AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Juliet Sutton for the degree of Master of Arts in Applied Anthropology presented on June 7, 2017.

Title: Food Insecurity Among Oregon College Students: Their Experiences and Perspectives.

Abstract approved:

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Joan E. Gross

This thesis examines the food insecurity experiences of student clients of the Oregon State University Emergency Food Pantry. Utilizing semi-structured interviews and participant observation at the food pantry, this study investigated who is using the food pantry, the forms of food insecurity they experience, how they cope with it, and how they feel about it. This study found that students are the primary users of the pantry, and graduate students and students with families use the pantry in higher numbers due to more intense financial pressures. Study participants generally experienced low food security (as opposed to very low food security), but the food pantry was often a key long term strategy in avoiding more severe food insecurity. Participants identified food insecurity as stressful and shameful. This research is an important addition to the burgeoning study of college student food insecurity; providing basic information about an additional university while also providing a more personal angle to a highly emotional issue.

Food Insecurity Among Oregon College Students: Their Experiences and Perspectives

by
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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.

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Juliet Sutton, Author

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Chapter 1: Introduction

I grew up using food pantries, usually attached to churches. Weird government commodity cheese and past-expiration date cereal were brought home. As I got older I developed an interest in food and cooking and later, anthropology. Later still, I found myself in graduate school for food anthropology where I gravitated towards issues concerning poverty. My own experiences growing up without enough to eat inspired me to study food insecurity.

At the start of my graduate degree I participated in a learning community where a group of us from Oregon and a group from Ecuador visited each other and took classes surrounding food and farming practices. Through this I met Daniel Lopez-Cevallos and Megan Patton-Lopez who were instructors in the program and had recently published a paper on food insecurity in a western Oregon university. At the same time I got to know Sarah Cunningham, who while being the department graduate coordinator was also the co-founder of the food pantry. Once I became aware of the food pantry on the Oregon State University campus it occurred to me that a study of the OSU food pantry could add something significant to the small but growing body of work on college student food insecurity, and could support the Patton-Lopez study in providing context to Oregon college student food insecurity.

My study developed around the idea that most of the college student-specific food insecurity studies only utilized surveys. As a cultural anthropologist I could provide emotional resonance on the topic by allowing people to explain their experiences in their own words. Because of my own upbringing I was very aware of how emotionally fraught and draining food insecurity can

be, and wanted to capture that in my research. My central question was simply: what are the experiences of food insecure students at OSU? No one had specifically asked that before. I also had a few sub-questions that I wanted to examine. How do food insecure students feel about their situation? What coping strategies do they use? What structures impede college student food security?

In the effort to answer these questions I start with a review of the literature, first examining relevant theory, and then summarizing college student food insecurity research. The following chapter reports the methods I used, from my participant observation as a food pantry volunteer to conducting interviews with its student clients. I discuss the results of my interviews in Chapter four and I use the conclusion to bring together the literature and my data as well as identifying further avenues of research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This literature review is divided into two parts. First I survey the theories that provided a framework for my study. Then I will give an overview of university food insecurity studies. I will examine food pantries and emergency food distribution as a whole, and then focus on the specific context at Oregon State University and go over of the data collected about the campus and the OSU food pantry.

Theory

In *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, Bourdieu states that those with a high volume of cultural capital are most likely to be able to determine what makes up taste in a society (Bourdieu 1984). They make up the rules of what counts as high and low culture, good and poor taste, and the people with lower overall capital accept this taste, though they may not be able to practice it. A person's aesthetic choices therefore serve to separate and identify the individual classes. Children internalize these preferences of their class and may even develop aversions to other classes' tastes, especially those that are located lower in the hierarchical scheme. These aversions to lower class foods can be troublesome when a person with higher class habitus has their circumstances change and must adapt to a lower class lifestyle.

Translating this to my study, differences in the class of student food pantry clients makes itself known through students' food choices. There are a hundred little signals that all of us give off advertising our class. As a food pantry volunteer I only really picked up on this when there was a conflict or something out of place. I slowly became aware that a client was used to much

higher quality foods when they would reject multiple choices or make comments about the quality of the food. Once in a while I would have a client that would walk through the whole pantry but only take a handful of items. College students are a unique group because many of them have an upper class habitus while experiencing temporary poverty in college. It is my assumption that food pantries that do not receive such a high volume of student clients do not experience this upper-class dissatisfaction as often from clients. Even at the OSU food pantry this was a rare situation. Many people who used the pantry while I volunteered there grew up poor and maintained that habitus to their benefit in college. Bourdieu has helped me decode these interactions through his concept of taste. He defines class in opposition to Marx by declaring that it is consumption, not production that is the most significant marker. This is a helpful way for me to look at it because my study is much more concerned with consumption versus production.

Bourdieu goes on to explain that taste is an important example of cultural hegemony, showing how cultural capital ensures the cultural reproduction of the ruling class. This hegemony of the ruling class is internalized by the lower classes and it affects how we discuss poverty at every rung of the social ladder. The concept of deserving poor versus undeserving poor matters in the context of the food pantry. It comes up in discussion of funding the food pantry itself, and is reflected in how people react to using the food pantry. With specific items that are coded as higher class or expensive, such as the fresh cilantro, it makes people hesitant or else extremely grateful that they get these items. It also affects how willing people are to use the food pantry and how shameful they are when they talk about using it.

Bourdieu's concepts of habitus and capital are also useful to this study. Habitus, which is the collection of embodied social conditions that are durable parts of everyone's identity, helps me make sense of the way I see people who have come from lower classes respond to the poverty of their college years with a seemingly innate group of coping skills (Bourdieu 1990). These coping skills, such as knowing how to cook cheap meals or having some knowledge of the network of food aid, can be explained by their habitus.

For Bourdieu there are three types of capital: economic, social, and cultural capital. Economic capital is money and other assets, and social capital includes networks of influence or support that you have access to by being part of a social group. Cultural capital refers to knowledge, educational credentials, and skills. The interplay of these is really interesting when studying college students. We can explain college as someone choosing to (ideally temporarily) lose economic capital in order to build future cultural, social, and economic capital. We can interpret people from low-income backgrounds going to college as making a riskier choice, and their difference in habitus partially explains the higher dropout rates for low income students. It also helps me interpret the unwillingness of some people to use charity because in asking for help from the institution they risk losing social capital. For both making the decision to go to college, and making the decision to use charity, Bourdieu would explain this as playing the game. The field and their list of options is already constructed by a person's habitus but the individual chooses the game to play.

Judith Butler's concepts of performativity and precarity help me explain students' behaviors and their place in the world. Performativity is the way people become visible or respected by

the institution (Butler 2004). She originally wrote in terms of gender, but the idea has been expanded to concepts such as disability and I see the room for expanding it to poverty. People who are attempting to get government assistance or use charity have to perform a certain way in order to be recognized as someone deserving of help. I have seen this in conversations I've had with people who feel uncomfortable going to the food pantry with nice clothes on or with their iPhone. They feel the need to perform their own definition of poverty in order to seem like they belong at the food pantry. They also know that they need to perform close to a certain script in applying for services. When students are applying for SNAP or registering at the food pantry they often know going in what answers will give them a better result, and as Bourdieu says they play the game. In choosing their performance they are able to express agency.

Butler's idea of precarity is also helpful in describing student poverty. Her definition of precarity is a politically induced condition where certain populations suffer from failing social and economic conditions and become more at risk of violence. Her original definition specifically applied to people like sex workers and transgender people who particularly experience high rates of violence. College students do not experience this level of precarity, but I do think that the term still has usefulness here. Poverty involves an amount of structural violence, in and of itself. Students often have to balance multiple things like jobs, classes, scholarships and internships. If any one of these fails they may have no safety net and might be forced to drop out or experience financial ruin. So while I feel it is somewhat overdramatic to use the concept of precarity here, it has helped me make sense of students' lives.

I use Goffman in a similar way. His idea of performance and masks is right in line with Butler's performativity and is very useful in explaining students' behaviors (Goffman 1959). We can also see how people conduct social performances where they use certain masks in order to control their image. People can choose to present themselves as less poor than they are. Often people dress and act like they are not experiencing poverty in order to save themselves the indignity of it. This is definitely true for students because the University is traditionally a place for middle-class and upper-class people (Deil-Amen 2011). There is a very narrow range of acceptable behavior for college students. You can complain about not having any money, and basically everyone does, but it is still somewhat taboo to really admit that you are poor. This is something I've thought about in terms of my interviews and conversations with food pantry clients. When someone says that they are not poor, they are really not having trouble at all, the food pantry is just a there to make it a little easier every month, I have to wonder how much of that is true, and how much is a mask that they put on to control their image. Of course this is the big dilemma in ethnographic research. We deal in perceptions and it is not always clear how close they are to reality.

Goffman also discusses the humiliation and control of "total institutions". Goffman had a fairly narrow view of the total institution compared to Foucault, only including things like prisons and mental hospitals, but I feel justified in stretching the concept to the government welfare system and charity. The process of getting government assistance involves many inconveniences and humiliating procedures like probing questions and long time spent in lines. Goffman goes on to

discuss micro means of resisting these total institutions, which I saw some evidence of in my results.

The control of the total institution is also important to Foucault. The way he outlines the institution and its power resonates with the concept of government assistance and the network of charities (Foucault 1979). Surveillance and bureaucratic tests are two ways in which he describes how the institution controls people. Institutions control and create individuals. They put forth systems of rules and tests that individuals must conform their bodies to, thereby disciplining individuals and producing what he calls docile bodies. In applying for government assistance or using charity, individuals often have to submit to increased surveillance and bureaucratic tests. There are invasive forms to fill out and standards to meet. Surveillance is increased to make sure people conform to these standards. An example of this is the restrictions on food you can buy with the SNAP program. You cannot buy hot food, alcohol, paper products or household supplies, and some states have recurrent legislative movements to further restrict choices in order to limit junk food or high class foods. Politicians often try to increase surveillance for people using government assistance, such as the frequently pushed idea that states should drug test SNAP users, most famously tried in Wisconsin. While the food pantry only requires you to sign in and declare the number of people in your household, the extensive paperwork and interview that SNAP requires is typical of the whole system of food aid.

Obesity is also tied into discussions of poverty and food aid. Foucault does not leave much room for agency and resistance but he says transgression can happen through bodies. An obese

or starving body transgresses social norms. For people who are usually seen as not having much agency, people in poverty can be seen to resist power by having bodies that do not conform. Bourdieu also talks about the body, but very differently than Foucault. He says that the body is a materialization of class and taste. Taste is embodied and therefore shapes the body. The body is a social product and bears signs as well as produces them, and bodies have value based on the social position of their owners (Bourdieu 1984).

Giddens states that routine interactions worked on by skilled actors are ultimately institutionalized (Giddens 1990). We can see these routine interactions in the buildup of bureaucracy surrounding government assistance. Giddens discusses how post-modernity has led to a decrease in community connection but an increase in institutional trust, despite controlling bureaucracies. He sees the decrease in community connection as a negative but there are positive results of the situation as well. While he says that institutional trust is less personally satisfying than community trust, institutional trust is picking up much of the burden of these lost community interactions. This is very obvious in my study population. College students (even more than most other postmodern people) have very little community connection. They often move from a distance to college and know very few people in the area. And so I see in my data that community-based coping strategies that we would traditionally find, such as food sharing among neighbors, are rare. Instead of community, students rely on institutions to cope with food insecurity. Students unconsciously or consciously know that there isn't much community support but there is institutional support, so the logical place to look for

help is the government or charity organizations. And that's what we see them do: they apply for SNAP when they can and they go to food pantries.

Giddens explains that one way we are making up for a lack of community connection is a greater distribution of knowledge and expertise in the postmodern era (Giddens 1990). This allows the individual to take more control of their own choices than in the old system where they relied on their social network. There are many contradictions in the life of a food insecure college student, the biggest one being that the University (the institution) takes very small steps to alleviate students' food insecurity while side stepping the fact that it is the entrenched system of expensive but necessary college degrees that creates the food insecurity in the first place. People are aware of this conflict, consciously or subconsciously. Ortner's contradictions in the system are also useful here (Ortner 1989). All people live with contradictions, and they use cultural schemas to try to solve them in their own lives. Cultural schemas are standardized plot structures that reoccur throughout the way people tell stories, conduct rituals, and write history.

For American college students, this contradiction is worked out in their personal lives with the cultural schema that a college education is 'The One Way' to improve your social and economic life. Framed in that way quite a lot of suffering is justified during college. This idea of cultural schemas attempting to solve contradictions is important in how college students talk about their degrees and how they talk about their food insecurity. It is very much thought of as temporary food insecurity that is caused by this transitional period of college, and students often do a lot to minimize how much of a challenge this is in their speech. This cultural schema

is apparently losing effectiveness in the current generation as more and more people who graduate college still cannot improve their economic status. Time will tell if this cultural schema mutates or dies out entirely in response to this generation's disillusion. There are hints of this already happening in the larger numbers of young people choosing alternatives such as trade schools and community college to avoid the trap of four year universities. In *Paying the Price: College Costs, Financial Aid, and the Betrayal of the American Dream*, Sara Goldrick-Rab elaborates on that disillusionment with university (Goldrick-Rab 2016). She tracked 3000 students who entered college with federal aid. Only half of them finished college, and the reasons they left were always financial. She explains how our system just doesn't work anymore, but she does try to end on a positive note, outlining a few hypothetical programs that could fix the problem.

University Food Insecurity

The USDA defines food insecurity as a household-level economic and social condition of limited or uncertain access to adequate food (USDA 2014). This is in contrast to hunger, which is a physiological condition that can be caused by food insecurity. The USDA moved away from the label of hunger because it did not adequately describe the multiple facets of food insecurity and actual physiological hunger was beyond the scope of their household survey to record. The USDA further splits food insecurity into low food security and very low food security. Low food security is when someone reports decreased variety, quality, or desirability in their diet. It does

not include reduced food intake. Very low food security involves multiple indications of reduced food intake and disrupted eating patterns. As of 2015, 13% of American households were food insecure (FeedingAmerica 2014). 17% of households with children were food insecure, also relevant because several of my interviewees had children. In Oregon, 16.1% of households were food insecure as of 2016, significantly higher than the national average.

The research done on college food insecurity is spotty but there are some studies to rely on for overall percentages of food insecure students. Of those studies we are given a wide range of percentages experiencing food insecurity. The variation is significant: anywhere between 14% and 59% of American students sampled had some signs of food insecurity. Each study used somewhat different methods so it is hard to compare, however I think that the wide range may be due at least in part to specific variable contexts at each university. While there are differences that make these difficult to compare, we can still take this range as a jumping off point. One thing is clear, student food insecurity is higher than the US national average of 13-14%. It seems that even if we cannot find a consistent average for college student food insecurity, it is dependably higher than other population groups.

One of the key studies done in this area surveyed Australian college students (Hughes 2011). They used a self-administered food insecurity questionnaire and the range of respondents who were identified as food insecure was 12.7% to 46.5%. The wide range is due to different ways they could analyze the data. They first asked a single question about whether the respondent had ever run out of food in the last year, which garnered the 12.7% figure, but when they asked a series of more nuanced questions that align with the USDA definition of low food security

they got the figure of 46.5%. We could potentially interpret that first lower figure as the rate of very low food security in the sample, but because of the potential for respondents to misunderstand or reinterpret the question, I would not feel comfortable making that claim. Food insecurity in their sample correlated with those who rented or boarded, and those with low incomes or receiving government assistance. The coping strategies they recorded were based around increasing their income by working more or reducing expenses such as living with their parents.

Another Australian study backed up the findings of Hughes et al. a few years later (Gallegos, Ramsey, and Ong 2014). They also used the USDA food security survey module and found that yes, students were food insecure correlated with lower income, using government support, and renting. They found one in four students, or 25% of their sample were food insecure. They also found that 80% of food insecure students reported that their studies were compromised because of it. This is a very useful data point for proving the importance of this issue to government and university figures.

Both of the previous studies noted that self-reported poor health was correlated with food insecurity. Diet has a major impact on people's health, as well as the other dimensions of food insecurity and poverty that can act on health. One study out of the US Midwest focused specifically on fruit and vegetable intake of college students based on housing type (Mirabitur et al. 2016). Looking at housing that included food provision, such as a campus meal plan, versus housing without food provision, only male students with no food provision who had no car access had statistically significant lower fruit and vegetable intake. This could show that

food provision with housing may act as a buffer for other food insecurity issues. It also provides more proof that lack of access to a car affects diet and food security, something my interviewees mentioned often. But this result could also be that students with cars and meal plans come from wealthier families anyway.

Another American study, this time at a university in Hawaii determined that 21% of their sample of students were food insecure (Pia Chaparro et al. 2009). Students who lived on campus, or off campus with roommates were more likely to be food insecure, which aligns with the Australian studies. Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders in the sample were also more likely to be food insecure. This falls in line with other evidence that ethnic minorities are often more likely to experience poverty and food insecurity (Agyeman and Alkon 2014).

A study of a large university in the southeastern United States examined several financial factors as well as food management skills (Gaines et al. 2014). The rate of food insecurity in this study was 14%, comparable to the US average. They also noticed a correlation with several financial factors including familial support, financial independence, whether they received food or money assistance, and budgeting behaviors. This study highlighted two specific elements of context at that university. They were experiencing economic uncertainty at the national level, and the area had recently experienced a natural disaster, both of which affect people's behaviors and access to resources.

One study in particular provides the greatest insight into Oregon-specific student food security (Patton-López et al. 2014). At a small, rural university in Western Oregon they recorded 59% of

students had experienced some level of food insecurity in the past year. This was the highest rate of any study I could find, and highlights how different universities can be, based on location and context. Oregon was the 6th worst state for food security in the US from 2013 to 2016. Rural areas are known to be vulnerable to food insecurity, so this may partially explain the exceptional percentage in the Patton-Lopez study. Patton-Lopez et al. found that 27% of their sample used some kind of food aid including government assistance, food pantries/banks, church food aid, and others. Most of this was SNAP use. Income below $15000 was most correlated with food insecurity, along with being employed and having poorer health. Like other studies, students who worked were more likely to be food insecure, again suggesting that students are working to fill gaps in their budget or student aid package. Interestingly, students with a GPA above 3.1 were significantly less likely to be food insecure. One way to interpret this is that students who are food insecure struggle academically because of it.

Clare Cady's overview of university food insecurity research highlights what little research there is (Cady 2014). Her overview of the published work strives to show the importance of this issue and offers suggestions for continued research and possible ways to tackle the issue on a university administration level. She points out that while all the research shows that college students are experiencing food insecurity at higher rates than the rest of the US population, it goes against popular opinion of how poverty affects who gets into college. There are many studies showing that food insecurity in childhood leads to negative academic outcomes, and even more studies that show that lower income students go to college at lower rates than their wealthier peers (Brown, Wohn, and Ellison 2016, Roderick, Nagaoka, and Coca 2009). She does

not know exactly how to harmonize these two ideas, but her discussion of the campus food pantry movement shows that food insecurity on college campuses is a reality.

She then examines the academic impacts of food insecurity. One study shows how working more than 20 hours a week in college is correlated with lower GPA. Studies about the academic impact of food insecurity on college students are very limited, so she also extrapolates from elementary education studies that connect food insecurity to behavioral problems, memory issues, and lower scores in math and reading. Even if we don't have specific studies linking these things to college students, I think it is safe to say that food insecurity does affect university academic performance. She also points out that food insecurity disproportionately affects groups that are already underserved on college campuses: African Americans, Latinos, Native Americans, persons with disabilities, and people under the LGBTQ umbrella. All of these groups experience food insecurity at higher rates than the general population, and when studies of university food insecurity actually collected the information, they found that these groups were more likely to be food insecure on campus as well.

University campus food pantries were a foreign idea not much more than a decade ago. As people began to realize what a problem student food insecurity is, they started to create food pantries on their campuses to attempt to relieve the problem. Nowadays they are discussed increasingly often in both popular news and academic articles increasingly often. There are only a few academic papers on college food pantries so far but that number will continue to grow. One study out of the University of Alberta looked at population characteristics of the students who were using the campus food pantry (Hanbazaza et al. 2016). They found that compared to

the broader university population users were more likely to be international students, graduate students, and they were older. All of these identifiers are true of my interviewees as well so we could possibly be seeing a wider trend.

As for the OSU food pantry, it came about when in 2008 Ten Rivers Food Web administered a food assessment of the university campus, where anthropology graduate students surveyed 181 students (Caplan 2011). People generally commented on a lack of or difficulty getting fresh, healthy, organic, or local foods on campus and said that cost was a large motivator in whether they bought these items. They identified lack of time and the proper tools as reasons why it was hard to cook their own food. About one third of their sample said that they had skipped meals or limited their size because they could not afford it. And about one fourth said that they worried they would run out of food before they had money to buy more. Significant numbers also said that high tuition, low income, expensive housing and utilities, transportation, and time were factors that affected their ability to get the food they need.

There were previous efforts to strengthen food security by campus groups, notably a free lunch program that transitioned into the still-operational campus food subsidy program, Mealbux. This program takes applications and selects qualified students to receive a variable amount of money on their campus ID cards per term, to be spent at campus restaurants and stores. So Mealbux as well as the food assessment gave them evidence that there was a need for some kind of food assistance, and they decided to set up the Oregon State University Emergency Food Pantry in 2009. Since its beginning the OSU food pantry has continually improved itself, from just a few shelves of dry goods in the corner of an old campus building to the bright new

section of the Human Services Resources Center building that sources fresh organic vegetables from campus gardening clubs and has just started their own vegetable garden. It was an early example of campus food pantries so it has always had the attention of other universities wanting to start up their own food pantries. Sarah Cunningham and Dana Johnson, the original heads of the food pantry, even put together a manual for starting and operating a food pantry to act as a resource for other universities (Cunningham 2011). They were also a founding member of the College and University Food Bank Alliance, which currently has almost 500 member colleges.

The Oregon State University Emergency Food Pantry has collected only a few bits of information on its users because of its commitment to client privacy. Talking to the staff there in addition to my own fieldwork, got me some unofficial information however. During a few pantry nights they occasionally recorded whether each household served contained at least one college student, and they found that about 90% of households did. They do not maintain records of pantry users per night for security reasons, but they keep yearly aggregates. In the 2013-2014 school year they had 2223 people use the pantry. During 2014-2015 it was 2974 people, and in 2015-2016 it was 2531. The explanation for higher attendance in 2014-2015 is that the pantry advertised far more widely that year, but they did not adequately explain the purpose of the pantry, so they had far more one-time visitors who realized that they did not need the pantry during this year.

The literature here covered food insecurity, food pantries, and college student food insecurity. The theorists described broader human cultural trends that I have found in my study, and the

individual summaries of college student food insecurity studies helped lay out the variation in

the work that has been done, as well as highlight the research there is still left to do. I will

continue to use these theorists and studies in the rest of this paper to back up my personal

findings. Next, I will outline my own study and provide additional context about the OSU Food

Pantry.

Chapter 3: Methods

My methods included two main parts: first, participant observation at the food pantry during which I took fieldnotes and solicited interviews, and second, interviews, which were then transcribed and coded. There was an ongoing study of the OSU food pantry and I had the idea to examine more personal narratives about food insecurity as a good addition to the study. I was allowed to join the study as a research assistant as well as get my own interview questions approved under their IRB approval #08222014.

Participant observation was my first step. It is very easy to start volunteering at the food pantry, something interviewees actually mentioned as a positive fairly often. So to get started I visited the Human Services Resource Center and did a short computer training session. The training session went over the goals of the pantry and the HSRC, the way the pantry works, and included some basic information about food insecurity. After that I was free to show up at any food pantry distribution night and help out. Distribution nights started at 5 o'clock and volunteers were asked to come 15 to 30 minutes before. It was fairly chaotic, although always a friendly atmosphere. I entered through the loading dock and found one of the staff members who would point me in the direction of something that needed doing. Sometimes that was setting up the snack table or stocking shelves. At 5 o'clock the food pantry opened and one of the staff members checked in people, after which they waited in a large auditorium room for a volunteer to come get them and walk them through the pantry. As a note: I write about the

location and procedures during my fieldwork. As of 2016, the pantry moved to a different building on campus that had a smaller but nicer waiting room and clients became able to pick out their own produce. Other than that the procedures are basically the same as written here.

Escorting clients was the main duty of all the volunteers, including myself. We were given a number to call out, and the client with that number would come up to us in the waiting room. Then we would make chitchat and explain the number of servings that each client got of each category of food while we walked them through each section of the pantry. The exact procedure changed frequently even in the few months I was there, but the basic order stayed the same. First we came up to a white board with a list of fresh fruits and vegetables available. We would fill out a card for the clients listing the types and amounts of produce that they wanted. Then we would hand off the card to a volunteer who stayed in the freezer and refrigerator space who then put together their order, put it in a box or bag, and set it out for the client to collect later. While this was happening we would move on to the room with the freezers. Clients were able to take the items they wanted within the servings they were allowed of each category of frozen meat, vegetables, and processed foods like frozen pizza or other prepared items. Next we moved on to the dry goods room that had wire shelves lining the walls filled with canned food and dry goods such as rice and cereals. Clients picked from the categories of fruits, vegetables, prepared foods, soups, grains, and proteins. This was always where it got a little confusing because clients would have to add together the shelf stable proteins or vegetables with the things in those categories they had already gotten in the fresh or frozen sections of the pantry. We all carried dry erase markers to keep track of servings on

the laminated serving sheets, but it involved a fair bit of repetition and confusion. At the current time they have switched to new information cards that seem to make the job easier. At the end there was usually a shelf with toiletries, toilet paper, other non-edibles, and sometimes, seasonal items like pumpkins at Halloween. Clients could usually take one of each type of item if they were interested. After that section was done we would take the client back into the hallway where their order of fresh produce was waiting for them. Sometimes we had free boxes or reusable bags available for clients to put their food in. Then we would go back to the front, get a new client, and start the whole process over again.

Often the traditional system in food pantries is to hand each client a ready prepared box of nonperishables, many of which the client may not be able to eat or may not want. In contrast this pantry attempts to give clients as much choice they can and allows them to pick out almost all of their own food. This also informs the staff's attempt to get as much fresh food as possible. They also feel that people receiving aid deserve good nutrition, and make stocking choices with that goal in mind when they can.

The pantry was open twice a month, on alternating Mondays and Wednesdays, although clients were only supposed to use the pantry every other time it was open. After the food pantry distribution night ended I would find a close spot on campus and write everything I could remember into my fieldnotes. Ideally one takes fieldnotes throughout the event but it was way too busy for that, so writing everything as soon as possible afterward was an acceptable alternative (Emerson 1995). Volunteers who also want to receive food at that night's pantry waited until the last 30 minutes or so, when they would then be signed in by a staff member

and walked through the pantry by another volunteer, like a normal client. Due to my own

financial situation I often did this as well, so I got a pretty good perspective of the pantry from

both sides.

While all of the volunteers made sure to make conversation and make the clients feel welcome,

I had an additional goal--to recruit interviewees. So while I chatted with the clients I would

mention I was a graduate student doing research while also volunteering, and asked them if

they were a student at OSU since that was my target population. Near the end of the trip with

each client I would ask if they were interested in scheduling an interview at a different time in

the next week or so. If they said yes this is when I would collect their name and email address

and get back to them within 24 hours to schedule a time to meet. I would often ask them about

their availability for the next week right when they signed up for an interview, but almost

nobody was comfortable with doing that and they wanted to go home and look at their

calendar. So I followed up with those who were interested and scheduled a time to meet on

campus within the next week.

 I had a really big problem with attrition here. Maybe a third of the people I asked at the pantry

to do an interview said yes, which wasn't bad considering I was asking them to schedule and

then get to an extra event in their schedule on relatively short notice with no real reward to

them. But then more than half of the people who agreed to an interview ignored my follow-up

emails and nothing came of it. This isn't entirely surprising because they may have felt a certain

amount of pressure to say yes considering they were receiving aid or just didn't want the

confrontation of saying no in case I was pushy. Furthermore some of the people who were

genuinely interested and said yes to an interview may just not have felt like they had the time

in the next week and ignored my email. I also set up a lot of interviews, provided location and

time and reminders if it was more than a week away, and then people just didn't show up.

These are all really typical problems in setting up social science interviews but truthfully it was

fairly discouraging. I went to roughly a year's worth of food pantry distribution nights,

interacted with maybe a couple hundred people personally, and ultimately only got 10

interviewees to actually sit down in front of me. I would say that getting participants to follow

through with an interview is perhaps the biggest difficulty in this type of qualitative research.

For those who did an interview with me, I used the private reserved rooms in the library. In the

few cases when I was unable to reserve a library room, I performed interviews in reserved

rooms at the Memorial Union and once in a public area of the library. I recorded my interviews

with their permission and also took notes during the interview. I used pseudonyms that the

interviewees chose for themselves to protect their privacy. I also gave them a copy of the IRB

explanation of research which laid out the minimal risks to participating in the study, our

procedures to protect the data, and gave them contact information to the primary investigator,

should they have additional questions or concerns. The purpose of the larger study was to

examine the organizational culture of the pantry while soliciting suggestions for improvement

through interviews with staff and volunteers, so this was also a place where people could give

the primary investigator additional comments on the pantry.

In the Appendix you will find a copy of our joint interview guide. First we asked for very quick

demographic information such as age, gender, ethnicity or race. Whenever applicable we tried

to make the question open ended rather than providing a list of possible responses because of the problems with providing a limited list of options, particularly for something like race, but also gender. Then we asked longer questions about the nature of the interviewee's relationship to the pantry, and what they liked or didn't like about the pantry.

Towards the end was the portion that I added. I asked a few questions based on the USDA food security survey module: whether they got enough to eat, or whether they got the foods they wanted to eat. I asked them what foods they considered to be healthy, and what ideas they had about college eating. Then I asked whether they use any other alternative sources of food, and asked if they had used any of these in childhood. I also asked about their emotional responses to these situations. At the end of the interview I made sure they had no more questions or concerns about the study and also asked them if they wanted to participate in a focus group, which was another section of the larger study. The interviews were typically 30 to 40 minutes long, with some lasting an hour.

After conducting the interviews I transcribed them using Express Scribe Transcription Software. Then I entered the transcriptions into Dedoose, an online program for coding qualitative research. I uploaded the interviews and developed first basic broad codes to distinguish larger themes. This was often simply grouping all the responses to a single question in the same place. Then I did a second pass where I developed more specific codes that allowed more particular patterns of ideas to be highlighted (Bernard 2011). Once I had those groupings I could finally write about them, incorporating my notes from participant observation and my interviews as I went.

Sample

There were twenty-one interviews in total, eleven performed by Sarah Cunningham with volunteers and staff, and ten performed by me with clients of the pantry. Two focus groups with volunteers and staff were performed but they are excluded from this study. We collected a handful of demographic statistics. The whole sample were either currently students or had been students at the time they were affiliated with the pantry. Eight of my 10 interviews were with graduate students, which seems to back up a trend in what people noticed at the pantry which we will discuss later.

Table 1.1: My Sample

Sarah Cunningham's Interviews: 10 Total	My Interviews: 11 Total
Staff and Volunteers	Pantry Clients
2 International Students	6 International Students
2 Graduate Students	8 Graduate Students

While we included a question about veteran status, none of the people interviewed were veterans. 15 of the total sample were female, six were male. Broken down between staff and volunteers versus clients we see a more obvious trend. Of the 11 staff and volunteers surveyed,

nine were female. In clients we see a more even ratio, although the sample is small. Of 10 interviewees six were female and four were male.

Country of origin and race identification revealed more interesting trends. Of the volunteers and staff, nine of 11 were from the US, with just one each from Germany and China. Anecdotally, there is a strong trend of international students who either previously or currently use the pantry as a client also deciding to volunteer. It was a way to give back something in return for the use of the food pantry. This study did not show that trend in our participants, but the evidence for it is there in stories from clients and volunteers, and my own fieldwork. Many of the volunteers I worked with were international students. Volunteers and staff primarily self-identified as white, with two identifying as Asian and one identifying as Hispanic.

Four of the clients I interviewed were from the US, the rest were from Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Madagascar, Switzerland, and Chile. So there is clearly a wide variety of nationalities represented at the food pantry. All of the clients from outside of the US essentially identified their race as their nationality. The clients from the US all identified as white, besides one who identified as half white half Hispanic.

From my interviews, I can say that all but one or two experienced low food security. One interviewee, 'Fabio', definitely experienced very low food security but he is the only one I can be sure of. From what clients said, I can also guess that without the food pantry, more of my interviewees would have experienced very low food security.

Age also was recorded. Volunteers and staff ranged from 21 to 31 years old. Both the mean and median was 24 years old for this sample. Two of my client sample did not give ages, but of the eight that did they ranged from 19 to 51. The mean was 30 and the mode was 28. The 51-year-old skews the sample a little bit because the next oldest client was 36. These older ages for most clients follows with the information we gathered about who was an undergrad and who was a graduate. It seems that most of the sample follows general trends in the ages of undergraduate and graduate students, i.e. graduate students are typically noticeably older than undergrads.

Family status, such as partnered status and children, is important to look at because it can have such a dramatic impact on a person's food security. None of the volunteers or staff interviewed had children. Two were married. This aligns with our information on age and the fact that they were mostly traditional undergraduates. Seven of the 10 clients interviewed were married or otherwise partnered long-term. Four of them had one child, while none of the sample had more than one child. It is hard to unravel correlation and causation here, but it is clear that there is a connection between age, having children, being a graduate student, and needing to use the food pantry. Graduate students are older broadly speaking, older people are more likely to have children, and having to feed children on a graduate student's income makes you more likely to be food insecure. The high rate of people with children in the sample may purely be due to how skewed it is towards graduate students. On the other hand it makes perfect sense that students with children would be more likely to use an aid source such as the pantry.

Since my sample of clients caught so many graduate students we may be seeing an interesting bias where graduate students are more likely to label or recognize other graduate students in a crowd. They are also more likely to remember a conversation where they discovered someone else was a graduate student than the reverse. The fact that I am a graduate student may also have contributed to these final sample numbers. Graduate students may be more likely to talk with other graduate students. It also came up multiple times in conversation that graduate students were much more willing to sign up for an interview because they had an existing familiarity with scientific studies, and they were empathetic about how difficult it is to get people to sign up for interviews. So even though that wasn't my intention or even something I've thought about when I was recruiting for interviews, I may have been much more likely to pick up graduate students out of the sample because of this "pay it forward" mentality. This potentially has outside use in the vein of research that is starting to break down much academic research bias. It has been found that a huge portion of academic research relies on college students, particularly those college students that are most willing to participate in a research project such as psychology undergraduates, and this of course could be an under-discussed source of bias in these studies (Grohol 2010). On the other hand, graduate students may need the food pantry more, and not just because they may be more likely to have children. There is less government investment in graduate students; they do not have the same access to Pell grants and sometimes have less loan money available than undergraduates.

Chapter 4: Results and Discussion

People they noticed at the pantry

One of the questions all interviewees were asked was to describe who they noticed at the pantry. This was a purposefully broad question that got many different answers. We can pull some trends from the answers. There were no obvious majorities in ethnicity or nationality. People frequently expressed that it was surprising you could meet someone from any part of the world at the food pantry.

> "There is such a huge diversity of people. I have seen Indian, Asian, I did not ask him but there was a man with a clearly French accent. There are white students, black people, it just seems like there is a huge array of types of people. ('Star')"

Since no actual statistical data was taken at the food pantry is hard to decide whether this is an actual trend, but many people seemed to think international students made up the bulk of the clients. Certainly from my fieldwork there were many international students using the food pantry, but it's hard to know if they were actually a majority at the pantry. As a note, the food pantry very intentionally did not record demographic information because they stressed privacy and anonymity as a goal for their clients. This becomes especially important when you consider many of these clients were international students and potentially undocumented students that could be hurt if this information was attached to them. There are a lot of mentions in the answers to this question of possible explanations for why there were more international students. It seems that international students were less likely to be funded adequately, and

they were more likely to be prohibited or limited in their ability to work, making the food pantry a much needed source of aid.

Again, actual data were not recorded at the food pantry level but almost everyone agreed that students made up the majority of the food pantry clients. There was only a single interviewee that disagreed with this idea. Even when interviewees acknowledged that the majority of people at the pantry were students, their preconceived notions of what a college student looks like could have obscured things, making the actual number of students even higher. A few students discussed the people at the pantry who brought their children in ways that suggested that they took for granted that those people would not be students. We all have ideas of what a college student looks like and for many people someone with a family is not part of that image.

Students absolutely were the majority as volunteers, which of course makes sense because students frequently need volunteer hours for certain organizations or classes and they are in proximity to the food pantry on campus. In fact I cannot even remember an anecdotal story of a volunteer who wasn't a student at OSU. This follows with the low number of non-students who use the pantry, as well as the lack of advertising outside of campus.

Once again anecdotally we see the perception that more graduate students than you would expect from an average of the university population were using the food pantry as clients. This is difficult to discern however.

> "Most of them are OSU students. Also I have talked with a few people who are not OSU students but they come here to have some food. There are undergraduate and graduate. I have found more graduate, I don't know why. ('Mary')"

Pantry atmosphere

We asked several questions designed to get feedback on the pantry. We specifically asked about the atmosphere of the pantry, how it made people feel. A large majority of people talked at length about how comfortable the pantry seems to them. They mentioned how it felt like a judgment-free zone, that volunteers were friendly and happy to help. The lack of judgment was talked about again and again.

> "Well the greatest thing was the nonjudgmental thing…Yeah I'm just gonna harp on the nonjudgmental thing. I was kind of averting my eyes, not making eye contact. But everyone I met was welcoming and very nice to me. ('Fabio')"

Different people were worried to different extents about how they would be treated or judged at the pantry, and it seems that the institutional atmosphere of the pantry does a very good job of putting those fears to rest. This will be discussed in more detail when we get into the emotions attached to food insecurity. The welcoming atmosphere was frequently attributed to the fact that most volunteers were students, giving most clients an automatic commonality with them. The people that were aware that it is common to start out as a client and then decide to volunteer also identified that is a great source of comfort. Many people described having anxiety about how they would be treated by the volunteers, but once they found out that their volunteer or many of the volunteers used to be clients that was no longer a concern.

> "They are helpful, they are nice. They are friendly with you. It's not like they are just 'ugh what do you wanna get?' Maybe it's because we are all students so we feel more comfortable talking. ('Jane')"

Both volunteers and clients mentioned positively how you would start to identify people through multiple pantry nights. When people would volunteer multiple times or visit the pantry multiple times, they would recognize other people and develop rapport with them. This was unanimously described as a positive thing. It made people feel more welcome and safe in the pantry. They really seem to have built a sense of community within the food pantry.

While people describing the institutional culture of the pantry were very pleased and comfortable with it, people who mentioned the actual building had different things to say. Although the food pantry has since moved locations, the original location in Snell Hall's unused industrial kitchen put some people off. There was still a lot of unused old kitchen equipment that cluttered the space. All of the back rooms were described as dingy and dark. There were also major issues with overcrowding in the small space that the food pantry had to actually store food. In the beginning they had to display nonperishables in a narrow hallway which led to major bottlenecks that both clients and volunteers hated because they were stuck in a small crowded area while they waited for people to move. Later an additional room in the kitchen area was made available to the food pantry to store the nonperishable foods. This helped the traffic jams somewhat, but it was still a small space and people still frequently commented on how crowded it got.

Interviewees had a lot to say about what they liked about the pantry. People frequently commented on how pleased they were at the foods that were offered. Some people were

surprised at the variety of foods offered, especially that they offered refrigerated and frozen items like meat, eggs, and milk. By far the most common thing that people loved about the pantry is that they were able to get fresh fruits and vegetables. While there were limits to the amount and variety that were offered, people thought it was amazing that they could get anything like that at a food pantry, based on their ideas of what food pantries usually provide.

> "I think they do a really good job trying to promote good food, real food. Not just ready-made food. Not just ready-made lunches and stuff like that. ('Kitty')"

The perception is that food banks and pantries only have nonperishable, government commodity food. While that is very common, more and more food pantries are trying to change that. Clients seemed to be very aware that the pantry made an effort to provide healthy foods. Although there were again limits to what the food pantry could provide, people were very happy at how they perceived that healthiness and quality were important to the food pantry staff. Several people on both the volunteer and client side were very appreciative that the staff of the pantry made it a priority to include toiletries and feminine hygiene products, since these are often overlooked in the food pantry system but greatly needed. Some of the most valued things for clients were special seasonal items. Often the food pantry would be able to obtain a certain amount of pumpkins for Halloween or turkeys for Thanksgiving. There was never enough to go around, which was frustrating, but clients particularly remembered and valued these culturally significant items. In my fieldwork I remember a specific client family I helped on a pantry night in October when they had pumpkins available. The news that we had pumpkins that night had spread through all of the people waiting, and by the time I helped this woman

and her toddler they were very excited. The little boy was even dressed in his Halloween costume. So while it might sound very sappy, it meant a lot to me and these clients that they were able to take home a pumpkin for Halloween.

People also loved the environment of the waiting room. While the pantry was held in Snell Hall they used the international forum as a waiting room. This was a very large room with stadium seating and a projector. Clients really enjoyed the small touches that the food pantry staff implemented to make their wait more comfortable. This included having music videos and shorts running on the projector, a snack table, and other organizations who tabled and did activities in the area. The Food Hero program provided recipe slips and sometimes samples. There was also usually a table of other information about resources on campus, including ways to access counseling or other types of financial relief. Occasionally they would even have a cooking demo by a chef that incorporated food items that were available at that night's pantry. On a seasonal basis the pantry would also do holiday themed giveaways, or have a table of seeds with information on how to garden. Clients mentioned all of these things frequently in what they most liked about the pantry.

Volunteers also had several things they liked about the pantry. They liked the low barrier to volunteering, since the training was fast. They liked how centrally it was located on campus because it was easy to get to. Many of the volunteers also needed volunteer hours for a specific class or organization, and the consistency as well as the evening time of the food pantry made it easy for them to get there volunteer hours that way. More than one volunteer also specifically

mentioned that they used volunteering at the food pantry as a way to strengthen their English language skills.

Everyone interviewed had at least a few critiques of the pantry. A frequent one was is issues of overcrowding and long waits. It was already mentioned when we talked about pantry atmosphere, but people frequently mentioned how crowded it could get in the areas where they actually picked up their food. People also frequently mentioned how long it could take to go through the pantry. The line to check in was often very long and the process of checking in could be very slow. Then once they got into the waiting room people could frequently wait for an hour or more. So even with the waiting room being a pleasant place this was just too long for many people to wait. Goffman's resistance shows up here in how clients often act out or are very sullen and uncooperative if the lines and the wait time to go through the food pantry are long. It seemed to be an unsolvable problem in this space because even when they had plenty of volunteers, volunteers would have to hold back before calling clients back because there just wasn't enough space for everybody to be in the pantry area at once. Also because of the overcrowding people often got to the pantry an hour to a half hour before it opened just to get a good spot in line. When they weren't able to get there early, people were very aware that the pantry would run out of the most desired food items. This was clearly upsetting to people, especially if they couldn't get to the pantry in the first hour through schedule conflicts with work or school.

Clients also had some complaints about the food available. Far and away the most common critique of the pantry was that they did not have enough fruits and vegetables. While above I

mentioned that people were very grateful even to have some at the pantry, the quantity and variety was just not enough for the pantry's needs.

> "But I think the range of vegetable items are not very good. Both less in quantity and variety, especially variety in vegetable items. ('Angel')"

The pantry staff have over time tried to rectify this but fresh foods are often the most expensive and hard to transport and store in the pantry context. Still the thing people would most change about the pantry was to have more fruits and vegetables at the pantry. There was also major seasonality in what fresh foods were available. A lot of the fresh produce that the food pantry had access to was provided in direct donations from gardening groups on campus, such as the Student Sustainability Initiative. Therefore what the food pantry had to offer varied with the growing season, particularly in total quantity. The fresh produce was almost always the first thing the pantry ran out of on a given night. Since the pantry is open for three hours it's easy to see why people who came later were frustrated by this.

What makes students food insecure?

Many of my interview questions had to do with the reasons clients use the food pantry, as well as the reasons clients felt food insecure. I asked why they decided to use the pantry. Then I asked whether they have trouble getting enough food or the kinds of food they wanted, and why. As you would expect most of the reasons were financial, but there were other things that people identified as contributors to their food insecurity. There were varying levels of food

insecurity I identified amongst my interviewees. It seems that most of these clients experienced

relatively mild hardship—low food security, although some experienced very severe

problems—very low food security. Often as I attempted to get the interviewee to elaborate on

their insecurity, they would say that they didn't feel insecure because they had the food pantry.

Basically once they received their food from the pantry that month they were fine. So that

portion of their budget that they no longer had to spend on groceries was enough to provide

them some amount of security. Of course the concept of food insecurity and having enough to

get by for the month varies tremendously from person-to-person. It's so subjective that it

makes our job as researchers of food insecurity rather difficult. We just have to take our

interviewees' opinions at face value and determine what we can from their answers that they

provide us.

Title 7 of the United States code covers agriculture in the US and defines a food pantry as a

resource that people use during an emergency; presumably after that they can get back on

their feet and become stable again (2016). However, from what I heard from my interviewees,

most of them needed the food pantry on a monthly basis over the long term. Long term can

mean different things in different contexts, but here I mean something like a year or the entire

time the person was in college. In other words, these clients budgeted for their month including

the food pantry offerings in the food portion of their budget. Without this they would've come

up short every month.

> "Usually after I pay rent and utilities and my Internet bill at the beginning of the month
> my food… My paycheck pays for about half of my month's food. Right now it's near the

>   end of the month, what day is it the 20th. I have $13 in my bank account right now. If I
>   hadn't gotten food from the food pantry on Monday I would be in a pickle. ('Eloise')"

As I said most of the clients I talked to experienced fairly mild food insecurity that was mostly

rectified by using the food pantry. However I talked to a certain client who experienced very

low food security even after including the food pantry. He explained that having gone back to

college for graduate degree, taking that significant pay cut, and his wife having to stay home for

child care, his household was really hurting. He and his wife were having to skip meals on an

almost daily basis just to leave food for their child. And even then often the only thing in the

house would be a box of cereal or bag of pasta. So while he was an outlier in my data sample,

we know that some college students are certainly experiencing severe food insecurity.

Financial constraints were almost always identified as a result of being in college. People

mentioned the high cost of tuition, fees, and books, as well as not being able to work at all or

for very many hours per week because of college courses. In addition to these reasons, some

interviewees mentioned that their situation was even more difficult than the average college

student because they were supporting dependents such as a spouse or child.

>   "The biggest reason I went is that I wanted to make sure we had enough food especially
>   for my son. I guess I could do Ramen noodles or something but I think my son needs a
>   little more nutrition and stability in that regard. ('Fabio')"

Particularly in the case of international students they had hourly limits for how much they could

legally work, and their spouses could often not work at all. So they are left with trying to

provide for a spouse and/or child on a 20 hour per week campus job — a huge challenge. The

cost of food is often also higher in Corvallis than in their home country. There is also an

awareness that money for school and money for living are coming from different sources. A student might be at OSU because they received multiple scholarships or tuition waivers but have no money to live. There is a misconception that was even displayed by one of the volunteers interviewed, that students have some money just because they have managed to get to college. That may have been the case 30 years ago but today more than ever people with poorer backgrounds are getting to college through scholarships (or most commonly, loans) that do not provide enough to cover living expenses (Perez-Pena 2014). I see this as the largest reason that college students around the country need to access food pantries and other sources of aid. Student loan debt has become such a burden and source of anxiety for current college students that even when loan money is technically available for living expenses, people avoid it, live on as small a budget as they possibly can, and use sources of aid such as the food pantry. One interviewee, "Eloise" specifically identified this as her strategy.

> "Some of the people in my program will take out small additional loans to help get them through the year that will help supplement their income. But I don't like to do that. I promised my dad that I would never have loans so I try to promise that and stick to that and I don't have loans. So I just work through it. ('Eloise')"

Historically, there used to be more of an emphasis on grants that did not have to be paid back, but over time we have seen those programs go away. Now the Pell grant program is one of the last standing and even it has been greatly reduced. Pell and many of the other aid programs originate with the Higher Education Act of 1965, but have been modified and eroded over time. Now the emphasis is on loans that must be paid back by students, and as tuition goes up, so does the debt burden people are leaving the university with.

 The university is therefore responsible to an extent for students' struggles. They are most definitely part of the whole system; effecting and being affected by other parts of the system. Tuition is going up, which is somewhat controlled by the university, but also caused by continuously decreasing investment of the government in education. OSU does more than most universities to alleviate student hardships but those hardships are still caused in part by this institution.

There are other constraints that are not necessarily financial. While designing this research project I came up with some likely barriers to food security that I thought students were facing. One was not being able to have access to a kitchen. However this did not come up in any of my interviews. The one freshman, and so the only person who lived on campus, I interviewed had access to a communal kitchen as well as a microwave and refrigerator in her room. She was able to prep and store food, and mentioned cooking her own food about two thirds of the time. The other third was taken care of through her meal plan on campus. She had expected to be able to use her meal plan for a larger proportion of her meals and was caught off guard. OSU is actually working on alleviating this issue with a "second helping" program for students like her. While I wanted more freshmen in my sample, it is possible that I would not have found many freshmen at the food pantry anyway because their meal plans may cushion them from food insecurity. This would be a good avenue for further research.

Another barrier I identified but did not capture in my study sample was the problem of access to government aid programs for college students. Most notably SNAP, or 'food stamps,' is very difficult for college students to get. You must demonstrate a low enough income, and at least

20 hours of work per week, not including campus jobs like graduate appointments or work-study (USDA 2016). Therefore many college students do not have access to this. International students are even less likely to qualify for government programs because they are non-citizens. Even with all of this being the case, SNAP or any other government program did not come up in any of my interviews except for a single graduate student who very briefly mentioned that graduate students are often not eligible for the program.

Transportation was frequently identified in my interviews as a contributor to food insecurity. Three of my interviewees did not have cars and they all identified transportation as a barrier to getting food. Two of the three are international students and they both discussed how common it is for international students to not have cars and to have problems getting to grocery stores. Both of these international students actually mentioned that they were using the food pantry especially at the beginning of their stay here, because it was within walking distance while no grocery stores were. A previous study of food insecurity at OSU identified the campus and some areas surrounding the campus as potential food deserts (Caplan 2011). A food desert is an area where it is difficult to buy affordable or good quality fresh food. The city of Corvallis has a free bus system and some interviewees mentioned using it. While it does help it is often confusing and time-consuming to use since it runs infrequently—usually once an hour, and the routes are often inconveniently placed for grocery stores.

A lack of energy was also often identified as a contributor to food insecurity. Occasionally as a barrier to getting food at all, but more commonly as a barrier to making good choices with their food. Students would say that they didn't have the energy to go to a grocery store, meal prep

for the week, or make dinner after coming home in the evening. When this happens people

would occasionally just not eat or more commonly they would choose fast food or something

else unhealthy. This was almost unanimously described as a negative they wished they could

change. However college students are often juggling courses, homework, paid work, and

volunteering, so it is not a surprise that energy can be lacking in this group. And perpetuating

the cycle is the fact that poor nutrition contributes to low energy.

> "Usually Sundays are my catch-up day, where I make meals for the week. But recently I
> haven't had time to do that because Sundays are my catch-up time on my PhD, and I'm
> preparing for teaching for the next week. So that frustrates me. ('Kitty')"

Much more commonly than energy was time identified as a limit to food security. Again as with

energy, you need time to go to the grocery store and prepare meals. Not having a car means

using the bus which also takes more time. People also mentioned that if they had more time

they might be able to work more hours and increase their income. Some also mentioned

wanting to garden or raise chickens or do other things to get or make food but time was always

the biggest factor in not doing this. So when people didn't have the time to obtain or prepare

the food that they would like, they made food choices that were not ideal. Frequently this

meant going out to eat often for fast food, or eating something that was nutritionally lacking

such as a bowl of cereal or Ramen noodles. It's easy to see here that many factors in food

security that appear to be discreet are actually influenced by a lack of time. Time poverty is an

interesting and relatively new way of framing this subject (Brewis 2010). A lack of free time is

distributed unevenly among socioeconomic classes, race and many other groups. People in

poverty usually have the smallest amount of free time and that contributes to their food

insecurity and lack of exercise which in turn can influence things like obesity and health. I do

see the desire to conform by having a healthy body. When asked, basically all of my

respondents said that they want to eat healthy, and they often say that one result of their

poverty is eating less healthy food and gaining weight. As Foucault explains, bodies can

transgress in society by being obese. People in general want to have bodies that do not

transgress, but food insecurity hinders that. So time touches a lot of areas that on the surface

don't appear to have anything to do with it.

Emotions surrounding food insecurity and who is deserving of help

I asked my interviewees to describe the emotions that they attached to food insecurity, and

particularly I asked them if it was a source of stress. While fewer than I assumed identified it as

a source of stress, they had some common thoughts about the emotions they experienced.

I took it for granted that people would consider food insecurity as a source of stress, however

this was not unanimous. A few people felt that they did not experience acute enough food

insecurity for it to majorly stress them. One interviewee said he had so many other sources of

stress in his life he couldn't untangle them well enough to firmly identify food insecurity as one

of the sources of his stress. Other than these people it was fairly common for interviewees to

say their food insecurity was a stressor. One woman explained that she had only heard about

the food pantry when she brought up her concerns about her food budget to a therapist at the

OSU counseling and psychological services, CAPS, and the therapist had suggested it as a possible help. The people who thought of time and energy as their biggest barriers to food security all had similar stories about how stressful it is to balance all of the responsibilities of student life, and how purchasing or preparing food was last on their list of priorities.

One client articulated the never ending drudgery of poverty better than any of the others. This has been written about many times before, but it is hard to fully express how consistently overbearing it is to have no room in your budget for the smallest luxury.

> "I mean it's tiring when you are that broke. Not able to do anything. Like nonetheless yeah you can't go out drinking with your graduate friends, you can't go out to do fun things because you can't even afford to feed yourself for the whole month. It's tiring for sure because sometimes you just want to break out and occasionally like spend a tiny bit of money on something stupid. You know or something not totally necessary and I just couldn't afford to ever do that so I felt like I guess I felt limited in my social life too because of it" ('Eloise').

While this only came up in this one interview I have a feeling it is a very common emotion. Having no room to buy even a coffee is stressful, and as Eloise says in her quote it also limits your social life. As problematic as it may be, most social events involve some amount of money, usually spent on food or drinks. I feel that more of the interviewees could have talked about this but it is easy to feel like you sound whiny or spoiled when talking about it. Particularly people in the millennial generation are so used to being criticized for those traits that I think people in this age group minimize their problems with money and how those make them feel.

As discussed in the pantry feedback section many people emphasized that the food pantry was a place free from judgment. I believe that this was so emphasized in people's interviews

because it surprised them. We have a strong cultural discomfort with taking help from others, particularly groups that can be connected to the government. Many people find it extremely distressing to have to take help from others without giving anything back. In fact many people who had started as clients and then volunteered explicitly said that they were doing it to give back something in exchange for the help earlier. People in their interviews several times mentioned how embarrassed to they felt to be getting help, how they felt they were going against how their parents raised them, or against their own personally held beliefs. This is additional evidence for a higher class habitus and suggests that they are only experiencing situational poverty.

A few of my interviewees seemed to be in the middle of an identity crisis. One in particular talked at length about how he never thought he would be in the situation, and it was hard to reconcile who he was as a person with getting this kind of assistance. He talked about how a year before, he would have considered someone using a food pantry "horrible or deviant" ('Fabio').

> "If you had asked me a year ago if I would ever use a food pantry… Or the kind of individuals that go to a food pantry. I would have given a vastly different answer than I do now. Now that I'm in that situation. Because I don't consider myself horrible or deviant. Or any of the other stereotypes. ('Fabio')"

He didn't feel that way about himself so he had really had to examine those thoughts and change his way of thinking about aid. He also had the strongest feelings of shame about going to the food pantry.

"Um [I was] embarrassed, humiliated honestly. I've never thought that I would be in that situation before. And I've never been in that situation before. So to be in that situation was quite eye-opening. ('Fabio')"

Our interview was very emotional and several weeks after we talked, when I next saw him at the food pantry he avoided me and wouldn't even make eye contact. This was fairly shocking to me because as far as I knew the interview was friendly but he was so consistently embarrassed to be seen in this place that he couldn't handle being recognized by someone he had talked to. The truly unfortunate thing was that if we were to scale worthiness based on how badly someone needed to use this resource, he would have been at the top. He was by far the most food insecure of anyone I talked to, skipping meals literally just to make sure there was still a box of cereal for his son to eat.

This interviewee really highlights how strong the emotions can be that we attach to food insecurity and receiving aid. While he was by far the most strongly emotional about it, many of the clients made statements suggesting that they could have done something that prevented them from needing this resource. Some said they could have somehow made more money, or used more coupons, or not gone to college at all, and they would no longer be in this situation. While this is probably technically true to an extent, it's very revealing about our cultural sense of personal responsibility. One client eloquently explained what I feel is probably the dominant idea among clients.

"I think students will prefer to provide for themselves if they have the opportunity. It's not like -- people don't want to use the food pantry. It's not fun for them. But the cost is limited and as well if they had enough opportunity to work when they are students, this

issue would take care of itself. Instead of someone providing help, we can provide food security to ourselves" ('Angel').

In contrast to conservative panic about 'Welfare Queens' and the like, when given the opportunity people would rather be self-sufficient.

Aside from personal feelings of guilt people had a lot to say about who is deserving of help at the food pantry. The staff and many of the volunteers were adamant in their idea that anyone who felt they had need was deserving and welcome to use the food pantry. I think this attitude is definitely felt by the clients that use the pantry and contributes to their unanimous feeling that they never felt judgment while at the pantry. Staff also make dignity a priority at the pantry. They feel strongly that people receiving aid should have choice in what they receive, and therefore they make the pantry as close to a grocery store as possible. Looking at it through Goffman's means of resistance, the volunteers at the food pantry often find a lot of wiggle room in the ways the rules are written. For example is not uncommon for a volunteer to let someone take slightly more than their allowed amount in a category, or shuffle around amounts to other categories if the client has some issue.

Complicating the staff's general positivity were a couple of references to people trying to 'scam the system'. Two staff members who had worked at different times both mentioned interacting with people that were clearly lying during check-in about their household size in order to get more servings of food. In one case a group of people that the staff member knew were roommates each said they had six people in their household. This was distressing for the staff and volunteers that noticed this behavior because a handful of people taking enough servings

for that size of household could easily cause the pantry to run out of certain items for the night.

Even though it was clear what was happening, the two staff members who encountered this

behavior both said that they never tried to confront the people because they wanted to

maintain that attitude that anyone was welcome in the pantry. As sure as they were about

what was happening, they were also worried about what would happen if they confronted a

person and it turned out that the person was telling the truth. So we know that some people do

take advantage of the pantry, but it seems to be a tiny minority of the people who use it.

Only one of the volunteers interviewed was openly judgmental about people receiving aid.

While this luckily doesn't appear to be a widespread attitude at the food pantry her judgments

are very much representative of how a lot of people feel and are therefore worth discussing.

This volunteer mentioned that when she started at the food pantry she and her friends had

discussed how they thought clients would be "self-centered and greedy" ('Anne'). She did say

that once they had volunteered for a while they no longer thought that, but the general societal

attitude towards people who need food assistance was clearly feeding into her expectations.

This volunteer also espoused common attitudes towards worthiness such as how homeless

people will buy drugs with any money that they receive, so it's better to give them food

directly. The undercurrent here is that people who need assistance don't deserve the dignity to

choose what they do with their money. Fortunately food pantry staff seem to have cultivated a

positive, dignified environment where this attitude is the minority.

Alternative food sources

While our focus was the food pantry we also tried to determine any other ways college students were getting food. Probably the most common thing people used were family and friend networks, either through gifts or trading. This system is often called the care economy (Gibson-Graham 2006). While it was the most common strategy my sample picked up, it still was only mentioned by three interviewees and seemed less common than you would expect. Interviewees described situations where friends would trade off cooking for each other or going to potlucks where their small contribution would still get them a big meal. Even more common were trades for ingredients, for example if the interviewee had a surplus of squash they would trade with their friend or neighbor for eggs from their backyard chickens. Extended family would often be involved too. One client could always depends on his mother-in-law giving them frozen beef from her ranch when they visited. Another woman talked about how her roommate's family sent her home with leftovers from Sunday dinner that they all got to eat. One interviewee mentioned getting financial support from her mother but otherwise people didn't discuss it and mostly maintained a very self-sufficient attitude.

One hundred years ago someone who was struggling with food insecurity would rely on their family and community to share food or to teach them how to cook. As Goffman posits, now we see young students without that community to teach them skills to survive with a smaller food budget. So students naturally do research. They use the Internet, books, and television shows among other things to expand their knowledge and expertise in order to cope with food

insecurity. The University plays an interesting role in this. Colleges all around the US are starting to acknowledge that many of their students are experiencing food insecurity. They often go for the expertise angle and provide students with classes and workshops to build their skills in coping with poverty. On the OSU campus you can take one night classes in gardening sustainably, making bread, preserving fruit, etc. There are gardening clubs that provide extended experience as well as a network of people to depend on in developing skills. So students can take a class or watch a YouTube tutorial on how to prepare cheap meals or grow their own vegetables. This came up a lot in conversations that I had with people at the food pantry. Students are well aware that they can research these things and they often do in order to alleviate their own food insecurity.

To expand on gardening as a resource, it was mentioned by a few participants. Some said that they would like to garden but time or other factors prohibited them from doing so. Those that did garden, as mentioned liked to swap their surplus for other people's extra produce. So this was a source of fresh produce and variety for people, but a very seasonal one. Everyone who mentioned gardens said it was a source of food only in the summer months. People also mentioned the farmers market occasionally, but it was never a significant place for them to obtain food. The biggest complaint was that it was too expensive for their budget. Although one client was aware of and utilized a special program that gave five dollars of credit to every child that visited the farmers market, so she would go do that with her daughter. Roughly half of the participants had never been to the farmers market in Corvallis, and the other half went occasionally to buy a few things as treats, citing the high cost of things at the market.

College students are also very aware of where to get free food on campus. Two interviewees routinely went to Bible studies or campus church groups for lunches. One graduate student went to his department's once a week catered lunch and often hung around afterwards to take home leftovers. Some of them scoured event posts and showed up to almost anything that was catered on campus. When people talked about this type of behavior they often acted slightly embarrassed but they pretty much all agreed that it was expected and a smart way to get as much as they could out of the University's resources. The neoliberal system makes it almost necessary to scam the system but students still feel guilty about it. The one freshman I interviewed was an extreme example of this free food alertness. She often volunteered as a server at OSU events to get a free meal. She also worked in the dining centers so she was entitled to a discounted meal for each shift she worked. She would even swipe salt, pepper, mustard, and ketchup packets from the dining halls to use when cooking in her dorm.

> "I also scour the OSU page for events that are going to have a free meal or will give you food for volunteering at the event. So if they're serving a meal they need servers and they will also give you dinner. ('Claire')"

This interviewee gave me the best view of how freshmen have to navigate their dining plan. All OSU freshmen are required to have a meal plan and it is fairly expensive, between $700 and $1300 per term. As opposed to the traditional cafeteria meals served at specific times, the new plan has students charged separately at a variety of campus restaurants at any time. It gives the student more freedom of choice and flexibility but it does seem to be more expensive. Since it was this expensive she assumed she would be able to pay for all of her meals through it but she quickly realized she could only do one or two meals a day through her meal plan if she wanted

it to last through the term. On the other hand it also served as a buffer in that when she ran out of money before her next paycheck she could fall back on her meal plan temporarily.

Student eating

People have lots of ideas about how college students eat, whether from personal experience or cultural stereotypes. I asked my interviewees what they thought of when someone mentions college student eating, and whether they thought that was fair or acceptable. Interviewees held a lot of the same stereotypes about student eating. Students are more likely to eat fast food, fried food, and generally unhealthily. A burger and fries versus fresh vegetables for example. Expense was probably the biggest thing people thought of. Ramen noodles were mentioned in four of 10 interviews and they are connected to college students because they are fast and extremely cheap. So these were the more culturally agreed-upon attributes of college eating.

People also talked about how the dining halls influence what students eat. Several mentioned how it takes a conscious effort to get healthy food at the dining halls and those choices are often more expensive. However a few were aware that most likely the dining halls are like this in reaction to what most students actually want. In contrast a few interviewees said that they thought the dining halls did an excellent job providing healthy options, so this may be a difference in perception. OSU is attempting to change this with their "Make Cents" program that provides healthy cheap options in the dining halls. People generally thought this student way of eating was to be expected for a few reasons. Traditionally aged students are often living

on their own for the first time which means they are not used to spending time on cooking, they may not possess cooking and shopping skills yet. Students on their own for the first time can also be reveling in their new independence and therefore eating anything that was limited or restricted at home, like junk food.

I found one common thread in the student eating section that I didn't expect. A few men who were now married had experience in college first as a single person and later as part of a couple. They all had very similar stories of how their eating habits changed. So when we think of college student eating we are picturing a very young single person. They said that when they were young and single in college they did all of the stereotypical things. They ate pizza or fast food for a lot of meals or they scraped together things like Ramen noodles at home. However once they were married they had a much stronger support for eating at home, somewhat because their wives cooked but also just because they could operate as a team and make decisions about cooking together. After they were partnered and some of them had kids, they put a higher priority on budgeting also. So talking to these men gave me a really interesting perspective on how college students' eating behaviors can change depending on the circumstances, specifically with these two key markers of the transition to adulthood.

Ideal food choices

I asked people to talk about the foods that they considered healthy. We see that people generally have a very similar idea what is healthy, based on the basic nutrition we are taught in

school and through the media throughout our lives. Fruits and vegetables were the biggest thing, followed by lean meats, low-fat dairy, whole grains, and eggs. Limiting carbs and sugar was often mentioned. A few people had dietary requirements that affected what foods they could get. Three in my sample were vegetarian for religious or health reasons. One was gluten intolerant, and another had a daughter who had severe food allergies. So they all had specific requirements for what foods would be healthy for them. It appears that the food pantry does a fairly good job accommodating these needs, shifting servings that would normally go to meat into other categories for the vegetarians, or providing some amount of gluten-free items.

Clients had strong views on what foods were pure or whole and that those foods were better than packaged or processed foods. When we talked about the foods the food pantry provided quite a few people were distrustful of canned foods, seeing them as less healthy as their whole counterparts, or filled with preservatives. This view seemed to be more prevalent in people born outside of the US, but I did see it in several Americans as well. People also mentioned how they would rather have fresh over frozen vegetables, but that seems to be more of a feature of taste and texture than nutrition. When they talked about improvements to the pantry one of the most common things was asking the pantry to limit their processed food and increase the amount of whole or unprocessed food.

Six of the 10 interviewees specifically mentioned organic food as ideal. They considered it healthier because of the lack of pesticides and other chemicals and said that if they had the option they would purchase much more organic food but the cost was prohibitive. Most were talking about produce but a few also mentioned that they would like to buy organic meats. It

was always framed as a question of health, no other reason for eating organic foods was

mentioned.

> "Oh I think veggies, organic veggies. That you know exactly that they were not fertilized
> or not so many chemicals in it…But no more canned food, that kind of thing that has
> preservatives or something. ('Paola')"

This is very interesting because it reveals our general societal perception of organic food may

not be grounded in reality. There is not a significant amount of evidence for organic foods being

healthier than conventional foods, although new research is being performed constantly.

People were very excited when they could find organic foods in the food pantry. There were

not a lot of organics there, but what the food pantry staff was able to procure stood out as very

high quality to clients. In addition to organic a few people also mentioned local foods as ideal.

They said it was a priority for them to buy local but again cost was an issue. A few of them were

very appreciative that a lot of the produce that the food pantry receives is local, coming from

on-campus gardening clubs and projects.

While this wasn't frequently talked about, people also mentioned their problems with getting a

variety of food. Poverty frequently forces people to eat a very monotonous diet. A few people

mentioned how they ate a lot of beans and rice or other things that could be very bland

multiple days in a row, particularly at the end of the month when they ran out of food or

money. With that awareness clients loved how much variety the pantry had. They loved that

they could get almost everything to have a fairly interesting diet for a week or two just from

one visit to the food pantry. They also loved when they could get things that could be

considered luxury items or special occasion items at the food pantry. Often for holidays the

food pantry is able to obtain a limited amount of special seasonal items to give out on a one per household basis. These special items were frequently mentioned by clients in my interviews I something that made them very happy and really brightened their week. These were things that are thought of as instrumental to celebrating a holiday, but the fact that they are not essential means that people who are struggling financially will go without them. It really adds to the drudgery of poverty to know that you can't get one of these culturally significant items. So on paper it may look like a waste for the food pantry to use their resources on obtaining things that wouldn't necessarily contribute significantly to clients' nutrition, but emotionally these items are very important.

College as a system

Students are aware of the contradictions in the university system and often mentioned how they felt stuck between multiple bad situations. They felt a college degree was required to succeed but it felt untenable to get one. They broke down things like rent, food, cell phone bills, and textbooks that rarely are factored in to the cost of college but are essentially required. Either people struggled tremendously financially or they took out horrifyingly large loans, and often both happened at once.

Two people talked about how parents in school had limited options for childcare because of the expense. Childcare costs continue to go up, and particularly in Oregon the expense is massive. There are limited options on campus at OSU but they have downsized in past years and they

are still too expensive. An on-campus childcare facility currently sits empty because a deal with

a private company to run it fell through. All of this is a sign of the neoliberal push to put services

in private hands and for people to shoulder the whole burden of childcare.

Two staff interviewed talked at length about the contradiction of college: a necessary part of

the American dream and yet low income students are often left in very precarious positions

because they do not have the family support we traditionally take for granted that college

students have.

> "I think a lot of people don't realize that students may have the chance to come on campus, and
> have their school paid for or have some kind of scholarship but that doesn't leave them a lot of
> opportunities outside of that. I guess it's fortunate that more people are getting to come to
> college and get to have this experience but often they don't have the means to either feed
> themselves or have different things that the human services resource center offers. ('Cathlin')"

American college students are stuck in a difficult scenario and they know it.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

This study had some findings that appeared to be new and more that support other studies in the field of college student food insecurity. Clients of the Oregon State food pantry were overwhelmingly students at the University, something that isn't a big surprise. My interviews further revealed the extra hardships that older students, more likely to be graduate students or supporting a spouse or child, experienced which made them more likely to need the food pantry. International students seemed to utilize the pantry at higher rates as well, often because they have visa-limited work opportunities and available assistance programs. There were also plenty of American students at the pantry, falling in line with Oregon's particularly high food insecurity levels.

So that is who was using the pantry, but how were they using the pantry and other resources? More than half of my interviewees used the pantry as a long term strategy throughout the course of their college experience to alleviate their food insecurity. This is in contrast with how the pantry is set up, as it is supposed to be a temporary emergency stopgap. To drive this point further, many people said that they did not feel food insecure—when they included the pantry as a resource. This complicates our job as social scientists when we are trying to determine who is actually food insecure, as well as when we try to evaluate the necessity of programs like the food pantry. Poverty is the main reason that people are food insecure, but I learned about other things that contribute to food insecurity among college students, notably lack of transportation and the hectic student lifestyle leaving one with a lack of time and energy.

What coping strategies did they use? People did not use other sources of food like gardening and trading in the numbers I expected, but I did find evidence of it. Giddens talks about a greater reliance on self-expertise in the post-modern world, which I found in the people who taught themselves to garden or cook to make cheap food go farther. Even if they weren't growing their own food, they all had opinions on what was best. Natural and organic was prized, while processed and canned was devalued. As Bourdieu explains, our class influences our taste, and students whose habitus may be different from their current lifestyle bump into issues at the food pantry.

I expected to be able to find differences in the coping strategies of people from richer or poorer backgrounds. I did not clearly find that here but Bourdieu's concept of habitus clearly still informed people's actions. Instead of differences in coping strategies, I saw differences in attitude towards lower-class and higher class food at the pantry. Whether someone turned up their nose at generic brand or government commodity packaging told me a lot about their habitus. Along the same lines Butler's performativity gave me a lens to interpret the differences in how people carried themselves at the pantry, and whether they felt the need to prove their poverty like hiding their nice cell phone.

Butler's concept of precarity and Ortner's contradictions in the system both explain how college students feel in the post-modern era. Students are often one mistake or accident away from total financial disaster, and their loans keep piling up. As more and more people enter college, the worth of a degree goes down. People feel that they are signing their souls away for an unsure benefit. As students are so precariously positioned, institutional support like the food

pantry becomes more important (like Giddens predicted). But the mental conflict of spending thousands of dollars in loan money to in turn wait in line at the food pantry is not lost on students. While they mostly still see this time as a temporary hardship to bear in order to receive long term benefit, more and more people become disillusioned with the system. The people who work at the pantry are also frustrated with the system and acknowledge that the food pantry won't solve the issue of hunger for good. And in the short term, students experience feelings of stress, guilt and shame. This study gives a human voice to a topic which is more commonly presented only through survey data. Although the sample was not large, I was able to form a picture of student food insecurity at OSU, and an image of the food pantry here that can prove useful to other researchers.

My study was limited in a few ways. The sample size is very small. Some of that is the nature of ethnographic interviews—huge sample sizes just are not possible. But I would have liked to have many more interviews than I ultimately did. This especially makes additional studies necessary. This study will always be limited by only looking at a single university. I also had a unique sample with many graduate students and not much else. Ideally I would have wanted a more even spread of all the demographics at OSU.

There are a few things missing from the college student food insecurity literature. Additional qualitative interview research can provide different views of multiple contexts, since the few individuals I spoke to can never fully explain the whole. International students have been highlighted in at least one other study, but more in depth research is needed since it is still not clear if they are experiencing food insecurity at a different rate than domestic students. There

are also many other angles to look at international student food insecurity; are there differences in country of origin, class status in their home country, or coping strategies? The concepts of time poverty and personal energy leading to food insecurity are also not well understood, and while they came up briefly in my interviews they deserve a more in depth exploration. I was interested in the difference between students who have upper or lower class habitus but wasn't able to pick it up in my sample adequately. A closer look at how those groups may benefit or be hurt by their social and cultural capital could be very revealing. Freshmen students also have unique cushions and problems with food insecurity, and I would like to see further research focusing on them. Does having access to a dorm kitchen or a meal plan help? Those elements vary from university to university.

In closing I would like to highlight that while hard numbers are vital in proving that the problem of food insecurity on college campuses exists, and allows us to plead our case in front of policy makers, we also need the voices of the food-insecure so that policy makers more fully understand the predicament of low-income college students. We need those numbers to identify and characterize the problem, but we also need those voices to emotionally sway those policy makers. I see that as the truest benefit of my work. Attention from policy makers is important because of what happens when student food insecurity is allowed to persist. When students have too much hardship, they drop out or fail out. This is of interest to universities for the damage it does to their retention rates, and of interest to the government for their goal to have an educated populace.

Universities should take responsibility for their part in this problem as well. Education in the neoliberal era places the burden of cost of what is essentially a necessity on the student. As it stands now, the system is broken and students are in trouble. Tuition costs continue to increase as state investment goes down. OSU is doing an admirable job in alleviating student suffering in the short term, but people at every level understand that this is a temporary solution. Colleges need to address the institutional problems directly or they will soon find the system irreparably damaged.

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APPENDIX

Interview Guide

Thank you for agreeing to meet with me today to be interviewed about the OSUEFP and your experiences with it. Here is a copy of the explanation of research document for our study, which you were given prior to the participant observation phase of our study. If you'd like, you can re-read it to yourself and then we can discuss it or we can go over it again together...What questions about this research can I answer for you?

To recap, I want to reassure you that I will not be using your real name anywhere in my notes or on the audio-recording, should you consent to that. You are also free to skip any question you feel uncomfortable answering.

Now please choose a pseudonym for yourself, something that isn't likely to identify you, but that you'll remember so that if/when you read our results you can find yourself in them.

I'd like to start with some questions to collect basic demographic information. After that, what I'm most interested in hearing are your accounts, stories, and examples, which is why I'll be asking open-ended questions. Please be as detailed as you think is necessary in order to share your thoughts. You might imagine I know nothing about the pantry and how it works.

[If consents to being recorded, begin audio recording.] This is [interviewer] on [date] with [interviewee pseudonym] at Valley Library. [Interviewee pseudonym], do you consent to being audio-recorded? Do you have any questions about this study or the explanation of research document I shared with you?...Let's get started then.

- Demographic information collected will be: student/non-student status; country of origin; family status; age; veteran status; race; sex/gender; how long the participant has been attending/volunteering/working at the Pantry

- What led you to take part in the OSU Food Pantry?

- Why do you think there is an OSU Food Pantry? Possible follow-up – Are there other reasons?

- Can you describe the way the pantry works?

- Can you describe who is at the pantry, and what they do there? Possible follow-up – Are there any others?

- What does the pantry feel like? Why do you think it feels like this?

- What do you like about the Pantry?

- What would you change about the Pantry?

- Do you ever have trouble getting enough food?

- Do you have trouble getting the kinds of food you like to eat? What foods are those?

- What kinds of food do you think are healthy? Do you want to eat these?

    o Do you feel like there are barriers to you eating healthy food? If so, what are they?

- Tell me about a time when you had problems getting food. What did you do?

- How does this kind of experience make you feel? Is this a source of stress in your life?

- What defines college student eating for you?

- Do you think this type of experience is to be expected during college? Why?

- Do you ever get food in ways other than buying it at a grocery store? How?

- Did your family ever have trouble getting enough food, or getting healthy food when you were growing up?

    o Were you on free and reduced lunch at school?

    o Did your family ever use emergency food pantries?

- Is there anything else you want to share?

Would you be interested in participating in a focus group of pantry users sometime this term? As before, your participation or non-participation will not affect your access to the food pantry.

If yes, collect name and preferred contact info