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Terrance Gabel, University of Arkansas - Fort Smith

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A Transformative Look at Food Security and Surrogate Consumption Behavior
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ABSTRACT
The primary objective of this paper is to draw consumer researcher attention toward the issue of food security. We also seek to encourage consumer researchers to view the concept of surrogate consumption more broadly. Toward this dual end, we profile food-insecure persons, a growing segment of disadvantaged consumers in the United States, as a type of surrogate consumer user. By drawing attention toward the issue of food security we hope that consumer researchers might be better equipped to make positive differences in the lives of the growing number of food-insecure consumers in the United States.

INTRODUCTION
According to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), in 2003, nearly 36.3 million persons—12.7 percent of the U.S. population—lived in households that, at some time during the year, “were uncertain of having, or unable to acquire, enough food for all their members because they had insufficient money or other resources” (Nord, Andrews, and Carlson 2004, p. iv). Of these more than 36 million people living in “food-insecure” households, approximately 9.6 million lived in households experiencing hunger by virtue of being food insecure to the extent that one or more household members could not afford enough food at some time during the year (Nord, Andrews, and Carlson 2004). USDA research indicates that the number of persons living in both food-insecure and “food-insecure with hunger” households has risen steadily since 1999 (Nord, Andrews, and Carlson 2004).

These and other data suggest that food insecurity is a large and growing consumption-related social problem in the United States. Understanding consumption issues related to food insecurity has, to date, been a major priority for all but a select few consumer researchers. Given the Transformative Consumer Research theme of the 2005 ACR conference, we feel that this is an opportune time for disciplinary scholars to consider paying greater attention to this important social problem. Accordingly, the primary purpose of this exploratory, conceptual inquiry is to draw consumer researcher attention toward the issue of food security. We pursue this goal via conceptualization of the food insecure as surrogate consumer users—as disadvantaged consumers that (often must) rely on the intervention of others in the consumption process in order to meet (often basic) needs. We begin, below, by examining the concept of food security.

FOOD SECURITY (AND INSECURITY) IN THE UNITED STATES
Understanding food security in the United States is predicated on understanding at least three issues related to the concept: 1) the historical development of definitions of food security (and its relationship to hunger), 2) measurements of food security (and insecurity), and 3) the incidence of food insecurity. Each issue is discussed below.

History of “Food Security”
Hunger has been researched in the social sciences and has been of interest to public policy makers in the United States for many years. The notion of food security, however, is of relatively recent vintage. The origins of current conceptualizations of food security—and the concept’s relationship to hunger—can be traced most directly to 1984 when the President’s Task Force on Food Assis-
tance “…recognized the distinction between the concept of hunger in the traditional medical usage and a more socially oriented, common-sense meaning” (Andrews, Bickel, and Carlson 1998, paragraph 3).

The work of hunger analysts, driven by the findings of the 1984 Presidential Task Force, culminated in the formulation of definitions of food security, food insecurity, and hunger which remain in common use today. These definitions were reported by the Life Sciences Research Office (LSRO) of the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology in 1990. The seminal LSRO definitions are as follows.

Food security—Access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life. Food security includes at a minimum: (1) the ready availability of nutritionally adequate and safe food, and 2) an assured ability to acquire acceptable foods in acceptable ways (e.g., without resorting to emergency food supplies, scavenging, stealing, or other coping strategies).

Food insecurity—Limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe food or limited or uncertain ability to acquire acceptable foods in acceptable ways.

Hunger—The uneasy or painful sensation caused by a lack of food. The recurrent and involuntary lack of access to food. Hunger may produce malnutrition over time…Hunger…is a potential, although not necessary, consequence of food insecurity (Nord and Brent 2002, p. 20).

Using the LSRO definitions, households and, to a less precise extent, household occupants1 can be categorized into one of three segments based on degree of food-related deprivation: food secure, food insecure without hunger, and food insecure with hunger.

The LSRO’s definition of food insecurity warrants brief elaboration. There are two main types of food insecurity contained in this definition (Hamilton et al. 1997). The first—hereafter referred to as food insecurity “type A”—concerns the household’s inability to acquire a sufficient amount of food to meet basic needs. The second form of food insecurity included in the definition—“type B”—occurs as a result of having “to resort to socially unacceptable ways of obtaining food” (Hamilton et al. 1997, p. 62). A household can also be classified as food insecure for both reasons simultaneously. Food insecurity type A is generally considered the more severe form of insecurity due to a greater probability of it leading to a state of hunger (Hamilton et al. 1997).

Food Security Measurement
Arguably the most significant use of the 1990 LSRO definitions has been by the USDA. In 1994, the USDA, working jointly

1USDA measurements of food security are done at the household level. If any member of the household has experienced food insecurity in the time period of interest, then the household is classified as food insecure. It is thus: a) possible for a food-secure person to be living in a food-insecure household, and b) not appropriate to assume that all members of food-insecure households are themselves food insecure. For further discussion on this issue see: Nord, Andrews, and Carlson 2004; Nord and Brent 2002.
with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, hosted an.
overview of the conference was the formulation of food security
is measured by asking respondents a series of 18 questions—10
questions addressing food conditions at the household level and
among adults in the household and, if the household contains
children, eight additional questions examining their food condi-
See the Appendix for a complete listing of questions included in
the USDA’s food security measure.
Since its development in 1994, the USDA’s 18-item scale has
been used by governmental agencies, the media, and advocacy
groups to: 1) report on the extent of food insecurity and hunger in
the United States, 2) monitor progress toward national food-
security and hunger goals, and 3) evaluate the impact of particular
hunger and food-security policies and programs (Wilde 1994). The
USDA’s food security measures have, however, been criticized
(e.g., on grounds that the statistical model used is inappropriate and
that measures are “crude” [Wilde 1994, p. 6]). The USDA has
admitted inadequacy with regard to the ability of its scale to
measure “type B” food insecurity—the form present when a house-
hold finds it necessary to resort to socially unacceptable means of
acquiring food. In 1997, the USDA tested the possibility of adding a
“resource augmentation index” to the scale to remedy this defi-
cency but chose not to do so (see Hamilton et al. 1997). This
decision was based on the USDA’s conclusion that adding these
items does not significantly improve the overall measurement
capabilities of the scale. According to USDA analysts:
A resource augmentation index… and estimates of “type B”
food insecurity derived form the index, provide a potential
means of broadening the basic categorical measure of food
insecurity prevalence to include the dimension of food insecurity
involving reliance on non-normal, “emergency,” or “so-
cially unacceptable” forms of food acquisition. The practical
effect of broadening the reach of the categorical food security
measure in this way, however, turns out to be slight. This is
because a very large proportion of the households that would
be classified as food insecure on the basis of the resource
augmentation index are already classified as food insecure by
the underlying measurement scale and the classification crite-
ieria for the food security status indicator (Hamilton et al. 1997,
p. 66).
These same USDA analysts do, however, note that “resource
augmentation or coping behaviors… constitute an important area
for future research” (Hamilton et al. 1997, p. 68). Since 1997,
several teams of researchers have attempted, with at best moderate
success, to, among other things, better measure the social aspect
of food insecurity inherent in its “type B” form (see Kennedy 2003).
Official USDA measurements of food insecurity remain focused on
“type A” insecurity (capturing mainly the “sufficiency” or “eco-
nomic access to enough food” dimension of the concept).
Overall, there is generally strong consensus that the USDA
measures of food security have been, at the very least, a large step
in the right direction with regard to understanding U.S. food
security. Arguably the most significant achievement of the mea-
sures has been their ability to help inform the national debate over
the incidence and nature of hunger in the United States. Prior to
1995, for example, hunger was typically viewed as a monomor-
phic—“yes” or “no”—malady experienced by as many as 30
million U.S. residents per year (Wilde 2004). Today, thanks in large
part to the USDA’s food-security measures: 1) hunger is seen as
existing on a continuum—with various degrees of relevant depriva-
tion, and 2) assessments of the incidence of hunger in the U.S. are
generally more accurate (and considerably lower than previously
thought) (Wilde 2004).
Incidence of Food Insecurity in the United States
As previously alluded to, the number of food-insecure house-
holds in the United States is large and growing. Table 1 contains
selected USDA data documenting the incidence of food insecurity
between 1999 and 2003.
Most notable in Table 1 is the steady upward trend in the
number (and proportion) of “food-insecure” and “food-insecure-
with-hunger” households (and persons living in these households).
Another way to comprehend the magnitude of this growing prob-
lem, given that being food insecure entails having “….an assured
ability to acquire acceptable foods in acceptable ways (e.g., without
resorting to emergency food supplies, scavenging, stealing, or other
coping strategies)” (Nord and Brent 2002, p. 20), is to track recent
increases in demand for the services of privately run emergency
food relief (EFR) organizations (i.e., food banks, food pantries, and
soup kitchens). It is now estimated, for example, that tens of
thousands of EFR organizations in the United States provide
assistance to “nearly a tenth of the population during some point in
a given year” (Martin, Cook, Rogers, and Joseph 2003, paragraph
3). America’s Second Harvest (A2H), a rapidly growing network of
more than 200 food banks and food-rescue organizations2 serving
every county in the U.S., provided EFR services to 23.3 million
persons in 2001—a nine percent increase over 1997 (America’s
Second Harvest 2004a). Demand for A2H’s services has risen
fastest in the nation’s largest cities. In New York, for example,
demand at soup kitchens and food pantries was up 45 percent
between 2000 and 2002 (America’s Second Harvest 2004a). In
Boston, the Greater Boston Food Bank recently saw demand for
emergency food rise from the normal level of 350,000 pounds a
week to between 500,000-600,000 pounds (America’s Second
Harvest 2004a). The operator of a state-level food bank system
sivs the situation up as follows.
Food is flying off the shelves and not keeping up with de-
mand… Once again, we had an increase in the number of
working poor, folks who kind of fall through the cracks. They
don’t qualify for public programs… Rents are not going down,
utility costs are going up, gas prices are going up, and people
are having to stretch a dollar farther (Graves 2004, paragraph
2).
EFR organizations, which have existed in the United States for
more than 200 years, were, until very recently, predominantly
temporary in nature. Today, however, driven by the escalating
number of food-insecure persons (coupled with what many analysts
view as inadequate governmental assistance programs for the food

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2Food banks “serve people in need by securing and storing surplus
food and distributing it through their own network of local service
agencies” (America’s Second Harvest 2004c, paragraph 3). Food-
rescue organizations “often operate within a shorter time-frame,
picking up and delivering perishable foods on a single run” (Am-
rica’s Second Harvest 2004c, paragraph 3). Some A2H
affiliates combine the two types of operations.
insecure [see: America’s Second Harvest 2004d; Biggerstaff, et al. 2002; Martin, et al. 20033), these organizations appear to have become permanent fixtures on the U.S. social landscape (Biggerstaff et al. 2002).

THE FOOD-INSECURE CONSUMER

Although it is difficult to calculate the exact number of food-insecure consumers in the United States, there appears to be strong consensus among EFR service providers and food-security analysts as to who the food-insecure consumer is. Biggerstaff, Morris, and Nichols-Casebolt (2002), for example, in a study of approximately 1,500 food pantry and soup kitchen users, find that: 1) 24.9 percent of respondents were employed, 2) 25.7 percent stated that the main reason for EFR use was that they are “working poor and cannot make ends meet,” 3) 15 percent of informants were homeless at some time during the previous six months, 4) 16 percent had lost Food Stamp Program (FSP) benefits in the previous six months, 5) 13 percent had recently lost Medicaid or other health insurance benefits, 6) more than 67 percent of respondents had completed high school or above, and 7) primary risk factors for food insecurity include recent job loss, low earnings (even if employed), and recent retirement. Graves (2004), reporting on a state-level survey of 3,761 households seeking EFR assistance, finds that: 1) 39 percent of households include at least one employed adult, 2) 6.7 percent of households are dual-income households, 3) 1.1 percent of client households contain three working adults, 4) 19.7 percent of clients who have worked or are currently working have or had managerial or professional jobs, 5) 64 percent of households have incomes at or below the poverty level, 6) 45 percent of clients had to choose between paying for food and paying for utilities or heating oil, 7) 36 percent had to choose between paying for food and paying their rent or mortgage bill, 8) 30 percent had to choose between paying for food and paying for medicine or medical care, 9) 30 percent of clients are receiving (federal) food stamps, and 10) 10 percent are homeless.

At least two notable segments of food-insecure consumers emerge from these (and other similar) studies: 1) the working poor, and 2) the newly poor. Each type of food-insecure consumer is discussed below.

The Working Poor

“because their food stamps ran out,” 4) 45 percent of households included adults without health insurance, 5) many EFR clients have high levels of debt, and 6) 10 percent are homeless. Finally, America’s Second Harvest (2001), in a study of more than 32,000 clients, finds that: 1) 39 percent of households include at least one employed adult, 2) 6.7 percent of households are dual-income households, 3) 1.1 percent of client households contain three working adults, 4) 19.7 percent of clients who have worked or are currently working have or had managerial or professional jobs, 5) 64 percent of households have incomes at or below the poverty level, 6) 45 percent of clients had to choose between paying for food and paying for utilities or heating oil, 7) 36 percent had to choose between paying for food and paying their rent or mortgage bill, 8) 30 percent had to choose between paying for food and paying for medicine or medical care, 9) 30 percent of clients are receiving (federal) food stamps, and 10) 10 percent are homeless.

At least two notable segments of food-insecure consumers emerge from these (and other similar) studies: 1) the working poor, and 2) the newly poor. Each type of food-insecure consumer is discussed below.

3While many EFR clients utilize these services due to being ineligible for or having recently lost governmental benefits just as many appear to be driven to seek private EFR assistance by the complexity of governmental assistance programs, being poorly informed about these programs, and/or the stigma associated with utilization of governmental benefits (see: Biggerstaff, et al. 2002; Martin et al. 2003).

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Without Hunger</th>
<th>With Hunger</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td># (1000s)</td>
<td>% (of all U.S.)</td>
<td>#</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>#</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Households</td>
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<td>1999</td>
<td>10,529</td>
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<td>2000</td>
<td>11,101</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>7,786</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>11,521</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>8,010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>12,058</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>8,259</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>12,583</td>
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<tr>
<td>Household Members</td>
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<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>31,015</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>23,237</td>
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<td>2000</td>
<td>33,231</td>
<td>12.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>33,642</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>24,648</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>34,902</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>25,517</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>36,255</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>26,622</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Nord, Andrews, and Carlson (2004 [Table 1, p. 6]).
In the last decade, hunger-relief agencies have found that the greatest increase in hungry Americans has been among the working poor. Despite the strong economy and their own hard work, they cannot always make ends meet (2004b, paragraph 1).

As many poor families continue to make the difficult transition from welfare to work, as their benefits are cut or reduced, they are finding that their meager wages are not sufficient to meet their basic needs... Too often, a family finds that it must cut their food budget or turn to a local charity for aid (2004d, paragraph 2).

The Newly Poor: Food Insecurity Among the White-Collar Unemployed

As alluded to above, Biggerstaff et al. (2002) find that recent job loss is one of the primary risk factors associated with seeking EFR assistance. As suggested by America’s Second Harvest’s (2001) finding that nearly 20 percent of their clients who have worked before or are currently working had or have managerial or professional jobs, a considerable portion of food-insecure persons seeking EFR assistance may be motivated to do so as a result of losing well-paying jobs (and facing resultant financial hardship).

Other research supports this contention. USDA researchers Nord and Brent, for example, note that: “During the 3-year period from 1995 to 1997... middle- and high-income households accounted for 20 percent of all food-insecure households and 17 percent of all households with hunger” (2002, p. ii). According to Nord and Brent: “This apparent anomaly raises questions about the measurement process” (2002, p. ii). The researchers then set out to determine whether these middle- and high-income households truly are food-insecure or if their identification as food-insecure is the result of measurement error. Nord and Brent (2002) find that measurement error is not a significant factor and that “food security as measured is the same phenomenon” (p. ii) as experienced by low-income households. They conclude that “determinants of, and responses to, food insecurity are similar across the income range” (p.iii).

Berner and Zellner (2003) also support the notion that once financially secure persons facing recent hardship constitute a significant and growing proportion of the food-insecure. Berner and Zellner tell the story of Michael Smith, a senior project manager at Nortel Networks, Ltd. in Richardson, Texas. Mr. Smith often found himself locked into high-dollars lifestyles during the boom and are now strapped with hefty mortgages, college tuition, car payments, and credit-card debt” (paragraph 4). Finally, Berner and Zellner speculate that the newly poor may become an even more important customer segment for EFR service providers. According to Berner and Zellner (2003): “Often, the wealthy have fewer coping skills than the poor, who may better understand how to take advantage of the resources available to those down on their luck” (paragraph 6). As increasing numbers of the white-collar unemployed learn how to cope with their newfound food-insecurity—and seeking EFR assistance begins to lose its negative connotations, as Berner and Zellner suggest it might—we may see more and more newly poor persons frequenting food pantries and other EFR service organizations.

Food Insecurity and Surrogate Consumption

Surrogate consumption exists as an area of consumer research offering a wealth of opportunities to disciplinary scholars interested in advancing knowledge with regard to food security and, most particularly, the consumption behavior of food-insecure persons. Below, we first briefly review seminal surrogate consumption literature and then conceptualize the food- insecure as surrogate consumer users.

SURROGATE CONSUMPTION: THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Solomon (1986) defines a surrogate consumer as “an agent retained by a consumer to guide, direct, and/or transact market activities” (p. 208). The two main theoretical treatments of surrogate consumption—Hollander (1971) and Solomon (1986)—both focus on exchange-based surrogate consumption activities involving professional surrogate consumers (e.g., wardrobe consultants and interior decorators) and the relatively wealthy persons choosing to employ them. Hollander (1971) focuses on describing various functional motivations for surrogate usage (e.g., lacking product knowledge and limited access to goods). Solomon (1986), while also addressing functional motivations, expands upon Hollander’s perspective by: 1) discussing psychic and expressive motivations driving the employment of surrogates (e.g., the desire to make the most socially advantageous purchase possible or to move up in the social hierarchy), and 2) suggesting that surrogate consumption activity is most likely to occur when consumers are in role transition.

Overall, what emerges from a preponderance of the surrogate consumption literature in marketing and consumer research is: 1) the notion that surrogate users tend to be relatively wealthy and relatively young, and 2) that role transition and/or a desire to move up in the social hierarchy are situational factors that significantly increase the likelihood of surrogate consumer utilization. Another important—albeit seldom explicitly discussed—issue involves the notion that surrogate usage is a matter of choice and that it involves an economic exchange. Specifically, for either aesthetic and/or functional reasons, surrogate consumer users choose to formally assign the right to perform acquisition and other consumption activities to an expert, professional agent.

The practicality of our disciplinary focus on the relatively privileged persons most likely to choose to employ the services of a surrogate consumer is not questioned from a strategic/practitioner perspective. However, a problem that potentially arises from a theoretical perspective is whether or not these privileged consumers are the only surrogate users worthy of researcher attention. Related problems concern: 1) whether or not surrogate users necessarily choose to formally employ the surrogate consumer, and 2) whether or not an economic exchange necessarily takes place between the surrogate consumer and the person benefiting from their involvement in the consumption process.
It is our opinion that there exists a sizable segment of consumers, including but not limited to food-insecure persons (see Gabel 2005), who: 1) frequently need and use surrogates, 2) do not and/or cannot formally employ the surrogates that perform services for them, 3) often have little if any choice but to rely on surrogate intervention for fulfillment of consumption needs, and 4) go unaccounted for in existing surrogate consumption theory. Below, we view the food-insecure as surrogate consumer users worthy of consumer researcher attention.

**The Food-Insecure as Surrogate Consumer Users**

Food-insecure persons often lack the financial resources to function within the “normal” exchange-based marketplace in which surrogate consumption studies are typically conducted. The food insecure are, however, highly likely to utilize the services of surrogate consumers (e.g., persons employed by EFR organizations) based on strong functional need. Although the food insecure typically do not compensate or formally employ the persons or organizations providing EFR services, these service providers do function as surrogates in that they perform consumption activities (e.g., food acquisition and preparation) on behalf of the food insecure.

The newly poor food-insecure warrant special consideration as surrogate consumers. This is due to the fact that these persons, who may account for as many as 20 percent of food-insecure consumers in the U.S. (America’s Second Harvest 2001; Nord and Brent 2002), differ from their working-poor counterparts in at least two important ways central to the concept of surrogate consumption. First, the newly poor are in role transition—they, often due to recent job loss, unemployment, and/or underemployment are learning their new role as lesser-affluent consumers. This transitional condition, according to Solomon (1986), is likely to motivate the persons experiencing it to seek the help of others—EFR surrogate consumers—in an effort to adjust to their new living conditions. Second, the newly poor may be far more likely than their working poor counterparts to exhibit “type B” food insecurity—food insecurity resulting from resorting to socially unacceptable means of food acquisition. Thus, the social implications of surrogate consumption here differ significantly from those generally discussed. Whereas the privileged surrogate users discussed by Solomon (1986) often employ surrogates in an effort to either make the most socially advantageous purchase or to move up in the social hierarchy, newly poor food-insecure surrogate users may experience negative social consequences (e.g., stigmatization) as a result of surrogate use. Accordingly, the newly poor may be hesitant to use EFR services or may not use them to the extent that they perhaps should. It is possible, however, that this may change over time as the newly poor learn to cope with their new roles and “do what they have to do” to make ends meet.

**DISCUSSION**

Food insecurity is a large and growing social problem in the United States. With but few notable exceptions (e.g., Hill’s [Hill 1991; 1992; Hill and Stamey 1990] work on the food acquisition behaviors of the homeless), consumer researchers have had little to say about food security. We feel that consumer researchers are well qualified to both advance knowledge on food security and to make positive differences in the lives of the food insecure. Further, we believe that viewing the food insecure as surrogate consumer users is a potentially fruitful perspective for scholars interested in food security.

One area where consumer researchers, particularly those experienced in ethnography, have much to offer involves better measuring and understanding “type-B” food insecurity—the dimension of food insecurity most in need of additional study (Hamilton et al. 1997). For example, in the context of surrogate consumption activity engaged in by the newly poor, disciplinary scholars are well equipped to investigate the under-researched issue of what does and what does not constitute a socially unacceptable means of food acquisition (at the level of the lived human experience of the food-insecure surrogate user). In extant research on “type B” food insecurity, researchers have used questions that they assume serve as indicators of socially unacceptable means of food acquisition only to then cite as a limitation to their findings their (post-hoc) observation that the questions used “could be interpreted by some respondents as not indicating behaviors that are socially unacceptable” (Hamilton et al., 1997, p. 65). Social unacceptable is, in short, a highly subjective matter: 1) that at times has not been viewed as being highly subjective in attempts to measure “type B” food insecurity, and 2) that consumer researchers are in an excellent position to better conceptualize.

Additional examination of the interface between the food-insecure surrogate user and the surrogate service provider also provides consumer researchers with an opportunity to advance knowledge of food security in heretofore non-considered ways. Better profiling the food-insecure surrogate user, perhaps in an attempt to better segment the food-insecure surrogate user market or to understand the consumption-related expectations of food-insecure surrogate users, is one possible avenue for research. Another goal for consumer researchers to pursue might be better understanding what motivates food-insecure persons to seek (or not seek) interactions with EFR surrogate service providers. Whatever the specific objective, we hope that this exploratory inquiry will encourage consumer researchers to at least consider better understanding food security and, perhaps, try to make positive differences in the lives of the growing number of food-insecure consumers in the United States.

**REFERENCES**


APPENDIX
Questions Used to Measure Household Food Security in the Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement\(^1\)

1. We worried whether our food would run out before we got money to buy more.
   Was that often, sometimes, or never true for you in the last 12 months?

2. The food that we bought just didn’t last and we didn’t have money to get more.
   Was that often, sometimes, or never true for you in the last 12 months?

3. We couldn’t afford to eat balanced meals.
   Was that often, sometimes, or never true for you in the last 12 months?

4. In the last 12 months, did you or other adults in the household ever cut the size of your meals or skip meals because there wasn’t enough money for food? (Yes/No)

5. (If Yes to Question 4) How often did this happen—almost every month, some months but not every month, or in only 1 or 2 months?

6. In the last 12 months, did you ever eat less than you felt you should because there wasn’t enough money for food? (Yes/No)

7. In the last 12 months, were you ever hungry, but didn’t eat, because you couldn’t afford enough food (Yes/No)

8. In the last 12 months, did you lose weight because you didn’t have enough money for food? (Yes/No)

9. In the last 12 months, did you or other adults in your household ever not eat for a whole day because there wasn’t enough money for food? (Yes/No)

10. (If Yes to Question 9) How often did this happen—almost every month, some months but not every month, or in only 1 or 2 months?

(Questions 11-18 are asked only if the household includes children under 18 years of age.)

11. We relied on only a few kinds of low-cost food to feed our children because we were running out of money to buy food.
   Was that often, sometimes, or never true for you in the last 12 months?

12. We couldn’t feed our children a balanced meal because we couldn’t afford that.
   Was that often, sometimes, or never true for you in the last 12 months?

13. The children were not eating enough because we just couldn’t afford enough food.

14. In the last 12 months, did you ever cut the size of any of the children’s meals because there wasn’t enough money for food? (Yes/No)

15. In the last 12 months, were the children ever hungry but you just couldn’t afford more food? (Yes/No)

16. In the last 12 months, did any of the children ever skip a meal because there wasn’t enough money for food? (Yes/No)

17. (If Yes to Question 16) How often did this happen—almost every month, some months but not every month, or in only 1 or 2 months?

18. In the last 12 months, did any of the children ever not eat for a whole day because there wasn’t enough money for food? (Yes/No)

\(^1\)Sources: Nord, Andrews, and Carlson 2004; Wilde 2004. Not all questions are weighted equally. Items are listed in increasing order of severity (Wilde 2004).