

UNDERSTANDING RESERVATION HUNGER: FOOD ACQUISITION AND FOOD SECURITY AMONG THE NORTHERN CHEYENNE

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ABSTRACT

The Northern Cheyenne represent a group that experiences poverty and hunger at an exceptionally high level. As an extreme case study, this project adds conceptually and methodologically to food provisioning literature by examining not only the sources of food reportedly used by households, but also the combinations of sources used as strategies in food provisioning. This is done through the application of a cluster analysis to show the patterns in which households actually use food sources together on the reservation. In addition, the relationships between household use of food sources and strategies and food security levels are examined. Thus, this project attempts to start a conversation not only about the types of choices that households must make, but how this is happening and what it looks like for limited resource households.

Using the livelihoods perspective, we see that households use the food sources that reflect their capitals and capabilities. As expected, clustering the food sources shows greater clarity for these food provisioning patterns on the reservation, and show that sources are grouped into understandable combinations. Overall, households that have access to more reliable and valuable resources (such as wages or fixed income transfers) are more likely to reach food security. Conversely, households that use more risky food sources (such as pawning or churches) are more likely to have food insecurity.