

**An Analysis of the Use of the On-Campus Food Bank by International Graduate Students
at the University of Guelph**

By

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ABSTRACT

AN ANALYSIS OF THE USE OF THE ON-CAMPUS FOOD BANK BY INTERNATIONAL GRADUATE STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH

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In this thesis I discuss the experiences of international graduate students at the University of Guelph, who have used or are current users of the CSA on-campus food bank. This exploration illuminates the barriers that international graduate students face when coming to the University of Guelph to gain an education. In this thesis, I demonstrate factors that help shape the use of the food bank by international graduate students. I use the term “food citizenship” to explain the levels of intersectionality that international students have, and how food impacts the way that they fit into their communities. Drawing on my data, I demonstrate that food insecurity negatively impacts the wellbeing of international graduate students. I argue that, while international students are being supported by the food bank, they are still food insecure given the FAO (2012) definition of food insecurity. Consequently, I argue that the on-campus food bank is an essential resource that should be supported by the University of Guelph’s administration, but that there may be better supports that target housing, employment and student wellbeing, which can be implemented to assist international graduate students with their transition.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|-----|
| ABSTRACT | ii |
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS | iii |
| Chapter 1: Introduction | 1 |
| Background and Goals: | 1 |
| Chapter 2: Literature Review | 6 |
| Anthropology of Food: | 7 |
| Food Security/Insecurity: | 14 |
| International Students, Diversity Practices, and Agency: | 18 |
| Food Insecurity and Food Banks in a Campus Setting: | 22 |
| International Students at the University of Guelph: | 24 |
| Conclusion: | 25 |
| Chapter 3: Methodology and Research Context | 27 |
| Location of Research: | 27 |
| Project Motivations: | 28 |
| Methodology: | 29 |
| Online survey: | 30 |
| Interviews: | 36 |
| Focus groups: | 41 |
| Positionality: | 42 |
| Analysis techniques: | 43 |
| Methods of Dissemination: | 44 |
| Chapter 4: The challenges associated with transitioning to Canada and the direct impacts that the on-campus food bank has on food security of international students | 45 |
| Challenges Associated with Housing: | 47 |
| Work and work abuses: | 54 |
| The food bank is a necessity for campus: | 63 |
| Situational Food Insecurity, and ‘Food’ Versus ‘Nutrition’: | 73 |
| Chapter 5: The On-campus food bank and its impacts on international student agency | 83 |
| The Food Bank is Safe and Welcoming: | 86 |
| Changes to the Food Bank Over Time: | 95 |
| Preferred Foods, Agency and Inclusion: | 98 |
| International students are comfortable confiding with other international students: | 106 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| Chapter 6: Conclusion and Recommendations | 113 |
| Policy Implications: | 115 |
| 1. Housing issues: | 115 |
| 2. Employment issues: | 115 |
| 3. Wellbeing issues: | 115 |
| 4. Food insecurity issues:..... | 116 |
| Limitations: | 116 |
| Concluding Thoughts:..... | 117 |
| References Cited: | 118 |
| APPENDIX A: Recruitment Email for Survey | 127 |
| APPENDIX B: Recruitment Email for Interviews | 128 |
| APPENDIX C: Recruitment Email for Focus Group | 129 |
| APPENDIX D: eSurvey Questions..... | 130 |
| APPENDIX E: Interview Questions..... | 138 |
| APPENDIX F: Focus Group Guide/Questions..... | 141 |
| APPENDIX G: Participant Demographics | 142 |
| APPENDIX H: Expenses Per Semester..... | 143 |
| APPENDIX I: Where did you hear about the CSA on-campus food bank?..... | 144 |
| APPENDIX J: International Students Countries of Origin..... | 145 |
| APPENDIX K: The number of family members who joined participant during migration | 146 |
| APPENDIX L: Which department are your studies associated with? | 147 |
| APPENDIX M: Policy Recommendations | 148 |

Chapter 1: Introduction

In this thesis, I explore the experiences of international graduate students who are enrolled at the University of Guelph, and have used, or continue to use, the on-campus food bank. In doing so, I problematize the lack of attention that university administrators have regarding food insecurity among international graduate students, which raises questions about food citizenship, agency and belonging. By developing understandings of food bank usage, I argue that the international graduate students that I worked with experienced food insecurity at a higher rate than other students. I demonstrate that their experiences with food insecurity negatively impact their wellbeing. Additionally, I argue that while the on-campus food bank is an essential resource which should be supported by the University of Guelph's administration, there are other ways the administration can better support international graduate students.

Throughout this thesis I use the term "food citizenship" as a way to consider international students' experiences of intersectionality, and how food impacts the ways that they fit into their communities. I use food citizenship to connect to agency, explaining that when given the ability to make choices about what foods they are consuming, international students are able to participate as citizens more. Thus, while the food bank is essential for many of my participants, reliance on it nevertheless signals limitations on international graduate student agency. I argue that even when supported through the food bank, international graduate students may still be food insecure. This is in reference to the FAO (2012) definition of food insecurity, which states that security is based on whether people can access food they prefer, to meet their dietary needs in socially acceptable ways.

Background and Goals:

Most post-secondary students will face challenges such as financial difficulties, or have issues maintaining a job (Hanbazaza et al. 2016). However, international graduate students at many institutions may be challenged to a higher degree due to international tuition costs and their lack of community and access to familiar resources. Therefore, the aim of this research project is to assess whether there is a relationship between the use of the University of Guelph's Central Student Association's (CSA) on-campus food bank by international graduate students and their financial situations. Agency, which is the ability to act, and the citizenship rights of international graduate student food bank users will also be discussed (Ahearn 2001).

Additionally, I aim to understand how food bank usage impacts personal wellbeing. International students are particularly vulnerable to being food insecure and this is one of the main challenges that they must overcome (Burley 2016; Hanbazaza et al. 2017). Food security is defined as “a situation that exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life” (FAO 2012). As food expenditures are more flexible than tuition, rent and utilities they can be easily compromised (Hanbazaza et al. 2016; Farahbakhsh et al. 2015). This can result in vulnerable students opting to use emergency food services, such as the CSA's on-campus Food Bank (Stewin 2013; Hughes et al. 2011).

International graduate students make up approximately 19% of all graduate students at the University of Guelph (University of Guelph 2017), and communication with the CSA food bank indicated that 53% of registered food bank users as of January 2018 were international graduate students. However, previous work on the use of on-campus food banks by international students is very limited. A former University of Guelph student, Erika Stewin (2013), conducted her Masters research for her degree in Public Issues Anthropology on food security among

international students at the University of Guelph and the University of Windsor, which included the use of the on-campus food bank, as will be discussed in my literature review. However, there have been no follow up or additional studies since then, even though, as indicated above, there are higher numbers of registered international students using the food bank than any other on-campus group. The purpose of this research project is to explore why international graduate students at the University of Guelph are using this emergency food source more than any other demographic of students. My research question is: *What key factors shape international graduate students' disproportionate use of the on-campus food bank at the University of Guelph?*

Attaining a post-secondary school degree has become more imperative now than it was in the past twenty years (Burley 2016). This is because higher education is socially understood as a tool for gaining economic stability, as university graduates are shown to earn 25-50% more income than their fellow high school graduates (Patton-Lopez et al. 2014; Silverthorn 2016). However, Canadian provincial governments' collective post-secondary funding is estimated to be 2.4 billion dollars less than what it was in the early 1990s (Burley 2016). Decreases in funding have resulted in increased tuition fees, with several provinces opting to increase tuition fees as a means to make up for these additional monies needed for operative costs (Burley 2016). Tuition increases made to address funding shortfalls can be maximized by increasing enrollment of international students, as international fees are often two or more times the amount that domestic students pay (Farahbakhsh et al. 2017).¹ Therefore, there is plenty of additional revenue to gain from international students. For example, in the fall semester of 2017, full time Canadian graduate students pursuing a Master of Arts, Master of Applied Science or a Master of Science at the University of Guelph, paid \$3328.36 in tuition and ancillary fees, whereas full time

¹ Provincial mandates may place limits on increases to domestic tuition fees for most degrees, but this is not the case for international student tuition.

international graduate students in the same programs paid \$6979.54 (University of Guelph 2017). These fees do not include additional charges for a meal plan, residence or parking (University of Guelph 2017). Due to these financial charges, both domestic and international students can face challenges as they attempt to navigate their lives (Burley 2016). The number of domestic students per university, and the resulting income associated with their schooling is controlled by the government, so increasing international student numbers and tuition is one of the few ways that universities have to increase revenue. A significant difficulty that international students face is related to finances and the exorbitant prices of international tuition. Fees are also extremely high for English as a second language students who are entering the Integrated Admissions Pathway, which is a program run through the University of Guelph, which allows students to be guaranteed admission into several undergraduate programs while they are also taking English language courses (University of Guelph 2016). Although financial problems are just one of many challenges that international students face, they are the most significant as they directly impact the wellbeing of international students and their ability to enjoy their lives while at the University of Guelph.

A secondary goal of my research is to make suggestions to the University of Guelph, through a policy brief, which will outline the problem, and suggest plausible solutions. A better understanding of this issue this will benefit international graduate student communities in Guelph and at other universities, and will have implications for university policy and practice. By carrying out this research, I will be able to make university administrators aware of the issue so that they can implement new support services (Andrade 2006). Additionally, this research can help fill the scholarly gap which I found on this topic, as will be discussed in my literature

review. Further, the suggested solutions can be applied to other institutions which may have identified a similar problem.

Thesis outline:

In Chapter 2 of this thesis, I situate my research within the larger context of literature on the anthropology of food. I also review the literature on food insecurity, further defining the term, and how it will be used further on in this thesis. I further explore international students and diversity practices, and how the literature discusses the citizenship of international students in reference to agency.

In Chapter 3, I discuss the need for the research in my specific context, and provide a description of the field site. I discuss my positionality and how it could have been seen as a barrier to my work. Subsequently I discuss the research methods that I used, and explain why I chose to do a multi-pronged and mixed method study.

Chapter 4 begins my analysis of the data that I collected. I discuss the challenges that international graduate students face when they transition to Canada, specifically in regard to housing, and employment. Additionally, I discuss how the use of the food bank has direct impacts to international student wellbeing, and subsequent food insecurity. This is understood by noting that for many students the food bank is seen as a necessity for survival and not a luxury.

In Chapter 5, I take a close look at the impacts that using the on-campus food bank has on agency of international students. I discuss that knowledge and use of the food bank is often transferred between students who use the food bank themselves, and that there is generally a safe community that can be found at the food bank. Moreover, I discuss how international students often feel that they are unworthy to use the food bank, and that there are others who may be more in need.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The Canadian provincial governments' public post-secondary funding is estimated to be 2.4 billion dollars less than what it was in the early 1990s (Burley 2016). This has led to several provinces opting to increase their tuition fees (Burley 2016; Frenette 2008). In a study comparing the fees of university programs in Ontario, Québec and British Columbia, universities in Ontario were seen to increase their tuition fees the most (Frenette, 2008). This has resulted with tuition accounting for an average of 37% of a university's operative costs (Burley 2016). Despite the increases in funding, studies have shown that university enrollment patterns have not changed significantly (Frenette 2008). Universities have opted to increase the enrollment of international students as one way to gain additional revenue through international fees, which are often two times the amount domestic students pay (Farahbakhsh et al. 2017). As mentioned in the introduction chapter, the tuition rates for the fall semester of 2017, full time Canadian graduate students pursuing a Master of Arts, Master of Applied Science or a Master of Science at the University of Guelph, paid \$3328.36, whereas full time international graduate students in the same programs paid \$6979.54 (University of Guelph 2017). For fall 2019, the rates for these programs have changed, with domestic student tuition lowering slightly to \$3184.01, and international student tuition increasing to \$8280.02 (University of Guelph 2019). This can have implications for other expenses, including food security for international students. Food security is defined as "a situation that exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life" (Saldanha 2013:11; FAO 2012). Personal wellbeing is inherently shaped by food security, as individuals are unable to fully enact their lifestyle choices while being food insecure. Moreover, food insecurity is an important public health problem, due

to the impact that it has on individuals wellbeing and overall population health (Tarasuk et al.2016).

In this chapter, I discuss literature on the anthropology of food, food insecurity, and emergency food services within universities. Then I review the background information on international graduate students at the University of Guelph, followed by an exploration on how international students are recruited within institutions. In doing so, I position my research into the broader body of work on the anthropology of food, and show its importance. I draw attention to how university administrators handle food insecurity among international graduate students, which raises questions about food citizenship, agency and belonging. This review identifies limitations and gaps which should be addressed in further research. Additionally, an intersectional framework is suggested for further work which attempts to resolve this problem.

Anthropology of Food:

Anthropological food studies have proven valuable in determining social processes and debating culture versus structure for many human behaviours (Mintz and Du Bois 2002). Mintz and Du Bois (2002) explain that anthropologists have studied food and its complexities since the discipline's origin, with many notable anthropologists, such as Frans Boas, taking time to discuss food, and using recipes to discuss hierarchies and social organization of the Kwakiutl in the 1920s (Boas 1921). As anthropology has developed over time, so has the use of food in theorising cultural behaviours. Mintz and Du Bois (2002) argue that food discussions are now being used to interpret larger problems in cultures such as determining symbolic values and memories, and that food is being used as a means of debate between cultural materialism and structuralist or symbolic explanations. Further, Mintz and Du Bois (2002) use political-economy theory as a means to understand the food system and the creation of societal values in relation to

food, as this theory explores the relationships between a society and people, taking into consideration political and economic influences (Balaam and Veseth 2014). They add that anthropologists are particularly interested in food and social change, and how these factors may impact intergroup relations (Mintz and Du Bois 2002). The anthropology of food is a diverse field of literature, with which my research study will be situated.

Not all anthropologists agree that food, and food insecurity, can be interpreted through a political-economy framework. Many anthropologists also look at food and hunger from an evolutionary perspective. Robin Fox (2003), acknowledges that eating can be a social experience, but that it is important in terms of genetic survival, and that the, “hunger urge must be satisfied everyday” (2003:1). This evolutionary need is paralleled in Sutton’s (2010) article on food and the senses. Similar to Fox (2003), Sutton (2010) discusses the senses as an uncontrollable function of the body, which when expressed can create meaning out of ordinary situations. Food and senses interact and create memories and emotions which have cultural values (Sutton 2010). Through senses being used while eating, memories are created (Holtzman 2006). Holtzman (2006) explores food and memory, specifically looking into how memory is placed within the literature on food, and how looking at memory through food can overall offer more insight into understanding the concept of memory. The idea of why food creates memories was discussed, and with arguments that the senses are impacted through eating, specifically, smells and tastes. However, Holtzman (2006) warns readers to consider the limitations of this answer because it is reflected in Western ideas of food and the body and this understanding may not be appropriate at a global level. An understanding of how food and the senses interact is important in understanding food security, as one’s preference for food can be linked to their experiences and memories of foods that they have previously eaten. Having access to foods that

one prefers is a part of food security, and the foods someone might want could be linked to their cultural values (Sutton 2010; FAO 2012).

Phillips (2006) discusses the relationships between food and globalisation, and explains that typically food is studied focusing on the specific context. This focus shows how food is used to create or reinforce specific cultural worlds (Phillips 2006). Phillips (2006) breaks this mold by studying food at a global scale, looking at it as a commodity, reviewing the corporations and the global governance of food. Furthermore, Phillips (2006) discusses how the study of food has changed over time, from being focused on food production, to questioning food consumption. Specifically what an indicator of food inclusion or exclusion is and how it is created, and what is being defined as a sustainable place to live based on its food. For example, in terms of food security, if one is living in a place where they are unable to safely access foods which are nutritious and preferred, this may not be a suitable place to live (FAO 2012). Karrebæk et al. (2018) has built on the idea of the complex global food system by discussing food and language and how their intersections create meaning. This article discusses how eating and making food are shaped by language, which can be polite conversations, to blessings, to entitled comments which reflect power dynamics over others based on their food choices (Karrebæk et al. 2018). These power dynamics are expanded in the global systems of inequality, through the discussion of whether the poor and hungry have the right to speak out, and make decisions about their food and preferences, or if they should just accept what is given to them (Karrebæk et al. 2018). This article is relevant because even if fed in a way to satisfy a nutritious need, one is still defined as food insecure if they are not getting foods that they prefer (FAO). Karrebæk et al.'s (2018) discussion also reflects the political-economy framework that is similarly discussed by Mintz and Du Bois (2002).

Depending on ones' training and theoretical perspective within which they root their work, their beliefs about food and its relation to society will be different, which some may interpret to be a limitation of using an anthropological framework to study food insecurity. To mitigate this challenge, anthropologists must consider the local realities of the people that are food insecure (Himmelgreen and Romero-Daza 2009). Given the definition of food security cited earlier, in order to gain food security for all people at all times, a local context needs to be considered (Himmelgreen and Romero-Daza 2009). However, the local context must also be examined in terms of the larger global context of food insecurity, in order to develop policies and practices which aide people in being able to access their food in socially and economically acceptable way, as is cited as a part of the definition of food security (Himmelgreen and Romero-Daza 2009). In the literature, the discussion of food insecurity has mostly been situated in relation to social group interactions, access, and social vulnerability (Maciel and de Castro 2013). Maciel and de Castro (2013) root their understandings of the food system in arguments around society and relationships. Within this dialogue, food insecurity has also been discussed in relation to access and citizenship rights (Phillips 2012).

'Food citizenship' is a concept discussed by anthropologists and it can guide the discussion of food insecurity of international graduate students (Phillips 2012). Phillips (2012) explains that there are many roles to play in the food system, from producers to consumers, and within each role, individuals are able to enact their citizenship (Maciel and de Castro 2013). The food citizenship concept suggests that if individuals are able to make more decisions regarding their food, that they will likely have more meaningful relationships within the food system (Phillips 2012; O'Kane 2016). Moreover, food citizens are meant to be aware of how they engage with food, and the implications of the global food system in regard to inequality

(Grasseni 2008). Delormier et al. (2009) agree with Phillips (2012), explaining that by having agency in their food system, individuals will gain the capacity to choose what they eat, how they attain it, and how they eat it, embodying the definition of what it means to be food secure (FAO 2012). A food secure person will have the agency and the ability to choose to access foods that they prefer eating, when they want it, with no physical, economic or social barriers from accessing it (FAO 2012). Additionally, the eaters are able to have a better relationship with their community and their food because of these choices (Delormier et al. 2009). However, an individual's capacity to enact his or her rights can become quite limited when agency around food is constrained by social structures (Delormier et al. 2009). Himmelgreen and Romero-Daza (2009), refer to hunger and food insecurity as a product of structural violence which has occurred over time, and the associated political-economic transformations. The social structure can lead to someone being food insecure, by constraining them from accessing food in physical, social and economic ways (FAO 2012). In Chapter 5, I will discuss how the international students I spoke with experienced agency constraints, and how this impacted their use of the on-campus food bank.

Students who use the food bank often eat foods they do not typically want (Stewin 2013). This lack of agency makes students feel that, "You're forced to eat whatever they want you to eat" (Stewin 2013:70). Stewin (2013) explains that international students would rather eat foods that are familiar to them, but that they eat what is provided to them because of their need. This lack of access to foods that international students are familiar with and enjoy eating limits their relationships to others within the food system, and can lead to adverse wellbeing issues, such as social isolation, and stigmatization (Delormier et al. 2009; Stewin 2013). Additionally, Stewin (2013) discusses how using an on-campus food bank can impact identity, as consuming foods

provided at a food bank often leads to students feeling like their eating habits are making them more Canadian. In this case the eating habits of the international students work to transition their citizenship status (Stewin 2013). This transition is not always understood as or experienced as a positive change for international students, and some students feel that they need to make this change in order to survive. Stewin (2013) demonstrates this by discussing the issue of Muslim students who are unable to access halal food. These students must temporarily abandon their religious customs and pick up non-halal, eating habits (Stewin 2013). This can lead the students to feel guilty about their new identity, and ashamed to tell their families about their lack of ability to maintain their customs (Stewin 2013).

Anthropologists, and related social scientists, have continued to increase the types of food-related research that they conduct. However, there is much that still needs to be studied, such as my topic of research, food bank usage of international graduate students, with which there is little work being done by anthropologists and other researchers. Nevertheless, the types of food studies currently being done are extremely diverse, including studies on production, consumption, language, symbolism of food, and more. For example, Ruff et al. (2015) discuss the idea that food production can be linked to humans having decreased mobility. Moreover, they link a sedentary lifestyle to agricultural intensification, but found it did not have many effects on bone density (Ruff et al 2015). Others, such as Neira et al (2018) are studying the production of foods in terms of energy usage and the resulting carbon footprint, by doing case studies of farmers who are using different agricultural technologies to grow tomatoes in Spain. Kay et al. (2017) look at food consumption of low-income mothers during their post-partum period, and how it can lead to these marginalized women being at risk of becoming obese. They suggest implementing interventions to assist this specific group of women from becoming ill (Kay et al.

2017). Consumption has also been studied in terms of food activism and resistance. Ayres and Bosia (2011) talk about food sovereignty, and how there has recently been a movement to localize food consumption as a way to protest against the neoliberal globalization of foods. They compare localization methods in France to those in rural Vermont to show ways in which the food sovereignty concept is being applied (Ayres & Bosia 2011). In 2014, Cavanaugh et al. explored connections between food and language, and discuss specific methods that they have developed in order to study the interconnected relationship between the two. Some of these methods include, participant observation, food-oriented interviews, and ethnolinguistic analysis (Cavanaugh et al. 2014).

All of these studies relate in some way to food insecurity, as it is through understanding how food is produced, consumed and the meanings associated with it, in several local contexts that we can then understand the context when peoples access to food is restricted (FAO 2012). While all of these different types of anthropology and food research projects are interesting, it is beyond the focus of my thesis to discuss in more detail the diversity of food-related research. However, I will explore in more detail some of the food security and insecurity studies conducted by anthropologists.

Anthropological studies of food insecurity itself have a broad range, from researchers studying insecurity in urban settings to food insecurity in the Global South. Some researchers focus on gender roles in experiencing food insecurity and others focus on community consequences to facing food insecurity. For example, Hill (2017) discusses “food deserts” in Detroit, and how due to a history inequality the people of Detroit have limited food access. He finds that by labeling Detroit a “food desert” it impedes them from getting work done and actually having equitable access to appropriate foods (Hill 2017). On the other hand, Pandey

(2016) explores food insecurity in Nepal, explaining that it is the result of several factors, including low food production, low income, and fluctuations in prices. After conducting interviews Panday (2016) discusses how it seems there is no improvement over time to food security in the Trans-Himalaya area, and that policy interventions must be done which consider multiple components of the food system, such as irrigation, promotion, and subsidies.

Hadley and Crooks (2012) discuss the consequences of food insecurity in the 21st Century, such as poor health outcomes. Additionally, they consider threats to achieving food security, such as food prices, and population increases (Hadley and Crooks 2012).

Phillips (2006) points out that most work studying hunger and food deprivation is being done by international organizations such as the FAO, or the United Nations. However, when considering the local context, anthropology is particularly well suited as a discipline to root this research in, as the relations of food to culture offer great opportunities to develop policies around health, nutrition, and others which can help resolve hunger (Mintz and Du Bois 2002) By understanding how to mitigate physical, social and economic barriers to accessing food in a local context, the work of anthropologists will help to limit the amount of food insecure people (FAO 2012). Mintz and Du Bois (2002) believe that unfortunately anthropologists have yet to fully benefit from their advantageous position in this field. My exploration of food bank usage of international graduate students at the University of Guelph will contribute to the overall food studies conducted by anthropologists, and will fill an identified gap in the discipline.

Food Security/Insecurity:

The definition of food security has changed over time to reflect the overall preferences and concerns of the public (Saldanha 2013). As was previously noted, food security is currently defined by the FAO as “a situation that exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social

and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life” (FAO 2012). Similarly, in a Canadian context, the Dieticians of Canada define food insecurity as "the inability to acquire or consume an adequate diet quality or sufficient quantity of food in socially acceptable ways” (Dieticians of Canada 2016:1). Similarly, researchers at Ryerson University (2019) explain that there are five A’s of Food Security, availability, accessibility, adequacy, acceptability and agency. Therefore, they posit that in order to be food secure that food must be available at all times to all people, without any physical or economic barriers, that it be nutritious, environmentally sustainable, and procured in culturally and morally acceptable ways, and finally that there are policies in place which enable individuals to be food secure (Ryerson 2019) .

The United Nations recognizes food security as a fundamental human right, however food insecurity in Canada is a prevalent problem, with 7.8% of the nation identifying as food insecure (Hanbazaza et al. 2016; Farahbakhsh et al. 2015). This value amounts to approximately 1.92 million people aged 12 or older (The Government of Canada 2012). The Government of Canada (2012), recognizes household food insecurity in three categories: Food Secure, having access at all times to enough food for a healthy life; Moderately Food Insecure, having had to compromise quantities and qualities of food; Severely Food Insecure, disrupted eating patterns and reduced food intake. Within the known 7.8% that were food insecure, 5.1% were moderately insecure, and 2.7% were severely insecure (The Government of Canada 2012). The number of people who identify as being food insecure varies depending on the area or group, and the specific social determinants that may impact that group. For example, the Canadian Community Health Survey indicates that among Indigenous individuals living off of reserves, that one in five

households were either moderately or severely food insecure, with 8.4% identifying as severely insecure (The Government of Canada 2017).

Being food insecure reflects an individuals' lack of access to a basic need and is linked to having a low sense of belonging in a community (Farahbakhsh et al. 2017). In Canada, food insecurity is a problem that results from a lack of income to buy food and support oneself by paying for non-food essentials, such as housing (Hanbazaza et al. 2016). A significant contributor to the literature, Hanbazaza et al. (2016) explain that certain groups are highly food insecure, such as lower-class individuals, new immigrants, and students. Farahbakhsh et al. (2017) identify that middle-class individuals may have moderate food insecurity, but they typically have more resources than low class individuals or new immigrants who are more vulnerable (Patton-Lopez et al. 2014). As was previously mentioned, most of the work done studying hunger and food insecurity is conducted by international organizations, and non-profit groups, such as the FAO, the World Health Organization (WHO), and governments (Phillips 2006). Additionally, many of the statistics used are based on self-reporting to government surveys. For the most part, these large organizations take a globalized understanding of food insecurity. The WHO lists on their website that food insecurity is linked to food safety (WHO 2019). They also have a supporting document called "The 3 Fives" which outlines what steps can be taken to ensure food safety (WHO 2019). However, there is no mention in this document on how to stay healthy if you are unable to access foods. Therefore, although food security is listed as food safety issue, they do not give resources on how to actually deal with food insecurity (WHO 2019). The FAO (2019) are doing more work to understand food insecurity. They too look at food insecurity at a global level, specifically, by looking at the reported number of undernourished people worldwide (FAO 2019). Although this may be the most effective way to

get data, self-reporting insecurity does not allow for people who may not consider themselves food insecure to be counted, therefore the numbers might seem smaller than they really are. In their 2019 report, the FAO attributes economic slowdowns to be one of the root causes of food insecurity, given that it creates inequality, poverty and further marginalization. They explain that to end hunger, that policies and programmes need to be implemented to protect the most vulnerable people (FAO 2019).

Food insecurity is also discussed by public health officials in terms of policies and programs. The Canadian Public Health Association considers food insecurity in their Policy on Poverty Reduction, in which they indicate poverty as the most influential determinant of health, which impacts one's ability to gain a home, food, education and other essential expenses (CPHA 2017). Looking at this like an anthropologist, if policies are implemented that can make improvements to one's social structure, this may alleviate some marginality and improve access to basic needs such as foods, therefore aiding to decrease food insecurity.

Anthropological studies of food insecurity tend to take a case-specific approach. For example, Collin West et al. (2014) studied famines in Burkina Faso, and O'Connell and Foster (2014) did a comparative study of food insecurity in Tanzania and St. Lucia. Although anthropological studies may be focused on a specific case, their results can indicate which policies need to be implemented on a larger scale so that the changes can be replicated in different settings. Previous studies have paid limited attention to the food insecurity of international students, and there is a misconception with the public that all international students are wealthy (Nagesh 2018). Anthropologists such as Van Esterik (2005) have criticized emergency methods for food insecure individuals, as temporary and inappropriate solutions, which provide food that is nutritionally inadequate (Farahbakhsh et al. 2017; Loopstra and

Tarasuk 2015). In order to address the needs of international students, and to find appropriate solutions, further studies need to be done which consider the relationship between food citizenship and food insecurity.

International Students, Diversity Practices, and Agency:

Universities attempt to use international students to diversify their environments (Andrade 2006). Andrade (2006) suggests that without an understanding of cultural adjustment, the benefits will not be known. Many universities use diversity as a buzzword in their heading or school motto (Ahmed 2012). Yet, as Ahmed (2012) argues, when diversity is used as a descriptor, it maintains the previous values of the institution rather than updating it.

Internationalization is another buzzword that has been circulating North American universities. The University of Guelph notes on their website that they are committed to internationalization, and list it as a method to be used to advance the university's progress forward in their strategic planning document (University of Guelph 2019b). The concept of internationalization is not just being discussed at the University of Guelph; it is a trend which is being implemented at many North American universities, and institutions are allocating infrastructure, including increased funding, to implement this (Marinoni & deWit 2019). Universities Canada (2019) conducted a survey consisting of 97 public and private universities in the summer of 2014, and 96% of surveyed universities indicated that internationalization was a part of their strategic planning, with 80% listing it in their top five priorities. This survey also indicated that many of the international students were in graduate school, with approximately 28% of all graduate students in Canada being international (Universities Canada 2019). As of Fall 2019, 19% of all graduate students at the University of Guelph are international students. Universities Canada (2019) indicates that the dialogue around internationalization is being mobilized faster than anticipated,

with 89% of survey respondents indicating that the pace of internationalization on their campuses has accelerated within the past three years.

Diversity on campus, achieved in part through internationalization, is appealing to those who believe that migrants should be competent in the public sphere (Faist 2009). However, in order to be used as an approach that has intentions other than just gaining economic production, diversity practices must consider the, “socio-moral resources of citizenship, and citizenship rights” (Faist 2009: 173). Without considering the needs and rights of citizens, diversity practices will not succeed (Faist 2009). Yuval-Davis (2007) suggests that citizenship is multi-layered, and that peoples’ citizenship in one layer impacts their citizenship in others. Without considering citizenship, diversity practices can become “depoliticized management technique[s]” (Faist 2009: 173). Food citizenship is just one layer of citizenship that international students must negotiate. To be clear, this concept is different from the traditional idea of citizenship, in which an individual holds citizenship within a nation state. Rather, this is a more nuanced understanding of citizenship, which allows individuals to negotiate their identities in communities based on the food they are eating, and how and why they are eating it (FEC 2018).

Food citizenship is a concept that can guide discussions of food insecurity among international graduate students. The concept of food citizenship renegotiates people’s identities within the food system to explain people’s relationships with food and their social environments (FEC 2018). By considering eaters as food citizens, we are then able to see how everyone participates in society, and see how we influence the food system (FEC 2018). Consequently, when acting as food citizens, people are able to have an increased sense of belonging and community (FEC 2018). It is within this community that we are more likely to see changes occur in the food system (FEC 2018). Within the literature, food citizenship is discussed as a way for

individuals to take action in the food system, which is challenging for many as the food system is often something passive, and where we get our food is often never thought about (FEC 2018). Grasseni (2008) looks at understanding food citizenship through understanding collective food procurement. She believes that by understanding the different ways that people procure food, we can better understand how they participate and belong in a community (Grasseni 2008). She finds that normative frameworks do not allow for the diverse types of procurement, and thus diverse food citizens, and suggests that how we procure food is central to understanding our social participation. Similarly, Shifren et al. (2017) use food citizenship as a means to understanding one's place in a community. Shifren et al. (2017) see a gap between what people think about their food citizenship, versus what they are actually doing. They found that food citizenship increases one's sense of place in a community and that people become active food citizens in order to learn more about their food system. They argue if given an opportunity to make connections with their agricultural community, there will be less of a gap between people identifying as food citizens and actually acting like food citizens (Shifren et al. 2017).

In the literature, food citizenship is discussed as something people are able to choose to do. However, the food citizenship of international students is mitigated by their capacity to access foods and make decisions about what they want and need. Agency is defined as "the socioculturally mediated capacity to act" (Ahearn 2001:112). Agency, like citizenship, has dimensions which are not mutually exclusive of one another (Ortner 2001). Agency can be interpreted as power, and the forms of power that individuals have, including their ability to act on their own behalf, and maintain control of their lives. Although this may be interpreted as being something that only those who are in power may be able to achieve, Ortner (2001) argues that those who are dominated have the capacity to exercise their influence in the form of

resistance. Agency can also be understood as intentions, desires, and purposes that one projects into the world through their socially constructed position (Ortner 2001). The concept of agency has been critiqued because of its differing definitions and its synonymization with free will (Ahearn 2001). However, in the discussion of international graduate students what we must consider is that multiple layers of agency can be exercised at any given time, and that agency can impact one's livelihood and wellbeing (Ahearn 2001). Given that food citizenship is contingent on relationships and an understanding of the food system, people can enact their food citizenship through their consumption choices (Lockie 2008). Therefore, when people are not given a choice on what to eat, they are unable to express their agency of citizenship (Lockie 2008). Without being given the choice to eat what they want, when they want it, international students will not be able to be food secure, as one's food preference is an important part of the definition of food security (FAO 2012).

For international students, the layers of their citizenship can marginalize them, and should be examined through an intersectional framework. Although Crenshaw (1991) first coined the term, Yuval-Davis (2007) uses intersectionality with reference to citizenship and belonging, explaining that each layer of citizenship and its associated agency must be considered to truly understand experiences of oppression. To understand the layers of citizenship of international students at the University of Guelph, we must consider the contexts in which they are living.

The official multicultural policy, implemented in 1971, makes the Canadian context for internationalization unique (Houshmand et al. 2014). The multicultural policy creates a pseudo-tolerance for cultural diversity and masks racism, structural and otherwise, in day-to-day life (Houshmand et al. 2014). Yuval-Davis (2007) explains that minority individuals are impacted by

the multiple layers of their citizenship more than others. Racism in Canada is more common than average Canadians would like to admit, specifically in the university context (Houshmand et al. 2014). International students are victims of racial microaggressions, insults and invalidation (Houshmand et al. 2014). International students who use the on-campus food bank may not be able to enact their food citizenship rights as they are forced to eat what is provided to them without any choice.

Food Insecurity and Food Banks in a Campus Setting:

Post-secondary students, although highly vulnerable to becoming food insecure are an understudied group when it comes to the literature on food insecurity (Hanbazaza et al. 2016). Post-secondary undergraduate students are vulnerable to food insecurity because they often rely on summer jobs for much of their income, therefore there are many months where they do not have an active flow of incoming money (Hanbazaza et al. 2016). Additionally, they frequently depend on loans and financial aid, or balance work while also taking classes (Hanbazaza et al. 2016). In studies conducted by Hanbazaza et al. (2016) and Farahbakhsh et al. (2015), post-secondary students identified that they struggled to budget for particularly whole, and healthy foods, which they would prefer to have. Moreover, the students acknowledged that they have a lack of shopping, and budgeting skills (Hanbazaza et al. 2016). As a result of these qualities, students felt food insecure, and in need of emergency food (Hanbazaza et al. 2016). In 1991 the first on-campus school bank was opened in Canada, at the University of Alberta (Hanbazaza et al. 2016). The number is continuing to grow with 51 in 2004, increasing to 104 as of August 2016, making it evident that the problem of post-secondary food insecurity is ongoing (Farahbakhsh et al. 2015). Moreover, the problem is continuing to be recognized by school administrators, who must approve the openings of on-campus food banks (Farahbakhsh et al.

2015; Silverthorn 2016). Farahbakhsh et al. (2017) and Hanbazaza et al. (2016) believe that the number of food insecure students exceeds the number of students actually using food banks. This can be a result of stigma and shame, or unawareness that the emergency food program exists (Farahbakhsh et al. 2017). Additionally, given the definition of food insecurity, some students may not feel that they are starving and need emergency food, however they may still be insecure in terms of accessing nutritious or preferred foods, in socially acceptable ways (FAO 2012). Much of the literature on food insecurity on university campuses is repetitive, and very little of it has been conducted by anthropologists. Stewin's (2013) thesis discusses the use of the on-campus food bank by international students at both the University of Guelph and at University of Windsor. It identified important issues; however, no further research has been done to impart changes. The food citizenship concept can guide the discussion of food insecurity on a university campus, and address key problems, such as access, enacting citizenship and social relations to others.

Some literature includes statistics regarding international students and their specific vulnerability, however, I have yet to find a study other than Stewin's (2013) which primarily focuses on this group, and this work must be done. Hanbazaza et al. (2016) indicate that international students may have more financial distresses than domestic students, as their distance from their families impedes receiving any financial support from them. Hanbazaza et al. (2016) explain that they may already have accumulated student debts, and may be beginning to start their own families, which has led to more financial responsibilities. International graduate and undergraduate students have more financial barriers than domestic students in terms of accessing a job, as they are often unable to work during their first six months after migration, and several of the on-campus jobs are reserved for Canadian students (Stewin 2013). This additional

barrier also limits the amount of finances that they will have to spend on their essential expenses such as food, and housing. More work needs to be done focusing on food insecurity on university campuses as an identified gap is found here.

International Students at the University of Guelph:

Studying in a different country can involve many challenges for students, including dealing with a language barrier, finding appropriate housing, making new friends and struggling with financial responsibilities to name a few. Despite this, the decision to study internationally has been increasingly popular (Matera et al. 2018). Many of these challenges are difficult to navigate because unlike domestic students, international students have fewer resources to access, including financial resources, social support networks, and family networks (Matera et al. 2018). Not having access to these resources gives international students an additional challenge and leads to them feeling barred from being food secure. Burley (2016) and Hanbazaza et al. (2017) identify food insecurity as one of the main challenges that international students must overcome.

Canada has attempted to create a plan to increase the number of international students attending their institutions (Andrade 2006). This plan includes outreach programs, simplified application processes, and funding opportunities (Andrade 2006). Nevertheless, Andrade (2006) suggests these programs may have ulterior motivations, as university administrators view international student enrollment as an essential way to gain revenue. Once students are enrolled, the institutions often lack a means to assist students in adjusting to life in their new country. As a result, students may feel that they are taken for granted by the institution, and, as Stewin found, may feel that they are “cash cows” and that their presence is valued on the university campus because of the financial contribution they are giving. (2013:73). At the University of Guelph,

international students are provided with a financial support depending on their different programs, as can be seen in the Table 2.1 below.

Table 2.1: Financial Support Provided for International Students

| Program | Total Fees (per semester, As of Fall 2019) | Minimum Funding/Support Provided |
|----------------|---|---|
| PhD | \$8002.75 | Approximately \$20 000 |
| MA/MSc | \$8280.02 | Varies by department |
| Meng | \$9250.69 | Funding not available |

International students make substantial economic contributions to the institutions they attend, often leaving themselves with very little to spend on their essential expenses (Andrade 2006). However, universities can be lacking awareness of the range of difficulties that their students experience (Andrade 2006). University administrators need to become aware so that they can implement new support services (Andrade 2006). These services would ideally give international students the ability to enact their citizenship, and not feel socially marginalized (Andrade 2006).

Conclusion:

My research is situated in the broader work of the anthropology of food. The anthropology of food is a diverse area of study. I have shown that anthropologists use food to understand issues about evolution (Fox 2003), memory (Holtzman 2006), and language (Karrebaek et al. 2018). Moreover, food is used to describe more complex global relationships, and when discussed with a political-economy framework, some anthropologists use it to talk about power dynamics and systems of inequality (Mintz and Du Bois 2002). The key anthropological concept of food citizenship is used as a framework to determine how international students are able to enact their rights, and their access to foods (Phillips 2006). Anthropological studies of food insecurity themselves range, from looking at urban settings to

rural, and often have specific case studies. Stewin (2013) studied the use of food banks by international students at the University of Guelph and the University of Windsor, however no further work has been done on this topic since then.

By reviewing the literature on this subject, I am able to contextualize my research into the frameworks presented by previous researchers. This literature review is by no means exhaustive of the literature on this topic, rather it is meant to demonstrate some of the foundational theories, and gaps which should be addressed. The agency of international students who use the food bank should be considered in relation to happiness and wellbeing of my participants. Moreover, an intersectional framework should be used when discussing internationalization and the resulting issues of international student food insecurity, as it allows researchers to consider the diverse factors that shape student experience, including the potential for marginalization.

Given the discussion in this chapter, how can we understand the experiences of international graduate students with regards to food? I will discuss this further in Chapters 4 and 5. However, first I will discuss how this research project came about, and its context in the next chapter discussing methodology and background.

Chapter 3: Methodology and Research Context

In this chapter I provide a summary of my research methods. This includes a discussion of the location of research, the recruitment of participants, and the three phases of data collection. Additionally, I discuss my positionality within the research, and how I became involved with this project. As I am not an insider to the participant pool, understanding my positionality is important, as it shaped my ability to recruit and my chosen methods of data collection.

Location of Research:

As was previously mentioned in the introduction, this research was conducted at the University of Guelph, in Guelph, Ontario. The City of Guelph, is a community of over 120,000 people, located in Southern Ontario, 100 km west of Toronto (GWI Portal 2018). The city is known for its low crime and unemployment rates, and its over all ability to offer a balance of city life, and small-town friendliness (Guelph Tourism 2018). The city is organised with the university at the centre, and it is surrounded by a dense student community. Guelph is an attractive place for migrants to settle as it offers many services and guides for new residents (GWI Portal 2018). For example, there are two immigrant serving organizations, Immigrant Services Guelph Wellington, and Wellington County Settlement Services (GWI Portal 2018). These organizations assist migrants in securing employment, and gaining access to health care, banking and translation services (GWI Portal 2018). Additionally, Guelph has many activities for residents, many of which are suited for families and involve arts, sciences and exploring the outdoors (GWI Portal 2018).

The University of Guelph is a midsized university, with 29,507 enrolled students as of November 2017 (University of Guelph 2017). Within these students there are more than 550

international graduate students coming from 83 different countries (University of Guelph 2018a). The student-run food bank (Central Students Association Food Bank) opened in 2004, and has various programs such as a breakfast program, a garden-fresh box program, and cooking classes, along with the traditional food bank services (University of Guelph 2018b). Additionally, they have put together several recipe guides and a cookbook on how to eat on a budget (University of Guelph 2018b).

Project Motivations:

The Office of Graduate and Postgraduate Studies at the University of Guelph identified that the CSA on-campus food bank was being disproportionately used by international graduate students, as 53% of registered food bank users as of January 2018 were international graduate students. Once this was identified by the university administration, the Vice President of Graduate Studies, Benjamin Bradshaw approached my advisor, Elizabeth Finnis, the chair of the Sociology and Anthropology department, looking for someone to undertake this research project. Due to my undergraduate background and interests in cultural anthropology and nutrition, I was approached about considering this project and accepted it in February 2018.

The previous work on the use of on-campus food banks by international students is very limited, as was discussed in the literature review, and this illustrates the importance of this project. In 2013, a previous student in my program (Masters of Public Issues Anthropology) at the University of Guelph, Erika Stewin, conducted her research on food security among international students at the University of Guelph and the University of Windsor, which included the use of the on-campus food bank. Stewin (2013) found that international graduate students were facing food insecurity, and that they were using the on-campus food bank to combat this. There have been no additional studies focusing on the use of the on-campus food bank at the

University of Guelph since then, however the problem of international students using the food bank disproportionately persists. My thesis has built on some of the work that was done by Stewin (2013) and builds on her findings in the 5 years since she completed her thesis, and to better defines the nature of the problem. The intent was that together our two theses could act as building block to create change for the international students who are suffering from food insecurity on the University of Guelph campus. The dissemination plan for my thesis will contribute to these changes, and will be discussed further in this chapter.

Methodology:

Data collection was conducted in three phases, an online survey using the university's Qualtrics system, semi-structured in-depth interviews, and a focus group. Data collection commenced in May 2018 and finished in December 2018. All methods were approved by the research ethics board, REB #18-03-022. Phase One's survey was intended to gain demographic information about the students. By conducting a survey, I was able to reach a greater audience than I would have been able to if I had only done interviews. Additionally, it allowed me to begin to see the most effective next steps and questions in data collection. Phase Two's semi-structured interviews were intended to fill some of the gaps and add depth to the data from phase one, such as whether students using the food bank identify as food insecure, whether they experience stigma, and if they believe the University of Guelph can help to make their experiences better. Phase Three's focus group was an opportunity to meet with students and discuss with them data and analytical themes that I had identified from the first two phases. The focus group merged a preliminary discussion of results and themes with additional questions, in order to elicit feedback from participants.

Using a mixed methods approach offered a unique opportunity to gain both rich quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative data provided me with an idea of how many people were afflicted by this issue, and the qualitative data provided me with an opportunity to gather more in-depth data by asking semi-structured interview questions about food security and the use of the food bank. Additionally, both the interviews and the focus group provided international graduate students with an opportunity to share their stories about using the on-campus food bank, and the various barriers that they have had to overcome. Giving international students the opportunity to reflect on their experiences is important, as this group is a minority on the University of Guelph campus, and can experience diverse forms of marginalization, and may not have the opportunity to have their voices heard and considered when it comes to everyday university practice and policy-making. I chose to use three approaches to data collection because my research question could not have been answered in sufficient depth with only quantitative or qualitative data. The online survey generated quantitative and some qualitative data, and was used to inform the final set of questions used for semi-structured interviews. These semi-structured interviews gave students an opportunity to explain in more details some of the information that they have indicated in the online survey. Conducting a focus group allowed for further depth, and allowed me to generate feedback about my identified themes.

Online survey:

The first phase was a survey implemented on Qualtrics Software. The main purpose of the survey was to determine the demographics of the students, and to gain guiding information which would aid in developing meaningful semi-structured interview questions. The survey also provided me with a broader understanding of the scope of the problem, gathering basic

background information about where the student is from, whether they received a funding package, and whether it was sufficient for their needs. It also asked questions about awareness of the on-campus food bank, how they became aware of it, and whether – and to what degree – they had ever used it. There were no overtly personal questions about stigma, or why the individual uses the food bank, as these questions were addressed in phase two of data collection. The survey had 34 questions comprised of a combination of multiple choice, short answer, and drag and drop questions, taking about 20 minutes for participants to complete (see Appendix D for a complete list of the questions). The number of questions students could answer was dependent on their status. For example, if students had never used the CSA on-campus food bank, the survey directed them to the end page, and they were not invited to participate in further research. Additionally, there were other flow questions that would appear depending on the answer to the previous question. For instance, if a participant indicated they were an international student, the next question would ask them which country they migrated from. Even if students had not used the food bank, they may have been motivated to complete the survey due to the fact that an incentive was provided, which I will discuss further.

The survey was distributed to all University of Guelph graduate students through their program specific graduate secretaries. I emailed all graduate program assistants and requested that they forward my recruitment email, which can be seen in Appendix A. The email request was sent out on May 30th, 2018 and the survey was kept open until June 30th, 2018. Students were sent several reminder emails to fill out the survey before the due date. Additionally, the Office of Intercultural Affairs assisted me in recruitment by sending out the recruitment email to their international graduate student list. The decision to send the survey to all graduate students, both domestic and international, was made so that no one was excluded, and so that a

comparison could be done between the answers provided from both sets of students in the future. Although this is out of the scope for this thesis, this domestic student data is important as it can be used in the future in a study which works to compare data of food insecurity of international and domestic students. Additionally, by sending it to all students and not just those who are currently registered with the food bank, I was able to gain perspectives from students who were previously registered, and no longer needed the service.

The survey was sent out to a pool of approximately 2830 graduate students, out of which around 550 are international. I anticipated approximately 100 students responding to the survey. As of January 2018, 109 international graduate students were registered to use the food bank, therefore there were at least 109 out of 2830 graduate students that fit the demographic criteria for participation in an interview or focus groups. When the survey was closed, 364 students had participated, with 338 (93%) completing the survey in its entirety. In consideration of the time that it took to fill out the survey, and as an incentive for students to participate, all students who filled out the survey were given the option to be entered into a draw to win 1 of 5 \$50 grocery store gift cards. They had the option of requesting a Metro or Sobey's card, or a card for Loblaws, Zehrs or No Frills. There were 331 people who entered into the draw.

The survey was also meant to act as a means to recruit participants for phase two, and concluded by inviting the students to indicate if they would be interested in participating in an interview or a focus group to discuss this topic further. Out of the 364 students who filled out the survey, although 67% indicated that they had heard of the food bank, only 20% had ever used the food bank and were eligible for further research.

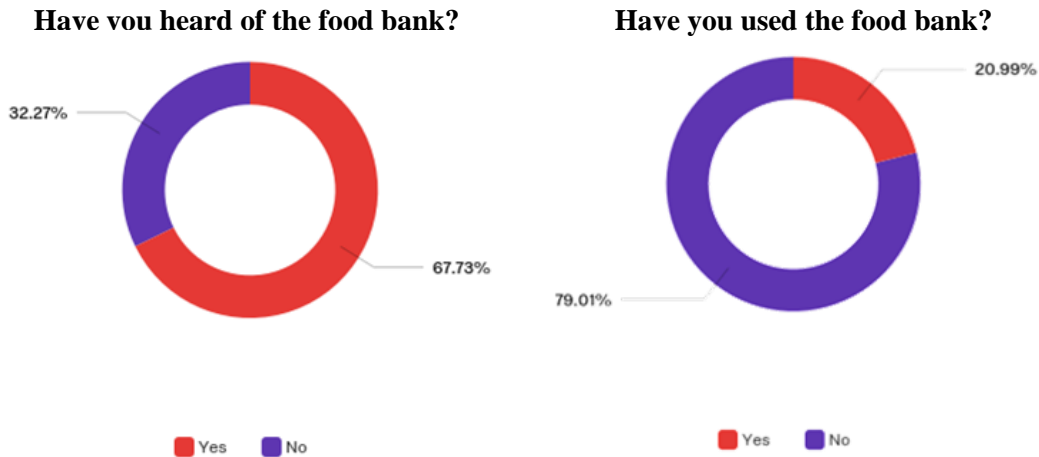


Figure 3.1: Participants who had heard of the on-campus food bank versus students who have actually used the food bank

Of those eligible, 74% were international graduate students, as is seen in Figure 3.2, and 47 individuals indicated that they would want to be contacted again for further research, and they were contacted through email. Participants had the option of listing which country they migrated from. 18 different countries were listed and, and out of those who provided this information 27.9% indicated they were from India. A more detailed list of all of the country’s respondents indicated they were from, and the number of respondents from each country can be found in Appendix J.

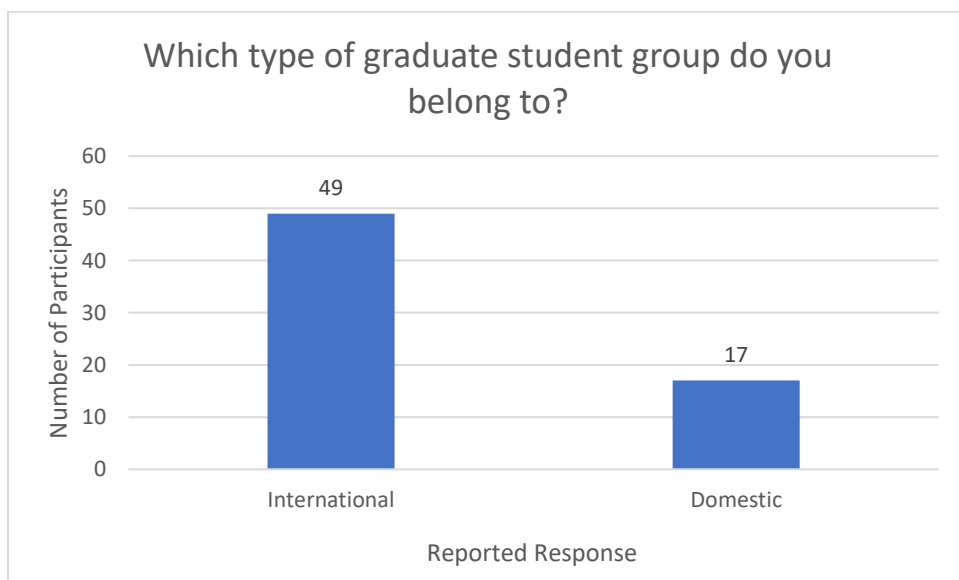


Figure 3.2: 74% of students who used the food bank identified as international graduate students.

Some other important demographic information from my survey participants is that when asked more specifically about their migration, 36.7% of international students indicated that they brought their families with them when they migrated to study at the University of Guelph. 37.5% of respondents indicated that they brought one adult, and one child with them during their migration. Several respondents indicated that the adult who migrated with them was their spouse. A more detailed break down of the reported responses can be found in Appendix K.

Furthermore, respondents had the option to indicate which department their studies were associated with. 25% reported that they were associated with the School of Engineering, followed by 15% indicated they were associated with The Department of Plant Agriculture. A more detailed list of all of the departments that were reported by respondents can be found in Appendix L. The highlighted key demographics of the survey sample can be seen below in Table 3.1

Table 3.1: Survey Sample Demographics

| | Survey Participants (N= 364) |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Survey Status | |
| Completed (%) | 93 |
| Not Completed (%) | 7 |
| Knowledge of the CSA food bank | |
| Yes (%) | 67.7 |
| No (%) | 32.3 |
| Use of the CSA food bank | |
| Yes (%) | 20 |
| No (%) | 80 |

| | |
|--|------|
| Use of another food bank | |
| Yes (%) | 18 |
| No (%) | 82 |
| International Graduate Student | |
| Yes (%) | 74 |
| No (%) | 26 |
| Migrated with family | |
| Yes (%) | 36.7 |
| No (%) | 63.3 |
| Level of Study (%) | |
| Masters Thesis | 37.9 |
| Masters MRP | 7.6 |
| Masters Coursework | 18 |
| PhD | 36.4 |
| Associated Departments (%) | |
| Engineering | 25 |
| Plant Agriculture | 15 |
| Environmental Science | 10 |
| Computer Science | 10 |
| Chemistry | 5 |
| Food Science | 5 |
| Languages and Literature | 5 |
| Marketing | 5 |
| Animal Biosciences | 2.5 |
| English and theatre studies | 2.5 |
| Environmental Design and Rural | 2.5 |
| Development | 2.5 |
| Family Relations and Applied Nutrition | 2.5 |
| Landscape Architecture | 2.5 |
| Molecular and Cellular Biology | 2.5 |
| Philosophy | 2.5 |

| | |
|------------------------|------|
| Population Medicine | |
| Funding | |
| Yes (%) | 43.9 |
| No (%) | 56.1 |
| Employed | |
| Yes (%) | 51.5 |
| No (%) | 48.5 |
| Location of Job | |
| On-campus (%) | 38.7 |
| Off-campus (%) | 61.3 |

Only international students were contacted for further research because my research focused on the experiences of international graduate student food bank users.

Interviews:

After the survey was completed an amendment was sent to the Research Ethics Board for the second phase of data collection, interviews and focus groups. An interview and focus group guide was created for each method respectively. Emails were sent out to the 47 students who indicated that they wanted to participate in further research. A copy of this email can be seen in Appendix B. Students were asked to participate in further research and were told that they had the option to participate in a 1-hour semi-structured, in-depth interview or a 2-hour focus group. Since the proposed research question could be answered by both group or individual data, the decision on which method would be used in phase two was ultimately connected to the number of participants, and how they would rather participate. The majority of students indicated that they would prefer participating in the interview, and as such, interviews were initiated.

Although I contacted 47 students who indicated they wanted to participate in further research, ultimately it was difficult to connect with each individual. In some cases, students were no longer interested in being interviewed, and in other cases, potential participants did not respond to emails. In order to address this, I also began snowball sampling. At the end of each interview, I asked my participants if they knew of others who were also international students and had used the food bank. Additionally, the Office of Intercultural Affairs assisted me by sending out additional recruitment emails to their international graduate student list, in an attempt to find more participants for my interviews. The participants that were referred by friends explained to me that they had known about my project because of their friends, and that they understood that I had good intentions because of the referral. Additionally, the emails sent out through the Office of Intercultural Affairs assisted me as students recognize that emails sent from this office are trustworthy and would be checked more promptly than an email sent for participation by a name they do not recognize.

The interviews commenced in September 2018 and ended in November 2018. In total, I conducted 16 semi-structured in-depth interviews which ranged from 45 minutes to 1 and a half hours. Appendix G lists the key demographics of the participants I interviewed, including gender, their levels of study, and their countries of origin. The names listed in Appendix G, and used throughout this thesis are pseudonyms that were assigned to each participant. Using pseudonyms was a decision made to further protect the identities of participants, as many of the descriptors that could have been used, such as their specific program in conjunction with their names and countries would have made identifying them easy. Some other key demographics of my participants are whether they migrated to Canada alone or with their families, what their country of origin is, and what college their current graduate degree is associated with at the

University of Guelph. In Figure 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5 below you are able to see the distributions of these demographics in my interview participants.

Did you migrate with your family?

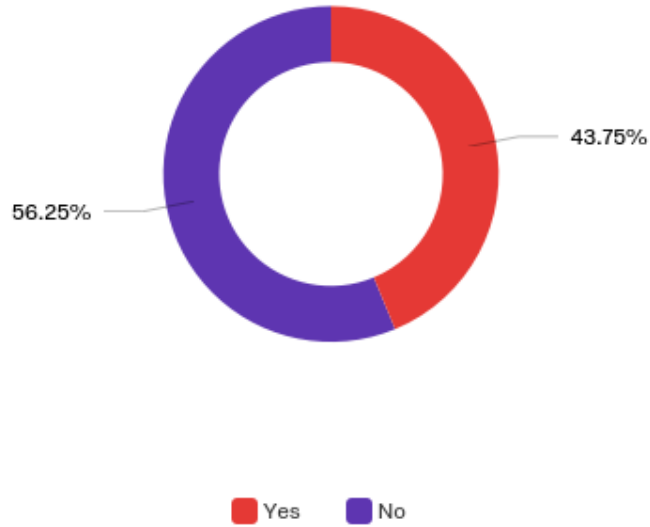


Figure 3.3: More participants came to Guelph without family; however, this is a small difference.

What is your country of origin?

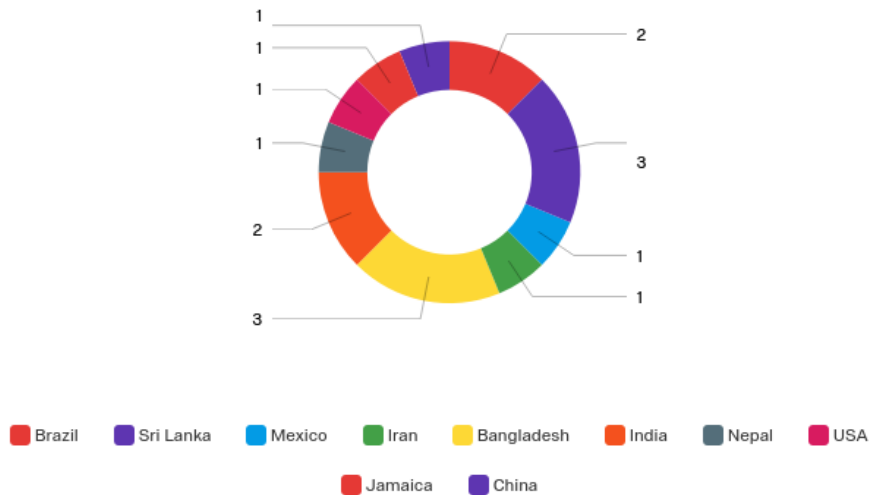


Figure 3.4: Interview participants came from a range of countries, however there are several interviewees from Bangladesh and India.

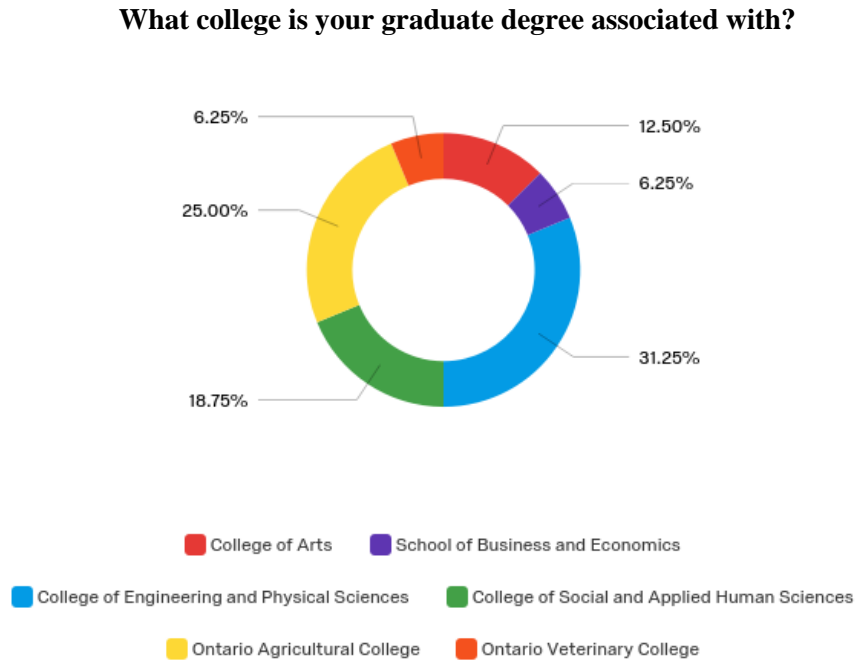


Figure 3.5: Participants ranged from a variety of colleges; however, the majority of participants were from the College of Engineering and Physical Sciences.

One of the interviews was completed over a skype video chat, as the participant was not available to meet on in person. However, the remaining 15 were all conducted in person, and a meeting place on campus was arranged 48 hours before the interview. For the most part, two-person study rooms were reserved in the library, and two interviews were conducted in the teaching assistant office in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology. All of the in-person interviews were audio recorded, however the skype interview was not audio recorded at the request of the participant. In this instance, notes were typed throughout the interview in order to get the most accurate summary of the interview.

The interview guide consisted of 20 questions, and was broken into three sections: Background, Process, and Barriers and Solutions (see Appendix E for a complete list of the

questions). The order of these sections allowed me to gain information about the participant and build rapport first, by discussing when they arrived in Guelph, why they choose to come to the university, and their motivations for moving. Once the participant shared some information about themselves, for the most part they were much more comfortable and open to answer the more personal and reflexive questions which were posed in the Process section. The Process section began by asking about the type of funding the student received to come to the university, and also discussed the food bank and why students felt that they had to use the service. The Barriers and Solutions section was a way to end the interview on a positive note and encouraged students to tell the university what they thought could decrease help their use of the on-campus food bank, and what services they felt they needed.

Conducting interviews allowed me to speak to international graduate students who have identified that they have used the on-campus food bank and provided an opportunity for these students to indicate strategies that they believed the university could implement in order to reduce their need to use the on-campus food bank. The one-on-one interviews allowed me to ask more in-depth questions which talked about stigma and encouraged participants to share more personal aspects of their food security realities. Although students were advised in the consent process that they could choose not to answer questions, all participants answered each question and were motivated to tell their stories. The interviews provided the international graduate students with an opportunity to share their stories about using the on-campus food bank, and the various barriers they have had to overcome. As I was unable to provide incentives for these interviews, the students who did participate advised me that they were doing so because they wanted to make a change and help out where they could. All of the interview participants indicated that they would like to have a copy of the report when I was done, and several touched

base after the interview to let me know that they were available if I needed them again. By listening to their personal stories about their use of the on-campus food bank, I was able to develop deeper insights into why international graduate students are disproportionately using this service.

Focus groups:

Focus groups were conducted as a final method of data collection in December 2018. An email invite, as is seen in Appendix C, was sent out to the international graduate student list inviting students to participate in a 2-hour focus group to discuss the key factors that shape international graduate students' disproportionate use of the on-campus food bank (see Appendix F for a complete list of the questions). The focus group began with a discussion of six preliminary themes that emerged through the survey and the in-depth interviews. After discussing these preliminary themes, I asked three questions:

- Is there anything here that you would like to comment on? Ask questions about?
- What kinds of solutions might help international students experiencing food insecurity?
- Are there any specific ideas about solutions for students experiencing food insecurity at the University of Guelph?

In total there were 3 participants, all of which I had already interviewed. Through this focus group, I was able to have an opportunity to talk to international students about the data I had already gained from phase one and two, and I had the opportunity to fill in blanks and increase insight into other areas which I may have over looked during my initial analysis. During the focus group I took notes but also provided a copy of the questions and paper for the participants to make notes on themselves. All three participants handed in notes at the end of the focus group,

and I coded my notes and their looking for similar themes that I found from the previous methods of data collection and any new themes.

Positionality:

As I am not an insider of the group I have researched, I believe it is important to discuss my position as a researcher. I believe that my position affected my ability to build rapport with and get participants involved without the use of a group gate keeper to help with snowball sampling. Although one of the purposes of the survey was to help facilitate participant recruitment, it did not work as I had expected. The survey worked to inform participants about the project and worked to give students an opportunity to identify if they wanted to participate in the study further. Though 47 people indicated that they would be interested in participating in further research, there were significantly fewer people responding to my emails to participate. It was only when I connected with insiders from the group that I was able to gain more participants through snowball sampling.

Additionally, the Office of Intercultural Affairs helped to distribute my email for recruitment when my personal ones were failing. As this is a trusted source for international students it enabled me to gain more participants. I believe that students would have felt more willing to be participants if I was an insider to their group. Two participants admitted to me that they only agreed to do the interview because they thought I was from the same country that they were from based on seeing my last name. Most participants agreed that they did not often speak about their use of the food bank, but when they did it was to a fellow international student, as they believed that they were more understanding of their struggles. My domestic status may have been a limitation on recruitment, because participants may have not felt comfortable speaking to someone who was not in the same situation as them. Although I felt that I was an appropriate

researcher for this project because of my experience and interests, being an outsider came with a set of difficulties. Since the participation was voluntary, people who wanted their voices to be heard participated regardless of my status, however being a domestic student may have discouraged people from participating in this project. Another limitation of the study is the timeline. This work is being done as part of my MA degree, and as such, is bounded by the expectations and requirements around the time it should take to complete the project. At the same time, given that food security is an ongoing issue at the university, it makes sense to be as timely as possible, in order to have the data that can be used to shape policy and potentially improve the situation sooner, rather than later.

Analysis techniques:

At every phase of data collection participant information was de-identified before being analyzed. The survey was anonymized as I had no specific contact with the participants. However, as I had specific contact with participants from the interviews and the focus groups, information on participant identities was kept confidential and pseudonyms have been used. I have done my best to remove any other information which can be used to identify participants. The survey was composed of a mixture of quantitative and qualitative questions. The quantitative questions were analysed through SPSS software, and descriptive statistics were found. Additionally, the answers to the qualitative questions were compiled and coded to find the most common answers and themes. As all but one of the interviews were audio recorded, verbatim transcripts were created without using any software or technologies. After the transcriptions were completed, my personal jot notes from the interviews were compared to the transcripts, and I highlighted points which I thought were important during the interview. Finally, a thematic analysis occurred on the hard copies of the transcriptions, in order to find similarities and

differences. Once the common themes were determined, a review of all of the transcripts occurred, and the themes along with important quotes were organized in order to build my argument. During the focus group, I took handwritten notes, and afterwards I typed them and organized them into themes. I organized these themes in terms of which ones were similar to those I had already found, and new or outlying themes.

Methods of Dissemination:

Although this research was done in part of the requirements needed for a Masters' thesis, the intent of the project was to increase awareness of the problem, and to create positive change for international students. In order to ensure that the data collected will have benefit for a wider community, I will disseminate my research in different formats. This includes this thesis, a policy brief for University of Guelph administration, and a conference presentation at the Society for Applied Anthropology (March 2018). The policy brief is particularly relevant in terms of support change. This document will allow me to share key aspects of the data while also suggesting solutions that are rooted in the stories and experiences of participants. This also connects with one of the underlying goals of the Public Issues Anthropology MA program, which is to undertake and share research with audiences outside of academia. By disseminating my research in this way, the outcomes will be of use to a variety of audiences and policy makers at the University.

Chapter 4: The challenges associated with transitioning to Canada and the direct impacts that the on-campus food bank has on food security of international students

“It is good. We are needy, so whatever we get, it is good for our purpose.”- Abanish

In this chapter, I focus on the experiences of international students and use the data to explore the factors that shape food bank usage, and unpack the various reasons why they find themselves in this situation. Critically, I use data I have collected to reveal the sort of culturally appropriate interventions that might be the most relevant in solving this problem. I first present the results of the interviews and then the chapter moves on to discuss some related results found in the survey. Specifically, I discuss the CSA on-campus food bank and how it directly impacts the lives of international graduate students, as it is a main resource used by international students to assist them while they transition to their new country. Specifically, I address how the food bank is considered a necessity to international students, and how students face transitional challenges associated with housing, employment and financial troubles which lead them to use the food bank. I argue that the lack of transitional assistance that international students receive upon arriving at the University of Guelph negatively impacts their ability to be food secure, and therefore has implications on their need to disproportionately use the on-campus food bank. As such, I will demonstrate that if international graduate students are given more assistance, this might minimize regular reliance on the food bank. In order to make this argument, I first discuss the challenges associated with finding appropriate housing and employment opportunities. I then discuss why the food bank is often considered a necessity, and how international students often identify as situationally food insecure.

Upon making the decision to pursue studies abroad, international graduate students have to work hard to ensure that if they are successfully admitted into an institution, they will be able

to legally and financially accept their spot. Many participants discussed how the process of deciding to pursue international graduate schooling was vigorous, and typically done alone. This process included researching and ranking universities based on the programs they had to offer, contacting and/or having interviews with potential advisors, and applying for the required paperwork such as visas and study permits for themselves and family members who might be joining them while they get their education. Ultimately, potential international graduate students have to determine whether they were financially able to pursue studies abroad, and try to plan how they will afford both their education and the expenses that go along with their travels and living in a new country. This preparation process was described by participants as demanding, and if even a small thing went wrong during the process there was the chance that all of their plans could be derailed. Participants further described that timelines on paperwork being processed in their respective countries was unpredictable, and in a few cases participants discussed how the entire travel plan to Canada was compromised and the participants were put into a more financially precarious state. For most of my participants, these problems were completely out of their hands. For example, Matheus reflected that he had lost a lot of money during this process before he even arrived in Canada. During the time he had been processing his passport and the paperwork required for his travels there was a strike in his country, and he was not able to get any of the documentation before he was scheduled to leave. Matheus then had to book a new flight to Canada, and lost all of the money from his original flight. This affected his life in a nonfinancial way as well, because his delayed arrival meant that he missed the orientation session provided for new graduate students at the University of Guelph.

Although there were many challenges before moving, most participants agreed that the difficulties really began once they got to Canada, and that this is when they felt they needed the

most resources and support from the University. One of the main issues brought up by participants was complications with housing and finding appropriate accommodations. This has both food security and broader wellbeing implications.

Challenges Associated with Housing:

The issues with housing discussed by participants were wide-ranging but significant. Most participants indicated that they lived in university-owned family housing as this was the easiest method when they first moved to Guelph. The University of Guelph has two options for family housing communities, College Avenue and Wellingtons Woods. Both of these options are located just outside of the main university campus. These units are advertised for students who are married or equivalent, in which at least one partner is a student at the university. A spot in family housing is not guaranteed and is typically confirmed within six weeks before arrival. Many participants stated that they believed international students were given a priority for family housing, however this is not stated on the website. The large number of international students living in family housing helps make these ‘safe’ spaces for international students. Family housing units provide a fridge, and hot water and electricity is included in the rental fee. All other utilities, such as internet or cable must be arranged upon arrival. Additionally, all units are unfurnished, and have no additional amenities, so this must also be arranged upon arrival. Anushia, who migrated with her husband and children explained that there were a lot of challenges with her arrival, and the first one was housing. She explains,

...[F]irst thing to find the accommodations, I mean housing. So, I got housing three weeks after my arrival. Until that period, I lived in one of my not related friends’ home, so it was hard to keep my kids and husband together. So, three weeks later I got moved here [family housing], and at that point, so only the housing was provided, it was not furnished, so I had to figure out these to get furniture, because I don’t have much money to buy new stuff, I was waiting for free stuff. And furniture....Only they give you an empty house, it has a cooker and a washing machine that is it. There is no furniture, no beds.

Anushia explained that she was placed on a waiting list for family housing for three weeks and was offered no solution by the university upon her arrival as to where she should stay until a unit became available for her family. Her advisor suggested that she rent something off campus, but she was unable to do so. For the three weeks that she was on the waiting list, she stayed with the family of her husbands' colleague in Toronto and took a bus to Guelph almost every day to attend her classes, spending nearly 30 dollars and over two hours of travel time each way. Some of the issues regarding housing encountered by Anushia and other students included having to fully furnish the family housing unit, being wait-listed and having to stay with other community members for a few weeks until they were able to enter their family housing units.

Anushia was not the only student who told stories of being wait-listed. Randy, who also migrated with his children and spouse who was pursuing a Masters, explained that his major challenge when moving to Guelph was housing. Randy's study permit was originally declined, and he was unable to come to Guelph right away, however he was told that he would be reevaluated within the month. Randy reached out to the university and explained his situation, but in order to secure his housing spot, he was still required to pay his rent for one month. At a later time, his family then decided to move units to one that was more appropriate for them, and they were told they would have to move by the first of November. They got themselves packed and ready, and were then told by the university that they needed a month to do repairs on their unit. Randy explains his frustration in this situation by saying, "They wanted us to consider their need for an extension, but they wouldn't consider our need for an extension." Randy felt that the university should have been understanding of his situation and that his delayed arrival was out of his control. Furthermore, he felt that the university was willing to inconvenience him and his

family without any consequences, holding themselves to a different standard than what was acceptable for students.

The cost of family housing depends the size of the unit and how many people are going to be living in it, as is similar to renting a home off of campus. Some participants explained that the reason why they were more inclined to go into family housing is because payments were monthly, and they were not required to provide a first and last month deposit, which is a common practice for other rentals in Ontario. Miguel, who migrated with and needed accommodations for his children and spouse further explained:

But one positive thing, for example is that they do not ask us for the deposit in addition to the first and last months. So that is good because for example coming from Mexico, the exchange rate to Canadian dollars it is high, so if we needed to pay a deposit in addition to the first month of rent, that would have been too much for us. So basically, we are just paying the rent month by month.

This payment schedule was appealing for many participants and added to the idea that living in family housing was easier and more convenient than living off campus, particularly when you have a family. Focus group participants were a mixed group, some with families or spouses, and others who migrated single, and a discussion emerged where it was agreed upon that living in family housing was good if you had dependents but living on campus would not be worth it for a single international graduate student. Although finding a place off campus may have be difficult, it was more cost effective to rent off campus. Housing affordability and accessibility has become a significant problem in Guelph for a number of reasons, including commuters living in Guelph and working in the Greater Toronto Area, and the provincial governments plans to increase the population in Guelph with the Places to Grow Act. These factors and others have affected the availability of rental units, and the increased prices of those that are available. Due to the Places to Grow Act there is planned to be 191,000 people in Guelph by 2041, meaning that the housing

issues, including the costs and availability of housing, will likely become worse over time (McNaughton 2018; Gibson 2019).

Others who lived off campus discussed how it was difficult to find an appropriate home, and how even within their homes they felt secluded and lonely. Arjun explained that generally finding accommodations off campus was more difficult given the lack of networks and due to landlords not trusting that international students had the ability to pay their rent. Arjun also felt that finding a home was his primary challenge upon moving to Guelph. He explained that,

Uh, as an international student, the only source for us is Kijiji and the Cannon, and that time when we try and talk to the people that we are international students newly coming here, they really want to have those certificates, and this and they say that this person is a good person types of certificates but we don't have those or we do not have initial jobs, that's what we are here to come here and find, so there not sure or confident about it, if they would be able to pay the rent or not, so they generally do not reply.

Arjun eventually found housing two weeks before arriving in Guelph, through a connection made with another student who was migrating to Guelph, and who happened to have an uncle who lived in Canada. He was able to meet with landlords and vouch for their ability to pay rent. Matheus also explained that he had difficulties with his accommodations, particularly, that it “was not exactly what it seemed” once he arrived in Guelph. Because he did not know anyone in Guelph, Matheus did not want to just blindly pick a place before he arrived. Rather, he wanted to be able to go view his potential new homes before he made any financial commitments. In order to visit places and see them in person, Matheus attempted to couch surf for a couple of days, but was not able to find any one to host him. Eventually he was contacted by his future landlord and agreed to the lease without seeing it because “she seemed to really care about who was coming into the house,” and he was promised he would be living with other studious and respectful graduate students. In reality, the space was not as was described, and the other housemates were not a match. Matheus felt lucky that he was able to break his lease after 2 months when he found

somewhere better suited for him. Most students are unable to leave their leases until a year has lapsed, so in the case that their accommodations are really unbearable, they feel forced to stay in them or lose money in order to leave and find a new place. Although this issue is not particularly confined to just international students, having to settle accommodations before arriving in Guelph can lead to this situation happening at a higher rate than it might for students who are actually able to see their future homes and meet the people they will be living with before making a financial commitment.

Another fear about renting off campus was discussed by the group during the focus group. Participants shared that they had become aware that landlords would try to take advantage of international students by posting fraudulent advertisements on Kijiji and on the Cannon. Since the students would not be there to meet with potential landlords, these advertisers would ask them to send deposits for homes that were non-existent, and some students only found out about it once they arrived. This appeared to be somewhat common knowledge among international students, contributing to why they had become wary about renting rooms or homes from these non-University of Guelph websites.

Sharron was an outlier when it came to housing, as she lived in university residence. She lived in West Residence, which is an apartment style residence integrated within the family housing community, and is ideal for mature and graduate students. Unlike the family housing units that were stayed in by the majority, West Residence is furnished, and all utilities including internet are included. Additionally, a meal plan is required to be purchased to live there. Sharron explained that she bought the smallest one possible, with the option to use it to buy her textbooks and get the rest of the money refunded by the end of the year. Therefore, she still bought much of

her food and made it at home, rather than getting it on campus. Moreover, Sharron thought that she would come to West Residence and if she did not like it she would move, saying,

I thought for myself if you don't want to continue staying in this residence you can ask for refund and move, and when I emailed them they said no we don't have a contract for one semester it is for the full year so at least 2 semesters, so if you want to move that won't be refunded.

She was informed that this was in the contract information, but Sharron admitted that she did not read much of the details on the contracts. Sharron also suggested that some information on the contracts be more readily available and translated more clearly for international students. For example, upon her arrival to Guelph she had difficulties finding where the keys were to be picked up because she did not arrive on the predetermined orientation day.

Finally, in regard to housing, rent was regarded as the biggest financial problem after tuition, and that most of one's money was going to pay it. Survey participants were asked to rank their expenses in terms of priority, and 68% of participants ranked rent as their second priority, as is seen in Figure 4.1 below.

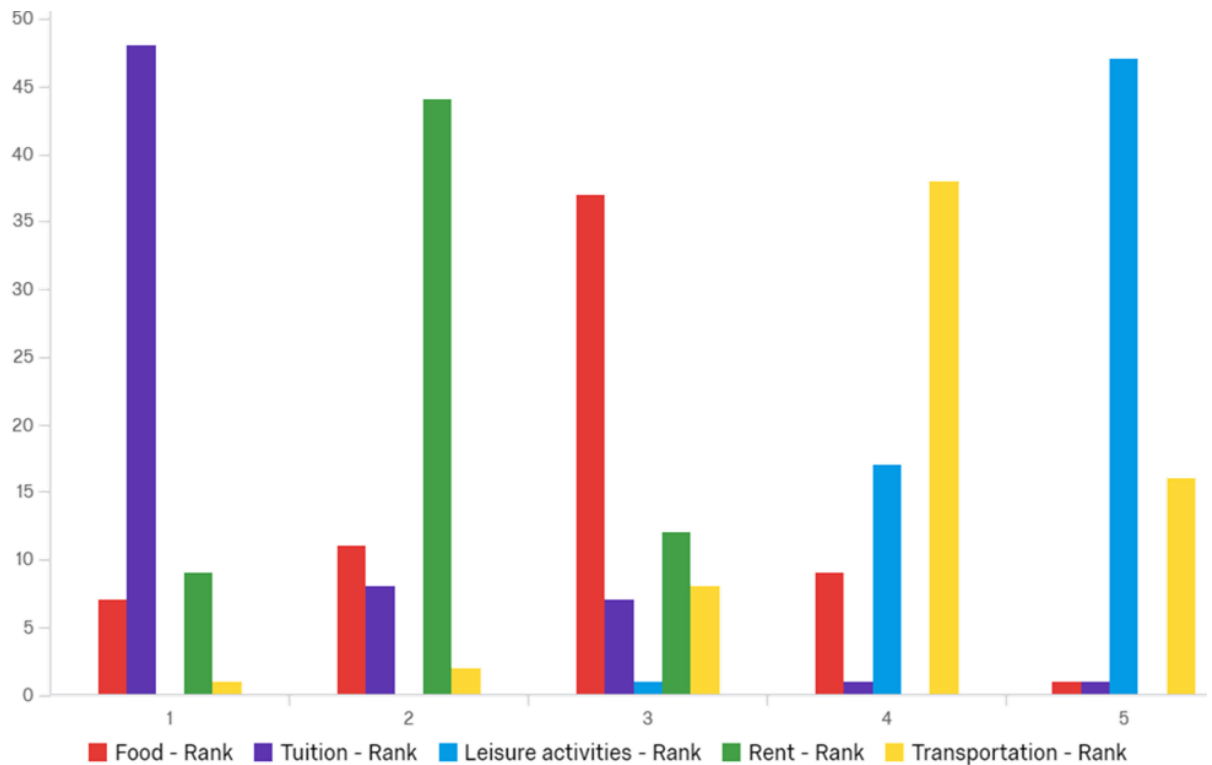


Figure 4.1: Survey Results: Participant prioritization of expenses per semester

During the focus group, a discussion also arose about independence and how there was an assumption within the group that they would be able to move to Guelph as graduate students and be able to afford to live by themselves. In reality this was not the case as most single international students felt they had to rent rooms in homes with others or had to live in family housing because these were the only affordable options. Their agency was being affected, as they did not really have a choice to do what they wanted or believed they would do before they migrated, and had to settle for what was affordable. Additionally, paying rent was also given the highest priority of all required payments by the majority of participants, out of fear that they would lose their homes, Furthermore, rent costs are not as easily negotiated as buying fewer and cheaper food items. Sharron explained that in terms of prioritizing her money, “Yeah, definitely I would be putting it on the rent. It is not possible to survive, food you cannot say anything for food but keep some, but eat less, and stay alive.” Participants commented that if the housing

prices were generally lower, then they would be able to spend more money on food, particularly on food that they liked or that was culturally appropriate, and this change could lead to an increased sense of and experience of wellbeing and improved food security for graduate students. In the conclusion chapter I will present recommendations that draw from these findings. By making these changes I have suggested, international students may be more financially secure and therefore may be less reliant on the food bank.

Work and work abuses:

The financial difficulties that students face with their housing are also shaped by the employment opportunities that international graduate students have. Finding work for international students can be difficult, but students indicated that it was necessary in order to pay for one's essential expenses, including but not limited to rent, tuition, and food. Slightly more than half of the survey respondents (51.5%) indicated that they worked jobs other than GTAs or GRAs throughout the school year, with the majority of these jobs being found off campus (61.3%). Participants explained that with their student visas they were able to work part time jobs, at a limit of 20 hours a week, and the majority felt that they were obligated to do so. Out of the survey respondents who worked these extra jobs, 48.5% said that they worked approximately 5-10 hours per week. Although finding a job can be challenging for all students, there are additional challenges when it comes to trying to find a job as an international graduate student. This includes the lack of networks that international students may have. Participants felt that they were at a disadvantage in hiring as they did not know people who could get them positions. Being unable to find a job on campus, Rohan reached out to the networks that he had with his other international friends and was hired at a gas station. Although the ideal position for Rohan would have been at the University of Guelph Library, he had to settle for what he was able to get

based on who he knew. He explained that even getting the job at the gas station was a difficulty as “they usually hire people who are experienced, so we find it hard in getting a job. I had a reference from my friend, so he did me a favour.” Like Rohan, many students would rather have worked on campus, however in reality, 61.3% of survey respondents indicated that their job was off campus. Without having any formal networks already established with professors or other groups on campus, international students struggled to get any jobs on campus and were further limited to jobs off campus as a result of where people in their networks had jobs. Many participants shared similar experiences to Rohan where they had a friend vouch for them and ask an employer to hire another international student. A few participants who had formal jobs were employed at gas stations, and others were employed at big box grocery stores, and large food companies.

Some participants brought up the idea of working on campus. Students have the ability to work in various positions on campus, from working for hospitality services in one of the food locations on campus, to doing a work study for a professor, or as a graduate student working as a teaching or research assistant. There are many other positions, some of which are meant for students who have financial need, or require students to have completed certain classes at the university in order to be qualified. Although there are many jobs available on campus, participants found it difficult to get a position given the various stipulations or restrictions, and/or limited available positions. Batuk explained that once he realized he needed to get a job due to his struggles with groceries and rent, that hospitality services were not hiring at that time. Many jobs at the university are hired for much earlier than when the position actually comes available. For example, work study positions which begin in May will have the hiring procedures in March. Students who might need a job right away are often unable to get a job working at the

university because they will have had to apply months beforehand. Additionally, there are some jobs on campus that have stipulations that the applicant must be a domestic student. These jobs often come from government money and therefore it is the funder who sets the rules as to how it is spent. Participants suggested that there be jobs that are specific for international students as there are those specific to domestic students, in order to level the playing field. Furthermore, many on-campus jobs stipulate that you must be in financial need in order to be a candidate, and for many international students the university definition of being in financial need can cause problems for them. This is because some international graduate students might be required to have a certain amount of money in their bank accounts if they for immigration or visa purposes. By having this money in their accounts for immigration purposes, which they are not able to use on a daily basis, they are then being cut out from job opportunities. The financial need assessment form that is filled out to determine whether or not someone has financial need does not take this into consideration and may indicate that certain applicants do not have financial need when in reality the money that they have in their account is untouchable.

Having to work off campus for Rohan and others felt disadvantageous and at times a waste of time. This was particularly true for participants who were in natural sciences and were limited to only working in evenings and weekends because they were required to be working in their labs on campus during regular business hours. Generally, participants expressed that when they were working on evenings and weekends, they would much rather be at home spending time with their families or using that time to do their homework or further school studies. Manish explained, “Students acknowledge that working is wasting time, they also compromise their time to go and study at home, because you have to go somewhere to work, and the way you work for 2 or 3 hours, and then you are tired.” Manish felt that the restriction of hours that he was able to

work given his visa regulations further led to this feeling of wasting time. Although he was working every day it was only for two or three hours at a time. This happened to several participants, because only being able to work 20 hours or less was unappealing to some employers, so they tried to make them work as much as they could throughout the week. In comparison to students who had previously worked a teaching assistantship or a research assistantship, this was doubly frustrating because the pay was much less at jobs off campus. Miguel explained, “Last summer I had a part time job outside the university, so I used to get some income to complement the expenses....it wasn’t the same income as teaching assistantship, but it helped me to cover my tuition for the summer.” Students explained that given the choice to work as a teaching or research assistant, or to work off campus they would choose the teaching assistantship, or try to do both. Arjun explained that even though he wanted to do both, it became difficult managing his hours as result of his work restrictions. He explained,

For the summer semester I was working at Walmart for 20 hours. The time when I got this job we were allowed only 20 hours, so I cannot cope with them because they want me to work at least 12 hours, and then I am offered a full TA and that is something like 17 hours, so it gets me down to 9.5 hours a week, so that together is 26.5 hours, and I can’t do it.

Arjun was forced to quit his job at Walmart and rely solely on the funds that he received from his teaching assistantship in order to pay for his essential expenses. As a single person, Arjun was able to manage his essential expenses using just the money from his teaching assistantship and some money from his savings. However, this was more difficult to do when migrating with an entire family, as more money was needed and led to the additional work-related problems that international students with families had to encounter.

For participants who migrated with families, an added difficulty was finding a job that would allow them to work and also go home and spend time with their families and rear their

often very young children. 36.7% of international student survey participants indicated that they brought their families with them when they migrated to study at the University of Guelph.

Anushia explained, “If I am alone, I would not have much problems with that, but I came with my family so for me, I have to find an external job. Still I am trying, but I find the time frame doesn’t always do good because I need to work 7 days.” Although she was attempting to find a job, at the time of our interview, Anushia was unable to find a job that could accommodate her schedule and felt financially unstable. For some students who had their spouses with them, their spouses also had to find jobs, which was an additional challenge. It was explained to me by participants that immigration allows spouses to have open working permits, and these jobs were needed in order to help pay for expenses outside of tuition for many families. Many times, students would try to arrange jobs for their spouses before they came to Canada, however once they arrived and realized the reality of the jobs they would have to find new ones. Some problems included how far the jobs were from their homes, and how they could get there due to their lack of awareness of the city as a whole before arriving. If the job was not manageable, they then had to switch jobs. João explained his wife’s situation, “She was working at Mucho Burrito at night on Sundays so its weird because there are no buses on Sundays after 5, that was very different.” João then explained that she left this job for a different one but while she was there she often felt unsafe having to walk home at night when the buses were not running. This type of awareness about the City of Guelph would have been good to know before she accepted this job. The university does not take into consideration how many people are coming with their potential student and if they need an extra job at the university or extra funding in order to care for their families who have also migrated. Anushia explained to me that even with her spouse here with

her three children, it was difficult to manage at times. Childcare is expensive and having only one of them working was not enough.

A few students managed to get around these difficulties by working in informal capacities, including working online or tutoring for cash. By working online, participants were able to do things such as program evaluations on their own time, and once they were done they would get paid by an internet cash transfer. This was all untraceable and the hour restriction was no longer a problem. Similarly, with tutoring this was usually done on the participants' free time, it usually took place on campus and paid in cash. These two informal jobs allowed participants to both get around only working 20 hours a week, and work around their own schedules. Matheus explains,

I have 3 jobs right now, so that is how I am paying for it. I mean 3 jobs, PhD, tutoring, and an online job. ...the online job is kind of informal, no one has any knowledge of that, it just deposits in my PayPal account, and my supervisors they expressly prohibited that I don't work which they cannot do, but they did it any way.

Matheus notes that he did not tell his supervisor about this online job, because they expressly forbid him from taking on other work outside of what he was doing in their lab. Prohibiting students from getting other jobs is not allowed, however Matheus was not the only student who experienced this type of situation, and who felt that he had to go against his advisors best wishes and get a job in order to pay for his essential expenses. Additionally, this speaks to a general discomfort that international students might feel with addressing their needs with a faculty member. Having a negative relationship with one's advisor can have negative implications for overall wellbeing.

During the focus group, a discussion arose about how students found their advisors would "strongly recommend" that they not get other jobs or that they quit their jobs to focus on their

studies or lab work. If participants did not adhere to this, then they felt that advisors would find ways to make their lives more complicated by using threatening behavior. For example, participants at times experienced what they perceived to be unnecessarily tight deadlines and were given bad semester reviews if they did not quit their non-university jobs. Focus group participants said that they were understanding of their advisors' concerns and agreed that to a point when you are studying and working at the same time then you were not able to be focused entirely on your studies. However, they felt that if their advisors had concerns about student focus, then they were not going about addressing it in the right ways. Some participants were explicitly told not to get another job like Matheus was, while others felt that their advisors were implying this, and that their behavior was in this way coercive. Luxshan explains,

I was thinking of doing some part time activity, part time job, as I was entitled to, then my professor wanted me to be very focused on my research and he just might think that I am going to these part time jobs, he told me be very focused he didn't tell me you should not do part time activities, but he is always telling me you need to be very focused.

Discussion of this type of coercion was more prominent among students who were in the natural sciences as they were required to work in the lab as a part of their studies. Participants also felt that their lab work was not regulated and that what was being asked of them was meant to be particularly difficult and time consuming so that they were unable to find another job. Matheus explained, "I know what is expected of us, but I don't know what the rules are, what I can tell you is it is expected of us from 9-5 or even more." Participants explained that even if they were expected to be there during regular business hours, they were often given assignments that needed to be completed right before they were to leave, particularly on Friday nights so that they were required to come into the lab on weekends, thus taking away any opportunity for them to have jobs on the weekends or evenings because they had to finish the work their advisor assigned first. Matheus went on to explain,

I'm not sure how the hours work for this type of thing, but I'm pretty sure they can't keep forcing you to come on the weekend unless it is for something extraordinary that you have to do. I wouldn't mind it but just pressuring all the time and things you could do on Monday morning.

Participants were extremely understanding and would be happy to come in to do work on the weekends or evening if necessary, but the frequency of these emergency lab situations was frustrating to participants and felt abusive. Participants also felt that the power relationships inflicted by their advisors was more than just in controlling their lab work and jobs but also controlling their ability to get teaching assistantships, which for many were their main ways of gaining income and valuable teaching experiences.

For many of the participants their teaching assistantships were not guaranteed for all of the semesters of their education and would have to be applied to if the student wanted them. Participants felt that they were at a disadvantage applying for teaching assistantships within their own department if their advisors did not want them to have one. During the focus group, participants explained that they often applied to teaching assistantships with the hopes of getting them but never did, and that if they would apply outside of their own departments then they were more successful. Although there is no way to know if this success was due to there being more positions outside of their departments or because their advisors were stopping them from getting a position, it is something to think about, particularly with regards to ensuring that hiring practices follow the CUPE 3913 Collective Agreement. Moreover, participants felt that it was common for advisors to tell students that there were only allowed to work one teaching assistantship per year based on university guidelines. However, this is not true, and there are no university guidelines which limit the number of teaching assistantships any student, domestic or international can have. International students coming into a new school and a new country may rely on advisors to be truthful and trustworthy, but as my participants' experiences highlight,

international students are not always comfortable with their advisors and may actually feel threatened by them to work and live a certain way. This can particularly be a problem in the lab-based disciplines, where graduate students are working for advisors' projects. This can be less of an issue in the disciplines where students work more independently. Essentially, this points the potential pitfalls of graduate work, and the ways that individual faculty advisors can affect the relative wellbeing of students. While this is not necessarily limited to the international graduate student experience, it does highlight student precarity. If international graduate students have supportive advisors who have correct information, then they may be more secure. However, if they feel their advisors are not supportive of their wellbeing, then they may not feel they have the resources or support to improve their working relationships.

Given the financial elements described above, this has real implications for food security, while also negatively affecting the overall wellbeing of students. Although not ideal, Matheus explained that sometimes you just have to work a job without your advisor knowing in order to survive. He put it, "It's not just me going through this kind of struggles, and all international students they have to manage some and sometimes they get jobs and they don't tell their advisors." Limiting the number of teaching assistantships not only disadvantages international students because they are not able to make the money from these positions, it also puts students who might want teaching experience at a disadvantage because it is difficult to get teaching experience without being a teaching assistant. This behaviour is not what should be practiced by an advisor, particularly with international graduate students, who are more vulnerable and less familiar with Canadian university practices. The food security and overall wellbeing of an international graduate student should not be tied to the relative beliefs, practices, and priorities of an individual faculty member. These experiences highlight a structural problem with graduate

studies at the University, in that they demonstrate that students who find themselves in difficult financial situations may have little in the way of options for support and success.

Overall, my research participants indicated that they were required to find jobs, whether on campus or off campus, in order to survive in the country. Finding a job is a transitional challenge which is associated with students being food insecure, and negatively impacting overall wellbeing. Without the means to find an appropriate job, or without job security provided by the University of Guelph, international students can find themselves struggling financially and are unable to cover all essential expenses. Although this is difficult for all international students this is particularly harder for international students who have migrated to Canada with their families. In response to whether he felt it was necessary to work, Manish explained, “You know at the end of the year you will have no money. But money will be sufficient to stay here, you will feel like you can’t. If I know I become sick there is health insurance everything is fine, but I don’t know, psychologically you feel safer when you have some extra money.” Having some income from a part time job, even if it is only 20 hours a week, helped my participants to feel safer and more secure while they were completing their degrees. In my conclusion chapter, I make recommendations related to housing that the university should consider in order to aid international students in their transition.

The food bank is a necessity for campus:

Overwhelmingly, my research participants argued that they did not know what they would do without the food bank as a resource. When asked whether they often felt they did not have enough money for food, the majority of participants responded yes, as is seen in Figure 4.2.

Do you ever feel that you do not have enough money to buy food?

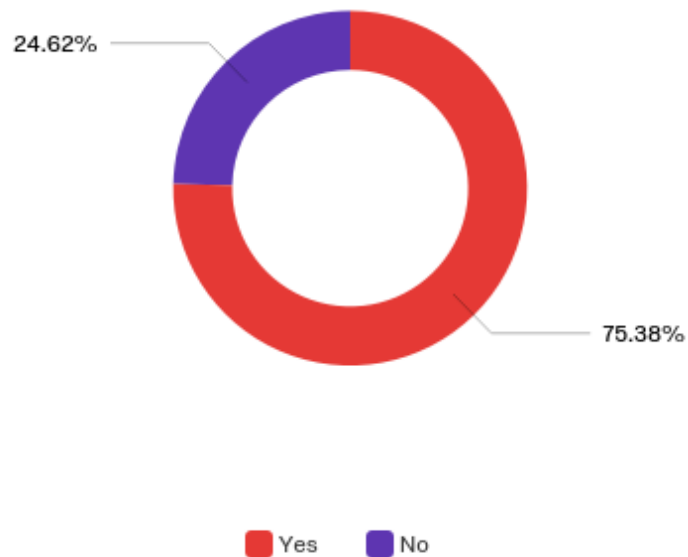


Figure 4.2: 75% of respondents indicated that they often did not have money for food

Manish explained that eating was sometimes optional if there was no money to get groceries.

Survey participants who indicated that they did not have enough money for food suggested strategies that they use when they do not have enough money for food. Generally, they suggested that they typically will rely on eating fewer meals, cooking more at home meals, visiting the food bank or other on campus events that provided food, and cutting down other expenses. Several participants also suggested that their solution was to not eat, or to eat fewer meals in a day. This lack of money might seem like something that could be a quick fix, but given the previous conversation about the difficulties of getting secure employment as an international graduate student, and the exorbitant costs of international tuition as was discussed in the literature reviewed, having financial difficulties is a systematic and structural problem. Participants acknowledged that their financial issues could be alleviated if their tuition costs were more

affordable. Batuk explained that he felt international students needed more support when it came to paying for tuition fees. He said,

“I think that the tuition fee is very high for international students, so this is a big issue...I understand why the tuition is so costly here, it is so costly all over the world, so when I came here I knew about this, I made this decision.”

Batuk hoped that the University would help provide more scholarships for international students, but suggested that if they were not willing to do that then they could “at least increasing these types of social services, like food banks.” This point made by Batuk further pleads the case that the food bank is a necessary resource on the University of Guelph campus, and that students are using it because they are overwhelmed with the burden of paying for their inflated student tuition fees. High tuition fees lead international graduate students to feel that they are the universities “cash cows”, and that their presence on the University of Guelphs campus is only secured because of the amount of money that they are able to contribute (Stewin 2013: 73).

Furthermore, the food bank is considered an everyday essential for many students, with the majority of my survey participants, both domestic or international student food bank users, indicating that they visit the food bank every week or every other week (see Figure 4.3).

How frequently would you estimate you use the CSA on-campus food bank?

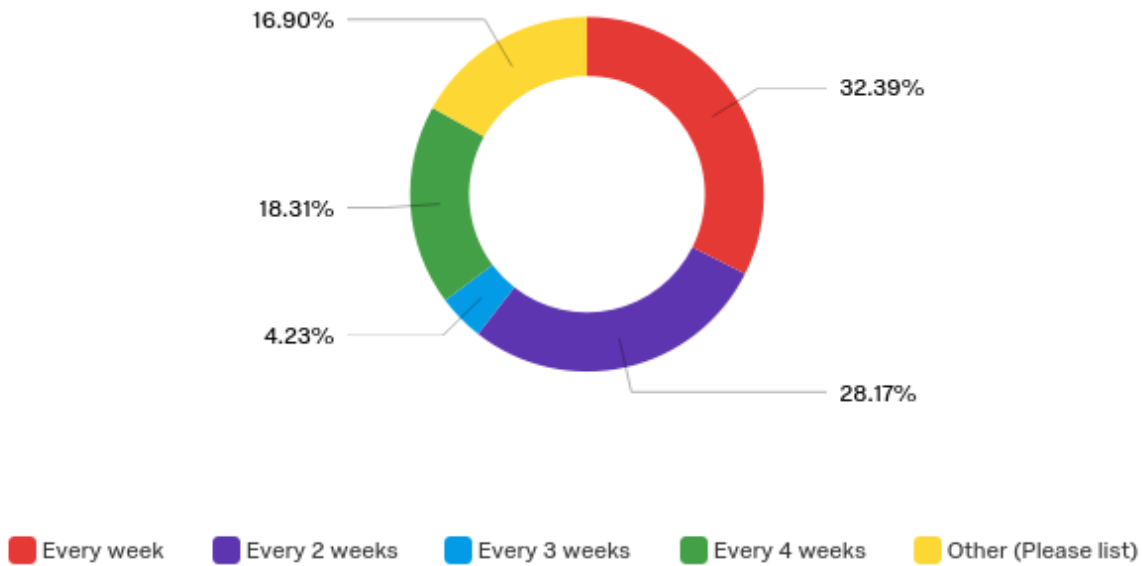


Figure 4.3: The majority of respondents visit the food bank every week or every 2 weeks

Batuk explained that his use was “regular, almost because I was in the constant pressure of money.” This constant pressure is what led participants to feel like they were not really living but rather were just studying until their programs were over, and then they were going to go back home. João puts it well when he explains that,

The only issue is not food security it is how you feel about it, this feeling that you are not living and that you are not having this quality time... the quality of life. Because if you are not able to go out once in a while, or to buy a Christmas gift, imagine if you were able to only pay the bills and to eat the food from food bank, are you going to be a happy person? If you pay your bills, and you eat canned beans and tuna...and then you don't do anything else you just study, how can you say this is life? So, you need money outside of the food bank. To at least have some, so yeah, money is needed to have other things to give you a little bit of breathing room.

Participants made it clear to me that using the food bank does not allow you to have a good life, but it is just something that is done out of necessity. Many students voiced that they felt that they were not actually living, and due to the various responsibilities they had they were

feeling strained in terms of money and ability to get food elsewhere. As mentioned, the majority of survey respondents who were food bank users, indicated that they sometimes felt that they did not have enough money to buy food. Furthermore, as an international student without having a support system geographically close to them as was discussed by Farahbakash et al (2017), it became more difficult to find others to help when times were tough, and thus the food bank came in handy and was there to provide items to help them survive. Given the FAO (2012) definition of food security, students who are using the food bank, are not food secure, as they are feeling that they are unable to have a healthy life. Relying on the food bank prohibits international students from living a life where they are able to have choice in terms of what they eat, and over all this impacts their wellbeing.

Focus group participants explained that even though they knew it was not bad to accept help, it did not feel normal to do so. Noah explained that when he went to use the food bank that he would never want to complain about the products that he was getting or the quantities available. He explained that he felt it was a “beggars can’t be choosers kind of situation”, and that he was grateful for whatever he was given even if it was not his preferred product. Some participants explained that it was more than just preference, but that they felt the food they were getting from the food bank was not nutritious enough, given that it was typically canned and frozen foods. Therefore, if they were given the choice of what they would want to eat it would be foods that were more nutritious. Food choices will be discussed more in the upcoming chapter, along with the matter of culturally appropriate foods, and the concern from many students that the foods they were receiving from the food bank were culturally inappropriate, or were not appropriate for the specific diets of students, in particular students who needed vegetarian, or halal foods. Moreover, with the added frustration of having to go at specific days and times to

get certain products, going to the food bank was not as easy for many as it may seem to an outsider. João, for example, told me that even though he was getting many food products, that he felt that what he was getting from the food bank was not nutritious or that he did not like it. He explained that you “just get it out of desperation.”

Participants explained that this situation of desperation was often the result of not having enough funds to pay for groceries, as was discussed in the literature reviewed in Hanbazaza et al. (2016) and Farahbakhsh et al. (2015), financial stresses are a main contributor to the challenges that international students have to face upon transitioning. Even though not all students I talked to received funding packages, even those who did explained that they still would not have been able to survive with the funding that they had. Many of the participants attributed their use of the food bank as a way to manage their household expenses. João explaining his reasoning to go to the food bank as, “I don’t have much money to buy groceries, so to cover my expenses as part of it.” The majority of the funds were going towards their tuition fees, so having a source of food was extremely helpful, and a way to ensure the money they did have was able to be used to cover tuition and accommodation fees. When my participants were asked to list all of the expenses that they have to pay each semester, they primarily selected food, rent and tuition; a few selected textbooks. Other responses that respondents indicated can be broken into four categories, entertainment, health, living expenses, family expenses. A further detailed list can be found in Appendix H. Additionally, when asked to prioritize expenses, as is seen in Figure 4.2 and 4.3, shown earlier in the chapter, only 11% of participants rank food as their primary financial concern.

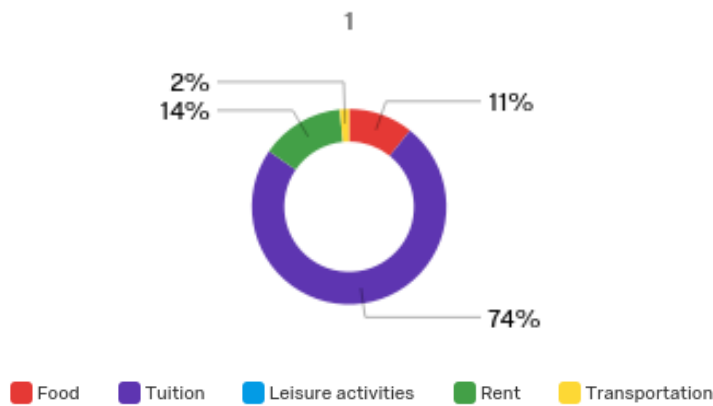


Figure 4.3: Participants' number one financial priority ranked

For most students, but in particular those with tight financial situations, such as the international graduate students, all expenses came down to priorities. Abanish explained that in terms of priorities,

The first thing is the fixed cost the things I have to pay to live here, and based on things other than this that I have I have to send on food in a weekly basis maybe I have supposed 200 dollars extra this month so my food budget would be like that and maybe in the next month depending on what is left then my gas cost is not the same.

Abanish explained that monthly he had to worry about costs like rent and associated utilities, in addition to semesterly tuition. Additionally, monthly whatever he would have left over would be his grocery funds, however if there were miscellaneous expenses the money for those would also come out of the same amount that was allotted to groceries. Meaning that monthly this amount would change and that he could sometimes be left with nothing for food. Manish echoed this sentiment by explaining that,

Because food is not very expensive here compared to home rent, and books and things, food is not that expensive, but by paying for rent, paying for the internet, paying for insurance, you eat or do not eat, and you have to pay it. So that can't compete with the food, those are compulsory, so sometime those can't compete, so sometimes that cannot I don't know that.

It is evident that international graduate students are forced to make hard choices on what they are spending their money on. Participants explained that spending on food is less of a priority for

them given all of the other expenses that they have. Circumstantially, they then use the food bank.

Additionally, participants listed saving for the future as a reason why they felt they were using the food bank. Rohan explained,

Because I have to save every dollar, so like if I'm buying milk from no frills or whatever, then it definitely is going to cost me, so I need to save every dollar I can to make my expenses, to cut my expenses basically as much as I can, and to see if I don't know how I am going to pay the fees of my semester so definitely I need to start saving from today.

Rohan used the food bank to offset his costs for basic items, and still went to the grocery store for more specific items that he was unable to get at the food bank. This was common for many of the participants to use the food bank for some items and not others, as a way to offset costs.

Matheus similarly attributed his use of the food bank to not feeling,

...safe spending the little money that I've got. Which could be enough for food for a month or two I don't know. Thinking in the long term I don't really feel like I should. It is just a small help because I don't use it for all the items because I have a restriction and everything it is just a little help.

Matheus was one of the participants who had specific food needs which limited his ability to find the food bank as useful as other students may have. For students like Matheus and Rohan, this saving was because they were feeling that they were unable to pay their bills month to month, and because they were unaware as to whether they would be offered jobs or funding in the next semester. For these two students, and many of the other participants, their futures seemed precarious. This precarity was due to a lack of consistency of the amount given each semester in the funding packages, and how it is distributed. This will be discussed further with reference to situational food insecurity. Saving money was not just done by students who were feeling financially precarious but was also done by students who were planning for their futures.

João discussed with me how he planned to immigrate to Canada once he was done his PhD. Given this choice, he was forced to save to show the immigration office that he had money in his account and would be a good candidate for immigration. This was a stressful thing for João to do and involved him borrowing money from family and friends. Additionally, Jeetu, who had migrated with his wife and two children explained that he had to save for the future of his children and their potential lives in Canada and associated expenses, such as school, its supplies and childcare. Jeetu explained that he began using the food bank as a means to save money, elaborating, “we were trying to save at least 100 dollars [a month], and the older brother from my community he was saying you could save at least 200 dollars a month” by using the food bank. Although Jeetu shortly after discontinued his food bank usage due to the stigma which he learned about through his children, during the time that he was using the food bank he was able to save the money he was hoping too. Jeetu’s experience shows that the usage of the food bank can be more complex than food insecurity alone. For some international students the food bank may be used as a means to save money. In addition, there may be lack of understanding as to how food banks are used in Canada, as for many participants there was no similar services available in their countries for them to draw comparisons to. Ultimately, whether international graduate students are using the food bank because they are unable to buy their own foods, or because they are trying to save money speaks to the larger problem, which is that international students are financially insecure, and have become reliant on the on-campus food bank to assist them.

Many participants argued that even though they felt they were dependent on the food bank that it did not feel good to use the service. Focus group participants agreed that using the food bank made them feel poor and that it was an ugly way to live. Food bank users were

stigmatizing themselves into feeling this way, and thus were not abusing the resource or using it without really being in need of it. International students that I spoke to explained that they would not be using it and feeling that self-inflicted embarrassment if it was not completely necessary to do so. Focus group participants felt that the service and their use of it should not be taken lightly, and that this should be seen as a serious matter. Furthermore, they believed that because it was so important that others should have more empathy and understanding for them. Batuk explained,

I thought food bank was like food in other places in Canada, just like a social service to help people. Then when I understand it is like social stigma and people donate food sometimes, and it is not like very like good quality food. So, I understand that, you get lots of food like from no name, like no frills, so you know when I go grocery when I buy no name bread it is an option for minimum cost food, it is not high-quality food. But I was not bothered about those issues. No not that much.

In Batuk's country there were no social services similar to food banks so when he came to Canada this was his first experience with it. He further explained that once he found out about the social stigma related to food banks that he began to feel bad about using it, and that this was impacting his overall happiness and wellbeing. The fact that students are indicting that while using the food bank they feel they are not 'living', highlights even more why the food bank must be understood as a necessity, because without using it there would be even less money to live. Just because a student is international does not mean that they should not be able to live a bit like everyone else. Further this illustrates how using the on-campus food bank is a wellbeing issue, and goes beyond food insecurity in the sense that they do have food to eat, however they are still insecure as they do not have choice in what they are eating, nor do they have access to foods they prefer and which will give them a healthy lifestyle (FAO 2012). Moreover, using the on-campus food bank becomes a necessity because of the expenses that international graduate students have, however the use can negatively impact international student's happiness, and lives. When

talking about his social life, and associated expenses Arjun explained, “Sometimes we go out if it’s a birthday, everyone would say they want to go out, so you go out. But generally, it is not a trend that to go out every Saturday or Sunday...just special occasions.”

In the literature, food banks are considered an “emergency” resource that is implemented in response to an emergent need from the community (Van Esterik 2005). However, what the evidence presented in this chapter is illuminating is that for University of Guelph international graduate students, being food insecure is not an acute problem, rather it is a chronic one. Given the statistics presented in Figure 4.3, 60% of participants are reporting using the food bank at least every 2 weeks, showing that this is an ongoing issue with which international graduate students have now become reliant on the food bank, and goes to show that its presence on the University of Guelph campus is necessary, even if students are still feeling food insecure after they are visiting it.

The wellbeing of international students is being impacted due to their food insecurity, and financial problems. Participants felt that they were not able to fully express themselves and live life as they imagined they would be once migrating to Canada. I present recommendations in my conclusion chapter that draw on these findings, and with these in place international students will have the chance enact their lives in similar ways to domestic students, and their wellbeing will be positively impacted.

Situational Food Insecurity, and ‘Food’ Versus ‘Nutrition’:

Although food insecurity for the majority of my participants was not a constant state, using the food bank helped to alleviate the feeling of insecurity. The majority of participants did not identify themselves as regularly food insecure. Rather, participants explained their feeling of food insecurity as situational, and ever changing depending on the context. The precarious nature

of international students' lives was the main reason why my participants felt that they were unable to say if they were food insecure or not. Although some participants explained to me that they did not currently feel insecure, there was a general thought that they should still be living conservatively because they were unaware as to how their situation would unfold within the next couple months. The constant worrying about their financial situations can impact one's wellbeing, thus even though participants have explained that they do not necessarily identify as food insecure, their dependent use of the food bank and their impacted wellbeing demonstrates that they are suffering from food insecurity (FAO 2012). The most common concerns were whether participants would have a teaching assistantship in the next semester, or some other type of job, and whether they would be able to stay in their home, or if they would have to move somewhere with higher rent. A less common but still frequent concern for my participants were whether they would be healthy, or if they would have unexpected expenses related to illnesses. Moreover, participants wondered if they would be able to rely on their families in emergency situations, but were aware that there could be other unexpected situations in their families such as unexpected deaths which could limit their ability to access family-based assistance. For each participant, their reasons for feeling situationally insecure were different, but the commonality was that all of my participants felt worried about the future and tried to prevent their situations from worsening.

As previously discussed, at times the process of immigration and the costs associated would add up, and if there was anything wrong, there would be additional costs incurred that were not originally accounted for. The reality is that students may not have much in the way of financial safety-nets, or the ability to react to unexpected costs; this further highlights their precarity and the importance of the food bank. João explained that his first need to use the food

bank was because he had to change his flight leaving Brazil, which put him out about 500 dollars that he was not expecting to lose. Once he arrived in Canada, even though he had a scholarship he was prioritizing his spending on bills and rent, and needed the food bank to fill the unanticipated shortfall in his finances. Similarly, Heeba attributed her use of the food bank to her prioritization of her expenses. She explains, “There was a time where I said I put other things before, so I had no money, so I had to.” Heeba explained to me that one time she was left with no money to buy food, and since then she has worked harder to save. Nevertheless, Heeba did not want to label herself as food insecure. Rather, she felt that this was a one-time mismanagement that would not happen again.

Prioritization of funds was something that was discussed by all participants and was not exclusive to those who did not have jobs. Abanish explained that his priorities would be ordered by first rent, then food, then lifestyle requirements like clothes and school supplies, and then lastly home services like internet, or phone packages. He explained that this is the order he would follow when he has a job, but if he did not have a job in the winter semester then he would have to rank his lifestyle essentials higher than food, because he needed to purchase a jacket, boots and other winter gear in order to survive his first winter in Canada. Although Abanish had some funding to cover his tuition fees, he had to work or take money out of his saving in order to pay for the rest of his expenses.

When asked specifically about funding in the survey, 43.9% of students who used the on-campus food bank did not receive a funding package. However, even if provided with funding, 62.2% of survey participants explained that the money they received would cover only their tuition fees and nothing else. Additionally, many students indicated that they did not receive funding for the entirety of their studies, with 24.3% of students indicating they only had funding

for six semesters, which is the approximate time it takes to complete a Masters degree, however PhD students get funding for 9-12 semesters. In terms of the amount of funding that students were receiving, 24.3% of survey participants indicated that they would receive per semester funds between \$6000-6999. Given the price of international tuition for typical Masters programs which was discussed earlier, the funding that the majority of students are receiving per semester does not cover the costs of tuition. Therefore, without having a teaching assistantship or a graduate research assistantship, students felt they were in a financial crisis. For students migrating with their families, their spouses or partners also needed to get jobs. There were more challenges involved with non-student partners finding employment, as there was less availability of off campus jobs that were as well paying as a teaching assistantship or a research assistantship. However, at the end of the day most partners were able to find some sort of job which assisted them in gaining more security.

Most of the participants felt that their food insecurity was going to be short term, and at the most they would suffer during their time as a student, but once they either went back home or successfully got a job in their new country, then they hoped they would be relieved of this situation. Therefore, they accepted that for a short time they would be food insecure, but overall they felt it was worth it because the education they were gaining during this time would weigh this out in terms of betterment of their lives once they had completed their graduate degrees. Participants felt they were able to manage their situational food insecurity through prioritizing, which I have talked about in length, and by making lifestyle sacrifices. This included things like cooking all food at home with the cheapest ingredients, or only having one meal a day when they get home from school. Manish further explained his food insecurity by giving me this example,

Sometimes I like to go to a café and have nice food...but if I go and spend there I have to spend like 50 dollars or 70 dollars. With the 50 dollars or 70 dollars I can bring all of the

ingredients from No Frills and get nice food. So sometimes I like to go out, but I can't go there. I make the food nice for me, and then make the balance. ... This is the situation.

Manish did not want to identify himself as food insecure, rather he explained that in situations where he might want to get food from outside his home he would not be able to, because he could not justify spending so much money on one meal when he would be able to get a significant amount of groceries with the same amount. Similarly, Matheus hoped that next semester he would not have to worry about food insecurity and that he would get a job on campus as a teaching assistant which would allow him to pay for his expenses.

Matheus explained that even when being paid by the university it was difficult to predict how secure you might be in a given week because pay cheques and the payment distribution tended to be inconsistent. Matheus explained that he relied on biweekly paycheques to pay for his rent and expenses, and at times he would get miniscule amounts instead of the full paycheck. Matheus recalled receiving a pay cheque one week that was only 14 dollars, and two weeks later receiving a larger pay cheque which balanced this out. Although he eventually got his money, receiving this small amount felt as if he did not make any money that pay period, and made it difficult to manage while he waited for the remaining balance to be given to him. This inconsistency made it difficult for him to be able to plan his weeks out, or to be able to feel like he would be secure until he actually saw the money be deposited. Matheus explained to me that he talked to several people in financial services about this and tried to get it straightened out, but he hit many roadblocks when individuals in financial services were not able to explain why this was happening. When discussing his use of the food bank and how it was impacted by this inconsistency Matheus replied, "I have to figure it out. Its hard to know my situation month to month, in the long term I don't really know if I should go or not, I take it seriously if I should

take what is only necessary.” Although not explicitly identifying as food insecure, Matheus’ behaviour and attitude towards the food bank illustrates that the definitions of food insecurity are nuanced and that someone may not want to identify as food insecure even when they are experiencing these nuances.

When asking students whether they identified as food insecure, I defined food insecurity as: *The state of being without reliable access to a sufficient quantity of affordable, nutritious food.* Upon hearing the nutritional part of the definition, participants commented on how even when they were eating, they never felt that they were really getting the nutritious food that they would have selected. João felt they were making a lot of sacrifices when it came down to eating quality food. Similarly, Sharron explained, “Affordable, nutritious, that maybe sometimes no. Because nutritious like maybe you need to eat enough vegetables, healthy and eat some fruits and sometimes I don’t buy fruits. It is so expensive in the food court.” Feeling nutritionally insecure, was the result of several factors, one being that nutritious foods can be more expensive than other foods, and two being that when they were getting foods from the food bank it was mostly canned and frozen foods, which students believed had less nutritious value than fresh foods.

Participants felt that in response to the food they were receiving or able to purchase that their overall eating habits were changing. Although similar to the issue previously discussed about the inability to find culturally appropriate foods, these participants explained that their change in diet was strictly due to their access to foods which they thought were healthy. Randy explained that he felt food insecure due to his lack of access to meats, and eventually he and his wife became vegetarians because of their lack of access to meat products. This dietary change ended up being more negatively impactful than it would have originally seemed, as it led to his

wife developing anemia, and becoming ill. Although having food to eat, Randy's wife was still suffering from food insecurity, as this was not the food that she wanted, and over all it impacted her health in a negative way. Randy explained that this illness ended up being costly because she had to pay to have tests done and to attend doctors' visits to try to cure this ailment. Overall this was a stressful situation on their family, and it showed them how much it costs to eat what you are supposed to, not only in money but in health and general happiness and wellbeing.

Anushia also commented on how her eating habits were changing, explaining that even though she felt she was not eating what she culturally preferred she also felt that she was not eating food that was nutritionally sufficient. Anushia explained that her food preferences were not being met, however this would not have been so difficult for her if she felt she was meeting her nutritional needs. She felt that although she was getting some products, it was not products she was used too, such as different rice's or fish than she had at home. Additionally, for products that she did know, like eggs and milk, she felt she could not get enough to feed herself and her family. Nevertheless, it was difficult to meet nutritional needs when getting the majority of their food from the food bank.

The problem for some participants was that although they had intentions to buy nutritious foods, their funds fell short. Arjun explained that he was lacking in nutritious food, but not by choice. He explained to me that he would buy vegetables every month during the first week when he would go do his groceries, but once the money gets tighter near the end of the month he would have to cut out vegetables and other nutritious foods because they would cost too much. Exhaustion of monthly food budgets is not an uncommon issue, however due to the educational backgrounds of many of my participants, they felt that having nutritious food was a priority, and would attempt to buy it whenever possible (Seligman et al. 2014). My participants were not

unaware that they were nutritionally insecure. Manish explained, “I’m going to explain this, like I made food by myself very often so in that situation I take uh my money and make it everything. I studied nutrition, I know, so if I explain from a nutrient point of view I’m probably not fully secure.” Although my participants acknowledged that they were nutritionally insecure, they were unable to solve this problem on their own because their lack of funds outweighed their want to go out and buy more nutritiously rich foods.

The time of the year had something to do with situational insecurity, with 90% of survey respondents indicating that they felt at certain times of the year there was less money to buy food, with summer being selected by survey participants as the semester where they felt they had the least amount of funding. Survey participants attributed prioritizing other expenses and a lack of employment as the main reasons why certain times of the year were harder than others. Participants prioritization of expenses and some of the other expenses per semester can be seen in Figure 4.3, and Appendix H respectively. Again, this is related to the situation that people are in based on their finances at the time. For many people the fall semester seemed to be the time when they felt the most food insecure. This was because the student fees in the fall were a bit higher than in other semesters, and additionally there were other costs incurred relating to the new school year such as moving costs, getting new school supplies, and getting new home supplies. On the other hand, some students said that their hardest semester was the winter semester, as they had used a lot of the money from their savings in the fall semester and were feeling that they were unable to use more savings to pay for their expenses. Luxshan explained,

This is my second semester, I feel like I do need the food bank more in this sense, and I have been in because I am not able to because the tuition fee is quite high then it was in summer so obviously I am not able to spend more money on food, like on the summer, so I may have to spend some. This food bank is quite obviously very important in the winter.

Additionally, in the winter the food bank was seen as a convenient place to go to get food items everyday instead of having to go to the grocery store which may have been much further from the participants' homes. Having the food bank located on campus was convenient for students as it allowed them to stop there in-between classes and get items as they needed every day. For several participants it became more practical, as well as more financially viable, to go to the food bank rather than go to the grocery store.

Situational food insecurity, and the problems participants were discussing about eating non-nutritious food can be mitigated by the University of Guelph's administration, and I have provided recommendations in my concluding chapter. Nevertheless, these recommendations do not address the underlying problem of financial insecurity. That is, the University could put work into breaking the association between using the CSA food bank and personal stigma, but ultimately, the fact that the food bank exists highlights a broader, persistent issue of marginalization and educational costs. The CSA food bank should not be a 'necessity' for any students, undergraduate or graduate, domestic or international, but it is. Ideally, it should be a short-term, stop-gap measure, but, as with food bank usage off-campus this is increasingly not the case. We are seeing rates of food insecurity growing within Canada with 7.8% of people reporting that they are food insecure, within which 5.1% were moderately insecure, and 2.7% were severely insecure (The Government of Canada 2012). Moreover, these rates are those of people who have reported being food insecure (The Government of Canada 2012). In the case of individuals like international graduate students who are food insecure but may not identify as that, we must assume that the rates of food insecure Canadians is larger than the statistics imply. Given that this problem is growing in Canada as a whole, it is evident that larger changes need to occur to help people from having chronic food insecurity.

With the increased need of the resources provided at the food bank by predominantly international students, the food bank is being overused, and is negatively changing. Many participants felt it was best to only take items from the food bank that they felt were completely necessary in order to preserve the resources and allow as many people to benefit from what was provided. The demand on the food bank highlights the precarity of student lives, which affects food security as well as broader wellbeing and experiences of exclusion.

Chapter 5: The On-campus food bank and its impacts on international student agency

“I have tried to help newcomers, they come here, they face the same problems. Because I knew that, I went through this too.” -Heeba

In this chapter, I focus on the CSA run on-campus food bank and how it directly impacts the lives of international graduate students. I will continue to argue that the CSA food bank is a resource that is needed by particularly international graduate students to ensure wellbeing and success once they have arrived in Canada. In doing so, I argue that food bank usage intersects with issues of inclusion and exclusion, food citizenship and agency. Before discussing the elements of agency, food citizenship, and exclusion, I provide some additional information on how the food bank works, and changes which have happened to the process over time. I will continue to demonstrate that participants described many challenges that they had to face before moving to Canada. However, there was a consensus that the majority of the transitional challenges occurred once students arrived in Canada. As discussed in the previous chapter, these challenges included, but were not limited to, having issues associated with housing, finding culturally appropriate food, being abused in their workplace or not finding appropriate work, and not being able to make friends with domestic students.

In this chapter, I specifically focus on how the food bank is regarded as a safe space for international graduate students, and how it has changed over time becoming less useful for some than it once was. Furthermore, I discuss how international students are comfortable confiding in other international students about their situations, and how they might have food related problems associated with their transition, such as accessing culturally appropriate foods. Many of these issues were not easily resolved by the participants themselves and were the result of structural issues rooted in the transitional processes that international students partake in when

they migrate to their host universities. The University of Guelph, and other institutions who host international graduate students, need thoughtful resources in place to ensure that the transition of students is as straightforward and culturally sensitive as possible. Providing thoughtful resources which will aid with transition and life in a new country will help with inclusion, and make international graduate students feel that their presence on the University of Guelph campus is valued in ways other than just being “cash cows” for the university (Stewin 2012:73; Andrade 2006).

One of the resources that is already in place at the University of Guelph is the on-campus food bank. Although the resource is in place, it is not outwardly advertised to students, but is more on a need to know basis, and therefore many international students find out about it once they have made friends with other international students who share similar precarious situations as them. 62% of survey respondents that they had heard about the food bank from their friends, as is seen in Figure 5.1 below.

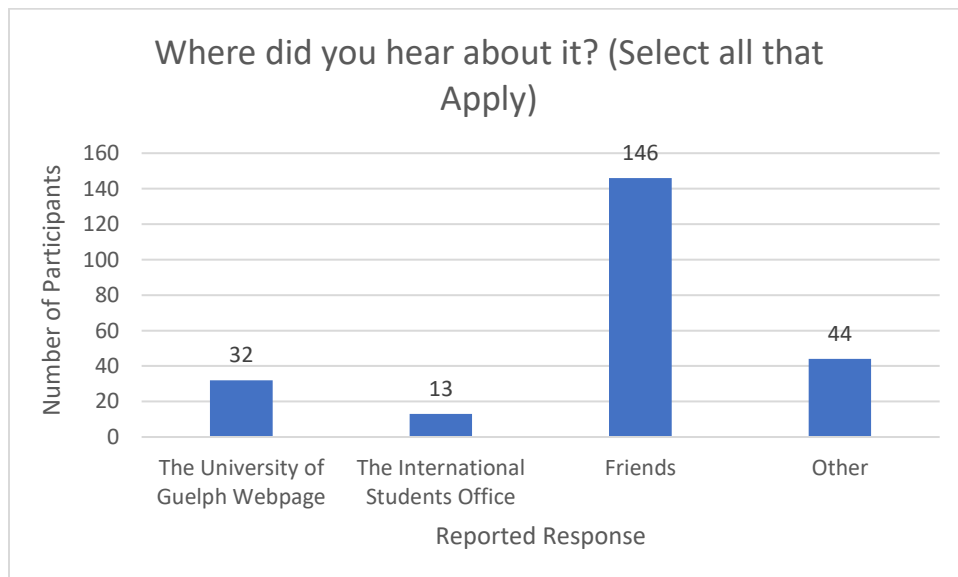


Figure 5.1: Survey Results - How did you hear about the food bank?

The other ways respondents listed they found out about the food bank range in answers. The responses can be broken into four categories: Advertisements on the University Campus, Peer/Personal Networks, School Content and Non-intentional discovery: A more extensive list of these categories can be found in Appendix I. These results are consistent with Farahbakash et al's (2017) work, which highlighted that many students were unaware of emergency food programs that are in place, and that there are probably more insecure students than those who use the service. Once international graduate students become aware of the food bank, this resource is used, and for the majority it is seen as a positive and helpful resource. Similar Stewin (2013), discusses how the food bank is seen as a useful resource to international students in more than just providing them with emergency food, but with also working to transition their identity through their eating habits. Also, it impacts their relationships with others by creating a community of students, who are food citizens, and who are bonded by their use of the food bank.

The concept of food citizenship will be used to discuss the identities of international graduate student food bank users. By considering this group as food citizens, we are then able to see how they participates in their community and influence their food system (FEC 2018). By acting as food citizens people are able to have an increased sense of belonging and community, which is what we are seeing happening with the international graduate student community (FEC 2018). Food citizenship is understood by Grasseni (2008) through how individuals procure food. Understanding the ways that people procure food, can help to illuminate how they participate and belong in a community (Grasseni 2008). However, normative frameworks do not allow for diverse types of procurement, such as procuring food from a food bank, and thus it does not account for diverse food citizens, and how we procure food is central to understanding our social participation (Grasseni 2008). The food citizenship rights of international students are

mitigated by their capacity to access and make decisions about materials that they want and need, such as their food. Given that food citizenship is contingent on relationships and an understanding of the food system, people can enact their food citizenship through their consumption choices (Lockie 2008). Therefore, when people are not given a choice on what to eat, they are unable to express their agency, and are food insecure (Lockie 2008; FAO 2012).

The Food Bank is Safe and Welcoming:

Most participants had similar experiences when first making the decision to begin using the on-campus food bank. The experience was described as pretty simple and non-invasive to the potential new users. Most participants explained that once they heard about the food bank, which as I previously explained was typically something told to them by another person in their international student circle, they would visit the food bank, often with those who first told them about it, and would simply have to fill out a form explaining why they needed to use the service. Rohan called the process “easy and simple” and Heeba echoed this sentiment by explaining it was a three-step process: “I fill up a form and they give me a card, and then I show that card and I can use it.” Users felt that this form was quite simple to understand, and that not much information was required in order to begin using the service. Primarily the form asked for the users’ name, status in the school, and why they felt they needed to use the food bank. However, these questions were all check boxes and no other directly identifying information was collected.

Arjun clearly explains,

They got us to fill out a form, asking what our situation was, like what was the main reason that we wanted to use the food bank...we had to check mark everything which applied to you, like we were to fill out name and student number and if we have on campus, off campus job or not. Then where do we live, on campus or off campus, then what is the main reason for coming to the food bank, was it the rent? Was it the utilities? Was it these or something, we are to check mark everything which is of. And the last thing was one last topic, there were 4 check marks. They did not ask for anything like how much do you have, or how much do you spend on food, why do you need that.

Although Arjun explained that he was not asked about his finances, some participants, such as Abanish remember being asked about their funding. Abanish explained, “I have to mention what is the reason to come to food bank, poor budgeting or something and then info about yourself, name, your ID number, what is your scholarship, or you have funds reserved, general information. And then they give you a card for the whole year.” As Abanish explains, once this registration form was filled out, participants were given a food bank card, and an associated number. Upon each visit to the food bank, students would provide their number to the volunteer working, who would then determine how many items they had used at each visit, and what they were allotted for the rest of the month. Luxshan explained, “I just had to fill out the form, they didn’t ask me for proof of my ID”, and the proof of ID is what Miguel explained to be the only one requirement of the food bank, which was being a registered student of the university. Miguel explained, “They do not check IDs so you could lie if you wanted to.” He further believed that you could lie even more about your status, including how many members of your family you needed items for, as students are asked if they are alone or with family, and again no proof is required.

This informality of the food bank system was interpreted by some as a good thing which increased their comfort and agency, as even though they were in an unfavorable social context position, they did not have to report exactly what they were getting which can be seen as an act of agency as resistance and empowerment (Ortner 2001). Participant views on the informal item disclosure will be addressed further in this chapter. But some participants felt the informal nature was leading to some users being abusive. As mentioned, the only stipulation that was required of the users is that they be University of Guelph students and if they were a part of a family, that at

least one member be a University of Guelph student. However, as Luxshan and Miguel explained, this information was never actually checked, and they were concerned that some users may not be students and may be abusing a service that is meant for students.

Overall students felt safe and welcomed in the food bank, but this welcoming support was also a concern for some. Interviewees explained that the informality makes people fear that others are using it when they do not necessarily need it and are abusing the resources that some students really need. João expressed his frustration by stating,

I think some of them did not need to use it and they still used it. I myself only use when really need it, sometimes I felt even not worthy of using it because there is other people who might need it even more than I did but yea... This is basically just me judging them and their financial situation, I know they spend on beers and pop, instead of water and then... I knew a person who bought a dishwasher for their family house at the university, and I think I can wash my own dishes, so if you spend so much on beer or cigarettes they can spend that on food, that's their decision if they think.

Some suggested that the university should check the need of the students before allowing them to use the service. However, many potential problems were also linked to this, such as the lack of privacy and the fact that need can be different depending on one's definition, and their plan of what they are doing with their life. For example, if a student intends to seek permanent residency in Canada once they are done their studies, they must have a certain amount of money in their bank account for the government to see. Participants in these situations explained that even though the university might see that they have money in their bank accounts, in reality it was often money borrowed from a friend and that was meant to be untouched and only used for immigration purposes, and for financial checks provided as a part of the immigration process. As Andrade (2006) discussed, international students make financial contributions to the institutions they attend, and feel that some administrators do not acknowledge that they are facing difficulties throughout their student experience. Immigration and the associated financial

stability needed to go through this process is one of these difficulties. Participants told me about the methods that they would use in order to help them gain their Canadian permanent residency, however there was a level of discomfort knowing that if other people knew about these tricks then it could lead to their citizenship status being compromised. Participants chose to talk to me about this because they felt it was more important for administrators to see that financial status and that their needs may not always reflect things like the amount of money they had in their bank account. Furthermore, during the focus group, participants explained that asking people to show or explain their need to use the food bank would have made them personally uncomfortable, and ultimately the participants felt that if you are too invasive in the questions that you ask then people will no longer ask for help anymore. As I suggested, this problem of international students relying on the food bank would be best looked at through an intersectional framework, as financial need is just one of many layers of citizenship participants discussed as a factor for their use of the food bank (Yurval-Dvis 2007).

Not only are students upset because they feel that the resources are being abused by people who are not needy, but they also feel that the food bank's resources are being taken advantage of and that there should be stricter regulations being enforced on what items each individual is able to take. There are currently regulations on many items, however the informal method of check-out at the food bank allows students to tell volunteers what they have, and many participants felt that other users were not always being truthful in what items they had, or were coming in everyday and taking items which have weekly restrictions when they noticed the volunteer changed, and that they would not know they had already taken that item. There was particular concern about limited items, such as milk, eggs, and some vegetables. Arjun explains, that he knew people that, "would get milk for themselves and their friends, and they would take

3 or 4 bags and say this is my number, this is my friends number and then take 3 bags and by the first twenty or twenty-five people the milk would be done.” Arjun further went on to explain that the items that are being taken should be accounted for because if a person is only allowed a certain amount of an item because of the limitations, they might come back once the volunteer is changed and get it again. He explained that if there is a record of what is being taken it can limit the amount the people are abusing the system and taking things they are not allowed to. Further, Abanish explained that it does not matter what the items are at the check out just how many you have. He elaborated saying, “Because they are not checking, they are so generous. It is what you are saying, so if you say 4 items, they don’t say what 4 items you are taking, it is just like okay, I have 4 items only you just have to mention the total number of items.” These limitations and increased need will be discussed more in relation to the overall changes to the food bank over time further on in this chapter. As was briefly mentioned, although some students see the non-disclosure of items as abusing the system, it could be interpreted as an act of agency of resistance (Ortner 2001). Instead of being obliged to only take items that are dictated to them, food bank users are enacting their ability to choose what they really want and taking back some of their citizenship rights. Specifically, just because they have limited financial flexibility, this does not mean they should not be allowed to eat what they want.

Furthermore, focus group participants suggested that the cash out system of the food bank be updated and be more similar to a grocery store in that the purchaser shows all items that they take to the volunteer, and it is less of a trust system. There was also the suggestion of vouchers being provided for each item so that people are only allotted a certain number of specific items per month, and they need that voucher in order to receive the item. This would be used specifically for high demand items like milk, eggs, and certain meats. The way the current

system works, there is some freedom in terms of what items people are taking past the volunteers, which is what participants believe allows abuses to the system. Additionally, the trust system stretches further than the items that one is taking but also goes into the number that they are assigned with their first food bank card, and their identities as students. Given that the system is based on trust, Arjun explains that, “they trust us to not take food on any other person’s number.” However, the generally casual nature of the food bank does create concerns that abuses in trust are occurring.

This informality of the card system was helpful in terms of easing people’s use of the food bank, by simply having to remember a number, it also led to participants feeling like the system was being abused. Participants felt it was easy to simply use someone else’s number or have a stand in person go for you when you were not available to go, which made people think that certain individuals were getting access to the products always, while others were waiting in line or unable to attend the food bank because of their school commitments during the time it was opened. Having a stand-in was also brought up during the focus group as a point of contention, because participants felt that it was unfair to have someone other than the primary user go and stand in line for food. Focus group participants expressed that they felt at a disadvantage as they did not have any one to go for them while they were stuck in class during the food bank rush times. Furthermore, focus group participants explained witnessing people fighting in the line to get into the food bank during rushes, and wondered if it would be appropriate to email all users about updated regulations and rules, including the limits on all items and reminding them of appropriate behaviour. Although participants generally said they hoped that people would be truthful when using the food bank, they understood that the regulations would have to be updated, and the process would have to be revised in order to try to

prevent any further abuses on the system. The participants that suggested these changes wanted to encourage other users to not abuse the resource because it has positively impacted their lives and wellbeing. As discussed in the previous chapter, without the food bank being in place, most participants felt that their quality of life would be severely negatively impacted.

There is some disagreement on the general feel of the food bank. For the most part people felt safe and accepted, but there were others who felt that if people knew they were using it then they would be stigmatized. Generally, the data supports the idea that users felt safe within the food bank but that they did not want others to know that they were using it, as they were afraid to be judged or stigmatized. Houshmand et al. (2014) notes that this stigmatization would mostly occur by domestic students and could be coupled with invalidations, insults and racial microaggressions. Focus group participants agreed that overall the structure of the food bank added to the feeling of stigma that they had, because they felt that the office looked temporary, and that it was clear that the staff were volunteers. Participants discussed the idea that going to the food bank in its current state and location made it “feel like welfare.” However, one thing that led to a decreased level of stigma was that it was obvious to users that most people going to the food bank were graduate and international students, and that most users seemed to know others who used the service. Unfortunately, a common theme that I found was that students were assuming that others, such as the domestic students would stigmatize them based on their dependency on the food bank, and then would self-impose this stigma. Batuk explains,

I understand there is a stigma for using service in food bank, but in my culture when I came here I thought this is a good thing, there is no stigma, so I don't have any idea. When I just mix up with people from this culture then I understand that there is some stigma but then I think that influenced me and one thing shocked me.

Because of the influence of now believing it was stigmatized to visit the food bank Batuk discontinued his use, ultimately forcing him to make changes in his life that negatively impacted his wellbeing. As a result of their experiences using the food bank, international students believe that domestic students are not using the service at the same rate, thus may be more likely to judge international students for their use. However, within the international student group there is no stigma in terms of use of the food bank, there is only negative association with individuals who are believed to be abusing the resource. Within the international graduate student group there is a shared lack of agency and inclusion which bonds them together. Although international students may feel excluded from the general population of domestic students, as was discussed in Houshmand et al. (2014), they are bonded together through several layers of their identity.

The participants also discussed a self-doubt about being worthy enough to use the food bank. Many of the students who discussed their concerns with people abusing the system then went on to comment about how they sometimes felt they were not as much in need as others, and it seemed as if they were worried that they too were abusing the system. Matheus explained,

I feel there is a stigma. I'm trying to think if I'm being objective or not. I think it is in my mind mostly, but it is not about stigma, because it is for poor people, well that too, but I really feel that I should only take when it is really necessary, and I'm not sure if I should be going there. ...I'm not sure how people think about it here. I know in Brazil it would be stigmatized here which is a contradiction it should be more natural, and we should be used to it.

This concept of food bank usage being stigmatized in Canada but not in their poorer home countries was common. Many participants explained that their home countries did not have similar programs to food banks but might have emergency food donated when there was a natural disaster through global outreach programs. Therefore, most participants explained they would tell their parents and family about their use of the food bank, and that it was accepted.

However, they would not as easily tell other domestic students, with fear that they may be stigmatized.

For the most part participants did not feel that the food they were receiving was bad, and while at the physical food bank participants were greeted and treated with respect by helpful volunteers which made the entire situation much better. The focus group participants agreed that the service at the food bank was good, and that the providers were kind. Randy was one of the few students who was aware that the food bank was funded through student fees. When asked if he felt safe using the food bank, he explained that he was never concerned about safety while using it, and he thought that it was a great way to see students help other students, and feel that he too was helping others. That being said, he too did not directly want to tell others about this use of the food bank because of the stigma. Randy's intersectional citizenship was discussed in his reflections as he indicated that although he used and benefitted from the service, that at times he too felt that he was helping others because he was contributing to the food bank through paying his student fees.

Lastly, being able to get food from the food bank allows participants to gain some dependence back as students have access to raw materials and can cook their own food. This can lead to an overall feeling of increased safety and security in their new country and an improved wellbeing. Manish explained that, "the quality is good food, I could buy those from no frills...I feel nice when I cook so I know always to bring ingredients." For the most part students are happy and feel that the food bank is a service that is necessary. Some students such as João went as far as to say that "I would like to congratulate them [those that work at the food bank] because they saved my life." This sentiment further supports that for some of my participants, the food bank is best understood as a necessity and not as a luxury.

Changes to the Food Bank Over Time:

Some of my participants have experienced changes in the food bank atmosphere and its general rules. Participants are left to feel that the policies and practices at the food bank have continued to change and this has contributed to concerns and feelings of exclusion. These changes were discussed by many of the participants that had been users for many years, and even those who had just been at the university for a couple of semesters. When participants noticed these changes several of them reached out to food bank staff and volunteers to ask about them. Staff and volunteers attributed these changes to the increased demand to use the service, and participants were encouraged to come early and come often to receive the products that they required.

Randy who was just finishing up his PhD when we spoke explained to me that the food bank was initially not so bad, and that he would go all the time in 2014 and was able to get the products that he needed. He explained that things started changing drastically in 2016-2017. It was during this time that he noticed there were big lines outside, and that you had to go much earlier to get the specific foods you needed. This line that Randy mentions is noticeable to even nonusers of the food bank. If you are to walk by the food bank around opening time, which is typically around 12 pm, you will see a line of people wrapping around the building waiting to get in. Waiting in a line like this was inconvenient in bad weather and was also problematic because it limits people who had class during the same time that the food bank was opened. Luxshan explained that if he was unable to go for 12 pm exactly, because he had class or work, that when he would eventually get to the food bank around 4 o'clock that there would be nothing that he needed available, such as high demand items like eggs and milk. Although this line up was inconvenient, participants also suggested it could be dangerous. Participants in the focus group

recalled that they had seen individuals fighting in the lineup before, and that once everyone got inside the food bank it would be rather crowded. Miguel explained that he had felt safe when using the food bank because, “It wasn’t crowded those times, but I heard that in other times of the week, for example in the food bank it is crowded because some people get some food at the same time, so it is kind of not dangerous, but stressful.”

The lineup, and associated overcrowding, was not the only thing participants explained changed due to the higher demand. Anushia explained that because of the higher usage the quantity of items she was able to get was reduced. She explains that in her family, “Before we were 5 members, we used to get 5 eggs and 5 milk provided and now it is reduced to half, 2.5 eggs and 2.5 milk.” These were amounts that they were able to take per each week as a part of their allotted items per month. However, because the food bank was based on a trust system many participants explained that they felt that students would come in several times when there were different staff members present and get their milk and eggs exceeding the amount they were eligible for. Anushia explained that this limitation on these products was negatively impacting her and was forcing her to spend more money at the grocery store because she needed a lot of milk to give to her young children. She explained that there were restrictions on other products as well, and that it was written on signs in the food bank for everyone to see, however there was discussion again of people abusing this system and ignoring the signs. Manish elaborated on the limitations by explaining,

Yeah, they have a designated rule, you can have this much of this when you have family of two or this much of this as a family of 4, for example if you’re a family of 3 you can have 2 bottles of milk, and if you’re 2 one can have 1 bottle of milk. Otherwise if you distribute everything free of cost people will want to take everything.

Manish followed the instructions of the staff and volunteers by going to the food bank frequently and early, however he still felt limited. He further elaborated, “I go every time when I’m on campus. But you know I see the people grabbing everything without following the rules there, but they told if your family is two persons then bring two potatoes or 4 breads, and the food sometimes from the food bank they are really limited.” Manish explains that even though there are regulations as to how much one is supposed to be able to take, that the overall amount provided at the food bank was limited and he would often not be able to get the amounts of certain foods that he was permitted to take.

Abanish too felt that the demand for the food bank was increasing each semester, and that there were not enough supplies for the quantity of students that were going to the food bank. He explained that he felt the food bank was now being run more strictly, and that there were more regulations to try to stop people from breaking the trust system. He felt that this was a necessary response to the influx of people. He explains the change due to the amount of people as,

Yes, change means now they are regulating because before there are some people and there is no monitoring system, you could open the freezer and take whatever you want... Maybe I go after 10 minutes, didn’t get anything because nowadays they open at 12 o’clock so there is a huge line before 10 or 15 minutes. So inside, they have a good system, that I have to share. But before if you go, maybe they start at 12, if you go at 2 o’clock you won’t get anything, so if you follow the instructions for one single person you can take 2, then maybe everyone will get the portion. But sometimes it is not monitored before, maybe he was getting 3 items instead of 1, so you’re getting 1 but taking 2 or 3.

Participants explained that they were informed to arrive early for the food bank particularly if they wanted high demand items like milk and eggs, however if they were not able to make that time they would have to settle for canned foods and non-perishables. Matheus recalled to me that when he went on a Friday it seemed that everything had run out. He remembered them having small amounts of vegetables and fruits, but mostly having canned foods, pastas and rice.

Although grateful for what they were getting, participants were frustrated that the resource that they once relied on was now less helpful and many explained that they rarely used it anymore because they did not find it fulfilling their needs. Additionally, its convenience level was lower with now having to wait in line, and the lack of guarantee that there will be useful items available once they get into the food bank. Noah reflected, “I mean again, it feels stupid to complain about it, but like there were a lot of times where I would go there, and it was basically just very little to offer besides canned stuff and like flour and some of the basic things.” Randy explained that these changes to the food bank made it into a system that he was no longer able to depend on, even though it did help him in the past, he felt it could not longer get him through his hard times and he had to make ends meet through other means.

Preferred Foods, Agency and Inclusion:

Many of my interviewees explained that they had difficulties finding foods that were similar to those that they had at home. This was not exclusive to just one country or one region but from a wide range of the interviewees. These foods included things like certain fish or meats, specific types of rice and certain spices. The lack of familiar foods available impacted participants’ abilities to adjust and their overall wellbeing. Rohan explains: “It is the availability. In Brampton they are more people from my province, it's almost full of people from Punjab so you have Indian stores, so many, but in Guelph it is a little bit hard...but it’s manageable, if I don't find anything here I will just tell my friend to bring it to me when they come from Brampton.” Some interviewees like Rohan mentioned that if they were to go to a bigger city like Toronto or Brampton then they were able to find these foods, however, as Abanish pointed out, the entire process of going to Toronto just to get the foods that he wanted would end up being too costly. Sharron agreed that some of her friends would go to Mississauga to get food from a

Chinese food market, but since she did not drive she felt it was not possible for her to go, and that she could settle for the groceries that she could find at a local Walmart. Others explained that no matter where they went, they could not find what they were looking for because they were regionally too far to get what they wanted imported here. This led to many people either adapting and learning to like new foods here, or continually searching to try to find their comfort foods. Not being able to find preferred foods is linked to food insecurity, and although not directly related to money, trying to find these foods becomes an additional challenge that international students face. By not being able to access the foods that they prefer, international students struggle to become comfortable in their transition to Canada. This lack of access can further ones feeling that their agency is being impacted (Ahearn 2001). By limiting their agency, their personhood is impacted and their ability to participate fully in society is negatively affected.

In terms of foods provided by the food bank, Luxshan explained that although common foods were provided such as rice, it was not culturally appropriate. He explained that in his experience at the food bank sticky rice is the only rice provided, but that at home “we do not have sticky rice, that is basically Japanese culture, and Thailand, so we do not eat those sticky rice.” Instead what Luxshan is used to eating from home is brown rice. This was a common comment brought up by students from south Asian countries, that the rice provided at the food bank was not culturally appropriate. Luxshan further went on to explain that it would be nice to have brown rice, but not at the cost of taking away sticky rice, because he believed other food bank users might prefer it because it is culturally appropriate to them. Anushia explained that she too did not use the rice provided from the food bank, explaining, “We don’t usually cook that type, we use their basmati rice, and it is not always in the food bank, they give us some kind of jasmine or something and we don’t cook that type, so we have to find it from the outside.” From

an outsider's perspective, it may seem that rice is rice, and that it should be accepted, however making this assumption leads international students to feel that they are all grouped together as one, and that their culture is not valued. Suffering from food insecurity in this situation impacts the lives of international students and their feeling of belonging. As internationalization is continuing to be a priority on university campus', as was discussed in (Marinoni and deWit. 2019), university administrators should work to make students from all countries feel equally valued, and not that they are one homogenized group.

Another common trend discussed by students from south Asian countries is the difficulties surrounding accessing and affording sufficient quantities of milk. Rohan explained that, "In India, we have dairy animals at our home...yes, we have a lot of milk, so we consume a lot of milk." The limitations implemented on certain food bank products negatively impacts the amounts of culturally appropriate food that students can receive, such as milk. These limitations will be discussed later in this chapter. In order for diversity practices such as internationalization to work, they must consider the "socio-moral resources of citizenship, and citizenship rights." (Faist 2009:173). By limiting culturally appropriate foods the needs and rights of international students are not being considered (Faist 2009).

Another common culturally appropriate food that was difficult to obtain both at the food bank and at grocery stores was halal meat, as was also found by Stewin (2013). Several of my participants mentioned that they needed certain meat products to be halal in order to consume them based on their religious beliefs. Therefore, this need for halal products is more than just a preference, but for most was a part of their identity and a religious rule that they were not willing to break. Heeba mentioned in regard to her experiences at the food bank, "they had chickens, but they didn't have halal chickens." Similarly, Abanish stated that the food bank does not, "have

halal options, so I have to buy from outside.” Buying these products from a grocery store is possible in Guelph, however halal products are often priced higher than non-halal products, which was not ideal for many international students like Abanish who were already struggling financially. The problem that international students are facing is food insecurity, however the religious prescription adds another layer to the problem. Taking into consideration an intersectional framework, and that citizenship is layered, would allow administrators to see that this problem of food insecurity needs to be thought of as more than just providing people with emergency food, but with a way that they can live both happily and to their full capacity. As the FAO defines, food insecurity is “a situation that exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life” (Saldanha 2013:11; FAO 2012). The dietary needs should be considered, but the bigger problem is that international students cannot afford to eat what they want. In order to avoid paying the premium costs for halal products in the grocery stores, participants would attempt to settle and have other products from the food bank to fill them, such as fish or bread, however these products were not without problems either. Heeba explained that when there was no halal chicken that she tried to get fish, moreover she recalls the situation, “I got fish from there and I threw it away because it wasn’t good quality, when I saw it I couldn’t eat it.” The fish provided by the food bank was commonly discussed as not being good quality. Additionally, the fish species provided were not common to the students, therefore they had problems preparing it and consuming it. Anushia commented stating, “We eat varieties of fish, but in the food bank, only one type is there, we don’t cook that type. And we can’t find it even in the grocery stores.” As a means to fill themselves up when the other foods were not appropriate, students explained that they would eat bread, however many

students described the bread that was provided at the food bank to be culturally inappropriate, because of the way that it was stored. Arjun explained, “I was quite confused, I had never seen frozen bread in my life, so I am not really sure how the things are...it feels odd.” Because the bread provided was stored in the freezer, many students were put off by this and would rather buy it in the store. Several students commented on whether it was safe to eat, and that it generally was unappealing and strange to see the bread like that.

Additionally, students discussed that it would be nice if there were more options for vegetarians available at the food bank. Several participants discussed how their only vegetarian option was vegetables. Noah explained, “I mean theoretically it would be nice to have some more like vegetarian meal options because you know it’s usually like fish or burgers. I think a lot of people are vegetarians and it is hard to find things substantial there.” Rohan also agreed that one of the major challenges upon migrating was finding food that he could eat because he was a vegetarian, and he was unable to get any of his typical choices because the food here was quite different from what he was used to. Although participants suggested having more familiar foods available, like halal products or vegetarian foods, the problem is that students cannot afford to eat, and providing culturally appropriate food is just a band aid solution not a permanent one. As mentioned by Farahbakhsh et al. (2017), Loopstra and Tarasuk (2015), and Van Esterik (2005) food banks are not solving the real problem of food insecurity, which in this case is rooted in financial insecurity. Finding ways to include more halal foods or other foods to address medical or religious needs is a step the food bank could take to be more inclusionary in its focus. However, as previously mentioned, this should not be the end goal. The goal should be to work to minimise the need for the food bank as a whole.

The problems associated with the foods provided at the food bank being culturally inappropriate can be understood as an issue of familiarity. On the side of the food bank, it seems that there might be a disconnect in terms of what products are culturally appropriate to the main food bank audience, and on the side of the international students they are unfamiliar with products and certain food storage procedures which are commonly practiced in Canada. Nevertheless, the issues of unfamiliarity are not exclusive to the products that are being offered at the food bank but are also experienced by students when they go to grocery stores. Heeba explained that she was wary of buying certain produce products at the grocery store because they did not look the same way as the products looked in her home country. For example, she discussed how the onions and potatoes were so big, and she had never seen anything like that before. Similarly, Batuk explained that when he first saw a big onion, he too was uneasy and was not sure if he should purchase it. These issues of unfamiliarity eventually went away for most students and they began to adapt to products that were available in Canada. Through adapting, these students developed another layer to their identity, and began to feel that they belonged more in the community.

Anushia explained that culturally appropriate food was a major challenge for her upon migrating to Canada, and she saw this as a label of being food insecure, which reflects the food preference part of the FAO (2012) definition. She explained that what was challenging was, “Finding food at the groceries. We are Asians, so it is hard to find Asian groceries here. So, we are eating Canadian food, we are not familiar, so it was hard.” When asked whether or not they were food insecure, most participants answered no, or explained that they were situationally insecure, which I discussed in the previous. Interestingly, Anushia explained her situational food security in terms of her need of culturally appropriate food. She felt that she was not food

insecure in terms of the quantity of food she was eating, but that she was not feeling food secure due to the lack of preference of food she was eating. Although she was eating enough food, she did not necessarily enjoy it, and therefore she felt as if she was unsatisfied. This is similar to what Stewin (2013) found, and she explained that food was used as a lens to express a lack of inclusion. Subsequently, Anushia's children who were quite young upon migration were able to adjust to the new foods because they were younger. She explained, "For me and my husband it is hard to digest with these foods, but my kids now have adapted to the Canadian food." At the end of the day, although most of the participants like Anushia were unable to find their culturally appropriate food, they have learned to adapt and will not go hungry without it. However, as Abanish explains the reason he prioritizes trying to find culturally appropriate food is, "It is because we like it and we are used to using these things from our childhoods we know we like it, and it gives us comfort so when we eat, we feel full." This statement by Abanish echoes Anushia's sentiment in that eating culturally appropriate foods made participants feel more satisfied overall with their meals. Rohan also explains that he still prefers his staple foods, and that daily he cooks naan, an Indian bread. He explains, "I can't survive without it, if I'm eating pizza, I still need that bread, or else I'll be hungry...I'm so used to it because for the last 22 years I've been having this, and I'm so used to it and I don't try new things very easily."

The difficulties accessing culturally appropriate food was mentioned by the majority of participants, however the amount at which it negatively impacted their lives was notably different depending on where the participants were coming from. This issue is important; however, it should not overshadow the fact that the real problem that international students are facing is that they are struggling financially, and their transition to Canada is made even more difficult because they are missing foods which are familiar to them. These difficulties accessing

preferred foods were primarily mentioned explicitly by students from Asian or South Asian countries, and only mentioned briefly by South American and North American participants. Miguel, who migrated from Mexico, explained that he did not think the food bank should try to carry other foods, explaining, “I think that the food they have is good probably for our eating habits. I don’t know if people from other cultures for example they might need different products.” However, even though students from South and North American countries did not explicitly state that they were looking for other products, there are still some disparities when it comes to finding some culturally appropriate ingredients. For example, Miguel mentioned that he found it difficult to buy corn flour and certain spices which he was used to using in Mexico. Moreover, the focus group members all originated from a South or North American country, and during the discussion on culturally appropriate food, they agreed that it was a problem, but that it maybe was not as big of a problem for them as “Westerners” than it was for other students. This speaks to the idea of availability, and perhaps it is more likely to find products available from South or North American countries in grocery stores in larger diverse cities in Canada, however when it comes to specific products from Asia and South East Asia, it becomes more difficult to access specific products.

Unfortunately, participants explained that even though they may have wanted their home foods, at the end of the day when they are doing their grocery shopping, they are going for “the most common and the most cheaper ones” (Batak). If the food bank begins to carry foods that are more culturally appropriate, then participants will be able to get more items from the food bank using the items that they are allotted monthly, and will have to settle less when they go to buy other foods to supplement the donations they are receiving. However, the lack of culturally appropriate food available at the food bank is discouraging students from using the service.

Batuk explained that he stopped going to the food bank because “the food is not culturally appropriate, I found it wasn’t that helpful for me, so I stopped going.” International students rarely talked about these preferences for foods, and in particular participants did not want to tell me many negative things about the food provided at the food bank. Being a non-international student meant I needed to work harder to build rapport with my participants so that they would tell me details about their food insecurity that would likely only be told to other international students who were in similar situations. Although adding culturally appropriate food to the food bank might help participants like Batuk be able to spend money on other things at the grocery store, diversifying the food carried at the food bank should not be the end solution to the problem of insecurity that the international students are facing as a result of financial insecurity. When we think about the bigger issue of why international students are using the food bank disproportionately, it is because they are struggling financially. Being able to access culturally appropriate food is just an additional challenge faced and associated with their transition and a lack of money.

International students are comfortable confiding with other international students:

Most interviewees admitted that they were comfortable talking about their use of the food bank with other international students but do not typically talk about it with non-international students. This is because they typically stated they wanted to help others get out of similar situations that they found themselves in. For example, Luxshan stated, “Whoever comes as an international student I am always recommending food bank to them and I am suggesting at least that you should go.” Similarly, Abanish stated, “Whenever I get any international students, I try to tell them there is a support from the university if you have any budget problems.” Furthermore, within the focus group a discussion arose about how international students do not

want to be seen as coming from their country to be hungry in another. Given that international students may already be facing microaggressions and struggling to fit in, they do not want to appear to be abusing the resources in their host country (Houshmand et al. 2014). The participants believed that international students coming to Canada were generally coming from poorer countries, and did not want to seem like they were taking advantage of their host countries benefits. The focus group discussion came to a general conclusion that participants felt that getting help from people when you are visiting is uncomfortable, but when talking about it with other international students it is comfortable, because you can open up and teach each other things, and it becomes a trade. International students bond together over shared troubles, such as their need to use the food bank because of being financially insecure because of their student fees and associated tuition costs. The context of their social structure leads to their socially constructed position, within which they enact their lives (Ortner 2001).

In terms of awareness of the food bank, most participants found out about the food bank from other international students within their networks, and this was often information offered up in the trade that was mentioned by participants in the focus group. Furthermore, international students discussed that they typically only talk about the food bank and their use of it with other international students. João explained:

The international students they face the same struggles and sometimes they open up, and if you mention something like oh it has been quite hard I can't do this and that because of money if they identify with you and if they feel safe talking about the food bank then they will...international students help each other because they understand each other better.

This was the common trend when it came to gaining knowledge about the food bank. When I asked participants how the conversation came about between their peers who told them about the food bank, commonly it was discussed as a way to offset the lack of funds that they have to give

to their food budget. As Farahbakash et al (2015) have discussed, post-secondary students are known to struggle to budget and have a lack of shopping skills. International students seem to have more problems with budgeting because their fees are so much higher, therefore they are using the food bank as a way to make their limited budgets last longer. Discussions of the food bank were often very informal and were accompanied by a discussion of international students and their ability to survive within the new country. These types of conversations were not restricted to international students from one region, but instead were widespread among the international students that I spoke with.

The comfort level that international students felt with other international students stretched further into the use of the food bank, as many participants explained they would go to the food bank as a group, and many times they would go with the person who initially told them about the service. Other students shared that they would go to the food bank with their roommates who were also international students and were typically from the same or similarly located countries or with their family members. Given that I previously mentioned that family housing is regarded as an international student safe zone, some students such as Anushia explained that they know of others who live in family housing who also go to the food bank and that they sometimes go together. Randy also mentioned that when he would drive to the food bank he would drive others home who lived in family housing, even if they were not necessarily close friends. For him this was a way to help out other international students and create a bond of shared experience between them. Through these connections that international students create with each other, they are demonstrating that they need a space where they can create a community of international students who can support each other and act as resources for one another (Matera et al. 2018). Although the food bank is the current place where this community

is growing, because the food bank should not be seen as a permanent solution to international students struggles, university administration should begin to think about other ways and spaces or resources that they can provide to make international students feel included in the general University of Guelph population. If university administration values international students, then they should rethink the structures, such as high fees, that contribute to their marginalization and exclusion.

Given the discussed estrangement international students feel towards domestic students, the shared experiences were not something that participants felt they could have with domestic students. Interviewees stated that they often felt disassociated from the general University of Guelph population, but that they could confide in other international students who were also feeling like outsiders. In reference to discussions about the food bank, most interviewees were not comfortable talking to domestic students about their use. Manish explains:

I myself, I don't go and tell to others. If someone asks me then I'll explain but it depends you know, people from Canada they don't use that much food bank, I can see the people from Asian and Africa and Latin America using the food bank because I can read from them, mostly I can see that they use it.

Manish explains that he will not outwardly speak about his usage of the food bank, which echoes what Farahbakash et al. (2017) discuss, in that it is difficult to determine how many students are actually food insecure because they do not use food banks or discuss their insecurity because of the associated shame. Although there are domestic students using the food bank, as was described in Figure 3.2 (Chapter 3), 74% of users who responded to my survey are international graduate students, and thus the food bank is an international student safe space. Ultimately, within the food bank, even if people did not speak to each other, there was a shared sense of respect and comradery. Manish explained that he knew people that went to the food bank, and

even though they did not talk while they were there, they were still a familiar face both at the food bank and on campus.

The international student community has many things to bond over, and for some it is the use of the food bank and the challenge associated with transitioning to a new country.

Participants discussed that within their international student community that they were able to make close friendships, and in many cases a pseudo-family is created. Which is important because as was discussed in Chapter 2, families, and the resources associated like financial and emotional support are very far away (Farahkakash et al 2017). Many participants explained that they found others who had migrated from the same or a similarly located countries to live with while they were pursuing their graduate degrees. Within their homes, they would do many things a family would do, such as cook meals together, buy their weekly groceries together, and spend time together. Moreover, within these relationships' participants would help their housemates to make their payments for tuition, rent and bills. Arjun explained, "My friends are totally depended on that [a TA-ship] for their rent, and then for food they are dependent on me. And then later on when they got the job they transferred the funds to me." This informal loan system was based on a level of trust instilled in the relationships of the housemates. Getting loans from housemates or other international friends was often done as it was seen as an easier way to survive without having to go through a bank and pay additional interest. Arjun explained to me an instance when he had to ask a friend for an informal loan. Due to a family emergency, Arjun had to return back to his home country and this unexpected expense made him have a lack of money when it came time to pay his tuition.

I had to ask a friend to pay my fees, so he kind of paid my fees and told me that I can wait until I come back, so when I came back I transferred whatever funds I had and now I am still left to pay a few, but then he is okay like you can pay me when you get it, it is kind of not like I can't say a system, but it more of an easier way rather than going

through bank, because even when you get a loan you have to pay it off with taxes, it is really difficult for us.

Having lived with other domestic university students throughout my own educational journey, I found it very interesting that these students were willing to trust each other enough to share so many expenses, and still keep cordial relationships.² Rohan explained that the creation of an international family where everyone could share everything, was based on the culture that he grew up with. He said,

People of my country, we share a lot. So, you might have heard of Indian hospitality, you might have heard we treat our guests as a god and we feel proud in serving them and we are always from the school and parents taught me to share everything. So even if I'm hungry I will give my food to you. We have learned sharing and that's why we don't have this problem.

In Rohan's home, he and his roommates would do groceries together, but this evolved into going to the food bank together as a group. This helped their group get around some of the limitations that were put onto certain items. Additionally, getting everything as a group helped them to offset the costs of big items, such as coffee and rice, moreover, the cost of staple items was split between all of the housemates.

The relationships between international students goes further than just being there for each other when it comes to food and financial troubles. Participants explained that the international student network would help them to provide important networks that they did not have upon migrating to Canada. These networks were previously discussed in relation to finding new homes, or for finding work. International students who see themselves needing to use emergency resources for food because of their financial struggles are also coming together

² This is admirable, and points to the creativity and resilience of students in developing structures that work for them. However, it should be pointed out that these kinds of informal systems also highlight precarity and are vulnerable to exploitation, which could, in worst-case scenarios, further marginalize students. It highlights the need for formal emergency fund support options that could be used by students.

informally to help each other both in terms of improving their mental health and wellbeing by becoming a pseudo-family, but also by creating a viable system where they can help each other without having to rely on structures which take advantage of them. Although these networks are important for support and inclusion, they also highlight international student precarity. These networks illustrate that students without access to this informal community might be even more vulnerable.

International students, as I have previously discussed, have to face many challenges in regard to their transition which have left them with financial problems, or with difficulties fitting in and adjusting to their new lives in their new country. The on-campus food bank is a valuable resource and should be considered as more than just a place to gain emergency food resources, but as a safe space for international students to go, and a necessity within the transition from one's home country to Canada. Furthermore the food bank should be considered in terms of the changes that have been happening at the University of Guelph, as with the increased push for the university to internationalise and the amount of international students growing, the resources of the food bank are not being able to assist students as much as it once did, as there is not enough food to go around, making the resource no longer as helpful. Given that international students feel that they are situationally food insecure, related to factors including but not limited to the amount of food that they are receiving at the University of Guelph food bank, the food bank should be considered a necessity and overall should be supported more by the university administration in order to assist international students and ensure their food security, and their safe and healthy transition to their institution.

Chapter 6: Conclusion and Recommendations

In this thesis, I have explored the relationship between the use of the University of Guelph's Central Student Association's (CSA) on-campus food bank by international graduate students, and their financial situations. As international students are particularly more vulnerable to being food insecure, and this is one of the main challenges that they must overcome (Burley 2016; Hanbazaza et al. 2017). Food expenditures are more flexible than tuition, rent and utilities, and it can be easily compromised, resulting in vulnerable students opting to use emergency food services, such as the CSA's on-campus food bank (Hanbazaza et al. 2016; Farahbakhsh et al. 2015; Stewin 2013; Hughes et al. 2011).

Upon beginning this project, it was identified by the Office of Graduate and Postgraduate Studies at the University of Guelph that the CSA's on-campus food bank was being disproportionately used by international graduate students, as 53% of registered food bank users as of January 2018 were international graduate students. This problem persists as throughout the course of this project; it remains that international students are using the food bank at a disproportionate rate. As of September 2019, 66% of registered food bank users are international graduate students. This increase is a cause for concern.

The survey allowed me to collect baseline data, and a broader understanding of food bank usage. The interviews and the focus groups provided international graduate students with an opportunity to share their stories about using the on-campus food bank, and the various barriers they have had to overcome in relation to their transition to being students at the University of Guelph. Giving international students the opportunity to talk about their experiences was important to me as a researcher, as this group is a minority on the University of Guelph campus, and are thus marginalized, and may not have opportunities to have their voices heard. By

listening to their personal stories about their use of the on-campus food bank, I have been able to look deeper into why the international graduate students are disproportionately using this service, and this has aided me in proposing appropriate solutions to barriers that the students have identified. Throughout this thesis, I have argued that the CSA food bank is a resource that is needed by particularly international graduate students to ensure wellbeing and success once they have arrived in Canada. In doing so, I have demonstrated the ways that food bank usage intersects with issues of inclusion and exclusion, food citizenship and agency.

The previous chapters analyze themes that were discussed by participants during the course of this research project. The data collected in this thesis speaks to the fact that the food system should be understood through relationships and society, and that food security is more than just having food to eat, but that being secure considers whether the food is chosen, preferred and can lead to a healthy lifestyle (FAO 2012). ‘Food citizenship’ is a concept that was used to guide the discussion of food insecurity of international graduate students as it states that if individuals are able to make more decisions regarding their food, they will likely have more meaningful relationships within the food system, and by having agency in their food system, individuals will gain the capacity to choose what they eat, how they attain it, and how they eat it. I discuss how an individual’s capacity to enact their rights can become limited when agency around food is a product of a social structure, such as is the case for international graduate students who use the on-campus food bank. This lack of access to foods that they are familiar with and enjoy eating demonstrates other elements of their food insecurity. Moreover, this lack of agency limits their relationships to others within the food system, and can lead to adverse issues, such as social isolation, and stigmatization.

Policy Implications:

Food insecurity is only part of the issue of inclusion, safety, financial security, and wellbeing for international graduate students. As such, my recommendations to address food insecurity, while important, will be of limited success for increasing graduate student wellbeing without considering them in the context of other recommendations. A more in-depth breakdown of each of these recommendations can be reviewed in Appendix M.

1. **Housing issues:** The university must do more to address housing concerns for international graduate students. This should be a two-pronged approach: A) Improve access to on-campus housing, which includes providing information about that housing further in advance, and B) Working to improve student access to off-campus housing searches. This might include something like providing international graduate students with access to listings that have been ‘vetted’ as safe, with transparent landlords.
2. **Employment issues:** The university can help international graduate students to earn money so that they can feel safer and more secure in their new lives while they were studying at the University of Guelph. Overall the university would be able to aid international students in their transition by: A) Offering job security to international students, B) Providing more on-campus job opportunities for international students, C) Mandating clear GRA and GTA contracts so that students are not able to be taken advantage of by their advisors, D) Providing supports for students who are juggling with work and child rearing.
3. **Wellbeing issues:** The university can help students who may feel that they are not able to live their lives as they imagined they would. Food insecurity impacts the wellbeing of international students. International graduate students can lead happier lives if: A) The

university acknowledges the on-campus food bank as a necessary service and provides funding to it to allow increased amounts and options be made available, B) The food bank is promoted on-campus as a stigma free option to accessing emergency food, and C) The university ensures that funding packages are distributed consistently so that students can plan their financial expenses, and be in less emergency situations.

4. **Food insecurity issues:** Situational food insecurity, can be mitigated by the University of Guelph administration. The University of Guelph should: A) Destigmatize the on-campus food bank, B) Adjust the tuition fees for international students, C) Provide funding packages to all international students. D) Offer support (personal and/or financial) to students year-round.

Limitations:

There are some limitations to my findings. The time frames at which I collected data may have been a limitation. My online survey was sent out during the Spring/Summer semester of 2018, and potential participants may not have been checking their emails to receive notice about my research during this time. Additionally, when recruiting participants for my interviews I had a great deal of difficulty having students agree, which may have been linked with the time of year (end of the summer semester and the beginning of the fall semester when students are not as readily checking their emails). Moreover, not being able to give students compensation for their time likely limited the number of participants I was able to get. Additionally, being an outsider to this group limited me as potential participants might not have talked to me because they feared stigmatization. Nevertheless, being an outsider gave me a fresh perspective on the problem and allowed me to analyze the data without bias.

Concluding Thoughts:

The disproportionate use of the food bank by international graduate students is more than just a food citizenship problem; it should be understood as a structural problem that can be addressed at the institutional level. Food insecurity among international graduate students is linked to a neoliberal shift. As universities face cuts in terms of public funding, they must find ways to make up budget shortfalls. International students and high international student fees is one approach to this. This comes at a cost to the students themselves, in terms of their food security, general wellbeing, food citizenship, and agency. University policies and practices can be changed in order to positively improve the lives of international graduate students.

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APPENDIX A: Recruitment Email for Survey

Subject Line: On-Campus Food Bank Project- Recruitment Email for eSurvey

Dear University of Guelph Student,

I am writing to ask if you would be interested in participating in a research project that I am conducting. As a graduate student studying at the University of Guelph, you are invited to participate in a research study to understand why certain demographics of students are using the on-campus food bank more than others.

This proposed research project has been requested to be conducted by the University of Guelph's Graduate Studies Department. It has been identified that international graduate students are disproportionately using the Central Student Association's (CSA) on-campus food bank.

The aim of this proposed project is to identify what key factors shape international graduate students disproportionate use of the on-campus food bank. Through this research the University of Guelph will be able to implement changes that are needed in their international graduate studies program in order to meet the needs identified by the group.

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to fill out an eSurvey, which will take approximately 10 minutes. The eSurvey will ask you general questions about your background and position at the school and will inquire into what you know about the on-campus food bank. Upon completing the eSurvey you will be entered into a draw to win one of five \$50.00 grocery store gift cards.

If you are interested in participating in the eSurvey, please click the link below and complete the survey by May 15, 2018. Participation in this eSurvey is voluntary, and your decision to participate will not affect your relationship with the researcher or the University of Guelph. Prior to completing the eSurvey you will be asked to consent to participating in this research, however if at any point you no longer want to participate, you can withdraw your consent at any time. If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact the researcher by email at rperei05@uoguelph.ca

SURVEY LINK INSERTED HERE

Thank you for your consideration,

Rebecca Pereira
MA (Candidate) Public Issues Anthropology
University of Guelph
Department of Sociology & Anthropology

APPENDIX B: Recruitment Email for Interviews

Dear University of Guelph Graduate Student,

As an international graduate student studying at the University of Guelph, you are invited to participate in a research study to understand why international graduate students are using the on-campus food bank more than others. Understanding this may help the university to create better policies around graduate student supports. The research project has been REB approved (REB #18-03-022), and the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral studies is a sponsor.

If you are interested in participating in my research, please email me at rperei05@uoguelph.ca and we can further discuss the research and potentially set up a time to meet for an interview. If you are interested in an **interview**, this will take **approximately one hour**, and we can meet at a time and place that is convenient for you.

Participation in this research is voluntary, and your decision to participate will not affect your relationship with the researcher or the University of Guelph. Prior to beginning this interview, you will be asked to consent to participate in this research.

If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact the researcher by email at rperei05@uoguelph.ca.

Thank you for your consideration, and looking forward to hearing from you,

Rebecca Pereira
MA (Candidate) Public Issues Anthropology
University of Guelph
Department of Sociology & Anthropology

APPENDIX C: Recruitment Email for Focus Group

Dear University of Guelph Student,

As an international graduate student studying at the University of Guelph, you are invited to participate in a research study. I am interested in better understanding why international graduate students are disproportionately using the Central Student Association's (CSA) on-campus food bank.

The aim of this proposed project is to identify what key factors shape international graduate students' disproportionate use of the on-campus food bank. Understanding this may help the university to create better policies around graduate student support. **I am looking to speak to students who have used the on-campus food bank at least once.**

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to partake in a **focus group**, which will take approximately **2 hours**, and will include refreshments and snacks. The focus group will discuss preliminary themes that have emerged through an eSurvey and in-depth interviews that I have previously conducted. The focus group will be held on campus, and prior to partaking in the focus group, you will be asked to consent to participation.

I would like to assure you that this study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through a University of Guelph Research Ethics Committee [REB# 18-03-022].

If you are interested in participating, or would like more information please email me at rperei05@uoguelph.ca

Additionally, if you are interested in participation, **please fill out the doodle poll below** indicating all of the time slots that you are available in order **to set a time and date that works for as many members as possible**. There are several available options of meeting times on Wednesday, Dec. 19, Thursday Dec. 20 and Friday Dec 21.

Doodle poll link: <https://doodle.com/poll/ba8rznrunxtx8gqw>

Thank you for your consideration, and I looking forward to hearing from you,

Rebecca Pereira
MA (Candidate) Public Issues Anthropology
University of Guelph
Department of Sociology & Anthropology

APPENDIX D: eSurvey Questions

1. Have you ever heard of the CSA on-campus food bank?

Yes

No

1a. If yes, where did you hear about it?

University of Guelph Webpage

CSA webpage

International Students Office

Friends

Other (Please list) _____

2. Have you ever used the CSA on-campus food bank?

Yes

No

If No, Participant will be directed to the end of the survey and can choose to enter their names for the draw (names will not be connected to the survey)

3. How frequently would you estimate you use the CSA on-campus food bank?

Every week

Every 2 Weeks

Every 3 Weeks

Every 4 Weeks

Other (Please list) _____

4. Please tell us a bit about why you used the food bank:

5. What is most useful about the CSA on-campus food bank?

6. What is less useful about the CSA on-campus food bank?

| |
|--|
| |
| |

7. Have you ever used other food banks?

Yes

No

7a. If yes, please list which one(s).

| |
|--|
| |
|--|

8. Which type of graduate student group do you belong to?

International

Domestic

8a. If international, please indicate which country you are coming from:

| |
|--|
| |
|--|

8b. If international, please indicate if you came to study at the University of Guelph alone, or with family members.

Alone

With Family

8b.i. If you came with family members, please indicate number of family members and whether they are adults or children.

| |
|--|
| |
|--|

9. What level of study are you pursuing?

- Masters Thesis
- Masters Major Research Paper/Course Work
- PhD

10. Which department are your studies associated with (Optional)?

11. Did you receive a funding package?

- Yes
- No

11a. If yes, how many semesters of funding do you have?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6

11.b. If yes, how much funding did you receive per semester

- 1000-2000
- 2000-3000
- 3000-4000
- 4000-5000
- 5000-6000
- 7000-8000

- 9000-10,000
- Over 10,0000
- Other (Please list) _____

12. Has this funding been enough to cover your tuition for each semester?

- Yes
- No

12a. If no, please indicate which semester(s) for which you don't have enough funding.

(Select All that apply)

- Fall
- Winter
- Summer

13. Are you financially supported by sources?

- Loans
- Scholarships from external sources
- Bursaries from external sources
- Personal Assets and savings
- Family
- Friends
- Jobs (other than GTAs)
- Other (please describe):

14. Do you work any jobs (other than GTAs or GRAs) throughout the school year?

Yes

No

14a. If yes, how many hours do you work per week (approximately)?

Less than 5 hours

5-10 hours

10-15 hours

15-20

25-30

30-35

Over 35 hours

14b. Is this job on campus or off campus?

On Campus

Off Campus

15. What expenses do you have to pay each semester? (Check all that apply)

Tuition

Rent

Utilities

Textbooks

Food

Other (Please list) _____

16. Do you ever feel that you do not have enough money to buy food?

Yes

No

16a. If yes, are there times of the year (semesters or otherwise) when you feel that you have less money to buy food?

Yes

No

16b. If yes, what factors make it harder to buy food at those times of year?

16c. If you ever feel you don't have enough money to buy food, are there some foods you

are **more** likely to buy?

16d. If you ever feel you don't have enough money to buy food, are there some foods you are more likely to **not** buy?

17. What are some strategies that you use when you do not have enough food? Please explain:

18. Please drag and drop the following in terms of which you prioritize spending money on, with

1 being the highest priority, and 5 being the lowest priority in terms of your budget for the semester:

Priority List:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Terms:

- Food
- Tuition
- Leisure activates
- Rent
- Transportation

19. Please drag and drop the following in terms of your priority for how the university helps assist with your food security, with 1 being the highest priority, and 5 being the lowest priority:

Priority List:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Terms:

- Lower international student tuition
- More international student tuition bursaries
- More options for emergency assistance
- More access to on-campus work options (i.e. GTAs GRAs)
- More information of living costs in Canada

20. Do you have any other comments about what the university could do to assist with your food security?

21. Would you be interested in participating in additional research on this topic in the form of an interview or focus group?

Yes

No

This question will be restricted to only students who identify as international students.

End of Survey

Would you like to participate in the draw for one of 5 \$50 grocery store gift certificates? If yes, please enter your email address here. Your email address will not be connected to your survey answers.

Would you like a summary of results at the end of the project? If yes, please enter your email address here. Your email address will not be connected to your survey answers.

APPENDIX E: Interview Questions

Background:

1. When did you first begin your studies at the University of Guelph?
 - a. What program are you currently enrolled in?
 - b. What is the duration of your studies?
2. Which country did you migrate from?
 - a. How long have you been in Canada?
 - b. When did you arrive (Summer/winter ex)?
 - c. Did you move alone, or did you bring your family?
 - d. What challenges did you experience when moving to Guelph?
 - e. Did you know anyone else in Canada before you moved here?
3. What made you choose the University of Guelph for your studies?
 - a. Were you more motivated to travel for school or for an experience?
 - b. Were there any services that led you to choose the University of Guelph over other universities in Canada?
 - c. When you got here, were you provided with any information or resources about the food bank, grocery stores or other emergency food resources?

Process:

4. Did you receive a funding package to attend the University of Guelph?
 - a. Would you say you have enough funding money to cover expenses outside of tuition?
 - b. Is the amount of funding different depending on the semester?
5. Can you list all of the expenses that you might have to pay over a semester? (ex. tuition rent utilities, personal, food, textbooks...etc).
6. How do you pay for essential expenses other than tuition? Such as Rent, utilities, and food?
 - a. What do you do if you find yourself in a situation where you are unable to pay for these essential expenses?
7. Do you ever have to prioritize spending your money on expenses other than buying food?
 - a. How often does this occur?
 - b. Would you identify yourself as being food insecure?
 - i. Defined As: the state of being without reliable access to a sufficient quantity of affordable, nutritious food.
 - c. Are there any food that you prioritize over others? (ex cultural food?)
 - i. Why is this?

- d. Can you list any foods that you find particularly difficult to buy?
8. Do you ever get financial support from other sources? (such as your family, a loan, an external scholarship)
 9. Are you currently working, or do you work throughout the school year in a job that is not TAing or RAing?
 - a. Is this job on or off campus?
 - b. How many hours do you work?
 - c. Is it necessary for you to work in order to afford to study here?
 10. How did you find out about the CSA Food bank?
 - a. How frequently do you use it?
 - b. Why do you use it?
 - c. Are there certain times of the year where you need to use this service more?
 - d. Are there certain products you always access from the food bank?
 - e. When you go to the food bank, do you go with others or do you go alone?
 - f. Do you know others who use the food bank?
 11. What do you think about the quality of food at the food bank?
 12. What do you think about the quantity of food at the food bank?
 13. Are there certain foods that you think the food bank should have but that they don't?
 14. Were there any criteria that you had to meet to use the CSA food bank?
 - a. Did you feel safe using the CSA food bank?
 - b. Do you regularly tell people about your use of the food bank?
 15. In your home country are there emergency food methods such as food banks?
 - a. Who can use these food banks in your home country?
 - b. Is there a stigma surrounding the use of food banks in your home country?

Barriers and Solutions:

16. What do you see as a solution for overcoming your need to use the food bank?
17. Do you believe there are areas where international students need more support?
 - a. Are there ways the university administration can better help international students?

- b. Are these supports needed more before you migrate to Canada or after you have migrated?
- 18. Were you informed about prices of housing, and food in Canada?
 - a. Were you prepared to afford these?
- 19. In your opinion what is the best way the University can help you to transition from your home country to the University of Guelph?
- 20. Is there anything else you'd like to talk about today, or that you think I should have asked you?

APPENDIX F: Focus Group Guide/Questions

- **Introductions:**
 - Name, program, country, why are you interested?
- **Themes:**
 - Inability to find culturally appropriate food
 - Issues with housing
 - The food bank is a necessity not a luxury
 - Food bank is a safe and welcoming space
 - International students are comfortable confiding with other international students
 - Situational Food Insecurity
- **Discussion:**
 - Comments or questions on the themes?
 - Solutions for international students experiencing food insecurity?
 - Specifics for Guelph?

APPENDIX G: Participant Demographics

| Pseudonym | Gender | Level of Study | Country of Origin |
|------------------|---------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| Joao | Man | PhD | Brazil |
| Luxshan | Man | PhD | Sri Lanka |
| Miguel | Man | MA | Mexico |
| Heeba | Woman | PhD | Iran |
| Anushia | Woman | PhD | Sri Lanka |
| Abanish | Man | PhD | Bangladesh |
| Mathura | Woman | PhD | Sri Lanka |
| Arjun | Man | MEng | India |
| Manish | Man | PhD | Nepal |
| Noah | Man | PhD | U.S.A. |
| Rohan | Man | MEng | India |
| Matheus | Man | PhD | Brazil |
| Randy | Man | PhD | Jamaica |
| Sharron | Woman | MA | China |
| Batuk | Man | MA | Bangladesh |
| Jeetu | Man | PhD | Bangladesh |

APPENDIX H: Expenses Per Semester

The other responses people selected can be broken into four categories

- Entertainment: recreational activities
- Health: medicine/medical expenses, UHIP
- Living Essentials: Loan payments, internet for home, cell phones for all family members, car and car expenses, living items like shampoo, toilet paper. Clothing to adapt to weather, paperwork for visas
- Family Expenses: Bus passes for family, Childcare fee in University Child Care and learning centre (1000 per month), baby food, childcare for school aged kids, children's school expenses, subscription to Grammarly, clothing to adapt to weather

APPENDIX I: Where did you hear about the CSA on-campus food bank?

The responses provided by the participants about how they heard about the CSA on-campus food bank can be broken into four categories:

- **Advertisements on the University Campus:** Signs in the University Centre, circulating flyers, posters on campus, university and departmental wide emails, a feature in the Ontarion (the university run newspaper), a fair held in the University Centre, advertisements in the CSA distributed agenda, and signs posted outside of the location.
- **Peer/Personal Networks:** Word of mouth, international student groups, on Facebook, the Graduate Student Support Circle, CBSSC Peer Mentor training, the Family Housing Office, the Student Volunteer Centre, volunteering at the food bank.
- **School Content:** professors, coursework, in class discussions, in class promotions, food security undergraduate course, through research project on Guelph's emergency food providers, during graduate orientation, university welcome package, during orientation week events, through the CSA or the GSA, working for the CSA,
- **Non-intentional discovery:** walking by the building, seeing it in the school fees breakdown, going to the bike centre which is located next door.

One respondent listed that they were not aware how they first learned about the CSA on campus food bank, stating, "I don't recall. I've been around the University since 2008 and have heard it mentioned several times since then."

APPENDIX J: International Students Countries of Origin

| Country | Number of Respondents |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Bangladesh | 1 |
| Brazil | 1 |
| China | 3 |
| Croatia | 1 |
| Egypt | 2 |
| Ghana | 2 |
| India | 12 |
| Iran | 4 |
| Italy | 2 |
| Jamaica | 1 |
| Mexico | 3 |
| Morocco | 1 |
| Nepal | 2 |
| Nicaragua | 1 |
| Nigeria | 3 |
| Sri Lanka | 1 |
| United States | 2 |
| Vietnam | 1 |
| | |
| Prefer Not | 1 |
| One of the European countries | 1 |

APPENDIX K: The number of family members who joined participant during migration

| Reported Response | Number of Reports |
|--------------------------|--|
| 1 adult | 4 (2 indicate this other person is a spouse) |
| 1 adult, 1 child | 6 |
| 1 adult, 2 children | 2 |
| 2 people | 3 |
| 4 people | 1 |

APPENDIX L: Which department are your studies associated with?

| Reported Response | Number of Respondents |
|---|------------------------------|
| Animal Biosciences | 1 |
| Chemistry | 2 |
| Computer science | 4 |
| Engineering | 10 |
| English and Theatre Studies | 1 |
| <i>Environmental Design and Rural Development</i> | 1 |
| Environmental sciences | 4 |
| Food science | 2 |
| Family Relations and Applied Nutrition | 1 |
| Languages and Literature | 2 |
| Landscape Architecture | 1 |
| Marketing | 2 |
| Molecular Cellular biology | 1 |
| Philosophy | 1 |
| Plant Agriculture | 6 |
| Population Medicine | 1 |

APPENDIX M: Policy Recommendations

Housing Recommendations:

1. Being transparent and accommodating about housing availability on campus and all of the rules associated with living in family housing, and having a better system where students are aware of their status much before they arrive would be sufficient.
2. Having housing contracts available in multiple languages to ensure students are aware of all contract stipulations. The lack of understanding led to students missing important dates, and information about their living conditions and the associated rules. Despite this requiring effort and resources to translate materials at first, the University will then have access to several documents for the future. Having clearer information could help transition and make international students feel welcome on campus.
3. Creating a list of reputable housing websites or options available for international students. This will limit the student's possibility of being taken advantage of by landlords.
4. Having temporary housing available for international students (suggested maximum: 3 days) in order to facilitate a search for accommodations.

Employment Recommendations

1. Offering job security to international students. This would positively affect the lives of students and lead to a decrease in feeling food insecure and feeling like they need to use the food bank service in order to survive.
2. Providing more on campus job opportunities for international students. The Office of Graduate and Post-Graduate Studies could connect students to on-campus employers,

who would recognize that there are higher everyday costs and start up fees for international students.

3. Acknowledging that the students they are recruiting likely have young families, and that they should have some supports in place to aid the work-life balance. This can include making sure people are not working multiple jobs in order to pay their bills while also attempting to complete their doctoral work.
4. Having clear contracts which lay out the duties and hours for GRAs so that students do not feel that they are being taken advantage of by their advisors.
5. Ensuring that advisors are transparent with students, and ensuring that students are aware of their options should they feel they are being inappropriately prohibited from working other jobs.

Wellbeing Recommendations:

1. Acknowledging that the CSA on-campus food bank is a necessary service and providing funding to it. With more funding allotted to the food bank students will be able to access more products, and benefit from the service at highest degree possible.
2. Promoting the food bank on the University of Guelph campus as a stigma free option to accessing emergency food.
3. Recognizing that there are numerous expenses that students must pay each semester, and that funding packages should be consistent in terms of amount and distribution times per semester. With consistency in this area students will be able to appropriately plan their lives around their expenses and may be able to regulate in times when they may have previously felt they were in emergency situations.

4. Reducing the use of the food bank from everyday needs to “emergency only” needs.

Food insecurity Recommendations:

1. Work towards destigmatizing the on-campus food bank and understanding that this is a necessary resource for many of their students. Doing this can help food bank users feel safe using the service, and that they will have some security in their lives.
2. Realize that tuition fees and the means to start a life as an international student are too high and must be adjusted in order to increase student wellbeing. If the fees are not adjusted, then appropriate funding must be provided to offset this.
3. Provide significant funding packages to all international students. Survey results show that 43.9% of users of the on-campus food bank did not receive a funding package and were entirely dependent on their savings to get by³.
4. Offer support to students year-round, and not just upon arrival. This support can be both financial and personal.
5. Regulate the pay schedules so that students can predict their financial status and will not feel like they have to live conservatively because they do not know how large their next pay cheque will be.
6. Provide nutritionally sufficient foods at the food bank, so students will not have to feel that they are nutritionally insecure.

³ There have been some improvements to funding packages for international graduate students pursuing PhD's, however, this research was completed before they were implemented.