

CERM THESIS DEFENSE

**Higher Education & Food
Access:** A Case Study of
Central Washington
University's Food Access
Initiatives and their
Community Impact

Presented by Becca Wheaton (She/Her)



How is food insecurity addressed at Central Washington University?

OBJECTIVE 1

Assess current knowledge on student food insecurity and food bank non-profit models.

OBJECTIVE 2

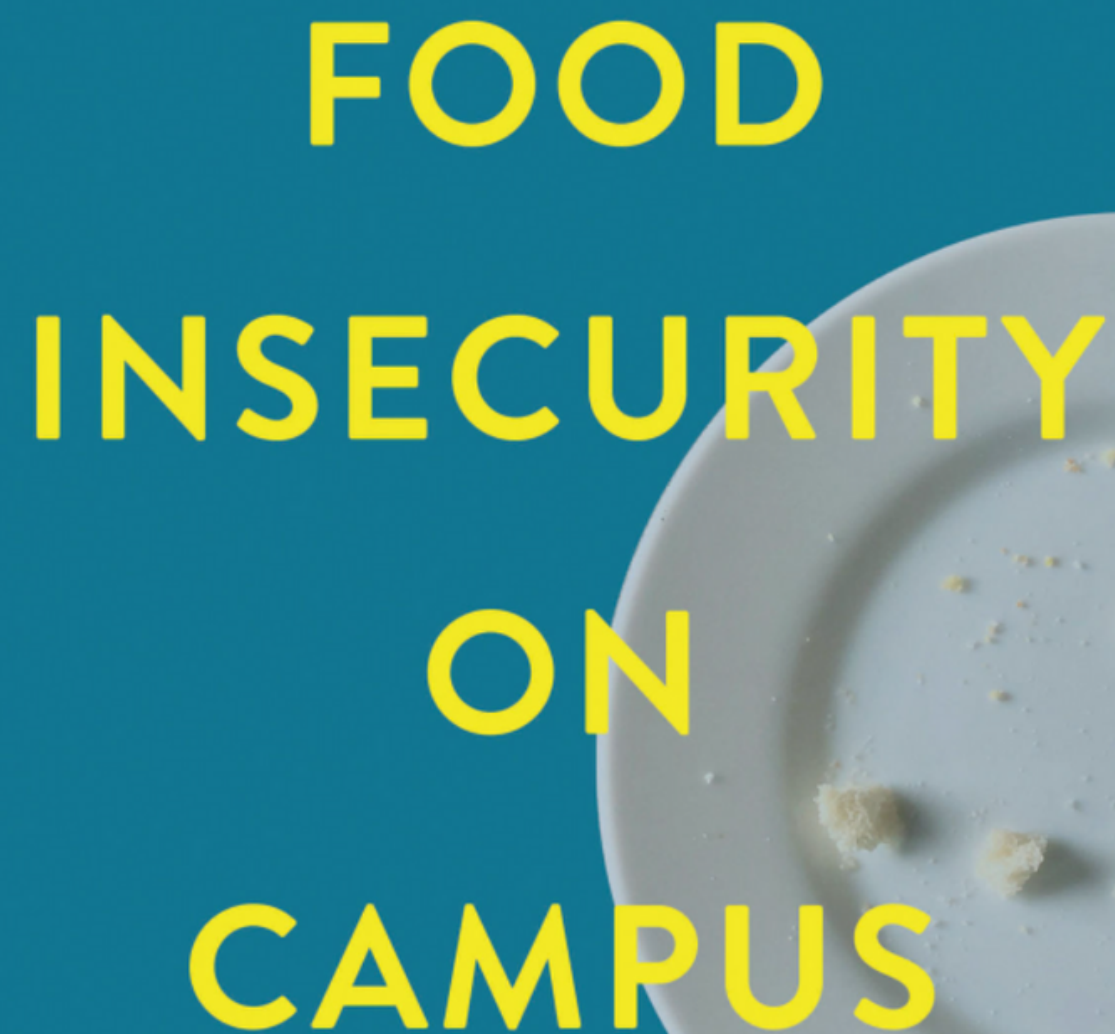
Examine the historical and cultural context of CWU and their on and off-campus partners with FISH and APOYO.

OBJECTIVE 3

Develop a conceptual framework that encompasses key actors and their associated fields as it relates to food access programs and services on CWU's campus.

OBJECTIVE 4

Share key insights on food insecurity on CWU's campus based on culmination of results.



FOOD INSECURITY ON CAMPUS

ACTION AND INTERVENTION

EDITED BY KATHARINE M. BROTON
AND CLARE L. CADY

Foreword by Sara Goldrick-Rab

STUDENT FOOD INSECURITY ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES

- **41% of students** are food insecure (Goldrick-Rab 2018)
- Contributing factors to student food insecurity
 - Shifting student landscape (Goldrick-Rab 2016; CLASP 2015; Hughes et al. 2011; Nellum 2015).
 - Transportation, money & time expenditures, and extenuating circumstances (Henry 2017)

PILLARS OF FOOD SECURITY



"A condition or circumstance where people have equitable access to foods to lead a healthy life."
(USDA 2020)

PILLARS OF FOOD SECURITY

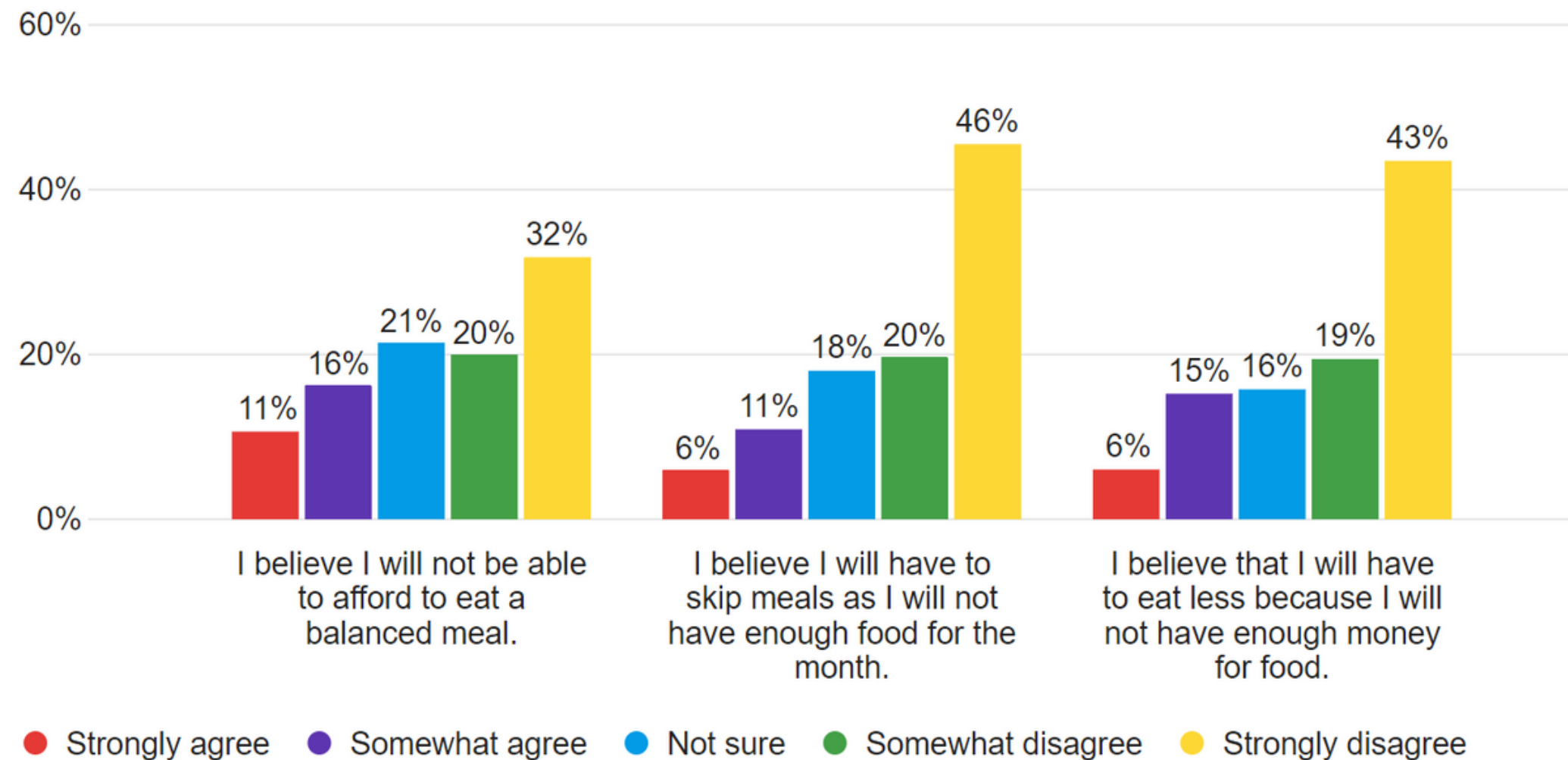
Access

- Social, Political, Economic Factors
- Inequitable Distribution
- Affordability
- Purchasing Power
- Location & Transportation
- Time & energy expenditures



Food Security

Q143 - Considering the upcoming academic year, how strongly do you agree or disagree that... (n=761)



CWU STUDENT FOOD INSECURITY

- Data exists but does not address all students in terms of scope or depth
- Focus on local solutions to food insecurity issues related to college students (Henery 2017).



ETHNOGRAPHIC METHODS

- Provides an intimate understanding of data (Khanna 2009).
- Address the complexities and nuances of local experiences (Himmelgreen and Romero-Daza 2009; Johnston and Fiske 2013).

“I didn't have a car for two years so I didn't really know how to get groceries ...if I was to get groceries that **I can carry home**, then I only have so many hands and so many muscles

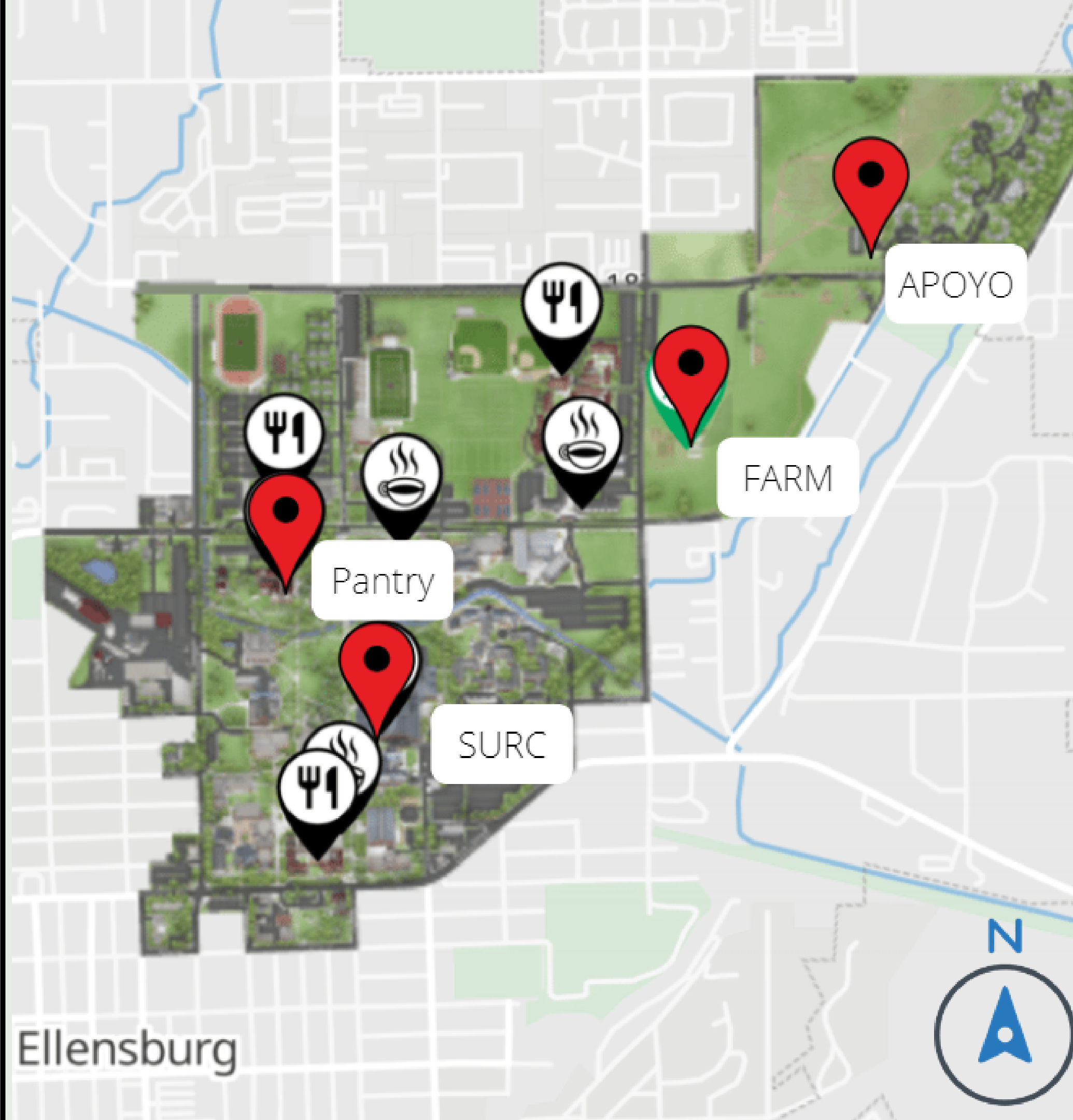
Central Washington University

Food Access Initiatives Serving Students

- Dining Services
- The Wildcat Neighborhood Farm
- PUSH & The Wildcat Pantry
- APOYO Food Pantry, 501(c)(3)



(CWU Sustainability Map)



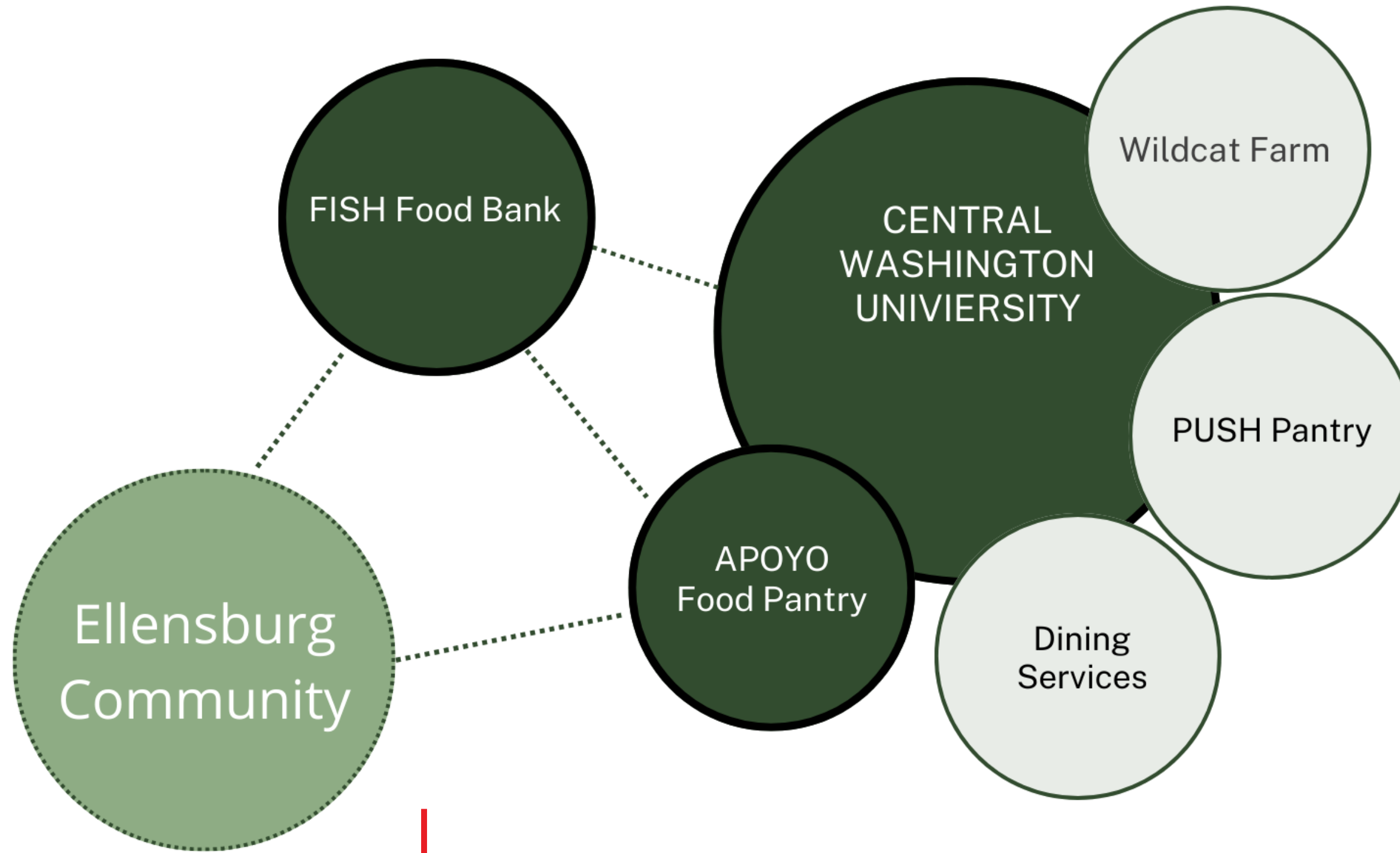
Field: APOYO Food Pantry



Field: FISH Food Bank



Fields of Action



Student Food Insecurity

Who are the Subject Matter Experts?

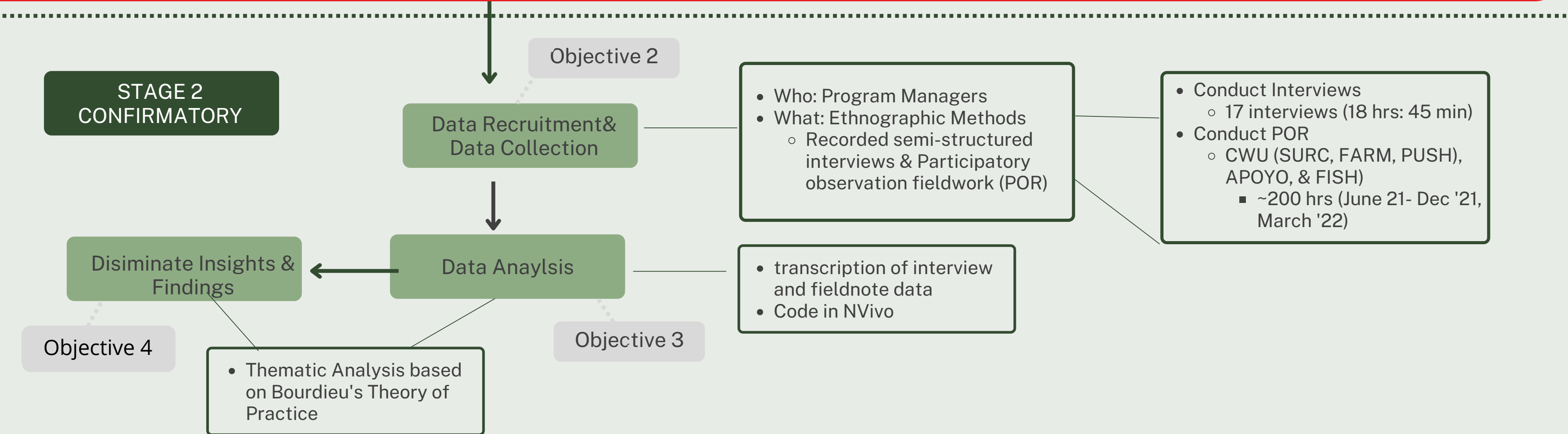
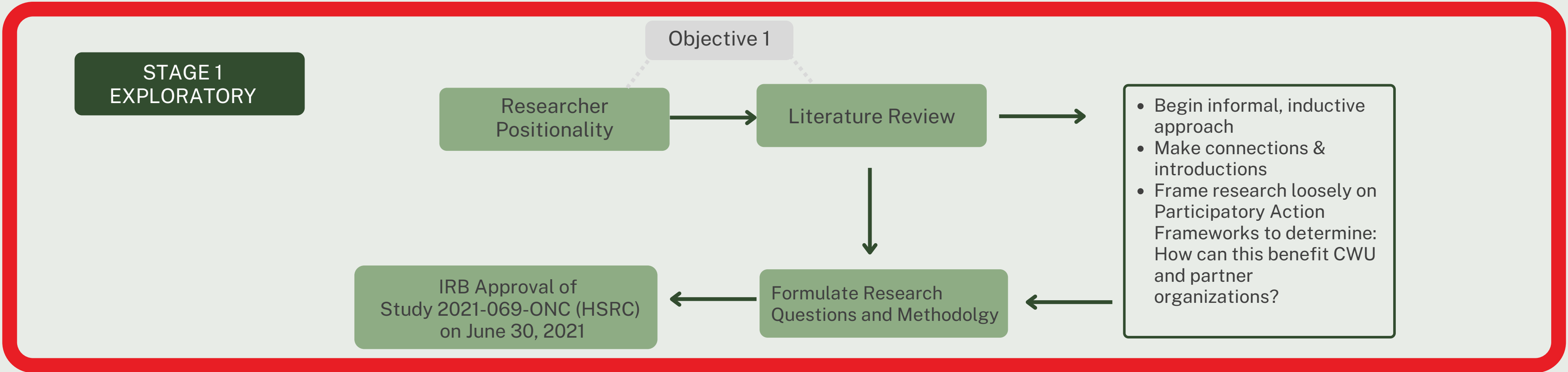
Habitus



People who create and influence student food access programs and services.

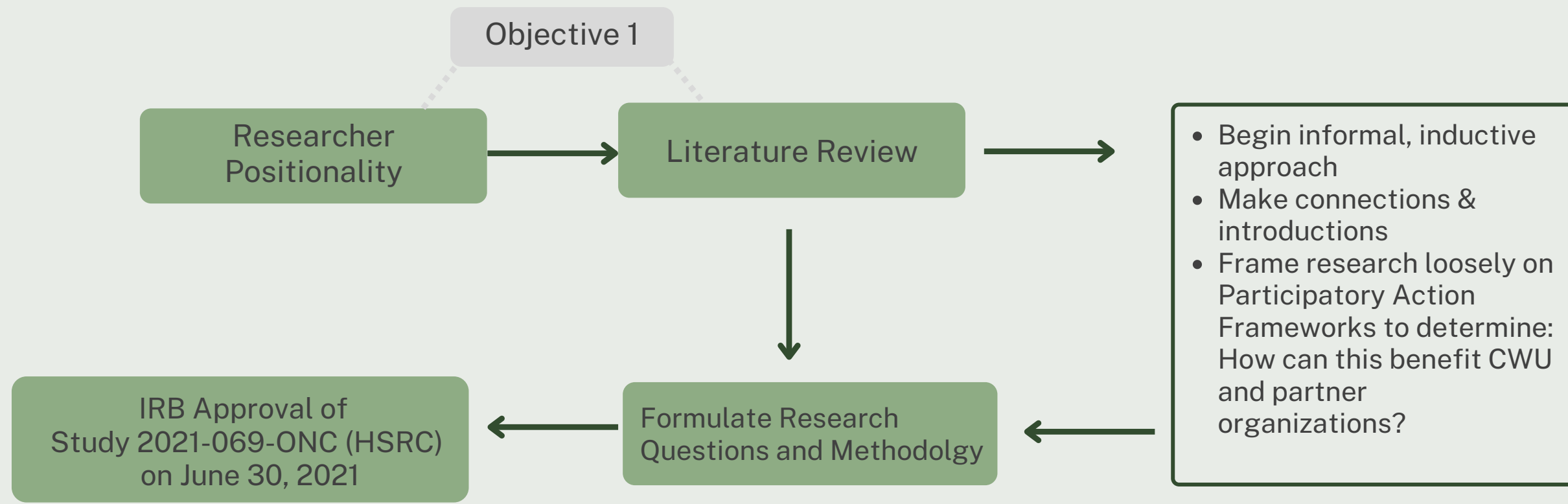
How do they perceive student needs?

Research Design

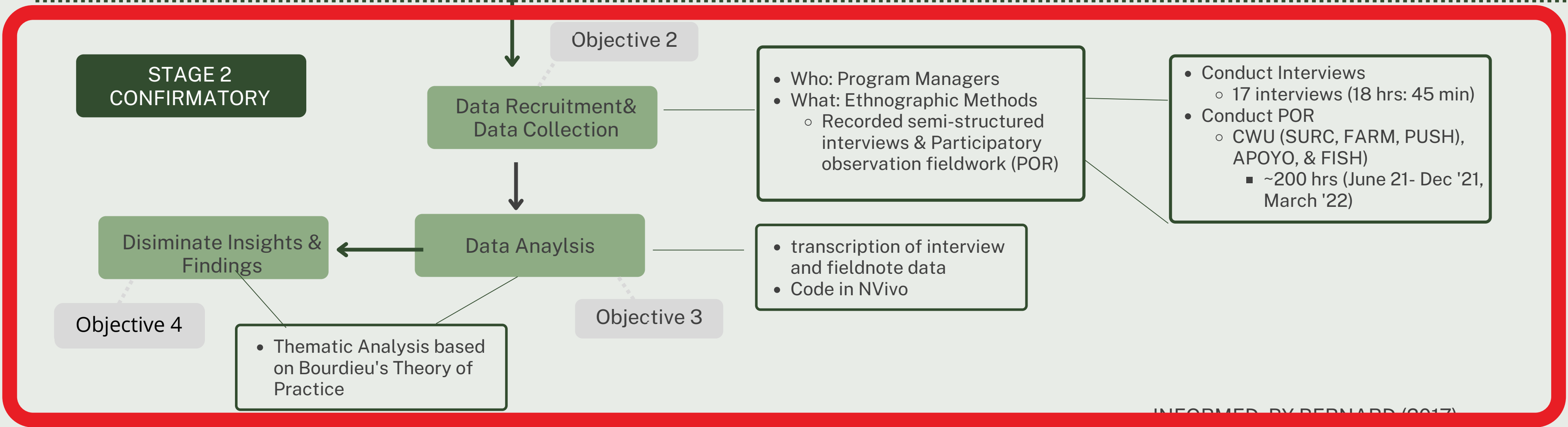


Research Design

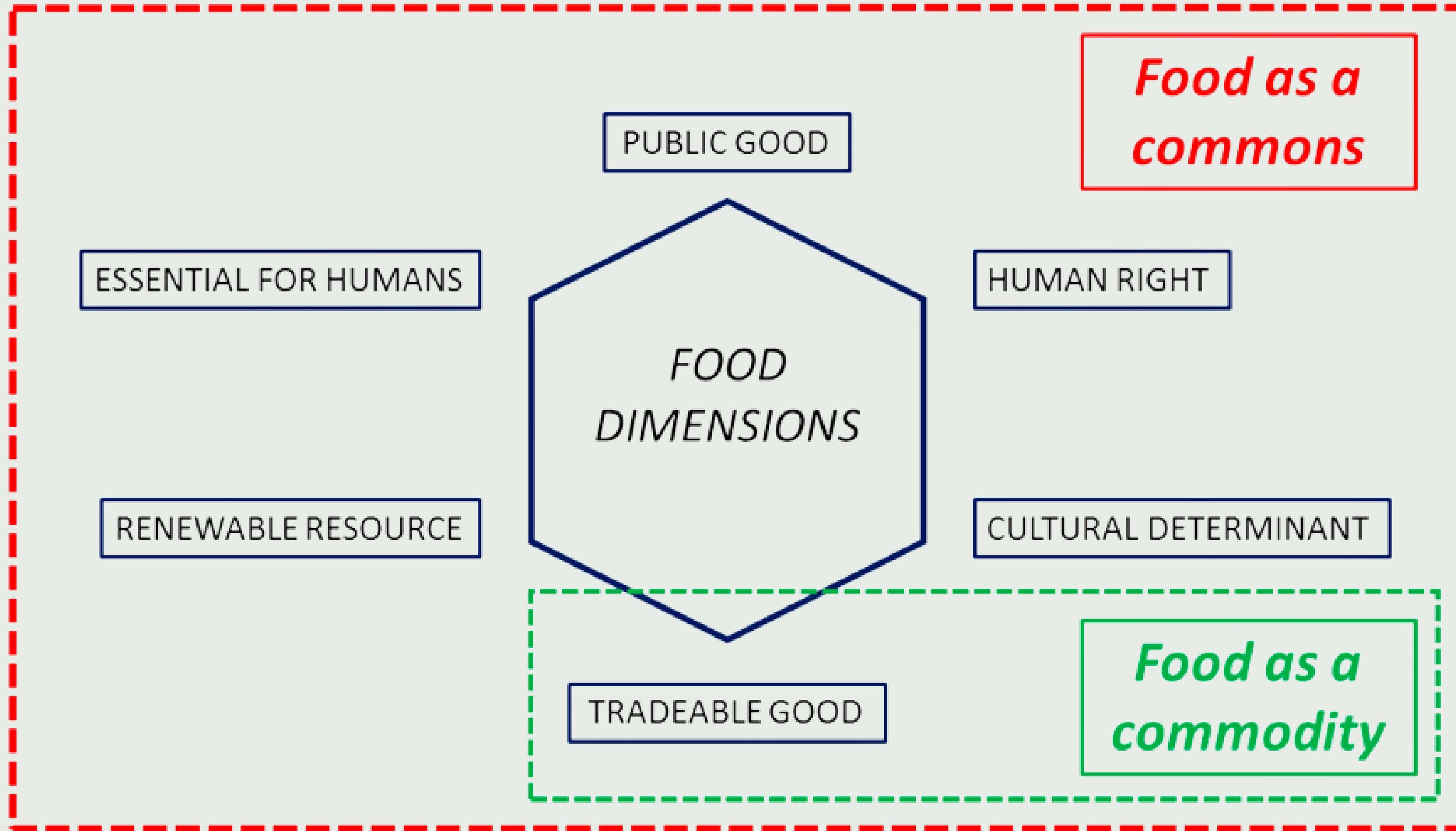
STAGE 1 EXPLORATORY



STAGE 2 CONFIRMATORY



The Many Ways Food Is Framed



Who are the key stakeholders and their fields?

How do they perceive themselves and their response to student need?

Phases of Analysis

PHASE I

Trascription

Identify vignettes & direct quotes

Identify Themes & Patterns and apply codes

Thematic Analysis

PHASE III

Relationship Analysis:
Food Circulation

Social-Ecological Model

PHASE II

Apply Bourdieu's Theory of Practice as a conceptual framework to determine distribution of resources

PUSH & The Wildcat Pantry (Student-Driven, Student-Oriented)



“ Central says it cares about food and security but why are the students and staff who also might have their own food insecurity issues having to stock the shelves because they don't want students showing up and seeing nothing **because an empty shelf is almost worse than no shelf at all.**



Dining Services (Nourishment and Sustenance)



“ We serve food and beverage. That's the basics that we do, **but we do so much more than that.** We're not a private sector restaurant on the street that's for-profit ---there are a lot more connectors on a university campus that require us to do a lot more.



Wildcat Neighborhood Farm (Food Access)



WILDCAT
NEIGHBORHOOD FARM
sustainability center | outdoor classroom

“ Having local locally grown produce is a sort of reliable and stable way to acquire food... it's just not the most cost-effective with the way that it's all laid out...**having the farm on campus prioritizes that sort of local food access point.**



APOYO Food Pantry (Community Responsiveness)



“ We get a lot of people that are **excluded from mainstream society** and don't feel comfortable going to a larger food bank...we just have an ability to be flexible in a way that bigger food banks aren't within responding to needs that we can identify in the community.



FISH Food Bank (Community Service)



“ There is a misperception that we are constantly working against in this community... **it's such a community of haves and have nots** and rarely do those two communities meet unless you're involved in something that serves the have nots and so it's hard for the haves to really believe that the other half exists.



Central Washington University (University Responsibility)



“ How do you get it on the agenda and call attention to it **so it gets the eyes and the ears it needs to really change** and really move things? **That's bureaucracy.**

“ **We don't put barriers in their way on purpose,** but we do put barriers in their way.



What are the Stakeholder Relationships?

How are their relationships defined by the way food is circulated to students?

Phases of Analysis

PHASE I

Trascription

Identify vignettes & direct quotes

Identify Themes & Patterns and apply codes

Thematic Analysis

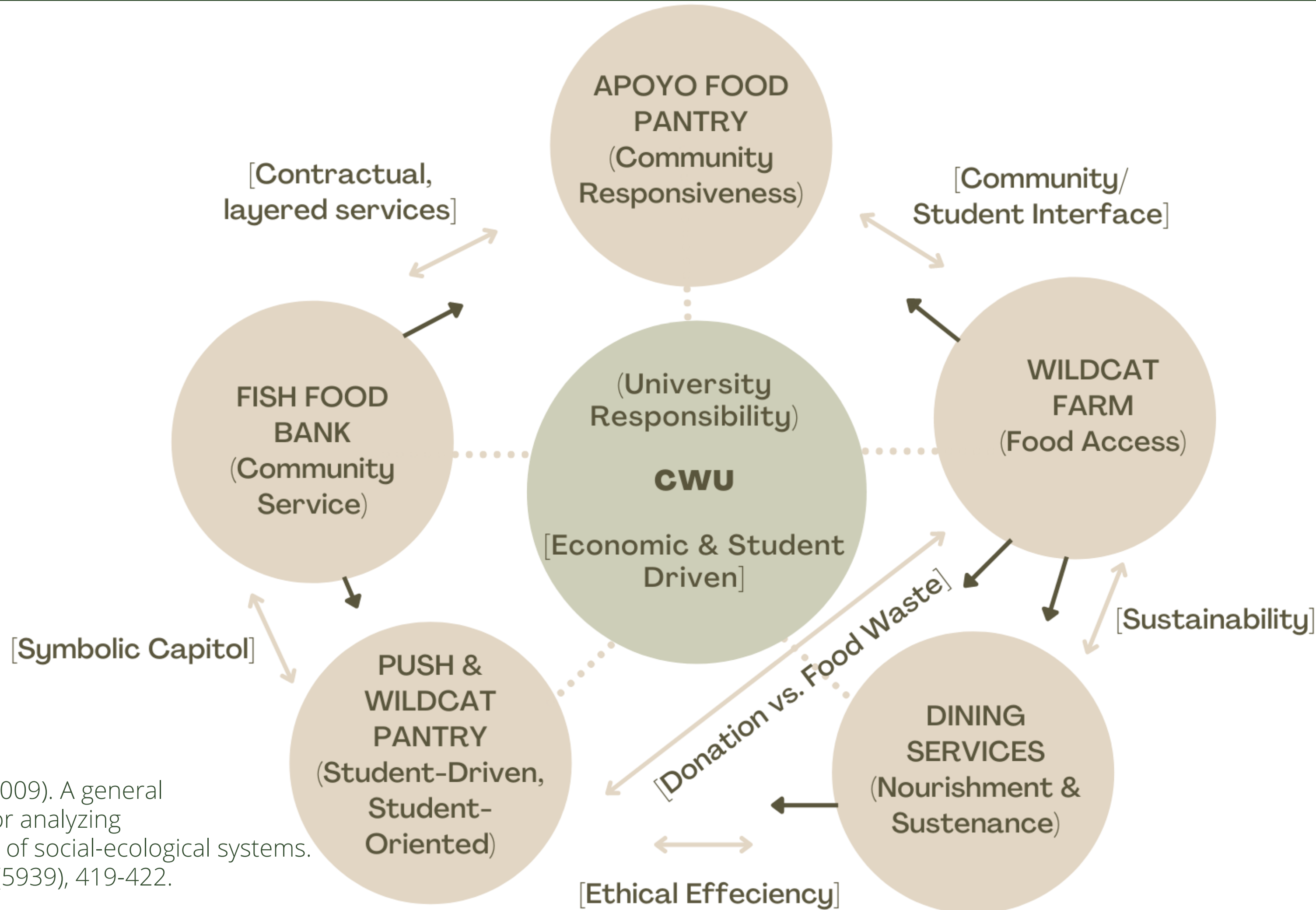
PHASE III

Relationship Analysis:
Food Circulation

Social-Ecological Model

PHASE II

Apply Bourdieu's Theory of Practice as a conceptual framework to determine distribution of resources



Ostrom, E. (2009). A general framework for analyzing sustainability of social-ecological systems. *Science*, 325(5939), 419-422.

Wildcat Farm-Dining Services [Sustainability]

Food and access to food are transformed into **localized solutions to closed-loop food systems on a college campus.**

Sustainability | Local | Organic



Dining Services-PUSH Pantry [Ethical Efficiency]

Food and access to food are transformed into **a way to sustainably and ethically donate food waste to student communities.**

State Asset | Recovery | Health & Safety



Wildcat Farm-PUSH Pantry [Donation]

Food and access to food are transformed
into **a way to destigmatize food
pantry donations for student
communities.**

Groceries | Fresh | Colorful



Wildcat Farm-APOYO [Community-Student Interface]

Food and access to food are transformed into **a point of connection between students and Ellensburg communities.**

Support | Outreach | Solidarity



FISH Food Bank-PUSH Pantry [Symbolic Capital]

Food and access to food are transformed into **a way to leverage resource support in exchange for partnership and networking.**

Prestige | Pride | Service

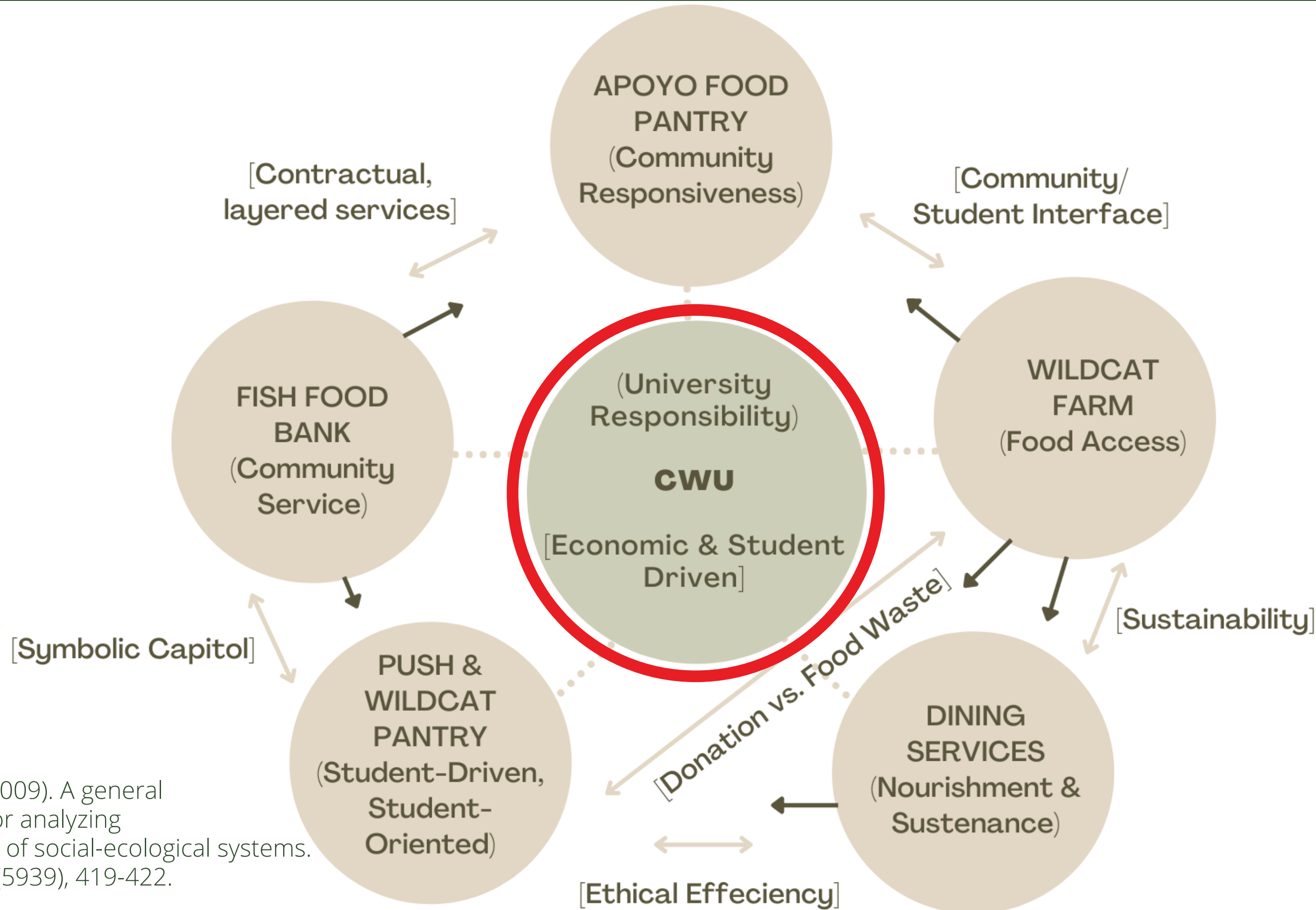
This year, PUSH has partnered with the *Fish Food Bank* to help raise awareness of the resources available to students. Partnering with Fish has provided opportunities for volunteering, support, resources and community involvement. Fish is located at 1513 North B Street Ellensburg, WA 98926.

FISH Food Bank-APOYO [Contractual Service]

Food and access to food are transformed
into **operationalizing the
redistribution of food to food-
insecure populations in Ellensburg,
including students.**

Subcontracted | Allocation | Scale





Ostrom, E. (2009). A general framework for analyzing sustainability of social-ecological systems. *Science*, 325(5939), 419-422.

Central Washington University [Economic & Student Driven]

Food and access to food are transformed into **mission-driven strategies to support students from a predominately economic-client framework.**

**Student Success | Student Retention |
Responsibility to students**



Messaging and Marketing

There is a disconnect between mission and action, where the sell and reality do not align.

Messaging to students should reflect a candidness about expectations, the transparency around the decision-making process, and how executive leadership and administration related to their students at a human level.

Demonstrating institutional support could take the form of engaging in university-wide research initiatives to understand the unique student landscape of CWU.

Structure & Development

Formalized organization

- Benefits:
 - Infrastructural stability
 - Sustainable model
- Weakness:
 - Slower rate of response to student need
 - Less flexible

Less Formalized organization

- Benefits:
 - Flexible
 - Adaptable
 - Effective rate of response
- Weakness:
 - Capacity is dependent on resource availability

Data Communication

“I know in my gut, and I know in my heart, and I know from student qualitative feedback but Central has not been great at collecting **actual data to back up what we see.**”

“I don't think it's just a matter of saying we think we know that students aren't getting the food that they need... we really don't know it **as authoritatively as we'd like to, but we do know it.**”



“I can tell you that when we have a stocked food pantry shelf, it is emptied out by the end of the week, usually later in the quarter.”



Data Communication

"[Data] get evaluated and then we usually get an increase every year 'cause our numbers are going up or because we are providing a lot of food. Our numbers go up when we increase the number of people we serve through SNAP, we are responsible for signing people up for SNAP, so we get paid more for the more people we reach, **the more they like it, the more [Federal & State] pay.**"



Phases of Analysis

PHASE I

Trascription

Identify vignettes & direct quotes

Identify Themes & Patterns and apply codes

Thematic Analysis

PHASE III

Relationship Analysis:
Food Circulation

Social-Ecological Model

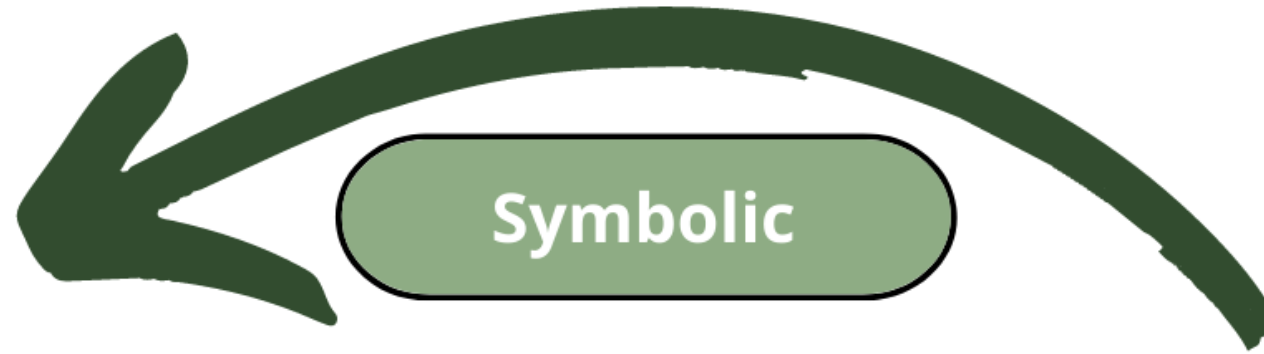
PHASE II

Apply Bourdieu's Theory of Practice as a conceptual framework to determine distribution of resources

Practice

Habitus

Program
Manager
Positionality

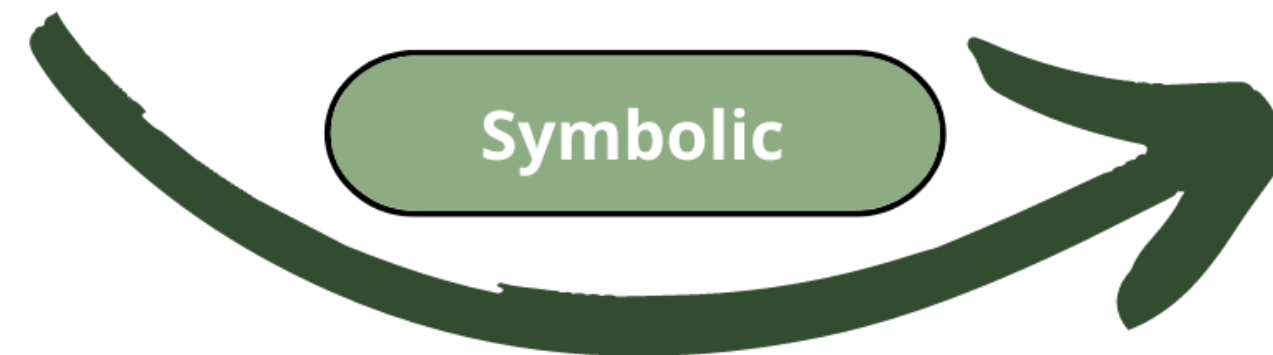
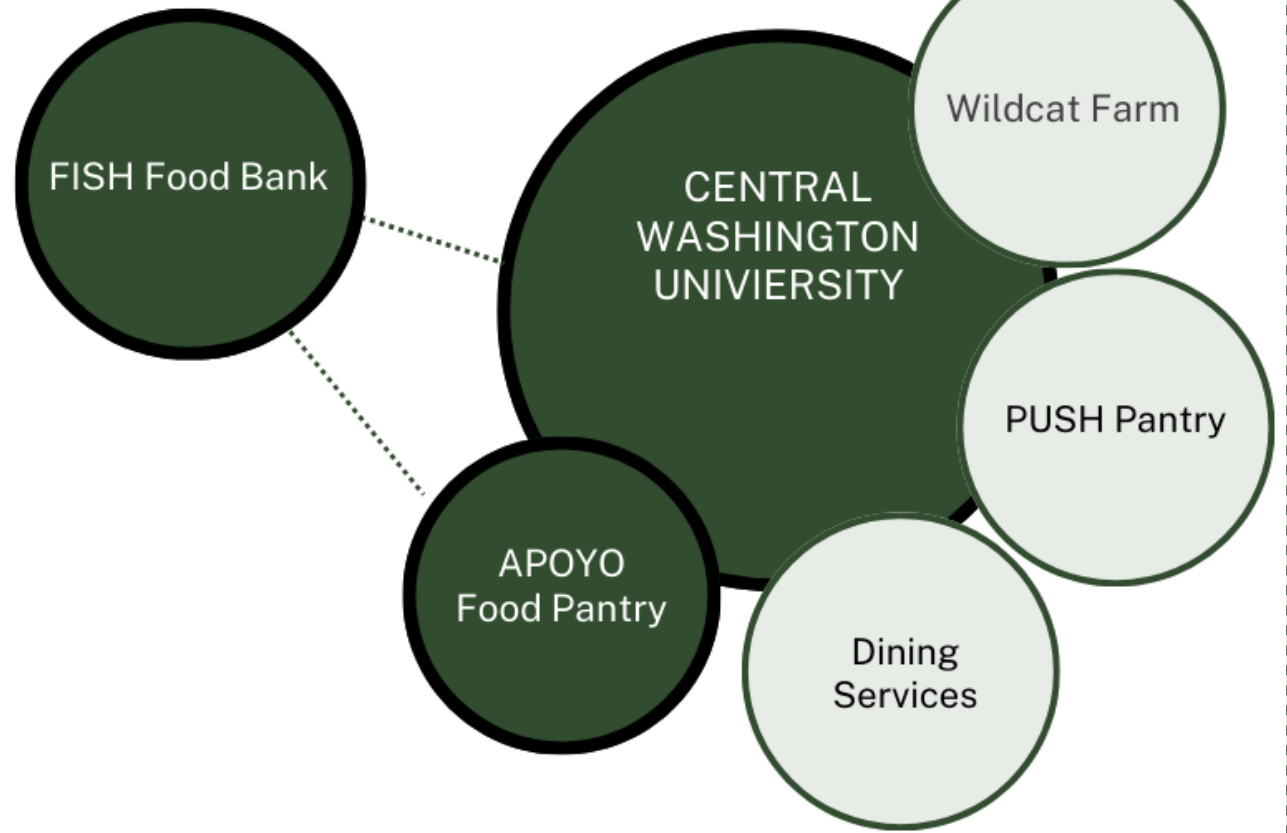


Forms
of
Capital

Economic

Social

Cultural



Fields
(Student Food Access)

Practice

High Capital, Greater Engagement

**HOW
EMBEDDED
ARE THE
SUBFIELDS
ARE WITHIN
THE HIGHER
EDUCATION
SOCIO-
POLITICAL
CONTEXT?**

MORE EMBEDDED

LESS EMBEDDED

HIGH DEGREE
OF CAPITAL

LOW DEGREE
OF CAPITAL

DEGREE OF CAPITAL

Low Capital, Less Engagement

Thomson, P. (2014). Using "Field Theory".
In Pierre Bourdieu (pp. 73). Routledge.

Are resources equitably distributed?

Does shifting from food as material to both cultural & symbolic capital hide inequality?

High Capital, Greater Engagement



HOW EMBEDDED ARE THE SUBFIELDS ARE WITHIN THE HIGHER EDUCATION SOICO-POLITICAL CONTEXT?

MORE EMBEDDED

LESS EMBEDDED



LOW DEGREE OF CAPITAL



DEGREE OF CAPITAL

Low Capital, Less Engagement

Thomson, P. (2014). Using "Field Theory". In Pierre Bourdieu (pp. 73). Routledge.



“PUSH committee wise, **they're so well connected with other people in it the university and students don't have that**, so whenever there are things that we need that we **don't know who to go to** or we feel like **they may not be responsive to us because we're students...** we can have them relay information for us.”



When Central decided like “we're not gonna support APOYO anymore” and people kind of found out about it and got upset- I think those are the people that realize that **“hey, we have a need for this,”** and I think it's kind of weird that Central, I mean for whatever reason, was like “we're not gonna support you anymore” 'cause in a sense, they're saying we're not gonna support what you're doing which is feeding people ...



“They deserve better space... I think we've learned a lot, we have some more concrete relationships so I think that the informal could work sort of but, where it doesn't work is then when the people most involved begin to fall away. **[We all have a] responsibility to build networks that outlasts the people.”**



"I think that from the student's perspective do they always know about this? The answer is clearly no...**I don't think the communication has been great between the school administration and us**, I feel like the communication is better with the students-- the students who use us tend to know how much we do over there, but **I don't think the school administration recognizes it.**"



"We are working on making signage more clear and more known 'cause there is a section that is specifically for people to take food, even if they don't have a community garden plot... If someone said, "oh I need produce, can I have some?" **We wouldn't say no... but that's us out here more than like the function of the farm"**

Conversations for the future of CWU food insecurity

Understanding the Student Experience

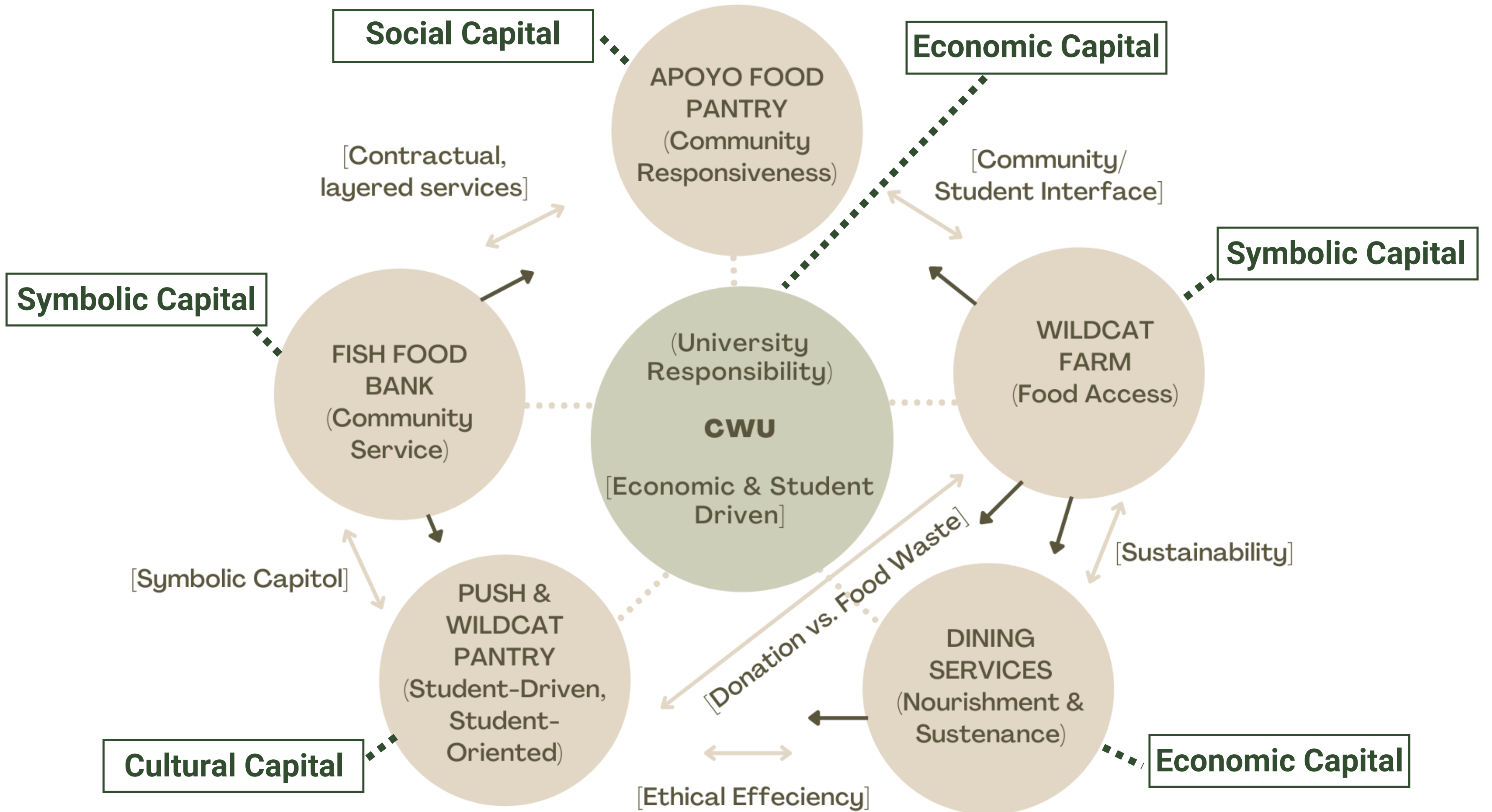
“We love having agency and autonomy to be able to dictate these decisions that are made, so I think entering a space that's filled with:

- people who are of **higher knowledge** than you,
- that have **more titles** than you,
- that are **older** than you,

and you're sitting in that space ... I think when it comes to sort of **committee teams and faculty** leads they like **to think so broad** in terms of wanting to just see this **mission** sustained and it becomes too wide - **it feels like students can lose their grip on what's happening and it's not about us anymore.”**

De-stigmatizing what qualifies as Need

- De-stigmatizing food pantries and access to basic needs is still needed.
- This can take the form of
 - Language and messaging
 - Addressing the larger systemic issues on campus



How Food is Conceived



Transitional

**Cultural
Reproduction**

**Reflexivity &
Transformation**

Commodity

Service

Right

State Asset

Health

Identity

Pounds

Local

Food

Economic Model

Sustainable Model

Food Justice Model



Questions?

Special Thanks To:

Advisor: Dr. Rodrigo F. Rentería-Valencia

Research Participants

Committee Members:

Dr. Hope Amason & Dr. Lene Pedersen

Works Cited

- Aborisade, B., & Bach, C. (2014). Assessing the pillars of sustainable food security. *European International Journal of Science and Technology*, 3(4), 117-125.
- Bernard, H. Russell. *Research methods in anthropology: Qualitative and quantitative approaches*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2017.
- Bourdieu, P. (1977). *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (No. 16). Cambridge university press.
- Cady, C. L. (2014). Food insecurity as a student issue. *Journal of College and Character*, 15(4), 265-272.
- Campus Sustainability Map. Maps & Resources. <https://www.cwu.edu/sustainability/maps-resources> Accessed February 4, 2021.
- Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) 2015. *Yesterday's Nontraditional Student is Today's Traditional Student*. <http://www.clasp.org/resources-and-publications/publication-1/CPES-Nontraditionalstudents-pdf>, accessed February 10, 2021.
- Central Washington University, S3 Food insecurity report fall 2021, administered by Student Success, accessed November 11th, 2021. <https://ql.tc/zl0f2g>
- Goldrick-Rab, S. (2020). *Food insecurity on campus: Action and intervention*. JHU Press.
- Goldrick-Rab, S., Richardson, J., & Hernandez, A. (2017). *Hungry and homeless in college: Results from a national study of basic needs insecurity in higher education*.
- Henry, Lisa. "Understanding Food Insecurity Among College Students: Experience, Motivation, and Local Solutions." *Annals of Anthropological Practice* 41, no. 1 (2017): 6-19.
- Himmelgreen, D., & Romero-Daza, N. (2009). Anthropological approaches to the global food crisis: Understanding and addressing the "Silent Tsunami". *Napa Bulletin*, 32(1), 1-11.
- Hughes, Roger, Irene Serebryanikova, Katherine Donaoldson, and Michael Leveritt 2011 *Student Food Insecurity: The Skeleton in the University Closet*. *Nutrition and Dietetics* 68(1):27–32.

Works Cited

Johnston, Barbara Rose, and Shirley Fiske. 2013. The precarious state of the hydrosphere: why biocultural health matters. *Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews: Water*, doi:10.1002/wat2.1003.

Khanna, S. K. (2009). Anthropological Approaches for Understanding the Complexities of The Global Food Crisis. *NAPA Bulletin*, 32(1), 193-200.

Maton, K. (2014). Habitus. In Pierre Bourdieu (pp. 60-76). Routledge.

Nellum, Christopher 2015 Fighting Food Insecurity on Campus. *Higher Education Today*. <http://www.higheredtoday.org>, accessed February 1, 2021.

Otten, Jennifer J., Drewnowski, Adam, Lewis, Laura R., Collier, Sarah M., Sivaramakrishnan, Brinda, Rose, Chelsea M., Ismach, Alan, Nguyen, Esther, Buszkiewicz, James. "Special Research Brief: Food Security and barriers to Food Assistance Use in Washington State Households, 2020-2021, Research Brief 11" (July 2021). Washington State Food Security Survey. <https://nutr.uw.edu/cphn/wafood/brief-11>

Ostrom, E. (2002). Common-pool resources and institutions: Toward a revised theory. *Handbook of agricultural economics*, 2, 1315-1339.

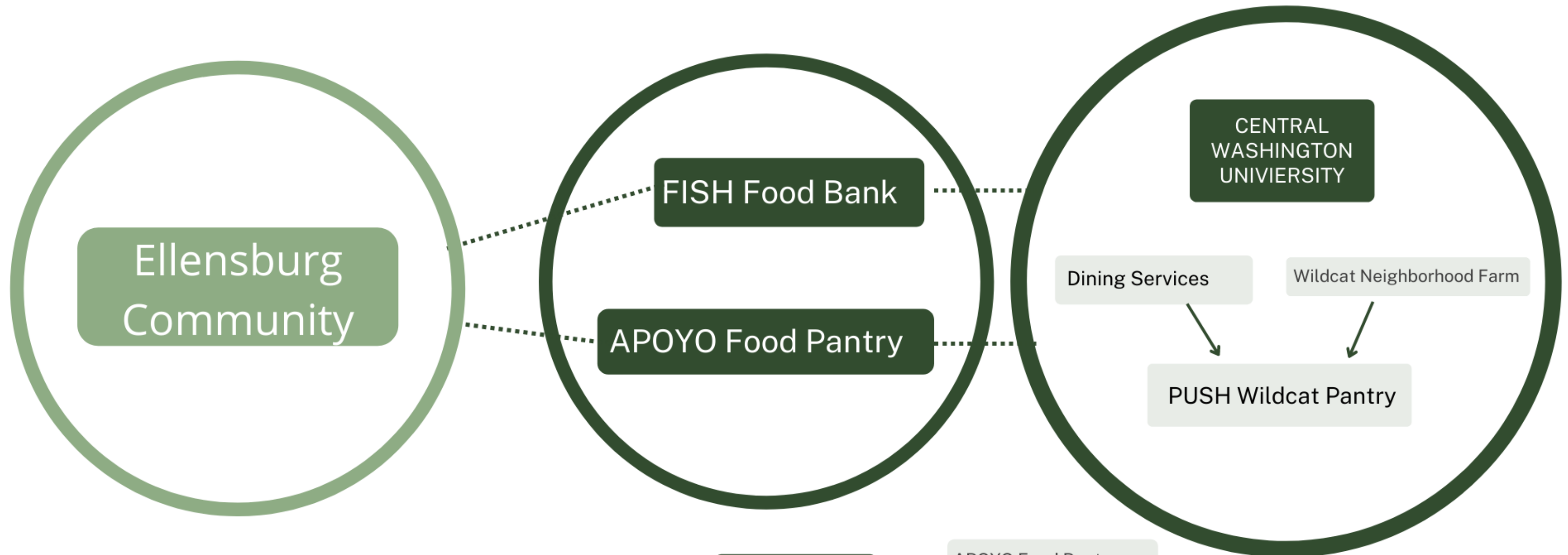
Ostrom, E. (2009). A general framework for analyzing sustainability of social-ecological systems. *Science*, 325(5939), 419-422.

Tarasuk, V., & Eakin, J. M. (2005). Food assistance through "surplus" food: Insights from an ethnographic study of food bank work. *Agriculture and Human Values*, 22(2), 177-186.

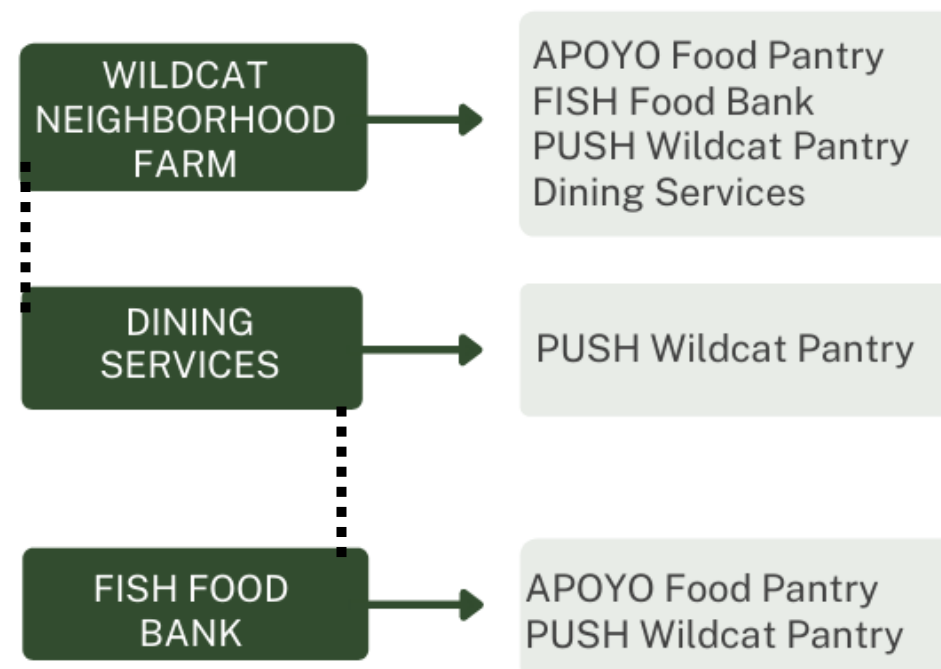
US Department of Agriculture, (2019). Definitions of Food Security. Available online at: <https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/food-security-in-the-us/definitions-of-food-security.aspx>

US Department of Agriculture (2014-2016) , Economic Research Service, Current Population Food Security Supplemental data.

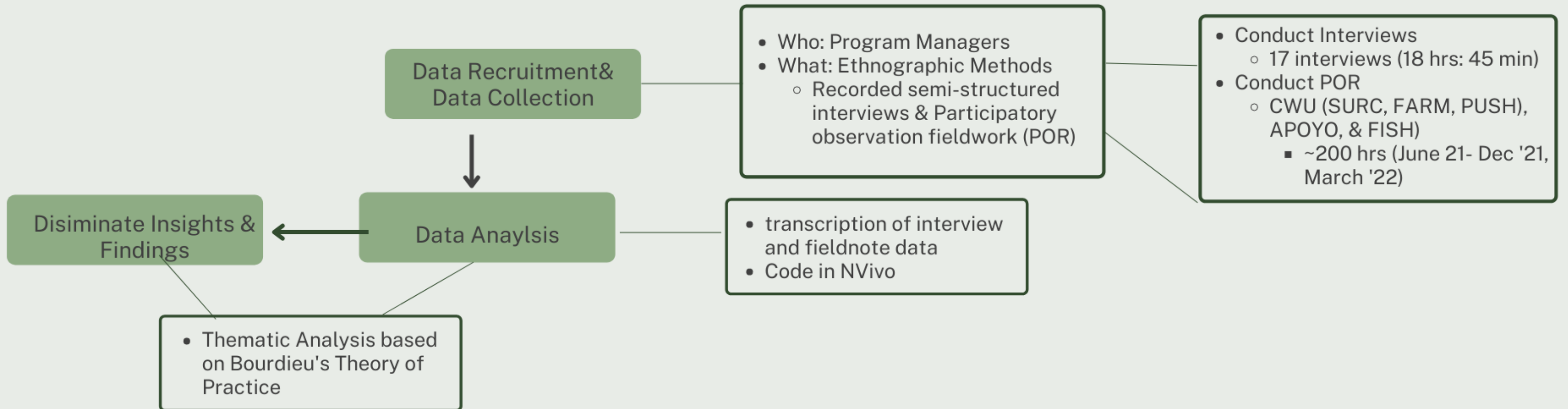
Vivero-Pol, J. L. (2017). Food as commons or commodity? Exploring the links between normative valuations and agency in food transition. *Sustainability*, 9(3), 442.



Where food circulates



STAGE 2 CONFIRMATORY



Initial Semi-Structured Interview Questions * *Interview Guide was loosely used*

1. How long have you been a part of _____?
2. What inspired you to work for _____?
3. What are your role and responsibilities at _____?
4. Could you describe a typical day at work?
5. In your own words, what is the purpose or mission of _____?
6. What are your personal goals while you are affiliated with _____?
7. How does your work seek to challenge food insecurity in the area?
 - a. In your expert opinion is there food insecurity in the Ellensburg community?
 - b. In your expert opinion is there food insecurity in the CWU campus community?
8. What are the programs and services _____ offers to challenge food insecurity for CWU student communities?
 - a. Who do you think benefits from your programs and services?
 - b. Do you have data from this? How do you document, track, and report this?
 - c. What do you think people benefit from using your programs and services?
 - d. Do you have any plans to build on the existing programs and services? What are they?
9. What are your partnerships with _____ who also serves CWU student communities?
 - a. In what ways do you partner with other food access organizations?
 - b. How would you describe your partnerships in terms of achieving your mission and goals?
 - c. How would you describe your partnerships in terms of building a strong, resilient food system?

Additional data from the census revealed that 45% of CWU's new first year students are first-generation college students, while 51% of transfer students are first generation. Meanwhile, 43% of new first-year students and 45% of transfers come from traditionally underrepresented communities. The census also revealed that 53% of new first-year students are women, and 92% are Washington residents.

The 10-day numbers confirm that Central is moving closer to becoming a Minority Serving Institution (MSI), a U.S. Department of the Education designation that rewards colleges and universities for their efforts to serve traditionally underrepresented populations.

FALL 2021

