



universidad  
de león

■ Departamento de Economía y Estadística

## SEMINARIO

### **Ocultando el hambre: inseguridad alimentaria en el corazón de Estados Unidos**

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[www.localandorganicfood.org](http://www.localandorganicfood.org)

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**SALA 133, FACULTAD DE CIENCIAS ECONÓMICAS Y EMPRESARIALES.**

“Hiding hunger: Food insecurity in middle America”

Abstract: This is a community based research project using a case study of 20 people living in middle America who are food insecure, but do not use food pantries. The participants' rate of actual hunger is twice that of food insecure community members who use food pantries. Since most of the participants are not poor, the Asset Vulnerability Framework (AVF) is used to classify causes of food insecurity. The purpose of the study is to identify why participants are food insecure and why they do not use food pantries. Findings reveal that the participants restrict the quality and quantity of food eaten as a strategy to manage their budget. Following AVF, this strategy allows them to offset lower returns to labor assets, cover rising costs of human capital investment, protect their two most important productive assets of housing and transportation, and compensate for household relationships that increase their vulnerability. In addition, food insecurity itself inhibited social capital formation, further increasing vulnerability. The main reasons the participants do not use food pantries is to protect their social capital assets: almost all of the participants hid their hunger from colleagues, friends, relatives, and even the people they lived with. The participants described fear of societal shaming and blaming as motivations for hiding their hunger. However, using food pantries could reduce their food insecurity. Therefore, there was a feedback loop between food insecurity and social capital: food insecurity reduced social capital and efforts to protect social capital prevented participants from improving food security by using food pantries.