

Program and Policy Context

Food Insecurity: Assessing Disparities,
Consequences, and Policies
University of Missouri (Oct 18, 2012)

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Using food security measures to evaluate policy

1. Progress toward national goals
2. Deciding how much food spending is enough
3. Evaluating the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

For more information ...

Chapter on “Food Security Policy in Developed Countries”

The Oxford Handbook of the Economics of Food Consumption and Policy

Edited by Jayson L. Lusk, Jutta Roosen, and Jason Shogren

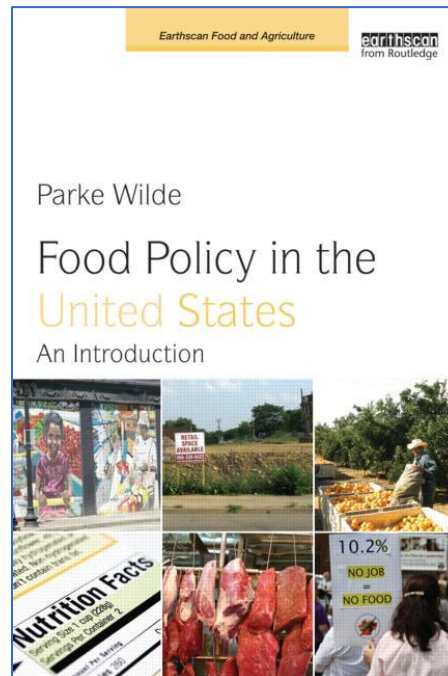


<http://www.oup.com/us/> (2011)

For more information ...

Chapter on “Hunger and Food Insecurity”

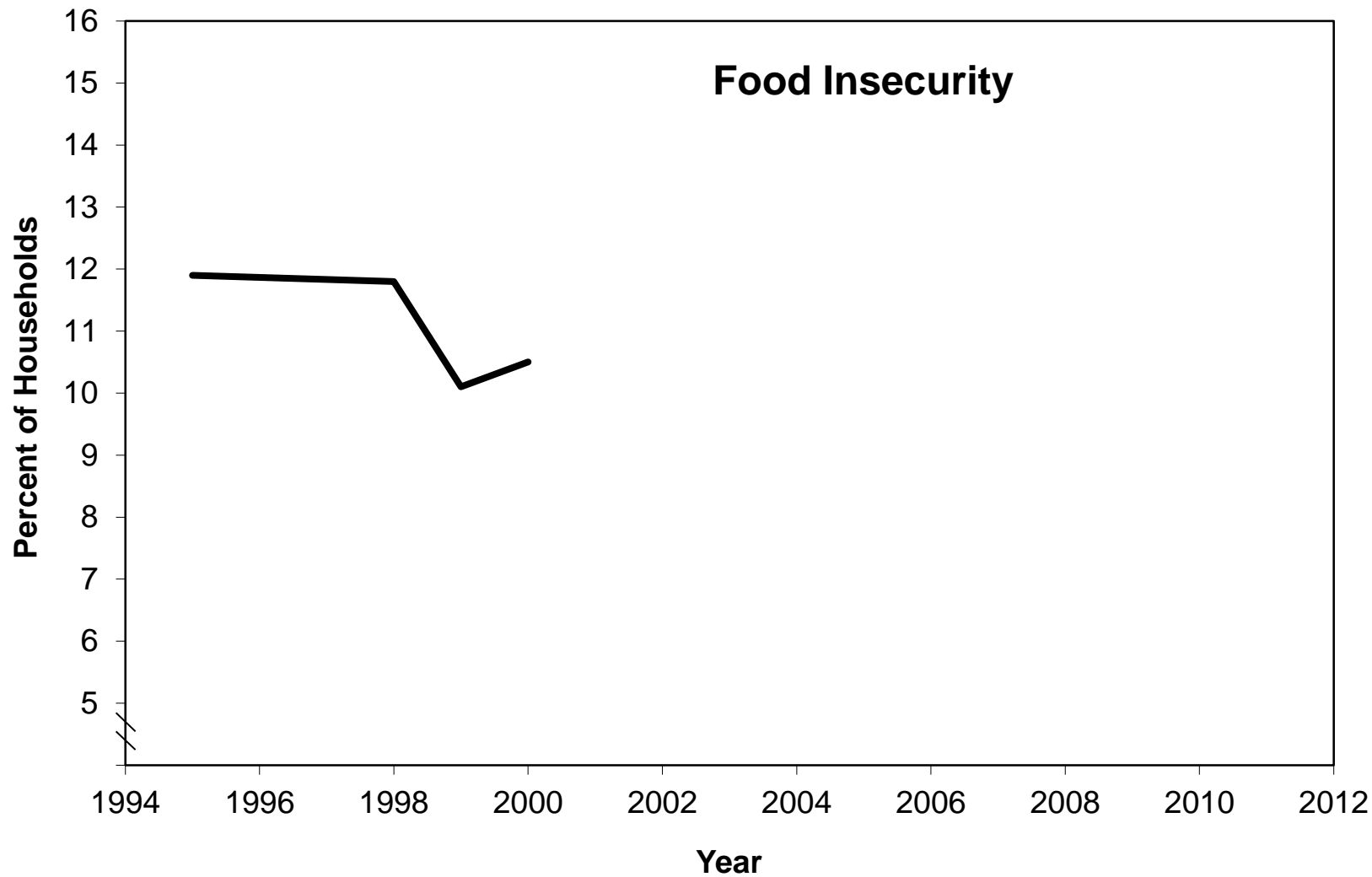
Food Policy in the United States: An Introduction

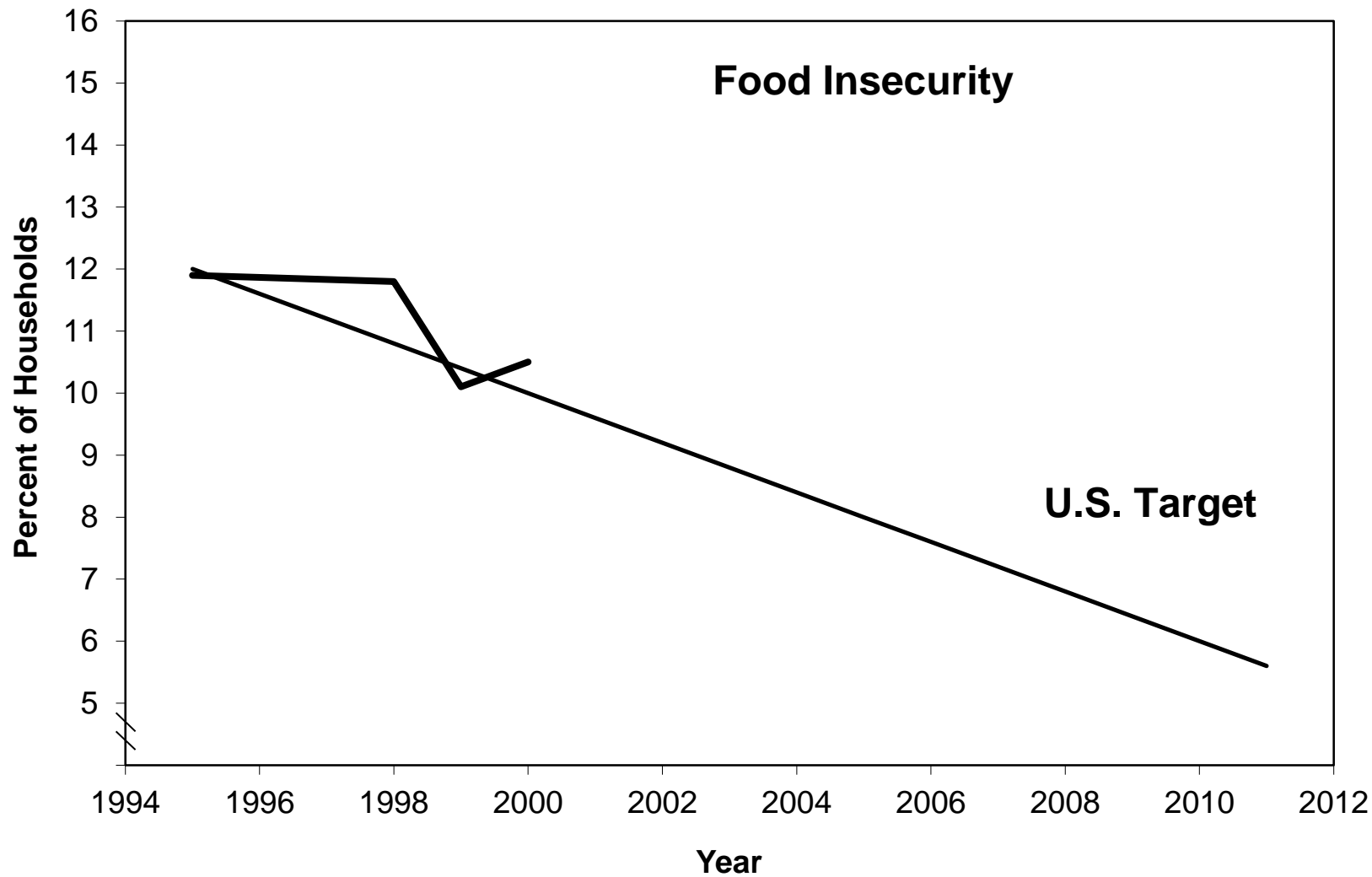


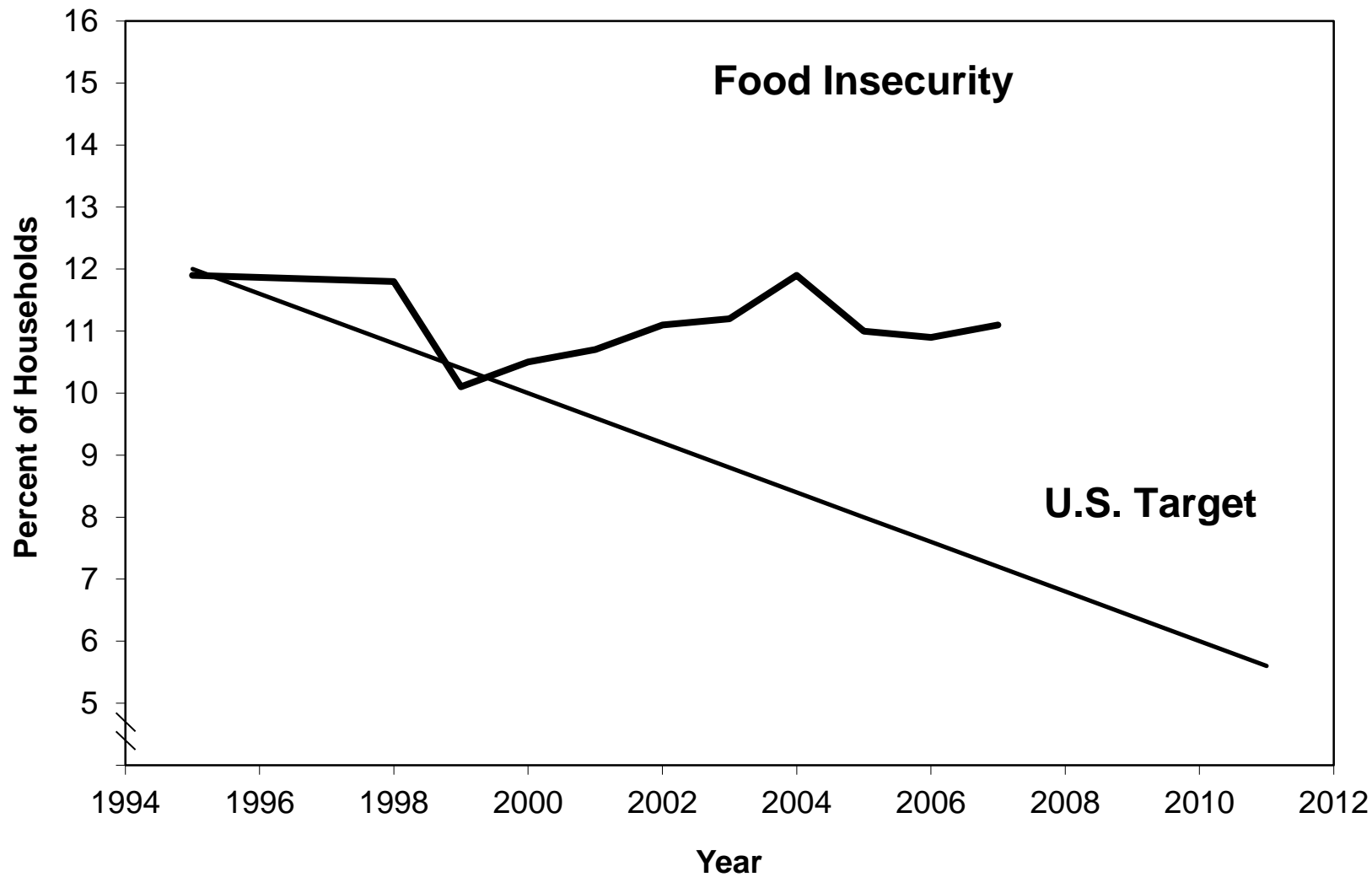
<http://www.routledge.com> (March 2013)

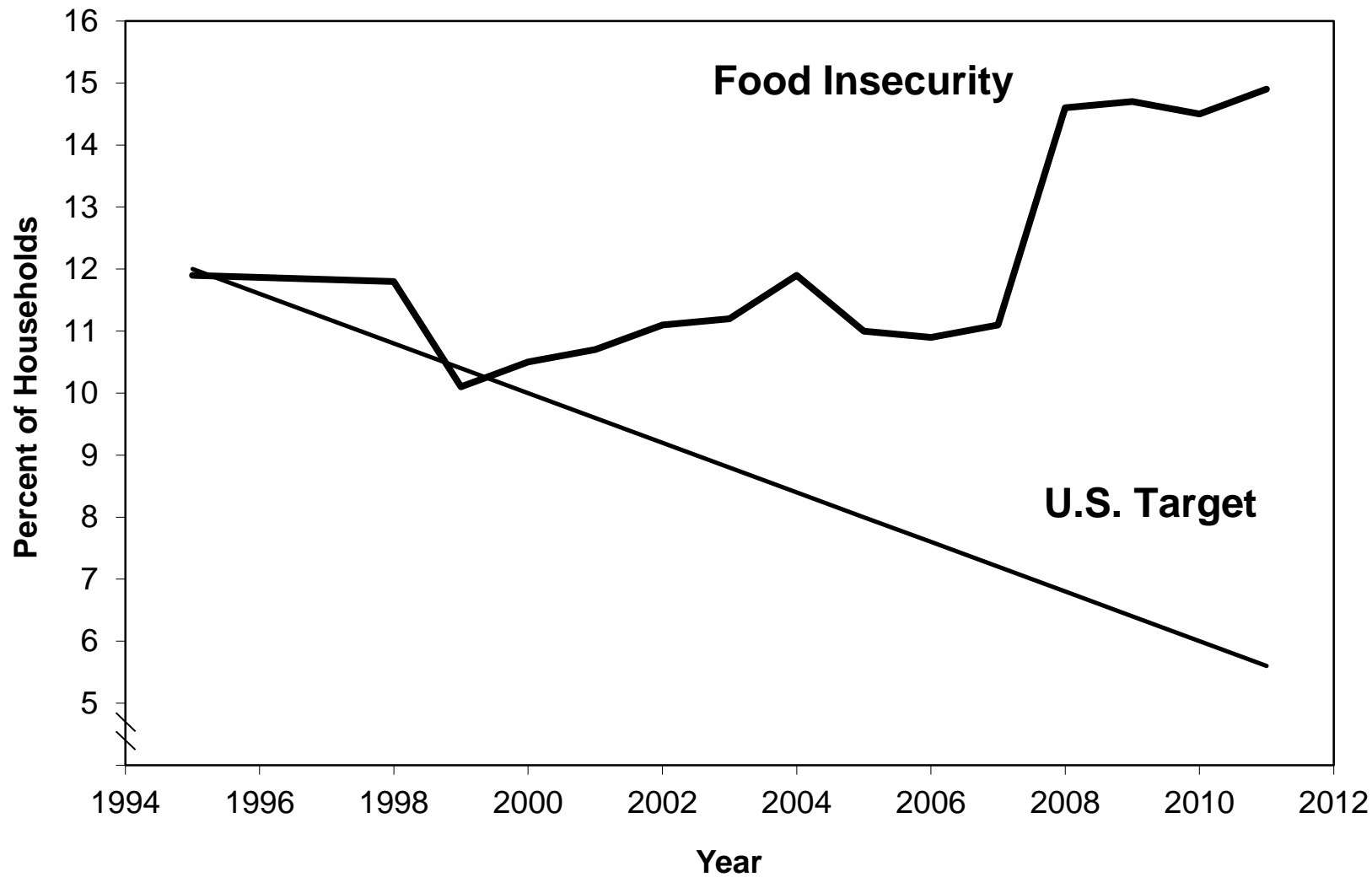
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Parameters of the SNAP benefit formula:

- a) Maximum benefit
- b) Benefit reduction rate
- c) Deductions

$$\text{Benefits} = \text{MaxBen} - (0.3 * \text{Net Income})$$

$$\text{Net Income} = \text{Gross Income} - \text{Deductions}$$

1(a): Maximum SNAP benefit, 2008

People in Household	Maximum Monthly Allotment
1	\$ 162
2	\$ 298
3	\$ 426
4	\$ 542

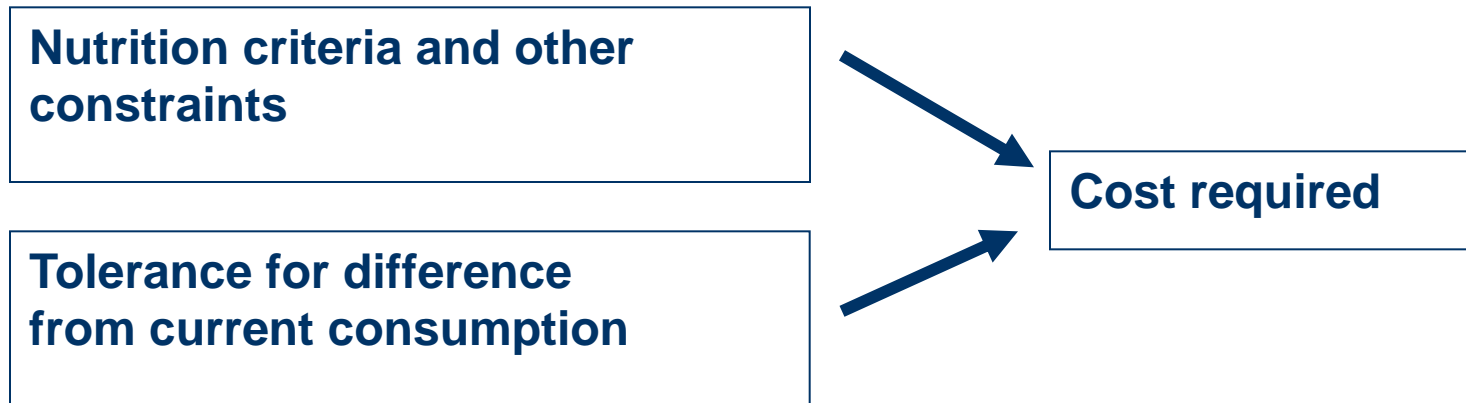
Data: USDA/FNS (2008).

1(a): Maximum SNAP benefit, 2009-2011

People in Household	Maximum Monthly Allotment
1	\$ 162 → \$ 200
2	\$ 298 → \$ 367
3	\$ 426 → \$ 526
4	\$ 542 → \$ 668

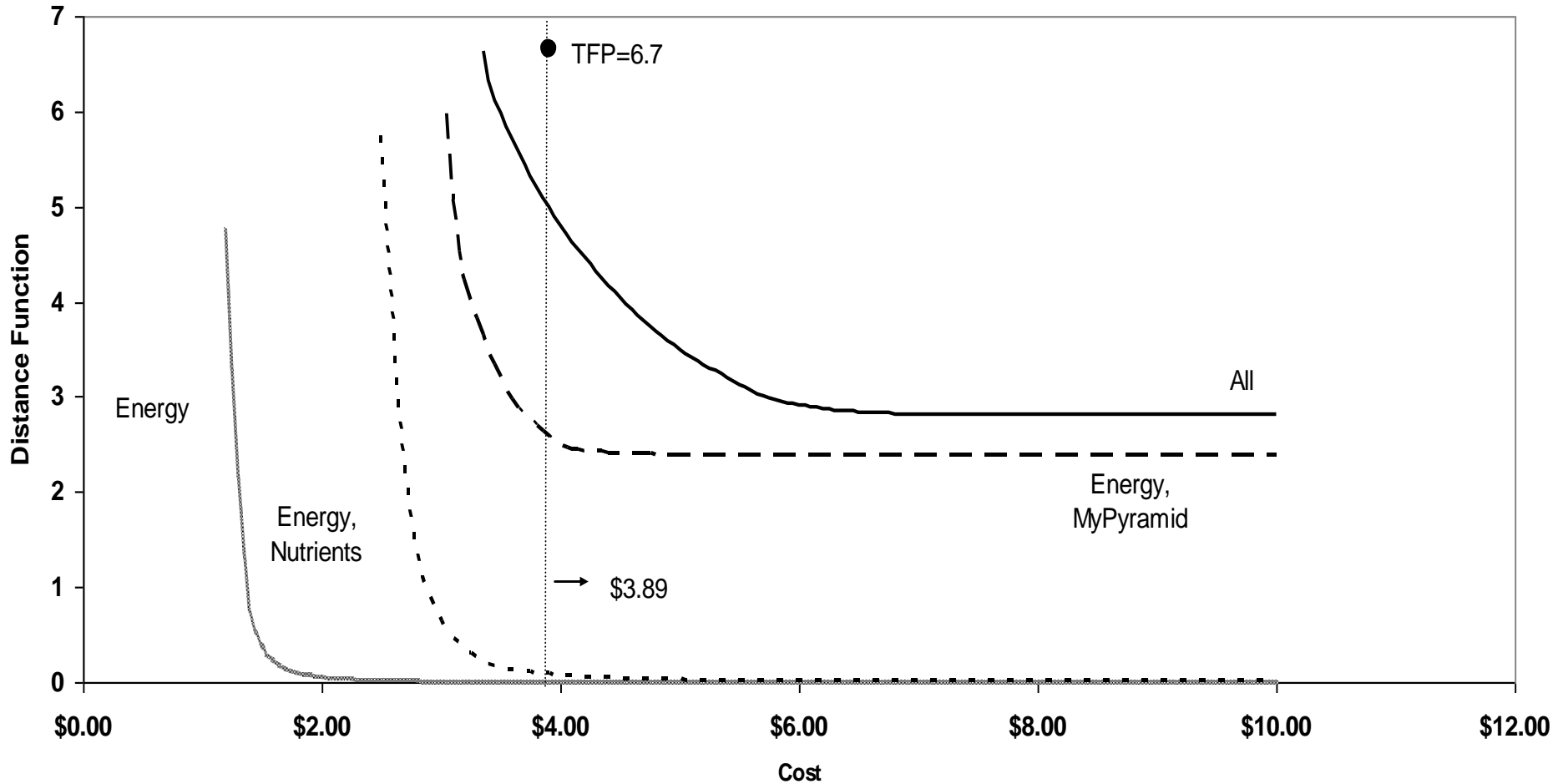
Data: USDA/FNS (2009).

2(a): Thrifty Food Plan



Choice of constraints → estimated cost.

Variable Cost Constraints



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Household food insecurity for key demographic groups - 2011

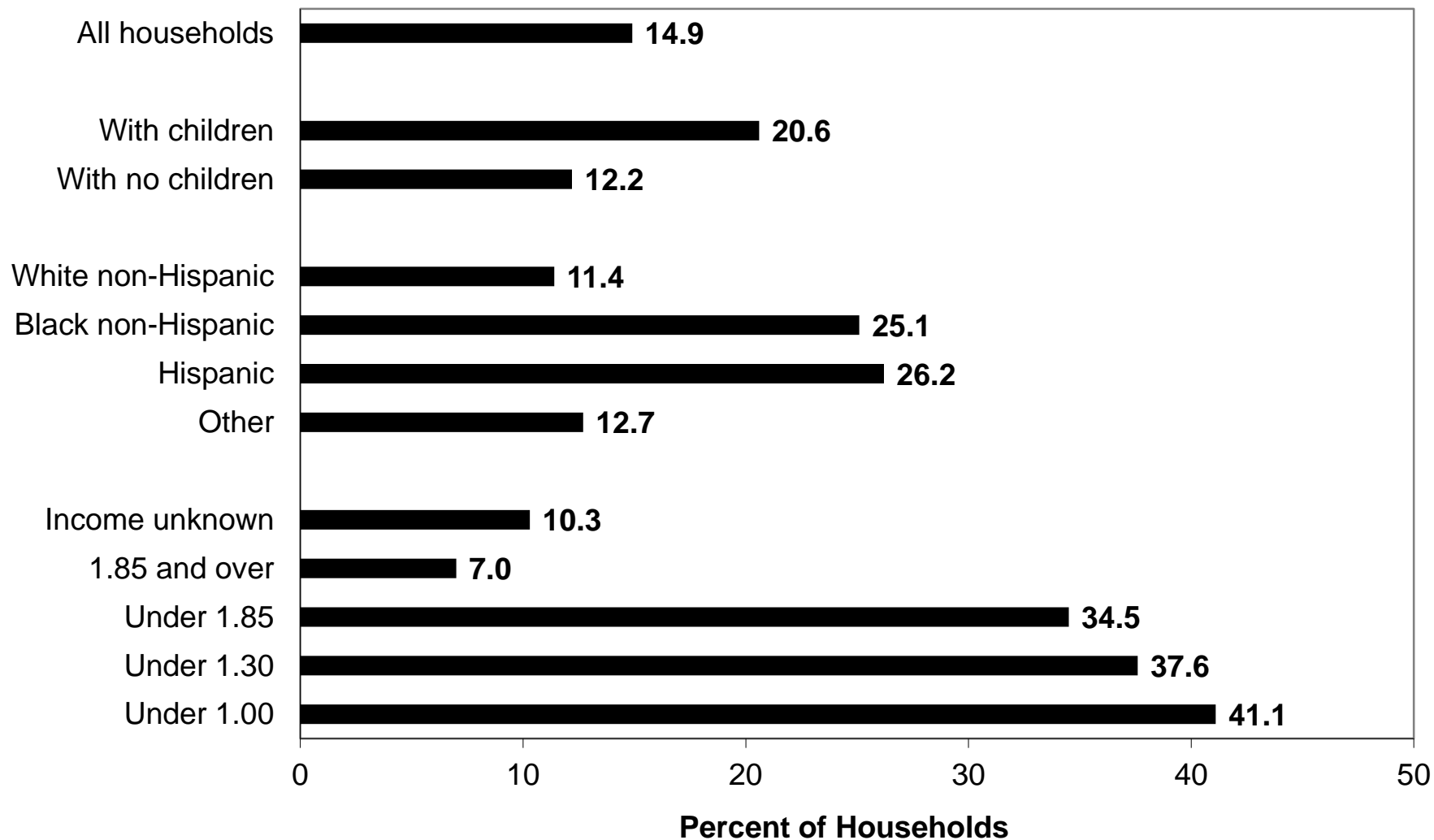


Table 10.5. (a) *Food spending relative to the Thrifty Food Plan budget and (b) prevalence of household food insecurity, by income category and SNAP participation status, 2010.*

Income-to-poverty ratio	SNAP	(a)	(b)
		Median Spending-to-TFP ratio	Food insecure (%)
<1.3	Participant	.94	51.6
	Nonparticipant	.94	27.7
< 1.85		.95	33.8
1.85 and higher		1.30	7.4
Income unknown		1.11	9.3

Data source: Coleman-Jensen et al. (2011), Tables 2, 5 and 7.

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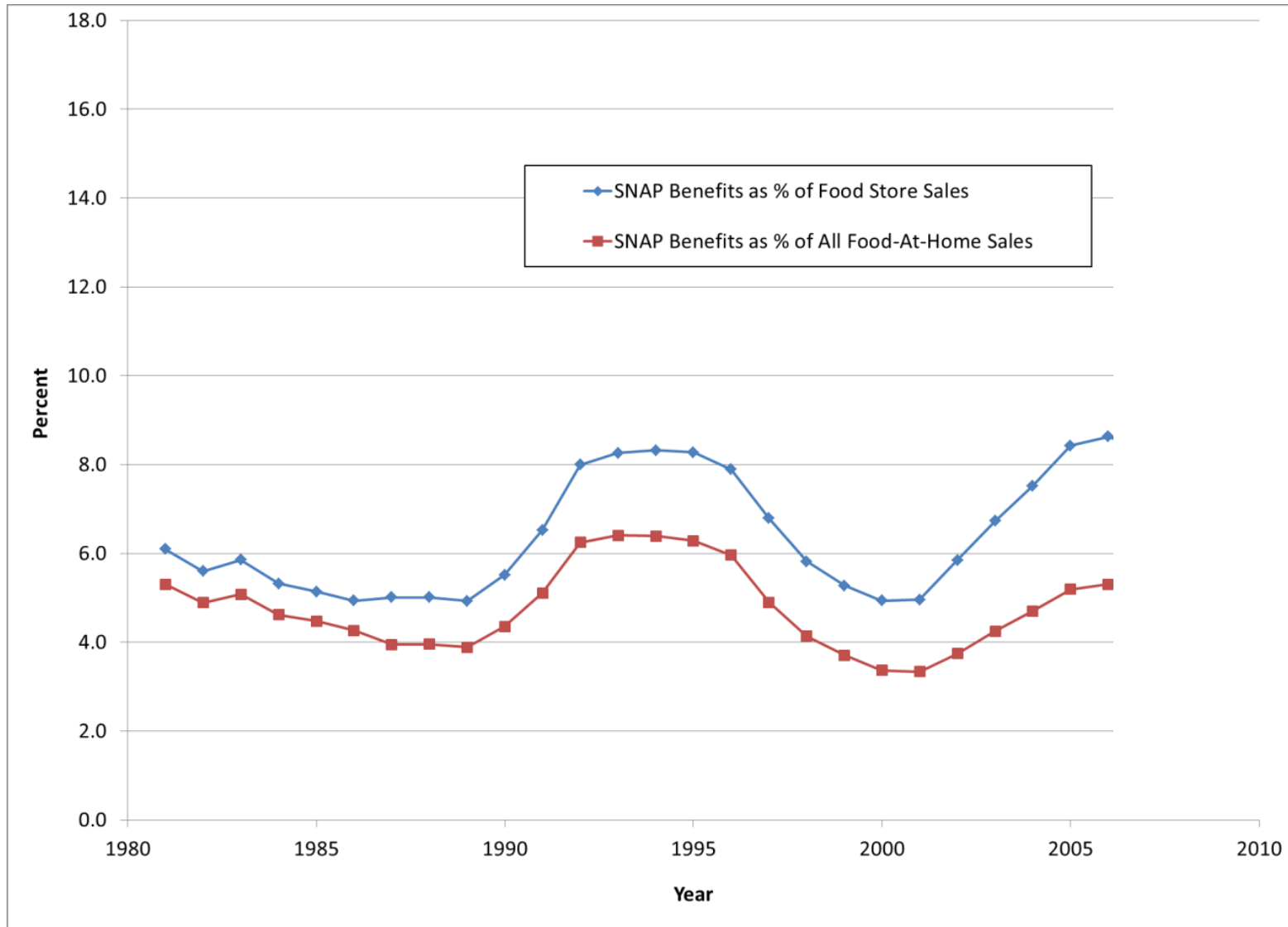
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Methods for evaluating SNAP effects on household food security

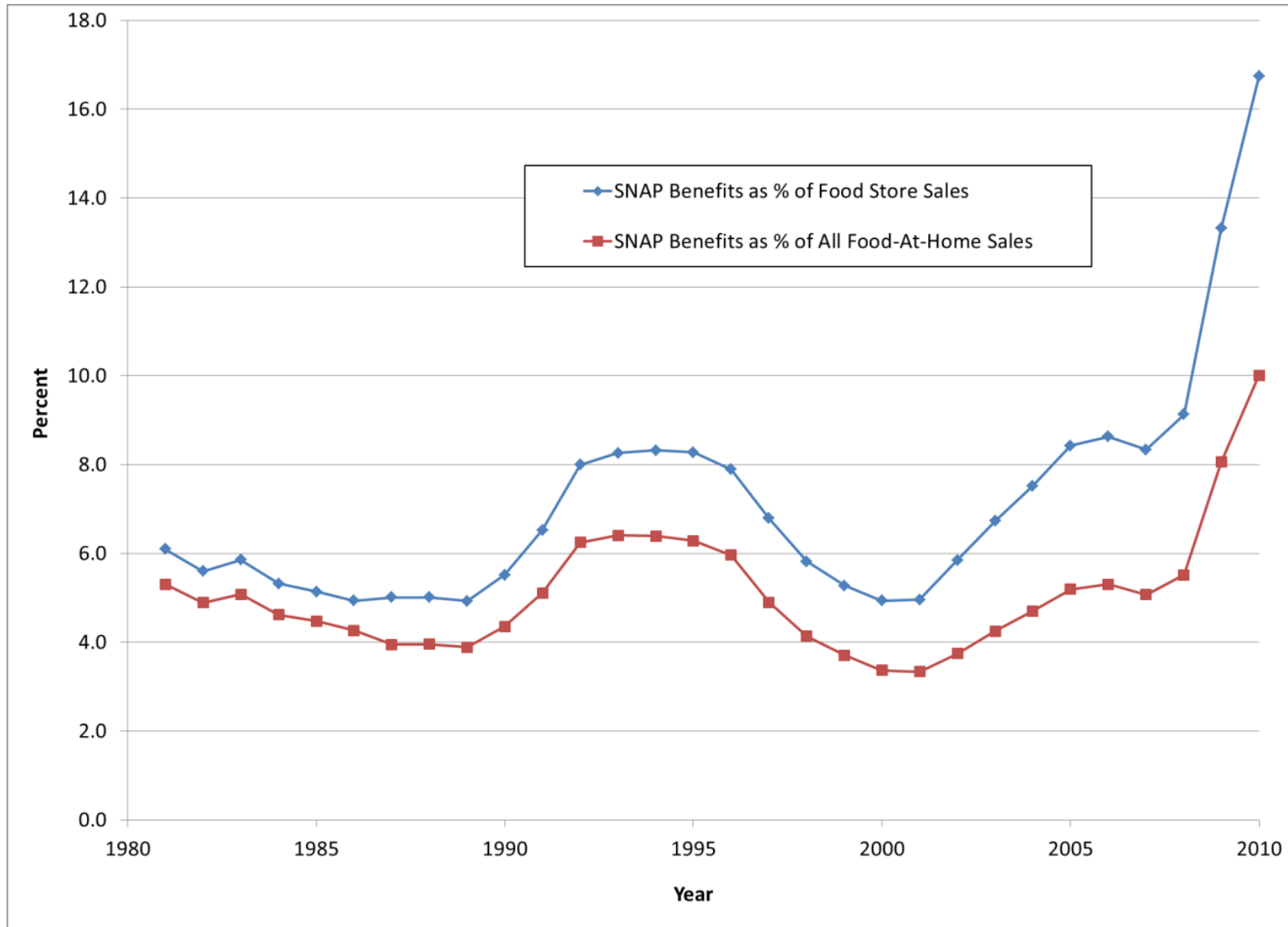
1. Cross-sectional (with regression adjustment)
2. Difference-in-difference
3. Longitudinal (fixed effects)
4. Instrumental variables

SNAP benefits / food-at-home sales



Data source: USDA/FNS (SNAP) and USDA/ERS (food spending).

SNAP benefits / food-at-home sales



Data source: USDA/FNS (SNAP) and USDA/ERS (food spending).

Conclusions:

Using food security measures

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Conclusions:

Using food security measures

- 1. Progress toward national goals. Food insecurity measures have been used well, and they show little progress.**

Conclusions:

Using food security measures

2. Deciding how much food spending is enough.
Food security is about more than just spending.

Conclusions:

Using food security measures

3. Evaluating the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). **SNAP participation may improve household food security (relative to counterfactual), but participation does not fully ensure food security.**