Are 'they' needy or greedy? An exploration into the influences of neoliberal discourses within the food aid social world, and the perceived impacts of food insecurity on the wellbeing of food aid users.

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Abstract

Study Aim: to explore the discourses present within the food insecurity narrative during the COVID-19 pandemic, alongside the experiences and perspectives of food aid users and the effects food aid use has on wellbeing.

Background: the growing number of foodbanks seen since 2014 has been attributed to the neoliberal austerity measures implemented since the 2008 financial crisis. Organised foodbanks have produced high volumes of quantitative and qualitative research into the causes of food insecurity and foodbank use, with limited research being published around independent food banks, and a small amount determining the food aid users experiences of food insecurity and the reported effects on their wellbeing.

Methods: this study performed a critical discourse analysis to determine the discourses present within the food insecurity narrative in British media. This was followed by completing in-depth semi-structured interviews with food aid users and volunteers at an independent community food hub. Using qualitative multi-methods to analyse the findings and explore the discourses found within the food banking social world.

Results: during the COVID-19 pandemic, British media challenged the neoliberal discourse 'undeserving and deserving poor', in a number of different ways. Food aid users reported strong feelings of stigma, shame and guilt associated with food aid use, and a loss of control and power. Using Foucault's disciplinary power to explain the loss of power seen within the food banking social world and food insecurity narrative.

Conclusion: food aid users are reliant on food banks when in a crisis, they lose control and have power removed from them. With the creation of the neoliberal discourses and stigma, and subsequent feelings of shame and guilt their wellbeing is negatively affected. However, the independent community food hub resists the discourses and stigma through actively challenging them.

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Table of Terms / Abbreviations

Table of figures

Table of Tables

Table of Contents

1. Introduction

A food insecure person is defined as 'a person who lacks regular access to enough safe and nutritious food for normal growth and development and an active and healthy life' (FAO, 2019). Since 2008 there has been a rise in food insecurity in the United Kingdom (UK) (Purdam et al., 2019; Purdam et al., 2016; Loopstra et al., 2015a; Loopstra et al., 2019; Garratt 2020) and this can be linked to the austerity measures implemented after the 2008 financial crisis (Power et al., 2014; 2017a; 2018a; Power and Small 2021; Lambie-Mumford, 2013; 2019; Lambie-Mumford and Dowler, 2014; Lambie-Mumford and Green, 2017; Lambie-Mumford and Sims, 2018; Garthwaite 2011; 2014; 2015; 2016; 2017). There is some research into the causes and effects of food insecurity on an individual (Barker et al., 2019; Caraher and Furey, 2019; Lambie-Mumford and Green, 2017; Loopstra, 2018a; Loopstra et al., 2015a; Loopstra et al., 2015b: Loopstra et al., 2018) but limited research into the effects the food aid offered to food insecure individuals has on their health and wellbeing (Garthwaite et al., 2015; Jones, 2017; Kirkpatrick et al., 2010), nor food aid users perspectives of food insecurity.

Food insecurity has been reported to have had a negative effect on reporting individuals' wellbeing (Garthwaite et al., 2015; Jones 2017; Kirckpatrick et al., 2010), with data primarily being gathered from formal food aid organisations such as the Christian Partnership (Thompson et al., 2018; Garthwaite, 2016; Loopstra et al., 2018). There is a lack of knowledge in regard to the perspectives of food aid users on the use of food aid and their wellbeing in a community independent food banking system. Alongside this, there is a minute amount of research (Power et al., 2020) into food aid and wellbeing during the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic within the UK, which is the social, political, and cultural context in which this project is based, while there is slightly more comprehensive literature from America (Leddy et al., 2020; Wolfson and Leung, 2020).

This thesis has several aims; the first aim is a deep-dive into the current neoliberal food insecurity discourses within British Media and how they are reproduced and challenged. Building on this is the second aim of exploring food aid users' perspectives of food aid use, and the potential effects it has on their reported health and wellbeing. Alongside this exploring the discourses within the food insecurity narrative and food banking social world, to determine the effect they play on food aid users and independent food aid charities. Exploring these discourses within this social world will allow for insight into the effects the

discourse has on the wellbeing of food aid users and how the independent community food hub challenges or reproduces them within the social world.

This chapter will introduce the thesis by first discussing the background and context followed by the research aims, objectives and questions, the significance and finally the limitations.

Food insecurity has been seen to have risen in the UK since 2014, with there being more than 1,200 Trussell Trust food banks (Tyler 2020a) and by 2021, this had risen to 1,300 (Tyler, 2021). Links between the increase in food insecurity and austerity have been determined (Loopstra et al., 2015a; Jenkins et al., 2021; Lambie-Mumford and Green, 2017; Strong, 2019), alongside this a link between food insecurity and neoliberalism has been explored (Swales et al., 2020), findings showing austerity being an effect of a neoliberalist society (Gill and De Benedicts, 2016). Further to this, it has been determined that food insecurity has resulted in an increase in food banks (Caraher and Cavicchi, 2014; Caraher and Furey, 2019; Hardcastle and Caraher, 2021). However, limited research has been conducted into the effects the use of food banks and food aid has on food insecure individuals (Prayogo et al., 2018; Garthwaite et al., 2015).

The first food bank in the UK opened in Salisbury in 2000 (Lambie, 2011), with a social model being developed in 2004 (Lambie, 2011). Following the financial crisis, the election of the coalition government of 2010 resulted in some of the strictest austerity measures known; these measures were implemented to help reduce the deficit felt by the UK government, due to the need to 'bail' the banks out (Sawyer, 2012; Ginn, 2013; Ridge, 2013). These austerity measures have been researched greatly (Dowler, 2014; Harris, 2014; Loopstra, 2014; O'Hara, 2014; Dowler and Lambie-Mumford, 2015; Loopstra et al., 2015a; Lambie-Mumford and Green, 2017), with some research believing that the true effect of the austerity measures on the population's health and wellbeing will not be known for some years (Stucker et al., 2017).

Within the UK there are many forms of food aid, with the majority of them being within the charitable third sector (Tyler, 2021). Food aid is a term encompassing many forms of food being redistributed, typically free of charge for the individual, to people within the population who have the inability to source food in a socially acceptable way (Lambie-Mumford et al., 2014). Different types of food aid consist of: food banks, soup kitchens, community meals, and pay-as-you-feel supermarkets, although this is not an exhaustive list (Thompson et al., 2019b). Within food aid there are typically three grouped organisations, the Christian

partnership (also known as the Trussell Trust), the local council run food banks, and the third being the independent community-based food banks (Tyler, 2020a; Tyler, 2021). These three different divisions of food banks have separate criteria, rules and norms for accessing their help. Typically, the Trussell Trust requires the food aid individual to have a referral from a registered health or social care professional; which requires the individual to seek them out, and disclose their current situation in the hopes of receiving a referral slip, to then take to their nearest Trussell Trust to receive a food parcel that aims to feed ten meals (or three days) (The Trussell Trust, 2020; Praygo et al., 2018; Lambie-Mumford, 2013). The Trussell Trust stores information about the food aid user, to ensure that they only use the service three times in six months, and to publish annual reports on the number of food parcels that were distributed (Lambie-Mumford, 2013). Local council food banks run similarly, in that the individual needs to be referred by a health or social care professional and provide evidence of need before they can receive their food parcel. Finally, the independent community fund food banks typically do not have a referral scheme, they provide food parcels to all those who ask for help; while basic information may be stored, it is harder for these organisations to publish research and reports in regard to the number of food parcels they are producing. The food used within the food parcels typically come from donations, fareshare subscriptions, or financial donations, which the food bank will use to purchase food they require.

The number of food parcels and indeed the number of food banks are not fully known within the UK because independent food banks do not publish this information, however information is readily available in regard to the Trussell Trust. It is currently estimated that there are over 2000 food banks in total within the UK, with 900 being independent (Tyler, 2021). Therefore it can be argued that it is hard to produce a clear picture of the extent of food insecurity within the UK, and that further research needs to be conducted within the independent food banks.

Further quantitative research has been conducted to answer the question of how food insecurity and food bank use is affecting individual health and wellbeing, this has found that food insecurity negatively effects food aid users' wellbeing, with the food parcels typically using food that is calorie dense with limited vegetables and fruit available (Garthwaite et al., 2015; Thompson et al., 2018).

As highlighted above research published within food aid and food banks is typically focused within the Trussell Trust food banking system (Lambie-Mumford, 2013; Power et al., 2018b; Garthwaite et al., 2015), with very little research being conducted within independent food banks, therefore this thesis project aimed to provide research within the community and independent food bank system. It has also been shown that little research has been conducted with regards to the reported effects food insecurity and the independent food bank has on the health and wellbeing of the food aid users, in a qualitative methodology.

Within the current research exploring the food aid systems, none have used situational analysis (SA) as a research method, nor have they used two second generation grounded theory methods, with the use of constructionist grounded theory as well. Alongside this, while many discourse analyses have been conducted within the poverty narrative, very few have been in regard to the undeserving and deserving poor discourse in relation to food insecurity specifically. The current research in food aid and food banking systems relies heavily on data collected from the more formal food aid organisations. However, research also focuses heavily on quantitative methods of data collection, and not on the reported experiences and perspectives from the food aid users themselves.

Alongside this, with COVID-19 and the ongoing pandemic having had an effect on the food security of the nation, with job losses and furlough. It is being reported that there is an increased demand on food banking systems, from individuals who have previously relied on food banks and those who have had to turn to food banking systems due to the uncertainty of the pandemic. On top of this, food banking systems were being utilised by those who were self-isolating or shielding and were unable to obtain food from another source.

The overarching aim of this project is to explore the perspectives of food aid users, within an independent food banking system. Analysing the discourses found within the food insecurity social world, and the reported effects food insecurity and the use of food aid has on the wellbeing of food aid users.

1.1. Aims

The projects aims are:

RA1 – to identify common neoliberal discourses and positions held by a selection of British press, food aid users and volunteers within an independent food bank

RA2 – to explore the shared experiences and perspectives of food aid use within the independent food banking system, in the North East of England, against a COVID-19 background

RA3 – to explore the reported effects of food insecurity, food aid use and neoliberal discourses on the wellbeing of food aid users.

1.2. Objectives

While the specific objectives are:

RO1 - To perform a critical discourse analysis of British press to explore the current neoliberal discourses within food insecurity during the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic

RO2 - To determine the lived experiences of food insecurity amongst food aid users within the North East of England

RO3 – To investigate the reported wellbeing of food aid users, and the effects of food insecurity, food aid and neoliberal discourse has on this

RO4 – To identify the discourses present within the food aid sector, and positions held by both food aid users and volunteers within an independent food bank

RO5 – To determine the influence food aid organisations have over discourses within the social world, and the effects the discourses have on the independent food aid organisations.

This study will contribute to the body of knowledge on food insecurity and the use of food aid within the North East of England during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as adding knowledge to the field of wellbeing and the effects food insecurity and food aid use has on the wellbeing of food aid users. This will help address the current shortage of research in this area, explicitly within community and independent food banking systems, as well as providing real-world value to third sector independent agencies that are providing food aid during very uncertain times.

1.3. Thesis Layout

The layout of the thesis can be seen here.

This chapter provides an introduction into the research project and the aims and objectives of the thesis.

Chapter 2 will introduce and provide sufficient background regarding the current literature within the research topic area; with the introduction to neoliberalism and austerity within the UK, food insecurity, food banking systems, the effects of food insecurity on wellbeing, the poverty narrative. Alongside introducing subsequent sociological theories of significance including: Foucault's (1970; 1975; 1976) ideas of knowledge, power and discourses, Goffman's (1986) ideas on stigma, and Benedict's (1946) ideas on shame vs guilt being a public vs private argument.

Chapter 3 will introduce the methodological underpinnings of this thesis, including the two qualitative methods utilised, the data collection and analysis technique chosen to answer the research questions, aims and objectives, as well as detailing the philosophical leaning of this research.

Chapter 4 will detail the critical discourse analysis, by which the detailed methodological stance is explored, including the chosen methods, the findings, and a discussion of the impact the discourse analysis plays.

Chapter 5 will present the findings from the main part of this thesis project, detailing the key themes, discourses and quotes found within the data, as well as exploring the findings from both the analysis techniques utilised.

Chapter 6 provides a detailed discussion of the findings shown in chapter 5, and the implications these findings have for the current knowledge and policy development.

Finally, chapter 7 provides the concluding statement of the thesis.

2. Literature Review and Sociological Theory

In this chapter, I will present an introduction and overview of the many themes that can be found within food insecurity and food aid literature within the UK. This includes identifying evidence that suggests its roots are embedded within neoliberalism while also showcasing evidence that suggests that the austerity measures, which were implemented post 2008 financial crisis, have led to an inevitable increase in food insecurity and reliance on the charitable sectors answer to this - food aid. This chapter will also explore the evidence that showcases the link between food insecurity and the health and wellbeing of the food aid users, including the hidden cost of food aid in the reported emotions and feelings of stigma, shame, and guilt, as well as the physical effects of food aid, in the nutritional value of a food parcels.

Some relevant sociological theory is presented and explored in this chapter, specifically an introduction to Foucault's theories of power and discourse, with both appearing again in later chapters, as well as theories regarding stigma, shame, and guilt. Before concluding this chapter by stating the need for this piece of research, and where in the current body of work will it fit.

2.1. Neoliberalism

The term 'Neoliberalism' refers to a broad and general concept of an economic model that rose to prominence in the 1980's both in the UK and the USA, through both Margaret Thatcher's and Ronald Reagan's leaderships. This ideology praises unimpeded free markets, as the most effective way of attaining economic growth and public prosperity (Bell and Green, 2016), doing so through deregulation, privatisation, and decentralisation (McGregor, 2001). Thatcher and Reagan's neoliberal governments are argued to have been the first to dismantle trade unions, cut welfare benefits and start privatising public services (Prendergast, Hill and Jones, 2017). Although this point has been contested, with Desmarais (1975) stating that in fact the first government in the UK to work in opposition to the trade unions was Lloyd George in 1926.

The theoretical underpinnings of neoliberalism believe that through the function of the free markets, there will be a better utilisation of resources, which will guarantee better consumption and a bigger balance of the foreign trade, which results in providing higher

economic growth and development for the country (McGregor, 2001). However, these free markets are known to be unfairly skewed to favour the rich and powerful (Harris 2014). This ideology allows for the State to ensure that the rules that govern the free-market economy are followed and that the markets can function effectively (McGregor, 2001), while also having the idea that the individual is solely responsible for their health and wealth and not that of the State (Harvey, 2007).

McGregor (2001) explains that neoliberalism consists of three key principles; 1. Individualism; 2. Privatisation; 3. Decentralisation. And these will be explained and explored below.

Individualism:

Individualism is centred around the belief that humans are selfish and will always try to favour themselves, this results in having little to no concern for others or the environment. It is expected that every person acts freely of others and therefore is only constrained by their natural surroundings and no one else. This way of thinking leads individuals to have no concern for the effect their choices and conduct has on everybody else. This is reinforced by the elimination of the 'public good' concept, with ideas of individual accountability, causing the poorest people in society left to find their own resolutions for their lack of health care, education, and social security (McGregor, 2001).

Privatisation:

Under neoliberalism, the removal or privatisation of anything that decreases state directive is acceptable. This includes eradicating policies that safeguard the environment, human rights, or labour rights. Any relocation of money from the state to one community is seen to hurt the systems of the market. Public policies are seen to favour those who get to benefit from them but do not pay into them, as opposed to those who do not benefit but yet must pay for them. Neoliberal structures wish for homogenisation of the entire social world, therefore generating its own of social justice. The outcome being no security from poverty, food insecurity or inequalities (McGregor, 2001).

Decentralisation:

Decentralisation focuses on the neoliberal system for advocating the transmission of central state control, accountabilities, and obligation to regional and local governments. The consequences are less noticeable and less reachable health care, and public services. These

facilities are often moved onto smaller administrations who do not have the capacity or capital to offer equal services as the national State. The idea of decentralisation is that it will lead to quicker response rates and more sufficient responses to the requirements of the citizen's, however, this is not always the case (McGregor, 2001).

There is some understanding that neoliberalism is an ideology and theoretical belief that sees those in poverty accountable for their individual difficulties (Harris, 2014; Wacquant, 2009). While under neoliberal governments the rich have become immensely richer, the poor, poorer (Prendergast, Hill and Jones, 2017). Some have argued that neoliberalism can breed dependency and the culture of worklessness or being 'work-shy', when in fact it creates unemployment, poverty, and social exclusions, which are often expressed as being caused by the workforce environments, difficulties in contributing, and disparity (Reeve, 2017).

In the early 1970s the world suffered an economic shock. Within the UK, along with many other advanced countries, a phenomenon termed 'stagflation' was seen, this is defined as having to excessively high levels of inflation together with increasing rates of unemployment. During this time there was a belief and a large move concerning free market policies, along with a condensed role of state involvement, as part of the Neoliberal ideology (Kitson and Michie, 2014), believed to help reduce 'stagflation'.

In the UK, post 1979, the Conservatives opposed state intervention meaning that the state quickly reduced their industrial policy, this was against the backdrop of deindustrialisation. Following a confrontation with the Thatcher Government during the miner's strike in the early 1980s, a decline in the power of the trade unions, often referred to as the 'key instrument of work solidarity' took place (Kitson and Michie, 2014).

The North East of England has a very extensive manufacturing and engineering history; in the nineteenth century the area had a booming economy before being marginalised by the end of the twentieth century, with the region being riddled with widespread poverty and inequality (Hudson, 2005). The coal sourced from the region powered in part the industrial revolution which in turn generated high need for migrant workers – required to work in the collieries and dockyards. However, in the late twentieth century, deindustrialisation infiltrated the area and disrupted these industries resulting in very few of them remaining today (Hepworth et al., 2019; Hudson, 2005). Though rejuvenation efforts have converted Newcastle's leisure and cultural activities, some areas of the city and region didn't improve

(Hepworth et al., 2019). Not only that, but Newcastle was one of the earliest UK cities to experience Universal Credit (UC), with more than twenty percent of the city's population of 270,000 currently living in the utmost disadvantaged ten percent of districts in England and Wales in terms of revenue, employment, education, wellbeing, accommodation and crime, with child poverty being fifty percent greater than the national average (Booth, 2018).

While neoliberal theory was presented in the UK throughout the Thatcher era, since the 2008 financial disaster it has been more profoundly rooted into state plan, with neoliberal procedures being sought to maximise the profit through market exchange (Blake, 2019). Neoliberalism broadens the revenue divide between the affluent and the deprived through the withdrawal of state sponsored social support, such as welfare benefits, and pursues substituting it with the development of the charitable third sector (Blake, 2019).

2.2. Austerity post-2010 Coalition Government

In 2010, following the 2008 economic disaster, there was a continued level of uncertainty regarding the economy, a Conservative-Liberal Democrat administration was selected. This newly elected government instigated a widespread and ambitious austerity agenda in pursuit of a smaller government deficit (Lambie-Mumford and Green, 2017). Throughout the early months of the economic disaster, countries with large financial divisions, like the UK, USA, Sweden, and Germany were inclined to implement sizeable incentive programmes; these happened to 'bail' out the banks, while absorbing their arrears into the public areas balance sheet (Stuckler et al., 2017). Large scale cuts were seen within both central and local government budgets, alongside reductions in social security packages, in contributions for local establishments to provide social care services, in employment, salaries, pensions and welfares as well as the slow privatisation of the NHS; all of which were argued as essential to assist in reducing the annual fiscal deficit, defined as the space between the tax revenue and the state spending (Ginn, 2013; Garthwaite et al., 2015).

The Conservative-led coalition government came into power stating their intentions to reduce the shortfall - what followed was a mixture of tax increases (15 percent of the total austerity package) and spending reductions (85 percent), while concurrently decreasing spending by £85 billion from April 2010 (Reeves et al., 2013). These changes, economically, were impacting not only job losses but also dropping earnings, which resulted in a decline in

consumer expenditure and impacted the associated tax revenues (Stuckler et al., 2017). Underprivileged regions and cities felt larger reductions in backing although the effects varied between establishments and for different services (Jenkins et al., 2021). Capital spending was reduced, resulting in two thirds of a million public sector contracts being removed by the end of 2012 (Wintour, 2013), while wage suspensions for the remaining public sector were announced, as well as an important transformation of the welfare state, including eliminating numerous crucial benefits (Wintour, 2013) which had primarily assisted the working poor. While simultaneously introducing a new sanctioning system into the social security system, which was then reported to have plunged hundreds of thousands of people into tremendous economic crisis, which resulted in some occasions of mental collapse (O'Hara, 2014). During this time, more than half a million individuals were regularly turning to food banks for food parcels (Eaton, 2013). What resulted was individuals with disabilities, females and children, and people from minority ethnic backgrounds being excessively affected, meaning they were suffering on top of established disadvantage (O'Hara, 2014).

One of the main alterations applied within the austerity package was the changes to the welfare system. Contemporary policies comprised of a benefit cap to limit the sum that families could obtain financially, while removing the child benefit if the family comprised of a higher rate taxpayer (Jenkins et al., 2021). Selected policies openly diminished benefits or steered reductions through conditionality, such as: modifications to the method that housing benefits were estimated which meant that low-income private tenants expected less in housing benefits, sanctions for not meeting the criteria for active job-seeking such as searching for employment and rises in the quantity of hours worked to qualify for working tax credit (Jenkins et al., 2021). Not only this, but there were also alterations to entitlement, comprising of reconsiderations for benefits leading to more rigorous tests and advanced levels of conditionality; an example being the modifications to disability benefits, with the main alteration being the change to personal independence payments, which contain reconsideration for benefits against new criteria (Etherington and Daguerre, 2015; Roberts and Price, 2014; HM Treasury, 2010). Alongside this was the introduction of the two-child policy limiting the child components of benefits to the first two children. Additionally, a new benefits system, Universal Credit (UC), was devised to unite legacy benefits into one monthly salary payment and absorb the decreases, caps and changes in appropriateness stated

(Etherington and Daguerre, 2015). However, examination produced by the Equality and Human Rights Commission discovered that the tax and welfare modifications publicised since 2010 were forceful, with a bigger bearing on those with poorer incomes and among the susceptible groups, especially those with disabilities, lone parents, certain ethnic groups, and children (Jenkins et al., 2021).

Due to the nature of the UC system, individuals can be sanctioned for numerous violations of the guidelines, resulting in many families facing unpredictable income with numerous being one pay cheque or welfare benefit payment away from crisis (Caraher and Davison, 2019). Research (Booth, 2018; Caraher and Davison, 2019) has shown that households living in poverty first go to community and family systems for assistance, then to additional sources such as pay-day loans, before turning to charity. However, the local systems and services used to support families and communities are losing subsidy due to the above-mentioned austerity package, not only by the way of the welfare system being transformed, but services such as education, health, and childcare are also suffering with similar economic cuts (Caraher and Davison, 2019).

While the welfare reforms and austerity programmes were being executed, the wider financial background of rising living costs and declining incomes was also having an influence on domestic finances and spending (Lambie-Mumford and Green, 2017). Prices had climbed swiftly, particularly in 2008 and 2011, even as the economy declined. This increase was driven by food and fuel prices, both of which account for a high percentage of the expenditure of people living in poverty (Lambie-Mumford and Green, 2017). Tax rises under the coalition government, such as Value added tax (VAT), have been reverting, with the lowliest 10 percent forfeiting twice as much of their income in VAT as the wealthiest 10 percent (Oxfam, 2013). By the end of 2013, three-and-a-half years after the austerity programme were first presented in the UK, tens of billions of pounds had been removed from public expenditure, with a further 20 percent cut planned for between 2014 and 2018 (O'Hara, 2014).

Not only did the austerity package create changes to the welfare system, it also performed cuts to the social housing budgets and income support, which both coincided with a noticeable rise in homelessness (Loopstra et al., 2014; Loopstra et al., 2016a; Reeves et al., 2013). Under the previous labour government homelessness was decreasing, the coalition government reduced housing benefits by 10 percent for some people, which saw the UK

homelessness tendencies overturning, with a rise of 40 percent (Reeves et al., 2013). The legal homelessness scheme in England, first established by the Housing Act in 1977, places a responsibility on local authorities to find housing for those making claims of homelessness and who meet legal homelessness conditions. After approximately a decade of dropping numbers of such people, there was a setback in 2010 when rates started to increase (Loopstra et al., 2016a). This has become a concern to public health due to the knowledge that homelessness raises the risk of infectious diseases, physical harm, food insecurity, multiple morbidities, and premature death (Stuckler et al., 2017; Loopstra et al., 2016a).

One study in the UK (Loopstra et al., 2016b), found that the decrease of budgets in housing services and emergency housing support payments were strongly associated with the rising rates of people looking for emergency aid for housing. Believing that the reductions to revenue and cuts to social security such as housing support funds were two factors that could justify why homelessness has escalated so abruptly in England (Loopstra et al., 2016b). While a similar study concluded that the reductions in spending on housing-related services and welfare benefits were related to the increase in homelessness. The most vulnerable populations are those at greater risk of homelessness, while there is evidence that suggests that homelessness has a negative impact on the health of people who have found themselves homeless, therefore it could be argued that the 2010 austerity package to reduce public spending could cause an increase in heath inequalities within the UK (Loopstra et al., 2014).

The coalition government took authority from the preceding labour government, who had remained dedicated to eliminating childhood poverty by 2020. Alongside this was the introduction of the Child Poverty Act in 2010, which forced a legal duty on the government to chase a child poverty target and to present a child poverty policy before parliament in March of 2011 (Ridge, 2013). The government created the Coalition Agreement, in which they specified their purpose of upholding the goal of eradicating child poverty by 2020 (Lambie-Mumford and Green, 2017). In this policy the understanding of both poverty and child poverty had changed, taking the focus away from the children themselves and instead placing focus on the family unit-as-a-whole (Lambie-Mumford and Green, 2017). The social security system responded to the rise in two-earner households with changes that saw it withdraw the insurance that had previously been used if one partner lost their income, now instead the household unit is on its own, with each partner providing security to the other; as well as

financial funding becoming progressively provisional and contractual and in some areas even reduced due to modifications to certain benefits (Ridge, 2013; Lambie-Mumford and Green, 2017; Mabbett, 2013).

Two key papers (Marmot et al., 2020; Marmot Review, 2010) have also stated that austerity is likely to widen, already in existence, health inequalities. Stuckler et al. (2017) states that there are two different mechanisms as to how austerity can impact health; the first being known as the healthcare affect, which directly effects through cuts to healthcare services, effective preventative, and treatment programmes. The second being the social risk affect; which indirectly effects unemployment, poverty, homelessness, and other socioeconomic risk factors (Stuckler et al., 2017; Reeves et al., 2013). It has been argued that an outcome of austerity is the reduction in the public sector service; resulting in unemployment, which has claimed to increase depression and suicide rates. Between June 2010 and September 2012, there were over 500,000 public sector job losses, of which 35 percent were in the North of England (ONS, 2012). This local area pattern of unemployment relates with suicide numbers, a 20 percent rise was detected in those regions most affected by austerity, including the North East and North West (Barr et al., 2012; Barr, Kinderman and Whitehead, 2015; Taylor-Robinson and Gosling, 2011). Austerity has, in many countries, also been attained by decreasing social expenditure on the unemployed, one way is to intensify eligibility for unemployment insurance. The UK has done this through increasing its disciplinary policies of sanctioning, which is reducing the benefits when an unemployed person fails to meet firm conditions, including evidence of actively seeking employment (Stuckler et al., 2017).

2.3. Food Insecurity

Food insecurity is described by the Food and agriculture organisation (FAO) as 'limited access to food… due to lack of money or other resources' (FAO, 2019). Food insecurity can vary from minor food insecurity, such as agonising about being capable of attaining food, reasonable food insecurity such as bargaining quality and variability of food, decreasing quantities, avoiding meals, to severe food insecurity such as facing hunger (Strong, 2021). Separate from acute malnourishment and hunger that explains the effects of a near complete absence of nutrition, food insecurity defines persistent precarity of sustenance, where a healthy, nourishing diet is tougher to maintain (Strong, 2021). It may lead to reduced fruit, vegetable, and protein intake together with more processed food intake, disordered eating patterns and

worse levels of vitamins and minerals. Food insecurity is also related with inferior physical health, higher body weight and obesity, chronic disease, regardless of awareness about how to eat healthy (Johnson and Markowitz, 2018; Seligman et al., 2010; Lombe et al., 2016). Food insecure children are also considerably more likely to have inferior health and behaviour troubles. Food insecurity is also linked with broader social matters including difficulties with accommodation and substance misuse (Jenkins et al., 2021). Food insecurity has been growing in the Global North, and in the UK, since the 1980s (Riches, 1997). This rise has been predominantly noticeable after the 2008 financial crisis, with the FAO (2013) reporting a 15.5% rise in the number of people malnourished in Europe and North America between 2005-07 and 2011-12 (Riches and Silvestri, 2014), with up-to-date figures approximating that 8% of people in North America and Europe are presently facing food insecurity (FAO, 2019). The UK is home to the highest number of food insecure people in Europe, with one in five food insecure Europeans living within the UK (FAO, 2018). 8.4 million people, approximately 13% of the UK population, are living in homes reporting some level of food insecurity (Taylor & Loopstra, 2016), whilst 2.2 million are facing severe food insecurity (FAO, 2018). The Food Foundation (2017) found that 19% of UK children under 15 live with a parent or guardian who is moderately or severely food insecure and 10% live with a parent or guardian who is severely food insecure while in 2018, 13.6% of UK school children were eligible for free school meals (Department of Education, 2018).

Within the UK, there is currently a lack of methodically collected data on who is suffering food insecurity, where they are based and to what degree they are food insecure (Smith et al., 2018). The UK does not regularly measure food insecurity among their people, nor is there an recognised and vigorous measure of the population level influences which contribute to food insecurity. The occurrence and whereabouts of food banks, specifically the Trussell Trust food banks, with them being the largest network of food banks in the UK, have previously been used as a substitution measure for levels and distribution of food poverty or insecurity (Smith et al., 2018). However, research aimed to change this (Pool and Doris, 2021), analysed data from the United Nations (UN) FAO national survey, providing an internationally comparable pre-COVID-19 look at food insecurity. The study found that severe food insecurity was reported by 3 percent of the sample, that amounts to an increase of 66.7 percent from the last comparable UK analysis, which was the Gallup World Poll (pooled data from 2016 to

2018), while 14.2 percent reported some degree of food insecurity, and this tended to be higher amongst younger age adults, low-income households and those who rent their housing. The study concluded that the prevalence of severe food insecurity had already increased before the COVID-19 pandemic had had an effect, across all areas of the UK. Loopstra, Reeves and Tarasuk (2019) also found that in 2016 nearly 21 percent of adults in UK, excluding Scotland, experienced food insecurity. This study determined that unemployment was linked with high likelihoods of any level of food insecurity and long-term health problems or disability.

Studies have consistently shown that austerity policies are linked to the increased numbers of food insecurity and foodbank use in the UK (Loopstra et al., 2015a; Loopstra et al., 2015b; Loopstra, 2018b; MacLeod, 2018; Prayago, 2018; Reeve, 2017; Sonserko et al., 2019). It has also been reported that sanctioning, disability benefit reassessment, the elimination of the spare room support, and the introduction of UC have all been considerably connected with a rise in foodbank use (Jenkins et al., 2021). Previous studies also propose that these modifications can lead to a failure to afford food, causing deprivation, and result in foodbank use (Jenkins et al., 2021; Caplan, 2016; Wright and Patrick, 2019). Local area studies of foodbank use propose that elevated amounts of foodbank users do so owing to benefit changes and interruptions, with high proportions of people using foodbanks having experienced current benefit modifications, most frequently being the switch to a different benefit, a benefit being stopped completely, or interruptions, which include sanctioning (Jenkins et al., 2021). It has been realised that the amount of food insecure people relying on foodbanks due to these changes varied throughout the country with, 21 percent of foodbank users in Islington, Wandsworth, and Lambeth (Prayogo et al., 2018) to 54 percent of foodbank users in County Durham (Perry et al., 2014). The potential impact of UC on food insecurity is reinforced by studies identifying rises in foodbank use shadowing UC rollout (The Trussell Trust, 2017a). While UC was intended to unite the multifaceted legacy benefits system, characteristics such as the five week wait, two child policy limit, and sanctions may lead to escalations in food insecurity and foodbank use as people shift over to the new system (Jenkins et al., 2021; Jitenara et al., 2018; Thompson et al., 2019a).

It has been argued that foodbanks have emerged as a direct response to the austerity measures (Lambie-Mumford, 2013). United Nations General Assembly (2019) believed 'the

immense growth in foodbanks and the queues waiting outside them' were an indication of such generous organisations, i.e., foodbanks, 'stepping in to do the governments job'. UK foodbanks characteristically practice extremely contained forms of food redistribution with contributions being sourced from local populations, before being dispersed. Most foodbanks, and definitely those in the Trussell Trust network, purpose is to deliver 'emergency relief', where food is provided on a provisional basis (Strong, 2019). Research has argued (May et al., 2020) that within the Trussell Trust system, with the explicit use of a voucher system, access to food is tied to calculations of deservingness, and the limit to three parcels of three days' work of food in a six-month period can manufacture scarcity.

Jenkins et al., (2021), performed a systematic review concluding that the welfare reform and removal of security policies has led to progressively insecure lives, often with the poorest members of UK society having difficulty affording food. It was noted that decreases in income due to the austerity policies have been felt most within the lowest 50 percent of incomes, who have experienced a decrease in income of around 10 percent, due to the welfare reform since 2010 (Portes and Reed, 2018). These declines in funds have also concurred with a growth in food prices, which mean that families in the lowest income decile must spend 74 percent of their disposable income to eat well (Scott et al., 2018). Income poverty is correlated with food insecurity and a failure to afford a healthy diet, and so a decrease in income for those with previously low income may increase food insecurity (Penne and Goedeme, 2021). Food insecurity may lead to unhealthy diets and disordered patterns of eating (Kirckpatrick and Tarasuk, 2008; Pilgrim et al., 2012). Therefore, it could be said that welfare reform may have substantial effects on diet and health for both adults and children (Jenkins et al., 2021) and could broaden present inequalities in nutrition and health (Penne and Goedeme, 2021).

It has been widely argued that food insecurity results in a restricted and often less nutritionally satisfactory diet. However, it also has wider health consequences for children, as they are likely to have inferior general health (Kirkpatrick, McIntyre and Potestio, 2010), and significantly more likely to display behavioural problems, and experience anxiety and depression (Alaimo, Olson and Frongillo, 2001). Consequences of food insecurity on long-term conditions, including hypertension and diabetes are noteworthy (Seligman, Laraia and Kushel, 2010; Barons and Apinall, 2020), other results comprise of poor educational attainment, poor

mental health and social isolation, which rise mortality (Steptoe et al., 2013). A study performed by Ebadi and Ahmadi (2019) determined that food insecurity negatively affects fruit and vegetable consumption, these findings agree with Barons and Aspinall (2020). It also concluded that sociodemographic factors, specifically education, had a considerable effect on the intake of fruits and vegetables. Alongside this, it was reported that individuals on low incomes have reported shopping for cheaper foods, eating less, skipping meals, eating foods that are high in fat, sugar, salt and processed (Leung et al., 2014).

Loopstra (2018b), findings agree, that people living in food insecure homes have inferior nutritional consumption than those who are not; while also linking food insecurity to diet-related chronic illnesses, such as diabetes, metabolic syndrome, and obesity. Asserting that people who had knowledge of running out of food or deprived of food reported poorer mental health and social relationships. While another study (O'Connell et al., 2019) determined that incomes had stagnated or even fallen, while the amount needed to attain a minimum diet for health and social contribution had risen in both real terms and as a percentage of households' income. The study goes on to state that when there is a rising price gap between healthy and unhealthy food and when income decreases or the cost of food goes up, people change to inexpensive calories. When decreasing the quality of food is hard, food quantity is normally reduced, with parents usually forgoing their own food intake to guarantee their children have enough.

A systematic review performed by Holley and Mason (2019) scrutinised the current evidence base regarding the interventions that were attempted to address children's food insecurity. In the US, the administration regularly collects data on food insecurity using the United States Department for Agriculture Food Security Scale. Meanwhile, in the UK, the government does not gather such information or have any approved measure in place currently. Two key approaches were found to have been accepted in an effort to address children's food insecurity, which are defined as being attended or subsidy interventions. Subsidy interventions deliver families with more flexibility to make choices about how to use the additional funds, while the attended programmes involve children accessing provision in schools etc (Holley and Mason, 2019).

2.4. Food Aid and Food Banks

Foodbanks as a form of emergency food aid have become an increasingly prominent part of British society in recent years, following the growing trend in America and Canada, who have both had history of emergency food aid since the 1980s (Gaithwaite, Collins and Bambra, 2015). It has been highlighted above that the escalating inequality within the UK has been demonstrated through the rise in emergency food aid and the austerity measures (Lambie-Mumford, 2013). It can be argued that food banks are the charitable sector's reaction to this increase in austerity and inequality within the country (Tyler, 2020b). With some stating that foodbanks can be seen as statistically an indirect measure of food insecurity (Davis and Baumberg Geiger, 2017). It has been stated that the failings of Britain's welfare system to prevent hunger and ensure good nutritious food amongst economically vulnerable people since the 2008 financial crisis has been well documented (Barker and Russell, 2020; Barker et al., 2019; Lambie-Mumford, 2019). Research proposes that the lack of financial security, including unemployment, household debt, and weakness in the welfare system, are the main drivers of food insecurity (Davis and Baumber Geiger, 2017; May et al., 2020). This thinking has been given further weight within popular media thanks to the constant campaigning from footballer Marcus Rashford (Feinmann, 2021a) who has highlighted foodbanks, and more specifically food insecurity making this a high-profile issue.

In response to food insecurity, several food aid initiatives have been established to help aid those in need, not only foodbanks, but also soup kitchens, community cafes, pensioner lunch clubs and lunch clubs for school children during the summer holidays (Caplan, 2017). Recently, a new food aid model has been established, known as social supermarkets. This is where the shop obtains excess food and consumer goods from partner establishments for free and sells them at a reduced price to a restricted section of the population living in poverty, or danger of it (Michelini, Proncipato and Lasevoli, 2018), an example of this practice would be The Company Shop. Technology is also helping to change the face of food aid, with the development of apps and web pages for the sole purpose of food sharing and distribution (Michelini, Proncipato and Lasevoli, 2018), Olio being an example of this. Olio states that it 'connects neighbours with each other and volunteers with businesses so surplus food and other items can be shared, and not thrown away' (Olioex.com, 2016).

The largest charitable foodbank system within the UK, is the Trussell Trust Foodbank Network, a not-for-profit Christian emergency food aid supplier run by volunteers, usually set in churches or community centres (Lambie-Mumford, 2013). The Trussell Trust initiative involves the collection, storage, and redistribution of food to people in crisis at a local level (Lambie-Mumford, 2013). The collected food items are stored and distributed to individuals in the form of 'food parcels', which are made up of 10 meals (or three days) worth of long-life food items. These food parcels are provided to individuals who have been referred to the foodbank (via a voucher), by a professional, front-line member of staff (e.g., G.P or social worker), in the local community (Lambie-Mumford, 2019). Three of these vouchers can be issued to an individual as a maximum (Lambie-Mumford, 2013). The Trussell Trust Foodbank Network was designed as an emergency service that helps individuals; it was designed to help aid individuals until they were able to access long-term support from other services. The three-day provision, the role of the voucher, and the distribution as well as the three-voucher rule, were designed to ensure that foodbanks would fit within the wider system of support within society (Lambie-Mumford, 2013).

However, Trussell Trust foodbanks are not the only charitable foodbank in the UK, with several independent foodbank suppliers across the country. Although the large scale of the Trussell Trust, (with them having had 1200 foodbanks in 2020 (Tyler, 2020a) and 1300 by 2021 (Tyler, 2021)) allows them to collect data, and publish annual reports, highlighting the number of foodbanks, and the number of food parcels dispatched every year. The Independent Food Aid Network (IFAN), is the UK's network for independent foodbanks, those foodbanks not associated with either the Trussell Trust or local area councils. There are at least 822 independent foodbanks within the UK, meaning that the total number of foodbanks within the UK is in excess of 2000 (Tyler, 2020a). Both the Trussell Trust and independent food banks are usually run by volunteers with food given by members of the local community and supermarkets (Beck and Gwilyn, 2020). Such a large number of independent foodbanks does raise questions regarding the reliability of data released from the Trussell Trust, as it does not show the full extent of the problem, and underestimates the current crisis (Tyler, 2020a). The rate and momentum of the growth amongst Trussell Trust foodbanks raises questions regarding the increase, not only in regard to how this growth came about, but also what the

likely trajectory of the continuing growth in the future will be, as to better understand the relationship between foodbanks and the wider welfare system (Lambie- Mumford, 2013).

As mentioned, formal foodbanks limit who can and cannot obtain food parcels using their referral scheme (Lambie-Mumford and Dowler, 2014), whereas it is very uncommon for non-emergency food aid and independent food aid to directly reject people and many aim for full inclusivity (Power et al., 2017b). Soup kitchens provide free food to be eaten straightaway and have an relaxed approach to the distribution of food, with policies regarding the receiving of food being flexible and individual, while the relationships between the client and the provider is personal (Power et al., 2017b). Community cafes tend to seek to recycle local surplus food – both fresh and dry, and to serve meals at affordable prices.

Foodbanks have been branded 'successful failures' because they are successful in the eyes of the public as they are seen to be offering a solution to the widespread problem of food insecurity, while at the same time failures since they cannot address the root causes of food insecurity (Caraher and Davison, 2019). While research (Riches and Silvasti, 2014) has compounded this idea by determining that foodbanks and food aid do not address the central socioeconomic roots of poverty nor why the food system is concurrently creating surplus waste. Riches and Silvasti (2014), go onto state that nations that rely on the use of foodbanks and the generosity of donations from communities as one of the major ways of supporting low-income people and communities in poverty should be termed 'foodbank nations'. While De Schutter (2013) argues that the removal of the government from welfare provisions could lead to the reinstatement or even reinforcement of the undeserving and deserving poor, as food has the potential of becoming perceived as not a right, which could result in more inequality (De Schutter, 2013).

2.4.1. Wellbeing

A study performed by MacLeod et al., (2018) attempted to understand the prevalence and drivers of foodbank usage in Glasgow. The study examined the scale of food bank usage in Glasgow and aimed to contemplate the association between sociodemographic, health and financial variables. This study considers who is not using foodbanks, despite needing to, to help the investigation into the wider perceived relevance of foodbanks as well as to emphasise the subject of non-access between those who may be in need. Quantitative

analysis was performed on the collected data through interviews as part of the 2015 Glasgow Community Health and Wellbeing Study. Questions were centred on foodbank usage, health of the individual, financial difficulties and current benefits allocated to the individuals. This study established that one in twenty-five participant homes had used a foodbank in the past 12 months, with a little over one-in-six of those who had experienced difficultly paying for food having used a foodbank, less than a quarter of those who regularly struggle to provide food for themselves. These results challenge the observations that foodbanks are a exploited source by those who are incapable of affording adequate food and seem to corroborate suggestions made by Garthwaite (2016) that foodbanks are avoided, other than in situations of tremendous need. The study highlighted that the extent of foodbank use might aggravate present health conditions and has been acknowledged as a possible matter of concern predominantly in relation to the dietary needs of the individuals who are consuming foodbank parcels, however concluded that further research into this area was very much needed.

2.4.2. Shame, Stigma, Embarrassment and Judgement

Garthwaite (2016) produced a study exploring the stigma and shame surrounding foodbank usage in the North East of England. The paper established that shame, embarrassment, and fear can appear in different ways for foodbank users, deteriorating existing health conditions and generating additional stigma. It also found that stigma itself was not formed from the treatment of food aid users at the foodbanks but was more centred on how these individuals' thought others were perceiving them. This influenced individuals' internal judgement of their own abilities. It was also noted that stigma was a barrier to accessing foodbanks, due to embarrassment, meaning that individuals were not asking for foodbank provision until they were desperate. While another study, performed by Purdam, Garratt and Esmail (2016), also highlighted the shame, stigma, and embarrassment found to be felt by individuals who are in use of foodbanks. They go on to state that while a food parcel from a foodbank is considered 'free', there is in fact an indication of concealed costs for those who rely on food aid. This could be the long journey to travel to the foodbank, or the social stigma, shame, and embarrassment of having to use a foodbank, on being reliant on others for their survival and not being able to deliver for their families. Individuals in this study stated they felt like a failure within their community. The study concluded that people are forced in their food selections and are missing meals to guarantee there is enough food for all family members.

Food insecurity was found to be a source of both guilt and shame which then became a barrier to seeking food assistance, in a study by Swales et al. (2020). The study also found that food aid users were able to challenge the neoliberal discourses, therefore using food aid charities appropriately. The strategies implemented displaced the feelings of 'asking' or 'begging' for help and instead used a discourse that allowed them to see themselves positively, 'independent', 'provider' and 'helper', this allowed them to mitigate the feelings of shame or guilt and allowed them to obtain food aid help. Middleton et al. (2018) found that participants deliberated a dread of being seen at the foodbank, fear of being judged and fear of social stigma. It was also reported that individuals felt that 'begging' for food or getting 'charity' would generate a undesirable social image and were mortified by how others may view them, which often resulted in secrecy around their foodbank usage and in some cases prevented people from using them. The study goes onto state that participants were frightened of being stigmatised and labelled as a 'foodbank user' because they had perceptions of a food aid user. Bowe et al. (2019) results agree, stating that a food aid user admitting they needed help and are unable to meet their basic needs was a great source of shame and embarrassment thereby preventing people from visiting foodbanks. While a further study (Douglas et al., 2015) found that while food aid users were recounting their experiences with a foodbank, feelings of shame and desperation were evident. Feelings of shame and desperation were reported to also be coexisting with feelings of gratefulness and hopelessness. Powerlessness was centred around the idea that participants felt they could not ask for a change in the food, for food that they generally ate or liked. This study concluded that it provided findings that challenged the accepted idea and assumptions that those seeking help from a foodbank are doing so due to a personal fault, instead highlight that there are considerable amounts of activities being engaged by people in a food crisis to help alleviate their experience of food insecurity.

2.4.3. Diet

Research (Puddephatt et al., 2020) found that revenue was the most important issue swaying food choice and eating behaviour. With the price of food, availability of shops, and health issues being additional causative issues concerning food choices and eating behaviour, with participants implementing tactics to ration food to guarantee longevity. The study showed that almost all the participants appreciated eating healthy and had a realistic understanding

of how to make and cook healthy meals nonetheless had an inability to afford to do so, instead opting for cheap and filling foods. And explored the effects of food insecurity on health, finding that participants experience worsening health issues. The study concludes that making health food affordable would be more effective in improving food choice and eating behaviour, predominantly as participants often mentioned their low income as a reason for not being able to afford such food.

The food parcel offered by organised foodbanks often containing up to twenty items of processed foods to feed a family; while it is expected that as much as 50 percent of a food aid parcel will remain unused by the family because it cannot be used to produce meals (Caraher and Davison, 2019). Food parcels do not cater for particular dietary requirements, with most food parcels being composed of processed goods, mostly edible only as individual products. A diet made of products containing high levels of additional sugar, processed meats, with no fruit and vegetables is a diet that can lead to a number of poor health outcomes, such as obesity, diabetes, and heart disease (Caraher and Davison, 2019; Monteiro 2018). While periods of extended food insecurity have been connected to a variety of physical and mental health issues (Hardcastle and Caraher, 2021). There is also an indication that for those on low incomes food variations are constrained due to price or accessibility, resulting in an uptake of foods high in calories (Drewnowski and Specter, 2004).

Fallaize et al. (2020) aimed to determine the nutritious competence and content of food bank parcels in Oxfordshire. The research found that foodbank parcels exceeded energy requirement, with excessively high sugar and carbohydrates and insufficient vitamin A and D compared to the standard UK guidelines. The study also found that based on the energy consumption, it is anticipated that a food parcel would provide adequate energy for an average 2.5 days longer than advocated, concluding that energy imbalance is a key risk factor for obesity and extra provisions of carbohydrates, especially sugar, in food parcels may have adverse health effects, including rising the risk of nutrition-related disease.

Nutritionally poor diets can equate with a lack of safety and reliability around food intake (Caraher and Cavicchi, 2014). In the UK food insecurity is not seen at the level of under-nutrition which is experienced by many nations in the global south (Caraher and Cavicchi, 2014). Previous assumptions linked under-nutrition with malnutrition, while it is now thought that health related to poverty is more likely the new form of malnutrition – obesity, often

joined with hunger and micronutrient deficiencies (Caraher and Cavicchi, 2014). Those who are food insecure are not only food disadvantaged but also financially, time and resource poor, with Caraher and Cavicchi (2014) stating that if you are incapable of affording to eat what your neighbours and peers are consuming then you might be deemed food insecure. However, this idea of a cultural dimension to food insecurity is not recognised by everyone, some politicians object to the concept of relativity and claim that outcomes are entrenched in choice (Caraher and Cavicchi, 2014).

2.5. In a time of Brexit and COVID-19, the Social and Political Context

In June 2016, the UK voted to leave the European Union (EU), a matter that has since become commonly referred to as 'Brexit' (Strong and Wells, 2020). Brexit is embedded within neoliberalism with the deregulation of the economy, privatisation of public services, low wages and growing socioeconomic inequalities (Telford and Wistow, 2020). The EU vote appeared to offer an exclusive chance for change for individuals that had felt resigned at their absence of control over the nation's political economy (Telford and Wistow, 2020). However there have been warnings from the House of Commons, academics, charity organisations, businesses, and industry experts regarding the potential disruption to the food supply, food shortages and the rising cost of food (Coleman, Dhaif and Oyebode, 2020).

Crises and tragedies often uncover current faults within our systems (Bublitz et al., 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic has uncovered systemic weaknesses in food access for people suffering hunger (Bublitz et al., 2021). The pandemic has changed the lives of many people within the UK with families having experienced hardships with their personal finances and changing their lives in ways they could not possibly have imagined (Hagger, Geraghty and Aslam, 2021). The lockdown in Britain has reduced a large amount of the population financially susceptible and has quadrupled need for emergency food assistance (Barker and Russell, 2020), with around 1.8 million people applying for welfare provision through the UC between the 24th March 2020 and 4th May 2020 (BBC News, 2020a). As highlighted above food insecurity can have the effect of reduced supply, rise in price, or reduced spending. It was seen that there were absences of food in supermarkets instantaneously after the lockdown in March 2020, largely due to panic purchasing, and these were rapidly resolved. The food price annual increase, which had been negative prior to the Brexit vote but increased rapidly thereafter, persisted at between 1% and 2% between March and July 2020 (Koltai et al., 2020).

Ranta and Mulrooney (2021) examined UK food insecurity in light of the COVID-19 pandemic but also against the backdrop of the UK leaving the EU at the end of 2020, even if a deal was not agreed upon. The beginning weeks of the pandemic saw empty supermarkets shelves and panic buying. This uncovered a number of inequalities within the UK food structure and the overreliance on a 'just-in-time' food distribution method together with an increase in the use of foodbanks. Food insecurity became national news during the pandemic; due to the dramatic increase in the use of foodbanks (Loopstra, 2020) and the movement led by Marcus Rashford to ensure free school meals were provided to children who were eligible (Richardson, 2020). Throughout the pandemic more and more people were thrust into food insecurity, which elevated the risks of obesity and malnutrition especially amongst disadvantaged groups (Ranta and Mulrooney, 2021), this is a cause for concern for people living in disadvantaged regions; predominantly those with long term conditions, due to evidence emphasising the connection with higher rates of infection and death from COVID-19 (O'Dowd, 2020). Ranta and Mulrooney (2021) go onto state that food security within the food system was affected by the pandemic because of the dependence on the 'just-in-time' (JiT) model. The JiT model permits for cheaper food costs and better choice for customers (Holmes, 2020), but it also means low levels of UK food stocks (Ranta and Mulrooney, 2021). While panic buying uncovered widespread insecurity around food stocks among those who would not think of themselves food insecure (Power et al., 2020).

It has been argued that the COVID-19 crisis has left large number of UK citizens food insecure (Barker and Russell, 2020). Another study (Koltai et al., 2020), reported finding a rise in food insecurity in the UK during the COVID-19 pandemic, stating that difficulties were expected, and actions taken to alleviate them, nevertheless it is seen to have had inadequate success. Koltai et al. (2020) discovered that adults who happened to be employed in February 2020 but who seemingly transitioned into redundancy in May or July were between 2-5 times more likely to report food insecurity associated to those who had continued in employed. These findings were consistent with Loopstra, Reeves and Lambie-Mumford (2020) who also discovered that those who had been in employment in February but were furloughed in May or June did not have a similar increase, suggesting the furlough scheme had alleviated what could have been a considerable growth in food insecurity. Nevertheless, Koltai et al. (2020) findings disagreed with this point stating they found that furloughed individuals testified

expressively higher rates of food insecurity comparative to those who continued employment. While Loopstra (2020) found that the response to COVID-19 has aggravated the food insecurity emergency within Britain, with the percentage of adults reporting experiences with food insecurity being four times higher than estimated. Those who have lost incomes currently managing by relying on investments, credit cards, loans, and social networks, but these provisions may not be maintainable (Loopstra, 2020). Individuals who have lost revenue but who are anticipating government aid may see their food insecurity resolved when this assistance appears. A short-term unavailability of basic foods in supermarkets, and the failure to access shops due to self-isolation and financial reasons were the three main drivers reported of food insecurity (Loopstra, 2020). However, people from minority ethnic groups, unemployed people, families with children and people with disabilities and health conditions were at a higher risk (Barker and Russell, 2020).

While UK Food Standards Agency (Connors et al., 2020) offers a qualitative insight into the lived experiences of those affected with food insecurity during the COVID-19 pandemic. There were numerous factors that amplified the risk and vulnerability, these included the failure to build on economic safety nets, the lack of consistent full-time employment, working in areas that did not allow distant working, caring duties that limit income, health – predominantly mental health, and domestic violence. The study also found that while there was a consciousness of food banks and food box schemes, there was low uptake due to the accompanying stigma (Connors et al., 2020).

Whereas these studies emphasised food insecurity and sourcing food during the pandemic, Parnham et al. (2020) examined access to free school meals (FSMs) amongst entitled children during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study discovered that in the month directly after the COVID-19 lockdown, 49% of entitled children did not obtain any form of FSMs, and the voucher system did not help children who could not attend school throughout the lockdown. The study determined that more needed to be done to support families relying on income-related benefits, who still reported requiring foodbank parcels.

Due to the nature of the three national lockdowns, Hagger, Geraghty and Aslam (2021) found that the difficulties felt by families have impacted upon their mental health and wellbeing and upon their children, with fears for their children's future. Hagger, Geraghty and Aslam (2021) reported there were concerns over the loss of employment and the effect that had on paying

bills, finding money for shopping to feed their family and the need to ask for help and support from others they never expected to need, reporting that sometimes it felt it was too difficult to keep asking for help. Financial support was given in the form of UC and furlough payments, while having their children at home due to school closures, meant providing more food for their children resulting in finances being stretched as utility and food bills increased. Hagger, Geraghty and Aslam (2021) state that those families who had little money left for food would juggle their pay or seek support from others, for some a lack of funds meant families had to sometimes go without, while those who found they needed help were helped by strangers or distant friends.

Ranta and Mulrooney (2021) have argued that the problems already highlighted due to the COVID-19 pandemic will only be aggravated by the UK's departure from the EU, and while the pandemic's affects are short-term, those from withdrawing from the EU will be much more long-term. It is believed that Brexit will result in greater disturbance of trade concerning the UK and the EU, which will influence the JiT model. Forty percent of food consumed is brought into the UK from elsewhere, the vast majority from and through the EU (Lang, 2020). Ranta (2019) stated that the pro-Brexit campaign recognised low productivity, overbearing EU bureaucracy and food prices as key food matters that needed focussing. They believed that leaving the EU would bring around new free trade arrangements with non-EU food manufacturers, such as the US, Canada, and Australia, which would decrease the cost of food, and allow UK food producers to innovate and raise productivity and reduce the food regulations and rules set by the EU. However, it is believed that leaving the EU with or without a trade deal will have profound impacts on the UK food system, with Coleman, Dhaif and Oyebode (2020) stating that a no-deal could have led to an increase of ten percent in food prices with a 30-50% reduction in food imports. While Ranta and Mulrooney (2021) asked if the UK government had correctly diagnosed the UK food system's problems, particularly regarding food insecurity.

It has been shown how food storage and stockpiling have had a significant impact on individuals sourcing food, during the pandemic. Coleman, Dhaif and Oyebode (2020) aimed to understand how these issues of food shortages, stockpiling and panic buying, within the context of Brexit, have been portrayed within the British media. What they found was missing from the narrative was that individuals required the financial ability to purchase additional

food items, with few articles focusing on the impact of the food supply chain disruption or the rising food prices on vulnerable groups, such as those already experiencing food insecurity (Colemn, Dhaif and Oyebode, 2020). While Barons and Aspinall (2020), stated that any increase in food prices will likely result in many more households facing food insecurity, including households that previously had not been food insecure. Going on to state that food prices after Brexit are expected to be significantly higher and may be considerable with changes being felt by the entire population, not just those most food insecure; this combined with the expected stagnation of household incomes, could push more households into food insecurity. Nutrient-dense foods are typically more expensive and less obtainable amongst lower income areas when likened to processed foods. Processed foods are typically cheap and easily available, they are also energy dense, high in added sugar, salt and fats. Barons and Aspinall (2020) add that rising numbers of patients with this type of diet will probably result in an increase in the frequency of diet associated chronic illness in the long term.

2.6. The Poverty Narrative

The language and discourses used by the media to refer to people living in constrained conditions in the context of neoliberalism and austerity that were introduced by the UK coalition and conservative governments since 2010 have received much attention by academics in recent years (McEnhill and Byrne, 2014; Jenson, 2014; Knight et al., 2018a). As many of the studies have shown the right-wing media, reveals a dominant discourse and philosophy that people living in poverty are responsible for their condition, and that many are 'scroungers', freeloading off the state, are swindles, disinclined to work, and making immoral choices in life. It has since been argued that these discourses perpetuate a narrative that links family dysfunction, worklessness, and welfare reliance with the 'othering' of people living in poverty (Knight et al., 2018a).

Foodbank usage has risen rapidly in the UK, alongside the presence within both newspapers and media coverage. Alongside the increase in newspaper articles reproducing harmful neoliberal discourses such as the food aid user being to blame, scrounging, or being undeserving, there was also a rise in 'poverty porn' television shows. Described as a televised portrayal of welfare applicants living in low-income societies, a way of objectifying its subjects (Feltwell et al., 2017). This new cultural method of articulating class repulsion was placed into the public and political awareness, following the transmission of a new television show

'Benefits Street' (Channel 4, 2014-2015) (Cope, 2021). Research (Cope, 2021) has argued that 'Benefits Street' appealed to the political and right-wing reporting objective of the time, which was defending the stark welfare reform and austerity programme by rising public concern of 'skivers' and 'scroungers'. In the creation of this 'poverty porn' tv programme, and the many that came after, was the pictorial appearance of these right-wing neoliberal ideologies, a depiction of people who were 'abusing' the welfare system to the harm of the hard-working taxpayer, reinforcing the distinction being the deserving and undeserving poor (Cope, 2021).

These shows frequently portray 'imagined' links between welfare beneficiaries and moral deficiencies. Public opinion and attitudes towards food banks and food bank users can be shaped by these TV shows and the discourses seen within newspapers. In order for the harmful neoliberal discourses of being undeserving, workless, welfare dependent, lazy, scrounger, and skiver, to move into the public narrative and to generate wider discussion around being welfare dependent, welfare reform fanatics need a populist language in which to communicative the narrative of state and personal welfare failure (Feltwell et al., 2017). Jenson (2014) states that the eruption of 'poverty porn' has allowed for welfare discourses to be placed into the public domain, it allows for the idea of a need for welfare reform to be placed into the common narrative, for it to become 'common sense'.

Ample amounts of the British media and its owners exercise national and global power (Jones, 2014). Harkins and Lugo-Ocando (2016) study showed that much of the British media serve to legitimise inequality through both the discourses they create and the strategies and narratives they employ. The discursive practices of the news media is argued, to emphasise the inadequacies of individuals therefore rejecting the argument that structural social inequality fundamentally causes poverty. Harkins and Lugo-Ocando (2016) also found that it was more probable that reports focusing on poverty and inequality would be found in left-leaning newspapers, emphasising the importance of studying and gaining knowledge through a range of media and the different discourses they reproduce.

Wells and Caraher (2014) found that the limited presence of food banks being reported in British media before 2011 echoes the fact that in 2000, there was only one food bank within the UK. The study found that within the UK media there was a transfer from observing food banks as a feature of the 'big society' by the state, a contribution to the mitigation of poverty

to seeing them as part of the problem. The study also reported there being a difference in the sample from the left-leaning UK press and the right-leaning press raising questions about the media transparency within the UK. This compounds anxieties regarding a highly focussed UK media ownership resulting in restricted number of issues receiving attention and a lack of variety in the UK reporting on matters. Wells and Caraher (2014) concluded that there is a framing of the food bank story not just in terms of the political inclinations of newspapers but also in the way some subjects are evaded. The hard work of the volunteers and the work that the food bank is doing is often presented at the expense of the voices of the food bank users. While the opinions of the food bank users were frequently missing within the newspaper articles, visits to the food banks either by journalists themselves or politicians and celebrities visiting them were frequently reported. While Knight et al., (2018a) aimed to analyse the media attention given to the effect of different economic circumstance on food and eating practices, specifically the terms 'food poverty' or 'food insecurity'. What they found was many articles examined simply reported a piece of news, such as the release of statistics documenting the rise in food bank use. Although their styles, language used and the length of article differed according to whether it was a broadsheet or a tabloid, in many of the examined articles, no particular stance was put forward. However, the study states there were exceptions to this, with articles written by key journalists often reflecting a newspapers political stance, although it was noted that these were exceptions and not the rule.

The use of social media as a space for interacting with likeminded individuals has long been seen; however, more focused work has been done in recent years to discuss how social media can be used to support debate and action around both social and political concerns (Brooker et al., 2015). A study (Brooker et al., (2015) found that Twitter, a social media platform, was used to support different forms of communication regarding 'poverty porn' and welfare. The study found that there was an emergence of socio-political talk being associated with referencing external sources, bringing into the discussion blog posts, radio commentary, and news media. These external references were used to counteract the negative portrayal of people on 'poverty porn' TV shows, providing an alternative narrative of lived experiences on welfare, and to campaign against the biases of such TV shows. While Feltwell et al., (2017) investigated how counter-discourse is designed and reproduced by protestors via social media to challenge the leading narratives around 'poverty porn'. The study found that one

way to produce a counter-discourse was through promoting discussion amongst individuals who were previously 'tweeting' in relation to the TV show, in doing this it allowed for individuals who were consuming the dominant discourses to be challenged with a different narrative. Alongside this another way of promoting an alternative narrative was through the promotion of optimistic stories and news in the local area. Both these two techniques were utilised to produce a Foucauldian counter discourse, with both ways imploring two different audiences (Feltwell et al., 2017).

Shame, stigma, and guilt as associated emotions from accessing foodbanks and food aid and has been discussed earlier in this chapter; however, Price et al., (2020) in their study found that desperation, shame, stigma, and embarrassment came across via quotes from foodbank users in the news stories analysed. The journalists typically appeared to be sympathetic in their reporting, in contrast to national newspaper headlines which have displayed judgemental and damaging rhetoric around foodbank use. The study also found that the narratives within the comments section attached to the articles describe those using foodbanks as 'scroungers' and 'skivers'. This study also found that there was encouragement to donate food, which can be linked to the narratives around the 'Big Society' and citizens taking an active role in their community. The study concluded that the deserving and undeserving poor discourse has become so deeply ingrained within popular narratives it has led to an 'othering' of people in similar circumstances and food aid users would typically describe themselves as struggling, but not 'scroungers' who need to use a foodbank.

The poverty narrative is largely focused on blaming the individual for the financial position that they find themselves in, that the individual is at fault for their situation, while the neoliberal rhetoric is focused on self-help, and independence. Highlighting that the individual is at fault for their current situation, and that they are the only one who can remove themselves from the situation (O'Hara, 2020a). Dagdeviren, Donoghue and Wearmouth (2019) believe that this rhetoric and idea of self-help, self-sufficiency, and empowerment is not only an idea of neoliberalism but also a central key idea within the continuing process of welfare reform during the time of austerity within the UK. The political narrative includes a handover of power from the state to communities, families, and people as a form of enablement. There is a extensive history of the empowerment narrative within UK social policy, and this has been used to legitimise the severe withdrawal of the welfare and other

public spending on the basis that the government control will be released and the power will be in the hands of the people. Dagdeviren, Donoghue and Wearmouth (2019) found that the narratives of the third sector tasked with supporting essential necessities such as food are not capable of empowerment because of the shame and stigma that participants are connected with when using a service, and the failure of the charities to deliver regular and universal provision to all who need it. The study concludes that the political landscape that the third sector must operate within has resulted in a reduction in their ability to cover the gaps within provision caused by austerity and an inability to empower its users. This results in an increase in insecurity as more people feel they have very few places to turn to for support, rather than an empowering and empowered third sector. However, Garthwaite's (2017) study aimed to analyse the construction of the 'active citizen' within the 'big society' framework. The 'big society' agenda was presented as an answer to a 'broken Britain'. The Conservative party claimed the 'big society' would help to reallocate power from the government to local communities, families, and the individual, prompting social responsibility. When food banks began to gain attention in the UK media, they were defined as an 'excellent example' by the conservative government, Garthwaite (2017) states this suggests that food banks played a part within the 'big society'. As accountability for welfare was being transferred from the government to the individual, the linking of 'active citizenship' to lengthier projects of improving the welfare system took place. Garthwaite (2017), found that there was a subtle balance between crisis provision and the welfare system, as welfare is progressively being distributed through the charitable sector, and therefore carries a greater stigma than it had previously done. The stigma attached to foodbank use means, to be granted with charitable supplies, users become unavoidably involved in a process that aggressively rejects their equal citizenship and status. Fulfilling the role of 'active citizen' in the context of the 'big society' can also strengthen the feelings of shame and failure that has previously been reported. Furthermore, an argument has emerged that the business model of food banks encourages use and a demand where none existed before (Caraher and Cavacchi, 2014).

2.6.1. Framing food banks

Strong (2021) believed that the increasing rates of food insecurity and foodbank usage in 'Austerity Britain' suggested that our sense of responsibility in the face of hunger is fading. Strong (2021) also stated that in order to understand the shifting sense of responsibility of

the lives of others, hunger must be scrutinised as a cultural category that surpasses the material lack of food, bearing a history that is simultaneously an explanation of the methods – political, technological, scientific – that have sought to frame it. Strong (2021) applied Judith Butler's theory of framing to three images of 'Food Bank Britain', concluding that the pictures analysed do more than depict hunger, rather undertake a role in arranging the social and political phenomenon, as the observers of hunger, reflecting upon the social world. Strong (2021) found that visual depictions of hunger influence the sense of obligation to deliberate and feel in the face of hunger. Beck and Gwilym (2020) state that the economic crash in European capitalism can be described by the response of austerity and the removal of welfare services alongside a renewal of the discourse deserving and undeserving poor. Within the media, associations between Victorian values and present-day values, reflect a long-standing prejudice about deserving and undeserving poor. Most media studies on poverty suggest that there is a recurring observation that usually the poor are presented in one of two contrasting frames: the 'deserving poor' and the 'underserving poor' (Chauhan and Foster, 2014).

2.6.2.   The Poverty Discourses

As mentioned above, 'scroungers' is a popular poverty discourse, along with the neoliberal discourse of blame and the undeserving and deserving poor discourse. Here the deserving and undeserving poor discourse is explored further.

2.6.2.1.   Deserving and Undeserving Poor neoliberal discourse

One of the most robust poverty-related notions has been the 'deserving' and 'undeserving poor', which has dominated the social and political discussion for years (Tihelkova, 2015). The English system of welfare, going back to the Elizabethan Poor Laws, has relied almost entirely on separating the 'undeserving poor' from the 'deserving poor', in terms of their 'eligibility' for support (Shildrick et al., 2012). The Poor Laws made the distinction between these two kinds of poor – the deserving and undeserving. The 'deserving' being individuals who were unable to work due to age, sickness or were children. Their treatment was fairer than that of the 'undeserving poor' who were identified as fit and healthy but unemployed individuals. The 'undeserving poor' were treated severely, by a series of disciplinary policies reflecting their position as an anti-social element in need of removal from society (Tihelkova, 2015).

Historically it had been assumed that the route out of poverty was via paid employment, encouraging the 'undeserving poor' to return to full-time employment. A way of encouraging individuals into employment is via the principle of 'less eligibility', which ensures that the social position of the unemployed individual, who is currently reliant on welfare, will be inferior to that of even the lowest waged individual, this in turn provides a clear enticement to seek paid work. This key principle remains a core feature of the 21st century social welfare system in the UK (Shildrick et al., 2012; Alcock et al., 2003).

It has been documented that the historical cycles of blame and stigma that surrounded the 'undeserving poor' in the 16th century version of the 'unworthy poor' is reborn and reinforced by neoliberal ideologies (Hansen et al., 2013). Some individuals have seen stigma as important in preventing excessive claims to the welfare system, with Charles Murray stating, 'stigma makes generosity feasible' (Murray, 1990), while others see stigma as a reason of non-take-up by the individuals that benefits are intended to help (Baumberg Geiger, 2016). Arneson (1997) states that the new consensus proclaims that the policies should be designed to reward the 'deserving' poor and punish the 'undeserving', this rhetoric is reminiscent of what liberals formerly called 'blaming the victim'.

Following the financial crisis of 2008 and the austerity measures implemented by the coalition government of 2010, the notion of the 'undeserving poor' resurfaced, both within the political institutions and the mass media. It is claimed that the depiction of the deprived in British media, has very much followed that of the government, and represents the Victorian era; with the UN Special Rapporteur calling it 'Dickensian' (United Nations General Assembly, 2019), in a time in which poverty was interpreted as a failing of the individual rather than that of a systemic problem caused by superior economic and social forces (Tihelkova, 2015).

People who have been labelled 'undeserving poor' are typically those who are not actively seeking paid employment, this is irrespective of the quality of the work that is obtainable, whereas the 'deserving poor', are individuals who are trying to find employment and see that this is their responsibility to society, irrespective of how unsuccessful their quest may be (Garthwaite, 2011). The 'deserving' cannot be blamed for their poverty; their poverty is not due to individual behaviour or character flaws, but rather due to macro forces outside of the individuals' control (Bridges, 2017). Whereas it is seen that the 'undeserving poor' not only have behavioural or moral deficiencies but are seen as being lazy and adverse to work, are

promiscuous, criminally inclined and are predisposed to addiction (Mooney and Neal, 2010). Essentially, they are poor due to flaws in their character or ethical codes (Bridges, 2017).

Drawing differences between the 'deserving and undeserving poor' and prevalent discourses of an underclass have long existed in social policy (Wiggan 2012). Recently there has been an increased interest within the UK, that welfare payments have become increasingly stigmatised due to a media and political discourse of 'scrounging' (Baumberg et al., 2012), with the discourse itself causing claimants to feel stigmatised (Garthwaite, 2014). The rise of neoliberalism in the 1980s allowed for libertarians to campaign behavioural explanations of poverty and unemployment, resulting in social security no longer being accepted as a form of protection for society. No longer is it there to compensate people for the imbalanced distribution of resources and opportunities provided to them (Wiggan, 2012). While the term 'deserving poor' indicates favourable treatment of improvised individuals, the use of the term 'undeserving poor' indicates a deficiency in the persons who are depicted as burdensome to the taxpayer as defined by their dependency on social security and welfare policies (Chauhan and Foster, 2014).

Mooney and Neal (2010) state that the 'deserving/undeserving poor' ideology is an anti-welfare perspective, in which the language of the modern day suggests deviant and dysfunctional behaviours, a perceived lack of social capital and an expanding range of ethical and behavioural deficiencies, which have in turn rediscovered a culture of poverty within the UK. David Cameron used the term 'Broken Britain' and the wider idea of the 'broken society' this has infiltrated wider and popular discourses relating to the social and moral state of the modern day United Kingdom (Mooney, 2009). Anti-welfare narratives of previous generations, such as Charles Murray's documentation of a welfare created and dependent underclass (Murray, 1990), have helped in aiding part of the 'broken society' idea in that it allows for it to be utilised as a justification for a range of social and cultural problems (Mooney and Neal, 2010).

Chunn and Gavigan (2004), have argued that the philosophical move to neoliberal thinking has served to reframe and re-examine the notion of 'deserving poor' so that almost no one is thought of as deserving. The current welfare discourse has positioned the unemployed and benefit claimants as choosing a 'life on benefits'; so, they therefore are framed as liable for their own situation as a direct result of their lack of aptitude, motivation or skill rather than

lack of demand for their labour (Hodkinson and Robbins, 2013), with the emphasis solely on the supply side of the labour market (Patrick, 2014). However, Arneson (1997), states that if an individual is to blame for his path into poverty, surely this does not foreclose the possibility that society is under a duty to alleviate his condition. Mooney and Neal (2010), argue that the accountability of the underprivileged and the poor should be of the state they exist in, which is an old argument, that has found a following with some mass media outlets and politicians.

The government and media have called into question the lifestyle choices of foodbank users, which only reinforces the neoliberal narrative of 'deserving poor' and 'undeserving poor' which previously had been almost exclusively associated with benefit recipients (Garthwaite, 2011). Some political critics have argued that food bank users are incapable of managing their budgets. Former Conservative Government Health Minister Edwina Currie has blamed food bank users, stating 'they never learn to cook… the moment they've got a bit of spare cash they're off getting another tattoo'. While the social commentator Katie Hopkins compared food bank users to cancer patients, and Rachel Johnson described food bank users as 'living like animals' (Purdam, Garratt and Esmail, 2016). Lister (2004) states that the opinions and views of individuals suffering poverty are infrequently heard, 'the poor' are often talked about and theorised about but find themselves very infrequently in a situation to have their opinions or views distributed.

It has been stated before that the public tend to think of the 'deserving poor' as those who are not able to help themselves, examples given being, the elderly, children, and those with disabilities and sickness (Alcock, 2006). However, a study found that individuals felt that the 'undeserving poor' were workshy, were claiming benefits illegitimately or were spending large amounts of their money on alcohol, cigarettes, or drugs, rather than on their children or food (Shildrick et al., 2012). In this study produced by Shildrick et al. (2012), participants overpoweringly overruled 'poverty' as a label that captured the circumstance of their own lives, with people being more open to acknowledge 'struggling to get by', 'to feeling the pinch', or to 'things being tight'. The study found that individuals living in poverty expressed that they did not feel they were living in poverty and that poverty was a situation that people in developing countries face. However, individuals felt that poverty was a consequence of individual failure and related with impoverished, homeless people or difficult drug users.

Wells and Caraher (2014) produced a study in which they found that the reporting of food banks within British press had shifted. There is little analysis of the operations of food banks, nor any analysis on the need for food banks, no questions asked regarding other models or ways of supplying food, or how the use of food banks as stepping stones to more essential alterations were asked or raised. Lewis et al. (2008), have stated that this is due to a change within British press, due to falling circulation of newspapers and reduced distribution, combined with increasing opposition from other media platforms, has all lead to the demise of investigative journalism, which is expensive, this could influence journalists interrogating issues such as food welfare appropriately. Post-2011, the British media has gone from portraying food banks as being quite rare, short term and an emergency feature of the recession towards them becoming normalised, a part of society, and a long-term feature of food delivery within the UK (Wells and Caraher, 2014).

A study (Tihelkova, 2015) aimed to determine the discourses surrounding 'scroungers' and the 'undeserving poor', through analysing British press. The study found that during Cameron's government, the right-wing newspapers were using the deserving/undeserving ideology as a foundation for their coverage, with heavy typecasting being applied to fit and healthy individuals claiming welfare, who were being regarded as economically inactive, lazy, and showing faulty behaviour qualities. The study goes on to note that no consideration was given to individuals who were claiming welfare who were in paid work. On the contrary, left-wing newspapers have somewhat resisted applying this stereotype, instead showing individuals as being victims of an unfair economic system and determining there is an underlying structural cause of poverty and welfare dependency (Tihelkova, 2015). While the Caraher and Wells (2014) study emphasised the media stories of food bank users making use of a system where no real need exists, this is the depiction of the 'undeserving poor' pursuing deals so they can spend their money on other consumer goods (Caraher and Cavicchi, 2014).

2.7. Sociological Theory

2.7.1. Foucault's ideas on power

Foucault's analysis of power suggests that there is a link between the will of knowledge and power, and that although knowledge and power are not to similar, each provokes the construction of the other. Knowledge is not something that pre-exists power and governs it

from a value-free cultural perspective, but knowledge and power are closely and effectively connected (Barker, 1998).

Foucault's ideas on power have key principles which remain consistent throughout his discussions. He uses these principles to differentiate his ideas on power from more conventional thinking, typically Marxist (O'Farrell, 2005). Foucault's thinking of power is more diffuse rather than focussed, embodied and enacted rather than controlled, discursive rather than forced, and comprises actors rather than being deployed by them (Gaventa, 2003). Foucault confronts the idea that power is exercised by people or groups by way of 'episodic' or 'sovereign' acts of authority or oppression, seeing it instead as dispersed and universal (Foucault, 1976). Foucault believed that power functions in terms of the relationships between distinctive arenas, establishments, organisations, and other groups within the state. What distinguishes these relationships of power is that they are not set in stone. Power can move very rapidly from one area to another, contingent on shifting associations and conditions; meaning power is moveable and contingent (Danaher, Schirato and Webb, 2000).

The most important principle of Foucault's thinking of power, is that power is not a 'thing' that can be possessed either by the government, social class or by persons. Instead, he argued that it is a relation between different persons and groups only to exist once it is being employed (O'Farrell, 2005). Foucault's notion of power is relational (Foucault, 1976). He sees power as a '*multiplicity of force relations'* (Foucault, 1976). Each of these associations requires normative force in proportion to its capability to encourage, provoke, impact, direct, supress, or control the behaviour of the other (Dore, 2009). The 'force relation' mainly includes a relationship between two or more persons, in a society individuals have the capability to exercise actions on one another in an array of ways, which may involve a chain of reactions (Foucault, 1976; Dore, 2009). The term power denotes to a set of relationships that occur between individuals, or that are deliberately organised by groups of individuals. With this thinking, the state and organisations are just the cementing of extremely multifaceted sets of power relations which occur at every level of the social world. Foucault argued that control can only be employed over free actors. However, by independence, Foucault means the likelihood of responding and acting in different ways, if these prospects are stopped through violence or suppression then it is no longer a question of a association of control but of its restrictions (O'Farrell, 2005).

Additionally Foucault distinguished his thinking of power is through the criticisms of models that see power as existing solely situated within the State or governing organisations. Foucault argued that for the very existence of the State requires thousands of micro-relations of power at each level of the social world. The state is a particular grouping of the numerous power relations, therefore believing it is not a 'thing' (O'Farrell, 2005).

The third point Foucault uses to distinguish his idea of power to that of others, is that power is not simply saying no and dominating persons or social classes. Instead, Foucault argued that power is dynamic, that power produces different varieties of knowledge and cultural belief (O'Farrell, 2005). Foucault also believed that power and oppression should not be defined as the same thing, because there are actually unalike relations of power encompassing throughout the social world, and to recognise power with coercion is to accept that power is applied over one group from another. He also stated that some people enjoy placing power over others, while some enjoy resisting power (Foucault, 1976 pp. 45). Foucault also argued that power manufactures a variety of behaviours through controlling peoples' daily habits. Stating that power returns to individuals, that it touches them and comes to insert itself within them, through their gestures, attitudes, discourses, and daily lives (Foucault, 1975).

Foucault has criticised Marxist's analysis of power, with three features. The first being the assumption that the creation of economic associations is the sole function of power relations. The second criticism is that Marxists overlook the fine textured power relations that fall outside the field of politics and the administration. Finally, Foucault criticises the exaggerated importance which Marxists assign to ideology as a means of power relations (Cousins and Hussain, 1984; Foucault, 1980).

From this one of Foucault's most important ideas was that of power being able to construct different forms of knowledge aimed at collecting data on peoples' activities and existence. The knowledge collected in this way then allows itself to be used to reinforce exercises of power. Power and knowledge operate almost interchangeably. From this Foucault states there are subsections within power/knowledge, these being disciplinary power, sovereign power, biopower, and governmentality (O'Farrell, 2005).

Foucault believed that there were three distinct varieties of power: sovereign power; disciplinary power and pastoral power. Sovereign power comprises of compliance to the ruling of the king or main authority figure and is argued that disciplinary power followed

sovereign power in the 18th and 19th century when the sovereign had less control and power. This form of power pertains to a feudal society system, where there is a high authority figure, such as the father, the priest and the king, who are selected to be the owners of the power and who owns it. It is power that works through divine right, public ritual and making examples of those who disobey authority. Sovereign power functions as a 'macrophysics' opposed to 'microphysics' of disciplinary power which pursues to modify every component of the social world (O'Farrell, 2005). Pastoral power is argued by Foucault as consisting of a very precise form of methods, wisdoms and practices intended to rule or lead peoples' behaviour as single members of a population, and also to organise them as a political and civil cooperative in an identical way as a Shepard who cares for his flock of sheep from birth to death. The final type of power being disciplinary which will be discussed in greater depth.

Disciplinary power is one of Foucault's most popular ideas amongst power. Foucault believed that disciplinary power primarily began at the end of the eighteenth century, substituting sovereign power. Foucault argues that disciplinary power uses technology to hold someone under observation, to control their behaviour. Foucault states that disciplinary practises were first utilised in the armed forces and the school, before being applied to infirmaries and prisons (Foucault, 1975). Foucault mentions that space is a method used to organise people, starting with enclosing individuals, where people were locked away into institutional areas: offenders into prisons, children into schools, and employees into factories. Inside these larger enclosures, smaller ones occurred, such as cells, classrooms, and hospital wards. Within these smaller enclosures people were then grouped and divided, children were clustered into classes according to age and soldiers according to their level of expertise. All these enclosures and divides involve specifically formulated construction to actually uphold these newly organised areas. Foucault describes a second technique used and this is the organisation of time. This resulted in the development of a timetable meaning that individuals grouped together would be engaging in similar activity at the same time and was utilised in schools and factories. Group activities were controlled, with individuals being educated to perform identical actions at the same time. Foucault believed disciplinary power was so successful because of the methods of training the body, alongside the addition of surveillance technology (O'Farrell, 2005). Surveillance was guaranteed via a mechanism Foucault termed – Panopticism. It was based on the architectural belief of a ring-shaped structure with units

clustered around a key, central tower. A spectator residing in the tower could view all of the cells, however, due to the system, the inhabitants of the cells could not see into the main tower. This meant that the individuals within the cells, be they children, workers, prisoners, or the mad; would adopt and change their behaviour to that of someone being watched all the time. This is the principle Foucault believes modern society to operate on (O'Farrell, 2005). Following this Foucault argued through examinations, people are expected to generate certain forms of knowledge and behaviour, their ability can then be measured and entered into a data depository which compares them with other people. The examination lets people be 'individualised' to becomes 'cases' which are then measured alongside other cases and are then stored and used to generate further knowledge.

2.7.2. Foucault's ideas on Discourses

Foucault's ideas on discourse, alongside de Saussure (1972) and Derrida (1976) and their positioning within structuralism and poststructuralism will be discussed within Chapter 4 – Critical Discourse Analysis.

2.7.3. Ideas on Stigma

Mentions of stigma are now widely seen within the media and in general discourse. The expression is often eagerly applied to a 'disreputable' individual, occupation, activity or geographical area. In its most literal usage, the term stigma refers to some form of mark or stain. Spicker (1984) states that stigma is associated with a loss of self-worth, humiliation, shame, embarrassment, disadvantage, unwillingness to claim welfare, labelling and a feeling of inadequacy. Osborne (1974) stated that the term 'stigma' can be traced back to the Greek word for 'tattoo-mark', which was made with a hot iron and pressed onto individuals to show that they remained dedicated to the temple, or that they were criminals or runaway slaves, people who should be avoided. However, recently the expression has tended to be related with 'inferior' forms of physical appearance, mental and social flaws, conduct or ethnicity (Page, 1984). It is important to highlight that any discussion of stigmas – socially inferior attributes, also requires some mention of what social normality is. Merton and Nisbet (1971) defined six features of social norms:

1.   Norms may advocate behaviour or specify the type of behaviour that is favoured

2.   The consensus in relation to what constitutes a norm will differ within society

3.   There will be differing levels of conformity to the norm between individuals

4.   Sanctions, both formal and informal may be placed upon those who fail to conform to accepted norms

5.   Different norms may require differing levels and types of adherence

6.   Some social norms have a greater flexibility in regard to range of conduct that is accepted within them

Page (1984) states that this classification can be useful but does not provide any means for identifying social norms, and that any classification is likely to be deficient regarding the respect social norms require.

Goffman (1959) identified three vastly different types of stigmas which he believed to have existed within society.

1.   stigma related to physical deformities

2.   stigma related to mental illness and character flaws

3.   stigma attached to those who identify with a particular, religion, race, ethnicity, or ideology

Goffman (1959) also argues two ways in which stigma can be 'carried', these are referred to as discredited and discreditable. The term discredited is utilised by Goffman when describing those who believe that observers know about their stigma, or it is easily observable by others usually because it is visual in nature. While he uses the word discreditable to describe individuals who consider their stigma unknown or hidden from others and not easily observable. In general, those with tribal or physical stigmas will tend to be discredited rather than discreditable, while those with blemishes to individual character are more likely to be discreditable rather than discredited. Alongside this, Goffman describes a level of blame that is attached to the different types of stigmas. Goffman notes that those with stigmas classified as physical or tribal are permitted a level of tolerance as they are not considered to be liable for their 'failing', while those with stigmas attributed to blemishes in character or mental illness are widely considered to be personally accountable for their 'failing' because it is felt that the person has autonomy over their choices and situation and has made an individual decision to behave in a socially unacceptable way.

While Goffman (1959) described three different types of stigmas, Pardo (1974) only classifies two types of stigma, these being either a physical stigma or a moral stigma. Physical stigmas are ruled by social conventions around assumptions concerning health and appearance; while moral stigmas are also governed by societal conventions, these norms are distinguished from others in three different ways, according to Pardo (1974).

1.   Moral behaviour is considered to be responsible – e.g., one is not deemed accountable for physical illness that result in a deformity resulting in them not being able to walk unaided.

2.   Moral norms carry penalties – expectations are placed upon individuals to behave in a particular way, and if not, a sanction or penalty is applied

3.   Moral norms hold higher value when compared to other expectations – this value can be rationalised for example as being associated with religion or the effect they have on other people

Spicker (1984) disagrees with some of Goffmans (1963) and Pardos (1974) thinking, in particular, the classification of different types of stigmas detailed by both. Spicker (1984) states that Pardos thinking is useful but insufficient, in that 'physical' stigmas do not contain incidents of mental disease and addiction. He goes onto state that it also doesn't allow space for people living in poverty, those accepting welfare, homeless and unemployed. They might be in breach of social norms, but Spicker (1984) believes it would be incorrect to presume that poverty is immoral.

Spicker (1984) details his classification for stigma, consisting of five categories. Stating that it is necessary for physical stigmas to be differentiated from mental stigmas, with physical stigmas including old age, disability, race, and physical illness. Physical stigmas are a physical trait that then results in social rejection. Whereas mental stigmas are seen in the conduct and behaviour of the stigmatised individual, although include both mental disease and addiction and are related to the behaviour and conduct of a person. However, the stigmatised conduct is accredited to the mental state of the person rather than immoral behaviour. Then there are the moral stigmas and the stigmas of poverty. The stigmas of poverty consist of a wide range of destitution: homelessness, low pay, unemployment, and financial dependency. These difficulties are connected by reduced resources that is socially stigmatising. While poverty may cause reliance on others, in particular the welfare systems. The stigma of

reliance is considered a different to the stigma of destitution. Finally, moral stigmas, while connected to destitution and reliance stigmas are different. A person is stigmatised morally when they do something that is extremely intolerable and is believed to be accountable for it. A moral stigma results when there is a violation of a moral rule, this includes homosexuality stigma, stigma around criminality, and divorce.

2.7.4. Theories on Shame Vs Guilt

Shame and guilt are two different feelings; however, both include self-blame and are closely tied to our opinions of self (Baldwin, Baldwin, and Ewald 2006). While Miceli and Castelfranchi (2018) state that shame and guilt are both common emotions, they require the individual to be self-aware and self-reflecting. They can take different forms, examples being, people viewing themselves as ugly, stupid or are 'lacking' in physical attractiveness or intelligence. Another example is a person may view themselves as awful, unpleasant, or bad, having the power to disrupt norms and are prepared to do so (Miceli and Castelfranchi 2018). Cryder, Springer and Morewedge, (2016) state that guilt alongside shame belong to collection of self-conscious emotions that also include remorse and embarrassment. Miceli and Castelfranchi (2018), argue that guilt implies a damaging self-evaluation, and therefore is concerned with an individual's accountability for the harmful attitude or behaviour. Shame suggests an apparent lack of power to meet the norms expected of themselves, whereas guilt implies perceived power and willingness to be damaging, to disrupt the norms expected of themselves.

Benedict (1946) explain shame and guilt are grounded in the situation. She theorised that it was more probable for shame to appear in a public situation, and guilt in a private situation. However, Tangney (1994) established that it was equally likely for shame to appear in private as guilt is to occur in public. Lewis (1971) detailed the involvement of shame within the self, whereas with guilt, the main negative evaluation is the thing done or undone. Within guilt, the self is negatively affected with something, but it is not the main focus of the experience.

This idea of a public vs private states that shame is provoked by public liabilities and others negative assessments, whereas guilt is a private emotion, provoked by one's own negative self-assessment (Benedict 1946; Combs et al., 2010; Wallbott and Scherer, 1995). This form of differentiating between shame and guilt has been called into question theoretically.

Creighton (1990) has questioned that the internal and external criteria cannot be used to differentiate guilt from shame, because at some point in the process both were internalised. Shame in private might imply that either one is thinking of their fault in a public setting or imaging an audience. It has often proposed that shame is an emotion more likely to suggest a sensation of exposure to a judging audience. However, if shame is provoked by actual or imagined external judgement, then this emotion could coincide with a fear of others approval. Smith et al. (2002) believed that guilt was connected to private faults, whereas shame was linked more to public ones. Guilt has also been determined to lead to actions of compensation, such as apologising; while shame seems to favour withdrawal and escape behaviours and, in some cases, hostile and self-defensive reactions (Miceli and Castelfranchi, 2018).

Schott's (1979) theory sees that the emotions of embarrassment, shame, and guilt act as signals to the subject that deviations from social norms have taken place and actions to correct this are required. Shame is felt when someone feels negatively about themselves due to an act of what is perceived as a negative behaviour or transgression, whereas in comparison guilt can be felt when a person feels negatively about the transgression or behaviour itself (Cryder, Springer and Morewedge, 2016).

2.8. Conclusion

This literature review has provided an insight into the current literature within the wide and ever-growing area of food insecurity. It has aimed to show the importance and deep rootedness of neoliberalism regarding the current socioeconomic concerns that are seen in today's society. The introduction of neoliberalism has inevitably led to the scientific, financial and health increases seen since the 1980's; however, it also led to the financial crisis in 2008, which inevitably led to the austerity measures placed to reduce the deficit felt by the government. This chapter has shown the link between the austerity measures implemented and the rise of food insecurity, and poverty as a whole, felt by the lower classes within society. This chapter has also shown the link between food insecurity and the austerity measures implemented, resulting in the charitable third sector providing aid in the form of food aid and food banks. The Trussell Trust being the largest organised food banking system within the UK, but not exclusively the only food aid system, with local councils running organised foodbanks, and hundreds of independent community food aid charities.

An introduction to the many forms of food aid found in the UK has been presented, along with literature showcasing the link between food insecurity, food aid, and health and wellbeing of food aid users; highlighting the link between shame and guilt, stigma, barriers to help and the nutritional value of a foodbank parcel, affecting the health of food aid users. This study takes place during the COVID-19 pandemic and in the early months following Brexit, therefore it is vitally important to understand the political and social context this study finds itself in. COVID-19 has reportedly had significant effects on food insecurity, which has already been shown to negatively affect individuals' health. With the pandemic, subsequent lockdowns resulting in mass fear and mass stockpiling resulting in less food on the shelves, and an increase in the shame and stigma. Not only that but an increase in job insecurity, unemployment, and furlough for many. This leads into the introduction of food insecurity and poverty discourses seen in mass media, particularly the undeserving and deserving poor, more of which will be discussed within the CDA chapter.

An introduction to some of the sociological theory associated with this study has been seen in this chapter, with an introduction to Foucault's theory of power and discourses. It is important to determine the difference between Foucault's theory of power and a more typical theory, such as Marxists, alongside his theory of discourses, and how they differ from that of de Saussure; however, this will be discussed further in a following chapter. It has been mentioned regarding the effects of stigma and shame on the wellbeing of food aid users, so the introduction of Goffman, and his ideas on stigma, and a stigmatised individual have been presented. Alongside this an introduction into the theories of shame and guilt, and the sociological differences between the two have been introduced, as this is a theme of great importance within the literature.

It has been shown that there is a gap in the current research in terms of food insecurity during the pandemic and the effects food aid use has on food aid users, but also incorporating the effects of discourses on the thinking and perspectives of food aid users. A very limited number of studies have been performed in local independent community food aid organisations, resulting in this study being focused on such an organisation.

3. Methodology

As researchers we must have the ability to comprehend and communicate principles about the type of reality, what can be identified and how we go about achieving this knowledge (Rehman and Alharthi, 2016). This is known as a research paradigm, which is a theoretical agenda with statements about: ontology, epistemology, axiology, and methodology (Rehman and Alharthi, 2016).

Every paradigm is founded on its own ontological and epistemological beliefs (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). Since all beliefs are conjecture, the philosophical foundations of each paradigm cannot be empirically confirmed nor refuted (Scotland, 2012). Different paradigms comprise of differing ontological and epistemological opinions; therefore, they have opposing assumptions of reality and knowledge which reinforce their research method (Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Scotland, 2012), this is then reflected within the methodology and methods chosen (Crotty, 1998).

In this chapter I will present my ontological and epistemological position, before exploring the chosen research paradigm, constructionism. An argument will be presented regarding the chosen methodology and methods selected, including quantitative and qualitative research, and inductive and deductive reasoning before presenting the chosen research design and sampling method utilised. This research project uses multi-qualitative methods, using both constructionist grounded theory and situational analysis. Data was collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews, transcribed verbatim and analysed using the two methodologies. The use of these two methodologies allows for a greater analysis of data through the use of coding and mapping.

3.1. Ontology, Epistemology, and the Research Paradigms

Ontology is a subdivision of philosophy concerned with the meaning of 'being' and is concerned with 'what is', an instance being what is the nature of existence and the construction of reality (Crotty, 1998) or what it is possible to distinguish about the world. Ontology is the assumptions that are often made regarding the nature and different kinds of reality and what exists (Richards, 2003), while also being the nature of the world and what can be known about it (Snape and Spencer, 2003). Bryman (2008) further presents the notion of 'social ontology' which is expressed as a philosophical thought within research which is

concerned with the nature of social identities, whether social identities can exist individually from all social actors or are they instead individual social constructs made up of the actions, interpretations, and perceptions of those within society. Ormston et al. (2014) states that ontology enquiries if there is in fact a social reality that independently exists from all social actors, as well as determining if there is one shared social reality or multiple specific ones. Ontology focuses on the assumptions that people make in order to understand the world around them. Philosophical assumptions about reality are vital to understand the meaning of the information collected during the research project (Kivunja and Kuyini, 2017). These expectations and notions help to position my thinking regarding the study problem, its implication, and how I might approach it to contribute to its answer.

Alongside this is Epistemology, which in general is the assumptions that are made about the kind of knowledge, or how it is possible to find out about the world and society (Richards, 2003; Snape and Spencer, 2003). Epistemology is a method of observing the world and making sense of it. It encompasses knowledge and requires a level of understanding of what that knowledge involves (Crotty, 1998). Epistemology demands to know the nature of knowledge, what knowledge can be attempted what is conceivable, but also what is already known, as well as its scope. Bryman (2008) states that epistemology is concerned with the question of what should be or is deemed as adequate knowledge in a field. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) defines epistemology as relating to the assumptions made about what is the bases of knowledge, its very nature and form, and how it can be attained and then disseminated.

Within the social sciences it is imperative that the researcher ascertains their epistemological assumptions to determine the appropriate research methods to be utilised (Kivunja and Kuyini, 2017). If knowledge is seen as being tangible and objective (Mannan, 2016), this will demand the researcher to take the role of an observer together with a loyalty to the methods of natural sciences which typically include testing and measuring. While, on the other side, if knowledge is seen as subjective and unique, this then aligns with the researcher rejecting the approaches that are used by natural sciences and instead calling for greater involvement with the subjects (Saunders, 2009)

The ontological, epistemological, methodology and methods together make up what is known as a research paradigm. These paradigms are used as frameworks they shape both what we observe and how we interpret and understand this (Kivunja and Kuyini, 2017). They are the

framework in which people look at reality, and references that are utilised to organise both observations and reasoning (Hennink, Hutter and Bailey, 2015). Every paradigm is based on its own ontological and epistemological assumptions; due to the nature of these, the philosophical foundations are never able to be truly proven (Scotland, 2012). Different paradigms comprise of distinct ontological and epistemological opinions; therefore, they have opposing beliefs of both reality and knowledge. These will then be reflected within the methodologies and methods chosen.

Methodology is focused on the what, where, when, why and how questions within data collection and analysis. Methods encompass the precise practises used to collect and analyse the data. The data collected will either be qualitative or quantitative (Grix, 2002).

Social constructionism, the research philosophy underpinning this thesis, claims that humans are born into a world in which meaning has already been defined, known as culture (Andrews, 2012; Saunders, 2009). This culture contains agreements about knowledge that have previously been and are still continuing to be decided upon. Research interests are predisposed by race, gender, geographical location, and culture (Scotland, 2012). Constructivists see knowledge and truth as shaped and not pre-determined by the mind and supports the view that realists and constructivists are not dissimilar (Schwandt 2003; Andrews 2012); some believe that notions are constructed rather than discovered yet uphold the belief that they resemble something in the social world (Andrews, 2012). Steedman (2000) states that what is known and the act of knowing is related to making sense of the question 'what it is to be human', with individuals defining reality. Berger and Luckmann (1991) were focused on the formation of knowledge, how it arises and how it appears to have implications within society, they see knowledge as shaped by the relations of the people within the society which is key to constructivism.

Social constructivism has been instrumental in remodelling grounded theory and originated as an attempt to understand reality (Andrews, 2012), with origins in sociology and postmodernism within qualitative research (Andrews, 2012). Constructionists generally do not start with a theory, rather they produce or advance a theory (Creswell, 2003), which lends itself particularly well with grounded theory, that aims to find theory grounded within the data (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). The idea has been linked with Francis Bacon (1561-1626) who presented the notion that observations remain only a precise reflection of the world under

observation (Murphy et al., 1998). At its core, social constructivism is both an anti-realist, relativist thought (Andrews, 2012). Constructivism suggests that each person conceptually constructs the world through experiences, while social constructionism has a social emphasis rather than an individual one (Young and Colin, 2004), although the terms constructivism and constructionism tend to be substitutable for each other, both encompassed under the broad term 'constructivism' (Charmaz, 2000; Charmaz, 2006). Honebein (1996) outlines the constructivist research paradigm as a method that explains that individuals need to construct their own knowledge and thinking of the world through their experiences and then reflecting on those; and is based on the principle that people construct much of their learning though circumstances (Cashman et al., 2008).

Social constructivism or the 'sociology of knowledge' defines knowledge as the set of beliefs or mental models that individuals use to understand activities and events in the world and tells us that knowledge is built as ways of interpreting the world, and that these interpretations are a subsection of how the world could be interpreted (Jackson, 2010). Interpretivists alongside constructivists generally pay attention to the development of meanings and how they are shaped, conveyed, sustained, and altered (Schwandt, 2003), both aim to recognise the world of lived experiences from the viewpoints of the people who live in them (Schwandt, 1998; Kelly, Dowling, and Millar, 2017). Both ascended as a challenge to scientism and have been manipulated by the postmodernist movement, whereas interpretivism distinguishes between the social and natural sciences with the aim of interpreting the meaning of social phenomena (Schwandt, 1998; Crotty, 1998; Denzin and Lincoln, 2000).

Constructivists assume that external reality occurs, however is only identified through the human mind with the meanings socially constructed, while there is no shared social reality, just multiple distinctive individual constructions of it (Crotty, 1998). Following this is the idea and belief that reality is entirely subjective. Social phenomena and their meanings are shaped through social connections and are in constant states of revision and are always being accomplished by social actors (Al-Saadi 2014). The use of social constructivism allows for a greater exploration into the experiences and perspectives of food aid users. Social constructivism proclaims that people construct their own understanding and knowledge of the world through different experiences and then reflecting on those experiences (Jackson,

2010); therefore, to fully understand the effects food aid use has on the wellbeing of food aid users, food aid users need to be at the centre of the research project. Experiences and perspectives are produced through interaction within the social world under investigation, therefore, social constructivism allows for the answering of the research questions (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). The researchers aim of understanding the world of lived experiences of those who have lived it (Andrews, 2012), and believes that both knowledge and truth are generated and not exposed by the mind (Andrews 2012, Schwandt, 2003).

This thesis, while performing a critical discourse analysis, is predominately that of a social constructivist research paradigm.

3.2. Positionality

The term positionality is used to both describe a person's world view and the position adopted during a research project and its social and political context (Gary and Holmes, 2020). The individual's world view or 'where the researcher is coming from' concerns ontological assumptions, epistemological assumptions and assumptions about human nature and agency (Gary and Holmes, 2020; England, 1994). The interpretive constructionist approach acknowledges subjectivity (Hennink, Hutter and Bailey, 2015). The standpoint of the study is that participants mirror their subjective views of their social world and the interactions they have experienced, while the researchers also bring their own subjective influences into the research process (Hennink, Hutter and Bailey, 2015). It is during the coming together of data collection, that each will respond to the contextual, characteristics, and position of the other, and will therefore contribute to the co-construction of knowledge and reality (Hennink, Hutter and Bailey, 2015). Clarke et al. (2018) has stated that historically in grounded theory (GT), the researcher should be invisible, a positivist thinking, and therefore resulted in an inadequate reflexivity within research. Clarke et al. (2018) argues that the addition of a reflexive account on the processes of inquiry adds further to the epistemological break from Glaserian GT towards constructivist GT (CGT) and Situational Analysis (SA).

3.3. Qualitative vs Quantitative Research Design
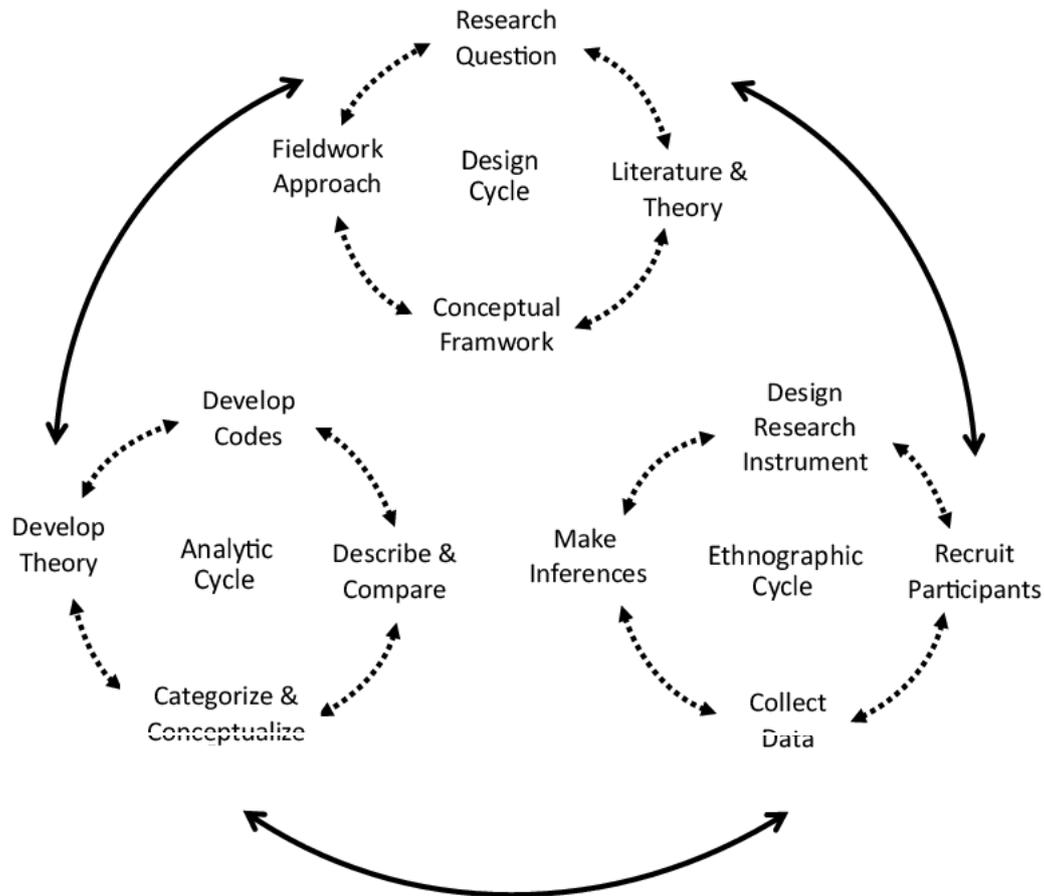
Figure 1: Hutter-Hennink qualitative research cycle (Hennink, Hutter and Bailey, 2015)

The design cycle (Figure 1) is the first section of the overall qualitative study cycle and involves of four interwoven tasks: the formation of the study question, examining the current and previous literature and theory, the creation a theoretical structure, and the selection of an suitable data-collection approach. The ethnographic cycle is the second part of the general qualitative study cycle and defines the essential tasks in the qualitative data gathering; comprising of the planning of the study tool, recruitment of participants, data gathering, and creating the inductive interpretations. Finally, there is the analytical cycle. Which includes the main tasks needed for data analysis, comprising of the development of codes, description, and comparison, classifying and conceptualising data and theory development (Hennink, Hutter and Bailey, 2015).

Quantitative research main objective is to quantify data and generalise results into the broader population, with the purpose being to measure, count, quantify a problem and relationships within the data. This results in data being that of numbers and numerical with a large sample size that is representative of the population and the analysis is statistical, with

the consequence being to identify occurrence, averages and patterns within the data and then generalising it to the population (Bowling, 2014). Whereas, with qualitative research the objective is to gain a comprehensive understanding of the fundamental motives, theories, and drivers of a phenomena. Data is typically textual data with small number of participants or interviewees chosen purposefully and are often referred to as participants. Data is collected via in-depth interviews, observation, and focus groups/group discussions, with the outcome being to develop an original understanding, to ascertain and explain behaviour, opinions, and actions (Hennink, Hutter and Bailey 2015).

Within public health, there has been a debate regarding the two different types of methods, and which is more appropriate. Baum (1995) states that conventional public health concentrated on disease, investigating its causes and on the behaviours of people, while new public health focusses on how people experience diseases and how socioeconomic factors can affect health. Baum (1995) goes onto state that qualitative research is often expected to be used within public health to research socioeconomic, cultural, and political issues which can and have influenced health and disease; whilst also used to study the interactions between the actors present and relevant to the public health concern. Qualitative approaches allow theoretical knowledge to be applied to concepts regarding empowerment and participation by public health researchers. In addition, qualitative research designs also allow for researchers to interpret and record the diverse ways individuals understand their perspectives and experiences of both health and disease. However, while qualitative research can generate substantial amounts of information, they are often marred by difficulties in generalisation from often small samples (Baum, 1995).

It has been said that a pitfall of qualitative methodologies is that its primary focus is on providing in depth descriptions of social interactions without making attempts to link them to specified social structures (Muntaner and Gomez, 2003). A further critique is that the personal involvement of the researcher within the population and the blurring of the distinction between researcher and researched may at times become unethical. Muntaner and Gomez (2003) have also recognised that qualitative perspectives may intentionally overlook a more political standpoint by disregarding certain questions that would provoke particularly political reactions. In this research project, I – having performed a CDA beforehand, had some knowledge of the political and social contexts of the project. Not only

that, but political questions were asked, in relation to food poverty and the effects of COVID-19, two topics that are very political.

3.4. Deductive, Inductive, and Abductive Reasoning

Alongside the research paradigms and the differences between quantitative and qualitative methods is the idea of either a deductive or inductive conceptual framework. Within the design phase of a research study, deductive reasoning is manly utilised, indicating that existing literature and theory are utilised to develop or deduce a conceptual framework that directs the collection of data. Within the positivist research paradigm, once the research question has been decided, reading regarding the existing literature and theory and the creation of a conceptual framework, a hypothesis is formulated (Hennink, Hutter and Bailey, 2015). Researchers use theory deductively at the start of the project, this theory is then employed within the research becoming a framework for the entire study, not only organising the hypotheses and research questions but also the data collection (Bahari, 2010; Saunders, 2009). In the positivist paradigm, existing literature and theory is used to develop hypothesis which are then tested empirically (Hennink, Hutter and Bailey, 2015). The hypotheses are then either verified or falsified by the data collected. Hypotheses are very much a part of the positivist research paradigm; in that they are closed statements that are determined to be true or false. In the deductive approach researchers verify and test identified theories by scrutinising research questions and hypotheses that result from theory (Saunders, 2009). This approach goes against that of qualitative research in that its focus is on understanding experiences and behaviours of people themselves.

Bahari (2010) states that qualitative research strategy is characterised as being inductive and that inductive approaches involve the formation of theory as a consequence of the interpretations of observed data. With inductive reasoning in qualitative research, the researcher starts by collecting data from participants before developing this data into themes. When conducting in-depth interviews or focus groups, the researcher is able to gain understanding of the key issues within the situation. From this the knowledge can be used to make inductive interpretations which allow the researcher to delve deeper into those topics within the next data collection interview or focus groups (Hennink, Hutter and Bailey, 2015). The themes identified are expanded into broad theories and can sometimes be likened with personal experiences or with the existing literature related to the topic (Bahari, 2010). After

each interview, the researcher will make more interpretations and therefore delve deeper and deeper into the issues found within the research until a point is reached where no new information is being found. This is referred to as being the point of information saturation (Hennink, Hutter and Bailey, 2015).

Grounded theory was originally seen as an inductive conceptual framework that produced theory that was grounded within the data, while also challenging 'doctrinaire approaches to verification' (Glaser and Strauss, 1967:7). Strauss (1987) later clarified that this was a mistaken impression, arguing that grounded theory analysis requires three activities: induction, deduction, and verification. While more recently, it has been concluded that researchers who engage with grounded theory use a mixture of both inductive and abductive thinking to account for the theoretical framework analysis that occurs, moving grounded theory from a qualitative descriptive account and towards an abstract theoretical framework (Birks and Mill, 2011: 94).

Inductive thinking has been defined as 'a type of reasoning that begins with the study of a range of individual cases and extrapolates patterns from them to form a conceptual category' (Bryant and Charmaz, 2007: 608). Compared to abduction which has been defined as 'a type of reasoning that begins by examining data and after scrutiny of these data, entertains all possible explanations for the observed data, and them forms hypotheses to confirm or disconfirm until the researcher arrives at the most plausible interpretation of the observed data' (Bryant and Charmaz, 2007: 603).

Abduction has become quite noticeable within the grounded theory discourse in recent years as a main principle of the framework (Reichertz, 2019). Charmaz clarifies that grounded theory is in fact an abductive method because it relies on reasoning, making inferences about empirical experiences (Flick, 2018: 10-11). Abduction was introduced originally by Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914) as a third principle of reasoning in addition to induction and deduction (Peirce, 1878). Within the grounded theory narrative there were debates between the Glaserian approach – which strongly emphasised inductive reasoning as a key principle of grounded theory and the Strauss and Corbin approach which suggested the use of both induction and deduction, once their second step of coding had been completed (Flick, 2018: 10-11). Abduction can be seen as a third option to this debate, with abduction allowing researchers to have more control over the process of examining how the data supports

existing theories or hypothesis while also allowing the data to call for changes in existing understandings (Flick, 2018: 11; Saunders, 2009).

A strong benefit of abduction is that it allows more focus on the researcher and the situation. While allowing the methodological choices to inform what is deemed relevant in the situation and how it is used to inform the theory. This replaces what some believe to be the naïve inductivism belief, in which phenomena were discovered and emerged if the researchers were only open enough. It emphasises abduction as a third principle of reasoning which is a way of working between the domain of observations and the domains of ideas (Flick, 2018:11; Saunders, 2009). Abduction and abductive reasoning have become prominent within the methodological discussion around constructivist grounded theory; believing that induction alone is not sufficient for describing inferences found within the grounded theory processes while deduction does not cover what is intended within this process. Charmaz (2008: 157) states that grounded theory starts by using inductive reasoning but that this moves into abductive reasoning as the researcher pursues an understanding of the findings. Abductive reasoning aims to explain any anomalies within the collected data.

This research project used both a combined inductive and abductive conceptual framework. In doing so, allowed for an inductive reasoning to be utilised first to ensure that all ideas, codes, categories, and theories are derived from the data. Therefore, researchers should aim to go into the research situation with an 'open mind' (Flick, 2018: 7). Following from this is the move to using abductive reasoning to ensure that the data is scrutinised and explored, while forming several hypothesis and theories that are then either proven or disproven during the analysis process (Birks and Mill, 2011:173).

This research project consists of both a critical discourse analysis and a thorough literature review being conducted before the primary data collection, which will allow for me to become knowledgeable regarding the discourses present within the food insecurity narrative as well as ensuring that I am equipped with interviewing food aid users about the very sensitive topic of food insecurity.

While some could argue that this could impact my ability to generate theory from the data, because they could not be 'open minded', due to the knowledge gained through reading literature and performing a CDA, I believe this to be false. As mentioned, the CDA and literature review allowed the me the opportunity to familiarise myself with the research

situation, in which I was going to become immersed within. I went into the research situation to determine theory based on the data, and not to test a hypothesis or theory – a key determinant of deductive reasoning (Saunders, 2009). Once preliminary codes and ideas had been generated from the data, abductive reasoning was utilised to determine all possible theories and hypothesis from the data, and as analysis took place the removal of any theories and hypothesis that did not align with the data observed was undertaken. This allowed for an exploration as to how the data supports existing theories while simultaneously changing existing understandings. The results of the theories generated from the data are expressed within the results and discussion chapters.

3.5. Research Design

The term 'research design' refers to the entire research process and includes identifying the research questions, collecting relevant data that will allow the research question to be answered, and analysing the collected data (Yin, 2009). There are various research designs e.g., longitudinal studies, experiments, case studies, survey studies, comparative studies and cross-sectional studies (Bryman, 2008). However, it is not always straight forward to place one's research design into the mentioned categories. This thesis refers to Figure 1 to highlight the research design cycle used in this project.

3.5.1. Research problem and aims of project

This project has shown that there is a lack of knowledge and understanding in regard to food aid users' perspectives of their wellbeing and the effects that food aid has on that. This project has also highlighted that there is a lack of studies in which experiences are explored from food aid users who have used an independent form of food aid as opposed to the more known and larger scale organised food banks, this has resulted in a gap within the knowledge of those food aid users who primarily used an independent form of food aid.

This project has three main aims:

RA1 – to identify common neoliberal discourses and positions held by a selection of British press, food aid users and volunteers within an independent food bank

RA2 – to explore the shared experiences and perspectives of food aid use within the independent food banking system, in the North East of England, against a COVID-19 background

RA3 – to explore the reported effects of food insecurity, food aid use and neoliberal discourses on the wellbeing of food aid users.

As well as five main objectives:

RO1 - To perform a critical discourse analysis of British press to explore the current neoliberal discourses within food insecurity during the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic

RO2 - To determine the lived experiences of food insecurity amongst food aid users within the North East of England

RO3 – To investigate the reported wellbeing of food aid users, and the effects of food insecurity, food aid and neoliberal discourse has on this

RO4 – To identify the discourses present within the food aid sector, and positions held by both food aid users and volunteers within an independent food bank

RO5 – To determine the influence food aid organisations have over discourses within the social world, and the effects the discourses have on the independent food aid organisations

3.5.2. Sample

This research project used two qualitative research methods, constructionist grounded theory and situational analysis, both second generation grounded theory designs. Both methods use theoretical sampling to focus on discovering new data sources that are best to address the specific theoretical perspectives that have appeared through the provisional analysis. A strength of the analytical approach of grounded theory is theoretical sampling, and therefore is crucial for both constructionist grounded theory and situational analysis (Clarke, 2005; Bryant and Charmaz, 2007).

Due to the nature of the research aims, especially the two that are centred around exploring the food aid users' experiences with food aid and food insecurity, alongside the reported effects these have on their wellbeing, it was important to find not only food banks, but food aid charities in the North East of England. Food aid charities typically provide food aid users with more than just a food parcel, but commonly a community meal or soup kitchen, and some often have a pay-as-you-feel supermarket or a community café. It was also important

to find independent food aid charities as opposed to the more organised food banking system, due to the limited amount of research from independent food aid charities.

When pursuing food aid charities there were several key features that needed to be ensured, the first being that the food aid charity was based in the North East of England and provided food aid to those in the area that needed help and assistance, it was not important if the food aid charity had a referral scheme in place or not. Ideally the food aid charity would be an independent organisation, and not affiliated with any organised food aid charities. It was also important that the food aid charity not gatekeep participants, and that I would be able to approach food aid users and volunteers regarding their participation within the research.

Relationships were formed between me and 4 independent food aid organisations across the North East of England. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19, three food aid organisations had to close or change to accommodate the pandemic, this resulted in an inability to work with these organisations to gain participants. Due to the pandemic, and the social distancing protocols, national and local lockdowns, resulted in few food aid users coming to the food bank for help, but asking for help via social media or a phone. Therefore, a poster was created and distributed via social media outlets and groups that were centred around food insecurity in the North East.

3.5.2.1. The independent community food hub (ICFH)

The independent community food hub (ICFH) had a chef that would produce the community meals, twice a week during the winter months, and once a week during the summer months. Prior to COVID-19, these meals would be eaten within the ICFH, however, due to social distancing and lockdown measures, these meals were available for pre-order, and would be ready for collection, with heating instructions for the food aid user to reheat them in their own home. Alongside this was the community café, which provided hot and cold food that was prepared by the chief alongside donations from Greggs. However, due to the pandemic, the café was closed throughout the data collection of this study. Finally, there was the food bank itself, which consisted of two different parts. The first was the fresh fruit and vegetables food bank, this was available Monday-Saturday 10am-2pm, and was free to anyone, no referral needed, and could be accessed repeatedly everyday it was open. The food in this food parcel was kindly donated by supermarkets in the area and consisted of food that had a short

shelf life which would have found itself ending up in landfill. Alongside this was the dried food parcel, this was available Monday-Saturday 10am-2pm, no referral needed, however personal details such as name and address were taken, because this food parcel was available only once a month per food aid user. This food parcel consisted of food that had been donated by both supermarkets and local business and charities, but also food bought by the monetary donations made to the food bank. These parcels would consist of pasta, rice, pasta sauce, tinned meat, tinned vegetables, frozen meat and potato products and crisps/chocolates/sweets and would be given in conjunction with a fresh food parcel.

3.5.2.2. Social Media

Alongside this a poster was made (see Appendix A) which was distributed via social media asking participants who met the criteria to reach out to me, alongside this was a link to my website which held more information regarding the research aims of the project. Purposeful sampling technique was used to gain participants for this part of the research, with an inclusion criterion being that they must be over the age of 18, have been in receipt of food aid (either from an independent food bank or an organised food bank), and live (and have been in receipt of their food parcel) in the North East of England. Please see Table 1, which demonstrates the spread of interviews and source of participants. When the food aid users contacted me, the information sheet and consent form was emailed to the participants for them to read and sign if they agreed to participate (see Appendix B and C for both Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form). Following this, four interviews were conducted with volunteers at the ICFH, of these three were male and one was female. The volunteers also had an information sheet to read and a consent form to sign.

Number of Sample Collected	Sample Collected From	Number interviewed twice
10	Independent community food hub	2
4	Internet	2
4	Volunteers at independent community food hub	0
Total Number of Interviews (including first, second and volunteers)		22

Table 1: Spread of interviews and source of participants

3.6. Data Collection

Data collection took place across six months between July 2020 and December 2020. Data was collected through in depth semi-structured interviews with both food aid users and volunteers.

3.6.1. In-depth interviews

Semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with both food aid users and a small number of volunteers from the ICFH.

In-depth semi-structured interviews are a one-on-one method of collecting qualitative data, that involves an interviewer, typically a researcher, and an interviewee, usually the participant, having a detailed conversation regarding specific topics, and are described as a conversation with a purpose, or intensive interviewing (Hennick, Hutter and Bailey, 2015). The purpose is to gain insight into certain issues using a semi-structured format as a guide, resulting in a conversational feeling for the interview. In-depth interviews have long been a useful data collecting method in various types of qualitative research (Charmaz, 2005). Hennick, Hutter and Bailey (2015) state that in-depth interview must involve a semi-structured interview topic guide, to prompt the questions, establishing a connection with the interviewee, asking questions in an open and empathetic way, allowing for the interview to tell their story through probing if needed. Charmaz (2005) has stated that in-depth interviewing should provoke each participants interpretation of his or her experiences, while

the interviewer attempts to understand the topic that the interviewees have the experience to share.

In-depth interviews were selected as the primary data collection method with the questions asking the interviewee to describe and reflect on their experiences in a way that rarely occurs naturally in everyday life. The researcher is there to listen, observe and to encourage the participant to answer, hence in this situation the interviewee does the majority of the talking (Charmaz, 2005).

Within grounded theory, it is recommended that the researcher devise a few open-ended, broad questions that will be used as guide to prompt data collection. Charmaz (2005) states that this then enables the researcher to focus the interview questions on these key topics and enables a detailed discussion to take place. With the creation of open-ended, broad, and non-judgemental questions the researcher is allowing and encouraging stories to emerge from the participants. Charmaz (2005) showcases that intensive or in-depth interviewing goes beneath the surface of the described experiences, by exploring the statement, requesting more detail, and asking for the participants thoughts and feelings. Intensive or in-depth interviews work well within grounded theory because both grounded theory methods and in-depth interviewing are open-ended yet direct. Charmaz (2005) argues that although in-depth interviewing works well as a single method, as seen within this study, but that it complements other methods such as observations and surveys well. In this study, in-depth, semi-structured interviews are used as a single data collection method. It is important to note that in-depth interviews do require the researcher to take more control over the construction of data over that of ethnography of discourse analysis (Charmaz, 2005). However, grounded theory requires researchers to take control of the collecting of data and analysis, therefore these methods give researchers more analytical control over their data.

In-depth interviewing offers open-ended and in-depth examination of an aspect of life that the interviewee has considerable experience and significant insight. The combination of flexibility and control within in-depth interviewing fits best with grounded theory methods for increasing the analysis, in-depth interviews allow for the me to narrow the range of topics questioned allowing for specific data to be collected resulting in the development of the theoretical frameworks (Charmaz, 2005).

3.7. The interviews

Interviews were conducted either face-to-face, over the phone or via video call, depending on the technology available to the interviewee, the restrictions in place due to the pandemic, and ensuring the safety of both interviewee and interviewer. All interviews were recorded via a Dictaphone and then transcribed by me verbatim; this allowed me to get more comfortable with the data. Questions were asked in regard to their experiences with a) food insecurity, b) food banks, both independent and organised, c) their health and wellbeing, d) income insecurity, e) food available in their food parcels, f) emotions associated with food insecurity and food banks and g) if the reporting of food aid users and food banks within news and social media affected their wellbeing, please see Appendix D for example interview questions.

The area of interest was sensitive to the food aid users, which resulted in the need for me to form a rapport with the food aid user(s) before asking questions that may cause feelings of embarrassment for the participant. The interview questions sparked a detailed conversation with both food aid users and volunteers, who had stories to tell, and opinions and reflections of their own experiences with food aid.

Fourteen first interviews and four second interviews, totalling eighteen interviews were conducted with food aid users. The first four interviews created a large amount of data regarding the key themes of food insecurity, food aid use and the wellbeing of food aid users. This resulted in the next three interviews being more focused on some of these provisional themes that were prominent within the first four interviews. These three interviews provided more data and again the interview questions were altered and more focused for interviews for the next three. The final four interviews of the first round, provided further data, and these questions incorporated ideas and probing regarding COVID-19 and the effects that the pandemic had had on food insecurity and the availability of food aid. After the first round of interviewing, four participants agreed to be interviewed a second time, with further questions, gaining more depth into the codes and themes that had surfaced. At this point it was deemed appropriate to interview a small number of volunteers from the food aid charity. Four volunteers agreed to a single interview. This placed the total number of interviews at twenty-two, with four of those being second interviews. I felt that I had reached theoretical saturation, and was not gaining any new data, codes, or themes, so no new interviews were conducted. Please see Table 2, which showcases the timeline of data collection.

Date	Number of Interviews	Who was Interviewed
July 2020	4	Food aid users
August/September 2020	3	Food aid users
October	3	Food aid users
November/December	4	Food aid users
January 2021	4	Volunteers
January/February	4	Food aid users second interviews

Table 2: Timeline of data collection

Questions asked to the food aid users were split into sections. The first being the experiences the participants had had with the different forms of food aid: asking questions about positive and negative experiences, what made them a positive or negative experience, how easy the process was of receiving a food parcel, what forms of food aid where they offered, and how did they find the overall experiences. The second section led from the first, where questioning was specific to the participants income and expenditures, questions were centred around: welfare, housing payments, monthly bills, expenditure, and balancing income with outgoings. The third section focused on food inequality and the experiences food aid users had had with it. Questions focusing on times when they felt they were food insecure: why they felt they were food insecure, what they did in that situation, who they asked for help. This led to the fourth section which was focused on the wellbeing of the participant, here the participant was asked about their health and wellbeing: how food insecurity and the use of food aid had either positively or negatively affected it, and what they did personally to affect it. Throughout the interview, questions were asked and probed regarding the discourses that are popular within food insecurity, and how the food aid user perceived them, challenged them, or reproduced them. Following the increase of COVID-19, and the appearance of the pandemic in the codes of the data, questions probing COVID-19 were also added to the interviewees, especially aimed at participants who had used food aid prior to COVID-19 and again during the pandemic. Although the questions were grouped into sections, they were not followed strictly, but used as a guide to ensure all codes and themes were covered.

Questions asked to volunteers differed slightly. Instead of being in sections, there was more flow between me and the volunteer. Questions were focused on how the volunteer became involved with the charity: what they felt they added to the charity, the stigma, shame, and guilt that was associated with food aid, the health and wellbeing of the food aid users, and their perspectives of the popular discourses within the food aid narrative. Volunteers had stories that they were happy to share and were more forthcoming with information than the participants.

3.8. Data analysis

This thesis combines three different research methods across two studies. The first study uses a critical discourse analysis and can be found in chapter 4. While the second part of the thesis, and the second study utilises two different methods, that of constructionist grounded theory and situational analysis. Both are second generation grounded theory methods. Clarke et al., (2018) highlighted those larger projects may benefit from using both Constructionist Grounded Theory and Situational Analysis, but that they should be done independently of each other, due to the fact they are in fact two different methodologies. However, this thesis performed these two methodologies concurrently instead. I felt that due to conducting this research project, specifically data collecting, during the global pandemic, that analysing the data concurrently using both methodologies would ensure that if there were areas of interest, contention or discourses that were not being explored thoroughly that the interview questions could be altered to capture the missing data. Performing data collection and analysis as proposed by Clark et al., (2018) would have resulted in interviews being conducted and analysed using Constructionist grounded theory to develop codes and themes. Once these themes were confirmed, the coded interview transcripts would then be analysed using situation analysis. This process could highlight areas of interest or discourses that had not been explored sufficiently, resulting in further interviews being conducted, or repeat interviews with participants. In performing data collection and analysis concurrently using both methodologies, ensured that if situational analysis highlighted a gap, this would be able to be collected at the next interview as opposed to waiting a greater length of time. The next section explains the use of these two methods, the sample technique utilised, the data collection methods and the interaction and interplay of performing the two methodologies concurrently.

3.8.1. Grounded Theory and Constructionist grounded theory

Constructionist grounded theory is a second-generation grounded theory method, therefore it is important to have a good understanding of grounded theory, to allow for an understanding. Grounded theory is argued to be one of the most popular qualitative research designs (Birks and Mills, 2011). Glaser and Strauss's book 'The Discovery of Grounded Theory' (1967) highlighted the stages and supported the development of theories from research grounded within theory as opposed to deducing hypotheses from existing theory (Charmaz, 2006). Grounded theory is defined by several components these being: a simultaneous movement between collecting data and analysis the data, creating logical codes and themes from the data, and not a fixed deduced hypothesis, by using a continuous comparative method, which includes making comparisons throughout all states of the research, progressing theory creation during each stage of the data collection and analysis, memo-writing to expand categories, themes and to explain relationships between categories while identifying holes, sampling being intended to create theory, and finally performing the literature review having already developed an independent analysis (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Charmaz, 2006).

Glaser and Strauss (1967) set forth a powerful change from the powerful quantitative narrative to legitimise qualitative study. Most significantly within the grounded theory idea was the bringing of two conflicting philosophical and methodological thoughts, positivism, and pragmatism. While positivists and pragmatists think that truth is conditional and subject to change, they start at different points and have very different modes of thought and emphasis within the research domain.

However, this thesis uses constructionist grounded theory and situational analysis as the analysis techniques. The biggest change from grounded theory to constructionist grounded theory is the shift in both the ontological and epistemological grounds. Constructivist grounded theory accepts a relativist epistemology, as it believes knowledge is socially constructed and recognises that there are and can be multiple positions of both the research participants and the researcher. Constructivist grounded theory assumes that the production of knowledge is done through the contention with empirical problems, believing that knowledge sits upon social constructions. We, as people, construct research processes, however these constructions happen under pre-existing structural circumstances, occur in

circumstances, and are predisposed by the researchers' perspectives, privileges, positions, and interactions (Charmaz, 2009).

While grounded theory is typically thought of as a linear process beginning with data collection and ending with the writing of the analysis and reflecting on the process, Charmaz (2006) disagrees and believes that constructionist grounded theory is in fact not linear, with the researcher moving forward and back through the process to write up ideas that occur to them. While grounded theory places a strong focus on the two-step process of sampling and analysing data (Flick, 2018), Charmaz (2006) again believes that a variety of data collection methods can be used within constructionist grounded theory and that they should be used as a tool rather than a recipe to follow. As data is being collected from the participants, I will begin to make analytical sense of their meanings and actions, this allows for coding to take place. There are two distinct ways of coding, the first being line-by-line coding, the second being focused coding. Writing notes or memos on the codes help me develop ideas, with the idea being that they dismantle the codes and analyses them, doing this through memos. Memos are invaluable and allow for the comparing of data, investigate thoughts around the codes and to direct further data-collection. After every session of coding, I will memo, and then explore the codes and themes and make a list of things I want to read more regarding, or to question more in up-coming interviews, or to go back to previous interviews and determine if the codes and themes were detailed there also. The codes and themes will then be utilised within the second methodology – situational analysis and will be vital in the mapping and memoing stages. Theoretical sampling is used to gain particular data to refine major themes, while theoretical saturation is an indication that no new ideas within the themes are emerging from the data collection (Charmaz, 2006).

3.8.2. Situational analysis

Situational Analysis (Clarke, 2005), is known as a second generation of grounded theory, adapted by Adele Clarke. I felt it was important to include situational analysis to the methodology design in this project due to the deeper analysis of discourses that situational analysis allowed that constructionist grounded theory did not explore. Adele Clarke uses Foucault's ideas on discourses as a way of placing SA within pragmatism and interactionism, especially within postmodernism and post structuralism (Bryant and Charmaz, 2019). By utilising Foucault's thinking on discourses, an exploration into the domains of social life, while

analysing the narrative, visual, and historical discourses in the situation under study is possible. It was vitally important for the use of both analysis techniques in this second study, as Clarke et al., (2018) states that to get the most out of the situational maps the data needed to be coded prior, and I felt that constructionist grounded theory would allow for an exploration and familiarisation of the data, before initial coding took place, ensuring the data was ready to then be analysed through the maps of SA.

Both constructionist grounded theory and situational analysis are empirical approaches to qualitative analysis (Clarke and Charmaz, 2019). As stated above, grounded theory is inductive and comparative while situational analysis is an extension to this and shares the same epistemological stance of pragmatism and interactionist sociology (Clarke and Charmaz, 2019). Situational Analysis relies on using and doing parts of conventional grounded theory, with the need to start analysis as soon as the researcher has data, and that coding begins immediately, followed by theorising based on the codes generated. Sampling is driven by theoretical concerns that have emerged during the provisional data analysis (Clarke, 2005; Bryant and Charmaz, 2007). In this research project, these key elements of grounded theory are also found within constructionist grounded theory, again highlighting the need for both methods to work together for the analysis within this thesis.

However, situational analysis differs by incorporating Michel Foucault's work on discourse analysis and introducing mapping into the analysis technique. CGT analysis is primarily focused on action and interaction, asking questions around what is happening? What are the people and things doing? The researcher analyses the action by coding, later organising these codes into categories (Clarke et al., 2018). Whereas with SA, the fundamental focus is on relationality. The researcher analyses relationality by mapping and memoing the ecologies of relations among the various elements in the situation (situational maps), the various social groupings (social world maps) and discourses in the situation (positional maps) (Clarke et al., 2018). Clarke et al., (2018) goes onto state that for large projects, such as a dissertation or a book, both CGT and SA should be pursued; however, recommends that they are done one at a time, and not blended, due to them being two different methods.

Situational Analysis offers three fresh ways into data sources and are used as a major technique of 'opening up' data and interrogating it in a new way. The primary way of achieving this is through the making of three maps, followed by analytical work and memos. Clarke

(2005) goes onto state that these approaches should be considered analytical exercises, with their most important consequence being provoking the researcher to analyse the data on a deeper level. Not only does the introduction of these three methods allow for a deeper analysis of the data but can and should also be used with data that is coded, by utilising coding methods from grounded theory. Situational maps can be used as a way for the researcher to become familiar with the data, although the use of coded data is much better (Clarke, 2005).

One of the uses of the maps is to help the researcher stimulate thinking, therefore the activity of mapping should always be followed by memoing, using the same principles of grounded theory. Clarke (2005) states that the goal is to multi-task between mapping, which should provoke new insights into codes and themes that need memoing promptly. The mapping allows for the researcher to note new things already present within the data that should receive more attention, whilst also allowing for areas consisting of inadequate data to be noted for further data collection (Clarke 2005). Inadequate memoing is one of the major problems within qualitative research (Clarke 2005). This resulted in the researcher ensuring that memoing took place in a variety of ways, through voice notes, handwritten notes and computer notes, all of which dated. It was also important for the researcher to use their own experiences when mapping, this included impressions and images around the topic area.

Situations, as with social life, are both messy and complicated, resulting in these concerns being central to situational analysis. One of the most innovative aspects of situational analysis is the ability to bring whole situation to the attention of the researcher. With Clarke (2005) stating,

'…situational analysis pushes Strauss's postmodernsation of the social further around the postmodern turn and grounds it in new analytic approach that do justice to the insights of postmodern theory'.

3.8.3. Maps

Situational analysis, as mentioned, consists of completing three maps (Clarke, 2005).

3.8.3.1. Situational Maps

This is the first type of map, and aims to lay out all the major human, nonhuman, discursive and any other element within the research situation that is of concern to the researcher. The map aids in provoking analysis of the relations amongst these elements. These maps attempt

to show and discuss the many messy complexities of the situation under study within their dense relations. In doing these messy maps, it reveals the messiness of social life, in a postmodern way (Clarke, 2005).

3.8.3.2. Social worlds/arenas maps

This is the second map, with the aim of presenting all the collective actors, key nonhuman components and the area(s) of commitment within the area they are involved in. These maps encourage a meso-level interpretation of the situation, engaging its social structures and institutional layers. They are postmodern in their assumptions, believing that boundaries are open, and negotiations are ongoing. The empirical question being 'who cares and what do they want to do about it?' (Clarke, 2005).

3.8.3.3. Positional Maps

This the third and final map and sets out the major positions taken and not taken within the data, particularly variations and differences as well as any controversy found within the situation. Positional maps are not populated by individuals or groups of people, instead aim to represent all the positions on a single issue within the situation allowing for contradictions from both individuals and collectives (Clarke, 2005).

3.8.4. Analysis - Coding and Mapping

As highlighted this thesis incorporated both constructionist grounded theory and situational analysis for the analysis of data. This link was somewhat sequential and simultaneous.

3.8.4.1. Preliminary stage

Prior to data collection I made links with four food aid charities in the North East. As highlighted above in Section 3.4.2 Sample, three of the four food aid charities had to close or change their services due to the pandemic and were either unable to support the research project or were deemed to be inappropriate. Once the ICFH hub was selected, two preliminary meetings between myself and the CEO of the food hub took place, these lasted 6 hours each, and were compiled of a walk around the two sites that the food hub was working from due to the increase demand for food banks. Within these two meetings, observations of the food hub, the workings and the interactions between food aid users and volunteers were observed, alongside the interaction between private donators and charity/schools/public

donators. I made notes of these observations, which provided more information regarding the types of questions to be asked to the food aid users. When safe to do so, following the national and regional lockdown guidance, I attend the food aid charity, to observe, and talk to volunteers, food aid users, donors and local council members regarding the food aid charity and the effect the pandemic was having on the food hub. Relationships between I and the volunteers/CEO/regular food aid user/regular food aid donors and local council members were made throughout this stage. Once food aid users became familiar with me, participants started to willingly engage with the research, and participate in audio-recorded interviews. Participants would be provided with a participant sheet and a consent form, prior to participating within the research, and the opportunity to ask any questions or to take time to discuss the research with family, friends, or members at the food aid hub.

3.8.4.2. Step 1

Once an interview had been collected, I digested the un-coded data, this was achieved through listening back the voice recording before I transcribed the data. This allowed me to have a 'feel' of the data before coding began. Once transcribing had been completed, CGT coding began, specifically line-by-line coding, followed by detailed memos. The memoing was focused on the codes and ideas of the codes. As more interviews were transcribed and coded this same way, a picture started to emerge regarding large codes and themes.

Through transcribing the data, I was allowed time for un-coded data to be digested fully before coding began. Line-by-line coding, also known as initial coding, allowed me the opportunity to examine the data in minute detail while at the same time asking questions about the data. These questions were set out by Glaser (1978), with Charmaz (2006) adding one more (Birks and Mills 2013):

1. 'What is this data a study of?'

2. 'What category does this incident indicate?'

3. 'What is actually happening in the data?'

4. 'From whose point of view?'

These questions allowed for an exploration into the data and initial codes generated. This interviewing, transcribing and initial line-by-line coding followed by memoing was repeated for the first four interviews, and made-up step 1 of the analysis process, before step 2 began.

3.8.4.3. Step 2

Step 2 began after the first 4 interviews had been collected, transcribed, initial coding and memoing had been completed. Once the initial codes were emerging, situational mapping began. The messy situational map allowed me to explore the human and nonhuman components within the situation being studied, as well as listing who was and what are in the situation, who and what matters in the situation and what elements make a difference within the situation. More relevant human, nonhuman, material, and discursive elements were added to the map, as they became known through the data collection and coding through CGT. This map followed by memoing allowed for an exploration into the different elements within the situation and the interaction between them. This map was updated as data was collected, with new ones being made, as elements were removed from the situation. This map appears messy but highlights the complexities within the situation. From the messy situational map formed and constantly edited as new information was available, a neat situational map was created, again this was edited as more information and data was available. Alongside this, six more interviews were conducted, transcribed, initial coded, and memoed following CGT as step 1 lays out, these codes and new data were placed on the messy and tidy situational map.

3.8.4.4. Step 3

Step 3 began after 10 interviews had been completed, and analysed through CGT, before the coded data was placed on both the messy and tidy situational maps. The codes from CGT became more focused and organised, with the smaller codes being grouped together, while exploring the codes through subsequent memoing, I was able to form preliminary categories and sub-categories. This was due to patterns emerging from the analysis.

The creation of the social world/arena maps allowed for me to probe deeper into the social worlds within the situation. Social worlds are groupings within the situation, that are distinctively collective. In this situation, there were several social worlds, one being the fresh food bank users, one being the volunteers, and another being parents accepting food aid help.

This map allowed for me to understand the shared perspectives from that specific social world, that form the basics of both individual and shared identities. Arenas are formed of multiple social worlds all committed to particular issues and prepared to act in some way in that area. Within arenas, topics are debated, negotiated, and sometimes fought about. One of the arenas within this situation was the ICFH. This map allowed for me to gain a meso-level interpretation of the situation, while visualising the human, non-human, organisation, and institutions that are present within the situation alongside the interaction between these social worlds within the arena. This map became more detailed as more data was generated regarding the relationships between the social worlds being more evident. Every mapping session ended with memoing. A further eight interviews were conducted and analysed following the CGT protocol outlined in step 1, this new coded data was then placed on both the messy and tidy situational map before being placed on both the social world and arena maps.

3.8.4.5. Step 4

Finally, as theoretical saturation was being reached, through the final four interviews being conducted, and coded as step 1 sets-out, before the coded data was placed on both the messy and tidy situational map, and the social worlds and arena maps. The preliminary categories and sub-categories became finalised themes. Once these final themes had emerged, and no new information was appearing within the data, interviews stopped. Alongside this SA's positional maps began; positional maps are the tools applied to the discursive material within the situation and analyse the discourses within the situation broadly conceived. Positional maps allowed me to determine the discourses within the situation, and how different social worlds, and individuals positioned themselves against the discourses. The prominent discourses found were the undeserving poor, the discourse of blame, scrounging, and needy vs greedy. Positional maps allowed for an exploration as the positions that food aid users placed on these discourses, how they distanced themselves from them, or how they would reproduce the discourse, often without knowledge of doing so.

Starting SA before fully completing CGT allowed for a greater understanding of the early codes and categories that were forming within the data, before mapping all human and nonhuman elements; it allowed me to have a better understanding of what human and nonhuman elements were important in the situation, and which were not. And mapping before

completing all interviews allowed me the ability to visualise the data and categories and themes. At each stage of the analysis process, memoing was followed, this allowed me to determine if more data was needed, and if the direction of the interview questions needed to change, to ensure theoretical saturation was reached. Maps were constantly edited, with new ones being created, edited, and changed, as the situation progressed and developed. This process continued until theoretical saturation was reached.

3.9. Ethics

Ethical approval was sought and obtained from the University of Sunderland's (ref. 006953) ethical committee to conduct the second part of the study (see Appendix E). Data was collected and stored in accordance with The Data Protection Act (UK Government 2018). A risk assessment was completed as part of the ethical application (see Appendix F), due to the nature of data collecting during COVID-19.

This research project followed the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Framework for Research Ethics (FRE) (ESRC, 2015) throughout the project. The FRE (ESRC, 2015) recognises six key principles for research to be ethical, and therefore are expected to be addressed. The first principle is that research participation is entirely voluntary, free from any undue influence, and participants rights and dignity are respected throughout. This project met this principle throughout the research project, ensuring that all participants were taking part voluntarily, and their dignity was always respected.

The second being that researchers need to maximise the benefit of the research and minimise any potential risk of harm to participants. Any potential risks and harm should be mitigated by precautions. Prior to data collection commencing, I performed a risk assessment, the potential risk the research would pose to the health of both participants and myself. Alongside this, I was aware of the very small potential of psychological discomfort the interview questions might have on participants. To mitigate this, I made participants aware of the types of questions that would be asked and the subsequent discussions when providing the information sheet and consent form, as well as highlighting that at any point the participant could request a break or to stop. Also, I produced a document that listed a series of contact details to local food banks, mental health support, LGBT, and crisis support, this was made available to any participants that required additional help.

The third principle of the FRE (ESRC, 2015) is that the researcher will provide participants with appropriate information about the purpose and intention of the research, what participation entails and the potential risks and benefits in a suitable time frame. I produced an information sheet for participants (Appendix B), alongside the consent form (Appendix C). The information sheet details the purpose of the research, what is required of the participants, if there is any risk and/or benefits of participating in the project, along with providing information as to the proposed outcome of the research. This information sheet was supplied to the participant before consent was given to participate and was retained by the participant for their records. It was a requirement of the study for all participants to read the information sheet before consent was given. Participants were encouraged to ask any questions regarding the project before providing consent. Participants were provided contact information to contact the me on, if they had any further questions throughout the length of the study.

The fourth principle states that participants anonymity should be respected as should the confidentiality of all participants personal information and data. Due to the nature of face-to-face or telephone interviews, personal details such as name etc were recorded on the consent form, however, when transcribing the interviews all interviews were anonymised, ensuring that all personal details were removed from the transcripts, resulting in no identifiable details being present within the analysis process. Alongside this, confidentiality is very important, I ensured that all information provided through data collection was treated confidential, ensuring that no one has access to the transcripts or voice recording of interviews, other than myself. I stored voice recordings and electronic transcripts on a secure hard drive that is password protected, and all printed transcripts, along with memoing, maps and signed consent forms were stored in a locked filling cabinet, where I was the only one with a key to access. No identifiable information will be present in any reports, publications, or this thesis.

The fifth principle states that standards of integrity of the research should be met alongside quality and transparency. This research project ensured transparency by disclosing that it was part of a PhD project, and that there was no funding or other involvement from outside organisations.

The final principle is the independence of the research should be clear, and any conflicts of interest should be explicit. Again, this research project had no conflicts of interest.

3.10.   Conclusion

This chapter has provided insight into the methodologies chosen by me to answer the research questions and aims outline in the chapter. This chapter has shown that constructivist research paradigm has been selected due to the nature of the research questions and objectives, by which a constructivist approach will ensure that the correct methodological design would be selected. The chapter then detailed the differences between inductive and deductive reasoning before showcasing that in this research study both deductive and abductive reasoning is utilised, which is in-line with the two analysis techniques selected. Theoretical sampling will be utilised due to its use in both research analysis techniques and methods, alongside in-depth semi-structured interviews.

Two second generational grounded theory methods have been selected for this research project, the first being constructionist grounded theory, and the second being situational analysis, both these two methods complement each other well, and allow for an in-depth analysis of data collected. The five-step process used to analyse the data using both CGT and SA have been outlined above in this chapter.

This chapter also explores the ethical framework that was used throughout this study, alongside gaining ethical approval from the University of Sunderland's ethics committee.

4. Critical Discourse Analysis

Research has previously looked at the reproduction and challenging of discourses within media and social media (Tihelkova, 2015; Garthwaite, 2011; Morrison, 2019). Due to the rise of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the government's actions to limit the spread of the virus, national lockdowns were enforced (Institute for Government, 2021). This resulted in panic buying of food and household items, children staying home from school, and all non-essential businesses closed, with those who can do so, working from home. During the time it was reported that there was an increase in people unable to source food due to a host of reasons, those being newly found in unemployment, food shortages, or an increase in the number of meals needed to cook (due to children being at home), this saw an increase in the demand for a food parcel from food aid charities all over the country (Baraniuk, 2020).

Negative food insecurity and poverty discourses have long been seen within British media and social media, often depicting food aid users as 'scrounging', 'lazy' and 'workshy' (Price et al., 2020; Tihelkova, 2015; Patrick, 2016), claiming that these individuals live a life of luxury at the taxpayers' expense. These damaging discourses are seen throughout media, ensuring that food aid users are unable to distance themselves from this negative image. During the rise of the pandemic, amidst the national lockdowns, more and more individuals were relying on food parcels, (Loopstra, 2020; Loopstra et al., 2020; Connors et al., 2020) often individuals who had not previously required or used a food aid charity. These discourses are rooted in neoliberalism ideology and strengthened by the austerity measures implemented within the UK (Wiggan, 2012). The food insecurity narrative, and in general the poverty narrative has long been controlled by the media (van Dijk, 1995b), typically the right-wing press, that further root themselves within the neoliberal ideas.

The main discourses seen in previous studies have been centred on 'scroungers' (Garthwaite, 2011; Howe, 1998; Morrison, 2019; Patrick, 2016; Price et al; 2020; Tihelkova, 2015) and an idea of a 'them and us' divide, also known as othering (Douglas et al., 2015; Pemberton et al., 2015; Chase and Walker, 2013). This study attempts to perform a critical discourses analysis of British press to determine the discourses present; and how, if at all, they changed during the early months of COVID-19 pandemic, leading to the announcement of the first national lockdown.

4.1. Neoliberalism and the poor

Neoliberalism has shaped and structured poverty in the UK through its treatment of the poor (Long et al., 2020). Neoliberalism argues that those living in poverty can remove themselves from poverty via the open market (Katz, 2013). This thinking rejects some theories regarding poverty and views the poor as equal to all other people in society. This thinking believes that everyone, including the poor, are to make market-based decisions that will improve their lives, and that the poor do not take responsibility of their lives. For example, the scrounger discourse, or the idea of deviant lazy individuals spending their welfare money on nice TV's and shoes before asking for a food parcel from a foodbank (Schram, 2015).

Some have argued that there are direct links between neoliberalism and austerity (Allen et al., 2015; Jensen 2012; Gill and De Benedicts, 2016). Allen et al. (2015) stated that the objectives of austerity align nicely with those of neoliberalism, such as the reduction of the state's role to reallocate finances, wealth, and power from labour to capital. Britain has seen large changes to the socioeconomic setting under the pretence that austerity measures are required to help the country out of the recession. However, it has been seen to have increased social inequality, with the changes to the welfare state, punitive benefit sanctions, and cuts to the state organised services, resulting in the rise of foodbank usage, homelessness and deprivation (Barr et al., 2015; Dowler, 2014; Dowler and Lambie-Mumford, 2015; Jenkins et al., 2015; Lambie-Mumford and Green, 2017; Loopstra et al., 2014; Loopstra et al., 2015a; Gill and De Benedicts, 2016; O'Hara, 2014; Strong, 2019; Strong 2021). Jensen and Tyler (2012) state that the 'public narrative of austerity' increasingly upholds the idea of the individuals being solely responsible for their own socioeconomic status, and accountable for their increasing independence from the state.

4.2. Current neoliberal discourses

Neoliberal discourses are understood widely as social usages of language and acts of communication that shape our understanding (della Faille, 2015). The discourses that are currently prominent within the poverty narrative are heavily focused around the right-wing neoliberal idea. These discourses are centred around the idea of the 'undeserving' and 'deserving' poor, that individuals are to blame for their hardships and that those reaching out for help are in fact scroungers and workshy or lazy (Romano, 2015; Kingston and Webster, 2015; Chunn and Gavigan, 2004; Garthwaite, 2011; Morrison, 2019; Harms Smith, 2017; van

der Bom et al., 2018). These three discourses are reproduced daily in the media, by politicians, social media, and academic organisations (Wells and Caraher, 2014; Morrison, 2019; Brooker et al., 2015; van der Bom et al., 2018).

One of the most durable poverty-related discourses has been the 'undeserving and deserving poor' which has dominated the social and political debate for years (Tihelkova, 2015). The English system of welfare, going back to the Elizabethan Poor Laws, has relied almost entirely on separating the 'underserving' poor from the 'deserving' poor, in terms of their 'eligibility' for support (Shildrick, 2012). In the UK, popular representations of the welfare 'scrounger' have for a long time been influential in the formulation of policy in state welfare systems (Howe, 1998). While the scroungers discourse is very much compounded by terms such as 'dependency', 'workshy' and 'unwilling', these terms are strongly associated with those who receive sickness benefits, or welfare benefits. Linking with the 'undeserving' and 'deserving' poor where people are labelled workless or 'undeserving' if they do not seek paid employment, regardless of the type and amount of work that is available (Gaithwaite, 2011). However, the 'deserving' poor are seen as those who do actively try to find work and see it as their responsibility to society. News media outlets continue to produce headlines vilifying the 'workshy', 'cheats', 'scroungers', and 'lazy' benefit recipients and foodbank users, continuing to reproduce this negative neoliberal discourse (van der Bom et al., 2018; Dorling, 2014; Morrison, 2019; O'Hara, 2014). While placing blame onto the benefit recipient or foodbank user allows for greater stigmatisation of these groups of people. Many British people believe that the poor are partly, if not solely to blame for their poverty levels (Shildrick and MacDonald, 2013). Many of the poorest in the UK are subjected to negative assumptions that they are to blame, due to poor lifestyle choices, their inability to cook, or budget, laziness, or a moral deficiency. With individuals being blamed for their poverty, they therefore become subjected to condemnation rather than compassion (O'Hara, 2014; Shildrick and MacDonald, 2013). People are often labelled poor, underclass or undeserving, and in doing so allows for the construction of a 'them' and an 'us' discourse within the poverty narrative (Bottero, 2005:24; Cannadine, 1998:19-20). These negative discourses have undoubtedly been reproduced and reinforced through national media coverage alongside social media and TV programmes that depict the poor as having character flaws, highlighting anti-social behaviour,

chaotic lifestyles, dysfunctional family relationships, alcohol and drug abuse, gang culture, vandalism, and widespread welfare dependency (Jensen, 2014).

4.3. Background Sociological Theory

In recent decades, the idea of discourse has become increasingly popular. It has been applied in many contexts and research disciplines (Rasinski, 2011). Although employed and used differently by different theorists, the word discourse is commonly used to signify the systems of cultural practices, symbolic representations, knowledge and 'common senses' that may produce a framework of what can be said and by whom, within precise contexts of social communications, not just specific speech, or text (Tew, 2002). Discourses may construct ways of thinking or seeing that are right, compared to those that are considered wrong within that cultural space (Tew, 2002). All discourses have the potential to situate people in particular power relationships to one another, or to specific institutions.

4.3.1. Structuralism and de Saussure

It is argued that Ferdinand de Saussure is one of the most influential figures within linguistics, and the founder of structuralism (Al Umma, 2015). Structuralism in linguistics was focused on synchronic or diachronic linguistics, de Saussure began by distinguishing between the two, the former perspective considers language as a system of related terms without reference to time, while the latter refers to the evolutionary development of language over time (Howarth, 2002; Al Umma, 2015).

Throughout de Saussure's work he stresses the role social systems play in the understanding of societies and places an emphasis on the shared systems of signs which make up natural languages (Phillips, 2005; Howarth, 2000; Bouissac, 2010). Forms of communication, including words and symbols require a set of norms and rules that humans learn and internalise (de Saussure, 1972; Phillips, 2005; Bouissac, 2010). In one of his key texts *Course in general linguistics,* de Saussure provides a distinct difference between Langue and Parole. Language is a system of signs, which he calls langue, which consist of the appropriate linguistic rules that the speakers of language must observe to if they are to communicate appropriately (de Saussure, 1972; Phillips, 2005). This is drastically different to that of speech, or parole, as de Saussure calls it, which refers to individual acts of speaking (Howarth, 2000; Fairclough, 2001). In providing a distinguishable difference between language and speech, de Saussure

was able to separate what was social and what was individual, what was essential from that of accessory. Each use of the language is only possible if both the speakers and authors share a fundamental system of language (Howarth, 2000).

The basic elements of a language for de Saussure are signs. Signs unite a sound-image, known as signifier with a concept, known as signified (Howarth, 2000). Ferdinand de Saussure (1972) theorised that language can be seen as a code, with meanings constructed within the systems of other already existing meanings (Tew, 2002). In *Course in General Linguistics*, de Saussure provided rationale for the difference between signifiers (sounds, images, written words and symbols) and the signified, which he defined as entities that exist outside language to which certain signifiers refer to (Tew, 2002; Howarth, 2000). de Saussure believed that the link between signifier and signified is subjective, with the signified having no fixed signifying element attached to it, therefore no one can assume a pre-determined image (Rasinski, 2011). He recommended that the meaning of a specific signifier may be constructed regarding how it is different from all other possible signifiers with a precise linguistic code of signifiers; rather than from its relation to an object external to linguistic structures (Tew, 2002), and that significance and implication occur completely within the system of language itself (Howarth, 2000).

This new way of thinking provides a basis for overturning the modernist thinking that signifiers, both linguistics or cultural symbols are to have direct and linear relationships with the signified (Tew, 2002). Within modernist thought, it is believed that the signified exists already and that meanings have been associated with it independently, and that the word or symbol used by the author seeks to communicate the signified as precisely as conceivable (Tew, 2002). While structuralism has made an important contribution to our understanding of language and social systems. However, there are several problems with the classical structuralist model. By stressing the way social systems determine social meaning, it risks replacing the humanism of existing approaches with a new form of essentialism founded on the importance of a still and whole structure. The assumption makes it difficult to provide a sufficient account of the history of social systems, as well as the role of social actors in bringing such change about (Howarth, 2000).

4.3.2. Post-structuralism and Derrida

The move from structuralism to post-structuralism saw a shift in the examination of things-in-themselves to a study of things-in-relation-to-other-things (Howarth, 2000). De Saussure suggested that language can be comprehended as a code in which meanings are constructed in relation to the systems of other existing meanings and association, while within post-structuralism, Derrida (1976) began deconstructing texts. Developing on de Saussure's linguistic analysis, he scrutinised the meanings essential in texts, not in terms of their hypothetical relationships to objects outside of the text, but instead an internal analysis of the text itself (Bagiu, 2009), how meanings were constructed because of the interaction of differences within the structures of the text (Howarth, 2000).

Deconstruction, which has attained widespread recognition (Sarup, 1993), is essentially post-phenomenological and post-structuralist. The leading figure within contemporary deconstruction is Jacques Derrida (Sarup, 1993). Derrida's view of language believes that the signifier is not directly related to the signified. However, in de Saussure's thinking a sign is seen as a union, while Derrida views the word and thing never become one. He sees the sign as a structure: half of it is always 'not there' and the other is always 'not that' (Bagiu, 2009). Believing that the signifiers and the signified are always breaking apart and reattaching in new combinations, while de Saussure's thinking of the sign, is that the signifier and signified are two sides of the same sheet of paper (Sarup, 1993).

Derrida's approach critiqued 'binary oppositions' within structural linguistics, arguing that these oppositions comprise of a privileged principle, an 'inside' and an excluded principle an 'outside' (Bagiu, 2009; Sarup, 1993). He examined the modernist assumption that such words 'centre' importance. Instead, he argued that the value and implication of each of these terms was fundamentally uneven. Each word has no meaning of its own, only in relation to its differences from a different and opposite word, resulting in the meaning of these words not being fixed, but connected to a chain or other related words.

4.3.3. Foucault and Discourse

Discourse plays a key role in each of the different parts of Foucault's work; however, the concept remains somewhat unclear. Foucault perceives discourse regarding bodies of knowledge, with this concept moving away from it being linked to language in the sense of a

linguistic system, and instead towards the concept of discipline (O'Farrell, 2005; McHoul and Grace, 1993). At one end, discourses are independent structures of rules that incorporate concepts, subjects, objects, and strategies, therefore leading the manufacturing of scientific statements (Fairclough, 2001). At the other end of the extreme, and against the constructive view of discourse, Foucault argues that discourses are 'tactical elements of blocks operating the field or force relations' (Foucault, 1976). In The Archaeology of Knowledge, Foucault (1969) defines 'discourse' as a certain way of speaking, while also using it to describe 'the group of statements that belong to a single system of formation of knowledge'. Examples being 'clinical discourse, economic discourse, the discourse of natural history, psychiatric discourse' (Foucault, 1969 pp107-8)

The relationship between people and their experiences includes numerous social and cultural areas, such as education, politics, and science. Each area then places rules and processes, and assigns characters and positions, while regulating behaviour and speech. The roles within the area precede the individuals who occupy the roles, therefore a position within an area; the individual enters into, the procedures which control what happens within the area, and their identity is shaped by the operations of the specific area (Danaher, Schirato and Webb, 2000). Discourse can be seen to be the way in which the area 'speaks' of itself and plays a central role in the operation of the area. When mapping a discursive area, Foucault wants to trace where particular instances of discourse have occurred, to make influences between these occurrences, and to bring them together to recognise a specific discursive development (Danaher, Schirato, and Webb, 2000). Foucault believes that discourses are made up of statements, that share a space and establish context, but can be removed and substituted by other statements (Danaher, Schirato, and Webb, 2000).

Foucault also thinks of discourse in relation to bodies of knowledge. His use of the concept discourse moves away from the linguistic approach previously associated with the term, and towards the concept of discipline and power (McHoul and Grace, 1993). Foucault believes that power is inscribed into the discourses, not outside of them. Discourse is not simply what masks power, but the thing in which there is a struggle. Discourse is the power which is to be appropriated (Purvis and Hunt, 1993). Foucault's use of the term 'discourse' refers to areas of social knowledge and not to language or social communication. According to Foucault's thinking, in any given historical period, we can speak, think or write about a given social object

only in certain specific ways and not others. A discourse would be what enables the thinking, speaking, and writing but also what also constrains it (O'Farrell, 2005; McHoul and Grace, 1993; Howarth, 2002). Foucault believed that the rules that dictate statements are not purely linguistic in nature, nor are they solely material. Believing that in fact, the two domains are connected. Foucault believes that discourses always function in relation to power, which is why it is important to understand his theory of power to fully understand his thinking of discourse (Miller, 1990; Purvis and Hunt, 1993). Foucault's theory of power differs from traditional socio-political thinking of power, believing that discourse is not merely an effect of pre-existing power, while also believing that power is not 'owned' by a privileged group and exerted over those who do not have it (McHoul and Grace, 1993).

In the Archaeology of Knowledge, Foucault develops categories to organise discourses and the wider relationship to other practices, events, and objects; the most known and used is the term 'discursive practice' (O'Farrell, 2005). Foucault (1969) explains 'discursive practice' as 'to speak is to do something'. O'Farrell (2005) goes onto explain that discursive practices operate according to rules which are specific to the particular time, space and cultural settings. It is not a matter of external willpowers being imposed on people's thought, rather it is a matter of rules which allow for certain statements to be made.

4.3.4. Discourse within Society

Fairclough (2001) views discourse as 'language as a form of social practice', meaning that language is a part of society and rooted within society, and therefore not external to it, that language is a social process and finally language is socially conditioned by other, non-linguistic, parts of society. Fairclough holds the view that the relationship between language and society are internal, and not an external relationship (Fairclough, 2001:19). His belief is that language is part of society, that social phenomena is part linguistic phenomena and vice versa. Linguistic phenomena are social because when people listen and speak, or write and read, they do so in ways that have been predetermined socially, and therefore have social effects. Whereas social phenomena are linguistic because the activity of language takes place in social contexts and is not merely a reflection of the social processes and practice, it is ingrained within the processes and practices. Fairclough even argues that a symmetrical relationship between language and society as equals does not exist, that society is a whole, while language is just one factor within the social.

Fairclough believes that language is a social process (Fairclough, 2001), theorising that the term 'text' refers to both written and spoken forms; with spoken text being simply what is said in a piece of spoken discourse, this thought originating with linguist Michal Halliday. Text is a product as opposed to a process, a product of the process of text production. The expression discourse is used by Fairclough to refer to the entire process of social communication, of which a text is just a small part. Fairclough's belief that language is conditioned by other, non-linguistic, parts of society, and that people create and understand a variety of texts cognitively. However, this has a social sense and social origins because their cognition is socially created, and their nature is therefore reliant on social relations and struggles out of which cognition was produced, but also socially transmitted and in most societies, this is also unequally distributed.

4.3.5. Power in and behind discourse

Within a critical discourse analysis (CDA), power and power abuse are of specific relevance (van Dijk, 1995a; van Dijk, 2001). Although power relations between individuals are discursively created, expressed, and reproduced by the discourse; CDA is specifically interested in social power relations between groups, organisations, and institutions (van Dijk, 2014). Discourse is a form of action and power may be exercised by controlling the discourse (Miller, 1990). This could be via several structures of context, including the setting, the participants, social acts, and their interactions as well as knowledge, or even through more specific structures of text. To be able to exert such power, people need a power basis, which can either be physical or symbolic (Foucault, 1984). Every social group will be characterised by its structures, its relationships to other groups, the members characteristics, but also the absence of power. A group can be defined by the terms of access to and control of the public discourse, examples being; journalists have access to the creation of news, politicians have access to parliamentary debates, and academics have access to the manufacturing of academic discourse, whereas many people within society have only passive access to these systems of discourse production (van Dijk, 1995b; Fairclough, 2001).

One of the most prominent ways in which power is within discourse, is through influential members controlling and compelling the contributions of the non-powerful individuals (Fairclough, 2001); this is primarily done through face-to-face discourse. There are three types of constraints (Fairclough, 2001). The first is contents, constraining what is being said, the

second is relations, constraining the social relations people enter into in discourse, and finally subject, constraining the positions on a subject that people occupy (Fairclough, 2001). However, it is vital to note that there is another form of discourse, in which the participants are separated in time and place, an example being mass media within contemporary society. The nature of the discourse in mass media is often hidden, this is due to it being very one-sided. Whereas in face-to-face interactions the individuals alternate between being the producers and the interpreters of the text, in relation to mass media, there is a sharp contrast between the producers and the interpreters, who are deemed as consumers. Mass media is produced for mass audiences, although discourse producers need to produce discourse with some interpreters in mind, therefore media producers address an ideal subject, and produce the text and discourse to that ideal individual (Fairclough, 2001).

Whereas power behind discourse is focused on the idea that the whole social order of discourse is put together and held together as a hidden effect of power. Powerful participants can exercise power over other less powerful individuals within situations based on this specific discourse type. Power behind discourse is the power that aids in the discourse being imposed upon all people. The power behind the conventions of a discourse type belong to the institution but to those who hold power within the institution. Another aspect is who has access to the discourse types and who has the power to enforce and apply constraints on access. This can be seen through the idea of free speech, that people are able to say what they want, when in fact there are a number of constraints on access to various sorts of speech and writings. These lead onto the more universal restraints on social practice, on access to the more limited social institutions.

4.4. Methods

Fairclough's critical discourse analysis was used to perform the CDA in this occurrence (Fairclough, 1995).

4.4.1. Corpus Specifics

Prior to starting the CDA, the specific corpus was identified and selected (Hoepfiner, 2006; Janks, 1997). It was decided that the corpus would be made up of daily newspapers, as they would have more up-to-date articles issued on a daily basis. Using statistical information (Statista, 2021a) to guide the decision of which newspapers would be included in this analysis.

Representation of both broadsheets and tabloids and left and right politically aligned papers would be selected, to ensure that a wide perspective would be analysed. Statistical information regarding the number of monthly readers online was used to determine the papers. The two broadsheets selected were The Guardian, a left-leaning paper with an average of 24,170 monthly online readers between January 2019 and December 2019 (Statista, 2021b), and The Telegraph, a right-leaning paper with an average of 21,464 monthly online readers between January 2019 and December 2019 (Statista, 2021c), due to the very similar reach. The two tabloids selected were The Mirror, a left-leaning paper with an average of 29,062 monthly online readers between January 2019 and December 2019 (Statista, 2021d), and The Daily Mail, a right-leaning paper with an average of 28,081 monthly online readers between January 2019 and December 2019 (Statista, 2021e) again, due to the similar reach.

4.4.2. Search Techniques

All four papers had online websites containing their articles, this is where the search took place. Using www.theguardian.co.uk; www.telegraph.co.uk; www.mirror.co.uk; www.dailymail.co.uk. Parameters were identified before the searches, to determine the suitability of the articles found.

All the articles that were chosen had to be available online. Articles had to be written and published online between the 1st January 2020 and the 31st March 2020. Specific search terms used: 'foodbanks', 'food poverty', 'food insecurity', 'hunger', 'undeserving poor' and 'deserving poor'. These search terms were used on all four websites listed above. A list was compiled. These articles were then narrowed down further, to only articles that were also relevant to the topic of the thesis; this resulted in 41 articles. Three articles were removed due to their suitability and relevance to the key themes of the thesis. Meaning a total of 38 articles were analysed in this CDA.

4.4.3. Analysis process

The analysis process followed was Fairclough's CDA mode (Fairclough, 1995, p.98).

Stage 1: determining words and phrases that disclose the attitudes of the text. What tone is suggested? Does the text include or exclude any readers or communities? Are there any

assumptions made about the text? Any borrowed language via quotes or statistics? (Fairclough, 1995)

Stage 2: determine how the text has been produced. Identify and interpret the historical cultural and political context the text was produced within, as well as that of the author and format. Who has access to the text? (Fairclough, 1995)

Stage 3: what discourses are related to the text? Determine the ways in which the text reveals the traditions of a culture? Examine if norms are held by a culture? (Fairclough, 1995)

Answering these questions helped outline the analysis method.

4.5. Analysis

4.5.1. Social Context

There were several historical, political, and social events that were taking place between 1st January 2020 and 31st March 2020. These would inevitably influence the articles that were being published by the British newspapers at the time. Two key political and social events that were taking place were Brexit – the UK leaving the EU, and COVID-19 – the global pandemic.

The EU Brexit referendum took place on the 23rd June 2016, with 51.9% of voters voting Leave (Electoral Commission UK, 2019), which resulted in the UK initiating plans to withdraw from the EU. In January 2020 the House of Commons voted 330-231 to pass the Withdrawal Agreement Bill (www.parliament.uk, 2020) authorising the country's departure from the EU at the end of January 2020. The EU Withdrawal Agreement Bill passed the House of Lords and was given the Royal Assent in the UK, formally making the bill law. The UK formally left the EU on January 31st at 23:00 (BBC News, 2020b), with March seeing the beginning of the UK and EU post-Brexit trade talks.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) declared a global emergency on the 30th January, a rare designation that helps the international agency mobilise financial and political support to contain the virus (WHO, 2020a). The UK confirmed its first case of COVID-19 on 31st January 2020 with February seeing the first COVID-19 death within Europe, as well as the first confirmed cases in both Wales and Ireland. March saw the first confirmed case in Scotland, while England experienced its first COVID-19 death. Fear of the virus resulted in mass panic stockpiling of groceries, causing stores, such as Tesco, having to restrict the sale of essential

food and household items (BBC News, 2020c). Italy was the first European country to announce a nationwide lockdown, while the WHO officially declared the COVID-19 outbreak a pandemic. The UK government placed the UK on a lockdown, because of the increase in infections and deaths, with the closing of all non-essential shops, schools, restaurants, gyms, bars, and pubs (The Guardian, 2020). The government also introduced the Coronavirus Bill 2019-21, which would grant the government extensive discretionary emergency powers in managing the COVID-19 pandemic.

4.5.2. Broadsheets (The Guardian and The Telegraph)

The Guardian consistently used borrowed language, in the form of quotes, from a wide range of sources, including specialised leaders within their fields, CEO's, MPs, and volunteers. However, two articles were opinion pieces and contained no borrowed language. All bar one article had selected some form of data or statistics to inform their argument, and these came from a variety of respected sources. In general, the language used was positive, while some contained a worrying undertone, which could be explained by the cultural context. Paragraphs were well formed, with well-formed sentences.

The Telegraph produced less papers to analyse compared to the Guardian, and therefore had less text to describe, however these papers used borrowed language, also from a range of sources, including the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF), CEO's of charities, and a PhD student. The language was generally positive in all articles, with many of them attempting to educate the reader on a particular matter, there was very limited text that was not borrowed or paraphrased. The articles were well structured and consisted of well-formed sentences and paragraphs.

4.5.3. Tabloids (The Daily Mail and The Daily Mirror)

The Daily Mirror consistently borrowed language from a range of sources, including MP's, volunteers of charities, CEOs, and in one case a father. The source of the quotes was always detailed within the article, although it was not always known if the sources were via online social media or an in-person quote. Statistics were also employed throughout the articles, however not always referenced. When looking at the writing style it was predominately positive in nature, especially towards individuals who had been negatively impacted by the social welfare system. Harsh language was used to paint an image to the reader '*families*

without a penny to their name' and *'desperate families'*, who were waiting 6 weeks for a Universal Credit (UC) payment, and *'Dad on universal credit 'forced to pawn son's PlayStation games to feed family''.* This language was used to employ empathy towards these individuals and anger towards the situation that they found themselves in. Negative language was also noted when referring to the conservative party, using shortened terms such as 'tory' and 'torys'. The language used was far simpler than that of the broadsheets, with most paragraphs being made of one sentence, however this allowed for a quicker read.

The Daily Mail again used borrowed language, although it is noted that this paper produced a higher number of opinion pieces than the other papers, and in the opinion pieces there was no borrowed language. There was also a proportionately higher number of articles regarding 'public figures', such as footballers, singers, and social media influencers; in all cases all of the borrowed language was taken from their social media, their own website or from another newspaper, and not from the source itself. Throughout the articles, both positive and negative language was used in equal parts, with the opinion pieces tending to be heavily negative towards an issue, this was either Sir Michael Marmot *'Life expectancy is NOT falling because of austerity. It's just that we're getting fatter – and can't live forever'*, or the London Assembly and the Mayor of London. However, the articles regarding public figures, were all positive towards them and the actions that they were undertaking *'Scarlett Moffatt kindly donates to a food bank after previously offering to buy shopping for the elderly in her area amid the coronavirus crisis'*. In all the articles simple language was used, similar to that of the Daily Mirror, again the small paragraphs were made up of very short sentences.

4.5.4. Neoliberal discourses

Within this CDA the three key neoliberal discourses were found, these being: 1. The neoliberal discourse of blame; 2. The undeserving and deserving poor discourse and 3. The scrounger discourse.

4.5.4.1. Neoliberal Discourse of Blame

The neoliberal discourse of blame, as discussed previously, has been centred around the idea that those in poverty are there because of a moral or character flaw; this results in their lifestyle choices being scrutinised by the media, social media, and TV programmes. Lifestyle

choices are bought into question, such as their ability to cook, to budget, their owning of 'luxury' goods, anti-social behaviour, chaotic lives, and dysfunctional family relationships.

4.5.4.2. 'Undeserving and deserving poor' Discourse

The 'undeserving' and 'deserving' poor discourse is generally centred around dividing those in poverty into two categories. Those who are deserving of help, and those who are undeserving of help. In doing this, it allows for more harsh media reporting around those who have been deemed 'undeserving' and creating a stigma associated with welfare benefits and food bank use. This produces room for unfair treatment of those who are deemed 'undeserving', by media and society.

4.5.4.3. The Scrounger Discourse

The scrounger discourse is strongly linked with the 'undeserving' and 'deserving' poor discourse. However, the scrounger discourse is centred more around the character and moral flaws of the individuals. Calling into question if they are in genuine need of help. Questions around whether they are 'lazy' or 'workshy' because they claim welfare benefits, or sickness benefits.

4.6. Findings

Please see Appendix G, to correspond the number of the quote to the article.

4.6.1. Challenging the discourse

The key discourse that came to light during the analysis was the 'underserving and deserving poor' discourse. Discourses within media can either be challenged or reproduced, in this case this discourse was heavily challenged, and was done so via several ways. The discourse was either challenged or redefined in three key ways:

The first way the discourse was challenged was by redefining and reframing who was seen as being 'deserving' by the media, this included highlighting individuals who had never had to use or rely on a food bank before, as well as highlighting 'real voices' from food banks.

The second way was via raising counter arguments to the dominant right wing neoliberal narrative

Finally, by highlighting the generosity of the communities, including public figures, sports teams and players, and national supermarkets.

4.6.1.1. Reframing who is seen as 'deserving'

Between 1st January 2020 and 31st March 2020, saw the beginning of the 'undeserving poor' discourse being reframed by the media. This was done in several different articles, that brought to attention those that had previously been deemed 'undeserving' now in fact being deemed 'deserving', through providing arguments to their need of being deserving.

With articles stating, *'Desperate families are arriving at Britain's food banks hungry after going days without eating' (10*), emphasising the word 'families' to conjure empathy towards children going hungry, and the guilt felt by parents who are unable to provide their children with sustenance. This article goes onto state *'More than third of all food voucher recipients last year in Plymouth were kids from hard-up homes…'.* Providing statistical evidence to back their claims, this was to re-emphasise the number of children going hungry, in the year 2020, the year that it was vowed would be the end of child poverty.

Another article with the headline '*Testing times for students: food banks open at universities'* (20), goes onto state how one particular university has opened a food bank within the Students Union (SU) to aid students who are financially struggling. The article goes onto state that *'With the coronavirus outbreak making students even more financial vulnerable, the service has become more important than ever…'.* Due to university students part-time work typically being within restaurants and bars, which was seen to be a vulnerable sector, due to the looming announcement of the national lockdown. The article continues with the use of statistics to highlight that maintenance loans do not provide enough income.

An article that was specific to universal credit and coronavirus, reframed the discourse by stating *'The Department for Work and Pensions said on Wednesday 477,000 people had applied for the benefit in the past nine days…' (41*). That is 477,000 people that had previously not needed or required any government welfare to support themselves, or their families. The article goes on to state '*of the 230,000 people who applied for universal credit last week, 70,000 asked for an advance to deal with immediate cashflow problems'.* This again highlighting not only the increased demand in the welfare required by individuals, but that 70,000 of them were in a complete crisis, to request the advance on payment. By producing an article like this showcases why the UK has a welfare system to help those who are in need and are unable to support themselves.

These articles helped to challenge the 'undeserving' discourse by reframing those who were deemed deserving in the media, therefore providing positive representation of those needing UC or a food parcel. By highlighting the number of people who had to seek welfare support, new applicants, people who had not previously sought financial support. Also, articles stating the increased demand that food banks were under, as an increase was felt by them as well, which again shows that people who hadn't previously required help with food were now seeking help. In doing this, not only were the articles helping to reframe those needing help as being deserving, but also highlighting how many people were being negatively affected by the national lockdowns, and the uncertainty regarding their employment. It highlighted the need for a robust welfare system within the UK, to help those who find themselves in difficult times, and that everyone who does so should be deemed deserving of the help that they receive as opposed to being undeserving.

4.6.1.2. Counter arguments to the right-wing neoliberal narrative

During the first three months of 2020, with the rise of COVID-19, with Brexit being finalised, and the beginning of the trade talks with the EU, the neoliberal right-wing narrative around poverty was still being expressed. Through several articles published, counter arguments to the dominant narrative were expressed, in order to help change the poverty narrative that was being reported in the press.

With headlines such as '*Tory DWP Chief says food banks are 'perfect way' to help the poor'* (3), it can be seen that, some articles aimed to change the neoliberal poverty narrative. This article goes onto state that Work and Pensions Secretary Therese Coffey is directly quoted as saying *'Marrying the two is the perfect way to try to address the challenges that people face at difficult times in their lives',* when questioned why there was more food banks than McDonalds in the UK. The dominant narrative focused on food banks being a negative organisation, ensuring that individuals who used them were lazy, and that society having food banks in fact increased reliance on them. Here the DWP chief was seen as stating that food banks are in fact the 'perfect' way to help the poor, while some may argue providing those living in poverty with more income would help them, this paper choose to instead highlight the Chief stating that there was a need for food banks, and that they help those living in poverty. Another article had a subheading that read '*Councillor Mike Bird, leader of Walsall's ruling Conservative administration, said that the cause of food poverty in parts of the district*

were caused by families having children they couldn't afford' (11). However, this article goes onto to state '*while it is difficult to judge without local statistics, the average number of children UK couples have has continued to fall over the past decade.'* Before then using statistics to bolster their counter-narrative argument, '*The number of emergency food parcels handed out by the Trussell Trust – the country's largest food bank operator – has increased by 73% in just the last five years'.* Showing with the use of statistics that what was reported as being said was not factually correct, with the number of children reducing and the number of food parcels being distributed increasing. The Daily Mirror continues to fight this poverty narrative in another article, by stating '*our Give Me Five campaign wants an immediate increase in child benefit – a move that would lift 200,000 children out of destitution. We also want the Government to restore child tax credits, to scrap the two-child limit and to axe the benefit cap'* (27). Using their platform, the paper was able to highlight their belief in the need for policy changes, specifically in order to aid the children who are most deprived living within the UK.

Several articles using borrowed language from chief executives and directors of food aid charities within the UK, were used to help change the narrative and ultimately challenge the discourse. Anna Taylor, director of the Food Foundation was quoted as saying '*we need a food aid task force, led by a single minister, to conduct a comprehensive assessment of need and coordinate across government, with local authorities, businesses and charities to deliver the right package of food and financial assistance' (*23). The article goes on to paraphrase Anna Taylor by stating '*the problem could not be solved by the voluntary sector alone and called on the government to coordinate emergency food aid immediately'.* Emphasising that the charity sector does not have the means to help support the growing numbers of individuals seeking help but calls for the government to step forward and aid in supporting the communities. Following this a different article is directly quoting Emma Revie, the chief executive of the Trussell Trust '*food banks are an essential community service'* (19), before stating that the government needs to do more, '*Our benefits system should be a life raft in times of crisis'.* While another article was written by Emma Revie for The Guardian, where she states that food banks are resilient, and that they will continue to provide the lifeline of emergency food for those in need '*we face logistical challenges of getting food to the thousands of people who need it most if the country goes into lockdown, as well as concerns around donation levels'*

(5). Before she continues '*However, many thousands of people have faced significant issues, waiting five weeks for a first payment, with no money for essentials'.* When talking about Universal Credit and the wait people are currently having to endure before a first payment is received.

4.6.1.3. Generosity of communities

During the Coronavirus pandemic, it was seen that there were large amounts of panic buying and stock piling of food and home essentials across the country. It was seen within the media, that this was having a knock-on effect on some communities, those being the elderly, the frontline staff who were working, those who were unable to go to several stores to purchase the necessities they were after, or unable to afford to buy the more expensive brands, and foodbanks who rely heavily on the generosity of those in the community to support those most at need within the community. It was reported that people were having to travel to numerous supermarkets and stores to get the food needed, while supermarkets implemented a restriction on the number of the same item that could be purchased, which impacted larger families, or people who were shopping for friends or family members who were isolating.

The Daily Mirror, The Daily Mail and The Guardian all produced articles that challenged the 'undeserving poor' discourse by highlighting the generosity of public figures and large retail stores. It was seen that Morrisons was going to donate £10 Million worth of produce to food banks '*to help restock the nation's foodbanks'* (31). The article goes onto state '*we know food banks are finding life very difficult and running our manufacturing sites for an extra hour each day to help restock them is the right decision at this time'* – a direct quote from Morrisons Chief executive David Potts. Morrisons wasn't the only retail store to offer help, as quoted in the same article '*Co-op has announced it will be donating £1.5million worth of food to FareShare…. And B&M said it would make each of its 650 stores donate £1,500 of essentials to their nearest food banks too'.* This story was also covered by another paper which quoted '*The UK's food banks have been struggling to meet demand at a time when the number of volunteers, typically older people, has slumped because of self-isolation. It is estimated that the outbreak of Covid-19 has led to a 40% reduction in donations to community food banks across the country, when most are seeing demand for their service soar'* (22). With both these articles using direct quotes from the chief executive, and showing the readers the generosity

from leading retailers, to help combat food poverty during a time when large amounts of people were stockpiling food and essentials.

Another form of generosity was through sports teams and players. The Daily Mirror reported *'Liverpool defender Andy Robertson is believed to be the mystery benefactor to have made a large donation to six food banks in Scotland* (28). While another article is quoted *'Robertson's intervention is the latest heartwarming gesture made by a high-profile sportsman to help tackle the coronavirus crisis'* (34). These two articles aim to raise awareness of a sports personality, who wished to remain anonymous, who donated to the local food banks in Glasgow, where he was born and raised. While another article when highlighting that both Manchester United FC and Manchester City FC have come together to donate £100,000 to Trussell Trust foodbanks within *Manchester 'Both clubs are giving £50,000 to the Trussell Trust, which supports a network of 1,200 food bank centres, so capacity can be increased for vulnerable people affected by this crisis',* followed by a direct quote from Manchester City Football Club Fans Foodbank Support *'This will be an enormous help for the Greater Manchester community at a time when people need it most. We'd like to thank everyone on both sides for demonstrating that hunger doesn't wear club colours, and for the show of community solidarity'* (35). This article in particular highlights that rival football teams can work together to support those who are disadvantaged in their local area, helping to raise awareness that at this time the communities need to pull together more in order to help as many people as they can.

Finally, through several articles, the generosity of public figures, such as singers and TV personalities, were highlighted. Not just UK based, but also in Canada and America. Within the UK, it was seen that Liam Payne *'has teamed up with a national charity to provide food banks with 360,000 meals for those left struggling as a result of the coronavirus pandemic'* (32). The article goes on to state a direct quote from Liam Payne *'it's not right that anyone in our country is unable to afford food. Food banks do incredible work to help the people most in need of support'.* Liam Payne is again quoted as saying *'when we're out the other side of this, we need to look at why there are people in our country who don't have enough food. I want to play my part in findings a solution to ensure people have enough money to buy their own food – and end the need for food banks'* (32). Scarlett Moffatt, a TV personality, took to Instagram to highlight how she was helping *'Scarlett Moffatt once again showcased her kind*

side as she donated items to a food bank…' (36). The article goes on to directly quote Scarlett *'I do feel like we need to make sure we aren't just thinking about ourselves in this situation. It is an epidemic, and we need to make sure we aren't hoarding things unnecessarily and that we can helping people as much as we can'.* Again, positive language was used when highlighting the good that was being done by these personalities, but this also included messages regarding ending food poverty post-COVID and asking for people to stop hoarding and to help people as much as you can.

4.7. Discussion

The most significant change that has been seen is regarding the active challenging of the 'undeserving' discourse. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic millions more British households are now relying on government support to survive (BBC News, 2020a; Storer, 2020; Wood, 2020; Buter, 2020; Booth and Rawlinson, 2020; Proctor, 2020). Individuals who had previously had a large degree of control over their lives are now subject to new rules and regulations that are being set by an external figure, this has been seen to be the UK government or a local charity offering support (Bulman, 2020). This is inevitably taking some of the control that has previously been held by the individuals themselves and giving it to an external body. This feeling of lack of control can have many detrimental effects on the individual's wellbeing.

Prior to COVID-19, many low paid workers - now referred to within the COVID-19 narrative, as key workers - cleaners, supermarket workers and delivery drivers (Department of Education, 2021; Farquharson et al., 2020; Jooshandeh, 2021), had to rely on benefits to top up their income and sometimes have had to resort to relying on foodbanks to ensure there was enough food to eat, had been deemed 'undeserving', and within the poverty narrative, were told they had to work harder to pull themselves out of poverty. Now in the times of COVID-19 they were being referred to as 'essential' and were being recognised for their work to ensure the nation was running as much as possible during the uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic (Blackall and Bannock, 2020; The Lancet, 2020).

Words like 'scroungers', 'feckless' and 'undeserving' have over the past two decades been used by politicians and journalists before making their way into more sacred spaces like social media and TV entertainment, as the poverty narrative expanded (Hancock and Mooney, 2013; Brooker et al., 2015; Jensen, 2014; Patrick, 2016; Garthwaite, 2016). These terms have

been used in ways to suggest that benefit claimants and food bank users are workshy fraudsters with large TVs and no family values (Morrison, 2019; Romano, 2015). Politicians have compared 'scroungers' to 'strivers' which has only helped fuel and reinforce the narrative of an 'us and them' (Valentine and Harris, 2014; Williams, 2013). This idea of an 'us and them' has in recent years been played out on TV; through the steady supply of TV programme, sometimes referred to as 'Poverty Porn', shows include "Benefits and Proud" and "Benefits Street", which are successful in streaming this flawed impression straight into the homes of thousands of people across the country (Cope, 2021; Jensen, 2014; Brooker et al., 2015). Unfortunately, due to the nature of this form of entertainment, food bank users and benefit claimants are turned into characters with flawed personalities, that have been placed there as entertainment, to be judged by those who do not know them, sat at home watching their flawed personalities be exposed on TV (Garthwaite, 2016). The actions of politicians and journalists publicly shaming claimants and those who have had to rely on food aid, only further reinforces the notion that there is something shameful and embarrassing in asking and reaching out for help when its needed (Garthwaite, 2016).

The welfare state is there as a form of protection for the nation's children, to help support the sick, to aid those whose employers do not pay them a living wage, and those who do not work for a variety of reasons, some of which are complex, although the welfare state has changed as the economic and social policies have changed (Hills, 2011). However, the poverty narrative mixed with neoliberalism has changed the welfare state, to ensure that the actions of the parents who are receiving the benefits for their children are questioned, that proof of sickness is proven, and that those who do not earn a living wage are told 'they need to work harder'. However, due to COVID-19 there has been a drastic change seen, the new groups of self-isolating vulnerable people, those older adults, pregnant women and those with pre-existing health conditions, they are now all deemed by the British media as being 'deserving' of any help that can be provided to them; the NHS workers, and those who work in low-paid jobs, such as supermarkets, delivery drivers and carers are also now considered essential and deserving of the help that they receive to supplement their income (Power et al., 2020; Barker and Russell, 2020). Those who have lost jobs, been made redundant, relying on benefits as their sole income, or those who are receipt of furlough payments, are all considered deserving of this help.

Three of the four newspapers (The Guardian, The Daily Mirror and The Daily Mail) all actively challenge the discourse in a number of different ways between January-March 2020. With school closures, non-essential shops closing, restaurants, pubs and gyms forced to close, many people saw themselves losing their jobs, because they had the inability to work from home, or were furloughed, receiving only 80% of their previous wage. Some registered for universal credit and welfare benefits, and many found themselves reliant on foodbanks in the immediate and potential long term. With hundreds of thousands of people having to rely on government support to pay their bills and to feed themselves and their families, a shift was seen within the 'undeserving' discourse. Pre-COVID-19 this discourse was skewed to ensure that almost no one was deemed 'deserving', everyone that was seeking help was 'undeserving' due to a fault with themselves. However, the pandemic forced a change to the discourse, now ensuring that almost everyone is 'deserving', of whatever type of help was made available to them.

It is seen that the voices of those who are deemed 'undeserving' do not get the platform to share their stories. However, in the early months of COVID-19, it was seen that more stories from people who previously would have been deemed 'undeserving' were being shared in the media. Increased numbers of these articles operated, in part, to shift the discourse in allowing a space for their voices. The articles allowed them to defend themselves, and somewhat 'prove' that they are 'deserving'. Alongside this, some articles were able to employ empathy in the reader towards the situations that families, and specifically children, were finding themselves in, due to unforeseen circumstances that were largely outside of their control. While children have always been seen as 'deserving', often the actions of their parents have been bought into the discourse as being 'undeserving'. There were articles showcasing the desperate need that some groups of people were feeling, an example being students at university relying on the university run food banks. Previously these groups of people would not have been seen as 'deserving' due to them receiving loans and grants from Student Finance England; however, it has been reported that these payments no longer cover the cost of living. This paired with articles that highlighted statistical data regarding the number of people who had applied to Universal Credit, showing the large increase that was being felt by DWP, aided in demonstrating that a large majority of individuals had previously worked and supported themselves. These articles were of great importance in reframing who

was deemed as 'deserving', however, due to the increase in people out of work, at no fault of their own, it become harder to distinguish who is relying on government help due to being 'undeserving' and who is due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, reframing those who are on welfare benefits, as being 'deserving'.

When looking at how the articles produced a counter argument to the neoliberal narrative there was three distinctive ideas. The first of these is the articles that produced arguments from the volunteer sector calling for government help, explaining that the volunteer sector was stretched pre-COVID, and that they need help to ensure that there are enough resources to help all of those who are in need. There were genuine fears that the volunteer sector would not be able to adapt to the vast increase in demand that was being seen, along with a reduction in donations due to the heightened fear and evident stockpiling of food and household essentials. Following this, there were several articles that placed responsibility back onto government officials and the DWP. Articles that used direct quotes from right-wing MP's reproducing the negative neoliberal narrative, also provided a counter argument and created a way to produce a narrative that actively went against the predominate neoliberal narrative. This neoliberal narrative places the blame of the situation that an individual finds themselves in, on themselves, for having too many children, or not budgeting their money appropriately; whereas this counter argument is able to challenge this narrative, and to provide statistical data from charities and organisations.

Finally, the idea that the discourse was challenged through showing the generosity of people and organisations within the community, was seen in numerous articles. It was seen when highlighting the large food organisations who had pledged to make donations to food banks across the country, to ensure that they were receiving enough food to distribute within their food parcels. This at a time when other articles were reporting that there were limits on the number of items that could be purchased, stock piling and a reduction in donations to food banks. This went alongside an influx in articles that reported sports teams, players and public figures who were donating food and money to both local food charities and people within their community. These articles were best placed to highlight that the local community were helping and supporting those within their ranks who were struggling, and needed help and assistance, as well as urging any that could help to donate to their food bank, asking that they contact their local food banks to determine what essentials were most in need.

The idea of blaming those who live in poverty, specifically placing the blame on their lifestyle choices, the clothes they wear, how they spend their money, on the luxury items they own, allows for power to continue to oppress this group. Through the production of these negative discourses, and the negative image of those living in poverty and relying on welfare or food parcels, in British press, allows for society to feel they have the 'right' to also hold these negative but strong opinions, this allows for welfare reform to pass easily. This oppression is done through placing harsher penalties on those experiencing poverty, not only physically cutting their welfare payments, or placing stringent sanctions on them, but also through the production of the negative discourses, which are then reproduced through media, tv and social media. Food aid users and welfare recipients must see these discourses on a daily basis, and read headlines about them, while not having the ability to change them through amplifying their own voices and stories. The stories that are shown are typically highlighting how scroungers live such dysfunctional and chaotic lives, when in fact maybe only a small portion of those living in poverty live this way, and not the majority, as the press tries to convey. This then forces those living in poverty to attempt to distance themselves from the discourse and negative image that is being painted within the press and reposted via social media.

4.8. Conclusion

This chapter has allowed me to meet the first aim of the project, exploring the discourses within a selection of British media. This chapter has provided an argument that the neoliberal binary discourse of 'undeserving' and 'deserving' poor was challenged and changed through the early months of the pandemic. Three of the four British newspapers that were selected for this study, actively challenged this binary discourse in several very different ways, while it can be argued that the fourth, while not actively challenging nor actively reproducing, was silently reproducing the discourses. It has been shown in this chapter that food aid users who had, before the pandemic, been deemed as 'undeserving' during the pandemic were now labelled as 'deserving'. This change coincides with many employed people being made redundant or furloughed to 80 percent of their wage due to the pandemic and national and local lockdowns. This chapter has provided evidence that this was linked with an increase in the number of people applying for and relying on UC. It was also seen that there was an increase in the number of food bank parcels that were applied for. What this chapter doesn't

showcase is whether the challenging and changing of this discourse and subsequent food insecurity narrative stays, or whether it reverts to the previous image of the discourse and reproducing the negative discourse within British media. This is an area that will require further research.

Through exploring the discourses and showcasing how they have been challenged and changed during the early months of the pandemic, I was then able to explore these discourses in greater depth within the food banking social world, in the next chapter.

5. Findings

This chapter will present the findings from the data analysis highlighted in chapter 3. First this chapter will provide the themes and subthemes found using CGT, before showcasing the findings found through SA and the maps produced. Please see appendix H for further transcript extracts, themes and discourses and appendix I for a description of participants (excluding volunteers for anonymity reasons).

The themes in which the thesis is primarily centred around are control, power, stigma, guilt, shame, and the effects these issues have on the wellbeing of food aid users. Control and power being one of the biggest and central themes, which influences stigma, guilt, and shame. Please see figure 2, below, in which the themes and findings are expressed in a diagram, to highlight how the themes all interact with each other, and that power and control effect everything.
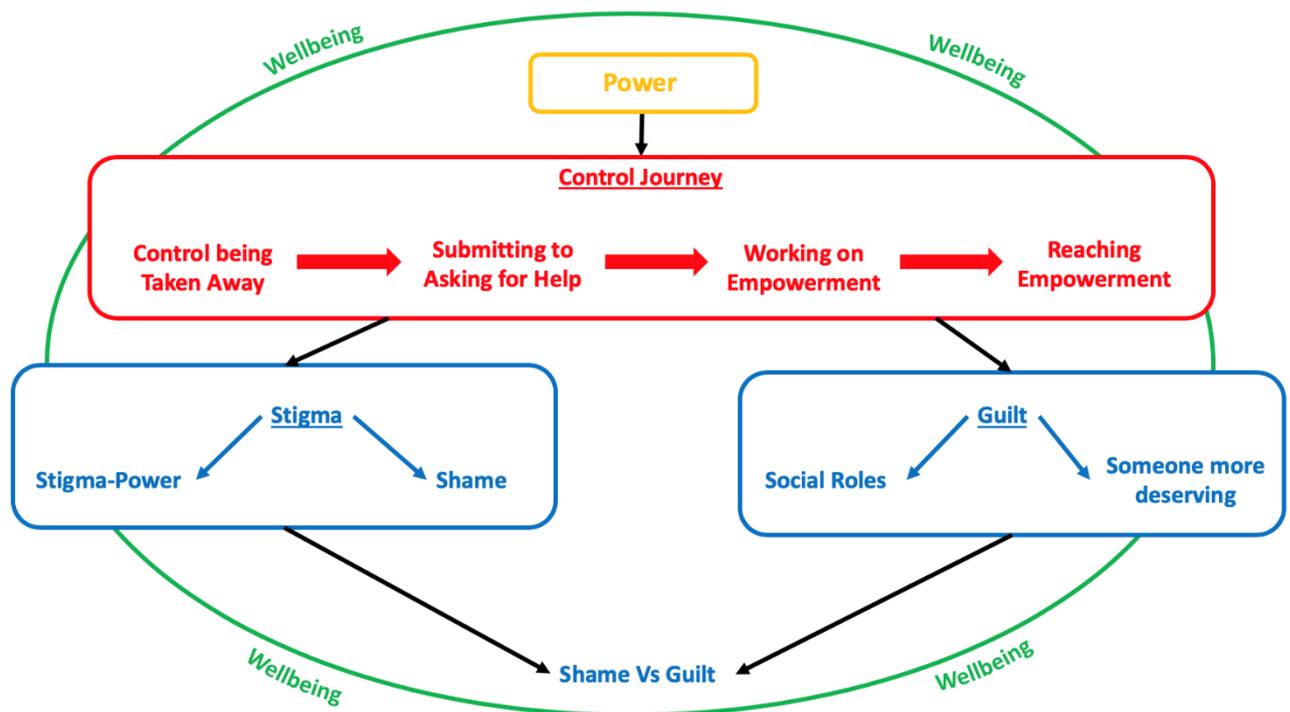

Figure 2: Diagram of themes and findings

5.1. The Control Journey
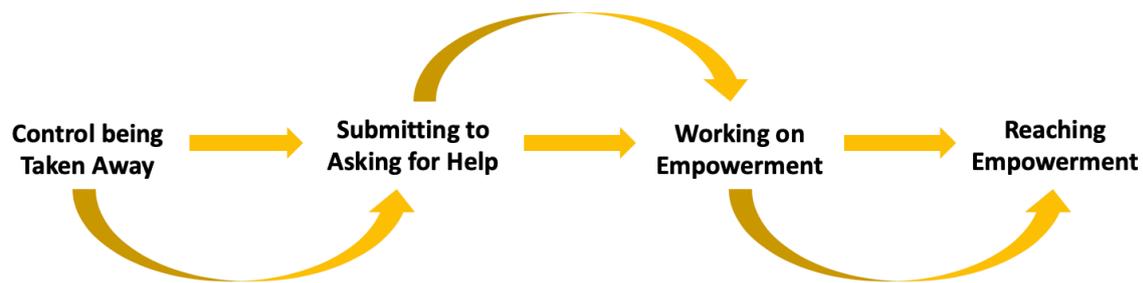
Figure 3: The Control Journey

Control was a key category and theme seen within this thesis and was seen as a journey made up of four different parts as detailed in figure 3 . The first: having control forcibly taken away or removed, the second being: submitting to help from either a charity or a family/friend member, the third being: working on gaining control back, and again can be done with the help of a charity (enabling), or independently, and finally: being empowered to take control back. Alongside this, was the idea that the food aid user would exert control when they could, over what they could.

Within this research situation it was seen that control was forcibly taken away and removed from the food aid user, and that the food aid user was passive in this movement, in that they had no choice. This typically happened when the food aid user was in a crisis, examples include, a relationship breakdown, running out of resources, sanction by UC, moving house or attempting to afford one-off purchases in their financial budget, such as new school uniform and Christmas.

The second part being where food aid users submitted to asking for help, typically taking place when the food aid user felt they had no other options and would either ask a family or friend to help or asking a food aid charity. This stage is more active for the food aid user, who must physically ask for help from one of the above mentioned. Examples include, admitting needing help to a charitable food organisation, speaking to third party organisations regarding finding help, or when providing information such as bank statements and answering questions regarding income and expenditure to food aid organisations. This submitting to asking for help would often result in short-term help in the form of a food parcel from a charity, a referral to a food bank, or financial help from a family/friend.

The third stage is focused on the food aid user working towards gaining control back and empowering themselves regarding their financial situation. This was reported to have taken place in two different ways, the first being independently, and the second being with the help of a food aid charity. The first was not reported about to great extent, due to the nature of the participants, who had all accessed food aid charities to help them gain control back and empower themselves. The ICFH was able to enable the empowerment of the food aid user, by helping them with a range of resources, including food aid, cooking skills, help with UC applications and Job applications.

Finally, the fourth stage of the journey is the food aid user gaining control back through empowerment, this being a long-term result of the control journey. The food aid user has become aware of the reasons as to why they became food insecure and in crisis, whilst also enabling them to gain skills such as cooking, budgeting, and UC management.

5.1.1. Control being taken away

It was reported that control was taken away from the user through a range of different ways, it was a passive action of the food aid user; the idea that control was being taken away from the food aid user forcibly and outside the control of the food aid user. This was often disclosed as feeling that things were 'being done' to the food aid user, and that they had little to no control over the event, the actions within the event or how the event took place, this was often reported as being distressing and stressful to the food aid user.

One of the most frequently reported ways food aid users stated control being removed was through an unforeseen crisis. This included a relationship breakdown, or a death in the family. A crisis like these could not be predicted, and with limited financial resources available to food aid users it is often difficult for them to have a savings account in order to support them through difficult times such as these. It was reported that due to a relationship breakdown a now-single mum was unable to claim any benefits until the assessment processes had been completed, which took several weeks, while at the same time the father was not providing any financial support. This was a crisis that was not avoidable but resulted in the mother and children relying on food aid, because the control had been removed from the mother.

Alongside this were events that take place that can be expensive, including a house move or the beginning of the new school year. Schools often asking parents to buy branded school

uniform that costs much more than the unbranded school uniform. This often leaves parents with the choice of buying the branded expensive school uniform and going without other essentials or buying the cheaper non-branded school uniform and then their child having possible repercussions when they are in school without the correct uniform. Both these two reported forms of control being forcibly removed often resulted in the participants having to actively give control away to aid the situation.

It was commonly reported that control was removed from the user when resources were low, had run out, or were needed elsewhere. This predominately included money, food, or a combination of both, often resulting in a lack of income. One food aid respondent reported 'willingly' placing themselves in financial uncertainty by paying expensive rent payments, in a good school catchment area, to ensure that their child lived in a good area and was able to attend a good school. It was felt by the food aid user that by aiding her daughter in attending a good school, and live in a good area, was worth paying premium rent. Further to this it was expressed that some felt there are three key elements that money needs to be spent on: housing, heating, and food. And unfortunately for many, there will be times when they are unable to pay for all three, resulting in at least one not being met. Usually this is food, and with the help of food banks, people are able to receive some form of help.

> *'We live in an expensive house, we rent an expensive house. But where we live, I have a 6-year-old daughter who is in school. We can't find another house, to actually be able to go with reduced rent. So, our money goes onto rent, and quite often we don't have a lot of money left over' – Claire*

> *'Your money is only an X amount of money has to go on. You're keeping the roof over your head, keeping warmth, keeping you warm, and keeping you fed. And sometimes, some people are not going to have enough money to be able to do all three' – Claire*

This idea of food aid users having to choose what they spend their limited money on is compounded by a select number of participants who are students and did not necessarily receive welfare payments but instead receive student loans payments every 3 to 4 months. Often it was reported that when the payment was received the students would pay 3-4 months' worth of bills at once, these include rent, phone, gas, electricity etc. This then results in there being a limited amount of money left to pay for food and 'luxuries' on a weekly and

monthly basis. While it was reported to help with budgeting, at the end of the 3-4 months, they report often struggling to ensure that there is enough money to pay for the weekly items.

While those who do receive a welfare payment in the form of universal credit often reported being sanctioned by the DWP for not complying with their regulations often resulting in control being removed from the food aid users, this being closely linked with the above-mentioned notion of a lack of resources. Food aid users being sanctioned resulted in a decrease of financial income, while they are expected to still pay the same financial outgoings, resulting in the food aid users having to choose which bills and financial payments are paid, and which are not.

However, it is important to note, that during the time of this research project, COVID-19 was a global pandemic, and resulted in numerous changes to society in order to curb the virus. This resulted in the closure of businesses, schools, and social gatherings. This led to an increase in job losses, redundancy, and furlough, which again resulted in the removal of control from the food aid user. The first way in which control was forcibly removed was via furlough payments. Many low-income families live paycheque to paycheque, and when furlough was introduced, employees were offered 80% of their monthly wage. While the scheme aimed to ensure everyone received income while all non-essential work was stopped, many low-income families rely on their entire pay cheque and found it hard to pay this on 80% of their income, with some young families reporting they had to feed their children more food, because they asked for more during the day, resulting in an increase in their monthly outgoings, with a reduction in their monthly incomings.

'…he was furloughed, we were on 80% wage, but had more mouths to feed, and more meals to prepare' – Sophie

While the schools were closed, resulting in children being at home from school and being educated by parents, many food aid users' children were in receipt of free school meals before COVID. This resulted in the government first providing monetary vouchers for parents to aid in their food shop. This was then changed to a food box, that provided enough food for a weeks' worth of lunch meals. However, some food aid users expressed that it wasn't enough.

My daughter, she's at the big school. The Academy. They gave me about
one, one loaf of bread, two potatoes, and a tiny, a quarter of a cucumber.
Erm what else was there… a tin of beans, a tomato and soup.' – Joanne

5.1.2. Submitting to needing help

When food aid users are submitting to asking for help, to receive a short-term fix, often a food parcel or financial aid. It was reported that this was done via two ways, the first being seeking the help of a food aid organisation, such as a food bank and the second being asking for assistance from a family member or friend. The food aid user has submitted to asking for help and in order to receive it, often has to provide information to the food aid organisation. There is a distinction between control being taken away, often through a crisis, and submitting to help. The food aid user has no ability to control when and how the control is forcibly removed from them, however, they can have some say in who and when they ask for help.

The primary form in which participants submitted to asking for help was through a food aid organisation and/or charity. It was reported that food aid users who asked for assistance from a Community food aid organisation found it easier to ask for help from the volunteers and the foodbank, with reports highlighting that they felt less judgement and stigma from the foodbank with one participant claiming it felt like 'friends helping friends'. However, it was also reported by some participants who had used a more organised foodbank that it was easier asking for help, knowing that they were anonymous, and didn't know anyone who volunteered at the foodbank. Stating they felt that they were able to maintain their dignity this way. However, both these perceptions didn't stop the participants from feeling shame at having to ask for help or guilt for having accepted help and a food parcel.

'I messaged [Volunteer], and asked if it would be ok, to pick up a few bits,
and he talked me through what they had got, and I came down and picked
up the bits, it was straight forward' - Sophie

While asking for help from an organised or community food aid organisation was commonly reported as the main form of asking for help to receive aid, it was also heavily reported by participants that some food aid users would ask for help from family and friends first, with some stating that they rely on family support in order to pay for their children's school uniform. They commented on having family support, however, this wasn't always the case, as a small number of food aid users reported not having any family or friends support system, or any family or friends in a financial position to help, and therefore had to ask the food aid

charity for help. It was reported that some food aid users felt that there was only one foodbank in the area, the only place they felt they would be able to ask for help. Therefore, it didn't matter the judgement and shame that they felt, they believed there were no other options. Some reported that they would never ask family and friends for help due to the stigma and shame.

The criteria that was utilised by the formal organisations, that imposed a certain level of structure, however resulted in the food aid user moulding themselves into the individual that would meet the criteria set out. It was reported from food aid users who had used specific structured criteria food banks, one in particular required food aid users to fill in a form, before being asked to provide bank statements to back up their claims that they were in a financial crisis. Once this documentation has been provided alongside the form and a decision had been made then a food parcel would be issued. This structured process was reported to eliminate those in genuine need from those being greedy. It was reported that due to the food aid users providing all the details to meet the criteria, they reported that they viewed receiving the food parcel as external validation of their need, and therefore felt little to no feelings of shame of guilt. However, in providing the foodbank with this private information resulted in the user giving control to someone else, who would be able to pass judgement and deny the claim for help. Some food aid users reported that the criteria and questions asked by some formal food banks can be hurtful and appear judgemental, while other stated that some formal food banks don't want to ask too many questions, to get to the root of the problem.

> *'Christian food bank and they want to know where you have spent all your money, why you haven't got any money. If you have any money at all, they won't help you… if you don't fit their criteria' – Anthony*

> *'…because the form you have to fill out for the council had all sorts of questions, and then you had to send them your bank details to prove it' – Kate*

This idea that some food aid users sought external validation when they were accepting a food aid parcel, and this in turn relieved feelings of shame and guilt, as well as reinforcing the idea that they are both deserving of help and in genuine need, as opposed to being deemed undeserving and greedy. Other participants reported opposite feelings, stating that they felt humiliated in having to disclose this kind of sensitive information to a third party in order to

receive a referral slip to take to the foodbank. However, while the participants stated that they felt humiliated they acknowledged that when they found themselves in a crisis, they would disclose this information to a third party to receive the slip for the foodbank.

It was also reported, that when they visited formal foodbanks, within the information that was required, was travel arrangements. Food parcels typically are made of heavy, tinned produce that have a long life. Food aid users found that when they detailed, they were travelling via public transport or by foot, they would be given a food parcel without tinned food in, without consulting the food aid user themselves. The decision was made without the food aid user having an input. So, while the food aid user had submitted to asking for help from the food banking organisation, they then had no control over the food that was provided to them. This idea was reported in a number of settings, where food aid users had allergies to dairy or nuts or couldn't eat spicy food. However, due to the food aid user submitting to help from the food bank they felt they then had no ability to say they didn't like certain foods, or have allergies, or wanted tinned foods. Alongside this, is the idea that in some areas and communities there are limited number of food banks, and if the food aid user does not have the money to purchase public transport to attend the food bank, then they travel via foot. Food banks can sometimes be a distance from the food aid user, however they have no other option, due to limited number of food banks, so often must negotiate a way to attend.

> *'I'm intolerant to dairy, and I was at no point on my first trip was I able to, I wasn't offered the opportunity to turn around and say I can't have dairy.*
> *And I would say 1/3 of the parcel we received we could not eat' – Claire*

This idea of submitting needing help from a food aid organisation is further explored against the backdrop that is COVID-19. Some food aid users reported that they were unable to print the free school meal vouchers that were being emailed to them, resulting in the food aid user asking for assistance from the ICFH. This help could have come in a variety of sources, charity, school, or family and friends. Some participants then reported that the vouchers were not working at the tills, and this was particularly hard on the food aid user emotionally and mentally, who felt an increase in embarrassment as well as guilt and shame. This situation not only highlights the food aid user submitting to help from the food hub or school in order to print the food vouchers, but also when the vouchers were not working at the checkout, and increased feelings of embarrassment.

What is important to note though is the difference in time it took for food aid users to submit to asking for help; some food aid users submitted to asking for help from aid organisations quicker than others. This was usually seen within food aid users who had previously used the ICFH, and had formed a relationship with the volunteers, this resulted in them feeling less shame and stigma about attending the food bank and asking for a food parcel. Following this, food aid users who had had a previous bad experience with a different food aid organisation or worried about the judgement, stigma, shame, or guilt would be more hesitant in asking for help. Another factor was if the food aid user was a single person, or if they had dependents. Those who had dependents tended to report asking for assistance quicker than those who were single and tried to manage on their own for longer periods of time.

5.1.3. Working on gaining control back and Empowerment

The ICFH holds a lot of power and significance within the community, and in doing so is able to not only enable food aid users to empower themselves but are also in a position to help eliminate or reduce the stigma associated with food aid, and the subsequent feelings of judgement, shame and guilt. This ICFH was able to help support the food aid users in a variety of different ways in correlation with providing food aid.

'[ICFH] do help me a lot when it comes to food, you know in many ways.
But a lot when it comes to food, and making sure I have plenty and have
eaten' – Anthony

Empowerment in the case of this ICFH, is aiding food aid users, who have had to rely on the charity in their crisis, to gain back some of the control that they have lost, whether that be it being taken away or given away. The volunteers at this particular ICFH were previous food bank users, often resulting from a reduction in welfare benefits, homelessness, substance misuse, or domestic violence. The use of volunteers with prior experience was very empowering, not just to the volunteers but to the food aid users. The volunteers were being empowered, by learning new skills and furthering their knowledge in a practical setting. In terms of the food aid users, it was empowering being helped by volunteers who had lived experience, because when they shared their experiences with the volunteers, they were able to empathise, offer support, guidance, and a listening ear. Food aid users stated they felt little to no judgement from these volunteers, because they could understand the situation that they found themselves in.

'Knowing I had somewhere I could go, and I know it might not have been much, but it was always somewhere I could turn to, to get something, you know' – James

One of the ICFH aims was aiding the local community in any way they could, and through a variety of different routes. Through this, it was important to the charity that those who volunteered or worked within the charity were local to area and knew the small mining town in the North East of England, to allow better understanding of the deprivation seen within the area. This created and developed a very rich community feel, which resulted in the large proportion of donations being from local people, or shops in the local area, that knew of the good work being done at the charity. However, donations were accepted from larger organisations such as Amazon and Fareshare and shops further afield, however still within the North East of England.

Participants reported that the food aid charity had an atmosphere of 'friends helping friends', and this attitude was the ethos of the charity. The food bank volunteers reported that they aim to treat every person who asks for help equally, no judgement or prejudice. This allows for trust to be built between the food aid charity and the food aid user. Volunteers reported that treating all food aid users equal was beneficial to the food aid user, because while some food aid users were happy to disclose their current crisis or situation, some were not, and the volunteer's ability to treat all food aid users equal, ensured that all food aid users felt they were helped, and to build a relationship. This idea of 'friends helping friends' also resulted in food aid users being able to state if they had any allergies or a dislike of certain food groups, and this was acted upon in a non-judgemental way, which resulted in the food aid user feeling empowered. Asides from the charity distributing food parcels, the 'friends helping friends' atmosphere created allowed there to be a space for food aid users to reach out to volunteers to talk, not necessarily regarding a food parcel; but someone who had been in a similar situation who they could talk to freely, knowing there was no judgement, something that was often reported not done with friends and family. And this idea was extended further from food aid support, to support with mental health, job applications, welfare applications, autism assessments and management, LGBT issues, education, and child development.

'I mean I could just message them and they would be there to talk or anything you know' – Joanne

'I have been to Scotland. Worked with Jamie Oliver, have a certificate… I
have good feelings and thoughts, and am a totally different person' – Rosie

The ICFH attempted to reframe the stigma that was associated with food banks and food aid users. Attempting to do this via changing the narrative around food poverty. Instead of referring to the fresh fruit and vegetables as a food bank, framing it more towards eliminating food waste, and landfill waste. By actively changing the narrative and subsequent social media posts, the food bank can ensure that they are empowering food aid users to ask for help when needed, but at the same time helping to reduce landfill and food waste. Following this, the food bank attempts to not brand themselves as a food bank but as a community hub, that helps individuals with a range of services. In marketing it as a community hub and café, people can enter and receive help for a variety of reasons that are not known to other people. It also provides the food aid users the confidence to enter the building and feel that they won't be judged or feel stigma or shame.

'yeah, you see, [ICFH] isn't just a food bank, I wouldn't class it as a food
bank, I would class it as a community café. It's not a place where you walk
in, and people are like 'ooh he comes for this, that or the other'. Or people
walking through the streets, people know what food banks look like. So
people duck their heads, but at [ICFH] you don't have to.' – Liam

'[ICFH] café, on the other side as well, not a foodbank, it gives people a
little extra confidence to go in' – Liam

However, due to the pandemic, not all the empowerment was reported to have come from the food bank, but the government as well. The government allowed for some control to be given to the food aid users, when it provided monetary vouchers to families whose children would have been receiving free school meals had the schools not needed to close due to the pandemic. The choice to provide monetary vouchers was changed to providing a food box with a week's worth of food, this again removed control from the parents. However, the monetary vouchers allowed for the individuals to purchase food that was appropriate for their child.

'When you get a parcel from this foodbank, they ask you if there's
anything else you need, dietary requirements' – Denise

5.1.4. Control being exerted by food aid users

It was often reported that while control was taken away due to circumstances outside of the control of the food aid user, and control was given away in a variety of ways to help alleviate

the situation the food aid user found themselves in; this often left the food aid user feeling they had no control, and so would attempt to exert some control over other aspects of their lives, though several different techniques.

Participants reported 'juggling' their bills and money, by not paying essential bills, until the end of the month, they insured they had 'spare' money in their account to pay for any emergencies that might happen. However, if they did not need the money, they would then pay their bill late, before receiving any late charges. In doing this, the food aid user feels some form of control in that they have 'emergency' money that can be spent if needed, some reported that it felt nice to have a little money in the purse, even if they knew they weren't going to spend it, but just knowing that it was there.

*'But some months you just have to keep the money. Its either that or
starve, or keep the money' – Liam*

Others reported skipping meals to ensure that there was enough food for their family members, this was reported usually by parents, who would skip meals to ensure that their children had enough. This was a way of the food aid user exerting control over the situation, instead of asking for a food parcel, they would skip meals. Some participants commented on the budgeting techniques to ensure that they would have enough money to afford Christmas, often reporting that they would save and go without for 12 months, while they saved. This again is a form of the food aid user exerting control over the situation. One participant reported that they only ever buy food items that are on special to ensure that they can get the most food on the limited money available to them.

It was reported by some that this was in relation to the potential stigma, shame, and guilt that they would feel, others however reported that it was a way for them to control the situation themselves. The food aid users would hold off asking for help, to regain some of the control that had already been lost due to the crisis, knowing that they would have to give control away when asking for help. It was seen as being a coping mechanism for the feelings associated with loss of control. Once the food aid user decided that they would give control away, they then needed to make the decision as to who they would give it away to.

*'more essentials, like me rent, council tax. Gas I'm not really bothered
about, electric I am. And now obviously, manly dog food and then my food.
Phone bill, not really, I pay that like, if I want to pay £10 a month, I'll pay
that.' – Liam*

5.2.Guilt

Guilt was a negative emotion frequently reported as being felt by the participants as a response to receiving help. This emotion was reported in relation to the idea that the food aid user was now owing a debt to the food aid organisation who had provided them with the aid. Guilt was reported to be an emotion that was felt upon reflection, and not in the action of receiving the food parcel. Food aid users would feel guilt once they were alone, often in a private setting and able to reflect on the act of being deemed to be in need of help, and for a charitable organisation to offer that help. This feeling was often linked to feelings of not being deserving of the help, or of there being someone in a worse position, who needed the food aid more, therefore they deserve the help more, and feelings of failing in life, for having the inability to support themselves and any dependents.

5.2.1. Motherhood

Food aid users who were mothers typically reported feelings of guilt associated with the idea of failing as a mother and failing their child. Both these ideas are centred around the idea of the mother comparing themselves to what society deems and dictates as being 'normal' behaviour for mothers in their ability to care for themselves and their children. Society has dictated those mothers asking for food aid and financial help from charity as 'not normal' or best practice for mothers, therefore resulting in the framing of them poorly. This is further reinforced with the depiction of 'bad mothers' being shown within the media as having less then desirable behaviours and lifestyle choices. With the reproduction of neoliberal discourses, such as blame, needy vs greedy, and the undeserving poor being used in the narrative about mothers and their actions.

Mothers typically positioned themselves against the neoliberal discourse of blame. Blaming themselves for the situation that they have found themselves in. This could be due to a financial crisis, a relationship breakdown or because of poor mental health. This often presents itself in them blaming themselves for not being a 'good' mother, this was reported to have led to poor mental health and self-worth. This thought reportedly spiralled into thoughts around the idea that they had brought children into the world, and then were unable to support them appropriately, and therefore failing at being a mother, and more broadly failing at life. These feelings of guilt are then associated with them blaming themselves for their life choices and for finding themselves in the situations that they do. Often causing a

cycle of blame and guilt. This feeling of guilt can be linked to feelings of powerlessness in their responsibility for another human life, one that they bought into the world.

One young mother felt constant guilt, they felt they had opted to have a child, to bring human life into the world, and were unable to take appropriate care of that child, they were unable to comfortably sustain that child without the help of food charities:

> *'I would always get myself down and out about being a mother who couldn't feed her child. Like you have a child and you're given this automatic responsibility, and you just feel shit when you can't do it'* –
> Denise

Strong feelings of guilt were reported in regard to the idea that a mother who seeks financial help or a food parcel, is unbale to care for her child appropriately. It was consistently reported that mothers always ensured that their children had appropriate food to eat, often ensuring that their children eat first, leaving the mother to eat very little. This resulted in an increase in guilt feelings around the idea of failing as a mother. The idea of failing was often raised within mothers and fathers who had children and was always associated with them comparing themselves to other members of society, people who did not have to rely on food aid or welfare payments. In this mindset the recipients were feeling low self-worth and would struggle to think positively about themselves.

> *'it is whether the kids eat or, I didn't buy enough. I would just get toast or something, as long as I've got the food in for the kids…. It feels like you're a failure to be honest'* - Joanne

This was strongly compounded by the idea of a need to seek assistance from someone else to feed and clothe their children. Something that is disparaged from being done, with food aid having negative connotations associated with it, these having been reinforced through both the media and social media. Therefore, mothers typically positioned themselves away from individuals who were seen to be 'taking the mick' and 'trying their luck'. Placing themselves against both the needy vs greedy discourse and the undeserving poor discourse, mothers attempted to distance themselves from individuals deemed greedy as much as possible, in case they too were deemed greedy. This was reported to be generally easier than distancing themselves from those being deemed underserving.

Joanne, a single mother to four children, was previously in a relationship with the children's father, while both working. When the relationship broke down suddenly, Joanne had to stop

work, and apply for benefits, while waiting for that assessment, she relied on many forms of food aid. But was always conscious that she would be seen as being greedy because her children had nice expensive things, these had been bought when both parents were together and in work. This resulted in her feeling guilty due to the idea that she was failing as a mother, but also the idea that she could be seen as being greedy, because her children had nice electrical items.

'I'm thinking your gonna think that we don't need that because they've got an xbox and they've got a telly, but I've bought all that stuff well before I was… you know I've always tried to give back' - Joanne

Guilt was stronger amongst women who felt they might be associated or thought of as being an individual who is undeserving, following the typical neoliberal discourse. They would attempt to distance themselves as much as possible, often placing barriers between them. It was often reported that mothers felt a sense of guilt when they had the opportunity to reflect on the situation of collecting a food parcel. This resulted in not only the feelings of guilt regarding taking a food parcel, but more so around being a 'burden' on society, as opposed to an active member who can support her and her family.

Some mothers were able to position themselves differently than others on these discourses, and they reported this helped them feel reduced feelings of guilt. This was in part, due to the fact they were able to see themselves as being deserving of the help, either due to internal or external validation. Sophie's family experienced the furlough 80% wage, resulting in a loss of 20% of their income, and this affected what they could afford when it came to food shopping. However, the knowledge that COVID-19 and the furlough payment was not her doing, she found less guilt in asking for a food parcel from her local food bank. At first, she stated she felt like a fraud, but having the knowledge that this was happening to thousands of people helped her reduce the feelings of guilt.

'I kinda feel like a fraud to an extent, because it comes down to it we can live on pasta and stuff, but having the option now, or having something more than just pasta and chips' – Sophie

While another single mother to two girls, reached out for a food parcel from a local food bank due to one of her daughters having a chronic illness, that required the whole family to isolate. She was unable to order food for delivery, due to there being no delivery slots, she had no family to help, so reached out to her local food bank via social media, explaining the

circumstances, and they were able to provide her and her two daughters with a food parcel that same day. The feeling of guilt was reduced here, again because of an external cause, in that COVID-19 had affected all other options on getting food, and she felt she had no other option than to rely on the food aid charity.

'erm, I think we are in a position where we do need help, it's not like I'm scrounging or anything like that' – Kim

For these mothers, having the ability to position themselves differently against the discourse, allowed them to seek help from charitable organisations, and while they may feel guilty in that they feel someone is more deserving, or because they now feel they owe a debt; they know that they are deserving of the help, and are able to either rationalise this internally themselves, or because they seek and receive external validation through the charitable organisation. COVID-19 seemed to be a topic that helped mothers who had relied on food aid to feel less guilty and position themselves different on the discourses. This could be due to the fact that COVID-19 affected everyone, some more than others, while it was also a crisis that was not 'caused' by the mother.

5.2.2. Fatherhood

Reported feelings of guilt by males, specifically fathers, was somewhat similar to that of mothers, except that the guilt was associated with the role men and fathers play in society. This was linked strongly with the idea that men must be masculine, strong and not show weakness.

A way in which fathers felt guilt was centred around the role that society has deemed fathers to play within the family structure specifically. With society highlighting that a male should not have to ask for help in any form. The idea that the father is deemed to be the 'breadwinner' and is therefore responsible for providing all financial support for the family and subsequently food, heating and clothing. The male participants heavily positioned themselves on the discourses as blaming themselves for not being able to support their family in the ways society has deemed appropriate, blaming themselves for not being able to feed their children specifically, but also for this idea that they are failing in life:

'People don't want to be seen as failing in life. You can't even feed yourself, how are you going to feed your kids. How are you going to move on in life' – Liam

This was closely linked with the idea that men had a role of masculinity imposed on them. When fathers or single men asked for food assistance it was noted that they reported they felt their role had changed, that they no longer felt 'big' or 'strong' because they were asking another man to help feed him and his family. There was a loss of pride when asking someone else to provide, a job that society has reiterated should be achieved by the father in the family unit. Typically, fathers positioned themselves as being deserving and needy, when asking for food aid, since they had children that relied on them to provide everything they needed. With James stating having this ethos:

'I'll beg, steal and borrow to make sure the kids have' – James

Before continuing:

'I mean I'm a bloke, I'm a man, I'm the dad, I'm the father, I'm the husband, that's the thing, I should have been doing …. That's the way that I've been bought up, the man, that's not being sexist, that's just how I was bought up, the man goes to work, makes the money, fetches the food, and puts it on the table. As the man and the dad, I don't feel like I was doing any of that, and then to go cap in hand sort of thing, but the way I started to look at it was there was another 100 odd families in the exact same boat as me, seeing people who we didn't think we would see in that position' – James

It was reported that single men were positioned against the discourse's as being undeserving and greedy, because they were single and male, and this caused heightened feelings of guilt. Typically, it was reported they had limited, if any, family support, that could be used as a form of external validation needed. They reported being positioned in this way due to the media and social media representation of single men asking for food aid. With one of the food aid volunteers Adam stating:

'… a lot of single men that really don't like it. Family men really really do not like coming. Because they don't feel like they are strong, big dads anymore' – Adam

This idea of there being a loss of 'big' and 'strong' when asking for food assistance from someone else is associated with this idea that men shouldn't ask for charity, that they should be able to cope on their own. So again, a loss of pride when having to admit that they do need help and having to go to a food charity to receive that help. Feelings of guilt are associated with admitting that they need someone else's help to support his family, or himself. It was reported that men, both single and fathers, are having to give control of their power to

someone else, when asking for any form of help. Often reporting that asking for help of any kind is showing weakness.

'… well I was, when I was living in North London, I was raised to believe that you didn't do charity shops, you know if you didn't have any food in the house then you went hungry, until you next got some money' –
Anthony

Adam, the volunteer, commented on the guilt felt by all men, especially single men, who are struggling, but don't like asking for help, because they have never had to access a food bank before, and they are working but can't afford to live an independent life. Some men reported feeling so worried about being labelled as being greedy or undeserving because they were given food they didn't enjoy or was out of date, that they would often not say anything to the volunteers who would be able to make changes. These men, being so grateful, that they were being provided some help, did not want to be labelled as being undeserving or greedy, so did not speak up about the food items being provided to them, but happily accept them. These individuals then feel further guilt, when they go home and dispose of the food that they would not eat, that could have gone to someone else.

'I do find a lot of people do get a food parcel, a lot of the food they get they just don't like, but they feel bad…. Because they see it as, 'ah you've given us some food for free, and it's not good enough' – Liam

5.2.3. Someone is more deserving/in a worse position

It was seen that many food aid users reported that they had felt that there was someone in a worse position than themselves. In many cases this was seen in a positive light – in that this individual is not in the worse position because someone unfortunately has it worse. However, the majority saw it in a negative light, in that when the individual asked for help, and they felt that someone was in a worse position than them, so they shouldn't qualify for food help, or they felt they were taking a limited resource from someone who may deserve it more or be in a worse situation than themselves. James stated:

'…there is a whole lot of people worse off than me, but it doesn't make you feel any better about your situation' – James

Reported feelings of guilt were in association with the idea that someone is in a worse position than themselves, and that the food aid user is taking a limited food resource from someone else, who may be, or appear to be, in a worse position or deemed to be more needy or

deserving of the help than them. Again, this stems from the individual comparing themselves to others whether favourably or less favourably and positioning themselves along the needy vs greedy and undeserving poor discourses. Joanne stating:

'I try and think that there is someone worse off than me, so I really don't like asking for help now, and getting things. I really don't' – Joanne

'I keep thinking, I'm asking for help, but there is someone worse off than you' – Joanne

'I do feel awful when I'm getting things' – Joanne

These feelings of guilt associated with asking for help and receiving help, while feeling that there is someone more deserving, needy or in a worse position can manifest in a way that acts as a barrier and stops people asking for help. Denise stated that upon reflection if receiving the food parcel, she felt ashamed of having to ask for help:

'I think that even just packing my food on the bench, and just looking at it and just being like, I just felt awful, I felt so ashamed of myself, whether I need to or not, and it just felt really really really shitty, and I just wouldn't want to' – Denise

Multiple participants reported believing that someone deserves the food parcel more than them, therefore placing themselves as being undeserving of help. Sophie, who spent numerous years being homeless in the past feels guilty and like a fraud for asking for help, because having lived a time of truly having nothing, she understands what it is like to not have anything.

'I kinda feel like a fraud to an extent, because it comes down to it we can live on pasta and stuff, but having the option now, or having something more than just pasta and chips' – Sophie

'…because I've been homeless, I know what it's like to have absolutely nothing, so it's just awkward' – Sophie

Here Sophie is stating that due to their history of being homeless and truly having nothing, they deeply felt guilt and shame for asking for help now. However, they are seeking help due to their partner only receiving 80% of their wage when furloughed during the pandemic and having dependent children. Sophie reports that it would have been different if they were a single individual with no dependents.

Some food aid users reported that to help with the feelings of guilt they felt, they would seek external validation, usually from a volunteer or manager of the charity. This external validation would appear in many forms, most typically the volunteer confirming their need of help, and their deservingness. This allowed the food aid user to accept help with limited feelings of guilt. It also allowed food aid users who were asking for help repeatedly to know that they were still entitled to the help, and not being labelled greedy. Alongside this was also the confirmation that they were deserving of the help, and that while there may be other people in need, so were they. This helped the food aid users overcome the barrier of not asking for help, to ensure that others received the help.

'I've always, I've said to [Volunteer] and [Volunteer], I feel bad, there are people out there that need it more than me' – Grace

'Yeah, that's what [Volunteer] and [Volunteer] normally say to us, like, you need it. It's not like, we know you don't come and ask for things, when you don't need them – Grace

5.2.4. Guilt vs Shame

Guilt was always reported to having been felt when the food aid user had received the food parcel and was in a private setting and reflecting on the action of needing a food parcel and receiving the food parcel. Reflecting on the actions that occurred and resulted in the participant requiring a food parcel would bring feelings of guilt. However, guilt was repeatedly reported by food aid users to be an emotion felt alone, in private and reflecting on the past. One participant reported placing food items on the counter once back from the food bank and feeling a lot of guilt at the actions she had undertaken, this coupled with the feeling that she was now in debt to the food bank who had helped her.

On the other hand, shame, is also a negative emotion, that was often reported to be felt similarly to guilt and was reported to be a barrier of food aid users asking for help. However, shame was felt very much in the situation of the food aid user asking for help and was felt when in the presence of other people, who could place judgement or stigma onto the food aid user. This idea will be explored more within the stigma/shame theme.

5.3. Stigma

Stigma is predominantly negative, within this situation it is being reproduced by society to ensure that people do not ask for too much food at food banks, by shaming them, using the

media to 'show' that they are lazy, undeserving, greedy, dysfunctional, scrounging and to blame for their own problems; to ensure that they are as independent as possible, in-line with the neoliberal thinking. By using the media to reproduce these discourses it ensures that the individuals using food banks are being judged by 'normal' people on the street, that see them enter the food bank. That these members of society then feel they can share their views and opinions on social media for people to see in their own homes, strengthening the reproduction of these negative and harmful discourses, and cause shame and stigma around food banks, often resulting in a barrier to seeking help.

5.3.1. Stigma-power

Stigma was reported by participants and seen throughout the research, in different settings and held different reactions by the food aid user. One of these subthemes of stigma is stigma-power. The idea is that stigma possess a power over both food aid users and food aid charities. One way in which stigma-power can 'control' food aid users is through oppression. Oppressing individuals who are using food aid charities, was seen to be through the production and reproduction of negative discourses and negative media output, by means of news articles, TV programming and social media. However, some food aid organisations asked participants to prove their deservingness and need, by asking them to provide answers to questions regarding their income and spending habits and to provide bank statements as proof.

Another way in which stigma-power has effects on food aid users is through the idea that large 'chain' food charities require 'proof' of eligibility. To ensure that 'greedy' individuals do not receive food that they are not eligible for. This is predominantly done through a third party. Whereby an individual in need must first contact a professional – often a healthcare professional, such as a GP, who will deem that they are in fact in need of a food parcel, by asking them questions and noting their answers. This third-party individual will then complete the necessary paperwork for the individual to receive a slip for the food parcel, this slip is then taken by the food aid user to the organised formal food bank in order to receive the food parcel.

'So it was like a referral type thing, through the jobcentre. So they gave him a slip' – Amy

*'…so my health visitor had given me a red form to fill in, and then you have
to go to the food bank yourself, with the red form' – Denise*

Often the individual will then have to answer further questions when they go to the food bank to collect the food parcel and produce the signed paperwork from the third-party individual. The use of a third party not only causes more shame on the individual, which will be discussed below, but also enforces the individual to explain themselves and their situation twice – to two different people and organisations. By ensuring that the food aid user is embarrassed and to some degree humiliated, is a method used, to deter individuals from reaching out and using food banks, this is the power that stigma possesses.

*'er, I did feel embarrassment, erm, because the form you have to fill out for
the council, had all sorts of questions, and then you had to send them your
bank details to prove it, and I was like, I wouldn't be ringing if I wasn't in
need of help. So it was a bit of embarrassment and a bit of shame.' – Kate*

Although this idea of 'proving' your deservingness, need and eligibility didn't just end with foodbanks. As one food aid user reported it was utilised by her daughter's school, when in need of financial support for school trips:

*'…regarding the school, you have to explain everything to get the free
school meals. Erm, they call it the hardship fund at the school, to get help if
the kids are going on a school trip, and it was like £50, you could apply to
the school for a hardship payment, and they would help you pay for it, but
you still got to fill in a form, and explain why you can't afford it, which is
quiet embarrassing' – Kim*

And finally, through the reproduction of the negative discourses and the negative image of individuals who are using food aid charities as being dysfunctional and disobedient, through the media, TV programming and social media, is placing a further stigma on individuals who are having to rely on the help of these charities. The way in which social media and news outlets express that those individuals who are seeking food aid help are disobedient and have behavioural problems, then stigmatises all those who seek help from food aid charities. With one food aid user stating:

*'…but then I see articles online or I see facebook status', people just calling
them 'bombing on benefits'. And I'm just like that's not the case. If you
walked a mile in someone else's shoes, I'm pretty sure your opinion would
change' – Denise*

Food aid users reported trying hard to distance themselves from the image that has been conjured up by media outlets of the types of people who use food banks and they also reported that this image of food aid users would stop them from reaching out for help in case they were labelled undeserving, greedy, dysfunctional or disobedient.

'I mean, I've seen, I've seen people come, who've waited for so long who have absolutely nothing, and they have come for help' - Stacey

'… you see the ones who have had, like jobs their whole lives, and need the help now and don't, and don't go because they're too proud' – Joanne

These individuals are not only seeing this image of food aid users in the news but also on social media, where friends and family members can share information, opinions and views on the 'types' of people who are relying on charitable help. Typically, these ideas are that those who are using food aid are undeserving, greedy and are to blame for their own problems, due to a lack of skills and knowledge; reinforcing the stigma associated with asking for food help while also placing the stigma on those who do ask for help, as being associated with these discourses.

'…because is then the stigmatism that people start to feel like it's not a very deserving service. And people that use it, they are not deserving, they are all on the dole. But it all comes with its own stigma and I do think that its then, when you want to reach out and ask for help, it does make it harder, because you don't want to feel like that' – Amy

While friends and family often start to reach out to them if an individual is in need, it was reported that while this is offered, many don't take up the offer due to dignity, and being associated with the image of people who are unable to take care of themselves:

'There's a lot more people out there that are going ''if you need help, just give me a call''. But how many people are going to be able to do that? When they've got dignity?' – Claire

Adding,

'They want their dignity. They don't want… they want it to be anonymous' – Claire

Finishing by stating,

'You've got those people that have got dignity that they want to preserve and it's their absolute last resort there, they will be on their knees before they will go begging' – Claire

Some volunteers reported that food bank users found it particularly hard when friends and family reproduced the discourses seen in the media and social media. Judging food aid users, as being undeserving and greedy only strengthened the stigma and shame that they had previously felt, alongside judgement and embarrassment:

> *'Then to have to go and talk to your mates, and your mates say, ''oh going to a food bank, only for greedy people and that are on drugs or drink''.' –*
> Adam

While some food bank users reported that they were rejected at mainstream food banks due to not meeting the criteria that has been laid out by the food charity. One volunteer stated:

> *'…I've had service users mention other food banks, and yes, very much ''you don't fit the criteria'' or ''you were here'' or ''you're doing this'' or ''you're doing that'' or ''people won't agree with the way you're living your life''*– Anna

Some smaller organised foodbanks are run by local councils, and therefore have a different set of criteria and referral scheme. One food bank user reported how, in order to receive food aid, while she didn't have to use a third party, she did have to present her bank statements alongside the required forms to her local council. A decision would be based upon these and a short informal chat regarding her expenditures.

> *'…and you had to fill in this form out, and you had to send all your bank statements over to prove that you basically had no money left, and or where your money was going, kind of thing. And then they get in touch with the food bank'* – Kate

It was reported from the food aid users that many had to rely on food aid because of DWP sanctions, which either resulted in no welfare payment or a reduced welfare payment. They reported this was due to not complying with the rules and procedures that were required, and most felt these sanctions were unfair, unjustified and as a result, required the individual to seek food from food aid charities.

It can be seen through the responses from the food aid users that the discourses play heavily within the stigma-power dynamics, which unfortunately leave the food aid user being oppressed and somewhat controlled through the continuous production of the negative neoliberal discourses surrounding food aid. Food aid users attempt to distance themselves from these discourses and the ideals that food aid users are typically dysfunctional, disobedient, lazy, scrounging, and live a chaotic life. The image that is often shown in media

and social media. Through the reproduction of these images and discourses those food aid users who genuinely need help, feel they do not want to be associated with the negative image held in the public's opinion; so they do not ask for help until they absolutely have to, they do not ask for family or friends help, they only take the smallest amount of food and they do not discuss their use of food aid.

5.3.2. Stigma/shame

Shame is a strongly associated emotion to stigma and was repeatedly reported to have been felt throughout the interviews. Stigma was associated with food aid organisations and charities, and the users who relied on the help from food aid charities, therefore felt the shame that was associated with this stigma. The stigma associated with the food aid charity was strong enough to become a barrier and put some individuals off asking for help until the very last minute, until they had no other possible options, because of the feelings of shame that they felt.

'Some days I wouldn't go in, I would be so upset, and [Volunteer] would sit with us' – Joanne

As mentioned above feelings of shame are very much a public emotion, in that while stigma is what causes the feelings of shame, an individual must be in the company of someone else in order to feel the shame, an individual who is placing stigma on the food aid user.

'…it felt like it was, it felt shameful, because it was kind of come into this room, very secretive, and also instead of them saying, instead of them just accepting that you need help they had to look into wider reasons, but it felt like they were judging you' – Denise

Stigma can be associated with the building itself, so the food aid user can feel shame when walking into the foodbank, this was reported to have been the case when there were people in the street that witnessed the food aid user entering the building; when asking the volunteer for help and when leaving the food bank with carrier bags of food, especially if the bags where labelled with the foodbanks name and details. The physical act of walking through the door was reported to have caused feelings of shame.

'…I would say going through the door though, coz I had never used a foodbank before, ever, up until that point, that was a bit nervous' – Kate

During COVID-19, food parcels were being delivered to individuals who needed help and were self-isolating due to their age or an underlying medical condition. This resulted in them not having to physically walk into the foodbank for their food parcel and was reported to have lessened feelings of embarrassment and shame. However, one participant reported that there were still feelings of stigma and shame when the food parcels from the government were being delivered to their door, due to the knowledge that they were the only ones in the street that was in receipt of them.

> *'…that it is quite embarrassing, actually having to walk into a foodbank, for me, and my experience, they delivered it to the door, I didn't have to physically walk in and ask. Erm, but I could imagine, it would be quite embarrassing to do that'* – Kim

Food aid users reported feelings of judgement from the volunteers at the larger, more formal organised food banks as well as people in the street that witnessed them entering or leaving the food bank. It was reported that the shame was felt by one particular user when her and her dad walked past her school having been to the food bank that was next door to her school, while carrying bags of food bank food, her friends at school were able to see where they had been in order to get the food:

> *'I remember that the foodbank was by my school, and I would help my dad carry the shopping home, and I would pass my friends. And that had a mad effect on me coz I was, it was embarrassment, I just thought like, I don't know, maybe it was the stigmatism from it, of the low-income family, needing help, that type of thing'* – Amy

Once individuals had asked for help, or were contemplating asking for help, they would not disclose this information to friends or family, due to the shame and stigma that they believed they would feel from these interactions.

> *'Yes, I won't admit it. I've never admitted it, even to my closest friends. Erm no one knows, er have used it, apart from me and my husband'* – Claire

This also resulted in individuals hiding the food that had been provided to them.

> *'The food banks put the best before dates in big, like marker pens on the packaging. And I was very very careful if I had people in the house. They didn't see those. Yeah, they may not have understood what it meant. But I certainly understood and then I was, I don't think I've told anyone'* – Claire

Individuals also reported that when they did ask for help from a volunteer that they knew, they would do so in a quiet manner, so that other volunteers would not overhear the

conversation, and would take the food parcel very discreetly, to protect themselves from further shame.

> *'…tried to keep hush hush, pulled someone aside, can I get a food parcel, or something like that. You don't want other people to know, even though they are in the same boat'* – Liam

While others reported that when they see someone at the food bank that they know this caused a heightened feeling of shame and embarrassment, or for a friend or family member to refer them to a foodbank that could help.

> *'… I know a lot of people feel shame. And I mean, I've got somebody who came to me a couple of week ago, and I'm like, you know, I've got nothing, and I was like come on go to [ICFH]. She said no, no I can't do it. I was like no they're there to help. Even if, you know we could give you something to last you over. But I think… I don't think it's guilt, it's a lot of the time shame'* – Joanne

Judgement was reported throughout the interviews as a feeling felt associated with stigma. Individuals felt they were being judged, but not only for using a food bank, but the wider context of why they needed to use a foodbank, the choices that they had made, or the decisions that they had not made, that had resulted in them relying on a form of food aid. This feeling of judgement from others alongside the stigmatising looks and comments from others resulted in feelings of shame.

> *'Because they judge you, very judgemental'* – Anthony

> *Researcher: 'Do you ever feel, that when you go to the foodbank to ask for help, that they are judging you, in terms of if you are needy or if your being greedy?'*

> *Joanne: 'I mean in my head I am probably thinking that, but they don't… but in my head I'm thinking oh my god, they are looking at us funny, they know'* – Joanne

It was reported that these feelings of judgement and stigmatising looks, and comments were often placed on the users by those who the users reported as being 'posh' individuals within the community.

> *'Of course, because those people who are posh, they look down at you they do'* – Rosie

Some food aid users view food bank charities as being the upmost charity - helping someone else feed their family, because they are unable to do so, and while the volunteers may not be

judging the user, they themselves can place shame on themselves, and feelings of guilt when reflecting on the situation. They can produce these feelings because they 'think' the volunteers are judging them or because they compare themselves with members of society who do not need to rely on food aid and are able to support their family themselves.

Individuals reported often apologising for asking for help, due to feeling like a burden and not believing they were deserving of the help. This often followed with individuals comparing themselves to the ideal 'deserving' individual, to determine if they can and will be seen as being deserving or if they would be deemed undeserving by the volunteer, the food bank as a whole or society. This apologising was reported to have been caused not only by the feelings of being a burden but the subsequent feelings of shame.

> *'I know from my own experience, I don't like asking for help, the first time I had to ask for electricity I was in tears, and they were fine and said don't worry about it… I can imagine that there are a lot of people, who don't come for that reason, because they don't'* – Stacey

It was reported that when participants felt that they were being stigmatised - which resulted in the feelings of shame, that they would then work hard to distance themselves from these negative neoliberal discourses of being undeserving and greedy, and that they are to blame for their troubles. Believing that they are deserving of help for a variety of reasons.

> *'But aye, that's just the normal stigma, of someone wanting help, 'no you can't do it yourselves', or 'obviously you can't because you're not working', and that's the worst one, and a lot of people work, or have families, not earning enough, and they still need that little extra help'* – Liam

While others positioned themselves differently on the discourse and reported that they felt they were not deserving of the help. This resulted in large feelings of shame and guilt, especially around the theme of there being someone more deserving.

> *'I just think, I just feel that sometimes that I don't deserve it. Because the kids have these nice things, but if it wasn't for [ICFH] then they wouldn't have anything, they wouldn't have anything'* – Joanne

And some felt that they were unable to remove themselves from the discourses and the subsequent labels. Some participants felt that there was no way to remove themselves from the discourses because they were 'everywhere' within the food banking world, due to social media, tv programming, and mainstream media, often leaving some participants to 'just deal' with the discourses that would be placed onto them.

5.3.3. Stigma avoidance techniques

It was seen that food aid users shared numerous techniques that they have utilised to deter the feelings associated with stigma and shame. The first stigma avoidance technique reported was refusing to ask for help from an organised body, such as a food bank/charity, until they absolutely had to, and felt they had no other options. This to them, allowed them to reduce the amount of time they were associated with the stigma, and therefore the subsequent shameful feelings.

'I just had to go for it, I had nothing. It was either ask or don't eat' – Laura

'I'd hum-and-ha about it for a bit beforehand, but I would always message [Volunteer] because I've known her since I was 12' – Grace

Stemming from this, is the availability to befriend volunteers at community-based foodbanks, so that when food aid users ask for a food parcel, it's from someone they know on a more personal level. It was reported that this generally was an easier task than asking a volunteer that they did not know. While this was reported by a large percentage of food aid users as reducing the stigma, a few had an opposing opinion, and believed that asking for help from someone they knew – such as a volunteer they had befriended, resulted in an increase in stigma and shame, due to the idea that they knew them. These select few participants stated they felt going to a food bank that allowed anonymity was a stigma-reducing technique. However, this viewpoint was limited.

'I don't like asking for help, but that's just me, I have always been like that. But I know that I have children, if I need help then I will ask, I will go to [Volunteer] or [Volunteer], because I know them personally, and I trust them.' – Grace

Food aid users also reported that positive self-talk allowed for stigma and shame feelings to be reduced, which resulted in them having increased feelings of confidence and esteem. This entailed them telling themselves that they were not in fact 'scrounging' or 'greedy', and that they were in fact deserving of help. This inevitably helped them feel confident enough to seek help.

'I just sat and had a word with myself, and said 'do you know what, it's not my fault. I was born into this situation, and I just have to make the best of

what I've got' and the day I spoke to myself like that, I just had a much
better outlook on life – Amy

Another way expressed was associated with pride, that food aid users felt they had to 'swallow' their pride to ask for help; mostly this was reported by users who had families relying on them, or just plain ignoring the stigma. This was followed with the thinking that this was a short-term problem, and that they needed help and advice now, and it wouldn't be a long-term crutch.

'I just swallow my pride, and get on with it' – Kim

'To be honest, I just learned to ignore it' - Kim

Another reported technique associated with self-talk, is individuals reminding themselves to feel grateful for the help that they have received as opposed to feeling the effects of the stigma and shame. Turning this negative thinking into a positive thought helped them deal with the negative feelings associated with food aid, but also helped their mental health, and self-worth.

'I think just, instead of feeling shame, just feel a bit more gratitude. I think
the first time, I didn't actually realise how grateful I should have been.
Although, what I got might not have been sufficient enough, it was still
food that I could give to me and my son' – Denise

'I was just grateful that I had the help' – Grace

The foodbank itself can help reducing the stigma associated with food aid and the users by reframing the stigma. It was reported by both food bank users and the volunteers at the ICFH that there appeared to have less stigma associated to them, due to several reasons. Firstly, because the foodbank doesn't have a typical foodbank 'look' due to it being inside a community café and hub. From the outside the ICFH looks like a community café, with computers, a café, tables, and chairs along with a kitchen and some fridges. However, with the foodbank stored out of site, individuals looking in would be unable to notice the foodbank. During the pandemic, with the increase demand, and the closure of the café, the foodbank moved into the café, which did unfortunately make it more visible to individuals; however, with food being distributed in supermarket carrier bags, people having received a food parcel, wouldn't have any identifying factors about them. The ICFH is also known by people in the community to offer a range of services including children's clubs, games nights and

advice/help for the LGBT community and those with autism, so when people access the ICFH, it is not clear to observers what help they are accessing.

> *'[ICFH] isn't just a foodbank, I wouldn't class it as a foodbank. I would class it as a community café. It's not a place where you walk in, and people are like 'ooh, he comes for this, that or the other.' Or the people walking through the streets, people know what food banks look like. So people duck their heads. But at [ICFH] you don't have to. They are giving you more confidence, people don't know what you are going in for, you could be going in for a cup of tea'* – Liam

The second is that because it is run by the community for the community, people see that the community is working together to help the most disadvantaged in the local area, helping those close to home. This theme was very strong during the pandemic, when there were large amounts of media attention to the problems that foodbanks were facing, due to stockpiling, and reduction in donations. Local members of the community, local shops, school, churches, and other charities attempted to help by providing both financial and food donations to the ICFH.

> *'This is all done on the community's back. The community that is the North East is quite prevalent for being run down, and lots of drugs and stuff, and yet they still pull together, to help the most disadvantaged. So I feel like, and I feel as well, there is a huge stigma that comes from the government side, whether people realise it or not, because if you see the things that were said in parliament about the people who are on benefits, I think loads of people would fall to their knees'* – Denise

Thirdly, through the volunteers associated with the foodbank, treating all users equally, fairly, with respect, and in a non-judgemental manner. Volunteers at the ICFH were typically ex-foodbank users, so had lived experiences of accessing foodbanks, and the stigma, shame and guilt that are often felt during the transaction. Therefore, the volunteers would ensure that they treated all food aid users equally, fairly and with no-judgement. This resulted in food aid users feeling safe and would often disclose information to the volunteers when asking for help and assistance.

> *'…because if you judge somebody, they're not here to be…they don't want to be judged. It's taken a lot of courage for a lot of people, personally could have anxiety problems or other mental health issues. If they come to the door and physically asking a stranger, help me I'm hungry.'* – Paul

During the pandemic the ICFH changed its narrative on social media to fight stigma and the associated feelings of shame amongst food aid users. The food hub would typically post on

social media highlighting that the 'fresh food bank' would be open between certain times, post pictures of what was available and to remind food aid users to bring a carrier bag if they had one available. However, during the pandemic, with increased demand and increased generosity of local supermarkets – one being Tesco, they changed their social media posts, to highlight the food had a short shelf-life, and therefore reframed the fresh food bank to highlight this and referred to it as 'preventing food waste in landfill'. The fresh fruit and vegetables were available to anyone, which resulted in some, who were not food insecure, receiving a bag, and donating money to the food bank in return. This action of changing the narrative from 'fresh food bank' to 'preventing food waste in landfill' resulted in reducing the stigma for people who were attending due to food insecurity and highlighted an environmental issue of food waste.

Finally, through the foodbank allowing users to be discreet in asking and receiving help.

> *'You know, they were quite discreet about it. You know, you want anything, you just messaged. You didn't have to write or comment on facebook, so nobody found out about anything. And it wasn't like you were walking out with a big label on you saying 'I've just shopped at [ICFH]' you know. It was all normal carrier bags, as far as anyone else was concerned, you were walking around [North East Village], with bags of shopping' –*
> James

5.4. Wellbeing

When looking at wellbeing, the BioPsychoSocial model (Borrell-Carrio et al., 2004) was determined to be an appropriate model to ensure that all aspects of wellbeing were being reported on. Food aid users reported that wellbeing was typically negatively affected by the use of food aid through the stigma, shame, guilt and the lack of control and power over their decisions. However, there was a number of reported issues that either positively or negatively affected food aid user's wellbeing, and these can be separated via the BioPsychoSocial model of wellbeing.

5.4.1. Physical Wellbeing

The physical aspect of wellbeing was reportedly affected due to several different issues that were acted on by the food aid users. The first being that food aid users reported that they would skip meals reporting it affected their mood, often causing them to have low mood and self-reported grumpiness. The reason behind this was typically reported as being due to

ensuring enough food for other members of the family unit, usually children, or ensuring that there was enough money to buy essentials for other members of the family and children.

'Researcher: Have you ever skipped a meal, or gone hungry?

Rosie: For me son? Yeah, I'm talking before I met [ICFH]. Oh yes, most definitely. Yes' – Rosie

Food aid users that they would eat a very limited diet due to the inability to afford 'healthy' foods and to change their diet. Food aid users reported spending minimal money on food, buying frozen produce, cheaper items, such as supermarket's 'own-brand', and buying food when it is on special offer. This resulted in food aid users eating the same meals repeatedly, with the majority of food being highly processed food items, due to their lower cost and large portion sizes. Food aid users reported that they knew they would be able to get fresh fruit and vegetables from the ICFH, so didn't 'waste' their money on those items, as they were expensive, and often referred to as 'luxury' items.

'I know I can survive on pasta. I will only get cheap shopping. If it's not on offer, I don't get it'- Sophie

Alongside this idea of getting fresh fruit and vegetables from the food bank, it was reported by numerous respondents who had used more formal food aid in the past, that they were not asked if they had any food allergies or if there were food items that they didn't eat or were unable to eat. This resulted in large amounts of the food parcel being inedible due to severe allergies or due to the food being inappropriate for the individual to eat. This idea was linked to food being provided in organised food bank parcels that food aid users were unable to make a meal with, due to them being unorganised tins. This resulted in full meals not being easily assembled, with items from the food parcel.

'I was dairy free at the time. And I think half the food we couldn't eat. We either had some that was ethical food, and it was really hot spicy food, which just wasn't gonna happen' – Claire

Following from this, is the reported wellbeing effects of being provided food that has short shelf life or is past its best before date. Food aid users reported receiving food items from the ICFH that had a short shelf life or were past their best before date. While the food was still fine to eat, food aid users reported not wanting to eat the food, or felt they had to eat it the day they received it, which was problematic if they tried planning meals for a few days.

'I've been along this morning… and I've come back with nothing to make a meal out of. A few boxes of cereal, which is brilliant, I know that will come in handy, erm some bags of pepper crisps, but the kids don't like them. A couple of yoghurts but if they aren't eaten today then they are out of date, and that's pretty much it' – James

This again affects the wellbeing of the food aid users, due to their inability to eat the food over a period of time, resulting in them not having enough food from the food parcel to last a few days. However, it could be argued that better education, storage, and preparation of the food would result in no waste.

Finally, within the physical effects of wellbeing was the reliance on takeaways. This was reportedly very close to the mental health aspect of wellbeing. So will be looked at in two different lenses. In regard to the physical health and wellbeing, it is was reported that food aid users would have a takeaway, and then regret it. This could be for a variety of reasons; one was the way in which the takeaway made the food aid user physically feel e.g. sluggish. From this it was also reported that food aid users knew that takeaways were highly processed foods and were not healthy food to be consuming, however, would make the choice to eat the food.

'…That why you go for the junk food, like mcdonalds, all the time, when you have that ability to cook and prepare your food at home, and I think for most people, I think it comes down to their mental health, and their mental ability' – Claire

5.4.2. Psychological Wellbeing

Following from the physical effects of eating takeaways, is the mental. Food aid users typically reported that they would rely on fast-food when they felt they had poor mental health at the time. It was reported by food aid users that if they felt they had poor mental health they would find cooking too tiresome and would rely on the ease of fast-food. Food aid users reported that they felt it was a cycle between poor mental health and then making poor food choices, resulting in poor mental health. However, it was also reported that when food aid users were in a time of poor physical health, they would rely on fast-food and eating this food would then affect their mental health. While they also reported that they would feel guilty having spent money on a takeaway after having consumed the food.

The Food aid users reported feeling a stigma, shame, guilt, and judgement. This was reported to be followed by negative self-talk. These emotions effect the wellbeing of food aid users by causing low self-esteem and low self-confidence as well as increasing the reported feelings of anxiety and depression. Food aid users reported having a low self-confidence in their ability to ask for help, due to their positioning against the negative discourses and stereotypes placed upon food aid users, caused by their belief that they were in this position due to their own fault. It was reported that food aid users with low self-esteem typically postponed asking for help from the charity, and often reported that they felt there were other people in need, who were more deserving, placing their need lower than others. To counter this, volunteers would reassure the food aid user, in regard to their needs. Food aid users reported that the judgement placed on them by volunteers within the more formal foodbanks resulted in a decrease in self-confidence and self-esteem, resulting in them not wanting to attend again.

'Because of my mental health, when I get depressed I want to spend money, it could be anything' – Rosie

Food aid users reported an increase in feelings of anxiety and depression amongst those with a history of mental health problems. It was reported these feelings were compounded by the negative emotions that were felt when using food aid; but also, by the low self-worth that the food aid user felt when comparing themselves to the negative image of food aid users that were being portrayed in the media and social media. Food aid users also reported an increase in stress at times when loss of control was greatest, this had a negative effect on their wellbeing, in both physical and mental health. Food aid users reported they found it difficult to eat a healthy diet when they were stressed and would choose poor food choices. Secondly, food aid users reported that when they felt stressed, they struggled to perform the tasks required of them, as well as reporting an increase in anxiety and depression feelings. Some food aid users reported that using a food aid charity would cause them stress or heighten their stress, while others disagreed with this and stated that using food banks reduced their feelings of stress and therefore improved their emotional wellbeing due to the knowledge that they would be able to accept help for their current situation, and that they weren't 'alone' in this situation. Some food aid users reported that certain food aid organisations benefited their wellbeing while others negatively affected their wellbeing.

Feelings of self-worth, anxiety and depression and stress were the key aspects that were affected in food aid users emotional and mental wellbeing. The feelings of loss of control, stigma and guilt all play a part in these feelings for food aid users.

5.4.3. Social Wellbeing

Regarding social wellbeing, in the context of COVID-19, it is important to note that both local and national restrictions were in place. A large emphasis was placed on social isolating and social distancing, resulting in little contact between individuals, causing effects to social wellbeing outside of the control of the food aid charity. However, it was reported by food aid users that their mental health was affected by the stigma and shame felt from the using a form of food aid, so they would distance themselves from friends and family to prevent further stigma and shame from loved ones. While other food aid users reported they would rely on their friends and family to help them when they were in a difficult situation.

Not all food aid users reported the use of food aid negatively affecting their wellbeing. While it was largely reported that those who had experience with using an organised form of food aid having had a negative effect on wellbeing, food aid users using a community-based food aid also reported seeing some benefits to their wellbeing associated with the community food aid. Linked to the above idea of control, power and empowerment, food aid users at the ICFH stated that the ways in which the ICFH tried to include them and remove or reduce the stigma allowed for the food aid user to see benefits to wellbeing.

Food aid users reported that they felt more empowered to ask for help from the ICFH, even if they had had a negative experience at a different food bank, due to the reduced stigma associated with the ICFH over that of an organised food bank. Food aid users with young children also reported that the ICFH asked questions in regard to their children and food preferences and allergies. This allowed for the food parcel to be compiled of food that was appropriate to the family that was receiving it, allowing food aid users to decide to swap items out, if they would not be eaten. Due to the nature of the daily fresh fruit and vegetable food bank, food aid users reported they would be able to do their food shopping at a local store,

and then use the fresh fruit and vegetable food bank as a 'top-up', ensuring that they were able to get more fruit and vegetables into their diet.

Following this, community food aid users stated they felt less stigma, shame, and judgement at the ICFH, due to the volunteers. The volunteers would try to listen to the food aid user's problems, and help them in any way possible, often resulting in the food aid user receiving help other than food, and possibly being referred to other services for help. The volunteers would also help with aspects other than food, including mental health, counselling, universal credit help alongside help for parents with autistic children and those in the LGBT community. The ICFH attempted to ensure that the majority of volunteers were previous food aid users, to help reduce any stigma, shame, or judgement that might be felt by the food aid users.

Food aid users also reported that the ICFH had improved their social wellbeing. Prior to COVID-19, the ICFH would run different social clubs for all individuals, as well as the community meal on a Friday and Saturday and the community Christmas dinner. With no set opening hours, it was a safe place for anyone within the community to turn to. Due to COVID-19, this unfortunately had to change. While the volunteers would still strike a conversation with those asking for help, they were unable to offer the community social side that they had previously. Food aid users commented stating that prior to COVID-19, the ICFH had improved their social interactions with others, had allowed them a safe place to meet like-minded people, to do activities that were reduced cost, knowing that the money raised was supporting the charity. They noted that they missed it during COVID-19, and felt that their social wellbeing was being affected, outside of the control of the food aid user and the ICFH.

5.5. Situational Mapping

The use of situational mapping allowed for a greater exploration of the different aspects found within the situation, this included actors, non-actors, discourses, and other non-human elements that were present within the food banking world. The first map is a pictorial representation of everything that is present within this situation of food banking in a community bank setting (Figure 4), following this map, a tidied version was created, please see Appendix J.

The situational map allowed for the relationships between food aid users personal wellbeing and the role of the ICFH to become highlighted, along with the relationship between the ICFH

and the volunteers. However, the power relations within the ICFH and between the users and the food bank and volunteers also became apparent. Using the messy situational map allowed for greater exploration of the themes that were apparent with the constructionist grounded theory, and how these themes are impacted or impact the discourses that are present in the situation.

The map allows for a description of all the human and non-human elements in the situation of enquiry to be presented. Asking questions, such as who and what are important, who and what else may matter in this situation, and who and what might make a difference in this situation. Asking these questions allowed for figure 4 to be made. Some of the key human elements within this situation are the researcher, who plays a key role in the situation and the interpretation of the situation; alongside this are the volunteers, the food aid users, the food aid user's friends, families and ex-partners, their children's schools, local independent and organised charities, shops, and local people who donated food items. The non-human elements important in this situation is the community atmosphere, the food aid users experiences and perspectives, feelings and emotions, power, loss of control and empowerment, , the geographical location of the ICFH, and the ICFH itself. While there were discourses, and areas of contention, which included stigma, shame, guilt, being anonymous while also wanting to be seen as an individual, stereotypes of the food aid users, stereotypes of those living in poverty, and stereotypes of the foodbank itself, who was deserving and how deserving, who was being greedy and why? This all played a part on the food aid users wellbeing, and that also played a role in the map, including wellbeing, physical and mental health. It was important to include and display COVID-19 and the national and local lockdowns on the map due to their significance in the situation. Both COVID-19 and the lockdowns were areas of high contention due to the effects they had on the ICFH, the food aid users, those living in poverty, those who had not previously used a food bank and were now financially insecure due to furlough. This map allowed for the completion of the second map – the social worlds and arenas maps.

Figure 4: Situational Map - Messy working version

5.5.1. Social World mapping

Following from the messy situational map was an organised tidy version, this was followed by the social world mapping. Figure 5 shows the ICFH social world, which plays into the social arena of food poverty and food aid.
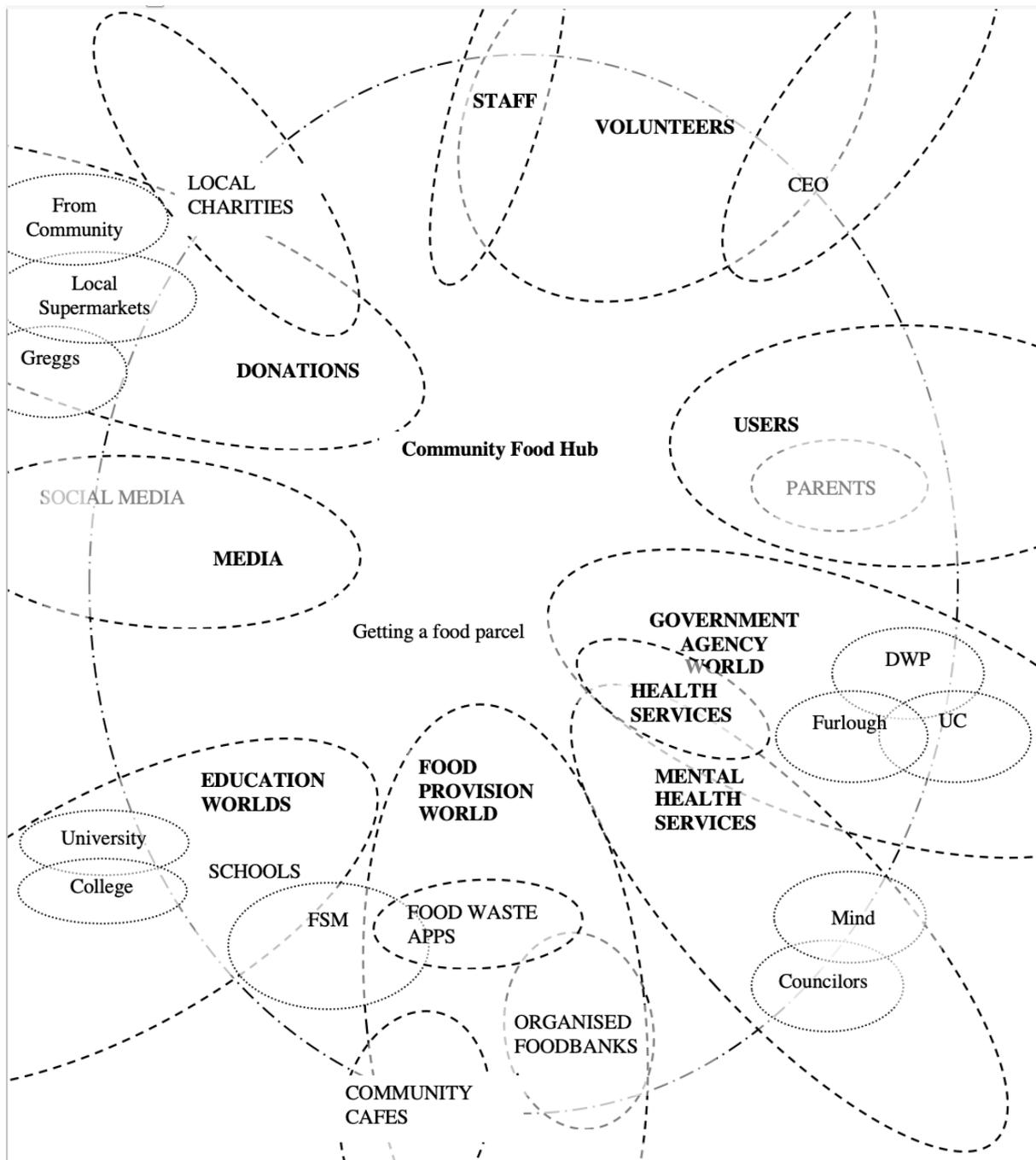
Figure 5: Social Worlds Map – Community Food Hub

The ICFH social arena consists of many social worlds including: volunteers; paid workers; food aid users; external organisations such as local councils, police force and health services; organised foodbanks within the area; donators; government agencies; the media, including social and news and the education worlds, of schools, college, and universities.

The social arena of the ICFH has many roles and purposes. One of the main focuses during COVID-19 was to ensure that those struggling in the community were receiving help. They did this by sourcing more finances to support the increase demand for food parcels, as well as seeking out other sources of food donations. The ICFH has a focus on providing anti-stigma strategies and to produce an anti-stigma narrative that helps to not only reduce the stigma, but also the shame, guilt and judgement that are commonly reported as being felt by the food aid users, helping to improve their overall wellbeing. While the ICFH attempts to support all those living in the community in a variety of ways and to empower themselves, while also taking a position on the neoliberal discourses that are present within the situation. The ICFH attempts to limit the reproduction of discourses within the social arena, while this is sometimes difficult with food aid users themselves reproducing discourses, the ICFH attempts to challenge, change, and adapt the current negative discourses.

The main focus of the volunteer's social world, is to ensure that the food aid users who are coming to seek help, feel at some sort of ease with sharing their personal problems. Volunteers are usually the first layer of the ICFH and therefore are more than likely the first person a food aid user will meet. They will ask what they need, how many people for and if there are any allergies etc. If the volunteer appears to be trustworthy and non-judgemental, then the food aid user can and will share more with them, building a rapport. On top of this, the volunteers are there to unload donations, organise the food, package food parcels, and deliver them to those self-isolating individuals. The volunteers being individuals who have had similar experiences allow for them to feel they can open up more, talking to someone who has had experiences similar to themselves. Alongside the volunteers of the ICFH, the food bank side has organised paid staff, a chef, a youth support worker alongside a councillor and the CEO and managerial staff. The chef produces the menu for the community meal, preparing the meal, cooking the meal, and packing the meal ready to be delivered. He does this with the help of volunteers, and sources the food from donations received during the week. The counsellor is there for both the users and the volunteers to talk and receive help for a variety of mental health concerns, in a completely confidential setting. While the youth support worker has had to adapt due to COVID-19, and the restrictions in place, putting a temporary stop to youth groups, he has stepped into the day-to-day running of the fresh and dry food bank. The managerial team and CEO are central to the ICFH, where they interact with

users daily, as well as those who volunteer, work, and donate to the charity, while also performing a host of managerial and financial tasks behind the scenes on a daily basis. The volunteers and paid staff work independently and in tangent with others within the ICFH.

Food donations to the ICFH come in three forms and are referred to as 'donators'. The first being donations from large organisations, typically these are local supermarkets, Amazon Food, FareShare and Greggs. Some of these are paid for subscriptions, such as FareShare, where the ICFH pays a subscription fee, to receive food from these organisations at a reduced price. Amazon food provides donations of food they consider end of life due to their specific distribution model. These typically consist of frozen food or tinned and dried food. Others, such as local supermarkets and the local Greggs, support via donations to the ICFH depending on the food that is available and the time of the day. The local supermarkets typically donate food that has a short shelf life, they box it up the evening before, and the ICFH collects it in the morning, ready for the volunteers to organise it. This food is typically fresh fruit and vegetables, bread, milk, and yoghurts, that are nearly out of best before date, but are still good to eat, and would normally have ended up in landfill waste. The ICFH has an agreement with their local Greggs. Greggs donates a variety of their premade sandwiches, their sweet treats, and their pasties every morning and again every afternoon. The second method being donations coming from individuals within the community. This is primarily done through people living within the local community who are able to provide a bag or two of shopping, dropping it directly to the ICFH. While others consist of a trolley in a local supermarket, where people can donate food with their shopping. As this ICFH supports their users with more than just food, they take donations of many things, such as furniture, children's toys and clothes, white goods etc. Finally, donations from other charitable organisations in the local area. There are several similar community hubs in the surrounding area, many do not help with food poverty. These charitable organisations donate excess food or items that are of no use to them. Alongside this, other charities, churches, and many schools collect food and/or money from their users and then donate this to the ICFH, in order to support them.

Alongside this, the ICFH has many external individuals who are invested in the charity and who give help and aid, when they are able, but are not volunteers. These include the local councillors, the mayor, and a local Policeman. These individuals work externally to the ICFH, in that they work for different organisations but come together to help the ICFH with their

skills, knowledge and connections to the local community. They work for a variety of different organisations but are important in the running of the ICFH. This support allows the ICFH to receive aid, funding, and support for a variety of causes – not just food support.

Finally, the largest group of individuals within this social world are in fact the ICFH users. These users, specific for this research are those seeking food aid, although the charity deals with numerous people a day, who do not seek food aid, but instead help of another sort. This could be help with DWP and UC applications, a PIP assessment, a job interview, a children's bike, or help of all kinds due to homelessness. The food aid users can be split into three main groups: those that are seeking a community meal on a Friday or Saturday, those seeking a daily fresh food parcel, and those seeking a monthly dried food parcel. The community meals, prior to COVID-19, were available to anyone who walked in and asked for one. The café had a seating area, where people would sit to eat the meal. However, due to the changes needed because of COVID-19, those that required a community meal would contact the ICFH either in person, via social media or a phone call, and reserve a meal. These would then be delivered or available to be picked up and reheated at home. The second form is the fresh food parcel, this is food made up of the fresh fruit and vegetables that have been donated and have a short shelf life. Again, this is for anyone, and helps to eliminate food waste. Those that ask for this parcel must provide their name and their postcode; this is purely to see the number of parcels that are being given out. The final form is the dried food parcel, these are made up of dried foods that have had to be bought with the ICFH money, therefore are restricted to one a month to a family or individual. Although no questions are asked, the users name and address are noted on the system, to ensure that this parcel is only given out once a month. Those that claim this form of food parcel are also able to receive the fresh one the same day and every day.

5.5.2. Positional mapping

Positional mapping allowed for a greater exploration of the discourses that were present within the situation. Allowing for further examination of the many positions held on the discourses by both food aid users and the ICFH volunteers within this social world, which allowed for the differences to be highlighted and the different positions to be found. Not only this but it also allows for an exploration into the missing or silent positions of the discourses.

5.5.2.1. Needy vs Greedy Discourse

Both food aid users and food bank volunteers positioned themselves differently on this discourse (Figure 6), and within the food aid user's social world positions differed. The negative neoliberal discourses associated with being needy or greedy were centred around the idea that some food aid users are not in need but are motivated to reach out for help through greed. The media portrays food aid users as being greedy because they are lazy, unemployed, and relying on welfare benefits, the media also produces this image of food aid users having large flat screen TV's, smart phones, copious amounts of alcohol and nice clothing. Social media continues this through the reproduction and 'sharing' of popular stories created by popular online news outlets.

Food aid users attempted to remove themselves from the label of greedy, by attempting to provide a rationale for their unemployment or possessing nice things. In regard to unemployment many food aid users were on long term sickness due to a variety of illness, while others were in full-time higher education, and struggled to afford all necessities due to their low income of student loans.

Some food aid users had misplaced feelings of greediness. Although they were in need due to a financial crisis, they believed that someone was in a worse position than them, and that they were taking food away from another family in need. It was reported many times that external validation was sought by food aid users from volunteers and food bank workers and was provided to help them understand that they were in need, and not being greedy. However, it was reported that food aid users often had low self-esteem and would not always change their position and thinking about their need. Another food aid user reported they felt like a fraud asking for a food parcel due to them having previously been homeless and had nothing, they knew what it was like to have nothing, and at the time they had a home with heating and electric, so reported feeling like a fraud by asking for a food parcel.

A food aid user stated that their children had nice possessions due to being given them when she worked, however, when her partner left her and the children, she was unable to work; this resulted in her having to rely on food banks. The ICFH provided her with food parcels and activities for her children without questioning the idea that her children had Xbox's. However, formal food banks may have questioned why her children had nice expensive toys, if she was in genuine need of a food bank. She reported that was a reason as to why she wouldn't attend

them, she reported that she already felt guilt for having to rely on the help of someone else because she could not support her children. She would always provide a rationale as to why she was in genuine need, proof almost of her level of need, while she would protest the idea that she would ever ask for anything if she didn't need it.
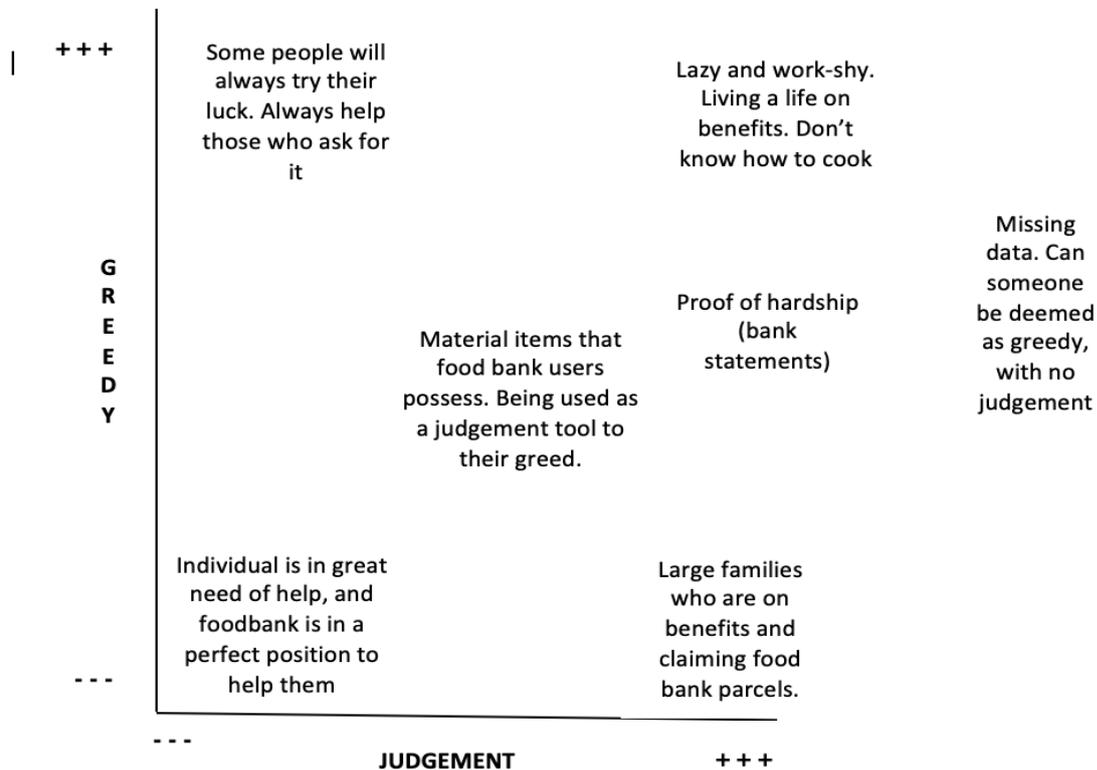

Figure 6: Needs Vs Judgement

Some food aid users felt no greed nor any guilt when asking for a food parcel during COVID-19, due to the pandemic and the social restrictions, isolation and social distancing that were being enforced. With some food aid users reporting there was no other way to source food, so felt they were in genuine need of a food parcel, with a child with a long-term condition that required them to self-isolate, they were limited options of receiving food due to the stock piling and no delivery slots at the time. Other food aid users stated they felt no greed when asking for food aid help, due to the knowledge that they had young children who needed feeding, as opposed to being a single person asking for help; while they didn't feel that all single people asking for help were greedy, but that due to them having children it automatically qualified them to be in genuine need. Those that were single and didn't have dependents would often explain why they were in need, but also relied on external validation.

While some food aid users would position themselves away from this discourse, others would position other food aid users – naming them greedy, due to their buying habits, often alcohol, and then asking for a food parcel. These food aid users were labelled as being greedy by other food aid users who couldn't understand why they would spend their money on alcohol instead of food. Another example reported, was a food aid user waiting in line for a food parcel, when they saw someone else in the line, an acquaintance, and know from previous experiences that they receive more monthly income from UC than this food aid user does, this lead to the food aid user reproducing the greedy discourse to label this individual, who he had deemed didn't need a food parcel, due to the increase in monthly income. This was not very common, but it was reported a few times in interviews, however, food aid users seemed unaware of the fact that while they are attempting to distance themselves from these negative discourses, they are placing them on fellow food aid users.

Volunteers positioned themselves against this discourse as well, different to that of food aid users, due to the volunteers not utilising food aid, while they also had the power to challenge the discourse, more strongly than that of the food aid users. Volunteers reported that yes there were some food aid users who were 'greedy', and 'would try their luck', or took more than they were entitled to, and this was not just seen with food, but also the fresh flowers that were free to food aid users. However, the volunteers would mention this to the specific food aid user, highlighting that it was important to leave some food items for others that needed help. They would not reprimand the food aid user, nor would they deny aid, and the conversation would be done in a sensitive manner and in a private setting. If and when the food aid users would return for further help, they would be supported again by the volunteers, with the volunteers believing that anyone who came to a foodbank to ask for help was in need of that help, due to the barriers and stigma associated with asking for a food parcel. It was reported by both food aid users and volunteers, that previous experience in more organised foodbanks had seen the use of this binary discourse as a way to determine who was in need for help and who was being greedy. This idea was heavily challenged within the ICFH, who took the stance that everyone was in need, and no one could know the circumstances the food aid users find themselves in.

5.5.2.2. Undeserving and Deserving Poor Discourse

The undeserving and deserving poor discourse, while also a binary discourse, differed to that of the needy vs greedy due to a number of reasons, the first being that it is focused on poverty as a whole, instead of just food insecurity. Secondly, is that the needy vs greedy discourse was created and produced and reproduced within organised food banks as a tool to decide was entitled to help; whereas the undeserving and deserving poor discourse has been seen to be controlled by the media and reproduced and challenged through media and social media. Food aid users positioned themselves on this discourse in a variety of different positions again, alongside this was the positions the volunteers placed themselves on against this discourse as well (Figure 7).
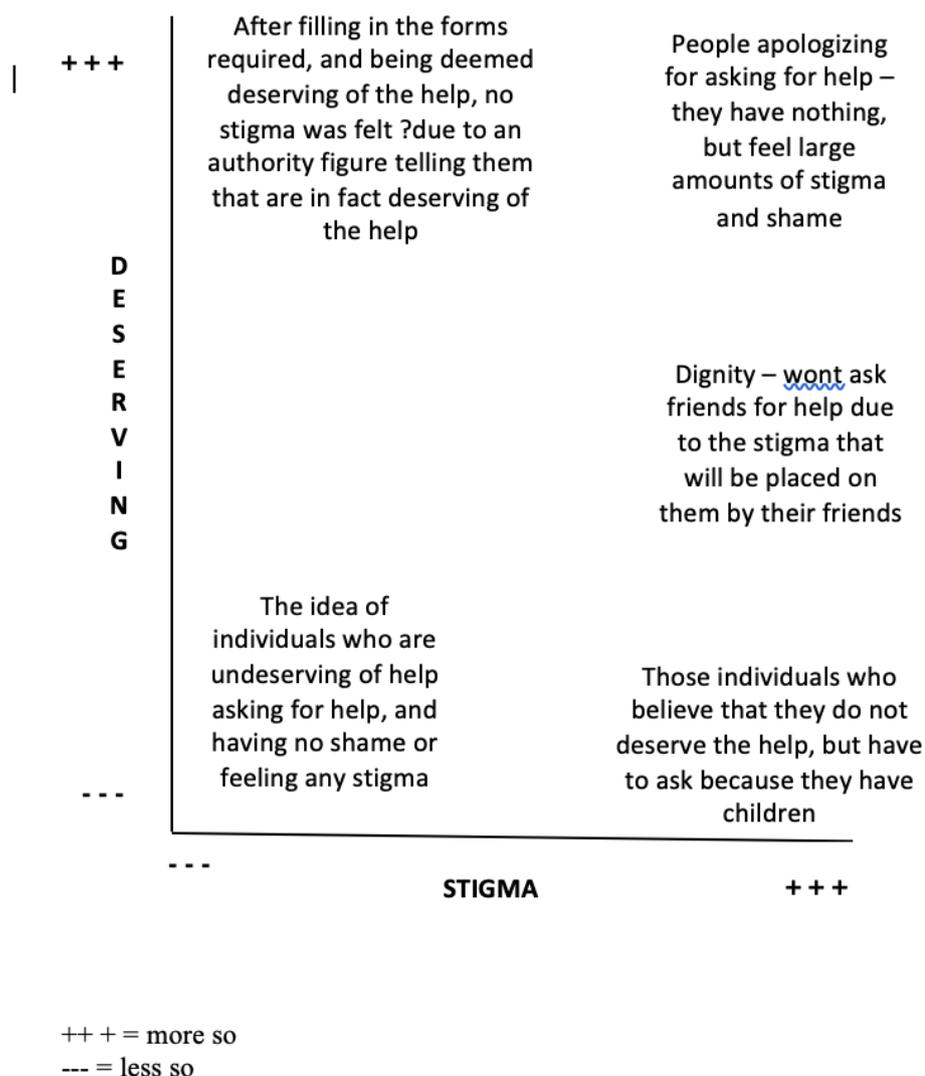
Figure 7: Stigma Vs Deserving

Some food aid users and volunteers believed that other food aid users were undeserving, and positioned against this, viewing the food aid users who use food banks, so they can spend their money on alcohol as being undeserving and greedy. While also viewing those food aid users who attend the ICFH, to ask for a Greggs sandwich, drink, and crisps as being undeserving, because they were being picky about what they asked for – and they didn't ask for a full food parcel. Individuals who would ask for these few items would have been provided them, because they were considered to still be in needy and deserving of the help.

Some food aid users took the stance that every individual is deserving of help, no matter the circumstances, and no one is undeserving, however, they often felt the need to seek external validation that they were deserving of their need, to confirm their need. This was usually linked to having dependents to support. However, COVID-19 changed the social, cultural, and political climate within the deserving and undeserving poor discourse. With more people being made unemployed and furloughed more and more people were being considered deserving of help, individuals who would have previously been deemed undeserving of any help.

Some organised food aid charities asked for an application form to be completed, alongside this evidence of finances were required, typically a bank statement. Once these forms of evidence and application form had been received a formal meeting was organised to discuss the application form and evidence. Here food aid users had to defend their outgoings and provide rationale for why they may have money left in their bank account but are unable to purchase food, due to that money being required for other expenses, later in the month. Once this had been completed the food aid user was informed if they were successful. Food aid users reported feeling, if they were successful, they were considered deserving, if they were not successful, they were considered undeserving. This way of food banking allows for greater reproduction of this discourse within the food banking system. Compared to the informal ICFH, that provides food aid to any individual regardless of background or finances deeming everyone to be deserving of help.

It was also reported that food aid users felt that they were not deserving of the help, this was usually linked to poor attitude towards their own self-esteem. However, they believed their children to be deserving, because they were unable to influence the financial situation the parents were in. This resulted in food aid users positioning themselves as being undeserving

but positioning their children as deserving. This linked with the need that food aid users had to apologise for asking for help, even if they had positioned themselves as being deserving, they still felt the need to apologise for asking for help.

Media and social media again play a part in deeming who is deserving and undeserving of help, and it can be seen, through the CDA, that the discourse changed as COVID-19 had a greater impact on the country. What is important to notice is the silent positions within this discourse. It was seen that there was missing data regarding maximum un-deservingness and no feelings of stigma and shame. Data was gathered regarding this position, however, not from individuals who hold this position themselves. Food aid users who hold this position were not found to be interviewed, however food aid users bought this position on the discourse into the narrative by expressing how some food aid users are depicted in the media as being undeserving and having no feelings of shame and stigma at relying on food aid.

5.5.2.3. Neoliberal Discourse of Blame

The neoliberal discourse of blame is centred around the idea that the individual in poverty is to blame for the current financial situation that they find themselves in. This is a discourse that is heavily influenced by the media and politicians but reproduced via social media. It was not the most defined discourse, nor the most prominent one found within this situation, however it was still reported on and reproduced by food aid users.

In the time of COVID-19, food aid users held different positions within this discourse. With a select number of food aid users feeling that in fact, some food aid users were to blame for their current situations, feeling that some food aid users do not try to 'help themselves' and are happy to constantly rely on the help and handouts of others; while spending their money on material objects that are not needed nor required, instead of spending the money on what they deemed items of importance, such as food. This was compounded by stories of other food aid users spending their money on alcohol from the store, and then asking the food bank for a food parcel. Individuals who leaned towards this position typically attempted to distance themselves from the idea that food aid users were greedy and undeserving. It was interesting to note that the majority of individuals who blamed food aid users for their situation, within the food aid social world were in fact the food aid users themselves. Volunteers within this social world did not blame individuals for their current reliance on food aid, nor did any of the

supporting staff and/or organisations. Again, this was linked to the idea the ICFH had, in that if anyone asks for help and aid, then they are deserving and in need of that help, while also believing that no one is to blame, instead the volunteers would help the food aid users, and provide knowledge and skills to help them in the future if they were to find themselves in a similar situation.

Other food aid users positioned themselves differently, in that they felt they were not to blame for their troubles. One user stated that at the time she was under 16 and had to rely on what her parents could provide for her. Therefore, she did not see herself as being to blame for the situation. However, this perspective is a reflective view on the past, and not in the current moment. Another felt that they found themselves in a financial difficult situation because their partner had left them and their children, which resulted in a reduced income. In this situation the food aid user did not blame themselves for having to rely on food aid but blamed their ex-partner.

What was also interesting in this discourse, is that several food aid users held the position that the government was to blame for their current financial situation; with the effects of COVID-19 having played a massive part in some of the food aid user's current financial issues, due to unemployment, redundancy, furlough, and the stockpiling of cheaper food items. It was also interesting to note in this discourse, no food aid user blamed themselves for their current reliance of food aid or their financial difficulties. They positioned themselves differently in regard to who was to blame for their situation, but none of them felt they were to blame.

5.6. Conclusion

This chapter presented findings from in-depth semi-structured interviews with food aid users and volunteers, using constructionist grounded theory and situational analysis.

One of the main findings of this chapter was the control journey food aid users find themselves on when in a crisis. This chapter showcased this phenomenon which will be discussed further in the next chapter. This chapter also highlighted stigma, shame and guilt which was seen within this situation, and the effects that these have on the reported welling of food aid users. While presenting analysis of discourses within the food banking social world, by showcasing the needy vs greedy discourse alongside the 'undeserving' and 'deserving'

previously explored within British media. Furthermore, this chapter presents an in-depth analysis of positions food aid users and volunteers took with discourses within the situation, noting many food aid users distance themselves from discourses as much as possible, while also reproducing the discourse and placing it on others that were also using the food bank. Finally, this chapter showcased how the ICFH actively challenged stigma and discourses being brought into their social world via food aid users, social media, British media, and volunteers.

6. Discussion

In this chapter, the findings from the previous chapter are interpreted and contextualised within current knowledge and sociological theories. The implications, limitations and recommendations for future research are presented. This chapter will explore the control journey and Foucault's idea of disciplinary power amongst food aid users, after which the idea of stigma and power will be contextualised within Foucault's thinking of power.

This thesis set out to answer several questions, aims, and objectives. The first aim was to identify the common and current neoliberal discourses and positions held by the British press, food aid users, and volunteers within an ICFH. The second aim was to explore the shared lived experiences and perspectives of food insecurity and food aid use within the independent food banking system. The final aim was to explore the reported effects of food insecurity and food aid use on the wellbeing of food aid users. This thesis has achieved all the aims and has shown this throughout the previous chapters but will be summarised in this chapter.

The CDA of four British newspapers, between January and March 2020, allowed for an in-depth analysis of the dominant discourses within poverty, but more specifically food insecurity. This allowed for an analysis into how they were being reproduced or challenged within the media, while also allowing myself to develop a greater knowledge of the discourses present within food insecurity, and how the context of COVID-19 changed the food insecurity and food bank narrative. This knowledge was of great importance when formulating interview questions for the second part of the study – interviewing food aid users and food aid volunteers. It also led to an analysis of these discourses and the interviews of food aid users/volunteers, their positioning and reproducing/challenging of the discourses to be fully explored within the second part of the study. This ultimately allowed for a deeper exploration of the effects that the discourses can possess on the reported wellbeing of food aid users, through their digestion of these discourses through the British media. Furthermore, the analysis of volunteers and the interviews of food aid users allowed for an exploration into the ICFH itself, and how the organisation challenges or reproduces the discourses seen within the food bank narrative.

This thesis has highlighted the reporting from food aid users of a feeling of shame and judgement, and that these feelings are inexplicably linked to the stigma that is associated with requiring food aid support from a food aid charity, whether that be an ICFH or an organised

food aid charity. The physical act of asking for help from another person produced strong feelings of shame, and the fear of potential judgement that could be felt often resulted in being a barrier to participants asking for help when they are in need. This study has also shown the reporting of strong feelings of guilt associated with needing and receiving a food parcel. This feeling of guilt was often reported in relation to their 'role' within society, whether that was a mother, a father, or just believing that there was someone else in a worse position, that deserved the help more than they did. An important part of this thesis is the phenomena of shame vs guilt. Shame in that food aid users felt shame in a public setting, often in the food bank in front of people who could place judgement and stigma onto the user. Guilt, a private emotion felt when the food aid user was alone and had the ability to reflect on the situation of needing a food parcel, also being offered and accepting the food parcel. This study has added new evidence on Benedicts (1946) theory of shame vs guilt being public vs private and will be discussed more later in this chapter. This study highlighted that food aid users felt that there was a loss of control due to a crisis, over which they had little to no control. They often found themselves in crisis, resulting in them often being forced to rely on charity while they work through their control journey to achieve control again. The ICFH empowered food aid users by providing them with a range of skills and knowledge to better help themselves in the future and by aiding them in understanding how the crisis came about in the first place. This thesis highlighted the reported effects that relying on food aid can have on the wellbeing of food aid users, both positively and negatively, linking this with the feelings of stigma, guilt, shame, control being forcibly removed, and their journey to regain control. Finally, this study showcases the neoliberal discourses that are present within poverty and food insecurity as well as providing an argument for the new needy vs greedy food aid specific food insecurity and food banking discourse that was seen throughout the qualitative interviews with both food aid users and food banking volunteers.

6.1. The control journey and disciplinary power amongst food aid users

Control was reported by food aid users as being a contributing factor to their wellbeing and was reported as having equally a negative and positive effect on the participants wellbeing. Control within this situation was a journey (Figure 3 –Section 5.1), due to the ways in which control was often forcibly removed from the participant who then must attempt to gain control back through different means, as the situation they find themselves in changes and

develops. Food aid users reported that when control was forcibly removed from them, their wellbeing was negatively affected, with reports of increase stress, anxiety and in some cases depression. Examples of control being forcibly removed from the participant included being sanctioned by the DWP, job loss and furlough due to the COVID-19 pandemic, relationship breakdown, or a death in the family. When food aid users found themselves in this situation with a loss of control, they are often left with few options in regard to empowering themselves again. This thesis found two main resources food aid users utilised for help, they either asked family and friends or asked a charity for help. Both these options reported mixed impact on the wellbeing of the food aid users. Some stated that asking family and friends helped, due to the knowledge there would be no judgement from 'strangers', while other participants stated they couldn't ask for help from family and friends, due to the stigma that they could potentially feel from a loved one, being stronger than that of a stranger. When asking a charity for help, participants defined two types of food aid charity, Organised and Independent. The organised food aid charities, were often judgemental, determining the deservingness and need of the food aid users, and often would decline. These experiences had a negative impact on the wellbeing of participants, often reported as being barriers to accessing food aid help from other charities for fear of a similar experience. Others reported that they found it a positive experience, due to the knowledge that they were anonymised, the volunteers didn't know them. Food aid users reported independent food banks had a negative impact on their wellbeing, due to the 'closeness' of the volunteers and users. The volunteers were friendly and chatty, giving the idea of 'friends helping friends' which resulted in those looking for anonymity some discomfort. Other food aid users reported this atmosphere of the independent food banks benefited their wellbeing as they felt no judgement and a reduction in the stigma and shame that they had previously felt. Following the immediate need for help, was the need for long-term empowerment and enablement of food aid users. The independent food aid charity was exceptional at empowering food aid users. They would help users recognise the actions that resulted in the crisis, before teaching them the skills and knowledge needed to help prevent further crisis of similar nature, while at the same time teaching them skills such as cooking and budgeting, college courses, CV courses, help with the DWP and UC forms etc. This support allowed the food aid user to learn and grow from the situation while also providing immediate help and relief in the form of a food parcel. Food aid users reported this empowerment had a positive impact on their

wellbeing, reducing stress, anxiety, and depression, while also enabling them to determine bad cycles of behaviour, such as poor diets, and providing them with the skills and knowledge to improve these.

To place this control journey within a theoretical context, the use of Foucault's ideas on power relations can be utilised.

Foucault challenged the idea that power is exercised by people or groups of individuals through acts of control or force, instead seeing it as being distributed through society and being universal (Foucault, 1975). Believing that 'power is everywhere' and 'comes from everywhere' (Foucault, 1976:63), so therefore has no agency nor a structure. Foucault's move away from 'sovereign' power to 'disciplinary' power. Insisting that sovereign power had started to be eliminated around the 17th and 18th century which allowed disciplinary power to rise. Disciplinary power uses a variety of tactics and techniques to encourage particular behaviours and inhibit others from individuals within society (Foucault, 1975). Foucault's idea was that disciplinary power can regulate the conduct of people within the social body through regulating the organisation of space, the time and people's activities and behaviours. These being enforced through the complex systems of surveillance. Disciplinary power works through the techniques of hierarchical observation, norms, and micro-penalties and rewards to subtly guide the behaviours of individuals and populations towards those that are desirable (Foucault, 1975). Disciplinary power relies heavily on the concept of normal and abnormal, where most people internalise the proper way to behave in each culture and actualise that in their life course, avoiding those behaviours that are considered abnormal or those that go against a society's standards and norms (Foucault, 1975).

In the situation of food aid users having control forcibly removed, it was reported that food aid users were often sanctioned by the DWP. This was due in part to not complying with a set of rules or regulations that were being outlined by the Welfare State. The DWP request a meeting at a certain time, date, and place. If the participant was unable to make this appointment they were threatened with sanctioning. If the participant arrived at the meeting late, they were sanctioned. If they arrived on time but did not have proof of job searching for 35 hours a week (Department for Work and Pensions, 2021), then they were sanctioned. This is an example of Foucault's idea of power, in the DWP organising the participants time, space, their activities and behaviours to receive their welfare payment. If they performed behaviours

that were undesirable, then they experienced micro-penalties in the form of sanctioning of payments. This movement of power resulted in the food aid user having a 'crisis'. The Welfare State, with the incorporation of UC, has applied heavier sanctions for recipients as a form of penalty (Keen, 2018) to curb, what society has deemed, inappropriate behaviour (Foucault, 1975). Food aid users could be sanctioned for a variety of tasks not being fulfilled, such as not applying to enough jobs, not attending their appointment(s) on time, or not having the correct paperwork for the previous week or fortnights activities (Webster, 2017; DWP, 2021). Here it can be seen that power is being used to regulate the behaviour of food aid users and welfare recipients, and when they fail to do so, they are penalised through a sanction. As mentioned, this forces them to lose control, through a passive action of control being forcibly removed from them.

After the food aid user has experienced a crisis, they reported having to submit for help, or struggle alone with no help. When food aid users submitted for help, there were two routes. They could either rely on friends and family or on a charity for help. It was seen that when the food aid users were faced with this predicament and relied on the help of a charity, they would seek out a foodbank through several means, either asking for help from a healthcare professional, or searching via social media and search webpages. To access a food parcel, some foodbanks required participants to disclose personal information, or to perform a series of tasks prior to their attending the foodbank, this finding agreed with previous research (Loopstra, 2018a; Dowler, 2014). In the terms of an organised foodbank, this would often result with food aid users having to disclose their current situation to a third party, to receive a 'slip' that they were then able to trade for a food parcel (The Trussell Trust, 2020). In this example, again it can be seen that Foucault's idea of disciplinary power is being exercised to guide the behaviours of those in need. If the food aid user did not complete the tasks prior to attending the foodbank; if they did not have the 'slip', or if they did not attend within the correct time frame, they would be turned away with no food. Individual information, such as name and address were kept by the organised foodbanks, as a form of surveillance, to determine if an individual has had too much assistance, and if they are 'allowed' more, or if they have in face become dependent or taking 'advantage of free food' (Williams et al., 2016). This stage of the control journey allows the food aid user to receive a short-term emergency,

fix to their current crisis, but does not delve deeper to help with the root cause of the crisis, nor does it allow the food aid user to empower themselves to gain control back.

Following the short-term help provided by both organised and independent community foodbanks, the food aid user typically reports working on gaining control back. This was seen to be via two main routes. Independently, where the food aid user works alone to try and regain their control, or with assistance, with the help of the ICFH. Where help is provided by the ICFH, Foucault's disciplinary power is being challenged and disrupted by the ICFH themselves. In this situation the ICFH is attempting to enable and support food aid users to empower them to take back control and does so in a variety of ways. Empowerment Theory's (Perkins and Zimmerman, 1995) ambition is to empower individuals and communities, particularly those with pasts of oppression or marginalisation (Perkins and Zimmerman, 1995), through guiding people towards attaining a sense of control (Perkins and Zimmerman, 1995). This theory's main aim is helping oppressed people at the individual, group, and community levels gain the personal and interpersonal power to improve their lives (Perkins and Zimmerman, 1995). This is the long-term help that food aid users often need, with the ICFH enabling food aid users to improve their knowledge and understanding of the crisis, helping them prevent further crises.

The ICFH enables the empowerment of food aid users in a wide variety of ways. The first being the use of ex-food aid users as volunteers. Using these individuals as the key volunteers within the foodbank allows the new food aid users to know that the individuals who are helping them, are listening to their experiences, and empathising, having lived through a similar experience. This allows for a reduction in the stigma, shame and judgement felt by the food aid users (Zimmerman et al., 1992).

This approach also empowers the ex-food aid users, who are now able to gain volunteer experience, to develop transferable skills that are beneficial to their CV and future job employment. It was also reported that the ex-food aid users were provided with courses such as the Jamie Oliver Cooking Course, to help further develop skills that can be utilised at home, but also in future employment. The charity also helps with writing CV's, with job interviews and application prep, as well as help navigating the jobcentre, UC and the DWP. The ICFH also helped to empower the food aid users by changing the narrative used in the ICFH and on their social media. Individuals from the community were able to access food from the fresh fruit

and vegetable section daily, no referral needed, and this used to be termed the 'fresh food bank'. However, the ICFH changed the narrative and started referring to it as 'food waste', advertising that the food had a short shelf-life, and that anyone was able to come and collect some, helping prevent food waste, which appeared to be hugely popular. The ICFH also organised confidential counselling with trained councillors where coping mechanisms were taught. During the half-terms, and school holidays, food packs are available to families. They include all the ingredients to make 3-4 different meals, along with an activity book that includes the recipe and step-by-step instruction, as well as links to 'follow-along' YouTube videos. They also contain activities for children - colouring in, word searches etc.

Enabling empowerment of the food aid user was an important aspect of the ICFH, in ensuring the food aid user was supported in empowering themselves to take control back. It was also hugely important to the ICFH to empower food aid user in the long-term as well as ensuring that they had access to food in the short-term.

6.2. Poverty Narrative

The narrative around food poverty, and poverty in general, has been seen to be very negative, as can be seen in chapter 4: Critical Discourse Analysis and is also shown to be compounded by the media, social media, and TV programming production.

The role that the media has in the production and reproduction of harmful neoliberal discourses forces food aid users to position themselves against them daily, defend themselves for their actions and results in feelings of un-deservingness, and that they are 'failing in life' (Purdam, Garratt and Esmail, 2016). The narrative around poverty, and specifically food poverty, has been dominated by right-wing politicians and newspapers, who often 'talk' about individuals living in poverty and experiencing food poverty but don't provide a platform for these individuals to speak for themselves, and share their experiences (Garthwaite, 2016).

This narrative has been this way for some time. With more austerity measures being enforced, during a conservative government being voted into power in December 2019 and the leaving of the EU in January 2020, it could have continued. However, the COVID-19 pandemic and the UK's subsequent dealings resulted in the narrative being altered – slightly. As can be seen in chapter 4: Critical Discourse Analysis, the narrative and discourses were being challenged in four daily British newspapers. Each of the newspapers challenged the discourses in a variety

of ways, which corresponded with the general readership of that specific paper. COVID-19 allowed the narrative to change, as it highlighted the problems with the food system in the UK, but also permitted food aid users, volunteers, and CEOs of food banks to express their need and their experiences with food aid during a pandemic (Power et al., 2020). Due to the nature of the pandemic, social isolation, local and national lockdowns were used to curb the virus, resulting in high numbers of furlough and unemployment (Power et al., 2020). This resulted in individuals who had previously been financially secure, had never relied on welfare or food banks, that were now in a position of need (Power et al., 2020). This allowed for the narrative around people being undeserving and deserving to be altered, with newspapers now highlighting how people who had previously been termed undeserving were deserving. The British newspapers also allowed a platform for food aid users to express themselves and their experiences with food poverty and how a food aid charity had helped them in their time of need.

Following on from this, the interviews conducted as part of this thesis, allowed a space for food aid users to highlight their thoughts, feelings, ideas, experiences, and perspectives regarding food poverty, food banks, their wellbeing, and the COVID-19 pandemic, doing so in a safe, non-judgemental environment. The production of this thesis follows on from this and allows a space and a platform for food aid users to express themselves, and to change the narrative. The only way to change the narrative is to change the narrators (O'Hara, 2020b).

As mentioned above, the narrative around food poverty was used to compound the food aid user's comparison of themselves to the social roles they believed to have been assigned to (Garthwaite, 2016; Price et al., 2020). This was more than just the social role of a mother or a father, but regarding the role of a food aid user, with food aid users being expressed as being lazy, workshy, scrounging, to blame for their situation, being unemployed, uneducated, and living a chaotic life (Gilbert, 2003; Garthwaite, 2016; Tihelkova, 2015; Howe, 1998). The poverty narrative then allowed for a stereotype and subsequent labels to be formed around food aid users (Patrick, 2016; Romano, 2015). This stereotype and narrative have been formulated by people in a position of power to do so. These ideas are then repeated within society especially through social media (Brooker et al., 2015; Byrne and McEnhill, 2014). This narrative has been formulated by people outside of the narrative and not the people that are being affected by nor live within the narrative (O'Hara, 2020a).

6.3. The Needy vs Greedy discourse

As highlighted above, the poverty narrative changed during the COVID-19 pandemic, along with the popular neoliberal poverty discourses (Power et al., 2020). The discourses that were explored in the Chapter 4 were the idea that an individual was either 'undeserving or deserving poor', they were to blame for their situation, and that those who were accessing help are scroungers. Food aid users positioned themselves differently on these discourses, as seen in the previous chapter. However, the associated stigma and shame of these discourses was reported to have caused fear and stopped food aid users from seeking help, allowing the discourses to have power.

The second part of this thesis, through the semi-structured interviews with food aid users and volunteers, using situational analysis to explore the discourses and the positions of food aid users, a new neoliberal discourse was seen - the idea of a 'needy vs greedy' food aid user. The discourse was focused on the food aid user. Whether they were in genuine need and therefore met the criteria and were awarded a food parcel, or they were in fact being greedy and 'trying their luck', therefore they were not awarded a food parcel because they had not met the criteria. This discourse was found within the organised food banks as opposed to the ICFH and was used by the volunteers as a method to decide whether to help an individual or not, eliminating those not deemed in genuine need. While it was not used like that within the community food bank, it was still present, however the ICFH positioned themselves against the discourses, believing that all those that sought help were in need, as it had taken a lot of courage to ask for help.

It was reported that organised food banks used this binary of being either needy or greedy to ensure that only appropriate individuals had access to the food aid help. Often deciding if an individual was either in need or being greedy through the information and answers provided by the food aid user to the food aid volunteer. However, the information provided was through a short question and answer chat, and not in detail, so did not allow for the food aid user to give a precise answer. While the ICFH positioned themselves along the idea that everyone is needy, and that if a food aid user has mustered the strength to ask a stranger for help in feeding themselves and their family, then they are in genuine need of help. Positioning themselves thus, resulted in the ICFH stating that they helped everyone that asked for help and would refer them onto more specialist assistance if needed.

The food aid users reported feeling that the needy vs greedy discourse was another form of judgement from the volunteers within the organised food banks, as it was used as a formal tool of elimination. Food aid users reported that they would stress and internalise their level of need – due to their children having electrical items, such as Xbox's, that they had previously afforded before they were in crisis; this would result in the food aid user not asking for help, skipping meals to make food last longer and asking for help from friends and family first. Some reported this is when they would seek external validation of their need to ensure they would not be labelled greedy. The ICFH volunteers reported that they would attempt to make all food aid users feel that their need was valid, providing validation to those that required it.

When contextualising the Needy vs Greedy discourse found within this research study, it can be seen that it slightly resembles aspects from the three more prominent neoliberal discourses explored within the CDA (undeserving and deserving poor; the neoliberal discourse of blame, and scroungers). However, it is important to note that the needy vs greedy discourse is one that is found to have been created and primarily reproduced within the foodbanks, as opposed to the more prominent three that were created and are reproduced within the media and government speeches.

The 'undeserving and deserving poor' discourse can be seen as another binary discourse, with individuals either being undeserving poor or deserving poor, and is linked to their position within society, and while linked to poverty (Tihelkova, 2015; Shildrick, 2012), more so financial than food poverty. The undeserving and deserving poor discourse is used to determine how resources should be spent between groups of people in society (Shildrick, 2012; Mooney and Neal,2010). With most people being deemed undeserving before COVID-19, it was used as a form of stigma-power, in the sense of Marxism (Nigam, 1996; Tyler 2020b), to control the undeserving poor into feelings of shame, with the idea of guiding them to seek employment (Tyler, 2020b). However, due to COVID-19, it was seen that this discourse changed, and that more and more people were being deemed deserving, due to their current crisis being explicably linked to COVID-19 as opposed to being seen as their own doing.

Regarding the needy vs greedy discourse, it is outside the realm of this thesis to determine if there was a change seen during the pandemic, as the thesis had not specifically sought this discourse before COVID-19. However, the needy vs greedy discourse is also used to determine

who has access to resources, specifically food, as food banks position themselves differently on it.

This discourse differed from the undeserving and deserving binary discourse in several ways. The most prominent is where the discourse is used, reproduced, and challenged. The needy vs greedy discourse was produced and reproduced within the organised foodbanks, who use it as a tool to decide someone's need. It was created and shared within the food bank world, amongst the volunteers who are supposed to be helping and aiding the food aid users; whereas the undeserving and deserving poor discourse is a top-down discourse, in that it is produced and reproduced by British media, social media, TV programming and MP's speeches, shared and used within the poverty narrative about food aid users. This then trickles down into the general poverty narrative amongst people but is not typically used amongst the food bank volunteers. This could be due to the second difference, in that the undeserving and deserving poor discourse is primarily a poverty discourse, in that it is used to determine if someone is deserving of help from the welfare state, due to their personal lifestyle choices, and their inability to work, due to sickness, being a child or elderly etc; whereas the needy vs greedy is a food poverty discourse, in that it is used primarily to decide if someone is in need for food, or being greedy.

When looking at the scrounger discourse, this can be linked to the greedy aspect of the needy vs greedy discourse. If an individual is a scrounger, they are typically labelled lazy, workshy and would rather cope on handouts than find employment (Morrison, 2019). This 'scrounger' discourse can also be linked with individuals who are seeking sickness benefits, being deemed to not have a disability or illness (Garthwaite, 2011). Again, this discourse is a poverty discourse, but can be used within the food poverty narrative. If an individual is being greedy, they are said to be 'trying their luck' and hoping to receive a food parcel when they might not be 'deserving' of one, and instead are 'scrounging'. Food aid users reported that they were in genuine need of the help, but often were quick to state that someone else who had accessed help was in-fact being greedy, due to their ability to purchase alcohol from the supermarket and then ask for a food parcel. It was interesting to note that in these situations the food aid users were often unaware of the fact that they had reproduced the needy vs greedy discourse.

Finally, the discourse of blame and individualism. This discourse is centred around the idea that the individual is to blame for their problem or crisis (Shildrick and MacDonald, 2013). The individual is to blame for their financial insecurity and their poverty, resulting in them having to rely on help from the state welfare or the charity sector (Garthwaite, 2011; Shildrick and MacDonalds, 2013). This links with the needy vs greedy discourse in that even if a food aid user is deemed to be in genuine need of a food parcel, they are in that position because they have failed in some way. They are in need so will receive a food parcel from the charity sector, but they are to blame for the fact they are unable to provide for themselves and their family via appropriate means.

6.4. Stigma and power

Previous social scientific research (Link and Phelan, 2014) has attempted to expand on the theoretical lens of both the meso and macro social-cultural structures that influence stigma. This thesis has built on that. Previous research (Link and Phelan, 2014) into stigma/power has described the role that it plays in the exploitation, control, and exclusion of others (Tyler, 2020b), stemming from the belief that stigma arises, and stigmatisation both take place within specific contexts of culture and that power is used to amplify the existing inequalities of class, race, gender, and sexuality (Tyler, 2020b). However, recent social research (Tyler, 2020b) has focused on 'stigma-power', suggesting a cross-disciplinary focus on the significance of stigma in the reproduction of social inequalities. This study provided evidence and expanded on this theoretical idea, utilising Foucault's idea of power (Foucault, 1975) as well as Marxist's theory of power (Amenta et al., 2012).

Stigmatisation is the practice of stigmatising looks, comments, remarks that can be made face-to-face or via social media (Garthwaite, 2016), and has been argued as always being embedded into the wider capitalist structures of exploitation, domination, discipline, and social control (Tyler, 2020b), with previous research (Tyler, 2020b) stating that stigma is a productive form of power. While this thesis provides evidence of stigma power being a dominant force within the food banking work, the idea of a 'stigma-power' follows a Marxist view of power (Tyler, 2020b), an idea where a group of individuals has the means to oppress, dominate and control another group on the grounds that they are somehow less 'human' or less of a person, resulting in the oppressed group having no power and being forced into action by the more powerful group (Amenta et al., 2012). This thesis utilises Foucault's

thinking of disciplinary power to provide an argument for 'power' within the 'stigma-power' being utilised to control the food aid user's behaviours and actions through stigma.

It was seen in this research that the stigma was used by governments, media, social media, and TV programming as a form of control on the individuals who rely on the aid. It was consistently reported by food aid users that they would wait until the very last minute to ask for help, agreeing with previous research (Garthwaite, 2016; Purdam, Garratt and Esmail, 2016; Middleton et al., 2019; Bowe et al., 2019; Douglas et al., 2015). That they favoured foodbanks that did not look like a stereotypical foodbank, but instead 'community hubs' or 'community cafes', that also produced food parcels. The small North East ICFH associated with this thesis attempted to challenge and remove stigma from its foodbank, as they see it as being a barrier for individuals coming to seek help. However, Tyler (2020b) has stated that charitable anti-stigma campaigns, those that challenge the stigma associated with a particular condition, cannot overcome the barriers to seeking help without first acknowledging the ways in which the stigma has been deliberately designed into the social systems to prevent help-seeking and to create it as a difficult task. This North East ICFH attempted to utilise numerous anti-stigma strategies to challenge the power dynamics that regulate many organised foodbanks. These strategies were employed not only to challenge the power, but also to empower food aid users. One way in which the ICFH attempted that, was through challenging the narrative when publishing information via their social media. The fresh fruit and vegetable food bank is accessible every day, to anyone in the local community, not just those who are food insecure. The food was kindly donated by local supermarkets, and most often has a very short shelf-life. They reframed the stigma narrative by expressing that the food is for anyone in the local community, with the aim to help aid those in the community who are food insecure, but also to prevent food waste in landfill.

Previously, 'a Marxist' idea of power has been used to explain stigma-power (Tyler, 2020b), and the governmental exercises of domination and social control through stigma-power. However, Foucault's ideals of disciplinary power could also be used to help contextualise the phenomena of stigma-power that has been seen within this thesis. In this situation, stigma-power was strong enough to stop food aid users from asking for a food parcel and stop them from accessing foodbanks that looked like the typical organised 'foodbank', due to the fear of the stigma and the stigmatising looks. Foucault's disciplinary power also encompassed the

idea of a 'normal' and an 'abnormal' (Foucault, 1975). Viewed alongside Goffman's theory of stigma (Goffman, 1963), which can be used to contextualise those that require food aid being the 'abnormal' people, and those who do not being the 'normal' people; this allows them to place stigmatising looks and stigma onto the 'abnormal' people within the situation. Food aid users reported they felt less stigma and stigmatising looks when accessing food aid from organisations that did not look like a typical organised foodbank due to the reduction in the systems of surveillance - of recording their personal information, the removal of micro-penalties if they failed to comply with the organisations hierarchical nature, and the reduction in the forcible regulating of time.

Food aid users repeatedly reported a stigma associated with asking for food help, mental health help, and even entering the building of a food bank. Using Foucault's idea of power, on a meso level the stigma-power found within this situation resulted in Society's behaviours being regulated by micro-penalties, rewards, norms and hierarchical observation or surveillance (Foucault, 1975). With food aid users being sanctioned by the DWP resulting in reduced welfare income, often for not complying with their rules. When in this position and in need of a food parcel, stigma arises from needing to give personal details and information pertaining to their current financial crisis, also being observed, and having personal details being obtained by the organised food bank in exchange for a food parcel. Being aware that this information is utilised to determine how many food parcels a food aid user has been in receipt of produces stigma on the behalf of the food aid user, who is aware that their personal details will be stored and that the volunteer is able to see how many visits to the foodbank they have had. This is an example of surveillance within Foucault's idea of disciplinary power, and one of the results of this is the production of stigma. On a macro level, the British media, backed by the government (Garthwaite, 2016), are producing articles that help formulate an image of a food bank user as being someone who is undeserving, lazy, workshy, greedy, and living a chaotic lifestyle. This image being reproduced through social media, TV programming, the news and MP's (Garthwaite, 2016), becomes associated with the food bank charities, who are attempting to help those in need, often having been failed by the welfare state (Feeding Britain, 2019). This image being reproduced alongside the neoliberal discourse and the idea that sourcing food from a food bank is not the 'norm', helps to cement the stigma that is associated with food banks and results in food aid users feeling stigmatised (Purdam, Garratt

and Esmail, 2016). Therefore, the individuals who do seek help from a food aid charity are considered 'abnormal' within society and are then linked to the unpleasant neoliberal discourses and stigma that are associated with foodbanks, such as the food aid user being to blame for their problems and hardships. Food aid users reported that the stigma was not only strong enough to stop them from reaching out and asking for help from a food charity, but also in confiding in family and friends that they were experiencing financial hardship. Food aid users reported that they feared being labelled and stigmatised by strangers, family, and friends, so would keep their foodbank use to themselves, to prevent any further feelings of stigmatisation. As mentioned, Foucault's idea of disciplinary power heavily relies on the binary of being normal or abnormal to ensure that people's behaviour and activities are the most desirable for society, with individual's internalising the 'appropriate' way to behave in society and that going against those behaviours is considered abnormal and is against the norms and standards of society, resulting in stigmatisation.

The use of Foucault's disciplinary power to contextualise this thesis's work with stigma power, and the stigma felt by food aid users on both a meso and macro level allow for a greater understanding of the power that is behind the stigma and how it impacts food aid users within society.

6.5. Stigma and shame

One of the key findings of this thesis was the link between the stigma of both food aid users and the reproduction or challenging of this by foodbanks, and the subsequent feeling of shame that was often reported to have been felt by the users themselves. The foodbank not only was able to reproduce and challenge the stigma but the foodbank itself was a source of stigma to the food aid user, which would often be felt by the food aid users in the form of shame.

Goffman's (1963) theories of stigma can be applied here to help contextualise the reported feelings of stigma-shame by the food aid users. Goffman (1963) theorised that stigma is placed onto the 'disgraced' rather than any physical evidence of it, and that it is society that determines the means of categorising a person and the characteristics that are felt to be conventional or the norm (Goffman, 1963). This leads to social settings establishing the groups of people likely to be encountered there (Goffman, 1963). Within the food bank

situation, the ICFH is the social setting, with the use of the media 'helping' establish the types of individuals who are likely to be in this specific social world of a food bank, and therefore has the power to continue to produce the stigma of the foodbank.

The term 'stigma' is being used to refer to an attribute that is deeply discrediting or a shameful difference (Goffman, 1963), and according to Goffman (1963), is a relationship between attributes of an individuals and stereotypes. People obtain stigma in their interactions with other people. This could be a look, a glance, a comment, or a more obvious form of judgement (Goffman, 1963). Goffman theorised that stigma defines a social relation between people, and that stigma is not 'stuck' to a person but is shaped between people in social settings (Goffman, 1963). Stigma is a socially conditioned reaction to somebody who is supposed to be different to society's norms, standards, and behaviours (Goffman, 1963). Food aid users reported not wanting to visit food banks that were clearly food banks from their image, as they felt greater stigmatisation at these institutions. They also reported feeling greater stigmatisation from volunteers who seemed to comment on the food aid users need or their deservingness. However, food aid users also reported feelings of stigma when entering and leaving the food bank and found great relief in being given their food parcel in supermarket bags, so when they walked past other members of the local community, they could not tell they had visited a food a bank.

Goffman (1963) questioned whether the stigmatised individual assumed his difference is already known, or if it was evident on the spot to the other individuals, or does he believe that it is neither known about by the other individuals present or immediately perceivable by them. This thesis determined that food aid users felt a stigma when entering the food bank and on receipt of the food parcel due to the knowledge that others (often in this situation, the volunteers, or witnesses in the street) know they are in use of a food bank. Food aid users often reported they then internalised this knowledge and believed that the volunteer was placing judgement on them, while they quietly determined if they believed them to be needy or greedy, or deserving of a food parcel. While in this situation, there was no evidence of this, however the food aid user believed this to be the situation.

Spicker (1984) believed that stigma is associated with the loss of dignity, causing damage to their reputation, labelling them, and producing feelings of shame, embarrassment, and inferiority which, in this thesis, were all reported by the food aid users. Many stated that the

use of these terms resulted in them not seeking help earlier or as often, as they tried to distance themselves from these negative terms as much as possible. While others reported going to the ICFH because it didn't look like a typical food bank, it did less damage to their reputation and the feelings of shame were reduced.

Unlike Goffman (1963), Spicker (1984) theorised that poverty itself was a stigmatised condition as was dependency, both of which were seen within the food bank world in this thesis. This idea focusing on individuals who live in poverty being stigmatised for lack of money and possessions. However, individuals living in poverty who then seek help from organisations, including charities and government welfare systems are then equally stigmatised due to their dependency on the help of others, to better themselves (Spicker, 1984). This idea was seen in the data collected in this research project, with food aid users reporting feeling stigmatised due to lack of income and low social class, but then also feeling stigmatised when they sought and accepted help from food aid charities and/or from the welfare system. Both these two stigmas also resulted in an increase in feelings of shame, embarrassment, and judgement. However, some participants reported that the shame linked with the stigma was reduced through a series of tasks, one being self-talk, highlighting that they were unfortunately born into a low social class and into poverty, and that they had to make the best of the situation. While another felt that they were in a moment of need at that exact time, but that in the future, when things were financially better and more secure, they would help individuals who were in the situation they had found themselves in.

Shame is a powerful emotion concerning a negative assessment of the self, comparing oneself to the expectations of others. Chase and Walker (2013) stated that shame is an expected assessment of how an individual will be judged by others, and the verbal or nonverbal language of others who consider themselves either socially or morally superior to the individual sensing the shame. While Walker (2014) found that people are shamed by others, this is known as external shaming and often this results in individuals being ashamed of their position, which is internalising the shame.

As mentioned within stigma power, the 'normals' in the situation possess the power to place stigma on any person who they believe to not be 'normal' (Foucault, 1975; Goffman, 1963). This results in one form of stigma power oppression already discussed. However, this leads to terms such as undeserving, greedy, scrounger, and lazy being used within daily discourse to

label those seen to be less superior, in the case of this thesis, the food aid users. This then results in feelings of shame, felt by the food aid user, or the abnormal individual. Shame arises from the individual's perception of one of their own attributes being undesirable attribute to possess (Baldwin et al., 2006). These feelings of shame take place in the presence of the individual doing the stigmatising (Gardner and Gronfein, 2005; Scheff, 2005; Chase and Walker, 2013). The participants feeling shame often positioned themselves as far away from the discourses of being greedy, undeserving and to blame, as much as possible. They often reported fearing they would be labelled with these negative discourses and this fear was closely linked to the stigma and subsequent shame, while it was also reported that the feelings of these discourses often brought on feelings of shame and embarrassment.

With the stigma and subsequent stereotypes being reproduced by the media, TV programming, social media, and news media, it is seen everywhere (Garthwaite, 2014). Resulting in the food aid user being unable to remove themselves from the stigma, and the subsequent feelings of shame, these findings agree with previous research (Purdam, Garrett ad Esmail, 2016; Chase and Walker, 2013). Feelings of shame were reported to be associated with admitting that they needed help with food or money and that they found themselves in a moment of crisis. It was reported repeatedly, that not only did the idea of stigma and shame stop food aid users from seeking help, from asking for help from friends and family, but it also made an impact on how food aid users perceived individuals within the same social world. They reported feeling shame when asking for a food parcel for the first time, but once they had formed a relationship with the volunteers, the feelings of shame reduced and became manageable. The participants also stated that when experiencing a new volunteer, they would often internalise the interaction, and place doubts that the volunteer was judging them, this placed more shame onto them, this adds to previous research, that found food aid users internalised the stigma and judgement from volunteers (Garthwaite, 2016). However, it was also reported that often they felt that the stigma had reduced as well as the shame, although they still internalised it to some degree.

The findings of this thesis regarding stigma and shame being felt within food aid users, agree with but also add to previous work (Purdam et al., 2016; Baumberg Geiger, 2016; Garthwaite, 2016; Garthwaite, 2015) within food poverty. This thesis has also showcased the power

behind the stigma, and the force of the media, social media, TV programming and news media in reproducing the stigma, so that it is not only being felt at the time of food bank use.

6.6. Shame vs guilt

The two biggest emotions reported by food aid users where shame and guilt. Both emotions were reported to be detrimental to the wellbeing of the food aid user; however, it was seen that these two emotions are not interchangeable, and that in fact were felt at different times during the food bank situation. Both shame and guilt are understood to be self-conscious emotions, as opposed to a basic emotion (Chase and Walker, 2013), which entails a negative assessment of self-evaluations and self-reflection alongside the perceived expectations of others and a feeling of powerlessness (Sutherland, 2010).

Both shame and guilt involve self-blame and are intertwined with perceptions of the self (Tangney et al., 1996; Baldwin et al., 2006). Benedict (1946) distinguished between shame and guilt founded on the social situation, theorising that shame was more likely to occur in public situation, whilst guilt in private situations. While others (Baldwin et al., 2006; Tangney, 1994) argue that there is no evidence to support this distinction and Tangney (1994) argued that shame and guilt were similarly likely to occur in public and that shame was just as likely to occur in private as guilt.

The findings of this thesis have aligned with previous theories of shame vs guilt (Benedict, 1946), being a public vs private matter, and allow for more evidence and argument to this debate. Shame is reportedly felt when an individual is being stigmatised (Benedict, 1946), when the individual, typically mothers, compares themselves with societies norms, and assesses the judgement that they may be subject to by others in the situation, who are either socially or morally superior (Sutherland, 2010). Shame is reported to have taken place in a public setting in the presence of another, the one who is stigmatising (Benedict, 1946). In this thesis, the individual (food aid users) feeling shame was in the presence of the individual (typically volunteer or an individual in the street) who is stigmatising them and as a result stated they felt shame. Shame was reported to have been felt when they walked into the food bank from the street, when people on the street saw the action, when the volunteers greet them, when the volunteers talk to them, ask them about their situation, the number of people in the household etc. caused feelings of shame, and when the food aid user left the food bank,

and people witnessed this action this caused feelings of shame. Finally, food aid users stated they felt shame when they were carrying the food parcel if it was not in discrete packaging, such as supermarket shopping bags, but instead in a box with large letters stating it was a food parcel.

Guilt is reported to have been felt when the individual was in a private setting, often upon reflection of the situation. In this thesis it was reported that food aid users felt guilt when they returned home from the food bank with the food parcel. When they looked at the food that had been provided, having reflected on the situation, and what led to them seeking help, the knowledge of not being able to provide for themselves and their family independently, or for having taken a food parcel, that they deemed, was for someone more deserving than them often resulted in feelings of guilt. Mothers typically compared themselves to the ideal mother while fathers typically compared themselves to the ideal man/father, being the breadwinner and keeper of the house. This will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter. However, the feeling of guilt was in a private setting, with the food aid user being on their own, having reflected on the events surrounding the food parcel.

However, it was also reported in this thesis that food aid users who felt guilt also felt they owed a debt to the food aid charity. It was reported that some food aid users would donate what they could when they were able to do so, and that this then relieved the feelings they had regarding guilt. While a volunteer recounted a story of a woman, who came without asking and cleaned the toilets for years, to repay the debt that she felt she owed for accepting food help from the ICFH. This repaying of the debt allows for the guilt to be lifted from the individual. This agrees with the work of Cryder et al. (2012), who stated that guilt leads to an increase in generosity towards those they believe they have wronged. While also agreeing with Eisenbery (2000) and Linday-Hartz (1984) who stated that the guilty party perceive their wrongdoing, actions or decisions and assume responsibility for them. They then possess a desire to find a way to either undo the wrong or punish themselves. This thesis did not find any evidence of food aid users punishing themselves for accepting food aid help.

Some food aid users reported not feeling shame or guilt when receiving the food aid help. Of those who reported that they did not feel any shame or guilt, or those who felt reduced feelings, it was seen that they had sought some form of external validation of their need and deservingness from who they deemed, a person of authority. In organised food banks this

external validation appeared to be in the form of agreement of their need by providing the red form required or the signing the application form. For the ICFH, it was much more around the conversation between the food aid user and the volunteer, providing a rationale as to why everyone is deemed to be deserving. This thesis has highlighted the action of seeking external validation, and the link between feelings of shame and guilt and how closely they are linked to the neoliberal discourses within the food poverty narrative. Food aid users not only used this external verification to eliminate feelings of shame and guilt but also to further distance themselves from the discourses, and to distinguish what the food aid users perceive the deservingness is of other food aid users in need. This external validation was often sought from volunteers at the food bank, the CEO of the ICFH, or at the more organised food banks, from the professionals who provide the red form or agree a food parcel is warranted after an application has been submitted, alongside the financial evidence.

Due to COVID-19, and the global pandemic, changes were made to the food banking system across the country. With mass social distancing and isolating of the vulnerable, food parcels were often used as helping individuals who were unable to get food shopping due to several issues, such as stock levels and delivery availability, or inability to leave their house. Some food banks offered food parcels to be delivered to houses, and with the increase of furloughed workers and individuals being made redundant, there was an increase in the number of food parcels required. These changes within the food banking system allowed for greater changes within the feelings of shame and guilt. Some food aid users who were unemployed or furloughed due to the pandemic, reported no feelings of shame or guilt because they knew they were deserving of a food parcel due to their change in circumstances being outside of their control.

6.7. Guilt and Social Roles

Food aid users reported having compared themselves to the social roles they deem to have been assigned, resulting in feelings of guilt, when they perceived that they had not reached what is required of the social role. A prominent example of this is the roles of mothers and fathers. These situations, food aid users comparing themselves to the social role that has been appointed to them, such as mother and father, or even food aid user, can be contextualised using the sociological concept known as role theory (Gilbert, 2003). The idea of this theory is that everyday activity is carried out within socially defined categories, such

as mother and father. Each role is a set of rights, duties, expectations, norms, and behaviours that a person must fulfil within that role (Gilbert, 2003). This idea allows for a theoretical underpinning of the phenomena found within this thesis. However, while role theory provides an explanation for the roles seen within the food bank, it does not provide a theoretical underpinning for the subsequent guilt that was felt by these individuals who felt they had not achieved what was required of their social role.

Food aid users who were mothers often reported that they felt guilt for having a dependent child who they felt they were unable to care for and provide all that they needed. Mothers often reported not only relying on food aid charities to ensure that their child had enough food, but also relying on family to help with the cost of school uniform, the school for free school meals, the government for welfare payments, and the idea that they have to save for 12 months to afford a Christmas dinner and presents for their children. Mothers reported comparing themselves, to the 'ideal' mother. A mother who did not rely on food aid charity to feed themselves and their dependents, who did not rely on grandparents to help afford their child's school uniform, the school for free school meals or the hardship fund so their child could go on school trips (Meeussen and Van Laar, 2018). This association between an 'ideal' mother and the food aid mother, is the way in which the media and society have perceived the role of mother, how a mother should act, and how they should be able to care for and provide for their child (Meeussen and Van Laar, 2018; Batty, 2009). Mothers reported that they felt the most guilt around the idea that they had willingly brought the child into the world believing that at this time they are unable to provide them with everything. However, mothers also went on to state that they would often go without food, clothing, and other personal items to ensure that their child had everything that they could need.

Regarding food aid users who were fathers, again they reported comparing themselves to the 'ideal' social role of a father. The 'typical' father is someone who can provide for his family, both financially and regarding housing, food, clothing, and heating (Cassiman, 2008). This role defines a father as the breadwinner, the main provider of the family and the household (Ipsos MORI, 2002). One food aid user specifically stated that he saw himself as the man of the house, the breadwinner, and the provider. However, he felt he was failing at being a father and failing the social role, due to his wife being the main financial earner. However, his wife had been placed on furlough and due to this their income was reduced causing the father to

ask for help from food aid charities and his children's school to provide food for his family. He said he felt guilty when comparing himself to the social role of a father, and reported that this comparison, being very negative, also negatively affected his depression. Typically, men reported to have found it harder to ask for help from food aid charities because they are having to admit that they are unable to provide, and be the breadwinner for their family, but instead relying on free help from an individual outside of his family to help him support himself. Not only this, but men typically reported that they felt damage to their pride and masculinity by asking for help, and this was a barrier for them asking for help.

However, other food aid users compared themselves with what society has deemed to be the norm social role of food aid users. This norm is heavily centred around the neoliberal discourses of being greedy, undeserving and to blame for their situation (Morrison, 2019; Garthwaite, 2016). Food aid users compared themselves to these discourses and attempted to position themselves as far as possible from them, at times seeking external validation to ensure that they were not in fact undeserving, greedy or to blame. However, this act of comparing themselves to societies depiction of food aid users, also resulted in the food aid user determining that someone was in a worse position than them, and therefore they didn't deserve the food parcel, and this resulted in the feelings of guilt. Often with food aid users who had previously accepted a food aid parcel, they often reported that it was this idea that there was someone in a worse position than them that stopped them from seeking help earlier.

This idea that there is someone else in a worse position was also reported by other food aid users as helping relieve some of the feelings of guilt. Some reported that knowing that someone else was in a worse position resulted in less guilt because they started to appreciate what they had more than they had previously. This helped relieve some of the feelings of guilt associated with seeking food aid help.

It is important to note that not all food aid users felt guilt when comparing themselves to the social roles they had been assigned, nor when receiving a food aid parcel. For those that reported they did not feel guilt, it was seen that they often had some form of validation of their need and deservingness, or they were able to rationalise that they were in-fact not to blame for the circumstances that they had found themselves in. This became particularly prominent during the COVID-19 pandemic, when more food aid users found themselves out

of employment or were having to support their children during the school week when previously, they would have been in receipt of free school meals from the school.

6.8. Wellbeing

This thesis aimed to explore the perspectives of food aid users regarding food insecurity and the use of food aid and how it affected their wellbeing. For this thesis, the use of the biopsychosocial model is used to decipher the reported effects, splitting them into physical, mental, and social, as food aid users would often report their wellbeing and health in regard to these three areas.

It was reported that skipping meals was one of the biggest physical effects of food insecurity and food aid use. Food aid users reported that they skipped meals for a variety of reasons: they had a family or children and felt they required the food more, they were single and had no one else to support, they often skipped meals to try and ensure the food they did have lasted longer.

Following on from this it was also reported that food aid users ate a limited diet, with some reporting only receiving food that was able to be cooked via a kettle or microwave. Some reported having received no tinned foods, and others reported receiving food that they had allergies to (dairy and nuts) and as they were unable to eat the food, they donated it back to a foodbank. Food aid users reported that they would eat the same meal repeatedly, because it was a cheap meal to cook, which they could buy in bulk, so would last longer. An example would be frozen chips for dinner for a week. The cost of 'healthy' foods, such as fruit and vegetables were a reported factor in the decision to eat more frozen produce, where food aid users would be able to purchase more for the same cost. This agrees with previous research (The Food Foundation 2020) which found that the poorest households have even less disposable income to spend on healthy foods than they did in previous years. Some food aid users also reported that the food parcel they received would at times have food that was past the best before date. Often the food aid user would not eat this food, so would waste it, often resulting in the user not having enough food to last the three days the food parcel was supposed to.

Food aid users reported a variety of effects food aid had on their mental health and wellbeing. The first two are closely linked, those being anxiety and depression. Several food aid users

reported having had a long-standing mental health concern, some being anxiety, depression and DID (Dissociative Identity Disorder), this agrees with previous research (Barker et al., 2019; Jones 2017; Loopstra, 2018a; Stuckler et al., 2017) that found that the build-up to having to ask for help, the moment when they have had control taken away from them, their mental health deteriorated, with high levels of anxiety and an increase in depression (Loopstra, 2018a; Stuckler et al., 2017). This was reported to have had an impact on their diet, with many food aid users stating that they would eat and drink a poor diet which would often result in poorer mental health. At the time they said it was hard for them to prepare their food themselves (Laung et al., 2014; Harvey, 2016). Another food aid user reported that they ate a poor diet, that consisted of fast food when they were physically unwell as they felt it would be quicker than having to prepare the food themselves. Others reported that they would stop eating when the anxiety and depression was particularly bad, resulting in them controlling what they did and did not eat, often making themselves physically sick from the lack of food, these findings are in line with previous research (Anderson, 2020). The increase in anxiety and depression was reported to influence the user's self-esteem and self-confidence, and how they see themselves within society, this finding agrees with previous research (Anderson, 2020; Jones 2017). This was clearly linked to the discourses as well.

As mentioned above in this chapter, food aid users reported high levels of shame and guilt, which affected their wellbeing, self-esteem, and self-confidence, as found in previous research (Dolezal and Lyons, 2017). Guilt has also been connected to anxiety, and anxiety is often a response to apparent threats to personal relationships (Bowlby, 1969, 1973; Baumeister & Tice, 1990). The feelings of shame and guilt prevented food aid users from accessing the help available to them, in fear of the prejudices and judgement that is associated with the food aid charity. Another reported effect on wellbeing was stress, with food aid users reporting that stress was common throughout their life. However, when they had control taken away from them, they saw an increase in stress with many food aid users reporting that the use of a food aid charity helped reduce the feeling of stress, due to the knowledge that they would be receiving some form of food aid and help. They knew that they would be given some food to last them a few days while they then looked at how to manage the crisis that had resulted in them having to use the food aid charity.

When looking at the reported effects of food aid on social wellbeing, it was reported that many food aid users distanced themselves from family and friends due to feelings of embarrassment and shame (Garthwaite, 2016). They felt that if they did this, it would lessen the shame, guilt and potential judgement that would be felt. However, this resulted in food aid users reporting they felt isolated and didn't have people to turn to other than the ICFH, these findings are similar to that of previous research (Garthwaite, 2016). Food aid users also reported that they felt they were unable to attend social gatherings outside of the ICFH due to the financial aspect to them. The ICFH however ran a series of events aimed at adults, children, and those in the LGBT community, that were free or very low cost, which allowed for inclusivity. The ICFH also had a café, which provided food for a reduced cost, allowing for food aid users to access the café for a meal and a drink at a price that is more affordable. Food aid users also reported that for them to have a Christmas that they wished for, with a Christmas dinner and presents for their children, they needed to have saved, often reported for 12 months prior to Christmas to ensure that they had enough money to afford everything. However, the ICFH provided a Christmas dinner every year, that was prepared and cooked by the volunteers at the café, and anyone was able to access the Christmas dinner. However, in 2020, due to COVID-19, the Christmas dinner was prepared, cooked, packaged, and delivered by the volunteers to those who would normally have accessed, or asked for a Christmas dinner.

Wellbeing was reported to have been both positively and negatively affected by food aid, at different times of the control journey. It was reported that when control was taken away at the beginning of the control journey, food aid users had increase anxiety, depression, and stress. This often resulted in food aid users skipping meals or eating a poor unbalanced diet. When food aid users submitted to asking for help from an organised food bank, they were provided with a food parcel that typically consisted of tinned, dried food that could be prepared with a kettle or microwave, in some cases, no heavy items would have been provided. Enough food would have been provided to last the food aid user and family three days. Accessing organised food banks were reported to have caused an increase in stress, feelings of shame and judgement as they often required proof of eligibility. However, when accessing the ICFH, food aid users reported feelings of less stress, as they knew they would be provided with food. Due to the ICFH providing fresh fruit and vegetables daily to anyone,

food aid users were provided with fresh ingredients, helping improve their diet, along with cooking instructions and recipe ideas. Food aid users who used the ICFH to enable them to take back control, would report feeling empowered, due to the wide variety of resources available to them, including education, food support, DWP help and advice etc.

6.9. Policing for Foodbanks

While it was not within the scope of this research project to explore the effects the policing of foodbanks has on the wellbeing of food aid users, nor was it to compare the formal foodbanks with the ICFH, it was a theme that was bought to my attention through the interviews and subsequent analysis. Participants often reported having had a 'bad' experience with a certain foodbank i.e., formal, which then shadowed their experiences with all foodbanks, often comparing any new experiences with different foodbanks to the original 'bad' experience. Participants also reported having had a 'bad' experience left them feeling they didn't deserve help, and would try not to use other foodbanks, in case they received similar experiences.

The policing for foodbanks is centred around the ways in which a food aid user can access the space, and the food parcel. Participants often reported having used two different forms of food aid, a formal foodbank and the ICFH. When discussing the formal foodbanks, participants reported that they felt they had to perform lots of tasks to be eligible to receive the voucher, to exchange for a food parcel. This often started with disclosing the 'need' for emergency food to a healthcare profession (i.e., GP, healthcare visitor etc) or through more social channels (i.e., the jobcentre, social worker). Once the participant had disclosed their need to the third-party individual, they deemed if they needed help, if they did, then a food parcel voucher would be provided. These vouchers can only be used at the formal foodbanks, which are open for a limited time every week. Participants were to make their way to the foodbank, during its opening hours, and provide them with their contact details and the voucher. If they had not used a voucher for three times in a 12-month period, and they were deemed to be in 'need' of the food parcel (this is reported by participants, as having to answer questions regarding their income, outgoings and why they are in a crisis at this time), then a food parcel is provided. The formal foodbank monitors the number of vouchers provided to individuals and records the number of times they access the service, and the reason for needing to access the service.

Whereas the ICFH, does not require any formal declaration of need. The fresh foodbank is available to everyone, regardless of need. Anyone can walk in off the street, phone, email, or message on social media, the ICFH and ask for a fresh food parcel. If the individual feels they can contribute financially to the ICFH then they can. But this is not expected, and only done so in rare cases, where an individual collected a fresh food parcel, to reduce landfill waste. A surname and postcode are taken for this, and that is to allow the ICFH to monitor the number of fresh food parcels that are being distributed weekly, monthly, and yearly, and to what geographical regions. Alongside this, is the dried food parcel, this is made of tinned food and pasta's etc. This food parcel is given a maximum of once a month to individuals, and requires a name and full address, to ensure that it is being provided once a month. However, fresh fruit and vegetables, bread and dairy are available every day, no restrictions. No questions are asked regarding the participants financial situation, or the current crisis they find themselves in. Instead, questions are focused on the number of people in the household, any children, and the ages of the children, any food allergies, or preferences, and cooking equipment at home (this is to allow for the food parcel to be tailored to the needs of the family or individual). However, if a food aid user does want to disclose any information regarding their finances and current crisis, then volunteers are trained to listen, provide help and advice, and refer to more specialists help if needed.

It was reported through the participants that those who had had a poor experience with accessing a formal foodbank felt that all foodbanks were similar, so would distance themselves from them. However, often reported that having had positive experiences with community foodbanks, gave them the confidence to ask for emergency help, while also seeing themselves in a different discourse, that they are deserving and in genuine need of help. They also commented that the ICFH and community foodbanks ensured that they felt they didn't need to 'prove' their deservingness or need, but that all individuals are in need.

Previous research (Ridge, 2013) has found that there is a hidden cost to acquiring a food parcel, predominately the feelings of shame and guilt, however, the policing tactics used by various foodbank organisations could play into this rhetoric, by creating a social situation in which it is inevitable for feelings of shame and guilt to be produced alongside the reproduction of prominent neoliberal discourses of undeserving and deserving poor;

scroungers; needy vs greedy and blame. Which would all influence the health and wellbeing of food aid users.

It is important to note, that this comparison is not an aim of this thesis, and therefore interviews with participants could be said to be unfairly swayed towards that of the ICFH, due to all interviews having had experience with community foodbanks as opposed to formal foodbanks. The nature of this study was to examine independent foodbanks and not formal, therefore the interviews sourced would not allow for an analysis to take place. As emphasised above, it is not within the scope of this research project to determine the effects policing of foodbanks nor the difference in policing tactics between formal and community foodbanks has on the wellbeing of food aid users. However, this thesis recommends that further research is conducted in the policing of foodbanks, the comparison between formal and community foodbanks, and how the different policing methods challenge or reproduce the discourses present within the foodbank social world.

6.10.   COVID-19

An unexpected result found in this thesis was COVID-19. Due to the timeline of the project, the COVID-19 pandemic affected the data gathered in both the CDA and the semi-structured interviews with both food aid users and volunteers. The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in both national and regional lockdowns (Institute for Government, 2021), and the closure of businesses which resulted in an increase in unemployment and furlough. It also required for people to socially distance (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2020). The ICFH that was used throughout this research project remained open, however it had to change drastically to meet the new needs of the community during COVID-19, offering more food parcels, specialised food parcels and sourcing more food donation units. The community saw an increase in unemployment and furlough, so the ICFH offered more food bank options. The café had to close in line with the lockdown guidelines and food aid users were not allowed to enter the building. The volunteers were placed on a timetable as opposed to a previous drop-in affect. However, the ICFH still did everything they could to ensure that everyone in the community was receiving the help needed during the pandemic. This was done with the introduction of financial support in the way of vouchers for electric and gas for those that needed it, and the collection of prescriptions and delivery of them to the those shielding and

self-isolating. Food parcels were also delivered to food aid users for the first time, along with the community meals.

Unfortunately, COVID-19 had a large impact on the food sector as well as the foodbank sector specifically (Power et al., 2020). This thesis agrees with the findings previously found (Power et al., 2020); that there was a sharp increase in demand for food from food banks due to the sudden unemployment and reduced wages of furlough, stockpiling and inability to source food at a reduced rate. Power et al., (2020) also found that due to social distancing rules the interactions at foodbanks had to be modified, and instead of being invited into the food bank building, food aid users were provided with a pre-packed food bank parcel, that was often delivered to their door. This thesis agrees with these findings. This thesis also found that the ICFH had to transform its services and model, to support the community with its compliance with the social distancing of COVID-19, this resulted in them not only offering food parcels to people who walked to the door, but also offering deliveries to those unable to leave their house.

COVID-19 had an impact on the research itself, and while it was not within the scope of this research project to determine the impact COVID-19 had on the health and wellbeing of food aid users, nor the extent that food aid services were disrupted, instead the wellbeing of food aid users living in a time of COVID-19. It has been shown in Chapter 4 (Critical Discourse Analysis) that there was a large and obvious shift in the neoliberal discourse 'deserving and undeserving poor' between January 2020 and March 2020. This chapter has also shown how the discourse was challenged, and how COVID-19 had altered the social space in which the discourse was either challenged or reproduced. However, in the second part of this thesis, the neoliberal discourse 'needy vs greedy' was explored more. It is not in the scope of this research to determine if COVID-19 had any effect on the discourse, and it is not one that is seen within media, but more so within foodbanks. Therefore, it is a recommendation of this research project to perform further research into the 'needy vs greedy' discourse within foodbanks, the effects COVID-19 has had on this discourse and how the power behind the discourse results in it being challenged or reproduced in different food aid settings (i.e., formal foodbanks and independent community foodbanks, soup kitchens, pay-as-you-feel supermarkets).

COVID-19 influenced the social situation under investigation due to the fact the COVID-19 has infiltrated all parts of the social life and the social situation. Situational Analysis allowed for this to be explored through the three maps, while highlighting areas of the situation that were being impacted by COVID-19 that might not have been explored as in-depth through Constructionist Grounded Theory alone. The use of the three maps to explore the situation, allowed for the effects of COVID-19 to be explored at depth. An example of this would be the changes the ICFH implemented to ensure that they adapted to the change in demand due to COVID-19, this meant that the foodbank was unable to allow people in, but that is food parcels are to be delivered to the door, the change in the narrative placed on social media, the Friday meals are to be prepped and delivered to people to reheat instead of having the opportunity to eat inside the ICFH. Situational Analysis allowed for a greater exploration into the effects COVID-19 was having on the social situation in relation to the wellbeing of food aid users, and the reproduction of discourses, and the challenging of power, as opposed to the effects COVID-19 solely had on the health and wellbeing of food aid users, which is outside the scope of this project.

6.11.   Unexpected Results

While it was not the aim of this research project to determine the differences between organised and community focused food banks, it was a theme that became apparent through the semi-structured interviews. The food aid users often made a comparison between the two types of food aid they had previously accessed, with both positive and negative comparisons being made between the two different types of food aid. The differences in how food aid users accessed the two different food banks, the information the food bank required, and the level of stigma, shame and judgement that was felt was recorded in the interviews. Many participants reported positive feelings towards community food banks as they felt they knew the volunteers on a more personal level, even formed friendships, which resulted in lesser feelings of stigma, shame, and judgement. Others reported that they liked the organised food banks, as it was a more formal setting, where anonymity was kept and there was little to no chance of forming friendships. It was evident through the semi-structured interviews that food aid users had a preference as to which form of food aid they preferred, however, the large majority felt that ICFH were more beneficial to their wellbeing than the more formal organised food banks.

It was often reported that the organised food banks had more stigma associated with them, resulting in an increase in feelings of shame and judgement, compared to the ICFH, with the food aid users often reporting that they felt more judgement from the volunteers at the organised food banks than the ICFH. Food aid users often stated that they felt their wellbeing was better taken care of from the ICFH as opposed to the organised food banks, who would position themselves differently on the needy vs greedy discourse, determining if the food aid user was in need, and often provided the food aid user with a pre-packed food parcel and nothing else. The ICFH attempted to enable the food aid user to empower themselves, by providing a wealth of resources hosted by the ICFH, while supporting the food aid user by referring onto a variety of charitable organisations that can help with specific concerns that were outside the scope of the ICFH.

6.12.   Implications

The implications of this research are large, primarily, through the CDA and following exploration of the three prominent neoliberal discourses within British media. This thesis agrees with Power et al. (2020), who found that this new 'group' of individuals did not fit into the previous 'deserving and undeserving poor', but whereas Power et al., (2020) asked whether they were then more entitled to food support. This thesis raises the idea that the media has the power to change the whole narrative into a more positive discourse, while also having the potential to eliminate the discourse altogether. The control journey between food aid users and food banks, is not something that has been explicitly explored before within research in this setting. The understanding of how control changes throughout the situation has allowed for greater exploration of the effects control has on the wellbeing of food aid users. This thesis showcases two relationships, the first being stigma and shame and the second being shame and guilt. Stigma-shame is a common theme in previous research regarding food banks (Baumberg, 2016; Garthwaite, 2016). This thesis adds to knowledge regarding anti-stigma strategies that both food aid users and ICFH employ to deter the feelings of stigma and shame. This thesis also utilised a Foucault theory of power to contextualise the stigma-power that is enforce within the food bank world. When interpreting the results of the effects food insecurity and food bank use has on food aid users wellbeing, this thesis has added a qualitative context to previous quantitative studies, as well

as adding an alternative narrative to food aid and food insecurity by incorporating food aid users who have experience with ICFH.

This research project has many practical implications. The first being the ability to aid in the creation of the first framework for ICFH, that aids food hubs in their ability to enable food aid users to empower themselves. In creating a framework for ICFH, the anti-stigma and anti-oppression strategies that work well are employed, alongside further strategies that have been highlighted through the semi-structured interviews with both food aid users and volunteers. By creating this framework, ICFH can challenge the stigma associated with food banks, alongside conquering the subsequent feelings of shame, guilt, and judgement that are reported by food aid users, and also challenge the discourses present within food banks and changing the narrative used within the food bank. The framework will allow food banks a practical guide for implementation of the above strategies.

This thesis has allowed food aid users voice to be heard and provides a detailed analysis of the ways in which food insecurity and food aid use impacts their wellbeing. Allowing these voices to be heard to inform future development of policy in relation to food aid provision and the structure of food aid provision on a community, regional, and national level. Opening a door for the co-production of future developments with the food aid provision. This thesis has also highlighted the positive implications for food aid users when a food bank recognises their role in supporting a food aid users wellbeing outside of short-term food aid provision. Including identifying and supporting the resolution of the root cause of the crisis, mental health and multi-agency wrap-around support, and ongoing opportunities for food aid users to contribute to the wider community. These findings can help support future policy development regarding the wellbeing of food aid users both short-term and long-term.

6.13. Limitations

This main limitation to this thesis, is COVID-19, and how it affected the project, and the projects aims and objectives. Due to both the national and regional lockdowns, there was a noticeable fluctuation with the number of people seeking food aid support. It also meant that due to the physical risks of COVID-19, it was not always deemed an appropriate risk to be attending the food bank in order to speak to food aid users, and when the lockdowns were in place, food aid users were asked to stay at home and get the food parcel delivered which

meant it was difficult to recruit the sample needed. Alongside this, the study had the agreement of four different food aid charities in the North-East, however, due to the pandemic, three had to close due to volunteers needing to self-isolate for a number of reasons, that resulted in only one ICFH being used to gather participants, alongside the use of social media. While this is a limitation to the study, in that it limits the ability to generalise the results, although this was not something that I was aiming to do, it did allow me the opportunity to provide an in-depth analysis of an ICFH, the challenges it faced during the COVID-19 pandemic and how it adapted to challenge the stigma and discourses within food aid. Also linked to COVID-19, was the need to use technology to perform most semi-structured interviews, using either a telephone call or via conference call software. While interviews were performed face-to-face if it was deemed safe to do so, and following all national and regional guidance, as often as possible, the use of technology was required to perform the majority of interviews. This is a limitation due to the topic of the conversation. It can sometimes be difficult for people to talk openly when they do so via technology (Kennedy et al., 2021), it also reduced the human experience of sharing their perspectives and experiences of food aid and resulted in a reduction in the building of a relationships between me and the food aid user. Following from this, it was hard to build a rapport with regular food aid users in general, due to the inability to attend the food bank regularly during national and regional lockdowns. Having said that, it was my impression, that the food aid users who were able to share their stories and provide answers through phone calls, provided greater detail to answers, more so than those who were being interviewed face-to-face.

COVID-19 was also a limitation to this study in that the pandemic changed the media perceptions of food aid use, as highlighted in the CDA in Chapter 4. With the change in the discourses and stereotypes within the media, it can be argued that it would have changed the attitudes, perceptions, and experiences of food aid from the food aid users. This is linked to the change in the provisions required by the food bank, with the food bank adapting to the pandemic, resulting in some large changes within the running of the ICFH, with the closure of some of the wellbeing activities and the café. This also changed how food aid users would typically get a food parcel, with food parcels being delivered to the user's house during the lockdowns. Both local and national governments provided more funding to the ICFH to ensure

that they were able to support the local community. This is not funding that would previously have been available to the ICFH.

6.14. Recommendations

More research is needed within the food bank sector – specifically looking at the effects it has on the wellbeing of the users. Not only this but qualitative and outside of the organised food banks that a large amount of research is focused on. Future research should also focus on the idea of the control journey that is highlighted in this thesis, the effects of having control taken away, and the journey food aid users undertake to regain control and empower themselves, alongside how this impacts their wellbeing. A more detailed exploration is also needed into why food aid users submit to asking for help, and the many ways in which food aid users can empower themselves independently or through the help of a charity. Following this, further research into both ICFH and more formal organised food banks should be around the organisation of the food banks, and how they help the food aid user in both the short-term, long-term, and enabling empowerment of the food aid user. Further research into different ICFH to ensure the ICFH framework is evidence-based, and follows a structure of actively reducing stigma, feelings of shame, guilt, and judgement while aiming to enable the empowerment of food aid users.

A large area that needs development and further research is around the neoliberal discourses of the undeserving and deserving poor, as well as further exploration into the needy vs greedy discourse within British media, social media, TV programming and the food bank world. This thesis researched how the undeserving and deserving poor discourse changed and was challenged in the early months of COVID-19. However, further research into the post COVID-19 effects of the discourse in the British media will help determine if the discourse is still active and if it is being challenged. Not only this, but with the finding of the needy vs greedy discourse within the food bank world, it is important for further research to be conducted, exploring this discourse within the food bank world, but also to determine if it could be seen outside of that world, and in other social worlds. The effects of these neoliberal discourses on food aid users' wellbeing and social lives should be further researched, along with determining how and why food aid users either reproduce these discourses or challenge them when talking about other food aid users.

6.15.   Dissemination

In this section the dissemination of findings from this thesis will be explored.

- The creation of the independent food bank framework

This research can aid in the creation of an independent food aid framework which will allow for independent food banks to work with the framework to ensure that they are aiding food aid users wellbeing to the best of their ability, while also challenging the discourses present that can affect the wellbeing of food aid users and reducing the stigma that is associated with food aid use, which is often reported as being a barrier to accepting help from a food bank. In producing the framework, it can also aid future knowledge production through research into food aid user's wellbeing, anti-stigma strategies and tactics, and the needy vs greedy discourse.

- Providing feedback to the food bank involved within the research/stakeholders

Having worked closely to a single ICFH through this research project, and the stakeholders of that ICFH, it is important to provide feedback after the completion of this research. Providing feedback will allow the ICFH to fully understand the impact that their food bank is having on the food aid users. The work within this thesis highlighted some of the amazing things the foodbank does that aids the wellbeing of the food aid users, but it may also highlight some things that the foodbank was not aware of, feelings and actions that could be implemented to help aid food aid users even more.

- Peer reviewed publications

Through producing articles within peer reviewed journals, the findings of this thesis can help further research into the area, aid in the production of knowledge, aid policy development around food aid and food banks, but most importantly, help to continually improve the wellbeing of food aid users. This thesis aims to produce a minimum of three articles published within peer-reviewed journals, one in relation to the CDA in chapter 4, one regarding the anti-stigma strategies utilised by both food aid users and the independent food hub and the effects these had on the stigma present and the reported wellbeing of food aid users, and finally, one in relation to the needy vs greedy discourse, and its creation, reproduction and challenge within food banks.

- Conferences

Findings from this thesis have been presented at several conferences. The most recent being the MedSoc 2021 conference, in which the second part of the research thesis was presented. Analysed data collected from the semi-structured interviews was presented, along with the themes found and the discourses present within the situation, alongside how the food bank and food aid users either reproduced or challenged these discourses in their language. In doing this, the findings of this research were able to reach a large audience, who were able to use the findings to further future research and help improve food banks.

6.16. Trustworthiness

Within qualitative research, it is important that trustworthiness of the study is highlighted in order to evaluate its worth. Lincoln and Guba (1985) believe that trustworthiness involves establishing, credibility; transferability; dependability and confirmability.

6.16.1. Credibility

The first criteria to be met to establish credibility is prolonged engagement, defined by spending adequate time in the research area to study and comprehend the social setting and phenomena of attention. This encompasses spending sufficient time observing numerous aspects of the social setting while speaking with a variety of people and developing relationships and understanding with individuals of the social setting (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). I spent six months becoming orientated with the situation, to understand the context, while building trust and rapport with both food aid users and volunteers. The next criteria being persistent observation, which allows for the researcher to be open to the multiple contextual factors that can infringe upon the phenomenon being studied, the purpose being to identify the characteristics and elements within the situation that are relevant to the phenomenon (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). This study achieved this, through the six months spent within the ICFH, observing the social setting, and the interactions between food aid users, volunteers and those who donate to the food aid hub. The third criteria is triangulation, which involves using multiple data sources during the research project to produce knowledge and understanding (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). This thesis used data gathered from four different sources, the first being through the critical discourse analysis, the second being the food aid users within the ICFH, the third being food aid users within the North East but had used different foodbanks and were found online and finally the volunteers working within the

ICFH. The fourth criteria being peer debriefing, which is the process of providing an analytical session with a peer, for the purpose of exploring aspects of enquiry that might otherwise have been overlooked (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). This study invited criticism and questioning of my analytical process from both the director of studies and co-supervisor. They queried my perspectives, assumptions, and analysis throughout the project. The fifth criteria being negative case analysis, which involves searching for and discussion elements of the data that do not appear to support the patterns or explanations that are emerging from the analysis (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). This study has conducted a robust analysis technique that ensured analysis was a repetitive process that entailed going back and forth through the analysis. This allowed for the exploration of any results that do not support the themes emerging. Finally, member checks is the criteria by which the researcher either formally or informally shares the interpretations and conclusions with members of those groups from whom the data was originally obtained (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). This study has had informal conversations with the volunteers from which some of the data was gathered, to highlight the strong themes that were present within the data. More formal feedback will be delivered once the research project is complete.

6.16.2. Transferability

Transferability is established in one way, and that is through dense explanation. Dense explanation is a way of attaining a sort of external validity (Lincoln and Guba, 1985), by detailing a phenomenon in adequate detail that one can begin to evaluate the degree to which the inferences were drawn and if they are transferable to other times, settings, situations, and people (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). This thesis has provided thick descriptions of all field experiences, the social setting, the social, political, and cultural context in which the study took place, the social relationships within the situation, along with thick descriptions of the analysis technique and findings.

6.16.3. Dependability

External audits establish dependability. External inspections involve having a researcher not involved in the research project scrutinize both the processes and the outcome of the research study (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). This is not something that this thesis has incorporated for several reasons. The first being that external auditing relies on the

assumptions that there is a fixed truth or reality that can be accounted for by a researcher and confirmed by an external auditor, however, within the constructionist research paradigm used, this is not the belief of the researcher nor within the scope of the research project. From an interpretive perspective, understanding is co-created and there is an objective truth or reality to which the results of the study can be compared. This alongside the potential problem of the external auditor disagreeing with the researchers' interpretations, then raising questions as to whose interpretation should stand.

6.16.4. Confirmability

Audit trail is a transparent account of the research steps taken from the beginning of the project to the development and writing of the conclusions and are records that are kept concerning what was completed throughout the study (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). This research project has kept all the raw data from both the CDA and the interviews with food aid users and volunteers, alongside all memoing and maps conducted as part of the analysis process. Within the methodological processes, notes have been kept regarding the procedures undertaken, the designs, strategies, and rationales that can be seen in chapter 3: Methodology. Reflexivity is also an important aspect of confirmability, and is the examination of one's own beliefs, judgements, and practices throughout the research process, and how these may have an influence on the research (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). This thesis has produced a reflective subsection within this chapter that highlights my perspectives, positions, values, and beliefs regarding the research project.

6.17. Originality

As required within a PhD, the thesis must present its originality. This thesis is original in several different ways.

The first being the discovery of a new neoliberal food insecurity discourse, the needy vs greedy. This discourse has been explored and analysed thoroughly within the thesis, while also explaining the differences and similarities between the current neoliberal discourses of the undeserving and deserving poor, scroungers and the neoliberal discourse of blame. The discovery of this discourse has added new knowledge to the research regarding neoliberal discourses, specifically those related to poverty and food insecurity.

The second is that by providing the food aid users, often left voiceless, an arena in which to share their stories, lived experience, and perspectives regarding food insecurity, food aid use, and the effects COVID-19 has played on this. This thesis can support the cause for policy change to be driven by those whose voices have been previously unheard, those who will benefit the most from the resulting changes of reducing stigma, shame, guilt and enabling empowerment within the food bank and food aid provision.

The third is the use of three different methodologies within the analysis of the thesis. With the use of Fairclough's CDA allowing for an exploration into the discourses present within the food bank social world, specifically British media, before performing the semi-structured interviews with food aid users and volunteers and analysing them within a constructionist research paradigm using two second generational grounded theory methods, constructionist grounded theory and situational analysis. Using two second generational grounded theory methods, allowed for a greater exploration of both the themes present within the qualitative data, and then a further exploration of the discourses present within the food bank world. This ensured that the analysis of the qualitative data was both deep enough within the themes but also in regard to the discourses that were present within the situation. This linked back to the first methodology used in this thesis, Fairclough's CDA.

This thesis brings new evidence to an old theory by providing new rationale and evidence that shame vs guilt is a public vs private argument that Benedict (1946) first theorised. However, in recent years this theory has not been a popular one, with more recent theories (Tangney 1994; Tangney et al., 1996; Lewis 1971) being more common to explain the phenomena of shame vs guilt. This thesis has argued that within the food bank social world under investigation, the shame vs guilt being a public vs private matter is most evidenced within the qualitative semi-structured interviews collected.

Finally, this thesis attempts to synthesise old theories into new phenomena, with the use of Foucault's ideas on power to explain and contextualise the stigma-power that was seen within the situation, as opposed to the more popular theory of power. Marxist's ideas of power, which have previously been used to contextualise and synthesis the stigma-power phenomena seen within stigmatising situations

6.18.   Reflexivity of the Researcher

The aim of reflexivity is to be aware of the influence that we, the researchers have on the whole research process, from designing, data collecting, analysis and writing this thesis. Therefore, we need to be aware of our reflexive position and consider our own views to ensure the process remains credible and trustworthy and not derived through bias.

I, the researcher am aware of the potential influence that my personal, social, and political positions could have had on this research project, including the topic area, the design, the research philosophical position, data collection, and interpretation of results. My personal position, as a financially secure, well educated, white British female, member of the LGBT+ community is very different to the typical personal position of the participants who were food aid users. While this is my current position, and while I have never had the experience of using food aid, I have had an up bringing that was very financially insecure, with my parents often having to make compromises to ensure that the five children in the family had all the basic needs met when possible. This life experience undoubtedly has made it more likely for me to gain an interest in this area. Not only this, but due to my background and experiences, I have been able to relate to the food aid user participants to some extent, which has allowed me to develop more trusting relationships and gather more in-depth data. Several participants who were parents, disclosed their experiences of food aid and food insecurity in relation to their children and being the breadwinner, in this respect, I feel at a disadvantage when interpreting this data as I have not had the experience of caring for children.

Regarding my political stance, it is clear throughout this thesis, that I hold left leaning beliefs. And although I have made a consorted effort to distance myself from any particularly political statements and standpoints, I believe it would be impossible for this not to be reflected within this thesis in some way. My political leanings have directed my choice of research, due to my interest in food aid user's health and wellbeing, and how this can be improved.

My personal, social, and political perspectives could have impacted all stages of this research project, especially data collection and interpretation. Within the food bank social world, it was known to food aid users and volunteers that I was a researcher, and this likely impacted my ability to create relationships with potential participants and influenced any participants ability to be open within interviews. My presence at the foodbank afforded me the opportunity to observe several distressing situations from a position I have not had the

chance to be privy to. However, this has undoubtedly impacted the analysis of data sourced from the food bank due to my experiences observing these situations.

'Research is a process, not just a product' – England, 1994

6.19.   Conclusion

This chapter has presented the overarching argument of this thesis. That due to a crisis, food aid users find themselves in a situation where there are limited resources, typically financial and food. Food aid users then have a series of options, either to rely on the help of a food aid organisation or relying on family and friends. With the help of the ICFH, food aid users were able to empower themselves and gain the control that they had previously lost. During this process however, food aid users experience several barriers. When thinking of Foucault's disciplinary power, food aid users are 'controlled' through the timetabling of their time, they are to arrive at the DWP at an agreed time, or to the organised food bank, during their two-hour opening. Through the use of positive and negative feedback to reinforce behaviours, sanctioning UC recipients, if they are perceived to not have completed all the requirements; and through observing food aid users, again through DWP and organised food banks, that require personal information and data, which is stored. A stigma is created around food banks and charity, which is reinforced through media, social media, and discourses. This stigma has been shown to create feelings of shame and guilt within the food aid users, who then avoid asking for help from food banks, to reduce the stigma and subsequent feelings of shame and guilt. This compiled with the 'undeserving' and 'deserving' poor discourse to try and deter food aid users from relying on food banks, as a form of 'control', which induces further shame, when food aid users do eventually seek help at a food bank. The needy vs greedy discourse is created within the organised food banks as a form of 'control', using it as a tool to decide who does and does not get help, which reinforces the stigma, shame, and guilt that the food aid users are already feeling. Resistance comes in the form of the ICFH, who actively challenge the stigma associated with food banks, attempt to reduce any feelings of shame and guilt felt by food aid user, and attempt to change the narrative within the food insecurity social world. Resistance also comes in the form of some media outlets challenging the discourse and narrative. However, as seen in the CDA, not all media outlets are challenging the discourse,

and could be argued that to change the discourses and narrative a more collective approach is required, with the inclusion of all British media, government officials and food banks.

This chapter has used Foucault's sociological theories of power and discourse to provide an explanation as to the phenomena that was seen in this situation. While the shame and guilt that was seen within this research has provided further argument to Benedict's theory of a public vs private nature of shame and guilt, while also pulling on the work of Goffman to explain the stigma associated with food banks and food aid users. This chapter has also shown where this research sits amongst other research within the field, agreeing and providing an alternative argument to the phenomena seen within food banking social world.

This chapter has also provided an overview of the dissemination of the findings that I will be carrying out, along with the originality of the research, required for a PhD. Finally, this chapter explains the trustworthiness and credibility of the research study and a reflex statement written by I, both vitally important within qualitative research.

7. Conclusion

The overarching aim of this thesis was to explore the perspectives of food aid uses within an independent food banking system while simultaneously analysing the discourses found within the food insecurity narrative, analysing the reported effects of food insecurity and the use of food aid on the wellbeing of the food aid users. It has explored the current literature and theory within food insecurity and food aid systems within the UK, while highlighting the lack of knowledge regarding food aid and wellbeing within an ICFH food banking system. This thesis also completed a critical discourse analysis of British press within the context of the evolving COVID-19 pandemic and the effects the pandemic was having on the food aid systems within the UK. It also showed the perspectives of food aid and food insecurity on the food aid users wellbeing, highlighting how wellbeing was at times both negatively and positively affected with the use of an independent food aid system.

Firstly, this study performed a critical discourse analysis to explore the discourses within the British press between 1st January 2020 and 31st March 2020. The CDA highlighted the scrounger discourse, the neoliberal discourse of blame and the undeserving/ deserving poor discourse. Not only that, but the CDA showed that the British press were actively challenging these discourses in a variety of different ways. Previous studies have shown how the British press typically reproduce the neoliberal poverty discourses, with few actively challenging them. Therefore, it is hard to say, without performing another study, if the change is due to the social and political changes of COVID-19, although it was seen that many of the ways in which the media were challenging the discourses were through COVID-19 information and highlighting the response needed to provide food to all those who were newly facing food insecurity due to the pandemic. Alongside this, further research would be needed to see if the change lasted longer than the three months of this study, and if/how the media continued to challenge the discourses or did they start to reproduce them, as the pandemic progressed.

The thesis also used two other qualitative research methods to analyse data gathered from food aid users and volunteers. The two methods were second generation grounded theory methods, that of constructionist grounded theory and situational analysis. These two methods were used to analyse data generated via in-depth interviews of the participants, where codes, themes and discourses were discovered.

Strong themes around power and control being a continuum, stigma and power, shame and guilt, and the effects of these on wellbeing were explored. This thesis used Foucault's thinking of power to explain the power relations within the control continuum that were expressed within this study. As mentioned within the findings and discussion chapters, the control continuum flowed and changed as the food aid user moved through the processes of being food insecure, needing help and securing a food parcel, to being empowered. It also highlights the changing in reported wellbeing as the continuum changes, with food aid users reporting worse wellbeing as power and control is taken away from them. Mixed responses to wellbeing and giving control away were reported, depending on the food aid style, with some food aid users who had previous experiences with organised food banking systems saying that it negatively affected wellbeing, while those who had only used an independent food banking system said that it benefited their wellbeing. All food aid users reported that intendent food banking systems attempted to empower the food aid user in a variety of ways. To not only help improve the food aid users' wellbeing, but also view the socioeconomic needs of the food aid users as being just as important as the need for an emergency food parcel.

Following this was the stigma power theme. This thesis showcased this idea of "stigma-power", in that there is power in and behind the stigma being produced as a form of oppression of those being stigmatised. Stigma-power previously used a Marxist thinking of power to explain this phenomenon, however this thesis argued Foucault's thinking of power, which is that power is not something that is possessed and owned by a select group of individuals using power to control others who do not possess power. Instead, power is everywhere, in everything and therefore can be used as a form of oppression.

This thesis also allowed for the theme of guilt and shame to be explored. Not only in the sociological effects of shame and guilt on wellbeing of food aid users, but also with food aid users reporting that shame and guilt, alongside feelings of judgement and embarrassment, negatively affected their wellbeing, causing them to have reduced self-esteem and self-confidence. Shame and guilt become a barrier to accessing food aid used as an avoidance technique. This thesis also adds to the debate regarding shame vs guilt, with this being further evidence arguing that shame and guilt are a public vs private difference. With shame being reportedly felt during a public situation while guilt is a private emotion Shame where individuals are being stigmatised by another individual leaving them with feelings of shame

that they are having to perform an act that is not a social norm. Guilt in that guilt was reportedly felt by the food aid user in a private setting, where the individual was able to reflect on the act of requiring a food parcel and having to rely on the generosity of strangers.

This thesis has explored and presented the different forms of stigma avoidance used by food aid users as well as the many ways in which the ICFH charity challenged the stigma and removed the barriers to food aid users. Food aid users' stigma avoidance techniques generally were determinantal to their wellbeing in that they would skip meals so as not to ask for a food parcel. They would ensure their children would have enough food, often resulting in them eating smaller portions and/or less nutritious foods because the food items available within the food parcel were typically long-lasting and high in sugar and calories. Alongside this was the discussion regarding the steps the ICFH were taking to reduce the stigma and challenge the discourses and narrative of food poverty. This ICFH aided in reducing the stigma by not insisting that the food aid users disclose their current financial situation, or how they found themselves to be in need of help. They did not ask for bank statements as a form of proof or require any referral voucher. If the food aid user wished to disclose information the volunteers were equipped to deal with sensitive issues. Mental health and youth workers were on hand as needed. Alongside this many volunteers were previous food-aid users, so had shared experiences and were able to provide conversation, support, and guidance. The food aid users often felt more confident that they would not be judged or stigmatised and would share more. Not only this, but the food aid hub also challenged the narrative around insecurity and food bank use. It has been explained that this particular food aid hub provided unlimited fresh fruit and vegetables daily to anyone in need in the community. This included bread, and butters/jams/yogurts as and when they were available. This food was all near end of life produce from local chain supermarkets that would otherwise end in landfill. The food aid hub changed their narrative on social media, from calling it a food bank, to asking people of the area to come and collect some bags to help reduce food waste and landfill, helping the environment. This saw an increase in members of the community who did not need to rely on the food from a food aid organisation, who then generously donated money to the food aid hub so that they were able to purchase more dried items for the other part of the food bank. This did not impact the number of people who were in genuine need of a food parcel because there was always plenty of food. This resulted in less feelings of stigma to food

insecure people due to the change of narrative. Notably, the food aid hub, is part of a wider community hub that offers support to LGBT, youth, parents, low-income families, young families, help with DWP forms and job applications and interview prep. It is also a social space for gathering and has a community café in the centre of the building, with the food bank typically hidden out of sight. There is not a typical 'food bank' look about the building. When food aid users enter the building to ask for help people who see them don't necessarily know what it is that they are entering for. This has helped reduce the stigma felt by food aid users.

With a key aim of this thesis to determine how food insecurity and food aid use effects reported wellbeing of food aid users, it was explored, and found that food aid users reported both food insecurity and food aid as affecting their wellbeing, including both physical and mental health. What was surprising was the reported effects of wellbeing being influenced by the control continuum discussed above. When control was forcibly removed from the food aid users, this was followed by reports of negative wellbeing. Skipping meals, not eating, increased feelings of stress, depression, and anxiety alongside the idea of being helpless.

When food aid users gave control away often in the form of asking a food aid organisation for help with sourcing food, reports of the effects on wellbeing were divided. Those participants who had experience with organised food banks typically stated that they felt giving control away and asking for help also negatively affected their wellbeing. It added to the feelings that they were already experiencing, additional feelings of embarrassment and the notion that someone else was more deserving of the help that they were about to receive. Many reporting coming as a last resort and had often skipped meals or not eaten for as long as they felt they could.

On the other hand, participants who had primarily used the ICFH reported that their wellbeing improved with control being given away to this type of food aid. Participants reported that they felt they were given enough food to not skip meals. They also felt that they were provided with the information and tools to prepare meals using a host of ingredients they had not previously tried before, as well as providing specific foods for younger children, those with allergies or 'picky' eaters. It was also reported that it helped improve mental wellbeing due to the knowledge that the volunteers were not judgemental but actively listening, helping, and aiding in all respects, not just their need for food. Typically, when asked how the food aid user would report their health and wellbeing, the large majority stated that their

health and wellbeing was poor, not only due to their poverty or need to rely on the generosity of others, but due to the discourses that were being reproduced within the food aid communities.

The discourses within food insecurity and the wider narrative of poverty have been explored within this thesis, in both the CDA, followed by the use of situational analysis to analyse the effects the discourses are reportedly having on food aid user's wellbeing, and experiences within food aid organisations. It was seen that food aid users were aware of the discourses and actively attempt to distance themselves from them, doing so in a variety of ways. One being justifying with themselves as to why they are deserving of help even though this community food aid organisation requires no justification. It was reported that food aid users would justify their need to not only themselves but to volunteers, again without prompting, when they believed that they could be challenged. Following this, food aid users would often feel or believe that there was someone who was more deserving of the help, so would have to seek external validation of their need from the volunteers. However, it was also seen that while food aid users distanced themselves from the discourses as much as possible, they would often reproduce the discourse towards other food aid users within the community.

This thesis has answered its aims and objects that were set out in the introduction and added a wealth of knowledge to several key areas within food poverty. The first being the introduction of the control continuum and the effects that this has on people's experiences with food aid and their wellbeing. Secondly, the effects of stigma, shame and guilt on food aid user's wellbeing, and the link between stigma and shame, while adding new argument to the shame vs guilt theory. Thirdly, this study also attempts to utilise Foucault's theories of power and discourse to explain the phenomena seen within stigma-power, which had previously used a Marxist thinking of power. Fourthly, this thesis also adds knowledge regarding the food insecurity discourses seen within British press during the beginnings of the COVID-19 pandemic, exploring the food aid user's wellbeing during the pandemic, when food aid organisations were having to change and adapt due to the problems arising from the COVID-19.

While limitations to this study have been addressed already within the previous chapter, it is worth noting them again. Due to COVID-19, and the lockdowns imposed, it was not viable to use numerous food aid organisations, as was planned. This resulted in the large majority of

participants being sourced from one food bank which could have impacted the responses generated through the questioning and data collection.

Research is needed to explore the control continuum further, in both organised food aid settings and the independent community settings. Alongside this, further research as a whole needs to be conducted within the independent food aid sector, focussed on the need to create a framework for independent food aid organisations to work with in order to ensure that food aid wellbeing is at the centre of every interaction within the food aid organisation; as well as the continued attempts to challenge and remove the stigma associated with food banks, to actively challenge the discourses seen within food insecurity and poverty as a whole. Following this, more research is needed to analyse the changes to the food insecurity and poverty discourses throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

I, the researcher believe that food aid is going to become a permanent fixture within society, following in the footsteps of other nations (i.e., USA and Australia), but that there will be a change in the food aid social world. Currently, the largest form of food aid is the foodbank, with other forms, being soup kitchens, community cafes and pay-as-you-feel supermarkets. However, I feel that this will change, that we will see a rise in pay-as-you-feel supermarkets, and community cafes, which will utilise end-of-life food items, preventing them from landfill, whilst allowing for food to be sourced at a lower price. COVID-19 has shown that there is an increase in people who need emergency food help, who are unable to make their finances cover all their expenses, and need help with food, especially with the rising costs of food. I feel, a rise in pay-as-you-feel supermarkets, which allow for individuals to access reduced cost food, will allow individuals who need help accessing food, but may not need a free food parcel, an ability to afford food. I also feel that the ICFH sourcing end-of-life food products from local supermarkets and providing them to those in need within the community, to prevent landfill is a brilliant way to both help those who need food, whilst also reducing our landfill, and that this should be incorporated by other foodbanks and food aid organisations. Although appreciate, that it may be difficult for formal foodbanks to use this model due to the size of the organisation.

I believe my next steps would consist of publishing the intended publications from this thesis, while gaining further experience and knowledge of research working with another research team. Regarding the future of this work, I would like to remain focused on food insecurity,

foodbanks, food aid social world and the discourses within the social world. I would like to conduct further research into the two main organisations of foodbanks, the formal and the independent/community, while also conducting research into the new forms of food aid (i.e., the pay-as-you-feel supermarkets) and how these reproduce or challenge the discourses. As mentioned earlier in this thesis, I would also like to conduct further research into the policing for foodbanks, and how this may play into and shape the narratives of foodbanks, and the narratives the foodbank places into the social world. Similarly, I would like to continue one of the key themes from this thesis, how food aid organisations use their power to challenge the discourses and narratives, that are both in the foodbanking social world, and those that are outside of it, but play into it i.e., Universal Credit and fuel poverty.

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9. Appendix A: Social Media Poster

University of Sunderland

<u>Participants wanted</u>

Research Title*: An investigation into the perceived effects of food aid on the health of the users*

1. Are you over the age of 18 and live in the North of England?
2. Have you used a form of food aid? i.e. foodbank, soup kitchen, community meal

Would you be happy to share your experiences with food aid completely **ANONYMOUSLY**, through an online call or phone interview?

If you answered yes to the above questions and are interested in taking part or want any more information

Please contact Kerry Brennan-Tovey, PhD researcher via *Kerry.brennan-tovey@research.sunderland.ac.uk* or text/call on 07761660070

10. Appendix B: Participant Information Sheet

An Investigation into the perceived effects of food aid on the health of the users.

Researcher: Kerry Brennan-Tovey - MSc Public Health
School of Health and Nursing, University of Sunderland

Dear Participant,

You are being invited to take part in this research project. Before you decided to do so, it is important you understand why the research is being done and what it involves. Please take the time to read the following information carefully and discuss with others if you wish. If at any point you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask the researcher, Kerry, or contact the supervisor, Lisa Board. Both their contact details are at the bottom of this letter.

What are the projects purpose?

This research project aims to investigate the perceived health effects food aid, such as food banks, soup kitchens and community cafes, are having on the users. This research is building on previous research done by other researchers in the field, and has been designed to add to the current knowledge.

Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen because you are currently using a form of food aid, or have previously used a form of food aid to help in a time of crisis. You will have perceptions of how it has either positively or negatively affected your health.

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you decide to take part you will be able to keep a copy of this information sheet and you should indicate your agreement to the attached consent form. You can still withdraw at any time, before data analysis has commenced, which will commence 2 weeks after you have been interviewed. You do not have to give a reason.

What will happen to me if I take part?

You will be asked to take part in an interview with the researcher, Kerry. This is estimated to last a maximum of 45mins. These interviews can take place via telephone, online video call, or in person (maintaining social distancing), whichever is more appropriate for you. You may agree to be contacted further, in the future by the researcher, if any follow-up questions are required.

What do I have to do?
Be content with giving up 45 minutes of your time, and to please answer all questions in the interview as fully as you can, that you feel comfortable answering, and sharing any experiences you have had with food aid.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?
Participating in the research is not anticipated to cause any disadvantages or discomfort to yourself. However, it is understood that it is a sensitive subject area. There is no physical risk to the research, and the potential psychological harm or distress will be the same as any experienced in everyday life.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?
Whilst there are no immediate benefits for those people participating in this research project. It is hoped that this work will have a beneficial impact, in changing local and national policies and raising awareness of these matters.

What if something goes wrong?
If you have any complaints about the project in the first instance you can contact the researcher, or the supervisor. If you feel your complaint has not been handled to your satisfaction you can contact the University of Sunderland's Head of Ethics, Dr John Fulton, to take your complaint further. There contact information will also be at the bottom.

Will my taking part in this research be kept confidential?
All the information that we collect about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. You will not be able to be identified or identifiable in any reports or publications. If you wish the charity that helped you can also be kept confidential and will not be named in connection with you in any publications. Any data collected from the interviews will be stored on a password protected external hard drive, that only the researcher has the password for, and any physical copies will be locked in a filing cabinet, and again, the researcher will be the only one who has access to the key. All data will be made anonymised after collection. The Data Protection Act (2018) will be followed and adhered to throughout.

Will I be recorded, and how will the recorded media be used?
Yes, voice recordings of the interviews will be taken. This is to allow the researcher to listen and engage in the interview, without having to take notes. This recording will be stored on an external hard drive, that is password protected and stored in a locked filing cabinet. It will be deleted from the recording device. The data from the recording will be typed up, the transcript of the data will be stored just the same. No one will have access to the recorded data, nor the transcripts, other than the researcher.

What type of information will be sought from me and why is the collection of this information relevant for achieving the research projects objectives?

The interviews will be centred around your experience using a form of food aid, and how you feel it has impacted your health, either negatively or positively. If you have any specific examples that would be great. Your views and experiences are what the research project is interested in exploring.

What will happen to the results of the research project?

Results of the research will be used in the researcher PhD thesis, upon completion of the degree. Your will not be identified in any publication or report. The charity that helped you will not be named in any publication or report, unless you give permission for this information.

Who is organising and funding the research?

The project is being organised by a PhD researcher – Kerry Brennan-Tovey, and being supervised by Lisa Board. There is no funding in this project.

Who has ethically review the project?

The project has been ethically approved by University of Sunderland's Research Ethics Group, University of Sunderland, UK.

Contacts for further information:

Researcher:

Kerry Brennan-Tovey, University of Sunderland, UK.

Kerry.brennan-tovey@research.sunderland.ac.uk

Supervisor:

Dr Lisa Board, University of Sunderland, UK. Lisa.board@sunderland.ac.uk

Chair of the University of Sunderland Research Ethic Group:

Dr John Fulton, University of Sunderland, UK. John.fulton@sunderland.ac.uk Tel: 01915152529

11. Appendix C: Consent Form

Consent Form

An Investigation into the perceived effects of food aid on the health of the users.

Researcher: Kerry Brennan-Tovey – MSc Public Health
School of Health and Nursing, University of Sunderland

Participant Code:_____

Dear Participant,

Thank you for taking the time to read the accompanying information sheet. If you could answer yes or no to the questions below, before signing and printing your name at the bottom.

	Y/N
I am over the age of 18	
I have read and understood the attached study information, and by signing below, I consent to participate in the study	
I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the study, before analysis has taken place, without giving a reason	
I give consent to have my voice recorded during the interview, and understand that It will be deleted once it has been transcribed by the researcher.	
I understand that I can contact the researcher at any time to answer any questions that I may have	

Signed: _____

Print name: _____

(Your name, along with your participation code is important to help match your data from the interview. It will not be used for any purpose other than this.)

Date: _____

12. Appendix D: Example Interview Questions

Part 1: Food Aid
1. Can you explain an experience you have had with food aid?
2. Can you give details of a form of food aid you have used?
3. The reasons why you have used this form of food aid? i.e. UC, COVID-19, a crisis, financial etc
4. Your overall experiences with the chosen food aid?
5. Was the process easy?
6. What kind of food was available to you?
7. Did you feel it was appropriate?
8. Did the food aid charity offer any other support to you?

Part 2: Income Inequality
1. Do you have accommodation?
2. Are you in any form of paid employment?
   a. Zero hour contracts
   b. Full-time/part-time
   c. Working during COVID-19
   d. Furlough (COVID-19)
3. Do you receive any income from the government in the form of UC, PIP or any other benefits?
   a. If so is this your sole income? Or a top-up?
4. Do you have dependents?
5. Are you the main source of income in your household?

Part 3: Food Inequality
1. Have you/or do you ever worry about your ability to buy food?
   a. Can you explain a situation when this has occurred?
   b. How did this make you feel?
   c. What help was made available to you?
2. Have you ever skipped a meal, or gone hungry?
   a. Can you explain a situation when this has occurred?
3. Are you able to eat fresh fruit and vegetables every day?
4. Do you feel you are able to eat a healthy, varied and balanced diet?
5. Do you see food as enjoyable?
6. Do you feel you are the ability to cook food appropriately? i.e. afford gas to cook, facilities available to cook

Part 4: Health **PARTICIPANTS DO NOT HAVE TO DISCLOSE THEIR HEALTH CONDITIONS, JUST THE EFFECTS FOOD AID HAD ON IT, AND IF THEY DEVELOPED ANY NEW ONES DUE TO FOOD AID OR FOOD POVERTY?**
1. Did you have any previous physical or mental health conditions prior to food aid use?
   a. Are you happy to explain if they effected your need to use food-aid?
   b. Did it impact your ability to get appropriate food aid help?
2. Did you experience any new health conditions that were linked to food aid use?
   a. If so, can you explain how they are linked to the food aid use

3. How was your physical and mental health effected with the use of food aid?
    a. Was it effected in a positive or a negative way? Examples?
    b. Do you feel that it wasn't effected at all? And if so why?
4. Did you feel your health was supported by the food aid charity that you were helped by?
    a. Were they supportive of your health?
    b. Did they signpost you to further help for your health conditions?
5. Do you think they food aid charity could do more to help or support your health?
    a. Mental
    b. Physical
    c. Diet

Part 5: Covid-19
    1. Did you require food aid during the COVID-19 pandemic?
        a. If yes, how did this differ from previous use?
        b. If yes, was this your first experience with food aid?
    2. For participants who had used a form of food aid before COVID-19 to compare:
        a. Did you feel the food available to you was different to that before the pandemic?
        b. Did you feel you had less choice over the food available to you?
        c. Did you still have to go to the food aid charity to pick up the food or was it delivered to you?
        d. Was it easier or harder for you to access food aid?
        e. Do you feel societies opinion of food aid/bank users have changed since COVID-19
    3. For individuals who the first time with food aid was during COVID-19
        a. Do you feel societies opinion of food aid/bank users have changed since COVID-19
        b. Specifically linked to COVID-19 was it easy or challenging to get a form of food aid?

13. Appendix E: Ethical Approval

University of Sunderland

Kerry Brennan-Tovey
School of Nursing and Health Sciences
Programme: PhD

Dear Kerry

PROJECT TITLE: An Investigation into the Perceived Health Effects of Food Aid on the Users
APPLICATION: Reference Number 006953

On behalf of the University ethics reviewers who reviewed your project, I am pleased to inform you that on 29/06/2020 the above-named project was **approved** on ethics grounds, on the basis that you will adhere to the following documentation that you submitted for ethics review:

- University research ethics application form 006953 (form submission date: 26/06/2020); (expected project end date: 14/12/2020).
- Participant information sheet 1012617 version 1 (26/06/2020).
- Participant information sheet 1012474 version 1 (26/05/2020).
- Participant consent form 1012473 version 1 (25/05/2020).

If during the course of the project you need to deviate significantly from the above-approved documentation please email ethics.review@sunderland.ac.uk

For more information please visit: https://www.sunderland.ac.uk/research/governance/researchethics/

Yours sincerely

Veronique Laniel
Ethics Administrator
University of Sunderland

14. Appendix F: Ethical Application Risk Assessment

University of Sunderland – Research Risk Assessment
Name: Kerry Brennan-Tovey (bh22ms)
Title: An Investigation into the Perceived Health Effects of Food Aid on the Users

Identified Risks Identify the risks/hazards present	Likelihood Low/Medium/High	Potential Impact/Outcomes Who might be harmed and how?	Risk Management/Mitigating Factors Evaluate the risks and decide on the precautions

Travel Risks to location of research project
• Road/Rail accident
• Physical assault
	Low	Researcher:
		• Physical injury
		• Psychological harm
			• Awareness of different options for mode of travel
			• Awareness of physical environment
			• Researcher to be aware of health and safety policies of research location:
			   ○ Fire bells
			   ○ Location of fire alarms and exits

Discussion of a sensitive topic in an interview has potential to cause minor distress to participants	Low	Participant: • Psychological stress Researcher: • Anxiety about dealing with a complex situation	• Offer to cease interview • Signpost participant to external support services
Participant to disclose sensitive information, that requires action by the researcher/external authorities	Low	Participant: • Psychological stress Researchers: • Psychological stress	• Researcher to report to appropriate authorities/support structures
Data Collection taking place in an unfamiliar location with people not already known to researcher	Medium	Researcher: • Physical injury • Psychological harm	• Visit location prior to data collection to assess possible risk associated with building and social environment

			• Use information to plan session • Researcher to introduce themselves to CEO/volunteers and service users • Researcher to have a backup contact details and plan ready
COVID-19 infection	Medium	Participant • To contract infection Researcher • To contract infection	• To follow government guidelines at all times • Hand washing guidelines to be followed • Facemasks to be worn during interviews that are face-to-face • 2m distance when interviewing • Interviews outside if face-to-face • Interviews via phone or online video call if possible • Both participant and researcher to follow guidelines

15. Appendix G: CDA Data Collection Table

Article No.	Name of Paper	Article Name	Author	Date	Discourses
1	The Guardian	Food banks run out of milk and other staples as shoppers panic buy	Robert Booth	10th March 2020	• Undeserving/deserving poor • Inequality – food
2	The Daily Telegraph	Poverty has increased for pensioners and working families, says charity	Telegraph Reporters	7th February 2020	• Inequality • Poverty
3	The Daily Mirror	Tory DWP chief says food banks are 'perfect way' to help the poor	Nicola Barlett	28th January 2020	• Food Insecurity • Inequality
4	The Daily Mail	ROSS CLARK: Life expectancy is NOT falling because of austerity. It's just that we're getting fatter – and can't life forever	Ross Clark	26th February 2020	• Austerity isn't to blame • Left are Lying
5	The Guardian	Coronavirus won't break food banks – but the government has to fix universal credit now	Emma Revie	13th March 2020	• Food Banks • Food insecurity • UC
6	The Daily Mirror	Coronavirus: Food banks face ''uncertain future'' dur to killer bug	Rosaleen Fenton	11th March 2020	• Food Banks • COVID Panic buying
7	The Daily Mail	Free school meals should be made available to ALL children no matter their family income, London Assembly says	Amelia Wynne	11th February 2020	• Food insecurity • Scroungers
8	The Guardian	How Deprivation in the north has led to a health crisis	Gregory Robinson and Helen Pidd	25th February 2020	• Health inequalities • North/South divide
9	Removed due to not meeting the criteria				

10	The Daily Mirror	Hungry families arriving at food banks desperate after 'not eating for days'	Miles O'Leary	22nd February	• Scroungers • Undeserving/deserving poor
11	The Daily Mirror	Tory councillor says poverty 'caused by families having kids they can't afford'	Gurdip Thandi and Milo Boyd	8th January 2020	• Undeserving/deserving poor
12	The Daily Mirror	Free school meals could be available to all – no matter what you earn under new rules	Emma Munbodh	12th February 2020	• Inequality
13	The Guardian	Why are millions of children in the UK not getting enough to eat	Louise Tickle	16th February 2020	• Inequality
14		Removed due to not meeting the criteria			
15	The Guardian	Universal credit 'sending people into arms of loan sharks'	Patrick Butler	23rd January 2020	• UC
16	The Guardian	Food-bank users deserve luxuries as well as lentils – just like everyone else	Zoe Williams	23rd January 2020	• Scroungers • Food parcels are political
17	The Guardian	We are about to learn a terrible lesson from coronavirus: inequality kills	Owen Jones	14th March 2020	• Inequality in health
18	The Guardian	Food bans ask UK supermarkets to set aside coronavirus supplies	Patrick Butler	21st March 2020	• Scroungers • COVID Panic buying
19	The Guardian	How to help food banks during the coronavirus outbreak	Sirin Kale	17th March 2020	• Undeserving/deserving poor
20	The Guardian	Testing times for students: food banks open at universities	Jessica Murray	24th March 2020	• Undeserving/deserving poor • Shame and stigma
21	The Guardian	Millions to need food aid in days as virus exposes UK supply	Felicity Lawrence	27th March 2020	• Undeserving/deserving poor
22	The Guardian	Morrisons gives food banks £10m during coronavirus outbreak	Rebecca Smithers	30th March 2020	• Undeserving/deserving poor

23	The Guardian	Families borrowing to buy food a week into UK lockdown	Felicity Lawrence	28th March 2020	• Undeserving/deserving poor
24		Removed due to not meeting the criteria			
25	The Daily Telegraph	Lockdown leaves charities fighting for survival	Dominic Penna	1st April 2020	• Economics
26	The Daily Telegraph	Allotments should be brought back to help feed the nation, study says	Emma Gatten	27th March 2020	• Food policy
27	The Daily Mirror	Dad on universal credit 'forced to pawn son's PlayStation games to feed family'	Milo Boyd	10th March 2020	• Scroungers • Undeserving/deserving poor • Inequality – loans and debt
28	The Daily Mirror	Liverpool's Andy Robertson 'makes a generous donation' to six food banks	Darren Wells	22nd March 2020	• Covid 19 food banks donation
29	The Daily Mirror	Coronavirus: more than a million poor kids could go hungry if COVID-19 shuts schools	Dan Bloom	13th March 2020	• Undeserving/deserving poor
30	The Daily Mirror	Free school meal supermarket vouchers – all you need to know including who gets one	Emma Murbodh	1st April 2020	• Undeserving/deserving poor
31	The Daily Mirror	Morrisons gives £10million to food banks to help tackle coronavirus crisis	James Andrews	30th March 2020	• Undeserving/deserving poor
32	The Daily Mail	Liam Payne joins forces with charity to provide food banks with 360,000 meals for people struggling as a result of the coronavirus pandemic	Katie Storey	27th March 2020	• Undeserving/deserving poor
33	The Daily Mail	Supermarkets rally to Britain's coronavirus call: Lidl prepares thousands of free bags of fresh fruit and veg for frontline NHS medics	Mark Duell	30th March 2020	• Undeserving/deserving poor

		while morrisons hands £10million worth of produce to foodbans			
34	The Daily Mail	Liverpool and Scotland footballer Andy Robertson 'is the mystery backer behind huge donation that kept SIX food banks in Glasgow going' amid the ongoing coronavirus crisis	Daniel David	22nd March 2020	• Undeserving/deserving poor
35	The Daily Mail	A city united: BOTH Manchester clubs come together to donate a combined £100,000 to help food banks cope during the coronavirus pandemic	Chris Wheeler	21st March 2020	• Undeserving/deserving poor
36	The Daily Mail	Scarlett Moffatt kindly donates to a food bank after previously offering to buy shopping for the elderly in her area amid the coronavirus crisis	Niomi Harris	20th March 2020	• Undeserving/deserving poor
37	The Daily Mail	First food parcels arrive at doorsteps of vulnerable people being shielded from coronavirus with 50,000 are set to be delivered this week	Sara Scarlett	29th March 2020	• Undeserving/deserving poor
38	The Daily Mail	Social Bite to double production of free lunches as demand soars	PRESS ASSOCIATION	30th March 2020	• Undeserving/deserving poor
39	The Daily Mail	Blake Lively and Ryan Reynolds donate $1 million to foodbanks amid coronavirus outbreak	Adam S. Levy	17th March 2020	• Undesiring/deserving poor
40	The Daily Mail	Victoria Beckham announces she will donate 20% of all sales from fashion label and beauty brand to food bank charities amid coronavirus pandemic	Eve Buckland	30th March 2020	• Undeserving/deserving poor

| 41 | The Guardian | Almost 500,000 people in the UK apply for universal credit in nine days | Kate Proctor | 25th March 2020 | • Undeserving/deserving poor |

16. Appendix H: Transcript Section and the Subsequent Themes; Sub-Themes and Discourses

Transcript Section	Theme/Sub-theme/Discourse

'More essentials, like me rent, council tax, gas I'm not really bothered about, but electric I am…. Manly dog food and then my food, phone bill, not really, I pay that like, if I want to pay £10 a month, ill pay that. … can I do without paying this and put that money aside, and if that money is there at the end of the month, then I can pay it before that whack the extra charge on for missing a payment' **Liam**
 	
'Some months you just have to keep the money. Its either that or starve, or keep the money' **Liam**
 	
'We don't qualify for any support because my other half works, but he is on low income, but while he was furloughed, we were on 80% wage, but had more mouths to feed, and more meals to prepare' **Sophie**
 	
'… It's not that I want to go and spend it, I just want that little bit in my purse.' **Rosie**
 	
'I have my mum and my sister and stuff if I need. If my son needs a pair of shoes then they are there to help. My mum lends me money' **Rosie**
 	
'I have had loads of arguments with the dole, like if you raise your voice to them or your opinion, they come out and grab you. They don't listen to you' **Rosie**
 	
'…being sanctioned by the job centre, or not doing something they want, so they just stop your money' **Anthony**
 	
'…[Formal Christian Foodbank] they want to know where you have spent all your money, why you haven't got any money. If
	Control
	Themes:
	Crisis – control being forcibly removed
	Submitting to asking for help
	Short-term help
	Long-term help
	Empowerment
	Discourses:
	   1. Neoliberal discourse of blame
	- blaming the government because they have controlled them, i.e. UC, sanctioning, furlough 80% etc
	   2. Undeserving and deserving poor
	- Proof needed to determine if you meet the requirements of being deserving of the help, or labelled undeserving because of a 'lifestyle' choice
	   3. Needy vs greedy
	- Proof needed to determine if your needy or greedy – this is proof required by the foodbank organiser

you have any money at all, they won't help you…. They are very dismissive, if you don't fit there criteria' **Anthony** 'You've got to fit the criteria, otherwise they are not willing to help you' **Anthony** '[ICFH] do help me a lot when it comes to food, you know in many ways. But a lot when it comes to food, and making sure I have plenty of food and have eaten' **Anthony** 'Knowing I had somewhere I could go and I know it might not have been much, but it was always somewhere I could turn to, to get something, you know' **Anthony**	

'I do find a lot of people do get a food parcel, a lot of the food they get they just don't like, but they feel bad, coming up to you and erm look I can't have this, because they see it as, ah you've given us some food for free, and it's not good enough' **Liam**
 	
'I know from my own experience, I don't like asking for help, the first time I had to ask for electricity I was in tears, and they were fine and said don't worry about it ….. I can imagine that there are a lot of people, who don't come for that reason, because they don't …' **Stacey**
 	
'at first it was as bit strange, but you know I give back, I'm not one of those who take, take, takes, I give back' **Anthony**
 	
'I just think it, I just feel that sometimes that I don't deserve it. Because the kids have these nice things, but if it wasn't for PACT then they wouldn't have anything, they wouldn't have anything' **Joanne**
 	
'yes, I won't admit it. I've never admitted it, even to my closest friends. Erm no one knows I have used it, apart from me and my husband' **Claire**
	<u>**Guilt**</u>
	<u>Themes:</u>
	Someone in a worse position
	    Someone deserves the help more – they are in a worse position
	    External validation of 'deservingness' or 'need'
	    Courage to ask for help knowing they are not as 'deserving' as someone else
	Owing a debt
	    Repaying the foodbank for providing help by donating when able to do so
	    Volunteering their time
	    Until they are deemed to have paid the debt off
	Motherhood
	    Comparing self to 'ideal' mother
	    Feelings of failing children
	    Reduced feelings of self-worth
	    Guilt for not providing children with everything
	Fatherhood/masculinity
	    Role of man of household
	    Breadwinner – and failing
	    Connotations of 'strong man'
	    Reduced feelings in pride
	<u>Discourses:</u>
	    1. Neoliberal discourse of blame

'there's a lot more people out there that are going ''if you need help, just give me a call''. But how many people are going to be able to do that? When they've got dignity?' **Claire**

'because the people that are going to be more likely to turn around and say, I can't bring myself to do that, are the people that are more genuine. And they are the people who are more genuinely in need' **Claire**

'people don't want to be seen as failing in life. You can't even feed yourself, how are you gonna feed your kids. How are you going to move on in life' **Liam**

'I kinda feel like a fraud to an extent, because it comes down to we can live on pasta and stuff, but having the option now, or having something more than just pasta and chips'
'because I've been homeless, I know what it's like to have absolutely nothing, so it's just awkward' **Sophie**

'… well I was, when I was living in North London, I was raised to believe that you didn't do charity shops, you know if you didn't have any food in the house then you went hungry, until you next got some money…' **Anthony**

'…but there is a lot of times where a lot of the stuff is out of date, and there is usually by time you get home and look through the bags, a lot of the time, you have to throw half of it away, because it is out of date, and I mean I don't ever say anything, because what they are doing is an amazing thing anyway, and I don't like to look like I'm having a go, or being ungrateful….' **James**

'I'll beg, steal and borrow to make sure the kids have' **James**

- Employed but on a 0 hour contract – given no hours/no pay
- Sanctioning from DWP – for not completing a task correctly
- C19 and furlough – only receiving 80% of wage, however 100% of bills and extra – children at home due to school closures and no extra money to support their day time meals

2. Undeserving and deserving poor
- Individuals who ask for 'special' food items, instead of a whole food box – are perceived as being undeserving
- Parents with children/ill children consider themselves deserving – due to their children needing the help
- Seek for external validation of deservingness – from the foodbank or volunteers at the foodbank
- C19 and furlough – highlighting the change in the discourse, In that more people are 'deserving' of the help
- Someone in a worse position, are more deserving – therefore they feel they are undeserving of help, so wait longer to ask for help, and then seek external validation to help ease some of the negative emotions that are felt

3. Needy vs greedy
- Some people are perceived as 'taking the mick' by asking for a foodbox, but then can afford to buy alcohol
- Individuals not feeling greedy when asking for help, because they have received external validation i.e. the red slip from TT
- Some have misplaced feelings of greediness – due to the fact their children have nice things (xbox etc), however these were purchased before the user had a relationship and financial crisis that resulted in her relying on help
- Role of the mother and father reproduces this idea of being needy – they have children to support as opposed to single individuals who could easily be misconceived as being greedy

'…. I mean I'm a bloke, I'm a man, I'm the dad, I'm the father, I'm a husband, that's the thing, I should have been doing…. That's the way that I've been bought up, the man, that's not being sexist, that's just how I was bought up, the man goes to work, makes the money, fetches the food, and puts it on the table. As the man and the dad, I dint feel like I was doing any of that, and then to go cap in hand sort of thing, but the wat I started to look at it was there was a another 100 odd families in the exact same boat as me, seeing people who we didn't think we would see in that position….' **James** '… it as wither the kids eat or, I didn't buy enough. I would just get toast or something, as long as I've got the food in for the kids,…. It feels like you're a failure to be honest.' **Joanne** 'I keep thinking, I'm asking for help, but there is someone worse off than you' **Joanne** 'I'm thinking your gonna think that we don't need that because they've got an xbox and they've got a telly, but I've bought all that stuff well before I was …, you know I've always tried to give back' **Joanne** 'I would always get myself down and out about being a mother who couldn't feed her child. Like you have a child, and you've given this automatic responsibility, and you just feel shit when you can't do it' **Denise** 'I've had a lady with access to food bank who came to clean the toilets for two years.' **Stacey**	
'Yeah but there's that stigma isn't there, … you know, tried to keep hush hush, pulled someone aside, can I get a food parcel, or	**Stigma** <u>Themes:</u> Stigma/power

something like that. You don't want other people to know, even though they are in the same boat. But aye, that's just the normal stigma, of someone wanting help, no you can't do it yourselves, or obviously you can't because your not working, and that's the worst one, and a lot of people, I work, or have families, not earning enough, and they still need that little extra help' **Liam**

'ICFH, you don't know it's a foodbank, a lot of people don't usually know, unless you say we can do you a food parcel. Coz its hidden away, so no one sees it. It's a massive benefit id say.' **Liam**

'… I know a lot of people feel shame. And I mean, I've got somebody who came to me a couple of weeks ago, and I'm like, you know, I've got nothing, and I was like come on go to [ICFH]. She said no, no I can do it. I was like no they're there to help. Even if, you know we could give you something to last you over? But I think… I don't think its guilt, it's a lot of the time shame' **Joanne**

'there's people in [North East Town] going *"oh, look at them go to the foodbank. Going to [ICFH] all the time, when you don't need to"* they don't know anybody's situation' **Joanne**

'you're, you're asking someone else for free help, essentially. And I think that's… I know, when I… when we went through the food banks, erm the food bank…. The food banks put the best before dates in big, like marker pens on the packaging. And I was very, very careful if I had people in the house. They didn't see those. Yeah, they may not have understood what it meant. But I certainly understood and then I was, I don't think I've told anyone' **Claire**

'…if we look at abuse of any sort, and how much society has changed, the main reason

Sanctioning
Production/reproduction of discourses
Neoliberal narrative
Stereotypes
Control
Foodbank access criteria

Stigma shame
Judgemental
Barrier
Shameful experience
Normals vs abnormals in situation
Labelled greedy or undeserving

Stigma avoidance techniques
Postponing asking for help until no longer able to
Won't admit to anyone they are using a foodbank
Self-talk
Gratitude
External validation sought
Excessive apologising
ICFH Re-framming the narrative
ICFH challenging the narrative and discourses

Discourses:

1. **Undeserving and deserving poor**
- After meeting the requirements, and are deemed deserving of the help – no stigma was felt.
- People apologising for asking for help – they have nothing but feel large amounts of stigma and shame
- Dignity – won't ask friends and family for help due to the stigma that will be placed on them from those who know them
- Those individuals believe that they do not deserve the help, but have to ask for their children

2. **Needy vs greedy**
- Informing the volunteer that you need a food parcel but 'hush hush' because you have friends at the food bank
- The foodbank redesigning itself as a community café, that has a food bank, as to help reduce waste and stigma

it's changed is because people have come up, they've spoken about it, they've talked about it. And they try to take… the more people that come forward, the more people are going to be going, actually, maybe… they're gonna say things in a different way' **Claire** 'er, I did feel embarrassment, erm, because the form you have to fill out for the council, had all sorts of questions, and then you had to send them your bank details to prove it, and I was like, I wouldn't be ringing, If I wasn't in need of help. So it was a bit of embarrassment and a bit of shame. And it was a bit nervousness, walking through the doors for the first time, of the foodbank. Because I didn't know exactly what to expect.' **Kate** '…because its then the stigmatisism, that people start to feel like its not a very deserving service. And people that use it, they are not deserving, they are all on the dole. But it al comes with its own stigma and I do think that its then, when you want to reach out and ask for help, it does make it harder, because you don't want to feel like that' **Amy** 'the labels, the stigma that comes from it. What other people think of you. Even though it shouldn't be an issue it is' **Amy** 'I just swallow my pride, and get on with it' **Kim** '… that it is quiet embarrassing, actually having to walk into a foodbank, for me, and my experience, they delivered it to my door, I didn't have to physically walk in and ask. Erm, but I could imagine, it would be quiet embarrassing to do that' **Kim** 'erm, I think we are in a position where we do ned help, it's not like I'm scrounging or	- The physical act of walking into the food bank – the food bank/building holds stigma - Social media/news media/politicians and friends continuing to state that those who are using food aid are greedy, reinforcing the stigma of a foodbank and asking for help – stigma power

anything like that, I wouldn't ask if I didn't need' **Kim**	
'I do feel, that people are looking at me, think she just doesn't work, she just sits in the house and sit on my backside all day. That kind of stigma, but that isn't the case at all… so there is definitely a stigma around not working. But that I am actually my daughters carer and have a lot of running around to do … but the stigma is there, just because I don't work, they just assume I'm on benefits and that's it' **Kim**	
'I think just, instead of feeling shame, just feel a bit more gratitude. I think the first time, I didn't actually realise how grateful I should have been. Although, what I got might not have been sufficient enough, it was still food that I could give to me and my son' **Denise**	
'I feel absolutely no stigma whatsoever being in this place, but then I see articles online or I see facebook status' people just calling them bombing on benefits. And I'm just like that's not the case. If you walked a mile in someone else's shoes, I'm pretty sure your opinion would change' **Denise**	
'I was just grateful that I had the help' **Grace**	
'I think that the foodbank fighting against it really does help people and want to come in, like, we do lots around not have any food waste, or anything like that. Because doesn't matter how rich or poor you are, food waste is awful' **Rosie**	
'yeah, the stress of the whole reason of having a food bank. We know the impact of stress on health' **Claire**	**Wellbeing**

'Because of my mental health, when I get depressed I want to spend money, it can be anything' **Rosie**	
'R: Have you ever skipped a meal? P: for me son? Yeah, I'm talking before [ICFH]. Oh yes, most definitely. Yes' **Rosie**	
'I have a problem with eating as well. When I'm stressed I won't eat' **Rosie**	
'both me and my wife have, we've skipped quiet a few meals through the times. I'd rather the kids eat, I'm not bothered about me, I can get by on a bag of crisps or a slice of toast, you know what I mean' **James**	

17. Appendix I: Description of Participants (Food Aid Users only)

Alias	Background Information
Liam	Single white male, unemployed, in receipt of Universal Credit. Lives in a flat share due to the cost of rent. Has a dog, who he always ensures has food. Previously worked at McDoanlds on a zero-hour contract, but was not given shifts, due to younger staff that were cheaper to pay. Has had experience of using formal food banks and clothing banks. Struggles with long term anxiety and depression.
Sophie	A stay-at-home mum to three children (two from a previous relationship), partner works full time, but was furloughed to 80% wage during the pandemic. Father to two eldest children is in prison for child abuse. Sophie was homeless from the age of 14, and a survivor of domestic violence. Sophie currently rents her house with her partner and three children. Has used foodbanks on and off for several years, recently due to furlough and reduced wages.
Rosie	Single mother to one son. Has used foodbanks for several years, both formal and community. Has had a bad experience with formal foodbanks in the past. Unemployed due to long-term sickness. Mental health impacts her daily living.
Stacey	Single mother to two children. Unemployed due to struggling to find work – always told she doesn't have the experience needed. In receipt of Jobseekers allowance, and in the process of being transferred onto Universal Credit. COVID-19 and national lockdowns played a part in poor mental health
Anthony	Single white male, lives alone. Has had experience of using formal and community foodbanks, a relay bad experience with formal foodbanks. Unemployed, in receipt of Universal Credit due to long-term sickness. Struggles with poor mental health. Has no family, but feels the ICFH is like a family.
James	A father to four children, wife works in the hospitality industry, and was furloughed to 80%. James is unemployed but seeking work. In receipt of tax credit, but no other benefits. Grieving a family loss, and feels isolated from friends. Has previously never used food aid, relied on it through the pandemic due to the furlough payments. Previously struggled with poor mental health.
Joanne	Mother to five children, four from a previous relationship, living with partner. Unemployed stay-at-home mother. Started using foodbanks when ex-partner left her and her four children, and again due to the pandemic.
Claire	Mother to one child, lives with her husband. Currently a full-time student at university, husband works full-time. Husbands pay was not affected by furlough and COVID-19. Live in an expensive area, to ensure child can access good schools. Relied on foodbanks due to poor health.

Kate	Single mother, and full-time university student. Lives alone with child. Relied on foodbanks due to lack of finances. Used a formal foodbank that required access to bank statements.
Amy	Young single women, lives with father, studying full-time at university. Has used foodbanks with father and on own.
Kim	Single mother to two children, unemployed, due to being full-time carer for one of her children. Owns her own home. Relied on foodbanks during the pandemic when the household was isolating due to one Childs illness and was unable to get food delivered. Was also provided with the Governments COVID-19 food parcel due to self-isolating.
Denise	Single mother to young child. Denise is in full-time education at university. Has used community foodbanks and formal foodbanks, as well as Free School Meals for child. Denise receives child tax credit and student loan.
Laura	Single women, recently moved into a new house, and relied on foodbanks to help, due to the increase in cost of moving house. Unemployed due to sickness.
Grace	Single mother to four children. One of which has a childhood illness that resulted in the whole household isolating during the pandemic. Grace is unemployed, a stay-at-home mother, but is looking forward to starting work when her youngest child is old enough to go to school. Relied on foodbanks when self-isolating and unable to source food for delivery.

18.   Appendix J: Ordered Situational Map - Food Aid Users Perceptions of Health Relating to Food Aid

Individual Human Elements/Actors	Nonhuman Elements
- Researcher - Food Aid Users - CEO - Volunteers - Guidance Councillor	- Voucher referral scheme - Community atmosphere - Resources needed for food aid charity (money, food, gas and electricity) - Social Interaction
Collective Human Elements/Actors	**Implicated/Silent Actors**
- PACT - Community centre - Job Centre - National government/DWP - Local Council - Donators – Individuals, supermarkets, Fareshare, Greggs - Local salvation army charity - Housing Association - Employers	- Family of Food Aid users - Ex partners - Housemates - Friends - Schools/teachers - General public - Private Landlord - Christian food bank/TT - Council Foodbank - Local clothing bank
Discursive Constructions of individual and/or Collective Human Actors	**Discursive Constructions of Nonhuman Actors**
- Inability to manage their finances - Lazy and scroungers - Undeserving - Have no control over their resources - Limited cooking knowledge - They are greedy not truly needy - Christian volunteers are portrayed as being fair and open - Government not helping those in need - Job centre being difficult and overly harsh (sanctioning)	- Financing/grants are being scarce for charities - Foodbanks have a community feel, happy to help everyone - The referral scheme is easy to do
Political/Economic Elements	**Sociocultural/Symbolic Elements**
- COVID-19, national and local lockdown - Food aid charities struggling with increase in referrals - Food aid charities struggling with reduction in donations - UC roll out = reduction in money	- Have to fill in all benefit forms online – with few having access to a computer - MH/Emotional Health - Behavioural Problems - National/Local lockdown – reduced family and friends support

• Furlough payments = 80% wage • Free £15 voucher scheme for those on UC and receive free school meals	• General public judgement
Temporal Elements	**Spatial Elements**
• COVID-19 • Schools are closed • National/local lockdown • Furlough payments – 80% • Stockpiling food items	• NE • Local lockdown (NE) restrictions
Major Issues/Debates (usually contested)	**Related Discourses (Historical, Narrative, and/or Visual)**
• Feed the needy not the greedy • Judgemental Volunteers • Food aid users are lazy and greedy • Reduced self-esteem (feelings of failing in life, shame, stigma, embarrassment etc) • Newspapers portrayal of food aid users • MH • COVID-19, Furlough payments/UC	• Undeserving poor • Unable to feed themselves • Spending their money on tattoos and alcohol • Lazy and scrounging • Shame and stigma of food aid users • Poverty porn • Greedy
Other Kinds of Elements	