Food Insecurity in the UK: A Critical Narrative Analysis

Ryan Wczasek

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctorate in Clinical Psychology

Department of Health and Human Sciences

University of Essex

Date of Submission: October 2017

I would like to dedicate this research to all of the people who made it possible.

To the participants, without whose willingness to share their experiences the research would be meaningless.

To my partner, Helen, and son, Oscar, who have provided me with the comfort and support needed to get through the hard times, and to the rest of my family and friends for still being there on the other side.

To my research supervisor, Danny Taggart, for providing me with invaluable guidance, and the rest of the course team for expanding my knowledge and critical thinking.

Finally, to the rest of my course mates, for keeping me grounded, laughing and sane.

Index

Results

Abstract

Food-insecurity is a serious and growing problem in the UK. The following research details the levels and causes of the problem and sets this in the context of the biggest contributors to food-insecurity, namely poverty and welfare-reform. The existing psychological research in the area is critiqued, and whilst it positively draws attention to the problems faced by food-insecure people, it does so through a positivist and medicalised lens that draws attention away from structural issues and towards the individual. As conceptions of distress grounded in relation to unequal power and access to resources may go some way to address this, several theories of power and resistance are outlined. Research questions addressing the context of food-insecurity, the power imbalances people faced, and how they resisted these imbalances were identified. Four participants who had experienced food-insecurity were interviewed for the study. Data was analysed using the Listening Guide, a method designed to listen for multiple complementary and contradictory voices within a person's narrative. The method was adapted to add an extra layer of analysis, examining the voices of participants for how they reflected reproduction or resistance of structural power-imbalances in society. None of the participants spoke about problems of food-insecurity or mental-health in isolation from other areas of their lives, and all discussed their distress in relation to structural forces. The results suggest that framing distress in models of power and resistance has utility in both research and clinical psychological practice.

Introduction

1. Overview of the Study

The following study aimed to look at the growing problem of food-insecurity and the impact it has on individuals and their families. As will be outlined, previous psychological research in this area has predominantly measured the individual distress caused by food-insecurity in terms of mental-health diagnosis, and has excluded the structural societal conditions which led to people struggling to feed themselves. The present research aimed to look at the impact on food-insecure individuals in relation of both their struggles to feed themselves and to the wider societal power-dynamics they experienced. It aimed to explore how they experienced food-insecurity, as well as the individual and structural resources they were able to draw on to cope with the physical, psychological and social effects of being food-insecure.

Although there could be many reasons that people find themselves food-insecure, research outlined in the introduction will show how those who struggle to feed themselves in the UK also tend to experience other kinds of poverty. Whilst it would be possible to experience food-insecurity without experiencing other forms of poverty, the rise in food-insecurity in the UK in recent years has been explicitly linked to state-benefit reductions and sanctions, in work poverty, falling wages and increased costs of living. In light of this the author decided to focus their research on those who food-insecure people who were likely to have also experienced other kinds of poverty.

2. Definitions and context of food-insecurity and food-poverty

2.1 Definition of Food-Insecurity

Food-security can be a complex issue that can examined from numerous viewpoints and geographical perspectives. The Global Food Security Index (GFSI) uses the core categories of affordability, availability, quality and safety of food in determining levels of food-security (Economist Intelligence Unit, 2014). Food-insecure individuals or families could be defined as those whose access to food does not meet certain standards in any, or all, of these categories. A universal definition of what these standards are is unlikely to be agreed upon, due to cultural and individual expectations of what is deemed to be affordable and of sufficient quality. However, Taylor and Loopstra (2016) mark out four stages of food-insecurity relating to increasing degrees of severity. These are: worrying about the ability to obtain food; compromising quality and variety of food; reducing quantities and skipping meals; and experiencing hunger. This is a helpful basic blueprint which includes some of the likely individual experiences of food-insecure people, although it could be expanded to acknowledge that there are also grades of severity in how many meals are skipped and in the severity and length of episodes of hunger.

The present research will take account of the wider societal factors which contribute to food-insecurity. It should be noted that most of the research the author has encountered has settled on using either the term food-insecurity or food-poverty, and these terms tend to be treated interchangeably. It is also worth noting that the above terms are academic ones which are unlikely to be used by the public, who may instead speak in terms of food safety and availability (Dowler, Kneafsey, Lambie, Inman and Collier, 2011)

2.2 Levels of Food-Insecurity in the United Kingdom

It is difficult to accurately judge the level of food-insecurity in the United Kingdom (UK). In a wide-ranging review of 'food aid' uptake in the UK, the governmental department for environment, food and rural affairs (DEFRA) identified numerous ways in which people were supported to access additional food resources, including food stamps, community care, day centres, charitable community kitchens and institutional feeding (e.g. through schools). However, they were unable to identify any figures describing the extent to which these services are used. (Lambie-Mumford and Dowler, 2014).

One indicator of the level of food-insecurity in the UK could be the use of foodbanks, which whilst far from being the only form of food support people rely on in the UK, are arguably the best known and most discussed. As Garthwaite (2016) discusses, there can often be misconceptions about what foodbanks are and what purpose they serve, so it is useful to outline a brief description. Foodbanks are charitable organisations, frequently associated with or supported by religious organisations, which distribute food donated by the public. Although different foodbanks run different referral systems, in the Trussell Trust, which is the largest foodbank provider in the UK, a frontline professional (GP, social worker etc.) must provide a voucher to those deemed to be 'in crisis' and this voucher is then redeemed for a three-day food parcel at a foodbank. Three of these vouchers can be issued to each person, and if it is deemed that they need more support to get through their crisis, then the professional can contact the foodbank to discuss the possibility of further support. It is important to highlight this system as it shows that it would be difficult to receive support from a foodbank if it were not needed and equally that it would be difficult to rely on them as a long-term solution.

Although there is more available data on the levels of foodbank use in the UK than for other forms of food support, not all food-insecure households use foodbanks, and because many foodbanks are independently run at a local level, figures are not always available for those who do (Lambie-Mumford and Dowler, 2014). Their use therefore is likely to be under-estimated. However, three of the main food aid providers in the UK (The Trussell Trust, Fareshare and Food Cycle) delivered 20,247,042 meals in 2013/14 (Cooper, Purcell and Jackson, 2014). Additionally, The Trussell Trust reported that distribution of three-day food parcels increased from 25,899 in 2008/9 to over one million in 2014/15, and although some people received more than one parcel, it is estimated 500,000 of these were unique users. On top of this, data indicates that there may be up to 17 times this number of food-insecure households who do not access Trussell Trust foodbanks, either because they gain food support from other sources or they do not seek support at all (Taylor and Loopstra, 2016). Although they acknowledge that there are relatively few sources of data in this area, based on their analysis of the available data, Taylor and Loopstra indicate that 10.1% of people over the age of 15 (8.4 million people) experienced either moderate or severe level of food-insecurity in the UK in 2014.

The level of food-insecurity and the associated level of foodbank use in the UK is the topic of controversial debate. Conservative ministers from the three most recent UK governments (the Conservative-Liberal Democrat Coalition formed following the 2010 general election; the Conservative government which won the 2015 general election; and the minority Conservative government which formed following the 2017 election) have insisted that the food banks existence creates demand for their use, and that their increase is linked to the purposeful expansion of charities (Garthwaite., 2016b; Loopstra, Reeves, Taylor-Robinson, Barr, Mckee, Stuckler,

2015). However, the UK government department for the environment, food and rural affairs (DEFRA) have stated that all of the available evidence suggests that increased demand for food aid in the UK is driving increased services, and not the other way around (Lambie-Mumford and Dowler, 2014). The rise in food bank use therefore is suggestive of increasing levels of food-insecurity in the UK.

2.3 The causes of food-insecurity in the UK

In a systematic review of people receiving food aid in the UK, Garratt, Spencer and Ogden (2016) link the rise in food-poverty in the UK to wider economic and social change. Notably they draw attention to research stating how 2011/12 was the first year in which over half of households living in poverty contained someone in work (MacInnes et al., 2013, cited in Garratt et al., 2016), and link this to an erosion of the financial security previously offered by work due to falling wages, rising underemployment, and an increase in unstable work, exemplified by zero-hours contracts. The report of the All-Party Parliamentary Enquiry into hunger in Britain (Forsey, 2014) states that beyond the 'obvious' conclusion, that people go hungry when they do not have enough money to buy the required amount of food, two major factors are responsible for the increase in food-insecurity. The first is increases in prices of the three basic areas of expenditure of food, housing and utilities. Secondly, the real term increases in wages and benefits which were dependable for much of the post-war period have disappeared in recent decades. These two factors have meant that the margin of income available to families once the basics have been covered has been significantly reduced, leaving them unable to cope with additional expenditure above the necessary basics or cuts to income, meaning people have to turn to charity to get help in feeding themselves. The inquiry intrinsically links the three factors of food, housing and utility bills and makes the point that relief in one area frees up

income to spend in the other two. This is backed up by a study of one thousand UK consumers, in which Dowler et al. (2011) reported that a third of respondents said they had reduced heating or electricity consumption to meet their food bills, rising to 40% in households with a lower income. This highlights that food-insecurity cannot be considered as a problem in isolation, and is symptomatic of the wider pressures of the costs of living.

It is however important to note that whilst there are clear links between poverty and food-insecurity, difficulties in accessing food in sufficient quantity and/or quality could result from a variety of different causes. Compton (2014) for example highlights how the 'quality' dimension of food-insecurity can become problematic even in high-resource environments, when healthy food is substituted for energy-dense highly-processed 'junk' food. Food-insecurity in some situations can therefore lead to obesity and related health problems rather than hunger and malnutrition. It is also possible to conceive of situations where families or individuals are well resourced enough to be able to afford enough high-quality food, but cannot do so for other reasons. For example, people may struggle to access the right food because of problems with mental-health or disability; neglect or abuse; or addiction; as well as many other conceivable factors. Additionally, poverty itself is a complex and multi-dimensional concept. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2016), for example, suggest a three-tiered definition of poverty, consisting of: those on an income below the minimum expected standard, who are getting by but unable to manage unexpected costs; those who do not have enough income, and therefore fall substantially short of a decent standard of living; and those who are destitute, and can't afford to eat, maintain hygiene, and stay warm and dry. Someone unable to afford enough food would certainly fall into the destitute category. However, as previously discussed,

evidence suggests that people who currently experience this level of poverty in the UK maintain their food-security by sacrificing other basic needs such as heating (Dowler et al., 2011; Forsey, 2014). Similarly, people in the 'not enough income' category may sacrifice other needs to maintain their food-security, or may trade-off one element of food-security for another, for example increasing quantity of food at the expense of quality. It would therefore also be possible to live in poverty without being fully food-insecure. Whilst food-insecurity and poverty can be shown to be separate concepts, as the research cited above shows they are inextricably linked for many people. Given that previous research has shown that the recent increase in food-insecurity in the UK has resulted from increasing poverty (e.g. Loopstra et al., 2015; Garrett et al., 2016), the present research will specifically focus on those experiencing food-insecurity in the context of wider poverty.

Aside from poverty more generally, Increase in food-bank use has been explicitly linked to unemployment and austerity measures, particularly welfare cuts and sanctions (Loopstra et al., 2015; Sheffield Political Economy Research Institute, 2014), whilst Garthwaite (2016) reports that the most common reasons given by people approaching professionals for foodbank vouchers are 'benefit-change' 'benefit delay' or 'low income'. Interestingly Garthwaite, in her ethnographic study of food-bank volunteers and users, also reports that the food-bank users she spoke to did not tend to talk broadly about 'austerity' or 'welfare-reform' when discussing the politics of food-banks, but instead talked about the specific changes which had impacted them, for example "sanctions, delays, appeals, cuts and the bedroom tax" (Garthwaite, 2016. p. 63) The issue of austerity measures and welfare reform are seemingly inextricably linked with the rise of food-insecurity and are therefore worth examining in further detail.

16

3. Welfare and Austerity

3.1 A brief history of welfare in the UK

3.1.1 The New Poor Law

Beresford (2016) discusses how the creation of the welfare state in Britain can only be understood in relation to its forebear, the New Poor Law of 1834. This was the first written legislation which specifically built policy around the conception of poverty as a moral failing. The New Poor Law was built around Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill's philosophy of utilitarianism, founded on the principle that action should be guided by what provides the greatest good for the greatest number of people; as well as Thomas Malthus' principle that the poor should be discouraged from having children to counter the fact that population growth outstrips resource; and the free-market economic principles of Adam Smith. This resulted in two fundamental principles of the New Poor Law, namely the principle of 'less eligibility', meaning that the conditions applied to those supported by the poor law should be worse than expected if they supported themselves, and the principle of 'deterrence', meaning that the conditions of support under the law should be so unpleasant as to strongly discourage anyone applying for assistance unless they absolutely had to (Beresford., 2016). Elder-Woodward (2009) discusses some of the further consequences of conceiving poverty as a moral failing, and the link to the notion of 'survival of the fittest', a term misattributed to Charles Darwin although influenced by his writing and later adopted by him. For Darwin, the term referred to the fact that only species or members of species best suited to their environment would survive. When taken out of the context of Darwin's theory of natural selection and re-purposed as 'social-Darwinism' however, the concept formed the basis of

moral and political arguments in favour of eugenics, which argued that people with 'undesirable' characteristics (such as disabilities) should be sterilised to reduce 'weak' genes being passed on to subsequent generations. Although biological eugenics was not enacted in law in Great Britain, Elder-Woodward argues that elements of it were incarnated through the segregation of socially undesirable groups in institutions such as asylums and workhouses. The workhouses were the practical incarnation of the New Poor Law legislation, through which poor people would be housed and fed by companies who in turn could impose forced labour and extract profit. Due to the underpinning philosophies of the workhouses, conditions were intended to be brutal; and cruel, violent and abusive practices were undoubtedly commonplace (Beresford, 2016).

Foucault (2009) also highlights the links between capitalist industrial society and the workhouses. In times of high wages and full employment the workhouse inhabitants provided cheap labour, and when the economy slowed they absorbed the unemployed and reduced the likelihood of riots and civil unrest. Thus, rather than intending to offer any solutions to helping people out of poverty, the poor-laws and workhouses were designed to exploit the poor on numerous levels.

3.1.2 The post-war welfare state

Although liberal reformers attempted to amend the poor laws at the beginning of the 20th Century, the first significant legislative shift away from them came with the creation of the welfare state. Beresford (2016) outlines how the British welfare state was created following the second world war. He discusses how although there is no simple answer to the question of what gave rise to it, it resulted from the complex social conditions following on from two world wars and the inter-war economic

depression. The post-war Labour government implemented reforms which were broadly based on the Beveridge Report, a document produced during the war in 1942 which outlined a plan for social renewal based on addressing the 'five giant evils' of 'Squalor, Ignorance, Want, Idleness and Disease'. Beresford states that these terms were not viewed as individual characteristics, but rather seen as social problems which required a collective response. Crucial to the plans were the proposals of a system of national social insurance to protect against financial insecurity resulting from factors such as ill-health, unemployment and old age. The Beveridge report also proposed the creation of a national health service. The Labour government which implemented the welfare state implemented these proposals as policy, adding that the national health service should be free at the point of use, along with the policies of free education up to the age of 15 and public housing for all citizens to rent. This approach to welfare formed the basis of the British welfare state for the next 30 years.

3.1.3 Modern welfare reform

Beresford (2016) highlights that although there was a consensus for the welfare state across political parties for the first 30 years of its existence, there were many difficulties and failures which eroded public support for the concept, including institutional neglect and abuse scandals, and criticisms about the delivery of housing and healthcare. Despite this, public popularity of welfare provision remained high, however the political will to reduce the role of the state in providing welfare arrived with Margaret Thatcher's conservative government, elected in 1979 (Hills, 1998). According to Hills' analysis, welfare spending was maintained as a proportion of national income under Thatcher's government, but this was only because of increased demands due to high unemployment rates and an ageing population. Recently revealed treasury documents revealed how Thatcher and her chancellor, Geoffrey

Howe, tried to implement plans to dismantle the welfare state, including plans to get rid of the NHS and charge for state schooling, but could not gain consensus for this within their own party (Travis, 2016). Nevertheless, informed by neoliberal economic philosophy, which preached the value of the freedom of an unregulated economic market above all else, they undertook a systematic and ideological set of reforms designed to reduce the role of the state, including removing the safety nets of the welfare state for all but the poorest. Hills (1998) argues that the most significant shift in thinking was away from the universalist principle of unconditional social security for all, towards a system in which welfare benefits were means tested.

The Labour government which came to power in 1997 continued along similar lines with welfare policy. Whilst increasing welfare in some areas such as childcare, the step away from universalism continued. The Prime Minister, Tony Blair, talked of providing work for those who were able, with social security to be available only to 'those who are not' (Taylor-Gooby, 2000). Cash benefits to lone parents were cut and were restricted to six months for young people looking for work, with both policies defended on the grounds that they encouraged people back to work (Hills, 1998). Jones (2016) notes the shift in tone from politicians who once spoke of improving conditions for working class people, to the current discourses of 'aspiration' and escaping the working class, with the consequence that poor people are often accused of lacking the ambition or impetus to escape their conditions. This attitude finds its apotheosis in the 'strivers vs skivers' discourse of some politicians and the tabloid press, which only serves to increase class prejudice and a 'them vs us' attitude between and within economic classes (Valentine and Harris, 2014). The shift away from the universalism of the welfare system feeds this narrative by pushing the

discourse that only certain people deserve social security, in opposition to how it was originally envisaged as a security net for all.

3.1.3.1 The UK austerity regime

Following the global financial crash of 2008, the Coalition government led a new era of cuts to welfare spending and social security systems. Garthwaite (2016) discusses how under the banner of 'austerity', the dominant fiscal policy of the Coalition and Conservative governments has been one of deep spending cuts to public services, along with relatively small tax rises and few measures to stimulate the economy. The cuts to welfare announced in 2010 as part of this regime represented the biggest since the end of the second world war (Oxfam, 2013, cited in Garthwaite, 2016). This has increased the pressure on those already living in poverty, with low income families with children £1000 a year worse off in 2015 than they were in 2010 (Institute for Fiscal Studies, 2015, cited in Garthwaite, 2016).

Elder-Woodward (2009) argues that the welfare reform bill of 2009 represents a return to 19th century utilitarianism and the thinking that led to the creation of work-houses, with the parallel that private employment services are paid by the government to ensure that benefit claimants find and retain employment. Beresford (2016) supports this view with a discussion of how the neoliberal governments in power since the Thatcher era have marked the return of large-scale poverty, particularly noting how employers have been enabled to pay low wages, which are subsequently topped up by in-work benefits and tax credits, which in turn are attacked by right-wing critics. This system has led to income levels gradually reducing and in-work poverty rising. Beresford believes that food-banks, people facing the choice of 'heat

or eat', and the vast increase in 'payday lenders' are all signs of a return to the treatment of the poor in the 19th century.

These policies, along with the increasing narrative of individual responsibility for material conditions as discussed earlier, also suggest the re-emergence of another key narrative from the time of the poor-laws: that of the deserving vs the undeserving poor.

3.2 The deserving vs. undeserving poor

Garthwaite (2016) reports that a frequent theme of discussion she encountered among volunteers working in charitable food-banks was around who was deserving and underserving of assistance. She links this to the notion of the deserving and the undeserving poor, which has close historical ties to the poor law. It is worth exploring the history of this dichotomy further to provide the context for modern attitudes towards poverty.

Foucault (2009) traces the beginnings of the notion that the poor could be worthy of assistance or not to the religious reforms of Luther and Calvin. The notion that God was everywhere and had a specific fate laid out for each man meant that a state of poverty could only indicate God's ire that the poor person had done something wrong, and had brought their poverty upon themselves as punishment for their sins. As God was seen to be omnipotent by the church leaders and authorities, a moral division of the poor became possible in the eyes of the state. Those who submitted to the punishment of their poverty were acting within the will of God and were therefore the 'good' poor of Christ, whereas those who sought to change their situation or alter their circumstances were seen to be rebelling against the word of God and could be classified as the 'evil' poor of the Devil. In England, there followed a focus on the

22

morals of the workhouse inmates who as part of their incarceration were obliged to undertake a Protestant religious education, as was the case across all of Europe under varying Christian denominations. The notion that the poor should receive help from the state was therefore inextricably linked with the idea that a moral judgement should be made about those seeking relief.

Following the advent of the New Poor Law in Britain, the role of charities came under scrutiny as it was feared their charitable giving would undermine the utilitarian goals, and that 'indiscriminate' giving would encourage dependence and indolence. To counter this, the charity organisation society (COS) began to subject those requesting charitable donations to systematic investigations of the conditions of their lives and of the 'acceptability' of their behaviour (Beresford, 2016). It is possible to see the remnants of these attitudes in modern attitudes towards poverty in the UK. Garthwaite (2016) links the attitudes she encountered among food-bank volunteers to wider public perceptions of the modern undeserving poor. She discusses the stereotypes perpetuated by the print and television media of unemployed people with too many children, drinking alcohol in the daytime and not looking for work. She also highlights how the attitude of some food-bank recipients being undeserving takes form in the narrative of people trying to 'cheat the system' when they don't qualify for assistance, and in the narrative that food-poverty is due to individual rather than systemic failings. Garthwaite (2011) further discusses how the language used by Conservative politicians and a supportive media in justifying the welfare-reform bill repeatedly sought to label those receiving benefits as 'workshy', 'dependent' and 'unwilling'. This suggests that the notion of the undeserving poor serves as both the ideological basis for modern welfare reform as well as the justification for making cuts to benefit payments. Linked to this, Bambra and Smith (2010) discuss the shift in

23

policy away from welfare and towards 'workfare'. They define workfare as a system in which rights to benefits are dependent on taking part in employment based interventions, such as training courses and work experience. This shift is tied up in the debate around whether welfare should be an entitlement of citizenship or not. 'Incapacity benefit', which was paid to people unable to work in the UK was replaced by 'employment support allowance' (ESA). The New Labour government's mantra 'work for those who can, welfare for those who cannot' was embodied in the two tiers of ESA, with lower conditional payments for those deemed able to work and higher payments for those assessed as unable. Bambra and Smith (2010) argue that this policy shift echoes and enforces the narrative of the deserving vs. the undeserving poor. Although policy changes and cuts to benefits have affected several groups, they have principally targeted those of working age. The impact has therefore fallen disproportionately on those who have more barriers to work, and particularly on disabled people (United Nations, 2016).

3.3 The impact of welfare reform on disabled people

As Bambra and Smith (2010) discuss, in the UK disability and chronic illness have a long association with poverty and social exclusion. Beresford (2016) discusses how the history of both state and charitable support for disabled people has positioned them as 'defective' members of society who are dependent on others. This narrative has been countered by service-user groups and the social model of disability, which holds that it is the perceptions and actions of non-disabled people (as the more powerful group in society) which makes people disabled, rather than any inherent characteristics. Elder-Woodward (2009) discusses how the welfare-reform bill continues to imply that the difficulties faced by disabled people in finding

employment reflect inadequacies within the individual, and does not acknowledge external factors which disable them from participating equally in the labour market.

The state has historically played a role in the construction of disability by deciding which disabilities, or what severity of disability, means people are entitled to benefit payments. However, whereas previously disabled people were viewed as exempt from certain citizenship duties such as employment (Stone, 1986, cited in Bambra and Smith, 2010), there has been an increasing focus in policy on 'helping' disabled people into employment in order to improve their lives. However, policy in this area is not based on evidence, despite the proclamations of politicians who advocate for it (Ball, 2013). In fact, the current UK government has been criticised by the United Nations for the 'systematic violation' of disabled people's rights through the continued austerity regime and welfare reform measures (Butler, 2017; United Nations, 2016).

3.4 The social and psychological impact of welfare reform

3.4.1 Neoliberalism

As previously stated, the dismantling of the welfare state was the stated goal of Margaret Thatcher's Conservative party and was driven by the ideology of neoliberalism. Although a multi-faceted and contested term, Monbiot (2017) gives a history of its use and influence in UK politics. Thatcher's interpretation of neo-liberalism was based on Friedrich Hayek's 1960 book: 'The Constitution of Liberty'. Hayek argued against the forces and policies which he said restricted the creation of wealth, including universal healthcare, trade unionism, human equality, wealth redistribution and the conservation of natural resources. This was in opposition to the post-war economics of John Maynard Keynes which had aimed for the relief of

poverty and development of public services through high taxation. Following economic crises in the 1970s, Thatcher's government was able to implement policies which enacted Hayek's ideas, centred on strengthening the 'free market' through privatisation of public services, deregulation of private industry, tax cuts for the rich and the disempowerment of trade unions. Neoliberalism describes more than just a set of economic and social policies however, and Monbiot argues that the individualist narrative which underpins the ideology has been internalised and reproduced by all members of our society. The messages that we are all in direct competition with each other, and that individual responsibility rather than structural inequality are to blame for individual and societal problems, have led poor people to blame themselves for their conditions of living.

Verhaeghe (2014) argues that neoliberalism is the latest incarnation of the 'social-Darwinism' discussed earlier. Where the social-Darwinists of the 19th Century advocated that it was someone's genes which determined who was the 'fittest', in recent times the language has shifted to that of 'natural talent' determining someone's place in the 'meritocracy'. Meritocracy was originally a disparaging and satirical term used by Hannah Arendt (1954) and Michael Young (1958/1994), among others, to highlight the dangers of building a society where power is allocated solely on the basis of intelligence, education and occupation. It was revived by Tony Blair as a positive societal ambition and has continued to be used as the basis for policy making in subsequent governments (see: Wheen, 2001; Littler, 2017). The meritocratic notion of the natural supremacy of one group over another, and that those most deserving will rise to their deserving places at the top of society is used to justify the existing social order. This argument is flawed, not just because it ignores environmental influences such as socio-economic conditions and upbringing, but also because it is

those already in power who get to determine who is 'naturally talented' and how that is to be measured. Policies can then be implemented with the justification of nurturing that talent, and the continued existence of one group in powerful societal positions is in turn used as evidence of their natural talent. In this way, the concept of meritocracy ingrains inequality in a society (Verhaeghe, 2014).

3.4.2 The welfare trait

In order to maintain the neoliberal discourse, it becomes necessary to blame the poor for their own living conditions. As discussed earlier, 19th Century social policies which amounted to eugenics were justified using the scientific language of social-Darwinism (Elder-Woodward, 2009), and neoliberally informed welfare-reform finds its equivalent in the concept of the 'welfare trait'. The term comes from the work of Perkins (2016), who uses sociological and psychological theory to argue that higher rates of benefits lead, through genetics and environment, to a work-resistant personality type typified by 'anti-social, aggressive and rule-breaking' traits (p.3), as well as encouraging people out of work to have more children. He argues in favour of reducing the level of benefits available to workless families so that these traits can be bred out of the population (Foster, 2016; Perkins, 2016). There are many methodological flaws in the studies which Perkins uses to justify this argument (see Criticisms of Adam Perkins, n.d.). For example, he frequently cites a study from Argys, Averett and Rees (2000) which claims that reducing welfare payments to families reduces the number of children they have, although fails to report that the strength of the correlation cited in the paper comes nowhere near significance, with the p value reported at 0.321. Additionally, echoing concerns about 'problem families' in the post-war period, Perkins uses evidence from the 'troubled families' programmes, implemented by David Cameron's Conservative government in the

wake of the London riots of 2011. He places the blame for social conditions and policy within individual and familial characteristics, and homogenises the disparate difficulties faced by them, for example using statistics about 'workless' households, whilst ignoring research that shows that 88% of those people are out of work due to disability, health problems or caring responsibilities (Wilson, Bivand, Rahman and Hoya, 2015). In doing this he ignores the role of researchers and the state in the constructing and reinforcing concerns about the behaviour of the poor, at the expense of acknowledging their powerlessness in shaping their socio-economic conditions.

4. Psychology, Poverty, and the Individual

4.1 The role of psychology in controlling the working class

As a discipline, Psychology is intricately interwoven with the history of capitalism and has played its part in maintaining some of the social and wealth inequalities spoken about earlier in the introduction. Parker (2007) discusses how at the end of the nineteenth century, psychology as a discipline rose in conjunction with industrialisation and capitalism. Industrial competition engendered the notion that individual creativity was what gave someone the edge over their competitors. In parallel to this it was conceptualised that workers, in competition with others for jobs, had possession over their labour and sold it to their employers. By giving manual labour its equivalence in 'mental labour', Psychologists could position themselves as being useful to industry. In turn, early industrial relations managers called on psychologists to ensure the efficiency and therefore profitability of their industries. Through focusing on the internal characteristics of workers such as their attitudes, perceptions and motivations, psychology could identify ways in which productivity could be improved. Parker also argues that in capitalist systems, the nuclear family

becomes a means of producing the workforce, as well as ensuring its everyday welfare. Further, the focus of psychology on pathology has given the means for owners of businesses to identify those who are not productive or who dissent against working conditions as being abnormal. In relation to the current issues of in-work poverty and access to social welfare discussed above, it can therefore be seen how psychology has historically helped to create the conditions through which the narratives of skivers vs strivers and the deserving vs undeserving poor have flourished. The role of psychology as a tool of the state to force citizens to conform in their productivity continues today, for example in the UK government's plans to situate mental health workers in job centres (see Gayle, 2015).

Linked to this, psychology is also a field which institutes what Michel Foucault called 'the gaze'; the notion that established discourses and institutions in society function as a form of social control to keep those without power in a submissive position (Foucault, 1991). Foucault (1991) links the concept of the gaze to what he calls panopticism, in reference to Jeremy Bentham's designs for 'panoptic' prisons in the late 19th century. The concept of the panoptic prison involved a central watchtower manned by a single guard and surrounded by multiple floors of individual cells. The cells were backlit so the guard would be able to clearly see every individual prisoner, and the windows in the central tower arranged so that the prisoners would never be able to know for certain if they were being observed. Because it was possible that they could be being watched at any time, the continuous possibility of observation would lead prisoners to self-regulate their own behaviour. For Foucault, this is analogous to, and in some senses literally the mechanism by which all institutional functions (education, production, medical treatment, punishment) exert power on the individual through societal control. In Psychology, the panoptic gaze could be said to

be constituted through the normalising lenses of social expectation and individualised medical psychiatry/psychology. By locating distress as a mental health problem within the individual, it becomes that individual's responsibility to conform to what is deemed to be sane by the majority of the population, or risk being forced to conform through detention and medication.

4.2 The conflict between psychology as a scientific and political discipline

Harris (1997) outlines the complexities of the interaction between psychology as a discipline and politics. He discusses how mainstream psychological organisations have often sought to portray the field of psychology as a neutral and positive scientific entity and strip it of any past political associations or impact. This has the effect of removing the socially negative impacts of psychology, like the use of early intelligence quotient (I.Q.) testing to 'prove' the intellectual inferiority of black people, Jewish people, women, and anyone who was not a white male Protestant. Harris also argues that this 'cleansing' of the history of psychology strips the field and its past practitioners of their often socially progressive aims. For example the use of psychology to show the damage done by racial segregation in the US and its role in bringing about its end. Harris is also critical of the academic movements which arose in response to the de-politicisation of psychology (Harris, 1997). Herman (1995) argues that psychology as a field can be manipulative and regressive as well as freedom-enhancing and progressive, depending on the social context in which it is employed, and sometimes at the same time. Further, she argues that for psychological knowledge to be used as a tool of progressive change, there needs to be a rejection of the false dichotomy between subjective internal transformation and external transformation of the world.

Fromm (1956/2002) too is critical of social Psychology in its form where social processes are examined as acting on the individual. He contends that the biological and the sociological cannot be separated out when discussing human nature. We are not purely the product of our physiology and instincts, nor are we 'blank slates', shaped into humanity through cultural influence. He discusses the importance of viewing mental health in terms of "the human practice of life as it results from the conditions of human existence" (p.68). He criticises psychological practices which compartmentalise elements of human existence as if they were separate from the social sphere in which that existence occurs. Mental health, he argues, should not be defined by how well an individual adapts to the pressures of a society, but "must be defined in terms of the adjustment of society to the needs of man" (p. 70). Fromm further argues that most societies both support and hinder the mental health of their members, the question being to what degree they do each.

4.3 The role of Psychology in constructing the individual

Danziger (1990) discusses how in the late 19th century the 'founder' of modern experimental psychology, Willhelm Wundt, conceived the field as a way of proving the 'psychic causality' behind experience. Taking the field of physics as the ideal model of investigation, Wundt conducted his work in the frame of reference of the physical sciences. On the theoretical level, he needed an analogue to the physical objects studied in the natural sciences and conceived that psychic causality must take place between 'mental objects'. He believed that psychological investigation needed to be experimental rather than observational to show these causal mechanisms of experience. However, Wundt also argued that getting to the truth of these mechanisms was dependent on accessing the inner mental worlds of human subjects and was qualitative in nature. Wundt did not seem concerned about addressing the

dualism in his work, partially because he has no interest in the practical applications of psychology, and in his experiments considered the inner world of experimental subjects as being an accurate reflection of the external world. However, he did argue that there was necessarily a social element to individual psychology, and that links with the fields of philosophy, anthropology, linguistics and history would be necessary for a complete understanding of individual psychology. To the psychologists following Wundt in the 20th century this view gave way to scientism, which viewed the scientific method as being the only way to secure useful and reliable knowledge in any field.

4.4 Diagnosis and the medicalisation of misery

A consequence of the construction of the psychological individual using scientific and statistical methods has been the reliance of psychology upon medical and scientific categorisation. Pilgrim and Bentall (1999) discuss how the 'medical naturalism' approach of Psychiatry and much of Clinical and Experimental Psychology assume that mental health problems exist as invariant natural diseases. They take depression as an example, where the diagnosis is taken to have self-evident validity amongst many in the fields of psychology and psychiatry, but where there are numerous competing accounts of what constitutes depression as a disorder or syndrome. Because there is no agreed upon minimum criteria for the diagnosis of depression which can be applied transculturally, it is possible for two people to receive a diagnosis of the same condition without sharing a single symptom in common. The difficulties of delineating specific diagnoses from each other and concerns of the construct validity of diagnoses; the ever-expanding criteria of inclusion for diagnoses (Pilgrim, 2014); and the lack of evidence that psychological problems have their roots in brain-chemistry (Rapley, Moncrieff and Dillon, 2011);

all highlight how unscientific psychiatric diagnoses are. Despite this, they continue to be used uncritically in both clinical and academic psychology. It is against this background that the author will now examine the existing food-insecurity literature.

5. Critique of Existing Research into the impact of food insecurity on mental health and psychological wellbeing

5.1 Overview of the available research

Food-insecurity is almost by definition a stressful experience, and it seems highly unlikely that anyone experiencing it would not notice some negative impact on their psychological health or wellbeing. Psychological research in western nations though has sought to establish links between food-insecurity and specific mental-health diagnoses, which in turn has influenced the proposed methods of intervention. They have also for the most part chosen experimental quantitative methodologies which, by the nature of their design, delineate complex real world life experiences into specific variables to be measured in the form of statistical outcomes. This has the effect of 'disembodying' the participants, removing them from their social context and acknowledging them as individuals only in the form of abstract data (Stam, Lubek and Radtke, 1998) or as an 'object' to be measured (Parker, 2007). A critique of the research to date in this area will now be presented, framed by a critical exploration of the use of diagnoses and psychological categorisation when addressing problems relating to poverty. Little research has been conducted in this area in the UK and so the following critique includes papers from similarly developed 'western' nations, including the USA, Canada, New Zealand and Israel. Papers examining the situation in developing nations were excluded as the level and type of food insecurity

discussed, e.g. famines, did not seem to the author to be analogous to the situation in the UK.

5.2 Food-insecurity and mental-health diagnosis

Many of the studies identified purported to examine the effects of food-insecurity on specific mental-health diagnoses. Davison and Kaplin (2015) for example examined the associations between mood disorders and nutritional and psychological health. They reported that food-insecurity was associated with greater chance of depression, lower psychological functioning, and a greater chance of reporting the symptoms of mania. Similarly, using a very large sample of Canadian adults, Muldoon, Duff, Fielden and Anema (2013) report that food insecurity increases the odds of having depression and anxiety disorders, as measured by those who had received a diagnosis. An obvious criticism of the claims made by this kind of research is that, as outlined by Pilgrim and Bentall (1999), the diagnoses used vary both in the views of the clinicians providing them and the experience of the people receiving them.

Some of the research looking at the impact of food-insecurity on children did so through the mediating influence of parental mental-health diagnoses. Whitaker, Phillips and Orzol (2006), for example, examined the psychological impact of food-insecurity on children under the age of three years. The authors used maternal diagnoses of 'generalised anxiety disorder' or a 'major depressive episode' in the past 12 months, and three categories of behavioural problems in children, namely aggressive, anxious/depressive and hyperactive. The authors report that when other variables, including demographic groups, physical health and alcohol and drug use were accounted for, the chances of a child of a food-insecure mother having at least one behavioural problem was 36.7%, falling to 22.7 % for a fully food-secure mother.

Maternal mental health status did not significantly influence these percentages when adjusted for, which the authors suggest means either food-insecurity has a direct impact on children's behavioural difficulties, or that it does so through variables not measured in the study. Although the authors discuss that the mental health difficulties of the mothers in the study may have made it more likely that they would report behavioural difficulties, they do not take into consideration that the stresses of being food-insecure and socio-economic pressures on participants may have impacted on the reporting of such difficulties. This highlights how this kind of research is founded on the assumption that social factors are mediating or partially causative of distress, rather than co-constitutive of it.

In a longitudinal study, McIntyre, Williams, Lavorato and Patten (2013) examined various food-security and mental health outcomes at eight time points over a fifteen-year period. They reported that participants who experienced child hunger were at 2.5 times greater risk of depression and suicidal ideation in adolescence. Other factors, including the child living without their biological mother at any stage or their mother experiencing depression also increased this risk by the same amount. However, child hunger remained an independent risk factor for worse mental health in adolescence. The advantages of the study using longitudinal data is that the authors were able to hypothesise more confidently about the causal mechanisms of change. However, they still relied on a reductionist approach of defining distress in terms of narrow diagnoses and psychological constructs such as 'depression' and 'insecure-attachment'.

As Walker (2007) discusses, depression is an excruciating and debilitating condition which causes immense amounts of misery, and this description could equally apply to any other mental illness. The argument against the use of diagnosis as a variable is

35

not that the condition described does not exist, but that by uncritically using the terms in their medical-psychiatric sense, as discrete and measurable diseases, the research reinforces the constructs as being separable from social and economic conditions which play a part in producing and maintaining them. Whilst correlational studies like these can be said to have utility in highlighting the links between variables, they are undermined by the desire to separate out environmental and individual variables which are complexly intertwined.

5.2.1 Food-insecurity, children's behaviour and parental practices

Research which focused on the direct impact of food-insecurity on children tended not to focus on specific diagnoses, but on broader psychological constructs and measures of distress. Ramsey, Giskes, Turrell and Gallegos (2011) measured various facets of children's and adolescent's wellbeing, including emotional symptoms, peer relationships, conduct difficulties and pro-social behaviour. They found that those from more food-insecure households were more than twice as likely to experience 'atypical emotional symptoms' and 'conduct problems' than those with food-security. Similarly, Melchior, et al. (2009) found that behavioural problems were reported in 34% of households where both maternal mental health difficulties and food-insecurity were reported, compared with 18% when maternal mental health was present but the household was food-secure. When maternal mental health problems were absent, behavioural difficulties were reported in 18% of children in food-insecure families, compared with 7% in food-secure families. The conclusion drawn is that whilst being food-insecure on its own is enough to increase behavioural difficulties, maternal mental health problems magnify this effect.

A similar focus on children's behaviour is found in Slopen, Fitzmaurice, Williams and Gilman (2010), who found that 'internalising' (sad, withdrawn or anxious) and 'externalising' (aggressive, bullying or demanding) disorders in children between the ages of four and fourteen years were more likely in food-insecure households, whilst accounting for food-security and poverty status. As the participants were followed over time, they found that children whose households moved from being food-secure to food-insecure had an increased likelihood of displaying both externalising and internalising problems. Persistent food insecurity over time also predicted both types of problems, even when poverty levels were accounted for. In keeping with the theory that parental mental health mediates the effects of food-insecurity on children's responses, the authors also report that maternal depression predicted both internalising and externalising problems when first measured. However, this effect disappeared at the two year follow up, with the authors suggesting that the effects of caregiver depression on childhood outcomes may not persist over the long term. This conclusion seems to exemplify the problems of much of the research in this area, namely that when complex problems are reduced to simple dichotomous variables, e.g. 'food-secure or food-insecure', 'depressed or not depressed', then we lose the ability to make interpretations which acknowledge the full complexity of people's lives, and the multiplicity of responses which may lead to the observed responses of the different individuals and families who take part in a study.

Zaslow, Bronte-Tinkew, Capps, Horowitz, Moore and Weinstein (2009) used infant attachment security as an outcome, and found that greater food-insecurity increased the likelihood of maternal depression which in turn had an impact on the quality of parenting practices. This then led to greater numbers of insecure attachment styles and in turn had a negative impact on social/emotional and cognitive development.

Interestingly, food-insecurity and parental mental health did not impact on the number of cognitively stimulating activities engaged in by parents, leading the authors to conclude that it must be the quality of these practices which made the difference. The difficulty with the studies above whose focus is on parental wellbeing and behaviour is that they appear to suggest that the problems of food-insecurity lie not in the social and economic conditions that give rise to parents not being able to provide enough for their families, but in the distress of the parents or their affective and cognitive reactions to external factors. The implications for policy makers who want to address the problems of food-insecurity in families is that resources should solely be directed to addressing the effects of deprivation, rather than the causes and effects.

There is also a concern regarding the focus on the behaviour of children in food-insecure families. Rapley et al. (2011) discuss how psychiatric manuals claim in their definitions of reactive attachment disorder that children's behaviour in response to their environment is a 'mental disorder'. This contains troubling implication that a child enacting whatever mechanisms they need to make sense of an abusive or deprived environment, is suffering from a medical condition which needs treatment. This is compounded by the use of pseudo-medical language like 'pathogenic care' to describe conditions of abuse and neglect. As Rapley et al. (2011) state, the shift of focus to the individual child is quite clearly a moral rather than a scientific one. Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM) labels such as 'conduct disorder' and 'oppositional defiant disorder' further imply that the focus of intervention should be in policing the behaviour of children and young people, rather than making sense of their distress and attending to the environmental factors which caused it.

5.3 Poverty and social conditions as experimental variables

Whilst many of the identified studies did take into account the socio-economic conditions of food-insecure individuals and families, they did so by categorising them as independent variables to be controlled for in their analysis of correlations of food-insecurity and mental distress. Taggart, McCauley and Smithhurst (2017) discuss the problem of social factors being decontextualized and re-packaged as individual psychological variables, as opposed to the individual and their context being inseparable aspects of their embodied experience of the world.

For example, Pryor, Lioret, van der Waerden, Fombonne, Falissard and Melchior (2015) reported that food-insecurity increased the risk of depression, substance use and suicidal ideation, although not Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). The authors state that these correlations held when socio-economic variables were controlled for, although state that general poverty and food-insecurity may impact on mental health through the same pathways. In doing so they seem to suggest a stress-vulnerability model of mental health, whereby low socio-economic status increases vulnerability to underlying mental health problems. This is problematic as it further feeds the dichotomising of a person's wellbeing and their environment, as discussed earlier.

Davison, Marshall-Fabien and Tescon (2015) specifically examined associations between food-insecurity and suicidal ideation, reporting that there was a direct positive association between the two after other variables were accounted for, and additionally a possible 'dose-effect', i.e. the greater the food insecurity the greater the chance of suicidal ideation. They also report that the association holds even when income level was adjusted for, which they suggest indicates that overall poverty may

not be a factor. However, this suggests a one-dimensional view of poverty, and does not consider other factors, for example quality of housing, type of employment or social inclusion.

Carter, Kruse, Blakely and Collings (2011) reported a strong association between food-insecurity and psychological distress. The authors partially adjusted for demographic and socio-economic variables and found that this could account for some of the variance, and the authors discuss the possibility that the association might disappear completely if more socioeconomic factors were included. In common with much of the research in this area, there seems to be a strong desire on the part of the authors to compartmentalise the different aspects of participants' lives, namely their food-security status, psychological wellbeing, and socio-economic status, and attempt to prove which of these areas has a direct causal impact on another. This seems at least partially driven by the desire to conform to a scientific ideal of empirical observation.

In a longitudinal study of female welfare recipients in the USA, Heflin, Siefert and Williams (2005) found that food-insecurity was linked to an increased likelihood of major depression. The authors explicitly discuss their theoretical framework as being based in a social production of disease model, and measure a range of social and environmental factors including homelessness, domestic violence, poverty related stressful life-circumstances, and living in a hazardous neighbourhood. Whilst it is explicitly outlined that these are the type of factors which the authors think are responsible for mental ill-health, in practice they are in line with other research in framing these as discreet variables which might trigger the disease of depression, which is taken at face value as a valid psychiatric construct.

In an Israeli study, Kaufman, Mirsky, Witztum, and Grisaru (2013) looked specifically at those receiving welfare, comparing a community population with those who were patients in a psychiatric inpatient unit. This research was notable for not only considering the links between food-insecurity and mental health, but also looking at how support was utilised in these populations. They report that psychiatric patients were more than twice at risk of food-insecurity than the general population. They found that food-insecure psychiatric patients were significantly less likely to rely on the support of family, friends, charities or social security benefits when compared to the welfare group. This may highlight a particularly isolated population who struggle to access support in relation to food-insecurity.

McLaughlin et al. (2012) looked at adolescents' experiences of food-insecurity and mental-health, as measured by having received a diagnosis under the DSM-IV. The authors reported that when socio-economic and child-adversity factors were controlled for, all diagnoses were significantly associated with higher levels of food-insecurity. Interestingly, the authors also included a subjective measure of social status, and reported that adolescents who perceived themselves as having lower social status were more likely to have a disorder. However, they do not report whether perceived social status correlated with actual socio-economic status, making it difficult to assess whether it is perception or actual economic hardship which contributes to the higher diagnosis rate. However, the authors do acknowledge that food-insecurity may simply be a visible marker for more general material deprivation, which may be what contributes to mental health difficulties.

The conception of environmental conditions as individual variables which can be compartmentalised to examine their effects on other variables feeds into the biopsychosocial conception of distress, which links biological illness with

psychological and social variables. As Rohleder (2012) discusses, the biopsychosocial model was originally intended as a way of countering reductionist biomedical accounts of health which did not consider the patient and their social context. However, rather than fully acknowledging the social causes of distress, it still regards biology as primary, and links with the stress-vulnerability hypothesis which reduces the role of environmental factors such as abuse and poverty to triggers for underlying genetic vulnerabilities (Read, Bentall and Fosse, 2014). As Read et al. argue, this further feeds the conception of mental distress as a primarily biological one, an assertion for which no convincing evidence has yet been produced.

5.4 Qualitative studies

Very few studies identified by the author examined food-insecurity from a qualitative perspective. De Marco, Thorburn and Kue (2009) interviewed low-income participants in the state of Oregon, USA. Using content analysis as their method of analysis, they identified three main themes. The first was contributors to food insecurity, which included illness and injury, social isolation, unemployment and underemployment, bills and geographic isolation. The second was coping strategies, which included alternative food sources (including gardening and hunting), food stretching, creative bill paying and social support. The final theme was mechanisms for improving conditions, which included employment, education and home ownership. Notably, participants described similar explanations for their food-insecurity despite coming from a variety of life experiences and from a mixture of urban and rural backgrounds, with the exception being that the rural participants experienced more isolation.

Using semi-structured interviews, Lachance et al. (2014) spoke to adolescents in Toronto between the ages of thirteen and nineteen. All participants referred to the food-insecurity of people they knew, but only four of the eleven interviewees spoke directly about their own food-insecurity. The authors discuss that this could reflect the actual experiences of the group, or could reflect the discomfort and shame inherent in discussing the subject. Either way, most of the interviewees discussed the psychological and emotional effects of not having enough access to food. The responses and effects discussed mainly centred on sadness and depression, with some participants discussing how these would arise through worrying about other family members not having enough to eat. Also referenced were affective and psychological reactions such as shame, anger, stress and anxiety in relation to not having enough to eat, and sleep loss because of these worries. A further theme which emerged was the impact on family functioning, with specific mentions of children arguing with parents because they could not provide the food being demanded. Poor diet quality was also reported as causing guilt and anger which had an impact on participants' self-esteem, particularly for female participants.

These qualitative studies allowed for a more complex understanding of the people affected by food-insecurity and their complete experiences as people within their environments. By doing so they were able to move away from, although not completely escape, some of the more problematic dichotomies and categorisations of the quantitative research discussed above.

5.5 Implications and Recommendations of mental-health based psychological studies into food-insecurity

The implications of the above research and the recommendations made by the authors vary considerably in scope and depth. As might be expected from the methodologies, many papers take a mental health-centric view, for example Melchior et al. (2009) suggest that health professionals could identify food-insecure families, and recommend that further research looks at whether improving mothers' mental health might alleviate the impact of food-insecurity on families with young children, as do those of Muldoon et al. (2013). These recommendations seems to focus on alleviating the effects of the food-insecurity, with no mention of the need to address the circumstances which led to it in the first place. It also seems to place the responsibility and pressure for improving the situation on mothers who, it is seemingly suggested, would need to respond to mental-health treatment to improve outcomes for their family. While not wanting to suggest that individuals and families would not require psychological support in such circumstances, the lack of reference to wider societal and economic influences in these recommendations does seem to suggest that the solution to poverty is psychological or psychiatric help, and that this is all that is needed.

Retaining a focus on mental health, although approaching the problem from a different angle, the papers by Pryor et al. (2015), MicIntyre et al. (2013), Ramsey et al. (2011), Carter et al. (2011) and Zaslow et al. (2009) all tentatively suggest in their recommendations that future research should address whether reducing food-insecurity can reduce mental health difficulties. Whilst not being any more specific than this, there is an acknowledgement that the problem should be addressed at a policy level. Davison and Kaplan (2015) make similar suggestions, but also

acknowledge that decreasing food-insecurity would improve health and social inequalities. The reluctance to make recommendations based around social policy in an area of research which is clearly influenced by political decisions, suggests that the authors of these studies might be concerned about remaining neutral and apolitical.

Slopen et al. (2010) and Heflin et al. (2005) are more direct in their approach to policy, naming food-insecurity as a specific and modifiable risk factor for mental-health problems. Both are quite general in their recommendations, with Slopen et al. saying that increasing employment and decreasing poverty can lead to a reduction in risk for disorders, and highlighting the importance of strengthening the protections of vulnerable people against food-insecurity and poverty. Heflin et al. (2005) are slightly more specific, suggesting mental-health relapse prevention should be tackled through interventions to reduce household food-insufficiency. This is also explicitly named as an alternative to pharmacological interventions, challenging the narrative that intervention should focus on mental health.

Finally, two papers were more explicitly political and make specific recommendations at a policy level to try and address the problems of food-insecurity. McLaughlin et al. (2012) addressed both the clinical and policy levels by suggesting that clinicians should routinely enquire about hunger in clinical assessment, but also talked about the necessity of removing barriers to people accessing welfare payments (in the USA), and suggest an increased need for professionals to link families in with social services to facilitate more consistent access to food. Kaufman et al. (2013) talk about the need in Israel for the development of specific programmes for psychiatric patients to access informal support around food-security. This is also the only identified study which explicitly criticises the failures of the societal 'safety-net', and calls for interdisciplinary action on the part of frontline health and social care

professionals in response. Namely in the form of collecting information on food-insecurity at a local level and using this to promote the importance of this issue to politicians and policy makers.

It should be noted that the author believes that all of the above research was well intentioned, and that it provides useful evidence for arguing in favour of more resources being targeted at the problems of food-insecurity. However, the focus on diagnosis and dichotomising of individuals from their environment invariably fuels conceptions of distress which lie exclusively in the domain of the individual. Whilst it is no easy task to produce research which brings together all aspects of an individual's life, the author believes it is necessary to work towards this in order to begin to move away from medical and biological conceptions of the impact of food-insecurity, and towards research that fully encompasses the social and political conditions of suffering.

5.6 Other Relevant Research in the UK

Outside of the psychological and mental health literature, researchers in the public policy field have also done work which directly explores the experiences of people who have lived with food-insecurity.

Research into the reasons for using foodbanks in West-Cheshire (Spencer and Ogden, 2016) employed a narrative enquiry technique, gathering brief accounts of respondents' stories relating to foodbank use to supplement their quantitative data. One or two brief stories were selected to highlight each of the main reasons for foodbank use recorded in the Trussell-Trust's data collection system. The stories identified have the positive effect of humanising the statistics, for example in the section on benefits sanctions, the following section of a story is used: "Will was then

put on a mandatory work programme, but was unable to collect his money from the post office until 9am, so couldn't get to the work programme for 7am. He was sanctioned for two months". Whilst these stories add depth to the research, they are principally used as supplementary illustrations of the conclusions being drawn from the quantitative data and are therefore secondary the research being presented.

The other major contributors in researching food-insecurity in the UK have been Kayleigh Garthwaite and colleagues (Garthwaite, 2016a; Garthwaite, 2016b; Garthwaite et al., 2015). Using a mixture of interviews, observations and field-notes, their research has explored food-insecurity from an anthropological and ethnographic standpoint, whilst framing discussions around the topic in the wider context of welfare reform and consecutive UK governments' austerity measures. As part of a planned five-year project which began in November 2013, Garthwaite et al. (2015) discuss the complex factors which brought people to the foodbanks that the lead author was volunteering in. They reported three major themes to emerge from the data. The first was a high level of ill health and in-particular mental ill-health, as well as the perception that some participants feel this is one of the main problems facing foodbank users. Several participants discussed how their mental health problems meant that they could not work, which led to them relying on the foodbank. There was also some description of the foodbank as being beneficial for some people in terms of having someone to talk to who takes an interest in their difficulties. The second theme was 'negotiating food insecurity', which included descriptions of fluctuating weight gain and loss due to inconsistent access to food, and searching multiple supermarkets for the cheapest reduced foods. One participant described the difficulties of planning meals and making money stretch across a couple of weeks. Another described the difficulties of maintaining nutrition for her and her eleven-

year-old daughter, stating how some weeks they could not afford any fruit or vegetables, which was in turn having an impact on their physical and mental health. The final theme identified was 'financing a healthy diet', with most participants identifying that "eating well was too expensive", and that cheap processed foods were often chosen over fruit and vegetables as they were more filling. Participants reported eating poor quality and out-of-date food, and one discussed the problem of healthcare professionals telling her she should eat better when she was unable to afford to do so. The quality of food available from food-banks also contributed to a mixed view of them, particularly for those with specific health needs such as food-intolerances.

Continuing this research, Garthwaite (2016) extended these themes and identified additional ones. These included issues around employment, with people finding the precarious nature of work, including short-term and 'zero-hours' contracts difficult to manage. Some participants were involved in the Jobcentre Plus's Work Programme, a government programme which makes people prove they are applying for work, or undertaking unpaid placements at businesses, if they want to claim benefits. They found this arduous and demoralising, and described the lack of resulting opportunities and extremely limited replies and interviews they received from employers. Another theme was 'going hungry', which encompassed people having to ration food and struggling to feed their children properly when they were on school holidays. Other participants spoke of the stigma, shame and embarrassment which went along with using foodbanks and with poverty more generally.

In their discussion of what can be done to improve the lived experiences of her participants' lives, Garthwaite (2016) highlights three areas of structural societal change which would be beneficial. The first is government intervention, specifically: a named government minister for eliminating food-insecurity; action on benefit

delays, sanctions and errors; work to identify ways to remove 'poverty premiums', where the poorest pay more than the financially stable on housing, utilities, food and transport, for example due to having to use pre-paid electricity meters; the development of food-access plans at local authority level; and raising the national living wage to eliminate in-work poverty. Secondly, Garthwaite calls for us a society to stop stigmatising people living in poverty. She highlights the language of some sections of the media, politicians, and members of the public who seek to entrench a 'them and us' narrative by using the language of 'scroungers' and 'underserving'. Finally, she calls on us all to listen to the voices of the people who use foodbanks to try and understand the complexity of their lives and the factors which have led them to rely on charitable handouts. Garthwaite argues that it is only through listening to their voices that we can understand who uses foodbanks, why they use them and what it feels like to do so, and through this begin to take action on behalf of a marginalised group in society.

5.7 Concluding comments on the existing research

The idea of food-insecurity as a political and social problem as well just an individual one has varied acceptance in the psychological research to date. It could be argued that all research in this area has a positive contribution at a societal level, as it raises awareness of the problems of food-insecurity and adds weight to arguments highlighting the importance of making public-policy interventions in this area. However, the author of the present study contends that research which takes an apolitical stance reduces and oversimplifies problems which exist at a cultural and societal level to being wholly contained within individuals and families. This is exacerbated by the recommendations of some of the psychological research, which

suggests the focus of intervention should be on the mental health of food-insecure individuals.

The research by Garthwaite and colleagues demonstrates the complexity of the circumstances of those in food-insecure situations. Issues of nutrition, health, work, benefits and psychological responses to their situation are inextricably interconnected, and by allowing participants to tell their own stories this complexity can be recognised. Reducing the lived situations of families to a series of 'measurable' variables, for example attempting to discover the links between 'food-insecurity' and 'depression', risks losing touch with and diminishing the suffering of the participants, stripping their experience from the context and leaving the impression that we only need to improve clinical outcome data, rather than help people.

There is also a failure in the psychological research to acknowledge participants as political actors who may have opinions on policy and how best to alter their own circumstances. This leads to the sense that they are being treated as studied 'subjects' rather than complete people. Garthwaite's research addresses some of these problems from an anthropological and social-policy perspective. The question for continued psychological research in this area is how to address the holistic nature of the problems faced by those living in food-insecure situations. The author will now outline theory which might help to conceptualise food-insecurity as a political, social and psychological problem.

6. Social and political conceptions of distress

6.1 Power, oppression and distress

Many theorists have produced conceptions of distress based in the operations of power and oppression as they function in the social environment. The basis of some of these theories will now be outlined.

6.1.1 Structure vs Agency

Elder-Vass (2010) outlines the sociological debate of structure vs agency. In summary, the debate refers to the extent to which our behaviours can be said to be influenced by our social environment, or to which our social environment is structured by our behaviours. As Archer (1998) discusses, proponents of agency reject individualist explanations which hold that society arises from individual people, and it is therefore individuals who should be the focus of investigation and explanation in research. This would be in line with the conceptions of the causes of mental distress lying within the food-insecure individual described in much of the research above. For Archer, the principal flaw in individualist reasoning and investigation is that any properties, motivations or behaviours which can be designated to an individual necessarily imply a social context which these must operate from and within: "A tribesman implies a tribe, the cashing of a cheque, a banking system" (Bhaskar, 1989; cited in Archer, 1998, p.20). Without social predicates, explanation at the individual level ceases to make sense. Conversely, those who argue for explanations based around structure favour a collectivist approach, which asserts that social reality has systemic or relational properties, in which 'parts' of society exist in interplay with individual people, but cannot be explained fully on an individual level. In other words 'group behaviour' is more than just the behaviour

of individuals within groups. Whilst it can be contended that the structure vs agency debate is an overly simplistic binary (Elder-Vass, 2010), in accepting Archer's arguments in favour of a structural approach, it is important to be specific about *which* structures are being referred to. The author will now outline some conceptions of structure and power which will be useful in considering the effects of poverty and food-insecurity.

6.1.2 Critical Theory

Critical theory originated in 1930's with the 'Frankfurt School' philosophers, including Max Horkheimer, Erich Fromm, Herbert Marcuse and Walter Benjamin. Horkheimer considered the aim of critical theory was to specifically critique capitalist social relations (Malpas and Wake, 2013). Kim (2016) describes critical theory as examining the relationships of power, domination and subordination in society that lead to inequality. Horkheimer set critical theory in opposition to Marxist theory, which offered a detached rationalistic analysis of the "concrete historical situation" and instead insisted it should act as "a force within that situation to stimulate change" (Daly, 2013). According to Kim (2016), two of the key concepts in critical theory are those of reproduction and resistance. Reproduction refers to the way in which societal institutions maintain the existing social order through their practices. Resistance in critical theory refers to the ways in which individuals or groups struggle against the dominant power structures in an attempt to regain power for themselves.

Whilst critical theory provides a framework for understanding forms of power relations operating in society, it is fundamentally underpinned by compassion for those in suffering and a moral imperative to empower individuals and bring about social change (Kim, 2016). In terms of social research, the aim is not just to comment

on how people are oppressed, but to investigate where points of resistance can be found and how these might bring about change. The mechanisms of reproduction and resistance will now be discussed more fully

6.1.2.1 Reproduction of capitalism

Althusser (1971/2014) outlines Marx's theory of the reproduction of capitalism, that is the mechanisms by which a capitalist society continues to reproduce itself. According to Marx, in order to reproduce itself, capitalism necessarily exploits the labour-power of the workers, who are the means of production. It does this by only 'rewarding' the worker with a fraction of the true value of their labour in the form of a wage. All of the rest of the value of the product then remains in the capitalist's hands, who extracts a profit from it. In only providing the worker with a subsistence level of earning, it is ensured that they must continually sell their labour to the system. It is in this sense that Althusser states that "capitalist relations of production are relations of capitalist exploitation" (p.29). By keeping the worker in an oppressed position through these means, they also deny them the opportunity to overthrow the oppressor (Marx and Engels, 1888/2015).

6.1.2.2 Repressive state apparatus and Ideological state apparatus

Althusser (1971/2014) expands on Marx's theory by outlining further means by which the state reinforces the capitalist relations of production and thus maintains the existing social order. Firstly, he outlines his theory of repressive state apparatus, which describes how the dominant class exercise and maintain their power through the institutions within their control, namely the law (including the police and courts), governments and the armed forces. Through these institutions those in power have the necessary force (or threat of force) to violently or non-violently crush any dissent

53

from those without power. The repressive state apparatus is coupled with what he refers to as the Ideological state apparatus, by which he is referring to the institutions which reproduce power relations in society by disseminating and reproducing the ideology of the ruling class. In this way, the state is able to institute power relations in the private sphere as well as in public. The concept of ideological state apparatus is a development of Gramsci's (1971/1999) theory of cultural hegemony, in which he hypothesises that each social class develops its own culture through which the individuals belonging to that class can make sense of the world. Working-class culture develops as a resistance to the 'bourgeois' culture of the ruling class, which imposes itself as the norm to which the lower classes must conform.

6.1.2.3 Cultural Reproduction

Related to Althusser's notion of ideological state apparatus is Bourdieu's theory of cultural reproduction. Nash (1990) outlines Bourdieu's concept of 'habitus', being the formal and informal customs and rules in society which reproduce its values. For Bourdieu, habitus is the means through which political structure expresses itself in the agency of the individual. He identified the school in particular as the site through which the habitus of a culture is generated. The school is therefore also the site through which societal power relations are reproduced. Because the education system is controlled by the dominant classes, it will perceive students who possess the habitus of the dominant classes as ready to receive knowledge, and students with the habitus of the non-dominant classes as being deficient. The cultural capital of the dominant classes is turned into educational achievement which reproduces power relations. Conversely, any habitus representing a culture of resistance is isolated, and transformed or eradicated by the school environment, acting in conjunction with the habitus of the dominant societal classes. Although Bourdieu's focus was on the

54

education system, the hegemony of the dominant power could theoretically reproduce itself through any form which the dominant class has influence over, such as media and social-media.

6.1.3 Power, repression and psychological distress

Hagan and Smail (1997) explore how abstract concepts of power might be treated as a realist or concrete determinant of psychological distress. They discuss three tiers of influence which act on the individual, namely: distal influences (politics, economics, culture, information media etc.); Proximal influences (domestic and work situation; education; personal relationships; family); and the person, including experience (beliefs, dreams, memories, wishes etc.) and bodily sensation (comfort, pain, fear etc.). Smail (2015) asserts that wellbeing, rather than reflecting an internal individual 'state', is determined by a person's current embodied experience and the exercising of power in relation to their environment. This includes the power they experience as having an influence on them, and whatever power they feel able to exercise in order to have an influence on the world around them. An important feature of this way of conceiving the world is that 'ideas' and 'thoughts' are merely aspects of meaning-systems which people employ to make sense of what is happening to them in an embodied sense. In and of themselves ideas and thoughts are powerless, and change of any kind is wholly dependent on the power and resources available to someone at a given moment in time. The concept of being able to alter someone's internal state in order to reduce their distress in the face of social and economic deprivation is therefore misguided. This is not to say that therapy that focuses on the individual or the family system is entirely useless, but Smail (2015) contends that the usefulness of therapy is limited to the provision of comfort, clarification of the situation, and encouragement in the use of available power and resources.

Prilleltensky (2008) discusses how although the discussion of power is often focused on oppressive regimes, psychologists should not forget the potential for their own role in abusing power (see section 3.2). By remaining aware of our own history in this regard, we are reminded that psychology is a political field. He goes on to discuss the role of power in wellness, which he conceives as the "contextually sensitive satisfaction of personal, relational and collective needs" (p. 122). He argues that conflict between personal needs, including health, self-determination, meaning and opportunities for growth, need to be balanced with the collective needs, including economic equality and welfare policies. As the relationship between these two sets of needs is often in conflict, it is also important to attend to the relationships among and between individuals and groups. This can be achieved through respect for the individual at the same time as collaboration and democratic participation, giving the individual a measure of control over the decisions impacting on their environment. Importantly, he states that if only one of these dimensions is attended to it is likely to have negative impacts on wellness.

Prilleltensky and Gonick (1996) define oppression as a "long term and consistent denial of essential resources" (p. 129). They argue that because oppression remains a continuous feature of both developing and post-industrial societies, it is a pragmatic and moral imperative that the social sciences attend to the needs of the oppressed.

7. Resistance and Liberation

7.1 Psychological conceptions of resistance

Taking the theoretical position that distress is primarily caused by structural forces of power acting on the individual, the question arises for psychological research and

practice of how this power can be resisted so that the individual can be relieved of distress.

7.2 Social class and class consciousness

Savage (2015) outlines how the terms 'working', 'middle', and 'upper' class arose in the 19th century to describe the sharp social divisions during the industrial revolution. Marx and subsequent generations of social scientists predicted that the working class, or 'proletariat', would organise politically to overthrow the system through loyalty to each other in a process that Marx called 'class consciousness'. For Gramsci (1971/1999) class consciousness would be instituted through the process of working-class culture rising up in resistance to the cultural hegemony of the ruling classes, as was encapsulated by Marx and Engels (1888/2015) when they wrote: "now and then, the workers are victorious, but only for a time. The real fruit of their battle lies, not in the immediate result, but in the ever-expanding union of the workers" (p.15). Whilst this has clearly not taken place in the UK, it also seems increasingly unlikely that it could at this point in societal history. The findings from the great British class survey, published in 2013 from data gathered in 2011, demonstrate a complex and fractured picture of modern class identity based on economic, social and cultural capital. Savage (2015) reports how, in total, seven new categories of class were identified, each having little in common with the others. On top of this, over two-thirds of respondents did not personally identify as belonging to a social class, with those with least power in society being least likely to identify with a class-category. This raises seemingly insurmountable challenges for the class-consciousness theory, and may be interwoven with the pervasive neoliberal ideology discussed earlier. In the absence of this form of resistance, it is worth exploring other ways in which social power-structures might be fought against.

7.3 Critical Psychology

Prilleltensky and Fox (1997) argue that although critical psychology is a broad field containing numerous approaches, these approaches are based on a set of core values. One of the central principles they extrapolate is that of psychologists trying to operate as 'agents of social change, rather than agents of social control'. They explain that this involves challenging traditional practices in the field of psychology which can be viewed as reinforcing societal practices and attitudes which they view as harmful. For example, mainstream psychology's focus on the individual disrupts people's communication with their communities, blinding us to the impact of our actions on the environment and other people, as well as placing the power to make decisions about our lives in the hands of corporate capitalists and the political elite. Another central concern of critical psychology highlighted by Prilleltensky and Fox (1997) is that oppression and inequality are widespread in society, and that they continue to be so because those in power maintain control at the expense of other relatively powerless groups. Although they make no claims for critical psychology having all of the answers to these problems, they argue that if psychologists are to play a role in countering them, then they have to adopt a political position grounded in social justice and let go of the pretence of psychology being an objective and 'value free' scientific pursuit.

Rohleder (2012) also outlines how critical approaches, aligned with the anti-psychiatry (and more recently the de-medicalising) movements, can challenge the conception of medical diagnoses as an explanation for mental distress. It could also be contended that through shifting the discussion about distress from a frame of agency to one of structure it is possible for psychologists to align themselves with service-user groups to help them to reclaim power. Parker (2007) for example

discusses how the disability action movement shifted the focus from the individual back to the environment, so that it becomes necessary to think about what it is about a person's environment that disables them, rather than seeing that individual as having a disability located within them.

Hagan and Smail (1997) highlight the difficulties of engaging with clients in ways which are not just tantamount to political posturing, or getting caught up in the same systems which they have no more power than the client to influence. Nevertheless, they advocate for the role of psychologists in conceptualising and measuring power as a way of offering an alternative conception of distress and unifying clinical phenomena under a coherent paradigm. In this sense simply bringing attention to the social operations of power becomes the first point of resistance for psychologists, research participants and clinical clients.

7.4 Community Psychology

Community psychology is closely linked to critical psychology and whilst again a broad field, in summary could be said to be the ecological approach of working with people within their natural environments and aligning as collaborators with those in distress, rather than as scientific experts providing a service (Prilleltensky, 2001). Prilleltensky (2001) outlines the two central goals of community psychology as being the elimination of oppressive social conditions and the promotion of wellness. Prilleltensky (2008) discusses how the role of the psychologist is in maintaining the balance between individual and community needs by identifying neglected areas and bringing these to the foreground.

Taggart, Franks and Osborne (2013) however, outline how one of the difficulties for community psychology generally is that it can allow a psychological sense of

empowerment to replace or mask the ability of marginalised groups to collectively exercise real power in order to access socially valued resources. Conceptions of praxis may help to address this difficulty.

7.4.1 Praxis

The word Praxis has its origins in philosophy and politics, and refers to the unity of knowledge and action. Arendt (1958/1998) discusses how political action "…is never possible in isolation; to be isolated is to be deprived of the capacity to act" (p. 188). Power and the potential for power only occur when people act together, and when their action is fuelled by knowledge and theoretical intention. Knowledge without action leads to political impotence and action without a grounding in knowledge only amounts to individual shows of strength, which is helpless against power. Freire (1970/2005) echoes this sentiment, adding that reflection and action together need to be "directed at the structures to be transformed" (p. 126). He adds that in the effort to transform societal structures, there can be no separation between 'thinkers' and 'doers'. Those conceiving theory must act and those who are oppressed must have a role in creating the theory of their oppression. In this way the oppressed gain a critical awareness of their conditions.

Prilleltensky (2001) outlines a praxis framework for use in community psychology consisting of four considerations, namely: philosophical and political discourse about values in society, aimed at providing an ideal vision of society to work towards; contextual analysis of economic, social and cultural trends and norms; analysis of the needs and lived experience of community members, with the intention of highlighting a desirable state of affairs; and a pragmatic consideration of how resources can be mobilised to bring about change.

7.5 Liberation Psychology

A parallel model for resisting oppression comes from liberation-psychology, which as Afuape (2011) outlines draws its influence from two main sources. Firstly, the Latin-American psychologies of Paulo Freire (1970/2005) and Ignacio Martin-Baro (1996), which focused on violent oppression, poverty and inequality and how these forces could be resisted through Praxis. Secondly, post-colonial theories of how subjugated groups are historically, culturally and socially positioned as 'the other', and through this process come to view themselves through the eyes of their oppressors (see Fanon, 1967/2001). When confronting these systems of oppression, the role of the psychologist is to help individuals and groups to locate their experience and memories in historical and political context, and to help people in understanding their values, strengths and resources in order to resist oppression. Resistance in the therapeutic context then is centred on minimising negative manifestations of power, such as being oppressed, and maximising positive ones, such as collective power and resisting dominant structures (Afuape, 2011).

8. Summary of Introduction

The introduction has shown how food-insecurity, a large and growing problem in the UK, is connected to and must be viewed in the context of welfare-reform and the political austerity regime. Any examination of it must therefore include a conception of the treatment of poor people in the UK and the political power structures that oppress them. Little psychological research into food-insecurity has been carried out in the UK and what does exist is primarily focused on mental-health diagnoses and places the focus at the individual and family levels. By doing so it also feeds a conception that the environmental conditions of poverty are discreet variables which

can operate independently of each other and of the people who live in them. A concept of distress as rooted in the reproduction of societal power inequalities, and an examination of how they might be resisted, may be helpful in addressing some of these concerns.

9. Aims of the current research

The current research aims to work towards addressing the problem of the individual-social dichotomy in food-insecurity research by adopting a narrative approach which can take a more complete account of people as individual and social actors. It aims to explore how individual narratives reflect issues of structure and agency, power relations and individual distress, and how people find ways of fighting back against structural inequality. Finally, it aims to explore how food-insecurity ties into the broader set of difficulties faced by people living in poverty.

10. Research Questions

Based on the theoretical grounding and aims of the research, four research questions have been formulated:

- What is the psychological impact of food-insecurity on individuals?
- How does food-insecurity fit with the broader context of people's experiences of disadvantage and poverty?
- How do people's experiences reflect the reproduction of structural power imbalances in society?
- What resources are available to food-insecure people to resist the structural forces acting upon them?

Methodology

11. Theory and Context

11.1 Overview

As highlighted in the introduction, the qualitative research that has been completed in the area in the UK has described the relationship between political austerity policies and food-insecurity as experienced by people who have relied on food banks. As discussed by Garthwaite (2016), the intense media discussions based on the release of statistics and reports linking government policy and food bank use were notable for the absence of the voices of people who were dependent on food-banks. Garthwaite's ethnographic research has gone some way to redressing that balance, as has the work of journalists (e.g. Ryan and Domokos, 2017) and film-makers (O'Brien and Loach, 2016).

The author of the present study wanted to add to this work with a more systematic analysis of the voices and stories of those who experience food-insecurity, as well as examining the power structures which may have contributed to their situations. In the initial outline of the study, the plan was to analyse the data using discourse analysis. However, upon volunteering in some community kitchens in London the author felt that a discursive analysis, whilst allowing for an exploration of the history and power-dynamics involved in food-insecurity, felt too impersonal and would lose the subjective voice of participants. What felt most important were the lives and stories of the people who used these services. It was therefore decided that a more appropriate approach to analysis would be a narrative one. This way the voices of those affected could be heard but there would still be space for a critical analysis of the power dynamics which lead to and maintain food-insecurity, as well an analysis of how

these dynamics could be resisted. The methodology was informed by a number of different theoretical standpoints, namely: a theoretical perspective grounded in conceptions of power and resistance, as discussed in the introduction; a narrative approach to research in general; a critical realist epistemology; an ontological perspective grounded in narrative and critical theory; and a narrative method informed by these positions. Each of these areas, and the links between them and to the research area, will now be explained in more detail.

11.2 Critical realist epistemology

11.2.1 The critical realist approach

Roy Bhaskar, the originator of critical realism, states the importance of distinguishing between the existence of reality (ontology) and what can be known about it (epistemology), and the avoidance of conflating the two concepts, a mistake which Bhaskar calls the 'epistemic fallacy'. He discusses how it is our 'natural attitude' to conflate ontology with epistemology, however this position becomes untenable when there are competing claims about the nature of reality, as is currently the case in the social sciences. Bhaskar offers a solution to this in what he calls the holy trinity of critical realism, namely: *ontological realism*, or the supposition that there is a 'real world'; *epistemological relativism,* or the supposition that we cannot have access to the real world, and what can be known about it is therefore always mediated by other factors, such as language and culture; and finally, *judgemental rationality*, or the ability to say that one position is better than another (Bhaskar, 2016). For Bhaskar this approach avoids the pitfalls of both realist approaches (in which existence is assumed to be factual and measurable, and which therefore has little to say about the mediating factors of discourse and culture on experience), and post-structural

approaches (in which existence is said to be constructed through discourse, and which therefore denies the possibility of a stable and measurable existence).

11.2.2 Critical Realism and Social Constructionism

Critical Realism emerged as an alternative to post-structuralist/social-constructionist approaches to social sciences (Archer, 1998) and it is therefore important to examine the differences between the two. Cromby (1999) argues that although both approaches have constructionist elements, the distinction lies in the extent to which proponents of each believe that reality is constructed by discourse. He exemplifies this through a discussion of how knowledge and social action are intertwined. He argues that by exploring and being active in our environment, we create knowledge, which in turn forms the foundation of what we see as 'true' in the world. However, different activities, or the same activities set in a different time, place or culture, will create alternative truths. From a 'pure' social constructionist position, there can be no knowledge which remains true across cultures and for all time, leading to the conclusion that reality is constructed by discourse and is culturally contingent. This puts social-constructionism in direct opposition to the positivist or realist view, that there exists factual knowledge which can be gathered by neutral observation, as forms the basis of empirical science. Someone arguing from the critical-realist position however would argue that there are some things which are more 'true', or more universal, than others. For Cromby (1999), the difference between a critical-realist and a social-constructionist epistemology, boils down to the extent to which one believes knowledge is always "local and particular" (p.5), versus the belief that some aspects of the world transcend local beliefs, culture and activity. The difference in these positions comes with the caveat that within each of them practitioners adopt significantly different stances. Cromby states that one of the areas a purely social-

65

constructionist epistemology finds difficult to address is that of embodiment. As a biological machine, Cromby argues, the body "provides the material preconditions for subjectivity, thought, emotion and language" (p. . Bodies then, are the "intimate place where nature and culture meet". Our relationships with and attitudes towards what happens in our bodies and the way we use them are culturally mediated, but there exist physical limits to our embodied experience.

Pilgrim and Rogers (1997) contend that whilst post-structural arguments inspired by Michel Foucault have offered an important counter-position to positivistic, personalistic and economistic accounts of mental-health, they are limited by their suspicion of material reality and individual agency. Archer (1998) goes further in her criticism of post-modern discursive practices as they relate to social theory in general, stating that they have adopted a position of persuasion whereby their conclusions require no justification outside of themselves. Any critique of the conclusions reached by research using this epistemology can be met with the somewhat paradoxical response that the conclusions are merely discursive and rhetorical, and that many other interpretations are possible. Thus it becomes impossible to find a settled position from which to act from. Archer therefore contends that social-constructionist epistemologies are antithetical to any project of social science which hopes to bring about emancipation from oppressive conditions. Although this position may be true of those who cleave dogmatically to post-structuralism, it may also represent somewhat of a caricature of discursive social research. There are many examples of research from a post-structural position which could be argued to have had an emancipating effect (see Speed, 2011; Harper and Speed, 2014). The author considers more helpful the view of epistemological pluralism, in which any one 'way of knowing' is insufficient to understand the complexity of the world (Miller, Baird,

Littlefield, Kofinas, Stuart Chapin III, and Redman, 2008). Although it is beyond the scope of this study to approach the problem of food insecurity through multiple epistemologies or methodologies, it is important to acknowledge that there are multiple ways to address the problem, each contributing to the knowledge and debate surrounding the subject.

11.2.3 Critical Realism and the scientific method

Discussing the origins of the social sciences, Archer (1998) discusses how Auguste Comte, one of the founders of sociology and of philosophical positivism, aimed for an understanding of the social world based on the principles and methods of the physical sciences. People, then, are reduced to physical objects, and the social realm is viewed in mechanical terms as the interactions of these individual objects. The search for this equivalence meant that social sciences were originally tied to empiricism, and in practical terms research was restricted to an attempt to find causality (and later correlation) at the observable level of 'events'. Critical realism rejects this equivalence, and instead calls for an ontological separation between physical and social realities. For Archer, explanations of social events based on empirical studies in the scientific model are fundamentally flawed. There are individual actions which operate in relationship with the properties of social systems; but these properties are emergent and cannot be reduced to or described at the observable level of events, and further cannot be treated as if they were self-contained and cut off from internal or external change from individuals or other systems. What is needed then is a position of inquiry into the social world which rids itself of the empirical methods of observation, and Archer (1998) argues that this is what critical realism provides.

11.2.4 Critical realism and the present study

The author's decision to use a narrative and critical realist approach in this research was partly in relation to a personal experience of volunteering in a community kitchen prior to undertaking the research. After engaging in conversation with service users it was felt they wanted to do justice to telling the personal stories of participants, as well as examining the structural nature of the inequality they faced. In relation to Cromby's (1999) arguments that our bodies are the place where nature and culture meet, it can be argued that there are embodied aspects of our relationship to food which need to be acknowledged as more 'real' than some other social experiences. In particular, the necessity of food for survival and the experience of hunger, malnutrition and ultimately death in its absence are universal experiences. The response to hunger, malnutrition and resultant death may be mediated by relative cultural or socio-economic experience, or the prior knowledge of an individual or group, however it remains linked to an embodied experience. This is why a critical realist rather than a realist or post-structural epistemology felt most appropriate for this research.

11.3 An introduction to narrative research

In his book 'Letting stories breathe: a socio-narratology' Arthur Frank (2010) discusses the vital importance of stories: "…human life depends on the stories we tell: the sense of self that those stories impart, the relationships constructed around shared stories, and the sense of purpose that stories both propose and foreclose." (p. 3). Additionally, Wake (2013) discusses how our constructions of "history, politics, race, religion, identity and time", can all be understood as stories which both explain and construct our experience of the world. These general conceptions of the

importance of narratives and stories and their function give a starting point for acknowledging the value of narrative research. However, under that banner lie multiple theoretical and methodological divisions. Although there are few structured methods for narrative research, Squire, Andrews and Tamboukou (2013) highlight how as a broad framework it allows the researcher to examine multiple layers of meaning and is one through which we can learn more about individual and social change.

Irrespective of the theoretical position taken by the narrative researcher, Cortazzi, Lin, Wall and Cavendish (2001), writing from the position of ethnographic research, offers several reasons for using narrative as a research method. Firstly, narratives share the meaning of experience, which is to say they offer the researcher an insight into the teller's perspective on the meaning and importance of events. Secondly, it offers the opportunity for particular groups to give 'voice' to their experience, and in particular the human qualities of that experience, so that other groups can have some understanding of their lives. This could hold particular importance for groups who are typically disenfranchised and therefore find it difficult to have a voice in society. Cortazzi et al. (2001) also highlight that narratives are a form of discourse which can perform differential functions for the teller depending on the situation. These functions include problem-solving, defining a collective social stance towards a particular issue, offering evidence or testimony, or being used as part of or in place of an argument. Narratives, then, are a ubiquitous and multi-functional aspect of human life which offer rich opportunities for qualitative researchers.

11.4 Narrative as a social ontology

Somers (1994) discusses the importance of the shift in focus from representational to ontological narrativity at the beginning of the 1980's. Narrativity had previously principally been used by philosophers of history who had seen narrative interpretation as a way of imposing form and structure onto lived experience. That is to say narratives were simply a way in which people could describe events. During its uptake by the social-sciences however, it began to be postulated that narrativity is in itself an ontological condition of social life. In other words, people construct their ideas of themselves and the world around them in the forms of stories. From this ontological viewpoint people's experience of the world, and their actions in it, are guided and limited by their projections, expectations and memories which in turn are derived from the multiple but limited repertoire of social and cultural narratives available to them (Somers, 1994). After this shift to the ontological aspects of narrativity, narratives could now be seen as fundamental to the way in which people understood the social world, and through which they are created as social beings within it.

The author of this study will address the data from this ontological position. The implication for the analysis is that the stories people tell about their experiences of food-insecurity will not be treated as a way in which they can represent what has happened to them, giving post-hoc meaning and structure to a series of chaotic events. Instead their stories, and where they have located themselves or are located within them, will be seen as a fundamental component of who they are.

11.5 Critical Narrative Enquiry

Kim (2016), exploring the links between critical theory, as covered in the introduction, and narrative theory, discusses how narrative analysis can be used to highlight the themes of reproduction and resistance. Through examining the way people tell their stories, particularly when the stories focus on areas of power and disenfranchisement, researchers can try to understand how policies and institutions reproduce existing social structures and maintain social order and stability. In turn, individual stories can also give clues as to how inequalities and power imbalances are resisted and how individuals empower themselves.

Wake (2013) discusses the work of Frederic Jameson, who in his book *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* states that narrative theory is concerned with "power, property and domination". The key issue for Jameson is who controls the narrative and who has the authority to speak within it. Wake also suggests that narrative enquiry poses the additional questions: "who speaks?" and "how is it possible to speak?", which are inherently political questions as they implicitly suggest that there are always those whose voices are supressed. In relation to questions of power dynamics and social inequality, the author would suggest that a third question also needs to be asked, namely: from what position does someone speak?

Squire (2013) discusses how critical narrative analysis can overcome epistemological divisions. She discusses how individual 'experience' narratives, which presume the individual subject to be a coherent self who can experience events, are at odds with a postmodern view of a socially constructed subject. She suggests that a bridge between these two positions can be built by considering the socio-cultural and historical

contexts in which individual stories are told: "Stories operate within 'interpretive communities' of speakers and hearers that are political as well as cultural actors. They build collective identities that can lead, albeit slowly and discontinuously, to cultural shifts and political change. Personal stories thus often operate as bids for representation and power from the disenfranchised." (p. 62). In discussing narratives as a social ontology (see section 10.4) Somers (1994) also discusses the links between the formation of individual identity and how this leads to action from a narrative perspective. For Somers, ontological narratives are used to define who people are, which is a necessary precondition for knowing what to do or how to act. The action people take in turn produces new narratives and a continual process results in which identity and action are reciprocally constituted.

If narratives are to be viewed not merely as descriptive but as constitutive and productive of the social self, then from a critical theory perspective they can also reveal where the points of reproduction and resistance lie for each individual in relation to the power structures as constituted in their stories.

12. Method

12.1 The listening guide

Having decided that the research questions would be best approached using critical narrative analysis as a theoretical perspective, the author settled on the listening guide as being the best method to provide the necessary structure for this.

The listening guide is a method of psychological narrative analysis developed by Carol Gilligan and her collaborators (see Brown and Gilligan, 1992; Gilligan 1993), which incorporates elements of narrative analysis, thematic analysis and grounded theory (Gilligan and Eddy, 2017). It outlines a systematic way of listening to the

multiple voices present in any given narrative, and fundamentally seeks to answer a core set of questions about voice: who is speaking and to whom, telling what stories about relationship, in what societal and cultural frameworks (Gilligan, Spencer, Weinberg and Bertsch, 2006). The underlying theory draws on numerous concepts, including Bakhtin's concepts of dialogism and polyphony of voice, Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the rhizome, and psychoanalytic theories of the self (Loots, Coppens and Sermijn, 2012), which will be outlined in brief below. Gilligan et al. (2006) discuss how the method is founded on the premise of relational psychologies, or that human development is grounded in relationships with others, and that each individual's sense of self is inseparable from their culture and their relationship to others. It is based in cultural-oriented approaches to narrative research which treat narrative as social performance of different identities, as opposed to sequentially ordered, closed or complete texts. In this branch of narrative research, selfhood is conceptualised as being constituted through these performances, and human subjectivity is viewed not as coherent, but as "diverse, fragmented, contradictory and open" (Loots et al., 2012, p. 109).

12.1.1 Dialogism, polyphony of voice and counterpoint

Dialogism and polyphony of voice are two interconnected concepts developed by the literary and cultural theorist Mikhail Bakhtin. In Bakhtin's work, dialogism does not only mean related to dialogue, but rather means "double voicedness", and specifically refers to the presence of two distinct voices in one utterance (Vice, 1997, p.45). The voices in a narrative text may be internal or external, cultural, historical, real or imagined, and contained within the person, the other, or the language itself (Vice, 1997; de Poiter, 1998). De Poiter (1998) outlies how in dialogical analysis, the self is not an internally stable construct as traditionally conceived by Western philosophy,

73

but exists as an ever-changing joint production of multiple internal and external voices. The boundary of selfhood is not one which excludes others, but one which is created in dialogue. In this view, the Western ideals of synthesis, order and progress are rejected in favour of a view of the self which knows itself through the responses of real or imagined others, and of the 'competition, co-operation, conflict and consensus' of different parts of the self, as seen by the self or by others. The concept of an internally created single identity is rejected in favour of multiple interdependent identities defined by their difference to others.

Dialogism forms the basis of the concept of polyphony of voice. The term polyphony is borrowed from musical terminology and re-employed as a metaphor for the different voices present in narrative texts. In music, polyphony "refers to the co-presence of independent but interconnected voices" (Fowler, 1996, cited in Vice, 1997, p. 112). Bakhtin (1999) outlines how Dostoevsky created an entirely new form of novel where, rather than the only voice present being the omnipotent voice of the author, he instead creates "a plurality of independent and unmerged voices and consciousnesses, a genuine polyphony of fully valid voices" (p. 6). Further, each character presents multiple voices as the narrative develops, and these variously merge and compete with Dostoevsky's own voice. In the listening guide method this concept is extended beyond the polyphonic novel and used to analyse the dialogic self as outlined above. Linked to the concept of polyphony is another term taken from musical theory: 'counterpoint', in which multiple melodic lines are played simultaneously and work in relationship with each other (Gilligan et al., 2006). In its analogous use in the listening guide, the 'contrapuntal' voices of a narrator converge, either in complementary or contradictory ways.

12.1.2 The Rhizomatic Perspective

Rhizome is a philosophical concept conceived by the philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari. The word is borrowed from botany and refers to an interconnected and tangled network of underground roots. Deleuze and Guattari (1988/1999) take this metaphor and extend it to thought, language and other aspects of being. In antithesis to traditions of rational thinking in Western philosophy which privilege categorisation and hierarchical ordering, any point in a rhizome is connected to everything else. A system such as language is not self-contained, it is continually interwoven with biological, political, economic and multiple other systems. This highlights the openness and unpredictability of thinking, language and narrative and denies stable form.

12.1.3 Psychoanalytic Influence

Loots et al. (2012) discuss how the listening guide considers the participant's voice to be a "constitutive expression of her/his dynamic and multi-layered inner world" (p. 114) as it is connected to culture and relationships. Gilligan et al. (2012) outline how this concept originates in Psychoanalytic theories which have long emphasised the multiple layers of the psyche as expressed through a multiplicity of voices. Specifically, Gilligan (2015) discusses Breuer and Freud's insight in *Studies on Hysteria* (Breuer and Freud, 1895, cited in Gilligan, 2015) that their patients knew everything significant there was to know about themselves, but may not know that they knew it. Breuer and Freud were highlighting the process of dissociation, through which people can hold elements of their experience outside of conscious awareness. As someone's speech may hold clues to the elements of the psyche which they have dissociated from, Gilligan (2015) discusses how she wanted to create a research

method which acknowledged and allowed for an examination of people's dissociated knowledge and motivations. In order to achieve this, Gilligan et al. (2016) emphasise the importance of the researcher following the lead of the interviewee in order to tune in to the associative logic of their psyche. This draws on the psychoanalytic method outlined in *Studies on Hysteria*, which aims to allow the researcher to put aside their own constructions and frameworks in order to gain a better understanding of how the interviewee constructs reality. This shows itself in practical terms in several ways in the research method: firstly, through the general approach to interviewing, in which the researcher is responsive to the interviewee and tries not to impose their own meaning; secondly, in the multiple 'listenings' which make up the analysis (described in further detail below), and bring attention to multiple parts of the self which the participant may not be aware they are unconsciously communicating; and finally in the stance the researcher takes in relation to the analysis of remaining aware of the cultural and relational pressures which can lead to dissociation from parts of the self (Gilligan, 2015).

13. Procedure

13.1 Recruitment

13.1.1 Difficulties with recruitment

The recruitment process for the present study was fraught with many obstacles and difficulties. The initial plan was to recruit participants through charities which ran foodbanks and community kitchens in London, where the author lived. As these charities tended to operate at a local level but under national jurisdiction, local sites did not feel they had the authority to allow recruitment, and representatives of the national organisations did not respond to calls or emails. One major charity did not

respond to the request to recruitment, but rejected with the reason that they wanted to keep any research involving their users in-house. Following these frustrations and rejections, the author approached other community sites with flyers outlining the details of the project and stamped addressed envelopes for participants to send their contact details. Flyers were distributed to community centres, churches and local charity sites such as salvation army centres (see appendix 5 for example of recruitment poster). A £10 voucher for a supermarket of the participant's choice was offered in return for their time.

The distribution of sixty flyers in this manner provided four contacts, one of whom did not respond to initial attempts to get in touch, two who stopped responding to correspondence when trying to organise a time and place for interview, and one who took part in the study. At this stage the author extended their recruitment strategy by reaching out to a disability charity network, who advertised the research on their social media sites and circulated Emails to individual charities. Four people expressed an interest, one of whom dropped out due to issues related to their disability, and three others took part in the study.

Aside from the obstacles encountered when dealing with organisations, there may have been many different reasons why it was difficult to recruit individuals to the study, and why some of those who were initially contacted dropped out. It is probable that for many people currently struggling to feed themselves, they would not currently have the desire or the physical and/or psychological resources to prioritise taking part in research. Additionally, there may have been an element of shame or embarrassment which prevented people from feeling they wanted to discuss their experience. These potential reasons for difficulties in recruitment may have been compounded by the author's decision to try and recruit from areas where people were

77

likely to be currently experiencing food-insecurity. Although the original recruitment strategy aimed to recruit people currently experiencing food-insecurity, when it was expanded to social media this was not stipulated. As a result one of the final participants was not currently experiencing food-insecurity, but was reflecting their experiences of it as a child and how this had subsequently affected them. Although their narrative differed from the other participants in this regard (see section 17.4 for further exploration of this), their reflections on the effects of historic food-insecurity over the lifespan offered valuable insights. On reflection, a recruitment strategy which was more explicitly open to those who had experienced food-insecurity at any stage during their lives may have been more successful.

13.1.2 Participants

Four participants were interviewed in total, one in person and three over the phone due to geographical reasons. In line with Gilligan et al.'s (2006) principle of allowing the participants to guide what was important about their narrative, no direct questions were asked about demographic information.

From information offered voluntarily: participants were from London, Norfolk, Hertfordshire and Kent; three were female and one was male; in terms of ages, one participant was in their 20s, one in their 40s and two in their 50s. One participant gave their ethnicity as Black British and the others did not mention race. Three of the participants were currently experiencing food-insecurity and the fourth had experienced it as a child.

13.2 Interview Schedule

A semi-structured interview schedule was drawn up covering the main areas that the researcher was interested in, namely: getting a sense of the context of the participants'

lives; food-insecurity (including the political and media contexts); physical health, psychological wellbeing and disability. The schedule was designed to serve as a prompt to the researcher and not all questions were asked of all participants. Additionally, as the researcher was following the narrative cues of the participants, many additional questions were asked of each participant which specifically related to their stories (see appendix 1 for interview schedule).

13.3 Recording and Transcribing

All interviews were recorded and transcribed by the author. In order to protect data all recordings and transcriptions were stored on an encrypted and password protected portable flash drive.

13.4 Analysis

The listening guide method takes place over multiple stages or 'listenings' of each text in line with Gilligan et al. (2006) and Gilligan and Eddy (2017), each designed to bring the reader into relational engagement with the narrator. An account of how these were used in the present research follows. Analysis was carried out by the author and reviewed by their research supervisor.

13.4.1 Listening for plot

The first stage involved listening for the plot of the narrative. To get a sense of the plot the researcher paid attention to what was happening, to whom, when, where, who with and why, as well as maintaining awareness of the wider social and cultural contexts in which both the narrator and they were situated. Initial thematic categories were recorded for use later in the analysis. At this stage the researcher also paid attention to and recorded their response to the narrative, where they connected with the narrative and didn't, what thoughts and feelings emerged for them and how this

might have impacted on their interpretation of the data. A separate set of notes was kept for each participant containing the above reflections.

13.4.2 Listening for the 'I'

In the second listening, the researcher constructed what are known as 'I poems' (Debold, 1990, cited in Gilligan et al., 2006). This involved highlighting all of the statements in a section of text which begin with 'I' along with its following verb and any other seemingly important words, for example: 'I thought...', 'I asked...', 'I gave...' etc. and re-writing them in sequential order so that they took on the form of a verse. The purpose of this was to give the researcher a clear sense of the first-person voice of the narrator, both to be able to hear *what* they say about themselves and *how* they talk about themselves. By paying attention to the content of the text but also the cadence and rhythm, the researcher was able to tune into the voice before making interpretations of the data, and was therefore able to stay relational by being in tune with how the narrator might experience a situation rather than engaging in a cold 'objective' analysis.

13.4.3 Listening for contrapuntal voices

These first stages built the context for the following listenings, which fall under the heading of 'contrapuntal listenings'. Using the metaphor of counterpoint, the researcher listened for how the multiple voices of the narrator converged, either in complementary or contradictory ways. Potential voices were identified from initial listenings with the research questions in mind. In order to narrow down the many possible voices identified on initial listenings, the researcher grouped voices into themes by hand, and the groups of voices were given a name. An iterative process then took place whereby the narrative was re-listened to with the new voices in mind,

finding further examples of the voice and deciding whether each was meaningful to the analysis. Voices that did not feel meaningful were discarded or adapted. (see appendix 2 for example of extract showing organisation of themes into voices)

13.4.4 Additional level of analysis

For the present research, and additional stage of analysis not present in the listening guide method was included, to incorporate the element of critical narrative enquiry and address the research questions relating to the reproduction and resistance of societal power structures. This was achieved by categorising the identified voices into those which reflected reproductions of existing power hierarchies, or contributed towards them, and those which represented attempts to resist them, either through individual or collective resources. The concepts of reproduction and resistance discussed here are drawn from critical theory, and refer to the way in which societal institutions maintain the existing power structures and the ways in which individuals or groups attempt to fight back against this process (Kim, 2016). More specifically, the analysis of power will be considered in reference to Althusser's (1971/2014) conceptions of the repressive state apparatus and the ideological state apparatus, as outlined in the introduction.

13.4.5 Individual Analysis

The final step of the listening guide method involved bringing these multiple voices back together and analysing how they complemented each other, so that the complex selves being expressed were not oversimplified. The researcher collated what had been learned about the person in the previous stages of listenings and formulated what was known about them in relation to the research questions.

13.5 Ethical considerations

Ethics were sought and granted by the University of Essex Ethics Board in June 2016 (see appendix 3 for original ethics application and appendix 4 for ethics approval letter). An individual consent form was distributed to each participant outlining the structure and aims of the interview, and making clear confidentiality issues and the right to withdraw from the process at any time (see appendix 6 for copy of consent form). For the participant who was interviewed in person, a hard copy of the consent form was completed. For the three who were interviewed by phone the consent form was sent by email, with confirmation of consent confirmed in written response in email, and re-confirmed verbally at the start of the interview.

Due to the nature of the study, participants were members of the public who would possibly be vulnerable and have mental and/or physical health difficulties. The subject matter meant inviting people to recall elements of their lives which may have been emotionally and psychologically difficult to cope with. A brief discussion of the nature of the interview was given in the consent form and at the start of each interview it was made clear that the participant could refuse to answer any questions they did not wish to and give as much or as little information as they wanted. A post-interview information sheet was also provided (see appendix 7), which gave more information about the research as well as providing information about who to contact if the participant needed additional support. As the research was carried out with members of the public, the interview in person was carried out in a private room booked in a public library, to offer security for both the researcher and participant.

13.6 Dissemination

The author plans to edit the research and submit it for publication. Due to the topic of research, it seems that journals specialising in community or critical psychology, or disability might be the best fit. The edited version of the research will be distributed to the participants who said they wanted to be kept informed of the outcomes of it. The author also hopes to present the research at appropriate conferences if the opportunity arises.

Results

The listenings and analysis for each participant will now be presented. All names have been changed to protect the identity of the participants.

14. Participant one results

14.1 Participant one - listening for plot

Claire was a 27-year-old woman. Her story spanned from childhood to the present day in varying levels of detail. As a child her mother was absent and she was raised by her father, who had some issues with managing money and food as well as a difficult relationship with alcohol. Her description of how she was parented was notable more for what was absent than what was present. In relation to food she remembers that there was sometimes food in the house which she was allowed to take but she was not cooked for and her father was not active in providing meals for her.

She left home at 16 and no longer had much contact with either of her parents, a situation which continues to this day. She often relied on going to friends' houses in order to eat meals, but sometimes felt uncomfortable and not welcome, seemingly

internalising the experience that she was "not their problem". She often went hungry but described feeling unable to ask for more food and felt anger and hatred at having to lie about this. There was a sense of disbelief at other people's lives and how other families functioned and sat down for meals together. She found a place to stay and a job but describes not understanding her responsibilities with work or home and ended up losing both.

Claire spoke about receiving benefits when she was eighteen, but still described how she did not know how to manage money or deal with it. It was an extremely hard process for her to access benefits and when she did the amount she received was not even enough to cover her rent, so she borrowed and got into debt. She tended to spend what money she did have on drink and drugs rather than spend it on food. She slept rough on a few occasions, and although she sometimes found jobs she would lose them due to anxiety, or because she didn't have the experience to know that she had to consistently show up to work. In this period of her life she described feeling immature and although she occasionally spoke to people she knew she felt misunderstood. In relation to food she said she did not know how to budget or how to do a "big shop" and plan meals.

In the previous year to the interview, she was barely able to leave the house and lost any motivation for self-care. The sense of isolation was palpable when she described this period, and she felt she had to hide her distress from her housemates by pretending to go to work. This culminated in a suicide attempt where she was found by her housemate who took her to hospital. Although this was an act fuelled by desperation, it also became a turning point. She was able to accept more support from her housemates, and having someone to share the burden with also allowed her to become more aware of her own physical and mental state, as well as find the

resources to try and make changes. She described the year in-between the suicide attempt and taking part in the research as the best of her life. This was attributed in part to finding a private counsellor, as well as finding work. Additionally, she now feels that an awareness of food, diet and her body are crucial in keeping her well. During the telling of her story, the contrasting emotional salience between the isolated and vulnerable woman who attempted suicide and the positive and determined woman who had now taken control of her life was particularly striking.

14.1.1 Participant one - listener's response

When listening and re-listening to Claire's responses I found myself slightly overwhelmed with the images of isolation and separation that seemed to mark so much of this person's early life. I felt a particular desperation on behalf of her 16-year-old self, who seemed so lost and in need of guidance. Her sadness and anger when talking about this time were obvious, but I wondered how hard it must have been for her and how she survived it. Although she seemed ambivalent, or at least reluctant to talk about her parents in any detail, I was angry on her behalf that they or other adults in her life had not taken better care of her. In contrast, during her discussions of the previous year I became slightly awed by someone who had survived so much hardship alone yet had found the determination and personal resources to make such massive changes in her life.

14.2 Participant one - listening for the 'I'

This person's I Poem underwent many shifts, seemingly reflecting a wide range of differing first-person experiences in the narrative. Although she clearly communicated her experiences of isolation through the stories she told, parts of her I poem gave clues to the reason for this by providing an indication of how uncertain

she felt of herself at a young age. The following passage suggests a young person

forced into reticence and uncertainty through their life circumstances.

I left home
I did suffer
I wouldn't say I knew
I kind of went off
I was desperate
I kind of
I didn't know how
I had no idea
I took so much
I ended up
the first thing I did
I wasn't in a position
I got brought up
I haven't spoken
I can't
I kind of
I had to
I kind of
I didn't really
I was only kind of
I wasn't earning
I was just
I was 16

In other sections of the poem, the words 'I think' become a refrain, suggesting her

experience was dominated by her inner thoughts. This seemed to reflect someone

who was continually trying to make sense of the world, but also someone who

doubted her position continually, as illustrated by the following section.

I think
I think
where I am now
I kind of feel
I think
I think
I think, I don't know
I think it's difficult
I do
I think…I think the attitude
I don't think that's…I think a lot of it's just education
I think
I think
I think a lot of people think that's what it's like

This contrasts with the following section of the poem where she is more assertive in what she knows and as a result gives a sense of moving from a place of uncertainty to a place of feeling in control.

I kind of never thought of myself
I didn't know what I was doing
I never used to
I know how much I
I look forward
I, I bought
I know
I know
I think, I feel as in control as I ever have

Finally, a section towards the end of the interview is indicative of where Claire has arrived at in her narrative, and suggests a positive and hopeful account of her current life circumstances:

I'm clearly
I'm the healthiest I've ever been
I look the healthiest I've ever been
I do as much as I've ever done
I'm working
I'm exercising
I'm socialising
I've got…
I'm telling them
What I eat
What I drink
What I do
I can see

Although these sections represent the many first-person experiences which still, to some extent, make up Claire's internal world, they also mirror the same narrative journey from uncertainty and struggle to hope and confidence as seen in the plotting of her narrative.

14.3 Participant one - listening for contrapuntal voices

Table 1 reflects the contrapuntal voices identified for Claire and whether they represent a voice of reproduction or a voice of resistance. The voices have been arranged in pairs by the researcher in an attempt to reflect the sets of voices which seemed to come into conflict with each other the most. However, it would be an oversimplification to suggest that multiple other voices could not also offer points of

resistance to any given voice. There were also voices identified which did not clearly have a contrapuntal voice in direct opposition to them, and these will be identified in the descriptions of the voices. Following the table each voice will be described in further detail.

14.3.1 Table 1: Contrapuntal voices of Reproduction and Resistance – Participant 1

Voices of Reproduction	Voices of Resistance
Voice of being failed by society	Voice of independence / individual strength
Voice of abandonment / being left to fend for self	Voice of supporting others / collective responsibility
Voice of negative impact of food-insecurity on wellbeing	Voice of power through health
Voice of the worthless self	Voice of hope in desperation
Voice of separation and isolation	Voice of relying on others
Voice of Pressure to conform	
Voice of corporations' and the media's influence on health	Voice of political action
Voice of the medicalisation of wellness	Voice of health and wellbeing as a non-medical construct

Voice of being failed by society

This voice reflected how Claire clearly felt let down by the societal institutions that were supposed to support and protect her. The lack of power she experienced from a young age was maintained, both through continued active rejection from the council and welfare agencies, and also through her difficulties not being noticed in school.

"...because I think it's just kind of assumed that everyone who turns up at school had a good meal the night before and had a good sleep the night before and you know...I think school do assume the parents are doing their bit and I think very often that isn't the case"

Voice of independence / individual strength

Although clearly frustrated and let down by these processes, Claire was able to find some resistance by maintaining a voice which was sceptical of the welfare system and saw independence from it as a positive.

"I think, benefit stuff is incredibly difficult to access anyway. And, just cutting out a whole group like that just seems insane to me but, I think, on the other...kind of, because of where I am now, because I've done most of that myself I kind of feel like a lot of people can help themselves a lot more than they know they can"

Voice of abandonment / being left to fend for self

This voice related to Claire's experience of not receiving the support she needed on a more personal level from those around her, beginning when she was a child with limited help in meeting her physical needs around food and self-care, and extending to adulthood where she struggled to look after herself without the skills which she missed out on acquiring in childhood

"I was basically always fending for myself food wise from as young as I can remember. I don't ever remember my parents you know, cooking dinner for me, it was kind of: 'there's stuff in the cupboard you know, eat what you want"

Voice of supporting others / collective responsibility

Resistance to her experience of being left to fend for herself comes in the counterpoint of her concern for others and desire to help people who had been in similar situations to her. This was realised through her choice of work but also in her attitude towards and faith in society more generally.

"I volunteered at the foodbank at Christmas and we were kind of, well you know it's very much in the erm, the mental-health campaigning I do at the moment is, a lot of it is aimed around the levels of homelessness"

Voice of negative impact of food-insecurity on wellbeing

This voice was focused specifically on the impact food-insecurity on Claire's psychological and physical wellbeing. Rather than being a straightforward relationship, a complex picture emerged in which life circumstances, poverty, mental-health, physical wellbeing and food-insecurity interacted with each other. The interplay between these factors amounted to a trap that was difficult to escape from.

"...so there'd just be a few days at a time when I just wouldn't be able to leave the house so I used to try to order food or get people to come and bring me things but it's actually really difficult to just go out and know what to buy when you're...when I was so young and had mental health problems, I didn't know how to cook myself a meal"

Voice of power through health

This voice represents one of the key ways in which Claire resisted and escaped the negative consequences of the factors described above. Through taking control of her diet and body she felt she was able to gain a sense of control over other elements of her life. This seems to have been the start-point for a recovery process encompassing all aspects of her wellbeing, which she viewed as inextricable from her food choices.

"I wasn't just buying what I'd watched other people buy. I was actually buying things that I wanted to eat, because I knew now what I didn't wan'to eat. The same now, when it comes to dairy, I only buy things that I feel morally comfortable eating"

Voice of the worthless-self

This voice represents how the combined pressures of life took their toll on Claire, leading to a sense of worthlessness about herself and to an eventual suicide attempt.

"well last summer I attempted suicide, and my housemate who owns the house found me in time and took me to hospital"

Voice of hope in desperation

This sense of worthlessness was countered by finding hope and determination in the situation and seeing the crisis as a turning point from which she could improve her life.

"I think, over the last year my life has changed so dramatically, for the better, because last year was kind of the final straw for me and I just knew that I had to get up and really work hard to get through this situation"

Voice of separation and isolation

This voice was made up of both the material and psychological separation felt by Claire in relation to others, as well as the ways in which she isolated herself from the rest of the world. Her feelings of being different from others in part seemed to stem from her experiences of inequality around food and family circumstance when growing up. In her adult life, this voice encompasses a lack of trust in others and feeling the need to hide her situation from those around her, which acted as a coping mechanism but also maintained her difficulties.

"...you know I'd go people's houses and they'd have these kind of, sit round the table for meals and there'd be just like you know loads of really nice cooked food and different drinks and, like I always felt like they must be really well off. I just used to think everyone was so much richer than us because, that how it came across. We were just a particularly poor family"

Voice of relying on others

As a counterpoint to the voice of isolation, another of Claire's voices found comfort and strength when turning to others for support. This centres on events after her suicide attempt and therefore signals more of a break with the voice of isolation, rather than being in competition with it. This voice manifested itself in relying on those directly around her but also in her feelings towards the welfare state being a stepping stone to independence.

"I think now, I had, me and my housemates spoke, they all know the situation now and I kind of, we all cook together and they sometimes will come shopping with me or they go for me in some situations and we kind of all, try to all eat together"

Voice of Pressure to Conform

In a voice without an obvious direct counterpoint, Claire experienced a pressure to conform to ideas of 'normality', exerted through pressure in the workplace and through family, friendships and housemates. This need to show she was not different from others focused on food, poverty and mental health. It is an area which clearly had a negative impact on her psychological wellbeing and the absence of a contrapuntal voice suggests it is one which she felt unable to, or did not want to, resist.

"I was trying to maintain a job and I was trying to show them that I was...normal, if you like. Because at that time this was the first job that I had lasted that long in, and I was quite good at the job and I wanted, you know I would never tell them what my life was like at home, or the kind of problems I'd had in the past"

Voice of corporations' and the media's influence on health

Claire spoke about the pressure to eat unhealthy, poor quality food that comes from supermarkets, advertising and the media, and how difficult it was to resist these influences for a long time.

"...when it comes to food, I think, the food that's advertised and it's pushed and everything's brands and its products, you know that are on offer at that time or what's, so that's all the terrible stuff for you to eat, that's...you know, and you go into a shop and they're not promoting the things that make you feel genuinely good"

Voice of political action

Although not responding directly to the influence of media and corporations, in trying to influence events at the distal level of power Claire spoke with pride and about her

political engagement and seemed to take strength from feeling she could have a voice at this level and the feeling of rebellion this imbued.

"(the organisation) is quite politically voiced as well so I try to…we're not, we don't kind of shy away from being political cos I think a lot of organisations are worried about it because of funding and things like that, but we kind of don't take that view (laughs)"

Voice of the medicalisation of wellness

This voice related to the encounters which Claire had had with health services and the feeling that they were attempting to offer psycho-pharmaceutical solutions to difficulties she was experiencing around food-insecurity, life-skills and social support.

"I think all the times that I've been to the doctors and hospital and things like that, it just, they never ask you, they never ask you what you're eating, and how are you eating, are you drinking enough water. Like, to me now, they're such basic things I have to do, erm, that I…and they're just obvious things to keep you well. Whereas I'm, it feels as if in any situation it's very medical, everything's very clinical and they don't…they don't strip you right back to basics and, you know, help you understand what you can be doing little things wise"

Voice of health and wellbeing as a non-medical construct

The medical construction of wellness was countered with a voice that valued other interventions and methods to improve wellbeing, particularly those centred on food and bodily wellbeing, which Claire valued greatly as a route to overall wellbeing.

"Rather than the first lot of anti-depressants I had if somebody had sent me to a support group that taught me how to…then, how to deal with money and certainly how to cook, I think my entire wellbeing could have been entirely different"

14.4 Participant one - analysis

Taken together, the different listenings to Claire's stories provide a narrative of someone who experienced extremely difficult life circumstances and, after a time of struggle and crisis, found ways to overcome them. The difficulties described by Claire went far beyond the scope of thinking about food-insecurity, taking in poverty more generally, mental health, homelessness, drug and alcohol use, physical health and workplace difficulties. All of these however linked in some way to food and to each other, highlighting how hard it is to separate out these issues into discrete categories.

Having been let down by those who were supposed to support her, both her family and the welfare state, she became isolated from others, both practically and psychologically. This situation seems to have been maintained by pressures of what she thinks others will think about her but also by the pressures of the need to be 'normal' exerted by the household and workplace environments. Claire found ways to take strength from this independence, however she did not seem to be able to feel 'well' until her suicide attempt forced her to begin to trust in and rely on other people.

In relation to the question of reproduction of the social order, Claire's experience of facing obstacles at every turn to access welfare support was one of a system that, for some time, has been geared towards denying people support and forcing them to fend for themselves, rather than offering the 'leg-up' that she needed to get her life back on track. Claire's experience offers an interesting look at how the Repressive State

Apparatus (Althusser, 2014), in this case the local council and Jobcentre Plus (enacting policy created by the department for work and pensions) took actions which reproduced the relations of production by putting her in a position where she has no choice but to work whether she was able to or not. By offering no, or insufficient, benefits at varying stages during Claire's life, the government was able to use coercive means to ensure that she fits into the ruling ideology of individualism and neoliberalism by acting as an individual who has to support herself. Claire found elements of this individualism empowering, although her isolation eventually led to unbearable strain on her psychological state, resulting in her suicide attempt. It can also be seen in Claire's account how the pressure to be 'normal' in relation to food consumption and mental health was a significant factor in her distress and isolation. This is an example of how the Ideological State Apparatus (Althusser, 2014), in this case acting through the proxy institutions of the family, household and workplace, reinforced Claire's socio-economic position, preventing her from challenging her place in society.

Although Claire was able to find small and personal ways to resist her social conditions, her ability to attempt to exert her influence at the proximal and distal levels only became possible following her suicide attempt and subsequent reclamation of her 'wellness' on her own terms. Notably this involved the rejection of corporate and media influences over what she should feed herself, rejection of the message that the 'cure' for her distress was a medical and pharmaceutical one, and the embracing of support from others. Through these she was able to engender a different form of independence, one where she felt in control of her life-decisions and her health. This is what allowed her to find work where she supports others and feels able to exert some form of power at the local and national political levels.

15. Participant two results

15.1 Participant two - listening for plot

Mandy was a 59-year-old woman who described herself as being born working class, but moving "up to middle class" over the course of her life. She did not discuss much of her upbringing or family life except to say that she was the eldest of four children. She was a general and psychiatric nurse for 19 years until she was made redundant due to chronic medical conditions. She was angry at this because she worked for the NHS and they did not show any understanding around her conditions. At the time of the interview she had been out of work for over 25 years. Her past employment as a nurse was clearly important to Mandy and she outlined a particular period where she worked with homeless people in London in the 1980s. Her compassion for the people she helped during this period was obvious, as were her frustrations at the obstacles she had to overcome to try and make it work. For Mandy, this project formed the basis of comparison for the growing food-insecurity crisis in Britain.

Mandy had a 17-year-old daughter who still lived with her and was the emotional centre of many of her stories. Mandy described having relied on benefits for a long time in order to be able to survive, but told how she had to repeatedly justify her need for them through frustrating bureaucratic processes. Their situation was made worse by being evicted and made homeless, through no fault of their own, four years ago. They were forced to live in Bed and Breakfasts and poor quality temporary accommodation, which, along with limited money for food, had an impact on Mandy's ability to provide good quality meals for her and her daughter. It was particularly painful for Mandy that shortly after they were made homeless her daughter attempted suicide. Her frustrating experience of the benefits system was

central to much of Mandy's narrative, particularly how she felt demeaned and belittled by the processes she had to go through and the way staff communicated with her. A final thread of Mandy's narrative focussed on how in recent years she had completed a degree in embroidery, which was a source of pride for Mandy and an important way of making her voice heard. Finally, just before the interview was conducted, Mandy and her daughter had been given permanent accommodation.

15.1.1 Participant two - listener's response

I had a mixed response when listening to Mandy's interview. She made almost immediate reference to her political protests through art work, which I found to be bold and inspiring, although at times she seemed quite uncertain of herself. Throughout the interview she seemed to oscillate between being confident and certain in her position and being very unsure of herself and what she was saying. When discussing particularly emotional topics, such as her daughter's suicide attempt, she seemed understandably reluctant to dwell for too long. I found it difficult to know how I would cope being responsible for a child whilst homeless and suffering with chronic health conditions. Nevertheless, Mandy seemed to find strength through identifying with various groups, namely as a feminist, an artist and a disability campaigner.

15.2 Participant two - listening for the 'I'

When constructing Mandy's I Poem, it did not feel like there were many points when phrases coalesced naturally to suggest a deeper meaning. There were however occasions when this happened.

At times, the I poem suggested someone who was uncertain of herself and seeking reassurance from the listener, with variations on the phrase 'do you know what I mean?' used repeatedly.

I think
I think this
do you know what I mean?
If you see what I mean?
you know what I mean?
You know what I mean?
I suppose I'm quite lucky
I haven't, I didn't
if you see what I mean?

Other sections hinted at how her life circumstances made it difficult for Mandy to maintain coherent thought and confidence in what she was thinking.

I was homeless
I was in bed and breakfasts
I was just questioning
I suppose
I was short of money
I err, I also had
I became low
I asked for
I think
I don't know
I don't think
I think
I suppose
I applied for
I received

I'm going
am I?
I don't know

Finally, another section hinted at what it meant to her to be at the mercy of someone else making key life decisions for her. In this section speaking about housing, it seemed that Mandy felt restricted and oppressed by her living conditions, with the restrictions on her gardening becoming a metaphor for her current life conditions.

I'm quite green
I suppose
I've just been placed
I've just been placed
I have gardened all my life
I have grown
I've been placed
I can't grow

15.3 Participant two - listening for contrapuntal voices

15.3.1 Table 2: Contrapuntal voices of Reproduction and Resistance – Participant 2

Voices of Reproduction	Voices of Resistance
Voice of being let down by systems supposed to support	Voice of personal victories
Voice of powerlessness in face of dehumanising systems	Voice of creative resistance
Voice of worthlessness in face of shaming and punitive systems	Voice of political defiance
Voice of patriarchal oppression	Voice of feminist resistance
Voice of media and capitalism removing choice	Voice of actions having an effect
Voice of instability as threat to a healthy existence	Voice of support in the collective

Voice of being let down by systems of supposed support

This voice reflected Mandy's experience of the inadequacy and inefficiency of various systems which were supposed to help her but only ended up frustrating her. These ranged from her previous employers, the NHS, to council and government departments responsible for benefits and housing.

"Erm, you know, the year I was in this bungalow, the housing association or the council would not listen that it was damp. They would not listen"

An interesting aspect to this voice was Mandy's feeling that foodbanks, and care of citizens more generally, should be a responsibility of the state, who should not rely on charities to carry out this work.

So, you know, give the churches their due, they don't do too bad, but, but it's not for the churches to do it is it? Like it's not for the churches to provide medical care for homeless people. It's not for the churches, yeah it's not, yeah it's not ok is it?

Mandy also told stories which highlighted what she perceived as the flaws of charities and the foodbanks they ran. These included inequalities in the system depending on where you lived, foodbanks not providing adequate food for a healthy diet, and charities pushing their own religious agendas when providing food.

"I am quite religious. But when, when they delivered the food parcel and said can we pray with you, I objected. I did not like that. Yeah, it sort of, religious freedom does not entail praying for your food if you do not want to"

Voice of personal victories

Mandy was able to find some satisfaction in pushing back against the systems which had let her down, albeit in small ways which had little impact on the way she was treated but which seemed to be important for her psychologically.

"And this is a man who's you know, getting £800 a month for single rooms, in a B&B, yeah, and I led him a complete dance do you know what I mean, and it was a pleasure to do it as well"

Voice of powerlessness in the face of dehumanising systems

Mandy found that many of the systems she was forced to engage with were inherently impersonal and dehumanising. She was demoralised by the continual struggle to get support for her and her daughter and often felt completely powerless, leading to feelings of pessimism and fear for the future on a societal and personal level.

"and I've experienced what it's like to be in temporary accommodation on a road…and my God does it exclude you entirely from the community, entirely from the community, and that's not OK is it because erm, you know we're all human beings"

Voice of creative resistance

Mandy seemed to find most strength and energy when talking about creative acts which she used to send a message to those who she felt oppressed by. These included starting a blog about her homelessness experiences and the following story of using art to find a political voice.

"…I made a garment, I called it a story telling coat, which err on the outside of the coat…I was fed up with the amount of spin going on about disabled people, negative spin going on about disabled people, and erm, I found a bit of research, I think it was

105

done in Glasgow, saying that the erm, tabloid press had increased their negative use of words about disabled people by around two thirds. So I decided that I would make this story telling coat that would put a positive spin on disabled people. So on the outside of the coat I hand embroidered, erm, positive affirmations about disabled people. And then on the inside of the coat I wrote the list of the erm, 320 conservative MPs that voted for the cuts (interviewer laughs) of £30 in the, erm, benefit. And I also wrote negative, err embroidered, hand embroidered negative words about politicians really in general (laughs, interviewer joins in)"

Voice of worthlessness in face of shaming and punitive systems

As well as the feeling of being dehumanised mentioned earlier, Mandy's responses also indicated that she felt actively shamed by the systems she encountered which were supposed to offer her support. Mandy felt that the government saw the poor and those who needed help as worthless and expendable. She also experienced a systematic shaming when asking for support, both from the local council and from foodbanks run by charities, and discussed feeling watched over by those offering support to her.

"...and believe me it takes something to ask for it, you know what I mean, cos of the shame factor. You know what I mean. Cos you're asking when you haven't got anywhere else to go, and then to be told, you've already had it once this year, if have it twice then you can't get it again"

Voice of political defiance

Mandy was able to find some points of resistance to the oppression she felt by voicing her frustrations at the political system, in what she termed as radical statements. There was a clear sense of despondency in some of the statements but the

feelings of anger and frustration heard in this voice may have contributed to the acts of creative resistance discussed earlier.

"Basically, I'm not happy with the political system at all. Erm, if 30% of the population are voting. And if in that 30% there's a division of 50/50, about, it is not ok for 15% of the population to decide what happens to the rest of us"

Voice of patriarchal oppression

Beyond the generalities of feeling oppressed by the broad political system, this voice indicated that Mandy felt particularly targeted as a woman with a daughter in systems that threatened them due to their gender. She also expressed a sadness at the inadequacy she felt in trying to look after her daughter in these difficult conditions.

"And the women are not on the streets, the men are on the streets. And so there was I, as err you know, as a 57-year-old woman with a 17-year-old daughter, in a pretty much male environment"

Voice of feminist resistance

In contrast to this however she was able to find power in her identity as a woman and mother and used feminism as a way to portray her strength.

"I worked out that the Indian men, the Turkish men, were not used to women speaking straight at them. Right. So I would speak straight at them as equals and they would just (laughs), they just did not know what to do, I mean it amused me to, you know, take some power"

Voice of media and capitalism removing choice

Mandy felt that the television and news media were disconnected from people's lives and was concerned about how it's bias could influence people's decisions. In relation to food she was also concerned about the profit-driven influence of supermarkets exerting a negative influence on the food people consumed and contributing to the destruction of healthy diets and food-sourcing.

"One of the things that has come to me recently which I find most worrying, is about how information is disseminated. And where it's come to me is obviously all the newspapers are owned by millionaires who live in other countries. So basically they don't know anything about you know, England and what people live like"

Voice of actions having an effect

In contrast to feeling powerless in the face of big business, Mandy also had a voice which spoke of the many ways in which direct action she had taken had a positive effect on the world, giving her the power to change things.

"I err, worked with a doctor and a minister to erm get some money out of the government to start a medical centre because the homeless people couldn't access care, cos they didn't have an address…So we put it in, and within, it doesn't sound so much these days, but within about 2 months the Methodist church got £100,000 towards the running of the medical centre"

Voice of instability as a threat to a healthy existence

This voice was centred on the impact of environment and life-circumstances on Mandy and her daughter's health. Many of Mandy's stories contained elements of various types of ill-health, including disability, physical health conditions, addiction

and poor mental-health. The difficulties of sustaining a healthy lifestyle when faced with unstable and inadequate housing was dominant in the stories making up this voice.

 "And even in the three weeks that my daughter and I have been here our breathing has improved, right. We didn't have breathing problems before we started this, at all"

Voice of support in the collective

This voice reflects the strength and support Mandy found in turning to others around her, particularly around food-insecurity and addiction. The support came from a range of sources including family, charities and addiction support organisations.

"I err, go to 12 step meetings on the phone, online, anywahere I can get to a 12 step meeting (laughs). Erm, so that has been, they have helped me the whole time, you know. It's a fellowship of people who stand by people all the time"

15.4 Participant two - analysis

After listening to Mandy's narrative with multiple perspectives, she came across as someone whose life was split into distinct phases. The parts of her voices which represented her past suggested someone who found confidence in her work as a nurse and felt like she had the power to change things and make a positive difference to the world. The series of life events that followed, particularly chronic illness, followed by unemployment and homelessness, had forced her primary focus to be on ensuring the survival of her and her daughter. The difficulties in controlling even aspects of her immediate environment and living conditions meant that there was little to no time to think about how she might influence the things which frustrated her at the political level. Nevertheless, part of her survival was rooted in maintaining an active

109

knowledge of political issues and resisting injustice through her anger with those in power. There was a feeling that, in being consumed by this fight for survival, she had lost some of her sense of who she was as an individual. The necessity to fight for survival could be viewed as one of the ways in which the ruling class, through the mechanism of government policy, maintain the power structures of society. If people need to channel all of their physical and psychological resources into finding ways to survive, then they are unlikely to be able to challenge the status quo in any meaningful sense.

In terms of her immediate environment, Mandy's interview suggested someone who was continually trying to find ways to resist the social conditions she lived in in whatever way she could. However there was also frustration, uncertainty and sadness at the perceived limitation of these efforts. What she did achieve was seemingly through strength she drew from her identity as a mother and feminist, and as part of a collective identity formed with others with addiction, disability and health problems. More recently in Mandy's life she had begun to find ways of acting on her thoughts of anger and frustration at the political establishment through artistic and creative expression. Although at times she seemed to find it difficult to sustain hope in the face of her circumstances, these small act of resistance seemed to be enough to maintain her hope that things could change. Her act of creating the story-telling coat was an act of political praxis, in which she combined her artistic skill and knowledge of the impact of benefits cuts to disabled people, in order to create something which actively sent a message to the world. Although she did not have the influence or opportunity to exert power more directly at the distal level, she sent a message of resistance using the resources she had available to her, in conjunction with a collective of disability campaigners who supported the promotion of her work. By

joining forces with a group facing similar challenges, she was able to amplify her voice of resistance and reach a wider audience.

Another interesting facet of Mandy's account was although she was asked broadly the same set of semi-structured questions as the other participants, few of her stories were directly related to food and food-insecurity. Instead she seemed to consider this just part of the broader spectrum of difficulties relating to her socio-economic conditions. Mandy's critical appraisal of the role of charities was also notable. although she was grateful to them, she was not afraid of offering criticism of the way they operated, either in their own self-interest or in conjunction with the government as enforcers of oppressive conditions. This opens up the interesting possibility that some charities now act as another form of repressive state apparatus, acting in a supervisor role over part of the system through which power imbalances are maintained, and mimicking their history as moral arbiters of who received support in the time of the poor laws. The continual oppression of Mandy through systems of power led her to feeling dehumanised. As Freire (1970/2005) states on the process of dehumanisation: "Because it is a distortion of being more fully human, sooner or later being less human leads the oppressed to struggle against those who made them so." (p. 44). For Mandy, there was a sense that, although constrained by circumstance, this struggle was beginning to gather strength.

16. Participant three results

16.1 Participant three - listening for plot

David was a Black-British man whose narrative spanned from his early years to the present day. He began with the story of his parents who he described as being invited to England from Jamaica, which was still under British rule at the time, to do "menial

jobs", namely nursing and transport. He was born in East London sometime in the 1960s and went to Comprehensive school in the 1970s, which he disliked intensely, leaving without any qualifications at the age of 15. He then took part in a youth training scheme with the civil service to please his parents, doing office work for 7 years. He had ambitions of being a musician and was pursuing this in his spare time.

By the time he left school he said he also had two children. He wanted to leave home to be able to be a full-time father but his partner was reluctant to leave her home. They eventually got a council house when their oldest child was 6-years-old, but his partner resented him, feeling he had forced her out of her parent's house. He had optimism that this could be the 'start of his life', but the relationship broke down, with his partner telling him she no longer loved him. Although this happened a significant amount of time ago, David considered everything that happened since in reference to this event, saying he had been going from 'pillar to post' since then.

At the age of 33 he quit his office job and decided to apply for an access course to pursue his music career. He got onto a course which taught video as well and for the first time in his life was told he excelled at something. He went on to a fine-art university, where he excelled creatively but struggled academically, although felt at times he was treated unfairly in comparison to white middle-class peers because he was Black and working-class. He was shocked when he left because he had thought a degree would provide him with employment opportunities but this was not the case.

At some point in the following years he ended up in a psychiatric unit, which he wryly reflected had been converted from the hospital he had been born in. He said he felt comfortable talking about mental health issues because he no longer thought it was a taboo in society. Although it was difficult to decipher the exact series of events,

he was sent to prison in the year before he was interviewed for an unnamed crime in which he implicated the local residents, as well his son stabbing him, an incident which he seemed to find it too painful to talk in any detail about. It was his first time in prison and he found it tough, feeling threatened by other prisoners, especially when he was first incarcerated. On the whole he found the system neglectful, but said he stayed out of trouble and built up trust with the prison staff.

He began to use foodbanks because once released from prison he could not claim benefits for 6 or 7 weeks, which he thought was a key reason why people re-offended. His stories of the time since he was released were focused primarily on the injustices of the probation office and benefit's system, as well as his struggle to maintain his health and survive in the face of limited resources.

16.1.1 Participant three - listener's response

Although the plot of David's narrative came together on subsequent listenings, during the interview it was often difficult to follow what was being said due to his communication style. He spoke in a stream of consciousness style, often leaving sentences halfway through to follow another thread of thought, and then returning to complete his original point minutes later. He seemed eager to share his thoughts and the interview consisted of very few questions being asked by the researcher. As a result it felt like a reciprocal relationship was not developed between David and me, but that I was the means through which his story could be told and listened to. My overall impression was of someone whose hopes and dreams had been continually thwarted throughout his life, and who was searching for answers as to why this had happened. Nothing had gone to plan for him and he struck me as someone who did not feel he had a place in the world, and was rightfully angry because of this. It was

easier for me to engage with some of the targets of this anger, such as the post-colonial attitudes and structural racism he had encountered than it was others, such as his tendency to fall back on islamophobia or misogyny when describing those he felt wronged by. The frequent switch between personal and political views consistent with mine and those I found difficult to connect with meant it was hard to empathise with David at times, although at other points during his story I was struck with feelings of hopelessness and desperation at the circumstances of his life.

16.2 Participant three - listening for the 'I'

A striking feature of David's I Poem was that it was almost exclusively in the past tense. Where other participants frequently used the phrase 'I think', for example, David's used 'I thought'. When listening to the whole narrative, it became apparent that when referring to himself it was usually in relation to a story from his past. He did talk about current events, but tended to speak about them in the abstract, rarely including himself directly. For example he stated: "*when it comes to the NHS and the prison services. And now the government cuts, they cut they cut they cut they cut. But they're cutting in the wrong place man*". This might have reflected a discomfort of remaining in the present psychologically, or of reflecting on his past from his current position. Additionally, many of the stanzas in the I Poem were very short, which reflected the stream-of-consciousness style of talking discussed in the listener's response. It may be because of this fragmentation that the I Poem did not appear to reveal much in the way of unconscious communication.

Where the stanzas did seem to be representative of things, it seemed that in some sections represented an assertive side of David who knew what he want and could take action.

I've been
I thought
I'm going
I wanted
I said
So I did
I was doing
I thought
I've done

Whereas some stanzas seemed to represent a weary defeatism, suggesting he had had enough and was giving up.

I've got my
I go you're joking
I said you know what
I was done
I thought fuck me
I was like I know, I know

Other sections of the poem showed how quickly David could switch from positivity to negativity, showing that the fragmented nature of his life, and the frequent transition from optimism to having his hopes dashed were also present in his emotional life.

I just
I was happy
I had a premises
I thought right
I thought

I thought nah
I go fuck off
I felt low, I felt like scum

I thought nah

I felt low, I felt like scum

16.3 Participant three - listening for contrapuntal voices

16.3.1 Table 3: Contrapuntal voices of Reproduction and Resistance – Participant 3

Voices of Reproduction	Voices of Resistance
Voice of distance between the ruling class and ordinary people	Voice of freedom in poverty
Voice of being discriminated against and the struggle for representation	Voice of identity through communities
Voice of prejudice	
Voice of being trapped in oppressive conditions and systems	
Voice of aggressive masculinity	Voice of vulnerability
Voice of the embodied effects of poverty	
Voice of disconnection from charitable support	Voice of gratefulness for support
Voice of being failed by societal systems	

Voice of distance between the ruling class and the ordinary people

This voice represented the feelings of disconnection and mistrust David felt towards politicians, as well as how he felt condescended to by those in power. His experience was that different rules applied depending on your position in society, which left him angry.

"It's those wankers in parliament, in the house of commons etc, that dictate the way we live. They're the worst hypocrites mate, they don't need food banks. But they always cut. Why cut the NHS? Why cut schools? Meals? Why cut everything? And yet the banks fuck up the peoples' PENSIONS, how can they get away with it? They get away with it. Banks…."

Voice of freedom in poverty

Although he mostly felt oppressed by his impoverished conditions and angry at those in power, David also found a certain amount of freedom and pride in not being tied to possessions or to a certain way of living.

"They've got two mortgages, they're on the third marriage, they've got gallstones, they've got a car they can't really afford, what's it all about? I'm quite, I'm better off where I am, know what I mean?"

Voice of being discriminated against and the struggle for representation

This voice incorporated David's experiences of discrimination and persecution at both the societal/structural level and the personal level. This discrimination related to race but also to the fact he was poor and unemployed. This was also linked to this was feeling that his identity was not represented at the cultural level.

"You're innocent unti...you're guilty until proven innocent in this country. Especially a black man. You're guilty until proven innocent"

Voice of identity through communities

Although he did not feel like he had representation or affirmation through his racial identity, David found some power in being both a member of his geographical community. He also found some strength in representing his identity through membership of various groups, including being a father, a musician, and artist, a member of his educational institution, and in his parent's cultural roots in Jamaica.

"One particular occasion, this working girl, whole estate knew her, lovely girl. She goes 'security', she called me security, she goes could you walk me to the err entrance please, I don't know if it was her boyfriend or a punter or what but some guy was like threatening her. I went come on babes, I'll go with ya. I wanted to see whose flat it was anyway cos there was a housebound tenant in there, I'd never seen 'im before, and she used to go and do his shopping...

Voice of prejudice

As well as directly having experienced racism and prejudice himself, David also expressed racist, xenophobic and prejudicial views towards groups he had had difficult encounters with, including women and non-British people, but in-particular towards Muslims.

"cos there's that old joke know what I mean, every corner shop know what I mean, have four generations in one room – it was true. Look at them now, look at them now. They're dangerous mate. They wanna dress like me, they wanna talk like me. I can't talk to their missus though they'd fucking chop your head off"

Voice of being trapped in oppressive conditions and systems

This voice represented David feeling that food-poverty, fuel-poverty, the criminal justice system and the benefits system all came together to form an inescapable cycle.

"I got out of prison and I was facing a mountain of debts. Even though my benefits had kicked in I've gotta pay all these people back the money that I owe. I've only just managed…water rates 'fucks sake. That was inclusive in your rent at one…now you've gotta do it separately (inaudible) £450, 'I was in the nick', 'oh well could you provide evidence before we reassess. Council tax the same thing. They should have known where I was. That's what they put me through. I went to the job centre, they fucked me off, they said this is for those to seek employment, not to get your benefits. I nearly punched his lights out. But, they sent me to the housing to try and get hold of pips and stuff. They said, oh, there's a no phone policy now. I said 'it's a Freephone number'. They said no you've gotta go outside to use the phone. How do you work that out?"

Voice of aggressive masculinity

David sometimes presented himself as aggressive, physically strong and stoical, qualities which might be associated with a traditional view of masculinity.

"He was like asking me questions, and two questions later he'd be…for example it's be, do you use any drugs, or medication, or an inhaler? I said yeah, medication, I thought (shouts and bangs fist) you've just fucking asked that question."

Voice of Vulnerability

As a counterpoint to his feelings of aggressive masculinity, this voice represented the many ways in which David showed his vulnerability, including stories of how he was

physically beaten and rejected by his father, his physical and mental health difficulties, the fear he felt in prison and his worries about death.

"I feel like I'm on death's door…I look in the mirror and I think 'I can see what they're saying you know"

Voice of the embodied effects of poverty

This voice reflected the harrowing reality facing people stuck in food and fuel poverty. The lack of access to sufficient and safe food, as well as the inability to afford gas and electricity, had an enormous impact on his physical and mental wellbeing. The difficulties of hunger, as well as the desperation of the situation, also led David to turn to alcohol as a way of suppressing his appetite and distancing himself psychologically from his conditions, which in turn had a further negative impact on his bodily health.

"…and I have to sleep at my premises every night. Now, no gas, no electricity, no money, and it's in October, ok? So by four o'clock, I couldn't see what I was doing. I had to get under the quilt and just, fuck about, cos I couldn't sleep, I was too cold and hungry. I couldn't go out cos I'd get nicked straight away. It's not nice is it?"

"I mentioned bread didn't I? I had this out of date bread at the soup kitchen. Don't get me wrong, I had nothing else to eat so I soaked gravy granules in bread yeah, just to fill the hole. It all came up, literally…I thought, something's really wrong here man"

Voice of disconnection from charitable support

This voice was representative of David's sceptical attitude towards charities in general, and specifically his feelings around food charities. David felt like foodbanks

did not provide adequate support, that the people who volunteered in them had suspect motives and did not understand him, and also felt shame and embarrassment at using foodbanks. He also voiced his mistrust of other foodbank users, feeling that some of them were not deserving of support.

"What I have noticed, these people, who are serving, all squeaky clean, they've got a silver spoon in their fucking mouths. It's just a way of easing their conscience. Not one of them has been a rough sleeper, not one of them. It's like giving something back to ease their conscience. And when they try to interact with you, they're just on a different planet mate"

Voice of gratefulness for support

As a counterpoint to this voice, David also acknowledged the importance of the support and help he received from foodbanks and soup kitchens, although this was a relatively weak voice in comparison to the one expressing his distrust. He also identified foodbanks and soup kitchens as places where he could socialise with others who had been oppressed.

"the soup kitchen is a way for me personally to associate with people like minded, who are fucked off by the system. Whether they're…base that's it, you know what I mean?"

Voice of being failed by societal systems

In one of the strongest voices of reproduction, David felt he had been failed by a large number of societal systems in various ways. He felt let down by the education system, the prison and probation services, the welfare system, the NHS and the government as a whole. The stories represented in this voice spanned his practical experiences, but also his feelings of abandonment, disappointment and anger.

"I had nothing else my friend. Nothing else that this country had to offer me. It's not that I didn't deserve it, it's just that they couldn't be bothered to get their arse into gear. Know what I mean?"

16.4 Participant three - analysis

The fragmented nature of David's narrative was suggestive of someone who was struggling to fit all of the pieces of his life together, both in the practical sense, having recently been released from prison, and psychologically. His distancing of himself from his past through his use of language, as reflected in the I Poem, might have reflected his uncertainty about his current position and identity. It was notable that David was the hardest participant to identify voices of resistance for, and the ways in which he was able to resist social inequalities seemed relatively ineffective. His negative experiences of the systems supposedly in place to support him only added to the sense of him as being an isolated individual. The sense of fragmentation in his life could in itself be said to be a mechanism by which power inequalities were maintained, as he did not have a coherent enough sense of self to be able to find ways to resist his living-conditions. Although his means of resistance were limited, through his narrative it is easy to see some of the ways in which power-structures are reproduced.

David was the only participant who discussed race as well as class, and his Black identity was clearly a focal point for him in making sense of the oppression he had suffered. His vocal discrimination towards other cultural groups, as well as his occasionally aggressively masculine response to his struggles could both be seen as unsuccessful strategies of resisting this oppression. This is in line with the findings of Myrie and Gannon (2013) who discuss the concept of hegemonic masculinity, linked

to Gramsci's (1971/1999) theory of cultural hegemony, which explains how cultural discourse and practice reinforces men's dominant position in society through the subjugation of feminine or 'less masculine' ways of being. They found that Black British men were positioned in terms of hegemonic-masculinity and hyper-masculinity, using stoicism and physical toughness as 'armour' in the battle against their socially disadvantaged position. This also had the effect of making them feel like they should be able to 'handle' their situation and made them less likely to reach out for support. In the context of the current study, David's narratives also positioned him in aggressive opposition to other racial, cultural and gender groups. In this way, narratives of hegemonic masculinity turn disadvantaged groups against each other and prevent them from joining resources in the fight against oppression enacted through government policy. The notion that another group competing for the same resources is to blame serves to deflect attention away from the policies which are the real cause of the inequality. Conversely, when he was able to show vulnerability, although personally difficult for David, this allowed him to resist the masculine role expected of him by society.

Although it is tempting to focus solely on the disadvantages David had had to overcome in his life, it is also important to remain aware of the cultural knowledge and capital which saturated his stories. As outlined by Yosso (2006), critical race theory highlights how it is often the case that socially marginalised groups are framed entirely in negative terms of disadvantage which detracts from their strengths and in turn the struggle towards social and racial justice. David was someone who expressed an understanding of the historical, political and social conditions which led to entrenched discrimination against black people in British society, and therefore brings unique cultural knowledge to the understanding of power reproduction and resistance

in current British society. The systemic inequalities and racial discrimination he has experienced serve as ways of ensuring his disadvantaged place in society is maintained and make it difficult to mount forms of meaningful resistance.

David's mistrust of charities suggested another mechanism through which the government could maintain the power inequalities in society. By ensuring that charities provide services which the government should be responsible, and support for people who the state have failed to protect, the anger for the failure to provide an adequate resource is directed towards the charities and kept away from the government. The failure to help David by every societal institution he came into contact with led him to be increasingly isolated from society, and with few outlets for resistance.

17. Participant four results

17.1 Participant four - listening for plot

Sarah was a woman who was in her early 40s and identified as having been working class for her whole life. She grew up on a housing estate in East London, and did not know her dad. Her and her half-brother and sister were raised by her mum, although she had two step-fathers at different times. Her mum didn't work and the family were dependent on benefits for her entire childhood. She described food as being a continual problem up until she was about eleven-years-old, and often there was very little or nothing to eat in the house. This was exacerbated by one of her step-fathers, who did not support the family financially and would spend all of the money at the pub and then go to his family's house to eat leaving Sarah and her family to go hungry. Her mother as described by Sarah came across as caring but desperate at times, with one particularly heart-breaking story of some friends dropping off

selection boxes of chocolate for the children one Christmas, only for their mum to tear them open and eat the contents when the children were out because she was so desperately hungry. Sarah described herself as a precocious child who loved to read but whose opportunities were limited by poverty.

From the age of eleven the situation around food improved and there was consistently food in the house. However, the periods of poverty in her childhood led to attitudes towards food and other resources that have continued through her adult life. She said that despite periods of unemployment there had always been food in the house for her and her daughter, and that she has a tendency to hoard all kinds of essential resources out of panic that they might run out. The sense of panic and feeling the necessity to hoard was also linked to her relying on disability benefits for survival, and the fear they may be taken away. She had previously worked in a bank but had what she described as a "breakdown" due to pressure from customers and her bosses during the 2007 financial crash.

In recent years Sarah said she had become more actively involved in politics. This was in contrast to her youth when, although she was politically aware, she did not make the link between government policy and her own family's poverty. She encouraged her daughter to enter local politics and at the time of the interview was actively involved in helping with Labour's general election campaign. In her adult life she has felt disconnected from the area she lives in and does not feel it has the same sense of community as the east end of London where she grew up. She said she felt like people were not willing to admit that they were in trouble and ask for help, and wanted to blame all of their problems on immigrants, which left her very frustrated. She has suffered the physical and social effects of disability due to ill health, having been abused in the street on numerous occasions, leaving her

vulnerable and fearful of going out in case she draws attention to herself. It was clear that much of Sarah's hope and energy was drawn from her political engagement and beliefs, particularly around socialism and the hope of a more equal society, but there was also sadness and desperation at the current political climate.

17.1.1 Participant four - listener's response

Listening to Sarah's story, it was clear she was somebody who vividly carried the memories of her early life in poverty with her, and how much those years continued to impact on the decisions she made today. I was struck by how much frustration she felt with her fellow citizens and how much nostalgia she had for the community she grew up in, despite the poverty she experienced. Throughout the interview she often struck me as maintaining a stoical attitude, often laughing when describing times of hardship or difficulty. This seemed tied to her pride in her working class roots and the idea that people just 'got on with it'. However, in some of the most emotionally salient sections of the interview, there were also contradictions to this stoicism in the shame and anxiety she expressed. On a personal level, I was aware that I shared many of the political sentiments which Sarah discussed, and as a consequence found her passionate engagement in politics inspiring.

17.2 Participant four - listening for the 'I'

Parts of Sarah's I Poem suggested she was someone who was uncertain of herself and to what extent she should engage with the world. The following section is full of imagery to indicate this, including that of hiding and then of going too far.

I'm gonna hide
I might not get
I think you don't think about it
I think

127

I've, I've worked

I have a child

I throw it away

I can't bear

I've really gone too far

I mean

I mean

I suppose

I think it really depended

I find

do you know what I mean?

During sections of her interview, Sarah used the phrase 'I mean' frequently at the beginning of sentences. This seemed to suggest she had a need to qualify to the listener what she was about to say, and maybe to reaffirm for herself what she was trying to communicate.

I mean, I think
I've spoken
I do live
I mean
where I'm from
I mean
I mean, it's like
I think so, yeah
I'm pretty sure
Yeah, I mean everybody
I mean it was

Another interesting section of Sarah's I poem suggested a link between her need to hoard physical objects and her need to hold on to memories. This links with aspects

of her plot where her identity was tied up in her early years. She is not just hoarding so she has resources in the event of unforeseen circumstances, but also because it reminds her of where she came from and who she is.

I hoard
I remember
I've been needing
I mean, I've got
I got
I bought it
I wouldn't have anything
I would have something
I can remember

17.3 Participant four - listening for contrapuntal voices

17.3.1 Table 4: Contrapuntal voices of Reproduction and Resistance – Participant 4

Voices of Reproduction	Voices of Resistance
Voice of threat to survival	Voice of survival through inner resources
Voice of Embarrassment/shame in poverty	Voice of pride in working class identity
Voice of reduced opportunities	
Voice of feeling oppressed by an individualist / consumerist society	Voice of strength in community
Voice of the desperate child	Voice of the protective adult
Voice of bodily stress	
Voice of being persecuted by the state	Voice of belief in the values of the welfare state
	Voice of power through political awareness and action
Voice of being oppressed by the media	Voice of finding affirmation in the media
	Voice of strength in having your story heard

Voice of threat to survival

This voice incorporated the unstable access to food and resources from Sarah's youth, but also the continual threat of having benefits removed in the current welfare system, and the continuing psychological impact of both of these.

"And you never feel secure, ever. And food hoarding is part of that, you think well...like I'm waiting for an assessment now...you think well if they stop my benefits then at least we've got tins in the cupboard, that sort of thing"

Voice of survival through inner resources

Sarah's survival in the face of these threats depended on her being able to find smart ways to resist and survive the impacts of poverty, and in developing an attitude towards food and money that meant she would always feel prepared for the worst circumstances.

"I'm not actually certain it's a bad lesson. It certainly jolted me into understanding how to prioritise my budget. So it teaches you how to be austere with yourself, it teaches you what's cheap, and things like that, so it's not an entirely bad lesson"

Voice of embarrassment / shame in poverty

This voice represented Sarah's experience throughout her life of feeling she had to hide her poverty from others for fear of being targeted and ridiculed, an attitude she felt she saw mirrored in her community today. This voice also incorporated episodes from Sarah's life where she felt like she had betrayed her working-class roots.

"if somebody else had something you'd go 'oh, can I come round to yours for tea', and you know, you wouldn't say why, you know, it was that kind of thing. And you'd feel embarrassed that you had to do that"

Voice of pride in working class identity

The voice of embarrassment and shame was resisted with a voice of pride in her roots and upbringing. Sarah spoke about the relationship between food and fuel poverty and the working-class community she grew up in, as well as offering anecdotes which contradicted those in which she felt she had to hide her poverty.

"I mean everybody was dirt poor but we all were, and it, although you were embarrassed there really wasn't that much shame in it"

Voice of reduced opportunities

This voice spoke to the way in which Sarah felt the working-class had been abandoned by the rest of society and how an increasingly unequal society meant reduced opportunities for people from her background. This contrasted to the era in which her mother had grown up when there were more opportunities for working-class people.

"Yeah, I mean before I was born she worked in a job but she didn't like it because the bus stopped in the wrong place, so she literally gave it up and then went to another job the next day. And, that sounds laughable to me, but it was a possibility in sort of the late 70's, early 80's"

Voice of feeling oppressed by an individualist / consumerist society

This voice represented Sarah's experience of living in a world where she felt individuals were out for themselves. There was a sense that she was trying to understand where this attitude came from but also that it was a negative reflection on the current times. She felt this represented a change from the society she grew up in and felt it reflected a lack of empathy in society for those who were poorest. She also

linked it specifically to the actions of politicians and felt it was a deliberate tactic to keep people in their place.

"it's an unequal society, but I think successive governments have made all people poorer. But the only way to stop, because there are more people with not so much money, the only way to keep them in place is to, keep the sort of people who are in the middle saying 'at least I'm not those people', so keep them afraid of being as poor as the poorest, or in some way to blame the poorest. If they're trying to keep their head above water they're likely to do anything"

Voice of strength in community

In response to the two previous voices, Sarah did find some hope in collectivist action. Although she did not receive any support from those in power or in more fortunate positions in society, Sarah found strength in the solidarity of giving and receiving support from those in the community. It is worth noting that this voice was solely located in events from the past, suggesting that this sense of community had been lost to Sarah in practical terms, although she still held on to it psychologically.

"Yeah, I mean everybody, it was a housing estate though, if anything happened everybody was in each other's houses. If one person's electric went out, one person's had the phone cut off, you would always go 'oh the phone's been cut off', you never really felt like you had to lie. I mean it was, it was just ok, yeah we know, we understand that happens"

Voice of the desperate child

Although relating to the poverty she experienced before the age of eleven, Sarah seemed to carry with her a voice of a child in desperation, which remained emotionally salient for her to this day.

"But you shouldn't have to be there, that's the thing that kills me, it's that you have to be there. No-one should have to do that"

Voice of the protective adult

In response to the desperate child, Sarah also carried a protective voice, partially that of her mother but also one which she had developed in relation to others.

"I don't think they choose to be on benefits and their children certainly don't choose to. And it's, it's the children that always suffer. And there are people who say 'well, they shouldn't have children if they can't afford them' but again that isn't the children's choice. And they are the ones that are suffering"

Voice of bodily stress

This voice represented Sarah's embodied experiences of hunger, which she still held strong memories of, as well as her difficulties later in her life with disability and weight gain. It had no clear contrapuntal voice in response, perhaps suggesting this was one of the areas she found most difficult to deal with.

"I think people always think it's always down to you, I don't think people think it's much of a priority. And I don't think you do unless you've felt actually properly hungry"

"I: Yeah. Do you remember the experience of being hungry when you were younger.

P: Yeah yeah, I do, I remember it really well. It kind of sticks with you, you can't think about anything else really"

Voice of being persecuted by the state

This voice represented Sarah's feeling of persecution by the welfare system, who she did not just feel were neglectful but who made it actively difficult and stressful to be believed. She also felt that the attitude of the benefits agencies was reflected in and reflective of recent societal attitudes to people on benefits.

"There's good poor person and bad poor person. Bad poor people are the ones that go down the pub and they have flatscreen TV's. No one thinks about the thing that you probably couldn't get another TV if you tried (laughs), they're all flat-screen now. Those are the bad poor people. Now the good poor people, well they're the ones that are really starving, but don't go out and bother anyone with it"

Voice of belief in the values of the welfare state

As well as the voices discussed earlier reflecting Sarah's belief in collectivism and community, she also strongly expressed her belief in the core values of the welfare state and what this represented. However, she clearly felt this was no longer a majority view in society and that the original purpose of the welfare state was being eroded.

"and she says well 'it's not the same, I've paid into my pension pot, I've paid in', and they sort of have this idea that there's this little pot with their name on it, that they've paid in and they can take out. They don't understand that they've paid in to pay for everything that was going on at the time, for roads and buildings and infrastructure, and now they're getting benefits, but it's not from their little pension pot"

Voice of power through political awareness and action

This voice represented Sarah's awareness of the political decisions made by the government impacting on her daily conditions as well as her direct political engagement which seemed to give her some sense of control and purpose, as well as hope that things could improve with a different government in power.

"I have been campaigning myself this election. Well not campaigning because you know, obviously I'm disabled. But I've been folding the leaflets and making the, you know doing the jam making…I think even this, god forbid if Labour doesn't get in, I think at least you can say you did something"

Voice of being oppressed by the media

Sarah felt that parts of the entertainment and news media were complicit in the dehumanisation of disabled people and people on benefits, and was also sceptical of the news media's objectivity, having particular concerns that they echoed the agenda of the current government. There was also a worry that people repeated the narratives they heard in the media, both in person and on social media, and that this actively led to the abuse of disabled people, something Sarah had experienced herself.

"I do think the media's to blame for a lot of it really… I think basically it's the demonization of, erm, various groups of people"

Voice of being affirmed by the media

In contrast to negative representations in the media, Sarah also expressed a voice which felt that parts of the media represented her experience and had a positive effect on societal narratives surrounding foodbanks and benefits.

"we went to see I, Daniel Blake, and my daughter and I were actually, we were in tears at the cinema, And everyone was looking at us and I was thinking 'did you not see what I saw?', because it felt to me, it felt very real"

Voice of strength in having your story heard

This voice reflected Sarah's belief in the power of narrative, both in the importance of being listened to and the hope that sharing her story might help to humanise the problems she has encountered for others.

"Well I don't know how much has been helpful but these are my experiences and it's not something you go around telling people a great deal, but I'd like to think that somebody knew what had happened"

17.4 Participant four - analysis

Sarah's narrative differed from the other participants in that she was no longer experiencing food-insecurity but was reflecting on her experiences of it from childhood and the impact it had had on her life since then. It was clear that these experiences were not just abstract memories but that she held onto them as embodied reminders of her experience that influenced how she viewed the word and interacted with it. Her remembered experiences of the all-encompassing bodily state of hunger and the difficulties of the researcher in identifying a voice to act as a counter-point to this suggest that for Sarah, the embodied effects of poverty were the hardest to resist. In terms of the reproduction of power imbalances, it could be argued that by putting people in conditions which threaten their survival on the most basic level, in this case that caused hunger to dominate all other aspects of thinking, the ruling classes make it extremely difficult for the oppressed in society to offer any form of resistance to existing power structures.

In terms of Hagan and Smail's (1997) model of distal, proximal and personal power, it was interesting that Sarah gave a lot of thought to the distal influences on her proximal and personal circumstances. She framed much of her narrative in terms of wealth and class, and felt she was aware of the mechanisms by which the ruling class kept people in the position they wanted them to be in. Although she felt relatively powerless in doing anything about this. She did find some hope however in contributing directly to her favoured political party and trying to make change through democratic means. For Sarah, her attitudes towards food-insecurity and poverty more generally were closely tied to her working-class background. On a personal level, shame had been a factor in maintaining the silence of her and others living in poverty, a silence which would stymie any attempts to find ways of fighting those living conditions. This could be seen as an example of what Freire (1970/2005) called the "culture of silence of the dispossessed" (p. 30). In Freire's description this silence results from social, economic and political domination, but it is interesting to consider shame as the mechanism through which this silence in ensured at the personal level. However, there was also a sense that for Sarah this shame was alleviated within working-class communities, and that an attitude of 'all being in the same boat' allowed an honesty about people's struggles. Thus the silence could be resisted, although still confined within the walls of her community. It was this honesty which Sarah felt was missing from her current community and modern society in general, its absence making it hard to form a collective response to conditions imposed by the government.

Sarah's battles with the welfare system tapped into the narrative of the deserving vs the undeserving poor, and how she felt this was encouraged by the media, albeit with other media outlets offering a counter-narrative. Although she clearly felt the

demonization of people on benefits was a political tool used to maintain power-divisions in society, she had also struggled with how her social and economic conditions positioned her to be hostile both to other working-class people and towards those in power. She now chastises herself for how she once ridiculed other working-class people. This could also be seen as reflecting Sarah's loss of community, and the societal shift from a collective attitude to an individualistic one. The promotion of narratives by politicians and the media which seek to promote individualism and position people to foster hostility towards those in need of support creates division. This division then acts as a barrier to collective action to improve conditions.

Finally, it was worth noting that Sarah spoke about herself in position to the research, highlighting the important role that simply having your story listened to can play for people. In line with her sentiments about the importance of having a voice in a shared community, she also hoped that her story might act as some form of support to others in similar situations to hers.

Discussion

18. Overview of findings

The findings from each individual participant gave insight into the narratives surrounding the causes of their distress. All four participants named the ways in which they felt they had been oppressed, and their narratives gave indications of how they had attempted to resist this oppression. A deliberate decision was taken by the researcher not to conduct a formal of analysis of how each individual's results fit with each other. This was with the intention that their narratives could be retained, as much

as possible, as those of whole people in the context of their environments. However, there were clear overlaps in how people experienced systems of power, although their attempts to offer resistance were more unique to the person and the resources available to them. Each research question will now be addressed in relation to the narratives of participants.

19. Research Question One: What is the psychological impact of food-insecurity on individuals?

All participants spoke about their distress in the context of the social and systemic conditions which created it, however within this there were clear indicators of the individual psychological impact of these conditions. It was not always possible to delineate whether or not the psychological states described by the participants were exclusively as a result of food-insecurity, but taken as part of the complicated interaction between social and individual factors, it was clear it had some impact on their emotional states, psychological wellbeing, and individual ability to cope.

The combined pressures of life led some participants to view themselves as worthless. For participant one in the 'voice of the worthless self', this seemed to describe both how they felt they were viewed in the eyes of society and an internalised state. This sense of worthlessness was also linked to intense enough distress that the participant felt the need to commit suicide. For another participant ('voice of worthlessness in the face of shaming and punitive systems', participant two), the worthlessness was explicitly linked to how they felt they were viewed and treated by government policy and systems which she felt were set up to actively shame her. Shame and embarrassment were also overtly named as an emotional reaction to food-insecurity by two other participants. In the 'voice of disconnection from charitable support',

participant three named these emotions as linked to using food banks, and in the 'voice of embarrassment / shame in poverty', participant four labelled these emotions as the driving force behind having to hide her food-poverty and other types of poverty from the rest of her community. Feelings of psychological isolation from those around them were also present in the accounts of other participants. For example, in the 'voice of separation and isolation', participant one discussed how her food-insecurity and other experiences of poverty and inequality led her to physically and psychologically separate from friends and acquaintances because she could not share her experiences and felt the need to conform to the expectations of those not living in poverty.

These were the individual psychological states described most overtly in the data, however they undoubtedly represent a small fraction of the emotional, cognitive and behavioural responses to food-insecurity as set within the wider complexity of participants' lives.

20. Research Question Two: How does food-insecurity fit into the broader context of people's experiences of disadvantage and poverty?

The causes of food-insecurity described by the participants were varied, although many of the reasons were in line with the research of Garthwaite et al. (2016). The main reason discussed by all participants was low-income resulting from difficulties in accessing work, mainly due to disability and physical and mental health problems making employment prohibitive. Participants also spoke about inadequacies in the benefit system caused by difficulties in accessing benefits, having benefit access delayed on being released from prison, complex bureaucracy, and the amount of benefits received being inadequate to live on.

Something that was clear from each participant's results was how inseparable food-insecurity was from the other elements of their lives. Their experiences reflected all four of Loopstra et al.'s (2016) stages of food-insecurity in their worries about being able to obtain food, compromising on quality, reducing quantities eaten and experiencing hunger. However, even when asked questions directly about food-insecurity, no-one talked about it as a problem in isolation. For various participants, it was linked to a series of environmental and individual factors including: childhood neglect and poor education around life-skills ('voice of abandonment/being left to fend for self' – participant one); feeling alienated and being isolated ('voice of feeling oppressed by an individualist / consumerist society' – participant four); insecure housing ('voice of powerlessness in face of dehumanising systems' – participant two); disability and physical and mental-health problems ('voice of bodily stress' – participant four); and fuel poverty ('voice of the embodied effects of poverty' – participant three), among other issues. These elements were all interlinked in the narratives, and separating them out from each other would have oversimplified them and devalued each person's experience. This suggests that the division of food-insecurity from the other socio-economic conditions and personal difficulties inherent in previous research in this area does not accurately reflect the way people conceptualise their problems.

An explanation for people's conditions that did not fit with the data was the narrative of people who receive benefits being 'work-resistant' or 'unwilling' (see: Perkins 2016; Garthwaite, 2011). All of the participants in the study shared stories of fighting for survival and using every resource at their disposal to improve their conditions. What the participants' narratives did reflect was an awareness of the structural and social conditions which had contributed to their food-insecurity specifically and

impoverished conditions more generally. These factors will be discussed in more detail below.

21. Research Question Three: How do people's experiences reflect the reproduction of structural power imbalances in society?

All of the narratives came from people who were from poorer socio-economic backgrounds, and all featured examples of how the state apparatus functioned to repress them and maintain their place in the social order.

21.1 The shifting role of the welfare state

The voices of some of the participants spoke to feeling let down or persecuted by societal institutions, for example 'voice of powerlessness in face of dehumanising systems' (participant two) and 'voice of being persecuted by the state' (participant four). These narratives seem to represent an inversion of the welfare state, from a safety-net designed to support people to a tool used to threaten punishment for non-conformity, either through making the process so unappealing that people don't bother to request help or through making the system so threatening as to make people live in constant fear and insecurity. For participant four, who had not been food-insecure for a long time, the psychological threat of food-insecurity was a daily challenge due partially to the ever-present possibility of losing her benefits, and partly to the embodied memory of hunger from childhood. All participants described, for at least part of their lives, being unable to work due to disability or physical or mental health problems, and all had been made to feel worthless or had felt they had been shamed or persecuted by the welfare system. This seems reflective of the developing state attitude that welfare should be 'workfare', and suggests that even within the misguided confines of the 'deserving vs undeserving poor' discourse, people with

disabilities may no longer be seen to be deserving. This changing narrative might reflect how people perceive that the modern welfare state, in the services of the ruling neoliberal ideology, no longer serves to support people or act as a social safety net, but rather to reinstitute the existing social order by making it impossible for the less privileged classes to escape their social and economic conditions. By forcing people to continually fight to assert their rights to benefits, as evidenced through suitability to work interviews and volunteer programmes, and by offering inadequate support to those who do qualify, it could be argued that the government is able to keep people in a position where they can only be concerned about their survival.

21.2 The abdication of state responsibility

Several voices identified in the analysis spoke to how the state has entrenched unequal power by abandoning those in need through various mechanisms. All of the participants felt like they had been left to fend for themselves by society generally and by the governments specifically, for example in the 'voice of being failed by society' (participant one) and the 'voice of distance between the ruling class and ordinary people' (participant three). This demonstrates one of the ways in which the individualist neoliberal narratives are reproduced by governments in power, particularly that of individuals being responsible for their own place in the societal structure as described by Monbiot (2017).

This tied in with the medicalisation of the problems of poverty. All of the participants labelled their distress in the medical language of mental-health, reflecting the current ubiquity of this explanation of wellbeing in society. On the whole however, these were discussed as being connected to their poverty and environmental and social conditions, rather than being a separate entity of distress. One voice in particular

represented this in the 'voice of the medicalisation of wellness' (participant one), and showed how representing distress in this way caused alienation and frustration to the person seeking help. It was also a demonstration of how mainstream psychiatric and psychological narratives allow those in government to maintain a focus on the individual, meaning they don't have to acknowledge or act on the structural and social conditions which lead to the individual experiencing distress. From this standpoint, not only is the focus on the mental health problems of food-insecure people misguided in its proposed points of intervention, but it also acts as an institutional form of control over them. The panoptic gaze described by Foucault (1991) is constituted through the normalising lenses of social expectation and individualised medical psychiatry/psychology. This reinforces the narrative that those who are food-insecure or living in poverty should be labelled as 'abnormal' or 'other' and therefore offers justification for looking the other way for the rest of society who are, by the fortune of their relative power, able to set the terms of what constitutes being 'normal'. The combination of being 'poor' and suffering with a 'mental health' problem, backed up 'scientifically' by psychological research, adds support to the neoliberally informed assertions by some politicians that the people who find themselves in these positions do so by some deficiency or weakness of character or mind.

A final way in which the narratives reflected the state's perceived abdication of responsibility was through voices which were critical of the role of charities. Part of participant two's 'voice of being let down by systems of supposed support' included a criticism that charities should not be providing support which should be provided by the state. This reflects Riches' (2002) argument that foodbanks in Canada, where they have existed since 1991, have become a second tier of the Canadian welfare system

as social workers and other frontline staff now routinely refer people to foodbanks. This is the same situation which now exists in the UK (Garthwaite, 2016). By co-opting charities into playing this role, governments can receive credit for the charities' good deeds whilst avoiding criticism if the services provided are not satisfactory, as seen in participant three's 'voice of disconnection from charitable support'. Governments have further sought control over charities by implementing legislation which prevents from speaking out about the impact of austerity measures (Asthana, 2017). By doing so they have co-opted them into the establishment power structure and have been able to shut down their potentially influential voice of resistance on behalf of the disempowered people who use their services.

21.3 Use of repressive state apparatus

The repressive state apparatus refers to the use by those in power of the institutions under their control to silence resistance in order to maintain the existing social order (Althusser, 1971/2014). One of the clearest ways this was reflected in participants' narratives was through government controlled sites, such as jobcentre plus, enacting punitive policy by keeping those who receive benefit in a continued state of vigilance and precariousness through the use of sanctions and enforced activity, as discussed above. The knock-on effect of this was food poverty, fuel poverty and poor-quality housing, as reflected in the 'Voice of negative impact of food-insecurity on wellbeing' (participant one), the 'voice of instability as a threat to existence' (participant two) and the 'voice of the embodied effects of poverty' (participant three). The embodied existential threat brought about by these conditions could be said to represent a subtly instituted form of oppressive neglect by the state, in the case of participant one leading her to a suicide attempt, and in the case of participant three to endangering his health through eating mouldy food. In contrast to benefit sanctions

146

helping people back to work, the chronic health problems and embodied effects of poverty faced by participants meant that reduction in their benefits would only serve to make their lives harder, whilst they had no recourse to work to improve their conditions. This is in line with the view that welfare cuts are indeed a systematic violation of the rights of disabled people (Butler, 2017; United Nations, 2016)

21.4 Use of ideological state apparatus

The ideological state apparatus refers to the way in which the dominant cultural practices and beliefs of the most powerful groups in society are instituted and maintained through the practices of institutions not directly under state control (Althusser, 1971/2014). Whilst this has previously been theorised primarily in relation to religious and educational institutions, the main manifestation of it in the present study was in reflections of the practices of the media. This was partly through the media's role in promoting unhealthy choices of food on behalf of corporations, which in 'voice of corporations' and the media's influence on health' (participant one) contributed to the poor bodily health of participant one, making it difficult for her to maintain her psychological health and in turn to function as a healthy person in the world. For participant two, the 'voice of media and capitalism removing choice' reflected concerns about the power of the news media being controlled and wielded by 'millionaires' who were disconnected from the lives of ordinary citizens. Jones (2015) discusses the 'revolving door' positions of government ministers, corporate executives and media journalists and executives. In this context, it is easy to see how these concerns may reflect how the media does the work of the state in maintaining the status quo. Finally, the 'voice of being oppressed by the media' (participant four) represented the experience of seeing negative stereotypes perpetuated by the news, exploitative documentary programmes and fictional representations of poverty.

Stories told in these mediums might function to reinforce negative cultural stereotypes about people who claimed benefits, ingraining narratives such as 'strivers vs skivers' and 'the undeserving poor'. From the voices represented in the present research, this seems to have the effect of shaming those having to claim benefits, which in turn silences them and impacts on their ability to resist these narratives. This shows how the cultural reproduction of power structures oppresses individuals through impacting on their individual psychological states.

A further example of this was in the effects of hegemonic masculinity on David, as discussed in section 15.4. David's experiences of structural and personal discrimination, in the absence of being able to make sense of them through a collective voice, seemed to result in a struggle to find his identity. As Monbiot (2017) notes, as neoliberalism has eaten away at state provision and community, people have been left feeling isolated and without a sense of belonging. For David this resulted in him taking up narratives of discrimination in relation to people from other cultures, as shown in the 'voice of prejudice' (participant three). These narratives have been strengthened in the UK in recent years, as concerns around pressure for resources resulting from cuts to the state have been conflated with debates around immigration through government fuelled rhetoric (see Swinton, 2013; Ross, 2016), despite evidence refuting these claims (see Tetlow, 2016). David's experiences isolated him as an individual, which in turn meant that he directed the blame and anger for his circumstances towards other groups without power in society. This culture of division is one of the ways in which the ruling class prevent unified resistance to their hegemony.

22. Research Question Four: What resources are available to food-insecure people to resist the structural forces acting upon them?

Viewing the results through Hagan and Smail's (1997) model of power, the methods of reproduction represented above reflect the mainly distal and proximal influences of those in power and the institutions and practices through which they maintain control of societal and cultural norms to maintain that power. Through the interviews conducted in the present research, many forms of resistance were identified.

22.1 Class consciousness

As discussed in the introduction, it seems like the concept of class-consciousness may be redundant as a form of resistance, given the many strata of modern social class and people's limited identification with even belonging to a class (Savage, 2015). What arose in the results of the present research however was a more complex picture. For three participants, it formed an important bedrock of some of their voices of resistance. In the 'voice of political defiance' and the 'voice of creative resistance', participant two found she was able to take her anger at injustices she had suffered because of political decision making and channel this into creative acts of resistance. The anger in itself as expressed through her self-defined 'radical' statements about Conservative politicians also seemed to serve some personal protective function for her. Participant three's 'voice of freedom in poverty' represented his anger at those in power but also his response in feeling unconstrained by the cultural norms of society. In this sense his non-conformist individualism served as a form of resistance. Participant four's 'voice of pride in working class identity' represented the strength she felt from the working-class community when she was growing up, and although this was based on memories of childhood, it was still important to her current

conception of her individual identity. In terms of class-consciousness, there was little evidence that identifying as being working-class had unified the participants with other members of the working-class towards forms of collective resistance. However, at the individual level it seemed to contribute to a sense of cultural identity from which other forms of resistance could be built.

22.2 Collective and political resistance

In the absence of a movement towards class-consciousness, other forms of collective resistance were reflected in the voices of all participants. In participant one's 'voice of supporting others /collective responsibility' and 'voice of relying on others', she responded to her feelings of abandonment and isolation through engaging in activities which helped others and in turn, was eventually able to accept some help from others. Participant two's 'voice of creative resistance' reflected how she had joined with a disability action group to amplify her voice to a wider audience, and the 'voice of feminist resistance' showed how identifying with the feminist movement, even in abstract terms, allowed her narrative to connect with a larger movement than herself and use this collective identity to inform her actions. Although participant three remained isolated, his 'voice of identity through communities' still reflected a positive psychological connection to wider groups of people which gave him some sense of pride. Finally, participant four's 'voice of strength in community' showed that she still held onto a psychological ideal of collective resistance, even if she did not see this currently implemented in her community. This shows that whilst it can certainly be argued that the pervasive nature of neoliberal ideology has shifted societal narratives to more individualistic terms (see Monbiot, 2017), stories of collective resistance could still be found in the accounts of the participants of this study.

150

22.3 Individual and psychological resistance

Alongside the collective forms of resistance outlined above, several individual forms of resistance were identified. Although participant one had been let down by structures supposed to help her, her 'voice of independence/individual strength' allowed her to survive outside of and in defiance of state systems of support. Participant two's 'voice of personal victories' represented the small acts of resistance she performed in day to day life, some of which were external acts of rebellion against the oppressive practices she encountered, and some were internal thoughts about her oppressors which gave her a sense of satisfaction. Participant four's 'voice of survival through internal resources' allowed her to develop strategies which helped to shield her from having to experience the same levels of hunger and struggle again.

These results raise the question of difference between internal or psychological acts of resistance and acts in the world or on the person's environment. Whilst the systemic pressures of poverty operate at the distal, proximal and personal levels, people's individual resistance seems to take place either internally or in acts which have a small effect on their immediate environment. Although Hagan and Smail (1997) warn against psychologists slipping into conflating feelings of power with actual power to act on the environment, the results of this research suggest that for the participants feeling *as if* they were offering meaningful resistance, or even fantasising about doing so, offered them an important psychological defence against their material conditions. Put differently, in the absence of any power to actually affect the structural influences on their lives, the thought that they might be able to do so was enough to sustain them. The acts of individual resistance identified here were therefore more akin to strategies for psychological survival. It was important for people to feel like a useful being who is in control of their lives, and to be able to

push back against power and inequality in some way, even if this is kept entirely to themselves.

23. Summary of discussion

The above discussion shows how participants' experiences of food-insecurity were inextricable from the other aspects of their lives and environments. The oppression the participants had faced resulted not just from food-insecurity, but also from other factors such as family relationships and inequality. The distress caused by these intertwining life circumstances is likely to have influenced their narratives in complex and inextricable ways. Their narratives also reflected numerous ways in which societal systems of power sought to oppress them, and the saturation of oppression in their voices reflected the continuous need to fight and resist structural power imbalances. Individual and internal acts of resistance were important to people in maintaining their psychological wellbeing, but had little impact beyond their immediate environment. Collective acts of resistance seemed to have a wider reach in impacting on communities and amplifying the voices of the oppressed, but still did not have any impact at distal levels of power or on subverting the existing societal power structures. The implications for the role of psychologists are discussed below.

24. Implications of the research

24.1 Theory implications

By grounding the analysis in the theoretical framework of reproduction and resistance, the present research examined the issue of food-insecurity from a different perspective to prior work in this area. The first theoretical implication is that this provides a useful lens for examining the struggles of people living in poverty. The findings could be seen to support the assertions of the de-medicalising movement (see

Rapley, Moncrieff and Dillon, 2011; Speed, Moncrieff and Rapley, 2014) that treating distress caused by social conditions as individualised medical problems is a reductionist approach which does not represent the experience of the individuals living in those conditions.

One of the questions posed by grounding the study in critical theory is how relevant the concepts of reproduction and resistance are to psychological practice. Althusser's (2014) theories of repressive and ideological state apparatus seem to have good explanatory power for many of the injustices faced by the participants in the study. These concepts also seemed to have particular relevance when examining the actions of current and previous UK governments in their reform of the welfare system.

Interesting theoretical questions were raised in relation to the mechanisms through which power was resisted. The division arose between external resistance of power structures through action and internal resistance through psychological mechanisms. Although this is likely a false dichotomy and the two are interdependent, it raises interesting questions for psychologists in their understanding of distress and resilience.

24.2 Practice implications

The growing problems of food-insecurity, fuel-poverty, and other forms of poverty in the UK mean that these are areas which practitioner psychologists need to remain aware of when considering the sources and maintenance of distress. The finding of this research that people did not delineate their experiences of distress into discrete categories suggests that to do so in a clinical setting would be to miss out on crucial information about a person's wellbeing. The research then, suggests a more holistic approach to distress, but also a more political one, is necessary when working with

service-users who have faced some of these challenges. The act of hearing and framing narratives in political rather than medical terms is, in itself, an act of resistance by psychologists, and may offer an avenue of resistance for clients. Although in the framework of Hagan and Smail's (1997) model it may not be possible to influence the distal level of power, it is important to acknowledge the impact of these forces on the psychology of individuals and communities. The present research demonstrated how people who don't have material resources still find the psychological resources to resist oppression. It could be argued then that one of the roles of the psychologist and other professionals to help to amplify the voices of those they work with. By continuing to name and draw attention to the effects of poverty on wellbeing, psychologists can go some way to breaking the silence and stigma which prevents people from speaking out against their conditions.

Liberation Psychology has been used as a model to address injustice brought about by trauma (Afuape, 2011), gang culture (Clennon, 2016), gender discrimination (Wren, 2016), the asylum system (Clayton and Hughes, 2016) and many other systems of oppression. Afuape (2011) outlines how some liberation and critical psychologists have argued that all forms of counselling and therapy are ineffective due to the focus on the individual at the expense of structural issues. She argues however that rather than being the preserve of radical community psychology, we need to find ways of interweaving ideas of liberation and social justice through all forms of psychology. If liberation is to be used as a model to help those living in food-insecurity and other forms of poverty make sense of their distress and act to relieve it, then the answer to the question of who or what is being resisted needs to be clear. As this research has shown, people already fight these battles on their own terms, although with varying success regarding real-world impact to their environment. Whilst individual and

psychological acts of resistance provide enough resources to survive, the present research indicated that collective acts were where people found it easiest to act. Therefore, for distress founded in socio-economic conditions the role of the psychologist should be to help bring together clients so their collective voices can have more reach and impact. Where service-user groups have already done this, for example the hearing voices network (see hearing voices network, 2016) the role of the psychologist may be to join their voice with the group. As Monbiot (2017) notes, one of the major effects of the societal neoliberal narrative has been to isolate people from each other in individualism and competition. It is only through a sense of belonging and through collective action that people can hope to change the conditions of their existence. A broader implication of the present research is that each person is the expert of their own experience, which implies that genuine service-user involvement in services and the decisions affecting them is crucial for truly therapeutic work. Models of community psychology may offer a way for those in distress to contribute meaningfully to their treatment.

24.3 Implications for future research

One of the notable outcomes of the present research is that although ostensibly about food-insecurity, this topic acted only as an entry-point into the complex narrative worlds of the participants. Future research may wish to take a broader view of poverty as its topic of investigation. It would also be recommended that more research to be conducted in this area with a critical realist epistemology which eschews the conception of mental health problems as realist medical constructs. This will help to counter-balance the vast majority of research in the area of food-insecurity, which is grounded in realist epistemology.

As discussed above, one of the advantages of narrative research in this area is in allowing people's voices to be heard, which in-itself constitutes an act of empowerment. A general recommendation then is that more research focused on the stories of individuals living in poverty is carried out to allow these voices to be heard.

One of the drawbacks of the present research is that service users were only involved at the point of sharing their experiences and providing data for the analysis. In the spirit of co-constructive praxis future research should aim to involve participants at all stages of the research process.

25. Critique of methodology

One of the clearest drawbacks of the methodology was that the insight gained from completing an in-depth analysis meant that only a small number of participants could be included. This was an intentional decision on behalf of the researcher to go some way to addressing the concerns of previous research in this area discussed in the introduction. Namely to avoid a diagnostic and medically centred view of psychological distress and to avoid treating poverty and other socio-economic conditions as variables which can be separated out and seen as acting 'on' the individual (Taggart et al., 2017). In turn this meant that the generalisability of the findings is fairly limited. Despite participants being from a range of backgrounds and areas, each analysis is representative of the distinctive narratives of that individual. However, as Somers (1994) notes, the number of narratives that people in any given society and culture can draw from is limited, and therefore the ones represented in this research are likely to reflect those of others in similar situations to the participants. Whilst it could not in any way be said to offer a comprehensive examination of the causes and effects of food-insecurity, in the spirit of

epistemological pluralism (Miller et al., 2008) it offers a perspective which has been limited in this area of research. An alternative method, such as critical-realist grounded theory (Oliver, 2011), might have allowed for an analysis from which theory with more generalisability could have been built. However, given the problems with recruitment, it is likely to have been difficult to get enough participants.

The recruitment issues faced by the researcher were one of the biggest hurdles to overcome and slowed the research down considerably. This was partially caused by the initial narrow focus of research sites and might have been avoided by using social-media to recruit from the outset. It did however offer an insight into the structure of big charities and their need to retain control over research involving them. This perhaps partially reflected external pressures placed on them by them by the government to remain apolitical as discussed in section 20.2.

One of the key strengths of the methodology was that it allowed the participants to give voice to the human qualities of their experience, so that others might have some understanding of their lives. This was specifically identified by participant four as being particularly important, however all participants belonged to disenfranchised groups who often struggled to get their voices heard in society. It also differed from previous in the research in the area by considering the complex and interlinking experiences of poverty as a whole, rejecting individual-societal dualism and the construction of participants as 'subjects', and allowing people to voice their narratives.

The author is aware of the contradiction of criticising previous researchers for treating food-insecurity as a separable variable whilst framing the current research as looking at the problem of food-insecurity. Based on the results it seems that framing the

research in this way was relatively unimportant, as the way in which people constructed their narratives did not allow for a narrow focus in this one area. However, it may have been better to frame the research in more general terms relating to poverty.

Gilligan et al. (2006) discusses how the listening guide method arose, in part, as a way of allowing multiple readings of the same text to avoid the oversimplification of complex psychic processes into single categories. Although the author feels their adaptation of the analysis was true to this in that it followed each individual's voice and paid close attention to the contrapuntal voices they were speaking with, there are still concerns that by applying an analysis founded in critical theory the research forced participants' words into categories that did not fit with their experience. Although the model of reproduction and resistance offered an important political interpretation of distress, in retrospect I could have included this as a more structured part of the conversation with participants in order to promote a more collaborative process. A criticism of the research as a whole is that it did not involve a participatory element, and therefore follows the division of praxis which Freire (1970/2005) warns against, in separating out the 'thinkers' of research from the 'doers' of resistance. If conducting the research again, the researcher would use a model of participatory-action research, which let participants co-construct the study from the bottom-up. This would allow them to be the co-creators of the theory of their own oppression, while a community-intervention element would allow them to take active resistance based on this theory.

26. Reflexive account

26.1 The researchers experience of food-insecurity and poverty

Conducting this research had a significant personal impact on me as I had to explore my own experiences of poverty and food-insecurity as a child and adult to be able to fully understand my position in relation to the analysis. Whilst I had memories of living in poverty for parts of my childhood and had specific memories relating to the need to stretch food and resources, I felt that my mother would be able to offer better insights, and so decided to interview her as part of the process. I do not have the space to reflect fully on all aspects of the conversation but have pulled out some select quotes to give a sense of our experiences.

> *"It's the old saying I think, cutting your cloth, and sometimes that meant literally (laughs), getting rid of things that you would normally have kept. Selling things, selling jewellery, selling records, selling any luxury items. I have, as I said to you, we literally always had open fires in the house, and had to cut up furniture to burn to keep us warm. And I remember applying back in the day to the council to have heating put in when you were all small, and no, they didn't want to know"*

> *"and I took on quite a few part time jobs, you know in a factory, in a bar, you know different things, just trying to…doing ironing for people…you know lots of different things that meant, I basically had some cash to, not to splash, to buy food. So, although you were given help with your housing, you weren't given help with living as such"*

It was difficult emotionally to hear her talk about the conditions we lived in, as it helped to put into context some of my own childhood memories, but also in the context of becoming a parent myself during the course of the research. However, it

also put into context why I felt so strongly on the side of the participants when they talked about being demonized for being scroungers and when they criticised the report they received from the state.

26.2 Effects of researcher's experience on research

The interview with my mother took place after I had completed all of the research interviews but before I analysed the data. It therefore undoubtedly had an impact on my interpretation of the data. I had already chosen the theoretical frame of the research, however it is not coincidental that the theory chosen fits relatively well with my own political affiliations as a democratic socialist, and my family's history of being active in trade-unions. Although I tried to retain neutral framing in the questions I asked, my own political views undoubtedly formed part of the co-constructed narrative between me and the participant. I certainly felt more encouraged when participants expressed views that were in line with my own, and in turn probably subtly encouraged them to pursue these lines of thinking more. Although not consciously, my analysis that food-insecurity is inseparable from the wider conditions of poverty must have been influenced by my own experience, as would the wider conclusion that food-insecurity is a social problem and not an individual one.

As Frank (2010) highlights, stories are 'recipient designed', in that "any storytelling is tailored to fit the expected response of the listener(s), including the listener's apparent needs and purposes, sense of humour, likes and dislikes, and readiness to approve or disdain." (p. 90). Murray (2000) discusses how each partner in a social discussion brings certain social characteristics. In the case of research, the researcher is usually in a more advantaged position than the participant. In this case I was interviewing food-insecure participants as someone who is presently food secure, and

who does not experience some of the other difficult circumstances (e.g. cuts to benefits, racial discrimination) which participants had encountered. Murray states that this difference in social positions between researcher and participant immediately puts the participant in the position of having to justify themselves. The stories participants tell are also shaped by the research context and the knowledge that the stories will be recorded and read (Murray, 2000). Although I cannot know what the participants' perception of me was, it is worth considering my position in relation to them.

As Phoenix (2013) discusses, in all conversations speakers need to establish their right to discuss the issue at hand. Claiming 'category entitlement' (Potter, 1996, cited in Phoenix, 2013) allows a speaker to discuss certain issues due them belonging to a certain group. In a research situation, assumptions about the category entitlement of the interviewer are also made by the interviewee and these assumptions influence the answers given. In the case of the present study, I felt that I had the right to discuss some of the issues surrounding poverty, food-insecurity, mental health and parenthood as I had experience of these areas. However, I am aware that my position as a trainee clinical psychologist, in terms of education and professional status, is likely to have influenced the assumptions made about me by participants and consequently influenced the answers they gave. Although a psychological researcher cannot escape their likely position of relative power in relation to their participants, a critical-psychological stance at least allows this to be acknowledged and explored as part of the research process. There were also areas that arose during interviews where I felt I had no claim to category entitlement and was therefore less comfortable speaking about or questioning these issues. In particular issues of racial-discrimination and of feeling persecuted as a woman. In these instances I felt my role

could only be a listening one, and this may have limited the range of narratives it was possible for participants to speak from.

26.3 Professional practice implications

The process of carrying out this research and immersing myself in the philosophy which informed the theory has certainly impacted on my position as a practicing psychologist. Whilst I was already exploring and using concepts of critical and liberation psychology in my clinical practice, this research forced me to examine them in much more detail. Afuape, Hughes and Patel (2016) raise the importance of critically examining the concept of liberation, and whether it is possible to liberate someone through psychology alone. They also discuss the importance in acknowledging whose agency is invoked in liberation-psychology, who sets the agenda for liberation, and who defines the end-point of liberation. Whilst I do not believe that psychologists do not have a role to play in the liberation of oppressed members of society, it is also worth remembering Martin-Baro's (1996) proclamation that the oppressed need to play a role in the theorising of their own oppression. In this sense it is valuable to listen to and analyse the narratives of those suffering under the impress of power, to let them guide their own liberation whilst joining our professional voices with theirs. My experiences writing this research have also helped me to consider how my own experiences can play a more central role in my approach to clinical work, and have made me keener to engage service-users within the context of their communities, to help them resist their oppressive conditions.

References

2 child limit : claiming benefits for 2 or more children (2017, August 3). Retrieved from https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claiming-benefits-for-2-or-more-children

Afuape, T. (2011). *Power, resistance and liberation in therapy with survivors of trauma: To have our hearts broken*. Hove, East Sussex: Routledge.

Afuape, T., Hughes, G., & Patel, N. (2016) Looking further at liberation: a critical perspective. In Afuape, T., and Hughes, G. (Eds.), *Liberation practices: towards emotional wellbeing through dialogue* (pp. 37-47). Oxon: Routeledge.

Althusser, L. (2014). *On the reproduction of capitalism*. London. Verso. (Original work published 1971)

Archer, M. (1998). Introduction: Realism in the social sciences. In Archer, M., Bhaskar, R., Collier, A., Lawson, T., & Norrie, A. (Eds.) *Critical realism: Essential readings.* (pp.189-205). Oxon: Routeledge.

Arendt (1954) *The Crisis in Education* Retrieved from:
http://www.digitalcounterrevolution.co.uk/2016/hannah-arendt-the-crisis-in-education-full-text/

Arendt, H. (1998). *The human condition.* Trans. Canovan, M. (2nd ed.). London: University of Chicago Press Ltd. (Original work published 1958)

Argys, L.M., Averett, S.L., and Rees, D.I. (2000) Welfare generosity, pregnancies and abortions among unmarried AFDC recipients. *Journal of Population Economics* 13(4), 569-594

Asthana, A. (2017, May 29) Charities say 'gag law' stops them speaking out on Tory social care plans. *The Guardian*

https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2017/may/29/charities-gag-law-stops-them-speaking-out-tory-social-care-plans

Bakhtin, M. (1999). Problem of Dostoevsky's poetics. Trans. Emerson, C. (Ed.). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press

Ball, J. (2010, May 9) Iain Duncan Smith rapped by watchdog for misusing benefits cap statistics. *The Guardian*.

https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2013/may/09/iain-duncan-smith-benefits-cap-statistics

Bambra, C., & Smith, K. E. (2010). No longer deserving? Sickness benefit reform and the politics of (ill) health. *Critical Public Health*, *20*(1), 71-83.

Beresford, P. (2016). *All our welfare: Towards participatory social policy*. Bristol: Policy Press

Bhaskar, R. (2016). *Enlightened common sense: The philosophy of critical realism*. Mervin Hartwig (ed.) Oxon: Routledge

Butler, P. (2017, August 31). UN panel criticises UK failure to uphold disabled people's rights. *The Guardian* https://www.theguardian.com/society/2017/aug/31/un-panel-criticises-uk-failure-to-uphold-disabled-peoples-rights

Carter, K. N., Kruse, K., Blakely, T., & Collings, S. (2011). The association of food security with psychological distress in New Zealand and any gender differences. *Social science & medicine*, *72*(9), 1463-1471.

Clayton, S., & Hughes (2016). The use of film and creative media to liberate young refugee and asylum-seeking people from disempowering identities: a dialogical approach. In Afuape, T., and Hughes, G. (Eds.), *Liberation practices: towards emotional wellbeing through dialogue* (pp. 89-99). Oxon: Routeledge.

Clennon, O. (2016). 'Holdin on': using music technology as a tool of cultural liberation with respect to performing masculinities at a young offenders' institution. In Afuape, T., and Hughes, G. (Eds.), *Liberation practices: towards emotional wellbeing through dialogue* (pp. 51-63). Oxon: Routeledge.

Compton, M.T. (2014). Food Insecurity as a Social Determinant of Mental Health. *Psychiatric Annals, 44*(1), 46-51.

Cooper, N., Purcell, S., & Jackson, R. (2014). Below the breadline: The relentless rise of food poverty in Britain. Retrieved from http://www.church-poverty.org.uk/breadline/read/belowbreadlinereport

Cortazzi, M., Jin, L., Wall, D., & Cavendish, S. (2001). Sharing learning through narrative communication. *International journal of language & communication disorders*, *36*(1), 252-257.

Criticisms of Adam Perkins and the Welfare Trait (n.d.) Retrieved from https://storify.com/PsychologyBrief/criticisms-of-adam-perkins-and-the-welfare-trait

Cromby, J. & Nightingale, D. (1999). What's wrong with social constructionism? In Nightingale, D.J. &Cromby, J. (Eds.) *Social Constructionist Psychology: a critical analysis of theory and practice* Buckingham: Open University Press

Daly, G. (2013). Marxism. In Malpas, S. and Wake, P. (Eds.) *The Routledge companion to critical and cultural theory.* (2nd ed.) Oxon: Routledge

Davison, K. M., & Kaplan, B. J. (2015). Food insecurity in adults with mood disorders: prevalence estimates and associations with nutritional and psychological health. *Annals of general psychiatry*, *14*(1), 1-7

Davison, K. M., Marshall-Fabien, G. L., & Tecson, A. (2015). Association of moderate and severe food insecurity with suicidal ideation in adults: national survey data from three Canadian provinces. *Social psychiatry and psychiatric epidemiology*, *50*(6), 963-972.

Danziger, K. (1990). *Constructing the subject: Historical origins of psychological research.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

De Marco, M., Thorburn, S., & Kue, J. (2009). "In a country as affluent as America, people should be eating": Experiences with and perceptions of food insecurity among rural and urban Oregonians. *Qualitative health research*, *19*(7), 1010-1024.

De Peuter, J. (1998). The dialogics of narrative identity. In *Bakhtin and the human sciences.* Mayerfield Bell, M., & Gardiner, M. (Eds.) pp. 30-48. London: Sage

Deleuze and Guattari (1988) *A thousand Plateaus.* London: Bloomsbury Academic (Original work published 1999)

Dowler, E. A., Kneafsey, M., Lambie, H., Inman, A., & Collier, R. (2011). Thinking about 'food security': engaging with UK consumers. *Critical Public Health*, *21*(4), 403-416.

Economist Intelligence Unit (2014) Global Food Security Index 2014: An annual measure of the state of global food security. Accessed at http://foodsecurityindex.eiu.com/Resources

Elder-Vass, D. (2010). *The causal power of social structures: Emergence, structure and agency*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Elder-Woodward, J. (2009). Whatever happened to the human altruism gene? A service user's view of the Welfare Reform Bill. *Disability & Society*, *24*(6), 799-802.

Fanon, F. (2001). *The wretched of the earth*. London: Penguin (Original work published 1967)

Forsey, A. (2014). *An Evidence Review for the All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry into Hunger in the United Kingdom*. The Children's Society. Retrieved from https://foodpovertyinquiry.files.wordpress.com/2014/12/food-poverty-appg-evidence-review-final.pdf

Foster, D. (2016, March 9). Adam Perkins: 'welfare dependency can be bred out'. *The Guardian* https://www.theguardian.com/society/2016/mar/09/adam-perkins-welfare-dependency-can-be-bred-out

Foucault, M. (1991). *Discipline and punish: the birth of the prison*. London: Penguin

Foucault, M. (2009). *History of madness*. Oxon: Routledge

Frank, A. W. (2010). *Letting stories breathe: A socio-narratology*. London: University of Chicago Press

Freire, P. (2005). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. Trans. Bergman Ramos, M. London: The Continuum International Publishing Group Ltd. (Original work published 1970)

Fromm, E. (2002). *The sane society*. Oxon: Routledge. (Original work published 1956)

Garratt, E., Spencer, A., & Ogden, C. (2016). *#stillhungry. Who is hungry, for how long and why*. Retrieved from

https://westcheshire.foodbank.org.uk/about/ourresearch/stillhungry/

Garthwaite, K. A., Collins, P. J., & Bambra, C. (2015). Food for thought: An ethnographic study of negotiating ill health and food insecurity in a UK foodbank. *Social science & medicine*, *132*, 38-44

Garthwaite, K. (2011). 'The language of shirkers and scroungers?' Talking about illness, disability and coalition welfare reform. *Disability & Society*, *26*(3), 369-372

Garthwaite, K. (2016). *Hunger pains: Life inside foodbank Britain*. Bristol: Policy Press

Garthwaite, K. (2016b). The perfect fit? Being both volunteer and ethnographer in a UK foodbank. *Journal of Organizational Ethnography*, *5*(1), 60-71

Gayle, D. (2015, June 26) Mental health workers protest at move to integrate clinic with jobcentre. *The Guardian*

https://www.theguardian.com/society/2015/jun/26/mental-health-protest-clinic-jobcentre-streatham

Gilligan, C. (1982). *In a different voice*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press

Gilligan, C. (2015). The Listening Guide Method of Psychological Enquiry. *Qualitative Psychology, 2*(1), 69-77.

Gilligan, C., & Brown, L. (1992). *Meeting at the crossroads: Women's psychology and girls' development*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press

Gilligan, C., & Eddy, J. (2017). Listening as a path to psychological discovery: an introduction to the Listening Guide. *Perspectives on medical education*, *6*(2), 76-81.

Gilligan, C., Spencer, R., Weinberg, M. K., & Bertsch, T. (2006). On the listening guide. *Emergent methods in social research*, 253-268.

Gramsci, A. (1971). *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci: Ed. and Transl. by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith*. International Publishers Co

Hagan, T., & Smail, D. (1997). Power-mapping-I. Background and basic methodology. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, *7*(4), 257-267.

Harper, D. (1991). The Role of Psychology in the Analysis of Poverty: Some Suggestions. *Psychology and Developing Societies*, *3*(2), 193-201.

Harper D.J. (2003) Poverty and Discourse. In: Carr S.C. & Sloan T.S. (Eds.) *Poverty and Psychology*. Boston, MA: Springer

Harper, D., & Speed, E. (2014). Uncovering recovery: The resistible rise of recovery and resilience. In Speed, E., Moncrieff, M., & Rapley, M. (Eds.), *De-Medicalizing Misery II* (pp. 40-57). London: Palgrave Macmillan

Harris, B. (1997). Repoliticizing the history of psychology. In Fox, D. & Prilleltensky, I. (Eds.), *Critical psychology: An introduction* (pp. 21-33). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications

Heflin, C. M., Siefert, K., & Williams, D. R. (2005). Food insufficiency and women's mental health: findings from a 3-year panel of welfare recipients. *Social science & medicine*, *61*(9), 1971-1982.

Helm, T. (2017, April 2). Osborne's huge tax giveaway starts for rich – as the poor are hit. *The Guardian* https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2017/apr/01/huge-tax-giveaway-for-rich-as-poor-are-hit-george-osborne-tax-benefit-budget-changes

Herman, E. (1995). *The romance of American psychology: Political culture in the age of experts*. California University of California Press.

Hills, J. (1998). Thatcherism, New Labour and the welfare state. Retrieved from http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/5553/1/Thatcherism_New_Labour_and_the_Welfare_State.pdf

Jones, O. (2015). *The establishment: and how they get away with it*. London: Penguin Random House

Jones, O. (2016). *Chavs: the demonization of the working class.* (2nd ed.) London: Verso

Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2016). *UK poverty: Causes, costs and solutions.* Retrieved from: https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/uk-poverty-causes-costs-and-solutions

Kaufman, R., Mirsky, J., Witztum, E., & Grisaru, N. (2013). Food insecurity among psychiatric patients and welfare clients in Israel. *Israeli Journal of Psychiatry and Related Sciences, 50*(3), 188-192.

Kim, J. (2016). *Understanding narrative enquiry.* London: Sage

Lachance, L., Sean Martin, M., Kaduri, P., Godoy-Paiz, P., Ginieniewicz, J., Tarasuk, V., & McKenzie, K. (2014). Food insecurity, diet quality, and mental health in culturally diverse adolescents. *Ethnicity and Inequalities in Health and Social Care*, *7*(1), 14-22.

Lambie-Mumford, H. & Dowler, E. (2014) Rising use of "food aid" in the United Kingdom, *British Food Journal*, Vol. 116 Issue: 9, pp.1418-1425

Littler, J. (2017, March 20). Meritocracy: the great delusion that ingrains inequality. *The Guardian* https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/mar/20/meritocracy-inequality-theresa-may-donald-trump

Loopstra, R., Reeves, A., Taylor-Robinson, D., Barr, B., McKee, M., & Stuckler, D. (2015). Austerity, sanctions, and the rise of food banks in the UK. *BMJ (Clinical research ed)*

Loots, G., Coppens, K., & Sermijn, J. (2013). Practising a rhizomatic perspective in narrative research. In Andrews, M., Squire, C., & Tamboukou, M. *Doing narrative research* pp. 108-125. London: Sage

Malpas, S. & Wake, P. (Eds.). *The Routledge companion to critical and cultural theory*. Oxon: Routledge

Martín-Baró, I. (1996). *Writings for a liberation psychology*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Marx, K. & Engels, F. (2015) *The communist manifesto.* St. Ives: Penguin Random House (Original work published 1888)

Melchior, M., Caspi, A., Howard, L.M., Ambler, A.P., Bolton, H., Mountain, N., & Moffitt, T.E. (2009). Mental health context of food insecurity: a representative cohort of families with young children. *Pediatrics*, *124*(4), 564-572.

McIntyre, L., Williams, J.V., Lavorato, D.H., & Patten, S. (2013). Depression and suicide ideation in late adolescence and early adulthood are an outcome of child hunger. *Journal of affective disorders*, *150*(1), 123-129.

Miller, T., Baird, T., Littlefield, C., Kofinas, G., Chapin III, F. S., & Redman, C. (2008). Epistemological pluralism: reorganizing interdisciplinary research. *Ecology and Society*, *13*(2).

Monbiot, G. (2017). *Out of the Wreckage: A New Politics in the Age of Crisis*. London: Verso

Muldoon, K.A., Duff, P.K., Fielden, S., & Anema, A. (2013). Food insufficiency is associated with psychiatric morbidity in a nationally representative study of mental illness among food insecure Canadians. *Social psychiatry and psychiatric epidemiology*, *48*(5), 795-803

Murray, M. (2000). Levels of narrative analysis in health psychology. *Journal of health psychology*, *5*(3), 337-347

Myrie, C.V., & Gannon, K.N. (2013). "Should I really be here?" Exploring the relationship between Black men's conceptions of wellbeing, subject positions and help-seeking behaviour. *Diversity and Equality in Health and Care*, *10*(1), 1-22

Nash, R. (1990). Bourdieu on education and social and cultural reproduction. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, *11*(4), 431-447

O'Brien, R. & Loach, K. (2016). *I, Daniel Blake* (Motion Picture). UK: Why Not Productions

Oliver, C. (2011). Critical realist grounded theory: A new approach for social work research. *British Journal of Social Work*, *42*(2), 371-387.

Parker, I. (2007). *Revolution in psychology: Alienation to emancipation*. London: Pluto Press

Phoenix, A. (2013). Analysing narrative contexts. In Andrews, M., Squire, C., & Tamboukou, M. (Eds.). (2013). *Doing narrative research*. London: Sage.

Pilgrim, D. (2014). The failure of modern psychiatry and some prospects of scientific progress offered by critical realism. In *De-Medicalizing Misery II* (pp. 58-75). Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan UK.

Pilgrim, D., & Bentall, R. (1999) The medicalisation of misery: A critical realist analysis of the concept of depression. *Journal of mental health*, *8*(3), 261-274.

Pilgrim, D., & Rogers, A. (1997). Mental health, critical realism and lay knowledge. *Body talk: The material and discursive regulation of sexuality, madness and reproduction*, 33-49.

Prilleltensky, I. (2001). Value-based praxis in community psychology: Moving toward social justice and social action. *American journal of community psychology*, *29*(5), 747-778.

Prilleltensky, I. (2008). The role of power in wellness, oppression, and liberation: The promise of psychopolitical validity. *Journal of community psychology*, *36*(2), 116-136.

Prilleltensky, I., & Fox, D. (1997). Introducing critical psychology: Values, assumptions, and the status quo. In Fox, D., Prilleltensky, I., & Austin, S. *Critical psychology: An introduction* (2nd ed.) (pp. 3-20). London, Sage

Prilleltensky, I., & Gonick, L. (1996). Polities change, oppression remains: On the psychology and politics of oppression. *Political psychology*, 127-148

Pryor, L., Lioret, S., Van Der Waerden, J., Fombonne, É., Falissard, B., & Melchior, M. (2016). Food insecurity and mental health problems among a community sample of young adults. *Social psychiatry and psychiatric epidemiology*, *51*(8), 1073-1081

Ramsey, R., Giskes, K., Turrell, G., & Gallegos, D. (2011). Food insecurity among Australian children: potential determinants, health and developmental consequences. *Journal of Child Health Care*, *15*(4), 401-416.

Rapley, M., Moncrieff, J., & Dillon, J. (2011a). Carving nature at its joints? DSM and the medicalization of everyday life. In Rapley, M., Moncrieff, J., & Dillon, J. (Eds.) *De-Medicalizing Misery* (pp. 1-9). Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan

Rapley, M., Moncrieff, J., & Dillon, J. (2011b). (Eds.) *De-medicalising Misery.* Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan

Read, J., Bentall, R.P., & and Fosse, R. (2014) Time to abandon the bio-bio-bio model of psychosis: exploring the epigenetic and psychological mechanisms by which adverse life events lead to psychotic symptoms. In Speed, E., Moncrieff, J., & Rapley, M. (Eds.). (2014). *De-medicalizing misery II: society, politics and the mental health industry*. Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.

Riches, G. (2002). Food banks and food security: welfare reform, human rights and social policy. Lessons from Canada?. *Social Policy & Administration*, *36*(6), 648-663.

Rohleder, P. (2012). *Critical issues in clinical and health psychology*. London: Sage

Ross, T. (2016, May 7) Migration pressure on schools revealed. *The Telegraph*
http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/05/07/migration-pressure-on-schools-revealed/

Ryan and Domokos (2017, May 30) 'I was a citizen, now I'm nothing': disabled readers on life under austerity. *The Guardian*
https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/may/30/disabled-readers-austerity-disability-cuts

Savage, M. (2015). *Social class in the 21st century*. London: Penguin Random House

Sheffield Political Economy Research Institute (2014) *Food bank provision & welfare reform in the UK*. Retrieved from http://speri.dept.shef.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/SPERI-British-Political-Economy-Brief-No4-Food-bank-provision-welfare-reform-in-the-UK.pdf

Slopen, N., Fitzmaurice, G., Williams, D. R., & Gilman, S. E. (2010). Poverty, food insecurity, and the behavior for childhood internalizing and externalizing disorders. *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*, *49*(5), 444-452.

Smail, D. (2015). *The origins of unhappiness: a new understanding of personal distress*. London: Karnac Books.

Somers, M. R. (1994). The narrative constitution of identity: A relational and network approach. *Theory and society*, *23*(5), 605-649.

Speed, E. (2011). Discourses of acceptance and resistance: Speaking out about psychiatry. In Rapley, M., Moncrieff, J., & Dillon, J. (Eds.) *De-Medicalizing Misery* (pp. 123-140). Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan

Speed, E., Moncrieff, J., & Rapley, M. (Eds.). (2014). *De-medicalizing misery II: society, politics and the mental health industry*. Springer.

Swinton, S. (2013, July 23) David Cameron: 'Immigration is constant drain on public services'. *The Telegraph* http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/10197738/David-Cameron-Immigration-is-constant-drain-on-public-services.html

Squire, C. (2013). From experience-centred to socioculturally-oriented approaches to narrative. In Andrews, M., Squire, C., & Tamboukou, M. (Eds.). *Doing narrative research*. (pp. 47-71). London: Sage

Stam, H.J., Lubek,I., & Radtke, H.L. (1998). Repopulating social psychology texts: Disembodied "subjects" and embodied subjectivity. In Bayer, B.M. & Shotter, J. (Eds.), *Inquiries in social construction. Reconstructing the psychological subject: Bodies, practices and technologies* (pp. 153-186). London: Sage

Taggart, D., Franks, W., Osborne, O., & Collins, S. (2013). 'We are the ones asking the questions.' The experiences of young mental health service users conducting research into stigma. [Special Issue] British Journal of Educational Psychology, 30 (1), 61-71

Taggart, D., McCauley, C. & Smithurst, S. (2017). Community psychology praxis in a Children's Centre: The Great Yarmouth Fathers Project. Clinical Psychology Forum, 293, 46-49

Taylor-Gooby, P. (2000). *Risk, trust and welfare*. Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.

Taylor, A., & Loopstra, R. (2016). *Too poor to eat*. Retrieved from

http://foodfoundation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/FoodInsecurityBriefing-

May-2016-FINAL.pdf

Tetlow, G. (2016, May 26) Public services experts blame strains on money, not

migrants. *Financial Times*. https://www.ft.com/content/b12181a0-2332-11e6-9d4d-

c11776a5124d?mhq5j=e6

Travis, A., (2016, November 25). Thatcher pushed for breakup of welfare state

despite NHS pledge. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from

https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/nov/25/margaret-thatcher-pushed-for-

breakup-of-welfare-state-despite-nhs-pledge

United Nations (2016) Committee on the rights of persons with disabilities. Retrieved

from http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CRPD/Pages/InquiryProcedure.aspx

Verhaeghe, P. (2014). *What about me? The struggle for identity in a market-based

society*. London: Scribe

Valentine, G., & Harris, C. (2014). Strivers vs skivers: Class prejudice and the

demonisation of dependency in everyday life. *Geoforum*, *53*, 84-92

Vice, S. (1997). *Introducing Bakhtin*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Wake, P. (2013). Narrative and narratology. In Malpas, S. & Wake, P. (Eds.). *The

Routledge companion to critical and cultural theory*. Oxon: Routledge

Walker, C. (2007). *Depression and globalization: The politics of mental health in the

21st century*. New York: Springer

Wheen (2001, February 14). Satirical fiction is becoming Blair's reality. *The

Guardian*. https://www.theguardian.com/theguardian/2001/feb/14/features11.g21

Whitaker, R. C., Phillips, S. M., & Orzol, S. M. (2006). Food insecurity and the risks of depression and anxiety in mothers and behavior problems in their preschool-aged children. *Pediatrics*, *118*(3), 859-868.

Wilson, Bivand Rahman and Hoya (2015) Worklessness, welfare and social housing: a report for the national housing federation. Retrieved from

https://www2.learningandwork.org.uk/publications/worklessness-welfare-and-social-housing

Wren, B. (2016) A clinical service for gender non-conforming young people: what can a liberation psychology perspective contribute? In Afuape, T., and Hughes, G. (Eds.), *Liberation practices: towards emotional wellbeing through dialogue* (pp. 78-88). Oxon: Routeledge.

Yosso, T.J. (2006). Whose culture has capital? A critical race theory discussion of community cultural wealth. *Race, ethnicity and education, 8(1), 69-91*

Zaslow, M., Bronte-Tinkew, J., Capps, R., Horowitz, A., Moore, K. A., & Weinstein, D. (2009). Food security during infancy: implications for attachment and mental proficiency in toddlerhood. *Maternal and child health journal*, *13*(1), 66-80.

Appendix 1: Interview Schedule

Interview Schedule

Say as much or as little as you are comfortable with; If don't want to answer questions then please say so; there will be some questions about food, some personal questions, some questions about other issues you might have faced; some questions might not apply; if you want to stop at any time then please say so.

General:

Tell me a little bit about your background, where you're from.

Tell me a little bit about your life now.

Food Insecurity:

Have you used food banks or community kitchens?

What was it like the first time you used them? What have your experiences of them been like in general? Can you tell me about any particularly good experiences? Any particularly bad ones?

Do any other memories related to food come into your head?

Have you had help with food from other sources?

Do you have family who depend on you? What has been the impact on them and on you all as a family?

How about family or friends who have supported you?

How has it felt having to get support with food?

What impact has it had on the rest of your life? (friends, social life)

Is there anything you used to do but can't anymore?

Physical Health:

What impact has there been on your physical health?

How has hunger had an impact on the rest of your life?

Mental Health:

Tell me about the impact on your mental health of not having enough access to food.

What has helped you to cope?

What feelings have your difficulties with food raised for you?

Disability:

Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

How has this been impacted by the difficulties you've faced around food?

Benefits System:

Have you had to claim benefits? Tell me about your experience of the benefits system (claiming process, job centre etc.)

Can you tell me about a specific time you had a difficulty/good experience?

Has claiming benefits had an impact on your access to food?

Political Context:

Do you think anything can be done to change the current situation? To have less need for food banks? To change the benefit system?

DO you think about the impact politicians have on your situation?

What do you think needs to change about the political situation?

DO you feel you have any power to change things?

What would help in your life?

Media:

Do you pay any attention to the news around food banks or the benefit system?

What do you feel about the way the TV/radio/newspapers report issues around food banks? And benefits?

Do you relate to what you see?

Have you seen anything on entertainment programmes, TV, film, radio, about it? How did you relate to that?

Culture/Race/Religion:

Do you have religious beliefs? Do you attend church regularly? Do these have any relation to your experience of the difficulties you've faced with food?

How about your race or culture? Have you found anything connected to these to be helpful or not helpful when it comes to food difficulties?

Final thoughts:

What has been the least helpful thing for you when it comes to food? What has made your life hardest.

What has been the most helpful thing?

If you could change one thing, what would it be?

How have you found this interview?

Appendix 2: Extract showing organisation of themes into voices

Voice of political defiance

Political action

working with DPAC doing that was (laughs) yeah, was pretty good fun.

Political defiance (internal and external)/ political system not working /frustration at political apathy

And then on the inside of the coat I wrote the list of the erm, 320 conservative MPs that voted for the cuts (interviewer laughs) of £30 in the, erm, benefit

And I also wrote negative, err embroidered, hand embroidered negative words about politicians really in general

I'm laughing cos of, yeah trying to…so, I think Guy Fawkes had an idea

Basically I'm not happy with the political system at all. Erm, if 30% of the population are voting. And if in that 30% there's a division of 50/50, about, it is not ok for 15% of the population to decide what happens to the rest of us

, people are not voting, people are not voting

I've got friends who are my age, that have never voted. I'm 60 this year. Never, voted. So yeah, the whole political system needs to be got rid of. We need to start again. We need something else. Cos it's not working is it. Not working at all, in my opinion. So yeah…radical

Gosh, you've got a 59 year old radical

Fighting for others (drawing on past)

And just, people's attitudes were just horrendous. They're, it's still really a jungle isn't it, a jungle affair. When, 30 years ago I tried to get er a radiography van, to come to the homeless centre to err, see if people had TB, right?

So we put it in, and within, it doesn't sound so much these days, but within about 2 months the Methodist church got £100,000 towards the running of the medical centre

Inequality

(laughs) It's sort of like, I'm getting a lot of references here, but it's sort of like Robin Hood days you know. We need to just (laughs) rob the rich to give to the poor, cos the rich are just taking the money all of the time.

Voice of patriarchal oppression

Living in a patriarchal environment

So the erm sexism was there, do you know what I mean, it was so acute, it was so acute, yeah, sorry, yeah that's how it affected me

And the women are not on the streets, the men are on the streets. Ans so there was I, as err you know, as a 57 year old woman with a 17 year old daughter, in a pretty much male environment

I mean, I've lived a lot of my life in London, in a multicultural society right…I was moved three miles and I was like 'where are the women?', there's no women on the streets. And there wasn't, there was no women on the streets. And then I asked somebody and they said you know the Sikh women, the Indian women, stay in, stay together or go out together, right…this was not what my daughter and I were used to,

Voice of feminist resistance

Pride and power in independent female/feminist/motherhood identity / protective mother / protective of other women

And the women are not on the streets, the men are on the streets. Ans so there was I, as err you know, as a 57 year old woman with a 17 year old daughter, in a pretty much male environment. And you know I was lucky because I was 57 and I could tell the men you know, where to (laughs) you know.

But there was also, err, single mothers there, with multiple children having to fight the system alone.

. But erm, I worked it out, I worked out that the Indian men, the Turkish men, were not used to women speaking straight at them. Right. So I would speak straight at them as equals and they would just (laughs), they just did not know what to do, I mean it amused me to, you know, take some power, but erm…yeah, erm, they were not used to women speaking back to them; they were not used to women making requests. In the end the man who owned the B&B called me Madam. Because I was constantly asking…you know I wanted hot and cold running water. I wanted a water heater that didn't make a noise all through the night. I wanted windows that didn't have centimetre gaps round them.

They're probably breeding a warrior group of women (both laugh), who will be causing a lot of trouble soon.

It was so painful seeing these mothers struggling, you know what I mean, because I was, my daughter was 16. And it was hard, I literally had to take her to College, you know what I mean, I had to take her take her. But the mums with the babies, the toddlers, with the school kids, you know they're in another town…they had to take those kids to school.

And I'm old enough to say, well, I'm quoting Mary Poppins (laughs), 'our daughter's daughter's will applaud us, and they'll sing in grateful chorus', erm, you know, I make my, you know I vote because of the suffragettes, and that's what I tell my daughter

Voice of sadness at inability to care for family

Frustrated mother / feeling inadequate unable to protect

I: And how about sort of, I guess the impact on all that of, as you as a mother, and how's it been for you in that role and, you know…

P: Erm, well it's very belittling, I think that's…my whole experience has been you know to be treated like a child with very few choices. You know, it's very odd. You know, erm, maybe it's because I'm a bit older than some, you know, erm, yeah (sighs). Yeah, it's very undermining, very undermining. And the thing is, is that they're not aware of it.

And err, yeah, we lived in McDonalds mostly

my daughter was 16. And it was hard, I literally had to take her to College, you know what I mean, I had to take her take her

You know within two months of my daughter being inside the B&B she'd made a suicide attempt. So she had to enter the whole mental health system

Identity through family / difficulties of being a mother

Yeah I'm the eldest of erm four.

and then err, I had a daughter, who's 17 and still with me

So yeah, that's been pretty err, pretty heavy (laughs) to be ill and to be a mother at the same time

Difficulties of cooking / not having appropriate facilities / limited choices

And err, yeah, we lived in McDonalds mostly

We had er, a bedsit a microwave in it and err, yeah that was it pretty much. And so it was quite hard to cook, not that you had the incentive to do it…

I was just questioning why I was mentioning McDonalds, erm, I suppose because of the stress and because of the way of living, we were actually moved, it was only three miles, but we were moved into another time, so we had no bearings, you know for like food shops, and yeah, we just had to do it…and it was very stressful

And err, yeah, eating out, so yeah that cost obviously a fair amount as well

Voice of actions having an effect

Caring for others

I was a nurse for 19 years. I did general nursing and psychiatry, and ended up in public health

When I was 30, so yeah, god whatever (laughs). I worked on, I worked as a nurse on the streets of London with the homeless

and I saw…and at that point I'd been nursing for about 8 to 10 years, and I saw the sickest people I'd ever seen, on those streets then

Past voice with power to change things

I err, worked with a doctor and a minister to erm get some money out of the government to start a medical centre because the homeless people couldn't access care, cos they didn't have an address

So we put it in, and within, it doesn't sound so much these days, but within about 2 months the Methodist church got £100,000 towards the running of the medical centre

Power in collective disabled identity

working with DPAC doing that was (laughs) yeah, was pretty good fun.

Empowerment through education

I did a degree in hand embroidery, at the… royal school of needlework, which I'd wanted do since I was 13 (laughs, with intervewer), and I finally got to when I was 55.

for my dissertation on my hand embroidery degree, I did adult embroidery education… and as part of that dissertation I studied MOOCs, cos I was looking at ways that adults learn. And erm, and in order to comprehend that, I took a MOOC on food-security at the university of Reading.

Fulfilling Dreams

which I'd wanted do since I was 13 (laughs, with intervewer), and I finally got to when I was 55.

Appendix 3: Ethics Application Form

Application for Ethical Approval of Research Involving Human Participants

This application form should be completed for any research involving human participants conducted in or by the University. 'Human participants' are defined as including living human beings, human beings who have recently died (cadavers, human remains and body parts), embryos and foetuses, human tissue and bodily fluids, and human data and records (such as, but not restricted to medical, genetic, financial, personnel, criminal or administrative records and test results including scholastic achievements). Research should not commence until written approval has been received (from Departmental Research Director, Faculty Ethics Committee (FEC) or the University's Ethics Committee). This should be borne in mind when setting a start date for the project.

Applications should be made on this form, and submitted electronically, to your Departmental Research Director. A signed copy of the form should also be submitted. Applications will be assessed by the Research Director in the first instance, and may then passed to the FEC, and then to the University's Ethics Committee. A copy of your research proposal and any necessary supporting documentation (e.g. consent form, recruiting materials, etc) should also be attached to this form.

A full copy of the signed application will be retained by the department/school for 6 years following completion of the project. The signed application form cover sheet (two pages) will be sent to the Research Governance and Planning Manager in the REO as Secretary of the University's Ethics Committee.

1.	Title of project: Food-insecurity in the UK: a critical narrative analysis

2. The title of your project will be published in the minutes of the University Ethics Committee. If you object, then a reference number will be used in place of the title. Do you object to the title of your project being published?   Yes ☐ / No ☒

3. This Project is: ☐ Staff Research Project   ☒ Student Project

4. Principal Investigator(s) (students should also include the name of their supervisor):

Name:	Department:
Ryan Wczasek	Clinical Psychology Doctorate, Health and Human Sciences
Dr Danny Taggart	Primary supervisor (HHS)
Dr Susan McPherson	Secondary supervisor (HHS)

5.	**Proposed start date**: June 2016
6.	**Probable duration**: 12 months

7. Will this project be externally funded? Yes ☐ / No ☒

   If Yes,

8.	What is the source of the funding?
	N/A

If external approval for this research has been given, then only this cover sheet needs to be submitted

External ethics approval obtained (attach evidence of approval) Yes ☐ / No X

Declaration of Principal Investigator:

The information contained in this application, including any accompanying information, is, to the best of my knowledge, complete and correct. I/we have read the University's *Guidelines for Ethical Approval of Research Involving Human Participants* and accept responsibility for the conduct of the procedures set out in this application in accordance with the guidelines, the University's *Statement on Safeguarding Good Scientific Practice* and any other conditions laid down by the University's Ethics Committee. I/we have attempted to identify all risks related to the research that may arise in conducting this research and acknowledge my/our obligations and the rights of the participants.

Signature(s):

…….

Name(s) in block capitals: ……..RYAN WCZASEK…………………………………………………….

Date: ………………………………………………………………………………….

Supervisor's recommendation (Student Projects only):

I have read and approved both the research proposal and this application.

Supervisor's signature: ………………………………………………………………………………………

Outcome:

The Departmental Director of Research (DoR) has reviewed this project and considers the methodological/technical aspects of the proposal to be appropriate to the tasks proposed. The DoR considers that the investigator(s) has/have the necessary qualifications, experience and facilities to conduct the research set out in this application, and to deal with any emergencies and contingencies that may arise.

This application falls under Annex B and is approved on behalf of the FEC
   ☐

This application is referred to the FEC because it does not fall under Annex B
   ☐

FOOD INSECURITY IN THE UK

This application is referred to the FEC because it requires independent scrutiny
☐

Signature(s):
……………….…….…….…….……….…….…….…….……….…….…….……………….…….……………

Name(s) in block capitals:
……………….…….…….…….……….…….…….…….……….…….…….…………

Department: ……………….…….…….…….……….…….…….…….……….…….…….……

Date: ……………….…….…….…….……….…….…….…….……….…….…….……….

The application has been approved by the FEC
☐

The application has not been approved by the FEC
☐

The application is referred to the University Ethics Committee
☐

Signature(s): ……….…….…….…….…….…….…….…….…….…….…….…….…….…………………………….

Name(s) in block capitals:
……….…….…….…….…….…….…….…….…….…….…….…….……….

Faculty: ……………….…….…….…….……….…….…….…….……….…….……

Date: ……………….…….…….…….……….…….…….…….……….…….……

Details of the Project

1.	**Brief outline of project** (This should include the purpose or objectives of the research, brief justification, and a summary of methods. It should be approx. 150 words in everyday language that is free from jargon).

Introduction: Food-insecurity is a term used to describe situations in which people have limited or inconsistent access to adequate amounts of food, or only have access to food of insufficient nutritional value. Little qualitative research has so far been conducted from a psychological perspective into the impact of food-insecurity.

Aims: The aim of this study will be to investigate how people make sense of being food-insecure and how they construct their stories around it. It will examine the personal impact to participants and will also consider how wider factors such as government policy and media representations have influenced how people view themselves in relation to food-insecurity.

Method: The study will use a qualitative, narrative research design. Participants will be recruited from community kitchens and food banks in London and Essex. A total of 15-20 participants, aged 18 and over will be recruited via poster and leaflet containing contact details of the author. One-to-one semi-structured interviews will be conducted and audio recorded for transcription and analysis.

Analysis: Once the interviews have been transcribed, narrative analysis will be performed with the aid of MAXQDA qualitative data analysis software. In line with Doise (1986), four levels of narrative will be analysed: The personal; interpersonal; positional; and ideological.

Participant Details

2. Will the research involve human participants? (indicate as appropriate)

    Yes   ☒   No   ☐

3. Who are they and how will they be recruited? (If any recruiting materials are to be used, e.g. advertisement or letter of invitation, please provide copies).

    Adults (aged 18 and above) will be recruited from the 'food-cycle' community kitchen charity, from various locations in London (Peckham; Bloomsbury; Kings Cross; Hackney and Islington) and from an independent food-bank in Kingston, South London.

    Posters and leaflets containing a brief description of the project and the author's contact details will be distributed at these sights.

    Will participants be paid or reimbursed?

    Participants will each be offered a £10 voucher in return for participation in the project

4. Could participants be considered:

    (a)   to be vulnerable (e.g. children, mentally-ill)?   Yes ☒ / No ☐

    (b)   to feel obliged to take part in the research?   Yes ☐ / No ☒

> If the answer to either of these is yes, please explain how the participants could be considered vulnerable and why vulnerable participants are necessary for the research.
>
> The participants will be members of the general public, and as such it is possible that some may have mental health problems. This will not be enquired about directly, although will possibly come up during the process of participants telling their stories. The lead researcher is a trainee clinical psychologist, and is very experienced in being with people with mental health problems. If it is felt that taking part in the research is causing too much distress, then the researcher will gently end the process and if necessary instigate a discussion about whether the participant may want to seek support.
>
> All participants will be given mental health support numbers as part of the information sheet given at the end of the interview, which will be talked through and explained with each participant.

Informed Consent

5.   Will the participant's consent be obtained for involvement in the research orally or in writing? (If in writing, please attach an example of written consent for approval):

Yes ☒   No ☐

> How will consent be obtained and recorded? If consent is not possible, explain why.
>
> Consent for participation in the study and for the recording of interviews will be obtained by a paper copy consent form prior to completing the interview. An information sheet outlining the details of the study as well as contact details for the researcher will be given at the same time. The information sheet and consent form will clearly state that the participant has the right to withdraw from the evaluation at any time without reason.

Please attach a participant information sheet where appropriate.

Confidentiality / Anonymity

6.   If the research generates personal data, describe the arrangements for maintaining anonymity and confidentiality or the reasons for not doing so.

> The researcher will not ask participants to produce any identifiable information in the questionnaires to ensure anonymity. Due to the qualitative nature of the study and the small number of participants, the researcher will know the identities of the participants, although it will be made clear that they only have to provide as much personal information as they want. If they want to receive any feedback on the study, then they will need to provide some form of contact details. This and all other information pertaining to the study will be stored on a hardware encrypted and password protected memory stick, and duplicated on the university of Essex M drive in password protected files.

Data Access, Storage and Security

7.   Describe the arrangements for storing and maintaining the security of any personal data collected as part of the project. Please provide details of those who will have access to the data.

> All information will be stored on a hardware encrypted and password protected memory stick, and duplicated on the university of Essex M drive. All files and databases will have additional password protection. Only the researcher and their supervisors will have access to the data.
>
> Participants will be provided with information about how their data will be stored. The final report of the data will not disclose any identifiable personal data such as names.
>
> Consent forms will be scanned and stored electronically as soon as possible after receiving them. Audio recordings will be kept until the project has been completed and the researcher has passed their viva. They will then be deleted.
>
> Once the project is finished, transcripts and consent forms will be stored in a password protected file by the doctorate in clinical psychology administrator at the school of health and human sciences in case of future publication and the need for data checking.

It is a requirement of the Data Protection Act 1998 to ensure individuals are aware of how information about them will be managed. Please tick the box to confirm that participants will be informed of the data access, storage and security arrangements described above. If relevant, it is appropriate for this to be done via the participant information sheet ☒

Further guidance about the collection of personal data for research purposes and compliance with the Data Protection Act can be accessed at the following weblink. Please

tick the box to confirm that you have read this guidance
(http://www.essex.ac.uk/records_management/policies/data_protection_and_research.asp
x)   ☒

Risk and Risk Management

8.   Are there any potential risks (e.g. physical, psychological, social, legal or economic) to participants or subjects associated with the proposed research?

Yes ☒   No ☐

If Yes,

Please provide full details and explain what risk management procedures will be put in place to minimise the risks:
Participants will have experienced some degree of food insecurity and therefore are likely to be experiencing socio-economic difficulties. Although it is not anticipated that taking part in this research will add to any potential distress they are experiencing, it is possible that this may happen. I will provide a debrief sheet at the end of the interviews containing a list of contact details of local social services, children and young people's services, and mental health services. I will inform participants before the interviews that if they disclose information that highlights a safeguarding issue (pertaining to either children or adults), or if I feel they pose a risk of harm to themselves or others, then I will need to pass this information on to the relevant authorities. Due to the nature of the proposed study, it is likely that the participants will be experiencing some degree of poverty. It is therefore important that I am clear in the distinction between poverty and neglect when considering whether to report a safeguarding issue. The World Health Organisation (WHO, as cited in Radford et al. 2011) define neglect as the "failure to provide the resources to meet a child's needs if those resources exist or should be available". Therefore parents who cannot afford to feed their children, but are making efforts to do so through the use of food banks, are unlikely to fall under this definition of being neglectful.

9.   Are there any potential risks to researchers as a consequence of undertaking this proposal that are greater than those encountered in normal day-to-day life?

Yes ☐   No ☒

If Yes,

Please provide full details and explain what risk management procedures will be put in place to minimise the risks:

> There will be minimal risks involved to the researcher however any risk issues arising will be discussed with supervisors.
>
> Interviews will be conducted in the venues where the community kitchens or foodbanks are based (typically churches or local community centres), providing there is a suitable private space to do so in. If suitable spaces are not available then they will be conducted in local libraries. In both cases there will be other people in the buildings who will be informed that the researcher is there.

10. Will the research involve individuals below the age of 18 or individuals of 18 years and over with a limited capacity to give informed consent?

Yes ☐   No ☒

If Yes, a criminal records disclosure (CRB check) within the last three years is required.

Please provide details of the "clear disclosure":

Date of disclosure:
Type of disclosure:
Organisation that requested disclosure:

11. Are there any other ethical issues that have not been addressed which you would wish to bring to the attention of the Faculty and/or University Ethics Committees

> Participants will be recruited from community projects in which the researcher has already volunteered in a separate capacity. For this reason, no one will be approached directly by the researcher to take part in the study to avoid people feeling pressured to participate.

Appendix 4: Ethics Approval Letter

13 March 2018

MR R. WCZASEK

(Address Redacted)

Dear Ryan,

Re: Ethical Approval Application (Ref 15037)

Further to your application for ethical approval, please find enclosed a copy of your application which has now been approved by the School Ethics Representative on behalf of the Faculty Ethics Committee.

Yours sincerely,

Lisa McKee

Ethics Administrator

School of Health and Human Sciences

cc.   Research Governance and Planning Manager, REO

        Supervisor

Appendix 5: Example of Recruitment Poster

Have you used food banks or community kitchens?

Would you like to share your story?

I am a trainee psychologist carrying out research into the impact on people's lives of not having secure access to food.

I'm looking for participants who are willing to talk about their experiences.

If you are interested then please fill out the form below and return it in one of the pre-paid envelopes provided, or alternatively you can email me on rtwcza@essex.ac.uk

I will then get in touch to arrange to meet you at a convenient time and location.

Interviews will take between 45 and 90 minutes and a £10 voucher will be given in return for your time.

Many thanks,

Ryan Wczasek

University of Essex

- -

Please fill out either your phone number or email depending on how you would most like to be contacted.

Name ....

Phone Number ....

Email Address ....

Best time of day to contact me ....

Appendix 6: Participant Consent Form

I agree to take part in this research project being conducted by Ryan Wczasek (trainee clinical psychologist) which is looking at the stories of people who have used food banks, community kitchens, or have struggled to feed themselves or their families. I understand that I may be asked personal questions, but that I do not have to give any information that I don't want to. I understand that I can withdraw my consent for my information to be used without giving a reason, either during the interview process or at any stage afterwards by contacting the researcher on the email address provided.

The researcher is a current student in the school of Health and Human Sciences at the University of Essex and has received ethical approval for this project from the university's ethics board.

I agree to the interview being recorded and then transcribed into writing. Audio recordings will be transferred an encrypted and password protected memory drive and deleted once the project has been examined. The transcripts will be stored on an encrypted and password protected memory drive and then stored on the university of Essex computer system in a password protected folder. Only Ryan Wczasek (researcher) and his supervisors will have access to the recordings and transcripts, although external examiners or auditors may request access to the transcripts at a future date.

All information that I disclose will be treated as confidential, although I understand that this confidentiality may be broken if I disclose any information which leads the researcher to believe I pose a significant risk of harm to myself or others, in which case relevant external organisations may be notified. I will be told immediately by the researcher if this is the case. I understand that once the interview is complete, no names or other information which could be used to identify me will be attached to the recordings or transcripts, but that quotes from the transcripts might be used in the write up of this research.

The final write up of the project will be stored in paper and digital format at the University of Essex and will be accessible to other students and researchers who request it. The title and a summary of the final project will be kept at the British Library where members can request a full copy of the study. I understand that the project may also be re-written for publication in an academic journal.

I confirm that I have received payment for participation in this study in the form of a £10 gift voucher of my choice, and that any travel costs have been reimbursed.

Name

…………………………………………………………………………………………
…

Date

………………………………………………………………………………………………

…

Signature

………………………………………………………………………………………………

Please tick this box if you would like to be contacted by the researcher in the future to receive feedback on this study: ☐

Appendix 7: Post-interview Information Sheet

Thank you very much for agreeing to take part in this research project.

The project aims to hear the stories of people who have found it difficult to get enough access to food or have only had access to poor quality food, and as a result have struggled to feed themselves or their families.

The researcher, Ryan Wczasek, is a trainee clinical psychologist, and is interested in how people's living conditions, as well as the economic and political environment, have an effect on people's well-being. One of the ways to investigate this is to listen to and record the stories of individuals, and to use this information to analyse the different ways in which people speak about these issues. It is hoped that by finding out what people have struggled with and also how they have found ways to cope, that this information can be useful to professionals who are trying to help other people in similar situations. It is also my aim to get this research published in an academic journal, and that this along with other studies in this area can be used to add pressure to politicians to give more assistance to those who struggle to feed themselves and their families.

The interview you have given will be treated confidentially, and no record of your name or other information which could be used to identify you will be published. I will only keep personal information about you if you would like me to get in touch with you once the project is finished to let you know the results.

Please remember that you can withdraw your consent for your interview to be used in the project at any time and without giving me a reason why. If you want to do this then please get in touch on the following email address:

rtwcza@essex.ac.uk

I appreciate that during the interview we spoke about some sensitive areas, and that this may have been distressing. I have included some details of how to get help at the bottom of the page if you need them.

Thanks again for agreeing to take part in the study,

Ryan Wczasek
Trainee Clinical Psychologist
University of Essex

If you are struggling and feel the need to talk to someone then you can contact the Samaritans 24 hours a day by phoning: **116 123** (Freephone)

If you are feeling suicidal then please go immediately to your local A&E department, or call **999** to ask for an ambulance if you can't get there by yourself.

If you feel your mental health has been affected but it is not an emergency, you can contact your GP. Your GP can also refer you for talking therapy.