



University of Strathclyde, Business School

The Department of Marketing

**Understanding the components of consumer  
assemblages, within the context of food-insecurity  
in Royston, Glasgow**

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Some parts of this thesis have been presented at academic events during the process of developing this research.

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## Abstract

This thesis examines food-insecurity within an urban demographic of Glasgow, which is recognised within public, private, and government sectors, as a substantial societal concern. The overall aim of this research is to provide a thorough understanding of food-insecurity, by exploring the lived experience of those involved within the receipt and delivery of supplementary food provision. With consumer research as its core, this study considers literature from the aspect of consumption, vulnerability, poverty, food-insecurity, and assemblages.

The contextual underpinning contained within this ethnographic work, is the urban demographic of Royston, Glasgow, which despite aspects of community regeneration and transformation, has remained within the most deprived areas across Scotland. The thesis considers three key research objectives within the investigation: to understand heterogenous cultural phenomena, to investigate relations between those phenomena, and to identify what relations impact upon the stability of the food-insecurity landscape.

The findings contribute to consumer research assemblages by making three contributions to knowledge: firstly, it highlights distinct conditions that impede access to supplementary food provision through the role of boundary making and levels of vulnerability. Secondly, it provides empirical evidence of how people experience socio-spatial disadvantage, which increases aspects of vulnerability. Thirdly, through examining the food-insecurity landscape, this work identifies socially created marketplace tensions which occur between people and resources. The work concludes by emphasising the importance for subsequent marketing research, to duly explore, innovate, and respond to entangled social issues.

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## **Chapter 1.      Introduction**

This investigation is concerned with gaining an understanding of the components that make up consumer assemblages, within the context of food-insecurity in Royston, Glasgow. This research contributes to consumer research which considers vulnerability, food-insecurity research and to assemblage theory. It does this by exploring how material and expressive capacities interplay within food-insecurity assemblages, and what conditions are found to impact upon the stability of the assemblage.

This thesis is focused upon understanding complex relations occurring between components which make up supplementary food provision, and how these relations impact upon aspects within the food-insecurity landscape. This research contributes to consumer research and to existing theories of assemblages, by conceptualising food-insecurity as an assemblage, which in turn allows improved understanding of the marketplace. This chapter introduces this thesis, and provides the sequence of discussion to follow. It begins by outlining the theoretical tradition to which it means to contribute, consumer research which considers vulnerability (Baker, Gentry and Rittenburg, 2005) with particular emphasis upon aspects of vulnerability within space (Saatcioglu and Corus, 2015). It then determines the context within the research setting to discuss poverty, before establishing the investigative parameters of food-insecurity assemblages. A brief definition of the research aims, objectives and methodology employed follows, finishing up with a short outline of the chapters.

## 1.1 *Tradition of the Research*

This thesis is underpinned by consumer research upon culture and specifically those relations that occur “between consumer actions, the marketplace and cultural meanings” (Arnould and Thompson, 2005: 868). Under the umbrella of consumer culture, this work concerns itself with consumer inquiry which considers aspects of vulnerability (Baker, Gentry and Rittenburg, 2005), to highlights how social consequences of consumption may be applied within the parameters of research.

### 1.1.1 Vulnerability

The historical parameters of consumer vulnerability, have encompassed many streams of research, which highlight contrasting definitions (Baker and Mason, 2012), eluding to demographic and socioeconomic variables (Hamilton *et al.*, 2014). However, as vulnerability research has evolved and expanded, it now considers a breadth of research which encapsulates how interactions between individuals and social structures (Baker and Mason, 2012) may drive “vulnerability within the marketplace” (Hamilton *et al.*, 2014: 1841). A perspective of vulnerability research which is key to this investigation, is that of spatial vulnerability. Spatial vulnerability has been conceptualised as a “dynamic, multidimensional state that is characterised by powerlessness, lack of control and dependence, which arises from ideological tensions within the social space” (Saatcioglu and Corus, 2015: 244). This is critical within this investigation, where experiencing poverty amongst affluence has become increasingly pervasive “within societies where consumption has a strong ideological hold” (Hamilton *et al.*, 2014: 1834).

### 1.1.2 Poverty

For people experiencing poverty or a lack of “consumption adequacy” (Farrell and Hill, 2018: 1158), it is understood they may be at increased risk of becoming vulnerable (Baker, Gentry and Rittenburg, 2005). Similarly, people who are experiencing vulnerability, may be at increased risk of falling into poverty and experiencing a lack of consumption adequacy. This is critical within this work, which considers an urban demographic within the city of Glasgow, where the relationship between poverty, inequality, and health is well documented across the city, and poverty is attributed as the ‘main’ factor behind the particularly poor health outcomes of adults within its deprived urban communities (The Scottish Government, 2020). Extant research within the city of Glasgow has coined the term the ‘Glasgow effect’ as an urban profile which demonstrates an up to 30% increase in premature mortality, in comparison to other cities with similar profiles (Gray and Leyland, 2009; Lund, 2015). The relationship between poverty and poor health suggests that the environmental conditions people reside within, means some people are at increased risk of becoming multiplicatively vulnerable as they occupy “multiple identity categories of the poor” (Saatcioglu and Corus, 2014: 123).

### 1.1.3 Food-insecurity assemblages

In response to the complex issues of food-insecurity, the need for supplementary food continues to increase within Glasgow, and so too does the variety of services which are involved with its distribution. Food-insecurity within this study, is considered a facet of poverty (Moraes et al., 2021). This research considers consumer assemblages as an appropriate way, to investigate the many relations occurring within the food-insecurity landscape, in the urban demographic of Royston, Glasgow. Using assemblages to study food-insecurity, allows this examination to unpick and understand how food-insecurity exists, through considering the relations between phenomena. These relations will help to highlight social complexities within the assemblage, which allows this investigation to identify the key components and conditions of food-insecurity within the community, whilst considering the heterogeneity or diversity that exists between kinds and scales of phenomena found (Epp et al., 2014: 83). It also presents the opportunity to understand how material and expressive capacities interplay, and what conditions impact upon the stability of the food-insecurity marketplace. The food-insecurity marketplace within this work, is contextualised by the ongoing fluid relations occurring between charitable food providers, and those strategies which are applied to access food and the margins of the food marketplace.

## *1.2 Research Aim and Contribution*

Within the research context and theoretical origins presented above, this thesis aims to gain an understanding of the components of consumer assemblages, within the context of food-insecurity in Royston, Glasgow. Using the context vulnerability as experienced by consumers, the findings within this investigation will contribute to research by providing empirical evidence which builds upon aspects of spatial vulnerability, highlighting how socio-spatial disadvantage increases aspects of vulnerability. To achieve the overall aim outlined within this investigation, three objectives were developed throughout the work to allow flow within the research:

- to understand key heterogeneous cultural phenomena as experienced by individuals and organisations within the food-insecurity landscape.
- to investigate relations between the phenomena, highlighting the interplay of capacities within the assemblage.
- to identify how relations impact upon assemblage stability, allowing the issues of food-insecurity to become stabilised or destabilised.

Using an ethnographic research approach to better understand the consumer assemblage, allows for a rich data set to be captured over the research study, using key ‘field’ methods of observation, depth interviews, and volunteering.

### *1.3 Outline of the thesis*

This thesis is presented to the reader over six chapters. Having introduced the thesis, considered the tradition of research and context, Chapter one now concludes by outlining the chapters.

Chapter Two considers the review of the key literature through discussion upon consumer research, which is core to this work. Specific to this, is research surrounding how consumers may be experiencing socio-spatial disadvantage which increases aspects of vulnerability. Particular focus is also given to research upon poverty and a facet of poverty food-insecurity.

Chapter Three reviews the theoretic of assemblages, its origins, and why it is valuable within consumer research which spans social complexities in relation to space. The study of the consumer assemblage allows reflection upon both the aspect of the individual consumer and the organisation, in relation to those things that make up the geographical place.

Chapter Four discusses the methodological approaches within this investigation, outlining in detail the ethnographic approach that underpins this research. It also highlights why the research study was chosen, how sampling was conducted, and the importance of data collection with reflective hermeneutic analysis.

Chapter Five allows the presentation of the findings by reflecting upon the data collected within this investigation. These are outlined across three key tenets of heterogeneity, capacities, and stability. The tenet of heterogeneity considers phenomena made up of people and things, and includes individuals, employees,

volunteers, and other community connections. The tenet of capacities allows an exploration of how the heterogeneous components relate to one another, and these are further explored as material and expressive. The tenet of stability discusses the outcomes of relationships between components, to identify socially created tensions within the marketplace.

Chapter Six considers the research aim and presents the contributions of this study. It discusses the implications of the findings and acknowledges the limitations before making recommendations for potential future research and concluding with reflections within the research.

## **Chapter 2. Consumer Vulnerability, Poverty and Food-insecurity**

### *2.1 Introduction*

This chapter discusses the literature underpinning this work, and will be divided into the following sections. Firstly, a brief introduction to the topic of consumer research , followed by a discussion upon where this study is located within the realm of consumer vulnerability, with particular focus upon spatial aspects of vulnerability. Following this, the context underpinning the work will consider literature upon poverty, and the concluding section considers a facet of poverty, that of food-insecurity.

### *2.2 Consumer Research*

Consumption is outlined by Hogg and Michell (1996: 629) as the “search for choice, acquisition, possession and disposal of goods and services”. In order to provide a better understanding of behavioural patterns and preferences within the parameters of consumption, consumer research originated from within the early years of marketing science, where investigation allowed the study of individuals, communities, and organisation (Algesheimer and Gurău, 2008). Consumer culture is a stream of study within consumer research, which allows investigation of the social relationships occurring between culture and the material resources on which they depend (Arnould and Thompson, 2005). Although a relatively recent theoretic, the assortment of research supported under consumer culture is incredibly diverse,

encompassing the “sociocultural, experiential, symbolic, and ideological aspects of consumption” (Arnould and Thompson, 2005: 868). As consumer culture expanded, the investigatory parameters and variance of methods used within its approaches are wide ranging, and this can prove troublesome academics who are looking to produce results from more coalesced investigative approaches (ibid). In order to promote communication across all realms of consumer research, Arnould and Thompson (2005) provided a thematic review of consumer culture literature, and coin their framework collective as Consumer Culture Theory (CCT). This CCT framework illuminates consumer culture as “a social arrangement in which the relations between lived culture and social resources, and between meaningful ways of life and the symbolic and materials in which they depend, are mediated through markets” (Arnould and Thompson, 2005: 869). The framework presents four themes or structures by which to group consumer culture research; “consumer identity projects, marketplace cultures, the socio-historic patterning of consumption, and mass mediated marketplace ideologies and consumers’ interpretive strategies” (Ibid: 871).

Following this classification of CCT, the rhetoric within consumer culture research developed swiftly, and researchers were found opposed to the institutionalised nature of the theoretic, particularly in concern of the considerable challenges and limitations of CCT classification. For example, Askegaard and Linnet (2011: 381) contend that epistemologies currently contained by consumer research fail to fit within the CCT framework, arguing that “individualism has become endemic to consumer research limiting the potential of ethnography within the field”. Moisander, Penaloza and Valtonen (2008: 9) suggest that CCT is more than the positioning of “a mere label or

brand to aid ‘interpretative scholars’”. Subsequent work by Arnould and Thompson (2007: 07) present that their CCT conception should be reflected upon as an inductive mapping publication, to help researchers identify subsets of research under the branding of CCT. Outlining CCT as a group of “family resemblances among different studies” (ibid), and suggesting the branding term would be better served epistemologically as Consumer Culture ‘Theoretics’, which would better represent “the theoretical, ontological, and epistemological heterogeneity” encompassed (ibid: 07). Irrespective of ideological arguments, the outcome of this collective branding exercise, now ensures the CCT theoretic (Arnould and Thompson, 2005, 2007) has its own annual conference (CCTC, 2022), and is found institutionalised within the annual conferences of the Association for Consumer Research (Fischer and Sherry, 2011).

Within the realms of CCT research, finding meaning within the relationships between marketers and consumers is seen to be important, however, finding balance within these relations can be fraught with complications. Baker and Mason (2012: 543) describe this contrast well when they present “relational connections, and freedom on the one hand, and sources of risk, vulnerability and social conflict on the other”.

Within the next section, this work turns towards conferring insight within these social consequences of consumption, to examine and better understand the literature found surrounding consumer vulnerability.

### 2.3 Consumer Vulnerability

*“What makes people vulnerable?..... At one level the answer is a straightforward one about poverty, resource depletion and marginalization; at another level it is about the diversity of risks generated by the interplay between local and global processes and coping with them on a daily basis”.*

*(Bankoff and Hilhorst, 2004: 1)*

Drawing upon the concept of what can make people vulnerable, the term consumer vulnerability “provides a unifying label for a variety of studies” which highlights the social consequences of consumption and the challenges that consumers can face (Baker, Gentry and Rittenburg, 2005: 128). Consumer vulnerability is suggested to impact “billions of consumers worldwide” (Hill and Sharma, 2020: 551), with under-represented research populations accounting for a substantial amount of this number. It is perhaps not surprising, therefore, that many consumer populations remain under studied, and continue to face disadvantage in the marketplace (Hamilton and Catterall, 2008). For example, Pavia and Mason (2014: 471) indicate that current models of vulnerability frequently overlook the 700 million people globally, who are living with some level of disability including “physical, cognitive and behavioural impairment” (ibid). However, even though populations may be found understudied, there is still a growing expanse of research found encompassed under the vulnerability umbrella, and an equally extensive amount of methodological approaches used to study and understand these vulnerability challenges.

### 2.3.1 Defining Consumer Vulnerability

There are several applied definitions of consumer vulnerability spanning differing types of consumer research (Hill and Sharma, 2020). This work aligns with the often used definition of Baker, Gentry and Rittenburg (2005), which highlights the social consequences of consumption, and how it can be applied to individuals within a marketing context:

*“Consumer vulnerability is a state of powerlessness that arises from an imbalance in marketplace interactions or from the consumption of marketing messages and products. It occurs when control is not in an individual’s hands, creating a dependence on external factors (e.g., marketers) to create fairness in the marketplace. The actual vulnerability arises from the interaction of individual states, individual characteristics, and external conditions within a context where consumption goals may be hindered, and the experience affects personal and social perceptions of self”.*

*(Baker, Gentry and Rittenburg, 2005: 134)*

Outlining their definition as a consumer driven specification of consumer vulnerability, Baker, Gentry and Rittenburg (2005: 128) present consumer vulnerability as “multidimensional” and “context specific” which “does not have to be enduring”. This work highlights that vulnerability often occurs when a person has lost control of their own consumption activities, which makes them more susceptible to marketplace interactions, marketing messages and products. It is the view of the authors, that anyone may become vulnerable at sometime within life, however,

consumers should only be qualified as vulnerable when they are experiencing or expressing vulnerability (Ibid). This vulnerability definition provided guidance for researchers and the researched, helping clarify academically the concept of a consumer driven specification of consumer vulnerability, and key triggers of vulnerability as those related to external factors (Moisander, Penaloza and Valtonen, 2008). Vulnerable consumers have been broadly outlined as those capable of “readily or quickly suffering detriment in the process of consumption” (Cartwright, 2015: 120). In this manner, vulnerability often relates to a person’s ability or potential to be vulnerable to markets and marketing messages, where the result may be that consumers suffer from the consequences of making poor choices.

There are concerns with consumer driven definitions of vulnerability, for example, Moisander, Penaloza and Valtonen (2008) raise methodological issues within individual features of vulnerability, outlining a lack descriptive for researchers to construct variance between vulnerable individuals who are at risk, and those who may participate in risky behaviours or experience harm in the marketplace. The fluid and transient nature presented within consumer driven definitions of vulnerability, has also been questioned. Understanding vulnerability as a transient subject can prove problematic both when considering complex research, and whether or not vulnerability can actually be considered as a fleeting or momentary. For example, Commuri and Ekici (2008) consider the context within individual ‘instances’ of vulnerability, suggesting they are complex and too numerous for critical reflection, and as such, are not enough alone to bear relevance when conferring influence or evidence, within the wider implications of macro marketing and policy making. Furthermore, research by Pavia and Mason (2014) suggest it is doubtful that the

nature of vulnerability can actually be considered ‘fleeting’. They highlight individuals who present with a progressive illness, are very unlikely to be able to move away from being vulnerable, and in reality are more likely to become ever more vulnerable as time passes (ibid).

As consumer research upon vulnerability now has a wide application of activities, Hill and Sharma (2020: 551) suggest there is a “need for greater conceptual anchoring” of the theoretic and that definitions of consumer vulnerability should be expanded to present a more “global and dynamic” construct, with a focus upon “experience and observation”. Defining consumer vulnerability as “a state in which consumers are subject to harm because their access to and control over resources is restricted in ways that significantly inhibit their abilities to function in the marketplace” (ibid), their work suggests that vulnerability exists upon a continuum, where it can be experienced “with less extreme states at one end of the continuum and more extreme states at the other end” (ibid: 551). Ford, Trott and Simms (2019: 435) align with the notion of expanding parameters within specific characteristics of vulnerability research, for example, they suggest ranges of vulnerability is found to occur within aging populations further explicated as “proximate, immediate, intermediate and ultimate vulnerability”.

As discussed within this section, vulnerability definitions provide structure for research. For example, the conceptional work of Baker, Gentry and Rittenburg (2005) paved the way for research, highlighting the strength of context within a consumer driven approach, allowing the person who is actually experiencing vulnerability, to present their own lived experience of what it means to be vulnerable.

Hill and Sharma (2020: 563) agree with a contextual underpinning of vulnerability, where “experiencers tend to have a fuller understanding of their own consumption environments”. However, they present that by combining a wider reach of context within vulnerability work, they can incorporate “observational viewpoints of third parties such as policymakers” with the hope to alleviate aspects that “create consumer vulnerability” (Hill and Sharma, 2020: 563). However, as with much research focused upon social elements of culture, there is generally no straightforward solution to understand and unpick the entirety of these incredibly complex issues (Baker, LaBarge and Baker, 2015). To consider vulnerability research within all its parameters, each inquiry should be focused upon the multiple contexts of the task at hand, only in this instance can a researcher be convinced that the investigation is sufficiently thorough, to include all characteristics of the phenomena (ibid). Discussed next section are some of those vulnerability characteristics in more detail.

### 2.3.2 Characteristics of consumer vulnerability

Whilst unpicking relations between people and resources, or consumers and their markets, understanding the context of the phenomena being studied is key (Baker, LaBarge and Baker, 2015). In this way, who may be considered a vulnerable consumer, incorporates a deeper understanding of what it actually means to be the vulnerable individual (Dunnett, Hamilton and Piacentini, 2016). Table 2.1 outlines a selection of vulnerability research, which is in no way definitive, however, it comprises a varied range of consumer vulnerability study populations and contexts.

Table 2.1: Examples of consumer vulnerability research

<i>Authors</i>	<i>Vulnerability Research</i>	<i>Published</i>
Voola, Ray & Voola (2022)	Social inclusion of migrant workers in a pandemic: employing consumer vulnerability lens to internal Indian migrant experience	Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion
Ong <i>et al.</i> , (2022)	Sharenting in an evolving digital world: Increasing online connection and consumer vulnerability	The Journal of Consumer Affairs
Batat & Tanner (2021)	Unveiling (In)Vulnerability in an Adolescent's Consumption Subculture	Journal of Business Ethics
Bruce & Banister (2020)	Army wives' consumer vulnerability and communities of coping	European Journal of Marketing
Higgins (2020)	Psycho-emotional disability in the marketplace	European Journal of Marketing
Stewart & Yap (2020)	Low literacy, policy, and consumer vulnerability: Are we really doing enough?	International Journal of Consumer Studies
Ford, Trott and Simms (2019)	Food portions and consumer vulnerability: qualitative insights from older consumers	Qualitative Market Research
McKeage, Crosby & Rittenburg (2018)	Living in a Gender-Binary World: Implications for a Revised Model of Consumer Vulnerability	Journal of Macromarketing
Falchetti, Ponchio & Botelho (2016)	Understanding the vulnerability of blind consumers: adaption in the marketplace, personal traits/coping strategies	Journal of Marketing Management
Hutton (2016)	Neither passive nor powerless: reframing economic vulnerability via resilient pathways.	Journal of Marketing Management
Saatcioglu & Corus (2016)	Exploring spatial vulnerability: inequality and agency formulations in social space.	Journal of the Academy of Marketing
Spotswood & Nairn (2016)	Children as vulnerable consumers: a first conceptualisation.	Journal of the Academy of Marketing
Mason, Marlys, & Pavia (2015)	Health shocks, identity, and consumer vulnerability	Consumer Vulnerability: Conditions, contexts, and characteristics
Bone, Christensen & Williams (2014)	Rejected, shackled, and alone: The impact of systemic restricted choice on minority consumers' construction of self	Journal of Consumer Research
Hamilton (2009b)	Low- income families: experiences and responses to consumer exclusion	International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy

As the examples of research in the above table highlights, consumer vulnerability can be found presented individually or collectively, it can encompass elements relating to demographic information for example age, or can be found to result from the outcome of external events. Additionally, the context of vulnerability research can be “the subject or focus of the study” (Dunnett, Hamilton and Piacentini, 2016a: 32), and outline or understand the process of how the actual vulnerability occurred (Hill and Sharma, 2020), and as academic vulnerability research continues to expand, it comprises additional multidimensional constructs, including vulnerability aspects gained from outside the realms of academia (ibid). Used in this way, researchers can provide an overarching holistic application of consumer research. For example, Piacentini *et al.*, (2019: 330) partner with social impact organisations (SIOs) to provide empirical recommendations of the barriers and challenges that may occur, whilst building “relationships between marketing academics and SIOs”. This type of investigation can also allow research to “be the driver for transformation or impact as well as theoretical contribution” (Dunnett, Hamilton and Piacentini, 2016a: 32).

Presenting a collective of contemporary concerns of consumer vulnerability, Dunnett, Hamilton and Piacentini (2016: 01) map consumer vulnerability within: ‘*Consumer Vulnerability: Conditions, contexts and characteristics*’. Within this work to ‘key life stages’, ‘health and wellbeing’, and ‘poverty and exclusion’. Baker, LaBarge and Baker (2016) contribute within this work, to expand upon their previously the discussed definition (Baker, Gentry and Rittenburg, 2005), to present an intricate construct of consumer vulnerability which combines and presents extant vulnerability research from; “people, conditions, and experiences characterised as vulnerable (a status) or by vulnerability (a state)” (Baker, LaBarge and Baker, 2016:

13). Their work groups topics of exploration by isolating particular key approaches, namely: populations of people, environmental conditions, and meanings and processes (ibid). For the purpose of structure within this consumer vulnerability analysis, the following section first outlines why some populations of people are thought be at greater risk of becoming vulnerable, how environmental conditions are presented within vulnerability research, and finally how populations and conditions combine, to impact upon vulnerability meanings and processes.

*a) Populations of people*

Baker, LaBarge and Baker (2016: 22) outline within vulnerability approaches to consumer research some groups of people may have characteristics which identify them as having a greater risk of becoming a vulnerable consumer: “People with these characteristics are at risk for harm, based on status in society or state of being”. The characteristics of vulnerability within at risk populations can be explained within a person’s status in society or within a person’s state of being.

An individual’s status in society includes characteristics that are related to “addiction, age, appearance, functional ability, gender, health, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation” (Baker, LaBarge and Baker, 2016: 22). These characteristics are often linked to agency attributes, which means that for the individual there is no option for exclusion from the risk of being vulnerable (Pechmann *et al.*, 2011). Therefore, these attributes are frequently considered a limitation, and for some groups, for example children, the appropriate market and policy response can be assumed to be protection (Spotswood and Nairn, 2015). However, Hill and Sharma (2020) suggest that

‘categories’ to which consumers belong “are not sufficient to make them vulnerable, and such synonymous usage may lead to misunderstanding and misuse of the consumer vulnerability concept” (Hill and Sharma, 2020: 554).

A persons state of being involves how an individual is restricted in such a way that impacts how they access the market (Hill and Sharma, 2020). Baker, Gentry and Rittenburg (2005: 135) outline these characteristics to include “cognitive capacity, cognitive development, felt ethnicity, education/learning, self-concept, socioeconomic status”. See table 1 for more specific examples (Hamilton (2009b), Falchetti, Ponchio and Botelho (2016), Higgins (2020)). These examples above highlight how some consumers are at increased risk of vulnerability because of their status in society or state of being (Baker, LaBarge and Baker, 2016). The following section now considers the next vulnerability approach to be considered within this investigation, environmental conditions.

#### *b) Environmental conditions*

The second approach presented by Baker, LaBarge and Baker (2016), allows the researcher to isolate particular environmental conditions, and explore vulnerabilities to understand how individuals react within their circumstances. Approaching investigation to consider disabling environments, allows the study of a “particular type of social problem, structural issue, environmental disruption or business practice that disempowers the people who must operate within it” (Baker, LaBarge and Baker, 2016: 16). It considers environments which may be disabling for individuals, occurring within some groups of people, all or at least some of the time. Baker and

Mason (2012) suggests that understanding environmental approaches to vulnerability research, can present a better moral perspective on investigation than demographic approaches, because the blame of vulnerability placed upon “characteristics of the environment” (ibid: 45) and not on the individual. However, as reflected upon by Wisner (2004), if individuals are continuously exposed to these disabling environments, they will always remain vulnerable. Within environmental conditions, vulnerabilities may be defined geographically or socially. An example of this type of vulnerability research, is Saatcioglu and Corus (2016: 234) work upon ‘spatial vulnerability’. This conceptual piece is critical to this investigation, it defines spatial vulnerability as “a state of disadvantage and powerlessness that arises due to the tension and conflict that exists across multiple material, socio-spatial and ideological interests over social space”. Space within this work is dependent on the context for explanation, in order to better understand the dynamic state of vulnerability within how “consumer exclusion and vulnerability is created and maintained” (Saatcioglu and Corus, 2016: 234). It draws upon aspects of both urban geography and consumer research, to identify in what way vulnerability may be found to occur within the “production and consumption of social space” (ibid: 230). Through contextualising vulnerability and how it can be applied to social space, Saatcioglu and Corus (2016: 245) highlight the need for appropriate empirical research; such as the work which will be considered within this investigation; which draws light upon the manifestation of spatial vulnerability as it occurs across different “geographies and contexts”. As outlined, spatial vulnerability is an important condition to be considered within the parameters of this thesis, as the production and consumption of social space and place will contextualise how food-insecurity can be understood.

### *c) Individual vulnerability*

The third approach from Baker, LaBarge and Baker (2015) present a collective within vulnerability research, which is essentially an alignment of the first two approaches, this enables those populations and conditions to be studied in combination, which comes from within a subjective rather than objective position, where the focus on individual vulnerability “conceptualised as a dynamic state of powerlessness and dependence” (Ibid:18). To understand these multidimensional aspects of vulnerability, a practical application of research is necessary, collecting firsthand experiences from the lived experience of individuals. The focus is upon their interpretation of how a situation can be “disempowering and as a threat to their physical, psychological, or social safety” (Ibid:19). Vulnerability in this instance is defined by the situation, occurring as a multidimensional process where a number of causes “simultaneously work to disempower consumers are create vulnerability” (Baker and Mason, 2012: 545). This last section upon understanding individual characteristics of vulnerability, demonstrates why the investigative aspect of context is needed within research. Better understanding of the research context, allows a better understanding of vulnerability, this is essential for the marketplace, primarily because it has implications upon the individual who is considered vulnerable, but also because and as to “how and to whom social and economic resources are distributed” (Baker and Mason, 2012: 546).

Baker, LaBarge and Baker (2015) suggest that consumer vulnerability should not always be outlined or accepted as a negative state of existence, because vulnerability encounters present an opportunity for the vulnerable individual, to become more

resilient and strengthen resolve. To consider those key aspects of vulnerability research in relation to how people are found to feel, the following sections discussion turns towards how people manage the outcomes of vulnerability, and considers research which surrounds how people have been found stigmatised, are found to cope or become resilient whilst encountering aspects of vulnerability (Baker, Gentry and Rittenburg, 2005; Hutton, 2016).

### 2.3.3 Outcomes of vulnerability

*“What distinguishes coping from other aspects of human behaviour is its relevance to adaptation in the face of stressful life experiences or conditions”.*

(Eckenrode, 1991: 01)

Consumer vulnerability is considered by many to be “an undesirable state catalysed by a number of human conditions and contexts” (Dunnett, Hamilton and Piacentini, 2016: 01), and it can only be understood through listening and observing the experiences of the consumer. Within much vulnerability research, it is presented that most human beings will expect to encounter some form of vulnerability within their lifetime (Baker, Gentry and Rittenburg, 2005). However, the experience of becoming vulnerable can often reflect upon an ability to engage within the marketplace, and this ability can contribute to wellbeing (Pavia and Mason, 2004; Bruce and Banister,

2020). Discussed next is those outcomes as to how people feel and respond to being vulnerable, which can present as exclusion or contain stigmatising attributes, also reveals how people identify consumer coping strategies (Hamilton and Catterall, 2005) and resilience (Hutton, 2016).

#### a) Stigma

The process of defining vulnerability as a concept can be seen to marginalise and stigmatise people, because by highlighting who may actually be vulnerable has the potential to heighten the associated risks (Pechmann *et al.*, 2011). It is because of such occurrences, it is necessary for researchers to understand the difference between what constitutes real vulnerability and those perceptions of vulnerability (ibid).

Mirabito *et al.*, (2016: 171) define marketplace stigma as the “labelling, stereotyping, and devaluation by and of commercial stakeholders (consumers, companies and their employees, stockholders, and institutions) and their offerings (products, services, and experiences)”. Some examples of stigma within consumer research investigation can be presented upon a person’s size (Scaraboto and Fischer, 2013), faith (ref), race (Crockett, 2017), disability (Baker, 2006), family identity (Pavia and Mason, 2012), literacy (Stewart and Yap, 2020), family income (Hamilton, 2009a), poverty (Hill, 2002; Chase and Walker, 2016), and food-insecurity (Dresler and Tutt, 2019). For example, food-insecurity research highlights volunteers hadn’t used supplementary food services, as being a recipient of charity meant that they were “placed in a stigmatised social group” (Dresler and Tutt, 2019: 1593). Individuals were found to volunteer their time for free food, as seeking help had been “perceived as a sign of

dependency or incompetence” (ibid: 1586). This highlights an example of how marketplace stakeholders can create stigma by being different from a perceived norm (Mirabito *et al.*, 2016), and how individuals resist stigma through the application of coping strategies (volunteering in exchange for food). Consumer resistance has been outlined as a coping strategy by Mason and Pavia (2015) found to help those individuals who become suppressed or stigmatised within the marketplace.

#### b) Coping

Eckenrode (1991: 01) suggests that the context of coping is less of a unified social construct and more of a “general rubric or metaconstruct under which a number of phenomena are embedded”, where the experience of coping is directly linked to the cognitive behavioural response to phenomena contained within stressful situations and events. Coping strategies or mechanisms can be found presented within consumer research, and they frequently relate to patterns of behaviour occurring across vulnerability situations (Hamilton, 2009b). As the nature of vulnerability changes depending upon people and their environments, so too does the ability for people to present and adapt coping mechanisms (Pavia and Mason, 2014). Coping behaviours are found observed relating to individuals and individual situations (Hutton, 2016), or collectively across similar communities (Baker, Hunt and Rittenburg, 2007; Bruce and Banister, 2020). How people are found to cope and reduce aspects of consumer vulnerability, are often focused on “psychological, financial and resource resiliency” (Mason and Pavia, 2015: 145). For example, research by (Hamilton, 2009b) low-income consumers are found to rebalance

marketplace disadvantage and “employ a variety of coping strategies”, including creative management of finances whilst shopping for bargains or applying price comparisons (Hamilton, 2009: 556). However, the impact of using such coping strategies, is found to reduce the negative psychological consequences which may be found associated with disadvantage in the marketplace (ibid). Coping strategies have been shown to impact on consumer experience of vulnerability and how people cope with being vulnerable, is also found within to present both improvement and worsening within vulnerability circumstances (Hutton, 2016). For example, consumption and coping are found to have a reflexive relationship when consumers are faced with life threatening illness (Pavia and Mason, 2004). Understanding the nature of consumer coping within study populations, can prove helpful for those who are vulnerable. For example, Balabanis *et al.*, (2012) offer a conceptional coping model, which may reduce the stress of marketplace accessibility for consumers who are visually impaired. Coping mechanisms can found presented as “either nondefensive or defensive” (Hill and Sharma, 2020: 560-1), where nondefensive strategies are more aligned with people resigning to their state of vulnerability, and defensive coping strategies are where people are found to “reject and rise above day-to-day restrictions, purposefully exerting control” (ibid: 560-1). In addition to consumer ‘coping’, the understanding of consumer resilience has been developed over recent years, as a construct which links into the narrative of how consumers cope with vulnerability (Hutton, 2016).

### c) Resilience

Pechmann *et al.*, (2011: 25) suggest that understanding the opposing tensions of vulnerability versus strength, can be a helpful way to identify the “practical issues that may arise when a group perceives itself in terms of its strengths, while others perceive only vulnerabilities”. Perception has been found important within how a person varied their resilience, when people have more than one restriction to cope with. “[S]tructural factors (e.g., laws) and interpersonal factors (e.g., societal norms, biases) tend to be less malleable than some individual factors (e.g., knowledge)” (Hill and Sharma, 2020: 564). Within work upon consumers who are vulnerable, resilience has been outlined as an emerging construct within the context of economic adversity (Hutton, 2016). For example, Hutton (2016: 252) identifies how “low-income women strive to reframe their relationship to the market via resilient pathways”. Resilience is frequently linked to facets of poverty, and outlines the possibility of reframing economic vulnerability. Within the research outlined above, Hutton (2016) presents resilient pathways which have included active agency, self-care practices and relational coping. These distinct pathways show how particular populations and environmental conditions (low-income women), “strive to reframe their relationship to the market” (ibid: 267). Similar findings have been found within other research, for example, Hamilton (2012) finds single mothers within low-income households also display resilience to vulnerability, whilst adopting various coping strategies in order to protect a perceived standard of living. Canvin *et al.*, (2009: 239) show how individuals and families living in deprived areas were found to transition into and out of poverty when presenting resilience “in the face of adversity”. Within this investigation, resilience was found created through

knowledge exchange within the community, concerning public services and welfare issues, and positive impacts included return to better circumstances such as education, training, and employment.

## 2.4 Poverty

Poverty is a widely used meaningful term and concept used in “all counties in the world” (Gordon, 2006: 29). Lister (2004: 03) outlines “*there is no single concept of poverty that stands outside history and culture. It is a construction of specific societies. Moreover, different groups within a society may construct it in different ways*”. As such, terms of poverty are often related to the degree by which a person experiences it, and the most commonly found discussion considers absolute and relative terms.

The United Nations (1995:38) define ‘absolute poverty’ as a “condition characterized by severe deprivation of basic human needs, including food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health, shelter, education and information. Therefore, absolute poverty depends not only on income but also on access to social services”. Absolute poverty also found termed extreme poverty or acute deprivation, is defined at a set level of income which is measured upon economic conditions of the country in question. How a level of income is set, means that any economic growth within a country will have no bearing for the individuals who exist within absolute poverty. The characteristic of absolute terms can mean life and death (Walker *et al.*, 2013) because being in absolute poverty means that a person’s income does not meet the basic needs for living. Absolute terminology is more often found connected to discourse linked with third world countries (Walker *et al.*, 2013), and not necessarily a good indicator of deprivation within the parameters of social research. However, as a result of the combined ascent of the COVID-19 pandemic, in addition to the pre-existing factors of global conflict and climate change, The World Bank (2020)

forecasted a rise within absolute poverty for the first time in more than two decades, and a subsequent fall in living standards also means that absolute poverty and absolute child poverty within the UK is set to rise in the short-run from 2021-22 to 2023-24 (Brewer, Fry and Try, 2023).

In addition to absolute, poverty is found discussed as relative. Relative poverty defines how an individual measures within a specific economic climate. Therefore, an individual may not reside in absolute poverty, in so much as they meet the basic human needs as outlined above, however, the individual may be poor in a relative sense reflected within societal comparison (Eskelinen, 2011). Relative terminology is also found used to describe deprivation. For example, Townsends (1979) early work suggests that poverty should be measured on non-material dimensions, which he defined as ‘relative deprivation’. He considered that if people were ‘relatively deprived’, they had no access to things that were otherwise widely available in society, so access to resources or the inability to “obtain the types of diet, participate in the activities and have the living conditions and amenities which are customary, or at least widely encouraged and approved, in the societies in which they belong” (Townsend, 1979: 31). However, if terms are understood to be relative, then there should always be a descriptive within the literature as to what is it relative to (Flaherty, 2008). Without such context, definitions of relative poverty which are means tested or based upon relative income, may be found open to interpretation (Townsend, 1979) both upon personal and political viewpoints.

This poverty investigation is situated within the realms of consumer research, which generally occurs “within societies where consumption has a strong ideological hold”

(Hamilton *et al.*, 2014: 1834). Here, being poor is commonly understood from the “plight of a flawed consumer” (Bauman, 2005: 1), and poverty is measured in relation to “the societal norms and customs of a given society”, where people should have an “unimpeded, lifetime access to goods and services that meet basic needs” (Hill, 2018: 214). Within such consumer investigation, relative terms are more useful when discussing complexities of research, and thorough discussion of ‘what’ the researched poverty is relative to. However, as with any research, in order to better understand the implications of living within poverty, it is important to understand the context which underpins the parameters of investigation. Discussed next is poverty and how it is frequently debated and contested within the UK political landscape.

#### 2.4.1 Understanding Poverty within the Political Landscape

Askegaard and Linnet (2011: 381) provide a platform to expand what is understood within consumer researchers, through the “contextualization of lived consumer experiences” with additional deeper contextualization’s. Their work highlights that the neglected “systemic and structuring influences of market and social systems” (ibid: 381) should be taken into consideration when it explicitly connects to the underlying lived experience of the consumer.

The ‘context of context’ between the socio-historical agenda and the lived experience of the individual can be found fragmented within UK poverty discourse. To explain, within the UK, the driver of poverty discussion often lies within governance or who is guiding the political landscape, and an example of this can be highlighted within the 1980s/90s, whilst the UK Conservative government sat in power. At this time the

term ‘poverty’ was scantily used, it was deemed an ill-fitting societal word to describe an already eradicated problem (Gordon, 2017). As described by Flaherty (2008: 29), throughout the Thatcher years ‘poverty’ thrived, and “despite its rapid increase in incidence throughout the 1980s it was barred from the governments’ formal political discourse”. It was about this time that welfare state reforms were being overhauled and the values and attitudes of the ‘underclass’ were frequently highlighted as root causes of poverty, as opposed to the material deprivation occurring within much of society (Flaherty, 2008). Moving forward past neo-liberal governance and into the Blair era of ‘New Labour’ (circa 1997), poverty once again became found a term used to highlight social exclusion, however, new governmental approaches to understanding poverty, didn’t adopt a position or positions which could be applied across nations (Flaherty, 2008). Lansley (2022) explains the governments political expression surrounding poverty appears aligned with a social strategy that is more anti-poor than anti-poverty. This approach to strategy assumes a person has a choice to remain in poverty or not, therefore, the politicised agenda could be said to apportion blame to the individual who resides within poverty (Lister, 2004, 2016).

In 2016, ‘*The Scotland Act*’ resulted in some governmental matters being devolved to the Scottish Government (2016). This included additional aspects which would impact upon poverty including social security measures (disability and carers’ benefits, Winter Fuel Allowance). Meaning, the Scottish Government have selected autonomy to address some issues surrounding poverty: “for instance, major areas of economic development, education, health and housing policy” (Lodge, Henderson and Davies, 2015: 03), and power to create new benefits to top-up reserved benefits

such as the housing element of Universal Credit (Scottish Government, 2016). “It is anticipated that existing and proposed changes to benefits within Scotland will go some way to alleviate the current poverty issues” (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2020: 11). However, the transfer of social security matters to Scotland has been slowed in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic (ibid).

How Scotland’s devolved politics and governance interplay, has determined how some elements of poverty may be understood or alleviated, and specific issues have been investigated through the application of local research and policy. To explain, Scottish “campaigns and stakeholders” prompted funding for research upon ‘Period Poverty’ (The Scottish Government, 2018: 3). Subsequent to research, a parliamentary Bill was introduced: ‘Period Products (Free Provision) (Scotland) Bill’ (Scottish Parliament, 2019), the Bill became an Act and subsequently became law on 12 January 2021. The law should help to alleviate aspects of poverty by means of “general right to and supply of free period products” (Scottish Parliament, 2019: 1). This example demonstrates that process and outcome from governance and policy, has the potential to be transformative, and presents how intersectionality within and across research (Saatcioglu and Corus, 2014: 123), can help understand intertwined issues “economic, social, cultural, and political contexts in which individual and external conditions interact”. This also demonstrates value within social policy research which considers an “equalities or human rights informed approach” (The Scottish Government, 2018: 3) to understand societal needs. Highlighting research which is “attentive to the context of contexts” (Askegaard and Linnet, 2011: 396) including parameters within investigation such as “class divisions, historical and global processes, cultural values and norms”.

The discussion within this section highlights that governments have immense power, including the authority to skew language and belief, through influencing the flow of discourse, and as governance is in constant flux, it remains within the UK that there is no standardised definition of poverty, and as such the ebbs and flows of poverty discourse remains “highly politically contested” (Gordon, 2018: 19). Unanimity can be found around the topic of poverty in so much as the partisan consensus agrees that poverty should not exist. However, “the political and policy challenge as to how best to reduce it and its attendant human suffering” (Walker *et al.*, 2013: 2016), still surrounds “whose understanding of poverty is being promoted” (Flaherty, 2008: 17-18). For example, Martin and Paul Hill (2012: 773) present that politically led agendas “may not have a direct relationship with needs of impoverished populations under study”. Such disparity has been reflected between the grassroots views offered by the general public, as opposed to those provided by policy makers or health professionals (Lister, 2016), and the outcome of political agendas can mean the same policies which provide clarity for health professionals, can also undermine the communities they seek to help by preserving the low expectations of social inclusion (McKendrick *et al.*, 2016).

Flaherty (2008: 13) explains that one reason this may occur is because “access to discourse is not equal”, and few within entitled sectors are in contact with those who live in poverty. Meaning it is exceedingly rare for a researcher who is framing discourse, to be a construct of the task at hand. In this way, academic discussion surrounding who makes up the poor does not necessarily translate accordingly towards the needs of the people under observation (Farrell and Hill, 2018). For example, research may be defined by “not only what it is legitimate to say but also

who can say it, only certain 'truths' about poverty, primarily those of the 'non- poor', come to constitute a discourse of poverty” (Flaherty, 2008: 13).

This section has briefly outlined that poverty is understood very differently depending upon who is in control of poverty discourse. The next section now turns to the ways by which poverty can be found measured.

#### 2.4.2 Measuring poverty

Measurements of poverty most frequently relate to information issued from the UK's largest public service department, the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP). The DWP control welfare, pensions, and child maintenance policy, this includes issuing a range of working age, disability and ill health benefits to around 20 million claimants and customers (DWP, 2022). DWP measurements surround household income, or more concisely whether a household is below average income (HBAI) after inflation adjustments. HBAI is a source for data and information about household income and inequality in the UK. Household income (equivalised dependent on composition) as 60% of median household income DWP (2020: 02). The DWP annual estimates of UK poverty are obtained from a sample of 19,000 private household surveys, based upon resources such as earnings, benefits, and housing costs. However, data collected are not considered concise, due to the size of the research sample and the exclusion of individuals' in residence, for example, student halls or elderly residential homes (Ibid). Previously discussed absolute and relative terms still remain within the HBAI measurement, however terminology is discussed as 'relative low income' and 'absolute low income':

***Relative low income:*** This refers to people living in households with income below 60% of the median in that year.

***Absolute low income:*** This refers to people living in households with income below 60% of median income in a base year, usually 2010/11. This measurement is adjusted for inflation

Francis-Devine (2023: 05)

Definitions as outlined above can be found measured before and after housing costs, where a general increased level of poverty is found after housing costs. HBAI statistics only present a snapshot of individuals at a single timepoint, without fine or greater detail demonstrating the persistence of poverty (ibid).

‘Persistent poverty’ is a measurement of poverty over time, identifying “individuals who live in relative poverty for three or more of the last four years” (The Scottish Government, 2022: 1). This type of poverty measurement identifies people who may be at increased risk, as a result of their persistent poverty status, as the longer people remain in poverty, the more detrimental the impacts are upon “health, well-being, and overall life chances” (ibid).

‘Deep poverty’ and ‘very deep poverty’ measurements highlight a trend of deepening poverty within the UK: “we see the scale of destitution in the UK rising fast. Four million people experienced destitution in 2022 – an extraordinary 148% increase over just five years. This included one million children, nearly three times as many as in 2017” (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2024: 04). These poverty measurements highlighting that 40% of people living in poverty, are in ‘very deep poverty’, measuring beyond the relative and absolute HBAI measurements of income below 60% of median to consider ‘very deep’ poverty “(equivalised household income after

housing costs that was less than 50% of the UK median)” and 26% of people living in poverty are in ‘deep poverty’ “(that is, with an income less than 40% of the UK median)” (ibid: 27).

The discussion within this section highlights some rudimentary terminology and measurements across poverty discourse. Lister (2016: 139) summarises that although numerical measurements can be important to help understand research and also to hold governments accountable, “[a]ll too often political debate about poverty hangs on statistics and the measures used to compile them”. These measurements are suggested “inadequate because it is a measure not a definition. Measures are but imperfect attempts to operationalise definitions” (ibid: 140), and there are significant contrasts to those definitions of poverty and how circumstances of poverty are understood (Farrell and Hill, 2018). Within academia the narrative is similar, for example, Gordon (2006: 32) suggests that “if you put five academics (or policy makers) in a room you would get at least six different definitions of poverty”, however, there is general agreement that poverty can be presented as having an “insufficient command of resources over time”.

As this consumer research will investigate complex social issues, it will consider relative parameters when researching poverty (Darley and Johnson, 1985), and define low-income consumers as those “who lack resources necessary to participate in the normal customs of their society” (Hamilton and Catterall, 2007: 559).

Moving forward from poverty measurements, the following section briefly discusses what can be understood about the causes and impact of poverty.

### 2.4.3 Causes & Outcome of Poverty

Poverty research by McKendrick *et al.* (2016: 58) outline that most ‘causes’ of poverty are an combination of mechanisms which can be identified under the banners of “social, economic, and political”. However, their work suggests that although there may be an association within trends or labels of poverty, these descriptors offer no “insight to the root causes of poverty”. They highlight ‘income’ as the primary resource which is lacking for people in poverty, therefore, income poverty in Scotland is simply “about not having enough” (ibid: 61). Lister (2004: 12) presents that in order to better understand poverty descriptive, researchers need to step away from inaccurate blanket approaches contained within demographics, to consider “social, cultural and historical contexts”. Understanding the causes and consequences of poverty has been highlighted important within research, especially that which looks to understand the lived experience of people. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation present some commonly found causes and consequences of poverty (see table 2.2):

Table 2.2: Causes and consequences of poverty

<i>Causes of poverty</i>	<i>Consequences of poverty</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>unemployment and low-paid jobs lacking prospects and security (or a lack of jobs)</i></li><li>• <i>low levels of skills or education</i></li><li>• <i>an ineffective benefit system</i></li><li>• <i>high costs</i></li><li>• <i>discrimination</i></li><li>• <i>weak relationships</i></li><li>• <i>abuse, trauma, or chaotic lives</i></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>health problems</i></li><li>• <i>housing problems</i></li><li>• <i>being a victim or perpetrator of crime</i></li><li>• <i>drug or alcohol problems</i></li><li>• <i>lower educational achievement</i></li><li>• <i>poverty itself</i></li><li>• <i>homelessness</i></li><li>• <i>teenage parenthood</i></li><li>• <i>relationship and family problems</i></li><li>• <i>biological effects</i></li></ul>

(adapted from: Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2022))

The table above outlines the causes of poverty as those ‘things’ that reduce an individual’s resources or those ‘things’ that increase their needs. This research highlights poverty as a multidimensional issue, containing a range of aspects namely, a lack of resources, opportunities, and outcomes. The resources which are frequently lacking for individuals living in poverty is insufficient personal or household income.

However, this work highlights an overlap occurring between the causes and consequences of poverty that creates a persistent ‘difficult to escape’ poverty cycle (ibid). For example, social research by Walker *et al.*, (2013: 216) describe a range of negative consequences for individuals who endure poverty, from poverty-related shame to “pretence, withdrawal, self-loathing, ‘othering’, despair, depression, thoughts of suicide and generally to reductions in personal efficacy”. Suggesting the consequences of poverty “often leads to poor physical and mental health, restricted social and economic mobility, social isolation and powerlessness” (ibid: 216).

#### 2.4.4 Consumer Poverty

“In a consumer society, where ‘normal life’ is structured around consumption”, being poor does not prevent socio cultural aspirations to consume (Hamilton *et al.*, 2014: 1834). Poverty is outlined by Hill (2002: 365) as “the source of vulnerability for most of humankind”, and how individuals who are experiencing poverty process and adapt within consumption practices, is a topic that has been studied over the years. Although vulnerability and poverty are not synonymous or measured in the same manner, there are similarities between investigation of poverty and vulnerability, as in so much as poverty is generally understood as a multifaceted societal issue (Martin

and Hill, 2012), which stretches far beyond issues of income. When poverty and vulnerability are experienced together they comprise many groups of people, and poverty can be considered a specific form of vulnerability within populations who may be at increased risk of being or becoming a vulnerable consumer (Baker, Gentry and Rittenburg, 2005).

Consumer research upon poverty highlighting poverty can be found to outline a divide between those who 'have', and those who 'have not'. Those who 'have' and live amongst affluence, continue to accept and or help sustain poverty. The 'affluent' have been found to understand the poor, as those who are responsible for their own socioeconomic status. For example, studies within social classes, those deemed to be lower class were found to feel discriminated against by higher classes. This is aligned with Bauman's (2005: 01) work which suggests the "poor will always be with us, but what it means to be poor depends on the kind of 'us' they are 'with'", and the poor may be found "socially defined, and self-defined first and foremost as blemished, defective, faulty and deficient in other words inadequate consumers, who have "no access to a normal life, let alone a happy one" (ibid: 38).

Consumer poverty research can include how the individual is affected by poverty and how they respond to living within poverty constraints. How people understand and feel with regards to being within the confines of consumer poverty, should also not be understated. For example, investigation surrounding families and poverty can show how individuals experience vulnerability and "feel devalued, useless, helpless, uncared for, hopeless, isolated, and anxious and a failure" (Wilkinson, 1996: 215). Poverty is associated with shame for many, where a failure to meet expectations and

the struggle of keeping up appearances has a negative impact on identity. Material and psychological destitution is found to cause embarrassment and humiliation (Felski, 2000), and as a multifaceted issue, poverty has nuance or association within its own identity, surrounding the ‘who’ and ‘what’ and sometimes the ‘where’.

As the preceding sections upon poverty research highlight, the diversity and disparity of poverty experiences is greater than ever before, and poverty paradoxes between the best and worst off, are becoming increasingly prevalent (Hamilton *et al.*, 2014). This can certainly be suggested within Glasgow, which features the worst disparity in western Europe (Walsh *et al.*, 2010). The myriad of consumer research which now surrounds the cause and impact of poverty covers many decades and topics. Some examples include poverty’s impact upon ethnicity (Peñaloza, 1995) exclusion (Hamilton, 2009b), consumption inadequacy (Farrell and Hill, 2018), and marketplace morality (Hill, 2018). Consumer research also highlights how poverty can make people vulnerable (Baker, Gentry and Rittenburg, 2005), are found to cope (Hamilton and Catterall, 2008), and show resilience (Hutton, 2016), when faced with vulnerability.

Measuring poverty within consumer research looks beyond “financial shortfalls”, to understand consumption adequacies comprised of differing or multiple poverty aspects (Farrell and Hill, 2018: 772). A consumption adequacy framework has been suggested a way to understand poverty in a “more complete and effective manner” (ibid: 771), considering “a deficit in the consistent supply of culturally specific and nutritious foods, socially and environmentally appropriate clothing, safe and sufficient housing, curative and preventative healthcare, and access to developmental

opportunities for personal and professional growth” (ibid: 784). Similar to the previously outlined ‘absolute’ measures, including deprivation of basic human needs of food, water, facilities, health, shelter, education, and information, however, this framework is also relative, is so much as how individuals relate to some kind of measurement within their consumer activities.

Poverty research can be found entwined with research upon those consumers who experience vulnerability. For example, within the section upon consumer vulnerability (see section 2.3), individuals who fit within a specific race or ethnicity are considered to be a population who are at risk for harm with respect to vulnerability (Pechmann *et al.*, 2011). This is also shown within poverty research, for example, the city of Glasgow has a higher than average ethnic minority populace which currently sits at 12 percent, poverty is found higher among ethnic minority groups than within the majority white population, albeit varied within and between groups and geographical areas (Johnstone *et al.*, 2016).

Research shows the varied landscape of poverty investigation, plus the indeterminate and extremely sensitive nature of the issue, means it is difficult to consistently research, record, and present, that which is ultimately very messy data (Flaherty, 2008). To allow better understanding within poverty investigation, some investigation is found presented within facets of poverty, or poverty subpopulations (Saatcioglu and Corus, 2014). For example ‘child poverty’ (Judge, 2012), ‘period poverty’ (The Scottish Government, 2018), ‘food poverty’ (Lambie-Mumford, 2014). The next section now draws upon the poverty subpopulation that is key within this work, and turns to discussion upon food-insecurity.

## 2.5 Food-insecurity

*“The relationship between poverty and food-insecurity is not a necessary one, but in the UK, a neoliberal governance context enables the two to form a contingent relationship that is creating hardship”.* (Blake, 2019: 3)

Food availability, affordability, and accessibility has been the topic of research for some time (Cummins and Macintyre, 2002), including cheapest price, branded price, and general food availability (Dawson *et al.*, 2008). Highlighting that although not a new issue within the UK, relations between poverty and food-insecurity are commonly intertwined (Blake, 2019). However, food-insecurity continues to gain increasing attention because of the significant concern it presents to the health of all those who reside within it (O’Connor, Farag and Baines, 2016).

Comparable to the previous sections discussion on poverty, how food poverty is debated and described varies hugely, and as such, how researchers and or policy makers are found to measure hunger can sometimes lack definition, therefore, this section first turns to a brief discussion of terminology to outline the often interchangeable terms of food poverty and food-insecurity, and present the preferred term of food-insecurity. Following this, the section is structured to present how food-insecurity is found measured and understood within Scotland, and what responses are found applied to reduce the issue.

### 2.5.1 Food poverty and Food-insecurity

The discussion upon food poverty and or food-insecurity can sometimes be vague, largely because the terms are used interchangeably. The National Health Board Scotland adopts the often used Dowler definition of food poverty (NHS Health Scotland, 2015). The Dowler definition comes from a prior definition of ‘hunger’ by Radimer *et al.*, (1992: 39S): outlined as “The inability to acquire or consume an adequate or sufficient quantity of food in socially acceptable ways, or the uncertainty that one will be able to do so”. Described in this manner, Dowler explains that “[a]ccess, availability and affordability are important dimensions of food security, but the food itself, and the ways in which it is obtained, have to be socially acceptable as well as nutritionally adequate” (Dowler, 2002: 709).

Dowler's (2002) frequently used definition of food poverty is helpful for research which comes from a rights-based viewpoint, and allows research to define those lived experiences of individuals who are experiencing hunger. For example, Lambie-Mumford (2014: 35-6) agrees with Dowler, to suggest that “the concept of food poverty” should be used to understand both the social issue and causes, whereas food security is more frequently used “to refer to national food supply issues and global or national food systems”. There are many similar takes upon food-insecurity, for example, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) outline food-insecurity similarly, to food-insecurity as a lack of “regular access to enough safe and nutritious food for normal growth and development and an active healthy life” (FAO, 2022: web).

However, there are some disagreements with the positioning of poverty and insecurity in this manner. For example, O'Connor, Farag and Baines (2016: 431) suggest that to improve understanding of food poverty within the parameters of the UK, food poverty should be understood more holistically in relation to the pillars of food security: "access, stability, utilisation, and availability". They outline that food poverty can occur through pressures occurring between a combination of the pillars; however, food-insecurity can result from pressures upon an individual pillar: "food-insecurity can exist without food poverty as a contributing influence however food poverty cannot exist without food-insecurity" (ibid: 431).

All of the work discussed above and definitions beyond these, have similarities, strengths, and weaknesses. However, as this consumer research concerns itself with the phenomena outlined considered within the lived experiences for individuals and organisations, this study aligns itself with the reasoning of Moraes *et al.*, (2021: 1170), who suggest the term 'food-insecurity' is a more encompassing because it indicates that an individual's inability to access food "is a facet of poverty and the way in which poverty is structured socio-politically". Therefore, going forward this work adopts the term food-insecurity to describe the inability for both people and organisation to access food within the marketplace. Now that concerns of terminology have been discussed, the next section turns to how food-insecurity is found measured.

## 2.5.2 Measuring food-insecurity

The measurement of food-insecurity is frequently understood through the provision of emergency food aid. Food aid is a term “encompassing a range of large-scale and small local activities aiming to help people meet food needs, often on a short-term basis during crisis or immediate difficulty; more broadly they contribute to relieving symptoms of household or individual level food-insecurity and poverty”

(Lambie-Mumford, 2014: iv). Within the UK in 2022/23 14% of people were suggested to be food insecure, 3 million food parcels were given out, where households with children are more likely to turn to food banks (The Trussell Trust, 2023). Some contextual examples of existing research showing a narrative of food-insecurity is presented in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3: Measuring food-insecurity

<b><i>Author</i></b>	<b><i>Research</i></b>	<b><i>Published</i></b>
Moraes <i>et al.</i> , (2021)	Understanding lived experiences of food-insecurity through a paraliminality lens	Sociology
Francis-Devine, Tyler Danechi (2021)	Food poverty: Households, food banks and free school meals	House of Commons Library
Sosenko <i>et al.</i> , (2019)	State of Hunger: A study of poverty and food-insecurity in the UK	The Trussell Trust
Blake (2019)	More than just food: Food-insecurity and resilient place making through community self-organising	Sustainability
Dresler & Tutt (2019)	Food-insecurity, customer to volunteer transition and self-concept repair: a free store example	Journal of Marketing Management
MacLeod, Curl & Kearns (2019)	Understanding the prevalence and drivers of food bank use: Evidence from deprived communities in Glasgow	Social Policy and Society

Davis & Geiger (2017)	Did food-insecurity rise across Europe after the 2008 crisis? An analysis across welfare regimes	Social Policy and Society
Mirosa <i>et al.</i> , (2016)	The social value of rescuing food, nourishing communities	British Food Journal
Purdam, Garratt & Esmail (2016)	Hungry? Food-insecurity, Social Stigma and Embarrassment in the UK	Sociology
Douglas <i>et al.</i> , (2015)	The Nature and Extent of Food Poverty/Insecurity in Scotland	NHS Health Scotland
Flora Douglas <i>et al.</i> , (2015)	Resourcefulness, Desperation, Shame, Gratitude and Powerlessness	AIMS Public Health

As can be seen from the sample of food-insecurity exploration outlined within the table above, research can come from a variety of academic, public, policy, and organisational sources. Found presented geographically by country, city, or community. The issue of food-insecurity can be addressed across varying societal contexts, for example: welfare, nutrition, stigma, deprivation, resilience. A recent report ‘*Hunger in Scotland*’ delivered by the Trussell Trust (IPSOS and The Trussell Trust, 2023) suggests that at least 1.2 million people in Scotland experience food-insecurity yearly. However, investigation by Douglas *et al.* (2015) show food-insecurity largely under reported. This is partly because of the absence of clearly defined appropriate measures of food-insecurity, and the resulting difficulty to measure the issue.

Within Glasgow City, the number of individuals who are living within the constraints of food-insecurity is on the rise, and largely assumed to be under reported. Moraes *et al.*, (2021:1172) suggest that “food-insecurity begins with a first stage of separation from stable social standings as conventional food consumers who rely on the marketplace for food access”. Marketplace food access for a food-insecure individual

is generally understood to be supplementary food parcels, as can be accessed from a food bank (Francis-Devine, Tyler and Danechi, 2021). However, there is a substantial knowledge gap about “what it means to be able to acquire food in a socially acceptable manner” and food insecure means “that people are unable to behave like normal consumers” (ibid: 65).

a) Food bank

‘Food bank’ is the general name for those organisations who provide free supplementary food parcel provision, these food banks were initially intended to provide a temporary respite for people who were food insecure (Francis-Devine, 2020). Food banks “occupy an uncomfortable position, being seen both as a manifestation of caring communities as well as an undesirable feature of neoliberal government” (Surman, Kelemen and Rumens, 2021: 1). For many, food banks have become the first response to food-insecurity in high-income countries (Middleton *et al.*, 2018). Because of the well-known food bank response, the measurement of food-insecurity is frequently understood through the provision of emergency supplementary food parcels.

Within the UK the largest single provider of emergency supplementary food parcels, is the food bank franchise the Trussell Trust. In exchange for an annual fee, organisations are said to benefit from the support of a nationwide network of around 1,300 foodbanks (The Trussell Trust, 2021a). Systematic recording of Trussell Trust provision dates back to 2005, and information collected by the franchise includes age, ethnicity, household composition, reason for referral and household

composition. Recent statistics (2022-23) on emergency food provision (see figure 2.1) shows around 3 million food parcels were given out across the UK, an increase of 37% on the previous year, “[m]ore than one million of these parcels were distributed for children” (The Trussell Trust, 2023: web)

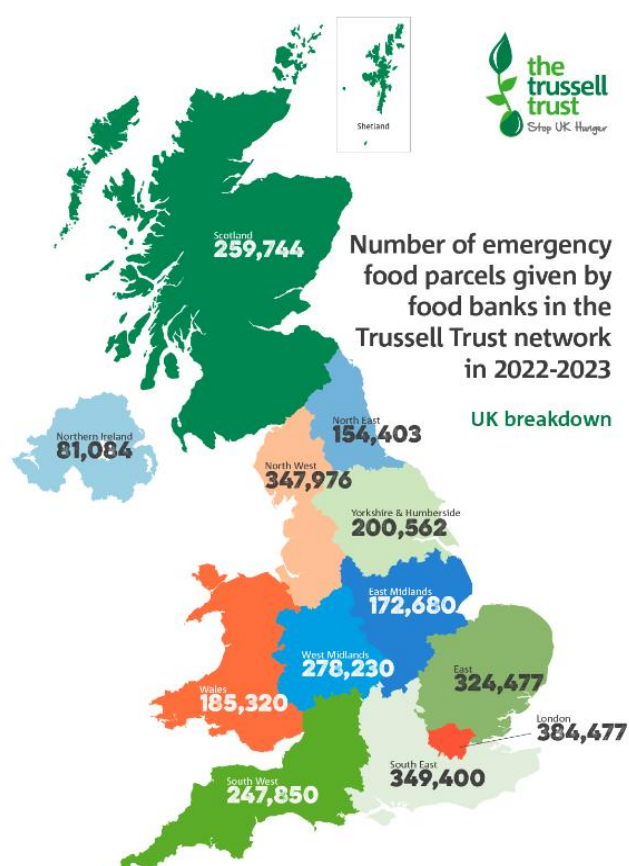


Figure 2.1: The Trussell Trust – emergency parcel provision 2022-2023

(adapted from The Trussell Trust (2023))

“In the five years between 2017/18 and 2022/23, the number of emergency food parcels provided by the Trussell Trust network of food banks in Scotland has doubled and a record number of parcels have been distributed for children, up 57% over the past five years” (IPSOS and The Trussell Trust, 2023: 11). These and other

Trussell Trust statistics highlight some general information upon supplementary food provision, with continuous reporting year on year, which highlights a rise of parcel provision every year since records began. However, relying on the provision of food parcels has been suggested as a poor indicator of the scope of food-insecurity (MacLeod, 2015). To explain, although the Trussell Trust records information and identifies and how many parcels are provided, it does not consider any dynamics beyond basic parameters. Thus, it is difficult to assume solid validity within their data (Davis and Geiger, 2017).

However, the Trussell Trust is increasingly seen as a fast growing powerful franchise, and it is conveniently linked with the similarly powerful organisation of surplus food distribution, Fareshare. As such, the rhetoric, or the lived experience of those who use this supplementary food, has been suggested “carefully curated” and “based on ‘ludicrous’ assumptions” (Power, 2022: 08). To explain, findings by the Trussell Trust suggest people have been saved from hunger by their food charity (The Trussell Trust, 2023), however, in reality some clients would not access the services of the Trussell Trust because they were found by some to be inadequate (Power, 2022: 08). Additionally, as access to Trussell Trust mainstream supplementary food parcels is achieved through a referral process, it often depends upon the knowledge of local communities and their residents, as to how effective a foodbank is (MacLeod, Curl and Kearns, 2019).

The Trussell Trust parcel provision is estimated to account for more than half of the total supplementary food provided within Glasgow City (ibid). In addition to the Trussell Trust franchise, there is also an Independent Supplementary Food Aid

Network (IFAN) of over 1,172 foodbanks which is established throughout the UK (IFAN, 2024b). The latest report from IFAN indicates that:

- *Nearly three-quarters of organisations responding to IFAN's latest survey had seen increases in need comparing November 2023-January 2024 with the same three-month period last year*
- *98% of organisations reported supporting people who had not asked for help before*
- *Most organisations reported an increase in the number of people seeking regular support*
- *65% of services had seen a drop in food donations while 45% of organisations contributing to the survey had seen a drop in financial donations*
- *If demand increases, nearly half of contributing organisations said they would need to reduce the size of the parcels they provided or might not be able to help everyone who asked for support*

(IFAN, 2024: 01)

IFAN suggest that food waste cannot remain the answer to food poverty, and considers the parameters of choice for both the people who access food banks and also those organisations who provide food services. In addition to the Trussell Trust and the IFAN network, there are a range of independent organisations found providing food-aid to alleviate aspects of hardship for those who are experiencing food-insecurity (Dresler and Tutt, 2019). However, as these many food bank services are dispersed and dissimilar, the diversity of supplementary food is very difficult to capture and document (Lambie-Mumford, 2014; Douglas *et al.*, 2015; McKendrick *et al.*, 2016; FAO *et al.*, 2017; Sosenko *et al.*, 2019). In addition to the provision of food parcels, food aid can also be found in a manner of diverse ways discussed within the next section upon supplementary food.

## b) Supplementary food services

‘Supplementary food’ is a term used by Moraes *et al.* (2021) to describe all types of food supplied in response to food-insecurity. This term goes beyond the general provision of food parcels as discussed above, to include other foods that may be considered as a form of supplementary food provision. Supplementary food comes from many other outlets, including soup kitchens, community meals, food parcels and or meals delivered (MacLeod, 2015). Supplementary food can also include the free provision of school meals, and additionally reduced cost or subsidised food provided within schools, such as breakfast clubs or school tuck shops. Similarly, supplementary food can also include those provisions that are subsidised within organisations such as food pantries, these foods are generally provided “beyond food emergency, offering a more sustained form of food access for a peppercorn fee” (Moraes *et al.*, 2021: 1184).

Within Glasgow, supplementary food comes from a range of services which are dotted throughout the sprawl of the city, including local and national organisations such as charities and community groups, more often than not, the organisations hosting supplementary food are interconnected to a religious organisation (MacLeod, 2018). Supplementary food delivered within Glasgow soup kitchens has been suggested accessed by homeless people often with long-standing issues, and food parcels and meals delivered are accessed by white Scottish individuals who are housed and have access to little or no income (ibid). Additionally, Glasgow has a proportion of individuals accessing supplementary food, from both soup kitchens and food parcels, as a result of being displaced within the city either because they are

seeking asylum or are destitute migrants (Sosenko *et al.*, 2019). The provisions discussed above, provide needed food resources, information, and services. However, Lambie-Mumford (2014: iv) suggests that food charities “raise bigger questions about our food system and social policy”. Governance has presented some action. For example, hunger has been highlighted within an independent working group, offering recommendations to the Scottish Government. They proffer ambitious future goals: “By 2030, end hunger and ensure access by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round” (Johnstone *et al.*, 2016: 4). However, these goals are possibly ambitious when considering that scant robust research upon the topic of food-insecurity (Macleod, 2018), means it is difficult to provide an accurate interpretation of supplementary food supplied within Scotland.

Within societies which comprise a welfare state, charitable organisations are often found to fulfil a role where the aim is to alleviate aspects of poverty (Parsell and Clarke, 2022). The Glasgow Council for the Voluntary Sector (GCVS) produce a Citywide third sector organisational directory ‘Challenge Poverty’ (GCVS, 2019), outlining a range of services surrounding support with child poverty, youth poverty, food poverty, financial inclusion services, housing association services, refugee services. However, although it comprises some understanding of a scale of support available to people who are experiencing poverty, it is in no way exhaustive, and there are charitable organisations absent from it. For example, although information within it provides local organisations who can help with housing issues and or homelessness, not included are Shelter Scotland (2022), who are one of many

charities who provide advice, support, and legal services to people who need help with their housing or homelessness.

One aspect which is key across the charitable or non-government organisation, is the recruitment of volunteers to aid within or lead upon the provision of supplementary food services (Riches, 2018). Some volunteers are found to do so because the identity of fulfilling a volunteer role reduces the “stigma associated with getting food for nothing and restores a sense of competence with the feelings that they have not ‘failed’” (Dresler and Tutt, 2019: 1593). However, although stigma or shame has been associated with individuals who access supplementary food, the charity or organisation providing food services may be maintaining the very status quo which food charities claim to reject, “[b]esides being the adherent factor of society, food has always been a weapon and an instrument of power” (Sodano, 2012: 375).

## 2.6 Conclusion

This chapter presents the literature which underpins this work, highlighting the key aspects considered as: consumer research upon vulnerability (Baker, Gentry and Rittenburg, 2005; Baker and Mason, 2012), poverty (Lister, 2016; Farrell and Hill, 2018), and food-insecurity (Moraes *et al.*, 2021). It identifies that consumer research upon vulnerability has allowed the expansion of research that considers the negative consequences of marketing and consumer research, and how in turn both the researched and researcher respond to these consequences. It presents that key within this investigation, is research upon spatial vulnerability, which presents vulnerability as a “dynamic, multidimensional state” (Saatcioglu and Corus, 2015: 244), highlighting that people may be at increased risk of becoming multiplicatively vulnerable because of where they live. As well as discussing the characteristics of vulnerability, and spatial vulnerability, it also highlights outcomes for people experiencing vulnerability, to consider consumers in relation to stigma, coping, and resilience. Alongside research upon vulnerability, it highlights that aspects of poverty are entwined, understood, and outlined in many ways, and that as a facet of poverty, food-insecurity is also considered a complex increasing phenomena, which is cause for considerable societal concern, especially within Glasgow, where the existing disparity continues to grow.

Each of the literature sections discussed here, could be applied to this research within its own right. However, in consideration of the multiplicity concerned across these similarly linked topics, the next chapter is the theoretical underpinning which will augment and align this research, which is assemblage theory.

### Chapter 3.      Assemblage Theory

*In a book as in all things, there are lines of articulation or segmentarity, strata and territories; but also lines of flight, movements of deterritorialization and destratification. Comparative rates of flow on these lines produce phenomena of relative slowness and viscosity, or, on the contrary, of acceleration and rupture. All this lines and measurable speeds, constitutes an assemblage.* (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 3)

The initial theory of assemblage gained purchase during a series of works in the 1970s by French philosophers Gilles Deleuze & Felix Guattari: ‘*Anti-Oedipus*’, ‘*Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*’, ‘*Rhizome*’, and their most recognized work ‘*A thousand plateaus*’ (Deleuze and Parnet, 1987; Müller, 2015). This chapter outlines the literature relevant to the theory of assemblage. The first part considers the theory of assemblages as presented by its three most prolific contributors; Gilles Deleuze (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987; Deleuze and Parnet, 1987; Deleuze, 1995), Felix Guattari (Deleuze, Guattari and Maclean, 1985; Deleuze and Guattari, 1988), and Manuel DeLanda (2006, 2011, 2016). Following a general discussion of the theory it considers the explanatory underpinnings of rhizomes and multiplicity and gives an overview of the principles of heterogeneity and relations. Discussion then turns to the literature more aligned to this thesis, and considers assemblages as they are understood within consumer research and geography.

### 3.1 Assemblages

Deleuze and Guattari introduce the reader to the diverse scope and terrain contained within the theoretic of assemblage, presenting assemblages as layered, fluid, and changing in nature, and comprised of heterogeneous components or actors which enact roles and construct relations or meaning (DeLanda, 2006). Outlined in this way, the theoretic of assemblage provides a platform for the researcher by which to study complex phenomena and their associations (Thomas *et al.*, 2013; DeLanda, 2016). However, caution within research should be applied when considering the fallible aspects of theoretical simplicity, for example, assemblages should not merely be accessible to the investigator as a simple tool that pulls together varying components of research in a “joining up exercise”. As Allen (2011: 156) explains, a thorough investigation, and an understanding of significances, are all paramount to understanding what makes the assemblage an assemblage.

The theory of assemblage allows researchers an umbrella theory, under which to align and unite differing phenomena across broad ranges of research (Anderson and McFarlane, 2011). However, because Deleuze and Guattari’s original works were written in French, there are considerations which arise from the actual ‘*assemblage*’ terminology. The English descriptive of assemblage is “a collection of things of a group of people or animals” (Cambridge Dictionary, 2022: web), which is considered an inferior translation to its French counterpart (DeLanda, 2016). This is because ‘agencement’ refers to a layout or arrangement which considers more than a collection of things, it not only includes the act of assembling, but also what relations and flows emerge ‘from’ the act of assembling (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987).

Therefore, agencement does not focus solely upon the assemblage, but also how and what becomes of assembling. Whilst using the richer agencement descriptive of assemblage, the researcher is able to observe the relations and flows, without them becoming the object or subject of theatricalization. Perhaps more simply outlined in DeLanda's words as "the action of matching of fitting together a set of components (agencer), as well as to the result of such an action: an ensemble of parts that mesh together well" (DeLanda, 2016: 01). Deleuze and Guattari (1987: 03) outline their assemblages as compiled of "neither object nor subject", and consider assemblage literature to be that without ideology. They present it in this manner in order to allow the researcher to compile research made up of radical or divergent works. However, the lack of firm ideology or clear guidelines within assemblages, means the resulting theoretical notions are many, and the theoretical implications are immense, and the sheer scope of research that can be found within assemblages can present a concern within academics, particularly an if investigation lacks lucidity or harmony where researchers can be found to rally in order to find scientific merit (Figueiredo, 2016).

Research by Franco *et al.*, (2024: 03) provides clarity for scholars considering the assemblage theoretic, explaining that "[a]n assemblage is an ensemble of component parts whose ongoing interactions produce a whole" with "properties that its components do not have" (DeLanda, 2016: 05: Hoffman and Novak 2018). Franco *et al.*, (2024) present both explanations and examples of key concepts within assemblage (see table 3.1), allowing them describe how products are "entangled with humans and other objects, as well as what transpires from these interconnections" (Franco *et al.*, 2024: 02):

Table 3.1: Assemblage Theory Concepts

<i>Concept</i>	<i>Explanation</i>	<i>Examples</i>
Assemblage	A whole that emerges from the ongoing interactions between heterogeneous parts including humans and objects.	A home office is a whole that emerges from ongoing interactions between parts such as a Wi-Fi router, computer, apps, files, stationary, furniture, websites, electrical connections, and users.
Properties	A finite set of characteristics that emerge from interactions between component parts in assemblages.	The useful properties of a home office include its enabling of administrative tasks. A property such as ease of use depends on how seamlessly component parts connect.
Capacities	Components' potentials to interact with other components.	For the usefulness or ease of use of a home office to emerge, various office technologies must have capacities to connect with each other.
Territorialization	Processes that stabilize properties such as usefulness and ease of use by assuring capacities for parts to connect remain predictable and ongoing.	A home office is territorialized when devices operate together predictably. Users can tighten territorialization via actions like developing habits or adding a password manager to assure device-app connections.
Deterritorialization	Processes that destabilize capacities and properties, such as usefulness and ease of use, if components no longer connect predictably without interruption.	A home office can be deterritorialized if connections between devices fail. If access to a cloud storage app is disrupted, useful properties of devices are destabilized as they no longer have the capacity to access files.
Tendencies	A set of patterns that typify what an assemblage can become and how properties and capacities change.	Home offices tend to become disorganized. Multiplying apps and aging devices often can deterritorialize desired properties such as usefulness and ease of use.

(Franco *et al.*, 2024: 02)

Common lines of assemblage thinking are outlined within the table above, and the next section will start with tools helpful to visualise an assemblage, to discuss the rhizome and multiplicity (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987; DeLanda, 2016). Following which, focus will turn to some key assemblage characteristics essential for this thesis, namely, that of heterogeneity and relationality (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987; DeLanda, 2016).

### 3.1.1 Rhizome

*A rhizome ceaselessly establishes connections between semiotic chains, organisations of power and circumstances relative to the arts, sciences and social struggle.* (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 07)

Deleuze and Guattari (1987) discuss connections and position the key characteristics of their notion or metaphor of a rhizome, in stark opposition to the hierarchal lines and structure which may be considered within a tree (see figure 3.1).

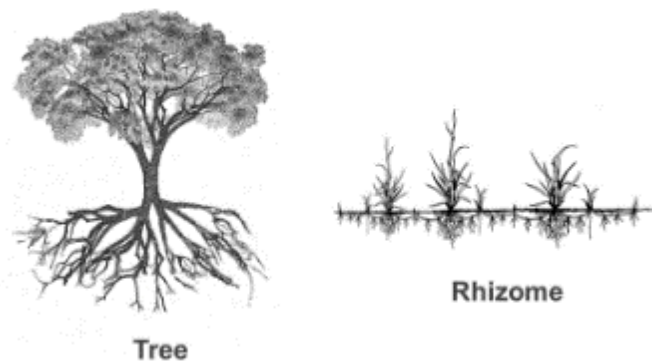


Figure 3.1: Tree versus Rhizome

(Murray, 2017)

From Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) point of view, the perception of a tree can be studied through the points, positions, and organisation that make it up. It can be studied in this structural way, because there is a linear connection which aligns the tree, from roots, to the trunk, and then the trunk to the branches (Deleuze and Parnet, 1987).

In opposition to the structure and hierarchy of a tree, the rhizome exists as an irreducible system of lines without points or positions, composed of dimensions with

no beginning or end, and operating as a result of “variation, expansion, conquest, capture, and offshoots”. Rhizomatic diversity includes the “best and the worst” of the “potato and couch grass, or the weed” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 07). Everything that constitutes the social should be considered an assemblage, and underpinning this notion of a rhizome, it is proposed that there should be no absolute start or end point, because “any point of a rhizome can be connected to anything other, and must be” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 07). As a result, there is no structure or process within the theory of a rhizome, there can be no linear order, or no one point which supersedes another, the rhizome is suggested to be the ultimate antagonist to structure (Briand-Boyd, 2019). Deleuze and Guattari (1987) outline their sense making approaches within rhizomatic thinking, as an intertwined discussion upon connection and heterogeneity, multiplicity, asignifying rupture, cartography, and decalcomania. This notion of creating knowledge through tracing how things are found to come together, interact, and break apart, is helpful to aid the flow of the subsequent discussion. Therefore, the following sections will present the discussion of assemblage across the following rhizomatic features: multiplicity, heterogeneity, and relationality.

### 3.1.2 Multiplicity

*What is an assemblage? It is a multiplicity which is made up of many heterogeneous terms and which establishes liaisons, relations between them, across ages, sexes and reigns – different natures. Thus, the assemblage's only unity is that of co-functioning: it is a symbiosis, a 'sympathy'*

(Deleuze and Parnet, 1987: 69).

Multiplicity is a term used to describe the nature of assemblages, outlined as lines or dimensions, and discussed in constant flux, this ensures everything within a multiplicity is moving, folding, shaping, therefore, every multiplicity is unique. As such, the multiplicity lacks a foundational base or superstructure, and this means there is no hierarchy between subject and object component parts, so all proportions are flattened “onto a single plane of consistency” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 09).

Without structure or ideals in support of the theoretic, the focus of assemblage investigation relies upon the interdependence between parts and the resulting symbiotic relationships (DeLanda, 2016). However, the sense of a multiplicity does not ignore that there may be balances of power within and between any given exploration and its components, it is just that relations of power are not the sole focal point of a multiplicity, instead a multiplicity should consider all the contextual underpinnings which may be understood, both within and between assemblage components (Baker and McGuirk, 2017).

For Deleuze and Parnet (1987: viii), identifying the scope and purpose of the multiplicity depends upon differing “focuses of unification, centres of totalization,

points of subjectivation”. As a multiplicity grows or intensifies, so too does the nature of the assemblage. Therefore, in order to understand multiplicity, notions must be captured or specified in some manner within theory, because without some understanding of the empirical information, it will be impossible to untangle the type of assemblage, or where the relations are occurring within it (Allen, 2011). Roffe (2016) considers this aspect of multiplicities to be scalar, where all phenomena under study should be explored (including nature) with no fixed order.

Within this social science research, multiplicity has been found used to describe the combining of particular actors and processes to become what they are (Figueiredo, 2016), or to present a collective of different elements into a functional unit (Roffe, 2016). DeLanda (2016) suggests the most crucial feature for the multiplicity is that the component parts remain irreducible. For example, he explains that communities, organisations, or governments, cannot be reduced to the people or parts that make them up, because the result would be a simple collection of people and things, and a decomposition of what can be understood (Ibid).

Now that the assemblage is underpinned by the metaphor of the rhizome and contextualised through the explanation of a multiplicity, it has been possible to demonstrate that the theoretic lacks hierarchy and structure. And although an assemblage may develop in levels or layers both within and between components (DeLanda, 2006; Canniford and Bajde, 2016b), assemblages are not concerned with level for the purpose of analysis (Weijo, Martin and Arnould, 2018). Turning towards the following section, the discussion considers the next key feature of heterogeneity.

### 3.1.3 Heterogeneity

“[A]ssemblages are always composed of heterogeneous components” (DeLanda, 2016: 20), and because of this, understanding heterogeneity is good starting point for assemblage researchers to grasp the theoretic. Heterogeneity permits an impartial approach to inquiry, allowing research to demonstrate variety that rarely exists between homogeneous groupings (Roffe, 2016). The requisite of heterogeneity is ubiquitous when considering the broad reaching aspects of social reality, and has helped present the mapping of both the “material and linguistic aspects of consumer culture” (Canniford and Bajde, 2016b: 02-3), or more simply put the study of “both people and things” (Parmentier and Fischer, 2015: 1229).

Within each assemblage, heterogeneity exists within and between components, and can be made up of people, things, practices, and relations. To highlight some examples, family (Epp and Velagaleti, 2014; Price and Epp, 2016), health (Fox, 2011), community (Thomas *et al.*, 2013), institutions (Gerolami, 2015), nature (Canniford and Shankar, 2013), and objects (Sesay, Oh and Ramirez, 2016), have all been researched with the use of assemblages.

As discussed within rhizomes (3.1.2) and multiplicities (3.1.3), there is no hierarchy present within assemblages, no levels of analysis or underpinning, and as the theoretic lacks structure, the identity of an assemblage at any one time will be determined by the diverse setting of study parameters (DeLanda, 2006, 2016).

Understanding heterogeneity within assemblage research permits the investigation of this diversity within broad parameters, and helps the researcher understand messy boundaries (Rokka, 2021) or a mixing of forces (Duff and Sumartojo, 2017) which

are frequently the result of differing components coming together (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987).

For example, Canniford and Shankar (2013) highlight difference within research components when they find discursive, material, and technological resources, helped identify how people assemble romantic experiences of nature within surfing culture. Weijo, Martin and Arnould (2018: 18) highlight that “collective creativity changes the logic of mobilization, organization, participation, and recruitment for consumer movements”. Epp, Schau and Price (2014) track and map families, to explain how consumption practices can survive distance from one location to another through the use of technology.

Whilst this diversity within heterogeneity can be considered useful within assemblages, researchers should always avoid scoping boundaries which prioritise one heterogeneous component above another. This is because the answer to the assemblage questions should not be known before the investigation begins. To explain, if an assemblage results from the “distributed agency of their components”, then the assemblage itself, can instead be determined an effect (Figueiredo, 2016: 83). This should not be the case within assemblages, where the researcher and researched should “only know its boundaries after the analysis, not before” (ibid) . However, even though the assemblage researcher should not prioritise aspects of heterogeneity, difference amongst components should equally not result in a fragile investigation. For example, the outcome of assemblage diversity should not destabilise theoretical exploration and explanation (Allen, 2011).

The creation of value within assemblages, must instead include well developed research which is rich in detail and transparency (Sesay, Oh and Ramirez, 2016). Instead of tenuous links, assemblages should be shaped by those relations, or connections, which occur between “diverse kinds and scales” of phenomena (Canniford and Bajde, 2016b: 02), which can all be considered within the immanent possibilities upon how they relate to each other, allowing unpredicted and uninfluenced discovery (DeLanda, 2016). Deleuze and Guattari (1987: 205) highlight that “[l]ines of flight are immanent to the social field”, and that both individuals and groups are “traversed by lines, meridians, geodesies, tropics, and zones marching to different beats and differing in nature” (ibid: 205). To discuss these relation or connections and associations, and how they come together, drift apart and re-group as potentially whole new assemblages, the next section now turns to the discussion upon relationality.

#### 3.1.4 Relationality

The identity of an assemblage is defined by how the heterogeneous components relate to each other (DeLanda, 2016). Relations, otherwise found explained as interactions (Sesay, Oh and Ramirez, 2016), or encounters (Price-Robertson and Duff, 2018). Relations are documented within assemblage literature as “between, the between” or part to whole relationships which occur between “elements within a provisional whole (Deleuze and Parnet, 1987: i-viii). This whole remains open; it is never a totality”, because assemblages are irreducible (ibid).

Relations can be found described as fluid in nature, existing with other parts or assemblages, without logic or unity (DeLanda, 2006). However, as with aspects discussed within the section upon heterogeneity, relationality within assemblages should not provide the researcher with what is already known, it should present more questions than answers (Allen, 2011). That said, theories may be extracted by ‘becoming’ or what Deleuze (1995: 133) outlines as tracing “the line of flight”.

Becoming is the result of heterogeneous components coming together to form something new (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987). Whereas tracing is aligned to the aspects of cartography (mapping) and decalcomania (folding), which were previously identified within the principles of rhizomatic thinking (ibid). Tracing is an action which can allow the researcher to understand how component parts connect and or separate and demonstrate how relations emerge (DeLanda, 2016).

Becoming or tracing the relations of and between components can be used as a tool to understand the nature of interactions between the heterogeneous component parts of assemblage (DeLanda, 2006). Relations can be found identified as interior and exterior and they may be exclusive within the assemblage; however, the properties of the components are innate, and therefore, cannot be defined by those relations. It is simply the capacities of assemblages which are defined by those relations (Ibid).

Interior relationships are understood to develop as a connection between things or between components parts of the assemblage, there is no independent relationship. DeLanda (2006: 09) explains relations of interiority, where “the component parts are constituted by the very relations they have to other parts in the whole”. Within these relationships varying capacities are exercised, and can be found presented as

emergent properties (DeLanda, 2016), or emerging relationships (Deleuze and Parnet, 1987). Capacities exercised relate to the potential occurring within the relations between components (DeLanda, 2006), and can be found presented as material, expressive, or imaginative capacities (Epp, Schau and Price, 2014).

Relationships of exteriority are found within those parts of the assemblage that have intrinsic qualities and maintain autonomy, these are the relationships which can be separated out and can interact with each another, but they preserve their own identity (DeLanda, 2016). This type of relationship is often described when components leave or return to an assemblage, which can also be found explained as detaching and re-attaching, or coupling and decoupling (Price-Robertson and Duff, 2018). For example, Price and Epp (2016) discuss family assemblages and explain how material objects, such as a dining table, can be detached from one assemblage and then be reattached into another. The resulting interactions with the table and other components will change, however, the intrinsic nature of the table remains.

Within all the assemblage relations, it is the principle of emergence that ensures assemblages are always in flux and are continuously shaped as they are made (Figueiredo, 2016). Although emergence as a theory does not specifically occur within the early works of Deleuze and Guattari (1987), DeLanda (2016:10) describes it is implied by the theory of irreducibility, because emergence ensures irreducibility which is “implicit in the theory of assemblage”. For DeLanda (2006), the emergent capacities and relationships of exteriority are theory’s which can be used to define social wholes within assemblages. For example, as similarly discussed within the section upon multiplicity (3.1.3), DeLanda (2006) presents that networks,

communities, or organisations, cannot be reduced to the persons that comprise them. This is because a person would just be a person, not a collection of people who are making connections and relations that are key to assemblages. However, in complete opposition to irreducibility, components cannot totalize assemblages either, because merging people into a seamless whole would mean individuality is lost (ibid: 10).

The discussion over the previous sections allowed the presentation of the notion of assemblage using explanations of the rhizome and multiplicity. It then demonstrates how the complex nature of assemblages can be explored within heterogeneity and relations (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988; DeLanda, 2016). The following section will now turn to the literature aligned within this thesis, to discuss aspects of assemblages as they are found to occur within consumer research, to do this, focus will draw down upon the micro-level elements within the investigation. The main thought behind this choice is that as the phenomena under study are incredibly diverse and numerous, and many components may be multi-level assemblages within their own right. As such, it will be incredibly difficult to capture the extent and nature of all of the power dynamics occurring within all the relations discovered, within the time limit for the study. However, it will be possible to infer some characteristics of the food-insecurity assemblage within consumer research, through drawing upon and the key characteristics of capacities, territory, and tensions .

### 3.2 Assemblages within consumption

*[C]onceptions of the world as constituted from more or less temporary amalgamations of heterogeneous material and semiotic elements, amongst which capacities and actions emerge not as properties of individual elements, but through the relationships established between them.*

(Canniford and Bajde, 2016: 01)

The use of assemblages as a theoretical position is recent within consumer research. However, emerging research over the last decade has allowed the opportunity to explore consumption in a different way, or the study of “diverse kinds of things at various scales of life” (Canniford and Bajde, 2016b: 01). For example, the relations between an assortment of actors, networks, and markets, in consideration of all their complexities within the social field (Epp, Schau and Price, 2014; Weijo, Martin and Arnould, 2018; Carrington and Ozanne, 2022).

As assemblages increase within consumption research, the theoretic has become an important tool which allows research to stretch beyond social aspects of research, presenting a unique opportunity within contemporary research and existing theories (Roffe, 2016). For the purpose of this work, the following section will introduce and consider three key tenets of assemblage which have been outlined important within consumer research, that of capacities, tensions, and territory (Canniford and Shankar, 2013; Epp, Schau and Price, 2014; Parmentier and Fischer, 2015; Price and Epp, 2016; Weijo, Martin and Arnould, 2018).

### 3.2.1 Capacities

DeLanda (2012:13) explains the difference between assemblage properties and capacities, using the example of a knife. Presenting that the knife as a component has innate properties, that of weight, shape, or state (sharp). However, the actual capacity of a knife is to cut, and if the knife interacts with another component, the capacity of the knife may be realised. “And when that capacity is actualized it is always as a double event: to cut [or] to be cut. In other words, when a knife exercises its capacity to cut it is by interacting with a different entity that has the capacity to be cut” (ibid: 13).

Because capacities are not inherent to components, they may never be realised or remain dormant because the knife may never be used. Additionally, the knife only has the capacity to cut, depending on the potential of innate properties or characteristics, so in this example, the capacity to cut may only be realised if the knife is sharp. If the right components do not align within the assemblage (Epp, Schau and Price, 2014), for example, if the knife is never used, the capacity of the knife will not be known, as it “will never be exercised” (DeLanda, 2006: 07).

Capacities can be found within research explained in different manners, for example, identified within the: interplay of elements (Bennett, 2010), assembling relations (Canniford and Shankar, 2013), relationships between entities (Price-Robertson and Duff, 2016), provisional unity through co-functioning (Deleuze and Parnet, 1987), alloys or alliances (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988), or skills (DeLanda, 2016).

Consumer research assemblages have allowed the discovery of capacities which

occur within nature (Canniford and Shankar, 2013), brands (Epp, Schau and Price, 2014; Parmentier and Fischer, 2015; Preece, Kerrigan and O'reilly, 2019), families (Price and Epp, 2016), objects (Sesay, Oh and Ramirez, 2016), place (Cheetham, McEachern and Warnaby, 2018), and consumer movements (Weiyo, Martin and Arnould, 2018).

Capacities outlined within academic research, are generally found presented as material, expressive (DeLanda, 2006), and more recently imaginative (Epp, Schau and Price, 2014). Material capacities are those that describe interactions between both people and things. For example, relations between the heterogeneous resources of technology, geography, and discourse, were found necessary for surfers to assemble their romantic experiences of nature (Canniford and Shankar, 2013). Expressive capacities are those that result from the sentient interactions of or with people (Parmentier and Fischer, 2015), and result from the socially constructed ability to process and express thoughts, experiences, and sensations (DeLanda, 2006). For example, Canniford and Shankar (2013) find surfers demonstrate their expressive capacity, when they explain the contradictory characteristics of surfing and surfing resources, where surfing links them nearer to their romantic experience of nature, however, the resources used can be damaging to the environment which causes conflict within their romantic experiences. As discussed above, these expressive capacities cannot exist alone, and without language to indicate the context within a conversation, expressive capacities are redundant. Additionally, meanings surrounding the language, are also needed to compliment "other not-semantic sources of expressivity: tone, stress, rhythm, rhyme" (DeLanda, 2016: 54).

DeLanda (2006: 12) suggests the range of capacities spans between a “purely material role on one extreme of the axis, to a purely expressive role at the other extreme”. However, Epp, Schau and Price, (2014: 88) have also introduced imaginative capacities within assemblages, as those capacities which can “compensate for the absence of materiality and expressiveness”. Imaginative capacities are those capacities that are envisioned. For example, families who are separated over time and space, find imaginative capacity as a way to reassemble family practices in the “absence of materiality and expressiveness” (Ibid).

Consumer research assemblages can also demonstrate that components can have a range of capacities. For example, Epp, Schau and Price (2014: 88) find that each assemblage “component has capacities that limit and boost potentialities”. To explain, when families re-assemble their assemblage components over dispersed locations, the components range between high and low capacities. The authors find that family practices with “high capacities of key components that complement one another will have a high capacity to reassemble” (Ibid: 86). Understanding this range of capacities, can allow better understanding within consumer research. For example, Parmentier and Fischer (2015) identify expressive capacities within consumer narratives of a serial brand, these were found to both complement and undermine the material capacities within branding campaigns, which were shown to stabilise or destabilise a brands identity.

Capacities within consumption can be found discussed within their different contexts of material, expressive, imaginative, however, capacities most often occur “simultaneously and influence one another” (DeLanda, 2016: 52). For example, Epp,

Schau and Price (2014) show families increase their material, expressive, and imaginative capacities through the use of new technologies, or Parmentier and Fischer (2015: 1240) consider “expressive and material capacities exercised by fans” to understand serial brands.

Identifying how capacities impact upon each other, allows researchers to better understand investigation. It allows researchers to consider consumers across a range of differing platforms (Parmentier and Fischer, 2015), and permits a range of broad parameters to understand the lived experience of how people feel and behave towards a vast array of consumption research, from nature (Canniford and Shankar, 2013) to restaurants (Weijo, Martin and Arnould, 2018), from family (Epp, Schau and Price, 2014) to body worn technology (Sesay, Oh and Ramirez, 2016), to present how people and things relate with each other “across time and space” (Epp, Schau and Price, 2014: 87). Therefore, assemblages can be helpful to provide insight into the intricacies of consumer research, it can identify how people and things relate, and may help demonstrate consumer influence upon markets. For example, Epp, Schau and Price (2014: 95), identify “marketing strategies to create, sustain, and leverage brands in collocated and tech-mediated practices”. However, the type of relation occurring between components can also influence or determine the degree or direction of change within assemblages, and these changes have the potential to stabilise or destabilise assemblages. To discuss these aspects further the next section outlines characteristics of territory (DeLanda, 2006).

### 3.2.2 Territory

*“An important contribution of assemblage theory is to give us an enriched way of thinking about territories and boundaries”.* (Price and Epp, 2016: 68)

As discussed previously, the components of assemblages are “a composite of heterogeneous bodies that themselves are also assemblages” (Weijo, Martin and Arnould, 2018: 03). The properties contained within heterogeneous components are innate or knowable and explains what an entity is, and these properties determine each components parts distinct abilities to interact and interlink with other components (Anderson and McFarlane, 2011; DeLanda, 2016). Cheetham, McEachern and Warnaby (2018) use the metaphor of a kaleidoscope to describe these fluid patterns or sequences that can be interpreted within assemblages.

It is the combinations of these relations or interactions which “makes assemblages inherently unstable but not equally unstable” (Weijo, Martin and Arnould, 2018: 04), and it is the surrounding discussion upon this activity, that helps defines the territory within an assemblage. DeLanda (2006: 13) suggests that territory should be understood in two ways, firstly within those aspects that may define “spatial boundaries of actual territories” and secondly “non-spatial processes which increase the internal homogeneity of an assemblage”. However, the notion of parameters or spatial boundaries and territories is immense, and assemblages should depend heavily upon underpinning context in order to understand the characteristics occurring within it (Chelekis and Figueiredo, 2015).

Irrespective of discussion upon space and homogeneity, each assemblage in principle is outlined as a territorial entity, regulated through the degree of territorialisation and deterritorialization (DeLanda, 2006; Canniford and Bajde, 2016a; Weijo, Martin and Arnould, 2018). Within assemblage literature, the regulation or balance of a territory, can also be found discussed as aspects of stabilisation and destabilisation (Parmentier and Fischer, 2015). Aspects of territorialisation, or “lines of articulation” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988: 88), are those aspects that help to stabilise or strengthen assemblages (Deleuze and Parnet, 1987). These are found within determination of spatial boundaries, and or to what degree component parts of assemblages draw upon and assemble homogeneity (DeLanda, 2016). For example, understanding “tangible and intangible elements of boundary making” allows Cheetham, McEachern and Warnaby (2018: 479) to present aspects of space and place, which they feel are essential to see place-making within consumption practices. Or Epp, Schau and Price (2014) outline decoupling and then reassembling practices (sometimes in new ways), as an important re-territorializing aspect for family assemblages, when people are separated by space or distance.

Aspects of deterritorialization or “lines of flight” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 223) lie in opposition to territorialisation and is found to weaken assemblages (Deleuze and Parnet, 1987). This either occurs as a result of reduced clarity of spatial boundaries, or an increase in internal heterogeneity destabilising the assemblage identity (DeLanda, 2016). For example, within Weijo, Martin and Arnould (2018: 04) study of consumer movements, they found increased heterogeneity when a new component entered into an assemblage of collective creativity, and that this new addition will, “at least initially”, deterritorialize an assemblage. Similarly, Parmentier

and Fischer (2015) show how consumers contribute to the territory of audience dissipation, within serial brands. They find that whilst remixing or adding new components, fans can effect deterritorialization within an assemblage identity, because the increased heterogeneity involved, was seen to “diminish the coherence of the assemblage” (Ibid: 1230). However, their research suggest that the degree of remixing depends upon the material capacities of new components to the assemblage.

Examples of territorialization or deterritorialization, whether it be spatial or non-spatial are frequently presented together within consumer research assemblages. For example, Canniford and Shankar's (2013) present territory and homogeneity together within their work upon surfing communities. Their investigation finds that surfers territorialised or stabilised their assemblages of nature, through the use of specific spatial boundaries that occurred within surfing locations. However, they also boosted assemblage stability through the increased homogeneity demonstrated within the surfing community's choice of specificity and style of surfing resources. Similarly, Figueiredo (2016) finds aspects of home that can both territorialize and deterritorialize assemblages when people are transferring from one location to another. For example, moving location can deterritorialize a person's sense of home, however, if people are found to transfer and reassemble alongside all their prior resources, the home assemblage becomes re-territorialized, showing that a person's physical territory is important for creating a sense of home.

Understanding aspects of territory as discussed above, is important within assemblages. It allows the discussion of how component parts move and relate, and

within consumer and market research this can present opportunity for understanding the dynamics of research, some examples include: cultural resources (Canniford and Shankar, 2013), brands, marketers, and technologies (Epp, Schau and Price, 2014; Parmentier and Fischer, 2015; Preece, Kerrigan and O'reilly, 2019), collective creativity and consumer movement (Weijo, Martin and Arnould, 2018), consumption of place (Cheetham, McEachern and Warnaby, 2018), or how consumer behaviours change (Carrington and Ozanne, 2022). Through understanding aspects of territory, researchers can also identify and outline where and why conflict or tensions can or may occur and or resolve within assemblages (Canniford and Shankar, 2013). The next section now turns to discussion upon assemblage tensions.

### 3.2.3 Tensions

Tensions within research are frequently presented as things which occur between two opposing aspects. DeLanda (2006) suggests the theory of assemblage allows a more general understanding of the social, and identifying tensions within research can help consider aspects that blur divisions of social material, near and far, and structure and agency. Within marketing and consumer research, tensions can be found presented amid the broader aspects of research. For example, the contrast between micro and macro marketing environments or descriptive occurring between the emic and etic perspectives of consumer culture (Chelekis and Figueiredo, 2015).

Within consumer research assemblages, tensions can be presented in many ways, for example, to consider opposing ideologies (Saatcioglu and Corus, 2015), to better understand social resources (Canniford and Shankar, 2013), or to identify constraints occurring amongst food resources (Weijo, Martin and Arnould, 2018). Better understanding tensions are particularly useful tool for research, because highlighting them, can allow the investigator to consider the opposing aspects of what people can and or are able to do. Some examples can be found within research upon the characteristics of family identity (Epp and Price, 2008), commercial services (Epp and Velagaleti, 2014), brands (Parmentier and Fischer, 2015).

Tensions within assemblages can be found caused by increased heterogeneity amongst phenomena, where components are seen to destabilise assemblages (Parmentier and Fischer, 2015), even if only fleetingly (Weijo, Martin and Arnould, 2018). As researchers better understand characteristics of tensions, investigation normally highlights aspects that can also reduce tensions. For example, Epp and Velagaleti (2014: 912) present a framework which highlights things that incite and relieve tensions, allowing their research to better understand how parents make choices. Using assemblages in this way, shows how tensions are present for parents who want to outsource care, and how they decide “which care activities are acceptable to outsource” (ibid), presenting which market resources are helpful for reducing such tensions. Similarly, social tensions found by Canniford and Shankar (2013: 1051) are seen to betray “consumers’ romantic experiences of nature”. However, understanding how consumers manage tensions, the authors discover “purifying practices” which help counteract and conserve and rebalance romantic experiences (Ibid: 1061).

Finding balances within and between assemblage tensions, can present aspects useful for research. For example, Canniford and Shankar (2013: 1067) demonstrate how “micro-social contexts of consumers’ lived experiences” are applicable to macro-social frameworks”. Suggesting assemblage theory is useful to approach Askegaard and Linnet’s (2011: 389) perception of “contextually oriented consumption research”. Understanding how tensions occur, demonstrates how research may become transformative. For example, displaying how tensions occur within social research, has the potential to identify how the marketplace shapes or impacts different facets of poverty. The last three sections have allowed a presentation of how capacities, territory, and assemblage tensions can be understood within consumption research. The next section now turns to the final topic, that of geographical assemblages.

### *3.3 Geographic assemblages*

*Assemblage is being increasingly used in a wide range of geographical scholarship. Alongside partially connected terms such as network, milieu or apparatus, the term has become a familiar part of the lexicon of contemporary social-spatial theory.*

(Anderson and McFarlane, 2011: 124)

Allen (2011: 154) outlines geography research as that which is frequently “made up of relationships and things that jostle, co-exist, interfere and entangle one another”. Therefore, it is unsurprising that the appeal and development of assemblages within

geographical literature provides a “provocative and productive role” (McCann 2011: 143). The sheer ‘manipulability’ of the theoretic is attractive to researchers, as it can be applied across broad geographical contexts in order to bring disparate actors together. This means investigation can span beyond a mere theory, allowing the scholar to look outside of historical restrictions and to investigate socio-spatial formation in consideration of “heterogeneous elements that may be human and non-human, organic and inorganic, technical and natural” (Anderson and McFarlane, 2011: 124).

Geographical assemblages have vast potentials within research. Organisations and governments, and cities and nations are outlined by DeLanda (2006) in respect to social complexity, assemblage presents the opportunity to research entire countries (Greenhough, 2011), UK regions (Allen 2011), cities and policies (McCann, 2011), translocal assemblages (McFarlane, 2009), contemporary human geography (Anderson and McFarlane, 2011), power and space (Müller, 2015), and spatio-temporal assemblages (Allen, 2011).

As with assemblages overall, the applications for geographic assemblage research is vast, and so too are the theoretical underpinnings. Terminologies used include aspects of emergence and multiplicity though social and material formations, some example works amongst many others, are Deleuze and Guattari (1988), DeLanda, (2006), Latour (1994), Greenhough, (2011), and Bennett (2006).

An example of nonhuman assemblages which consider social-spatial aspects, can be found within the work of Bennett (2006). Her work considers assemblage in relation to an electrical power grid and includes “very active and powerful nonhumans [of]:

electrons, trees, wind electromagnetic fields”. Outlining how nonhuman elements are thought “less as social constructs and more as actors” (Ibid: 02).

Market and consumer research can be found to ebb and flow into the research parameters of geographies, space, and place. For example, Visconti *et al.*, (2010) consider an ethnography of street art, concerning socio-spatial issues and ideologies of public goods. Saatcioglu and Corus (2016) conceptualise spatial vulnerability, to highlight consumers may become inhibited and excluded within space, and Cheetham, McEachern and Warnaby (2018) present tangible and intangible boundaries, that impact upon the consumption of place. However, few marketing and consumer research studies have adopted an assemblage perspective on space.

It is within these human and non-human associations, that the parallels between assemblages and actor-network theory (ANT) are most prominent. Müller (2015: 30) outlines ANT as “an empirical sister-in-arms of the more philosophical assemblage thinking”, which goes beyond the hierarchical organising of theory as aligned under one universal principle, where all entities begin on an equal plain. This can be found in consumer research, for example, both ANT and assemblage can be applied to enrich “how markets and consumer cultures are constructed” (Hill, Canniford and Mol, 2014: 378). However, although both ANT and assemblages can be considered as relational theories ontologically speaking, ANT presents two key differences that would negatively impact understanding within this assemblage investigation.

Firstly, “ANT asks about processes through which worlds have already been achieved” (Greenhough, 2011: 135), and as Law (2010) outlines what power was required in order to do so. However, as Thrift (2000: 214) explains, the theory lacks

somewhat if research is “confronted with the flash of the unexpected and the unrequited”. This is because ANT does allow for the wide research parameters or fluidity that may be required, in order to really understand complex relations occurring within social research. Secondly, “ANT stops short of conceptualising the capacities of bodies...to affect and to be affected” (Müller and Schurr, 2016: 224). This flattened view of “cohabitation of all things”, negates the “expression, powers of invention, of fabulation” (Thrift, 2000:214).

Both points as outlined above highlight that ANT would not include aspects of the broader social structure, for example, those relations between people and things that may shape or underpin the phenomena under study (Anderson *et al.*, 2012). As this study hopes to understand components of consumer assemblages, within the context of food-insecurity, it will need to unravel complex relations between many differing phenomena including people and things, or individuals and organisations. ANT would be a less suitable approach to consider investigative aspects beyond that of which is already known.

Outlined within this section is the usefulness of understanding research in within a geographic assemblage, particularly within investigation that considers people and things together. It also highlights that merging aspects of geography together with consumer research, may better demonstrate the impact upon the consumption of space and place. Additionally, this consumer assemblage will also consider sensitive topics of food-insecurity, highlighting a multiplicity of factors that stretch beyond aspects of geography and consumer research alone. To consider the task at hand, the concluding section turns to the theoretical framework of this investigation.

### 3.4 Conclusion

Consumer researchers have been expanding the boundaries within consumer culture to investigate phenomena of the social world for some time. Within the vast expanse of consumption research there are many approaches under which to study consumer culture (Arnould and Thompson, 2005), consumer vulnerability (Baker, Gentry and Rittenburg, 2005), community (Thomas *et al.*, 2013), place (Cheetham, McEachern and Warnaby, 2018), and space (Baker, 2006). Therefore, it seems unlikely, if adhering to one theoretical perspective as outlined above, the research which is central to this thesis can or will be wholly understood (Parmentier and Fischer, 2015).

We also know from previous research that poverty is dynamic (Lister, 2004), and it changes from the consumers' point of view when individuals are transitioning in or out of poverty (Hamilton and Catterall, 2005), or when consumers' expectations of poverty shift, for example, when the policy and support landscape changes (Moraes *et al.*, 2021). We also know that people are found to cope with poverty in a variety of different ways, or employ a range of coping strategies (Hamilton, 2009a; Bruce and Banister, 2020) or develop resilience in response to difficult situations (Hutton, 2016).

However, what we do not know so well, is how capacities are presented within this consumption landscape or how these changes create tensions for consumers, and what the subsequent impact is upon the territorial aspects of food-insecurity.

### 3.4.1 Theoretical Framework: Food-insecurity as an urban assemblage

The aim of this investigation is to understand the components of consumer assemblages, within the context of food-insecurity in Royston, Glasgow. Within this work, food-insecurity is considered a particular form of vulnerability, resulting from consumption experiences underlined by its own set of social practices and values. Using an assemblage perspective to study food-insecurity as presented with all its complexities, allows the geographic spatial perspective to come to the fore, which can highlight particular vulnerabilities as experienced by consumers (Saatcioglu and Corus, 2015), and explain how socio-spatial actors emerge and combine within “key communities, networks, institutions, infrastructures and places” (McCann, 2011: 143). Assemblage thinking will also allow the investigation to stretch beyond the parameters of the individual consumer, to consider how food-insecurity impacts the organisation (Moraes *et al.*, 2021). As this chapter has shown, adopting the perspective of assemblage resolves the dilemma of having to make this study fit into a singular view, which may not encompass the many parameters uncovered within this investigation. Assemblages focus upon the interaction of and between different components found (DeLanda, 2016), helping understand how those actors, events, communities, and processes of interest come to be, and how they exist in relation to one another (Figueiredo, 2016), within space (Saatcioglu and Corus, 2015), and place (Cheetham, McEachern and Warnaby, 2018). It will also allow the study of both the human (individuals) and non-human (locational) aspects of investigation, enabling the use of differing tools and expressions to recognise and account for relations, helping present a descriptive of how material or tangible things and semiotic elements become interconnected and shape each other (Canniford and Bajde, 2016a).

## **Chapter 4. Methodology**

### *4.1 Introduction*

The following discussion highlights the methodological considerations outlined within this investigation. It reflects upon philosophy, researcher reasoning and rational to present how data is collected and analysed. The chapter initially outlines the context emerging from the literature discussed throughout Chapter Two and Three, to present the research aims and objectives. Following this, the research philosophy from where this work is positioned will be explored including ontology and assemblages and interpretive approaches to research. Epistemological positioning will identify qualitative approaches within research methods, understood within an interpretive framework. Ethnographic methods (Agar, 2008; Valtonen, 2022) are outlined as the approach to examine the aims of this investigation, as underpinned within social research (Hill, 1993), consumer research (Schouten and McAlexander, 1995; Kozinets, 2002a), and consumer research assemblages (Canniford and Shankar, 2013; Cheetham, McEachern and Warnaby, 2018; Weijs, Martin and Arnould, 2018). The research design is then detailed and discussed within the field, including the ethical issues encountered, the research population and how the research sample was chosen. Consideration is then given to the ethnographic approaches outlined for data collection within the consumer assemblage, including key methods of observation, interviews, and volunteering. Approaches used to analyse the collected data are explored within data management and analysis, these are discussed from within a hermeneutic approach, and considers research

credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. This is followed by the conclusion of the chapter.

#### 4.1.1 Research Aim

The aim of this investigation is to understand the components of consumer assemblages, within the context of food-insecurity in Royston, Glasgow. Its goal is to understand key heterogeneous cultural phenomena as experienced by individuals and organisations within the food-insecurity landscape, and recognise relations between phenomena which impact upon assemblage stability.

### 4.2 *Philosophical perspectives*

From the pivotal work of Burrell and Morgan (1979) social science theorists have been considering applicable ways by which to seek knowledge. What knowledge is depends entirely upon how a researcher views their world, or more generally put, how they understand phenomena under investigation, in relation to their ontological, epistemological, and methodological considerations.

#### 4.2.1 Ontological position

Ontological positioning broadly questions whether the reality under investigation is external to the individual, or a product of individual consciousness (Burrell and Morgan, 1979). Morgan and Smircich (1980: 491) consider the assumptions

surrounding ontology within the study of human nature to present elementary positions of social theorising (see table 4.1). This early work proposes that social researchers should no longer rely upon whether exploration is adopting either a quantitative or qualitative approach, but instead consider “relationships between ontology, human nature, epistemology, and methodology” across a “subjective-objective continuum” (ibid: 493).

Table 4.1: The Subjective – Objective Debate Within Social Science

	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: space-between;"> <span>←</span> <span><i>Subjectivist Approaches to Social Science</i></span> <span><i>Objectivist Approaches to Social Science</i></span> <span>→</span> </div>					
<b><i>Core Ontological Assumptions</i></b>	reality as a projection of human imagination	reality as a social construction	reality as a realm of symbolic discourse	reality as a contextual field of information	reality as a concrete process	reality as a concrete structure
<b><i>Assumptions About Human Nature</i></b>	man as pure spirit, consciousness, being	man as a social constructor the symbol creator	man as an actor the symbol user man	man as an information processor	man as an adaptor	man as a responder

(Morgan and Smircich, 1980: 492)

Within the parameters outlined above, ontological assumptions present a span between conflicting views of subjectivism and objectivism. The objectivists view – or the most basic understanding of realism outlines that assumptions of an objective nature, are those that are external to the mind, a concrete reality which is often made up of “measurable regularities, laws and patterns” (Cunliffe, 2011: 649). This stance contends that the world is an “empirical entity” that precedes individuals (Rittmann, 1996: 07) which can only be uncovered through observation and measurement (Burrell and Morgan, 1979). Whereas researcher assumptions of a subjective nature suggest that knowledge cannot be discovered, as it is subjectively acquired, therefore, everything is relative, where reality that is a product of the human mind, as

in so much as, meaning is created in the mind, therefore, knowledge is experiential (Cunliffe, 2011).

Philosophical underpinnings which may be considered within ‘social research’ will continue to be added to and re-shaped and as knowledge expands, and as such both the researched and researcher will continue to present a more thorough and contemporary underpinning of what can be known. For example, within consumer research Hudson and Ozanne (1988: 508) consider alternative ways to seek knowledge whilst outlining strengths and weaknesses within the differing approaches of positivist and interpretive research. Subsequent research by Murray and Ozanne (1991) features Hudson and Ozanne’s 1998 work, and expand the view across positivist and interpretive consumer research to add critical theory as an additional approach to seek knowledge. Following this, the research of Arnold and Fischer (1994) features both Hudson and Ozanne (1998) and Murray and Ozanne (1991) to identify hermeneutics, alongside interpretivism and critical theory.

As with the works described above, there are clear benefits to understanding where research is positioned within opposing perspectives dependent upon world view perceptions, particularly when research and researcher align with perspectives which can be justified. However, placing research within such strict study parameters from the outset can prove problematic within research, especially work which includes more than “the social activity of humans” (Bennett, 2006: 07). This may be of particular note within this investigation, which hopes to consider how heterogeneous phenomena relate including both “people and things” (Parmentier and Fischer, 2015: 1229) though the study of consumer assemblages.

#### 4.2.1.1 *Ontology and Assemblages*

As outlined within the previous chapter, ‘Assemblage’ is the preferred perspective to study the complexities of food-insecurity. The ontological attentions of the most prolific present-day assemblage theorist are those deliberations of Manuel DeLanda. DeLanda (2016: 138) is a self-proclaimed realist explains that assemblages exist independent of our theories about them: “concrete assemblages must be considered to be fully independent of our minds”. This realist view aligns within the realm of objectivism where “reality as a concrete structure” (Morgan and Smircich, 1980: 492). However, DeLanda (2016: 37-8) also explains that there is an important distinction between the “concept of assemblage and the concrete objective entities that the concept helps us understand”. He suggests that although entities can exist independently of the mind, the ‘concept’ of an assemblage cannot not exist ‘outside’ of the human mind. This is largely because in essence, Deleuze and Guattari’s (1987) early theorising upon assemblages contain ‘virtual’ lines of flight, or pathways, which interact, unfold, and unravel to present varying connections or relations, occurring simultaneously with no ‘real’ beginning or end. Deleuze (1995: 171) explains his subsequent work that ‘*A Thousand Plateaus*’ sets out in many different directions, but the first instance is that “*we think any society is defined not so much by its contradictions as by its lines of flight, it flees all over the place, and it's very interesting to try and follow the lines of flight taking shape at some particular moment or other*”. Therefore, the possibilities or thoughts that may be contained within assemblages, considers a reality or belief that is fluid of flux, which leans away from the notion of concrete realities that underpin objectivist thinking.

This idea is reflected within consumer research assemblages, where Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) lines of flight are presented to explain the “body’s interactions with other assemblages” (Carrington and Ozanne, 2022: 860) to identify and realise virtual connections or pathways. When these interactions occur, relations between assemblage components can create new capacities within assemblages which may be fleeting or lasting depending upon how stable interactions are found (Price and Epp, 2016).

For example, lines of flight are found mapped as practice trajectories by Epp, Schau and Price (2014) to advance how research understands family collocated consumption patterns. In a social assemblage such as a brand, these lines of flight can occur between both people and things, such as the consumers of the brand, the physical elements of the product itself, and the technologies of distribution that allow the consumer to access the brand (Parmentier and Fischer, 2015).

This investigation, therefore, is in line with social science research which makes ontological assumptions “about the nature of reality and social beings” (Hudson and Ozanne, 1988: 509). The reality within this work is presented as “a social construction” or the “projection of human imagination” (Morgan and Smircich, 1980: 492). Murray and Ozanne (1991) expand upon the work of Hudson and Ozanne to summarise key differences between the positions of Positivism, Interpretivism, and Critical Theory, see Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: A summary of Positivism, Interpretivism, and Critical Theory

	<b>Positivism</b>	<b>Interpretivism</b>	<b>Critical theory</b>
<i>Ontological assumptions: (Nature of reality)</i>	Objective, tangible; Single, ahistorical; Fragmentable; Divisible	Socially constructed; Multiple; Holistic; Contextual	"Force-field" between subject and object Dynamic; Historical totality
<i>Nature of social beings</i>	Deterministic; Reactive	Voluntaristic; Proactive;	Suspend judgment; Emphasize human potential
<i>Axiological assumptions: (Overriding goal)</i>	"Explanation" via subsumption under general laws, prediction	"Understanding" via interpretation	"Emancipation" via social organization that facilitates reason, justice, and freedom
<i>Epistemological assumptions: (Knowledge generated)</i>	Nomothetic; Time-free; Context-independent; Value-free	Idiographic; Time-bound; Context-dependent; Value-laden	Forward-looking; Imaginative; Critical/unmasking; Practical
<i>View of causality</i>	Real causes exist	Multiple, simultaneous shaping	Reflection, exposure of constraints through dialogue, reconstruction, reflection,
<i>Research relationship Metaphor</i>	Dualism, separation Detached observer	Interactive, cooperative Translator	Continuing dialogue Metaphor Liberator

(Murray and Ozanne, 1991: 133)

Using the previous discussions and the parameters of the table above, the ontological positioning of this research leans towards a methodological stance which promotes interpretivist approaches within research. This is largely because the phenomena cannot be completely constructed independently of the people who interact within them, they instead will be “socially constructed, multiple, holistic, and contextual” (Murray and Ozanne, 1991: 133). Additionally, as this investigation looks towards the realities found between research components to consider interactions or lines of flight with “no privileged point of observation” (Hudson and Ozanne, 1988: 509),

these social phenomena will generally be found in a state of flux which cannot routinely be understood, particularly within the outset of investigation. In this way, “[o]bjects, action or behaviours of (or in) the social world only become ‘real’ to the individual once they have been interpreted by them and therefore acquire meaning” (Shankar, Elliott and Goulding, 2001: 438). As such, the analytical processing to seek knowledge is one where the researcher will provide gestalt within their own interpretation, and thus, understanding of the whole which can be observed as more than the sum of its parts.

#### *4.2.1.2 Interpretive approaches*

The philosophical scope included within cultural consumer research (Arnould and Thompson, 2005) means that theory does not align nor promote one specific methodology over another. The result of this means that researchers may struggle to attribute a philosophical viewpoint which “adequately captures all facets” of consumer behaviour (Hirschman and Holbrook, 1986: 215). However, much of the contextualising literature within Chapter 2, is shaped upon a wide variety of methodological investigation which falls under an interpretive umbrella. For example; CCT (Arnould and Thompson, 2005, 2007), consumer vulnerability (Baker, Gentry and Rittenburg, 2005), and interpretive approaches within research which feature broadly throughout consumer research assemblages. For example, Parmentier and Fischer, (2015: 1232) consider netnography with “an iterative process of interpreting” data to consider audience dissipation within brands, Epp,

Schau and Price (2014) use grounded theory approaches to interpret theory and data, and Canniford and Shankar (2013) use assemblage theory and ethnography, to interpret how consumers assemble their experiences of nature.

Interpretivists believe that many realities exist within an inquiry, and “these realities are changing” (Hudson and Ozanne, 1988: 509), therefore, consideration should be given to the evolutionary nature within investigation, and interpretive work should not focus upon who reads, researches, or participates within it, but should instead reflect upon understanding the phenomena under examination (Creswell, 2007).

Acquiring knowledge using interpretivist approaches within research also allows exploration which goes beyond conventional consumer investigation, to consider the more detrimental aspects of consumption. For example, understanding how consumers may experience vulnerability, allows the investigation of contextual phenomena across differing populations and environments (Baker, Gentry and Rittenburg, 2005; Baker, LaBarge and Baker, 2015), permitting researchers an opportunity to interpret and demonstrate how individuals (Hamilton, 2012; Saatcioglu and Corus, 2015) and communities of people may cope with vulnerability (Bruce and Banister, 2020), or how people may develop resilience in conditions where they are vulnerable (Hutton, 2016).

Interpretive approaches within consumer research are also useful if research looks to support “a close researcher-researched relationship” (Jafari *et al.*, 2013: 1185), when researchers hope to understand ‘not’ predict behaviour, this approach can be viewed as “more of a process than an end product” (Hudson and Ozanne, 1988: 510).

#### 4.2.2 Epistemological positioning

Epistemological considerations surround knowledge and meaning. This means understanding the approaches applied within knowledge generation, and what and how that knowledge is created, in consideration of both the researched and the researcher (Hudson and Ozanne, 1988). The phenomena to be studied within this research is social in nature, and as such how a researcher views the social world, reflects upon what constitutes the type of knowledge found (Morgan and Smircich, 1980). For example, as discussed within the last section, this consumer research assemblage will consider complex relations or phenomena arising from the interaction of components, including both people and things, where it is reasonable to assume that human interaction, intentions, and belief will create many and disparate understandings of reality (Burrell and Morgan, 1979).

Because of the complex nature of reality within this research, the investigation will require context to help the researcher understand and interpret the social surroundings. And although social science has fashioned consumption research which adopts a variety of qualitative and quantitative methods (Hill, 2001), it is unlikely that value will be created within this research by reducing research findings to a single outcome (DeLanda, 2016). Belk, Fischer and Kozinets (2013) provide a visual representation which outlines the contrasting capacities of qualitative and quantitative research approaches (see table 4.3).

Table 4.3: Qualitative versus quantitative research differences

	<i>Qualitative</i>	<i>Quantitative</i>
(1) <i>Nature of data</i>	Visual and verbal recordings in rich detail	Responses distilled into numeric scores
(2) <i>Relevance of context</i>	Results are generally assumed to be specific to time, place, people, and culture studied	Results are generally assumed to be generalisable across contexts and cultures
(3) <i>Nature &amp; control of potential causes</i>	Ideally naturalistic with multiple factors shaping the behaviours observed and discussed	Ideally settings are controlled, and variables are manipulated or measured to allow simple causal inferences
(4) <i>Key research instrument</i>	Researcher is the instrument and uses skills and rapport to gain insights based on trust	Researcher tries to be invisible and relies on responses to structured measures or choices

*Adapted from Belk, Fischer and Kozinets (2013: 03)*

As outlined within the table above, the nature of the data, the research context, the nature of control, and research processes involved within collecting data (Belk, Fischer and Kozinets, 2013), are all important when deciding what type of data collection should occur. The nature of the phenomena under study within this investigation are the lived experiences of both individuals and organisations, and the rich context found within the investigation will be of a sensitive nature and built “upon detailed nuanced observation and interpretation of phenomena of interest” (Belk, Fischer and Kozinets, 2013: 03). From this position, the researcher and the research account are both considered subjective, where ‘truths’ are relative to situation and reflexivity. Therefore, the nature of control within this interpretive work is observing and understanding naturalistic behaviour, where depth can be created within inquiry through the use of multiple methods (Warr, 2004).

In order to understand varied phenomena and their relationships occurring across contexts, the researcher must be the key instrument throughout data collection (Creswell, 2007), and within this work, they will be immersed within the field of research for a prolonged period of time.

The section above demonstrates that the type and context of data involved within this work is less fitting for a traditional quantitative study (Belk, Fischer and Kozinets, 2013). It work will not produce vast numerical data sets, or examination which adheres to structured replicable parameters over a large study population (Law, 2004). Also, the structuring parameters achieved within quantitative research can also limit what can or might be known (Gioia, Corley and Hamilton, 2013).

Creswell (2007: 11) identifies qualitative work as a “legitimate mode of social and human science exploration, without apology or comparisons to quantitative research”. However, as interpretive approaches within research has improved and advanced, it has “in many ways, been integrated into the core of qualitative inquiry” Creswell (2007: 03). It is a result of this integration, that researchers often use ‘qualitative’ and ‘interpretive’ interchangeably or synonymously. For example, Denzin and Lincoln (2011: 06) outline qualitative methods “as a set of interpretive activities privileges no single methodological practice over another”. However, this investigation supports distinction between the terminology of interpretive and qualitative. Qualitative methods are the processes which will be used to collect data within this investigation, and the subsequent analysis within and or between the collection of qualitative data’s is what makes this approach to research interpretive (Holt, 1995; Arnould and Thompson, 2005; Moisander, Penaloza and Valtonen, 2008).

To allow the researcher to interpret the multifaceted data collection, the investigation will use a hermeneutic spiral to aid interpretation (Thompson, Pollio and Locander, 1994). This way of analysing information, will allow the researcher to map and reflect upon the data collecting journey, highlighted across phases as outlined by Stenbacka (2001).

Rigour is built within investigatory procedures, and created by constructing research credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). Creating credibility within the research process, surrounds understanding what makes the research practice trustworthy, and can be highlighted throughout investigation within procedural aspects. For example, explanations of in what way the qualitative research is conducted, and within descriptive of how the data analysis is carried out (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). “[D]ependability and confirmability are established through an auditing of the research process” (Creswell, 2007: 204), and can be demonstrated with thorough clarification of how research findings have been created objectively. For example, a comprehensive view of the decisions made throughout research, and what outcomes were interpreted throughout the process. Confirming research credibility, dependability, and confirmability, will demonstrate that the investigation can provide value or insight, which in turn promotes research transferability. Transferability is the way in which, an investigations findings, may be made applicable across other contexts (Schouten and McAlexander, 1995).

To investigate this consumer research assemblage in consideration of the parameters outlined above, ethnographic research methods have been chosen as the most suitable to gather the data. Ethnographic methods have proved helpful within investigation to understand consumer research assemblages (Canniford and Shankar,

2013; Weijo, Martin and Arnould, 2018), and research which considers sensitive contexts (Hill, 1995). Ethnographic methods are also shown are useful within work of an exploratory nature which through understanding relationships rather than measuring them (Hill, 1993; Paxton and Dixon, 2004).

The interpretive analysis throughout the ethnographic data collection will be complimented through the use of a hermeneutic spiral. This iterative process (Spiggle, 1994) will be used to develop a sense of the whole, within the dimensions of data variability (Arnold and Fischer, 1994), and has been demonstrated useful other consumer research assemblages (Epp, Schau and Price, 2014; Parmentier and Fischer, 2015; Weijo, Martin and Arnould, 2018).

### 4.3 *Ethnographic Methods*

*Ethnography is an inherently open-ended practice. It is based on participation and observation in particular cultural arenas as well as acknowledgment and employment of researcher reflexivity.*

(Kozinets, 2002b)

With anthropological and sociological beginnings, ethnographic research allows an investigation of individuals, cultures, or societies over a period of time. This is particularly helpful for studies on small scale societies, where the focus is upon understanding “environments that include people, places, objects customs and behaviours” (Venkatesh et al., 2017: 83).

The “theoretical evolvement and plurification” (Moisander and Valtonen, 2006: 47) of ethnography has produced a diverse use of ethnographic methods within marketing and consumer research. As ethnography has “gained increasing popularity” (Valtonen, Markuksela and Moisander, 2010: 375), it can now found to fit within many “fields of scholarship, research questions, research sites, times, researcher preferences and cultural groups” (Kozinets, 2002: 62). For example, some subtypes of differing perspectives or techniques includes; netnography (Kozinets, 2015), sensory ethnographies (Valtonen, Markuksela and Moisander, 2010), videography (van Laer, Visconti and Feiereisen, 2018), and collaborative event ethnography (Weston *et al.*, 2019).

Combining method and theory within consumer research assemblages, has also proved increasingly popular, allowing researchers to present relations between a

diverse range of components. Some examples include: identifying territory within the consumption of space (Cheetham, McEachern and Warnaby, 2018), presenting marketplace tensions within food culture regulation (Weijo, Martin and Arnould, 2018), demonstrating how consumers experience nature (Canniford and Shankar, 2013), or understanding consumer object assemblages (Hoffman and Novak, 2018). The advantage of this complexity, both within and between consumer assemblages and ethnographic methods, means a range of approaches can be applied to better understand the complexity within research. This can be particularly useful if studying sensitive contexts (Jafari *et al.*, 2013). For example, ethnographic work can be helpful to identify rich messy data, particularly within consumer research which considers the context of what makes people vulnerable (Baker, LaBarge and Baker, 2015).

As the range of ethnographic investigation now found is substantial, the method can generate academic scepticism, and research rigour is often questioned. This is often because the length of investigative immersion within ethnographies can be complicated to manage, and can be explained as a double edged sword for the researcher. On one side they must research and apply strategies to get true reflections of the lived experience and sensitizing concepts of study participants, on the other side lies the jeopardy of “going native” (Schouten and McAlexander, 1995:46). Going native describes the researcher when they become completely entrenched within their study culture, adopting the view of the participant, potentially resulting in desensitisation and “losing the higher-level perspective necessary for informed theorizing” (Gioia, Corley and Hamilton, 2013:19).

Ethnographies generally rely upon the skill of the fieldworker to create rigour within investigation (Valentin and Gomez-Corona, 2018). This can be created within ethnographies by embedding methodological procedures or features which help support the collection of challenging data, (Kozinets, 2002b) and substantiate researcher interpretations. Features of ethnography include cross-validating or triangulation of collected data. For example, interviews may be used to explain observations in the field (Valentin and Gomez-Corona, 2018), or triangulation of visual and textual data may highlight emergent themes within data (Canniford and Shankar, 2013). Additionally valuable to create rigour throughout the interpretation of qualitative work, is the researchers account of their own research reflexivity. Researcher reflexivity is a contemporaneous account of the researcher journey, processes, choices, and decisions, which can also help provide research transparency as it highlights research objectivity through the researcher journey (Woodruffe-Burton, 2006).

Ethnographic methods are described within this section and presented as a useful way to study cultural phenomena. It highlights the importance of the researcher within an ethnographic research, and explains how the researcher can apply rigour and safeguards within the work, to both make the method robust and afford the researcher protection whilst being immersed within their research.

#### 4.4 Fieldwork

*Ethnographies – join culture and fieldwork. In a sense, they sit between two worlds or systems of meaning – the world of the ethnographer (and readers) and the world of cultural members. (Van Maanen, 1988: 04)*

Central to any ethnographic approach is understanding the complex perspectives of research participants (Hill, 1993), and even though the research methods and study populations involved assures that no two research investigations are the same (Kozinets, 2002b), there are some essential features within ethnographic research which remain embedded, namely: “(1) the *fieldwork* and (2) its textual or visual representation, the *fieldwork report*” (Valtonen and Moisander, 2006: 47). The fieldwork report within this work will be detailed within the subsequent findings chapter, however, this section now turns to the discussion of the ‘fieldwork’.

“[T]he study of social phenomena *in situ*” (Moisander and Valtonen, 2006: 48) is key within this fieldwork, and the phenomena considered within this investigation are cultural components which are comprised of people and things. The following section turns to identifying the research population or the study ‘field’, and then discusses the forms of sampling considered within it.

#### 4.4.1 Research Population

Glasgow is the most populous city within Scotland, and is known for having the worst economic disparity, between the wealthy and the impoverished, throughout western Europe (The Scottish Government, 2021b). Given this disparity, it should perhaps come as no surprise that food-insecurity is experienced by an increasing number of people throughout the city (MacLeod, Curl and Kearns, 2019). Royston is a centrally located community within Glasgow, and is home to just over 5,000 people. The geographic region of Royston is found within 20% of the most deprived communities in Scotland. The population size and the socio economic demographics which support aspects of deprivation (The Scottish Government, 2020), suggests that the Royston location will contextualise research which considers aspects of food-insecurity. In addition to presenting Royston as an area of deprivation, the researchers own knowledge or “pre-understanding” (Arnold and Fischer, 1994: 55) within the location, substantiates that there are several organisations who were engaged within the provision of supplementary food within the Royston community.

The location of Royston has been disclosed within this research, as it has been demonstrated within other investigations; upon Glasgow (Paton, 2009; Hill, Meer and Peace, 2021) and Doctoral research within Marketing (Goode, 2018); that the secondary sources and photographs drawn upon, will make the location identifiable.

To consider how the people and things came to be chosen within the study field, the following section now turns towards sampling within the study field.

#### 4.4.2 Sampling within the study field

The sampling of this investigation has been considered from within the interpretative theoretical positioning of this study, therefore, the study population or ‘natives’ (Ergun and Erdemir, 2010) who are central within it, are those who will provide an emic understanding of food-insecurity within Royston. To highlight how aspects of food-insecurity are created and experienced within this research (Moraes *et al.*, 2021), it was important to include characteristics experienced by both the individual and the organisation, including those who live, work, and volunteer within the community. This would demonstrate differing perspectives of the people and things within the assemblage, and create a better understanding of any complexity encountered. In common with the ethnographic work of Arnould and Wallendorf (1994), the immersion within this research was generally context driven, and as a result the pragmatic sample for the study was a purposive one (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). This meant that the sample was determined by the task at hand, and that the phenomena under study were either individuals who are or were food insecure, or those individuals who volunteer or work within organisations providing measures to reduce food-insecurity. It would be highly unlikely given the sensitive nature of the study context, the pre-understanding of the researcher, and the sample size, that this research would achieve high quality data from a random sample (Agar, 2008).

In addition to purposive sampling, and in consideration of both researcher pre-understanding plus engaging within the study field over time, spontaneity within research and provided instances of ‘opportunistic’ sampling (Ibid). Opportunistic sampling was beneficial in the investigation, and access within the community was

bolstered due to those existing relationships between the researcher and the community, which developed with the ethical sensitivity required for this type of research as fieldwork progressed. For example, opportunist sampling helped consider the investigation from the aspect of (1) the individual, and (2) the organisation:

(1) The researcher was established and known to many people within the study field.

Whilst reconnecting with people and talking about the context of the research being undertaken, it was discovered that people known to the researcher had recently become food insecure. Although these were delicate situations, the existing researcher rapport provided an opportunity to develop a sample which included a better understanding of individual experiences.

(2) Whilst mapping local organisations, it became evident that food was intertwined within differing aspect so the organisation within the community, however, this provision of supplementary food was not necessarily known to many, nor outlined as an organisational part of the organisations services. This highlights how an opportunistic sample was beneficial, to yield data that may have otherwise been overlooked.

The relations which provided opportunistic sampling were important because it helped increase access to, and subsequently understanding of, the qualitative data (Van Maanen, 1988). With the data in mind, the next section summaries the chosen methods and subsequently considers three key applications, namely, observation, interviews, and volunteering.

#### 4.4.3 Methods

Within any given research, the methods chosen to study phenomena should address the aims of investigation (Arnould and Thompson, 2005). Within this work, the aim was to understand the components of consumer assemblages, within the context of food-insecurity in Royston, Glasgow:

- This involved understanding key heterogeneous cultural phenomena as experienced by individuals and organisations within the food-insecurity landscape.
- The investigation considered relations between the phenomena, highlighting the interplay of capacities within the assemblage.
- It identified how relations impacted upon assemblage stability, allowing the issues of food-insecurity to become stabilised and/or destabilised.

Ethnographic methods are outlined as the most appropriate way to collect data within this work, primarily because other consumer research assemblages have demonstrated they are an effective way to support investigations which hope to understand complex social phenomena. Some examples of ethnographic methods used within investigation includes: observation, fieldnotes, diaries, interviews, images (Canniford and Shankar, 2013), videography (Weijo, Martin and Arnould, 2018), ethnographic imagination (Cheetham, McEachern and Warnaby, 2018), or sensory observations (Canniford, Riach and Hill, 2018).

This ethnographic investigation benefited from the application of a combination of research methods within the ‘field’ (Belk, Sherry and Wallendorf, 1988). This blended approach within data collection contextualised the experiences gathered within the field (Arnold and Fischer, 1994), and improved research rigour is achieved through triangulation of collected data and researcher reflexivity. Interpretative consumer research assemblages, have provided examples of rigorous research methods, and demonstrated investigative usefulness within qualitative ethnographic methods (Canniford and Shankar, 2013; Weijo, Martin and Arnould, 2018). Adopting a combination of three key research methods; semi structured depth interviews (Epp, Schau and Price, 2014), observation (Canniford and Shankar, 2013), and volunteering (Thorburn, 2015); promoted increased rigour within this research where differing perspectives provided a deeper understanding of the parameters of food-insecurity.

Outlined within Table 4.4 is an overview of the three key methods used within this work, and the resulting textual and visual data collected. The methods outlined occurred over a timeframe of around 12 months, allowing descriptive documentation of the ‘field’ producing a “detailed nuanced observation and interpretation of phenomena of interest” (Belk, Fischer and Kozinets, 2013: 03).

Table 4.4: Overview of data collection within the field

<i>Method</i>	<i>Data Collection</i>
Observation	52 field visits 106 Digital photographs 125 pages of fieldnote transcript, (handwritten in situ and transcripts of audio recordings) 28 pages of researcher diary transcript, from handwritten and audio recording. pre and post interview chats, emails, texts 31 visual data pdf (leaflets, flyers, advertisements)
Interviews	18 semi-structured interviews (audio recordings) 27 participants 57,705 words of transcript (125 pages single spaced 12point text) Follow up information (emails, text messages)
Volunteering	30 volunteering sessions Each session 3-4 hours Sessions recorded in researcher diary 62 Digital photographs

As depth rather than breadth of research was key to understand the relations between the components of the assemblage, the following sections outline and discuss the fieldwork in greater detail, reflecting upon each of the key methods: observation, interviews, and volunteering.

#### 4.4.3.1 *Observation*

A key task for the researcher within this ethnographic work involved observation (Elliott and Jankel-Elliott, 2003). This occurred throughout the investigation allowing study of behaviours in a variety of settings (Belk, Sherry and Wallendorf, 1988; Arnould and Wallendorf, 1994). In order to gain comprehensive observation of the ‘field’ (Belk, Sherry and Wallendorf, 1988), an initial framing of activities as they occurred within Royston sites of inquiry, were the key to start data collection and allowed the presentation of a wider perspective of engagement. Primary observations were documented to include dates, times, locations, people, and events. These early observations were conducted online and in situ, allowing a diary or mapping of the projects present, see undesignated example below (figure 4.1).

Penaloza (1998: 652) recommends combining several types of observation as it can be found helpful to identify “how the context operates” within the field. The initial monitoring or background data documentation was helpful, as it highlighted activity within the community, outlined facilities being used, and helped to develop opening connections with employees managing local services relating to supplementary food and aspects of deprivation.

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Figure 4.1: Unspecified location activity mapping example - Royston

For example, outlined within the figure above are two money advice services. These were not specifically food services, however, mapping them allowed the researcher to engage with employees and find out what advice they provide to their clients. This in turn highlighted signposting activities relating to supplementary food.

Context for connotations were also found helpful for any differences between what people say they do, and what they actually do (Arnould, 2004). For example, a subsequent site visit to mapped activities highlighted that services engaging with children were often providing some kind of supplementary food. This would not have been known from the information provided either online or upon a flyer, and these types of supplementary food provision would have gone undocumented.

Observation can be found to occur covertly or overtly (Valtonen, 2022), however, due to the sensitive nature of the contexts which may be uncovered within this ethnographic investigation, the researcher adopted an overt approach to establish contact with participants whilst providing research transparency throughout the study. The observation collected throughout the investigation was a combination of “moderate participant observation (limited/occasional interaction), or active participant observation (integrated within the field)” (Valentin and Gomez-Corona, 2018: 05). Moderate participant observation took various forms, from general ad-hoc walking within the location, to more focused and organised trips. For example, found within Appendix I are field notes from a discussion with a 76 year old local, which included an explanation of how the walkways are kept ‘in poor condition’ that can become treacherous in harsh weather conditions. This textual data was subsequently contextualised with photographic documentation of the over-motorway pedestrian

bridge and the condition of walkways to and from the bridge. This highlighted barriers for people in both the condition of the walkways, and the lack of shielding to weather elements. This was helpful to fully represent the difficulties that people can face, when trying to access food options hosted outside of the community.

Moderate participant observation was also helpful to contextualise how food services operate. To explain, the opportunity to analyse the ‘field’ pre and post engagement ‘in-situ’ was valuable for the researcher, to consider some location information within a wider context. For example, field notes fifteen minutes either side of participant interviews added insight upon how people were found to ‘get to and leave’ places that were providing supplementary food within the community:

*How do these people get here [foodbank]? It is dark and dreary, with no signs, and it is bang on the edge of the motorway. When the weather is like today, you must feel up against it... trying to exist, no access to food. What if folk need to bring their kids? I would be terrified trying to balance everything, and add to the mix, how you feel with all this if you were hungry.....suffer the thought.*

*(researcher field note pre-interview 02 Donna: 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2018)*

Field notes like above help understand the “naturally occurring data” within the cultural environment (Valtonen and Moisander, 2006: 70), it adds context to the components under study. These notes were documented in a researcher diary, and collection of images and project paraphernalia like leaflets were also recorded.

In addition to moderate observation within the field, active participant observation was also found useful, particularly whilst engaging within the population about the content of the study. Active participation observation will be discussed later within interviews (4.3.1.4) and volunteering (4.3.1.5). The next section outlines the methods used within the process of interviewing.

#### 4.4.3.2 Interviews

*“[T]he interactive, flexible but focused nature of interviews still makes them one of the most trustworthy and effective sources of data about consumers”.*

*(Arsel, 2017:939)*

Interviews are one of the most frequently used methods to collect data within qualitative consumer research, particularly within the ‘*Journal of Consumer Research*’ (Arsel, 2017). For many ethnographers “the interview is often the most useful” form of data collection (R. Hill, 1993: 60). Examples of other consumer research assemblages interviews are found in table 4.5.

Table 4.5: Examples of interviews employed in consumer assemblage research.

<i>Study</i>	<i>Interview type</i>	<i>Title</i>
Weijo, Martin & Arnould (2018)	Ethnographic methods	Consumer Movements and Collective Creativity: The Case of Restaurant Day
Epp, Schau & Price (2014)	In depth Group interviews	The role of brands and mediating technologies in assembling long-distance family practices
Epp & Velagaleti (2014)	Semi-structured Depth interviews	Outsourcing Parenthood? How Families Manage Care Assemblages Using Paid Commercial Services
Canniford & Shankar (2013)	Semi-structured Depth interviews	Purifying Practices: How Consumers Assemble Romantic Experiences of Nature
Parmentier & Fischer (2015)	Offline Online	Things Fall Apart: The Dynamics of Brand Audience Dissipation
Preece, Kerrigan & O’reilly, (2019)	Retrospective	License to Assemble: Theorizing Brand Longevity

The form of interviewing outlined within the table above, reflects the researcher position within investigation. For example, a researcher creating context in-situ may use depth interviews (Canniford and Shankar, 2013; Epp and Velagaleti, 2014; Epp, Schau and Price, 2014; Weijo, Martin and Arnould, 2018), or a study being conducted in retrospect may consider historical interviews (Preece, Kerrigan and O'reilly, 2019). As this work was occurring in-situ, the use of offline, online, and retrospective interviews as outlined above, would only hope to provide modest data within this investigation. Therefore, the interviews necessary within this study were complimented by a phenomenological approach (Thompson, 1997), allowing the researcher to interpret data during, and or after the interview process. This helped to better understand the emic account from participants, in consideration of the broader cultural relationships (Arnould and Thompson, 2005) occurring within the food-insecurity assemblage.

Interviewing can range from small casual encounters, to more cultivated and formally structured investigation (Valentin and Gomez-Corona, 2018). However, the chosen semi-structured depth interview approach, accommodated a more flexible interview process in consideration of some divergence within discussion (Maciel and Wallendorf, 2017). This allowed the discovery of context specific aspects of food-insecurity, and complimented both the researcher's previous interviewing experience and the heterogeneity of study participants. Prior to conducting these semi-structured interviews, informed consent as presented within the ethical considerations of this project was given by all of the informants. The interviews were conducted with individuals who were or had been food insecure, or who volunteered or worked within organisations who were providing measures to reduce food-insecurity.

Table 4.6: Interviews

Interview number	Participant 'Pseudonym'	Position in Community	Worked/lived in Royston (years)	Words
Individual				
1,9	Hannah	Employee	5+	4,073
2	Donna	Employee	10+	3,072
3,17	Leanne	Employee	-1	3,584
4	Debbie	Employee	3+	2,112
7	Charlotte	Employee	3+	2,621
8,10	Heather	Local	40+	5,508
11	Flora	Volunteer local	-1	1,802
13	Grace	Employee	2+	2,267
14	Mandy	Local	30+	5,169
15	Jennifer	Employee	4+	5,534
Group				
5	Helen	Volunteer local	20+	6,105
	Connie	Volunteer local	20+	
6	Lorna	Volunteer local	5+	2,935
	John	Volunteer	10+	
	Ryan	Volunteer local	2+	
12	Jenny	Volunteer local	10+	3,187
	Rowan	Volunteer local	10+	
	Sylvia	Volunteer local	10+	
16	Alan	Employee	3+	2,469
	Gillian	Local	20+	
	Beth	Local	20+	
	James	Local	10+	
	Eliza	Local	1+	
	Maryam	Local	1+	
	Kath	Employee	1+	
18	Carol	Employee	5+	7,267
	Bev	Employee	1+	

Approximately 19.5 hours of audio recordings were produced, from 18 interviews (13 individual, 2 pairs, and 3 group) with 27 participants (see table 4.6). Thirteen interviews were held with individual people, three participants had two interviews. Four interviews occurred with groups of two or three people. One was a focus group that had seven adults plus children. Liamputtong (2007) suggest that establishing rapport with participants, means it is more likely they would feel relaxed talking about their own lived experience. Therefore, the place where these interviews were conducted was chosen by the participants, with the hope to make the individual as calm and comfortable as possible. These interviews were conducted in a range of places including cafes, food venues, workplaces, volunteer spaces, the library, and within participants own homes. Throughout the planning and subsequent collection of interviews and for safety reasons, the researchers supervision team were always aware of her location.

An “interview protocol” (Arsel, 2017: 941) included the research questions and was structured around the aims of the investigation (see example appendix II). The initial or lead in discussion enveloped what people already knew about food-insecurity in their Royston neighbourhood. The interviewer tried to make the introduction to the topic gently, so as to understand the context of food-insecurity as viewed from the experience of the participant. The interview guidelines evolved somewhat in response to initial findings (Weijo, Martin and Arnould, 2018). This was because early interviews highlighted that to fully understand food-insecurity within the community, this work needed to include research from the position of the organisation providing food and those who worked and volunteered within them.

These changes were slight, and mostly surrounded initial interview conversations aimed at making people comfortable. For example, a person interviewing from within the aspect of a supplementary food organisation, may have a unique experience and underpinning community knowledge, different from those individuals who are currently experiencing food-insecurity. The approach to interviewing also varied slightly, a result of the heterogeneity within study participants, how many people were present within an interview, and if they already knew the researcher. The researcher's previous interviewing experience complimented the chosen semi-structure depth interview approach. Semi-structured interviewing allowed a more flexible process which allowed for divergence between subjective and intersubjective approaches (Maciel and Wallendorf, 2017). Most of the interviews one to one were of a subjective nature, so researcher led (a transcript example can be found in Appendix III). However, an intersubjective approach within the interviews was of particular benefit to group and focus groups discussion. To explain, the flexibility within a multi person interview environment, allowed participants to freely communicate with each other, to affect and be affected by each other (DeLanda, 2016). Meaning that groups who were more likely to communicate aspects of food-insecurity occurring within their community, to each other in their own way, without the interviewer needing to steer the conversation:

*Researcher: What do you know about food banks within your community?*

*Gillian, local: I have not seen a sign up saying there is a food bank anywhere, I've not seen anything up saying...[looks to others]*

*Beth, local: Do you not have to be referred to a foodbank though?*

*James, local: Don't know [shrugs].*

*Gillian, local: See that's the thing [gets cut off] ...*

*Beth, local: Is it not like if you've no got money and you go and sign on for a crisis loan or something, and they canny give ye that, so when you say I have no food to feed ma kids, and they say well I'll give you that letter, and you can go and take it to the food bank, you canny just turn up and get food can you?*

*Researcher: Depends on the foodbank.*

*James, local: Well, that's annoying because it should be the same.*

The example above presents a more generalised discussion, highlighting some complex community issues which were raised, without applying the context of food-insecurity 'directly' to any of the individuals who were present within the group. This type of intersubjective discussion, then allowed the researcher to delve more into the context of the work and subjectively unpick parts of the topic further. Within the instance outlined above, the researcher steered the discussion towards children and hunger, and subsequently uncovered that these and other parents (friends and family of participants) often feed other people's children.

In addition to unpicking and navigating interviews and whilst conducting them, the researcher created rigour within the interview process. To explain, in addition to collecting the data created by interview recordings and subsequent transcripts, it was also valuable to observe and record how interview participants reacted or expressed

themselves. This helped identify and understand the context of the discussion. For example, an interviewee explains supplementary food provision:

*Mandy, local: Realistically 'that' bag of messages[pointing] is supposed to be for 3 adults to do a week [gestures to the sky, exasperated]. What the fuck are you supposed to do with that? There's one dinner in it [throws it on the seat], the rest is tins of soup, do you know what I mean? [Mandy is resigned to the situation, sits down, hands on head].*

This interview quote alone, without the accompanying active participation observation, highlights the discussion occurring with Mandy. It would show she was angry or upset, but it would not necessarily highlight the antipathy which she was feeling, highlighted by changes in her posture and tone, compounded when the contents of the parcel becoming harshly upended within the back seat of the researchers car.

Understanding the expressive responses of interviewees whilst being interviewed proved helpful, however, the researcher also found the 'before and after' process of note taking was an additional way to bolster the engagement of interviews. To explain, diary fieldnotes were documented to include the feeling of the space, for example, the weather, type of location, this was in addition to informal chats, emails, texts (as touched upon in the observation section). These fieldwork annotations were helpful because they presented the opportunity for both participant and researcher to follow up with questions and create additional depth, within the interview process. For example, a follow up email from employee Jennifer, highlighted Glasgow city 'specific' area problems, for those asylum seekers who needed access to food bank

vouchers “*The latest answer from Foodbank when I tried to negotiate more vouchers for AS [asylum seekers] in ongoing crisis. No surprises... problem is that alternatives are available only in certain areas in the city*” (Jennifer, employee – email). These extracts of information added more context to the task at hand. For example, the process that Jennifer was using to provide individuals with food vouchers, was subsequently being monitored in a stricter way. This highlights additional complexities for those individuals who are using foodbanks, problems for employees working from within different areas in the city, and validated similar data from other participants.

Penaloza (1998) cautions using interviews as a primary data source of ethnographic research, as interviews may only highlight what people say, and not consider what people do. However, within this research the complimentary elements of observation (4.3.1.3) and volunteering (4.3.1.5) are helpful to help create context within the research phenomena. This section has outlined data collection in consideration of how the researcher managed the key task of interviews. It shows how this method of data collection can be improved and complimented with the practical addition of a researcher diary, compiling fieldnotes, and through additional forms of communication. The next discussion turns to the final key method of data collecting, volunteering.

#### 4.4.3.3 Volunteering

As outlined within the previous section, the ethnographic work began with collecting data in the form of observations (4.4.3.1), followed by semi-structured interviews (4.4.3.2). Whilst both these methods continued throughout the duration of the data collection, Valtonen, Markuksela and Moisander (2010) suggest that a defining characteristic within ethnography is the participation within the social lives, of the study population. To increase depth and contextualisation of the phenomena under study, the researcher immersed herself further, from within the role of a community volunteer (Moisander and Valtonen, 2006). Higgins (2014) shows that volunteering is an effective ethnographic method to collect data, when the field is that which is normally encountered within the study of a PhD. This ethnographic immersion whilst volunteering, adds layers within the investigation, it proved helpful to understand the social aspects of food services, for example, how they are managed and overseen. It also creates insight to both the people behind the scenes and those attending the services, generating differing perspectives of food-insecurity encompassed within the Royston community. The fieldwork involved within volunteering (see table 4.7) allowed the researcher to accumulate over one hundred hours within the community, undertaken within three different organisations.

Table 4.7: Researcher volunteering

<i>Organisation type</i>	<i>Within services</i>	<i>Roles undertaken</i>
<i>Public</i>	Fundraising, Cookery, School meals, education	Nutritionist, Cook, dinner hall monitoring, funding advice,
<i>Community (1)</i>	Food service	Helper in food service, holiday cover
<i>Community (2)</i>	Holiday food provision	Collection, delivery, allocation, and distribution of surplus food.

The volunteering activities within the table above, created more depth and context within the research than observation and or interviews alone, and will be further discussed within the data analysis section. A brief volunteer subsection is presented next to consider each role the researcher volunteered within, and following this a discussion upon a combined organisation researcher led session.

*Public* - volunteering within a local school, allowed an insider perspective of; public meal provision, and to better understand how local volunteers work within the school. It also highlighted how individuals within the school, engage with other organisations within the Royston location. Whilst volunteering within the school, the researcher assisted teaching staff to navigate pupils at lunch services, allowing her to consider how the food is managed. Also, she was responsible to help complete applications for cookery funding for primary 4-7 and fundraise alongside the parent council volunteers to provide extra services for children within the school.

*Community (1)* - volunteering within a community food project, the researcher helped out within the ‘pop-up’ fruit and veg barras<sup>1</sup> (market), provided cover for staffing absence, helped distribute project evaluation work. This allowed a better understanding as to how low cost fruit and veg occurs within the community, how surplus food becomes distributed within that service, and how their evaluation process occurred. Additionally, it allowed informal conversation with other volunteers and locals, to enable future exploration of the context of supplementary food within the community.

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<sup>1</sup> *the Barras, the Barrows* Shortened form of The Barrowlands, a street market in the East End of Glasgow (Dictionary of the Scots Language, 2004).

*Community (2)* - volunteering within a charitable organisation who were providing holiday supplementary food, the researcher engaged with collection and delivery of supplementary food, starting with surplus food - supplied from the Glasgow fareshare depot. Following collection, it was easier to understand how the food was managed, separated, and reorganised into food parcels, and where the food went to be redistributed to those in need. All of these different roles helped draw attention to this journey of surplus food, and allowed insight of the “how and why” people manage relations within resources (MacInnis *et al.*, 2019: 21).

Combining volunteer roles also occurred when the opportunity presented. Linking the three organisations as described above, led to a community development session within the parameters of a food demonstration. Prompted by the researcher, recruited by one, prepped by another and hosted within the third. This focus group volunteering session proved helpful to understand some research components, and highlight discoveries that otherwise would have gone unnoticed (Valentin and Gomez-Corona, 2018). For example, a local housing association is found to offer additional help to food insecure locals, through the provision of replacement white goods. Highlighting information that would not be known, and increasing the parameters of what was previously understood.

Throughout the last few sections, the ethnographic methods of observation, interviewing, and volunteering within the research community have been considered, the next section now turns to discussion of how the data collected was managed.

## 4.5 *Data Management*

Data management is important within qualitative research particularly in ethnographic work where the data set is vast and varied (Valtonen, 2022). The processes involved within managing data are outlined within this section, and considers the considerations within the ethical approval and the ways in which distinct types of research data was collected and managed.

### 4.5.1 Ethical approval

Ethical approval was granted prior to the collection of all data. Within the parameters of this application, specific attention was given to the practical and methodological implications which could occur across the range of research settings. To explain, as this social research hoped to conduct investigation within sensitive contexts (Jafari *et al.*, 2013), the participants involved within it may be experiencing difficult life situations. Therefore, any perceived risk from the aspect of the vulnerable participant, was considered as fully as possible, to make likelihood of risks negligible for those who chose to engage within the work.

As such, pseudonyms were ascribed to all data throughout the investigation to protect participant confidentiality, and beyond pseudonyms it was not applicable to achieve tick box samples of additional data, for example age, race, or gender (Valentin and Gomez-Corona, 2018). All electronic transcripts of data were password-protected and saved within the institutional shared drive.

In addition to the risk for the researched, consideration was also given to the risks which could occur as a result of researcher vulnerability (Jafari *et al.*, 2013), including those which may be drawn from the context of the investigatory field, or as a ramification of the immersed approach to research. When outlining risks for the researcher, the opportunity presented to develop safeguarding or protectory measures in response to any risk, where the aim is to reduce potential harmful outcomes (ibid). To explain, it was helpful to identify parameters of space and place before visiting the field (Hamilton, Downey and Catterall, 2006), for example, basic mapping of the neighbourhood route, condition of lighting, state of repair of streets, paths and crossings, and any issues of accessibility within the access to participant homes. If any uncertainty whatsoever within the participants home setting, the interview was subsequently conducted in a public place.

However, as investigation activity would be wide ranging, it would be disingenuous to assume that every single aspect of risk would necessarily be accounted for. There are ways in which the researcher may be vulnerable whilst balancing the context of that which is being researched, and some interactions cannot be avoided (Hamilton, Downey and Catterall, 2006). As such, caveats were built within the ethical process which involved continuous monitoring and re-assessment, any subsequent changes which swayed research study parameters radically, would mean re-submitting the ethical application within the work.

#### 4.5.2 Data Collected

Table 4.8 briefly groups the type of data collected within this investigation, in consideration of the type recorded and the data collection and processes.

All data collected as outlined above, was primarily managed and organised using the Table 4.8: Data management outline

<i>Data Type</i>	<i>Data collection and processes</i>
Audio recording	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Interviews</i> – digitally recorded</li> <li>• <i>Observations</i> – digitally recorded</li> </ul>
Textual recording	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Audio recordings</i> – transcribed</li> <li>• <i>Researchers diary</i> – notes taken to allow the documentation of what was seen and thought by the researcher, for example, sensory notes of how people and things looked, felt, or smelled</li> <li>• <i>Fieldnotes</i> – informal discussion with the researcher, and between others</li> <li>• <i>Fieldnotes</i> – within interviews, for example, participant expressions or interruptions, or how the researcher felt</li> <li>• <i>Fieldnotes</i> – within volunteering sessions, allowing documentation of roles and tasks conducted</li> <li>• <i>Textual transcripts</i> – were conducted verbatim, together with participant pseudonym, saved with password protection</li> </ul>
Visual recording	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Images</i> – captured documented within fieldwork</li> <li>• <i>Images</i> – captured documented before and after interviews</li> <li>• <i>Images</i> – captured documented within volunteering sessions</li> </ul>
Data storage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Digital recordings (audio and visual) and transcripts were stored with password protection.</li> <li>• All data captured was stored upon the institutional shared drive, then transferred into a NVivo file.</li> <li>• NVivo file was located within institutional shared drive.</li> </ul>

platform of NVivo (12 Pro qualitative data software) with the add-on of Evernote

(Evernote, 2018). NVivo allowed the iterative identification of data whilst accommodating the intricacy required within analysis and interpretation. Evernote made documenting data more accessible - whilst in the field and online. Verbatim electronic transcripts were created both from the audio and written files contained within observation, interviews, and volunteering.

As an “inherently open-ended practice” (Kozinets, 2002: 62) the initial data within the ethnography lacked uniformity and evolved. For example, early consideration showed additional data would be required to better understand exactly how a person receives supplementary food, and that increased depth within the data would be needed beyond what may be understood from the lived experience of the individual. This initial analysis improved data collection, through creating a wider deeper analysis of the parameters of the investigation. The sample was subsequently expanded to include Royston organisations within the location. For example, data collection increased to include supplementary food services and the people who worked and volunteered within them. This increased the cohort of interviewees included within the research. The chain of events from these actions, was researcher engagement within volunteering activities, which subsequently led to more data collection in the form of additional observations and interviews.

As she was already known within Royston, the researchers “insider or semi-insider status” (Ergun and Erdemir, 2010: 17) helped reduce any tensions that may have

occurred if the researcher was considered an ‘outsider’ to the research community (Moisander and Valtonen, 2006).

During the entire application of ethnographic methods it was important for the researcher to provide a clear descriptive of detail (Law, 2004) whilst documenting complexity of all phenomena, and not only consider data which would exclusively relate to the position of “the reader, the researcher, or the participants” (Creswell, 2007: 03). Equally, the analysis of ethnographic data could only ever really be concluded when the final stages of writing are complete (Hill, 1993).

This part to whole processing of data (Arnold and Fischer, 1994) occurred concurrently over all stages of data collection, and overlapped within and between the aspects of observation, interviews, and volunteering and researcher notes were documented alongside other data as a way to outline key contextual experiences within this consumer assemblage (Arnold and Fischer, 1994). This process provided an additional layer of data analysis, and it was a useful process for the researcher to be more fluent within her data and helped within reflection and analysis of all data documented.

To manage the complexities occurring throughout the data analysis and interpretation, discussed within the next section is the hermeneutic approach which was used to consider the phenomenon (Arnold and Fischer, 1994).

#### *4.6 Hermeneutic data analysis*

To capture all the information and analyse and reflect upon it every step of the way, a hermeneutic approach to data analysis was adopted. (Arnold and Fischer, 1994).

Hermeneutics allows the iterative processing of qualitative data, to understand, interpret, and reinterpret each ‘part’ of data (as outlined previously in Table 4.8).

This rolling reflection of data would develop and expand the sense of the ‘whole’ over time (Thompson, Pollio and Locander, 1994). Hermeneutic data interpretation is in alignment with the context of consumer research. (Arnold and Fischer, 1994) And the theoretic assemblages, where rhizomatic thinking shows a lack of definitive start or endpoint (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987).

Hermeneutics also supports the underpinning theory of assemblage to present multiplicity, heterogeneity, and relationality within and between the data collected. (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987). To present some structure within the analysis of these complex phenomena, and highlight the position of the researcher within the data collection (Arnold and Fischer, 1994) This investigation uses the interpretive concept of the hermeneutic spiral as a visual representation of how this study interpreted and understood the qualitative data (see Figure 4.2).

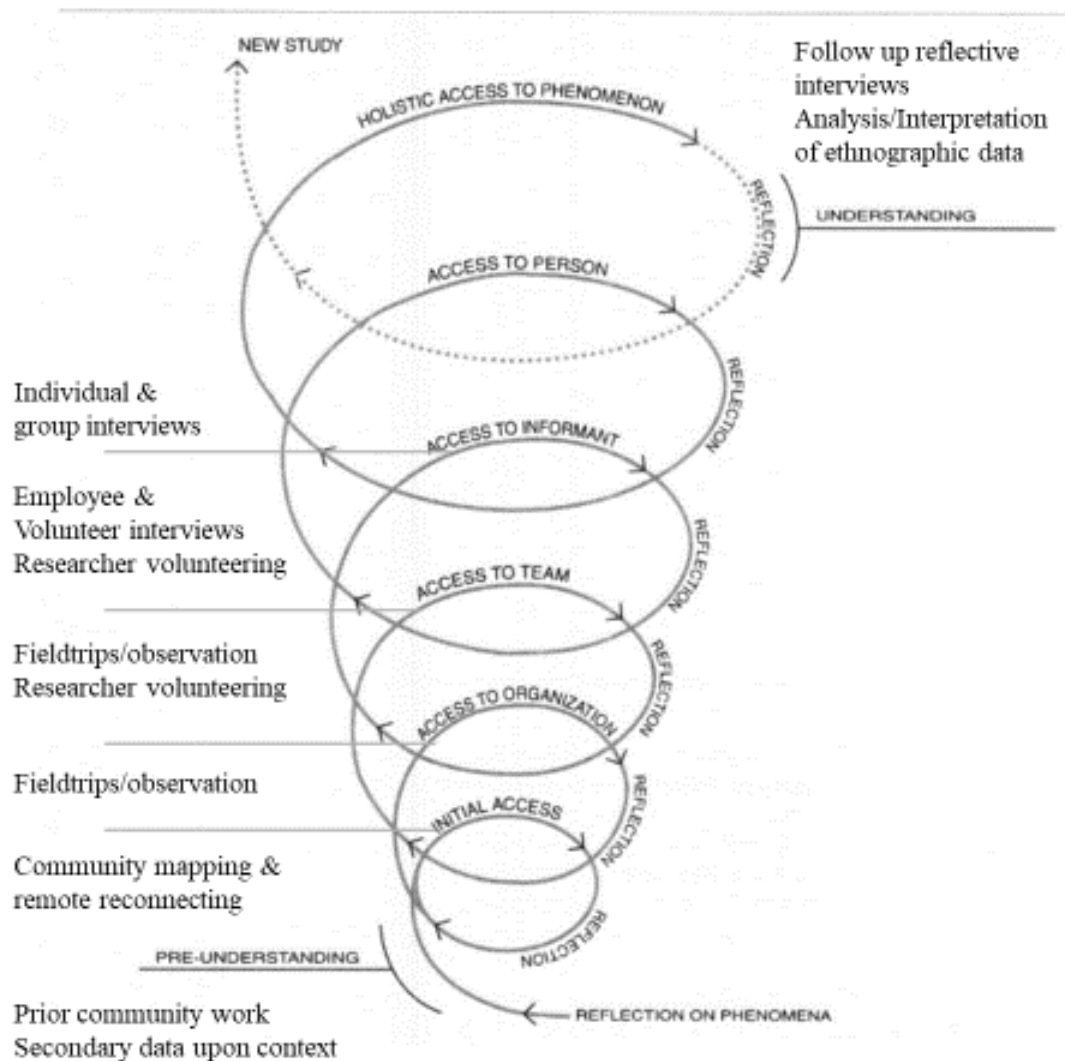


Figure 4.2: Hermeneutic data analysis

Adapted from Stenbacka (2001)

The hermeneutic approach to data analysis is outlined above. Starting from the bottom of the spiral and working upwards, the following section discusses some key parts of the data analysis: pre-understanding, initial access, extending access, researcher reflexivity, and discussion of methodological limitations and challenges.

#### 4.6.1 Pre-understanding

“The concept of [pre-]understanding accounts not only for existing theory and research findings but also for the knowledge that researchers as subjects share with the human objects of their inquiry” (Arnold and Fischer, 1994: 55). “[R]esearchers are never objective and knowledge is never neutral” (Hill, 1995: 147). Discussed as the researchers existing experiential and theoretical parameters including “beliefs, theories, codes, metaphors, myths, events, practices, institutions, and ideologies”, and the “lived experiences” of the researched community (Hill and Sharma, 2020: 563), pre-understanding can be identified as first or second-hand.

First-hand pre-understanding includes that which is understood through personal experience, and second-hand pre-understanding includes that which includes understanding information, which is accrued through other intermediaries, for example, (other peoples’ pre-understanding) within theory, literature, or from the social phenomena within the field. (Arnold and Fischer, 1994).

The researcher's first-hand pre-understanding or analysis of the Royston community was her first tracing of the people and things that comprise the urban demographic. The second-hand pre-understanding within this investigation was the analysis of the context underpinning this thesis, consumer research on vulnerability, poverty, and food-insecurity. This allowed the broader literature consideration of consumers' wellbeing, and the subsequent theoretical alignment within assemblage theory. It is conceivably this notion of Arnold and Fischer's (1994) ‘shared’ pre-understanding, which was ratified when the researcher reconnected within the community and analysed the data collected within the field.

#### 4.6.2 Initial analysis

To better understand phenomena, as and when they occurred throughout the research. (Valtonen and Moisander, 2006), it was important to analyse data as and when it was collected, and analysis at the early stage of research was grouped or classified into broad categories which were identified within the investigation, for example, information was saved according to where the data arose from. This helped create manageability within the dataset (Spiggle, 1994: 493), and allowed units of data to be labelled (or as represented in the case of NVivo software, coded). Coding started as soon as the gathered research became a data file (see fig 4.3).

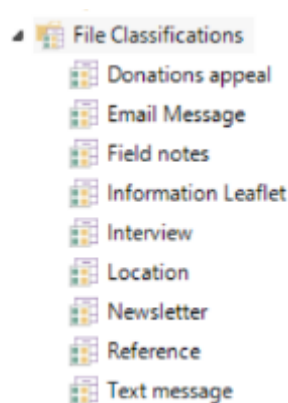


Figure 4.3: NVivo beginnings – a visual example

Initial analysis from the data set outlined above identified themes emerging within the data. This allowed for further categorisation of groups of data improving analysis by identifying similar ideas or concepts within the investigation (Spiggle, 1994). For example, it became clear within early analysis that the individuals ability to access supplementary food within the community, depended upon the capacity of numerous moving parts including differing aspects of the roles of organisation, management structures, employees, and volunteers. This interpretation created understanding

within the analysis, allowing for new “lines of flight” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 223) to be considered. This ongoing analysis or back and forth iterative exploration of data (Spiggle, 1994) highlights the appropriateness of using hermeneutic spiral to create and promote understanding between the different layers, it promoted themes and ideas which, in turn, facilitated deeper understanding throughout interpretation.

After reflecting upon the initial analysis or coding of data, subsequent coding was structured around what Gioia, Corley and Hamilton (2013) outline as ‘participant terms’, this was used initially to better present and analyse the emic account of the people and organisations involved within supplementary food services. Frequent participant terms were assigned nodes (see example in figure 4.4), which were helpful to analyse prominent emergent themes within the data.

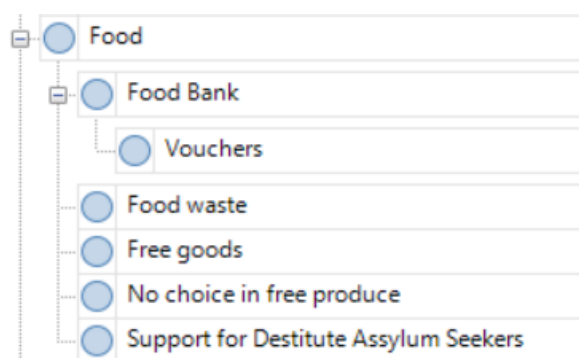


Figure 4.4: Coding of nodes

NVivo complimented the researcher analysis, it granted the opportunity to continually revisit and reflect within the data, to allow a presentation of any patterns whilst at the same time still engaging within the ethnographic processes occurring in situ. This allowed the opportunity to refine and reflect to consider the work from the participants or emic representations (Hamilton *et al.*, 2014) of food insecurity within the data, and how this emic account related within the wider context of the research.

### 4.6.3 Extending analysis

Data analysis included coding and cross coding, which allowed the presentation of this large changing holistic ethnography, whilst simultaneously unpicking the data set into more manageable components to better understand and interpret (Spiggle, 1994). Extending analysis included application of conceptual findings (Gioia, Corley and Hamilton, 2013) to include contextual and theoretical underpinnings within the research (see figure 4.5).

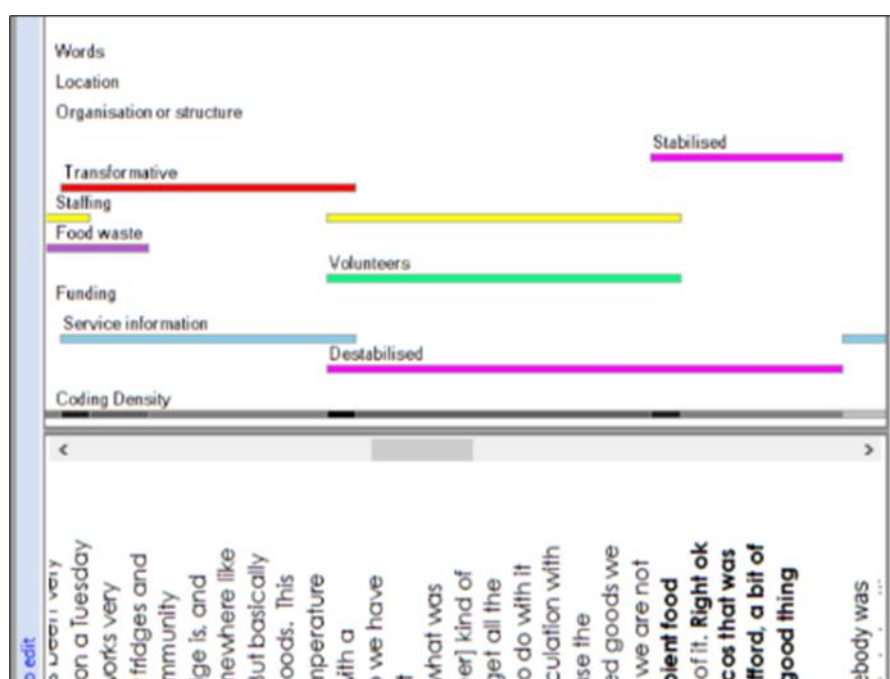


Figure 4.5: Theoretical & Contextual Information

This reflection within analysis evolved as the ethnography progressed, initial themes and coding were verified within subsequent data analysis, improving the holistic understanding within the work. Analysis of different data were helpful to highlight fluidity within the context at hand, which improved the contextual understanding of the phenomena under study. Researcher reflexivity was also valuable within analysis.

#### 4.6.4 Researcher reflexivity

Understanding within this research was provided through holistic access to the phenomenon (Arnold and Fischer, 1994; Stenbacka, 2001) and reflection and analysis within and upon the data whilst being collected, analysed, and reanalysed in consideration of contextual theory. The researcher promoted understanding within the gathered data, through informed interpretation whilst considering their own experiential gestalt (Diamond *et al.*, 2009). The adoption of a hermeneutic spiral (Arnold and Fischer, 1994; Spiggle, 1994) allows a part to whole consideration to analyse within the qualitative data, highlighting that much consideration has been given to constituent parts of phenomena included within this investigation, similar to other consumer research assemblages (Parmentier and Fischer, 2015; Price and Epp, 2016), and ethnographic research (Valtonen, 2022).

As this investigation concerned itself with those consumers who were vulnerable and the sensitive information that unfolded, there were challenges for the researcher to document and construct, and researcher reflexivity was used to promote subjectivity. Researcher reflexivity is a means for the researcher to address investigative complexities and consider how they relate or impact within research (Woodruffe-Burton, 2006; Jafari *et al.*, 2013). It allows those who are studying social sciences to “address power and control in the research encounter” (Bettany and Woodruffe-burton, 2009: 673), meaning researchers can create a better account of research whilst reflecting “upon our own actions in the world” (ibid: 675).

To promote subjectivity within the researcher analysis, and highlight its role within the creation of meaning within the work, the researcher followed suggestions of

Bettany and Woodruffe-burton (2009: 663) and included the following forms of researcher reflexivity within data collection:

- Autobiographical/social/personal location vis a vis the research
- Recording management/development of any relationship with respondents
- Recording of researcher responses within the research
- How they have the researcher/respondent relationship

(Bettany and Woodruffe-burton, 2009: 667)

These suggestions were helpful for the researcher, particularly when analysing participant data which came from within a position of vulnerability, and highlighted the “dual role of empathy” (Jafari *et al.*, 2013: 1189) which could make her emotionally vulnerable and more susceptible to the experience of the researched.

Warr (2004: 579) explains that methodological insight shows us that it is very difficult for researchers to “avoid their own subjectivity”, and therefore recommends “practical strategies” (ibid:84) to both preserve the research context and minimise harm to the researcher. Consumer researchers have also identified approaches to help promote critical reflection within work sensitive, for example, Hamilton, Downey and Catterall (2006: 673) explain that supporting materials such as researcher diary and field notes, allow the management of researcher reflexivity in order to produce “a more holistic picture of realities under exploration”.

The researcher was acutely aware of her position within the research, and applied appropriate approaches to mitigate the risk involved within this prolonged approach to analysing data. “It is difficult to engage with the politics of our own practice when our world of operation is configured as one of amoral technique applied to external

contexts” (Bettany and Woodruffe-burton, 2009: 662). For example, to cope with the immersed approach the researcher kept a research diary throughout, which was particularly useful to immerse herself within the context of the analysis. However, it proved a beneficial evaluating tool to ensure she kept critical self-reflection detached from the task at hand. To explain, the following excerpt comes from a challenging volunteering session: *“I am not sure I can cope with what I am seeing with regards to food packing, storage, and transportation. If someone were to turn up from environmental health they would have a field day, it’s my worst nightmare in many of my former careers. I just want to step in and take charge, it’s taking me to the edge of sanity”* (Researcher diary: 18<sup>th</sup> March 2019). Jotting diary and field notes such as this were helpful and improved the rigour of the research. It allowed processing within the research context, and provided the ability to reflect upon the outcome of any perceived actions, and how this would impact the task at hand.

However, it did allow subsequent transformative discussions when the data collection aspect was complete. For example, highlighting issues of collection and distribution of perishable goods, and how this could be aided by the support of inexpensive food safe temperature sustaining packaging.

The methodological limitations and challenges within this investigation and analysis can be presented in relation to both the parameters of the research and the position of the researcher, considered next within credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability

#### 4.6.5 Credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability

Within the parameters of the research, the specificity of the study population within a single urban demographic of Glasgow, could be highlighted as a limitation. Such a specific cultural focus can present the question as to whether the research has transferability, as in so much as whether or not this work could be applied within other study populations (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). However, the nature of rich and detailed complex social phenomena (Valtonen, Markuksela and Moisander, 2010) generally assumes that the context under study is always going to be time and place specific. The reactive nature of the topic at hand, suggested that very little specificity would be involved within the collection of data, in so much as every visit to the field would be entirely different. This was the initial reason why the relations occurring between the diverse phenomena found, would be studied and underpinned by the theoretic of assemblages (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987; DeLanda, 2016).

The researcher within this work can also be presented as having a research bias, considered from the aspect of both pre-understanding and the length of time she was immersed within the ethnographic work in the 'field'. Pre-understanding has been outlined a negative influence upon research, because the researcher does not enter into the parameters of investigation from within an entirely neutral manner (Hill, 1995). The researchers influence within qualitative work can vary dependent upon the engagement process within an investigation (Warr, 2004), and the all-encompassing approach within the study of this social investigation, can mean the researcher becomes a participant within their own research.

The nature and time spent within an ethnographic investigation can promote the researcher “going native” (Schouten and McAlexander, 1995: 46), where balance within the work becomes difficult and the research findings can emerge from within a position of bias, because, the researcher is seen to be adopting the view of the research population. Protectionary safeguards were used within this investigation to prevent ‘going native’. For example, this work turned to Schouten and McAlexander (1995: 46) who support critical self-examination and self-vigilance during the research process. Additionally, this work would suggest that credibility of the investigation can be established through the “prolonged engagement” within the field, as this provided an increased “understanding of the phenomenon, group or culture” (Wallendorf and Belk, 1989, 71).

#### 4.7 Conclusion

This chapter presents the researchers overview whilst developing methodological considerations for this investigation. It has outlined the research aim as understanding the components of consumer assemblages, within the context of food-insecurity in Royston, Glasgow. It identifies that the ontology of this investigation is based upon a reality that surrounds understanding the data, and in order to achieve this, the ontological assumptions must be socially constructed from within an interpretivist approach. The resultant epistemological stance to surround knowledge and meaning is a qualitative approach to produce depth and understanding within phenomena. As with the other consumer research assemblages, ethnographic methods (Canniford and Shankar, 2013) were chosen as the approaches within the ‘field’ to collect qualitative data, which included observation (Weijo, Martin and Arnould, 2018), interviews (Epp and Velagaleti, 2014; Epp, Schau and Price, 2014), and volunteering (Higgins, 2014).

Using NVivo software and the application of a hermeneutic circle to better understand the data collected, helped the researcher analyse the lived experiences (Hill and Stephens, 1997) of the individual and the organisation, and identified those individuals who were food insecure, and those organisations whose employees and volunteers were engaged within supplementary food provision (Moraes *et al.*, 2021).

The next section now turns to the findings chapter. It discusses the holistic phenomena considered within the data collection, hermeneutic interpretation of those findings, to present a holistic expression of the phenomena studied within investigation.

## **Chapter 5. Findings - Food-insecurity Assemblages**

### *5.1 Introduction*

As consumer need for supplementary food continues to increase, so too does the variety of services which distribute it. The evolutionary nature of both the individuals in need and the services which deliver it, means it is incredibly difficult to document. Existing understandings of food-insecurity in Scotland has been evidenced through recording the use of supplementary food services such as foodbanks, meal services, and community cafes (MacLeod, 2015). Additionally, there is some insight into relations between the use of supplementary food and the welfare state (MacLeod, 2018). Within the city of Glasgow, more is also understood about the prevalence and drivers of food bank use (MacLeod, Curl and Kearns, 2019). However, outlined within all existing research is a need for further evidential work.

Using ‘assemblage thinking’ allows this investigation to unpick and understand how food-insecurity exists within the urban demographic of Royston, Glasgow. It allows the study of social complexities to identify the key components and conditions of food-insecurity within the community, whilst considering the heterogeneity or diversity that exists between kinds and scales of phenomena found (Epp et al., 2014: 83).

The following chapter presents the main findings gathered within the field using ethnographic methods and depth interviews. To allow structure the data is presented across key themes to help explain emergent findings. The chapter opens with an ethno-excursion fieldnote (5.1.1) to introduce the reader to Royston. Then the findings are split into three tenets; tenet 1 (5.2) outlines the key heterogeneous

components found within the investigation, Tenet 2 (5.3) presents how phenomena relate to one another and identifies material and expressive capacities, Tenet 3 (5.4) discusses the stability among those relations, identifying tensions surrounding the provision of supplementary food, and how these tensions can affect the level of stability within the assemblage.

### 5.1.1 Ethno-excursion fieldnote

*I am doing a lap by foot around Royston, on a stunning June afternoon, it is very warm with no air movement and feels a little muggy, people are slowly making their way around the neighbourhood. Heading south down towards the M8 motorway, where the Glasgow city bypass goes directly through the middle of the city, I had forgotten how noisy the constant buzz of traffic can be. There are ten lanes 'sounding out' right beside me, five heading east towards Edinburgh, five going west towards Glasgow international airport.*

*I continue along the route of the motorway, under and over all the walkways heading in and out of Royston. The pathways are not all well-kept, and in some places trees are at war with the bitumen for the ground underfoot. There are a couple of young people drinking and chatting together under one of the tunnels, and because I take photographs of the area whilst walking, they ask if I am here to renovate the space. It is bleak down here, filthy, and because there is no direct sunshine encroaching on the space, it smells damp and foul. Broken glass and rubbish furnish the ground, and the old phone booth as I exit, has been burnt out.*

*I loop around the whole locale, walking under the five looming Royston high-rises. They look lovely in a sunshine glow, all pink and white like proud obelisks. On the opposite road, there is a brand new four storey bricked structure being built. I believe this will soon host 24 social homes. Further along on the main drag, nothing looks bright or shiny in the sun. Same old shops, same dirty pathways, everything is run down with little improvement seen in the last decade. A small road that loops around the back of some takeaways to join the road again, remains a rodent magnet*

*from the fly tipping common in the space. I recognise and nod or wave to a few people. The most prominent thing you see in the whole neighbourhood is the towering Royston Spire, and it is also clear to see within some areas, the fruition of recent refurbishment. There is a lot of brand new housing, recent landscaping and from this vantage it looks hugely different to when I started working here in 2012.*

*Statues of Mother Mary are present in lots of pretty trim hedged gardens, frequently she is standing with arms open and palms facing upwards. However, not all gardens are presented equal, and many of the newly erected houses have small jungles growing, and as I walk past these and get bowled over by the smell of marijuana, it is so strong I cross the road. I am soon headed back to my old haunt, a small 'shed' where I used to work. It and the other four shed spaces are closed down, locked up. The whole adjoining centre will soon be closed. I feel quite emotional about this, and hope that someday the former school will be rejuvenated, and bursting with life once again, full of noise and laughter.*

*(Researcher diary: 15 June 2021)*

## *5.2 Tenet 1: Heterogeneity within food-insecurity assemblages*

Components of social assemblages vary widely and can include networks of people and organisations (DeLanda, 2006). Understanding the distinct properties of those components made up of people and organisations, can help determine some idea of the assemblage composition and will contribute to understanding what those properties are found to do (ibid).

Throughout Tenet 1, the detailed descriptive of research phenomena presents the key heterogeneous components which make up this food-insecurity assemblage. This discussion is vital, as it is from these foundational beginnings that Tenet 2 and Tenet 3 will be further understood.

As an entry point to explaining Tenet 1, Table 5.1 outlines the heterogeneous groupings of phenomena comprised of “both people and things” (Parmentier and Fischer, 2015: 112).

Table 5.1: Heterogeneous components of the food-insecurity assemblage

Phenomena	Description	Examples
<b>Things</b>		
Location	The urban demographic of Royston	Maps, boundaries, industry, migration, image
	Vulnerabilities specific to region or composition	Deprivation, accessibility
Infrastructure	Housing facilities, food facilities, transport facilities	Housing associations, retail, buses
Organisation	Organisations providing services which source and or distribute supplementary food within Royston.	Charities un-registered, social enterprises, public institutions
	Funding - in what way organisations are funded	Funding streams, cash donations, other donations
Supplementary Food	Types of food provided and linked to the marketplace	Free of cost, reduced in cost, other arrangements
<b>People</b>		
Employees	Individuals found to be working within the assemblage	People responsible for making or implementing decisions, surrounding delivery of food
Volunteers	Persons working for organisations, without being paid.	People managing supplementary food provision, people working for projects
Individuals	People experiencing vulnerability who were found at risk	Those in receipt of supplementary food
	Community	Those surrounding individuals and or organisations concerned with supplementary food

This tenet will present findings following the path of table 5.1, firstly discussing things, secondly discussing people. The ‘things’ found are grouped into the four key themes of location, infrastructure, organisation, and supplementary food. The ‘People’ found are grouped according to if they were either in receipt of, or in some way involved with the provision of supplementary food and included people who were employees, volunteers, or individuals within the community.

### 5.2.1 Things

To better understanding the properties of the ‘things’ that make up the food-insecurity assemblage, the researcher combines findings which resulted from ethnographic immersion and analysis of local documents.

#### 5.2.1.1 Location

The properties of components that make up this assemblage, are all encompassed within the urban demographic of Royston, Glasgow. Royston is situated within the northeast of the city, around a mile from the city centre (see figure 5.1).

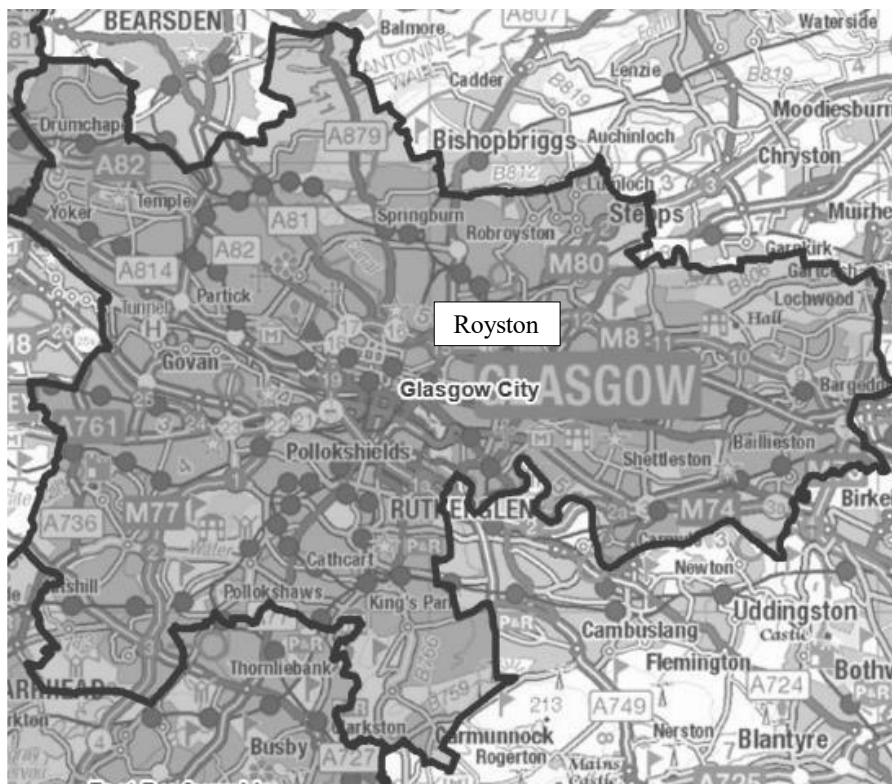


Figure 5.1: Glasgow City Map

(adapted from the Scottish Government, 2020)

Formerly named Garngad, an infamous city slum, Royston has historically been known for the capitalist industrial manufacture of chemicals, and the accompanying influx migration of Irish populations (Mitchell, 2020). Over 150 years onwards Royston is still found to resonate of erstwhile immigration and industry. For example, properties of Royston's industrial past were found highlighted within the investigation. Gowan, an Irish local who had moved to Royston in the 70's explains a manufacturing discovery within their garden. *"There was a clay pipe factory here which closed in the 60's, and Jim [husband] discovered lots of fancy scrolled clay pipes the first time he turned over the garden"* (Researcher diary: 5<sup>th</sup> May 2019). However, these post-industrial discoveries are not always found to be sentimental. Much of the land in Royston remains contaminated with heavy metal deposits associated with heavy railway engineering. Revealed within an interview with employee Carol, when she alluded to the potential of food growing activities for young people: *"We have had them [youths] out in the garden, we've been speaking about growing [food] for years, but we have problems because the soil is contaminated"*. This shows how Royston's industrial past continues to impede access to the land for current generations. As outlined in the previous figure (5.1), the Royston location is only about a mile from the city centre of Glasgow; however, the urban demographic can be seen as an island within the city. Visually presenting this notion, Figure 5.2 shows how the location is isolated from the surrounding neighbourhoods.

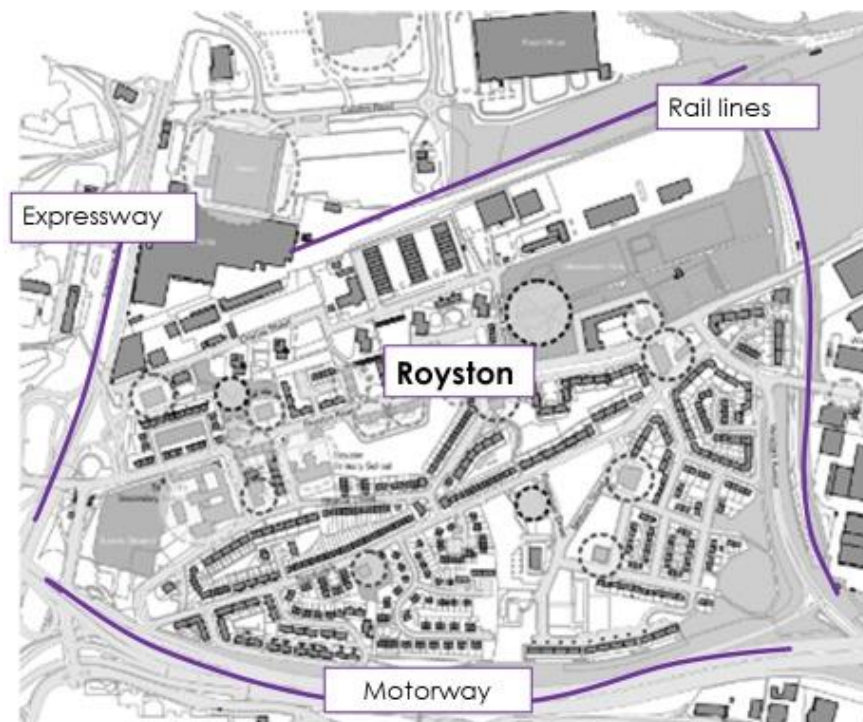


Figure 5.2: Royston Urban Location

Adapted from Murray, Miller and Scott-Simmons (2015: 27)

The figure above demonstrates how Royston is restricted from neighbouring communities, the neighbourhood is nestled between the M8 motorway to the south, the Springburn expressway to the west, and a railway line to the north and east. There are no walkways found over the railway lines. This means that access in and out of the area is restricted, demonstrating evidence of tangible boundaries (Cheetham, McEachern and Warnaby, 2018).

The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) measures the Royston population at 5024 people (The Scottish Government, 2020). The SIMD is a Scottish government toolkit that measures relative deprivation throughout the entirety of Scotland. The SIMD is made up from small areas called ‘data zones’ which are less

populous than local council wards. The purpose of the SIMD data is to identify areas that are experiencing disadvantage. The data collected is based upon social characteristics called indicators, namely, income, employment, health, education, housing, geographic access, and crime (ibid). SIMD zones over the entirety of Scotland are collectively ranked between 1 (most deprived) and 6,976 (least deprived). The zones are then grouped into a percentage scale.

The five data zones outlined within Table 5.2, are those that make up Royston. All zones are all found to lie within 20% of the most deprived areas in Scotland, and as highlighted below, three out of five are within the most deprived 5% areas of the country.

Table 5.2: Royston Data Zones

Royston Location Data zone	People within each zone	Most deprived	Rank (1 – 6,976)
S01010229	1292	20%	990
S01010230	987	5%	84
S01010231	907	5%	307
S01010232	1016	20%	1341
S01010233	822	5%	339

Adapted from SIMD (2020)

Within the organisations studied, poverty statistics are frequently discussed in relation to deciles. Deciles are where data zones are clustered into ten groups. Each decile (or group) accounts for 10% of the population (see Table 5.3).

Table 5.3: SIMD Deciles

SIMD Rank		
Decile (10%)	From	To
1	1	697
2	698	1395
3	1396	2092
4	2093	2790
5	2791	3488
6	3489	4185
7	4186	4883
8	4884	5580
9	5581	6278
10	6279	6976

Adapted from SIMD (2020)

The table above highlights where the Royston deciles are ranked. The most deprived 5% are located within decile 1, and the most deprived 20% are located within decile 2. However, some people (like employee Hannah) suggested that these statistics should be considered subjective:

*Hannah, employee: If you look at the SIMD, everybody in this area is going to be a 1 or 2 with a few 3s [deciles]. In your 2s, I can paint a picture of a very enriched child who is not poor and is not deprived.... Then a 2 that is seriously deprived affecting their attainment and achievement, affecting their social capacity, their being as a person, affecting everything about them with significant issues.....they are both 2s and they live 50 yards from each other.*

Throughout the discussion above, employee Hannah does not feel that SIMD numbers are either informative or positive for explaining aspects of poverty, and

grouping people according to these values may not be the most helpful way to capture population diversity.

The section above has set the scene with an outline of the urban demographic of Royston. These location findings suggest that Royston is an area that has characteristics of spatial vulnerabilities (Saatcioglu and Corus, 2014). To expand upon this notion, the next section now turns to Royston infrastructure.

#### *5.2.1.1 Infrastructure*

To outline and explain those findings which surround infrastructure within the Royston assemblage, the following section presents the components of (a) housing, (b) food, and (c) transport.

##### *(a) Housing*

As discussed in the previous section, Royston is found to be home to just over 5000 people and this number has remained stable over the last decade, with less than 1% change in the number of people who live there. Most location dwellings are a result of social housing stock of four registered social landlords.

East of Royston, the neighbouring area of Sighthill was largely razed between the years of 2008 to 2016 (Glasgow City Council, 2017). Royston saw an increase of local funding to build social housing during this period, with a hope to negate

Sighthill decampment (Leslie, 2016). However, whilst more homes were built, to accommodate people from next-door communities, the population numbers did not increase. This was found to be a result of the demolition of some of Royston's own tower block housing (see figure 5.3).



Figure 5.3: Hollybank Street, Royston

(Researcher photographs)

As demonstrated in the images above, the most apparent result of change within accommodations is the location topography. The skyline changed from huge tower blocks of 29 storeys, to individual homes and flats which are no more than 3 storeys. Interactions or relations occurring within Royston housing, highlights aspects of flux which can be common within assemblages (DeLanda, 2006). A better understanding of those components can be demonstrated by unpacking their properties. In this

instance of housing, the homogeneity increased within this specific data zone, as all of the homes became individual low-rise accommodations. Homogeneity is suggested to stabilise assemblages (ibid). In a small area of Royston, the stabilisation can be shown by an increase in like for like housing. This has resulted in a rise in SIMD rankings from 551 to 1341 which demonstrates significant reduction in deprivation as a result of housing homogeneity for some residents. However, deprivation in wider Royston remains since not all high-rises are scheduled for demolition such as those in figure 5.4.



Figure 5.4: Royston high rises

(researcher photograph)

While prior research suggest that the home involves “a deeply emotional set of meanings to do with permanence and continuity” (Dupuis and Thorns, 1998: 30), in locations where high-rises dominate, people have more ambivalent emotional attachments to their homes and geographical area. This may be the result of the constant flux within high-rise living coupled with the enduring aspects of deprivation.

This was evident in the many stories the researcher heard through the ethnographic fieldwork about how these types of accommodation are rife with criminality, risk, and uncertainty. For example, volunteers were heard discussing the tower blocks as the local police had just ‘carried out a raid’. *“They just put anyone in those flats, and the worst thing is they look over the local primary schools” (Lorna, volunteer)*. This brief conversation highlighted supposedly ‘known’ offenders being housed locally. Next discussed is the component of food.

#### (b) Food

For consumers, Royston Road is the main neighbourhood shopping street and the location of food retail. This area is found in a rundown state, and hosts fast-food takeaway shops, corner shops, and a supersaver (budget store). One store ‘Nisa local’ provides a small range of fresh fruit and veg or perishable goods (see figure 5.5).



Figure 5.5: Royston Road Nisa local

(researcher photograph, 2021)

The Nisa store is new in relation to the other shops; however, all the shops are small, and a collection of stores and the homes above (see figure 5.6A), are all owned by a single businessperson. This building and the rear of these premises are not well maintained, resulting in an often discussed local rodent problem.



Figure 5.6: Homes over retail

(A) Researcher photograph field trip 21; (B) Google Maps (2021)

During field trips to the shops, it was noted that food purchased locally was lunch fare for high school students (see figure 5.6B). And even though the researcher did not see shoppers buying what could amount to a weekly shop, it was mentioned in study interviews. For example, local school volunteer Rowan has three young children, she explains her view on the expense of shopping locally:

*Rowan, volunteer: [Y]ou actually see people in there, doing their shopping, like they're going round with a basket, taking frozen food, tins, packets, and I just look, and I think how can you afford tae dae [to do] your shopping here?*

In addition to worries about expense, the local Nisa food was also found to be lacking for some people in both nutrition and quality, as explained by Gillian a local parent, in a focus group:

*Researcher: What is the situation with your local shops for food?*

*Gillian, local: What ..... doon [down] the road? Nisa and that? [researcher nods]. Oh my god. I went in to see if they had mince .... 20% fat is all they do!! And it was pure like black. I only buy the 5%. There is not much choice.*

Gillian raises concerns about the nutritional content of the produce, specifically in relation to high fat content foods. This can be regarded as an exchange restriction (Hill and Stephens, 1997). Research surrounding issues of access and availability of healthy food, has been debated within Scotland. An entire mapping of the nation was commissioned by (the then) Food Standards Agency (Scotland) (Dawson *et al.*, 2008). This mapping debunked the notion of food deserts in Glasgow urban areas; however, it did show that people within the most deprived areas face difficulties accessing healthy food. These findings show that healthy food, such as lean protein outlined by Gillian above, are still difficult to access over a decade later.

In order to access larger supermarkets with cheaper food (Dawson *et al.*, 2008), people need to leave the assemblage. A journey from the mid-point of Royston into the neighbouring community's nearest supermarkets, Co-op, Iceland, ALDI, Lidl, Tesco, and Morrisons are all over one mile, and ASDA is over two miles. This may not appear to be a long distance, however, a return trip from a supermarket by foot would be difficult, if carrying food bags and compounded by additional factors such as physical ability, children, or the safety of surrounding neighbourhoods. For

example, access points under and over the M8 and expressway are not found well-kept or utilised (see example figure 5.7), and bridged access footways south, are found particularly dangerous to use within severe weather such as high winds or low temperatures.



Figure 5.7: Access by foot heading out from Royston

Researcher photographs

Additionally, some more direct sheltered motorway underpasses are blocked to be impassable. These boundaries were closed to deter antisocial behaviour relating to youth alcohol consumption and opposing gang clashes between local communities of Royston and next-door Dennistoun. These findings demonstrate the presence of both

tangible and intangible boundaries (Cheetham, McEachern and Warnaby, 2018), that prevent marketplace access to neighbouring communities and their affordable food.

These findings also reinforce that people within the assemblage are spatially vulnerable (Saatcioglu and Corus, 2015) because access to food retail is impeded by both price and quality. Consumers, who are able to access retail, must venture out with the area by public transport. The next section now turns to discussion upon those facilities.

#### (c) Transport Facilities

Royston is contained from its bordering communities to the north and east by rail lines, however, it has no access points in the form of rail stations. Historically, there was a rail station (see figure 5.8) however this has long been closed to passenger traffic. Community consultation within Royston by Murray, Miller and Scott-Simmons (2015: 17) present local aspirations to “Re-open Royston station”. This highlights disparity between the grassroots views of residents, and those of policy makers who make decisions on behalf of the community (Lister, 2016).



Figure 5.8: Train passing through Garngad Station

(Robin, 1956)

Dropping a pin in to the midpoint of the Royston area, the distance to the nearest rail stops is over a mile. With a lack of link by rail, the key components of public transport that exist within Royston are limited to bus routes, of which there are two; First Bus service 19 and McGill's Bus Service 329. By day, both go to and from the city centre, the 329 links hourly services to and from the local Stobhill hospital, and the 19 provides services every 20 minutes, to and from the east of Glasgow city limits in Easterhouse. However, as Murray, Miller and Scott-Simmons (2015) highlight, these area connections are linear, so, in order to get to a destination even within neighbouring communities, it is often necessary to go into and then come back out from the city centre. This is a form of transport poverty since a longer time is necessary to travel to and from essential food retail. For example, from the midpoint of Royston a combination of walking and bus would take a minimum of 25 minutes to reach a supermarket. For people already experiencing vulnerability, these

infrastructural layers complicate simple tasks like shopping, and may manifest a profound effect on lives.

This section has allowed the researcher to give an account of the material things found within the location of Royston, as they relate to the infrastructure of housing, food, and transport. These findings are important to better understand the food-insecurity assemblage components, and to lay the groundwork for discerning relations between components in tenet 2. Particular note has been given to boundaries (Cheetham, McEachern and Warnaby, 2018) and spatial vulnerabilities (Saatcioglu and Corus, 2014), and it can be suggested that the impact of local deprivation combined with such spatial limitations, means it is more likely that Royston consumers may be confronted with exchange restrictions (Hill and Stephens, 1997). Now that ‘things’ have been discussed the next section turns to those Royston organisations who are involved with supplementary food.

#### *5.2.1.2 Organisations*

Within Glasgow, there are charitable organisations such as Urban Roots (see figure 5.9), which highlight a selection of free food provisions throughout the city. This organisation provides people with an electronic application to search for supplementary food provision based upon type of food, for example, food parcels, meals, lunch clubs.

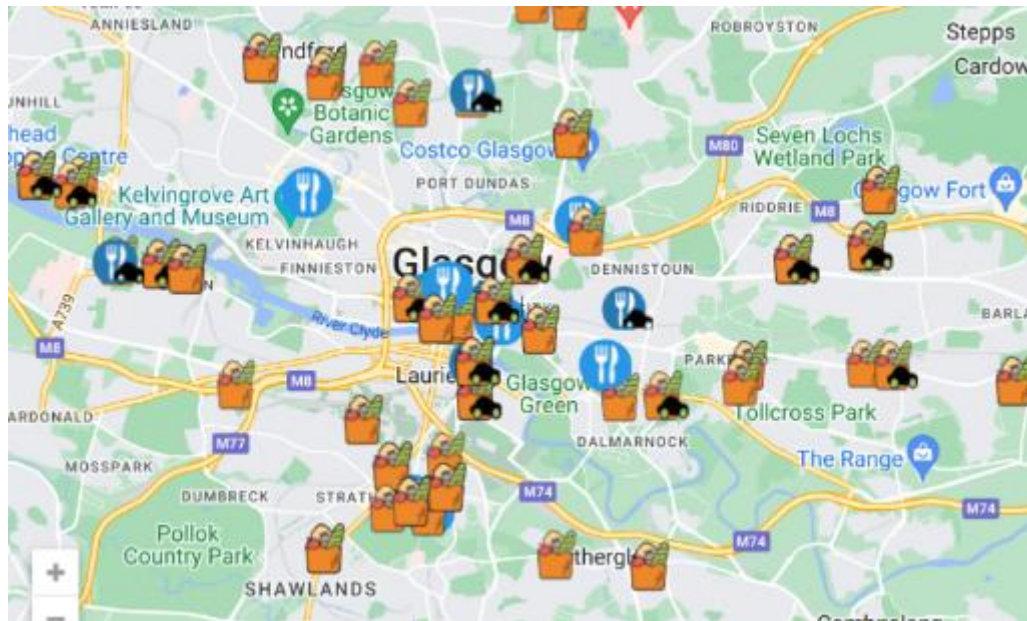


Figure 5.9: Glasgow free food map

(Urban Roots, 2022)

Within the map above, there are no free food projects located within the Royston location. Additionally, an online postcode search at the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) provided 22 charities (OSCR, 2020), four of which are known to the researcher to deliver some type of food service. Table 5.4 highlights these four alongside additional fieldwork findings. It shows a wide range of organisations operational within the community delivering a crisscross of food services, including unregistered organisations such as small lunch clubs, public organisations such as schools, or those charities which host offices or services within the area, but are subsidiaries of larger organisations, for example, Wheatley Homes (formerly Glasgow Housing Association).

Table 5.4: Royston Organisations involved with provision of supplementary food

Organisation	Name	Services
<i>Public provision</i>		
Education	Primary School	Breakfast & lunch Provision host – Royston Food Hub & services
	Primary School	Breakfast & lunch
	Secondary School	Lunch
	Nursery	Lunch
NHS Scotland	Health Hub	Cookery & healthy eating
Social Work	Social Work Services	Signpost and connect to services
<i>Charitable funding</i>		
Housing	Wheatley Homes	Tenant food parcels Food bank vouchers Money advice
	Spire View Housing Association Ltd	Provision Host – barra Food bank vouchers Money advice
	Blochairn Housing Association Ltd	Provision Host – barra Food bank vouchers Money advice
	Copperworks Housing Association Ltd	Provision Host – barra Food bank vouchers Money advice
Lunch Club	50+ Club	Lunch – Thursday
	160 Club	Lunch – Thursday
	Men's Group	Lunch - Monday
Multi-service	Learning Group	Holiday food Provision host – barra
	Food Hub	Barra, cookery, community meal, growing
	Youth Group	Holiday food Breakfast, lunch, snacks
	Childcare Service	Breakfast, lunch
Networking	Integration Network	Signpost services Food bank vouchers
Religious	Church of Scotland	Provision host – Food Store, destitution service
	Roman Catholic Church	Provision host – Food Exchange & barra
Trust Fund	Development Trust	Funds Royston services

Presenting the organisations in this way allows this ethnographic research to better identify components within the assemblage. It offers deeper context of supplementary food revealing heterogeneity of organisations. For example, an organisation that does not adhere to parameters of third sector regulation, may still be found to benefit people within the assemblage. How these organisations relate both with each other and with people, will be highlighted further within the discussion of capacities in tenet 2, and stability in tenet 3. To better explain these relations and capacities, the next section highlights how organisations are funded.

#### (a) Funding

Previously within table 5.4 organisations were grouped by whether they receive public or charitable funding. Public funding or the statutory provision of free and reduced cost food in Royston is provided by the Facilities Management Services, based within Glasgow City Council. This includes free meals to all primary children (years 1-4). Additional years (including secondary schools) may be eligible based upon socio-demographics. Additionally, Primary schools provide breakfast clubs, which is a reduced cost provision to all, or free for children entitled to a free school meal. School meal provision is found causally linked with how a school receives their pupil equity fund that can be used for supplementary food provision, employee Hannah explains the relationship: *“So, pupil equity fund or PEF is government funding that has been put in for the most deprived areas, so 96% of pupils at this school are a 1 to 2 [SIMD decile]. So, if a child has an application that is granted for free school meals, I can get £1,200 in my PEF for that child [annually]”*.

The Scottish Government outline “The Pupil Equity Funding is allocated directly to schools and targeted at closing the poverty related attainment gap” (Scottish Government, 2022: web). However, PEF funding is complicated, while a child will automatically receive a free school meal, the parents must additionally apply for PEF in order for the school to receive this money. So, while these measures could be instrumental in “poverty proofing the school day” (Bryson and Crossley, 2015: 209), this extra administrative burden on parents and schools reduces their impact.

Charitable funding is also found crisscrossed between and within organisations throughout the Royston assemblage. Within this work, findings can be explained by using the type of funding pot (big or small). Big-pot funding is precisely this, larger more structured funds of money. For example, Figure 5.10 is from a Royston housing association quarterly newsletter, and it shows a selection of big-pot funders for a new community hub, which will include a space for a community food pantry.



Figure 5.10: Collective funding for new community hub

(Copperworks Housing Association, 2018: 3)

The figure demonstrates that many funders can be involved collectively within a single funding application. Similarly, within many charitable projects, there are

different pots funding work across differing services. How organisations receive contributions towards supplementary food is more complex. Big pot funding was found by the Scottish Government, including the People and Communities Fund (The Scottish Government, 2016), the Climate Challenge Fund (The Scottish Government, 2021a), and Glasgow City Council (Glasgow City Council, 2021).

Small-pot funding is when organisations received donations from smaller funders, but also donations from across the community in multi-layered methods. As such, small-pot funding was harder to evidence because of its unstructured nature, but they can be grouped into monetary, food, and service donations. Interview excerpts within figure 5.11, shows some examples of ‘giving’ and or ‘receiving’ supplementary food donations:

*“I know about the food bank at the chapel, we always give our harvest food to them”*  
(Hannah, employee)

*“We deal with donations from people, but we also get Trussell Trust surplus stuff”*  
(Donna, employee)

*“Once a year, we get donations fae Celtic park green brigade”*  
(Connie, volunteer)

*“Move On just phone us up and say – do you want a pallet of milk?”*  
(Charlotte, employee)

Figure 5.11: Interviewee excerpts discussing food donations

Small-pot funding was often seen to account for supplementary food. For example, monetary donations collected from within religious denominations, went some way to fund the provision of supplementary food parcels, and peppercorn fees (Moraes *et al.*, 2021) were requested for those recurrent services within the assemblage, such, lunch clubs, breakfast clubs, tuck shop, and barra services. In addition to these small-pot donations, some donations came in the form of time or space. For example, the provision of a facility to host food services, or the time allocated in voluntary hours.

The funding discussion throughout this section highlights that funding is not particularly straightforward, and can appear arbitrary, but it must be achieved for supplementary food organisations to survive. Findings show that funding is intrinsically linked with everything that has been researched within the assemblage. There simply would not be supplementary food without it, but no funding is unlimited. This exploration and explanation of how funding works, reinforces the need to use assemblage thinking (McFarlane and Anderson, 2011). To understand supplementary food in Royston, assemblage thinking helps to go beyond the boundaries of an organisation or individual and to holistically understand the diversity encompassing the people and things that make up the assemblage. Within the next section the final thing to be considered within this first tenet is the actual commodity of food.

### 5.2.1.3 *Supplementary Food*

Supplementary food within the assemblage transpires in many forms (see table 5.5). Findings are distinguishable in this instance by whether food is provided free of cost, reduced in cost, or complemented by other arrangements. Each different provision is found to contain its own specific properties.

Table 5.5: Supplementary food provision

<b><i>Free of cost</i></b>	<b><i>Reduced cost</i></b>	<b><i>Other</i></b>
Breakfast	Breakfast Club	Various provision by family/friends/ community/teacher Pet supply Supplementary (volunteering)
Cookery class	Donation fresh/dry goods	
Community meal	Fruit & veg sales point	
Lunch	Lunch Club	
School meal	Supermarket	
Snack	Tuck shop	
Food bag/parcel		

The properties of ‘free of cost’ supplementary food provision can be explained in two ways, those foods which are eaten where they are provided, and those foods which are taken home. Foods that are eaten within the location where they are provided includes community meals (see example figure 5.12), breakfast, lunch, dinner, snacks, and also food which an individual has prepared in a cookery class.



Figure 5.12: Advertising poster for community meal

During research, 25 people were attending a community meal, where it was explained that the “*idea behind it is rescuing food from landfill, but also in some ways it is almost a more important point is reducing isolation, getting people together*” (Leanne, employee). This reveals that community meals have benefits that go beyond the concerns of food provision, to extend to environmental and social benefits (Foden *et al.*, 2022).

Foods which are taken home are most frequently provided in the form of a food bag or parcel. This type of supplementary food is most often found distributed from food banks. The measure of foodbanks as discussed by Lambie-Mumford (2014) is based upon scale. Large-scale foodbanks are typically those operated by the Christian

franchise the ‘Trussell Trust’, and small scale are local and operate autonomously.

The three organisations providing food parcels in Royston are all identified as small scale. As with other food-insecurity research, the two organisations providing an open door parcel service were delivered from the confines of religious organisations (Lambie-Mumford, 2014; Macleod, 2018). The third small scale provider was a charity delivering holiday food parcels, this was a closed ‘client based’ service.

The properties of reduced cost food provision includes people shopping deals or end of life produce. Other forms of reduced cost food came through subsidised food from institutions, organisations, or through a peppercorn fee provided by client (example see figure 5.13).



Figure 5.13: Fruit and veg barra

(researcher photograph)

Pop-up fruit and veg stalls are subsidised by charitable organisations such that the cost to the individual is only slightly above wholesale value. However, the food price is still found to fluctuate in relation to market value:

*Researcher: Is the barra fruit and veg always cheaper?*

*Leanne (employee): Sometimes, sometimes not. We had a great cucumber controversy the other day, it was 40p in Tesco and we were charging £1.30... they can do lost leaders, we can't.*

As Leanne outlines, small charitable organisations do not hold any buying power such as larger supermarkets, and therefore, cannot always compete with the marketplace. This can lead to uncertainty for both the organisations and supplementary food users who are powerless in the market at the mercy of factors beyond their control to access affordable food. This powerlessness has been recognised as a feature of consumer vulnerability (Baker, Gentry and Rittenburg, 2005) and these findings show how this can extend to institutional vulnerability. Discussed next is supplementary food which was provided in other manners.

‘Other’ food provisions did not align well into either the free or reduced cost grouping. This is because these foods were given in a more ad hoc manner or within a “reciprocal arrangement” (Dresler and Tutt, 2019: 1595). For example, some organisations encouraged volunteering in their services, solely to feed people who appeared vulnerable. They provided supplementary food people both whilst volunteering and to take home after volunteering. Food was also found to be

crisscrossing the assemblage to reach those most in need. Individuals both inside and outside the established organisations were ‘helping out’ by providing food in a more ad-hoc manner, such as snacks, meals, food parcels, and food for pets. These findings add nuance to table 5.5 which cannot recognise the cross over between distinct types of food and organisation within the assemblage. For example, breakfast is found to be provided both free and at a reduced cost, free in more than one organisation, and free and at a reduced cost in the primary schools.

These findings starts to illustrate the how “assemblage thinking” (Epp, Schau and Price, 2014: 83) can be applied to the context of food-insecurity. It has allowed complex documentation of the heterogeneous ‘things’ found within the assemblage, developing a better understanding of the key properties of components, which are grouped under the four themes of location, infrastructure, organisation, and food.

This allows for intricate understanding of the properties that make up the things which were found within the assemblage, and will promote rigour within the more complex discussions that follow in tenets 2 and 3. As the discussion surrounding the heterogeneous things discovered within the assemblage comes to an end, the next section will now turn to the findings that surround the ‘people’.

## 5.2.2 People

To better understand the properties of the ‘people’ that make up the food-insecurity assemblage, the researcher combines findings which resulted from ethnographic immersion and analysis of local documents. It considers the experience of employees and volunteers who are providing supplementary food services and lived experience accounts of the individual who is food insecure.

### 5.2.2.1 Employees

Identifying the key employees found within this investigation, table 5.6 outlines their roles according to if they were ‘involved’ with supplementary food services, or they were fulfilling ‘contiguous’ roles that impacted upon the provision.

Table 5.6: Employee Roles

<b><i>Organisations</i></b>	<b><i>Involved</i></b>	<b><i>Contiguous</i></b>
Food project		Project manager
Housing Associations	Housing officers	Housing Management
Integration Project		Project Worker
Development Trust		Manager
Community development project	Child development workers Family links worker Positive family team	Project manager Community learning and services manager
Food project	Sessional cooks Drivers	Manager Volunteer co-ordinator
Project for Youths	Children’s co-ordinator Youth workers Development workers	Project manager Funding manager Volunteer co-ordinator
Primary School	Service cooks Teachers	Head teacher

The employees involved in the provision of supplementary food, were those with ‘boots on the ground’, directly involved with receiving and or distributing food. Some people were employed within a food related role, for example, food delivery drivers, whilst others have incorporated food services into their role and or

organisation, in response to an identified need within their client. For example, Debbie was a child development worker, and her organisation had conducted a food parcel service for the first time, when asked how she managed the food: *It was very challenging... we had 5 staff who kind of organised it along with four volunteers, all the staff who had cars distributed the food.*

In addition to employees like Debbie, who were involved with receipt and or re-distribution of supplementary food, were those people that are found interwoven within the organisation, but not active within the actual food service. Based on ethnographic fieldwork, I found an extensive amount of work conducted by contiguous employees. This demonstrates the expansiveness of the people involved within the food-insecurity assemblage. The role of the contiguous employee is particularly important and often under-documented. They are often the people who make the decisions upon the when, what, where, and who will be engaging within supplementary food services. For example, the provision of a community meal as discussed in section 5.2.1.4, occurs in response to an identified need. This need has to be documented in order to achieve initial funding, which is necessary to accommodate the people and things required to provide the community meal. This includes networking with food providers, providing vouchers for access and coordination of the many volunteers involved. The entire food service also needs to be managed, marketed, monitored, and evaluated, to identify whether the need has been met. As literature would suggest, the issue of food-insecurity is not reducing (MacLeod, Curl and Kearns, 2019; Sosenko *et al.*, 2019), and as such, the need is always present. Therefore, the contiguous employee roles are reactive within the supplementary food landscape. Having grasped a better notion of the underpinnings

of the key employees within the assemblage, the next section now turns to the role of the volunteer.

#### 5.2.2.2 Volunteers

The volunteers within the assemblage were found to be dominant within every supplementary food service, and table 5.7 highlights their roles. The food parcel service within the Chapel, was the only service which was entirely volunteer led. Most other volunteer roles were complimentary to food service employees.

Table 5.7: Volunteer roles

- 
- Charity shop (pop-up)
  - Community meals & lunch clubs
  - Cookery classes
  - Food banks
  - Food collection redistribution
  - Food demos
  - Food growing classes
  - Food parcel prep
  - Fruit and Veg Barras (pop-up)
  - Gala days food
  - Management committees
  - School committee
- 

Volunteers were often found in large numbers, such as the day of employee Donna's interview at St Rollox Church: *"...as I wander around the ESOL (English as a Second Language) class and church, volunteers are everywhere, packing up in big blue plastic tubs, sitting at tables helping fill forms. They direct me to a big table for*

*teas and coffees. The hall is lively and cheerful, lots of chat and engagement”*  
(researcher field note: October 3rd, 2018).

As found with Dresler and Tutt (2019), researching people who were involved with volunteering, allowed deeper insight within the investigation. In this research the volunteer experience provided an additional layer of understanding, which occurred in between the viewpoint of the organisation and the people using services, allowing a novel perspective within the assemblage. This additional layer within the research, is one example of how rigour was achieved across these findings (Belk, Fischer and Kozinets, 2013).

During field work no two days were found the same for volunteers. This was demonstrated within researcher volunteering sessions, all presented differently. Some organisations provided continual management and formal paperwork prior to during engagement; others did not seem to need a formal confirmation of the volunteer’s identity and no outline of what should be achieved within the volunteer shift. This was first documented within researcher field notes *“I know they know me, but I am generally being left to walk around and do what I want unguided!”* (researcher volunteering field note: March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2019). The volunteer role is more influenced by the ethos of the organisation and those who are employed within it, these relations will be discussed later within Tenet 2. The next section now turns to the individual people engaged within the research, who had their own accounts of food-insecurity.

### 5.2.2.3 Individuals

During the ethnographic investigation, this research included individuals with lived experience of food-insecurity within Royston. Some of the people who participated within interviews, were known to the researcher when she worked in Royston, but they were not food insecure at that earlier point in time. However, as outlined by Baker, Gentry and Rittenburg (2005), any individual has the potential to become a vulnerable consumer, and this was most evident for Heather. Heather who is a Royston local, was previously employed as a community development worker, but she had received an injury within the workplace, and because has been unable to work. She describes her journey of becoming vulnerable, as a transformation:

*Heather, local: All this was happening to me; my life was just shattering in front of me. I don't mean that to be dramatic, I wasn't dying or anything like that, but it was like a transformation, only instead of going from a caterpillar to a butterfly, going from a fucking butterfly back into a caterpillar, do you know what I mean?*

Heather lived comfortably in Royston all her life. However, similarly to Douglas *et al.*'s, (2015) findings, recent changes in both personal and financial circumstances, led to Heather becoming food insecure, and she felt that this was an experience which negatively transformed her life. The complexities within her life circumstances were prolonging her transition “into and through precarity”, which is in line with findings of Moraes *et al.*, 2021 (1185), which suggest that food-insecurity is not always a time limited occurrence. It also became known that Heather had been hiding her circumstances from her whole family, finally admitting

to them within the previous week, that she had absolutely no food in her household. She explained that her daughter had ‘*caught her out*’, and used a web delivery service to get groceries delivered to her mum’s:

*Heather, local: I’m going to cry at this now, but listen I’ve told you warts and all, I may as well now. XXXX [daughter], she phoned me in a delivery fae Sainsbury’s.*

Heather wept for a long time within the interview, both about the shame she felt for herself for being food insecure, but the powerlessness she felt from receiving food from her daughter. Within her interview, her sense of shame and her notion of a negative transformation of her life shattering, highlights how consumers can experience vulnerability when they feel “powerless, out of control, and dependent in a consumption situation that has negative ramifications on one’s identity” (Baker, Gentry and Rittenburg, 2005: 134). Heather felt that within her role as a parent, she should be helping her daughter and not the other way around, that her daughter has four young children of her own to look after.

Mandy is also a Royston local; she grew up there, moved away, and has subsequently returned. Mandy, like many people researched within Glasgow (MacLeod, Curl and Kearns, 2019), was found to have difficulties making ends meet because of welfare issues, and her benefits had recently been sanctioned. When she was interviewed, she was relying on family loans to get by, and working out how to be resourceful and stretch her money further to get food bargains in order to eat:

*Researcher: So, when you were skint and you weren’t getting your benefits, did you get help from other people?*

*Mandy, local: Aye, like my son and my daughter. But that is when I found out about Tesco's 7 o'clock and all that ..... then you just stock up on it [reduced cost food].*

Mandy has a complex life, she is a recovering addict, who can also struggle with her mental health. She has been engaged with family and addictions services in Royston, but she feels like she has determined her own system for managing any issues that arise, before it causes her too much discord:

*Researcher: Do you have any additional support with your mental health, do you get any support from wider services like GAMH [Glasgow Association for Mental Health]?*

*Mandy, local: No.*

*Researcher: Have you thought checking them out, in case if you need it?*

*Mandy, local: No, I know like myself with when my mental health goes, I will go and get it sorted, the only good thing with me is; I identify when it's going wrong and I pick up on it, before it goes really wrong.*

Both Mandy and Heather's stories reinforce the multiplicity and complexity of issues that food insecure individuals often need to manage. As well as utilitarian food access issues they also face associated emotional and mental health impacts. Mandy also has multiple roles within the food-insecurity assemblage. In addition to attending local food banks to get food parcels, she had been engaged (short term) within volunteering sessions in the community and had previously been helping out with one of the supplementary food parcel services. Mandy explained that, although

she was struggling with food-insecurity herself, she was still committed to helping others:

*Researcher: So, the man you are helping out, why is this?*

*Mandy, local: When he is getting messed up with the benefit system, he's getting into debt otherwise.*

*Researcher: Was he not getting help in any other ways?*

*Mandy, local: No, just the neighbour next door, that's how I landed up getting involved. I'm a sucker for people...If I have anything left or something, I will take him up like a cooked dinner or whatever..... If I've got stuff left, aye.*

Heather and Mandy, like many people who live in the Royston, were also shown to have family ties within the parameters of the assemblage and have relied upon them to get help when they are most desperate and formal systems like state benefits fail them. Similarly, employee Carol describes the struggles of the benefits system from the position of a co-worker, who is a single parent who recently started employment:

*Carol, employee: We had a new worker in here that got sanctioned ..... every single benefit got stopped and she got sanctioned for 4 weeks, and it got to like week 3 and she had no money. She's got 2 young kids to feed. Now she has xxxx [parent] here that fed her and stuff, and put heating in her meter. It wasn't until the third week that she told me; "I literally have no money".*

Carol highlights the complexities found for individuals who are food insecure. Her employee was fortunate in one respect as a parent was helping alleviate the cost of

food and energy. These findings enhance extant knowledge by highlighting the significant role of informal support in food-insecurity which may otherwise be under documented. However, many more individuals had no informal support systems in place. Employee Grace talks of her own circumstances and the coping strategies she employed as a single parent:

*Grace, employee: See when I was a student at uni, I had food poverty.*

*Researcher: How did you manage?*

*Grace, employee: Well, the discretionary fund at Strathclyde, I got that a few times, sometimes I just went without [food], I always made sure my girls had but I would go without...*

*Researcher: You skipped meals to feed them?*

*Grace, employee: Yeah. They never went without ever. Once I had graduated and that and got a job, it was just so much easier.*

This discussion with Grace highlights findings in common with previous research, identifying that parents adjust their own dietary provisions and needs, second to the need of their children (Hamilton and Catterall, 2007). This research found many examples of parental sacrifice to prioritise children's needs above their own so that they are not impacted by food-insecurity.

### 5.2.3 Conclusion

The findings in Tenet 1 illustrate how “assemblage thinking” (Epp, Schau and Price, 2014: 83; Deleuze and Guattari, 1988; DeLanda, 2016) can be applied to the context of food-insecurity. It has been an effective way to understand this assemblage, and present research as comprised of heterogeneous components of ‘people’ and ‘things’, allowing this first tenet to indicate some key points.

Sociodemographic statistics present Royston as a deprived location. In addition to deprivation, this tenet has highlighted some component ‘things’ which may impact how people access food. This suggests that Royston is spatially vulnerable (Saatcioglu and Corus, 2015) particularly within aspects of infrastructure where tangible and intangible boundaries (Cheetham, McEachern and Warnaby, 2018) are identified. The combination of these factors suggest Royston consumers experience vulnerability and are confronted with exchange restrictions (Hill and Stephens, 1997).

It has allowed composite documentation of the heterogeneous ‘people’ found within the assemblage, developing a better understanding of how they work, volunteer, and live within Royston. It shows how people are found to be employed, within and contiguous to, supplementary food services, and discusses the significant role of the volunteer. It also allows the investigation to consider how individual people are affected by food-insecurity and sets the scene for the discussions to follow in tenets 2 and 3.

### 5.3 Tenet 2: Capacities amongst assemblage components

*“[A]ny assemblage component is characterised both by its properties and by its capacities.... The distinction between properties and capacities is roughly that between what an entity is and what it can do” (DeLanda, 2016: 52).*

Throughout Tenet 1, understanding the properties that made up the components of this food-insecurity assemblage, was an effective way to present heterogeneity within the people and things found. To better understand the inner workings of the assemblage, Tenet 2 now considers what these properties were found to do, and to facilitate this discussion, this section discusses ‘capacities’ (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988).

In common with other consumer research (Epp, Schau and Price, 2014), this study uses DeLanda's (2006: 07) explanation of ‘capacities’, which outlines what components were found to do “when they interact with other social entities”. To present the key capacities found within this investigation, tenet 2 is divided into four sections: surplus food (5.3.1), supplementary food services (5.3.2), people (5.3.3), and choice (5.3.4).

#### 5.3.1 Surplus Food

Within Royston, organisations who are providing supplementary food services within the community, were frequently found to have a relationship with surplus food distributors, Move On. Move On is a charitable organisation that “manages and runs the Glasgow and West of Scotland branch of FareShare” (Move On, 2020: web). Fareshare is the largest organisation involved with surplus food provision

throughout Scotland (and the UK). The charitable organisation receives surplus food from the food industry (mostly large supermarkets) and redistributes it to other organisations who are providing some type of food support to people within their community. The premise of FareShare, is that a community food membership (subscription) should save the applicant organisation money. The benefits proffered by the organisation (see figure 5.14), are suggested to heavily outweigh the cost of subscription.

- *Choose how much food you receive.*
- *Choose the type of food.*
- *Get a regular supply of food.*
- *We will support you on food safety.*



Figure 5.14: Benefits of Community Food Membership

(adapted from Move On, 2021)

Whilst the researcher worked within the Royston community in 2015, the lowest membership fee was £1,000 per annum, which loosely equated to a half pallet of food per week. Although the ‘Move On’ organisation is not a thing that is based within the assemblage, it is “enrolled within the assemblage when appropriate” (Preece, Kerrigan and O’reilly, 2019: 33). How the organisation is found enrolled, presented within two distinct types of relationships. The first was a formal relationship with an assemblage organisation, realised by a paid subscription within a community contract (as outlined above in figure 5.14). The second was an informal relationship, reliant upon an intricate folding of community links, which was absent

of a subscription, and both of these relationships were found to occur simultaneously within a single organisation.

To explain, Move On had a formal relationship in the form of a seasonal contract with Charlotte's organisation, and were funded to deliver surplus food to the Children's holiday food service: *"So, they've got this new service called family food service. It is to tackle holiday hunger, so we literally only get Move On food at holiday periods"* (Charlotte: employee). However, after talking further with Charlotte, it was discovered that her organisation was also in receipt of food outside of holiday periods: *"They 'will' drop off the odd thing on the QT [quiet], because it's [only] 'supposed' to be specifically holidays. But we are now seeing that if there is an excess they will just phone us and say, 'Do you want a pallet of milk'? And we just say 'Yes!!' .... We are like hotline to the Kremlin! I've never seen so much milk in my life [exasperated]"*.

Charlotte was found at an impasse with aspects of the engagement with Move On. On one hand she was delighted that she could boost the capacities for families she worked with by offering ad hoc additional food support. Studies have shown similar findings (Blake, 2019) when supplementary food was seen to temporarily reduce both the physiological aspects of hunger, and tensions associated with the consequences of living within poverty. On the other hand, Charlotte was anxious about the chain of events needed within her organisation, in order to receive, host, and then re distribute this additional uncontracted food. For example, timings of food delivery and or pick up, or the food type and quantity received, may stretch her organisation to its limits in terms of staff, transport, space, and storage needed to

coordinate this extra provision. This reveals that ostentatiously beneficial donations, can also make organisations experience aspects of vulnerability. This organisational vulnerability occurs if they do not have the properties needed to cope with managing the provision, and are “powerless, out of control” (Baker, Gentry and Rittenburg, 2005: 134). Other organisations also explained informal relations with supplementary food provision. Employee Donna explains how her service ‘at times’ receives food provision from Move On, as a result of their existing relations with the Trussell Trust “*We are quite happy to sort of link in with the Trussell Trust so we can get their surplus food [Move On] and we can refer people on [to the Trussell Trust]... we don’t want to become a place where people rely on all the time*” (Donna, employee).

Donna explains that her link is considered positive, as it allows the organisation to benefit from additional food, and in return she reciprocates by signposting people on to the nearest Trussell Trust (and other) food banks (see figure 5.15).

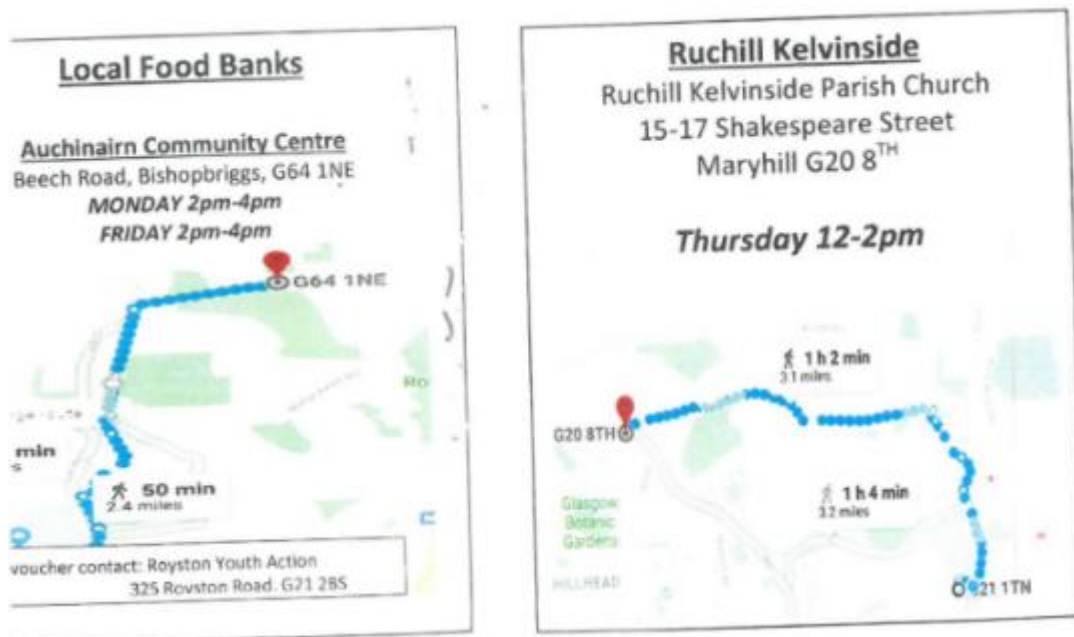


Figure 5.15: Leaflet of nearest Trussell Trust Food banks

These relations help Donna's organisation in two ways, 1) it increases the material capacity by the direct addition of supplementary food resources, and 2) the signposting information she provides about other food banks, increases the number of people who can be helped.

Similar findings across this investigation showed many relations of surplus food redirection. Holiday food was forwarded between organisations, surplus provisions were redistributed between and within organisations. Additionally, these Move On informal relations were also found to boost the capacity of assemblage organisations in other ways. Whilst volunteering, the researcher redirected sanitary wear received as an ad hoc donation alongside food, to a primary school. Whilst there, it was found that the employees have been buying sanitary products from their own pockets, "*I've bought a stock of sanitary products for kids*" (Hannah, employee). Upon receipt of

the surplus provision, employee Hannah explained the benefits because free sanitary provision for all Scottish schools, had not been fully implemented at that time, “*we are meant to be getting that [from the Scottish Government], we are meant to be linking up, but they don’t give us any, so we provide our own*”.

The section above demonstrates that increased capacities are realised within the assemblage (Epp, Schau and Price, 2014), as a result of both formal and informal relations with surplus food distributor Move On. Additionally, relations of surplus food ‘re-distribution’ occurring between assemblage components highlights an under documented ‘knock-on impact’, which is found to boost assemblage component capacities, and suggests that surplus food provision may not be as linear as it is currently perceived. Similar to how consumers realign components for increased resilience (Epp, Schau and Price, 2014), organisations are identifying gaps within their services and realigning surplus food, to make components more resilient. Discussed next are additional relations that impacted the capacity of assemblage components.

### 5.3.2 Supplementary Food Services

The following section now turns to findings resulting from relations which were seen to boost or limit accessibility within the tangible delivery of supplementary food services. These are discussed within the key themes including access to funding, information, and services.

### 5.3.2.1 Access to Funding

As briefly touched upon within tenet 1 (see table 5.4) all of the organisations providing supplementary food in Royston, need funding in some manner in order to deliver their services. Within this section, two key themes are outlined which were found to boost or limit an organisation's capacity to access funding. These are discussed in relation to whether an organisation was found to be (a) constituted, or (b) achieved funded for the community or a service.

#### (a) Constituted

It was found very rare for funders to consider an un-constituted group to be their beneficiary. For example, 'The National Lottery' requires all applicants to be a constituted group with governance, have a committee, a bank account, and yearly accounts (The National Lottery, 2021). For un-constituted services, relations between people and organisations can become difficult because limitations are placed upon funding, this makes it hard for the organisation to fully realise its capacities.

This limitation was found for even the most basic of supplementary food provisions, such as public donations within supermarkets. When asked about approaching the nearest supermarkets for these donated provisions, volunteer Helen explained that her organisation "*asked them [Tesco], and they said no, because we are not a registered charity*". As Helen's food service was un-constituted, the volunteers who manage it were unable to achieve as much funding as they would like, and the service relied upon local donations of food, and money received from mass. When the discussion above subsequently turned to the precarity of the food service, Helen touches upon the comfort she finds within her own faith "*I've said to the Father*

[pointing up], “going to work your magic?” You know what I mean [laughing]? We really need that, there’s a few times we’ve thought we would shut”. The un-constituted nature of an organisation may mean that they are surviving hand to mouth and at ongoing risk of closure, disrupting the capacity of the broader assemblage by reducing food availability.

In opposition to Helen’s un-constituted organisation, Donna outlines her community outreach project is a registered charity in its own right, and they are in receipt of big-pot funding, monetary and or food donations from both their volunteers and other individuals. Their parcel provision service also receives “*funding from ‘Go for it’, which is from the Church of Scotland*” (Donna: employee). The information surrounding how Donna’s organisation is funded is clear on her website, with guidelines of how a person can “help financially and either become a regular supporter or give a donation” (St Rollox Community Outreach Project, 2020: 11). Additionally, Donna explains that being a registered charity, further boosts the material capacity of her organisation, because their monetary donations can be found to account for more than just their value. They have the potential to boost the capacity a further 25% through the process of a gift aid declaration. Gift aid is where charities can claim an extra 25p from the government, for every £1 donated by a UK taxpayer (HM Revenue and Customs, 2013).

These contrasting findings highlight how the capacity of a supplementary food service can be boosted or limited depending upon constituted or un-constituted status. Outlined within the following section are funding limitations that occur when a service does not manage its own funding.

## (b) Community or Service Funding

The second aspect that impacts on accessibility of funding within Royston, is whether an organisation is funded for the Royston community or for an overall service. This was highlighted when supplementary food services are either subsidiaries of a larger company, or they make up a small part of the services provided within an overall organisation. Both conditions show that Royston food services were found to have less agency within the assemblage, and this was shown to negatively impact service capacities.

To explain, as a subsidiary of a larger organisation, changes within recent funding applications, meant funding was achieved for the wider organisation and not every community, this meant that the Royston food hub had less autonomy within its service. Employee Leanne explains: “*we got the funding, one of the things they stipulated was community meals*”. Leanne was frustrated with the changes, not because of what the meals represented; “*rescuing food from landfill, whilst reducing isolation, getting people together*”; but because the changes to funding had limited the capacities of other aspects of Royston food services including type of food and times of food services: “*My issue is... with the new funding, we were going to increase the amount of food we were getting, and all that is happening is that instead of dried goods we are getting more chilled goods, it’s not actually improving anything, and the pickup has changed to a Tuesday*”. Leanne explains above that changes in funding parameters, from Royston specific to organisation specific, is impacting the type, amount, and day that the food is received. This restructuring has

caused properties within the supplementary food services to change, and further interviews found the material capacity of the Monday barra has been limited, as explained by volunteer Lorna:

*Researcher: So, what is now happening with Move On?*

*Lorna, volunteer: They have changed it to chilled goods, and we are getting it on a Tuesday and the barra is on a Monday... basically, we are not getting anything.*

*Researcher: So, you have taken a hit because it is split between the 3 hubs?*

*Lorna, volunteer: Yeah. For example, we have one person that comes in 'just' for the fareshare, and last week we had nothing for them.*

These findings as highlighted by Leanne and Lorna, suggest that even though an organisational component may be found to have more properties, in this example the introduction of community meals, if the added element results in some form of change to current food services, it may limit the capacity of others.

Charlottes organisation is more complex and made up of many projects. As a result, it may have a more general approach to identifying funding sources. To explain, a community fund is frequently found to have a 'local' target quota, meaning that most of the people engaged within its services, must live within the exact locale where the funding is provided, for example, this type of funding can often be applicable to postcodes. This would imply that a Royston community fund, would benefit people from Royston, and presents an example of how an organisation can have an

increased homogeneity of client, and may subsequently lead to reduced community tensions (DeLanda, 2016).

Charlotte's organisation has funding for services' which are not specific to the community, are found to be enrolled throughout the span of the city: "*We [family service provision] have got clients all over the city*" (Charlotte, employee). Charlotte is partly based within the community, and runs the children's holiday food program, however, the family service clients are made up of people outside of the Royston assemblage. This highlights how service specific funding can be found limiting to the Royston assemblage supplementary food provision, the impact of which, will be discussed further in Tenet 3, in relation to boundary tensions.

This section discusses how relations amongst assemblage components may be impacted, when accessibility to funding is dependent upon whether or not a service or organisation is a constituted group, or if it receives funding for a community provision or a service provision. Both these aspects were shown to limit the accessibility of supplementary food provision in Royston. Discussed next is accessibility of information surrounding food services.

### 5.3.2.2 Accessibility of Information

A general dearth of information surrounding supplementary food within the community was found across interviews, when people were asked “*What do you know about food banks in this area?*”:

*Sylvia, volunteer: Nothing.*

*Rowan, volunteer: Nothing really. I dunno [do not know] where it’s situated or anything...is it in the Chapel?*

*Jenny, volunteer: I know there is a food bank, but I just assumed the food bank was for people that was on benefits. I don’t think there’s enough information locally, like, I’ve not seen a sign up saying there is a food bank anywhere, I’ve not seen anything.*

*Beth, local: I never even knew there was one.*

This general lack of information was found to be limiting the capacity of the food-insecurity assemblage in Royston. People were unclear about the location and eligibility criteria for supplementary food services. The accessibility of information surrounding food services, both online and onsite, was found to vary hugely. Within some food services, the number of leaflets, newsletters, and flyers supplied to the researcher in the field was extensive (example see figure 5.16).



Figure 5.16: Food Store Flyer

The flyer above, is one example of relations occurring between many organisations. It was offered to people within the community outreach, who may be accessing the service from farther away communities. It allowed people to see where additional supplementary food services were available, heightening what people could know and boosting their capacity. However, much supplementary food service information was found to be dated. For example, the researcher found that some supplementary food services were wrongly marketed (locations and times) both online and onsite (see figure 5.17): *Researcher: “I don’t think the barra’s have been recently updated on the website, when I checked it was advertised at the wrong place. Also, at the housing association today, it was advertising the wrong time?”.*



Figure 5.17: Incorrect supplementary food information

(Researcher photograph)

Whilst the researcher spoke with Leanne, she was unconcerned about the inaccurate information: *“So that’s changing after .... the 1st of November. I didn’t actually know until last week, the Spire View barra runs from 9-11, instead of 10-12”*. Leanne felt that enough people knew about the services, and she would subsequently update the information. However, after four weeks, there still hadn’t been a change of information to either website or signs.

Similarly, other services were found advertising outdated information (see figure 5.18), including where people would be able to go to receive a voucher, and incorrectly advertising whether or not a person actually needed a voucher for accessing the supplementary food service.

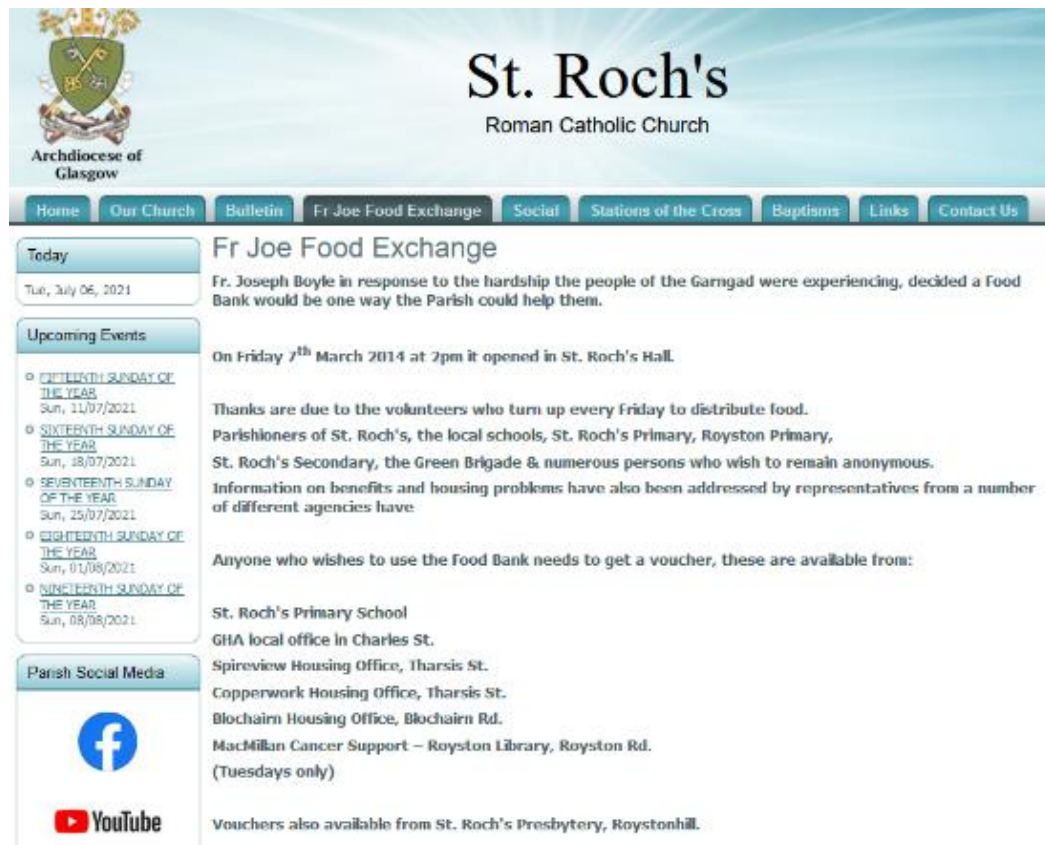


Figure 5.18: St Roch's Food Notice

(St Roch's, 2019)

To explain, although the website specified that local schools were providing food bank vouchers to people, in order for them to get access to supplementary food, this investigation found that the schools had not been providing vouchers for over six months, but the website had yet to be updated to reflect this. Interviews also uncovered information, contrary to what was stated on the website “[a]nyone who wishes to use the Food Bank needs to get a voucher” (St Roch's, 2019: webpage), as people had been known to access this parcel provision, without the need of a voucher:

*Researcher: So, people are not using that food bank [pointing at the chapel]?*

*Carol, employee: Loads of people don't know about that...they don't know that you can just go in there, and you don't need a voucher.*

*Researcher: Who told you that?*

*Carol, employee: The women that run it.*

It was found that some housing associations were distributing the food bank vouchers, however, their tenants were not actively given information that they could get them, or where they should go, as Mandy explains:

*Researcher: So how did the housing know you were having money problems?*

*Mandy, local: Because I told them, I was getting fucked about with the benefits agency. It wasn't until 2 days later that the postman came [with a letter]. I phoned them [housing] and asked them what it was? [the voucher]. I didn't know nothing about it....I didn't even know what it was then.....but I NOW know you can go into some housing offices and ask for it as well.*

It was surprising to Mandy that she received her vouchers, because the housing officer did not make it clear they would be posting them out to her. And upon receipt, the letter did not provide clear information upon what the vouchers were, or how and where they could be used. Although Mandy called for the requisite information, some other residents may not, for example, people who have difficulty with literacy. Mandy subsequently also found out, that how a person can get a voucher differs by housing association. The researcher, Carol, and Mandy highlight above, that information does not always make it clear where people can find access to supplementary food services, and these issues may create barriers within the

community, which results in a lack of relations between people and services that make up the assemblage.

The lack of visible information continues in the physical place where a food service was held, for example, the food exchange service delivered from the Chapel is reachable from a barely opened side door to the chapel hall (see figure 5.19).



Figure 5.19: Chapel side door entrance

*(Researcher photograph)*

*I am looking for the entrance to one local foodbank, and I cannot find it, no signage, or directions. I ask someone on the street, and they also don't know. Upon my second query, a local man points me to a side door. It turns out that this is the only access in! How do people know where to go? If I was stressed and hungry, would I have the expressive capacity to find the venue? (Researcher diary, 12<sup>th</sup> October 2018).*

Months after the diary note outlined above, it was found that the Chapel advertises the food exchange service as part of a flyer that gets printed once a week. This can be

found inside the Chapel after mass on a Saturday and Sunday. This information was only mentioned once in conversation over the entire year this research was occurring. This means a person would have to attend mass to obtain a flyer, so any individual not aligned within this religious denomination would be excluded.

The examples as outlined above, highlight accessibility limitations surrounding information prior to engaging with a service (both online and by word of mouth), this can be shown through both a lack of information and inaccurate information. These accessibility limitations within food services, may be experienced by impoverished consumers whilst navigating marketplace environments, and create a negative impact upon individuals who are food insecure. It can also distort understanding of need within the community. Services could better respond to need and reduce aspects of nervousness or stress for an individual who is experiencing poverty, through provision of accurate, clear, accessible information online or in physical space.

These findings also suggest an imbalance in exchange restrictions, between the individual and the organisation, as the organisation is failing to provide up to date information about supplementary food services, and the individual is powerless to rectify this situation. It also identifies examples of tangible and intangible boundaries, which occurs when people have limited or no access to information surrounding supplementary food services (Moraes *et al.*, 2021). These findings reinforce the spatial vulnerability (Saatcioglu and Corus, 2015) identified in Tenet 1, and combined would suggest that the organisations may be contributing to the multiple forms of vulnerability evident within the Royston food-insecurity assemblage.

### 5.3.2.3 Services

How accessible a supplementary food service can be, was found to depend upon a combination of many relations. For some people who are “transitioning into, and through, precarity”, it has been found important that wider needs are met (Moraes *et al.*, 2021: 1185). This investigation can show that some capacities were found boosted within the assemblage when services are clustered together. For example, in St Rollox church community outreach and their food services occur upon the same day (see figure 5.20).



Figure 5.20: St Rollox Church & Community Outreach Services.

Adapted from (*St Rollox Community Outreach*, 2020)

The project has specific poverty actions, a service solely for destitute asylum seekers, and a food store (foodbank): “*We have a food store, and support for destitute asylum seekers...that’s our two food poverty actions.... we give an emergency food bag for anybody that comes, you don’t need to be referred.. we will ask questions, but still give them something*” (Donna, employee). Donna explained that her organisation did

not want people to come to rely upon food provided by the food store. This is in common with the notion that food-insecurity is often understood to be transitional experience. However, what is not in common with other inquiry, is that the food store never turns hungry people away, they are always found to get ‘something’ to eat.

The food services clustered together for Donna, identify that “shared social processes and practices” surrounding food-insecurity may “co-constructing and co-reinforcing people’s experiences of food-related vulnerability” (Moraes et al., 2021: 1171).

However, in this research example the shared social aspects of food-related vulnerability, are impacting (co-constructing and co-reinforcing) both the individual and the organisations experience of food-related vulnerability.

Clustering services benefits the individual who needs access to supplementary food and also benefits the organisation to more easily, manage the service and document the impact of their provision. During fieldwork, the researcher experienced the impact of clustering *“It’s so loud in the church, there are families everywhere. Staff and volunteers are run off their feet, but nobody complains when I chat to them. No one is alone.... not a solitary soul sitting or standing on their own. It feels homely, but how would I feel coming into this bustle?”* (Researcher diary: 3rd October 2018).

The researcher could understand the positive aspect of this clustering of services, however, for a person experiencing vulnerability, who is unfamiliar with the different service procedures, it might be overwhelming. This may create an unintended intangible boundary, particularly for those accessing food services for the first time

and novice to the process and for those unfamiliar with the St Rollox environment who may prefer a more private space. I found that clustering of provision can fail to account for individual vulnerabilities and may be exclusionary, an aspect that hasn't been documented in existing work.

The other cluster of 'food' services within the assemblage is the Royston Food Hub. The hub does not offer a parcel provision service, and their supplementary food cluster surrounds the whole food cycle (see figure 5.21) including growing, cooking, composting and community meals.



***Our Vision:*** A society where health, well-being and harmony is supported within active communities.

***Our Strategic Goal:*** To empower individuals and communities to lead practical and sustainable food related activities that improve health and well-being and which help build stronger, more cohesive communities.

Figure 5.21: Royston Food Hub (NGCGI) Vision and Goal

(Adapted from NGCFI, 2021)

The hub services are not clustered upon the same day, instead the concept is for people to become engaged with all aspects of the organisation. For example, providing a free community meal, can boost the potential for recruitment to a

cooking class. Additionally, some services for example cooking classes, provide more than just supplementary food, because they may boost the material and expressive capacity of the individual, through a combination of elements. For example, introduction to new foods, improvement in cooking skills and increased interaction with other people. However, making services more accessible by engaging people over a process, does not always ensure people access the experience that they are hoping to get. *“You know the cooking classes? I just think they’re mad. They ask you if you want to do stuff, but they don’t actually talk you through the full recipe” (Mandy, local).* Mandy explained that she was keen to engage within the class, and she wanted to cook, but she felt that the cooking classes assumed too great an existing knowledge base. She needed more simple and thorough instruction to access and benefit from the classes.

The clustering of supplementary food provision, both within the community outreach and the food hub can benefit the people engaged. The collective capacity of these services may be shown to boost “expressive capacity” (Parmentier and Fischer, 2015: 1229), and it could be suggested that individuals who are engaging within these provisions, may judge the capacity of a single resource, based upon other resources assembled (Epp and Velagaleti, 2014).

The section now moves on to discuss other issues that were found to limit the capacity of the services. Accessibility issues to services were found within the infrastructure of buildings. For example, food services in upper floors of buildings without lift access, were limiting because they were not accessible to all. The Royston food hub is housed within a school building and the notoriety of the

sweeping stairways are well known. During an interview with employee Hannah, she explained that a volunteer who was bringing in food bank vouchers, had fallen down the school stairs: *It was here that she fell, down these stairs, when she was bringing in the vouchers. We took her up to the hospital.* Hannah was devastated when this accident happened, this limitation is a direct result of the architecture and age of the building, this is found limiting for individuals who cannot or do not want to physically access it. This limitation also impacts the organisation, who may see reduced clients.

The time at which supplementary food services were available was also seen as limiting for the client. Mandy explains that collecting her parcel provision was an issue for her, because it operated directly across the road from a school at the same time as pupils are vacating the building:

*Mandy, local: The time it's at [foodbank] is the school run, so everybody is at school when you are coming out of there, do you know what I mean? So, people coming out of there and you know what school gates are like... they're bitchy. So, when I have went round [to the foodbank], I went at quarter past 2 when it's opening, so people don't see me coming out.*

Mandy highlights that she masks her disadvantaged position of food-insecurity, through managing the time she accesses the parcel provision, and in this way she is actively trying to reduce negative consequences of stigmatisation (Hamilton, 2009). This reinforces the role that institutions play in stigmatisation and destigmatisation processes (Mirabito *et al.*, 2016).

Services provided within the confines of a religious institution were also found to limit the capacity of the service. To explain, negative relations in conjunction with religion were found difficult for some clients who are accessing food parcel provision. *“I’ve had a few [client] come in here as well and go “canny fuckin believe am in a fuckin chapel” (Connie, volunteer).* This religious environment can alienate people with different beliefs and lead to volatility. Connie became a volunteer to support her mother who was facing angst from client about this issue, *“I wasn’t wanting xxx [other volunteer] here herself. I know she’s a soft touch”.* Connie explains that sometimes volunteers need to be ferocious, and her previous foodbank experience had helped her to settle the service and create a sense of structure within the provision, *“I’m firm but fair, if you get me [laughing]”.*

Similarly, another food service recently transferred from a housing association, into the Chapel. The distance the service moved, would take less than a minute to walk. The researcher asked volunteers if they had noticed a difference within clients accessing it, *“It definitely is, aye. I think a few customers will not come in here because it’s a chapel, and half the regulars don’t even come anymore” (Ryan, Volunteer).* Ryan and the other volunteers were happy they could continue with the service a short distance away. However, these findings may suggest an additional dimension to the experience of spatial vulnerability, this is because food services which are provided from spaces within religious organisations, may restrict accessibility for some people who are already experiencing precarity. This social exclusion could lead to increased vulnerability (Saatcioglu and Corus, 2015).

This second section of tenet 2 outlines findings that were seen to boost or limit access to supplementary food services. It highlights the influence of surplus food arriving within the assemblage, and then considers key findings that impact accessibility of Royston supplementary food services. The next section turns to a discussion of the people.

### 5.3.3 People

Throughout this investigation, people were vital to everything involved within the provision of supplementary food. Employees, volunteers, residents, and family were all embedded within the community and their connections and commitment were required to make these food provisions flow. Discussion within the following section considers the key relations outlined within and between the people of the assemblage, these are grouped according to volunteer relations, employee relations.

#### 5.3.3.1 *Volunteer Relations*

An evident discovery within relations of the assemblage is the capacity which results from the volunteer engaging with other components. In common with findings by Dresler and Tutt (2019: 1587), some organisations were found “reliant on volunteers to operate”, which suggests that ‘without’ volunteers, assemblage organisations or services would have reduced or limited capacities. This is certainly found within some services, for example, as touched upon in tenet 1 (5.2.2.2), the entirety of the ‘Food Exchange’ parcel provision, is volunteer run. That means the general

interactions that occur between this service and other assemblage components are volunteer led, and as such, are dependent upon the volunteers ability to promote capacities or outcomes within their relations. These relations include communication with the Father who manages the chapel, making the best choices within the process of purchasing food, opening and closing the venue where the food service is housed, the set-up and break down of the service, and interacting with client. Connie outlines examples of these capacities below:

*Researcher: So where do you get the food for your service from?*

*Connie, volunteer: Sometimes I'm out shopping, am using my niece's car... I use my man's car..... It takes up a lot of time [realisation]. I do a big shop.....so I get a delivery, Tesco or ASDA, whatever comes out cheaper that month. But I got to sit and pure think about it and see how much it is to go round .....It is quite time consuming. I'll get a phone call fae my daughter "such and such is doon in price" [laughter]. I'm like check the dates, ok get 20... my boy does it too, and I'm like get me 25. I've seen myself do a few journeys [to get a weekly food parcel provision].*

Without this group of volunteers, this particular food service has the potential to be eliminated or from the assemblage, however, their commitment is evident, as demonstrated in the excerpt above which explains how they go beyond fulfilling their basic role, by drawing on personal resources such as additional family members, their vehicles, and donating lots of personal time. Findings within other research highlights how food insecure people cope with a lack resources, identifying individual strategies which are found around budgeting and procurement of food,

which allows their money to stretch further (Hamilton and Catterall, 2005). This work builds on existing research, by showing those organisational strategies that volunteers use to maximise their capacities are similar: budgeting down to the penny, resources required in consideration of vehicles and technology for online shopping, and considerable time and effort needed to keep a constrained budget.

Most supplementary food services within Royston are found to be boosted by volunteers and this can be hours donated, or tasks achieved. Volunteers are instrumental in continuation of more than one supplementary food service. This was described by Lorna, who has been volunteering within the food hub barra since its inception in 2013, but its foothold within the community had recently come under threat:

*Lorna, volunteer: I wanted this [barra] to stay in Royston, the Housing never gave much choice this time [the food service had recently been asked to move from its location]. I had to come in here [Chapel] to try and get the barra in here.*

*Researcher: So, the barra is now here, because of you?*

*Lorna, volunteer: Yeah.*

*Researcher: So, what would have happened if you didn't sort this space out?*

*Ryan, volunteer: You would've been out in the street with the barra, basically that's the bottom line.*

Because of Lorna's commitment to help her community, she arranged a meeting with the Father and secured a new location for the barra service to continue. Lorna had fostered some new relations between the food hub and the Chapel, subsequently

increasing the capacities between organisations. She is boosting the capacity of her supplementary food service, through both access to a new venue free of charge and increased relations with other components within the assemblage. Lorna orchestrated this on her own behalf and without prompting by the organisation she was volunteering for. Without her expressive capacities, this barra had the potential to be eliminated from the assemblage.

Many volunteers are directly or indirectly managing food services, and some like Lorna and Connie are found empowered within their role, however, for some volunteers a lack of structure within their role can impact services. Ian confirmed this, in a chance meeting with the researcher. When she asked why he was no longer volunteering, he was exasperated, and explained that he missed a more structured volunteering role and appropriate guidance:

*Researcher: So how come you haven't been in [volunteering]?*

*Ian: I had come down during July when the school holidays were on, and spoke with [volunteer coordinator], and he was like what's wrong? I was like well nothing is wrong, you know, but I am not telling the kids what tae dae [to do], cos it's no ma job. I was coming in a couple of times, and nobody was here, nobody was telling me anything. I was standing there myself, going what do I do here? So, I was like if you don't tell me anything I canny do anything [gestures with hands]. So, I stopped coming.*

At the time when Ian stopped engaging, the management structure had been going through changes, and within the previous two years Ian has volunteered with 4 different managers and 3 different volunteer coordinators. From his expressions and

tone of voice, it was clear to the researcher that he was feeling neglected within his role. The scant engagement provided from the employees who should have been managing him, was found to directly impact upon volunteer continuity. His position was untenable, and he left. This discussion highlights that if the volunteer role does not create value to the volunteer (Dresler and Tutt, 2019), and no capacities are subsequently realised within their relations (DeLanda, 2016), volunteer ‘gaps’ may occur within services. The outcome of this particular volunteer gap, was the closure of a supplementary food provision service and reduced assemblage access to low cost fresh fruit and veg. In common with Price-Robertson and Duff (2018), not every component found to disengage with the food-insecurity assemblage, influenced the assemblage to the same extent. As highlighted by Connie, one volunteer was a significant loss for the chapel and friends:

*Connie, volunteer: She was into everything, and she couldn't say no... she has nae been here this year really, she has been dying of cancer, do ye get me? She was in the in the hospice.*

*Helen, volunteer: We had to look after her a bit, because she wasn't good at looking after herself.*

It was found that the other volunteers at the food exchange, did not connect with any of the other services that they were linked to within the assemblage, neither during her sickness nor upon her death. They were worried about the adverse effect of local people knowing:

*Helen, volunteer: We never told any of them [client] that came into the food bank in case any of them went to her house.*

*Connie, volunteer: So, we just kidded on that she was away doing something else. We lied for months, didn't we? We did nae want her house getting tanned [smashed] or that. Then eventually she didn't want to go home, and her cat died, and I said you are better off way [with] people.*

The volunteer, who would have turned 70 during this research, was well-known to the researcher. She had been the lynchpin within the wider reach of the services provided by the 'Food Exchange'. The wider impact became apparent in an interview with an employee at the school:

*Hannah, employee: .... we did have a contact down there [place of worship], and we always give our harvest food to them.... right up until the summer, I don't know why it stopped after that and I would really like it back. But I don't like to ask, they were giving us about 10 vouchers a month for the food bank.*

*Researcher: I am going to try and visit there over the next couple of weeks, do you want me to find out?*

*Hannah, employee: Could you because we were getting them [vouchers]. It was a wee old lady that would come in, and she'd had a bad fall.*

It was a direct result of the missing volunteer link, that the capacities realised between 'food exchange' and the School first became destabilised. For example, the 'Food Exchange' did not benefit from the material capacities of harvest food provided by the school, and the parents at the school, did not benefit from the supplementary food provision from the 'Food Exchange'. The vouchers would have

entitled a family to go every Friday for the entire month, so 10 vouchers a month would equate to 40 food parcels in total.

Within discussions above, people generally volunteer in order to get something in return (Dresler and Tutt, 2019). For some, the increase in their expressive capacity may simply be the ‘feel good factor’ in helping out, for others it may be the work experience or engagement they gain within their community. Volunteer roles can be understood further by identifying if an individual is gaining direct or indirect capacities within their volunteer roles. Direct volunteer capacities can be those which are found to be an immediate outcome of relations between components, and indirect capacities are those which are a consequence of a direct capacity. For example, employees within organisations were found to directly increase the material capacity of volunteers, by providing free food for lunch in return for volunteer hours.

Employee Debbie describes an allocated food cupboard within her organisation, which volunteers have direct access to: *“we have volunteers who come to us that are in the whole day, who don’t necessarily have money for lunch. So, there is a food cupboard ..... that people can help themselves to”*. The direct capacity for the volunteer in Debbie’s example, is the material capacity of food provision, which reduces the physiological aspects of hunger. However, when the researcher talked with one of Debbie’s volunteers, the cost she saved through having this food provided, boosted her capacity in other ways, because it allowed her to buy stationary supplies which she needed in order to attend an evening class. Therefore, the indirect capacity of volunteering may exceed beyond what is observed, and could have an impact far beyond the material capacity provided with free food.

In a similar way, employee Carol explains the delicate balance of helping youths whose families are known to be struggling: “*we had a wee kid last week that had come to us through child protection, and xxxx [parent] was holding food back as a punishment .....So, the past few weeks we’ve been feeding XXXX [child] in here you know, asking him to come in and volunteer at the after-school club and he gets a snack*”. The immediate impact for Carol, is making sure the youth does not suffer from the physiological aspects of hunger (Sosenko *et al.*, 2019), which allows a more focused experience and development for the both the individual volunteer, and the other youths involved with the same service. Although using the transaction of volunteering as a guise to directly reduce characteristics of hunger, the indirect impact of volunteering highlights how Carol could help oversee the youth, without attributing wider stigmatising currents which arise from “sociocultural, historical, institutional, and commercial” influences (Mirabito *et al.*, 2016: 175).

The findings within this section highlight that Royston volunteers may be found to impact the capacity of a supplementary food service, and also how a supplementary food service may be impacting the capacity of a volunteer. It also suggests that benefits for the volunteer may be understood within complex layers. Next discussed is the key relations found from the aspect of the employee.

#### *5.3.3.2 Employee Relations*

Contiguous employees as outlined in Tenet 1 (5.2.2.1) were found to have a valuable role in boosting capacity of supplementary food services. Managers employed within Royston projects are often responsible in some way to source food funding, however,

some projects were found to employ specific funding managers to achieve this task. Employee Carol explains this new funding manager role had resulted in positive changes, as relations were now realised between her funding manager and a funder for the ‘Children’s Holiday Food Program’ (Glasgow City Council, 2021): “[w]e [now] put our own grant into the holiday hunger fund, and that pays for snacks and a pack lunch for every child that attends”. This funding had boosted the capacity for food services within her organisation. In addition to contiguous employees helping organisations secure funding for food, funding overall is also positively impacted by strong networking between the employees of the assemblage. For example, funding projects in Royston for many years, Rosemount Development Trust (see figure 5.22) highlight the success of a joint application to the Scottish Government.



Figure 5.22: Working together to support the community

(Source: Rosemount Development Trust, 2020)

The recipients of this funding were two Royston organisations providing food within ‘The Children’s Holiday Food Programme’ (Glasgow City Council, 2021). These networks of employees within the assemblage, highlight relations which increase the capacity of project funding. Improved or realised relations between employees are also found helpful for information dispersal, which boosting capacity of supplementary food services through signposting activities:

- Bolt on services, such as money advice at the same time as food bank
- Food voucher provision
- Hosting of events such as Gala days
- Joint funding
- Newsletters (maildrop & electronic)
- Social media cross posting
- Royston forum strategy meetings
- Word of mouth

The employee relations outlined above may appear meagre, however, the outcome of small relations between components, creates momentum for larger and wider capacities. For example, employee and people relations are found to increase the capacity of community provisions: *“Spire View Housing Association is delighted to report that work has begun on the creation of a new, state of the art Community Facility on Roystonhill”* (Copperworks Housing Association, 2018: 03).

Within all the findings outlined so far, the assemblage components have been discussed in relation to what properties make them up, and what capacities could be found within relations between components. The next section outlines an element that was prominent within supplementary food findings, which is the discussion upon the capacity of ‘choice’.

#### 5.3.4 Food Choice

*“Choices are conditioned by what is available, what is easily accessible and what appears in front of our eyes”.* (Gabriel and Lang, 2015: 26)

The following section outlines the capacity of choice in two sections, the first outlines the organisations’ choice about receipt of surplus food provision, the second considers the individual’s choice as provided by the supplementary food organisation.

##### *5.3.4.1 Organisation choice*

As explained within the surplus food section (5.3.1), ‘Move On’ has formal and informal relations within the assemblage, which are found to impact the capacity of Royston organisations. However, within these relations, there is very little expression of choice. To explain, Move On as an organisation, has its own set of constraints that impact the food choice of other organisations. Firstly, Move On are also in receipt of surplus food provision, and as such, are without choice in what they receive, which in turn impacts upon what food they deliver to other organisations. Secondly, the capacity of Move On to manage their own provision, in consideration of foods’ consumable nature and the organisational structure of their own people and things, determines what food may get distributed on a given day. Thirdly, if a Move On relationship is flexible with another organisation, the other organisation may benefit from additional food. During my volunteering sessions I observed that the provision received varied (see example figure 5.23).



Figure 5.23: Volunteering, food pick up and sorting.

(Researcher photographs)

However, even though an organisation as outlined in the photograph above, may boost their material capacity through increased food, there is still little or no capacity to make food choices. The only choice within surplus food provision is whether to take the food or not. Many services are found to take as much food as they can when hoping to alleviate aspects of food-insecurity, the food content is not really considered and instead food quantity is deemed paramount. *“Crazy day as the office, you can never tell what you are going to pick up. No method in the madness,*

*sometimes amiable, sometimes perishable, or a mix. We had 3 full cars, and a Move-On van followed us back to Royston” (Researcher volunteer diary: 18 March 2019).*

This brief discussion shows that within the exchange of surplus food, there is very little control exercised by the organisation who is on the receiving end of the food. This may be due to the changeable network of resources (Canniford and Shankar, 2013; Epp, Schau and Price, 2014) which are involved within the Move On surplus food provision. However, the organisational relations with Move On were shown to create limitations within an organisations choice. This research suggest that “[c]hoice can be used as a smoke screen for shedding responsibility” (Gabriel and Lang, 2006: 26), when an organisation is actively choosing to receive food from Move On with no cost to them, in all likelihood they would not be expected to subsequently complain about the food. In previous research, individuals have been found unable to make charitable organisations accountable for the services they were providing (Lambie-Mumford, 2014), this research suggests that a hierarchy of power is also present between charitable organisations, where surplus food providers, as a result of how they receive and manage their food service, impose control over what type of food is available, and this was found to limit the capacity of supplementary food choices available within the assemblage. This highlights an additional example of exchange restrictions (Hill and Stephens, 1997) found occurring between charitable organisations. The next section now turns to how organisations managing their own supplementary food services, are also impacting the capacity of food choice.

#### 5.3.4.2 Individual Choice

For the individual who is food insecure, it can be suggested that relations occurring between them and the supplementary food organisation, results in an increase within their material and expressive capacity, through the realised material and physiological impact of increased food provision. However, the way by which organisations structure and manage their supplementary food services, impacts the choice of whether a person will access a food service, and what food an individual will actually receive.

Of the three services providing supplementary food parcels, no two were found the same, even two parcels from within one service on a given day may be different. Within researcher volunteering sessions, the preparation of food parcels was inconsistent. Food was firstly split by similar types, then depending on the resources amassed, divided into bags. The bag varied both on the packer, and food still available upon the table. Local Mandy - who is food insecure explains, not all food bags are created equal in Royston, and they varied dependent upon the organisation providing the food: *“I was volunteering .... Those bags [food parcels] were brilliant. I packed them, and I got [given] them as they were. But they were totally different .... You know, there was fruit, veg, stock cubes ...you could do stuff with those bags”*. Although Mandy was happy with this food service, the only choice she had was whether to take it or not. The researcher met her when she had just collected food, from another parcel service, she was exasperated and wanted the following photograph taken (see figure 5.24).



Figure 5.24: Food bag provided to a food bank client

(researcher photograph)

She was very vocal about the contents *“now there’s 3 adults in my house and you get one wee bag of messages, what the fuck are you supposed to do way that [vehemently pointing at the food]?”* (Mandy, local). Mandy had no agency within this situation, because although in receipt of supplementary food, she had “very little recourse to hold the organisation to account”, for the quantity and quality of food (Lambie-Mumford, 2014: 116). Additionally, many organisations are found limited to what they can provide, both by funding and storage.

When the researcher asked local Heather about getting parcels from supplementary food services, she explained that Shelter had offered her some vouchers and she chose not to use the service: *“you need a docket to go to a food bank.....but I just was no interested because you had to get a voucher, and I was at the lowest point in my life and that would have taken me lower if I had to go to a food bank”* (local, Heather). Gabriel and Lang (2015: 26) outline that people “believe that they have choices, even if they do not exercise them”, and although Heather knew she could

benefit from a voucher, she did not want to engage with the supplementary food service because of how it would make her feel. She chose instead to eat noodles at 20p a serving, or living on a loaf of bread, because this was preferable. This highlights some of the “hidden costs” of social stigma that people have been shown to feel about accessing supplementary food (Purdam, Garratt and Esmail, 2016: 1079).

Employee Donna’s organisation was accommodating some food choices and or food preferences, up to a point. For example, she explains that she needs to buy food killed in a specific way: “*our destitution support is Halal, so there are very specific things that we buy for destitute asylum seekers*”. However, Donna’s destitution project had funding that accounted for this specificity within food choices. These findings are in common with other research, which shows more variation found within food provision, specifically in relation to religious beliefs (MacLeod, 2015; Macleod, 2018). This was not typically provided within other parcel provisions. A few choices were found accommodated, for those people who cannot eat certain foods:

*Researcher: Is there food that folk will not eat?*

*Connie, volunteer: Just now we’ve got a woman that canny [cannot] eat chicken, so we have a separate bag. ..we had the woman that was vegetarian as well, so she got all the chickpeas, beans, and spaghetti, wasn’t it?*

*Helen, volunteer: Oh aye. And soup wise you have to watch as well, it’s either cream of chicken and tomato or vegetable.*

In this instance an individual's choice may be considered, but only with regards to 'not' providing meat. They get little choice as to what else is in their bag, as volunteer Connie explains "we cannae [cannot] go individually pure shop for everybody". This limitation to food choices, is found to be the result of a volunteer service which has constraints of time and the rising cost of food:

*Connie, volunteer: The cost is going up, spaghetti Bolognese... when I first started to buy it was 16p... now they're 45p or 44p, for a tin [incredulous]!! She [vegetarian woman] did get that pasta and rice, but then she didn't the next week cos she already had hundreds, do ye get me? So, at that time we didn't have any money, so we just had to use whit wis there.*

Food provision for this service has risen 300% since the start of the service over 5 years ago, therefore, it is strictly monitored and is heavily reliant on supermarket own brand foods: "Sometimes it's just plain Tesco's ... Morrison's [supermarkets own branded food], cos it's what we're left [money], that's what we've had to buy" (Helen, volunteer). Services like Helens have little capacity to deal with requests, and often requests granted are dependent upon an existing excess of foods. However, excesses of food such as pasta, were also found problematic:

*Helen, volunteer: That is the thing, we get donations of pasta handed in, and we get more pasta handed back [from food bank users].*

*Connie, volunteer: Aye, and any 'mad beans' [chickpeas], we need to leave them out [of the parcels]. They [client] come back with it the following week saying... "I'll no use that at all".*

Volunteers were keen to find people who both like and use the food they have too much of. *“The odd one that goes “I love that”, and you give them 3 or 4 tins”* (Connie, volunteer). This increases the material capacity of the service user, and resolves any food surplus that may arise such as storage space, *“he or she is more than welcome to it, cos we get rid of it”* (Helen, volunteer). These foods that cannot be used are seen to go to landfill. Within researcher volunteering, I took what was considered waste; *“because people wouldn’t know what to do with it”* (Charlotte, employee); to local allotments for composting purposes.

Examples as outlined above, highlight some limitations to the capacities of a supplementary food organisation, including restrictions of time, resources, and knowledge, which all impact what finally ends up being in a food parcel. However, it particularly highlights the lack of choice for the individual accessing the supplementary food, as a result of how organisations operate in response to their own capacities. Mandy who was food insecure, had been found during a six-month period, to be the recipient of food parcels from more than one Royston organisation:

*Mandy, local: See what you get out a food bank? Now, there’s 3 adults in my house and you get one wee [small] bag of messages. What the fuck are you supposed to do with that [exasperated]? .... It’s basically tins of soup; there’s about 7 or five tins of soup and a tin of meatballs. They give you pasta and no sauce, they give you rice and nothing else, or a box of cereal with no milk, it’s just odd.*

Mandy was found to be frustrated with the contents of some food parcels, but she had no choice, she needed food. She felt like there was not enough food for her

family of three, and the types of food in a parcel are 'odd' because the produce does not match up for a meal. She was also concerned about the lack of fresh food choice. The 'food exchange' parcel service does not have the resources needed to keep fresh produce, which limits the nutritional choices that can be made available within a food parcel. Choices which were available for fresh produce, highlighted that many people were shopping farther way for deals to improve the access to food choice:

*Gillian, local: Tesco's are trying to make it all healthy, but at the same time they are putting their prices up!!*

*Beth: Yeah, they're too expensive. I like ASDA.*

*Gillian, local: Sometimes their [ASDA] fruit is a hit or miss int it? But Morrisons, I've never had a problem way with fruit and veg out of there, and their meats always dead good.*

*Beth, local: Yeah, they've [Morrisons] always got good deals on.*

Reduced cost foods in supermarkets may be able to address some on the issues around the choice and quality of food, but as explained by Mandy, there is more to reduced cost food than accessing produce or deals in a supermarket, you need to know your 'stuff':

*Mandy, local: Well, I found out what time they reduced stuff at, you got reduced stuff in the shop during the day, but when it goes down to right cheap prices, it's 7 o'clock, and you've got to stand in a queue.. you can only get 5 reduced items at a time; that's the way it works in Tesco.*

Mandy had created her own strategies to work out when supermarkets reduced their food, however, access to reduced cost food items were also found to be limited. She understood that everyone should get an opportunity to purchase reduced cost food, but she also explains that the reduced section at her nearest supermarket has to be barriered off and staffed, because the queueing people had been found to act quite aggressively: *“if there was nobody there, they’d fucking jump on top oh you fighting and everything. Honestly, it’s brutal man”* (Mandy, local).

This shows that an individual who is food insecure may be quite restricted in knowing what to do and adopting coping strategies in response to their food-insecurity. They would need knowledge which goes beyond adapting parameters of shopping and cooking to make them more economic.

This section highlights that an individual’s choice of supplementary food is directly constrained by the capacity demonstrated within access to both reduced cost food in supermarkets, and supplementary food organisations. Highlighting that relations and or restrictions with compatible resources (Canniford and Shankar, 2013; Epp, Schau and Price, 2014), create an imbalance within exchange restrictions (Hill and Stephens, 1997) for the consumer because they can neither access (Purdam, Garratt and Esmail, 2016) or choose (Gabriel and Lang, 2006) the food received.

### 5.3.5 Conclusion

The findings within Tenet 2 outline what Royston components were found to do when they interact with each other. Following these relations has allowed a better understanding of the inner workings of the assemblage, and through identifying capacities (DeLanda, 2006) occurring within the relations, this research presents some key points.

Surplus food provision is shown to increase the capacity (Epp, Schau and Price, 2014) of supplementary food organisations, highlighting an under documented aspect of ‘re-distribution’ within the assemblage, where organisations are found to realign components for increased resilience (ibid).

Supplementary food services are found to be both restricted and restricting dependent upon their access to funding, and the accessibility of their service and service information. These imbalances of access are found to be limiting choices (Gabriel and Lang, 2006) within the assemblage, for both the organisation and individual. The limitations of choice are resulting from a changeable groups of resources (Canniford and Shankar, 2013; Epp, Schau and Price, 2014) and the influence of power occurring between both different food organisations (Thapa Karki, Bennett and Mishra, 2021) and between the people and services that make up an organisation.

How people are found to cope with “constrained or suboptimal” choices (Epp and Velagaleti, 2014: 913), highlights how people and organisation are found to adapt and cope in response to supplementary food service provision. Both employees and volunteers are found to be key within assemblage “continuity–change continuum”

(Preece, Kerrigan and O'reilly, 2019: 333), and volunteers are found critical within the implementation of most supplementary food services within the assemblage.

Within the third tenet discussion turns to the relations which cause tensions, how these tensions influence connectedness within the assemblage, and how this impacts assemblage stability.

#### *5.4 Tenet 3: Stability amongst assemblage components*

The previous two sections have allowed an explanation of the heterogeneous components identified within this assemblage (5.2), and what these components were found to do when they interact with each other (5.3). Tenet 3 now considers the relations occurring between components which were found to cause tensions (Epp and Velagaleti, 2014). Tensions found within consumer research assemblages have been outlined as a way to better understand the trends and themes that occur when people navigate and manage their choices (Canniford and Shankar, 2013; Epp and Velagaleti, 2014; Parmentier and Fischer, 2015). This research has identified tensions between a diverse range of component relations, and also some strategies which have been applied in order to balance the outcome of those tensions. These tensions are subsequently outlined within the following sections: changes occurring within location, crossing location boundaries, public provision, associated meanings, and ethical tensions.

##### *5.4.1 Changes occurring within Location*

Within social assemblages, the capacities expressed within and around the relations of people that make up a community, may create stability among components. This is because networks of people who are known to each other, may create a dimension of homogeneity that offers social unity (DeLanda, 2016). As discussed within the section upon the Royston location (5.2.1.1), the ‘amount’ of people that make up Royston has remained stable throughout the decades, however, the diversity of

people who make up this number is found changed, and as such, people heterogeneity has increased within the assemblage.

Some of these ‘people’ changes are directly linked to availability of housing and Glasgow city dispersal. The city of Glasgow is noted to be the only Scottish city to engage with the dispersal of asylum seekers. City dispersal began in 1999 and provided the “means and motive” for letting vacant homes, particularly within hard to let tenancies in high rise homes (Hill, Meer and Peace, 2021: 269). One such location for dispersal of asylum seekers was Royston tower blocks (see figure 5.25).



Figure 5.25: Glasgow Tower Blocks

(Housing Estates Glasgow, 2020)

After the dispersal scheme began, the city of Glasgow had an influx of funding provision specifically for those seeking asylum, and for the services that people seeking asylum would need. As is the nature of survival within the charitable sector, organisations within Royston adapted to city dispersal and followed funding

opportunities: “*In 2000, Glasgow City Council began to house asylum seekers in flats in Sighthill, Royston and Red Road, and Rosemount responded to the needs of this new group by offering women’s support groups, childcare and English classes*” (Rosemount Lifelong Learning, 2020: web).

Following a funding path which was specifically for new residents of Royston, presented a fracturing of local services within the community, and it continues to cause tensions to this day. For example, when the researcher started work within Royston in 2012, residents described some organisations as places that were ‘*not really for locals*’. This highlights an example of socially questioned or fragile relations “between consumption resources” (Canniford and Shankar, 2013: 1059), where resources (organisations and people) fail to work together. An investigation of the ‘*not really for locals*’ organisations at this time, highlighted that some organisations were accessing funding to provide the much-needed services for those who were newly integrating within the community, one such instance is English as a Second or Other Language (ESOL) classes, see example below in figure 5.26.



**Free**  
**ESOL Class for Royston parents**  
**starting Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> April**



**Learn English to feel more confident.**  
**To help with everyday life.**  
**To support your children's learning at**  
**home and at school.**

<u>Where?</u>	<u>When?</u>	<u>Time</u>
zoom	Wednesdays	10am-11am
zoom	Thursdays	11am-12pm

**To find out more call:**  
**Angela on 07541615275 or**  
**Fiona on 07541615278**  
**Tuesday-Thursday 9am-5pm**

402 Royston Road, Glasgow G20 2NU  
 Direct Tel: 01424 220 6200  
 Reception Tel: 01424 553 0000  
 Website: [www.rosemount.gla.ac.uk](http://www.rosemount.gla.ac.uk)  
 Twitter: @RosemountGLA  
 Facebook: Rosemount Lifelong Learning

Figure 5.26: Flyer for English Classes 2020

(Rosemount Lifelong Learning, 2020)

Observation showed that ESOL classes are still found to occur within this service, and the researcher also found them within 2 other assemblage locations. Jennifer was an employee who worked across many services for asylum seekers within Glasgow, and upon interviewing she discussed dispersal across communities: *the reality is that very often people who are dispersed to other local authorities [not Glasgow], are in much better circumstances*. Jennifer explains that people seeking asylum within smaller local authorities may have better designated services, for example social care, and ESOL provision. The lack of ESOL classes within Glasgow is causing

problems for dispersed people, and this causes tensions both for the individual who needs to learn English and the services that surround them:

*Jennifer, employee: Glasgow is a huge dispersal city, but it is in crisis...the money is there in the home office contract for at least 4 hours provision per week [per person]. In Glasgow they don't get it....of course the mum is staying with the kids. Dad is the one who goes to college, you have women who have been here two years...they cannot say a sentence in English.*

Jennifer highlights the tensions that occur for people who are dispersed within the city. Firstly, there may be no provision of English classes because of funding, and secondly some of the dispersed population are not engaging because they are left with the responsibility of caretaking for family. The outcome of this is that women remain mute within English speaking circles, and because of this tension and additionally family needs, Jennifer explained she may only see such women once a year. This highlights a range of tensions that might occur for ethnic minorities who are based within Glasgow, including the people who make up their community and resources available, suggesting that choices for ethnic minorities can be “more of an arduous uphill battle” (Bone, Christensen and Williams, 2014: 470).

Although it can be argued that most assemblages are found to be in a processes of change (Canniford and Shankar, 2013), the component changes occurring within the Royston location, highlight tensions that support the disconnectedness of both the people that make up the community and the community services that are found to access. Seeking to better understanding what makes up disjointed communities that have undergone aspects of “depopulation, demolition and dispersal” (Hill, Meer and

Peace, 2021: 265), was a key aspect of Big lottery funding by ‘Our Place’. This funding specifically aimed to “empower local people and organisations to bring about a massive and lasting positive difference to their neighbourhood” (The National Lottery, 2021, web). It has been over a decade since the introduction of these community fundings’, and although some organisations have secured subsequent funding enabling them to continue to exist within the location, most applications are driven by ongoing need for charitable services.

The tensions occurring because of changes to the Royston location, primarily result because aspects of dispersal have impacted and changed the people who make up the community. And although subsequent funding streams aimed to match the changing population, services are struggling to meet the needs of both the old and new Royston population. The next section considers tensions that are found when food and people cross the Royston location boundaries.

#### 5.4.2 Crossing Location Boundaries

As discussed within Tenet 1 (5.2.1), the Royston location is made up of some 5,000 people and there are a range of services within the assemblage who are involved within supplementary food provision. However, one tension identified within the location is that the supplementary food which makes its way into Royston, does not necessarily stay there for the benefit of the people who live within the location, instead, it crosses boundaries because of services relations of funding and familiarity.

#### 5.4.2.1 Funding beyond boundaries

As previously discussed (5.3.2.1b), some of the funding that comes into Royston is for overall services, and as such, delivery of some project work is not Royston specific. This amounts to supplementary food either leaving Royston to go to people who live outside the assemblage, or that people come into Royston to get supplementary food, then take it out of the assemblage. To explain, one of the services found distributing children's holiday food, was delivering food parcels over many different Glasgow communities: *With my children I am northeast, I am away over at Shettleston or Maryhill... all over the joint (Charlotte, employee)*. This route as outlined by Charlotte, covers a huge urban area around 7 miles distance, and travels over many community boundaries. Charlottes work is service specific, and it is dictated by social services who have identified particular families in need. Similarly, people coming into Royston to access Donna's destitute asylum provision, were also found to be from far reaching communities crossing many boundaries. Some people were dispersed beyond the city limits of greater Glasgow around ten miles away:

*Donna, employee: The destitute support is for destitute asylum seekers who have been refused their asylum appeal or claim....they get one chance for appeal, if they are not successful they are made destitute and homeless. So, we give them support, there is 20 on our list, 15 of them are active. They are dispersed all over the city... it just depends on where they can actually find someone to put them up. Can you imagine [coming so far] in this weather [torrential rain and fierce wind]?*

As Donna outlines, the people engaged with her work are “vulnerable to food-insecurity due to limited opportunities for social and economic participation” (McKay *et al.*, 2018: 01), for example, they have no money for travel or a home to live in, and they may not even have a place to sleep. They rely upon the kindness of others to house them, however, although Donna’s supplementary food service may be relieving the tension by increasing access to food, the effort and expense required to cross boundaries in uncertain circumstances and travel to Royston for the provision of this food, can be suggested to heighten other tensions. Donna provides the researcher a leaflet she gives to those seeking asylum (see figure 5.27).



Figure 5.27: Advice leaflet for asylum seekers

This leaflet highlights that those individuals accessing Donna’s service; who are already experiencing vulnerability; also, may not speak English, which could mean additional barriers to accessing transportation and services. These findings suggest

that those people using Donna's service experience multiple tensions, highlighting they are multiplicatively vulnerable (Saatcioglu and Corus, 2015).

For organisations like Donna's and Charlotte's, who provide supplementary food across a larger client base, it can be found that people who live within the Royston assemblage feel alienated from their services. Mandy best articulates this notion when she tells the researcher about her recent volunteering:

*Mandy, local: I just felt as if .... all the food was getting taken off the community... So, I was doing the bag packing. All the workers were coming down – and I did nae like the way it was going.....a lot [food] was NOT coming to the community. I could phone three people now that's in [the organisation's] groups, and they've not had nothing [food]. It is no going local, it's going to Springburn....Possil....Wallacewell, into other communities.*

As Mandy highlights, she is aware that this organisation is providing their supplementary food provision to clients outside of the Royston location. However, she also knows families who are engaged within this service locally, who need the food. This example highlights that movement of food into Royston and then out to other communities, is found to create tensions within and between services and the local people. In addition to supplementary food crossing location boundaries, funding was also found to impact entire community spaces like Donna's (see figure 5.28).

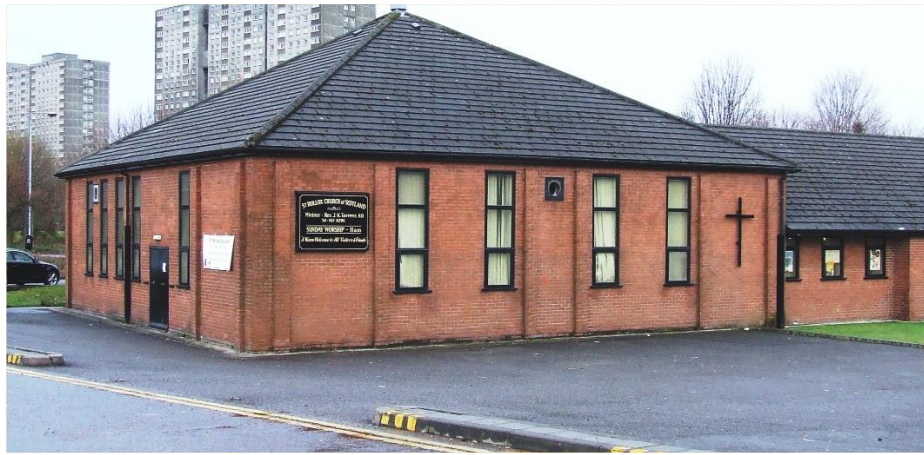


Figure 5.28: St Rollox Church of Scotland

(St Rollox Community Outreach, 2018a)

The church in the figure above was scheduled to be razed to make way for a new city link road. The funding was the result of a city wide ‘Transformational Regeneration Areas’ strategy, occurring across 8 Glasgow areas (Glasgow City Council, 2018).

Whilst onsite before the demolition, the entire organisation was in upheaval and being temporarily moved to portable cabins. Donna outlines the tensions they were causing the local council by remaining where they were: *The whole of Sighthill [community] is being sort of renovated, and they are building a road here. So, we are holding up thousands of pounds worth every single day that we are here, because they can’t get the road through.* Employee Donna explained that the delay in moving was because the new church wasn’t yet built, so her project was stalling the progression of the regeneration. Her outreach service was being pressed to move into transitional accommodations (see figure 5.29), where organisational capacities would be limited or temporarily stalled due to a lack of space.



Figure 5.29: Flyer - moving services

These findings outline that in a similar way to how consumers make “trade-offs among resources” (Epp and Velagaleti, 2014: 914), organisations are also developing trade-offs within resources in order to balance needs in response to change. For the community outreach, those resources found with absolute funding; destitute asylum program, ESOL classes and ongoing church activities; remained a priority within their transitional phase, and other services such as the food store parcel provision and reduced cost fruit and veg barra, disengaged from the assemblage. When the new church is built, the community outreach project will continue in its entirety.

However, the location is further away and disconnected from Royston, highlighting an example of how funding can destabilise the assemblage, by reducing the provision of supplementary food services. In addition to funding determining how the organisation or service manages the boundaries of their supplementary food, the next section discusses how familiarity across boundaries can cause tensions.

#### 5.4.2.2 *Familiarity across boundaries*

Engaging with some supplementary food organisations, was found to cause tensions which resulted in food provisions traveling across boundaries. These tensions are connected to being too familiar with the people who manage or work within the supplementary food services. The result of this familiarity is either people crossing boundaries to come into Royston for food, or people crossing boundaries to attend food services outside of Royston for food.

For example, many clients were found coming across boundaries from other communities to use access some food services: *I mean we had people from Barmulloch, Balornock, Carntyne, Blackhill, High Street, Parkhead, this year, most of our people is fae [from] Blackhill (Connie, volunteer)*. Connie outlines locations where clients come from and they encompass quite a large expanse of urban area, including communities miles away from Royston. However, it became clear during interviewing that people may be crossing these community boundaries, because of tensions they had found when accessing their local food banks:

*Connie, volunteer: People stopped going there [a different foodbank] because it was carnage. We got two women that couldn't go into it because of fights outside it. They would not go into it; they were getting threatened in the queue.*

The women Connie spoke about had been under threat of physical violence within the queuing system at their local food bank. So they severed social ties with the service (Epp and Velagaleti, 2014) in order to eliminate tensions associated with their operating rules, and chose to access the Royston service instead because they simply felt safer. However, people were also coming into Royston from other locations within the city as a result of relations between the clients and the volunteers:

*Researcher: So, the people from Blackhill that you know, come here because of your links?*

*Helen, volunteer: We are from a rough area, I stayed in Blackhill.*

*Connie, volunteer: Aye, or someone has told them that this was open, now a lot of people know, because of word of mouth.*

Connie and Helen have links across Glasgow and because of their familiarity across community boundaries, people are coming into the Royston assemblage for food. As a result, what may otherwise be a Royston community food service is actually spanning many communities far beyond the Royston boundaries. This disjointedness, akin to the previous community funding discussion, is felt within and between the local people in the community. Heather mentioned the service within her interview *It's no always the right people deserving of it that get it, you know? There is people going to it that are not entitled to it, and there is people that could be entitled to it*

*and won't. Like myself.* Heather, although food insecure, feels that this foodbank is not something that she would go to, because she has a moral dilemma about the people who run the services and how they choose to operate it. To explain, familiarity with the location, volunteers, and perceptions of a local food bank, were found to incite tensions for Heather and she refused to access it:

*Researcher: You were at home and isolated? Did you go to a foodbank?*

*Heather, local: The one in the Chapel? No way!*

*Researcher: You know the folk running it?*

*Heather, local: Yeah.*

*Researcher: Why does that bother you?*

*Heather, local: One of the persons who runs the foodbank, when her [child] was younger, there was friction between us. He came in to [her workplace] and punched me and I battered my head, so there is kind of issues there. So no, even when I am destitute, I would never go near that foodbank.*

Heather's familiarity and associated history with the family of volunteers who manage this foodbank, means that she would never access the provision, even as she told the researcher she had *existed on loaves of bread and cheap noodles for weeks*. Similarly, employee Grace explains the tensions as to why she does not send local Royston people, who engage within her service, to the local food banks:

*Grace, employee: I've took a few of my parents to the food bank [Parkhead].*

*Researcher: Right, why Parkhead?*

*Grace, employee: Because they were feeling embarrassed of the fact they were having to get a food voucher, and that was the first barrier, and the second barrier is they were worrying about who they would see, right?*

*Researcher: So, they felt comfortable because they got a welcome and because it was out of this area. do you think that is a big thing?*

*Grace, employee: Yes, because depending on the individual person, you know, if they're well known here some of them wouldn't bother going along the road you know. They don't make them feel all anxious or upset or paranoid. They are really nice to them.*

Grace highlights that for local people who are food insecure, the tensions of collecting food from a food bank where the people running it may be familiar to them, is a catalyst for stress relating to embarrassment, anxiety, and paranoia. The volunteers who run the service confirmed that people felt this way, and some clients had been found to collect the food provision from a different location: *People may be too embarrassed to come in. There is, I know there is because we have put bags of messages [food parcels] at our own houses for them (Connie, volunteer).*

These findings are comparable to Chase and Walker's (2016: 206), where people in poverty were found to “risk exposure to judgement and treatment by others for not meeting societal norms”. This ‘familiarity’ tension can be suggested to increase the condition of vulnerability, because it exacerbates the conditions of food-insecurity. It also highlights a reason why there may be a ‘lack’ of local Royston people that were

utilising this parcel provision within the community, identifying examples of tangible and intangible boundaries which are impacting access to food services (Cheetham, McEachern and Warnaby, 2018). Very few people in this study, when asked, didn't know the family volunteering within the 'Chapel' service, if this leads local people to view the service similarly to Helen and Grace then the familiarity of service workers may be impeding access to the service for those who need it, and reducing the flexibility (Moraes et al., 2021) people have in choosing their food resource venues.

The findings suggest there are opportunities to reduce tensions for people accessing food, by going across boundaries with some organisations actively choosing to send people across boundaries to access supplementary food outside of the community, because they are already familiar with the capacities of other food services:

*Researcher: So where do you send people [clients] who are hungry?*

*Charlotte, employee: Most of our clients go to Parkhead.... we are a partner to Parkhead Trussell Trust...everyone says that's the best one to go to....you know when you take them in they were offered a bowl of soup or a cup of tea and a cake, they make them feel welcome as soon as they're in the door.*

Employee Charlotte explains that both existing relations with food banks, and the expressive capacities of how people are made to feel when they access food services, has a positive impact upon their clients. However, Parkhead is outside community boundaries, and three miles and a minimum of two bus journeys away from Royston: *One had a terrible time; she was on the bus trying to carry it all, we actually picked her up because you can't leave somebody struggling like that (Charlotte, employee).*

Thus, by seeking to address the expressive capacities of a clients food access, the employees create a material capacity issue within the parameters of their own role.

Employees Grace and Charlotte are familiar with another food service and understand their clients can access food provision anonymously. Because of this they are shown to go beyond the parameters of their role, for example, reducing client tensions through providing transportation. This highlights that some employees understand and respond to aspects of “psycho-social dimensions of poverty” (Jo, 2013: 515). It also outlines that similar to consumers who chose resource types based upon “their ability to incite and alleviate tensions” (Epp and Velagaleti, 2014: 912), resources are being chosen similarly at an organisational level, where employees were found ‘opting out’ of using components or services within Royston, because other foodbanks further away would reduce tensions for their clients.

This section has allowed the research to highlight how components ebb and flow across community boundaries, as a result of how organisations are funded and local knowledge of who runs what food service. It emphasises that the way organisations are funded may impact services, and why people have little choice but to cross community boundaries to distribute supplementary food within and outside the community boundaries of Royston. It also explains that people (individuals and employees) navigate boundaries to access supplementary food provision, in order to reduce tensions (Epp and Velagaleti, 2014) which are associated with being food insecure. The outcome of these tensions may be, that services within a location, may not be used by the people who reside there. This disjointedness of people and services within the community, may be responsible for increased tensions for those

who reside within it, because they feel they do not get the benefits of access to the supplementary food services.

The next tension to be discussed within these findings are those which occur within public food provision.

### 5.4.3 Public Provision

As briefly discussed within Tenet 1 (5.2.1.3a), school catering is publicly provided through the facilities management services of Glasgow City Council (see figure 5.30), which is known locally as Cordia.



#### ***School Catering***

*Fuel Zone (School Meals) is an award winning dining concept that operates in the city's Primary and Secondary schools, serving well balanced and nutritional meals to more than 63,000 children every day, in a bright and vibrant dining space.*

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Figure 5.30: Facilities Management Services

(Glasgow City Council, 2018)

The Cordia component intersects into the Royston assemblage providing free and reduced cost supplementary food, and although this school catering component is highlighted as an award winning dining concept (ibid), this section considers “what tensions emerge” (Epp and Velagaleti, 2014: 912) when parents and employees manage relations within the different properties of the Cordia food service.

The Cordia breakfast service, which is provided for free of cost for some children or reduced in cost for others, was not found well utilised by pupils at one of the assemblage primary schools. Within a focus group session, employee Alan mentions that the teachers within the school: *find it amazing how few children come to our breakfast club, because we have got quite a lot of children here who come for lunch (Alan, employee)*. Alan wasn't able to connect the disparity of pupils who currently use the breakfast service, with the number who were engaging within the lunch service. However, it was discovered within interviews that there may be tensions occurring for parents, when they send their children to use the breakfast club provision. For example, when asked about the club, some parents expressed negative opinions about their children's engagement with the supplementary food service:

*Gillian, local: I'll be honest...what a rip off. I pay £3 for that, but half the time they [children] cannot even get any butter on their toast. So, it's £2 for your first child, £1 for your second child right? [asking other parents] And what they are getting is a tiny little bowl of rice crispies.*

Gillian outlines tensions for parents who send their children to the provision, relating to food cost, food quality, and food quantity. She outlines the breakfast service as a 'rip off', and other parents agreed that the cost of the breakfast club can be a concern, especially when there is more than one child: *I'm £15 a week for them [2 children] to go (Rowan, volunteer)*. Gillian further explains that the quality and quantity of food is also found problematic: *The other morning the woman [employee] said when the wean [her child] was getting toast: oh, gonnae no [do not] eat all of that cos I've not made any more, and I don't think I've got enough left*. These parents highlight some

tensions which may have an impact upon uptake of the food resource, however, some parents were found to be using the breakfast club service for reasons other than accessing food provision. To explain, Beth chose to use the breakfast element as a form of childcare, and she weighted these breakfast club tensions, by feeding her children breakfast at home before they went to the club: *I'm giving them breakfast before they go*. Parents have been outlined by Epp and Velagaleti (2014: 927) to choose a mix of resources or choose "one type of resource over others depending on whether, or to what extent, these resources facilitate tension- minimizing strategies".

The relations occurring between the children and the Cordia lunch provision was also found to come with tensions, Beth outlines that her child is eating lunch, but is still hungry:

*Beth, local: xxxx [child] mostly comes out of school starving ...he's just had a cup of soup...he is no getting enough.... They don't have the same amount of food when he [his class] comes, it's bad. You feel that the older kids should have a wee bit more food.*

This lack of provision may be the result of how the food is being split between classes: *The way in which this system 'doesn't' work, is an argument I have been having [with Cordia] (Alan, employee)*. The group went into more detail about how the school lunch service was managed. The Cordia employees manage the lunch service across two sittings; however, the parents and employees feel that the 'top half' (older and often physically much bigger children) are not receiving enough food: *They've got 3 trays [of food] for the bottom half, and 3 for the top (Gillian,*

local). The parents within the group explained that they have tried to negate these food provision tensions, by speaking with Cordia employees:

*Gillian, local: I spoke to the Cordia woman, and she was like “that’s not how it goes”. And I was like, “I assure you it is”. She [employee] was like “we would just put toast on for them”. And I was like you’re telling me my son would get a slice of toast for his lunch if there was nothing left? You’ve just told me there’s always something left, but now you’re telling me when there is nothing left you’re making toast?! [incredulous].*

Because parents like Gillan do not physically attend the breakfast club, they have to garner information from their children, after the fact. This makes it difficult for them to navigate these lunch club tensions, and highlights that parents have limited influence upon how the service is supplied. Too little control over resources has been shown to cause “anxiety and guilt” for parents, when they outsource childcare activities (Epp and Velagaleti, 2014: 920). However, these findings highlight that when outsourced resources are publicly provided, and parents try to exercise some level of control over their child’s activities, the outcome of these relations creates conflict which heighten tensions within the food service, rather than reduce them.

‘Packed Lunches’ made by Cordia were also found to create tensions for other organisations. Packed lunches were made by Cordia and provided as part of the Children’s’ holiday food program to other organisations within the assemblage: *So, a lot of organisations got a pack lunch that was made by Cordia (Debbie, employee).* However, receiving these pack lunches created tensions for Debbie and her workplace, as they were very unhappy with their quantity and quality: *they [her*

*organisation] spent a fiver on it [each lunch from Cordia], and it was absolutely terrible (Debbie, employee).* Debbie's organisation had been found to boost the capacity of the Cordia lunch provision, by purchasing additional food. For example, adding snacks such as cereal bars and the provision of fresh fruit. This wasn't an ideal situation for her, and it caused tensions by reducing both material and expressive capacity of her organisation. They had already pre-paid £5 for every packed lunch for the entire holiday program, but they now had to account for the extra cost involved (time and food) to resource and purchase pack lunch top ups. Debbie had little recourse to address this within the funding and provision of the packed lunches. Primarily this was because the holiday food program was both a 'new' and 'temporary' entity within the assemblage, but also because her organisations employees were already stretched beyond their normal capacities and as such restricted to fulfilling a reactive role with limited capacity to address the tensions beyond the food top up.

Supplementary food provision was also found to cause tensions for employees, and they raised concerns about portion size and nutrition: *My concern is ... they [local authorities] go on about how all our meals meet these standards, you know all that low salt and low fat, and in my opinion it is because meals are too small (Alan, employee).* Alan feels that the food portions are being manipulated to in order to adhere to specifications upon nutritional value. The nutritional variety that makes up the school provision was also raised in conversation with Hannah:

*Hannah, employee: It's just a mess. The standard has been poor, I mean they are putting out wee tubs of fruit and it's all tinned fruit...peaches,*

*pineapple... They [Cordia] used to sell capri suns as well. I mean it's just a joke, they took off cake and custard [from the lunch menu] because it wasn't healthy, I know it's probably not 'that' healthy, but I'd rather a kid ate cake and custard, than had a capri sun.*

Employee Hannah highlights unhealthy foods, for example, tinned fruit in syrup, which were given to the children. These are found high in sugar, and she felt that there are other healthier or more filling options that could substitute these choices. These findings around nutrition highlight some further notions of why “the school meals programme is failing to meet its potential and protect children from poor nutrition” (Parnham, Millett and Vamos, 2023: 298).

In addition to the tensions surrounding the cost, quality, and quantity of the public food provision, the final tension discussed within this food provision is that of food waste sitting in strange contrast: *What really does hack me off immensely, is the amount of food in the dinner hall that goes in the bin. I think that is a disgrace. Cordia is not allowed to give leftovers out.... we've to add them up and bin them* (Hannah, employee). Hannah goes on to explain the complexities that occur within the system for processing food waste within the kitchen of the school:

*Hannah: They [cordia employees] record how many slices of pizza and how many burgers they have 'not' given out as part of the meals, and they've to throw them in the bin [incredulous]. This is all about money, they have to keep statistics on [food] waste, because then they are obviously making too much [food]. They are not secretive... that's their procedure and that's it.*

Hannah has outlined that the catering employees are balancing decisions within the service in order to manage the relations of the food. The food made should mirror the food eaten plus minimal food wastage. Therefore, Cordia employees are balancing the need to provide enough food to feed however many children are eating lunch within a given day, but on the other aspect they are being heavily scrutinised by their employers to manage their wastage. In order to reduce the tensions of hunger for school children, the employees were found to take risks: *We have to play that game, so we actually.... technically, we have to put our own jobs on the line you know? Because we are not complying with instructions to us [shrugs], because it's "children" we are dealing with! (Hannah, employee).* Hannah explains that the employees and some other employees have been found to 'play the system' within the lunch provision, they morally cannot accept that this food which would otherwise be disposed of, could be given to hungry children. Therefore, they are found stretch their Cordia boundaries (as long as the risk of getting caught is assessed): *We 'do' give out the seconds [waste] to children as they just go in the bin.... But if we get spotted, if any of the managers are down and see them [Cordia employees] they are given into trouble for that.* This highlights that employees are navigating the tensions of feeding hungry children in a balance with their own job security. Hannah 'breaks the rules' with this reshuffling of food, and monitors which staff are coming into the school building during the lunch service, so she can alert the other employees and the Cordia employees: *nobody needs to know, because nobody [managers] is going to raid the bins.* Hannah feels that beyond the scrutiny of the school dining hall, the managers will not venture outside to monitor food wastage by checking the rubbish bins.

This ‘Public Provision’ section outlines that employees, parents, and organisations, who have relations with the Cordia supplementary food component, are not enabled to make changes within the food service. This highlights findings similar to Parnham, Millett and Vamos (2023: 297), who present school meals as “unequal and inadequate”. This is in part “due to the complex delivery system, which is a mix of in-house, local authority and outsourced private caterers” (ibid: 298).

However, this work also finds evidence of specific tensions relating to food quality, quantity, nutritional content, and waste. Found alongside these tensions, were some tension minimising strategies (Epp and Velagaleti, 2014) which were used to navigate the Cordia provision and slightly alleviate some issues within the catering provision. However, most of these tactics were small in nature, but big in risk to the employees who were navigating the system. This highlights that tensions within the public provision of supplementary food, are unchecked and unresolved.

The next section now turns to the discussion upon tensions which were found as a result of associated meanings.

#### 5.4.4 Associated Meanings

Outlined within the following section are those tensions which were found to occur as a result of how people connected meanings with specific names or affiliations.

The first section discusses the connotations associated with the word ‘foodbank’; the second section discusses the connotations associated with the ‘religious institution’.

#### 5.4.4.1 Connotations of the 'foodbank'

A key tension outlined within these findings are the connotations people associate with the term 'food bank'. It is unknown how many supplementary food organisations exist across Scotland, however, the Trussell Trust franchise opened its first foodbank in 2009, and it remains the "largest food banking organisation" (Lambie-Mumford, 2019: 04) with around 120 venues who operate with similar procedures. In Royston, the two continuous providers of emergency food parcels within the assemblage, specifically chose the alternative names for their parcel provision, because they did not want to be 'known' as a food bank. Donna the manager at the 'Food Store' explains:

*Donna, employee: So, we use food store instead of foodbank, so we differentiate ourselves. We don't want to be known as a foodbank, because the foodbank has the sort of connotation of the Trussell Trust. And at the Trussell Trust you come in and you get a cup of coffee, and you get a roll and sausage...and you get a set amount of stuff [food]...the DWP [Department of Work and Pensions] got the idea that we were a food bank, and they started sending one person after another to us... and we have not got the capacity.*

Donna explains that they did not want the connotations of what people link to the provisions of a foodbank, and that the term had already been found to cause tensions within their services. When the 'Department of Work and Pensions' referred clients towards her 'Food Store', they did not have the resource mix to cope with the people demand: *The Trussell Trust have got a [food] list, and they tick the list off and put it into boxes. So, they've got boxes for single people, single parents with a family,*

*bigger families you know? And then they will say, well you can only come back to us a maximum of 3 times - and then we are going to ask questions.* Donna fears that her parcel provision would have the capacity of space, people, or the structure required to deliver the services needed to become a member of Trussell Trust. Yet in tenet 2 (5.3.2) she expressed great capacity when her organisation was found never to turn people away. So Trussell trust memberships would create tension, reducing her capacities by placing limits on how many times a person can attend.

Although a foodbank does not in any form have to be a franchise of the Trussell Trust, more parcel provision services throughout the UK are becoming a member of the scheme. However, what a ‘foodbank’ service means for many people (MacLeod, 2015) aligns with a similarly structured approach to food services (see figure 5.31).



When you join the Trussell Trust Foodbank Network, we will provide:

- Full training
- An operating manual
- Ongoing support from national staff team and an Area Manager
- Template website tailored to your food bank with your own content management system
- Branding artwork (including leaflets, banners, etc.)
- An online forum
- Data Collection System
- Annual audits and quality assurance process
- Corporate relationships – discounts and services (e.g. many Trussell Trust food banks are able to hold supermarket collections in local Tesco stores and receive a cash ‘top-up’ on what is donated)
- National and regional conferences

Figure 5.31: Trussell Trust

(Trussell Trust, 2021)

Upon entering into a contract, the organisation is expected to benefit from their relations with the Trussell Trust, particularly with the provisions outlined above. Those may certainly benefit the capacity of the Chapel 'Food Exchange', for example, a website with current information and improved branding would heighten the accessibility of information as discussed within Tenet 2 (5.3.2.2). However, a contract means an organisation must pay to join, and "*[f]ood banks are asked to make a contribution of £1,500 during the first year of the food bank development and £360 each consecutive year. This contribution helps towards the costs of delivering these services to food banks*" (The Trussell Trust, 2021b: web). The volunteers at the 'Food Exchange' also chose the name for the parcel service because they did not want to be associated with the 'Foodbank' notion of the Trussell Trust. They explained that both the processes and the fees would create tensions within their service:

*Connie, volunteer: We don't ask people for the likes of, what's that other one that does forms?*

*Researcher: The Trussell Trust?*

*Helen, volunteer: Aye, they ask for letters. But we're not doing that! And because it costs money [annual fees], and I don't see the point spending money on that. The Father had looked into that before we started, and they were wanting paid.*

*Connie, volunteer: Cos [because] the money that we've got, we just pure use it.*

Similarly, to the 'Food Store', this volunteer run service are not comfortable with the connotations associated with the name 'Foodbank', which for them is directly linked to the Trussell Trust. The volunteers outline they have no interest in asking people for information, and they do not have the capacity to fulfil the subsequent paperwork. Additionally, and the outlay of fees for this service would be a useful resource lost.

The connotations associated with foodbanks were found to stretch beyond those services that provide food parcels. Volunteers explain such tensions within the pop-up barra service:

*Researcher: [looking over food list] So, when did you put a notice on the price lists saying that you are 'not' a foodbank?*

*Lorna, volunteer: Aye...well for example [client] comes in just for the fareshare, and last week we had nothing, and she was like "oh this is 'some' foodbank"! I said, "this is not a food bank, who told you that?".*

*Ryan, volunteer: She's dead cheeky like.*

*Lorna, volunteer: She comes in [every week] and I have to show her the price list [with the "not a foodbank sign].*

The Royston food hub is under the umbrella of North Glasgow Community Food Initiative, and people within Royston (and other areas) were found to mistake the 'Food Hub' as a food bank service. For the volunteers, the 'perceived' expectations of those clients have caused tensions across all their services. To explain, the barra service delivers subsidised food, not free food, and the volunteers have to continually negate the conflict of people who turn up expecting a different type of service. As a

result, all advertising on their website and within flyers had recently changed (see figure 5.32). Now ‘however please note we are not a food bank’ can be found across their materials.



Figure 5.32: Website notice

(Adapted from NGCFI, 2021)

The signage on leaflets and flyers was less extensive, however the website does direct people on to another food organisation who can provide information of where to find free food. When the employees and volunteers were asked where the local food banks were, they did not have steadfast information beyond what the limited information they knew about the ‘Food Exchange’.

This section outlines that the connotations associated with the term ‘food bank’ are found to go hand in hand with the services of the Trussell Trust. However, as “[f]ood banks can adapt a formalised or informal system in redistributing the food they collect” (Livingstone, 2017: 07), some services such as the three discussed above, choose not to integrate their services within the Trussell Trust. This was because signing up with a franchise was thought to impact the organisations ability to make choices or decisions within their services. These ‘Food bank’ or not a ‘Food bank’ choices are made within assemblage organisations and services, because they are not willing to lose some of the capacities they already have (monetary value of fees), nor are they able or willing to provide the capacities they would need for such

membership (space, people, administration). However, as discussed within ‘Surplus Food’ (5.3.1), not being affiliated, or having some relations with the Trussell Trust franchise can also be found to present tensions for an organisation.

This presents a deeper understanding as to why some organisations may justify and modify resources, and defines why “capacities offer a fitting construct” to understand why resources may or may not be integrated into an assemblage (Epp and Velagaleti, 2014: 914). The next section now turns to tensions found occurring as a result of a service who is affiliated within another organisation, in this case providing food from the confines of a religious institution.

#### *5.4.4.2 Connotations of the ‘religious institution’*

DeLanda (2016: 22) explains that some homogeneity within a social assemblage can result in a “degree of conformity”, for example when a community is comprised of similarly linked individuals, the result can be less tensions. However, in the opposite manner, degrees of heterogeneity among components can impact the stability of an assemblage, and tensions can grow within cultural discourse when difference among components becomes challenged: “The distinction between ‘us’ and ‘them’ will sharpen any small deviation from local norms will be noticed and punished: are you really a Christian, a Muslim, a Jew?” (DeLanda, 2016: 22).

As briefly touched upon in the section upon location (5.2.1.1), historically Royston had an influx migration of Irish populations (Mitchell, 2020), and these early ties remain important for local people. Royston's moniker 'Little Ireland' is used within the assemblage, and also present is a resultant link to Catholicism within the community. For example, the 'Chapel' (Roman Catholic Church) is commonly outlined in conversation, and whilst first whilst working here in 2012 this felt unusual for the researcher (who comes from the far north of Scotland where such Irish migration is rare), however, locals were found to have great pride of their Irish heritage, and generations of families have not moved outside this urban demographic since they arrived in the 1930s (Murray, Miller and Scott-Simmons, 2015). However, as romantic as the Irish lineage is portrayed, the link between Irish ancestry and Catholicism is not without its own concerns, and Glasgow for a long time has been infamous for convoluted associations which merge together football, sectarianism, and national identity (May, 2015), and in 2012 The Acts of the Scottish Parliament (2012) saw the introduction of the 'Offensive Behaviour at Football and Threatening Communications (Scotland) Bill'. Funding tackling sectarian behaviour increased at that time and the topic remains embedded within the school curriculum (Brown, 2020).

Aspects of sectarianism were found to be an undertone within the Royston assemblage, and the location is found exhibiting division and vulnerability within its food spaces. To explain, as with many Scottish food bank services, some of the Royston supplementary food services are delivered from within religious denominations the 'Food Exchange' and a 'Food Hub Barra' are delivered from within a Roman Catholic Chapel, and the 'Food Store' is delivered from within the

Church of Scotland. Within the parcel provision of the Chapel, sectarianism is a tension which is found to impact upon the service:

*Connie, volunteer: There wis an argument with a guy [service user] who was quite aggressive about this [service] being in a chapel, right? And I was like well don't come in the chapel then. I'm like it's no Rangers, Celtic, black and white in here.*

In this example, Connie immediately adopts “tension minimising strategies” (Epp and Velagaleti, 2014: 921), and she proceeds to unlink supplementary food provision from religion and or the support of any football team. However, sometimes these clarifications are not enough for the clients who come to use the service:

*Connie, volunteer: He was like “I'm not a fucking catholic”, and I was like “neither the fuck am I, so”? He was like “she's a catholic”, and I was like “shut your mouth, don't be disrespectful... don't be cheeky, if you don't like the food, go”.*

Connie subsequently realises that for this client the conflict may not be resolved, and the only way to reduce the tensions caused, may be to eliminate the component (Epp and Velagaleti, 2014). In this instance the client accessing the service was removed from the premises, not only because he was exhibiting poor behaviour but because he was causing stress for the other people attending the service. However, these types of disruptions do create tensions for Connie and her family, who are simply volunteers doing the best they can for their community. These excerpts above provide examples of how relations impact the expressive capacity of both client and supplementary

food service providers, and this in turn can impact on the degree of stability within an assemblage component.

Sectarian behaviour also caused tensions which reduced access to food donations for the Chapel service. To explain, as discussed in tenets 1 and 2, the Chapel relies on the provision of food donations from within the community and monetary or food donations from the Chapel mass. Beyond this their capacity is limited because they are not a constituted group. Occasionally, the volunteers have the opportunity to participate in food drives at local football matches, for example they were recently asked if they wanted to participate in a food drive at Celtic Park necessary to collect food and toiletry donations:

*Connie, volunteer: The green brigade has asked us to get a van at Celtic Park, but you need to get a van and stand there [to collect food]. I can't even get the van.*

*Researcher: What about hiring a man with a van?*

*Connie, volunteer: I've tried that. Actually, do you know the weird thing, it still happens you know with Celtic and Rangers, Catholic and Protestant. Three guys I've asked, and I've looked at their Facebook and they've said that they don't work on a Saturday, yet I know people that have used them on a Saturday. It turned out one guy is pure Rangers daft, and he will not go with us down at Celtic park.*

This may appear a trivial tension, however, the Green Brigade food drive provides direct access to 60,000 people. It has raised £17,987.60 cash for 'food providing'

organisations, in addition to 8 full van loads of donated food and toiletries (The Celtic Star, 2019). Therefore, participation at a food drive would have gone some way to both increase the capacity of the service, and help reduce tensions for the volunteers who source the food.

This section has outlined how connotations which are linked to assemblage components can be found to cause tensions within food services. Three food services have been found to disassociate themselves from the name 'food bank' because of how the name is aligned with the procedures of the Trussell Trust, and although the parameters that result from being engaged within the franchise are helpful for some, none of these assemblage food bank services wishes to be affiliated because their mix of resources (Epp and Velagaleti, 2014) cannot accommodate the perceived tensions. This section has also highlighted, that the undertone of sectarian behaviour found associated with the chapel, also causes tensions for food services which can impact both the client accessing the food service, the organisation volunteers, and also limit accessibility of donated food. These examples demonstrate tensions of

intangible boundaries (Cheetham, McEachern and Warnaby, 2018), which can impact upon whether a client will use the Chapel service.

The next section highlights tensions that surround moral decisions, and considers finding that show how people and ethics interplay within the assemblage.

#### 5.4.5 Ethical Tensions

Outlined within the following section are tensions within the investigation which presented with an ethical undertone, predominantly because they were either restricting or emancipating how people in Royston access food. The features of these tensions are grouped by whether they relate to food vouchers, the food parcel, sharing spaces, and hunger.

##### *5.4.5.1 The food voucher*

As discussed throughout the findings, there are two organisations which are providing food parcels to take home within Royston. The 'Food Store' do not require their clients to produce a voucher to access their service, they find vouchers increase tensions for clients because it adds unnecessary rigmarole to what is already a stressful situation. The 'Food Exchange' (for the most) requires a client to have a voucher, and vouchers are provided across four housing associations, the library, and previously within schools. During interviews, employees mentioned they used to

receive food vouchers and for those families who were struggling to make ends meet, they were thought to be very helpful. When asked, the volunteers at the service explained that one school had: *auctioned the tickets!! They put them in a raffle and gave them away (Connie)*. This was discovered when volunteer Helen became aware that more than one ‘new’ parent, had accessed the provision on the same day:

*Helen, volunteer: When the second one [raffle winner] came in, I was like “excuse me how did you get the ticket?” She said, “The wee man [child] came home with it from the school”. She showed us the letter, and I just took the ticket off her.*

The volunteers had refused the second parent access to the service, because they did not consider her to be food insecure. The volunteers were angry about the raffling of their vouchers as they had explained the parameters of how they should have been issued: *The people [employees] were told. Tickets are for people that present themselves, and it didn’t happen. People that came here, did not need it (Connie, volunteer)*. Raffling food bank vouchers on a fortune based procedure can be highlighted as an ethical or moral tension, it negates the capacity of ‘need’ which is commonly linked to food bank clients (Surman, Kelemen and Rumens, 2021). However, the volunteers did not attempt to resolve these school raffling issues, it is possible they didn’t have the mix of skills or resources to better manage their voucher system. In response to this problem, they “fostered tensions around control” (Epp and Velagaleti, 2014: 920) of their service and implemented a blanket ban of voucher provision across all schools. The choice to terminate school engagement, heightens further constraints within the provision of food vouchers, by restricting

how parents could access food bank vouchers. Effectively the volunteers were found to create boundaries (Cheetham, McEachern and Warnaby, 2018) which impacted access to their supplementary food service.

As their food service has no process to identify a persons need, familiarity with local people was most often used as a method to navigate their food service: *Some of them [with vouchers] did not need it, because we knew them.....One in particular came in with... House of Fraser bags.... I was like it's for the needy not the greedy. And she didn't come back... I know for a fact her man was working (Helen, volunteer).*

However, the activity of 'knowing' who needs food is highly subjective, and it could be that the individual being referred to as greedy was actually food insecure. They do feel that some of their clients are vulnerable: *there is a couple of them that are quite vulnerable, and we do tell them to come back next week (Helen, volunteer).*

However, scant measurement or monitoring means there is no way to prove or disprove this vulnerability. For example, Mandy had been receiving foodbank vouchers from her housing association, and she attends the service, but she does not use this food for herself. Instead, she is bending the rules, using her voucher to reduce the tensions of food-insecurity, to support someone else within the community. She takes the food to an elderly man: *I've been going for like 6 months..... for someone else, I've been going for a wee old man, he's struggling, and I don't want to see him struggle.* Although Mandy is herself food insecure, she is managing her food-insecurity through the support of her family, and smart shopping. Mandy told the volunteers exactly why she accessed their food provision, and they didn't stop her using the service.

*Mandy, local: So, I ended up coming clean [to the volunteers] why I was going because like, their daughter is my weans [child's] best pal, so I didn't want my weans being embarrassed or anything.*

However, in her words she only 'came clean' because of the "embarrassment or shame" (Chase and Walker, 2016: 202) that it might cause her family, if external factors beyond her control (Baker, Gentry and Rittenburg, 2005) caused stigmatising effects because local people thought she was accessing the food provision for herself.

The examples above highlight that 'knowing' local people is not a precise measurement of need within supplementary food services. However, some Royston Housing Associations had other approaches to identify need. To explain, a common theme within social landlord services, is a referral to a food bank (Perry *et al.*, 2014), and this was confirmed by Mandy when she experienced complications with her benefits: *They [housing] found out because of my rent arrears....so actually, no I didn't ask for it [vouchers], they just sent them.* However, as Mandy had existing tensions with her housing provider, she was not permitted to access the housing offices without being accompanied: *I've had my ups and downs with them, but they are a bit bitchy.... I'm no allowed to [physically] go there without a third party.*

Although it was difficult for Mandy to engage with her housing association, her landlord offsets perceived tensions by sending her food vouchers by mail. However, although Royston housing associations provide services to both their tenants and factors (home owners), their provision of vouchers only applies to their tenants. Mandy as a tenant received vouchers for the foodbank, but Heather who is a local homeowner did not. However, Heather had also accumulated factoring debt to the

same housing association: *shelter gave me some advice because I am having shit with ... the factors and it's this [pointing] common land...everything was just too much for me.* Therefore, the organisation were aware she had money concerns, but their process created a barriers for Heather, because the same support services did not apply to her. This highlights that perceived psychosocial characteristics (Baker, Gentry and Rittenburg, 2005), for example, assuming a person's socioeconomic status because they own their own home, may be increasing aspects of vulnerability.

In opposition to restricting access to food bank vouchers, some employees were trying to emancipate their clients access. The foodbanks of the Trussell Trust limit the amount of food they provide to households; at most 3 provisions in a six month period; because they suggest their service should be helping people through transient stages within extraordinary circumstances (The Trussell Trust, 2021a). Jennifer had sent people to Trussell Trust foodbanks, and knowingly been breaking rules:

*Jennifer, employee: I used to give people [clients] more vouchers yeah, until I got in trouble .... but with the other food bank, I am not in trouble yet .... You know it's crazy, you should not have to do things like this. I already got an email saying don't send us people again, they can come only 3 times.*

Although Jennifer knows she should not send people to the Trussell Trust service more than their allocated number of times, her clients and their families have no food. For Jennifer, the trouble that might result from creating tensions within the Trussell Trust service, is offset by her compassion of reducing tensions for her hungry clients. The day after I spoke with Jennifer, she called to say she was in trouble 'again', and forwarded an email she received from her Trussell Trust contact:

*We try, where we can, to accommodate...I cannot promise that we will be able to continue to support individuals on a regular and long term basis... we cannot be seen as a solution to ongoing crisis (Jennifer, email).* However, for Jennifer, all of her clients are in constant crisis, and are multiplicatively vulnerable (Saatcioglu and Corus, 2015), as such, she will not stop testing the boundaries that the Trussell Trust put in place, because provision of food can reduce client tensions and build their capacity (Epp and Velagaleti, 2014).

#### 5.4.5.2 *The food parcel*

There were also ethical tensions surrounding what surplus food finally makes it to a food parcel. Local Mandy explained that she had been volunteering to help pack parcels, and was shocked with the employee process of managing the delivery: *“I’ll take this” and “I’ll take that”, but it was all the good shit [produce] that was taken out”*. Mandy felt like the best food was being removed before the produce was bagged into parcels. A similar occurrence happened whilst volunteering, where luxury cakes (see figure 5.33) were being reserved for staff meetings and tea breaks:



Figure 5.33: Too good for holiday food

(Created by the researcher from Tesco (2022a, 2022b))

*I am uncomfortable about the system in which employees are using some of the surplus food, removing things like cakes and biscuits to use them for work related tea breaks and meetings. I am well aware why charitable organisations must try to make resources stretch, but I can't stop thinking about that family who may have appreciated the luxury they can ill afford.*

*(Researcher diary: 19<sup>th</sup> March 2019)*

Within most parcel provision services the headline generally relates to how many parcels are being donated within a certain period of time (The Trussell Trust, 2021a), and there is very little opportunity to unpick the food provided, and although the lack of choice within food parcels is discussed within tenet 2 (5.3.4), this ethical tension of need as discussed above, is based upon the casual judgement of employees. It goes beyond the qualities of potluck provision because it eliminates entire food options.

#### 5.4.5.3 *Sharing spaces*

As discussed throughout the findings, there are many organisations which are providing supplementary food services within Royston (see table 5.4). However, ethical tensions were found within services, where people (employees, volunteers) were heightening or reducing food availability.

For example, some organisations were found to create food availability tensions by removing access to organisations or food spaces. To explain a housing association evicted a pop up barra service from the confines of a community boardroom. As the two organisations didn't have an agreement in place surrounding their relations, the barra service had to leave, Leanne clarified:

*Researcher: So, what happened with the housing?*

*Leanne, employee: They never gave much choice this time. He [manager] wanted a nice new meeting table in that room we are in.... we had to leave.*

The volunteers had mentioned that some of the tables were being damaged, as a result of the food crates, and this had gotten worse as this food service had been attending the same venue for over 5 years. As the service did not have a formal agreement with the housing association, there was very little that could be done to change the space situation. Fortunately, the continuity of the fruit and veg service was transferred to the Chapel, however, this caused tensions for this barra and their wider services, because the relocation had reduced the amount of people using the service. The volunteers explain:

*Researcher: Is it more or less the same people coming in?*

*Lorna, volunteer: The customers have just come from there, to here.*

*Researcher: So, it's not had an impact?*

*John, volunteer: Oh, I think so, I think it has maybe halved the customers we are seeing. It's regulars you know; they don't see us like they did in the window at Blochairn, I'd say about half the customers haven't been in here.*

*Lorna, volunteer: It has, aye.*

John highlights above that whilst within the housing association, the barra service was visible through an enormous window which had increased the capacity of the service. This boost to capacities was subsequently lost because the pop up site within the chapel is not at all known, through visibility or signage.

Similarly, Jennifer's integration network organisation was forced to move from within Royston, because of limitations within space. Jennifer's service is for people seeking asylum, included within her work is signposting to where people can get supplementary food. She was housed for 5 years within a Royston youth project: *When the [former manager] looked for extra funding – and at the same time the network didn't have a base. They needed more money, and the city council needed someone who would host our project.* Relationships between Glasgow city council funding and the youth project, saw Jennifers organisation move into the Royston location. However, new management and funding had resulted in an increase in services and staff within the youth organisation, causing tensions of space and place for both organisations. The result of these tensions, was the network disconnecting from the assemblage:

*Researcher: So, you've moved?*

*Jennifer, employee: Yeah, just recently, one month ago we moved to Barmulloch community centre. Right now, the project is in the process of becoming an independent organisation and getting SCO [Scottish Charitable Organisation] status. It's far away...because it's so cheap.*

Although the Integration Network employees needed to manage tensions of relocation and finding additional resources, they wanted to better unify their service. Jennifer felt the outcome was positive, and overall, the move would reduce tensions for employees: *I think it was always quite difficult, we were employees, but we were left completely without separate provision whatsoever... and that is why I worked most of my time somewhere else, all our activities we had somewhere else.*

Sharing spaces within other organisations was shown to create tensions within the assemblage, and these tensions impacted how volunteers and employees managed services. Some services relocated to other areas, others relocated and reconnected within Royston, both relocation and reconnection were shown to impact how clients accessed services. These points have highlighted that charitable projects, who are relying upon the good will of other organisations and volunteers within their operations, are more susceptible to exchange restrictions (Hill and Stephens, 1997).

In addition to the organisation causing tensions within food access, people were also found to cause tensions within space. For example, those who were struggling with addictions, had created tensions for food insecure clients, when the food space started to be 'known' as a space to meet up and 'score':

*Connie, volunteer: I think what was happening was they [drug users] were starting to meet and greet here, do ye get me? Being greedy ... they were fighting over the biscuits; a lot were cheeky like “where’s my effing chocolate biscuits”.*

The volunteers realised that there were too many tensions occurring as a result of local addicts using the food service: *It was putting off other people that really need us as well (Connie)*. In addition to reducing the number of people using the service, Connie explained that there were also tensions occurring because all of the volunteers running the food service, were women. She felt they were at risk of being overwhelmed because they could not properly monitor the entire space, including the toilets: *I was going god we canny even check the toilets until we shut really, we are only women as well....and we didn’t want to go in and find somebody dying (Connie)*. To reduce the tensions resulting from the attendance of addicts within the service, they tried to eliminate all aspects of the service that was over and above the parcel provision. From that point, food bank clients were no longer able to access toilets, hot beverages, nor were they able to consult outside of the venue. The volunteers explained that they had justified their decisions to those with addictions:

*Helen, volunteer: She says [pointing to Connie] first of all, this is your one and only explanation so don’t ask me again. We don’t do teas, it’s not a meeting place for drug addicts, and you’re not scoring outside the Chapel, it’s highly disrespectful.*

The volunteers couldn’t cope with the risk of tensions such as anti-social behaviour or aggression, so they applied their own tension reducers (Epp and Velagaleti, 2014)

to take back control within their food service. This subsequently reduced tensions for their wider client base as it made their service more accessible. This section upon sharing spaces, has allowed this investigation to outline tensions found, when the capacities expressed some components do not align with others. The next section now turns to the tension of hunger.

#### 5.4.5.4 *Hunger*

People within the assemblage were ethically compounded to alleviate tensions of hunger for others, for example, meals or food given to others within the community. Gillian is a mum of two, she describes herself as a ‘feeder’ who cannot morally sit by and do nothing whilst children are hungry:

*Gillian, local: See am a feeder, so like see all the weans in the street they all come in tae ma hoose [to my house] and they all have their lunches on my days off .... the most I had was eleven, but am like it's fine... the thought of [of] wee weans [children] going home hungry, aw no [horrified], it's no right.*

Gillian has struggled to make ends meet before now, and she has relied upon other organisations to get by. Because of her own experiences, she understands the struggle of other parents, and calls or texts them to let them know she is feeding their children at lunch. She does not question the parents need, nor give the option to them for refusal, it just happens. These findings are in common with Hamilton and Catterall (2007), who suggests that for some consumers like Gillian, decisions are

made in consideration of love and that of self-interest. She is worried about other people's children, in addition to her own.

Lorna is a volunteer, and her work within the community had highlighted specific families through as people who were struggling with the tension of hunger, Lorna had used surplus food received to feed such families: *I had a couple of families I used to gie [give] food to, aye.*

Hannah is an employee; she was found to break rules to reduce tensions of hunger:

*Hannah: This wee thing ... she'd already had lunch and eats what's there no matter what... Cordia has wee cookies (40p). They can't 'give' them out as part of the lunches, you've got to pay for them...this wee girl was scrambling about the floor under her friend whose cookie was crumbling... picking up the crumbs off the floor [to eat].*

*Researcher: What the hell?*

*Hannah: That is what she was doing. I just went and bought her a cookie myself...That wee girl, she's tiny, she's in primary one but she looks like she's two or three [years old], known to the social work, significant issues, she's dragged out through the night standing outside pubs and things [head in hands]. I'm not meant to give her seconds; she's not meant to get a cookie. And that's what we are here to do, you can't do that...she's a wee girl!*

Hannah and other employees are found to be subsidising diets of the children they know are vulnerable. In this instance above, Hannah reduces tensions of food accessibility by feeding the child, and she explained afterwards that she had bought

her all the remaining cookies. It was heart-breaking for her to be sharing this story, she was in tears, and equally horrified and frustrated that she cannot do more. There were many distressing stories about hunger throughout this work, and the wider narrative is rarely solely about hunger. For example, in Hannah's workplace they have a free food store cupboard:

*Hannah: I keep in my cupboard, big multi packs of crisps and bottles of water ... I mean we have a lot of kids that come down "I'm not feeling well", "I've got a sore tummy". I'm like did you have breakfast? "No". That's the standard answer, they don't have anything in their stomach, and then we wonder why we have children are acting out...and have meltdowns.*

Hannah anticipates the tensions caused by hunger will potentially cause disruption for the child, the class, and the employees. Her tension reducing strategy (Epp and Velagaleti, 2014) is supplementary snacks to substitute missed breakfasts, and in so doing, reduce the anticipated behavioural difficulties.

Grace is an employee, she was found to be supplementing children's diets: *I support those whose parents are recovering from drugs and alcohol issues, and I work with them .. their behaviour is really bad, they're angry (Grace, employee).* Grace is reducing tensions by bending the rules within her organisation, to reappropriate food and feed her teenagers: *I have these young people who just gorge food, like one wee girl would just take the melon or pineapple and she would just sit and eat the whole thing, nobody else would get any. It's quite sad.... obviously, they've had no food in the house.* She explains that the tensions for children whose parents are in recovery are numerous, but hunger exacerbates tensions. If she feeds them, it improves how

the young people feel, and this in turn improves behaviour: *then they're not starving, they've had something in their stomachs so they're able to communicate better and you know function better, so they're no like so bedraggled*. For Grace, eliminating hunger can reduce individual tensions, but also improve her work collectively, by impacting all of the young people within her activities.

Entire services were also found reducing the tensions of hunger by providing food for people in return for volunteering, Debbie explains their food cupboard:

*Debbie, employee: Another thing that I probably should say is that we also have a store cupboard of dried food that we give to volunteers, like pot noodles, super noodles, not healthy or nutritious. But, they don't have to then say, 'they don't have money'. There is tea, coffee, soup whatever else is there, and they don't have to ask.*

Debbie's organisation anticipates the tension of embarrassment (Purdam, Garratt and Esmail, 2016) associated with food-insecurity, and is offering food in a roundabout way for volunteering. Similarly, Carol explained they found that a teenager was being disciplined at home, where the parents were withholding food in response to poor behaviour. Her organisation could not be effective in an official capacity as the family would not accept a donation of food:

*Carol, employee: We were saying [to a parent] for a growing teenage boy, rice isn't really a dinner, maybe add in a tin of tuna or maybe pasta is a bit more filling you know and just as cheap..... So, we do things but in a very round about one on one basis. But we're in the position we can do that, because we know everybody so well and we make a point of knowing that.*

However, for the youth discussed, the organisation reduces the tension of hunger, by offering food as ‘pay back’ for volunteering. This delicate approach to problems occurring outside the reach of the organisation, has the potential to stabilise the services provided whilst providing respite for the adolescent. The relations that occur within this example are dependent on both the employee knowledge of local individual, and how far they feel they can press parent and or child boundaries, whilst engaging within the overarching mechanisms of the social care system. Other research by Surman, Kelemen and Rumens (2021: 14) has highlighted that Trussell Trust volunteers forged relations when they “bent the rules” in response to need, however, this research highlights that employees are also choosing to be more malleable within their decision making, and responding to aspects of hunger in a more circuitous fashion.

The above section upon ethical tensions has highlighted how tensions impact accessibility of supplementary food within the assemblage. Familiarity of people within the location is shown to create barriers to accessing food or food vouchers, and that this familiarity may be resulting in ‘othering’, where consumption goals within the community is found limited, for those individuals who are deemed ‘too rich’ or upper-class. However, familiarity with people is also found to create groups of people who want to push boundaries and create strategies to break rules and facilitate a reduction of tensions, or unethically break rules because of ethical or moral considerations. What is not so well known, is the great length that people are willing to go to in order to help others eliminate these tensions. These findings outline that in a similar way to how consumers develop coping strategies such as “seeking social support” (Hamilton, 2012: 85), organisations are also developing

their own tension reducing strategies to help people cope in tough times, introducing some subtle ways and intuitive guises, to deal with circumstances that stretch beyond hunger and tough wider social problems.

These community networking findings also promote the notion of other research, where it is suggested that people use food banks as a last resort (MacLeod, Curl and Kearns, 2019). Identifying this supplementation of food is important for two reasons. The first is to understand the severity of the social crisis of food-insecurity more fully, the second is to explain the significance or value of the intricate social connections occurring between people and things.

#### 5.4.6 Conclusion

The findings within Tenet 3 outline relations occurring between components that were found to cause tensions. These show how people and organisations navigate and manage aspects of food-insecurity, identifying some key points.

Changes within the demographics of people that make up the location has highlighted tensions of disconnectedness, and organisations face challenges to accommodate funding provision to match Royston's needs. Disconnectedness tensions (Epp and Velagaleti, 2014) are also found across community boundaries, where ebbs and flows are found between people and supplementary food services.

Associated meanings cause tensions within food which is delivered from within a 'food bank' or a 'religious institution'. The term 'food bank' causes tensions when the organisations mixture of resources (Epp and Velagaleti, 2014) cannot accommodate the connotations people attach to the largest food bank provider, the

Trussell Trust (The Trussell Trust, 2021a), and tensions of sectarian behaviour were shown to create intangible boundaries (Cheetham, McEachern and Warnaby, 2018) which limited access to supplementary food.

Tensions also result within the public provision of supplementary food within food; quality, quantity, nutritional content, and waste; this results because of complexities (Parnham, Millett and Vamos, 2023) within the food delivery management system.

Tensions surrounding ethical considerations within the assemblage, outline food vouchers and parcels within Royston, lacks any kind of procedure. This absence of conformity allows a tenuous understanding of ‘need’ within the assemblage

## Chapter 6. Conclusion

### 6.1 Introduction

Within this concluding chapter, discussion turns to the investigative findings that demonstrate contributions to research. Firstly, the aims of the study will be revisited followed by analysis of the three contributions, and lastly a concluding section to highlight the research limitations and future recommendations.

This investigation set out to contribute to consumer research by offering assemblages as a way by which to understand the complex social issues, which influence food-insecurity. The inquiry analyses the ways by which heterogeneous phenomena are found, and how these phenomena relate to one another and which of these relations impact upon aspects of food-insecurity. The overall aim outlined within the study was to understand the components of consumer assemblages, within the context of food-insecurity in Royston, Glasgow. The objectives presented to do this were:

- to understand key heterogeneous cultural phenomena as experienced by individuals and organisations within the food-insecurity landscape.
- to investigate relations between the phenomena, highlighting the interplay of capacities within the assemblage.
- to identify how relations impact upon assemblage stability, allowing the issues of food-insecurity to become stabilised or destabilised.

The previous section discussed findings across three tenets, which extensively outline the objectives as presented above. This concluding chapter will now consider the theoretical implications of these findings, and how they contribute to the field of

both consumer and food-insecurity research. Contribution (1) outlines distinct conditions that impede access to supplementary food. Contribution (2) presents relations between phenomena and highlights how spatial vulnerabilities are experienced. Contribution (3) considers aspects of stability and demonstrates tensions within the marketplace.

## *6.2 Contribution (1): Conceptualising food-insecurity as an assemblage highlights conditions that impede access to supplementary food provision*

The first contribution outlines two distinct conditions that impede access to supplementary food. The first condition builds upon understanding of community boundaries (Cheetham, McEachern and Warnaby, 2018) by exploring how tangible and intangible boundaries in deprived community spaces can constrain access. The second condition expands consumer vulnerability (Baker, Gentry and Rittenburg, 2005) research to include organisational vulnerability and shows how different layers are related within the exchange process.

### *6.2.1 The Role of Boundary Making in Food-insecurity*

Building upon Cheetham, McEachern and Warnaby's (2018) study of urban green spaces where they explored “tangible and intangible elements of boundary making” (ibid: 479), this work reveals that tangible and intangible boundaries within contexts of consumer vulnerability take on renewed social significance. Through understanding the distinct types of boundaries within urban communities, this investigation uncovered how they can impede facets of consumption in deprived urban spaces, highlighting how boundaries can make it less likely for people to access to supplementary food provision.

Tangible boundaries (Cheetham, McEachern and Warnaby, 2018) found, were those things that limited an individual's physical access to a service. For example, this was demonstrated where footpaths were found barricaded or poorly maintained, or where a service lacked correct or visible information. Identifying these tangible boundaries of food-insecurity, enabled this investigation to better understand the context of

spatial boundaries within the community (DeLanda, 2006). It highlighted that tangible boundaries can be found to deterritorialize the food-insecurity assemblage by impeding consumption activities, and that this impact upon territory, was found to increase the individual's food-related vulnerability.

Intangible boundaries were those boundaries within the assemblage which limited or reduced the possibility of accessibility. These were demonstrated because of expressive capacities, or how people felt about or related to things. These boundaries can be explained through the tensions that emerge among people and things. For example, religious institutions although accessible to all, contain intangible barriers for those outside the denomination. This highlights how intangible boundaries are created or come to exist.

By transferring the boundary making observations of Cheetham, McEachern and Warnaby (2018), and applying them within the contextual findings of spatial vulnerability, this work considers both tangible and intangible boundaries as a “particular environmental condition, which create disabling environments for some people, all or at least some of the time” (Baker, LaBarge and Baker, 2016: 16). These disabling environments highlight conditions that impede access to supplementary food, which subsequently reduces stability within the food-insecurity assemblage. Highlighting these boundary environments added depth to how we understand the challenges that people, and organisations have to cope with, both within the provision of, and the accessibility to, supplementary food.

### 6.2.2 The Entwinement of Consumer and Organisational Vulnerability

The second part of the first contribution, builds upon the vulnerability work of Baker, Gentry and Rittenburg (2005: 136), to highlight that additional levels of vulnerability can be found within “the exchange process”. Relations between phenomena identified “exchange restrictions” (Hill and Stephens, 1997: 32), which in common with Baker, Gentry and Rittenburg (2005), suggests that individuals in vulnerable positions lack control in their consumption. Within the context of supplementary food, individuals have little control over their eligibility to receive food and the type of food provided.

Enabled by the underpinning theoretic of assemblage, this study reveals the importance of extending beyond the perspective of the lived experience of individual consumers, to also include the experience of the organisation. This work identifies that organisations can also experience exchange restrictions, and these restrictions can subsequently increase the vulnerability of the organisation.

Relations within the informal hierarchy of surplus food show that organisations who rely upon this provision, are allocated resources with little or no control over the process. However, this provision determines what supplementary food they can then provide within the community. As a result, organisations have reactive relationships with supplementary food providers. This imbalance of exchange restrictions increases vulnerability within organisations, as “their ability to acquire needed and desired goods and services” is limited (Hamilton, 2012: 05). Indeed, many organisations do not have the infrastructure needed to manage the fluctuating provision (staffing, vehicles, surplus food top up, funding). This is further

compounded when reactive coping strategies (Hamilton and Catterall, 2005) are applied to manage the supplementary food. For example, when organisations spend additional hours to complete organisational commitments and fulfil existing client services.

Consequently, this contribution suggests that Hill and Stephens' (1997) notion of exchange restrictions, as applied to the individual consumer, can be built upon to include the organisation. Organisational restrictions are the result of specific conditions (Baker, LaBarge and Baker, 2015) that negatively contribute to the exchange process. This in turn heightens organisational vulnerability by impeding access to supplementary food provision. It also demonstrates that organisations may experience increased vulnerability as a result of how they cope with the imbalance within the exchange process.

In highlighting that vulnerabilities are experienced by both individuals and organisations; this study expands the scope of existing consumer vulnerability research. It demonstrates the intertwined nature of consumer and organisational vulnerability: the vulnerability experienced by the consumer can be exacerbated by the organisational vulnerabilities in the assemblage. The use of assemblage has therefore allowed this research to demonstrate greater understanding of complex societal relationships, highlighting that organisations who seek to alleviate aspects of poverty may increase their own vulnerability in the process.

### 6.3 Contribution (2): Spatial Vulnerabilities and Food-insecurity

This second contribution to research provides empirical evidence which builds on Saatcioglu and Corus's (2015) conceptual work on spatial vulnerability, as a *“dynamic, multidimensional state that is characterised by powerlessness, lack of control and dependence, which arises from ideological tensions within the social space”* (ibid: 244). This investigation is one of the first to empirically evidence how people experience socio-spatial disadvantage, which increases aspects of vulnerability.

To explain, Saatcioglu and Corus' (2016: 230) concept of spatial vulnerability explores how space is “shaped and negotiated”. Building upon their understanding, this work found aspects of social space which highlighted how consumers experience inequality and disadvantage. For example, socio-spatial disadvantage was found across aspects of Royston infrastructure, including housing, retail, and transportation, presenting evidence that people were multiplicatively vulnerable because of where they lived or worked.

In addition to providing empirical evidence, this work further develops how aspects of spatial vulnerability can be understood through the use of assemblages (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988; DeLanda, 2016). For example, assemblages present a way to better understand the relations between components that inhabit social space, which strengthens the contextual underpinning of spatial vulnerability. Despite extensive urban community regeneration, this investigation shows little change within the deprivation parameters that make up the space (The Scottish Government, 2020).

This suggests that how “how spaces are designed, constructed, and used” (Saatcioglu

and Corus, 2015: 245) may not always prove beneficial in improving the health and well-being of those who continue to live and work with there.

The application of the conceptualisation of spatial vulnerability allows this research to manage and unpick the incredible complex dynamics of social data within the context of spatial inequity. Highlighting evidence of “multiplicatively vulnerable groups” (Saatcioglu and Corus, 2015: 232), this research suggests that the imbalance experienced within low-income urban communities may demonstrate those individuals who experience more than one kind of vulnerability, are at increased risk of poor determinants of health. This may be particularly applicable for the communities of Glasgow, who remain “more vulnerable than the comparator cities to the particular socioeconomic and political exposures” (Walsh *et al.*, 2017: 07).

## 6.4 *Contribution (3): The Social Creation of Marketplace Tensions*

The third contribution builds on prior work on tensions in assemblages (Epp and Velagaleti, 2014) by identifying how emergent capacities within the food-insecurity assemblage can create tension. The first marketplace tension builds upon how conflict is understood when it occurs between people and resources as a result of religious or cultural identity. The second marketplace tension expands vulnerability research to understand how multiplicative vulnerable groups consume space.

### 6.4.1 Religious and Cultural Identity Tensions within Food-insecurity

Building upon the exploration of spatial vulnerability by Saatcioglu and Corus (2015: 245), this work found that “historical, political and social-cultural processes” were shaping aspects of “spatial vulnerability” within deprived urban spaces. The interplay of relations occurring between people and supplementary food resources reveals tensions (Epp and Velagaleti, 2014) emanating from differences in religious and or cultural identity. For example, supplementary food services within religious and or culturally specific spaces impacted and limited the engagement of people accessing and delivering food services. This type of conflict heightened tensions for both the people hosting the food service, and clients using the service. This reduced accessibility of services which in turn heightened “food-related vulnerability” (Moraes *et al.*, 2021: 1171). Untangling these relations highlighted that increased heterogeneity within these aspects of the community (DeLanda, 2006) can create conflict which destabilises the assemblage, making it less likely for people to access resources.

Tensions were also found when the food organisation's "historical, political and social-cultural processes" (Saatcioglu and Corus, 2015: 245) restricted their access to supplementary food donations. This was demonstrated when secular services dissociated themselves from religious spaces, destabilising supplementary food provision within the assemblage and increasing aspects of spatial vulnerability (ibid) for people and organisations.

This investigation builds upon the work of Saatcioglu and Corus (2015) to identify that relations which shape spatial vulnerability can be intrinsically intertwined with cultural identity. To explain, Royston as a space is shaped through historical Irish Catholic immigration, and as with much of the wider city of Glasgow, is infamous for sectarian behaviour within its consumption communities, which follow the cultural pursuit of football. "Catholic' and 'Protestant' are now associated with a number of different identity elements, including national, political, and cultural identities, amongst others" (May, 2015: 01). These assemblage layers of geographical consumption, religion, politics, and nationalism gives increased understanding upon how negotiations of space can impact upon marketplace tensions, and how they may be socially created and influenced. It also provides empirical evidence that some locations can be at increased risk of aspects of spatial vulnerability (Saatcioglu and Corus, 2015).

#### 6.4.2 Power Dynamic Tensions

Building upon the work of Saatcioglu and Corus (2015: 245), where they conceptualised '*Spatial Vulnerability*', this work found that the way in which spaces are negotiated within the assemblage, can result in "market exclusion, spatial control or the oppression of marginalised groups" (ibid). Understanding how spaces are used within urban communities uncovered relations which would have otherwise been unknown. For example, how people manage and respond to social resources and the spaces in which they are provided, can induce tensions within supplementary food aid and make it less likely for people to access supplementary food provision.

Exclusion from the marketplace was found to occur when tensions arose because the mix of skills and resources (Epp and Velagaleti, 2014) were not suitable for their chosen purpose, in this case, supplementary food provision. For example, this was highlighted when food voucher provision was withdrawn for some groups of people, or when volunteer gaps caused supplementary food services to be terminated.

Identifying how relations between components could result in marketplace exclusion, enabled this exploration to better understand how social spaces are negotiated (Saatcioglu and Corus, 2015), whilst highlighting food-insecurity has a largely under-documented and startlingly varied landscape.

Aspects of spatial control within the marketplace were found when tensions arose between organisations who were navigating food spaces. These tensions occurred when the organisation providing food lacked control within the negotiation of their spaces. For example, this was demonstrated where food services were evicted from pop-up operating spaces, or where entire organisations were relocated as a result of

citywide transformational regeneration strategies. This identifies an additional way by which the organisation can be susceptible to exchange restrictions (Hill and Stephens, 1997), when aspects of control are eliminated from their operational processes. It also identifies that some organisations can be spatially vulnerable (Saatcioglu and Corus, 2015) when they are subject to disadvantage, because the spaces they must operate within are structured by diverse power dynamics, which operate within their own contextual hierarchy.

Oppression of marginalised groups was highlighted, when tensions were found to occur between people and organisations. “The marketplace is not a very welcoming environment for many consumers who are already in disadvantaged positions” (Saatcioglu and Corus, 2015: 243). Tensions occurred as a result of scant measurement of hardship, within the “marketplace stakeholders” (Mirabito *et al.*, 2016: 171) of the assemblage. For example, food organisations who lacked formal processes to contextualise need, other than ineffective subjectivity, were found to create and perpetuate stigma (ibid). This highlighted how already disadvantaged consumers, experienced heightened marketplace tensions, which impeded access to food resources and promoted “social stigmatisation” (Saatcioglu and Corus, 2014: 128). Understanding the relations that influence how social space within this assemblage is negotiated, has identified how individuals and groups can be limited within their consumption of space, and experience tensions which impact aspects of control, exclusion, and oppression. This demonstrates how tensions may cause an “additional layer of disadvantage for those who are already marginalised” (Saatcioglu and Corus, 2015: 244).

## 6.5 *Areas for future research*

The following section outlines suggested areas for future research arising from the work within this thesis. Suggestions provided are based upon the key research contributions and limitations within this investigation, and a brief discussion of practical implications.

### 6.5.1 Food-insecurity

This investigation highlights that food-insecurity is different to other facets of poverty (Moraes *et al.*, 2021), highlighting vast disparity within poverty responses specifically how food services are structured, funded, and managed. The contextual understanding within this investigation presents relations between differing aspects of the social issue, highlighting the disordered nature of the supplementary food landscape, and the many things which were found to impede access: barriers, imbalances, tensions, and vulnerabilities. However, the acute focus upon food-insecurity in a single urban demographic, is also acknowledged to be a limitation of this research. This widens the scope for future consumer research to evidence what impedes access to supplementary food in a range of different settings, including additional urban and non-urban locations, and if any contrast exists within access to supplementary food between locations. Further to this, the thesis also calls for research to expand understanding of how accessibility issues may impact upon evidence of the ‘need’ for supplementary food provision. For example, how do organisations provide a realistic representation of need within their supplementary food spaces, which accurately reflects upon holistic understanding of how people are impacted by barriers to those supplementary food spaces.

To broaden understanding of the societal impact of food-insecurity, consumer research is needed which investigates barriers to accessing food services across separate locations and settings. Such exploration has the potential to be transformative in nature if the research and impact of investigation aligned with stakeholders (Piacentini *et al.*, 2019). For example, how can barriers found within supplementary food services be reduced? Will addressing those barriers found, reduce the severity of food-insecurity, by making food accessibility more equitable across communities (Lambie-Mumford, 2014)?

#### 6.5.2 Spatial vulnerability

This investigation demonstrates empirical findings which reinforce the concept of ‘*Spatial Vulnerability*’ by Saatcioglu and Corus (2015). It highlights that people who live in the Royston location are multiplicatively vulnerable because they already exist in disadvantaged positions. This view of spatial vulnerability is augmented within this work through the addition of assemblage theory (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988; DeLanda, 2016), which allowed a deeper understanding of social phenomena and those relations which are seen to heighten aspects of spatial vulnerability.

However, a limitation within this work upon spatial vulnerability (Saatcioglu and Corus, 2015) was the lack of findings about the impact of digital spaces upon food-insecurity. Further examination is needed to ascertain the function digital spaces play in supplementary food spaces, and do these spaces shape or exclude the dynamics of marginalised consumers. Therefore, this thesis considers that future consumer research should aim to better understand the digital spaces of food-insecurity, and

what role they play within the consumption of supplementary food services. For example, do digital spaces (or the lack of digital spaces) reduce or heighten tensions for those people accessing supplementary food services? Does a lack of digital spaces, increase elements of special vulnerability for organisations delivering supplementary food services?

To understand the needs of the multiplicatively vulnerable, future research should address discussion upon how food spaces are “designed, constructed and used” (Saatcioglu and Corus's, 2015: 245). Do digital spaces, or the lack of digital spaces, highlight additional layers of control, exclusion, or disadvantage from the market, and do these layers heighten aspects of food-insecurity? Can the creation of digital spaces within supplementary food services, promote additional support to those who are multiplicatively vulnerable? Does the addition of digital spaces within supplementary food services, create alternative models of food access which builds resilience for both organisation and individuals to alleviate aspects of food-insecurity?

### 6.5.3 Vulnerability Layers

Research illuminates that short-term supplementary food provisions “are inadequate” (Moraes *et al.*, 2021: 26), and this investigation demonstrates that the reactive nature of supplementary food services presents enormous pressure on both the individual who needs food, and the charitable organisation trying to respond to this need. This creates imbalances within the marketplace, and this investigation highlights that layers of vulnerability extend beyond the individual who is food insecure (Baker,

Gentry and Rittenburg, 2005) to include the community organisation providing the food-insecurity response. However, although this work has extended the vulnerability discussion to include the layer of the organisation, a limitation within this investigation has been understanding the layers of structural forces at play within the funding landscape of food-insecurity.

Therefore, this thesis calls for further research into funding within supplementary food systems. Future research should investigate the complex relations between not only individuals (Baker and Mason, 2012) and organisations, but should consider the fluidity of the structuring forces that fund supplementary food services (Moraes *et al.*, 2021). For example, in what way do funders, in both governance and charity determine funding? How are benefactors chosen? What decisions are made within the collection and analysis of food-insecurity data, and how is rigour created within monitoring processes of those funded services?

Understanding and expanding what is known within different layers of vulnerability is vital for the organisation, partially because the ongoing emergency food response continues to accept that food-insecurity is fleeting, but also because the response to the societal issue of food-insecurity is expected to persist and intensify.

#### 6.5.4 Practical Implications

This research evidences a number of prominent issues in relation to how individual consumers and organisations experience issues of access within the marketplace, including: barriers, imbalances, tensions, and vulnerabilities, all of which contribute to discussion upon spatial vulnerability, consumer vulnerability, and market exclusion. The implications of this suggests that 1) the ‘grassroots’ (Lister, 2016) reactive nature of the food-insecurity landscape is not equitable for those who exist within it, 2) the increasing needs of the multiplicatively vulnerable (Saatcioglu and Corus, 2015) are not being met, and 3) the food-insecurity landscape is not wholly understood by the governments and their agencies (Baker, Hunt and Rittenburg, 2007) who take action within it.

The role of spatial vulnerability has been acknowledged (Saatcioglu and Corus, 2015) and research such as this investigation compliments how theory can be used to enhance layers of understanding, within and across urban aspects of spatial vulnerability. Individually, factors which heighten spatial vulnerability can impede access to resources, however, collectively multiplicatively vulnerable people may have debilitating circumstances which creates a life threatening impact to provisions. For example, deprivation occurring within urban areas combined a lack of infrastructure or increased barriers, can present limitations upon how both people and organisations access food. This study suggests that marketplace locations which present with multiple aspects of spatial vulnerability, need to adapt to meet the need of those who are at risk. This should include the funding food services, the actual services providing food, and how their staff and volunteers understand the

communities they deliver within. Practices or interactions provided within supplementary food services should be contextualised and formed around unpacking who makes up their community, and providing additional assistance for people who are multiplicatively vulnerable (Saatcioglu and Corus, 2015). However, this is no minor task given the nature of the charitable sector (Parsell and Clarke, 2022) and more specifically emergency food charity (Lambie-Mumford, 2014).

The certainty remains that the source of food-insecurity is poverty, and as such, until the source of poverty is fully addressed through the prompting of policy and governance, the amount of people who are multiplicatively vulnerable will continue to rise, as so too will the need of supplementary food services. Indeed, a key challenge to understanding the food-insecurity landscape, is the entire lack of legislation which surrounds the response to the societal problem (Thapa Karki, Bennett and Mishra, 2021). As such, the grassroots of food-insecurity cannot be fully understood by governments and their agencies, who are often those responsible for financial funding of surplus food.

Consequently, future consumer research could contribute to discourse surrounding food-insecurity, by developing sociological research which provides insight into the links between governments, agencies, and their stakeholders to better address how need is understood. This would expand the discussion upon food-insecurity, for example, if short term emergency food access models are inadequate (Moraes *et al.*, 2021), why are these types of food services (foodbanks) (IPSOS and The Trussell Trust, 2023), the most often funded and promoted. Through better understanding

## 6.6 Conclusion

The three contributions as outlined previously, explains vital findings that are absent when considering the existing parameters of social research within food-insecurity.

If the heterogeneity amongst components that make up communities are not identified or understood, how can we make progress as a society to lessen the impact of complex social issues such as food-insecurity, throughout Scotland and the United Kingdom.

Understanding spatial vulnerabilities more thoroughly, may allow a better understanding of determinants of health, and provide valuable insight as to why the urban demographic of Glasgow has “excess premature mortality among more deprived populations” (Walsh *et al.*, 2017: 05), illuminating how to achieve better outcomes for complex societal issues.

Conceptualising food-insecurity as an assemblage, has allowed the presentation of layered social phenomena, exactly how they are found to exist, made up of people and things reflecting the ebbs and flows of a challenging society. Understanding the implications of consumption insecurities from the experience of the individual, in addition to understanding the experience of the organisation, is a practical step in understanding how consumer research has the potential to become transformative. This is increasingly important for both marketing research and researchers, as we duly are expected, to explore, innovate, and respond to entangled social issues.

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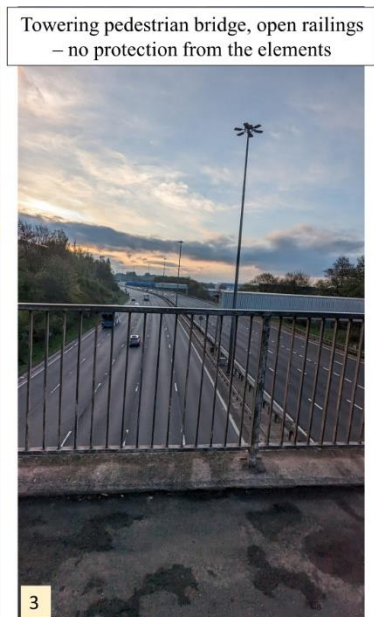
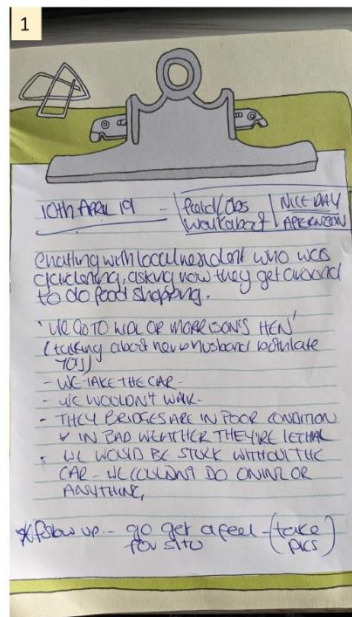
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## Appendices

### Appendix I - Field Observations

Field note (16/04/19) – (chatting with local resident – asking her how she does/gets her shopping). “We go LIDL or Morrisons hen” (both her and her husband are in their late 70s). “We take the car, we wouldn’t walk. They bridges are in poor condition and in bad weather they’re lethal. We would be stuck without the car; we couldn’t do online or anything”. Researcher photographs 2-7 for context.



## Appendix II – Interview protocol (guideline)

Pre Interview Checks	Confirm
Have you double checked the venue, ensured comfort for the participant and access to water and/or tea and coffee?	
Signed participant consent form?	
Participant contacted and interview confirmed?	
Contacted Supervision team?	
Dictaphone in working order, plus additional batteries?	

Interview Details
<b>Date:</b>
<b>Time:</b>
<b>Place:</b>
<b>Name of interviewer:</b>
<b>Name of interviewee:</b>

Introduction & purpose of research:
Start the process by introducing myself and giving a little bit (not too much) of my background. A brief overview of why we are chatting, followed by a reminder that their decision to take part in this study is entirely voluntary, and that they may withdraw at any time.
Some starter questions to guide interview:
What does the term food poverty mean to you?
What kind of help is available in your community if you find yourself not being able to afford food?
Have you ever used food aid, so a food bank or something like this?
Is it easy to access this type of help?
How does this food help you?
Do you think it could be organised better?
How do you feel about having to access this service?
Does this change how you feel within your community?
Is there things you have to change because you are in this situation?
What do you do to improve your situation?
Are you able to depend upon family or friends for help?
Finish up:
Confirm availability for contact
Ask if they have any other questions

### **Appendix III – Interview Transcript (9) Hannah: Interview (2 of 2) 01/03/19**

**Hi, how are you getting on?** I'm glad you called in as I had a really challenging incident and I was thinking about what you said in your research.

**I'm recording, just fire away.** So, this wee thing just before Christmas, she'd already had lunch and she eats what's there no matter what it is she'll eat it, and she'll take seconds when it's offered and that's fine, and we do give out seconds out to children as they just go in the bin. We are not meant to do that actually, that's another thing that's an issue cause Cordia has it that we are not meant to give out leftovers out, we are meant to bin them. We've to add them up and we've to bin them, we've not to give them out, and if we get spotted, see if any of the managers are down and see that happening, the girls [cordia staff] are given into trouble for that, because that's not on. So anyway, so we give out the seconds and then she....Cordia have wee cookies and biscuits that they charge 40 pence for, and they can't give them out as part of the lunches you've got to pay extra for them and this wee girl was scrambling about the floor under her friend whose cookie was crumbling. She was picking up the crumbs off the floor. I just went and bought her a cookie myself. That's what she was doing, and that's one that you know, I know that wee girl, she's tiny, she's in primary one but she looks like she's three, two or three [years old] she is so tiny, and known to the social work, got significant issues, she's dragged out through the night standing outside pubs and things that she shouldn't be. So, I know there's a lot of stuff going on in life but technically I'm not meant to give her seconds and she's not meant to get a cookie. And that's what we are here to do, you can't do that, she's a wee girl.

**So, you're subsidising diets?** Yeah, I mean I know a cookie is not the healthiest thing to have, but you know she's just wanting more food at the end of the day, that's all she's wanting. If I'd given her a piece of fruit or something she would have taken it.

**I came across a similar thing happening with teachers when I was in Aberdeen doing the period poverty pilot study.** Oh yeah, I've got a stock of that in there [cupboard], I've got a stock of sanitary products for kids and that's all.... actually, we are meant to get that, we are meant to be getting that, we are meant to be linking up, but they don't give us any, so we provide our own. Also, I keep in my cupboard, big multi packs of crisps and bottles of water and things like that. Because half the time that's why, I mean we have a lot of kids that come down "I'm not feeling well", "I've got a sore tummy", I'm like did you have breakfast? No, that's the standard answer, they don't have anything in their stomach, and then we wonder why we have children who are acting out, and they have meltdowns, they've got no concentration, and we wonder why. Because they've got no energy, food is an essential and they don't have it.

**So, teachers are up against it already in areas that are needing help, even without taking that into consideration the basics?** Yes, that's right because for a lot there is a lot of social issues as well with isolation, and you know parenting and all these things going on as well and then throw in nae food.

**I can't believe that they are not allowed to give seconds and then they throw it in the bin.** They are no meant to, they've to throw it in the bin.

**That's...** I know, I know. I know. It's meant to all go in the bin, they are meant to record how many slices of pizza and how many burgers they have nah given out as part of the meals and they've to throw them in the bin, this is all about money. They have to keep statistics on waste, because then they are obviously making too much. So do you know what the problem is here, I want to put back those figures and say we have no waste, but I can't do that because, then I have to produce my figures that say how many lunches I had, how many were free school meals, how many were paid and then the money has got tae add up. Then that will be looked against that [waste], and then they'll say to you, well you only had a hundred and nine in for lunch and we sent down a 135 lunches, so where's the other ones gone? And then you get questioned on that. So, they have to mark it as waste, but nobody needs to know, cause nobody is going to raid the bins.

**That's ridiculous.** We have to play that game, so we actually, technically we have to put our own jobs on the line, you know because we are not complying with instructions to us because it's children we are dealing with. I know it's terrible, she was crawling about, and I was like "what you doing there, get up", and then I see these crumbs in her hands. And I'm like oh come on, what's wrong, what's the matter are you still hungry? I just went and bought all the cookies they had left, cos they were going tae throw them in the bin, because that was them outta date that day anyway.

**Oh my.** So, they were going tae throw them in the bin, so you know, I just took them all. It's just a mess. The standard has been poor, I mean they are putting wee tubs of fruit and it's all tinned fruit, I know it's fruit, its fine but I just think they could make it a lot nicer.

**Tinned fruit like?** Well tinned peaches, pineapple.

**All in syrup?** Yeah. It all just gets spooned; they get these big, huge tins in.

**A10 tins, this size [shows example].** Yeah, and they just get the wee tubs, and they just scoop in.

**Fruit that has been preserved in syrup, it's one of the worst things, for the whole spike in the glycaemic index, you don't want that for kids.** They used to sell capri suns as well. I mean it's just a joke, they took off cake and custard because it wasn't healthy, but they sell capri suns. I mean I know cake and custard is probably know that healthy, but I'd rather a kid ate cake and custard than had a capri sun. [general chat]

**Are there any overweight kids?** Aye we've got a few, not many nah. You should come in one day over lunch time. Just come in 12-1 or something and just come down to the dinner school with me. Do you know something, the whole thing just now is unethical, I don't feel as if I am following my own values here in this, because there is so many things like that, that happen, it's not just about food in the school, it's about meeting children's needs, and it all comes down to money. We don't ever put, I mean, I love that phrase that is banded about "let's put our children at the centre", less and less and less, we're not, they're not at the centre.

**It comes back to what we chatted about before and what kids are expected to learn at school.** We are meant to squeeze, I mean we only have children for

between 15 and 20% of their lives in school, and more and more gets put on us. We do tooth brushing in school, we do after care, we do breakfast club, we take care of a lot of the things that I used to do at home.

**I guess some of that is both parents working.** Yeah there is mixed reasons but sometimes it's the expectation, because so we do tooth brushing so that's my responsibility now, to make sure that there's good dental hygiene. So, we have a breakfast club, so it's now my responsibility that all children are in school and fit and ready to learn. But it's not, it's a support, I can offer that support for those that need it, but it's not my responsibility, all we are doing is devaluing our parents and we are pulling all that responsibility away from them, and we are saying we can do this better because we are teachers. But they are parents, and we are taking that power away, and we are only gonna make it worse. And the thing that I find, this is my bug bear right, and my parents as well here, because there is a stigma attached to those words surrounding poverty and deprivation right, and they don't like hearing that, and to be honest I don't like it either. I now talk about equity and opportunity because I don't like those terms, and equity and opportunity are more from my perspective, what it's about. Because it's not all about money, it's about how you manage that. So for me it's about opportunity cause I've got some children, now bearing in mind all my children are 1s and 2s [SIMD], I can compare two 2's that go from one, no opportunity climbing in and out the window to go to the toilet, significant mental health issues, blah blah blah, to another one who, no they don't go away on an aeroplane anywhere, but they'll maybe go away to a farm park, or they may save up and go to a caravan you know, and the kids have always got shoes that fit their feet and a jacket on their back, they are washed and they've got their hair washed and that kind of stuff. And that's the poverty in this school, none of my children have got loads of money, they are all SIMD 1&2 right. But having said that, there is too many different ends of the spectrum in here, so for me I had to find a way of explaining that to people coming into the school who are saying, how do you know how to close the gap. Well, that's how we've got to work out how to close the gap, it's about opportunity and equity.

**\*\*Talking about breaking the day to day cycle.**

Yeah parents will go to the shop [local Nisa] and buy a big 500ml water and a bar of chocolate, but see if they went up to Lidl, they could get 10 of the bars of chocolate and 12 bottles of water, and it might cost them a bit more, but it would last them 2 weeks.

**So how do you break the cycle?** I don't know how you, I mean what is that to do with, that for me is just like, that's more about mental health for me because it's like, I'm not ready to think about tomorrow, I can only do the here and now, because that's too scary.