

**TAKING WHAT IS GIVEN:
JOURNEYS TO AND FROM THE
FOODBANK**

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Introduction

- Background
- Methodology
- Findings/Conclusions
- Recommendations

Background

- What is food insecurity?
 - Almost 4 million adults in Britain regularly struggling to feed themselves (FSA, 2017)
- Growth of charitable organisations
 - Trussell Trust
- Growth of food insecurity
 - UK – 1,182,954 food parcels 2016-17
 - Stoke-on-Trent – 10,330 food parcels 2016-17

Methodology

- **Rationale**

- The emotions experienced by people in receipt of food aid lacks investigation
- To explore and capture lived experiences of those who have found themselves either in receipt of or giving food aid

- **Research Design**

- Qualitative, interpretative approach
- In-depth interviews/narrative inquiry

Methodology

- **Practicalities**

- Creating a sample and recruiting participants
- Ethical considerations
- Gathering narratives

- **Data Analysis**

- Treating data “*as windows on the participants’ social world*” (Ritchie et al, 2014)
- Locating patterns and shared meanings
- Principal themes

Discussion

- Embarrassment and Shame

- Foodbank setting
- Spoiled social identity (Goffman 1963) -
Internalisation of social attitudes
- ‘Oliver Twist’: ***“when you come into somewhere and you’re looking for, asking someone to give you food [...] you feel low in yourself, you’re thinking, do I really want to go [...] with a little piece of orange paper that says, can I have some food please?”*** (Matt)

Discussion

- Reciprocity
 - Food parcel perceived as a gift, rather than charity
 - Giving something back: “ [...] *I was like, ‘I’ll pay you back! And they were like ‘you don’t need to pay us back’ and I said ‘I will, when me money’s sorted out I will pay you back’ [...]*” (Rachel)
 - Reconstructing status and social identity

Discussion

- Faith in Action

- Reaching out to those in need – ***“works and faith going hand in hand”*** (Karen)
- ‘Big Society’ – Conservative Party Manifesto (2010)
- Disappearance of the ‘safety net’ – ***“I never thought I’d need it myself [...] especially being an engineer and having a good job [...]”*** (Paul)
Implications for individuals and society

Conclusions

- Embarrassment and shame consistent negative emotions
- Reclaiming status and dignity through reciprocity
- Retraction of social security safety net = burgeoning foodbank use
- Normalisation of charitable food provision

Recommendations

- Research needs to be rooted in real life (Garthwaite, 2016)
- ‘*The Geographies of Foodbanks in the meantime*’ Cloke et al (2016) – “There’s an overwhelming responsibility to draw attention to the narratives of service users”
- Further research – Exploring the effects living with food insecurity has on relationships with family and friends