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***The Life-Making Potential of Community Food Provision
for People Seeking Asylum in Scotland***

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Abstract

People seeking asylum in the UK experience systemic barriers to accessing nourishing food. In response to this, movements have emerged to improve food provision for this group. This research used a Participatory Action Research informed approach to build on existing work being done by Food for All (FFA), a group of volunteer peer researchers with lived experience of seeking asylum, based in Glasgow. Since February 2022, FFA have been delivering 'Dignity in Practice' workshops for community food providers with the aim of increasing understanding of the asylum system and exploring how providers can embed dignity in their practice. My research responds to a need identified by FFA for follow up research with workshop participants to understand their impact. In addition to collecting this feedback, research also aimed to explore how and whether community food provision can be 'life-making' for people seeking asylum. I use Navarro's (2022) term 'life-making' to capture how food practices foster hope, joy, empowerment and community. I consider the importance of this within the context of a necropolitical asylum system which systematically devalues the lives of people seeking asylum (Mayblin, et al., 2020a). Research consisted of semi-structured interviews with five community food providers based in Scotland who had attended a Dignity in Practice workshop. Considering themes of nourishing food, care and connection, and barriers, this research found that community food provision has a life-making *potential* for people seeking asylum and identifies areas where further work is needed to fully realise this potential.

1. Introduction

“She imagined a lush garden punctuated with clusters of vegetables and fruits from her home country... she could see herself kneading, mixing, folding her way into nourishment” – Murphy (2019:100) on Ellie Kisyombe, founder of *Our Table*, a solidarity initiative for sharing food and experiences of Direct Provision for people seeking asylum in Ireland.

Insufficient access to nourishing food is deeply felt by many people seeking asylum in the UK. As a result, movements have emerged to improve food provision for those going through the asylum process. My research seeks to build on this existing, ongoing work within communities – in particular, the work of Food for All, a group of volunteer peer researchers with lived experience of the asylum process based in Glasgow. Focusing on community food provision in Scotland, this research engages with both the difficulties and possibilities of community food support for people seeking asylum.

Barriers to accessing nourishing food for this group are fundamentally systemic. People awaiting a decision on their asylum claim in the UK receive impoverishing levels of financial support and largely do not have the right to work (Mayblin, et al., 2020a). Many are accommodated in housing which does not meet their basic needs (Burns, et al., 2022). In Home Office hotel accommodation, people seeking asylum have reported food being served with visible mould and pieces of wire in it, routinely missing meals due to restricted mealtimes, religious considerations such as fasting not being accommodated for, and being forced to eat meals on their beds due to a lack of communal eating space (Asylum Inquiry

Scotland, 2022; Sustain, 2024). Those who are housed in self-catered accommodation receive, at the time of writing, a meagre £49.18 per week. This amount is 51% of the rate of Universal Credit for a single person over 25. Those whose asylum claims have been refused and declared appeal rights exhausted are not entitled to any financial or accommodation support; most are forced to rely on the support of family, friends and charities and many find themselves homeless (NACCOM, 2023). The barriers to accessing nourishing food created by low levels of income are further compounded by Home Office dispersal policy, in which people seeking asylum have no choice over where they live and are often accommodated in isolated areas. This means many have to travel to access food, particularly culturally familiar food, incurring additional costs for transport (Govan Community Project, n.d.:23). As a result of these systemic barriers to nourishing food for people within the asylum process, many people turn to alternative food sources provided by the third sector (Burns, et al., 2022:4075).

With more people accessing additional food support across society (Berri & Toma, 2023), attention has turned to how third sector organisations can embed dignity and choice within their food provision, including through different models of support (Ranta, et al., 2024). There has also been a greater focus on how these organisations can meet the needs of the diverse communities accessing their support (Nourish Scotland and The Poverty Truth Commission, 2018). One group working on this issue, focusing on those within the asylum process, is Food for All (FFA) in Glasgow. A group of volunteer researchers, FFA advocates for better food provision for those seeking asylum in both policy and practice. They are part of Govan Community Project (GCP), a community-based organisation in South-West Glasgow providing support including advice and advocacy, ESOL and community groups for

refugees and people seeking asylum. FFA started in 2020 as part of research project conducted by GCP into access to food in the asylum process (GCP, n.d.). Since February 2022, they have been delivering a series of 'Dignity in Practice' workshops for community food providers with the aim of increasing understanding of the asylum system and exploring how providers can place dignity at the heart of their practice. As a caseworker within GCP's Advice and Advocacy service, I have been following and inspired by FFA's work for some time. Through conversations with the FFA project lead, a need for follow up research with people who had attended the Dignity in Practice workshops was identified to understand the impact of the workshops in more depth. Feeling strongly that I wished my research to have a real-world impact, I was excited to have the opportunity to do this research in collaboration with the FFA group. My research used a Participatory Action Research (PAR) informed approach and sought to build on the group's existing work in two ways; firstly, through providing feedback to FFA around their Dignity in Practice workshops. Secondly, it aimed to explore how and whether community food provision can be 'life-making' for people seeking asylum, in the context of an asylum process which systematically devalues the lives of this group. The term life-making, as used by Navarro (2022), captures how food practices foster hope, joy, empowerment and community, beyond being physical sustenance. The findings aim to highlight the importance of FFA's work, as well as provide food for thought around future avenues for community food provision and ways to build strong, nourished communities.

Following this introduction, Chapter 2 provides an overview of existing literature around food and the asylum process and introduces the theoretical framework of this study.

Chapter 3 outlines the methodological approach and methods used in this research,

including discussion of the collaboration with FFA and the PAR-informed approach. Chapter 4 presents the findings of research and a discussion of these in relation to existing literature and the notion of community food provision as life-making. Finally, Chapter 5 offers concluding reflections, including suggestions for how this research may be used beyond this dissertation and valuable avenues for further research in this area.

2. Literature review

This chapter presents an overview of relevant existing literature and the theoretical framework for this research. I begin by considering connections between food, identity, and the everyday, followed by work around community food provision, and finally I discuss literature around food and the asylum process.

2.1 Food, identity, and the everyday

Preparing, cooking and eating food is an essential part of everyday life. Each of these is embedded in an array of rituals and cultural practices, or 'foodways' (Klein & Watson, 2019). Food practices are therefore deeply entwined with our social lives and the structures of race, gender and class we live within (Bourdieu, [1984] 2010; Klein & Watson, 2019; Mintz & Du Bois, 2002). Anthropologists have historically paid greater attention to food than sociologists (Burnett & Ray, 2012:136) and have emphasised the importance of food practices for personal, group and cultural identities. In his seminal work on the Greek island of Kalymnos, Sutton (2001) recalls being told: "Eat, in order to remember Kalymnos" (p.2), capturing the deep connections between food, memory, and cultural identity. Embodiment plays a large part in this; indeed, Abbots (2019), using Fischler (1988), suggests food is so powerful for enacting identity as it is "ingested and brought into the body" (Abbots, 2019:127), and therefore literally constitutive of personhood. I return to connections between embodiment, memory, and identity below.

Being entwined with race, gender and class, food also has a distinct relationship with power. Control over and policing of food have been fundamental to those exerting power throughout history; we can consider the British government's role in the devastating Irish potato famine (Nally, 2008), the systematic devaluing of indigenous food practices through colonial 'education' programmes in East Africa (Raschke & Cheema, 2008), and continuing threats to indigenous ecologies by North American colonial settler practices (Whyte, 2017). Recently, there has been increased sociological interest in the 'everyday', a valuable site for revealing how power is felt in everyday life. Neal and Murji (2015:812) suggest exploring the everyday reveals how 'big' power structures are felt in 'small' everyday practices, emotions and interactions. Mayblin, et al. (2020a) suggest combining everyday approaches with postcolonial theories is valuable in the context of the UK asylum system. They suggest these approaches reveal how dehumanising and impoverishing government policies shape everyday lives of people seeking asylum – eating, washing, travelling, socialising. Using Neal and Murji (2015), they suggest the 'ordinariness' of the everyday, which may be dismissed as mundane, "cannot be equated with harmless" (Mayblin, et al., 2020a:109). Everyday experiences around food are therefore an important site for exploring the deeply felt impacts of harmful asylum policies and by extension, I suggest, a space for challenging this harm. My research seeks to build on this work in several ways. Firstly, through exploring community food provision as part of everyday food practices for many in the asylum process and secondly, through exploring how practices within community food spaces can be life-making within the harmful environment of the UK asylum system.

2.2 Community food provision

Due to the low rates of financial support people seeking asylum receive, many turn to third sector organisations for support with food (Burns, et al., 2022:4075). According to the Trussell Trust, people in the asylum process accounted for 3.7% foodbank users in 2016/17, despite making up less than 0.1% UK households (Loopstra & Lalor, 2017). However, with financial hardship increasing across society in recent times – in part due to significant cuts to public services and benefits since 2010 (Berri & Toma, 2023) – more people across society are seeking alternative sources of food. The use of Trussell Trust foodbanks increased eight-fold between 2011 and 2015 (Garthwaite, 2016) while 9% adults in Scotland reported in 2021 that they had been worried about running out of food in the last year (Scottish Government, 2022). With increasing numbers seeking this additional food support, different models of provision have emerged alongside more conversations around the importance of dignity and choice (Ranta, et al., 2024). Following Nourish Scotland and The Poverty Truth Commission (2018), I use the term community food provision to encapsulate the wide range of food support within communities, “from provision of emergency food aid to supporting people to grow and enjoy fresh food in the community” (p.iv); this research will explore organisations across this spectrum.

Ranta, et al. (2024) and Mulrooney, et al. (2023) both highlight the dignity and choice which newer models of community food provision such as pantries, larders, and social supermarkets allow for; these often use a membership scheme where people pay a small amount to access the organisation. However, they both note the wider lack of research into these models. Mulrooney, et al. (2023) suggest further research is particularly needed

around community food provision in more ethnically diverse areas to understand different food needs and provisions. While Chaplin's (2019) research highlights the value of community meals for people living in temporary asylum accommodation in London, she does not frame this as a type of food support, nor does she situate it within the context of the poor-quality food likely being provided in people's hotel accommodation or low asylum support rates. This leads us to question further how and whether people's food needs are being met. Other research has acknowledged the challenges faced by people in the asylum process accessing third sector food support. These include feelings of shame and lack of dignity (Mayblin, et al., 2020a:114), having to travel long distances to access support (Burns, et al., 2022:4075), difficulties accessing information about services and limited provision of fresh or culturally appropriate food (GCD, n.d.). My research builds on this existing body of work through exploring how and whether community food provision in Scotland meets the needs of people in the asylum process. It also considers changes made in community food organisations to better meet this group's needs, following their involvement in workshops run by FFA. Doing so also aims to fill a gap in literature documenting the experiences and extent of destitution amongst people in the asylum process "through the lens of the responding organisations" (Mayblin & James, 2020:75).

The role of third sector support and community food provision has been conceptualised in different ways. The common thread through these is understanding destitution and food insecurity as a structural, political issue. Some have argued that the poverty at the root of food insecurity has been de-politicised through the emergence of 'sub-types' such as food, fuel and period poverty – placing these issues in isolation from one another and framing these issues as needs rather than rights (Thompson, 2022). Mayblin & James (2020) and

Hamilton, et al. (2022) suggest that in the context of asylum, third sector organisations are not always best-placed for transforming structural inequalities and policies. While they provide invaluable immediate support mitigating the worst effects of impoverishing systems, they do not necessarily address the structural causes. In addition, it has been argued that third sector organisations may act as a “pressure valve” for those who disagree with UK asylum policies to “feel they are doing something to remedy it” (Mayblin & James, 2020:79), further taking away from efforts to transform the system. Despite this, Mayblin and James (2020) suggest these organisations still hold vital importance. As well as alleviating suffering through the support they provide, they also reject dehumanising constructions of people seeking asylum and represent a significant group of people who refuse to accept government logics and policies. Mayblin and James (2020) suggest they do this through refusing to ‘let die’ or ‘let suffer’, an ideology central to UK asylum policy – discussed further below. Solidarities emerge within third sector organisations which resist othering discourses perpetuated by the UK government. While the provision of food is one example of third sector support discussed by Mayblin and James (2020), it is not their focus. I suggest this idea is particularly powerful in the context of food support; community food providers can resist the dehumanising and harmful effects of the UK asylum system through providing nourishment and connection. Stettin, et al. (2022) suggest social supermarkets which embed community development in their work can strengthen communities through engagement and empowerment to tackle root causes of, and discourses around, poverty. In an Irish context, Murphy (2020) found that migrant-led food initiatives created new bonds of solidarity around wider issues within the asylum process, “nourishing both the personal and political, in a way that evolves alternative socialities and networks that move to different forms of action” (p.806-7). Nourish Scotland and The Poverty Truth Commission

(2018) point to the possibilities within community food provision for people to feel nourished and supported, and this is one of their five 'dignity in practice' principles. This means "people being able to enjoy food and access support that meets their needs... community food initiatives provide more than an immediate source of food. They can and should be designed as spaces of hospitality and support, where people can feel welcomed and included" (Nourish Scotland & The Poverty Truth Commission, 2018:15). Building on this, my research considers how community food spaces can facilitate joy around food and build stronger communities within a harmful and dehumanising asylum process, and how this in itself can constitute a resistance to that harm.

2.3 Food and the asylum process

I now turn my attention to experiences of food amongst asylum-seeking communities. Food can be an important way that people seeking asylum can find connections to community, identity and 'home' (Mayblin, et al., 2020a:115), however, there is a limited amount of work specifically exploring food within the asylum process in the UK. While it is mentioned in some studies, discussed below, it is often not the main focus. My research therefore intends to provide a more in-depth insight into food for people seeking asylum in the UK. I begin this section by considering conceptualisations of the asylum process, and food within it, as relating to death. I then consider work on food, memory and notions of 'home' for people seeking asylum, and finish by bringing together these works to present my theoretical framework of food as life-making within the 'death-producing' space of the asylum system.

2.3.1 Food and death

Mayblin, et al. (2020a; 2020b) and Guma, et al. (2024) make important contributions to understanding how food relates to power within the asylum process. Using a postcolonial approach, Mayblin, et al. (2020a) argue that impoverishing rates of asylum support in the UK and the living conditions which result are an expression of ‘necropolitics’. A term coined by Achille Mbembe (2003), necropolitics encapsulates the power of states to determine “who may live and who must die” (p.11). Those deemed unworthy of life are, according to Mbembe, subjected either to death itself or death-like conditions in which people are “kept alive but in a state of injury” (2003:21). Crucially, Mbembe locates the history of these hierarchies of human worth in colonial racism and violence. Following this, Mayblin, et al. (2020a) suggest that people seeking asylum are constructed within racial hierarchies as “more easily expendable [and]... more easily impoverished” (p.110) and they experience death-like conditions through the ‘slow violence’ (Nixon, 2011) of UK asylum policy. They consider how this plays out in the everyday lives of people seeking asylum in the UK and food is one aspect of this; they note the difficulties people faced accessing nourishing, cultural food on low rates of asylum support. Most participants they spoke to had one or two meals a day to save money (Mayblin, et al., 2020a:114) and many also reported weight loss, worsening skin conditions and loss of hair as reflective of a poor-quality diet, highlighting the embodiment of the slow violence inflicted upon people seeking asylum (Mayblin, et al., 2020b:109). This is conceptualised as an expression of necropolitics; people are kept alive by the food they eat, but in a ‘state of injury’. They are ‘gradually wounded’ through experiences of hunger, physical weakness, and insufficient access to the cultural food which is more satisfying and enjoyable (Mayblin, et al., 2020a; 2020b). Mayblin, et al.

argue this is an expression of control; while they highlight ways people resist necropolitical dehumanisation in everyday ways such as strategising around shopping for food (2020b:104), they also suggest asylum support policy “subdues” (2020a:120) people through the pain they experience at its hands. This is also reminiscent of Puar’s (2017) concept of ‘the right to maim’, which highlights efforts by the Israeli state to injure Palestinians, and in doing so weaken Palestinian resistance.

Guma, et al. (2024) build on this work in the context of hotel asylum accommodation. They suggest the quasi-detention conditions of hotels contribute to racialised hierarchies of “differential humanity” (2024:742) in which people in the asylum process are constructed as ‘undeserving’. Although food is only mentioned briefly, Guma, et al. argue the culturally inappropriate and poor-quality food provided in hotels “weaken” and “exhaust” (2024:758) people’s bodies to the extent they are kept alive but ‘in a state of injury’ – again using Mbembe’s (2003:21) terms.

Related to this, other scholars have conceptualised the asylum process as a structural determinant of health; Yeo and Abay (2024:218) consider it disabling through systemically restricting access to essential services such as healthcare and food, while Castañeda (2023) suggests narratives around deservingness create unequal access to healthcare for people in the asylum process. Furthermore, Cassidy’s (2019) work illuminates how everyday bordering occurs within the asylum system to impact health, for example through Home Office-issued payment cards restricting where people can shop. In Bennani-Taylor and Meer’s (2024) research, people seeking asylum in Glasgow described Home Office-issued payment cards not always working in halal butchers and African food shops. Such Home Office policies and

practices therefore impact health through restricting access to culturally appropriate food and forcing people to walk long distances for food (Cassidy, 2019); these also constitute everyday bordering practices through retail workers enforcing unequal access to food.

It is important to be aware in this discussion that necropolitics does not impact all people seeking asylum in the same way; Tschalaer (2022), for example, considers Puar's (2005) queer reading of necropolitics to highlight that queer people seeking asylum experience slow violence in specific ways, including exacerbating existing inequalities around access to healthcare, community and safety.

The works discussed here are valuable in illuminating the death-like conditions experienced by many seeking asylum, and the part insufficient access to nourishing food plays in this. They have deeply informed my research in highlighting the importance of life-making practices within this often-deadly environment – which Mayblin, et al. (2020a; 2020b) and Guma, et al. (2024) arguably do not consider enough. My research will specifically explore the life-making possibilities of food within the asylum process, focusing on the role of community food providers in facilitating these. In orienting this research towards life-making practices, I follow Paret and Gleeson (2016) to “counter scholarship which associates migrant life with irreversibly bleak conditions, and an erosion of collective agency” (p.287). Through exploring how community food providers can facilitate life-making practices, this research project looks towards possibilities for more nourishing lives within the asylum process. In doing so, it also builds on existing work within communities – specifically, FFA's work – pursuing dignified and equal access to food for all.

2.3.2 Food, memory and home

Sabar and Posner's (2013) work on restaurants run by people seeking asylum in Tel Aviv is a seminal work on food, memory and 'home'. Using Lewis' (2010) notion of 'community moments', Sabar and Posner conceptualise these restaurants as 'culinary safe havens' through the ways they evoke a sense of home. In her study of community parties and events for refugee communities, Lewis (2010) notes how being in familiar cultural surroundings – including music, clothes, and food – create a sense of relaxation and relief from “constant engagement with the unfamiliar” (p.585). She suggests that community events which incorporate these familiar cultural elements can be places of safety for people experiencing so much insecurity. Sabar and Posner (2013) build on this, exploring how home-like environments are created in hospitality settings run by people seeking asylum, and the importance of this for people's survival. They emphasise the role of embodied actions in the preparation and provision of food, as well as the senses – smell, sight, sound, taste – in creating feelings of home. Certain food preparation methods, for example, were considered important by their participants; one highlighted the importance for her of using a curved messaluna knife for making *maluchia* paste “properly, ‘like at home’” (Sabar & Posner, 2013:208). The physical acts of such food preparation methods are conceptualised as an important way that past meals are remembered and recreated in the present, evoking a sense of home. The familiar sights, smells, sounds and tastes of restaurants run by people seeking asylum in Tel Aviv were also vital in making these places culinary safe havens. Sabar and Posner term this a 'sensescape' using Law's (2005) terms, meaning “a landscape that simulates home... achieved through the senses” (Law, 2005:238). “Tastes combine with the sense of touch as hands dip into deep bowls of *asida* and *tagaliya*”, Sabar and Posner

(2013:213) describe. This emphasis on the senses in creating feelings of home builds on existing work around connections between food, the senses and memory. One of the most influential is Sutton's (2001) study in Kalymnos, Greece. Sutton explores the emotions associated with smells and tastes of 'home' for Greek migrants from Kalymnos and suggests experiencing these allows for a re-imagining of the social world of the island. As part of this he notes the cultural specificities of how the senses are understood and experienced, for example describing how food smells are understood in relation to sound in Kalymnos: "listen to that smell" is a Kalymnian phrase to describe a delicious smelling meal cooking (Sutton, 2001:99). Chaplin (2019) and Kohli, et al. (2010) both acknowledge the importance of the sensory experiences of cooking and eating food for people seeking asylum in evoking memories of home and creating bonds with others. Kohli, et al.'s (2010) research on foster placements for children seeking asylum, for example, describes how cooking food which is familiar to young people can be a powerful way to support them to "recapture... the smell, taste and texture of ordinary life" (p.234) as well as build trust and connection. Returning to Sabar and Posner's (2013) work on restaurants run by people seeking asylum, the authors suggest the home-like environments created in the ways described above are a "survival tool" (p.207) and part of "daily struggles for survival" (p.197). Abbots (2019), writing on Sabar and Posner's (2013) work, suggests these culinary safe havens are "coping mechanisms" for people seeking asylum (p.118). While these conceptualisations are useful for understanding the importance of food for living within uncertain and difficult asylum systems, my work seeks to move beyond notions of 'survival' and 'coping', towards ways food can more widely create nourishing life. I suggest the connections between food, memory and home discussed here can also be conceptualised as life-making. My research

seeks to build on these works around food as providing nourishment and comfort within the asylum system within a framework of food as life-making.

I now briefly consider connections between nourishing and 'good' food and notions of home. Palutan and Schmidt (2023) highlight that much literature around food in contexts of displacement focuses on food security, "which sees food in terms of access, quantity and nutritional value... rather than the symbolic variable and the bonds that the latter recalls" (p.4). Their work with people seeking asylum living in urban encampments in Rome highlights the importance of food which is socially nourishing, building connections and community, and evokes memories of home. Vallianatos and Raine (2008) discuss this same idea of food meeting people's emotional needs, as well as physical ones, in terms of feeling 'satisfied'. In their work with South Asian women migrants in Canada, one of their participants said: "one eats these Canadian foods like a sandwich, pasta, etc. but you don't feel satisfied; but once you eat roti and sabji (flat bread and vegetable curry) you feel satisfied" (Vallianatos & Raine, 2008:368). This is echoed in other studies with people seeking asylum, who have stated: "if I eat other foods, I get hungry quickly... But if I eat my traditional because I am used to that, I stay for a longer time without being hungry" (Isaacs, 2018:141) and "spicy food makes me want to eat: it makes me hungry" (Palutan & Schmidt, 2023:8). These highlight the importance of food as a source of emotional nourishment, as well as physical sustenance, and how this is often deeply connected with culturally familiar food. GCP's research with people in the asylum process in Glasgow add important contributions to this. Their report 'An Ongoing Emergency' (n.d.) highlighted people felt having access to culturally familiar food enabled them to eat more healthily, "as it was food they were familiar with enough to know what was good for them" (GCP, n.d.:15). 'Healthy'

here is understood as subjective and holistic, encompassing a “healthy mind, body and attitude” (n.d.:15). Additionally, this report highlights the importance of fresh fruit and vegetables for people in the asylum process, especially as fresh produce enables people to cook for themselves in ways they choose (n.d.:15). This work is useful for highlighting the different ways food can be understood as ‘nourishing’ – emotionally nourishing food refers not only to specific ingredients or food types from people’s home countries, but also fresh food which people can cook themselves in ways they choose. We can think back to Sabar and Posner’s (2013) work on the importance of embodied acts of food preparation to understand this further. My research study will use and build on these understandings of ‘nourishing’ food to explore how they may be considered life-making within the death-producing environment of the asylum process in the UK.

The work discussed in this section has relied upon notions of ‘home’ and the positive, nourishing associations ‘home’ can carry. However, it is important to take a critical look at this notion and delineate what ‘home’ is and is not, for the purposes of this study. Firstly, appealing to a notion of home risks creating a false dichotomy between ‘food from there’ and ‘food from here’ (in Lewis’ (2010) terms), and treating both as static and unchanging. By extension, this also risks treating migrant identities as singular and unchanging (Abbots, 2019:120). It is imperative that work around migrant communities and food eaten within them is not essentialised in this way, and that the diversity of experience and practices within these is at the heart of such work. Indeed, many scholars highlight the hybridity of migrant food practices – incorporating food from a variety of cultures into dishes – and the diversity of experiences of food amongst migrant communities (Lewis, 2010; Palutan & Schmidt, 2023; Vallianatos & Raine, 2008). So, while we can understand the nourishing

properties of culturally familiar food, we must at the same time understand the hybridity, fluidity and multiplicity of experiences surrounding this culturally familiar food.

The second risk in thinking about notions of home is an overreliance on associating home with a particular nation state. In her research with an organisation running community meals for and with people in the asylum process in London, Chaplin (2019) considers one of her participants' descriptions of communal eating: "in his description of home as being primarily with family, he highlights that 'home' is not merely a nation-state, but rather a sense of warmth and familiarity" (p.19). Hage's (1997) work on the role of food in homemaking for Lebanese Australians in Sydney is useful for further understanding this. Hage suggests "positively experienced nostalgia does not necessarily involve a desire to 'go back'", more often it is "a desire to promote the feeling of being there here" (p.108). This highlights that appeals to 'home' are less reliant on nation states, and more about recreating the feelings and emotions of home such as warmth, comfort and joy. With this, however, we must also not assume that all memories of home created through food carry positive associations. For many migrants, especially those who have left their countries fleeing violence or persecution, memories of home may be difficult or complex (Lewis, 2010; Vallianatos & Raine, 2008). Chaplin (2019) notes one of her participants was reminded of the corruption in Syria and Lebanon which prevented the countries from thriving "despite their rich natural resources and sunshine that could grow tasteful vegetables" (p.17). This highlights how experiences around food may be deeply entangled with the difficult political contexts from which people have fled, and food-related memories may at times be painful. Connections between food, memory and home, then, are complex. While we must keep in mind these complexities, the power of food to create feelings of warmth, comfort and joy in

difficult times are apparent. My work seeks to build on this through conceptualising this power as life-making within the death-producing environment of the UK asylum system. I also wish to contribute to this body of literature a greater focus on community food providers, which many in the asylum process in the UK use but little research has explored, to explore how they can facilitate these life-making possibilities of food.

2.3.3 Food as 'life-making' in 'death-producing' environments

Finally, I wish to bring together the work I have discussed so far and present the theoretical framework for this study, using Navarro's (2022) concept of 'black culinary epistemologies'. Navarro uses this term to capture how black communities and cooks resist racism and inequality through their food practices and knowledge. She conceptualises these as "*life-making practices within death-producing spaces*" (2022:202, emphases added). Rooted in the African American context, Navarro uses Gilmore's (2007) work on institutional racism within the prison system to conceptualise 'death-producing spaces' as those where black people are subject to "premature death" (2022:202). This has clear parallels to Mbembe's (2003) necropolitics, although neither Navarro (2022) nor Gilmore (2007) reference this. Navarro gives the example of the Black Panther Party's Free Breakfast Program in 1960s/70s America, the Party's response to a failing welfare state which "denied food to low income-black communities: producing hungry bodies amongst black children, in order to maintain passivity and political control" (2022:207). I suggest we can draw a clear link here to Mayblin, et al. (2020a, 2020b), and Guma, et al.'s (2024) work discussed above about how insufficient access to nutritional food 'subdues' and 'exhausts' racialised communities.

While Navarro's (2022) work is built on African American history and experiences, I suggest her notion of 'death-producing spaces' can also be applied to the necropolitical environment of the UK asylum system (Guma, et al., 2024; Mayblin, et al., 2020a; 2020b). Bringing this work together, I suggest, provides an opportunity to explore life-making food practices within the UK asylum system.

In defining life-making practices, Navarro suggests food within black communities can be a site for producing "hope, vitality, joy, and empowerment" and for "[imagining] futures in which black people thrive" (2022:211). She centres the work of chef, food writer and food justice activist Bryant Terry in making this argument and suggests Terry's cookbooks are an "archive for black culinary epistemologies" (2022:201). In his cookbook *Vegetable Kingdom*, alongside a recipe for cornbread muffins Terry writes about his grandfather's experiences of the Jim Crow South and the solace found in sharing sweet cornbread with his family.

Navarro writes: "The preparation and consumption of the Cornbread Muffins were a part of larger practices of caring oneself, family, and community in the face of racial oppression" (2022:213). She considers this a "life-making practice" within the death-producing environment of the Jim Crow South (2022:213). She suggests such practices allow black communities to imagine radically different futures for themselves, in which they construct their own conceptions of joy and self-determination, and black communities thrive. Relating this to my research, I have discussed above existing work around the power of food to evoke memories of 'home' for people seeking asylum, the feelings of nourishment and comfort these can create, and the importance of this for 'survival'. I suggest these can be understood as life-making practices, using Navarro's (2022) terms, within death-producing spaces in which people seeking asylum are so often forced to live. My research seeks to use

this framework to explore life-making food practices within the UK asylum system, focusing on the role of community food providers within this.

3. Methodology

This chapter outlines the methodology and methods of my research. I begin by discussing the methodological approach which informed the project and my collaboration with FFA. Following that, I outline how the project was carried out, including recruitment of participants, method of data collection, and how data was analysed. Finally, I acknowledge limitations of the study.

3.1 Methodological approach

This research is underpinned by an interpretivist ontology and epistemology. I understand the social world as constructed and consisting of multiple, equally valid realities, rather than as one single reality which can be 'objectively' known (Hesse-Biber, 2017:6). Within an interpretivist epistemology, particular attention is paid to the ways knowledge is created; knowledge construction is understood as a collaborative process between researchers and participants and within this, researcher biases and positionalities are made explicit (Moon & Blackman, 2014:1173). This approach is in accordance with the aim of this research to provide insights into the perspectives of community food providers, which are subjective. It also aligns with the PAR approach which informed research (Kendon, et al., 2007:13) and the important role FFA played in knowledge creation.

This research is informed by PAR, which emphasises working in collaboration with marginalised groups, who are often the subjects of research, to co-create research (O'Neill,

2011:17). By collaborating with marginalised groups and being led by their expertise and concerns, PAR is arguably better placed to produce outcomes which are beneficial for those communities (Liamputtong, 2020). *Critical Pedagogy in the Political Now*, a collective of academics, activists and practitioners (including GCP), highlighted the importance of asking communities what knowledge they need in their guide on ethical practice in migration research 'A Manifesto for Change' (2018). Asking this question ensures research is rooted in the needs and aims of marginalised groups as opposed to being extractive or exploitative, or purely for the sake of academic curiosity (Conrad & Campbell, 2008). As the grassroots organisation RISE: Refugees, Survivors and eX-detainees (quoted in Piacentini (2024:127)) put it: "our struggle is not an opportunity, or our bodies a currency, by which to build your career". PAR is also explicitly oriented towards social justice; in addition to pursuing social change through its outputs, PAR also "challenges processes of othering and subjugation" and interrogates "the politics of representation and recognition" (O'Neill, 2011:19) through ensuring marginalised groups have agency and control within the research process. PAR which involves communities at all stages of the research process is often time- and resource-intensive (Liamputtong, 2020:128); however, it has been acknowledged that participatory research can involve different degrees of participation depending on the time and resources available (Kendon, et al., 2007:15-16). While my research has been informed by principles of PAR, the limited scope of the project meant I was not able to fully pursue PAR which involved FFA group members at all stages of the research. I return to this issue below.

PAR has its roots in decolonising research methodologies (Bartlett, et al., 2007) which seek to challenge eurocentrism and emphasise the knowledge of indigenous communities

(Liamputtong, 2020). Decolonising methodologies have been largely rooted in indigenous scholarship such as important work by Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2021), however Swadener and Mutua (2008:35) suggest they are also valuable for research with marginalised groups such as those living in poverty and ethnic minorities. Indeed, many researchers have employed decolonising methodologies in work with asylum-seeking communities in the UK (Mayblin, et al., 2020a; O'Neill, et al., 2019). Decolonising methodologies often advocate using qualitative research methods, in part due to the harm to which more positivist methods have historically contributed – for example through privileging the ‘expertise’ of the researcher in a way that reproduces dominant power structures (Hesse-Biber, 2017:27). While it is worth noting decolonising and PAR approaches can also use non-qualitative methods, depending on the needs of the community (Sendall, et al., 2018), methods were deemed more suitable for the aims of this research project to explore the impacts of FFA’s workshops for community food providers and their provision for people in the asylum process more widely. This is because research sought to examine “the ‘meanings’ that people give to their own social situations” (Liamputtong, 2020:21) rather than aiming to generalise findings.

The importance of participatory approaches in migration research has been widely acknowledged for ensuring the experiences of those with lived experience of migration are at the heart of research around migration issues (O’Neill, et al., 2019; Quinn, 2014). In ‘A Manifesto for Change’, *Critical Pedagogy in the Political Now* (2018) highlights the value of collaboration with communities and organisations in migration research for ensuring research benefits communities. Thinking specifically about the aim of this research project to explore how community food provision can be life-making in contrast to the harm of the

UK asylum system, O'Neill, et al. (2019) suggest participatory methodologies are of “vital importance in challenging necropower, in pushing back at the borders of humanity” (p.141) through giving migrants agency and voice, so often systemically denied. I now address the collaboration with FFA in more detail, highlighting the benefit of a PAR approach in this research.

3.2 Collaboration with Food for All (FFA)

One of my primary aims for this research was to have real world impact for asylum-seeking communities and build on the vital work already being done within them. Being a caseworker at GCP, where FFA is based, I have an existing relationship with the organisation and had been following FFA's work for some time – including their Dignity in Practice workshop series. Through conversations with the FFA project lead, we identified there was a need for follow up research with community food providers who had attended Dignity in Practice workshops to understand their impact. With greater demands on funding applications due to funding becoming increasingly difficult to secure (Mayblin & James, 2020:80-81), the findings of this research will provide FFA with clear evidence of the impacts of their workshops and aims to support them to secure further funding to continue their important work. The pressure on third sector services means time to do in-depth data collection and follow up from projects such as this workshop series is limited; through collaborating with FFA on this research I have been able to use my resources as a master's student to address this need for research within the community. This research project therefore had two aims: to provide feedback to FFA on the impact of their workshops and,

building on this, to explore whether and how community food provision can be considered life-making for people seeking asylum, in the context of a necropolitical asylum system. The second aim seeks to build further on FFA's existing work and in doing so was done in solidarity with this community (Piacentini, 2024:126).

Agreeing clear boundaries and expectations of everyone involved in this research was an important part of collaborating with FFA, particularly as I was not able to fully pursue PAR due to the limited scope of the project. In its early stages, I sought advice from the School of Social and Political Sciences Ethics Forum and the College of Social Sciences Employability Officer around how to ensure ethical practice within this PAR-informed research; this included having a written agreement with FFA and creating a consent form and participant information sheet for FFA group members (see Appendices D and E). This advice was especially useful for navigating my positionality as a caseworker at GCP within research. Full ethical approval was gained from the School of Social and Political Sciences Ethics Forum before research began (see Appendix A). *Critical Pedagogy in the Political Now* (2018) highlight the importance of researchers and communities "defining together what is meant by a meaningful collaborative relationship" for conducting participatory research ethically. Through conversations with the FFA project lead, it was agreed that FFA would be involved with co-creating questions for interviews with Dignity in Practice workshop participants. This was important for ensuring interviews generated data which met the group's needs and for ensuring research was informed by those with experience of seeking asylum and campaigning for improved food provision within the asylum process. It was agreed that FFA would not be involved with conducting interviews, data analysis, or writing. While this would have been valuable and is a significant limitation of this project, it was felt this level

of participation would have required more time and resources than was available to us; we felt it would have been unethical to attempt participation in these parts of research without the necessary resources. Because of this, it was agreed that FFA would not have access to raw interview data or information about participants involved in research. This is in line with ethical considerations about research data and participant information only being shared with those for whom such access is necessary (Hesse-Biber, 2017:96). To ensure the group were kept informed about the research process and had the opportunity to ask questions, I provided them with a written update following the interviews, reporting initial findings.

While one of the aims of PAR is to address power imbalances in research, it is important to acknowledge power relations do still exist. Reflexivity is therefore an important practice within participatory research (O'Neill, 2011:19) and I worked to maintain reflexivity throughout this project – meaning an ongoing critical awareness of my own position and practice as a researcher (Carpenter, 2018). Conscious that my position as a researcher from the university comes with privilege, collaborating with FFA to co-create interview questions was a valuable way to navigate power dynamics within research; while I was able to share my experience around research methods, FFA was able to share their expertise in a mutual sharing of knowledge. Given my position as a caseworker at GCP, it was also important to maintain boundaries between my employed work and this research. As caseworkers work in a separate team to FFA, I was well-placed to ensure the people I work with day-to-day would not be involved.

Finally, PAR highlights the importance of sharing research in accessible ways, so it can be shared widely and have long-lasting value to communities (Liamputtong, 2020). As Fals

Borda, quoted in O'Neill (2011), puts it: "diffuse and share what you have learned together with the people, in a manner that is wholly understandable and even literary and pleasant" (O'Neill, 2011:19). With this in mind, and following University of Glasgow guidance on collaborative dissertations, in addition to this dissertation I also plan to produce a report specifically for FFA focusing on interviewees' feedback around the impact of Dignity in Practice workshops. This report will be shared with FFA and community food providers who participated in research.

3.3 Recruitment

Participants were recruited using purposive sampling, meaning they were invited to participate based on having particular knowledge and experiences relevant to the research aims (Oliver, 2006). The criteria for participants in this research was working within community food provision in Scotland and having attended a Dignity in Practice workshop run by FFA, so they could provide reflections on the workshop and its impact on their organisation. Having engaged in issues around access to community food provision for people in the asylum process in the workshops, this group were also more likely to have experiences relating to the life-making potentials of community food provision for people seeking asylum. I had invaluable support from the FFA project lead with recruitment; she contacted everyone who had provided their contact details and consented to further contact after attending a Dignity in Practice workshop. She emailed this group of people with an invitation to participate in research, asking those interested to contact me directly. This meant I did not have access to contact details for all workshop attendees, only those

interested in research. It also meant participants' details were not shared with FFA, protecting confidentiality and anonymity which is an important ethical practice (Carpenter, 2018:39). The support of the FFA project lead with recruitment was also invaluable as the invitation to participate in research came from a trusted source (Namageyo-Funa, et al., 2014).

Thanks to continued efforts by the FFA project lead, five people were recruited to participate in research. This was slightly fewer than the number of participants I aimed to recruit; however, as in much qualitative research, depth was more important than breadth in this project (Hesse-Biber, 2017:63). I was still able to gain valuable in-depth feedback for FFA and explore a range of food providers' experiences through interviews with these five participants. Three participants worked for community organisations providing food support such as larders and pantries, community meals, and community gardens. The other two participants worked for organisations primarily providing emergency food aid.

My positionality was made clear to participants from the beginning – the initial recruitment email stated I am both a master's student and a GCP staff member. This was important firstly to highlight my existing relationship with the organisation and the direct benefit the research sought to have for FFA, as well as being part of my master's dissertation project. Also, it was important to emphasise that food providers choosing (or not) to participate or withdraw from research would not impact any existing relationship with GCP or FFA. This was made clear in the Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form (see Appendices B and C) and reiterated at the end of each interview. Ensuring participants understand their

right to withdraw from research is an important ethical practice, particularly where there are existing relationships between researchers and participants (James & Busher, 2009:58).

Reciprocity within research is another important ethical consideration, meaning participants should gain something from being involved (Liamputtong, 2020:192). Reciprocity comes in many forms, including research benefiting communities in which participants are involved, enacting social change, and sharing knowledge (Liamputtong, 2020:193). I hope that being involved in this research provided community food providers with an opportunity to reflect on their practice and changes they may have made following the Dignity in Practice workshop, as well as knowing that research would support work led by asylum-seeking communities on dignified food provision for all. Through sharing my dissertation and report with participating food providers, I hope to provide ideas which will be valuable for them in continuing to provide dignified food support to people in the asylum process.

3.4 Interviews

Research consisted of five individual semi-structured interviews, with questions co-created with FFA (see Appendix F). Individual interviews were chosen as they allowed for a focused conversation, where specific organisations' experiences and practices could be explored in detail (Liamputtong, 2020:41). I chose semi-structured interviews so that questions co-created with FFA could be centred, while also allowing for a more free-flowing conversation. Semi-structured interviews give greater scope for participants to explore ideas which are important to them and for researchers to follow up unexpected topics that come up, which

they might not have considered previously (Hesse-Biber, 2017; Morris, 2015). Interview questions were co-created with FFA in a collaboration session which took place online. In the session, we discussed which topics to cover and wording of questions, covering those specifically around Dignity in Practice workshops and more general questions about community food provision for people seeking asylum. We also discussed the theoretical framework of the research. This collaboration session was informed by principles of meaningful and trauma-informed participation, as outlined by Migration Yorkshire (2023a; 2023b), including clearly establishing the aim of the session and ensuring everyone had an opportunity to contribute ideas. Interview questions were not always asked in the order written in the co-created interview guide, but according to the flow of the conversation.

I chose to conduct interviews online using Zoom with the aim to give interviewees greater flexibility in both time and location, making participation in the research more convenient and potentially more accessible (Liamputtong, 2020:218). This was especially useful given not all interviewees were based in Glasgow, so online interviews enabled people from a wider variety of locations to take part. Using Zoom allowed me to conduct video calls with participants, more effectively resembling an in-person interview through being able to see and use nonverbal cues and more easily develop rapport with interviewees (Howlett, 2022). While I acknowledge that online interviews require access to the internet and a degree of digital literacy, potentially impacting the inclusivity of the research (Liamputtong, 2020:219), I offered the option of in-person or telephone interviews to all participants to try and mitigate this risk. Additionally, given participants were all working within organisations, they were more likely to have access to the resources needed to utilise online methods. The

familiarity many of us developed with Zoom following the Covid-19 pandemic may also have meant participants felt more comfortable using this technology (Self, 2021).

Written consent was gained from participants prior to interviews and then reaffirmed verbally at the end of each interview, with emphasis on ensuring participants were happy for direct quotes to be used. The importance of consent as an ongoing process, rather than beginning and ending with the consent form, is highlighted by Hesse-Biber (2017:91) and Miller and Bell (2012).

Interviews were recorded using Zoom's recording technology and these were downloaded directly to Microsoft OneDrive; both software meet GDPR requirements. Zoom recording automatically creates separate video and audio files; video files were destroyed immediately following the end of the interview and audio files were stored securely on Microsoft OneDrive until they had been transcribed. Interview transcripts were also stored securely on Microsoft OneDrive. Participants were made aware and gave consent for this mode of recording and data storage (see Appendices B and C).

Participants were assured I would make every effort to protect confidentiality and anonymity through not sharing their details or interview transcripts with FFA, using pseudonyms in any publications, ensuring no identifying factors are stated, and ensuring direct quotes are anonymised and decontextualised. Participants were made aware and gave consent for findings from this research to be used in this dissertation and in a report for FFA, which may be shared more widely with bodies including funding bodies and Scottish Government for the purposes of supporting FFA's work (see Appendices B and C).

3.5 Data analysis

Data was analysed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) approach of thematic analysis, which involved coding interview transcripts to sort data and create themes. I began by using initial coding in my first reading of interview transcripts, meaning I was not restricted to particular codes, which was useful in being open to unexpected findings within interviews (Saldaña, 2021:149). Through drawing similarities between these initial codes, I created more formalised codes which I then applied to the data on a second reading of transcripts. Throughout this process, I also used Charmaz's (2007) concept of memo writing, "partial, preliminary, and provisional" (p.84) notes which are freely written and capture initial ideas for analysis. These memos provided a space to begin connecting the content of interviews with existing literature and theories. With these memos in mind, I grouped together my formalised codes to create three main themes for analysis: nourishing food, connection and care, and barriers to the life-making potential of community food provision.

3.6 Limitations

A significant limitation of this project is that its limited scope meant the level of participation with FFA also had to be limited. With more time and resources, I would have loved to collaborate with the group on all aspects of the research, including data collection and analysis, and this would have allowed for greater co-production with those with lived experience of the asylum process. Liamputtong (2020:128) suggests PAR projects which involve communities in all aspects of research often take longer than a year due to the time

commitment this collaboration needs. While my work was informed by the principles of PAR, and included as much collaboration with FFA as was possible with the resources available, the limited time available meant that unfortunately greater participation was not possible.

Finally, this research was somewhat limited by its small sample size. While five interviews did provide detailed data which I have been able to analyse in-depth, this small sample size will have limited my ability to capture greater diversity of experience within community food provision (Hesse-Biber, 2017:60). I acknowledge this study cannot capture the great variety of practices and support provided for people in the asylum process in community food provision in Scotland, but rather seeks to provide a snapshot of this.

4. Findings

This chapter presents the findings of research, exploring whether and how community food provision can be life-making for people in the asylum process. I begin by focusing on food itself, how it is sourced, shared, and enjoyed ('nourishing food'). I then discuss the connections fostered within food spaces, exploring care, community and solidarity ('connection and care'). Finally, I consider the difficulties raised by participants in providing support to people in the asylum process ('barriers to the life-making potential of community food provision').

4.1 Nourishing food

Access to nourishing food through community food provision was a key theme during interviews. Participants referred mostly to fresh fruit and vegetables and their importance amongst asylum-seeking communities.

The people from the asylum-seeking families do often really go for the veg [at the community larder]... at the end there's a table of fruit and veg, and you can just help yourself, whatever you want from that. And we found that they're like 'Ah there's loads of aubergines! Amazing! Like I'll have loads of them, I can use these!'
(community food provider 2)

Quite a lot of the food banks in and around Glasgow offer vegetables and fruit as a top up to the standard food parcels... one of the things that came back in the consultation with people who have no recourse to public funds was that they really value having fresh fruit and veg (community food provider 1)

In addition to accessing fruit and vegetables as part of food parcels and in community larders, food providers with community gardens also highlighted the value of accessing produce straight from the garden.

We've said to people, we've got fresh stuff growing in the garden, come along to the sessions, you can come and help yourself, and several people have done that, and they often use things in a slightly different way to the way that we would typically be growing and using stuff. So we've had people come and take and use lots of the leaves from our grapevine in their cooking, and also squash, pumpkin and courgette leaves, people have harvested them, and I think they stuff them and fry them... I'd say that's culturally appropriate for them, using it that way, having access to that (community food provider 2)

The importance of having access to fresh fruit and vegetables, which can be used to cook culturally familiar food, comes through strongly here. This resonates with GCP's research which found people in the asylum process value being able to cook for themselves using

fresh produce (n.d.:15). The joy found in being able to cook cultural dishes, be it stuffed vine leaves or aubergine dishes, is felt in the first quote ('Amazing!', 'I can use these!'). We can understand this through Palutan and Schmidt (2023) and Vallianatos and Raine's (2008) works, who both note the emotional nourishment and satisfaction found in culturally familiar food, in contrast to simply being physical sustenance. Furthermore, Lewis (2010) suggests that cultural food can be relaxing and a relief from "constant engagement with the unfamiliar" (p.585) experienced within the asylum process.

Within the context of the harmful UK asylum system, I suggest this access to nourishment is vital. As Mayblin, et al. (2020a), using Mbembe (2003), put it, impoverishing asylum support rates subject people to a death-like environment in which they are 'gradually wounded' and live in a 'state of injury'. This is underpinned by racial hierarchies of human worth which dehumanise people seeking asylum. As part of this, this group are often systematically denied access to nourishing food through insufficient financial support and/or poor-quality food in hotel accommodation. In this 'death-producing environment' (using Navarro's (2022) terms), being able to access and cook with fresh produce to create dishes which are familiar and comforting can arguably be considered life-making; physical and emotional nourishment can constitute a resistance to 'gradual wounding'.

It is important to acknowledge that systemic change and access to sufficient income would enable people to access fresh food more easily, and community food provision is arguably filling a gap created by government policy in providing it (Mayblin & James, 2020). While

this may be true, it does not take away from the importance of community food providers providing fresh food while asylum support rates remain as low as they are. In doing so they arguably resist the dehumanisation and harm within the asylum system through facilitating access to nourishment.

Furthermore, something which may be unique to community food provision is access to community garden spaces. Sudanese and Eritrean people seeking asylum in Sabar and Posner (2013)'s research noted they had less connection with food production in their new urban environment, which impacted food preparation methods and the meanings given to these: "the missing ingredient was the connection to the soil, taking an active part in growing, picking and harvesting" (p.208). Providing a space where people can access garden produce and "get their hands dirty, harvesting, planting, nurturing" (community provider 5) may be particularly powerful for people seeking asylum, facilitating greater connection to the food they eat in ways which may be more familiar to practices in their home countries. As community food provider 2 highlights, people use plants in different ways; having access to garden produce enables us to harvest produce in culturally familiar ways. We can consider this another form of nourishment and another way community food providers can facilitate life-making food practices. Finally, it is worth noting the value of gardening itself, in addition to the produce being grown. As one participant put it:

Being in the garden spaces provides a real sense of wellbeing... it's an emotionally calming kind of space (community food provider 5)

Having access to a space promoting mental wellbeing and calm, being in and tending to a community garden, arguably provides an opportunity for people to care for themselves and their community – something Navarro (2022) considers a life-making practice within an environment which dehumanises and degrades.

Next, I turn to opportunities for sharing cultural food and food knowledge within community food spaces. There were many examples of such exchange shared during interviews, including one participant who started a ‘spice library’ after being told to “spice their food up a bit!” (community food provider 4). I consider two examples here in more detail – first, one participant described a cooking session with cooks from Kurdish and Lebanese backgrounds:

They both had recipes for Biryanis, but they completely and violently disagreed, verbally of course, on whether or not an ingredient should be in it and whether it should be cooked or not. So let's make two different things, because I'm not making it that way, and the other person said I'm not making it that way... it was done in a very friendly way, but it was very much like a no, this is traditional, and it is a very traditional dish, and they just refuse to budge on their values, which shows the importance of food to people, we might be like, yeah, cool, it won't make a difference... but food is emotionally tied to everybody, but I guess when you've been through that dislocation process, I wonder whether there's a case of actually, no, this is a real marker of my identity and my roots and I'm not changing it... let's all make

our different versions of the same thing, using the same ingredients all done slightly differently, all tasting subtly different (community food provider 5)

The strength of feeling about food, subtle differences in preparation methods and tastes, and the importance of these for cultural identity is apparent in this example. In their research with people seeking asylum, Sabar and Posner (2013) note the importance of food preparation methods in making food “properly, ‘like at home’” (p.208), evoking memories of past meals through embodied acts to create a sense of ‘home’ in the present. This is echoed by other work emphasising the importance of smells and tastes of culturally familiar food in re-imagining or re-capturing ‘ordinary life’ in migrants’ home countries (Kohli, et al., 2010; Sutton, 2001). Building on the discussion above, we can understand culturally familiar food to be important for connecting with one’s cultural identity, in addition to being a source of joy and comfort.

This example also demonstrates a valuing of different food knowledges in the community food space; rather than disregarding these different practices as unimportant and saying ‘it won’t make a difference’, this community made space for both recipes to be made and celebrated. Within a context where people seeking asylum are systematically devalued and denied agency, whether being denied the ability to cook for themselves or the choice over where they live (Guma, et al., 2024), I suggest this is very powerful. Navarro (2022) considers the sharing and celebration of food knowledge within black communities a vital life-making practice, particularly where this knowledge has been historically undervalued.

Through creating space where cultural food practices and knowledge can be shared, valued and celebrated, community food providers can be said to support life-making practices amongst asylum-seeking communities.

Building on this, another example highlighted the value of giving food to others:

It was amazing spicy rice and chicken... it was a Nigerian woman who lives not so far, a couple of streets away from here, and we had... a huge blue bag full of frozen chicken legs, and I think she maybe she came at the end of community larder... we were a bit stuck with what to do with this, did we defrost them all at once, how did we get them out to people, and she said, well I could make you this from my country, I can bring it back in here and... she just brought in loads of delicious food a couple of days later... it was just this ad hoc food sharing... it felt like a real exchange. I think she was really proud to share and be able to give delicious food, and take pride in that (community food provider 2)

As well as again highlighting the value of sharing food knowledge, in this case ideas about how to use leftover food, this example also highlights the value of being able to share and give food from one's cultural traditions. In an environment where people in the asylum process are often constructed as passive 'receivers' of support (Darling, 2011:214), and may be limited in their ability to provide hospitality to others due to low levels of financial

support (Mayblin, et al., 2020b:122), being able to give can be powerful for challenging these narratives and positionings. We can understand this as an empowering, life-making practice within Navarro's (2022) framework. I do not wish to suggest that people in the asylum process never have opportunities to share with and give to others; indeed Mayblin, et al. (2020a:115) give examples of people pooling their limited resources to create and share cultural food to be enjoyed together. Rather, I suggest here that community food organisations can provide another space in which people may be able to share and give food.

Finally, I suggest we can understand these opportunities for cooking and sharing food together in light of Navarro's (2022) claim that "cooking, sharing recipes, and preparing dishes are ingenious ways of producing vitality, joy, and empowerment in spaces of terror and oppression" (p.214). Community food providers can arguably facilitate these feelings of vitality, joy and empowerment for people in the asylum process through creating spaces where people's recipes and food knowledges are valued and enjoyed, as in these examples.

4.2 Connection and care

The section above focused on access to and opportunities for sharing nourishing food. I now turn to opportunities for connection and care within community food spaces.

Many participants noted the acts of care which take place within community food provision – as one participant put it:

Food is such a powerful thing for so many reasons... it's a big thing for a sense of taking care of others and what it symbolizes in terms of compassion (community food provider 1)

A powerful example of this came up during one of the workshops run by FFA:

At the workshop was somebody with lived experience who had actually been to one of the food banks many years before, and they instantly recognized the volunteer from that food bank as being somebody who had been really kind to them, and came over and said, I remember you, you did this for me. And it was a very specific example of a breakfast food that her son had really wanted and her being very overwhelmed with everything she was facing and coming to the food bank, and telling that to this volunteer, who then ensured that there was a super-size pack of that particular breakfast food the next week, and just the fact that she had listened to her, recognized her need, and responded to it... it does show you that power of like a simple generosity, or an everyday kindness, and just how much that can stick with people (community food provider 1)

This act of seeing and responding to a specific need is an act of care (Tronto, 2015).

Following Mayblin and James (2020), we can consider this care a rejection of the dehumanisation of people seeking asylum; Mayblin and James (2020) argue that third sector organisations represent a group who refuse to accept government logics of people seeking asylum being left to 'let die' or 'let suffer'. Indeed, Tronto (2015) highlights that acts of care not only meet people's immediate needs, but also create conditions for them to "feel safe in the world" (p.4). As community food provider 1 highlights, food can be a strong symbol of care and compassion; Navarro (2022:213) points to the ways care for yourself and others can be expressed through food and the importance of this in contexts of racial oppression.

It is also worth noting the breakfast food in question here, Weetabix, to highlight that many different types of food are imbued with emotional significance – not just food associated with migrants' home countries, as discussed above. This relates to literature around the hybridity of migrant food practices and the importance of understanding notions of 'nourishing' food for people in the asylum process as varied and diverse (Lewis, 2010; Palutan & Schmidt, 2023; Vallianatos & Raine, 2008).

While acts of care within community food provision can be powerful, it is important to acknowledge power dynamics within this concept. In Darling's (2011) work exploring care in an asylum drop-in centre, some service users placed importance on acts of care, and feeling valued, in the context of an un-caring asylum system. However, Darling also highlights how care can be asymmetrical and reproduce dynamics of people seeking asylum as passive. It is

important, then, to acknowledge acts of care which also take place between those in the asylum process in community food spaces:

They have a volunteer who themselves is going through the asylum process and is the most welcoming wonderful lady... she will really make people feel like, come in, sit down, have a cup of tea... I think it's very powerful in theory to have somebody who has that experience there to greet you, if you are somebody who's in a similar situation (community food provider 1)

It's also really helpful if we get someone who maybe speaks their language and they can have a chat with them and make them feel comfortable, and let them know how to get help, how to get support, and I suppose it kind of reiterates to the person coming in that there is help there (community food provider 3)

These quotes highlight possibilities for people in the asylum process to both give and receive care within community food spaces, be it an offer of a cup of tea or sharing knowledge about sources of support in someone's own language. This is also in line with Tronto's (2015) conception of care as reciprocal. In this way, we can understand community food as spaces for care; within an un-caring asylum system which relies on dehumanising ideologies of 'let die' and 'let suffer', we can consider this life-making.

Another key finding relating to the theme of connection and care was possibilities for building community, from sharing food at community meals to volunteering opportunities.

Food banks will see some people who are in hotel accommodation, for example... they have very little communal space, they may not have anyone with them... and they're really down and really struggling, because it's a horrible environment for anybody to live in... I think, actually, it's really important, both offering an opportunity to the volunteer to feel part of a community and to feel sort of part of the place which they're in, but also there are impacts that it has on other people, and challenging misconceptions and prejudices and promoting integration, I think it can only be a really powerful and really good thing (community food provider 1)

We integrated him [volunteer seeking asylum] into part of our team, and he just became our family in a way and we always made sure that he was alright, anything he needed help with, he would come... aye he moved on and done really really well for himself, and aye I'm dead proud of him... it is definitely building some sort of community, I suppose in a way, growing our [local area] family in a way... aye, it makes me emotional (community food provider 3)

For these participants, volunteering opportunities can build community through supporting people within the asylum process to feel 'part of the place which they're in' and creating

relationships providing support in moments of need. This is especially powerful within the context of systemic isolation of people in the asylum process from communities. The Home Office policy of dispersal, where people seeking asylum are accommodated across the country on a no-choice basis, means many are moved away from their existing communities in a process described by Tazzioli (2020) as a “forced scattering” (p.522). This scattering arguably weakens organising and bonds of solidarity within communities. Teresa Piacentini (in Kerr, et al., 2021) highlights a powerful example from the day of the 2021 Kenmure Street protest, which saw a local community in Glasgow resist the dawn raid and detention of two men. On the same day, a homeless man was successfully detained by immigration enforcement; being disconnected from his community, he not able to access the same networks of support and solidarity. Piacentini says this demonstrates the importance of organisations who “connect people together” and argues they represent an “act of resistance” (Kerr, et al., 2021). Indeed, Stettin, et al. (2022) and Nourish Scotland and The Poverty Truth Commission (2018) both suggest community food providers can create strong communities through enabling people to feel nourished and supported. I suggest we can understand the bonds of support and belonging described by participants as an imagining of a different future (in Navarro’s (2022) terms) in which people seeking asylum are vital parts of our communities. In contrast to harmful policies intent on isolating this group, I suggest community building is a life-making practice.

Building on this theme of resistance through community building, I now consider possibilities for solidarity within community food spaces in more depth. In interviews, participants discussed learning about issues faced within the asylum system and

opportunities to advocate for the rights of people seeking asylum within their organisations. One participant described equipping their staff with the knowledge and ability to raise complaints about food provision in asylum hotel accommodation through Migrant Help, an organisation contracted by the Home Office:

We had Migrant Help come to one of our clusters for people with no recourse to public funds and talk a little bit about ... AIRE [Advice, Issue Reporting and Eligibility]... that was helpful for some of the food banks in terms of where hotel provision is not up to standards, being able to escalate issues... we could give food banks more time to do things like that, like where they see an injustice to challenge it... we felt that was quite a powerful thing to equip food banks with if they do need to raise some issues because that is one small thing that there is something you can do about within the larger system that might be quite frustrating (community food provider 1)

While community food provider 1 acknowledges the sometimes-limited resources of staff to escalate issues in this way, I suggest this highlights the *potential* for community food providers to advocate more holistically for the rights of people in the asylum process beyond food provision. Murphy (2020) found migrant-led food initiatives in Ireland fostered solidarity around other issues within the asylum system through “nourishing both the personal and political, in a way that evolves alternative socialities and networks that move to different forms of action” (p.806-7). Fostering knowledge within community food spaces

about how to challenge injustice may allow them to provide greater support and solidarity to people in the asylum process. This knowledge arguably strengthens communities and their potential for resisting the harmful, necropolitical logics and practices of the Home Office.

Turning to the FFA workshops, a key finding from this research was the powerful impact for community food providers of engaging with people with lived experience of the asylum process. I suggest this active engagement with FFA is a form of solidarity and can be considered life-making.

*One of the things I feel was so powerful was having co-produced resources that were delivered by people who have lived experience and there's no substitute for that
(community food provider 1)*

*I think a lot of people are shocked at the system... some people would be like 'oh that should change' and 'we'd quite like to campaign'... I think it's just a wakeup call for people to realise what the asylum system is like and what they have to go through
(community food provider 4)*

We got a printout thing, it was the preferred foods from people was on the bottom of it, possibly the most useful bit of information I've ever received, genuinely... because obviously that had been done by people who have been in that process, and are telling us what they would like... I've got one pinned in my food bank and I carry one in my bag in case anybody wants to see, honestly the amount of times I've photographed it and sent it to people (community food provider 3)



'Community Centre' and 'Community Pantry' images used in the FFA workshops. Images were co-produced by FFA in collaboration with Martha Adonai Williams, with illustrations by Kaitlin Chan.

These workshops included information about the asylum process, difficulties faced within it, and activities around dignity within food provision. They were run entirely by people with lived experience of seeking asylum. The quotes above highlight the desire amongst community food providers who attended to listen to, actively engage with, and share the knowledge gained from FFA. There were also significant changes within organisations following the workshop:

The workshop was a brilliant way for breaking down barriers, really changing people's perception... I think after the workshop you can definitely see amongst the volunteers a much less antagonistic approach to working with everyone which is brilliant... [it also] really pushed [staff member] to look about transitioning it to a pantry, because she felt like it would offer people more dignity (food provider 2)

Through this active engagement, I suggest community food providers are collectively working towards and envisioning alternative futures in which people in the asylum process can thrive (using Navarro's (2022) terms) – including having equal, dignified access to nourishing food. This is in direct contrast to the 'let die' and 'let suffer' necropolitical logic of

the UK asylum system. Navarro (2022) considers imaginings of alternative futures an important life-making practice, particularly where black communities can enact self-determination and autonomy to imagine futures for themselves which have historically been denied. Through taking seriously the experiences and ideas of people with lived experience of the asylum process, within a system which systematically attempts to deny this group a voice (Phillimore, 2018), I suggest community food providers can support and collectively work towards a future where the lives of people in the asylum process are treated with value and dignity.

4.3 Barriers to the life-making potential of community food provision

I have argued that community food spaces can be life-making through facilitating access to nourishing food and opportunities to share it, and connection and care within communities. I now suggest, however, that we should proceed with caution and understand this as a life-making *potential* due to the difficulties which remain within community food provision.

First, participants highlighted they cannot always provide the most nourishing or culturally appropriate food, particularly when they rely on donations and food surplus:

We are set up essentially to be crisis intervention to ensure people don't go hungry... do you want anybody living off bank food? It's tins, it's not great (community food provider 3)

We rely on donations of food so there's a couple of barriers there for making everything as culturally appropriate as people would like (community food provider 4)

This highlights that continued work around sourcing food may be beneficial to community food providers – one practice which stood out during research was the value of community gardens. It also points to the differences between organisations providing emergency food aid and those providing more holistic community spaces. As one of the participants whose organisation provides emergency food aid put it:

I'm probably the only person in Glasgow that's working to lose our job (community food provider 3)

This sentiment was shared by the other participant whose organisation uses the same model. While those providing emergency food aid aim to end the need for their services, those in more holistic community organisations are seeking to widen their reach and

provide spaces where people can come together to enjoy, grow, and learn about food (discussed further below). This speaks to Nourish Scotland and The Poverty Truth Commission's (2018) work to promote food support based on justice rather than charity, and Stettin, et al.'s (2022) argument that social supermarkets rooted in community development are better placed for empowering communities. As such, I suggest holistic community spaces may have a greater potential for facilitating life-making practices.

The second difficulty some participants expressed was tension between white community members and community members of colour in their organisation:

One of the main cooks... I think he's Indian and he makes always curry, really amazing curries, and they go into the deli counter, but often that gets pushed back at by some of the white Scottish staff like, where's things that people want... the worry is the problem is not the food or how it tastes, but something else (community food provider 5)

It should not be taken for granted that sharing food between different cultures is always a positive experience; Slocum's (2006) research found many instances of white privilege and racism within community food spaces. It is important to recognise that community food provision in the UK exists within a wider context of racial and anti-migrant tensions, espoused by governments and media (Cooper, et al., 2021). Indeed, de Noronha (2019)

highlights how government rhetoric and policy around ‘controlling’ immigration shape (and in turn are shaped by) localised, everyday forms of racism. While these wider racial tensions may seep into everyday interactions within community food provision, I suggest these can also be spaces for resisting and challenging racism:

Some people didn't respond the best, or even well, to the training [FFA workshop] and have since been subjected, as it were, to more training and awareness in the area, trying to introduce an increased empathy and understanding (community food provider 5)

Participants who experienced racialised tensions in their organisations also highlighted their will to challenge these through further trainings and awareness-raising. Some noted the value of food spaces, including the FFA workshops, for doing this:

I think it's [the FFA workshop] a really powerful way of hearing people's lived experiences directly and in a context which isn't necessarily purely about that, can have a lot more impact sometimes than us being like 'right volunteers we're going to go on an anti-racism training'... 'oh that's not for me' (community food provider 2)

This speaks to literature highlighting the power of food, as something universal and not always overtly political, for bridging differences. Amram (2019) uses Avieli's (2016) concept 'gastromediation' to argue that speaking about and sharing food can help with the 'digestion' of difficult conversations. Amram suggests the intimacy of sharing food, combined with it being seen as 'nonthreatening', softens people to engage in difficult conversations and challenge existing power structures. As community food provider 2 highlights, people may be more willing to engage in conversations around racism in spaces which are not seen as overtly political.

Continued work is needed to challenge racism within community food provision; this discussion highlights the need to understand these spaces as *potentially* life-making, this is not a given. However, I have argued here and in the sections above that community food spaces can equally provide powerful opportunities for bridging differences and resisting racism.

Finally, some participants raised difficulties with reaching people in the asylum process and felt they could be supporting more people.

I feel like there are potentially asylum seekers and refugees who live within our area... I just feel like we could be offering this support to more people... but I don't know how to reach people (community food provider 2)

We certainly have an issue... of getting contact with the asylum community... if we can't get through to them, if we can't find them, then we can't get them into the community to enable them to be the best they can be and to solve some of the problems they face in terms of food inequality (community food provider 5)

Participants' desires to support more people in the asylum process arguably reinforces what I have claimed above, that community food provision has the potential to provide valuable, life-making support to people seeking asylum. However, it identifies further work needed to fully realise this potential, namely stronger connections with asylum-seeking communities in their local areas. I address this final point further when discussing the implications of this research in the concluding chapter.

5. Conclusion

I have argued that community food provision has the potential to be life-making (in Navarro's (2022) terms) for people in the asylum process, but that more work is needed to fully realise this potential. In the previous chapter, I outlined multiple examples of life-making practices already taking place within community food provision in Scotland, organised around the themes 'nourishing food' and 'connection and care'. The first theme built on existing literature around the importance of food for people seeking asylum for accessing feelings of 'home', comfort and nourishment. Considering this within the necropolitical UK asylum system, I argued that access to fresh produce and opportunities to share food with others are life-making. I suggested that community food providers can facilitate spaces where cultural food knowledge is valued, shared and enjoyed. The second theme explored care, community and solidarity within community food spaces and argued these constitute a resistance to the dehumanising 'let die' and 'let suffer' ideologies underpinning the UK asylum system. It explored food as a symbol of care and the importance of community food provision for building connections and ultimately stronger communities. It also considered workshops run by FFA and community food providers' engagement with them as an example of solidarity, a collective imagining of alternative futures where people seeking asylum can thrive. However, this research also identified barriers to the life-making potential of community food provision: difficulties sourcing nourishing food, racial tensions within community food spaces, and the disconnect between community food providers and asylum-seeking communities. While many food providers rely on donations and food surplus, other methods of sourcing produce raised in this research – namely, produce grown in community gardens – present alternative possibilities

for provision which could be explored further. I also argued that organisations providing more holistic community support may be better placed to facilitate life-making practices, in contrast to emergency food aid whose focus is more on crisis intervention. This research highlighted that the racial tensions which exist across society also exist within community food spaces and impact day to day experiences within them. While important to acknowledge, it is also important to highlight the ways community food practitioners are continually seeking to challenge this through trainings and awareness-raising, the FFA workshops being one example. I argued that food, as something universal and not overtly political, can be a powerful bridge across differences; community food organisations are valuable spaces where this racial tension may be resisted. Finally, this research identified feelings amongst community food providers that they could be reaching and supporting more people seeking asylum. I return to this issue below when I discuss implications of the research in more detail.

One of the limitations of this research was the somewhat limited participation of those with lived experience of the asylum process. The extent of FFA's participation within the PAR-informed approach was deemed the most ethical for the scope of this research project. However, I acknowledge that involving the group in more aspects of research would have resulted in a project better informed by lived experience. Related to this, in focusing on the perspectives of community food providers, this research sought to fill a gap in research looking at third sector organisations' responses to destitution within the asylum process (Mayblin & James, 2020:75). While doing so has been valuable, researching experiences of those seeking asylum alongside this may have allowed for a fuller understanding of the life-making potential of community food provision. This could be a fruitful avenue for future

research. Finally, the small sample size of this research makes it difficult to know how widely applicable its findings are. Research into more community food providers across different locations would be valuable for exploring a greater range of practices (as well as difficulties) and considering how provision may differ across the UK.

In sharing this research with the community food providers who participated and FFA, I hope to highlight the value of some existing practices within community food provision and present ideas for future development. In particular, I hope this work highlights the importance of access to nourishing food for people seeking asylum and the connections community food spaces can foster. I hope food providers find ideas which inspire them to continue facilitating life-making practices within their community spaces and perhaps overcome some of the difficulties they experience. Already, after speaking to the FFA project lead about community food providers reporting difficulties accessing asylum-seeking communities, FFA have been exploring ways they can support workshop participants to build stronger connections with those seeking asylum. While they acknowledged some difficulties with this due to many people within the asylum process finding out about available support services through word of mouth, they have identified some useful avenues for organisations to explore. The group have recommended organisations reach out to local asylum/refugee groups working in their area and hosting these groups at community meals and other food services. They have also suggested recruiting volunteers through existing volunteer fair events aimed at people in the asylum process. FFA is offering support to any interested community food providers to build these connections. In addition to sharing this dissertation with them, I will also produce a report for the group focusing on feedback about their workshops given during interviews. I hope this can be used to

demonstrate the value of the group's work in reporting and future funding applications and support its continuation. The report will also provide some insight into the landscape of community food provision in Scotland at the time of writing and therefore other potential avenues for FFA to explore. Taken together, I hope this research is a useful contribution to all the existing work within communities in Scotland to better food provision for people seeking asylum and create community food spaces which foster strong, nourished communities.

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Appendix A – Ethical approval

Ethics Committee for Non-Clinical Research Involving Human Subjects

Notification of Ethics Application Outcome – UG and PGT Student Applications

Application Details

Undergraduate Student Research Ethics Application Postgraduate Student Research Ethics Application

Application Number: PGT/SPS/2024/080/GMSJ

Applicant's Name: Enter text here

Project Title: Food, Dignity, and Nourishment: Community food provisions for people seeking asylum in Glasgow

Application Status: Fully Approved

Date of Review: 17/06/2024

Start Date of Approval 17/06/2024 End Date of Approval 02/12/2024

NB: Only if the applicant has been given approval can they proceed with their data collection with effect from the date of approval.

Recommendations (where changes are required)

Where changes are required by reviewers all applicants must respond in the relevant boxes to the recommendations of the Committee and provide this as the Resubmission Document to explain the changes you have made to the application as well as amending the documents. **Changes to the application form or supporting documents should be highlighted either in block highlight or in red coloured text to assist the reviewers.**

All resubmitted application documents should then be provided.

Approval Subject to Amendments means that the applicant can proceed with data collection with effect from the date of approval, but amendments must be fulfilled.

Amendments Subject to SEF should be submitted to ethics administrator.

If your application is rejected a new application must be submitted to the ethics administrator. Where recommendations are provided, they should be responded to and

this document provided as part of the new application. A new reference number will be generated.

REVIEWER MAJOR RECOMMENDATIONS	APPLICANT RESPONSE

REVIEWER MINOR RECOMMENDATIONS	APPLICANT RESPONSE

ADDITIONAL REVIEWER COMMENTS	APPLICANT RESPONSE
Many thanks for replying to all comments so clearly. This application has now been fully approved. All the best with your research.	

Appendix B – Participant information sheet (for participants)

Participant Information Sheet

Title of study

Food, dignity, and nourishment: Community food provision for people seeking asylum in Glasgow

Researcher details

Name of principal researcher:

Contact for principal researcher:

Name of research supervisor:

Project details

I am conducting this research for my master's dissertation in the programme Global Migrations and Social Justice at the University of Glasgow (College of Social Sciences).

Invitation

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether you want to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Below, you will find answers to questions about what this research will involve. Thank you for reading this.

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FAQs

1. What is the purpose of the study?

This study will explore community food provision for people seeking asylum in Glasgow. As people in the asylum process receive very little financial support from the government, many of them turn to services such as food banks and food pantries to access food. However, some have reported difficulties in using these services as they do not always feel they meet the needs of people seeking asylum.

The Food for All group at Govan Community Project has been organising workshops for community food providers to explore these issues and share ideas about how services can better meet the needs of people seeking asylum. All members of the Food for All group have lived experience of seeking asylum. This study seeks to understand the impact of these workshops on the organisations who have attended them. It aims to provide feedback for the

Food for All group, so they can improve future workshops, and which they can use in funding applications to support the continuation of their work.

The study will ask questions about community food providers' services, what they thought of the Food for All workshops, and if they have been able to make any changes following the workshops. It will also ask about the different meanings we attach to food, including how food can help us build community, experience joy, and feel physically and emotionally nourished.

Research for this study will take place in July 2024. The project will be completed by December 2024. The study will be a collaboration between me (the researcher) and the Food for All group, who will be involved in planning interview questions.

2. Why have I been chosen?

You have been invited to participate in this research because you attended a 'Dignity in Practice' workshop run by Govan Community Project's Food for All group. This may have been online or in person. You have received this invite because you consented to be contacted following your participation in this workshop.

I am aiming to conduct interviews with 8-12 people for this research. These will be individual interviews with me (the researcher) and you will not be involved with any other participants.

3. Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you decide to take part, you are free to withdraw any time before or during our research interview without giving a reason. You are free to withdraw your participation and any data you have supplied up to 2 weeks after our interview has taken place without giving a reason. Choosing to take part, refusing to take part, or withdrawing from research after you have started, will not jeopardise any relationship you have with the Food for All group or Govan Community Project in any way.

4. What will happen to me if I take part?

If you decide to take part, you will be invited to an interview with me (the researcher). The interview will last approximately 45 minutes to 1 hour. In the interview, I will ask you some questions about your experiences and your views. The interviews will take place in July 2024, and we will agree a time together that is convenient to you.

The interview will take place online using Zoom and will be recorded. The interview will be video and audio recorded; the video recording will be deleted immediately after the interview and only the audio file will be kept. It will be stored securely on the University of Glasgow OneDrive platform until it has been transcribed. After this, the audio file will be destroyed and the interview transcript will be stored securely on the University of Glasgow OneDrive platform until the end of this research project in December 2024, when the file will be destroyed.

If you do not have access to Zoom, we can arrange an interview over the telephone or in person. In person interviews could take place at the University of Glasgow or in a space in your organisation.

5. Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

All information which is collected about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. You will be identified by a pseudonym and any information about you will have your name and contact information removed so that you cannot be recognised from it. Neither you, nor your organisation, will be identified in any publication. No identifying features will be shared, and you and your organisation will be given a pseudonym such as 'food pantry 1' or 'community food provider 1'. It will be stated that your organisation is in Glasgow and the rough size of your organisation (i.e. small, medium, large) may be stated if it is considered relevant for analysis.

All data collected during research will be stored securely on the University of Glasgow OneDrive platform and only I (the researcher) will have access to this. Your personal information and research data will not be shared with Govan Community Project, which means they will not know who has been involved with this research. All research data will be destroyed at the end of this research project, in December 2024. All data will be electronic and will be destroyed through the deletion of files.

Please note that assurances on confidentiality will be strictly adhered to unless evidence of wrongdoing or potential harm is uncovered. In such cases the University may be obliged to contact relevant statutory bodies/agencies.

6. What will happen to the results of the research study?

Written findings of this research study will be presented in my final master's dissertation and a short report. These will both be available in September 2024. Both the dissertation and report will be made available to you, Govan Community Project, and the University of Glasgow. Govan Community Project may choose to share findings with organisations including funding bodies and Scottish Government. Findings may be shared with funding bodies for the purpose of supporting a funding application for the Food for All group. Findings may be shared with Scottish Government as a means of influencing policy around food provision.

The dissertation and report are likely to include direct quotes from interviews. Quotes will be anonymised and de-contextualised in any written publication. Only I (the researcher) will have access to full transcripts from interviews, and these will not be shared with Govan Community Project. I will check whether you are happy for direct quotes to be used in the ways described above at the end of your interview. If you decide after the interview that you want to withdraw the data you have provided, I would politely request you do this no later than 2 weeks after our interview. This is so I have time to adjust my written findings. You are welcome to contact me any time with any questions about how your data or quotes will be used.

Neither you, nor your organisation, will be identified in any publication. No identifying features will be shared, and you and your organisation will be given a pseudonym such as

'food pantry 1' or 'community food provider 1'. It will be stated that your organisation is in Glasgow and the rough size of your organisation (i.e. small, medium, large) may be stated if it is considered relevant for analysis.

7. Who is organising the research?

This research is being conducted by me (the researcher) on behalf of the University of Glasgow and Govan Community Project. I am both a master's student at the University of Glasgow and a staff member of Govan Community Project. At Govan Community Project, I work within the Advice & Advocacy Team as an Asylum Support Caseworker. The main contact at Govan Community Project for this research collaboration is (Food for All group co-ordinator).

8. Who has reviewed the study?

This study has been reviewed by the School of Social and Political Sciences Ethics Forum.

9. Contact for Further Information

Please contact me via email if you have any questions or if you would like more information. You can also contact (Food for All group co-ordinator) via email if you have any questions about this collaboration.

If you have any concerns regarding the conduct of the research project you can contact the School of Social and Political Sciences Ethics Officer via email: socpol-pgt-ethics@glasgow.ac.uk

Appendix C – Consent form (for participants)

Consent Form

Title of Project

Food, dignity, and nourishment: Community food provision for people seeking asylum in Glasgow

Name of Researcher and Supervisor

Researcher:

Supervisor:

Basic consent

- I confirm that I have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary. I understand that before or during the interview I am free to withdraw at any time without explanation. I understand that I can withdraw my participation up to two weeks after my interview has taken place without explanation.
- I understand that my participation or withdrawal in this research will not impact any existing relationship I have with Govan Community Project or the Food for All Group.

Confidentiality and anonymity

- I acknowledge that participants and their organisation will be referred to by pseudonym.

Data usage and storage

- I understand all names and other material likely to identify individuals will be anonymised.
- I understand the material will be treated as confidential and kept in secure storage at all times.
- I understand the material will be destroyed once the project is complete.
- I understand research findings may be used in future publications by Govan Community Project, both print and online.

Privacy notice

Appendix D – Participant information sheet (for Food for All group members)

Participant Information Sheet

Title of study

Food, dignity, and nourishment: Community food provision for people seeking asylum in Glasgow

Researcher details

Name of principal researcher:

Contact for principal researcher:

Name of research supervisor:

Project details

I am conducting this research for my master's dissertation in the programme Global Migrations and Social Justice at the University of Glasgow (College of Social Sciences).

Invitation

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether you want to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Below, you will find answers to questions about what this research will involve. Thank you for reading this.

--

FAQs

1. What is the purpose of the study?

This study will explore community food provision for people seeking asylum in Glasgow. Firstly, it seeks to understand the impact of workshops run by Govan Community Project's Food for All group on the community food providers who attended the workshops. It aims to provide feedback for the Food for All group which can be used to evaluate their workshops, in funding applications to support the continuation of their work, and in future campaigning around food provision for people in the asylum process. It also provides another opportunity for community food providers to reflect on their practice and the ideas covered in Food for All's workshops.

Secondly, it will ask how food can help us build community, experience joy, and feel physically and emotionally nourished – and how community food providers can contribute to this. In a political environment which is so often harmful for people in the asylum process, this study will explore the potential of good food to create more nourishing lives in contrast to the hostility of government policy.

To answer these questions, this study will consist of interviews with community food providers who attended a Food for All workshop. They will be asked about their experiences of the workshops and any changes they may have made following them. They will also be asked questions about their organisational practices and how these might create community, joy, and nourishment for and with people in the asylum process.

Interview questions will be created in collaboration with the Food for All group, informed by Participatory Action Research principles. This collaboration aims to ensure the research is informed by those with lived experience of the asylum process and expertise in campaigning for improved food provision within the asylum process. This collaboration will be important in making sure the research is as useful as possible to the Food for All group, and contributes to their important, ongoing work.

Research for this study will take place in July 2024. The project will be completed by December 2024.

2. Why have I been chosen?

You have been invited to participate in this research because you are a member of Govan Community Project's Food for All group.

3. Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you decide to take part, you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. Choosing to take part, refusing to take part, or withdrawing from research after you have started, will not jeopardise any relationship you have with the Food for All group, Govan Community Project, or any organisations who participated in the Food for All workshops in any way.

4. What will happen to me if I take part?

If you decide to take part, you will be invited to a one-off session with me (the researcher), (the Food for All project co-ordinator), and other Food for All group members. In the session, we will work together to create questions for interviews with community food providers, focusing on what feedback you would like to get about the Food for All workshops. I will ask the questions we create together to community food providers in an interview.

You are welcome to take breaks at any point during the session, as you need. You are also free to leave the collaboration session at any time. Not taking part, or leaving part way through our session, will not impact your relationship with Food for All group, Govan Community Project, or any organisations who participated in the Food for All workshops in any way.

This session will take place at a time and location which is convenient for group members. This could be either in the Govan Community Project office, another public meeting space, or online. The session will last around 45 minutes – 1 hour.

The session will not be recorded in any way, and I will not record any of your personal information.

5. Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

Our collaboration session will not be recorded in any way, and I will not record any of your personal information during the session. The only people present in our collaboration session will be me (the researcher), Food for All project staff and other Food for All group members.

In written publications following this research study, it will be stated that the research involved collaboration with the Food for All group to create interview questions, but our collaboration session will not be discussed in detail. None of your personal information or any identifying features about you will be included in any publications.

6. What will happen to the results of the research study?

Written findings of this research study will be presented in my final master's dissertation and a short report. These will both be available in September 2024. Both the dissertation and report will be made available to you, Govan Community Project, community food providers participating in the research, and the University of Glasgow. Govan Community Project/Food for All may choose to share findings with organisations including funding bodies and Scottish Government. Findings may be shared with funding bodies for the purpose of supporting a funding application for the Food for All group. Findings may be shared with Scottish Government as a means of influencing policy around food provision.

It will be stated in the dissertation and report that the research involved collaboration with the Food for All group to create interview questions, but our collaboration session will not be discussed in detail. None of your personal information or any identifying features about you will be included in any publications. If you have any concerns about this, you can speak to me (the researcher) during the session or (Food for All group co-ordinator) during or after the session.

7. Who is organising the research?

This research is being conducted by me (the researcher) on behalf of the University of Glasgow and Govan Community Project. I am both a master's student at the University of Glasgow and a staff member of Govan Community Project. At Govan Community Project, I work within the Advice & Advocacy Team as an Asylum Support Caseworker. The main contact at Govan Community Project for this research collaboration is (Food for All group co-ordinator).

8. Who has reviewed the study?

This study has been reviewed by the School of Social and Political Sciences Ethics Forum.

9. Contact for Further Information

Please contact me () via email if you have any questions or if you would like more information. You can also speak to (Food for All group co-ordinator) if you have any questions or concerns. 's email is.

If you have any concerns regarding the conduct of the research project you can contact the School of Social and Political Sciences Ethics Officer via email: socpol-pgt-ethics@glasgow.ac.uk

Appendix E – Consent form (for Food for All group members)

Consent Form

Title of Project

Food, dignity, and nourishment: Community food provision for people seeking asylum in Glasgow

Name of Researcher and Supervisor

Researcher:

Supervisor:

Basic consent

- I confirm that I have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.
- I understand that my participation or withdrawal in this research will not impact any existing relationship I have with the Food for All Group, Govan Community Project, or any organisations who participated in the Food for All workshops.

Confidentiality and anonymity

- I acknowledge that none of my personal details will be collected during this research.
- I acknowledge that written publications following this research will say that the researcher collaborated with the Food for All group, but that none of my personal information, nor any identifying features about me, will be included in any publications.

Data usage and storage

- I understand that this collaboration session will not be recorded in any way.

Consent clause

I agree / do not agree (delete as applicable) to take part in the above study.

Name of Participant Signature

Date

Name of Researcher Signature

Date

Appendix F – Interview guide

Introducing the community food provider

- Could you tell me about your organisation and what type of food support you provide?
- Do you have a sense of how many people in the asylum process access your service?

Experiences of ‘Dignity in Practice’ workshops

- Have there been any changes in your organisation or service as a result of the workshop?
- Do you remember what your next step commitment, made at the end of the workshop, was?
 - Were you able to put this into practice?
 - Were there any challenges you faced putting these into practice?
- Have there been any unexpected outcomes or experiences for you since the workshop?

Community food provision as life-making

- Does your organisation provide any opportunities for people seeking asylum at the moment? For example, volunteering?
 - Why is it important for you to have these opportunities?
- From looking at your organisation online I can see you have [XXX] community activities – why is it important for you to have these community activities within your organisation?
- What discussions have you had in your organisation about where your food comes from?
- What does providing cultural and religious food look like within your organisation?
- What sort of environment do you try to create for people accessing your organisation?
- If you had infinite resources, is there anything else you would like to do within your organisation to continue enhancing the dignity of asylum seekers?

Final comment

- Is there anything we haven’t discussed that has come up for you during this conversation, or anything you would like to add?