



# Conceptualising food banking in the UK: A mixed studies systematic review and directed content analysis

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Food banks have become commonplace in the UK as an emergency response to food insecurity. Yet, their inability to provide a long-term solution has initiated criticism within existing literature. Given that the cost of living crisis has left even more people food insecure, there is an urgent need to further understand the full experience of food bank use, from drivers to impacts. Hence, this systematic review explored 3 key research questions: why are food insecure individuals turning to food banks?; what are the limitations of the food banking model?; and what are the impacts for those accessing these services?

The search term was developed from preliminary reading and 221 titles were identified using Web of Science, SCOPUS, PubMed, and CINHALL Plus databases. 104 duplicates were removed. Title and abstract screening resulted in exclusion of 58 articles. Full texts of the remaining articles were screened for inclusion and reference lists were reviewed, giving a final sample of 42 articles. Data was extracted and analysed through directed content analysis, in which theory is used to derive analytic themes.

Failures of market and government were widely reported to drive food bank use (n = 30) in line with Weisbrod's (1977) market failure/government failure theory. Inherent insufficiencies, and paternalistic and particularistic tendencies represented key limitations of the food bank model (n = 29) in line with Salamon's (1987) voluntary failure theory, yet amateurism was not well represented. Finally, with impacts of food bank use derived from Radimer, Olson and Campbell's (1990) defining domains of food insecurity, negative health and psychological impacts were widely reported (n = 29), yet social impacts were largely positive.

This review highlights the structural drivers and significant limitations of food bank use. New solutions are required which promote positive health and psychological impacts to food bank clients.

## References

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3. Weisbrod BA (1977) *The voluntary non-profit sector* Lexington, MA Lexington Books.