



# MONITORING SOCIAL INCLUSION AND THE RIGHT TO FOOD AND NUTRITION IN EUROPE

MODULE 3  
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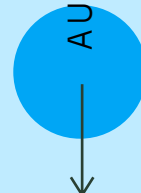
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**PART 1**  
INTRODUCTION



Food insecurity, ‘the inability to acquire or consume an adequate or sufficient quantity of food in socially acceptable ways, or the uncertainty that one will be able to do so (Dowler et al., 2001) is a growing and unevenly distributed problem throughout Europe. Evidence from the UK suggests that food insecurity affects some demographics more than others. For instance, single women or some ethnic minorities are more likely to experience right to food violations than other segments of the population. Yet social differences and discrimination rarely come up in discussions about food insecurity or the right to food in Europe.

However, there has been a significant amount of research and case studies examining the relationship between socially constructed differences, particularly, race, gender, intersectionality and food insecurity and the food system in general in North America (Nasser, 2021; Sbicca & Myers, 2017). Meanwhile in the UK, there is some emerging yet limited academic research on how food insecurity relates to questions of race. Elsewhere on the European continent, the situation is much worse, where there is little to no discussion of socially constructed differences and food insecurity. Similarly, discussions around the right to food in Europe lack any significant engagement with marginalisation or discrimination based on gender, race, sexuality, intersectionality, or other supposed markers of difference. Hence, the social-inclusion dimension of the right to food is underdeveloped.

This module is therefore designed to explore the connections between social difference and right to food violations in the UK. We focus on the UK rather than the other nations within Europe for two main reasons. Firstly, some initial research already exists that critically explores difference and discrimination within the context of the right to food in the UK, and we hope to build upon this foundation. Secondly, the right to food campaign and approach in the UK is arguably more developed than in other countries in Europe. Thus, it seems like an opportune moment to create and mobilise a monitoring framework to assess social difference in the UK to move the right to food towards a truly socially inclusive direction.

Therefore, this module examines the relationship between socially constructed differences and right to food violations. Such an analysis is highly necessary because there is a generalised lack of intentional literature or guidance on how the right to food can monitor violations from a socially inclusive perspective. Consequently, ways to create an inclusive right-to-food monitoring practice in the UK are also suggested herein.

### *The erasure of race, gender, and other axes of difference*

At present, the narratives on the right to food and its violations have arguably erased questions of difference, in particular on race, racialised gender, as well as other axes of social differences. Before developing a socially inclusive methodology for the right to food, we must first understand some of the reasons behind the disconnection between the right to food and race and other axes of difference. It could be argued that the lack of theoretical discussion on the right to food in relation to questions of difference can be partly, if not fully, explained by the way that gender, race, intersectionality, and difference in general are rarely referenced to understand structures of power and policy in Europe (Boulila, 2019; Lentin, 2004, 2014, 2016).

The sidelining of race in policy discussion is a product of the initiative to erase race from European thought and discourse. The European tendency to overlook race is complex and historical. For this reason, the reader is directed to the work of Stefaine Bouila, Alan Lentin, and Cederic Robison for a deeper dive into this topic. To summarise nevertheless, the idea of race has historically been mobilised by Europe to support nationalism and to justify slavery and colonialism by positioning European as white, civilized, and superior; while the rest of the world was painted as culturally and racially inferior, or even non-human (Grosfoguel, 2011; Said, 1995; Wynter, 2003).

Ideas regarding race in Europe began to evolve during World War II in opposition to the Nazis' interpretation of race. In the wake of the Holocaust, scientific evidence from the 1978 UNESCO Statement on Race and Racial Prejudice declared that race has no biological foundation, and thus race cannot be used to explain human differences (Boulila, 2019). Following this statement by UNESCO, Europe abandoned the idea of racial hierarchies and adopted a post-racial discourse. The post-racial position entails that race is elided as a concept because it does not have any scientific merit (Boulila, 2019). Consequently, race is no longer viewed as a credible analytical category, and thus is seldom brought up in conversations around structures and policies.

Despite this post-racial posturing, European nations do generally recognise that racism and other forms of discrimination still pose a problem. This acknowledgement has given rise to a range of anti-discrimination and hate crime laws. Such legislation is premised on the idea that if racism does occur in Europe, it is found within individuals and not in structures of power or policies (Boulila, 2019). The logic that racism is no longer connected to state structures and policies allows individuals who harbour racist thoughts to be viewed as pathological, abhorrent, isolated and in need of education to reverse their errors of thought. In simpler terms, tackling racism is considered a matter of educating individuals, rather than examining and transforming structures.

However, critics of the post-racial narrative have argued that while indeed race has no scientific basis, it still matters and continues to characterise Europe at a structural level. Bouila (2019) has argued that eliding race allows Europe to distance itself from its past and positions the continent not only as post-racial but also as post-gender and post-homophobic. By doing so the productive and performa-

tive power of race, gender, and heteronormativity, which has real material effects, is denied. To illustrate this problem, the Black Lives Matter movement has clearly demonstrated that Europe continues to be home to racism. Furthermore, discrimination in employment, education, policing, the criminal justice system, healthcare, and racial harassment and violence remain stubbornly persistent across Europe and clearly indicate that race intersecting with gender still matters despite race having no scientific foundation (Equinox, 2021; Lentin, 2014). Bouliia (2019) takes a critical approach to race and draws on Black and women of colour feminism to argue that whilst race has no scientific basis, rather than abandoning race as an analytical category, race, gender, and sexuality ought to be analysed intersectionally to reveal the continuing productive and performative power of race and its material outcomes in Europe.

Drawing on critiques of post-racial, post-gender, and post-homophobic perspectives which deny the performative power of difference and its material outcomes, this module aims to develop an intersectional lens to explore the ways in which difference and food insecurity correlate. By using the UK as a case study to shed light on the relationship between difference and food insecurity, it also argues that an intersectional framework is essential to guarantee the right to food model remains inclusive, rather than becoming raceless and genderless and bereft of other axes of difference. In other words, centring race within an intersectional framework could ensure that white hetero-patriarchal-ableist norms do not consciously or unconsciously come to dominate right to food analysis and interventions.

## PART 2

DEVELOPING A SOCIALLY INCLUSIVE  
RIGHT TO FOOD APPROACH



It could be argued that right to food monitoring is currently conceptualised in a way that does not genuinely engage with socially constructed differences, such as ethnicity, gender, disability, and other axes of difference. Its theoretical foundation fails to integrate difference into its framework and analysis: the approach to the right to food reflects the aforementioned post-racial, post-gender, post-homophobic discourse. This post-racial attitude insinuates that since race has been proven to lack scientific credibility, it is therefore no longer a factor in policy or structures of the state. In the post-racial, post-gender, and post-homophobic framework, the material and performative power of patriarchy, heteronormativity, ableism, racism, and various intersectional formations are therefore marginalised, or not even recognised in mainstream food insecurity and right to food analysis.

In order to counter this marginalisation, a socially inclusive approach to monitoring the right to food is necessary to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the ways in which the right to food is violated in differentiated manners across different demographics of society. And importantly, this would also reveal how these violations are structural in nature. Developing a socially inclusive right to food monitoring model is nevertheless a complex and thoroughly contextual activity. The process would necessarily vary across nations and regions, depending on the local context. However, there are number of steps that can be taken universally to move monitoring of the right to food in a socially inclusive direction. The steps to support social inclusion include, but are not limited to, the following:

## STEP 1 →

### **RECOGNISE RACE, GENDER, HETERONORMATIVITY, AND OTHER AXES OF DIFFERENCE**

An inclusive right to food approach arguably starts by recognising that the UK and Europe are constructed through a post-racial, post-gender, and post-homophobic lens. Similarly, disability and other axes of difference are also ignored as sources of oppression, discrimination, and marginalisation. By acknowledging the post-racial, post-gender, and post-homophobic context, which does not fully address structural and intersectional issues, monitoring is impelled towards examining and exploring the relationship between constitutive institutional discrimination and right to food violations.



## STEP 2 →

### **CONSTRUCT AN INTERSECTIONAL SOCIALLY INCLUSIVE ANALYSIS**

In order to reverse the erasure of difference, an intersectional socially inclusive approach must be applied carefully and intentionally to monitor the complex ways in which the right to food is violated. To monitor the right to food inclusively we recommend that analyses of food insecurity pay intersectional attention to social categories that are known to be associated with widespread and frequent discrimination. These socially constructed categories include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Gender: men, women, non-binary and transgender;
- Race and ethnicity;
- Social economic and educational background;
- Roma and traveller groups;
- Disability;
- Age;
- Mental health;
- Migrants – see box one for a more in-depth look;
- Refugee/Citizen status;
- Income levels; and
- Sexuality

An intersectional analysis will intentionally reveal how race, gender, disability, social economic background, immigration/citizen status, mental health, age, and various intersectional combinations of these social differences relate to right to food violations.

In order to prototype and test a socially inclusive approach, data collected by the UK government, civil society groups, and academics were analysed from a socially inclusive perspective, using some of the aforementioned key categories. The narrative generated from a socially intersectional inclusive viewpoint, along with a critical race perspective, can be found in section three.

## STEP 3 →

### **CENTRE LIVED EXPERIENCE OF PEOPLE DIRECTLY AFFECTED BY RIGHT TO FOOD VIOLATIONS**

An intersectional analysis of right to food violations shows the relationship between difference and food insecurity. Nevertheless, the complex and nuanced ways in which right to food violations impact everyday realities cannot be fully comprehended through secondary data alone.

Thus, it is essential to centre those with lived experience of food insecurity and develop an analysis with and from the individuals that have been harmed by right to food violations. Centring this lived experience can be done in many ways, for example through focus groups, interviews, or surveys. Whilst these methods have their place, scholars and activists have shown that to genuinely centre lived experience, participatory action research (PAR) approaches must put into practice.

Furthermore, from a critical race perspective, it is important to critically engage with lived experience, so that particular community groups are not pathologised or oversimplified in relation to right to food violations. For example, uncritical accounts of people not eating enough healthy foods can devolve into pathologising the individual or community, rather than exploring structures of power and the all-pervasive nature of race and racism, all of which hinder access to health and nutritional food.

In developing the content and context for this module, the PAR method of photovoice was mobilised and prototyped to centre lived experience as part of a socially inclusive approach to monitoring the right to food with a critical race perspective (see section 3.1 for further details and boxes 2 and 3 for the photovoice methodology).

## STEP 4 →

### **KNOWLEDGE MOBILISATION**

An important step in advancing the right to food from an intersectional critical race perspective is to counter the post-racial, post-gender, and post-difference narrative currently in force about food insecurity in the UK and Europe. This could take the shape of local or national campaigns or activating analysis with key policy makers and decision makers to unpack how structural forces inform right to food violations.

The participatory photovoice method used in this project allowed: a) migrants to collectively express and narrate their lived experience of right to food violations; b) ways to tackle food insecurity and other associated human right violations to be identified; c) migrants' voices to be mobilised and amplified before policy makers and decision makers. In addition, photovoice empowers the community to curate an exhibition and advance their narratives creatively.

## BOX 1

Anti-migrant racism and political opposition to migrants is commonplace across Europe and suggests that immigration policies could remain regressive for years to come. To illustrate this point, claims for the international right to asylum are often deliberately hindered across Europe. Activists and scholars have argued that making Europe a hostile place for migrants and actively promoting policies and practices that deny or frustrate the fulfillment of migrant claims for international human rights reinforces the negative image of ‘fortress Europe’. A right to food approach will therefore need to keep migrant rights at the core of monitoring for the foreseeable future. Such a monitoring model will also need to raise awareness not only about the connection between immigration policies and food insecurity, but also about a more comprehensive strategy for strengthening human rights for all migrants, as they are currently being debilitated by EU countries.

Furthermore, migrants face similar forms of racism as other racialised groups, while they are also often subjected to additional discrimination tied, though not exclusively, to their familiarity with the language and culture of their host nation. They also face discrimination that may be derived from immigration policies. In the UK we have seen how hostile immigration policies have directly and indirectly undermined the right to food and other social rights such as the right to housing, education, and work, and the denial of access to a range of social security entitlements (see section three below).

Britain is not alone in its anti-migrant racism. Europe needs to monitor the ways in which migrants, subject to regressive immigration policies, experience food insecurity and other negative social outcomes. A critical step would be a right to food monitoring tool to develop partnerships with migrant rights organisations and migrants themselves as they have lived experience and nuanced knowledge of the ways in which migrants’ rights are eroded. Furthermore, it is necessary to conduct a critical study and analysis of immigration policies, in particular how these policies affect right to food violations.<sup>1</sup> Again, a partnership with migrants themselves, migrant rights organizations, or academics with relevant expertise can help to identify which specific immigration policies are related to right to food violations.

<sup>1</sup> See also the publication on “Responses to Hunger”, [MODULE 2](#), which is part of this series of learning modules, and shares information about social benefits for refugees and asylum seekers in Austria, among other issues.

# PART 3

PRACTISING A SOCIALLY INCLUSIVE  
RIGHT TO FOOD APPROACH



### *An intersectional analysis and narrative of right to food violations*

The UK, despite having one of the largest economies in the world, has a persistent and growing food insecurity problem and has been found to have one of the highest levels of food insecurity in all of Europe<sup>2</sup>. Whilst an overview of the scale of the problem in the UK is available, measuring household food insecurity is a contested and inconsistent process. It is challenging therefore to accurately and fully comprehend the scale of the problem (Pool & Dooris, 2021). Although the figures vary across different research studies, the trend is consistent: levels of household food insecurity are rising (Pool & Dooris, 2021).

A number of studies indicate that 9–14% of households experience different levels of food insecurity from low, moderate, to severe. Between 2016 and 2018 the Gallup World Poll showed that 5.6% of the UK population experienced moderate to severe food insecurity, and 1.8% experienced a severe level of food insecurity (Pool & Dooris, 2021). In 2018 the UK Food and You Survey found a notable increase: 10% of households faced moderate to severe food insecurity. In 2020, a Food Foundation study found that 4.7 million adults, which amounts to 9% of households, experienced food insecurity. However, Pool and Dooris (2021) found that 14.2% surveyed in their study experienced mild food insecurity, 6.6% moderate, and 3% severe. It also observed an increase in households experiencing food insecurity more generally. Similarly, the government's recent Family Resource Survey<sup>3</sup> found that households experienced marginal (6%), low (4%), or very low (4%) food security.

Applying a socially inclusive lens to the data on food insecurity reveals that the unequal distribution of food security speaks more broadly to existing and entrenched inequalities in the UK. The Department of Work and Pension's Family Resource Survey shed light on the ways in which income, education, region, ethnicity, and the number of children in a household can influence vulnerability to experiencing household food insecurity. Notably, the correlation between food insecurity and social security is pronounced. Only 57% of households on Universal Credit, the main social security benefit in the UK, are food secure compared to 87% of all households who do not access Universal Credit. It is not surprising then to see that food-aid use increased following the introduction of Universal Credit and more recently, during the pandemic when more people applied for Universal Credit due to job loss and reduced work hours (Lambie-Mumford, 2017; Lambie-Mumford & Green, 2017; Lambie-Mumford & Loopstra, 2020; Reeves & Loopstra, 2021; The Food Foundations, 2021).

Households in the North East and North West were more likely to be food insecure than other regions, suggesting that regional economies and conditions are intertwined with food insecurity<sup>4</sup>. Heads of household with a gross income of less than £200 pounds per week were most likely to be food insecure. The poorest 20% of

2 The UK parliamentary select committee shows that the UK has the highest level of food insecurity, see the full report: <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmenvaud/1491/149105.htm>

3 See complete survey here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/family-resources-survey-financial-year-2019-to-2020/family-resources-survey-financial-year-2019-to-2020#household-food-security-1>

4 The family resource survey is conducted annual by the Department of Work and Pensions on income and living standards of households and families in the UK. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/family-resources-survey-financial-year-2019-to-2020/family-resources-survey-financial-year-2019-to-2020#household-food-security-1>

households have also seen their income and disposable income decline, while housing and transport costs have done the opposite (DEFRA, 2021). These households also spent a higher proportion of their income on food than other households. Households where the head was between the ages of 16–24 were less food secure than other age groups. Families living in social or rented accommodation also experienced limited food security (DEFRA, 2021).

The chronically ill were twice as likely to be food insecure. In addition, before the pandemic, people with health problems or disability were three times more likely to be food insecure; this figure then increased by five-fold during the pandemic (The Food Foundations, 2021). In early 2020 the Trussell Trust found that six in ten working-age people who had been referred to a food bank were disabled (DEFRA, 2021). These findings suggest that structures of ableism, in addition to inadequate social security, are entangled with food insecurity.

Race and ethnicity also play a part in food insecurity. Black or ethnic minority households are twice as likely to be food insecure. In January 2021, 20% of ethnic minority households had experienced food insecurity during the past six months compared to 9% of White British households. Black households were more likely to face food insecurity than any other minority or racialised group, indicating that structural racism, and especially, anti-Blackness, are interwoven with food insecurity (Richmond-Bishop & Singh, J, 2021).

Households where there is only one adult and one or more child are more likely to face food insecurity. It is also possible to draw connections between specific welfare policies and food insecurity. The two-child limit that restricts welfare support to only two children per household is understood as a key driver of poverty amongst large households. The latest UK-wide food insecurity data shows that nearly half of households with three or more children are food insecure (Richmond-Bishop & Singh, J, 2021). It is also worth noting that single-adult household are more likely to be headed by women and user profiles of food banks show that single women with children are disproportionately over-represented (Jeraj, 2014). These findings indicate that the structures of patriarchy and gendered power dynamics and food insecurity are all interconnected.

We can see from the data that some regions, ethnicities, disabled groups, chronically ill, and single women with children are more likely to experience food insecurity. What the current data does not show however is an intersectional analysis of food insecurity. This is important as it is widely understood that women's lived experience differs considerably from that of men. Women's lived experience also differs when gender intersects with race and/or religion. Yet we have little understanding of how gender intersects with disability, ethnicity, migration status, and other axes of difference in relation to food insecurity.

### *Food insecurity, migrant groups, and immigration policies*

It is widely understood that some migrants, because of their immigration status, face a range of state-based and societal hostilities, barriers to basic amenities, and therefore are disproportionately more likely to be vulnerable to experiencing household food insecurity than many other groups (Richmond-Bishop & Singh, J, 2021; Singh, J et al., 2019). Nevertheless, the experiences of migrants or their children are not explicitly featured in any of the governmental surveys; thus their narratives of food insecurity remain hidden and ignored. Given the vulnerabilities that many migrants face across Europe, a right-to-food monitoring approach would need to better understand these experiences.

### *The immigration policy “No Recourse to Public Funds” and the violation of the right to food*

To understand how some migrants are faced with disproportionate levels of food insecurity in the UK, we first need to unpack immigration policies to see how they connect to food insecurity. Due to the restrictions imposed on migrants through these policies, such as exclusion from work and/or social security, some migrants, especially people seeking asylum, experience poverty, including food insecurity and destitution at higher rates than the overall population (Nasser, 2021; Sbicca & Myers, 2017). Immigration policies and law can be complex, and the conditions associated with them vary from individual to individual. Generically speaking, however, the immigration rule No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) appears to be centrally linked to the lived experience of poverty that many migrants face in the UK.

NRPF was originally introduced through the UK Immigration Act 1971. It denies access to public funds including most social security benefits and tax credits, council housing, and local authority homelessness assistance. The NRPF rule applies to most people subject to immigration control, including those who migrated for work, study, or to join their family, seek asylum, or visit, and have overstayed their visa, as well as the ‘undocumented’ (Anitha, 2008; Farmer, 2017; Jolly, 2018; Jolly et al., 2021; Odu-made & Graham, 2019; Woolley, 2019). It is difficult to determine the exact number of people who are subject to NRPF, as the home office does not collect this data<sup>5</sup>. However, it is estimated that 1.4 million people in the UK are affected by the NRPF regulation (Citizens Advise, 2020). However, this figure does not include any individual who is undocumented and thus has no access to public funds by default.

Notably, since the COVID–19 pandemic, an estimated one in four adults have experienced food insecurity, leaving them susceptible to hunger and malnutrition (Power, 2021). Researchers found that 84% of the asylum seekers involved in their study were unable to afford enough food at some point during the pandemic, thereby illustrating that this group faces a higher risk of household food insecurity than the general population (Richmond-Bishop & Singh, J, 2021). Commentators have argued that raising wages or allocating stronger welfare provisions would offer a more fun-

5 An official letter from Director General for Regulation Office for Statistics Regulation showing that NRPF is not officially recorded by the government: [https://osr.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Response-from-Daniel-Shaw-to-Ed-Humpherson\\_Parliamentary-question-response.pdf](https://osr.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Response-from-Daniel-Shaw-to-Ed-Humpherson_Parliamentary-question-response.pdf)

damental solution to food poverty than the current emphasis on emergency food aid and charity (i.e. food banks, soup kitchens). Nevertheless many migrants are denied these important avenues (well-paying employment, social safety net) to secure a livelihood and their wellbeing. To illustrate, due to NRPF, support for migrants is restricted to £39.63 per person per week, or just over £5 a day, which is hardly sufficient to be food secure in the context of rising costs (Singh, J et al., 2019).

Some migrant families who are subjected to NRPF can seek out other support through Section 17 of Children Act 1989, although receiving this support is not guaranteed and the financial amount varies widely according to local authorities. However, many migrants, such as single parents without care needs who are not asylum seekers and the undocumented, cannot access Section 17 support. It is also important to note that migrants without permission to remain in the UK are not legally entitled to seek paid employment. These immigration rules are directly linked to destitution and food insecurity. Furthermore, children who have parents subjected to NRPF and who are not seeking asylum, or receive section 4 asylum support, are denied free school meals (FSM) from age three and up. Universally free school meals have therefore been viewed as one way to support the right to food (Dickson, E & Richmond-Bishop, I, 2020). At the same time, it is important to note that free school meals are not available during school holidays; thus school meal planning needs to ensure that every child has access to quality nutritious foods during holiday periods.



### 3.1

#### **CENTRING THE LIVED EXPERIENCE:**

##### A PARTICIPATORY APPROACH TO RIGHT TO FOOD MONITORING

The current quantitative analysis of food insecurity in the UK provides a numerical view of the scale of the problem, and, in a limited way, shows which groups are differentially affected. However, it is also important that people who have lived experience of food insecurity share their perspectives and discuss ways to tackle the problem. It is beyond the scope of this module to provide a space for all the community groups and individuals impacted by food insecurity. Instead, this module focuses on migrant groups because it is widely understood that these groups face, arguably, the most severe degree of food insecurity and even destitution, yet there are few interventions that address the connection between food insecurity and the migrant experience.

The participation of affected communities is an essential part of right to food monitoring<sup>6</sup>. Yet how to integrate participatory methodologies into right-to-food monitoring lacks research and theoretical foundation. It is beyond the scope of this module to examine the ways in which the right to food mobilises participation, although studies in this vein are clearly needed. For our part, the following section outlines the process of centring the lived experience of migrants using the participatory photovoice framework explained in box three.

#### *Photovoice In Action*

In order to engage with migrant groups with sensitivity, a partnership was formed with Project 17, a small charity based in London that supports migrant rights through information, advice, and advocacy, especially with local authorities. Project 17 also organises a separate project: United Impact, which provides social, moral, and emotional support to migrants who are subject to immigration controls, such as the NRPF policy. United Impact meets weekly online and provides a space for migrants to collectively connect with each other through a range of activities, including, but not limited to, games, yoga, and self-care, and provides opportunities to discuss their lived experiences with key policy makers to create change around the NRPF policy.

In collaboration with United Impact, a PAR approach was designed to allow participants in the group to share their lived experience of NRPF and food insecurity, and how it relates to immigration policies, which are of equally key concern for migrant rights organisations across the UK.

United Impact meets every Wednesday morning on Zoom. The number of participants varies from week to week, but approximately thirty people usually attend, primarily but not exclusively women. The immigration status of individuals varies across the group, but many of the group are subject to NRPF. In collaboration with the Project 17 staff, three meetings were organised around informed consent, and contextualising informed consent authorisations for participants.

<sup>6</sup> See the publication entitled “Participatory Policy Making and Right to Food and Nutrition”, **MODULE 5**, which is another learning module developed as part of this series

During the first week, everyone met to discuss questions of ethics and informed consent in more depth. The second week, the group started taking photos of their lives to get familiar with the photovoice project. The photos were discussed the following week as a group to better understand each other's lived experience and to collectively develop the photovoice practice. Each week we narrowed the focus of the photovoice inquiry to zoom in on how NRPF influences their lives. A photography workshop was also conducted with a professional photographer so that participants could learn more about technical and artistic aspects. The photos shared vary from individual to individual, although there are clear themes and connections across the group.

Many of the photos that were shared and discussed revealed poor housing conditions, including inadequate cooking facilities, financial precariousness in terms of purchasing food, energy, transport, and toys and play activities for their children. Some of the photos and associated narratives showed that there were significant amounts of black mould in people's house making children sick, a lack of space to crawl/walk, hostile treatment from social workers and refusals of section 17 support when families were entitled to it. Families also described how they had to use supermarket vouchers exclusively as they had no access to cash for food markets or buses. The combination of these negative factors were perceived to be affecting children's development and creating poor outcomes for families. It is important to note that whilst this module does not attempt to precisely measure food insecurity amongst this group, it was evident that food insecurity was a common reality for them, and that many in the group felt anxious and distressed, and experienced feelings of indignity by rising energy and food costs.

During the discussion on the photos, a range of negative outcomes associated with immigration policies were shown to be commonplace among the group. The photovoice project also demonstrated that food insecurity cannot be isolated from other financial concerns around energy, transport, housing, and childcare costs. Some members of the group did not have the financial means to purchase toys for their children and were excluded from work and training opportunities because of immigration policies.

Although the right to food was discussed and considered important, this right alone does not speak to some of the other concerns and challenges of this group. The photovoice project is ongoing, and it has already revealed the complexity and interdependence of a range of rights. For example, the right to quality housing, the right to work, the right to education, and the right to food are effectively interdependent.

### *Mobilisation of lived experience and analysis*

An important aspect of the photovoice project is advocating for social changes that grow out of the research and learning process and to disrupt the post-racial, post-gender food insecurity narratives. The photos will be used to create an exhibition and e-book to bring attention to the way that immigration policies, in particular NRPF, lead to food insecurity along with other forms of deprivation and distress. The exhibition targets key policy makers who work in immigration policies, particularly the NRPF immigration rule and human rights. The e-book will be widely distributed to ensure that the word continues to spread after the exhibition.

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## BOX 2

### PHOTOVOICE TO CENTRE MIGRANTS' LIVED EXPERIENCE

“Nothing about us, without us”, is the poetic slogan often attributed to the disability rights movement. The slogan indicates the importance of ensuring that those most affected by and with lived experience of disability ought to be at the heart of any movement working to counter ableism. Similarly, those most affected by food insecurity ought to be at the centre of the any right-to-food approach.

There are a variety of ways to centre the voices of those most affected by right to food violations. Participatory action research (PAR) is a methodology widely used across the world to prioritise marginalised voices in research and community development processes and has the potential to be utilised more often in right to food frameworks. PAR has a long and layered history, arguably emerging from Latin America in response to colonial and authoritarian regimes. Born within such a political context, PAR has become well known for generating processes that enable communities to develop strategies and approaches to tackle oppression through concrete actions. The methods used in PAR include, but are not limited to: citizen juries, theatre, video, deliberative inclusive process, oral history, and photovoice.

PAR can be viewed as a practice and therefore a practitioner does not necessarily need to be an expert in PAR. Instead, engaging in a range of PAR principles and attitudes is more important than exacting methodological expertise. Furthermore, the ideal PAR method varies from case to case and depends on what the facilitator is familiar with and what works with the group involved. In this module, the photovoice method was employed (see section 3.1). Now let us turn to some key tips on implementing the method photovoice:

### TIPS FOR FACILITATING A PHOTOVOICE PRACTICE

Sutton-Brown, (2014) provides a guide on how to use the photovoice method, based predominantly on the academic literature. Some practical tips are provided below however.

#### *Principles to guide the photovoice practice*

The understated but fundamentally important principles to start with are solidarity and sensitivity. PAR is about solidarity, premised on the idea that the liberation of oppressed groups is not granted through charity. Instead, communities themselves are best situated and well-equipped to navigate and overcome the oppression they face. Lila Watson, an indigenous Australian is often cited within PAR circles, “if you have come to

here to help me you are wasting your time, but if you have come because your liberation is bound to mine, then let's work together". Facilitation is viewed as an act of solidarity and connection rather than intervention to solve the problems on behalf of participants.

Sensitivity is also an important principle of the photovoice practice. There is no fast-track to centring the lived experience of communities who have had their right to food violated. Often, marginalised groups who have had their right to food violated are simultaneously being harmed and repeatedly victimized in other ways by structures of power. For instance, an individual might be exercising their international right to seek asylum in a given country as they flee persecution in another. But if they seek refuge in Europe, and particular in the UK, they would be further harmed by the asylum process, as the current policies are openly and intentionally hostile to new migrants. Being sensitive therefore to the ways in which structures of power harm and re-harm participants is fundamental to the photovoice practice.

The structural problems that result in right to food violations also violate other basic rights and access to amenities, including housing, the right to work and education, among others. Given the hardship and destitution that structures and polices enact, facilitating and conducting photovoice involves evoking a set of core values, principles, and attitudes that reverse or at least counter the cruelty of immigration policies. The values and principles of genuine care, active listening, solidarity, playfulness, sensitivity, and even love alongside community organising are central to developing photovoice in places where migrants are harmed by the state.

### *Build partnerships with relevant organisations and groups*

A facilitator builds processes so that different knowledge bases can flourish. The role of facilitator includes establishing a partnership with an organisation that works with groups whose right to food has been violated, in this case, a migrant rights organisation. This practical step of collaborating with migrant rights organisations affirms their knowledge and expertise while also fostering a better understanding of the issues. Furthermore, partner organisations often have a history of nourishing trust with the communities with whom they work. Thus conducting photovoice with communities builds on that body of trust. Trust is a key ingredient as many communities have – in the past and in the present – viewed research as extractive and colonial (Tuhiwai Smith, 2012).

### *Coproduce a research process with affected groups*

A facilitator will nurture the process between the partner organisation and community groups to coproduce questions for the inquiry. This involves setting up workshops and creating spaces for participants and the partner organisation to coproduce the framing of the questions, and the terms and duration of the research process, as well as creative ways to mobilise the knowledge generated through photovoice.

### *Facilitate the research process*

A facilitator supports the research process so that the partner organisation and participants have space to articulate their narratives, and develop and deepen their collective analysis. This requires ensuring space to listen to each others' perspectives and build the collective analysis of the research process. Each week for example, photos are taken and shared and used as points of discussion and analysis (see box 3 on the photovoice method). Through the sharing of individual photos, the collective analysis is continually developed week after week.

### *Develop a partnership with a creative and technical photographer*

Photography is a technical as well as a creative skill. Developing a partnership with a creative and technical photographer early on in the project has proven to be crucial. The photographer can train participants on the technical and creative aspects of photography. The photographer can highlight the aesthetic side of photography, as well as its 'documentary' dimension.

### *Mobilisation of knowledge through photo exhibition*

One of the benefits of using the photovoice method is the creative potential it can harness which can then be disseminated through a photo exhibition. Indeed, curating an exhibition is not straightforward, nor intuitive. Thus, organising a group visit to an established photography exhibit provides an opportunity to learn about aesthetics and formats. Working closely with the photographer during the exhibition phase also provides useful insights and practical know-how in terms of curating and display.

### BOX 3

#### PHOTOVOICE METHOD: A CONCEPTUAL OVERVIEW

Sutton-Brown, (2014) provides an overview on how to use the photovoice method, including examples and guiding principles. In the following paragraphs and in box 2 the concepts underpinning photovoice are succinctly outlined, along with practical steps and principles to implement photovoice as part of a broader participatory approach to monitoring the right to food.

Photovoice was developed and conceptualised in the 1990's by Wang and Buris (1997). The method is mainly conceptualised as a tool for social justice and specifically informed by participatory action research, feminist theory, and documentary photography (Fals-Borda, 1987; Freire, 2000; Wang & Burris, 1997) (Fals-Borda & Rahman, 1991; Freire, 2000). The feminist dimension of the method is the idea that women take the pictures, thus their viewpoint is utilised to conduct their own research, rather than a male researcher. This approach disrupts the male gaze inherent in epistemologies (Coemans et al., 2019). Given that photovoice is sensitive to gaze and ensures that the voice of the research is firmly grounded in the bodies of those taking the photos, this method seemed ideally suited to migrants experiencing food insecurity.

The typical procedure is as follows: cameras are given to individuals in a community group, who take pictures to visually narrate their lived experience (Sutton-Brown, 2014; C. Wang & Burris, 1997). In photovoice projects, the researcher takes on the role of facilitator with two objectives: prioritising the voice of participants and decentring the researcher as the "expert". Participants normally have the cameras for a number of weeks, which allows them to contextualise their lived experience in both the public and private spheres and the social spatial environment around them (Catalani & Minkler, 2010; Sutton-Brown, 2014). The method fosters dialogue wherein participants can discuss the meaning and aesthetics of the photos with each other and with the facilitator-researcher to create reflexive narratives (Byrne et al., 2016; Evans-Agnew & Rosemberg, 2016; Sutton-Brown, 2014).

Whilst there are clear benefits to using photovoice, there are number of limitations and contradictions as well. Photovoice has been critiqued for the way in which the researcher selects images, or because images can be taken out of context and thereby misrepresent the individual or community (Switzer, 2018). Prins, has shown that photovoice does not necessary dissolve the power dynamics between researchers and participants, and calls into question the assumption that a photovoice participant is completely free from the researcher's influence (Prins, 2010).

# PART 4

## LIMITATION OF THE RIGHT TO FOOD MODEL



Hannah Arendt's work on persecuted minorities and refugees has exposed the contradictions in the application of universal and inalienable rights. Universal inalienable rights are mediated through the relationship between the state and the citizen. However, people seeking asylum are largely overlooked when it comes to their universal and inalienable rights, as they are not considered 'members' of a given state, in effect they are rendered stateless and thus legally viewed as 'non-citizens'. Arendt argues that there is a step prior to universal rights, and that is 'the right to have rights' (Jones, 2018). Under immigration law, particularly regarding asylum, some migrants do not have the right to work or receive public funds. People seeking asylum are therefore often over-represented in food relief programs and are forced to rely on community and family support systems. A right-to food model will therefore need to address the fact that right to food violations are clearly tied to state-backed immigration policies.

One of the goals of the right to food is for it to be incorporated into domestic law. However, even if it is integrated into domestic law, it is quite likely that such a law would not apply to those considered non-citizens, as rights are generally granted only to those who have the right to have rights in a given state. There is a risk that the right to food may not apply to people pursuing their international right to asylum in the UK. If this is the case, then the right to food, even if included in domestic law, would not apply to all people in a state; and thus, its universal potential is undermined.



# PART 5

## FINAL REFLECTIONS



We suggest four concrete steps to move right-to-food monitoring in a socially inclusive direction. Step one involves recognizing the fact that the perspective of the UK and Europe is currently muddled by the post-race, post-gender, post-homophobic, post-difference paradigm. This guise fails to acknowledge the material and performative power that race, gender, and other axes of difference continue to wield.

Step two consists of a firm commitment to constructing a socially inclusive approach to monitoring. To do this, we suggest that the right to food intentionally record and analyse the relationship between difference and right to food violations. Step two also entails a critical race approach whereby race is placed at the centre of an intersectional analysis. This intersectional analysis would also address disability, immigration/citizenship status, and other categories of difference.

Step three, based on the premise ‘nothing about us without us’, involves using creative participatory action research approaches to centre the lived experience of those most affected by right to food violations. This step also adds nuance to monitoring and ensures that analysis and solutions are coproduced by those who suffer from right to food violations. Step four activates the knowledge generated by a socially inclusive approach to disrupt the post-difference narratives in general and among practitioners and policy-makers specifically.

To prototype a socially inclusive monitoring approach, food insecurity data from the UK was analysed. The analysis shows that a range of social differences based on race, ethnicity, disability, mental health, gender, immigration/citizenship status, single parents, and various intersectional formations are definitively correlated with food insecurity. The analysis also demonstrates that there is clear relationship between right to food violations and structural racism, patriarchy, intersectionality, and other sources of injustices.

The rising cost of living and growing levels of food insecurity in the UK make clear the pressing need to incorporate the right to food into domestic legislation. Nevertheless, the right to food will continue to be plagued by limitations. The right to food is conceived as a universal human right, but this may not be the reality, as people seeking asylum, do not always have the ‘right to have rights’. To illustrate this point, it is likely that any future entitlements afforded through the right to food will be considered public funds. And immigration policies in the UK deny people applying for asylum the right to work, education, and public funds such as social security. This means that people seeking asylum would have no recourse to such a right to food entitlement, if considered public funds. Furthermore, on the one hand we can clearly see how the state could and should incorporate the right to food into domestic law. But on the other hand, the deeper structural sources of injustice such as racism, ableism, and heteropatriarchy, all of which are key drivers of right to food violations, ultimately remain intact and continue restricting the potential of the right to food.

Right to food violations are caused by racialised immigration policies. Beyond the realm of immigration policies, heteropatriarchy, ableism, and race are also entangled with food insecurity. It has not escaped our notice therefore that some of the

root causes of poverty are arguably beyond the reach of human rights, given that race, ableism, and heteropatriarchal forces are structural and embedded within the fabric of capitalism and the state. This circumstance suggests that decolonisation for equitable futures and human rights agendas need to be more closely aligned, if we aim to live in a world where the root causes of right to food violations are comprehensively abolished.

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