

Conceptualising food poverty in a mixed methods study of families and food in hard times

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Families and Food in Hard Times

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- How do social contexts and social positionings mediate the experience and extent of food poverty?
- Mixed methods embedded case study design
- Contrast of contexts in relation to conditions of austerity: Portugal, UK and Norway

Conceptualisation

- **Poverty vs insecurity**

(See Lambie-Mumford 2014; Friel and Conlon, 2004)

- **Food poverty**

- ‘The inability to acquire or consume an adequate quality or sufficient quantity of food in socially acceptable ways, or the uncertainty that one will be able to do so’ (see Dowler et al 2001:2 and taken from Radimer et al 1992 cited in Riches 1997)

Operationalisation

Secondary analysis:

- Material deprivation, food intake & expenditure
- Dis/advantages incl. children/adults, timepoints, variables

UK

- PSE UK 2012 – quantity (2/3 meals), quality (e.g. F&V) and social participation (family/friends meal/ snack), adults & children
- EU SILC 2009 –quantity, quality, social participation, adults & children
- MIS/LCFS – social participation

International

- EU SILC – ‘protein deprivation’, adults
- HBSC – quantity, school/bed hungry, quality (e.g. F&V), children

Operationalisation

Qualitative research

135 families with a child aged 11-15 yrs in deprived rural and urban areas (45 families in each of the three countries)

Experiencing an aspect of food poverty; low income; employed & non-employed, lone & couple

Self completion screening questionnaire: subjective income adequacy; quantity; quality; worry; social participation

Q's adapted from: USDA; PSE-UK; EU-SILC; LIDNS; FTT

Reflections on definitions and measurement

- Concepts, definitions, measures = highly political (Lister, 2004, Saunders 2013)
- Importance of food for social participation and acceptability = reflected in consensual definitions of living standards e.g. PSE UK and MIS (but adapted preferences in austerity)
- Narrow definition that reduces food to ‘nutrients’ = consistent with ‘food’ ‘solutions’ (charity; vouchers)
- Alternative/additional qs that frame the ‘problem’ more broadly = consistent with multidimensional definition of (food) poverty, ‘right to food’ and minimum income approach

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