A qualitative study of the perceptions of stigma on food banks in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver, Canada.

A Research Paper presented by:

Jane Miller

(Canada)

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for obtaining the degree of MASTER OF ARTS IN DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

Major:

Agrarian, Food and Environmental Studies (AFES)

Members of the Examining Committee:

Dr. Christina Sathyamala

Dr. Tsegaye Moreda Shegro

The Hague, The Netherlands

November/ 2018

Disclaimer

This document represents part of the author's study programme while at the Institute of Social Science. The views stated therein are those of the author and not necessarily those of the Institute.

Inquiries:

Postal address:

Institute of Social Studies
P. O. Box 29776
2502 LT The Hague
The Netherlands

Location:

Kortenaerkade 12
2518 AX The Hague
The Netherlands

Telephone: +31 70 426 0460
Fax: +31 70 426 0799

Contents

List of Tables:

List of Figures:

List of Maps:

List of Appendices:

Acronyms:

BCCDC- British Columbia Center for Disease Control
BCPG- British Columbia Provincial Government
COV- City of Vancouver
CPS- Child Protective Services
DTES- Downtown East Side
FBC- Food Banks Canada
FIM- Food Insecure Food Bank Members
FINM- Food Insecure Non-Food Bank Members
FSNM- Food Secure Non-Food Bank Members
GOC- Government of Canada
GVFB- Greater Vancouver Food Bank
KNH- Kiwassa Neighborhood House
SCC- Strathcona Community Centre

Acknowledgements:

I would like to thank my Mum and Dad, for encouraging me to complete this degree, even when I was hesitant, and for supporting me during every failure and triumph that I faced. As I am completing this degree I feel surrounded by love and I think of all my friends and family who supported me during this time. To all of you, thank you. Thank you Dr. Christina Sathyamala, Dr. Mindi Schneider, and Dr. Tsegaye Moreda for your time and comments as my supervisors for this research paper. This paper is dedicated to my home, Vancouver, Canada. It is my hope that one day my work will make someone in this city happier, healthier, and inspired to continue to do good work for others.

Abstract:

The Canadian Hunger Count stated that in March 2016 alone 863,492 people used a food bank in Canada. This was a 28% increase from 2008 (Food Banks Canada, 2016). However, in Canadian society food banks still have social stigmas attached to them and the members who use their services, affecting their funding and use by the public in times of need. This paper address what role stigma plays in the community perception of food banks in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver, Canada. The theoretical framework focused on stigmas in the welfare state, structure and agency, and conservative ideology. Participants were separated into groups that categorized their food bank membership status and their income level. The results yielded that past and present food bank members felt disrespect embarrassment, fear, and hopelessness when they went to the food bank food distribution service. These emotions were caused by the disrespect towards members that came from poor food quality and inappropriate food with low nutritional value in addition to the underlying social stigmas against food banks that have been encouraged by a society that was built on conservative narratives. In a society that values independence and self-reliance, food banks are seen as a last resort and a personal failure. In reality food banks are the product of an inefficient government and dismantled welfare state that cannot support citizens.

Relevance to Development Studies:

This paper contributes to the conversations occurring globally about how to respond to hunger. However, in the academia of Development Studies it is not common to look at issues of hunger and poverty regarding 'developed' countries like Canada. In Vancouver poverty is rampant and quickly growing as the cost of living increases and social welfare services lose funding. The research performed will aim to bring Canada into international discussions about emergency food aid.

Keywords:

Food bank; Vancouver; Canada; agency; food security; welfare services; stigma.

CHAPTER 1: Introduction

1.1 Food Banks:

Food banks are a part of the emergency food system that began in the United States the 1980s during a period of global economic recession. In Canada, the recession lead to reduced government spending on social programs, particularly for low-income Canadians, which resulted in a need for emergency food as people lost their benefits and incomes (Holmes et al. 2018, p. 1). They are usually characterized as large-scale warehouse charitable operations that are run on the basis of donations from individuals, food corporations, and local grocers (Poppendieck, 1994, p.69). These are usually charitable organizations. In Canada the government encourages donations to these institutions without directly making any whereas in food banks in the United States public funds are used to supplement food supplies (Tarasuk et al. 2014, p. 2).

Between 2008-2016 food bank use increased across Canada by 28% as food insecurity has become a growing concern for many Canadians (Food Banks Canada, 2016, p. 2), A food insecure person is defined by Food Banks Canada as a person or family who, "Worry that they won't be able to afford enough food, eat suboptimal food because they cannot afford better, [and/or] skip meals because they are unable to purchase enough food" (Food Banks Canada, 2016). Food banks in Canada continue to be the primary institution used to measure food insecurity in the country (Barbolet et al, 2005). It is recorded by Food Banks Canada that an average of 1.7 million households (or four million Canadians) suffer from food insecurity, with 340,000 of those households living with such food insecurity that they cannot meet normal energy requirements (Food Banks Canada, 2016). Although such high numbers of people are facing food insecurity Food Banks Canada has recorded that only 800,000 people are accessing food bank services each month (Food Banks Canada, 2016). This is less than half of the reported food-insecure population.

The food bank institution in Canada has been praised for supporting people in need by providing compassion towards the poor and preventing food waste (Riches and Silvasti, 2014, p.2). However, there have been critiques for some fundamental weaknesses. Food Banks are completely dependent on the food and money donations they receive from their donor, which is not guaranteed from year to year, and the food donations are often seen as 'leftovers' because they come from personal or corporate donations of food that no one else wanted to consume (De Roux-Smith, 2014, p.27). This dependency on fiscal and food donations that can be used to supply food bank members puts these institutions in a place where their ability to help people can become uncertain. Tarasuk et al. (2014) noted that in any interview that was commenced with vulnerable groups there were always concerns about food safety, nutritional quality, and the ability to access food when stores are low, in addition to concerns of how acceptable it is to access food bank services in the society of a developed capitalist nation (Tarasuk et al. 2014, p. 2). Food banks in Canada also play a role in undermining the welfare state because their existence suggests that our society has accepted that the government does not necessarily

need to fulfill every element of poverty support while normalizing poverty (De Roux-Smith, 2014, p.29). In the United States emergency food programs like food banks and food stamps receive some government funding to fill their shelves, but in Canada this does not happen. The food bank system in Canada has become a supplement for low-income people to aid the Canadian welfare state. The state cannot does not completely support these people in need so food banks take on the initiative of providing food. Graham Riches (2002) analyzed that the emergency system as it exists now is a significant indicator of both the widening inequalities in wealth and the increasing food insecurity of all states and the failure of politicians to adapt public policy in welfare state in Canada to protect citizens (Riches, 2002, p.650). The reliance on food banks has grown so much that some academics believe the term 'emergency food service' is no longer applicable. At the Greater Vancouver Food Bank, for example, over half of the members have been using the food distribution service for five years or more (Holmes et al. 2018, p. 10).

1.2 The Welfare State:

The welfare state in Canada was introduced in the 1960s after a series of social welfare reforms were passed (Canadian Encyclopedia, 2015). The major welfare state of Canada covers an array of programs including, "Social Assistance, the Canada Child Tax Benefit, Old Age Security and the Guaranteed Income Supplement, Employment Insurance, the Canada and Quebec Pension Plan, Workers' Compensation, public education, Medicare, social housing, and social services" (Canadian Encyclopedia, 2015). State run food banks have never existed in Canada in the twentieth century because these social welfare reforms were meant to keep people out of a level of poverty where they would need to seek outside aid. However, as social benefits of the welfare state were cut, emergency aid in the form of food banks grew in presence. In Vancouver the Greater Vancouver Food Bank originated in 1982, at the time of the fourth term of the Liberal party Prime Minister of Canada, Pierre Trudeau (1968-1979 and 1980-1984). In this period the social welfare of Canadians was a high priority because of the poor economic performance of Canada in the 1970s. This period of economic decline led to rising levels of unemployment across the country and a sweeping demand for improved welfare services (Moscovitch, 1985, p.3). In 1984 the leader of the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada, Brian Mulroney, took office as the Prime Minister, bringing with him an era of social welfare cuts. From 1985-1995, which coincided with the emergence of food banks and other emergency food aid services across the country, the Canadian government proceeded with a series of federal government cutbacks that largely affected the social benefits of the welfare state. These food bank programs were created out of necessity to fill the gap that budget cuts of social services left on the incomes and resources of Canadian families. The programs that faced the largest decreases in their budgets were affordable housing, childcare, indigenous advocacy and engagement, health (especially for women's health programs), employment insurance and senior pensions (Cohen et al. 1995, p.9). The substantial decreases in funding for these programs, and complete abolishment of others, led to a period of increased poverty in Canada that has still not been recovered from today. The changes to the welfare state in this period mirrored the

neoliberalization of welfare politics that was occurring in the 1980s that is characterized by a return to the privatization of charity and the encouragement of faith-based community aid instead of federal aid and the encouragement of self-reliance over social welfare (Riches, 2002, p.658). Allies of Canada such as the United States and the United Kingdom were entering a period of neoliberal reform with the leadership of President Ronald Reagan (1981-1989) and Prime Minster Margaret Thatcher (1979-1990). Under Thatcher the UK experience a period of individualism that discouraged the use of the welfare state. There was a concern that reliance on government handouts would discourage people from working and leave them in a state of comfort where they would burden the economic system of the country at a time of high unemployment (Sutcliffe-Braithwaite, 2013). This sentiment reached Canadian politicians who followed the neoliberal approaches of Thatcher and Reagan and thus, similar discouragement of welfare use appeared im Canada. Although the demand for welfare services was strong, citizens equally prioritized the need for economic stability. These battles of priorities lead to a back and forth between the Conservative and Liberal party at each federal election. Stigmatized people tend to lack political influence in the form of voting or lobbying because they have been convinced by society that their opinion as an 'undesirable' or stigmatized person who did not follow the structured rule and opinions are invalid, and thus resources are frequently diverted to other groups with more influence (Spicker, 1984, p. 25). Therefore, the people who are the most affected by the changes to welfare services are often not the ones voting in favor or against policy changes. Instead they have to take whatever is given to them, just like the charity they take from food banks to survive.

1.3 Nature of the Research Problem and Filling the Research Gap:

In Canadian society food banks are still seen as an emergency food service although they have now become permanent fixtures in low-income communities. This is a solution that high-income countries like the UK, Australia, and the United States have adopted in response to food insecurity in the state (Middleton et al, 2017, p. 699). The Canadian government does not have an official poverty measure so instead poverty is understood by Statistic Canada through three measures of low income: The Low Income Cut-Off, the Market Basket Measure, and the Low Income Measure (Scott, 2014). This lack of a definition for a poverty measure suggests that the Canadian government does not consider poverty to be a problem worth defining, thus aligning with the practice of welfare benefit budget cuts. Existing literature on food banks has displayed that in Canada government welfare services are not providing sufficient assistance to the people who use it, putting more and more pressure on these charitable institutions to complete the job that the government fails to do. In the study, "Examining Food Insecurity Among Food Bank Members in Greater Vancouver," by Jennifer Black et al. the authors recognized that charitable food services are now being seen as an appropriate solution for food insecurity while governments of Canada and British Columbia do not take further responsibility for this welfare gap (Black et al. 2018, p. 1). There is now a narrative that food banks are a permanent part of society that we have stopped questioning

because of their existence in Canadian communities for almost forty years. The federal and provincial governments are expected to do less and less for food security because the food bank fills this roll. Additionally food banks are not able to meet the capacity necessary to respond consistently to the people who use their services (Middleton et al, 2017, p. 699). Food Banks will usually measure their success based off of the pounds of food distributed or the members served each year (Derrickson et al. 1999, p. 32). This measure of success is based more on the idea of the quantity of food that is provided to members rather than the quality of food. This is not an effective measure because members may be eating enough but the food they are provided could be low in nutritional value and cause health problems for members who already have limited access to health care and other social benefits. While state institutions are failing to serve the people through the welfare system so are the food banks that have risen to support their neglect.

Oomkens studied why some people in the Netherlands make use of food banks instead of state provisions, and vice-versa. The results yielded that people were in favor of using a food bank over state services because the food bank accepted anyone for membership who lived with a low amount of disposable funds after necessary costs like rent and utilities were paid whereas the state only provides additional low-income benefits to those who reach a certain level of low-income per year (Oomkens, 2008, p. 46). As a result, many low-income people are excluded from the eligibility of receiving welfare benefits they desperately need to survive, so instead they turn to food banks for assistance. Although this study pertained to the Netherlands it speaks to the relationship that some people in Vancouver build with food banks if they do not meet the criteria for government welfare assistance benefits. In a city with such a high cost of living, even those who make a seemingly decent living may require food aid services. Middleton et al. investigated how food bank members experience food relief services and how using these institutions for aid impacted their lives and wellbeing. They found that food banks were viewed as a last resort when there was no other form of welfare or aid through personal connections left. When people attended these services they acknowledged feelings of shame, embarrassment, and perceived stigma from non-members (Middleton et al. 2017, p.707).

The research topic I will investigate is, “What role does stigma play in the perceptions of food banks in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver?” This study is very important for informing this research paper because it supports that stigma does indeed still exist in food banks around the world. It informs the reader of the feelings that members face when using the food bank and how they perceive themselves as well as the society that they live in through their learned experiences of using food aid. In ““Who Do They Think We Are, Anyway?” Perceptions of and Responses to Poverty Stigma” by Reutter et al. the authors studied, “How people living in poverty perceived their personal and social identities pertaining to their financial standing” (Reutter et al, 2009, p.298). The authors identified some of the labels and ideas that prevail in the stigma surrounding food banks and the members. These included a lack of empathy from those with material means towards low-income people, the concern of ‘freeloaders’ in the government system that take but do not contribute, and the notion that those who live in poverty

deserve to live in their current situation because of a diminished work ethic or lack of fiscal responsibility (Reutter et al, 2009, p. 300).

In the review of literature I have observed that there is stigma attached to welfare services of all forms, including food banks. In *Stigma and Social Welfare* Spicker said that, "A service is stigmatizing when it degrades the recipient, or undermines his dignity; when it embarrasses or humiliates him, and makes him feel guilty or ashamed; when it deters him or makes him hesitate to seek help; when it deprives him from rights or treats him with contempt; when it marks him from others, or identifies him as someone who is socially rejected" (Spicker, 1984, p.37). Stigma has a wide berth of how it can affect the self-worth and societal situation of a person. Garthwaithe (2015) argued that stigma, fear, and embarrassment were realities that people who used a food bank faced every day because of conservative political narratives in the United Kingdom. These political narratives are extremely similar to those that exist in Canada and therefore, the opinions on food banks in the UK may give insight to how food bank members are perceived in Vancouver by the larger society. Tarasuk and Beaton (1999) looked at the food insecurity and nutritional vulnerability of women across North America and saw that 84% of the women that they interviewed experience humiliation and believed they were unable to support their families on their own income without charitable assistance. They did not share that they used a food bank with their families because of feelings of shame and embarrassment that they feared they would receive or did receive eventually, particularly from their children (Tarasuk and Beaton, 1999, p. 112). Tarasuk and Beaton provide a valuable viewpoint because their work was also done in the Canadian context, albeit that their work applies specifically to families. Spicker's theories on agency and stigma support this statement when he evaluated that when people had a lack of freedom to spend money because those who were living on a low-income they were not considered a full member of society in the view from a conservative rhetoric (Spicker, 1984, p.49). This encouragement of roles of people as independent, self-reliant agents in a state is crucial in the understanding of stigmas like those of the 'undeserving poor' or the 'freeloader'. These understandings of people from this conservative narrative brought forward the stigma of using welfare services like food banks.

There is a gap in this literature review because there are few studies about stigma in food banks in the Canadian context, particularly in Vancouver, that look at how people in certain communities perceive food bank services and the stigmas that are created with them. Particularly, there is a gap in how non-food bank members view food banks, as the literature largely focuses on the perceptions of food banks by the members only. Many of the studies take place in the United States or the United Kingdom, which provide valuable literature in the preparation for this research. In this research paper I will fill this gap in the literature by engaging in qualitative interviews with members of the community in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver of varying levels of food security to understand how they perceive food banks. This research paper will focus on two institutions in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver to gain a greater understanding of how stigma may relate to one food service, like food banks, and not to others. The institutions that were researched in

this study are the Greater Vancouver Food Bank and the breakfast program at the Strathcona Community Centre.

1.4 Research Question and Objective:

Question: What role does stigma play in the perceptions of food banks in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver?

The objective of this research is to compare how food insecure food bank members, food-insecure non-food bank members, and food secure non-food bank members living and working in the DTES community of Vancouver perceive food banks. The participants will undergo qualitative interviews to see how stigma affects their perceptions of these services.

Sub Questions:

- Where do the stigmas surrounding food bank use come from?
- Why do people choose not to use the food bank even if they are food-insecure?

1.5 Structure of the Paper:

This research paper will begin with a description of the theoretical framework that anchors this research followed by the methodology of the study, information about the participants, and transition into the context and positioning of the research paper. After there will be a chapters investigating the results of the field research and analysing the data that was collected during the field research period. Lastly will be a section outlining the conclusions of the research paper, including recommendations and next steps for the GVFB and the surrounding community of the DTES.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework:

2.1 Stigma:

Erving Goffman defined stigma as, "The phenomenon whereby an individual with an attribute which is deeply discredited by his/ her society is rejected as a result of the attribute. Stigma is a process by which the reaction of others spoils normal identity" (Goffman, 1963). He stated that stigma comes down to three attributes in a person, which are, "abominations of the body, blemishes of individual character and tribal stigma by race, nation, and religion" (Colton et al. 1997, p.13). However, the possession of one of these attributes alone is not enough to consider the stigmatization of a person complete. For stigma to take effect the attribute has to be recognized and acted on by the interactions a person has with others (Colton et al. 1997, p.14). This study primarily focuses on the stigma associated with blemishes of individual character, as it relates to fulfilling the society rules and roles as mentioned in the section on agency and structure. In an interview about Vancouver's Downtown Eastside a nurse named Liz Evans stated that, "Junkies were junkies and if you helped an supported people who were addicted, you were part of the problem" (MacQueen, 2014). Within this statement there is a discourse of social stigma surrounding the treatment of the poor in Vancouver. Although some institutions, like food banks, may aim to de-stigmatize certain groups, individual perceptions of a service by employees, volunteers, or donors quickly changes how the public feels that these structures perceive the members, making their intentions honorable, but moot (Colton et al. 1997, p.14). In the study of stigma the 'labeling perspective' or 'labeling theory' of low-income people suggests that the act of labeling a person by the organizations that they attend distinguishes them from the rest of society (Spicker, 1984, p.52). When someone states that they are member of a food bank, then they are automatically put into a homogenous group with all other members.

Additionally, there is a suggestion that social stigma can be used an effective policy tool by government administrations. In order to pursue certain policy interests a party may use social stigmas that already exist to encourage the public to sway in favor of their platform. In the British Conservative party this was an effective tool used under the New Poor Laws of the Victorian Era, which provided relief, but primarily to those who were desperate enough to identify themselves and subsequently work in government workhouses (Colton et al. 1997, p.15). The visibility of these people created a very public image of the consequences of being unable to provide for ones self and their family. From there on, anyone deemed poor enough to go to a workhouse, which was still a form of welfare, had the stigma of those conditions attached to them. In the end it all comes down to the relationships we have with one another in society based on the structures that are in place.

2.2 Stigmas and The Welfare State

In the study, "Stigma, shame, and 'people like us': an ethnographic study of food bank use in the UK" the author, K. Garwaithe, found that the 'undeserving poor' was a common stigma that accompanied food bank users from the point of view of Conservative politicians (Garwaithe, 2016. p. 1). The concept of abusing social services is a relatable concept in Canada, which has its own prominent Conservative party. This political stance on food banks opens the possibility for the social identity of a work-shy or selfish citizen to be given to anyone who uses these services, without any consideration for the personal circumstances surrounding their food insecurity. In another study, "The experiences and perceptions of food banks amongst users in high-income countries" by Middleton et al. results found that people who accessed food bank services felt that they were inadequate providers for their family, thus taking a toll on their self worth and formulation of their identity as a parent and provider (Middleton et al. 2017, p. 701). The social stigmas surrounding food banks left food bank members in this study with emotions like shame, embarrassment, and fear. The institution of food banks themselves were seen as intimidating forms of welfare where asking for assistance was akin to begging (Garwaithe, 2016, p. 6). Pre-conceived ideas of what it meant to be a food bank user influenced the choice to attend a food bank not only because of shame, but also because food-insecure people were not sure if they qualified for the services. The stigma of a user as homeless and unemployed person kept vulnerable people away from the services (Middleton et al. 2017, p. 706). The stigmatization of people who use welfare services makes it extremely difficult for these people to participate in simple economic transactions like buying groceries at the store, buying new clothes for their children, or having a newspaper delivered to their house (Spicker, 1984, p.49). These simple actions make these people visible to the public by separating them into a class that has fewer means, and thus the agency to make more choices, and isolating them as non-conforming to the societal rules. Social stigma divides people through the process of labeling people into 'us' and 'them' categories. This process is very important to recognize in food bank stigma analysis because it helps to identify what attributes of the 'others' people see that they wish to distance themselves from. In 2014 Global News, a prominent news channel in Canada aired a segment on the most common myths and stigmas about food bank use in Canada. These myths were that, "Food banks create dependence among the people they help…Many people who use food banks don't really need them…Those who use food banks do not work…People who use food banks lack an education…[and] food banks don't provide any other services" (Ogrodnik, 2014). These myths encourage the rhetoric of 'the underserving poor' that appears under Conservative government structures.

2.3 Structures and Agency

We live in a society where specific foundations and structures have been created to give each person a set of roles and rules to follow. Structure is defined by David Walsh as a, "Definite form of organization to the way in which the persons

who live in [society] relate to one another [and] shapes the nature of these relationships" (Jenks, 1998, p.8). This organization and structure often comes in the form of institutions, such as governments, for example. Canadian society as a whole sits in its own realm of societal structure compared to other states because of our own set of roles and rules. There are roles each person takes on that are relatable around the world, such as those of a mother, father, wife, husband, and so on, which comes with their own sets of rules, such as being a provider for family and children. In Canada these roles and rules can be defined by the Canadian social identity that has developed since Canada became an independent nation from Britain in 1867. The identity of Canadians has been developed as an aggregate of individual identities from various nations coming together as a community (Jenks, 1998, p.8). One of the nations that contributed to a large portion of Canada's population at its independence came from Britain, Scotland and Ireland, bringing some of the political and religious identities from Europe to North America (Dunae and Woodcock, 2010). 55% of the population of Canada at the time also followed a Protestant faith, thus making the Anglo Protestant background a large base in Canadian society (Government of Canada, 2018). With the large population came the political ideologies of Britain, which were formally adopted in Canada upon Confederation and are still used as part of the parliamentary political system today (Hodgetts, 2012). One familiar party that came to Canada with this system was the Liberal-Conservative Party, which was known as the Conservative Party after 1873, similar to the British counterpart of the same name and was represented by Canada's first Prime Minister, John A. McDonald (Harrison, 2011). The Conservative party that exists today mirrors the traditional party quite closely. In their foundation principles the party states in the Conservative Party of Canada Constitution (appendix that they have, "2.1.1: A belief in a balance between fiscal responsibility, compassionate social policy that empowers the less fortunate by promotion of self reliance and equality of opportunity" (Conservative Party of Canada, 2018, p.1) and "2.1.14: A belief that it is the responsibility of individuals to provide for themselves, their families and their dependents, while recognizing that government must respond to those who require assistance and compassion" (Conservative Party of Canada, 2018, p. 2). This history has shaped the structure of politics that Canadians live within, and the Conservative ideology that has influenced the rules of Canadian society.

2.4 Canadian Conservatism

Between 2006-2015 the Canadian government was under the Conservative administration of Prime Minister Stephen Harper. This administration followed the neoliberal era politics of Reagan and Thatcher, with Harper as a vocal advocate for some of the same economic and welfare changes made by the two political icons during their administrations (Lukacs, 2015). During this period Canadian society faced severe budget cuts to welfare services and anti-welfare rhetoric by high-profile politicians. The Canadian Encyclopedia states that, "The modern conservative conception of the welfare state is guided by the principles of 19th century liberalism, i.e., less government equals more liberty," (Canadian

Encyclopedia, 2015). This was an attempt to chip away at the welfare system, similar to the strategies of Margaret Thatcher in the 1980s (Sutcliffe-Brathwaite, 2013). This is associated with Principle 2.1.14 in the Conservative Party of Canada Constitution where there is, "A belief that it is the responsibility of individuals to provide for themselves, their families and their dependents, while recognizing that government must respond to those who require assistance and compassion" (Conservative Party of Canada, 2018 p. 2). While this statement is clear that welfare can and will be provided to those in need, the definitions of 'in need' are not outlined and the quality of service required in basic at best. Paul Spicker noted that in this ideology the recipients of welfare should not care about the quality of services they receive because it is an act of charity to those who could not provide for themselves and their dependents, with little to no consideration for privacy or the needs of those asking for assistance (Spicker, 1984, p. 25). It is the epitome of the colloquial phrase 'beggars can't be choosers'.

In a 1997 meeting for the Council of National Policy, Harper, then the Vice President of the National Citizens Coalition, made the following statement on people living in poverty in Canada and the unemployment rates in Canada due to immigration to the United States; "In terms of the unemployed, of which we have over a million-and-a-half, don't feel particularly bad for many of these people. They don't feel bad about it themselves, as long as they're receiving generous social assistance and unemployment insurance" (The Globe and Mail, 2005). This negative attitude towards people living in poverty across Canada exemplifies one of the social stigmas of the poor. It presents them as ignorant to the needs of fellow Canadians, greedy for assistance, and lazy enough that they only wish to rely on the government welfare state. The Conservative Party of Canada's main ambitions during Prime Minister Harper's administration focused on economic growth and management, especially following the 2008 international economic crisis. Harper's previous statement on Canada's poor in his 1997 speech followed into his platform as Prime Minister as the focus on economics overwhelmed the need for welfare developments. In this platform unemployment aid and other welfare services were viewed as a contingency for worst-case scenarios in the economy (Canadian Encyclopedia, 2015). The Conservative administration presented direct action on disassembling the welfare state through the decrease of federal taxes, which championed the success of large corporations while taking much-needed funds away from vulnerable populations (Lukacs, 2015). Attacks such as these perpetuate a culture of sexism that puts value on patriarchal capitalist industries while degrading the importance and dignity of vulnerable groups like indigenous people, women, and children (Moscovitch, 1985, p. 22).

After the failure of Stephen Harper and the Conservative party to bring Canada out of a major budget deficit the Liberal Party of Canada leader Justin Trudeau was elected to the position of Prime Minister (2015-present). In Trudeau's platform during the 2015 federal election he addressed the growing need for food banks, especially for women and children, in an uncertain economy with rising levels of food insecurity (Sethi, 2015). Although the Liberal government of Canada under Justin Trudeau is championing the need to develop the Canadian welfare

state, today there are still approximately 5 million people living in poverty in Canada, amounting to one in every seven people (CWP, 2018).

2.5 Summary:

This chapter performed the task of summarizing the theoretical framework tools that inform this research paper, which are stigma, stigmas and the welfare state, structure and agency, and Canadian conservatism. These references for the theory of the paper are important because they position the relevance of stigma to poverty services like food banks and inform the reader of the societal elements surrounding food banks in Vancouver. The next chapter will describe the methodology of this research.

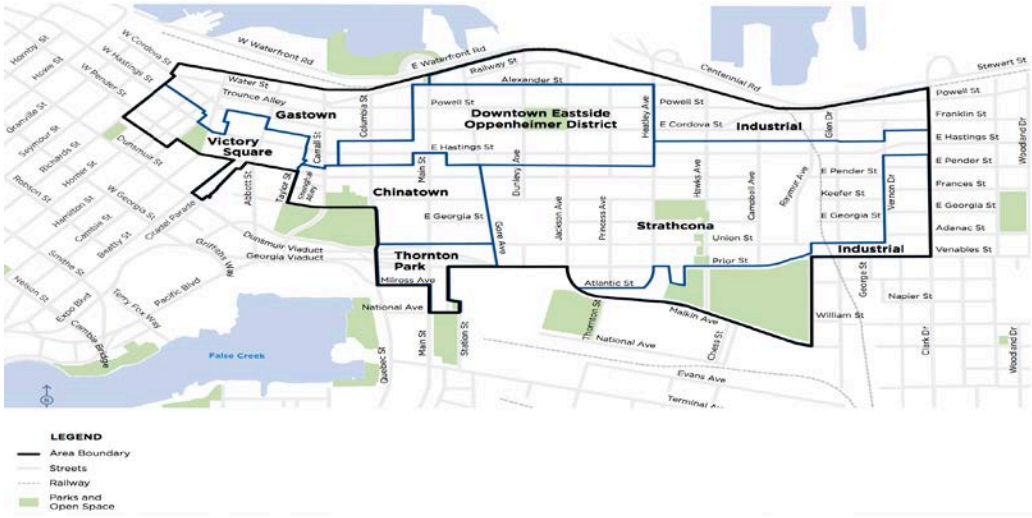
CHAPTER 3: Methodology

3.1 Methods of Data Collection:

This research paper used a multi-sited qualitative interview based case study approach to collect data. Initially I planned to use an ethnographic approach. Allaine Cerwonka stated that, "Ethnography has traditionally been concerned with how social structures, relationships, and processes produce cultural forms that in turn shape individual consciousness and practices" (Cerwonka, 2007, p.14). I chose to use multi-sited ethnography in my research because I wanted to communicate with members of the community to get a better understanding of why they choose or do not choose to use food bank services. To Willis and Trondman (2000) ethnography is, "A family of methods involving direct and sustained social contact with agents, and of richly writing up the encounter, respecting, recording, representing at least partly in its own terms, the irreducibility of human experience" (Willis and Trondman, 2000, p. 5). Through this method I felt I would able to conduct participant observation as a temporary volunteer for all chosen sites of food-insecurity and facilitating qualitative interviews. However, this was not the case because I felt that the short period that was given to facilitate field research (approximately 3 months) would not be sufficient enough to complete a full ethnographic study with immersive participant observation. Instead I opted to use the qualitative interview elements of an ethnographic study and brief participant observation as supplementary information.

Qualitative interviewing is of crucial importance in this process because this research focuses around how members and non-members view food bank institutions in their community. This is a process that cannot always be quantifiably measured and recorded. Communication from food bank members can be formally recognized through comment cards and previous research on food bank use but there is very little recognition of the opinions of the community that do not use these services. Even those that do use the services may choose not to voice their opinions for a variety of reasons. Hannah Wittman and Jennifer Black, from the University of British Columbia recently published a study of the GVFB in 2018 that acted as the foundation for my interview methods. Their research team found that, "Qualitative inquiry enables participants to frame and provide in-depth reflections about their experiences," which might otherwise be unrecorded (Holmes, et al, 2018). Within each category I have detailed the reason I chose each method of qualitative interviewing based on the particular group. In this study I used a combination of semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and online surveys to collect qualitative data. The use of open-ended questions allowed for direction in the study while still giving interviewees the flexibility to convey their own ideas and question as they arose.

Map 1: Downtown Eastside formal boundaries



Source: City of Vancouver, 2015, p.18

Map 2: Locations of fieldwork research sites

Red= Kiwassa Neighbourhood House, Blue= Strathcona Community Centre, Purple= Starbucks
Source: Google Maps, 2018

The study took place in the DTES community of Vancouver in three primary locations, which can be seen in Map 2. The first was the community surrounding the Hastings Sunrise GVFB location at the Kiwassa Neighbourhood House (red on map), the second was the Strathcona Community Centre (blue on map), and the third was a Starbucks location on Main Street (purple on map), a major thoroughfare street in this neighbourhood. This final location was changed to a purely online venue after

some complications, which will be discussed further. The qualitative analysis of the data included the audio recording and transcription of all of the interviews from each food security group and then analyzing them by theme, similar to the process done by Holmes et al (Holmes et al. 2018, p. 132). By using thematic coding of works such as food, money, rent, expensive, income, and security I was able to analyze the content of the interviews.

3.2 Positionality:

While conducting the ethnographic portion of my research I needed to consider my positionality in the spaces I entered. The recognition of my own positionality in this research, "Invites [me] to be more deliberate in [my] approach," to the understanding of this information (Cerwonka, 2007, p.38). I am an educated, Anglophone, white, female, who is a food secure non-member of the food bank and has not used any type of poverty-centric social service while living in British Columbia. My position as all of the previously stated attributes meant that when I went to create questions for interview participants I had difficulty phrasing questions in a way that was too academically worded and I was not as informed about all of the hardships and complexities that come with using welfare services. Thus, when creating questions I had to adapt my phrasing to accommodate each person's education and background in their own understanding of poverty and welfare services and expand my knowledge to include topics outside of food security, including housing, substance abuse, and childcare. However, I have worked with social services groups such as the GVFB before near their geographical locations and I grew up in the Vancouver area, so I was aware of some of the social situations that might keep many of the members or non-members in poverty, which could have influenced my research based on my own assumptions of how services function. Additionally my own biases about poverty and food security initially affected my conclusions. I grew up in an area that had high views of charitable institutions like food banks for the work they did, but not for the people using their services. When I initially wrote my conclusions for the paper I was not critical enough about the institution behind food banks, and instead championed them without fully considering the views of food insecure people in Canada who use or do not use their services. This was brought to my attention by one of my supervisors, and I have since gone back to the beginning of my work and looked more closely at the answers of the interview participants and the literature on this topic. As a person who is not affiliated with the process I hoped that my observations would be as unbiased as possible as I paid particular attention to the type of interactions members, staff, and volunteers have in the distribution and community centers. Nevertheless, in recognizing my own positionality there is strength because it is necessary in any form of research in order to have an interpretation of data, lest it be left alone and left meaningless to the socio-historical context (Cerwonka, 2007,p. 26).

3.3 Data Collection Groups:

Pre-Data Collection Consultation:

Before commencing on a formal data collection process I met with staff and volunteers from both the GVFB head office and the KNH distribution and staff from the SCC. These consultation meetings were performed to create a report between the people I would be working with and myself and to set out expectations for each side during the research process. This was an opportunity to see how community organizations perceive social stigmas as people who may work in the food security sector, but not necessarily experience it themselves. There was also a chance for each of these community agencies to put forward their own requests for questions that would be put into interview questionnaires and surveys for participants to answer. I felt that this was an act of collaboration between research and the practical applications that could come from the conclusions of this study.

Food Insecure Food Bank Members:

Food-insecure food bank members were chosen from the GVFB location at Hastings Sunrise. This location was chosen out of thirteen other GVFB locations because it has food distribution each Tuesday from 11:00am-1:00pm at the KNH and it is located strategically next to the DTES neighborhood in Vancouver. There are no GVFB locations in the formal borders of the DTES. Each interviewee was selected by a member of the GVFB staff that knew the background of the members on a personal level. The previous week before the interviews began the food bank members at the KNH were informed of the study happening and asked to let the staff member know if they were interested in participating. Then the staff member chose members who fulfilled the ethics guidelines and we available to stay for a short interview after their food collection time. After the staff member chose them I confirmed them after a short conversation again assuring they would meet the ethics requirement that I laid out. The interviews of the members at this location were semi-structured and took place in a private room at the community center. Each interview occurred once and lasted between eight and forty-five minutes depending on the extent of the answers given by interview participants. Each interview was scheduled for thirty minutes initially, but some went shorter or longer depending on the depth of their answers. One member interview went for eight minutes and one went for forty-five. The remaining six lasted for the thirty minutes that was originally set out. Semi-structured individual interviews were chosen as my original method of research because there was privacy for each person to express their opinions and experiences without judgment in a familiar space. Each interview participant was gifted a $25 CAD gift certificate to a local grocery store for their contribution, which was donated by the GVFB to support my research endeavors. They were told they would be receiving a small honorarium for their participation in this study after they initially expressed interest in participating and were confirmed to be participants. When I inquired with the GVFB about their reasoning for supporting me with the donation of these gift certificates

they stated that in past research projects they found that members were not interested in participating without some form of compensation.

Food Insecure Non-Food Bank Members:

Food-insecure non-food bank members were selected by employees at the SCC from the participants of the community breakfast program that occurs each day from 8:00am-9:00 am. Similar to the GVFB, participants of this program were told about the study and asked to express their interest in participating. From there these the study participants were chosen based on the employee's personal knowledge of each participant's food security history and confirmation that they would be eligible under the ethics requirements. I met each member the week previous to the interviews to once again confirm this with each person. Similar to the FIM I had a conversation with each of the participants selected by the SCC staff and assured that they would fulfill the ethics requirements of this study. These participants were interviewed together in a focus group format, as per the request of the community center staff and the interview participant. The staff at the SCC felt that the members would be more comfortable discussing their food security experiences and opinions with me if they had familiar peers there with them as emotional support. I did not permit the staff member of the SCC to be present during this interview process so the participants could speak freely about their experiences with the group. After confirming this request with each of the participants individually the focus group went forward. The entire interview lasted one hour and thirty minutes, with one break to check on the participant's children. Each interview participant was gifted a $10 CAD gift certificate for their contribution, which they were not aware they would be receiving prior to expressing interest and being confirmed for the study. This honorarium was purchased from my own personal funds.

Food Secure Non-Food Bank Members:

Food secure non-food bank members were initially going to be found at a Starbucks location on Main Street in Vancouver. Individuals were going to be approached by me inside the store and asked to fill out a survey online using Survey Monkey about their perceptions of food bank services in Vancouver. Starbucks was chosen as the location to find participants because the popular chain coffee shop has been connected to gentrification in cities and acts as a marker of improving community quality, which is reflected in rising housing prices in the neighborhood where a Starbucks is implemented (Glaeser et al. 2018, p. 79). The international coffee shop chain most often appears in a community when there is social buzz that a space is, "On the upswing" (Glaeser et al. 2018. p. 80). However, this location preference had to be changed because upon arrival at the chosen Starbucks the staff were not comfortable with me approaching customers, although I had received permission beforehand when I called the store. As a backup plan I chose to approach people that I professionally knew who had either lived or worked in the DTES of Vancouver and asked them to fill out the same surveys. I felt this was the most

effective method of qualitative inquiry because I was able to send the survey to people who lived still in Vancouver, but at quite a distance from where I was located. Additionally I was able to act as a form of gatekeeper to these people because I was able to vouch for their personal experiences in this geographical space as true and reliable, just as the staff at the GVFB and SCC would for their members. The detriment to this form of research is that I was not able to see body language or hear inflections as I would during an in-person interview. Nevertheless, I believe this was more successful because I was able to vouch for the reliability and language skills of each person thus fulfilling my ethics requirements.

3.4 Gatekeepers:

The significance of gatekeepers in this research project has been critical to my success. When working with vulnerable populations, which in this case included both food-insecure groups, gatekeepers permitted access to these institutions, vouched for my credibility as a researcher, and assisted in choosing potential interview participants that fit into my personal ethics requirements. In the FIM data collection period I worked closely with one of the staff for the GVFB, to create interview questions that members would be comfortable answering and to pick suitable interview candidates. During the FINM collection period I worked with the food security staff of the SCC, specifically in the Community Breakfast Program. I was introduced to them through a personal connection that works at Strathcona elementary school, which is connected physically to the community center. Upon his introductions being made I was able to work with staff at the SCC to once again design appropriate interview questions for the specific group, choose interview candidates, and organize a focus group. For the FSNM group each individual who chose to take part in my survey acted as his or her own individual gatekeeper. They have the privilege of not being labeled in society as a vulnerable person in the realm of food security, and so there is no one to be held responsible for this form of security.

3.5 Ethics, Risks, and Limitations:

Before the data collection period began I sent the GVFB a formal proposal of my research and methodology intentions. The President of the GVFB, Aart Schuurmann-Hess, approved of my research plan and it was sent to a number of staff for further consideration. The same plan was also sent to the SCC before my arrival in Vancouver. Upon arrival I met with both groups to confirm that the research was suitable for each location and received permission to begin my study in these spaces. In both locations I was not asked to sign any form of a non-disclosure agreement, which is important because that would have impeded my ability to display results from this study without any constriction by these institutions.

My primary ethics considerations during data collection surrounded consent, language, and age. Before any participant was able to begin an interview they were read a statement of anonymity (Annex #) by me and asked for verbal consent.

During this study there is a strict code of anonymity offered to all members of food banks services and any volunteers or staff who choose to employ it. Only numbers, in the order that they are interviewed, will participants be referenced in this study. All participants were guaranteed that the information will be used strictly for research purposes and their personal information and identity will remain anonymous unless consent is otherwise given. Next, to avoid any miscommunication of ideas and opinions and to fulfill ethics considerations I only interviewed people who speak English fluently enough to agree to a form of confidentiality consent and answer questions coherently. If I had funding for this research I would have chosen to hire a translator for one of the other largely spoken languages in this community, such as Mandarin, Cantonese, or Punjabi, but because this was not possible I had to rely on English because it is the only language I am fluent in. My grasp of my second language, French, is only conversational and therefore would not be appropriate for research. From this point only community members over the age of majority, eighteen in Canada, were asked to participate in this study. This action was taken to protect the identity of minors in their communities.

For this research I subjected myself to exposure in spaces that are considered highly vulnerable spaces, both for the people living there and for those visiting the area. As mentioned previously in the introduction of the DTES, this area is the oldest neighborhood in the City of Vancouver and currently has high incidences of crime, mental illness, and substance abuse (Linden et al. 2012, p.559). Therefore, even though I have worked in these communities before, I made a personal pledge to only go to these communities during daylight hours and to work closely with certified food bank volunteers and staff when I was inside the KNW food bank location and SCC. I also chose to pick-up a Naloxone opioid-overdose reversal kit from a local pharmacy to carry in my car in the chance that I faced a situation in this neighborhood where another person was in danger from an episode of substance abuse. I chose to get one about half way through my research when one of my interview participants showed me how to use a kit and because I had witnessed overdoses in this neighborhood before but was never adequately prepared to help. As a part of my risk management it was important to keep others around me and myself safe.

During interviews there was a chance that the information that was provided to me by interviewees may contain sensitive content about their personal history or others living in the community. I am aware that I am not qualified to offer any advice or resources to these people (Black et al. 2018). I actively chose to speak beforehand to researchers from UBC who worked with members of the food bank services to gain a better understanding of how they approached these sensitive conversations. It was decided that if anyone had any needs or concerns that are brought up during the interview I would refer them to the GVFB staff and volunteers, and the SCC staff who are specifically trained to offer assistance to vulnerable people in crisis. Fortunately, this was not necessary initially during or after any of the interviews. After completing interviews I recognized that people were worried about the same issues and agencies working in the DTES. Primarily this included child services, housing services, and health services in connection with food security. In each of these situations I was able to refer the participants of both of the FIM and FINM

groups to staff at each location that could help them with accessing these services. The group of FSNM remained the most exposed to personal trauma after their survey interviews because they are not definitely part of a specialized community that can assist them, whereas the food-insecure interview participants are. After these surveys were completed I contacted the participants to inquire about how they felt post-interview, and ask if there was any support they needed. While this action may have been ethical, there is no way to confirm if it was effective.

Chapter 4: Context

4.1 Vancouver Downtown Eastside:

This research will take place in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver. For many years this has been considered Canada's poorest postal code (MacQueen, 2014). One opinion article in the largest British Columbia newspaper, the Vancouver Sun, referred to the central blocks of this community as, "The epicenter of hell" (Shore, 2017). This space is subject to high levels of crime, a large informal street living population in poor conditions, and a large population of people with untreated mental health conditions, and a high rate of substance addiction (Overseas Security Advisory Council. 2017). In 2011 the population of the Downtown Eastside was 18,477. This meant a population of 40% female, 60% male, 39% immigrants, and 10% aboriginal people (City of Vancouver, 2013). In a 2007 study it was released that 30% of the DTES residents suffered from HIV and as many as 70% from Hepatitis C virus, resulting from a large culture of risky behaviors such as shared needle use (Linden et al. 2013, p. 560). It is estimated that in a day over one million dollars in charitable and government aid is invested into the neighborhood in the form of social services such as subsidized housing, shelters, food banks, and health services (MacQueen, 2014). Since the early twentieth century the DTES has been home to some of the most marginalized and transient populations in Canada, primarily because of the extensive availability of single-room occupancy hotels available for rent for low prices with flexible rental lengths. This housing system grew in popularity primarily due to the demand to house people who moved in and out of the city frequently for work, but quickly became a staple in East Vancouver housing (Linden et al. 2013, p 560). However, over the past ten years the Downtown Eastside has seen an increase in gentrification due to skyrocketing real estate prices across the city, with commercial property values in the neighborhood increasing 13% from 2015 to 2016 (Omand, 2017). The area is now the site of multiple condominium development projects and a growing food and arts district, while simultaneously still being known as the home of Vancouver's poorest residents.

In a city with increasing real estate price gentrification is an inevitable reality for many citizens. Gentrification relates to the stigma of food banks because the process of gentrification has been directly linked to increased food insecurity, as a cause of increased house prices and dwindling food store choices in changing spaces. In the DTES one significant period of gentrification occurred in 1986, at the time that the World Exposition on Transportation and Communication was featured in Vancouver. Due to the large number of SRO rooms available in this community, many property owners took the opportunity to convert these spaces into tourist hotels, given the large opportunity for profit at hand (Linden et al. 2013, p. 560). This resulted in the eviction of hundreds of low-income people from SRO room hotels and left them without a suitable affordable alternative, further pressing their living expenses or leaving them with no choice but to live on the streets (Linden et al, 2013, p.569). After this displacement the DTES was unable to recover the levels

of low-income housing that previously existed. To combat the processes of gentrification the Vancouver Agreement was created in 2000 to, "Support local community solutions to economic, social, health and safety issues…[with a focus in] particular in the Downtown Eastside" (Vancouver Agreement, 2018). The premise of this agreement promised revitalization without displacement of longstanding residents and vulnerable populations (Vancouver Agreement, 2018). This agreement expired in 2010 and with it came new streams of gentrification within the area (Vancouver Agreement, 2018).

4.2 Vancouver Institutions in this Research

The Greater Vancouver Food Bank (GVFB) was created in 1982 as an emergency food service relief program during a period of economic recession and food crisis (Greater Vancouver Food Bank, 2018). Although the service was meant to be a temporary solution the food bank has grown to thirteen locations across the Greater Vancouver region in thirty years to support anyone facing food insecurity. The GVFB currently serve approximately 27 000 people per week (Greater Vancouver Food Bank, 2018). In recent years they have expanded their services outside of weekly food distribution to address food quality, literacy, and access. Their new programs include safe food preparation and cooking workshops, curriculum based classes for children about growing food and healthy eating, and connecting people to other social services such as healthcare and economic wellbeing. As of 2018 approximately 60% of their members were characterized as severely food insecure, 30% moderately food insecure, and 1% marginally food insecure (Holmes et al. 2018, p. 5). The GVFB is a registered charitable organization under the Government of Canada Revenue Agency, allowing the food bank to be exempt from paying annual income tax and increasing their status as a credible organization in the community (Canada Revenue Agency, 2018). Approximately 33% of their funds come from public donations by private citizens in addition to the 52% that is donated food products by citizens and corporations (Greater Vancouver Food Bank, 2018, p. 19). Most citizens who leave the GVFB food distribution program often have phased out of the system because they have received a new form of income or welfare and do not require the services or their family sizes have decreased as children age and families members die, leaving them with more money to allocate to food purchases.

The Strathcona Community Centre is located in the center of the Vancouver Downtown Eastside neighborhood and has been serving the community for over forty years. The community center offers programming for children, youth, adults, and seniors in addition to childcare and fitness facilities and a community breakfast and food security program for members in need (City of Vancouver, 2018). The breakfast program is run from Monday to Friday each morning to provide a place for children and their families to eat a nutritious meal and alleviate the pressures of providing food on a restricted income. During my research period I was told that each morning during the school year in particular, from September to June, the program receives at least 50 people each morning for the entire week. The members of this program are primarily families with children between the ages of four to

twelve that attend the neighboring Strathcona Elementary School. After children move forward in their studies out of the elementary school often parents will stop using the program also. The Breakfast program is funded by the City of Vancouver department of Parks, Recreation, and Culture, who also fund the rest of the community center recreation activities (City of Vancouver, 2018). This highlights the separation of the SCC as a state funded initiative compared to the charitable status f the GVFB.

Although both the GVFB and SCC are food security programs intended for low-income people to use, there are some fundamental differences between these two programs that leads to one being defined as a food bank in this study while one is a considered a food program. The GVFB is specifically a food bank because it requires a formal membership to be a part of the bank and collect food from the distribution spots each week. To become a member one has to visit a GVFB distribution center during the open hours and present a piece of identification and a piece of mail with a home address on it, in addition to the information of any other family members who intend to use the food from the service. This is a charitable service that is provided by a registered charity. The SCC is a local government service run as a City of Vancouver community center. The funding for this program comes from the city and is available to anyone in the public who wishes to use it. Upon entering the breakfast program participants are asked to sign in their name but they are not kept in a formal member system like at the GVFB. The SCC is not viewed as a charity, but as a service that every member of the community in Vancouver can access for free as part of government initiatives for health living and lifestyles. It is viewed as no different than having free drop in times at a local recreation center for sports.

4.3 Charitable Food Donations in Vancouver:

The GVFB is in a long-term process of changing their distribution approaches to provide safe and nutritious food in a dignified manner. At the GVFB the endeavour to improve food quality is the highest priority. In the GVFB Community Report 2017 the authors discussed the improvement to food quality in a statement that read, “We confirmed the sample size that was required each month to represent the inventory in our warehouse. Then, we were able to analyse nutrition criteria to score over 3,500 unique food products into rankings. The result was that 59% of our foods were scored in our top nutrition ranks. With one year left in our strategic plan and an end goal of 70% of our food in top ranks, we’ve got room to improve, and we’re up to the challenge” (GVFB, 2017, p. 6). This project has begun to yield positive results in maintaining higher levels of food quality and nutrition as it passes from warehouse to distribution hubs, based on the observations from the main office. In my own field observations at KNH I witnessed volunteers taking further steps to assure food quality by looking through the food delivery boxes. During my observation I asked how often volunteers performed this task and they responded that they check each box every week before members begin their food shopping process. However, current and past GVFB members have stated that these actions have not created a noticeable difference in the food distribution quality.

The British Columbia Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) has published a series of industry food donation guidelines that are now in practice with all institutions that have a non profit status in British Columbia that handle food. It was created as collaborative project between the GVFB and other charitable food organizations in cooperation with the British Columbia public health service to improve food donation practices across the province. This publication provides guidelines for acceptable food during its initial processing stage considering safety points like expiry and best before dates in products (BCCDC, 2015, p. 17). Additionally it lists items that are considered healthy and in-demand food and beverages for donation to help prioritize what food bank members' need and what is valuable for the prevention of prominent health complications like diabetes and heart disease. A sample of this list from the BCCDC report can be found in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Identifying Healthy and In-Demand Food and Beverages for Donation Snapshot

Healthy, In-Demand Donations	What makes a food or beverage healthy?
Vegetables and Fruit	
• Fresh vegetables and fruit • Canned vegetables and fruit, including unsweetened sauces and purees • Frozen vegetables and fruit • Dried vegetables and fruit • 100% fruit or vegetable juice	• Prepackaged products listing a vegetable or fruit (not a sugar) as the first ingredient • Canned fruit packed in water or 100% juice • Canned vegetables and 100 % vegetable juices with little or no added sodium (<15% Daily Value) • 100% vegetable and fruit juices with no added sugar
Grain and Grain Products	
• Whole grains (e.g., quinoa, barley, brown basmati rice, wild rice) • Noodles or pasta, especially whole grain • Hot and cold cereals, especially whole grain (e.g., oatmeal) • Bread, especially whole grain • Crackers, especially whole grain	• Prepackaged products listing a grain, especially a whole grain, as the first ingredient • Gluten-free options are welcomed • All products meets the restriction of 5% trans fat or less of total fat content

Source: BCCDC, 2015, p. 27

Food Banks Canada (FBC) sets its own level of standards that may conflict with the report from the BCCDC. The FBC report (Annex 2) of Guidelines for Distributing Food-Past the Best Before Date states that many non-perishable products that are canned or jarred can safely be distributed in food banks for up to one year past their best before date (FBC, 2013). The report gives a description of the product type and the expiry date when the product is stored at room temperature, in refrigeration, frozen, canned, and boxed.

Although these products are still safe for consumption they may lose some of their nutritional value over time and members who see these labels may feel that they are being given expired food. These feelings of disrespect lead to a further stigmatization of food distribution services from the public because these negative incidences may be what members remember if they choose to share information about the food bank with their community or may ultimately be their reason for leaving the service altogether

CHAPTER 5: Findings and Analysis

5.1 Demographic Data of Interview Participants:

The sample consisted of 8 in each of the three groups, amounting to a total of 24 interview participants. The age range of the interviewees ranged between 25-75. All of the participants were either native English speakers or sufficiently knowledgeable of English as a second language, per ethics guidelines for this study. Tables 1 display the demographic characteristics of all of the interview participants.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of All Interview Participants

Demographics of Interview Participants (n= 24)	Percent	(Number)
Gender		
Female	62.5%	(n=15)
Male	37.5%	(n=9)
Age		
18-40	12.5%	(n=5)
41+	87.5%	(n=19)
Ethnicity		
White/ European	50%	(n=12)
Non-White	50%	(n=12)

5.2 Participant Descriptions:

In Tables 4, 5, and 6 there is a brief description of each interview participant, split up into food-security groups. All participants have been assigned a number of 1 through 24 to assure their anonymity in this research paper. From here on any member that is referenced in the analysis of this fieldwork will be referred to by their number.

Table 2: Description of Food Insecure Food Bank Member Participants

#	Sex	Age	Ethnicity	Marital Status	Dependents[1]	Reason for first GVFB visit[2]
1	M	61	Non-White	Married	1	Divorce and disability
2	M	70	White	Single	0	Disability
3	F	58	Non-White	Married	0	Housing Loss
4	M	65	Non-White	Married	0	Housing Loss
5	M	58	White	Single	0	Workplace Injury
6	F	71	White	Single	0	Job loss

[1] In this study dependents can mean children or other minors that they maintain guardianship of or adults with mental or physical accessibility needs. Applies to Table 4-6.

[2] All interview participants stated that they went to the GVFB and SCC Breakfast program initially because they were low on income. This is assumed in this chart and the initial circumstances of their low-income situations have been specified. Applies to Table 4-5.

7	F	56	Non-White	Single	2	Immigration to Canada
8	F	26	Non-White	Single	1	Unexpected pregnancy

Table 3: Description of Food Insecure Non-Food Bank Member Participants

#	Sex	Age	Ethnicity	Marital Status	Dependents	Reason for first SCC visit
9	M	49	White	Married	3	Job loss
10	F	38	White	Married	3	Could not work raising kids
11	F	45	White	Single	4	Could not work raising kids
12	F	34	Non-White	Single	1	Refugee to Canada
13	F	45	Non-White	Married	4	Could not work rising kids
14	F	49	Non-White	Single	0	Immigration to Canada
15	M	47	Non-White	Married	3	Job loss
16	F	38	Non-White	Married	3	Could not work raising kids

Table 4: Description of Food Secure Non-Food Bank Member Participants

#	Sex	Age	Ethnicity	Marital Status	Dependents	Occupation[3]
17	F	47	White	Single	2	Homemaker
18	M	77	White	Married	0	Retired- Computer Analyst
19	M	25	White	Single	0	GIS Analyst
20	F	65	White	Married	0	Retired- Human Resources
21	F	51	White	Married	2	Registered Nurse
22	F	50	Non-White	Married	3	Homemaker
23	M	48	Non-White	Single	2	Law Enforcement
24	F	59	White	Married	2	Interior Designer

5.3 Field Work Observations:

At the GVFB the members begin to lineup outside of the KNH up to two hours before the food bank distribution center opens at 11:00 am. This is done so they can save their place in line with their bags and they can converse socially with anyone they may know outside. The lineup goes along the side of the building leading to a door near the back, away from view of the street and protected by shrubs and other gardens. The building is only marked as the Kiwassa Neighborhood house and the only sign of the GVFB is a small stand put up outside the door explaining to members how to line up safely away from fire exists. When members approach the door at opening they are scanned in through an online system done on a tablet. For the first thirty minutes of the service seniors and those with a mobility barrier are welcomed inside first, followed by families with children under the age of 12 for the next thirty minutes, and then any remaining members for the rest of the open hours. They present their membership card and they are then given a poker chip that establishes if they are collecting for themselves, as part of a couple, or for an entire family. They then walk down a small hallway to the food distribution room where they are welcomed by another volunteer and offered a basket to carry their food. The room is full of single folding tables that each hold specific products based on

[3] This is to give an idea of the income level of these participants

their nutritional group (starches, protein, vegetables, etc.). Each table also has a sign with pictures of the item and translations into four languages (English, Mandarin, Cantonese, and Punjabi) and pictures of the colored chips followed by a number stating how much of each item they can take based on their collection group. They walk around the tables to collect their items and volunteers stand nearby to help members understand what each items is or clarify how much they are able to take. When they are finished collecting members go to the front of the room where a 'checkout' has been created. Here the volunteers go through their basket and assure that members have taken the correct number of each object, collect the poker chip, and assist them in putting food into their bags. They then leave the premises through the back door.

Unlike the GVFB, the process to enter the SCC breakfast program is much simpler. Participants enter and leave the community center through the door closest to the school and the parking area, so that they do not have to go far to take their children to school breakfast. When they arrive inside they are asked to sign their name and the number of people attending that morning on a piece of paper that acts as a sign in sheet. They then take a seat at any of the tables set up in the classroom to settle their children in and then they go to the front of the room where there is an open window to the kitchen and the counter where food sits. They are able to take whatever they feel they want to eat tat morning and there is no limit to what they can have, with the exception of one egg each until everyone has had a chance to get one. Teachers usually come to the room for coffee and they sit and have breakfast with their students and their parents, and make conversation until they need to go begin the school day. The volunteers who help run the program or the parent participants take any leftover cooked food at the end of breakfast.

5.4 Food Quality- What They Give Is What They Get:

During the period of data collection the results have shown that a large portion of the interview participants who are food insecure and are both members of the food bank and non-members, believed that the quality of food received through the GVFB was suboptimal. This was contradictory to what I saw during my time observing the food distribution service at KNH. During my observations volunteers took time before the members arrived to go through the food that the center received that day to remove any items that were rotten. However, members of the GVFB and past members of the food bank at the SCC and in the FSNM group recalled frequently receiving non-perishable food items, such as canned goods or pasta, which had reached expiry, or perishable products, like vegetables, that were partially or completely rotten. This made me consider that the volunteers may have been performing the task of removing rotten items only because they knew that I would be observing them that day or this practice was a newer phenomenon for the service. Nevertheless, participant 15, who was previously a member the GVFB, stated that sometimes over half of the food that they were given would have to be disposed of when they arrived home because it was inedible. When the GVFB member participants in this study were asked how they currently felt about seeing improved food quality at the GVFB just over half of them were positive about the

changes while the remaining members felt that they had seen no significant improvement. All of the members reported that they had received items from the food bank that were rotten or inedible at some point in their time using the service. Participant 3 said that, "[The GVFB is] ok. Comes in handy, so there's nothing to cry about. What they give is what you get". The participants who stated this displayed that they felt that they have no choice, no agency in a societal structure that does not value the poor. A recent study at the GVFB led by Eleanor Holmes found that 50% of members reported no change in their food security since they began using the food distribution service while 9% actually found that their food insecurity had increased (Holmes et al. 2018. p.6).

The remaining food bank members who felt that the food quality had not improved said that while the food was not necessarily rotten anymore, the products were the same still and did not provide any better nutritional value than before. Nutritional value is defined as, "An indication of the contribution of a food to the nutrient content of the diet. This value depends on the quantity of a food which is digested an absorbed and the amounts of the essential nutrients (protein, fat, carbohydrate, minerals, and vitamins) which it contains" (Biology Online, 2018). In contrast, the participants from the SCC said that in their community center there was an extremely negative view of the GVFB. All of the participants at this location had used the food bank distribution service at some point in their lives but eventually stopped. A third of the group said that they left because of operational problems with the food bank, such as long line times or inconvenient hours, while the remaining two thirds said it was because they could not have the food provided by the food bank in their diet anymore because of health restrictions in their family. Participant 11, who was both a member and volunteer with the GVFB for ten years, said that, "I started years ago when my kids were little to make sure there was extra food in the house. I stopped going and stopped volunteering for the GVFB because they weren't helping people as much as they could or treating them with respect. I realized that the food they gave out was killing us".

This problem is not only noticeable to the people receiving food assistance. The group of FSNM participants all provided the information that at some point in their youth or adult life they had taken part in a food drive for their local food bank. Participant 19 noted that in his childhood his school would collect non-perishable items during the Christmas season to send to a nearby food bank. This was the height of his exposure to emergency food services. I also remember in my own youth growing up in suburban Vancouver the same type of food drives occurring at my elementary and high school. Each student was usually instructed to bring any cans or boxes of non-perishable items they could from home, resulting in a large cardboard box of pasta and pickled beets that your parents said you could take from the cupboard. When food aid recipients mention that much of the canned food they receive is expired, it comes as no surprise for much of the donations coming from individual food drives would be the leftover cans that no one in the donor's house would want to eat, so they went to the poor instead.

5.5 Inappropriate Food:

Over half of the participants in this study claimed that their visits to the food bank stopped because they were unable to fulfill their food needs with a dietary restriction due to limited variety at the food bank. It has been found that, "Food insecurity is often associated with low fruit and vegetable intakes and a low mean nutrient intakes of protein, vitamin B12, magnesium, zinc, and phosphorus" (Holmes et al. 2018, p.11). This lack of valuable nutrients often drives low-income people to turn to food assistance programs like the GVFB. However, when they are unable to fill their needs while following dietary restrictions, changes have to be made in how they get food. Participant 12 stated that she was unable to visit the food bank due to a combination of religious food restrictions for her family and her daughter's allergy to dairy. Both of these dietary restrictions left the two with limited options at their local food bank, and thus they had to resort to other food options. Another couple said that they similarly found it difficult to find suitable options at the food bank when the wife developed Gestational Diabetes Mellitus during her third pregnancy. Participant 10 noted, "I stopped going [to the food bank] because I developed gestational diabetes during my last pregnancy and I found that the food bank was providing a lot of food that I couldn't eat with my dietary restrictions". The couple began to eat along the guidelines of the ketogenic diet to help combat the effects of her diabetes but at the time the food bank was unable to provide enough foods that were non-processed and fresh. In low-income communities dietary restrictions due to health conditions, such as diabetes or heart disease, are commonplace (Williamson et al, 2006 p.107). The ability to access nutritious food is an important precondition to healthy lifestyles and the ability to assure that a family is able to access food in a stress free way is also central to complimentary health conditions (Wakefield et al. 2015. p.82). It is a reality of living in low-income communities like the DTES. All of the food-insecure participants in this research paper, especially those over the age of 40, stated that at some point in their life they had faced some form of health complication that required a change to their eating habits. The most commonly stated health condition was diabetes. Their health needs are more likely to be neglected when the government evaluates the public health system because they are part of the welfare system in Canada (Williamson et al, 2006, p. 108). However, their conditions are largely influenced by the food available to them. Food banks are an institution that is directly able to influence the health of their members through the food that they choose to provide. Although the GVFB is working to denounce the stigmas that surround food bank use and the members they are in part to blame for their creation in the first place. As the interviews have shown institutions like the GVFB have a history of serving their members suboptimal food. Today the GVFB is working in a campaign to continue improving their food quality by analyzing the criteria of the nutrition of food that they accept for donation and give to their members (Greater Vancouver Food Bank, 2018, p. 6). Nevertheless members are still reporting food that is not nutritionally valuable is being served and FSNMs are unaware of the changes being made to donation criteria. Suboptimal food will continue to be a prominent stigma of food banks unless drastic changes are introduced to show members and the public what kind of change is necessary and possible.

5.6 Fear and Helplessness

When you live as a low-income person in Vancouver there are many forms of fear that you live with on a daily basis. For member 9 it is the concern for those with opioid addiction that he carries a Naloxone kit to save in the case that he sees someone suffering from an overdose. For others it is the potential of losing your children because you are viewed as a parent that cannot care for them. The fear of losing your children is recognizable to any parent. In the province of British Columbia everyone has the legal obligation under the Child, Family, and Community Service Act to report potential abuse or neglect of a youth under the age of 19 to the police or a child welfare worker (Province of British Columbia, 2018). These laws are in place to protect youth that may be in high-risk situations such as sexual, emotion, or physical abuse or neglect.

Of the 16 food insecure members interviewed six of them had experiences where they were reported to CPS for what they felt was connected to their food bank use. Participant 8 is an Indigenous young mother who is currently unemployed and a member of the GVFB. She worried that by telling people like her neighbors that she used the food bank she might be exposing herself and her family to the attention of CPS. She worried that she could possibly lose her daughter if they thought she could not sufficiently feed and provide for her child because she had previously received a visit from them when living in her old apartment complex after a neighbor came to her home to visit and noted that there was limited food in the house because the next day was food collection day. Participant 10 had similar concerns that had become a reality. Years before when she was still attending the food bank distribution service her neighbors called Child Protective Services claiming that she was not feeding her children because they knew she was attending emergency food distribution. Parents who are subject to an investigation by CPS are fearful because they are skeptical about the intentions of CPS with their children or they feel that the social workers have pre-conceived ideas about their family from reports and cannot put aside that bias (Dumbrill, 2006, p.30). These pre-conceived ideas can relate to the reports given to the worker in addition to the evaluation of the services that they use to supplement any form of welfare they may already receive. These parents do not have the luxury or the privilege to be open about their use of charitable services because they could be flagged as a parent to watch by the British Columbia CPS.

75% of the GVFB participants said that they did not have a strong opinion about using the food distribution services or that it did not matter how they felt because they had no other choice for ways to find affordable food. In the conservative context they might be seen as the 'underserving poor', meaning that they are mismanaging their income or using a food bank to save money they do have to spend it instead on personal goods like alcohol, cigarettes, or other luxury items (Garthwaite, 2016, p.1). Participant 18 believed that people go to the food bank because, "They do not have enough money to buy food, possibly because they could not budget properly and spend frivolously". This understanding of poverty as a

character flaw is apolitical in nature. In the statement by participant 3 there is a sense of the helplessness that is felt by those who cannot afford even the most basic of goods, yet they are made out to be a villain that is taking advantage of the welfare system. Each person I spoke to who was food insecure was very clear that they worked whenever they could but they were often held back because they were physically incapable of doing so because of a disability or injury or they could not afford to work because of the high costs of childcare in Vancouver. They are not undeserving. They are living on tight budgets with low income because the system of welfare is systematically oppressing their ability to take the steps to rise out of poverty.

5.7 Humiliation and Independence

Humiliation and embarrassment were two words that every single participant in this study uttered in reference to food banks. For the FSNM group it was the reaction they had to the mere idea of using a food assistance service while for the FINM and FIM groups it was a feeling they had already experienced during their first times collecting food or that they still feel today when they use a food bank service. This humiliation was related to the lack of independence that a person felt when they used a charitable service. For those who had no dependents, it was because they felt that they had failed to take care of themselves and for those with dependents, especially parents with children, they felt that it was a reflection on their choices as a parent and a provider. In many societies there is an expectation that parents will be active in providing resources to encourage the care for the health and wellbeing of their children. For both men and women this relates to the gendered assumptions we make about mothers and fathers and their roles as a homemaker or a provider (Ristovsko-Slijepcevic et al. 2010. p.469). Similarly in Canada there is a looming presence of conservative rhetoric that puts value on independence and self-reliance (Conservative Part of Canada, 2018, p.1). This is present in Canadian society in daily activities where you are considered an active citizen by working and contributing to the country by paying of taxes or providing services. Every food insecure participant stated that it was difficult at first to become a food bank member but once they had exhausted all other options it was the final step to having food in their homes. Some of these options that people go through include accessing government welfare benefits, like unemployment or disability status, or turning to friends and family members to help provide resources like jobs, extra food, or monetary gifts.

Half of the FIM and FINM groups said that they either told no one about their food bank use or only close friends, but not family members. The reasoning for this from three members was that their families donated to charitable services in their youth and they believed that their families would be ashamed or embarrassed by them using those services now. However, the FINMs now were open with their families and friends about attending the breakfast program at the SCC because they said it was a community program that anyone in the city could use, instead of only low-income people. The GVFB is a form of charity while the SCC is a service that citizens are entitled to. In general government welfare services are an entitlement

for all Canadian citizens under the welfare state while taking more from additional charity institutions expands outside the realm of the perceived needs of a person, making these services less acceptable (Spicker, 1984, p.51). Participant 11 in the FINM group noted that they felt more comfortable about telling their family and friends about going to the breakfast program at SCC because it was a program that they felt they were entitled to because it was provided by the City of Vancouver Parks, Culture and Recreation Division. The status of this program as a government project made it more acceptable when anyone in the facility was able to use it instead of only the low-income families. The element of local and provincial government support of the SCC keeps stigma largely at bay compared to the GVFB because of the entitlement of all citizens being able to engage in the SCC programs.

All of the FSNM participants were supportive of the food bank service existing but did not support the idea of themselves or their close family members using the services, primarily because they felt they could find alternative resources and support through their personal community networks instead of turning to government welfare assistance. Participant 18 said that, "I never have and never will [use the food bank] because I will ALWAYS be able to take of my family and myself". Their response to the idea of using the food bank was very aggressive because they had a very clear notion of their own independence. Participant 21 noted that she would not use a food bank if she were food insecure because, "I think I would be uncomfortable because as a society we value financial independence". This is a significant statement because the participant suggests that even if she were starving she would not access a food bank service because of her perception of how people would view her and her ability to be an independent person. When food insecure people turn to food banks they lose the ability to be independent in any aspect that they choose and with that they lose some of their agency and choices that would further be available with more income.

By becoming a member of the food bank you are traditionally given items based on charity donation so you have no choice in what you are given. Food bank members are subject to the reduction of their agency as they are given a limited choice in what they get. People who are non members but food insecure may worry about entering food banks programs because they want to hold onto any agency they may have on the outside of this small structure and still try to fit the rules the rules (i.e. be independent, have a job, ask for nothing) and roles (i.e. parent, mother, father, provider) created on the larger outer structure of society. In the FINM group all of the members stopped using the food bank service because of dietary restrictions or because of an inability to work within the operations of the food bank. For families that rely on the food bank their agency is significantly decreased because they do not have the full freedom to decide when they want to get their food, how much food they need, how frequently they can restock their cupboards, or know what items will be available to them week-by-week, even if their health depends on it. The GVFB is attempting to return some of this agency and choice to their members by giving them the chance to choose their own items during the food distribution rather than the traditional method of being given a pre-packaged bag of goods. However, this is not enough for these people, as has been reflected by the members of the SCC that stopped attending the GVFB services. At the SCC the

members may rely on a prepared meal from the breakfast program on weekday mornings but to them this is viewed as a service that any member of the community is entitled to. These members stated that for parents and children from the adjacent elementary school the breakfast program is considered a morning ritual and communal space where students can have a healthy breakfast and parents can have a cup of coffee with their child's teachers or other families. At the GVFB there is an atmosphere of shame where people are shuffled in through a side door near the back of the building and hurried through the food bank center so that more people can continue to come inside. At SCC thee atmosphere is reminiscent of a coffee shop, where people are able to start the day with their friends. In comparison, FSNMs don't need consider their agency because they fulfill the expectations of the structure by being self sufficient and profitable in their work. In a system that is based on capitalism money is an important part of agency. Only one FIM said that they did not feel shame or embarrassment about the idea of using the service. Participant 6 said that they were so desperate for anything to eat that they did not have a chance to think about their own feelings in the situation. Eventually the feeling of hunger overtakes the feeling of humiliation. The rest of the group had a variety of reasons for their feelings of shame. Over half of the FIM group said that when they were contemplating using the food bank they felt that they were not in a bad enough situation to use the charitable service because they had donated to similar institutions in their youth and felt that they were not a representation of what they thought a food bank member might be. Nevertheless, similar to participant 6, when they finally got to a point where they were hungry enough they were left with the choice between giving up some of their agency to use the service or to starve.

During this research period each group of participants was asked what their opinion would be if the GVFB changed their name to an alternative option like 'food society' or 'community food hub'. Across all of the participant groups approximately 75% the participants stated that there was no point to changing the name of the food bank. Some of these people felt that there was no point in changing the name if there was not going to be changes to the food quality, food variety, and respect they gave to members as well. Participant 18, a FSMN, felt that, "Changing the name sounds like a socialist or liberal approach to sanitize something the rest of the world finds offensive, but it doesn't change what it is". Participant 3 said, "Food bank is fine because it draws attention to the fact that you're still getting older food and its straight to the point". The labeling of this institution as a food bank allowed for transparency to the public that this is a charitable organization. It also allows the public to acknowledge that those living in poverty still need food assistance that the government is unable to currently provide and could help create a narrative about why this still has to exist. While some viewed this as honesty in the name others saw it as a way to isolate poor people through the service they use. When someone lined up outside of a building that is labeled as a food bank he or she suddenly become extremely visible to the public. The public is then able to make assumptions about these people based on their appearance and the knowledge that they are receiving food assistance. Participants felt that changing the name of food banks to an alternative option like 'community food hub' might be helpful said this because they

knew when people heard that you attend the food bank that you were poor. When members attend the food bank service you could not tell this by looking at them directly. Almost all, with some exceptions, wore clean and well-mended clothing and they brought their children, who were happy to run around on the playground while their parents collected food inside the KNH. They put effort into making sure that their appearance was that of any higher-income family so that they could not be called poor based solely on their appearance. For some of the members this was extremely important because they thought that if their friends and family could not see the affects of their low-income, in a way it did not exist at all until the moment they needed to return to the food bank. Until then they were invisible to scrutiny because they appeared to fit into the structure of the society. Those who were in favor of renaming the food bank felt that it could be a way to bring dignity to the process by using terms that did not come off as aggressive or stigmatized as food bank. By renaming the organization they may hope that the outer name that people see is appealing and more socially acceptable, just like the appearance they make of themselves on a day-to-day basic. One of the FSNM, participant 19, encouraged this idea and said that he would be interested in visiting a place called a 'community food hub' because it sounded like a co-operative food organization for people of all incomes.

5.8 Summary:

In this chapter I discusses the results and analysis of the field research. During the qualitative interviews and observation periods that were conducted four major themes were discovered. First, participants were disappointed and frustrated with the food quality that they received because it was not providing the nutritional value that members required to maintain healthy lifestyles and there was a noticeable level of rotten or expired food that was provided to them. This created a culture of disrespect. Next was the topic of inappropriate food. Low-income communities face a high level of health concerns compared to the rest of society because of low nutritional value in the food they receive. Although the food bank reported that they were attempting to change this by closely monitoring the food they put into the distribution centers, current and old members recognized that very little had changed and they even felt that the low quality of the food might one day kill them. After this fear and helplessness were discussed because past and current members reported that their use of the food bank led to neighbors reporting them to CPS for neglecting their children. Their use of a charitable service like the GVFB suggested to the neighbors that they were unfit parents who were unable to care for their children. This stigma nearly separated their families. The last theme was humiliation and independence. For some participants the mere idea of using a food bank was enough to cause feeling of embarrassment and shame and when those who had used the food bank began to attend the services, these feeling never did completely subside. In a society that encourages self-reliance and financial independence using the food bank was viewed as a personal failure on the part of the member, to the point where many people did not share their GVFB status with friends or family in order to avoid embarrassment or further isolation from society.

Chapter 6: Conclusions

6.1 Implications for Food Banks

Sometimes acts of charity and philanthropy are performed because we believe that these acts will bring us personal, spiritual, or social fulfillment. Other times an action is performed because we purely believe in the good of helping others. It is not our place to judge what motivates people to do good work, just like it is not our place to judge how people survive. This study examined the role that stigma plays in the perception of food banks in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver, Canada. The results show that the stigma perpetuates the oppression of low-income people because food banks are a physical representation that the government does not care about these people enough to provide adequate welfare services and thus, tells society the same.

Food banks in Canada are trying to the best of their ability to provide dignified and respectful services to their members without these judgments. They do their work in order to achieve their vision of providing, "Accessible, healthy and sustainable food for all" (GVFB, 2017, p. 5). However, while the GVFB has shown to be proactive in working towards creating sustainable food systems and improving food quality in their distribution services, their efforts need significant improvement. Members and non-members of the food bank alike stated that the food they received from the GVFB in the past was often rotten or expired. Although this reportedly happens less frequently now, the food-insecure people who have used the service in the past and currently notice that the food they receive still has a low nutritional quality that affects their health and the health of their families. Actions by food banks like the GVFB are the origin of stigma surrounding poor food in their institutions and this is a history they need to actively work to change. They can do better, but not on their own. This section considers the necessary improvements of the food bank, but they are not an institution that is capable of initiating these changes on their own. It is my personal recommendation that the GVFB and other food banks that are interested in making their services more accessible to food-insecure citizens consider the following recommendations that have been created based on the results of this study.

Firstly, food banks need to consider practical operation points to improve their services. This includes creating longer hours or more open days for people to attend food distribution, increasing food quantity available per service, and updating warehouse processes to continue improving the sorting of safe food products from those that may be expired or damaged. Of the FIM interviewed at Hastings Sunrise, all participants requested an extension in operational hours incase there were community members who could not attend because of work, family, or health barriers. 50% of these same members asked that more food be available to each family, couple, or individual per service, as there was a consensus that the quantities were diminishing. The organization has launched new comment cards at

the majority of their locations, which will be a valuable tool in maintaining relationships between members and staff (GVFB, 2017, p.7).

Second, food banks should continue to work together with community organizations for food-insecure people to promote their services. However, these promotional activities should show people the improved quality of the food that they can receive at the food bank compared to what they may have know in the past. This also means that the GVFB needs to do a more thorough study of the health conditions affecting their members so they can put forward foods that will be appropriate for their diets. At the SCC many members with elementary school aged children participate in the Breakfast Program. They are hesitant to use the food bank because of poor previous experiences or stigmas and myths they have heard. It would be valuable to have a health professional on site each week to speak with members. This colleague would be able to have one-on-one consultations with any member that has a health concern or dietary restriction and assist them in deciding what types of foods could be valuable for their situation and thus, they can further advise warehouse distribution and head office staff of what products to look for more specifically. Putting a special consideration into member health needs will provide all members with greater opportunity to improve their livelihoods while opening the food bank administration to collaboration with other health-centric organizations in the community. The most important step for the GVFB, and furthermore all food banks, will be to communicate with members and critically listen to their concerns.

6.2 Looking Forward

In the future there will ideally be no need for food banks because the Government of Canada and Province of British Columbia will develop more policies that support social welfare initiatives like low-income housing, employment assistance, free child-care centers, and improved medical facilities. Food banks were meant to be a temporary solution for food insecurity, but they have become permanent institutions across Canada because the welfare state is unable to support low-income people. They are physical representations of the failure of the federal and provincial governments to provide adequate support for their citizens. Conservative narratives in Canadian society have led to a stigma against food banks because they are institutions that support low-income people who cannot support themselves while the society values self-reliance and independence. This leads to humiliation from self-perception and the perceived judgment of others and the fear that they will be targeted because their food bank use identifies them as poor people. While they are a beacon of hope for many of better times ahead, they also remind us all that we have a long way to go if their presence is necessary. Looking forward food security institutions like the GVFB need to lobby and demand government welfare projects that can support the needs of their members and the other members of the community who are living in poverty. They are an establishment that has direct access to the voices and concerns of low-income citizens. They are capable of putting forward a voice on behalf of those who may feel that they do not have the agency or resources to do so themselves. I hope that this

work will be used to recognize the stigmas affecting food banks, and poverty as a whole and encourages government bodies in Vancouver to do better for the people.

References:

Biology Online. (2018). "Nutritive Value". *Biology Online*. Accessed Nov 10/ 2018. https://www.biology-online.org/dictionary/Nutritive_value

Black, Jennifer et al. (2018) "Examining Food Insecurity Among Food Bank Members in Greater Vancouver". *Journal of Hunger and Environmental Nutrition* 14(1) "Latest Articles". Taylor and Francis.

British Columbia Centre for Disease Control (2015). "Industry Food Donation Guidelines*". BC Center For Disease Control*. http://www.bccdc.ca/resource-gallery/Documents/Guidelines%20and%20Forms/Guidelines%20and%20Manuals/EH/FPS/Food/Food%20Donation%20Guidelines%20Complete.pdf

Canada Revenue Agency (2018). "Charities and Giving". *Government of Canada Website*. https://www.canada.ca/en/services/taxes/charities.html

Canada Without Poverty. (2018). "Just the Facts". *Canada Without Poverty Website*. http://www.cwp-csp.ca/poverty/just-the-facts/

Canadian Encyclopedia. (2015). "Welfare State". *The Canadian Encyclopedia*. https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/welfare-state

Cerwonka, A. and Mallki, L.H. (2007). " Nervous Conditions: The Stakes In Interdisciplinary Research". *Improvising Theory: Process and Temporality In Ethnographic Fieldwork*. Chicago, USA. University of Chicago Press. p. 14-40.

City of Vancouver. (2013). "Downtown Eastside Local Area Profile 2013". *City of Vancouver*. http://vancouver.ca/files/cov/profile-dtes-local-area-2013.pdf

City of Vancouver. (2015). "Downtown Eastside Plan". *City of Vancouver*. https://vancouver.ca/files/cov/downtown-eastside-plan.pdf

City of Vancouver. (2018). "Strathcona Community Center". *City of Vancouver Department of Parks, Recreation, and Culture.* https://vancouver.ca/parks-recreation-culture/strathcona-community-centre.aspx

Colton et al. (1997). *Stigma and Social Welfare: An International Comparative Study*. Avebury Publishing. Aldershot, UK. p. 1-34.

Conservative of Canada. (2018). "Conservative Party of Canada Constitution". *Official Documents: Conservative Party of Canada Website*. Published August 25/ 2018. https://www.conservative.ca/wpcontent/uploads/2018/10/KXBCNkWf-X3IDtR.pdf

Derrickson, J. et al. (1999). "Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Program: Perceptions of Benefits and Effect of Welfare Reform". *Journal of Nutrition Education*. 31(1). p. 31-38

De Roux-Smith, I. (2014). "Food Banks, Food Drives and Food Insecurity: The Social Canstruction of Hunger". MA Thesis. McMaster University. p. 27-35 .https://macsphere.mcmaster.ca/bitstream/11375/16400/1/Food%20Banks_Food%20Drives_Food%20Insecurity_MSW_thesis_Iris%20De%20Roux-Smith_FINAL.pdf

Dumbrill, G. 2006. "Parental Experience of Child Protection Intervention: A Qualitative Study". *Child Abuse and Neglect*. 30(1). p.27-37.

Dunae, P. and Woodcock. G. (2010). "English Canadians". *The Canadian Encyclopedia*. Published February 10/ 2010. https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/english

Food Banks Canada (2013). Guideline for Distributing Food-Past the Best Before Date. http://www.bccdc.ca/resource-gallery/Documents/Educational%20Materials/EH/FPS/Food/FoodBanksCanadaGuidelinesforFoodShelfLife2013.pdf

Food Banks Canada (2016). Hunger Count 2016. https://www.foodbankscanada.ca/getmedia/6173994f-8a25-40d9-acdf-660a28e40f37/HungerCount_2016_final_singlepage.pdf

Garthwaite, K. (2016) "Stigma, Shame and 'People Like Us': An Ethnographic Study of Food Bank Use in the UK". *Journal of Poverty and Social Justice*, 24(3).

Glaeser, E. Kim, H. Luca, M. (2018) "Nowcasting Gentrification: Using Yelp Data to Quantify Neighbourhood Change*". The American Economic Review*. 108. p.77- 82.

Globe and Mail. (2005). "Transcript of Harper's Speech". *The Globe and Mail*. Published December 15/ 2005. https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/text-of-harpers-speech/article1131985/

Goffman E. (1963). *Stigma: Notes on the Management of a Spoiled Identity*. New York: Prentice-Hall.

Google Maps, (2018). Viewed October 20/ 2018. https://www.google.ca/maps/@49.2746395,-123.0861631,14z?hl=en

Government of Canada. (2018). "Canadian Statistics in 1867". *Statistics Canada*. https://www65.statcan.gc.ca/acyb07/acyb07_0002-eng.htm

Greater Vancouver Food Bank. (2018). "Community Report 2017". *The Greater Vancouver Food Bank*. p. 1-25. https://foodbank.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/GVFB_Community-Report-2017_Web.pdf

Greater Vancouver Food Bank. (2018). "About Us". https://www.foodbank.bc.ca/about-us

Harrison, T. (2011). "Conservative Party". *The Canadian Encyclopedia*. Published November 16/ 2011. https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/conservative-party

Hodgetts, J. (2012). "Parliament". *The Canadian Encyclopedia*. Published January 8/ 2012. https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/parliament

Holmes et al. (2018). ""Nothing is Going to Change Three Months From Now": A Mixed Methods Characterization of Food Bank Use in Greater Vancouver". *Social Science and Medicine* Vol. 200. Elsevier Ltd. p.129-136

Jenks, C. (1998). " Structure/ Agency" by David Walsh in *Core Social Dichotomies*. Sage Publications. London, UK. p. 8-34.

Linden, I.A. et al. (2013). "Research On a Vulnerable Neighbourhood- The Vancouver Downtown Eastside from 2001-2011". *Journal of Urban Health* 90(3). P. 559-573. https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3665976/

Lukacs, M. (2015). "Canada's Real Barbarism? Stephen Harper's Dismembering of the Country". *The Guardian*. Published October 14/ 2018.

https://www.theguardian.com/environment/true-north/2015/oct/14/canadas-real-barbarism-stephen-harpers-dismembering-of-the-country
MacQueen, Ken. (2014). "What Rules Apply in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside?". *Maclean's*. https://www.macleans.ca/news/canada/what-rules-apply-in-vancouvers-downtown-eastside/
Middleton et al. (2017). "The Experiences and Perceptions of Food Banks Amongst Users in High-Income Countries: An International Scoping Review". *Appetite Journal*. Vol. 120. Elsevier. p.698-708
Miewald, C. McCann, E. (2013). "Foodscapes and the Geographies of Poverty: Sustenance, Strategy and Politics in an Urban Neighborhood". *Antipode*. 46(2). P. 537-556
Miewald, C. and Ostry, A. (2014). "A Warm Meal and a Bed: Intersections of Housing and Food Security in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside". *Housing Studies*. 29(6). P.709-729
Moscovitch, Allan. (1985). "The Welfare State Since 1975". *Social Policy Research Unit*. University of Regina, Canada p. 1-26.
Ogrodnik, I. (2014). "5 Common Myths About Food Bank Use in Canada". *Global News Canada*. Published December 1, 2014. https://globalnews.ca/news/1652329/5-common-myths-about-food-bank-use-in-Canada/
Oomkens, R. (2008). "A Qualitative Study on Food Bank Clients in Rotterdam: Food Bank Versus 'Alternative' State-Run Social Welfare Provisions". MA Thesis. University Utrecht.
Omand, G. (2017). "Vancouver's Downtown Eastside changing with development". *CTV News*. https://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/vancouver-s-downtown-eastside-changing-with-development-1.3654610
Overseas Security Advisory Council (2017). "Canada 2017 Crime and Safety Report: Vancouver. United States Department of State Bureau of Diplomatic Security. https://www.osac.gov/pages/ContentReportDetails.aspx?cid=21710
Poppendieck, J. (1994). "Dilemmas of Emergency Food: A Guide for the Perplexed". *Agriculture and Human Values*. 11(4). p. 69-76
Province of British Columbia. 2018. "Child Protection Services in BC". *Government of BC Public Safety and Emergency Services*. Accessed Nov 9/ 2018. https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/public-safety/protecting-children
Riches, G. (2002). "Food Banks and Food Security: Welfare Reform, Human Rights and Social Policy. Lessons from Canada?". *Social Policy and Administration*. 36(6). p. 648-663
Riches, G. and Silvasti, T. (2014). "Hunger in the Rich World: Food Aid and Right to Food Perspectives". *First World Hunger Revisited: Food Charity or the Right to Food?* Second Edition. Palgrave Macmillan. New York, NY, USA. p. 1-14.
Ristovski-Slijepcevic, S. et al. (2010). "Being a 'Good Mother': Dietary Governmentality in the Family Food Practices of Three Ethno Cultural Groups in Canada" *Health*. 14(5). P.467-483

Scott, K. (2014). “Making Sense of Poverty Measures”. *Citizens for Public Justice Website*. Published October 8/ 2014. https://www.cpj.ca/content/making-sense-poverty-measures

Sethi, A. (2015). “PM Trudeau Supports Food Banks”. *Seva Food Bank Blog*. Published December 6/ 2015. http://www.sevafoodbank.com/pm-trudeau-supports-food-banks/

Shore, R. (2017). “Welcome to Hell: A Walk Through the Downtown Eastside”. *Vancouver Sun*. Published online April 12/ 2017.

Sutcliffe- Braithwaite, F. (2013). “Margaret Thatcher, Individualism and the Welfare State”. *History and Policy*. http://www.historyandpolicy.org/opinion-articles/articles/margaret-thatcher-individualism-and-the-welfare-state

Tarasuk and Beaton. (1999). “Household Food Insecurity and Hunger Among Families Using Food Banks”. *Canadian Journal of Public Health*. 90(2). p. 109-113

Tarasuk, V. et al. (2014). “A Survey of Food Bank Operations in Five Canadian Cities”. *BMC Public Health.* 14(1234). p. 1471-2458

Vancouver Agreement (2018). “Economic Revitalization” and “The Agreement”. *The Vancouver Agreement 2000*. http://www.vancouveragreement.ca/the-agreement/

Williamson, D.L. et al. (2006). “Low-income Canadians’ Experiences With Health-Related Services: Implications for Health Care Reform”. *Health Policy*. 76. p. 106-121

Willis, P. and Trondman, M. (2000). “Manifesto for Ethnography”. *Ethnography*. 1(1). p. 5-16

Appendix 1: Conservative Party of Canada Constitution 2018: Principles

2.1 The Conservative Party of Canada is founded on and will be guided in its policy formation by the following principles.

2.1.1 A belief in a balance between fiscal responsibility, compassionate social policy that empowers the less fortunate by promotion self-reliance and equality of opportunity, and the rights and responsibilities of individuals, families and free associations.

2.1.2 The goal of building a national coalition of people who share these beliefs and who reflect the regional, cultural and socio-economic diversity of Canada.

2.1.3The goal of developing this coalition, embracing our differences and respecting our traditions, yet honouring a concept of Canada as the greater sum of strong parts.

2.1.4 The Conservative Party of Canada will operate in a manner accountable and responsive to its members.

2.1.5 A belief in loyalty to a sovereign and united Canada governed in accordance with the Constitution of Canada, the supremacy of democratic parliamentary institutions and the rule of law.

2.1.6 A belief in the value and dignity of all human life.

2.1.7 A belief in the equality of all Canadians.

2.1.8 A belief in the freedom of the individual, including freedom of speech, worship and assembly.

2.1.9 A belief in our constitutional monarchy, the institutions of Parliament and the democratic process.

2.1.10 A belief in the federal system of government as the best expression of the diversity of our country, and in the desirability of strong provincial and territorial governments.

2.1.11 A belief that English and French have equality of status, and equal rights and privileges as to their use in all institutions of the Parliament and Government of Canada.

2.1.12 A belief that the best guarantors of the prosperity and well-being of the People of Canada are:

> 2.1.12.1 The freedom of individual Canadians to pursue their enlightened and legitimate self-interest within a free competitive economy;

2.1.12.2 The freedom of individual Canadians to enjoy the fruits of their labour to the greatest possible extent

2.1.12.3 The right to own property

2.1.13 A belief that a responsible government must be fiscally prudent and should be limited to those responsibilities which cannot be discharged reasonably by the individual or others.

2.1.14 A belief that it is the responsibility of individuals to provide for themselves, their families and their dependents, while recognizing that government must respond to those who require assistance and compassion.

2.1.15 A belief that the purpose of Canada as a nation state and its government, guided by reflective and prudent leadership, is to create a climate wherein individual initiative is rewarded, excellence is pursued, security and privacy of the individual is provided and prosperity is guaranteed by a free competitive market economy.

2.1.16 A belief that Canada should continue its strong heritage of national defence, supporting a well-armed military, honouring those who serve, and promoting our history and traditions.

2.1.17 A belief that the quality of the environment is a vital part of our heritage to be protected by each generation for the next.

2.1.18 A belief that Canada should accept its obligations among the nations of the world.

2.1.19 A belief that Canadian Jurisdiction extends beyond the coastline to include the internationally recognized regions of the Territorial Sea, Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and Continental Shelf.

2.1.20 A belief that good and responsible government is attentive to the people it represents and consists of members who at all times conduct themselves in an ethical manner and display integrity, honesty and concern for the best interest of all.

2.1.21 A belief that all Canadians should have reasonable access to quality health care regardless of their ability to pay.

2.1.22 A belief that the greatest potential for achieving social and economic objectives is under a global trading regime that is free and fair.

Appendix 2: GVFB Member Questionnaire

1) How long have you been a member of the GVFB?
2) Are you collecting for yourself, as a couple, or part of a family? Please describe whom you collect for.
    a. Are there children or elderly people in your home?
3) Do you share the food that you get from the food bank with family or friends who are not registered?
4) How did you hear about the food bank initially?
5) How do you currently feel about you personally using the food bank distribution service?
6) Do you feel respected by volunteers and staff when you visit the food bank? Why or why not?
7) Before you became a food bank member did you have any doubts or reasons to think that you should not use the service?
8) Does your community accept accessing the food bank? Why or why not?
9) What do you think about food bank line-ups?
10) What do you think about choosing your own items in the food bank?
11) Do you think that the negative thoughts about food banks are spread more by food bank members or by non-members?
12) Are you open with family and friends about using the food bank?
    a. In your community do you openly talk about food security, groceries, difficulty in getting food, etc.?
13) Do you use any other food services (i.e. meals on wheels, community gardens, etc.)? If so what are they?
14) Are any of your family or friends food bank members? Do you tell them about services?
15) Has anyone ever said anything to you about your use of the food bank? Either positive or negative.
16) Do you speak with other people in line at the food bank? What do you talk about?
17) Have rising house prices or pricing out of neighborhoods ever affected your food security? Is your cost of living increasing?
18) How do you feel when you see improved food quality at the food bank?
19) How would you feel if the Greater Vancouver Food Bank changed their name to an option such as “community food hub” or “food society”?

Appendix 3: SCC Member Questionnaire

In this focus group 'food bank service' refers specifically to the Greater Vancouver Food Bank locations and distribution.

1) How long have you been attending programs at Strathcona Community Centre?
2) Which food services do you use at the SCC? How did you hear about them?
3) Do you have a child attending Strathcona elementary school?
    a. If yes how old or when did they graduate?
4) Do you have any friends or family who use the food bank service?
5) Why do you think people use food bank services? Is there specific group of people that you think uses the service more than others?
6) When you were child what did your family say about food banks services?
7) In this community what do people say about food bank services?
8) Have you ever used a food bank service like the Greater Vancouver Food Bank?
    a. Why did you go and why did you stop?
9) If you have not used the service, have you ever considered using a food bank like the Greater Vancouver Food Bank?
    a. If yes why didn't you attend?
    b. If no why did you not consider it?
10) In this community do you openly talk about food security (grocery prices, difficulty in getting food, etc.)?
11) This is the oldest neighborhood in Vancouver. For 150 years it has had lots of different kinds of people. What have you noticed about the last 10 years in your neighborhood and how it affects you and your family?
12) How would you feel if food banks changed their name to an option such as "community food hub" or "food society"? Would it increase your likeliness of using their services?

Appendix 4: Food Secure Non-Food Bank Member Survey

1) Why do you think people use food banks?
2) Do you think there is a specific group of people that use food banks?
3) When you were a child what did you hear about food bank services or the people that used them?
4) In your community what do your family and friends say about food banks?
5) Do you have any friends or family who currently use a food bank?
6) Have you ever used a food bank?
    a. If yes, for how long and why did you start/ stop?
    b. If no, would you feel comfortable using a food bank if you were food insecure? Why or why not?
7) How do you think that gentrification (rising housing prices, grocery stores moving from neighborhoods, etc.) affects food insecurity?
8) How would you feel if food banks changed their name to an option such as "community food hub" or "food society?

Appendix 5: FBC Guideline for Distributing Food-Past the Best Before Date

Food Banks Canada / Banques alimentaires Canada — Guideline for Distributing Food-Past the Best Before Date

	CATEGORIE							
Time Frame Past Best Before	**Fruit / Vegetables**	**Fruit / Vegetable Juices**	**Bread**	**Grains & Cereals**	**Meat uncooked**	**Meat cooked**	**Deli Meats**	**Dairy-Pasteurized**
	Categories Explained							
Product Descriptions	Fresh Produce	Juices and Drinks-Tetra Pak, Bottled (Not requiring refrigeration prior to opening)	Loaves, Rolls, Bagels, Muffins	Granola, Flours, Rices, Dry Pastas, Cookies, Crackers	Packaged and Bulk	Examples: Prepared Food from Food Service Providers. Canned Tuna, Salmon	Deli Meats, Sausages	Milk (Fresh, Powdered, Canned)
Room Temperature	**Fresh** 2-7 days	1 Month (Tetra Pak)	1 Week	NA	less than 2 hours	less than 2 hours	less than 2 hours	< 2 hours (after open)
Refrigerated	**Fresh** 1-4 Weeks (depending on produce)	3-6 Months (Tetra Pak)	2 Week	NA	3-4 Days	Fish and Shellfish 1-2 days other 3 Days	5-7 days	2 Weeks (after open/ reconstituted)
Frozen	1 Year	1 Year	1 Month	NA	beef, lamb pork, veal, whole poultry 12 months, poultry pieces 6 months, ground meat 2-3 months, fish 2-6 Months, and shellfish 2-4 months	beef, lamb pork, veal, 3 months whole poultry 2 months, food mixtures 3 months	2-3 months	6 months
Canned/Jarred	1 Year	1 Year	NA	NA	NA	1 Year	1 Year	1 Year
Boxed/Bagged	NA	NA	1 Week	6-12 Months	NA	NA	NA	Varies*

S					
Dairy-Sterilized	**Fats**	**Combination Foods**	**Soups/Stews**	**Non-Food**	**Infant Formula and Nutritinal Supplements**
Tetra-Pak Milk (UHT)	Butter, Margarines	May contain Popcorn, Condiments, Tomato Sauces, Canned Pastas, Cooking Oils	Soups, Stews, Gravies. Could be Food Service Packaged or in Larger Quantities	Laundry Detergent, Mixed Product Pallets, Body Washes, Deodorants, Diapers, Infant Wipes	**Note: These products do not conatain Best Before Dates, only Expiry Dates**
< 2 hours (after open)	1 Week	NA	less than 2 hours	NA	Do Not Distribute Past Expiry Date
2 Weeks (after open/ reconstituted)	3 Months	NA	2-3 Days	NA	
NA	6 Months	3 Months	3 Months	NA	
NA	NA	1 Year	1 Year	1 Year	
6 months	NA	6 Months	1 Year	1 Year	

Source: Food Banks Canada, 2013.