What are the characteristics of organisations that are able to meet need and support flourishing?

An explanatory account of grassroots community organising in England and Wales during the Covid-19 pandemic.

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Abstract

This thesis presents an empirically derived explanatory account of the ways in which grassroots community organisations (GRCOs) worked toward meeting need during the first Covid-19 lockdown in England and Wales. Based on comparative analysis of qualitative data from 40 different GRCOs, I argue that GRCOs' ability to meet need and support flourishing was related to their engagement in a relational response process through which identifying and responding to need were done iteratively, through subject-subject relation. This process was enabled by minimisation of hierarchy within organisations and by trusting frontline workers to use their judgment within a teleological framework. The process relied on organisations being adequately resourced. Sources of funding that impel organisations to act toward purposes other than the needs of their communities, such as commissioning or selling of services, are a barrier to acting towards the end of meeting need because they can force organisations to choose between prioritising care and prioritising income, in circumstances in which lack of income damages organisations' ability to act caringly. As a result, ability to enact the relational response process is likely to currently be inequitably distributed across society. Meanwhile, need-meeting often entails an imbalance of give and take within relationships and encounters, and in some cases, involvement in GRCOs was depleting for organisers, workers and volunteers. Consequently, in order for everybody's needs and interests to be valued, it is necessary to have a web of caring relation based on the principle of *doulia*, in which those who give care in one context are cared for in another. I have suggested that grassroots community organising is a potential mechanism for creating such a web, but in order for this to be equitable it needs to take place within material conditions that enable the relational response process.

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Author's Declaration

I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work, and I, Rose Rickford, am the sole author. This work has not previously been presented for a degree or other qualification at this University or elsewhere. All sources are acknowledged as references.

A version of the argument presented in Chapter 4, Section 1, has been presented at two different scholarly workshops.

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I. Introduction

This is not the thesis I planned to write. When I first set out to do a PhD, my intention was to use conversation analysis to examine processes of decision-making in meetings of community organisations. The aim was to learn something about the 'how' of sharing decisions between groups of people in the hope of having something to say about this that might prove useful for community groups. However, less than six months into the first year of my doctorate, the lurking but still vague sense of threat from a virus originating in China came into sharp focus. Between my birthday on 2nd March and Mothers' Day on 22nd, life went from 'normal' to absolutely, decidedly, historically *not* normal. It was a material, political and social crisis, and it was unclear for some weeks how, and indeed if, people, communities, and society would cope.

On 23rd March 2020, the UK Government declared a national emergency and ordered the general population (except those designated as key workers) to stay at home in order to prevent the spread of the new coronavirus that causes Covid-19 (Johnson, 2020c). Schools were closed to most pupils, and people were instructed to work from home if possible and to leave the house only for essentials, medical reasons, and exercise once a day (Johnson, 2020c).[1] People aged over 70 and pregnant women were advised to be particularly careful and stay away from others (Age UK, 2020; Johnson, 2020a), while 1.5 million people with certain health conditions were advised to 'shield' themselves by remaining in their homes at all times and keeping a distance from household members (Department of Health, 2020). Anybody with a cough, breathlessness or fever was instructed to self-isolate at home for seven days, and their household members to self-isolate for 14 days (Johnson, 2020b).

As Covid-19 spread rapidly across the UK and people were confined to their homes, it became clear that we were living through an extremely unusual historical event, and one in which grassroots community organisations (GRCOs)—the kind of organisation I had been planning to study—were

[1] The order would remain in place across the UK until mid-May, after which the rules began to be relaxed. The four nations operated different timescales on lifting restrictions. This thesis focuses only on England and Wales, which allowed people to meet with one person from another household in outdoor spaces from mid-May and early June respectively (Prime Minister's Office, 2020a; Senedd Research, 2022). Schools reopened in England at the beginning of June (Prime Minister's Office, 2020b) and in Wales at the end of June (Senedd Research, 2022). 'Non-essential' businesses re-opened in both countries in mid-June (Prime Minister's Office, 2020c; Senedd Research, 2022), indoor meeting between members of different households was permitted in some circumstances from late June (Prime Minister's Office, 2020d; Senedd Research, 2022), and hospitality began to reopen in the first half of July (Prime Minister's Office, 2020d; Senedd Research, 2022). These gradual relaxations of restrictions mean there was no clear end-date of 'the lockdown'. Throughout the thesis I refer to this whole period, from 23rd March until early July 2020, as 'the lockdown' and 'the first lockdown in England and Wales'. Participant accounts predominantly refer to the period from March-May 2020, when the restrictions were the most severe, but some interviews were conducted in June and July 2020, and some participants in later interviews commented on events up until July.

already playing a significant role. By the time the formal lockdown was announced by the Government (23rd March 2020), I had begun to make some observations about community organising from my own life. For example, a community choir that I was involved in held a session on Zoom. It was not possible for everyone to sing together because of the audio delay (Daffern et al., 2021). Nevertheless, over 60 people spent nearly two hours singing, hearing only themselves and the musical director, whilst watching one another's faces on the video call. The experience felt powerful and moving to me, and several other people mentioned that they felt that way too. I was interested in what it was that such an experience was offering to participants when the ostensibly fundamental point of a choir—to sing together— was not possible. I also became aware, through social media, mainstream news outlets, and personal connections, of an upswell in community activity and mutual support around the country. In the context of a major crisis, with its accompanying social uncertainty and economic instability, I was interested in the response that seemed to be prevailing of people looking for ways to organise help for those around them. This struck me as a sharp contrast to the way that crisis situations are often portrayed in fiction. For example, the film *Contagion* (Soderbergh, 2011), the drama series *The Walking Dead* (Darabont, 2010), and the dystopian novel *Blindness* (Saramago, 1999) all depict global pandemics and, in each case, social cohesion breaks down and people begin fighting for power and resources.

Although there were reports of panic buying in supermarkets shortly before and in the first weeks of the lockdown (Barr, 2020; The Telegraph, 2020),[2] there also appeared to be a widespread effort by people to help and support one another. Social and mainstream media were awash with suggested ways of reaching out to others, such as posting notes through neighbour's doors offering help (BBC, 2020), setting up mutual aid groups (P. Butler, 2020; Covid-19 Mutual Aid UK, 2020; Forrest, 2020), and making scrubs for NHS workers (Murray, 2020). "Clap For Our Carers" began, in which, all over the country, people came out onto their streets on Thursday evenings to join their neighbours in applauding the NHS and key workers (Addley, 2020; Clap for our Carers, 2020). My personal experience of this weekly ritual of joining my neighbours in the street was moving and powerful. I had moved to York 18 months earlier with my partner, and we found ourselves in a rented house in a street where neighbours did not speak to one another—a sharp contrast from the community we left behind in our hometown of Brighton. As the weeks went on, Clap for Our Carers felt like it was mostly about people coming out into the street to greet one another, and I noticed relationships in the street begin to change. People said hello when you passed them, and acts of generosity, such as sharing plants or food, began to emerge. Friends and

[2] Panic buying received widespread media attention, but empirical research suggests that changes in buying behaviour during the early months of the pandemic were characterised by wealthier households stocking up gradually rather than by large number of people buying high quantities of items in one visit (O'Connell et al., 2021).

family told me about similar experiences in their neighbourhoods—my mother's street began a weekly coffee morning outside their houses, and a friend told me about a neighbour who brought a sound system out onto the pavement on Saturday evenings so that residents could dance together at a distance.

Pre-pandemic, my interest in researching community organisations had been borne from a conviction that grassroots community organising is a condition of possibility for human flourishing. In my original research proposal, I wrote:

> *I approach this research from a position that people acting together outside of either state or market institutions is important for democracy and for resisting oppression… In the context of the global climate crisis, neoliberalism and the rise of the far right, people need the skills to work together to make decisions in their communities.*

However, at the time that I wrote those words, this conviction was not fully theorised. While my own experience told me that it was true, I had no empirical evidence that this was the case, nor a well-developed explanation of *why* it is the case. When the pandemic gripped the world, it threatened the infrastructure and institutions on which people rely to meet their basic needs (Springer, 2020). State, private and voluntary sector organisations were all severely disrupted. Meanwhile, grassroots community organisations appeared to act quickly to fill gaps and meet needs. Far from dystopian fictional depictions of pandemics, large numbers of people sought to reach out and help one another. As a sociologist with the intention of researching grassroots community organising, I saw a unique opportunity to study this historical phenomenon as it unfolded.

What I found through doing this was that GRCOs appear to have been more responsive and flexible than statutory services or the professionalised voluntary sector to the crisis of the pandemic. It is also clear that many of those involved found the experience of participating in a GRCO to offer something of value to them personally. GRCOs seemed, on the whole, to be able to meet need in those who used their services or took part in their activities, and to do so in a way that was meaningful and rewarding for the organisers. This seemed to provide evidence for my original instinct that grassroots community organisations are able to act in a way that is good for society, but the question then became: what is it about grassroots community organisations that allows them to do this? What can be learned from this model of organising, and can it be applied in other contexts? In other words, what are the conditions of possibility for an organisation to meet need and support wellbeing of both those who use its services or activities and those who organise them? Given that a great deal of what happens in society happens within or between organisations, the question of '*what are the characteristics of organisations that are able to meet need and*

support flourishing?' seems pertinent to the broader sociological aim of understanding, explaining and improving society. The aim of this thesis is to theorise an answer to this question.

In the remainder of this chapter, I provide further introduction to the context of the thesis by providing an outline of ways in which people's basic needs were in danger of being unmet during the early months of the pandemic. This provides the basis on which to study need-meeting during lockdown. I then introduce and define some key concepts used throughout the thesis. Finally, I provide an overview of the argument that will be made in the chapters that follow.

1. Threats to basic need during lockdown

The 'lockdown' created a host of immediate and significant challenges for the UK population, with women, racialised people, disabled people, lone parents, people living in rented housing, low-wage earners, part-time workers, those living in areas of high unemployment and those reliant on benefits all disproportionately affected (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2021).[3] New unmet need was created when a large number of 'clinically extremely vulnerable' people were 'shielded' and instructed not to leave their homes at all, even for basic supplies, while others, including people aged over 70 and pregnant women, were told that they were 'clinically vulnerable' and should take extra precautions (UK Government Accounts Committee, 2021). Without support, these people faced a conflict between their need to access food and medicines (which generally involves going out to shops)[4] and their need to avoid exposure to Covid-19. People who shielded were also more vulnerable to deteriorating mental health during lockdown than those who did not (Di Gessa & Price, 2022). In addition, anyone who had symptoms of, or had been exposed to, Covid-19 was instructed to self-isolate at home, which created obstacles to meeting basic need because of an injunction on going to shops and pharmacies (Johnson, 2020c). For these people, there was a conflict between meeting their own needs and meeting the needs of the wider community (by reducing the spread of the virus) (L. E. Smith et al., 2020).

The lockdown also led to new unmet need due to an increase in poverty. The country (and the world) saw increased economic uncertainty (Altig et al., 2020), and individuals experienced increased job insecurity (Lu & Lin, 2021). For many people, the pandemic meant less paid work,

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3 Of course, these groups intersect substantially with one another. Women, racialised people and disabled people are all over-represented among low-wage earners, those reliant on benefits, and those in rented housing. Women are also substantially over-represented among lone-parent families (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2021).

4 In the early weeks of lockdown, supermarket and prescription home delivery services did not have enough capacity to meet demand (Davey, 2020), which meant that many people who wanted to order shopping for delivery were unable to do so. Shopping delivery also incurs a delivery fee, and there is a minimum spend, which is likely to preclude some from using these services. Meanwhile, some people do not have access to digital technologies and/or the skills to use them(Park, 2017). For all of these reasons, pre-existing supermarket and prescription delivery services were unable to meet the new need caused by lockdown.

lower incomes and/or higher costs, leading to increased material hardship (Brewer & Patrick, 2021; Kotak & Chappell, 2021; Power et al., 2020). Living costs increased for lower-income families with children (Brewer & Patrick, 2021), which made it harder to afford the cost of living. Both food and fuel poverty increased as a result of the disruption caused by Covid-19 and related government policies (Kotak & Chappell, 2021; Power et al., 2020). The Food Foundation reported "a grave picture of the immediate and catastrophic effect [of the first lockdown] on food security for the UK's poorest households and children" (Goudie & McIntyre, 2021, p. 5). Employment levels decreased, with self-employed and part-time workers (disproportionately women) and people aged 16-24 and over 60 particularly badly affected (Office for National Statistics, 2020a, 2020b; WBG, 2021a).

Meanwhile, the lockdown caused an increase in loneliness (Bu et al., 2020; Groarke et al., 2020) and in mental ill-health (Kwong et al., 2021; Serrano-Alarcón et al., 2022), with young people and women affected disproportionately (Bu et al., 2020). For the 6.7 million people who live alone in England (Office for National Statistics, 2021), lockdown laws meant it was illegal to come within two metres of another human being for nearly three months, and these people were more likely to develop depression during this time than the general population (Kwong et al., 2021). School closures and closures of services for older and disabled people meant increased care and education responsibilities for families, which disproportionately affected women, particularly those on low incomes (Johnston, 2021). Male violence against women and girls increased.[5] Ten women were killed by men in the first week of lockdown (Ingala-Smith, 2020), compared to the pre-lockdown average of two per week (Ingala-Smith, 2022), and the number of women seeking support from domestic abuse organisations increased dramatically compared to pre-lockdown levels (Proudman & Lloyd, 2022; Refuge UK, 2020; Speed et al., 2020). Violence and abuse against children also increased, including the number of recorded serious incidents involving children (Samuel, 2021), the number of calls to Childline to discuss child sexual abuse (Proudman & Lloyd, 2022), and the number of children attending hospital with abusive head trauma (Sidpra et al., 2021).[6]

As well as generating new unmet need, the lockdown disrupted the support systems that were already in place for meeting need. Where state, voluntary or private services or GRCOs themselves had previously been meeting mental health, social care or safeguarding needs, disruption to everyday life meant new gaps opened up. Disruptions to the just-in-time food distribution system

[5] The pandemic and lockdown did not, of course, cause male violence. However, women are more likely to be abused by intimate partners than by anybody else (Office for National Statistics, 2022), so lockdown meant that women were confined with potential perpetrators for more of the time (Proudman & Lloyd, 2022).
[6] Just as lockdown did not cause violence against women, neither did it cause child abuse, but most child abuse is perpetrated by family members (Office for National Statistics, 2016) which means that being at home is likely to have made children more vulnerable to abuse.

damaged the ability of food banks to meet need caused by (new and pre-existing) poverty (Power et al., 2020). Safety nets for women, children and other groups vulnerable to abuse were compromised because people were less likely to be seen by those outside their households (Dixon et al., 2022; Levine et al., 2020; Weale, 2020). Disruption of refuge services reduced the ability of women and children to escape male violence (Panovska-Griffiths et al., 2022). Pre-existing support groups and services relating to a range of issues, including addiction, loneliness and unpaid caring, were disrupted (Linden et al., 2022; Lloyd et al., 2022; Papadaki et al., 2021). All of this meant that people who already required support from organisations to ensure their basic needs were met before the pandemic were at increased risk of these needs going unmet.

In summary, the impact of the lockdown was the population of the UK faced new challenges in meeting their needs, including inability to access supplies, increased poverty, social isolation, increased care and education responsibilities, and, for women and children, increased vulnerability to violence. Pre-existing support systems and services were disrupted, which meant that people who were already facing challenges in meeting their needs were in danger of no longer being supported. Lockdown was, therefore, a potential humanitarian crisis, with the population at risk of not having its most basic needs met on a large scale. This is the context in which GRCOs were operating when they organised themselves towards the aim of meeting need during the lockdown. They worked to try to help to prevent the significant harm that would arise from widespread unmet need. This thesis argues that they were, overall, effective at helping to meet need (and that the harm of lockdown would have been substantially worse without their efforts) and considers why this was the case.

2. Key concepts

The argument made in this thesis relies upon a number of concepts that require a little explanation. There are also terms I have chosen not to use for reasons that also require explanation. This section aims to provide the reader with the definitions of a few key concepts, and the basis of these definitions. The concepts introduced here are *grassroots community organisation*, *volunteering*, *care*, and *flourishing*.

A. Grassroots community organisation

The category of organisation studied in this thesis is ‘grassroots community organisation’. This term has been used by scholars before, although not widely, and without consistency of definition. Scholars of the types of organisations that might reasonably be considered ‘grassroots’ and ‘community’ have used different terminology and have focussed on slightly different phenomena from one another. I introduce here some uses of the term ‘grassroots community organisation’ and also uses of other similar terminology (‘grassroots activist group’ and ‘grassroots association’). I

then explain what I mean by grassroots community organisation and how I have come to identify this category.

The term 'grassroots community organisation' is rare in scholarly literature. Where it is used, it either refers to groups engaged in organising/campaigning for social change (Kline et al., 2000; Orsi, 2014; Speer et al., 1995) or to community-based initiatives such as self-help groups (Arun et al., 2011), youth groups (Kolano & Davila, 2019) and education projects (La Garza, 2012). Meanwhile, two scholars who have specialised in the study of similar phenomena to these use slightly different terms from 'grassroots community organisation'. Kathleen Blee has produced a substantial body of work on small, informal groups that engage in activism for social change, which she refers to as "grassroots activist groups" (Blee, 2012, 2013, 2015; Blee & Currier, 2005). Her focus is explicitly on 'activism' rather than other forms of community organising (such as, for example, organising community-based childcare, creating community gardens or bringing neighbours together for street parties). Most of the groups she has studied are very small, informal, and run by unpaid people with very low budgets. Her categorisation of 'grassroots activist group' appears to be based primarily on the kind of work that the groups do (organise for social change) rather than on any particular pre-determined taxonomy relating to governance or motivation. In contrast, David Smith (D. H. Smith, 2000) has developed work on "grassroots associations", which he defines as follows.

> Grassroots associations are locally based, significantly autonomous, volunteer-run, formal non-profit (i.e., voluntary) groups that manifest substantial voluntary altruism as groups and use the associational form of organization and, thus, have official memberships of volunteers who perform most, and often all, of the work/activity done in and by these non-profits. (p.7).

Smith's 'grassroots associations' are defined quite rigidly as formal[7] membership organisations run predominantly by volunteers, working on the basis of 'voluntary altruism'.

Faced with this scarce and/or inconsistent landscape of terms and categories, I struggled early in this study to identify the precise category of organisation I was investigating, and what to call it. Critical realists and grounded theorists recommend generating categories inductively through data analysis rather than imposing them pre-emptively (Dey, 2007; Sayer, 2000). This is because the imposition of taxonomy can result in studying an artificial category—one that does not relate to any real phenomenon in the world and instead relates to a set of arbitrary criteria. I began with an aim to focus exclusively on organisations that were run solely on an unpaid basis. However, like Smith and Blee before me, I quickly found that this criterion was too blunt an instrument, which led to the exclusion of organisations that I felt definitely *were* of the kind that I was trying to

[7] Smith is not clear what he means by 'formal', but in the USA organisations can register as a 'non-profit', which affects their tax status. I take his use of 'formal non-profit' to mean organisations that are so registered.

understand. For example, community groups with no employees often pay someone to do something on a sessional basis, such as running activity sessions or performing administrative tasks. Meanwhile, as publicity for this study was distributed (see chapter IV), I was contacted by several small charities that were responding to the crisis in their neighbourhoods but had a small number of paid workers working alongside trustees and unpaid workers. It was clear that these organisations could help me understand the community response to the pandemic, and I wanted to include them in the study. Having widened my criteria, I subsequently found that a small number of my interviews were with people involved in organisations that were qualitatively different from the rest of the participating organisations. This was because they were not run by people who were *of* the community being served, and/or they were not focused on engaging with people in a community. These organisations did not help me to understand the phenomenon I was trying to learn about, so I excluded them from my analysis (see chapter IV). It was through this process of comparative inclusion and exclusion that I developed a definition of the particular category of organisation under investigation here, which I have called 'grassroots community organisation'.

For the purposes of this study, a **grassroots community organisation** is a not-for-profit organisation, formal or informal, that is run by and for people who are of a particular community and exists primarily for the purpose of benefiting or acting on the basis of the interests of that community. This includes geographical communities and also communities based on shared culture, experience or interest. Critically, whether paid or unpaid, *the people running these organisations are part of the community that is being supported*. This is, of course, not a clear-cut set of criteria, and judgement was needed to identify which organisations should be included and which should not. The focus I aim for is on organisations that experience themselves, and are experienced by others, as part of a community, rather than organisations that experience themselves, and are experienced by others, as external service providers.

B. Volunteering

Volunteering is not well defined as a concept (Cnaan et al., 1996). However, there is broad consensus across the literature that volunteering is unpaid work performed willingly and without obligation (Cnaan et al., 1996; Petkau, 1991; Shure, 1991), outside of the context of the family (Cnaan et al., 1996; D. H. Smith et al., 2006). This definition runs into problems when applied to more communitarian cultural contexts than the individualistic Western context in which they have been developed (Liu et al., 2017). This is because, in cultures in which interdependency and collectivism are valued more highly, activities that occur outside of the family, which might be considered as 'volunteering' in a Western context, are considered as responsibilities or obligations. I want to suggest that this difference points to a fundamental problem with the concept of

'volunteering', which is that is based on a particular set of assumptions about obligation, responsibility, and dependency.

As will become clear in later chapters, this thesis is based in radical materialist feminist thinking (J. C. Jones, 2023, 2021c). Grounded in this perspective, I have developed a basic question that I ask of ways of understanding the social world, in an effort to evaluate their usefulness for explaining that world. This is "Does this make sense in relation to *mothering*?". The basis for this particular question is explained in chapter III, but to briefly summarise it, the aim is to assess the extent to which the theory relies on a denial of dependency expressed by Irigaray (1985a) as symbolic matricide—"the murder of the mother" (J. C. Jones, 2014, para. 1). 'Volunteering' does not include the unpaid care work that is done within the family (Cnaan et al., 1996; D. H. Smith et al., 2006). As volunteering is conceptualised as work done without obligation and for the interests of others, I suggest that a delineation is being made here that places unpaid care within the family under the realm of obligation, or even self-interest. Meanwhile, other types of unpaid care work, such as offering support or care to those outside of the family through organised volunteer programmes, are imagined as *not* in the realm of obligation or self-interest. In order to make this delineation, it is necessary to employ a set of assumptions about who is responsible for the welfare of whom, and who is *not* responsible, as well as assumptions about who benefits from the care of certain people and who does not. Drawing on materialist feminist thinking about care (which will be discussed in detail in chapter III), I want to suggest that these assumptions are, I suggest, by no means politically neutral (Federici, 2020; Irigaray, 1985a, 1985b; J. C. Jones, 2016, 2021c). It is beyond the scope of this thesis to go into this further, but I contend that the very concept 'volunteering' carries a hefty load of baggage borne from its grounding in a culture of individualism and dependency denial—a culture that systematically fails to recognise a great deal of women's labour. For this reason, I avoid using the terms 'volunteer' or 'volunteering' in my theorising and analysis, and instead refer variously to 'unpaid work' or 'people working on an unpaid basis'. Where payment is not relevant to the discussion. I simply refer to 'organisers', 'participants' or 'workers'. I use the term 'volunteer' only as means of reference to literature that uses the term, when referring participants who identify themselves in this way, and when discussing organisations that identify their unpaid workers in this way.

C. Care

This thesis is about the organisation of human need-meeting and involves extensive reference to and discussion of ways that people look after and support one another. I use the term *care* inclusively to mean forms of relation organised around meeting people's needs and supporting human flourishing. This definition of care draws on feminist care ethics and anarchist thinking (Kavada, 2022; Kittay, 2019; Ruddick, 1980, 1990; Springer, 2020; The Care Collective, 2020),

and the thesis is an argument about ways in which care could and should be placed at the centre of social organising.

D. Flourishing

My evaluation of need-meeting is based on Maslow's (1943, 1968) model of human motivation. Chapter III provides a thorough outline of the basis of using this model, which includes an argument that humans have both deficiency and growth needs. Deficiency needs are needs based in lack—needs for things without which, we come to harm (Maslow, 1968). Growth needs, in contrast, are those experiences through which human beings can come to be ourselves in our fullest potential (Maslow, 1968). They refer to ways in which, through acting into the world and experiencing life, we come to *flourish*.

As I will argue, a great deal of thinking about need imagines it only in its deficiency modality (Bay, 1968; Doyal & Gough, 1984; Fitzgerald, 1985; Marcuse, 1972), which means that considerations of what human beings need tend to be based on considerations about *what we need in order to survive*. In contrast, this thesis assumes a (radical materialist feminist) position that 'the good', in its Aristotelian sense (Aristotle, 2014), requires flourishing, and that the aim of human societies should be to meet people's needs sufficiently that they are able to flourish. Where I refer to specific ways in which people have their needs met, I use 'need'. Where I refer to the overall purpose of supporting people to live their best lives, I use 'flourishing'. This, I hope, serves as a reminder to the reader that we are always grounded in a positive imagining of the possibilities of humans and societies, rather than simply in the rather pessimistic aims of keeping people alive or minimising suffering.

3. Thesis outline

This thesis is comprised of a literature review, a theoretical groundwork chapter, a methodology chapter, four empirical chapters and a conclusion. Chapter II, the literature review, begins with a critical summary of the empirical literature on community and voluntary responses to the Covid-19 pandemic in the UK, in which I argue that there is a lack of research focussing on the phenomenon that I have defined above—that of grassroots community organisations. I then review theoretical perspectives on grassroots responses to the pandemic, focussing the discussion on the two perspectives that make up the bulk of the literature—neoliberal and anarchist thinking. I argue that neoliberal perspectives lack material analysis and are grounded in an ontology of *homo economicus,* which denies humans' fundamental interdependency and thus makes erroneous assumptions about the nature of collective action. Anarchist thinking assumes interdependency and I therefore find it to be much more useful in explaining the phenomenon of grassroots community organising during the pandemic. However, I argue that anarchist thinking also lacks

material analysis, and as a result is in danger of advocating for ways of organising that could reproduce existing structures of material oppression. This brings me into chapter III, in which I introduce the theoretical and political framework within which this thesis sits—radical materialist feminism. I argue that radical materialist feminism provides the framework for analysis based on an ontology of interdependence whilst applying a materialist class analysis that challenges structures of domination and exploitation. On the basis of radical materialist feminist thinking I argue for an intersubjective understanding of human need, and this brings me to advocate for Maslow's theory of human motivation (Maslow, 1943, 1968), which is the model of need used throughout the thesis. Having laid the theoretical groundwork, chapter IV introduces my approach to conducting social research. I argue that dominant methodological paradigms (positivism, social constructionism and critical realism) are grounded in Cartesian dualistic thinking, and instead advocate for a methodology based on process-relation ontology. I then outline my research design, which is inductive, qualitative, comparative and multi-method. The aim of the project is to generate explanatory theory, grounded in analysis of empirical data.

Chapter V is the first of the four empirical chapters and is where I present my analysis of whether or not grassroots community organisations were effective at meeting need during the first lockdown in England and Wales. I argue that they were very effective overall, although levels of effectiveness varied between organisations. In chapter VI, I begin a comparative analysis aimed at generating theoretical explanation about what makes organisations able to meet need and support flourishing. I compare grassroots community organisations with one another, and also consider their work in comparison to the work of statutory services and professionalised voluntary sector organisations. I argue that ability to meet need requires identifying need in its specificity and responding to it appropriately according to that specificity. I then consider what enables organisations to do this, and introduce the core argument of this thesis, which is that identifying and responding to need requires that organisations engage in an iterative *relational response process* in which responding to need creates opportunity for identification of further need. This process involves relating to people in a subject-subject modality, which means that effective need-meeting relies on subject-subject relation.

In chapter VII, I consider the organisational conditions that enable and restrict the emergence of the relational response process. The process is made possible when frontline workers are involved in strategic and day-to-day decision-making. This is made possible by minimisation of hierarchy and by trusting frontline workers to use their judgment about how best to offer support in any given situation. Meanwhile, the relational response process is hindered when material conditions prevent it from emerging. Organisations cannot respond to need effectively if they are inadequately resourced. However, the dominant neoliberal funding model—commissioning—

forces organisations to act according to the wishes of commissioners rather than according to the needs of the community. Similarly, when organisations have to sell services in order to fund themselves, they may face conflicts between action that will lead to income and action that will meet need. Consequently, both of these funding models (commissioning and selling services) can disrupt the relational response process and damage organisations' ability to meet need effectively.

Chapter VIII is the last empirical chapter and is where we turn to the needs of the people involved in organising and working for grassroots community organisations. I consider the extent to which these people's needs were met through their involvement in GRCOs, and thus whether the relationships and encounters that emerged through participation can be understood as reciprocal. I argue that subject-subject relation necessarily involves mutual recognition, which means that there is always a degree of reciprocity involved in the relational response process. For this reason, I suggest that the subject-object terminology of 'service-user' and 'service-provider' is an inaccurate and unhelpful way to conceptualise caring encounters. However, many caring encounters involve asymmetrical need-meeting, and some people, at some times, are unable to fully reciprocate care. Consequently, I argue that creating the conditions for overall flourishing requires a web of caring relationships and encounters, in order that a person who gives care in one encounter can receive it in another. I suggest that networks of grassroots community organisations are a suitable mechanism for the creation of such a web of care. Finally, in the concluding chapter, I consider the policy implications of my findings and argument. I argue for social policy based on an aim of creating the material conditions for the development of webs of caring relation, and suggest that this includes universal basic income, shorter working weeks, and generous grant funding for grassroots community organisations.

II. Grassroots responses to the Covid-19 pandemic

I conducted this research inductively. I began with an apparent social phenomenon—the response of communities and community organisations to the first Covid-19 lockdown in England and Wales (March-July 2020). I investigated the phenomenon in 'real-time', which means that, when I began, there was no literature on the Covid-19 lockdown at all. It was therefore impossible to review the literature to identify a 'gap' through which to generate a research question. The initial aim of the fieldwork and analysis was to enable an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon. The specific research aim—understanding the conditions of possibility for organisations to meet human need—was generated inductively through my experience of interviewing participants and analysing what they said. Through this process, I identified which concepts appeared to be relevant to understanding the phenomenon, which helped to direct my reading of literature, particularly theoretical literature. These included the concepts of mutual aid, social capital, care, volunteering, reproductive labour, human need, reciprocity and recognition. I engaged in an iterative process of analysing data, developing preliminary understanding, looking to social theory to help me to understand and interpret further, and returning to the data with the more focussed lens brought through this engagement with literature. It was engagement with data that led my reading, and reading helped me to understand my data more fully. By the time my empirical analysis was completed, there had emerged a nascent empirical literature on the way that volunteers, voluntary organisations, mutual aid groups and communities responded to the Covid-19 pandemic in the UK and around the world, plus a literature drawing on social theory to offer analysis of this phenomenon. Due to space limitations, I have focussed this literature review on the empirical literature from the UK[8], where my research was conducted. I have included analytic literature based on the broader international phenomenon because this enables a more thorough understanding of the different perspectives that have been forwarded about the meaning of grassroots organising during lockdowns.

The empirical UK-based literature is reviewed in section 1. I find that this literature supports my claim that grassroots community organisations (GRCOs) helped to meet human need during the

[8] This thesis focuses on GRCOs based in England and Wales only. Lockdown rules in England, Wales, Scotland and the north of Ireland were the same as one another until late May 2020, and then slightly more lenient in England (where the majority of my data was collected) (Cushion et al., 2020). Nobody in any of the nations could meet in groups indoors during the whole period of my data collection, and people advised to shield were instructed to do so throughout the data collection period (Runswick-Cole, 2020). Much of the empirical literature looking at grassroots organising during this period covers the whole of the UK, and I have taken an inclusive approach to this review.

first lockdown in England and Wales. However, I argue that there are some conceptual problems with some of this literature relating to the categories used. Specifically, much of the focus is on 'volunteering', 'voluntary organisations' and 'mutual aid groups'. My analytic process of theory development has led me to believe that these are not the most useful explanatory categories for interpreting what happened, which is why my argument relates to *grassroots community organisations*. I suggest that the imposition of these other categories can, at times, distort the conclusions of research, particularly where findings are theoretically generalised to the (wrong) category as a whole. I also argue that the empirical literature is mostly descriptive and exposes a lack of explanatory analysis aimed at explaining *why* GRCOs were so effective. This thesis contributes by offering an empirically grounded explanation for the phenomenon.

Section 2 is an examination of analytic literature from neoliberal and anarchist perspectives. I argue that the neoliberal literature is based on the ontological assumption that human beings are fundamentally self-interested and that our natural mode of relating to one another is one of competition and instrumentalisation. The literature is therefore preoccupied with trying to solve the 'problem' of why people help one another in crisis situations, which it concludes is either an expression of self-interest (the 'social capital' explanation) or a temporary break with normal, natural human relations. The policy recommendations of this literature focus on 'mobilising' or 'harnessing' community action, which means finding ways for the state and capital to gain control of the grassroots response to the pandemic as quickly as possible. In contrast, the anarchist literature is based on an ontological assumption of human interdependency. It understands the grassroots pandemic response as an expression of a form of human relation and social organisation that is repressed under the 'normal' circumstances of neoliberal capitalism and asserts that mutual aid is necessary for human flourishing. The empirical analysis presented in this thesis supports this perspective. However, I will argue that the anarchist literature on the grassroots response to the pandemic lacks material class analysis, which makes its recommendations vulnerable to the reproduction of dominant class interests, particularly on the axis of sex.

1. Empirical literature on GRCO responses to Covid-19

In the three years since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, there has been a large output of academic and professional research into the activities of volunteers, the third sector, and mutual aid groups during the first lockdown in the UK. This section will review that literature, first summarising its findings and then assessing its limitations.

A. Summary of findings

It has been widely reported that when the public became aware of the threat of Covid-19 in the UK, there was an "upsurge" (Kavada, 2022) in community activity focussed on meeting people's immediate needs (Cocking et al., 2023; Cooney, 2020; Kavada, 2022; O'Dwyer, 2020; Rendall et al., 2022). The literature stresses the crucial role played by GRCOs and informal networks (Acheson et al., 2022, 2022; Cocking et al., 2023; McBride et al., 2022; McCabe, Wilson, & Paine, 2020; Rendall et al., 2022; Tiratelli & Kaye, 2020), which acted quickly to help meet physiological and safety needs, particularly through shopping services, prescription delivery, emergency food aid and provision of cooked meals (Ellis Paine et al., 2022). They also supported relational needs by organising online/telephone social and support activities, collaborative creative projects, and socially-distanced outdoor activities (McCabe, Wilson, & Paine, 2020).

It is widely acknowledged that the work that people in communities did to support one another was paramount in enabling people to adhere to lockdown rules, and many would not have had their needs met during the early weeks of the first UK Covid-19 wave without grassroots support (Bynner, McBride, et al., 2022; McCabe, Wilson, & Paine, 2020; Rendall et al., 2022; Tiratelli & Kaye, 2020). Overwhelmingly, grassroots community initiatives were faster to respond to the fast-changing circumstances of the early-pandemic than state institutions or the professionalised voluntary sector (Chevée, 2022; Harris, 2021; Kavada, 2022; Macmillan, 2020; Mao et al., 2021; McCabe, Wilson, & Macmillan, 2020; Rendall et al., 2022; Tiratelli & Kaye, 2020). Many new, informal neighbourhood groups set themselves up and began offering support to shielding and self-isolating people before the lockdown was announced (Tiratelli & Kaye, 2020). By April 2020, there were over 4,000 such groups operating in the UK (Chevée, 2022; Covid-19 Mutual Aid UK, 2020; Kavada, 2022; Tiratelli & Kaye, 2020). While these new, informal groups (sometimes called 'mutual aid groups') have had a lot of publicity, the effort to meet people's immediate material needs was also contributed to by a large number of pre-existing GRCOs that changed their focus in response to Covid-19 (Bynner, Damm, et al., 2022; Bynner, McBride, et al., 2022; Fernandes-Jesus et al., 2021; McBride et al., 2022; Resource Centre, 2022; Woodward et al., 2022). Community centres, places of worship, and mental health support groups were among the many types of organisation that adapted their work to help meet people's immediate and changing needs during the lockdown (Ellis Paine et al., 2022). Studies into the emergence and development of community responses suggest that these responses changed and adapted over the period of March-July 2020. Before the lockdown and in its first few weeks, the focus of much grassroots activity was on food and medicine provision (McCabe, Wilson, & Macmillan, 2020; Rendall et al., 2022). As the weeks went on, social support needs became a higher priority, with GRCOs organising opportunities for people to support one another through phone-calls, online activities and neighbourhood projects

(Ellis Paine et al., 2022; Mao et al., 2021; McCabe, Wilson, & Macmillan, 2020). Some new groups have sustained and developed since the crisis into longer-term community projects (Ellis Paine et al., 2022; Fernandes-Jesus et al., 2021; Resource Centre, 2022).

Despite this overall picture, research suggests that the grassroots response varied substantially between different neighbourhoods and areas (Ellis Paine et al., 2022). The grassroots response to the pandemic appears to have been strongest in areas where there was already a strong history of community organising and an existing community infrastructure (Ellis Paine et al., 2022; Tiratelli & Kaye, 2020). In addition, GRCOs in areas of higher deprivation had more challenging work to do because people tended to have higher levels of need for support (M. Jones et al., 2020). Such groups also had lower access to resources than those based in more affluent areas (Ellis Paine et al., 2022). Despite this, some very deprived communities organised strong responses to help meet need in their neighbourhoods, although places where there had been a historic lack of investment in community initiatives struggled more than others (Ellis Paine et al., 2022). Areas that already had established community activities and organisations were in a stronger position to respond than those that had little to build from (Ellis Paine et al., 2022), and community responses were made more effective by pre-existing relationships and local knowledge (Cocking et al., 2023; Ellis Paine et al., 2022).

B. Limitations of the empirical literature

In my reading of the literature on volunteering, the voluntary sector and mutual aid groups during the pandemic, I have noted two significant limitations. First, studies into volunteering, the voluntary sector or mutual aid tend to converge on the finding that support organised within local communities by people living in those communities was crucial to meeting people's needs during the lockdown. However, I suggest the validity of the conclusions and recommendations of some of the research is limited by the fact that rather than drawing conclusions about grassroots community organising in particular, generalisations have been drawn and attributed to the categories 'volunteering', 'voluntary sector' or 'mutual aid groups'. As a result, I suggest that conclusions and policy recommendations have, in some cases, been made in relation to the wrong phenomena. Second, it has been widely argued that grassroots community responses to the pandemic played a critical role in meeting people's immediate needs and that they were more

effective than state and professionalised[9] voluntary sector organisations. However, there has been a low level of empirical investigation aimed at explaining *why* the grassroots response contrasted so sharply with the state response and what it is in particular about GRCOs that allowed them to act so quickly and effectively. There has also been a lack of comparative work done on the difference between GRCOs and professionalised voluntary sector organisations.

a) Conceptual confusion

During the first few weeks of the first Covid-19 lockdown in the UK, it was reported that over 10 million people gave time to help meet people's needs (Legal & General, 2020). This was done through a variety of avenues, including setting up and getting involved in neighbourhood mutual aid groups (Kavada, 2022; Macmillan, 2020; Mao et al., 2021; McCabe, Wilson, & Paine, 2020; Tiratelli & Kaye, 2020), unpaid involvement with pre-existing small local charities and community organisations (Tiratelli & Kaye, 2020), volunteering with the 'NHS Volunteer Responder' scheme (Churchill, 2020; Krekel, 2021), and volunteering with local authorities, including through the pre-existing 'Community Champions' scheme (Mao et al., 2021). Studies focussing on UK 'volunteering' during lockdown (e.g. Aveduolos et al., 2021; Harris, 2021; Mao et al., 2021; McCabe, Wilson, & Paine, 2020; Mcgarvey et al., 2021) tend to treat involvement with some or all of these types of organisation, and in some cases neighbour-to-neighbour relationships unmediated by any organisation (e.g. Harris, 2021; McCabe, Wilson, & Paine, 2020), as the same broad phenomenon — 'volunteering'. This concept is rarely defined in either the Covid-19 specific literature or in the literature on volunteering more broadly (see Cnaan et al., 1996)

I argued in chapter I that the concept of 'volunteering' is grounded in a particular set of assumptions about responsibility and dependency. Studies using this concept uncritically and without defining it are, I suggest, at risk of interpreting findings on the basis of this same set of assumptions. In addition, glossing such potentially different sets of experiences and activities as 'volunteering' is a problem for the validity of research because it risks attributing observations about particular types of organising—e.g. mutual support between neighbours—to 'volunteering' as a whole and then making generalisations or policy recommendations about 'volunteering' inappropriately. For example, Mao et al. (2021) include people involved in mutual aid groups in their literature review of "Covid-19 volunteering", along with people involved with local community organisations and local authority 'Community Champions'. They list activities that

[9] Professionalisation is the process, generally associated with neoliberalism, through which the voluntary sector has come to value professional knowledge and expertise over the tacit knowledge and skills held by communities themselves (Bondi, 2006). The result is that organisations that were originally set up by particular groups or communities for their own specific interests (e.g. women's refuges) are increasingly run by professional experts and place less value on the knowledge and priorities of the communities they were set up by/for, who are relegated to the passive role of 'service-user' (Jenkins, 2005).

'volunteers' were involved in during the early weeks of the pandemic, finding that they predominantly provided practical support to help meet people's immediate material needs (e.g. shopping and prescription delivery and food distribution), and social support to help reduce the social, emotional and psychological impact of the lockdown. However, this claim is based on a report about *local community organising,* not 'volunteering', and the report *does not* include Community Champions or any other formalised 'volunteering' scheme (McCabe, Wilson, & Macmillan, 2020). I suggest that by presenting grassroots community organising as part of the same overall 'volunteering' phenomenon as local authority volunteering schemes, authors risk imposing a taxonomy that distorts, rather than sheds light upon, what actually happened by shoehorning activity into a concept in which it does not belong and thus drawing conclusions about the wrong phenomenon. Avdoulos et al.'s (2021) mixed-methods study also focuses on 'volunteering' during the pandemic and includes 'volunteers' from mutual aid groups, local authorities and professionalised voluntary sector organisations. They find that what they term "informal volunteering" (p.13) is important but that this type of activity is not always recognised by policy makers as 'volunteering'. They suggest expanding understanding of 'volunteering' to include this activity, but do not explain the basis on which they have characterised it as such, or what it has in common with other types of 'volunteering' (such as participation in professionalised volunteering schemes). McCabe et al. (2020) and Ellis Paine (2020) note that many people helping others within their local neighbourhoods, (whom they classify as 'volunteers'), did *not* refer to themselves as 'volunteers', and some actively rejected the term. Instead, these people understood themselves as neighbours helping one another out. This suggests that the phenomenology of supporting neighbours through informal local networks and community groups may have differed significantly from the experience of 'volunteering' via a larger, more formalised scheme, such as NHS Volunteer Responders. Certainly, it invites the *question* of whether 'volunteering' is the right concept to describe the phenomenon of people supporting their neighbours during lockdown—a question elided by both Ellis Paine et al. and McCabe et al., who seem to assume that participants are simply incorrect in not understanding themselves as 'volunteers'. McCabe et al. (2020) characterise neighbour-to-neighbour conversations on doorsteps and in the street, and online knitting groups, as "volunteering initiatives" (p.4) without qualification. Similarly, Harris (2021) includes "neighbours offering cooked food to each other" and children displaying pictures of rainbows in their windows as "spontaneous volunteering" (p.30). I suggest it is far from obvious that such encounters can or should be understood as 'volunteering', and that generalising from these activities to 'volunteering' overall may be stretching the concept beyond any usefulness. This relates to the upcoming comparison of neoliberal and anarchist analysis of GRCO activity during the pandemic, in which neoliberal perspectives understand the phenomenon of people helping one another as 'volunteering', while anarchist perspectives understand it as solidarity.

Where comparisons are made between different "models of volunteering" (Mao et al., 2021, p. 9), studies found that informal, decentralised and self-organised initiatives were quicker to respond and better able to target support to where it was needed than formalised volunteering schemes (Mao et al., 2021; McCabe, Wilson, & Paine, 2020). This suggests that what is being glossed as "Covid-19 volunteering" (Mao et al., 2021, p. 2) may not be one phenomenon, and invites the possibility that there were at least two different distinct things going on: grassroots community organising on one hand, and top-down professionalised volunteering schemes on the other—with the activities and achievements of the former potentially not shared by the latter. This glossing can cause a similar problem in studies of the impact of participation on 'volunteers' themselves. Bowe et al. (2021) deal with this by looking at "community helping" in particular, rather than general volunteering. They found that the mental health benefits of community helping are mediated by "community identification and unity", which suggests that participation in a community initiative is key, and that the benefits may not apply to larger, more anonymous volunteering schemes. However, Tierney and Mahtani (2020) take observations about the benefits of community helping and extrapolate them into policy recommendations for NHS volunteering schemes. In their discussion of potential benefits to wellbeing for volunteers, they acknowledge that:

> what constitutes volunteering is wide-ranging, making comparisons across studies difficult; it covers a plethora of heterogeneous activities, so it is probably misleading to treat all volunteering as the same when considering its consequences for individual health. (p.3).

They also point to the fact that building connections and a sense of community are key benefits of volunteering. However, they conclude their paper by suggesting that the NHS should make use of "untapped" volunteer potential, without considering whether volunteering for the NHS would, in fact, lead to the same mental health benefits as participating in GRCOs. Volunteers in large, formalised volunteering programmes are subject to performance management processes and work within structures over which they have little control (R. Read, 2021), and so I suggest that it should not be assumed that the experience of participating in such a scheme is the same as the experience of involvement in grassroots community organising.

Using observations about grassroots community organising to make claims about 'volunteering' is a significant limitation of the validity of generalised claims about the activities of, and benefits to, 'volunteers' during lockdown. I have observed a similar limitation with some of the literature on 'voluntary sector'/ 'civil society' responses to the pandemic. For example, in her analysis of civil society responses to the pandemic, Harris (2021) argues that civil society was "flexible, responsive and innovative" (p.38). However, she also notes, elsewhere in the same paper, that large established charities were unable to mobilise as quickly as grassroots activists. Despite this, she generalises her claim about flexibility, responsiveness and innovation to civil society as a whole, including in that definition the very organisations that she has observed were slow and inflexible.

Similarly, Bynner et al. (2022) argue that the voluntary sector played a crucial role in meeting people's needs during the pandemic, but they base this claim on their research with local charities operating in specific areas. Many professionalised voluntary sector organisations are funded through commissioning and procurement processes, which means that their work is highly controlled by the state rather than designed in response to community need (Benson, 2014). Research into the responses of small charities suggests that they were quicker and more effective at meeting changing need than larger voluntary sector organisations (Dayson et al., 2021). Generalising the achievements of small charities to the voluntary sector overall could lead to the potentially erroneous conclusion that simply being a not-for-profit organisation, or simply being a registered charity, is the causal factor in an organisation's ability to help meet people's needs in a crisis. 'Voluntary sector' and 'third sector' are contested terms, with some arguing that they do not actually delineate any real phenomenon in the world, and are instead a way of referring to organisations according to what they are *not* (i.e. not statutory and not run for profit) (Alcock, 2010). There is evidence that local grassroots initiatives are quite different in their response to emergency situations than professionalised voluntary sector organisations (Whittaker et al., 2015), so generalising a broad 'voluntary sector' or 'civil society' response from the activity of GRCOs is likely to be misleading.

Finally, some of the research on the grassroots response to Covid-19 focusses on 'mutual aid groups', but these are defined in at least three different ways across the literature. First, some studies look at a very specific phenomenon of new informal networks that were set up by groups of residents in local areas around the country, for the purpose of meeting the needs of people in the area (Chevée, 2022; Tiratelli & Kaye, 2020). These groups responded very quickly to the pandemic (Chevée, 2022), and many of them provided vital support to people in their neighbourhoods (Tiratelli & Kaye, 2020). They came to be known as 'mutual aid' groups, although they did not all call themselves by that term, and many were not familiar with the anarchist concept of mutual aid (see p. 33), nor motivated by anarchist analysis (Fernandes-Jesus et al., 2021). Some commentators have therefore argued that these groups were *not* all mutual aid groups, on the basis that mutual aid is a social movement built on particular political analysis (Kavada, 2022; Lachowicz & Donaghey, 2022). This is a second and distinct way of defining 'mutual aid groups', and thus studies that used this definition focused on a subset of new neighbourhood support groups defined by political consciousness. In contrast, some scholars have taken a much wider angle view on mutual aid, including in their definition of 'mutual aid group' all new and pre-existing community-based not-for-profit organisations that designed or adapted their work toward meeting people's immediate needs during lockdown (Fernandes-Jesus et al., 2021). This is different again, which means that the conclusions drawn are, again, based on a different, broader phenomenon.

The first of these definitions of 'mutual-aid group' refers to what appears to be a clear empirical phenomenon—new self-organised groups of neighbours who supported people in their local area during lockdown. The second refers to activity informed by a particular political analysis. This is harder to delineate empirically, as it requires an understanding of the political motivations of those involved, but literature suggests there were such groups, and that they form a subset of the wider category of self-organised neighbourhood support groups (Aidan & Sam, 2021; Kavada, 2022). Both of these ways of categorising mutual aid groups lend themselves to studies about whether a particular type of organising that emerged during the pandemic was effective at meeting people's needs. However, studies suggest that a lot of the on-the-ground work to meet material and social needs was done by pre-existing organisations (Fernandes-Jesus et al., 2021; Harris, 2021), and indeed that the existence of such organisations correlates with a higher level of grassroots activity toward supporting local need (Ellis Paine et al., 2022). Studies that take a very broad definition of 'mutual aid', (e.g. Fernandes-Jesus et al., 2021) are therefore likely to have captured more of the grassroots response to the pandemic than those that limit their study to new or politically-conscious groups. However, as the term 'mutual aid group' is contested and used inconsistently across the literature, I suggest that it is potentially confusing to use this term to refer to this wider category of organisations.

Literature on 'volunteering', 'the voluntary sector' and 'mutual aid groups' has a common weakness relating to its taxonomical focus. By using pre-defined categories to determine the focus of research, these literatures risk attributing conclusions to 'volunteering', 'the voluntary sector' or 'mutual aid groups' which are, in fact, related to a phenomenon that crosscuts those categories. My empirical analysis, presented in this thesis, suggests that there is such a phenomenon: grassroots community organisations (GRCOs). This concept—defined in chapter I—was developed in the course of my field work and analysis, rather than pre-imposed. This analytic process is detailed in chapter IV, where I argue that this approach allows for the identification of a concept that is better able to point to a real and relevant phenomenon in the world than imposition of pre-determined taxonomy (Sayer, 2000).

b) Lack of explanatory empirical analysis

Many commentators and researchers have observed that local, community-based groups and organisations responded more quickly than the state to the immediate challenge of meeting material needs during the early months of the pandemic (Chevée, 2022; Harris, 2021; Macmillan, 2020; Mao et al., 2021). They were also more person-centred in their approach, which allowed them to provide social support more effectively than large, centralised approaches (Sussex Health and Care Partnership, 2021). It has also been reported that the NHS Volunteer Responders programme was slow to process volunteers (Law & Armstrong, 2020), struggled to match

volunteers with tasks (Aveduolos et al., 2021), that many people who signed up with them were never given anything to do (Krekel, 2021), and that, unlike GRCOs, they did not provide ongoing, person-centred support (Sussex Health and Care Partnership, 2021). However, there has been little consideration into *why* GRCOs were so much faster and more effective.

The little consideration that has been given to this question has tended to take two different perspectives. The first focuses on the fact that new mutual aid groups were unregulated by the state, which is conflated with being risky and unaccountable. It is then extrapolated that the relevant difference between organisations that acted fast and those that were slow relates to their relative carefulness and accountability (Harris, 2021; Rendall et al., 2022), with agility and speed being treated as mutually exclusive with carefulness and accountability. This work treats the grassroots response to disasters as something that is necessary during the temporary crisis but that should be brought into line with establishment ways of working when the immediate crisis is over (Harris, 2021; cf. Preston & Firth, 2020). Describing "spontaneous volunteering", Harris writes that "regulations, safeguards and formal management systems were bypassed with impunity in the face of an overwhelming national crisis" (p.30). She fails to account for the fact that many of the GRCOs that responded very fast and effectively were, in fact, pre-established community groups and charities, *not* brand-new informal collectives. Most of the participating organisations in my study had been careful to work in ways that helped to safeguard people from harm and were not unnecessarily hazardous. To assume that carefulness and accountability is only made possible through bureaucratic procedure and state regulation, and thus that the reason that GRCOs were able to respond fast was due to a lack of carefulness and accountability, is not empirically grounded. I suggest this narrative serves a particular set of political interests, which is discussed in section 2.

The second approach argues that the key differences between mutual aid and other types of organising, in terms of ability to support wellbeing, are the structure of the organisations and the political analysis of the organisers. This thesis will argue for the former point, but against the latter, based on analysis of empirical data from GRCOs. In contrast, those making these arguments fail to ground them empirically, which I suggest is the reason that they conflate these two different factors. Kavada (2022) compares the NHS Volunteer Responder scheme to mutual aid groups. She observes that mutual aid groups responded much more quickly than the NHS scheme, both in terms of the speed of setting up the scheme itself and the speed of matching 'volunteers' with people who needed support. She suggests that the cause of the delay of the NHS scheme was its centralised and formalised systems. However, she also suggests that grassroots neighbourhood groups that were not consciously motivated by the political analysis of mutual aid are *not* mutual aid groups and does not include them in her analysis of the strengths of the localised, more

informal model of working. Her analysis therefore fails to deal with the fact that some of the GRCOs that were effective at meeting need very fast were not motivated by a particular political analysis, so the key difference between the NHS scheme and mutual aid groups is not necessarily political analysis. Similarly, Chevée (2022) observes that mutual aid groups were able to "fill the gaps in emergency planning", and explains this with reference to the "solidarity not charity" model taken by politically-conscious mutual aid groups (p.18) (see Covid-19 Mutual Aid UK, 2020). However, Chevée's argument rests on the fact that mutual aid groups took a 'bottom-up' approach, which is not, in fact, contingent on having a particular political consciousness. As we will see in chapter V, my analysis *does* convince me that the anarchist political theory of mutual aid (introduced in the next section) is a correct explanation for the effectiveness of GRCOs, but not that the possibility of this way of working is contingent on organisers' familiarity with that theory.

This section has provided an overview of the empirical literature on the grassroots community response to Covid-19 in the UK. Overwhelmingly, research suggests that self-organised community responses were vital in meeting people's material and social needs during lockdown. However, there is conceptual confusion across the literature, in which the grassroots response is attributed variously to 'volunteering', 'civil society', 'the voluntary sector', and 'mutual aid groups'. I suggest that 'grassroots community organisation' is a more useful concept for the phenomenon under study here. Overall, the literature also lacks explanatory power. There is little engagement with the question of *why* GRCOs were so effective, and where there is, its conclusions are unreliable due to conflation of different possible causal mechanisms. The present study aims to fill this gap by offering explanatory analysis of the effectiveness of GRCOs during lockdown.

2. Grassroots responses to Covid-19 lockdowns: analysis and perspectives

This section provides a review of analytic interpretations of the GRCO response to Covid-19 from neoliberal and anarchist perspectives. Neoliberal literature considers grassroots organising from the perspective of an assumption that individuals are ontologically independent from one another, and that mutual support is thus a state of temporary exception to normal social life. It works to explain grassroots organising and mutual aid through a lens of assuming human beings to be basically self-interested and competitive. This literature compares communities to one another with a view to understanding why some are more 'resilient' than others to crises. It explains this by reference to discourses of 'social capital', in which relationships of trust and reciprocity are conceptualised as a form of wealth that is developed through transactional civic engagement. Civic engagement is therefore understood as a causal factor in increasing 'community resilience'. In contrast, anarchist literature understands mutual support as a natural and normal way for humans

to relate to one another, rather than a state of exception that emerges only in crisis situations. It rejects the concepts of social capital and civic engagement in favour of solidarity and mutual aid. Participation in grassroots community support is understood as a way for communities to build power from the ground up, which makes them less dependent on the capitalist state. I am going to argue that, while the anarchist understanding of grassroots organising is more accurate, both perspectives lack material analysis as an explanatory factor in how, where and when grassroots organising happens, and in whose interests. Both literatures therefore make recommendations for policy/action that risk replicating material power imbalances.

A. Neoliberal thinking: resilience, social capital, and the self-interested subject

There is a substantial literature analysing the grassroots response to the pandemic from a neoliberal perspective (e.g. Abrams et al., 2021; Aveduolos et al., 2021; Blake, 2021; Borkowska & Laurence, 2021; Cocking et al., 2023; Felici, 2020; Hwang & Lee, 2022; Morsut et al., 2022; Rippon et al., 2021; Sanderson Bellamy et al., 2021; Yang, 2021). This literature treats the crisis of Covid-19 as a temporary interruption to 'business as usual' (Abrams et al., 2021; Blake, 2021; Rippon et al., 2021) (cf. Preston & Firth, 2020) and the grassroots response as a short-term arrangement that should be brought under the control of the state and capital as soon as possible (Acheson et al., 2022; Harris, 2021) (cf. Firth, 2022). It understands the support people give to one another as 'volunteering' done on the basis of a rational calculation of self-interest (Bowe et al., 2021; Tierney & Mahtani, 2020) (cf. Lachowicz & Donaghey, 2022). It uses discourses of 'resilience' (Blake, 2021; Cocking et al., 2023; Rippon et al., 2021) (cf. Mould et al., 2022), 'cohesion' (Abrams et al., 2020, 2021; Borkowska & Laurence, 2021) (cf. Preston & Firth, 2020) and 'social capital' (Felici, 2020; Hwang & Lee, 2022; Morsut et al., 2022) (cf. Preston & Firth, 2020) to treat communities and individuals as responsible for their own unmet needs, and lacks consideration of material power differences.

Neoliberal perspectives understand the crisis of Covid-19 as a temporary interruption that necessitated some changes to everyday ways of doing things until the resumption of 'normal' or 'new normal' life (e.g. Abrams et al., 2021; Blake, 2021; Rippon et al., 2021) (cf. Springer, 2020). On this basis, neoliberal analyses have compared the extents to which different communities have been negatively impacted by the pandemic and explained these in terms of 'resilience' (Blake, 2021; Rippon et al., 2021; South et al., 2020), with those whose lives have become most difficult being understood as more 'vulnerable' and less 'resilient' to the disruption than those who have fared better. Much of the literature on the grassroots response to the pandemic understands 'resilience' as being causally related to 'social cohesion' (e.g. Abrams et al., 2020, 2021; Borkowska & Laurence, 2021, 2021; Lalot et al., 2021). Grassroots organising is understood as an expression of social cohesion, so grassroots organising is seen as an enabler of community resilience (e.g. Ellis

Paine et al., 2022). For example, studies comparing levels of resilience and vulnerability between different communities find that there is a converse relationship between the extent to which communities are characterised by social networks and bonds, and the extent to which they were harmed by the crisis of the pandemic (Borgonovi & Andrieu, 2020; Borkowska & Laurence, 2021) and/or other crises such as natural disasters (Fraser & Naquin, 2022), and conclude that the causal factor here is 'social capital' — a theory developed by Putnam (2000).

> Social capital refers to connections among individuals—social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them. (p.19).

Putnam argues that some communities have lower levels of civic engagement than others, and this leads to a lack of reciprocal trust between individuals. When there are low levels of reciprocal trust, people are less likely to give their time and energy to civic engagement. Communities in this loop of low trust and low engagement are understood as having low social capital (Putnam, 2000, p. 277). From this perspective, communities with higher social capital are understood to be more 'resilient' than those with low social capital, which are understood to be more 'vulnerable' to crises such as the Covid-19 pandemic (e.g. Borgonovi & Andrieu, 2020; Fraser & Naquin, 2022) (cf. Mould et al., 2022). This is a circular logic through which social capital improves civic engagement within a community, and civic engagement creates social capital, and thus the solution to lack of 'resilience' among certain communities is to encourage people in those communities to do more 'civic engagement' (e.g. Aveduolos et al., 2021; Borgonovi & Andrieu, 2020).

I suggest that the circular logic of social capital theory fails to explain why different people and communities have different levels of supportive social networks. In their study of social cohesion during the pandemic, for example, Borkowska and Laurence (2021) blame lack of perceived cohesion among certain communities on lack of social capital, but also note that there is a correlation between the communities that lack perceived cohesion and those that are made up of 'vulnerable' and 'disadvantaged' groups, such as people of colour, migrants and neighbourhoods high on the Index of Multiple Deprivation. They do not, however, consider potential material causes that might lead to people of these demographics being less likely to experience cohesion. In the UK, housing policy has displaced people away from their support networks (Clair, 2022; T. Gillespie et al., 2021), anti-trade union policies have damaged networks of solidarity and community (Perchard, 2013), and the hostile environment policy makes deliberate effort to prevent the emergence of supportive networks for migrants (Wilcock, 2019). The social capital explanation for differences in 'cohesion' during the pandemic ignores these factors. I suggest, in contrast, that the systematic breaking up of communities, and the prevention of the forming of new ones, might explain why some geographical areas have less 'cohesion' than others.

The basis of social capital theory is that people do things based on rational calculation about what will confer benefit to them individually. As Putnam puts it, "Individuals form connections that benefit our own interests" (p.20). In a society that is well-endowed with social capital, people trust one another and are more likely to act in the interests of others, because they believe that, in turn, others will act in their interests. In a society low in social capital, people do not act in the interests of others because they do not believe others will do the same. The theory is, I suggest, based in a particular ontology of personhood and society, grounded in the neoliberal subject—*homo economicus*—who is inherently competitive, rational, and entirely motivated by self-interest (Foucault, 2008; J. Read, 2009). This subject's relationship with society is as a rational agent that makes calculated choices about what to do on the basis of their individual interest. Beginning with this ontology of the human subject, on observing the fact that human beings act toward meeting the needs of others, neoliberal perspectives attempt to explain how 'civic engagement' could be motivated by self-interest and produce social capital as a solution.

However, this still leaves neoliberalism with a difficulty in explaining community responses to upheaval and disaster in particular. Despite fictional depictions suggesting the contrary (e.g. Sodervergh, 2011), it is a well-documented empirical fact that, in situations of immediate disaster, people gravitate towards those affected and work together to try to help (Fritz & Williams, 1957; Solnit, 2009). Mainstream (neoliberal) (Preston & Firth, 2020) disaster studies understands this as "spontaneous volunteering" (Harris et al., 2017; Simsa et al., 2019; Yang, 2021) and it occurs in situations in which people who are relatively safe and unaffected by the crisis offer help to those who are in danger, sometimes in ways that involve taking personal risks (for example the 2015 refugee crisis, when thousands of people travelled to Greece and Italy to provide practical support to refugees arriving on Europe's shores) (Simsa et al., 2019). The neoliberal literature frames this as an "impulsive" (Simsa et al., 2019, p. 105S) (as opposed to rational) response that constitutes an exception to normal human behaviour that is inherently temporary (Cocking et al., 2023; Fritz & Williams, 1957). The way in which people behave toward one another in crisis situations is understood as consequence of a lapse in rational thinking, which, in the face of disaster, is temporarily overridden by impulsive behaviour. As time goes on, rational thinking takes over again, and this explains why the social solidarity that emerges in the immediate wake of disasters wains as time goes on (Fritz & Williams, 1957).

In the next section we look at anarchist perspectives, which offer an alternative way of understanding people's support toward one another, based on an ontology of humans as interdependent beings rather than disconnected, in-dependent rational agents. These perspectives see people's response to disasters as an emergence of a natural and normal form of human behaviour that is systematically suppressed by the state in capitalist societies.

B. Anarchist thinking: mutual aid and political consciousness

In contrast to neoliberal thinking, anarchists begin with an ontology of human interdependency (Kropotkin, 2003; Springer, 2020; The Care Collective, 2020). Rather than being a strange and puzzling state of exception, mutual aid is understood as fundamental to human survival and flourishing (Firth, 2022; Kropotkin, 2003; Preston & Firth, 2020; Spade, 2020; The Care Collective, 2020). From this perspective, the 'spontaneous' upswells of reciprocity and care that occur during times of upheaval are not a temporary departure from normal human life, but a moment in which a way of living emerges that has been systematically repressed by the social and economic structures that limit possibilities in everyday life (Preston & Firth, 2020). This way of thinking about mutual aid draws on Kropotkin's (2003) (first published 1902) demonstration that mutual aid has been necessary for the survival of human beings throughout our evolution, and indeed is necessary for the survival of many other species. Human beings are small, physically weak apes who have been able to succeed as a species because of our ability to communicate and collaborate effectively with one another. Our capacity for language is an evolved trait that makes it possible for us to survive and thrive together rather than try to survive alone, and thus humans thrive best when we organise society on the basis of mutual aid (Kropotkin, 2003). From this perspective, mutual aid organising in the here-and-now is *both* a way to help directly meet people's needs *and* a way to challenge neoliberal power structures that are failing to do so (Lachowicz & Donaghey, 2022; Spade, 2020). (It should be noted that this is the meaning of 'mutual aid' in anarchist theory and interpretation. As explained above, the 'mutual aid' groups that were set up during the early months of the Covid-19 pandemic did not all base their work explicitly on this understanding of mutual aid.)

From an anarchist perspective, the ontology of human being is quite different from the entirely self-interested, competitive *homo economicus*. As a result, anarchist inquiries into grassroots community organising during the pandemic have asked different kinds of questions and come to quite different conclusions from neoliberal investigations. The anarchist literature on the grassroots response to Covid-19 is primarily concerned with explaining the emergence of solidarity and mutual support from a perspective grounded in an ontology of interdependent being (Springer, 2020; The Care Collective, 2020), and considering how we might learn from this period in history to restructure society on the basis of the principles of mutual aid (Dowling, 2021; Firth, 2022; Kavada, 2022; Preston & Firth, 2020; Spade, 2020). Several writers, on observing the upswell of mutual support in the early weeks of lockdown, provided swift analysis of the potentialities of such action and suggested that the pandemic offered an opportunity for building a new way of organising society from the ground up (Donaghey, 2020; Kinna & Swann, 2020; Preston & Firth, 2020; Spade, 2020; Springer, 2020). They argued that the crisis was exposing

long-term failures of the state and capital to meet people's needs (Preston & Firth, 2020), was bringing the interdependency of human being into sharp focus (Springer, 2020), and that a space was temporarily open in which to work to build a more caring and democratic way of living together (Donaghey, 2020; Spade, 2020). As the months and years have passed, some have produced empirical analysis into what has taken place, using these events as case studies for learning about how we might imagine a different way of organising society (Aidan & Sam, 2021; Firth, 2022; Kavada, 2022; Lachowicz & Donaghey, 2022).

Kavada (2022) and Lachovicz and Donaghey (2022) compare ways of organising that are consistent with the politics of mutual aid with those that take a neoliberal approach. Kavada compares mutual aid groups in the UK with the NHS Volunteer Responders scheme. She observes that the NHS scheme was slow to respond to the crisis, and also that, as a model, it located power in the hands of a few through centralised systems of decision making and data management. In contrast, she argues that mutual aid groups created a "hyperlocal infrastructure of care", through which people organised together to meet the needs of their own communities (p.152). Lachowicz and Donaghey compare two different projects set up to make personal protective equipment (PPE) for NHS workers. They argue that one of these projects assumed a neoliberal volunteerism model, while the other was grounded in the politics of mutual aid. Over time, the two diverged increasingly in their methods of organising and their interactions with the state. The former understood itself as 'volunteering' to help the NHS, while the latter understood itself as providing solidarity and support to healthcare workers themselves. Echoing Kavada's findings, the neoliberal project was centralised, with decision-making and data processing done by a few who delegated 'volunteering' tasks to a wider group. In contrast, the mutual aid model consisted of a network of autonomous groups that communicated with and learned from one another.

In both of these cases, authors find that there was a correlation between the political intentions and consciousness of organisers and the material outcomes of their way of working, including their ability to meet need effectively. There is, therefore, a question to ask about whether it is possible for people who do not have explicit anarchist analysis, and an aim to change society overall, to nevertheless organise in a way that is consistent with the politics and goals of anarchist mutual aid. Kavada assumes it is not:

> "Of course, this more political understanding of mutual aid is not necessarily embraced by all the community groups that have registered themselves on the [mutual aid website] platform. For some, this may simply be a way to help vulnerable neighbours in a spirit of charity, which implies a more hierarchical relationship, where the 'helpers' are more powerful than the people they help." (Kavada, 2022, p. 148).

This assumption of a clear causal relationship between political analysis and mutual aid practice during lockdown does not appear, however, to unequivocally stand up to empirical scrutiny. Both Kavada and Lachowicz and Donaghey's studies compare localised grassroots ways of organising with centralised, top-down structures. Although there is a correlation in their data between politics and outcome, there is no evidence of causation, and the group structure itself could be an explanatory factor (rather than the political perspective of organisers). Meanwhile, several studies converge on a finding that having strong pre-existing community organisations correlated with an ability for communities to meet peoples' needs effectively during lockdown (Cocking et al., 2023; Ellis Paine et al., 2022; Tiratelli & Kaye, 2020). These studies took neoliberal perspectives and did not consider the political analysis of participants. However, their findings, which are consistent with my own, are that the experience and networks created through well-established community organisations—such as small local charities—helped communities to respond to the crisis fast and effectively. Formally speaking, charities assume a philanthropic model of 'helper' and 'helpee', and it is a legal requirement that political activity must not be the reason for a charity's existence (Charity Commission, 2022). Charitable status is thus inconsistent with the anarchist model of organising for explicitly political ends—although it is of course possible that people running charities have political aims that are not written into their charity governing documents (see Monforte & Maestri, 2023; Pawlowski, 2022) . Nevertheless, the role played by grassroots charities suggests that the conscious anarchist analysis of organisers may not be a causal factor in organisations' ability to meet need effectively during lockdown. Instead, it may be the case that organisations that organised in ways consistent with anarchist analysis were effective at meeting need, regardless of the political intentions of the organisers. Indeed, it may be the case that organisations that aimed to meet need found themselves working in ways that are consistent with anarchist analysis *because they are effective*. This is supported by Firth's (2022) finding that grassroots organisations operating in disaster situations "often default to anarchistic models even without anarchist involvement or analysis" (p.162). It is perhaps a mistake to assume that anarchist consciousness is necessary for organisations to meet need. Instead, perhaps these methods are used in crisis situations because they work, which could potentially offer empirical evidence that anarchist ways of organising are effective for meeting need. The analysis provided in this thesis goes some way toward providing this evidence.[10]

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[10] Even if political consciousness is not necessary for organising effective mutual aid, Firth finds that a lack of political consciousness makes organisations that lack political analysis more vulnerable to neoliberal co-option. As the pandemic went on, some GR groups that began with a concern for organising on the basis of reciprocity and interdependence fell into more hierarchical, voluntaristic and bureaucratic ways of working (Firth, 2022; Kleist, 2021). This thesis argues that hierarchical and bureaucratic ways of working are detrimental for need-meeting (see chapters VI and VII). This might suggest that, although political ends are not necessary for organising to meet need, lack of political ends may make organisations vulnerable to becoming less effective at meeting need.

This thesis compares different organisations with one another with the aim of explaining what enabled organisations to meet need. In contrast to the conscious mutual aid political analysis explanation, I argue that working in a way that is broadly consistent with mutual aid analysis is necessary, but that this does not require being explicitly motivated by the aim to make a fundamental change to societal structures. I am not the first writer to make recommendations about how to organise to meet need based on grassroots organising during the pandemic. In his book *Mutual Aid: Building Solidarity Through This Crisis (And the Next)*, Spade (2020) gives instruction on what does and does not qualify as a mutual aid group, and how mutual aid should and should not be organised. His recommendations are not empirically grounded but include broad principles that are theoretically grounded in anarchist thinking. These include commitment to non-hierarchy, resistance to co-option by the state, and principles of solidarity rather than philanthropy. However, he also gives prescriptive instructions against accepting grant money (people are urged to "beg, borrow and steal" (p.61)), against engaging with any statutory procedure (e.g. criminal record checks), and against having closed organising meetings. I suggest that these instructions lack acknowledgement of different specific contexts and circumstances, or how material power structures might make certain ways of doing things harder for some than others. Spade does not consider the fact that people are not all equally able to "beg, borrow and steal" resources—the middle-class British student may be able to generate donations from family and friends, while the asylum seeker would risk deportation if caught shoplifting. While some groups have money and resources available within their communities, some are run by and for people with very little and are unable to function without external funding for the basics. For example, some groups received small grants during the pandemic to supply food and phone credit to their members, buy IT equipment for group organisers, and pay for fuel for shopping delivery (Sussex Community Foundation, 2023). These are resources that many groups supplied for themselves, from within their own communities (see chapter VII). Furthermore, in order to access grant funding, groups may have to engage with some statutory processes (Sussex Community Foundation, 2021), and failure to comply with statutory processes, such as legally mandatory criminal records checks (Disclosure and Barring Service, 2022), presents a personal risk to those involved that some (particularly migrants, racialised people and people on probation) may be unable to take. In any case, groups organising childcare (which helps make groups more equitable by enabling participation from parents (Kelly, 2011), particularly women), or other activities that render people particularly vulnerable, (such as transporting people to healthcare appointments), may in fact wish to take measures to help ensure that people doing the work do not have a history that would indicate a high risk to others. Finally, open meetings, while offering the potential for wide participation, are not always conducive to the detailed and careful organising required for meeting people's needs (Resource Centre, 2023). In contrast to Spade, this thesis argues that

meeting need and supporting flourishing relies on engaging with people and communities in their specificity. There are certain conditions of possibility that enable organisations to do this (see chapter VII), and these are broadly consistent with anarchist principles. However, prescriptive and strict application of universal rules can be damaging to organisations' ability to engage with specificity.

I also suggest that Spade's lack of engagement with specificity is caused by a lack of material class analysis. Responding to Spade's book, Lindgren (2022) argues that without a robust materialist feminist and anti-racist class analysis, mutual aid could "reproduce…the unmet bodily and psychological needs of the labouring classes". I agree. In particular, Spade lacks any explanatory analysis of who is subordinated by current power structures and for what ends. His assumption seems to be that anybody organising on the basis of mutual-aid principles (which as we have seen he defines very narrowly), is always-already a challenge to unequal power structures. This approach risks concealing a reality in which relations of structural oppression—those on the axes of sex, race and socio-economic class— (Durand, 2022; J. C. Jones, 2021b; Rickford, 2022b)) are further entrenched. For example ,higher levels of education, higher income, being employed or in education, and living in a rural area were all predictors of grassroots 'volunteering' (Mak & Fancourt, 2022). Although research suggests that ethnicity was not a predictor of neighbourhood 'volunteering' or participation in mutual aid groups during lockdown (Mak & Fancourt, 2022), racialised people were more likely to experience a decrease in their sense of safety and support in their local community during lockdown than white people (Borkowska & Laurence, 2021). These patterns could suggest that more affluent localities benefited more than more deprived areas from the benefits of local grassroots organising (although one study suggests that the demographic makeup of those who benefitted from mutual aid support is more representative of the UK population (Wein, 2020)). In my own data, as we will see, groups run by and for refugees, and those run by and for people with low access to digital technology, were much less able to support one another during lockdown than other groups.

Spade is not alone in his lack of material analysis. Throughout the anarchist literature, I found that thinking about local organising exposed a lack of engagement with questions of geographic inequality. If a "hyperlocal infrastructure of care" (Kavada, 2022, p. 147) is to be equitable, it needs to deal with the fact that different neighbourhoods have wildly different access to material resources, levels of precarity, and relationships with power structures. Over the last 13 years, the British state has deliberately pursued an aim of creating a "hostile environment" for migrants (Webber, 2019), whilst relying on a transient migrant workforce (Green et al., 2009) and has created its own internal displacement of people through austerity and unregulated housing markets (Hodkinson et al., 2016). Localities are therefore not all created equal, and not everybody

feels equally 'at home' where they live. A politics that assumes that any self-organisation and mutual support between people who live close to one another is a challenge to the status quo fails to deal with the fact that people who are in the most dominant positions in current social structures are likely to have advantage when it comes to organising with their neighbours. This is not because others have failed to acquire 'social capital', but because they are systematically torn from their roots (T. Gillespie et al., 2021), forced into overcrowded accommodation (Clair, 2022) and made to live in a constant state of not knowing how long they will be able to stay in one place (Vásquez-Vera et al., 2017). Even in their rejection of the social capital analysis, anarchist literature appears to have failed to deal with the reality that community organising is made systematically harder for some than others.

Meanwhile, a consistent finding across the empirical literature is that mutual aid and grassroots 'volunteering' was done by more women than men (Mak & Fancourt, 2022; O'Dwyer, 2020; Wein, 2020), with one study suggesting that two thirds of people offering mutual aid support to others were women (Wein, 2020). As we have seen, it is widely acknowledged that mutual aid and community organising was vital for meeting people's needs during lockdown. This means that, at a time of crisis, the meeting of human needs in Britain was dependent on women taking on an increased load of unpaid reproductive labour. Women's disproportionate contribution to meeting community needs happened in a context in which women were also taking on an increased load of unpaid reproductive work in the home (J. Smith et al., 2021; UN Women, 2020; WBG, 2021a; Xue & McMunn, 2021). Twenty percent of mothers were made redundant or lost work hours because of childcare responsibilities (compared to 13% of fathers) (WBG, 2021a). Women did more housework than men (Sánchez et al., 2021; Zamberlan et al., 2021), more unpaid care for family members than men (WBG, 2020), and more childcare than men (Zamberlan et al., 2021). The increased burden negatively impacted women's mental health (WBG, 2021a; Xue & McMunn, 2021). Time spent doing reproductive work is time that women are not spending on other activities. In the UK, men have five hours more leisure time per week than women (which means more time, for example, socialising, engaging in cultural activities, resting, taking part in sports or outdoor pursuits, pursuing hobbies, and reading (Office for National Statistics, 2018)). As we will see in chapter III, engaging in generative, creative activities is important for human flourishing, so women having less opportunity to do these things is a matter of injustice. Any evaluation of the extent to which the grassroots response to the pandemic truly challenged the status-quo needs to take account of the disproportionate reliance on women's unpaid reproductive labour. However, when searching title and abstract, none of the following Scopus searches bring up any results at all.

- "reproductive labour" AND "mutual aid"

- “unpaid work” AND “mutual aid” AND “covid-19”
- “unpaid work” AND “mutual aid"” AND “women”

We might expect the neoliberal literature to ignore power dynamics, but the anarchist literature also fails to engage with exploitation of reproductive labour. I have encountered no anarchistic theoretical or empirical arguments in favour of mutual aid as a way to transform society that provide any consideration of how to avoid replicating patriarchal exploitation of women’s care labour. A politics of interdependence that imagines a future in which mutual support is at the core of society must engage with the fact that it is operating in a context of deeply entrenched exploitative material relations between men and women, and that care labour is the site of much of that exploitation. Meanwhile, some of the anarchist literature actively engages in discourses that replace sex as an analytic category with ‘gender-identity’, (Spade, 2020; The Care Collective, 2020), which works to erase women as an oppressed class altogether by replacing material class analysis with identity-based politics (J. C. Jones, 2021b; Rickford, 2022b)

Anarchist theory of interdependence and mutual aid generally rings true in relation to my own data and inductive analysis of grassroots community organising during the Covid-19 pandemic. However, the tendency to insist that organisers must have anarchist analysis in order to meet need effectively is not empirically grounded. In addition, I suggest that the anarchist literature overall lacks materialist analysis. As a result, it risks replicating the mistakes made by neoliberal thinkers when they locate responsibility for change solely on the shoulders of the oppressed and conceal the realities of structural class-based oppression. In particular, it appears that very little thinking (anarchist or otherwise) has been done on the matter of how the grassroots community response to Covid-19 relates to domination and exploitation on the axis of sex. To my knowledge there is no materialist feminist analysis of the grassroots response to lockdown, and no literature that considers how we might learn from and build on the positive elements of the response without replicating patriarchal power dynamics between women and men. I hope this thesis goes some way toward opening up discussion of these tensions, although, as I discuss in chapter IX, there is much more to do. In the next chapter I provide a brief rehearsal of feminist debates relating to reproductive labour and care, to situate the radical materialist feminist perspective from which I conduct my analysis of meeting human need during the Covid-19 lockdown.

3. Conclusion

This chapter has provided a review of empirical literature into the grassroots community response to the first wave of Covid-19 in the UK. There is substantial evidence that this response played a crucial role in meeting people’s material and social needs during lockdown. However, there is

conceptual confusion throughout the literature, with grassroots community activity being conceptualised as ‘volunteering’, ‘civil society’, ‘voluntary sector’, and ‘mutual aid’. I have suggested that this makes conclusions and recommendations less reliable because they have been theoretically generalised according to the wrong concepts. The empirical literature also lacks empirically grounded explanatory analysis, and thus is unable to explain why GRCOs were so effective. This thesis aims to fill that gap.

I have also reviewed neo-liberal and anarchist theoretical interpretations of the GRCO response to the pandemic. I have argued that the neoliberal literature is based on imagining human beings as self-interested, competitive, and entirely independent from one another. Its focus is on explaining why, given this assumption, people helped each other during lockdown. I suggest that this is an attempt to solve a problem that does not exist because, as argued in the anarchist literature, human beings are actually interdependent. However, I find that the anarchist literature lacks material analysis, and, in particular, assumes that organising on the principles of mutual aid is a challenge to power structures irrespective of who is included in it and who is doing the work. In contrast, I suggest that without material analysis, mutual aid risks replicating existing power structures. On this basis, what is needed is a theoretical approach that combines an ontology of interdependency with material class analysis. This is provided by radical materialist feminism, which I introduce in the next chapter.

III. Radical materialist feminism: care, instrumentalisation, and the need for recognition.

In the previous chapter, I argued that literature on the GRCO response the pandemic lacks material class analysis, and, in particular, sex-class analysis. Both neoliberal and anarchist approaches assume that people's interactions with and engagement in GRCOs are equal to one another in terms of material and structural power. I suggest that what is needed is a perspective based in both material class analysis *and* an ontology of interdependence, which I suggest is offered by radical materialist feminism (J. C. Jones, 2021c).

Section 1 makes a case for a radical materialist feminism. I examine Marxist feminist and radical feminist perspectives on care and reproductive labour, and look in detail at Firestone's *The Dialectic of Sex* (1979), which is an attempt at developing a radical feminism grounded in historical materialism. I argue for a *both/and* analysis of care that engages with ways in which it is generative and vital for human flourishing and ways in which it is a site of women's exploitation. Marxist feminism engages with the latter in a way that is missing from the anarchist literature we have visited but fails to acknowledge the former. This mistake is replicated by Firestone, who sees the rejection of care as the route to women's liberation. Meanwhile, non-materialist radical feminism (e.g. Brownmiller, 2013; Dworkin, 1987; Jeffreys, 1994) understands sexual difference as the cause of patriarchal oppression, which is ahistorical. Firestone also replicates this mistake, which for her results in a drive to remove sexual difference from social relations by using technology to remove women's role in reproduction. The assumption that the dismantling of patriarchy involves removal of sexual difference is replicated in liberal, queer, trans and xeno feminisms. I suggest it is based in an assumption that the route to women's liberation is in embracing the self-interested competitive mode of subjectivity reified through neoliberal capitalist patriarchy. In contrast, radical materialist feminism shares anarchism's ontology of interdependence, and so argues that the route to liberation is not women adjusting to patriarchy, but a fundamental shift in the way that society understands human relations. Instead of thinking in terms of subject/object, radical materialist feminism embraces subject-subject relationality. On this basis, I argue that care for others is not *always-already* exploitative, which means that rejecting exploitation does not require rejecting the value of care. The analysis presented in this thesis argues that human beings' care for one another is necessary for the meeting of human need, and that on this basis it should be a core purpose of social organisation.

In section 2, I look at the ontology of human need in order to define the terms on which I later evaluate whether and how GRCOs were able to meet it during lockdown. I argue that theories of human need vary according to their core ontology of human being. I suggest that both Marxist and relativist theories of need are based on subject/object ontology, in which subjects are understood as needing or wanting objects which themselves have no reciprocal needs or wants. In contrast, radical materialist feminism understands human beings as having reciprocal relationships of need with one another and other entities (e.g. plants, animals and the Earth). In order to meet need sustainably and without exploitation, it is therefore necessary to relate in subject-subject terms. I suggest that Maslow's theory of human motivation (Maslow, 1943, 1968) offers a model consistent with this ontology. I introduce this theory, which will form the basis of my understanding of need throughout this thesis.

1. Feminist theories of care and reproductive labour

The matter of care, and of reproductive labour, is fiercely contested in feminist thinking. Care involves work that is heavily exploited in patriarchal societies, to the benefit of male sex-class interests and against female sex-class interests (Federici, 2020; Firestone, 1979; J. C. Jones, 2021b). This structure means that women are systematically prevented from flourishing because of the excessive burden of their care responsibilities (Friedan, 1963; Hartley, 2018; Hochschild & Machung, 2012). Meanwhile, caring for others, and being cared for, are necessary for human flourishing on an individual and a societal level (J. C. Jones, 2016; Maslow, 1968; Springer, 2020; The Care Collective, 2020) (see section 2). Care is both restrictive and generative, and so it is not surprising that feminists understand it as both a site of domination and of resistance (Lindgren, 2022). In this section, I briefly visit feminist thinking from Marxist and different radical feminist perspectives, particularly in relation to care. I argue for a radical materialist feminism (J. C. Jones, 2021c) that is grounded in sexual difference (Irigaray, 1985a, 1985b, 1999, 2000, 2007; J. C. Jones, 2016, 2022b) and materialism (Hartmann, 2010; J. C. Jones, 2022b, 2021b). Such an approach engages with *both* the life-giving, generative, interdependent nature of care (and of human being), *and* the exploitation of women's reproductive bodies, and our material and affective labour (Hochschild, 2012; Weeks, 2007) in patriarchal societies. I argue that this both/and way of thinking is necessary for breaking out of patriarchal either/or logic and finding forms of social organisation based on non-exploitative mutual relation.

A. Socialist feminism and radical feminism

Socialist feminism understands the work done to maintain human life as *reproduction*—a necessary condition of the *production* from which capital extracts profit (Hartmann, 2010; J. C. Jones, 2021c; Mainardi, 1970; see also Engels, 2010) (see also Engels, 2010). From this

perspective, the work involved in reproducing the workforce is understood as reproductive labour. The exploitation of this labour is understood as emerging from the economic structure (Hartmann, 2010). Capital is generated from wage labour by paying workers less than the exchange value generated through their work (Marx, 1976), but in order to maintain the workforce, workers must be paid *something*. In contrast, when performed for free by women in the home, the entire economic value of reproductive labour can be appropriated by capital, and women are forced into a state of material dependency on male wage labourers (Federici, 2020), which diminishes women's social, political and economic power in society. This is the basis of the feminist political demand for "Wages for Housework"[11] (Cox & Federici, 1976). In her essay 'Wages Against Housework', Federici explains that the political aim of the idea, rather than literally to subsume housework into waged labour, was to highlight the value that reproductive labour was generating for the capitalist economy, and the fact that the people doing this labour were not having it acknowledged as work, either financially or symbolically (Federici, 2020). I find, though, that Federici makes an error when she views care *only* through the lens of exploitation.

> *In the same way as God created Eve to give pleasure to Adam, so did capital create the housewife to service the male worker physically, emotionally and sexually, to raise his children, mend his socks, and patch up his ego when it is crushed by the work and the social relations (which are relations of loneliness) that capital has reserved for him. (p.13).*

By conceptualising emotional and sexual relationships, and parenting, as nothing but labour, this strand of socialist feminism risks ignoring the generative, reciprocal and liberatory aspects of having caring relationships with other people. Meanwhile, this socialist feminist analysis assumes that sex-class relations are a product of the economic system. Since male dominance pre-dates capitalism by some millennia (Engels, 2010; Lerner, 1986), this analysis appears to be ahistorical (J. C. Jones, 2021c)

In contrast to the socialist/Marxist feminist position, radical feminists identify patriarchy as a structure of domination in its own right, rather than an adjunct of capitalism (Firestone, 1979; Jaggar & Rothenberg, 1993; Walby, 1990). Radical feminists of the Anglo-American second wave tradition focused their work primarily on psychic and physical male dominance, and particularly on ways that women are systematically dehumanised and terrorised through rape, fear of rape, pornography, sex buying, compulsory heterosexuality, and other forms of violence against women and girls (e.g. Bindel, 2019; Brownmiller, 2013; Dworkin, 1981, 1987; Jeffreys, 1994; Morgan,

[11] Early theorising of the Wages for Housework demand should not be confused with the actions and political organizing of the campaign group of the same name.

2014). In other words, they were concerned with an extreme *lack* of care toward women in patriarchal society. These accounts are powerful in their analysis of the ways in which women are othered and treated as less-than-human in patriarchal societies. However they lack explanatory power of *why* male dominance exists (Firestone, 1979; J. C. Jones, 2016). Because they do not engage with the question of what men materially gain from dominating women, some radical feminists lean into a defeatist, essentialist explanation that posit that men are inherently violent and dominant—something Jones (2016) demonstrates in relation to the work of Brownmiller (2013) and Dworkin (1987). From this defeatist, essentialist perspective, some propose that women's liberation is contingent on excluding men from our lives altogether (Jeffreys, 1994). This proposal presents a problem from the perspective of care, because: a) many women have male children, whom they love; b) many women are heterosexual and want to engage in loving, mutually caring relationships with men—something which is difficult to achieve in patriarchal culture, but telling women to deny their own desire presents a host of problems for supporting human flourishing (J. C. Jones, 2022a); and c) it is not true—matricultural societies are a demonstration that male dominance is neither natural nor inevitable (Dashu, 2005).

Recognising the defeatism caused by the lack of materialist analysis in radical feminism, Firestone (1979) attempted to develop a materialist theory of patriarchy, but I am going to argue that she repeats the same essentialist mistake made by non-materialist radical feminists, and that her conclusion represents a serious error when thinking about the politics of care. Firestone argues that women are a potentially revolutionary material class whose actions can overthrow the structure through which we are dominated. Her account relates the history of patriarchy to the biological fact that women carry, birth, and feed babies. In this respect I, and other sexual-difference feminists (Irigaray, 1985a; J. C. Jones, 2016, 2022b; Rickford, 2022b), agree with her. Patriarchy (and its social mechanism *gender*) are not, as Butler (1990) would have it, arbitrarily related to the fact that the reproduction of the human species is dependent on women's reproductive labour, and any explanatory account of patriarchy must deal with sexual difference. However, Firestone describes the different roles women and men play in physical reproduction as "the first division of labor", which she understands as "*the origin of class"* (p.9, emphasis mine). In other words, Firestone equates biological sex difference with sex class, and thus, repeating the mistake of Dworkin, Brownmiller and Jeffreys, assumes that sexual difference *is the cause of patriarchy*. From here, women's liberation becomes dependent on liberation from our female bodies, which leads to her dystopian recommendation that humans should "outgrow nature" (p.10) and that society should use technical means to free women from our reproductive capacities. Rather than men being *more* caring, the solution becomes women being *less* caring. This broad perspective—that the route to women's liberation is the denial or transcendence of femaleness and

care-capacity—can be traced through dominant 'feminist'[12] traditions in recent decades. This includes liberal choice 'feminism' (e.g. Frances-White, 2018; Hartley, 2018; Marcus, 2015), which puts the onus on women to live more like men, without acknowledging or challenging material and structural constraints; xeno-'feminism' (e.g. Cuboniks, 2018; Haraway, 1991; Lewis, 2019), which advocates for women to transcend our physical bodies in what amounts to a full-throttle embrace of patriarchal Cartesian dualism (J. C. Jones, 2022c); and queer and trans 'feminisms' (e.g. Ahmed, 2006; J. P. Butler, 1990; Earles, 2019; Hines, 2007; Margree, 2019; Scott-Dixon, 2006), which deny that sexual difference, or sex class, exists at all.

The demand placed on women to reject care and mothering has been criticised by some radical feminists for its lack of engagement with the reality that, when white, rich women reject care, someone still has to do it (Hill Collins, 2000; Tronto, 2002), so the exploitation is simply shifted onto other women. Black feminists have identified that socialist and radical feminist traditions dominated by white women have posited mothering as *only* weakness and exploitation, where in fact it involves a dialectical relationship of power and powerlessness, barriers and strengths (Craddock, 2015; Hill Collins, 2000). Hill Collins point out the existence of long traditions of women organising care through "organized, resilient, women-centered networks of bloodmothers and othermothers" (Hill Collins, 2000, p. 178) which are ignored when thinking of women's relationship with care as *only* exploitative. The possibility that care (including childbirth and mothering) can be organised without forcing women into isolation, exploitation and disempowerment is empirically demonstrated in historical research on matricultural societies (Dashu, 2005). Colonialism has led to the enforcement of the patriarchal nuclear family structure on peoples around the world who previously organised care in different ways (Hill Collins, 2000). This is not to say that patriarchy is simply colonial import: sexism pre-dates slavery in Africa, for example (Hooks, 1982). However, the idea that motherhood (and by extension sexual difference) is *the cause of* women's oppression is ahistorical. Meanwhile, resting women's liberation on our rejection of caring leaves individual women feeling torn between being a "'bad' mother" or a "'bad feminist'" (Whiley et al., 2021). When care is posited as a choice that women can reject if they so wish, the 'second shift' of reproductive labour that millions of women still do each day (Hochschild & Machung, 2012) becomes the fault not of men, or of patriarchal structure, but of women

[12] As none of these traditions identify women as an oppressed class, and some of them (queer and trans feminisms, and recent iterations of liberal feminism (e.g. Frances-White, 2018)), deny that sex is an axis of oppression, I suggest that they are perhaps not best understood as 'feminisms' at all. I have argued elsewhere (Rickford, 2022a) that labelling perspectives that are to all intents and purposes anti-feminist as 'feminism' is a patriarchal mechanism for the appropriation and dismantling of feminist resistance. This cannot be discussed further here, but I use scare-quotes when referring to these 'feminisms' in order to avoid discursive participation in this appropriation.

ourselves.[13] In my eyes, a feminism that blames women for the exploitation of our reproductive work, in a society that relies fundamentally on that work (as the Covid-19 pandemic demonstrated), seems rather convenient for patriarchal power.

Firestone repeats the socialist feminist mistake of assuming that care is *always-already* exploitative of the caregiver, and the radical feminist mistake of biological essentialism. As a result, her conclusion is that the route to women's liberation is for us to reject our female bodies and their generative capacities. Following Irigaray (1985a, 1985b, 2000, 2007) and Jones (J. C. Jones, 2016, 2011), I am going to argue that this replicates a deep devaluing of care (and of women), and a denial of dependency (particularly dependency on women's bodies), that is the foundation of Western patriarchal culture. Anarchists are correct that justice requires re-valuing care and embracing dependency, but they forget that, in order to move from here to there, we need to reckon with *which* dependencies are being devalued, and to what ends. This requires an approach that embraces reciprocity and interdependence from within a materialist sex-class analysis. I suggest that such an analysis is provided by Jones' (2021c) radical materialist feminism.

B. Radical materialist feminism

We have seen that socialist feminism understands patriarchy as a material relation of exploitation that is an adjunct to capitalism, and that radical feminism tends toward an essentialist, non-materialist account of male dominance. In contrast, Jones (J. C. Jones, 2023, 2021c) proposes that patriarchy is itself a historical material structure that exists for the purpose of exploiting women's bodies and labour, and male dominance exists to enforce and reify this structure. The core analysis of radical materialist feminism is that a) patriarchy is a system of material exploitation of women's bodies and labour, and b) that system is naturalised and maintained by symbolic othering of women, who are not imagined as full human subjects.[14] This provides a non-essentialist materialist explanation for the practices of male dominance identified by radical feminists. To develop this

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[13] Cue a proliferation self-help literature telling women how to take less responsibility at home (e.g. Dake, 2022; Hartley, 2018; Hogenboom, 2021).

[14] A brief note on terminology. *Gender* is part of the system of symbolic othering of women. As Jones puts it: "patriarchal gender is a system of norms and cultural values which developed to enable men to appropriate women as a reproductive and sexual resource. That is, *gender is a historical mechanism of resource extraction*. This mechanism does not arise by necessity from the existence of the resource, any more than the international oil trade arises by necessity from the existence of oil. That does not mean, however, that the motive for appropriating a resource is unrelated to its material properties. Males want to control women's bodies because women are female, and females have reproductive capacities males need to produce offspring. *Patriarchal gender is the mechanism that developed historically to enable men to control that resource*." (J. C. Jones, 2023) (emphasis mine). Throughout this thesis, I only use the term 'gender' to reference this meaning. Where I say women, I mean female adult people, and where I say men, I mean male adult people. When I wish to reference the taxonomy through which women and men are distinguished from one another, I use the term sex.

position, Jones draws upon the poststructuralist feminist philosophy of Luce Irigaray, which she develops through her own thinking of patriarchal ontology.

a) Luce Irigaray and the murder of the mother

Western culture and philosophy, from Plato to present day, is grounded in a denial of dependency. This is Irigaray's claim, and one she makes convincingly in her incisive readings of male-stream philosophical and psychological thought (Irigaray, 1985a). Unpicking Plato's allegory of the cave (Plato, 2014), she demonstrates that his imagining of truth as being what lies *outside* of the cave relies upon a disregard for the existence of the cave itself. Without the cave (or, as Irigaray calls it, *hystera,* (womb)), there would be nowhere from which to emerge into the sun. The transcendence imagined by Plato is dependent on the cave but gives no value to it. Similarly, Freud's Oedipus complex (Freud, 1951) posits that the way for a (male) child to individuate is to reject his mother's care. For Freud, the mother is a resource to be milked (literally) and then discarded in order that the person who matters can himself come into being. That the mother herself is, in fact, a human being does not appear to occur to him at all. Meanwhile Lacan (1966) notes that it is through being reflected back at himself that a child comes to understand that he exists. Lacan imagines this reflecting happening in an object—a mirror, but Irigaray points out that the reflecting is actually done by a *person*. Usually a female person. "This mirror-person is a mother" (J. C. Jones, 2014, para. 4).

Irigaray's observation is that all of these thinkers, and many more besides, base their imagining of what it means to achieve personhood on both a denial of the existence of the mother, *and* on using her as a resource. Truth is outside the cave (so the cave is not part of 'truth' and thus does not exist in any way that counts). Personhood is in severance from the mother (who is not, herself, a person). Consciousness comes from reflection in an object, not interaction with a subject. In each case, the (male) child comes into personhood through the use of, and denial of dependence on, the care of a mother. Irigaray's analysis is both literal and metaphoric. She is arguing that mothers *in particular* are erased from Western imagination of what it means to be a person, but also that this represents a wider dualistic ontology through which the reliance of *one* on *the other* is denied. Mind is imagined as superior to body, without acknowledgement that mind is dependent on body. Idea is imagined as superior to matter, without acknowledgement that nothing exists without matter. Man is imagined as superior to woman without acknowledgement that men do not exist without women. And so on. This is an ontology of being that denies the value of the 'others' on which being is, in fact, dependent. This provides the ontological conditions for exploitation. By denying the value of what is outside of himself, 'man' can take from that (and must, since he is dependent on it) without ever acknowledging that it was there, far less reciprocating. Jones develops this analysis further in her ontology of male dominance (J. C. Jones, 2016).

b) Jane Clare Jones: sovereign invulnerability

We saw earlier that the imagined subject on which neoliberalism is based—*homo economicus*—is entirely self-interested and self-sufficient. His relationship with others is nothing more than competition. Co-operation is not necessary because he needs nobody else for his survival—he is independent (i.e. has no dependencies). Consistent with Irigaray, Jones (2016) shows that this ontology of personhood relies upon understanding people as sovereign, bounded, invulnerable units. In order to be independent in this way, it is necessary to imagine the subject as self-originating (since being originated by someone other than yourself would mean *not* being independent). This imagery of the self-originating man is found throughout Western patriarchal culture and is not specific to neoliberalism. For example, the idea that sperm is *a seed* posits man as the creator, and woman as simply the field in which he plants his seed (Irigaray, 1985b). In fact, sperm is more like pollen. It cannot make another human on its own. It requires *another*. Similarly, centuries of philosophy and social sciences have grappled with the question of how it is possible that humans—the self-interested, self-originating individuals that we are—come to make a society together (e.g. Durkheim, 2002; Garfinkel, 1967; Kant, 2004; Locke, 1995; Rousseau, 2002). It is assumed that humans begin as sovereign individuals and then go on to find ways to connect and collaborate with others. This ontology is grounded in the mother-murder manoeuvre, because in reality humans do not begin as individuals. We begin in relation—relation with a mother (Irigaray, 1985a; J. C. Jones, 2014). Our lives are temporal, and throughout them we remain dependent on (and vulnerable to) what is outside of ourselves. We need recognition, love and nurturing in order to thrive (Benjamin, 1987; J. C. Jones, 2016; Maslow, 1968) (see section 2). Denying this dependency creates a problem for the patriarchal subject when he finds himself needing, or desiring, support, comfort and love from others. Jones calls this "the dilemma of desire" (J. C. Jones, 2016, p. 222). Because his idea of his own personhood relies on not needing others, (i.e. on not being vulnerable), he has a problem to solve in getting his needs met without dismantling his sovereign self-image. This problem is solved through the mechanism of symbolic erasure described by Irigaray. He can get his needs met without acknowledging dependency on 'the other' if he denies that 'the other' has any value in its (or her) own right. In other words, the ontology of the independent, sovereign subject is dependent on denying that what is outside the male subject exists for its own ends (rather than simply as a resource for him to use). If women are subjects in our own right, men become reliant on something (someone) who could, if they chose to, say 'no' (J. C. Jones, 2016). This results in the patriarchal subject potentially not getting his needs met, and this possibility brings a previously concealed dependence into sharp relief. In order to maintain the illusion of the invulnerable male subject, patriarchy *must* involve imagining women as less-than-full-persons and treating us as such. To imagine us as subjects in our own right, who exist for our own ends and not just to meet the needs of men, would be to acknowledge

dependence on the other, or of vulnerability, which would shatter the illusion of self-originating sovereign invulnerability (J. C. Jones, 2016). Again, this is both literal and metaphorical. It is the ontology of patriarchy, and an explanation of male dominance and the exploitation of women's labour. It is also an ontology of dominance and exploitation in society more broadly. If we return to the case of need-meeting during lockdown, we find a case-in-point example of dependencies that are routinely denied and exploited. Our dependency on underpaid shopworkers, lorry drivers, factory workers, cleaners and nurses became starkly apparent, and the idea that any of us are truly independent was rapidly shown to be an illusion. *Homo economicus*, if he truly lived without support from any other person, would not survive very long (and in fact would never come into existence in the first place).

c) Sexual difference, interdependence and care

Irigaray and Jones' analysis demonstrates that, in order to survive and flourish, human beings are dependent on what is outside of, and therefore different from, ourselves. This understanding draws on Derrida's (1998) deconstruction, in which he identified that nothing exists outside of relation, which in turn draws on Heiddeger's (1962) observation that being is Being-in-the-World (in temporal and spatial relation with other entities).

Nothing can survive in total isolation (J. C. Jones, 2021a)—there is no such thing as the 'self-made man'. In order to live, we need air, water, food (plants and/or animals), and other people (Irigaray, 1999). As none of these things is self-identical to the subject, life is dependent on difference. Irigaray identifies that Western patriarchal culture and thought is based on imagining a single universal human subject (Irigaray, 2000) (i.e. on erasing difference). By basing social organisation on the idea that everyone is the same, the specific needs and contributions of those who are not represented by the patriarchal subject are erased. Once again, this is metaphorical and literal. For example, in her bestselling book *Invisible Women,* Criado-Perez (2019) demonstrates that treating male bodies as a universal default creates systematic disadvantages and dangers for women. Meanwhile, imagining that everyone in society can have their needs met in exactly the same way as one another leads to one-size-fits-all policies that disadvantage anybody who does not match up to the imagined universal subject (Childers-McKee & Hytten, 2015; Vandekinderen et al., 2012; Winetrobe et al., 2017; Wolf, 2020). Communities and people who do not fit easily into one-size-fits-all thinking are imagined as, themselves, at fault. They are positioned as 'vulnerable', 'disadvantaged', or 'minority', and the ways in which their needs are unmet by society is treated as their failure to live up to the image of the default human subject. Those who offer them help are positioned as saviours in a subject-object relationship of doing-for those that do not, or will not, do for themselves (Flaherty, 2016). I would counter that the 'other' status attributed to such groups is

a way of denying societal dependence on, and exploiting, their work, bodies and resources.[15] As we have seen, anarchist thinking goes some way toward acknowledging and acting upon interdependence. However, non-feminist anarchist thinkers such as Spade (2020) and The Care Collective (2020) replicate the patriarchal mistake of imagining each individual as ontologically the same as one another, which results, necessarily, in a denial of dependence on difference.

Once we have established that difference is necessary for life, and that valuing difference is necessary for justice, it becomes clear that Firestone's demand that women abandon care is a demand that we replicate the patriarchal subjectivity that is the cause of our oppression. When she recommends that liberation depends on women transcending our femaleness, Firestone is confusing *difference* with *hierarchy*. Justice is dependent on acknowledging that there are different ways of being a human subject (e.g. female *and* male)[16], that difference is necessary for the reproduction of human life and society, and that the survival of the individual is dependent on the survival, not only of the collective (as anarchist literature imagines), but of 'the other'[17].

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[15] Following Jones (J. C. Jones, 2021b) I suggest that this double manoeuvre of othering and extraction is done on the basis of sex (enabling appropriation of women's bodies and labour), race (enabling appropriation of the lands and labour of racialised peoples), and socio-economic (material) class (enabling appropriation of labour through wage work). In all three cases, it produces a class relation in which an oppressed class is othered and extracted from by an oppressor class. In the case of race and socio-economic class, this class relation is the only basis on which the categories are socially salient (i.e. without the oppressive class relation, there would be no reason that skin colour should be socially salient, and there is no physiological difference between wage workers and bosses, which clearly means there is no socially salient difference outside of class relation). However, sex is both a class category (sex class), and a biological difference in kind (see also footnote 16). "The reproductive sex difference between males and females is a difference in kind, and because reproduction is a core activity of all species, and in the case of humans, must be organised in *some* way, the sex difference will always be socially salient." (J. C. Jones, 2021c, p. 6 emphasis original). Sex would be socially salient outside of its oppressive class relation, and the denial of sexual difference is in fact a manoeuvre of denial of dependency, which is part of the structure of oppressive class relation itself.

[16] Humans come in two physical types, which (regardless of substantial attempts to obfuscate this fact (e.g. J. P. Butler, 1990; Fausto-Sterling, 2000) have a difference in kind. Fully developed healthy human beings, until we reach an age at which our reproductive capacity diminishes, produce *either* eggs *or* sperm, and have the capacity to *either* gestate foetuses *or* ejaculate semen, There is no third gamete, no third reproductive role, and no continuum between the type of human that produces eggs and the type that produces sperm (Hilton & Lundberg, 2021; J. C. Jones, 2022b; Stock, 2022). This difference in kind means that imagining a universal human subject must necessarily involve erasing the specificity of one or the other sex, and the history of imagining a universal human subject has imagined that subject as male. I suggest, for example, that when philosophers, political thinkers and sociologist use 'man' and 'he' to refer to human subjects, this was not just a false generic way of referring to male and female subjects. They were, on the whole, actually referring to men. Today there are still a myriad of ways that the world is designed for male bodies rather than female ones, because male bodies are imagined as default and female as other, or special, or different from the norm (Criado-Perez, 2019). For example, women are more likely to die in serious car crashes because cars are designed to protect the default male body (Criado-Perez, 2019). The default male body is not, of course, the default human body, but is treated as though it is. Similarly, the working day, week and career trajectory is designed around a person who doesn't give birth and breastfeed (Criado-Perez, 2019; Pregnant Then Screwed, 2023). Designing everything around the default male means that women as a class are systematically disadvantaged because women as a class are the people who have babies. (This isn't a normative claim that every woman should have babies, or that having babies is part of some woman-essence, or that childcare is and should be women's responsibility. It is a factual claim that only women can have babies, therefore only women are disadvantaged by organising the world to disadvantage people who give birth and breastfeed.)

[17] From a radical materialist feminist perspective, being female is not an impairment that women should try to transcend in order to become a full human subject. Instead, being of the kind of human being that has the capacity to gestate foetuses is a way of being a full human subject (and a way that the human species is entirely reliant upon for its continued existence).

Human flourishing requires that each person be engaged with *in their specificity*, as a full human subject in their own right. Such an engagement requires vulnerability because to depend on another who exists for their own ends means that we cannot fully control whether our own needs get met. We must accept that we live in a state of interdependence and that human flourishing requires that we acknowledge our dependencies and value 'the other' (women, workers, land, animals, plants, etc.) in their own specificity and with their own needs. Care involves engaging with difference and specificity. In the final section of this chapter, I explore theories of need in order to situate my analysis of whether and how organisations met need during the first Covid-19 lockdown in England and Wales.

2. Human need

This section will briefly engage with debates about the universality or otherwise of human need, drawing on Marxist and relativist thinking. These debates centre around the assumed problem that people naturally want more than we need and are in competition with one another to get what we want and need, which creates an ethical dilemma of balancing need-meeting with democracy. I will argue that both Marxist and relativist approaches assume a subject-object ontology of need, in which subjects need resources from objects, which themselves have no reciprocal needs. However, from a perspective of interdependency, we can understand that subjects need other subjects, and that we do not only relate to one another in a mode of competition. Following Maslow (1968), I suggest that when people do not have their recognition needs met through subject-subject relation, they are more likely to engage with the world in a mode of consumption and accumulation. In contrast, cultures of interdependence and reciprocity produce conditions in which people are less likely to take more than they need (Kimmerer, 2013). This means that models of human need that are based in subject-object ontology are likely to reproduce the very conditions that they take to be *a-priori*. I argue for a model of human need that is consistent with a radical materialist feminist ontology of interdependence and difference, and suggest that Maslow's (1943) theory of human motivation provides this

A. Determining what people need

Philosophical and political literature on human need features a debate between Marxist perspectives, which posit that universal human need exists and that society should be run on the basis of meeting it (Bay, 1968; Doyal & Gough, 1984; Marcuse, 1972), and relativist perspectives, which emphasise that different people have different understandings of their own needs, which means that any attempt to base policy on a model of universal human need is undemocratic and potentially totalitarian (Fitzgerald, 1985). Doyal and Gough argue for "the absolute centrality of the notion of human needs to any meaningful discussion of human welfare and human suffering"

(p.6). They forward a theory of basic need, suggesting there are conditions that must be achieved for every person in order to enable them "to achieve any other goal" (p. 10). They suggest these needs fall into two categories: survival/health and autonomy/learning, and that policy should be based on meeting these needs in any population. They point out that people do not always advocate for their own basic needs (e.g. an older person who needs care may be reluctant to accept it), and people may want things that they can survive without (or even are harmful for them). On this basis they argue that people's perception of their own need is not a reliable guide to that need, and that human welfare is best served by establishing an understanding of universal need and making policy on the basis of it. In contrast, Fitzgerald (1985) identifies that, given that people have different perspectives on their own needs, there is no way of reliably delineating universal needs from individual 'wants'. Imposing a model of universal need, and making policy on the basis of it, involves conceding authority to 'experts' who claim to know what people need better than those people know themselves. This, for Fitzgerald, is profoundly undemocratic and unjust as a model for organising society. This relativist position is critiqued by Doyal and Gough for failing to provide any basis on which to determine whether a society is working to the good or harm of the population, and therefore falling into an amorality that denies the reality that harm exists and is different from wellbeing.

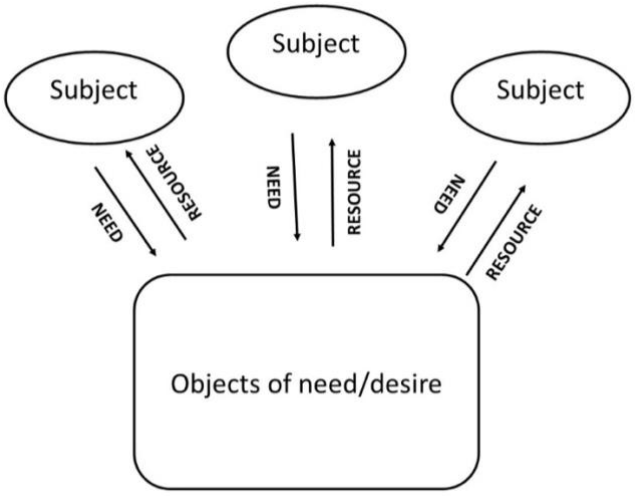
I suggest that these two positions, whilst coming to starkly different conclusions, both draw on the same basic assumption. The assumption is that it is natural and inevitable for human beings to want what we do not need, and to not ask for what we need. For Doyal and Gough, this means that demands are not the best way to determine need, and for Fitzgerald, it means that need is not the best way to determine justice. What neither position questions is what conditions might lead people to want what they do not need, or not ask for what they do need. This problem is addressed to some extent by Marcuse (1972). Marcuse's (1972) theory of need is similar to Doyal and Gough's in that he differentiates between needs and wants, or, to use his terminology, *real needs* and *false needs*, but he engages with the latter as neither natural nor inevitable. He argues that, in capitalist societies, we are subject to discourses that tell us that we need certain products in order to be happy and fulfilled. These are not products that we actually need for our survival, but we feel as though we need them because of the power of advertising. This draws on Marx's concept of commodity fetishism, which is the status or power attributed to an object that is separate from its use value (Marx, 1976). Commodities take on a mystical quality, and we come to believe that, for example, being the owner of a pair of trainers, a handbag or a car gives us something *additional* to their functions as footwear, luggage and transport. Marcuse identifies that people in capitalist societies covet the accumulation of objects that do not meet our needs, and that this desire is a barrier to revolutionary class consciousness. Having made this observation, however, Marcuse does not consider *why* human beings in capitalist societies are susceptible to developing false

needs. Following Maslow (1968) I want to suggest that the answer to this is directly related to the fact that we have unmet real needs. It is beyond the scope of this project to enter into a deep discussion of the ontology of need and desire. However, my analysis of whether and how organisations met need during the pandemic requires a working ontology of need, which I now present.

B. Recognition and reciprocity

In section 1 I argued for a radical materialist feminist ontology that understands human beings as fundamentally interdependent. Following Jones (2016) I have suggested that, by imagining the full human subject as having no needs for anything outside of himself[18] (i.e. being invulnerable), we create a situation in which getting one's needs met becomes reliant on appropriating from and exploiting others. This way of meeting our needs is done in a subject-object modality, in which the subject takes what it/he needs from the object, who it/her-self has no reciprocal needs.[19] This way of imagining need is used by Doyal and Gough, Fitzgerald and Marcuse, when they think need-meeting as a matter of deciding which subject should acquire which objects. In all three cases, they imagine need as closed relationships between subjects and objects, in which subjects need/desire objects and objects provide resource for subjects. The only relationship *between* subjects is one of competition for objects, and objects are not, themselves, subjects.

FIGURE 1 SUBJECT-OBJECT RELATION



[18] In the patriarchal imagination, the universal human subject is male (Irigaray, 1985a).
[19] Of course women are entirely capable of treating other people as non-subjects, but the ontological structure of patriarchy is such that it is women as a class who are systematically desubjectified by men as a class (J. C. Jones, 2016).

By imagining human need only in terms of subject-object relation, Doyal and Gough, Fitzgerald and Marcuse all assume that the objects of human need have no subjectivity of their own. Subjects and objects are assumed to be entirely different entities from one another, with objects existing only to meet the need of subjects.

Indigenous American botanist Robin Wall Kimmerer (2013) identifies that this instrumentalising mode of getting our needs met does not acknowledge reciprocal needs of 'objects', which results in an exploitative relationship between humans and the Earth. The term 'natural resources', for example, depicts other entities as nothing but resources for human use. Kimmerer argues that, because we do not recognise the intrinsic value of land, air, water, plants, and animals, we take more than we need. She shares the indigenous American concept of the Honourable Harvest.

> *"Know the ways of the ones who take care of you, so that you may take care of them…Take only what you need. Take only that which is given…Never waste what you have taken. Share…Give a gift, in reciprocity for what you have taken." (p.183).*

The Honourable Harvest differs from the Marxist and relativist conceptions of need we have seen, because it is based in an assumption that all entities have their own needs—that is they are beings in their own right and should be recognised as subjects in some sense. Although certain ways of relating are necessarily subject/object, the entities that take the role of object can *simultaneously* be subjects, and vice versa. The Honourable Harvest is a way of conceptualising plants and animals not only as food, but also as beings with their own needs. This way of understanding need is consistent with Merleau-Ponty's (2004) chiasmatic phenomenology, in which he offers that the experience of hands touching one another as an experience of *both* touching *and* being touched. To be human, for Merleau-Ponty, is to be simultaneously subject and object.

Imagining that some entities exist only to be used as resources (i.e. are always and only objects) creates a dynamic in which the (finite) contribution of those entities is not accounted for in the economy of need-meeting (Irigaray, 1985a). In other words, whilst these entities are relied upon to meet need, dependency on them is denied because they are not understood to have any value outside of the subject that is using them. This creates the possibility of overconsumption (i.e. taking more than we need), because to imagine that the entities we depend on do not exist in their own right, whilst making use of those very entities, is to treat them as an infinite resource that requires no reciprocal care. Meanwhile, as we have seen, human beings in capitalist societies are encouraged to overconsume and to compete with others for resources that we do not actually need (Marcuse, 1972). We are, then, both encouraged to overconsume, and at the same time living in a world in which the dominant mode of need-meeting is instrumentalisation, which creates the cultural conditions for overconsumption. This still, however, does not explain what drives us to

overconsume. I want to argue that instrumentalisation itself leads to unmet need in subjects, which creates a tendency to experience ourselves as unfulfilled in some way.

Instrumentalisation involves relating to 'the other' as nothing but resource. This precludes the possibility of engaging with other beings in a way that allows us to experience their being in itself, or their being *as subjects*. Following Beauvoir (1988) and Jones (2016) I suggest that this mode of relation prevents the meeting of an important basic need—the need for recognition. This is because, as Irigaray (1985a) and Benjamin (1987) demonstrate, recognition can only be given by *another subject*. Lacan (1966) notes that personhood is reliant on having oneself reflected back, and Irigaray (1985a) shows that this reflecting is, necessarily, not done by an object but by another subject. This is because the role of reflection is to allow us to experience our own being through experiencing somebody else's response to our being (Benjamin, 1987). Hegel's Master-Slave dialectic (1977) highlights that, when recognition is forced, its functionally worthless because if it is not freely given then it does not actually provide what we need—the experience of having another relate to us in a way that demonstrates their experience of us (Hegel, 1977). We therefore cannot have our recognition needs met in a subject-object relationship: recognition can only take place *between subjects*.

FIGURE 2 SUBJECT-SUBJECT RELATION

I have argued that dualistic subject-object ontology dominates Western culture (J. C. Jones, 2021c). My claim is therefore that we are operating in a world in which the dominant mode of relation does not meet people's recognition needs, *and* a world in which we learn that the way to get unmet needs met is to appropriate 'objects'. In this dynamic, other people are treated as tools rather than as persons, and there is an attempt to meet recognition needs through force and appropriation (J. C. Jones, 2016), (which, as we have seen, is not possible). Instrumentalisation a) creates non-reciprocal relationships, which b) do not meet people's recognitional needs, which c) further embed a culture of subject-object relation in which people try to get their needs met through consumption and appropriation. I suggest that the unmet need created by a culture imbibed in a subject-object patriarchal imaginary is thus a cause of our vulnerability to the manufacture of false need. This means that, by theorising need as subject-object, Marcuse,

Fitzgerald, Doyal and Gough and others make the same set of erroneous assumptions about the ontology of need as are implicated in the conditions that produce the problems they identify. The assumption that human beings have a natural propensity to believe that we need things that we do not need may be incorrect, and is certainly not necessarily and naturally as prevalent as it appears to be in capitalist patriarchal societies. By taking the ontology of capitalist patriarchy as *a priori*, many theorists of need fail to recognise that they are thinking within a framework that produces the very problem they set out to solve. Furthermore, Doyal and Gough, Bay (1968) and other Marxist scholars recommend that, because individuals cannot differentiate between real and false needs, the state should work out what is universally needed and provide that. This recommendation is based in instrumentalising thinking, as argued above, because the resources provided by the state (e.g. social care) are not imagined to be created from or by subjects who exist in their own right (e.g. the people doing the care). They therefore advocate for a social organisation that replicates the very dynamic that is a cause of false need in the first place, thereby reproducing the problem they assume is inevitable. In contrast, I suggest that propensity to experience false need is directly related to the patriarchal ontology of sovereign invulnerability discussed in the previous section, and organising society for human flourishing requires, instead, a relational interdependent ontology. In order to assess the extent to which organisations met need and supported flourishing during the pandemic, I therefore need a working model of need that is consistent with this ontology. I suggest that Maslow's (1943, 1968) theory of human motivation provides such a model. I now briefly introduce Maslow's model as it relates to this thesis.

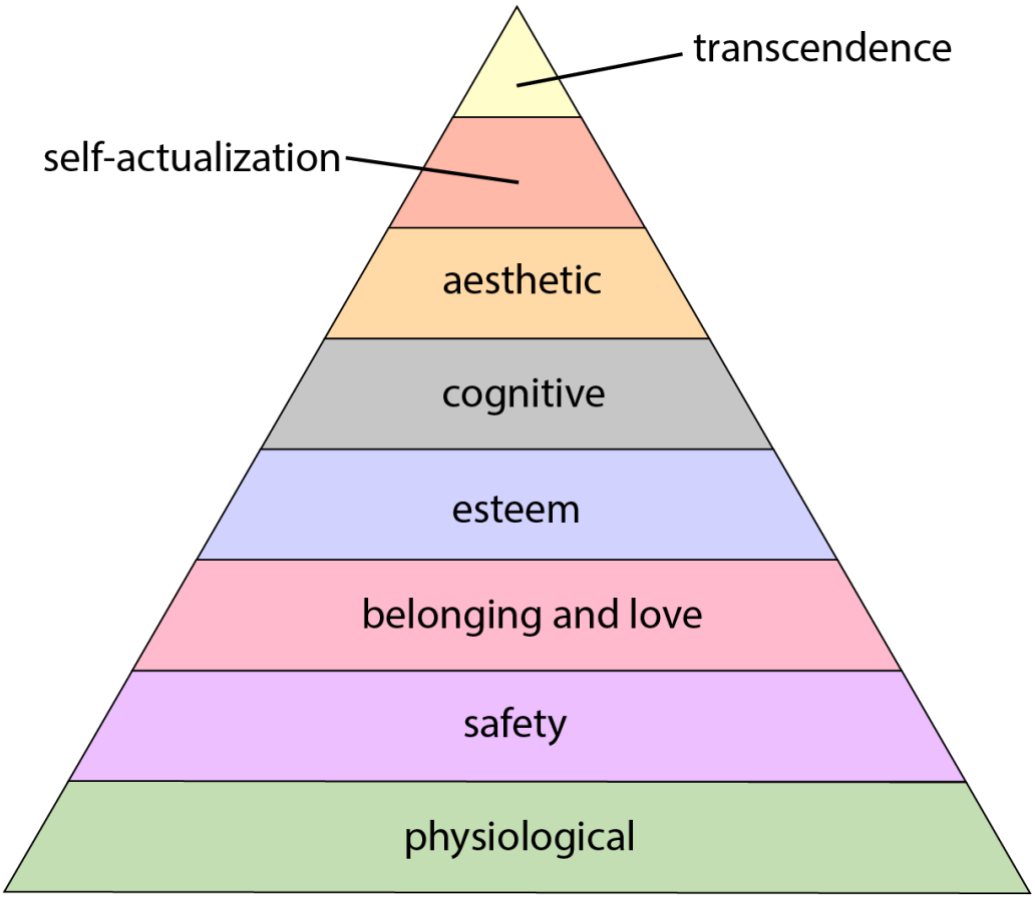
C. Maslow's theory of human motivation

Maslow theorised that humans are motivated to act by need, and that some of our needs are more 'basic' than others (Maslow, 1943). The level of 'basicness' relates to the extent to which having a particular need met is necessary for creating the conditions of possibility of being motivated by other needs (Maslow, 1968). For example, in general, in a situation in which we are hungry and cold, we will be motivated to seek food and warmth rather than, for example, creative pursuits or education.[20] For this reason, physiological needs are theorised as more basic than other needs (Maslow, 1943). Maslow's original model included five levels of need: physiological needs, safety needs, love and belonging needs, esteem needs and self-actualisation (Maslow, 1943). He later expanded the model to include three additional needs: cognitive and aesthetic needs (which sit below self-actualisation), and self-transcendence (also known as 'flow' (Csikszentmihalyi et al.,

[20] This is an oversimplification of Maslow's argument. His theory is that people who have had basic needs met reliably (e.g. been well cared for as children) are more able to override these needs in pursuit of 'higher' needs, than people who have not (Maslow, 1968). For example, a person who was hungry throughout their childhood may be less able to tolerate temporary hunger for pursuit of another goal than someone who is accustomed to having enough to eat.

2014)[21]) which he suggests is the highest level of human motivation, in which we are able to reach our full capacity as persons (Maslow, 1968).

FIGURE 3 MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF HUMAN MOTIVATION



(EucalyptusTreeHugger, 2022)

Maslow's model differs from the instrumentalising models we looked at above, because he understands need not only in terms of use of resources (or objects) but also in terms of the experience of being a person in the world. For Maslow, need is not simply imagined as a list of static resources that must be provided to a person, but as experiences, necessarily relational and temporal, that support human flourishing. Maslow (1968) understands need/motivation as having two different modalities, which he calls "deficiency" and "growth" (p.25). Deficiency is that which in absence "breeds illness", in presence "prevents illness", and in restoration "cures illness" (p.27). To be motivated on the basis of deficiency is to be motivated by what we do not have. This mode of need is subject/object in the sense that, in order for the subject to be well, s/he needs something

[21] Csikszentmihalyi imagines flow as being a process of mastery. Mastery involves a subject 'mastering' the world around them, which is an instrumentalising way of imagining the process of transcendence. I suggest that this is a mistake in Csikszentmihalyi's understanding of flow, which actually involves a subject transcending egoic notions of mastery and allowing themselves to surrender into process (J. C. Jones, 2018). Mastery is a subject-object notion, which is in conflict with the possibility of flow.

from the object. For the Marxist and relativist theorists of need we visited earlier, as well as for traditional psychoanalysts such as Freud (1951) and Lacan (1966), this is the only mode of need/desire/motivation that exists for humans. We are motivated by lack (Lacan, 1966), and thus the experience of needing, or desiring, is always one of seeking to fill a void. Maslow agrees that some human need/desire/motivation is based on lack. The need for food, for example, emerges out of having not yet eaten enough to fill us up. When we have eaten enough, we become full, and we cannot eat indefinitely. For Maslow, like Lacan, deficiency needs are motivational when they are unmet, and decrease in their level of motivation in proportion to the extent to which they are met. However, for Maslow, this is not the whole story of motivation and need. This is because he observes that there are circumstances in which people engage in activities without becoming increasingly demotivated, and indeed, at times becoming increasingly motivated. For example, in a healthy state, a guitarist does not reach a point where they have played all the guitar necessary, are 'full-up' of guitar playing and are no longer motivated to play. On the contrary, being proficient at something can be a motivator to do that thing more, because it enhances the experience of doing it (Csikszentmihalyi, 2014). Maslow therefore concludes that, as well as being motivated by deficiency, human beings are motivated by growth (Maslow, 1968). Instead of being met by filling a void, these needs are met by engaging in a process of relation with the world around us (Maslow, 1968; Benjamin, 1987; Deleuze and Guattari, 2013; Jones, 2018). This may be a subject-subject relationship (Maslow, 1968; Benjamin, 1987) or a process of creativity or flow (Maslow, 1943; Jones, 2018). This model therefore acknowledges that human wellbeing is reliant on the extent to which the conditions of our lives enable us to engage with other people, and the world around us, in relational processes of discovery, creation and reciprocity. In other words, this model offers the possibility of forms of human need that can only be met through intersubjectivity and cannot be met through instrumentalisation. It is thus consistent with radical materialist feminist ontology.

In this thesis we will primarily be concerned with the bottom four needs in Maslow's model—physiological, safety, belonging/love and esteem needs, because these are the needs that were focussed on by participants in this study. Physiological need meeting necessarily involves subject/object relation (e.g. using another being for food) (although the Honourable Harvest shows us that such subject/object interaction need not involve desubjectification of the objectified being). Safety need can also be met in subject/object relation (i.e. a subject being protected by an

object). In contrast, I am going to argue that the meeting of love and belonging needs and esteem[22] needs require recognition, and therefore requires subject-subject relation.[23]

3. Conclusion

This chapter has provided the ontological groundwork for the inductive empirical analysis that follows. I have introduced radical materialist feminism, drawing on the work of Luce Irigaray and Jane Clare Jones to offer a theoretical perspective that combines interdependency with materialist class analysis. I have argued that sovereigntist subject-object ontology creates conditions for a) exploitation, which means one party's material needs are potentially unmet, b) desubjectification of the 'object', which is profoundly harmful (J. C. Jones, 2016), and c) a lack of mutual recognition, which means that the recognition (or love and belonging) needs of both parties are unmet. In contrast, a radical materialist feminist ontology of interdependence creates the possibility of meeting human need through relational process. Finally, I have suggested that Maslow's theory of human motivation provides a model of human need which is consistent with radical materialist feminism and have introduced this as the ontology of need that will be used throughout this thesis.

[22] There is debate about whether esteem is a need in its own right, or whether it is in fact a consequence and condition of the meeting of other needs (R. M. Ryan et al., 2003). Ryan et al conceptualise esteem as resulting from competence, relatedness and autonomy. Maslow (1943) understands it as being composed both of personal sense of competence *and* recognition from others, and also that freedom to act toward ends is a pre-condition. This appears to be very similar to Ryan et al's conception, with the difference that Maslow claims that esteem is a need in and of itself, while Ryan et al claim it is a consequence of the meeting of other needs. I cannot enter into a discussion of the ontology of esteem here, but I take esteem to be made possible by a combination of recognition, competence and the freedom to act toward ends. My discussion of whether esteem needs are met (chapter VIII) is therefore concerned with these different elements.

[23] The higher needs in the pyramid, most notably the needs for self-actualisation and transcendence, can only be met through doing (rather than consuming). The human need to act into the world is, like the need for recognition, one that cannot be met through instrumentalisation. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to enter into further discussion of the higher needs in the pyramid, but I suggest that, from belonging/love upwards, none of the needs in Maslow's model can be met through instrumentalisation alone.

IV. Process-relation methodology

The previous chapter lays out the ontological framework within which this study is situated. I now explore what this ontology means for my approach to conducting research before outlining my research design. I have argued for an ontology of interdependence, in which being is understood as inherently temporal and relational. I suggest that the social world is thus a *relational process* rather than a static, bounded object, and social research is part of that relational process (and, therefore, is itself a relational process). I argue that knowledge of the social world is generated by being in that world and distinguish this position from dominant research paradigms of positivism, social constructionism and critical realism, which I argue are all based on an ontology of Cartesian dualism.

Having outlined the basic premises of a process-relation methodology, I present my inductive, comparative research design. I include a description of the data collection methods, an explanation for why these were chosen, an overview of my attendance to ethical considerations, and an introduction to my final data set. I then describe my approach to analysis, which is to use thematic analysis to describe the phenomenon of GRCO responses to the pandemic, followed by different forms of comparative analysis to develop explanation for that phenomenon.

1. Ontology as methodology

In the previous chapter, I argued for an ontology of interdependence. This ontology draws on the continental philosophical traditions of phenomenology and poststructuralism, particularly on Heidegger's (1962) concept of Being-in-the-World, and Derrida's (1998) deconstruction, and rests upon an understanding of "the process-relational constitution of being" (J. C. Jones, 2016, p. 153)—that being is necessarily temporal and relational, rather than static and bounded. I want to suggest that such an ontology has profound implications for the philosophy of science and for social research method. These implications are more substantial than I can fully outline in this chapter, but I offer a brief overview to ground my research design.[24] I argue that we learn about the world by being in it (Heidegger, 1962) and that engaging with phenomena effectively (e.g., in order to learn about them) involves engaging with them in their specificity. How we come to know about something depends on its ontological properties (Bhaskar, 1975). I will argue that different ways of finding out about the world (i.e., different research methods) are differently effective depending on the ontological properties of the phenomena under investigation (Rickford, 2022c).

[24] A fuller version of this argument is outlined in my conference paper entitled "Social constructionism, sociology and sex denial (or what happens if social scientists forget the world exists)", (Rickford, 2022c).

A. The paradigm wars

As part of my training for this doctorate, I undertook an MA in Social Research in which I engaged with a range of methodological textbooks and literature aimed at helping postgraduate students to develop a basic understanding of the theoretical underpinnings of different methodological approaches to social research. Through this process, I observed what appeared to be a recurrent theme across much of this literature—dualistic thinking of method and methodology, characterised in terms of a binary between quantitative and qualitative research, between positivism and social constructionism, and between realism and relativism. Within this literature, qualitative and quantitative approaches tend to be presented as paradigms (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Denzin & Lincoln, 2014; Flick et al., 2004; Gaudet & Robert, 2018), defined as sets of "beliefs, assumptions, values and practices shared by a research community" (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 4). Notwithstanding a minority of more nuanced perspectives (e.g. Bryman, 1992; Denzin & Lincoln, 2014), the quantitative paradigm is associated with realism (Braun & Clarke, 2013) and positivism (Flick, 2014; Gaudet & Robert, 2018; Saldana et al., 2011; Taylor, 2015) (which are often conflated with one another (e.g. Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 5; Flick, 2014, p. 27)), while the qualitative paradigm is associated with constructionism, constructivism, interpretivism and relativism (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Flick, 2014; Gaudet & Robert, 2018; Saldana et al., 2011; Taylor, 2015) (also used fairly interchangeably and often with a lack of clarity about these different terms).[25] The "so-called paradigm-wars of the 1980s" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2014, p. 1) featured disputes about the value of each paradigm, with many researchers positioning themselves on one side or other of the divide.

Although the conflict of the 1980s has mostly subsided (Denzin & Lincoln, 2014), the textbooks I encountered indicate ongoing dualistic thinking within social science. Braun and Clarke (2013), for example, characterise different epistemological positions as "camps", with positivism as one, constructionism as another, and contextualism and critical realism as having "a foot in both camps" (pp.29-30). The core epistemological arguments that underpin the paradigm wars are also present *within* qualitative research (Taylor, 2015) rather than simply between quantitative and qualitative researchers. Braun and Clarke (2013), following Kidder and Fine (1987), distinguish between "small q qualitative research" and "Big-Q qualitative research" (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 4). This is particularly characterised by debates about whether language can be used to access

[25] For example, Braun and Clarke (2013) characterise realism and relativism as *ontological* assumptions, and positivism and constructionism as *epistemological* assumptions. However, they go on to say, "realism assumes a knowable world that is comprehensible through research", and relativism that "we can never get beyond…constructions" (p.27). These are epistemological positions (related to what is knowable to humans). Meanwhile, (post)positivists "believe in … [a] singular truth", and constructionism "that there is no single underlying reality" (p.30). These are ontological positions (relating to the nature of reality). Braun and Clarke's characterisation of realism is very similar to their characterisation of positivism, and their characterisation of relativism very similar to that of constructionism, and they conflate ontology and epistemology in both.

information about a reality 'outside of' the immediate context of the production of the speech/text or whether text and speech should be studied only as context-contingent interpretations, constructions and discourses, but never as representations of a world 'beyond' themselves (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Rapley, 2004; Seale, 1998).

I am going to argue here that this doctrinal (Bryman, 1992) approach to methodological thinking within social science results from a repeated ontological error made on both sides of the paradigm wars, which is replicated in debates within qualitative research. This error, I will claim, is to imagine *knowledge* and *being* as ontologically separate from one another. This creates a Cartesian problem of epistemology, in which humans are imagined as separated from a world beyond ourselves, and thus a puzzle emerges over if and how we can come to know that world. In contrast, I argue for a Heideggerian phenomenological approach (Heidegger, 1962; Michel, 2012) that understands being as the only possible source of knowledge. I suggest that we come to know about the world by being in it, that the way we come to know about different phenomena depends on the ontological properties of those phenomena, and thus that different research methods are appropriate for finding out different things about the social world. This is an argument for a flexible, iterative approach to social research, in which methods are selected (and adapted) in relation to the phenomenon under investigation and what we want to learn about it, and in which learning about the world is understood as an ongoing relational process, not a static, isolated event producing a static, isolated product.

B. A dispute based on a shared ontological error

The differences between positivism and social constructionism (and between empiricism and relativism) rest around an ontological difference between whether there is a real-world 'out there' that exists independently of our perception of it (Bhaskar, 1975; Braun & Clarke, 2013; Flick, 2014; Gaudet & Robert, 2018), and an epistemological difference between whether it is possible for human beings to access the world 'out there' in order to develop true representations of it (Bhaskar, 1975; Braun & Clarke, 2013; Gaudet & Robert, 2018). Critical realism takes the realist ontological position that there is a world out there and the relativist epistemological position that it is not possible to fully see it clearly (Bhaskar, 1975, 1986, 1989). In this section, I argue that these three positions all share the same core ontology, which is that human beings exist in a bounded, impermeable state of being that cuts us off from any world around us.

a) Positivism

The term 'positivism' comes from Comte's 'positive philosophy' (Comte, 1988). Comte argued for a positivistic approach through which methods used in the natural sciences should be used in the social sciences, which would enable the uncovering of value-neutral law-like generalisations about

the social world (Giddens, 1974; Turner, 1985). There is no established tradition of social science that understands itself as positivistic (Giddens, 1974),[26] but positivism appears to be routinely presented as the paradigm that others are defined in opposition to (e.g. Braun and Clarke, 2013; Flick, 2014; Taylor, 2015), so it is one that I engage with here. Positivism is a model of social inquiry that involves testing theory using scientific method (Turner, 1985). The core ontological assumption of positivism is that there is a real world 'out there' that has generalisable laws and patterns and that the job of the social scientist is to try to work out what these are (Turner, 1985). From this perspective, the researcher is imagined as separate from and independent of the social world under investigation. The scientific method is understood as a means through which this separate and independent researcher can remove the distortion, bias and misinformation that sits between us and the truth. We must isolate our thinking from the messy reality of subjective being and look only at what is outside of ourselves.

b) Social constructionism and Relativism

Social constructionists[27] have identified that it is not possible to step outside of ourselves for the purposes of conducting social research (Glasersfeld, 1989) and that knowledge is constructed rather than being a representation of a reality beyond itself (Schutz, 1966). For the most radical social constructionists (e.g. Gergen, 2015), nothing 'out there' can reliably be said to exist beyond our constructions and discourses, which means that the material world, and all non-human life, can only be understood to exist as human constructions. For others in the social constructionist tradition (Hepburn, 2000; e.g. Potter, 1996), there is an acceptance that there could be some reality 'out there', but we are trapped 'in here', within constructions and discourse, and therefore cannot access 'out there' without distortion. In both cases, the social researcher is imagined as existing within an impenetrable sphere of discourse and construction, and any reality that exists outside of this is inaccessible.

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[26] Writing nearly 50 years ago, Giddens pointed out that positivism isn't actually a term any social scientist uses to describe themselves. "After Comte, very few philosophers or social thinkers willingly called themselves 'positivists', and there are evident differences between his views and those of others to whom the label has since been applied. The term has become one of opprobrium, and has been used so broadly and vaguely as a weapon of critical attack, both in philosophy and sociology, that it has lost any claim to an accepted and standard meaning." (Giddens, 1974, p. 2).

[27] It is important to distinguish here between two different uses of the term 'social constructionism'. Sociologists originally used the term "social construct" to make an ontological claim that certain objects in the social world, such as institutions and concepts, are socially constructed (i.e. created by humans in the course of our interactions with one another and with objects in the world). In this context, to say that something is socially constructed does not mean it is not real: it means it has been created socially (e.g. Kitzinger, 1987). This is distinct from (although often muddled up with) epistemological social constructionism, or constructivism, which is closely related to relativism and is the argument that a) we cannot access a "real world out there"; b) all knowledge is therefore constructed in here in our minds/discourse (e.g. Gergen, 2015).

c) Critical realism

In his arguments for a critical realism, Bhaskar (1975, 1986, 1989) argues that empiricists (including positivists) and relativists (e.g., radical social constructionists) make an error of collapsing ontology and epistemology together. Empiricists assume that 1) there is a real world out there, and, therefore, 2) it is knowable, while relativists assume that 1) it is not possible to know a real world out there, and, therefore, 2) it does not exist. Bhaskar argues for a clear separation of ontology from epistemology, or of knowledge from reality. On this basis, he suggests that there is a real world out there, which social scientists can study, but that our knowledge of it is always partial and contingent. The aim of research is to gain as clear a view as possible, and to theorise explanations for what we can see. Human knowing is imagined as irrecoverably separated from reality, but that it is possible to develop pictures of reality on the basis of our partial view.

d) Ontological assumptions grounding positivism, social constructionism and critical realism

Although coming to very different conclusions about the purpose and possibilities of social research, I want to suggest that positivism, social constructionism and critical realism are all grounded in the same Platonic, Cartesian ontology of separation of mind from body, idea from matter, and knowledge from being. We will take Plato's Allegory of the Cave (2014) as an illustrative example. We begin with humans trapped inside a cave, and 'the truth', if it exists at all, located outside the cave. Positivism follows Plato in aiming to get out of the cave to see the truth and imagines that this is possible if we apply the right method. For constructionists, getting out of the cave is impossible, so we can only access the illusions and constructions within. In both cases, there is an assumption that what is within the cave—i.e., what we interact with in the course of being in the world—is not 'truth'. Positivism concludes that it is possible to see out to 'the truth', and constructionism that we only see our projections and constructions (so much so that we cannot reliably know whether there is any such thing as 'truth' at all). Critical realism shares the assumption that any truth that exists is outside the cave and offers that, while it is not possible to get out of the cave entirely, it is possible to apply certain methods that allow us to see more clearly what is beyond. Thus, while arguing for a separation of ontology from epistemology, Bhaksar in fact begins with a particular ontology—the same one as positivism and social constructionism—in which knowledge/idea/mind are separate from being/matter/body (Cruickshank, 2004; Michel, 2012).

In all three cases, it is assumed that the cave itself is not part of 'the truth', so our experience of living within it cannot tell us anything about truth (Irigaray, 1985a).[28] Gaining access to 'truth' is imagined as a process of transcendence, and the different schools of thought have different perspectives on how possible this is. For positivists, we can step out and see a full and complete picture of 'truth'. For constructionists, we cannot get out of the cave and any view we have of the outside is too distorted and partial to tell us anything reliably (including whether there is anything out there at all). For critical realists, we can work to look out, but will never get a totally correct and entire view. In all three cases, the way humans come to know things is imagined as a matter of looking out from within and creating representational pictures. In the next section I will argue that all three perspectives make the same ontological error, which is to separate inside from outside in the first place.

C. Knowing through being

Drawing on Heidegger's (1962) theory of Being-in-the-World, I want to suggest that the ontological mistake made in positivism, social constructionism and critical realism is to imagine being as separate from knowledge, rather than understanding knowledge as a part of, and made possible by, being. We do not come to know the world by looking out at it, but by being part of it. This means that our perceptions are not created by receiving and interpreting messages from somewhere separate from the world that produces them. The inside of the cave is part of the world, and therefore part of 'truth'. The existence of the cave entrance means that there is no absolute separation of 'within' from 'without', and that being is inherently immanent (Cruickshank, 2004; Irigaray, 1985a). Our knowledge, discourses, constructions and interpretations are *part of the world*, and they exist and are developed in iterative relation with materiality.

What this means is that knowledge (and discourse) is developed through interacting with and within the world, rather than by looking at it. We may misperceive things, but our interactions with and within the world (and with one another) help us to understand when this has happened and to develop a more accurate account of reality. To take a simple example, if I walk my dog in my local park, I encounter trees, grass, people, dogs, bins, benches, mud and a pond. I do not see these things through a viewing window that may or may not be distorted. I engage with them in ways that enable me to operate in that particular situation. If I misperceive something, and interact with it inappropriately, I will receive feedback about that misperception. For example, I might see something that I perceive to be a bench and sit down on it. If it turns out that thing is actually a

[28] Irigaray (1985a) points out that the entire premise of the allegory is therefore both dependent on the existence of the cave and dependent on assuming that 'truth' does not include the cave (i.e., the cave does not exist). This is, therefore, an example of the denial of dependency that is fundamental to patriarchal ontology of sovereign self-origination (J. C. Jones, 2016).

pond, my misperception will be corrected by the world in which I am interacting. This is because I am not looking out at the bench/pond from inside an impermeable capsule—I am in the world with it, and my interaction with it, perceptions of it and knowledge about it are all part of that world. I may have a friend join me on the walk, and we will engage with the entities we encounter in ways that suggest we are perceiving the same world (e.g., I know she can see the trees that I can see, because she also avoids walking into them). We might chat as we walk, and in so doing co-construct discourses of dog-walking. Consequently, such discourses are part of the same world as the dogs, ponds, benches and trees, and are constructed in relation to (but not as representations of) these material entities.

I suggest that the social world that sociologists wish to study does not exist *only* in our perceptions, nor *only* beyond them, and it is neither entirely separate from our knowledge of it, nor entirely constructed by that knowledge. The existence of society, and our knowledge of it, is made possible through human interaction with the world (including with one another). We produce (construct) the social world together, but this happens in an ongoing process of relation that includes relation with the material world (which provides the parameters within which social realities can be constructed).[29] Through being in the world we *both* learn things about it *and* participate in its construction. Braun and Clarke (2013, p. 29) claim that "a basic distinction between epistemological positions is whether we think reality…is *discovered* through the process of research, or whether we think reality is *created* through the process of research". Because being in the world involves *both* discovering *and* constructing the world, I suggest that this dichotomy is false, and that research is always, and necessarily, both.

By understanding human knowledge, discourse and perception as *part of being*, we no longer have a problem to solve about the relationship between knowledge and being. The world is in a constant process of changing (and being changed) (Bergson, 2014), and everything that happens is happening in relation to other things (Derrida, 1998). It is, therefore, ontologically impossible to ever produce a perfect static image of reality. This is not because we cannot see what is going on, but because what is going on *is not a static image*. Research is always process-relational (i.e., it happens as a process of the researcher relating to the research object/subject), and thus it is never

[29] The material world has certain properties that provide for and limit the possibilities of how the social world can be constructed (Jones, 2022b) (e.g., human capacity for language learning and tool use, human need for food and shelter, and the fact that humans reproduce sexually) (Rickford, 2022c).

complete and final. This is why we need a research community, and a multitude of research methods, in order to develop useful[30] explanatory accounts of what is happening in society.

D. Methods as tools

If we understand research as a relational process with and within the world, we might find that how we come to know about phenomena depends on the properties of the phenomena, and that there is more than one thing to know about the same phenomenon. For example, I might conduct a study of the properties of apples, using the method of *sight*. I might learn that they are green and red, round and shiny. You might conduct a study of the properties of apples using the method of *taste*. You might learn that they are sweet and sharp. Meanwhile, a third person might investigate apples using the method of *touch* and find that they are hard and smooth. None of these accounts is wrong, but none are complete. Taking them together, we can know more about apples than by using one method alone. A fourth researcher might try to learn about apples using the method of *hearing,* because they found this useful for a research project into birds. They are likely to find that hearing does not give them as much information about apples as it did about birds. This does not mean that hearing is not a useful method for finding out about the world—just that it is being inappropriately applied.

There are different things to learn about the world, and how we learn depends on the properties of the phenomena under investigation. The fact that different methods tell us different things about the social world means that there is no single, complete account. It does not, however, mean that every account is as valid as any other. A fifth person might join in with our apples study, and claim that apples are blue, salty and soft. Through using our different methods, the first three researchers (and others besides) can argue that it is not true, providing evidence of how apples actually look, taste and feel. The claim that apples are blue, salty and soft should not be taken to be as valid as any other, because to believe this claim would involve all the other researchers denying the evidence of their own senses (or methods).

Finally, having established some knowledge about the properties of apples, our research community might wish to know how many of them there are in the world. At this point, none of the previous methods would be suitable, and instead they would need somebody to count all the apples. This is because methods that tell us details about the properties (or qualities) of phenomena are generally not useful for giving us information about quantities. Developing fulsome understandings of the world requires both. Methods, I suggest, are tools that we use to

[30] By 'useful' I mean accounts that help humans to understand what is going on in the social world in order that we might interact with and within it more successfully. To go back to my dog-walking example, accounts are useful if they allow us to tell the difference between a pond and a bench and engage accordingly.

learn about the social world. Which tools are appropriate to use depends on the properties of the phenomenon under investigation, and what we want to learn about it.

E. Qualitative research: language as *both* communication *and* construction

I have argued that it is through participation in the social world that researchers can come to know about it, and that participation in the social world is also the means through which people co-construct that world. I have also argued that research methods are tools, and that the tool that is appropriate to use depends on the properties of the phenomenon under investigation. Returning to the debate within qualitative research about whether language should be studied as a means of learning about a social world beyond the immediate utterance or text, or as a means of constructing that social world, I now wish to argue that the answer is both, but that the analytic methods that are appropriate for the former are different from the analytic methods appropriate for the latter. Language is used by people to communicate *and* construct meaning, and such meaning relates non-arbitrarily to the world in which and with which we are interacting (Sayer, 2000). This means that linguistic data can be used to find out things about people's lives 'beyond' the data (i.e., referents) (Sayer, 2000), and also can be studied in its own right in order to learn how meaning is constructed through language.

We can, for example, interview people and ask them questions about their lives, and reasonably use their answers to develop accounts of phenomena to which they refer. This does not require assuming that participant accounts are a static representation of a reality beyond the account, because it is understood that participants are part of the world that is being investigated (and researchers are too). Who we ask, and what we ask them, will affect what we learn, just as participants' perspectives, interests and interpretations will affect what they tell us. Nonetheless, if we want to know people's experiences of and views about apples, asking them is a reasonable method to find out. The claims we can make on the basis of this asking will depend on who we ask, what we ask, and how we analyse the data.[31] Meanwhile, it is simultaneously possible to investigate how realities are constructed through language-in-use. If we recorded naturally-occurring interactions in orchards, apple-pie factories and school dinner halls, we would likely discover a range of different constructions and orientations to 'apple', and we could examine these interactions for the work they do to construct apples in different ways (see Kitzinger, 2000). This would tell us something about constructions and discourses of 'apple'.

[31] If we want to know in-depth experiences of people who work in an apple juice factory, our approach to asking questions and analysing data would be different to if we wanted to know what the customers of a greengrocer look for when choosing apples.

Overall, by using different tools to study language-in-use, we can both learn about phenomena that people speak/write about (e.g. apples and people's experiences of eating, growing or cooking with them), and also about how language is used to construct realities through discourse (e.g., constructions of 'apple' as food, as a crop, as a chore ("you must eat that apple"), or as a treat ("here is a delicious apple")). Each of these approaches to research tell us different things about the social world because it is simultaneously true that apples exist and are experienced by people, and that 'apple' is constructed in different ways in different contexts. It therefore makes little sense to push for an either/or approach to qualitative research—language is *both* a way people refer to the world, *and* a way that we construct realities.

F. Process-relation methodology

This section has introduced my argument for a methodology based on process-relation ontology, informed by Heideggerian phenomenology (Cruickshank, 2004; Heidegger, 1962; Lowes & Prowse, 2001) and Derridean deconstruction (Derrida, 1998; J. C. Jones, 2016, 2013). Such a methodology is grounded in an understanding that knowledge and being are not separate from one another, because knowledge (and discourse, language and interpretation) is part of being (and it is through being that these are developed). Different ways of engaging with and within the world enable different types of knowledge production, which means that the most effective way to conduct research into any given phenomenon depends on the properties of that phenomenon and what we want to learn about it. By comparing knowledge gained through different ways of engaging with and within the world, we can develop accounts about the world that are evidence-based and be accountable to one another for the validity of our claims, despite never producing a complete and static representation. I therefore advocate for researching the social world by using/developing methods of inquiry that are well-suited to the ontological properties of the phenomena under investigation (which necessarily involves trial and error, as one method may lead to understanding that other methods would be useful), and analysing data comparatively, in order to develop well-rounded accounts based on a variety of perceptions and interpretations. The research design for this study aims towards this approach to methodology.

2. Research design

I first imagined this study in 2017—some three years before the Covid-19 pandemic. My intention at that time was to use conversation analysis and a qualitative survey to investigate the processes through which organisers of community organisations made decisions about the work of the organisation. I began preparatory work in October 2019, which included seeking organisations who would be willing to participate. In February 2020, I was in communication with a community choir, a feminist campaign group and a residents' association about their possible participation,

but by March of that year the context of the study had changed substantially due to the Covid-19 pandemic. First, of course, groups were no longer able to hold their meetings in person, and many of their usual activities had to stop. Second, and more significantly for the study as it turned out, the type of organisation I was interested in studying—small organisations run by people who were part of the community being served/supported—appeared to suddenly be playing an increasingly major role in people's lives, and in society. I attended an online session of a community choir I had previously been a member of, and observed that the atmosphere seemed warm, supportive and that people seemed to be moved by the experience of connecting with one another in lockdown conditions. I also became aware of community groups in the city I lived in, who were offering support to local people in the form of shopping, prescription and meal delivery. I read in the news that this phenomenon was occurring around the country (P. Butler, 2020; Forrest, 2020; Phillipps & Mahanty, 2020; Purdy, 2020). While I remained interested in the decision-making processes of grassroots groups, I felt that studying these in isolation from the very unusual and potentially historically significant context of the pandemic would be a missed opportunity. I therefore moved my focus toward learning about the emerging phenomenon of the activity of grassroots community organisations (GRCOs) during lockdown.

The combination of the process-relational approach to method described above, and the fast-changing context in which I conducted this study, meant that the research design was necessarily emergent and flexible in both the data generation/collection and analysis stages. In this section, I outline my methods of data generation/collection, my attention to ethical research practice and introduce my data set. I then describe the analytic processes used to develop the argument in the chapters that follow. The argument of the thesis will turn out to offer an explanatory theory of how organisations met need during the pandemic, generated through comparative engagement with empirical data. Before going into the detail of the research process, I therefore first engage with the question of whether this study can reasonably be understood as a grounded theory.

A. Is this study a grounded theory?

The study was inductive—I did not set out with a theory to test. However, I was clear that my aim was to go beyond simply describing a phenomenon, or describing interpretations of it (the common aim of research informed by Heideggerian phenomenology (Cohen, 2000)), and instead to work toward offering explanation. This aim of generating explanatory theory appeared to more consistent with grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) than with phenomenological research designs. The grounded theory approach of theoretical sampling and comparative analysis (Glaser, 2011) was well suited to my research goals of generating theory on the basis of empirical phenomena. However, the theoretical underpinnings of the main 'schools' of grounded theory are less well suited to process relation methodology. Classic grounded theory (Glaser, 1992) assumes

that theory emerges from data, without acknowledging this as a process that involves the researcher as a subject engaged with the data, and thus constructing the theory. Meanwhile constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014) lacks acknowledgement that doing research involves being in and learning about the real world, not just constructing it. Straussian grounded theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2012) takes a rigid approach to the process of analysis, which is not consistent with the aim to use and design research method in relation to the ontology of phenomena under investigation.

I followed the lead of feminist grounded theorists (Byrne, 2001; Wuest, 1995) in adopting some fundamental tenets of grounded theory within a feminist research framework. In particular, I used theoretical sampling and comparative analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) and approached "theory as process; that is, theory as an ever developing entity, not as a perfected product"(Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 32). I worked toward developing explanatory theory in a way that is underpinned by the process-relation methodology outlined above, which means I drew on different forms of data and data analysis in different ways throughout the research process. Consequently, I have not followed the particular and limited coding procedures advocated by the various schools of grounded theory, and my approach will doubtless be understood as insufficiently systematic by those who adhere strictly to those procedures. My claim is that I have engaged in a process of developing explanatory theory through comparative analysis of qualitative data and that the theory offered is thus grounded empirically. The process of my data collection and analysis is outlined below in order that the reader can assess the extent to which this claim is legitimate, and whether this work can be reasonably understood as a grounded theory. What I believe I have done, in any case, is work toward developing theoretical explanation for a phenomenon, in a context in which both my learning about the phenomenon and my theorising about it have been made possible through my being in the world.

B. What data did I generate/collect, how and why?

This study involved conducting semi-structured interviews, collecting participants' written accounts and organisational documents, and recording video-mediated meetings. The details of the generation/collection of data are detailed here.

a) Interviews

I conducted semi-structured interviews with 38 people who were participating in a total of 40 community groups and charities between April and July 2020. My sampling method is detailed on page 77. The interviews were between 30 and 90 minutes in length, with most being 45-60 minutes long. The majority of the interviews were conducted over Zoom. Four were conducted

over the telephone when the participant was not comfortable using Zoom and/or did not have access to a device that would enable Zoom.

My approach to interviewing is to understand the interview as an intersubjective encounter and the researcher as a co-participant. This is a Heideggerian phenomenological perspective (Drew, 1989; Heidegger, 1962; Lowes & Prowse, 2001), which is also consistent with feminist interviewing ethics (Oakley, 1981) of engaging with interview participants as subjects rather than resources, and Glaserian grounded theory understanding that "all is data" (Glaser & Holton, 2004, para. 3.3). Interviews were approached as "deliberately created opportunities to talk about something in particular" (Lowes & Prowse, 2001, p. 475) and were structured in a way consistent with recommendations by Heideggerian phenomenologists, which is to ask an initial, open question in order to initiate a substantial account from the interviewee, which was followed up with further questions within the context of the initial response (Lowes & Prowse, 2001; Wood, 1991). At the beginning of each interview, I explained that I was interested in what was going on for grassroots organisations during the pandemic, that anything that the participant felt was relevant was fine to talk about, and that they should "feel free to go off on any tangents". This approach of assuming that everything and anything is potentially relevant is also consistent with Heideggerian phenomenology (Lowes & Prowse, 2001), grounded theory (Glaser & Holton, 2004) and feminist research (Oakley, 1981). Each interview took a different path from the next. I used an interview guide as a prompt to remind me of questions I might want to ask but did not stick to this rigidly. I found that certain topics I had planned to ask about were more salient to some participants than others. In particular, participants spoke fulsomely about the details of their organisations' direct work with communities (e.g. shopping delivery, support groups, befriending), and told me a lot about their own thoughts and feelings about their involvement in their organisation. Some participants spoke about their experiences of the responses of statutory and professionalised voluntary sector services. Participants generally had less to say about the details of how they worked together as a group (e.g., decision-making processes and organisational systems). A few weeks into interviewing I amended the interview guide to reflect this, focussing more on the work done by GRCOs to meet need in their communities, and less on the details of how work was organised. Designing the focus of the study in relation to what was relevant to participants is consistent with a grounded theory approach of supporting emergence in the data generation process. The original and amended interview guides are provided in Appendix 1.

b) Documents and written records

Before meeting me for interview, some participants sent me documents relating to their GRCO's work. These were sent without request from me and were provided by participants as a means of offering informative context for the interview. These documents included written histories of

organisations, written accounts of activities during lockdown, publicity materials, and feedback from group members/'service-users'. In line with the grounded theory approach of "all is data" (Glaser & Holton, 2004) and the process-relation approach of learning about the world through engagement with it, I used these documents to help provide context for my analysis and understanding. I did not directly include them in the analyses described below, but this is because they tended to replicate information that was already available from interviews, rather than because I excluded them in principle.

In addition to these resources, I referred to organisational financial records and governing documents in order to develop an overall picture of the types of organisations that had participated in the study. For larger, formally registered organisations, these were accessed through the Charity Commission or Companies House. Some small, unregistered groups provided me with copies of their governing document and accounts. Not every unregistered organisation shared this information with me, and some small informal groups had neither a governing document nor written accounts.

c) Recorded meetings

I recorded organisational meetings of three GRCOs. The meetings took place on Zoom and were recorded by participants using the Zoom recording function. One organisation recorded four meetings, one recorded two, and one recorded one. In total, seven meetings were recorded, which created over eleven hours of data.

The purpose of recording these meetings was to use conversation analysis (CA) to contribute to my understanding of being-as-becoming a grassroots community organisation. CA is an established method of investigating the interactional processes through which organisations are talked-into-being (Heritage, 2005, 1984; Markaki & Mondada, 2012). CA approaches contexts (such as organisations in which meetings take place) as ongoing interactional achievements rather than static objects, which is well-suited to the process-relational ontology in which this study is grounded.

Initially, I also intended to also collect text-based interactions (such as email exchanges and WhatsApp conversations within groups), for the same purpose as recording meetings (to investigate interactional processes). However, I received a high level of interest from participants wishing to take part in the study, which resulted in a large dataset without this additional interactional data. I therefore chose not to collect this, as I had a substantial amount of qualitative data to work with—enough to produce a thorough analysis—and wished to avoid collecting more data than was needed for the project.

d) Secondary sources

This thesis focuses on developing an explanatory account of organisations' ability to meet need during the pandemic. Many GRCO organisers' perceptions were that their organisations had been faster and more effective at meeting need than statutory services (SSs) or professionalised voluntary sector organisations (PVSOs). In order to develop my analysis, I therefore considered the response of GRCOs compared to the response of SSs and PVSOs. This involved engaging with secondary sources about the work of SSs and PVSOs during the pandemic—specifically literature from non-governmental organisations, local authorities and the government, plus academic research.

e) Sampling and participant recruitment

I sampled interview participants using a purposive sampling strategy (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Patton, 2002), which began with criterion based case selection (Patton, 2002) (made possible through snowball sampling (Patton, 2002)), and moved into inductive theoretical sampling (Morse, 2007) through comparative case selection (Patton, 2002). My initial strategy was to speak to as many GRCOs as possible. I created a simple website with information about the study, and made electronic fliers, which I used on social media. Publicity materials are available in Appendix 2.

Using these materials, I publicised the study in five ways:

1) By contacting infrastructure organisations (charities that support community and voluntary groups) and local authority community development workers. Through these contacts I engaged three people who helped me to recruit participants. These were: a) a community development worker in an infrastructure organisation; b) a community development worker in a local authority; and c) a funding organisation that provides small grants for community groups.

2) By engaging directly on social media groups and networks where people were sharing information about community organising during lockdown.

3) By using my own contacts, developed from my experience working in an infrastructure organisation and my experience of being involved in GRCOs.

4) Through snowball sampling—some participants connected me with further participants.

5) As I moved into theoretical comparative sampling, by contacting organisations directly.

I defined 'grassroots community organisation' loosely, in order to avoid imposing an artificial taxonomy, which could lead to exclusion of cases salient to theory development (Dey, 2007; Sayer,

2000). This is consistent with a grounded theory approach to sampling and categorisation (Dey, 2007). I wanted, however, to avoid researching large professionalised voluntary sector organisations, because my interest was in how communities organised in response to the pandemic (rather than the responses of professionals working in the not-for-profit sector (King, 2017; Maier et al., 2016)) . I therefore initially included any not-for-profit organisation where the majority of the work was done on an unpaid basis. As time went on, and I began to conduct initial analysis of the interviews, I conceptualised 'grassroots community organisations' more clearly, as organisations run by and for people within a particular community (defined as geographical, shared interest, or cultural) (see chapter I for more about my definition of GRCO). I developed this category through comparison of cases (i.e., by noticing similarities and differences between organisations, and honing my understanding of the phenomenon 'GRCO' through comparison) (Dey, 2007). Consequently, I ended up with a small number of interviews with organisations that I eventually did not consider to be GRCOs, which I excluded from the analysis. I excluded two interviews through this process—the chair of a national twelve-step recovery programme, and a trustee of an advocacy charity. In order to focus the theoretical development, I also honed my study to look at organisations that worked with people in order to meet need, and excluded those that did not do this. This led to excluding one organisation—a residents' association whose work focussed exclusively on negotiating with a housing association regarding building maintenance and development (rather than on supporting individuals or organising activities for the community). Finally, two of the participants I interviewed were involved in GRCO networking or infrastructure organisations in addition to their involvement in a GRCO. One participant was involved in both a local food project and a national network of food projects. The other was involved in a village hall and a national network of community buildings. Both spoke about both these organisations in their interviews. The national networks did not meet my eventual criteria of GRCO, so parts of the interview that focussed on these were excluded from the final analysis. These participants' accounts of their involvement in local GRCOs were included.

By the time I had conducted the first 20 interviews, I was developing strands of analysis and beginning to focus on ways that organisations worked toward meeting need in their communities. I wanted to understand what the factors were that enabled this, which meant I wanted to speak to some groups that were struggling to operate during the pandemic. For this reason, I purposively sampled a small number of GRCOs that had stopped running or significantly reduced their activities during the pandemic. In addition, through my initial sampling techniques I interviewed only two organisations run by and for racialised people, and these organisations reported challenges that no other organisation reported. I therefore purposively sampled a further three organisations run by and for racialised people. My initial sampling technique also resulted in only one organisation run by and for women. I therefore purposively sampled another organisation run

by and for women. I attempted to recruit more women's organisations but was unable to do so because I found a very small number of women's organisations that were GRCOs.[32]

Organisations were sampled for meeting recordings from among those that participated as interview participants. In the first few weeks of interviewing, I asked interview participants whether they would be willing to ask their organisations' management committee/organising group whether they would be interested in recording meetings for the study. Criteria were only that the meetings must be focussed on organising the work of the organisation, and that they must be conducted via Zoom. Three organisations subsequently went on to record meetings.

f) Ethical considerations

Throughout the research process I worked according to the four core principles of ethical social research outlined by Diener and Crandall (1978). Specifically, I considered informed consent, invasion of privacy, deception and potential harm to participants. I have sought throughout to comply with the British Sociological Association Statement of Ethical Practice (BSA, 2017). My initial research design was approved by the University of York Economics, Law, Management, Politics and Sociology Ethics Committee (ELMPS). When the context and design changed due to the pandemic, I reapplied for approval and the new design was approved. I now outline the specific steps I have taken to ensure ethical practice and sound data management.

All participants were provided with an information sheet presented in a clear question-answer format, detailing the following information: the purpose of the study; the reason for their inclusion in their study; what was entailed in taking part in the study; rationale for different forms of data collection; assurance that participation was optional; assurance that consent could be withdrawn up to one month after participation; explanation of how the data would be used; information about findings dissemination plans; assurances of confidentiality, anonymity and data security; GDPR compliant information about data processing and retention; contact details. Organisations that took part in meeting recording were also provided with an information sheet for their organisation, which included the same information. Participants were asked to complete a form confirming that they understood how their data would be used, and to sign confirming their consent. The information sheets and consent forms are provided in Appendix 3.

All but one of the participants returned a consent form either electronically (using Hello Sign software), or on paper. One participant, who was unable to read in English, asked me to go through the form with him verbally instead. After discussion with my supervisors, I read him the

[32] I hypothesise that this is because women's grassroots organising has been badly damaged by attacks on our right to organise on the basis of sex (Dillon, 2021).

information sheet, and read through each item in the consent form. I asked him to confirm his understanding and consent to each item one by one. I recorded this interaction and kept the recording with my records of consent for this study.

One potential issue relating to informed consent was the possibility that participants in organisational meetings may feel under pressure from other members to participate. In order to guard against this risk, I attended a meeting of each organisation that recorded meetings, before they participated. I explained the study to the group, explained that each person in the group was free to decide whether to take part, and that if anyone would prefer not to, the group should not take part. I explained that they should discuss their participation together and only agree to participate if there was a unanimous decision to do so. I asked them to record this decision in the minutes of their meeting, and for a group member to confirm it in writing to me. Each member was then provided with an individual consent form, which they were asked to complete and return to me independently. Only once forms were received from every member did I accept recordings from organisations.

This study did not involve asking questions about sensitive subjects, or about asking about the personal lives of participants. However, the interviews and meeting recordings took place during the Covid-19 pandemic, whilst participants were in lockdown. This was a potentially upsetting situation for participants. I was careful to ensure that participants knew that there was nothing they were compelled to discuss with me, and that they were free to stop the interview at any time. I also, in line with feminist research ethics (Oakley, 1981), engaged in reciprocal interactions with participants, which included answering questions that they asked me, and making efforts to connect with them in an empathetic and gentle manner when discussing experiences that may be upsetting (such as being alone during lockdown). A small number of participants (n=3) became visibly upset during the interview. I contacted these participants after the interview to offer my thanks, and to check that they were okay following the interview. They all confirmed that they were, but had I had any concerns, I would have provided them with information about places to get further support (which I had prepared in advance of the study).

Interviews conducted over Zoom were recorded directly onto my PC, and then immediately uploaded as encrypted files onto my University of York Google Drive and deleted from the PC. Interviews conducted over the phone were recorded directly onto my mobile phone, then immediately uploaded onto my University of York Google Drive and deleted from the phone. Zoom meetings were recorded by participants onto their computers and transferred to me via the University of York Google Drive. I asked participants to confirm to me that they had deleted the recordings from their own computers. All files were saved under pseudonyms, and my record of

the names and contact details of participants was saved separately, on the University of York internal server, in an encrypted file.

g) Transcription

I transcribed some of the interviews in full myself, and some using Otter software to create rough transcripts, which I then edited for accuracy. The result was a data set of interview transcripts that were used for analysis.

Conversation analysis is conducted using audio/video data, rather than only transcripts (Toerien, 2014). I transcribed the sections that I wished to analyse in detail using Jeffersonian transcription conventions (Hepburn & Bolden, 2013).

C. The data set

The final data set consists of transcribed interviews from 35 participants from 35 different GRCOs, plus 11 hours of recorded Zoom meetings from three GRCOs, plus written records and publicity documents from five GRCOs. All data was collected between April and July 2020.

The interview participants included 19 management committee/organising group/trustee board members, 5 people who worked unpaid for the group and were not organisers, 5 paid workers, 4 people who were paid for some of their role and unpaid for the rest, and 2 people who were group members. The organisations included 15 registered charities (including charitable companies and Charitable Incorporated Organisations), 11 informal collectives, 6 unregistered unincorporated associations, and three social enterprises (registered as Community Interest Companies). Five organisations were newly established during lockdown, while the remaining 30 were pre-existing organisations. Twenty-two organisations paid people to do work of some kind. This included organisations with employees, but also organisations that paid occasional sessional workers to run activities. Thirteen organisations were run entirely on an unpaid basis.

Participating organisations included three mutual aid groups, two community transport projects, one Covid-19 information sharing group, one gardening project, three food sharing projects, one language school, one befriending organisation, four community centres, two churches, three community choirs, two craft groups, two dance groups, five organisations run by and for racialised people and/or migrants, two women's organisations, three organisations that supported older and disabled people, two groups run by and for lesbian, gay, bisexual and/or trans people, one organisation run by and for people experiencing mental health difficulties, and one organisation run by people who had previously been homeless, for homeless people.

Fourteen groups were based in and provided community support for the general population of a geographical area (not limited to a particular demographic, interest group or shared activity). Of

these, three were based in the most deprived 10% of locations in England (Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government, 2019). The remaining 11 were based in the 50% least deprived locations in England.

Meetings were recorded by the organising committees of one community choir (four meetings), one mutual aid group (two meetings), and one church (one meeting).

D. How did I analyse the data?

a) Question development

I approached this study with the type of very broad research question recommended by Corbin and Strauss (2012) for use in grounded theory, the purpose of which is to allow for inductive research whilst setting some parameters for what the study is about. McCallin (2003) suggests that a useful starting point is to identify an area of interest—e.g., the responses of community organisations to the pandemic in England and Wales—and to begin the study simply by asking "What is happening here?" (p.206). This was the question with which I began the study. However, such a question is too broad to answer fully within a PhD thesis. It is also a 'what' question, inviting a descriptive, rather than explanatory answer. Honing the project into theory development therefore required an inductive narrowing of the 'what' question, plus the addition of an explanatory 'why' question. This process of inductive question development involved the following stages.

(1) Descriptive coding of interviews and organisational documents.

The aim of descriptive coding was to enable the development of a description of the overall dataset (Lambert & Lambert, 2013), and also to facilitate noticing of overall patterns in the data to enable the honing of my research focus. This process began before I finished data generation, which meant I was able to use this coding to help guide sampling and questions in the later interviews. I coded for a wide range of matters, including organisational activities, benefits and motivators for taking part, perceived strengths and weaknesses of the GRCO's work during lockdown; challenges the organisation faced, and methods of organisation. Through this process I identified several broad areas that interested me and that I wanted to explore further.

a. Most organisers and workers (paid or unpaid) seemed to be focussed on (re)designing their work toward the purpose of meeting needs of people in their communities during lockdown, rather than any other purpose.

b. Most GRCO organisers reported having been successful at meeting basic need in their communities during lockdown.

c. Accounts from many GRCO organisers appeared to suggest a pattern of fast and flexible responses to changing needs in their communities.

d. Not all GRCOs appeared to have been equally successful at achieving the aim of meeting need.

e. Many GRCO organisers expressed frustration with the responses of statutory services and professionalised voluntary sector organisations.

f. Some participants (including organisers and workers) said that participation in their GRCO had helped to meet their own needs during lockdown.

g. Some organisers reported that their work to help meet need had been a struggle for them during lockdown.

(2) Initial CA engagement with meeting data, including early collection building (Toerien, 2014).

I wanted to explore the ontology of organisations, and to use CA to look at how matters that might be imagined as static properties of an institution, such as its purpose or governance structure, are produced, altered and reproduced through the relational process of talk-in-interaction. I therefore developed initial collections of extracts of data where participants appeared to be

a. oriented to or co-producing organisational purpose (i.e. what is the organisation for), and/or

b. oriented to or co-producing organisational structure (i.e. who does what, and who has authority to make what decisions).

Through these two processes, I honed my overall area of interest to describing GRCO work toward meeting need and supporting flourishing during lockdown, and explaining why some organisations were more effective than others at doing this. Through engagement with literature on need and human flourishing (see chapter III), I established that I wanted to answer this question within a radical materialist feminist framework of assuming that everyone (including workers) has needs and interests that matter, and that I would adopt a Maslovian model of need.

I developed the following sets of research questions to help me investigate.

1) Did GRCOs help to meet need during lockdown?

2) Why were some organisations more effective than others at meeting need? What are the enablers of and barriers to effective need meeting? (How) does this relate to the purpose and structure of organisations?

3) Some people did a lot of work to help meet the needs of others. Were their needs also met? Why/why not? What are the conditions of engaging with the needs and interests of everyone involved?

These questions are engaged with in the four empirical chapters of this thesis. Chapter V focuses on question 1, chapters VI and VII on question 2, and chapter VIII on question 3. Through engagement with these questions, I have developed an explanatory theory about how organisations can meet need and support flourishing. This theory offers an answer to the to the following overall, inductively produced research question.

What are the characteristics of organisations that are able to meet need and support flourishing?

This question was thus developed through the process of answering it, rather than vice versa. The rest of this chapter describes the analytic processes used, which all worked toward developing the explanatory answer to this final, core question.

b) Chapter V: Thematic analysis and categorisation of cases

Before presenting my analysis of *why* and *how* organisations were able to meet need, I need to present evidence that GRCOs worked toward meeting need during the pandemic, and how they did so. The first piece of empirical analysis presented in this thesis (page 89) is a thematic analysis of the different types of work GRCOs did toward the aim of meeting physiological, safety and love and belonging needs. I followed Braun and Clarke's (2006, 2021) guidance on conducting thematic analysis. I coded the interview data (Braun & Clarke, 2006) for the type of activity being done by GRCOs. From these codes I developed sub-themes relating to different ways in which GRCOs worked toward meeting need. These sub-themes were then organised according to Maslow's model of need (1943, 1968). This resulted in three overall theoretical themes—physiological need, safety need and love and belonging need—with subthemes within each, such as 'shopping delivery', 'safeguarding' and 'befriending'. The purpose of this is to provide the reader with an overview of the types of activities that GRCOs were engaged with and the types of need they aimed to address.

Having established that GRCOs engaged in activities that aimed to meet need, I wanted to explore the extent to which they were effective, and why. Analysing data thematically does not allow for comparison between cases. Explanation necessarily requires comparison, because without comparison, we have no way to generate and test possible hypotheses about causal mechanisms (Bhaskar, 1975; Glaser, 2011; Sayer, 2000; Williams, 2019). I wanted to compare organisations that were more effective with those that were less effective. In order to do this, I first needed a method by which to assess effectiveness. I conducted another thematic analysis, this time focussed on accounts that appeared to relate to effectiveness at meeting need. I coded for types of content

that could be used as evidence of need-meeting. Through this process I identified three forms of evidence available from interview data and written documents: the extent to which organisations' services/activities were used; evaluative comments from organisers; and feedback from participants/members.[33]

Having identified these ways of assessing effectiveness, I categorised each GRCO in the dataset according to its effectiveness at meeting need. I developed three categories: GRCOs that met basic need during lockdown; GRCOs that struggled to meet basic need during lockdown; and GRCOs that stopped their activities during lockdown. Finally, in order to provide the reader with evidence of GRCO's effectiveness at meeting need, I present cases from each category, with description of their work and the basis on which I have assessed whether they met need effectively. This creates the groundwork for the analysis presented in chapters VI and VII.

c) Chapter VI and VII: comparative analysis, featuring conversation analysis.

Chapter VI and VII consider the differences between organisations that were effective at meeting need and those that were not. This is done through comparison. There are three forms of comparison used.

(1) Direct comparison of two or more cases.

This is used to develop understanding of why some GRCOs met need more effectively than others. I took cases where the organisations had similar structures and/or aims and/or activities but had different levels of effectiveness or faced different challenges and compared them directly in order to theorise potential causal factors to explain the difference.

(2) Comparing GRCOs with other types of organisation.

GRCO organisers spoke about their experiences of statutory services and professionalised voluntary sector organisations, generally reporting that GRCOs were faster and more effective in their response to the crisis. I assessed the validity of their accounts in relation to wider literature, which provided supporting evidence. I then compared the reported structures and ways of working of GRCOs with their accounts of the structures and ways of working of larger organisations, in order to develop theory about the relationship between organisational structure and organisational ability to respond to need.[34]

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[33] My dataset includes only two interviews with people who were involved in their GRCO in no capacity other than as a member/participant. My ability to assess GRCO effectiveness at need-meeting would have been strengthened by the inclusion of more such participants. This limitation is discussed in the final chapter.

[34] I did not collect any primary data from statutory or professionalised voluntary sector organisations. The inclusion of such data would have strengthened my ability to compare GRCOs with these larger organisational types. This limitation is discussed in the final chapter.

(3) Testing theory in relation to data

Having compared GRCOs with one another and with other types of organisation, I began to theorise about possible factors relating to organisational ability to meet need. I then studied the dataset overall for evidence of these factors in different organisations. I collected evidence to support or counter my developing theories, in order to hone the development of the offered explanation. This resulted in collections of data extracts which are presented in order to provide evidence to support theoretical claims.

Most of the comparative analysis in these chapters is based on interview data, supported by literature and secondary sources. However, a comparative discussion of the role of purpose in the organising of community choirs in chapter VII includes an extract of a meeting of a choir organising committee, which I have interpreted using CA. My approach followed the process recommended by Toerien (2014) in her discussion of single case analysis in CA. I use this extract, and my CA of it, as part of a broader argument made through comparison of data from different community choirs, which also includes extracts of interview data. This is an unusual use of CA. I have taken this approach because the learning I developed from conducting CA early in the project helped me to develop understanding about the production of organisational purpose, which appeared to be relevant to this comparison of the role of purpose in the work of community choirs. Incorporating CA into the discussion is consistent with my overall methodological approach of using methods as tools to help learn about the world, and with my argument that language can be used *both* as a means of understanding the world being referred to, *and* as a means of understanding the construction of that world.

The outcome of chapters VI and VII is the production of a theory about the conditions that support and hinder organisations' ability to meet need.

d) Chapter VIII: thematic analysis and comparative critical discussion

Chapter VIII moves from a focus on how organisations met the needs of 'service-users' to a focus on whether and how they met the needs of those who were involved in doing the work. I began by conducting a thematic analysis of ways in which workers and organisers reported having had their needs met and categorised these according to Maslow's model. I then engaged in a comparative critical discussion, considering whether the conditions that I have suggested to help organisations to meet 'service-user' need are also effective at helping organisations to meet the needs of their own workers. This was done by comparing the reported experiences of 'service-users' with the reported experiences of workers and considering this in relation to the explanatory theory offered in the previous chapters. The data used in this chapter is almost entirely interview data. I use one extract from a meeting. However, unlike in the previous chapter, this extract is not a sequence of interaction—it is simply a statement made by a participant on a topic relevant to the question of

whether organisers had their needs met. I include this extract alongside interview extracts, for its content rather than as CA data.

E. An inductive comparative research design

The research design I have presented here aims overall to offer description of a phenomenon, followed by explanation of that phenomenon. My approach was developed through a process of working out what would be effective for meeting this aim. For this reason, I have used different methods and different forms of data. However, overall, the project is characterised by inductive design—the focus and question are inductively generated—combined with comparative analysis—the data has been explored comparatively in order to identify patterns and assess the credibility of theories. The result is a theoretical argument offering explanation for an observed phenomenon.

3. Conclusion

This chapter has introduced my overall methodological approach. I have suggested that dominant methodological debates are based in Cartesian ontological error and have argued for a methodology grounded in process-relation ontology. I have suggested that such a methodology calls for selecting/developing methods that offer themselves as effective ways to investigate the phenomenon of interest, and that different methods are useful for finding out different types of things about the world. I have argued that language is *both* a way to refer to entities in the world *and* a means of constructing and producing realities, and thus that it can be studied in ways that make use of both of these capacities.

This chapter has also introduced the data and research design for this thesis. I have used an inductive, comparative research design informed by both grounded theory and Heideggerian phenomenology. I conducted interviews, collected written documents and recorded organisational meetings. I generated my research question inductively through engagement with data. I then used a combination of thematic analysis and comparative analysis to first describe the phenomenon of interest, and then work toward explaining it. The majority of the data used is interview data, but I have also made use of extracts of organisational meetings, which, in one case, I have interpreted using conversation analysis before including it in a broader comparative discussion.

V. “We’re really doing a lot.” Did GRCOs help to meet need during lockdown?

This chapter presents a comparative analysis of GRCOs’ work to meet basic need during the period March to July 2020, aiming to compare organisations according to their accounts of whether and how they met need. I use Maslow’s model of human need, which is introduced in chapter III, and assess the extent to which GRCOs met the most basic of the needs in Maslow’s model—physiological, safety, and love and belonging needs.

I begin by providing a descriptive thematic analysis of the ways GRCOs worked toward helping to meet people’s basic needs during lockdown. I show that this included work with the aim of meeting deficiencies in physiological, safety, and love and belonging needs, which are identified by Maslow (1943, 1968) as the most basic of human needs. GRCOs attempted to meet physiological needs through shopping and prescription delivery, provision of free food, Meals-on-Wheels, and transport to and from healthcare appointments. They attempted to meet safety needs through safeguarding and welfare support, and through provision of information about Covid-19. Finally, they attempted to meet love and belonging needs through companionship, creation of mutual support opportunities, organisation of shared creative projects, and through ‘feel-good-factor’ initiatives such as delivery of treats and activity packs.

Having outlined the different types of work that GRCOs did in the service of meeting need, I go on to provide a comparative account of different GRCOs’ success in doing so. I argue that, during the early months of the pandemic in England and Wales, many GRCOs (the majority in my dataset) were effective in helping to meet people’s basic needs. GRCOs worked to help people to access food and healthcare, safeguarded people from harm, provided Covid-19 information, and created opportunities for people to interact and connect with others. These findings are consistent with wider research into grassroots activity during the first lockdown in England and Wales (Acheson et al., 2022; Chevée, 2022; Fernandes-Jesus et al., 2021; Harris, 2021; Kavada, 2022; Macmillan, 2020; Mao et al., 2021; McBride et al., 2022; McCabe, Wilson, & Macmillan, 2020; McCabe, Wilson, & Paine, 2020; Rendall et al., 2022; Tiratelli & Kaye, 2020). However, not all the organisations in my dataset were effective at meeting need, and some met some need but were not able to meet all the need they identified. The chapter ends by noting that further analysis is needed

to explain why some organisations were more effective than others—a question answered in the next chapter.

1. GRCOs work toward meeting basic needs

This study analyses interviews with people involved in 35 different GRCOs engaged in work that aimed to prevent harm caused by physiological, safety and love and belonging deficiency. Of these, two were inactive during lockdown, while 33 were active. Before evaluating the extent to which GRCOs were able to help meet need, we begin with a thematic overview of the kinds of work they were doing and the kinds of need they were trying to meet during lockdown.

A. Working to meet physiological needs

GRCOs worked toward meeting physiological needs by delivering shopping and prescriptions to people who were shielding and self-isolating. The aim of this was to ensure that people had their need for basic supplies met even when they were unable to leave their homes. GRCOs also provided free food as a way to help ensure that people had enough to eat, and cooked meals for people who were unable to cook. Finally, some GRCOs provided transport to and from essential healthcare appointments as a way to help meet people's needs for medical care.

a) Shopping and/or prescription delivery

Sixteen participating GRCOs provided shopping and prescription delivery services for people who could not leave their homes because they were shielding or self-isolating. All of these organisations offered these services to those who requested them, rather than setting eligibility criteria. This meant that people could receive support on the basis that they felt vulnerable rather than on the basis of external categorisation of risk. This distinguished this support from, for example, the government food parcel scheme, which was only available to those who were categorised as clinically vulnerable by the government (Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government, 2020a).

> *It [phone call from person seeking help] come through to the me, so I would speak to the person, I would get the details of what it was, then I would allocate it somebody, that person would do the shopping, they would go and deliver it to the person. (Colin, organiser, Greenville Mutual Aid).*

> *We are now doing shopping. We have an arrangement with the local CostCutter…So the clients phone the store staff, they pick what they want, and then they ring us, and we go and collect the shopping and a little card machine. (Karen, trustee, Woodhouse Community Transport).*

The first thing we did was leaflet every house in the parish saying "if you need help with prescription delivery and shopping, give me a ring at the vicarage". (Ryan, vicar, St Mary's Church)

We've got volunteers who are happy to pop in and pick a prescription in their local area…so that's what we set up. (Hannah, organiser, Get Active Together).

b) Provision of free food

Ten GRCOs provided free cooked meals and/or emergency food parcels and/or food vouchers. The purpose of this was to help alleviate food poverty, which increased during the pandemic (Power et al., 2020). Within this study, all of the GRCOs that provided free food accepted self-referrals, which meant that people could request food support if and when they needed it. This distinguished these small organisations from larger food-bank organisations, which generally require that people are referred by statutory or professionalised voluntary services (Loopstra et al., 2015; Möller, 2021).

We just started saying to people, "if you know anyone who's isolated, anyone who's vulnerable and needs a meal, we've got some food here". (Jill, organiser, Dinners for All).

People leave a message asking for food…And we've got a warehouse team buying the food in, packing it up and also a kitchen team cooking meals which is what I predominantly do, and then delivery drivers and cyclists who deliver it around the city. (Sasha, volunteer, Eat Together).

I'd say we've got about 30 clients. And this is a brand-new foodbank…We get some self-referrals. (Mary, volunteer, Sunville Coronavirus Volunteers).

[We] did a lot of food parcel delivery as well. For those who couldn't afford food, they just needed some. (Issy, volunteer, Thurton Hub).

If somebody phoned up and said they couldn't afford to pay for the food, we just delivered one of our food parcels. (Janet, manager, Hilltown Community Centre).

c) Meals on Wheels

Eight GRCOs provided cooked meals delivered to people's homes. In some cases, the meals were free (see above), but in others, meals were paid 'Meals on Wheels' that helped meet needs of people who were unable to cook for themselves. This included GRCOs that were running a Meals on Wheels service before the pandemic—who increased the number of people supported—and those that had run luncheon clubs, which they changed to meal delivery services.

We've upskilled our cook so that she is now qualified to do takeout meals, so we are still providing meals when they would normally have one. Volunteers are delivering them to their homes. (Catherine, trustee, Dove Centre).

They couldn't go out to the luncheon clubs. People may have been giving them bags of produce, but many of those that we service couldn't cook or have dementia or poor mobility. So, we started, for want of a better term, Meals on Wheels. (Hazel, manager, Black Families Project).

That's our main bread and butter at the moment is the Meals on Wheels service. And obviously, since the COVID, that's gone two-fold now. It's been really, really busy. (Janet, manager, Hilltown Community Centre).

We've got 11 volunteers delivering 44 hot meals to people in the local area. (Leonard, trustee, Treeview Community Transport).

d) Transport to and from healthcare appointments

Two GRCOs provided transport to and from essential medical appointments during lockdown. These were organisations that already provided a community transport service before the pandemic.

We still have to do some hospital transports, like cancer treatments. And people who are having eye treatments that they can't miss. And some blood tests where they can't miss them. (Karen, trustee, Woodhouse Community Transport)

B. Working to meet safety needs

GRCOs worked toward supporting people's safety needs through safeguarding and welfare support and through provision of information about Covid-19. Safeguarding and welfare support was a very common way for GRCOs to meet need, and often coincided with other types of support, such as food provision. GRCOs also shared Covid-19 information with people who may have otherwise been unable to access it.

a) Safeguarding and welfare support

GRCOs worked hard to keep in touch with people during lockdown, particularly people they thought might be at risk of harm. Seventeen of the organisations I spoke with did some form of social welfare or safeguarding support. This included phoning people regularly to check they were okay, providing support (including, in some cases, counselling), and, if necessary, making referrals to statutory agencies.

Looking at whether a person was vulnerable. Looking at, you know, whether they've got, you know, decent clothes on, you know, and just looking over their shoulder, seeing what the house is like and everything. I mean, I've been to a guy who was…really, really, really ill. So, you know, we've got the doctor involved and everything like that, and he ended up going to hospital. (Janet, manager, Hilltown Community Centre)

We've got a programme called 'checking in'. So, we ring some of those that are much more vulnerable to check in with them to make sure that they're doing okay. And if they're not, referring them to appropriate agencies. (Hazel, manager, Black Families Project).

We contacted our members and said "This is new, this is how we are, but we'll have as much contact with you as we possibly can", and that those who were most vulnerable and isolated were to contact us and we'd set up a buddy system where the volunteers would take x number of members and contact them twice a week. We are supporting 160 women. All done by volunteers. (Yana, manager, Manon Women's Centre).

Some of them are having some really difficult times. So, it's kept that connection. Because we've always wanted to keep the connection going during this time and make sure people are staying because, even though I would say the numbers have gone down, the intensity has gone up. So, people have been presenting with more profound mental ill health. (James, organiser, Hanford LGBT Network).

b) Covid-19 information

Five GRCO organisers mentioned that they were putting work into keeping their communities informed about Covid-19 and the lockdown. This included one organisation working with people who did not have internet access, and three organisations working with people who did not speak or read English fluently.

Information, that's been a big thing as well because the majority of our people aren't on the internet or, if they are, they wouldn't really be able to research anything that they needed… So, a big thing is we pulled together an information pack of what we thought it was that they might be interested in and might help them. (Diane, paid worker, Energise).

When we have information that we get from the government and media, we try to translate it into our language to try to create awareness among the community members. (Debru, organiser, Welcome Refugee Group).

C. Working to meet love and belonging needs

GRCOs were widely involved in working to meet people's love and belonging needs by organising social contact during lockdown. This included arranging for people to call or visit those who were at risk of loneliness, creating opportunities for mutual support and socialising, and organising collaborative projects for people to participate in. In addition, some GRCOs organised deliveries of activities and treats to help people to feel less isolated.

a) Companionship

GRCOs arranged phone calls or doorstep visits as part of an effort to reduce isolation and provide companionship. Nine participating GRCOs organised some form of companionship activity of this kind.

> *We have stepped up our befriending service. (Leonard, trustee, Treeview Community Transport).*
>
> *There's a few people who members kind of make sure they kind of keep in touch with at least weekly. (Amy, volunteer, Shine On Community Church).*
>
> *The befriending phone calls…the customers have grown so much…a lot of them have got really good befrienders. Some that phone twice a week and chat to them. (Diane, paid worker, Energise).*
>
> *I got a phone call from a lady whose husband had a stroke two years ago, and she felt very vulnerable. And I think she was. She said she just wanted if anyone was walking to press her buzzer…she just said if anyone's passing. And they had time for a chat, she'd be she'd be up for that… I think she just felt terribly lonely…So I did. (Harry, organiser, Forest Lane Volunteers).*
>
> *I tried to contact [new mothers] sometimes and they are really scared and homesick…Also the singles, I try to contact them most of the time… Particularly the single mums, I try to contact them. (Debru, organiser, Welcome Refugee Group).*

b) Mutual support

GRCOs provided opportunities for people to interact with one another and thus provide each other with company and support. Fifteen participating organisations arranged opportunities for people to connect with one another during the lockdown.

> *The staff are also setting up a pen-pal service. So as part of the activity pack they can get a postcard putting them in touch with other members of the centre, other older people, so that they can keep in contact with one another. We'll facilitate the delivery. It means they are receiving something from someone who is part of their social circle, as well as sending something. (Catherine, trustee, Dove Centre).*

> *The first thing I did was set up a WhatsApp group with all their names and everybody started communicating on the WhatsApp group…I explained on the WhatsApp group how to download Zoom, they are now even better than me in digital education. Teaching their friends, inviting their friends to come, helping them to download zoom. (Jenna, organiser, Joy Language School).*

> *It's about seeing people's faces and connecting, and there's all the chat going on in the little chat box. So, it's about connecting with each other through this really. (Lauren, member, Firefly Choir).*

> *It's how can we connect people, that's why the WhatsApp thing was interesting. It was trying to find a way that was more level but creates a way that people can chat to each other. (Liz, organiser, Commonthorpe Neighbourhood Support).*

c) Shared creative projects

As the lockdown went on, fourteen GRCOs organised collaborative projects that encouraged people to contribute to something created by and for a community. This included, for example, recorded music collaborations, street decoration competitions, and participatory art projects.

> *We put out an open call for responses to the pandemic…We just put everything online…and the response has been really good, like, two submissions a day. (Andrea, organiser, Connect Community Arts).*

> *I want to do the [organisation name] Covid Capsule. It could be quotes, it could be photographs of somebody crafting, anything… Ideally, we'd like to get it into something like the art gallery. (Yana, manager, Manon Women's Centre).*

> *Every week, xx sets us up a bit of a homework challenge, and the first week she sent us the piano part for one of the songs that we're singing, she said record yourself singing*

it. And she mixed it all together…But instead of just doing a song she started to set us these other tasks. The first one was she just gave us a rhythm to sing. But the second one was to go bababababab, then do it on a different note, then on a different note. And she would have that playing in the background and then we just improvise on top of it… And then she's mixing all of those down. Let me just play you something. It's weird, it gets quite dark in the middle actually. But basically, that's all of us in our own homes, giving her a little soundbite and then she's mixing it all together. (Lauren, member, Firefly Community Choir).

Somebody had the idea of doing like a scarecrow festival in the in the area…we had 100 scarecrows that people did…it was like there was almost like, you know, those Victorian promenades…it was just families that would just come in past all the time. I mean, literally, it was like, the biggest thing that's happened in the area for, you know, years and years and years…We had some prizes for the winning ones. (Colin, organiser, Greenville Mutual Aid).

Some are becoming involved in a project of reminiscence…something about capturing their experiences of lockdown and maybe comparing it to previous experiences, where social activity has been curtailed, like previous pandemics, blitz and so on. And what we're trying to do with that is getting them to think about how they would capture those experiences. And they with support from the staff, some through arts and crafts, some through creative writing, poetry, music, or audio or video discussions, to capture those experiences so that we can collate them at the end as a record of this time. (Catherine, trustee, Dove Centre)

d) 'Feel-good-factor' deliveries

We have seen that physiological needs were often met through deliveries of food, medicines and other essentials. Five GRCOs extended their use of deliveries with an aim to not only meet basic physiological needs but also to help people feel cared about and supported. This included provision of activity packs, jigsaw puzzles, and treats (such as sweets and chocolate), and provision of cooked meals with a focus on providing a positive experience, rather than solely on making sure people were fed.

We were doing the lunches in Village Hall for two years…What we do is to try and make each occasion really special. So, it's not like the typical lunch club because we try and do the old-fashioned tablecloths, the old-fashioned cups and saucers, fresh flowers on the table…We started a new project called 'lunch on legs'… People just need something to look forward to. Not necessarily the food but somebody to look forward

to, a conversation… So last Thursday, we did 38 lunch deliveries from the pub. And really traditional beef pie, crumble and custard. All delivered. (Diane, paid worker, Energise).

The lunches we're delivering tomorrow are mainly going to our people who would go to a normal luncheon club once a week… For them, it's a break. Just something different. Somebody else has cooked a meal for them. You know, that's what this event is. All part of wellbeing and avoids the real rural isolation…that feel-good factor. (Leonard, trustee, Woodhouse Community Project).

We did 50 bags of happiness. So, there was a water bottle, some suncream, a puzzle, lots of chocolate…And we went round in the community to people who we know are quite vulnerable and we delivered those out. And then we had some children's ones as well. So, we went out and delivered children's ones to the families that we know struggle in a crisis. (Janet, manager, Hilltown Community Centre).

D. Summary of GRCOs' work towards meeting basic needs

GRCOs involved in this study worked toward meeting the most basic needs in Maslow's model—physiological, safety and love and belonging needs during the first lockdown in England. The extracts presented demonstrate attempts to address potential deficiencies in access to food, medicine, safety, social interaction, and care. This work was therefore aimed at avoiding or minimising harm by meeting deficiency needs. We will now turn to consider the extent to which GRCO efforts to meet these needs during lockdown were successful.

2. Assessing whether GRCOs met need

Interview participants in this study included a small number of GRCO members and 'service-users', but the majority of interviewees were GRCO organisers. This is a limitation to my ability to assess the meeting of need because I have received relatively little feedback from 'service-users' themselves. I discuss this limitation in chapter IX. However, many GRCOs reported high demand for their work during lockdown, while some found that their services were not well-used. Some organisers felt confident that they were meeting need well, while some did not. Some of the members/'service-users' I spoke with felt their needs were being well met, while some did not. Using the data I have available, I have evaluated organisations' success at helping to meet basic need according to a) the extent to which their services were used; b) evaluative comments from organisers, including those based on feedback they received from their members or 'service-users'; c) comments from members themselves in cases where the interviewee is a member. This section provides a demonstration of the basis of my analysis of the effectiveness of GRCO ability to meet

need. This provides the grounding for my later claims about the extent to which GRCOs met need effectively.

A. The extent to which services were used

Many GRCOs spoke about the high demand on their services during lockdown. For some, this included a big increase in demand in comparison to their work before the pandemic. Several groups told me that the number of people they were supporting had increased very substantially.

> *Our two staff are now overloaded and in a typical week deal with almost 350 telephone calls and some 700 e-mails. (Leonard, trustee, Treeview Community Transport)*

> *We are supporting 35-40 people now. It was more like 20 before. So have picked up about 15, nearly doubled. (Catherine, trustee, Dove Centre)*

> *On March 11th [pre-pandemic] I did a meal for 80 people…and that felt like loads…but I cooked 300 meals pretty much by myself on Monday [this week]. (Sacha, volunteer, Eat Together)*

In contrast, some GRCOs found that demand for their support was low. For example, Commonthorpe Neighbourhood Support distributed fliers offering to support people with shopping and prescription collection. They received very low uptake on this offer, which suggests their work was not as effective at meeting need.

> *We waited for the flood of calls coming into the phone number…We got 30 volunteers… we sat with bated breath…Well we've had four calls for help. (Liz, organiser, Commonthorpe Neighbourhood Support).*

These different experiences of use of services provide evidence that some GRCOs were more effective at identifying and responding to need than others and are part of the evidence I have used to assess whether GRCOs were helpful in meeting need.

B. Evaluation and evidence from organisers

GRCO organisers spoke about their perceptions of the effectiveness of their GRCOs' work during lockdown. Some told me about the feedback they had received from their members and 'service-users', in which they were told that their work was valuable during lockdown.

> *I got an email from a member who's been supported by a volunteer, just yesterday, saying that, if it hadn't been for this volunteer contacting her, she felt that there was a*

strong possibility that she might not have come through this. (Yana, manager, Manon Women's Centre).

The immediate feedback during the sessions, and the feedback afterwards, has been that there is still quite the possibility of an emotional connection for people. (Ellie, volunteer, Songa Community Choir).

I've had messages from people who've submitted [a video of themselves dancing] being like, 'Oh, I've just submitted this, thanks so much for doing it. I'm really excited to see everyone dancing together'. So, there is a sense that it will help, at least the people involved, feel engaged with each other. (Issy, organiser, City Swing).

It is really lovely to be part of something that is needed, and people are really appreciating having a meal delivered… people are really happy with what we're doing, and I'm just delighted to be able to do it. (Jill, organiser, Dinners for All).

Some organisers offered empirical evidence of the impact they were having, based on the level of uptake of their services.

We've become an emergency food parcel distribution hub…We are currently providing about 16-17% of emergency food parcels across the city. (Sacha, volunteer, Eat Together)

In contrast, others noted that uptake of their support had been low and suggested that this was because the help they were offering was not well-matched to community need. Adam of Pangton Mutual Aid suggested that low uptake of the group's support was due to the fact that they were offering help with meeting physiological needs, but what people actually needed was support with love and belonging needs.

I think like, actually, people, at least where I'm living, I think material support hasn't been as important as people's mental health and wellbeing and, you know, people want to talk to people that they're closest to and already have relationships with, rather than, people who live on their street, but that they don't really know that well. (Adam, organiser, Pangton Mutual Aid).

Organisers reflected on their knowledge of and relationships with their communities, and used this as a way to evaluate the extent to which they were meeting need effectively. This involved identifying needs and considering if and how the GRCO work was well matched to those needs. Some assessed that their work was effective at meeting need and explained why. The following

three extracts are examples of explicit identification of specific needs and explanation of why the particular services provided by the GRCO were well-matched to those needs.

> *The lunchtime meal is important because it could be that it is only 3 days a week that some people get a cooked nutritious meal. (Catherine, trustee, Dove Centre).*

> *We do have a counselling project that is very culturally aware. Meaning that we don't use CBT because it doesn't work within many cultures, and one of the reasons for that is because various cultures do not believe that you should access counselling, you know, there's a belief that you should deal with your issues by yourself…So the success of the counselling programme is the fact that we understand that. (Hazel, manager, Black Families Project).*

> *It's the people who aren't on any digital media. They're not on the web, they're not on the internet whatsoever. They're not on social media, not on anything. So, there you are, in lockdown, in your house…We knew from meetings that it was this sort of person who was cut off…they are really social outsiders… that's why we're doing a lot more phoning. (Sarah, organiser, Aging Together)*

In contrast, other GRCO organisers spoke of their assessment that there was need in their communities that they were unable to meet. They emphasised the challenges they faced in trying to meet the needs of their communities, particularly in relation to the impact of social isolation and the difficulties created by being unable to meet in person.

> *The three ladies who had babies in lockdown are homesick. It's so hard we can't even help them (Debru, organiser, Welcome Refugee Group).*

> *The [nationality] community come all together every Saturday, meeting for three hours… That is very good before, now that is closing. Now all people stay home… The coronavirus is a very hard time because we need to come together, to eat together, to play together, to stay alive together…Social life is an important thing. (Abdul, organiser, Seaville Refugee Group)*

> *We're a very face-to-face and a very agile service. So, we work in the community as much as possible. And at the start of the pandemic, we kind of felt like, that had been taken away from us. Because the building our offices in a closed, the building where we do our drop ins has closed, we couldn't sit down with people and have a conversation. We couldn't kind of do all that tactile, really personal kind of support … So and I think that's it's affected the way we work, obviously, but it's also affected our relationship with the people we serve as well. Because typically, the people we're trying to support*

need that very time labour intensive social input from us. And we're not able to supply that as much as we want at the minute. (Aaran, organiser, Thorne Homeless Project).

GRCO organisers themselves had different perceptions on whether their organisation was managing to meet need. This was based partly on feedback and level of usage, but also on their reflective interpretations based on their knowledge of and relationships with their communities. Some GRCO organisers felt that they were meeting need effectively, while others felt that they were unable to meet some of the need in their communities.

C. Comments from interviewees who were members

A minority of GRCOs in this study were member organisations run directly by and for their members. This meant that the people running the organisation were the same people that it was run for (as opposed to being run for a wider community). This included, for example, choirs, dance groups, churches and self-help groups. These people were able to comment first hand on the impact their organisation's work was having on their lives. For example, choir members spoke about how participation in weekly online choir sessions was helping to meet their love and belonging needs.

The reason I've just started blubbing my eyes out is because I am on my own, in this flat, and without that connection I would still be on my own in this flat. Last night for two hours I felt like I was part of a group again, part of that family. Which is why at the end of the call I never want to leave, my mouse is hovering over 'end meeting', and I'm not going to go until everyone else has gone. I'm going to squeeze every last moment of potential human contact out of this. "You hang up, no no you hang up." (Lauren, member, Firefly Choir).

It retains that kind of, you know, we see people and there's that real thing about being together…When we finish, I'm just on top of the world again. (Steve, member, Larks Folk Choir).

In contrast, members of other groups spoke about how they were missing their usual engagement with their group, and that the support they had been getting from the group was not replicated during lockdown.

A lot of our community is built on the fact that we meet strangers and we dance with them. And we build connections for those three minutes. And I think a lot of people are missing it. I was probably dancing five to seven days a week. So, it is a very difficult transition … I'm not dancing five to seven days a week anymore. So, I think people are missing that connection with other people. (Issy, organiser, Swing Together).

Feedback from group members offered a similar picture to that of organisers—that some GRCOs were more effective than others at meeting basic need during the pandemic. While some felt that their group was a very important part of their wellbeing during lockdown, others focussed their accounts more on what had been lost for them as a result of no longer getting the support they had been getting before lockdown.

D. Overall effectiveness of GRCO work during lockdown

Based on a review of these forms of evidence about GRCO work during lockdown, I have assessed the extent to which different groups appear to have been effective in meeting need in their communities. My analysis is that 29 participating GRCOs had success in helping to meet people's basic needs during lockdown. Four worked to meet people's basic needs but were unable to do so effectively. Two stopped operating altogether. In the next section I present example cases from each of these types of organisations in order to demonstrate ways that organisations met need (and evidence that they did), plus ways in which organisations struggled to meet need.

3. Case studies

I now present short case studies of 12 different GRCOs, in order in order to present evidence of GRCOs' meeting need effectively during the lockdown, and also evidence that some GRCOs were unable to do this. I have selected cases to demonstrate the variety of different types of GRCO that worked toward meeting need, and also to provide background information for some GRCOs that are referred to in comparative discussion later in the thesis.

TABLE 1 GRCOS MEETING OF BASIC NEED DURING LOCKDOWN

	TOTAL NUMBER OF CASES	**CASES PRESENTED**
GRCOS THAT MET BASIC NEED DURING LOCKDOWN	**29**	**9**
GRCOS THAT STRUGGLED TO MEET BASIC NEED DURING LOCKDOWN	**4**	**2**
GRCOS THAT STOPPED OPERATING DURING LOCKDOWN	**2**	**1**

A. GRCOs that met basic need during lockdown

These organisations had high demand for their services, which suggests that those services were needed by those who used them. In some cases, they received referrals from other organisations, which suggests that they were filling a gap in provision. Where I interviewed a group member/participant, they reported ways in which their personal needs were being met by the GRCO. Where I interviewed an organiser or worker, they reported receiving feedback that suggested that their work was helping to meet people's basic needs.

a) Get Active Together

Get Active Together is a small charity focussed on encouraging people to take physical exercise. Before the pandemic, they ran a walking-buddy scheme, through which unpaid befrienders joined older people on short walks. When they had to suspend their face-to-face scheme during lockdown, befrienders were concerned that the older people the charity usually supported would be at increased risk of loneliness. They therefore began offering support phone-calls instead. Through making these calls, befrienders learned that older people were having trouble accessing their medications due to being unable to go to pharmacies. The organisation responded by organising a prescription collection and delivery service, which also expanded to include a wider group of those who needed this support. Having set up these services, Get Active Together were approached by the local authority (LA) and local infrastructure organisation (LIO)[35] to request that they expand them to support a larger number of people, which they did.

> *Hannah (organiser): [The prescription delivery service] has grown massively in a short space time. We're really doing a lot... [LIO] were saying "we're having loads of phone calls with people whose prescriptions aren't being delivered" ... The council then asked if we would take on some more welfare calls. So, this is people that have phoned the council helpline number and they've been offered a regular welfare call. So, we've taken over 120 referrals from the council.*

Get Active Together found that their services were in high demand, and that other organisations directed people to them to meet unmet need. This suggests they were effective in helping to meet physiological need through prescription delivery, plus love and belonging need through welfare calls.

[35] A local infrastructure organisation is a voluntary sector organisation whose purpose is to provide support and services to the voluntary and community sector across a geographical area.

b) Dinners for All

Dinners for All is a meal delivery project that began in March 2020, at the beginning of lockdown. It was initiated by Jill and her husband, who own a café. They were concerned that their regular older customers had relied on the café for hot meals and would be unable to feed themselves well. They were also concerned that there may be people in the community who were facing food poverty and needed access to free food. For both of these reasons, they began giving away free meals from their café. They began doing this as soon as they were aware that the pandemic was going to have a substantial impact on people's lives, and before the formal lockdown had been announced.

> *Jill (organiser): We started to get a sense from our local community that people were very worried and how were people going to manage and get food. Quite quickly we started just giving meals away … just started saying to people, "If you know anyone who … needs a meal, we've got some food here". We were encouraging people just to come and collect it… A few old people that we know who come in, we knew that they would be vulnerable, that they wouldn't manage to cook.*

Within a few weeks of starting, the project was delivering over 1000 free meals per week to local residents. Jill felt that the project was meeting a need, and received feedback that the meals were making a difference to local people. Dinners for All acted fast toward meeting a local physiological need. This involved setting up a new project and then expanding it quickly. The take up of support and feedback from those receiving support suggested that they were successful in helping to meet physiological need.

c) Woodhouse Community Transport

Woodhouse Community Transport is a charity that provides transport for people who need it in a rural area and runs a community building which includes a low-cost café and a charity shop. Due to the pandemic, many of their previous 'service-users' were unable to leave home. The need for the charity's usual work of getting people from A to B decreased substantially, although they continued to offer transport for medical appointments. Instead of travel, many people now needed support with accessing essential supplies. Woodhouse therefore replaced most of their transport services with a service delivering shopping and prescriptions. They also worked with the ambulance service to provide non-emergency patient transport to relieve strain on statutory services.

> *Karen (trustee): We are now doing shopping…Then the other one we are doing a lot of is prescription delivery…We're still servicing our existing client base, 200 clients, slightly differently than we did before. But we have got about a third more new*

clients… The non-emergency passenger transports—the taxi services they've previously been using all got pulled off to, obviously, support COVID, which is fair enough. So, we've been liaising with the ambulance service on what their requirements are… So, we pick up whatever is necessary.

Woodhouse's shopping and prescription delivery services were well-used during lockdown by both their pre-existing 'service-users 'and new ones. Feedback from users suggested that they were struggling to access other ways of getting supplies (e.g. online shopping), and that Woodhouse's service helped to meet physiological need that would otherwise have potentially been unmet. Referrals from the ambulance service also suggest that their work providing transport for medical appointments helped to meet a need where there would otherwise have been a gap in provision.

d) Greenville Mutual Aid

Greenville Mutual Aid was an informal collective established just before lockdown began with the purpose of meeting emerging needs caused by lockdown. It was set up by a group of residents of a neighbourhood in a city. They distributed fliers to invite people to get in touch if they needed help, and people began to call. Colin described how requests for help started very quickly and continued for several months.

Colin (organiser): Very much in the early days of the COVID outbreak, what happened was we had a local WhatsApp group… somebody on that group said, 'I think that we need to be putting something in place to help out people in the local area, you know, that's something that we should do'. So, what we did at that point was we put together some leaflets, and we got them printed out… we needed to get over 1000 done for the area. So, they were they were distributed round in the local patch… people that would ring you up and, you know, asking for something. The first contact that we had…she was like, I just need to have some [list of food items] … That was probably at about 8:40 on Tuesday night…the woman got her stuff by 20 past nine (Colin, organiser, Greenville Mutual Aid).

Greenville Mutual Aid received a lot of calls and had high demand for their support, particularly for shopping and prescription delivery. They began receiving requests for help very soon after distributing the fliers. They supported people who needed short-term help due to self-isolation and also provided ongoing support throughout lockdown for people who were shielding, which continued after lockdown had finished. The council began referring prescription delivery requests to them, further increasing demand. This high demand for support suggests that they were doing something that was helping to meet a local physiological need.

e) Black Families Project

Black Families Project is a small charity aiming to address inequality of access to health, education and social care experienced by racialised and minoritised communities. They lobby local statutory services and provide direct support to the community (including health and wellbeing activities, counselling services, a cancer support programme, and activities aimed at reducing isolation in older people, which includes a lunch club). During lockdown they had particular concerns about the wellbeing of their older members. This was because they had already been working to address social isolation amongst this group, as well as to ensure they ate healthy hot meals during the week. Disruption to this support would leave older people vulnerable to exacerbated isolation and lack of access to healthy food. They therefore launched a hot meal delivery service and began providing regular phone calls to older people in the community.

> *Hazel (manager): A lot of our operational work has changed, because it really consisted of bringing people together addressing social isolation–all the opposite that COVID-19 told you to do. The older generation...were more vulnerable. They couldn't go out to the luncheon clubs. People may have been given them bags of produce, but many of those that we service couldn't cook or have dementia or poor mobility. So, we started, for want of a better term, Meals on Wheels...We've got a programme called checking in. So, we ring some of those that are much more vulnerable, and to check in with them to make sure that they're okay, they're doing okay.*

Once they had begun providing hot meal delivery, Black Families Project found that demand grew substantially. They received requests for help directly from older people and their families, plus referrals from GPs and other statutory services. In three months, they went from delivering 15 meals per week to delivering over 120 per week. This suggests that they had identified a physiological need and that their response to it was effective in helping to meet it. Meanwhile, through their 'checking-in' programme, Black Families Project identified people who needed further statutory support (e.g., adult social care) and were able to make appropriate referrals, thereby helping to meet safety need. They also received phone calls from some of their older 'service-users' (who pro-actively called rather than waiting to be called). This suggests that offering telephone support was helping to meet love and belonging need.

f) Firefly Choir

Firefly is an established choir with 40 members. I spoke with Lauren who has been a member since the choir began 25 years ago. She explained that the choir has two main functions—to produce good music and to be a supportive community.

> *Lauren (member): We can sing…there's a lot of technical musical stuff happening. But I'll say to [the Musical Director (MD)] we're a family…a lot of us are about the camaraderie and the love we all feel for each other because we have been rehearsing together for 25 years.*

When the new context of a lockdown meant that the choir could no longer meet to sing together, they established new activities that prioritised connecting with one another to provide mutual support and community by meeting on Zoom. It was not possible to experience singing together as they usually did because audio latency meant that, while singing, they had to mute their microphones. However, they chose to continue meeting weekly anyway. Lauren told me that, for her, this was primarily because the community was a vital source of support during the crisis and spending time together helped her to manage loneliness and isolation.

> *Lauren: I love these people. They are my family… These people are my family. And to not see them would be really sad. We're certainly not doing it for the musical enjoyment because it's really frustrating and you can't hear everybody… It's momentum… It's that kind of like, 'what would happen if we stopped for up to three months?' It would be awful… It's part of the fabric of our week, Thursday night is choir night and it's been like that for 25 years. Every Thursday, pretty much almost without fail. So why do we go? Because it's unimaginable to think that we might not. Ain't nothing gonna stop us. And one of the songs we sing, almost every rehearsal, is 'Ain't no mountain'. And yeah, fuck the virus, we've got a choir to go to. And it's that connection with people that I love, people that I truly love, and I would really miss them.*

For Lauren, the choir was important for meeting her love and belonging needs. She described it as part of the 'fabric' of her week and expressed that not attending would be 'awful', suggesting that she experienced it as something of very high importance in her life. She felt that maintaining that 'momentum' was important for her wellbeing. Choir sessions also provided a source of connection and interaction during the isolation of the pandemic. This suggests that Firefly was helping to meet love and belonging needs at a time that those needs were particularly challenging to meet due to the requirements of lockdown.

g) Hilltown Community Centre

Hilltown Community Centre is a long-established community organisation based in a rural area. They provide a wide range of different types of support and service for local people, including youth work, Meals on Wheels, a lunch club for older people, a community café, and specialist support for migrants. Janet, the centre manager, explained that their ethos is to provide support according to what is needed. This involves adapting their work to respond to the particular issues and problems being faced by specific people who come to them for help. This might include, for example, helping people to fill out benefit claim forms, providing advocacy, and other similar types of immediate practical assistance for those who need it. Throughout lockdown, Hilltown Community Centre focussed on meeting people's immediate physiological and safety needs. They did this through provision of emergency food parcels, Meals on Wheels, and shopping and prescription delivery, plus making welfare visits to those at risk of harm and engaging young people through detached youth work.

> *We started with people that had accessed our services previously. So, whether that was through the over-60s group, the luncheon club, the Meals on Wheels… We've also increased our detached work as well with the young people. We have a real problem with young people jumping off a railway bridge into the canal, which is extremely dangerous, and taking drugs and what have you in the local pack. So, we've increased the detached youth work as well. (Janet, manager, Hilltown Community Centre).*

Hilltown Community Centre used their pre-existing knowledge of and relationships with the community to assess who was at risk of harm through unmet physiological and safety need. Their services were well-used and in high demand, and they received feedback from local people that their help was more effective at meeting need than the local authority's own services.

h) Energise

Energise is a charity that usually provides social and support activities for older people in a rural area. During lockdown they delivered essential supplies to those who needed them, created information packs about how to keep safe during the pandemic, provided befriending phone calls, and partnered with their local infrastructure organisation and a local restaurant to deliver cooked meals to older people who were unable to cook. They also extended their remit to include younger people because they were concerned that younger people were experiencing poverty and not receiving appropriate help. They did outreach work to low-income neighbourhoods in order to identify households that were in poverty to refer them for an LA food voucher scheme.

> *Diane (paid worker): We started doing shopping and prescription deliveries for people… probably for about 15 people me and the volunteers have shopped for every*

week for them for various reasons. The information thing, the befriending phone calls… the customers have grown so much… I came across a lady… her husband couldn't work… So, she's one of the people who's got food vouchers.

Diane described how Energise were trying to target resources at those who needed them most. They had very high demand for befriending phone calls, which suggested the need they were aiming to meet was real and that the service they were providing was thus useful for helping to meet it. Meanwhile, their outreach work helped them to identify who was in food poverty, which helped them to ensure that their efforts to alleviate food poverty were going to help meet physiological need.

i) Manon Women's Centre

Manon Women's Centre provides social, emotional and educational support to women. Their sessions are open to any woman who wants to attend, and their 'service-users' include women who are experiencing domestic abuse, women who are survivors of male violence, women with significant mental ill-health, and women who have recently come out of prison. The ethos of the organisation is to bring women together to form a mutually supportive community. Before the pandemic, these women relied on regularly attending the Women's Centre for coffee mornings, support groups and other activities. During the pandemic, the organisation offered a programme of video-mediated online activities to help sustain the community. They were concerned that some of their regular users would be particularly vulnerable to harm due to isolation, so they also supported those women through a buddy programme.

Yana (manager): And at this particular moment we're actually supporting 160 women twice a week… And then we were fortunate, we got some funding for emergency counselling. So, we can then feed them, if needs be, straight into more to more support…We're running the Spanish group through Zoom. We're running mindfulness. We're running a poetry group. We're running a meditation group.

Manon's online groups were well attended, which suggested that they were offering something useful to women in need of support, and feedback about the one-to-one buddy scheme was that it was vitally important to women's survival during the pandemic (see page 97). This suggests they were helping to meet basic need.

B. GRCOs that struggled to meet basic need during lockdown

Four of the GRCOs that participated in this study aimed to help meet people's needs during lockdown but struggled to do so. This included two new mutual aid groups and two self-organised refugee support groups. The new mutual aid groups established themselves to help meet people's

physiological needs through shopping and prescription delivery but found they had little uptake of their support. The refugee groups were organised by and for communities that had significant unmet physiological and love and belonging needs during lockdown, but they found they were unable to meet these needs. One of each of these types of groups is presented here.

a) Commonthorpe Neighbourhood Support

Commonthorpe Neighbourhood Support was a new group made up of residents of housing association estate, most of whom were already members of either the estate's Residents' Association or its community events organising group. They set themselves up before the beginning of lockdown because of a concern that people on the estate may need practical support during the pandemic. They began by buying a mobile phone and distributing fliers to the neighbourhood advising people to call if they needed assistance or if they could offer to help others. They organised helpers according to the area of the estate they lived on so that they could be matched with people living very close to them.

> *Liz (organiser): Several people independently thought 'what should we do to support people?'... So, a group maybe of five thought shall we get together... So, we got a leaflet out really quick, we printed out a leaflet in our own homes, and got those distributed..., volunteers who came in from a particular quarter would be put in contact with one or two people in that quarter who would then link up. And then any calls coming into the single number would be linked into a coordinator depending on what quarter.*

Commonthorpe Neighbourhood Support received few requests for support. Most of those that contacted them were people offering to help. In total they received four requests for support, and over 30 'volunteers'. I interviewed two organisers from this group, and they felt that they wanted to help meet need in their community but were struggling to work out an effective way to do so.

b) Seaville Refugee Group

Seaville Refugee Group is a community group run by and for North African refugees living in a city. Their main purpose is to support their members to develop reciprocal relationships with one another so that they have a support network. Their activities include sports sessions, shared meals, women's activities and mother-tongue classes for children. Their members, particularly women, are reliant on the group for social interaction and support. Abdul, a committee member, explained that women in the community are particularly isolated due to being less likely to go out to work and (relatedly) less likely to speak English. The group members tended to live on the outskirts of the city, far from one another, and many of the families could not afford to pay for bus fares for women to visit one another whilst at home alone during the week. The group had received grant

funding to pay for bus fares to and from their weekly activities, plus lunch for everyone. This meant that families could meet together and support one another regularly.

The community found lockdown extremely difficult and disruptive. Abdul explained that loss of income, combined with children being off school and the cessation of the group's weekend activities, was putting huge strain on household budgets and on people's wellbeing. The group members were struggling to pay for food and were also struggling with isolation and poor mental health. The group had very limited material resources, limited English, few local contacts outside of their community, and limited knowledge of British systems and processes. All of this meant they struggled to adapt their work during lockdown. They provided shopping delivery to single mothers and supported the community to stay in touch with one another via WhatsApp. However, Abdul emphasised that mutual support and community was fundamental to people's survival and welfare, and that the combination of poverty and isolation brought by the pandemic was causing profound harm. He said that, even before the pandemic, it was harder to maintain community than it had been in the group's country of origin, where he described a culture in which neighbours looked after one another and people spent a lot of time at large gatherings. Seaville Refugee Group had tried to replicate some of this culture in their activities, but this was made impossible by lockdown, which was very distressing for the group's members.

> *Abdul (committee member): The coronavirus is a very hard time because we are needing to come together, to eat together, to play together, to stay alive together… Now you stay home, it's very difficult. The money is not enough also in the house… Because children and family staying school and work. Now stay home means using more money. Cannot get that more money. Shopping, for example, cannot get enough shopping, cannot work, cannot do anything, cannot get any more. For example, people getting benefits, that benefits is not enough… It is very stressful. Just stay home every time, all day, stay home. All people, stay together, not like before… The community came all together every Saturday, meeting for three hours. And there were sandwiches, cooking, playing with children, learning language. Now we cannot do it that because coronavirus is stopping that… that is very good before, now that is closing. We created the WhatsApp group… Speaking with every people, if you have problems… that is our culture. We come together; we eat together… And now we cannot get that life, because of coronavirus… We do shopping for a woman, you know she have children here, she don't have husband, we do her shopping and take it to her house… We can't do it for everybody, just single mums. We get the children's school meal vouchers… and go and buy for them. We leave in front of the door, not entering. After that she collect and she put in her house.*

The organisers of Seaville Refugee Group worked hard during lockdown to try to provide as much support as they could to their members. However, they themselves were struggling profoundly with poverty and isolation and had very limited resources. Overall, the group organisers were aware that people in the community had unmet need but were very limited in their ability to respond in ways that met this need.

C. GRCOs that stopped activities altogether during lockdown

I interviewed members of three groups that stopped their activities altogether during lockdown. All three of these groups were long-running community groups that brought people together who shared a common interest or activity. I present one as an example here.

a) Crossover Craft Group

Crossover Craft Group is a long-running craft group attended by women in a rural area. Most of the members are retired. I spoke with Joan, who has been attending the group for over 20 years. She explained that the group had completely stopped running during lockdown. This was because they could no longer meet in person and the members did not have the technical skills or equipment to use video-call technology. She had spoken to one member on the phone and had exchanged a small number of emails with others, but the group had mostly been out of touch with one another for several months. Joan, who lives alone, told me that attending the group each week is an important part of her social life and support system and that she was missing the weekly connection with other people very much. She said she did not have independent relationships with the other attendees, so without the structure of the weekly meetings it was difficult to maintain the support network.

> *Joan (member): I belong to Crossover Craft Group. I joined them in 1998… So, I've been there since that time… There's 12 of us all together, probably only up to nine come on at any time. It is a weekly group, and it meets for two and a half hours on a Tuesday morning… we are all retired… So obviously we've lost some to old age along the way. Otherwise, I think most people have stayed… It's a lovely group. Especially when I've been stressed out in the past. It's a really cosy place to go somehow, because they are all very friendly. understanding people… In lockdown, we just stopped. And nothing was happening at all between us, although one member did phone me up to see how I was, I think because she knew I lived alone, and we just had a chat. And that was that. And then there was nothing. And it was through me emailing most of them with a photograph of something I had completed… that started chat between people and other people put up photos of what they were doing, but I suspect it will subside again, because there's not much more we can say. But it was rather nice. Having a chat sort*

of thing, even if it was by email between us… I have never made a particular friend or any of them. We just meet up and chat about anything.

Rose: Do you think people are missing each other?

Joan: Very much. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah, very much. Yes. It'll be nice when we can get back together again… I'm afraid I think we are of an age where we couldn't manage [video calls]. I couldn't do it. I think quite a few other people wouldn't be able to do it.

Joan found that, without the regular structure of weekly meetings, the support network she gained from her craft group could not be sustained. The group had been helping to meet her need for belonging, and during lockdown it stopped doing so.

D. Summary of cases

I have presented cases to demonstrate the range of experiences of different GRCOs during lockdown. Most GRCOs in this study met physiological, safety, and/or love and belonging needs. This supports wider findings that community organisations and 'volunteers' provided vital support to people during the pandemic. Some GRCOs that had, before the pandemic, been supporting people's safety and love and belonging needs found that they were less able to do so during lockdown because of the inherent social isolation, but nonetheless provided important support to people. A few GRCOs were unable to meet need effectively. This included new mutual aid groups that received few requests for support, and pre-existing refugee groups whose members and organisers struggled with poverty and isolation during lockdown. Finally, some long-running community groups stopped their activities during lockdown, which meant that where they had previously been supporting people's love and belonging needs, they were no longer able to do so.

4. Conclusion

This chapter has provided an overview of the work done by GRCOs toward the end of meeting physiological, safety and love and belonging deficiency needs. I have provided a thematic account of the various means through which GRCOs aimed to meet these needs. These included shopping and prescription delivery, provision of free food and cooked meals, transport to and from healthcare appointments, safeguarding, provision of Covid-19 information, companionship, mutual support opportunities, shared creative projects, and provision of feel-good-factor deliveries. I have evaluated the extent to which different GRCOs were effective at meeting need and concluded that the majority were effective. This finding is supported by the literature on responses to the crisis of the first lockdown (Acheson et al., 2022; Chevée, 2022; Fernandes-Jesus et al., 2021; Harris, 2021; Kavada, 2022; Macmillan, 2020; Mao et al., 2021; McBride et al., 2022; McCabe, Wilson, & Macmillan, 2020; McCabe, Wilson, & Paine, 2020; Rendall et al., 2022; Tiratelli & Kaye, 2020). A small number of GRCOs in this study were unable to meet need effectively. This finding opens up a further question: *why* were some organisations more able to meet need than others? This question is addressed in the next chapter.

VI. “We shouldn't expect people to fit into services, we should develop services that address the needs of the people.” The relational response process of need-meeting.

We have seen (chapter V) that grassroots community organisations (GRCOs) acted to try to help meet physiological, safety, and love and belonging needs during the first months of the pandemic in England and Wales. Most of the GRCOs in this study were successful at helping to meet these basic needs. A small minority of participating groups were not able to act in ways that were effective at meeting need. We have also seen (chapter II) that grassroots action was generally more effective at responding to the changing circumstances of the pandemic in the UK than statutory organisations were. Explanation is needed as to why some organisations were more effective than others at meeting need during the crisis of the early pandemic. This chapter presents a comparative analysis aiming to develop such an explanation.

In the first half of the chapter, I present two comparative analyses. The first is a comparison of two mutual aid groups that organised themselves in very similar ways. One met a lot of need and the other met little need. On the basis of this comparison, I argue that meeting need requires both *identifying* need and *responding* to it. I then consider GRCO accounts of their own work in comparison to their (negative) perceptions of the work of statutory services (SSs) and professionalised voluntary sector organisations (PVSOs). GRCO accounts suggest that GRCOs acted more quickly than SSs and PVCOs in response to the crisis, and that they were more able to adjust their work to meet the particular needs of different people and communities. These claims are supported by the timeline of statutory intervention, and by secondary sources and empirical literature. Comparing the responses of GRCOs to those of SSs and PVSOs leads to a conclusion that effective need-meeting requires identifying and responding to it *in its temporal and relational specificity*.

The second half of the chapter engages with the dataset as a whole in order to explore the work that is involved in identifying and responding to need in its specificity. Identifying need is, of course, necessary in order to respond to it, but I argue that the reverse is also true—that

responding to need in its specificity involves relating to people in a way that allows improved understanding and identification of diverse and changing needs. I therefore suggest that effective need-meeting involves an ongoing relational response process in which *acting toward the end of meeting need is itself a mechanism of identification of need*. The chapter concludes with a presentation of the core theory of the thesis: *the relational response process of need-meeting*.

1. Identifying and responding to need in its specificity

Among participants in this study were three new mutual aid groups that were set up in similar ways to one another but were very different in their effectiveness at meeting need. Through comparing two of these groups, I note that meeting need requires both *identifying* need and *responding* to it. I then consider the differences between the responses of GRCOs and the responses of SSs and PVSOs. GRCO organisers were generally frustrated with the ineffective response of SSs and PVSOs. I evaluate their concerns with reference to wider evidence and conclude that GRCOs were faster to respond to changing circumstances, and more able to engage with particularity of need (rather than applying one-size-fits-all models). I argue that this was because GRCOs were better able to engage with need in its *specificity*. It therefore appears to be the case that in order to meet need effectively, organisations must both *identify need in its specificity* and *respond in a way that engages with that specificity*.

A. Identifying and responding to need: A tale of two mutual aid groups

This study included in-depth interviews with three different new mutual aid groups. Of these, one was very effective at meeting need—Greenville Mutual Aid. The other two—Commonthorpe Neighbourhood Support and Pangton Mutual Aid—had much less take-up of their offer of support to their communities, and the organisers felt that they had low impact on people's needs. As a first step to understanding the necessary conditions for an organisation to meet need, I provide a detailed comparison of Greenville Mutual Aid and Commonthorpe Neighbourhood Support. An overview of these groups has already been presented on pages 104 (Greenville Mutual Aid) and 109 (Commonthorpe Neighbourhood Support).

These two mutual aid groups were both set up very early in the pandemic, before the government announced a lockdown. The groups were established when residents in neighbourhoods contacted one another and shared concerns that people in their neighbourhood may need support with access to food and medicine during the pandemic. They aimed to organise themselves to help meet this possible need by establishing a structure through which local people in need could be matched with those able to help. Both organisations began by purchasing a mobile phone and distributing fliers to local homes, asking people to contact them if they either needed practical support or could offer practical support to others. Both organised themselves into local clusters so that those who

requested support would be matched with helpers living close by to them. Both organisations provided food shopping and prescription delivery services. They both had members with access to printers for publicity, and they were able to easily fundraise for the little expenditure they had. They used the internet for meetings and communication, which was easily accessible to their members.

Greenville Mutual Aid found that local people began asking for support very quickly after their leaflets were distributed. This included immediate requests from people who were self-isolating because they had Covid-19, and ongoing requests from people who were shielding throughout lockdown. They matched people who had offered support with those who needed it, which allowed relationships to develop between neighbours, who were able to learn about the specific needs of those asking for help.

> *It turned into a relationship…Like I've got this lady that lives around the corner from us and we've been doing her shopping. And we have to go down to the Asian superstore to get it, which had been…been quite an adventure. (Colin, organiser, Greenville Mutual Aid.)*

Once relationships were established, they encouraged neighbours to continue to provide support to one another and did not require that every request came via the centralised phone number.

> *Once those connections have been made between people, why would you come through to a coordinator? You just do it through those connections there. (Colin, organiser, Greenville Mutual Aid)*

This way of working meant that those with ongoing need for help received support from someone who came to know them personally and could be called upon directly. This meant that those in need of longer-term support continued to receive it until they no longer needed it.

> *Now we're, 14th of July, and for all intents and purposes, lockdown is over. I've got this lady that lives around the corner from us. And we've been doing her shopping… And like even now, this week, she asked us for some shopping…It's doing something for her. (Colin, organiser, Greenville Mutual Aid).*

Commonthorpe Neighbourhood Support also responded very quickly to the pandemic and made themselves available to provide help for those who might need it. However, despite their very similar form of organising, demand for their support was much lower. Only four people asked for help. This meant that there was little opportunity for providing either immediate help or developing relationships with those that may have needed longer term support. Liz, an organiser, explained that other members of her group wanted to produce more publicity because they

believed people were not calling because they no longer had the original flier. Liz thought it was possible that the reason people were not calling is because they did not need help.

> *We've had four calls for help. And they've been very satisfied with it. So, after several weeks we reviewed it a bit and people thought people have forgotten the number they don't know where to ring, we need to send another leaflet with the phone number. And I was like what evidence have we that people are sat there. They might be but how do we know that's why people aren't ringing in? It might be because they don't need to. (Liz, organiser, Commonthorpe Neighbourhood Support.)*

She also considered the possibility that the approach the group had taken of asking people to phone for help might not be an effective way to identify need, because people might be reluctant to ask for help from strangers.

> *I wasn't convinced people would feel able to ask for help from those strange people…it takes a lot for people to ask for help from other people. Would I ring a number and ask for help? I'm not sure I would. (Liz, organiser, Commonthorpe Neighbourhood Support).*

Evidence shows that people who need social and care support do not always ask for it (P. A. Miller et al., 2016; Roe et al., 2001), although Greenville Mutual Aid received plenty of requests for help, by using a similar approach. There were, however, at least two potentially significant differences between the two groups' circumstances and responses.

First, they were based in different locations, and their communities may have had different needs from one another. Research suggests that people living in areas with higher levels of deprivation needed more support during lockdown than those living in areas with lower levels of deprivation (M. Jones et al., 2020). Greenville Mutual Aid was based in an area higher on the index of multiple deprivation than Commonthorpe Mutual Aid (although both were in the third least deprived areas) (UK Local Area, 2015). It is therefore possible that the community supported by Greenville Mutual Aid had a higher level of need, and Commonthorpe Neighbourhood Support were trying to meet a need that simply did not exist.

Secondly, although their approaches were very similar, the publicity used by the groups differed. Where Commonthorpe simply advertised a phone number with an offer for help, the leaflet that Greenville put through doors included the faces and names of the group's organisers.

> *We got about 1200 leaflets done, which had the photographs and the details of the coordinators (Colin, organiser, Greenville Mutual Aid.)*

Liz from Commonthorpe Mutual Aid suggested that a reason that people were not asking her group for help was that it was not easy to phone an unknown number to seek assistance from an unknown person, and that people prefer to seek support from those they are familiar with. This hypothesis was supported by the experience of Hilltown Community Centre, who reported that their established community organisation received more requests for help than a new, faceless helpline set up by the local authority (LA). Further research would be needed to establish whether mutual aid groups that put their faces and names on their fliers received more requests for help. If this were the case, the difference in effectiveness between the two groups could be explained by the details of their response.

Despite not having a conclusion about the causal factors in these cases, comparing these mutual aid groups helps to highlight that there are two different but related necessary parts to meeting need. These are 1) *identifying* need accurately, and 2) *responding* in a way that helps to meet that need. It is not possible to ascertain which of these caused a problem for Commonthorpe Neighbourhood Support—it could be that the need did not exist, or that the fliers were not effective. We can, however, establish that both are necessary for meeting need.

B. Specificity of need: comparing statutory and professionalised voluntary sector organisations with GRCOs

Literature on responses to the pandemic in the UK suggests that GRCOs were more effective at meeting changing needs in the crisis than the state and PVSOs (Chevée, 2022; Harris, 2021; Kavada, 2022; Macmillan, 2020; Mao et al., 2021; McCabe, Wilson, & Macmillan, 2020; Rendall et al., 2022; Tiratelli & Kaye, 2020), so identifying differences between these approaches is a way to move toward understanding how organisations meet need. In line with this literature, GRCO organisers interviewed for this study generally found that SSs, and in some cases PVSOs, were less effective than GRCOs at meeting basic need during the first lockdown. Many participants commented on their frustrations regarding the ineffective support provided to their communities by national and local government and the professionalised voluntary sector. Twenty-two participating GRCOs were working on issues that relate to the obligations and activities of statutory organisations (such as, for example, supporting people with accessing food and medicine, providing social care, and supporting people living with mental ill-health). Participants from thirteen of these were explicitly critical of the approaches taken by SSs and/or PVSOs, whom they felt were less effective than they were at meeting basic need. This compares to just one GRCO trustee who was explicitly positive about the work of her LA.

There were two overall criticisms that GRCOs made of statutory and professionalised services. These were that they were slow to respond to the crisis and to each individual instance of need,

and inflexible in their one-size-fits-all approach, which meant the support they offered was not always well-fitted to people's actual needs. Before considering what enabled some GRCOs to meet need effectively, I provide an overview of the details of these criticisms, (predominantly from GRCOs provided as cases in chapter V but also from other participants where relevant). I have not interviewed representatives of SSs or PVSOs, which is a limitation to my ability to evaluate GRCO claims (see chapter IX). However, I consider whether wider evidence suggests that GRCO criticisms are well-founded. Statutory sector documents and empirical literature support the GRCO perspective. I suggest that being slow to respond to change and being inflexible in response to the needs of different people and communities, are part of the same phenomenon—a lack of engagement with specificity.

GRCO organisers reported that their response to the crisis of the pandemic had been quicker than the response of statutory organisations, who they felt were too slow to act to meet people's needs. Some GRCOs also made this criticism of professionalised voluntary sector organisations. In contrast, GRCOs in this study reported that they responded quickly to the changing circumstances of lockdown.

> *Quite quickly we started just giving meals away, I think it was before [our café] even closed. (Jill, organiser, Dinners for All.)*
>
> *Suddenly in the week leading up to the lockdown it was obvious that things were going to change overnight… the trustees met, we decided we have to do something. (Leonard, trustee, Treeview Community Transport.)*
>
> *The core team met up on the Monday [15th March 2020] and had to make the decision we were going to close. It was really hard. By the following Monday [22nd March], you can imagine there was quite a lot of hours put into this, we contacted our members. (Yana, founder and manager, Manon Women's Centre.)*
>
> *We were able to change everything really, really quickly, which is one of the advantages of being small and very local. (Diane, paid worker, Energise.)*
>
> *As a small organisation we've been able to adapt quicker. (James, organiser, Hanford LGBT Network).*

In contrast, they found that SSs and PVSOs responded more slowly. Mutual aid groups, for example, reported that LAs, local infrastructure organisations (LIOs) and the NHS Covid-19 Emergency Responder Service (run by PVSO the Royal Voluntary Service) were slow to organise support for local people, and that by the time they got involved, GRCOs were already meeting people's needs.

We…started our group…certainly a couple of weeks before the council got involved…the council seemed a bit late to the party. It was like, well, you know, we've done this ourselves, so why do we need your help with this? (Colin, organiser, Greenville Mutual Aid.)

There was a lot of confusion about how things would be working with other services, like the council, for instance, or [LIO] and… the NHS Volunteer Service… And I feel like mutual aid groups probably got there first and actually none of the other organisations have really done much. And if they have, it was too late. (Adam, organiser, Pangton Mutual Aid.)

In some cases, GRCOs attempted to work in partnership with statutory organisations but found that the statutory sector's inability to act quickly made it difficult to respond to need effectively. When Jill had the idea to set up Dinners for All, she contacted her LA to offer to provide meals if they could identify who needed them and co-ordinate delivery. She found that the LA did not respond quickly or with useful support, so the group decided to go ahead without them in order to meet urgent need. Similarly, Janet explained that Hilltown Community Centre started working in partnership with the LA but had to split off from them because the LA took too long to make decisions, which hampered Hilltown Community Centre's ability to respond quickly and effectively to the crisis.

We quite quickly got in touch with the council and said we can do something. We wanted them to identify a group of people that were in need, and we wanted them to deliver. It didn't really happen from them… it felt a bit chaotic. So, we just decided that we wanted to just continue with what we were doing… just getting some food out to those people who didn't have a meal, which was many. (Jill, organiser, Dinners for All.)

We had [council] staff and ourselves, and the leisure centre was used as a base for all the emergency food rations. And then all of the referrals would come through a dashboard to us. And it was a nightmare really, Rose. It was an absolute nightmare… They had so many structures and procedures, and the decision-making would take five days to a week to make the simplest of decisions… So, we quickly separated the two organisations… I honestly think they just should have left it all to us. (Janet, manager, Hilltown Community Centre)

These GRCOs found that it was not possible to respond quickly to the rapidly changing situation whilst working in partnership with LAs. In both cases, the statutory organisations did eventually provide some support or resources, but the GRCOs found that, in order to ensure need did not go

unmet for several days or weeks, they had to act earlier than statutory organisations were in a position to help them. This experience was echoed by other GRCOs who felt that they were relied upon to meet the needs of people that the state was leaving without support due to being slow to respond at the beginning of lockdown. When Get Active Together identified that older people were not able to access medication, they moved fast to meet the need and observed that the NHS had not done so. Similarly, community food project Eat Together reported that the LA was referring clients to them for emergency food because they had made no provision of their own.

> *With prescriptions… we were able to be quite quick on the ball with that… But the bigger organisations, we have noticed, are… not being able to be so responsive. (Hannah, organiser, Get Active Together.)*

> *They were referring loads of people to us. We'd get calls from Children's Services, from social workers, because they had no choice but to refer people to us because we were the only people on call for emergency food parcels. (Sacha, volunteer, Eat Together.)*

This experience of acting to fill gaps in state provision is evidence to support the anarchist understanding of mutual aid (outlined in chapter II), which is that when there is a break in state control over need-meeting, people will take the opportunity to support one another (Spade, 2020).

GRCOs also found that, once set up, some statutory services functioned too slowly to be useful to people in immediate need. Colin from Greenville Mutual Aid explained that his LA set up a system of receiving requests for support to its own central phone number and referring them out to neighbourhood mutual aid groups. He found that the LA were slow to process requests for help and that people who called the mutual aid groups directly received support much more quickly than those who called the LA number. A similar problem was reported by Hannah at Get Active Together. She said her LA was not responding to referrals for people who needed prescriptions delivering.

> *There was a council number that got set up, and people would ring that number, and then they would… get a local response put together… I felt that the turnaround that you got through the council, compared to [mutual-aid groups] … I think we would probably work to… 12 hours for you to ring us up to getting whatever it is that you wanted— the council there were people that were hanging around for… three, four days. (Colin, organiser, Greenville Mutual Aid.)*

> *[LIO] had this experience where they had referred some people to the council to have prescriptions delivered and that hadn't happened. So, they were kind of in a bit of a panic about, we've got all these people and it's not happening… They were really fed up*

with the council, they refer people in and haven't heard back. (Hannah, organiser, Get Active Together.)

Being slow to respond to requests for support with immediate survival needs made the LA services less useful, and as a result, GRCOs continued to run their own services even after larger organisations had set up parallel ones. Colin explained that Greenville Mutual Aid continued to run their own shopping support phone number and continued to receive calls. Hannah said that, because the LA was so slow to pick up prescription requests, the LIO began referring requests to Get Active Together instead.

GRCOs accounts suggest that GRCOs were more able to quickly respond to fast changing need than were SSs and, in some cases, PVSOs. This perspective is supported by studies of grassroots activity during the pandemic. Tiratelli and Kaye (2020) argue that mutual aid groups in particular were necessary for enabling the government's self-isolation and shielding programmes, and that without their fast response the suppression of Covid-19 would have been much harder and many more would not have survived lockdown. A report by Power to Change found that the speed at which community groups began operating was a key feature of their response to the crisis of the pandemic and that this set them apart from other organisations, particularly statutory organisations (Alakeson & Brett, 2020). New Local Government Network (NLGN) interviewed members of mutual aid groups and local authority officers and found that "traditional public services… simply cannot compete with the 'agility' of community groups, who have been able to uncover need and get working almost immediately" (Tiratelli & Kaye, 2020, p. 19). This difference was reported by local authority representatives as well as by mutual aid groups themselves. An overwhelming majority—95%—of council leaders and chief executives reported that community groups played a significant or very significant role in the Covid-19 response within their LA jurisdiction (New Local Government Network, 2020), and some LA officials referred people to GRCOs for support (Sanderson Bellamy et al., 2021). Large professionalised charities were also unable to respond as quickly as GRCOs and were caught up in time-consuming systems and processes (Harris, 2021) while small charities were found to be more agile and quick to adapt (Dayson et al., 2021). National government was also slower than GRCOs to respond to the crisis. Many mutual aid groups were established by mid-March (Kavada, 2022)—over a week *before* the beginning of lockdown. In contrast, the government's scheme to deliver food parcels to the 2.1 million people who had been advised to stay at home for 12 weeks to protect themselves from contracting Covid-19 (Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government, 2020a) had delivered just over 1 million boxes by the end of April (Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government, 2020b). Each box was designed to feed one person for a week (Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government, 2020b), which means that, over a month into the

lockdown, the government had delivered less than one twelfth of the food necessary to sustain the population whose need it set out to meet. Similarly, a comparison of the NHS Volunteer Responders Scheme— through which members of the public volunteered to help meet need during the pandemic—and the mutual-aid movement found that one key difference was speed (Kavada, 2022). The government began recruiting volunteers to the scheme on 24th March 2020 (Krekel, 2021). This was a day after lockdown began, twelve days after those with symptoms were instructed to self-isolate (The Health Foundation, 2022), and over a week after many mutual aid groups began organising (Kavada, 2022). Meanwhile, in their evaluation of the NHS Volunteer Responder Scheme, the Royal Voluntary Service (which organised the scheme) found that the task response rate required improvement (Royal Voluntary Service, 2020). Their improvement target was 48 hours to respond to each request for help (e.g. requests for shopping delivery). This target response rate is substantially slower than the speed reported by Greenville Mutual Aid group of under 12 hours. Overall, GRCOs perception that they organised themselves more quickly than SSs and PVCOs, and that they responded faster to requests for support, appears to be borne out.

As well as being fast to respond, GRCO organisers reported that their organisations' approaches were characterised by attending to the specific needs of the people and communities they supported.

> *We acknowledge every woman's journey is different. (Yana, manager, Manon Women's Centre).*
>
> *Communities are different. They have different needs. And we can respond to those needs explicitly. Especially in somewhere like [town] that doesn't have the highest level of employment and stuff compared to somewhere like [another town]. It makes sense that we have different structures in place to help different people in different situations. (Sacha, volunteer, Eat Together).*
>
> *If the community has got a need, you do it. It's as simple as that. (Karen, trustee, Woodhouse Community Transport).*

In contrast, they found that SSs and PVSOs ran inflexible services that did not engage with the specific needs of individuals, nor the ways in which different communities and demographics differ from one another. For example, several GRCOs criticised the national government's food parcel scheme, which they felt was poorly targeted and did not engage with individual need appropriately. The parcels were sent to people that the government considered to be clinically vulnerable to Covid-19 (Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government, 2020a). All recipients in the country received similar parcels to one another. A University of Edinburgh analysis of the food parcels revealed that they did not contain ingredients to make satisfying,

enjoyable meals or to meet different cultural or religious requirements and thus that, although they provided calories, they did not meet needs for comfort and care that were under threat by social isolation (McNeill et al., 2022). Janet of Hilltown Community Centre explained that the contents of the parcel were not appropriate for older people in her community.

> *A lot of those vulnerable people are older people, and they've got things like pasta in, and, you know, couscous. I'm not saying that all older people just have meat and two veg, but a lot of the time, it's stuff that they just would not eat. (Janet, manager, Hilltown Community Centre.)*

As well as containing ingredients that did not meet people's specific needs, the parcels were also sent to people who did not require them. Several organisations reported that members of their communities were receiving parcels they did not want or need.

> *I did have a sneak at all our emails that came in over the last couple of days. And a number of those are asking… 'How do we stop the government food parcels?' (Leonard, trustee, Treeview Community Transport.)*

> *The food parcels that were coming out, that seemed to happen from a national level, and it's a bit random… I've heard about people who tried to stop them… I think a lot of money was probably wasted on that. (Diane, paid worker, Energise.)*

> *Those who've had the shielding letters get the food parcels. They're the only ones who do. Some of them have said they don't want them. (Karen, trustee, Woodhouse Community Transport.)*

While government food parcels were being delivered to some people who did not need them, GRCOs felt that some households who should have been supported by the statutory sector were not being. Diane of Energise felt that a blanket approach of supporting only older people was ineffective. She reported that her LA had food vouchers available to alleviate food poverty but that they were struggling to find people to give them to due to only targeting older people, some of whom did not need the help. Energise stepped in and used their local knowledge to help identify people in need more specifically so that the resources could be directed at them.

> *It's a very strange thing for me, because if you think about it, the financial situation for over 70s is no different now to what it was six months ago. They're not in any different financial state but…everybody's throwing things at them…The council said not as many people have come forward [for food vouchers] as they imagined yet… So, what I've done now is, working with the council… There are three streets in two different villages, where it's Housing Association properties. And I think those people could have*

been looked after a lot more than they have… I'm going to do a mail drop in those streets and talk to people… And then we'll identify what the need is from these people, because I just think there's a lot of need that's not being met. And it's not necessarily with the older people. I came across a lady who was a hairdresser, pregnant with two children, and her husband couldn't work and was worried about going back to work, because in case he brought anything back to her, as she was so heavily pregnant… So, she's one of the people who's got food vouchers. (Diane, paid worker, Energise.)

Because GRCOs had relationships with their communities, they were able to better identify who needed support. Several GRCOs were involved in collecting unwanted government food parcels and redistributing the food to those who actually needed it.

We'll get people phone us and say, "The government have sent us this food parcel, can you come and collect it?"… Or they just drop it at the door and say, "Look, this is useless to us". (Janet, manager, Hilltown Community Centre.)

Quite a few older people around here getting food parcels from the council and saying, "I don't really need it"… And so, they bring it and put it on my doorstep. And goes in the food cupboard. And that goes to our homeless friends or to one or two other families we know who are in dire straits. (Ryan, vicar, St. Mary's Church.)

We were getting calls weekly from elderly residents… saying, "We've had a government food parcel dropped in our door. Do you want it? We don't need it". (Aaron, organiser, Thorne Homeless Project)

By only targeting households that the government had designated as clinically vulnerable, statutory services provided support to some people who did not need it and failed to support some people who did. GRCOs found that they were better able to meet the specific different needs of their communities.

This experience was not limited to services provided by the national government. GRCOs also identified that the inflexible policies of LAs and PVSOs meant that some people who needed support were excluded from their services. Janet of Hilltown Community Centre reported that her LA and local infrastructure organisation (LIO) launched a food parcel scheme for those who were shielding and self-isolating, but only made it available to those who were able to pay for it and would not alter this policy depending on need. This meant that those in the highest level of need were possibly left hungry. Hilltown Community Centre responded by creating an additional food distribution service because the LA/LIO provision was not meeting the needs of people in food

poverty. She felt that their more flexible approach meant that they were able to meet people's needs, while the rigid policies of the LA and LIO led to waste of resources.

> *They [the LIO] looked after all of the food, but then they became quite protective with the food, and you had to follow procedures. The foodbank ran out of food—our normal local foodbank ran out of food. So, what people would do is phone the council number, that would get them through to the switchboard… And they had to pay £20 for a box of food…And I had a real battle with [LIO], a major major battle with the manager because he refused to give the food away. So, in the end we got our own foodbank, we got our own food parcels and if people phoned and said I can't afford to pay for the food we gave them a food parcel. So, their food there sat and rotted. They chucked away so much milk, frozen bread, absolutely mounds and mounds of food they ended up chucking away because they would not give it away, they would only sell it… Because that was the procedure that was the process. And you could not deviate from that process. (Janet, manager, Hilltown Community Centre).*

The one-size-fits-all approach of LAs and PVSOs was also criticised for failing to meet the particular cultural needs of ethnically diverse communities. Hazel of Black Families Project reported that, despite her city's LA having set up four Community Hubs with 13,000 volunteers, black and minoritised people were not having their needs met and her organisation had had to step in to fill the gap.

> *The inflexibility of the statutory bodies who say that they are responding to COVID-19 while yet still not acknowledging there are gaps in the systems, and those who are deemed to be the most vulnerable because they come from a BAME group, and also, they're elders… they were not being serviced… What we're finding was that we were getting referrals …from individuals and families who were not being able to access the volunteers from the local authority led services. That's why we're saying it's not working… We shouldn't expect people to fit into services, we should develop services that address the needs of the people. (Hazel, manager, Black Families Project.)*

Hazel felt that the LA's approach was to design a service that would work only in a certain way, and to expect residents to fit into that service. In contrast, she felt that services should be designed to fit people in need. She had the same concern about the professionalised voluntary sector, which she said was unable to meet the specific needs of black and minoritised communities despite receiving funding to provide services for the whole population.

> *We find that we get a lot of referrals as well from those who are funded within the city to deal with people from various cultural backgrounds but are unable to do so. So,*

they're referring to us who again, do not get any funding. (Hazel, manager, Black Families Project).

The experience of GRCOs in this study suggest that by offering services that are the same for every person and community, some people are systematically disadvantaged and less likely to get their needs met by SSs or PVSOs. In particular, GRCOs found that statutory services were less able to meet the needs of black and minoritised people and of poor people.

Accounts from GRCOs suggest that SSs and PVSOs were less able to design and redesign their work in order to meet actual needs of specific people and communities and were more likely to use one-size-fits-all, or perhaps one-size-fits-none, approaches. Other studies support this perspective. NLGN found that, compared to the statutory sector and professionalised voluntary sector, community groups were able to "work flexibly, responsively and in a person-centred manner" (2020, p. 7). A report by Sheffield Hallam University found that small charities were better able to engage with the specific needs of different communities and groups than larger organisations (Dayson et al., 2021). Meals-on-Wheels drivers report that their services are less adaptable to the specific needs of different clients and communities when they are run by large providers rather than local community organisations (Papadaki et al., 2021). The UN acknowledges that food needs include the need for cultural specificity and sensory enjoyment, as well as calories and nutrients (Cutola & Vidar, 2003). Mutual aid group organisers found that operating on a small geographic scale was important because it enabled them to engage with people's specific needs, which vary from place to place (Kavada, 2022). A study of BAME-led organisations' activities during the pandemic suggests that they were vital to meeting the needs of racialised and minoritised communities that would otherwise have not been appropriately provided for (Woodward et al., 2022). Overall, GRCOs' own perspectives that they were more able than statutory and professionalised voluntary sector organisations to act flexibly in response to different specific needs, and therefore met specific need more effectively, appears to be supported by wider research.

GRCOs organised themselves more quickly in response to the changing circumstances than SSs and PVSOs, which were relatively slow to adapt, (which was a contributing factor in creating the gaps in service provision that GRCOs stepped into). The faster response of GRCOs meant they were likely more effective at meeting need because the nature of basic need is that it is time sensitive. GRCOs also designed their activities to meet the specific needs of individuals and communities. In contrast, SSs and PVSOs appear to have been more likely to deliver services in the same way across a population, irrespective of the different needs of different communities and individuals within that population. I suggest that this meant that those services were less able to meet need, because need is not identical across populations. I want to suggest that both

differences—speed of response and standardisation—are iterations of the same phenomenon: a lack of engagement with specificity. Responding quickly required GRCOs to be open to designing and redesigning their work as the context changed around them. Instead of continuing to do the same things in the same way, they had to change in response to changing needs and changing restrictions. This involved engaging with *temporal specificity* by changing their work in relation to needs that changed over time. Responding adequately to the particular needs of individuals and communities required GRCOs to be open to designing their work in relation to those actual needs. This meant that what worked in one community, or with one person, did not always work in other contexts. Well-fitted, flexible support required GRCOs to engage with *relational specificity* by adjusting their work in orientation to heterogenous relational contexts.

C. Identifying and responding to need in its specificity

As we have seen, GRCOs were not all equally effective at meeting basic need during lockdown. By comparing two mutual aid groups with one another, I have argued that in order to meet need, organisations must both identify it and respond to it. We have also seen that GRCOs played a crucial role in meeting need during lockdown and were more effective at meeting many immediate needs than SSs and PVSOs were. I have argued that this was because they engaged with need in its specificity, which allowed them to act flexibly in response to different and changing needs. Drawing these findings together, I want to suggest that *identifying and responding to need necessarily involves engaging with it in its specificity*.

Research suggests that when services fail to engage with need in its specificity, people are left with unmet needs. For example, Vandekinderen et al. (2012) found that labour market training programmes fail to engage with the specific needs of women with mental illness, and that the workplaces they create are therefore unsuitable for these women. A study into migrant and refugee communities' use of substance misuse services found that services commissioned by LAs are failing to meet the needs of these communities, which the authors suggest is because the commissioners do not recognise their specific needs and how they differ from the "mainstream" (Mills, 2012, p. 671). Meanwhile, rigidly imposed schedules in preschool settings mean that staff are unable to engage with the specific needs of each child, which means that those who take longer to do something (e.g. eat, think about the answer to a question, get their coat on, etc.) are not given the support they need to develop at their own pace (Davies, 1994).

In order to meet need, organisations need to identify what that need actually is. Need changes over time, and different people and communities have different needs from one another. This means that identifying need is not a one-off event. It requires that organisations remain open to incoming information about changing and different needs. Responding to need requires organisations to be

able to change what they do over time, and in different circumstances, in response to the different and changing needs they identify. Responses that work in one context may not work in another, so meeting need requires openness to doing things differently across time and space.

2. How do organisations identify and respond to need in its specificity?

We have seen that the grassroots community response to the crisis of the early Covid-19 pandemic in England was characterised by speed and flexibility. Many GRCOs (re)designed their activities quickly in order to meet changing needs in the changing context. They also operated in a flexible manner which allowed them to engage with individual people and communities according to their emerging needs (rather than offering one-size-fits-all services). In contrast, SSs and PVSOs seem to have been slower to respond to the changing context and less flexible in their approach to dealing with the particular needs of different individuals and communities. Through comparative case analysis of the accounts of participants from 35 GRCOs I have argued that organisations' ability to help meet need relied on their ability to identify and respond to need in its temporal and relational specificity. I now consider the conditions of possibility for an organisation's ability to identify and respond to need in its specificity. I argue that identifying and responding to need requires that an organisation be engaged in a *relational response process* that enables it to receive incoming information and adapt its actions accordingly. Identification of need, decision-making and action toward the end of meeting need are all parts of this process and must be done in relation to one another.

A. Identifying need in its specificity: a process of relational learning

GRCO organisers felt that their ability to meet need during the pandemic was reliant on their ability to perceive the particular situation of the people and communities they were supporting.

> *The fact that you can see the issue. It's not abstract because it's right there. And also, communities are different. They have different needs. And we can respond to those needs explicitly. (Sacha, volunteer, Eat Together).*

In order to see what was needed, organisations had to be open to incoming information from people and communities. One way of doing this was to invite people to get in touch.

> *Someone suggested buying a phone…we put out a leaflet through everyone's door (Suzi, organiser, Commonthorpe Neighbourhood Support)*

> *We then managed to set up a phoneline. We started off so basically, paper and pen, taking orders. (Jill, organiser, Dinners for All)*

We have a volunteer run helpline run by people who do it remotely. When people leave a message asking for food, they ring them up and get details. (Sacha, volunteer, Eat Together).

Receiving direct requests allowed GRCOs to learn not only who needed help, but what they needed in particular. For example, Harry of Forest Lane Volunteers explained that people asked his group for help with prescriptions and post, while Colin of Greenville Mutual Aid was asked for specific items of shopping.

We just get calls from people saying that they need a prescription collected or parcels posted (Harry, organiser, Forest Lane Volunteers).

Somebody rang me, and she sounded absolutely shocking. Sounded like at bloody death's door. And she was like, I just need to have some mint tea and some honey. (Colin, organiser, Greenville Mutual Aid)

This openness to receiving information was one distinguishing feature of GRCOs in comparison to some SSs and PVSOs. For example, an evaluation of the NHS Covid-19 Emergency Responders service found that people were often contacted several times despite already having had their needs met, because there was no easy way to let the organisation know that they no longer needed help (Royal Voluntary Service, 2020). However, while being contactable was helpful, it was not adequate for identifying all unmet need. Aaron of Thorne Homeless Project explained that, by definition, some of the most vulnerable people were those least able to make contact to ask for help.

Those in crisis by very definition aren't the people who have Facebook and can send a Facebook Messenger message. They don't have the tools to ring a phone number they've seen on the internet and ask for a food parcel, you know? (Aaron, organiser, Thorne Homeless Project).

Relying on those in need to initiate contact was thus not always sufficient for identifying need. In order to help counter this challenge, some GRCOs used relationships with other organisations to help identify need. For example, organisations providing food-aid and social support received referrals from statutory agencies.

What we were finding was that we were getting referrals from GP practices, from Councillors. (Hazel, manager, Black Families Project)

Most of our referrals are coming from agencies… I think some of them are mental health staff, some of them are GPs, housing. Some of them are social workers. (Mary, volunteer, Sunville Coronavirus Volunteers)

This was, in some cases, a useful way to identify need of which the GRCO may have otherwise been unaware. However, we established above that SSs were not always effective at identifying and responding to need. Relying only on statutory services for referrals is therefore likely to have led to missed cases of unmet need. To counter the challenge of identifying need among those who did not initiate contact, some GRCOs found that their pre-existing relationships with communities helped them to identify potential need.

You are already there. You know the community. You know the people who probably will need that support more than the next person. (Janet, manager, Hilltown Community Centre.)

Organisations that already knew local people were able to make judgements about who was likely to be vulnerable during lockdown and contact them directly. Several GRCOs, including Black Families Project and Dove Centre, set up systems for making regular phone calls to members of their communities so that they would become aware of unmet need as it emerged.

We've got a programme called checking in. So, we ring some of those that are much more vulnerable and check in with them to make sure that they're doing okay. (Hazel, manager, Black Families Project).

Staff have worked out a programme of what they called companion calls… So, they're in touch with the clients frequently and regularly… they are able to just keep an eye open, and a listening ear… to just check out how they're managing the days. (Catherine, trustee, Dove Centre)

This pro-active support meant that the burden of initiating contact was moved onto organisations themselves, which helped GRCOs to identify need that they would not have been aware of otherwise. Similarly, organisations that already knew their communities were able to identify those who had *not* contacted them to ask for help, and initiate contact with them.

I've noticed that there's been people who've been noticing when other people aren't there. And then messaging. (Ellie, volunteer, Songa Community Choir)

We were able to go through that list in a meeting and identify, 'Okay, who do we need to touch base with and check that there okay? Or who have we not heard from?' (Amy, volunteer, Shine On Community Church).

> *We set up our own systems and our own spreadsheets and everything to look at the referrals and to identify and analyse why they were coming to us, when they were coming to us, how many times they were coming to us. And that's the way that we could identify whether we hadn't heard from people you know, and so then we'd phone them up and say, 'Are you okay?'. And if they weren't okay, we'd go knock on the door… we picked up a picture from our own data of people who were regularly having prescriptions or regularly having shopping. And then all of a sudden, they'd stop. And you'd think well why have they stopped? So, then we would contact them and say are you okay, we're just making sure you're alright. (Janet, manager, Hilltown Community Centre)*

In these cases, identifying need was enabled by having an ongoing relationship with people who might have unmet need. Pre-existing GRCOs were thus in a strong position to meet need during the crisis. However, some new organisations were able to replicate this approach as they developed their work. For example, Greenville Mutual Aid provided shopping and prescription delivery to those who were shielding. They matched neighbours who could help with those who needed help in order to encourage them to develop ongoing supportive relationships. Consequently, people delivering shopping were able to get to know those to whom they were delivering and notice if someone was in increasing difficulty. Meeting needs in a way that enabled the development of ongoing relationships created a relational mechanism that meant that, through the initial meeting of need, further needs could be identified as they emerged.

B. Responding to need in its specificity: acting towards ends

Identifying need is not sufficient for meeting it. In order to respond effectively, organisations had to decide what action to take and then take that action. This required that organisations make decisions about *what to do* on the basis of *identified need*. This may appear obvious, but GRCO organisers in this study felt that this was a key factor in explaining why their organisations were often effective at responding to specificity-of-need. For example, Karen, a trustee of small charity the Dove Centre, felt that the reason GRCOs were effective during the pandemic was their ability to identify need, and then act toward the purpose of meeting it.

> *Local organisations can see a need on the ground and say let's do it… We're doing it because we want to help the community, if the community has got a need you do it, it's as simple as that. (Karen, trustee, Dove Centre).*

For some brand new GRCOs, the whole setting up of a new organisation–including its governance, formal aims and systems–was geared toward the purpose of meeting need during lockdown. Dinners for All (overview on page 103) provides an example. The initiative was not, at the

beginning, part of a plan to set up a new organisation. It was simply an action taken toward the end of meeting perceived need.

> *Me and my husband own a business… We started to get a sense from our local community that people were very worried and how were people going to manage and get food. Quite quickly we started just giving meals away, I think it was before we even closed. We just started saying to people if you know anyone who's isolated, anyone who's vulnerable and needs a meal, we've got some food here. (Jill, organiser, Dinners for All).*

After a few days, Jill and her husband connected with a local councillor who arranged for a small number of volunteers to deliver the meals to people's homes. They set up a simple system of "paper and pen, taking orders". As word spread, the number of requests for meals grew, and so did offers of help from other restaurants.

> *As the numbers started to grow, we started to get calls from other restaurants who were keen to come and help… We realised that really our ordering system wasn't really very efficient and that we needed something better. (Jill, organiser, Dinners for All).*

The original organisers did not have the skills to set this up, but "this guy with a really strong IT background got in touch and said he could set us up with an order form spreadsheet". As the volume of orders grew, the newly established collaboration of restaurants and local residents began to require funding to pay for ingredients. They realised that in order to fundraise they would need a more formal governance structure, so they registered Dinners for All as an incorporated charity. Through the process of responding to need and accepting offers of help, what began as a couple giving away food from their café quickly became an informal collaborative project involving a larger group of people, and then a formal registered charity. This had all been achieved by the time I spoke to Jill in late April 2020—just over a month into the lockdown. By this point, the group had over 50 people involved in helping and was delivering 1000 meals per week. Jill and her husband did not set out to launch a charity. The establishment of the new organisation was an outcome of acting toward the end of feeding local people. The systems within the organisation, including its governance structure, were designed and re-designed as tools to support the group to achieve its purpose of meeting local need.

Dinners for All established a relatively formal organisation, with a central organising group and centralised systems, because they found that this was needed in order for them to achieve their specific purpose of cooking and delivering meals to local people who needed them. In contrast, other new groups, with different specific purposes, found that less centralised ways of organising were better suited to these purposes. Colin, an organiser from Greenville Mutual Aid, told me how

he and a small group of neighbours identified that, in the context of the pandemic, local people were likely to need help with accessing supplies, so they made a leaflet to offer help. Colin explained that, when people first started contacting them for help, the group had not yet established a procedure for how they would allocate requests for support. They were nonetheless able to meet the urgent need by sharing the request among the group to see who was best placed to help.

> *She said I just need to have some [list of groceries]. I was like flipping heck how the hell are you going to get this? … So that was probably at about 8:40 on a Tuesday night. And so, what I did was I put a call out on the WhatsApp group … and long story slightly shorter, the woman got her stuff by twenty past nine. (Colin, organiser, Greenville Mutual Aid)*

The group was acting toward the end of providing supplies to local people, so they allowed this end to inform what to do and how to do it. This quick response felt useful and efficient, so the group decided to set up a system by which, when a request was received, it would be shared with residents who lived nearby and had offered to help their neighbours. Someone would identify themselves as able to provide the help, and "then we would direct message them to say can you just sort it out between you". For the purpose of delivering shopping to self-isolating people, the group found that minimal coordination was required from a central organising team, and that a decentralised approach enabled the organisation to provide agile, personalised support for people as and when they needed it. Like Dinners for All, they designed their way of working in direct relation to what they found effective when acting toward the end of meeting identified need.

One of the few groups I spoke with who struggled to meet need effectively was Pangton Mutual Aid. They were also one of the only GRCOs in this study who established their ways of working in lockdown *before* engaging with people in need or offering practical support. This meant they were slower than other groups in offering support because they did a lot of time-consuming system-design early on. They were also very committed to running their group in a way that was consistent with anarchist mutual aid principles (see chapter II), which became a barrier to working collaboratively with other mutual aid groups and thus a barrier to working toward the end of meeting need.

> *I guess our main sort of initial thing was trying to get as many of the streets covered as we could… So, we managed to get like pretty much everything sorted in that respects within a month, maybe getting all the streets covered… We wanted to do quite a non-hierarchical thing, whereas other groups have quite a lot more of a hierarchical… way of doing things… We were trying to coordinate with our neighbouring mutual aid*

group. And it's not really been that easy to do… just coordinating with them… where we had overlapping spaces was really difficult, just in the different ways that we've done things… So, it just didn't really work that effectively and trying to try to link up and like cover those overlapping areas. (Adam, organiser, Pangton Mutual Aid).

By prioritising finding cover for every street, Pangton Mutual Aid delayed offering help to anyone. In the end, they received few requests for help, which meant their efforts to cover all the local streets were not needed. In contrast, Greenville Mutual Aid prioritised responding to emerging need. Members mostly worked in their own neighbourhoods, but with sufficient flexibility to make the best use of the time and energy of those involved. Comparing Dinners for All, Greenville Mutual Aid and Pangton Mutual Aid, we can see that new organisations that worked teleologically, designing their processes as they went along and prioritising the meeting of need as it arose, were able to meet need effectively. As well as being purpose-oriented in setting up new systems, this also involved changing and developing their ways of working in response to incoming information that helped them to identify need and how to meet it (e.g. Dinners for All moved from a pen and paper system to a spreadsheet, because the pen and paper system was no longer fit for purpose).

This willingness to adapt and redesign systems in order to enable teleological working was also observable in pre-existing GRCOs that adapted their activities and ways of working to meet the changing needs that arose from the pandemic context. Like Dinners for All and Greenville Mutual Aid, Get Active Together found that, in order to meet changing needs, they had to set up new systems that were well-suited to the new work they were trying to do. When they began providing welfare calls and prescription deliveries, they experienced a big increase in both the number of people signing up to help, and the number of people asking for support from the organisation. This meant that their previous systems were no longer able to support them to work effectively to meet need.

We had never done prescriptions before. And the systems we had just weren't designed for the volume we needed … So, the first couple of weeks we were just very reactive, sorting stuff out, and now it's kind of plateaued into something more manageable, sustainable, long term. (Hannah, Get Active Together)

Although Get Active Together was already an established organisation before the pandemic, their ability to respond to people's particular needs in a specific and changing context relied on their ability to react to those changing needs, identify ways to meet them, and then establish the necessary procedures to enable them to do so. The organisational procedures were tools to enable the organisation to achieve the purpose of meeting people's needs. This was seen by some as a key difference between grassroots groups and larger organisations—and one that explained the ability

of grassroots groups to adapt more effectively to the fast-changing context of the pandemic. Grassroots groups acted to meet need and then set up the procedures they needed to organise that action well. Jill from Dinners for All felt that her city council did things in the opposite order.

> *The way we set it up was we started doing the food and taking it out before we thought about a form, so we did things backwards in a way, which was the right thing to do in an emergency situation, "Let's just get food out to who needs it and then try to organise"... what the council were doing is, "Right, here's the form, here's the spreadsheet". But that takes ages, and then it might be two or three weeks before the actual food part comes in. (Jill, organiser, Dinners for All).*

This perspective was echoed by Janet, the manager of a Hilltown Community Centre, who as we saw earlier, reported that her LIO was inflexible in its approach to providing council food parcels to people who were self-isolating. Her perception was that the LIO was wedded to its procedures, despite the fact that these procedures were preventing it from meeting need. In other words, the LIO prioritised procedure over purpose, which meant they were not acting toward the end of meeting need.

This is not a simple contrast between SSs and PVSOs having systems through which they organise their work and GRCOs working without systems. On the contrary, GRCOs spent time and energy setting up systems because they needed them in order to do the work they were trying to do. The work they were trying to do was to meet need, and as need is relationally and temporally specific, meeting it requires acting according to specificity of context, rather than applying the same processes in every context. Meeting need therefore requires establishment of suitable systems that are (a) designed in response to actual need that is temporally relevant and (b) flexible enough to deal with each specific relational situation. Colin reflected that the reason mutual aid groups were more effective than the council at meeting people's needs quickly was that "if there is a problem with [a process], you can adapt it". When procedures are set up and used in the course of meeting actual need, they can allow the organisation to do just that. In contrast, if organisations prioritise following rigid procedures irrespective of whether need is being met, their approaches are less well suited to meeting need in its temporal and relational specificity.

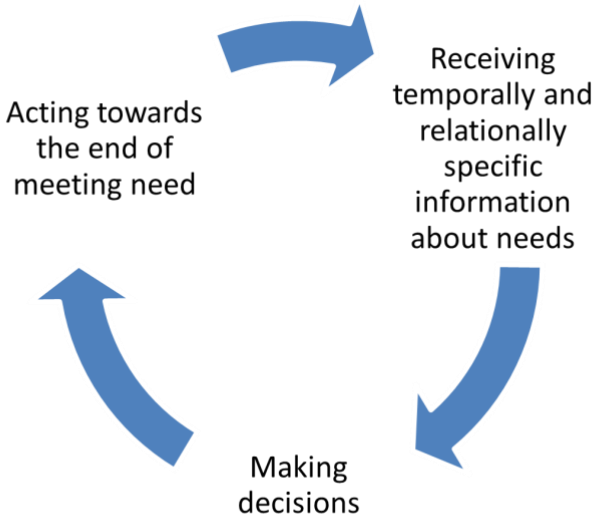
GRCOs that were effective at meeting need acted in ways that have certain commonalities. They offered support early on in the crisis and then adjusted their support as they learned more about what was needed. This learning happened through the process of providing support. This means that by acting teleologically toward the end of meeting need, GRCOs learned more about need, which allowed them to respond appropriately. These organisations thus acted toward ends on the basis of information gained through the relational process of acting toward ends. I am going to

argue that this iterative relational process of need-identification and teleological response is key to organisations' ability to meet need effectively.

3. The relational response process

We saw in section 1 that the ability to both identify specific emerging need and respond to it quickly and in its particularity were key to the ability of organisations to meet need effectively. In section 2 we have seen that these two parts are themselves mutually enabled. Identifying need is, of course, necessary for responding to it. Meanwhile, through responding to need, workers (paid or unpaid) are able to develop ongoing relationships with people and communities who need support. These relationships enable further identification of need. Decisions about further action are then made on the basis of that new information. As such, an ongoing relational process is developed, which I will call the relational response process.

FIGURE 4: THE RELATIONAL RESPONSE PROCESS



My claim is that GRCOs were able to meet need during the lockdown because they allowed this relational process to flow. When the three parts were engaged in relation to one another and allowed to affect one another, the organisation was able to respond effectively to the particulars of changing need. This relational response process involved meeting people's needs in ways that engaged them in encounters and relationships of a kind that enabled the 'service provider' to learn from the 'service user'. This meant not simply "doing to" people, but "being with" them (Milstein, 2005, p. 563). For example, the contrast between the government food parcel scheme and Energise's distribution of food vouchers was that the government simply dropped parcels on doorsteps, while Energise got to know people and allowed their experiences and perspectives to influence the charity's actions. Meeting need in its specificity therefore appears to be related to the

establishment and development of subject-subject relationships. This theory supports feminist care ethics arguments that "caring entails a focus on the particularities and context of the relationships in which it is expressed" (Bowden, 1995, p. 10). The relational response process helps to explain *why* this is the case—subject-subject relationships are the mechanism through which need is both identified and responded to in its specificity. This finding supports models of care practice that value relationships, including relationship-based social work practice (Megele, 2015), spiritually competent practice in mental health care (Rogers et al., 2020; Wattis et al., 2017), and ethics-of-care based nursing practice (Bowden, 1995; Woods, 2011). However, research into the implementation of these models of practice suggests that the organisational structures in which care is organised can act as a barrier to subject-subject relationality (T. Brown et al., 2018; Hingley-Jones & Ruch, 2016; Laurin & Martin, 2022; Rogers et al., 2020; The Health and Europe Centre, 2022). In the next chapter, we consider what it is that makes it possible for GRCOs to enable the relational response process, and what the barriers are.

VII. “We would look at it and say, ‘yes’.” Conditions of possibility for the relational response process.

The previous chapter argued that, in order to meet need effectively, organisations must identify and respond to it in its temporal and relational specificity. In other words, they must identify need as it changes over time and ways that need varies between different people and communities. They must also be flexible enough in their responses to be able to engage with such change and difference in need. I have suggested that acting towards the end of meeting need in its specificity involves an ongoing process of relating to people, and it is through such relational process that it is possible to identify need in its specificity. Specifically, need-meeting involves a relational response process in which identifying need and responding to need are in iterative relation to one another.

In this chapter, I look at the details of how different grassroots community organisations (GRCOs) organised themselves during the lockdown. I consider what makes it possible for organisations to enact the relational response process I have described and what the barriers are to doing so. This is an argument about what conditions make it possible for organisations to meet need effectively. Using comparative analysis, I argue that the relational response process is enabled when the people who are doing the direct work of providing support to those who need it have sufficient influence to allow the organisation to make use of what they learn through these relationships. Meanwhile, the relational response process is hindered by material conditions that prevent organisations from acting towards the ends of meeting need.

1. Enabling the relational response process: structuring organisations for spatiotemporal specificity

Working toward the end of meeting need requires that decisions about what work to do and how to do it are revised in relation to change (temporal specificity), and flexible enough to deal with difference (relational specificity). As we have seen, being able to respond to need requires identifying need, and identifying need happens in the process of responding to it. It follows that, in order to adjust, adapt and work effectively toward the end of meeting need, information gained through the process of meeting need must be allowed to inform organisational decision-making. It is no use some people in an organisation identifying different and changing needs if the those who make decisions do not have access to that information. Consequently, if organisations do not value

the knowledge and expertise of those relating directly to the people the organisation aims to support, they will be unable to act toward the end of meeting need. This section looks more deeply at the particular ways that GRCOs are structured, and ways in which GRCO organisers felt that their structures and processes were different from those of statutory services (SSs) and professionalised voluntary sector organisations (PVSOs). I suggest that there are two structural features that help organisations to respond to need in its specificity. These are: A) minimisation of hierarchy; and B) trust in frontline workers.

A. Minimisation of hierarchy

In order to respond quickly and effectively to the changing context of the pandemic, it was necessary for decision-makers within organisations to have a good understanding of changing need. Knowledge of need was gained through interacting with people with unmet needs. It appears to be the case that having few, if any, layers of management between decision-makers and frontline workers allowed their GRCOs to easily share information internally and make informed decisions.

In some cases, the people doing the work 'on the ground' were the same people making decisions about what work would be done and how. Small associations or informal collectives, run on unpaid bases, worked in this way. For example, in both Greenville Mutual Aid and Forest Lane Volunteers, the person receiving phone calls from local people about their needs was also directly involved in meeting those needs (e.g. by delivering shopping or prescriptions), and also involved in making decisions about the purpose and work of the organisation. Forest Lane Volunteers began posting parcels for people because this was requested through their advertised phone number, and Greenville Mutual Aid continued delivering shopping to some residents after lockdown had ended, because this was requested by those receiving support. In both cases, those dealing with requests were the same people that made decisions about what to do. It was therefore very straightforward to make decisions in response to identified need. Furthermore, in these groups, the people receiving the information and making decisions were also involved in actually fulfilling the request. This meant that the whole process of receiving a request, deciding whether to fulfil it, and acting was all done by the same person or small group of people, which made response times very quick and meant that knowledge gained through fulfilling a request could directly impact the organisation's ongoing decision-making. Groups that worked in this way tended to be very small, involving just a handful of unpaid people who made all the decisions and did all the work.

In contrast to these small informal collectives, registered charities are formally run by boards of trustees, who are prohibited from being employed by the charity (Resource Centre, 2021). This means that, when a charity pays workers to do frontline work, this frontline work is formally

separated from the organisation's strategic decision-making processes. Meanwhile, some charities delegate day-to-day decision-making to paid staff, but some or all of the frontline work is done by paid or unpaid people who are not involved in this decision-making. Experiences of GRCOs in this study suggests that close and reciprocal working relationships between trustees, staff and 'volunteers' enables well-informed decision-making in GRCOs, which allows them to identify and respond to changing need. Janet of Hilltown Community Centre used her own direct experience with 'service-users' to inform her judgements about what was needed and shared this directly with trustees for their informed decision-making. Meanwhile, workers at Get Active Together learned from volunteers about what the needs were and used this information to advise trustees about what direction the organisation should take during lockdown.

> *For us as a small organisation, you know, I would contact our chair of trustees and say, 'Look, we need to adapt this, we need to do this, is it okay if we do this?' And we'd have a discussion, and then we'd just go with it. (Janet, manager, Hilltown Community Centre).*

> *Obviously when corona came we were kind of like, right so we've got to suspend [our activities]...but what was actually happening was as we were sending the emails out to the volunteers to say, 'Look, guys, we need to suspend this, you know, and we'll be in touch as soon as we can', was that a lot of them are coming back and saying, 'well, the people that we were visiting are vulnerable people, and they will be lonely'...And so they were saying 'we want to carry on doing something'. So, we were like, 'okay, great'... All it needs is two of us to have a conversation, [manager] to have a conversation with the trustees who are great, and then we are go. (Hannah, organiser, Get Active Together).*

We saw earlier that an enabling factor for GRCOs in identifying need was using knowledge gained in the course of providing support as a source of information about ongoing need. Both of these GRCOs used the knowledge and expertise of their frontline workers in order to identify need and respond appropriately.

By working closely with and valuing the input of the people who are doing the frontline work and learning about need, decision-makers in GRCOs were able to make choices that enabled the organisation to act teleologically in response to changes in need. Some participants felt that this was a reason that their organisations responded more quickly to the crisis than statutory services (SSs) and professionalised voluntary sector organisations (PVSOs). Several GRCO organisers commented that they felt hierarchy was a barrier for larger organisations in responding to need during the pandemic and that this distinguished them from GRCOs. Janet of Hillside Community

Centre described her experience of working with the LA during the pandemic. She found that they were very slow to respond to changes in need because of the large number of layers of management separating decision-makers from those doing the work on the ground. This meant that effective action was delayed because the people interacting with the outside world were not the same people that were making decisions. Karen of Woodhouse Community Transport suggested that excessive hierarchy was a barrier to effective action in a PVCO because decision-makers prevented those on the ground from responding to need by enforcing ways of working that were not fit for purpose.

> *There were so many different managers involved in their decision making… It astounds me the amount of managers that one small decision had to go through… the layers of management within the statutory sector is such that you would get one manager saying one thing, then the next manager would say another, and it wasn't until you went to either the head of service or the assistant director, that you would get clear directive. (Janet, manager, Hilltown Community Centre.)*

> *We are masters of our own destiny. It's as simple as that. We choose what we do. We have not got massive hierarchies that say you have got to do this and got to do that, or you can't change… It works because we're not constrained. It's because we don't have a hierarchy from some nebulous place from down south or up north or wherever it happens to be… Even things like [national charity]. The local [branch] were really struggling because they were getting all these edicts about what they could or couldn't do. Local organisations can see a need on the ground and say, "let's do it". (Karen, trustee, Woodhouse Community Transport)*

These participants felt that separation of decision-making from support provision and information gathering was a barrier to responsive decision-making, which affected the ability of organisations to respond quickly and also constrained what organisations could do in response to changing need, because decision-makers were not informed by the situation on the ground.

Minimising hierarchy within an organisation helped to enable the relational response process by allowing decision-making to be informed by the knowledge gained by those who were interacting directly with people who required support. This is a similar finding to that of Laurin and Martin (2022) in their study of intensive care nurses treating critically ill patients. They argued that patient interests were better served by involving nurses in decision-making discussions about treatment because nurses were the people who spent the most time with patients and therefore had important insight into the traumatic impact of futile treatments that might be considered desirable by doctors and family members. Similarly, Pavlish (2012) found that nurses could identify need in oncology patients due to their relational care, but that organisational hierarchies

were a barrier to this knowledge being allowed to inform treatment plans. Minimising hierarchy in decision-making structures appears to be a strengthening factor for organisations' ability to respond to specificity of need because it helps organisations to make decisions that take account of the relationally gained knowledge of frontline workers. We now look at a second, related strengthening factor—trust in frontline workers.

B. Trust in frontline workers

GRCOs perceived that attendance to the different needs of different people and communities was a key factor in their ability to meet need. GRCOs that were effective at meeting need appear to have been flexible in their approach, engaging with different people and communities in ways that were designed to meet their particular needs and appropriate to specific circumstances. This involved trusting the people who were engaged directly with 'service-users'[36] to use their judgement in response to each specific situation, rather than following rigid one-size-fits-all procedures.

GRCOs described how meeting need required treating each person as a unique individual, rather than treating everybody in exactly the same way. This relied on the development of relationships between frontline workers and people in need of support. Through such relationships, workers could learn about specific need and respond appropriately.

> *We acknowledge a woman's journey is different and can take longer…We had a one-to-one mentor for women who had very high levels of anxiety and didn't feel able to come into the building. So, this mentor was able to go out, have a cup of coffee with them, meet them where they felt safe, so over a period of time the mentor could bring them into the centre, stay with them… we can treat each one as an individual (Yana, manager, Manon Women's Centre).*

> *It's very personal… So, for example, we know which clients are interested in creative writing. And we can work with that person at that level, on the things that interest them. We know who needs to get up and move about. And we know if it's a matter of saying, actually have a look through your window, and having a chat about what they can see through the window… you can personalise that service for them… They really appreciate that familiar person being in touch with them… There is something about*

[36] In chapter III I argued that understanding need-meeting in a subject-object modality prevents justice because it means that the needs of the 'object' in the relation are not taken into account. Imagining need-meeting as a relationship between service-providers and service-users is an example of subject-object ontology. Chapter VIII looks at this in more detail, arguing that subject-subject relation is necessary for the relational response process and for organising care in a mode of justice.

that someone is showing a personal interest and a level of care. (Catherine, trustee, The Dove Centre).

The mentor at Manon Women's Centre, and support workers at the Dove Centre, engaged differently with different people on the basis of their identification of the needs of those people, which was made possible by having the freedom to develop ongoing relationships and respond to changing and different need. Meeting need in its specificity requires not only that the response cycle be enabled within the organisation overall, but for each person needing support and for each instance of need. In order for this to be possible, the people doing direct work with 'service-users' need to be trusted by the organisation to engage in all three aspects of the process, including decision-making. Trusting the judgement of frontline workers is therefore necessary for enabling organisations to meet need in its specificity.

GRCO frontline workers described how having the freedom to do this meant they could deal with different people's specific needs efficiently and effectively. A number of participants in this study described this way of working. They included staff members from Hilltown Community Centre and Energise, who got to know 'service-users' over time and had the autonomy to respond to different people in different ways and to develop ongoing relationships, and members of Greenville Mutual Aid, who responded directly to requests for support from people in their communities according to the specificity of the request. Below are four further examples, which were not included as cases in chapter V.

- At Thorne Homeless Project, direct work with homeless people was done by a small team of paid and unpaid workers. The organisation was founded and managed by Aaron, who had himself been homeless in the past, and a number of the other people involved had also been homeless. The organisation focussed on developing supportive ongoing relationships with homeless people, to help them to do whatever was needed to help with their particular unique circumstances. For example, some people received mental health support, some received practical help such as food parcels, some received housing advice. People's needs changed over time and the organisation responded in turn. Those working directly with homeless people were trusted to make judgements about what was needed in a given moment and act upon those judgements, rather than rigidly offering the same service to everyone.

- Jenna set up Joy Language School to offer free English language classes for migrant women. She and a small group of unpaid workers provided the classes. In the course of the work, women began asking Jenna and the other workers for support in other areas of their lives, such as communicating with agencies (housing, health, schools etc.), making asylum claims

and dealing with domestic abuse. Jenna and the workers had the flexibility within their roles to respond directly to these needs, as they emerged. As a result, women got their specific instances of need met. Learning from this, the school expanded its remit beyond language classes and to more holistic support for migrant women.

- Forest Lane Volunteers is a long-established community group, run by and for residents of a rural village. The group takes on voluntary tasks in support of the community. This includes, for example, litter-picking, making road-signs and building footpaths. During lockdown they advertised a phone number for requests for support with shopping and prescription delivery. Members took it in turns to hold the phone, and whilst they were on shift, they dealt directly with requests for support. I spoke with Harry, an organiser, who explained that while he was holding the phone, a woman called to say that she was feeling very isolated and would appreciate somebody knocking on her door to say hello from the street. This was not something the group had predicted they would need to do (they had imagined providing shopping and prescription delivery services), but Harry responded to the request by knocking on her door and providing her with some company.

- Songa Community Choir is a large, open, non-audition choir that had been running for over 20 years in 2020. During lockdown, the choir began running weekly sessions on Zoom. These were attended by over 50 people each week. I spoke with Ellie, who is a long-standing member of the choir who helps out with IT related matters involved in running the organisation. She explained to me that most of the choir's regular members had been attending on Zoom, but that some had struggled with the technology at first. She had the freedom to connect with and support these members to help them to access the sessions. This involved speaking to people on the phone to help talk them through the process and being on hand during sessions to deal with problems.

In all these cases, organisations were able to meet need in its specificity by approaching interactions with 'service-users' flexibly. This requires the development of ongoing relationships with people who need support, and that each interaction is done in a mode of being open to learning from people about what their needs are, (information gathering about need), and with the autonomy to make decisions and act based on that learning.

It should be noted that trusting frontline workers to use their judgment does not mean having no overall ethos, aim or way of working as an organisation. In order to act toward ends, organisations must understand what their purpose is. In some cases (e.g., Woodhouse Community Transport), this was a broad purpose of meeting the needs of a particular community, whatever they may be. In others (e.g., Songa Community Choir), it was more specific and involved a particular activity or

focus. Trusting frontline workers does not mean, for example, giving free reign to choir committee members to launch activities entirely unrelated to singing. Instead, it means allowing people to enact the relational response process within an overall teleological framework. For an organisation to be able to trust its people to engage in the response cycle appropriately, those people need to have the requisite skills and expertise to do so, and their skills and expertise must be valued. Which skills and expertise are necessary for the response cycle of any given organisation or situation is context-dependent, but throughout my dataset, GRCO organisers commented on ways that the particular knowledge, abilities and experiences of those involved were of value in enabling them to meet need in its relational specificity. Groups offering practical support to neighbours during lockdown valued the knowledge that residents had of their own immediate neighbourhoods. They organised for people to support their own neighbours. Meanwhile, organisations whose work required particular skills sets relied upon the ability of frontline workers to make sound judgments and were therefore careful to ensure that the people doing this work had the requisite expertise. Jill of Dinners for All explained that she had sought volunteers with experience in the food industry, because they would be able to use their judgment to help ensure that the food was safe. Janet reported that, in her local area, the LA had instigated doorstep visits of vulnerable people during lockdown, but that these were being done by staff who lacked skills in supporting people at risk of harm. This meant they were unable to respond to need in its specificity. She compared this to her own door-to-door work, explaining that having sufficient expertise was necessary for meeting need. Meanwhile, Thorne Homeless Project chose not to recruit any new volunteers during lockdown, because they needed their workers to be well-trained and reliable.

> *I had quite strict criteria for some of the volunteers that they need some knowledge of food and stuff like that. I didn't want just anybody coming. Because it's not that it's complicated but making sure all the bags are made up correctly with all the allergies and stuff needs someone with a bit of knowledge (Jill, organiser, Dinners for All)*

> *They were going knocking on people's doors…they were lifeguards who were doing that, they weren't people who had the knowledge or the background of looking at whether a person was vulnerable, looking at whether they've got decent clothes on, just looking over their shoulder at the house. I've been to a guy who was laid there for weeks, and he'd got a burst abscess on his abdomen. And he'd been there that long that all the blankets and everything had stuck to him. He was really really really ill. So, we got the doctor involved and he ended up going to hospital. But I could do that because of my background. And I think a care worker or someone working in social care would*

have noticed how he was and the way that he presented and everything. (Janet, manager, Hilltown Community Centre)

We've had quite a few requests from people about volunteering. But we took the decision not to take any on purely because we can't invest the time in them, to get them up to speed, which is really sad, but it's just almost not worth the risk... I think we're just quite lucky that we've got some really good volunteers that just do what they need to do. (Aaron, organiser, Thorne Homeless Project).

In order to act toward ends of meeting need, organisations needed to ensure that the people doing the frontline work had the necessary skills and expertise to be able to enact the relational response process. This required that those people understood the objective of the organisation (e.g. to meet the needs of homeless people, or to provide meals for those who need them) and had the competence to act appropriately in order to act toward this objective in different contexts and circumstances. They needed to be able to perceive need, make sound decisions and enact them, all within their direct and ongoing relationships with 'service-users'.

Meeting need was enabled when those doing the work of supporting people were trusted to use their judgment to respond to different and changing needs in real time. Aronson and Neysmith (1996) argue that control and surveillance of social care workers runs counter to their ability to care effectively. Similarly, Brown and Korczynski (2017) suggest that social care has been subject to a process of rationalisation (Weber, 2010) which has pushed care workers into the role of "front line bureaucrats" (p.847), in which they are expected to simply enact and enforce organisational policies rather than respond to need. They argue that in order to act in a caring way, carers have to resist this process (and that there is therefore a tension between the organisation of work and meeting of need). My findings support these arguments. It appears that, by trusting frontline workers to use their judgment rather than follow rigid procedures, organisations can create the conditions in which the relational response process can emerge.

C. Being the relational response process: organisational being as becoming

The relational response process, through which organisations can identify and respond to need, requires an ongoing iterative relationship between receiving information about need and acting toward the ends of meeting it. Acting toward ends of meeting need involves relating to others in a way that allows learning about need, which means people involved in meeting need are an important source of information and expertise about need. In order to identify and respond to need effectively, organisations need to value this expertise in their decision-making processes. I have suggested that there are two mechanisms through which organisations do this: A) minimisation of hierarchy; and B) trust in frontline workers. Minimisation of hierarchy allows

organisations to respond to changing needs and make plans that deal with specificity because decisions and plans are made in relation to information gained from frontline workers. Meanwhile, trusting frontline workers to make and act upon their own decisions within an overall organisational ethos and teleological framework allows organisations to respond appropriately to different and changing needs.

The relational response process can, by definition, only exist within an ever changing temporal and relational context. It can never be a static, bounded entity, because to be static or bounded would be to prevent process and prevent relation. I want to suggest that enabling effective need-meeting therefore requires that organisations act with sufficient openness to the influence of people and communities who need support, and a willingness to change and adapt according to changing and different contexts. Rather than rigidly imposing static universalised ways of working, meeting specificity of need requires that organisations allow themselves to be in an ongoing relational process in which, within the boundaries of an overall ethos or set of intentions, they allow themselves to move, change and adapt appropriately to context. This claim runs counter to neoliberal tendencies toward standardisation and rationalisation (Frost & Edgell, 2022), and also to Spade's (2020) prescriptive, decontextualised instructions for how to organise mutual aid (see chapter II). Instead, my finding is consistent with the radical materialist feminist ontology introduced in chapter III, and with the ontological project of poststructuralism more generally, which "is dedicated to demonstrating the ineradicability of spatiotemporal relation… as an 'absolutely general condition.'" (J. C. Jones, 2016, p. 150; quoting Hägglund, 2008, p. 3). By embracing spatiotemporal relation as a way of being (becoming), organisations open themselves sufficiently to allow them to identify and respond to spatiotemporal specificity.

2. Barriers to the relational response process: the importance of material conditions

Just as certain conditions help to enable the relational response process, others appear to prevent it from flowing effectively. I am going to suggest that these are barriers to identification of and response to need. Through my analysis I have identified three such barriers, which all relate to the material conditions in which organisations operate. First, a lack of resource is a barrier to responding to need. Meanwhile, two common mechanisms for gaining income—service commissioning and the selling of services to 'service-users'—are also barriers because they create distortions of purpose and disincentivise organisations from acting teleologically towards the end of meeting need.

A. Lack of resource

In this section, I present a comparative analysis of GRCOs which did similar types of activity to one another, but some were able to meet need during the lockdown and others were not. I argue that one barrier to meeting need is being insufficiently resourced. This prevented the relational response process from emerging because under-resourced GRCOs were unable to act towards ends.

a) Meeting physiological need for food: Seaville Refugee Group, Energise and Dinners for All

Dinners for All (see page 103), Energise (see page 107), and Seaville Refugee Group (see page 109) all aimed to meet people's basic physiological needs, and all had members/'service-users' who were in food poverty during lockdown. All three of these organisations were run by people who had long standing relationships with people in their communities. Through these relationships, all three became aware of individuals within their communities who were struggling to feed themselves. However, while Dinners for All and Energise were able to act toward meeting this need, Seaville Refugee Group was not. I am going to argue that the key difference between the groups was access to resources.

We look first at Dinners for All. They had a professional kitchen, which meant they could respond to concern about hunger by preparing meals. They also had knowledge of how to cook for large groups of people.

> *We thought we had an opportunity because we had a kitchen, we had staff, we were all well. And we just felt like it was something that we could do. (Jill, organiser, Dinners for All).*

Although they did not have all the skills and money necessary to organised and expand the project, they used their networks (including personal networks and social media) to generate what they needed. They worked with their local councillor to set up a volunteer delivery scheme. They appealed to local people to help with delivery and received a large number of offers of assistance. Demand for meals increased quickly, and other restaurants contacted them and offered to help. They also needed support with the administration of the project, which they gained by recruiting people with particular skills. They launched a fundraiser to pay for ingredients, which received a large amount in donations.

> *As the numbers started to grow, and we started to get calls from other restaurants who were keen to come and help. So, we thought 'well that will ease the pressure, great'. But then we realised that our ordering system wasn't really very efficient and that we needed something better. And this guy with a really strong IT background got*

in touch and said he could set us up with an order form spreadsheet… What's been amazing about the whole project is the amount of people who've come forward to say 'how can I help'. We've got restaurants doing their food on a rota. We've got volunteers taking calls now on a morning, a group of elderly ladies who used to be social workers taking calls. Then we have a guy that has a team that interpret all that data, put it on the spreadsheet… And then the funding side of it… I started a GoFundMe page, which was amazing… I had a friend who offered to be the treasurer… The right skills at the right time. Me and [my husband] have done a lot but there was a lot we couldn't do.

Dinners for All's response to need was made possible because they were able to involve people who had the resources and skills needed to make the project effective.

Energise had an established infrastructure of paid and unpaid workers with experience of supporting older people in their community. They also had contacts with other local organisations, which enabled them to access cooked meals and food vouchers to distribute to those who needed them.

One of the community support organisations that was designated for this area asked, would we support them in this area with additional shopping, as in the vouchers and things. So, we worked with them because they'd already got an agreement with a local restaurant who were doing seven meals a week, so the meals are all made in the restaurant, but they're not cooked and the restaurant delivers them to various people and then you pop them in the oven… So for quite a number of our clients… it's a great thing to be able to point them in that direction… I think we've got eight households on that at the moment. (Diane, paid worker, Energise).

Both Energise and Dinners for All were able to respond to the need they identified because they had some of the necessary resources, and also had access to networks that enabled them to generate the resources that they were missing. In contrast, Seaville Refugee Group (see page 109) had very limited access to resources. The organisers were themselves struggling with significant poverty during the lockdown and had no resources to use for community action. They had no money to buy food, and very little means to transport it because few members had access to a car. In addition, they did not have the equipment or skills necessary for video-meetings, which the other two groups relied upon to organise their work. Finally, they did not have contacts who had the resources that they were missing.

A study of refugee community organisations in London argued that these organisations can help generate access to resources for their member by building social capital (Kellow, 2011). Dinners for All and Energise had social networks and were able to use them to reach out and enlist help. In

contrast, Seaville Refugee Group had no access to people or organisations that could help fill their gaps in resources and expertise, and this prevented them from being able to respond to the needs that they identified among their members. However, I suggest that explaining this by way of social capital implies that the reason Seaville Refugee Group were unable to respond was because they had failed to take the civic action necessary to develop their wealth of social capital. In fact, Seaville Refugee Group had been active for nearly 15 years at the time of the pandemic. They had been working on a mutual-aid basis for all that time, supporting one another and helping to meet each-other's needs in the very difficult circumstances of being displaced from their home countries and living in significant poverty. This involved working collectively and collaboratively in a network of over 100 people. Their lack of ability to harness resources from wider networks was thus not down to a lack of civic engagement. The problem was caused by the fact that the people within their network did not have the resources necessary to meet the needs that emerged in the new circumstances of the pandemic. Research has shown that refugee community organisations are consistently under resourced and have to try to support their members without access to adequate funding and in very difficult circumstances (Griffiths, 2005; Zetter & Pearl, 2000). In contrast, the organisers of Dinners for All and Energise had resources, and also had networks of relationships with others with access to further resources. The distinction was thus not that one community had less social capital than the others, but that one community had less access to resources than the others.

b) Meeting love and belonging needs through community: Crossover Craft Group, Firefly Choir and Songa Community Choir

Another group that was unable to meet the needs of its members during the lockdown was Crossover Craft Group (see page 111). This group had similarities to Firefly Choir (see page 105) and Songa Community Choir (see page 145). All three were long-standing community clubs that had brought the same group of people together every week for many years. Members of the group had become important sources of support and community to one another. However, unlike Crossover Craft Group, Firefly Choir and Songa Community Choir ran Zoom sessions throughout lockdown. When Lauren (Firefly) felt lonely in her flat, she found that these sessions were a vital source of support. She felt that losing the weekly contact with the members of her choir would be extremely negative for her. In contrast, Joan of Crossover Craft Group did not have weekly sessions to attend. This was because she and other members of the group lacked access to the equipment and/or knowledge they would need to set up and participate in video-calls. Songa Community Choir also found that some of their members lacked access to video-call technology. However, in their case, they had resources and expertise within their community to help those who were struggling.

The contrast between the experience of members of these groups suggests that lacking the resources and skills to access video calls significantly hindered some organisations' ability to meet their members' needs. Some scholars have suggested that digital exclusion can be analysed in terms of individual differences in 'digital capital' (Park, 2017; Ragnedda & Ruiu, 2020). Although these perspectives acknowledge that 'digital capital' is related to other forms of social exclusion (Park, 2017), they fail to take account of the material and structural conditions that make some GRCOs more able to use digital technologies than others. Firefly Choir and Songa Community Choir were both based in affluent areas of cities in England. Their organisers and members had access to high-speed broadband and the devices with which to access video calls. They were also organised by middle class people who used digital technologies in the course of their work, so were comfortable doing so. In contrast, Crossover Craft Group was based in a deprived area of rural Wales. The participant I spoke with was a working-class woman who had never used IT for work, did not have broadband in her home, and did not have a device on which to make video-calls. She explained that nobody in the group had the skills and resources needed to set up video-calls or to support others to access them. The members of Crossover Craft Group were unable to connect with one another not simply because of their own individual lack of digital capital, but because, as a community, they did not have access to the resources and skills that were used by Songa Community Choir and Firefly Choir.

As we have seen, in order to meet need, organisations must not only identify it but also respond appropriately. This requires having access to the necessary resources to act towards ends. For some GRCOs in this study, a lack of access to resources was a key factor in their inability to meet need effectively and appears to be the significant difference between them and GRCOs that were able to respond to the needs they identified. Access to resources includes both access to material resource (such as food and equipment), plus access to skills and expertise (such as IT skills). Money, of course, is a way to access both (e.g. through employment of skilled staff), but some projects with very low budgets, such as Dinners for All were able to access these resources within their own communities without paying for them. Meanwhile, others did not have the resources available within their communities, nor the money to pay for them. This was a barrier to the relational response process because even when groups identified an unmet need, they could not act toward the end of meeting it.

B. Commissioning: a distortion of purpose

We have established that, in order to meet need effectively, organisations must make teleological decisions on the basis of the goal of meeting need. However, funding for voluntary and community organisations has become increasingly neoliberalised (Ehrenstein, 2012), and is now primarily organised on the basis of service commissioning rather than needs-based grant funding

(Ehrenstein, 2012; Simmonds, 2019; Vacchelli et al., 2015). This means that organisations are funded to deliver certain outcomes or provide particular services assigned in a top-down relationship by LAs (Bassel & Emejulu, 2017). These outcomes and services may not be well-aligned with the needs of the people and communities that the organisations are working within (Ehrenstein, 2012). Several GRCOs in this study said that their organisations were significantly underfunded, which made it hard to do all the work that needed to be done with the communities they supported. However, the three participants that placed most emphasis on the challenges of raising enough funding to meet their community's needs were organisations that supported women and/or racialised people. Manon Women's Centre meets the specific needs of women. Joy Language School meets the specific needs of migrant women. Black Families Project meets the specific needs of black and minoritised communities in a city. All three were unfunded or underfunded, and in particular were shut out of statutory commissioning processes because their services did not tick the boxes required by commissioners. Their experience was one of having to choose between enacting the relational response process in order to meet need, *or* bid for LA funding, which required that they changed their focus away from the purpose of meeting the needs of women and racialised people.

Manon Women's Centre and Black Families Project both provide support for people whom SSs are ostensibly supposed to support. Manon Women's Centre provides support for any women who need it. This includes women who have recently come out of prison, who form a large number of their 'service-users'. However, they could not access funding for women exiting prison because they did not work within the probation model (because they did not find it well-suited to meeting need). Yana explained that they had chosen not to bid for probation funding because it would damage the need-driven ethos of the organisation. Similarly, Black Families Project could not access NHS funding for their counselling service because the particular needs of black and culturally diverse communities were not reflected in the aims of the funding. Hazel explained that other services in the city had been commissioned to provide counselling services, but their services were not culturally appropriate for all. Black Families Project was left in the position of filling the gap in service for black and culturally diverse people, but without the appropriate funding.

> *There was a large lump of funding available from probation, and we seemed to fit the bill… but I was really afraid we would become a probation centre… It is so easy to chase money, and we all need money, but I think it's really important to retain our values and our ethos. It's too easy for us not to be what we are…We're not chasing targets… So, we're not constantly running after, you know, X number of people have to complete this. And if they don't complete it, oh, we're gonna lose the funding (Yana, manager, Manon Women's Centre).*

You'll find that people from certain communities feel doubly traumatised because they have to explain things that is culturally different to their therapist. Whereas if they're in front of someone who understands this, they can go straight into being able to deal with their issues. We find that we get a lot of referrals [to our counselling service] from those who are funded within the city to deal with people from various cultural backgrounds, but unable to do so. So, they're referring to us who again, do not get any funding because… we don't fall in the remit of what [LA] is supposed to be doing. (Hazel, manager, Black Families Project).

Hazel felt that this situation was a symptom of institutional racism, through which statutory services assumed that everyone has the same needs and funded accordingly. This meant that the specific needs of black and brown people were left unmet. Similarly, Yana reported that she had founded Manon Women's Centre because, through her professional experience, she identified that other services were not meeting women's needs. In particular, she felt that women who had experienced trauma needed long-term support to rebuild their lives, and that this was not prioritised by commissioned services.

I do believe that any woman who's gone through any kind of trauma actually loses a lot of self-esteem, self-worth, and I feel loses trust and that belief in herself… You might not think it's a very good use of money, for a paid member of staff just to sit with one woman for three hours. Now, we would say that was excellent use of a member of staff's time, simply because she was actually moving on with her life. (Yana, manager, Manon Women's Centre).

Meeting the specific needs of women and racialised people meant that these organisations were not well-positioned to bid in state-funded commissioning programmes, despite the fact that they were meeting need that other organisations failed to meet.

The organisers of Manon Women's Centre, Joy Language School and Black Families Project all noted a disparity between the work that the LA was willing to fund (which did not allow their organisations to meet specific needs), and the dependency the LA had on GRCOs to meet those needs. Yana felt that statutory funding models did not value the long-term relationship-building needed to help traumatised women feel safe and move forward. This meant that much of the work the organisation was doing to meet women's needs went unfunded, despite the fact that other services were relying upon them to do it. Jenna explained that her LA had given her an award for her vital services to the community but provided no funding to support that same work. Hazel felt that, due to the way that funding is organised, PCVOs end up providing services according to the

stipulations of commissioners, rather than actual need. Specialist GRCOs then end up filling the gaps by meeting need but with very little resource.

> *Most of our referrals come from either NHS, GPs, or other voluntary services… I think we're quite a good tick box for a lot of organisations. "Okay, so what's the future journey for this woman? She'll go to Manon." That's great. Unfortunately, no money comes with her… We've got a footfall of just under 180 women a week, which is a lot of women coming in… [The LA say] "Manon is wonderful. It's marvellous, we couldn't do without it." I'm thinking, "Yeah, show us the money darling"… we all do a damn good job, and we don't want loads of money. We don't want to pay lots of staff. We don't want to line in our pockets. We just want to survive. And that's, that's the bottom line. We just want to survive. (Yana, manager, Manon Women's Centre).*

> *I got an award for the work I do in [town]. I got the Lord Mayor's award. It was a big award, it's not something they give just willy nilly… For the little money we get we do so much. Myself and the volunteers we do a lot of work, we do valuable work in the community. And meanwhile the city council— we are offering the services that they are supposed to offer, and they are not even supporting us. But we carry on doing what we are doing because we know that what we are doing is highly valuable and needed in the community. (Jenna, organiser, Joy Language School).*

> *If you do not keep your roots in the grassroots of the communities, then you lose sight of what is actually needed… And you then provide services that you can get funding for rather than being true to the needs of the communities and the citizens and saying, 'well actually, this is what needs to happen'. Because many of those larger organisations will come to the smaller ones and ask them to reach those that they find hard to reach and will then offer peanuts for that work. (Hazel, manager, Black Families Project).*

In order to meet the needs of women (Manon Women's Centre, Joy Language School), and racialised people (Joy Language School, Black Families Project), these organisations had to work on very low budgets because neoliberal funding models did not assign sufficient value to their work, despite relying upon them to do it.

The present study supports previous findings (Bassel & Emejulu, 2018; Ehrenstein, 2012; Hirst & Rinne, 2012; Vacchelli et al., 2015) that commissioning programmes fail to adequately resource services for women and racialised people in particular. Commissioning encourages one-size-fits-all approaches because, rather than funding on the basis of need, funding is allocated on the basis of achievement of particular standardised outputs and outcomes (Bassel & Emejulu, 2017; Benson,

2014; Ehrenstein, 2012; Hirst & Rinne, 2012; Vacchelli et al., 2015). For example, in 2021, Brighton's long-standing locally-run women's refuge was defunded (Rise Up!, 2021) when they were 'beaten' in the LA commissioning process by a large national PVSO providing standardised services for "anyone effected by crime" (Victim Support, n.d.). Research suggests that neoliberalisation of the voluntary sector has damaged organisations' ability to meet need, particularly need of women and racialised people whose specific needs are not well-served by the standardised outcomes pushed by commissioners (Bassel & Emejulu, 2018; Benson, 2014; Ehrenstein, 2012; Tilki et al., 2015; Vacchelli et al., 2015). In her study of neoliberalisation of the women's sector in England, Ehrenstein (2012) found that:

> Women's organisations face difficulty attracting consideration in the setting of priorities for local government spending through Local Area Agreements [a commissioning mechanism], which have resulted in the agglomeration of funding for highly regulated and quantifiable outcomes driven service provision.

Meanwhile, a University of Birmingham report into community organisations run by and for black and minoritised people found that:

> The move from grant-aided funding to commissioning and procurement as a primary mode of resourcing the sector has had an impact on all community and voluntary organisations. However this trend has left many BME VCS organisations competing on an unequal basis, as the sector is less well established and resourced in the first place. (Ware, 2011, p. 23).

It is perhaps no coincidence that the two groups I interviewed who were able to identify need but unable to meet it, (Seaville Refugee Group and Welcome Refugee Group) were both run by and for racialised people, and both reported that women in their communities had the most unmet need. As a result of the decision not to chase funding that is not aligned with need, Yana of Manon Women's Centre had never been able to pay herself a full salary and had worked some of her hours on an unpaid basis for many years. Jenna of Joy Language School was also working partly on an unpaid basis, and in both organisations, most of the day-to-day work was unpaid. This experience was shared by participants in a study of women's voluntary sector organisations in England, which reported widespread "institutionalised volunteering", in which state funding models force women's sector workers to work for free by not resourcing work that meets real need on the ground (Ehrenstein, 2012, p. 211). By imposing standardised targets and outputs, neoliberal funding models may be causing the systematic exploitation of the work of those who are engaged in meeting specificity of need of women and racialised people.[37]

[37] Such workers are often themselves women and/or racialised people (restricting appointments to people who share a protected characteristic is permitted under the Equality Act, so this exploitation may be of female and racialised workers in particular, as well as female and racialised 'service-users').

The experiences of Manon Women's Centre, Joy Language School and Black Families Project suggest that restrictive funding models can lead to a disruption in the response cycle. In order to allow the relational response process to flow, these GRCOs were forced to work on very low budgets and avoid bidding for LA funding. Ehrenstein (2012) found that, when women's and black and minoritised community organisations bid for commissioned funding, they then have to put time and energy into activities that do not meet the needs of those they aim to support, and that they felt there were important needs going unmet as a result. This suggests that the dominant funding model (commissioning) threatens to distort the purpose of organisations away from need-meeting and toward target-meeting. This finding is supported by research into the impact of commissioning on public services. For example, scholars have argued that commissioning has damaged the ability of NHS staff to be patient-centred (Brookes & Harvey, 2016), has made it harder for workers in children's services to prioritise relational care (T. Brown et al., 2018), and has failed to enable substance misuse services to meet the specific needs of refugee service users (Mills, 2012).

Even if frontline workers are able to identify need, organisations that are funded through commissioning cannot meet that need if it does not match up to the priorities of funders. Commissioning therefore constitutes a disruption to the relational response process. Manon Women's Centre, Joy Language School and Black Families Project avoided this problem by not bidding for restrictive commissioning contracts. Meanwhile, they were faced with a large unmet need that they were relied upon to try to meet despite a lack of resource, which we have already seen is itself a barrier to meeting need. In short, the neoliberal funding models force organisations to choose between two different barriers to enacting the relational response process, and therefore make it harder for GRCOs to meet need. This is discussed in chapter IX, where I offer recommendations for models of funding that do not distort the purpose of GRCOs.

C. Selling services: a distortion of purpose

I have argued that in order to meet need effectively, organisations have to act teleologically toward that end. This means that decisions about what to do, how and why are made on the basis of what will help to meet identified need as relevant to the organisation's overall aim, rather than on any other basis. Perspectives from GRCO participants suggest that, when organisations charge 'service-users' for services, this creates the material conditions in which there is incentive to do work that people can/will pay for, rather than work that meets need. This section looks in detail at Songa Community Choir, which charges participants a fee for attending sessions in order to pay the Musical Director (MD) and administrator. Analysing recorded meetings of the group using conversation analysis, I demonstrate that decision-making is done in relation to both the purpose of meeting need in the community *and* the purpose of generating income through fees. What

makes sense as a way to achieve the former purpose does not always make sense as a way to achieve the latter. For this organisation, generating income through selling of services presents a distortion of purpose that is a potential disruption to the relational response process. This analysis is supported by the perspective put forward by a member of the choir in her interview. In contrast, Larks Folk Choir is run on an entirely on an unpaid basis, which meant there is less requirement for focus on income generation. Drawing on interviews with two members (one of whom is the MD —a role paid in Songa Community Choir), I argue that because the choir sessions are given rather than sold, there is no conflict of purpose. However, we have seen that lack of resource can be a barrier to organisational ability to meet need. For example, several GRCOs in this study had too much work to do to rely solely on unpaid workers and had to raise money for wages. I am going to argue that when organisations have to sell services in order to generate the resources they require, a conflict is created between the aim of meeting need and the aim of creating income.

In April 2020 I interviewed Ellie, a member in Songa Community Choir who helps with IT and is also the spouse of the MD. She explained that, before lockdown began, the MD had some concerns about running Zoom sessions because she was not sure that they would generate income. There was a question of whether people would pay for the sessions, so whether the sessions would have value from the perspective of income generation (or, to use Marx's terminology, exchange-value (Marx, 1976)). However, she ran a first session on the day that lockdown began, and the experience of choir members was that the session had a great deal of experiential value for members.

> *From a freelance point of view, what's the value of doing it? Are people going to contribute? Are you going to charge?... So, she had some reticence about doing it to begin with, but... the first session ended at half past eight and at half past eight on that first night, Boris Johnson came on TV and announced the lockdown... And the clash of those two emotions was, well, it was a clash of two massive emotions. I mean, I don't know if I've even got words to describe it. Yeah, but it helped us realise that... there is some value in what we spent the last hour and a half doing before that announcement came out... I think there's a realisation that we have an amazing thing in the choir, and maybe sometimes we take it for granted. (Ellie, member, Songa Community Choir).*

Ellie identified that there was a possibility that Zoom sessions might not generate income and contrasted this with the experiential value of the sessions themselves. This same contrast was made by other choir organisers in their monthly committee meetings, where they weighed up the benefits of taking certain actions in relation to the needs of the community against the need to sell choir places. By the time the GRCO began recording meetings they had already decided to continue to charge their usually subscription rate for Zoom meetings. They experienced a decline in the number of attendees, which meant they were not generating as much income as usual. They

therefore faced a potential financial problem of being unable to pay the MD and administrator. As the months went on, numbers reduced further, and the MD was concerned that the sessions were no longer as experientially valuable as they had been early in lockdown. This left the organisation in a position of considering what activities they should continue to run. These decisions were made in relation to both the aim to support the community, and the aim to generate income by selling services.

The first meeting extract is taken from a committee meeting held in May 2020. The committee have been discussing the fact that they are concerned about reduced income and their ability to pay the MD and administrator in the future. They are considering whether to organise Zoom sessions during the summer. The speakers are the Chair (Cha), MD, Secretary (Sec) and an ordinary committee member (CM1).

MEETING EXTRACT 1

	01	Cha:	So do you want to talk about the summer sessions which is
	02		item six.
	03	MD :	Well this was just an idea: that um Ellie had about keeping
	04		everyone going through the summer. And it doesn't need to
	05		be me like we could have a quiz one week we could have a
	06		little open session the next week, we can have you know
	07		sing through a song one week. But if we're all pretty
	08		much just in for the summer shall we just keep a- a
	09		Monday night spot that anyone can drop in to:::. Um
	10		and I don't mind but I can't be the
	11		pgwaahh ((breathy voice, wiggles fingers)) behind that.
	12		(4.8)
	13	Cha:	[Um
Income —>	14	Sec:	[Is it- go on is it creating something that's- not gonna g-
	15		if it's not going to generate us any income one argument is
	16	MD :	Yeah
	17	Sec:	what's it for?
Experience—>	18	MD :	The community.
	19	Sec:	[Yeah.
Experience—>	20	CM1:	[To stay connected I think isn't it.
	21	MD :	Yeah.

At lines 03-11, the MD relays a suggestion that she reports has been made by Ellie (the MD's partner), to run sessions for members throughout the summer holidays. The proposal is to have

weekly Zoom sessions with various activities, that are not all run by the MD. The MD introduces this proposal as something that would be done for the purpose of "keeping everyone going through the summer" (lines 03-04). This framing treats the proposed activity as being for the purpose of meeting the needs of choir members. However, at lines 14-15 and 17, the Secretary orients to a different potential purpose—to generate income. By asking "if it's not going to generate us any income one argument is what's it for?", the Secretary treats income generation as a taken-for-granted purpose of the organisation, and other purposes as requiring justification. [38] In contrast, responses from the MD (line 18) and committee member (line 20) orient to community need as a purpose in its own right. This exchange is therefore an example of a negotiation between organisers of what the purpose of the GRCO is and provides evidence that selling services can be treated as a purpose in its own right, which may disrupt organisations' ability to act toward the end of meeting need.

This tension between the aim to generate income through selling services and the aim to act toward the ends of meeting the needs of the community emerges again later in the same meeting when the committee are considering whether to recommence weekly choir sessions after the summer holidays. Speakers are the MD, the Secretary (Sec), the Events Organiser (Ent), and the Treasurer (Tre).

MEETING EXTRACT 2

```
Experience—> 01  MD :   I don't think a Zoom- another Zoom- I think this is fine
             02         but I don't think another Zoom is gonna work really.
             03         I [mean people-
             04  Sec:     [What another term [on Zoom
             05  MD :                        [Another Zoom term. I don't think it's
             06         gonna work. [I don't think
             07  Sec:               [Cos that's the alternative is just Songa closes
             08         for a term.
             09  MD :   Yeah we just fall fallow for a term.

((3 minutes omitted, discussion of whether the choir might be able to begin meeting
face to face again after the summer, and MD suggests that she does not think she or the
choir will want to continue on Zoom because it does not provide the same quality of
experience as in-person sessions.))

             10  Ent:   I'm really quite surprised Katie to hear you say- I understand
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[38] The Secretary does orient to the possibility of other purposes by hedging her turn with "one argument is". However, this turn nevertheless works to make relevant the justification of any purpose other than income generation.

and I hear you I hear you but at the same time I'm really quite surprised because I've been feeling that the community of Songa has been so::: oh it's felt quite

MD : Mm

Experience—> Ent: A very supportive thing and I feel like a lot of the members have had an enormous amount of support. From it. [And a sense of community.

Experience—> MD : [That's true. Yeah.

Experience—> Ent: Yeah. And I've felt that it's actually more important at the moment than it is under normal conditions and I'm quite surprise- I'm quite gobsmacked actually to hear you say that you wouldn't con- you wouldn't consider doing an autumn term=I was expecting you to say yeah of course we've done one term so well it works so well [the community seems to ( ).)

MD : [Oh right

Ent: Of course (

MD : I mean I feel like um- well I will be led by the community so if we say to people what do you reck- I think we should just ask people what they want. And whatever they want I'll do.

((4.5 minutes omitted, in which MD raises concerns about whether the sessions are enjoyable for the members, and the Events Manager and Treasurer feedback their perception that the sessions are going very well and meeting the needs of those who are attending. The only purpose oriented to the needs and experience of the community.))

Sec: I want to sort of echo everything that ((events manager))and everybody else has said about how brilliant you are ((MD)) at doing it [but I think also

MD : [Not particularly I'm not fishing for any of that [I just

Sec: [We can't- we can't say at this point you know how

Experience—> you're gonna feel and how the community are going to feel. And how- what the circumstances are going to [be. In September.

MD : [No we don't [know

Sec: [And it's a really good conversation to start flagging up

Income —> and having that but my only point in relation to the finances is if we don't get seventy six people- oh was it seventy six Jane? [About that

Tre: [Well yeah it's ( )

CM1: Something like that

Sec: Yeah we- we're not

Income —> Tre: Sixty four it's sixty four people that will take us through

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             48          to January
             49  Sec:    Okay. Sixty four people:
             50  MD :     Yeah
Income    —> 51  Sec:    Then: we aren't s(h)olvent. And can't pay people.
             52          And I would feel anxious about sort of promising a
             53          term because I just think it probably is unrealistic
             54          to think we're going to get that many people.
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At lines 01-29, the discussion is focussed on whether the activity that the GRCO is running—online choir sessions—will continue to work and be effective for another term. The MD forwards a position that "I don't think another Zoom is gonna work" (line 02), and the Secretary suggests that "the alternative is just Songa closes for a term" (lines 07-08), which the MD agrees is an option (line 09). From line 11, the events manager (a committee member) disagrees with the MD's assessment that the Zoom sessions are not effective, with reference explicitly to the purpose of meeting the need of the community. The event manager is focussed entirely on the question of whether the sessions have experiential value for choir members. On this basis, the MD agrees to run sessions if the choir members want them (lines 27-29). The secretary challenges this suggestion on the basis of the different purpose of generating income (line 30 onwards). She refers to numbers of members needed to pay workers, and that she does not think this many people will sign up. In contrast, the event manager's orientation has been to the experience of those who do attend (irrespective of their number). Generating income through selling services is thus positioned as being a different and contradictory purpose to the purpose of meeting need in the community. This exchange provides evidence that, when organisations are reliant on selling their services to generate income, this creates an additional purpose on top of the experiential purpose of the organisations' activities. This additional extrinsic purpose is made relevant in decisions about what the organisation should do, which suggests it represents a potential disruption to organisations' ability to act teleologically toward the purpose of meeting need.

In contrast to Songa, where the MD is paid, Larks Folk Choir is run entirely on an unpaid basis and therefore the choir is not reliant on member fees in order to run its sessions. At the beginning of lockdown, Mandy, the MD, was hesitant to run Zoom sessions. Other members of the choir, who like her were unpaid, decided to organise them themselves. This was successful, so Mandy agreed to lead rehearsals. Like Songa, the number of attendees was much lower for Zoom sessions than for in-person sessions but, unlike Songa, this did not present a problem for the MD or for the organisation.

> *I think I was slightly hesitant at first if I'm honest about whether to kind of dive straight in. But I'm really grateful that ((member)) did that she you know, she kind of said, "Do you mind if I do a zoom meet up?" And I said "no, I don't mind. But I can't*

join you this week" … So, they just met up online and had a sing… [we] had a brief discussion about whether to carry on with rehearsals. I think, again, ((member)) kind of led on that. And I said why not? Let's just give it a go… I'd say we've got about half a choir. So, we have lost people… So, we normally have about 25 at a rehearsal, I would say, and we've had between 12 and 18… but of the people who come… I think that they enjoy seeing each other definitely. I think that actually, even though it's quite an informal choir, we're quite rigorous about learning. And I think people have been really enjoying that. (Mandy, musical director, Larks Folk Choir).

Mandy's focus was on the benefit of the sessions for those who attended, and not on concern about the number of attendees. For Songa, decisions about whether to run choir sessions were made in part in relation to the question of whether enough income would be generated. In contrast, Larks appear to have made these decisions solely on the basis of whether those involved valued the sessions in their own right. The number of attendees did not matter, because the choir was not making decisions on the basis of whether their services would be bought by a sufficient number of people.

This section has argued that selling of services is a distortion of purpose for organisations, and thus has the potential to disrupt the relational response process. When organisational income is generated through exchange mechanisms, the organisation can be motivated to act toward the end of creating marketable services rather than simply toward the end of meeting need. This is consistent with Marx's (1976) distinction of use value from exchange value. Exchange attaches a form of extrinsic value to goods and services that is disconnected from their actual usefulness. However, under conditions of capitalist patriarchy[39], exchange is the dominant form of income generation, and recent decades have seen increasing marketisation of the voluntary and community sector in the UK, marked by an increase in reliance on selling of services and the rise of the 'social enterprise' (McKay et al., 2015; Nicholls & Teasdale, 2017; Roy et al., 2021). Larks Folk Choir managed without selling services because their activities were limited, their membership small, and their MD not reliant on them for income. However, some organisations, such as Seaville Refugee Group, were significantly limited in their ability to act towards ends because of lack of resource but could not sell the work of meeting their members' needs because their members could not afford to pay. There is substantial evidence that marketisation of voluntary and community

[39] I use the term 'capitalist patriarchy' to denote the current economic system in which this study takes place. The term 'capitalist' is intended as a verb, describing a particular iteration of an older, longer established culture of extraction and dependency denial, of which the extraction from and denial of dependency on *women's reproductive bodies* historically appears to predate (Engels, 2010) some of the other forms of systematic extraction and dependency denial operating today. Male dominance cannot be undone within a culture in which dependency is denied (J. C. Jones, 2016), which means, I suggest, that the conditions of patriarchy may also be implicated in the rise of capitalism.

organisations damages their ability to target their work at those who most need it, and also risks distorting their core purposes (Alexander & Weiner, 1998; Eikenberry & Kluver, 2004; W. P. Ryan, 1999). My findings add to this evidence and suggest that selling of services creates conditions in which organisations can be left with a choice between creating a successful commercial product which does not meet the needs of the community, or being under resourced (which we have seen is a problem in its own right).

3. Conclusion

This chapter has assessed the conditions of possibility for the enactment of the relational response process within organisations, and thus the conditions of possibility for organisations to meet human need. I have argued that meeting need is reliant on an iterative relationship between 1) identifying need; 2) making decisions; and 3) acting toward ends. This iterative process is made possible when the parts of an organisation that do these things are closely connected and able to influence one another. I have therefore suggested that organisational structures and cultures that minimise hierarchy and place trust in the judgement of frontline workers are enabling conditions for the meeting of need in its temporal and relational specificity. Comparing organisations that met need effectively with those who struggled to do so, I have further argued that the relational response process is only possible if organisations have sufficient access to resources to enable them to act toward ends. Meanwhile, commissioning disrupts the process because it introduces purposes that are unrelated to the actual needs of the communities the organisation is set up to support. Similarly, selling of services distorts purpose because it incentivises organisations and individuals to make decisions according to what people can and will pay for, rather than what is in the interests of those who need support. My findings support arguments against the neoliberalisation of the voluntary and community sector, because neoliberalisation involves increasingly centralised control and standardisation of services (Benson, 2014; Ehrenstein, 2012; Vandekinderen et al., 2012), combined with funding models of commissioning and marketization that create distortions of purpose (Alexander & Weiner, 1998; Benson, 2014; Brookes & Harvey, 2016; T. Brown et al., 2018; Ehrenstein, 2012; W. P. Ryan, 1999).

In the final empirical chapter, we will consider the needs of people involved in running or working within GRCOs, and if and how their needs were met through involvement in their organisations. This leads to an argument for a subject-subject imagining of need-meeting, in which the service-user/provider dualism is broken down and care is organised on the basis that all persons are subjects who have both contributions to make *and* needs of their own.

VIII. "I think we're turning up for each other." Recognition, reciprocity, and the principle of *doulia*.

In chapter III I argued for a radical materialist feminist ontology of care in which people doing the work of meeting others' needs, on a paid or unpaid basis, are understood as subjects in their own right with their own needs and interests. However, the first three empirical chapters—chapters V, VI and VII—have only considered if and how grassroots community organisations (GRCOs), as 'service-providers', met the needs of people in their communities, as 'service-users', during the first lockdown of the Covid-19 pandemic. I have not discussed the needs and interests of the people who did the work of meeting others' needs. This chapter considers if and how those who worked to support others also had their own needs met through involvement in GRCOs. I suggest that involvement in GRCOs helped to meet growth needs in general (the need to act into the world), and also specifically helped to meet love and belonging needs and esteem needs. Esteem includes recognition, which requires subject-subject relation. The relational response process outlined in chapter VI requires subject-subject relation, so I suggest that meeting the needs of 'service-users' in their specificity involves working in a way that supports recognition for 'service-providers'. Consequently, it is not useful to imagine some people as exclusively 'service-users' and others as exclusively 'service-providers'. Such a framework is based on subject/object thinking and erases the subjectivity of one or other of the people involved.

Having advocated for a both/and imagining of service-user/provider, I consider whether the consequence of organising need-meeting in a mode of mutual recognition means that GRCO care encounters and relationships were fully reciprocal (i.e. met the needs of all parties equally). I argue that, where need is met by being part of a community, those involved are necessarily *both* beneficiaries *and* co-creators of the community. However, by necessity, not all care encounters, even when based in mutual recognition, can meet the needs of both parties equally. This is because different people have different needs and different capacity to provide care, at different times. Consequently, many need-meeting encounters are necessarily uneven: the work of one subject goes into meeting the needs of another subject to an extent that cannot be directly reciprocated (Kittay, 2019). Drawing on feminist care ethics (Kittay, 2019; Ruddick, 1980), I argue that organising care on the basis of justice requires recognising these dyadic imbalances, placing high social value on the "dependency work" (Kittay, 2019, p. 94) that goes into caring for those who cannot fully reciprocate, sharing dependency work sufficiently that everybody has the opportunity

to act into the world as a full subject, and building matrix cultures (Dashu, 2005) of care in which carers have their own needs met through webs of relation based on a principle of *doulia* (Kittay, 2019).

1. Having our own needs met through supporting others

The organisations in this study were run mostly on an unpaid basis. Of the 35 participants I interviewed, 33 worked for their GRCO in some capacity (as opposed to simply attending sessions as members/participants). Of these, 24 were unpaid for all their work, and 4 were unpaid for part of it. Only 5 participants were paid for their whole GRCO role. All of the GRCOs had people working for them on an unpaid basis in some capacity. Most reported an increase in unpaid work for the GRCO during the pandemic. Several said that they had experienced an increase in offers of unpaid help during lockdown—in some cases more than they were able to make use of.

> *We have new volunteers. Lots. Overall, 51 new since lockdown. Plus, another 20 in application stage. (Hannah, organiser, Get Active Together.)*
>
> *People really want to do something to help…We could have twice as many volunteers at least. Or more. (Jill, organiser, Dinners for All.)*
>
> *It's grown so much since Covid because people have got the time to help. (Sacha, volunteer, Eat Together.)*
>
> *We've actually got more volunteers than we need (Mary, volunteer, Sunville Coronavirus Volunteers.)*
>
> *Most of the phone calls in the first week were people who said they would they wanted to help. So, we got far more help than we actually needed. (Harry, organiser, Forest Lane Volunteers)*

This study has detailed the work that GRCOs did to help meet need during lockdown. Most of this work was done on an unpaid basis, and a common experience during lockdown appears to have been a desire to get involved in acting to support others. This finding is supported by trends in national volunteering programmes—for example the NHS Emergency Responders programme received three times more offers of help than it was able to make use of (Krekel, 2021).

I asked participants what motivated them (if entirely or partly unpaid) and/or other unpaid people in their project to give their time and energy to their GRCO. Participants reported that they themselves and/or others were motivated by a general desire to act/do, and/or a desire for social interaction, and/or a desire to make a useful contribution in the world. I suggest that these motivations are consistent with Maslow's model of need (presented in chapter III of this thesis),

and in particular that people are motivated by growth as well as deficiency needs, that people have a need for love and belonging, and that self-esteem is necessary for wellbeing. People's growth needs were supported by opportunities to act toward ends. Love and belonging needs were supported by opportunities for social interaction. Esteem needs were supported by both a sense of feeling competent and able to contribute, and recognition by others of one's contribution. I argue that the relational response process described in the previous chapters requires mutual recognition, which means that, by definition, people working within this model must experience recognition when giving support to others.

A. Doing as an end in itself

A common experience among GRCO participants was that of wanting to act, or be *doing*, during a time in which the possibilities of activity were limited. For some, this was presented as an end in itself. Hannah of Get Active Together had previously worked for the organisation on a paid basis two days per week and had other paid work on other days. During lockdown, her other paid work stopped, and she worked three more days per week for Get Active Together on an unpaid basis. She explained that she wanted to continue being as active as she had been and to have something to do with her time. Similarly, Heather from Black Families Project reported that a desire to "do something" was a reason that people were signing up to volunteer for her GRCO during lockdown. Adam of Pangton Mutual Aid explained that doing was important for his wellbeing. He also felt that doing is motivational for further doing.

> *I didn't want to just kind of be stuck at home. Not doing a lot. To go from a lot to not doing anything. Yeah. So, you know, I said early on, I'd really like to kind of fill my time. (Hannah, organiser, Get Active Together.)*
>
> *The feedback from some of the volunteers is that they were either furloughed or working from home. And they just felt that they weren't doing anything…there's a drive to want to do something. (Hazel, manager, Black Families Project)*
>
> *I feel like if I stop doing things, I'll just sort of fall into a slump and have like no energy to do anything. (Adam, organiser, Pangton Mutual Aid.)*

This experience suggests that people are motivated to be subjects engaged in processes of doing. In chapter III I argued, with reference to Maslow (1943, 1968) and Jones (2018), that human need has a growth as well as a deficiency modality—or that people are motivated not only by lack but also by becoming. Models of need that assume that people are only motivated by what we do *not* have (e.g., Doyal & Gough, 1984; Fitzgerald, 1985; Lacan, 1966; Marcuse, 1972), fail to recognise that acting can be an end in itself, and, in particular, that acting can create the motivation for

further acting (Graeber, 2018). Participant experiences of wanting to be doing, and not wanting to be "not doing a lot", support the proposal that humans need to act into the world in order to flourish. Participation in GRCOs allowed people to act into the world in a way that was good for their wellbeing.

B. Love and belonging

Lockdown, as we have seen, was a time in which people were particularly vulnerable to isolation and loneliness (Bu et al., 2020; Groarke et al., 2020). Some of those who worked for GRCOs on an unpaid basis explained that their involvement helped them to feel less isolated because of their interaction with others. Mary is a volunteer for Sunville Coronavirus Volunteers. She helped at a new foodbank during lockdown, including running food collections outside of supermarkets with other volunteers. She told me that one of the reasons she got involved was to meet her own need for social interaction and explained how involvement in the GRCO had helped to meet this need. Similarly, Issy, who had returned from university to live with her parents during lockdown, said that getting involved in a GRCO allowed her to make friends with people in the local area, which helped her feel less isolated.

> *I wanted a reason to go out and talk to people. On a personal level. I live by myself. I'm quite lonely at the moment. I'm struggling a little bit with being, with feeling isolated… So, yeah on a personal level… I actually wanted to have an opportunity to get out and speak to people. Two weeks ago, we did a collection outside the supermarket, and I managed to sort it out so that I could do it with a friend of mine… So, doing that, that was just really good for my well-being. Being in the centre of (town)… with a friend of mine, having a bit of a giggle… It's good for me to be able to be in a space with other people, even if they are 2 metres apart. (Mary, volunteer, Sunville Coronavirus Volunteers)*

> *I really valued it as an opportunity to feel like I had friends physically close, because since I've left home and come back, I don't really have any my age friends in (town)… So, I was surprised how nice that felt. (Issy, volunteer, Thurton Hub).*

Maslow (1968) tells us that love and belonging is a fundamental human need, and that experiencing love and belonging is a condition of possibility for human flourishing. These GRCO participants found that their need for love and belonging was in danger of being unmet due to lockdown conditions, and that by working with others to help meet need in their communities they were able to access opportunities for social interaction that helped them to feel less lonely.

C. Esteem

Participants reported that they wanted to feel that they were contributing to society or to their communities during the challenging period of the pandemic. They were motivated by wanting to have something useful to offer to the world around them. Issy explained that she got involved in Thurton Hub because she wanted to "feel helpful", and Liz of Commonthorpe Neighbourhood Support said she wanted to "do something that's beneficial". Jill reflected on the motivations of those who worked on an unpaid basis for Dinners for All and said that "people really want to do something to help". Hannah reported that volunteers in Get Active Together had told her that they were benefiting from feeling "useful" as a result of their involvement in the GRCO.

> *I want to help. I can't spend the next four weeks sitting around in my parents' house. I want to feel helpful. (Issy, volunteer, Thurton Hub.)*
>
> *I think when lockdown came, certainly I felt oh my goodness, what can I do, I need to do something to help, something that's beneficial, and I need to do something…Clearly it satisfies a need in us to feel that we're doing something. (Liz, organiser, Commonthorpe Neighbourhood Support.)*
>
> *People really want to do something to help. (Dinners for All)*
>
> *We've had quite a few nice bits of feedback [from volunteers] about feeling useful. Particularly the people that may be stuck at home… those people that are doing the welfare calls from there, say it's great to be able to still feel useful. (Hannah, organiser, Get Active Together).*

I suggest that the desire to do things that are "helpful" or "beneficial" relates to the needs that Maslow identifies as 'esteem'—the need for positive self-regard. As Mary of Sunville Coronavirus Volunteers put it, "it will be nice to be able to look back at this time and say, I did my best".

Maslow suggests that esteem need has two subsets:

> These are, first, the desire for strength, for achievement, for adequacy, for confidence in the face of the world, and for independence and freedom. Secondly, we have what we may call the desire for reputation or prestige (defining it as respect or esteem from other people), recognition, attention, importance or appreciation. (Maslow, 1943, p. 10)

Esteem is understood as a combination of a) the experience of one's own competence; and b) the experience of having one's being (including one's efforts) recognised positively by others. When discussing their unpaid organising for GRCOs, retired participants Liz (Commonthorpe Neighbourhood Support) and Catherine (Dove Centre) spoke of their desire to use their skills, experience and capabilities.

I'm retired but I'm still capable of doing stuff… Where I feel comfortable is doing something I know how to do. (Liz, organiser, Commonthorpe Neighbourhood Support.)

I retired round about 2013. I chose to work on three years beyond necessary, I could have retired at 60. I worked on to almost sixty-three. But I suppose one of the things there is that actually, the kinds of things I've done in my life, I have gathered quite a lot of expertise, and it seems a shame in some respects just to shelve that… there's something about using it. (Catherine, trustee, Dove Centre.)

Liz and Catherine were motivated by wanting to do things that they were competent to do. This is the first subset of Maslow's understanding of esteem. Participants also reported experiencing the second subset—recognition. Pearl of Swing Time spoke about her positive experience of receiving messages of appreciation from others after organising an online dance event. Colin of Greenville Mutual Aid described how his experience of helping others involved feeling appreciated, which felt good. He said that this experience of feeling recognised for something he had done for another person was new and very valuable for him.

I had so many lovely messages afterwards saying, you know, thank you so much, I really appreciate it. And, you know, thank you for the effort… it's nice to be appreciated (Pearl, organiser, Swing Time).

What I would say, is that, I don't want to be twee about this, but I think that this was the first time in my life thing, this was. That, you know, where people say to you that at Christmas, it's better to give presents and receive them. Right? I've never felt that, I always want the presents, right? But the thing was that when you took shopping to people, and it was a case of, you didn't do it for people saying, 'Oh, thanks, thank you' and all that, but you could genuinely see that they were they were stuck. And, you know, your thing that you had done, had helped them with something. That was genuinely, you know, a warm feeling. (Colin, organiser, Greenville Mutual Aid).

These GRCO organisers put their time and energy into making things happen for the benefit of people in their communities, and through their interactions with those people, they felt recognised for their contribution. Crucially, this recognition was possible because these workers had direct, personal contact with the people who were benefiting from their work. They were engaged in a two-way interaction that involved not only the provision of a service to somebody who needed support, but also the provision of recognition back to the person giving the support. Aaron from Thorne Homeless Project reflected on what made him keep putting his time into his GRCO. He felt

that it was that he could see first-hand the impact his work was having, and that this provided him with the motivation to continue to do it.

> *I just, I see the benefits. And I see the benefit in small charities that are community led, because the direct social action is much more impactful than larger organisations. And I think it's just something that I really believe in, you know, I see the impact that our support has on people. Yeah. And it has real value. And I think I've just, and then you have that the personal interactions with the people you support as well. And you see how much it means to them. And even the relatively small things that you've done, have had such a big impact on them. It can be quite addictive. (Aaron, organiser, Thorne Homeless Project).*

We saw in chapter VII that Aaron's work involved getting to know people over time and meeting their specific needs through the relational response process. Through his relationships with homeless people, he was able to learn about what actions helped to meet their needs. This means that he was able to experience the value of his work. He put time and energy into doing something to support the needs of others, and by engagement in a relational response process with the beneficiaries, he had his efforts reflected back at him. He therefore had esteem-related need met through being involved in a subject-subject relationship with 'service-users'.

D. The relational response process requires mutual recognition

We have seen in previous chapters that meeting need in its specificity relies on a relational response process in which those giving support to others engage with those others in a way that allows the 'service-provider' to learn about the specific and changing needs of the 'service-user'. In other words, it requires that 'service-users' are related to as *subjects* rather than passive recipients. Engaging with people as subjects requires recognition, and genuine recognition can only be provided *by other subjects* (Benjamin, 1987; Hegel, 1977) (see chapter III). Thus, the relational response process necessarily involves subject-subject relation, or intersubjectivity.[40] If this is correct, it means that need in its specificity requires a relationship in which there are *two* subjects—which means the 'service-provider' *must also be a subject in the encounter* and must therefore be recognised by the 'service-user' as a subject. Looking back to our discussion of Marxist and relativist debates of need in chapter III, a common mistake in the theorising of need and its

[40] *Intersubjectivity* is a contested term (Duranti, 2010; A. Gillespie & Cornish, 2010). I use it as it is used by Benjamin (1990), which is that the core element of intersubjectivity is *mutual recognition*. This differs from Husserl's object-relations definition of intersubjectivity (Duranti, 2010; Husserl, 2012), which imagines intersubjectivity in terms of subjects' orientation to objects, and also from the narrower definition of intersubjectivity as shared-in-common-understanding, which is used in ethnomethodology and conversation analysis (Cipolletta et al., 2020; Heritage, 1984; Schegloff, 1992).

relationship to policy is to see services providers as resources (objects) to be used for the meeting of the needs of subjects (e.g., Bay, 1968; Doyal & Gough, 1984; Fitzgerald, 1985; Marcuse, 1972). This framing erases the subjectivity of those involved in provision of services. In contrast, the relational response process necessarily involves mutual recognition. Consequently, the relational response process not only enables the meeting of specificity of need of the 'service-user', but also by definition supports the meeting of recognition needs in the 'service-provider'. I want to suggest that this intersubjectivity means that it is an oversimplification to think of care encounters as being between service-user and service-provider, and that doing so is based on subject/object thinking.

An argument for challenging this dualism has been made in Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) literature (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993; Mathie & Cunningham, 2003). The ABCD approach is based on resisting discourses of 'needy' or 'deprived' communities and replacing these with models of community development based on making use of the strengths and resources in a community (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003). A proponent of the model in the UK writes:

> Care is the freely given gift of the heart from one person to another; you cannot manage it, nor can you buy it, it is not a service that you can package. (Russell, 2011, p. 7)

ABCD is based in the idea that that people need to both give *and* receive care (Russell, 2011) and that relationships, rather than services, are key to healthy communities (Harrison et al., 2019). This perspective supports the analysis I have put forward that recognition cannot be bought or forced, that subjects need other subjects, and that human beings have a need to act into the world in meaningful ways. However, I suggest that ABCD fails to acknowledge the reality that care is unvalued or undervalued within capitalist patriarchy, that this un/under-valuing is related to the systematic extraction of women's labour, and that this extraction is justified on the basis of imagining care as existing in a realm beyond the economy (Federici, 2020)—a realm of women's natural caregiving or maternalism (R. Read, 2019)—which, as we have seen, relies upon imagining care-givers as resources rather than subjects (Irigaray, 1985a; J. C. Jones, 2021c)). Within this context, an uncritical framing of care as "the freely given gift of the heart" risks reproducing a taken for granted assumption that caregiving is not work, and therefore risks reproducing structural exploitation of care labour. The lack of material analysis in ABCD is perhaps why it has been so enthusiastically adopted during recent years of Coalition and Conservative government in the UK, in which austerity policies have been pursued (MacLeod & Emejulu, 2014). ABCD promotes a politics in which people are not thought of as having needs but as having potentials. This is itself a dualism that has been used to justify reduced state expenditure and passing responsibility for unmet needs on the communities whose needs are most unmet (MacLeod & Emejulu, 2014). People and communities have *both* needs *and* potentials, and I suggest that

differences in levels of need and levels of opportunity to fulfil potential are non-arbitrarily related to material structures of extraction and domination. Encounters that meet need in its specificity are necessarily between two subjects, both of whom have needs and interests of their own. Organising care in ways that support the relational response process allows people in care encounters to recognise one another as subjects, which is beneficial for both parties which means that, by definition, some element of reciprocity (or mutual aid). However, in order to organise care in a way that engages with everybody's needs as subjects, it is necessary to consider the possibilities and limitations of such reciprocity, and the ways in which giving care can be depleting for care givers. This is the focus of the final section.

2. The possibilities and limitations of reciprocity

In this final empirical section, I want to consider the extent to which intersubjective encounters like those described above are reciprocal. I have already suggested that there is always an element of reciprocity in such encounters because they are based on mutual recognition. I further argue that some GRCOs organised group activities in which the people benefiting from being part of a community also played a crucial role in creating that community. GRCOs that support love and belonging needs by creating a sense of shared experience and togetherness are only able to do so when 'service-users' engage with one another on an intersubjective basis. In other words, meeting need through community is necessarily reciprocal, and to have one's belonging needs met in this way is also to contribute to a community that meets the belonging needs of others. Meanwhile, even in organisations with a clearer separation between those who received support and those who gave it, 'service-users' made meaningful contributions. By offering practical help or fundraising, people who received support from GRCOs contributed to those GRCOs in ways that helped to sustain them. This constitutes an element of reciprocity, in which the GRCO is reliant on its 'service-users' for its continued ability to support them.

However, encounters in which one subject acts towards meeting the needs of another are often *not* fully reciprocal, because different people have different needs and different capacities. In GRCOs, some people who played important roles meeting the needs of others found this work tiring and depleting, and the encounters and relationships were asymmetric in their need-meeting capacity. This reflects the wider reality of care labour, as discussed in chapter III. I conclude this chapter by considering what kind of organisation of organisations could support the wellbeing of those whose work meets the needs of others in encounters and relationships in which there cannot be full reciprocity.

A. Creating community together

This study predominantly examines organisations that provided support of some kind to individuals, such as shopping delivery, free food, meals-on-wheels, transport, safeguarding, Covid-19 information, and befriending. A minority of organisations organised group activities which brought people together for a shared experience. These included three choirs, and for each of these choirs, I interviewed people who attended the sessions as members (rather than led the sessions). For Firefly Choir, I interviewed Lauren, a member of the choir who attended weekly sessions as a participant. For Songa Community Choir, I interviewed Ellie, a member of the choir who attended weekly sessions as a participant, and also helped out with IT related matters. For Larks Folk Choir, I interviewed Steve—a member of the choir who attended sessions as a participant and also organised social activities for the group members on a voluntary basis—and Mandy—the Musical Director. This section will draw on accounts from the three people who attended sessions as participants and did not lead the sessions: Lauren, Ellie and Steve. I will argue that benefitting from being part of a supportive community necessarily involves engaging as part of that community, which constitutes helping to create the community that benefits others.

As we have seen in earlier chapters, Lauren, Ellie and Steve all found that participation in their choirs helped to meet their personal needs for love and belonging during lockdown (see pages 94, 100, and 105). Their accounts of what they gained from participating shared a commonality, which was that they felt part of a mutually supportive community. Although all three participants spoke warmly about the teaching and conducting offered by their Musical Directors, an important part of the experience was being together with others, as part of a group where they felt a sense of belonging.

> *Some of it for me has been really lovely to just look around at people… I am on my own, in this flat, and without that connection I would still be on my own in this flat. Last night for two hours I felt like I was part of a group again, part of that family. (Lauren, member, Firefly Choir.)*

> *It's sort of important to keep that group of people faces in each other's lives… I always feel like being part of Songa is very safely being a nutter, not in a clinical sense, but sort of your everyday standard bonkers person in a sea of other bonkers people. (Ellie, member, Songa Community Choir.)*

> *It retains that kind of you know, we see people and there's that real thing about being together… it still feels like a community. (Steve, member, Larks Folk Choir).*

This experience of belonging was presented as not only experienced by the participant, but also by the other choir members. For example, it was common for all three participants to refer to their choir community as 'we' or 'us' and make claims about how that 'we' or 'us' were benefiting from online choir sessions. By speaking on behalf of other members in this way, I suggest these participants presented their perceived benefits of participation in their choirs as being shared by other members. In other words, they were not only making claims that their choirs met their own love and belonging needs, but also the love and belonging needs of other members.

> *I think everyone immediately realises the emotional impact that being in a choir has on our lives. (Ellie, member, Songa Community Choir.)*

> *It still feels like a community, I mean, we all know each other pretty well. And we know the songs, you know, so we'll sing some of our old-time songs. And it just brings up those happy memories of being together… So, it just kind of evokes that that sense of community. (Steve, member, Larks Folk Choir.)*

> *It's part of the fabric of our week, Thursday night is choir night and it's been like that for 25 years. Every Thursday, pretty much almost without fail. So why do we go, because it's unimaginable to think that we might not. Ain't nothing gonna stop us. And one of the songs we sing, almost every rehearsal, is 'Ain't no mountain'. And yeah, fuck the virus, we've got a choir to go to. (Lauren, member, Firefly Choir.)*

Choir participants appear to have experienced themselves and other choir members as sharing the benefit of being part of a choir. They also, correspondingly, presented the creation of the choir community itself as being a collaborative achievement, created by the members through their participation. Ellie suggested that one of the reasons that people were attending Zoom sessions was to be part of something that was beneficial to others. Meanwhile, Lauren gave an example of a member of her choir who needed support from the community and related this to the group's decision to have Zoom sessions throughout lockdown.

> *I think we're turning up for each other… you know, it's not necessarily me turning up to be a face seeing other people, it's me turning up to be a face that other people can see. And I feel that other people are doing that as well. (Ellie, member, Songa Community Choir)*

> *We do it because we all love each other, and we couldn't bear to not see each other every week. It's tough. One of the choir has just got breast cancer just before the pandemic. Before all of this nonsense began, she was diagnosed and we were all like we're here for you, we're going to get a timetable together for who's going to come with*

you to your chemo. And she's on her own, she's having to isolate. And it's things like that, you know. One of the first emails that went round… was a discussion where people said, 'Well we're still going to sing, nothing's going to stop us'…We're all safe in our own homes. And that's why this choir isn't about being able to sing, although that's part of it. It's about who you are as a human being and connecting with other human beings. (Lauren, member, Firefly Choir).

For Lauren, Ellie and Steve, choirs were loci for intersubjectivity—an opportunity to be "a human being… connecting with other human beings". As such, they did not experience their GRCOs as providers of services that they or others simply used or received, but as communities that all the members contributed to and benefited from. The creation of the community and benefit from it were one and the same—being part of the choir was to engage in a relational process that involved both creating and benefiting from the choir community. This therefore involved a reciprocity in which, by engaging in the community, members helped to meet one another's needs for love and belonging.

B. "A two-way street"

In contrast to choirs, most of the GRCOs in this study provided support for individuals, rather than shared activities for groups. Such support was generally provided through dyadic encounters in which one person acted to meet the needs of another. Some GRCO organisers reported that, even in these organisations, the relationships between 'service-users' and 'service-providers' were characterised by some reciprocity. Hazel of Black Families Project described how people in the community being supported organised fundraising for the charity. Karen, of Woodhouse Community Transport, also reported that members of the community–including those receiving direct support from the project–contributed in ways that was helpful for sustaining the service.

We had some young men, they did a collection. And these young men would have been deemed 'hard to reach' because they don't access structured services. They're very much on the street, kind of doing what they do. But because either their family members have received support, or they've seen us, we have an envelope of cash given to us as a thank you. Which, you know, it's very humbling, especially when it's coming from people who have very little means. (Hazel, manager, Black Families Project).

We get a huge amount of support from the local community. Absolutely enormous. They are so good to us. The people that we're actually helping actually help us as well. It's two-way. They support the shop, they support us with goods. We have people who are on their own, housebound, they do the jigsaws for us. We have them all done so that when we sell them, we know all the pieces are there. We have someone who makes

pieces for us if they're not. It's all interlinked, we try to stay as part of the community. It's a two-way street all the time. (Karen, trustee, Woodhouse Community Transport).

These GRCO organisers reported an interdependency, in which community members helped to sustain and support those who were helping to meet need in the community, and this was understood as an important factor in GRCOs' ability to meet need. These GRCO organisers understood their organisations as being part of a wider community network, and that they had reciprocal relationships within that network. There was a sense of mutual reliance in which the GRCO was dependent on the community for its existence, and thus that the relationship was not simply one of unidirectional service-provision.

To my knowledge, there is no literature on the extent to which small charities such as Black Families Project and Woodhouse Community Transport are resourced from within the communities they support but reports of such local support for GRCOs were common across my dataset. However, this does not engage with the question of whether activities aimed at meeting need (e.g. by delivering shopping, making befriending calls or running support sessions) met the needs of those organising/delivering them as well as those receiving the support. It is to this we now turn.

C. Matrix care: the principle of *doulia*

I have argued that offering support to others can help to meet the esteem needs of those providing the support, and particularly that the relational response process necessarily involves mutual recognition (which means that both parties contribute to the encounter). However, some organisers and workers reported ways in which their work to meet the needs of others was sometimes detrimental to their own individual needs, which suggests that the encounters or relationships were not fully reciprocal. To illustrate this, we return to discussion of community choirs.

As we have seen, choir members found their choir sessions very important for meeting their love and belonging needs during lockdown, and this was enabled by their active engagements as participants in their communities. However, in order to make this possible, the musical directors (MDs) of the choirs had to lead weekly online sessions. In a committee meeting, the MD of Songa Choir told the committee members about the toll it was taking on her to run these sessions. Lark Folk Choir's MD Mandy reported a similar experience in her interview with me.

To be perfectly honest, I finish Monday night, that hour and a half, and I feel like I've been on stage for about six hours… And I just haven't got that much energy at the

moment… I find it really draining. (Katie, musical director, Songa Community Choir (meeting recording).)

It's a bit exhausting, I have to say (Mandy, musical director, Larks Folk Choir).

Despite the fact that choir members engaged as active subjects in their communities, the weekly sessions were made possible by the unreciprocated labour of the MDs. In order for the choir members to have their needs met, MDs had to participate in the encounters in ways that left them feeling depleted.

I suggest that this is an illustrative example of a common dynamic in care encounters. In some circumstances, need cannot be met reciprocally within one encounter or relationship. At some times, in some contexts, some people need more care than others, and/or some are more able to give care than others (Kittay, 2019). The provision of certain forms of care thus necessarily requires an imbalance of give and take between subjects. Thus, although meeting human need, particularly love and belonging and recognition need, requires intersubjective encounters and relationships, such encounters and relationships do not necessarily meet the needs of all parties equally. For the choir MDs, leading choir sessions took resource from them that the choir members were unable to reciprocate during the sessions. MDs did not gain the same benefits as others from choir sessions but were living through the same lockdown. Were the MDs to have no other way to have their own needs met, this imbalance could potentially leave them with unmet needs. I suggest, then, that the way to sustain both the MDs and the choirs themselves (and thus continue to meet the needs of choir members), is for the MDs to have their own needs met through *different* encounters. This was enacted within Larks Folk Choir through the running of folk-club social sessions (in which choir members performed for one another). Steve organised these sessions, and Mandy attended as a participant. She explained that she benefited from taking part, and Steve explained that one of his motivations for organising these sessions was to remove burden from Mandy.

I love folk club because I don't have to do so much. And I just like sitting back and hearing what everyone's been playing and hearing loads of different folk music that's quite inspiring. (Mandy, musical director, Larks Folk Choir.)

We know that Mandy can't do it all… she puts in a lot of time for us, you know, she really does spend a lot of time and energy… it is really big effort from her. We all appreciate that so much. And, you know, frankly I love her in a non-romantic way. I just think she's such an amazing person. The way she's just started the choir and kept it going. And I think we want to help her, we want to help her to keep things going. (Steve, member, Larks Folk Choir.)

This way of working, in which a person who meets the needs of others in one set of relationships/encounters has their own needs met by other relationships/encounters, is consistent with the principle of *doulia* presented by Eva Kittay.

> To each according to his or her need for care, from each according to his or her capacity for care, and such support from social institutions as to make available resources and opportunities to those providing care, so that all will be adequately attended in relations that are sustaining. (Kittay, 2019, p. 121).

According to this principle, overall need-meeting (and therefore justice) requires a matrix of caring relationships (Dashu, 2005), in which A acts towards meeting the needs of B, whilst C makes this possible by meeting the needs of A, which is only possible because C's needs are being met by D, and so on. In order to support need overall, I suggest there should be a range of different activities and services offering different forms of support to different people in different contexts. Although Larks Folk Choir achieved this for Mandy within their organisation by running more than one activity, such an outcome could also be achieved by different GRCOs offering different types of support. A person providing support to others in one GRCO could be the person receiving it in another. We have seen that GRCOs are well-placed to engage with the specific needs of different people in different contexts, and I thus suggest that grassroots organising is likely to be an effective means to produce the matrix of caring relationships that are necessary for justice. This is further explored in the next and final chapter, in which I consider what social and economic conditions might help to facilitate the increased development of a grassroots matrix of support.

3. Conclusion

This chapter has considered the extent to which those who met the needs of others via involvement in GRCOs also had their own needs reciprocally met. I have argued that people who worked for GRCOs on an unpaid basis were motivated by a need to act into the world, a need for love and belonging, and a need for esteem, and that GRCO participation helped to meet these needs. I have also claimed that the relational response process described in previous chapters is necessarily intersubjective, which means that by supporting the emergence of this process, GRCOs create conditions in which care-givers experience recognition.

Some participating GRCOs organised group activities which helped to meet belonging needs through the creation of community. I have argued that community requires active participation from its members, which means that GRCOs' ability to meet need through community relies upon reciprocal engagement from 'service-users' with one another. Meanwhile, some GRCOs that supported people on a one-to-one basis also reported some reciprocity by means of 'service-users' contributing to the GRCO through fundraising or helping out.

However, not all need-meeting encounters can be fully reciprocal. Using the example of choir MDs, I have argued that, overall, meeting need in society necessarily involves encounters and relationships in which some people have their needs met but are unable to reciprocate directly. Consequently, valuing and supporting the different needs and interests of all people requires a matrix of caring relationships that meet different needs in different ways at different times, based on a principle of *doulia*. I have suggested that GRCOs may be an effective means of organising such matrix care. In the concluding chapter, I consider the social and economic conditions that might support the development and sustaining of a caring matrix of GRCOs.

IX. Conclusions

In this final chapter, I summarise the arguments made in the four empirical chapters of the thesis. I then reflect on what social policy interventions might help to create the material conditions that would enable the development of a web of grassroots community organisations (GRCOs) enacting the relational response process that I have described. I suggest that, while care is systematically undervalued in a capitalist patriarchal system, there are certain policies that could help enable a more caring culture. These include universal basic income, a shorter working week, and generous state-funded grants for GRCOs. I then outline the contributions made by this thesis, which include contributions to empirical and theoretical literature on grassroots community organising during the pandemic, and on the organisation of care more generally, plus contributions to radical materialist feminist thinking. Finally, I reflect on the limitations of this study and make suggestions of avenues for further research.

1. Summary of findings and argument

In the first empirical chapter, chapter V, I outlined activities organised by GRCOs toward meeting the most basic three needs identified by Maslow (1943, 1968)—physiological, safety, and love and belonging needs. To help meet physiological and safety needs, GRCOs' work included shopping and prescription delivery, provision of free food, Meals-on-Wheels services, transport to and from healthcare appointments, safeguarding and welfare support, and provision of information about Covid-19. They also worked towards supporting love and belonging needs by organising companionship projects (e.g., befriending calls), creating opportunities for mutual support between people, facilitating shared creative projects, and organising 'feel-good-factor' deliveries. I argued that most of the GRCOs that participated in this study were effective at helping to meet need. This finding is supported by literature on volunteer, voluntary sector and mutual-aid group contributions to need-meeting during the pandemic, in which there is a broad consensus that local community and voluntary organisations played a vital role in meeting people's needs during the first lockdown in the UK (Acheson et al., 2022; Chevée, 2022; Fernandes-Jesus et al., 2021; Harris, 2021; Kavada, 2022; Macmillan, 2020; Mao et al., 2021; McBride et al., 2022; McCabe, Wilson, & Macmillan, 2020; McCabe, Wilson, & Paine, 2020; Rendall et al., 2022; Tiratelli & Kaye, 2020). However, I found that a small number of GRCOs in my dataset struggled to meet need effectively, which invites a question of why some organisations are more able to meet need than others.

Chapter VI compared organisational responses to the pandemic in order to develop explanatory theory about what makes it possible for organisations to meet need effectively. I offered a detailed comparison of the work of two mutual aid groups. The two groups organised themselves in similar

ways to one another, but one received high demand for its support and the other very low demand. I considered the possible causal factors, and argued that in order to meet need effectively, organisations must both *identify* need accurately and *respond* to it appropriately. I then considered GRCO accounts of their own work in relation to their accounts of the work of statutory services (SSs) and professionalised voluntary sector organisations (PVSOs). They reported that SSs and PVSOs were slower to respond to changing needs than GRCOs, and more likely to apply one-size-fits-all models that did not meet specific needs appropriately. These claims are widely supported (Alakeson & Brett, 2020; Dayson et al., 2021; Harris, 2021; Kavada, 2022; New Local Government Network, 2020; Papadaki et al., 2021; Tiratelli & Kaye, 2020; Woodward et al., 2022). Participants found that meeting need in their communities relied on them acting quickly, and tailoring their responses to the particular circumstances of the people they were supporting. By responding to need, they interacted with people and communities in a way that allowed them to learn more about their specific and changing needs. Responding to need was, therefore, a mechanism for identifying it, while identifying need was necessary for responding to it. This constitutes a relational response process that enables organisations to meet need by engaging with it in its *temporal and relational specificity*. The enactment of this process was made possible by engaging in subject-subject relation with those being supported. This empirically grounded theory supports models of care practice that are based on subject-subject relationships, such as relationship-based social work practice (Megele, 2015), spiritually competent mental health practice (Rogers et al., 2020; Wattis et al., 2017), and ethic-of-care informed nursing practice (Bowden, 1995; Woods, 2011).

In chapter VII, I considered what kind of organisational structures and practices might enable or prevent the relational response process. I argued that, because information about need is learned in the course of responding in a mode of subject-subject relation, it is important that the knowledge and expertise of those involved in this relation is valued within organisations (Laurin & Martin, 2022). GRCO organisers suggested that a difference between their organisations and SSs and PVCOs was their relatively flat management structure. This meant that those working directly with people in the community could use their learning from those relationships to influence organisational decision-making. As one trustee put it, they could "see a need on the ground and say, 'let's do it'". Meanwhile, because different people have different needs, responding effectively was also enabled when organisations trusted frontline workers to adjust their response in real time, according to what they learned through interaction with people, rather than working in the same way with every person (Wolf, 2020). I compared organisations that were able to meet need effectively with those that struggled to do so and argued that one reason for this was a lack of resource. Lack of access to money, equipment and skills meant that some GRCOs could identify need within their communities but were unable to respond to it. I argued that difference in access

to resources explains differences in communities' responses to crises better than social capital explanations, which I suggest are based in a circular logic that posits that the cause of community organising is social capital, and the cause of social capital is community organising. Another barrier to the relational response process was neoliberal funding schemes. These appear to be particularly ill-equipped to provide resource for GRCOs that meet the specific needs of women and racialised people (Ehrenstein, 2012; Hirst & Rinne, 2012; Simmonds, 2019; Tilki et al., 2015; Vacchelli et al., 2015). These organisations reported having to choose between bidding for funds that would force them to work in a way that was ill-suited to the people they were supporting, or to work on a very low budget, without sufficient resource. Meanwhile, when GRCOs were reliant on the selling of services for income, this meant that their responses to need were potentially disrupted by prioritising activities that people would/could pay for, rather than those that would meet people's needs. This, I suggested, is because care is systematically devalued in the capitalist patriarchal economy (Federici, 2020; Irigaray, 1985a; J. C. Jones, 2021c). Needing care does not correspond with ability to pay for it, and in fact, structurally, those that are most dependent on care are least able to reciprocate in terms of resources, energy or time (Kittay, 2019). This means that organising care on the basis of exchange value creates irrationalities in which working toward the end of generating income is at odds with working toward the end of meeting human need (Marx, 1976).

In chapter VIII, I reflected on whether meeting need in a mode of subject-subject relation means that both parties to the interaction get their needs met. I showed that some people who offered support to others via involvement in GRCOs found that this helped to support their own need to act into the world (Graeber, 2018; J. C. Jones, 2018; Maslow, 1968), their need for love and belonging (Bowlby, 1965; Maslow, 1943), and their need for competence (Maslow, 1943, 1968; R. M. Ryan & Deci, 2000) and recognition (Benjamin, 1990; Fisher, 2005; J. C. Jones, 2016; Maslow, 1943, 1968). True recognition can only take place between subjects (Benjamin, 1990; Hegel, 1977), which means that, in order for 'service-providers' to experience recognition, 'service-users' must be providing something to them. This, I suggested, provides evidence that the 'service-user'/ 'service-provider' dualism is neither an accurate nor a useful way to imagine caring encounters, which are necessarily intersubjective (i.e., involve *two* subjects). I considered the extent to which such encounters can be understood as reciprocal. I argued that people who participated in GRCO group activities had their love and belonging needs met through a sense of belonging to a community, and that this necessarily involved them in engaging in being part of that community. Consequently, community is made by the same people who benefit from being part of it and is thus grounded in reciprocity. In addition, GRCOs that organised one-to-one support also received support from 'service-users' in the form of practical help and fundraising, which was experienced by GRCO organisers as a form of reciprocity. However, some organisers and workers found that

their work supporting others was depleting for them. I suggested that this is because need cannot always be met fully reciprocally within every relationship and encounter (Kittay, 2019). Different people need different levels of care, and are differently able to give care, at different times (Kittay, 2019). This means that, in order to support everybody's needs, it is necessary to have a web of care encounters and relationships (Dashu, 2005). Through such a web, people who give more in one encounter/relationship can have their needs met in other encounters/relationships. Kittay (2019) calls this the principle of *doulia*, and I suggest its implementation requires a matrix culture in which care is placed at the heart of social organising (Dashu, 2005).

2. Implications for policy

The finding that a relational response process is necessary for the organisation of effective need-meeting, and that such a process is systematically disrupted by trying to enact it within the material conditions of capitalist patriarchy, perhaps offers some empirical evidence (to add to the huge body of existing evidence)[41] that capitalist patriarchy[42] is not the best system for supporting human flourishing. However, the history of capitalist economies is a history of class struggle, featuring a push and pull between the interests of capital accumulation and the ability of people to resist its worst excesses by enforcing better living conditions through collective action, including through the mechanism of state policy (Gough, 1979). In this section, I consider what state policies might help to mitigate the material conditions of capitalist patriarchy in the UK, with particular reference to creating the conditions of possibility for the development of webs of caring relation organised through the activity of GRCOs. I base these suggestions on arguments made by feminists and offer them as directions for thinking about the type of social policy interventions that might support the conditions for the organisation of a society organised around care. The first two suggestions—universal basic income and a shorter working week—are aimed toward enabling people to put less of their time and energy into wage labour, so that we have more time for engaging in activities because we find them meaningful and valuable in their own right. The third suggestion—increased funding for GRCOs—is aimed toward redistribution of resources toward the ends of supporting people to engage in the relational response process, via involvement in GRCOs.

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[41] Evidence that organising society on the basis of extraction and associated denial of dependency is not in the interests of human flourishing is, of course, too enormous to begin to cite here, but an immediate, pressing and obvious example is the fact that it creates the conditions for extraction from, and ultimately destruction of, the planet on which our survival depends (Collins, 1974; Griffin, 2016; Irigaray, 1985a; J. C. Jones, 2021c; Plumwood, 2016; Salleh, 2014).

[42] To remind the reader, I use the term 'capitalist patriarchy' to denote the current economic system in which this study takes place. The term 'capitalist' is intended as a verb, describing a particular iteration of an older, longer established culture of extraction and dependency denial, of which the extraction from and denial of dependency on *women's reproductive bodies* historically appears to predate (Engels, 2010) some of the other forms of systematic extraction and dependency denial operating today. Male dominance cannot be undone within a culture in which dependency is denied (J. C. Jones, 2016), which means, I suggest, that the conditions of patriarchy may also be implicated in the rise of capitalism.

A. Universal basic income

Following Marxist feminists such as Cox and Federici (1976), Weeks (2020) and Zelleke (2022), I suggest that a universal basic income (UBI) would help to create the material conditions for a more caring society based on the purpose of flourishing. By UBI I mean a universal living wage paid to every resident regardless of their circumstances. Weeks describes what a feminist UBI would consist of.

> a minimal liveable income regularly remitted as a social wage, paid unconditionally to residents regardless of citizenship status, regardless of family or household membership, and regardless of past, present or future employment status. (Weeks, 2020, p. 575)

UBI would not replace waged labour, but would "relax" the relationship between income and work (Weeks, 2020, p. 575). This would help to create the material conditions for webs of care organised by GRCOs in three ways.

First, the wage system only operates in the in the public sphere of capital and the market—the production of goods and services for exchange. It does not acknowledge the work involved in the reproduction of the workforce itself (Cox & Federici, 1976; Federici, 2020; Weeks, 2020; Zelleke, 2022). The work of reproducing the workforce is largely not directly waged, and is subsumed into the institution of the family in the form of unpaid housework, childcare and elder care (Federici, 2020; Melamed, 2021). The centrality of the wage system thus contravenes the principle of *doulia* because the work that is done to care for others is systematically devalued, and those who do this work are treated not as subjects with their own needs and interests, but as resource to be made use of with no requirement for reciprocity or recognition.

Second, and relatedly, organising care through the mechanism of exchanging time for money (e.g., social care organised through wage labour) means organising it in a way that disincentivises time-consuming work that meets need (see Davies, 1994). This is of course exacerbated in circumstances in which the organisations in question are aiming to generate profit (Hudson, 2019; Krachler & Greer, 2015), but as we have seen, even in not-for-profit organisations, the work that will generate income to pay wages is not always the same as the work that will meet need. Those with the highest care needs are, by definition, those who are least able to reciprocate (Kittay, 2019), so organising care by means of *exchange* is always-already set up to fail at meeting need. This necessarily leads to conflicts between generating enough income to pay wages and acting toward the end of meeting need. High-dependency care cannot, by definition, generate as much

resource as it takes to deliver it (at least in the short term).[43] Organising care within a system in which the only means of survival is through wage labour, and money for wages is generated through sale of goods and services, creates conditions for failure to meet high-dependency needs, and also for low wages, job intensification and hidden unpaid labour for people doing caring work (Cunningham, 2016; Cunningham & James, 2014; Ehrenstein, 2012). (This can be resolved through state-run services funded by taxation (WBG, 2021b). However, as we have seen, statutory services, run on the basis of top-down management, are relatively ineffective at engaging with specificity of need (The Health and Europe Centre, 2022). GRCOs are an alternative mechanism for spending of state funding on care, which is discussed in section C below).

Finally, Marx (2016) tells us that wage labour is alienated labour. For human beings, selling our time means not using it to act toward our own ends (Graeber, 2018), which is fundamentally harmful because it prevents the meeting of growth needs (Graeber, 2018; Maslow, 1968). Having the option to spend less time working for wages and more time acting toward our own ends would create the capacity for people to do what they think is useful and meaningful—e.g., to do grassroots community organising—which would be beneficial for those involved.

During the early months of the Covid-19 pandemic, the UK government ran a 'job retention' programme through which employers that lost income due to the pandemic had their employee's wages partially paid by the state (Powell et al., 2021). This furlough scheme was an example of a mechanism of meeting people's living costs in a way that was divorced from the selling of labour.[44] Research is needed on the relationship between the furlough scheme and the grassroots response to the pandemic, but an account from Issy of Thurton Hub suggests that for some, being furloughed may have created opportunities to engage in activity that felt meaningful to them—i.e., to act toward own ends (Graeber, 2018) and to work with other people in a way that helped to meet love and belonging needs (Maslow, 1943, 1968). She spoke about her experience of being involved in a small non-hierarchical organisation during lockdown.

> *It was very much an organisation where everyone was friends with each other, which made it really easy to join… and I think that was mainly because there's such a*

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[43] By high dependency care I mean care that cannot be reciprocated by those who need it, and therefore cannot be organised on the basis of exchange. In fact, in the case of child care, care *does* generate value by creating labour power (Federici, 2020), but this value cannot be reciprocated to the carer by the child in real time (i.e. children cannot pay their parents for care).

[44] Despite this similarity, the UK job retention scheme had significant differences from UBI. First, it was not universally paid. Many people were not entitled to it, which left them with no income (Bales, 2021). Second, it was not enough to live on. Furlough pay was 80% of workers' wages (HM Revenue and Customs, 2020), which meant for many it was less than minimum wage, which itself was less than the living wage (the amount calculated as being enough to live on) (Living Wage Foundation, 2023). Third, it was temporary. Those who received it faced uncertainty about the future of their income (Legal & General, 2020).

common cause. Everyone was there to do the job of making sure that no one got left out. That no-one went hungry during this time. And that was compelling… I think I'm much more aware of what a horizontal organisation… actually feels like… I feel like I'll stay emotionally connected to them… I find it really hard to let go. I spent a month building up these friendships and now I've sort of got to let them go and take myself back to work mode. Even though that was kind of fun work. (Issy, volunteer, Thurton Hub)

Issy found that the experience of working toward purpose, with a group of people who shared the same purpose, was phenomenologically different from her previous experience of 'work'. Graeber (2018) suggests that doing jobs that do not feel meaningful to us simply because we are being paid to do them is harmful, and that human wellbeing relies on having the freedom to act toward one's own ends. Meanwhile, as argued in chapter II, there is compelling evidence that, when allowed to act toward our own ends (such as in disaster circumstances in which the systems of state and capital lose their control temporarily), people tend to co-operate and work collectively meet one another's needs (Solnit, 2009). UBI would create circumstances in which people had more freedom to pursue activities that are not simply done for the purpose of earning wages, which would create possibilities for acting toward the ends of meeting the needs of others, as well enabling the experience of meaningful activity (which itself is necessary for flourishing).

B. Shorter working week

A shorter working week with no less pay (which would necessarily involve a higher minimum wage) is associated with more equitable distribution of both paid and unpaid work (WBG, 2022). The Women's Budget Group (2022) argues that a shorter working week could be part of a Feminist Green New Deal, which would centre care at the heart of the economy. Like UBI, shorter working weeks increase people's capacity to act toward their own ends, because less time is spent in waged work. This means that more time can be spent doing things for the reason that they are meaningful to us (e.g., because we know that they are useful), rather than for the reason that we are paid for them (Graeber, 2018). Shorter working weeks have been associated with increased community activity (Chung, 2022; Putnam, 2000), because when people have more time in which to act freely, they have more time to co-operate with others for the benefit of their communities. Less time in waged work also frees up more time for caring, which means that: a) it is possible to have a more equitable distribution of unpaid care labour (Chung, 2022; WBG, 2022); b) those who do the most care labour are less disadvantaged in the workplace (Stronge et al., 2019); and c) more time can be spent caring (Chung, 2022), which means that need-meeting can be more highly prioritised in society, outside of the uncaring logic of capital (which is also a logic of patriarchy). In addition,

longer working hours are associated with higher levels of stress and poor mental health (Jerrim & Sims, 2021), which makes people less able to care for others effectively (M. Smith, 2004).

C. Generous grant funding for GRCOs

We saw in chapter VII that inadequate resourcing is a barrier to the enactment of the relational response process. Supporting the development of a web of caring relation organised through GRCOs therefore requires a mechanism for resourcing GRCOs. I have argued that forms of resourcing that rely upon exchange are *by definition* ineffective for adequate resourcing of care. Meanwhile, neoliberal funding regimes, such as commissioning (Ehrenstein, 2012; Mills, 2012), fail to engage effectively with specificity and difference, which means that organisations that provide anything outside of generic, one-size-fits-all services are disadvantaged in bidding for funding (Ehrenstein, 2012; Hirst & Rinne, 2012; Mills, 2012; Simmonds, 2019), and grassroots organisations are forced to work according to the priorities of the state, rather than the needs of their communities (Benson, 2014).

I have also argued (chapter III) that extractive class relations involve *symbolic othering*, leading to an imagining of a default way of being human that elides the specificity of oppressed classes of people in particular. If this is correct, we would expect that, if the state imposes one-size-fits-all models of service provision on the voluntary sector, it would be people whose needs are different from those of the dominant classes that would be left unmet. Accounts from GRCOs in the present study support this claim, and there is substantial evidence of the negative impact of LA service commissioning on women's organisations (Dillon, 2021; Ehrenstein, 2012; Hirst & Rinne, 2012; Simmonds, 2019) and organisations run by and for racialised people (Benson, 2014; Ware, 2011).

Overall, commissioning creates conditions in which the state (with its neoliberal austerity agenda (Steer et al., 2021)), rather than communities, have increasing influence over the activities of voluntary and community organisations (Benson, 2014; Panel on the Independence of the Voluntary Sector, 2013). A report by the National Coalition for Independent Action (Benson, 2014) found that the shift from grant funding to commissioning substantially damaged the independence of voluntary and community organisations.

> The move from grants to commissioned contracts is the single most important factor in the progressive co-option of VSGs [voluntary services groups] as servants of state plans and policy and, increasingly, as subservient to the profit-making activities of private companies. The result has been huge damage to the autonomy, independence and, sometimes, integrity of VSGs and a diminution both of their interest and capacity to speak out against injustice and *to take their mandate from the needs of their users and communities*. (Benson, 2014, p. 3 emphasis mine).

As we saw in chapter VI, in order for an organisation to meet need they need to be able to both identify that need in its specificity and respond to it appropriately. Supporting the relational

response process therefore requires a funding model that does not impose on organisations purposes and targets that are driven by the interests other than those of the community. A funding model is needed that would provide: a) adequate resource, and b) not impose a distortion of purpose. This funding model is, I suggest, generous, flexible grant programmes through which state funding is made available to GRCOs to do the work that they, the GRCOs, believe is necessary and useful. Grant programmes differ from commissioning because, rather than the state deciding what should happen and then outsourcing that work, GRCOs decide what they think is important and then apply for grants to do it (Benson, 2014). This requires grant programmes that have very broad aims (e.g., supporting wellbeing), rather than specific outcomes that must be achieved in order to be eligible for funding (e.g., running x number of sessions and delivering x type of activity). There are few examples of this form of grant funding that have survived the neoliberalisation of the state's relationship with the voluntary sector in the UK (Benson, 2014).

Well-funded, flexible grant programmes are necessary to support the emergence of a web of caring relation through which people and communities can meet one another's' needs. I suggest that two such programmes are necessary:

- First, a programme to pay for the resources GRCOs need in order to do their work, such as the cost of running community buildings, buying equipment and paying for printing. Such a programme should be flexible enough to fund whatever resources communities need in order to act collectively to meet need and support flourishing. If implemented in combination with UBI and shorter working weeks, such a programme would support people to collaborate to take all sorts of action toward their own (collective) ends, outside of the relations of wage labour and the family.

- Second, a programme to fund GRCOs to pay living wages for childcare, eldercare and other forms of high-dependency care. We have seen that certain forms of need-meeting are necessarily labour-intensive and not fully reciprocal. Whilst capitalist patriarchy remains the economic system (notwithstanding the improvements created by UBI and shorter working weeks) it is therefore necessary for those who do this work to receive recompense in the form of wages. Such a grant programme would enable GRCOs to develop community childcare, eldercare and other high-dependency projects, fully funded by the state but designed and organised by those who are in a position to engage in the relational response process, and thus meet need in its specificity. Instead of having to sell services and thus design work for people who can afford to pay for it, (as is the case when GRCOs fund their activities by charging 'service-users'), state grants for wages would enable GRCOs to act solely toward the end of meeting need.

Combining these grant programmes with UBI and shorter working weeks would, I suggest, substantially improve the material conditions for the relational response process to be enacted through GRCOs, and thus would support the development of webs of caring relation based on the principle of *doulia*.

3. Contributions

In this section I explain how this thesis contributes to empirical, theoretical and methodological literatures. I argue that I have contributed to empirical knowledge of and theoretical understanding of grassroots community organising during the pandemic, particularly in England and Wales. I have also contributed to thinking about how organisations can help to meet need, including the organisational structures and material conditions that make this possible. Finally, this thesis offers what is, to my knowledge, the first empirical study based in radical materialist feminist thinking. This includes the offer of a methodological approach consistent with process-relation ontology, plus an argument that a society based on non-domination requires that its organisations be understood as relational processes.

A. Contributions to literature on grassroots community organising during the pandemic

This study offers both an empirical and a theoretical contribution to literature on grassroots community organising during the pandemic. Through 'real time' data generation, I have developed a qualitative description of the work done by grassroots community organisations (GRCOs) during the first lockdown in England and Wales, and of the experiences of people involved. While this description broadly supports other findings regarding the work done by volunteers, the voluntary sector, mutual aid groups and small charities (Dayson et al., 2021; Ellis Paine et al., 2022; Fernandes-Jesus et al., 2021; Kavada, 2022; Mao et al., 2021), this is, to my knowledge, the first study based on the empirically derived category of 'grassroots community organisations'. The study of this category has allowed me to present findings about what appears to be a distinct phenomenon, which cannot be understood accurately through studies of broader externally derived categories such as 'volunteering', or narrower ones such as 'mutual aid groups' or 'small charities'.

This is also, to my knowledge, the first study focussed on developing empirically grounded theory in order to explain the effectiveness of the grassroots community response to the pandemic (in the UK or elsewhere). Most of the empirical literature is descriptive (Ellis Paine et al., 2022; Mao et al., 2021), focussed on evaluating 'impact' (Bynner, Damm, et al., 2022; Mcgarvey et al., 2021), or concerned with understanding the demographics and motivations of volunteers (Mak & Fancourt, 2022). There is an anarchist theoretical literature which offers explanation of the grassroots

response to the pandemic but without empirical grounding (Firth, 2022; Preston & Firth, 2020; Spade, 2020; Springer, 2020). This study bridges the gap between these two approaches by using empirical data to generate explanatory theory. The resulting theory broadly supports the anarchist thesis that human flourishing is better supported by people acting together to care for one another than by the imposition of top-down services, and my findings support anarchist calls for non-hierarchical modes of organising. This study, therefore, provides empirical support for anarchist claims that particular modes of organising help to support human flourishing better than others (Kavada, 2022; Lachowicz & Donaghey, 2022; Spade, 2020). However, my findings suggest that these are less rigid and prescriptive than those advocated for by some of these theorists. For example, Spade (2020) presents a binary opposition between mutual aid and 'charity' (with charity conceived as a subject-object dynamic in which the 'giver' retains all the power), and then conflates 'charity' with *charities* (p.61). This unfolds into a simplistic either/or argument that certain characteristics common to charities, such as receiving grant funding, following government regulations and having closed management committee meetings, are all oppositional to mutual aid. My study has found that small charities were effective at operating in a sufficiently horizontal manner to enable engagement with specificity of need, and there was also a degree of reciprocity in some small charities (e.g., some people who were supported by the charity also did unpaid work for the charity). This suggests that, in reality, the relationship between organisational structure and ability to relate equitably with communities is more nuanced than Spade imagines. Core requirements appear to be relatively horizontal structure, trust in frontline workers, and sufficient resource that does not distort purpose. Registered charities are, in principle, able to achieve these criteria, and some small local charities do so.

My analysis of material conditions is informed by the radical materialist feminist perspective from which this study has been conducted. I am not aware of any other explicitly feminist, or materialist, accounts of the grassroots response to the pandemic. The majority of people involved in grassroots unpaid work during lockdown were women (Mak & Fancourt, 2022; O'Dwyer, 2020), and some studies suggest that more affluent communities were more likely to organise mutual aid support during lockdown than the most deprived communities (Borkowska & Laurence, 2021; O'Dwyer, 2020). Lindgren (2022) calls for materialist analysis of mutual aid, on the basis that without such analysis, grassroots organising could replicate material structures of oppression. This study offers such an analysis, and also, for the first time, considers the grassroots response to the pandemic in light of feminist literatures on care and social reproduction. The result is an analysis that engages with the effectiveness of grassroots organising, the details of how that organising was done (and what made it effective), and the material conditions of possibility for that organising, all in relation to a radical materialist feminist ontology of interdependence and difference.

B. Contributions to theorising the organisation of need-meeting

In addition to presenting a theory of grassroots organising during the pandemic, this thesis offers a contribution to thinking about the organisation of need-meeting more broadly. Debates about how social policy can and should meet need centre around a difference over whether governments can and should identify universal needs and work to meet them, or whether this is undemocratic because people have different perspectives on their own needs irrespective of the views of the population (Bay, 1968; Doyal & Gough, 1984; Fitzgerald, 1985; Marcuse, 1972). This thesis has argued that this debate rests on imagining need as unidirectional, with subjects having needs for object-resources that themselves have no reciprocal needs. I have suggested that a relational model of human need, in which subjects are understood to need *one another*, offers a more useful and accurate basis on which to design policy. I have provided empirical evidence of the importance of subject-subject relation for need-meeting. This argument supports relational models of care practice such as relationship-based practice (Megele, 2015; Ruch et al., 2018), spiritually competent practice (Rogers et al., 2020; Wattis et al., 2017) and ethic-of-care based practice (Bowden, 1995; Woods, 2011). My contribution to these models is to consider the material and organisational conditions that support the enactment of relational care. I have argued that minimisation of hierarchy and trust in frontline workers are necessary to enable the relational response process. I have also argued that neoliberal funding regimes and generation of income through selling of services both create distortions of purpose, which disrupt the relational response process. Meanwhile, having adequate resource is essential. I have, therefore, argued for policies that ensure adequate resourcing of care provision through means of UBI, shorter working weeks and grant funding. I have suggested that, in order to enact care on the basis of subject-subject relation, it is necessary to support the development of webs of caring relation, and that GRCOs are an effective model for doing this but must be adequately resourced by the state.

C. Contributions to radical materialist feminist thinking and research

This thesis contributes to radical materialist feminist thinking by offering an empirical study grounded in radical materialist feminist philosophy. I believe that this is the first sociological study to explicitly root itself in this particular strand of feminist thought, developed by Jones (J. C. Jones, 2023, 2021c), which understands patriarchy as a material class structure based in relation of extraction, upheld and reproduced through dominance and symbolic othering, and rooted in a sovereigntist culture based in denial of dependence and vulnerability. This study offers to radical materialist feminism a case study of the possibilities of a form of social organising based on non-dominance and interdependence. The particular empirical contribution made here is an argument about ways that radical materialist feminist principles of non-dominance and interdependency can be lived out through the relational processes of organisations. I have argued that, in order to

recognise the Other and engage with their specificity, organisations must allow a relational response process to emerge. This relational response process necessarily requires that organisations open themselves up to change and allow themselves to be influenced by what is outside of themselves. My research thus provides empirical evidence to support the thesis that flourishing requires vulnerability, and that being (an organisation) *is* a relational process of becoming (an organisation).[45]

I hope this will be the first of many empirical projects through which radical materialist feminist thinking can be honed, tested and developed. To this end, this thesis also offers a methodological perspective from which to conduct radical materialist feminist social science. Taking process-relation ontology (J. C. Jones, 2016) as a starting point, I have argued for a methodology that understands being as the only source of knowledge and thus is not rooted in Cartesian dualism.

This thesis is an attempt to conduct research as relational process, rather than as production of static product. There is, therefore, of course, much that I have not addressed, and I finish with more questions than answers. The limitations of what I have done here, and my ideas for how it could be further developed, are discussed below.

4. Limitations and avenues for further research

This thesis aims to be an opening of enquiry into grassroots community organisations and their capacity to meet need and support flourishing. There are ways in which the research conducted here could have been improved, and also avenues that are yet to be explored. I present both here.

A. How could this study be improved?

As I wrote in chapter I, this was not the thesis I planned to write. Both the research focus and the research design were developed inductively with the aim of building understanding about the phenomenon of grassroots community organising during the Covid-19 pandemic—a phenomenon that did not exist when I first embarked upon a PhD. In particular, the focus on how organisations meet need was not envisioned from the outset, and for this reason there are certain avenues that I did not go down which, in retrospect, would have been helpful to investigate. These relate to the

[45] I want to suggest that a way that organisations resist the inherent vulnerability of becoming is likely to be through indemnity drives (J. C. Jones, 2011) expressed through risk management culture (Lupton, 2013) leading to rigidity of systems and procedures which, as we have seen (chapter VI), damages organisations' ability to act usefully in the world. Further research is needed to explore the relationship between indemnity drives and organisational ability to act teleologically, particularly for the purpose of meeting need and supporting flourishing. This is discussed in section D.

perspectives that were not included in the study and forms of data that were not collected and analysed.

a) More perspectives

The study would have been strengthened by including more accounts from people whose main way of interacting with GRCOs was through being supported by them. This would have enabled a more thorough evaluation of the effectiveness of organisations' need-meeting and would also have been more consistent with my methodological position that understanding reality requires engaging with and comparing different perspectives. My understanding of the level of reciprocity and mutual recognition happening within GRCOs would have benefitted from speaking to people with a broader range of relationships with the GRCO, and particularly from speaking to 'service-users'. Similarly, my ability to compare GRCOs with other types of organisation, such as statutory and professionalised voluntary sector organisations, would have been strengthened by including accounts and perspectives from people involved in working with and using the services of these organisations.

b) More demographic variation, and better demographic data

I have argued that adequate resource is necessary in order to support the development of the relational response process, and thus enable GRCOs to meet need effectively. However, my sample included an overrepresentation of organisations based in the 50% least deprived neighbourhoods in the country. I did not collect demographic data about participants themselves, and I did not examine the financial circumstances of organisations in detail. I suggest that including a higher number of GRCOs based in areas of high deprivation, and collecting more detailed information about the material situation in which organisations were operating, would be useful to test and develop my claim that inadequate resourcing is a barrier to the relational response process.

c) Inclusion of data relating to the structure and processes of organisations

The explanatory theory I have developed relates organisational structures and processes to the ability of organisations to meet need. I based my understandings of organisational structures and processes primarily on the accounts of participants, notwithstanding one piece of conversation analysis based on an organising meeting. My ability to compare organisations on the basis of structure and process would have been improved by having collected more organisational documents and records. In particular, it would have been useful to have access to the minutes of meetings that took place in organisations early in the pandemic, plus access to policy changes, risk assessment records and other planning documents. This would have given me more evidence with which to examine the extent to which organisations adapted their work during the pandemic, and specific evidence relating to their approach to identifying and responding to need.

B. Further avenues of investigation

The process of conducting this research has raised several questions for me, which I suggest would benefit from further empirical investigation. Such investigation would be geared toward testing and honing the theoretical claims I have made here. This is the approach recommended by Glaser and Strauss (1967) who argue for "theory as an ever developing entity, not as a perfected product" (p. 32).

a) Risk management and the relational response process

When reflecting on the difference between GRCOs and statutory services, several organisers suggested that GRCOs took a different approach to risk management and that this helped to enable them to work flexibly and teleologically. Specifically, they suggested that statutory services tended to refuse to engage in certain types of work that they considered too risky, even if *not* doing the work would mean that substantial harm would occur. This is a theme that I have been unable to explore in this thesis due to time and space restrictions. However, Jones (2011) argues that a preoccupation with indemnity is a feature of the sovereigntist culture that is implicated in structures of dominance. In particular, working toward the end of protecting oneself from the outside, or from the Other, runs counter to the aim of allowing oneself to be influenced and changed by the outside, or of being in intersubjective relation with the Other. I suggest, therefore, that there may be a causal relation between high prioritisation of risk management[46] (Lupton, 2013) and organisational inability to enact the relational response process. Further empirical study is needed to test and hone this hypothesis.

b) Does size matter for need-meeting?

GRCOs are, by definition, small organisations. I have found that they seem to be better able to enact the relational response process, and therefore better able to identify and respond to need, than other types of organisation, which tend to be larger. What is not clear is whether the conditions that support the relational response process—minimisation of hierarchy and trust in frontline workers—can be achieved in a larger organisation. Such a model has been attempted by Buurtzorg—a community nursing social enterprise in the Netherlands (Monsen & de Blok, 2013), with what appears to be some success (Drennan et al., 2018; Gray et al., 2015). Buurtzorg employs over 10,000 nurses, who work in small, self-managed neighbourhood teams (Buurtzorg, 2023). Each nurse is involved in decision-making about how the team will allocate time and resources, and each nurse is trusted to make care decisions when engaging with patients (The Health and Europe Centre, 2022). Patients and staff both report positive experiences (Drennan et al., 2018).

[46] As opposed to, for example, need-meeting or harm reduction.

However, attempts to replicate this model within the NHS have faced significant challenges relating to the NHS's hierarchical structures and rigid systems (The Health and Europe Centre, 2022). This comparison may indicate that it is possible to enable the relational response process within larger organisations but that the structure and culture of the organisation is significant. Further research is needed to explore this. There remains, however, a question of whether organising need-meeting through large organisations can replicate the web of caring relation that I have suggested can be developed through networks of GRCOs. It may be the case that this necessarily involves a freedom to act toward ends that is perhaps only available when a small group of people with a shared commitment come together to make something happen. While I suggest that improving the relational response process within large organisations is highly desirable, I am doubtful that this can create the matrix culture that is needed in order for every person's needs to be engaged with in their specificity, and for every person to have the opportunity to be recognised for the contribution they can make. To test this theory, it would be useful to compare a large organisation that appears to be enabling the relational response process (such as Buurtzorg) with GRCOs. Such a comparison might help to offer insight into the role that organisational size plays in the development of community cultures of mutual recognition, reciprocity and care.

c) Comparative analysis of decision-making processes

In order to further develop understanding of the relationship between a) organisational structure, and b) organisational ability to meet need, it would be helpful to study organisational decision-making processes in detail. This would involve tracking and recording group interactions over time, using conversation analysis to develop analysis of where, when and how decisions are made, and then using this analysis to develop empirically grounded accounts of the distribution of authority within organisations. This would provide the basis for development of more in-depth understanding of the relationship between hierarchy and need-meeting.

d) Relationship between furlough and grassroots activity

Furlough created a temporary relaxation of the relationship between work and income. I have suggested UBI would make such a relaxation universal and permanent and could thus help to create the conditions for people to engage in grassroots organising. A quantitative study examining the relationship between furlough and participation in GRCOs would be useful to test this hypothesis.

5. Final comment

This thesis set out to consider whether and why, in the crisis of the Covid-19 pandemic, grassroots community organisations were well-equipped to meet need. What has resulted is an argument that human flourishing is fundamentally dependent on our ability and willingness to be in relational process with one another. I think this matters because it tells us something about the conditions in which organisations can support people to live well. These conditions, it turns out, are substantially different to those in which most of our public services are organised. Years of austerity have left the UK government dangerously unable to meet people's needs. Adequate resourcing is of fundamental importance to improving this situation. However, while services are run from afar, by people with little knowledge of the people whose needs they aim to meet, I believe we will still struggle to support flourishing. 'Service-users' will continue to be faced with one-size-fits-all services that do not account for the fact that people and communities are different from one another and thus fail to meet need in its specificity. Meanwhile, 'service-providers' will continue to be alienated from those they serve, which means they will not receive the recognition that comes from engaging with another human being in subject-subject relation. In addition, if services continue to be organised in ways that imagine that those who work in them have no needs of their own, the people who do the vital work of caring for others will continue to be exhausted, burnt-out and demoralised.

In the crisis of the pandemic, when state, private and professionalised voluntary services were rendered relatively helpless, people organised to meet one another's needs. They did so quickly, and in ways that helped people to feel recognised and valued as human beings. This was a real-life experiment in what happens when the state and capital loosen their grip. What happened was that people took care of one another. The goal of society should be to enable that to happen again, and to keep happening forever. I hope this thesis offers some inspiration that such a world is possible.

X. Appendices

1. Interview guides

A. Interview guide 16th April 2020

Pre-amble: I am researching grassroots community organisations during the pandemic. As you can imagine, this study has been designed quickly, in response to what's happening, and the aim of it at this stage is simply to develop understanding of what is going on in grassroots community organisations right now. I have some questions for you, but I would really like you to feel free to go off on any tangents that you like at any point. At the end I will ask you if there is anything we haven't talked about that you would like to add or discuss.

QUESTIONS	**PROMPTS WHERE RELEVANT**
What does your group do?	• History, • aims, • changes in what the group is doing now compared to before
What do you think people get out of participating in the group?	• Has this changed? • If the group is new, are there different benefits for volunteers and others? • If the group is previously existing:, why are people still participating? • Why are you participating?
What are the challenges of organising your group during the lockdown?	• Digital access / ability (of others and of organisers) • Is activity itself changed fundamentally by doing it remotely (if relevant) • Decision making and communication • Safety if doing things in person
How do you feel about your group / community?	• Has this changed in recent weeks?
Do you imagine the lockdown will have a longer term impact on your group/community (positive or negative)? If so, in what way?	• Changes to community cohesion / relationships? • Financial damage to group? • Technological changes?
Is there anything else you'd like to talk about that we haven't discussed?	
If not already covered	• How long has the group existed? • What is the group doing during this time (specifically) • What is your role? • How many people are involved in the organising? • How are you communicating with other organisers?

B. Amended interview guide 21st May 2020

Pre-amble: I am researching grassroots community organisations during the pandemic. As you can imagine, this study has been designed quickly, in response to what's happening, and the aim of it at this stage is simply to develop understanding of what is going on in grassroots community organisations right now. I have some questions for you, but I would really like you to feel free to go off on any tangents that you like at any point. At the end I will ask you if there is anything we haven't talked about that you would like to add or discuss.

TOPICS / QUESTIONS	**PROMPTS WHERE RELEVANT**
Can you start by telling me a bit about the history of the group and your history in the group?	History, aims, changes in what the group is doing now compared to before Relationships with other organisations
Benefits / reasons for participating / motivating factors	Why are people (still) participating? Why motivates you to take part / volunteer?
Challenges during lockdown	Digital access / ability (of others and of organisers) Is activity itself changed fundamentally by doing it remotely (if relevant) Decision making and communication
Feelings about group	Has this changed in recent weeks?
Do you imagine the lockdown will have a longer-term impact on your group/community (positive or negative)? If so, in what way?	Changes to community cohesion / relationships? Financial damage to group? Technological changes?
Is there anything else you'd like to talk about that we haven't discussed?	
If not already covered	How long has the group existed? What is the group doing during this time (specifically) What is your role? How many people are involved in the organising? How are you communicating with other organisers?

2. Recruitment publicity

What is Communities 2020?

Communities 2020 is a PhD research project by Rose Rickford, University of York.

I aim to explore how community groups are working together during the COVID-19 crisis.

The idea is that the study could help to offer an understanding of the community response to the crisis, and possibly suggest ways that we can learn from and build on the strengths of this response in the future.

How can community groups get involved?

The research will involve studying real groups operating during social distancing. Community groups of all shapes and sizes can contribute to the study by sharing recordings/ copies of video-meetings, email chains and other interactions. I am also interviewing people who are involved with community groups, both as organisers and as members/service users. One or more of your members could be interviewed as part of the study.

How can individuals get involved?

Individuals who are members of, or participate in, a community group or activity can get involved by being interviewed, even if their group does not wish to take part as a whole. For example, if you are participating in an online yoga group, or receiving practical support from a mutual aid group, and you wish to share your experience of being part of a community activity during social distancing, you can participate by being interviewed.

Which groups can take part?

Any group that:

- Involves 2 or more people organising something together. This can be a very informal network or a more formal organisation.
- Is run by volunteers. Groups with a small number of paid staff are also welcome, so long as the bulk of the day to day organising and decision-making is done by volunteers. Volunteer-run local branches of larger charities are eligible.
- Is organising in some way during the COVID-19 outbreak in the UK
- Is not-for-profit.

Get involved

communities2020.org.uk

rose.rickford@york.ac.uk

3. Participant information sheets and consent forms

A. Individual information sheet

Communities 2020

Rose Rickford, Department of Sociology, University of York
rose.rickford@york.ac.uk

Thank you for considering taking part in this study. This information sheet tells you about the study. Please take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Feel free to ask any questions.

What is the purpose of the study?
This study aims to help tell the story of community organising during the COVID-19 crisis. During this time, people are using new ways to connect and support one another. The aim of this research is to learn from this and share the learning with community organisations in the future. The study will form my PhD research at the University of York. The findings may also be used in publications, presentations and teaching, and to provide information and training for community groups.

Why have I been invited?
You have been invited because you are involved with a community group during the COVID-19 pandemic.

What will happen if I take part?
There are three ways to take part. You can do any or all of these.

1) If your group is holding meetings via video link (e.g. Skype, Zoom etc), you could record one or more of these to share with me. It is important that everyone who comes to your video meetings is happy to do this. If you decide to do this, I will either give you instructions for how to record a meeting, or I will login and record it for you (your choice). Either way, I will "attend" at the very beginning of your meeting to make sure everyone is happy to be recorded. If anyone in any meeting would prefer not to take part, the meeting will not be recorded, and I will leave your group to carry on as normal. If anyone decides they do not want to be recorded during the meeting, the recording will be stopped and the data deleted.
2) If your group is having discussions via messages, (e.g. Whatsapp chat, email chain etc), you could share these with me. It is important that everyone who takes part in these discussions is happy to do this.
3) You, as an individual, could be interviewed about your experience of being part of a community group or community activity during this time. You can do this even if your group does not take part in the study in any other way. If you choose to be interviewed you will be free to stop the interview at any time.

Why are meetings being recorded?
I need to record meetings in order to capture the details of what is said and how it is said. It is impossible to do this just by observing and making notes or by asking members about their meetings. I need to video-record rather than just audio-record, because it will help me to know, for example, what is happening during silences (e.g. did someone nod or smile or shake their head?).

Why are you collecting text-based interactions?
I would like to include this in the study because, during social distancing, this may be an important way that groups are communicating. Studying these interactions could also offer useful insights for groups on making decisions over text-based media in general.

Why are you interviewing people?
I would like to hear from group members themselves, and people taking part in community activity during the COVID-19 pandemic, so that I can include your stories and perspectives in the study.

Do I have to take part?
No, it is entirely up to you. If you decide to take part, you will be asked to sign a consent form. Even after signing, you can still leave the study without giving a reason up to one month after participating. A decision to leave the study or a decision not to take part will not affect whether you can participate in your group.

What will happen if I participate but then change my mind?
You can withdraw from the study at any time up to one month after participating. Any information collected during the time that you took part will be destroyed and your anonymity and confidentiality will continue to be protected. This means that recordings of meetings and text-based interactions be deleted (if the group wishes to withdraw), or individuals will have their faces blurred and voices muted in videos and their individual text deleted, and interview data deleted(if an individual wishes to withdraw).

What will be done with the information collected in this study?
I will examine the interactions and interviews and use the findings to inform my PhD research. The findings may also be published in scientific journals and presented at conferences and training workshops. I may use direct quotes from the interactions and interviews in these papers, presentations and workshops, as well as images and video clips of meetings (if you give your specific consent for this). Your name, the name of the group, or video/audio of your interview will never be included in any paper, presentation or workshop. If you prefer, I can also edit the meeting data so that your face and voice are unrecognisable.

Will I get to find out about the findings of the study?
Yes. When the study is finished, I will produce a report for all participants to let you know about the findings of the study.

Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential? Will my data be secure?
Yes. I will follow ethical and legal practice and all information about you will be handled in confidence and data stored securely. You should be aware of the following:

1) Code numbers or names will be used in place of names of people on all transcripts (of meetings, interviews and text-based interactions) so that all information collected for the study can be kept strictly confidential.
2) The University will put in place appropriate technical and organisational measures to protect your personal data and/or special category data. For the purposes of this project I will pseudonymise transcripts, encrypt all files and folders and ensure data is transferred securely. Consent forms and a database containing participants' real names and contact details will be stored securely in a password-protected encrypted folder on the University of York secure server. This information will not be available to anybody other than Rose Rickford. Recordings and transcripts will be labelled with a unique code (no real names of people or groups will be used) and stored in separate password-protected folders on the University of York secure server. The data will only be accessed via or downloaded onto an encrypted device. Transfer of data will be managed using encryption software to ensure that your recordings cannot be accessed by unauthorised people.
3) Information will be treated confidentiality and shared on a need-to-know basis only. The University is committed to the principle of data protection by design and default and will collect the minimum amount of data necessary for the project. In addition, we will anonymise or pseudonymise data wherever possible.
4) For this study, access to the recordings and transcripts will be restricted to Rose Rickford and her supervisors Dr. Clare Jackson and Dr. Merran Toerien. Data will be transferred using the University of York encrypted Google Drive.
5) The data may be reused by the research team or other third parties for secondary research purposes, subject to your explicit consent. You can choose not to consent to this and still participate in the study.
6) The only reason that I might have to break confidentiality is if anything you reveal suggests that you or another person is at risk of harm. Depending on the circumstance, researchers are required by law to co-operate with designated authorities to prevent or minimise harm in line with legislation or guidance (especially to children – Children's Act 1989).
This might mean informing someone else about my concerns, after discussing this with you first.

On what basis will you process my data?
Under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), the University has to identify a legal basis for processing personal data and, where appropriate, an additional condition for processing special category data. In line with our charter which states that we advance learning and knowledge by teaching and research, the University processes personal data for research purposes under Article 6 (1) (e) of the GDPR: *Processing is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest* Special category data is processed under Article 9 (2) (j): *Processing is necessary for archiving purposes in the public interest, or scientific and historical research purposes or statistical purposes*

Research is only undertaken where ethical approval has been obtained, where there is a clear public interest and where appropriate safeguards have been put in place to protect data. In line with ethical expectations and in order to comply with common law duty of confidentiality, we will seek your consent to participate where appropriate. This consent will not, however, be our legal basis for processing your data under the GDPR.

What will happen to the data when the study is finished?
The data may be used by Rose Rickford for future studies (subject to your consent). It will also be archived in the University of York data archive and TalkBank archive at Carnegie Melon University (subject to your consent), so that other researchers may use it in other studies. The data shared will not include participants' name or contact details, or the name of your group. If you prefer, I can also edit the data so that your face and voice are unrecognisable. Data will be retained in line with legal requirements or where there is a business need. Retention timeframes will be determined in line with the University's Records Retention Schedule.

Will you transfer my data internationally?
Possibly. The University's cloud storage solution is provided by Google which means that data can be located at any of Google's globally spread data centres. The University has data protection compliant arrangements in place with this provider. For further information see, https://www.york.ac.uk/it-services/google/policy/privacy/.

Subject to your explicit consent, the data will also be archived in Carnegie Melon's TalkBank Archive, which is hosted in the US. The server is fully compliant with the requirements of GDPR.

What rights do I have in relation to my data?
Under the GDPR, you have a general right of access to your data, a right to rectification, erasure, restriction, objection or portability. You also have a right to withdrawal. Please note, not all rights apply where data is processed purely for research purposes. For further information see, https://www.york.ac.uk/records-management/generaldataprotectionregulation/individualsrights/.

Who should I contact with questions?
If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Rose Rickford, rose.rickford@york.ac.uk

If you have any concerns about the study, or would like to speak to someone else, please contact the Head of Sociology at University of York, Professor Paul Jackson: paul.jackson@york.ac.uk, or the Chair of the University of York's Economics, Law, Management, Politics and Sociology Ethics Committee, Professor Tony Royle: tony.royle@york.ac.uk.

If you have concerns about how your data is being processed, please contact the University's Acting Data Protection Officer at dataprotection@york.ac.uk.

If you are unhappy with the way in which the University has handled your personal data, you have a right to complain to the Information Commissioner's Office. For information on reporting a concern to the Information Commissioner's Office, see www.ico.org.uk/concerns.

Many thanks for reading this leaflet and considering taking part.

B. Organisation information sheet

Communities 2020

Thank you very much for considering taking part in this study. Before you decide, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. This information sheet tells you about the study.

There are three ways to take part. You can do any or all of these.

1) If your group is holding meetings via video link (e.g. Skype, Zoom etc), you could record one or more of these to share with me.
2) If your group is having discussions via messages, (e.g. Whatsapp chat, email chain etc), you could share these with me.
3) One or more member(s) of your group could be interviewed about their experiences of being part of a community group or community activity during this time.

Please contact me if you have any questions: rose.rickford@york.ac.uk

Rose Rickford,
Department of Sociology, University of York

What is the purpose of the study?
This study aims to help tell the story of community organising during the COVID-19 crisis. During this time, people are using new ways to connect and support one another. The aim of this research is to learn from this and share the learning with community organisations in the future. The study will form my PhD research at the University of York. The findings may also be used in publications, presentations and teaching, and to provide information and training for community groups.

Who is doing the research?
This research is being done by Rose Rickford, a PhD student at the University of York. Before I began my PhD I worked in the voluntary sector for over a decade. The focus of my work was supporting small, volunteer-run groups by providing information, training and resources. I have also been an active member of several community groups myself, including a community choir and a number of campaign groups. This is why I am interested in how groups work.

Why has our group been invited?
You have been invited because you are a volunteer-run community group organising during the COVID-19 pandemic.

What will happen if we take part?
There are three ways to take part. You can do any or all of these.

1) If your group is holding meetings via video link (e.g. Skype, Zoom etc), you could record one or more of these to share with me. It is important that everyone who comes to your video meetings is happy to do this. If you decide to do this, I will either give you instructions for how to record a meeting, or I will login and record it for you (your choice). Either way, I will "attend" at the very beginning of your meeting to make sure everyone is happy to be recorded. If anyone in any meeting would prefer not to take part, the meeting will not be recorded, and I will leave your group to carry on as normal.
2) If your group is having discussions via messages, (e.g. Whatsapp chat, email chain etc), you could share these with me. It is important that everyone who

takes part in these discussions is happy to do this.

3) Members of your group could be interviewed about their experiences of being part of a community group or community activity during this time. This could be anyone in your organising group, or anyone who is participating in your activities. Only the people being interviewed need to consent to this - not the whole group.

Everyone who takes part will be given an individual information sheet and asked to sign an individual consent form.

Why are meetings being recorded?
I need to record meetings in order to capture the details of what is said and how it is said. It is impossible to do this just by observing and making notes or by asking members about their meetings. I would like to video-record rather than just audio-record, because it will help me to know, for example, what is happening during silences (e.g. did someone nod or smile or shake their head?).

Why are you collecting text-based interactions?
At this time, some groups might be doing a lot of their organising via email, Whatsapp or similar. I would like to include this in the study.

Why are you interviewing people?
I would like to hear from group members themselves, and people taking part in community activity during the COVID-19 pandemic, so that I can include your stories and perspectives in the study.

What will happen if we participate but then change our minds?
Your group, or any individuals in it, can withdraw from the study at any time up to one month after participating. Any information collected during the time that you took part will be destroyed and your anonymity and confidentiality will continue to be protected. This means that recordings of meetings and text-based interactions be deleted (if the group wishes to withdraw), or individuals will have their faces blurred and voices muted in videos and their individual text deleted, and interview data deleted(if an individual wishes to withdraw).

What will be done with the information collected in this study?
I will examine the interactions and interviews and use the findings to inform my PhD research. The findings may also be published in scientific journals and presented at conferences and training workshops. I may use direct quotes from interactions and interviews in these papers, presentations and workshops, as well as images and video clips from meetings (if you give your specific consent for this). Your name, or the name of the group, or video/audio of your interview will never be included in any paper, presentation or workshop. If you prefer, I can also edit the data so that your face and voice are unrecognisable in meetings recordings.

Will our taking part in the study be kept confidential? Will our data be secure?
Yes. I will follow ethical and legal practice and all information about you will be handled in confidence and data stored securely. You should be aware of the following:

1) Code numbers or names will be used in place of names of people on all transcripts so that all information collected for the study can be kept strictly confidential.
2) The University will put in place appropriate technical and organisational measures to protect your personal data and/or special category data. For the purposes of this project I will pseudonymise transcripts, , encrypt all files and folders and ensure data is transferred securely. Consent forms and a database containing participants' real names and contact details will be stored securely in a password-protected encrypted folder on the University of York secure server. This information will not be available to anybody other than Rose Rickford. Interviews will be transcribed, and the original recordings stored separately in a password-protected encrypted folder on the University of York secure server. Recordings and transcripts will be labelled with a unique code (no real

names of people or groups will be used) and stored in separate password-protected folders on the University of York secure server. The data will only be accessed via or downloaded onto an encrypted device. Transfer of data will be managed using encryption software to ensure that your recordings cannot be accessed by unauthorised people.

3) Information will be treated confidentiality and shared on a need-to-know basis only. The University is committed to the principle of data protection by design and default and will collect the minimum amount of data necessary for the project. In addition, we will anonymise or pseudonymise data wherever possible.
4) For this study, access to the recordings and transcriptswill be restricted to Rose Rickford and her supervisors Dr. Clare Jackson and Dr. Merran Toerien. Data will be transferred using the University of York encrypted Google Drive.
5) The data may be reused by the research team or other third parties for secondary research purposes, subject to your explicit consent. You can choose not to consent to this and still participate in the study.
6) The only reason that I might have to break confidentiality is if anything you reveal suggests that you or another person is at risk of harm. Depending on the circumstance, researchers are required by law to co-operate with designated authorities to prevent or minimise harm in line with legislation or guidance (especially to children - Children's Act 1989).
   This might mean informing someone else about my concerns, after discussing this with you first.

What will happen to the data when the study is finished?
When the study is finished, the data may be used by Rose Rickford for future studies (subject to your consent). It will also be archived in the University of York data archive and TalkBank archive at Carnegie Melon University (subject to your consent), so that other researchers may use it in other studies. The data shared will not include participants' name or contact details, or the name of your group. If you prefer, I can also edit the data so that your face and voice are unrecognisable.

Will we get to find out about the findings of the study?
Yes. When the study is finished, I will produce a report for all participants to let you know about the findings of the study.

Who should I contact with questions?
If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Rose Rickford, **rose.rickford@york.ac.uk**

If you have any concerns about the study, or would like to speak to someone else, please contact the Head of Sociology at University of York, Professor Paul Jackson: paul.jackson@york.ac.uk, or the Chair of the University of York's Economics, Law, Management, Politics and Sociology Ethics Committee, Professor Tony Royle: tony.royle@york.ac.uk

Many thanks for reading this information and considering taking part in this study. If you would like to participate, please get in touch and I will arrange consent forms for you.

C. Interview consent form

Rose Rickford
rose.rickford@york.ac.uk

Communities 2020: interview consent form

Please X next to each statement to record your consent. Some devices may require you to double tap/double click. Some just need a single tap/click. If you are unsure about a statement, please feel free to ask Rose Rickford for more information. rose.rickford@york.ac.uk	
I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet about this study.	
I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw without giving any reason. This will not affect my ability to participate in my group. I can withdraw at any time during the interview., in which case the recording will be stopped. I can withdraw any time up to one month after the interview, in which case my interview recording and transcript will be deleted.	
I agree to take part in the study.	
I agree to participate in an interview with Rose Rickford. I understand that the interview will be recorded.	
I understand that the recorded interview will be transcribed and studied by Rose Rickford as part of her PhD research.	
I agree that the interview recordings (and transcripts of the recordings) can be shared with Rose Rickford's PhD supervisors Dr. Clare Jackson and Dr. Merran Toerien, University of York. Neither my name, my contact details nor the name of my group will be shared.	
I agree that Rose Rickford may use anonymous extracts of my interview transcript in presentations, publications, training workshops and academic assessments both within and outside of the EU	

Please turn over

Please put an X in the boxes to indicate how your data can be used. Your name and the name of your group will never be shared. Your consent to data sharing and archiving will not affect your ability to participate in the study.	Yes	No
I agree that Rose Rickford can keep my interview transcript for use in other, future studies, subject to the consent given below.		
I agree that my interview transcript can be shared with other researchers for use in other studies, subject to the consent given below.		
I agree that my interview transcript can be archived in the University of York data archive and the TalkBank online data archive (Carnegie Melon University) for use by other researchers in future, both in and outside of the UK and EU, (subject to the consent given below and subject to compliance with EU data protection standards (GDPR)). I understand that this will involve transferring of data out of the UK or EU.		

Please complete your details below.

Name:

Name of group/organisation:

Email or postal address**

Date:

Signature:

**(I am asking for your email or postal address so that I can send you information about the findings of the study at the end, and in case I need to contact you relating to this study. Your details will not be used for anything else or shared with anyone).

D. Meeting recording consent form

A study of community group meetings: consent form video meetings

Please X each statement to record your consent. If you are unsure about a statement, please feel free to ask Rose Rickford for more information. rose.rickford@york.ac.uk	
I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet about this study.	
I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw without giving any reason. This will not affect my ability to participate in my group. I can also withdraw at any time during the meeting being recorded, in which case the recording will be stopped. I can also withdraw any time up to one month after participating, in which case my face and voice will be removed from recordings.	
I agree to take part in the study.	
I agree that my participation in video meetings can be recorded.	
I understand that the recordings (and transcripts of recordings) will be studied by Rose Rickford as part of her PhD research.	
I agree that the recordings (and transcripts of the recordings) can be shared with Rose Rickford's PhD supervisors Dr. Clare Jackson and Dr. Merran Toerien, University of York. Neither my name nor the name of my group will be shared.	
I agree that Rose Rickford may use anonymous extracts of written transcripts of my video-recording in presentations, publications, training workshops and academic assessments both within and outside of the EU.	

Please scroll to next page.

Please X in a box to indicate how your data can be used. Your name and the name of your group will never be shared. Your consent to data sharing and archiving will not affect your ability to participate in the study.	Yes, with face and voice recognisable	Yes, with face and voice made anonymous*	No
I agree that Rose Rickford may use clips of my video-recording(s) in presentations, publications, training workshops and academic assessments, both in and outside of the UK and EU.			
I agree that Rose Rickford can use stills (photographs) from my video recording(s) in presentations, publications, training workshops and academic assessments both in and outside of the UK and EU.			
I agree that Rose Rickford can keep my video-recordings, transcripts and survey responses for use in other, future studies, subject to the consent given below.			
I agree that my video-recordings, transcripts and survey responses can be shared with other researchers for use in other studies, subject to the consent given below.			
I agree that my video-recordings, transcripts and survey responses can be archived in the University of York data archive and the TalkBank online data archive (Carnegie Melon University) for use by other researchers in future, both in and outside of the UK and EU, (subject to the consent given below and subject to compliance with EU data protection standards (GDPR)). I understand that this will involve transferring of data out of the UK or EU.			

Please complete your details below.

Name:

Name of group/organisation:

Date:

Email or postal address**

Signature:

*Unaltered video is useful for teaching and presentations because it allows researchers to share the basis of their findings with others, including facial expressions. However, video data with face and voice made anonymous is also useful.

**(I am asking for your email or postal address so that I can send you information about the findings of the study at the end, and in case I need to contact you relating to this study. Your details will not be used for anything else or shared with anyone).

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