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Introduction: exploring the growth of food charity across Europe

Hannah Lambie-Mumford and Tiina Silvasti

European social policy analysis of food charity

An increasing body of country-specific research demonstrates that the need for emergency food assistance is growing throughout Europe, and that rising numbers of people are being forced to turn to charitable food aid to satisfy their basic need for food. Studies on contemporary experiences of food insecurity and food charity have recently been conducted in Estonia (Kõre, 2014), Finland (Silvasti and Karjalainen, 2014), France (Rambelison et al, 2007), Germany (Pfeiffer et al, 2011), Spain (Pérez de Armiño, 2014) and the UK (Lambie-Mumford, 2017; Loopstra and Lalor, 2017).

There is a long history of charitable food provision in Europe – the European Federation of Food Banks was established in 1986 and now has members from 24 European countries (FEBA, no date). However, the recent country-specific research suggests that the period since the year 2000 has been a particularly important juncture for both the development of the provision of food assistance and the rising need for it. Evidence suggests that the years following 2003 were particularly crucial for the development of food charity in Germany (Pfeiffer et al, 2011; see also Chapter 2 of this book), those following 2008 in Spain (Pérez de Armiño, 2014; see also Chapter 6 of this book) and those following 2010 in the UK (Trussell Trust, no date; see also Chapter 7 of this book).

There appear to be some noteworthy parallels across these European experiences of rising food charity, in particular, relating to changing welfare states and neoliberal social policy across Europe over the last 20–30 years. Evidence suggests that the recent rise of food charity has occurred in the context of increased conditionality and reductions to entitlements in social security across the continent. In parallel, there appears to have been a delegation of responsibility for caring for those experiencing food insecurity from the state to the charitable sector (Pfeiffer et al, 2011; Silvasti and Karjalainen, 2014). These

1 commonalities indicate that there may be important social policy
2 dynamics at work across Europe:

- 3
- 4 • In Germany, the German Social Code II, introduced in 2005,
5 represented a more workfare-oriented social security regime and
6 saw a significant reduction in the buying power of the payments
7 that people received (Pfeiffer et al, 2011).
 - 8 • In Spain, since the economic crash of the mid-2000s, austerity
9 programmes have had particular impacts on the shape of the welfare
10 state, increasing conditionality, reducing funding for services and
11 contributing to what Pérez de Armiño (2014: 133) refers to as the
12 Spanish welfare state's 'progressive erosion'.
 - 13 • In Finland, Silvasti and Karjalainen (2014: 83) argue that a
14 particularly important point was the move in the 1990s away from
15 the Nordic model of welfare towards a more means-tested model,
16 similar to Anglo-Saxon welfare states.
 - 17 • In the UK, research is beginning to demonstrate that the advent of
18 the so-called 'era of austerity' in 2010, bringing the most significant
19 period of welfare reform and retrenchment since the establishment
20 of the welfare state, was closely linked to a subsequent rise in
21 charitable food provision, particularly through the Trussell Trust
22 Foodbank Network (Trussell Trust, no date; Dowler and Lambie-
23 Mumford, 2015; Loopstra et al, 2015).

24

25 The relatively recent European experiences of the growth of
26 food charity in parallel with economic crisis, uncertainty and the
27 retrenchment of welfare states are similar to the evolution of this sort
28 of charitable provision on other continents. Notable cases include the
29 US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand in the mid-1990s (Riches,
30 1997). In both the US and Canada, the numbers of emergency food
31 projects and people turning to them for help grew in the context of
32 economic recession and reforms to social security that saw reductions
33 in entitlements and a broader programme of welfare retrenchment
34 (Poppendieck, 1998; Riches, 2002).

35 While there are convergences and evident parallels, there are also
36 differences in the developments of charitable operations that have yet
37 to be explored. This is especially the case for differences connected
38 to the particular political and cultural histories and welfare regimes of
39 European nations, and their impact on the evolution of food charity
40 in those countries.

41 Understanding the drivers of the rise of food charity is an urgent
42 empirical question. Rising need and provision indicate a change in the

nature of poverty in Europe and a widespread shift towards charitable responses to satisfying basic needs. Yet, there remains a lack of both comprehensive data and rigorous comparative analysis – in addition to only a limited number of empirical country case studies – of the drivers behind and consequences of the rise of food charity as a response to the growth in severe poverty. In the context of growing public, policy and academic interest in issues of food, poverty and food charity, this represents a significant gap in our knowledge.

This edited collection provides the first comprehensive qualitative cross-case study of the rise of food charity across Europe. Using food charity as a lens through which to examine the changing dynamics of poverty and social policy responses to it, the work is a key social policy text on the shifting nature of care in the context of changing social policies and welfare states. The book provides a cross-national comparative analysis of the reasons for the rise of charitable food provision as a response to contemporary poverty in Europe. Through case studies from Finland, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Slovenia, Spain and the UK, the book explores operational issues, including:

- how food charity has evolved;
- what food charity looks like now; and
- its current scale in these countries.

The social policy analysis focuses on questions around the role of welfare states in driving the need for food charity and shaping the nature of the charitable response. It also explores the role that food charity has in welfare provision, both independently and in relation to state-based provision. Crucially, the book draws on empirical evidence from each of the countries to explore:

- how the development of food charity may relate to welfare state traditions, for example, the role religious organisations have historically played in formal welfare provision;
- the impact of changing social policies – specifically, changes to social rights and entitlements – on recent growth in provision and the modern manifestation of food charity;
- the social justice implications of these shifts in social policy and the rise of charitable food provision; and
- where responsibilities lie for ensuring adequate access to food.

The collection offers a unique and much-needed comparative insight into the rise of food charity across Europe from a social policy

1 perspective. This chapter first sets out the comparative concepts used
2 by the authors throughout the book. It goes on to describe how the
3 book will examine the debates around social and human rights, and
4 the role of food waste in food charity. It then discusses the utility of
5 understanding food charity as part of the ‘charity economy’. It ends
6 with an outline of the rest of the book.

8 **Food charity, poverty and social justice: comparative** 9 **concepts**

11 Currently, there is a lack of consistent and agreed terminology
12 surrounding food, poverty and food charity in Europe. It is important
13 to address this issue as the lack of agreed terminology can hamper
14 attempts to draw comparisons and make the most of the data that are
15 currently available. Differences extend across understandings of what
16 constitutes food charity, as well as concepts around limited access to
17 food, including the use of terms such as ‘hunger’, ‘food poverty’ and
18 ‘food insecurity’. This section also sets out the interpretation of social
19 justice adopted in this book.

21 *Food charity*

23 Terminology around emergency food provision varies between
24 countries. For example, in the US and many European countries,
25 the term ‘food bank’ usually refers to warehouses or centres that
26 collect, store and redistribute food to charitable organisations, which
27 then pass on the food directly to recipients (Berner and O’Brien,
28 2004; Costello, 2007; Pérez de Armiño, 2014). In this model, food
29 banks effectively work as ‘middlemen’, collecting and redistributing
30 food, but are not themselves client facing. The food is distributed to
31 charitable organisations – either ‘emergency’ or ‘non-emergency’ food
32 programmes (Mabli et al, 2010). Emergency providers include food
33 pantries, soup kitchens, emergency shelters and breadlines (Berner
34 and O’Brien, 2004; Mabli et al, 2010). Food pantries and breadlines
35 distribute food for people to take home and prepare themselves (Berner
36 and O’Brien, 2004; Mabli et al, 2010). Soup kitchens provide prepared
37 meals, which are served on site, while emergency shelters provide
38 both shelter and prepared meals to clients in need (Mabli et al, 2010).
39 ‘Non-emergency’ programmes include, for example, day-care centres
40 or summer holiday programmes (Mabli et al, 2010). However, in the
41 UK and Finland, the term ‘food bank’ is used to describe projects that
42 provide food to people directly in the form of food parcels for people

to take home, prepare and eat (Lambie-Mumford and Dowler, 2014; Silvasti and Karjalainen, 2014).

This book adopts a broad definition of charitable food provision. This refers to all voluntary initiatives helping people to access food that they would otherwise not be able to obtain. It therefore covers a variety of provision, including projects that provide food parcels, food banks (of all kinds), soup kitchens, meal projects and social supermarkets. In these projects, food may be provided at low or no cost, with its distribution facilitated by a range of organisations (faith or non-faith) involved in delivery at various scales of operation (local, regional and national).

Food and poverty, 'food poverty' and 'food insecurity'

Similarly, there are divergences across countries in interpreting experiences of limited access to food. In Finland and Slovenia, the terms 'hunger' and 'food poverty' are often used. In the UK, 'food poverty' has long been commonly used (Dowler et al, 2001), but 'food insecurity' is increasingly referred to in policy-focused research (Loopstra et al, 2015; Loopstra and Lalor, 2017). Food insecurity **[[sense ok or food security?]]** is defined as:

access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life and includes at a minimum: a) the ready availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods, and b) the assured ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways (e.g., without resorting to emergency food supplies, scavenging, stealing, and other coping strategies). Food insecurity exists whenever the availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods or the ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways is limited or uncertain. (Anderson, 1990: 1560)

Limitations to the concept of food insecurity have meant that it is not used as a comparative concept in this volume. Importantly, in the Italian, Finnish and Spanish languages, 'food security' and 'food safety' are synonymous, and it is therefore problematic to use the term in those country contexts. The terminology of 'food insecurity' and 'food poverty' poses further challenges in a comparative European social policy research context. Critics of the concept of food security suggest that it may run the risk of endorsing charitable food aid as a solution to food poverty, rather than empowering sovereign actors

1 to democratically manage their own access to food (Schanbacher,
2 2010). It can be seen as reductionist, running the risk of encouraging
3 a focus on access to food specifically or even the provision of food,
4 rather than the broader dynamic relationship between poverty and
5 food experiences, and, crucially, the structural determinants of this.

6 This edited collection therefore focuses on contemporary responses
7 to poverty, using food charity as a lens through which to explore the
8 impact of changing social policies on how people are cared for. In
9 this volume, access to food – or specifically ‘food insecurity’ in the
10 particular case studies in some chapters – is treated as a key dynamic
11 of poverty, one that is worthy of independent investigation and vital
12 for understanding the impact of wider policy shifts.

13 This approach is in keeping with contemporary definitions of
14 poverty. Access to food has long been a key part of understandings of
15 relative poverty and minimum living standards in Europe. Having the
16 resources to access a customary diet was at the forefront of Townsend’s
17 (1979: 31) definition of poverty. Elements of food experiences
18 continue to feature in poverty measures, for example, the European
19 Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC)
20 (Eurostat, no date).

21

22 *Social justice*

23

24 In this book’s examination of the impact of changing social policies
25 on rising food charity in Europe, key social justice elements will
26 be explored. Notably, questions relating to issues of equality,
27 exclusion, rights and entitlements, social acceptability, solidarity, care,
28 accountability, and responsibility will all be covered. This builds on
29 previous food charity research, which has explored each of these
30 dimensions.

31 The social unacceptability, stigma and experience of exclusion
32 inherent in the receipt of charitable provision are increasingly well
33 documented (Poppendieck, 1998; Garthwaite, 2016). Even where
34 recipients of assistance are treated kindly, receiving charitable handouts
35 is very much outside of the socially accepted or ‘normal’ way of
36 acquiring food in Europe, usually through monetary exchange in
37 the form of food shopping (Meah, 2013). Excluding people living
38 in poverty from the primary food market and pushing them into a
39 secondary market and charity economy also means that people are
40 forced to consume what is left over from the affluent population, even
41 if that is not what they really need or want. This is particularly the case
42 where charities redistribute surplus food. It does not correspond with

what is considered to be appropriate and sufficient in contemporary consumer society, where freedom of choice is an aspiration (Riches and Tarasuk, 2014: 48; Lorenz, 2015: 10–11).

The solidarity and care that are offered by charitable food projects have been revealed by previous research (Lambie-Mumford, 2017), but the specific form of different charitable providers can have implications for the particular nature of recipients' experiences of exclusion. Faith-based organisations and churches are active operators in the field of charitable food assistance all across Europe. This is consistent with their moral principles that emphasise the importance of charity. Nevertheless, it also means that recipients of charitable food assistance often have to expose themselves to religious symbols or religious activities, such as praying, services and spiritual music, whether they want to or not (Lambie-Mumford, 2017). This may create feelings of oppression or anxiety for those who are atheist or irreligious, or who belong to other religious groups (Salonen, 2016).

The lack of accountability, rights and entitlements in charitable systems is also problematic in social justice terms (Riches, 1997; Poppendieck, 1998). This is a crucial difference from social welfare measures exercised as a part of government policy relating to poverty and charitable food assistance. The public sector has obligations that are determined and regulated by formal, democratically negotiated norms based on social rights and statutory social security. In contrast, food charities are by no means obligated to provide food for people in need of food aid because charity does not involve an idea of rights (Kortetmäki and Silvasti, 2018). The third sector and business-based charitable actors decide their practices and norms on their own, and their operations depend largely on voluntary work. Charitable food provision is therefore gifted, not based on notions of entitlements, and is thus not able to offer legitimate access to food to all citizens equally.

The question of where responsibilities lie – in theory and practice – for responding to the need for help with food is critical to understanding the evolution of food charity and the implications of its existence into the future. It has been suggested that the positive cultural status of charitable work normalises poverty and legitimises personal generosity as an answer to the major social, political and economic disorder manifesting as food poverty in the first place, and, eventually, as a violation of the human right to food (Riches and Silvasti, 2014 **[[Citation not referenced. Please add/correct]]**). Questions of where responsibilities lie for responding to food crisis and the respective roles of governments, charities and the private sector will be at the forefront of the analysis in this book (Riches, 2011;

1 Riches and Silvasti, 2014 **[[Citation not referenced. Please add/**
2 **correct]]**).

4 Social rights and the human right to food

6 This book builds on work by several of its contributors around
7 the human right to food (Riches, 1997; Riches and Silvasti, 2014
8 **[[Citation not referenced. Please add/correct]]**; Lambie-
9 Mumford, 2017). In this book, this idea is employed as an important
10 tool for understanding perspectives on the rise of food charity, but it
11 is not used as an organising concept. The book's broader social policy
12 and poverty analysis allows the collection to engage with the role and
13 changing nature of different rights. For example, it is not just human
14 rights approaches, but – critically for social policy analysis – different
15 understandings of social rights, that will be explored and employed.
16 Notably, this book deals with both notions of social rights in relation
17 to welfare state entitlements, on the one hand, and more normative
18 interpretations of social rights as societal objectives and the levels of
19 social protection that are or should be guaranteed, on the other (Dean,
20 2015).

21 The human right to food means:

22
23 the right to have regular, permanent and unrestricted
24 access, either directly or by means of financial purchases, to
25 quantitatively and qualitatively adequate and sufficient food
26 corresponding to the cultural traditions of the people to
27 which the consumer belongs, and which ensures a physical
28 and mental, individual and collective, fulfilling and dignified
29 life free of fear. (Ziegler et al, 2011: 15)

30
31 Most importantly, rights also invoke corresponding obligations. That
32 is to say, right-bearers are entitled to certain goods and can express
33 related claims to the parties who have the obligation. Hence, the
34 right to food invokes the corresponding obligation on states to ensure
35 that all citizens have the capacity to feed themselves in dignity. This
36 obligation involves duties to *respect*, *protect* and *fulfil* the right to food
37 (Ziegler et al, 2011: 15–20).

38 Normally, people are expected to be able to feed themselves and
39 their families; hence, in practice, the state's obligations are often limited
40 to respecting and protecting the right to food. However, one's ability
41 as an individual to feed oneself and one's family may fail for various
42 reasons. Examples include unemployment, underemployment, illness,

old age or becoming widowed or a single parent. Under circumstances of economic hardship and where a personal social safety net is lacking, the human right to food obliges the state to provide people in poverty with either food or resources for acquiring food. By definition, the core content of the right to food as a human right is consistent with the concept of food security (Anderson, 1990; FAO, 2005). However, while the elimination of food insecurity is a prerequisite for the right to food, it is only one aspect of this right's progressive realisation (Riches, 1999; Mechlem, 2004).

Where people are unable to acquire food for themselves and their family, and need to rely on charitable food assistance in the absence of public social security – or where that public social security turns out to be inadequate – it is justified to say that the right to food is not being fulfilled. The previous United Nations (UN) Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food described the reliance on food banks in Canada as 'symptomatic of a broken social protection system and the failure of the State to meet its obligations to its people' (De Schutter, 2012: 5).

The role of food waste

In many countries investigated in this collection, the redistribution of surplus food and food waste recovery have a role to play in the sourcing of food for charity provision. This varies between countries, playing an integral role in Italy and Slovenia and less of a role in the UK, for example. In some cases (France, Italy, Slovenia and Finland, where a legislative initiative is in process), environmental regulations and guidelines covering the management of food waste and facilitating surplus food redistribution have been enacted, moving food waste more firmly into the social policy sphere. Here, the motive is environmental: to reduce waste by donating excess food to charities.

Regardless of the scale of redistribution practices or the presence of waste redistribution laws, there is a powerful narrative around the so-called moral 'buy one, get one free' **[[sense ok?]]** of reducing food waste while feeding hungry people (Poppendieck, 1998). The implications of this narrative of substituting waste food for money or state provision, and, more generally, of conflating the two very distinct problems of food waste and hunger, have previously been found to be highly problematic (Riches, 2011). Donating surplus food to charitable actors, and hence redistributing it to people living in poverty, does not address the root causes of poverty and food insecurity (Riches, 2011). At its best, it offers short-term relief for the acute problem of hunger. Neither does it address the root cause of the environmental

1 problem of excessive amounts of waste food. It may be a short-term
2 solution to rescue edible food from landfill to give to the poor, but
3 the real environmental problem lies in the structures of the global food
4 system (for example, Ericksen et al, 2010), which cannot be solved by
5 delivering excess to charities (Salonen and Silvasti, 2019).

6 This book considers food waste and experiences of limited access
7 to food to be distinct phenomena, with different determinants and
8 requiring different responses and solutions. Given the book's focus
9 on social policy, it deals with surplus food redistribution in passing
10 as a characteristic of the operation of some instances of food charity.
11 There is a real danger that doing otherwise would be to conflate
12 environmental policy questions of how to reduce food waste with
13 distinct social policy questions around not just the need for assistance
14 with food, but what the best and most appropriate social responses are
15 to experiences of poverty.

17 **Food charity and the charity economy**

18
19 Growing income poverty and the rise of food charity can be connected
20 with the emergence of the so-called 'charity economy' (Kessl, 2015;
21 Kessl et al, 2016). It is argued that large-scale income poverty, which is
22 increasingly characterised by precarious work due to changing labour
23 market conditions, is creating a situation where it is more and more
24 necessary for charities to take care of the basic needs of the most
25 vulnerable people in European societies. The rise of food charity can
26 be understood as one part of this expanding economy.

27 The charity economy (Kessl, 2015; Kessl et al, 2016) is characterised
28 as an alternative distribution system where surplus elementary goods
29 are donated, or sold at minimal cost, to people with no or low
30 purchasing power. In this distribution system, necessities that have
31 already been used, or cannot, for one reason or another, be sold on
32 the primary market, are delivered through charity operations (generally
33 by voluntary or low-paid workers) to recipients, who are typically
34 people living in poverty. Through these practices, the charity economy
35 is established as a form of 'secondary market' for used or unsaleable
36 articles.

37 Charitable food assistance fits into the practice of the charity
38 economy – particularly when the food delivered by charities is
39 surplus food donated by farmers, food-processing industries, retailers,
40 restaurants or catering operations. Donated food is edible and safe to
41 eat but usually close to its expiry date or not saleable for other reasons
42 (for example, minor quality or packaging errors). Consequently, this

food becomes the waste of primary market actors and is redistributed on the secondary market.

The charity economy is tightly connected with the prevailing capitalist economic model. Private actors are able to save money on waste management. Delivering excess to a secondary market also allows the current capitalistic system of food production to continue systematic overproduction by presenting donations of surplus as a benevolent philanthropic act benefiting people in poverty. This, in turn, promotes a positive image of private corporate social responsibility (Salonen and Silvasti, 2019). Another consequence of these practices is that charities become dependent on these food sources and the private companies that donate their excess (Tarasuk and Eakin, 2005). The functions of food charities redistributing surplus are dependent on both vulnerable people in need of food assistance due to poverty and surplus production in the primary market.

The expanding charity economy can be understood as an expression of the transformation of European welfare states. It is an indication of a move away from the former politics of poverty alleviation and earlier social policy goals to truly eradicate the structural root causes of poverty (Kessl et al, 2016). Instead, responsibility for the most vulnerable people in society is being passed from states to the third sector and charities. However, at best, the charitable provision of food and other necessities can serve as a means to alleviate the immediate consequences of poverty; it cannot serve as a means to eradicate poverty.

Overview of this book

Case study selection

The case studies in this book are drawn from across Europe and represent key points of difference and commonality in terms of the types of welfare states and histories of charitable and faith-based provision for those in poverty. The book includes case-study chapters on Finland, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Slovenia, Spain and the UK.

Decisions and directives at the European Union (EU) level certainly have considerable impact on the operation of social welfare in EU member countries. However, in the EU – in fact, in the whole continent of Europe – there is no common social policy comparable, for example, to the Common Agricultural Policy. This means that responsibility for social and poverty policies lies primarily with national

1 governments. Historically, there have been remarkable regional
2 differences in the ways of organising welfare responsibilities in Europe.
3 According to the classification by Gösta Esping-Andersen (1990), the
4 Western welfare states can be divided into three categories of welfare
5 capitalism: liberal (for example, the UK and anglophone countries),
6 conservative (for example, Germany and Continental Europe) and
7 social-democratic (for example, Scandinavian countries). Later, this
8 typology was supplemented by the Latin Rim or Southern welfare
9 states, also called a rudimentary regime (for example, Mediterranean
10 countries) (Leibfried, 1992 **[[Citation not referenced, but see**
11 **1993. Please add/correct]]**), and to some extent the contested
12 post-socialist welfare regime (Aidukaite, 2004; Polese et al, 2015). The
13 public sector has significantly different functions in combating poverty
14 within each of these welfare policy regimes. Consequently, the role of
15 charitable work also varies considerably.

16 However, the notion of welfare state regimes is not unproblematic.
17 The original typology is based on a comparative historical analysis
18 of social policy development in 18 Organisation for Economic Co-
19 operation and Development (OECD) countries up to the 1980s
20 (Esping-Andersen, 1990). Over time, it has inspired an array of
21 alternative welfare state typologies, often including more than the
22 three types of regimes noted previously in this section, or using
23 different kinds of criteria for classification. In addition, the typology
24 neglects the gender and care dimensions of social policy (Arts and
25 Gelissen, 2002). Furthermore, given the rapid changes over the last
26 few decades, there is also a question of how well this typology can be
27 applied today. For these reasons, welfare state types were not used as a
28 sampling strategy to identify case studies. However, given the variety
29 of welfare states covered, the typology can still provide interesting
30 analytical insight.

31 Other key points of similarity and difference between the selected
32 cases are also important to note. Welfare policies are embedded in
33 the different political and cultural histories of European regions.
34 Religious actors played a major role in the histories of welfare state
35 development and hence also in the present-day operations of charitable
36 food assistance across Europe (Bäckström et al, 2016). In Spain and
37 Italy, the Catholic Church had a strong impact on the development
38 of the welfare regime and in the development of national social
39 policy systems (for example, Manow, 2015), which, in turn, define
40 the responsibilities of the public sector and the role of charity. During
41 the period of socialist rule, religion was ousted from public life in
42 Slovenia, but in the post-socialist era, the influence of the Christian

religion, especially Catholicism, has strengthened. Consequently, in Slovenia, both the political and cultural contexts of the development of charitable food assistance are interesting. In Germany, the Church has played a long-standing role in the delivery of state services (Zehavi, 2013). These cases contrast with Finland, the Netherlands and the UK, where the state has traditionally provided services directly, with faith-based organisations and other charities more commonly acting as informal voluntary providers that are peripheral in the practice of welfare. The growth of extensive faith-based emergency food provision therefore represents a marked change in the practice of welfare delivery in these countries (for example, Silvasti and Karjalainen, 2014).

This volume therefore includes seven national case studies from a mix of European welfare states usually categorised as having different welfare policy regimes and divergent political and cultural histories, but where charitable food assistance is established. Finland represents the Lutheran Scandinavian welfare state, whereas Germany is an example of a country that is traditionally classified as a representative of the conservative welfare regime. Italy and Spain are Southern welfare states and Catholic countries with a specific cultural background to the delivery of food aid. The Netherlands is often described as a country with a low poverty rate and a successful hybrid of welfare regimes, with strong characteristics from both the social-democratic and conservative models. Yet, there are also people in the Netherlands in need of charitable food assistance. Slovenia is a post-socialist country with one of the lowest levels of income inequality in Europe, as measured by the Gini coefficient. Nonetheless, about 17 per cent of people live at risk of poverty or social exclusion, and charitable food assistance has been introduced as an instrument to combat food poverty. In the final case study, the UK offers an example of a more liberal model, which has seen the rapid expansion in recent years of neoliberal social policies that are increasingly being shown to act as a driver of rising need for charitable food assistance.

Structural outline

Academic experts from each of the case-study countries have provided empirical chapters (Chapters 1–7). In order to enable comparisons to be drawn, each chapter adopts a common approach, providing evidence on the dynamics and implications of the rise of food charity in the particular case-study country. Each chapter is a country case study involving a secondary review of existing data and literature. The chapters will focus on several key themes: the history of food charity

1 in the national context and the relationship between the welfare state
2 and charities; the nature of and drivers behind contemporary food
3 charity provision; key changes in social policy and their impact on
4 rising charitable food provision; and the social justice implications
5 of increasing need for charitable assistance with food. Each chapter
6 concludes with critical reflections on where the authors think
7 developments will go next.

8 This common approach enables comparative analyses to be drawn
9 in the book's final chapter. However, the chapters are also designed
10 to form stand-alone, authoritative case studies on the rise of food
11 charity in different countries. The authors draw on a wealth of relevant
12 evidence and data from their countries and provide insight into the
13 unique circumstances of the national context.

14 In Chapter 1, Silvasti and Tikka explore the changes in social
15 policy and the organisation of charitable food aid since the mid-
16 1990s in Finland in order to understand the rise, establishment and
17 legitimisation of charitable food provision there. In Chapter 2, Kessl
18 et al highlight the importance of the notion of the shadow welfare
19 state in understanding the role that food charity increasingly plays in
20 plugging gaps in state welfare provision. In Chapter 3, Arcuri et al
21 highlight the importance of austerity policies in Italy after the euro
22 crisis in driving the need for food charity. In Chapter 4, Van der
23 Horst et al discuss where responsibilities lie in theory and practice for
24 solving food insecurity in the Netherlands. In Chapter 5, Leskošek
25 and Zidar discuss the roles of post-socialist social policies, increasing
26 conditionality and reduced entitlements in paving the way for the
27 rise of food charity in Slovenia. In Chapters 6 and 7, Inza-Bartolomé
28 and San-Epifanio, and Lambie-Mumford and Loopstra, respectively,
29 highlight the importance of the post-2008 austerity and welfare reform
30 policies enacted as a response to the financial crisis in driving the rise
31 of food charity in Spain and the UK.

32 The Conclusion (Chapter 8) brings together analysis from all seven
33 case-study countries. It argues that while manifested in different ways
34 and on different timescales, reductions in state entitlements appear
35 to have an important role to play in determining the need for and
36 shape of food charity across Europe. This has important implications
37 for social justice as systems move away from being based on universal
38 rights and entitlements towards ad hoc provision that is vulnerable,
39 unreliable and exclusionary.

40 This is an important juncture at which to take stock of the
41 implications of the rise of food charity across Europe. Social policy
42 and other researchers are now beginning to ask about the long-term

effects of these projects on our welfare landscapes. This book provides urgently needed social policy insight into the drivers of the rise of food charity and the nature of the charitable responses being developed across Europe. The findings indicate that a radical reassessment of social policy priorities is urgently needed if the ever-increasing provision of food charity is to be abated or reversed.

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