8

Conclusion: food charity in Europe

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Introduction

This edited collection provides the first comprehensive study of the rise of food charity across Europe. This concluding chapter pulls together the findings of all the individual case studies to analyse what comparisons can be drawn regarding the growth of this type of charitable provision across the continent over the last few decades. The aim of this book is to use food charity as a lens through which to examine changing responses to poverty in the context of shifting social policies, and the data provided by the case studies have demonstrated just how important a lens food charity is in this regard.

As this chapter outlines, a comparative study of the rise of food charity across Europe highlights several key things. First, the food charity landscapes in different countries vary widely; although they have common characteristics that can be categorised (see the typology later), this provision is ultimately difficult to quantify. Second, across the cases, there have been particular spikes in food charity provision at times of economic crisis and state welfare retrenchment. Third, regardless of the historical role of the third sector in the various welfare regimes, since the neoliberal wave, charities have come to play increasingly important roles in the provision of care in every country studied, whether in place of traditionally state-provided support or support from the family.

While this book has a particular focus on the social policy aspects of the rise of food charity, the case studies clearly highlight the importance of supply-side factors in the shape and scale of emergency food provision. This reveals how other policy measures – particularly in the domains of agriculture or the environment – may have an impact on social policy as directing surplus food to food charities impacts on the nature, scale and embeddedness of food aid as a response to food poverty. In particular, the case studies demonstrate the significance of the European Union (EU) Food Distribution Programme for

the Most Deprived Persons of the Community (MDP) and – after 2013 – the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD) in institutionalising the practice of redistributing surplus food through food charity. The implications of these findings for social justice are profound. The case studies demonstrate the detrimental effects of reduced social rights in two areas: first, the impact on food charity users' experiences of poverty and exclusion; and, second, a significant shift further away from welfare practices based on systems underpinned by universality and entitlements towards systems of ad hoc provision that are vulnerable, unreliable and exclusionary.

In addition to providing an important step forward in our knowledge about the rise of food charity in Europe, this book also serves to highlight just how much we do not yet know about this phenomenon. It is clear that further rigorous comparative work is required, particularly to explore the true scale of food charity, its operations and the drivers of need for help with food across the continent.

This book brings together leading researchers from across the breadth of Europe – both geographically and in terms of different welfare regimes – to explore the driving forces behind the rise of food charity. It provides a comprehensive social policy analysis of this contemporary phenomenon in different countries, exploring in particular the role of welfare state retrenchment and the responsibility that charity is assuming in its wake. This final chapter provides a comparative analysis of several key themes across the case studies. These are: the nature and scale of food charity; relationships between changes in welfare provision and the growth of food charity, as well as the shifting role of charity more generally; the role of food supply in shaping food charity; and the social justice implications of changing welfare states and the growth of food charity. The chapter ends by setting out the implications of this evidence base for future research and policy analysis.

Food charity in Europe: nature, scale and public discourse

The case studies provide valuable insight into the nature and scale of food charity across contemporary Europe. This part of the comparative analysis examines what food charity looks like in practice across the countries studied, the scale of its current operations and the different ways in which public discourses have reacted to the presence of food charity in different countries.

What is food charity in Europe?

As outlined in the Introduction, one of the key tasks of this book is to establish some coherence in the terminology applied to food charity. It is clear from the cross-country analysis that terms are used in slightly different, and even awkwardly overlapping, ways. Words like 'deliverer', 'distributor' and 'provider' are used to describe different kinds of operations working at different scales and in different ways. In order to gain some comparative clarity, it is helpful to return to the definition of food charity provided in the Introduction:

> 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).

A food charity project is therefore the end link in the chain that gives food to people in need. Importantly, these projects are distinct from 'mid-layer' food redistribution projects, where 'redistribution' to food charity projects is broadly defined to include surplus food redistribution, the redistribution of other food donations (including from individual citizens through food drives) or the channelling of financial donations to support food charity operations.

While food charity projects may collect surplus food or donations, and store food themselves (which is notably the case in Germany and the UK), they may also – or instead – use a mid-layer organisation to source food. The case studies highlight the importance and reach of such organisations, particularly in Italy, Spain, the Netherlands and Slovenia, where the practice of surplus food redistribution is more embedded. These organisations' main role is to redistribute surplus food, which is sourced through EU schemes, as well as other corporate food surplus donations. However, they may also collect and distribute financial donations, and provide training and other support.

The case studies confirm both overlap and divergence in the use of the term 'food bank'. In the majority of cases (the Netherlands, Italy, Spain and Slovenia), it is used to describe a mid-layer organisation

concerned with food collection, storage and redistribution. However, in the remaining cases, this term is either not used (in Germany, the *Tafel* initiative is the most prominent label) or used differently (in the UK and Finland, it refers to a project that provides food directly to recipients).

In addition to highlighting the presence of distinct layers in different European food charity systems, the case studies also draw attention to the incredibly wide variety in the nature of food charity projects themselves. Many of the case studies mention established food charity projects that have a wide reach. These projects may have been set up to provide social support, of which food is just one aspect (for example, Caritas in Italy, Spain and Slovenia), or they may have food charity as a principal function and provide other signposting or help in addition to food (for example, *Tafel* in Germany and the Trussell Trust food banks in the UK). However, beyond these established national food charity organisations, it is clear that a plethora of other projects – either working independently or as part of smaller networks – exist in all the countries studied.

From this analysis, we were able to develop a typology of food charity. Taking the umbrella definition of food charity outlined earlier, the European food charity examined in this book falls into the categories of 'emergency' and 'non-emergency' support (as identified in the US by Mabli et al [2010]). These can then be referred to as charitable emergency food provision and charitable food assistance, respectively.

Charitable emergency food provision includes projects that help with an acute food crisis and includes food parcel and prepared food provision. The key characteristics of charitable emergency food provision are:

- The provision is free.
- The provision is intended to meet an acute 'hunger/lack of access to food' need and intended to be temporary. The intension of emergency provision is critical here – there may, in fact, be chronic use but the project is intended to provide only emergency help.
- The provision is outside the mainstream market.

Charitable emergency food provision – most notably, food parcel provision – has been the predominant focus of the chapters included in this book but it is also important to set out in more detail the work of charitable food assistance initiatives. Charitable food assistance, as non-emergency food charity, refers to projects offering ongoing

Table 8.1: Charitable emergency food provision examples

Types of project	Broad description	Labels used	Points of variation	Country examples
Food parcel provision	Provide an amount of food ('parcels of food') for people to take away, prepare and eat	Food bank, food pantry, food project	People may be given a pre-prepared parcel or may be able to choose freely from foodstuffs, people may/may not be able to state dietary requirements The amount of food may vary as may the type of food and whether it is fresh or long-life	'Breadlines' in Finland Food parcel provision by Caritas (Italy, Spain, Slovenia) *Tafel* (Germany) Food Pantries (the Netherlands) The Red Cross (Slovenia) 'Delivery projects' (Spain).
Prepared food provision	Provides pre-prepared food for people to eat on site or take away	Soup run, soup kitchen, breakfast clubs aimed at child hunger relief (as opposed to childcare), school holiday programmes	Food could be eaten on or off site Could be prepared by the project or be pre-prepared food (for example, supermarket sandwiches)	'Consumption projects' in Spain 'Give me 5 for a Smile' (Slovenia) Soup kitchens (Germany, Spain, the UK).

help with food access, helping hungry or vulnerable people. The key characteristics of this kind of provision are:

- providing ongoing support, which may be intended to support ongoing access to a vulnerable or hungry population but is not designed to meet an acute need;
- subsidised (free or reduced cost), with the aim of easing access to food and reducing costs;
- may have 'market' characteristics (supermarket food, monetary exchange) but still outside the primary food market; and
- ways of working would include a membership system, food co-ops, nominal/voluntary contributions and community cafes/lunch clubs.

It is also important to set out the wider 'food aid' context in which this food charity typology fits. Food charity often also sits alongside state-provided support with food in a bigger landscape of assistance, as set out in Figure 8.1.

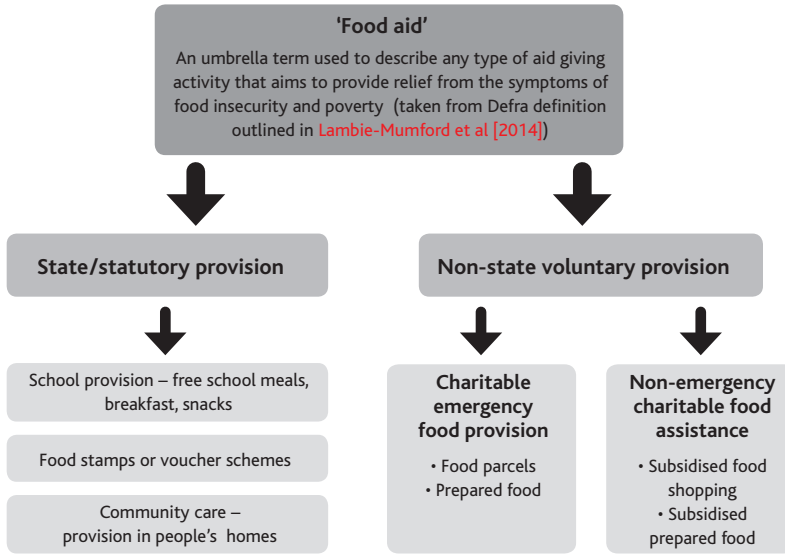
It is important to acknowledge that this typology is an ideal type, meaning that it is formed from characteristics and elements of the food aid phenomenon presented in the case studies but is not meant to necessarily correspond to all of the characteristics of any one particular case study. Following this typology and the evidence on the nature of food charity systems in Europe, it also becomes possible to develop a representation of European food charity systems, as outlined in Figure 8.2.

Table 8.3 sets out key information on the food charity landscapes of the case-study countries. Food charity across all the countries clearly shares some commonalities. The provision is primarily charitable and, for the most part, run by volunteers, though there may be some

Table 8.2: Charitable food assistance projects

Types of project	Broad description	Labels used
Subsidised food 'shopping'	The aims of these projects are usually about easing access to food Where costs are nominal these may be seen as alternatives to food parcel projects but they often also allow people to access the service for a longer period of time	Social supermarket, food co-operative, food pantries (in the UK)
Subsidised prepared food	May be about promoting access to food and/or a social function of bringing people together or providing a gateway to services for those that may be in need of further support	Community cafes, lunch clubs

Figure 8.1: Typology of 'food aid'



Note: Defra = Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

[[Note: Lambie-Mumford et al, 2014 is not listed in the references.]]

funded staff. In all countries, there are organisations operating at one or both of two tiers in the structure of food charity, with the first tier comprising client-facing food charity projects, and the second tier comprising food redistribution initiatives. To access food, recipients have to be assessed to confirm that they are in need – either by the providers themselves (for example, Caritas, *Tafel* and operators in Slovenia) or through referral processes (the UK, Germany, Slovenia and the Netherlands). Yet, it is not entirely clear how rigorously or consistently these referral and assessment processes are applied, and there appears to be a wide variety of approaches. For example, the Netherlands sets an income threshold for eligibility, while Finland has no officially validated procedure for assessment at all, so practices vary between operations.

Therefore, while it has been possible to draw out key insights into the overarching nature of food charity in Europe, there are significant gaps in knowledge and issues of incomparability across the case studies. These include matters relating to what food is handed out (in terms of the kind, amount and whether this is standardised), how it is handed out and why people are seeking help from charitable food projects.

Table 8.3: Food charity landscapes across case-study countries

Country	Prominent food charity projects and mid-layer organisations	Brief description of food charity landscape
Finland	FEAD food is distributed by 22 partner organisations, including the ELCF, FBOs and NGOs. *Yhteinen pöytä* is an emerging second-tier organisation that coordinates activities with parishes and municipalities. It is being piloted in several city regions and aims to establish best practice for food aid delivery in Finland.	There is no national umbrella organisation for food aid. The largest operators are the ELCF, other FBOs and NGOs, for example, associations for unemployed people. They provide food parcels to take away or meals to eat at their premises.
Germany	*Tafel* (the National Association of German *Tafel* trains members and manages private donations, for example, from large private donors such as Mercedes), Caritas, Diakonie.	*Tafel* collects, stores and provides food directly to people in need and may provide other goods or social services alongside food. It also operates through other large organisations (for example, Caritas). Soup kitchens and other projects do exist but are talked about and researched less.
Italy	Together, Caritas and the FBAO account for 70 per cent of all charitable food handed out. Seven organisations form a network that redistributes food from the FEAD programme: FBAO, Caritas (Caritas Italy), *Croce Rossa Italiana* (Red Cross Italy), *Comunità di S. Egidio* (Community of Sant'Egidio), *Banco delle opere di Carità*, *Associazione Banco Alimentare Roma* (Food Bank Association Rome), and *Associazione Sempre Insieme per la Pace*.	Food charity is dominated by the national food bank federation (FBAO) and Caritas. The FBAO is a mid-level organisation, redistributing food to providers. Caritas provides food to recipients through its centres and affiliated projects, and Emporia of Solidarity – a social supermarket initiative where people 'buy food' using electronic points on a card. In addition, there are also a range of other independent and undocumented projects.

Food sources	Access routes to food assistance	Rise and scale of food charity (food charity statistics from national organisations)
Most of the food is donated directly from retailers and the food industry to the charities without the involvement of a second-tier organisation. Food provision based on the FEAD programme is coordinated by the Finnish Food Authority, which delivers the food to partner organisations who then distribute it to recipients. More coordinated practice – with *Yhteinen pöytä* providing regionally centralised food collection and short-term storage – is under development.	There is no means testing. Charities are free to evaluate applicants' need for food. It is generally known that municipal social workers guide people in need of help to the appropriate charities, even if these charities are not part of the official social security system in Finland.	The first breadlines and food banks were set up in the mid-1990s because of the deep recession. Since then, charitable food provision has become established and now covers the whole country. There are no reliable statistics on charitable food aid provision. FEAD food was provided to 284,352 people at least once during 2017. The Church Resource Agency estimates that around 100,000 people receive food aid every year.
Tafel redistributes surplus but also runs food drives and takes monetary donations. It does not take food from the FEAD programme. Those funds are instead used to support social inclusion initiatives.	For support through *Tafel*, people need to 'prove' their need – often through benefit documents. People can also be signposted by state agencies.	*Tafel* began in the early 1990s. The period 1993–2003 saw moderate growth (330 projects established). The period 2003–10 saw a rapid increase alongside welfare reforms (up to 877 projects). There has been consolidation since 2010 (at 934 projects). In 2017, the 934 *Tafel* projects had 2,100 outlets servicing 1.5 million users.
Surplus food – including food from the FEAD programme – as well as food drives.	Caritas counselling centres assess applicants' need for help with food.	There was a 47 per cent increase in food aid provision between 2010 and 2013 – from 2.8 million to 4.1 million individuals. The FBAO has 21 regional agencies operating at the local level. Caritas has registered 3,816 food distribution centres and 353 soup kitchens, with the latter serving over 190,000 recipients. Other, undocumented projects also exist. FEAD food is distributed to 219 second-tier organisations and then to 11,554 front-line agencies. In 2015, this food was distributed to 2.8 million people.

(continued)

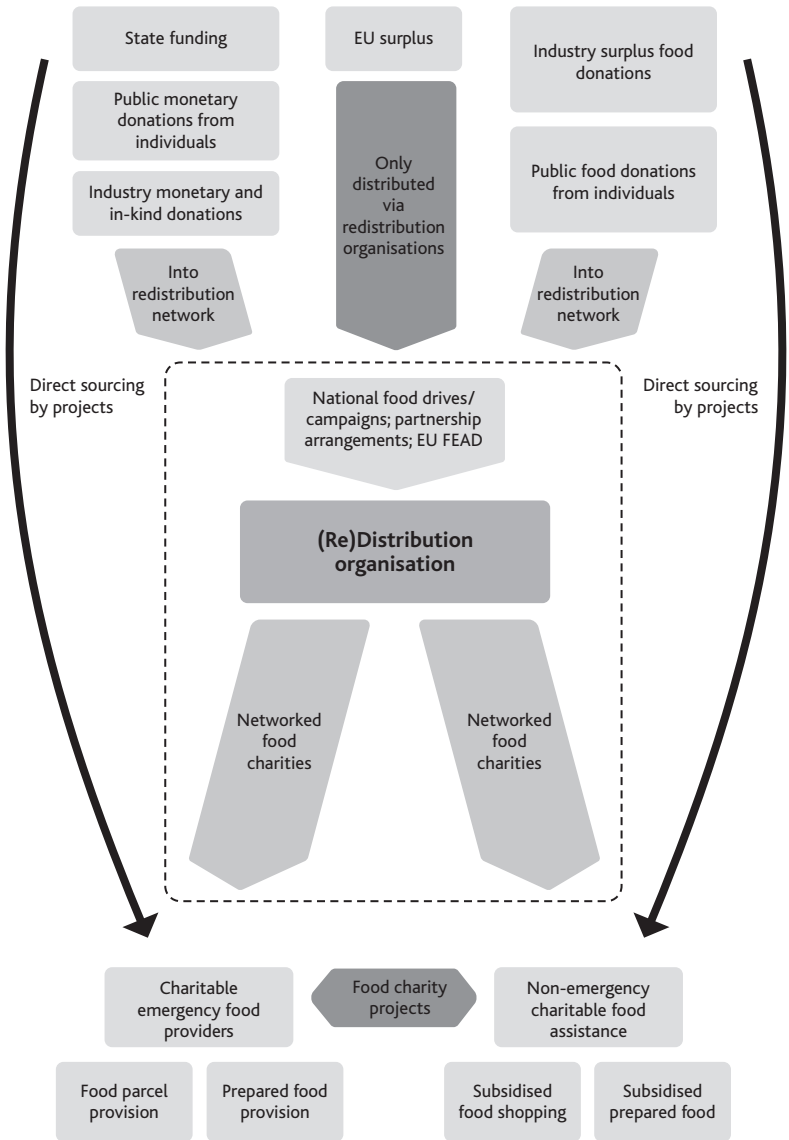
Table 8.3: Food charity landscapes across case study countries (continued)

Country	Prominent food charity projects and mid-layer organisations	Brief description of food charity landscape
Netherlands	Association of Dutch Food Banks.	The Association of Dutch Food Banks is the most prominent group of mid-level organisations that distribute food to 'food pantries'. There are other independent initiatives, including Muslim food banks and food banks for the elderly or children. One food parcel – matched in size to individual household composition (with a value of €35) – is provided per week for up to three years.
Slovenia	Red Cross Slovenia, Caritas and the Lions Club.	The Red Cross and Caritas provide food parcels and manage redistribution logistics. The Lions Club is another key mid-layer food redistribution organisation that also gives food to the Red Cross and Caritas. There are many other local ad hoc food charity projects and other initiatives such as donations for school lunches (Give Me 5 For A Smile!).
Spain	The Spanish Red Cross and FESBAL – 'food bank' is a registered trademark associated with FESBAL, and projects have to abide by its guidelines.	Nationally coordinated food redistribution through the Spanish Red Cross and FESBAL – they both distribute food to smaller charities and provide food directly to people in need. Various third sector organisations and informal charities collect food from food banks to hand out. There are other independent initiatives that provide food from different sources or money for food. Social discounting projects like social supermarkets also exist. FESBAL distributes food to collaborating entities which might be 'consumption projects' (soup kitchens and so on) or 'delivery projects' (where people take the food away).
UK	The Trussell Trust Foodbank Network. Fareshare is the most prominent second-tier redistribution organisation sending food to a range of emergency and non-emergency food charity projects, though, in many cases, it does not supply Trussell Trust food banks.	Food banks have come to dominate the discourse and landscape of food charity in the UK as a result of the prominent Trussell Trust projects. Food banks are recognised as outlets that provide emergency food parcels (containing a prescribed combination of foodstuffs and sized to household composition) for people to take away, prepare and eat. Other food charity projects do exist, including independent food banks, soup kitchens and other forms of community provision.

Notes: ELCF = Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland; FBOs = faith-based organisations; NGOs = non-governmental organisations; FBAO = Food Bank Foundation; FESBAL = Spanish Federation of Food Banks

Food sources	Access routes to food assistance	Rise and scale of food charity (food charity statistics from national organisations)
Mostly surplus redistribution organised at a regional level, though individual projects collect donations locally. Food projects in the Netherlands do not receive food assistance through the FEAD. These funds are instead used to support social inclusion for elderly people on low incomes.	People are referred by a social worker or other professional, and their discretionary income is calculated to confirm that they qualify. In 2018, the monthly income assistance threshold was €130 per household plus €85 per person in the household.	The first food bank was established in 2002. In 2014, there were 453 food pantries, rising to 530 by 2017. The number of people receiving help was on the increase until 2014, when it started to fall; it has remained stable since 2016. As of 2017, 168 food banks were operating in conjunction with eight regional distribution centres, sending food to 453 food pantries to be handed out. In 2017, 132,500 people received help from food banks.
Mostly surplus redistribution including EU MDP/FEAD, though there are some public food drives, for example, the school lunch scheme.	People are required to prove their need by showing evidence that they are in receipt of social assistance or being referred by social services.	Red Cross provision spiked in 2013 at the time of the economic crisis and the implementation of welfare reforms. In 2017, the Red Cross distributed food to 129,035 people, and Caritas to 94,884 people. The Lions Club delivered food for 2 million meals.
FEAD food redistribution but also corporate philanthropy and public support from individual citizens – around 25 per cent of food sourced by food banks comes through twice-yearly national 'Great Food Drives' collecting food donations from individuals at supermarkets. Food banks also receive other kinds of corporate support beyond surplus food.	Distributors must provide the food banks with information on the final recipients of food.	There are 56 food banks sending food to thousands of projects. Currently, 6,000 registered projects receive food from food banks. This is down from 9,000 in 2008, which the authors ascribe to the introduction of various conditions placed on projects that receive food through the FEAD programme. FESBAL distribution has increased from 60,000 tons of food in 2008 to 151,527 tons in 2018.
Private food donations from individuals as part of local or national food drives are a key source for food banks. Fareshare handles the redistribution of food industry surplus. The EU FEAD funding is used to provide financial support for breakfast club initiatives.	In the Trussell Trust model – and independent initiatives based on it – people have to be referred to a food bank by a professional (for example, state social security adviser, health worker or community worker).	In 2016/17, the Trussell Trust Foodbank Network – the UK's largest food bank organisation with 1,300 food banks – gave food to adults and children 1,182,954 times – an increase from 128,697 in 2011/12.

Figure 8.2: Food charity system diagram



The scale of food charity in Europe today

It is clear from the case studies that data on food charity – in terms of the scale of provision and need for help – are patchy at best, and what are available are not robustly comparable. Several case-study authors highlight problems with the data available and advise caution with

its use (in Chapters 1, 2, 5 and 7). However, as demonstrated by Table 8.1, collectively, these case studies do play an important role in gathering together existing data for the first time.

The reliance on food charities and mid-layer organisations for data is clearly problematic. Some public food aid distribution channels – for example, the FEAD programme – release annual reports. However, there are numerous independent charitable operators that rely on private donations, and it is very difficult, if not impossible, to obtain precise figures about their activities. Food provision is often counted per parcel/meal provided, not per person, so the exact scale in terms of unique individuals is impossible to discern. Available information also varies in specificity, depth and breadth, and has not necessarily been designed to provide systematic data for national analysis (Lambie-Mumford and Dowler, 2015). There are also important ethical and logistical questions about how appropriate it is for these data to be collected by charities and the level and nature of information that is collected about the people that they help.

Public discourses surrounding food charity

The case studies make interesting observations about public and political discourse surrounding the rise of food charities in the countries on which they focus. The authors report positive public responses to the notion of reducing food waste through the redistribution of surplus to food charity projects (in Chapters 1, 5 and 6). In this context, food waste recovery through charities is regarded as an act of environmental responsibility; as such, it provides a positive interpretation of charitable surplus food provision.

Elsewhere, reactions have varied. In the Netherlands, the public response has been characterised by moral outrage at the need for food charity projects (see Chapter 4). In Germany and the UK, there appear to be correlations between neoliberal (UK) and neo-social (Germany) shifts, with the common consequence that the charitable endeavour of food charity is seen as a positive intervention. That said, in both countries, the rise in need for emergency food was originally greeted by a sense of public outrage (Chapters 2 and 7). In Finland, the public discourse is contradictory. Charitable food aid is interpreted as an illegitimate form of social security in the framework of Nordic welfare state policies. Yet, it is accepted as philanthropic kindness that it is appropriate for faith-based organisations (FBOs) to provide (see Chapter 1).

Food and poverty or 'food poverty': theoretical and empirical debate

As outlined at the start of this chapter, the focus of this edited collection is primarily on the nature of responses to poverty in Europe, specifically using food charity as a lens through which to explore how such responses have changed as a result of shifts in social policy. Access to food is treated throughout this volume as a key aspect of poverty, one that is worthy of independent investigation and vital in understanding the impact of wider policy shifts.

Within this theoretical and conceptual context, the case studies highlight that 'household food insecurity' and 'food poverty' have variable relevance as specific policy issues across the case-study countries. Some authors use both concepts to discuss their country cases, for example, Slovenia and Spain (in Chapters 5 and 6). The concept of food poverty is favoured in Finland and Italy (see Chapters 1 and 3); as noted in the Introduction, the term 'food security' also means 'food safety' in these languages. 'Food insecurity' is used in the chapters on the Netherlands (Chapter 4) and the UK (Chapter 7).

However, the relationship between these concepts and the wider concept of poverty is also given more detailed reflection in the case-study chapters. As Arcuri et al point out in Chapter 3, the idea of food poverty per se has varied relevance in food charity practice: 'even if the largest share of services that Caritas provides entail food distribution, it points out that food poverty is not a specific target to be addressed and should rather be part of a broader definition of poverty'. In Chapter 2, Kessl et al make a similar intellectual argument for keeping attention on the broader concept of poverty, suggesting that a focus on food alone could be counterproductive in understanding how to protect standards of living and overcome poverty most effectively. The theoretical and empirical work in this book serves to reinforce the importance of situating discussions of food charity within this overall context of poverty. It is essential for research to maintain a focus on the relationship between food experiences and poverty, and not lose sight of socio-economic structural determinants.

The rise of food charity and the political economy of welfare in Europe

Table 8.4 sets out each case study's findings on the link between changing political economies of welfare and the rise of food charity across Europe. From the evidence presented throughout these chapters,

Table 8.4: Charting changes in welfare provision and the rise of food charity across the case studies

Country	Welfare shifts	Rise in food charity
Finland	Economic recession in the 1990s was the catalyst for neoliberal change in economic and social policies. As a result, basic social security benefits remained frozen for more than ten years. In addition, activation policy measures were implemented to connect unemployment benefit to work-related obligations. Failing to meet the requirements of the activation model results in cuts to unemployment benefit.	Need for food aid was initially triggered by the recession of the early 1990s, and the first charitable activities started in the middle of that decade. Levels of basic social security benefits – for example, labour market support, sick leave allowance and income assistance – remain too low to provide a decent standard of living, maintaining the need for food aid.
Germany	The 2003–05 *Hartz-Gesetze* reforms embedded neo-social policies.	The increase in food charity happened alongside the introduction of these reforms. The period 1993–2003 saw moderate growth (with a total of 330 projects established). After the welfare reforms were introduced, there was a rapid increase during 2003–10 (up to a total of 877 projects), and there has been consolidation since 2010 (a total of 934).
Italy	Austerity measures have involved cuts in welfare expenditure, which was already at a low level, and caused increasing regional differences in state provision.	There was a 47 per cent increase in food aid provision between 2010 and 2013 – up from 2.8 million recipients to 4.1 million.
Netherlands	Since the 1990s, and more intensely since 2013, there has been increasing emphasis on individual responsibility and the role of non-state actors. There have been cuts to levels of entitlements and the introduction of more bureaucratic processes to access social security, which have resulted in income reductions.	Since the initial establishment of food charity in 2002, there has been evidence of local governments increasingly playing facilitative roles as regards the work of food charities, and that people are 'falling through the cracks' of more conditional welfare assistance.

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Table 8.4: Charting changes in welfare provision and the rise of food charity across the case studies (continued)

Country	Welfare shifts	Rise in food charity
Slovenia	The Social Assistance Act 2006 made welfare provision more conditional and focused on individual responsibilities. A further round of reform and welfare spending cuts was initiated in 2009 – in the wake of the economic crisis – with the Social Assistance Benefits Act. This came into force in 2012 at the height of the effects of the economic crisis, when unemployment rates had doubled.	Red Cross provision spiked in 2013.
Spain	Over the last decade, social security provision has stagnated and there is evidence of strain on family support networks, which have traditionally been a key aspect of the Spanish welfare system. The third sector has stepped in. Post-crisis, there has been a tightening of access to social security. Delays in processing applications and payments are common, and policies vary widely across different municipalities.	Distribution by FESBAL increased from 60,000 tons of food in 2008 to 151,527 tons in 2018.
UK	In 2010, the UK government began the largest overhaul of the social security system since the establishment of the welfare state. Reforms have involved capping and freezing social security payment levels, increasing conditionality, and tightening criteria for eligibility. At the same time, funding for public services – including local authorities and family support centres – has been cut across the board.	The largest increases in food charity followed these reforms, and there is mounting evidence linking welfare reform with the rise of food charity. In the year 2016/17, the UK's largest food bank organisation, the Trussell Trust Foodbank Network, distributed 1,182,954 food parcels to adults and children across the country, up from 128,697 in the year 2011/12.

it would appear that there is, indeed, a link between changes to social rights and entitlements, as well as increased emphasis on non-state providers, on the one hand, and the rise of food charity, on the other. This appears to manifest itself not only in the timing of food charity expansion, but also in actual practices – particularly in relation to post-neoliberal-wave governments being active in facilitating food charity projects and celebrating the role played by these particular civil society actors. It would therefore appear that while specific policies and timescales have differed, reductions and increased conditionality in state entitlements have played an important role in determining the need for and shape of help with food – in the form of widespread food charity – across Europe.

There are some further commonalities across case-study countries. In Finland, in the Netherlands and – at least early on in the development of food charity – in the UK, there is an emphasis on people 'falling through the cracks' of the welfare system. This implies that bureaucratic processes – as well as conditionality and criteria for entitlement – are an important factor in the need for help with food (see Chapters 1 and 4). Chapters 3 and 6 emphasise the significance of decentralised welfare processes in Italy and Spain, leading to wide variations in entitlements and support for those in need across those countries. Additional pressure on public finance for welfare is also reported in Italy and Slovenia in the form of EU regulations on spending and deficits, exacerbated by the financial crisis (see Chapters 3 and 5).

The changing role of (food) charity in welfare

The findings presented across the case studies suggest that regardless of the historical role of the third sector in different welfare regimes, since the neoliberal wave and the economic crisis of the late 2000s, charities are now playing different and more prominent roles in the provision of care, whether in place of support traditionally provided by the state or the family. Data from Germany, the Netherlands and the UK suggests that since the 1990s – and in particular more recently – neoliberal thinking in support of privatised modes of care has fostered increasing political approval of charity, including food charity, playing a role in this area. In these countries, charities are assuming responsibility for support and provision that the state would previously have been expected to provide (see Chapters 2, 4 and 7). In Spain, where the family has historically played a particularly prominent role in social support, evidence suggests that this support is becoming exhausted. In response, charities – including those providing food –

are playing ever more important roles (see Chapter 6). Italy provides another interesting example of where charities have always played a prominent role in social assistance given the fragmented nature of state welfare. In Chapter 3, Arcuri et al observe that the role of charity in Italy – spearheaded by food charities – is shifting from a single focus on provision to an additional focus on advocacy and lobbying for improved public social policies. Seeing rising levels of need, charities are becoming increasingly aware of their inability to solve the root causes of poverty in the country.

There is also important evidence across the case studies of changing welfare practices, which increasingly incorporate food charity projects. This means not only that food charity projects are more and more present and prominent in the various welfare landscapes, but also that the ways in which the projects interact with state welfare providers in practice have been changing over time.

Evidence from across the case studies highlights increasing state support or involvement in food charity practices. Most commonly, this is in the form of formally or informally referring people in need from state agencies or professionals to food charity projects, as reported in Finland, Germany, the Netherlands, Slovenia and the UK (Chapters 1, 2, 4, 5 and 7). There are also reports of local authorities giving financial or in-kind (such as logistical) support to food charity projects across the countries studied, including Finland, the Netherlands, Spain and the UK (see Chapters 1, 4, 6 and 7). In Finland, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health maintains that food charity is not part of the social security system; however, at the same time, it allocated €1.8 million to food aid projects in 2016/17. In Germany, the Minister for Family Affairs is automatically appointed as the patron of *Tafel*. Kessl et al (in Chapter 2) sum up the situation all across Europe: 'Existing welfare states as public systems of poverty reduction are being complemented by a private–public system of poverty relief, which has been established in the shadow of formal state institutional arrangements.'

The role of food supply and agro-economic policies in shaping food charity

As previously mentioned in this chapter, this book set out to focus particularly on the social policy aspects of the rise of food charity. However, analysis of the data provided by the case studies clearly highlights the importance of supply-side factors in the shape and scale of emergency food provision. In particular, the countries studied

demonstrate the significance of the MDP and – after 2013 – the FEAD in institutionalising surplus food redistribution through food charity.

In all cases except the UK, surplus food redistribution is the most common method for food charity projects to secure food. While all authors report that projects source additional food in other ways, redistribution of surplus food is shown to play a major role. Food charity projects in Finland, Slovenia, Italy and Spain source food through the FEAD. In the UK, the programme is used specifically to provide financial support to breakfast clubs in primary and secondary schools in England for pupils who are entitled to free school meals (European Commission, 2019). In Germany and the Netherlands, the operational programmes of the FEAD focus not on food initiatives, but instead on social inclusion programmes. In each country where FEAD food stocks are used in food charity – or have a history of such use – this was found to be a determining factor in the shape of food charity (see Chapters 1, 3, 5 and 6). These chapters highlight how the scale, organisation and regulated nature of participation in the FEAD scheme have resulted in the prominence and institutionalisation of the redistribution of surplus food through food charity.

Following participation in EU redistribution schemes, Good Samaritan legislation – making the redistribution of surplus food easier – was introduced in Italy in 2016 and Slovenia in 2017. In Finland, food supervision authorities have loosened the regulations on directing expiring food from grocery stores to charities by relaxing the rules concerning expiration dates. Furthermore, in the Netherlands, the government's coalition agreement refers to the EU Council publication that calls on states to make the redistribution of surplus food easier, highlighting the importance of EU agricultural policy (Council of the European Union, 2016).

This book began with an assertion that as a group of researchers in the area of food charity, the authors have observed that food waste and experiences of limited access to food are distinct phenomena, with different determinants and requiring different responses and solutions. This research was framed to focus on food charity provision (first tier). However, it has become clear through the comparative analysis that, in fact, food sourcing practices at the second, mid-layer, tier – especially surplus food redistribution and food waste recovery through charitable food provision – constitute an important determinant of the scale, nature and embeddedness of first-tier food charity projects.

The Introduction cautioned that where issues of food waste and experiences of limited access to food are not treated distinctly, there is a real danger of conflating environmental policy questions – about

how to reduce food waste – with discrete social policy questions – about both the need for assistance with food and the best and most appropriate social responses to experiences of poverty. The analysis of the case studies serves to confirm the truth of this warning. In particular countries – notably, Italy and Slovenia – the conflation of these areas has become embedded in policymaking through Good Samaritan Acts (see Chapters 3 and 5). In Finland, there is a legislative initiative proposing a ban on large shops throwing away or destroying unsold food and an obligation for retailers to donate such food to charities. The rationale behind the legislation is to tackle food waste and food poverty in tandem.

In policy analysis terms, the importance of the MDP and the FEAD indicates that there is crossover between policy spheres. First, the MDP programme, as a part of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), bought up agricultural overproduction surplus to balance market fluctuations. This surplus food was later delivered as food aid. In this way, emergency food aid was used as a kind of market support for European agriculture. From 1987 to 2013, this manoeuvre worked to stabilise food supply for many of the charitable actors and thus helped to establish charitable food aid provision in many European countries. Second, some recent EU-wide environmental policy initiatives, such as the zero-waste initiative (in 2017) and the circular economy (in 2019), have a tangible impact on social policy practices in relation to extensive and embedded food charity in terms of state funding or support through surplus food provision to food charities. As observed in the Introduction, while there is no common EU social policy, initiatives that have come out of the CAP – in the form of the MDP and later EU guidelines regarding food waste (Council of the European Union, 2016) – have, in effect, served to homogenise private welfare practices in several member states in the form of surplus food redistribution through food charity. This policy sphere crossover is also apparent at a domestic level – for example, in the Netherlands, Slovenia, Italy, Finland and, more recently, the UK (Defra, 2018). Here, decisions made in the sphere of public policy concerning the environment – namely, surplus food redistribution incentives – are impacting on the scale and nature of food charity in the practice of both private and state social welfare. These decisions also serve to legitimise charity as a response to need, providing an 'illusion of a just system' and proving hard to argue against (a moral 'buy one, get one free').

Another reason why it is important to acknowledge that these initiatives originate in environmental policy spheres is that this highlights the fact that these policies stem from the problem of food

surplus and how to avoid waste. Surplus food redistribution policies did not begin with the problem of lack of access to food, or any assessment that the provision of surplus food was the best response. As the evidence provided in this book (in Chapters 1 and 3) and many others (for example, Riches, 1997) shows, an ad hoc system of private food charity reliant on unpredictable redistribution practices would not be the evidence-based policy solution presented in response to the problem of the systemic lack of access to food. Furthermore, the redistribution of surplus food through food charity is a downstream response to overproduction and does not represent environmental policy seeking to question the upstream production processes and construction of consumption practices resulting in the current scale of waste.

The social justice implications of welfare retrenchment and the rise of food charity

The social justice implications of the increasing need for and provision of charitable assistance with food are profound. This section of the concluding analysis discusses the implications of the book's findings for entitlements, equality and fairness, as well as for the future of food charity practice, policy and research more generally.

In the first instance, the comparative analysis highlights how changes to social rights brought about by neoliberal policy shifts have had direct consequences on food charity assistance in terms of both practice and rising need. The authors of all the case studies highlight the role played by increased conditionality and reduced levels of entitlements in driving increased need. Several case studies also demonstrate how neoliberal assumptions and practices are embedded within food charity, for example, means testing as part of requirements to 'prove' one's need for food assistance (at projects in Germany and Slovenia) or via referral criteria (in the Netherlands and UK). Yet, food charities also appear to make efforts to play a role in social policy. For instance, the worsening of need in Italy has prompted Caritas to monitor the inadequacy of social assistance (see Chapter 3). In the UK, the Trussell Trust has always regarded advocacy and lobbying as part of its role (see Chapter 7). In Finland, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland (ELCF) has regularly put poverty issues on the political agenda (see Chapter 1).

The case studies highlight a variety of ways in which exclusion is embedded within the need for and practice of food charity assistance. Chapters 2 and 6 set out how exclusion from consumer society

is embodied in both the need for and receipt of charitable food assistance. Experiences of exclusion and shame on the part of food aid recipients are discussed in Chapters 2 and 5. Chapter 4 observes the irony of the moral outrage that dominated public discourse in the Netherlands about the rising need for food charity when compared with the relative lack of reflection on the implications of the form of such charity, specifically, the fact that it is redistributed surplus food.

The case studies in this book demonstrate that food charity projects across Europe are assuming responsibility for helping people who lack adequate access to food. At a structural level, the shift of this responsibility appears, from this analysis, to be a function of states no longer assuming full responsibility for social protection. This is seen in the regressive social policy shifts that have occurred following the neoliberal wave – whether through reduced entitlements (in the UK, Germany, Slovenia and Finland), increased conditionality (in the Netherlands, Germany, the UK, Slovenia and Finland) or the failure to pursue more comprehensive social protection (in Spain and Italy). As welfare states retrench – or at least policy fails to adequately respond to need – in practice, food charity projects are assuming responsibility for care. As Van der Horst, Pijnenburg and Markus argue in Chapter 4, there is an iterative process at play here. As charitable initiatives step in to fill gaps left by state provision, and the political discourse praises the efforts and impact of charitable social assistance, food charity could be further exacerbating state retrenchment by taking on this role.

Conclusions

This edited collection provides the first comprehensive 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 the social policy responses to it, the book acts as a key social policy text on the nature of responses to poverty in the context of shifting social policies and changing welfare states.

While this book represents a significant step forward in understanding the rise of food charity across Europe over recent decades, it also serves to highlight the significant gaps in knowledge. Further systematic comparative study is required in several key areas. In the first instance, it will be important to develop and test the typology of European food charity and mid-layer organisations set out here. It will also be crucial to obtain a more systematic and reliable understanding of the scale of food charity provision, its operation and the reasons people are seeking food assistance. For future social policy analyses, it will

also be important to gain a better understanding of the practices and relationships between states (at local and national levels) and food charities. This is especially urgent because this cross-case analysis suggests that a charity economy – including food charity – is growing and taking shape rapidly, at least partly in the shadow of institutionalised welfare systems (see Chapter 2).

This is an important juncture at which to take stock of the implications of the rise of food charity across Europe. Researchers in social policy and other areas are now beginning to ask about the longevity of these projects as part of welfare landscapes. This collection provides urgently needed social policy insight into the drivers of the growth of food assistance and the nature of the charitable responses developing across Europe. The findings indicate a pressing need to radically reassess social policy priorities – and the consequences of environmental policies – if the ever-increasing provision of food charity is to be abated or reversed.

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