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Ollscoil na hÉireann, Corcaigh

National University of Ireland, Cork



Food poverty and charitable food provisioning in Cork.

Thesis presented by

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for the degree of

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List of Abbreviations

BFI	Bia Food Initiative
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CES	Community Employment Scheme
CFI	Community Food Initiatives
CFS	Charitable Food Services
CHNI	The Council for Homeless Northern Ireland
CJEI	Joint Committee on Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation
CVD	Cardiovascular Disease
DAFM	Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine
DARD	Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
DCRD	Department of Rural and Community Development
DEASP	Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection
DEIS	Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools
DHSSPS	Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety
DoH	Department of Health
DSP	Department of Social Protection
EAPN	European Anti-Poverty Network
ESRI	Economic and Social Research Institute
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organisation
FBO	Faith Based Organisations
FC	FoodCloud
FCH	FoodCloud Hubs
FEAD	Fund for Europe's Most Deprived Persons
FEBA	European Federation of Food Banks
FPN	Food Poverty Network
FSA	Food Standards Agency
FSAI	Food Safety Authority Ireland
FSS	Food Security Survey Module
GFN	Global Foodbanking Network
HBS	Household Budgeting Survey

Hffa	Healthy Food for All
HI	Health Ireland Strategy
HSE	Health Service Executive
IHF	Irish Heart Foundation
IPH	Institute of Public Health
MABS	Money Advice and Budgeting Services
MDP	Food Aid Programme to the Most Deprived Persons in the Community
NAPS	National Action Plan for Social Inclusion
NCD	Non-Communicable Diseases
NIFPN	Northern Ireland Food Poverty Network
NISRA	Northern Ireland's Statistics and Research Agency
OFMdFM	Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister
PHA	Public Health Agency
PHAI	Public Health Alliance Ireland
RTF	Right to Food
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SILC	Survey on Income and Living Conditions
SJI	Social Justice Ireland
SMLP	School Meal Local Projects
SVP	St. Vincent de Paul Society
TASC	Think-tank for Action on Social Change
UPF	Ultra-Processed Foods
USMS	Urban School Meals Scheme
UV	Unpaid Volunteers
WHO	World Health Organisation

Declaration of authenticity

This is to certify that the work I am submitting is my own and has not been submitted for another degree, either at University College Cork or elsewhere. All external references and sources are clearly acknowledged and identified within the contents. I have read and understood the regulations of University College Cork concerning plagiarism.

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Abstract

The issue of food insecurity has moved to the forefront of social policy debates, with inadequate diets affecting one in three people globally (IFPRI, 2016) and with low income persons carrying the largest burden. The impacts of food insecurity on health are extensive and resonate throughout a lifetime which positions issues of food insecurity as a central social justice concern. An increasingly normalized response to food insecurity, more commonly referred to as food poverty in Ireland, is the redistribution of surplus food. In the decade following the economic crisis of 2008-10 Ireland has witnessed a rapid expansion of charitable food services and the establishment of what would become Ireland's first national system of surplus food redistribution. This growth was also facilitated by multiple co-existing factors and circumstances. These include the historical precedence and primacy afforded to charitable responses, the withdrawal of significant third sector funding post economic crash, Ireland's persistently high rates of poverty, and a protracted homelessness crisis. An additional critical factor in this trajectory has been the deepening neoliberal ideology promoting novel, business led solutions and Corporate Social Responsibility responses to issues of social inequality. These features of Irish society combined with an increasing awareness of the problem of food waste positioned surplus food as a legitimate and distinguished approach to tackling poverty more generally.

This thesis focusses on the contemporary charitable food system in Ireland and is set against the backdrop of increasing diet-related poor health, rising inequality, wider food system trends, and the experiences of charitable food assistance in other high-income countries. Using critical realism as a metatheory and Cork city as an embedded case study, several aspects of Ireland's contemporary charitable food system are explored. This includes the organisations providing charitable food assistance, the surplus food flowing

through it, the circumstances and level of food insecurity and ill-health experienced by its users, and the representation of food poverty at the national level. The overarching goal is to identify the factors influencing food governance within the charitable food system and its impact at the local level.

The findings suggest that several dominant ideas and practices influence the governance of food within the charitable food system and work to indirectly support, and legitimize, the use of any surplus food as a response to poverty. This includes the conceptualisation of food poverty and nutritional poverty as separate issues which in turn supports the idea that health concerns are outside the remit and responsibility the organisations responding to food poverty. The local impacts of surplus food redistribution include redistribution beyond demand, in some instances the replacement of food vouchers with surplus and the loss of charity-based support for local food businesses. The findings highlight that the growing role of the charitable sector as a key food waste reduction strategy means that surplus food redistribution is influencing the diets, the health, and food cultures of low income populations using these services. Aligning these concerns with surplus food redistribution would prevent further deepening Ireland's inequalities. A practical first step in this regard would be the introduction of a healthy food policy across the charitable food.

Overall, this thesis demonstrates that the ideological framing surrounding food poverty have changed little since the early 20th Century where the focus was on the 'personal' rather than 'economic or social reform' (Miller, 2014), on providing food rather than addressing the causes of food poverty and with the local community as duty bearer. This thesis ultimately argues that a more critical reflection on food charity in Ireland is required with questions of social justice and the human right to good food in a socially accepted manner, taking centre stage.

Chapter 1: Introduction

The real problem of food production occurs within a complex, mutually influential relationship of soil, plants, animals, and people. A real solution to that problem will therefore be ecologically, agriculturally, and culturally healthfula bad solution solves for a single purpose or goal such as increased production

(Wendel Berry, 1981)

The Irish people's relationship with food is nuanced and anchored in a history that inhibited the achievement of food security for large sections of the population, most notably the poor. Our history of colonization, dispossession, famines, and the predominance of an export orientated agricultural economy for much of the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries led to repeated periods of food shortages, malnutrition, starvation, and famine for Ireland's poor, some of which extended into the 20th century. However, for those with legal and economic access, food insecurity was never a problem (Clarkson, 2002). This deeply unjust history, linked to poor food governance, is embedded in the Irish psyche and influences how we organize and administer Ireland's agricultural system, including the charitable food sector, today. Writing about food debates in Ireland during the First World War, Ian Miller observes that the primary interest of the state was on increasing agricultural productivity for export, with 'relatively few measures in place to ensure access to nutritionally adequate diet' beyond 'extolling individual responsibility and self-regulation' (Miller, 2014: 174-176). This thesis notes that little has changed in this regard and further argues that the redistribution of surplus food has followed a similar trajectory with efforts focused on celebrating efficiency and the quantity of food provided.

Under the Temporary Relief Act, a national soup kitchen scheme was initiated in 1847 in response to the Great Famine (Daly, 2017). While poor people relied on charity to survive, those with the financial means to access food feasted on turtle soup, salmon, and champagne (Herlihy, 2015). Equally, little has changed in this regard and while many of us benefit from Ireland's growing alternative food networks, many more are left reliant on food charity and increasingly, corporate food waste. Indeed some of the charities formed during the Great Irish Famine and the subsequent period of abject poverty in the early 20th Century, are still in operation today with many more opening their doors for the first time at a time when Ireland was hailed as the fastest growing economy in Europe for three years running.

This propensity for charity and community responsibility is deeply rooted in the development of the Irish state where the history of welfare is entangled with its history of poverty and charity (Cox, 2017). Despite much progress in Ireland's social policy over the proceeding century, the missed opportunity to progress Ireland's social protection system in the 1940s led to non-governmental institutions taking responsibility for the poor, a system that is still in place today (Dukelow and Considine, 2009) despite efforts in the 70s and 80s to move away from the charitable response to issues of welfare (Sammon, 1982).

In recent decades, the relationships between the public sector and the community and voluntary sector have been further complicated by additional influences and economic factors. These include the growth of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) (Sweeney, 2007), significant reductions in government funding to the community and voluntary sector post economic crisis (Harvey, 2012), government campaigns to increase philanthropic activity (Forum on Philanthropy and fundraising, 2012:12), and an overall deepening of the neoliberal rhetoric across many aspects of Irish society (Negra and McIntyre, 2019; Neville, 2014). It is unsurprising then that since 2012 substantial changes

have occurred with regards to the increasing use of surplus food from corporate donors, as a response to household food insecurity, termed food poverty in Ireland. Following the European trajectory, Ireland has witnessed a significant increase in charitable food provisioning in response to economic crisis of 2007/08. However, this thesis positions the increased availability of corporate surplus, as an attributing factor to the growth of the charitable food sector.

The purpose of this thesis is to explore multiple elements of the contemporary charitable food system in Ireland. Using critical realism as a metatheory and Cork city as an embedded case study, this thesis has three goals. First, to explore the various entities responding to food poverty within the contemporary charitable food system in order to identify the factors influencing the governance of food within this system. Secondly, to identify the impacts of surplus food redistribution in Cork and the ideas legitimising its use. And thirdly, to analyse the work of the Food Poverty Network (FPN), as a proxy indicator to identify how the problem of food poverty is represented at the national level.

Accordingly, the proceeding chapter sets out the rationale for this thesis by addressing definitional issues and exploring the wider, and related, food system trends. First, against a backdrop of increasing diet related ill health, dominant food system narratives, and the increasing availability of surplus food in high income countries. Secondly, in the context of the right to food which infers addressing the problem of food poverty through government intervention rather than through charitable and private means (Gottlieb and Joshi, 2010). The chapter then moves to the Irish context by first providing an overview of the key moments within the development of Ireland's health and welfare policies, and thinking surrounding the issue of poverty, since the establishment of the Free State in 1922. Next, a brief overview of food poverty and food charity in neoliberal Ireland is provided along with some considerations concerning the conceptualisation of charitable

food environments and the issue of ultra-processed foods. The chapter concludes with an outline of the theoretical framework guiding this thesis along with the rationale, aims and outline of the thesis.

1.1 Food insecurity and Food poverty: defining matters

The way a problem gets defined and characterized shapes the responses to it (Tarasuk & Davies, 1996), including its measurement (Pollard & Booth, 2019). Conceptualisations of food security have evolved since the adoption of the definition of food security put forward at the 1974 World food conference ‘... availability at all times of adequate world food stuffs... to sustain a steady expansion of food consumption... and to offset fluctuations in production and prices’ (Sage, 2019). This moved from a purely production focused definition in the 70s and 80s to include issues of adequacy, nutrition, and safety in the definition proposed at the 1996 World Food Summit, ‘when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life’ (FAO, 1997). And while an additional emphasis on nutrition was reiterated as a fundamental component of food security at the World Food Summit of 2009 (FAO, 2009), the productivist framing has remained central to the responses (Mooney & Hunt, 2009; MacMillan & Dowler, 2012; Carolan, 2013). Despite the many criticism of the term, Carolan (2013) reminds us of the ‘original spirit of food security’, which he describes as security through food rather than security of food. This broadens the lens from mere access and availability to include ‘issues of sustainability, enhanced individual, societal and nutritional well-being, and prosperity... a process that ought to make people and the planet better off’ (Carolan, 2013: 2-8) and encapsulates the wide ranging and interconnected challenges that makes food security slightly more difficult to define today, in comparison to the 1970s (Sage, 2019).

People who are not secure of food are said to be experiencing food insecurity, or food poverty – a persistent problem – that has attracted much attention from academics and media alike (O'Connor et al., 2016). According to Dowler et al. (2001:12), food poverty denotes 'the inability to consume an adequate quality or sufficient quantity of food in socially acceptable ways, or the uncertainty that one will be able to do so'. As illustrated in Box 1 below, the terms food poverty, food insecurity, and hunger have similar definitions and, in recent years, have been used interchangeably (Dowler and O'Connor, 2012; Lambie-Mumford, 2014). For example, Dowler and O'Connor (2012) refers to food poverty as a useful synonym for food insecurity, whereas Kracht and Schulz (1999: 57) notes that food insecurity is '...frequently used as a synonym for hunger...but its principal meaning refers to the risk of people being hungry'. Riches (2018:21) points out that people do not refer to themselves as being food insecure or food poor, but 'experience and speak of themselves as being hungry', arguing that 'hunger needs to be named what it is'. Thus, Riches refers to food poverty/food insecurity/hunger as 'domestic hunger in the rich world'. Importantly, he does so acknowledging that it has been this framing of the problem as one of hunger – denoting lack of food – that has contributed to the current and past response of supplying more food rather than addressing the issues preventing people from participating in society.

Typically, food (in)security in Irish literature is the preferred term when discussing national food supplies, such as in Ireland's food strategies (Food Harvest, 2020; Food Wise, 2025), whereas food poverty has more resonance when discussing household experiences (see Friel and Conlon, 2004; Dowler and O'Connor, 2012) and is regularly used in Irish media. Throughout this thesis, the terms food poverty and food insecurity are used synonymously and interchangeably and, in line with Box 1, both refer 'to an issue of access to healthy food and its affordability (Silvasti and Riches, 2014).

Food poverty

‘an issue of access to healthy food and its affordability (Silvasti and Riches, 2014)

A useful synonym for food insecurity (Dowler and O’Connor, 2012)

‘the insufficient economic access to an adequate quantity and quality of food to maintain a nutritionally satisfactory and socially acceptable diet’ (O’Connor et al., 2016)

Food insecurity

‘The inadequate or insecure access to food due to financial constraints’ (Tarasuk, 2016)

‘The limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods or limited or uncertain ability to acquire safe, nutritious food in socially acceptable ways (e.g., without having to resort to emergency food supplies, scavenging, stealing or other coping strategies)’ (Taylor and Loopstra, 2016)

‘the inability to afford to eat meat, fish or protein every other day’ (Eurostat, 2016a)

Hunger

‘Very low food security’ (ers.usda.gov, 2018)

‘a federal euphemism for hunger’ (Poppendieck, 2014)

‘Severe food insecurity’ ‘experiencing hunger’ (FAO, 2016)

‘an individual level physiological condition that may result from food insecurity’ caused by a household-level economic and social condition of limited and uncertain access to adequate food’ (USDA ERS, 2016)

Box 1. Definitions of Food Poverty, Food insecurity, and Hunger

Source: (adapted from Riches, 2018)

1.1.1 Food insecurity and health

The issue of food insecurity has moved to the forefront of social policy debates, with inadequate diets affecting one in three people globally (IFPRI, 2016). The impacts of household food insecurity on health are ‘profound’ and resonate throughout a lifetime, ranging from impaired growth and development for infants, increased likelihood of chronic conditions for children and compromised physical and mental health in adults. Importantly, these outcomes are independent of income, education, ethnicity, and other health determinants (Tarasuk, 2016, 5.10). Thus, household food insecurity is a

significant public health issue (Lang and Heasman, 2004; Dowler and O'Connor, 2012; Kneafsey et al., 2013; Caraher and Dowler, 2014). In 2003, the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) outlined that the number of diseases and illnesses such as obesity, cancers, osteoporosis, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, and dental diseases, attributed to poor diets, are increasing. It is a warning and situation that resonate across the globe, with non-communicable diseases (NCDs) now causing more deaths than all other causes combined (WHO, 2013); the leading cause of poor health globally (Swinburn et al., 2019). While not all NCDs can be attributed to diet alone, poor diets are directly linked to obesity, diabetes, some cancers, and cardiovascular diseases (CVD) and these illnesses account for the vast majority of Europe's disease burden. In Europe, 77 percent of the disease burden and 86 percent of premature mortality is attributed to diet related NCDs (WHO, 2014). CVD alone accounts for one third of deaths globally (WHO, 2017). Across Europe, diet-related CVD was responsible for 56 percent of male and 48 percent of female deaths in 2015 (Wilkins et al., 2017). Hence, the role of diet in preventing this disease is crucial (Srour et al., 2019). More recently, research has highlighted that, across the globe, one in five deaths are linked to poor diet (Willett et al, 2019).

Numerous factors beyond the control of the individual affect a person's ability to access a healthier diet (Kneafsey et al., 2013), one key factor being the types of food available within the physical food environment. Hawkes et al. (2013) outline how the environment in which we develop our dietary behaviours have a significant impact on what people eat, whereby the food supply in this environment is correlated with dietary patterns, meaning that supply dictates consumption. Basu (2015:248) outlines the increasing availability of 'edible oils, sweeteners, and meat' within the food system and excessive – nutrient deficient, energy dense 'pseudo foods' (Winson, 2004 cited in Sage, 2013); an occurrence termed as the 'nutrition transition' by Popkin (1994). This 'nutrition transition' has been

correlated to the rising diet-related ill-health across the globe and has ignited increasing public concern in relation to the quality of the food available in the supply system, particularly in relation to the role of trade agreements and large multinational food corporations in furthering, enabling, and promoting the consumption of energy dense, nutrient poor food items (Hawkes et al., 2012; Stuckler et al., 2012; Basu, 2015).

Often this nutrition transition is explained as ‘Bennett’s Law’ (Godfray et al., 2010): the westernization of diets in developing economies attributed to rising incomes. However, evidence suggests (Stuckler and Siegel 2011) that poverty, rather than rising income, ‘may be a key risk factor for the consumption of unhealthy commodities’ (Stuckler et al., 2012: 1), in addition to wider influences such as Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and global marketing (Hawkes, 2005), and economic trends rather than economic development. Basu (2015) uses global food supply data to challenge the idea that changes in food supply are an inevitable consequence of economic development and points to numerous divergent patterns across regions and countries of similar socio-economic status. The results of this analysis point to more complex processes at play that are not solely dependent on increased income or increased imports. For example, a handful of companies are responsible for the increased sales of sugar-sweetened beverages (e.g. Coca-Cola, Pepsi-Co and Danone) and packaged food (e.g. Nestle, Kraft, Unilever) distributed through domestic systems (often by franchising local production) rather than importations. The nutrition transition is also influenced by an increase in the supply of edible oils such as Palm oil linked to cardiovascular disease (Chen et al., 2011) and numerous human rights and environmental abuses (Tullis, 2019). Overall, Basu (2015) urges the consideration of multiple nutrition transitions and their relationship with national food related policies and global economic trends (Williams and Nestle, 2016).

One such economic trend is the growth in sales of global ultra-processed foods (UPF), particularly in low, and middle-income economies (Baker and Friel, 2016), given that in high-income countries UPFs already form a significant proportion of the food systems (Monteiro et al., 2013). Popkin and Hawkes (2016) highlight that added sugar-sweetened beverages and processed foods are a primary source of added sugar in the majority of countries. In the US, Ultra-processed foods (UPFs) accounted for 71 percent of the food supply in 2018 (Baldrige et al., 2019). These foods are generally characterised by their low-cost ingredients, hyper palatability, high levels of added sugar and salt, and general poor nutritional profile. UPF are defined as ‘formulations of food substances often modified by chemical processes and then assembled into ready-to-consume hyper-palatable food and drink products using flavours, colours, emulsifiers and ... other cosmetic additives’ (Monteiro, 2019). Such foods include soft drinks, savoury snacks, frozen dinners, and reconstituted meat products. Critics of the NOVA concept, a now widely used and validated method used to identify UPFs, argue the difficulties in avoiding UPF in today’s food environments and suggest reformulation as a more useful approach (Gibney, 2019), an approach in which is already favoured by the food industry and often used to introduce ‘healthier’ UPF products (Campbell et al., 2019). Lawrence and Baker (2019) highlight that Gibney’s (2019) criticisms ‘underplays the complexity of the potential harm’ (1). A substantial body evidence now points to a graded link between UPF and: obesity (Hall et al., 2020), metabolic syndrome in adolescents (Tavares et al., 2011), certain cancers (Fiolet et al., 2018), all-cause mortality (Rico-Campa et al., 2019) and reduced neurocognitive function (Stevenson et al., 2020). Negative environmental effects (Swinburn et al., 2019) have also been identified, in addition to UPFs contribution to the loss of eating traditions and culinary diversity (Sato et al., 2020). Thus, UPFs are a key consideration in any food system analysis and food security discussions.

The ongoing expansion of ‘Big Food’ is a factor in the increased consumption of these foods (Stuckler and Nestle, 2012: 2); unhealthy foods tend to be highly profitable with low production costs and a comparatively high retail cost incentivising production (Stuckler et al., 2012). For instance, an estimated 10 percent of the total budget for these foods is spent on ingredients, with the remaining budget allocated to marketing (50%) and packing (40%) (Stanton and Pollard, 2014). These foods now dominate the food systems of developed economies and increasingly in developing economies (Baker & Friel, 2016; Moodie et al., 2013; Monteiro et al., 2013), making the less healthful foods the easiest, most attractive, accessible, and cheapest option (Lang et al., 2009; Hawkes et al., 2013; Roberto et al., 2015). A recent study comparing the relative caloric prices for different food categories across 176 countries highlighted the association between prices and nutritional outcomes; sugary snacks are ‘cheap’ or ‘very cheap’ and vegetables and fruits rich in Vitamin A are ‘expensive’ or ‘very expensive’ in all countries (Headey and Alderman, 2019).

It is now widely recognised that the global processed food and beverage industry, through their supply, marketing, and efforts to shape national policies and public opinions in their favour, greatly contribute to the burden of NCDs (Moodie et al., 2013; Clapp and Scrinis, 2016) and policy inertia (Swinburn et al., 2019). Thus, represent a major challenge to preventing the growth of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) (Stuckler et al., 2011). As noted in Swinburn et al. (2019: 796) ‘...there is a right to wellbeing based on state obligations to ensure that all people, especially vulnerable populations, have access to healthy food and healthy environments’. While there are multiple opportunities within the food system to intervene at all levels from local to global, government action has been slow (Global Panel on Agriculture and Food Systems for Nutrition, 2016; 2018).

With one in three people across the globe suffering from some form of malnutrition, poor diets causing one in five deaths, and an immense environmental burden stemming from food production, (IFPRI, 2016) a ‘Great Food Transformation’ is required across multiple levels to improve both human and planetary health (Willett et al., 2019). The Eat-Lancet Commission have proposed three clear and necessary actions to achieve this: reducing the level of waste and food losses by 50 percent, a reduction in red meat, sugar and animal-based food production and consumption and an increase in the production and consumption of plant-based foods. Yet, in terms of ensuring food security – in which nutritional well-being is central – the focus is still business as usual.

1.1.2 Dominant discourse: More food > food safety > free choice

A healthy diet is said to contain an abundance of plant-based foods, limited or no ultra-processed foods, in conjunction with other nutritious foods aligned with the dietary needs of the particular life stage (WHO, 2015; FAO, 2016). Despite much evidence recommending dietary change (WHO, 2003; Westhoek et al., 2013; Mann et al., 2015; EAT-Lancet Commission, 2019), government population health focused intervention in the food system has been minimal and food security discourses are focused on increasing production to meet global future demands (Kneasfey et al., 2013; Mozaffarian et al., 2018). It has been well established that food insecurity is not a result of a shortage in global food production, yet this notion is still one of the most persistent misconceptions in Europe to date; a situation not helped by scientific research. Borch & Kjærnes’ (2016: 146) analysis of the academic discourse surrounding food insecurity in Europe from 1975 to 2013 identified three primary discourses: production, policy, and consumption. They note that, while the term food security is commonly used in academic papers, and populates the title of many papers, it is often neither defined nor the focus of the paper

and serves ‘more as a legitimising function for work being presented¹’. Their findings conclude that the discourse on production has remained dominant, is promoted by European policymakers who endorse more efficient agricultural technologies as the answer to food security issues and impedes political discourse highlighting access related consumer problems.

Beyond productivist food security framings, another central European food security concern is food safety centred ‘on the regulation and control of the supply of food, monitoring and controlling traceability, toxicity and food hygiene’ (Jones et al., 2013: 482). Lang and Heasman (2004) highlight that, when Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) caused the death of 129 people in the UK in the early 2000’s, the response was a complete restructuring of food control systems at the EU level and the establishment of numerous new food safety agencies. Whereas diet related ill-health, predominantly caused by poor quality diets, and responsible for a significant number of deaths is ‘somehow accepted as unavoidable’ (Lang and Heasman, 2004: 41). A key factor facilitating this acceptability was the ‘free choice’ rhetoric fuelled by the perception of ‘food as commodity’ a person chooses to buy.

Lang and Heasman (2004) use the analogy of war to depict the ongoing failures of the food system and the policies that govern food by highlighting the millions of lives that are lost due to the clandestine operations and propaganda associated with the current industrial food system. This system is maintained and protected by a food industry that invests billions every year cementing individualised public health messages. Such messages suggest that all food can be part of a healthy diet and there is no such thing as good food and bad food (Nestle, 2013: 91); being overweight is simply a result of

1 For example, Mamuti et al. (2009) paper entitled ‘controlling crop disease contributes to both food security and climate change mitigation’.

inactivity rather than overconsumption, thus governments should not be involved in food choices because such behaviour is undemocratic; diet is the responsibility of the consumer and that everyone should have freedom of choice (Smith, 2013). However, ‘choices require resources’ (Caraher and Coveney, 2016: 4) and, in the context of the numerous other factors outside the control of the individual (Sage, 2013; Nestle, 2014) influencing food choices, the notion of ‘free choice’ is a flawed concept. Yet, this narrative plays an important role in reinforcing the dominant individual focus in food policy, social policy and public health policy where food is not perceived as a citizen’s right, as a key component of public health (Dowler and Caraher, 2013) or as a public good (Caraher and Coveney, 2016).

Caraher and Coveney (2016) describe the loss of the public good element of food as a trajectory facilitated by ‘the new order’ in which nation states no longer have a commitment to its citizens, who are now perceived first and foremost as consumers, and where consumer choice takes precedence over citizens’ rights (Lang and Heasman, 2004: 101; De Schutter, 2011). This ‘rhetoric of consumerism’ (Caraher and Coveney, 2016: 5) complements the freedom of choice narrative that both facilitates and justifies placing the responsibility to improve poor diets on the ‘consumer’. Kneassey et al. (2013: 101) suggests this to be indicative of ‘neoliberal constructions of the consumers as a driving force in moves towards more secure food systems’. This ‘...neoliberal determination to transfer all responsibility for well-being back to the individual’ (Harvey, 2005:76) protects the current food environment and particularly ignores the circumstances of people living on low incomes who are locked into a well-documented cycle of malconsumption, malnutrition, and ill-health (Lang and Heasman, 2004). This is not to say that more well-off persons are not affected by diet related ill-health rather, it indicates that the situation will not correct itself in the absence of government intervention (Global Panel on Agriculture and Food Systems for Nutrition, 2016).

The food system is becoming increasingly filled with health demoting food items and consumers are increasingly held responsible for ensuring their own food security. The assumption being that this can be achieved by exercising their power to both choose and purchase healthier food. This is a difficult task even for those with purchasing power, offering little hope for those with limited purchasing power, and less hope again for those with no purchasing power and are thus, left reliant on charitable leftovers from the corporate food system (Riches, 2018).

1.2 Food justice and the Right to Food

In high income countries, food waste as a solution to food insecurity has attracted much attention in recent years given the increase in the number of people experiencing food insecurity in Europe post 2007, the increased awareness around the issue of food waste, and the drive toward a circular economy (Riches, 2018). Correspondingly, Europe has witnessed an accelerated growth in food charity as a ‘Band-Aid’ response to food insecurity and food waste (Caraher and Furey, 2017) both of which are two central food justice concerns (Herman et al., 2018).

Food justice is defined as ‘a social concern, an economic matter and a political problem’ (Hayes and Carbone, 2015: 2) and is described as both a movement and a lens that facilitates the exploration of exploitations and oppressions inherent within our food system (Alkon, 2009). As a concept, process, and practise, food justice encompasses the various elements of food from production to consumption and brings together various actors, activists, and advocates concerned with social, environmental, and economic justice (Cotlieb and Joshi, 2010). While approaches to these injustices vary (Hays and Carbone, 2015) the common thread ‘is the desire to create fundamental change as well as alternatives to the dominant food system’ (Cotlieb and Joshi, 2010: 8) and the focus is

usually based on the processes and outcomes within food systems that generate inequality (Agyeman & McEntee, 2014); such as charitable food system (Poppendieck, 1998). Numerous concerns have been raised regarding the approach of using surplus as food aid to feed those who are food insecure, or as Riches (2018: 2) suggests, ‘leftover food for left behind people’. This approach does little to acknowledge, protect, respect, or fulfil the human right to food because when people are left reliant on food aid, their right to food has already been undermined (O’ Brien, 2019). Food charity is ‘not an entitlement, it is a gift’ (Riches & Silvasti, 2014: 9).

The Right to Food (RTF) is a human right that protects all humans from hunger, malnutrition and food insecurity. Lindgren (2016: 52) describes the RTF as ‘theoretical framework with a moral imperative on dignity and social justice rather than merely on economic access or food availability....’ human rather than economic centred. The RTF is based on three key elements: (1) availability, (2) adequacy, and (3) accessibility. Availability refers to enough food production for the current generation and the future, thereby containing the concept of sustainability and environmental protection. Adequacy refers to both quantity and quality regarding nutritionally sound food that respects culture and ensures a diverse diet ‘covering all food groups in a balanced manner...not to expose the individual to diet-related non-communicable diseases’ (De Schutter, 2012: 5). Accessibility represents economic access – affordability – namely that the cost of food does not threaten the attainment of other basic needs such as health, housing, or education. It also entails ensuring physical access to adequate food for every human being (Zeigler, 2012). The RTF was first introduced in Article 25 of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights² (1948). Article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural

2 ‘Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control’ (Art 25. 1, Universal Declaration of Human Right, 1948)

Rights (ICESC) adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1966, also affirmed the ‘right of everyone to be free from hunger’ as a ‘fundamental right’. The right to food for all children is implied in Articles 24 and 27 of the Covenant on the Right of the Child (CRC) adopted in 1989 by the United Nations (FAO, 2009). Also in Article 12 and 14 in the Convention of Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) adopted in 1979, and in Article 28 of the 2006 Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disability (CRPD) (FAO, 2014).

Despite its long existence prior to the 1990’s, 1996 was the first time the RTF was evoked by the international community³ at the Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) World Food Summit in Rome. According to De Schutter (2014) the reinvigoration and revisitation can be attributed to factors. First, the increased awareness surround the fact that despite the many technological advancements and rising agricultural productivity associated with the green revolution, the number of people experiencing hunger and malnutrition had not decreased. Secondly, the body of works published by Amartya Sen highlighting hunger as a result of social injustice, unaccountable governments and failing institutions. This awareness evoked a sentiment that a new tool was needed to not only eradicate hunger and malnutrition but to also hold governments accountable and led to a call for the RTF to be strengthened and clarified (De Schutter, 2014). Consequently, in 1999 the ICESC defined the right to food in General Comment 12 as ‘the right to adequate food is realized when every man, woman

3 ‘All parties must therefore work together in a united effort to ease the anguish of the hunger and malnourished. That is why this summit also focuses on people, besides food, and on the ethical and moral dimension of hunger and malnutrition. It centres on life and on the right to food. The concern not just to produce and distribute more food, but to do so in a sustainable manner and to guarantee the access of present and future generations to a wholesome and nutritious diet’ – Jose Ramon Lopez Portillo, Independent Chairman of the FAO Council, 13TH November, World Food Summit, 1996.

and child, alone and in the community with others, has physical and economic access at all time to adequate food or means for procurement’ (para. 6).

The right to adequate food was reaffirmed in the 2002 World Food Summit (FAO, 2002), representing a significant shift from the anti-hunger approach of the previous decades. As per objective 7.4 of the World Food Summit Plan of Action, an intergovernmental working group was tasked with developing practical guidelines for governments to meet their RTF obligations (FAO, 2004). In November 2004, the Right to Food Guidelines were unanimously adopted by the FAO council. These voluntary guidelines outlined what governments can do to meet their obligations and are based on three key human rights principles; the obligation to respect, protect, and fulfil.

The obligation to respect the RTF requires governments to abstain from any activities, policies, laws, and actions that would deprive or inhibit people from having access to food. The obligation to protect calls for governments to actively pursue and enforce laws and measures to prohibit corporations and individuals from violating the RTF for others. The obligation to fulfil, facilitate, and provide warrants governments to actively engage in activities that enable people to feed themselves. When this is not possible, governments are responsible for fulfilling this obligation directly (Zeigler, 2012). As stated in paragraph 14.2:

States should consider building on existing capacities within communities at risk to provide the necessary resources for social safety and food safety nets to fulfil the progressive realization of the right to adequate food. States may wish to consider the benefits of procuring locally (FAO, 2004: 26).

1.2.1 Food waste, food surplus and food aid

In high income countries, using surplus food as a response to overproduction and poverty is by no means a new phenomenon and has been done at the European level, under the

auspices of the Common Agricultural Policy's (CAP) Food Aid Programme to the Most Deprived Persons in the Community (MDP). The MDP was established in 1987 and by 2010 it had distributed surplus stocks through aid agencies to some 18 million of Europe's 'most deprived' persons (De Piere et al., 2017:30). As noted by Caraher (2015:5), 'the scheme was mainly a way of reducing intervention stocks through redistribution to the poor and the needy'. Similarly, the origin of international food aid had comparable beginnings.

The introduction of the Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act of 1954 into US Public Law 480 (PL480) marked the beginning of food surplus as a replacement for financial aid to less developed countries (Ezekiel, 1960), with Europe joining in the late 1960s (Clapp, 2005). While Europe was less explicitly economic in their rationale, in comparison to the US, food aid has been used to dispose of surplus. In 1996, the European Food Aid Policy was changed in favour of cash transfers for locally obtained foods given that this supports both the local economy and allows for culturally appropriate foods. Food aid or 'corporate welfare' (Provost and Lawrence, 2012) is still highly contested considering the devastating impacts such practices had in Haiti and other poor countries (Oxfam, 2005). While food aid has mostly moved away from being a mechanism for surplus disposal (FAO, 2009), surplus is still used as food aid in the US, though to a much lesser extent (Clapp, 2005). The problems stemming from 'dumping' surplus tended to be reasoned away with claims that the money saved enabled the surplus recipient country to invest their limited resources in other sectors (Murphy and Hasan-Kuhn, 2017).

While direct food aid plays a critical role in crisis situations, outside of these circumstances it is now widely accepted that first, direct food aid is not an answer to long term food insecurity and secondly, when food aid was based on surplus alone, it had

devastating impacts. Cash transfers and vouchers are the favoured approach given that they contribute to the local economy and account for cultural difference (European Commission, 2013a). Conversely, these learnings have not transcended to the European context, where surplus, although this time in a slightly different form, is again taking centre stage as a response to both food insecurity and food waste. And as will be discussed further on is couched in similar narrow, and mostly economic reasoning. Despite a decoupling of food insecurity from food surplus at the European level in terms of the successor programme of the MDP, the Fund for Europe's Most Deprived Persons (FEAD) not being based on surplus⁴, a connection between these two issues has re-emerged in recent years, with government programmes now supporting corporate driven surplus food redistribution.

In 2018, almost 90 percent of the food distributed through the European Federation of Food Banks (FEBA) was either surplus (66%) or food purchased via FEAD (21%) (FEBA, 2019). According to FEBA (2019a), it was estimated that in the absence of FEAD, the activities of some food banks would be reduced by up to 50 percent. The expansion of large-scale food surplus redistribution as a response to poverty, and supported by EU programmes such as FEAD, has also been strengthened by the European Commissions identification of food donation as 'a key deliverable of a circular economy' and the adoption of measures to facilitate further food redistribution on World Food Day, October 16th, 2017 (European Commission, 2017). Nonetheless, surplus food redistribution solves neither the issue of food waste nor long-term food insecurity (Caraher and Furey, 2017).

⁴ However, this is not to say that this programme has improved in terms of its contribution to furthering food security concerns, notably that of health, considering the lack of reference to the nutritional quality of the food being provided (Caraher, 2015).

Today, surplus food redistribution encompasses a multitude of organisations with various motivations, intentions, aims, and political dispositions. In this regard, Midgely (2020) proposes a twofold typology which helps organise surplus food redistribution into two contrasting models. Type one is the ‘brokerage’ model of surplus redistribution, best illustrated by a food bank where surplus food redistribution is attained ‘through brokerage activities between food industry and the charitable and voluntary sector’ (Midgely, 2020:350). This model is most often associated with the use of surplus food to address food waste and food insecurity and typified by food banks aimed at the poor. Type two is that of the ‘challenger’ model ‘where more radical politics, accompanied by less conditional and more plural and collective means of accessing and sharing food are practised... [and] whose activities directly question and rework the industry donation–charitable consumption nexus...’ (Midgely, 2020: 354). An example of this model would be Food not Bombs, founded in the 1980s by anti-nuclear activists (see <https://www.foodnotbombs.net/story.html>). Unlike the brokerage model, the challenger model makes surplus available to everyone – not just the poor – and in this context redistribution becomes an act of exchange and a political and social encounter (Midgely, 2020:360). At this point it is important to note that this thesis is only concerned with the brokerage model of surplus food redistribution that best characterises the dominant model in Ireland responding to food poverty.

Before moving on to food poverty and food charity in Ireland, the next section provides an overview of some of key moments in the development of the Ireland’s health and welfare policies which in part explain why charity, based on the principals of subsidiarity and voluntarism, is still the governing ideology of the Irish state today.

1.3 Ireland: key moments in the development of health and welfare policies.

Catherine Cox observes that Ireland's 'history of health and welfare is intimately linked to its history of poverty and charity and to conflicting intellectual and philosophical outlooks' (Cox, 2017: 261). While this observation also reflects the period prior to Ireland's independence (Miller, 2014) the focus of this section is on the period post Ireland's independence in 1922, where Ireland pursued a Catholic Corporatist approach to issues of welfare (Neville, 2015), up until the economic crisis of 2008 which saw the closure of the Combat Poverty Agency.

Throughout the late 20s and early 30s the underlying philosophy concerning the entitlement to welfare provision 'continued to be divided between the 'deserving' and 'undeserving' (Cox, 2017: 272). Fianna Fáil's entry into government in 1932, under the promise of 'economic radicalism' in welfare reform (Miller, 2014:203), marked the beginning of some change in Cumann na nGheadheal decade long policy of 'national retrenchment' (Cousins, 2009 cited in Cox, 2017). Under the new government, a Housing Act was introduced in 1932, unemployment assistance to uninsured workers in 1933, the widows' and orphans' pension in 1935, and the children's allowance in 1944. Despite the children's allowance being paid to fathers rather than mothers, it is still considered to be most radical social policy introduced since the old age pension in 1908 given its universal approach (Dukelow and Considine, 2009). However, reforming Ireland's health services and progressing the issue of universal healthcare, and with it social protection, provision proved highly controversial.

A number of factors contributed to the decision in the early 1940s, and led by the Minister for Local Government and Public Health, to set about reforming Ireland's health and welfare policies. These included the publication of the 1942 Beveridge report in Britain (Cox, 2017), recognition of Ireland's highly 'disparate structure' of health services, and

the problem of excessively poor health outcomes threatening economic progression (McKee, 1986:165). In 1944, a Public Health Bill proposing the extension of state powers and responsibilities in the areas of infectious disease control, medical inspections of school children, and maternity and child welfare provisions was tabled unsuccessfully. At the time, intervention from the state in issues of welfare and health were perceived as totalitarian (McKee, 1986) and in direct opposition from Catholic teachings supporting ‘subsidiary and voluntarism’ (Cox, 201:274). And while the subsequent 1947 Public Health Bill was passed with amendments, the controversy revealed powerful alliances between the state, the church, and the medical profession (Dukelow and Considine, 2009) and laid the foundations for a two tiered healthcare system that still remains in place today.

In 1948, the first inter-party government was elected with socialist Dr Noel Browne, as Minister for Health, tasked with establishing the Mother and Child Scheme under the 1947 Health Act. Dr Browne’s proposal for a universal scheme that would provide free healthcare to all women and children under the age of 16 received staunch opposition from civil servants, the Church and medical professional concerning issues of power, responsibility, and vested economic interests and ideologies (McKee, 1986). Much of the opposition was centred on the Catholic principle of subsidiarity whereby the role of the state was ‘to support the work of vocational groups and corporations to further common interests’ (Cox, 2017:247). The Catholic hierarchy feared the erosion of Catholic principals concerning family planning and argued that it is the right of a parent to provide healthcare for their child, and that this right should not be encroached upon to cater to the ‘indigent or neglectful parents’. For medical professions the central concern was the loss of autonomy and income (McKee, 1986: 171). The controversy eventually led to the demise of the first inter-party government and the resignation of Dr Browne in 1951.

A significantly weakened Mother and Child Scheme was introduced in 1953 which provided free health care for six weeks rather than 16 years. However, the opportunity to progress towards a universal health and social protection system was lost due to vested economic and ideological interests, and the perception of the poor, ‘indigent’ and ‘neglectful’ as undeserving (McKee, 1986).

1.3.1 Reconceptualising poverty, and its responses

By the 1950s Ireland had a highly developed voluntary sector delivering a multitude of social services shaped by Catholic teachings (Holohan, 2016). The 1960s and 70s brought immense social and economic change with Ireland transitioning from a largely agricultural society to an industrial one. Despite significant economic gains during this period, poverty remained persistent and social security expenditure remained exceptionally low (Powell, 2017). However, a series of factors during this period did lead to a refocussing of efforts to combat poverty. This included the ‘rediscovery’ of poverty in the 1960s, the Kilkenny conference on Poverty in 1971, strong community activism (that continued throughout the 70s – see Chapter 3 in Dukelow and Considine, 2009), Ireland’s accession into what was then the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1973, and importantly, the political will to address the issue of poverty.

In 1973, the newly elected coalition government of Labour and Fine Gale pledged itself to ‘the elimination of poverty and the ending of social injustice’ which led to the establishment of the ‘National Pilot Scheme to Combat Poverty’ in May of 1974 (Powell, 2017: 179). Funding from the EEC was granted in 1975 and in its brief from the European Commission, the committee was tasked with developing new strategies to respond to poverty and its causes in conjunction with those affected by poverty and at risk from poverty (National Committee on Pilot Schemes to Combat Poverty, 1981: 36).

A key task of this committee was to raise awareness within Irish society concerning the meaning of poverty within contemporary Ireland, thus shifting the conceptualisation of poverty from an absolute to a relative concept. In light of findings from a 1977 EEC study on the perception of poverty in Europe, progressing this idea would be an arduous task. This report highlighted that unlike its counterparts, 25 percent of people in Ireland attributed poverty to personal misfortune and 30 percent to laziness. A further 56 percent did not believe there was any poverty in Ireland. The committee established pilot schemes across Ireland and ‘emphasized the empowering of deprived individuals and groups at a local level...far removed from traditional methods that emphasised charity and handouts...’ (Sammon, 1982:6). In Sammon’s (1982) analysis of the Committees final recommendations in 1980, he notes the centrality of moving beyond the handout approach to poverty and that of [human] rights based approach; ‘the right of everyone to participate equally in society’ (Sammon, 1982:10). The programme ended in 1980 at a time when the number of poor people was estimated to comprise 20 – 30 percent of the population. This was a fate sealed in part by a Fianna Fáil government led by an Taoiseach Charles Haughey who perceived the committees conceptualisation of poverty as a structural issue, to be problematic (Powell, 2017: 185).

Six years later, in the midst of an unrelenting economic crisis and under a coalition government of Fine Gael and the Labour party, the Combat Poverty Agency Act (1986) was introduced and the Combat Poverty Agency (CPA) established. The CPA was an independent state advisory agency with four broad functions: ‘Policy advice, project support and innovation, research and public education’ (Cousins, 2007: vii). Over the next two decades the work of the CPA contributed to ‘a sea change in the institutional approach to poverty’ until their absorption into the Department of Social and Family Affairs in 2009. As David Begg, the General Secretary for the Irish Congress of Trade Unions noted in a special issue documenting the pioneering work of the CPA over their 23 years of

existence ‘Combat Poverty held a mirror to Irish society and provided a far truer reflection of what we were than many in the official circles would have preferred. Their work discomfited and discommoded many...’ (Combat Poverty Agency, 2009:6). Indeed Begg’s observation captures the essence of what led to the CPAs demise. Prior to their closure, many civil servants opposed the agencies advocacy role embodied in the work of the CPA which was perceived by some to be overstepping their advisory role (Kelleher and O’Neill, 2018).

1.3.2 Depoliticising poverty and inequality

The recommendation to close the CPA, in favour of a centralised model of policy development, rather than a standalone independent agency, came from an internal review by the Office of Social Inclusion within the Department of Social and Family Affairs in 2008. On December 8th 2008, the motion to dissolve the agency was passed in Dáil Éireann by 72 to 60 votes (Kelleher and O’Neill, 2018: 32-33). The demise of this agency represented a significant loss of an independent voice on poverty and social exclusion that has yet to be replaced.

Indeed since the early 2000s, and aligned with neoliberal ideology, a number of government decisions have led to what Kelleher and O’Neill (2018:38) ‘a systematic process of dismantling’ ‘...of the Community Development, Anti-Poverty and Equality Sector’. This is represented in the closure of the CPA in July 2009, a 43 percent reduction in the budget of the Equality Authority⁵, a 24 percent cut in the budget of the Irish Human Rights Commission, the complete removal of the National Consultative Committee on

⁵ The Equality Authority was established in 1999, under equality legislation, to provide legal advice and representation to individuals bring cases before the Equality tribunal, many of which were against state agencies (Kelleher and O’Neill, 2018). In 2014, the Equality Authority was amalgamated into the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission.

Racism and Interculturalism⁶ budget (Kelleher and O'Neill, 2018: 31; Dukelow and Considine, 2009). This all occurred at the time of the economic crash 07/08, a point in which is returned to the proceeding section to, in part, explain the rise in charitable food redistribution. These depoliticising actions were justified as warranted under the economic climate of this time. However, even prior to this period, and stemming from early days of the Celtic Tiger, the rise in neoliberal thinking is evident in the reconceptualization of voluntary efforts from an independent political activity - rooted in a social justice framework - to a depoliticised activity intrinsically connected to the state (Neville, 2015). This is problematic in terms of function and advocacy within the community and voluntary sector but also in terms of state responsibility. As Lewis, (1999:17) explains in the context of UK:

Voluntary organisations may be in the process of becoming alternative, rather than supplementary or complementary providers of welfare, but in a situation in which the state determines the conditions of provision without taking responsibility. This form of welfare pluralism does not position voluntary agencies as mediating institutions, but tends to see them as instruments of the state, which raises difficult questions for agencies about both identity and function.

Nonetheless, throughout the 20th and 21st Century, the voluntary and community sector in Ireland have responded to social problems on the ground while the state operated a “hands-off” approach (Donnelly-Cox et al., 2001: 198). Little has changed in this regard leading some academics to argue that the community and voluntary sectors historical dominance, a predisposition for voluntary rather than statutory services, and the lack of clarity between the two sectors, has limited the potential for more progressive change in Ireland (Holohon, 2016). As noted in an Irish Times article questioning why so many of Ireland’s basic health services are provided by charities and not the state (to the tune of

⁶ An independent body established in 1998 to develop an inclusive approach to tackling racism, and to promote an intercultural society through monitoring and training (Dukelow and Considine, 2009)

3.7bn in 2016) that in spite of ‘all the charitable work, life is not getting better for the most disadvantaged and vulnerable people’ (Jones, 2017). In more recent years, and similar to other European countries ((Wainwright et al, 2018), the distinction between the roles and responsibilities of the state, and that of the community and voluntary sector have become even more opaque. This, in part, can be attributed to the drive to encourage further charitable, corporate and philanthropic activity as advocated for in a series of policy documents and government campaigns which will be presented in the following section concerning food poverty and food charity in Ireland.

1.4 Food poverty and food charity in neoliberal Ireland

In Ireland, household food insecurity is termed food poverty defined as ‘the inability to access a nutritionally adequate diet and the related impacts on health, culture and social participation’ (Friel and Conlon, 2004:119). The Irish Institute of Public Health (IPH) use a similar definition ‘the inability to afford or have reasonable access to food which provides a healthy diet’ (IPH, 2015) and people are said to be experiencing food poverty ‘... if they are unable to consume adequate safe healthy food in ways that align with their cultural and social norms...’ (Balanda et al., 2008). Ireland’s Social Inclusion Monitor Report (DSP⁷, 2017:48) define food poverty as the ‘inability to have an adequate or nutritious diet due to issues of affordability or accessibility’. Evidently, all working definitions of food poverty include references to quality and/or nutritious food and would imply that if a person is unable to access, for any reason, nutritious and good quality food, a person is experiencing food poverty. However, these elements are often overlooked in the responses to food poverty (Kenny and Sage, 2019) which are mostly charitable and voluntary in nature. And, as discussed in the previous section, are deeply entrenched in

⁷ In September 2017, the Department of Social Protection (DSP) became the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection.

Irish culture and social norms which contributes a situation where the role of charity remains outside the scope of critical reflection.

Some of the community and voluntary initiatives responding to food poverty, and poverty more broadly, in current day Ireland were founded in response to the Great Irish Famine and the abject poverty of the 19th and 20th Century. Traditionally, community and voluntary organisations providing food charity, henceforth referred to as charitable food services (CFS) have relied on material and financial donations from individuals and businesses alike in addition to core government funding. Up until relatively recently the relationship between the corporate and voluntary sector were underdeveloped in comparison to that of the UK and USA (Donnelly-Cox et al., 2001). This has changed in recent years with the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) movement gathering pace (Sweeney, 2007) and government campaigns such as the ‘The One Percent Difference’. This campaign was launched in 2012 to ‘increase awareness and understanding of the value of Philanthropy and Planned Giving amongst all section of Irish Society⁸ (Forum on Philanthropy and fundraising 2012:12) and, as Neville (2014:400) noted, is indicative of an ‘accumulation of the neo-liberal agenda’ that has influenced the shape and development of the community and voluntary sector in Ireland since the 2000’s. Other academics suggest an overall deepening of ‘Ireland Inc’ and neoliberal rhetoric across every aspect of Irish society and the rise of corporate citizenship post economic crisis (Negra and McIntyre, 2019).

This shift can be mapped in everything from a cluster of reality television series that glorify emigration as a permanent feature of Irish global citizenship, to bank ads that tout the good fortune of a small minority of older citizens in a position to have paid off mortgages, and in the political persona of a young, dynamic Taoiseach who cultivates good relations with corporate interests while largely ignoring the social problems associated with austerity (Negra and McIntyre, 2019:75)

⁸ high net worth, business, and the general public

Today Ireland has 10,000 registered charities, an additional 20,000 in the wider non-profit sector, 50,000 volunteer board members and over half a million volunteers (The Wheel, 2020) and as such is considered the backbone of Irish society (O'Connor, 2016) . In the case of food poverty, outside of school meals (which also relies on volunteer labour to varying extents), they are the primary front-line response. However, Ireland also has a dedicated All Island Food Poverty Network (FPN) in which the CPA was involved in establishing. This network of government agencies, NGO's, and to a lesser extent, academic, and community and voluntary organisations was formed in 2009 to support 'a co-ordinated and strategic approach to tackling food poverty on the island of Ireland through the development of consensus on related issues, collaboration and shared learning' (SafeFood, 2010).

The charitable food system in Ireland has also undergone significant growth post economic crisis, most notably in the increasing availability of food surplus brokered by social enterprises. This marks the beginning of a corporate led response to food poverty, and poverty more generally and again is not unique to Ireland (Riches, 2018). A crucial factor that facilitated the growth of surplus redistribution can be explained in the context of recessionary Ireland where, as discussed in the previous section, government funding to the community and voluntary sector during the period of 2008 and 2012 was cut by roughly 35 percent. This occurred in conjunction with reduced public donations and the closure of key front-line services (Harvey, 2012: 25) and came at a time when the need for these services, such as the provision of food parcels and hot meals, increased dramatically (Harvey, 2012:44). It was during the end of this period, 2012 and 2013, that Ireland's successful food redistribution social enterprises, FoodCloud and FoodCloud Hubs, were officially established offering a lifeline for cash strapped charities and have since become a welcomed staple of the charitable food system. The specific workings of these social enterprises, which are now simply called FoodCloud, will be discussed in

Chapter Two. However at this point it is worth highlighting that in other countries FoodCloud would be considered a food bank given that they carry out food bank activities of organising, collecting, storing and redistributing food surplus from food industry partners. Yet, in Ireland they are not referred to as a food bank, at least not since 2013. Nonetheless, regardless of the term used to describe their work, they fall within the brokerage model of surplus food redistribution: ‘corporate donations for redistribution’ (Midgely, 2020: 354).

During the period post 2013, what the Department of Employment and Social Protection (DESP) refer to as the early economic recovery (2014 – 2016), Ireland witnessed a significant growth in charitable food services (CFS) (Hebinck et al., 2018). Mirroring trends in other high-income countries, where distributing food waste is now ‘standard practice to meet many citizens needs’ (Dowler, 2018: xx), the distribution of unsold food items from various food industry actors via CFS is now the dominant response to the problem of both food poverty and food waste. These services are now a key part of Ireland’s charitable food system and as this thesis argues, are a critical element within the wider food environment and should be conceptualised as such.

1.4.1 Food environments: food governance and food democracy

Food environments comprise the physical, economic, political, social, and cultural circumstances that influence health outcomes (Swinburn et al., 2014). Ireland’s food environment has changed dramatically since the turn of the 21st Century and arguable not in favour of health, most especially for those with limited budgets. Despite state transfers protecting people from poverty, 24 percent of the population are at risk of poverty (Sweeney, 2019), meaning almost one quarter of the population have limited food budgets. Ireland has significant diet related health problems with 60 percent of adults and almost one third of children classified as obese or overweight with lower income families

especially burdened (Irish Heart Foundation, 2018). This is also the group more likely to be using CFS. Research elsewhere suggests that the proliferation of charitable food services, in this particular case, food banks, ‘warns of an unfolding public health crisis’ due to poor nutrition (Garratt, 2017). Accounting for the increasing role of CFS in determining the diets of many, academics are now calling for these services to be included in the definition of the local food environment (Thomson et al., 2019). A call in which this thesis supports.

Accepting food surplus, and more generally CFS, as a solution to food insecurity and food waste throws up profound ethical questions and concerns (Berry, 1984; Riches, 1996, Poppendieck 1998; Dowler, 2007, Caraher and Furey, 2017). While CFS have operated in Ireland for centuries, its scale (national food banks) and base (corporate surplus), is a relatively new phenomenon. Importantly, it is at this point – while their development is in its infancy – that Riches (2002: 648) urges countries to consider the implications of such arguing that ‘...the question of whether to support their development should be a matter of urgent public debate’. This debate has not yet occurred in Ireland to date where it appears that CFS will continue to grow and play a key role in shaping the food environment of a significant number of people on a regular basis. While the lived experience of food poverty has been documented in Ireland (Coakley, 2001; Daly & Lenord, 2002; Hickey and Downey, 2004; Manandhar et al., 2006; Safefood, 2011; Share & Hennessy, 2017), less is known about the governance of food within the charitable sector, particularly in light of the increasing availability of surplus foods.

Mason and Lang (2017:261) define food governance as ‘the entire process of decision making how decisions are made, by whom and with what effect...includes the style and mode of decisions...and draws attention to the role of values not just facts’. And increasingly, food scholars urge a focus on the governance of food (Bene et al., 2019;

Moragues-Faus, 2018). Key questions when exploring issues of food governance is who are the actors (Moragues-Faus, 2018), and what interests are informing the process (Mason and Lang, 2017) and these are two questions that this thesis attempts to address without the boundaries of this research. While usually the term governance is associated with government, its application in this thesis refers to the decision-making processes of those engaged with charitable food provisioning.

Connected with issues of food governance and indeed food justice is the concept of food democracy (Lang, 1999). This idea of a democratic food system at various level – including the local – provides a counter-concept to food control, where power is concentrated to a small number of transnational companies controlling what, when, where and how we eat (Lang and Heasman, 2004). Food Democracy is a grass roots movement, based on ‘active participation’ and the principal belief that people can shape the current food system into one aligned with human and planetary health (Booth and Coveney, 2015:9). Importantly, in the context of this thesis, one of Ireland’s surplus redistribution organisations has been identified as ‘agents of food democracy’ (Davies et al., 2019) which denotes that both the health of the environment as well as the health of its food surplus recipients are considered in their operations.

1.4.2 Ultra-processed food and class based stereotypes

In the context of surplus food redistribution, food environments are, of course, influenced by food industry surplus. As mentioned earlier, the negative health, environmental and cultural impacts of ultra-processed food (UPF) (Swinburn et al., 2019; Sato et al., 2020) places UPF as a central consideration in the transition towards a healthier and more socially just food system. In a brokerage model of surplus redistribution, these foods are an especially critical consideration given that multiple health burdens are already likely to be experienced by those experiencing food insecurity (Vozoris and Tarasuk, 2003;

Loopstra and Laylor, 2017). A further consideration in this regard is the public discourse surrounding food and low-income consumers. In other high-income countries, research has noted class stereotypes regarding food choices, tastes and practices; the assumption being that low-income groups have poor or less healthy food tastes (Maguire, 2016). On the contrary, UK based research examining food choice and nutrient intake amongst homeless people using charitable food services highlight that this is not the case. People did aspire to eat healthily ‘and disparaged the consumption of the repetitive, take-away and fatty food they had to consume...out of necessity rather than choice (Sparke et al., 2014:245). In the case of the US, Redman (2019) notes that the ‘poor food for poor people’ (Maguire, 2016) narrative that does not reflect the diversity of food practices within low income groups (Redman, 2019). While poorer households are just as likely as high income households to want to eat ‘healthier’ foods, the experience of poverty, in conjunction with additional factors, such as their food environments, inhibit their ability to do so (Nevarez et al., 2016). The evidence is clear that across food systems and within food environments, there is an imperative to move from ‘feeding people to nourishing people’ (Haddad and Hawkes et al., 2016:30) and from a social justice perspective, this is especially vital in the context of the charitable food system.

1.5 Theoretical framework

This thesis is underpinned by critical realism (CR) for two reasons. First, it provides a metatheory that places emphasis on the interplay between structure and agency, both explaining and understanding the phenomena under study, and on the analyses and critique of structures and their effects; making it particularly useful for exploring the governance of food aid. Secondly, it aligns with goals of food justice research, in order to change dominant narratives and practices. As Connelly (2016:116) notes, it is an approach focused on explaining and understanding the social world and on examining the

‘truth, justice, and worth of facts and values which have acted as motivational forces in the founding of social institutions and roles we encounter as a pre-given’.

CR is centred on the belief of a multi-depth/stratified ontology containing the real (mechanisms, customs, norms, obligations, values), the actual (events and actions) and the empirical (experiences and perceptions); maintaining that reality is constructed from generative mechanisms, that produce events at the empirical level (Danermark et al., 1997). These generative mechanisms are described ‘as nothing other than the ways of acting of things’ (Bhaskar, 1978:14) and some do so independently of events, experiences and discourses. For example, the exploitation of labour in the domain of the real generates low paid employment at the empirical level. Notably, critical realists maintain that, without exploring the processes and structures – the generative mechanisms – that have enabled the phenomena (Surplus food redistribution as an accepted response to food poverty) to occur, a researcher will not be able to understand, in this case, the responses to food poverty exhibited at the empirical level. The CR assumption is that our knowledge of reality ‘is a result of social conditioning and cannot be understood independently of the social actors involved in the knowledge derivation process’ (Sauder et al., 2009:7), meaning that the views and experiences of those working in CFS are central to understanding how the system operates. This also allows the researcher to differentiate the social phenomena, from the structure(s) which cause it (Danermark et al., 1997). The goal therefore is, not solely to identify generalisable laws (positivism) or the lived experience or beliefs (interpretivism), but to develop a deeper understanding of the factors influencing the responses to food poverty by asking what needs to be present for surplus to be perceived as a legitimate response. This thesis suggests that the conceptual separation of food poverty from health is one such factor that legitimises surplus as a response to food poverty.

The purpose of this next section is to briefly introduce the philosophy of CR, to outline the practises and concepts used in this thesis and Archer's (1995) Morphogenetic Cycle. As explained earlier, food poverty, charitable food provisioning, and surplus as a response to food poverty are not a new phenomenon. However, the scale at which it is currently being administered in Ireland is. This is leading to a social change in how poverty more widely is responded to and, as is argued in this thesis, is constructing surplus food as a dignified and legitimate approach to poverty. To explain this, 'the ingredients' of Archer's Morphogenetic Cycle – the particular structures, cultures and agency (Porpora, 2013: 29) – within the charitable food system will be the focus points when exploring the views, experiences, and observations of those working within the charitable food system. For the purpose of this thesis, social structures refer to entities involved in and influencing the charitable food system (CFS, material food flows, food poverty representations) and the relationship between them (Elder-Vass, 2010: 81). Culture refers to ideas, knowledge, norms and practises within CFS influencing the governance of food, and agency refers to power (Elder-Vass, 2010: 81) and choice (Lambi-Mumford, 2014), as represented within CFS.

1.5.1 Key concepts: stratified ontology, imminent critique, and entities.

Critical realism (CR) emerged in the 1970s through the work of the British philosopher Roy Bhaskar. It was further elaborated throughout the 1990s by Sayer (1992), Archer (1995), and Collier (1994) and has since been associated with various disciplines ranging from linguistics to criminology (Easton, 2010). It is a philosophical approach focused on ontology (what is real) whereby anything that produces a causal effect is perceived as real. Critical realists acknowledge four modes of reality: (1) material (i.e. oceans, planets), (2) ideational (discourse, ideas), (3) social (class structures, organisations), and (4) artefactual (buildings) (Fleetwood, 2013). And while the primary objective of social

scientific research is explanation rather than interpretation or prediction (Elder-Vass, 2010), CR framings enables the ‘conceptualisation of what could happen, should happen and what isn’t happening’ (Vincent and O’Mahoney, 2018:204).

As a metatheory, CR bridges the gap between positivism and interpretivism, maintaining that reality exists independently of our knowledge of it and that human knowledge is socially produced and fallible ‘...all knowledge is partial, incomplete and fallible’ (Maxwell, 2012:5). Unlike traditional knowledge paradigms, such as positivism and interpretivism, which reduce reality to human knowledge, critical realists maintain that there are transitive (epistemological dimension) and intransitive dimensions (ontological) to knowledge and perceive reality as an open system (Edgley et al., 2016). The transitive knowledge refers to the ‘the raw materials of science...facts, theories, models, techniques’, and intransitive knowledge to ‘real things and structures, mechanisms and processes, events’ that exist independently from human discourse and action (Bhaskar, 1997: 16-17). It is within this intransitive dimension of knowledge that a central tenet of CR – the concept of ‘a stratified reality’ – originates from (Elder-Vass, 2005). Stratified reality is comprised of three overlapping domains, (i) the empirical, (ii) the actual, and (iii) the real, with each stratum co-including the other and constituting ‘part of the same entity’ (Fletcher, 2016: 3) which simply means reality is structured, differentiated and changing. This concept originates from a key CR principal which is the distinction between ontology and epistemology (Fletcher, 2016) and ignoring this distinction is what is commonly referred to the epistemic fallacy ‘the view that statements about being can be reduced to, or analysed in, terms of statements about knowledge’ (Bhaskar, 1997:36).

A key characteristic of CR based research is the practice of immanent critique which Lawson (1997: 155) describes as ‘exposing internal inconsistencies in beliefs implicit in practices or demonstrating how beliefs held cannot accommodate practices actually

achieved’. The practice can be used as a method to provide a ground for knowledge and values, an epistemic claim that rejects foundationalism, that ‘in principle questions the premises that support our conclusions in an infinite regress and/or when we accept that we do not view reality from some neutral standpoint’ (Isaken, 2018:99). Importantly, this means that conclusions are confined to the principles discussed and are non-transferable from one context to the next (Bhaskar, 2016:6).

1.5.2 Entities

Fleetwood (2005) and Vincent and O’Mahoney (2018: 204) suggest that entities can be material (individuals), immaterial (social class) or both (i.e. an agreement) and are simply ‘things that “make a difference” in their own right, rather than as mere sums of their parts’. They further distinguish that these entities operate at different levels and in various ways, using the example of a fictional children’s cartoon character, stating that, while this character is not materially real, it is ideationally real, thus creating real discourses affecting social and material events. In the case of this thesis, the entities explored are food poverty representations (ideationally real), the food (materially real), and the organisations responding to food poverty (socially real). Elder-Vass (2010) argues that some entities (such as a group of people), have properties that depend on its parts (such as individuals). In this context, properties are defined as ‘some intrinsic aspect of an entity that can have a causal impact...’ (Elder-Vass, 2005:317).

1.5.3 Structure and agency and the morphogenetic cycle

For critical realists, the question of structure and agency is unavoidable and necessary because it cannot be assumed that what happens in the social world is a straightforward matter (Archer, 1995). The CR view of structure and agency begins with ‘the ontological claim that structure and agency contain distinct powers and properties within their own

right' (Carter and New, 2004:5), maintaining that human agency is shaped but not determined by structures (Fletcher, 2016); 'Agents are always acting in a world of structural constraints and possibilities that they did not produce....social structure, then, is both an ever present condition and is a continually reproduced outcome of intentional human activity' (Archer et al., 1998: xvi).

To this end, Archer (1995) theorized a three part 'morphogenetic cycle' composed of (i) structural conditioning, (ii) social interaction, and (iii) structural elaboration (or reproduction) to show how structure and agency relate over time. Structural conditioning refers to the context in which action taken place, as a result of past actions (i.e economic crisis) and the interests' people have ('solving' the problem of food waste). This occurs in the context of pre-existing and structural conditions (food poverty and food waste). Social interactions occur in and are greatly influenced by structured conditions, but with agency to affect events. At this point, social interaction occurs where agents (corporate actors, social enterprises, charities and communities groups, government) attempt to further their own interests and affect outcomes through negotiation/conflict. The final part of the cycle, before moving back to the first stage, is elaboration or reproduction, which occurs as a result of the previous stage, is structural change. Often this change is not what either group/individual wanted and is a result of the previous negotiations/conflicts/compromises. The central point here is that structures are not new, only modified/reproduced/transformed and this is what Archer refers to as change morphogenesis. This stage marks the beginning of another cycle for more elaborations or reproduction, the latter of which Archer calls morphostasis because frequently actions results in little or no structural change, which can be the desired outcome for some agents. Archer's model emphasizes that 'social structure can be highly durable in nature and, thus, difficult to transform' (McAnnula, 2010:287). This thesis argues that surplus as a legitimate response to poverty represents this latter stage and results in little or no

structural change in terms of addressing food poverty or food waste prevention. However, it also argues that it is possible to alter the current system, to make it more compatible with protecting the health of its recipients. This is because the current responses to food poverty in Ireland, and Cork city in particular, depend on the ‘intentional’ activity of people. Consequently, the focus of this thesis is predominantly based on the people working within the charitable food system.

People do not create society. For it always pre-exists them. Rather, society must be regarded as an ensemble of structures, practices and conventions that individuals reproduce and transform but which would not exist unless they did so. Society does not exist independently of conscious human activity (the error of reification). But it is not the product of the latter (the error of voluntarism) (Bhaskar, 1979: 45).

In summary, a critical realist framework perceives the world as complex and temporal and knowledge as fallible and partial and while causal mechanisms are not always visible, their effects are experienced (Erwin and Stephenson, 2019). The practical application of a critical realist framework to this thesis is the conceptualisation of the contemporary charitable food system as an entity in its own right composed of other entities operating at various levels (organisations responding to food poverty, surplus food, ideas within the responding organisations). These entities can be organised hierarchically and produce impacts at various level.

1.6 Rationale and Aims

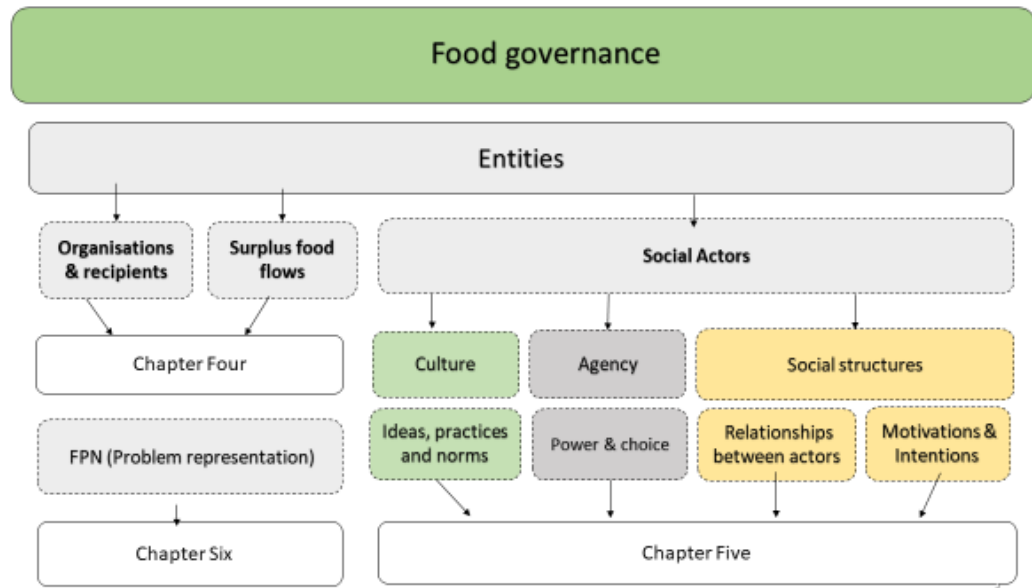
Since Friel and Conlon’s (2004) report ‘Food Poverty and Policy’, the Irish charitable food landscape has changed significantly in terms of scale. This is particularly true in light of the entrance of social enterprises, the establishment of numerous new charities, and the reinstatement of the Fund for European Aid to the most Deprived. Pre and post Friel and Conlon’s (2004) report, much of the food and poverty research in Ireland has been focused on the lived experience of food poverty (Coakley, 2001; Daly & Lenord,

2002; Hickey and Downey, 2003; Manandhar et al., 2006; Share & Hennessy, 2017), the measurement of food poverty (Carney and Maitre, 2012), and failings of this measurement to include the social aspect of being food insecure (Healy, 2019). Issues of food governance within CFS, and the focus of work of Food poverty Network – Ireland’s only body with a specific food poverty remit, remain underexplored. Similarly, while it can be assumed that anyone using CFS are food insecure, the level of food insecurity experienced by people using these services has never been measured in Ireland and their likely poor health circumstances remain undiscussed in the context of academic research exploring recent developments.

On the other hand, at both the European and national level, the role of intermediaries facilitating the movement of surplus food through the charitable food system has attracted much academic attention. Most of this is framed within the context of innovation, efficiency, and transformation and their potential capacity to contribute to a better and more just food system (Davies, 2014; Baglioni et al., 2017; Hebinck et al., 2018). Additional research on Ireland’s FoodCloud and FoodCloud Hubs suggest that ‘they [FoodCloud] increase access to and choice of safe and high quality food’ (Whymes and Davies, 2018: 22), exhibit multiple dimensions of food democracy, including the right to food by ‘distributing food to community groups...’, and reorienting control by enabling charitable food services ‘to connect more equitably with retailers’ (Davies et al., 2019). Similarly, FoodCloud Hubs have been identified as exhibiting the ‘...capacity to transform the food system in Ireland towards greater food and nutrition security...’ (Carroll and O’Connor, 2016:36). Yet to date the issue of what types of surplus food are being channelled through these services remain unexplored.

Further research, which includes Ireland’s FoodCloud Hubs, examining how food assistance practices can contribute to transforming the food system conclude that such

initiatives ‘show dynamics that have the potential for more substantial transformation towards food security over time...’ (Hebinck et al., 2018: 389). This leads to the question of what are the ideas and goals of those working within the charitable food system? Moragues-Faus (2018) suggests a number of considerations when exploring the transformative capacity of a food initiative, which in the context of this thesis are CFS. These questions include asking transformation for whom, how, and the motivations and intentions of those involved. Again, each of these questions align with food governance concerns. She further suggests acknowledging three fundamental and specific characteristics that require attention in the analysis of their transformative capacity. First, capacity is place-dependant meaning that specific contextual socio-economic factors within particular food environments will influence what is transformative. Secondly, the analysis needs to move beyond the mere contribution of a specific and potential food system transformation to explore the *motivation and intentionality* [original emphasis] of the actors involved. Finally, the transformative capacity is dependent on *relationality* [original emphasis], which requires further dissection of the power dynamics within these practices to explore how certain discourses can include and exclude other issues affecting the causes and consequences of food injustices such as gender, race, age, class. These questions and characteristics add further depth to the food governance lens and assist in exploring the charitable food system in Ireland.



1.6.1 Thesis outline

This thesis is led by one overarching research question:

What factors influence food governance within Ireland's contemporary charitable food system and what are the implications at the local level?

The purpose of this thesis was to explore multiple elements of the contemporary charitable food system in Ireland. Using critical realism as a metatheory and Cork city as an embedded case study, this thesis has three goals. The first goal is to explore the various entities responding to food poverty within the contemporary charitable food system in order to identify the factors influencing the governance of food within this system. The second goal is to identify the local impacts of surplus food redistribution in Cork and the ideas legitimising its use. The final goal is to analyse the work of the Food Poverty Network, as a proxy indicator to identify how the problem of food poverty is represented at the national level.

Chapter Two begins with a brief introduction to food waste and food donations within Europe, before moving on to examine the international literature in relation to the framings of and implications stemming from using food charity to respond to food insecurity. The focus then shifts to Ireland's social context, starting with how food poverty and the right to food are acknowledged or otherwise. Food poverty is a symptom of poverty and inequality, thus, the structural factors in Ireland contributing to these circumstances are examined. Next, poverty reduction measures are explored, before outlining the structures influencing the likelihood of experiencing food poverty in Ireland. Following on from this, Ireland's policy approach to food and health is discussed. Finally, Ireland's current response to food poverty in terms of actors, actions, and narratives are examined. This provided the background to which the research questions were developed.

Chapter Three outlines the mixed methods used to explore the various entities within Ireland's charitable food system. The focus is on first exploring which organisations are part of the local charitable food environment, followed by the governance of food within this system: the who, how, why of decision making, the effects of these decisions, and including the role of values in these processes, thus both qualitative and quantitative approaches to data collection and analysis were utilized. This included surveys, in-depth interviews, examining food inventory data, a measurement a tool to measure the level of food insecurity experienced by the users of one food bank in Cork city and a documentary analysis of the meetings of the All-Island Food Poverty Network. In line with critical realist research, the individual methods were guided by the research questions and the chapter is laid out accordingly.

Chapter Four presents the first empirical chapter and addresses three research questions:

1. What organisations are responding to food poverty in Cork, how do these organisations operate and who are the users?

2. What types of surplus food are flowing through the charitable food system in Ireland?
3. Who is using Food Bank services in Cork city and what is the level of food insecurity and ill-health experienced by its users?

The chapter begins with the first research question (RQ) and presents a profile of the Charitable Food Services (CFS) operating in the local food environment. The organisations presented here comprise two main groups. Group one consists of schools who are receive funding from local and national government agencies to provide their food services and who do not use surplus food or accept donations. Group two are organisations who operate without specific funding for food, some are FEAD recipients and most use surplus food in conjunction to donations of food outside of the now formalised routes. The chapter then moves back to the national charitable food systems by analysing the types of food being channelled through FoodCloud Hubs system (RQ2) and begins with an overview of the categories of food redistributed to charities across Ireland over a 27-month period. Next, a snapshot of food groups are presented, according to the degree of processing and over a period of three months: August 2014, 2015 and 2016. The final section addresses the third research question and returns to the local charitable food environment. The focus of this section is on the circumstances of people using a newly established food bank in Cork city and measuring the level of food insecurity and reported ill-health experienced by these people.

Chapter Five responds to the research question of what are the understandings, opinions, beliefs and motivations of those working within these charities. As such, the chapter presents a more in-depth exploration of the culture and motivations of the actors working within the local charitable food environment and the wider charitable food system in Ireland. Borrowing Pollard et al.'s (2018) classification of various charitable providers,

the first group of interviewees are direct providers signifying their contact with end users local level operations. The second group are indirect services who operate at the national level supplying food surplus and FEAD food items to charities on the ground. These indirect providers do not have contact with the end users.

The chapter begins by explaining the background context of the charitable food services organised by the primary type of food assistance provided, before moving onto examine the culture within these service including their perceptions of poverty, food poverty and its causes. Next, issues of agency are explored by outlining the factors influencing food flows and the degree of choice afforded to the end user. Following on from this, the social structures and the effects of surplus food redistribution in Cork are examined. The final section of the chapter is focused on the workings of the indirect services, and in particular their motivations, intentions,, practices and ideas which are influencing and shaping the process of surplus food redistribution at this level of the charitable food system.

Chapter Six examines the thinking around food poverty at the policy level and begins with a brief overview of the issue of food poverty being raised within Dáil Éireann, the principal chamber of the Oireachtas, Ireland's national parliament. Given the absence of a policy or strategy to address food poverty in Ireland, the focus of this chapter is on work of the All-island Food Poverty Network (FPN), a multiagency network, with a specific food poverty remit. Taking into account the network's All-island remit, the composition of the network itself, including their jurisdiction, is explored, along with the areas of focus and actions proposed during the period of 2009 to 2017. Thus, this chapter responds to the final research question concerning how the problem of food poverty has been represented through the actions and focus areas of this network.

Chapter Seven concludes the thesis by first reviewing the factors outside the charitable food system that influenced its growth. This is followed by an overview of how each of

the research questions was addressed and the associated key findings. Next, the practical and theoretical implications are discussed before outlining the thesis's contribution to new knowledge. Additional considerations for this field of study are noted and based on the limitations and findings, presented, key areas for further research are highlighted. Finally, the thesis concludes with a brief reflection of the research process.

1.6.2 Contribution to Knowledge

The governance of food within the charitable food system, most especially in the context of the numerous new actors, interests, and motivations has not been explored in the Irish context or Cork context, to date. Neither have the factors and circumstances associated with food bank use in Ireland, nor has the Food Security Survey Module (FSSM) been employed to measure food insecurity in any setting in Ireland. This thesis fills these knowledge gaps and provides a baseline for which future studies can build upon both in terms of monitoring the types of food flowing through the charitable food system and the level of food insecurity experienced by people left relying on food banks. Elsewhere, food bank data has been used to measure food insecurity among disadvantaged populations (Depa et al., 2018) and, in the Irish case, where only those living in private households are included in the measurement of food poverty, it highlights the prevalence of food insecurity within groups who may be excluded from the national measurement, such as some members of the traveller community.

Its findings encourage critical debate and reflection on the growth of food charity and surplus food redistribution in Ireland and support the call for upstream responses to address the causes rather than the consequences of poverty.

Chapter 2: From food waste to food poverty: context, framings & responses

2.1. Food waste, surplus food and food banks

Globally, somewhere between half and one third of all food produced is wasted (FAO, 2019), carrying with it enormous environmental, social, and economic costs. Within the EU, roughly 20 percent of the food produced here is lost or wasted (European Commission, 2019). Accordingly, food waste prevention and reduction has been identified as a priority area in the EU Action plan for the circular economy (European Commission, 2016). Food waste is defined as products that have not been sold, used or consumed at any stage of the supply chain⁹ (Garrone et al., 2014). Within the EU-28 alone, the associated economic costs of food waste are in the region of 143 billion euros per year, with 53 percent of this waste associated with households (FUSION, 2016).

In line with goal 12.3 of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in September 2015, the United Nations (UN) General Assembly adopted a target of reducing per capita food waste by 50 percent at the retail and household level and reducing food losses along the production and supply chain (European Commission, 2015a). To support the Commission for a Circular Economy a special platform dedicated to food waste prevention was established. Its members were tasked with identifying and prioritising actions to be taken at EU level to prevent food losses and food waste and to identify ‘...opportunities for prevention of food loss and waste across the food production and

⁹ This includes all crops and food mixed with garbage, that are neither edible nor safe which make it difficult to measure the actual amount of discarded safe and edible food that could otherwise have been diverted into edible food recovery streams (Sonnino and McWilliam, 2011; WRAP, 2013 cited in Garrone et al., 2014).

consumption chain and facilitate inter-sector cooperation...’ European Commission, 2019).

Membership of this platform comprises six categories of ‘competent authorities’: (1) EU umbrella organisations and Federations such as, primary production, processing manufacturing, retail and other distribution of food, restaurants and food services, food banks and consumers), (2) ‘organization not covered above but are involved in food waste prevention’, (3) NGO’s including charitable organisations; (4) EU bodies and International organisations’ (5) non-governmental organisations with expertise in food waste prevention in the food supply chain including charity organisations; (6) international organisations involved in food waste prevention and achievement of related SDGs (European Commission, 2016). Subsequently, the EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste formed two subgroups (i) a subgroup on food waste measurement and (ii) a subgroup on food donation (European Commission, 2017). On World Food Day, October 16th, 2017, the European Commission adopted guidelines to facilitate food donation within the EU. The guidelines solidify food waste as, first, a response to poverty and food insecurity and, secondly, to environmental concerns aligned with promoting a circular economy (SANTE/11147/2017). Facilitating the donation of food ‘safe and fit for human consumption...for people in need....is now a priority area of work in the EU’s action plan to prevent food waste’ (European Commission, 2019b: 4). One increasingly popular vehicle for distributing vast quantities of food waste, now commonly referred to as food surplus denoting unpurchased food that would otherwise end up as waste (Midgely, 2020) is through the brokerage model of surplus food redistribution, most notably, food banks who according to Pope Francis, and reflective of the public sentiment associated with such actions, “...take what is thrown into the vicious cycle of waste and insert it into the virtuous circle of good use” (Pope Francis, FEBA convention, 2019 cited FoodCloud, 2019).

2.1.1 Food banks

While various forms of surplus food redistribution in the form of CFS exist, food banks have tended to dominate the food charity discussion (Lambie-Mumford, 2018) and fall within the brokerage model of surplus food redistribution. As such, they will be the key focus of this section. The functionality of food banks is varied between distributing food directly to the end user and redistributing food to intermediary charities and organisations who then distribute to the end users (Caraher & Ronson, 2016). The first food bank emerged in Arizona, USA in 1967, Canada in 1981, and France in 1984 (Riches, 2018). Food banks and other form of charitable food provisioning are now a staple part of society in both developed economies and developing economies (Gentilini, 2013; Riches & Silvasti, 2014; Caraher & Coveney 2016; Riches, 2018) and have been described as existing at the intersection between waste and want (Fisher, 2017) and as a channel between welfare services and the food industry (Butcher et al., 2014).

Two noteworthy international organisations facilitating the spread of food banks across the globe are the Global Foodbank Network (GFN) and the European Federation of Foodbanks (FEBA). The GFN is an international non-profit organisation focused on developing and supporting food banks across the globe and self-marketed as ‘empowering the world to defeat hunger’ (GFN, 2017). Their most recent report, ‘The State of Global Food Banking 2018: Nourishing the World’, further adds that food banks are also a valuable business solution: ‘Food manufacturers, farmers, and retailers view food banks as a valuable business-to-business solution in managing waste and costs associated with the dumping of otherwise wholesome food’ (GFN, 2018:8).

The European Food Banks Federation (FEBA), a European non-profit organisation representing food banks within Europe was founded in 1986. In 2017, FEBA redistributed 756,000 tons of food products ‘the equivalent to 4.1 million meals each day to 8.1 million

most deprived people...' (FEBA, 2018). Although this figure is likely to be underestimated because not all food banks are a member of FEBA and as already mentioned, not all food redistribution is done so via food banks (Stenmarck et al., 2016), there is, nonetheless, a 224,463 ton increase from 2015 (eurofoodbank.org). FEBA was a key recipient of MDP foods (Riches, 2018) and as mentioned in Chapter One are still a key recipient of the successor programme, the Fund for Europe's most Deprived persons (FEAD)¹⁰, in place from 2014 to 2020 to 'help people take their first steps out of poverty and social exclusion' (FEAD, 2018). In 2018, 21 percent of the food flowing through FEBA came directly from FEAD, 66 percent from food recovery, and the remaining food from a mixture of products withdrawn from the market and food collections (FEBA, 2019). While no recent research exists on the types of food distributed through FEBA, Schneider's (2012) research suggests that three food groups form the vast majority of dairy products (36%), biscuits, cereal and starchy food (31%), and fruit and vegetables (15%). The most recent figures from the European Court of Auditors notes that 31 percent of FEBAs total supply comes from FEAD (European Commission, 2019) signifying that FEAD has become a crucial part of FEBA's operations.

Having access to the financial support from FEAD allows them [food banks] to redistribute the items that are most in need; it provides them necessary flexibility as donations cannot be programmed. FEAD offers funding for delivering special food (such as baby milk) according to needs analysis in concertation with managing authorities (European Court of Auditors report, 2019)

Riches (2018) highlights the role FEBA has played in both the development of a system of food banks across Europe and the 'corporate capture' of food banks and this has been '...facilitated by growing public support for addressing the environmental food waste crisis and the idea of a circular economy' (Riches, 2018: 54). As mentioned above, the

¹⁰ FEAD is a EU program running from 2014-2020 aimed at helping EU countries supply food and other material items, such as blankets and toiletries, to 'help people to take their first steps out of poverty and social exclusion' (<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1089>)

corporate sector is the primary food source for FEBA. Taking into account the recent introduction of sanctions for failing to redistribute food in France¹¹, voluntary agreements in the UK (Mansuy and Ferrando, 2017) and the European adoption of guidelines to facilitate food donation as a response to both poverty and food waste as illustrated in the Terms of Reference in the EU pilot programme in food redistribution (SANTE/2017/E1/051), it appears that all forms of food redistribution through charities will continue to grow in numbers and importance across Europe. Thus, the formation of a ‘paradoxical situation where charitable organisations delivering food aid are dependent on food waste rather than trying to reduce it’ which leads to the unintentional support of an unsustainable productivist driven food system (Tikka, 2019:1).

Despite the environmental merits of redistributing edible food (FAO, 2019) ‘...the further along the commodity chain food goes before being discarded, the more virtual energy, water, greenhouse gas emissions it contains’ (Carolan, 2011: 129). Scherhauser et al. (2018) note that almost three quarters of this waste impacting Global Warming originate from GHG emissions occurs in the primary production phase. According to this study, disposal accounts for only six percent, highlighting that efforts to prevent food waste ought to begin at the start of the food chain with a particular emphasis on preventing dairy and meat waste considering their heavy environmental footprint. This observation is in line with the necessary reduction of animal-based foods and reduction of food waste and food loss outlined in the EAT-Lancet commission report (Willett et al., 2019).

Despite the positive contribution of food banks to alleviating immediate hunger in times of crisis (Cloke et al., 2016), Concerns have been raised as to the appropriateness of such ‘corporatized’ (Booth et al., 2014; Riches, 2018), ‘institutionalised’ responses in relation

11 In 2016, France became the first country to pass a law prohibiting supermarkets from both throwing away and spoiling food approaching its sell by date.

to health, welfare, human rights and social justice concerns (Riches, 2011; Lambie-Mumford & Dowler, 2014; Booth & Whelan, 2014; Caraher and Davidson, 2019). Critics such as Berry (1984), Riches (1996; 2002; 2011), Poppendieck (1998) and Fisher (2017) question whether charitable food distribution models have become part of the problem of food insecurity as opposed to part of the solution. Additional questions in relation to the widespread acceptability of this CSR response have also been raised (Booth & Whelan, 2014; Caraher & Cavicchi, 2014). Most especially when the cause of such vast amounts of surplus food has stemmed from practices which result in: an ad hoc secondary food system that heavily relies on voluntary labour to meet the needs of the corporate sector (Tarasuk & Eakin, 2003), colossal profits for the food industry, struggling small-scale farmers, and low income consumers unable to purchase healthier food (Riches, 2011). Riches (2018) highlights that the corporations donating surplus food are often part of the structural problem in terms of low paid, precarious employment: ‘the same individuals who oversee the food bank and the same institutions that donate to it are offering wages that necessitate the use of that same food bank (Lindbaum, 2015: 383).

2.2 Food banks: Framings and implications

Booth & Whelan (2014: 1392) argue that food banks, while presented as food redistribution organisations to feed the ‘hungry’, serve more of a tool to improve ‘corporate food system efficiency’. In relation to food donations from large corporations Lindbaum (2015) refers to David Nally’s (2011:49) neoliberal truth regime that ‘presents global markets, agrarian biotechnologies and multinational corporate initiatives as the structural preconditions for alleviating hunger’. However, Lindbaum (2015:381) himself suggest that food banks offer a feasible alternative to profit driven exchanges replacing ‘market strategies (shopping at a store) with non-market ones (obtaining food for free...)’ resulting in the decommodification of food. Lindbaum (2015:372) suggests that while the

phenomena of emergency food provisioning is ‘neoliberal in nature’, the evidence that supports the idea of food banks spreading neoliberal discourse is absent and has limited ‘analytic value’. Instead, he employs the concepts of accumulation, disarticulation and waste, to outline that food banks operate in conjunction with, rather than in parallel to, the capitalist system; asserting that non-market exchanges are an element of capital accumulation. ‘Food banks exemplify capitalism’s imperative to actively create its own ‘other’ to stabilize itself’ (384) akin to devaluing assets to postpone overaccumulation. Disarticulation perspectives outline that ‘goods, places, and subjects can be disconnected from commodity chains and the process of capital accumulation’ (385) i.e. free food, unemployed ‘recipients’ rather than waged consumers disarticulated from their commodity chains, and finally waste – referring to wasted food, people and resources – all necessary for the charitable food system to operate.

2.2.1 Successful failures

Using Seibel’s (1996) theory of ‘successful failures’, Ronson and Caraher (2016) analysed 18 studies of food banks and charitable provisioning across the USA, Canada, Australia, and Europe and classify 14 of the 18 studies in the ‘failure category’. The theory of successful failures refers to a situation where highly visible societal ‘unsolvable’ challenges attract voluntary organisations keen to fill a gap where government are failing. This response is celebrated by government and civil society alike championing the ‘local’ approach to these issues but the underlying problem(s) remains. Moreover, for the organisations to continue their work, an endless pool of resources is needed to meet the endless demand (Ronson and Caraher, 2016). As such, those managing these ‘Successful failures’ (Seibel, 1996: 1011) ‘engaging in symbolic problem solving’ will develop operations to ensure a continuous supply even to the point of encouraging new users and even if the objectives of the organisations are compromised. Nonetheless, these

organisations continue to proliferate unquestioned due to their voluntary and faith-based nature, thus making any criticism unacceptable, as they are ‘doing the best they could in difficult situations’. Seibel contends that the real value of it, in terms of voluntary organisations outputs, are the ‘symbols or illusions’ that allow the public to believe that the issue was being dealt with (Seibel 1989: 189). In agreement with this theory, Ronson and Caraher (2016:85) highlight Brazil as an exception, which they attribute to the Right to Food being protected in their constitution and the ‘marshalling of the state to deliver on health and social care agendas’.

2.2.2 Shame & inadequate nutrition

A salient issue in relation to any kind of food charity is the indignity associated with its use (Poppendieck, 1998; van der Horst et al., 2014; Booth & Whelan, 2014). Much research highlights that this stigma prevents people from accessing these services when needed (Fabian Society, 2015; Purdam et al., 2016; Loopstra & Tarasuk, 2012; Tarasuk et al., 2019). Van der Horst et al.’s (2014) research addresses the recipients’ emotional responses associated with being a food bank recipient in Denmark. Of all the emotions, shame was the most prominent: ‘They felt like the food bank as well as society as a whole give them food that would otherwise go to pigs’ (1507). Purdam et al. (2016) also highlight the shame, humiliation, and embarrassment associated with having to resort to charity to access the ‘basic building blocks of life’ (Schurman & Munro, 2010:189). Fisher (2017:46) summarizes the experiences of food bank users as ‘Undignified. Racist. Classist. Toxic. Stigmatizing. A slow death of the soul’. However, others suggest caution at portraying these services in negative terms (Wainwright et al., 2018; Cloke et al., 2016). Cloke et al. (2016:5) argue that the ‘refusal to contemplate emergency responses to food poverty runs the risk of a politics of abandonment’, instead suggesting that these are an

‘in the meantime’ activity and ask that in the absence of food banks where would the people reliant on these organisations go while they wait for a longer-term solution.

Another well documented problem is the food itself. Addressing household food insecurity concerns through the redistribution of surplus food denotes providing access to fresh and healthy food options (Alexander & Smaje, 2008). As noted by Loopstra et al. (2019: 561) ‘...they must provide a quantity and quality of food to meet the nutritional and food security needs of their clients’. Much research indicates that this is problematic. Irwin et al.’s (2007) analysis of the nutritional content of the food hampers distributed from a Canadian food bank highlighted that 99 percent were nutritionally inadequate. Lindberg et al.’s (2015) systematic review of the charitable food sector in Australia concurred that the food provided is of poor nutritional quality, further adding that the diet and welfare of people reliant on such a mechanism is ‘of grave public health concern’. In Denmark, van der Horst et al. (2014: 1512) highlight the ‘abundance of durable products with high fat and sugar contents’. Concerns over the nutritional quality of the food being distributed by food banks in the UK, particularly regarding long term use (Morris, 2015).

Regardless of the economic climate, once food banks are established, they are likely to remain and expand (Ronson & Caraher, 2016) and as argued by some academics, end up reproducing rather than reducing social inequalities (Poppendieck, 1998; McIntyre et al., 2003; Rock, 2006). Bazerghi et al.’s (2016) systematic review in relation to the effectiveness and function of food banks found that, while they play a significant role in the provision of immediate food aid, they are limited in their capacity to improve overall food security. On the other hand, they also point out that, if adequately resourced with provisions for perishable food items, and if the users’ needs were taken into account, food banks could have the potential to improve food security outcomes for their users.

2.2.3 Improved social good, food security and social innovation

Research also points to the potential of surplus food redistribution contributing to social good (Blake, 2019) and improved food security and nutritional outcomes for its users (Carrol and O'Connor, 2016; Hebinck et al., 2018; Weymes and Davies, 2019; FAO, 2019). For instance, Weymes and Davies (2019) explore the types of food surplus redistributed within 403 organisations throughout the globe. Fruit and vegetables comprise the largest amount (36%), followed by tinned, packaged and prepared food (32%), and meals (26%); meat and fish comprised six percent. Importantly, these surplus redistribution initiatives vary, from 'pay as you feel cafes' in the UK, to redistributing garden surplus in the US, what Midgely refers to as 'challenger models'. While other initiatives such as FoodCloud operate within the Brokerage model. As Midgely argues, we 'need to pay attention not just to surplus food material but also the processes of its redistribution and the diversity of practices this can enrol in different contexts' (Midgely, 2020: 360). Likewise, the FAO (2019) suggest that surplus food redistribution interventions aimed at addressing food waste and food poverty must be delivered with health in mind and as such the composition of redistributed food is one factor necessitating consideration when asserting its potential contribution to improved social good and food security.

In recent years, an increasing body of research has emerged framing charitable surplus food redistribution - including food bank models – as 'socially innovative' inferring a more efficient and just solution to a problem (Baglioni et al., 2017; Hebinck et al., 2018) or rebranding them as part of the 'sharing economy' and as 'gifting' (Davies, 2015). Tikka (2019) cautions that this social innovation framing heightens the shift in responsibility from government to civil society and church and requires scrutiny. With regards to conceptualising charitable redistribution as 'gifting', Mary Douglas observes

from Mauss's *The Gift* (1925: ix) that 'there are no free gifts; gift cycles engage people in permanent commitments that articulate dominant institutions'. These cycles obligate giving, receiving and reciprocation and according to Mauss '...the unreciprocated gift...makes the person who has accepted it inferior' (Mauss, 1925 cited in Marks, 2019). For Lindbaum (2015), charitable 'gifting' is better understood as a process of re-gifting cloaked in a veil of volunteerism and community altruism with the original gift being tax breaks, trade policies, subsidies and corporate disposal costs avoided. Other academics have conceptualised food redistribution transitioning from the commercial sector to the non-commercial sector (Blake, 2019). However, Livingstone (2015:7) reminds us that, while it '...is charity...it is commercialized through corporate social responsibility...' and brand strengthening (Booth and Whelan, 2014).

The brokerage model of surplus food redistribution, most notably food banks, are a major component of charitable food services (CFS) and consequently have an important advocacy role to play in promoting longer-term solutions to food insecurity (Hawkes & Webster, 2000; Riches, 2002, 2007; Booth and Whelan, 2014). While their achievements and range of additional supports ought to be recognised (Booth and Whelan, 2014; Williams et al., 2016), the 'dark side' of food charity equally deserves consideration, along with their limited potential to effect advocacy and longer-term solutions, given their dependence on both the food industry and government in many instances. This reportedly limits their willingness and ability to advocate for policy change (Horton, 2004; Lindbaum 2015). However, Cloke and his colleagues (2016) propose that the sheer diversity in the organisations providing food charity and how they operate may prevent any 'singular reading' of the degree to which they can start addressing the structural challenges of food insecurity or whether they are in fact part of the continuing neo-liberalisation of welfare. They further suggest that the 'limited and contested' research creates the need for further investigation into their organisational types, structures, and

geographic spread in addition to more user-based research, the ‘who’, ‘how’ and ‘why’ of food bank recipients as well as their user experience. In contrast, Lambie-Mumford (2018:11-12) suggests a different approach and points out the need to study up, highlighting that food banks tend to dominate the food charity debate and argues that the structural determinants of the need for food charity are crucial to understanding the ‘dynamics of the growth...’ of these organisations. This, she points out, is in stark contrast to policy interpretation focused on the ‘notion of behavioural and individual drivers of poverty...’, concluding that ‘structural dimensions must remain a critically important part of the analysis’.

The next section turns the spotlight to Ireland, where following the trajectory evident in other high-income countries (Pollard and Booth, 2019) the provision of food charity has increased significantly. Ireland has a highly developed agricultural sector and is the fifth largest beef exporter and tenth largest dairy exporter in the world (O’ Shaughnessy and Sage, 2017). It has the fastest growing economy in Europe and ranked second in the Global Food Security Index in 2018. Yet household food insecurity, more commonly referred to as food poverty in Ireland, is a reality for 8.7 percent of people (DEASP, 2019) but as will be discussed in the next section, this figure is likely much higher. To date, Ireland remains without a measuring tool that reflects the definition of food poverty, a strategy for addressing the problem, a national nutritional strategy, or a national food policy concerned with domestic food security. All of this has been recommended in some form in Ireland’s periodic reviews of its international obligations. The problem of food poverty in Ireland is predominantly left to the community and voluntary sector (Dowler and O’Connor, 2012) and increasingly in recent time, corporations.

As mentioned in Chapter One, Ireland has considerable diet related health problems, which are more pronounced within the lower income population; the same group more

likely to be using CFS initiatives. According to the Growing Up in Ireland longitudinal study, children in lower income families consume 23 percent more calories than children in higher income families (Jennings et al., 2018). Thus, any discussion of food poverty in Ireland needs to be placed in the context of overall growing inequality, low paid employment, precarious employment, inadequate social safety nets, and financial hardship (Sweeney & Wilson, 2019), and, more recently, the growth of social enterprises tasked with solving food waste and food poverty. The remaining literature review addresses these issues in Ireland, starting with how food poverty is currently measured and the Right to Food.

2.3 The Irish Context: Food Poverty and the Right to Food

“When I give food to the poor, they call me a saint. When I ask why they are poor, they call me a communist”

- Hélder Câmara

In Ireland, food poverty is measured and monitored using the Food Poverty Index developed by Carney and Maitre (2012), where any individual who is ‘unable to afford a meal with meat, or vegetarian equivalent, every second day’ or is ‘unable to afford a weekly roast dinner or equivalent’ or is ‘missing one substantial meal in the last fortnight due to lack of money’ is classified as experiencing food poverty (DEASP, 2019). Despite reference to quality and nutrition in the definitions of food poverty, the measurement of this problem does not address any aspect beyond that of financial access to food more generally. Another limitation is the exclusion of those not living in private households given that the data is derived from the Survey on Income and Living Conditions (SILC). While both limitations were noted by the developers of this index, the consequence remains that the most vulnerable populations are excluded. This includes those living in

emergency accommodation, Travellers not living in private households, asylum seekers, and others living in institutional settings (Hickey and Downey, 2003; Manandhar et al., 2006; Share and Hennessy, 2017).

A further issue raised by Healy (2019) is exclusion of the social inclusion aspect of food poverty. While there is a question pertaining to the ability to socialise with family and friends once a month, this is not included in the official measurement of food poverty. In her analysis, the food poverty rate of 11.5 percent in 2015 increases to 21.5 percent with the inclusion of this question; leading to the conclusion that the ‘...current composite measure of food poverty underestimates the prevalence of food poverty in Ireland’ (Healy, 2019: 7).

There is a legitimate claim to the right to food in which the responsibility falls upon the government to uphold. As outlined in Kenny and Sage (2019), the duties of respecting, protecting and fulfilling the right to food are embodied in Ireland’s own 1937 constitution. Magdalena Sepúlveda Carmona¹² further notes that the Irish Constitution also refers to ‘directive principles of social policy’ ‘which represent a commitment to realizing social justice’ (.3). The issue of food poverty was noted in Ireland’s most recent periodic review (E/C.12/IRL/CO/3) of its implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights took place in 2015. Specifically, the Committee highlighted its concern regarding the issue of increasing food poverty and malnutrition among disadvantaged groups, such as single parent household, and the high cost of healthy food. Accordingly, it was recommended that the Irish state ‘take concrete measures to address the critical food and nutritional needs of disadvantaged families and expedite the adoption of a national action plan on food security and nutrition in line with the 2004 [FAO]

12 Independent Expert report on the question of human right and extreme poverty in Ireland in 2011(A/HRC/17/34/Add.2)

Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security’ (Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR), 2015:7). These FAO guidelines encourage states to assign a specific organisation tasked with both overseeing and coordinating the implementation of a strategy to ensure food and nutrition security for all and to embed food poverty within national poverty reduction strategies (FAO, 2004, 2009). This has yet to happen in Ireland.

2.3.1 Poverty: defining, measuring, monitoring and reducing

The contemporary perception of poverty and the Irish government’s definition¹³ of poverty has been influenced by Peter Townsend, the British sociologist who championed the idea of poverty as a relative rather than absolute concept that signifies the ‘inability to participate fully in society’¹⁴ (Townsend, 1979: 31). Townsend believed the causes of poverty are structural and ‘rejected the culture of poverty argument...’ which ‘...rooted solutions in the creation of additional opportunities and upward mobility’ (Holohan, 2016: 38). For Townsend, the problem of poverty is best addressed by the ‘reconstruction of the national and regional systems by which resources are distributed or, alternatively, the introduction of alternative systems which are universalistic and egalitarian’ (Townsend, 1970 cited in Holohan, 2016); ideas aligned with social justice and human rights and ideas that challenge charitable responses to poverty (Holohan, 2016).

13 ‘People are living in poverty if their income and resources (material, cultural and social) are so inadequate as to preclude them from having a standard of living which is regarded as acceptable by Irish society generally. As a result of inadequate income and other resources people may be excluded and marginalised from participating in activities which are considered the norm for other people in society’ (Government of Ireland, 2007)

14 ‘Individuals, families and groups in the population can be said to be in poverty when they lack the resources to obtain the type of diet, participation in the activities and have living conditions and the amenities which are customary, or at least widely encouraged or approved in the societies to which they belong. Their resources are so seriously below those commanded by the average family that they are in effect excluded from the ordinary living patterns, customs, and activities’ (Townsend, 1979:31)

Ireland developed its first national anti-poverty strategy in 1997 and the current National Action Plan for Social Inclusion, updated in 2014, for the period covering 2015-2017 carries with it an interim poverty reduction target of 4 percent by 2016 (DSP, 2016). This target was devised to meet the European goal of lifting 20 million people out of the 'at risk of poverty' category by 2020. Ireland's contribution to this reduction, based on its population size is one percent and, as such, Ireland has committed to lifting 200,000 people out of the at-risk category by 2020, using the baseline year of 2010 and a 'combined poverty' measurement. Each year, Ireland's Social Inclusion Monitor report is released to outline progress or otherwise based on the indicators (as described in Table 2.1) and using Survey on Income and Living Conditions (SILC) data.

Under EU legislation, Ireland's Central Statistics Office (CSO) is responsible for collecting information from private households¹⁵ concerning their income and living conditions since 2003. SILC data is collected from a nationally representative sample over a period of one year, it is comparable to other European Countries, and is used to monitor and measure poverty, deprivation and social exclusion on an annual basis (CSO, 2016)

Table 2.1: Poverty indicators descriptions

Vulnerable to consistent poverty	The percentage of the population experiencing basic deprivation and whose income is between 60% and 70% of the median.
Basic deprivation	People are regarded as experiencing basic deprivation if they live in a household deprived of 2 or more of the 11 basic deprivation items because they could not afford them (i.e. not by choice).
At-risk-of-poverty	People are regarded as being at-risk-of-poverty if their equivalised income is below 60% of the median income.

¹⁵ Includes a group of people living together or individuals living alone that are or not related (CSO, 2017)

Impact of social transfers on at risk-of-poverty (excluding pensions)	The impact of social transfers is measured by the percentage reduction, in absolute and relative terms, in the at-risk-of-poverty rate as a result of social transfers (excluding pensions).
Anchored at-risk-of-poverty	The percentage of the population with an equivalised disposable income below 60% of median income anchored in 2010 value.
Combined Poverty	The combined poverty rate is the combination of at-risk of poverty or consistent poverty or basic deprivation

Source: (DESP, 2018)

The official measure of poverty is the consistent poverty rate (Carney and Maitre, 2012). This measure was originally developed in 1987 by the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) and further refined in 2007 (CSO, 2016). People living in consistent poverty have an income of less than 60 percent of that national median income (after social transfers) and are experiencing deprivation meaning that they are unable afford at least two of the eleven material deprivation indicators¹⁶ (DSP, 2016). The latest Social Inclusion Monitor Report (DESP, 2019) based on 2017 data, indicates that 18.8 percent (901,000 people) of the population were experiencing basic deprivation, 6.7 percent of the population (321,000 people) are experiencing consistent poverty with a further 3.3 percent (158,000 people) are vulnerable to consistent poverty. In order to reach the EU poverty reduction target, consistent poverty rates would have to be reduced to 2 percent by 2020. The groups experiencing the highest rates of consistent poverty rates (between 22 and 25%) roughly three times the national average are the unemployed, lone parents and people living in social housing. Currently, 1.33 million people – 27.8 percent of the

16 (1) Two pairs of strong shoes, (2) A warm waterproof overcoat, (3) Buy new not second hand clothes, (4) Eat meat, chicken, fish or a vegetarian equivalent every second day, (5) Have a roast joint or its equivalent once a week, (6) Had to go without heating during the last year through lack of money, (7) Keep the home adequately warm, (8) Buy presents for family or friends at least once a year, (9) Replace any worn out furniture, (10) Have family or friends for a drink or meal once a month, (11) Have a morning, afternoon or evening out in the last fortnight for entertainment.

population - are experiencing combined poverty and, in order to meet the EU's combined poverty reduction target for 2020, this would have to be reduced to 1.21 million people (DESP, 2019).

Table 2.2 indicates that, despite economic recovery and living in the fastest growing economy in Europe for the third year in a row, the average consistent poverty rate in the early economic recovery period (2014- 2016, as defined by the DESP) is still higher than the crisis period (2009-2013, as defined by the DESP), as is the 'at risk of poverty' rate. In work, poverty averages at 5.8 percent for both periods. The average food poverty rate in the crisis period was 11.6 percent, versus 11.5 percent in the early recovery period. The average percentage of people experiencing basic deprivation during these two periods was 26.1 percent and 25.1 percent, respectively.

Table 2.2: Table: Ireland's Social Inclusion indicators

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Consistent poverty (%)	6.3	6.9	7.7	9.1	8.8	8.7	8.2	6.7
At risk of poverty (%)	14.7	16.0	17.3	16.5	17.2	16.9	16.5	15.7
In-work poverty (%)	5.7	6.5	5.9	5.3	6.0	5.8	5.6	5.4
Food Poverty (%)	10.0	11.4	11.8	13.2	13.1	11.5	9.9	8.7
Basic deprivation (%)	22.6	24.5	26.9	30.5	29.0	25.5	21.0	18.8
Self-reported health status (bad-fair)	16.7	20.5	17.5	17.9	17.4	17.5	17.2	16.7
Economic Stress ¹⁷	0.27	0.29	0.32	0.33	0.27	0.24	0.25	0.23
Combined poverty rate (%)	31.0	33.6	35.7	37.9	37.4	33.7	29.2	27.8

Sources: Social Inclusion Monitor Report 2017, Department of Employment and Social Protection, 2019.

2.3.2 The Working Poor

‘The State shall, in particular, direct its policy towards securing: i. that citizens (all of whom, men and women equally, have the right to an adequate means of livelihood) may through their occupations find the means of making reasonable provision for their domestic needs’

(Art 45.2, The Irish Constitution, 1937)

¹⁷ This measure was developed to go beyond income to capture the economic stresses of reduced household income. It is based on five key areas (1) Difficulty making ends meet (2) Arrears (3) Housing costs that are a heavy burden (4) inability to save and (5) Going into debt to meet ordinary living expenses. A mean level of economic stress of 0 means that there is no economic stress on any of the items while a score of 1 means there is difficulty on all the items (DESP, 2018)

The most notable measure to combat poverty in the Republic of Ireland was the introduction of the minimum wage in 2000 but this has not kept pace with the cost of living in Ireland. In order to obtain a minimum standard of living in Ireland, a person would have to be earning a minimum of 11.90 euro per hour - 2.35 euro per hour more than the current minimum wage of 9.55 euro for an experienced adult¹⁸ worker. Ireland has double the amount of people working close to or at the minimum wage in comparison to the UK, Greece or Portugal (Joint Committee on Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (CJIE), 2015:27). Just under one fifth of the total workforce (19.2%) and 33.8 percent of one income households are classified as deprived. A further 12.6 percent of all people in work are 'at risk of poverty' (CJIE, 2015:12) and over two-thirds of low paid households are below the poverty line (CJIE, 2015:20). Low paid employment is a persistent problem and currently, out of 36 mostly wealthy EU countries, only Latvia (26%) and the USA (24.5%) have a higher proportion of low paid workers than Ireland, accounting for almost a quarter of the total workforce at 23 percent. The OECD average is 15.4 percent (OECD, 2019). According to the 2017 EU-wide Labour Force Survey, Ireland has the highest incidence of people working in low paid full-time employment (17%) in the EU15 and the third highest incidence for part time employees (almost 40%). These figures are in stark contrast to countries such as Sweden (2.5%) or France (6.1%) (CJIE, 2015:21).

Women represent 60 percent of those in the low paid employment and the problem is confined to particular sectors within the Irish economy. Over a quarter of those earning less than or equal to 12.20 euro per hour are working in the wholesale and retail sector and the highest risk of low pay is in the agricultural, forestry and fisheries sectors (70%),

¹⁸ The minimum wage for those over the age of 18 years in their first year of employment is 7.32 euro, over 18 years in their second year of employment is 8.24 euro per hour. The minimum hourly rates for trainees over the age of 18 also vary starting at 6.86 euro for first third of course before reaching 8.24 for the final third of the training (www.citizensinformation.ie)

the accommodation and food sectors (69%) and administration and support (60%) (CJFI, 2015:27). There is also the informal, low paid care economy in which women also tend work in such providing care to infants, children, and the elderly.

While crucially important, income is not the only factor to consider in terms of creating a more equal society given that individual and household circumstances are affected by many factors beyond that of paid employment. In certain circumstances, even if the minimum wage was raised to the level of a living wage, other factors such as the prohibitive cost of childcare, will still impede the feasibility of joining the workforce for some parents, particularly women. While such support cannot be addressed in the wage structure, they can be addressed in supportive public policy, public investment, and adequate social transfers, particularly when 57.6 percent of people living in poverty are retired, in caring roles, are ill and/or disabled and unable to work and as such, not connected to the labour market (Social Justice Ireland (SJI), 2016).

2.3.3 Poverty Reduction measures

The state pledges itself to safeguard with especial care the economic interests of the weaker sections of the community, and, where necessary, to contribute to the support of the infirm, the widow, the orphan, and the aged.

(The Irish Constitution, 1937: Art. 45.3 2°)

Social transfers are considered a key government strategy to reduce poverty and refer to any income derived from non-market sources. Dependence on these transfers has increased in recent years. In 2004, social transfers represented 20 percent of gross household income and, by 2011, this had increased to 30 percent. The number of households receiving unemployment related social transfers also increased during this period growing from 16 percent in 2004 to 29 percent in 2011 during the economic crisis

(Watson & Maitre, 2013). Currently, there are 2,072,482 welfare recipients, which equates to 43 percent of the population at a cost of 19.9 billion. In 2005, these same figures were 1,469,106, 35.5 percent and 12.2 billion (DEASP, 2018b). When social protection expenditures as a percentage of GDP are broken down into categories, the patterns have remained unchanged since 2010 with older persons accounting for the highest percentage of expenditure, followed by those experiencing illness and disability, again, those not connected to the labour market. The third and fourth highest spending as a percentage of total social protection expenditures has fluctuated between unemployment payments and family and child payments – such as child benefit – which is paid to everyone regardless of their financial situation (DEASP, 2018:18).

Another such family and child payment was the family income support (FIS) payment, now known as the Working Family Payment (WFP) (Welfare.ie), designed to ensure that ‘people are better off in work’ (JCJEL, 2015: 29). WFP is a weekly tax-free payment available to low paid employees with children who work 38 hours or more per fortnight¹⁹. Since 2003, the numbers of families in receipt of what was then referred to as FIS increased from 12,317 families at a cost of 45.4 million per year, to 44,159 families at a cost of 261.8 million per year, reflecting the persistent problem of low paid employment. While this payment is supporting families in low paid work, it is also ‘indirectly subsidising some employers who create persistent precarious work patterns for their workers’ (Social Justice Ireland, 2015:5). Precarious employment refers to uncertain employment conditions and is typically characterized by low paid work, uncertain hours,

19 This payment provides 60% the difference between your average weekly family income and the income limit which applies to the household. For example, a single parent working 25 hours per week with an average earnings 335 euro per week (roughly 170 euro below the income limit of 506 euro for a one child family) would be entitled to a 130 euro FIS payment each week (www.citizensinformation.ie)

internships, zero-hour contracts, part-time or short-term contracts and in Ireland, the incidence of precarious employment has increased sharply (Nugent, 2017).

The proportion of social transfers that contribute to reducing the gap between a household's market income and the poverty threshold²⁰, is referred to as poverty reduction efficiency; whereas poverty reduction effectiveness refers to the degree to which social transfers contribute to reducing poverty. Poverty effectiveness is measured using either the poverty reduction rate or the reduction in the market income poverty gap and as illustrated in the following figures, the measurement used makes a significant difference the resulting figures. For example, social transfers were 71 percent effective in reducing the poverty rate in 2011, up 18 percent in comparison to 2004. However, the effectiveness of social transfers in reducing the poverty gap improved only 4 percent during this period. Between 2005 and 2010 Ireland, in comparison to the EU15 countries, moved from a middle position in poverty reduction effectiveness to 'the top of the range' (Watson & Maitre, 2013). Nonetheless, while Ireland's poverty reduction effectiveness is still amongst the highest in Europe (DEASP, 2019), Ireland still suffers from significant income disparities²¹ (Social Justice Ireland, 2018) and has a comparatively low rate (9%) of expenditure on social protection measures, in comparison to the average EU28 (19.2%) expenditure (Eurostat, 2020).

Ireland is the most unequal country in Europe in relation to how the economy distributes income, before taxes and social transfers are taken into account, with the top 10 percent of people receiving 34 percent of all taxable income (O'Connor & Staunton, 2015). So while Ireland's tax system is progressive in terms of redistribution this is due to the high levels of inequality prior to the redistribution of taxes (O'Connor & Staunton, 2015).

20 In the EU the poverty threshold is 60% of the median income

21 The top 20% earn 4.4 times as much as the bottom 20% (SJI, 2018)

Lynch (2014) notes that in the middle of the economic crisis (2010/2011) the income of the poorest 10 percent in Irish society lost 26 percent of their income, while the richest 10 percent gained 8.2 percent. She also draws attention to Ireland's seeming progressive tax system and highlights a significant caveat that sees the poorest 10 percent spending roughly 27 percent of their income on indirect taxes associated with electricity bills, gas bills, cigarettes, and alcohol. A figure closely aligned with 29.4 percent that the rich pay on taxation as proportion of their income (Collins, 2014).

Wealth in Ireland is concentrated at the top levels (O'Connor and Staunton, 2015). A person or a household's net wealth is measured by their assets,²² specifically the difference between assets and debts, and is strongly related to income. In Ireland, 72.7 percent of net wealth is held by the top 20 percent, slightly above the European average of 67.6 percent. The top 20 percent own in excess of 90 percent of all land and when broken down further, the top 10 percent own 82 percent of all land and 53.8 percent of all net worth (Staunton, 2015: 7-15). Single parent households, which account for roughly one quarter of all families in Ireland (CSO, 2017), have significantly less wealth. The average household has a net worth seven times greater than the average single parent household (30,600 euro versus 218,700 euro). Single parent households also have the highest debt to assets ratio and are much less likely to own a business or property (Staunton, 2015).

Ireland is currently experiencing a severe and protracted housing crisis and homelessness has become a key issue. The latest figures (June 2018) indicating that 10,000 people (3,600 children and 1,700 families) reportedly having accessed emergency accommodation. These numbers do not account for what is referred to as the hidden

22 Assets such as land, real estate, business equity, vehicles, savings, personal property, agricultural assets, life assurance, and pension fund equity (Staunton, 2015).

homeless, those who are staying with friends and families (Social Justice Ireland, 2018). Housing demand has far outstripped supply closely linked to a severe slowing down in housing stock rates. The 2016 census revealed that, in comparison to the previous census period (2006-2011), where 225, 232 houses were built, only 8,800 houses added to the Irish housing stock in the subsequent period. Consequently, home ownership has dropped to rates last seen in Ireland in the early 1970's, the cost of renting across Ireland has risen significantly – E300 more than the peak rents of 2008 (Ryan, 2019). The proportional number of households renting has also increased with roughly one in five households live in rented accommodation in comparison to one in ten in the previous census period (CSO, 2016b).

In 2005 roughly 42,000 households were on the social housing waiting list growing to 91,600 households in 2016. Hearne and Murphy (2017). According the latest Census 143,178 households are rented from the local authority (CSO, 2016b). These tend to be low income households²³ and comprise the largest share of those experiencing consistent poverty (DEASP, 2019). As evidenced in the next section, while these tenants spend more on food as a proportion of the total household expenditure than any other group, they consume a poorer quality diet and carry the burden of diet related ill-health in Ireland.

2.4 Structures influencing food poverty

2.4.1 Income and cost

Household income is a key factor in terms of accessing a healthier diet (Dowler, 1997; Coakley, 2001; Mason and Lang, 2017). In Ireland, the odds of experiencing food poverty are twice as high for households in the lowest income quintile, in comparison to all other

²³ To be considered eligible for social housing the maximum income threshold for a three adult, four child household in 2016 was 42,000 and for a single adult 35,000.

income quintiles (McMahon and Weld, 2015). Unsurprisingly, low income households are also disproportionately inflicted with diet-related poor health such as higher rates of coronary disease, obesity, high blood pressure, and diabetes in the low-income classes (Irish Medical Organisation (IMO), 2012; Jennings et al., 2018).

Households experiencing food poverty spend a greater proportion of income on food (Friel and Conlon, 2004) and for single parents, welfare recipients and elderly, food is the largest expenditure (Collins et al., 2012). In the Republic of Ireland's 2009/2010 Household Budgeting Survey²⁴ (HBS) households with mortgages spent 14 percent of their total income on food in comparison to local housing authority housing tenants (social housing) who spend 21 percent. Renting from the local authority was also associated with a higher proportional spending on takeaways, soft drinks and crisps and sweets but the lowest proportional spending on fruit and vegetables (CSO, 2010). As a proportion of total money spent on food consumed in the home, the most recent HBS (2015-2016) indicates that lone parent households spend the least amount of money on uncooked meat and fish and fresh vegetables and fruit and the largest proportion of money on sugars, confectionary and soft drinks (CSO, 2017b). This is not specific to the Irish case with O'Brien (2019) outlining that low income households are more likely to buy less nutritious food because it is cheaper and provides stomach fill so children are less likely to feel hungry after eating these food (O' Brien, 2018). Likewise, as consequence of tight budgets, health concerns are often pushed to the background out of necessity with low income mothers tending to cook foods they know their children will eat and will not waste (Daniels, 2016).

²⁴ The Household Budgeting survey is carried out every five years to determine the patterns of household expenditure in the Republic of Ireland. The sample is based only on private households and is carried out by the central statistics office Ireland using the Census as a sampling frame.

In Ireland, it is up to ten times cheaper to provide calories from unhealthy food as opposed to healthy foods (Sheehan, 2012; McGuire, 2015). Today, a low income family living in Ireland would have to spend up to 33 percent of their income on food to meet the requirements for a nutritious food basket (Safefood, 2019), which is impossible for most families, given the many other competing and non-negotiable costs (MacMahon & Weld, 2015: 82).

An additional factor influencing a person's diet is the consumer's food environment²⁵. In Ireland, the physical food environment has changed significantly since the 1990s and drastically since the 2000s in terms of retail concentrations, scale, and availability (Sage, 2010; Sage & Kenny 2018). This is especially evident in the case of the increasing presence of fast food availability and consumption within Ireland. Retail concentration is linked to higher food prices, reduced food choices and food deserts and Carolan's (2012) analysis places Ireland in the top ten countries in terms of supermarket concentration. Currently, three retailers²⁶ possess 65 percent of the retail market share (Kantarworldpanel.com, 2020).

2.4.2 The retail food environment

In the first seven years of the millennium, the number of retail outlets in Ireland increased by 71 percent and dedicated grocery floorspace by 77 percent (Competition Authority, 2008 cited in Sage and Kenny, 2018). The foodservice industry²⁷ has also expanded rapidly in terms of value and scale. According to Bord Bia's 2017 Foodservice Channel Insights report, this sector was worth 5.3 Billion euro in 2012, 7.5 Billion euros in 2016, and is expected to reach 9 Billion by 2020 (Bord Bia, 2017). Within the foodservice

25 The consumer food environment refers to availability, price, variety, quality and information in a person's food environment (Rideout et al., 2015).

26 SuperValu (22.9%), Tesco (21.5%) and Dunnes (20.5).

27 Comprising all food consumed outside of the home

sector, ‘quick- serve’ restaurants account for one third of total revenue making it the fastest growing and the largest segment of the agri-food market. After the economic crash of 2010 the number of fast food outlets in Ireland increased by 17 percent, transactions by 10.9 percent and the value of sales by 21.8 percent (Euromonitor, 2017). Ireland had the third highest increase in fast food transactions out of a study of 25 countries in which the authors correlate to increasing body mass index (BMI) and unregulated markets (De Vogli et al., 2014).

Browne et al. (2019) indicate that the retail environment near Irish schools can have a negative impact in terms of food choice. While there is limited research specific to Ireland in relation to the impact of the retail food environment on diet related ill-health, international studies indicate a link between obesity and the rise of the fast food industry (Parkhurst, 2015). The literature also identifies a link between deprived neighbourhoods and both fast food density and obesity rates (Fraser et al., 2010), particularly for children (Ceneteanu & Jones, 2015). Keane’s (2014) research specific to Ireland suggests that while social class and parental education are important risk factors associated with childhood obesity; irrespective of socioeconomic status, having overweight or obese parents posed a ‘significant’ risk factor for childhood obesity. In short, children's diets are influenced by what their parents are purchasing and in the case of charitable food services, being given.

According to recent shopping trend data, almost a quarter (23.6%) of the total grocery spend is on products high in salt, fat, and sugar (top layer of the Irish food pyramid) (Kantar Worldpanel, 2017). This is unremarkable considering these foods are heavily marketed and promoted²⁸ (Furey et al., 2019). In Ireland, ultra-processed food makes up

²⁸ Research commissioned by Safefood, examining the types of food ‘on offer’ concluded that 35 percent were from the top shelf of the food pyramid (Furey et al., 2019).

45.9 percent of household purchases (Montiero et al., 2017). Arguably, this is a more robust measurement of food quality, at least in terms of health impacts, in comparison to classifying food within the Irish Food Pyramid where all meat and dairy are considered equal.

Overall, there is a downward trend in food prices (Redden, 2017) which is possible accounted for in the increase in ultra-processed, cheaper food, own brand products and of course increasing retailer competition. Nonetheless, the cost of food and non-alcoholic drink in Ireland is still the fourth highest in the EU (Eurostat, 2019) but as highlighted by the managing director of Retail, Grocery, Dairy and Allied Trade Association, ‘people in Ireland are paying less for their groceries than ever before...’ (O’ Riordan, 2019). In comparison to 1980, when food accounted for 27.7 percent of total expenditure, spending on food has been reduced significantly at the population level, down from an average of 16.2 percent in 2009/2010 to 14.6 percent in 2015/2016 (CSO, 2017b). However, as already mentioned for those living on a low income accessing a healthier diet is still beyond their means.

2.4.3 Ireland’s policy approach to food poverty

‘That, especially, the operation of free competition shall not be allowed so to develop as to result in the concentration of the ownership or control of essential commodities in a few individuals to the common detriment’

(Art 45, The Irish Constitution, 1937)

Dowler and O’Connor’s (2012) examination of the social and policy circumstances within Ireland and the UK that contribute to food poverty conclude that policy responses to food poverty are concentrated on two levels: one, the regulation of the food supply and the retail sector at the national level and two, on the provision of food labelling and dietary

guidelines at the household level. Both responses are based on the consumerist model of ‘informed choice’ and assumes everyone has the resources necessary to make an ‘informed choice’ regardless of their economic and social circumstances. Consequently, guarding against food poverty is largely left to the market (Dowler and O’Connor, 2012) which has not worked for almost one fifth of the population of Ireland, if poverty statistics rather than food poverty statistics are to go by. Nor have food poverty concerns pierced poverty reduction policies, as recommended in Ireland’s most recent periodic review of the ICESCR.

As mentioned earlier, The National Action Plan Social inclusion 2007-2016 is the primary document that contains specific targets for the reduction of poverty and health inequalities. Prior to this plan, Ireland had a ten year National Anti-poverty Strategy 1997-2007 and despite there being an Irish Human Right Commission that has the statutory power and mandate to protect and promote the right to food, there is no recognition of nutritional needs within the anti-poverty strategies (O’Connor et al., 2008). On the same note, the National Action Plan for Social Inclusion (NAPS) 2007-2016 does not have a food remit but this document does make specific reference to a national nutrition policy ‘A National Nutrition Policy to address children’s food poverty and obesity will be finalised and launched by mid-2007’ (GoI, 2007:34). This never materialised and the updated NAPS 2015- 2017 has no reference to food whatsoever, just as Ireland’s Obesity strategy, a Healthy Weight for Ireland 2016-2025, has no reference to food poverty or food (in)security (DoH, 2016).

Ireland does not have a food policy aimed at ensuring domestic food security, instead Ireland has an agri-business strategy (the current version of which is Food Wise 2025) that is updated every five years and provides a roadmap for Ireland’s agricultural sector, and arguably Ireland’s food environment, for the subsequent years. However, domestic

food security concerns are not typically featured in these strategies. For example, in Food Harvest 2020, Ireland's previous agricultural strategy, food was disconnected from national health beyond functional food health marketing, and traditional food safety concerns. Public health engagement was exceptionally limited and public health representation on the committee tasked with developing the policy was nil (Kenny et al., 2018). On the other hand, industry representation, and their interests, remains steadfast. Table 2.3 outlines the committee representation of Food Harvest 2020 (FH2020) and its successor Food Wise 2025 (FW2025). In comparison to the committee makeup in 2020, representation from the food industry increased while civil society organisation representation decreased. On the other hand, when it comes to responding to issues of food poverty in Ireland, civil society organisations take centre stage, as will be discussed further on.

Table 2.3: Food Wise 2025 & Food Harvest 2002 Committee membership by area of representation

Representation	FW2025 representation (%)	Female/Male	FH2020representation (%)	Female/Male
Producer organisations	20	0/7	20	0/9
Food industry	42	3/12	30	0/9
Civil society	5.7	1/1	10	0/3
Government bodies	20	2/5	30	2/7
Business organisation	5.7	1/1	6.6	0/2
Academics	5.7	1/1	3.3	0/1

Source: Kenny et al. & FW 2025

Healthy Ireland (HI) is a national framework, launched in 2013 to improve the health and well-being of the Irish population through four goals: ‘(1) to increase the proportion of people who are healthy at all stages of life, (2) to reduce health inequalities, (3) to protect the public from threats to health and wellbeing and (4) to create an environment where every individual and sector of society can play their part in achieving a healthy Ireland’ (www.gov.ie). Despite Ireland’s poor diet related health record, being introduced at a time when food poverty rates were increasing and when food poverty was regularly mentioned in the media food poverty/food insecurity/food insecurity is not mentioned the HI strategy. Much like Food Harvest 2020, Food is considered primarily in terms of clinical food safety - ‘reducing the prevalence of food-borne infections by improved compliance with food safety indicators’ (DoH, 2013: 37).

Beyond its reporting in the Social Inclusion Monitor, food poverty has gained limited attention in Ireland’s food and health policies. Thus, little has changed since the Food

Poverty and Policy ‘At a policy level food poverty per se has not received much attention and explicit efforts to alleviate the adverse implications of food poverty are sparse’ (Friel and Conlon, 2004:113). However, more recently the problem was acknowledged in Ireland’s Better Outcomes Brighter Futures: The National Policy Framework for Children and Young People (2014 – 2020). Here, the problem was framed within the context of choice and supporting healthier food environments with the government committing to:

Support children, young people and their parents to make healthier choices through education, addressing food poverty and ensuring that all educational and State institutions providing food and drink to children, whether directly or through franchised commercial services on-site, have a Healthy Foods policy and provide food that meets basic nutritional standards(GoI, 2014:57).

Food Poverty is also mentioned in Ireland’s policy on social enterprises. In July 2019, Ireland’s newly established Department of Rural and Community Development (DCRD) launched Ireland’s first National Policy on Social Enterprise presented as

unprecedented opportunity for policy on social enterprise to be developed, for the first time, in a coordinated and integrated way alongside other initiatives to support organisations that are providing services to communities, or tackling social or socio-economic issues.... to support disadvantaged groups, or to address wider societal issues such as food poverty, social housing, or environmental matters (3).

This could be perceived as a further devolution of government responsibility to its people and further clouds both responsibility and accountability. Nonetheless, there are still several national level responses to food poverty, albeit with limited or no government responsibility or accountability in terms of ensuring nutritious foods.

2.5 Responses to food poverty in the RoI.

2.5.1 Government

The long lasting health, social and economic impacts of poor diets in early life combined with the fact that children are ‘the most powerless groups in society’ (Friel and Conlon,

2004:41), places school meals as a central government response to food poverty across the globe. Ireland began its official school meals programme in 1914 under the Education (Provision of Meals) Act 1914. Initially, it was introduced as an urban based scheme for a period of two years and managed by the Minister for Government and Public Health (Carney, 1985). Subsequently the time period was removed and in 1930 the scheme was expanded to cover all schools in rural Gaeltacht areas (Irish Times, 1997). In 1947, control was transferred to the newly established Department of Social Welfare. Carney (1985) notes that, in the seven decades following the establishment of these schemes, ‘little attempt has been made to re-shape its provisions in response to the changing demographic, social and economic features of the country’ (Carney, 1985: 31).

Currently, there are two separate schemes within Ireland’s school meal programme, the statutory Urban School Meals Scheme (USMS) and the School Meals Local Projects Scheme (SMLP). The USMS is a statutory scheme operated by the Local Authorities (LA), who are under no obligation to participate, and is for primary schools only. This scheme is part-financed (50/50) by the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (DEASP) whose only role is to approve and provide funding. Administration and operations are the responsibility of the LA. The SMLP works slightly differently in that all schools (primary and secondary) can avail of this scheme in addition to local groups and voluntary organisations operating their own school meals projects. Funding is provided directly to the participating organisation and it was established to assist projects operating outside the USMS. The purpose of the scheme is to ‘provide regular, nutritious food to children who are unable, due to lack of good quality food, to take full advantage of the education provided to them’ (DEASP, 2018a). In 2018, in excess of 300 schools received funding from the USMS at a cost of roughly €1m and the SMLPS provided funding to approximately 1,580 schools and organisations at a total cost of roughly €54 million (DEASP, 2019). The current funding rate allocated per meal is €0.60

for breakfast or a snack, €1.40 for lunch and a drink and €1.90 for dinner and a drink (DSP, 2016a).

Harper et al. (2008) note that, since the establishment of these schemes, limited changes have occurred, in that it is more of a school snack scheme rather than a meals scheme for the majority of participants. Other criticisms are in relation to the high operation costs, significant amounts of food waste and poor quality of food (Harper et al., 2008), its permissive rather than mandatory legislation contributing to the lack of government accountability for its organisation or for the quality of the food being provided (Carney, 1985). In September 2017, official nutritional guidelines were introduced under the auspices of Healthy Ireland (HI). Nonetheless, teachers do experience difficulties in enforcing healthy eating policies and ‘unhealthy options such as chips, cookies, muffins and “treat” days [are] permitted to allow food operators to make a profit’ (Browne et al., 2019: 6).

At the EU level, Ireland also participates in the EU school milk scheme and School Fruit and Vegetable (merged since August 1st 2017) and FEAD. The EU School Milk Scheme has been in operation since 1982 with the objective of promoting and encouraging milk consumption amongst school children. The milk is distributed daily and parents pay a contribution towards the cost although the plan is to remove this in the coming years. In the school year 2015/2016, 42,544 school children (from nursery to post-primary) participated in this scheme. The EU School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme is used to support and upscale Bord Bia’s Food Dude programme which was established in 2004. Food Dudes aims ‘to increase fruit and vegetable consumption long term through repeated tasting of fruit and vegetables over 16 days, supported by role models (Food Dudes Heroes) and small rewards (accompanying measures)’ (8). In the school year 2015/2016, 122,136 school children participated in this programme. The budget allocated for both

the school milk scheme and the fruit and vegetable scheme from 2017 to 2023 is €16,199,062 (DAFM, 2017).

Prior to FEAD, Ireland participated in the MDP program (1987 – 2013) where in its final year saw €2.6 million worth of cheese, butter and rice redistributed through the MDP to 563 charities across Ireland in 2013 (Tom Hayes, Oireachtas debate, 11th December 2013). In 2014, the MDP was replaced by FEAD which was introduced in Ireland in 2016 under the Managing Authority of FEAD Ireland located within the Department of Social Protection. Twenty-two million euro of this is funded by EU and €4 million from the Irish exchequer. Roughly 65 percent of the funding is directed towards the provision of food and the remaining 35 percent towards the provision of non-food items, and both are distributed through FoodCloud Hubs. The food is then distributed nationally through what are termed ‘recipient organisations’ and include a range of third sector entities including family resource centres, addiction support programmes, community crèches, women’s refuges, food banks, homeless support services, youth programmes and senior citizens’ associations. As acknowledged in a European Commission report, FEAD complements food surplus redistribution and ‘increases *awareness* [Emphasis added] around surplus food and the *demand* [Emphasis added] for redistributed food’ (EC, 2019). In the programme’s first year of operation in 2016, 120 organizations catering to just under 55,000 people across 23 countries in Ireland benefited from FEAD (Kenny and Sage, 2019). According to the 2016 FEAD annual implementation report,

The charities use the product either to distribute in food packs or use them in meals prepared as part of their service. The content and frequency of the food packs and meals are then tailored to the needs of the end recipient by each charity (Managing Authority of FEAD, 2016: 3).

The 2017 annual FEAD report contains a reference in bold to the reduced food poverty rate in Ireland from 13.1 percent to 11.5 percent (FEAD Managing Authority, 2017: 17).

What seemed like a positive change to FEAD, in comparison to the MDP programme,

was the move away from relying on surplus food items to now purchasing items which opens up significant opportunities to include healthier food items and, in theory, support local producers if the political will is there for such endeavours. As indicated in Table 2.4, which provides a list of the available food chosen by Irish charities involved in food CFS, this is not the case. In 2017, 80,000 people ‘relied on food parcels in Ireland’ at a cost of €4.5 million through FEAD (Hutton, 2018).

Table 2.4: Food items available through FEAD

FEAD Products (Ireland, by case)	Brand	Company
Uncooked long grain rice - case of 12 x 500g bags	Gem	Gem
Pre-cooked long grain rice - case of 6 x 250g sachets	Uncle Bens	Mars Inc
Penne pasta - case of 12 x 500g bags	Homestead	Stonehouse Marketing Ltd
Pot Noodle (Chicken and Mushroom) – case of 12 x 90g pots	Pot Noodle	Unilever
Pasta sauce (Dolmio) - case of 6 x 500g jar	Dolmio	Mars Inc
Cup-A-Soup 4 Pack (Vegetable) - case of 12 x 4-pack boxes	Knorr	Unilever
Instant Soup (Family Packet - Vegetable) – 14 x 65g sachets	Knorr	Unilever
Canned soup (Vegetable) - case of 24 x 400g cans	Heinz	Kraft-Heinz
Tea bags - case of 12 x box of 80 tea bags	Lyons	Unilever
Coffee - case of 12 x 200g jars	Maxwell House	Kraft-Heinz
Sugar – 15 x 1kg bags	Gem	Gem
Canned beans - case of 24 x 420g cans	Homestead	Stonehouse Marketing Ltd
Canned peas – 24 x 420g cans	Homestead	Stonehouse Marketing Ltd
Canned sweetcorn – 12 x 326g cans	Homestead	Stonehouse Marketing Ltd
Canned tomatoes – 12 x 400g cans	Homestead	Stonehouse Marketing Ltd
Canned tuna – 12 x 185g cans	John West	Thai Union Group
Canned fruit cocktail – 12 x 425g cans	Homestead	Stonehouse Marketing Ltd
Weetabix - case of 12 x 430g boxes (24 wheat biscuits)	Weetabix	Post holding
Cornflakes - case of 16 x 450g boxes	Kellogg's	Kellogg's
Rice Krispies - case of 14 x 510g boxes	Kellogg's	Kellogg's
All Bran – 12 x 375g boxes	Kellogg's	Kellogg's
Porridge Oats - case of 12 x 500g bags	Flahavan	Flahavans
Instant porridge pots – 12 x 44g pots	Flahavan	Flahavans

Ireland's national health service, the Health Service Executive (HSE), part-funds 'meals-on-wheels' which have operated in Ireland since the 1950s. For the vast majority of these organisations, the objective is to 'provide a meal for those unable to cook for themselves' (O'Dwyer and Timonen, 2008: 99). This service delivers a full dinner two to three times a week to isolated and disadvantaged elderly people in the community at a small cost of between three and four euro per dinner. Eighty percent of meals-on-wheels services are registered charities or do not have any formal status and the majority of its workers (89%) are volunteers (O'Dwyer and Timonen, 2008). In line with Corish and Kennedy's (2003)

findings of high rates of obesity and malnutrition among older people living in Ireland, O’ Dwyer and Timonen’s (2008) findings, specific to meals-on-wheels recipients, also indicated the presence of both. A nutritional assessment of the meals provided indicate adequate energy but inadequate levels of vitamin D, calcium, folate and vitamin C, in addition to an over reliance on meat and not enough vegetables, fruit and dairy. It is estimated that between 10,000 and 12,000 persons in Ireland use these services (O’Dwyer & Timonen, 2008); although now the number is likely to be higher due to Ireland’s aging population and post economic crisis austerity measures. Prior to the economic crash, the Food Poverty and Policy report recommended increasing the availability of these extremely valuable services (Friel and Conlon, 2004).

2.5.2 Community Food Initiatives

In response to Friel and Conlon’s (2004) report, Healthy Food for All (HFfA), an all-island initiative, was established in 2006 to address diet related ill-health and to eradicate food poverty in Ireland. The initiative was launched by Combat Poverty Agency, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul and Crosscare²⁹, with additional funding from the Department of Social and Family Affairs, the Health Service Executive (HSE), Safefood, and Food Safety Authority of Ireland³⁰ (FSAI). Ten years later, HFfA was disbanded due to lack of funding. However, the All Island Food Poverty Network (FPN), another all-island body formed in 2009 and tasked with supporting ‘a co-ordinated and strategic approach to tackling food poverty on the island of Ireland through the development of consensus on related issues, collaboration and shared learning’ (Safefood, 2019) is still in operation and their work to date will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Six. Prior to the disbandment

²⁹ Ireland’s first food bank discussed in the following section.

³⁰ FSAI are a statutory science based body whose function is to monitor and ensure compliance with food laws.

of HFfA, a key area of focus was on development of community food initiatives as a response to food poverty.

Community Food Initiatives are a much-championed response to food poverty problems in Ireland. Safefood Ireland, an all Island body tasked with communicating issues in relation to food safety, food hygiene and nutrition, and co-chair of the All Island Food Poverty Network describe Community Food Initiatives (CFIs) as practical response.

‘... means by which barriers to healthy eating can be addressed in a practical manner at a local level. They provide an excellent opportunity to combat food poverty in the local area, giving the power of choice and change back to local communities’ (Safefood, 2013a:1)

In 2008, Healthy Food for All (HFfA), was awarded funding to establish a demonstration programme for Community Food Initiatives (CFI). Seven CFIs across Ireland, all located in disadvantaged areas, were chosen and the aim of the programme was ‘to promote greater access and availability of healthy food in low income areas, through a programme of local projects using a community development approach’ (Safefood, 2013). An evaluation of the overall programme highlighted that each CFI within this programme was successful in making a difference to food poverty at the micro level by providing education and fresh food; training and skills in gardening and cooking; supporting vulnerable people and an ‘improved sense of community’ (HFfA/Safefood, 2013:6).

It is worth noting that the focus on improving cooking, budgeting, shopping skills reflects the findings and proposed community-based recommendations of a Safefood (2011) report entitled ‘Food on Low-income: Four households tell their story’. This report acknowledged that food poverty is couched in limited finance other findings were ‘weak self-regulation regarding cooking and food choices’, ‘self-acknowledged poor time management’, ‘food was for fuel’ and separated from health (63), and a ‘...conservatism

about food choices ...dictated by a combination of individual tastes and financial constraints' (27).

An additional ten CFIs were funded from 2013-2015 and a one year review highlighted that one project were 'beginning to address food poverty' (Weafer et al., 2014: 17). Prior to its closure in March 2016, HFfA called for further investment in community food initiatives in 2016 arguing that:

These Initiatives help to improve the availability, affordability and accessibility of healthy food for low income groups at the local level and they empower people to identify and address the food needs within their own community through community gardens, local cooperatives, community cafés, cookery/nutrition classes, budgeting and supermarket tours (HFfA, 2015).

Safefood have earmarked a further €630,000 to fund 14 CFIs from 2019 to 2021. Since 2010, a total of 30 communities have received funding for CFI 'which aims to positively influence the eating habits of families with children in low-income communities by focusing on the skills and knowledge around food and healthy eating, healthier shopping and enhanced cooking skills' (safefood.eu).

In Ireland, the focus '...on personal instead of social or economic reform' can be traced back to public health voluntary led initiatives to improve maternal and child health in the early 1900s (Miller, 2014:160). However, this is not an Irish specific state of affairs and, as Mason and Lang (2017: 176) highlight, 'there is a long tradition of health professionals and other scientists describing the diets of people on low incomes as unhealthy because of ignorance'. Similarly, in the UK, Midgely (2012) notes that food poverty tends to be linked to underlying practices that reflect what Dowler (2002:706) refers to as 'human inefficiencies' in budgeting, food purchases, preparation and cooking skills. However, the evidence to suggest that cooking and budgeting skills are lacking in low income communities in comparison to high income communities is lacking (Fabian Commission, 2015). As Garthwaite (2015) notes, financing a healthy diet is the problem rather than the

lack of cooking skills and knowledge. Alternatively, the Fabian Commission recommend that: ‘Instead of moral exhortations to people to eat better food, there needs to be an acknowledgement of the environment in which these choices are made, followed by action to change the environment’ (Fabian Commission, 2015:14). It is also worth highlighting that research elsewhere found no association between food skills or using a community garden and an exit out of food poverty (Loopstra and Tarasuk, 2013; McIntyre et al., 2014).

2.5.3 Food banks

‘We may find in the long run that tinned food is a deadlier weapon than the machine-gun’ –

George Orwell

Following European trends (Caraher, 2015; Bagoloni et al., 2017; Riches, 2018), Ireland has witnessed a significant growth of charitable food provisioning, including the proliferation of food banks. This form of charitable food provisioning did not exist in Ireland prior to 1989 when CrossCare, a longstanding charitable organisation founded in Dublin in 1941, opened Ireland’s first food bank. In late 2015, CrossCare opened a central Food Bank in Dublin to act as a distribution centre in order ‘to meet the demand for food assistance’, in addition to six community-based food banks (Crosscare.ie), all established in the era that the Department of Social Protection (2018) refer to as the early economic recovery period. Indeed, throughout this period and at a time when Ireland’s economy is the fastest growing in Europe, new food banks have popped up throughout Ireland (Masterson, 2015; McDonagh, 2017; Boland, 2017). To date, no research exists on the scale of operations.

Overall, since Friel and Conlon's (2004) seminal report, Ireland's response to food poverty has largely been focused on developing and supporting Community Food Initiatives (CFIs), upscaling the School Meal Schemes, participation in EU schemes, and more recently, supporting indirect services such as those offered by new entrants into the charitable food sector; social enterprises providing food bank services. In this regard, one recommendation from the 2004 Food Poverty and Policy report was to improve the extent of food distribution and its provision noting how the food industry, in line with CSR, can 'make a vital contribution to food redistribution programmes...' (Friel and Conlon, 2004:13). However, they also warned that

From the food provider's perspective, food donations from private industry must be improved. Food donations from partners in industry must be of nutritional value and not just a cheap mechanism of waste disposal for that organisation.... Financial redistribution through equitable taxation by the government was believed to be a better approach than surplus goods distribution or social contributions by private partners (Friel and Conlon, 2004: 111)

2.5.4 Social Enterprises

A significant change to the charitable landscape in recent years has been the entry of social enterprises streamlining the availability and efficiency of surplus food redistribution. FoodCloud Hubs (FCH), formerly the Bia Food Initiative (BFI), was established in Cork in 2012 as a not-for-profit social enterprise. As per their constitution, the purpose of FCH is the 'relief of poverty in Ireland by making provision for people suffering from hunger and/or malnutrition through waste reduction and sharing of surplus food and groceries...' (Benefacts.ie, 2017). Unlike some traditional food banks, FoodCloud Hubs does not have any contact with the end recipients. Instead, it provides a logistical solution for the movement of large quantities of surplus food with a minimum of three days shelf life from food industry partners to registered charities. This service is driven by the goal that 'no food should be wasted while people are going hungry' (Carroll and O' Connor, 2016:28) and, to cover the cost of storage and transport, a nominal fee is

applied to charities engaging in this service. However, if surplus food is left over after the orders from charities have been processed, the surplus is offered free of charge to avoid any potential food waste. In 2016, FCH opened two additional warehouses, won the contract to procure for and administer FEAD, and joined forces with FoodCloud, hence the name change from BFI to FCH. In a press release announcing this new partnership FoodCloud Hubs states that ‘we believe that together FoodCloud Hubs and FoodCloud will have a transformative impact on addressing the problems of food waste and food poverty in Ireland and internationally’ (FoodCloud Hubs, 2016; West Cork People, 2016 cited in Kenny and Sage, 2018).

The origin of FCH bears resemblance to the establishment and spread of food banking in the United States. The first food bank to open in the US was St. Mary’s food bank founded in 1967 by John van Hengel and Robert McCarty, both volunteers at the local St. Vincent de Paul Society³¹ (SVP) in Phoenix, Arizona. Similarly, here the concept, of what was originally called the Bia Food Bank before becoming the BFI, was brought to fruition by a number of people, with one man, Brendan Dempsey, being especially key to its formation. At the time Mr Dempsey was a lorry driver tasked with ‘dumping tonnes of food from factories into holes in the ground’ (Carrol and O’Connor, 2016:30). As a volunteer in the local St. Vincent DePaul (SVP) and former regional manager of SVP Brendan was keenly aware of the need for a steady food supply for SVP in Cork city. With the help of numerous other individuals, the current FoodCloud Hubs was born.

Another key person and founding father of this system is Jack Dunphy. Previously Mr Dunphy was involved in setting up Crosscare’s food bank and also served for 15 years on FEBA board of management (<https://food.cloud/board-of-directors/>). While in the case

31 SVP are a Christian based international voluntary based organisation focused on poverty alleviation in 140 countries across the Globe (SVP, 2019)

of the US both Van Hengel and McCarty travelled to various countries spreading this food banking model (Riches, 2018), in the Irish case, it has been FCH partner's model of surplus redistribution that is attaining international recognition and spread attributed to its technological focus enabling the capture of food surplus straight from the shelves of supermarkets.

FoodCloud (FC) is widely celebrated addition to the charitable food distribution landscape in Ireland. FC was launched as a not-for-profit social enterprise in Dublin in 2013 by two now highly acclaimed social entrepreneurs (for full list of awards see: <https://food.cloud/category/awards/>). FoodCloud's purpose is 'to benefit the community and relieve poverty by creating innovative solutions for the redistribution of surplus food and groceries, that reduces food waste, increases social inclusion, reducing food poverty and brings communities together through shared food' (Benefacts.ie, 2017b). FC uses a mobile application and a cloud-based platform to connect supermarket surplus directly with charities and in comparison to FCH, the food generally has a shorter shelf life. The registered charities then either collect this food at a pre-arranged time and day or this is not possible, the FC volunteers, of which there are roughly 200 (Weymes and Davies: 2019) collect and deliver the food. There is no cost associated with engaging in this service and similar to FCH, these 'back-line' services (Table 2.5) supply front-line charities and do not have contact with the end user. Figure 2.1 provides a clear representation of the differences in their operations.

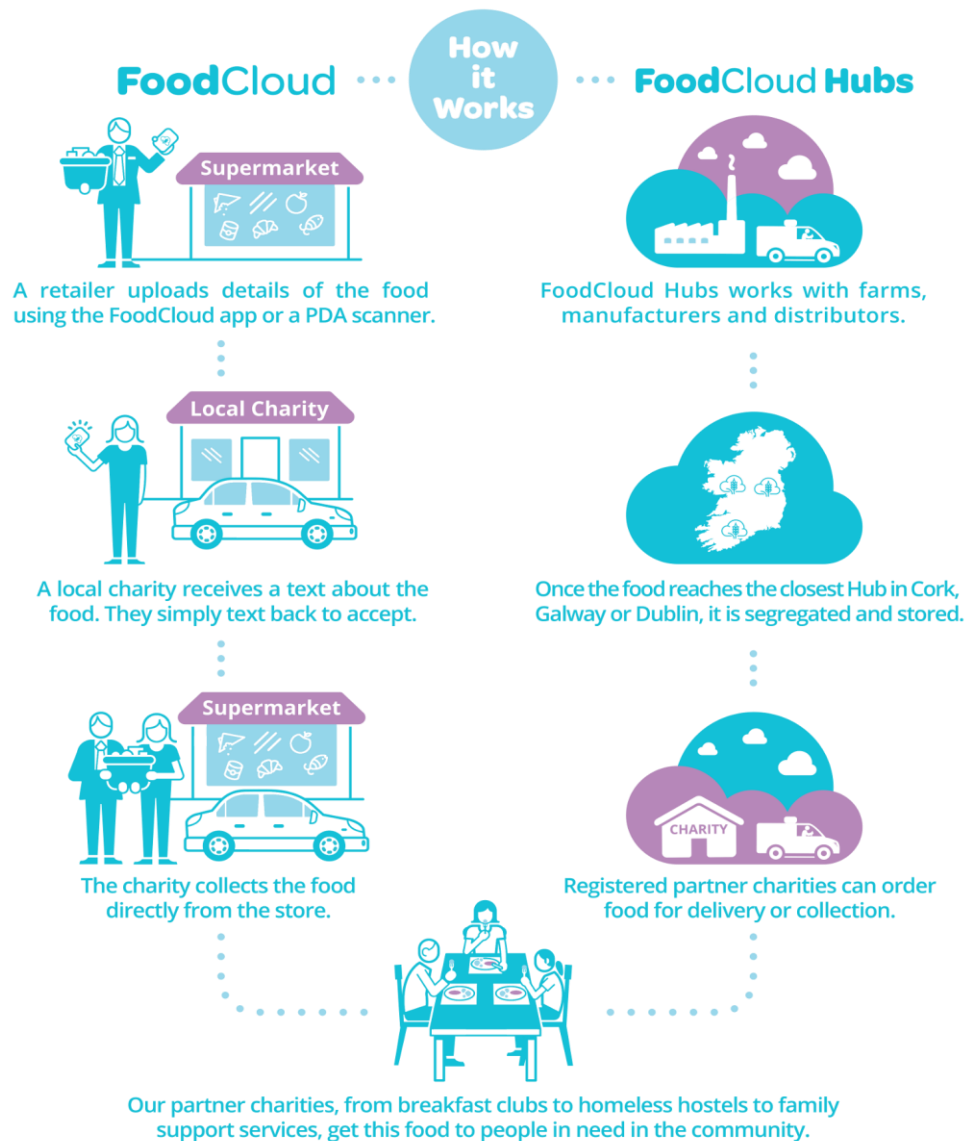


Figure 2.1: FoodCloud and FoodCloud Hubs supply systems

Source: Origin Green (<https://www.origingreen.ie/who-is-involved/partners/food-cloud/>)

By 2015, 640 tonnes of food was donated to 325 charities across Ireland equating to a ‘1.08 million meals’, a measurement gauged by weight whereby any 0.5kg of food is considered one meal (Wood, 2016). In 2016, FoodCloud expanded their operation to Waitrose stores and 1000 Tesco stores in the UK (FoodCloud, 2017). By October 2016, they had distributed 3,320 tonnes of food in Ireland and the UK (Murphy, 2016) and

importantly, Tesco had won the ‘IGD³² Sustainable Future Award’, sponsored by Unilever, for its partnership with FoodCloud. By February 2017, FoodCloud and FoodCloud Hubs had distributed ‘8.5 million meals’ (Reeve, 2017: 57).

FoodCloud are active in policy circles both in Ireland and at the European level and are considered a ‘key actor in national and European policy’ in reducing food loss and waste ‘... actively shaping food policy’ (Davies et al., 2019:15). In July 2017, FoodCloud spearheaded, along with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Ireland Waste Prevention Charter³³, they represent Ireland within FEBA, and are also a member of the EU platform on Food Losses and Food Waste mentioned earlier in this chapter. Since 2019, FC and FCH are simply referred to as FoodCloud and Table 2.5 outlines their scope of their operations, key actors, terms (including the recognition of these redistribution organisations as food banks) along with issues of liability, responsibility and best before dates.

32 The Institute of Grocery Distribution

33 Ireland’s Food Waste Charter was established in 2017 with a goal of reducing food waste by 50% by 2030. It is managed by Ireland Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Communication, Climate Action and Environment. ‘As part of the Charter, the Retail Action Group brings together five of Ireland’s largest retailers to work towards reducing food waste in the retail sector. This group has the ability to support the donation of food for redistribution collectively’ (EC, 2019)

Table 2.5: Surplus Food Redistribution in Ireland: Actors, Terms & Specifications

Redistribution of Surplus food in Ireland: Scope, Actors, Terms, Responsibilities	
What can be donated	‘Food may be donated by food manufacturers, caterers, retailers and other types of food businesses once the food is in an acceptable condition and where a “use-by” date is declared, the food is within this date. Food which has gone beyond its “best before” date may be donated provided that it is in an acceptable condition and is handled safely’
Examples of food donation actions	‘Technological and logistical solutions (redistribution “hubs”) managed by FoodCloud have been developed to facilitate food donation in Ireland at a national level. Five of Ireland’s largest retailers collectively support the donation of food for redistribution’
Relevant Actors	‘food banks, food businesses donating food, charities receiving food, redistribution centres’
Terms used to describe activities	‘donor organisations 80, front-line organisations / charity organisations (CO) 81, back-line organisations / redistribution. Organisations [FoodCloud Hubs] – also called "food banks" in some Member States’
Responsibility and liability	‘Donors are responsible for food safety up to the point of donation, after which charities become responsible. Each charity partner is responsible for food safety within its own organisation. Likewise, product liability lies with the food donor until the point of collection by the community organisation/food bank. Once accepted, the liability lies with the charity or food bank until the product is passed on to the end user or the customer’

Best before date specifications	‘Food can be redistributed after its “best before” date. FSAI Guidance Note 18228 refers to all food and this principle is carried through to food redistribution. “The best before date typically reflects <i>the quality rather</i> [Emphasis added] than safety of a food product. Therefore food which is past its best before date may not be unsafe to consume but may not be of optimum quality...”
Fiscal rules	A zero rate of VAT applies to the free supply of most foodstuffs
FEAD	‘FEAD does not directly support food redistribution in Ireland as there continues to be a lack of clarity around the practical application of Article 26 in Regulation (EU) No 223/2014 on the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived. FoodCloud hubs runs the FEAD programme in parallel to their activities of surplus food redistribution. The programme <i>increases awareness around surplus food and the demand for redistributed food</i>’

Source: (EC, 2019. Redistribution of surplus food: Examples of practices in the Member States EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste)

Much like in the early days of the development of the food banking system within the US (Riches, 2018), using food waste to feed the poor is seen as an innovative and effective response to food poverty. To date, any critical questions regarding the development of a national food redistribution or recognition of the wider food system issues have been avoided and as will be discussed in the next section, much of the narrative surrounding these developments have been celebratory.

2.5.5 Community effort

Carroll and O' Connor (2016) suggest that the 'organisation [now known as FoodCloud Hubs] neither engages in rhetoric on food poverty nor on food insecurity' (28) media reports communicate a divergent story with numerous headlines in Ireland championing community food banks and BFI as a 'Fresh approach to solve food poverty' (O'Doherty, 2013), 'Food banks to tackle poverty crisis' (O'Riordan, 2014) and as 'a great form of community effort' by Joan Burton, Ireland's then Minister for Social Protection (Holland, 2015a). Likewise, the minister's predecessor perceived its establishment as '...a significant step in developing a national operation that allows for the twin issues of food surplus and food poverty to be tackled' (DSP, 2014).

In 2014, a national Irish newspaper, described how the impending global population growth would require more food to be produced and that a third of all food produced for consumption was wasted before concluding that 'the problem with Ireland is it is very poorly served by food banks...although efforts are under way to set up a national network of food banks' with specific reference to the then 'Bia Food Bank' (Griffin, 2014). By 2015, media reports were focused on the mission of FoodCloud to create a much more 'efficient system' by increasing the capacity of the charities, enabling further food surplus redistribution (Kirwin, 2015); in addition to their role in enabling businesses and charities to come together 'to solve' the problems of food waste and food poverty within their own

communities (Food Cloud Annual Report, 2015; Think Business, 2016). Essentially, FoodCloud was presented as a solution to food poverty but in need of ‘5,000 charities’ to make sure all that food finds a home. Given the widely acclaimed success of FoodCloud and FoodCloud Hubs in Ireland, many additional businesses have been eager to support these social enterprises addressing the problem of food waste and ‘tackling food poverty in the process’ (Social Entrepreneurs Ireland, 2017). In August 2017, Lidl announced ‘an anti-food poverty partnership’ with FoodCloud (Business and Finance, 2017) and this same month FoodCloud attracted a €30,000 donation from the technology company Ricoh Ireland because the FoodCloud approach, ‘to find an environmentally sound solution to help solve the issue of food poverty’, appealed to Ricoh’s sustainability ethos’ (Kelly, 2017). In September 2017, Green News Ireland featured a headline ‘Food waste to fuel the fight against food poverty’ (Green News Ireland, 2017).

In December 2018, FoodCloud teamed up with Aldi’s ‘Food for Good’ Christmas food drive marketing campaign encouraging people to donate food items in one of its 137 stores across Ireland. According to the founder of FoodCloud, ‘Every Christmas we all find ourselves with that extra box of biscuits or Christmas cake that we didn’t really need after all’. Although the premise was by donating this food which is not surplus [at a box in your local Aldi store], you are ‘preventing waste and helping people in need’ (Checkout, 2018). This endeavour ventures beyond saving food from waste and redistributing surplus. As Blake (2017) notes, food that is purchased is not surplus. A similar practice was noted in relation to Fareshare’s work partnering with retailers to encourage in store, purchased food donations in the UK (Lambie-Mumford, 2014).

2.5.6 Government & corporate interests and support

In Ireland, charitable food redistribution is supported by numerous government agencies such as the EPA, the Department of Social Protection, Pobal³⁴, local city councils. Origin Green³⁵, Ireland's national agri-food sustainability programme which partnered with FoodCloud in 2017, are also keen to enrol their producers to increase Ireland's 'sustainability' claims (Carrol and O'Connor, 2016), a much-needed venture considering Ireland's intensive stocking rates and ever increasing GHG emissions.³⁶ As mentioned in the previous section, past Minister(s) for Social Protection have taken the time to attend, commend and celebrate the openings of these national food redistribution operations in 2012, 2015 and 2017 and as referenced in Ireland's Climate Action plan FoodCloud are perceived as a key actor in the prevention and reduction of Ireland's food waste (2019): 'We shall develop a strategy with the food sector and the food cloud to deliver our commitment to 50% reduction of food waste'. Of particular note, is that this action falls under the subheading of 'priority areas for prevention...' (Government of Ireland, 2019: 116).

A Transmango (2016) case study of FoodCloud Hubs suggested that the Irish State might even absorb this initiative:

although this might give cause for worry in some respects, it would mean that there is a centralised government agency with responsibility for feeding the hungry while reducing food waste – an undeniable step in the right direction. These findings demonstrate an up-and-out scaling potential...and further emphasise this

34 Pobal manages and supports, on behalf of the government, programmes and services aimed at increasing equality and social inclusion (<https://www.pobal.ie/about-pobal/>)

35 Origin Green is Ireland's food promotion boards (Bord Bia) 'pioneering approach to food sustainability' (origingreen.ie). More recently, the Origin Green programme came under fire when it was noted that three of Ireland's worst offenders in relation to compliance with Environmental legislation are certified Origin Green businesses (O' Sullivan, 2017).

36 In July 2019, Ireland introduced its first Climate Action Plan highlighting its commitment to meet its international climate obligations (Agenda 2030, Paris agreement, Sustainable Development goals, UN Convention on Climate Change). Key areas of focus include agriculture, transport, buildings, enterprise and services, waste and the circular economy (Government of Ireland, 2019)

organisations capacity to transform the food system in Ireland towards greater food and nutrition security (Carrol and O'Connor, 2016:36).

Considering their growth and success to date, it is likely that these social enterprises do have the capacity to contribute towards transforming the Irish food system. What is unclear is if this would be for the betterment of those left reliant on surplus and the necessary transition towards more sustainable food production and diets to ensure both human and planetary health. Moreover, their role in furthering food and nutrition security is less clear given the focus on quantities of food rather than the types of food. Although as mentioned earlier, research does suggest surplus food redistribution in Ireland has increased the quality and choice of food available to charities based on interviews with nine key stakeholders which includes its founders, its donors, its recipient and food safety and waste policy experts (Weymes and Davies, 2019:8).

As evidenced in Box 2, charitable food redistribution has grown exponentially since 2013 and is supported by numerous corporate and government actors. Food banks have become institutionalised in the US and Canada. According to Dave Beck (2019), drawing on the work of Riches (2018), the UK seem to be following the same trajectory. Arguably, Ireland can now be added to this list. Riches (2018) points to three stages of institutionalization of food banks. The first stage is the establishment of a national food bank provider (FoodCloud & FoodCloud Hubs). Stage two, this provider establishes partnerships and alliances with food companies (Tesco, Nestle, Aldi) and food redistribution organisations (charities) and stage three, the provider forms a relationship with the state (FEAD, funding from DAFM to expand services, funding from Community Services Programme to pay staff wages, reference to FoodCloud in Climate Change Action Plan). Holt-Gimenez (2017) suggests that, elsewhere, food waste has generated a significant number of enterprises, jobs – people – now dependant on food waste a by-product of a Capitalist food system and this seems to be the case in Ireland.

Box 2. Selected timeline of the development of social entrepreneurial charitable food provision in Ireland.

2012:	Bia Food Initiative established in Cork City with Tesco donating €60,000 initial start-up costs and a further €40,000 worth of infrastructure.
2013:	FoodCloud established in Dublin starting with ‘one Tesco store, a few small food stores and six partner charities’
2014:	Minister for Social Protection announces a three-year funding contract for the Bia Food Initiative (welfare.ie, 2014)
2014:	FoodCloud announce partnership with Tesco who offer €250,000 for a one-year contract. National roll-out begins across Ireland and FoodCloud founders wins Social Entrepreneur Ireland Impact award which comes with €100,000 award and two years of business support ‘which will keep FoodCloud growing’ (Gibson, 2014)
2016:	Bia Food Initiative open two new warehouses in Dublin and Galway, BFI and FoodCloud merge and by October 24th 2016, had rescued 3,320 tonnes of food equating to 7.3 million meals (Murphy, 2016)
2016:	FEAD begin Pilot study through FoodCloud Hubs, Opal joins FoodCloud as their transport partner ‘allowing it to scale rapidly’ and FoodCloud expand to the UK (Think business, 2016)
2017:	FoodCloud founder names as one of the ‘30 under 30 Europe’ list of leading innovators, entrepreneurs and leaders. FoodCloud app listed as number three in the Guardians newspaper top ten food waste apps (FoodCloud, 2017a; FoodCloud, 2017b).
2017:	‘274 Irish retailer and 303 charities; ‘8,300 tonnes of food or more than 18 million meals have been diverted from landfill’ (Clearly, 2017) and 20 million meals were distributed to charities across Ireland and the UK (FoodCloud, Facebook)
2017:	FoodCloud awarded €111, 407 through Ireland’s Department of Food and the Marine, Rural Innovation and Development Fund to support ‘food companies and charities in rural Ireland to solve the problem of food waste through surplus redistribution’ (Agriculture.gov.ie, 2017)
2017:	Tesco ‘pledged €150,000 to tackle food poverty’ through their community chill campaign offering fridges and freezers to charities to allow them to distribute more food (Cork’s RedFm, 2017)
2018:	FoodCloud becomes a member of FEBA and partners with Nestle.
2019:	FoodCloud present at FAO on how ‘FEBA and FAO can work together to create sustainable solutions to reduce food waste and achieve SDG 12.3’ (https://twitter.com/FoodCloud?lang=en)
2019:	FoodCloud announces plans for expansion to Australia, Czech Republic and Poland (Whelan, 2019) and are noted as a key actor in the prevention and reduction of Ireland’s food waste in the Government of Irelands Climate Action plan 2019 (GoI, 2019)

The benefits to the food industry are numerous and as highlighted on FoodClouds website these include a ‘Reduction in waste disposal costs and carbon footprint, positive brand sentiment, strengthening community relationships and increased staff engagement and fulfilment’ (www.food.cloud/FAQ/2016). The recipient list is also extensive and include ‘children and youth at risk of food poverty, the elderly, those who are homeless, those

who are going through drug and alcohol rehabilitation, women who are escaping domestic violence and families with low incomes who need help to get by' (ibid). Another outlined benefit is that of cost saving that frees up resources within the charitable sector 'which they can then re-invest in essential programmes to support their underlying mission' (ibid). Recent European based research which includes Ireland suggests these initiatives show 'dynamics that have the potential for a more substantial transformation towards food security over time, by building momentum through "small wins" (Hebinck et al., 2018:389-403). Under the 'system innovations' section, they suggest that 'Charities save funds (otherwise spent on food) that can now be directed to address root causes of poverty (e.g. education)'. As mentioned in Chapter One, a similar economic justification was used for direct international food aid in its early days.

2.6 Discussion

Nutrition and quality are key aspects in the definitions of food poverty yet are ignored in the measurement of the problem and while the social exclusion aspect of food poverty is measured, it is excluded from the reporting of food poverty rates. As highlighted by Healy (2019), if this indicator was to be included, the rate of food poverty would double, affecting over one fifth of the population which is more in line with the poverty rates at the time of her analysis. The RTF and a commitment to social justice is enshrined in the Irish Constitution, namely by ensuring everyone has the right to an adequate means of livelihood and for those unable to work, through state protection and welfare. The principles of protecting, respecting, and fulfilling the RTF offers a useful guiding framework for those working in this area, in terms of both examining the factors impacting food poverty and in monitoring government action and inactions.

Ireland has the fastest growing economy in Europe but also has the highest incidence of low paid employment in the EU15. Wage inequality is the highest in the OECD and the consistent poverty rate has actually increased since 2010. One in six people live below the poverty line and, from this, it can be inferred that one in six are unable to secure a healthy diet. ‘Hungry people are the income poor, the under and unpaid members of the precariat’ (Jones, 2017 cited in Riches, 2018:31). The same two groups of people continue to struggle. In group one are the young, the old, lone parents, those with illnesses and disabilities, the unemployed, namely those outside the labour market and reliant inadequate social transfers. In group two are the underemployed, precariously employed, and low paid or, as Jones (2017 cited in Riches, 2018:31) suggests, those ‘earning their poverty’. Bringing the attention back to these structural inequalities is critical to the work of those attempting to address food poverty.

Social transfers are the primary method for reducing poverty but these have not kept pace with the increasing cost of living (Sweeney & Wilson, 2019), evidenced by the growing number of people on the social housing list, in mortgage arrears and homeless. Despite minimal progress towards the EU poverty reduction targets, Ireland’s poverty reduction effectiveness is still one of the highest in Europe, attributed to the levels of inequality prior to social transfers. Furthermore, over half of people living in poverty are outside the labour market such as retired persons, lone parents unable to afford childcare, students, and those in caring roles. Despite a declining rate of food poverty over the last three years, there has been little change when examined over two periods of time – during the economic crisis and early recovery, with both periods having an average rate of roughly 11 percent.

There are clear social gradients visible within diets in Ireland. Income, food prices, and food environments are key factors influencing diets. While the food environment may not

be as important in terms of indicators as income would be (Tarasuk 2016) given the power of at least a level of choice afforded by money, it is an important consideration in the context charitable food environments where choice is limited or unavailable and thus shaped by what foods are donated.

In the last decade, a number of government funded responses aimed at tackling food poverty have unfolded. These include the expansion of the School Meals schemes, the formation of Healthy Food for All in 2006/7 (disbanded in 2016), the creation of the All-Island Food Poverty Network in 2009, Safefood funded Community Food Initiatives and the initiation of FEAD in 2016. This includes the expansion of the charitable food system through the support of social entrepreneurs aiding the efficient redistribution of surplus food through Ireland. At the national level, food poverty is largely invisible in health policies, agricultural policies and poverty reduction strategies and most initiatives are community and voluntary led (Dowler and O'Connor, 2012). However, members of Ireland's dedicated All-Island Food Poverty Network include government agencies and bodies and the workings of this group offer a gateway to understanding the current thinking at the level of policy, or at least of those close proximity to policy makers.

Overall, the role of surplus redistribution in addressing food poverty and its associated concerns in Ireland has thus far escaped any critical scholarly attention. Despite much celebratory media responses to the development of Ireland's charitable food redistribution sector, the potential longer-term implications of these developments have yet to be explored outside of the frame of 'innovation'. While research has pointed to an increase in access to high quality food being made available to charities as a result of surplus food redistribution (Wyemes and Davies, 2019), the agency afforded to the end user is not discussed. The dominant discourse, reflective of the those discussed in chapter one, do seem to be more food charity and the only concern seems to be food safety to avoid

potential liability as demonstrated in in Table 2.5. What remains unexplored is the quality or types of food being distributed. While there is a need to reduce food losses and waste, which surplus redistribution contribute to, equally important are the other measures outlined by the Eat-Lancet commission: the reduction in the excess production and consumption of animal sourced and unhealthy foods, and an increase in plant-based foods. At the same taking into account the criticisms of food charity elsewhere, such as lack of perishable items which include animal sourced food (Simmet et al., 2017) and the abundance of unhealthy food items (Horst et al., 2014) are also important considerations in the Irish context.

The redistribution of surplus food is an accepted and celebrated response to food poverty in Ireland and the research question central to this thesis is what factors influence food governance in the contemporary charitable food system and what are the implications at the local level. As such, the overall purpose of this thesis is to explain the factors contributing to maintaining the status quo by focusing on the actors governing the charitable food system in the Republic of Ireland. Using Cork as a case study, the governance of food in Cork's local charitable food environment is explored through the concepts of culture, agency, and social structures, as outlined in section 1.4.

The next chapter outlines the subsidiary research questions explored to address the overarching research questions and the methods chosen to address each question.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Embracing a mixed method approach typical of CR research (Vincent and O'Mahoney, 2014), the goal of this thesis is to explore Ireland's charitable food system, using Cork city as an embedded case study. Based on the assertion that food charity and surplus food as a response to poverty is widely accepted and is influencing the diets of a significant number of people, a key CR informed question that this thesis aims to answer is what structures, processes, and ideas are facilitating the current trajectory. This chapter provides, first, an overview of the case study approach employed and a brief summation of the research process followed by an in-depth explanation of the methodological tools used to answer each of the subsidiary research questions, as outlined below.

Research questions

Overarching Research Questions

- (1) What organisations are responding to food poverty in Cork?
- (2) What factors influence food governance within Ireland's contemporary charitable food system and what are the implications at the local level?
- (3) How is the problem of food poverty represented at the national level?

Subsidiary Research Questions

- (1) Who is involved in the charitable food system in Cork, how do these organisations operate and who are the users?
- (2) What are the understandings, opinions, beliefs and motivations of those working within these charities?

- (3) Who is using Food Bank services in Cork city and what is the level of food insecurity and ill-health experienced by these people?
- (4) What types of surplus food are flowing through the charitable food system in Ireland?
- (5) How has the problem of food poverty been represented within the All-Island Food Poverty Network?

3.1 Case study approach and overview of the research Process

This thesis utilized a case study approach to explore the factors influencing Ireland's contemporary charitable food system with a particular focus on the responses to food poverty in Cork. An embedded rather than a holistic case study design (Yin, 2014) was chosen to address the research questions concerning the local charitable food environment which required both quantitative and qualitative data to capture the breadth of inquiry. As such 'multiple bounded systems (cases)' (Creswell et al, 2007: 37) were explored to present a description and analyses of a selection of the organisations involved in charitable food provisioning, and of the recipients of food charity in Cork. In line with Yin's (2014) postpositive conceptualisation of case study research, and as such, its compatibility with critical realism, subjectivity, the fallibility of observations, and inherent researcher bias is acknowledged. To address these issues, triangulation in the form of multiple methods are employed to understand the contemporary charitable food system in context. Additionally, in the acknowledgement that charitable food provisioning as a response to food poverty in Cork does not exist in a vacuum, entities operating at the national level were also explored to provide a more comprehensive analysis charitable food provisioning in its contemporary form (Yin, 2014; Harrison et al., 2017). The multiplicity of information was then explored and analysed focusing on 'different salient aspects of the case' (Scholz and Tietji, 2002: 10). The ultimate goal of

case study research is to explore an issue, in depth and in context – ‘real world setting’ (Yin, 2014:16) - in order to understand the phenomenon from the perspective of the actors involved (Harrison et al., 2017), including the how and why of the phenomena under study (Yin, 2014).

The research began by compiling a database of potential organisations involved in charitable food provisioning in Cork and then designing, pilot testing, and distributing a survey to elucidate the workings of each potential organisation engaged in charitable food provisioning. Following on from this, a group of self-selecting local direct services (n=18), along with three representatives from national indirect services participated in semi-structured interviews to further explore the workings of charitable food system. Next, a database containing a list of all foods that passed through the then Bia Food Initiative (now FoodCloud Hubs) warehouses in Cork, Galway, and Dublin in 2014, 2015, and 2016 was obtained for analysis, whereupon a basic exploration of this data by category of food over this 27 month period ensued. Given the time constraints of a detailed exploration of this data (68,000+ cells), the NOVA method of analysis, explained in detailed in section 3.5.1, was carried out on one month in each of the year (6,237 items). From here, an additional survey tool, incorporating the USDA’s Food Security Survey (FSS) module and health and socio-economic related questions, was designed, pilot tested, and consequently altered, to capture the level of food insecurity experienced and the living circumstances of people using the first self-described food bank in Cork city. Finally, the minutes of 28 meetings of the All-Island Food Poverty Network, from 2009 to 2017, were acquired via the Food Poverty Network webpage hosted by Safe Foods, Ireland in order to explore the network structure (membership), thinking (as evidenced in their actions), and responses to food poverty during this period. Ethical approval for this research was obtained from University College Cork Social Research Ethics Committee on June 10th 2016 (Log 2016-046 Appendix 1).

3.1.1 Ireland's charitable food system: conceptualisation

Figure 3.1 illustrates the charitable food system as it is conceptualised and explored in this thesis. Here, it is presented as consisting of a variety of entities operating at different levels within an open system but each with their own specific properties, which influence how the system operates. The entities explored in this thesis are illustrated in colour and include one stream of surplus food, the organisations responding to food poverty, the people receiving the food (end users) and the Food Poverty Network. The recipients are in the centre and maintain the least amount of influence. Moving outwards, the next layer contains the direct charities who provide food aid to the recipients but are also recipients of food aid, albeit not for their own consumption. Next, are the indirect charities supplying the direct charities with food aid but again, similar to the direct charities, are also at the behest of wider food system surplus markets and corporate retailers. Nonetheless, these indirect services maintain positions on European Committees and thus have significant potential to shape and influence the future charitable food landscape. The outer layer houses the Food Poverty Network (FPN), who, as is argued in this thesis, shape how food poverty is framed and responded to.

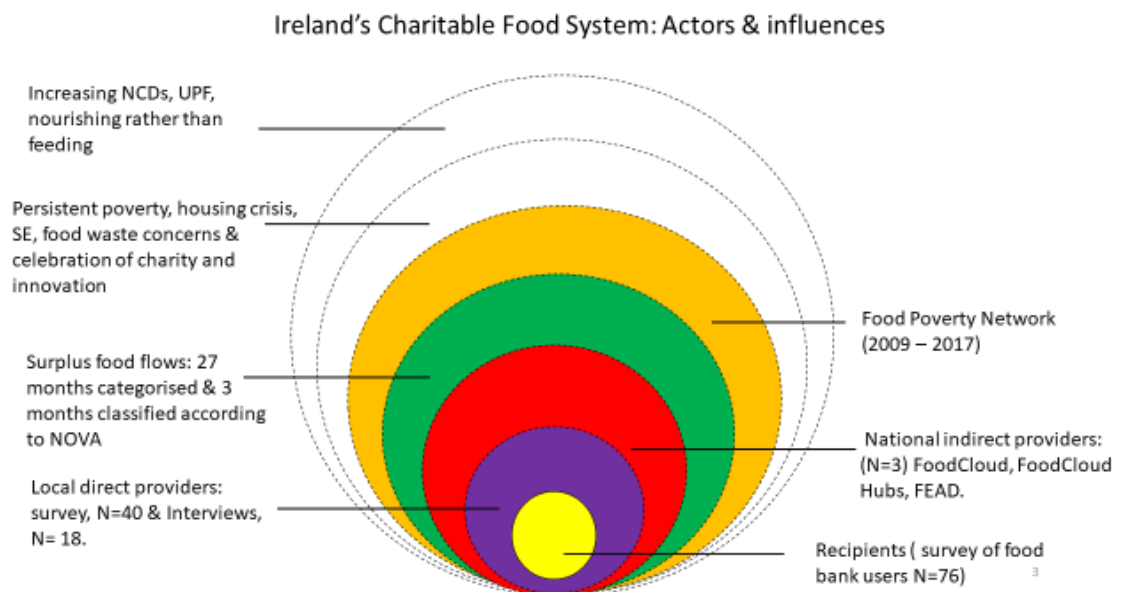


Figure 3.1: Ireland's charitable food system

3.2 Local responses to food insecurity: an introduction to actors, organisation & perceptions

The first objective, responding to the first subsidiary research question, was to examine which organisations, charities, and institutions are involved in the charitable food system in Cork, how they function, who their primary users are, their decision-making structures, their reported ability to meet demand, and their perspectives on the services they provide.

During the months of June and July 2016, a list of charities potentially working in food related activities was retrieved from the website of the Office of the Revenue Commissioners (Cork based registered charities), internet searches, informal key interviews, and correspondence with the Department of Social Protection's School Meal Section, Cork County Council and Cork City Council. In late July, a detailed email was sent to the Department of Social Protection's School Meal Programme, requesting information in relation to schools and organisations in receipt of funding through the Urban School Meal Scheme and the School Meals Local Project Schemes (Available on request). A similar email was sent to Cork City Council and Cork County Council; Cork County Council do not participate in these schemes, however. Further to incomplete information received from Cork City Council, a freedom of information (FOI) request was submitted and received by the City Council on September 5th 2016. The decision to grant the available information was made on September 30th. The information regarding an internal or external document outlining the decision-making process (inclusion/exclusion criteria) for assessing the eligibility of applicants by the School meals committee of the Cork City Council was unavailable, as there is no such document.

Similarly, a document outlining reasons for refusal was not obtained because no applicant was refused. All other information was provided.

A final list of 47 charities, 22 of which were individual St. Vincent De Paul (SVP) conferences³⁷ and other organisations working in Cork city predominately, were identified as potential respondents, along with 98 schools participating in the School Meals Local Projects Scheme and 32 schools in Cork city participating in the Urban School Meal Scheme. Out of these 32 schools identified by the City Council, 26 were in receipt of funding through both schemes. Consequently, a survey was sent out to a total of 104 schools in the Cork area.

3.2.1 Survey development, deployment & analysis

The objective of the survey was to build a profile of CFS providers. The survey (see Appendix 2), based on a similar study carried out in Hamilton, New Zealand (McNeill, 2011) was developed around four themes: (1) the nature and workings of the CFS, (2) the decision making structures, (3) their ability to user meet demand, and (4) their perceptions and beliefs in relation to the food assistance they provide to their users. Questions were altered to suit the Irish context and literature.

Pilot testing of the survey commenced in August of 2016, with three persons working in the community sector and one person involved in school meal provisioning. Slight changes and additions were made based on the feedback received before finalising the survey in late August. After numerous correspondences in relation to obtaining contact details for Cork city based conferences from the SVP Cork city office and national office, and in numerous failed attempts to contact these conferences using the telephone numbers received, 12 stamped and self-addressed surveys (out of a total of 22) were left at the

³⁷ The 'conference' is the basic operating unit of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul.

main SVP office in Cork city and were to be posted from there. Due to reported confidentiality reasons, these addresses could not be provided to the researcher. Unfortunately, and despite the key and longstanding role of SVP in food provisioning, obtaining information and establishing contact was exceptionally difficult. While other cities in Ireland have a list of conferences and contact numbers and addresses of each conference, Cork city and County do not.

In total, 104 schools, henceforth referred to as educational based CFS, and 47 non-educational based CFS involved in the provision of food assistance in Cork, were posted the survey, along with an explanation letter and a self-addressed and stamped envelope between the 9th and 31st of September 2016. The inclusion criteria for participation was based on the organisation/school/projects being involved in the provision of formal or informal food assistance. For the purpose of collecting information, food assistance was defined as ‘any food provided free of charge, at a subsidized rate, or at a nominal cost in the form of groceries, snacks or prepared meals’. Reminders were sent out late November to a selection of organisations that had yet to respond, with the final survey response received on December 5th 2016.

In total, only 46 out of the 151 surveys were returned, of which 10 were excluded due to incompleteness and/or ineligibility. One was returned outlining that they ‘are not a charitable organization’ (but do provide food at a nominal cost) one was returned with a note outlining that the organization, although in receipt of surplus food, chose not to participate, as they felt that this study ‘was not relevant to their organization’ in this instance; two were returned incomplete; four were returned blank; and two were excluded due to ineligibility.

Four more organisations were identified through word of mouth and surveys were delivered by hand to the persons running these CFS, resulting in a total of 40 surveys for

analysis (24 education-based CFS and 16 non-educational CFS). One question within the survey was in relation to participating in a next phase of the research which involved an in-depth semi-structured interview to further elaborate on their experiences, perception, and challenges. This is explained in more detail in the next section.

Data from the survey was cleaned and was entered into a statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS) Version 22, and then coded accordingly. Descriptive and inferential statistics were applied to explore the data and to obtain appropriate graphical representation. Then, crosstabulation was applied to measure the associations between variables.

3.3 Local responses to food insecurity: an in-depth exploration of circumstances, understandings & beliefs

The second research objective, responding to the second subsidiary question above, was to explore the workings of, the perceptions, beliefs, and motivations of those working and volunteering directly and indirectly in the charitable food system. Thus, following on from the survey, in-depth and semi-structured interviews were carried out with self-selecting participants. A qualitative approach was chosen for this phase, given its utility in facilitating a detailed understanding of the issue at hand (Cresswell, 2007). Semi-structured interviews were chosen as the most suitable interview method in this case for a number of reasons. These include the flexibility afforded by this method (Wengraf, 2001), the dynamic and fluid nature of semi-structured interviews, the ability to establish reciprocity between interviewee and interviewee (Galletta and Cross, 2013), and their use in facilitating a continuous flow of discussion (Wengraf, 2001). Moreover, in-depth interviews enable the researcher to identify perceptions, beliefs, and experiences (Hennink et al., 2011). In line with a key objective of critical realism, it facilitates the

researcher in identifying inconsistencies in beliefs that are implicit in practices, and beliefs and conceptions that do not resemble or contradict reality.

During the period of February to September 2017, primary data was collected from 21 participants, spanning 18 organisations. Fifteen of these CFS services are local direct services, meaning they had direct contact with the end user (Pollard et al., 2018), and three are national indirect providers meaning they supply food to CFS providers without any contact with the end users (ibid). In the direct service category, the interviewees consisted of 18 self-selected participants; ten females and eight males from 15 organisations located primarily in Cork city and its peripheries. Fifteen participants held leadership roles and three in food parcel packing roles and comprised both paid employees (n=4) and volunteers (n=14). Based on the survey findings, each of these organisations were tasked with feeding, in some cases, hundreds of families and individuals each week and, as such, the purpose of the interviews was to further contextualise and detail the operations, challenges, motivations, experiences, and opinions of these service providers in relation to food poverty and the circumstances of the people they assist. Taking into account the increasing focus on using food surplus as an answer to both food poverty and food waste, attention was given to the relationship between the direct and indirect providers, documenting the types of surplus and donated food, and exploring the challenges and opportunities that result from using surplus food to feed food insecure people. For classification purposes, the charities involved directly in the provision of food assistance were categorised into three groups based on the type of food services provided:

- (i) Organisations delivering food parcels and hot food into the homes of their clients (n=5)

- (ii) Organisations operating food banks, drop in food centres and outreach soup runs (n=6)
- (iii) Organisations providing supported housing and sheltered housing (n=4).

In order to obtain the views and opinions of those managing the procurement and distribution of surplus food, including food that complements the surplus system, as outlined in the chapter 2, three persons working in these indirect services (2 males and 1 female), namely, FoodCloud, FoodCloud Hubs, and the Managing Authority of the Fund for European Aid to the most Deprived (FEAD), also participated in an interview. The purpose of these interviews was to document the motivations, intentions, beliefs, and challenges, as experienced by these organisations servicing the Irish charitable food system. The interviews with these agencies are classified under the heading of (vi) indirect service providers. All semi-structured interviews were carried out in person, with the exception of one indirect service provider, where Skype was used. Each interview was audio recorded, subsequent to written consent, transcribed verbatim and stored in a password protected file. Interviews lasted between 45 and 90 minutes. All files were subsequently uploaded to Nvivo (version 11 and 12) for thematic analysis.

3.3.1 Method: Thematic Analysis

Braun and Clarke's (2006) six step approach to thematic analysis (TA) was used to analyse the dataset. This is a method of analysing qualitative data through the identification of themes and patterns. Being a method rather than a methodology (Braun and Clarke, 2006), it is independent of any particular epistemological and theoretical perspectives (Maguire and Delahunt, 2017), thus, is compatible with goals of CR research. As explained earlier, CR research is concerned with exploring and explaining the nature of the social world and requires moving beyond surface level observations. As Braun and Clarke (2006: 84) note, when TA is applied correctly, the analysis transition

from semantic analysis – ‘surface meaning of the data’ to latent analysis – ‘identify or examine underlying ideas, assumptions, and conceptualisation and ideologies that are theorised as shaping and forming the semantic content’. The purpose of these interviews was to explore the perceptions, beliefs, opinions, accounts and experiences and specific questions, such as what type of food is donated and distributed, were asked. Therefore, this was an analyst driven approach rather than an inductive, bottom-up approach led by the data (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

Braun and Clarke (2006) present a six step approach to carrying out thematic analysis. The first step is to become familiar with the data. This requires full immersion in the data through verbatim transcription, multiples readings, and ‘active’ reading – identifying meanings and patterns – after the full data has been read and rechecked against the audio recordings. The second step is to generate initial codes, which in this case was ‘theory laden’ and guided by the research questions. To avoid losing context, data is coded inclusively. At this point, a list of initial codes are produced and step three begins with the search for themes. Codes are rearranged into broader themes and all the coded text is organised under these initial themes for further refinement. The significance of the theme is not dependent on its prevalence across a data set; rather its significance is determined by its ability to capture something important concerning the research questions (Braun and Clarke, 2006). For instance, only one respondent spoke about an alternative use for surplus food – food education – but the decision was made to use this as a theme given its significance to the research question.

The fourth step is to review themes and has two levels. Level one is where themes are added, deleted, refined, and where sub-themes are created, before eventually creating a coherent thematic map. The second level of this step is to review the data set in its entirety to consider validity and to add any previously missed data. Step five concerns defining

and naming themes, whereby the ‘essence’ of the themes are documented by returning to the collated data extracts under each theme and then creating a narrative that reflects why the data is interesting (Figure 3.2 – full table is available in Appendix 5). Themes are again considered individually but also as a component of the larger picture, in how they contribute to answering the research questions. The final step is to produce the report, transcending description, and making an argument concerning the research question. As Braun and Clarke (2006: 24) note, at this stage the questions a researcher needs to be asking include, what does this theme mean, what assumptions are underpinning it, and what are the implications of this theme?

Overarching questions: What does the expansion of the charitable food system mean for the socio-cultural-health-local-food environment? What factors are influencing the contemporary charitable food system and the responses to food poverty in the Republic of Ireland and do these factors enable the transition towards a more just food system?

Table 1: Codes with descriptions and coded data.

Interview guide: Circumstances, decision making, challenges, changes, food source, types of food, experience with surplus, responsibility?		
Nodes	Files	Description/content
Alternative food procurement	8	How charities get foods outside FC/FCH arrangements, independent food stores, donations, KFC, Supermarkets with direct relationships. Purchase hampers from another conference who uses surplus, food drives at schools and supermarkets, purchase.
Bia relationship	5	Explaining the working relationship with Bia – benefits and drawbacks
Food poverty challenges	12	What it is, circumstances causing food poverty (poverty), proposed solutions
Changes in last few years	2	Increase in request for services, increased bureaucracy attached to getting entitlements, increasing costs, problems at a different magnitude, attracting volunteers
Responsibility	15	Stigma, clients, food improvement, younger clients, addiction, homelessness, cancer, doctor referrals, cheaper to buy tinned food than fresh, cheap food, funding cuts, FoodCloud supplying significant amounts of food, increase in food donations – after recession people giving food rather than cash.
Membership/motivations	13	Charities need to take responsibility, ‘the only thing you can do is help – you have to’, responsibility as a Christian, government free riding, government doesn’t have resources to look after everyone, community spirit, government’s responsibility, everyone’s responsibility not just government.
Decision making	9	Older, retired – suited to working hours, younger members (40’s age group), long-term volunteers – ‘know the historical cases’, often husband and wife, satisfying work, feel good factor, religious ties, personal experience of receiving charity, Christian ethos. Give people a ‘second chance’ ‘pick them up off the street’ ‘spread the love of Jesus’
Discontent	6	Collective decisions, ‘assessing the need’ by visiting homes’, trust people ‘err on the side of caution’, relying on experience on volunteers who go into the homes of people to notice signs that people are struggling. <i>ie</i> . ‘if the house is in a total mess’, fireplace boarded up, children collecting sticks for fire, ‘help you help yourself’, rely on local knowledge.
Dumping concerns	11	‘Chancers’, recognition that ‘you have to be creative when poor’, empathy, general public not understanding what charities are dealing with – quick to say so and so doesn’t need this help. Public asking charities to make sure only those ‘really in need’ get help. Recipients not making any effort, older people who need assistance not getting it. Some charities receiving government funding, other not,
Food cloud relationship	7	Food dumped on charities, shops clearing out storeroom, people cleaning out cupboards, massive amounts beyond the capability of the charity to manage or store. <i>ie</i> ‘600’ boxes of biscuits. Food gone past its sell by date with years (2009) out of date <i>jams</i> . ‘bread is an ongoing battle’ – too much to handle. Have to keep on top of donations to avoid dumping costs.
	7	Very supportive, help in applying for grants, they are always looking for partners, ‘very kind’, encouraging setting up food banks, ‘they dump a lot of food’, Supposed to give a list of food delivered – doesn’t always happen, chaotic – volunteers dropping off huge quantities of bread,

Figure 3.2: Overview of data coded to nodes within NVivo

3.4 Food insecurity and ill-health: a profile of food bank users

The third objective, responding to subsidiary question three is to measure the level of food insecurity as experienced by the users and to present a profile of the socioeconomic and health conditions associated with the users of a Cork city food bank. This component of the thesis was inspired by a larger study conducted by Loopstra and Laylor (2017) of UK Trussel Trust Foodbanks, which sought to elucidate the financial and food insecurity profile and health burden of people using 18 Trussell Trust foodbanks in the UK. While the Loopstra and Laylor (2017) study was much larger and more comprehensive with multiple objectives, the purpose of the survey conducted in this thesis was twofold. First, to measure the level of food insecurity experienced by the users of this food bank and, secondly, to outline their socio-demographic, economic and health profile. The internationally validated USDA Household Food Security Survey (FSS) 10 question adult module was used to measure the scale and severity of food insecurity (see Appendix 4). This tool is commonly used to both monitor and measure food insecurity across many countries (FAO, 2015), including high income countries such as the US and Canada (Tarasuk et al., 2016) and more recently in the UK in ‘Food and You’ survey administered by the Food Standards Agency in 2017 (Bates et al., 2017). Households were classified as having high, marginal, moderate, low, or very low food security, depending on the number of affirmative questions. Affirmative responses included ‘yes’, ‘often true’, ‘sometimes true’, ‘some months but not every month’, ‘almost every month’, and ‘in 1 or 2 months only’. The sum of affirmative responses to the 10 questions in the Adult Food Security Scale is the household’s raw score on the scale. The food security status is assigned as follows: zero = high food security among adults, 1-2 = marginal food security, 3-5 = low food security, 6-10 = very low food security among adults (Ers.usda.gov, 2018). This thesis used the USDA FSS module scoring and, as such, varies slightly from Loopstra and Laylor’s (2017) scoring, where 2-5 affirmative answers equate

to low food insecurity. In addition to the FSS module, the survey also included nine additional questions in relation to gender, age, ethnicity, household composition, economic status, and reported health issues (Appendix 4).

3.4.1 Data collection and analysis

The survey was administered at the Feed Cork food bank between November 22th 2017 and January 31st 2018, subsequent to one week pilot testing, to ensure coherent language and inclusive categories. Subsequent to this period, slight changes to the wording were made in addition to the inclusion of ‘other’ in the gender category. Ethical approval was obtained from the Social Research and Ethics Committee, University College Cork (Log 2017-115), prior to commencing with data collection. Participants were recruited using Simple Random Sampling (SRS). This method ensures that each individual in the sample frame had an equal opportunity of selection. Potential participants were approached subsequent to receiving their voucher and food to minimise any pressure felt by the clients to participate. The independent nature of the study was outlined, as was the purpose of the survey and the voluntary nature of the survey. Also stated was their right to withdraw their information within two weeks of completing the survey. To capture the experience of the Roma community, a known disadvantaged group in Ireland (Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre & Department of Justice and Equality, 2018), a member of the Roma community translated the survey to Romani. Given the initial low response rate within this community and the inability of the researcher to communicate with the potential respondents in relation to any questions they may have, a member of the Roma community was recruited to administer the survey to members of the Roma community. Only ten choose to participate in the study.

Written consent was obtained from all participants and each participant was given the choice to self-administer or to have the survey administered to them. The researcher was available to answer any questions the participants might have had and/or have the questions read to them. In total, 47.6 percent of respondents opted to self-complete, with slightly more females than males choosing to self-complete (56 percent of the 51 female participants versus 32 percent of the 25 male participants).

Subsequent to data collection, all information was entered into SPSS (version 22) and analysed using basic descriptive analysis, differentiated by variables such as gender, ethnicity/nationality and food security status to describe the characteristics and patterns present within the dataset. As outlined in Chapter One, this is the first survey of food bank users in Ireland and the first survey to utilize the FSS module to measure the level of food insecurity experienced by food bank users or any cohort of the population in Ireland.

Using the Small Area Statistics (SAS) available from the Central Statistics Office (CSO), the 2016 census results from the general Cork city population was used to compare the sample of people from the food bank with the wider city demographics to highlight which characteristics were over or under represented. However, it is acknowledged that not all Feed Cork users are Cork city residents. Furthermore, in the attempt to match this data with the categories presented in the Census data, certain variables were combined, when possible, to make a comparison. For example, in Figure 4.10, the Roma community were added to ‘the other EU 28’ category and the Brazilian population were added to ‘Rest of World’. When comparing Principle economic status, part-time, full-time, CES were combined as ‘at work’ when representing the food bank sample. Likewise, in the Cork city Census data looking for first regular job and looking after home family were combined into ‘unemployed’ (Figure 4.13). Additionally, people living in homeless accommodation were added to the category of ‘rented from voluntary body’ but people

with nightly arrangements and sleeping rough were not included (Figure 4.14). Single and co-habiting were combined in food bank data were also combined (Figure 4.15). All data presented for comparison are proportionately represented.

3.5 Surplus food flows within Ireland's charitable food system

The fourth objective, responding to subsidiary question four was to explore the surplus food flows within the national charitable food system by both exploring the categories and types of food but also by classifying the food according to the extent of processing. While most of the food consumed today is processed to some extent, the degree to which food is processed has become a significant determinant of dietary patterns and quality in recent years (Moubarac et al., 2014). The issue of processed foods was brought to the forefront of the diet and health debate in Monteiro's (2009) commentary, entitled 'Nutrition and health: the issue is not food, nor nutrients, so much as processing', where it was proposed that processed foods do not form a homogenous group, and in terms of human health the key issue is how much a food is transformed, reformulated and reconfigured that is, the 'type, degree and purpose of processing' (Monteiro, 2009:731). Consequently, the NOVA system of food classification was introduced as a method of differentiating food by the 'nature, extent and purpose of food processing', whereby it specifically allows the identification of what is referred to as ultra-processed foods (Monteiro et al., 2017). The Nova classification system is the most widely used framework where the purpose is to assess the food environment (Crino et al., 2017). To date, numerous studies have applied the NOVA system of classification across the globe in middle and high-income countries such as Brazil (Monteiro et al., 2010), the UK (Moubarac et al., 2013), Canada (Monteiro et al., 2013), and most recently France (Fiolet et al., 2018; Srour et al., 2019), and Spain (Rico-Campa et al., 2019). The datasets

analysed using this classification system vary significantly from 24 hour recall diary entries, to large market based data sets such as those available on Euromonitor.

The NOVA method of classification groups all foods, including drinks into four groups: (1) Unprocessed or minimally processed foods, (2) Processed ingredients, (3) Processed foods, and (4) Ultra-processed foods.

Group one foods include edible parts of plants and animals, fungi, algae, and water. The processes involved are drying, grinding, crushing, non-alcoholic fermentation, chilling, freezing among other processes with the purpose of naturally preserving, storing and transporting.

Group two foods are processed culinary ingredients such as butters, oils, sugar, salt, and substances from group one. Their purpose is to make products for use at home or in restaurants but are not meant to be consumed in isolation. These include, for example, butter and cream, which are often used in combination with group one foods.

Group three, processed foods, are made by adding substances from group two, such as sugar or salt or oil, to group one foods and include canned or bottled vegetables, fish and some cheeses. Most of these group three foods have two or three ingredients and are recognizably modified versions of group one foods. The purpose of processing within this group is to increase durability of group one foods or to enhance sensory qualities.

The final NOVA category is group four – ultra-processed foods – which include carbonated drinks sweet or savoury packaged snacks, reconstituted meat products, and pre-prepared frozen dishes. These are industrial formulations made mostly or wholly from substances derived from foods and additives, with little or no whole group one foods. Ingredients usually include those that are used in processed foods, such as sugars, oils, fats or salt, but also include other sources of energy and nutrients not normally used in a

domestic setting such as casein, lactose, whey, and gluten. Many are derived from further processing of food constituents³⁸ and additives, some of which are also used in processed foods, such as preservatives, antioxidants, and stabilizers. Classes of additives³⁹ found only in ultra-processed products include those used to imitate/disguise/enhance the flavours/appearance/scents. Typically, a multitude of processes are used to combine the usually many ingredients and to create the final product. Much like some of the ingredients, the processes include several that would not be carried out in a domestic setting, such as hydrogenation, moulding, and pre-processing. The overall purpose of ultra-processing is to create convenient, hyper-palatable, branded and highly profitable food products. Thus, ultra-processed food products are usually packaged attractively and marketed intensively (Monteiro et al., 2010, 2012, 2015).

3.5.1 Data collection, analysis & limitations

A food inventory data set, from July 2014 to August 2016, was made available to the researcher by the Bia Food Initiative prior to their amalgamation with FoodCloud in late 2016. Given the volume of data contained in the national three-year food inventory data, it was not possible to classify the full data set within the timeframe of this thesis. Instead, the 27 month dataset was organised by the categories of food distributed within this period followed by a NOVA analysis of three of these months. For this purpose, the month of August from each of the years was chosen for analysis given that August does not fall within any seasonal celebrations, which may influence the variety of foods available. Each food item obtained by the Bia Food Initiative from August 1st to the August 31st in 2014, 2015 and 2016 was assigned a NOVA code (see Table 3.1 for sample of items

38 Such as hydrogenated or interesterified oils, hydrolysed proteins, soya protein isolate, maltodextrin, invert sugar and high-fructose corn syrup

39 These additives include dyes, colour stabilizers; flavours, flavour enhancers, non-sugar sweeteners; and processing aids such as carbonating, firming, bulking and anti-bulking, de-foaming, anti-caking and glazing agents and emulsifiers

coded). These codes consisted of numbers 1 through 4, ranging from unprocessed to ultra-processed. These were assigned based on the ingredient list as presented on the websites of the supplier such as Tesco and Musgraves. Food items made available through the Fund for European Aid to the most Deprived (FEAD) programme were excluded from the analysis as were items that were documented as ‘waste’ such as 156 kilos of whole fruit on the 18th of August 2016. In addition to classifying food items, the most common categories of foods within the various groups are also highlighted in order to explore:

- (1) which food group was the most prevalent in the food redistribution system in 2016?
- (2) what short term trends are visible within food classification groups?
- (3) what specific items form the majority of each group throughout the years and
- (4) which specific items have increased or decreased as a proportion of total food distributed?

Table 3.1: Food and Drink items within dataset coded to NOVA groups

G1: Unprocessed	G2: Processed ingredients	G3: Processed	G 4: Ultra-processed
Dairy (natural yogurts, milk)	Spices	Industrial breads (made only from flour, water, salt and yeast)	Sugared breakfast cereals (Coco- pops, Frosties)

Vegetables (whole or prepared)	Vinegar	Savoury dips (Hummus,	Confectionary (Biscuits, chocolate, sweets)
Eggs	Butter	Breakfast cereals without added sugars	Dairy (artificially flavoured and sweetened yogurts, cheese spreads, easy-singles, flavoured milks)
Raw meat	Sugar	Fresh soups	Ready meals (Pizza, pies, lasagne)
Unflavoured Water	Cooking oils	Tinned foods	Savoury snacks, sausage rolls, Crisps.
Fruit	Honey	Raw and cooked smoked fish and meats. Cooked lunch meats.	Meats (Sausages, rashers, chicken nuggets, fish fingers, burgers, hot dogs)
Nuts	Cream	Cheese (using non-alcoholic fermentations) and non-specific cheese	Industrial breads (with emulsifiers or colours)

Source (Bia Food Initiative data, complied by author)

3.5.2 Limitations

Due the changes in how food was recorded over the years, namely how records became more detailed each year, this analysis is an estimation that errs on the side of caution in terms of classifying food where the brand and or description was not recorded. Where is was not possible to trace the ingredients in certain food products, such as cheese and yoghurts, the foods were classified according to its less processed category (Group 3 rather than 4). For example, in 2014, all cheese, regardless of type or brand, was recorded as cheese, whereas by 2016, the type of cheese was recorded for some brands such as ‘Easy Singles’ and ‘Philadelphia’, which are considered as ultra-processed. In the absence of such detail, cheese was classified as Group three.

3.6 The Food Poverty Network: Members, areas of focus and representations of poverty

As mentioned earlier, Ireland is without a specific food poverty policy or strategy, but does benefit from a dedicated Food Poverty Network, which was formed in 2009 and whose members include numerous government agencies and departments. As such the ideas and workings of this group as portrayed through the minutes of the network, offer a potential gateway to understanding the thinking around the issue of food poverty at the level of those likely to be engaged with policy making. McEachern (1996) suggest that the minutes of a meeting can represent the ideas of an organisation and reinforce cultural norms and practices by simply communicating its member's actions.

Responding to the research question – how has the problem of food poverty been represented within the All-Island Food Poverty Network (FPN) – the final objective is focused on the composition, actions, and efforts of the FPN.

According to Bacchi (2008), what a person/agency/organisation proposes to do about a problem, in this case food poverty, reveals what they think is the root cause of the problem. This question-based approach is known as the 'What's the Problem Represented to be' (WPR). The WPR is an analytical strategy for critical analysis. While this approach was first developed to analyse policy associated with women's inequality, it has since been elaborated and applied to a number of fields, including law, geography, psychology and public health and a range of social policies (Bacchi, 2016). The WPR approach consist of six interrelated questions that provide an analytical framework to explore the 'taken-for-granted assumption' and the in which representations of the 'problems' are portrayed (Bacchi 2009). These six questions are as follows:

- (1) What is the problem represented to be?
- (2) What presumptions and assumptions underlie the representations of this problem?
- (3) How has the representation of the ‘problem’ come out?
- (4) What is left unproblematic in the representations? Where are the silences? Can the problem be thought of differently?
- (5) What effects are produced by this representation of the problem?
- (6) How/where has the representation of the problem been produced, disseminate and defended and how can it be disrupted, questions and replaced? (ibid).

For the purpose of this thesis, Bacchi’s WPR framework was adapted to both suit the analysis of minutes rather than a policy and the research objective, as such, only three questions will be explored in relation to the workings of the FPN:

- (1) What is the problem represented to be based on the work proposed by members?
- (2) What presumptions and assumptions underlie the representations of this problem?
- (3) What effects are produced by this representation of the problem?

Bacchi’s approach rests upon the idea that what a person/agency/institution propose to do about something reveals what a person/agency/institution thinks needs to change, and hence, what they think the problem is. For example, if the issue at hand was increasing levels of obesity and a policy proposal was focused on encouraging more physical activity, then the problem representation in this case is the lack of physical activity. Bacchi notes that policy is often conceived as a tool of government to redress or address something that needs fixing, what she refers to as a reactive approach. In contrast, the WPR approach is based on the premise that it is the policies themselves that give shape and meaning to ‘problem’.

According to Bacchi (2015), governments produce ‘problems’ and this is the practice of problematization which in turn becomes problems governing society. The general purpose of the WPR approach is to reflect on how society is governed, how governing takes place, and the resulting implications. In this sense, the concept of governing, policies and politics is understood in a very broad sense and is concerned with how society is managed and administered thereby extending beyond the state to include academics and professional (Bacchi, 2018). Accordingly, this approach is suitable for the analysis of minutes from the FPN that, arguably, provide an insight into how the problem of food poverty is understood and responded to at the level of policy makers. However, it is acknowledged that the minutes may not represent the thinking of every member of this network.

3.6.1 Data collection and analysis

Contact with Safe Food, chair of the FPN, was made in August of 2016 requesting the minutes of the meetings from 2009-2016 and a meeting regarding the work of the FPN. A date was arranged but was subsequently cancelled and the minutes were not released. Contact was made again in August 2017 requesting an interview and the minutes of the FPN meetings from 2009 to 2016. A suggested month for this interview was October and interview questions were requested in advance. The researcher was informed that the minutes would be available online by the end of September 2017. Following further emails, the minutes of the meetings from 2009-2016 were emailed to the researcher on the 6th of November 2017 and were made available on the FPN webpage on November

16th 2017.⁴⁰ It was decided not to have pursue with an interview at this point and to focus entirely on the minutes of the meetings.

The minutes of 28 meeting from 2009 to 2017 were uploaded to Nvivo (Version 11) for analysis. Coding began with the members of the Network. Each member organisation, their role within their organisation, the geographic area they represented (Northern Ireland, All Island, of Republic of Ireland), and their attendance or absence at each meeting. Tables were compiled using this information for each of the years (Appendix 6). Subsequent coding was assigned based on the focus of the meeting and the projects/areas of work being reported by each organisation in order to highlight the efforts and focus of the FPN. Further tables were compiled summarising the action areas, new members, and policy engagement/policy reference (Figure 3.4). Given the growth of food redistribution during this period, particular attention was given to any references made to food banks and similar charitable food provisioning using surplus food redistribution.

⁴⁰ These minutes are available at: <https://www.safefood.eu/Professional/Nutrition/Food-Poverty/All-island-Food-Poverty-Network/All-island-Food-Poverty-Network-minutes.aspx>.

	FPN actions and reported actions via members organisation	Policy engagement/reference to policy	Absent for one or more meetings	New members
2009	Mapping and establishment of Community Food Initiatives (CFIs) (HfFA & SafeFood) Developing a set of indicators to measure food poverty and developing a definition of food poverty. Engaging with other organisations for support (PHAII and Queens University)	Noted lack of policy engagement and expressed intent to remedy this. Fiscal policy noted as 'root cause' of food poverty.	Queens University Belfast (QUB) (NI) Institute for Public Health (IPH) (AI) HfFA (AI) the Community Development and Health Network (NI)	
2010	Workshop organised to develop a food poverty indicator Developing practical food skills (as part of Obesity Prevention Framework policy) (DHSSPH, NI) Developing CFIs, Good Practice Guide for CFIs and directory of CFIs (SafeFood and HfFA, AI) Developing a network of food banks, engaging with the voluntary sector and identifying potential customers (CHNI) Piloting food budgeting programme (SafeFood) Developing an all-Ireland 101+ square meals (SafeFood) Qualitative research focussed on the experience of food issues among low income groups (SafeFood) Obesity Hub website (IPH) (AI)	Participate in the consultation on the draft Food in Schools Policy (HfFA, AI). Engage with NI Obesity prevention framework. Proposal to carry out food policy mapping.	HfFA (AI) Centre for Excellence in Public Health (NI)	Council for Homelessness in Northern Ireland (CHNI), the Public Health Agency (PHA) (NI) Centre for Excellence in Public Health (NI)
2011	Food Poverty Indicator development work ongoing International food policy expert invited to contribute thoughts on ongoing indicator work Successful opening of a pilot Depot of the FareShare (CHNI) Exploring the feasibility of including diet and nutrition- based questions in the FSAs consumer survey (NI) Drafting a discussion document on food poverty to inform policy across the Island of Ireland	HfFA participated in consultation process of 'A Fitter Future for All' Northern Ireland's obesity prevention framework	IPH (AI) CHNI (NI) Public Health Agency (PHA) (NI) ESRI (ROI) DHSSPS (NI) Office of Social Inclusion (ROI) Queen's University (NI) SafeFood (AI) Department for Social Development (NI)	Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) (ROI). Office for Social Inclusion (ROI). Northern Ireland's Department of Social Development (NI)
2012	Food Poverty Indicator work developed Advocating for the inclusion of food deprivation questions in the NI Health Survey and the Family Resources Survey.	'feed into' the <i>Regional Fitter Future Implementation group</i> (Northern Ireland's obesity prevention framework), in	SafeFood (AI) DHSSPS (NI) Central Statistics Office (ROI)	Department of Social Protection (ROI) Central Statistics Office (ROI)

Figure 3.3: Data extraction process

3.7 Conclusion

To explore the various entities influencing the charitable food system a multi-method approach was employed to contextualise, and explain the contemporary system; including its impact at the local Cork level. Using a food governance lens, focusing on 'how decision are made, by whom and with what effect ...and draws attention to the role of values not just facts' (Mason and Lang, 2017: 261), the methods included a survey of CFS (n=40), semi-structured interviews (n=21), food inventory analysis over a 27 month period, NOVA analysis of three of these months, a survey of the people using CFS (n=76) and, finally, documentary analysis of 28 meetings of the FPN from 2009 to 2017.

The next chapter presents the first empirical chapter exploring the local charitable food environment, its organisations, its users, and the food flowing through the national charitable food system.

Chapter 4: Cork's Charitable Food Landscape, Ireland's surplus food flows & a profile of food bank users

As mentioned in chapter two, besides Friel and Conlon's (2004) report, much of the food and poverty research in Ireland has focused on the lived experience of food poverty or, more recently, the innovation exhibited by the food redistribution social enterprises (Hebinck et al., 2018; Davies, 2019). Ireland's charitable food landscape has changed significantly in recent years, and the workings, perspectives of key actors within the charitable food environment (local) and system (national) remain underexplored. Similarly, there has been limited focus on the types of food being distributed, the factors associated with food bank use, the health of its users, or the level of food insecurity experienced. This chapter responds to these gaps in our knowledge and understanding by examining the diverse landscape of actors providing charitable food assistance, exploring the food flowing through this system, and specifically measuring the level of food insecurity as experienced by a group of people using one food bank in Cork city and presenting a profile of the associated health and socioeconomic conditions. Correspondingly, this chapter is based on three subsidiary research questions:

- (1) Who is involved in the charitable food system in Cork, how do these organisations operate and who are the users?
- (2) What types of surplus food are flowing through the charitable food system in Ireland?
- (3) Who is using one food bank in Cork city and what is the level of food insecurity and ill-health experienced by these people?

The chapter begins by offering a brief introduction of Cork city's well known CFS services before presenting the results of a survey administered to 40 organisations operating within the charitable food sector in Cork focused on how they operate, why they operate, their users, decision making structures, food procurement, and their perceptions on the services they provide. Next, the types of food flowing through the national charitable food system is examined by, first, categories of food and, second, by the degree of processing using the NOVA classification already outlined in Chapter Three. As a brief reminder, this method classifies food according to the degree of processing and 'is made up of snacks, drinks, ready meals and many other product types formulated mostly or entirely from substances extracted from foods or derived from food constituents' (Monteiro et al., 2019: 4). The final section of this chapter focuses on the circumstances associated with the use of Cork city's first self-described food bank and the level of food insecurity experienced by its users.

4.1 Cork city's local charitable food environment

4.1.1 The community and voluntary sector

Cork county, known as Ireland's 'Food Capital', at the time of data collection, is home to 417, 211 people, of which 125, 657 reside within Cork city,⁴¹ (CSO, 2017a). Cork city has a number of charities and organisations responding to issues of food poverty and poverty more broadly. The Society of St. Vincent de Paul (SVP) is one of Cork city's oldest and most well-known charities and indeed a key charity in the area of charitable food provisioning. For instance, in 2013 SVP were providing 'around 2,500 families with food each week in addition to supplying its own hostels, Simon, Cork Penny Diners, women's shelters, and school breakfast clubs' (O'Riordan, 2014). The basic operating

⁴¹ In 2019, Cork city boundaries were extended adding a further 85,000 people to the city's population.

unit of SVP are referred to as local conferences and at the time of writing a total of 41 conferences were operating in the greater Cork city area (personal communication). In 2015, the conferences within Cork city provided food parcels and food vouchers to the value of €1,937,785 (personal communication) and, in December 2016, SVP received 3,500 requests for food hampers (O’Sullivan, 2016). More recently, it was reported that at the national level, SVP spend roughly ‘€1 million euro per month helping feed families’ (Hutton, 2018). In 2014, SVP established an initiative to store, pack and distribute food parcels during the Christmas period via other SVP conferences. In 2018, this food bank became a permanent feature of Cork charitable landscape operating weekly throughout the year (SVP, 2018).

Cork city has an increasing number of persons living in homeless shelters and hostels and is serviced by six charities that provide a mixture of short, medium and long-term housing for homeless persons, support services (provision of sleeping bags, food and clothes) to homeless persons, women experiencing domestic violence, and individuals unable to live independently. The most well-known and oldest of these is the Cork Simon community,⁴² which provides a range of food aid services such as provision of food surplus to clients living in sheltered housing, soup runs on the streets of Cork city and hot meals served on site. Cork city also benefits from four meals-on-wheels services and, as explained in Chapter two, provide discounted meals to those unable to cook for themselves.

Cork city has one longstanding drop-in centre traditionally known as a soup kitchen, ‘Penny Dinners’. This charity, operating since the 1840’s provides free hot dinners, sandwiches, and desserts, 365 days a year, in addition to food parcels on request and

⁴² The Cork Simon community was established in 1971 in Cork city, opened its first homeless shelter in 1996 and today provides accommodation and support for 127 people daily (44 people in emergency accommodation, 56 people in five high-support houses, 27 people in Cork Simon flats throughout Cork and a number of people who have transitioned to private rented accommodation and social housing (<https://www.corksmon.ie/how-we-are-run/our-story/>)

during the Christmas period. The city is also serviced by a number of drop-in services and organisations that offer meals on a less frequent basis including a mobile bus offering dinner, soup and sandwiches one day a week between 12 and 3pm. The specific workings of the charities that participated in this study will be discussed in further detail in section 4.2.

A new addition to Cork city's charitable food landscape is 'Feed Cork', the city's first official food bank founded by the Cork Church, a Christian organisation (www.corkchurch.com). Feed Cork opened in May 2017 and initially distributed between 140-200 food parcels every Wednesday, containing a three-day supply of food, including perishables, to individuals and families. By June 2018, they reported '7,000 people fed with 250,000 meals given out over the past year' (June 6th, Feed Cork/Facebook). By June 2020, '1.5 million meals and over 25k food hampers' has been distributed (June 2020, FoodCloud/Facebook). At the time of interviewing, Feed Cork were working through their church network across Ireland with support from FEAD Ireland and FoodCloud to set up a national 'Feed Ireland' network of food banks similar to their operation in Cork city. The detailed workings of this food bank will also be discussed in more detail, along with the circumstances and levels of food insecurity experienced by its users, in section 4.6.

4.1.2 School Meals

Cork also benefits from School Meal Schemes, both the local projects scheme (SMLP) and the urban scheme (USMS) In 2015/2016 academic year, 98 schools and organisation across Cork county received €3 million from the SMLP funding through the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (DEASP) and 32 primary schools received a total of €86,226 through the USMS (personal communication, August 11, 2016). Twenty-six of these 32 schools were in receipt of funding from both funding streams. A

school can use the USMS funding for a snack/breakfast and the SMLP to fund lunches/dinner. However, if the administrator within the DEASP note substantial assistance being provided under the urban scheme, the applicant will be asked to choose between the two schemes (Personal communication, October 25, 2016).

According to Corporate Affairs in Cork City council, via a Freedom of Information (FOI) request, Cork City Council fund 35 primary schools in Cork city at an annual cost of €85,340.05. This payment was matched by the DEASP for the academic year of 2015/2016. The decision on the eligibility of schools to participate in the USMS rests with the school meal committee, which in the case of Cork city, is three local councillors. Once in agreement, the application is approved and placed before a full Council meeting before being subjected for approval by the Department of Social Protection's School Meals Section. To date, no application has been denied at the City Council Level. To be eligible for the SMLP, the programme has to be 'targeted at areas of disadvantage or children with special needs'. Consequently, the vast majority of schools participating are part of the Department of Education and Skill's initiative for disadvantaged schools, Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS⁴³). The primary reason for refusing applications in the last number of years was due to the lack of a DEIS status. Notably, the responsibility to ensure food is healthy and nutritious remains within the individual local groups and schools operating the projects (email correspondence, August 11, 2016).

The next section presents the findings of the survey administered to charitable food services (CFS) in Cork city and its peripheries addressing the research question: Who is involved in the charitable food system in Cork, how do these organisations operate and

⁴³ The scheme is available to support disadvantaged school children and the schools that joined the scheme prior to the introduction of DEIS would have done so under the various educational disadvantaged programmes in place at the time. The budgeted cost of providing the School Meals (Local Projects) Scheme in 2016 was €41m and the Urban Scheme €1m.

who are the users? For the purpose of clarity, the findings are presented as referring to groups: educational based (schools) and non-educational based (community organisations and charities).

4.2 Nature of the organisations: Education based and non-education based CFS

Forty organisations responding to food poverty participated in this survey, 24 were schools participating in the School Meals Scheme and 16 were in the non-education based CFS category. The latter represented SVP conferences (food parcels and vouchers delivered to homes), Meals on Wheels (meals delivered to homes), sheltered housing and assisted living providers, services offering food bank type services only (food parcels/boxes provided at a specific location), and organisations catering to homeless persons (meals on site, food parcels, soups runs). The education based CFS included: a school retention programme, pre and post special primary schools (catering to children with disabilities and special needs), primary schools, and post primary schools. For the purpose of analysis, CFS was classified into six categories depending on the types of food assistance provided: (1) school meals, (2) food parcels and food vouchers to homes, (3) sheltered housing, (4) hot meal provisioning, (5) hot meals and food parcels, and (6) food parcels only (Food bank services) (Table 4.1).

All educational institutions were in receipt of statutory funding specific to the provision of food assistance, whereas over 60 percent of the non-educational based CFS services were operating in the absence of funding for their food services (Table 4.1). Outside the educational institutions, the main service users are homeless persons and a ‘mixture’ which included categories such as unemployed and other at risk of poverty groups. The numbers of weekly service users varied significantly depending on the type of service

being provided, ranging from 1-30 and 251-300 in the non-educational based services (Figure 1, Appendix 3).

Table 4.1: CFS services by type of food assistance & funding sources

	Percent	No funding	Funding from HSE, DSP	Other funding source (incl. state & charity/community)	Total
School Meals	60.0	0	20	4	24
Food Parcels/Food vouchers	12.5	3	2	0	5
sheltered housing	7.5	1	1	1	3
Hot Meal Provision	7.5	1	2	0	3
Hot meals & Food parcels	7.5	3	0	0	3
Food Banks	5.0	2	0	0	2
Total	100.0	10	25	5	40

Source: Survey data

4.2.1 Rationale & length of time users typically rely on these services for

Eight schools identified their DEIS status as the reason for providing food assistance. Additional reasons included ‘disadvantaged background’, ‘to assist nutritional needs to improve concentration’, ‘to ensure equal access to healthy meals...children are coming to school hungry’...’organising healthier food than what parents would provide’ ‘to enhance quality and content of food’, ‘low income families’, and ‘to provide equal opportunities to learn’. Other schools identified how they qualify for funding to provide

food because they are special schools catering for students with disabilities. The non-educational based CFS identified reasons such as ‘to meet the need of food poverty’ and ‘ensures food on the table at Christmas time’.

For primary and secondary school, students receive their meals every school day 183 days of the year, for primary schools, and 167 days, for secondary schools. Some schools, such as special needs school and those with DEIS status, will provide meals for the students’ full school life (8 years in primary and 5-6 years in secondary). For other educational based organisations, the general length of use was between 2.5 to 3 years. In the voluntary and community sector, the length of use varied ranging from 1-4 months and up to three years and beyond in some cases. The newer organisations who started in 2017 ticked the ‘other’ box, stating that they tend to have the same clients since starting their CFS, indicating repeated and long-term use (Figure 2, Appendix 3).

4.2.2 Year of establishment, types of labour and number of meals & food parcels

Although the vast majority of the school meals programmes were initiated post 2000, some schools have been providing these services since the early sixties and mid-seventies. In the non-educational based CFS, the starting period varies significantly (Figure 3, Appendix 3). One organization providing hot meals dates back to the famine era, thus it is not represented in Figure 4.3. Just under half of these organisations began their food assistance services in the last 8 years, three between 2011 and 2015 and three more between 2016 and 2018.

Non-educational based CFS are heavily reliant on voluntary labour, ranging from six to 41 volunteers weekly (Figure 4, Appendix 3). Out of the schools that answered this question (n=19), four schools reported having unpaid volunteers numbering between 4 and 10 (which includes teachers and special needs assistants giving their time outside of

paid hours) and one relies on a mixture of paid professional (PP), unpaid volunteers (UV) and persons on the Community Employment Scheme⁴⁴ (CES) to administer their CFS.

In the educational based organisations, a total of 451,038 lunches, 163,662 snacks, and 189,388 breakfasts were served by 23 educational based organisations in Cork in the academic year 2015/2016, at a cost of €629,512. The actual figures are likely to be much higher given that three schools did not provide the amount spent on food and one school did not provide the numbers of lunches and breakfasts served and again, not all school participating in these services are represented in this survey. Out of those who did, one serves only breakfast, four serve lunch only, three serve breakfast, snack and lunch, ten serve breakfast and lunch, and six serve lunch and snack only. Generally, it was reported that breakfast consist of cereal, juice, tea, toast, crackers, scones; snacks include items such as fruit, cookies, water, rice cakes, yogurt, cheese, crackers and lunch consist of items such as rolls/wraps/sandwiches, raisins, pasta, milk/ bottled water. One school receives hot lunches, such as stews, from the Cope Foundation⁴⁵.

In the non-educational based CFS, it was more difficult to quantify the number of meals served due to the different operating mechanisms (food hampers, cooked meals, vouchers). However, out of those that replied to both the number of meals provisioned, and the associated cost with doing so (n=6), it was reported that 251,553 meals were provided at a cost of €277,756.50 euro for a one-year period ending in December 2016. Another non-educational based CFS reported delivering 166 weekly food hampers, and 1500 during the Christmas period totalling an annual cost of €162,000 euro; information on the number of individuals was not provided, however. Another reported delivering 10 to 20 weekly hampers per week during the period from January to March 2016. These

44 CE footnote to explain CE major source of C&V sector labour

45 The Cope foundation is a non-profit organisations providing support to persons with intellectual disabilities and/or autism in Ireland (<https://www.cope-foundation.ie/About-Us>).

hampers are made to feed a 4-5 person family for 5-7 days and, during the Christmas week, 100-120 hampers were delivered. The associated annual cost for this organisation was €1,750.

4.3 Food governance: decision making structures, values and perceptions

The management of the school meals services remains primarily with the school's principal and staff. Only two schools reported involving parents directly in this process and only one reported involving the students. Within the non-educational based CFS the management remains with the volunteers and the paid professional managers. For the majority of these services, food is provided free of charge, although some reported a nominal cost. In the case of schools this is in relation to the provision of milk (subsidized EU milk scheme mentioned in Chapter 2) and, in the case of the non-educational CFS, the nominal cost is applied although not always paid. For example, one Meals on Wheels have a flat rate of €3 per day for their services which consist of a soup and a dinner. While most clients meet this charge, those who do not are never refused the service.

In total, ten schools use private school lunch companies, three use a mixture of lunch companies and local stores, and 13 schools purchase from a local store only (Figure 5, Appendix 2). None accept donations of food or food surplus. Non-education based CFS services use a combination of sources to maintain their services such as purchasing from the local store, personal donations of food, donations of food from businesses, along with food from FoodCloud Hubs (n=12) and/or FoodCloud (n=8) (Table 4.2).

Table 4.2: Food Source

Food Source										
	Purchase required of food		Personal Donations of food		Donations of food from businesses		FoodCloud		FoodCloud Hubs	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
School Meals	23	0	0	23	0	23	0	23	0	23
Food Parcels/Food vouchers	3	2	1	4	2	3	1	4	3	2
Sheltered Housing	1	2	1	2	1	2	3	0	3	0
Hot meal provisioning	3	0	3	0	3	0	1	2	3	0
Hot meals & food parcels	2	1	3	0	2	1	1	2	1	2
Food Bank	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	0	2	0
Total	33	6	9	30	9	30	8	31	12	27

Source: Survey data

In the majority of educational based CFS, recipients are referred from within in school and are not required to verify eligibility. Similarly, in the non-educational CFS, verification of eligibility is not sought by any means. Almost three quarters of the sample reported an increase in the demand for their services over the previous five years with more non-educational based CFS services agreeing with this statement (Table 1, Appendix 3). Correspondingly, 14 percent of the educational based CFS, versus 19 percent of non-educational based CFS, reported ‘often’ or ‘always’ having to refuse food

assistance due to lack of resources (Table 4.3). Over half of the sample reported compromising the quantity of food given out due to the lack of food. While compromising quantity was more common in educational based CFS (59% versus 44%), compromising quality more frequently occurred in the non-educational based CFS (25% versus 9%). Compromising variation was also used as a coping strategy for 42 percent of all organisations, but again, it was more pronounced in the non-educational based CFS (50% versus 32%).

Table 4.3: Perceptions of their ability to meet demand with available resources

‘The demand for food assistance through our organisation is higher than we have the resources to meet’					
	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always	Total
School Meals	7	13	1	1	22
Food Parcels/Food vouchers	1	3	1	0	5
Sheltered Housing	1	2	0	0	3
Hot meal provisioning	2	1	0	0	3
Hot meals & food parcels	1	1	1	0	3
Food Bank	0	1	0	1	2
Total	12	21	3	2	38
‘We have had to refuse food to clients due to lack of food, resources and/or funding constraints’					
School Meals	19	3	0	0	22
Food Parcels/Food vouchers	5	0	0	0	5
Sheltered Housing	3	0	0	0	3
Hot meal provisioning	2	0	0	0	2
Hot meals & food parcels	1	1	1	0	3
Food Bank	1	1	0	0	2
Total	31	5	1	0	37
‘We have had to compromise the quantity of food supplied to clients due to resources and/or funding constraints’					
School Meals	9	12	1	0	22

Food Parcels/Food vouchers	4	1	0	0	5
Sheltered Housing	2	0	1	0	3
Hot meal provisioning	1	2	0	0	3
Hot meals & food parcels	1	1	1	0	3
Food Bank	1	1	0	0	2
Total	18	17	3	0	38
‘We have had to compromise the quality of food supplied to clients due to lack of food’					
School Meals	20	2	0	0	22
Food Parcels/Food vouchers	4	1	0	0	5
Sheltered Housing	1	1	1	0	3
Hot meal provisioning	3	0	0	0	3
Hot meals & food parcels	2	0	1	0	3
Food Bank	2	0	0	0	2
Total	32	4	2	0	38
‘We have had to alter the variety of food supplied to clients due to lack of food’					
School Meals	15	6	1	0	22
Food Parcels/Food vouchers	3	1	0	0	5
Sheltered Housing	1	1	1	0	3
Hot meal provisioning	0	3	0	0	3
Hot meals & food parcels	2	1	0	0	3
Food Bank	1	1	0	0	2
Total	22	13	2	0	38

Source: Survey data, 2016

4.3.1 Food and health, food choice and responsibility for food poverty

Most CFS agreed that the food provided is of good quality and is enough to meet their clients’ basic nutritional needs. In relation to the latter statement concerning nutritional needs, roughly one in five, educational based CFS services neither agreed nor disagreed and one organisation in the non-educational based CFS disagreed (Table 4.4). For 53 percent of the non-educational CFS, the nutritional value of the food is not their primary

concern, in comparison to 13 percent of the education-based CFS. Just under one third of the sample had no opinion or disagreed that the recipient should have a choice regarding the food they receive. Most of these fell within the non-educational based CFS (50% versus 17%) (Table 4.4). Notably, both CFS offering food bank services, disagreed or strongly disagreed that their users should have a choice. In terms of their services tackling food poverty, the vast majority (87%) agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.

Table 4.4: Perceptions of food assistance provided concerning nutrition, choice and tackling food poverty

‘The food we provide is enough to meet the clients’ basic nutritional requirement’				
	SA/A	NAD	SD/D	Total
School Meals	19	5	0	24
Food Parcels/Food vouchers	4	0	1	5
sheltered housing	3	0	0	3
Hot Meal Provision	3	0	0	3
Hot meals & Food parcels	3	0	0	3
Food Bank	2	0	0	2
Total	34	5	1	40
‘The nutritional value of the food is not our primary concern’				
School Meals	3	2	19	24
Food Parcels/Food vouchers	1	0	4	5
sheltered housing	2	0	1	3
Hot Meal Provision	2	0	0	2
Hot meals & Food parcels	1	1	1	3
Food Bank	1	0	1	2
Total	5	3	26	39

‘Clients should have a choice regarding the types of food they want to eat’				
School Meals	20	3	1	24
Food Parcels/Food vouchers	3	2	0	5
sheltered housing	1	2	0	3
Hot Meal Provision	2	1	0	3
Hot meals & Food parcels	2	1	0	2
Food Bank	0	0	2	2
Total	28	9	3	40
‘Our work is contributing to tackling food poverty’				
School Meals	20	2	1	23
Food Parcels/Food vouchers	4	1	0	5
sheltered housing	3	0	0	3
Hot Meal Provision	2	1	0	3
Hot meals & Food parcels	3	0	0	3
Food Bank	2	0	0	2
Total	34	4	1	39

Source: Survey data, 2016

Almost two thirds of the respondents would increase assistance upon provision of extra resources and in excess of two thirds of the respondents believe that community and charitable organisations have the responsibility to tackle the problem of food poverty. However, 93 percent believe it is the government’s responsibility, with many choosing both options. It is worth highlighting that four schools and one charity providing sheltered housing and assisted living do not believe it should be the communities responsibility to

tackle food poverty, whereas only one organisation providing food bank services believe it is not the government's responsibility (Table 2, Appendix 3).

Table 4.5 indicates that 27 percent of CFS 'never' fulfil requests for specific foods and this included all CFS offering food bank services and, hot meals and food parcels. Tailoring the food to suit the individual's age is also problematic, with 15.7 percent of educational CFS services and over a quarter of the non-educational CFS services reporting to 'never' doing this. And while the majority of CFS services do not end up with more food than users, roughly 20 percent of each category of CFS services do.

Table 4.5: Ability to meet requests and age appropriate food

'Our organisation fulfils any requests for specific food items'					
	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always	Total
School meals	6	10	3	2	21
Food parcels/vouchers	1	2	0	2	5
Sheltered housing	1	1	0	1	3
Hot meal provision	0	2	1	0	3
Hot meals & Food parcels	2	0	0	0	2
Food bank	2	0	0	0	2
Total	10	16	5	6	37
'We tailor the food to suit the individuals age'					
School meals	3	2	7	7	19
Food parcels/vouchers	1	3	1	0	5
Sheltered housing	0	2	0	1	3
Hot meal provision	0	3	0	0	3
Hot meals & Food parcels	1	0	0	1	2
Food bank	2	0	0	0	2
Total	7	10	8	9	34

Source: Survey data

Table 4.6: Food Waste

Q. More food than users?	Yes	No
School meals	4	20
Food parcels/vouchers	0	5
Sheltered housing	1	2
Hot meal provision	0	3
Hot meals & Food parcels	2	1
Food bank	0	2
Total	7	33

Source: Survey data, 2016

4.4 Discussion

Cork is home to a diverse range of CFS responding to food poverty within the community, providing often more than one type of food assistance, such as food parcels and hot meals. With the exception of educational based CFS who participate in the School Meals Scheme, the majority of these services operate in the absence of funding and rely on the donations of food, including surplus food redistribution to maintain their services. For the educational based CFS, the primary reason given for providing this assistance to students were centred on the schools being a designated DEIS status, health, and providing access to healthy and nutritious food. This is in contrast to the non-educational based CFS who specified addressing food poverty but without any reference to health or nutritional well-being. Most non-educational based CFS noted a mixed user base comprising a variety of people such as people suffering from addiction, homelessness, unemployment, and health issues. The numbers of people receiving food assistance from this group of CFS vary

greatly, ranging from up to 30 people per week to 300 per week, with longer term use common ranging from months to years.

There has been a reported increase in demand for these services and most organisations do feel a sense of responsibility to tackle the problem of food poverty. However, the majority perceive this to be the job of the Irish government. Just under half of the non-educational CFS began their food assistance services in the last eight years and three in the last two years, the latter being a period of national economic prosperity and decreasing food poverty rates. For most services, meeting the current demand for food assistance is a problem of varying degrees. While refusing food is not a common occurrence within any of these organisations, coping strategies such as compromising quantity, quality, and variety are used to match demand with the available resources. None of the educational based CFS accept donations of any kind or use surplus food, whereas all of non-educational based services accept food donations for individuals and businesses and also engage in surplus food redistribution through FoodCloud and FoodCloud Hubs.

Most respondents considered the quality of the food to be good, the nutritional value to be adequate, and their services to be effective in tackling food poverty. As outlined in Chapter Two, all definitions of food poverty include references to health and nutrition, yet half of the non-educational based CFS reported that nutritional concerns regarding the food are not the primary concern suggesting a disconnect between health and food poverty. Moreover, only half of the non-educational CFS services agreed that clients should have a choice as to what food they want to eat. Both organisations offering food bank services disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement. This may be attributed to the incapability of these charities, due to the nature of relying on food donations, to provide a choice to their service users or point to the perception that “beggars can’t be choosers” and this will be explored further in Chapter Five. A quarter of the non-educational

CFS do not or cannot fulfil specific requests for food and just over a quarter do not or cannot tailor the food to suit the individual's age. This could possibly be again attributed to the reliance of non-educational CFS on food donations and surplus food, which by its very nature limits their capacity to respond to individual needs. This will also be explored further in the qualitative interviews.

For the non-educational based CFS, which will be the sole focus on Chapter Five, the survey results point to an increase in demand, lack of funding, a reliance on volunteers, food donations and surplus, and a weak link between health/nutritional concerns and food poverty and limited or no user agency in deciding their diets. However, the findings also show that the majority of charities consider the food being supplied as being nutritionally adequate and of good quality.

The next section speaks to this issue by examining the types of surplus food flowing through the charitable food system across Ireland.

4.5 Food flows within the charitable food system

“To be interested in food but not in food production is clearly absurd”-

Wendell Berry

The purpose of this section is to establish the types of food being channelled through the charitable food system across Ireland by examining the food inventory data from FoodCloud Hubs, one of Ireland's two national food redistribution organisations. FoodCloud Hubs was Ireland's first initiative aimed at tackling food waste and food poverty. As mentioned in Chapter Two, FoodCloud Hubs works at the warehouse level, collecting and receiving food surplus food from a variety of food businesses such as major

food retailers and wholesalers. During the time period explored here, food manufacturers comprised the majority of its donor organisations.

As outlined in Chapter one, substantial food system changes are required across multiple levels of the food system to meet environmental and health needs (Swinburn et al., 2019) and food redistribution in Ireland has been positioned as a viable solution to both. At the level of food production and consumption, urgent actions include the reduction of food waste and loss by 50 percent, which food redistribution can contribute to. However, equally important is a reduction in the production and consumption of red meat, sugar, and animal-based foods (Willett et al., 2019). Correspondingly, the focus on this section is, first, the general food categories redistributed over the 27-month period and, second, the volumes and types of UPF.

From July 2014 to August 2016, FoodCloud Hubs redistributed a total of 2,049,246 kg of foods and drinks to hundreds of charities across Ireland, increasing from 135,868 kg at the end of 2014 to 1,510,987 kg by August 2016. This growth is aligned with the expansion of their services and the opening of two additional warehouses in Galway and Dublin. As illustrated in Figure 4.1, meat products, which include fresh, frozen and cooked meat but not ready-meals containing meat, and dairy products accounted for the majority of these food flows comprising roughly 40 percent of total flows (16% and 24%, respectively). Drinks, including juices, water, and soft drinks, accounted for the third largest ‘food’ group, at 14 percent. Proportional volumes of fruit and vegetables were aligned with that of confectionery and desserts combined at roughly eight percent, followed by ready-meals.

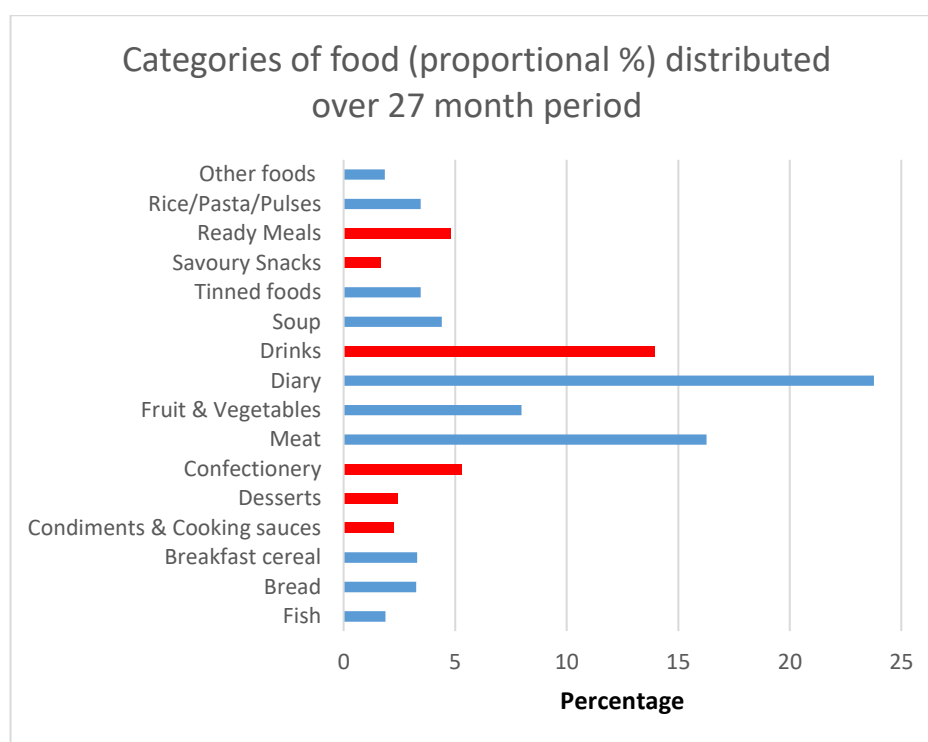


Figure 4.1: Categories of food redistributed over a 27 month period

Source: Bia Food Initiative data compiled by researcher

Figure 4.1 provides a detailed picture of the proportional volumes of food categories distributed over the period under examination. In 2014, three quarters of the food distributed fell within the dairy, meat, confectionery and desserts, drinks, tinned food and rice/pasta/pulses food groups. The latter consisted mostly of instant pasta and noodle meals. In 2015 and 2016, meat, dairy and drinks comprised over half of the total volumes distributed. As mentioned in Chapter Three, 2015 provides the only full year of data. Nonetheless, some trends are visible. For instance, while there is little variation between the volumes of fish, bread, and ready meals, increases can be discerned in dairy, fruit, and confectionery categories. On the other hand, decreasing volumes of rice/pasta/pulses, and vegetables are also visible. It is also worth noting that, given the publicity afforded to the number of meals redistributed (whereby any 454g of any product equates to one meal),

drinks comprised 10 percent of the total volumes distributed in 2014, 17.5 percent in 2015, and 15 percent in 2016.

Table 4.7: Categories of Food distributed

Categories of Food distributed over 27 months	2014 (%)	2015 (%)	2016 (%)
Fish (Fresh, cooked & frozen)	1.64	2.18	1.78
Bread	3.36	3.06	3.39
Breakfast cereal	5.27	4.36	2.65
Condiments & Cooking sauces	1.1	3.74	2.13
Desserts	4.69	2.72	2.11
Confectionery	4.76	2.58	6.75
Meat (Fresh, cooked & frozen)	10.05	19.07	15.89
Fruit (Whole & prepared)	1.23	1.59	4.4
Vegetables (Whole & prepared)	5.55	6.28	3.89
Dairy (including eggs)	10.77	24.69	25.15
Soup (Fresh and tinned)	0.79	6.93	3.66
Tinned foods	9.39	1.49	3.83
Savoury Snacks	1.79	0.89	2.05
Ready Meals	4.33	5.07	4.78
Rice/Pasta/Pulses (including instant pasta meals, pot noodles)	16.59	4.36	1.69
Drinks (soft drinks, water, juices, cordials)	17.54	10.47	15.48
Other foods (Baking ingredients, hot drinks, preserves, prepared salads)	1.5	1.45	2.1

Source: FoodCloud Hubs data compiled by researcher

A key criticism directed at charitable food is its nutritional inadequacy, given the relative lack of meats, dairy, and perishable items (Simmet et al., 2017). On the contrary, animal-based products form the largest proportion of food flows within this Irish system. Another

common criticism of charitable food is the ‘abundance of durable products with high fat and sugar contents’ (van der Horst et al., 2014: 1512). Aggregating the obvious categories of ultra-processed food groups presented in Figure 4.1 (confectionary, desserts, savoury snacks, ready meals and soft drinks, albeit this category also included water and pure fruit juices) over the 27 month period equates to roughly 28 percent. However, as the next section indicates, much of the UPF foods fall into the less obvious categories.

Further examination of the data involved a comparison of one month (August) over each of the three years available (2014, 2015, 2016) to assess changes in the composition of redistributed surplus reflected in the growth of this organisation. A total of 241,251 kg of food and drinks were redistributed over this period. Apart from August 2015, where group 3 (processed) foods represented the largest group, group 4 (UPF) formed the majority of foods redistributed. Group 4 increases from 45 percent in August 2014 to 59 percent in August 2016, as does Group 1 (unprocessed) foods, from roughly five percent in August 2014 to roughly 24 percent in August 2016 (Figure 4.2).

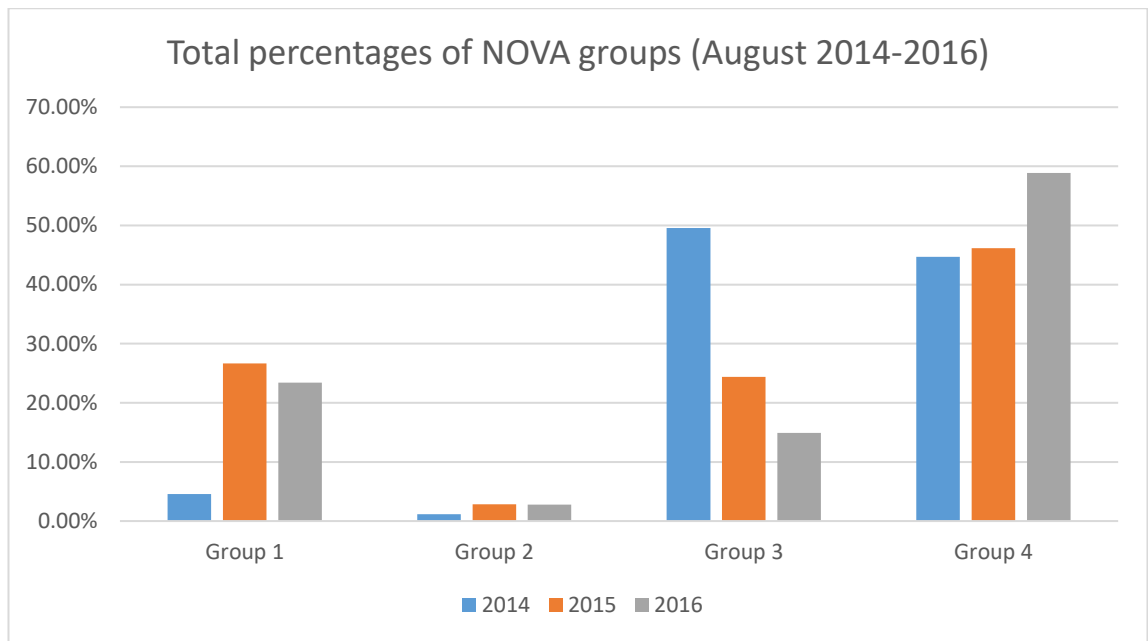


Figure 4.2: NOVA groups distributed in August 2014, 2015 and 2016

Source: FoodCloud Hubs data compiled by researcher

As illustrated in Table 4.8, the largest proportions of group one food contained mostly fruit, vegetables, and dairy products. Water formed 13 percent of this group in 2016. Group 2 food comprised mostly butter and cream in each of the years and soup and dairy within the Group 3 classifications. Though tinned food comprised 98 percent of this category in 2014, a notable increase in the variety of food is evident in 2015 and 2016, but with dairy products dominating.

Table 4.8: Composition of Nova food groups distributed in August 2014, 2015 and 2016

Group 1 (%)	2014	2015	2016
	2014	2015	2016
Pasta/rice/pulses	16.3	3.2	4.5
Fruit (dried, prepared, and whole)	10.1	11.5	20.6
Vegetables	64.9	33.1	14.9
Meat (raw & frozen)	2.0	14.5	6.5
Dairy	0	16.5	28.3
Fish	0	7.6	4.9
Nuts	0	0.07	0.64
Water (still and carbonated)	0	1.9	13
Cereal	7.06	11.1	2.7
Other unprocessed foods (prepared salads, maple syrup, herbs)	0	0.4	3.9
Group 2 (%)			
Sugar/oil	23.44	0	5.9
Tea/coffee	21.9	0	7.1
Butter/Cream	54.7	92.9	74.9
Baking ingredients	0	5.3	0
Condiments	0	1.8	12.2
Group 3 (%)			
Cereal	0.6	1.2	3.1
Breads	0	0.5	0
Meat (Cooked, added sauce)	0	10.6	9.1
Pasta dishes	0	6.5	0.4
Savoury snacks (non-descript Dips)	0	3.5	1.5
Soup	0	24.3	19.9
Tinned foods	98.6	0.01	18.6
Juice/smoothie	0	0	5.7
Dairy	0.9	46.3	39.3
Fish	0	6.6	0.4
Other processed foods (prepared foods)	0	0.8	1.9

Source: FoodCloud data compiled by researcher.

The relative proportions of UPF vary by year, meat and dairy products, ready meals, confectionary and soft drinks, form the largest proportions of UPF in the three months analysed. In 2014, soft drinks, confectionery, and desserts comprised the roughly 75 percent of UPF redistributed, whereas in 2015 meat and ready meals formed a majority. In 2016, dairy, confectionary, and desserts comprised the largest UPF groups.

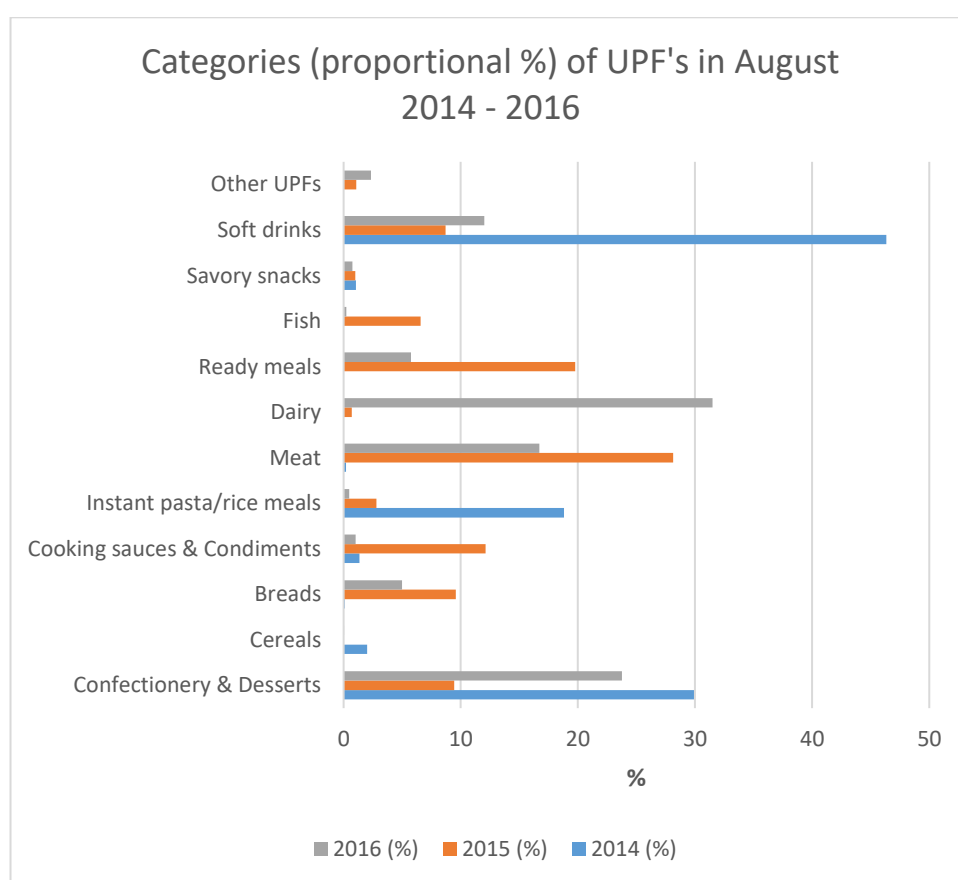


Figure 4.3: UPF categories distributed in August 2014, 2015 and 2016

Source: FoodCloud Hubs data compiled by researcher

4.5.1 Discussion

In the Irish retail sector, fruits and vegetables (37%), bread (13%), and meat (11%) comprise the majority of wasted food at the level of retail (Broderick and Gibson, 2019: vii). Household food waste in Ireland follows a similar breakdown with fruits and vegetables comprising the majority. While acknowledging that FoodCloud Hubs procure food from processors and manufacturers prior to the retail stage, the figures presented here indicate a different profile of what would be wasted food in the absence of redistribution efforts with the capability to capture food waste prior to the retail phase. Here, dairy and meat comprise the majority of food redistributed, and this is reflective of the Ireland's agricultural environment dominated by dairy and meat production and processing. While it highlights the important role that surplus redistribution organisation plays, it also brings to light significant volumes of animal sourced foods within this system. This potentially distracts from the need prevent the overproduction of animal sourced products and necessary reduction in the consumption of UPF required across food systems (Willett et al., 2019). Considering the environmental burden associated with animal source food in the primary phase of production (Sherhafer et al., 2018) and the considerable health and social burden if these fall within the UPF category, efforts to prevent waste rather than redistributing it ought to the focus of Ireland's 'sustainability' efforts (i.e. Origin Green) and Climate Action policy.

Fruits and vegetables form roughly eight percent of the total volumes of food redistributed; a figure aligned with the amount of confectionary and desserts redistributed potentially highlighting a gap in this systems ability to further food and nutrition security as suggested by some academics (Hebinck et al., 2018; Carroll and O Connor, 2016). However, as will be discussed in Chapter Five, the factors influencing food governance within surplus food redistribution extend beyond what is visible here. It is also likely that

not all of the food redistributed gets eaten with UK research suggesting about 40 percent of the food surplus redistributed by FareShare, ends up as food waste (Alexander and Smaje, 2008).

Ultra-processed foods contribute to significant health and environmental concerns (Monteiro et al., 2019; Swinburn et al., 2019), in addition to the loss of eating traditions and culinary diversity (Sato et al., 2020). Surplus food redistribution shapes the food environments of those using CFS and this makes the issue of UPF a key consideration and a social justice issue, in the context of food charity. The data presented here suggest that UPF form between 49 and 59 percent of the total food distributed depending on the month examined and again, dairy and meat form a significant proportion of the food within the UPF category. In August 2016, the year with the most detailed records enabling the precise classification, these two groups formed roughly half (47%) of the total volumes of UPF distributed. This suggests that meat and dairy are important considerations in terms of reducing the degree of UPF within surplus food redistribution.

The average proportions of UPF redistributed over the three months is roughly 50 percent and similar to the amounts of UPF comprising the general public's food baskets (45.7%) in Ireland (Monteiro et al., 2017). Taking the average proportion of unprocessed food within this system, there is a notable difference with that of the general public: 18 percent versus 32 percent, respectively (Monteiro et al., 2017 – supplementary materials). While it is acknowledged that this is only one stream of surplus redistribution flows, and that the sample in which the NOVA classification method was applied to only three months out of 27 months, the evidence suggests that unprocessed foods such as fruit and vegetables items are lacking, in comparison to ultra-processed foods. Moreover, meat and dairy products comprise a large proportion of UPFs within this system.

The final section of this chapter addresses the research question of who is using food bank services in Cork city and what is the level of food insecurity and ill-health experienced by these people.

4.6 Food insecurity and ill-health: Exploring the circumstances of people relying on one food bank in Cork city

The Feed Cork food bank opened its doors as the first self-identifying food bank in Cork city in May, 2017. This food bank is run by the Cork Church, an international Christian organisation, and is volunteer led with an expanding team of volunteers currently consisting of 80+ people in addition to numerous corporate volunteer teams. Volunteers include members of the Roma, Brazilian, and Irish Traveller community as does its user base. This food bank operates one day per week on a Wednesday from 12 to 2pm by appointment and from 2 to 4pm on a walk-in basis. The people using this CFS are self-referred and check-in on arrival where basic information is collected to elucidate their food needs according to family size. Subsequently, a voucher is given to the client who then passes this onto to the volunteer in the next room where the food is packed according to the needs of the individual or family. There are no limits on the number of visits and no requirements are in place to verify hardship and as such, they operate on the principal of trust and on a first come first serve. During its first week of operation, eight families and individuals utilized its services. By November 2017, this number had grown to roughly 200 families and individuals per week. Unlike other food banks, where the food is predominately non-perishable, Feed Cork offers a variety of perishables and non-perishable items – including meats, fresh bread, vegetables, and fruits – when available. Feed Cork avail of FoodCloud (FC), FoodCloud Hubs (FCH), FEAD, and maintain arrangements with supermarkets and food businesses outside of these now formalised food surplus channels in order to support their operations. Once the client has collected

their food they have the option to visit the café located across from the sorting table offering free tea, coffee and a selection of cakes, buns, and pastries donated from local businesses.

The proceeding sections outline the socio-economic and health circumstances of a group of 76 people using the Feed Cork food bank. As explained in Chapter Three, this data was collected via a survey completed by 25 men and 51 women over an eight-week period. It is well established that certain groups are more at risk of food insecurity than others. These groups include women, single parents, the unemployed and people with illness and disabilities. In order to verify which groups are particularly over represented in this sample, and more specifically, whose needs should be given particular attention in terms of charitable food governance and wider policies addressing poverty, the survey data is compared to Cork city census data. The first section outlines reported socio-economic circumstances before examining the level of food insecurity and ill-health, and the connections between these food insecurity and poor health within this cohort. This is followed by a brief overview of groups that were overrepresented in this data in comparison to Cork city statistics.

4.6.1 Socio-economic characteristics

The majority of people using this service self-identity as Irish. The second largest groups are self-identified Irish Travellers, an ethnic group with long history of extreme social exclusion in areas of health, housing and employment in Ireland (Watson et al., 2017) and Brazilians. The third largest group using this food bank were members of the Roma community, another exceptionally socially excluded group in Ireland (Van Hout and Staniewicz, 2012) (Table 4.9).

Almost two-thirds of the female sample identified as Irish (44%) or Irish Travellers (24%). Roughly, 56 percent of the male sample identified as Irish, there was no male Traveller representation.

Table 4.9: Ethnicity/Nationality representation

Nationality/Ethnicity	Frequency	Percent
Irish	36	47.4
Irish Traveller	12	15.8
Brazilian	12	15.8
Romani	10	13.2
Spanish	1	1.3
British	3	3.9
Polish	2	2.6
Total	76	100.0

Source: (Fieldwork data)

The majority of men (60%) and women (57%) using this food bank are single. Roughly, a third of the women (31%) and one fifth of the male users (22%) are married. The largest male cohort (64%) were in the 35-49 age group, whereas the largest female cohort (29%) were in the slightly younger 25-34 age group but followed closely by 35-49 (27%) age group. One in four women are in the 50- 64 age group and only four percent of the total sample are aged 65+ (Table 4.10).

The majority of men and women were unemployed; 52 percent and 74.5 percent, respectively. Extremely high levels of disability were reported within the male population with one in five men reporting being unable to work due to disability. Roughly, 8 percent

of women reported being unable to work due to illness (Table 4.10). Only one person (male) was engaged in full-time employment and five percent of the sample were engaged in part-time employment (3 females and 1 male), including one woman on a Community Employment Scheme (CES).

Table 4.10: Marital status, age group and economic status by gender

Marital Status (n)	Male	Female	Total (n)
Single	14	25	39
Co-habiting	1	4	5
Separated	2	4	6
Divorced	2	0	2
Widowed	0	3	3
Married	6	15	21
Age group (n)			
18-24	2	9	11
25-34	2	15	17
35-49	16	14	30
50-64	4	11	15
65+	1	2	3
Economic Status (%)			Total (%)
Full-time employment	4	0	1.3
Part-time employment	4	5.8	5.3
Unemployed	52	74.5	67.1
Community employment programme	0	1.9	1.3
Retired	4	1.9	2.6
Unable to work due to illness	4	7.8	6.6
Unable to work due to disability	20	1.9	7.9
Student	12	5.8	7.9
Total	25	51	100

Source: Survey data

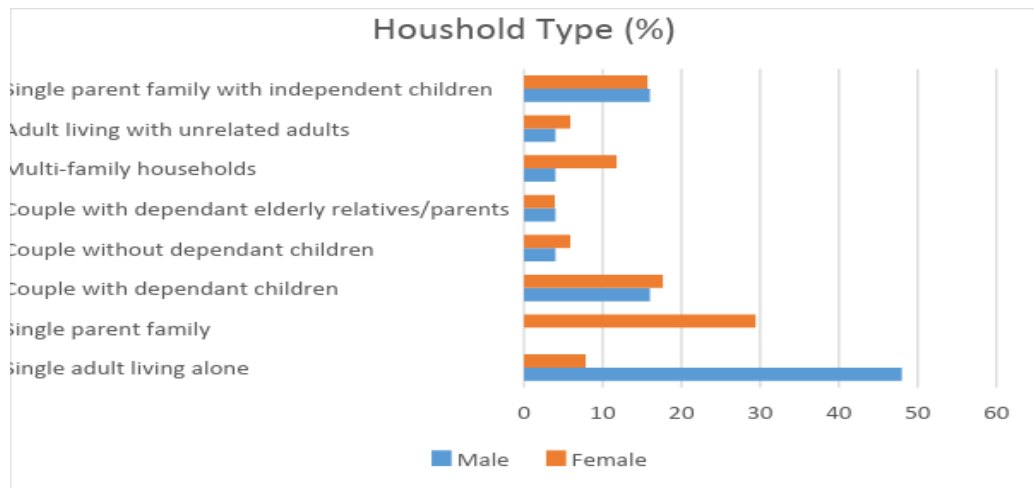


Figure 4.4 Household Type (%)

Source: Survey data

The largest representation of the male population (48%) were single adults living alone. In comparison, most women were single parent families (29.4%) or living with a partner and dependent children (Figure 4.4). In total, roughly two thirds (64.4%) of the sample had children. Of these: 33 percent had one child; 16 percent had two children; 14 percent had three children; 10 percent had five children and 22.4 percent had between 6 and 12 children (Table 3, Appendix 3).

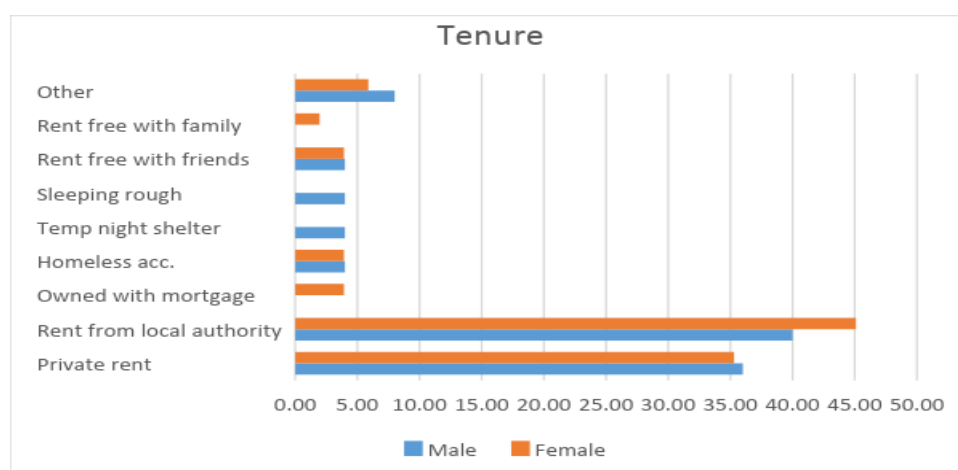


Figure 4.5: Tenure by gender

Source: Survey data

In terms of tenure, less than half (44%) of the women and 40 percent of males were living in local authority housing. Slightly more than one third of both men and women live in private rental accommodation (Figure 4.5).

4.6.2 Food security status and health

Almost three quarters of the total respondents (72.4%) were classified as severely food insecure (very low food security), 13.2 percent as suffering from moderate food insecurity (low food security), 11.8 percent as marginally food insecure with only 2.6 percent of the total sample falling within the food secure category (Figure 4.6). The largest percentage of the sample scored the maximum raw score number of ten (Table 4, Appendix 3) and 39 percent reported going without eating for a whole day(s) over the past 12 months (Figure 5, Appendix 3) and for many of these people, this was not a one-off event (Table 4.11). When separated by gender more women than men reported experiencing severe food insecurity (76.5% versus 64%) (Figure 4.7).

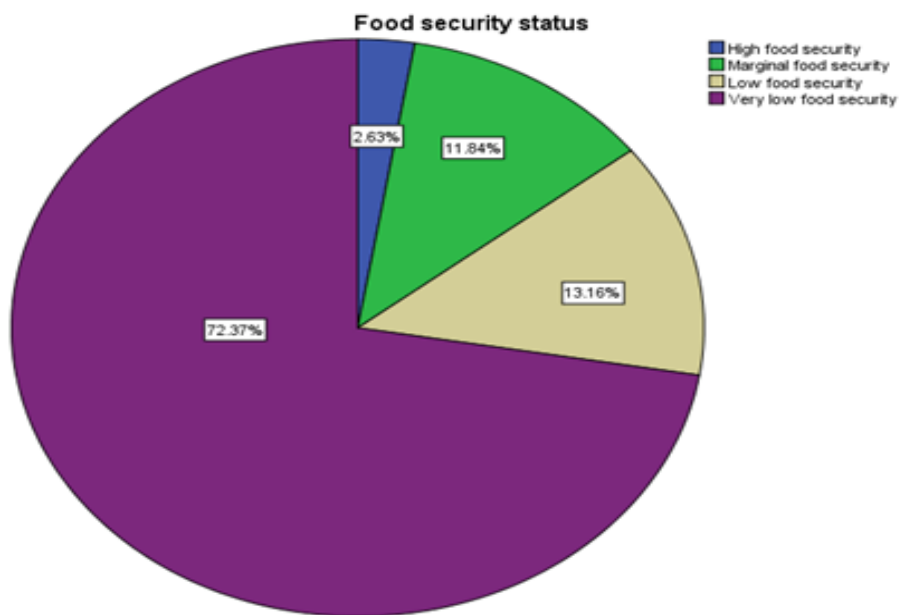


Figure 4.6: Food security status

Source: Survey data

Table 4.11: Frequency of not eating for a whole day

Response to 'how often did this occur' (going without food for a whole day)		
	Frequency	Percent
Almost every month	12	15.8
Some months but not every month	17	22.4
In 1 or 2 months only	1	1.3
NA	46	60.5
Total	76	100.0

Source: Survey data

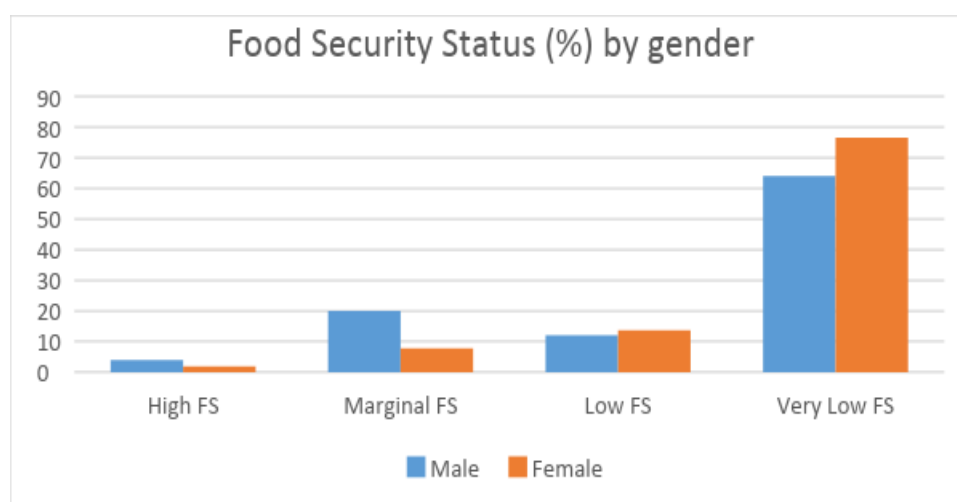


Figure 4.7: Food security status by gender (%)

Source: Survey data

Six in every ten participants indicated they had a health problem. One third reported having one to two health issues, roughly one in five (18.4%) reported between three and four, and less than one in ten (7.9%) reported experiencing between 5-6 comorbidities (Table 4.12).

Of those classified as having very low food security (severe food insecurity) almost half (46%) reported at least one health issue and 40 percent of those who are moderately food insecure (low food security) reported between 1 and 4 health issues (Figure 4.8).

Roughly, 30 percent of those experiencing severe food insecurity had between 3 and 7 health issues and about 10% had between five and seven comorbidities (Table 4.13). When separated by gender, roughly three quarters of the men and half of the women reported between one and four health problems. However, there was one outlier who reported high food security but suffered from significant poor health and this highlights the sometimes inadequate quantitative measurements of food insecurity or of quantitative

measurements in general. This circumstances of this woman will be presented in the discussion.

Table 4.12: Number of health issues (%)

Health Issues (%)			
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
None	30	39.5	39.5
1-2	25	32.9	32.9
3-4	14	18.4	18.4
5-7	6	7.9	7.9
8-9	1	1.3	1.3
Total	76	100.0	100.0

Source: Survey data, 2017

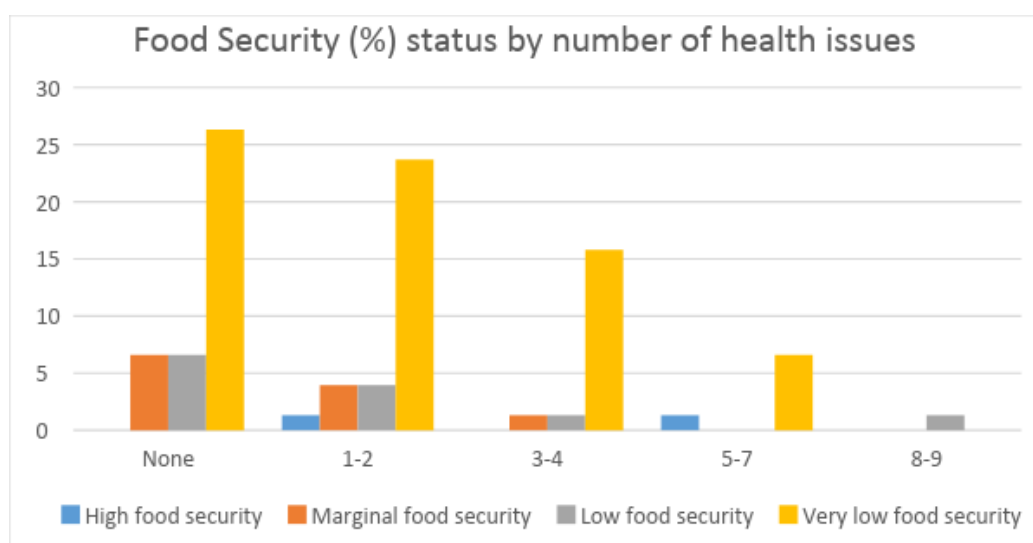


Figure 4.8: Number of health issues by food security status

Source: Survey data, 2017

Table 4.13: Food security status by gender and number of health problems

Health issues * Food security status * Sex Crosstabulation							
			High food security	Marginal food security	Low food security	Very low food security	
Male	Health issues	No	0	2	1	3	6
		1-2	1	2	2	7	12
		3-4	0	1	0	5	6
		5-7	0	0	0	1	1
	Total		1	5	3	16	25
Female	Health issues	No	0	3	4	17	24
		1-2	0	1	1	11	13
		3-4	0	0	1	7	8
		5-7	1	0	0	4	5
		8-9	0	0	1	0	1
	Total		1	4	7	39	51
Total	Health issues	No	0	5	5	20	30
		1-2	1	3	3	18	25
		3-4	0	1	1	12	14
		5-7	1	0	0	5	6
		8-9	0	0	1	0	1
	Total		2	9	10	55	76

Source: Survey data, 2017

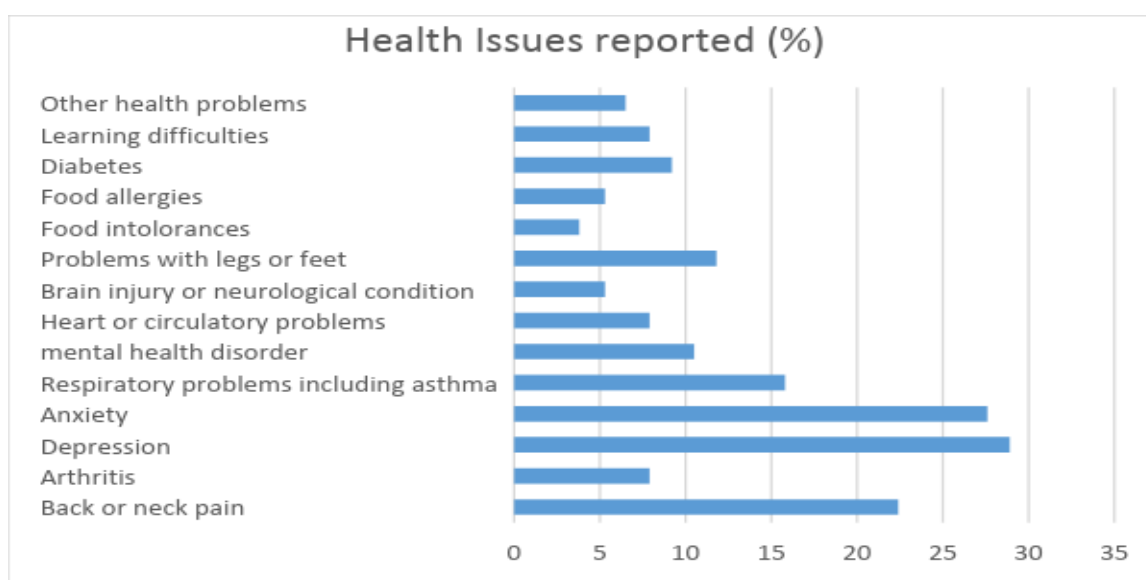


Figure 4.9: Reported health issues (%)

Source: Survey data

The top three most common health problems noted across the sample were depression (28.9%), anxiety (27.6%), and back or neck pain (22.4). These were followed by respiratory problems (15.8%), problems with legs or feet (11.8%), mental health disorder (10.5%), learning difficulties, arthritis, and heart and circulatory problems (all 7.9%), other health problems (6.6%), brain injury or neurological condition (primarily epilepsy), and food allergies (both 5.3%) and food intolerances (3.8%) (Figure 4.9). Almost 30 percent of women suffered from depression and 27.4 percent from anxiety. This did not vary significantly when compared with the male population (Table 4.14). However, circulatory and heart conditions were more prevalent in the female population (9.8% versus 4%). Certain chronic illnesses were also more prevalent when separated by ethnicity. For example, 20 percent of the Roma community suffered from diabetes, in comparison to 11 percent within those identifying as Irish. Similarly, significant levels of respiratory problems were noted in the Irish Traveller population in comparison to the general Irish population (50 percent versus 13.8 percent) (Table 4.15).

Table 4.14: Depression and anxiety by gender

	Depression	Anxiety
Male	28%	28%
Female	29.4%	27.4%
Total M&F	28.9%	27.6%

Source: Survey data, 2017

Table 4.15: Ethnicity/nationality by Diabetic status and respiratory problems

Ethnicity/Nationality	Diabetes (%)	Respiratory including Asthma (%)
Irish (n=36)	11.11	13.88
Irish Traveller (n=12)	8.33	50
Brazilian (n=12)	0	8.33
Romani (n=10)	20	0
Spanish (n=1)	0	0
British (n=3)	0	0
Polish (n=2)	0	0

Source: Survey data, 2017

4.6.3 Comparing Cork city's population with Feed Cork's service users

When comparing proportional representations of those using the food bank with Cork city statistics, certain groups are overrepresented such as Irish Travellers and non-nationals (Figure 4.10). Certain age-groups and genders are also overrepresented, such as men in the 35-49 age group and women in the 25-34 age group (Figure. 4.11). Whereas both men

and women are underrepresented in the over 65s age group. Looking at those using the food bank with children, again in comparison to Cork city statistic, the number of families using this service with five or more children is significantly larger (Figure 4.12). Other socio-economic characteristics of food bank use in Cork city are unemployment, being unable to work due to illness and disability particularly for men, living in local authority accommodation, those in rented accommodation, renting from voluntary body, and living rent free (Figure 4.13 - 4.15).

Men using the food bank in both the divorced and separated category were also overrepresented as were women in the latter category (Figure 4.15). Within data collected at food bank, the ‘other’ category for food bank users mainly consisted of Irish Travellers living on halting sites and one Irish man living in a caravan behind his parent’s house. This information was not available for comparison.

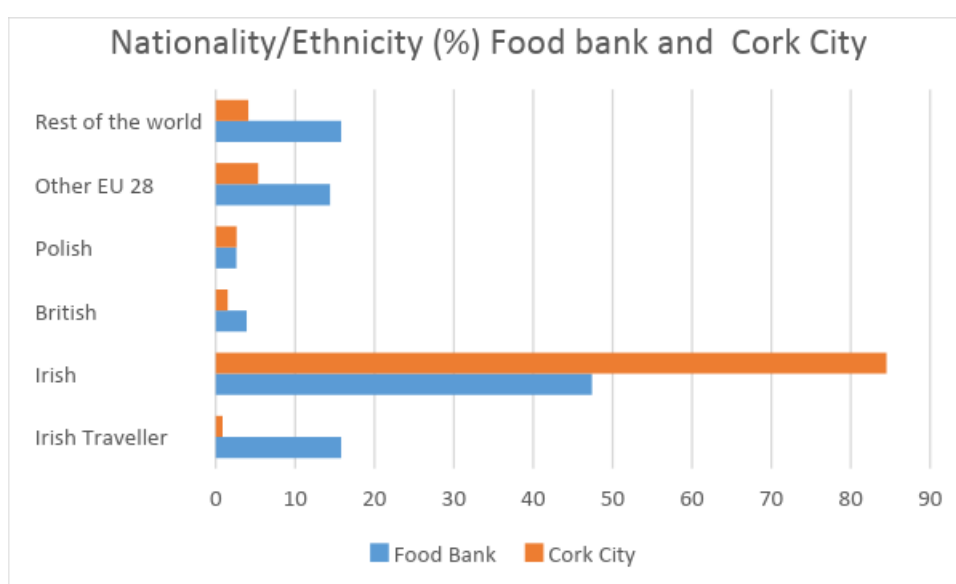


Figure 4.10: Nationality/ethnicity of sample population and Cork city population

Source: (Fieldwork data and CSO, 2018)

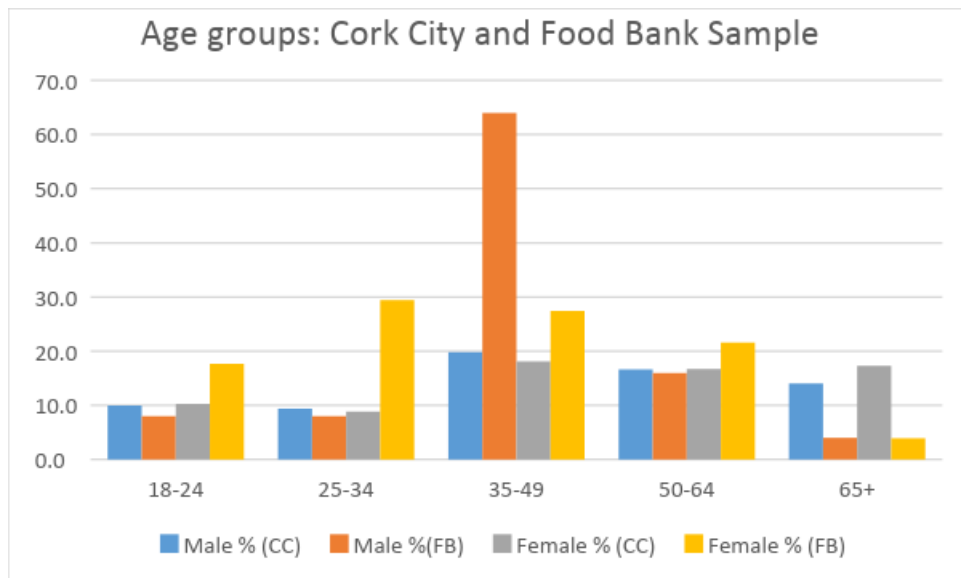


Figure 4.11: Age group representation

Source: (Fieldwork data and CSO, 2018)

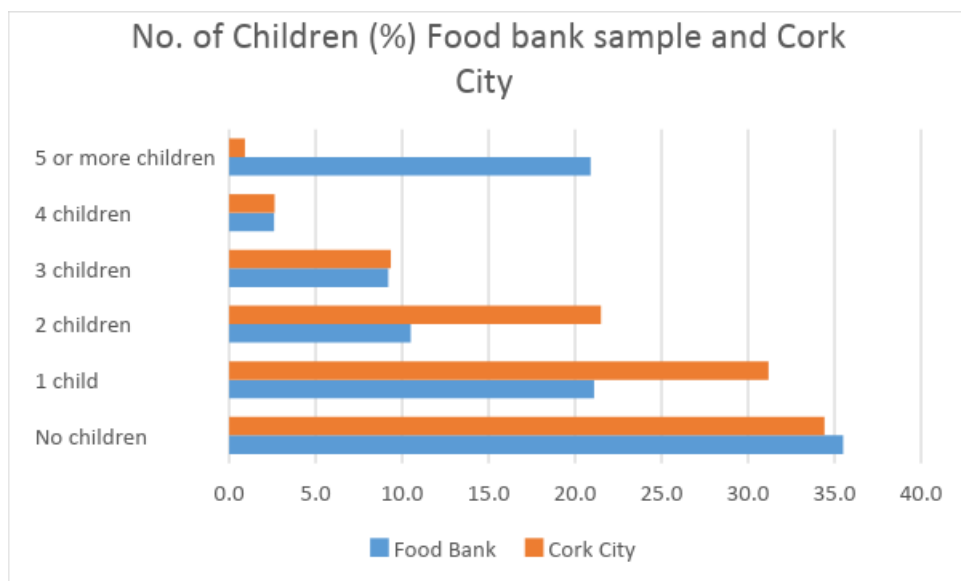


Figure 4.12: Comparison of number of children by food bank sample and Cork city data

Source: (Fieldwork data and CSO, 2018)

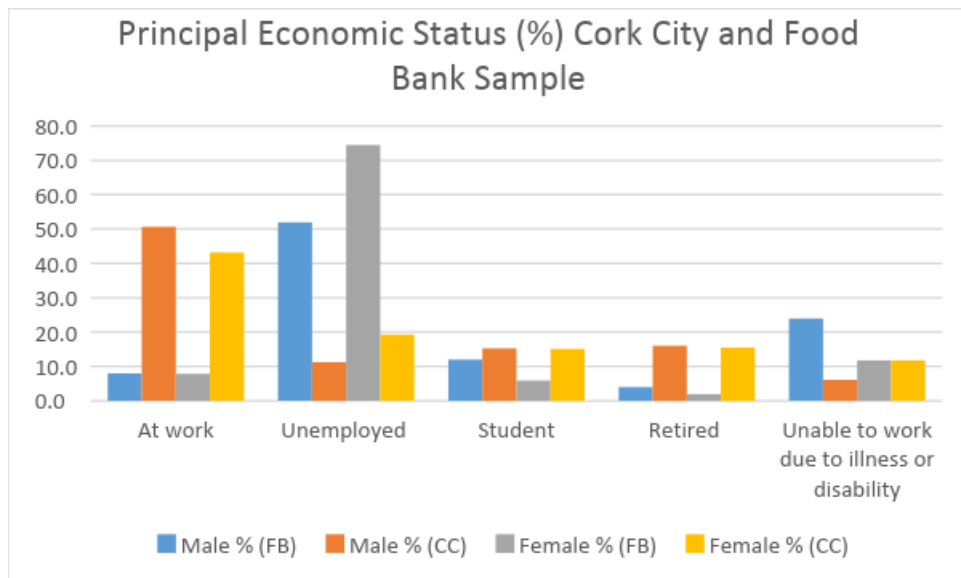


Figure 4.13: Principal economic status (%) Cork city and food bank

Source: (Fieldwork data and CSO, 2018)

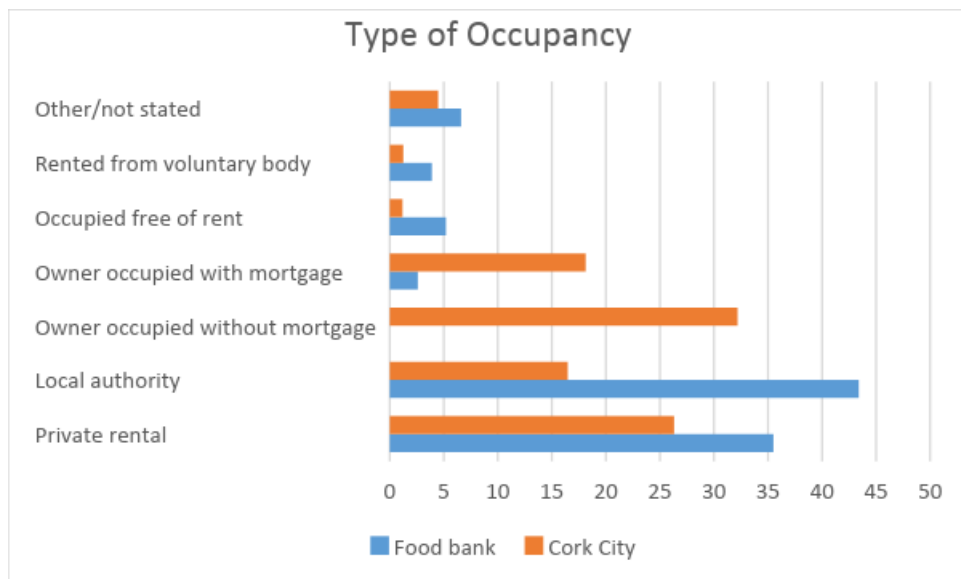


Figure 4.14: Type of Occupancy (%) by food bank users and Cork city population

Source: (Fieldwork data and CSO, 2018)

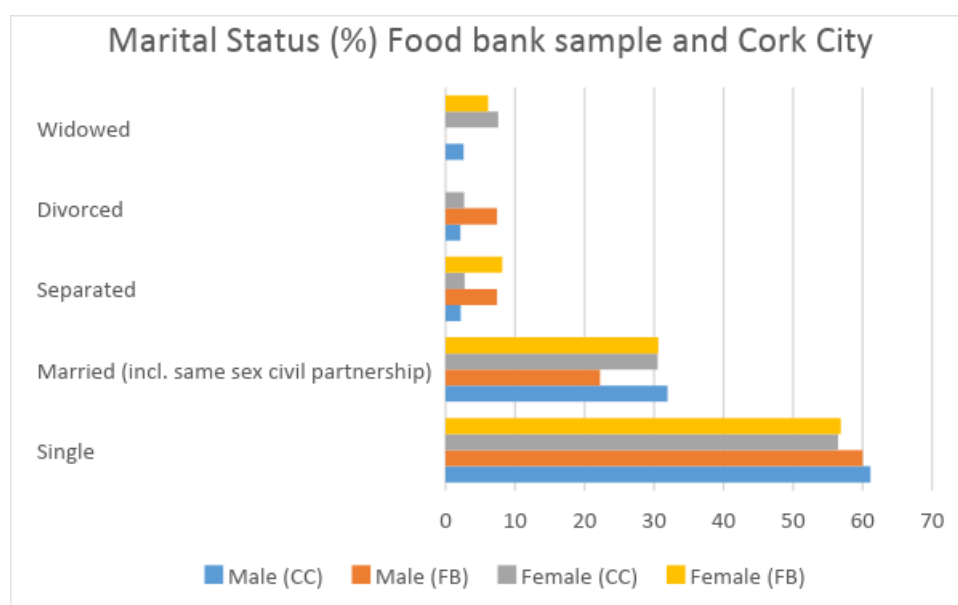


Figure 4.15: Marital status (%) by food bank users and Cork City population

Source: (Fieldwork data and CSO, 2018)

4.7. Discussion

The most common household type using the food bank were single male households (48%) and female lone parents with dependent children (29.4%) in line with research elsewhere (Loopstra and Laylor, 2017). However, unlike Loopstra and Laylor’s findings, in this case, the third most common type of household (17.6%) were female living with partners with dependent children as opposed to single women in the case of the UK. The majority of participants were under the age of 50. The men tended to be in the 35-49 age group whereas the largest group of women were in the 25-34 category. Most people tended to be living in local authority housing followed by those living in private rental accommodation.

Approximately, three quarters of the women and just over half of the men using this food bank were unemployed. This is over five times higher than the Cork City male

unemployment figure of 11.1 percent and for the female sample, four times higher than the Cork City female unemployment rate of 19.3 percent. One male (with 5 children) was engaged in full-time employment and one in part-time employment. None of the women were engaged in full-time employment but a minority worked part-time and one was engaged in a Community Employment Scheme,⁴⁶ which demonstrates the inadequacy of the very small amount of money paid (which at the time was €22.50 per week on top of their social welfare payment) to people on these schemes. This has been the subject of some debate (Duffy, 2017). Very few people of working age were in employment, suggesting that increased income would protect against food insecurity, in line with research elsewhere (Loopstra and Tarasuk, 2013; Mc Intyre et al., 2014).

High levels of disability within the food bank sample was also observed when compared to both the national level (13.1%) and the Cork city level (18.1%), a city in which has the highest level of disability in Ireland (CSO, 2016a). Overall, one in five male food bank users reported being unable to work due to disability. Age is also a consideration here, most of these men are under the age of 50 unlike national data where almost half of those living with a disability are over the age of 75 (ibid). This highlights the importance of adequate social safety nets for persons outside the labour market. As indicated in the Chapter Two, over half of those living in poverty are outside the labour market.

Almost two thirds (63%) of the sample had children, the majority of which had one child (33%). However, those with higher numbers of children were considerably overrepresented in comparison with the general Cork population, with 10 percent having five children and 23 percent with between six and 12 children. This was most common in

⁴⁶ The Community employment scheme is designed to reintegrate long-term unemployed persons back into the workforce by offering part-time and temporary employment within community settings. It is expected that those participating in this scheme will use the experience gained to attract full-time employment in a similar area of work (www.citizensinformation.ie)

the Traveller and Roma community and signals that children's diets are future food preferences are being shaped by charitable food flows and that the nutritional well-being of children as well as adults should be a consideration in the governance of food charity in Cork.

The majority of sample surveyed fell within the severely food insecure category which affected more women than men. This means that these households have reduced their food intake, experienced hunger, and or/gone whole days without eating (Tarasuk et al., 2016). Almost 40 percent of respondents reported to having gone without food for a whole day and again, this was more common in the female population which aligns with research elsewhere noting the gendered dimension of poverty, thus insecurity (Jovonoski and Cook, 2019). One of the two people who were classified as food secure was a woman in the 65 plus age group. This lady is a diabetic suffering from a range of chronic illnesses. Her husband spent most of his life as child in home for boys, where he was a victim of institutional abuse which led to a series of mental health issues in later life. This impeded his ability to maintain steady work which impacted the family throughout their life course. Her daughter, also present at the food bank on the day this lady took the survey, and indeed most weeks the researcher was there, has bipolar disorder and suffered from a series of other health problems. The daughter had one child under the age of five with her on the day and one baby less than three months old. The woman outlined that she has to keep an eye on her daughter's situation, as she was a single mother with health problems and needs help with bills and food. Notably, despite her difficult life circumstances, she explained how she does not struggle with food because her cupboard is full of pasta, she knows where to shop to get the best deals [the English Market where 20 chicken wings costs E2.50] and now also has Feed Cork, which she reported being very grateful for. This lady's story highlights a number of realities. Number one, the cyclical nature of poverty, two, the vital gap that food banks and other such services fill, three, the

importance of providing good quality food that assumes poor health within the population being targeted, and, four, the problem of trying to capture levels of food security in the absence of some measure that accounts for diet quality. It also brings attention to how very difficult circumstances become normal for people.

As outlined in the literature review, the link between food insecurity, food charity and poor health is well established, and high levels of ill-health is experienced by food bank users in Cork city. Food bank use is a last resort for many (Loopstra & Tarasuk, 2012; Tarasuk et al., 2019), signifies multiple deprivations (Tarasuk, 2016), and is only the tip of the iceberg in terms of the amount of food insecure people (Fabian Commission, 2015). While specific data was not collected on repeat food bank use, many of the participants attended the food bank every week while the researcher was present. Here, six in every ten participants (61%) reported a health problem and while the sample size was modest, it is in line with Loopstra and Laylor's (2017) finding that 63 percent of food banks users in the UK experience at least one health condition. In the case of Cork, this is almost double the national figure where according to Ireland's health survey 32 percent of the population in Ireland have a long-standing illness or health problem (CSO, 2016). Again, taking the age of group of the people surveyed here into considering it is likely more than double the national average. In the Ireland health survey age ranges vary between 15 years to 75 plus years. Ill-health increases with age, particularly in the 65 plus age group. Whereas in this survey only 3.9 percent were aged 65 plus with most participants (62%) being aged between 25 and 49 years.

The findings also align with Vozoris and Tarasuk's (2003) study noting how living with food insecurity and multiple health issues is a common occurrence. Just over half of those surveyed who are severely food insecure and 40 percent of those who are moderately food insecure (low food security) had between 1 and 4 health issues. Depression was the

leading health problem reported (30%). To put this in the context of the wider population in Ireland – this is almost three times higher than that experienced by the larger population in Ireland – where ‘at any one time, one in ten will be suffering from depression’ (www.aware.ie). Anxiety was the second most common ailment at 28 percent. These findings reflect research in the UK pointing to a high prevalence of ill health, particularly mental health issues such as depression and anxiety within populations who have to resort to food bank user (Garthwaite et al., 2015; Loopstra and Laylor, 2017).

The prevalence of asthma in the general population in Ireland is half of that in the Traveller community, in comparison to the general Irish population: 12 percent versus 6 percent (Watson et al., 2017:57). In this survey 50 percent of the Traveller community reported a respiratory illness including asthma, roughly 3.5 times more in comparison to the Irish food bank users. Similarly, within the Roma community, Diabetes was roughly 1.5 times more prevalent, when compared with the Irish food bank users. While the survey only captured the experience of ten members of the Roma community, the issue of diet related ill-health was also raised by those working within CFS, as will be discussed in Chapter Five. Overall, it can be concluded that, based on the sample of people surveyed, the level of food insecurity experienced is severe, as is the burden of ill-health.

This chapter examined the workings of a sample of organisations and charities within the local charitable food environment here in Cork city, the types of food flowing through the national charitable food system in addition to the circumstances, level of food insecurity, and burden of ill-health carried by people using on one food bank in Cork city.

The first part of the chapter presented a profile of educational and non-educational organisations providing food assistance to address the problem of food poverty in Cork. The majority of these organisations reported an increase in demand over the previous five years. Outside of educational based food assistance, the recipient base was broad ranging

from people outside the labour market to homeless persons and longer-term use was common which aligns with accounts elsewhere (Morris, 2015). Also reflecting circumstances elsewhere (Riches, 2018) there have been a number of newly established CFS in recent years and while resources are stretched, refusing food is a rare occurrence with organisations instead compromising the quantity, quality and variety of foods. However, for three organisations providing sheltered housing and hot meals and food parcels, too much food rather than too many people requiring food was reported.

With the exception of three schools, across both groups of CFS the persons in receipt of the food are not involved in the decision-making processes that decide what food will be served or given to them. Likewise, half of the non-educational CFS believed that the end users should not have a choice in this matter. Choice represents power and agency (Eldervass, 2010, Lambi-mumford, 2014), is connected to the right to self-determination and freedom (Ryan and Deci, 2006) and having no choice represents social exclusion (Lorenz, 2015). Acknowledging that surveys are limited in their inability to capture complexity (Miller and Brewer, 2013), the idea that people receiving food charity should not be entitled to the choice potentially point to perceived lack of entitlement for the person relying on charity. Equally, it could be attributed to the limited resources. A further notable perception is a disconnection between food poverty and health where half of the non-educational based CFS were not concerned with the nutritional value of the food. Yet 15 out of the 16 organisations believed that their work is contributing to tackling food poverty which implies having access to a healthy diet (Ravallion, 2002). These issues will be explored in more detail in Chapter Five which focusses solely on the non-educational CFS services. Schools were excluded from this stage of the research because as evidenced in the survey they do not rely on food surplus or accept food donations.

The second part of Chapter Four presented an overview of the categories of food redistributed over a 27 month period flowing through one national food redistribution

organisation. First by categories of food followed by a more detailed profile consisting of three months disaggregated by the degree of processing. Much of the criticisms of concerning the nutritional inadequacy of CFS elsewhere is the lack of fruit and vegetables (Simmet et al, 2017) which do form part of this data but in relatively limited volumes in comparison to that of UPF. Likewise, the lack of meat and dairy products is also noted elsewhere (ibid) and in this surplus stream they form most of the food flows. However, meat and dairy products also formed a large proportion of the UPF category (47% in 2016). This raises questions of the wider Irish food system around the overproduction of meat and dairy products but also the degree to which food within these categories, heavily marketed as healthy, are in fact UPF. This is beyond the scope of this thesis but is an area that warrants further consideration.

In line with research elsewhere (van der Horst et al, 2014), the abundance of unhealthy was also noted, particularly in the sample taken from 2016 where UPF comprised 59 percent. On the other hand, the data also highlights an increase in the variety of unprocessed foods being distributed which could contribute to a more varied diet and thus could be health protecting. Nonetheless, a proportionally much smaller group than that of the UPF group. Additionally, bottled water comprised roughly 12 percent of Group one ‘meals’ in 2016 and this highlights the inaccuracy of using any 454g of surplus to measure how many meals are distributed. Further research examining national charitable food flows (FoodCloud and FoodCloud Hubs) by disaggregating food by the degree of processing using the NOVA methods is warranted; particularly considering the longer-term nature of food charity in Cork but also in light of the already considerable health burden identified in the survey of food bank users in Cork city.

The final part of this chapter highlighted some of the circumstances in which severe food insecurity is experienced in Cork. These factors included being unemployed, a younger woman with children; a middle-aged man living alone, renting from the local authority

or privately, suffering from an illness or disability, being a migrant, or a member of the Traveller or Roma community. However, retirees, students, and people in paid employment also use this food bank highlighting that the defining features of food insecurity in this case are low and inadequate income and ill health. This strengthens the argument that the food being distributed within the charitable food system warrants further and more in-depth research and that the provision of good food must be central to any form of food assistance. Charitable food services do play an important role in offering a degree of relief to those experiencing food poverty, but likewise, they influence the diets within these households which shapes their health now and into the future. As mentioned earlier, CFS cannot address the socio-economic conditions of its users, they can work – along with the indirect providers - to ensure that the food available is not further contributing to the heavy health burden already experienced by the people using these services.

Chapter 5: Charitable Food Providers': Practices, beliefs, values, and motivations

Having presented the findings from multiple research methods in Chapter Four, this chapter elaborates on some of the issues already raised, responding to the research question of: what are the perceptions, experiences, and motivations of those working within direct and indirect charities? This question – focused solely on those providing food charity directly or indirectly – is built upon the Critical Realism assumption that these actors play a significant role in shaping the charitable food system, thus their practices, ideas, experiences, and knowledge are essential to understanding and explaining the current responses. As explained in Chapter Three, the concept of culture (norms and practices and ideas), agency (power and choice), and social structures (the relationships within the charitable system) is used to explore this data.

Chapter Five presents the findings from semi-structured interviews carried out with 21 participants, representing 18 organisations across a variety of local (n=15) and two national CFS providers along one state agency that facilitates the FEAD programme in Ireland. Based on survey and interview data combined, the local CFS represented here distribute food to somewhere between 1000 and 1388 people on a weekly basis and offer a variety of other services beyond food. Tables 5.1 through 5.3 provide an overview of the numbers of people using each of these services on a weekly basis, the additional services provided outside of food aid, the type of and frequency of the food aid provided, where the food they provide to its users originates from, and any government funding provided to these organisations for their CFS in particular. As mentioned in Chapter Three, CFS were categorised into two groups: direct services, organisations operating in Cork city supplying food directly to the end user, and indirect services, which are national

organisations and agencies supplying food to the direct services. These were further broken down by the type of food services provided (i) organisations delivering food parcels and hot food into the homes of their clients (Table 5.1, n=5), (ii) organisations operating food banks, drop in food centres and outreach soup runs (Table 5.2, n=6), (iii) organisations providing sheltered housing, homeless hostels and supported housing services (Table 5.3, n=4), and (vi) indirect services (Table 5.4 n=3). While many of these organisations offer a variety of CFS, for the purposes of this thesis they were organised into their primary form of CFS. That is delivering/providing food: into homes (home based, i.e. SVP), at a specific location (non-home based, i.e. a soup kitchen) or as part of a supported housing or sheltered housing project (supported housing, i.e. a homeless shelter). Each of the direct CFS represented here are FoodCloud and/or FoodCloud Hub recipients. While some are fully reliant on food surplus, most utilize a variety of additional food procurement options such as food drives, food purchasing, individual donations, and direct donations from food businesses outside that of FoodCloud and FoodCloud Hub arrangements (see Tables 5.1 – 5.3).

5.1 Direct Services

The organisations delivering food parcels, food vouchers, and hot food into the homes of families and individuals interviewed here, operate within Cork city centre and its immediate peripheries and provide up to 328 people with food on a weekly basis (Table 5.1). People relying on this type of food aid tend to be those who are unemployed, single parents, low paid, people with illnesses or disabilities; although as highlighted by all CFS services interviewed here, the user base has expanded since the economic crash of 2008.

The CFS operating drop-in food centres and soup runs are all city centre based and cater to somewhere between 606 to 728 people per week (Table 5.2). Additionally, mental health

problem, homelessness, unemployment, illnesses, and low paid employment are common problems experienced by the people obtaining food from these organisations.

Four of these organisations have been in operation for over four decades, one was founded in the early 2000's, two date back to the famine era, with the remaining four being recent additions (2015, 2016, and 2017) to the Cork charitable food environment. Three of these recent additions are Christian faith-based organisations (FBOs). Similar to the Catholic based charities, such as SVP, assistance is not dependent on being a member of their church. Both of these groups of CFS rely fully on unpaid volunteers (UV) and persons participating on Community Employment⁴⁷(CE) programmes (Table 5.1.& 5.2).

⁴⁷ The CE programme is a contested governmental programme that offers part-time temporary employment in the local community to the long-term unemployed and additional disadvantaged groups (Duffy, 2017)

Table 5.1: Organisations delivering food parcels and hot food into the homes of families and individuals (N=5)

	Additional Services	Clients per week	Type of FA	Food source	Staff	Frequency per week	Gov. funding
P8	Budgeting advisory, Life-skills, Counselling and guidance, Material assistance, Employment training, Rehabilitation and residential care, Health and well-being, advocacy, information services.	1-30	Food parcels & food vouchers	FC, FCH , donations of food from: businesses; individuals, & students	UV*	1 day	FEAD
P2	Material assistance	151-200 per week,	Food parcels, food vouchers	FC, FCH, donations of food from businesses	UV/CES*	4 days	FEAD

	Additional Services	Clients per week	Type of FA	Food source	Staff	Frequency per week	Gov. funding
						December: Monday to Saturday	
P17	Financial assistance	1-30	Food vouchers& food parcels	FCH	UV	One day	None
P5	Financial assistance	1-30	food parcels & food vouchers	Purchase, FCH	UV	1 day	None
P16	Food delivery only	38 (2000+year)	Meals on wheels service.	Dinners purchased from local store	UV	2 days	HSE (partial)

Source: Survey and interview data *UV= unpaid volunteers, *CES= persons participating in community employment schemes.

Table 5.2: Organisations offering drop-in food services and soup runs (n=6)

	Additional Assistance	Clients per week	Type of FA	Food source	Staff	Frequency	Gov. Funding
P3	Material assistance, informational services, advocacy	251-300	Hot meals, food parcels,	FCH, donations of food from businesses & individuals	UV, CES	7 days	None
P18	Material assistance	31-60	Hot meals	Personal Donations of food from individuals, Fundraising activities, Purchase food required.	UV	4 days	None
P20	Material assistance. counselling and guidance, religious services, rehabilitation	50-65	Hot meals, food parcels	FC, FCH, donations of food from businesses & individuals	UV	2 days	None
P21	Material Assistance, medical assistance, Information services, Advocacy, rehabilitation, counselling and guidance.	31-60	Hot meals, Food parcels	Personal donations of food. FC	UV/CES	1 days per week and 2 days per week every second week.	None

	Additional Assistance	Clients per week	Type of FA	Food source	Staff	Frequency	Gov. Funding
P10	Information services	120 per week	Food parcels	FC, FCH, FEAD	UV	1 day per week	FEAD
P15, P9, P11, P14	Information services & Advocacy,	123	Food parcels	FC, FCH, FEAD	UV	Monday-Friday	FEAD

(Source: Survey and interview data)

With the exception of one hot food provider which delivers food into to the home of its clients, all CFS services presented in Tables 5.1 and 5.2 operate in the absence of government funding, outside of the FEAD programme. In contrast, charities operating supported housing, sheltered housing, and homeless hostels (Table 5.3), henceforth referred to as supported housing, are funded by the Health Service Executive (HSE) and Cork City Council and are run by paid professionals, with two also incorporating UV and persons on CE programmes. Three of these services date back to the 1970s and 80s, with the remaining one founded in the mid 2000s. These charities provide accommodation and food to between 253 to 340 people each week and work with at-risk populations in society. These include young adults coming out of the care system, persons with learning difficulties, complex health problems, and addiction issues. More often than not, this is the home of the

person using these services for an extended period of time, often years. Each of these organisations work closely with government agencies, and obtaining a bed or a room from these services is needs based and dependant on space, which is lacking given the current housing crisis.

Table 5.3: Organisations providing sheltered housing (n=4)

	Additional Services	Clients per week	Type of FA	Food source	Staff	Frequency	Gov. Funding
P19	Budgeting advisory, Counselling and guidance, Material assistance, Life-coaching, Rehabilitation and residential care, Health and well-being, advocacy, information services	31-60	Residents Meals	FC, FCH	PP	7 days per week – breakfast, lunch, dinner and tea	HSE/City Council
P7	Budgeting advisory, Life skills ed, Counselling and guidance, Material assistance, Life-coaching, Rehabilitation and residential care, Health and well-	1-30	Food Club, meals	FC, FCH ,	PP	7 days per week, weekly food club	City Council

	Additional Services	Clients per week	Type of FA	Food source	Staff	Frequency	Gov. Funding
	being, employment training, advocacy, information services						
P13	Budgeting advisory, life-skills, Employment training, Counselling and guidance, Material assistance, Life-coaching, Health and well-being, advocacy.	61-90	Meals and parcels (every few weeks)	FC, FCH	PP/V	7 days per week	City Council/HSE
P12	Budgeting advisory, Life skills ed, Counselling and guidance, Material assistance, Life-coaching, Rehabilitation and residential care,	160	Drop in meals, Resident meals, food parcels	FC, FCH , donations of food from businesses & individuals	PP/V/C ES	Soup run: 7 days per week. Shelter: 7 days per week. Day centre: 7 days per week	City Council/HSE FEAD

	Additional Services	Clients per week	Type of FA	Food source	Staff	Frequency	Gov. Funding
	Health and well-being, employment training, advocacy, information services						

Table 5.3: Source: Survey and interview data

5.2 Culture: practices, norms and beliefs

All charities interviewed here operate primarily on the principal of trust, maintaining that if someone asks for help, there is a 'genuine need'. The charities offering hot food on site, soup runs, and take-away food parcels do not require any form of assessment and anyone who presents is given food, as 'it doesn't matter if you are a prince or a pauper' (P18, female, volunteer, non-home based). As with all CFS services, outside of those offering long term housing, clients are self-referred and there are no maximum number of visits or number of times a service can be used. One food bank requires proof of children and proof of address to ensure a food parcel is suitable to the number of people in the family unit. Another centre operating similar food bank services, but who do not identify as a food bank, operate a 'no questions asked' policy. The person requiring assistance simply leaves their name and number at the front desk of this community centre and, when the food parcel is ready for collection, they receive a phone call. In this instance, food is delivered via FC and FCH daily, packed into black bags by volunteers each morning, who never meet or know anything about the recipient, and then collected by the recipient that evening, after they receive a phone call notifying them that their food is ready for collection.

The decision-making structures of all charities delivering food parcels and food vouchers into the homes of clients are based on a collective committee membership structure. Letters, emails, and phone calls are received either direct to the committee or through a main office and the decision to assist are made collectively after a house call to determine 'the level of need'. Assessments are informal and dependent on the volunteers' perception, assumptions, and local knowledge '...because we are local we tend to know a lot of the stories' (P5, male, volunteer, home based). 'The key thing is to talk to the people, you know very quick if someone is coddling you' (P2, male, volunteer, home

based). For those delivering food parcels, all interviewees noted the importance of visiting the person's home, with observations made during the home visit forming part of informal assessment. 'You will notice it just by looking around the house and that sort of stuff...if you find a house that is in a total mess with clothes thrown around the place it's a warning sign there is something wrong' (P8, male, volunteer, home based).

It was noted that possibly not everyone needs the assistance to the extent they report, but for the most part, they err on the side of caution; '...maybe half the families we are helping don't strictly need our help but rule number one - you have to be 100% certain and [rule] number two- put yourself in their situation' (P8, male, volunteer, home based); '[we] have a bottom line - if there are children - no matter what the money is being used for, we know there might be a big TV or they might smoke, but if there are children they would respond to them...' (P17, female, volunteer, home based)

Each of the home-based charities use a mixture of supermarket vouchers, food surplus, other donated foods, and cash. Who gets what depends on the level of need, as assessed during the initial meeting and on the availability of food. Often, food is given out regardless of whether it was requested or not and is brought to the house before any informal assessment takes place. 'If we have it, we bring it...' (P17, female volunteer, home based). These organisations are aware that 'the food that we would bring might not be the food people use ...' (P17, female volunteer, home based), but the general perception is '... people either use it or not and if they don't then there is not that need there in the first place' (P5, male, volunteer, home based). A specific request for food is not the norm and, usually, the request is within the framework of another problem such as money being 'tight' and a general inability to both buy food and pay bills. Thus, food is given to free up money for other non-elastic bills.

5.2.1 Traditional member base and volunteer motivations

In addition to volunteers being from the local area, other common characteristics of homebased CFS services is that volunteers are of retirement age and have been with the charity for an extended period of time, decades in some instances. Being local, for some, is viewed as a significant asset in terms of knowledge surrounding the family history of the recipients: 'I joined in 1981 and some have been there before that...we know a lot of the historical cases...to be able to go back on things is a big plus ...' (P8, male, volunteer, home based). However, for the volunteers in smaller areas, it can make their job more difficult at times. For example, one volunteer spoke about the frustration in seeing people her organisation is helping, 'smoking and down the local supermarket shopping' after telling her they do not have any money. This is perceived as a lack of effort and respect on their behalf. One CFS provider within this group purposely changes the visiting volunteers after a period of time to avoid getting overly involved in situations and families. In the case of food bank services, volunteers tend to be from the local church, are recipients of the food bank, are from the minority communities in which they serve and also includes corporate volunteers on a weekly basis as does one soup kitchen albeit to a lesser extent.

A feel-good factor is associated with volunteering in these services, '... if someone benefits from it and if someone needs it then there is great satisfaction' (P9, female, volunteer, non-home based). Mirroring the survey results, many of the volunteers also felt a personal sense of responsibility to help where needed: 'I think government have an obligation to do its best for all its citizens, but I also recognize they can't do this for everyone ...' (P5, male, volunteer, home based). Others felt that this work was better left to the voluntary rather than the statutory sector: 'It's better to have it voluntary, there's nobody who would do the work we do' (P3, female, volunteer, non-home based).

Additional motivations included religious beliefs and empathy, ‘...we want to show the love of the Jesus through us and what he done when he walked the earth ...’ (P20, female volunteer, non-home based); ‘I have a responsibility as a Christian to do what I am doing...the only thing you can do is help, you can put food on the table, you can make sure that the little fella goes to school, you can make sure he has the shoes and you make sure he has the books and the uniform. And you have to do that’ (P2, male volunteer, home-based).

‘...It’s about the love of Jesus, to show them that Jesus loves them, that there is hope, and they are loved’ (P18, female, volunteer, non-home based). The founder of one of the newer FBO described how he was the person on the receiving end of charity in the past and for him it’s a personal mission. ‘... I was that person, I was that kid who lived in that home, who lived in that stigma, that lived below the poverty line. From my clothes to the food that I ate - you knew where we were at...’ (P10, male, non-home based).

5.2.2 Poverty & food poverty: perception of causes and solutions

Poverty is perceived as financial hardship and, according to all interviewees, is a persistent problem. Food poverty is generally perceived as a problem concerning the lack of food caused by financial hardship. CFS delivering food parcels recalled numerous situations of families attempting to survive on a minimal food budget such as ‘10 euros’ (P2, male, volunteer home based) per week. While the problem the requesting family require assistance with may not be food related, putting ‘food on the table’ is the first response ‘...this is our priority whatever else, food is the number one priority. You have to have food for god’s sake’ (P8, male volunteer, home based).

Numerous factors were outlined as causing and contributing to circumstances of financial hardship and, thus, food poverty including low paid employment and poor health: ‘I think

the common thing is disability and small income... people who are working but on low wages' (P17, female volunteer, home based). Low educational attainment, limited numeracy and literacy skills, smoking and poor budgeting skills were also mentioned. However, one female interviewee noted that it would be unfair to dismiss the problem of food poverty as poor budgeting skills, making the case that for some there are only two choices: pay the bills or buy food. One interviewee attributed poor tertiary educational choices as a factor prohibiting employment opportunities, thus showing the need for their service.

‘...the kind of weird courses in which you just don't walk out of and happily into a job. They don't seem to have thought that this through, they are people who may be have done the leaving cert but haven't got the points and theydo some sort of Community degree. They do the courses but at the end of the day you need to pay your bills’ (P8, male volunteer, home based).

For the homebased CFS, the need for their services arise due to sudden financial shock such as a broken washing machine, an illness, or funeral costs. Others working in this area spoke about special occasions and ‘keeping up with appearances’ as a common theme in the request for assistance. ‘The old problem of you have to be like the next-door neighbour buying something for the children. And that’s the way it is’ (P22, male volunteer, home based). In relation to Communion time, in particular, ‘...it seems the poorer you are, the flashier the dress has to be’ (P2, male volunteer, home based). Similarly, the cost of schooling such as school fees for photocopying, school uniforms, school trips, schoolbooks, and after school activities were also singled out as factors contributing to why people need these services. This reflects that young families, particularly single mothers, form a large proportion of the users of homebased services.

With regards to current unemployment payment, which at the time was €188, being adequate enough to live on, opinions varied, from it not being enough regardless of your

circumstances, to enough if you 'are very frugal' (P5, male). However, in the absence of a decent standard of living, it is enough if you do not have rent to account for:

'Accommodation is the biggest issue, let's say an unemployed person living at home then certainly €188 is enough but if you put that person paying for accommodation like that unfortunate man in the Midlands living in a garage that wasn't enough for him to sustain himself because if you add up ESB, gas, rent, feed himself and to get in and out of town like a return trip on the buses about €6 for per person on job seekers that's a huge chunk of money. If you go into Aldi you can buy a lot food for €6' (P8, male volunteer, home based)

The overall perception is that, even if the basic social welfare payment increased along with the minimum wage, there would be little change in the work that these charities do, as someone will always need assistance.

Mirroring the reasons as to why people are in the situation where assistance is required, numerous suggestions were put forward as a response to poverty including forced employment, improving budgeting skills, and enforced child maintenance payments:

'...if people were forced to go out to work it would solve a lot of issues' (P5, male volunteer, home based) and budgeting skills.

'I don't think there are any national policies that I'm aware of that people in poverty are given any sort of course or tuition on how to budget your family income I mean a person on job seekers alone is getting €188 per week, in European terms our social welfare system is very generous ...' (P8 male, volunteer, home based).

'...when a woman is with a child and supposed to be getting paid from her partner there should be a strict legal enforcement of that and not having it as a sick joke as it is at the moment' (P2, male volunteer, home based CFS).

Notably, part of the reasoning behind the suggestions to enforce child maintenance payments was the 'enormous' cost to the state. Requests for assistance for a particular family or individual often come from a variety of sources, including political representatives, schoolteachers, and in some cases the local priest. 'Social workers would also contact us...we get request from schools...Barnardos ...the odd time the local priest...' (P17, female volunteer, home based). 'TDs... regularly send people to us with a letter...statutory bodies at times' (P2, male volunteer, home-based). Additional

proposed solutions to poverty included making available specific school funds and extra funding for agencies such as Barnardos⁴⁸ and civil servants such as social workers. This would allow these organisations to allocate these funds to families in need at their will, as opposed to sending families to charities already struggling to keep up with the demand for their assistance.

5.2.3 Growing demand, long term use and stigma

Post recessionary Ireland has revealed a ‘new poor’ and this change in clientele was noted by all interviewees, ‘...people who were contributors are now the people looking for help’ (P17, female volunteer, home based). Typically, this group of people, characterized as ‘well-to-do’ ‘educated’ ‘hard-working people’ ‘who took a risk’ and are less well equipped to navigating the social welfare system. Empathy towards this group of people was particularly high: ‘I feel very sorry for those people paying a mortgage and who have lost their job, they are the real pity...’ (female, volunteer, non-home based).

‘The people that we are meeting now, that are seriously in trouble, I mean really hungry, are the well-to-do who have lost their jobs, especially I would point out the self-employed, the people who took a chance- crucified...I mean it is absolutely sinful that a group of people who have set up this country, provided the jobs and worked very very hard, have no support if things go wrong...they come to the door there and it would break your heart. It’s always the women who do it, I have never seen a man do it. It’s always the women who get the lousy jobs. They come there and are shaking with the humiliation, they are crying... these are third level educated women, professionals and really hard-working people ... I have seen a house with a BMW and a Merc parked in the drive and no tax or insurance, so they couldn’t move them, they couldn’t sell them- no value on them, a four or five bedroomed house that they couldn’t sell. Absolutely nothing they can do, I really pity these people, these are the actual people who are physically hungry at this stage’ (P2, male volunteer, home-based)

People struggling towards the end of the month while waiting for the next pay cheque, ‘people perceived to have good jobs like nurses’ (P3, female, volunteer, non-home based), and people managing illnesses such as cancer and signposted to these CFS service by

⁴⁸ National charity who delivers services to vulnerable children and families.

their GP were also noted as new occurrences in the last five years. ‘We have a good few people with cancer and the reason they come in here is to get a good nourishing meal...’ (P3, female, volunteer, non-home based). Homeless specific charities noted an increase in people with mental health issues and also young people, reflective of the 2014 reduction in job seekers allowance from €144 per week to €100 for those in the 21 – 25 age group: ‘... the reduced social welfare situation has really locked young people into homelessness, how do you survive on 100 Euro a week?’ (P13, male employee, supported housing). Grandparents who have assumed the responsibility to care for grandchildren due to parental addiction issues was also noted as a new phenomenon in recent years. As was the increased bureaucracy attached to applying for entitlements such as Family Income Support and basic social welfare payments, which ‘...makes it difficult for people who have a need to get what they are entitled to. Like you have to work so hard to get it and that’s awful...’ (P5, male volunteer, home-based).

As described earlier, while charitable assistance can be a one-off event due, or seasonal such as May (Communions), September (back to school costs), and December (Christmas costs), numerous CFS reported assistance being provided ‘to help them get back on their feet’ (P8, male, volunteer, home based) over a number of months and repeated use is common. ‘We do tend to see a lot of the same names reappearing from year to year’ (P5, male, volunteer, home based). ‘You might need to look after them [provide food hampers] for 6 months, 12 months or whatever, then others might only need it for three or four weeks’ (P3, female volunteer, non-home based). In other cases, assistance is years rather than months and there are cases where families use these CFS services in order to pay for other essential costs such as education.

‘Would you have families waiting on this food every week for year?’

‘You would, there are probably lots of families doing this, but one family came forward and said we have three children going to university and we couldn’t do it

without this. [they] are getting the food and putting money into education. Like that is survival' (P2, male volunteer, home-based).

In some instances, these charities are providing the same families assistance spanning generations, '... Mental illness in a family - you couldn't hold down a job and so it goes from generation to generation' (P2, male volunteer, home-based), and '... We would [see intergenerational use] - the grandfather would, the father, the son - so yeah- it's unfortunate but yes' (P5, male volunteer, home-based), '...we could go into the books...and go back through parishes and follow families back to grandparents and tell you what the grandparents had for their breakfast...' (P2, male, volunteer, home based). In the case of those providing homes, it is rarely a short-term arrangement: 'This is their home' (P19, male, employee, supported housing).

'You can stay here for two years or four if you leave and come back...and that does happen' (P7, male, employee, supported housing).

'In theory the max is 6 months but the reality is 6 years' (P12, male, employee, supported housing)

'50 percent of our residents are long-term [over 5 years]' (P13, male, employee, supported housing).

Generally, it was felt that families and individuals, used to living in poverty, were better equipped at 'making ends meet' in comparison to the 'new poor'. As one interviewee described, families in receipt of social welfare payments over a long period (years) "make do", and '... they have never been inside the door of a bank, they might be in a credit union, if they are they are probably in the red and the credit union won't give them anymore. But they have learnt to make do and survive and their rent is down, they are living in social housing' (P2, male, volunteer, home-based). Another interviewee noted that people living in these circumstances might also rely on other means such as assistance through meals-on-wheels, calls to SVP, and informal labour for periods of time.

Much like the perception that some [poor] people were better at dealing with poverty than others [new poor], it was felt by some that those who are more familiar with charity are

less likely to feel the shame and embarrassment associated with the act of charity. For one interviewee this was attributed to the normalisation of food assistance:

‘...like a couple of years ago people wouldn't be seen... now that the stigma is gone from accepting food from food banks and food cloud or whatever, food charity...how many people attend Penny Dinners? How many people receive food boxes from St Vincent De Paul every week? Thousands! And they are getting it because the stigma is gone- you got it once and nobody noticed then you go back again...’ (P7, male employee, sheltered housing).

However, in the context of the new poor or the ‘squeezed middle’ such as a young couple struggling to pay bills, mortgage and childcare, it was felt that the stigma attached to receiving charity is more of a problem now, given that these people are ‘not used’ to receiving charity.

‘... that’s becoming more [common] now [stigma] than it used to be say five years ago because there has been a change of emphasis - it’s not necessarily the people on social welfare their whole life who are the people in trouble. Young married couples...The problem is, historically [emphasis added], they are not used to that. I told you already that in some cases we are dealing with three generations- there is no issue there’ (P8, male, volunteer, home based).

Hence, for organisations delivering CFS to a person’s home, maintaining confidentiality is key for all charities in this sector and, despite varying degrees of perceived stigma, great attention is given to disguising what is happening. For example, some charities deliver the food in a non-descript cardboard box, so the neighbours will not know what is being delivered. Another interviewee spoke about working delivery times around the recipient who in this case did not want her mother knowing she was receiving charitable aid: ‘We had a lady whom through circumstances ended up living back home with her mother, she was totally unhappy that anyone would call to that house. They worked around it’ (P16, female volunteer, home based).

While not in the context of his daily workings, one interviewee is also involved with a local SVP conference in the city and described one couple’s experience, who used to be on the giving rather than the receiving side of charity, of asking for assistance help:

‘...both were crying, the genuine upset of having to reach out’ (P13, male, employee, sheltered housing). Thus, regardless of what charities do to minimise the stigma, it is still a problem; ‘...there are great services in the city...but still there is a stigma attached...absolutely no doubt about it’ (P13, male, employee, sheltered housing).

5.2.4 Acknowledging culture, health & religion

Catering to culture, religious, and health requirements are outside the capability of most charities offering CFS in the form of food parcels, some drop-in food services, and soup runs, given their limited resources and reliance on donations: ‘They [minority community in Cork city] do[ask], but you can’t really. They say to me that’s all Irish food – I say it’s food... food is food if you don’t have any...’ (P15, male volunteer, non-home based). In some cases, the perception is that, at this level of need, choice is a luxury: ‘I do know she happens to be a Muslim and she still gets the food the same as everybody else... when you are in her situation you will eat what you are given...it [religion] doesn’t come into it’ (P8, male volunteer, home based).

While it was reported that poor health was a common characteristic of service users, such as ‘diabetes, high blood pressure and heart problems’ (P15, male, volunteer, non-home based), these concerns were beyond the limits of what most charities can adapt to. When one interviewee was asked about the health concerns related to feeding families for long periods of time, on often heavily processed food, the reply was ‘It’s [food] killing us all ...It’s not the immediate worry with me, the alternative is don’t feed them at all and let them drop on the ground’ (P2 male, volunteer, home based). Thus, food is perceived as a means for survival and not as a means to health. ‘When it comes down to the level we are at with food, you don’t ask the question...food is food if you don’t have any...’ (P15, male volunteer, non-home based). One charity working with homeless people suffering

from addiction problems, catering to dietary requirements was not seen as important in the context of wider problems:

‘Would you ever get anyone who would say I have diabetes or coeliac disease?

‘No, that’s not important. The food is not as important...it’s not as important for them either’ (P21, female volunteer, non-home based).

For other charities, food is only a means to an end: ‘I used to be afraid people wouldn’t have enough food, this was years ago now, a lot of people were dependent on the food. But now they are not, they really aren’t. They just come because they like the atmosphere. So it is a social thing’ (P18, female, volunteer, non-home based).

Indeed, many CFS considered the social side of their services as the most important factor in their activities. For those offering meals at a specific location, great care is given to creating a family feel, sitting down together, speaking with the users of the services, and offering additional material and non-material services if required; ‘we encourage people and groups to go around and find homeless people and bring them over to our trailer...we have tables and chairs ...sometimes it’s nice just to talk, like sometimes they don’t talk to a person for two or three days’ (P21, female volunteer, non-home based). In other instances, gifts are given out on days of celebration such as Mother’s Day, and musicians come in regularly to play music on site, ‘Just to bring some sort of normality in to make people feel like they are still part of life’ (P3, female, volunteer, non-home based).

5.3 Agency: Factors influencing power and choice within surplus food redistribution

The ability to offer a choice regarding what food the person (end user) wants to eat, depends on the charity and their capabilities, but in most cases choice is not part of the service. As previously mentioned, choice is considered a luxury in these circumstances: ‘the soup run is minimalistic - there is no choice. It’s functional, it’s people who are

hungry looking for something to eat’ (P12, male employee, non-home based), ‘...you [end user] just take what you get...’ (P11, female volunteer, non-home based), ‘It’s potluck what they get’ (P9, female, volunteer, non-home based).

Those distributing food through food bank setups that are reliant solely on surplus and donations are not in the position to grant specific requests, with boxes and parcels packed in advance. The focus instead is on ‘getting them fed’. ‘We are not in a position to do that yet... we just want them to get fed’ (P20, female volunteer, non-home based).

Based on the various CFS interviewed here, those less reliant on and less supportive of using surplus food in their daily workings are in a better position to cater to specific requests, ‘if we don’t have it, we tell them straight out that we don’t have it, but we will tomorrow’ (P3, female volunteer, non-home based). Although restricted, there is still a degree of choice, as to what charities purchase, what they decide to accept as donations, and what they ask for in terms of donations. Refusing food is an option, but most do not: ‘we never refuse anything because we will always get rid of it’ (P15, male, volunteer, home-based).

5.3.1 Resources, donations and perceptions of demand, knowledge, and tastes

Resources do influence the flow of food in terms of what they can and cannot take due to the lack of facilities and the human resources to store and manage certain food safely, such as perishable items: ‘We take bread for sandwiches, crisps, sweets, chocolates – they all just love little bits... we always have hot food, sandwiches, crisps, buns – people are very good for baking cakes and everything so we always make sure we have some goodies for them’ (P21, female volunteer, non-home based). For many of the homebased CFS, food parcels usually consist of the pasta, rice, tea, sugar, beans and tinned foods, cereals, pasta sauces, instant soups, jelly, biscuits, cakes, and other non-perishable items.

‘Cereal, pasta, rice, tinned food, and again of course it depends on what's there[FCH], you don't go out saying I have this you take with there and often they have fresh food, eggs, tomatoes, but we can't take any of those, it's not suited to us and we haven't any freezers. We just meet in [a] room...’ (P16, female, volunteer, home based).

The opinions of the volunteers packing the food parcels also come into play in terms of influence. ‘They [volunteers] bring what they think that family would use’ (P16, female, volunteer, home based).

‘ ... you have to use your cop-on, if you were giving somebody a big bag of spaghetti or pasta you give them some sauce so they can eat it with the pasta ...we would be very conscious of the what's in the box... chancers only get the bag of baked beans’ (P8, male, volunteer, home based).

Perceptions of ‘demand’ and tastes also impact on the food types flowing through this system. For instance one CFS described how, ‘homeless people do not like very rich foods, they are not used to it, they like plain foods. If it's a young girl, intravenous drug users - they love fast food’ (P12, male, employee, supported housing and non-home based). Another noted how ‘they all [end users] just love little bits [‘treat foods]’ (P21, female, volunteer, non-home based). These generalisations do influence what food is both accepted and given out. Another interviewee explained that their clients tend to be in the mid-sixties and are ‘very plain eaters’, hence the ‘grainy nutty bread’ would not be suitable. On the other hand, it was acknowledged that generalisations and perceptions do change: ‘...when I started here 15 years ago, they didn't do salad- people didn't like salad, and they didn't do pasta or rice [and now they do]’ (P12, male, employee, sheltered housing and non-home based).

The perceived lack of knowledge and familiarity around how to prepare certain foods also influences what foods are accepted and also what foods get thrown out. ‘Avocado's is something we get a lot of lately ... but half the time they are dumped because the lads don't know what they are a lot of our lads give them the spuds, chips and meat and they are happy as Larry then’ (P7, male, employee, sheltered housing). This same interviewee pointed out that many people are unfamiliar with the ‘modern food stuffs’,

which are moving through surplus channels: ‘We get a lot of courgettes... it’s grand to say I know what to do with them but some fella who is only 19, coming out of care or prison, been eating stews and chipper food - like he won’t know what to do with them’ (P7, male, employee, supported housing). Consequently, this interviewee felt that surplus should be used as an educational tool to introduce people to foods they may not have been previously exposed too: ‘I think it’s a great idea [using surplus food] but I personally think it should be more informational and an educational tool for those who receive it...’ (P7, male, employee, supported housing).

5.3.2 Expectations: Reciprocity and gratefulness

Some charities do stipulate what groups of foods they want and do not want, while others take whatever the food rescue volunteers deliver. ‘unfortunately you take what you get’ (P7, male, employee, supported housing). Generally, the charities using the food to cook with on site, rather than using those distributing food parcels, tend to be more inclined to stipulate what they wanted and what they did not want. ‘If you don’t want bread, you can take that out of it [category on the FoodCloud app] so when the volunteers go they say no’ (P13, male, employee, supported housing). Making use of all foods in an effort to reduce food waste was important to some services: ‘I try to prolong their life [jam tarts and doughnuts] maybe make them into a trifle or something...’ (P7, male, employee, supported housing). Other CFS felt that because they are getting this food for free in the case of FC, and in some instances, FoodCloud Hubs, efforts should be made to accommodate the donor: ‘I was always of the opinion that you should play fair, you can’t turn around and say I want that that and that and I’m not taking that...’ (P19, male, employee, supported housing). Given the reliance of these organisation on charity in general, best efforts are made to avoid being perceived as ‘ungrateful’. This was a

problem in relation to all free food donations from food businesses, indirect services, and members of the public.

Pressure to take ‘free food’ was felt in relation to all offers of food from individuals and food businesses alike: ‘From a PR point of view we are not supposed to say no and we are supposed to be very grateful for everything’ (P12, male, employee, supported housing and non-home based). For some charities, this pressure is passed onto its clients: ‘They have this in their head that because it has a yellow label on it – it’s gone off. Now this is coming from lads now who haven’t a pot to piss in...’ (P7, male, employee, supported housing). At the same time, some interviewees would not like ‘...to be surviving on it...’ (P12, male, employee, supported housing and non-home based) and would not eat some foods they are feeding to their clients: ‘...we might get... convenience packs with slice of chicken, ham or whatever is inside in them- they are actually perfect a week later. Now I personally have a mental block about precooked stuff like that...’ (P7, male, employee, supported housing).

5.4 Social structures: relationships between CFS and donors

The reported working relationships between direct charities varied. Some noted a good working relationship with other charities offering similar services and it is not uncommon for a smaller charity to refer a client to a larger charity who may have more human and financial resources. However, issues of poor communication, no coordination, and duplication of efforts were highlighted as problematic, along with well-established charities ignoring requests to meet with newer CFS services working in the same area: ‘...we are doing similar work and we don’t want to step on their toes neither...we did request a meeting and we got nothing back...they are not too keen on volunteer organisations’ (P21, female, volunteer, non-home based). This lack of coordination in

some cases resulted in more food waste: ‘...someone was giving out dinners that night that fed everyone. So a lot of our food was wasted and people in the kitchen hate throwing out waste’ (P12, male, employee, supported housing and non-home based). The lack of communication and coordination between charities was also outlined as challenging.

...It’s a bit precarious ...some of the Christian ones would have you sitting down saying your prayers... a bit more consistency across the board - there are way too many homeless agencies...we need much more coordination and much less duplication... (P12, male, employee, non-home based).

Some attributed the lack of communication to time pressure, ‘I am at the stage where I need to go around and have a meeting with everybody I just need to get around to it’ (P20, female, volunteer, non-home based), whereas others suggested that the root of the problem is money with everyone struggling for a very limited amount of local funding and financial donations.

5.4.1 Relationship with indirect services

The vast majority of direct services reported a good relationship with the indirect organisations – the organisations providing food to the direct services. The primary motivation for engaging with these services was the potential monetary savings and the desire to prevent food waste by matching it with ‘people who need it’, ‘a whole network of people working together that are proactive and have the desire to see food that is wasted get to people who need it’ (P10, male, volunteer, non-home based). In some instances, this need was centred on the issue of waste: ‘It’s new enough and badly needed [new food bank in Cork] – the amount of food going to waste is ridiculous. FC are dumping an awful lot’ (P20, female, volunteer, non-home based). For many of these charities, FC and FCH have played a key role in encouraging and enabling more food charity while saving money on existing services to grow. One charity noted that, traditionally, they would have

used vouchers only and ‘wouldn’t have had food until Bia [FCH] was established’ (P17, female, volunteer, home based).

‘We would be lost without FC and the Food Hub [FCH]...I was paying...nearly a euro a chicken fillet...that’s 50 chicken fillets, that’s 50 euro plus your spuds and your veg...I paid 24 euros for the meal last week - last week and the week before I paid only 24 euro - that’s ice-cream and food to take away too - yogurts for them to take away, cheese for them to take away’ (P20, female, volunteer, non-home based).

The CFS services who do not use FC services consider suitability and quality as their main concerns. One interviewee delivering food parcels felt that the short dates on the food made available via the FC app was more suited to the certain areas of concentrated poverty within the north side of Cork city where it can be delivered quickly; ‘...it very efficient to get food to them...they [other CFS] go practically from, I won’t say door to door but very close to that...’ (P8, male, volunteer, home based). The quality of the food and the delivery mechanism (via food rescue teams if the charity was unable to pick the food up themselves) was also noted as a problem: ‘... for us it’s a little too messy and not clean ...’ (P13, male, employee, supported housing). In other instances, the food items were considered inappropriate because of the short dates, limited choice, wilted vegetables, and small quantities of various foods, which are unsuitable when cooking for large numbers of people: ‘...I have told FC that we are not in a position to take the food because it is not fresh ...and like we cook in bulk here. So ones and twos and threes are no good to us’ (P3, female, volunteer, non-home based). Giving vulnerable people vulnerable food’ as described by the interviewee above, did not rest easy with one and while surplus food did not form part of her primary service (hot meals) it is part of the additional food services ‘...it’s at its sell by date and we put it there [pointing to a table near the front door]’ (P3, female, volunteer, non-home based).

The pressure to accept surplus in this case relates back to the issue of agency and the factors influencing choice but is also a consequence of charitable relationship and the reduced agency that these relationships encapsulate:

‘Like you're reluctant to take anything [via FC]... and if you refused [food] then you're wrong. You don't know what to do... you get some food from supermarkets [via FC] that is just ...like one day I got a phone call from one of the volunteers asking could they stop off and dump the meat the car was smelling that bad. I hate talking about it and I'm not going to lie to you because you're doing your research on food poverty but if it was anyone else a radio station called me I wouldn't be saying anything, because you have to - I would say we appreciate everything’ (P3, female, volunteer, non-home based).

5.4.2 Traditional and alternative food procurements & food dumping

Numerous additional alternative and informal food donations take place outside of FC and FCH such as food donations direct from supermarkets, food drives, restaurants, independent butchers, bakeries, and fast food chains. For example, one organisation has a long-standing relationship with Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) in Cork city who donate cooked chicken drum sticks on a weekly basis; another receives unsold (surplus) Doughnuts direct from a Doughnut shop at the end of the day and ‘todays bread tomorrow’ from artisan bakers in Cork city’s English Market daily.

‘We get a big box of food from Centra every Friday night, its donated, stuff that might have to be used that day or the next you know cakes and bread and that kind of stuff we also get soup donated from bad boy’s BBQ...a lot of people now would be donating biscuits. Dunnes have come on board, SuperValue, Dunnes, Tesco, O Cruaiaoi [Butcher] they got onto us about the sausage rolls actually ‘(P20, female, volunteer, non-home based).

In some instances, donations can be difficult to manage. One charity described being thankful for the strict food safety regulations required for HACCP, because it provides them an excuse to refuse certain foods from businesses offering donations: ‘One meat company last year contacted us at least six times. They wanted to give us some sort of a rib in some sort of sauce but there was no traceability number, no origin number, no best before date...’ (P13, male, employee, supported housing). On the first instance this offer

was accepted, leaving the charity with the cost of disposing of the meat. The issue of food dumping is a reality for every CFS service at some point, given the nature of these relationships. For some, this was perceived as a problem rooted in a prevailing public attitude that beggars can't be choosers and that any food is better than no food. It is worth highlighting that this problem extended beyond food too:

‘There are perceptions out there that just because they are homeless people, it's fine. ... in my time I have come across just horror stories where people will donate stuff that really should have just been put in a bin. Like I say, there's an understanding out there ... it's better than nothing or the deserving poor mentality’ (P13, male, employee, supported housing)

...it looks like a lot of shop were cleaning out their store rooms... we will try to get rid of the food but dating back to 2009 or 2015... it goes straight into the bin... I would love to just change that [better than nothing perception]. For people to realise we are here to be of service to people and not to put them down further. (P3, female, volunteer, non-home based).

If you saw some of the stuff coming and you would be appalled, and we try not to be rude because people are giving it maybe in genuineness...but we've often got shoes with holes in the soles of them. We got a clothes parcel recently with one glove in it. The person said at least one glove is better than no glove because it was very cold last night. You know, we couldn't understand that rationale (P13, male, employee, supported housing).

However, this was also evident in the opinions of some volunteers who also felt that there is no room for complaining: ‘Whoever is getting those bags now can't complain... there is something there for everyone now in social welfare’ (P11, female, volunteer, non-home based), and ‘We just hope that whoever gets them deserves them’ (P9, female, volunteer, non-home based).

5.4.3 Relationships with government: advocacy and political engagement

The Simon community at the local, national, and international level do engage in policy, advocacy, and campaigning, as do SVP, at the national level. Whereas for other charities interaction with government, local or national, is limited outside of referrals from politicians and civil servants. Some interviewees working within this sector, for decades

in some cases, are disheartened by the lack of engagement and action on poverty by government to date: ‘They [government] are blowing their own trumpet saying we are out of the recession, they are talking about up there, not the middle and the lower class and it’s going to get worse’ (P15, male, volunteer, non-home based).

‘The government are not learning that they are dealing with human beings...people often ask me will I get involved in this thing with that thing and I say for what? who is going to listen to me? I could talk to the cows come home. But they [politicians] won't hear what I have to say’ (P3, female, volunteer, non-home based).

Others felt that their time is better spent ‘...where they feel they are doing most good’ (P10, male, volunteer, non-home based), that is through direct aid to the person rather than engage in wider advocacy work; ‘...we are not political at all in any way, shape or form’ (P20, female, volunteer, non-home based). However, many of these CFS services do advocate and negotiate on behalf of their clients with semi-state bodies such as the ESB and with social welfare officers.

5.5 Effects of surplus food redistribution

5.5.1 More food charity, loss of support for local businesses and health conflicts

According to some direct services, notably the larger ones, prior to the establishment of FC and FCH, flows of food through charitable provisioning systems tended to be inconsistent, but these new arrangements have transformed the flows ‘from ad hoc donations to now significant amounts’ (P12, male, employee, supported housing), with some charities adapting existing arrangements to accommodate surplus food: ‘It’s fantastic so we have tailored our deliveries around FoodCloud...’ (P19, male, employee, supported housing).

Often these are foods that would otherwise not be purchased but are nonetheless accepted and distributed as extra food to hand out on top of the primary food service.

We get ...quite a lot of stuff we wouldn't buy anyway - yogurts, Tayto's[Crisps], fancy biscuits, but then they get used by the residents...they will bring a half a pallet of Taytos {Crisps} so the nutritional value is not of much use but they get eaten anyways (P12, male, employee, supported housing).

'...we always get donuts and cakes and stuff ...I get extra bits' cos I know if I put them into a bag they will take them - I suppose we are a bit of a food bank in a way. Like there is always stuff left over' (P20, female, volunteer, non-home based).

'I remember the time we got all the boxes of crisps – they were just all there, boxes and boxes of crisps. But that can go the following week too but when we came back the following week they were all gone'. (P11, female, volunteer, non-home based).

'...I will try to offload it and if someone takes them great and if they don't then at least in my mind I have tried' (P3, female, volunteer, non-home based).

The increased availability of surplus has also resulted in CFS increasing the frequency of distribution: '...X approached me ... [to] get involved in this...at the time it was one day a week and the amount of food that we got increased to everyday then. So at the moment we are feeding... about 120 families every week' (P15, male, volunteer, non-home based). Another consequence of these new streams of surplus food has been the displacement of local food purchases. Flows of food are regular and standardized enough that charities have phased out local suppliers and replaced them with surplus foods through FC and FCH.

'We would normally buy 10 kilos of mince a week and now we are getting 10 kilos of cooked mince so it's a direct replacement. The ham hocks - they would be put on as a meal, and we would be buying from our butchers so that's a direct replacement (P12, male, employee, supported housing and non-home based).

'we started getting the breads so there was no need for a bread man anymore...we bought meat for here from a particular butcher and we spent about 1000 quid a month here and we cut that completely. Literally down to zero' (P19, male, employee, supported housing)

This has resulted in this last charity choosing to purchase additional meat requirements in the supermarket that the surplus originated from, rather than the butcher they used previously, in an effort to keep the meats as uniform as possible. Accommodating surplus food redistribution can also create conflicts in terms of attempting to keep the food environments within these services healthy. For instance, some charities offering housing

services have a service level agreement with the Health Service Executive (HSE) and, as such, try to maintain operations that are conducive to good health, such as providing healthier foods, but at the same time recognise the difficulties in doing this when dealing with surplus foods.

‘...we used to do chips then the health board told us that we have to be looking after peoples health and stop giving them chips. You know - you are making them fat! So we had chips down to once a week and now we are back to every day. Young people are asking for chips. We did the training with the HSE to provide nutritional food and low fat food but at the same time, we get ... mountains of Taytos and we are leaving them out...’ (P12, male, employee, supported housing and non-home based).

In some instances, certain meat products are only used if the budget is very tight on that particular month: ‘There were times when there was product [meat not destined for supermarkets with limited labelling] we just weren’t happy with it and we were funny about using it...and would only use it if we really needed to’ (P19, male, employee, supported housing). FEAD products, which as mentioned in Chapter Two, act as a complementary service to surplus food supplementary food: ‘it [FEAD] covers everything but outside of your dinner - I wouldn’t like to be surviving on it. But people don’t’ (P12, male, employee, supported housing and non-home based).

5.5.2 Regular supplies reflective of market trends

Another organisation noted that FCH were important for sourcing staples such as vegetables, yoghurt, and butter and milk products used daily. Flows of food also tend to be seasonal such as Lamb at Easter, BBQ food in the summer, Pork chops and roast chicken in Autumn: ‘... Christmas time - we have mince pies coming out our ears’ (P19, male, employee, supported housing). This same interviewee pointed out that he can even identify a new product being tested in the market based on the food he receives: ‘I know X obviously launched a new range of buns with icing on the top and I saw a batch of then coming in ...Gluten Free... a new product. But we use buns... so if they come in brilliant-

happy days' (P19, male, employee, supported housing). Food products mirroring wider food system trends – such as baked good, 'health' foods, and individually portioned convenience foods – are unsurprisingly a key element of the charitable food system. For example, on one visit to the food bank that packs black bags of food for recipients who have pre-registered, the contents of the three bags were checked with permission from the volunteers. Each bag contained a variety of food items, including yogurts, fish, grapes, bread, carrots, coconut water, swiss roll dessert, apple pie, processed breakfast meats, individual pots of salad, wraps, individual pots of spreads, and dips. According to these volunteers, individually packaged food items designed for one person and coconut water frequently pass through this supply system.

This particular CFS accept available surplus on a daily basis without knowing what is coming in advance: 'some days you get a lot and some days you don't sometimes you get sausages, rashers, bacon and god knows what' (P14, male, volunteer, non-home based). However, there are regular food items that come most days and these tended to be baked goods and convenience food categories; 'Apple tarts and rhubarb tarts – we get them fairly often and carrot cake'. (P11, female, volunteer, non-home based), 'Always a lot of bread, you get pasta, scones, things like that. It's pot luck what they get' (P9, female, volunteer, non-home based), 'Taytos [potato crisps] come regularly, and packets of soup and spaghetti Bolognese mix... Always brown and white bread and burger buns and hot dog buns – you get loads of them every week. We got rid of all them now today' (P11, female, volunteer, non-home based). For these volunteers, a 'bad day' is when no meat arrives. Unlike other charities, for this specific charity too much bread is not seen as a problem, possibly because their role is simply to pack the food into bags in the absence of contact with the end user: 'Loads of bread, always bread, but that's one of the family essentials ... with kids you fly through it (P14, male, volunteer, non-home based). A noted improvement in the variety of food coming from FC was also documented. 'More meat

and things like that, good stuff really, nutritional stuff...salads, carrots, yogurts (P14, male, volunteer, non-home based), and ‘...Never seen carrots, never seen celery, never seen mushrooms until about a few weeks ago– they used never come before’ (P11, female, volunteer, non-home based).

5.5.3 Adapting services to accommodate surplus and food waste

As a means of reducing food costs, all charities within the supported housing sector have incorporated surplus food into their daily workings. As one CFS noted, FC is used for ‘lashing out food with short expiry dates’ to their residential homes, and on the soup runs and FCH products are used for cooking meals in the shelter. While most CFS have large storage freezers and fridges, which as indicated in Box 2 Chapter Two was facilitated by Tesco, they prefer to keep this space for what is considered high value products such as meats. The CFS who have incorporated food waste into their daily food services noted the importance of managing the donations properly to avoid further waste and to save money; ‘...the meats we freeze it and we stockpile, and we get dinners out of that then’ (P19, male, employee, supported housing). Despite best efforts ‘to get rid of the food’, charities do end up throwing donated food out for a variety of reasons: ‘one week I filled one of those big wheelie bin with bread...you can’t even give it to the dogs’ (P7, male, employee, supported housing), and ‘We were getting a lot of pizza and stuff like that but we were getting enough pizzas from the Aldi...We didn’t need them’ (P19, male, employee, supported housing). Short best before dates – often being the day the food is received – also contributed to the problem of having to dump some surplus. As one interviewee explained, one supermarket using the FC app donate food at 9pm, with a best before date on that particular date.

The problem of surplus food reverting back to its original status of food waste was for this CFS attributed due to the lack of respect for anything that is free meaning that people were less inclined to manage surplus as a high value resource. ‘If they

had to go down to the shop and buy your steak or your mince, you'd respect it ... if you just fire it out to people...if you give something for nothing, a lot of people have no respect for it' (P7, male, employee, supported housing).

Meat coming direct from processors, rather than supermarkets with clear labels, was also an issue for some charities while others found they were getting too much of particular items such as bread and baked goods and in one case, fish. 'The amount of fish! It's a sin!' (P7, male, employee, supported housing)

'Cakes, Burger buns, hot dog [buns] - a lot of those... It was a bit chaotic; the FoodCloud volunteers were doing the rounds and they would come and just leave stuff here and leg it! and we would have to be watching out for them to explain to them...' (P12, male, employee, supported housing and non-home based).

In this instance, once this CFS spoke with the volunteers, this did not happen again.

Interviewees reported instances of boxes of bananas covered in flies, meat smelling bad (both coming from FoodCloud), and crates of jam gone past its sell by dates (coming from donations outside of the formalised FC and FCH arrangements). This tends to occur in all charitable arrangements from personal donations, formalized FC/FCH arrangements, and one-off donations from businesses.

'Do you ever get produce gone past its use by date?

'Sometimes fruit...the rest is fine it's just the date is up. Today's date is on everything' (P9, female, volunteer, non-home based).

For products with longer shelf lives, surplus waste is less of a problem. If the organisation has available storage, the food is stored and distributed in the coming weeks and months:

'...see they are all wraps over there left over [points to about seven large boxes of white wraps] they will be given out during the week'. (P9, female, volunteer, non-home based).

In other instances, the surplus is again distributed by the charities within the charitable food sector: 'last week we ...had sandwiches left over and biscuits and that kind of thing so I brought them down to Simon for the soup run' (P20, female, volunteer, non-home based).

... we had a pantry in Mitchelstown who rang us one day and said we have loads of biscuits do you want them...they sent us...about 600 big boxes of biscuits ...we were saying oh ohh thanks. So we gave them to the lads, we gave them to Simon

and spread them around...the odd time we get loads of butter - a box of butter and I don't even know where they are coming from (P21, female, volunteer, non-home based)

Table 5.4: Indirect services

Organisation	Number of charities served in 2016	Type of FA	Food source	Staff type	Gov. Funding
FoodCloud & FoodCloud Hubs board member, FC employee (P 1, P4)	350+(in 2015)	Food bank services	Food manufacturers, Retailers, caterers, other food businesses	PP, UV, CES	EPA, City Council, DAFM, Pobal, FEAD, DEASP
Managing authority of FEAD (P 6)	94	Food bank services*	Purchased from Musgraves, Barry's Group and BWG.	PP	EU, GoI

* 'the charities [receiving FEAD] can also collect high value surplus food products from the FoodCloud Hubs, also leading to significant savings for them. The charities use the product either to distribute in food packs or use them in meals prepared as part of their service' Source: (FEAD annual implementation report, 2017:22)

5.6 Indirect Services

5.6.1 Relationships between indirect services and donors, its implications and suggested solutions

Prior to their amalgamation in 2016, FoodCloud and FoodCloud Hubs shared board members and the founders of each have played a pivotal role in the development of each of the organisations:

‘...she (FoodCloud founder) was co-opted onto the board and I think she was one of the founding members of Bia [FoodCloud Hubs] as well. Eoin and Jack [Founders of BFI] were heavily involved in Food Cloud and we very much overlapped and worked together with similar people’ (P1, male, BoD within indirect provider).

Numerous public agencies have provided funding and resources to facilitate the growth and development of both social enterprises. These agencies include the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the local Cork city council, the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (DESP) and Pobal who at the time of interview paid 70 percent of FoodCloud Hubs staff wages.

‘We [DEASP] had worked with FoodCloudHubs as a department in the past, we still do, and we would have been instrumental in getting them set up as a social enterprise through one of the departments other schemes, the community services programmes’ (P6, male, employee, FEAD Managing Authority).

More recently, the Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine (DAFM), via a successful grant application to expand into rural areas, are also supporting the redistribution of surplus food. The corporate sector has been an especially crucial component in the setting up of and maintenance of indirect services, most notably, Tesco.

‘Tesco really were instrumental. Musgraves were great as well, especially when we were starting in Cork, they were hugely important, but Tesco were the first ones to put money down and you know what - a bloody credit to them. I don’t think either [FC and FCH] would be here without them...’ (P1, male, BoD within indirect provider).

The Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) element, particularly the technological ability to communicate the post hoc environmental benefits in quantitative terms, is a key motivating factor for encouraging retailers to engagement with their services, including the ability to quantify the number of meals donated. Tesco Ireland, Lidl, Aldi, Musgraves, and BWG all have a section on their website outlining the number of meals they have donated since their partnerships began. Whereas for the direct services, according to the indirect providers, the financial benefits associated with using surplus was ‘the most important factor encouraging their engagement:

‘That’s the most important thing [charities saving money] because donating food enhances the charities provision of services’ (P1, male, BoD within indirect provider). ‘...if you go to our services here who use both sides of FoodCloud, they are looking at 70 percent savings’ (P4, female, employee within indirect provider).

One implication of these relationships, and the practices embedded within them, is again food waste, given the challenging role of keeping both the charities needs and corporate needs satisfied and the sales and marketing techniques aimed at encouraging people to buy more food. Similar to direct providers, this is more problematic in the case of perishable items with a shorter shelf life.

‘...you want to be able to give them [charities] what they need and want and we don’t want to push waste downstream ...you also want to be saying yes to the food industry so they can see that there is a solution we can work on...’(P4, female, employee within indirect provider)

‘...they have that particular product [plums] that is very cheap on that particular week and they would have pallets and pallets of waste when they do this...it’ s something we don’t have a perfect solution for right now’ (P4, female, employee within indirect provider).

The overproduction of bread was flagged as a persistent problem and one influenced by consumers demands and supermarkets following guidelines to bake the products in house regularly. For example, a particular bread company recommending that their bread is baked fresh every four hours ‘...people want their fresh bread ... how do you combat that? ...that [food waste] is driven by consumers and consumers are driven by that – it’s interlinked’ (P4, female, employee within indirect provider).

There is an inherent acceptance of food waste at the production level for numerous reasons such as branding, convenience, best before dates, and an implicit suggestion that education at the household level first and foremost would be beneficial – possibly more beneficial given that there will ‘always be waste’ at the market level.

‘You know the education with the users... households waste is also a massive issue and education at that level and then on a government level. You are probably never going to get it very much at a market level or the production level’ (P4, female, employee within indirect provider).

Advocating for more up-stream responses to food waste before the food gets to the point of redistribution is considered not possible in the immediate future however, advocating for incentivising food donation for corporate actors was being considering at the time of interview:

‘We are too busy trying...to keep it going. In 10 to 15 years’ time that is stuff that we would be advocating for, that is a space in the Irish advocacy economy that actually needs to be filled and there needs to be pressure put at a governmental stage and we would love to be part of that but we can’t right now...we will be looking at, on the policy level, perhaps, incentivising donating food or something like that so instead of it going to waste that it goes somewhere that’s useful and then from our prospective it’s not taking anything away from the markets because you are actually developing food use in localities...’ (P4, female, employee within indirect provider).

5.6.2 Culture: practices, norms and beliefs

Much like the direct services, indirect services are also ‘at the behest of donors’ (P1, male, BoD within indirect provider). Particularly since their business model is built upon developing and maintaining good relationships with both the food industry and charities to maintain their supply and market. Hence, enrolling charities to take the food, otherwise known as ‘on-boarding’, is a necessary practice with a dedicated ‘charity support team’, in order to meet the requirements of those donating the food.

‘Food Cloud, the app side, the on-boarding of charities is very accelerated... they have to do a roll out in Lidl or a roll out in Aldi or a roll out in Tesco and they need charities for those slots.... they started a contract with Lidl recently and that would

mean that at the beginning they bring on 50 stores, and then they roll out to a 100 stores so they will have 5 slots each week and you will need to have a charity in each of those slots every day to give the food too. Five days a week. It doesn't need to be a different charity, it can be the same charity ... FoodCloud Hubs because it doesn't push out so fast, we don't have someone saying ok we are going to give you 900 stores or 600 tonnes of this food you need to bring on this many charities' (P4, female, employee within indirect provider).

As outlined in Chapter Two and further discussed in Chapter Six, within the media the FC and FCHs message is clear: food redistribution is a solution to food waste and food poverty. When representatives from these indirect services were questioned about this message, it was explained that, 'in the rebranding and the meshing of the two organisations there may have been and there was a little bit of ambiguity as to what the message is' and may not reflect the views of the organisation who 'are very uncomfortable taking a position in the food poverty area until we know what our position is' (P4, female, employee within indirect provider). It was suggested that FCH, given one of the founders' connections to SVP, had the direct link to food poverty in the media rather than FoodCloud who, '...are very careful not to do it' [link food waste and food poverty] (P4, female, employee within indirect provider). However, it was acknowledged that the food poverty message is a more emotive cause that resonates better with people, more so than the environmental case

'I came from a household where it was the starving children in Africa, if you didn't eat your dinner and there were starving children in Africa, when I was growing up I saw it all the time... wasting food when people are starving is an emotive thing' (P1, male, BoD within indirect provider).

'...we give food to charities and we do talk about that a lot and there is a good reason for that – people care about charities, they don't care about the environment in the same way...how do we get buy in from everybody – from state and food industries – you have to present what it is that you do and the kind of thing that resonates with people and a lot less about the environmental aspect but at our core the environmental aspect is actually the driving force and that means that although now charities are the solution for that – if the charity sector is no longer a solution for that then we will have to look somewhere else' (P4, female, employee within indirect provider).

On one hand, while there was an effort to distance FoodCloud from the food poverty narrative, on the other hand, there were attempts to justify the narrative using the accessibility element of food poverty, but in the acknowledgment that the food distributed may not be nutritionally adequate in some cases.

‘We don’t technically really take a position and I know that it has been skewed and there is definitely tidying up around that we try to do, and that we will be doing, but it’s very hard to be an organisation that advocates specifically for food poverty if we are saving food that is nutritionally not great, pallets of crisps for instance. Logically it doesn’t work but at the same time if accessibility to food is a problem and if that’s one of the overarching causes of food poverty, if people want to support food poverty [initiatives] in their locality to access food. So that’s a position we could take but we are not necessarily that advocate for food poverty, we advocate for accessibility element’ (P4, female, employee within indirect provider).

Food redistribution is perceived as a viable ‘national solution’ to food waste: [Ireland has a] ...relatively good infrastructure in terms of transport, we have fantastic volunteerism who are so connected, we have the potential to have a national solution ... (P1, male, BoD within indirect provider). For FoodCloud, the primary motivation and goal is food waste reduction, rather than food poverty reduction: ‘No, not to reduce food poverty’ (P4, female, employee within indirect provider), and ‘...ultimately what FoodCloud stands for is to reduce food waste’ (P1, male, BoD within indirect provider).

‘I understand the importance of food security...we are producing all this stuff and it should not be going to waste when there are people going hungry but first and foremost there is an environmental impact because if we don’t have our environment there is no society.... I am coming at it from an environmental perspective - absolutely, first and foremost – waste’ (P1, male, BoD within indirect provider).

The belief is that there will always be food surplus and there will always be people who need food, and if the surplus food is a ‘high value product’, it will be used by someone. When questioned on what is considered ‘high value’, the key characteristic is consistency and falling into one of the following categories: ‘... raw meat, vegetables, some fruits but I mean it’s funny we have a system based on ordering and demand and a lot of Irish people don’t try a lot of fruits – you know what I mean, so it’s not general fruit...’ (P4, female,

employee within indirect provider). The desire for consistency in food products was attributed to direct providers and their users: ‘the guys in Nass [Food Bank] would say to us is if you don’t have 140 portions of the same thing they get people coming back and giving back the food saying why didn’t I get the same as that person’ (P4, female, employee within indirect provider).

Mirroring the views of some direct providers, food poverty and health were separated, with less healthy food items justified by suggesting that for some populations, healthier food items are not suitable or conducive to the person’s circumstances, and that this is the types of food that is requested by charities based on their knowledge of what people want and what people can use.

‘...say you are dealing with an alcoholic, and you are trying to give them food and you give them chickpeas or lentils well their stomachs are not used to that type of food and it can really mess them up...so there is quality food there and you educate the charities to give them chickpeas and lentils and they have the runs for the week and they have to go into hospital and be put on a drip. ... so the whole quality food thing – you got food poverty and you got nutritional poverty’ (P1, male, BoD within indirect provider).

‘...we supply pot noodles, I despise pot noodles, I wouldn’t feed my own child pot noodles but to homeless charities – it’s gold dust because you have a guy who hasn’t got any facilities ...so you have to put your own mind set away...’ (P6, male, employee, FEAD Managing Authority).

When questioned about concerns relating to the long-term provision of often highly processed foods through these systems, it was acknowledged that certain foods may not be conducive to health, but this is the food that charities and individuals want and in some cases, what the only foods they are familiar with ‘...the nutritional value individually of some of the foods we have is dubious...that’s exactly what the charities wanted...’ (P6, male, employee, FEAD Managing Authority)

‘Biscuits go through the hubs, Taytos go through the hubs, that’s not food...but if a little kid wants a bag of Taytos [Crisps] then that’s something. In an ideal world we would have fresh fruit and veg and top-quality meat and everybody would be eating three square meals a day. On the donor side that is very difficult and on the

charity side well it's all very good in my middle-class background saying I love meat and two veg but what happens if someone doesn't eat that and somebody who has never eaten that?' (P1, male, BoD within indirect provider).

At the same time, and again similar to the views in the direct services, considering the long-term implications of diets based on surplus foods known to be detrimental to health was considered to be beyond the remit of these organisations.

'...what happens when a person is sick and they are only used to eating pizza and chips... so in terms of the long term thing with people, that's a much wider social issue that I don't even have the capacity to think about – that's so complex and it's so individual for everybody' (P1, male, BoD within indirect provider).

The idea that charities should not complain about the food, just as some charities believed that the end users have nothing to complain about, was also expressed, given the difficulty in managing the various relationships and the costs associated with dumping surplus that cannot be passed on: '...it's unfair from the charities perspective to criticise the food in many instances because it's a double edge sword...' (P1, male, BoD within indirect provider). Also similar to the perceptions of most direct CFS, the stigma associated with food charity was recognised and, in the case of indirect providers, was a factor prohibiting surplus use, but to varying degrees depending on the type of CFS provided by the direct provider. For instance, food banks services (those handing out food parcels) were described as, '... happy to give out [surplus] food', while other services prefer to build a system around 'empowerment' making the act of receiving food 'an empowerment exercise rather than a charity giving exercise ...because of a movement ... across the community sector of empowerment' (P4, female, employee within indirect provider).

'...the relationship with FoodCloud has to be built on empowerment and they [a particular community resource centre] have to be able to create an initiative that presents FoodCloud as a way to support the environment, as a way to be a part of that kind of process, so secondary to that, people are going to benefit but they are not being approached with food charity because there is a massive stigma around food charity in Ireland' (P4, female, employee within indirect provider).

5.6.3 Agency: *perceived demands and food system trends*

There is a degree of choice at this level of the charitable food system also, at least in the case of FoodCloud Hubs, because they act as a sorting depot, unlike FoodCoud, who connect supermarkets directly with charities. So the staff at FoodCloud Hubs make a decision as to what they think they can move based on their experience: ‘...just knowing the charities requirements are, biscuits and cakes are massive and tea and coffee...’ (P4, female, employee within indirect provider). Products that they feel they cannot redistribute, based on their list of direct CFS, will be declined. An example of these food items was smoked salmon, chickpeas, and lentils. This was attributed to a lack of familiarity with how to use these products, which led to the suggestion that the charities working with surplus should become familiar with different types of food and be more creative with what they serve: ‘...the charities in many ways have to change as well in that they should be...learn[ing] to use lentils and chickpeas’ (P1, male, BoD within indirect provider). One direct provider noted that this depends on the individual’s skills within the receiving organisation: ‘who is creative opposed to the person cooking food in the kitchen around the corner who only knows how to make stew or whatever’ (P4, female, employee within indirect provider).

Wider market trends also influence the types of surplus food available ‘... because ready meals get really popular and we end up getting hundreds and thousands of ready meals...’ (P4, female, employee within indirect provider). Health bars, which have also grown in popularity in recent years, were also noted as ‘a massive food waste [meaning they end up in the surplus system] in the last two or three years’ (P4, female, employee within indirect provider). These items, with a longer shelf life, heavily packaged, and easy to transport, as opposed to fruits and vegetables with a shorter life span, are easier to redistribute.

5.7 Discussion

Adding to the profile of CFS, the foods flowing through these services, and the circumstances of people using these CFS presented in Chapter Four, Chapter Five provided a more in depth insight into the culture of CFS and the factors influencing food governance within this system. As outlined in Chapter One, the concept of food governance, as applied to this thesis, simply means exploring how decisions are made, who makes them, in what mode and with what effect, all while drawing ‘...attention to the role of values’ (Mason and Lang, 2017: 216). This chapter contributes to understanding food governance within the local and national context by exploring the practices, beliefs, experiences, and motivations of those working in direct (local) and indirect CFS (national).

The introduction of indirect service providers, the post economic crash environment, the increasing awareness of the problem of food waste amongst society in general, and the formation of new direct services, primarily FBOs, have contributed to an evolving and diverse charitable food environment in Cork city. While numerous longstanding relationships with wholesalers, local food businesses, restaurants, cafes, schools, fast food restaurants, and private individual donors donating food exist outside of the services provided by the indirect CFS, surplus food redistribution assumes a dominant role in shaping the contemporary charitable food environment in Cork city. This presents both opportunities, in terms of the increased variety of foods made available to CFS, but also many challenges. In addition, as argued here, some of these challenges are rooted in the perceptions, practices, and motivations of CFS which contribute to maintaining surplus as a legitimate, normal, and distinguished response to food poverty, and poverty more generally.

5.7.1 Separation of Food poverty and nutritional poverty

A number of dominant ideas and practices influence the governance of the charitable food system and indirectly support the use of any surplus food as a response to poverty. In many instances, the ideas of the indirect and direct providers are analogous. These include the conceptualisation of food poverty and nutritional poverty as separate issues and, as such, health concerns are considered to be beyond the remit and responsibility of both direct and indirect CFS. Despite the clear link between indirect services and food poverty highlighted in Chapter Two, a noted effort was made by indirect providers to distance themselves from the dominant food surplus solves the food poverty narrative and this was attributed to the acknowledgment that certain food items flowing through the system are food items are not conducive to health. At the same time, the use of surplus as a response to food poverty was justified by using only the accessibility aspect of food poverty but excluding the health element. This is in contrast to the definition of food poverty outlined in Chapter Two and suggests that food poverty is perceived as the lack of food rather than the lack of entitlement to good food. Moreover, it represents a conceptual separation between food and health and legitimizes the use of surplus – any surplus – regardless of health or cultural requirements as a valid response to food poverty.

5.7.2 ‘Poor food for poor people’

Some actors at both levels (direct and indirect CFS) of the charitable food system suggested that certain populations are only accustomed to, or prefer, fast food, treat foods, plain food, and what could ultimately be described as cheap food. Acknowledging that circumstances, such as homelessness, do restrict what food a person can eat in some situations (Share and Hennessy, 2017), there is nonetheless a degree of class-based stereotyping within the charitable food system (indirect providers) and the local charitable environment (direct providers). Likewise, by individuals and food donors who donate

food that is clearly of substandard quality or unfit for consumption as reported by some direct providers. These stereotypes reflect what Maguire (2016) refers to as poor food for poor people, and this perception influences what food is donated, accepted and redistributed. As described by one provider, judgements on what people relying on charity eat and do not eat are not a recent phenomenon and, importantly, can and do change. Nonetheless, these ideas are problematic in terms of improving the charitable food environment and addressing existing health inequalities evident in those using CFS, such as those reported here by the CFS – high blood pressure, diabetes – and those identified in the users of food bank services in the previous chapter. But also, in terms of protecting and respecting food cultures, and dietary diversity in the future. As indicated in this chapter, and the food bank data presented in Chapter Four, many of the recipients of food charity are parents with young children, with assistance often provided over extended periods of time; months, years, and generations in some cases. Likewise, the user base has expanded in recent years and the evidence presented throughout the empirical chapters identify that the end users comprise various nationalities, ethnicities, age-groups, and socio-economic circumstances. Thus, they form a diverse group. It is then entirely plausible and likely that the dietary preferences and practises within this group, brought together mostly by low income, are as varied as those reported within low income groups in other high-income countries (Nevarez et al., 2016; Redman, 2019). This idea that any food, and particular types of food, will suffice and is preferred, does help legitimize surplus as a response to food poverty and food waste, where any food item, regardless of the longer term health, cultural or social impact, can be donated to charitable causes.

5.7.3 Motivations and intentions & moral pressure

The motivations and intentions of direct and indirect organisations vary. For indirect organisations, the motivation is ‘first and foremost’ the environment, with food

redistribution genuinely perceived as a viable solution to food waste and a moral response when people are ‘hungry’. Food poverty was attached to the issue of food waste and marketed as a solution to food poverty and food waste in an effort to attract government and corporate support. Food poverty was not the motivating factor or the intent. As described by one indirect provider, a certain level of ‘on-boarding’ is required to make the system work. Thus, when, or if, charities are ‘no longer a solution’, then other options will be explored. This suggests that the contemporary charitable food system, heavily based on surplus food redistribution, will remain a permanent feature in Ireland’s food environment. This supports Seibel’s (1989;1996) theory that charities will expand to protect their futures by creating new recipients and Poppendieck’s (2000) observation that, when charitable food systems are developed with multiple resources, actors, and livelihoods invested in it, growth will ensue. This has been the case in Cork, with direct CFS expanding their redistribution efforts to accommodate the increased availability of surplus and to contribute to fight against food waste by ‘doing the rounds of residential homes’, packing extra ‘treat items’ into bags to take away and preserving baked goods in jelly. Nobody wants to be responsible for food waste and there is an inherent moral pressure to ‘get rid of’, ‘offload’, and ‘lash out’ surplus beyond any immediate need or request. Even direct services, uncomfortable with the idea of feeding people food that they describe as ‘vulnerable food for vulnerable people’, accept some surplus and make it available to their users ‘to do their bit’.

Beyond the varying personal volunteer motivations which included a sense of responsibility, ‘being a good Christian’ and empathy for people living in poverty, surplus food redistribution also complements the goal of some, but not all, direct CFS. This, in many instances, is to simply ‘put food on the table’, a goal echoed in the surveys of CFS presented in Chapter Four. This aids in explaining why surplus is an accepted and unquestioned response to food poverty, because in the context of some models of CFS

explored here, food is stripped of all other attributes and is perceived as something that prevents hunger. It is, as described by one interviewee, ‘functional’. Similar to other charitable food environments (Lorenz, 2015), surplus food is not redistributed because people are hungry but, rather, because it is available.

5.7.4 Corporate-state response

As indicated by the direct services, food is given out for a multitude of reasons – when it was not requested and when the lack of food was not the issue at hand – shifting surplus food redistribution from an emergency response to a permanent response to poverty to mitigate the impacts of a severe housing crisis, poor mental health services, the high cost of living in Ireland, low paid employment, unemployment, and ill health. Taking into account the various bodies, agencies, paid professionals, and community members (GPs, teachers, politicians, social workers, priests) that signpost people to these organisations, food charity is an accepted, longstanding, and normal societal response to food poverty and poverty more generally. However, the supports provided by the national and local government in assisting the establishment and maintenance of indirect services, as outlined by the indirect provider (and section 2.4 in Chapter 2), indicate that surplus as a response to general poverty is a government strategy, albeit a hands-off one, as much as a philanthropic-corporate one. This continues the historical precedence of the community and voluntary sector being responsible for issues of social welfare (Donnelly-Cox, 2011; Miller 2014) that distract from addressing the generative causes of poverty. There are also implications that move beyond the charitable sector and reduce necessary actions in other areas of Irish society such as reducing food waste at the source.

Corporate support was, and still is, key to the development, maintenance, and growth of the contemporary charitable food system. This situation is not unique to Ireland, with Riches (2018) noting the degree to which the charitable food system has become a

corporate powerhouse, supported by governments across Europe. This makes advocating for real food waste prevention, rather than donation, a difficult if not impossible task for indirect services relying on government and corporate funding for their system to work (Horton et al., 2014; Lindbaum, 2015). The preference, as outlined in the interviews with indirect providers, is to not interfere with market processes. Hence, educating the consumer and advocating for a policy to encourage more food waste donation rather than food waste prevention at the source. Another example of this was exemplified in the intention to encourage childcare facilities, who cannot afford to purchase food, and thus would never be consumers and would ‘not take from the market’ to use this surplus. Ultimately, surplus redistribution CFS are reliant on retailers, processors, and businesses to maintain their flows of food, which makes the ‘brokerage model’ (Midgely, 2020) of surplus food redistribution, outlined in Chapter One, a difficult if not impossible environment to promote healthier diets compatible with long term environmental concerns and other social justice concerns. In addition, while surplus food redistribution does allow the recipient to use their limited resources on other requirements, it should not be confused with food democracy which implies agency or furthering the right to food. This, in essence, means an entitlement to food of/for which the State is responsible.

5.7.5 Agency, *shame and gratitude*

The most prolific type of CFS in Cork city in terms of number of people assisted each week is the food parcel based model where bags or boxes of food are packed and distributed via the home or at a specific location. In most instances there is no choice for the end users. It is as described by Riches and Silvasti (2014) a ‘gift’ rather than an entitlement and ‘the unreciprocated gift...makes the person who has accepted it inferior’ (Mauss, 1925 cited in Douglas, 1990). According to most direct CFS interviewed here, and multiple studies elsewhere (van der Horst et al., 2014; Garthwaite, 2014; Fisher, 2017),

there is a stigma associated with receiving food charity in Cork which is why much of it occurs behind closed doors. As outlined by one indirect provider, this stigma presents a challenge for encouraging more engagement with their services and thus a focus on creating surplus redistribution as an ‘empowerment exercise rather than a charity giving exercise’. Nonetheless, just as some direct providers feel the stigma associated with food charity is less of a problem for those *used to* receiving charity, direct providers noted how *some* types of CFS, such as food banks, are ‘happy to give out’ food within the traditional charitable model.

Surplus food also takes the place of vouchers in some instances with direct CFS using more food surplus and less food vouchers. As this was a stated intention of using redistribution surplus food – to prove ‘you can move away from the food voucher model’ (Baker, 2013). Food vouchers offer a degree of agency and control over what people might want to eat. They allow a person to acquire food in a socially acceptable manner, they accommodate for particular health, age, religious and cultural consideration that surplus food redistribution does not. They provide a choice. In many instances of surplus food redistribution exhibited here, the circumstances reflect control – due to the absence of choice – rather than food democracy (Davies et al., 2019) while at the same time encompass layers of choices that the end user was not a part of. In the case of supermarket surplus, the consumer’s decision not to purchase the food marks the first layer. This is followed by the supermarket’s decision to make the food available for surplus redistribution. In the case of FoodCloud Hubs, another layer of decisions are made based on their ability to store or distribute within the shelf-life of the food and the food’s perceived suitability for the recipient organisations. The charities then repeat this decision-making process within similar decision-making boundaries. For the most part, the only choice the end user is afforded is to eat it or not and, more importantly, if they do not then, as reported by one interviewee, the need was not there in the first place. This

also resonates with the experiences of direct services who may refuse surplus but at the risk of being perceived as ungrateful. This silence prevents a more critical discussion on surplus food redistribution specifically, and charity more generally, taking place and enables the celebratory narrative to continue uninterrupted. However, as pointed out by one direct provider, this is a longstanding problem with charity. In some instances, this was reflected in the opinions of direct providers who felt people ‘without a pot to piss in’ should have no reservations about eating food with yellow labels, signifying the use by or best before date is that day or those ‘who can’t complain’ because they are getting a good bag of food. For these people, the perception – as noted by two direct CSF exists at a societal level – is that anything is better than nothing; because poverty is the norm and these people should be grateful for whatever food, or help, they get.

5.7.6 Normalising poverty and improving ‘human inefficiencies’

CFS are heavily reliant on dedicated volunteers, who in many instances have been with the organisations for decades. Although this ‘local knowledge’ is a significant asset to charities, it can lead to a normalisation of the insecure positions people are living in as a fact of life for a cohort of its users. Or what Shildrick and MacDonald (2018: 288) refer to as ‘disclaiming poverty’, although in the context of the those living in poverty themselves. For example, numerous interviewees noted great sympathy for the ‘new poor’, the ‘hard working people’ who after the recession found themselves in financial difficulty, in comparison to those who are ‘historically’ ‘used to’ receiving charity and managing their circumstances. Equally, it was felt that these people were less likely to experience the stigma associated with food charity. This downplays the experience of living in poverty and, arguably, contributes to the focus on ‘human inefficiencies’ (Dowler, 2002:706) and teaching people how to manage their poverty. While direct CFS were acutely aware of the structural causes of inequality, the majority did refer to lifestyle

choices, poor budgeting skills, poor educational choices, welfare-dependency, and the lack of motivation to work, in some instances, as contributory factors and this was reflected in the proposed solutions such as forced employment and budgeting classes.

5.7.7 Local food environment considerations and implications

Using surplus has significantly reduced the food bills of direct services and this was cited as a major incentive for engaging with surplus redistribution. As noted by the indirect providers, the savings made from using surplus can then be reinvested into other ‘key services’; a rationalisation previously used to justify food aid in poorer countries and, as was the case with international food aid, surplus food redistribution has also had ramifications for the local food environment in Cork. Namely, the loss of support for local food businesses, with one CFS switching from purchasing raw mince in the local butcher to now using surplus ‘cooked’ mince. It has also built brand loyalty for the major supermarkets, as indicated by another direct service who now shops at Aldi, as opposed to his previous butcher, if he runs out of meat in order to keep dinners ‘uniform’. This aspect of surplus food redistribution – the potential to damage local business support – while simultaneously building brand loyalty and image for participating retailers is an area that warrants further exploration in Ireland.

An additional consideration is the role of surplus in encouraging over consumption. As described by one direct provider, some of the foods donated include products such as crisps, which would not have been purchased in the first place ‘but get eaten anyways’. This leads to the questions of whether some of these food flows are leading to the excessive consumption of energy dense foods, thus increased metabolic food waste, which carry significant health and ecological costs (Totti et al., 2019). The increased availability of surplus, and the necessary ‘on-boarding’ process required to make the system work efficiently, has created new charitable food flows by encouraging more

charities to distribute food. Hebinck et al. (2018) assert that the food system's decreasing ability to deliver food security has led to the emergence of food assistance initiatives. This chapter suggests that the emergence of large-scale food redistribution initiatives have also played a part in the context of Cork city. Nonetheless, surplus food redistribution has also contributed to a more varied charitable food environment for some direct services, with a noted increase in foods such as vegetables, meat, and fruit that traditionally would not have formed a key element of the charitable food system. Additionally, where resources allow, and in this particular case a paid staff member indicated that surplus food is used to introduce people to new foods and teach them how to prepare and cook foods they may not otherwise be exposed to.

A primary factor contributing to food poverty and poorer health outcomes is low income (Friel and Conlon, 2004) and this impedes the ability of parents to introduce their children to certain healthier and often more expensive food. Tastes are developed over time and require repeated exposures and for families with minimal food budgets, the risk of food waste associated with trying a new food is unaffordable (Daniels, 2015). In theory, surplus food redistribution could minimise the cost related to introducing children and indeed adults to new foods as one CFS does. However, this 'influence' works both ways because as demonstrated in Chapter Four, healthier foods do form a part of surplus food flow, albeit relatively limited in comparison to the ultra-processed food category. On the other hand, and more reflective of the interviews here reporting large amounts of baked good, snack food, treats, and individually and heavily packages food will contribute to keeping cheap food the most accessible or only option for low income communities. In this regard, there are questions around the role of some CSF in reinforcing and contributing to the poor diet related outcomes within low income communities.

In conclusion, the local charitable food environment is diverse and consists of an equally varied group of actors. While in agreement with Cloke and his colleagues (2016) that this diversity does prevent any ‘singular reading’, the observations presented and discussed here, which again do not represent all of the opinions and beliefs of all the CFS interviewed in this study, do highlight particular discourses with their practices, perception and motivations that influence food government within the local charitable food environment. Equally the dominant ideologies work to legitimize surplus food redistribution as a response to food poverty. Importantly, most of these ideas are built upon a distinct separation of food poverty from health, and environmental needs from human health needs. In many cases, food is just not perceived as important in the context of other concerns. Nonetheless, the growing role of the charitable sector as a key food waste reduction strategy means that surplus food redistribution is influencing the diets, the health, and food cultures of the current generation and that of the future. Without aligning these concerns with the growing role of charitable surplus food redistribution risks further deepening Ireland’s inequalities. While charitable food providers cannot, nor should they be expected to, address the factors causing food poverty, they can attempt to align their practices with encouraging better food environments for people using their services.

Chapter 6: Representations within Ireland's All Island Food Poverty Network

6.1. Introduction: the national political context

This chapter addresses the final research question concerning how the the problem of food poverty been represented within All-Island Food Poverty Network. Before delving into the analysis, the chapter first addresses the national political context in the form of Dáil Éireann debates. The wider political context surrounding the issue of food poverty, notably its absence from strategies and policies pertaining to health, food and poverty reduction measures was discussed in Chapter Two. As was the specific recommendation in Ireland's 2015 periodic review of the implementation of ICESCR to take concrete steps to address food poverty and adopt a national action plan on food security and nutrition. Despite these silences and inaction, the issue of food poverty has been raised on numerous occasions within Dáil Éireann debates between the years of 2000 and 2017, thus spanning various economic periods. Nine of these references were under the specific heading of 'food poverty'. Given the nature of food poverty and its relationship to poverty more widely, the vast majority of specific food poverty references were contained under the heading of 'anti-poverty strategies' with the remaining references tabled under various headings such as childhood development, child poverty, school meals, obesity task force, agriculture, health promotion policies, and 'national food bank' However, there are a number of Dáil debates and questions concerning the problem of food poverty without any specific reference to the term itself. This is evident throughout the years with multiple reports of struggling of families being unable to 'put food on the table', afford healthy and nutritious food, and having to make the choice between heating or eating. As such, the issue of poverty and food poverty is a reoccurring theme within Dáil Éireann.

In most instances the questions concerning food poverty are directed to the various Ministers responsible for administering Ireland's welfare system with Deputies asking the question of what this department is doing, or intends to do, to address the issue. The responses follow a similar format beginning with the responding Minister outlining Ireland's various social insurance and assistance schemes, its intention to expand or extend the School Meals Programme or outlining how successful it has been to date and how, at least prior to the cuts in 2009, social welfare payments have kept up with the cost of living in Ireland. Additionally, the role of the National Action Plan for Social Inclusion, along with FEAD in more recent times, are frequently mentioned when responding to questions of inaction or intent. Of particular importance in the context of this thesis is that the conceptualisation of food poverty, which for the most part, was not based on the lack of food – rather the lack of nutritious food. This was evident in the questioning of the issue and in some of the responses. While at the same time, the idea that the issue is connected to a lack of skills and knowledge on part of the person experiencing food poverty was also evident.

‘Sometimes people associate food poverty with a lack of food or low incomes when in many cases it is caused by the absence of a nutritious diet... may be related to income, it may also be because people do not have sufficient skills or knowledge in the area of nutritious food’ (May, 2013, Joan Burton, Minister for Social protection).

When Ministers of Health are questioned on the issue, the response often pertains to the policies to encourage healthy eating and physical activity and their support for community based initiative, including Health Food for All prior to its disbandment. When other Ministers are approached with the issue, it is usually deflected back to the Minister responsible for Ireland's welfare system. For instance in 2005, Deputy Stanton (Fine Gael) asked the Minister for Agriculture and Food (Mary Coughlan, Fine Fáil) about the number of food banks operating across the country, their success in combatting the issue

of food poverty and of the intentions of her Department in expanding these services. The response was that these are charitable organisation and as such outside the remit of her Department. On the other hand, it was acknowledged that in accordance with Commission Regulation, intervention stock had, in the past, been made available to charitable organisations, including food banks. Additionally, the willingness of Department ‘to play a role facilitating dialogue between the food industry and the charitable organisations...’ was also noted (Mary Coughlan, May 4th, 2005).

Food banks in the context of food poverty was raised on two other occasions post 2005, first in 2013 under the heading of ‘National Food Bank’ with Deputy Dessie Ellis (Sinn Féin) highlighting the need for 150,000 euros to progress the work of the Bia Food Bank to a national response (Dessie Ellis, December 11th, 2013) . It was raised again in 2015 by Deputy Joan Collins who at the time was representative of the United Left political party. In this instance, Deputy Collins asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection (Joan Burton, Labour Party) for her views on food poverty and the Departments strategy to combat it before suggesting returning social welfare payments to 2009 levels. Deputy Collins further noted the ‘irony’ of the Tánaiste speaking about ‘recovery several weeks ago and then went with a big smile on her face to cut a ribbon to open a food bank in Glasnevin’ (Joan Collins, 30th September, 2015). The response was once again formulaic highlighting that Ireland is a top performer in Europe in relation to protecting people from poverty before presenting a staunch defence of ‘the food bank movement’ and ‘people who have been involved in this work for generations’. The Minister then proceeded to point out:

A range of companies have surplus top quality food or goods and the different charitable and community organisations are used as a mechanism to redistribute that to people who want that. That is instead of having it put in landfill. That is a perfectly sensible use of social resources in this country. It is a combination of people involved with charity and community organisations, businesses and the Department of Social Protection and other public organisations...it is not a

measure of additional poverty at all in Ireland...what is the problem? (Joan Burton, 30th September, 2015).

This is by no means a composite review of the political discussions concerning food poverty in Dáil Éireann, it merely highlights that the issue, whether termed food poverty or not, is frequently raised by various political parties and mostly in the context of access to healthy and nutritious food. It does, however, highlight a number of tendencies within the political context of these debates. First, that food poverty tends to be presented as the responsibility of the Department of Social Protection. Secondly, Ministerial responses to the issue remain mostly unchanged over the years with schools meals, nutritional education and community based responses perceived as a central part of the response by Ministries responding to questions of inaction and intent concerning food poverty. Lastly, and importantly in the context of this thesis, the Dáil debates highlight that food banks are perceived as a logical solution to the issue of food poverty and food waste. As evidenced in Joan Burton's defence of the 'food bank movement' the assumption is that the food is 'top-quality' and the presence of such organisation is not 'an additional measure of poverty'. Only once was the irony of food banks expanding in times of economic recovery raised at this level during this period. In this sense, the political context of food poverty at this level is, in many instances, reflected in the work of the Food Poverty Network (FPN) which is primary focus of this chapter. Before moving onto the purpose of this chapter, which is to explore the work of the FPN, it is worth noting that while Healthy Food for All was mentioned at Dáil Éireann on numerous occasions and the disbanding of this agency represents a notable advocacy gap.

This focus of this chapter is on exploring the work of the Food Poverty Network (FPN). This interagency All Island Network is co-chaired by Safefood and the Food Standards

Agency⁴⁹, Northern Ireland (NI) whose purpose is to ‘support a co-ordinated and strategic approach to tackling food poverty on the island of Ireland through the development of consensus on related issues, collaboration and shared learning’ (www.safefood.eu). Since the disbandment of Healthy Food for All (HFfA) due to loss of funding, much of which came from the members of the FPN⁵⁰, the FPN is now the only interagency network and body with a specific food poverty remit in Republic of Ireland (RoI). As such, the aim of this section is to provide an overview of their work since establishment in 2009 until 2017, to explore its membership, where the focus has been, and how the problem of food poverty has been represented. To do this, three questions from Carol Bacchi’s (2009) ‘What’s the Problem Represented to be’ (WPR) approach was used to guide the analysis. As outlined in Chapter Three, this approach rests upon the idea that what a person/ agency/ institution propose to do about something reveals what a person/ agency/ institution thinks needs to change, and hence, what they think the problem is.

6.2 The Food Poverty Network: membership & problem representation

The FPN is the only working body in the Republic of Ireland with a specific food poverty focus and their work has been essential in highlighting the issue of food poverty, particularly within the media. The membership of this network over the years comprises key government agencies in the Republic of Ireland such as the Department of Social Protection, the Department of Health, and the Health Service Executive and, as such, offers an insight into how food poverty is understood, responded to, and, by extension,

49 FSA are a UK based ‘independent Government department working across England, Wales and Northern Ireland to protect public health and consumers’ wider interests in food’ (www.food.gov.uk)

50 Department of Social and Family Affairs, HSE, Safefood, Food Safety Authority of Ireland.

represented at the level of policy makers. Equally, membership over the years has been weighted towards those working in agencies specialising in health, social protection, and research (see Appendix 6 for membership throughout the period under review).

The structure of the remainder of this chapter is as follows, a brief outline of membership representation by jurisdiction, an overview of the minutes of the meetings from 2009 to 2017 focusing on actions, proposals, and points of interest relating to surplus food provisioning before moving onto the discussion. The discussion draws attention to the FPN influence on policies in the ROI and membership gaps, before then moving onto discuss the work of the FPN using three questions from Bacchi's WPR (2009) approach:

- (1) What is the problem represented to be? (Based on the work proposed by members)
- (2) What presumptions and assumptions underlie the representations of this problem?
- (3) What effects are produced by this representation of the problem?

Since its establishment in 2009, the first three years of the network was referred to as the Northern Ireland Food Poverty Network (NIFPN). While two Republic of Ireland (ROI) based organisations did attend meetings in 2011, it did not become the Food Poverty Network until 2012 – indicative of its shift to an all Island approach – as indicated in the titles of the minutes of the meeting. Northern Irish (NI) representation has consistently been higher than that of the RoI, although the gap appears to be closing in recent years (Figure 6.3). A total of 28 meetings took place between 2009 and 2017 and 39 percent of these minutes were entitled 'Northern Ireland Food Poverty Network Meeting' (Figure 6.4), reflective of a stronger food poverty focus in Northern Ireland.

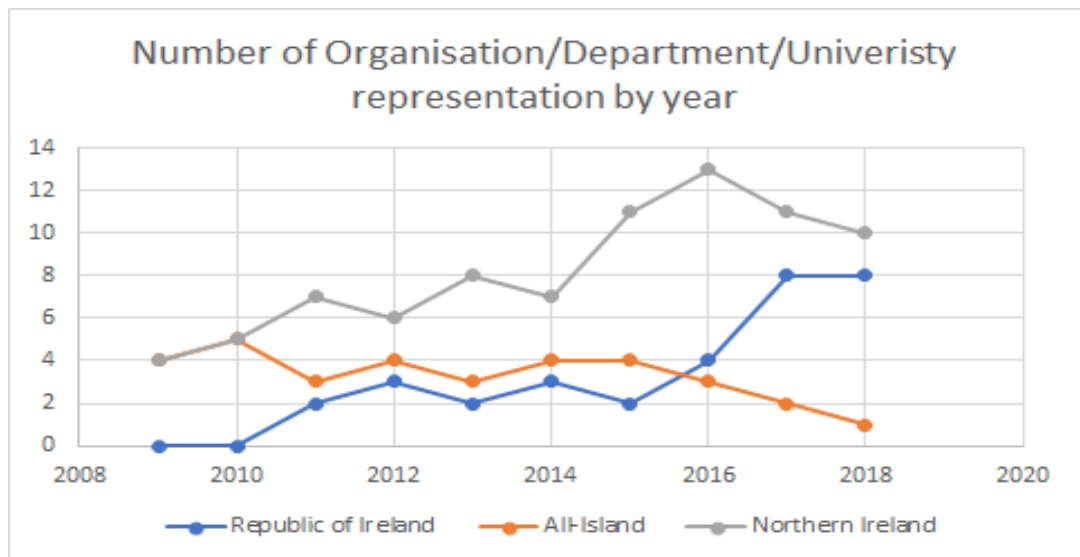


Figure 6.1: Number of representatives by area and year

Source: (Compiled by author using the minutes of the meetings)

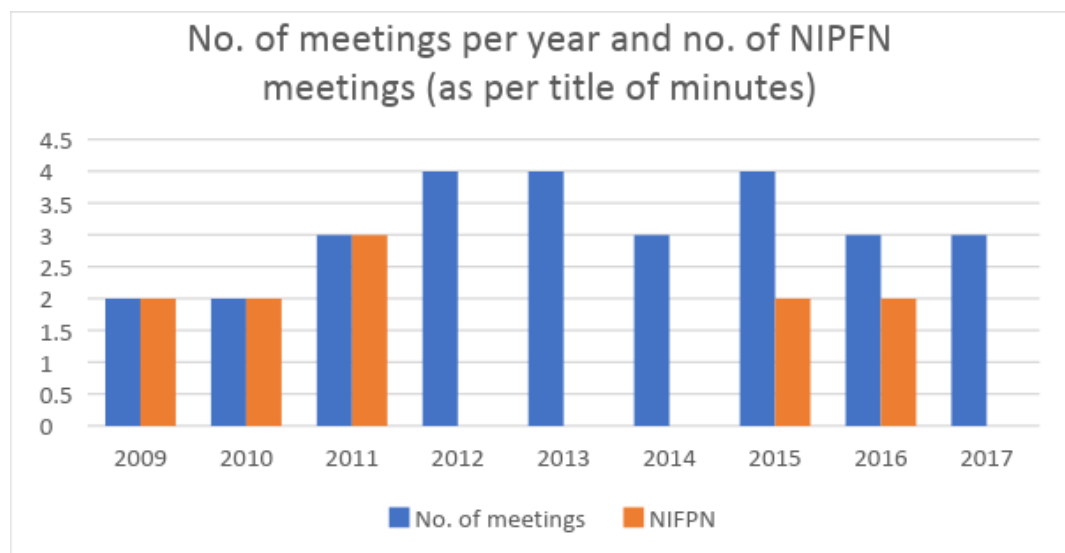


Figure 6.2: Number of meetings with a NI focus 2009-2017

Source: (Compiled by author using the minutes of the meetings)

Table 6.1: NIFPN list of attendees, their roles (where available) within the representative organisation, institution or Department and their associated jurisdiction

2009				
NIFPN, April 2009, Belfast				
Organisation	Role within organisation represented	Jurisdiction: All Island (AI), Northern Ireland (NI), Republic of Ireland (ROI)	Present	Apologies
Safefood	Director, Human health & Nutrition, co-chair	AI	*	
Institute of Public Health (IPH)	Associate Director	AI	*	
Safefood	Safefood fellow	AI	*	
Food Standards Agency (FSA)	Head of Dietary Health	NI	*	
Public Health Alliance Ireland (PHAII)	Co-chair	AI	*	
Healthy Food for All (HFfA)	Co-ordinator	AI	*	
Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS)	Health Development Policy Branch	NI	*	
Community Development and Health Network	Director	NI		*
Queen's University	Fellow	NI		*
October 2009, Belfast				
HFfA	Development worker	AI	*	
Safefood	Director Human Health and Nutrition	AI	*	

SafeFood	Fellow	AI	*	
Food Standards Agency	Ass. Director	NI	*	
Public Health Alliance	-	AI	*	
Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety	Health Development Policy Branch	NI	*	
Institute for Public health	Associate Director	AI		*
HFfA	Co-ordinator	AI		*

6.3 Review of Minutes 2009 – 2017

The first meeting of the ‘NIFPN’ took place in April 2009 and began with a ‘consensus that action on food poverty was necessary’ (23/04/09). A SWOT analysis was undertaken but was not available or attached to the minutes. Councils, Community Dieticians, and the Community Development and Health Networks were signalled out as key in terms of action on the ground. It was noted that ‘further work and discussion’ is needed before ‘developing an all-Island network’. Areas of action noted to progress the food poverty agenda were: (1) Mapping Community Food Initiatives (CFI’s), (2) Developing a set of indicators to measure food poverty and developing a definition of food poverty, and (3) engaging with the newly established Public Health Agency and Queen’s University Belfast for support. A full list of actions, policy engagement, and reference to policy, for all years, is available in Appendix 4.

The second meeting (20/10/09) highlighted the importance of developing indicators to measure food poverty in order to progress at a strategic and political level. Northern Ireland’s Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) outlined their work on developing an Obesity Prevention Strategic Framework and noted the outcomes related to food poverty such as young people leaving care being an at-risk group and its focus on ‘practical food skills’. The Public Health Alliance Ireland⁵¹ (PHAI) highlighted that the root cause of food poverty is fiscal policy and that a cross-sectoral approach is needed, along with linking food poverty to other agendas such as climate change and fuel poverty. It was also agreed that ‘differences between food poverty and obesity need to be acknowledged’. HFfA (Healthy Food for All) expressed their intention to participate in the consultation on the draft Food in Schools Policy (NI), their work in

⁵¹ An alliance of organisations and members advocating for improving health and reducing health inequalities founded in 2003, that has since been dissolved.

establishing seven CFIs across the island of Ireland, and in developing a directory of CFIs. Overall, it was acknowledged that there was a lack of action at the policy level but not on the ground, and that while food poverty spreads beyond marginalised there was a call for more focus on schools in disadvantaged areas. Action points included developing a food poverty indicator, mapping CFIs, and a letter to ministerial group highlighting FPN concerns over ‘the danger of missing out on setting food poverty with NI strategic framework’.

In 2010, two meetings took place in September and November. The Council for Homeless Northern Ireland (CHNI) highlighted their progress on developing a network of food banks, engaging with the voluntary sector, and identifying potential customers. A noted ‘gap is the lack of data on where surplus food supplies exist’. CHNI engagement with FareShare UK and ‘the benefit of an all-island Fareshare system’ were also referenced. DHSSPS flagged that the Obesity Prevention Framework had been signed off for public consultation and ‘food poverty is one important issue highlighted within the strategy’. PHAI noted a proposal to carry out a policy mapping exercise on the island of Ireland. Safefood pointed to a pilot food budgeting programme called ‘Food Values’ and the possibility of developing an all-Ireland 101+ square meals currently operating in the ROI through community dieticians and Money Advice and Budgeting Services (MABS). Progress was also highlighted in relation to qualitative research, funded by Safefood, focused on the experience of food issues among low income groups. HFfA highlighted their work on CFIs and the development of an online directory of such, in addition to a ‘Good Practise Guide for Community Food Initiatives’. An upcoming workshop to agree on a food poverty indicator, with a small group of stakeholders, in addition to options for an all-Island food poverty working group were also discussed. The November meeting was focused on the indicator for measuring food poverty, with the annual health survey flagged as a ‘potential vehicle’. The upcoming workshop details were discussed, and an

all Island policy mapping exercise was proposed. HFfA highlighted progress within the community on tackling food poverty but not at policy level in NI.

In 2011, three meetings were held in April, June, and September. The April (04/06/11) meeting was primarily focused on the development of a food poverty indicator. HFfA suggested the hiring of a dedicated person, based in NI, to carry out a food policy mapping exercise, develop food poverty indicator and to link work on the ground in NI. Their submission to the consultation process of ‘A Fitter Future for All’ Northern Ireland’s obesity prevention framework was also noted. CHNI highlighted a successful opening of a pilot Depot of the FareShare⁵². The June (06/14/2011) meeting was dedicated to discussing the food poverty indicator. Professor Martin Caraher, a food policy expert from City University London, highlighted the issue of capturing whether diets are nutritionally adequate. Action points included: (1) further contact with Martin Caraher regarding the UKs Institute for Fiscal Studies work on food expenditure, (2) exploring the feasibility of including diet and nutrition based questions in the FSAs consumer survey, and (3) and drafting a discussion document on food poverty to inform policy across the Island of Ireland. This would contain a possible indicator based on current available data and ‘the evidence available for a threshold level on food spending as a percentage of income’

The September (09/27/11) NIFPN meeting commenced with a discussion on feedback in relation to the food poverty indicator document. In addition to comments pertaining to wording, the Public Health Alliance Ireland (PHAI) noted that ‘in the determinants of food poverty section, limited cooking skills should be mentioned’. Public Health Alliance Ireland also suggested that the NIFPN needed ‘to decide whether we want to simply

⁵² FareShare is a UK based food redistribution charity co-founded by Sainburys in the UK in 1994. They are now the UK’s largest charity ‘fighting food waste and hunger’ believing that ‘no good food should go to waste’. They are a member of FEBA and the global food banking network (www.fareshare.org)

measure the people going hungry or measure the number of people not eating a nutritionally adequate diet'. Safefood suggested that both needed to be alluded to in the document. It was agreed that rather than focusing on the 'gold standard' for collecting data on food poverty, the initial aim would be to 'highlight food poverty as an issue through a quantification of the problem using available data'. Then, at a later date, the NIFPN would re-examine how specific questions about food poverty could be asked.

Four meetings took place in 2012. The first meeting (17/1/2012) commenced with the food poverty indicator progress and work on its development, to date, with presentations delivered by the ESRI and the IPH and the Department of Social Protection (DSP). The May 29th meeting was also focused on the food poverty indicator work for both the ROI and NI. The October 16th meeting started with a presentation from the IPH on their approach to measuring food poverty based on financial data and examining risk. Data availability in NI was highlighted as being delayed, and the possibility of incorporating the three food deprivation question from the Survey on Income and Living Conditions (SILC) data into the NI Health Survey was discussed.

The November 15th meeting included an update outlining that the FPN will pursue the inclusion of food deprivation questions in the NI Health Survey and the Family Resources Survey (FRS) in order to have robust and comparable data across the Island of Ireland, in addition to the network compiling a summary table of health and income surveys of potential interest. It was suggested that the network feed into the 'Regional Fitter Future Implementation group' (Northern Ireland's obesity prevention framework), in particular with helping to define food poverty.

FPN members agreed the following: (1) 'that the working definition of food poverty experience is based on the composite food poverty indicator', (2) raising awareness of food poverty issues, links to obesity and health inequalities, and supporting existing

initiatives should be prioritized, and (3) ‘food policy is a broad area and an up-to-date review of policies in place is required’. Member updates from the Department of Social Protection included that an annual monitoring report (National Target for Poverty in ROI) will include reporting on food poverty. HFfA reported progress on CFI demonstration programmes and their ‘Guide to Setting up a Community Food Initiative’ that they will Minister Joan Burton to discuss ‘planned changes to the EU Food Aid programme due to come on board in 2013 aimed at increasing social cohesion’. The related action point was for HFfA and CHNI to ‘discuss work of their respective organisations in relation to food banks’. The PHA noted a number of funding sources for CFI related activities such as the ‘Cook it’ programme and small grants available for sustainable community initiatives which include the Green Gyms project. The DHSSPS invited members of the network to contribute to NI ‘Fit and Well’ consultation, reported on the Child Poverty Study and requested that a representative from the committee for the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMdFM) to participate in FPN meeting.

Four meetings of the FPN took place in 2013, all with a higher than usual number of apologies than in previous years (Appendix 6). Member updates at the January 30th meeting included that HFfA and Bia Food Bank (FoodCloud Hubs) met with Joan Burton (Minister for Social Protection ROI) and TD Jerry Buttimer Chairperson of the Oireachtas Committee for Health and Children. Both meetings reportedly focused ‘on how to support the food recovery system in RoI’. HFfA also reported a future meeting with FareShare UK on this same issue. FSA also highlighted their intention to engage with FareShare UK to raise awareness of the issue of food poverty among elected representatives in NI and introduced a draft Food Poverty Action Plan. The April 11th meeting included updates from FPN members and reference was made to HFfA meeting with the Bia Food Bank, FareShare (NI) and MEP Eimear Costello (EU Parliamentary rapporteur on FEAD) but details were not given. The success of the FPN in getting the DHSSPS to include food

deprivation measures in the NI Health Survey but not in Department for Social Development (NI) FRS survey was also noted.

The July 2nd meeting began with the usual updates from members, followed by presentations from the Consumer Council NI and Vincentian Partnership for Social Justice (RoI) on the most recent food basket surveys on the island of Ireland. In the discussion of same, it was agreed that ‘nutrition and healthy eating elements is key and dissemination of results of surveys is critical to influence policy and practice. Cooking skills as well as parenting and confidence skills’ were also discussed.

The December 2nd meeting started with an overview of the FPN action plan. The priority actions for 2014 included the following:

- (1) Advocacy and communication, (a) increasing awareness about food poverty, (b) Stakeholder identification, (c) communication channels for disseminating information ‘used to communicate relevant information to community groups’.
- (2) Evidence base – support collecting of routine and accessible data on food poverty (a) indicator – continue to identify opportunities to collect comparable data measuring the extent of food poverty on island of Ireland. (b) food basket survey – establish an all Island food basket survey that monitors trends in low income groups food shopping.

Members work updates were outlined and ROI and AI specific updates included Safefood update on CFI and a plan to update the 101 Square meals recipe book and HFfA update on the national CFI conference, general progress, and that breakfast clubs have been piloted in Dublin, with the intention of expanding. All other updates were NI-focused.

Three meetings took place in 2014 (Appendix 6). The first 2014 meeting was March 14th. The FPN Action plan 2013-2014 was reviewed and discussed and member updates were outlined. With regards the ROI and all Island related work, CFI progress from HFfA was provided, along with the intention to set up a mentoring programme to share best practices and to evaluate Breakfast Clubs with parents and children. The Fund for European Aid to

the most deprived was recorded, as discussed, but no details were outlined. Safefood provided an overview of the contract regarding the Food Basket Research. It was reported that ‘the next message to be launched in the Childhood Obesity Campaign would cover physical activity’. It was also noted that The Food Poverty Indicator has been ‘cited, used and misused in various publications’.

Funding, support for CFIs post funding, and linking existing networks to disseminate information on CFIs were discussed and brainstormed at the June 24th meeting. The FSA suggested ‘linking church groups across NI and ROI who are setting up food banks for these initiatives’. The FPN Action plan review and priorities was discussed before members provided updates from their organisations. HFfA reported on the completion of the pilot work of breakfast clubs, funded by Kellogg’s, in two DEIS and non-DEIS schools. It was noted that FEAD remit has been broadened to include non-food items and HFfA have, in their pre-budget submission, requested that the ‘fund is kept in the remit of food as much as possible’ and an increase in the qualified child income limit and maintaining the school meals budget. HFfA also noted their presentation at the NI and ROI Human Rights Commission joint conference on the issue of food poverty and social exclusion. PHA and FSAI outlined research their organisations are undertaking and updating, food and non-food spending trends in the at-risk of food poverty groups and a five year follow up to the ‘affordability of healthy eating in Ireland in 2009 and 2014’. PHA noted that in 2013, £168,500 (across five offices) was provided to initiatives such as food banks in ROI and NI, SVP, FareShare and emergency support and, while this funding may not be available in 2015, FareShare funding will be core. PHA referenced the ‘Cook it’ module for those with disabilities and new migrants is due out in early 2015 and their three contracts working with community day allotments and volunteers. In the AOB section, it was noted that the Department of Health ROI has no representation on the FPN since 2013.

The November 3rd, 2014 PHA outlined that their funding remit covers poverty ‘as a whole and food poverty in one section within this’. Topics flagged for the next FPN workshop included: Health Survey NI update, FSA/CCNI and Food Basket research/Pilot NI or NI literature review on food poverty, the ROI Food Basket research, IPH indicator update and presentations from the PHA and DSP. General updates regarding individual organisations ‘top line’ work for 2015 included: a national conference focusing on young people and families (HFfA); launch of food poverty indicator (IPH); a review of local governance structures – briefing document for local councils/authorities to help prioritize food poverty- and internal meeting focused on food poverty and ‘Cook it’ programme (PHA); CNII provided an update on the Belfast Food Network outlining that FareShare are part of food poverty and food waste groups. It was also noted that the IPH would be presenting FareShare as an ‘example of best practice at the EU conference in Glasgow in 2015’.

Four meetings occurred in 2015 (Appendix 6). On January 26th 2015, CHNI noted that a FareShare scoping exercise would commence across NI on food banks. FSA reported on the workshop that took place with 14 external stakeholder, ‘with an interest/experience in food poverty and members of FPN’, and the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) noted a planned discussion on ROI indicator work with Northern Ireland's Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA). Membership of the FPN network was discussed and the new members identified to be invited were, FEAD, DARD and Healthy Ireland or Department of Health (RoI). The DHSSPS flagged new NI research of interest and relevant strategy/policy documents pertaining to food poverty, HFfA reported an upcoming workshop on the Schools Meals Programme in Donegal with schools not availing of services and their hosting of a Food Poverty event in Dublin focused on children and food poverty. Institute of Public Health (IPH), ESRI and Safefood all

reported on ongoing research, trend data, SILC 2013 data mining progress, and food basket research specifically.

At the April 21st, 2015 meeting, implications from the FPN workshop were outlined: (1) keep momentum and focus on the issue with clear actions for the next 12-24 months, (2) ‘mapping exercise of activities, launching research findings and coordinating actions further’, (3) ‘Highlight the importance of moving from research to action’, (4) ‘Assisting the NGO sector in taking a public lead’, (5) ‘Raising awareness among general public using indicators’, and (6) ‘Influencing policy makers – possibly an all-party commission in the NI assembly prior to Spring 2016’. Member updates included ongoing research and proposed research. Safefood noted that food poverty would be added to the agenda of the North South Ministerial Council. The August 19th 2015 meeting was specifically a NIFPN meeting concerning the Northern Ireland FPN Action Plan. Although the October 16th was also called NIPFN, there were still RoI representations, and reference. Updates from member organisations included that ‘FareShare are piloting a text Food Cloud project system with three Tesco supermarkets in NI in conjunction with local charities’ (CHNI). The Consumer Council NI highlighted their hosting of a ‘food challenge week’ – a social media campaign ‘used to share positive tips on saving money and making food go further’. The ESRI noted the upcoming release of the Healthy Ireland Survey, Safefood flagged ongoing research and a new research project looking ‘at the halo effect of food/health food claims’. FSA asked members to comment on how, when made available, Kantar’s research (consumer understanding of food labels and implications of new food labelling) can be used to include/extended to food poverty related uses. HFfA noted the last networking event for CFIs was held in September. PHA updated members on their progress regarding the All-island Food Poverty Network Action Plan under the heading of ‘supporting work in the community’

The FPN had three meetings in 2016, the first of which was referred to as the Northern Ireland Food Poverty Network meeting, however the RoI was represented, and updates discussed. Most notably, a key network member, HFfA had informed the FPN that their organisation was winding down in the coming year. It was suggested by HFfA that Focus Ireland, whom they were working with in developing an information leaflet around healthy snacks for homeless people living in hotel accommodation, should contact Safefood for further guidance.

The June 21st 2016 meeting was also called the NIPFN but contained representation and reference to RoI specific information. Namely, that the HSE, ‘will look into additional membership on the network for RoI’ and that ‘Many areas of work are underway: review of school meals scheme, national targets have been set for community cooking programmes’. Concern were raised over advocacy and the HSE were ‘not clear who should lead on this’. The HSE representative also noted that the Guidelines for Healthy Eating was being updated and menu plans based on those in the Food Basket research would be included. The RoI Action Plan was earmarked for discussion at the next meeting and all other updates were specific to Northern Ireland developments.

The final meeting on the 13th of September, 2016 was an ‘All-Island Food Poverty Network Meeting’, which took place after the Food Poverty Network Workshop/Conference. RoI specific updates were as follows: the HSE pointed to the launch of the upcoming Obesity Policy and Action Plan, which contains 10 steps, of which 9 are focused on ‘the disadvantages present in communities for children’. The positive effects of cooking programmes were highlighted by the HSE. Workshop/Conference reflections were discussed and suggestions for improvements were voiced by members: such as encouraging more attendees of key people at next conference, distributing publication and infographics to key stakeholders, more time for

networking and discussions, scoping out more international speakers, practical workshops ‘sharing cooking tips between agencies’. The HSE representative was tasked with gaining input from the RoI for the development and structure of food poverty networking briefing paper.

February 7th was the first of three meetings in 2017 (Appendix 4, Table 6). Updates from ROI included the Department of Health (DoH), which outlined their support for the Obesity Policy and Action Plan where five million is being allocated to ‘community actions to reduce food poverty in low income families’. The food pyramid revision, developing ‘a weight loss resource and guidelines for 1 to 5 year olds’, ‘a code of practice that restricts the marketing, promotion and sponsorship of high fat and sugar food and a bill in relation to calories on menus, was also part of ongoing work, with the intention of this becoming part of legislation. An EU wide food product improvement initiative, examining added sugar, in cereals, drinks, and dairy products, was also flagged.

The HSE noted a new ‘Healthy Eating and Active living’, ‘Cook It’, ‘Healthy Food Made Easy’ programme, and ‘Smart Start’ a pre-school programme aimed at disadvantaged areas. The Irish Heart Foundation reported ongoing work around developing three CFIs in the ROI ‘Community Heart Projects’ focusing on food poverty and cardiovascular health in low income communities. The ESRI reported that the CSO most recent figures on poverty, deprivation and social exclusion highlights that the measure for deprivation has decreased by 4-5% and ‘two of the three items used to measure food poverty had fallen in 2014 and 2015’.

ROI specific updates on April 17th included: the Irish Heart Foundation’s (IHF) campaign to highlight how companies are using branding to target children through digital marketing and social media and an ongoing petition calling for further regulating digital marketing. The IHF also noted potential future work to develop more CFI and

school engagement. CrossCare Ireland noted that 14 additional food banks, in addition to six already in existence, have been requested by the community and identified that their largest food bank provided food for 95 services across Ireland. Their community cafes, intention to work with DEIS schools, and the goal of helping ‘local community groups and schools to mobilise the food banks....’ was also highlighted. The Department of Social Protection reported a spending of more than €200, 000 since August 2016 on the central procurement of food. An expected €3.5 million will be spent on food, non-food, and basic material assistance in 2017, as well as providing ‘wrap around services such as social enterprise supermarkets’. And while CrossCare flagged the requests for more food banks at this meeting, the ESRI reported how the food poverty rate fell to 11.5 percent in 2015 from 13.1percent in 2014, ‘mirroring the general improvement of the economy over the recent period’.

The final meeting of 2017 was September 27th, after the Food Poverty Workshop/Conference. The meeting opened with reflections on the conference and the ‘stark and noticeable increase in the volume of sugar and sugar related products’ as presented in the Kantar Report. ROI specific updates from the Department of Health included that a new policy and implementation group will be meeting in October, with the intention of setting up two new groups, one being ‘a nutrition group to further develop the ‘Food for Life and Healthy Eating Guidelines’ for the 1.5 year old population. The second group would be working on food reformulation. The HSE’s appointment of a dietician to develop ‘Hospital Food Nutrition Policy’ was also noted.

Table 6.3 below presents an overview of the actions and areas of focus, as referenced by the FPN throughout the period from 2009 to 2017, grouped according to implied responsibility. It illustrates that actions focused on the individual are centred on educating people how to budget, cook, grow, and parent; teaching people how to manage poverty.

The community's implied role is to establish and expand existing services and the government's role is one of measuring, monitoring, awareness raising, and funding, facilitating and growing community food initiatives and food charity (FEAD, food banks and other types of surplus redistribution initiatives such as social supermarkets).

Table 6.2: Areas of focus 2009-2017 according to implied responsibility

	INDIVIDUAL (EDUCATION)	COMMUNITY (ESTABLISHING AND EXPANDING EXISTING SERVICES)	GOVERNMENT (MEASURING, MONITORING, FUNDING, RESEARCH & AWARENESS RAISING)
2009	Developing 'practical food skills'		Developing indicator to measure FP
2010	Budgeting services	CFI establishment and mapping	Developing indicator to measure FP School meals expansion
	'Food values programme'	'Developing a network of food banks', working with voluntary sector	
		'Good practice guidelines for CFIs'	
2011	'limited cooking skills'	CFI Demonstration Programme	Developing indicator to measure FP
			Inclusion of food poverty in Obesity policy NI
2012	Funding for 'Green Gym Project'	'Guidelines for setting up CFI	Indicator to measure FP
			Prioritize food poverty within local governance structure
			Inclusion of food poverty indicators in national health survey and Family resources Survey in NI
			Reporting of food poverty rates in social inclusion monitor ROI
			Inclusion of food poverty in 'Fit and Well' policy NI
			Research into child poverty
			FEAD
			Expanding school meals services

	INDIVIDUAL (EDUCATION)	COMMUNITY (ESTABLISHING AND EXPANDING EXISTING SERVICES)	GOVERNMENT (MEASURING, MONITORING, FUNDING, RESEARCH & AWARENESS RAISING)
2013	‘Cook it’ programme	CFI conference	Indicator to measure FP
		Expanding breakfast clubs	‘communicate relevant information to community groups’
	‘Cooking, parenting and confidence skills’		
2014	‘Cook it’ programme for migrants and persons with disabilities	CFI mentoring programme	Funding for food banks, SVP, emergency support, Fareshare
			Linking up church groups who are establishing food banks
2015	‘Cook it’ programme		‘Assisting the NGO sector in taking a public lead’
	‘food challenge week’		
2016	Healthy eating guidelines	Community cooking programme	
	‘Smart start’ pre-school education in disadvantaged areas		
	Healthy snack information for homeless people in hotel accommodation		
2017	‘healthy eating and active living’		Work with industry to reformulate food
			Providing care packages for homeless families
			Funding for ‘community actions to reduce food poverty in low income families’
	Community Heart Projects (education on nutrition, budgeting, food labels, cooking, food waste)		Restrict marketing and promotion of food high in fat, salt and sugar

INDIVIDUAL (EDUCATION)	COMMUNITY (ESTABLISHING AND EXPANDING EXISTING SERVICES)	GOVERNMENT (MEASURING, MONITORING, FUNDING, RESEARCH & AWARENESS RAISING)
		Calories on menus
		Research into products with added sugar
	Food for life and healthy eating guidelines for 1-5 year olds	Regulation of digital marketing
		Working with local and community groups to mobilise food banks
	'Healthy food made easy'	Develop hospital nutrition policy
	101 square meals	Developing and Supporting CFIs
	Food Pyramid revision	
	Weight loss resource for 1 – 5 year olds	

Source: Compiled by researcher using the minutes of FPN meetings

6.4 Discussion

6.4.1 Policy influence, key outputs & membership gaps

The FPN is comprised of key influential organisations with national health and social protection responsibilities. The network itself represents a hopeful platform for sharing resources and research, and setting action priorities. It is also a key network in terms of shaping the public and policy discourse surrounding food poverty and its responses. Equally, it has had numerous successful attempts at placing the issue of food poverty on the varying government body's agendas. Much of these policy specific efforts tended to be Northern Ireland focused, which is reflective of a stronger Northern Ireland based membership and focus throughout the years (Figure 6.1). In comparison, there was less direct engagement with RoI policy.

The work of the FPN has been crucial in terms of highlighting the problem in mainstream media within the RoI, which also influences policy (Wells and Caraher, 2014). The influential role of the FPN, in terms of their focus, was evidenced in the consultation on the development of the Obesity and Action Plan for Ireland 'food labelling; food gardens/allotments; breakfast, lunch and after-school clubs; summer camps; cooking in schools; guidance for corner shops stock ingredients and; support for existing initiatives such as Cook It, Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS), and Healthy Food Made Easy' (IPH, 2015: 33). While the actual term 'food poverty' or 'poverty' did not make it through to the final body of the 'A Healthy Weight for Ireland Obesity Policy and Action Plan 2016-2025', a similar version of actions representative of the FPNs focus is presented within this policy:

'Scale up effective community-based programmes with a focus on disadvantaged areas to enhance knowledge and skills with regard to healthy eating and active living. Special emphasis should be placed on providing guidance, advice and training to parents on healthy food and healthy eating' (DoH, 2015: 51).

In addition to developing and implementing a code of practice for food and beverages promotion, marketing and sponsorship (ibid: 41), a communication strategy focused on behavioural change (ibid: 42), a healthy weight initiative (ibid, 43), and numerous ‘knowledge translation’ actions. However, the absence of the term food poverty, indicates a reluctance on behalf of the government to acknowledge the link between Ireland’s diets related ill health and poverty or indeed the political nature of poverty. Likewise the similarity between the suggested responses to obesity and food poverty, points to the absence of a specific policy to tackle the problem of food poverty and a tendency to promote personal over economic and social change.

The term food poverty did make into the RoIs ‘Better outcome, Brighter Futures: The national policy framework for children & young people 2014 – 2020’ both as ‘recognised’ problem and as a problem that specific government departments have committed to ‘addressing’ through healthy food policies⁵³ (GoI, 2014:57). This is important because it sets a precedence for a future healthy food policy in all publicly funded institutions, influencing the diets of children and young people. As demonstrated in Chapter Two and Five, this includes surplus food redistribution organisations.

A key output of this network has been the increased public awareness of the issue of food poverty both through the members work highlighting the cost of a healthy diet for low income communities (McMahon and Weld, 2015; Safefood, 2019) and through the development of the Food Poverty Indicator. Despite its shortcomings, discussed in Chapter Two, the Food Poverty Indicator provides a tool that allows the problem of food poverty to be quantified, monitored and this helps raise awareness in both media and

53 The government commits toaddressing food poverty and ensuring that all educational and State institutions providing food and drink to children, whether directly or through franchised commercial services on-site, have a Healthy Foods policy and provide food that meets basic nutritional standards’ with the responsible government departments being the Department of Education and Skills (DES), Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA), Department of Social Protection (DSP) (GoI, 2014: 57).

policy circles. However, the perception that food poverty rates were improving at a time when food banks and other forms of food charity were being both established expanded across Ireland, reflects a gap between the measurement and the reality on the ground. Moreover, a measurement that does not account for the quality of diets being consumed by low income groups enables surplus to be presented as a legitimate response regardless of the composition of the food being redistributed.

Despite the reference to local actors being key in terms of ‘action on the ground’, the majority of members were government departments, agencies, and non-community-based organisations. Community-based actors, outside of the Council for Homelessness in NI, did not become members of the FPN until post 2013 when the Vincentian Partnership for Social Justice⁵⁴ and CrossCare joined the network. These were the only three organisations included in the FPN that represented community-based organisations working on the ground in the Republic of Ireland. While acknowledging that this may not be from the lack of effort on behalf of the FPN, the absence of community-based organisations from the discussion table is notable.

6.4.2 Problem representation, its effects and the RTF

In the initial meeting of the network, PHAI outlined that the cause of food poverty is rooted in fiscal policy. However the problematization of food poverty thereafter was centred on the individual and community level action. Action areas varied from CFIs, improving cooking skills, school meals, recipe books, educational messages, food budgeting programmes and general money advice (Table 6.3). The problematisation of food poverty within this network reflects the ‘human inefficiencies’ discourse where the problem is the lack of skills. This reinforces the idea that the individual is the

⁵⁴ This partnership comprised of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, The Vincentian Congregation, the Daughters of Charity, and The Sisters of Holy Faith was established in 1995.

gatekeeping to their own food security (Table 6.3) and is reflective of the narratives presented in the earlier media reports of food poverty discussed at the beginning of the chapter and of broader trends elsewhere (Kneafsey et al, 2013; Caraher and Dowler, 2014). Similarly, many of the actions presented by the FPN tended to be within a community setting and remained consistent from 2009 to 2016 with very little if any change in discourse (Table 6.3). However, in line with the work of the member agencies, the areas of focus did broaden in 2017 to include market-based influences such as targeted advertising and improving the food environment within public institutions. While this is a positive development in that it moves beyond the individual, it risks further minimising the centrality of poverty within food poverty discussions and this is particularly important considered the number of statutory agencies within this network. At the same time, there is also evidence of what Caraher and Dowler (2014: 236) refer to as ‘...“rebranding” food poverty work (as social exclusion, healthy eating...obesity prevention)...’ which again removes the core problem of poverty and low income.

Likewise, representing food poverty as an individual problem of ‘human inefficiencies’, that the community and the individual is responsible for addressing, exonerates the government from its responsibility to uphold the right to decent food. Within the actions examined here (Table 6.3) the government’s role is represented as supporting existing measures rather than the duty bearer of the right to food. Again, taking into account the composition of the FPN if the network was to reconsider the problem of food poverty using a right to food framework, the focus would be on respecting, protecting and fulfilling the right to good food. This would provide a structure for future efforts to ensure this right is respected and protected by highlighting practices, structures and policies that threaten a decent standard of living and access to decent quality food. Gottlieb and Joshi (2010) describe a right to food framework as addressing the problem through government intervention – whereas the charity framework addresses the problem through private

agencies and feeding programmes. In some instances, the actions and efforts promoted and supported the FPN are more aligned with the latter framework.

6.4.3 Underlying presumptions and assumptions and its effects, with special reference to surplus food redistribution

Based on the focus of efforts and action areas presented, the underlying presumptions and assumptions tend to be that people in low income communities have the time to tend to community gardens, attend cooking and budgeting classes. However, it is worth reiterating that these action areas do reflect the problems identified in Safefood's 2011 'Food on Low-income' report 'weak self-regulation regarding cooking and food choices', and 'self-acknowledged poor time management' highlighted in Chapter Two. Beyond reinforcing existing efforts, these focus areas do little to progress the discussion from the individual to the role of government. Likewise these action do little to bring the the issue of poverty to the forefront of food poverty responses.

The first reference to surplus food redistribution was in 2010 with the Council for Homelessness Northern Ireland⁵⁵ (CHNI), outlining their work in NI in developing a network of food banks and engaging with the voluntary sector to identify potential 'customers' to absorb this surplus food. This was also the first reference to the benefits of an all-island Fareshare system. In the years following 2010, numerous references to food banks and surplus redistribution ensued. The 2013 minutes also highlighted HFfA meetings with the then Minister for Social Protection and the Chairperson of the Oireachtas Committee for Health and Children, in relation to supporting a food recovery

⁵⁵ CHNI represent organisations working with Northern Ireland's homeless people. According to their website, they represent 60 organisations working with homeless people across Northern Ireland (www.chni.org.uk/)

system in the ROI. Funding was also provided to develop these initiatives through members of this network such as the Public Health Alliance and the Food Safety Agency NI. Additional support, voiced by the Food Standards Agency and the co-chair of the FPN, to link ‘church groups across NI and RoI who are setting up food banks for these initiatives’ was also suggested (06/24/14). The support of food redistribution efforts suggest, at some level, food poverty is still perceived as the lack of food rather than the lack of means/entitlement to access nutritious, culturally appropriate food in socially acceptable manner.

Despite the significant number of FPN members being primarily from Health/Nutrition bodies, agencies and departments, the issue of food quality within surplus food redistribution efforts was not raised at any point. As mentioned in Chapter Two, the issue of ensuring good food in food redistribution efforts was noted in Friel and Colon’s (2004) Food Poverty and Policy report. Following the traditional Public Health model (Graham et al., 2016), the focus was largely on educating people to make the right choice within their food environments. But in the absence of consideration for the charitable food environment, of which much research elsewhere suggest is problematic in terms of meeting health or social needs. Arguably, this reflects a general perception evident throughout the empirical chapters where, when food charity become the response to food poverty, health, or indeed the wider social justice implications, are not considered.

McEachern (1996) suggest that minutes of meetings can represent an organisations genre simply by communications its actions and events, which in turn, can reinforce cultural norms and practices. In the context of the minutes analysed here, this seems to be the case with little change in how food poverty is represented or responded to in the years explored. Indeed it could be argued that ideological framing is relective of that of the early 20th Century. Individual reform rather than structural reform (Miller, 2014).

Likewise, in the context of supporting the ‘food bank movement’, on providing food and with the local community as the duty bearer, equally reminiscent of Ireland over 100 years ago (Daly, 2017). There are of course obvious limitations to using minutes to capture the essence of food poverty responses in Ireland. These minutes may not represent everyone opinions and they do not reflect the total work of its members organizations. Nonetheless, they do provide an insight into the current and past thinking around the issue of food poverty and this is important because its members include government agencies with a responsibility for welfare and health.

In conclusion, the issue of food poverty is a recurrent theme in Dáil Éireann and Ireland has a multiagency Food Poverty Network, with a specific food poverty remit, and comprised of numerous statutory agencies. Additionally, Ireland’s international obligations to address food poverty and to develop a national food and nutrition security action have been noted in the periodic review of the ICESCR. Each of factors, in theory at least, could facilitate progressive action in both responding to food poverty and in ensuring that the established responses do not risk furthering already stark health and social inequalities. Yet, responses remain piecemeal, community and individual focussed, and without any serious action by either government, political parties or the FPN.

7. Conclusion

Charity is not collectively binding to those who give, and those who receive have no rights in what they receive

(Kathleen Lynch, Professor of Equality Studies, November 5th, 2014)

This final chapter concludes the thesis and begins by reviewing the factors, outside the elements explored in the empirical chapters of this thesis, which influenced the growth of contemporary charitable food system. Following on from this an overview of how each of the research questions were addressed, along with the associated findings is presented. Next, the chapter discusses the findings in the context of its practical and theoretical implications before outlining how this thesis has contributed to new knowledge. The chapter then outlines additional considerations for this field of study and suggests further research before concluding with a brief reflection of the research process.

In the decade following the economic crisis of 2008-10 Ireland has witnessed a rapid expansion of charitable food services (Hebinck et al, 2018) and the establishment of what would become Ireland's first national food banking network. Outside of the global economic crisis of 2008 – 2010, a number of additional factors contributed to Ireland's rapid expansion of its charitable food system which, as argued in this thesis, can in part can be attributed to the establishment of surplus food redistribution organisations. Importantly, this growth was also facilitated by multiple co-existing factors and circumstances that extend beyond, and precede, the establishment of surplus food redistribution as a response to food poverty but nonetheless influence food governance within Ireland's charitable food system. These include the historical precedence (Miller, 2014); primacy and legitimacy afforded to charitable responses more generally

(Donnelly-Cox et al, 2011); the withdrawal of significant third sector funding post economic crash (Harvey, 2012); Ireland's persistently high rates of poverty (Sweeney, 2019); and a protracted homelessness crisis (Hearne and Murphy, 2017). Another critical factor in this trajectory, that can be traced back to the Celtic Tiger era, has been the deepening neoliberal ideology promoting business led solutions and Corporate Social Responsibility responses to issues of social inequality (Neville, 2014; Negra and McIntyre, 2019; DCRD, 2019). These features of Irish society combined with an increasing awareness of the problem of food waste has contributed to a shift within Irish society whereby food surplus, an industry 'euphemism for food waste' (Kennedy-Burke, 2014) has become a distinguished approach to tackling poverty more generally.

This development was also widely celebrated by government and civil society alike. Within media and political circles surplus food redistribution was framed as a logical and legitimate solution to food poverty and food waste. In academic circles, the potential of surplus redistribution in contributing towards a more sustainable food system, by reducing the environmental outcomes associated with food waste and increasing food security, was noted (Carrol and O'Connor, 2016; Hebinck et al, 2018). As were the goals of surplus redistribution organisations that, according to some research, resonate with food democracy and the right to food (Davies et al, 2019). However, using a multi-perspective and multi-methods approach that accounts for the context in which surplus food redistribution take place, the motivations and intentions of the actors involved, the circumstances of the end users, and the food flowing through these systems, this thesis reveals contradictory evidence. On the other hand, the thesis also identifies opportunities that would encourage surplus food redistribution efforts, and its supporting actors, in becoming more aligned with the issue it has assumed the responsibility for.

The purpose of this thesis was to explore multiple elements of the contemporary charitable food system in Ireland. Using critical realism as a metatheory and Cork city as an embedded case study, this thesis had three goals. The first of which was to explore the various entities responding to food poverty within the contemporary charitable food system in order to identify the factors influencing the governance of food within this system. As outlined above, some of these factors extended beyond the boundaries of the charitable food system as conceptualised in this thesis. The second goal was to identify the impacts of surplus food redistribution in Cork and the factors legitimising its use. The final goal was to analyse the work of the Food Poverty Network, as a proxy indicator to identify how the problem of food poverty is represented at the national level. Accordingly, five subsidiary research questions were posed to address these aims.

7.1 Overview of RQs and findings

The first two subsidiary questions were: (1) which organisations are responding to food poverty in Cork, how do these organisations operate and who are the users? And (2) what are the understandings, opinions, beliefs and motivations of those working within these charities? These questions were addressed via of a survey of 40 organisations operating in Cork, followed by an in-depth interview with 21 participants working both directly and indirectly in charitable food services both locally and at the national level. The findings illustrated the diversity of organisations responding to food poverty in Cork, its growth in recent years, along with the longer term nature of charitable responses. Additionally, the research highlighted the multiple challenges faced by direct providers in terms of funding, volunteer reliance and managing food donations, and demonstrated how surplus food redistribution, as a response to issues of poverty, is gaining increasing prominence within Cork.

The findings also illustrated how dominant ideas, motivations, practices, and the structure of the charitable food system influence the governance of food within it. The impact of this at the local level has been, in some instances, the loss of support for local businesses, and the reduction of agency for the end user in cases where food surplus has taken the place of food vouchers. Indeed, the degree of agency concerning food choice and autonomy, is reduced at each level of the charitable food system. Indirect services are limited to what the multiples and other food businesses are offering to donate, direct services are limited to what indirect services have accepted, and the end user is restricted to what food is given to them. As demonstrated in this thesis and elsewhere (Horton, 2004, Lindbaum, 2015) this makes voicing any concerns, or lobbying for more systematic change a difficult task when all parties are reliant on both governments and corporate actors to maintain their operations and food supplies. However, a critical mediating factor here influencing food flows within this system are the ideas and perceptions of the actors in charge of deciding what food is suitable for its recipients. Acknowledging that many physical and resource based limitations also impact these decisions, class based generalisations were also evident. As this thesis has demonstrated, this is a systematic issue across the charitable sector that extends beyond issues of food.

The structure of the system also encourages practices that produce local level impacts. For example, the ‘onboarding’ of charities, pursued by the indirect providers, is necessary to maintain corporate relations and a continuous flow of surplus food. And in many instances, reflective of research elsewhere (Lorenz, 2015), surplus food in Cork is redistributed because it is available rather than because people are hungry. In other instances, supermarkets in Cork city release their surplus to CFS on the evening in which the date on that food is up. This leads to both surplus food transitioning back to food waste due to the inability to use or redistribute the food on time but also the redistribution of surplus food beyond demand because of the moral imperative not to waste food. These

finding supports Sibel's (1996) and Poppendieck's (2000) theory that new users will be encouraged and are necessary to ensure future operations and this is problematic when health is not a consideration.

Overall a clear disparity between food poverty concerns and health concerns was evident within the qualitative findings. As was a corresponding disconnection between planetary and human health concerns with the need to reduce food waste placed above that of human health considerations. These hierarchal conceptualisations, and motivations, legitimise using surplus food as a response to issues of poverty and enables the abdication of any responsibility to ensure that the food distributed is not furthering already deep social and health inequalities exhibited within Irish society and particularly within the populations using these services. There is need to move from feeding people to nourishing people (Haddad and Hawkes et al. 2016) and in Cork the focus is mostly on the former. This calls into question the transformative capacity of surplus food redistribution, in its current operations, in addressing food security concerns of which health and indeed agency are central.

The third subsidiary research question was who is using food bank services in Cork city and what is the level of food insecurity and ill-health experienced by these people? To address this question the USDA 10 item food security survey module in conjunction with additional questions to elucidate the socio-economic and health status of people using one food bank in Cork city. The findings illustrate that, based on the modest number people surveyed, the level of food insecurity experienced is severe, as is the burden of ill-health which aligns with much research elsewhere (Vozoris and Tarasuk, 2003; Tarasuk, 2016; Loopstra and Laylor, 2017). In the context of this food bank fully reliant on surplus food, FEAD and other forms of food donations, the food itself is the key food governance influence.

This data also provided first hand evidence as to why charitable responses tend to be longer term rather than short term arrangements. The circumstances of the people using food charity, many of which are female lone parents, people with long-term illnesses and disabilities, and ethnic minority groups, are not short-term in nature. These are the groups of people that are consistently highlighted as the most at risk of poverty. Correspondingly, relying on food charity often becomes a longer-term arrangement, a point reinforced by the qualitative data. This makes the call for respecting and protecting health in all responses to food poverty, particularly in surplus redistribution given its immense growth in recent years, even more pertinent.

The fourth subsidiary research question was what types of surplus food are flowing through the charitable food system in Ireland? This question was addressed by exploring the Bia Food Initiatives food inventory database from from July 2014 to August 2016, prior to their amalgamation with FoodCloud and its rebranding as FoodCloud Hubs. The 27 month dataset was organised by the categories of food distributed within this period followed by a NOVA analysis of three of these months. This analysis demonstrated that the variety of food items available through this surplus stream has improved over the years, a point reiterated by the qualitative data. Equally, it demonstrated large volumes of what charitable food providers consider to be high value food – meat and dairy products. Indeed, meat and dairy products comprised the largest volumes of food within this data, followed by drinks and this latter ‘food’ group highlights the inaccuracy of the current success metric measured by number of meals served. An additional caveat was that much of meat and dairy products fell within the ultra-processed category which carry significant health, cultural and environmental ramifications (Swinburn et al, 2019; Sato et al, 2019). The propensity of the charitable food system to attract and encourage ultra-processed food, for a multitude of reasons including monetary, physical and perceptual barriers, was noted in both this dataset and the qualitative interviews. Again, this calls into question the

ability of surplus food redistribution efforts to address food insecurity, of which health is central.

The final subsidiary question was how has the problem of food poverty been represented within the All-Island Food Poverty Network? This question was addressed by analysing the minutes of 28 meetings covering the period from 2009 to 2017 and focussing on the actions and intentions of this network. These findings highlighted that while the FPN has produced notable outputs since its establishment, much of its work mirrors the traditional public health and educational centred approach which is reflective of its membership structure. While there is obvious merit in this work, it does little to challenge (1) the structural nature of food poverty, (2) the neoliberal notion of the individual being responsible for their own food security or (3) the role of government as the duty bearer to ensuring the right to decent food is respected, protected and fulfilled.

The silence on the issue of ensuring decent food when promoting surplus food redistribution is problematic given the health centric focus of non-charitable efforts and this is reflective of a general finding across the charitable food system studied in this thesis. When the response to food poverty becomes a charitable endeavour, potential health, social and cultural requirements are either not considered or reasoned away as unimportant in comparison to other issues. This charitable ideology legitimises the abdication of any responsibility from government or the community and voluntary sector to cater to additional food attributes, such as those mentioned above. This demonstrates that the principal of subsidiarity and voluntarism are still a guiding force concerning issues of food poverty with the State continuing to assume a supportive, hand-off role.

The FPN were established to support a strategic and co-ordinated approach to tackling food poverty, and its members include State agencies with a specific welfare remit. This places the FPN in a delicate position in terms of advocating for structural change and

highlights the gap within the Republic of Ireland for an independent voice concerning issues of food poverty and its responses. On the other hand, their membership structure and remit, highlight that the FPN retain a powerful position in terms of their ability to encourage a reconceptualization of charitable food environments as part of the wider food environment that shapes diets. And by extension, to positively influence the governance of food within the charitable food system by encouraging and supporting the community and voluntary responding to food poverty to align their services with the well documented outcome of food poverty; poor health that resonates throughout a lifetime (Tarasuk, 2016). In practice this would mean encouraging surplus food redistribution efforts, and all charitable food providers, to adopt a healthy food policy, as is being done across other institutional settings across Ireland and realigning health with food poverty. Surplus food redistribution has become institutionalised and it is a government supported endeavour, and this brings the issue government accountability and responsibility into the frame.

7.2 Practical and theoretical implications

The central argument which flows throughout the thesis is that in contrast to the prevalent idea across Irish society that surplus food redistribution can address the issue of food poverty and food waste in an environmental and morally considered way, the reality is more nuanced. This thesis has demonstrated that while the surplus food itself plays role in influencing the diets its recipients – and reflects wider food system trends – the ideas, practices, intentions and motivations of the actors within this system play a significant role in mediating these food flows. Importantly, these factors are not aligned with health or cultural requirements and are based largely on environmental and economic motivations. Indeed, across each element of the charitable food system explored here a clear disconnection between health and food poverty concerns, in the context of charity, was evident. When charity becomes the response to food poverty, food poverty is

conceptualised in absolutist terms which in turn legitimizes surplus as a response. This demonstrates that while Ireland may have progressed poverty from an absolute to a relative concept, further work is required to afford the issue of food poverty the same dignity. A practical first step would be the realignment of both food poverty and nutritional poverty and of human and planetary health concerns.

This thesis has also illustrated that surplus food redistribution in Ireland is a depoliticised activity and one that has become intrinsically connected to both the state and corporate actors. Both the state and corporate actors, play an important role in promoting, developing and maintaining surplus food redistribution services. While FEAD does not contribute financially to these services beyond the contract to administer FEAD, their parallel activities and resources both promote and encourage demand for these services which further institutionalise Ireland's 'food banking movement'. The now permanent nature of surplus food provisioning, evident in its entrenchment within policies, strategies and social protection infrastructure, in addition to the long-term and inter-generational use of these services demonstrate that surplus food redistribution is not an 'in the meantime approach' (Cloke et al, 2016). And as such, the thesis provides evidence that supports the call for including the charitable food environment in current and future efforts aimed at aligning food environments with wider social justice concerns, such as health.

Food charity has been an accepted response to issues of poverty in Ireland for centuries and this thesis suggests that the ideological framing has not changed significantly over this time. While progress was made in reconceptualising poverty in the 70s and 80s, the responses to food poverty, both real and ideological, remain similar. The focus is still on the 'personal' rather than 'economic or social reform' as it was in the early 20th Century (Miller, 2014) and on providing food rather than addressing the causes of food poverty,

and with the local community as the duty bearer (Daly, 2017). Acknowledging that these responses are more tangible, their suitability and impact, given the vast problems evident within the wider food system that it relies upon, requires informed debate and critical reflection.

Additionally the thesis draws attention to the binary and simplistic narratives associated with surplus food redistribution more generally where more food surplus redistribution means less food waste and less food poverty. While the efforts of surplus food redistribution organisations have kept food poverty in the media, and drawn immense attention to the problem of food waste, the causes and consequences of food poverty have largely been silenced in favour of an unchallenging, celebratory narrative akin Siebel, (1996) ‘symbolic problem solving’ . This serves to legitimize and encourage surplus as a response to these issues. Likewise, it protects these developments from public scrutiny by reinforcing the idea that the lack of food is the issue and inhibits more progressive change from occurring in both food waste prevention and poverty alleviation. The data presented throughout the thesis endorses the need for responses that address the social and economic conditions that cause poverty.

In theory, charitable food redistribution offers an opportunity to begin addressing some of notable barriers to accessing a healthier diet. It can provide access to food that recipients may not otherwise be able to afford and it can be used, as illustrated in this thesis, as an educational tool to teach new food skills and to improve the variety of food being offered. It can also contribute to protecting food cultures by ensuring the food supplies are as diverse as the many ethnicities it serves and in facilitating good food practices and dietary preferences from early life. Indeed these are all critical aspect of encouraging a more sustainable food system of which health is central. However, the current working of the charitable food redistribution system does not reflect these

considerations. While surplus food provisioning cannot address the causes of food poverty, it can realign its workings to protect its recipients from further poor health outcomes and there is an imperative to do so.

How food poverty is measured, responded to, and conceptualised on the ground is not aligned with 21st Century challenges, many of which are connected to the overconsumption of mass produced food. Ultimately, the thesis argues that a more critical reflection on food charity is necessary. Questions of social justice, the quality of the food being distributed, the human right to good food in a socially accepted manner, and of the government's role as the duty bearer need to be brought into the discussion of, and actions concerning, food poverty.

7.3 Contribution to new knowledge

This thesis represents the first multi-perspective study that examines the charitable food system in Ireland as a series of interconnected entities which influence the governance of food within it. In doing so, it adds to the current academic debate surrounding surplus redistribution as a response to issues of food insecurity by demonstrating that surplus food redistribution in Ireland, in its current form, is not designed to address food insecurity, does not encourage food democracy, is not aligned with furthering the right to food, and is not an in the meantime approach. Indeed, this thesis repositions surplus food redistribution as a factor that has contributed to the increase in food assistance in Cork city rather than as a single consequence of the failure of the food system to deliver food security (Hebinck et al, 2018). Additionally, it positions the ideas of the actors within this system as a central force influencing the governance of food within this system and highlights the systemic nature of the dominant ideas that work to keep food poverty and food insecurity as an issue disconnected from its outcomes.

It is the first study in Ireland that measures the level of food insecurity using the Food Security Survey Module and provides evidence of severe food insecurity and high levels of self reported ill health within the populations using one particular food bank in Cork city. It also demonstrates that while the economic crisis of 2008 widened the recipient base using charitable services, those resorting to food bank use, and long-term use, are the consistently disadvantaged groups. Correspondingly, the thesis adds to the evidence base endorsing the need to address the structural causes – the social and economic conditions – resulting in poverty.

Surplus food redistribution as an answer to food insecurity is not a new concept and as noted in the introductory chapter, the international community has, by in large, moved away from using surplus to address issues of food security. In this regard, this thesis has demonstrated similar adverse impacts at the local level here in Cork, as was documented in poorer countries of the South. This includes the loss of support for the local economy, food dumping, and the inability of surplus and food charity more generally, to address cultural or health needs. And as such, this thesis provides a practical basis for which debates concerning the implication of surplus can be investigated further. Additionally, it highlights the shortcoming of the current metrics used to measure success within this system and endorses the need for this criteria to be extended beyond the current metric of meals distributed and economic efficiencies.

Finally, the thesis demonstrates that a system wide approach is necessary to bring surplus food redistribution, and charitable food provisioning more generally, into some form of an alliance with the required transition towards a better food system. One that respects and protects both human and planetary needs. A practical first step in this regard would be the introduction of a healthy food policy across the charitable food system.

7.4 Additional considerations and further research

The schools meals programme is a key response to food poverty in Ireland and schools elsewhere in Ireland do redistribute charitable food as part of a brokerage model of charitable food provisioning. Likewise, in the past, schools have also been engaged in the distribution of food items through the MDP. So while schools were included in the initial phase of the research, they were excluded from the interviews given that none of the schools surveyed participated in the redistribution of surplus food or in FEAD at the time of data collection. Today numerous schools, pre-schools, childcare services, and after-schools clubs throughout Ireland do engage in the brokerage model of charitable food provisioning (FoodCloud, 2020) and as such, ought to be included in any future research into the growth and workings of Ireland's charitable food system. Likewise, at the time of data collection, only one organisation in Cork self-identified as a food bank despite many other organisations operating food bank type services. A point in which future research concerning charitable food provisioning should bear in mind in order to capture the extent of charitable food services.

This thesis demonstrated that charitable food services are a key part of the food environment shaping the diets of a significant number of people in Ireland. It set out to explore the types of food being distributed through Ireland's charitable food system and while it did provide insight into this question, a significant limitation is that it only represented the surplus stream that caters to large volumes of surplus food from mostly manufactures and only a snapshot of its contents in detail. There is an imperative to explore these food flows in detail and the amalgamation of the two streams presents an opportunity to do so. While this thesis has highlighted the important role of actors in mediating food flows, an in-depth exploration of the composition of these food flow,

disaggregated by the degree of processing, would identify if surplus food flows can contribute to a fairer food future for its recipients.

7.5 Reflection

My PhD journey began in 2016, at a time when surplus food redistribution and their corporate partners were featured regularly in multiple media platforms highlighting their efforts in tackling food poverty and food waste. Initially, the expectation was that the analysis of the food data would provide the most beneficial data. This was not the case and I had not fully considered or appreciated the role of culture and ideas as a key mediating factor influencing food flows or the speed at which the developments would progress. Food redistribution in a few short years went from a local to a national to an international response. Within this timeframe, the indirect organisations progressed from distancing themselves from any food poverty or food bank narratives during the interview process in 2017, to today, fully embracing the term food poverty and the title of ‘national food banking system’ with the stated ambition of supporting the global community of food banks (FoodCloud, 2020). This represents a significant shift in confidence concerning the role of food banks, and food surplus more generally, as response to food insecurity which is likely to be solidified further in the current COVID-19 crisis.

The austerity that followed the economic crisis of 2008 was a key factor that legitimised the use of surplus as a response to poverty and acted as a catalyst for the growth and entrenchment of Ireland’s food banking system. COVID-19 presents another period of extreme uncertainty with far reaching, and potentially more significant, social and economic consequences. In Ireland, and likely elsewhere, this will further entrench surplus as a response to poverty. FEBA’s monthly newsletters are already highlighting extensive increases in demand for ‘emergency food assistance’ and new collaborations with ‘partners and corporates’ that will continue support for food banks in the post

COVID environment (FEBA, 2020). Likewise, surplus food redistribution organisations are thanking Nestle Ireland ‘for feeding kindness’ through the donations of 23,000 Easter eggs and 19,000 confectionary bars since March (FoodCloud, 2020). This will potentially surpass any debates about the right to food, or indeed any progress regarding the recommendations from Ireland’s ICESCR commitments. These recommendations did not gain any traction in times of economic prosperity and are unlikely to move forward in the current environment. Nonetheless, ensuring good quality food and limited ultra-processed food is not beyond the reach of the charitable sector and will arguably be more important now than ever before.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Ethical approval and information sheet for research participants

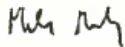
Tara Kenny 7 Rutland Place, South Terrace, Cork	 UCC Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh University College Cork, Ireland
24 April 2017	Oifig an Leas - Uachtarán Taighde agus Nuálaíochta Office of the Vice President for Research and Innovation 4th Floor, Block E, Food Science Building, University College Cork, College Road, Cork, Ireland. +353 (0)21 4903500 vpresearch@ucc.ie www.ucc.ie

Dear Tara,

Thank you for submitting your research (project Log 2016-046 entitled: "Food insecurity, charitable provisioning and policy silence: Taking a rights-based approach to food poverty in Ireland") to SREC for ethical perusal. I am pleased to say that we see no ethical impediment to your research as proposed and we are happy to grant approval. Approval date was 10 June 2016.

We wish you every success in your research.

Yours sincerely,



Mike Murphy,
Chair of Social Research Ethics Committee

Professor Anita R. Maguire BSc PhD CChem MRSC
Vice President for Research and Innovation

Ollscoil na hÉireann, Corcaigh
National University of Ireland, Cork

Tara Kenny,
Department of Geography,
University College Cork,
Cork.

September, 2016

Dear Sir/Madam

I am undertaking research into organisations that provide food assistance in Cork. This project is being supervised by Dr Colin Sage and the Department of Geography at University College Cork and is a component of my Doctoral thesis. The project aims to provide a better understanding of food poverty and food insecurity in Ireland, particularly in Cork city, and the circumstances by which it is being addressed. The results of the research may be presented in a journal article and conference papers but all organisations and individuals participating in this research will remain anonymous.

I would greatly appreciate if your organisation would participate in the first part of this study by completing and returning the enclosed survey, which explores the ways in which your organization/institution provides food assistance.

Please note the following points relating to this research:

1. Following data collection, any information relating to the name of your organization/institution will be removed and individual agencies will remain anonymous in the data analysis and results presentations. Surveys are coded for the purposes of monitoring return rates and to enable the researcher to make follow up contact where required.
2. I can be contacted at any time on 087 611 2879 or by email at tara.kenny@umail.ucc.ie. Please contact me if you require support in completing the survey, or have questions or concerns.
3. Ethical approval for this research has been granted by the Social Research Ethics Committee (SREC).

Sincerely,

Appendix 2: Surveys of organisations providing food assistance in Cork

Survey of Organisations Providing Charitable or Subsidized Food Assistance

Instructions

- This survey is intended for completion by the manager/person in charge of your organisations food assistance programme.
- If your organisation is part of a larger organisation- please answer the questions only in relation to your area- ie. Your office/locality.
- Please complete and return this survey along with the attached ‘Authority to Release Information on Behalf of an Organisation’ in the postage paid, self-addressed envelope provided.
- For the purpose of this survey, **food assistance** refers to any food provided free of charge, at a subsidized rate, or at a nominal cost in the form of groceries, snacks and prepared meals. This arrangement can be formal or informal.
- For the purpose of this survey, **food poverty** refers to the inability to have an adequate and nutritious diet due to issues of affordability or accessibility.

Section 1. Nature of the Organisation

1. Does your organisation provide charitable food assistance? (see definition on cover page)

☐ Yes

☐ No

2. Is your organisation primarily:

☐ Church based

☐ Supported Housing

☐ Community Trust

☐ Family Resource Centre

☐ Drop-in Centre

☐ Soup Kitchen

☐ School based

☐ Other. Please specify:

☐ Rehabilitation/ residential care

☐ Daycare

3. What is the primary aim of your organisation?

4. What services other than food assistance does your organisation currently provide?

Please tick all boxes that apply.

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ None | ☐ Rehabilitation or residential care |
| ☐ Budget advisory services | ☐ Health and Well-being services |
| ☐ Life Skills Education – parenting, cooking, etc. | ☐ Employment training or adult education |
| ☐ Counselling and guidance | ☐ Advocacy |
| ☐ Material assistance – clothes and furniture, etc. | ☐ Information services |
| ☐ Financial assistance | ☐ Other-please specify:_____ |
| ☐ Life-coaching | _____ |
| | _____ |

5. Who are your services main client group? Please tick all boxes that apply.

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Asylum Seekers | ☐ Drug/Alcohol Recovery |
| ☐ Homeless | ☐ Ex-Offenders |
| ☐ Families | ☐ Unemployed |
| ☐ School Children | ☐ Persons with disabilities |

☐ Rough Sleepers

☐ Survivors of Domestic Abuse

☐ Other. Please specify:

☐ Students

☐ Persons with mental health issues

☐ Survivors of institutional abuse

6. How would you describe the majority of your food service users? Please tick all boxes that apply.

☐ Short-term clients (2 weeks or less)

☐ Medium-term clients (1-4 months)

☐ Long-term clients (5- 7 months)

☐ Longer-term clients (8- 12 months)

☐ 13 – 18 months)

☐ Other. Please specify: _____

7. Who are the main beneficiaries of your organisations services? Please tick all boxes that apply.

☐ Adult Females (18+)

☐ Children (0-5)

☐ Adult Males (18+)

☐ Children (6-12)

☐ Adolescents (13-18)

☐ Older Adults (65+)

☐ Young Adults (18-25)

☐ Other. Please specify:

☐ Adults (25- 65)

8. How many individuals/service users receive your food assistance service each week?

☐ 1-30

☐ 351-400

☐ 31-60

☐ 401-450

☐ 61-90

☐ 451-500

☐ 91-150

☐ 501-550

☐ 151-200

☐ 551-600

☐ 201-250

☐ 601-650

☐ 251-300

☐ Other. Please specify:

☐ 301-350

9. Does your organisation receive specific funding from the government to supply food assistance?

☐ No, we do not receive any funding

☐ Yes, external funding from state organisations (such as the Department of Social Protection)

☐ Yes, external funding from community organisations (such as community trusts or other charities)

☐ Other, please specify:

10. How does your organisation obtain the food assistance it supplies? Tick all boxes that apply.

☐ The Bia Food Initiative

☐ Food Cloud

☐ Personal donations of money from individuals

☐ Personal donations of food from individuals

☐ Donations of money from businesses or the corporate sector

☐ Donations of food from businesses or the corporate sector

☐ Fundraising activities

☐ Other. Please specify:_____

11. In the last financial year of your organisation, what was the actual total cost of providing food assistance? Please exclude overhead costs such as rent, staffing and amenities.

Euro_____

This figure covers the period

_____ to _____

12. How many paid staff and unpaid volunteers work in your organisation

Paid staff

☐ 1-3

☐ 4-5

☐ 6-10

☐ Other, please specify _____

Unpaid Volunteers

☐ 1-3

☐ 4-5

☐ 6-10

☐ Other, please specify _____

13. Please specify the total number of hours worked by paid staff and unpaid volunteers per person, per week.

Paid staff

☐ 1-12 hours

☐ 13-22 hours

☐ 23-40 hours

☐ Other. Please
specify: _____

Unpaid Volunteers

☐ 1-12 hours

☐ 13-22 hours

☐ 23-40 hours

☐ Other. Please
specify: _____

14. What other costs does your organisation have which relate to the provision of food assistance? Tick all boxes which apply.

- ☐ Distribution costs
- ☐ Amenity costs such as electricity and phone
- ☐ Rent for buildings
- ☐ Other costs – please specify below

15. How is the management of your organisation structured? *For example, this organisation is run by a board of 12 directors*

16. Please identify the location and year your organisation began to supply food assistance. *For example, Cork city centre in 1999.*

Section 2. Description of Food Assistance Service(s):

17. Please indicate the kind of food relief that your organisation currently provides. Tick all boxes that apply.

☐ Food parcels

☐ Food Vouchers

☐ Community meals

☐ Other. Please specify:

18. Please provide a brief description of:

(a) What is the nature of the food assistance your organisation provides?

For example:

“Food parcels are supplied to feed a four-person household for three days.”

“We provide an evening meal consisting of a set menu of meat and potatoes plus two seasonal vegetables followed by a dessert of fruit and custard or similar.”

(b) What is the frequency of your organisations service?

For example:

“Our food service is accessible all year round. We are open Monday to Friday between 10am and 4pm and also respond to emergency after-hours requests for assistance.”

“We provide an evening meal in our centre every Tuesday.”

“We provide breakfast for school children Monday through Friday from 7:30 am-9am

(c) What is the quantity of food assistance which your organisation has provided in the previous 12 months for which you have available figures.

For example:

“We supplied 423 food parcels in the year to March 30, 2015.”

“At the end of our last reporting period (November 2015) we had supplied 1,264 evening meals.”

IMPORTANT: if your organisation does not have this kind of information you may wish to supply other details. Please comment, to the best of your knowledge, on the quantity of food support which your organisation supplies.

For example:

“We have distributed 20 5kg of potatoes and 30 2kg packs of frozen meat in the last month.”

“We provide a fruit and vegetable box and 6 loaves of bread to about 10 households per week.”

19. Does your organisation provide freshly cooked meals?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Other, please specify:

20. How many meals does your organisation cook and/or distribute each week?

☐ 1-50

☐ 50-100

☐ 101- 150

☐ 251-300

☐ 151-200

☐ 301-350

☐ 201-250

☐ 351-400

☐ Other. Please specify:

Section 3. Client Sourcing and Eligibility

21. How do the clients who use the food assistance offered by your organisation usually present? Tick all boxes which apply.

- ☐ Our clients are self-referred
- ☐ Our clients are referred to us from within our organisation
- ☐ Our clients are referred to us by other organisations
- ☐ Other. Please specify: _____

22. How does your organisation determine the eligibility of clients for food assistance? Tick all boxes which apply.

- ☐ We assist all clients who present to us without considering eligibility
- ☐ We require clients to verify hardship or their personal circumstances
- ☐ We require clients to verify that they have exhausted all other formal means of food assistance available to them
- ☐ Eligibility is determined by the resources we have available to us
- ☐ We determine eligibility in some other way. Please outline this below:

23. Does your organisation require clients to participate in any other services (either in-house or elsewhere by referral) in order to access food assistance?

Please complete the answer which best reflects the practices of your organisation. Additional comments (if required) can be made at the end of this question.

- ☐ We do not require clients to access any other services
- ☐ In all cases we require clients to use one or more of the other services we provide. Clients are referred to our _____ service(s).
- ☐ If clients regularly approach us for food assistance we refer them to one or more of the other services we provide. After supplying food assistance _____ times, our organisation refers clients to our _____ service(s).
- ☐ We require clients to attend services provided by another organisation if they frequently approach us for food assistance. After supplying food assistance _____ times, our organisation refers clients to _____ service(s).

Please make any additional comments in the space provided below

Additional comments:

Section 4. Ability to Meet Demand

24. Please respond to each of the following statements with regard to your organisation's food assistance programme

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree
We would expand our food provisioning services if more resources were available					
The food provided is good quality					
The food provided is of sufficient quality					
The food provided is enough to meet the clients nutritional requirement					
The client should have a choice regarding the types of food they want to receive.					
We would like our staff to have opportunity to participate in nutrition education					
Community and charitable organisations have a responsibility to tackle food poverty					

Local and national government have a responsibility to tackle food poverty					
Based on our experience, the number requiring our food assistance services has increased over the past 5 years					
Based on our experience, the numbers requiring our food assistance services has decreased over the past 5 years					

25. Please respond to each of the following statements with regard to your organisation's food assistance programme

Statement	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
The demand for food assistance through our organisation is higher than we have the resources to meet.				

Our organisation has had to refuse food to clients due to lack of food, resources and/or funding constraints.				
Our organisation has to ration or compromise the quantity of food supplied to clients due to lack of resource and/or funding constraints.				
Our organisation has had to compromise the quality of food supplied to clients due to resource and/or funding constraints				
Our organisation has had to alter the variety of food provided due to lack of food				
Our organization fulfills any requests for specific food items				
We provide perishable food items as well as dried goods				
We accept all food donated				
We are able to provide nutritionally sound food to our clients				
Our work is contributing towards tackling food poverty				

26. Please indicate what categories of food your organisation has the ability to accept and distribute/serve. Tick all boxes that apply.

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Fresh Meat | ☐ Soft drinks (soda and juices) |
| ☐ Dairy products | ☐ Baked goods |
| ☐ Frozen Food | ☐ Packaged food |
| ☐ Fresh Fruit | ☐ Tinned food |
| ☐ Fresh Vegetables | ☐ Freshly made food items (such as sandwiches) |

☐ Other. Please specify: _____

**(a) Please indicate the reason(s) why your organisation cannot accept certain food items.
Tick all boxes that apply**

☐ Lack of storage space

☐ Lack of transport

☐ Lack of refrigeration

☐ Food Safety Concerns

☐ Other. Please specify: _____

(b) Are there periodic or seasonal peaks in which your organisations services are required by more people than usual?

Yes ☐

No ☐

(c) If yes, what time of year does this happen and for what reason?

(d) Are there ever any times when your organisation has more food than it can distribute/serve

Yes ☐

No ☐

(e) If yes, what time of year does this happen and for what reason?

For example: "December each year because we received more donations than we can handle"

27. Can I contact you if clarification is needed on any of the questions?

Yes ☐ please supply email address and/or contact number below:

No ☐

28. If there is any other information or comments you would like to add, please do so in the space below.

Additional information/comments:

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COMPLETE THIS SURVEY.

**PLEASE MAKE SURE YOU HAVE ALSO COMPLETED THE AUTHORITY TO
RELEASE INFORMATION ON BEHALF OF AN ORGANISATION FORM AND
RETURN IT WITH YOUR COMPLETED SURVEY IN THE prepaid ENVELOPE
ATTACHED NO LATER THAN SEPTEMBER 4th PLEASE.**

Authority to Release Information on Behalf of an Organisation

Please complete and return the following declaration

Name: _____

Position: _____

Organisation: _____

Contact email address: _____

☐ I declare that I have checked this completed survey and that I am authorised to release this information as a representative of the above organisation.

☐ I am aware that this study has received ethical approval from the Social Research Ethics Committee (SREC) of University College Cork

☐ I understand that the information will be used in a PhD research project which aims to food insecurity in Ireland and the circumstances by which it is being addressed.

☐ The above organisation will remain anonymous in any publication of results or findings which may include journal articles and conference papers.

☐ I understand that participating in this survey in no way obligates our organisation to participate in any other aspect of the research. I have indicated below our wishes to be contacted/not contacted with regard to assisting in an interview for further research.

☐ Yes – our organisation would like to be contacted with regard to participating in an interview.

☐ No – our organisation does not want to be contacted with regard to the above.

☐ I understand that our organisation is unconditionally entitled to a copy of a summary report pertaining to the results of this research and have indicated below our wishes with regard to obtaining this.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Appendix 3: Supporting tables and figures from survey of organisations providing food assistance in Cork and survey of food bank users

Figure 1

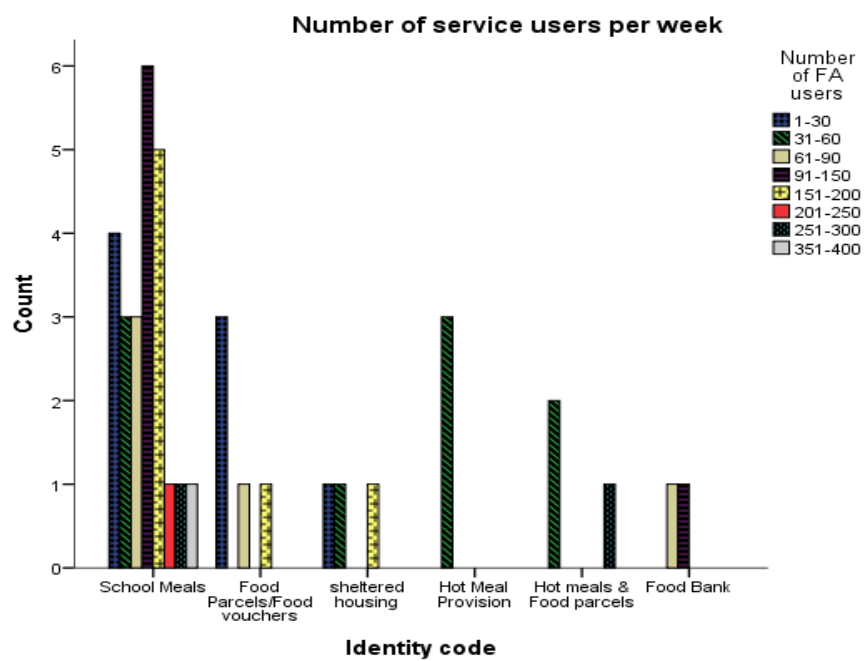


Figure 2

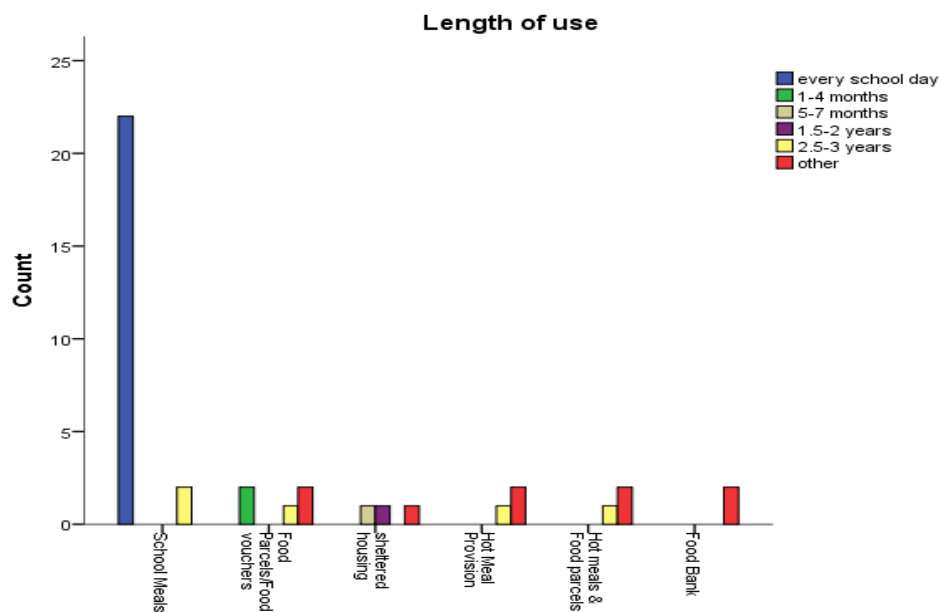


Figure 3

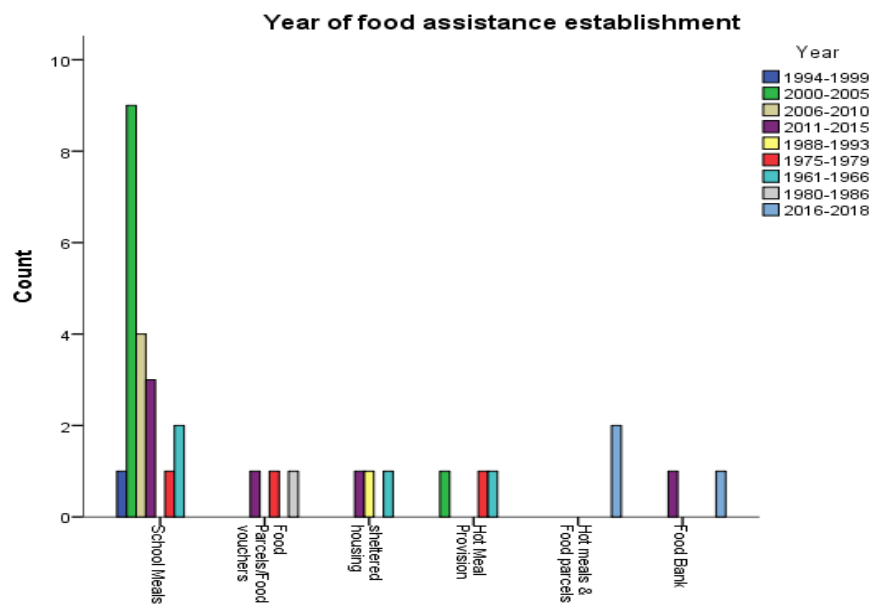


Figure 4

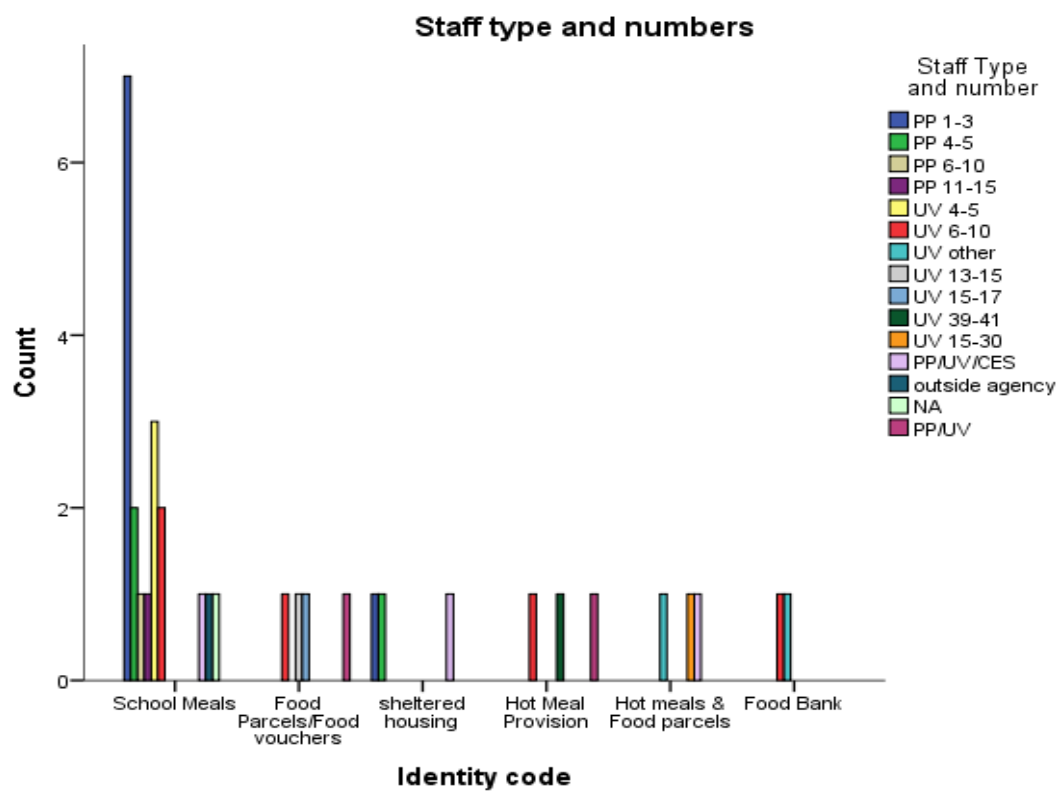


Table 1

Statement: 'Based on our experience, the number requiring our food assistance services has increased over the past 5 years'				
	SA/A	NAD	SD/D	Total
School Meals	16	3	5	24
Food Parcels/Food vouchers	5	0	0	5
sheltered housing	2	1	0	3
Hot Meal Provision	1	1	0	2
Hot meals & Food parcels	2	0	0	2
Food Bank	2	0	0	2
Total	18	5	0	38

Table 2: Perceptions of responsibility

‘Community and charitable organisations have a responsibility to tackle food poverty’.				
	SA/A	ND	D	Total
School Meals	15	5	4	24
Food Parcels/Food vouchers	4	1	0	5
sheltered housing	0	2	1	3
Hot Meal Provision	3	0	0	3
Hot meals & Food parcels	3	0	0	3
Food Bank	2	0	0	2
Total	27	8	5	40
‘Local and national government have a responsibility to tackle food poverty’				
School Meals	23	1	0	24
Food Parcels/Food vouchers	5	0	0	5
sheltered housing	3	0	0	3
Hot Meal Provision	3	0	0	3
Hot meals & Food parcels	2	0	1	3
Food Bank	1	1	0	2
Total	37	2	1	40

Source: Fieldwork data

Survey of Food Bank users: Supporting tables and figures

Table 3: Number of Children

Number of Children	Frequency	percent
0	27	35.5
1	16	21.1
2	8	10.5
3	7	9.2
4	2	2.6
5	5	6.6
6	3	3.9
8	1	1.3
9	2	2.6
10	3	3.9
11	1	1.3
12	1	1.3
Total	76	100

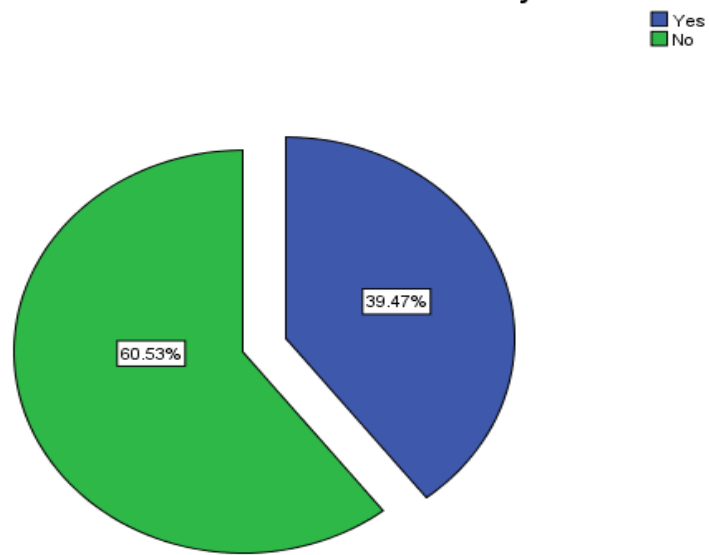
Table 4: Raw Food Security codes

FS	Raw	Frequency	percent
Scores			
0		2	2.6
1		2	2.6
2		7	9.2
3		4	5.3
4		2	2.6
5		4	5.3
6		12	15.8
7		11	14.5
8		11	14.5
9		8	10.5
10		13	17.1
Total		76	100

Table 2: Food Security raw scores

Table 5

Not eat for a whole day



INFORMATION SHEET



Purpose of the Study. This survey is part of a larger PhD project on food poverty and charitable food provisioning in Ireland. The purpose of this survey is to understand the circumstances of people receiving food parcels, the prevalence of any health conditions, and to measure food security status.

What will the study involve? This part of the study will involve completing a short survey which will take roughly ten minutes to complete. The participant can self-complete or the interviewer can administer the survey if the participant prefers.

Why have you been asked to take part? You have been asked because you receive food from the Feed Cork food bank.

Do you have to take part? No, participation is voluntary and you have the option to withdraw at any point before or during the survey. You also have the right to withdraw within two weeks after participation. Participation or not, will not affect your ability to receive food parcels from Feed Cork in the future. Should you agree to participate, consent will be required in writing.

Will your participation in the study be kept confidential?

Yes, all information collected is anonymous and no contains no identifying details, such as names or addresses. Your individual survey contains a number and the purpose of this number is that if you want to withdraw at any point after the data has been collected, you can contact Tara, cite the number and Tara will delete the file.

What will happen to the information which you give?

The data will be kept confidential for the duration of the study, available only to me and my research supervisor. It will be securely stored on a password protected file. On completion of the project, they will be retained for minimum of a further ten years and then destroyed.

What will happen to the results? The results will be presented in the thesis. They will be seen by my supervisor, a second marker and the external examiner. The thesis may be read by future students on the course. The study may be published in a research journal.

What are the possible disadvantages of taking part?

I don't envisage any negative consequences for you in taking part however, should you experience any distress in relation to this survey, with your consent I will pass on any concerns you may have to the food bank manager who can help you.

What if there is a problem? I don't envisage any problems but if a problem arises, I will refer you to the Food Bank manager with your consent.

Who has reviewed this study? Approval must be given by the Social Research Ethics Committee of UCC before studies like this can take place.

Any further queries? If you need any further information, you can contact me: Tara Kenny, 087 611 2879, or by email: tara.kenny@umail.ucc.ie or my supervisor Colin Sage at c.sage@ucc.ie

If you agree to take part in the study, please sign the consent form overleaf.

CONSENT FORM

I.....agree to participate in Tara Kenny's research.

The purpose and nature of the study has been explained to me in writing.

I am participating voluntarily and I have Tara's contact details.

I understand that I can withdraw from the study, without repercussions, at any time, whether before it starts or while I am participating.

I understand that I can withdraw permission to use the data within two weeks of the interview, in which case the material will be deleted.

I have been assigned a random number should I change my mind within the two week period after the survey has been administered.

I understand that anonymity will be ensured and that no identifying questions are asked

Signed:

Date:

PRINT NAME:

Survey of food bank users in Cork city

Please note:

- Participation is voluntary
- You can withdraw at any time within 2 weeks of participating by contacting Tara and quoting the number on top left hand side of the survey.
- Your decision to whether or not to participate will not affect future food parcel attainment or any additional services available at this food bank
- All information provided will remain anonymous –you do not need to provide your name.
- This survey will take no longer than 10 minutes to complete

Section 1. Socio-demographics

1. What is your sex?

☐ Female

☐ Male

☐ Other

2. What is your age group?

☐ 18 - 24

☐ 50 - 64

☐ 25 - 34

☐ 65 +

☐ 35 - 49

☐ Other. Please specify:

3. Marital Status

☐ Single

☐ Separated from husband/wife/partner

☐ Living with partner or spouse

☐ Divorced

☐ Married

☐ Widowed

4. What is your current accommodation?

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Privately rented accommodation | ☐ Temporary in a night shelter |
| ☐ Rented from local authority | ☐ Sleeping rough |
| ☐ Owned with mortgage | ☐ Staying rent- free with friends |
| ☐ Owned without mortgage | ☐ Staying rent-free with family |
| ☐ Sheltered housing ie Cluid | ☐ Other. Please specify: |
| ☐ Homelessness accommodation | <hr/> |

5. What is your ethnicity and/or nationality?

6. Which best describes your living arrangements? Ie. Household type.

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Single adult living alone | ☐ Couple with dependant and elderly parents/relatives |
| ☐ Single parent family with dependent children | ☐ Multi-family household |
| ☐ Single adult with dependant and elderly relatives/parents | ☐ Adult living with parents |
| ☐ Couple with dependent children | ☐ Adult living with other family members |
| ☐ Couple without children | ☐ Adult living with other adults – not related |

☐ Other. Please specify:

7. Do you have children and if so, how many?

☐ Yes, I have _____ children aged _____

☐ No.

8. What is your employment status?

☐ In full time paid employment

☐ Retired

☐ In part time paid employment

☐ Unable to work due to illness

☐ Unemployed

☐ Unable to work due to disability

☐ Unpaid part-time voluntary work

☐ Other. Please specify:

☐ Unpaid full time voluntary work

9. Do you suffer from any of the following health problems?

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| ☐ Depression | ☐ Problems with legs or feet | ☐ Food allergies |
| ☐ Anxiety | ☐ Diabetes | ☐ Coeliac disease |
| ☐ Respiratory problems including asthma | ☐ Learning difficulties | ☐ Arthritis |
| ☐ Back pain or neck pain | ☐ Food intolerances | ☐ Other. Please specify:
_____ |
| ☐ Heart or circulatory problems | ☐ Mental health disorder | |
| ☐ Cancer | ☐ Brain injury, neurological condition | |

Section 2. Food security

These next questions are about the food eaten in your household in the last 12 months, since November of last year and whether you were able to afford the food you need.

Which of these statements best describe the food eaten in your household in the last 12 months?

- ☐ I/we have enough of the kinds of food we want to eat
- ☐ I/we have enough but not always the kinds of food we want to eat
- ☐ I/we sometimes do not have enough to eat
- ☐ I/we often do not have enough food to eat

In the last 12 months, can you tell me if these statements were often true, sometimes true or never true?

‘I/we were worried whether the food would run out before I/we got money to buy more’

- ☐ Often true ☐ Sometimes true ☐ Never true

‘The food I/we bought just didn’t last, and I/we didn’t have money to get more’

☐ Often true ☐ Sometimes true ☐ Never true

‘I/We couldn’t afford to eat balanced meals’

☐ Often true ☐ Sometimes true ☐ Never true

In the last 12 months, did you ever reduce the size of meals or skip meals because there wasn’t enough money for food?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes: How often did this happen – almost every month, some months but not every month, or in only 1 or 2 months?

☐ almost every month ☐ some months but not every month ☐ in 1 or 2 months only

In the last 12 months, did (you/you or other adults in your household) ever eat less than you felt you should because there wasn’t enough money for food?

☐ Yes ☐ No

In the last 12 months, were (you/you or other adults in your household) ever hungry but didn’t eat because there wasn’t enough money for food?

☐ Yes ☐ No

In the last 12 months, did you lose weight because there wasn't enough money for food?

☐ Yes ☐ No

In the last 12 months, did (you/you or other adults in your household) ever not eat for a whole day because there wasn't enough money for food?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes: How often did this happen – almost every month, some months but not every month, or in only 1 or 2 months?

☐ almost every month ☐ some months but not every month ☐ in 1 or 2 months only

**YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THIS SUREVY IS GREATLY
APPRECIATED – THANK YOU**

Appendix 5: Interview coding sample

Table 6: Codes with descriptions and coded data.

Interview guide: Circumstances, decision making, challenges, changes, food source, types of food, experience with surplus, responsibility?		
Nodes	Files	Description/content
Alternative food procurement	8	How charities get foods outside FC/FCH arrangements, independent food stores, donations, KFC, Supermarkets with direct relationships. Purchase hampers from another conference who uses surplus, food drives at schools and supermarkets, purchase.
Bia relationship	5	Explaining the working relationship with Bia – benefits and drawbacks
Food poverty	12	What it is, circumstances causing food poverty (poverty), proposed solutions
challenges	2	Increase in request for services, increased bureaucracy attached to getting entitlements, increasing costs, problems at a different magnitude, attracting volunteers
Changes in last few years	15	Stigma, clients, food improvement, younger clients, addiction, homelessness, cancer, doctor referrals, cheaper to buy tinned food than fresh, cheap food, funding cuts, FoodCloud supplying significant amounts of food, increase in food donations – after recession people giving food rather than cash.
Responsibility	13	Charities need to take responsibility, ‘the only thing you can do is help – you have to’, responsibility as a Christian, government free riding, government doesn’t have resources to look after everyone, community spirit, government’s responsibility, everyone’s responsibility not just government.

Membership/motivations	9	Older, retired – suited to working hours, younger members (40's age group), long-term volunteers – 'know the historical cases', often husband and wife, satisfying work, feel good factor, religious ties, personal experience of receiving charity, Christian ethos. Give people a 'second chance' 'pick them up off the street' 'spread the love of Jesus'
Decision making	6	Collective decisions, 'assessing the need' by visiting homes', trust people 'err on the side of caution', relying on experience on volunteers who go into the homes of people to notice signs that people are struggling. I.e. 'if the house is in a total mess', fireplace boarded up, children collecting sticks for fire, 'help you help yourself', rely on local knowledge.
Discontent	11	'Chancers', recognition that 'you have to be creative when poor', empathy, general public not understanding what charities are dealing with – quick to say so and so doesn't need this help. Public asking charities to make sure only those 'really in need' get help. Recipients not making any effort, older people who need assistance not getting it. Some charities receiving government funding, other not,
Dumping concerns	7	Food dumped on charities, shops clearing out storeroom, people cleaning out cupboards, massive amounts beyond the capability of the charity to manage or store. I.e. '600' boxes of biscuits. Food gone past its sell by date with years (2009) out of date jams, 'bread is an ongoing battle' – too much to handle. Have to keep on top of donations to avoid dumping costs.
Food cloud relationship	7	Very supportive, help in applying for grants, they are always looking for partners, 'very kind', encouraging setting up food banks, 'they dump a lot of food', Supposed to give a list of food delivered – doesn't always happen, chaotic – volunteers dropping off huge quantities of bread,
Choice	17	Vouchers mainly but food when there is a possibility the vouchers won't be used for food, 'it depends on what's there, you don't go out saying I have this you take that', not in a position to give choice – based on what's available, limited facilities reduce ability to handle fresh food. 'when you are in her situation you will eat what you are given', vouchers afford some choice. Charities decide what foods go through FEAD programme, 'they do (ask for specific foods) but you really can't', food is food if you don't have any'. Do not receive requests, just take what is given' No choice, you take what you are given from FoodCloud. 'you should play fair, you can't turn around and say I want that that and that and I'm not taking that', functional – for hungry people, no choice.
Food drives	7	Done automatically at this stage (in schools), tend to get foods that nobody really wants, 'great to give back', people are very generous, generates massive amounts of food.
Food items/food types	18	Mention of Specific foods

Food waste	13	Food direct from processors – wrong colour, label or weight ‘100s of ready meals’, spoiled fruits, today's date on surplus items, too much bread and bakery for charities to handle, left over food (surplus) dropped to homeless shelter that night (circles of waste), FoodCloud asking charities to distribute more. ‘they asked me to do it (set up a food bank)’ unless the food is properly managed, it gets dumped because its dates that day and spoils if not put in fridge. Duplication of efforts (two charities working with same people and not in contact) results in more food waste. ‘18 pallets of beans with a 6 month expiry date’ no respect for free food, people do not know how to use items.
Generalization	14	Homeless people only like plain food – not used to rich food, drug users only like fast food, can't give alcoholics lentils etc. because it would upset their stomachs, ‘at least she can feed her family something’, shur tis grand like (ham ends from processors that general public won't buy), people can be fussy, people shouldn't complain, charities shouldn't complain, older people only like plain bread – nutty/grainy unsuitable, ‘substantial – they would have meat and cheese’, Recognition that perceptions change – 15 years ago homeless people didn't eat salad, rice or pasta and now they do. Perception (general public) that its only homeless people so any food is grand. Its better than nothing
Government	11	Grants should be available, government agencies contacting charities and referring people, ‘we are not political in any way’, advocacy, working with government and semi-state bodies (ESB) to arrange payment plans for clients, Schools referring people, charities going into schools to speak about their services, TD sending people with letters to charities for assistance. ‘from city council...we get lip service’, government throwing money around claiming to be out of the recession...no evidence of this in charities view’, government do not listen, do not treat people like human’, ‘they won't hear what I have to say’, people wouldn't come here if we were paid by the government.
Increase/decrease in food poverty	6	Things are getting worse, service has grown steadily, a lot we don't see because of stigma attached to charity, ‘people don't realise the poverty that is out there’ ‘lots of calls from schools. Cannot see a point where these services will not be needed.
Health	3	By giving food you are ensuring their health, we can't think about the health implications at this level, we do have people with bad health – obesity, heart problems, diabetics, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, try to link with other services to help them change their diets. It's not an immediate concern – other option is not feed them at all. It's (food) is killing us all. ‘food is food if you don't have any’ its (food) not that important for people who start their day with vodka
Lack of facilities	4	Lack of facilities to store food, store perishable, lack of resources to support facilities,

Length of use	13	Second generation families, certain occasions (communions, Christmas, confirmations), ‘some people two years...others way longer’, three generations (not altogether), ‘in theory 6 months in reality 6 years’, only at the end of the month while waiting for next pay check. Long enough to get people back on their feet. Years – families getting the food and putting the money into their children education. ‘we could tell you what the grandparents had for their breakfast’, ‘tend to see the same people crop up’ some people its only for a one off event – ie car broken down, needed for work. ‘This is their home’, ‘we don’t want to be enabling people’ (food bank)
Membership/volunteers	9	Retirees, older people, difficult to attract volunteers, students – transitory, local knowledge, with the charity with years – decades in some cases, local people who know the family’s history, activities suited to retirees, a few younger people (in their 40s). Partners often ‘dragged in’ to help, married couples, religious people, people who previously suffered addiction problems now volunteering.
Negatives	6	‘one in ten might not need it’, 50 percent of people might not need it, ‘people are jumping ahead of themselves – setting up projects without thinking’, lot’s of food people do not eat and don’t know how to use. Ie. Courgettes and avocados. People afraid to come and use the service (meals for homeless) because they get harassed. Food items in ones and twos is more hassle than its worth, no choice, unsuitable food, wilted vegetables, they (foodCloud/Bia) only saving the supermarkets money. ‘how can I cook food out of shite’ ‘I just hope whoever gets it (bag of food) deserves it. Pressure to accept all donations.
Perception of minimum wage and benefits	7	Depends on circumstances, ‘we have a generous social welfare system’, lot of Eastern Europeans doing low paid work, minimum wage wouldn’t affect our services because most aren’t working, some people better off not working, some people do not want to work, raising minimum wage might ‘attract more people out of the social welfare trap’, lots of genuine people on welfare but lots of chancers too. People who are used to social welfare can do it because they utilize other means – cash jobs, SVP. On one hand its ‘too generous and on the other not generous enough’, ‘no way’ not possible (3). Very difficult unless both parents are working, then childcare costs. Difficult to live on (SW) but better than most countries.
Perceptions of Quality	9	Handmade bread (donated from English Market) is great, its expensive but still use sliced pans because they stay softer for longer, Tesco fruit and veg is good quality – packaging might be damaged but not the food. Substantial = meat and cheese. Quality is ‘restaurant or hotel standards’
Perceptions of quality FCH and FC	5	‘hit and miss’ (FC) – ‘not impressed so far’, FC items have reached their expiry date, nearing expiry date(FCH) wilted lettuce, not up to our standard – ‘might be good food like hummus but then I am left trying to get rid of it’. Some meats weren’t great – straight

		from processors – no labels (FCH), only use it we need to, ‘felt funny about some products’, lots of pizza, ‘too messy (logistics)and not clean’ (FC) – use HACCP as an excuse to say no. Supermarkets not giving away anything of value but still appreciated.
Positives	4	Fantastic being able to use food waste, FCH very important to workings of food bank, saving money, cutting food bills now,
Bigger problems than food poverty	7	Homelessness, rent crisis, addiction, mental health problem, ‘The food is not as important...it’s not as important for them either’ There is food everywhere.if you are hungry in Cork you have a problem – people just take it cos its free (re food bank)
clients	18	younger families, older people due to illness, people just out of addiction programs, lone parents, low paid, precarious work, ‘middle class’, people who used to be the ‘givers’, mental health issues, illnesses, people living on social welfare payments, disability, ‘people outside the loop’ for special occasions, migrant families, Travellers, Roma community, people who have lost a partner, retirees who can’t afford to do anything else, students.
Relationships	4	Services do not want to communicate, ‘one piece of the pie and I am going to shout as loud as I can to get it’, duplication of services, lack of coherency. Or good working relationships, often call other services if they think more help is needed.
Social side of services	5	‘more for the chat’ – not about the food, calling to older people who may live alone, offering support after a bereavement, setting up counselling, social events. Somewhere to go if you do not have any money. Company.
Stigma	15	Depends on the person receiving it, more so with the ‘new poor’, ‘families too proud or ashamed to ask for help’, confidentiality is key to their workings, great efforts to avoid being ‘seen’, families crying asking for help. ‘absolutely, no doubt about it’
Impacts of surplus	13	Many charities wouldn’t be providing food if FC and FCH weren’t in operation, increase in amount of food be provided (one a week to daily), food being given out without being requested, bags of ‘treats’ given out because ‘they love little treat’ (homeless), food given out instead of vouchers, loss of local business support (direct swap from breadman and butcher to using only surplus), supplemental feeding almost – things charities wouldn’t buy in the first place, FoodCloud formed at a critical time for charities, when budgets were severely cut. Teach cooking skills with surplus. People experiencing food they wouldn’t have been exposed to before. Many items small portions heavily packaged – made for individual consumption.
Working relationship with other charities	14	Uncoordinated, duplication, ‘only one pie’, so and so has lots of money, distrust of certain charities, competition for resources. ‘disconnected. Or great relationships (usually between government funded charities with professional network meeting), working together, refer to each other, contact for additional help with a specific matter/case. ‘government charities hate us’

Thinking ahead	5	Planning meals from surplus, using freezer space only for meat, proper management to avoid waste, extending life of surplus – making trifle out of doughnuts and cakes – adding value, expanding services, renting a room for surplus storage, ‘some sort of limitations’ ...to avoid enabling people, food banks expects their services to be long term and to grow ‘exponentially’,
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Appendix 6: Food Poverty Network membership and actions

2011				
NIFPN, April 2011				
Organisation	Role	Jurisdiction	Present	Apologies
Food Standards Agency (FSA)	Ass. Director	NI	*	
DHSSPS	Health Development Policy Branch	NI	*	
Council for Homelessness NI	-	NI	*	
DHSSPS	Health Development Policy Branch	NI	*	
Safefood	Director Human Health and Nutrition	AI	*	
Safefood	Fellow	AI	*	
IPH	Associate Director	AI		*
Public Health Agency	Senior manager	NI	*	
Institute of Public Health (IPH)	-	AI	*	
HFfA	Co-ordinator	AI	*	
June 2011 Dublin				

Safefood	Chief Specialist in Nutrition	AI	*
Safefood	Director Human Health and Nutrition	AI	*
Safefood	Fellow	AI	*
Department for Social Development NI	Head of analytical services unit	NI	*
Economic and Social Research Institute, CSO	Research Officer	RoI	*
HFfA	Co-ordinator	AI	*
Queen's University	Research Ass. Poverty and Social exclusion Project	NI	*
Office of Social Inclusion	Dept. Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs	RoI	*
Public Health Alliance (PHAI)	Co-chair	AI	*
Food Standards Agency (FSA)	Ass. Director	NI	*
City university London	Prof. Food and Health Policy		*
DHSSPS	Health Development Policy Branch	NI	*
DHSSPS	Health Development Policy Branch	NI	*
CHNI	-	NI	*
Public Health Agency	Senior Manager	NI	*
Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI)	Research Prof.	RoI	*
NIFPN, September 2011, VC			
Safefood	Director Human Health and Nutrition	AI	*
ESRI	Research officer	RoI	*
HFfA	Co-ordinator	AI	*

Office for Social Inclusion	Dept. Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs	RoI	*	
Council for Homelessness NI		NI	*	
Safefood	Fellow	AI	*	
PHAI	Co-chair	AI	*	
FSA	Assistant Director	NI	*	
Public Health Agency	Senior Manager	NI	*	
DHSSPS	Heath Development Policy Branch	NI		*
DHSSPS	Heath Development Policy Branch	NI		*
Office of Social Inclusion	Dept. Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs	RoI		*
Queen's University	Research Ass. Poverty and Social exclusion Project	NI		*
Safefood	Chief Specialist in Nutrition	AI		*
Department for Social Development NI	Head of analytical services unit	NI		*

Table 1

2012				
AIFPN, January 2012, Dublin				
Organisation	Role	Jurisdiction	Present	Apologies
Food Standards Agency (FSA)	Ass. Director	NI	*	
Public Health Alliance (PHAI)	Co-chair	AI	*	
ESRI	-	RoI	*	
Council for Homelessness NI	-	NI	*	
Department of Social Protection	Social Inclusion Unit	RoI	*	
Safefood	Director Human Health and Nutrition	AI	*	
Safefood	Fellow	AI	*	
IPH	Associate Director	AI	*	
Institute of Public Health	-	AI	*	
HFfA	Co-ordinator	AI	*	
Safefood	Chief Specialist in Nutrition	AI		*
DHSSPS	Heath Development Policy Branch	NI		*
Central Statistics Office		ROI		*
DHSSPS	Heath Development Policy Branch	NI		*
Public Health Agency	Senior Manager	NI		*
Queen's University	Research Ass. Poverty and Social exclusion Project	NI		*
Department for Social Development NI	Head of analytical services unit	NI		*

Public Health Agency		NI		*
AIFPN, May 2012, VC				
FSA		NI	*	
Queen's University	Research Ass. Poverty and Social exclusion Project	NI	*	
DHSSPS	Heath Development Policy Branch	NI	*	
Public Health Alliance (PHAI)	Co- chair, student placement	AI	*	
ESRI	Research Officer	RoI	*	
Department of Social Protection	Social Inclusion Unit	RoI	*	
Safefood	Director of Human Health and Nutrition	AI	*	
HFfA	Co-ordinator	AI	*	
IPH	Associate Director	AI	*	
Safefood	Fellow	AI	*	
Safefood	Chief Specialist in nutrition	AI		*
Department of Social Protection	Social Inclusion Unit	ROI		*
DHSSPS	Health Development Policy Branch,	NI		*
Council for Homelessness NI		NI		*
FSA	Associate Director	NI		*
Public health Agency				*
AIFPN, October 2012, Dublin				
IPH	Associate Director	RoI	*	
FSA		NI	*	

PHAI	Co-chair	AI	*	
ESRI	Research Officer	RoI	*	
HFfA	Co-ordinator	AI	*	
Department of Social Protection	Social Inclusion Unit	ROI	*	
Safefood	Chief specialist in Nutrition	AI	*	
Safefood	Fellow	AI	*	
Safefood	Stakeholder Development Administrator	AI	*	
Queen's University	Research Ass. Poverty and social exclusion project	NI		*
DHSSPS	Human Development and Policy Branch	NI		*
Safefood	Director of Human Health and Nutrition	AI		*
Department of Social Protection	Social inclusion unit	RoI		*
DHSSPS	Human Development and Policy Branch	NI		*
Council for Homelessness NI		NI		*
Public Health Agency		NI		
Department of Social Development		NI		*
November 2012, VC				
Council for Homelessness NI		NI	*	
Safefood	Chief Specialist in Nutrition	AI	*	
Department of Social Protection	Social inclusion unit	ROI	*	

Safefood	Director of Human Health and Nutrition	AI	
FSA		NI	*
HFfA	Co-ordinator	AI	*
ESRI	Research Officer	RoI	
Safefood	Stakeholder Development Administrator	AI	*
DHSSPS	Human Development and Policy Branch	NI	*
Public Health Agency		NI	*
DHSSPS	Human Development and Policy Branch	NI	*
Public Health Alliance (PHAI)	Co-chair	AI	*
Queen's University	Research Ass. Poverty and social exclusion project	NI	*
FSA	Assistant Director	NI	*
Department of Social Protection	Social inclusion unit	ROI	*
Department of Social Development		NI	*
IPH	Associate Director	AI	*

Table 2

2013				
AIFPN, January 2013, VC				
Organisation	Role	Jurisdiction	Present	Apologies
Department of Social Protection	Social Inclusion Unit	ROI	*	
Safefood	Chief Specialist in Nutrition	AI	*	
Safefood	Director of Human Health and Nutrition	AI		
FSA		NI		
HFfA	Co-ordinator	AI	*	
Queen's University	Research ass. Poverty and Social exclusion Project	NI	*	
Safefood	Stakeholder Development Administrator	AI	*	
DHSSPS	Health Development Policy Branch	NI	*	
Council for Homelessness NI		NI		*
IPH	Associate Director	AI		*
FSA	Assistant Director	NI		*
ESRI	Research Officer	RoI		*
DHSSPS	Health Development Policy Branch	NI		*
Public Health Agency		NI		*
PHAI	Co-chair	AI		*
Department of Social Development		NI		*
Department of Social Protection	Social Inclusion Unit	ROI		*

April 2013 Dublin			
Department of Social Protection	Social Inclusion Unit	ROI	*
Safefood	Chief Specialist in Nutrition	AI	*
Safefood	Director of Human Health and Nutrition	AI	*
IPH	Associate Director	AI	*
FSA		NI	*
HFfA	Co-ordinator	AI	*
Queen's University	Research ass. Poverty and Social exclusion Project	NI	*
Safefood	Stakeholder Development Adminsitrator	AI	*
DHSSPS	Health Development Policy Branch	NI	*
Council for Homelessness NI		NI	*
Department of Social Development		NI	*
FSA	Assistant Director	NI	*
ESRI	Research Officer	ROI	*
Public Health Agency		NI	*
PHAI	Co-chair	AI	*
Department of Social Development		NI	*
Department of Social Protection	Social Inclusion Unit	ROI	*
DHSSPS	Health Development Policy Branch	NI	*
AIFPN, July 2013, Dublin			
Department of Social Protection	Social Inclusion Unit	ROI	*
Safefood	Chief Specialist in Nutrition	AI	*
Safefood	Director of Human Health and Nutrition	AI	*
FSA		NI	*

HFfA	Co-ordinator	AI	*
FSA	Assistant Director	NI	*
Safefood	Scientific Officer	AI	*
Public Health Agency		NI	*
Consumer Council for NI		NI	*
Vincentian Partnership for Social Justice		ROI	*
Vincentian Partnership for Social Justice		ROI	*
CHNI		NI	*
IPH	Associate Director	AI	*
Department of Social Development			*
DHSSPS	Health Development Policy Branch	NI	*
ESRI	Research Officer	ROI	*
Public Health Agency		NI	*
PHAI	Co-chair	AI	*
Department of Social Development		NI	*
Department of Social Protection	Social Inclusion unit	ROI	*
DHSSPS	Health Development Policy Branch	NI	*
Queen's University	Poverty and Social Exclusion Project	NI	*
AIFPN, December 2013, VC			
Safefood	Chief Specialist in Nutrition	AI	*
Safefood	Director of Human Health and Nutrition	AI	*
FSA		NI	*
HFfA	Co-ordinator	AI	*

FSA		NI	*
Safefood	Executive Assistant	AI	*
DHSSPS	Health Development Policy Branch	NI	*
PHAI	Co-chair	AI	*
Queen's University	Research ass. Poverty and Social exclusion Project	NI	*
Public Health Agency		NI	*
Department of Social Development		NI	*
Student x2			*
Department of Social Protection	Social Inclusion Unit	ROI	*
Council for Homelessness NI		NI	*
Department of Social Development		NI	*
IPH	Associate Director	AI	*
ESRI	Research Officer	ROI	*
Public Health Agency		NI	*
Department of Social Protection	Social Inclusion Unit	ROI	*
Department of Social Development		NI	*
DHSSPS	Health Development Policy Branch	NI	*

Table 3

2014				
AIFPN, March 2014, VC				
Organisation	Role	Jurisdiction	Present	Apologies
Department of Social Protection	Social Inclusion Unit	ROI	*	
Safefood	Chief Specialist in Nutrition	AI	*	
Safefood	Research Fellow	AI	*	
Safefood	Research Fellow	AI	*	
FSA		NI	*	
HFfA	Co-ordinator	AI	*	
DHSSPS	Health Development Policy Branch	NI	*	
Department of Social Development		NI		*
CHNI		NI		*
PHAI	Co-chair	AI		*
Queen's University	Research ass. Poverty and Social exclusion Project	NI		*
Public Health Agency		NI		*
IPH	Associate Director	AI		*
Department of Social Development		NI		

ESRI	Research Officer	ROI	*
Public Health Agency		NI	*
Department of Social Development		NI	*
Department of Social Protection	Social Inclusion Unit	ROI	*
DHSSPS	Health Development Policy Branch	NI	*
Department of Social Development		NI	*
Department of Social Development		NI	*
AIFPN, June 2014, Dublin			
Department of Social Protection	Social Inclusion Unit	ROI	*
Safefood	Chief Specialist in Nutrition	AI	*
Safefood	Director of Human Health and Nutrition	AI	*
FSA	Research Fellow	NI	*
HFfA	Co-ordinator	AI	*
FSA	Director	NI	*
PHAI	Co-chair	AI	*
Public Health Agency		NI	*
Public Health Agency		NI	*
Food Standards Agency Ireland (FSAI)		ROI	*
CHNI		NI	*
Institute of Public Health		AI	*
DHSSPS	Health Development Policy Branch	NI	*
Queen's University	Research ass. Poverty and Social exclusion Project	NI	*
ESRI	Research Officer	ROI	*

Department of Social Development		NI	*
Department of Social Protection	Social Inclusion Unit	ROI	*
DHSSPS	Health Development Policy Branch	NI	*
Department of Social Development		ROI	*
AIFPN, November 2014, VC/TC			
DHSSPS	Health Development Policy Branch	NI	*
Safefood	Chief Specialist in Nutrition	AI	*
Safefood	Director of Human Health and Nutrition	AI	*
Safefood	Research Fellow	AI	*
Safefood	Research Fellow	AI	*
HFfA	Co-ordinator	AI	*
FSA	Director	NI	*
Public Health Agency		NI	*
CHNI		NI	*
Institute of Public Health		AI	*
PHAI	Co-chair	AI	*
Queen's University	Research ass. Poverty and Social exclusion Project	NI	*
ESRI	Research Officer	ROI	*
FSA		NI	*
Department of Social Protection	Social Inclusion Unit	ROI	*
DHSSPS	Health Development Policy Branch	NI	*
Department of Social Development		NI	*
Department of Social Protection	Social Inclusion Unit	NI	*

Table 4

2015				
AIFPN, January 2015, VC				
Organisation	Role	Jurisdiction	Present	Apologies
Department of Social Protection	Social Inclusion Unit	ROI	*	
Safefood	Chief Specialist in Nutrition	AI	*	*
Safefood	Research Fellow	AI	*	
Safefood	Research Fellow	AI	*	
FSA		NI	*	
HFfA	Co-ordinator	AI	*	
DHSSPS	Health Development Policy Branch	NI	*	
Safefood	Director of Human Health and Nutrition	AI	*	
Department of Social Development		NI		*
CHNI		NI		*
PHAI	Co-chair	AI		*
Queen's University	Research ass. Poverty and Social exclusion Project	NI		*
Department of Social Protection	Social Inclusion Unit	ROI		*
IPH	Associate Director	AI	*	
DHSSPS	Health Development Policy Branch	NI	*	
FSA		NI	*	
Department of Social Development		NI		*

ESRI	Research Officer	ROI	*
Public Health Agency		NI	*
AIFPN, April 2015, Belfast			
Department of Social Protection	Social Inclusion Unit	ROI	*
Safefood	Chief Specialist in Nutrition	AI	*
Safefood	Research Fellow	AI	*
Safefood	Research Fellow	AI	
FSA		NI	
HFfA	Co-ordinator	AI	*
DHSSPS	Health Development Policy Branch	NI	*
Safefood	Director of Human Health and Nutrition	AI	*
Department of Social Development		NI	
CHNI		NI	*
PHAI	Co-chair	AI	*
Queen's University	Research ass. Poverty and Social exclusion Project	NI	*
Department of Social Protection	Social Inclusion Unit	ROI	*
IPH	Associate Director	AI	*
DHSSPS	Health Development Policy Branch	NI	*
IPH		AI	*
FSA		NI	*
Department of Social Development		NI	*

Department of Social Development		NI	*
ESRI	Research Officer	ROI	*
Public Health Agency		NI	*
NIFPN, August, Belfast			
FSA		NI	*
DHSSPS	Health Development Policy Branch	NI	*
Public Health Agency		NI	*
Safefood	Research fellow	AI	*
DHSSPS	Health Development Policy Branch	NI	*
Institute of Environmental Health Northern Ireland	Director	NI	*
Institute of Public Health	Director of Development and Capacity Building , BFN	NI	*
Consumer Council NI	Senior Policy Officer	NI	*
Newry, Mourne and Down District Council		NI	*
British Dietetic Association (BDA) NI		NI	*
Student			*
Safefood	Chief Specialist in Nutrition	AI	*
Department of Social Development		NI	*
Department of Social Development		NI	*
Safefood	Director of Human Health and Nutrition	AI	*

Queen's University	Research ass. Poverty and Social exclusion Project	NI	*
Council for Homelessness NI		NI	*
NIFPN, October 2015, VC			
ESRI	Research Officer	ROI	*
Public Health Agency		NI	*
Safefood	Chief Specialist in Nutrition	AI	*
Safefood	Research Fellow	AI	*
Institute of Environmental Health Northern Ireland	Director	NI	*
Institute of Public Health	Director of Development and Capacity Building , BFN	AI	*
Consumer Council NI	Senior Policy Officer	NI	*
FSA		NI	*
HFfA	Co-ordinator	AI	*
DHSSPS	Health Development Policy Branch	NI	*
Safefood	Director of Human Health and Nutrition	AI	*
CHNI		NI	*
British Dietetic Association (BDA) NI		NI	*
DHSSPS	Health Development Policy Branch	NI	*
IPH		AI	*
FSA		NI	*
Department of Social Protection	Social Inclusion Unit	ROI	*
Department of Social Protection	Social Inclusion Unit	ROI	*

Department of Social Development		NI	*
Queen's University	Research ass. Poverty and Social exclusion Project	NI	*
Department of Social Development		NI	*

Table 5

2016				
NIFPN, February 2016, VC.				
Organisation	Role	Jurisdiction	Present	Apologies
ESRI	Research Officer	ROI		*
Public Health Agency		NI		*
Safefood	Chief Specialist in Nutrition	AI	*	
Safefood	Secretariat	AI	*	
Institute of Environmental Health Northern Ireland	Director Chartered	NI	*	
Institute of Public Health, Belfast Food Network	Director of Development and Capacity Building	NI	*	
Consumer Council NI	Senior Policy Officer	NI	*	
FSA	Standards and Dietary Health Team	NI	*	
HFfA	Co-ordinator	AI		*
DHSSPS	Health Development Policy Branch	NI	*	
Safefood	Director of Human Health and Nutrition	AI	*	
British Dietetic Association (BDA) NI		NI		
DHSSPS	Health Development Policy Branch	NI	*	
IPH		AI		*
FSA	Standards and Dietary Health Team	NI	*	
FSA	Standards and Dietary Health Team	NI	*	

Department of Social Protection		ROI	*
Irish Nutrition and Dietetic Institute	CEO	ROI	*
Department of Social Development		NI	*
Queen's University	Research ass. Poverty and Social exclusion Project	NI	*
Department of Social Protection		ROI	*
NIFPN, June 2016, Belfast, hfFa DONE			
ESRI	Research Officer	ROI	*
Public Health Agency		NI	*
Public Health Agency		NI	*
Safefood	Chief Specialist in Nutrition	AI	*
Safefood	Secretariat	AI	
Causeway Coast and Glen Council		NI	*
Institute of Environmental Health Northern Ireland	Director Chartered	NI	*
Institute of Public Health, Belfast Food Network	Director of Development and Capacity Building	NI	*
Consumer Council NI	Senior Policy Officer	NI	*
FSA	Standards and Dietary Health Team	NI	*
Department of Health	Health Development Policy Branch	NI	*

Safefood	Director of Human Health and Nutrition	AI		*
Department of Health	Health Development Policy Branch	NI	*	
IPH		AI		*
HSE		ROI	*	
British Dietetic Association		NI	*	
FSA	Standards and Dietary Health Team	NI	*	
FSA	Standards and Dietary Health Team	NI	*	
Department of Social Protection	Social Inclusion Unit	ROI		*
Council for homeless NI		NI		*
Department of Health		ROI		*
Chest and Stroke		NI		*
FSA	Minute Taker	NI	*	
Irish Nutrition and Dietetic Institute	CEO	ROI		*
Irish Heart Foundation		ROI		*
Department for Communities		NI		*
AIFPN, September 2016, Dublin				
ESRI	Research Officer	ROI		*
Public Health Agency		NI	*	
Public Health Agency		NI		*
Safefood	Chief Specialist in Nutrition	AI	*	
Causeway Coast and Glen Council		NI	*	

Institute of Environmental Health Northern Ireland	Director Chartered	NI	*	
Health Service Executive		RoI	*	
Department of Health		RoI	*	
Institute of Public Health		AI		*
Consumer Council NI	Senior Policy Officer	NI		*
FSA	Standards and Dietary Health Team	NI	*	
FSA	Nutrition Intern	NI	*	
Safefood	Nutrition placement student	AI	*	
Safefood	Director of Human Health and Nutrition	AI	*	
Department of Health	Health Development Policy Branch	NI	*	
IPH, Belfast Food Network	Director of Development and Capacity building	NI	*	
Department of Health	Health Development Policy Branch	NI	*	
Northern Ireland Chest Heart & Stroke	Health and Homeless Co-ordinator	NI	*	
Health Service Executive		ROI		*
British Dietetic Association		NI	*	
FSA	Standards and Dietary Health Team	NI	*	
FSA	Standards and Dietary Health Team	NI		*
Department of Social Protection	Social Inclusion Unit	ROI		*
Council for homeless NI		NI		*
Department of Health		ROI	*	

Chest and Stroke		NI	*
FSA		NI	*
Irish Nutrition and Dietetic Institute	CEO	ROI	*
Irish Heart Foundation		ROI	*
Newry, Mourne and Down district council		NI	*
Department for Communities		NI	*
Department of Social Protection		ROI	*
Safefood		AI	*
Queen's University	Research ass. Poverty and Social exclusion Project	NI	*
Department of Social Development		NI	*

Table 6

2017					
AIFPN, February 2017, TC					
Organisation	Role		Jurisdiction	Present	Apologies
Department of Health	Health Development Policy Branch		NI	*	
ESRI	Research Officer		ROI	*	
Irish Nutrition and Dietetic Institute	CEO		ROI	*	
Safefood	Director of Human Health and Nutrition		AI	*	
Safefood	Chief Specialist in Nutrition		AI	*	
Safefood	Executive Assistant		AI	*	
Consumer Council NI			NI	*	
Department of Health	Health Development Policy Branch		NI	*	
Department for Communities			NI	*	
FSA	Standards and Dietary Health Team		NI	*	
FSA	Standards and Dietary Health Team		NI	*	
FSA	Standards and Dietary Health Team		NI	*	
Health Service Executive			ROI	*	
Public Health Agency (PHA)			AI	*	
Causeway Coast and Glen Council			NI	*	
Department of Health ROI			ROI	*	
Irish Heath Foundation			ROI	*	
Department for Communities			NI		*
IPH, Belfast Food Network	Director of Development and Capacity building		NI		*
Department of Social Protection			ROI		*

Public Health Agency				NI		*
British Dietetic Association				NI		*
Council for Homelessness NI				NI		*
Department for Communities				NI		*
FSA				NI		*
Institute of Environmental Health Northern Ireland	Director			NI		*
AIFPN, April 2017						
ESRI	Research Officer			ROI		*
Safefood	Director of Human Health and Nutrition			AI	*	
Safefood	Chief Specialist in Nutrition			AI	*	
Safefood	Executive Assistant			AI	*	
Consumer Council NI				NI	*	
Department of Health	Health Development Policy Branch			ROI	*	
Department of Health	Health Development Policy Branch			ROI	*	
FSA	Standards and Dietary Health Team			NI	*	
FSA	Standards and Dietary Health Team			NI	*	
FSA	Standards and Dietary Health Team			NI	*	
NI Chest and Stroke				NI	*	
Health Service Executive				ROI		*
Causeway Coast and Glen Council				NI	*	
Safefood				AI	*	
Department of Health ROI				ROI	*	
Irish Heath Foundation				ROI	*	
Irish Heath Foundation				ROI	*	
Crosscare Ireland				AI	*	
Department of Social Protection				ROI	*	
Institute of Environmental Health Northern Ireland	Director			NI		*
British Dietetic Association				NI		*

Council for Homelessness NI				NI		*
FSA				NI		*
Department for Communities				NI	*	
Health and Social Care NI				NI	*	
AIFPN, September 2017						
FSA	Standards and Dietary Health Team			NI	*	
FSA	Standards and Dietary Health Team			NI	*	
Safefood	Chief Specialist in Nutrition			ROI	*	
Safefood	Technical executive of Human Health and Nutrition			ROI	*	
Crosscare Ireland				ROI	*	
Department of Health	Health Development Policy Branch			ROI	*	
Department of Health	Health Development Policy Branch			ROI	*	
Department of Health				ROI	*	
British Dietetic Association				NI	*	
Irish Heart Foundation	Dietician			ROI	*	
Freelance Child poverty advisor				NI/UK	*	
Institute of Environmental Health Northern Ireland	Director			NI		*
Consumer Council				NI		*
Consumer Council				NI		*
Vincentian Partnership for Social Justice				ROI		*
Department of Communities				NI		*
ESRI				ROI		*
NI chest and Stroke				NI		*
Public Health Agency				NI		*