**Food Policy** 

Martin Caraher John Coveney *Editors* 

# Food Poverty and Insecurity: International Food Inequalities



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Martin Caraher · John Coveney Editors

# Food Poverty and Insecurity: International Food Inequalities



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This book was borne out of a long distance collaboration separated by 10,000 miles, with John in Adelaide and Martin in London. This meant early mornings for one and late eventing for the other. Occasional meetings in London and Adelaide helped this impasse.

We of course wish to thank all the contributors for their patience with the process and their expertise which flowed from the pages. Their writing often made us gasp with astonishment at the research they have been involved in and the breadth of their knowledge. Thank you all.

To our respective wives and life partners we express undying gratitude and love. Martin to Maggie and John to Melanie and of course vice versa for sharing their spouses at odd hours of the day and night.

## Preface

At a time of financial restraint while those most at risk are suffering from the ravages of the global economic meltdown, the notion of 'austerity' has become a *leitmotif* for modern government and is believed to be a necessity for the responsible management of jurisdictions. The effect of this is to ask those already suffering from food insecurity and poverty to further make sacrifices, for situations not of their making.

While the global financial crisis of 2007–2008 brought austerity to the fore as an antidote to the fiscal problems endured by some countries, it would be a mistake to believe that austerity in government started with this crisis. The UK, for example, experienced severe austerity measures under the Thatcher years, and of course the immediate post-World War Two years saw similar measures in other high-income economies. What is different now is the scale of austerity and the link globally in the financial and food systems so that changes in one part of the globe have impacts elsewhere.

Austerity is usually justified by the need to 'pay one's way' and 'live within one's means.' In principle, it is hard to take issue with these economic imperatives; however, the way austerity plays out in actual practice on particular groups in populations has become of interest to academics, policy makers, and community advocates.

This book explores the way austerity measures have impacted on food security and poverty. It examines how in different jurisdictions austerity has been adopted and adapted to fit with local conditions to influence the availability, affordability, and accessibility of food. The variety of jurisdictions examined in the book, from advanced economies such as USA and France, to emerging economies such as Brazil, and to developing economies such as Indonesia and other Southeast Asian countries, allows a rich understanding of the effects of 'belt tightening' on urban and rural communities. The book's chapter authors—all experts in their respective fields—provide in-depth insights that allow austerity to be compared and contracted at levels of policy and practice. The book will be indispensible for academics, policy makers, and practitioners in a variety of settings.

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# Chapter 1 Food Poverty and Insecurity: The Poor in a World of Global Austerity

Martin Caraher and John Coveney

#### Introduction

During times of austerity a constantly used phrase is 'tightening of the belt'. This *leitmotif* has been a constant refrain as part of the most recent examples of voluntary or enforced austerity measures introduced after the Global Financial Crisis from 2007 to the present. Countries involved have taken it upon themselves, or have been forced, to introduce measure to rein-in public expenditure, introduce austere economic measures and to... tighten belts. Yet few have had the opportunity to use this to address public health nutrition; the belt tightening has been done to address issues of financial austerity and economic stability often with huge implications for nutrition and health outcomes. Nutrition and diet-related outcomes have been a casualty of the economic crisis. Although belt tightening is a convenient and easy to use shorthand for strategies required during austere conditions, it could be argued that pulling belts a few notches tighter is, actually, a consequence rather than a strategy during hard economic terms. For many countries and regions belt tightening is a coping mechanism, a way of dealing with the hard times. In other words, as austerity measures take hold, the effects are to decrease the circumference or girth of individuals or the collective population (Egger and Swinburn 2010; Caballero and Popkin 2002). Of course, this is usually the result of limits placed on food intake, and the overall effects seen as the body starts to react to lower levels of energy and other nutrition substrates.

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#### **Creating Pressure Points and Even Greater Inequalities**

From OECD data (2011) we know countries such as Australia, the UK, and the USA have widened inequalities and increased levels of poverty, while others with increased levels of poverty have narrowed the inequality gap. So for some the belt has been tightened involuntarily and left them without much choice. The image of belt tightening is usually marketed as one where the more corpulent members of the population are in need of girth correction. However, an inevitable consequence of austerity is that it is the most vulnerable who end up having to tighten belts by virtue of going without the necessary food for health and wellbeing. The distinction here is often one of choice; while the well off adopt a lifestyle based on austerity they do so to improve their health or to save the planet; the poor on the other hand are driven by a lack of choice and the imposition of austere choices.

It is these ideas that provide a backdrop for this book. We are interested in exploring the ways in which austerity measure have been invoked in different countries, cultures, and contexts so that various population groups have had different access to the necessities of living, including basic food supplies. We deliberately sought contributions from a range of authors who could write about the ways that austerity can 'bite' and thus impact on belt tightening. But, any account of belt tightening under austerity measures requires an understanding of and the reactions to such measure in an historical setting, to look to modern approaches and solutions and why some countries have addressed the problem. Chapters in this book show a range of solutions to food poverty. These range from food intervention projects that consider food as a right, to approaches involving state or charity or individuals, or indeed all three. Several chapters in this volume also show the various levels at which governance occurs from the regional (as in global and SE Asia), through nation states (Australia, South Africa, and Brazil) to city (New York) and local initiatives (France).

#### Food Protest and the Underlying Moral Economy

Thompson (1993) in his review of the 'moral economy' of the English crowd in the eighteenth century noted that food riots were often a flash point for the anger of the populace. They were aimed at a more fundamental truth, which was the erosion of traditional liberties and privileges, and food offered a convenient focus for dissent

and social protest as opposed to merely a protest against food or hunger. The riots coincided with the demise of the medieval economy, its social order and the growth of the pre-industrial and early industrial economy. Riots were social calamities and engaged the energies of the 'mob', and the response of the civic authorities was muted. For some this was seen as collusion with the mob, for others it was a way of absorbing the energies and attention of the mob so that structurally nothing much changed. Seeking solutions in local projects could be said to ignore the structural influences of the global food system and 'Big Food' (George 2010; Moodie et al. 2013: Caraher 2003), it also medicalises and creates what Crawford (1977, 1980, 1984) calls a form of healthism in that it locates the solution at the individual or community level. Similarly to Crawford's arguments about self-help and alternative healthcare movements, food austerity as a lifestyle choice also runs the danger of depoliticising food and the food system. Food which is conceptualized as individual is highly dangerous; you can be responsible and change the world! For many, austerity has become a lifestyle issue and this is to be welcomed, but what needs to be acknowledged is that such choices require resources, resources that the poor do not always have. Such dangers are pointed out in the chapter on food banks where charity becomes the default option and we end up with 'successful failures'. On the other hand, the New York City and Brazilian examples given in the book demonstrate how food poverty can be tackled by combining community activism with state support.

The chapter from France shows how agricultural and social policy can be linked to deliver and shape a new and politically aware food system. The danger as Belasco (2007) points out is that dissatisfaction with the food system often becomes diverted into individual action and people opting out of the dominant food system, leaving an already inadequate and dysfunctional system to those who are most disadvantaged. They do not have the resources or social capitals necessary to put into action such choices. Belasco (2007) noted that many of the original US alternative food networks were, by the 1970s, torn apart by disputes over the issue of meeting consumer choice and the extent to which these undermined the original values of 'oppositional' politics. We can see such approaches outlined in the chapters on France and Brazil while the chapter on food banks in developed nations shows regression to a position of philanthropy and communities helping themselves, devoid of a political stance and no support from government.

The economic dogma espoused by Adam Smith (The Wealth of Nations), in the eighteenth century, promoted that free-trade and a self-regulating economy would result in social progress. He advocated that government needed only to preserve law and order, justice, defend the nation, and provide for a few social needs that could not be met through the market. This philosophy of free trade was used for non-intervention in the Irish famine of 1845–47 and the great Bengal famine of 1943 (Sen 1981, 1997; O'Gráda 2015) and more recently in the Ethiopian famines of the 1970/80s. Yet food is one of the goods that as well as being necessary for physical development and the maintenance of health also fulfills a social need. This can be seen in the development of public health policy related to food in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Hamlin 1998; Davis 2001) a point recently

reiterated by Sen (2015) in his criticism of modern economic austerity. Today, we see a re-emergence of that economic dogma in the global economy in the policies of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund and global regulatory bodies, such as the World Trade Organization, through the doctrine of neo-liberal economics (Hertz 2001; George 2010; Hossain et al. 2014; Colombo and Onorati 2013).

Thompson's (1993) analysis was that direct protest (in his case food riots), if not actually encouraged by those in power, were tolerated as ways of distracting attention from the real forces of change (i.e., changes in the political and economic order). Historically, Fernández-Armesto (2001, 2003) contends that food was the basis of the 'first class system.' Yet the focus of food historians has been on the gargantuan appetite and the development of surplus, which for many is seen as socially functional. The scraps from the tables of the rich were seen as feeding the poor-and grateful they should be! Yet food as an element of protest is a fact of life. This protest takes two forms which are not mutually exclusive but sit at opposite ends of a continuum of protest (Albritton 2009). The first is where there is a huge disparity in food intake between the rich and the poor, the second where food is a metaphor for other ills that are occurring in the world. The latter use of food as a metaphor and target for protest represents wider issues such as globalization. While some protestors may not understand the intricacies of global trade agreements, food stands as a useful metaphor for the ills that the agreements represent and their impact on poverty within countries.

An overlooked fact in the light of the recent and current global unrest, riots, and the fall of nation states has been the role of food and the tightening of the belt policies which led to food prices increases, food riots which then morphed into wider protest against repressive regimes. For example, in Sidi Bouzid, a small town 200 miles from Tunis Mohammed Bouazizi, 26, was a high school graduate, working as a vegetable merchant. On Dec. 17, 2010 his cart and its contents were seized by a policewoman after he failed to produce a permit. The policewoman apparently struck Bouazizi, insulted him and refused his offer to pay the fine. Bouazizi immolated himself, whether as a protest or out of despair is not clear. The country's January food shortage and the act of one man caused the pot to boil over. The town's citizens took to the streets in protest. The protests became the feedstuff of TV and social media, and before long several cities in the once quiet, stable nation were in the throes of a people's revolution. In London, the riots in 2011 started in an area of London known for its deprivation and food deserts (Caraher et al. 2013). In both instances food is not the focus of the protest but a symbol of what is wrong and representative of people's expectations to a healthy and affordable diet.

Protest around food can be channeled into actions which while useful and beneficial to those undertaking them may make little change to the overall food system (Guthman 2011). This form of distraction of the 'gaze' from structure to individual (Coveney 2006) or local action is sometimes called 'pilotitis', where, in the place of large-scale social change, another pilot project with a focus on behavior change is launched.

Many of the chapters in this volume point out that food itself can be a unifying issue; that can be both a public good, in that it can be seen as contributing to the health of a population, but also a private good in that it is subject to the law of supply and demand. It can also be regulated to create a middle ground between the public and private. The examples in the chapters on Brazil and France show how neo-liberal economic policies can be harnessed to address issue of food, public health, and the greater good. The entitlement to food occupies both the realms of citizenship where, as citizens, people and communities have a right to an adequate amount of safe wholesome food. At the same time food is a consumer good where the entitlement may be mediated by trade and financial rights (De Schutter 2011). These debates occur in the chapters on South Africa, Brazil, and India.

#### Globalization, Food and Health in the New World Order

In the present world order there are many similarities with the past. The process of globalization is not new but the scale and the direction and control of it are. Colonial powers in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries transported new foods around the globe through, for example, the so-called 'Columbian Exchange' between the new world of the Americas and the old world of Europe (Sokolov 1991). The British Empire in the nineteenth century was the epitome of a global economy (Davis 2001). What is different today is the scale and pace of globalization, and the shift of control and influence to the transnational corporations (TNCs) and some reframing of the debates around consumer as opposed to citizen rights (De Schutter 2011). The public good element of food has been challenged and replaced by a rhetoric of consumerism and what has been called '*consumptogenesis*' (Dixon et al. 2014; Banwell et al. 2012).

Sen (1981, 1997) sees the issues related to food as about the entitlements one has. Famine he argues is rarely the result of a lack of food but of a lack of entitlement. This is an important distinction as in the old global order the nation states had some commitment to their citizens and ensuring entitlement however this was manifested (e.g., food welfare schemes). The new order owes no such allegiance to its *customers*. Hence, we see the rise of solutions such as food banks (see chapter on big society and shunting yards) and the state demanding the evidence of the need before it takes action (see chapters 8 and 9 on food banks and the rise of food inequality in Australia).

Adopting Klein's (2007) principle of the shock doctrine we can see how "free market liberalism" and its policies have come to dominate the world through the exploitation of disaster-shocked people and countries. Food is a key here as it is often the means to persuade countries to open up their borders in order to be able to export but then leaves them open to invasion by foreign brands, e.g., belly flaps and turkey tails to Pacific islands, etc. The influence of corporate players and their encroachment into newly emerging economies can be seen as the new invaders, it is not the military complex that defines the new invasion but often food corporations.

This is helped by the fact is that citizens now more readily identify with corporations in their everyday lives. They believe corporations and brands to be important, therefore, *ipso facto*, they are important.

All this raises issues for those involved in developing responses to the globalization of food. Alliances are often based on flimsy relationships and the competing ideologies of members. For some the issues are antiglobalization and the dismantling of the system, for others it is the reform of the system to make it fairer. The inaudibility of a coherent approach can be seen in Klein's (2002) book of essays which include a range of approaches and philosophies. Nonetheless, the way forward is to develop alliances, which can tackle the underlying issues of the global food system and bring about permanent change. For 30 years the belief has been that free-trade and a self-regulating economy would result in social progress. There was a simple equation, free-trade, and economic liberalization = social liberalization. This mantra is in danger of being repeated as any protest against the global food system seems like an attack on social liberalization. Social liberalization has many benefits including the provision of education and the emancipation of women. Hertz (2001) points out that an anti-global stance does not necessarily have to be an anti-capitalist stance and is certainly not anti-internationalist. In addition social liberalization does not equate directly with economic liberalization and there is a need for food protestors to recapture the high ground. Global capitalism and the global food supply chain run the danger of killing democracy. The current focus of protestors on brands such as McDonalds or Coca-Cola also has imbued within them an anti-American perspective. This is a gross simplification of a complicated picture where large transnational companies unknown in the public eye continue to trade freely and unhindered.

Campaigns to change the global food system need to harness the desire for direct action of certain groups but this need to be constructive and hit companies where it matters, i.e., their profits. This links with what Barber (1995) called the tensions between McWorld (globalization) and local ground-up solutions (Jihad).

We have used the term food poverty deliberately as we feel it captures the reality of food scarcity for many people. While there is not one global definition of the term 'food poverty' the evidence from the chapters in this book suggest food poverty can be seen from three perspectives: (1) the causes and constraints facing both individuals, households, communities, and policy makers, (2) constrained choices or the 'lived experience,' and (3) the health impacts or outcomes. As a working definition of food poverty, this approach suggests that: where constraints are such that it is not possible for individuals or households to consume a nutritionally adequate diet, they could be considered to be in food poverty. We also hold to the term as it has long been used in food poverty work in the UK among pioneers such as Booth in London (1889) by Rowntree (2000) in York and in London by Maud Pember Reeves (2008) in her classic work '*Round About a Pound Week*' and right up to the present by Dowler (2003). Food poverty as a descriptor is often said to be emotive. But as the chapters in this book show we *should* be emotive (angry) over the state of hunger and food poverty in our communities and societies.

A final word on style, we have exercised a light hand in terms of editing, interjecting occasionally to ensure consistency between chapters but on the whole have let the authors' voices remain untouched. We feel this is proper and appropriate and while it may occasionally give rise to some inconsistency of expression across chapters, we decided to let this stand and to trust the reader to interpret within their own frameworks.

In terms of structure, the book is laid out as follows. The first chapter by *Stringer* provides a global overview of the food system and availability, this is followed by chapter on SE Asia by *Tahil* and the challenges faced by the region as it develops and the challenges posed by neo-liberal economics for food security. These are followed by a chapter on the right to food in India (Lindgren) which details how government has been held responsible for ensuring food security. We then move to a chapter on South Africa (Muzigaba and colleagues) and the nutrition challenges when faced with a complex series of epidemiological and healthcare challenges all located within a nutrition transition. We move then to more specific examples with a case study from new New York City (Libman) to address insecurity and health disparities, which shows what a city state can do with proper public health leadership to address public health nutrition. This is followed by some examples of work from France (Carimentrand and colleagues) which demonstrates what is possible and how agricultural and social policy can be linked and harnessed to address food poverty. This is followed by an input on food banks in developed economies (Ronson and Caraher) which questions the rise and apparent success of such endeavours, it also shows how such initiatives can depoliticize food politics. The situation in Australia is set out by **Pollard and colleagues** in what has been called the 'lucky country' but clearly from their data not for all. The need for data to inform policy is a large part of their contribution. The final contribution is a chapter on Brazil, by *Rocha*, which shows what can be done and how in an emerging BRIC economy the power of neo-liberal economy policies has been harnessed to address food inequality and poverty. We, as editors provide a final commentary which takes the form of a conversation and reflection on the contributions.

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## Chapter 2 **Food Security Global Overview**

**Randy Stringer** 

#### Introduction

This chapter addresses the following issues:

- 1. The relationship between household and individual
- 2. The maldistribution of gains in food security in some regions
- 3. The importance of attending to all facets of food security, not just increasing food availability

Food security is an age-old, seemingly intractable problem that endures today. The United Nations Agency responsible for measuring and monitoring global hunger and food insecurity, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), estimates over 800 million people are chronically undernourished in 2012–14 (FAO 2014). People are food insecure because they are unable to obtain sufficient quantities of food and the appropriate balance of nutrients. Over time, a continuously inadequate diet reduces physical capacity, lowers productivity, stunts growth and inhibits learning. Chronic malnutrition kills, blinds and debilitates (Stringer 2001).

Food security implies an individual has access at all times to enough food for an active and healthy life. The 1996 World Food Summit defines food security as 'a situation that exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life'. An important element of this is the cultural appropriateness of that food supply.

FAO currently uses four measurable and interrelated components to estimate the numbers of food insecure people at the country level. These four components are: (i) availability; (ii) access; (iii) utilization; and (iv) stability. Box A explains these

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four components in detail. Barrett and Christopher (2010) helpfully describe the four food security components as inherently hierarchical. In other words, the first component, food availability, means there must be enough physical quantities or supplies of food available to provide everyone with an adequate number of calories. So for individuals to be considered food secure, there must be adequate food supplies available and they must have access to these supplies.

Likewise, having ongoing access to enough calories does not mean individuals have a nutritionally sound diet—the third food security component, utilization, addresses food security issues related to diet quality, food safety and adequate intake of macronutrients and essential vitamins and minerals. The fourth component is stability, which introduces a temporal dimension accounting for risks to availability, access and utilization from economic shocks, natural disasters, or political instability.

Over the past five decades, the food availability component has tended to dominate food security concerns of the international development community. The World Bank, various United Nations agencies and national governments focused much of their policy, program and investment attention on the race between population growth and producing enough food. In particular, during the 1960s and 1970s, when studies often defined food as cereals, low levels of cereal stocks and high cereal prices raised fears about the long-term prospects of the world food system (Reutlinger 1977; Valdés and Siamwalla 1981; Konanderas et al. 1978). The new high-yielding crops that became know as the 'Green Revolution' resulted from the coordinated investments in research aimed at producing more food during this period.

The 1974 World Food Conference addressed this growing perception that the world was moving irrevocably food shortages, suggesting programs and polices to enhance and protect food supplies. The solutions that emerged focused on improving production, establishing national level self-sufficiency targets, coordinating world food stocks and implementing import stabilization policies (Stringer 2001). Even today, some countries still equate food security with food self-sufficiency, undeterred by widespread evidence demonstrating that hunger coexists with abundant food supplies at regional, national and international levels.

Sen (1981) initiated the debate broadening food security analysis from this narrower focus on national and global food supplies to include an access dimension. Empirical evidence demonstrated that while availability of food supplies is important, access to food by individuals is the greater constraint (Sen 1981; Ravallion 1987; Drèze and Sen 1989). Among other factors, access to food depends on an individual's access to resources, technology, markets, social networks and food transfer programs and how the right to food is conceived. If food is a consumer right then monetary resources can ensure access if it is defined as citizenship right then access can be conceived in other ways (see chapters on India and South Africa in this volume).

Sen pointed out that during the Ethiopian famine of 1972–1974, food output, supplies and consumption at the national level were normal, yet 50–200 thousand people starved to death. Most died because they could not afford to buy food. These

findings drew attention to the need for policy-oriented growth strategies to complement existing food projection projects aimed at meeting national level food self-sufficiency targets. For example, the new policy-oriented approach began focusing on how the poor can share the benefits of economics growth, pro-poor growth strategies and food distribution programs targeted at vulnerable communities.

During the 1980s, researchers further enriched the food security debate by focusing attention on distinctions between households and individuals as the appropriate unit to measure food insecurity. Initially, food security was measured at the household level, not the individual. The measurement changed as empirical research-linked individuals to their control over household income and household resources (Sen and Sengupta 1983; Reutlinger 1985; Sahn 1989; Evans 1991; Maxwell 1994).

For example, research found that non-wage household income in urban Brazil has a much more positive effect on child health if it is controlled by mothers (Thomas 1991). Research in Kenya and Malawi found that (a) child nutritional status is influenced by the interaction of income and gender of household head rather than just one or the other and (b) household food security is influenced by total household income and the proportion of income controlled by women has a positive and significant influence on household caloric intake (Kennedy and Peters 1992). This body of research demonstrated that some household members could be considered food secured while other members of the same household were not. Both the measurement of food security and the policy and program attention shifted focus away from households and towards individuals to better address food security outcomes.

The importance of nutritional security also emerged during the late 1980s and 1990s. A food security concept relying too much on target consumption levels (e.g. 80 % of the World Health Organization's average required daily calorie intake) were inadequate for several reasons (Maxwell 1994). First, individual nutritional requirements vary depending on age, job, size and health (Payne and Lipton 1994). Second, behavioural characteristics influence nutritional status including breast feeding, sanitation habits and the use of local foods (World Bank 1995). Third, research demonstrated that micronutrient deficiencies infection diseases, intestinal parasites and environmental factors contributed to malnutrition as much as calorie deficiencies (Strauss and Thomas 1998; Del Rosso 1992; Tomkins and Watson 1989). Fourth, nutritional status has important effects on the quality of household labour resources (Kennedy and Bouis 1993).

#### The Status of Global Food Security

FAO data demonstrate that enough food is produced worldwide to at least provide adequate calories for the 805 million chronically undernourished individuals. The current global population of more than 7 billion has significantly more food

available per capita than had the world's three billion people some four decades ago. After 60 years of substantial economic growth, steady progress in agricultural productivity, remarkable increases in per capita food availability and numerous international and national efforts to address hunger, food security remains elusive. The problem remains one of the access and how that access is defined or interpreted in practice (Drèze and Sen 1989).

In the developing countries as a group, progress in per capita food supplies has been nothing short of remarkable, increasing from 2055 cal. in the early 1960s to more than 2600 cal. by 2005/07 (Tables 2.1 and 2.2). This 27 % gain per person is particularly impressive given that it took place during a period in which developing country population more than doubled. Between 1961/1963 and 2005/2007, per capita food supplies increased by more than 70 % in China and Indonesia; by more

	Kcal/perso	n/day			
	1969/71	1979/81	1989/91	1990/92	2005/07
Developing countries	2055	2236	2429	2433	2619
East Asia	1097	2216	2487	2497	2850
South Asia	2072	2024	2254	2250	2293
Africa, Sub-Saharan	2031	2021	2051	2068	2238
Near East/North Africa	2355	2840	3003	2983	3007
Latin America/Caribbean	2442	2674	2664	2672	2898
Developed countries	3138	3223	3288	3257	3360
World	2373	2497	2634	2627	2860

Table 2.1 Per capita food supplies available for direct human consumption

Source FAO (2012)

 Table 2.2
 Undernourishment around the world, 1990–1992 to 2012–2014 number of undernourished and prevalence (%) of undernourishment

	1990–1992		2012-2014	1
	No.	%	No.	%
World	1014.5	18.7	805.3	11.3
Developed regions	20.4	<5	14.6	<5
Developing regions	994.1	23.4	790.7	14.5
Africa	182.1	27.7	226.7	20.5
Sub-Saharan Africa	176.0	33.3	214.1	23.8
Asia	742.6	23.7	525.6	12.7
Eastern Asia	295.2	23.2	161.2	10.8
South-Eastern Asia	138.0	30.7	63.5	10.3
Southern Asia	291.7	24.0	276.4	15.8
Latin America and Carib.	68.5	15.3	37.0	6.1
Oceana	1.0	15.7	1.4	14.0

Source FAO (2014)

than 50 % in Pakistan and the Republic of Korea; and by more than 30 % in Brazil, Burkina Fasso, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Jamaica, Mauritania and the Philippines.

Food supply gains resulted from a combination of stable domestic food production and strengthened import capacity. A considerable part of this gain is due to the rapid growth of food imports from the developed countries. Net cereal imports by the developing countries more than tripled during the 1970s, contributing to one-fifth of the increase in their food supplies (Bruinsma 2003).

Regions and countries did not share equally in these gains. East Asia made significant gains. Sub-Sahara Africa is the only region to stagnate, with essentially no increase in per capita food supplies since the early 1970s. The regions is generally characterised by high rates of population growth and urbanization with declining or stagnating incomes and food production. Per capita food supplies in the Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) region progressed steadily until the 1980s. LAC is the most urbanized and the most resource rich of the developing country regions.

With 60 % of the world's population, Asia's overall performance was sufficiently strong to pull up the global average. South Asia recorded little progress until the 1980s, however. Asia's food supply gains have resulted primarily from increased domestic food production.

Attempts to understand how some countries have succeeded in reducing food supplies while others have failed is important given the wide range of experiences. To date, world food production has increased continuously because cropped area has expanded and productivity per unit area has increased. For many countries, technological change accounted for much of the food productivity growth over the last three decades, including genetic improvements to major crops and livestock and the adoption of improved farming techniques.

Despite the overall success in food production, access to food and the lack of essential nutrients remain serious problems. Of the 805 million undernourished, 171 million are children under 5 years old. Malnutrition is the underlying contributing factor in about 45 % of the 6.3 million child deaths in 2013 (WHO 2014). At the global level, prospects for future productivity growth are uncertain and intensely debated. Runge and Runge (2010) provide a measured assessment concluding that past success in food production has created a false sense of confidence. Their study highlights worrying signs, including the decline in research and investment. For example, global official aid to developing countries for agricultural research fell by 64 % between 1980 and 2003 (Runge and Runge 2010). A significant issue considering that agricultural productivity improvements experience very long lags, peaking after about 25 years and lasting for another 25 years (Pardey and Alston 2010).

The evidence does demonstrate, however, that food availability is the only major food security success story. Several opportunities suggest continuing success in providing enough calories to feed the world. First, the research infrastructure at both global and national levels is in place—both human and physical capital. The ongoing technological agricultural research advancements at the cellar and molecular levels, together with increasingly strengthening global research networks, suggest positive prospects for further productivity gains. Second, yield gaps, or the difference between what is technologically possible given agronomic and growing conditions and actual yields is significantly high in large areas of Africa and Asia. The reasons for low yields are many across these agricultural landscapes, but the technology exists today. Overcoming adoptions barriers is the challenge.

Third, the evidence of food waste in both low and high income countries presents untapped opportunities. For example, a recent study identified that rodents consume about 6 % of the annual rice harvest, enough to feed Indonesia's 240 million people for 1 year (Normile 2010). To date, very little research focus on how to address food waste issues along the supply chain. Turning policy attention and research funding to address solutions to food waste is likely to provide substantial additional gains in food availability in the coming decades.

#### Conclusion

No matter if one is pessimistic or optimistic about future prospects for food production, food availability is the only success story among the food security indicators. Today, the world produces enough food to feed every individual. After more than 50 years of coordinated international efforts, however, access to food remains a serious problem. And consuming nutritionally appropriate diet is an increasing problem with 1.4 billion overweight people and 500 million obese.

#### Box A: Defining and Measuring Food Security

Food security is a complex phenomenon that manifests itself in numerous physical conditions resulting from multiple causes. The World Food Summit of 1996 established four dimensions of food security: availability, access, stability and utilization. The State of Food Insecurity in the World 2013 introduced a suite of indicators organized around these four dimensions with a view to overcoming the drawbacks that arise from relying solely on the prevalence of undernourishment indicator. By measuring food security across its four dimensions, the suite of indicators provides a more comprehensive picture, and can also help in targeting and prioritizing food security and nutrition policies.

The availability dimension captures not only the quantity, but also the quality and diversity of food. Indicators for assessing availability include the adequacy of dietary energy supply; the share of calories derived from cereals, roots and tubers; the average protein supply; the average supply of animal-source proteins; and the average value of food production.

The access dimension comprises indicators of physical access and infrastructure such as railway and road density; economic access, represented by the domestic food price index; and the prevalence of undernourishment. The stability dimension is divided into two groups. The first group covers factors that measure exposure to food security risk with a diverse set of indicators such as the cereal dependency ratio, the area under irrigation and the value of staple food imports as a percentage of total merchandise exports. The second group focuses on the incidence of shocks such as domestic food price volatility, fluctuations in domestic food supply and political instability.

The utilization dimension also falls into two groups. The first encompasses variables that determine the ability to utilize food, notably indicators of access to water and sanitation. The second group focuses on outcomes of poor food utilization, i.e. nutritional failures of children under 5 years of age, such as wasting, stunting and underweight. Since 2013, four more micronutrient deficiency indicators have been added: the prevalence of anaemia and of vitamin A deficiency among children under five; and the prevalence of iodine deficiency and of anaemia in pregnant women. Data for the suite of indicators are published in FAOSTAT and on the FAO Food Security Indicators website.

Source State of Food Insecurity (2014), FAO, Rome.

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# **Chapter 3 Food Issues Facing New and Emerging Economies of Southeast Asia**

Teuku Tahlil

#### **Introducing Southeast Asia**

Southeast Asia (SE Asia) comprises 11 countries (Moran 2014), about 24,000 islands and covers an area of approximately 4.5 million km<sup>2</sup> (Mukherjee and Sovacool 2014) or 3 % of the world's land (Kasapila and Shaarani 2011). This subregion of Asia is geographically bordering with China in the south, India in the east, and Australia in the north (Kasapila and Shaarani 2011). It is divided into mainland and island areas (Andaya 2014; Bacus 2001) and estimated that 43 % of the land is covered by forests (Mukherjee and Sovacool 2014). The mainland is an extension of the Asian continent and comprising several countries including Burma (Myanmar), Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, and Peninsular Malaysia (Koh et al. 2013). The Island or maritime states includes Brunei Darussalam, East Malaysia (Sabah and Sarawak), Indonesia, Philippine, Singapore and East Timor (Timor Leste) (Koh et al. 2013).

SE Asia countries differ in many respects, including in their population density, ethnicity, religion, politics, and economic development (Evers 2001). Indonesia is the largest country in the region, while Singapore is the smallest, with a total area about 0.01 % of Indonesia (Tanjung 2014). In terms of population, the highest numbers was observed in Indonesia, amounting over 238 million, while the lowest was in Brunei Darussalam, with only 0.4 million (Ministry of Health RI (MOH RI) 2012). The highest population density was reported in Singapore with 7565 people per km<sup>2</sup> and the lowest was in Laos with only 26 people per km<sup>2</sup> (MOH RI 2012). Overall, SE Asia is home for about 580 million or 8.7 % of the world's population (Kasapila and Shaarani 2011) with most of the population are living in rural areas (Dahiya 2012).

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Economically, SE Asia comprises both the world's richest and poorest countries. Four SE Asian countries (Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam) are classified as low incomes countries, three (Indonesia, the Philippines, and Thailand) as lower middle incomes, one (Malaysia) as an upper middle income, and two (Brunei and Singapore) with high incomes (Dans et al. 2011). Overall, most of SE Asian countries are classified as developing countries with the exception of Singapore, which is considered as the only developed country in the region. In terms of religion, Islam is reported as religion for the vast majority of people in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Brunei Darussalam, whereas Christianity became the majority in the Philippines and Timor Leste, and; Buddhism became the majority for people in Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, and Laos (Evers 2001).

SE Asia comprises both some of the world's largest importers and exporters of rice (Freedman 2013). Vietnam, Thailand, and Cambodia are regarded as world's largest rice exporters, whereas other countries, such as Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore were not able to produce sufficient amount of rice to meet their domestic demand (Freedman 2013). While rice is the most widely consumed food by people in the region, the lack of rice production and supply along with other nutrient deficiencies could produce significant effects on people in the region.

This section has briefly described demographic and socioeconomic differences between SE Asian countries. By identifying these differences, it is possible to predict about food and nutrient status among people across the SE Asian countries. While food and diets have the cultural, social, economic, and ethnic meaning, food security status might be also different across countries in the region. The next section will discuss further about the food and nutrient problems across the region.

#### **Identifying Food Problems Across SE Asia**

Food is an important global public health issue due to both its supply and safety issues (Mountjoy 2013). Although the proportion of people with protein-energy malnutrition and micronutrient deficiencies in developing countries have decreased recently, the proportion has not been reduced as quickly as expected and failed to meet global objectives (Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) 2002). While people in less developed countries are struggling how to get adequate food supply, nutrient density, and to reduce foodborne-related diseases, people in more advanced countries are challenged by the high proportion of obesity, poor diet, and lack of physical activity (Mountjoy 2013).

Globally, over 800 million (12.5 %) of the world's population are undernourished with 852 million of these are living in developing countries (FAO 2012). Among children, 178 million of the world's children under five are classified as stunted and 55 million are wasting (FAO 2012). Worldwide, 50 % of deaths are linked with malnutrition every year (World Health Organization (WHO) 2003) with about 300,000 deaths occurring among the resource-poor people in developing countries (Muller and Krawinkel 2005). It was estimated that approximately 19 million children below 5 years of age were in severe acute malnutrition (SAM) worldwide in 2011, with most of them were found in Africa and Southeast Asia (The Lancet 2013).

Regionally, many people in different population groups in Southeast Asia are considered at risk for malnutrition and other nutrition problems (Schaafsma et al. 2013). Findings of the Global Food Security Index 2014 (Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) 2014) show that food security index for SE Asian countries were ranked between 5th (Singapore) and 96th (Cambodia) of 109 countries from six regions included in the survey. The EIU also suggests that food security index had improved in Singapore (+2.7), Malaysia (+2.0), Thailand (+0.5), and Philippines (+0.3); reduced in Myanmar (-4.1) and Vietnam (-0.2); but remained stable in Indonesia and Cambodia. The EIU index ranks the surveyed countries according to their ability in three factors: accessibility, affordability, and quality and safety (EIU 2014).

The levels of malnutrition among children in SE Asia are a cause for serious concern. A report (MOH RI 2012) suggests that many children were suffering from acute or chronic nutrition problems, such as underweight, wasting, stunting in SE Asia. The proportion of these problems varied between countries across the subregion. The highest underweight proportion among under five years of age was found in Timor Leste (45), trailed by Laos (31), and Cambodia (28) (MOH RI 2012). Wasting incidence rates among under five years of age was highest in Timor Leste (19), followed by Indonesia (14), then Cambodia (11), Vietnam (10), Philippine, and Laos (7, each) (MOH RI 2012). Also, Timor Leste, Laos, and Cambodia had the highest under five stunting prevalence, a chronic nutrition problem, with Timor Leste accounting for 58 cases, trailed by Laos with 48 and Cambodia with 40 (MOH RI 2012).

Micronutrient insufficiency also appears to have disproportionally deteriorated many people in the region. Akhtar et al. (2013) suggest that most children with vitamin A deficiency are living in Southeast Asia. The proportion of vitamin A deficiency and anemia among preschool children in Southeast Asia were estimated to be around 45.5 and 65.5 %, respectively (Poh et al. 2013). In terms of vitamin D deficiency, the highest was found in Indonesia and Malaysia (41–87 %) and the lowest was in Thailand and Vietnam (5.7–7 %) (Yang et al. 2013). Also, Southeast Asia has the largest proportion of anemia in the world with an estimation of 315 million people (Wallace et al. 2014). Micronutrient malnutrition could increase morbidity and mortality rates, such as increasing poor pregnancy outcomes among pregnant women, impaired physical and mental development in children, and reducing work productivity in adults (Black et al. 2008). Vitamin A deficiencies increase individual risk for various physiological problems including blindness (xerophthalmia) among children (Akhtar et al. 2013).

Further, many studies have also identified obesity and overweight as major health problems for the people in SE Asian countries. In Malaysia, the prevalence of overweight and obesity, along with hyperlipidemia, hypertension, and diabetes among Malaysian adults has increased substantially over the last 10 years (Shariff et al. 2014). In Thailand, the prevalence of overweight and obesity were 8.5 % for children aged 1–5, 8.7, and 11.9 % for 12–14 years (Phaitrakoon et al. 2014). The

prevalence of severe obesity among school-aged children (between 6 and 12 years old) in Malaysia (4.6 %) and Thailand (3.4 %) was higher than in Vietnam (1.1 %) and Indonesia (0.5 %) (Sandjaja et al. 2013).

In summary, this section has shown that some people in SE Asian countries were suffering with a range of both under- and over-nutrition problems (dual burden of malnutrition). This suggests that low social economic status is an important social determinant for food or micronutrients problem. Understandably, socio economic status is closely related to ethnicity, education, occupation, diet, lifestyle choices, and other factors including healthcare access.

The next sections will examine any existing policies and practices to combat the dual burden of malnutrition and increase food security at regional, national and community levels across the region.

#### **Tracing Regional Approaches for Food Insecurity** Alleviation

SE Asian countries are united under an organization, namely the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). This association was established in 1967 in Bangkok by Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand (ASEAN Secretariat 2014b). ASEAN is a geopolitical and economic organization (MOH RI 2012), aiming at accelerating the economic growth, social progress, and cultural development in the region; promoting regional peace and stability; promoting active collaboration and mutual assistance; providing assistance to each other; collaborating more effectively; promoting Southeast Asian studies; and maintaining close and beneficial cooperation with other international and regional organizations (ASEAN Secretariat 2014b). The full member states of ASEAN include Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam (ASEAN Secretariat 2014b). It has also been reported that Timor Leste has applied for ASEAN's membership (Lunn and Thompson 2011).

Concerns over possible negative effects of food insecurity on socioeconomic aspects of people in the region, ASEAN has included food security as one of regional importance and permanent priority. ASEAN has made significant progress in preventing and alleviating food insecurity across the region. ASEAN countries have endorsed the ASEAN Integrated Food Security (AIFS) along with strategic plan of action on food security in the ASEAN region (SPA-FS). This strategic plan aimed at ensuring long-term regional of food security and improving the livelihood of farmers in the region (ASEAN Secretariat 2014a).

The AIFS framework has several objectives as follows: increasing food production; reducing postharvest losses; promoting conducive markets and trade for agriculture commodities and inputs; ensuring food stability; promoting the availability and accessibility to agriculture inputs; and operationalizing regional food emergency relief arrangements (Association of Southeast Asian Nations 2011). To achieve these objectives, ASEAN has outlined four components and established six corresponding strategic trusts to the four components of the AIFS framework. These include: (1) Food security and emergency/shortage relief trough strengthening regional food security arrangements; (2) Sustainable food trade development through promoting conducive market and trade for food; (3) Integrated food security information system by improving regional food security information system for effective forecast, plan and monitoring supplies and the use of basic food commodities; (4) Agricultural innovation through promoting sustainable food production, encouraging food-and agro-based industry investment, and identifying and addressing emerging issues concerning food security problems (ASEAN 2011).

Overall, various projects with a range of activities have been implemented. These include information exchange, crop production, postharvest and handling, training and extension, research and development, the enhancement of food safety, quality and standard, and trade certification and promotion in food, agriculture, and forestry (Freedman 2013). The report (Freedman 2013) also suggests that ASEAN has made several meeting and worked collaboratively with non-Southeast Asian countries and other existing regional and international agencies, such as with China, Japan, and Korea (ASEAN Plus Three), and APT and Australia, New Zealand, India, USA and Russia (the East Asia Summit). The ASEAN plus three cooperation strategy focuses on six strategic areas as follows: strengthening food security, biomass energy development, sustainable forest management, mitigation and adaptation of climate change, animal health and disease control, and cross-cutting issues (Freedman 2013). The ASEAN Plus Three Emergency Rice Reserve (APTERR) focuses on food security in emergency situation by providing rice and nutrition assistance program to disaster victims in the region during times of crisis (ASEAN Emergency Rice Reserve 2015), such as distributing rice to Philippines following the super typhoon Haiyan (ASEAN Emergency Rice Reserve 2014).

#### **Exploring National Strategies to Improve Food Security**

SE Asian countries have implemented several strategies at various levels to improve their individual country's food security at short and long terms, including through strengthening national food policies, subsidies, partnership, diversification, and research and development. For instance, to increase their domestic food supply, some SE countries such as Indonesia and Malaysia have strengthened their domestic agricultural and trade policies, helped local farmers by providing subsidies for agricultural-related needs and activities including for power, fertilizers, pesticides, paddy cultivation, seeds, irrigation, and other infrastructures; and imported rice from their neighbors' countries to keep the rice at low price (Freedman 2013). Both Indonesia and Malaysia along with other SE Asian countries, except Timor Leste, have joined the World Trade Organization (WTO) and few (i.e., Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, and Timor Leste) had not previously signed the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) (WTO 2015). The WTO (2015) has established rule of the games for its members to follow in a wide range

of international commerce activities, including in agricultural trade restriction, export, and food price and other domestic subsidies. In terms of agricultural trade, the WTO allows developed and developing countries to cut all agricultural product tariffs by 36 and 24 %, respectively (WTO 2015).

Additionally, a previous report suggests that other countries (i.e., Philippines) have also bolstered their rice production by initiating the production of rice with greater vitamin content (Freedman 2013) which is potentially vital in the prevention of micronutrient deficiency (De Steur et al. 2014). Research and development have also been regarded as an important strategy for boosting rice production. Singapore, for instance, included research and extension capacity for agriculture, aquaculture, and adaptation to climate change as part of their domestic strategy on food security in addition to urban farming strategies and the investigation of new farming technology (Freedman 2013). It has been reported that agricultural research and development could increase agricultural production and reduce poverty rates (Fan et al. 2008).

It has been described earlier that there is a large regional inequality between countries in SE Asia in terms of their economy and ability in ensuring food security among their people. Given these discrepancies, enhancing bilateral cooperation between countries have also been implemented and used as one of strategies for food security improvement. This cooperation is not only between food importer and exporter countries but also among exporter countries. For example, the cooperation between Vietnam and Thailand in controlling food (rice) price and supply; and between Cambodia and Myanmar in rice production and export (Freedman 2013).

Taken together, regional approaches for food security have provided broad picture of efforts in improving food security in SE Asia. Individual countries differ in their handling of the food security issues. The next section will briefly describe some important strategies or interventions in insuring food and nutrients strategies in SE Asia.

#### **Describing Specific-Food or -Nutrient Interventions** and Strategies for Improving Food Security

Several strategies have been identified to be useful to increase food security across SE Asia region. These include school meal program, breastfeeding, micronutrient fortification, supplementation, and dietary diversification. The following are short description of the programs or strategies.

#### School Meal Programs

School meal program plays a significant role in the improvement of food and nutrient status among school age population. This program has been developed at various levels, for different purposes and with different scenarios in SE Asian countries. In Vietnam, school meal programs targeted kindergarten and elementary schools students with the aims to provide appropriate meals and education and information (communication tool) for students (Le 2012). Program implementation was organized by Department of Education, comprised about 30 % of the recommended dietary allowances (RDA) with 90 % of meals were prepared in school's kitchen and 10 % by food companies (Le 2012). In Thailand, Pinkaew et al. (2013) tested their lunch meal program among primary school students (kindergarten to grade 6) with triple-fortified rice grains comprising Zn, Fe, and VA at lunch time. Findings of this randomized trial suggest that school meal program could improve serum Zn of school students (Pinkaew et al. 2013).

#### Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is a vital for achieving good infant nutrition (Gupta and Dadhich 2008) and tackling the burden of food and nutrients insufficiencies. Breastfeeding reduces infection rates, allergy, and atopic conditions in infancy, improves intelligence and cognitive development, and decreases individual risk for obesity, diabetes, cholesterol, and cardiovascular diseases later in adult life (Robinson and Fall 2012). A previous report also suggests that breastfeeding provides some benefits in reducing maternal obesity rates, by increasing weight loss among postpartum women who have gained excess weight during pregnancy (Dewey 2004).

The proportion of breastfeeding has slightly improved recently across SE Asian countries. For example, In Indonesia, exclusive breastfeeding for 6 months tends to increase over the years, from about 56.2 % in 2008 jumped to 61.5 % in 2010 (MOH RI 2012). Also, Indonesia has made significant efforts in improving exclusive breastfeeding practice through regulation, advocacy, training and counselling, establishing strategy for achieving successful breastfeeding, socialization and campaign, education, strengthening healthcare capacity and its personals ability, and mother, family, and community empowerment (MOH RI 2012). Another, in Timor Leste, the proportion of exclusive breastfeed infants have also increased by 18.23 %, from about 30.8 % in 2003 to approximately 49.0 % during the period of 2009–2010 Demographic and Health Survey (Khanal et al. 2014). Overall, a previous report suggests that the proportion of exclusive breastfeeding in SE Asia region (43 %) was higher when compared to Eastern Mediterranean (34 %), The American (31 %), Africa (30 %), and Europe (18 %) (World Cancer Research Fund International (WCRFI) n.d).

#### **Micronutrient Fortification**

The International Life Sciences Institute (ILSI) Southeast Asia Region considered micronutrient fortification as an appropriate public health strategy for nutrition

security improvement in Southeast Asia (Gayer and Smith 2015). Several empirical evidences have demonstrated some positive benefits of food fortification in the reduction of micronutrients across the region. Laillou et al. (2012) reported the impact of the fortified vegetable oils with vitamin A and rice with iron, zinc, and folic acid which show positive impact of the fortified vegetable oil on the Vitamin A intake by 27.1 % of the recommended nutrient impact (RNI); the fortified rice on iron, the increase intake of iron, zink, and folate by 41.4, 15.5, and 34.1 %, respectively. Theary et al. (2013) reported initial impact of fish sauce, soy sauce, and vegetable oil fortification program among Cambodians' knowledge, attitudes, and practices and found that the program improved study participants' perception toward the fortified food. Based on their findings, the researchers (Theary et al. 2013) recommended for communication campaign and the establishment of adequate regulatory food fortification monitoring system in Cambodia.

#### Supplementation and Diversification

Supplementation and dietary diversity have also shown to be effective in increasing nutrient status among SE Asian people. For example, findings of previous study (Purwestri et al. 2012) suggest that providing locally ready-to-eat foods comprising fortified cereal/nut/legume-based biscuits with  $\pm$ 500 kcal and 8–10 % protein per 100 g produced promising impact in the reduction of mild case of wasting children in Indonesia. Another, Shahar et al. (2013) assessed the effectiveness of exercise intervention and protein supplementation either alone or in combination for 12 weeks, on body composition, functional fitness, and oxidative stress among 65 elderly Malays with sarcopenia aged between 60 and 74 years (men = 47, women = 18), using a quasi-experimental study design. Findings of this community-based intervention study suggests that the protein supplementation increased upper body strength and reduced body weight among sarcopenic elderly in Malaysia. Report also suggests that supplementation could be used effectively to improve iron and zinc status among infants (Wasantwisut et al. 2006) and reduce the prevalence of anaemia and iron deficiency among women (Casey et al. 2009).

While each food produces different nutrients, the availability of dietary diversity is required to meet nutrient needs (de Pee and Bloem 2009). Dietary diversity is essential for food security (Dixon et al. 2007) and in particularly important for non-breastfed children (Arimond and Ruel 2004). Arimond and Ruel (2004) found a substantial association between dietary diversity and height-for-age Z-scores (HAZ) amongst non-breastfed children in Cambodia. It has also been acknowl-edged that consuming food with higher dietary diversity positively correlated with children's body weight and height in Malaysia (Ey Chua et al. 2012).

#### Conclusions

This chapter shows that SE Asia countries are being affected by various food and nutrient problems, which include both nutrition deficiencies, especially among children, and the rise in the proportion of overweight, obesity along with its related diseases. The double burden of malnutrition unequally affects many people in SE Asia and is acknowledged as an important regional issue for people in the region. While countries in the region differ in many respects, the extent of the public health threat posed by the nutrition problems is varied between countries. This could suggest that any intervention approaches at regional level should consider individual country socioeconomic background abilities. Also, governments and healthcare providers across the region should provide more attention on this issue. While the current approaches or strategies seem to be effective, matching the intervention with the individual country's background would provide additional benefit in increasing the program effectiveness.

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## Chapter 4 The Paradox of Undernutrition and Obesity in South Africa: A Contextual Overview of Food Quality, Access and Availability in the New Democracy

Moïse Muzigaba, Thandi Puoane and David Sanders

### South Africa's Historical, Socio-economic and Political Context

In 2014, South Africa was home to approximately 54 million people (Statistics South Africa 2011). The country has a rich heritage and ethnic diversity, with 11 official languages and several other indigenous languages and dialects (Steyn et al. 2006). With a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of US\$350.6 billion in 2013, and GDP growth of 1.9 % in 2013, South Africa remains the leading economy on the African continent (The World bank 2015). Within the Southern African Development Community (SADC) which consists of 15 countries, South Africa has over the years actively supported domestic and regional trade liberalisation to attract investments into the country and promote exportation of goods into other SADC countries (World Trade Organisation 2009). The country is not landlocked, has a high per capita income and is a net exporter of agricultural produce within and beyond the SADC region (Koch 2011). However, there are still some developmental challenges, many of which are a result of its apartheid legacy. South Africa had its first democratic elections in April 1994 and is currently undergoing a social transition from its repressive past to a democracy which boasts a constitution that embraces human rights and political freedom (Blaauw and Gilson 2001).

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Nevertheless, South Africa's income distribution is rated among the most unequal in the world (Terreblanche 2004). The past few years have also seen the country experiencing major challenges of poverty, unemployment, urbanisation, and more recently, increases in food and fuel prices, energy tariffs and interest rates (Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries 2014). These challenges have continued to undermine the policies put in place to ensure adequate food and nutrition security in South Africa. The Bill of Rights enshrined within the South African constitution guarantees every South African citizen "the right to have access to sufficient food, the right to basic nutrition and that the State must take reasonable legislative measures, within its available resources, to achieve progressive realisation of these rights" (South African Human Rights Commission 2004).

The South African National Policy on Food and Nutrition Security refers to food security as "Access to and control over the physical, social and economic means to ensure sufficient, safe and nutritious food at all times, for all South Africans, in order to meet the dietary requirements for a healthy life" (Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries 2014). As will be shown later in this chapter, food security for all is still not yet guaranteed. The South African National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (SANHANES) report provides the most recent and comprehensive profile of under- and overnutrition in South Africa as well as its associated risk factors (Human Sciences Research Council 2013). This survey was conducted using a national representative sample of individuals across different age groups. Data from this survey as well as the data from surveys conducted in the past such as the 1999 and 2005 National Food Consumption Survey (NFCS) (Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition 2005; Labadarios et al. 2005) and other research articles, are used in this chapter to illustrate changes that have occurred in malnutrition prevalence over the past few decades as well as the associated key risk factors and determinants.

# The State of Malnutrition in South Africa—Prevalence and Trends

### Undernutrition

South Africa still faces challenges of food insecurity among certain population groups. Data from the NFCS surveys and the SANHANES study show that the prevalence of food insecurity has decreased from 52.3 % in 1999 to an estimated 26 % in 2012. However, only 45.6 % of the South African population was food secure in 2012, and 28 % were at risk of hunger. In the SANHANES study, food insecurity was defined based on a hunger index developed through the Community Childhood Hunger Identification Project (CCHIP) (Wehler et al. 1992). The CCHIP index has been validated and used internationally and is based on eight questions which represent a generally increasing level of severity of food access and whether adults and/or children are affected by food shortages, perceived food insufficiency

or altered food intake due to the poor household socio-economic position Human Sciences Research Council (2013).

Stark racial disparities persist, with 67 % of African children living in poor households compared to only 4 % of White children (Puoane et al. 2012). The SANHANES study showed that the highest prevalence of being at risk of hunger was in the urban informal—also known as shanty communities—(36.1 %) and rural informal (32.8 %) areas, compared to urban formal areas (19 %). The black African racial group also had the highest prevalence of food insecurity (30.3 %).

In South Africa, poverty and food insecurity are accompanied by undernutrition, which particularly affects young children. Overall, stunting presents a greater burden of undernutrition compared to underweight and wasting and severe wasting. Stunting represents chronic malnutrition and more accurately reflects nutritional deficiencies and illness that occur during the most crucial phases of childhood growth and development (UNICEF (2009). Based on the SANHANES estimates, the prevalence of stunting, underweight and wasting among children aged from 1 to 3 years were 26.5, 6.1 % and 2.2, respectively in 2012. For children aged from 4 to 6 years, the prevalence of each of the three indicators of undernutrition was much lower in the same year. In 1999, the national prevalence of stunting, underweight and wasting among children aged from 1 to 9 were estimated to be 21.6, 3.7 % and 0.8, respectively (Labadarios et al. 2005).

The prevalence of Vitamin A deficiency among children and Anaemia among women has decreased over the past decade but remains high, nevertheless. About 44 % of children under 5 years of age had vitamin A deficiency (Serum retinol < 0.70  $\mu$ mol/L) in 2012, compared to 63.6 % estimated in the 2005 NFCS study. Similarly, the prevalence of anaemia was higher in 2005 (29.4 %) among women of the reproductive age (16–36 years) compared to 23.1 % in 2012.

### **Overnutrition and Associated NCDs**

The high prevalence of overnutrition and its comorbidities continue to negatively affect the lives of many South Africans. Despite the high burden of poverty and infectious diseases, such as HIV/AIDS and Tuberculosis, NCDs which are in part associated with overnutrition continue to account for a larger proportion of deaths in the country<sup>-</sup> In 2000, NCDs accounted for 37 % of the total deaths followed by HIV which accounted for 30 % (Bradshaw 2000).

Surveys conducted in the past have shown that obesity is more prevalent among women than men and that it ranged between 48 and 58 % in women from different racial groups (Goedecke et al. 2006). A survey conducted in 2010 on a small sample of adults in the four biggest cities in South Africa also revealed that obesity ranged between 52 and 72 % among 500 adults who were assessed across the four cities (Health24 2010).

More recent national estimates of NCDs and major risk factors in the SANHANES showed that obesity prevalence was high among both males and females. An estimated 19 % of males and 53 % of females in the 55–64 age groups were obese, whereas the prevalence among males and females in the 15–17 age groups was 1 and 7 % respectively. Furthermore, females had a significantly higher self-reported rate than males for high blood pressure (20.6 and 12 %), heart disease (3 and 1.5 %) and high blood sugar (6 and 4 %), respectively. For both sex groups, the reported rate of all NCDs tended to increase with age and there were no differences across the different survey regions. A study by Peer et al. (2012) also showed that diabetes has risen significantly for both men and women in the Western Cape Province of South Africa based on the 1990 and 2008 data, with the highest prevalence observed in the older population groups. Additional and more comprehensive statistics on the state of NCDs and the associated risk factors can be found in the SANHANES report referred to earlier.

### Determinants of Over- and Under- nutrition in South Africa

At individual level, dietary and individual risk behaviour define people's nutritional status, health, growth and development. However, according to the World Health Organisation (WHO 2003) these do not occur in a vacuum but within a cultural, economic, social and political context, which can either aggravate or promote their health. Given, the political history of South Africa as well as its rich culture and the recent economic transition, it is important to also consider some economic, health and development trends in South Africa that may play variable roles in nutrition and health.

Undernutrition can be a result of one or multiple aetiological processes such as illness (e.g. infectious diseases), social and environmental factors (poverty and natural disasters) which are associated with decreased nutrient intake or absorption or both (Joosten and Hulst 2008).

According to the SANHANES, the 1999 NFCS, and other surveys (Saloojee et al. 2007) conducted in South Africa, the leading determinants of undernutrition in the country include: low family socio-economic and education levels; sub-optimal food intake as a result of lower breastfeeding rates or early cessation of breastfeeding; lack of food; poor environmental and hygiene conditions leading to infections; HIV/AIDS; and Tuberculosis as well as recurrent infections. Under-nutrition rates are still highest among the poorest social strata, notably black South African children who reside in rural areas (Steyn et al. 2001).

In South Africa, as in many other countries, the nutritional status of the population is influenced by multiple risk factors or determinants. These factors are modifiable or non-modifiable, and can act directly or indirectly, singly or synergistically to influence an individual's nutritional outcome. The non-modifiable risk factors of obesity comprise individual-level characteristics, such as gender, age, race and genetic makeup. The modifiable risk factors, on the other hand, include behavioural, social and structural determinants associated with urbanisation.

### Individual-Level Characteristics, Food Consumption Behaviour and Obesity

In South Africa, the burden of obesity differs according to gender. Women, particularly those of the African origin, are generally more obese than their male counterparts (Human Sciences Research Council 2013). Also, as was shown earlier, obesity increases with age. Furthermore, food consumption behaviour varies across ethnic groups. For example, in a study conducted in 2011, it was shown that 19 % of black South Africans were considered frequent ( $\geq$ twice a week) consumers of street food (defined in South Africa as food prepared or cooked to be sold by vendors in a street or other public location for immediate consumption) compared to Indians (1.9 %) and whites (2.9 %) (Steyn and Labadarios 2011). However, a reverse pattern was observed when fast food consumption was measured (14, 12.5 and 5.4 % for Indians, Whites and Blacks, respectively). In a study conducted in South Africa, which included over 7000 South African women it was shown that black women and those of mixed ancestry had greater waist circumference and waist to hip ration—as a proxy for central obesity—than white or indicant women (Puoane et al. 2002).

# Socio-economic Status, Food Consumption Behaviour and Obesity

There is also evidence in South Africa that socio-economic status can influence individual behaviour and contribute to obesity. Although this relationship begs further investigation, it has been shown that in some parts of South Africa obesity and its associated NCDs are high in underprivileged groups and therefore not only prevalent among the affluent (Puoane et al. 2002). This is partly explained by increased consumption of cheap processed and packaged food in rural and poor communities associated with the nutrition transition (Cordain et al. 2005).

The SANHANES study also revealed that the price of food was the leading factor which influences grocery shopping among South Africans, followed by convenience, health considerations, food taste, safety and hygiene, nutrient content and shelf life. In a study conducted in a predominantly black urban township in South Africa (Muzigaba and Puoane 2013), the authors showed that some South Africans prefer to buy less healthy food with high fat and added sugar, as this is cheaper and more readily available than the healthy food options. The same study also showed that people in this community had a low level of education and preferred eating fried food and chicken with skin as a result of inadequate nutrition knowledge. This confirms the role of socio-economic status in obesity prevalence in South Africa, particularly in the context of obesogenic environment as explained in the next section.

### The Food Environment, Food Consumption Behaviour and Obesity

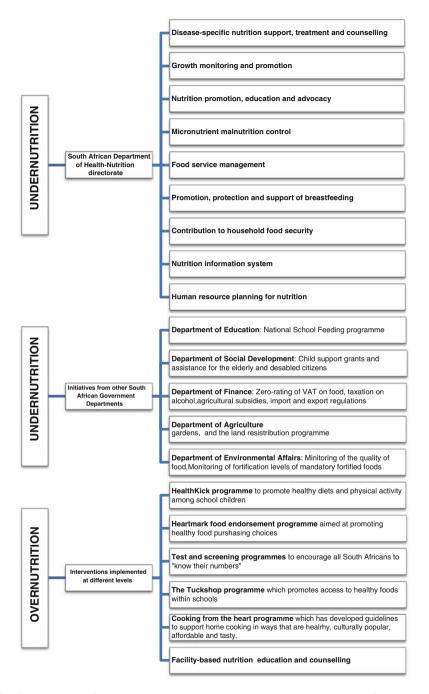
It is also important to consider the role of the so called "obesogenic environment" (Lake and Townshend 2006) in prevalence of overweight and obesity in South Africa.

Like many other parts of the world, South Africa has also been affected by the process of globalisation with concomitant changes in food systems, notably food production, manufacturing and distribution. The changes in the food environment have been associated with a nutrition transition. South Africans are progressively changing their diets from the traditional high fibre, high carbohydrate intake to westernised diets characterised by food that is high in saturated fat, added sugar and refined carbohydrates (Steyn et al. 2001). Multinational food and beverage corporations have found a niche within the local food systems (Igumbor et al. 2012). These include large companies such as the Coca-Cola Company; Cadbury Schweppes; PepsiCo Inc; Kraft Foods Inc; Mars Incorporated; ConAgra and SAB Miller and many other companies involved in the production and processing of dairy products; soft drinks; snacks and confectionery. More details on how these "Big Food" companies have changed the consumer food environment in South Africa can be found in the article by Igumbor et al. (2012).

The leading fast food franchises such as Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) and McDonalds also continue to mushroom in various parts of the country (International Trade Centre 2013). These corporations use strategic marketing campaigns to increase their market share and promote consumption of ready-to-eat and energy-dense foods and beverages which have been linked to obesity and other NCDs (Cordain et al. 2005). For example, compared with a worldwide average of 89 in 2010, South Africans consume 254 Coca-Cola products per person per year, an increase from 130 in 1992 to 175 in 1997 (Hawkes 2002).

### Culture, Belief Systems, Food Consumption Behaviour and Obesity

Cultural dynamics also contribute to food consumption behaviour in South Africa. Studies conducted among black women in South Africa found that although overweight women are aware of the obesity-related risk factors, they consider themselves attractive (Ndlovu and Roos 1999). In a black culture, especially in the older generation, a woman is admired if she has some padding over the hips (Puoane et al. 2005). On the contrary, South African white girls exhibit greater body image concerns and body image dissatisfaction than their mixed race and black counterparts (Caradas et al. 2001). Another study also revealed that some South African girls associated fatness with happiness, respect and health, while thinness was associated with ill health particularly HIV and tuberculosis.



**Fig. 4.1** Examples of strategies to combat under- and over-nutrition in South Africa. *Sources* Department of Health (2002), Swart et al. (2008), The Heart and Stroke Foundation South Africa (2015)

# Interventions to Address Under- and Over-Nutrition in South Africa

A number of strategies have been formulated and implemented in South Africa to combat 'overnutrition'. These range from community-based interventions to prevent obesity and NCDs to health service management of NCDs, food-related policy responses, alcohol control legislation and food fortification of basic staples, such as bread and mealie meal, which are fortified with micronutrients, amongst others. Interventions to alleviate and prevent the burden of undernutrition also exist. Figure 4.1 illustrates examples of these strategies. However, although the Figure has been divided into two to illustrate interventions for each of the two malnutrition categories, it is important to note that some of these strategies can be and are used to tackle both forms of malnutrition. For example, the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP) (Department of Education 2009) is used to fight both over and undernutrition. The objectives of the programme are to contribute to improving the learning capacity of all learners in needy primary schools in South Africa, to promote self-supporting school food gardens and other food production initiatives, and most importantly to promote healthy lifestyles amongst the learners. Learners are provided with daily meals based on menus developed in conjunction with the South Africa's Department of Health. The menus offer tasty, nutritious and adequate meals which must fulfil at least 30 % of the daily recommended allowance. Nevertheless, there are currently few evaluations of the NSNP, but these and anecdotal evidence suggests that the food supplied is not always optimal and may sometimes be obesogenic.

More detailed information about the large-and small-scale nutrition interventions to address malnutrition in South Africa can are available in the public domain and can be found in government policy documents (Department of Health 2002; Department of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries Department of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries 2014) review articles (Swart et al. 2008) as well as websites for civil society organisations involved in similar interventional efforts (The Heart and Stroke Foundation South Africa 2015).

### **Conclusions: Reflection and Recommendation**

This chapter has summarised the state of malnutrition in South Africa and the context within which this public health and social problem exists. References to additional readings have been provided for interested readers to explore further the dual nature of malnutrition in the country. Based on the information provided in this chapter, it is evident that South Africa has a huge burden of malnutrition that is fuelled by a multiplicity of risk factors which require sustainable and multi-pronged inter-sectoral action.

There is an urgent need for concerted efforts by the government, civil society and community-based organisations, to institute and more effectively implement nutrition-friendly policies and programmes that promote adequate and healthy diets and empower South Africans to make healthy food purchasing, preparation and consumption options. This falls within the ambit of the National Development Plan (NDP), Vision 2030, which stipulates the need for the government to continue addressing the issue of food and nutrition insecurity (Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries 2014). As outlined in the South African food and nutrition policy document, in order to ensure food availability in the country, there is a need to reform the agricultural sector and improve the country's ability to import, store, process and distribute healthy food. The document also highlights the importance of reforming domestic food markets as well as regulating food and beverage prices in a way that promotes healthy eating for the population.

The promotion of food accessibility and affordability for individual households also holds the promise of reducing food insecurity in South Africa. The National Agricultural Marketing Council has shown that there is a strong rural and urban food prices disparity, whereby consumers in rural areas pay more than consumers in urban areas to purchase the same basket of selected food products (Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries 2014).

In order to achieve this, there is a need to put in place systems that are well supported to ensure sustainability. The South Africa policy on food and nutrition security recognises that the current food safety and quality control systems in South Africa are fragmented. The policy proposes a centralised food safety and quality control system with input from different players such as the Department of Health (Nutrition programming and food inspection services), the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (perishable products, Export Control Board etc.) and the Department of Trade and Industry (South African Bureau of Standards) (Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries 2014). It also recognises the need to institute information management systems with a mandate to generate timeous, accurate and relevant information about food accessibility and affordability (income, markets), utilisation (health, nutrition and sanitation), stability of supply (climate change) and availability (production, imports). These monitoring data will be used to conduct food and nutrition security and vulnerability analyses and to identify risk factors for these.

The policy also calls for robust and novel agricultural research and technology development. There is a need for improvements in agricultural knowledge systems to generate evidence around potential impacts of soil erosion, pollution, infestations and loss of plant and animal genetic diversity on the country's ability to produce adequate and healthy food for the population. Similarly, the potential contribution of agricultural engineering in improving food security needs to be explored by engaging in new scientific discoveries. Lastly, the policy states that the food and nutrition policy should be led by a consortium of public, private and civil society partnerships with overall leadership from government through the National Food and Nutrition Advisory Committee (Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries 2014).

Other policy areas not included in the policy but which are equally important include for example regulation of manufacturing and retail of food substances, including legislation on salt and sugar and the regulation of placement of fast food outlets near schools, to mention but a few. The role of liberalised food trade is of prime importance particularly due to its public health implications.

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## Chapter 5 The Right to Food in India—Entitlements as Government Responsibility to Entitlements as Government Obligation

Karl-Axel Lindgren

### Introduction

India has the highest number of hungry and malnourished in the world at 190 million people (FAO et al. 2014), with malnutrition and infant mortality rates higher per head of population than in sub-Saharan Africa (Pillay 2009). The country, despite two decades of sustained economic growth, has failed to deal with economic and social inequalities adequately, with the majority of the population reliant on agriculture and working in the unorganised sector, i.e. low-paying casual labour with no taxes, job security, nor benefits (Pal and Ghosh 2007). Per capita calorie consumption has declined since the 2007-08 economic and food crises, as per capita food availability (Saxena 2011). While hunger and malnutrition has declined in India in the last two decades, it has not done so at an adequate pace, set to miss both the Millennium Development Goal of halving the proportion of hungry and the 1996 World Food Summit goal of halving the absolute number of hungry by 2015 (FAO et al. 2014). Faced with these challenges and the slow reduction of absolute hungry, the Indian government decided in 2009 to expand their public distribution system (PDS) of subsidised cereals and make it a legal entitlement for a segment of its population to demand through the National Food Security Act. How did this Act come to be, and what is the legacy of the right to food in India?

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### The Right to Food in India—'Top-Down' and 'Bottom-Up'

India was a signatory of the 1948 UN Declaration of Human Rights, and enshrined the right to life in Article 21 of its constitution. This operated more as a 'Directive Principle' on how the Indian government should behave rather than as a legal entitlement that the government was beholden to (Pillay 2009), and was fairly irrelevant to Indian food policy until the beginning of the twenty-first century.

Two significant moments marked the start of an intense debate on the right to food in India, starting with the appointment of the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food in 2000. Jean Ziegler, appointed by the UN Commission on Human Rights, was given the task to report on international progress regarding the right to food, and hold signatories of the UN Declaration of Human Rights accountable in fulfilling three main obligations (UNCESCR 1999):

- 1. To *respect* the right to food, by not taking any measure in depriving people of their right.
- 2. To *protect* the right to food, by enforcing laws and preventing individuals and corporations violating the right to food of others.
- 3. To *fulfil* the right to food, by facilitating and strengthening access to and utilisation of the necessary resources for people to feed themselves.

The international debate on the right to food helped trigger a domestic debate regarding, at the least, the moral, if not legal, duty of the state to feed its population. This activity from the top down was matched by bottom-up pressure to which we now turn.

The Indian government's primary food security strategy was the PDS, which contributed to household food security by providing subsidised prices on grains, edible oils and other essential commodities, aimed at moderating the open market (Chand 2005). The PDS became universal from 1966 onwards, albeit in theory rather than practice. Due to deep cultural inequalities, in caste, gender, class and communities, the PDS faced operational difficulties in distributing food to the poor and marginalised that needed it the most (Mander 2012).

The PDS was reformed in the mid-1990s into a targeted system as a result of these operational issues. Utilising household income levels, the proposal was to place every household into one of three categories:

- 'Above Poverty Line' (APL): Households that have a high enough income to ensure household food security.
- 'Below Poverty Line' (BPL): Households that do not have a high enough income to ensure food security.
- Antodaya Anna Yojana (AAY): Households considered the 'poorest of the poor', receiving a higher allotted amount of subsidised cereals than BPL households.

The aim was to reduce government expenditure and make the system more efficient, but the government had promised the politically influential farmer's lobby to not decrease the amount of grain purchased and, coupled with the integration of Indian agriculture with the global market, forced to increase the purchasing price to match the international market (Gupta 2008). Consumers, particularly in rural areas, could not afford the high food prices that resulted (Pal and Ghosh 2007), and an estimated one-fourth of India's annual production of grains accumulated in buffer stocks (Chand 2005).

Resultantly, at the turn of the twenty-first century, the Indian government held large amounts of cereal stocks rotting away in storage facilities while hunger remained a pervasive, widespread issue (Chand 2005; Ghosh 2005).

In 2001, these mounting issues came to a head in a court case known as the 'Right to Food' case (Hassan 2011). Calorie consumption of those classified as BPL had decreased from the 1990s to the current day (Saxena 2011), while grains continued to accumulate to record-breaking stock sizes annually. The Rajasthan branch of the People's Union for Civil Liberties, a human rights body, filed a petition with the Supreme Court of India demanding that the large stocks of grains that the government had accumulated over the years be utilised to feed impoverished people in the state, having suffered from extended drought (Guha-Khasnobis and Vivek 2007).

The court case triggered debates on the right to food as a legal entitlement rather than merely as a moral obligation in the Indian policy sphere. Up to this point, there were no legally binding laws or acts that gave the Indian population the right to demand food (Pillay 2009). The Supreme Court, arguing that Article 21 in the constitution meant that the state had the constitutional duty to ensure that no one went hungry (Pritchard et al. 2014), expanded the scope of the petition to the entire country (Guha-Khasnobis and Vivek 2007), and made the provisioning of food a legal entitlement in the eyes of the judiciary. This was made possible by the Indian judiciary having expanded its authority and power over the last few decades through public interest litigation (PIL), where the court itself, or a member of the public, can introduce litigation rather than a specific aggrieved party. The Supreme Court asserted itself as a "champion" of responsible governance and the rule of law (Mate 2013), arguing that the executive branch had failed to protect the poor. The Court had the jurisdiction to enforce fundamental rights violations and issue orders enforcing these rights. This enabled the Court to undertake judicial activism, actively protecting the poor from corrupt governance and repression of human rights (Mate 2013). Before the right to food case, the Court had played a significant role in policy governance on the environment, government accountability and corruption.

The Court followed the right to food ruling with a series of interim orders that further defined the rights and entitlements of people to food and food-related programmes (see Table 5.1), enabling a rights-based approach in the policy space and spurring a mobilisation of various non-governmental organisations, trade unions, grass-roots movements and other civil societies into the Right to Food Campaign (Hassan 2011; see Box 1). These interim orders made government schemes that had already been enacted into legal entitlements; coupled with the authority of the Supreme Court, as well as pressure from the Right to Food Movement, the government was obliged to implement these laws (Guha-Khasnobis and Vivek 2007; Mate 2013).

Scheme	Original scheme	Interim order	
Annapurna	10 kg of free cereals for the aged and destitute without pension	Provisioning of cereals to begin immediately, and eligible beneficiaries identified	
Antyodaya anna yojana (AAY)	35 kg of highly subsidised cereals for those considered 'poorest of the poor'	Provisioning of cereals to begin immediately, and eligible beneficiaries identified	
Integrated child development scheme (ICDS)	Comprehensive integrated programme concerning health, education and nutrition for children under six, pregnant and lactating women, and adolescent girl	Directing that childcare centres (anganwadis) should be opened in each settlement and existing centres to open immediately. Set a minimum norm for food to be provided	
Mid-day meal scheme (MDMS)	School meal programme for children attending government or government-aided primary schools	Ordered that school-going children should be provided with fresh cooked meals at least 200 days a year, on all working days	
National family benefit scheme	Social security for the poor	Ordered that in case of death to a primary breadwinner, 10,000 rupees should be provided to the family no later than four weeks after death	
National maternity benefit scheme	Scheme for poor pregnant women	BPL women, by their twelfth week of pregnancy for their first two live births, should be provided 500 rupees	
National old age scheme	Social security pension for the aged and destitute	Social security pensions provided monthly, and eligible beneficiaries identified	
Targeted public distribution system (TPDS)	Subsidised grain for the poor	Provisioning of cereals to begin immediately, ration cards provided, and eligible beneficiaries identified	

Table 5.1 List of interim orders in 2001

Source Guha-Khasnobis and Vivek (2007)

#### Box 1: The Right to Food Campaign

An informal network of NGOs, trade unions and grass-roots movements go under the banner of the Right to Food Campaign, united by the belief that every person has the fundamental right to be free from hunger and undernutrition, and motivated by the need for a public campaign on the right to food.

The Campaign believes it is the state's responsibility to guarantee these rights, and also desires equitable and sustainable food systems, livelihood security through the right to work and land reforms. More on them it can be found at www.righttofoodindia.org.

The Court also ordered the central government, state governments and state-run radio and television to spread awareness of the rights and entitlements that the public have, and to further support the right to food (Pritchard et al. 2014).

The Supreme Court took three important steps in raising the profile of a rights-based approach and pressuring the government to legislate on the right to food (Birchfield et al. 2010):

- 1. Identifying the right to life in Article 21 of the Indian Constitution as a right to food
- 2. Concretely laying out the implication of the right to food in terms of policy
- 3. Subsequently overseeing the implementation, and continued monitoring, of the court-specified policies.

In 2002, the Court instituted a mechanism independent of the government, in the form of Commissioners, who monitored and reported on the implementation of the Court's orders, as well as suggested ways to promote the right to food of the poor. The Court followed their first major interim orders with increasingly detailed and strengthened interim orders on each specific scheme. As an example, the interim order concerning the Mid-Day Meal Scheme (MDMS) expanded the scheme to all school-going children throughout the country, with precise directions to the government on how it would implement the change (Supreme Court 2001). The Commissioners would monitor the implementation of the new rulings with the Right to Food Movement, who were working in close collaboration with the Commissioners, acting as their on-the-ground 'eyes and ears' (Hassan 2011). The clear direction from the Courts, with specifically defined targets and closely supervised implementation with support from the Right to Food Movement, made the MDMS one of the most successful social assistance programmes, fully available in schools throughout the country by 2005 (Guha-Khasnobis and Vivek 2007).

The Indian National Congress (INC) led centrist coalition called the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) had taken power in 2004. The UPA recognised the populist benefits of a rights-based framework and made promises to revamp existing schemes and programmes, from financing a universal MDMS to legislating on a slew of social protection programmes, such as a rural employment guarantee (right to work) programme. All of these targets had been goals of the Right to Food Movement and part of interim orders by the Supreme Court, and reflected the successful bottom-up pressure that the original Right to Food case created in demanding rights from their government (Pritchard et al. 2014). Crucially, it laid the foundation for the drafting of a right to food bill, named the National Food Security Bill in a manifesto promise of the UPA as they sought re-election in 2009. The 'top-down' international pressure helped contribute, with the FAO releasing the 'Guide on Legislating the Right to Food' in 2009.

The contribution of the Supreme Court, the Right to Food Movement and the commissioners was ultimately hard to concretely measure. While its influence on changing the policy process in India has been praised by many different corners of civil society, academia and politics (Mander 2012; Mate 2013; Hassan 2011), managing to institute a rights-based framework for future legislation and pressuring

the government into drafting and passing rights-based bills,. There was a little accountability by the states for actual compliance, and the Commissioners had little authority on the state level in ensuring that changes were fully implemented (Guha-Khasnobis and Vivek 2007). Having excellent aspirational language on paper is one thing, but ensuring that malnutrition and hunger decline are almost wholly different.

The universalisation of the MDMS can be taken as an example of those mixed results. The Court orders meant that the MDMS went from reaching 33 million children in 1995 to ultimately reaching 120 million by 2010 (GoI 2010), and has been considered "successful" in terms of regularity and scale (Khera 2013). Furthermore, it has been extensively studied in terms of education and nutrition, with a significant positive impact on school enrolment, retention, and attendance, and limited improvement in nutrition (Afridi 2011; Jayaraman and Simroth 2011; Khera 2013). However, fundamental problems remain, including food safety and hygiene concerns, lack of proper infrastructure and staff training, questions over the nutritional value of the food, overall accountability and still-poor indicators on child stunting, wasting and underweight (Global Nutrition Report 2014). In certain states, individuals have monopolised the food supply to schools, enabling them to supply low-quality food for lucrative government contracts (Khera 2013).

### The National Food Security Bill

The National Food Security Bill (NFSB) was introduced to formalise policies that the Courts had already implemented. The bill eventually centred heavily on the PDS, with very few provisions for reforming the existing system, stipulating only (in legally non-binding terms) that certain technological innovations would be implemented in making the system more transparent and efficient, although it also acknowledged that technology cannot be the solution to governance (Gulati et al. 2012).

The NFSB went through a multitude of iterations (see Table 5.2). The very first draft was made by the National Advisory Council (NAC), an advisory body set up by the UPA government to directly advise the prime minister. The council, made up of prominent economists, bureaucrats, politicians and activists, emphasised the right to food in their draft, helping set the tone and focus of the NFSB's original content. The NAC did not have representation from any states, nor did it have an official role within the government, being an independent advisory body (Aggarwal and Mander 2013). The initial criticism of the NAC draft of the bill from the Right to Food Movement was the lack of a universal PDS (Mander 2012; Himanshu 2011), retaining a methodology that was strictly socioeconomic in identifying those eligible for the PDS.

In 2011, the government submitted an edited draft to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Food, Consumer Affairs, and Public Distribution. The role of the Standing Committee was to collate views from state governments, ministries, MPs,

Year	Draft	Key aspects	Eligibility	Changes from previous draft
2009	National advisory council draft	Provisions for people living in/with: homelessness, destitution, emergencies, disaster zones	90 %	
		Starvation protocol		
		Specific provisions for women and children		
		7 kg per person per month for 'priority' category at 3/2/1 rupees per kg of rice/wheat/coarse grain		
		4 kg per person per month for 'general' category at half of market price		
December 2011	Government draft introduced to Parliament	Provisions for women and children	67–75 % rural and 50 % urban	Removed all provisions for the homeless, destitute, those living in emergencies or disaster zones
		Starvation protocol		
		7 kg per person per month for 'priority' category at 3/2/1 rupees per kg of rice/wheat/coarse grain		Reduced eligibility from 90 to 67 %
		3 kg per person per month for 'general' category at half of market price		Reduced 'general' category entitlements to 3 kg
January 2013	Parliamentary standing committee on food, consumer affairs and public distribution draft	Provisions for women and children	67–75 % rural and 50 % urban	Removed 'general' and 'priority' categories. Uniform entitlements for everyone
		5 kg per person per month at 3/2/1 rupees		Removed starvation protocol
		per kg of rice/wheat/coarse grain		Extended provisions for children up to age 16

Table 5.2 Iterations of the NFSB

(continued)

Year	Draft	Key aspects	Eligibility	Changes from previous draft
July 2013	National food security bill/ordinance	Provisions for women and children	rural and fo	Introduced provisions for the poorest of the poor—the AAY
		5 kg per person per month at 3/2/1 rupees per kg of rice/wheat/coarse grain		
		35 kg per household per month for AAY households, at 3/2/1 rupees per kg of rice/wheat/coarse grain		

Table 5.2 (continued)

Source Author

researchers and representatives of organisations within food security and present a draft that had taken these perspectives in mind (Aggarwal and Mander 2013). The most significant of the changes by the standing committee was the removal of the starvation relief protocol and the provisions for people living in disaster zones, and emergencies, as well as of the homeless and the destitute, leaving only women and children that received specific entitlements (Aggarwal and Mander 2013). The eligibility criteria were also changed to encompass 67 % of the population rather than 90 %. Aggarwal and Mander (2013) heavily criticised the standing committee draft, arguing that the changes that had been made included removing provisions that the Court had already established. By further limiting who was eligible for food distribution, the policy decision to retain targeted distribution was strengthened, seemingly process-oriented rather than outcome-oriented. The Right to Food Movement, apart from arguing that the right to food should be universal from an ethical perspective, also argued on the practical level of the high administrative costs of targeting, including defining and identifying those eligible, as well as printing ration cards, updating lists, and hiring public officials to ensure that only those eligible received rations (Himanshu 2011; Mander 2011).

To further complicate the matter, the final arbiters of the eligibility criteria were the state governments, who had the responsibility to define the income levels of each category, which created wide variances and a high differentiation in the implementation of the PDS depending on the state (Drèze 2013). Furthermore, price subsidies, range of items covered by the PDS, and volume of how much is subsidised was also delegated to each state government to decide upon (Pritchard et al. 2014).

While the right to food language remained, the eventual act was considered a disappointment that did not go far enough in its legal entitlements (Aggarwal and Mander 2013). Table 5.3 shows the legal entitlements that became part of the National Food Security Act in 2013 as it was passed by parliament.

Target group	Entitlement
Antyodaya anna yojana (AAY)—'poorest of the poor'	35 kg of subsidised grain per household, rice/wheat/millets at Rs. 3/2/1 per kg
75 % of rural and 50 % of urban population	5 kg of subsidised grain per person, rice/wheat/millets/
Pregnant and lactating women	Free meals during pregnancy and up to 6 months after child-birth, 6 months of maternity benefit of Rs. 1000 per month
Children between 6 months and 6 years old	Daily, free, age-appropriate meals through the local childcare centre ( <i>anganwadi</i> )
Children between 6 years and 16 years old	Free mid-day meal every working day in all government and government-aided schools
Children suffering from malnutrition	Free meals through the local childcare centre (anganwadi)

Table 5.3 The entitlements of the national food security act

Source National Food Security Act (2013)

To summarise, in 2001, the Supreme Court of India interpreted the constitution to mean that the government of India had the legal obligation to feed its citizens, and that the Indian people had the right to food. The Supreme Court followed by passing interim orders directing policy implementation in lieu of the government acting. Judicial pressure, in collaboration with civil society movements, led the Indian government to adopt a rights-based policy approach in line with the Supreme Court's interpretation, and drafted the National Food Security Bill in 2009, passing as the National Food Security Act in September (2013). As of February 2015, the NFSA has yet to be implemented. Major criticisms of the NFSA have been its expected economic cost, lack of nutrition security, lack of structural change, and insistence on eligibility criteria (Drèze 2013).

## **Conclusions: What Are the Implications of the Right to Food?**

The significance of the 2001 Right to Food Case has only grown with the subsequent laws that have passed, being a landmark event that has set precedence on the justiciability regarding human rights. The FAO (2009) assert that "the protection of human rights through constitutions is the strongest form of legal protection, as constitutions are considered the fundamental or supreme law of the land...every law in a country must conform to the constitutional provisions and, in cases of conflict, the constitutional norm will always prevail". Translating constitutional rights into justiciable legal entitlements was a powerful move in ensuring those rights being upheld by the government. There are three main actors in a rights-based approach (Kent 2000):

- The holders of entitlements (the people)
- Those with the duty to provide the entitlements (the government)
- A neutral institution that, in case of violation, enforces the right (the judicial system)

The Right to Food is a theoretical framework that is based on a moral imperative, on dignity and social justice rather than merely on economic access or food availability, and thus takes a more 'human-centred' focus rather than an economic focus. This framework emphasises obligations and entitlements, yet are hollow promises if people are unable to exercise their right, or act to ensure that their rights are met. Chapman (2005) argues that raising awareness of the rights of the population is a key fundamental in realising a rights-based policy framework, built on "participation, empowerment and social change". The Indian poor are neither aware of most of their rights, nor are properly mobilised to demand that their rights are upheld.

The National Food Security Act makes the right to food a legal right, allowing action to be taken against the Indian government if it fails to provide its selected population with adequate food. This right can be incredibly powerful to hold governments accountable to its population, and would be a driving force for change—yet meaningless if those who are entitled to food are unaware of their rights.

In its global context, the case and ruling by the Indian Supreme Court can be used as an example of a strong judiciary enabling a rights-based framework, and an example of the far-reaching impact the judiciary can have on socioeconomic issues. More specifically, the policy detail in the interim orders of the Supreme Court set it apart from similar litigations in other developing countries. By ruling, giving precise orders and explicit policy directions, and establishing a set of Commissioners, the Supreme Court took the right to food further than simply ruling and relying on the government to implement policy decisions, potentially being a template for other nations in similar positions (Khasnobis and Vivek 2007).

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### Chapter 6 Food Insecurity and Health Disparities: Experiences from New York City

**Kimberly Libman** 

### Introduction

In the United States (US), diet is a leading cause of disability, death, and rising health care costs. Despite decades of policy and grassroots efforts, food insecurity, and diet-related health inequities persist. This chapter uses cultural acceptability of food and policy, to discuss institutional food, the use of federal food entitlement programs to shape consumer behavior, and local policies to change community food environments. Throughout this discussion, everyday experiences ground critiques of programs that target hunger and health disparities.

A relational perspective on place asserts that policy-making should take seriously cultural meanings through which health interventions are viewed, and should address distributions of power within governance structures and institutions that shape places (Corburn 2009). Proponents of this perspective focus on the dynamics of time, scale, and reciprocity between people and the places they constitute and live in (Cummins et al. 2007). This theoretical frame fits well with environmental psychology's notion of 'transactionalism' whereby people shape—and are shaped—their environments (Stokols 1995). Both emphasize dynamic reciprocity over time at the individual and collective levels. Complex systems include heterogeneous components (like people and places), linked by nonlinear relationships (food systems), with unpredictable outcomes (health). Thinking about diet-related health disparities as complex can reveal new approaches to resolution. One strategy for intervening is to focus on individuals (Finegood and Cawley 2011). Complex systems are made up

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of heterogeneous actors engaged in unpredictable interactions with their environments; no one solution will work for everyone. Because individuals play distinct roles throughout a system, interventions focused on industry or community, need to fit the functions and capacities of such leaders. The same is true for eaters. Thus, this chapter uses individual experience of food and policy as a key to thinking about solutions to modern malnutrition.

# Food Choice and Health: Cultural Acceptability Within Food Security

Hammelman and Hayes-Conroy (2014) trace the evolution of the food security concept from one focused on macroeconomic policy and agricultural production toward its current focus on individuals and their dynamic, culturally situated relationships with food and food systems. According to the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization, food security "exists 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" (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) 1996). There is implicit tension between the nutritional and psychosocial dimensions of food. Operationalizing cultural acceptability in food policy beyond static notions of "ethnic diets", and the nutritional value of specific foods contained therein, remains challenging. We are reminded that culturally acceptable food and policy recognize food is essential to maintaining social and cultural ties, realizing human rights, preserving traditional practices and knowledge, and defining or contesting one's relationships to place and the state.

With a population of almost 8.5 million and as many as 800 languages spoken within its borders, New York City (NYC) provides examples of how cultural acceptability operates within efforts to address food insecurity and health equity. In the US, the nutritional dimensions of poverty are addressed separately from the overarching lack of resources that define such living conditions. Several social welfare programs, such as the *Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program* (SNAP), formerly the Food Stamp Program, provide financial resources that can only be used for food to eligible very low-income people. Within these means-tested programs, more liberal income levels are set for women with children and the elderly. These programs are federally funded and administered at the state level, giving local government authority over some implementation decisions. This system for addressing food insecurity developed in the US at the end of the 1930s took the approach of joining urban and rural political interests in a market-driven approach to alleviating hunger and poverty.

### A Short History of Food Entitlement Programs in the US

Increasing food security and reducing hunger fall within the remit of the US. Department of Agriculture (USDA). The agency administers several programs that address the goal of reducing food insecurity, including SNAP and its counterpart the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infantsand Children (WIC), the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), National School Lunch Program (NSLP), and the School Breakfast Program. Table 6.1 provides a summary of these USDA food programs. The income limits for SNAP eligibility are \$1265 for an individual or \$2584 for a family of four, with slightly higher limits for people over the age or those with disabilities. The maximum monthly benefit for individuals is \$196, and \$649 for a family of four. Benefit levels are based on the Thrifty Food Plan (TFP). Last revised in 2006, the TFP is a market basket-based model used to specify what foods, in what quantities, for at-home-consumption, provide a nutritious diet at minimal cost. Eligible food is defined as "any food or food product for home consumption, except alcoholic beverages, tobacco and hot foods or hot food products ready for immediate consumption" (Food and Nutrition Act of 2008, p. 1).

The Food Stamp Program was initiated in 1939 in response to public outcry over the coexistence of hunger and agricultural surpluses. It expanded over time through successive national policy changes. Most relevant to this chapter are changes made in the last 40 years. The Food Stamp Act of 1977 included funding for nutrition education, in part to compromise on a failed attempt to include limitations on eligible food purchase with food stamps. During the 1980s and 1990s, with a booming economy, political concern shifted to the cost of maintaining the program. The Welfare Reform Act of 1996 addressed that concern by restricting eligibility for noncitizens and able-bodied adults without children (ABAWDS). It also introduced the electronic benefit transfer (EBT) delivery system. After the 2008 fiscal crisis, recognizing the potential of SNAP to stimulate economic growth, the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act increased benefit levels by 15 % through 2013 (Yaktine et al. 2013). Benefit levels, state-level control over the program, health promotion, as well as work and job training requirements for ABAWDS remain debated policy issues.

SNAP has demonstrated benefits to individuals and households, as well as local and national economies. Every \$5 in SNAP benefits generates \$9 in economic activity (Hanson 2010). This multiplier effect and the speed that increases in benefit levels can translate into local spending contributed to the political success of increasing SNAP funding during the Great Recession. Regarding health equity, it is recognized that among families who are very food insecure and participate in SNAP, food security levels rise to those seen in other low-income families—not full food security (Olson and Holben 2002). Yet, a study in NYC primary care clinics found food insecurity was associated with increasing body mass index only in women not receiving food assistance, suggesting SNAP participation may protect low-income women from obesity (Karnik et al. 2011).

Program	2014 annual budget <sup>a</sup>	2014 participation <sup>a</sup>	NYC participants	Mechanism
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program	\$74,140,000,000	46,536,000 people	1,742,730 people <sup>b</sup> in 2013	Funds provided through an electronic benefit transfer card
Women Infants and Children	\$6,293,000,000	8,259,000 participants	284,000 participants <sup>c</sup>	Funds provided through an electronic benefit transfer card
National School Lunch Program	\$12,657,000,000	30,408,000 children	871,275 children <sup>d</sup>	Administered through states in cooperation with local schools systems. Schools are reimbursed at set rates for meals that meet nutritional standards, schools also get fee "bonus foods" from agricultural surpluses
National School Breakfast Program	\$3,686,000,000	13,603,000 children	231,847 children <sup>e</sup> in 2012	Same as the National School Lunch Program
Summer Food Service Program	\$465,000,000,000	160,000,000 meals	7,600,000 meals <sup>f</sup>	Same as the National School Lunch Program
Child and Adult Care Food Program	\$3,135,000,000	1,981,000,000 meals served	680,546 children and adults <sup>g</sup> in 2007	Reimbursements to child care centers, senior centers, and afterschool program, meals and snacks must meet nutrition requirements

Table 6.1 Overview of select U.S. National Nutrition Assistance Programs

<sup>a</sup>USDA Food and Nutrition Services Summary of Annual Data 2010–2014 <sup>b</sup>NYC Human Resources Administration. SNAP Participation Rates 2002–2013 <sup>c</sup>New York State Department of Health, WIC Caseload Data, WICCIS Database, 2014 <sup>d</sup>New York City Food Policy (2015) food Metrics report <sup>e</sup>http://www.communityfoodadvocatesnyc.org/#!impact-school-breakfast/c1553 <sup>f</sup>http://schools.nyc.gov/Offices/mediarelations/NewsandSpeeches/2013-2014/City+Promotes+Free +Annual+Summer+Meals+Program+with+NBA+and+Share+Our+Strength.htm

<sup>g</sup>http://www.nyam.org/dash-ny/pdfs/HealthyFoodProcurementPolicy.pdf

Food insecurity also affects health care costs. Several studies document increased healthcare utilization and hospital admissions of up to 27 % for hypoglycemia, among low-income diabetics, during the fourth week of the month, when many benefit recipients have run out of money for food (Nelson et al. 2001; Seligman et al. 2014). These studies demonstrate that program implementation details, such as frequency of benefit payments, can have pronounced influence on people who depend on nutrition assistance programs to eat, with broader financial and health equity implications for society. Indeed, it may be more cost-effective to ensure food security than continue to medically treat its consequences (Nelson et al. 2001).

### Modern Malnutrition in New York City

As economic inequality expands, the number NYC residents who are hungry grow. Recent federal data indicate that in NYC during 2013, 1 in 6, or 1.4 million residents, were food insecure. Nearly 1 in 4 children, and 13 % of seniors 60 or older were food insecure (Friedman and Berg 2014). Simultaneously, high rates of obesity and diabetes concentrate in low-income communities. This book's framing of these as interrelated problems, allows focus on the systemic and upstream determinants they have in common.

Several theories, and somewhat mixed evidence, underpin connections between food insecurity and obesity, with implications for population health and equity. The "food stamp cycle" refers to the pattern of feast and famine that many households receiving SNAP experience over the month between benefit payments. Others emphasize the relationship between food cost and quality, arguing that the ubiquity of cheap energy dense foods and imperative to stretch food dollars as far as they will go, leads to obesity. Some researchers focus on psychological effects associated with food insecurity, such as preoccupation with food and use of food for coping with stress and depression (Dinour et al. 2007).

Diabetes and obesity are examples of diet-related disparities in health connected to food insecurity. Racial/ethnic disparities in diabetes mortality are wide, with the death rate for blacks more than doubling that of whites. Diabetes mortality is also 2.7 times higher in high-poverty than low-poverty neighborhoods (New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene 2013). In high-poverty schools, where more than 80 % of students qualify for free meals, youth are more likely to be obese than those from schools where less than half of the students are eligible for free meals (New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene 2012).

After implementing multiple policy and environmental interventions, NYC reported modest reductions in citywide child obesity (Berger et al. 2011). However, this success masks persistent inequities. Over a 5-year period, sizable decreases in obesity were observed among white children aged 5–6 (23.6 %). Black and Latino children the same age experienced 7 and 6 % declines, respectively. Similar differences in declines were observed across schools in neighborhoods with high—as compared to low-poverty levels (2.7 % vs. 16.7 %). These patterns reflect the social

and economic hierarchy of the city. They show that the collective impact of child obesity interventions has yet to level the social and environmental conditions that are associated with poverty and modern malnutrition.

### **Responses to Hunger and Health Inequities**

This section discusses responses to hunger and diet-related health inequities in NYC, and some of what is known about their implementation and outcomes. A comprehensive review of food policy and programs in is beyond the scope of this chapter, and available elsewhere (c.f. Libman 2015; NYCFood 2015). This section focuses on three categories of policy—institutional food, consumer food environments (products, prices, promotions) and community food environments (types, accessibility of food retail) (Glanz et al. 2005). Within each, concerns about cultural acceptability raised by Hammelman and Hayes-Conroy (2014) are brought to life and considered in the context of health equity.

### Institutional Food Standards and Workers

In 2008, former Mayor Bloomberg established nutritional standards for all food purchased or served by city agencies. Applied to over 260 million meals served annually in public schools, jails, hospitals, senior and child care centers, the standards limit fat, sugar, and salt. Local Law 52 requires annual reporting by city agencies on compliance with the standards (NYCFood 2015). Implementing the standards increased demand for healthier products, and may also affect individual food choices beyond institutional food environments by modeling healthy diets (Lederer et al. 2014). Regulations for group child care settings on beverages, physical activity, and screen time were established in 2006. A 3-year evaluation found compliance was higher among child care centers that participated in Head Start or CACFP, concluding that compliance may increase when there are synergistic redundancies in regulations across levels of governance (Nonas et al. 2014). Another study also found narrowing of the child obesity gap between high- and low-risk neighborhoods in two of three boroughs examined (Sekhobo et al. 2014). These examples show how setting nutritional standards can reduce health disparities and stimulate change at multiple levels.

Cooks and food service directors play key roles in translating nutritional guidelines into what is served, thus building the skills and nutritional knowledge of this workforce should be a public health priority (Tsui et al. 2013). Emma Tsui's research on the perspectives and practices of cooks responsible for carrying out healthy meal programs in publicly funded foodservice demonstrates that what constitutes "good" food extends beyond nutrition to include addressing hunger and clients' food preferences. Cooks do this by interacting with clients and altering recipes and menus to meet their taste preferences, but these aspects of their work are not widely recognized (Tsui and Morillo 2015). Within the institutional food context, for instance, palatability is not just about taste preference but also affects hunger alleviation and food waste. Cooks' role as mediator between the eaters they serve and the regulations associated with congregate feeding programs is essential to maintaining social and cultural ties, especially in contexts where cooks may share ethnic roots. Regarding cultural acceptability, this example raises the questions: What is good food? And, how is it socially and materially produced in public institutions?

### Carrots and Sticks in the Consumer Food Environment

Incentivizing or restricting foods SNAP and WIC beneficiaries can purchase with program benefits are strategies for influencing eater behavior. Beneficiary reactions to these strategies speak to how cultural acceptability can influence diet and health. In 2005, the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene introduced Health Bucks, a program that uses EBT to provide financial incentives for benefit recipients to purchase produce at farmer's markets, by giving them \$2 bonuses for every \$5 they spend. Sales data from participating markets show significant increases in sales to SNAP and WIC recipients (Baronberg et al. 2013). The incentives are an effective tool for increasing consumption of fresh produce at the household level, while supporting environmental changes by generating revenue for farmers markets in low-income neighborhoods.

In 2010, NYC asked the USDA to support a 2-year pilot that would prevent SNAP and WIC recipients from using those benefits to purchase sugary drinks. Citing potential logistical difficulties, the USDA rejected the proposal (Mcgeehan 2011). The following excerpt from an interview with a black SNAP recipient living in a low-income neighborhood with several chronic health conditions. In response to this policy proposal, he said:

You might as well put me back into slavery, if you're telling me I cannot purchase a soda. It won't stop me with my food stamps. Believe me, I'll still go buy my soda. With the stamps or cash . . . I'd rather lose it [money] but still keep my Pepsi.

His perception of institutionalized racism and strong emotional response highlight how culturally inappropriate food and policy can contribute to health disparities by adding to the "weathering" of black Americans (Geronimus et al. 2006). It also illustrates how food behavior can contest the state.

Local program administration details can influence SNAP utilization rates by making it culturally unacceptable to access benefits. For example, before 2012 SNAP applicants were fingerprinted to prevent fraud. Welfare reform in the 1990s included work requirements for ABAWDs participating in SNAP, but localities can opt out of this requirement. Mayor DeBlasio indicated willingness to waive the work requirement, but no official action has been taken. Maggie Dickinson found that the policy led people to relinquish their benefits rather than participate in demeaning work (Dickinson 2013a). Approximately, 760,000 NYC households are eligible but not enrolled in SNAP, translating to over \$650 million in lost economic activity (Poppendieck and Dwyer 2008). These examples illustrate how the legacy of slavery is still visceral in the everyday experiences low-income black Americans have with these food-based poverty alleviation programs. In the US, incentives appear to be more acceptable than restrictions, suggesting that carrots may support health and equity in ways that don't sticks.

### Targeted Food Retail Interventions: The Community Food Environment

In 2009, NYC presented the Food Retail Expansion to Support Health (FRESH) which includes zoning and tax incentives for supermarkets to locate in designated high-need areas. To qualify for FRESH, supermarkets must dedicate at least 30 % of their retail space to perishable goods and meet minimum requirements on square footage devoted to fresh produce. Residents of both high- and low-income neighborhoods in NYC report dissatisfaction with conditions inside their local supermarkets (Libman 2015). Residents from a low-income area suggested that the barriers to healthy food that policy incentives should address were the high price of food and the environment within stores, not the number of supermarkets in their area. Residents of high-income area also expressed dissatisfaction with food prices and the in-store environment of their local supermarkets. These eaters leveraged their financial, technological, and transportation resources to overcome those barriers to fresh food—strategies unavailable to those with fewer resources.

Neighborhoods continue to struggle with supermarket access. Even hard won victories are compromised by high-density, high-return, real estate development. In East Harlem, Extell Development Corporation has purchased the property currently housing a 60,000 square foot supermarket (Clarke 2014). This store was built in 1988, after years of community organizing. It is now on track to be replaced by a residential development. Extell also purchased the site of another supermarket in lower Manhattan, again with plans for a residential development. And in Brooklyn, Slate Property Group is looking to buy a site currently with a supermarket next to affordable housing—and plans to construct a mixed-use building in its place (Smith 2015).

A more culturally acceptable supermarket policy would be one that ensured all stores met basic standards of cleanliness, cost, and accessibility and used government incentives to address affordability. It would also address the distribution of power over place that privileges real estate values over human need. This example begs us to ask: is the free market a viable mechanism for ensuring access to supermarkets? If government can intervene in market dynamics with macroeconomic levers such as SNAP, why not also use regulatory action to universally raise standards of practice among grocery store operators across the socioeconomic spectrum? Like the effects of standard setting seen in institutional food settings, regulation of supermarket wages, cleanliness, and fresh food quality might have greater impact on improving food availability in poor neighborhoods than FRESH.

### **Conclusions: How Can Responses to Food Security in NYC Evolve to More Effectively Reduce Health Inequities?**

Opportunities to further enhance the effectiveness policy and programs that target the nexus of hunger and health equity exist, but entail intersectional action, crossing levels of government and societal sectors. The potential and limits of city action on diet and health equity lies in the complexity of urban food systems, and the ability of leaders to navigate these dynamics and the political forces that can advance or block action (Libman et al. 2015). To that end, I close with some lessons from these examples.

Federal nutrition assistance programs in US are an economic and moral policy lever currently used for feeding a socially acceptable subset of the full population of people living in poverty at a given time. History shows us that rates of unemployment and underemployment will continue to ebb and grow, with economic boom and bust cycles, affecting food security for poor and marginalized people along the way. The commitment to using the market as a tool to address social and population health problems that it creates brings to mind Janet Poppendieck's (1999) critique that charity food providers relieve moral and political pressure for structural solutions. The most fundamental approach to reducing diet-related disease disparities-and other health problems-is to reduce wealth inequality and poverty (Marmot 2005). Against this mark, it becomes clear that much of what is done to reduce food insecurity in the US, and its contribution to health inequities, falls short of addressing the root causes of modern malnutrition. As experiences of this system indicate, its reliance on free markets, restrictions on food choice, and the conditional terms of program participation, promote the hierarchical distribution of wealth and food that nutrition assistance programs should remedy. There is potential for more effective responses.

With growing demand for foods that are healthy, and produced through sustainable and ethical means, cultural acceptability within food policy and programs focused on food security and health should now entail attention to food's provenance and production. Redefining eligibility criteria and raising SNAP benefit levels could address the challenges of providing food security while advancing health equity, sustainable economic development, with consideration of food preferences (Dickinson 2013b). This would require coordinated action at all levels of government. The success of Health Bucks suggests that increasing the purchasing power of SNAP and WIC recipients could translate into increased sales and achieving sustainable supermarkets in low-income areas. Maximizing SNAP utilization and accessing the \$650 million in lost economic activity for NYC, could further bolster the food retail economy and make supermarket businesses more viable in low-income areas. Finally, institutional food workers bridge levels of the food system and its regulations. Training in how to maximize the health and equity potential of their work could have broad impacts, professionalize this work in ways that express its value to society, and improve the livelihoods of cooks. Opportunities for incremental and structural change exist, if look and listen closely.

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## Chapter 7 Creating New Links Between Agriculture and Food Aid: New Perspectives from France

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### Food Aid and Agricultural Policy in Europe and France

Here, the focus is on the links between food aid and agriculture and, more precisely, on the following question: in what respects is food aid integrated to the common agricultural policy, at National as well as European levels?

### Embedding in the European Productivist Agricultural Model

The European Council created in 1987, the European Programme of Food Aid for the Most Deprived (MDP or PEAD in French) as part of the Common Agricultural Programme (CAP): this established a deliberate link between agriculture and food aid. Following poor weather in 1986, the programme was established to address the results of food price increases for European citizens. It was conceived as an instrument under the first pillar of the CAP. This was based on two pillars: the first encompasses market and price support mechanisms; the second is the rural development strand which has been extended in recent years to include agri-environmental aspects of sustainability. The scheme was mainly a way of reducing intervention stocks through redistribution to the poor and needy. It was a contribution to stabilizing farmers' incomes albeit that the initial scheme simply removed food from existing interventions and surplus stocks, so that there was no

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possibility of it being sold on the open market and further deflating prices. The MDP offered the possibility for EU nations to use intervention stock<sup>1</sup> products for food aid. Intervention stocks were exchanged through bids by member States for food stuff (about 50 products such as flour, sugar, and processed foods, such as ready-made dishes, biscuits, cakes or dessert creams). Industries that won the bids were paid in raw material. Food products were then delivered to GNOs which took care of their distribution to the most deprived. European food aid policy was seen as a mechanism to regulate agricultural markets, it was not a social policy and indeed could not be funded as it was under CAP. It can be said that food aid was one adjustment variable of agricultural surplus at the time.

As early as the 1990s, due to reforms in CAP, surplus stocks were not sufficient any longer and the CAP started funding the MDP. Again, through such a framework, supply for European food aid came from long distribution channels and the agro-food industry.

Several countries, like Germany, contested this funding as being an impediment to the free market. Germany officially challenged the extension of the programme and the extension of the budget to purchase goods on the open market. The move from a programme within CAP which traded in agricultural surpluses across member states was contained and not all that visible, the move to providing direct financial resources to purchase goods on the open market exposed the scheme to scrutiny and took it beyond the confines of the CAP regime. The European Court ruled in favour of Germany in June 2011 and this resulted in negotiations towards a transition that led to the ending of the MDP Programme. This is how the MDP was replaced by the Fund for European Aid for the Most Deprived (FEAD) (Caraher 2015).<sup>2</sup>

The programme supports EU countries' actions to provide not only food but material assistance to the most deprived. This includes food, clothing and other essential items for personal use, e.g. shoes, soap and shampoo, accompanied by social inclusion measures. Such a change means, at EU level, disconnecting food aid from the agricultural policy. Besides, the FEAD stipulates that food products must be handed out for free to food aid beneficiaries although there is no dedicated amount allocated to food.

In France, the relationship between agriculture and food aid is mostly administrative and institutional: one of the authorities in charge of food aid belongs to the Ministry of Agriculture. In addition, food aid bids for National or European funding are administered by France-Agrimer, a public institution supervising the agricultural sector. The legislative text defining food aid as a priority in public policy is a law concerning agriculture.<sup>3</sup> Thus the French State, unlike European dynamics, has embedded food aid in a relationship with the agricultural sector. As described

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Special intervention entities intended to buy surplus products in order to regulate market prices. <sup>2</sup>The Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD) depends now from the European Social Fund and not from the CAP anymore.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>The Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act, No. 2010-874, 27 July 2010.

above, the links existing between agriculture (and more precisely with the agro-food industry) and food aid, incorporate the latter to dominant productivist logics: bidding processes are directed to long supply chains. This is also true at European level, since the initial plan was to include it as a regulation to control agricultural prices. Besides, food aid supply is partly designed to prevent food wastage: recovery of unsold stocks, defective goods (as long as they are not improper for consumption), or agricultural surplus. Such choices refer to the role of food aid as adjustment variable in case of overproduction.

# *Emergence of Initiatives in France Proposing an Alternative Relationship Between Agriculture and Food Aid*

Box 1 provides an overview of the developments in France.

#### Box 1 Food aid in France

Two major characteristics have marked the evolution of food aid in France, from the early 1980s until today. One is the increasing institutionalization with strengthened government control, visible through tighter controls and higher requirements concerning traceability and hygiene. The other one is the transformation from an emergency food aid system to long-term aid: more global dimensions, such as social insertion and nutritional preoccupations, are being taken into account by social assistance. The emergence of a new discourse around food donation with financial counterpart was accompanied by a new form of food aid: social and solidarity grocery stores. Such organizations offer help, chiefly food aid, to people facing economic hardships. In facilities arranged as self-service stores resembling commercial shops, they offer a range of usual and quality products, in exchange of a low financial counterpart. Within this frame, switching from quantitative to qualitative food aid also became an issue (Paturel 2013).

In the early 1980s in France, the government delegated food aid to charity associations. Originally four major actors have been appointed as authorized representatives (these were the only ones entitled to receive public funding from the French government and the EU): the Food banks network, Secours Populaire, Croix Rouge and Restos du Coeur. The successive French governments since the end of World War II have thus widely subcontracted parts of their social policy to non-governmental associations. The highly mediatized initiative of Les Restos du Coeur and personal support of Jacques Delors, the Minister of Economy from 1981 to 1984 and President of the European Commission between 1985 and 1994, have been decisive for establishing this food aid model and the creation of the Most Deprived Persons Programme.

In addition to these four original operators, eight others (this list was complemented in July 2014 with six additional associations) have been given authorization in 2013 to access funding from the Fund for European Aid for the Most Deprived (FEAD) and the French government (Paturel 2013).

The major sources of food aid in France are a combination of National and E.U. funding, direct purchase, donations (individual donations as well as agro-industrial firms and supermarket chains—which benefit from tax exemption), and surplus collection. As such, food aid is integrated to the current productivist agro-food system. The heterogeneity of sources and variability of products lead to poorly diversified supplies, with little fresh products such as fruit and vegetable (Caillavet et al. 2006).

Attempts to reconnect agriculture with food aid on the basis of a new model (support to local agriculture, short supply chain, sustainability and accessibility for food aid) lead us to formulate a few questions:

- What is the impact of such changes on food aid beneficiaries ? Can they be a lever to stimulate empowerment by restoring a certain power to act (particularly concerning people's food choices)? Can it help questioning the nutritional behaviours of deprived people and thus take part in the fight against health social inequalities (Birlouez 2009; Chenhall 2010)?
- Do such models ensure a better financial security for farmers (through yearly contracts, fixed prices and pre-orders)? Beyond the financial aspect, does it lead to more empowerment on the farmers' part (better control of their work and the possibility to constitute groups)? Is their resilience potential (capacity of resistance and recovery from shocks) strengthened?
- What impact in terms of emergence of new public policies? Can actors carrying this new model be supported by public authorities? Could this new relationship between food aid and agriculture impose itself at National or European level? (Caraher and Cavicchi 2014)

In early 2010 in France, new dynamics—plural and multifaceted—emerged and sought to amend the prevailing standard model. The vision is shared, although in a concurrent and dispersed manner, by diverse protagonists: agricultural organizations, the sector of social and solidarity economy, researchers, public authorities. Two major ideas prompted this movement. The first one, as exposed above, is that conventional sources of food aid concerning fresh products are not satisfactory, in terms of diversity as well as quality and quantity. The second one, following current trends in alternative agriculture and critical consumption movements, is that bonds must be established between producers and consumers in order to support a sustainable local agriculture (Pleyers 2011). A series of initiatives supported by NGOs were taking place. For instance: food supply for shops members of the Association of solidarity grocery shops in the Rhônes-Alpes region (GESRA), Biocabas, a solidarity organic food programme in Nord-Pas-de-Calais region, and the producers'

stores Solid'Arles, in Provence. We do not intend to answer all these questions here, yet we think that they may constitute pertinent lines of research for other programmes working on similar lines. We set out the findings from two initiatives which pertain to this attempt to renew relations between food aid and agriculture.

## Two Cases Promoting Alternative Relationship Between Food Aid and Agriculture in France

Case 1 Supplying local fruit and vegetable for the Restos du Coeur in the Hérault département (South of France) (Paturel 2014).

#### Box 2 Les Restos du Coeur

The national association «les Restos du Cœur» is emblematic of the issue of food access for the most deprived. The well known humourist and French comedian Coluche founded this organization on January 26 1985. Thanks to its largely mediatized action, it forced public authorities to recognize this association as one of the major operators in the food aid sector. Alongside earlier charities (Secours populaire, Secours catholique, la Croix rouge, l'Armée du salut), les Restos du Cœur promote a new form of solidarity based on public appeal for donations via media exposure (i.e. the annual concert *les Enfoirés*).

Les Restos du Coeur, unlike other food aid operators, buy the largest part of their supplies (around 72 %). Goods are stocked by the national organization then dispatched to regional associations. Fruit and vegetable are purchased from three wholesalers—among them the national leader "Pomona".

Based on the observation that les Restos du Cœur give out more than 30 % of food aid in the administrative region of Hérault (part of Languedoc-Roussillon Region), while the local fruit and vegetable production has difficulty in finding markets, in 2011 the local association of les Restos du Cœur was offered the opportunity to buy locally through a short supplying scheme. As well as constituting a new opportunity for the local short food supply chain, the objectives are to improve freshness of fruit and vegetable (with reduced time between picking and distribution) and better environmental impact (minimum transportation). The major requirement was to be able to supply fruit and vegetable throughout the entire winter season (lasting 17 weeks). Wholesalers in the Montpellier wholesale trading centre (MIN) were chosen because they had the capacity to regulate supplies and compensate shortages by resorting, when needed, to national or international markets—19 local producers were involved in the first year.

This system was-and is still-carried out by the regional association and not by the national body. An average of twenty volunteers and one staff member work every day in the warehouse; they take deliveries, stock goods, prepare orders and deliver to the numerous regional distribution outlets. An administrative team is in charge of inventory tracking, delivery orders and statements of accounts required by the national head. The working organization is based on the experience and professional qualifications of volunteers. They work in autonomy without being ordered. Orders to be prepared are noted on a whiteboard. As volunteers take care of each of them, they inscribe their name and then remove it when the task is over. Volunteers in charge of orders are the interface between the Restos' logistics services and wholesalers. However, farmers may deliver themselves in order to simplify their task but also to give substance to the link with the volunteers. An average 1300 tons of goods transit through the warehouse every year. During the first campaign, 180 tons of local fruit and vegetable were used.<sup>4</sup> The distribution took place from end of November 2011 until the end of March 2012: 22,140 persons were received and served in the food aid outlets (2 % of the Hérault population), 1,800,000 food baskets were handed out, 1200 volunteers have taken part in the whole work. This plan has proved its worth and is still in operation; it has been extended to operate all year round (winter and summer campaigns) over the past 2 years.

Today such a scheme for the distribution of fruit and vegetable is part of the local scene and serves as reference for other types of supplying chains, such as catering. However, it must be remarked that the national level of the association has not reproduced this local initiative elsewhere.

Case 2 A.N.D.E.S and the Uniterres experiment (Delavigne 2012; Précigout and Téchoueyres 2015).

#### Box 3 L'A.N.D.E.S

L'Association Nationale de Développement des Épiceries Solidaires (A.N.D. E.S.) is one of the major food aid networks in France. Created in 2000 by Guillaume Bapst, its aim is to structure this form of food aid for the most deprived, and to represent nationally member grocery shops. As they endorse the ANDES charter, the 250 plus member-grocery shops of the network, spread out all over France, benefit from extra funding.

The Uniterres programme is a pilot project by A.N.D.E.S that started in 2012 in the Poitou-Charentes and Aquitaine regions and in 2013 in Midi-Pyrénées region. The idea stemmed from the observation that an increasing number of farmers were

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>53 % of total supply came from a distance inferior to 60 km.

seeking food aid. A system was devised around two main axes: setting up a supplying mode along the lines of the AMAP system,<sup>5</sup> and the implementation of participative activities around it. Thus Uniterres aims to create links between customers in solidarity shops and local farmers; and, through workshops on food topics, to rehabilitate the relation to food among people in precarious situations.

In addition, this programme intends to support and contribute to the development of small fragile vegetable farms. Through a one year in advance pre-order system, with prices negotiated yearly between A.N.D.E.S representatives and farmers, the programme attempts to secure revenue for the farmers. They are chosen according to their situation: new farmers setting up, farmers with financial difficulties, farmers converting to organic agriculture, or needing to expand. They are indicated by diverse institutions and organizations.<sup>6</sup> Uniterres tries to work in partnership with local agricultural institutions in order to offer farmers a constructive and long-term support.

The programme requires organization and co-ordination: fruit and vegetable are removed from the farms and delivered weekly to solidarity grocery outlets by coordinators employed by ANDES. They<sup>7</sup> play an invaluable role of mediation between farmers and shops. They introduce flexibility to the system by modifying pre-orders according to production odds, for instance.

Solidarity shops manage their supplies according to their customers' needs. Based on the list of over one hundred varieties of fruit and vegetable, they put their order for each week of the following year. Goods are displayed in the shops and sold at a price not exceeding 30 % of purchase price. This system is totally cost-free for the shops because it is funded by local authorities, government services and private foundations (including supply in fruit and vegetable).

Uniterres also promotes participative and pedagogic workshops targeting beneficiaries. Three types of actions are offered:

- 1. Visits of farms. The farmer, or a member of his/her family, receives customers and staff from solidarity stores, presents his/her farm and his/her work.
- 2. «Tables de producteurs», which are cooking workshops with farm products. They are designed to gather beneficiaries, producers, shop staff members around a chef.
- 3. The «Compagnie des Gourmands», which are cooking workshops for parents and their children and include meal sharing.

In addition, and because it was felt to be needed, a pedagogic module intended to develop awareness of agricultural methods and local production has been set up in

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>AMAP, Association pour le maintien d'une agriculture paysanne: consumers associations supporting local farmers by subscribing yearly to a weekly basket.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>Local authority (Conseil Général), agricultural social security services (Mutualité Sociale Agricole-MSA), unions, the AMAP network,....

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup>Coordinators have a personal experience in farming and therefore concrete knowledge of farmers' work.

direction of solidarity shops' staff (volunteers included). It has been designed to remove certain obstacles in relation with people's representations and also to stimulate communication about the programme within the shops.

By the end of 2014, Uniterres has started its third year of operation in Poitou-Charentes and Aquitaine regions, and the second one in Midi-Pyrénées region. The programme includes today about one hundred producers in these three territories, and supplies 180 tons fruit and vegetable to 6900 persons who benefit from 33 social and solidarity grocery shops. Uniterres employs now 14 people through A.N.D.E.S., hires six refrigerated delivery vans and has developed an order tracking software.

This experiment is spreading: it is about to start in summer 2015 in the Bretagne and Pays de la Loire regions.

## Conclusion

The new tie created between agriculture and food aid, which we have reported through our presentation of two cases in France, could generate potentially interesting dynamics:

- the improvement of food diversity and quality in food aid,
- the enhancement of mechanisms of empowerment for Food aid beneficiaries as well as for farmers, thus tackling food poverty at two levels
- a contribution to local development, to the organization of local short channels and the constitution of farmers networks, which has the benefit of addressing the issue of a sustainable regional economy
- an alternative to the dominant logics presiding over the management of food aid by public authorities.

However, setting up such programmes is far from easy. Food aid operational modalities in France (and particularly the fact that "beneficiaries" need to be prescribed and controlled) and the quality of relations between this public and the persons, who deal with them, may produce counterproductive effects. Indeed such actions may be experienced as constraints and injunctions to "consume local" and to exhibit solidarity—such commitments that come on top of the all-pervasive nutritional injunction existing in food aid outlets. While on the farmers' side, difficulties may stem from the transition from a conventional supplying mode to a local short chain model—particularly the difficulty to establish a "fair" price or the constraint of contracting for a whole year.

From the intervention-research point of view, one of the major features relies on a bottom-up construction process. This means that, at local scale, the protagonists involved seize and negotiate the project's terms of use. Such a process could encourage the protagonists' empowerment in developing this new food aid supplying mode. A fair and subtle balance needs to be found, reconciling managerial and technical abilities, necessary to implement such project, with a participatory approach including all levels of actors. Both dimensions seem necessary to achieve the whole potential of such programmes.

More broadly, our research brings out questions on the political treatment of social security and welfare in France (Castel 2009; Paugam 2005). Indeed the role and place of the State is to be questioned, and French policy on the subject is ambiguous. Although we have underlined above how food welfare and social policies remain closely linked to ultra-liberal logics, food aid is officially delegated to quite a large number of associations, which only exist out of political will and public funding. The fact is that although formal welfare programmes are encouraged, supported and funded by public finance (at both national and local levels), the salaries and social status of people working in the field remain low and precarious (Abélès<sup>8</sup> 2006) while funding needs to be sought year after year. In fact, it can be said that the "ideal" models presented above are torn between an institutional social welfare system and the tinkering of community-based initiatives. Yet one cannot talk about the depolitization of food aid in France because although this sector relies largely on GNOs, the State still funds, regulates and remains the main driving force for evolutions in this field.

Both the Restos du Coeur and Uniterres experiments presented above are also an occasion to reflect on the interlocking mechanisms of national and European policies. The case of Uniterres is particularly enlightening in this respect. It has been implemented exactly during the transition period from MDP to FEAD. The original impact of this evolution, at European level, was to dissociate food aid from the agricultural policy. In addition, the FEAD imposes the free distribution of food products, meaning the exclusion of social and solidarity shops from this scheme. Such conditions seemed contrary to Uniterres principles-this intervention being based on both a renewed relationship between food aid and agriculture and on the social and solidarity shops network. It turned out that the European decision encouraged the French Government to increase its support to the grocery shops model which it had contributed to develop: in 2014, specific funding was allocated to make up for the extinction of European funds. Such a choice, because it includes the possibility of food supply from local farmers, opened the gate to long term national funding. Thus, the French government has facilitated the expansion of this scheme. We are, therefore, facing a paradox: a European decision, which was obviously contrary to this type of project, resulted, through the interlocking of diverse policy levels, in the emergence of public funding making this type of initiative possible. We can explain this through two major reasons. One is that the French government has originally taken part in the creation of the social and solidarity food store model, which was considered as more "modern". The other is the personal support given to Uniterres by administrative officials and elected regional representatives.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup>Cf. concepts such as *survivance* and *convivance* (survival and convivencia) as developed by Abélès (2006).

As for the implications of both case-studies concerning the FEAD and CAP and their diffusion to other E.U. member countries, we may argue that the European policy is schizophrenic: on the one hand the FEAD dissociates relations between food aid and agricultural policies, while on the other hand it opens up the possibility to fund short food supply chains while recent CAP evolutions concerning the second pillar (EARDF) emphasize rural development. However, member states remain free to choose how to use these funds. The diffusion of such schemes depends entirely on choices made by member states in using FEAD resources and/or on the capacity of civil society (NGOs, social and solidarity economy sector, agricultural associations,...) to impose on the political agenda programmes establishing relations between food aid and agriculture.

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# Chapter 8 Food Banks: Big Society or Shunting Yards? Successful Failures

**Daniel Ronson and Martin Caraher** 

# Introduction

At a global level people such as Polman (2010) and McKeon (2015) have highlighted the use of food aid as a political tool in the developing world and argued that it creates dependency and often undermines local food systems. Franks (2013) has shown how through the mechanism of Live Aid, organised by celebrity Bob Geldof, food charity has become an acceptable face of global food aid. Both Polman and Franks share a concern about the evidence for the effectiveness of food aid. Here, we focus on the developed world and the growth of food banks as an example of the changing nature of food welfare within countries with developed welfare systems and raise similar concerns to the rise of food aid and charity in the newly emerging economies of the global south. There are now examples of food banks in emerging economies (see Riches and Silvasti 2014 for a range of examples from across the globe including Hong Kong, South Africa, Brazil and Turkey), although these are not our focus here. Many find it astounding that hunger can exists in modern developed countries where there is an abundance of food but in fact where some groups have problems accessing it.

Food banks have become embedded in societies across the developed world (Gentilini 2013). Irrespective of the economic climate food banks, once established, they appear to persist indefinitely (although see Rocha 2014 and 2015). In 2000, a study noted two reported food banks in Britain, but warned that we may very well find that food banks become as prevalent here as they are elsewhere (Hawkes and Webster 2000). In the face of global economic austerity the numbers using food

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banks are spiraling. These predictions have proved accurate in the UK where there are now close to 1000 food banks in every corner of the country, with more opening each week (Clarke 2014; Forsey 2014; Loopstra et al. 2015). Here, we focus on the reasons for the growth in the number of food banks in neo-liberal economies of the global north, drawing on examples from the US, Canada, Australia and Europe. These are subject to analysis using the concept of '*successful failures*' developed by Seibel (1989, 1996).

### Food Banks as Highly Visible Successful Failures

Food banks, where stocks of food are given free of charge to people in need, have long been a feature of the informal welfare system in North America and New Zealand (Riches 1997; Riches and Silvasti 2014; Poppendieck 1999, 2014). In Britain, food banks are a relatively new phenomenon with media reporting of them sparse until about 2007. Up until then they were reported as something foreign (Wells and Caraher 2014). This dramatic rise has inspired a surge in media coverage of "Food Bank Britain" with the term becoming a shorthand in some media circles for cutbacks in the welfare state (Wells and Caraher 2014; Loopstra et al. 2015). There are a range of models and sourcing options: some food banks distribute food directly to recipients, others act by supplying food to other organisations for distribution to those in need, this latter is often referred to as the process of food banking. Sourcing can be using surplus/waste food from the food industry, relying on donations from the public or a mix of these two approaches.

Seibel (1989, 1996) theorised that there were some challenges in society that were both inevitable and unsolvable, although highly visible. These issues are troubling for a public concerned with social justice, and problematic for politicians who need to avoid blame for allowing such problems to exist (Blond 2010; Norman 2010). Seibel argued that such problems tend to be of particular interest to voluntary organisations, keen to fill spaces where the state and the market may have failed and attractive to politicians as it allows them to shift the focus away from government delivering services. The involvement of civic society can thus be celebrated by politicians and the public alike, thankful that well meaning others are addressing difficult issues. Meanwhile such celebration both reaffirms the importance of the work these organisations are undertaking, providing legitimacy to their efforts. This is certainly true of the situation in the UK where the Prime Minister has been welcoming of food banks as part of what he calls "Big Society" (Norman 2010). The "Big Society" concept aims to shift power to the local level and presents co-operatives and other mutually worker owned enterprises as the building blocks for a new economic model (Blond 2010: 218-219), and is seen as a way of addressing economic austerity where civil society can provide local services formerly supported by the State (Willetts 2010).

Of course, the underlying social problem in question remains and is not appropriately addressed. What results is a band-aid/sticking plaster approach that tackles the visible signs of the problem rather than its social determinants (Marmot 2010). Therefore, those addressing such need will theoretically require infinite resources to meet never-ending demand. A criticism levied by the food bank movement in the UK at government ministers as it has become more advocacy based and vocal and see no end to the demand for food aid (Wells and Caraher 2014). Seibel contends that as a result, management will construct their operations to ensure they have a continuous supply of sufficient and appropriate resources maybe even encouraging a new stream of users, even if the objectives of the organisation become compromised in the process. Seibel calls such organisations '*successful failures*'.

Seibel then wondered why such organisations could continue unquestioned, both from within the organisation and from without. He asked why these 'successfully failing' organisations seemingly proliferated indefinitely without anyone really pointing out that outputs did not meet the needs of those the organisation was meant to be helping. So in the case of food banks organisations were tackling hunger, but not the underlying causes that lead to people being hungry. He believed that this was due to what was called the 'mellow weakness' of these organisations, or what Salamon (1994) termed 'the Myth of Pure Virtue'. Seibel's belief was that in certain circumstances certain organisations are believed to be doing the best they could in difficult conditions, and their voluntary or faith-based nature made criticism socially unacceptable. There is a halo effect around such organisations doing good deeds. He noticed that organisations tasked with helping the disabled find work were widely celebrated across society, even though they found very little actual work for any disabled people. These organisations not only survived, but thrived with resources flooding in year after year. Meanwhile politicians widely celebrated their efforts. Seibel wondered how such organisations were able to proliferate, and questioned why they were so lauded for achieving so little. Seibel argued that such failure would never be acceptable in the public or private sectors where audits and accountability are sacrosanct. Therefore, the mellow weakness of the voluntary sector makes it the perfect vehicle for tackling problems that cannot be solved and in policy terms distracting attention from the underlying causes to the symptoms of the problem.

Can food banks be conceptualised as successfully failing organisations? Could household food insecurity be such an inevitable and unsolvable problem in society that it can never be adequately solved under the current economic and political system (Maxwell 1996)? If so, then surely once established, food banks will be faced with an infinite demand for food, as there will always be some people, at some times and in some places requiring charitable assistance. Meanwhile, those running food banks appear to have overwhelming need to ensure their organisations persist, not just because significant emotional, financial and physical capital are invested in their efforts, but mostly because many have a theological imperative to do so (Chapman and Lowndes 2008). Following Seibel, it can be theorised that under these conditions resource acquisition becomes the principal challenge, with services rendered becoming compromised in the process, and the mellow weakness of the organisation effectively quashing any critical debate. In the next section, we provide evidence from food bank research from OECD regions: the Europe, Australia, Canada and the US and apply Seibel's concept of successful failures to them.

# The Evidence for Successful Failure Food Banks—Successful Failures?/Shunting Yards

Critics such as the academic Janet Poppendieck and the food activists Mark Winne and Nick Saul argue that food banks benefit all but the users themselves (Poppendieck 1999; Winne 2008; Saul and Curtis 2013). Winne says we should 'seriously examine the role of food banking, which requires that we no longer praise its growth as a sign of our generosity and charity, but instead recognize it as a symbol of our society's failure to hold government accountable for hunger, food insecurity and poverty' p. 184. Poppendieck refers to the "Seven Deadly Ins" of food banks, namely insufficiency, inappropriateness, indignity, inefficiency, inaccessibility, ineffectiveness and nutritional inadequacy (Poppendieck 1999), while Saul says that food banks only offer those with complex needs a temporary, unhealthy and humiliating respite from possible hunger, doing nothing to improve capabilities or self-esteem. Those visiting food banks, he says, experience a 'slow death of the soul' (quoted in Butler 2013). In the UK, the Trussell Trust, the largest food banking organisation refutes this, saying that in the UK food banks offer 'dignity, relationships, nutritional food and signposting [for] people in crisis' (Butler 2013: discussion thread) but other evidence shows the indignity suffered by users of food banks (van der Horst et al. 2014). While the FAO definition of food security has a strong emphasis on access, other definitions extend this to include 'the ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways' and 'a sustainable food system that maximizes self-reliance and social justice without resorting to emergency food sources' (American Dietetic Association 2010). It is clear, therefore, that food distributed on a charitable basis whilst an important aspect to food security, does not fully address food insecurity.

Companies benefit from a halo of corporate responsibility in being associated with food donations and collections, while volunteers and individual donors enjoy the warm glow of altruism (Caraher and Cavicchi 2014; Booth and Whelan 2014). Faith-based organisations that run food banks are able to exercise their theological imperatives of feeding the hungry and spreading the word, while having an opportunity to strengthen their dwindling congregations. Politicians can reassure the public that no one is going hungry as a result of their policies, even claiming credit for creating an environment where such organisations can thrive and prosper. One can think of the UK Prime Minister David Cameron's proclamation that food banks are "a part of the Big Society" to well illustrate this assertion (Jacobs and Pickard 2013).

The argument is that food banks provide a useful service for those in need. They address the immediate issue of hunger if not the underlying cause of food poverty or insecurity. However, it could be argued that the services they offer are more about ensuring the sustainability of their operations, than meeting the real needs of their users. The largest UK food bank provider—the Trusssel Trust (http://www.trusselltrust.org)—limits use to three times and insists on referral from a professional, so users cannot just turn up at a food bank. This is justified around a discourse of preventing dependency, and reflecting a similar argument to justify

welfare reforms (Wiggan 2012), it appears that this stipulation is more about being able to reassure donors that their donations are only going to people faced with an emergency or crisis (Wells and Caraher 2014; Seabrook 2013). Food bank managers say that this is a "sellable" message, and if donors were to believe that their charitable largesse was being used to feed people on an ongoing basis, they would be far less inclined to donate on a regularly. This finding reflects Canadian research, which found the need to secure and sustain resources resulted in food offerings that were primarily "symbolic" in nature (Tarasuk and Eakin 2003).

A recent UK All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry into Hunger in the United Kingdom (2014) reported on food banks and highlighted how rapidly food banks have become part of the scene and celebrated their presence making recommendations for the establishment and formalisation of the current system with its strong religious presence. They went so far as to recommend the creation of a new national network 'called 'Feeding Britain', whose membership would be composed of the food bank movement and other providers of food assistance, the voluntary organisations redistributing fresh surplus food, the food industry, and representatives from each of the eight government departments whose policy affects the number of people at risk of hunger' (p. 46). All of this would be funded by the Archbishops of

Area	Evidence	Classification	
		Success	Failure
Europe	All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry into Hunger in the United Kingdom (2014)	X	
	Van de Horst, Pascucci and Bol (2014) <sup>b</sup>		X
	Lambie-Mumford (2013)		X
	Silvasti and Karjalainen (2014) <sup>a</sup>		X
	Garrone et al. (2014) <sup>b</sup>	X	
	Loopstra et al. (2015)		X
USA	Poppendieck (1999)		X
	Winne (2008)		X
	Poppendieck (2014) <sup>a</sup>		X
Canada	Tarasuk and Dachner (2009)		X
	Tarasuk et al. (2014) <sup>b</sup>		X
	Saul and Curtis (2013)		X
	Tarasuk and Eakin (2003)		X
	Riches and Tarasuk (2014) <sup>a</sup>		X
Australia	Lindberg et al. (2014) <sup>b</sup>	X	
	Booth and Whelan (2014) <sup>b</sup>		X
	Butcher et al. (2014) <sup>b</sup>	X	
	Booth (2014)		X

Table 8.1 Analysis of food bank and charity provision in Europe, the USA, Canada and Australia

<sup>a</sup>The majority of the above evidence is drawn from two sources Riches and Silvasti (2014) <sup>b</sup>A special edition of the British Food Journal on Food banks (2014, Vol. 116 Iss 9) Canterbury's Charitable Trust. This supports a move away from a welfare state approach to one based on civic society responses.

The following table shows a sample of key articles classified according to Seibel's criteria. The articles are drawn from two main sources and are representative of some of the key thinkers and findings in this area.

The analysis of the literature in Table 8.1 suggests that indeed food banks and charity provision can be classified as successful failures. The more positive approaches to food banks come from is now being called the food bank plus (+) movement (Lindberg et al. 2014; Butcher et al. 2014). These seek to go beyond the traditional role of providing food or as in the case of the All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry into Hunger in the United Kingdom suggesting the establishment alongside food banks of community stores.

### Discussion

Food banks have arisen partially as a result of welfare reforms (Silvasti and Karjojalainen 2014; de Armiño 2014; Tarasuk and Davis 1996). In the UK, the principle of welfare reforms are broadly popular with a public satisfied with explanations of austerity required to balance the books, and the benefits of work over worklessness. Central to reforms are the increasing use of sanctions to drive behaviours such as accepting work and freeing up under-utilised social housing (Wiggan 2012). Although the evidence is contested (Lens 2002), evidence from the USA indicates that total sanctions have been far more successful in reducing welfare roles than partial sanctions (Bloom and Winstead 2001). However, further research has shown that the process of implementing such reforms has proven problematic. Even though politicians have persuaded the public that such measures are essential to reduce welfare costs and dependency, the visibility of sanctioned families not being able to afford food has created significant concerns in the electorate. In addition, "street-level bureaucrats" (Lipsky 2010) tasked with implementing such reforms have used their discretion to avoid sanctioning, either because they are concerned about the injustice, or because they wish to avoid unpleasant confrontation. As a result, the success of implementation has varied considerably (Hagen and Owens-Manley 2002). It has widely been argued that significant welfare reform is very rare, and is generally little more than a process of tinkering around the edges (Pierson 2001). For reasons of institutional stickiness, path dependency and the general popularity of a basic level of welfare support, politicians often retreat from difficult and unpopular reform policies, even though most are fully aware that there is a pressing need to reduce the cost of welfare (Weaver 1987). In particular, Pierson cites negativity bias as a particular problem, saying that people are far more sensitive to things being done to them than things being done for them, and as a result the consequences of reform tend to be highly visible. The fact that voters may feel reforms are unfair and contrary to their core values of social justice will create electoral risk, and will therefore be avoided by policy makers. Food banks and emergency food aid provision by civil society and faith-based groups thus helps show something is being done while the broader welfare reforms often continue apace.

If food bank provision is effectively of questionable value to those needing such services, and yet the efforts of food bankers are so widely lauded, could there be an alternative reading to their value in society? Seibel, in examining his voluntary organisations, argued that the real value of their outputs could be as "symbols or illusions". He believed that they enabled the public to believe that something was being done about issues affecting others, even if very little was really being done at all, thereby reducing potentially unbearable cognitive dissonance. In addition, he theorised that these organisations allowed politicians to offload such problems thereby stabilising the prevailing social and economic system. In reality, these voluntary organisations could be considered as "shunting yards" for such intractable issues, "discharge[ing] government from responsibilities that could lead to unbearable risks for the general legitimacy of the political system" (Seibel 1989: 188).

While much of our argument and the data above shows an agreement with the theories of Seibel one country stands out as an exception and that is Brazil. In terms of rights to food Brazil has a written requirement in its constitution guaranteeing the right to food (de Schutter 2013; Rocha 2014). Rocha (2015) shows in Brazil that food banks have been marshalled by the state to deliver on health and social care agendas and they have become public food banks. The forces of economic neo-liberalism have been tamed and marshalled to serve a public need informed by the principle of the right to food. This includes the services they offer being located within a national food plan which provides public funding for the purchase of food from family farms and to be donated to government food programmes, such as subsidised restaurants, community kitchens and food banks, as well as other charitable organisations. This exception is worth pointing out as some see food banks and the rise of food charity as inevitable consequences of a neo-liberal economic agenda, what Brazil shows is that this is not inevitable. Thus, among present discourses "taken for granted" is that neo-liberal economic policies are not compatible with strong social welfare programmes. In countries of the global north, growing food insecurity and the rise of food banking, for example, are linked to neo-liberal welfare reforms, which led to the dismantling of publicly funded social safety nets (Riches and Silvasti 2014). The lessons from Brazil show that this is not inevitable but needs to be informed by a concept of a right to food and located within a national plan for nutrition and food (Riches 2002; Rocha 2014 and 2015).

To what extent could food banks be considered "shunting yards"? Is there any evidence that food banks stabilise the political system? To answer this, it is appropriate to examine one of the major reasons why people use food banks, namely the ongoing reforms to the welfare system (Forsey 2014). Could it be seen that food banks are actually enabling such reforms to take place, and are therefore an integral part of the most significant period of welfare retrenchment "for 60 years" (Peate 2012)? Could they, as Seibel predicted, prevent the electorate from feeling

conflicted about policies being implemented in their name, allowing politicians to escape catastrophic electoral risk?

It is in this context that food banks appear to be acting as "shunting yards". First, food banks allows what Pierson terms the pivotal voter, to believe that the essential welfare reforms they support will never leave those targeted unable to feed themselves and their children. Even though they may widely bemoan the need for food banks in society, their existence is reassuring in that they are able to easily believe that "welfare dependents", subject to sticks, not carrots, to wean them off their dependency, will never go hungry in the process. This ability to minimise the dissonance that the public may feel is essential for both politicians trying to implement potentially problematic policy, and for society in general which can continue untroubled by glaring inequalities.

Secondly food banks enable a smooth transition to the new sanctioning regime. Through their permission for frontline welfare staff to signpost food banks to claimants and those being sanctioned (Downing and Kennedy 2013), the government can ensure that the challenges experienced during implementation elsewhere are to some extent alleviated. Signposting will allow both dissonance and conflict to be minimised, as staff can assure claimants, and reassure them, that the mandatory sanctioning they are imposing will not result in them going hungry.

Although food banks undoubtedly offer a valued service to those with insufficient resources to make ends meet, the efficacy of this provision is rarely questioned. The "mellow weakness" of these organisations may prevent debate, and as a result enable food banks to become institutionalised in society. As has been demonstrated above, this might very well provide advantages for many—for those giving to food banks; and those volunteering; for those allowing collections to take place at their stores and offices; and for the churches who spend an increasingly large amount of time ensuring all those in need are being fed; for politicians who can utilise their existence for their own purposes; and for the public who can be reassured that they can maintain their standard of living while no one goes hungry. Is this the true role of food banks in society?

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# Chapter 9 The Rise of Food Inequality in Australia

Christina Pollard, Andrea Begley and Tim Landrigan

### Introduction to Australia, the Lucky Country

Australia is often referred to as the 'lucky country'. In 1964, Donald Horne wrote The Lucky Country, using the term ironically to highlight that Australia was simply lucky rather than clever as it had reaped the benefits of technological, economic, social and political innovations developed in other countries who were clever (Horne 1964; Government 2015). The term 'lucky' in contemporary times is used to reference to Australia's prosperity, resources, weather, health and distance from other world problems. The hangover from the 'lucky country' tag is the reluctance to admit that even with high prosperity there are issues with social, health and food inequality that need attention. It is reasonable to expect high domestic food security in a country that is rich, conflict free and agriculturally self-sufficient (Pollard et al. 2014a) but there are hidden pockets of domestic food insecurity that are due to social disadvantage and outcomes of how the food system operates.

## Hidden Food Inequality

Food inequality is determined by the factors impacting on access to food and is particularly evident in the differences in capacity to access and utilise nutritious

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food. Food inequality is only visible when the differences in people's capacity to access food is measured. Food insecurity is the common measure of the outcome of food inequality. The contributors to food security in Australia are articulated as resulting from a complex interaction between food, the food supply as a result of the food and nutrition system and food access factors as a result of social and economic determinants (The University of Sydney, NSW Department of Health 2003). There is an evidence of policy failure and a lack of engagement in issues related to food inequality in Australia. Food security and vulnerable groups were identified in Australia's 1992 Food and Nutrition Policy, however, there has been little government investment in advancing these strategic areas since the cessation of 2000–2010 Eat Well Australia (Strategic International Nutrition Alliance 2001a, b), the national public health nutrition action plan, in 2010 and no comprehensive policy has replaced the 1992 version.

There is a view that "In Australia food is available and most Australian families have the income to afford it" (Commonwealth of Australia 2014). Ranked 15th of 107 nations on the Global Food Security Index of 2013, food security is viewed as a minor problem in Australia (Economist Intelligence Unit 2013). Although at times food and agricultural policies acknowledge that social disadvantage and remoteness lead to "pockets" of food insecurity, there are examples of these plans asserting that food insecurity is due to the lack of food affordability and access, which would require changes to social rather than agricultural policy (Department of Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry 2013).

The extent, severity and nature of food inequality or food insecurity is not routinely measured or reported in Australia (Temple 2008). Nationally about 4 % of Australians were food insecure due to financial constraints in 2012 which is considered a conservative estimate. The reported rates are significantly higher in population sub-groups, for example, 22 % of Indigenous populations. In remote areas this figure rose to 20 % of non-Indigenous Australians compared to 31 % of Indigenous Australians (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2015). Food insecurity is differentiated by economic resources (Temple 2008). Low-income earners such as single parent families' unemployed persons, people with disabilities, those with mental health issues, homeless, Indigenous, older adults and refugees are more likely to suffer from food inequality in Australia (Temple 2008; Ramsey et al. 2011; Gallegos et al. 2008).

The demand for and expansion of Australian through the charitable food sector give an indication of food inequality. Food banks, community agencies and school breakfast programs operating in Australia provide food for over 2 million people per year and this has been growing steadily (Lindberg et al. 2015). This growth has led to the emergency food relief system being referred to as an "industry" of itself (Booth and Whelan 2014).

A contributing factor to lack of problem acknowledgement is that Australian food is safe and considered relatively cheap (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2012). Food production exceeds population needs, with Australia producing enough to feed around 60 million people in 2010, about three times the population (Prime Minister's Science Engineering and Innovation Council 2010).

Economic development is the reason given for this overproduction, for example, Australian net exports, the difference between the value of food exports and food imports, increased by 5.3 % to \$AUD20.2 billion (Australian Government Department of Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry 2014). Australia's food price inflation of 0.5 % in 2012–13 was markedly lower than the for OECD average of 2.0 % (Australian Government Department of Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry 2014). Food inflation rates have been below the 4.4 %/year OECD average over two decades. Food inequality in Australia is relatively hidden due to the discourse associated with Australia's successful economic policies with high levels of employment and income support safety nets.

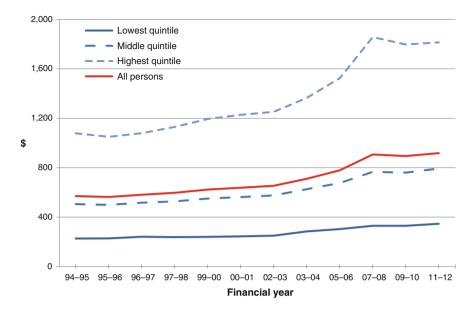
### The Current Situation in Australia

In the absence of an integrated national food and nutrition monitoring and surveillance system, a picture of food inequality in Australia is drawn from data sources that usually report on the national average, but have been used in this section to demonstrate inequality in income, geographical issues and health in Australia by reporting by quintiles of disadvantage where available.

### Income Inequality

A key problem in Australia is the rise in income inequality and in the number of people living in poverty. Economic growth has benefited the income poor in Australia but not the socially excluded (Smyth and Buchanan 2013). The poverty rate tends to be higher for older people than the population as a whole and higher for older women than men, the Australian old age poverty rate is 25–30 %. Between 1994–95 and 2011–12, the mean equivalised disposable household income (EDHI) increased in real terms from \$570AUD per week to \$918AUD; an increase of \$348AUD, see Fig. 9.1. Over the same period, the EDHI for households in the highest quintile increased in real terms by \$736AUD. The increase for those households in the lowest quintile was \$119AUD.

Poverty is generally defined relative to a 'poverty line', an indicator of low income, social disadvantage and hardship with those having a total income under the poverty line cut-off considered to be living in poverty (Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research 2015). Food affordability needs to be considered in terms of people's capacity to afford food. Australia has experienced 20 years of economic growth, yet in 2012, 13.9 % of all Australians were living below the 50 %-of-median-income poverty line, after taking housing costs into account. This rate is about a third higher than the OECD average poverty level of 11 % (Australian Council of Social Services 2014). 11 % of Australians It is likely that people living below the poverty line will not have sufficient money to meet



**Fig. 9.1** Mean weekly equivalised household income for low, middle and high quintiles (a), (b). (a) In 2011–12 dollars, adjusted using changes in the Consumer Price Index. (b) Estimates presented from 2007 to 2008 onwards are not directly comparable with estimates for previous cycles due to the improvements made to measuring income introduced in 2007–2008 cycle. Estimates for 2003–2004 and 2005–2006 have been recompiled to reflect the new treatments of income, however not all components introduced in 2007–2008. *Source* ABS (2013b)

basic food needs even if they have strong household management skills such budgeting and cooking at some points in time and may become reliant on cheap and filling foods (Anglicare Australia 2012a, b).

Food prices have risen in Australia by about 20 % between 2003 and 2010, after adjusting for overall inflation. The consumer price index (CPI) for food and non-alcoholic beverages increased by 0.5 % in 2012–13, compared to average increases of 3.3 % for the decade prior (Burns et al. 2008). This is despite the Australian Goods and Services Tax (GST) which exempts fresh food and basic items in an attempt to keep these foods affordable. The food exemption is viewed as a health protection policy, particularly for the socioeconomically disadvantaged. No evaluation of the economic benefit of this tax exemption has been undertaken, however, studies routinely show that the cost of fresh food increases disproportionally to other foods and all food prices increase with geographic remoteness (Burns and Friel 2007; Pollard et al. 2015; Harrison et al. 2007, 2010; Lee et al. 1996, 2002; Ward et al. 2012).

Healthy diets are out of reach for Australian welfare dependent families (Ward et al. 2013). Capacity to access a healthy diet can be measured by the proportion of disposable household income needed to purchase a basic healthy food basket (Ketting et al. 2009; Burns and Friel 2007). Figure 9.2 shows the income disparity

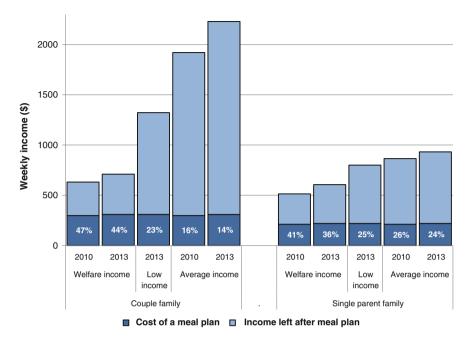


Fig. 9.2 Proportion of income required to purchase an affordable healthy meal plan, 2010 and 2013

between the average income, low income and welfare recipients in Western Australia in 2010 and 2013 based on the relative affordability of a healthy food basket to meet the nutrition needs of a family of six as described by Ketting et al. (2009), Pollard et al. (2015).

Food competes with other fixed (e.g. housing, transport, power) or unexpected (e.g. medical emergency, car maintenance) household expenses. Housing, food and non-alcoholic beverages expenditure (in that order) were the greatest proportion of goods and services costs in 2010 (website http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats). Decreases in housing affordability leads to higher rental demand affecting availability and price, increasing homelessness and food insecurity. Housing prices over the last three decades have increase and the proportion of household weekly expenditure on food and housing has decreased (see Fig. 9.3).

Assessments of food equality based on *average income* are at best misleading. Food inequality is evident in household expenditure when the highest income quintile is compared to the lowest. Families in the lowest quintile spend a greater proportion of their household expenditure on food and housing. This is in part due to increased expenditure on housing costs and medical and health expenses as a proportion of total expenditure compared to those in the highest income category (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2010b).

Figure 9.4 shows that for 2009–10, households in the highest EDHI quintile, spend more than twice as much on housing, food and health care than households in

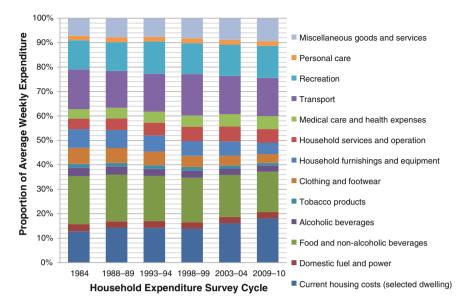


Fig. 9.3 Proportion of Household Expenditure, 1984 to 2009–10. *Source* Australian Bureau of Statistics (2010b)

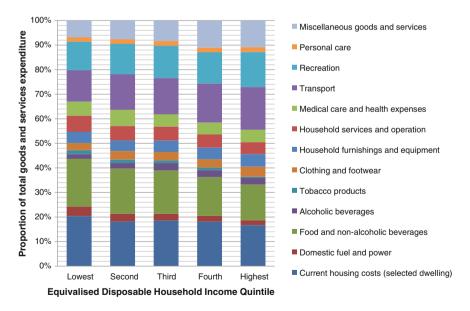


Fig. 9.4 Proportion of Household Expenditure by Quintile, 2009–10. *Source* Australian Bureau of Statistics (2010b)

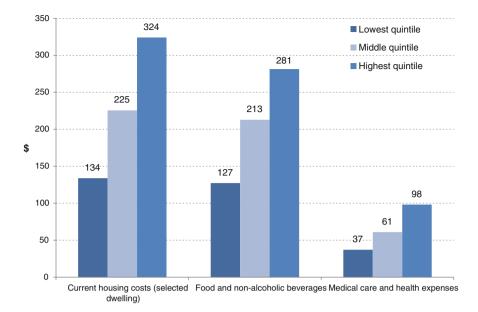


Fig. 9.5 Weekly household expenditure for selected goods and services, 2009–10. *Source* Australian Bureau of Statistics (2010a)

the lowest EDHI quintile. For households in the lowest EDHI quintile, 19.4 % of their income is spent on food and non-alcoholic beverages and 20.4 % is spent on current housing costs. For those households in the highest EDHI quintile, the proportion of their income they spend is 14.5 and 16.7 % respectively (Fig. 9.5).

### **Geographical Inequality (The Tyranny of Distance)**

Australia's vast land mass, 7,682,300 km<sup>2</sup>, means that food availability and access are determined in part by geography. Put into perspective, Australia's land mass is about that of the United States of America and about 50 % greater than Europe, and 32 times greater than the United Kingdom (Australian Government the Australian Continent, Council of Australian Governments 2009). Australian terrain is dry, 20 % is desert with low but variable average annual rainfall. Ninety percent of Australians live in urban areas, and half the population are aged between 30 and 70 years (World Health Organization 2014).

Food prices are not routinely monitored, ad hoc state-based healthy food market basket surveys provide some affordability information. The dearth of food pricing information is of concern due to geographic uniqueness of different states and anecdotal reports of 20–30 % higher food prices in rural and remote areas (Harrison et al. 2007, 2010; Pollard et al. 2014a, 2015; Palermo et al. 2008).

This inequality between urban and remote food prices has remained unchanged for decades. Foods promoted in government dietary guidelines for health (Australian Government 2013), such as fresh fruit, fresh vegetables and dairy foods, cost more in remote areas. Transport and freight costs are major contributors to food costs in remote communities (Pollard et al. 2014a, b; Pollard 2012). The distance, delivery mode (road or barge), temperature extremes, road conditions and access issues are predictors of transport efficiencies and food quality (Pollard 2012) with supply chain efficiencies needed to reduce the cost to remote communities. The geographic inequality seen with food prices is more likely to impact on Indigenous Australians who make up a significant proportion of those living in remote areas, particularly WA and NT.

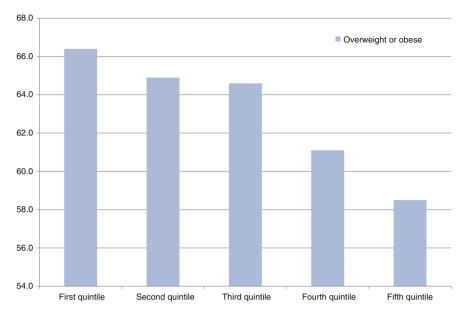
### Health Inequality

Between and within countries, health is extremely unequally divided and impacted by social and economic factors (Baum 2008). Despite Australia's wealth, there is inequality in life expectancy and illness, which is lowest in people with limited economic resources. People of low socioeconomic status are more likely to suffer disability, serious chronic illness and report only fair or poor health (McClelland et al. 1992; Turrell and Mathers 2001). There are health inequalities seen with relative socioeconomic disadvantage, based on the Australian Bureau of Statistics' Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2008) which includes a measure of relative area disadvantage.

Food insecurity co-exists with increase overweight and obesity, both products of economic and income related factors, shows the relationship relative disadvantage and health risk factors including obesity. The relationship between food insecurity and obesity appears paradoxical, and therefore, is complex as the solution to one will not 'fix' the other at the same time. (Troy et al.) It is likely that relying on energy-dense, nutrient poor foods which are relatively cheap compared to nutritious foods will influence health. Figure 9.6 shows the inequality in the population distribution of overweight and obesity.

## What Are the Challenges for Food Inequality in Developed Countries Like Australia?

The 'Lucky Country' discourse and the lack of recognition of the existence of inequalities in the capacity to access food as well as the subsequent health outcomes is a challenge for vulnerable Australians. Government documents communicate the belief that no one should go hungry in a wealthy country (Australian Government Department of Agriculture Fisheries and Forestery 2014). These beliefs reflect the



**Fig. 9.6** Proportion of persons who are overweight or obese by index of relative socio-economic disadvantage (a), (b). (a) Based on measured body mass index (BMI) equal to or greater than 25.0. Includes only those persons 18 years and over for whom height and weight were measured. (b) Based on the 2006 index of relative socio-economic disadvantage. *Source* Australian Bureau of Statistics (2013a)

dominant economic philosophy of neoliberalism where food policy focuses on consolidating and expanding competitive markets with economics, rather than human development as the major driver (Lawrence et al. 2013). Currently, the overriding proposition is that increasing economic growth and wealth is beneficial to health and prosperity because it results in a better standard of living, improved health care and wellbeing (Friel 2014a). Current Australian policy identifies food sustainability, affordability and insecurity as problems of social disadvantage and remoteness requiring changes to social policy rather than influencing food access through agricultural policy. To achieve food equality and therefore health equality these views must be challenged. From a public health perspective, equity is considered desirable and achievable and should be a basic objective of social and economic policy (Baum 2008).

Australia has a contemporary social ethos of a 'fair go' for all. Applying a social justice lens to food and agriculture policy decision-making processes may compel change. Baum (2008) notes that equality policy is about 'sameness' rather than 'fairness' which is the aim of equity policy however that both aim to ensure fair treatment (Baum 2008). Achieving food equality in Australia requires health, social justice, and environmental protection as policy drivers and outcomes. Political leadership, courage, progressive public policy, social action and a sound evidence base are required to address health inequalities (Friel 2014c).

Research suggests that the key drivers of public health are across diverse government policy portfolios (Carey 2014). While the responsibility for managing the impact of food inequality lies with the health sector, the food policy responsibility lies with external agencies such as Agriculture, Trade, Transport and Finance (Pretty et al. 2010). Strong political will, collaboration and a coordinated approach across many sectors is needed to reorient the food system using a whole-of-government approach (Carey and Crammond 2015; Public Health Association of Australia 2011). The Australian Government's now defunct Preventative Health taskforce called for a multi-faceted multi-sector response to obesity in its optimistic *Australia: The Healthiest Country by 2020* report including transport subsidies to ensure healthy, affordable foods are accessible across Australia (Government 2009). Traction in initiating whole-of-government approaches in Australia is yet to be achieved. At present governments appear to have left solutions to food inequality to the charitable food sector.

There is increasing income inequality and even middle income families who experience income reductions (i.e. through job loss) or who have high living expenses may experience food insecurity (Anglicare Australia 2012a, b). Social policy reforms are progressively shrinking the social safety net, rather than building the active, integrated and balanced social policy program that has contributed to Australia's economic development (Friel 2014a). Australians are protected by a social security safety net with an established basic floor of universal social protection including education assistance, unemployment benefits, universal health care and welfare assistance for vulnerable groups Australia Government (2015). Social services protect citizens through life cycle vulnerabilities (the young, mothers, elderly) and those due to disability, loss of employment, homelessness. Traditionally viewed as relatively robust, these protections are being challenged by neoliberalism where consolidating the market is the arbiter of economic and agricultural, policies (Lawrence et al. 2013).

Australians residing in remote Indigenous communities are more susceptible to food insecurity and provide an insight into the challenges of achieving food equality (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare). Government policy to reduce the impact of food insecurity and poor health among Indigenous Australians has been extensive (Pollard and Bornman 2012) and at times strong political led to regulatory efforts, for example community stores licencing to increase the supply of food as in the Northern Territory's Emergency Response Act in 2007 (NTER) (Australian Government 2009). Reports on the NTER acknowledged that it did not do enough to improve the affordability of foods. The 2009 Food Security in remote indigenous communities strategy aimed to improve both the supply and demand for nutritious foods in remote Indigenous communities to address health disparities (Council of Australian Governments 2009). This initiative applied learnings from the NTER store licensing along with nutrition promotion and workforce interventions, however, political changes led to a loss of intention and support for these interventions. Social policy such as income management quarantine a proportion of

welfare payments for allowable purchases, e.g. food, whilst banning products, such as tobacco and alcohol (Brimblecombe et al. 2010), with conflicting results, a range of benefits were reported by some government reports (Australian Government 2009) while others suggested limited impact and questioned the value for those most at risk (Brimblecombe et al. 2010; Farrell 2011).

Policy decisions are hampered by the lack of evidence on food inequality and its impacts. The Committee on World Food Security of the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations calls for countries to map and review food security and nutrition actions (Committee on World Food Security (CSF) 2011). Routinely reporting requirements on the health and social impact by applying food inequality assessments of all government policy would make the issues visible. Measurement and policy are inextricably linked since lack of data is likely to lead to policy inertia. Policy evidence must be of a high standard, take a strategic perspective and compelling to be effective (Henry 2007). With no routine monitoring of issues like food and nutrition security it is difficult to build evidence to challenge the status quo (Seal 2004). Monitoring food price and quality provides evidence for social policy reform such as increasing the minimum wage arguments (West Australian Council of Social Services 2013). Australian food statistics currently do not report on the human, social and environmental impacts of food such as reported by some countries (Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs 2014; Barosh et al. 2014).

The challenges outlined indicate Australia is not the lucky country for all citizens. Australia cannot afford to rely on luck to achieve healthy food for all and we have the capacity to be clever in policy efforts to reduce food inequality. These challenges continue to be the basis for public health authorities' advocacy for an Australian food policy vision of "*a safe, nutritious, affordable, secure and environmentally sustainable food system accessible to all Australians for health, wellbeing and prosperity now and into the future*" (Public Health Association of Australia 2011, 2012). The ultimate call to action is for "the Federal Government to take responsibility and to be accountable for a healthy, sustainable and fair food system".

### **Conclusion: Issues to Consider**

How to public health practitioners influence policy to consider the value of putting people first in food policy decision. The notion of food for all.

What would a comprehensive Food and nutrition monitoring systems that report on food inequality look like?

What role does government have in reduced geographic inequality in food access and availability and what are the best policy instruments in which to achieve this?

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# Chapter 10 Work in Progress: Addressing Food Insecurity in Brazil

Cecilia Rocha

## Introduction

According to Harvey (2005: 2), neoliberalism is "a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong property rights, free market and free trade". In the literature, neoliberal practices have often been associated with growing levels of poverty, inequality, violence, and deteriorating health and living conditions of the poor (Kim et al. 2000; Springer 2008; Wacquant 2009). Thus, among present discourses "taken for granted" is that neoliberal economic policies are not compatible with strong social welfare programs. In countries of the global north, growing food insecurity and the rise of food banking, for example, are linked to neoliberal welfare reforms, which led to the dismantling of publicly funded social safety nets (Riches and Silvasti 2014).

The case of Brazil does not fit neatly the classical neoliberal mold, and has political scientists looking for other terms to describe it—"neo-developmentalism" (Morais and Saad-Filho 2012), and "left neoliberalism" (Saad-Filho 2013) have been suggested. In the past twenty years, many of the neoliberal policy prescriptions of price stability (inflation control), privatization, and market liberalization (of domestic finance, foreign trade, exchange rates, and foreign investment) have been closely followed in the country. The 1994 *real* plan is credited as a successful anti-inflation program, which used high interest rates to attract large inflows of foreign capital. Since then, policies on low-inflation targeting, control of the public debt, support of international trade, and maintaining monetary stability have been followed (Morais and Saad-Filho 2011). At the same time, and particularly since

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2003, there has also been a strong government presence in social programs. As a consequence, neoliberal policies in Brazil have coexisted with, if not led to, significant decline in poverty and inequality, even after the 2008 global financial crisis. Critics of the neoliberal path adopted in the country did not expect such results (Mollo and Saad-Filho 2006). What the Brazilian case suggests is that there may be conditions under which progressive social policies are not incompatible with a neoliberal economy.

The focus of this chapter is on describing some of the main policies and programs responsible for the decline in food poverty and insecurity in Brazil, particularly since 2003. These policies require significant state presence and intervention in ways which seem anathema in many neoliberal settings. The chapter also describes some of the main challenges moving forward in the food security area. By discussing the case of Brazil in successfully addressing food poverty and insecurity, the chapter raises the possibility of social advances in a context of mostly neoliberal macroeconomic policies.

## **Evidence of Reduction in Food Poverty and Insecurity**

In its report on the Status of Food and Nutrition Security in Brazil (FAO 2014), the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization declared Brazil off the "hunger map" since, by the end of 2013, less than 5 % of the country's population showed any degree of undernourishment. This was certainly news to be celebrated in a country where until very recently hunger was assumed to be a permanent part of its social, economic and even cultural makeup.

Changes leading to the elimination of Brazil from the "hunger map" were evident in many fronts. First, in the past two decades, Brazil has been very successful in reducing poverty, particularly extreme poverty. From 1990 to 2012, the incidence of extreme poverty (below US\$1.25/day per capita) went from 25.5 to 3.5 % of the population (IPEA 2014). Historically one of the most unequal countries in the world, a reduction in inequality contributed to the reduction in extreme poverty. Between 2001 and 2012, income of the poorest 20 % of the population grew three times the growth of income of the richest 20 % Brazilians (FAO 2014). Between 1990 and 2012, the percentage of the national income accruing to the 20 % poorest group increased from 2.2 to 3.4 %, while the percentage accruing to the richest 20 % went from 65.2 to 57.1 % (IPEA 2014). Consequently, the Gini index of income inequality decreased from 0.612 in 1990 to 0.526 in 2012 (IPEA 2014).

Health and other indicators have also shown improvement in the past few years. Life expectancy for Brazilian men grew from 63.2 years in 1991 to 71.3 years in 2013. For women, the growth was from 70.9 to 78.6 years in the same period (IBGE 2014). Growth in family incomes, along with improvements in basic sanitation, mothers' education, breast feeding rates, vaccination coverage, and greater access to basic health services, complemented increased food and nutrition security to put Brazil above the world average in the reduction of child (less than five years

old) mortality rates (UNICEF 2012; IBGE 2014). Between 1990 and 2011, child mortality rates declined from 53.7 to 17.7 per thousand live births (IPEA 2014); infant mortality rates (children younger than 1 year old) went from 47.1 to 15.3 in that period (IPEA 2014), reaching 15.0 per thousand live births in 2013 (IBGE 2014).

In terms of the population's nutritional status, the percentage of children presenting deficits in height per age (or 'stunting' as an indicator of chronic undernutrition) declined from 19.6 to 6.8 % between 1989 and 2006 (IPEA 2014; see also FAO 2014); the percentage of children presenting weight below the expected for their age (or 'wasting' as an indicator of acute undernutrition) went from 7.1 % in 1989 to 1.8 % in 2006 (IPEA 2014). National Household Surveys showed a decline in the percentage of households reporting any degree<sup>1</sup> (mild, moderate, or severe) of food insecurity, from 34.8 % in 2004 to 30.5 % in 2009, with the more pronounced decrease being in the number of households reporting severe food insecurity (Burlandy et al. 2014).

## **Policies, Programs, and Governance**

Macroeconomic policies helped in controlling inflation and sustaining growth at sufficient levels to promote the increase of formal employment in the country. Although in decline in the previous decade, between 2003 and 2012 formal employment grew by 70 % (Costanzi and Ansiliero 2013), corresponding to the occupation of 57 % of Brazilian workers (Martins 2013). The growth of formal employment and a steady decrease in the open unemployment rate (from 12.3 % in 2003 to 5.0 % in 2014), even after the global financial crisis of 2008, were added to a policy of valorization of the minimum salary (which gained 68 % in purchasing power between 2004 and 2014) (DIEESE 2014; Pinto 2014). These led to significant improvements in the lives of workers, particularly the poorest cohorts whose compensation amounts to only one minimum salary. With an overall population of 200 million people, in 2012, 10.8 million workers and 20.3 million social security recipients depended on only one minimum salary as their income (DIEESE 2014).

Beyond the favourable results emanating from economic growth and stability (which could be credited to the neoliberal macroeconomic policies followed since the 1990s), since 2003 the government has pursued a deliberate policy to decrease food poverty and insecurity. Federal expenditures on social programs corresponded to 17 % of the country's gross domestic product (GDP) by 2012, an increase of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>In the survey, "mild" food insecurity was reported by households expressing preoccupation with the possibility of running out of food or not being able to procure quality food; "moderate" food insecurity was detected in households which suffered some form of food restriction, compromising the quantity and/or quality of food during the period covered in the survey; and "severe" food insecurity was detected in households which went without food (experiencing hunger) for some time during the period in question.

128 % since 2000 (CAISAN 2014). Specific programs to combat hunger and food insecurity were first organized under what became known as the *Zero Hunger* strategy (Rocha 2009; Graziano da Silva et al. 2010), which reflected a systemic view of food and nutrition security by addressing food access and also production, distribution and consumption of quality food and diets (Table 10.1).

Table 10.1 Zene hungen	
Table 10.1 Zero hunger strategy (circa 2004)	I—Food access
	Bolsa Familia—family grant (PBF)
	National school meals programme (PNAE)
	Food for specific groups
	Rainwater cisterns
	Popular restaurants and community kitchens
	Food banks
	• Urban agriculture
	Food and nutrition surveillance system
	Distribution of vitamin A
	Distribution of iron supplements
	Food and nutrition for indigenous people
	Food and nutrition education for consumption
	Promotion of healthy habits/healthy diets
	Workers food programme (PAT)
	Basic food basket tax reduction
	II—Strengthening family agriculture
	National programme for family agriculture (PRONAF)
	Harvest insurance
	Family farming agriculture insurance
	Food procurement programme (PAA)
	III—Income generation
	Social and professional training
	Solidarity economy and productive inclusion
	Food security and local development consortium
	Food and nutrition security organisation
	Cooperatives of recyclable material collectors
	Guided productive micro-credit
	IV—Partnership and civil society mobilisation
	Social assistance reference centre
	Social mobilisation and citizenship education
	Social and public agents capacity building
	Volunteer work and donations
	Partnership with private sector and NGOs
	Social development councils
	Source Ministry of Social Development and Fight against Hunger
	(MDS), http://www.mds.gov.br/

The Family Grant Program (*Programa Bolsa Família*—*PBF*) has been the most important initiative of the *Zero Hunger* strategy. Introduced in 2003 as an amalgamation of diverse and smaller programs, PBF has become the largest conditional cash transfer program in the world, covering 13.8 million families (a quarter of the Brazilian population) in 2012 (IPEA 2013). The conditions to be met by the recipients are related to the children's school attendance and currency with vaccination schedules. The program transfers monthly payments to families classified as poor or extremely poor. In 93 % of the cases, the transfers go to an adult woman in the household, with the total amount received depending on the number of children younger than 16 in the family. Studies have shown that families receiving the grant have increased consumption of all food groups (Lignani et al. 2010; Jannuzi and Pinto 2013).

Recent evaluations disseminated by Brazil's Institute for Applied Economic Research (IPEA) reveals that PBF has been both effective and cost efficient (IPEA 2013). While federal resources going to the program grew by 350 % between 2004 and 2013, reaching R\$24.9 billion or approximately US\$10 billion (Pinto 2014), PBF accounts for only 0.5 % of the country's GDP, but it has an estimated 1.78 multiplier effect on the country's gross domestic product. PBF also accounts for 28 % of the decline in extreme poverty, and between 12 and 21 % in the fall of the Gini income inequality coefficient (IPEA 2013). The program has decreased regional inequalities in Brazil, since the majority of beneficiaries reside in the poorest regions of the country. Other studies have also shown that the PBF scores high for its target accuracy (i.e., it does reach the intended group) without any negative effect on incentives to work or any increases in fertility rates (IPEA 2013). Additional benefits include the growth in children's school attendance, better health monitoring of infants, and advances for women in gender relations. Since 2003, 1.7 million families have "graduated" from the program as their incomes increased above the cut-off level of eligibility for benefits (Gombata 2014).

Another set of programs originally associated with the Zero Hunger strategy were designed to create institutional markets for food produced by smallholder farmers (Rocha et al. 2012). The Food Acquisition Program (*Programa de Aquisição de Alimentos—PAA*) provides public funding for the purchase of food crops and milk from family farms (Chmielewska and Souza 2010). Its largest modality promotes direct purchases from family farms to be simultaneously donated to government food programs such as subsidized restaurants, community kitchens and food banks, as well as charitable organizations (community child-care centres and nursing homes, hospitals, homeless shelters, etc.). The program donates food to institutions, which in 2010 benefitted 18.8 million people (MDS 2011). The number of participating farmers increased from 42,000 in 2003 to 185,000 in 2012, with a program budget of US\$450 million in that last year. Such expenditures represent only 0.0004 % of Brazil's GDP (IPC-IG 2013).

Support for family farmers is also coming from the Ministry of Education and Culture, responsible for funding the country's School Meals Program (*Programa Nacional de Alimentação Escolar—PNAE*). Requiring (since 2009) that 30 % of the funding for school food be spent on products from family farms, PNAE can

potentially take institutional markets to a new level. Unlike most government programs associated with the PAA (food banks, subsidized restaurants, community kitchens, homeless shelters), which are not necessarily present in all municipalities and, when present, are characterized by precarious conditions and uncertainties, the School Meals Program is well established in the country. Since 1955, municipal and state public schools are required to run a feeding program to cover at least 15 % of the children's daily nutritional needs (calories, proteins, and other nutrients). Public schools in Brazil are important institutional buyers of food. PNAE serves over 45 million children per day throughout the country (IPG-IG 2013). Favouring the supply of fresh vegetables and fruit from family farms, this initiative also aims at increasing the availability of healthy foods for children in the public school system (Burlandy et al. 2014).

While the PBF, PAA and PNAE are examples of innovative and successful programs contributing to the elimination of hunger and reduction of other forms of food and nutrition insecurity, one may argue that the most significant gain in the past few years has been in the institutionalization of policy for food and nutrition security in the country. This institutionalization includes not only laws and regulations, but also the creation of institutions and practices of governance, which include the participation of civil society (Rocha 2009).

At the national level, this model of governance is represented in the National Council for Food and Nutrition Security (CONSEA), an advisory body to the President on policies and general guidelines for food and nutrition security. Composed of two-thirds from civil society and the private sector, and one-third from the federal government, among its members CONSEA has representatives from labor unions, business associations, food industry, church groups, professional associations, academics, and non-governmental organizations representing family farmers, Indigenous communities, and others. Since 2003 CONSEA has been central in the institutionalization of food and nutrition security policy. In 2006, its proposed National Law on Food and Nutrition Security (LOSAN) was passed by congress. Article 1 of LOSAN "establishes definitions, principles, guidelines, objectives and composition of the National System for Food and Nutrition Security-SISAN, through which the State, with the participation of organized civil society, will formulate and implement policies, plans, programs and actions towards ensuring the human right to adequate food" (Brazil 2005). For the first time in the history of the country the Right to Food is institutionalized as a matter of public policy and an obligation of the state. In 2010, the Right to Adequate Food was added to Brazil's constitution.

## New and Continuing Challenges

The path towards food and nutrition security is a work in progress in Brazil. Despite the significant gains described above, close to seven million people are still extremely poor, and a quarter of the country's population is receiving cash grants under the PBF for being poor (falling under the country's poverty line). So, challenges abound. Among those, inequality continues to be high. Extreme poverty is more common among rural households (9.3 %) than urban (2.6 %), affecting more black families (4.8 %) than white (2.1 %). Only 1.5 % of the population in the South was classified as extremely poor in 2012, but 7.3 % of the people in the Northeast were in this situation. While child and infant mortality rates have declined in all regions of the country, in 2011 child mortality rates were 20.7 per thousand live births in the Northeast region, but 13.0 in the South; infant mortality rates were 18.0 in the Northeast and 11.3 in the South (IPEA 2014).

Of particular concern is the situation of Brazil's indigenous population (800 thousand people or 0.4 % of the country's population in 2010). The child mortality rate in this group is 41.9 per thousand live births, more than double the average rate in the country. Among the main causes of indigenous child mortality is malnutrition and this population's precarious access to basic health care services. The highest incidence of tuberculosis and other infection diseases has also been linked to poor nutrition and poor living conditions (Ferreira et al. 2011).

Another challenge in the field of food and nutrition security is the growth in the prevalence of overweight and obesity in all ages and socio-economic groups in Brazil. In the adult population, from 2006 to 2012 overweight rates increased from 43.2 to 51.0 % of the population in the major cities of the country, while the prevalence of obesity rates went from 11.6 to 17.4 % in that period (Malta et al. 2014). Among children from five to nine years old, in 2009 33.5 % were overweight and 14.3 % were considered obese (Reis et al. 2011).

The federal government has developed a number of policies and initiatives to combat the rise of overweight and obesity (Reis et al. 2011; Malta et al. 2012, 2014), many of those focusing on children in public schools. In 2011 the government launched the Strategic Action Plan to Combat Chronic Non-Communicable Diseases (2011–2022) incorporating many initiatives, including a revision of the Food Guide for the Brazilian Population. Launched in 2014, the new Brazilian food guide is being lauded as "revolutionary" for the promotion of sustainable food systems and the classification of foods into three main groups: minimally processed, substances extracted from whole foods, and ultra-processed foods (Brasil 2014). The simple recommendation which follows is that diets should be based on fresh and minimally processed foods, and that the consumption of ultra-processed products should be avoided or at least minimized (see also Monteiro 2009). The Guide focuses on food processing, and proposes "10 steps to healthy eating" which go much beyond the importance of nutrients (Table 10.2).

Worries about the country's less-than-impressive economic growth in the past few years are also challenging the progress ahead. Economic growth during the past twenty years relied greatly on commodity exports, particularly agriculture (Amaral and Peduto 2010). Brazil is a leader in the export of soybeans, beef, poultry, orange juice, sugar, and coffee. Trade and currency liberalization favoured the growth of agribusiness exports, which benefitted from a trade diversification policy increasing South-South commerce, particularly with China. The agribusiness sector also received support from public investment in research (through, for example, the

Table 10.2 10 steps for healthy eating	1. Make fresh or minimally processed foods the basis of your diet
	2. Use oils, fats, sugar and salt in moderation
	3. Limit the consumption of ready-to-consume food and drink products
	4. Eat regular meals, paying attention, and in appropriate environments
	5. Eat in company whenever possible
	6. Buy food at places that offer varieties of fresh foods. Avoid those that mainly sell products ready for consumption
	7. Develop, practice and share skills in food preparation and cooking
	8. Plan time to give meals and eating the space they deserve
	9. When eating out, choose restaurants that serve freshly made dishes and meals. Avoid fast food chains
	10. Be critical of the information, guidance and messages conveyed by commercial advertisement of food products
	Source Food guide for the Brazilian population (Brasil 2014)

Brazilian Corporation for Agricultural Research—Embrapa) and the expansion of cultivated areas (The Economist 2010). The country grew an average of 2.3 % annually from 1995 to 2002 (during the government of President Fernando Henrique Cardoso), and 4.0 % annually between 2003 and 2010 (during the government of President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva). While it has registered average annual growth of 2.0 % between 2011 and 2013 (under President Dilma Rousseff), it had zero growth in 2014 (Martello 2015). Adding to the economic pressures, growing inflation and rising public debt are signaling a more austere macroeconomic policy ahead.

Maintaining social programs in times of austerity pressures requires not only a strong commitment from the government, but also a government that enjoys strong political support and legitimacy. This is another concern in the current political situation in the country. President Dilma Rousseff was reelected for a second term in 2014 with the smallest of the margins in recent elections, and many members of her party (the Workers Party-PT) have been associated with notorious scandals of large-scale political corruption. The election campaign and corruption scandals have undermined government legitimacy, making it more difficult to move its agenda forward. In 2014 the government proposed a new National Policy on Social Participation (*Política Nacional de Participação Social—PNPS*), much in response to the street protests it faced in 2013. The PNPS had the expressed objective to further promote social participation in the planning, design, monitoring and evaluation of federal public policies. The proposal, however, was defeated in congress, with the opposition describing the initiative as "anti-democratic" since, it argued, it could lead to non-elected individuals (from civil society) having undue influence on policy-making (Azevedo 2014).

## Conclusion

The adoption of neoliberal policies by centre-left governments in the last decade of the 20th and first decade of the twenty-first centuries both in the global north (e.g., Bill Clinton in the US and Tony Blair in Britain) and in Latin America have forced political and other social scientists to "rethink" neoliberalism (Ibarra 2011; Baeten 2012; Dean 2014; Flew 2014). Some have argued for abandoning the term altogether, as it is not an appropriate or useful concept to represent these new realities; that we have now entered (particularly after 2008) a "post-neoliberal" phase (Peck et al. 2009; Yates and Bakker 2014). Others, however, see neoliberalism as malleable, being shaped by and expressed through different geographies, modalities and pathways (Brenner et al. 2010). According to Dean (2014: 154), under liberalism there can be a "positive role for the state in the construction of the conditions necessary for the free operation of the market".

Many of the macroeconomic policies followed in Brazil in the past twenty years have embraced neoliberal principles, but the country has also seen a strong presence of the state in social programs. Greater international trade, particularly in agricultural commodities, provided much of the basis for economic growth. At the same time, a strong government commitment to reducing poverty saw the growth of resources towards social programs. That combination has led to significant positive results in the reduction of food and nutrition insecurity.

Despite this undeniable progress, Brazil still faces many challenges ahead. Poverty continues to be a reality for a large portion of the population, and more nuanced ways to reach the most marginalized groups, including its indigenous population, must be devised for further meaningful gains to be detected. Having practically eliminated hunger, the country is now turning to issues concerning the quality of its foods and diets, and to the sustainability of the food system.

Further progress, however, requires continuing political commitment and government resources. As austerity pressure mounts and the political capital of the federal government further deteriorates with corruption revelations, the future of social programs is uncertain. The popularity of the Family Grant Program will most certainly protect it from significant changes. But this cannot be said about other programs promoting family farming or supporting minimum salaries. In times of austerity and loss of legitimacy, it is even more difficult to see how the transformation of the food system envisioned in the country's new Food Guide could have a chance.

Still, despite having come to fruition in the past 10 years, the set of policies and programs leading to better food and nutrition security in Brazil have been in the making for much longer than that. And despite the recent defeat of the National Policy on Social Participation in congress, the participation of civil society in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of public policies and programs is a reality, well ingrained in the country (Rocha et al. 2012). In times of austerity pressures, the future of social programs may depend on how engaged and determined civil society groups are in maintaining that participation.

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# **Chapter 11 Food Austerity; Concluding Thoughts and Reflections**

Martin Caraher and John Coveney

This chapter takes the form of a conversation between the two editors reflecting on the chapters and the process and, yes, it did happen like it is reported below. We have changed very little and added some references, but it is pretty much as it occurred.

- John The overall concept we've been working with for this book, is broadly food security and food poverty in the age of austerity. Perhaps I am reserved about rampant austerity, but I would like to give support to the notion of some kind of parsimony. That is to say, a belief that less is often more (Coveney 2011). In a world where we're consuming madly I think the idea of having a parsimonious approach to food and health is an approach that I would want to support. What I don't like is the way that the requirement to be austere is not evenly distributed; that some people, usually those less well off, are required to be more austere than others, and I'd like your thoughts about that.
- Martin I think that's true but I also think what's happened is that parsimony has become a dogma. It is now become part of public health rhetoric in that we expect people to behave in certain ways which do not recognize that the society we live in—a consumer environment. This has been described as a consumptogenic environment (Dixon et al. 2006). In order to live parsimoniously it takes capital; it takes assets. The poor now can't live parsimoniously because the rich have hijacked that area. So the well off can eat local, can eat sustainable and the poor can't. The poor now eat 'global goods'; these are highly processed foods.
- John That's very interesting, isn't it, because if you say that one has to be reasonably well off to be parsimonious, that really buys into our

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understanding about how to eat sustainably. For example, what a lot of farmers' markets are about.

- Martin Yes but it is not always the case that farmers' markets are the province of the rich (Markow et al. 2014). In this book we have examples from New York (Libman, Chap. 6) where farmers' markets exist where people on pensions and benefits are given extra value, even premiums, for shopping at farmers' markets so there are ways around, it but you have to be very creative and use policy to make an impact. Here we have an example from these problems, probably in the most consumptogenic environment in the world, New York, and yet people are finding ways around some of the problems of access and equity and using the system; I think that's the interesting point being made.
- John And your point about the way that parsimonious living has been hijacked by a certain elite really is important because what you're saying there is that in order to be parsimonious one often has to have choice. You choose to be parsimonious—so called 'opt-in frugality'. You choose to follow rules about austerity. But the less well off can't choose. Yet they are required to be parsimonious. It is required of them; they don't have any choice about that.
- Martin Yes, I think we've all got to live more parsimoniously in this environment otherwise the planet is not going to survive, but for some of us that's a choice; for other people that's not a choice, it's an enforcement, a requirement (Egger and Swinburn 2010). Those of us with resources can choose to make decisions about local, sustainable, organic, etc., and some people just don't have that choice. The chapter (Carimentrand et al., Chap. 7) on the rise of community supermarkets in France shows how the links can be made to deliver a more sustainable food supply but also a more politically related food system which engages people.
- John It's interesting that some of our authors in our book pick this up. For example Randy Stringer (Chap. 2) talks about the way that the problem of food security is not really to do with the production or the amount of food; we do have enough food.
- Martin Absolutely and we have enough food, Stringer says, for the next 10– 15 years. The problem is distribution of that food. Some authors in the book have focused on a 'rights' argument; for example, in both India and South African right—the right to food (Lindgren, Chap. 5; Muzigaba, Puoane and Sanders, Chap. 4), the Brazilian right to food (Rocha, Chap. 10). But it goes back to a more structural issue which might be Peter Townsend's argument (Hick 2014; Townsend and Black 1992; Marmot 2010) that this is more about structure than about rights. So people may have a *right* but that right does not give them *access* to the food. So Townsend (1979) would have argued in the past, in his classic book on poverty, that this is a structural issue so we're midway between rights and structure and a lot of the chapters in this book reflect that.

- John So are you saying that the right is not facilitated in any way. It's a principle, but in practice the structure isn't there to allow those rights to transfer to practices?
- I think that's a good analysis. A number of the chapters in this book show Martin that. I think the right to food is important; but on its own it is not sufficient to provide food security. It is merely the first step. I was heartened by the Brazilian chapter (Rocha, Chap. 10) which showed one of the emerging economies in the world—the Brazilian economy—is not just accepting neoliberalism but is actually harnessing it. So Brazilian welfare programmes are not divorced from the principle of neoliberalism but they're not allowing it to run roughshod over rights; they're harnessing it. To some extent the chapter on France said something similar (Carimentrand et al., Chap. 7). It is about bringing back power to people, but they don't necessarily have a rights approach in France. I think that although we have three chapters in the book with rights approach-in India (Lindgren, Chap. 4), Brazil (Rocha, Chap. 10) and South Africa (Muzigaba, Puoane and Sanders, Chap. 5)—each show the practical elements about how to deliver on that right. So approaches are welfare driven: hand-out rather than hand-up approaches.
- John To what extent do you think the Brazilian example and the French example is about the way neoliberalism has been influenced by the ideology in those countries? I don't know so much about Brazil but certainly in France the neoliberal market-driven ideology would have been softened by the French socialist foundations.
- Martin Yes. But most of these political transformations have not happened under a socialist government, don't forget, but more under a right wing political system. But people in France still tend to have a rights approach to more general issues, not necessarily only around food. But what is interesting about the French example is that the chapter describes the involvement of communities—in a business sense—and that was the interesting thing. It wasn't just volunteerism; it was based within a business model. These businesses had to be sustainable from a number of perspectives, dealing with local farmers, but from a business perspective they had to break even. I still think they rely somewhat on volunteers but they employed people and this is, you know, a big movement, I think akin to what's happening in the Brazilian situation.
- John Yes, I was also very interested in the kind of post-neoliberal approach taken in the chapter on Brazil (Rocha, Chap. 10). It demonstrates for me that neoliberalism doesn't always have to be a market-oriented approach; it can actually be harnessed for other ways and means and opportunities. Some of the other chapters in the book address not so much *rights* but *wrongs*. I'm thinking about the discussions on food banks as an example so-called "successful failures". What are your thoughts here?

- Martin Yes a number of the chapters discuss the growth of emergency food aid and food banks, including the chapters on Australia (Pollard, Begley and Landrigan, Chap. 9), France (Carimentrand et al., Chap. 7) and food banks as successful failures (Ronson and Caraher, Chap. 8). Undoubtedly food banks fulfil an immediate need and that is hunger. But do they solve people's underlying problem of food insecurity? There's little or no evidence that they do. Food banks are growing and Australia and the UK. There is concern that advanced neoliberal economies are turning to food banks as the welfare state retreats. This becomes a chicken/egg dilemma. Food poverty is not a problem so long as food banks are dealing with the situation. I think that's one of the things public health communities haven't got to grips with this. There appears to be a tendency to tackle the symptoms rather than the underlying cause.
- John So again that's structural isn't it? There is just a solution that doesn't really question the problem.
- Martin And it probably doesn't even draw on evidence. Indeed, there is no evidence to show food banks provide food security in the longer term, yet we still invest in them (see Ronson and Caraher, Chap. 8).
- John I wonder whether it's another example of the more middle class agenda, because basically this is about some sense of austerity. Is it saying 'well, we're not going to throw this food away, we're going to give it to a food bank because that's part of our overall ideology towards food excess'?
- Martin I mean that's from the individual donor and that's very true, this sense of the individual donor can put their tin of beans in the box and feel they're doing good, and business can donate their waste or surplus food and not feel they're sending it to landfill, and indeed get tax breaks and not have to pay for landfill. The growth of food banks and the supposition that they are a solution to the underlying causes of food poverty and hunger misses the point. They merely offer emergency food aid. Elevating them to a solution ignores the earlier argument over the issue of structure. Partially this is related to an argument over rights versus structure and, while I am a fan of Amartya Sens' work, an over-reliance on a rights agenda can lead to a dismissal of the structural argument (Hick 2014).
- John It is quite a food bank industry in some places.
- Martin Yes. In the UK we've gone from zero to a thousand within 12 years and it's like—and in Australia, you know, it's now a nationwide system of distribution of food. Yet again the examples from Brazil and France show other options.
- John I was intrigued by the South African example (Muzigaba, Puoana and Sanders, Chap. 5) in the way in which two consequences of food insecurity manifest themselves: one as under nutrition and the other as over nutrition. We know that this 'malnutrition' affects different demographics, where in the face of food insecurity children are more likely to become undernourished, and adults become overweight and obese.

- Martin Lots of the data we now know this happens (Popkin 2006) and it is a structural issue, but it's also a cultural issue. I think what the South African chapter shows is you've got people coming out of a situation where old fashioned austerity and underweight was associated with starvation and famines. But also where fatness is a cultural phenomenon where heaviness is admired. I think the interesting thing is that the people who grow hungry are the people who are obese. I mean they're the same cohort in the developed world and that's quite a hard concept to get across. This is especially so in the media where there is a tendency to portray people as either fat and lazy and thus the undeserving poor, or as victims of hunger and thus the deserving poor. Actually they're not different groups.
- John Which is quite a new experience for us, isn't it? Because one normally associate obesity with surplus and excess. One of the things that did strike me reading the chapters was that there doesn't seem to be a 'one size fits all' solution in terms of addressing food insecurity, even thought there appears to be a common rhetoric of austerity which gives the impression that the same measures are being applied. But the solution to food security within those austerity measures is not going to address food insecurity in all of them.
- Martin I think that's true. I think what we've encouraged in this book is many voices. We're hearing voices from different perspectives and I think the South East Asia chapter (Tahil, Chap. 3) shows up a number of issues around that. For example, technology is presented as one of the solutions to food security, whereas none of the other chapters highlight technology in the same way. That goes back to the argument about parsimonious living. Some economies may simply not have the choices required to be parsimonious. It becomes very clear from South East Asia that they are on a different trajectory. Many South East Asian countries are emerging economies, and, unlike other jurisdictions in this book who might be ten or 15 years in front of the problem, are looking at school meal programs, infant feeding systems and other similar interventions. The global north, on the other hand, has found that some of these interventions are potentially part of the problem as well as part of the solution. I think that the South East Asia chapter covers about 11 countries and this covers a wide range of political, religious and cultural issues of concern.
- John It was also interesting that the Australian chapter (Pollard, Begely and Landrigan, Chap. 9) has a lot about kind of calibration and the measurement of food insecurity and the way that has kind of influenced the response; I was fascinated by that.
- Martin Yes. I wonder if that is an issue about the demand for evidence in some countries like Australia. What do you think?
- John I think that that's very much the case in Australia. In order to argue that food insecurity is be a serious problem you need to demonstrate not only its existence but its magnitude. You also need to demonstrate that it is getting worse before anybody will do anything about that. In Australia that is very common.

- Martin Yet on the other hand in Australia, you know, food banks of various types are being funded by government, either directly or indirectly, so while wanting this evidence funding is given to what is considered to be part of the solution, with no evidence to suggest that works at all (Ronson and Caraher, Chap. 8). So we have evidence of a problem but we're still lacking the evidence base for a solution. I think Brazil (Rocha, Chap. 10) probably comes closest to that in terms of saying they've got outcome measures and showing this had been largely effective in some ways.
- John I think the way that the chapters in the book cluster around themes is really great. I wonder, though, if were doing this again, what other chapters we might want to add.
- Martin I think something from a user perspective. How do people feel as the recipients of food aid or food charity? I think that voice is missing. There is a nice piece on that in a British Food Journal from the Netherlands (van der Horst et al. 2014) which shows that for some people, shame of coming to receive food aid is massive. It's not something people take lightly, and I think that voice is missing, both global south and global north.
- John There's two chapters I would have liked to include, one on so-called food rescue, which is quite big in Australia at the moment (see for example www.ozharvest.org). Also probably quite big in the UK and similar countries. Food rescue is based on the idea that you collect food that would go to immediate waste and you distribute that to people who are food insecure. I think, like food banks there are some arguments about that; you know, what role does that really play in terms of addressing both the issue of food waste and the issue of food insecurity. The argument is that 'look, food waste is happening so why don't we put the food to good use? We can't sit on our hands and watch this stuff be wasted and watch it not being pressed into service'.

Also I would have liked to have had a chapter on how some jurisdictions and the one that leaps out to me is the experience in Cuba where austerity measures that simply had to be pressed into practice—gave rise to all sorts of innovations about how to dealt with that. My understanding is Cuba underwent a massive move to produce food everywhere and anywhere to try and grow itself out of that problem. I would have liked to have had a chapter which explained that. Of course, all this happened in a particular and highly regulated political environment.

Martin I think what the Cuban experience shows is that economies which are regulated better protect against food insecurity. Look at our discussion of Cuba earlier and the chapter in Brazil in this volume. UBS Warburg, has produced reports (UBS Warburg 2002) showing regulated economies are healthier economies, whether that's around obesity or access to food. There is a lot of literature appearing in the journals at the moment about the social psychology of giving—let's call it philanthropy—in is a consumptogenic environment. We still produce food, and probably too

much food. But philanthropy gives the excuse to produce more and surplus food because it can be send to food banks as welfare. This goes back to the issue where we started this conversation. It is about rights. The principles of rights ask: why should the poor have to rely on my dregs or your dregs or leftovers, perfectly good food when all of us have access to food in shops? This stems from very early political turmoil that has historically been food related. We discuss some of this in the Introduction of the book.

- John And we in the west continue to produce food at a rate which creates surplus and then we expect the poor to be the ones who are recipients, in other words we're not questioning our own practices here.
- Martin No, we're dressing it up. I mean most global economies, the UK, Australia, US, for example, we produce food and we export food. Actually what we're doing is exporting usually processed food, usually milk products in the form of infant feed and, with this, we are exporting a burden of disease and our contributing to global inequality,
- John We started this conversation looking at the notion of austerity and how this impacts unevenly in terms of food insecurity. We have some real case studies here.
- Martin Well, the people who have practised austerity have been the countries like Ireland and Iceland who have repaid the debts. They have therefore been rewarded for austerity. Greece on the other hand, because of a slightly different political model, is being punished because it does not fit the existing austerity dogma. What we've seen in Greece, as you know, is a massive rise of food banks. But also food banks that are community-owned. This is a very different beast to a food bank that operates on religious or principles of charity. So the way this plays out will be interesting.
- John So, in terms of the readers of this book, we always believed that the book would be of use to people from quite different backgrounds because the book chapters come from a variety of sources; that is to say, each chapter doesn't repeat the ideas in the chapter before or the ideas in the chapter after. I think that's quite a refreshing part of this enterprise, so I think that's going to be very useful teaching and reference text.
- Martin I am very pleased with the calibre of the chapters we were able to attract for this book. I hope the readership get value from the thoughts of our contributors.

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