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From Uberisation to Commoning: Experiences, Challenges, and Potential Pathways of the Sharing Economy in Food Supply Chains in Europe

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Introduction

Sharing, commoning, and collaborative solidarity systems in food provisioning are gaining more recognition of ‘from farm to fork’ and beyond chain, which is constituting now a consolidating field of experimentation. The policy prospect of food sharing economies is the capability to internalise some negative externalities of agriculture production and food supply. For consumers, it carries the hope of personalised nutrition and health. For industry, the primary driver is the digitalisation in

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the agri-food sector, often criticised for the data-driven approach from a responsible innovation point of view.

Food sharing as an ancient and universal human behaviour is at the core of our social life since the hunter-gatherer societies (Hunt 2000). Recently sharing food re-emerged as a mediated exchange in the form of sharing economy. For most analysts, originally, it carried the potential and hope about creating an alternative to the productivist-consumerist paradigm in food provisioning (Heinrichs 2013) by radically decreasing the resource use and creating less waste and more sustainable food. While the informal (non-monetised) forms of sharing and commoning are still dominant in human food provisioning, the sharing economy certainly created new opportunities for sophisticated platform-based and profit-maximising global enterprises (Martin 2016). It undoubtedly made its mark on the food markets and created new opportunities in the life cycle of our food from farm to fork. Although sharing economy research lacks overarching theoretical perspectives, it became a crowded field of study that builds on diverse intellectual traditions.

This chapter presents intersections of the research on sharing economy and food, including various market and non-market arrangements. Both authors are sociologists and grew up in Budapest and got to know each other after the political regime transformation in the 1990s when food commoning, sharing and exchange was an inherent part of our everyday life and much less organised through commodity market channels. To provide meaningful evidence of sharing economy mechanisms, its Janus-faced characteristics in the food supply, we turn to the review of the literature and empirical evidence from our own research and preliminary data gathering within the COST Action 'From Sharing to Caring: Examining Socio-Technical Aspects of the Collaborative Economy' (Sharing and Caring 2020a). Based on our literature review, we present our overview on the transformational potential and the multiple benefits it allegedly offers in the food sector, and then we summarise the attempts to define the sharing economies in the food sector. Section three is based on desk research to show various typologies of food sharing models and analyses multiple benefits of the food sharing economy. This is followed by our illustrative examples of food sharing economies from Europe and beyond, then some hopeful, inspirational cases. In conclusion, we reflect

on the scholarly and policy narratives around the food sharing economy. The empirical basis of this chapter relies on the meta-analysis of the 26 country reports with a special focus on food initiatives and the short stories—collecting practices from all over Europe in a concise format—within the framework of COST Action ‘Sharing and Caring’ provided by country experts in the area of food-related initiatives and re-organised them according to our categorisation provided further in Table 7.2.

Definition of Sharing in Relation to Food

The term sharing economy is usually related to a socio-economic ecosystem created around the sharing of resources. Since the literature on sharing economy research is becoming overwhelming, definitions are also proliferating. Google Scholar finds 42,700 search results for potentially pertinent papers with reports of sharing economy only in 2020; one-tenth is based on food examples.

On the one hand, it is characterised as a pathway to sustainability by inspiring a more sustainable and collaborative form of consumption (Fitzmaurice et al. 2020). Botsman and Rogers (2010) understand sharing as a possible way to liberate underutilised assets (either in the market or on a solidarity basis). In food sharing, this means the use of food surplus via online communities or donating vulnerable groups via food banks. On the other hand, the sharing economy is also characterised as a neoliberal nightmare with corporate co-optation that promotes overconsumption and drives us away from sustainability transition. As an example, Martin (2016) raises the complexity of sharing economy services, as its certain forms and aspects could be seen as pathways to sustainability while others may rather be labelled as ‘nightmarish forms of neoliberal capitalism’. He argues that within the new economic frameworks created by the sharing economy business model, more sustainable forms of consumption and a decentralised, more equitable and sustainable economy could be created. Food sharing initiatives can be seen as good examples for unregulated marketplaces—enabling innovations in multiple respects. Pottinger (2018) and many scholars also observed a

sheer bias in the literature that tends to prioritise novel, digitally mediated and often for-profit iterations of the 'on-demand' economy over the lived experience of sharing and its relationship with activist praxis. The informal, non-market form of food sharing economy encompasses gardening by households and other food self-provisioning and sharing practices that in the Central and Eastern European countries reached a high rate of self-sufficiency and unintentional environmental practices (Jehlička et al. 2020).

In food and consumption studies, the descriptions of sharing economies have two main focal points: 'access' and 'collaboration'. Sharing economy is understood most often and primarily as access-based consumption where consumers access to usage of a garden or produce instead of buying and owning means of food production, consumers pay for access to the produce. Notable examples are the sharing economies performed by community-supported agriculture or community gardens, or consumer groups. Within this category, Miralles et al. (2017) analysed five sharing economy models: consumer groups, commercial community gardens, network-based community gardens, privately owned community gardens, and publicly owned self-consumption community gardens.

Another distinctive type of sharing economy in the food scholarship is (food-based) collaborative consumption. This, in essence, goes beyond the markets by bartering, swapping. Notable examples are seed swap events, potlucks, tapas eating. In these settings, individuals actively engage in the production of service offerings to benefit others (Perren and Grauerholz 2015). Therefore, a different aspect of food is becoming visible: the non-commodity aspect. Several initiatives are promoting food sharing and, in this sense, promote a non-commodity meaning of food (food is a right), such as in the case of Incredible Edible Todmorden (Incredible 2021). Market-oriented novelty creation also happens by involving the users of food. Many small-scale companies invite their stakeholders, including consumers as innovation participants, to co-create food concepts, products, or services by providing their own work and ideas for free.

The two main focal points of access and collaboration create a broad dimensionality of the food sharing economies that range from non-profit to for-profit initiatives. The uniqueness of the sharing economies in the

agri-food sector is that their intersections present a full spectrum of these initiatives and that also provides exciting ground for exploring the emergence of food commons and multiple ways in which food can be valued, governed, and shared (Vivero-Pol et al. 2018). In our understanding, food as ‘commons’ means the value in use (feeding people) prevails over the value in exchange (market profit). Food sharing in non-market food systems is rather customary in human societies and mainly means self-provisioning or bartering, foraging.

Multiple Benefits of Food Sharing Economies

As the sharing economy became a battlefield of actors with different capacities and power to transform markets, analysts recorded that the debate is mostly about the normative conceptualisation of the ‘true sharing economy’. Public perceptions of the realities of the sharing economy have a pivotal role in such definitions: Cherry and Pidgeon (2018) uncovered broader social values of equality, communities, fairness that are underpinning expectations towards a true sharing economy. Hofmann et al. (2019) investigated how the sharing economy triggered the public sector (also by completely disrupting its regulatory role) to act more like a professional, efficient, service-oriented, and engaging actor. The sharing economy can push the public sector away from regulation towards the role of customer, service, and platform provider. Ciulli and Kolk (2019) argued that the main market players could easily reap the emerging market opportunities and diminish newcomers’ competition. The COVID-19 pandemics largely changed these emerging trends, and recently Hossain (2020) recorded a precarious situation in the sharing economy. It all seems that in the accommodation and transport sectors, the sharing economy does not prove to be resilient. In contrast, the food sector is probably the quickest-growing areas of the sharing economy.

A recent bibliographic analysis (Kraus et al. 2020) contended that studies on the sharing economy are from the start quite multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary. The organisational aspects (community vs commercial orientation) and behavioural aspects (consumers vs citizen) protruded from the studies. Within food studies, food waste is the most

prominent research theme for the research on sharing economy. Sharing economies can present multiple benefits in the food sectors ranging from the ecological through the social to the economic. The agri-food system opened up its idle components to the sharing economy by offering its food communities to deal with food system failures and inefficiencies, such as food waste, food delivery, food swapping, and food commoning.

As for the ecological ‘benefits,’ it is questionable how sharing economy initiatives can help a transition towards sustainability of our food—by, e.g., radically reducing food waste. Morone et al. (2016) found in their experimental study that adoption of food sharing practices does not translate automatically into food waste reduction in households. Laukkanen and Tura (2020) explored the value creation element and found that sharing economy initiatives via their choice of business models do not advance sustainability by default. Dabbous and Tarhini (2020) further depicted the key factors that ensure sustainable consumption through the sharing economy. They found that knowledge and technology have indirect and significant effects on engaging in sustainable consumption through trust. Platforms for surplus food exchange are gaining new ground as companies perceive sufficient incentives to manage surplus food more efficiently.

In their study on ‘imperfect produce’, Richards and Hamilton (2018) show that user demand rises in the number of growers shipping to the platform, and grower demand for distribution rises in the number of users. Their findings indicate that secondary markets have the key elements needed. The uncertainty about the ecological benefits is also illustrated by Davies et al. (2017), and Davies and Evans (2019). They gathered into a database more than 4000 technology-assisted urban food sharing activities operating across 100 cities in six continents. To conclude, food sharing practices—especially information and communications technology (ICT)-mediated forms—are still empirically understudied in their potential ecological benefits. It all seems that the sharing economy can underperform in terms of sustainability. Still, any improvement is highly dependent on business models that are often changing during the implementation. Therefore, strategic and deliberate efforts

would be necessary from researchers, practitioners, advocacy organisations and policymakers to increase the sustainability performance of sharing platforms (e.g., Curtis and Mont 2020).

The ‘economic’ viability of sharing economy initiatives is still uncertain whether they can disrupt (redefine or reorient) the economy. The value proposition, creation, and appropriation in the sector would be key in understanding the resilience of sharing economies. The industry giants maintain a top-secret and continuous management of the synergies between (1) the value they enable and create and (2) the value they appropriate. The business modelling of sharing economies is consequently diverse. Ritter and Schanz (2019) explicate four segments of the singular transaction, subscription-based, commission-based platforms, and unlimited platforms (for more details on the four models, see the Figure presented by Ritter and Schanz 2019, p. 18).

‘Social’ achievements of the sharing economy are not less contradictory. Instead of building new communities, Schor et al. (2016) clearly explained how inequality is reproduced within micro-level interactions during a food swap. While the social benefits of sharing economies are dynamically evolving, the meaning of work in this sector is emphasised. For example, in the food delivery sector, Lin et al. (2020) found a remarkably diverse relationship between food delivery workers’ meaning of work and their career commitment. The expectation for social benefits in the sector is high: the food sharing economy workers have a more meaningful concept of their work, and their intrinsic work goals generate work engagement and career commitment the most. Nica-Avram et al. (2021) identified a particular profile of network usage of OLIO (a popular P2P food sharing platform, founded in 2015) users that point to food insecurity, acute food need. As for creating more social equity in consumption, Harvey et al. (2020) studied OLIO and found that instead of reciprocity, kin selection, tolerated scrounging, and costly signalling, donor-recipient reciprocity and balance are rare, but also show that genuinely novel social relations have formed between organisations and consumers which depart from traditional linear supply chains. Asian et al. (2019) studied the sharing economy’s potential to enable organic smallholders to overcome social challenges by sharing resources

and aggregating peer-to-peer activities using a sharing economy-based collaborative platform.

Sharing food is a universal human social trait that coevolved with human cooperation. However, is there a potential to solve problems of poverty, inequality, and democratic accountability via sharing economies? Critiques of the mainstream sharing economy argue that via renting of cars, couches, bedrooms, spaces, labour time etc., platforms are building markets by simply assigning a monetary value to previously non-commodified and idle capacities of our life worlds. While this is true, the market created from these underutilised assets is a home-based, communal, intimate market, a morally attuned market that sellers and buyers often see as artisanal, domestic, and homey (Fitzmaurice et al. 2020). From the point of view of sustainable consumption and production, the sharing economy has become regarded as a revolutionary area within the broader 'new economics' that regards capitalist market production from a critical stance, pointing out its structural inequalities. It seeks alternatives to its inequalities' growth and GDP obsession (Rifkin 2014) and therefore presents hope for handling environmental problems through fundamental changes in the economic system. This moves turn attention from the centralised state and traditional business solutions to grassroots initiatives, decentralised services, and de-growth. Structural change-makers are already existing locally, and their uniqueness is that they are about sharing, not selling. One could argue that when monetary transactions are excluded, then calling it 'sharing economy' is a misnomer. The added value is created via sharing skills, knowledge, assets. Other times it is rather about swapping, bartering, or exchanging.

In sum, the sharing economy in the food sector has created different (and simpler) ways of allocating food along the whole value chain from producing through transforming to accessing and distributing. The role of ICT in mediating food sharing is pivotal. Still, it does not help avoid recreating existing inequalities and does not translate to more sustainable food by default either. Sharing economies encompass for-profit and not-for-profit allocation mechanisms via the market, the state, the community, and the third sector. A typical market-based solution is any short food supply chain that, by creating the direct link between consumers and producers, shapes new niche markets that challenge

traditional food distribution. Initiatives by the state actors, such as in public food procurement or state food programmes, allocate food to varied social groups and render food independent from market mechanisms. Community-based sharing economies link households, family, and friends into food communities by letting them informal food provisioning via gifting or bartering. In the third sector, food-focused associations, foundations, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) seek opportunities to organise different stakeholders into civic food networks. All these modalities enable to make different meanings of food visible, not merely a tradeable commodity but also conviviality, human right, and public good.

Possible Typologies of Food Sharing Models

Based on our literature review, we found various typologies summarising food sharing models. Micheline et al. (2018), in their study on food waste, identified three faces of sharing economy initiatives: for charity, for money, for the community. Table 7.1 summarises the three basic models of the sharing platforms based on Micheline et al. (2018) analysis focusing on food sharing initiatives.

Davies and Legg (2018) focused on urban food sharing initiatives and developed a two-dimensional typology to create a framework for a food sharing database from all around the world (from 43 countries from 6 continents). Table 7.2 shows Davies and Legg's typology as a suitable and quite complex starting point for our analytical framework, completed with examples from Europe, based on the collection of COST short stories, country reports, and our desk research (Sharing and Caring 2021b; Klimczuk et al. 2021).

Sharing the Harvest, Meal, and Leftover: Illustrative Cases from Europe

Firstly, it is important to note that our data collection does not offer a representative overview of the food sharing initiatives across Europe, only

Table 7.1 The three main ‘models’ of food sharing platforms

Model	Features
Food sharing for money B2C For-profit	The sharing economy in food is mostly understood as part of the market-based supply or provisioning of food. Market services create new markets. Typical examples are short food supply chains with intermediaries; initiatives that resell unused food (to reduce waste and generate revenue); food (and drink) delivery services such as Uber Eats, Farmigo, Bortársaság; or business enterprises that engage their consumers in product development
Food sharing for charity B2B Non-profit	Surplus food is most often collected and distributed via non-profit social enterprises, charities, food banks to vulnerable groups, typically organised by food justice organisations, such as Budapest Bike Maffia or Food.Cloud
Food sharing for the community P2P Peer learning and co-creation	Community garden members mutually help each other and share the means of production. Urban consumer groups often help local farmers sell their produce by collective ordering and sharing. Typically operated through apps where curators or chefs recommend food (http://www.chefsfreed.com), or consumers themselves build hubs and recruit local farmers via online platforms (http://www.thefoodassembly.com), or DIY restaurateurs offer home-cooked food (Restaurant Day)

Source Own elaboration based on the classification of Micheleni et al. (2018)

a selection of illustrative cases based on desk research and the collections and working materials of the COST project. Short stories were defined as examples from the mostly European countries participating in the COST Action, with some illustrative multidimensional cases. Altogether 12 cases were collected from the food sector, with a wide variety of examples ranging from seed bank projects to food waste projects. The meta-analysis of the country reports revealed that most countries highlighted at least one (i) food production or distribution (ii) home delivery

Table 7.2 Modes of urban food sharing (with explanations and examples)

Modes	Stuff (e.g., seeds, food, food waste, compost)	Spaces (shared growing, food preparation, or eating spaces)	Skills (knowledge and/or experiences about food sharing, growing or waste disposal)
Collecting	sharing food that has been 'liberated' foraged or gleaned	guerrilla gardening of public open spaces	identifying places where gleaning or foraging might occur
Gifting	providing food for free SeedBank (Czech Rep, France) Leftovers (Czech Rep) Budapest Bike Maffia (Hungary) 'A social plate for all' (Greece, Bulgaria) Waste not want not: Redistribution of surplus food (Denmark)	providing spaces for growing for free	providing skills around growing
Bartering	swapping food and food services e.g., SeedBank (Czech Rep, France)	providing spaces where food can be exchanged for labour	providing opportunities to gain experience in growing food, swap seeds, and produce
Selling (not for profit)	providing affordable food on a non-profit basis, Bios Coop: farm-to-table social initiative (Greece) Foodbank (Albania) Foodsavers (Belgium)	providing spaces for people to grow food on a not-for-profit basis e.g., Celebrate food (Hungary)	providing workshops around nutrition e.g., Let's bake a loaf! the Czech Republic

(continued)

Table 7.2 (continued)

Modes	Stuff (e.g., seeds, food, food waste, compost)	Spaces (shared growing, food preparation, or eating spaces)	Skills (knowledge and/or experiences about food sharing, growing or waste disposal)
For-Profit	selling home-cooked food that generates income beyond the costs of production Munch.hu: fighting food waste (Hungary) Brlog-women cooperative is a brewery (Croatia)	providing spaces for supper clubs or dining experiences	providing opportunities for travellers to experience home-cooked meals with locals, e.g.,

Source Own elaboration based on case study examples rendered into the classification developed by Davies and Legg (2018)

systems and (iii) food waste initiative at the national level, as relevant examples of sharing initiatives dedicated to the fight against poverty and food waste. We organised the examples along with these three categories.

Harvest Sharing

Many country reports include examples of food production and/or distribution, such as the regional example from Belgium called Puur Limburg (2021), founded in 2016. Puur Limburg is a local food initiative encouraging local producers and volunteering citizens to share their efforts in advertising, selling, and distributing their goods. It is ‘a cooperative of more than 30 Limburg farmers and producers. We believe in fair and sustainable products, and we proudly show who makes the product. By working together, we strengthen each other, and we offer a delicious assortment from our own soil’ (Sharing and Caring 2021b; Klimczuk et al. 2021). This Belgian initiative is a good example of how professional food producers, citizen volunteers, and the regional government cooperate to generate more sustainable local food chains and to boost the

local food market. Another example is the so-called ‘potato trust’ Kartoffelkombinat (2021), a cooperative (of 1500 households, as of 2020) committed to the creation of a regional, commons-based sustainable food supply in Germany.

In France, there were also several food cooperatives reported aiming at shortening the supply chains, mostly based on local networks, such as AMAP (2021), LaLouve (2021), and Plantezchezvous (2021). These initiatives are less platform-oriented and often related to time-banking services. In Hungary there several ‘box-based’ initiatives were collected, mostly working on a for-profit basis. Some of these ‘farm-to-table’ shortened food chain models offer a home delivery system in Budapest, and its surroundings, such as Nokedterem (‘Grownforyou’) (2021) others rely mostly on a pick up-point-system, primarily for sustainability and ecological reasons (Szatyorbolt, ‘Bagshop’ 2021). However, most recently, due to the COVID-19 related restrictions, Szatyorbolt has also offered contactless home delivery in Budapest, especially for those who are in official quarantine. In certain European countries, food is distributed directly from farmers to consumers through Facebook groups, e.g., REKO networks in Norway. As of early 2020, approx. 80 REKO networks distributed throughout Norway, primarily in urban, more densely populated areas. Rather similar examples may be found in Portugal, such as ‘Prove’ (2021) and in Poland Future Farms (2021), creating networks of local farmers that sell vegetables and fruits to the urban population through an online platform.

Furthermore, we found ‘special initiatives’ in the area of food distribution may be highlighted as good practices: The idea of the German-based ‘cow-sharing’ Kauf ne Kuh (2021) is that the animal is not slaughtered until its meat is 100% pre-sold. The Hungarian Youtyúk (YourHen) (2021) is a small platform-based ‘farm-to-table’ shortened food chain system, focusing solely on the distribution of fresh farm eggs. Customers may pick up the ordered eggs in boxes through a flexible network of various local stores acting as pick up points.

Summing it up, some of these food production and distribution initiatives define themselves as ‘shopping communities’ or ‘social enterprises’, others are closer to platform-based home delivery for-profit businesses. Their common values are strong sustainability and ecology focus.

Food Delivery

Several companies' in-home delivery help restaurants deliver what, when, and where diners want to be served. Wolt, Uber Eats, Deliveroo, Just Eat Takeaway, Delivery Hero, and others provide platforms that allow consumers to explore more takeout dining options than ever before. Food delivery from commercial kitchens (or virtual restaurants) is gaining important roles in provisioning food. EatWith offers immersive culinary experiences with locals in more than 130 countries by bringing together food communities of foodies, home cooking entrepreneurs, food lovers or chefs as hosts. Online groceries, logistics sharing platforms are also fast-growing. Coop Danmark allows its buyers to order online and get deliveries by private bicycle messengers within minutes. Any cyclist can register to make money by delivering groceries. The crowd-farming models help sustainable human-scale farms with unsubsidised funding by letting their customers invest in them directly.

Most recently, food 'home delivery systems' have gained special significance with the COVID-19 crisis. As most European countries have already experienced the second wave of COVID-19 and its related lockdown regulations, the relevance of home delivery from restaurants increased, especially when restaurants had to restrict their services to pick up and delivery. As the country reports rely on 2019 empirical data, we have only anecdotic evidence based on desk research on this issue. Major international actors in this field are Wolt and UberEats, and the German company called Foodora, which have been active in Nordic countries (Norway, Finland, and Sweden) as well as in Italy and Portugal.

Foodora faced certain difficulties, as their riders demanded higher wages and better working conditions in Norway and Italy in the past years. In Norway, 85 bike riders demanded higher wages in September 2019, claiming that their platform provider should cover expenses for maintaining their bikes. After five weeks, Foodora finally agreed to sign a collective agreement with the labour union (see, e.g., country reports of Italy and Norway in *Stories (Sharing and Caring 2021b; Klimczuk et al. 2021)*).

From a strict 'sharing and caring' point of view, it is questionable whether these highly profit-oriented and platform-based companies

(such as UberEats and Wolt) should be discussed in this chapter at all, their platform provider should cover expenses for maintaining their bikes, arguing that market-mediated sharing is not sharing anymore. However, the Uberisation of food provisioning has become a significant issue in various regards and undoubtedly transformed the mainstream markets. The term uberisation in itself carries this vagueness. While the Cambridge Dictionary (2021) defines uberisation as ‘the act or process of changing the market for a service by introducing a different way of buying or using it, especially using mobile technology’. According to the Collins Dictionary (2021), uberisation is the ‘conversion of existing jobs and services into discrete tasks that can be requested on-demand; the adoption of the business model used by the taxi service Uber’.

From a sustainability point of view, ‘restaurants without seats’ (or more precisely, commercial kitchens dedicated solely for meal delivery) have special relevance. These businesses can be physically smaller, as no seats and parking lots are required and also cheaper as they have their premises in lower rent neighbourhoods (IFCO 2017). Further special examples from Portugal are ‘Eat Tasty’ and ‘Portuguese Table’ which can be labelled as meal intermediation services. The Lisbon-based ‘Eat Tasty’ connects home cooks, riders, and people who want to receive a home-cooked meal at their workplace. ‘Portuguese Table’ is active in nine Portuguese cities, developing a platform that allows hosts to receive (paying) guests for a shared meal at their place.

Other examples derived from desk research are examples of ‘cooperation between hypermarkets and their customers’. Since 2017 Carrefour, the French hypermarket and most recently the Danish Coop company, have offered a collaborative delivery service called ‘Thanks Neighbor;’ i.e., shoppers register to provide shopping and delivery services to other nearby customers, for which they receive compensation. These are illustrative examples of how neighbourhoods and hypermarkets can cooperate easily and cheaply based on a suitable platform (IFCO 2017) to reach resource efficiency. From an economic point of view, food delivery initiatives share platforms that grow the fastest economically and financially. In light of this, it is worth monitoring systematically the activity of platforms operating in this sector, as their impacts are essential from a labour market point of view.

Leftover Sharing

According to a recent study, food waste along the supply chain has been estimated at approximately 88 million tonnes in 2013, or 173 kg per capita per year, and is expected to rise to about 126 million tonnes per year by 2020 in the European Union (Stenmarck et al., 2016). According to this study, the highest food waste generators are the Netherlands (541 kg/capita), Belgium (345 kg/capita), Cyprus (327 kg/capita), and Estonia (265 kg/capita) yearly. Therefore, several organisations are working in European countries on reducing food waste.

Food sharing is transforming from an ancient customary practice into a trend to avoid food waste. As a practice, it builds on physical distribution points and linked ICT platforms connecting food savers in non-monetary exchange in several European regions in Belgium, Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. Most of these initiatives operate in a non-profit way; we found examples in less and more developed countries, e.g., Food Bank (2021) in Albania or Foodsavers (2021) in Belgium. The basic idea of these initiatives is to manage food surpluses by collaborating with restaurants, institutions, and individuals to collect food donations and raise awareness about food waste. Generally, the aims of these initiatives are manifold: eradicating poverty by utilising the food waste based on a complex network and ICT generated platform. Moreover, these initiatives often employ people with difficulties as staff members (e.g., Foodsavers in Belgium) to further help re-integrate disadvantaged people into the labour market.

Decommodifying Food: Inspirational Examples from Hungary

Concerning the life cycle of our food and the farm to fork perspective, it is unclear how sharing economy can meaningfully redefine the roles of food chain actors, especially those who have most to lose but least power to influence the value chain characteristics, farmers, and consumers. In the recent decade, Hungary presented several exciting food sharing economy examples inspired by and inspiring others locally and beyond.

They help explain the dilemmas and confusion related to access-based vs collaborative consumption and how these practices render certain food provisioning characteristics visible. The transition towards a resilience-enhancing, commons-based food system would need such collaborative and access-based forms as allies in creating momentum. The examples also demonstrate the rising political recognition and growing popular consciousness around food justice, preventing food waste, or seeking food sovereignty.

As for for-profit companies, Budapest Makery is an exciting example of the 'DIY restaurant model', where guests are invited to cook their own meals in an inexpensive downtown eatery from a weekly changing menu. The recipes are developed by top-notch Hungarian gastronomy figures and cooked from scratch following the instructions from a tablet. It is not only that the food can be shared with a colleague or friend but also that the cooking and eating spaces are transformed into a convivial community experience. Although this DIY kitchen concept is free from being a cooking school, the skills and food knowledge are also shared, promoting the decommodification of eating out and a community feeling around sharing food from preparation to consumption. This redefinition of the consumer role into a more active and playful food chain actor carries the potential that consumers turn those regarding more attention to the origin of their food, the ecological diets and climate-friendly food preparations.

The Budapest Bike Maffia is an 'active civic food hub' founded by voluntary bikers in 2011 to feed vulnerable social groups, homeless people in the downtown of Budapest via food donations. In a few years, several other towns followed this concept of food as a human right, such as Debrecen, Miskolc, Pécs, Szeged, Székesfehérvár, and now the team also provides regular school programs and community building events around food justice issues, promoting the radical decrease of food waste. The initiative combines redistribution of food with solidarity and also works as a social enterprise. Also, it takes the valuation of food out of the commodity interpretation and enables the food as a common's framework.

Instead of selling and purchasing seeds, Magház (i.e., seed house), as a 'grassroots seed organisation,' has organised seed exchange events in

Hungary since the 2010s. The initiative connects people who maintain seeds of old varieties, landraces (vegetables, ornamentals, herbs, fruits) and share both the seeds and knowledge about these plants. Magház enables seeds as commons by promoting agricultural biodiversity in Hungary through seed exchanges, other related events, and online social media platforms. Their primary target group and seed swap visitors are smallholders, hobby gardeners, vegetable growers, subsistence farmers and anybody interested in chemical-free cultivation of love seeds. Therefore, seed swaps are particularly exciting events for the knowledge commons, with a range of non-reciprocal and non-obligatory interactions: disseminating information about sustainable agricultural methods, food sovereignty and exchanging know-how or experiences about seeds or saving seeds.

These food system innovations have the potential to lead to ‘sustainability transitions’ if they manage to radically change our mainstream practices around the existing food system failures. Food justice, convivial community, seed sovereignty, home-grown food sharing are all emergent components of our actually existing sharing economy. This sector comprises a varied network of for-profits, non-profits, and social enterprises operating in various segments of the food system that all promote urban food sharing practices. As the main motive, they are driven by the desire to transform our food system—mainly to decommodify food and enable food or seeds as commons. The food system transformation would require innovation of the food governance (how we organise food provisioning) and also a much wider popularisation and acknowledgement of actually existing food sharing practices.

Summary

The food sharing economy does not automatically translate into more equitable and sustainable practices; therefore, its meaningful contribution to a new economic paradigm (Frenken and Schor 2019) is rather questionable. As a for-profit arrangement relying on ICT platforms, it often disguises consumers by hiding the negative outcomes (extreme

market concentration, precarious jobs, unfair labour practices, disinvestments of social goods, generating overconsumption, hiding ecological externalities, greenwashing). In practice, the trend of blurring the line between grocery shopping, cooking, and eating at home or eating out becomes even more clear during the COVID-19 times. The inherent unsustainability of our global agri-food system resulted in various failures in recent decades. This chapter examined a broad spectrum of actually existing food sharing economies that have been opened up recently from food production through foodservice to consumption to counteract these systemic failures. We pictured the expansion and sporadic lessons learned from food sharing economies, some of their immediate challenges and opportunities. In the agri-food sector, numerous new sharing economy initiatives have been created as unregulated marketplaces—enabling innovations or beyond-the-market solutions for food system failures.

Similarly, to Pottinger (2018), we argue that it is not only the media-hyped digitally mediated, for-profit arrangements that would need more attention but also the less visible, quiet sustainability (Jehlička and Danek 2017), which has already been a lived experience for many. The transformation towards a more democratic, just, and sustainable food system will rely on these small-scale but growing urban food sharing economies. Still, much more empirical evidence would be desirable to understand the sharing economy in food and how seemingly marginal initiatives enact reform or alternative-building strategies in food governance. Either treating food as a commodity or a public good, sharing economy models (service or community-oriented) require grass rooting and decentralised forms to fight food injustices and create better food democracies via sharing unused or underutilised food-related skills, knowledge, and assets.

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