‘LOCAL’ LEVEL ANALYSIS OF FNS PATHWAYS IN IRELAND

Exploring two case studies: Cork Food Policy Council and Bia Food Initiative

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‘Local’ level analysis of FNS Pathways in Ireland

About TRANSMANGO:
TRANSMANGO is an international research project that aims to explore diverse transition pathways to a sustainable and secure food system. It is funded by the European Commission and runs for four years, from 2014 until 2018. The Transmango consortium consists of 13 partners from nine European countries and Tanzania. For more information, visit our website: http://www.transmango.eu/.

About this Document/Disclaimer:
This report is part of Work Package 6 of TRANSMANGO which is focussed on ‘local’ level analysis of FNS pathways in Europe. This report is based upon ‘D6.1 Case-study selection and methodological guidelines for local level analysis of FNS Pathways’ (transmango.eu). The guiding research questions for the Work Package 6 ‘local’ level analysis were:

1. To what extent, and how, do the selected FNS practices / pathways reflect novel responses to FNS concerns in specific settings?
2. To what extent are these novel practices / pathways promising and successful?
3. To what extent do the stakeholders involved search up- and out scaling potentials?
4. How do stakeholders characterize their interaction with institutional settings?
5. How relevant is EU level policy making in this interaction with institutional settings?

This report is focussed upon Cork Food Policy Council and Bia Food Initiative in Ireland. This report presents the interpretations of the researchers, and does not necessarily reflect the views and nuances of the initiatives and respondents themselves. In total there are nine separate ‘local’ level analysis reports from ten consortium members and they will feed into the ‘D6.4 Syntheses report on FNS pathway-specific drivers, potentials and vulnerabilities’.

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List of abbreviations

BFI       Bia Food Initiative
CFPC      Cork Food Policy Council
CSR       Corporate Social Responsibility
EPA       Environmental Protection Agency
FEAD      Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived
FNS       Food and nutrition security
FPC       Food policy council
HACCP     Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point
NICHE     Knocknaheeney/Holyhill Community Health Initiative
VdeP      St. Vincent de Paul
1. INTRODUCTION

Introduction to main and satellite case studies
The local case studies chosen for the Irish arm of this study focused on Cork Food Policy Council (CFPC: main case study) and Bia Food Initiative (BFI: satellite case study). Established in 2013, the key aims of CFPC are to promote health and wellbeing for all by ensuring access to a nutritious, balanced and affordable diet; a thriving local economy by encouraging the development of food enterprises which make use of local land and sea resources; the creation of resilient, supportive communities by bringing people together to celebrate local traditions; the provision of life-long learning and skills, particularly in how to grow, cook and enjoy food; and a reduction in Cork’s ecological footprint through the support of sustainable food production whereby food miles, packaging and waste are reduced, and composting and recycling are increased. BFI is an Irish charity formed in June 2012 which aims to provide a socially responsible, environmentally sensitive, alternative food redistribution network aimed at reducing the volumes of mismanaged food currently being disposed of and matching this surplus with the growing incidence of food scarcity across Ireland.

Relevance of case studies with regard to TRANSMANGO ambitions
Both case studies were selected because they are relevant to TRANSMANGO’s food and nutrition security (FNS) ambitions. CFPC focuses on a number of FNS activities ranging from food waste, to public procurement, to planning to consumption. Its practices address a range of FNS dimensions: socially it supports a wide range of community growing and other food-related activities to improve physical and mental health for people of all ages. It promotes lifelong learning and skills around food issues. Economically, it encourages sourcing healthy and sustainable food from local producers and suppliers, keeping value within the local economy. Ecologically, it has organized events such as ‘Feed the City’ which are expressly designed to address the issue of food waste. And politically, it engages in awareness-raising activities and lobbying of policy-makers/decision-makers on such issues as food waste and siting of fast food outlets near schools. CFPC hopes to address many system vulnerabilities including the concentration of power in the agri-food system, citizens’ health and wellness, social and economic inequalities, and pressures on biodiversity. It specifically targets vulnerable groups including low income households, children and hospital patients. The FNS outcomes which CFPC targets include utilization (focus on learning of food-related skills), better access to food (from better mapping/inventorising of the regional food system in Cork), and better availability (through events such as Feed the City). The FNS frames which CFPC use are ecology and food sovereignty. CFPC is encouraging interest and debate broadly on global ecological and food security challenges. Specifically, it focuses on the likely impact of rising global demand for food, accompanied by dietary change placing more pressure on agricultural production; on climate change impacts on agricultural production; on pressure on freshwater supplies globally; and on availability of and competing demand for land.

BFI focuses on the FNS activities of food distribution, consumption and waste reduction. BFI aims to address multiple dimensions of FNS. Economic objectives drive a reduction in the operating costs of food-related charitable initiatives by enabling them to access food supplies essential for the undertaking of their activities, and by reducing the costs for businesses associated with disposal of surplus food. BFI also aims to address social dimensions of FNS by enabling better service provision by food-related charities which are frequently dealing with the most marginalised groups. This is an attempt to make the mainstream, dominant food system more inclusive, by distributing the large number of surpluses that come with it. Finally, BFI seeks to address ecological FNS dimensions by reducing food losses which represent a waste of resources used through the production and consumption cycle including land, water, energy, materials and labour. BFI attempts to address a number of food system vulnerabilities such as social and economic inequalities, and citizens’ health and wellness. It targets specific vulnerable groups such as low income households and children. The FNS outcomes of BFI are that food is made more accessible to the poor and that food is more affordable for charities as their costs are lowered. BFI makes
some identifiable FNS claims such as claiming to improve efficiency of food redistribution in Ireland. They use an ecological frame, emphasising the mutual environmental benefits. They also acknowledge that there is a strong structural dimension to food poverty in Ireland which is not already addressed. Bia Food Initiative is open in debating the double-edged sword that is their initiative; they are addressing a real, immediate and growing need, but are concerned that their ‘success’ absolves the state of responsibility for these matters.

Position of case studies within the national food and nutrition security foodscape

In Ireland, agri-food production is highly valued, contributing greatly to the economy through exports and employment. The beef and dairy sectors are particularly important for the industry, amounting to almost 70% of value (as of 2013: Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine). A natural consequence of this is that Irish agriculture is primarily grass-based with 81% of agricultural area devoted to pasture, hay and grass silage, and just 8% dedicated to crops, fruit and horticulture production. Food Harvest 2020, Ireland’s national agri-food sector strategy, sets ambitious growth targets for exports and reconciling this with commitments to reduce national greenhouse gas emissions is an issue of concern due to Ireland’s high agricultural emissions. CFPC recognises the economic vulnerabilities associated with focusing on export markets and monocultures, and the environmental consequences of a largely livestock-focused industry. It works to tackle these problems with aims to encourage diversified food production systems and a greater emphasis on localisation of food chains.

Agricultural subsidies play a key role in supporting farm incomes in Ireland and in 2013 accounted for 67% of operating surplus (Donnellan, 2014). Farm incomes in the past twenty-five years have fluctuated in response to various external factors such as animal health crises and depressed world markets. Since the 1960s, there has been a trend in Irish agriculture of specialisation and consequently larger farms, fewer farms, less employment and more part-time farming. CFPC also recognises that agriculture in Ireland is a largely financially unsustainable venture and that its reliance on subsidies leaves it especially vulnerable. These are further reasons that CFPC hopes to encourage a shift in how agriculture in Ireland works, and also a change in how food moves from ‘farm to fork’.

Diets in Ireland are unhealthy in some respects with daily fat intakes higher and average daily intake of fruit and vegetables less than half than what is recommended (IUN Alliance, 2011). This can be partly attributed to the fact that Irish food prices are higher than the European average. Coupled with economic austerity beginning in 2009, this has resulted in an increase in demand for food assistance in recent years. Various food charity organisations have reported between a two and three-fold increase in demand for their service, and also a change in the profile of service-users with more families now in receipt of food donations. In total, food poverty is thought to affect 10% of the general population in Ireland (DSP, 2013) while this figure more than doubles for certain vulnerable households including lone parent households, unemployed households, and households where the head is ill or disabled. Both CFPC and BFI work to tackle the food poverty which arises (at least in part) out of the inaccessibility of healthy diets for some of the population. CFPC aims to increase the resilience of local food systems, to influence policy in the area of food and to encourage education around food production and food nutrition. BFI works mainly to redistribute much of the edible food which is wasted in Ireland towards those who are hungry.

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\[1\] Over one million tonnes of food is disposed of in Ireland each year: 300,000 from households, 370,000 tonnes from distribution and commerce, and 450,000 tonnes from factories (EPA, no date).
2. MAIN CASE STUDY REPORT

2.1. Research questions & Methods

**Research Questions**

This case study which focused on Cork Food Policy Council (CFPC) was underpinned by the question: “How can this practice develop into the future in a way that it will contribute significantly to better food and nutrition security at the European level?” Further specific questions to guide this research were:

- To what extent and how do CFPC’s selected food and nutrition security (FNS) practices/pathways reflect novel responses to FNS concerns in specific settings?
- To what extent are these novel practices/pathways promising and successful?
- To what extent do involved stakeholders explore up- and out-scaling potentials?
- How do stakeholders characterise their interaction with institutional settings?
- How relevant is EU level policy making in this interaction with institutional settings?

**Methods**

In this Irish arm of the TRANSMANGO study, CFPC was chosen as the main case study as it fit the criteria of being a ‘bright spot’ initiative.

In order to answer the research questions delineated above, a multi-stage mixed-methodology (leaning heavily on qualitative methods) was employed. In conducting case studies, it is common to use a number of different research methods in order to build up a depth and breadth of information about the organisation or initiative under investigation. This also allows for data to be cross-checked and triangulated. The methodological approach had four elements:

1. Desk-based research using secondary sources of information

A review of literature on food policy councils provided the basis of information about what food policy councils (FPCs) are, why they are necessary, how to are constituted, their membership, their aims and objectives, their activities and practices, and the challenges which are common to FPCs. It provided a fundamental understanding of how FPCs work and the context within which they operate. This phase of research also involved the investigation of specific details around the case study initiative through secondary sources such as websites and reports. As CFPC is a relatively new organisation, it was not a difficult task to gather and analyse every single piece of available information on CFPC for this study.

2. Online questionnaire

The second phase of this case study utilised an online questionnaire which was sent to respondents. The questionnaire was created in the Google Docs programme and this provided a link to be sent to respondents via email. Responses could be accessed by the creator of the document at any time via this link and Google Docs provided a function of collating all responses to each question together, assisting in organising the data for analysis. The questionnaire link was embedded in an invitation email which was sent to sixty invitees for the workshop in the third phase of this study (for more information on the sampling strategy used, see step 3 below). Eleven responses were received and a profile of these respondents can be found in the table below. Those with a * beside their name participated in either one or both of the workshops.

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2 https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1ELj2coP8Iqa6Cp11MgHT5YYhHyc2lf_n8vJkJzA18xs/viewform
### Name | Organisation(s) | Sample Sector(s)
--- | --- | ---
Tara Kenny* | Cork Food Policy Council and University College Cork (post-graduate) | CFPC/Academia
Eoin MacCuirc* | Cork Food Policy Council and Cork Simon Community and Bia Food Initiative | CFPC/Community
Zwena McCullough | Hydro Farm Allotments | Community/Market
Mary O'Shaughnessy | University College Cork (staff) | Academia
Karina Healy | The Lantern Project | Community
Alice D’Arcy | STEAM Education Ltd., University College Cork Green Campus | Community
Elke O’Mahony* | Bia Sàsta | Community/Market
Rupert Hugh-Jones | Cork Farmers’ Markets | Market
John Curran* | Musgrave Group | Market
Keelin Tobin | University College Cork (post-graduate) and chef | Academia/Market
Stephen Thornhill* | University College Cork (post-graduate) and Cobh Community Allotments | Academia/Community

**TABLE 1 PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS TO ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE**

A standard content analysis approach was used in processing the data. The questions contained in the questionnaire were as follows:

- What are the main strengths of Cork’s food system?
- What are the main weaknesses of Cork’s food system?
- What are the main challenges for Cork to deliver a fairer, healthier, more secure and sustainable food system for all?
- What are the main areas where civil society, the public and private sector should concentrate to contribute to a fairer, healthier, more secure and sustainable food system for all?

3. **Stakeholder Interview**

The third step in this research methodology entailed the completion of an interview with a key stakeholder in CFPC’s processes, Dr. Colin Sage, the founder and chair of the Council. He was interviewed over the phone and his comments were inputted into a spreadsheet immediately through touch-typing, for later analysis. The interviewee was asked a number of questions derived from and expanding on the research questions. A content analysis approach was utilised to process the data arising from this interview.

4. **Scenarios-guided transition pathways workshops**

This fourth and final step was the most important and involved workshops in which scenarios-guided transitions pathways were developed. Scenarios are defined as ‘*multiple plausible futures described in words, numbers and/or images*’ (van Notten et al., 2003) and are often used to test and inform the feasibility of plans. If a plan or policy is considered to be feasible under a wide range of challenging futures, it could be considered robust. Methodologies which employ scenarios seek to correct traditional approaches to planning which (problematically) fail to recognise and explore uncertainty and complexity in complex systems (Kok et al, 2011).

The process took place over two one-day workshops which were held on April 24th and May 13th, 2016, in Cork City. Fourteen people participated in the first workshop and eleven participated in the second. There was a degree of attendee self-selection as they were among the number who agreed to attend, from the more than sixty invitations which were sent. All fourteen members of the CFPC’s steering committee were invited, as well as their three affiliated members. The list of other invitees was derived from research on who in Cork (and sometimes outside of Cork) would be considered to be a stakeholder who could
potentially play a role in the future success of the CFPC. This could be done by, amongst other things, helping to up-scale and out-scale the initiative’s activities and realm of influence. In addition, people who it was thought could offer a critical outside perspective were also invited. In order to ensure a range of voices were present, this non-CFPC list of invitees mirrored CFPC’s constitution and was built around five key sectors: academia, policy, market, on-the-ground public service, and grassroots community groups. Grassroots community groups represented in CFPC include Cork Environmental Forum, and Cork Simon Community. For this category, invitees external to CFPC were drawn from grassroots organisations such as GIY Cork, Cork Food Web and Cork Food Map. Ultimately, the first workshop involved six CFPC-associated people and eight others, while the second workshop was attended by five CFPC members and six others. Seven invitees attended both workshops and this provided a degree of continuity between the two events while also allowing new thinking and challenges to be introduced through the involvement of four new people at the second workshop.

The workshop’s title- *Towards a fairer, healthier, more secure and sustainable food system in Cork* - was drawn from CFPC’s founding aim and this represented the guiding vision for the workshop. There were five steps to this methodological approach, four completed in the first workshop and the fifth on the second day. First, participants co-developed a vision of what a fairer, healthier, more secure and sustainable food system in Cork would look like, prioritising three elements of this vision to focus on. Second, in three groups (one for each prioritised vision element), participants back-casted from their final goal, identifying all of the steps necessary between this goal and the present to achieve their vision. Third, scenarios which were created at the EU-level were down-scaled to the Irish context (see Annex 1 for a narrative description of the three EU-level scenarios and Annex 2 for narrative descriptions of the three down-scaled local Irish scenarios). Fourth, participants developed causal maps which graphically captured how participants perceived connections between key variables in their newly created narrative, and the causal reasoning between these connections (these four steps are illustrated in the chart in Figure 1). The fifth step, which took place in the second workshop, involved the fortifications of plans made in the first workshop. This was done by testing each plan in the context of each of the three newly created Irish scenarios (this fifth step is illustrated in the chart in Figure 2). This scenarios-based transition pathways methodology, which these five steps illustrate, served as useful stimuli for the creation of a rich body of data. These data were then analysed and synthesised to provide the basis of an action strategy for CFPC which contains a number of objectives and sub-objectives. The final strategy is presented as a portfolio of actions from which CFPC may select and apply in the short, medium or long-term (this final action is illustrated in Figure 3).
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Workshop 2

Plan 1
- Scenario 1
- Scenario 2
- Scenario 3

Robust Plan 1

Plan 2
- Scenario 1
- Scenario 2
- Scenario 3

Robust Plan 2

Plan 3
- Scenario 1
- Scenario 2
- Scenario 3

Robust Plan 3

FIGURE 2: SCENARIOS-GUIDED TRANSITIONS PATHWAYS PROCESSES IN WORKSHOP 2: FORTIFYING PLANS BY testing in scenario contexts

After Workshops

Robust Plan 1
- Analysis

Robust Plan 2
- Analysis

Robust Plan 3
- Analysis

Action Strategy for CFPC

FIGURE 3: SCENARIOS-GUIDED TRANSITIONS PATHWAYS PROCESSES AFTER WORKSHOPS: CREATION OF ACTION STRATEGY
2.2. Research findings

Literature review

Irish Context
Ireland has become thoroughly embroiled in this globalised and industrialised food system, especially in the last twenty-five years. Multinational retailers and fast food franchises are located in most towns in Ireland, and a culture of convenience and low-priced food has come to dominate. Associated unhealthy eating habits have resulted in high levels of obesity and diet-related illnesses (Sage, 2010). Similar to other countries, horticultural growers have come under pressure from corporate retailers and as a result many, especially smaller producers, have left the sector and their operations have been absorbed into larger producers’. Livestock and its associated products account for 80% of agricultural production in Ireland (McDonagh and Commins, 2007). The emphasis on livestock production in Ireland explains how Irish agriculture accounts for 27% of all of the county’s greenhouse gas emissions (Sage, 2010). Production for export is emphasised in Ireland due to its value to the economy; in 2015, agri-food products to the value of €8.9 billion were exported and this represented approximately 25% of net foreign earnings (Teagasc, no date). It is perhaps not surprising therefore that Government policy in Ireland strongly supports the agri-food sector and the expansion of its exports. This is evidenced by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine’s Food Harvest 2020 strategy (2012) which sought to increase the value of agri-food exports by over 40% by 2020 (DAFM, 2012), and its follow-up strategy Food Wise which sets out the goal of a further 85% increase by focusing on dairy, beef, seafood and prepared food and drinks (DAFM, 2015). Not only is the environmental footprint of agri-food in Ireland high, it will grow further through these strategic plans.

In Ireland, the Grow it Yourself community is widespread, as are other local food growing initiatives such as community gardens and allotments (Murtagh, 2010). Farmers’ markets take place on a weekly basis in most cities and towns and the market for organic goods is growing (Sage, 2014; Moore, 2006). However, despite these promising trends, alternative modes of production such as organics are rare with conventional farming favoured by both producers and extension agencies (McDonagh and Commins, 1999). Cork is known as the ‘Rebel County’ and O’Callaghan (2012) argues that this designation still resonates deeply with Corkonians. Focusing on culture, he writes that this ‘rebel’ mentality feeds into a ‘do it yourself’ tradition in the arts scene of Cork and that this in turn creates a sense of self-sufficiency. This may begin to explain why Cork has much higher levels of local food activity than most other places in Britain and Ireland, and why west Cork is one of three organic farming clusters in Ireland (Läpple and Cullinane, 2012; Ricketts-Hein and Watts, 2010). Sage in his 2003 paper on alternative ‘good food’ networks in South West Ireland probes this further finding a disproportionately high number of small-scale artisanal food producers, as well as organic growers, in Cork. West Cork in particular enjoys a strong image as the culinary centre of Ireland. Other factors contributing to this designation include the significant role played by non-national food producers, who moved to Ireland in search of self-sufficiency and began to produce value-added products from their outputs to supplement farm income. The English Market, a covered municipal market in Cork city, is also presented as instrumental in galvanising Cork’s position as a foodie hub with key motivated individuals becoming stall holders and providing an outlet for the food derived from the alternative production systems outside the city. Finally, Sage notes the importance of key personalities for championing high quality local food in the Cork area, in particular Myrtle Allen of Ballymaloe House.

Constitution and Membership
There is no single model of how food policy councils (FPCs) are constituted or function. However, typically their mandate is to help transform the food system by providing inspiration and encouragement to empower communities, and by making policy recommendations around food. They do not create or enforce policies (Fox, 2010; Harper et al, 2009; Borron, 2003; Dahlberg 1994). Nonetheless, FPCs may
be officially sanctioned by a state or local government and in this case, staff may be made available to FPCs. This means they are answerable to public bodies, but this responsibility can also be beneficial as it means that FPCs are embedded in municipal bureaucracy and will be included in discourse on food-related topics (Blay-Palmer, 2009; VFPC, 2009; Borron, 2003). Alternatively, some FPCs are incorporated as non-profit grass-roots organisations providing them greater freedom to set their own agenda and to critically appraise government policies and actions (McClintock et al, 2012; Scherb et al, 2012). Finally, some FPCs are mandated by both governmental and community organisations, representing a hybrid of the two types of FPCs described above (VFPC, 2009).

The board members of FPCs are mostly volunteer food system experts from a range of backgrounds including gardeners, farmers, food processors, wholesalers and distributors, grocers, restaurateurs, waste managers and anti-food poverty activists. Other key stakeholders such as immigrants or refugees, academics, doctors, conservationists, school system representatives, planners, policy advisors and community leaders may also engage with FPCs (Scherb et al, 2012; Fox, 2010; Harper et al, 2009; VFPC, 2009). Government representatives may be involved either voluntarily or through holding appointed positions. This could include city and county council officials, as well as staff from relevant government departments (Agriculture, Health, Social Protection, Education) (Blay-Palmer, 2009; Borron, 2003). VFPC (2009) argue that the partnership and collaboration between these different types of people is a defining characteristic of FPCs. Having a wide variety of people on the board of an FPC creates an arena in which a diversity of expertise for ‘systems-thinking’ is hosted, facilitating cross-sector planning. It also makes FPCs credible, particularly when advocating for food policies (Fox, 2010; Blay-Palmer, 2009; Harper et al, 2009; Borron, 2003).

Aims and Objectives
The work of FPCs is explicitly underpinned by the goals of community food and nutrition security. FPCs aim to make local food systems more socially just and conducive to public health goals; to support the livelihoods of producers; and they aim to direct local food systems towards greater energy efficiency and biodiversity (VFPC, 2009; Green, 2007; Webb et al, 1998). In pursuit of these goals, fundamental objectives common to FPCs include highlighting the systemic nature of food, and the consequent need to recognise causal links between issues such as diet-related disease, poverty and economic development. A final defining objective of FPCs is their functioning as a forum for the practice of food democracy in pursuit of forging policies for their goal of sustainable, just and healthy local food systems (Scherb et al, 2012; Harper et al, 2009).

Although the exact objectives of FPCs vary, the most common of these is the development of food policy change. FPCs affect policy change by conducting or spearheading research (analysis, assessment, evaluation) on the food system and current policy. One way this is done is through testimonies gathered in citizens’ forums (Fox, 2010; Harper et al, 2009; VFPC, 2009; Borron, 2003; Barling et al, 2002; Webb et al, 1998). This allows FPCs to advocate for locally appropriate food policies by making recommendations for new policies, by improving the coordination of existing policies, by monitoring the implementation of existing policies, and more generally, by helping to facilitate the integration of food system issues into cities’ planning (MacClintock et al, 2012; Fox, 2010; VFPC, 2009; Borron, 2003).

A second key objective of FPCs centres on education: educating themselves, policy-makers and consumers about the food system though education programmes and public awareness campaigns. Specifically, many education initiatives focus on helping consumers make healthy and sustainable choices by, amongst other things, communicating messages about food security and bringing together disparate stakeholder groups for social learning (Harper et al, 2009; VFPC, 2009; Green, 2007; Borron, 2003).

Further objectives of food policy councils include the organisation of stakeholders and the building of partnerships between these. Harper et al describe how FPCs acts as ‘…platforms for coordinated
action…’ (2009, p.2) and serve as forums for the discussion of food system topics. Partnerships are supported by FPCs to help capacity building among communities towards greater food system agency (MacClintock et al, 2012; Scherb et al, 2012; Fox, 2010; Webb et al, 1998).

Necessity
Food policy councils fulfil a necessary role in providing leadership for the transition towards food systems which are more just and sustainable (VFPC, 2009). They are particularly necessary because they tend to focus on urban food systems. The role of cities and towns in food systems has largely been ignored until recently with government ministries which deal with food mostly concerned with production in rural places. The neglect of the urban context has left urban areas vulnerable to shocks which occur in rural areas, over which they have no control (Blay-Palmer, 2009; Pothukuchi and Kaufman, 1999; Dahlberg, 1994). However, the literature points again and again to one key and fundamental reason why FPCs are necessary and that is a broader deficient policy approach to food systems. Specifically it is argued that there is a lack of integrated systems thinking. FPCs are said to offer a solution to this by engaging with an array of policies, programmes, organisations and stakeholders to facilitate the creation of integrated local, regional or national food policies (Harper et al, 2009; Barling et al, 2002). Local places do not tend to have agencies devoted explicitly to food and as a result this important issue ‘falls between two stools’ (Borron, 2003). Many have argued that this problem is endemic because the food system is traditionally dealt with in ministerial silos (Levkoe, 2014). Barling et al put this succinctly: ‘…Departmentalism is entrenched in government, leading to turf mentalities and sustaining policy communities with client interest groups that can insulate officials from outside thinking on policy priorities.’ (2002, p.4). To date, food policy has been considered to be synonymous with agriculture and rural policies but it is now recognised that issues such as public health, social justice and the environment are intrinsically linked, thus requiring a new policy approach (Renting and Wiskerke, 2010; Sage, 2010). The FPC model has emerged in many cities of late for this reason and FPCs can help improve coordination between government agencies in pursuit of food justice and sustainability goals (Fox, 2010; Harper et al, 2009).

Activities and Practices
Established FPCs both identify problems and present solutions to these. However, it is important to note that they also take an active part in facilitating particular activities and practices, in pursuit of their aims and objectives. Specific examples include:

- The publicising of community food resources and related projects through the development of maps and directories (Connecticut, Iowa and Onondaga), by conducting ‘food system’ tours (Onondaga), by holding ‘food system’ dinners (Onondaga), and through the creation of awards systems which recognise important practices for food security (Knoxville) (Borron, 2003)
- Encouraging local universities to switch to multiple food wholesalers to allow smaller local producers to win procurement bids (Connecticut: Borron, 2003)
- Sourcing and securing funding to finance their efforts (Toronto: Blay-Palmer, 2009)
- Developing and supporting specific initiatives and projects such as:
  - Breastfeeding networks (Toronto: Blay-Palmer, 2009)
  - Bus routes linking deprived areas to healthy food outlets and other services (Austin: Borron, 2003)
  - The serving of local and organic food, as well as food grown in school gardens in school canteens; in some of these schools, kitchens where fresh foods can be easily prepared were developed (Berkeley: Boron, 2003)
- Providing support to other institutions and organisations such as farmers organisations (Toronto: Blay-Palmer, 2009)
- Facilitating dialogue and mediating between people and groups with often conflicting interests. In Toronto, groups from government, the voluntary sector, industry and media were all ‘called to the table’ (Blay-Palmer, 2009)
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- Producing discussion papers on food policy topics ranging from embedding food security issues into urban planning to how international trade agreement impact on food security (Toronto: Borron, 2003)
- Drafting documents which make policy recommendations for sustainable and just food systems:
  - The Berkeley Food Policy Council successfully submitted a policy supporting a ban on genetically modified foods (Borron, 2003);
  - Toronto Food Policy Council authored documents detailing the following (Blay-Palmer, 2009; Wekerle, 2004):
    - how planning could contribute to food security in the city;
    - recommending the adoption of an urban agriculture development strategy;
    - identifying specific problems and the municipal departments which could focus on each of these;
    - detailing how citizens’ access to nutritious food could be improved;
    - providing ideas for how services for those in food poverty could be better coordinated and delivered
    - highlighting that programmes for food security could be mutually beneficial for the community, the environment, and the city’s budget;
    - outlining specific ways Toronto’s municipal government could act as an advocate for food security in the city and region at other governmental levels

Challenges
In spite of the noble goals and successful actions of FPCs, they face numerous challenges. When trying to engage with policy-makers, a fundamental problem lies in the prevailing hegemonic view of food systems which often neither recognises their complexity nor the severity of their problems (Scherb et al, 2012; Barling et al, 2002). It is perhaps for these reasons that the role of FPCs may fail to be taken seriously (Dahlberg, 1994). It may also explain why FPCs struggle to keep food constantly on the policy agenda, especially in the face of pressure to achieve ‘quick, visible wins’ (VFPC, 2009, p.3; Blay-Palmer, 2009). Working in complex and dynamic political environments where administration change can occur following elections, it can be challenging for FPCs to navigate the organisational structures of local government (Harper et al, 2009; VPFC, 2009). The larger the city, the greater the difficulty for FPCs to operate with greater levels of jurisdictional fragmentation (Dahlberg, 1994).

Limited financial resources is the most often cited problem for FPCs (Harper et al, 2009; Borron, 2003). All local governments operate within a constrained budget; FPCs tend to be a low priority and at times of austerity, they are more likely to receive cuts (Borron, 2003; Dahlberg, 1994). As a result of minimal and inconsistent funding, many FPCs operate with few if any staff (Scherb et al, 2012; VFPC, 2009; Borron, 2003; Dahlberg, 1994). Voluntary council members are often time-poor as the roles which lead to their involvement with FPCs keep them busy. In fact, these people are often too busy to help maintain a high level of activity for their FPC or to work collaboratively with other members on projects (Borron, 2003). Collaboration and consensus in FPCs is also hindered by a lack of common ground among the diverse membership, as well as a lack of common understanding around certain key terms such as ‘local food’ and ‘food security’ (Harper et al, 2009; Borron, 2003). A failure to clearly define roles, responsibilities and accountabilities is a further procedural problem for FPCs (VFPC, 2009). In the case of FPC members being assigned to their roles by municipalities, there may be a lack of genuine interest and enthusiasm for the work (Borron, 2003). Finally, in the context of citizen beneficiaries of FPC actions, Blay-Palmer (2009) notes that those communities who are most in need of FPC’s help are often in the worst position to engage due to a lack of community capacity. For example, people in these areas may lack the skills to do things such as apply for grants.
**FNS practices**

**Pre-Workshop Questionnaire**

All invitees were sent a questionnaire in advance of the workshop and it was completed by eleven people. The questions and a summary of the responses are below. These responses were analysed prior to the first workshop and were used to inform the first ‘Visioning’ exercise.

**What are the main strengths of Cork’s food system?**

Questionnaire respondents recognised the value of Cork’s natural environment citing the fertile soil, ‘good’ land and excellent growing conditions which it enjoys as being key strengths of the food system. This was said to be supported by Cork’s long coastline and established aqua-cultural operations. The products of the soil and sea were described as abundant and of high quality. As a result of this, Cork was seen as having a strong and well-established food industry, with much entrepreneurial activity and production innovation on-going. One said there are ‘…plenty of people doing great things…’ and examples cited included the production of traditional and artisanal food; small-scale, specialised and organic production; and engagement with short food supply chains, with much food produced and consumed locally. Cork’s reputation and strong brand for these types of foods is a key asset. Respondents noted that the number of farmers’ markets is increasing in Cork and that these markets are of high quality. The English Market in Cork city was cited as a leader in the sale of ‘alternative’ foods. The prevalence of food festivals across the county to showcase local food was also mentioned, as was the proliferation of good restaurants, with Café Paradiso given as an example. These food activities are supported by good infrastructure, as well as various organisations such as Cork Chamber of Commerce and the West Cork Fucshia brand. Community-based organisations are influential in helping maintain a strong food system in Cork, whether they focus on charitable food provisioning or on food growing projects. In addition, food-based education is widely available in the Cork region from bodies such as UCC, CIT, Teagasc, Ballymaloe Cookery School, Kinsale College of Further Education, and the Clonakilty Agricultural College. Questionnaire respondents wrote that Cork’s food system is characterised by a strong food culture driven by passionate people with a genuine interest and commitment to bettering the food system.

**What are the main weaknesses of Cork’s food system?**

Respondents cited weaknesses of Cork’s food system relating to leadership and education. With regards to the former, over regulation by food safety regulatory bodies was described as problematic for the viability of small food producers. In addition, a lack of integrated planning and ‘cross system thinking’ was mentioned. The latter issue, education, was discussed in the context of there being a lack of awareness among the populace in Cork around cooking skills, and a lack of awareness around the importance of and knowledge of healthy diets. Connected to both of these was the issue of accessibility to healthy, fresh food which some respondents described as being uneven, resulting in much food poverty. One person theorised that there may be areas of Cork which could be characterised as food deserts. However the weakest parts of Cork’s food system would appear to lie in how the food market operates. This is indicated by the number of responses citing issues such as limited access to capital and the over-availability of cheap and poor-quality imported foods. There was much written about too heavy a reliance on livestock production and industrial food production methods in the Cork area, and the potential environmental and human health impacts of this. The prevalence of mainstream long supply chains is a weakness in Cork’s food system, with consumers spatially and conceptually distanciated from their food’s origins. There was said to be a power imbalance in such long corporate food chains, with primary producers often losing out. Conversely, there is a lack of connections between small-scale producers and the market.

**What are the main challenges for Cork to deliver a fairer, healthier, more secure and sustainable food system for all?**
Comments in this section mirror those in the previous one and can be categorised according to three headings: leadership, education and market. One respondent wrote that an important challenge to making Cork’s food system fairer, healthier, more secure and sustainable is that food and health are not priorities on the policy agenda. It was said that the ‘…necessary will…’ and ‘…genuine concern from public agencies…’ was absent, as was the provision of sufficient resources and support to help improve the food system. More broadly, there was said to be a lack of cohesive organization and co-ordination within the food system. This is exacerbated by the fact that plans to improve the food system, require a systemic multi-stakeholder approach which is difficult when food spans across a number of governmental departments. Insufficient education was mentioned a number of times as a challenge, especially in the face of consumers’ disconnection from their food sources. Particularly difficult areas for education were cited: sustainability citizenship, seasonality and healthy lifestyles. Respondents also mentioned challenges around how the market and the food system currently interact. At the producer end, the lack of opportunities for livestock farmers to diversify, and thus reduce their environmental impact, was seen as problematic, as were the poor prices currently received by farmers for their produce. Focusing on consumption, a final challenge which was described is the high price of healthier foods.

What are the main areas where civil society, the public and private sector should concentrate to contribute to a fairer, healthier, more secure and sustainable food system for all?

Questionnaire respondents had some suggestions for areas on which civil society, the public sector and the private sector could all begin to focus. The need for strategic planning, the creation of an integrated national food policy, and the re-balancing of power relations between supermarkets and primary producers are areas in which all three sectors could conceivably play a role. Both the public and private sector could concentrate on two suggested areas of focus: local, ethical and sustainable procurement; and reducing food waste. Beyond this, views diverged on where responsibility for the food system lay. Some cited the role which national-level and local governments could play in facilitating urban agriculture (zoning for food growing and farmers’ markets, designation of bio-waste sites for household compost), education around healthy diets, cooking and sustainable food systems, and school food programmes. Others wrote of the important role for activism to create public pressure on policy-makers to facilitate the creation of more sustainable food systems. Respondents detailed how civil society could instigate a dialogue around the hegemonic dominance of livestock production in Ireland and its associated problems, as well as a dialogue around how to (re-)create respect for food and its nutritional and epicurean values.

Stakeholder Interview

Genesis and evolution

The idea for Cork Food Policy Council (CFPC) sprang from the success of a previous initiative with which the interviewee was involved. In 2009, SafeFood3 funded a call for community food initiatives and the interviewee wrote a successful proposal for ‘Food Focus’, a three-year project which promoted healthy eating in the Knocknaheeney4 area of Cork. This project’s remit was broad and involved a range of community outreach activities including working with men’s groups, and providing talks on diets and health to at-risk groups such as young mothers. Within the period of time this project ran (2010-2013), Knocknaheeney Community Garden was developed and this has continued since then as a viable, multifunctional and well-used community resource. The interviewee attended the final meeting of the project’s steering committee at which the question ‘What next?’ arose, leading to the suggestion that a food policy council (FPC) for Cork should be established.

3 According to www.safefood.eu: ‘SafeFood is an all-island implementation body set up…with a general remit to promote awareness and knowledge of food safety and nutrition issues on the island of Ireland’.
4 A deprived area of Cork City
Together with Denise Cahill, the Healthy Cities co-ordinator for Cork City, Dr. Sage called a meeting for any interested citizens in June 2013 in University College Cork. Having advertised their meeting through various existing networks, approximately sixty people attended. The group were told what FPCs were and how they operated; they were asked whether they felt Cork needed an FPC and the overwhelming response was that it did. A steering committee was built through the hand selection of members to represent a wide range of interests. Currently, CFPC is a not-for-profit charitable organisation but it may be re-constituted to enable it to apply for certain grants and funding and for it to participate in projects, especially at the European level. CFPC is now part of the Cork Healthy City Initiative and they are somewhat under the auspices of NICHE (the Knocknaheeny/Hollyhill Community Healthy Initiative) who provide it with supports such as legal cover. It was explained that CFPC wants to formalise this relationship with NICHE.

Objectives
The interviewee explained that the primary objective of CFPC is advocating for food system change towards greater health, sustainability and social justice. This involves advocating for integrated food policies, in particular ones which aim to build a more resilient food system through policies of agri-food diversification because ‘…we need an agricultural policy which doesn’t put all our eggs in one basket.’ Connected to this, CFPC advocate for the production, retailing and equitable access of healthier foods. Finally, CFPC is driven by the goal of advocating for a change in social norms, in particular, attitudes and behaviours towards food systems. The interviewee was fully aware that this is something which would most likely be achieved in the long term. It was viewed as potentially transgenerational work where having school gardens encourages children to grow their own food in adulthood. The interviewee explained that their approach to advocacy was informed by social engagement and ‘…walking the walk on the ground’. It was emphasised that this approach was important and that CFPC wanted to avoid becoming bogged down with academic discourse. CFPC aims for its activities to be embedded in the community it purports to represent by having an everyday presence there and by working to ‘…build a constituency of people who are involved’. Leading on from this, CFPC works to connect up this ‘constituency of people’ with each other, and with city authorities to facilitate dialogue. All three of these objectives are underpinned by the goal of creating a credible profile for CFPC so that it is known throughout Cork and is regarded as a relevant stakeholder agency in the Cork food scene. In achieving such status, it is hoped that CFPC could be regarded as a potential partner who could work with the City Council on food issues, and also could be the ‘go-to’ organisation for the media for comments on food issues. In addition, ‘cultivating the media’ was identified as an important objective in pursuit of CFPC’s goals.

Operations and activities
Cork Food Policy Council is funded on an ad hoc basis getting ‘…bits and pieces of informal funding from the City Council mostly from the Healthy Cities budget…’. However, it is hoped that this arrangement can be formalised in the future and plans are afoot to meet with Cork’s city manager to arrange this. Tara Kenny has simultaneously embedded roles of co-ordinator for CFPC and PhD student; her thesis focuses on food poverty, charitable food distribution networks and food policy. Tara’s research is funded through CFPC; approximately half of her funding comes from the Healthy Cities budget and the other half from the Health Service Executive Community Health Department. CFPC has plans to securing research funding through European grants.

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5 Part of the World Health Organisation’s Healthy Cities Initiative
6 Knocknaheeny and Hollyhill are deprived areas on the Northside of Cork City. NICHE aims to address health inequalities and improve the quality of life for people in these areas. It works through community development and interagency approaches.
Cork Food Policy Council is part of the United Kingdom’s Food Cities Network (there is no global network) and council members attended this network’s conference in March 2016. These connections were viewed as very fruitful and the interviewee expressed the hope that further international links can be made to bolster CFPC’s activities and impact.

Cork Food Policy Council has already engaged in a number of activities in pursuit of their goals. One such example was to collaborate on the ‘Greening the Historic Spine’ initiative with other community organisations Reimagine Cork and the Cork Social Good Team. This initiative aims to ‘…(make)…our great city an edible one!’ Specific activities included organising an event at which pallets were used to make planting boxes, at low cost. This event was judged as successful because it helped to bring together citizens who had a mutual interest in civic engagement and that the participants appeared to gain satisfaction this. Community members who took part meet once or twice a week to continue this work and some outreach activities have been undertaken to involve local neighbours in watering plants and caring for them more generally. Most of these plants are edible and it was the hope of CFPC that the local community would not only harvest and eat these plants but that this would help to engage people with their food’s origins. It is the hope that this enthusiasm and these networks can be sustained in the future. CFPC are also developing an awards scheme to recognise businesses who are working in adherence to CFPC’s values. A sub-group of CFPC have been working on this and are aware of the risk of replicating an existing scheme, and mindful of the need to create an award scheme which offers something unique and which is credible. In autumn 2015, CFPC hosted a monthly lecture series with talks entitled ‘An Introduction to Cork Food Policy Council’; ‘Quality Produce Inspired by a Lifestyle Dream’; and ‘Mixed Organic Farming with Goats and Rare Cow Breeds’. However it was noted that these meetings were poorly attended, perhaps due to timing or location. The interviewee explained that although they would like to repeat this lecture series, the CFPC would need to rethink how these were run.

In contrast to these ongoing projects, the interviewee noted the importance of instigating one-off events such as the flash feasts and streets feasts CFPC have been instrumental in organising in past years. They are also currently working on setting up screening of the film Atlantic inside Cork’s historic and famous English Market, after which a ‘question and answer’ session with the film’s director and the market’s most well-known fishmonger will take place. In addition, representatives of CFPC have been invited speakers at various events, for example delivering a talk on food security and dignity in Kinsale College.

Challenges
One key challenge for CFPC which was repeatedly cited was that much of the work they would like to do cannot happen due to a lack of resources. Financial resources are limited as there are often competing claims for funding and the City Government who should support CFPC has been chronically underfunded itself for a number of years. Human resources are also limited: ‘…(it’s)…difficult to do everything without dedicated staff…we are stretched’. In the interviewee’s experience, this problem is common to even well-established FPCs. It is difficult to both get those who work in the private sector involved and to retain membership from this group; to date, the council has lost members who were a butcher, a solicitor and a farmer. The need to review the timing of their meetings and the model of how CFPC works to encourage greater engagement was mentioned. The interviewee also highlighted the need for energy and enthusiasm to drive membership but also engagement from citizens who for the most part lack awareness as to what a food policy council is and does. It was suggested that a significant proportion of

7 According to www.ifi.ie: ‘Atlantic follows the fortunes of three small fishing communities as they struggle to maintain their way of life in the face of mounting economic and ecological challenges.’

8 A local adult education institution where Rob Hopkins of Transition Towns used to teach and first developed the idea of this movement with students.
the population are apathetic to the problems facing the food system. It was also noted that the number of those who were concerned was few and in a small city like Cork it is difficult to gain a critical mass to support CFPC and its activities. A final and important challenge for CFPC which was reported is the prevailing political context. Agricultural policy in Ireland is driven by an economic imperative and encourages productivism. A focus on export-led growth leaves the Irish agri-food system vulnerable to external shocks such as Brexit\(^9\). In spite of food being a diverse and cross-cutting issue, it is dealt with in a disparate way across a number of governmental department. Furthermore, the local government approach to food system is also problematic with councillors reported to be hesitant to make policies which may improve population health (for example creating planning policies which would control the proximity of fast food restaurants to schools) for fear that this may result in job losses.

**Foresight Workshop**

**Workshop Summary**

The workshops were guided by the following title which was derived from CFPC’s founding aim: *Towards a fairer, healthier, more secure and sustainable food system in Cork*. The first step in this research process involved participants visualising, then grouping and finally prioritising key elements of a desirable food future for Cork. The top three priorities were Integrated Food Policy; Food, Food System and Nutrition Education; and Diversified Food Production Systems. A step-by-step back-casted plan was made for each of these three visualised goals and in parallel, scenarios which had been developed at EU level were down-scaled to the Irish context. The three Irish scenario narratives are summarised here:

1. **‘Business as Usual’**: EU subsidies have been removed having a particularly destructive impact on small family farmers. Less local food is available and small local shops and farmers’ markets have closed. Food prices have risen and ‘good’ diets are the preserve of the wealthy. Diet-related diseases and illness have begun to proliferate. Large scale industrial farms benefits in this scenario, expanding in scale and making much of agriculture in Ireland oriented towards export. Rural depopulation is a natural consequence of this, as is ecological degradation of lands and waterways.

2. **‘Grey Autarky’**: The European Union is no more and therefore the removal subsidies and free trade have resulted in a shock to Ireland’s agri-food system. Agriculture has dramatically shifted as a result away from livestock farming towards more self-provisioning and localised food chains. The environmental impact of Irish agriculture has decreased sharply and the physical landscape has changed too with much land being left fallow with a resulting increase in biodiversity. Ireland benefits from nature tourism as a result and citizens’ lifestyles become healthier as they take advantage of this new resource. As borders have closed the population is ‘greying’, resulting in a labour crisis and a health system which is under strain.

3. **‘Slow Progress’**: People have begun to move away from cities and to build thriving rural communities, driven in part by: economic necessity; by changing social norms; by technology; and by government policies, within the context of strong interventionist EU policies supporting re-ruralization. The return to the land is not a regression to nostalgic times as the availability of cheap and reliable ICTs allows people to be part time farmers while maintaining other career and educational activities online. The majority eat highly nutritious vegan or vegetarian diets leading to increased health; health care savings are invested elsewhere. Foods are generally produced and consumed locally and bartering and a gift economy re-surface. Larger families begin to re-emerge due to the need for labour. Parents spend more time with children and grand-parents help with childcare.

\(^9\) According to [www.bordbia.ie](http://www.bordbia.ie): 41% of Ireland agri-food exports go to Britain.
Each of the three plans was tested in the context of each of the three scenarios and as a result, necessary changes were made to fortify the plans. These plans are considered to be robust due to their testing and altering across multiple scenarios. They form the basis of an action strategy comprised of a portfolio of options from which Cork Food Policy Council can choose and address in the short, medium or long term. The actions listed are framed as things which CFPC can facilitate or which they can advocate for. Highlights from this strategy include:

- Facilitate the creation of impactful research which could inform or encourage the creation of an integrated food policy (1.1)
- Engage directly with policy-makers at all levels (1.2)
- Create networks to assist in advocacy work (1.3)
- Facilitate the creation and embedding of food education in educational institutions at various scales (2.1)
- Advocate for those in policy-making and governance roles to address the need for food education (2.2)
- Facilitate grass-roots approaches to and community activism for food education (2.3)
- Facilitate the re-framing in the public consciousness in Ireland of healthy and sustainable food consumption practices as the norm (2.4)
- Advocate for and facilitate a transition away from mono-cultural farming systems, especially those which focus on livestock (3.1)
- Advocate for and facilitate alternative means for food to reach consumers by short-circuiting existing conventional food chains for greater economic and environmental sustainability (3.2)
- Lobby those in government to make policy changes to facilitate the diversification of the food production system (3.3)

What are the most important differences between the three EU scenarios in terms of opportunities and limitations for the ‘local’ case study initiative?

The first European scenario, Fed Up Europe, sees a continuation of the prevailing neo-liberal globalised food system and a worsening of existing negative dietary, health and environmental impacts. Retrotopia, the second scenario, is characterised by a nostalgia-fueled sense of natural heritage and rural custodianship arising out of efforts to keep global problems out of Europe as immigration and terrorist threats increases. The final European scenario used in the workshops was The Price of Health which describes a plausible future in which many Europeans return to rural lives out of necessity due to global pressures and also because of changing social norms. These changes are supported by government polices (for a fuller description of these scenarios, see Annex 1).

There are three key differences between the EU-level scenarios in terms of opportunities and limitations for the local case study initiative. The first of these relates to leadership. In the Fed Up Europe scenario, it could be argued that it is ‘business as usual’ with regard to the nature and incidence of government policies which impact on the food system. This is not conducive to Cork Food Policy Council’s aims which seek to influence policy towards the creation of a more sustainable, just and fair food system for Cork. Specifically, in this scenario, EU and national level policy-makers have less power representing an entrenchment of the current neo-liberal laissez-faire paradigm. This approach sees too much control over the food system placed in the hands of multi-national corporations and insufficient leadership in support of farmers’ livelihoods, healthy diets and environmentally-friendly agri-food production. By contrast, in the Price of Health scenario, strong government policies are in place which support self-reliance and sustainability and this would certainly represent an opportunity for Cork Food Policy Council to achieve its goals.
The second important difference between the scenarios can be seen in how diets theoretically evolve. In Fed Up Europe calorie consumption increases, while in Retrotopia calorie consumption is said to be ‘significant’ and improving diets not a priority in the face of more pressing concerns around European security. By contrast, in the Price of Health calorie consumption is relatively low with healthy diets most prevalent. Connected to this, in Fed Up Europe, the level of consumption of meat and other animal products is high, while in both of the other European scenarios meat consumption decreases significantly. In the case of Retrotopia, this is because of environmental concerns, while in the Price of Health this is attributed to changing social norms. A scenario in which diets become healthier and less focused on animal products represents a significant opportunity for Cork Food Policy Council in terms of their environmental and health goals. Conversely, the mission of CFPC would be limited in theoretical futures in which there is increased calorie consumption, a lack of interest in improving diets, and high levels of meat and dairy consumption.

Connected to the level of meat production and consumption, the third key difference between the scenarios is in attitudes and behaviours towards environmentalism as it relates to the food system. In Fed Up Europe, because of the high level of livestock production, agricultural emissions increase and natural land cover decreases as more land is given over to the growth of grassland for livestock grazing. Correspondingly, in Retrotopia, agricultural emissions decrease due to a reduction in livestock numbers and natural land cover is untouched by agricultural expansion in both the Retrotopia and Price of Health scenarios. Furthermore, policies to enhance climate resilience in Southern European countries are made at European level - due to fears of mass south-north migration- in Retrotopia. Finally, there is a shift in public consciousness in both Retrotopia and the Price of Health around the importance of natural heritage, environmental stewardship and rural livelihoods. Yet again, much of the characteristics of the Fed Up Europe scenario offer potential limitations to CFPC’s work, while the possible futures presented by Retrotopia and the Price of Health suggest significant opportunities. Key objectives of CFPC can likely be achieved in these scenarios. These include diversifying food production systems, and changing the mind-set of citizen-consumers towards a greater understanding and valorisation of the food system and its environmental embeddedness.

To what extent are these differences also translated into diverging strategic choices for the future?

The three EU level scenarios, when scaled down to the Irish level provided a useful stimulus to create robust plans for the achievement of Cork Food Policy Council’s goals. These plans were based on the top three priorities as identified by workshop participants: Integrated Food Policy; Food and Nutrition Education; and Diversified Food Production Systems. Each plan was analysed to provide the basis for an action strategy containing a number of specific objectives and sub-objectives. The topics on which the scenarios most diverged correspond somewhat to the three priorities selected by workshop participants (see Figure 4). Figure 5 illustrates the relationship between the EU-level scenarios and the down-scaled Irish scenarios, through the lens of these emergent important themes and selected priorities. It is fitting that the most contentious issues are those on which the action strategy for Cork Food Policy Council was based, tackling these matters directly and in great detail. The result is a number of diverging strategic actions identified for the pursuit of each objective, some of which are listed below.
‘Local’ level analysis of FNS Pathways in Ireland

**FIGURE 4: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN VARYING SCENARIO TOPICS (TOP) AND PLANNING PRIORITY TOPICS (BOTTOM)**

**Objective 1: Integrated food policy**
- Facilitate the creation of impactful research which could inform or encourage the creation of an integrated food policy
- Engage directly with policy-makers at all levels, including national government
- Work to re-frame certain issues in the current food system to foreground their importance and encourage engagement at a political level with integrated policies. For example, framing childhood obesity as a children’s rights issue
- Be prepared to leverage windows of opportunity to get food and an integrated food policy onto the political agenda, for example food scares, public health crises, negotiations during the formation of government

**Objective 2: Food and Nutrition Education**
- Facilitate the creation and embedding of food education in educational institutions at various scales, from primary and secondary schools (encouraging parents to engage with these programmes as well), to adult education establishments
- Facilitate grass-roots approaches to and community activism for food, food system and nutrition education
- Facilitate the re-framing in the public consciousness in Ireland of healthy and sustainable food consumption practices as the norm
- Identify and utilise key motivated figures to lead and inspire learning around food, food systems and nutrition

**Objective 3: Diversified food production systems**
- Advocate for and facilitate a transition away from mono-cultural and high-input farming systems, especially those which focus on livestock
- Advocate for and facilitate alternative means for food to reach consumers by short-circuiting existing conventional food chains for greater economic and environmental sustainability
- Harness media narratives to transmit the message that the food system is not sustainable and is in need of ‘greening’
- Create production and distribution synergies by utilising novel technologies

**Which other outcomes of the scenario work is important to highlight to understand the case study initiative’s dynamics?**

Workshop participants in all three plan groups agreed that the three EU scenarios, and the Irish scenarios which resulted from down-scaling these, could each be positioned on a spectrum of ideal futures with *Fed Up Europe* at one end, the *Price of Health* at the other, and *Retrotopia* between the two but closer to the latter. *Fed Up Europe* was described as a future resulting from a ‘business as usual’ approach. It was seen as representing an entrenchment of current negative trends and the logical conclusion to prevailing approaches to food policy. The narrative for *Price of Health*, by comparison, described characteristics of an almost utopian food system, the end goal for CFPC. Because of this, when reviewing the plans in the context of the *Grey Autarky* (derived from *Retrotopia*) and *Slow Progress* (derived from the *Price of Health*) scenarios, many steps were described as ‘already achieved in this scenario’. Had other scenarios been used, which described contexts quite different to CFPCs vision, this may have resulted in more robust plans.
‘Local’ level analysis of FNS Pathways in Ireland

FIGURE 5 OVERVIEW OF EU SCENARIOS DOWNSCALED TO IRISH CONTEXT
Another notable outcome of the scenarios work is the finding that Cork Food Policy Council are operating within a particularly challenging national political context in which many of the fundamental problems they are working to address have yet to be recognised by those in policy-making roles. This is evidenced by particular strategic actions which were identified such as:

- Work to gain recognition for the value of research which focuses on non-quantifiable and non-agricultural elements of the food system (sub-objective 1.1.2) and the negative environmental impacts of agriculture in Ireland and agri-food systems more broadly (sub-objective 1.1.5);
- Highlight to those in government the connection between sustainable food systems and public health (sub-objective 1.2.4);
- Work to re-frame certain issues in the current food system to foreground their importance and encourage engagement at a political level with integrated policies. For example, framing childhood obesity as a children’s rights issue (objective 1.5);
- Engage with the Health Service Executive to emphasise the connections between food, food nutrition and food system education, and mental and physical health (sub-objective 2.2.2);
- Advocating for a diversified food production system to create a food system which is more economically, socially and environmentally sustainable (aim 3).

**2.3. Reflection on Transformative Capacity**

*Why is Cork Food Policy Council not more transformational now?*

Cork Food Policy Council is facing an uphill battle to transform the food system as Ireland is just as embroiled in the globalised and industrialised food system as other nations of the Global North. In some respects, the food system in Ireland is even more problematic due to the embeddedness of a culture of convenient and low-priced food. Also, prominent agricultural exceptionalism rhetoric prevents the extent of Irish farming’s unsustainability being made known and comprehended. This latter problem is partially attributable to the strength of the farming lobby in Ireland which contributes to a political focus on agriculture and rural policies, at the expense of the creation of intersectional food policies. Furthermore, agricultural policies myopically encourage productivism which is aimed at the export market (although greenwashed as ‘sustainable intensification’). Within this context, CFPC as an organisation is lacking in resources, both financial, due to underfunding, and (connected to this) human. This latter problem can in part be attributed to the time-poverty of some voluntary council members, particularly those working in the private sector. A lack of awareness and apathy from members of the community towards food system issues were also cited as barriers to transformation of the food system.

*How could Cork Food Policy Council be more transformational?*

At all stages of this case study the same challenges were repeated and this is reflected in the three key elements of a desirable food future on which workshop participants chose to focus: Integrated Food Policy; Food, Food System and Nutrition Education; and Diversified Food Production Systems. Although CFPC has begun to address these goals already, some further work could be done in this area to make it more transformational. In fact, one key output of the workshops was an action strategy built around these three desirable future elements, and which is framed as a portfolio of options from which CFPC may select and apply in the short, medium or long-term future. Key actions with which CFPC could engage to enhance its transformational capacity include:

- facilitating the creation of impactful research which could inform or encourage the creation of an integrated food policy
- engaging directly with policy-makers at all levels
- creating networks to assist in advocacy work
facilitating the creation of a body similar to Sustain in the UK to help advocate for an integrated food policy
facilitating the creation and embedding of food education in educational institutions at various scales, from primary and secondary schools (encouraging parents to engage with these programmes as well), to adult education establishments
advocating for those in policy-making and governance roles to address the need for integrated food system and nutrition education
facilitating grass-roots approaches to and community activism for food, food system and nutrition education
facilitating the re-framing in the public consciousness in Ireland of healthy and sustainable food consumption practices as the norm
identifying and utilising key motivated figures to lead and inspire learning around food, food systems and nutrition
advocating for and facilitating a transition away from mono-cultural and high-input farming systems, especially those which focus on livestock
advocating for and facilitating alternative means for food to reach consumers by short-circuiting existing conventional food chains for greater economic and environmental sustainability
lobbying those in government to make policy changes to encourage the diversification of the food production system
harnessing media narratives to transmit the message that the food system is not sustainable and is in need of ‘greening’
utilising windows of opportunity to embed these changes, for example global food production crises
creating production and distribution synergies by utilising novel technologies
using their unique position to bring all stakeholders ‘to the table’ to address key issues

Reflecting on the four dimensions of food and nutrition security, what is the transformational capacity of Cork Food Policy Council?

Assessing CFPC’s capacity to be transformational through the lens of the four dimensions of food and nutrition security (Availability, Access, Utilization, Stability), it has the potential to have impact on all but the first dimension (only because Availability is not currently problematic for FNS in the Irish context). Key objectives of CFPC’s, if achieved, could address the lack of food purchasing power which exists in some households (access), by amongst other things, facilitating growing, and improving purchasing and cooking skills. Another potentially transformational objective is addressing the spatial and infrastructural inaccessibility for some to shops selling healthy food. Priorities identified by CFPC also relate to the capabilities of individuals to fully utilize food that has been accessed; CFPC aims to improve low levels of nutritional knowledge and skills. Those with a compromised health status face greater challenges in gaining benefits from food so if CFPC were to focus on individuals such as this, they could have a great impact. A final aspect of utilization on which CFPC could increase their efforts for transformation towards greater FNS is on the prevalence of low-priced unhealthy foods. The stability of accessibility and utilization of healthy food are also areas on which CFPC could have great transformational capacity. Their aims and objectives, which focus on both top-down systemic change and bottom up community engagement, position them well to influence a stability of accessibility for household to healthy diets, as well as in developing resilience strategies in the situation of food accessibility being vulnerable to environmental shocks.
3. SATELLITE CASE STUDY REPORT

3.1. Research questions & Methods

Research Questions
This case study which focused on Bia Food Initiative (BFI) was underpinned by the question: “How can this practice develop into the future in a way that it will contribute significantly to better food and nutrition security at the European level?” Further specific questions to guide this research were:

- To what extent and how do BFI’s selected food and nutrition security (FNS) practices/pathways reflect novel responses to FNS concerns in specific settings?
- To what extent are these novel practices/pathways promising and successful?
- To what extent do involved stakeholders explore up- and out-scaling potentials?
- How do stakeholders characterise their interaction with institutional settings?
- How relevant is EU level policy making in this interaction with institutional settings?

Methods
Bia Food Initiative was chosen as the satellite local case study for Ireland, in examining promising practices for food and nutrition security in the context of the TRANSMANGO study. BFI is a charity which aims to prevent food waste through its redistribution which they see as having environmental benefits (preventing the disposal of surplus food, encouraging the efficient use of food and natural resources), social benefits (matching surplus food to those in need; encouraging community action and voluntary participation), and economic benefits (help reduce costs for businesses, provide employment). BFI works by coordinating with other national agencies, using existing logistics, utilising modern information and communication technologies, and drawing on the existing support for charitable actions which exists among the Irish populace. It also advocates for a more favourable business and policy climate for food redistribution in Ireland. BFI was formed in 2012 and is the only nationwide food redistribution network in Ireland.

In aiming to answer the research questions set out above, a two-part methodological approach was used. First, desk-based research of secondary sources was conducted and second, semi-structured interviews were carried out. The two-phase methodology provided for findings from phase 1 to be bolstered and cross-tabulated with those from phase 2. It also allowed for the interview schedule for phase 2 to be refined in advance by findings from phase 1. In the desk-based element of this case study, literature on food redistribution networks was reviewed and this provided context: what these are, why they are necessary, how they are constituted, their aims and objectives, how they work, and how they differ from food banks. It highlighted the novel and innovative nature of food (re-)distribution networks. In addition to this literature review, this desk study reviewed all sources of information on BFI itself which was feasible due to the fact that it is a relatively new organisation and as a result, the amount of online information about this body was digestible. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with five key BFI stakeholders. The interview sample consisted of three people who were part of BFI in some capacity, one person who represented a donor organisation and one person who represented a recipient organisation. Ultimately, interviews were carried out with Brendan Dempsey, Karen Horgan and Eoin MacCuirc from BFI, Lorraine Shiels from Tesco, and Chris Hilton from Cuan Mhuire.

10 Cuan Mhuire offers rehabilitation treatment for individuals suffering from addictions. It’s the largest charity of its kind in Ireland.
inception, BFI involved Brendan in setting up a pilot for this project in Cork. Karen Horgan has run her family's manufacturing business for a number of years. She works part-time with BFI and is their Director of Operations. Eoin MacCuirc has a long history of involvement with poverty charities and was co-founder of BFI. All three sit on BFI's board. Lorraine Shiels is the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) manager at Tesco Ireland. Tesco provided BFI with seed funding and provide food donations to BFI on a daily basis. Chris Hilton is head chef at Cuan Mhuire's Coolarne branch (near Athenry, Co. Galway). He is responsible for sourcing, planning and overseeing the cooking of all meals for approximately one hundred residential participants in their rehabilitation centre. Each of these five interviews took place over the phone and were transcribed for later analysis (using content analysis).

3.2. Research findings

**Literature review**

For the purposes of this report, food redistribution initiatives represent the activities of redistribution centres - where surplus food that is donated from producers, wholesalers, retailers or other organisations is distributed to charitable organisations, providing meals, food parcels or other forms of food assistance to those in need. Typically, such food redistribution activities involve the collaboration of several stakeholder groups in their establishment and operation (Hanssen et al., 2014). The source of such surplus is food that is not sold through normal retailing channels, such as products approaching their use-by date, goods with faulty packaging, misshapen fruit and vegetables or goods that are consequences of overproduction, distribution delays and end-of-line production (Sustain, 2002).

Recent research has highlighted how such initiatives exemplify a shift towards multi-sector collaborations among public, private, and civil society institutions rather than state-directed policy or programmes on food assistance, suggesting that such arrangements can be seen as instruments of “neoliberal governance” of the food system (Warshawsky, 2011). A recurrent theme in the literature is that redistribution initiatives (food banks in particular) support the neo-liberal default policy response which is to push responsibility for food security back onto individual citizens, charities and church groups (Lambie-Mumford and Dowler, 2014), as observed in many countries such as the UK (Lambie-Mumford, 2013) and Canada (Riches, 2011; Tarasuk et al, 2014). As Midgely (2013) notes, such developments reduce the pressure on governments to address the structural determinants of food poverty and thus depoliticise food insecurity. A more trenchant critique is that the growth of food banks in wealthy countries is a salient marker of social policy failure with respect to hunger (Lambie-Mumford, 2013) and a failure of governments to meet their right to food obligations (De Schutter, 2012).

At the same time, many accounts highlight what Poppendieck (1999) called the “persistent dilemma” of such initiatives, namely the “deeply felt tension” between responding to immediate hunger with charitable food assistance and tackling the myriad ways in which hunger stems from social injustice (Rock, 2006). Citing the rise of food banking initiatives in Canada since the 1980s, Tarasuk et al. (2014) note that reliance on donations by such initiatives means a preoccupation with the problems associated with supply and less attention on the factors underlying the growing demand for these services.

From the perspective of waste reduction, food banks in particular appear to be a win-win situation for private sector actors - via the reduced cost of waste management and the public relations/benefits (Midgely, 2013), while providing much needed donations for the charity organisations involved (van der Horst et al, 2014). A knock-on effect of corporate food philanthropy is an opportunity for brand strengthening in the market place such as building public recognition through product logos (Lambie-Mumford, 2013). However, Riches (2011) questions the ethics of actors such as supermarkets recycling surplus food when the pricing structures of the food industry are responsible for creating significant food wastage in the first place, leaving family farmers with low incomes and low-income consumers unable to purchase nutritious food. Similarly, some commentators have questioned why retailers have so much
Local' level analysis of FNS Pathways in Ireland

surplus. If they have costed surplus into prices borne by the consumer, are they really part of the solution - or part of the problem (Sustain, 2002)?

As McIntyre et al. (2012) note, food redistribution initiatives seem to combine humanitarianism with good common sense - what can be wrong with taking surplus food out of warehouses and putting it into the mouths of the hungry? Arguably, such initiatives are a pragmatic expression of the community and the corporate sector recognising and responding to emergency food needs (Sustain, 2002). They represent “deep wells of community altruism” and it is not to say that well-meaning persons, churches, farmers, and corporate food giants should not give their time, money and surplus or wasted food to feed the hungry. (Riches, 2011). On the other hand, there are arguments that such approaches are naïve, providing what Poppendieck (1999) describes as a sort of “moral relief” for people from the discomfort of confronting images of hunger in their midst, reassuring the public that food security is an issue that is being addressed which means that public debate on hunger is “silent” and “dampening the desire” to empower the poor and take a more muscular, public stand against hunger (Booth and Whelan, 2014). van der Horst et al. (2014) question if there is a “dark side” to such initiatives in terms of the impact on the self-esteem of receivers, arguing that the approaches may be disempowering for recipients and may be provided in ways that compromise or misunderstand the recipient’s needs.

What emerges clearly from much of the literature on food assistance provision is the extent to which it constitutes a distinctly ‘other’ system of food acquisition which sits very much apart from the mainstream ways by which most people access food today. The food is both sourced and acquired through mechanisms other than market exchange (Midgely, 2013). In addition, writing about the experience of food banking in the UK, Lambie-Mumford (2013) argues that such initiatives are experienced as ‘other’ by those who turn to them, relating experiences of stigma and embarrassment indicating that it is a difficult experience for those involved. Power (2011) comments on how, in the context of Canadian food banks, “otherness” is typified by recipients who lack the same options, choices and participation in food-related decisions that others in society do.

At the same time, it is recognised that food redistribution initiatives provide a palpable benefit for people in emergency and crisis situations and have helped keep at bay hunger and malnutrition for millions of people throughout the industrialised world (Sustain, 2002). As Poppendieck (1999) notes, such initiatives are not a problem if they represent a “kindly add-on” to an adequate and secure safety net of public provision.

FNS practices
Stakeholder Interviews

Overview and Aims
Bia Food Initiative (BFI) is a food redistribution charity which operates as an intermediary between food companies and charities which serve disadvantaged communities. According to interviewee Eoin MacCuirc: ‘We are the bridge to help serve busy charities and businesses’ and this bridge is made up of infrastructural and logistical services. BFI makes it as simple and easy as possible for companies to redirect their surplus food away from dumps, and does so in a timely manner. Of the approximately 50,000 tonnes of food waste in Ireland each year which is recoverable, BFI aims to re-distribute approximately 10,000 tonnes of this. The logistical services which BFI offers are driven by the following goal: no food should be wasted while people are going hungry. According to Tesco Ireland’s CSR officer Lorraine Shiels, her company got involved with BFI because their goal speaks to Tesco’s ethical ambitions to lead the way on reducing food waste in retail and other areas in the food chain. In fact, Lorraine stated that it is Tesco’s goal that no edible food will go to waste in Tesco by 2017. BFI is different to food banks in that it serves an intermediary logistical function and has no direct interaction with end-receivers of food aid. However the organisation is also different as it does not engage in rhetoric around food poverty. Instead, BFI emphasises its role in alleviating the environmental burden of food waste,
quantifying and making tangible its contribution to reducing carbon emissions. BFI works in parallel with a second food redistribution solution called Food Cloud. Food Cloud was set up at around the same time as BFI but uses technology to connect local food business directly to charities in their local area using a mobile phone app. Food Cloud complements the activities of BFI by serving those donors and recipient organisations with smaller needs.

**Operations and Practices**

Bia Food Initiative uses three distribution hubs, in Dublin, Cork and Galway cities with most of the food moving through the main hub and head office in Dublin. Food manufacturers and retailers contact their local BFI hub with details of their food surpluses which could potentially go to waste. Some businesses don’t have regular surpluses but BFI, at its three depots, can easily accept donations on an *ad hoc* basis. It does however reserve the right to refuse food donations which it doesn’t think can be re-distributed. Incoming donations may be frozen, chilled or ambient.

Karen Horgan reported that BFI currently have approximately 75 registered donor organisations, most of which are food manufacturers. Food manufacturers may have surplus food to donate because it cannot be sold. Examples given were products with packaging issues (the defined ‘shelf-life’ indicated by date labels (which may have no connection to food safety or quality) requires food be dumped as this is cheaper than re-labelling); the seemingly unsaleable by-products of the production process (the misshapen ends of compressed ham rolls); or those which do not pass quality control standards (‘gram-light’ food (labels are for 100g of chicken, not 99g); sauces not quite the right colour; chocolate chips not spread out evenly in ice-cream; and breaded chicken lacking coating on its edges). In addition, BFI approached Kellogg’s cereals to become involved with their ‘Help Give a Child a Breakfast’ initiative; in response, Kellogg’s gave BFI an entire truckload of cereal to distribute.

In addition, most well-known food retailers in Ireland are engaging with BFI in some way: Karen Horgan reports that BFI is ‘working on’ getting both Dunne’s Stores, and Marks and Spencer on board. Tesco provided start-up funding of €60,000 to BFI and donate food every week. Lorraine Shiels explained that most of the surplus food which Tesco donates comes from the distribution stage of the process whereby food cannot be sent to their stores because the ‘life code’ on the product is too short, or because it may be seasonal, such as Easter eggs. In this situation it is cheaper to send this food to BFI than to back-haul it. Tesco have a clear CSR ambition to reduce food waste in their retail operations but also to assist their suppliers and customers to reduce food waste. Lorraine reports that Tesco covers the cost of food deliveries from their distribution centres in North County Dublin but that pallets of donated foods tend to be included in deliveries which are already going out to their shops.

Bia Food Initiative operates a lean model with just eleven employees across all three hubs. BFI looks to employ special categories of people and works with the Department of Social Protection’s back-to-work *Pobal* scheme which helps get people from disadvantaged groups into employment e.g. ex-prisoners, single mothers. All of BFI’s board members are volunteers and the rest of the work on the ground is done by volunteers. Donations are separated out by volunteers and are inputted onto BFI’s computerised system. They need to be separated as deliveries from a donor organisation may be too much for one charity to take, for example, an entire pallet of milk.

The approximately 45 registered recipient charities can log in, see what is in stock and request the foods they want online. BFI personnel are familiar with charities’ preferences, for example homeless hostels prefer sandwiches and the St. Vincent de Paul charity favour food hampers. There is an informal system in place where charities may be called to inform them of the availability of their preferences. Chris Hilton from Cuan Mhuire explained that he gets an email from BFI at the beginning of the week listing specifically what is available and he will phone them back and most of the time, get exactly what he wants from the list.
Bia’s Karen Horgan emphasised that foods will never be pushed on charities, for example sugary or other unhealthy foods, however nor does BFI aim to deal with only nutritious foods. Chris Hilton agreed that he needs to be selective in what he chooses; working with drug or alcohol addicts who often have digestive sensitivities, spicy foods such as curry would not be in demand. Conversely, he tries to prepare healthy food for Cuan Mhuire’s clients and feels that this is not what is always offered by BFI.

In BFI, the afternoons are usually spent packing up deliveries for charities into trays. Either the charity will collect their chosen food or BFI will deliver it. The charity are charged either €1.50 for a tray if they collect it, or €2 if it is delivered. According to Eoin, this price represents about one tenth of the actual cost of the food. As the food is received as a free donation, charities are actually paying for the infrastructure which helps move the food. However, if food is left over after the charities have made their requests, BFI will give this out free of charge rather than asking for money for it or risking it going to waste. To date, BFI have facilitated the re-distribution of 700,000 meals worth of food. They have also hosted a Feed the 5000 event (2012), a Feed the City event (2014) and in 2013 along with Philip Boucher-Hayes, Bia made a movie entitled Waste Watchers about making Killorglan in Co. Kerry a zero waste town.

The Food Cloud app allows food retailers to send a text to local charities which have registered with them to say that they have certain types of foods in certain amounts. Lorraine Shiels spoke of how the Tesco store network uses the Food Cloud app a couple of times a week, working around a donation schedule. The charities accept or decline the offer and are then provided an allocated time for collection from the shop. It is normally in the evening, shortly after the store has closed. According to Chris Hilton (who on behalf of Cuan Mhuire engages with both Food Cloud and BFI), the text might say that what is available is from the bakery department; it is only once he gets to the store that he will find out if it’s one sliced bread pan that is available, or twenty trays of bread. There is no charge associated with this service for charities. All charges sit with the food businesses who are saving money overall through avoidance of food waste costs and the reputational damage associated with this. Tesco use Food Cloud in a slightly different way in their urban stores in Dublin, under the banner of the Food Rescue Project. In this, a network of corporate volunteers collect surplus food from city centre shops in an electric car donated by Electric Ireland, and then they drop it off to the charities.

Contextualised Beginnings
Eoin MacCuirc reports he first began to work on a project which eventually became Bia Food Initiative in 2008. He was aware of the context within which he was working: almost 100 billion tonnes of food is wasted (at household level alone) every year in Europe; 55 million European people are in food poverty; and food bank activities address only a small fraction of these problems. Eoin had been involved in a mass charity event in Dublin which had had a lot of surplus food and he was finding it hard to re-distribute this. He met Jack Dunphy who was part of the Cross-Care food bank, and Jack took all of the surplus food he had. However, Cross-Care is a religious organisation and only had a remit to distribute food within Dublin. This fuelled Eoin’s desire to set up a national food redistribution network. He and Jack worked on this for a number of years but eventually, by 2011 it was decided that it was not Cross-Care’s path to expand and Bia was then established as a separate body in late 2011. Karen Horgan explained that: ‘…2011 was a bleak year. There were an awful lot of people in need…people going down a horrible poverty spiral’. At that time, BFI received funding of €37,000 from the Environmental Protection Agency to conduct a feasibility study and they began running events such as Feed the City to get people interested.

About a year before this, a member of the Cork branch of the St. Vincent de Paul charity, Brendan Dempsey, in his day job as a lorry driver had been dumping tonnes of food from factories into holes in the ground, and then in the evening was visiting families who were living with hunger. In Brendan’s view,

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11 Well known journalist, author and presenter who often focuses on food issues in his work
12 Semi-state electricity supply board
those in Cork who were poor were getting less governmental support as the recession went on, with funding cuts for homeless charities and hostels, and other charities in the city on the verge of closing down due to financial concerns. He also saw a new type of people in need: ‘...we’re getting calls from new clients now...people with a third level education. These are hard-working people coming to us and saying they have no food, that there is nothing in the fridge. And they wait until the last moment to contact us. Hoping that something will come up before they come to the Vincent de Paul. The lights are out and there’s no food.’

In response to this, Brendan began connecting businesses’ food waste with those who were hungry. He got Musgraves\(^\text{13}\) on board first and Brendan began to bring the food ‘...in the boot of my car straight to families’. He upgraded to a van; then got free access to a 10,000 square factory for storing ambient foods; followed by free access to warehouses with fridges and freezers, expanding the scope of foods received and donated. Brendan met challenges along the way such as having to spend two years working with solicitors to come to an agreement that Musgraves would not be held liable for any issues arising out of their food donations. A further challenge was having to adhere to Ireland’s Food Safety Authority’s Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) regulations which are in place to ensure that food is handled safely.

St. Vincent de Paul service 5000 families in Cork each week which was quite a strain on their resources and difficult for VdeP’s membership, who, like Brendan, are mostly retirees. He says: ‘We were going nowhere and we couldn’t continue’. It was perhaps fortuitous that this was the point at which BFI came to Brendan’s attention. He was told that they wanted to become established and grow into a national network. Because of the work Brendan had been doing and the small size of Cork, it was decided that a pilot scheme be set up in Cork City to test the viability of such a network. Brendan jumped at the opportunity to collaborate with BFI because of VdeP’s lack of both human and financial resources.

Eoin MacCuirc and Jack Dunphy were responsible for starting BFI but there were many others involved. Eoin said these were ‘Just ordinary people who said this needed to be done...(and who were)...all really into making this happen...’ A steering group and a board consisting of five members was established and this brought together a diversity of expertise and skill-sets with experiences in food banks, project management, business development, logistics, finance and the food industry. Brendan reflects on the amalgamation of his efforts with BFI: ‘They got a lot of people of quality around the table. I was lost being a lorry driver’. Eoin described how in a radio interview he stated BFI’s need for logistical expertise and the response to this:

‘...a retiree from Masterlink, came on board. He put together a map of food charities and he was able to work out the tonnage and say how many depots we needed...He helped up set up a warehouse and looked at what kind of racking we needed. He was an expert...’

Financial and other supports were made available to BFI. The Environmental Production Agency had provided €37,000 to conduct a feasibility study. Tesco Ireland gave BFI an initial grant of €60,000 as part of their corporate strategy for that year which had put food waste reduction to the fore, and Karen Horgan reported that this was critical for getting BFI off the ground. Tesco have provided guidance to BFI since their establishment, helping the charity secure warehouses in all three hub cities. They have also been particularly supportive of Food Cloud and have heavily invested in the technology it uses. The JP McManus Benevolent Fund provided capital of €50,000 to fund refrigerated storage and this fund helped in the negotiation of leases on warehouses and in providing guidance on managing the steering group. Cork County Council has pledged €20,000 a year for five years. Smaller supports have also helped BFI

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\(^{13}\) The Musgrave Group are Ireland’s leading grocery retail and wholesaling group.
such as Cork VdeP allowing them to hold meeting in their offices, Ford Ireland giving them their first van, and FareShare\textsuperscript{14} providing operating manuals and contracts which were customised for Ireland and according to Karen Horgan ‘…allowed…(BFI)…to hit the ground running…’. Opel are sponsoring a new fleet of seven vans which BFI will receive soon. By July 2014 the beginnings of the BFI network were well-established in Cork and within a year, the organisation had begun to set up the Dublin and Galway hubs (operational from December 2015 and January 2016 respectively).

By contrast to the amount of support available in the establishment of BFI, there were also many challenges faced. Eoin MacCuirc repeated a number of times when interviewed ‘…it is like pulling teeth trying to make it happen’. He contends that one of the biggest barriers to the repurposing of recoverable and edible surplus food is perceptions around the value of this food. He cited the examples of out-graded fruits and vegetables being composted, and restaurants buying in whole chickens to cut the breasts off and discard the rest of the animal because it’s cheaper than buying the breasts on their own: ‘The motive isn’t about maximising the use of food. It’s about making money. There are no environmental, social or moral costs factored in.’ Leading on from this, there would appear to be a lack of awareness and recognition of the problem of food waste. Eoin argues that the government doesn’t tend to support food banks because to do so would recognise food poverty as a problem and require action on its part. Correspondingly, the concept of food re-distribution is little known and Lorraine Shiels from Tesco Ireland explained that embedding re-distribution processes (involved in Food Cloud) in their retail stores was problematic at first as it required a change in employee practices. Other problems emanating from the donor end of the interaction relate to safety concerns and commercial sensitivity. Karen explained that certain companies were reluctant to come on board as donors for fear of their brand reputation being sullied if food donations were not handled properly, and also for fear of litigation resulting from this. To allay these fears BFI had to invest in a state-of-the-art IT system to track every piece of food they dealt with. In addition, BFI agreed to legally shoulder all responsibility (both up- and down-stream from their activities) for illnesses arising from foods they distributed.

Despite the funding received by BFI so far, Eoin MacCuirc explained that BFI currently needs a capital investment of approximately €1 million and how difficult it is to raise this large an amount, especially when the problem they are trying to address is conceptually invisible to most. As a social enterprise, BFI is not yet making a lot of money. In order to avail of supports from the European Commission’s Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD), two extra hubs had to be set up and this was done at great cost to BFI. It took a full year to get the Cork depot established and running well, and it is anticipated that it will take as long for the Dublin and Galway hubs to be sustainable. This is particularly challenging for the Dublin hub where costs are more significant. Eoin informs us that BFI is ‘bleeding capital currently’ and he constantly asks himself ‘How do I make this survive for two years until we break even. Who will support this?’

Institutional Interactions
Both Karen Horgan and Eoin MacCuirc from BFI present an image of some but not enough governmental support for their organisation’s work. On the negative side, Eoin reports that although he has sent letters to all government departments requesting assistance for BFI he has received little response. He feels this is because BFI’s remit ‘falls between three stools’, those being the Department of Social Protection, the Department of the Environment, and the Department of Agriculture. He stated that the Department of Agriculture has not made any financial contribution to BFI, nor has the Department of the Environment done so directly (but funds have come from the EPA, a state body under their remit): ‘We have had ministers saying nice things, but no financial support.’ Around the time of interviewing, the government in

\textsuperscript{14} FareShare are a UK organisation which fights hunger by redistributing surplus food which would have gone to waste to frontline charities.
Ireland was changing and Eoin reported his feeling that this flux did not help in placing BFI and its work to the fore in the minds of those in governance roles. At the semi-state level Teagasc, Ireland’s Food and Agriculture Development Authority, have not interacted with BFI on any level.

However, there have been some positive institutional interactions at a state and semi-state level. Karen Horgan describes the Department of Social Protection as a key stakeholder in the BFI process providing support through the Pobal scheme which provides employees from disadvantaged backgrounds. Joan Burton, then Táiniste and Minister for Social Protection, ceremonially opened BFI’s Cork depot. The Department of the Environment, through the EPA, provided funding for upgrading of BFI’s IT systems, and have helped establish a working group to publicise their (and Food Cloud’s) messages. In addition, the Stop Food Waste campaign (an EPA-funded project) is in full support of BFI’s activities. At a local governmental level, Cork County Council has committed to giving BFI €20,000 per year for five years. Bord Bia, Ireland’s food board, is very interested in BFI’s work and have actively promoted BFI to their Origin Green applicants. Origin Green is a scheme to certify the sustainability of food production practices. Manufacturers set targets in a number of areas and work towards these. A target might be ‘reduce food waste’ and by engaging with BFI, this target can easily be met, providing producers with the opportunity to ‘tick the boxes’ relating to both social and environmental issues. This is a significant institutional engagement as Bord Bia aim to eventually have 100% of producers in Ireland certified by Origin Green.

At the supra-national level, European Union institutions have also contributed positively to BFI. BFI recently won the contract to administer Ireland’s wedge of the European Commission’s Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD) which is worth €11 million over five years. Karen noted that it made sense for BFI to partner on this as it ties in to what they are already doing. However, Eoin explained that BFI had to set up three hubs to be able to avail of the scheme. As noted above, this has left them financially over-extended in the short term. He also explained that as the infrastructure for networked food redistribution was not very developed in Ireland it was hoped that that extra funds would be made available to Ireland but this was not the case.

Bia Food Initiative interacts with institutions through various regulations and legislation, the most relevant of these govern charitable organisations and how they operate; and HACCP regulations which control food safety. Laws which relate to food safety liability are also relevant for BFI. When Brendan Dempsey began re-distributing surplus food he had to work for two years to develop agreements with Musgrave to assure them that they would not be liable if any food safety issues arose. Lorraine Shiels explained that when a charity wants to receive donations through Food Cloud, Food Cloud will check that the charity meets all regulatory requirements related to food handling. In two years of working with Food Cloud Lorraine states that there has yet to be a single issue of food mishandling, and she does not consider the legislation to be prohibitive. Connected to this, Karen explained that BFI are lobbying for a ‘Good Samaritan Act’ to be introduced whereby anyone who gives surplus food in good faith will not be held liable for any negative consequences arising from its consumption. BFI are also lobbying for legislation similar to that which has just been enacted in France which bans supermarkets from dumping food.

**Strengths and Success, Weaknesses and Challenges**

The main strength of BFI lies in what it works towards every day, that is, capturing tonnes of food which would be wasted and directing it towards those in need. Since BFI was set up, it has supplied 1.15 million meals made from surplus food to 75 charities; this food would have gone to waste otherwise. Lorraine reports that Tesco alone have donated 1.9 million meals through Food Cloud since the partnership began. Not surprisingly, she views this partnership as ‘extremely successful’. BFI helps charities to

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15 Deputy Prime Minister
achieve their goals more effectively by providing expertise and infrastructure to feed more people, in a more efficient manner. Brendan describes the problems VdeP had in attempting to distribute food, prior to BFI’s involvement: ‘We had a group to box food and a group to send it to visit homes, but all of these people were OAPs, and were struggling with the boxes of food. We couldn’t give cash to certain families as they would drink or gamble it so we gave them hampers but it was awkward to order, collect and deliver them.’ Money which would have been spent by charities on food can now be put to use elsewhere. Brendan reports that Cork VdeP are spending €2000 less than before BFI were involved and this saving is being put towards education. Lorraine reports that Tesco and Food Cloud have together enabled a saving of €2.5 million in the charity sector in Ireland which has been redirected towards providing a greater level of service for their users. In the face of austerity and continuing cuts, these savings have allowed many financially insecure charities to continue to operate. Chris Hilton, chef at Cuan Mhuire Coolarne, noted how in the short time his organisation has been involved with BFI and Food Cloud (five months, since January 2016), he often didn’t have to buy certain expensive foods such as salad, butter and meat, thus reducing his costs. He conceded that he hadn’t yet seen a large reduction in the food bill but was sure that in the long term these savings would increase and have a big impact on the Cuan Mhuire charity.

The particular BFI model has a number of strengths. These include the fact that BFI is very focused in what it does, operating in a streamlined way. It is very clear in its message as a result. In addition, because BFI is novel and small, it is not set in its ways, nor does it need to convene a large board before it can get anything done. It is much more agile than comparable organisations. Eoin explained: ‘We have one vision and one system that fits everything.’ Part of this system uses information technology which is another strength as it works out the CO2 emissions, the tonnage and the value of food ‘saved’. This makes the impact of BFI all the more visible. The value of the technology used by Food Cloud was also highlighted. The technology Food Cloud has developed is unique and has the potential to be sold for use elsewhere. Currently, the Food Cloud application is being rolled out across 100 stores every month in the UK. Another strength of the BFI model is that it is designed to be self-sustaining as a large number of charities pay a small amount each week. As a result, BFI should be less reliant on outside funding sources and therefore less vulnerable to systemic shocks. There has been a lot of interest in the BFI model and a number of stakeholders from across Europe have come to visit the depots and see about rolling out a similar network in their own country (Eoin: France, UK, Denmark, USA).

A final and very important strength of BFI’s model lies in its human resources: ‘...people who are committed and passionate, working their butts off to make it happen...’ (Eoin). There is a diversity in the board and steering committee membership which gives it strength, in part by having a balance of age, experience and foresight, and youth, enthusiasm and innovation: ‘The youngsters have the great ideas but the grey-haired board make sure all the governance and checks...are looked after’ (Karen). A range of expertise converges in BFI with experiences in logistics, warehouse management and charity work to name but a few. Key actors in BFI work hard to engage with the media and Karen Horgan argues that this makes businesses want to engage with BFI. This media awareness and savvy bore out when Food Cloud was recently one of six finalists in Virgin Media’s Voom competition for social enterprises. According to Lorraine Shiels from Tesco Ireland ‘(They are)...tapping into a generation where social concerns are more to the fore. This generation are more socially aware.’ Lorraine also discussed benefits which Tesco has enjoyed since interacting with BFI. These include greater employee satisfaction (‘...colleagues say they are really proud of these initiatives...’) and reputational benefits as it allows them to ‘...put a human face on Tesco’.

However, BFI faces some challenges the most important of which would appear to be that it is resource-constrained and is in a financially precarious position as they have over-extended themselves in order to expand recently to three hubs. According to Karen Horgan:
Without governmental support, it will be difficult for BFI to raise capital. Eoin MacCuirc does not think fundraising is a feasible option, especially if they want (and need, he argues) to operate as a self-sustaining business. Other challenges for BFI include having to coordinate their operating systems with those of large multiple retailers. Karen stated:

‘Dunne’s Stores are not on board. Dunne’s operate a slightly different model. They don’t have central distribution so it’s not as straightforward. We’re working on it. Marks and Spencer don’t donate in Ireland at the moment but we’re working on that too….But their policy is they keep food on the shelf until the very last day on the packaging. Bia need a three day turnaround.’

Eoin noted that a potential weakness of Food Cloud was that it concentrated its efforts on three or four large supermarkets for its income stream and that this concentration left it exposed to potential shocks. Finally, a weakness noted by Brendan and Chris, from the perspective of recipient organisations (VdeP and Cuan Mhuire respectively), was that there isn’t always a wide enough range of foods available for charities to choose from, or that the food they choose may have been taken by another charity before them. This makes it difficult to plan what will be passed on to service-users, and what need to be ordered by them separately. However, it should be noted that neither of these interviewees were overly critical of BFI and they felt that these weaknesses would be ironed out in time.

**Future Directions**

Both Karen and Eoin agreed there they had hopes and plans for operational changes for BFI in the short and long term future. First among these was to expand the list of donor organisations to include all food producers in the country (approximately 300 more companies). Karen did however concede that many companies may be hesitant to engage with BFI because of fears surrounding safe food handling and litigation and that BFI were working on assuaging such fears. A second aim for the future was for the creation of synergies with certain state agencies. Karen thought it appropriate that BFI and the Food Safety Authority of Ireland work together as strategic partners and this is something they are ‘working on’. BFI could potentially work with Teagasc to gather surplus food for donation through gleaning at the end of harvest: ‘We have the labour and it’s a very good message not to waste good food’. Another plan is to make Dublin the centre of their operations; although Cork is currently the centre, most food will pass through Dublin and will service more people. Karen also reported that they hope to integrate BFI and Food Cloud’s operations in the future. Food Cloud offers an introduction to the concept of food redistribution. They have the physical infrastructure and the technology; by using both, she said ‘…we will be covering a lot of the black holes...if we don’t have a depot in an area we can arrange for food to be collected at a supermarket in the area.’ Finally, Eoin emphasised that it was of paramount importance for BFI to be able to sustain itself financially and to not have to rely on sourcing funding on a piecemeal basis. Lorraine Shiels reported where she would like to see the BFI-Tesco partnership going in the future and this is largely in line with BFI’s goals. Firstly, she hopes that Tesco will continue to provide operational and technical supports to BFI; secondly Tesco is looking to encourage suppliers to change practices to enable them better engage with BFI (e.g. manufacturers sending surplus food to Tesco for them to redistribute); and thirdly it is hoped that the BFI and Food Cloud models can be expanded across the Tesco network internationally:

‘…Food Cloud is planned for all of the more than 3000 stores by the end of 2017. 110 stores in Ireland are using Food Cloud and it is planned for all 148 stores to be using it by the end of December…You never know what opportunities are down the road in Europe…The model might fit for other countries depending on what charity networks are there…We should maximise…(what we’re doing in Ireland and)…the UK and the sky’s the limit after that.’ (Karen)
Brendan expressed the wish that BFI might be taken over by the state in the future, and used as the go-to agency for emergency food re-distribution. He explained that this could easily be done because the requisite infrastructure and networks are now in place.

3.3. Reflection on transformative capacity

Why is Bia Food Initiative not more transformational now?

Bia Food Initiative is working at a time when there are more people than ever living in food and nutrition insecurity; this is the legacy of the economic recession of almost ten years ago and austerity policies which have followed. In addition, those who have descended into poverty in recent years due to broader international and national economic downturns are caught in the vicious circle of suffering from a lack of supports due to a dearth of public funding. This sets the scene for the challenging social, political and economic context which limits the transformational potential of BFI.

An internal barrier to greater transformational capacity is BFI’s (over?) emphasis on the role it plays in alleviating the environmental burden of food waste. The organisation neither engages in rhetoric on food poverty nor on food security, and no distinction is made between donations of healthy or unhealthy foods.

Bia Food Initiative’s reach is not as extensive as it could be as they work with some but not all multiple retailers and food manufacturers. However, their plans in this area (set out in next section) will mean greater transformational capacity in this regard.

How could Bia Food Initiative be more transformational?

Bia Food Initiative works within the context of a large amount of surplus food being wasted in Ireland due in part to it not being sufficiently valued. This is food which could be easily recovered and this is exactly what BFI aims to do. Of the approximately 50,000 tonnes of food waste in Ireland per year which is recoverable, BFI aims to distribute 10,000 tonnes of this. Although a small proportion, it represents a significant impact and as BFI aims to grow in the future, the potential transformative capacity of BFI going forward is huge.

As mentioned above, BFI currently works with most well-known multiple retailers and 75 food manufacturers in Ireland but it aims to eventually engage with all producers (amounting to approximately 300 more). Other plans for the future include streamlining both of their solutions (BFI and Food Cloud) to ensure that there are no ‘black holes’ in their supply chain. Furthermore, the Food Cloud app is being rolled out across the UK and it was noted by an interviewee that it could go further. Tesco hope to expand BFI and Food Cloud across their organisation internationally and there has been a lot of interest in the BFI model from community food activists from a range of countries (both within and outside of Europe). This geographical expansion and growth in the scale of BFI’s operations will magnify this organisation’s transformational capacity.

Were BFI to receive greater governmental support (organisational, technical, financial, legislative), their operation could be secure and grow. Possible future synergies with particular state agencies hold massive potential, while one existing synergy (with Origin Green) could grow more and this would have a significant impact in helping to achieve BFI’s goals. It was also suggested in this case study that at some point in the future, the state may opt to absorb BFI as a state-agency with responsibility for surplus food re-distribution. Although this might give cause for worry in some respects, it would mean that there is a centralised government agency with responsibility for feeding the hungry while reducing food waste – an undeniable step in the right direction. These findings demonstrate the up- and out-scaling potential of BFI and further emphasise this organisation’s capacity to transform the food system in Ireland towards greater food and nutrition security.
Reflecting on the four dimensions of food and nutrition security, what is the transformational capacity of Bia Food Initiative?

The first dimension of food and nutritional security (FNS) – availability – is not something that needs to be addressed in the Irish context. In fact, BFI deals with the opposite problem. Food is not only available, it is surplus and going to waste. This is while others lack access to healthy diets (second dimension of FNS: access). BFI therefore aim to provide access to food to households and individuals which lack purchasing power, by redistributing surplus food stocks. The third dimension of FNS – utilization – is also relevant for BFI. Utilization relates to deriving benefits from food which has been accessed. BFI certainly provides the benefit of staving off hunger for recipients; but it cannot necessarily be said that it provides the benefits of fighting malnutrition, as BFI accepts and redirects donations of both healthy and unhealthy foods. Nor does BFI focus on individual capabilities around food knowledge, cooking skills or dietary choices. It does not work to address power distribution in households where weaker household members (often women and children) are less likely to achieve full utilization of food donations. With this being said, BFI do allow recipient organisations to state a preference for foods which they feel are most appropriate for their service users and this may be foods which are more nutritious or which can be prepared with limited cooking facilities. The fourth dimension of FNS, stability, is not addressed by BFI’s work (stability of access, stability of utilization). This is because BFI functions to treat the symptoms rather than the systemic causes of hunger and a lack of household resilience to food poverty.
4. SYNTHESIS OF FINDINGS

Reflection on the cases and their capacity to illustrate the EU FNS space as a reassembled space

Both the main and satellite Irish case studies could be said to illustrate the European food and nutrition security space as a reassembled space. A reassembled space is one in which old ideas, resources, routines and patterns of connecting are continuously reassembled in different ways to create new routines, patterns, social relationships and realities which did not exist before. Re-assembled spaces are multi-faceted.

In these spaces, there can be evidence of global-local interaction patterns and this is certainly applies for the two case studies. Cork Food Policy Council (CFPC), like all food policy councils (FPCs) encourages systems thinking which, when discussing the food system, relates to local-global interactions. CFPC falls under the auspices of the Cork Healthy City Initiative which is funded by the World Health Organisation, it is part of a UK network of FPCs and it aims to work with other organisations at the European level. Bia Food Initiative also shows evidence of global-local interactions in that it has recently won the contract to administer the European Commission derived FEAD.

Re-assembled spaces also show evidence of natural and human assets. CFPC and BFI both operate out of Cork. Cork has a tradition of innovative alternative food practices involving key individuals, many of whom are not originally from Ireland. FPC’s memberships tend to be varied with experts from all areas of the food system and this is certain the case for CFPC. In BFI, people are also a key asset. In this organisation, people who traditionally find it difficult to find work are employed through the Department of Social Protection’s Pobal scheme. Those involved in building the organisation (including Food Cloud) come from a range of backgrounds, bringing a diversity of skills, experiences and expertise. A particularly important skill set would seem to lie in the areas of information technology and social media proficiency which have resulted in innovative solutions to assist in the redistribution of surplus food (the former) and a high profile for this organisation’s activities (the latter).

These two case studies also illustrate that they are operating in a reassembled space because of urban-rural relations which are evident in their practices. As mentioned above, FPCs are concerned with systems thinking which requires consideration of traditional spaces of production (rural) as well as traditional spaces of consumption (urban). FPCs, as is the case with CFPC, tend to focus on urban spaces as they are often neglected when it comes to food policy with the focus squarely on the rural as the places where agriculture happens.

Analysing both case studies, many driver/vulnerability configurations are evident, reinforcing the argument that these cases represent a re-assemblage of routines, patterns, social relationship and realities for greater food and nutrition security. Drivers are those factors or hazards which determine vulnerabilities in the food system. Vulnerabilities are characteristics of the food system which are potentially causing insecurity. FPCs aim to empower communities and to encourage policy change, thus addressing the drivers of consumption patterns, inequalities and a political vacuum, and the vulnerabilities of citizens’ health and wellness, social and economic inequalities, food safety, leadership at political and institutional levels, international trade liberalisation, and concentration of power in the agrifood system. The wide range of people involved in FPCs encourages systems thinking which also tackles many of these same drivers and vulnerabilities. By focusing on educating (policy-makers and consumers) and public awareness campaigns (which, amongst other things, encourage more healthfulness, translate rhetoric around food security, and help with capacity building) CFPC further illustrates that it is operating in a reassembled space. CFPC aims to address the drivers of water, weather, climate change, and the cost-price squeeze for producers, as well as the vulnerabilities of the productive capacity of Irish agriculture, pressures on biodiversity, and the concentration of power in the agrifood system. It does this by working to change the food system in Ireland towards greater diversification. BFI addresses many
drivers and vulnerabilities in the Irish food system, the most important of which is food waste. By redistributing food to those in need, it addresses the drivers of climate change and economic austerity, as well as the vulnerabilities of pressures on biodiversity, citizens’ health and wellness, and social and economic inequalities.

Cork Food Policy Council and BFI operate within spaces where there are producer-consumer interlinkages. CFPC aims to educate policy-makers and consumers about food, highlighting where it has come from and figuratively reducing the distance between sites of production and sites of consumption. FPCs bring together disparate groups from social learning, for example farmers and community gardeners in disadvantaged areas. FPCs act as a forum to bring together food system stakeholders, including producers and consumers. BFI creates new links between producers (of what ends up being surplus food) and end consumers. This interaction involves no market exchange and therefore operates in a reassembled space.

Bia Food Initiative utilises public-private partnerships, another characteristic of reassembled spaces. As a food redistribution organisation, it involves collaboration between private, public and civil society organisations. Most well-known multiple retailers are engaging with BFI in some way (private); food is delivered to charitable organisations (civil society); BFI employs special categories of people as part of a Department of Social Protection scheme (public). Some governmental, private sector and civil society funding and supports have been given to BFI and more would be welcomed. The synergies which exist between Bord Bia’s Origin Green programme and BFI are important and could have a large impact.

Cork Food Policy Council and BFI’s activities in the reassembled space are further illustrated by examples of interrelations between ideas and practices. Firstly, they both mainly operate in Cork, a place with a ‘rebel spirit’, a tradition of self-sufficiency, and high levels of local ‘good’ food networks, entrepreneurial activity and product innovation. This provides a deep pool of experts and experiences from which both organisations drew in building their membership. CFPC encourages systems thinking and healthfulness; it works to educate, raise awareness and instigate a change in social consciousness around food and food systems; and it brings together people and groups for social learning and planning synergies.

Finally, the two case study organisations are evidence of a reassembled EU FNS space because of evidence of regime-practice horizontal relations. FPCs aim to transform the food system by empowering communities to make change. They work with local government, as CFPC does, and attempt to remedy the problem of food falling between the stools of disparate government ministries. BFI engages with political institutions from the perspective that it has received financial and other supports from state and semi-state bodies. It will shortly begin to administer the European Commission FEAD scheme, showing that this has devolved from the supra-national to the local level.

Connections and relevant (dis)similarities in terms of adaptive or transformative capacity
In terms of aims and objectives, FPCs and food redistribution networks are quite dissimilar. While the former attempt to address the systemic causes of food (amongst other things), the latter attempts to address food waste, which is an outcome of a broken system. FPCs take a holistic approach and focus on paradigm-changing activities. Food redistribution networks, by contrast, are more focused in their approach. They pragmatically work on tangible and immediate issues. CFPC explicitly wants to move the food system in Cork away from further entrenchment in the neo-liberal food system, whereas BFI works within the conventional food system, but is doing something different within this system. It has been argued that food redistribution networks such as BFI reduce pressure on governments to address food system weaknesses. CFPC focus on a range of activities to achieve their goals, due to their broader remit. BFI is much more focused in its actions (on its two solutions: logistical redistribution services through BFI; technological solution for redirecting surplus food through Food Cloud). While CFPC works to ‘build a constituency of activists’, it has been argued that activities such as those with which BFI
engage ‘dampen the desire’ to take a stand against hunger. Cork Food Policy Council have a clear vision of creating a food system which is more just and healthier; BFI does not focus on the nutritional content of the food it distributes. A key goal of BFI is to engage with certain state organisations as strategic partners; CFPC does not have this goal.

Despite these differences, there are many similarities in what both organisations hope to do. CFPC’s broad remit is to affect policy change; BFI has lobbied to change certain laws pertinent to its operations. Both organisations have criticised how food policy in Ireland is deficient, both hope for some governmental support and both see the need to look to supra-national level governance structures, at least in part, for this. Other similarities in CFPC’s and BFI’s aims and objectives are their common focus on urban areas, their engagement in practical actions, their drive to change the practices of large multiple retailers, their concern with the environmental implications of the prevailing food system, and their belief in the need for change in the public consciousness around certain food issues. Other similarities in CFPC’s and BFI’s aims and objectives are their common focus on urban areas, their engagement in practical actions, their drive to change the practices of large multiple retailers, their concern with the environmental implications of the prevailing food system, and their belief in the need for change in the public consciousness around certain food issues. While CFPC is working on tackling the *cause of the illness* that is food and nutrition insecurity, BFI focuses on addressing immediate needs of individuals and families not having enough food to eat which surplus food is going to waste (*the symptom of this same ‘illness’*).

Other dissimilarities between the two organisations are in their operating models. BFI is a social enterprise; CFPC is an advocacy body. BFI hopes to be self-sustaining in the future but CFPC will always have to rely on sourcing external funding. CFPC focuses on Cork but is part of an international network; it is unique in the Irish context as it is the first and only FPC in Ireland. BFI, on the other hand, has a nationwide network but is not affiliated with any international networks. Its model is nonetheless novel both in an Irish and international context. However, there are again some similarities between the two bodies in how they function. They are both not-for-profit organisations which represent alternative approaches to the prevailing food system. They are both currently centred on Cork and can draw on the strengths of this ‘food capital’. Common to both organisations is the involvement of a diverse range of actors, with one person in particular (Eoin MacCuirc) heavily involved in both.

Finally, when examining the challenges facing CFPC and BFI, there are many which these two organisations have in common. Both organisations report that the problems they are trying to address are insufficiently recognised or taken seriously. Both mention a lack of concern particularly from public agencies and both work with insufficient human and financial resources. Although a common complaint was the difficulty in gaining traction for what they are trying to achieve, representatives of these organisations emphasised the importance of persevering in the hopes of one day making an impact on the food system.
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6. ANNEXES

Annex 1: European Scenarios

Fed Up Europe

Fed Up Europe is a story of inertia in the food system under global pressures. Practices and business models leading to unhealthy diets and negative environmental impacts continue. The power of EU and national policy makers to change these trends decreases over time with a combination of decreasing funds and decreasing popular support. There is a lack of leadership in the face of climate and migration crises. Consumers’ incomes are enough to avoid food insecurity, but many lack the knowledge, incentives or budgets for healthy life styles. In governments and in the private sector, there are minorities interested in changing the trend, but they are fighting an uphill battle.
### ‘Local’ level analysis of FNS Pathways in Ireland

**Driving factors:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food and nutrition security</th>
<th>Agricultural systems</th>
<th>Post-farm food system activities</th>
<th>Interactions with global food security</th>
<th>Environmental impacts of the food system</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Few people are undernourished, but other malnutrition and NCDs are common.</td>
<td>Large-scale industrial agriculture grows, with little innovation, among other reasons because cheap labour is available; smaller farmers fail.</td>
<td>Several companies control post-farm food system activities; locked into historic patterns</td>
<td>Europe struggles with competition from other global regions; but trade agreements remain open and free, offering market opportunities due to low European wages and lax regulations</td>
<td>Environmental policies are weakened; land and resource use becomes more indiscriminate and damaging.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Impacts:**

- Few investments and innovations are happening in agriculture.
- Prices of agricultural products go up because of global competition – this is particularly the case with meat. But the increase is gradual – production is also strong in Europe, partly because of the availability of cheap personnel.
- Calorie consumption increases overall.
- Agricultural emissions are very high – livestock production increases.
- Natural land cover decreases, partly because of growth of grassland for cattle.
Retrotopia

In Retrotopia, waves of immigration, terrorist threats and increasing impacts of climate change trigger social movements and policies that aim to keep global problems out of Europe, along with a nostalgia-fueled sense of natural heritage and rural custodianship. Racism becomes more accepted; migrants are kept out, creating employment problems in greying societies, which are partly solved by robotization of work; fear of migration from Europe’s southern to northern countries due to climate change prompts European policymakers to help make Mediterranean countries more climate-resilient. Environmental concerns drive down consumption of animal products; otherwise, the improvement of diets is not a priority amid concerns of European security and self-reliance.
Driving factors:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consumptio n Patterns</th>
<th>Environment al Degradation</th>
<th>Poverty and Economi c Inequalit y</th>
<th>Social and Technical Innovatio n</th>
<th>Urban and Rural Populatio n Dynamics</th>
<th>Power and Market Concentratio n</th>
<th>Trade Agreeument</th>
<th>Resource Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Retrotopia</td>
<td>Low animal products, high sugar/processed food (unhealthy vegans and vegetarians)</td>
<td>Environmental degradation is reversed</td>
<td>Low poverty, low inequality</td>
<td>High innovation, public sector driven</td>
<td>Decrease in both urban and rural population</td>
<td>Healthy competition exists in all sectors – significant role for SMEs</td>
<td>Protected markets (less free trade more subsidies)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Impacts:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food and nutrition security</th>
<th>Agricultural systems</th>
<th>Post-farm food system activities</th>
<th>Interactions with global food security</th>
<th>Environmental impacts of the food system</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poverty and food insecurity are low; meat consumption has dropped; but NCDs are common as sugar consumption is high and not a policy priority</td>
<td>Mediterranean countries become a hub for climate-smart agriculture; environmental policies have shifted Europe toward more sustainable agricultural practices.</td>
<td>Robotization has increased in all food system activities with decreasing labour availability. This innovation has been facilitated by public policies.</td>
<td>Trade with the outside world has decreased; large food companies are increasingly focusing on other global regions. Food security in other regions is threatened by economic and climatic challenges, but Europe does little to help.</td>
<td>Strict policies ensure low environmental impacts of food system activities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Insights from the models:

- Due to a lack of trade, and strong production at the same time, food prices drop.
- Animal product prices drop due to a lack of local demand.
- Calorie consumption is significant, but there is lack of a share of animal products.
- Agricultural emissions are lower due to a lower production of animal products.
- Natural land is largely untouched by agricultural expansion.
The price of health

The Price of Health is a story that sees many Europeans returning to rural lives, out of necessity due to global pressures, because of changing social norms, and facilitated by technological advances in communications. These changes are supported by strong government policies regarding self-reliance and sustainability. Not everyone, however, is happy to be returning to the land – and the wealthiest do not have to follow suit.
Driving factors:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Price Of Health</th>
<th>Consumption Patterns</th>
<th>Environ mental Degradation</th>
<th>Poverty and Economic Inequality</th>
<th>Social and Technical Innovation</th>
<th>Urban and Rural Population Dynamics</th>
<th>Power and Market Concentration</th>
<th>Trade Agreement s</th>
<th>Resource Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low animal products, low sugar/processed food (healthy vegans and vegetarians)</td>
<td>Environment is stabilized</td>
<td>High poverty, high inequality – incomes are low, but quality of life has been decoupled from income through other means of subsistence; the rich lead very different lives</td>
<td>High innovation, needs driven, bottom-up – local initiatives, local businesses and local governments</td>
<td>Increase in rural decrease in urban</td>
<td>Extreme decentralization dominated by SMEs</td>
<td>Protected markets (less free trade more subsidies)</td>
<td>Significant reduction in resource use/demand</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Impacts:

**Food and nutrition security**

Many are poor in terms of income, but rural lifestyles, smart and diverse agricultural, trade and distribution practices, combined with a shift in preferences and understanding of healthy supported by customized information technology results in good food and nutrition security for most. Cost and preferences have lowered the consumption of meat and animal products considerably.

**Agricultural systems**

Food produced by farmer cooperatives, and medium-sized farms, bolstered through flexible and climate-smart agricultural technologies, is integrated into short food chains, and supported by home-produced crops.

**Post-farm food system activities**

Post-farm food system activities are highly integrated with agricultural production, managed by small to medium-sized enterprises, supported by flexible agricultural, processing, transport and information technology. There are, however, some areas where such technologies are less available.

**Interactions with global food security**

Europe has little capacity to help resolve food security issues elsewhere in the world.

**Environmental impacts of the food system**

Re-wilding trends due to the abandonment of rural areas are reversed, with people moving back to the land. The return to cultivated land is mostly done in a sustainable fashion; nevertheless, this leads to a stabilization, rather than a revival, of environmental conditions.

Insights from the models:

- Many forms of local innovation are shared and raise yields.
- Protectionist trade policies mean that agricultural product prices drop - but much trade happens outside of formal systems.
- Calorie consumption is relatively low, and meat consumption decreases significantly, but diets are mostly healthy.
- Emissions drop because of the decrease in livestock production.
- Land cover changes due to large-scale agriculture drop, but small-scale agricultural land use increases.
‘Local’ level analysis of FNS Pathways in Ireland
Annex 2: Irish Scenarios

Business as Usual: Adapted from the TRANSMANGO EU scenario Fed Up Europe

In the context of the Fed Up Europe European level scenario, the most pertinent issue for Ireland has been the withdrawal of European Union subsidies to farmers for environmental schemes. This has had a destructive impact on farmers, in particular small family farmers. In Cork, many farms of this type had relied on subsidies to ensure their operation was financially viable. Less local food is available, both mainstream and artisan foods, and the shops are largely stocked with imported foods. Small local shops and farmers’ markets have largely disappeared because of this, but also because people have less time and are less emotionally connected to food consumption. There has been a withdrawal of funding for schemes to educate people on the topic of food and to help connect them with their food. Food costs more for the consumer and ‘good’ diets become the preserve of the wealthy. As a result, lifespans have shortened and an obesity crisis has emerged.

Corporate-owned or controlled farms have benefitted from the removal of European Union subsidies as they have been able to expand more into the market space left by smaller farmers, and also to buy up land from ‘failed’ small farms. Large-scale industrial farming run by corporations, some of which are foreign-owned, begin to proliferate. As a result of this, there is a growth of large food processing plants geared towards export markets and Cork airport becomes a global ‘food hub’. This also represents an employment hub and there are others of its type around the country. Although there are high levels of employment in these hubs, wages are low. In addition, there is increased unemployment away from these areas. One particular positive trend for Irish producers has emerged: Irish livestock farmers benefit from increased global demand for meat products and as a result, prices for their products have increased.

A further negative impact which has emerged in this scenario is rural depopulation, especially rural youth depopulation. This is due to the decline of family farms and there being less opportunities in rural areas. Specifically, there is less populated open countryside with more rural people living in villages and towns. This has also caused an increase in rural-urban migration trends, exacerbating Cork City’s existing housing crisis (and also the housing crises in other Irish cities). Social capital decreases, in both rural and urban areas, and there is little community life.

Ecological degradation of lands and waterways due to the increased industrialisation of agriculture has become a major problem. The rural landscape changes and is less diverse; there is a reduction in natural resource and in biodiversity. While this is concerning per se, it also has a consequent negative effect on tourism, in particular tourism which focuses on rural nature and beauty, such as walking tours, fishing etc.

How have we come to this?

Possible explanations for how this scenario would come to be in Ireland include ‘Brexit’ and the migration crisis together acting as a catalyst for a ‘house of cards’ style collapse of the European Union. Another suggestion was the possible collusion of political leaders and policy-makers with corporations; the leaders not only accept this situation but they actively facilitate it. An example of how this might occur is through the passing of free trade agreements such as the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership. A final suggestion of how such a situation might emerge was that civil society activism experienced a ‘slow death’ precipitated by cuts in funding on social inclusion and community initiatives.

Grey Autarky: Adapted from the TRANSMANGO EU scenario Retrotopia

In the context of the Retrotopia scenario, because EU systems have either gone or become disempowered, and because the Common Agricultural Policy is no longer in place and subsidies have been cut, this results in a shock to Ireland’s agri-food system. Ireland is cut off from non-EU markets and
as such, exports are down. Ireland enjoys less of the agri-food market share more generally and there have been some job losses in this area.

This has precipitated a drastic shift in how agriculture in Ireland works, for example with a reduction in the amount of livestock farming. There is more self-sufficiency and self-provisioning in the food system and food chains become more localised. Economic opportunities arise for specialisation in small scale, high value crops. The food system is considered to be more resilient as a result and a culture of frugality emerges. However, on the larger farms which remain, the use of automation and robot technologies grows due to the pinched labour market.

The environmental impact of Irish agriculture has decreased dramatically, specifically because of a move away from animal-based monocultures to smaller-scale diversified operations. The physical landscape of Ireland has also changed because of these transformation in Irish agriculture. One major difference has been a reduction in the square acreage under agricultural production. Much land is being left fallow, in particular marginal lands such as flood plains. This has resulted in an increase in biodiversity. An integrated policy for ‘re-wilding’ a number of animals has been established and Ireland is benefitting from wilderness tourism as a result. Another result is that people’s lifestyles have become healthier as they are taking advantage of this new wilderness and are exercising more.

At the same time, some agricultural land has been re-purposed for renewable energy farms making renewable energy cheaper, more readily available and more commonly used. The increased use of electric vehicles is one example of an indirect result of this land-use change.

However, a cultural change has occurred due to the closing of borders. There has been a loss of cultural diversity in Ireland and a change in food culture as Ireland has become increasingly insular. There has been a reversion to diets which are largely based on local food production. In some areas, nationalism has increased in response to perceived threats from outside migrants causing some to ‘head for the hills’. These problems have been exacerbated by the fact that many of the young generation are emigrating.

The top-heavy demographic profile resulted in a health system which is under strain and but also to one which is decentralised, to allow more ready access to medical care to the aging population. The economic flux in this sees many young people emigrating and the loss of young people in rural areas hinders rural social innovation.

Slow Progress: Adapted from the TRANSMANGO EU scenario The Price of Health

The coming decades see changes in urban and rural population dynamics in Ireland, with people moving away from cities and building thriving, creative and stimulating rural communities. This change is driven partly by economic necessity; partly because of changing social norms, and partly because of technology; and partly by strong government policies, within the context of strong interventionist EU policies supporting re-ruralisation.

Global economic downturns, social problems and decreasingly competitive EU economies have led to high levels of financial insecurity leading many people to seek alternative measures to meet their basic needs. Many return to the countryside and begin to grow food as being poor in a rural area is seen as significantly better than being poor in an urban area, as consumers can become producers. This move is supported by changing social norms in which people aspire to be healthy and sustainable, and a decoupling of notions of wealth and well-being from financial concepts, and self-sufficiency and community capacity development programs.

This return to the land is not a regression to times-gone-by, increases in cheap communications technologies produced in other parts of the world, allow people are able to work from home and be part time farmers while maintaining other productive, creative and intellectual career activities and to continue
their education through free online learning augmented by local institutions. Through these technologies, people’s worlds are global even if their food is local. There is a great deal of cultural richness in rural communities, and people live in virtual as well as local communities.

These changes, combined with strong EU taxes on products that are not deemed healthy or sustainable, and an increase of available information on smart farming and community organization, diet-nutrition-health-well-being, and sustainability; lead to the majority of people eating a highly nutritious vegan or vegetarian diet. There is a low consumption of animal products and little to no consumption of highly processed or sugary foods. This leads to increased physical and mental health, and lowered costs of health care are invested into education and infrastructure, and policing. The lack of access to animal products leads some people to hunt and fish leading to some reduction in Ireland’s local biodiversity.

The majority of foods consumed are produced locally and there is extreme market decentralisation dominated by small to medium sized enterprises, empowered by flexible technologies and subsidies. Barter systems re-surface, there is a gift economy many cooperatives. The Irish petrochemical industry declines, and remains only for exports. Skilled local tradesmen increase, there is a revival of craft foods, breads, cheeses, beers. Linen is back on the board. People travel less so the tourism and transport sectors decline. Chinese aid workers come to Ireland to facilitate capacity development in communications technologies, and sustainable rural development.

There are few very rich people who continue to live in cities, in gated communities because of tensions with other communities. There is tension because not everyone is happy with the rural lifestyle and diet and some people aspire to share the life of the few. Rich citizens in gated communities lobby government spending on military and policing, which is a livelihood for a class of poorer people who live in urban slums. Amongst disgruntled groups there are drug and alcohol problems in the face of a feeling of oppression and lack of opportunity to choose something different. Overall however, there are less drug problems as people are generally happier and healthier. The family unit has changed: larger families because of manual labour, older people caring for young children and being taken care of within the community, parents are able to spend much more time with children and there is less anti-social behavior. There is more time for story-telling, hobbies, interests and parenting.

How we got there:

Over the coming years, economic decline coupled with climate change and a growing awareness of environmental degradation globally lead to social change in favour of simpler, healthier, more sustainable lifestyles. Political instability, various crises leads to governments becoming more authoritarian.

Global economic instability continues, with years of recession that see Europe struggling to keep a strong role in global markets. These fears and challenges give power to increasingly interventionist and protectionist governments and simultaneously, and in reaction to this, many grass-roots social movements advocating community, social inclusion and a strong sustainability agenda also gain prominence.

By 2040 Europe has very strong environmental legislation in place. All activities not considered sustainable are blocked through legal and financial mechanisms. The EU fully enables sustainable energy. Education has been refocused around food, cooking, community, well-being and the environment. Emphasis is placed on local initiatives, policies are put in place to support local entrepreneurship and there are a growing number of SMEs catering to local needs. These SMEs are highly innovative pressured by bottom up social movements. This creates interesting job opportunities in rural areas and smaller communities.