Assessing the Practice & Sustainability Potential of City-Based Food Sharing Economies

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What do we mean by food sharing?

- Have a portion of FOOD with another or others; [shared consumption]
- Give a portion of FOOD to others; [gifting]
- Use, occupy, or enjoy FOOD jointly; [shared use of space & experiences]
- Possess an interest in FOOD in common; [shared interest]
- Tell someone about FOOD [shared knowledge/skills] (OED, 2014)

Our focus is on food sharing activities enabled by information and communications technologies (ICT)

Community gardens, CSAs, soup kitchens, food banks, potluck, meal sharing apps, collective buying schemes, food rescue, cooperatives, community kitchens, gleaning, foraging, dumpster diving, land and yard sharing, tool libraries, seed exchanges, food swaps, food education programs, skill shares, fermentation club, urban beekeeping guilds, meetup groups, food mapping sites.
SHARECITY

SHARECITY is a 5-year research project funded by the European Research Council which is exploring the practice and sustainability potential of city-based food sharing economies.

Aims & Objectives

To establish the significance and potential of food sharing economies to transform cities onto more sustainable pathways

1) Develop deeper theoretical understanding of contemporary food sharing
2) Generate comparative international empirical data about food sharing activities within cities
3) Assess the impact of food sharing activities
4) Explore how food sharing in cities might evolve in the future
Cities & Food

Sustainability of Urban Food Systems

Social
- Community Building, Food Poverty, Population Increase, Detachment from Food and Nature

Environmental
- Land Use Change, Pesticides and Fertiliser use, Transport, Nature in the City

Economic
- Fair Trade, Fair Returns to Farmers, Affordability and Accessibility, New & Diverse Food Economies

SOCIENTAL META-CHALLENGE
To transform urban food systems in a just and sustainable manner

SHARECITY INNOVATION
Reframing debates to include city-based food sharing economies
Sharing

SHARING AS AN EVERYDAY SOCIAL PRACTICE
Sharing a meal with friends and family; sharing a kitchen with colleagues
Historically well researched

SHARING ECONOMIES
Stretching contemporary sharing into new spaces and scales

SUSTAINABILITY CLAIMS BUT LIMITED EVIDENCE BASE
“a means to build community, to distribute (and re-distribute) resources more efficiently, to tread more lightly on our environment” (Gaskins, 2010)

Sharing is enabled by new technologies

SHARECITY INNOVATION
Opening up new research horizons and building evidence of food sharing
SHARECITY Research Phases

A. Development of Concepts, Framework, & Database
   • Identification of 100 Cities
   • Designing Database
   • Searching for initiatives
   • Analysing the database

B. In-Depth Ethnographies

C. Co-Designing Assessment

D. Integration, Analysis, & Futures

Complete
September 2015 – December 2016

Currently in Phase B
January 2017 – April 2018

2018 – 2019

2019 - 2020
The SHARECITY100 Database

Interactive Searchable Database: www.sharecity.ie/research/sharecity100-database/

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CITY</th>
<th>WHAT IS SHARED</th>
<th>HOW IT IS SHARED</th>
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<td>Vancouver</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

4008 FOOD SHARING ACTIVITIES ON MAP
Global Food Sharing

- 70% of initiatives share multiple food-related stuff, spaces or skills
- 53% of initiatives share via multiple methods
- 21% of initiatives use multiple organisational structures

**WHAT IS SHARED**

- Knowledge/Skills
- Meals
- Fruits/Vegetables
- Eating Together
- Land
- Food Products
- Tools
- Plants/Seeds
- Kitchen Devices
- Kitchen Space
- Compost
- Meat/Fish

**HOW IT IS SHARED**

- Gifting
- Selling
- Collecting
- Bartering

**SHARING ORGANISATION**

- Nonprofits
- Associations
- Forprofit
- Informal
- Cooperatives
- Social_Enterprises
Food Sharing and ICT

To what end does ICT enable, extend and transform contemporary food sharing practices?

ICT supports them:
- Gateways for engagement
- Maps resources
- Connect & share between groups
- Documents resources & successes
- Grassroots > general public
- Visibility
- Scalability

Financially-oriented food sharing initiatives are more likely to use Twitter and have developed an app.

Website – Social Media – Closed Groups – Discussion & Forums – Online Platform – Online Marketplace – Collaborative Mapping - App
Food Sharing in Dublin

• Dublin is ranked #32 in the SHARECITY100 Database with 44 food sharing initiatives.

• Knowledge & skills are most commonly shared by Dublin food sharing initiatives (61%), followed by food (fruits, vegetables and products not combined into a meal; 39%) and prepared meals (32%).

• Gifting is the most common form of food sharing in Dublin, followed closely by selling. Collecting and bartering are relatively infrequent, with only 7% and 5% engaging in these forms of exchanges.

• Non-Profits and charities are the dominant models of food sharing enterprises in Dublin (52%) followed by for-profits (36%) and clubs, associations & networks (20%).

• No enterprises were listed as social enterprises in Dublin, most likely due to the lack of formal recognition for the enterprise structure.
Food Waste & Food Surplus Redistribution

- 437 Initiatives tackling food waste through redistributing surplus food in 100 cities and using food ‘waste’ to feed people
Next Phases of Research

In-Depth Ethnographies

- Task B involves fieldwork and in-depth research in Melbourne, London, Berlin, New York, Barcelona, Athens, Singapore, Dublin

Emerging Themes:

- **Community**
  - Social Inclusion, Integration, Culture, Immigration, Asylum, Empowerment, Trust

- **Urban Space**
  - Development, Gentrification, Commons, Public vs Private, Dereliction

- **Governance & Regulation**
  - Health & Safety, Ownership, Legal Status

- **Financial Sustainability**
  - Funding, Volunteers

- **Health**
  - Food Poverty, Food Insecurity, Fresh Food, Nutrition

- **Education**
  - Growing, Cooking, Eating

- **Technology**
  - Scalability, Geography, Efficiency, Inspiration, Influence, Cost, Maintenance, Exclusivity
Next Phases of Research

• **Co-designing Assessment**
  - **TASK C** focuses on the co-design of a *flexible, open-access assessment toolkit* to determine the effects generated by food sharing activities analysed in Task B
    - Food sharing initiatives will be invited to join an *on-line working group* to shape the development of the assessment toolkit.
    - Once developed, these initiatives will be invited to *trial the tool* thus *providing data on their sustainability impacts*

• **Integration, Analysis & Futures**
  - **TASK D** provides a final *phase of research where* the
    - Outcomes of the Sharing City Profiles will be *compared*
    - Evidence gathered through the sustainability assessment process *evaluated* and
    - a *participatory backcasting exercise* will be conducted - bringing together key stakeholders in the sharing economy to outline *possible futures for food sharing in cities*
Thank you!

Website: www.sharecity.ie
SHARECITY100: www.sharecity.ie/research/sharecity100-database/
Blog: http://sharecity.ie/blog/
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