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Food banks: An eco-social solution?

Critical perspectives on food charity in Europe

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Abstract

Title: Food Banks: An eco-social solution? Critical perspectives on food charity in Europe

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This aim of this thesis was to investigate food banking organisations as part of food charity on different governance levels within the EU in relation to aspects of sustainability. The Doughnut model after Raworth (2017) as an element of eco-social research is employed as theoretical underpinning to explore the organisational positioning regarding the societal problems of food waste and food insecurity, as well as the solutions that the organisations envision in relation to sustainability. The Doughnut model is understood as a human rights-based model to investigate the problem context. Published documents from two organisations, each one on the supranational level of the EU and the German national level, that were published over a period of 5 years between 2018 and 2022 were examined through thematic content analysis. The analysis showed that the approach of the studied food banking organisations regarding food waste and food insecurity does not correspond with an eco-social understanding of sustainability as included in the Doughnut model. Moreover, it has been identified that the solution that both organisations suggest to approach the problem areas are marked by a high degree of systemic immanence and have little transformative potential.

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List of abbreviations

CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
DEAL	Doughnut Economics Action Lab
DGSA	German Association for Social Work
EU	European Union
Eurostat	European Statistical Office
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations
FEAD	Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived
FEBA	European Food Banks Federation
GFN	Global FoodBanking Network
ICESCR	International Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
NPM	New Public Management
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal of the United Nations
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN	United Nations
VAT	valued added tax

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1. Introduction

Complexity is a marker of our time. In a world that is heating up, an awareness for interdependencies between human actions and the planet as habitat need to be incorporated into decision and policy-making process, if a livelihood for future generations shall be assured. If we consider the human rights of the people who will inhabit this planet in the future, as well as the human rights of the many that cannot realise them due to structural inequalities, systemic discrimination and resulting powerlessness, the protection and safeguarding of the planet and its resources become imperative. This research will investigate one out of many aspects within the field of tension between ecological sustainability, social justice and the economic growth-centred aspirations that mark our time. It explores exemplary food banking organisations as a specific collective actor at the intersection between the societal problems of food waste and food insecurity in Western welfare states. Drawing on an emerging scholarly field of eco-social research and employing Kate Raworth's transformative model of the Doughnut Economy (2017), this study is going to offer a holistic approach to the integration of ecological and social dimensions in understanding the food banking organisations. Following the general orientation of eco-social research and policy which approaches the climate emergency as a global challenge beyond the national spheres, this thesis focuses on non-state actors within multi-level governance in the European Union (EU) to understand food charity in Europe: specifically an European organisation active at the supranational level, as well as an organisation in Germany as an exemplary member state-context. This dual focus provides an insight into potentials and challenges that the global orientation of the Doughnut model faces at different governance levels. This introductory chapter will provide an inside into the interconnections that shape the topic, mapping out the context of the thesis at hand.

Transnational trade, exchanges of ideas, shared values – globalisation has moved the world closer together through growing interconnectedness of economies and societies increasingly fast since the Second World War. At the same time, challenges and problems have come to the attention of the international community that require collective action. The most prominent of these problems is the climate emergency, as the sum of factors that threaten the planet Earth as human habitat. Effects of the climate emergency, fuelled by industrial activity in the pursuit of economic profit and decadent lifestyle choices of the richest 10% of the world population both predominantly in developed countries of the Global North, take a disproportionate toll on the vast majority of people who cannot choose to buy themselves out (Gore, 2021, p.3). The loss of habitat and livelihood through droughts, desertification, the rise of sea levels, water

becoming an increasingly scarce resource and conflicts are but a few effects of the human-made climate emergency that contribute to intensifying inequalities and particularly affect people living in poverty and in developing countries (cf. IPCC, 2022). The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) urges governments worldwide in their latest report to take comprehensive action that consider planetary boundaries immediately in order to preserve the planet as human habitat (ibid.).

Meanwhile, poverty is not only a phenomenon of developing communities confronted with the climate emergency, but a problem back on the rise in developed Western welfare states, in the 20th century. With the 2007 financial crisis and the European debt crisis starting from 2010, welfare states across Europe entered in a new age of austerity policies, focussed on reducing government spending and joined with the neoliberal agenda of New Public Management (NPM) (cf. Lambie-Mumford & Silvasti, 2020, 25 cont.). The effects of these crises on individual households' income in European made numerous people seek for solutions to decrease their cost of living and food charity organisations providing food bank services proliferated throughout Europe in the face of the growing demand (ibid.). Food insecurity as a facet of poverty and an experience of scarcity within societies where there is an excess of food is seemingly paradox, and rooted in the capitalist market structure that has made food a commodity. Beyond the experiences of food scarcity being a social problem in terms of food insecurity, the excessive amounts of food offered for sale themselves become an ecological problem, as large amounts of edible food turn to waste when the offer is larger than the demand of customers able to purchase (cf. Riches, 2018, p.133). Within this paradoxical experience of scarcity in abundance, food charity organisations in form of food banks intervene by recovering food surpluses to redistribute them to people in need. In the light of the most recent international crises, the Covid-19-pandemic, the war in Ukraine and the linked so-called 'energy crisis', food bank organisations have gained new prominence. Their calls for support when facing rapidly increasing numbers of people in need (Tafel Deutschland, 2022a; Goodwin, 2022), drew attention to the devastating effects that rising prices for energy-products and inflation had on low- and middle-income households, pushing them on the verge of poverty (Christelis et al., 2021; European Central Bank 2022a, 2022b).

The EU and national governments throughout Europe are confronted with poverty as structural inequality that gained new visibility through the recent crises, as well as the international challenge of the climate emergency. In the EU, one of the richest regions in the world with developed welfare institutions, 21.7% of the population were at risk of poverty or social

exclusion in 2021 (Eurostat 2023a). In a highly connected, complex world, policies need to take various dependences into consideration when navigating welfare and the economy, while keeping in mind the environmental dimension. Solutions for poverty reduction need to take into consideration the effects on the climate emergency and vice versa to achieve a sustainable balance (Hirvilammi et al., 2023). An obligation for both goals derives from human rights as an internationally agreed set of values and norms that build on the equal value and rights of all human beings within their shared humanity. The EU, as a transnational political and economic polity of sovereign countries sharing mutual interests, has developed a form of shared governance that involves non-state actors along with state actors into the policy-making process in the field of cohesion policies (cf. Bache, 2012, p. 629 cont.). Non-state actors are involved to increase the representativeness of issues and interests through vertical relations with non-state interest representatives, such as non-governmental organisations within formal and informal welfare (ibid.). Organisations that provide food bank services as a part of food charity in different European countries have joint the European Food Banks Federation (FEBA) as a stakeholder organisation that lobbies for the interest of food banks on the level of European governance. One of them is Tafel Deutschland, the national representation of the German food bank collective, which advocates for the interests of food banks in the national welfare state context. Food bank organisations as civil society actors provide essential support for people experiencing food insecurity within Western welfare states where public services fall short and act as spokesperson in the field of food insecurity and food waste.

1.1 Research aim

The aim of this research is to investigate food insecurity in the context of developed European countries on the background of current aspects of the globalised economy and the climate emergency. The topic has been inspired by current critical developments that exacerbated the social problem of food insecurity in Europe and worldwide. With social justice constituting an overarching frame to the topic, this research aims at providing insight into the problem of food insecurity and food waste in developed welfare states by understanding the work of civil society organisations (CSOs) active in delivering food charity. The purpose of this research is to explore and analyse how CSOs in the field of food banking at different governance levels in Europe position themselves in relation to the ecological and social challenges of food waste and food insecurity. To do so, the positions of the European umbrella organisation of food banks FEBA, as well as Tafel Deutschland as a national representative from Germany are investigated through their publications. The focus on ecological and social dimensions in understanding

these organisations and how they address the problem of food waste and food insecurity is inspired by an eco-social understanding of sustainability through the Doughnut model (see 4.1).

1.2 Research questions

1. How do the organisations working with food charity on different governance levels within the EU position themselves in relation to the ecological and social challenges of food waste and food insecurity?

2. How can we understand suggested solutions from an eco-social understanding of sustainability?

1.3 Relevance for social work and human rights

With poverty alleviation and guaranteeing minimum standards of economic and social security being at the core of state aspirations in welfare provision, a variety of welfare institutions and social programs focuses on providing support for vulnerable groups that experience poverty. This includes e.g. state agencies providing social benefits, CSOs providing counselling for people in need or the organisations behind food bank services as part of food charity. Social workers in frontline positions are often the first contact point for people experiencing poverty and have a facilitating role in allowing people access to different forms of support. Food insecurity as an aspect of poverty is thereby an essential concern to social work as a profession as well as a scientific discipline, that has the declared goal to "promote[…] social change and development, social cohesion and the liberation of people [by following] principles of social justice and human rights" (IASSW, N.D.), as stated by the global definition of social work.

Experiences of poverty and social exclusion shape individual life journeys and a low socio-economic status is likely to negatively impact people's physical and mental health and to create, increase or intensify other vulnerabilities (Donkin et al., 2017). Food insecurity as an experience of poverty is opposed to the human right to an adequate livelihood and its right to food (Art. 25 UDHR). It is thereby a relevant topic to human rights and to social work as a human rights profession, as described by scholars (cf. Staub-Bernasconi, 2012) and defined as based on human rights in the global definition of social work by the International Association of Schools of Social Work and the International Federation of Social Workers (cf. IASSW N.D.).

Eco-social research as a multidisciplinary research field that investigates and develops social policy approaches to assure human wellbeing in accordance with planetary boundaries can be understood as highly relevant and thematically closely linked with social work knowledge and

research. This thesis and its rootedness in both fields can offer an example of this. Social workers in structural and frontline positions can be carriers of social change in their cooperation with people, thereby they can play a vital role in realising a more equitable, just and ecologically-conscious collective future. Thus it appears that eco-social approaches require comprehensive inclusion into social work education, practice and research.

1.4 Terminology

In this section, relevant terms and concepts for this work and their specific meaning applicable in this thesis are defined.

Food insecurity – This term is used to describe a lack of adequate nutrition through sufficient food that maintains life and furthermore to live healthy and productively. This understanding derives from the United Nations (UN) definition of food security, as established at the World Food Summit 1996 (cf. FAO, 2008). A term used at times synonymously in the literature is food poverty. Food security is distinguished from food safety, which describes hygienic aspects. This definition of food insecurity corresponds with the requirements of the human right to food (cf. Art.25 UDHR).

Food bank – The term food bank refers to a charitable organisation that provides food from donations to eligible low-income households. It is a form of food charity, which varies significantly between different countries in terms of activities, organisational structures and funding, but has the common feature of being a predominantly voluntary service that provides support for people in need with food from donations (cf. Tarasuk et al. 2020, p.841).

Food waste, food loss, surplus food – Food waste can be defined as food products that were edible but are not consumed due to human interference (Riches, 2018, p.131). Meanwhile, food loss occurs along the production chain to raw materials that are unfit for consumption, e.g., a storm that destroys agricultural produce (ibid.). Surplus food mainly describes edible food that is part of overproduction and oversupply and therefore does not get sold; it constitutes the broad base of food donations that are redistributed by food banks (ibid.).

Climate emergency – This term is used here to describe the current global state of human-induced climate change and the urgency to act resulting from the far-reaching effects on the global climate that science has found to be resulting from human activity (UNEP, N.D.). Whilst a commonly used term for this phenomenon is climate change and the term climate emergency could be argued to be programmatic, I have chosen to use it in this thesis to underline how

pressing the matter of climate conscious political action is today, thereby following the evaluation of the IPCC (IPCC, 2022).

Poverty – The term poverty used here refers to a concept of relative poverty, meaning that a person's income and living standards are below the general standard of living of the societal majority, whereby the persons socio-cultural participation is limited or hindered (EPRS 2016, p.3 cont.). This differs from the definition of absolute or extreme poverty, where the basic needs of a person such as e.g. food, safe drinking water and shelter are not met, and severe deprivation is experienced (ibid.). The World Bank for instance currently defines the international extreme poverty line as $2.15 per person per day (World Bank, 2022). In this thesis the concept of relative poverty is used following the definition employed by the EU (EPRS 2016, p.4) in consideration of the regional context where a comparably high degree of development is prevalent; extreme or absolute poverty would therefore be less applicable. Following this definition, living 'at risk of poverty' corresponds to an income of less than 60% of the median national income (cf. Eurostat, 2022).

1.5 Disposition

After this introductory chapter, in chapter 2, background information concerning food is provided regarding its role and status in the 21st century, its nature as a human right, as well as food insecurity and food waste. Moreover, the organisations active within the field of food banking that are studied within this thesis are introduced. Chapter 3 first presents a literature review of previous research on food banks, including critical perspectives which this thesis develops further. Secondly, key themes in the scholarly field of eco-social research and policy are summarised and discussed. Chapter 4 then continues to introduce the Doughnut model as a central analytical framework for this thesis. In chapter 5, the methodological frame of the thesis is described, including aspects such as research design, sampling and data collection, analytical methods, the coding process and quality criteria of research. The chapter closes with reflections on limitations and delimitations of the thesis and relevant ethical considerations. Chapter 6 presents findings from the content analysis of the publications of the food bank organisations in Germany and at the EU level and discusses them in relation to the Doughnut model. Lastly, drawing on empirical findings of the thesis, chapter 7 provides a conclusion including a critical perspective on the Doughnut model and perspectives on further research.

2. Background

This chapter introduces the topic of food through the focus on food in contemporary society, its relevance as a human right, as well as food insecurity and food waste to illustrate the thematic area of the research topic. Furthermore, the studied food banking organisations and their work focus are introduced.

2.1 Food

Beyond being vital to human existence due to the need for nutrition, food is an essential element of social interactions and cultural practices. Food is a factor of great importance for physical and mental health and wellbeing (Beardsworth & Keil, 1997, p.72 cont; p.125 cont.) and in its characteristic as physiological, basic need is situated at the bottom of Maslow's pyramidal hierarchy of needs, highlighting is foundational relevance for human life (cf. Maslow, 1943).

2.1.1 Food in the 21st century

Food production has become an increasingly international and globalised affair. The modern European system of food production, distribution and consumption is marked by multi-layered, specialised production systems with industrial character, with delocalisation decreasing the number of people working in the production importantly (Beardsworth & Keil, 1997, p.33). The distribution system is of international orientation and the access to food is regulated by the market and thereby wealth (ibid.). When it comes to the consumption, different types of food are available independently from season or region, with the ability and willingness to pay the attributed price being the central criterion for access as well as choice (ibid.). It is important to note that the dominance of the monetary price leads to relevant nutritional inequalities within a given society, as well as between societies depending on their state of development (ibid.).

Especially in developed countries – thereby shaping the global trend – the distance between plough and plate is large (Magdoff, 2012, p.17). Though food awareness as a counter trend within developed countries, focussed on food quality and properties, has pushed research and initiatives, it does not reflect the reality of a large share of supply and production chains in the food industry (cf. Atkins & Bowler, 2001, p.14). Globalisation and the joint development of the capitalist economic system have brought large and increasingly transnational corporations as important players into the global economy, which have assumed the economic power of food and worked on their share in it intensely since the Second World War (Leopold, 1985, p.317). While in less developed parts of the world there is still an important share of food agriculturally

produced on the small scale for personal and local consumption, the developed Global North is marked by industrialised farming with international sales perspectives (Magdoff, 2012, p.17).

In today's European context, food is close to fully commodified (Magdoff, 2012, p.16), meaning that an economic value is attributed to any kind of food product and that it becomes subject to the economic market (Levesque, 2015). The commodification of food can be argued to have turned it from a necessity for human life and wellbeing into a subject of financial speculation and thereby profit maximisation, which is not centred on the best interest of the consumer nor the producer (Zerbe, 2019, p.155). This is resulting from the global spread of neoliberal capitalism and the resulting interconnectedness has moreover numerous direct and indirect effects on the producers of raw materials through price developments in the global market and the control of corporate actors (ibid.). The commodification of food has significant impact on the food consumption, as access is regulated through the price as well as the disposable income of the consumer. With commodification of food intersecting with is essential role as a basic need, the food industry is a profitable economic sector, with revenues in the food market in Europe being estimated to amount to approximately 2,000 billion USD in 2023, and an estimated annual growth of 4.35% (Statista, 2023).

The industrialisation of the production of food and extensive processing moreover affect the properties of food products and the human consumption. Whilst this applies to the agricultural production of raw materials, that is marked by the strategic cultivation of plants or animals to achieve desired features, as well as cases of genetic manipulation of animal and plant genomes, the focus in the following lies on the industrial food supply chain (cf. Atkins & Bowler, 2001, p. 88). The processing of food for the purpose of preservation has a very long tradition, such as e.g. the salting of meat or fish, but the industrial processing achieves significantly different outcomes through methods of advanced food chemistry. The results are highly or ultra-processed food products, which are designed for extended shelf life with consistent qualitative features, as well as profitability, taste, aesthetic appeal and convenient consumption, which thereby serve the profit-interest of producing corporations (cf. Mertens et al., 2022, p.1521). The NOVA system of food classification defines ultra-processed foods as "formulations made mostly or entirely from substances derived from foods and additives, with little if any intact Group 1 [unprocessed or minimally processed] food" (Monteiro et al. 2017, p.9). As a result, ultra-processed food products are low in nutritional value due to high energy density due to high levels of saturated fats, sugars and salt, reason why the consumption of them should be kept at a minimum (Mertens et al., 2022, p. 1521). With increasingly work and efficiency-

centred lifestyles, the consumption of convenient highly and ultra-processed food products such as packaged snacks and ready-made meals is rising as well. A report by the Pan American Health Organisation describes ultra-processed foods as problematic for the human health as they are "quasi-addictive; (…) falsely seen as healthy; conducive to snacking; aggressively advertised and marketed; and culturally, socially, economically, and environmentally destructive" (Pan American Health Organisation, 2015, p.6). The extent to which ultra-processed foods are consumed vary throughout Europe: they are higher in the Western European countries, but also on the rise in the Central and Eastern regions and range from 14% to 40% of the dietary energy intake (Mertens et al, 2022, p.1531).

The growing need and demand for food is relevantly impacting the world climate and eco-system. The global greenhouse gas emissions from food production, processing and distribution were origin of 26% of the global emissions, ranging from the use of land for farming over the production of crops and the handling of livestock to the supply chain (Ritchie, 2019). Furthermore, the IPCC (2022) outlines that the current practice in and around the food system would exceed planetary boundaries within which sustainable development could take place, even if climatic changes are not counted in (IPCC, 2022, p.792 cont.). The panel moreover emphasises that the ecosystem and its regulating mechanisms are endangered by the climate emergency (IPCC, 2022, p.734 cont.).

Considering the importance of food for sustenance, it is also a regulated branch of the economy to ensure food safety and quality, though regulations are rather scattered than comprehensive due to their highly specified nature. Within the EU, numerous regulations are in place to serve this purpose, ranging from regulations to ensure quality standards e.g. through the 'bendy banana law' (Commission Regulation (EC) No.2257/94) to regulations that establish labelling requirements for certain types of ingredients. The whole food production chain is subject to these regulations under the General Food Law Regulation (Council Regulation (EC) No. 178/2002), from the fertilisers used to grow crops to the final wrapping of food. Moreover, the member states have a number of individual regulations in place, including taxation laws under the EU standard rules on value added tax (VAT) concerning differing levels of taxation for product groups (EU, 2022). These regulations are relevant to organisations working in food charity, as companies donating food are subject to food safety and often regular VAT law to the same extent as in retail. Organisations active in food charity and food banks services, such as Tafel Deutschland and FEBA consider this as inhibitors of food donation and advocate for an adaptation to facilitate food donations.

2.1.2 Food as a human right

Food as a basic need and necessity for life and wellbeing has made it also a basic human right that is declared by the UN in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 1948:

> Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services (…). Article 25(1) UDHR

The term 'adequate food' applies to several dimensions: its availability to the subjects of a state, economic as well as physical accessibility and its adequacy in terms of cultural requirements, quality and quantity of nutritional needs, along with food safety (UN Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights, 2010, p.2 cont.). The right to food does not correspond to food security or food sovereignty: The first is a legal term based on the UNDHR, the second describes a prerequisite to comprehensively realise the right to food and the third describes a mode of the food system from production to consumption defined by the people themselves in agreement with their social, cultural and ecological standards (UN Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights, 2010, p.4). The human right to food as part of the universal and indivisible human rights is closely linked to the realisation of other human rights such as the right to health, the right to life or the right to education (UN OHCHR, 2010, p.5 cont.).

The right to food is part of the economic, social and cultural rights (cf. Art. 11 ICESCR) and specifically mentioned in the UN Convention on the Right of the Child (Art. 27 CRC). Herein, it is important to note that this type of right in its nature as positive obligation is to be ensured progressively by the state in question – as a result, the International Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) cannot be subject to a legal claim calling for immediate realisation (Bantekas & Oette, 2018, p.370). The right to food is an important element of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, launched in 2015 to eradicate all forms of poverty by the year 2030. A part from its obvious prominence in SDG 2 'Zero hunger', food through its production, distribution and consumption is moreover connected to several other goals, such as SDG 1 'No poverty', SDG 3 'Good health and wellbeing', SDG 12 'Responsible consumption and production', SDG 13 'Climate Action' (cf. UN DESA, N.D.).

The right to food can be affected by experiences of poverty, as the acquisition of food is connected to the availability of disposable income through far-ranging commodification. Whilst

all member states of the EU have ratified the UDHR as well as the ICESCR (UN Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, N.D.) and thereby committed to themselves to secure the right to food, experiences of insufficient food accessibility and food insecurity are still prevalent in the EU and its member countries (cf. FAO, 2022; see 2.1.4.).

2.1.3 Food insecurity

Food insecurity and hunger are on the rise again worldwide. Even though Europe is one of the least concerned regions in the international comparison, food insecurity is a reality in this developed, wealthy part of the world, despite the provision of governmental welfare programmes: a recent study by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the UN (FAO) and other UN bodies found that the number of moderately or severely food insecure people within Europe was decreasing, but are back on the rise since the year 2020 (FAO, 2022, p.26 cont.). While the development and level of moderate and severe food insecurity varies among different European regions, the tendency is rising (see below).

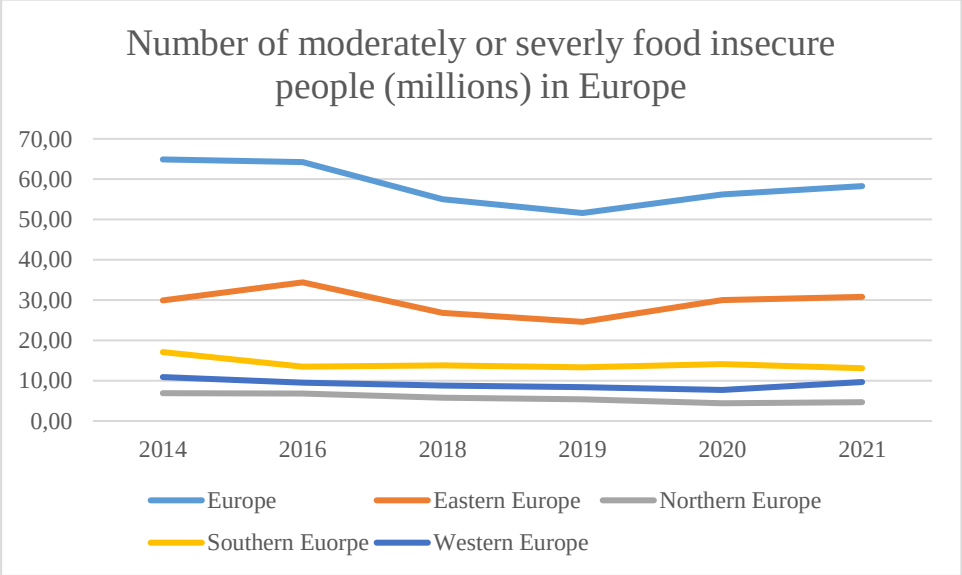

Figure 1 - Number of moderately or severely food insecure people (millions) in Europe, based on FAO, 2022, p.26)

In 2021, this group amounted to 58.3 million people within the European region (ibid.). According to estimates from the European Statistical Office (Eurostat), 36.2 million people in the EU were not able to afford a qualitatively adequate meal[1] on every second day in that year (Eurostat, 2023c). Whilst specific countries approach welfare and poverty alleviation in different ways, the importance of CSOs in supporting people experiencing food insecurity through food charity grows overall (Lambie-Mumford & Silvasti, 2020, p.25 cont.). Thereby,

[1] A quality meal is defined as a meal containing meat, chicken, fish or a vegetarian equivalent (Eurostat, 2023c).

these organisations fill in where state welfare service provision is insufficient or absent. The cost of a healthy diet has been increasing steadily as well, from 2.998 USD/day to 3.179 USD/day from 2017 to 2020 (FAO, 2022, p.188). The steeply rising inflation that began after the outbreak of the war in Ukraine is increasing food prices significantly, thereby also affecting the number of food insecure people (cf. Christelis et al., 2021).

Food insecurity and nutrition are closely connected with health. The impact of socio-economic means and poverty on the access to and choice of food can be considered part of the social determinants of health (cf. Donkin et al., 2017). Despite the degree of development, poverty is a reality in the EU: 73.7 million people were at risk of poverty in 2021, while 27 million were classified as being severely materially deprived (Eurostat, 2022). In the German context, nearly 17% of the population were found to be at risk of poverty and social exclusion in the same year, with higher exposure for people of 65 years and older, with low educational status, unemployed people, as well as single-parent-households (German Federal Agency for Civic Education, 2023). Pfeiffer et al. (2016) find that food insecurity is on the rise in Germany since the 2000s and has become a reality especially for recipients of social welfare. While the prevalence of poverty can only give an idea of the prevalence of food insecurity, data addressing food insecurity in the EU is missing. Researchers note that official EU data does not cover food insecurity, as there are no monitoring systems for food insecurity despite UN requirements (Toffolutti, 2020 cited after FEBA, 2010.15[2], p.6; cf. Riches & Silvasti, 2014).

2.1.4 Food waste

Food waste is a relevant problem for people and the planet. As mentioned above, the production, processing and distribution of food lead to considerable amounts of greenhouse gases and contribute to the climate emergency. Food that turns into food waste furthermore wastes limited, valuable resources. According to Eurostat, approximately 59 million tons of food waste were generated in 2020 in the EU, which corresponds to an average amount of 131 kg of wasted food per inhabitant (Eurostat, 2023b). Eurostat (2023b) identifies private households as main producers of food waste, followed by the manufacture of food products, the primary production, restaurants and food services and lastly retail (see below).

[2] Documents included in the analysed dataset are indicated with the organisational name and the year of publication. The number after the dot specifies the document within that year e.g. [FEBA, 2010.15]. Please find the complete list for both datasets in the appendices (Appendix I: FEBA, Appendix II: Tafel Deutschland).

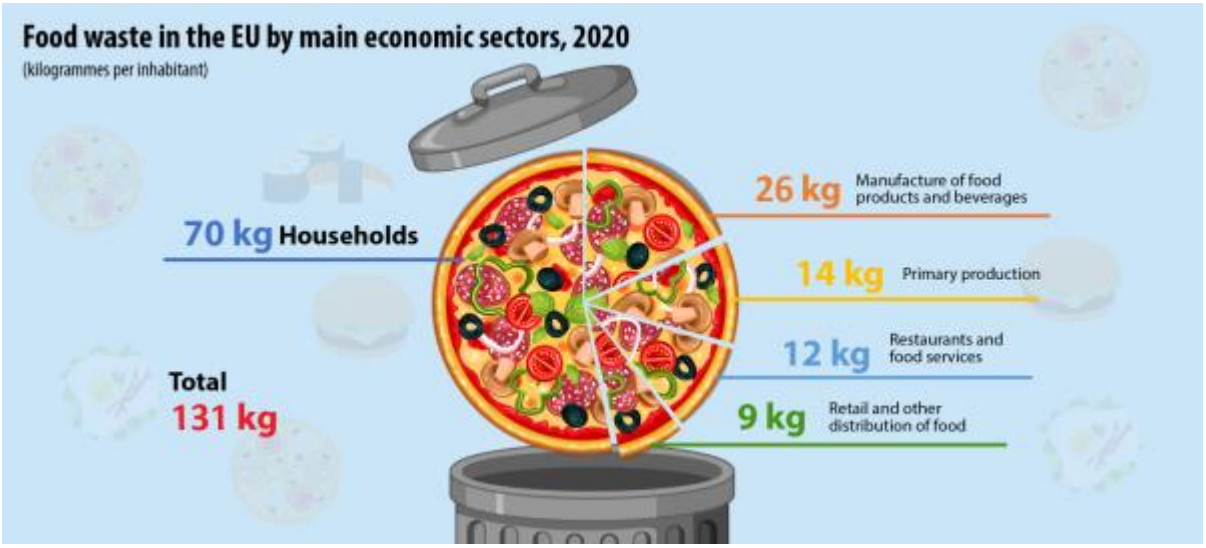

Figure 2 – Food waste in the EU by main economic sector, 2020 (Eurostat 2023b)

The German Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture (2022) estimates a total amount of about 10,9 million tons of food waste in 2020, corresponding to an average of 131 kg of food waste per inhabitant. A study funded by the EU from 2006 identifies food and drinks as a primary source of impact of individual household consumption on the environment with 20 to 30%, along with private transport (15 to 35%) and housing (20 to 35%, including energy) (Tukker et al., 2006, p.18). Scherhaufer et al. (2018) show that the amount of food waste generated in the EU corresponds to about 16% of the greenhouse gas emissions from the whole food supply chain – food waste is consequently an important climatic problem.

The EU has recognised food waste as a relevant dimension in tackling the climate emergency in its nature as an existential threat. As a results, the reduction of food waste is an element of the European Green Deal, enacted in 2020, that is aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the EU by at least 55% by the year 2030, in accordance with the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (cf. European Commission, N.D.a). The European Green Deal aims at making the EU into the first climate neutral continent by 2050, decoupling economic growth from the use of resources, whilst leaving no place and no people behind (ibid.). A core element of the European Green Deal is the Farm to Fork Strategy, targeted at transforming the food system to be socially and environmentally sustainable. Elements of the strategy include the transition to circular economy, the realisation of food security as well as the promotion of a sustainable food production and consumption, along with the reduction of food waste and food loss by halving on the levels of retail and consumption by 2030 (European Commission, 2020).

The EU's longer term perspective for a sustainable improvement of the food system and the reduction of food waste is the shift to a circular economy. The circular economic model follows

the principle that production and consumption are marked by a maximal extension of the use of products and resources through their reutilisation at the highest possible value level (European Parliament, 2023). As a result, the production of waste shall be reduced to the smallest extent possible, through the revalorisation of materials in recycling processes, which keeps resources within the economic system (ibid.). The circular economy and the EU's take on it are subject to criticism from different academic fields (Corvellec et al., 2022). These include amongst others relevant limitations that arise from material properties that do not allow infinite use and reuse due to gradual degradation and recycling technologies, limited in potential and beyond a certain point highly energy-intensive (ibid.). These criticism of lacking recognition of existing knowledge extends to consumption and consumption patterns, with the concept being criticised as rather ideal-typical and falling short in envisioning its realisation on the levels of policies, organisations and the consumer (ibid.) When it comes to ecological sustainability, critics see a difficulty in identifying potentials for environmentally-friendly developments, as effects on different stakeholder levels are not developed and as there is no clear plan for a restructuration of the global consumption and production chain, including the waste industry (ibid.). Another aspect of critique concerns the fact that markets and economic entities such as corporations are main carriers of the circular economic model, with public actors functioning as facilitators – this is seen as an essential limitation due to the reliance on market efficiency, a growth-centred economic thinking and the associated capitalist self-interest of profit maximisation (ibid.).

2.2 Food bank organisations studied in their welfare context

To prepare the ground for the following analysis, an introduction to the studied organisations is given below. This introduction aims at providing information about basic structures, features and the organisational focus of activities.

2.2.1 Tafel Deutschland e.V.

Tafel Deutschland e.V. (in the following: Tafel Deutschland), is a non-profit CSO based in Berlin/Germany, that is serving as an umbrella for food banks service-centred organisations nation-wide. The name 'Tafel' means 'large table'. The organisation operates as a registered association [eingetragener Verein, short: e.V.], a common legal form for non-profit CSOs in Germany. Tafel Deutschland represents the interest of more than 960 local Tafel organisations and their regional representatives on the national level towards politics, business and the society (Tafel Deutschland N.D.a). Moreover, the organisation provides an informational infrastructure for its members, acquires financial donations, coordinates large scale in-kind donations and

advises local member organisation on administrative matters (Tafel Deutschland, N.D.c). The organisation describes itself as "the largest socio-economic movement in Germany that rescues food and gives it to people affected by poverty" (Tafel Deutschland, N.D.b). The organisation does not receive public funding and finances their work through donations.

The Tafel movement originated from a food bank in Berlin in 1993 and the concept of redistributing surplus food was inspired by an US-American food bank based in New York City (Tafel Deutschland, N.D.c). The idea spread throughout the country and the umbrella organisation was founded in 1995 by the first 35 local Tafel organisations (ibid.). The work of local Tafel initiatives is reliant on the engagement of roughly 60,000 volunteers that recover food surpluses from local retailers and producers and distribute them to people in need in their community. About 10% of the engaged receive some form of financial compensation, including regularly employed as well as people participating in public activation measures for labour market reintegration, so called 'One Euro Jobs' (Tafel Deutschland, 2022.1, p.28). Local Tafel organisations can be connected to local non-statutory welfare organisations, often resulting from their historic development process. In difference to most food banks in Europe, Tafel branches distribute food directly to the people in need and not primarily to charitable organisations that pass them on. Moreover, local Tafel organisations vary from each other in scope and the range of services they offer, with some providing social services beyond food distribution, such as activities for children or soup kitchens. Connected to the national structure of federal states, regional associations provide an intermediate stage in the organisational structure, representing up to two of the federal states. Tafel Deutschland is a full member of the European umbrella organisation FEBA since 2018.

The Tafel food banks in Germany are an informal part of welfare provision that is not part of the public welfare. Within the conservative, insurance-based welfare state regime an extensive network of non-statutory welfare organisations as service providers on behalf of the state has developed, encouraged by the maxim of the privatisation of services under the neoliberal agenda of NPM (cf. Palier, 2010). Tafel Deutschland currently advocates for public funding for all Tafel organisations to cover fixed costs including expenses for personnel, based on their environmental impact (Tafel Deutschland, 2020.5; 2020.6). Due to the strong position of the insurance based social security system in Germany, social protection remains connected to a person's income and employment situation. It can be characterised as having a moderate level of decommodification in terms of a detachment of the livelihood of people from their participation in paid labour (cf. Palier, 2010). In the 2000s the extensive labour market policies

(the Hartz reforms) established the principle of activation and prepared the ground for a significant expansion of the low-wage sector, synonymous with a shift from welfare towards liberal workfare (ibid.).

2.2.2 European Food Banks Federation a.s.b.l.

The European Food Banks Federation a.s.b.l. (FEBA) is a non-profit networking organisation based in Brussels/Belgium, representing its 23 full and 7 associate member organisations active in food charity in different European countries in EU politics. The organisation operates as a registered non-profit organisation under Belgian law (Association sans but lucrative, short: a.s.b.l). FEBA activities are centred on network development through the exchange of knowledge and capacity building, impact monitoring and enlargement of its membership across Europe, as well as policy and advocacy on the European and international level (FEBA, 2022.1, p.2 cont.). Therefore, the organisation is concerned with the monitoring, implementation and further development of EU policies; thematic fields of their activity are food waste, poverty, and food insecurity (cf. FEBA, 2022.1, p.22 cont.). Moreover, the organisation works to acquire donations and establish partnerships with public and private actors, EU bodies and NGOs (cf. FEBA, 2022.1; 2022.13). The organisation receives funding from the European Commission, as well as donations.

FEBA was founded under the name Fédération Européenne des Banques Alimentaires in 1986 in France, by the initiators of a French and a Belgian food bank that were founded following the American model (FEBA, N.D.a). The goal was to represent food banks and their interest at the European level. In 2018, the organisation relocated to Brussels to be closer and more involved with EU institutions and actors and entered into a four year Framework Agreement with the Directorate General Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion of the European Commission[3] (ibid.). As a result, the organisational staff and activity expanded significantly.

FEBA cooperates with a number of actors from different areas. It is part of the Global FoodBanking Network (GFN), a USA-based organisation active in international food bank lobbyism. Moreover, the organisation maintains a number of partnerships with corporations across different sectors, such as the food industry, logistics, finances and communications (cf. FEBA, 2022.13). As part of their policy and advocacy work on the supranational level of EU governance, the organisation is a member of the advisory group to the Fund for European Aid

[3] EU framework agreements are a supportive financial measure to facilitate the social dialogue and involve non-state actors into EU the multi-level governance structure (cf. Bache, 2012).

to the Most Deprived (FEAD)[4] community, the EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste and serves as an observer for the European Commission's contingency plan for food supply and food security (FEBA N.D.b). With the organisational engagement with the FEAD, FEBA is concerned with EU cohesion policies, which are part of the EUs main investment policies and include social endeavours that complement the strong focus of a shared economy (cf. European Commission, N.D.b). FEBA acts as a non-state representative of food banks as part of European civil society within the supranational EU policy-making process (cf. Bache, 2012, p.629 cont.).

3. Previous research on food banks and the eco-social research agenda

A narrative literature review establishes the evidential background of a research project, contributes to the overarching theoretical frame and gives insight into the existing research in the investigated topic area (cf. Bryman, 2016, p.91). This review of previous research provides the reader with current knowledge on food banks, their origin and ideological foundation, as well as critical scientific assessment of their practice and impact. Moreover, eco-social research as an emerging research agenda and related eco-social policies are introduced and the contribution that this thesis makes to the existing knowledge is discussed.

The sources for this literature review consist of journal articles, as well as books. The material was researched and obtained through the general search engine of the library of Gothenburg University, the databases Scopus and ProQuest Social Sciences, as well as Google Scholar. The search terms used in the search engines where chosen in relation to the two focus areas and used in various combinations; both developed throughout the revision process (see Table 1). Starting from the provided results, I investigated the topic further through the references in relevant publications. Furthermore, the discussions with my supervisor led me to relevant authors.

Search terms for 3.1 Food banks (Scopus & Google Scholar)	Search terms for 3.2 Eco-social research and eco-social policies (ProQuest Social Sciences)
"food bank", "food charity", "food aid", "food poverty", "food insecurity", "poverty alleviation", "civil society", "Europe", "EU"	"Eco-social research", "eco-social research agenda", "ecological and social research", "eco-social agenda", "eco-social politics", "eco-social approach"

Table 1 - Overview of search terms for the literature review.

[4] "The Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD) supports EU countries' actions to provide food and/or basic material assistance to the most deprived. […] Material assistance needs to go hand in hand with social inclusion measures, such as guidance and support to help people out of poverty."(European Commission, N.D.c).

3.1 Food banks

Food banks originated in Northern America in the late 1960s, inspiring the foundation of similar organisations from the 1990s on all over Europe, where they proliferated in the 2000s linked to the economic crisis and related social policies marked by austerity (Lambie-Mumford & Silvasti, 2020, p.25). Food banks usually work on a community basis, where volunteers collect food donations that are then distributed to people in poverty (Loopstra & Lambie-Mumford, 2023). The recovery of surplus food to prevent food waste and for the purpose of charitable redistribution is a common feature in food bank activities (Lambie-Mumford & Silvasti, 2020, p.34). Whilst food banks and their organisational structure differ between countries, they have turned into common actors within informal welfare delivery and the national welfare landscape in Western welfare states (Loopstra & Lambie-Mumford, 2023). The role of food banks has been normalised, with corporate and government funding being commonly identified as proof (Riches, 2011, p.770; Riches, 2018, p.169 cont.).

Researchers on food banks within the context of Western countries in the developed Global North have investigated different aspects of food banks and their practice, such as the interrelations of the use of food banks and food insecurity (Loopstra & Tarasuk, 2012; Depa et al., 2018; Tarasuk et al., 2020), as well as the quality of available food products (Oldroyd et al., 2022) and the experience of service users of charitable food bank services (Douglas et al., 2015; Garthwaite, 2016). Moreover, the ethical background and motivations of charitable organisations in food charity have been of interest for researchers (Lambie-Mumford & Silvasti, 2020). The influence of the recent Covid-19-pandemic on food bank services has found entry into first publications as well (Warshawsky, 2022; Capodistrias et al., 2022). Food banks and food bank service delivery have inspired research in a variety of academic fields other than social sciences, e.g. in industrial and systems engineering through the evaluation of approximation methods of donations to manage collections more cost-efficiently (Brock & Davis, 2015) or to develop processes to optimise the distribution of food products to recipients with regards to short shelf-life and time efficiency aspects (Juanpera et al., 2022). Moreover, there is research within environmental studies, e.g. Meloni & Rocchi (2022) who focussed on the environmental impact of a Lithuanian food bank and identified the net positive impact of its practice. Overall, the research on food banks is scattered in the European context, where studies from different countries and organisations on national (Depa et al., 2018), regional or local level exist (Loopstra & Tarasuk, 2012; Meloni & Rocchi, 2022), as well as some cross-national publications (Riches, 1997; Riches & Silvasti, 2014). Implications of the work of food banks on the supranational level of the EU are focussed on little by scholars so far.

A number of studies from different national contexts have investigated the interrelations of the use of food banks and food insecurity. Loopstra & Tarasuk (2012) identified within a study from a population perspective in Toronto/Canada, that a majority of the studied low-income households' experiences food insecurity, but only a small fraction of them seeks assistance from food banks. The researchers conclude that a governmental reliance on food charity to prevent food insecurity is inadequate and identify the need for political action (Loopstra & Tarasuk, 2012, p.509 cont.). Tarasuk et al. (2020) state that the small share of food insecure households that use food banks makes organisational statistics invalid in the evaluation of food insecurity and question the usefulness of political initiatives to expand food charity operations as they do not correspond with individual needs and are thereby ineffective in alleviating food insecurity. Instead, the researchers urge for social policies that consider structural aspects of household poverty in assuring adequate incomes (Tarasuk et al., 2020, p.846 cont.). Depa et al. (2018) identified as part of a study on the prevalence of food insecurity among food bank users in Germany, that more than 70% of the assessed group experienced food insecurity, with intersectional categories such as gender, age, school education and duration of the use of food bank services impacting the food insecurity of more vulnerable groups. Criticising the normalisation and institutionalisation of food banks, Milbourne (2020) advocates for policy solutions to overcome food insecurity and structural poverty, suggesting food banks to function as community centres, that could provide knowledge on healthy eating and enhance social cohesion in the community (Milbourne, 2020 cited after FEBA, 2020.15).

The quality of food available through food banks has also been subject to a number of publications. Oldroyd et al.'s mixed-method review of over 2,000 publications on the topic found that charitable food parcels did not consistently correspond with nutritional requirements and were often inadequate to full fill service users' needs, including needs related to culture and health (Oldroyd et al., 2022, p.1222). Their study moreover found that while food bank services enhanced the quality of users' diets and alleviated food insecurity to some degree, food insecurity persisted due to limitations regarding quality, variety and availability of food (Oldroyd et al., 2022, p.1222 cont.). The study concludes that food bank services are not an exclusive solution to prevent food insecurity, thereby requiring political measures to assure stable and adequate household incomes and call for strategical improvements of the nutritional quality of provided food support (Oldroyd et al. 2022, p.1224 cont.).

The experience of users of charitable food bank services and their perception is also relevant within research in the field of food banks. Douglas et al. (2015) show in their findings a variety

of feelings experienced by food bank users in Scotland, ranging from desperation over shame and powerlessness to gratitude, and underline that the experience of intense shame can lead to impacts on the users mental health (Douglas et al., 2015, p.313). Garthwaite's (2016) ethnographic study in the English context came to similar results, with a majority of users of food bank services experiencing feelings of stigma, fear and embarrassment. Garthwaite states that the feeling of intense fear was enforced by televised representation of 'the poor', leading to food insecure people's refusal of food aid, while the impression of stigma could be reduced through repeated use of food bank services (Garthwaite, 2016). Loopstra and Tarasuk (2012) identified several reasons for the non-use of food banks by food insecure low income households in Toronto/Canada: the perceived inadequacy of available food in terms of quality and variety, feelings of humiliation and non-affiliation with the perceived group of service users as 'people in need', as well as access barriers (Loopstra & Tarasuk, 2012, p.503 cont.). Lambie-Mumford and Silvasti (2020) broach the issue of the ethical background and the motivation of charitable organisations in food charity. In highlighting the beneficial support by food banks in terms of experiencing care and solidarity, the authors state that the approach of food bank service providers can impact the service users' perception of exclusion (Lambie-Mumford & Silvasti 2020, p.31 cont.). In Europe and the Global North, charity as a concept is marked by a long Christian tradition. The affiliation of food charity organisations to religious beliefs, which is common for food bank organisations across Europe, is referred to and how food insecurity thereby forces food bank users to the exposition to religious symbols or practices, which can negatively impact people not associating with this religion (ibid.).

Recently, the influence of the Covid-19-pandemic on the delivery of food bank services has found entry into scientific publications. Warshawsky (2022) finds that the pandemic affected the organisations in similar ways, e.g. the rising of basic costs, unstable reception of in-kind donations and decreasing numbers of volunteers, and shed light on the structural deficiencies of the charitable food aid system. The study explores the differences of the pandemic's impact on organisations in three European states, where relevant disparities can be connected to the organisational structures and the respective economic and political context (Warshawsky, 2022). Capodistrias assesses within a multiple case study the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic within its first year, finding that organisations managed to overall distribute larger amounts of food despite various restrictions, due to the application of new strategies such as new partnerships with corporate actors (Capodistrias et al., 2022, p.11 cont.).

3.1.1 Critical perspective on food banks and food charity

Graham Riches, an internationally recognised researcher from Canada within the field of food banks, sees in the massive expansion of food banks and their development within rich, developed countries an expression of structurally embedded social inequality and therein rooted poverty that is tantamount to extensive welfare policy failure, fuelled since the 1990s by the neo-liberal agenda (Riches, 2011). I have chosen to provide critical perspectives on food banks based on the work of Riches, as I consider his work as authoritative in this field. This evaluation is based on his influential position in research within food security and food banking in developed countries for nearly two decades, which is often referred to by other relevant publications. In the following, some critical perspectives offered by Riches in relation to food banking as part of food charity will be presented, including the aspects of the construction of food banks in the problem context, corporate power, responsibility, as well as human rights and solidarity.

Riches critically investigates food banks and food charity in the construction of the problem context. A central aspect of his critique concerns the framing of food banking as a unified solution for food waste and food insecurity, as both are distinctly separate issues: one resulting from the structurally defective food system and the other from a structurally unequal welfare system (Riches, 2018, p.128). He problematizes that in the system of food charity, hunger and food insecurity are constructed as individualised issues associated with charity as its relief (Riches, 2011, p.771). This leads to its deeply structural and political dimension being left out (ibid.). Moreover, critical aspects in the perception and promotion of food banks are developed, such as the underlying religious moral requiring to feed 'the hungry' and the utility of food banks in an effective reduction of government expenses for welfare measures (Riches, 2011, 771 cont.; Riches, 2018, p.151). The latter leaves governments in developed countries in a position to consider food charity as an appropriate solution for food insecurity (ibid.). In his book "Food Bank Nation" (2018), Riches is moreover concerned with the overall impact of food banks in approaching poverty and food waste. There, he targets the phenomenon of food banks lacking food and thereby struggling to meet requests for support, which he connects to a shift from 'poor' receivers as people living on social benefits to people with low-income as deviating from the original mission of feeding the 'needy' (Riches, 2018, p.163).

Corporate power and influence are of central interest for Riches. While stating that the food banking model relies on a stable provision of surplus food, Riches underlines the interest of multinational food giants to establish the redistribution of surplus food as a solution to hunger

in wealthy, developed countries (Riches, 2018, p.143). He raises the question of a discrepancy between large corporate profits possible through the global food system and the market-profile they developed with large amounts of food waste as their side-product and the little share of responsibility attributed to them (Riches, 2018, p.145 cont.). His assessment finds strategies of corporate greenwashing and questions the distribution of benefits from surplus redistribution among different actors and recipients (Riches, 2018, p.145 cont.). This aspect is developed based on the pricing structures within the globalised food system that are importantly enhancing food waste creation, as well as the double benefiting of corporate actors from this practice, as calculated corporate social responsibility (CSR) actions of donations polish their image along with large profits (Riches, 2011, p.771 cont.; Riches, 2018, p.147). Riches argues furthermore against the conceptualisation of surplus recovery through food banks as a 'win-win' solution, as their efforts only cover a small fraction of the total amount of edible food waste, whilst providing but a short-term relief to a small fraction of food insecure people (Riches, 2018, p.147). The author considers the high degree of influence that corporate actors have in transnational organisations such as FEBA and GFN, and the impact of such networking organisations in facilitating growing corporate influence on national member organisation (cf. Riches, 2018, p.110 cont.). In this context, the strong focus of transnational lobby organisations on food waste and not food insecurity and poverty is described (Riches, 2018, p.145).

Riches also addresses the individual responsibility for the production of food waste. The author takes a critical stance when addressing the attribution of responsibility for food waste production to consumers, pointing out that the 2030 SDG Agenda as well as the FAO both place prime responsibility on the consuming level of the household, while ignoring the corporate dimension (Riches, 2018, p.142 cont.). The author develops the argument that corporate actors through their dominance in shaping the food system are essentially responsible for food waste production and benefit from its dysfunctional features by enhancing the phenomenon of scarcity in abundance (Riches, 2011, p.771; Riches, 2018, p.144 cont.). The author calls for the recognition of food insecurity as a structural issue of poverty, which requires political action to realise social justice and human rights (Riches, 2011, p.773 cont.).

Riches suggests a human rights-based approach centred on the right to food as a way to approach food insecurity and hunger as social problems, while taking the state up to its responsibility (Riches, 2011, p.773 cont.). This becomes a necessity to develop an inclusive approach to food insecurity, opposed to the system of surplus food redistribution which predominantly benefits corporate actors through marketing and the low-cost disposal of

surpluses, as well as the state that neglects its responsibility for structural poverty (cf. Riches, 2018, p.186). In relation to the human rights foundation, Riches critically assesses the common framing of solidarity in food banking, as a rhetorical tool to construct individualised needs (Riches, 2018, p.193). Instead, the author advocates for solidarity that is critical towards the many layers of food bank activities and collective in its efforts to realise food as a human right as part of shared humanity and human dignity (cf. Riches, 2018, p. 196 cont.). Through an analysis based on the Doughnut model as an eco-social research perspective that incorporates human rights principles, this thesis can contribute to develop critical perspectives on food banks from an eco-social point of view and thereby potentially expand the existing knowledge.

3.2 Eco-social research and eco social policies

Eco-social research is framed differently by different scholars, ranging from being a paradigm to an overarching research agenda. Here, I am following the understanding of eco-social research as an emerging research agenda (cf. Hirvilammi et al., 2023). Eco-social research as a cross-disciplinary field of research has been inspired by the climate emergency and its effects and investigates its interdependences with economic activities, as well as associated ecological developments, e.g. the degradation of eco-systems, and social phenomena, e.g. poverty and food insecurity. Eco-social research is closely linked to eco-social policies, suggestions for which arise from eco-social research activities and are concerned with social policies of state welfare and the economy (cf. Hirvilammi et al., 2023). The aim of eco-social research is to contribute to the development of an ecologically safe and socially fair societal and economic system (ibid.). While eco-social research has looked at different policy fields such as climate mitigations policies and social welfare policies so far, the food system has not been researched much from an eco-social perspective yet, which opens up the opportunity for this thesis to approach this area and develop perspectives for future research. The research presented in the following focusses on degrowth as presented in eco-social research in distinction from green growth, as well as the welfare state and eco-social welfare policies. Degrowth as an essential aspect has been chosen in accordance with the Doughnut model as theoretical framework of this research (see 4.1).

The concept of green growth was a central theme at the UN Conference for Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and is based on the theory that continued economic growth can be realised within the limits of the ecological system (Hickel & Kallis, 2020, p.469). The theory of green growth follows the understanding that it is possible to entirely decouple the growth of the gross domestic product from carbon emissions and the use of natural resources

and that to an extent that an ecological breakdown through e.g. dangerous climatic changes can be avoided (ibid.). Technological development and innovation are understood as main driver for the realisation of green growth (Gough, 2017, p.69 cont.). As an economic strategy, green growth moreover focusses on benefits resulting from the protection of the environment, especially carbon mitigation (Gough, 2017, p.71). The theory of green growth has become an influential response for politicians and economic actors in the midst of the climate emergency (cf. Dale et al., 2016, p.3 cont.), inspiring political strategies such as the European Green Deal in 2019. This EU strategy focusses on green growth being achieved through a model of circular economy, wherein a maximal extension of the use of products and resources is achieved through the longest reutilisation possible (European Parliament, 2023).

The theory of green growth, as well as the circular economic model that incorporates its principles is strongly contested within eco-social research. Corvellec et al. (2022) find that the circularity envisaged in the circular economic model is a rather "theoretically, practically, and ideologically questionable notion*"* (Corvellec et al., 2022, p.421), that in its current design lacks ecological and social inclusiveness, as well as transparency (cf. Corvellec et al., 2022, p.428 cont.). Hickel and Kallis (2020) research of historical trends and model-based projections of resource use and carbon emissions indicates that the possibility to achieve absolute decoupling with consistent economic growth is not supported by empiric evidence. Moreover, the authors state that the achievement of absolute decoupling in time to prevent global warming over 1.5°C is highly improbable, drawing the conclusion that green growth is merely a concept of political interest which contradicts ecologically and socially sustainable change (Hickel & Kallis, 2020, p.483). Similar findings are made by Haberl et al. (2020).

Degrowth within eco-social research questions the primacy of economic growth and profit and argues instead for social and ecological justice. The Doughnut model with its conceptualisation of a 'safe and just space' for action that respects human needs and planetary boundaries takes a critical stance towards the economic growth paradigm (cf. Raworth, 2017, p.43 cont.; see 4.1). Degrowth and the transition of state and welfare systems from being centred on the paradigm of the growth imperative to a post-growth or degrowth understanding have been subject to studies in various fields, ranging from the structural level of the welfare state over the paradigmatic frame of policy development to the field of tension between ecological sustainability and social welfare in the context of public spending.

The structural level of the welfare state has been studied within the context of degrowth. Fanning et al. (2020) do so by using the abstract concept of provisioning systems to investigate

interdependences of resource use and related social effects in terms of resource efficiency, by analysing different provisioning system theories within the 'safe and just space'-concept after Raworth. Whilst the researchers find that most of the analysed theories lack focus on human needs and consideration of planetary boundaries, they provide a framework for the analysis of provisioning systems that supports the understanding of differences regarding resource use and its social outcomes in different societies (cf. Fanning et al., 2020, p.8 cont.). It also allows to identify relevant challenges in improving resource efficiency for outcomes of human wellbeing (ibid.). Koch and Fritz (2014) instead focus on welfare regimes and the impact of the different types of welfare regimes on the development of an eco-social state through comparative empirical research. The authors investigate that established, developed welfare institutions do not lead to the development of an ecologically oriented state as the synergy hypothesis would suggest (Koch & Fritz, 2015, p.697). According to the synergy hypothesis, social-democratic welfare states would be better adapted than conservative or liberal regimes to incorporate ecological developments (Koch & Fritz, 2015, p.679). Gough and Meadowcroft (2012) study welfare state as a distinctive feature of developed societies and interconnections with climate change based on data from the United Kingdom. Therein, the authors raise challenges for the welfare state in the midst of the climate emergency and analyse implications of the urgent need for decarbonisation. After weighing scenarios within green growth and post growth, the issue of path-dependent tendencies within established welfare state systems is raised related to the absence of a social movement that could support the needed, radical adaptations (Gough & Meadowcroft, 2012, p.501 cont.).

Another topic area within eco-social research concerns policy development and its paradigmatic frame. Hirvilammi and Helne (2014) point out that policies that conform to ecological and social sustainability in the Anthropocene as the planetary era marked by human impact require a fundamental change of paradigm. The authors argue that too little attention is paid to the fact that the prevalent paradigm of human exceptionalism does not allow far-reaching changes as it is required to achieve an ecologically and socially sustainable system. Therefore, they call for a shift to a relational paradigm that is based on a holistic understanding of the world with deeply rooted ecology (Hirvilammi & Helne, 2014, p.2163). The authors highlight wellbeing and an understanding of wellbeing as multidimensional and relational as essential to overcome ecologically unsustainable preconceptions of social. This shift could allow to overcome path dependent thinking along the currently dominant social institutions and give access to an integrative paradigm of eco-social policy (Hirvilammi & Helne, 2014, p.2168). Koch (2019) approaches the paradigmatic 'growth imperative' as the primacy of economic growth in

political decision-making as a central hindrance of the development of an environmental state as well as a structural limitation of ecological and social change. The author argues that growth-oriented economies centre their attention on the GDP and the national level, whereby ecological and social policies are only considered if they do not restrict economic growth (cf. Koch, 2019, p.117 cont.). In difference to this, post-growth economies focus on larger environmental contexts and thereby the global and local sphere, with policies having the objective of keeping economic activity as well as consumption within ecological boundaries of the planet (Koch, 2019, p.122 cont.). The author takes the position that theories of the materialist state and sustainable welfare can enhance state-guided eco-social policies, which could overcome the growth imperative paradigm in social policies and the economy as part of a comprehensive political approach (Koch, 2019, p.129 cont.).

The field of tension between ecological sustainability and social welfare in the context of welfare states and public spending is also discussed in eco-social research. Büchs et al. (2011) consider the problem that climate mitigation policies pose a disproportionate financial burden for low-income households, thereby constituting a barrier for comprehensive policy application as social justice would require far-reaching welfare state intervention. The authors investigate different types of policies such as excise taxes, which show a tendency to have regressive distributional effects (Büchs et al., 2011, p.289 cont.). An exception to this rule of regressivity is the taxation of emissions for personal transport, which effectively reduces inequality if applied to the entire population (cf. Büchs et al., 2011, p.292 cont.). It is furthermore underlined that distributional outcomes depend importantly on the way in which revenues from mitigation measurements are used, and the authors identify lump-sum revenue recovery schemes as the best suited measure to prevent regressive outcomes (cf. Büchs et al., 2011, p.299). Markkanen and Anger-Kraavi (2019) also underline the risk of regressive distributional effects as result of climate mitigation policies and an intensification of social inequalities. They determine that negative effect of climate mitigation policies can only be avoided through thorough consideration of their complex effects on different levels of the policy-making (Markkanen & Anger-Kraavi, 2019, p.838). The authors call for a poverty-sensitive approach to climate change mitigation policies in the aim of reducing prevalent inequalities (ibid.). Gough (2013) draws a similar conclusion and supports policies that realise ecological sustainability in a socially equitable way. The author furthermore underlines as a result of his study of data about greenhouse gas emissions from Britain, that new policy measures are needed to radically limit consumption and change behavioural pattern to effectively realise carbon emission reduction (Gough, 2013, p.209).

Decommodification is an approach that is considered within eco-social research and policy development to realise ecological and social sustainability alongside each other. Dukelow and Murphy (2022) investigate potentials of decommodification from a post-productivist perspective in relation to three essential dimensions of the eco-social welfare state. Firstly, time redistribution between work and care, through a timely reduction of traditional labour, thereby creating a more equitable frame for decommodified social reproduction in form of care work (Dunkelow & Murphy, 2022, p.512). Secondly, the redefinition of purpose within labour activation policies, which could shift from workfare centred commodification, often as part of precarious work, to become more equitable through adequately remunerated participatory work environments, as well as measures focussed in the promotion of sustainability (Dunkelow & Murphy, 2022, p.513). And thirdly, a new orientation of financial transfers, that would be aimed at meeting individual needs and societal standards within planetary boundaries, e.g. through Participation Income[5] (PI) that are not bound by productivist requirements (Dunkelow & Murphy, 2022, p.510 cont.). The authors conclude by stating the need for a paradigmatic shift away from the growth imperative towards post-growth and post-productivism. McGann and Murphy (2023) develop the case for Participation Income (PI) further, constructing it as a potential tool to facilitate the shift towards eco-social welfare and underlining its non-stigmatising potentials (McGann & Murphy, 2023, p.27).

Another dimension of eco-social research that provides a relevant perspective for this thesis, is Barthold et al.'s (2021) article that challenges the concept of corporate truth from an eco-feminist perspective. Drawing from three historic examples of activists that challenged corporate practice within the context of chemically-induced environmental degradation, the authors build a case of advocacy for a holistic understanding of the world with thorough consideration of ecological dimensions, as opposed to isolated corporate self-interest (Barthold et al., 2021, p.1797 cont.). The authors consider extensive corporate investment into the production of a truth in accordance with their best interest through activities of CSR, certification processes and stakeholder involvement (Barthold et al., 2021, p.1809 cont.).

3.3 Contribution to the field

This literature review illustrates the existing knowledge on food bank services as food charity and their impact, including critical aspects of food bank service delivery from a human rights perspective. The field of eco-social research and eco-social policies is mapped and relevant

[5] Participation Income (PI) is "a targeted income support enabling engagement in social, ecological and democratic activity that fosters sustainable outcomes" (Dunkelow & Murphy, p.510).

aspects of the emerging research agenda with its ambitious aim of achieving ecological and social justice in their interdependent nature are reflected. Considering the research and literature that I have reviewed, this thesis can complement the existing knowledge and research on food banks within eco-social research, as well as potentially expand it. A complementation is possible through the application of eco-social research perspectives of the Doughnut model on the field of food banking and food charity in the context of the food system. This research can expand the existing knowledge in so far, as it is approaching eco-social research on food banks within the frame of multi-level EU governance, by shedding light on organisational ambitions and endeavours on a national level as well as the connected European level. The connection to the food system, which is not a central element in the field of eco-social research yet, can furthermore contribute to the field of eco-social research.

4. Theoretical framework

Economics are a dominant discourse in societies of the 21st century. Economic trains of thought are authoritative markers in politics and their reasoning; they affect the way people think of society and are reflected in daily used language (cf. Raworth, 2017, p.11 cont.). Thereby, economics also affect the social sector and social work practice in a variety of ways, exemplified by the neoliberal approach of NPM to public welfare services that is marked by rationalisation and marketization (Healy, 2014, p.52 cont.). Economic considerations are moreover essential for public welfare services, their design, further development and long-term sustainability. The Doughnut model with its holistic, global understanding of the interconnectedness of the economy, the society and the environment does not only challenge the exclusivity and dominance of the economic discourse, but furthermore essentially integrates the economy in the society and the environment.

4.1 The Doughnut Economy

The Doughnut model (in the following: the Doughnut) is the basis for Kate Raworth's theory of the Doughnut Economy (2017), which suggests a global approach to ecological and social sustainability for the 21st century. It is centred on shifting the overarching aim of economic activity from profit maximisation to humanities prosperity within planetary boundaries (Raworth, 2017, p.47). Raworth rejects the neoclassical assumption that considers the economy isolated from external factors such as the society and the environment, instead recognising the interdependence and connectedness of the economy, society and the ecological system (Raworth, 2017, p.43 cont.). The neoclassical theorem of the possibility of economic growth

over an indefinite period of time and its necessity to assure the systemic continuity is also abolished by the Doughnut model (ibid.). Instead, it centres its approach on the fulfilment of the needs and wellbeing of all people under respect for the limited means of the planet's ecological system (Raworth, 2017, p.49). To achieve this goal, the Doughnut is established to visualise the concept of 'the safe and just space for humanity' (Raworth, 2017, p.15). This space is limited by the social foundation, assuring minimal social standards for all people, and the ecological ceiling, which considers planetary boundaries through resource availability (ibid.).

Leaving 'the safe and just space' of the Doughnut corresponds to actions that do not align with social or ecological sustainability. The outer boundary of the Doughnut, the ecological ceiling, can be understood as the extent of stress that the Earth's ecological system can bear before it is irretrievably damaged and collapses (Raworth, 2017, p.50 cont.). Relevant stressors for the ecological ceiling are e.g. emissions, the pollution of air and water or climatic changes (ibid.). Exceeding the ecological ceiling consequently means the degradation of the ecosystem (Raworth, 2017, p.52). The inner boundary of the Doughnut, the social foundation, corresponds to essential needs and rights that should be assured for all people globally (Raworth, 2017, p.49 cont.). It covers 12 basic dimensions that are also reflected in the UDHR, such as the food, clean water and sanitation, education and health care (ibid.). Leaving the inner boundary of the Doughnut thereby stands for human deprivation and the neglect of basic needs and rights through e.g. the exposure to hunger (ibid.). Raworth complements the concept of 'the safe and just space' by adding dimensions to it that define the ecological ceiling and the social foundation: the social foundation includes twelve dimensions that correspond to the priorities of the SDGs, while the nine dimensions detailing the ecological ceiling derive from planetary boundaries defined by researchers of Earth-system-science (Raworth, 2017, p.49; p.52).

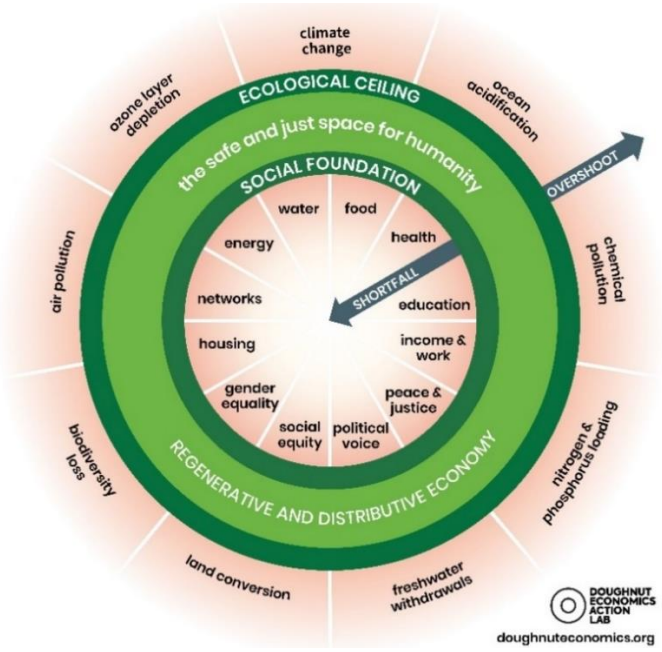

Figure 3 - The Doughnut of social and planetary boundaries (DEAL, 2020).

In extension of the model, the Doughnut Economics Action Lab (DEAL), a Community Interest Company around Kate Raworth, has quantified the Doughnut to reflect the world's 21st century state of the planet and humanity. Whilst there are boundaries that could not be quantified yet, the results show significant ecological surpassing and social shortfalls (Raworth, 2017 p.55).

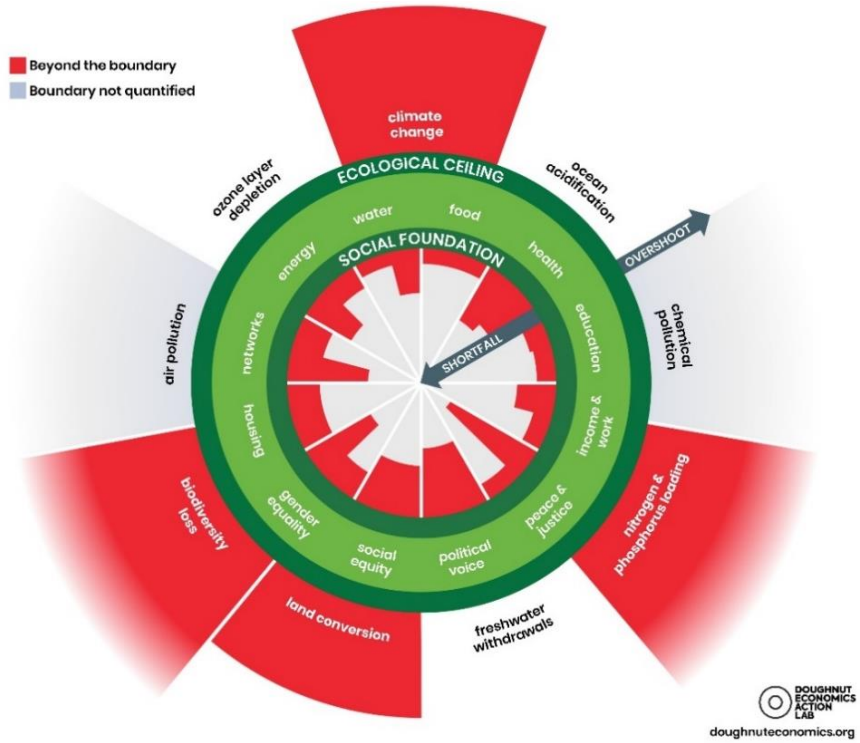

Figure 4 - Quantified Doughnut model for the 21st century (DEAL, 2020).

4.1.1 Guiding principles to get 'inside' the Doughnut

Raworth suggests seven guiding principles to define the way of thinking economics and the world; thereby realising socio-ecological sustainability in accordance with the Doughnut (Raworth, 2017, p.31). These principles are defined in distinction from the prevalent economic understanding to underline the shift that the realisation of the Doughnut model requires.

The first principle calls to "**chang[ing] the goal**" (Raworth, 2017, p.32), therefore aiming at realising the needs of all people within planetary boundaries – this applies to the adaption of organisational purpose, governance and finance (ibid.; DEAL, N.D.). It thereby requires a shift of focus from economic growth to human wellbeing and ecological dimensions to move into the 'safe and just space' of the Doughnut (Raworth, 2017, p.32 cont.).

The second principle focuses on "**see[ing] the bigger picture" (**Raworth, 2017, p. 33), thereby leaving the world view of market-centred efficiency behind and instead understand the economy, society and environment as integral and interwoven aspects of life reality (Raworth, 2017, p.63 cont.). As a consequence, importance is attributed to natural resources and their role for humanity as well as for economic production (Raworth, 2017, p.75 cont.). This principle equally requires a redistribution of importance among actors, such as non-profit initiatives and unpaid work, and the associated recognition that the economy and its impact extends further than the market and into society and nature (Raworth, 2017, p.77 cont.).

The third principle calls for actors to "**nurture human nature**" (Raworth, 2017, p.33), and a shift from framing people as the self-interested, calculating Homo economicus that has impacted socialisation. Instead, other traits of human nature such as social relations, empathy and value-adaptability should be focused on (Raworth, 2017, p.33; p.94 cont.).

The fourth principle evolves around the need to **integrate dynamic thinking** within the systemic context to realise sustainability within the Doughnut model (Raworth, 2017, p.33; p.126 cont.). Central to this principle is constant learning and adaptation in line with the overarching aim of improvement. This includes awareness of dynamic effects that can be illustrated by feedback loops (Raworth, 2017, p.33).

The fifth principle calls for a **distributive and just design**. This is related to the common economic assumption that growth will even out inequalities in the longer run. The principle can be understood as going beyond this, as a distributive design of structures can reach further than the redistribution of income (Raworth, 2017, p.33 cont.; p.157 cont.). Instead, it aims at the

redistribution of wealth in all its forms, may it be knowledge, power or the control of resources (Raworth, 2017, p.33 cont.).

The sixth principle requires a **regenerative approach** to (economic) thinking and acting. In difference to the prevalent linear system of production, where the planet and its resources are treated like indefinite sources, this principle underlines the need for a circular system of production and economic activities (Raworth, 2017, p.34; p.196 cont.). Consequently, the idea of waste material is rejected and the idea of a circular value creation chain is promoted.

The seventh principle is to **deconstruct the importance of growth**. This is grounded in the popular economic understanding of growth as ultimate source of advancement, personal and societal forthcoming, as well as wealth generation (Raworth, 2017, p.34; p.231 cont.). Instead, this principle sets as an overall aim the shift of focus of activities from growing to thriving, thereby from economic growth to thriving of humanity in terms of wellbeing and societal development in compliance with the planetary boundaries (ibid.).

4.1.2 Critics and limitations of the Doughnut Economy

Raworth's (2017) 'Doughnut Economics' and her take on thinking economics and its relationship with humanity and the planet through the Doughnut have received very positive feedback, as well as a variety of criticisms. These critiques are related to its realisability and the underlying perception of global economic and social reality. In terms of realisability, different scholars see an essential limitation in a lack of clear, real world suggestions for an implementation (Milanovic, 2018; Schokkaert, 2019). O'Neill et al. (2018) note that there is no national example where social foundations are assured without an infringement on ecological boundaries. This relates to the political will required globally to implement the Doughnut approach strategically (Horwitz, 2017). Milanovic (2018) extends this to conflicting interests of different parties and stakeholders worldwide, and challenges Raworth understanding of a universal interest to tackle the climate emergency. In this argument, the variety of complex interests, different powerful interest groups and interconnections with self-interest are highlighted (Milanovic, 2018; Horwitz, 2017).

This relates to criticism which arises from the human image that Raworth bases her model on. Raworth understanding of behaviours of people towards each other and society, that in her understanding offers plenty opportunities to decrease money-orientation and increase cooperativeness, is questioned (Milanovic, 2018; Horwitz, 2017; Schokkaert, 2019). Instead,

critics highlight the self-interest-centred human nature and the human tendency to think competitively and see in this assumption a shortcoming of Raworth concepts (ibid.).

Another central criticism concerns Raworth rejection of economic growth and its relevance in development. Different scholars claim that economic growth has played an essential part in raising the standard of living globally and reducing poverty (Horwitz, 2017; Milanovic, 2018; Bernhardt, 2017, p.4). Consequently, the overcoming of poverty worldwide relies on continued growth (ibid.). Therefore, Raworth position that does not discuss the role of economic growth beyond the need to overcome its systemic centrality is criticised. Bernhardt (2017) points out that also the SDGs, which Raworth partially employs as social foundation, explicitly include economic growth as a goal. A last aspect to be mentioned concerns the brief attention which Raworth pays to population growth, as the expectable growth of the world population is estimated to heavily burden the Doughnut or render its basic idea impossible (Milanovic, 2018; O'Neill et al., 2018).

4.1.3 The Doughnut as a right-based model

Human rights are relevant for the Doughnut, as the social foundation that constitutes its inner ring is based on the UN SDGs, which in return evolved from the UDHR (cf. Raworth, 2017, p.49 cont.). Thereby a perspective from the Doughnut model is also a human rights perspective. While it does not explicitly cover all human rights, the named twelve dimensions reflect the spirit of the universal and collective nature of human rights. The UN constructs human rights based on the values of dignity, equality and liberty of all human beings (Bantekas & Oette, 2018, p.11). In their declared nature as standards for human coexistence, human rights are an essential element of social work ethics, in theory as well as in practice (cf. Staub-Bernasconi, 2012). Thereby, they become an important marker to investigate the organisational perceptions of food security and food waste within social work research. In accordance with my constructionist perspective (see 5.1), human rights are essential for my understanding of the socially constructed reality in being the standards set for democratic societies in achieving equality and equity, as well as the practice and research in social work (cf. Bryman, 2016, p.30). While human rights are to be understood as universal and indivisible (cf. Ife, 2012, p.84), the human right to food is of particular interest for the topic of this thesis.

When considering the Doughnut, human rights are moreover an important pillar of the global orientation of the model as they are set out to be universal standards that are applicable worldwide. The Doughnut model and an eco-social scope of policies, require international standards in their global approach to realise social and ecological justice. Following this

understanding of the Doughnut and Raworth descriptions, and under consideration of the eco-social frame of this thesis, I establish the Doughnut as a human rights-based model within the frame of this thesis.

4.1.4 Account for choice of theory

The Doughnut after Raworth (2017), which settles economics within societal reality and its environmental context, can be contested as shown before. I have chosen to use it for the purpose of this thesis, as it highlights central dimensions of the complex reality and thereby offers important perspectives on society and larger correlations. Whilst the Doughnut may not consider and reflect all dimensions of reality, it achieves to set a focus on the interrelations between the economy, society and the environment. In its nature as a theory, the Doughnut model is limited compared to reality; at the same time it provides a framework which can be employed to explore important aspects of reality. For the extent of the research at hand, the three central dimensions of the economy, humanity and environment signify an adequate scope. In difference to the critics, I follow the opinion that the Doughnut is realisable, though this would certainly require extensive restructuration of the current economic system.

The use of an economic model to conduct social science research can potentially be questioned. In my opinion, two central arguments render the Doughnut model an adequate basis for the thesis at hand. Social work as an academic discipline is first and foremost marked by the flexible integration of knowledge from different scientific traditions, most commonly pedagogy, psychology and legal sciences. Respecting that social work aims at having a comprehensive, holistic understanding of societies and all their elements, economics as a basis for an understanding of social problems in societal systems marked by the economic system and its development becomes evidently reasonable, if not necessary. The human rights-based foundation of the Doughnut makes it furthermore compatible with professional and academic principles of social work. Secondly, the Doughnut model, which looks at the economic system as intertwined with the social context and embedded in a larger ecological system, takes itself a holistic approach to societies. It thereby aligns with fundamental understandings of social work science and practice. An economic model as a theoretic underpinning is also a useful tool, as the context of the investigated social problem of poverty in its manifestation of food insecurity is strongly linked to economic structures.

5. Methodology

This chapter gives an account of the methodological foundations of this thesis and considerations made in relation to them. The research design was informed by epistemological and ontological concerns as well as the choice of content analysis as analytical method for this qualitative thesis project. The sampling method and the development of the analysed datasets for the case study is described, followed by an introduction of thematic analysis as the chosen analytical method and a description of the coding process. Quality criteria of research evolving around trustworthiness are examined, as well as limitations and delimitations of the thesis at hand. Finally, relevant ethical considerations are addressed.

5.1 Research design

Social science research investigates societal developments and phenomena (cf. Bryman, 2016, p.3). Research interests and projects commonly originate out of identified gaps in the existing literature, as well as developments that inspire research questions (ibid.). My interest for the topic of food insecurity in Western welfare states in the European context arose from the latter; developments of the past years have led to a rising number of calls for attention of CSOs active within food charity that drew attention to the difficulties they were confronted with due to steeply increasing numbers of people facing food insecurity. Apart from the CSO activities being part of media coverage, accounts from organisations that I got in contact with through my studies inspired me to conduct this thesis' project. Reflections about the possibilities and limitations to the realisation of human rights have been central throughout my studies, as well an increased awareness for human rights shortcomings such as experiences of food insecurity in wealthy, developed countries.

To approach the thematic complex of food insecurity within the chosen geographical frame, this research follows an abductive approach within qualitative research. An abductive approach is marked by a notion of movement between theoretical material and the empirical material throughout the research process, thus integrating elements of induction and deduction (Timmermans & Tavory, 2022, p.156 cont.). This dynamic process leads to a reasoning that observes phenomena in data in relation to other observations and investigates "a situational fit between observed facts and rules" (Timmermans & Tavory, 2012).

Research and research projects are grounded in philosophical considerations of science, namely epistemology and ontology. Epistemology focusses on the origin of knowledge and its adequacy or acceptability (Bryman, 2016, p.24); Ontology addresses the characteristics of

social entities (Bryman, 2016, p.18). This research follows an epistemological approach of interpretivism, therefore it is concerned with the subjective significance of acts, interactions and associated constructions of the social reality (Bryman, 2016, p.26 cont.). Ontologically, this thesis is based on a position of constructionism, which understands social occurrences and the meaning attributed to them as outcomes of social actors and their actions (Bryman, 2016, p.29 cont.). This understanding extends beyond the studied phenomena and is of importance for the researcher's position to their own work, as they are themselves constructing the social world that surrounds them (ibid.). Therefore, the social factors relevant to the researcher as well as resulting experiences influence their construction of reality and thereby also the process of generating scientific knowledge and its outcome (Delanty, 2005, p.140). This approach fits with the focus of this research and the questions that this thesis sets out to answer, as they are focussed on the way in which the chosen CSOs position themselves concerning the ecological and social challenges of food waste and food insecurity and the related reasoning they apply to solutions they suggest, which are constructions within the subjective reality of these organisations, settled in the frame of society. I have decided to conduct a qualitative content analysis of the organisational publications for this research, as the documents published by the organisations are accounts of the organisational positions and their construction of reality. This moreover allows me to study these positions over a period of time. The interest of this research concerning structural dimensions of food insecurity and the way they are approached within the societal context can be addressed, as two different levels of governance within the field of food banks and food charity are inspected through umbrella organisations on the EU's macro-level and the national meso-level of Germany as a member state country.

Due to the focus of this thesis on FEBA as a European umbrella organisation and Tafel Deutschland as an exemplary member organisation to it, this research takes the form of a case study. While it integrates two cases, they are in so far singular cases as they are situated on different governance levels. Critics to case studies argue that they offer few generalizable outcomes and are bound to the specific environments and timely situation of the case (Dubois, Gadde, 2002, p.554). Following the argumentation of Dubois & Gadde (2002), I stand by the position that case studies can offer a particular, deep insight into a phenomenon and its context, due to the cases being anchored in their respective environment (ibid.).

5.2 Sampling method and data collection

Within the qualitative frame of this thesis, I have followed a purposive sampling approach. A purposive sample is the result of strategic considerations, not of randomness (Bryman, 2016,

p.408). The chosen entities that are subject of the analysis are appointed due to their relevance to the research topic and questions (ibid.). Consequently, the generalisability of results is limited and bound to the chosen sample (ibid.). My research questions focus on CSOs working with food charity on different governance levels within the EU, how they position themselves in relation to ecological and social sustainability, including the solutions they suggest. Therefore, I have opted for a typical case sampling, by choosing FEBA as a European umbrella organisations of food banks that advocates on the supranational European level, as well as at an exemplary national level Tafel Deutschland, which is a large German umbrella organisation of food banks and a member of FEBA. These choices allow me to approach the perspectives on two levels of governance. Tafel Deutschland was in so far chosen out of convenience, as the German context is the national context which I am most familiar with out of all the FEBA members due to my prior social work studies in Germany and as German is my mother tongue, which makes their documents accessible to me. The dimension of language is addressed further in the following under ethical considerations (5.7). Germany was a relevant and suitable choice for the research topic in relation to typical case sampling, as it exemplifies a wealthy, welfare state countries in the European context on the national level as a governance dimension of interest (cf. Bryman, 2016, p.409). The decision for a single national context was due to the limited nature of this thesis. Choosing organisations that are linked to each other can moreover provide perspective to this research, as aspect of similarity and difference on the different governance levels may thereby be included in the findings.

After choosing the two organisations as central cases of this thesis, material published by them was revised to develop a set of documents as basis for the thematic content analysis. With the research questions focussing on the organisational position concerning social and ecological sustainability and suggested solutions to the observed problem context, these documents needed to reflect organisational reasoning and their attitude towards these aspects within the purposive approach to sampling (cf. Bryman, 2016, p.408). The method of sampling here was furthermore sequential, as the initial sample was adapted during the research process (cf. Bryman 2016, 2016, p.410). A relevant dimension that influenced adaptations in the initial sample was the timely limitation for conducting the thesis project. Therefore, press releases were excluded from the sample due to their great number and limited connection to the research questions. Moreover, I decided to only include materials that are published as documents by the organisation and thereby exclude the content of the respective web pages into the data sets. I also considered the dimension of time in terms of the number of years that the sample covers. As a result, all material published by the organisations between 2018 and 2022, and available

online, was used as an initial sample. The year 2018 seemed a reasonable point of departure, as it is the year where the German came a full member of FEBA. Furthermore, the most recent developments that impacted the rise of food insecurity in Europe such as the Covid-19-pandemic and the war in Ukraine fall into this time period. After an initial study of this extensive corpus of documents, I decided to exclude some types of documents due to their limited relevance to the research question, including the FEBA reports on skill sharing sessions and three reports concerning members' experiences during the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic as they predominantly resumed individual members' experiences. Moreover, brochures and information leaflets from Tafel Deutschland were excluded due to their exclusively promotional nature. The study of the FEBA documents provided me in turn with some additional position statements on policy developments, that were not published as part of the resources on their website, but available through EU institutions. My final data consists of 48 documents from FEBA (661 pages) and 23 documents from Tafel Deutschland (439 pages) (see Appendix I & II). Some documents were not compatible with the software that I used to code and analyse the data, therefore I converted them into standard PDFs.

Type of document	Tafel Deutschland	FEBA
Annual Reports	**4** ≙ 242 pages	**4** ≙ 136 pages
Position paper	**14** ≙ 62 pages	**10** ≙ 46 pages
Newsletters	**5** ≙ 135 pages	-
EU monitoring documents	-	**26** ≙ 296 pages
Other activity reports	-	**8** ≙ 183 pages

Table 2 - Types of documents in final data sets (Appendix I & II).

5.3 Analytical method

Qualitative content analysis consists of the investigation of underlying themes in the chosen data (Bryman, 2016, p.563). I have decided to use qualitative content analysis as the analytical method to address my research questions, as it is suitable for the analysis of different kinds of materials, including published documents (Bryman, 2016, p.694). Due to the processuality of content analysis, themes and categories are under constant revision throughout the examination of documents (Bryman, 2016, p.563) and within an abductive approach the back-and-forth-

movement between theory and data (Timmermans & Tavory, 2022, p.156 cont.). My research topic and questions developed through the revision of publications and material about food insecurity in Europe. Aiming for structural dimensions of food insecurity in welfare state contexts, the analysis of published documents was the approach I chose to be able to investigate a structural dimension of food security. CSOs in food charity are relevant in this regard, as they have been working in this field within Western welfare contexts for decades. Therefore, I decided that the study of these organisations and their approach reflects important social and structural aspects of the topic.

A thematic approach to qualitative content analysis is commonly used to assess data, though there is no precise definition of this technique (Bryman, 2016, p.584). To address this circumstance and avoid vagueness in the method applied in this thesis, I therefore describe the process through which the themes relevant to my research developed. According to Bryman, a theme is a category that the researcher recognises within the processing of the data, whilst being linked to the research topic (Bryman, 2016, p.584). Thereby, the theme offers an approach to theoretically access the analysed data and consequently to produce further knowledge on the investigated topic (ibid.). My abductive approach to the subject of food insecurity led me to social dimensions of poverty and ecological dimensions of food waste emerging as central themes within the work of food banks. This led me to eco-social research as an academic field and the Doughnut as a contemporary take on the integration of economics, society and the environment. The study of publications by FEBA and Tafel Deutschland strengthened these overarching themes, which in return related back to the dimensions included in the Doughnut.

To process and analyse the two data sets, I used the qualitative data analysis software Nvivo. The software allows coding according to self-defined categories, the clustering of these codes, as well as the extraction of overlapping layers of code. Nvivo was an important element in my research as it served to identify relevant passages within the documents and reduce the data, organise findings and consider different codes in relation to each other. As a result, I obtained an overview of the extent to which passages that I identified as representing the organisational position dealt with social, ecological or a mix of these dimensions. Furthermore, it facilitated the analysis of intersecting passages dealing with organisational calls for action, social and ecological dimensions, as well as the actors they were addressed to and further relevant codes that I discovered through study of my data. The programmes functionality of connecting and grouping codes facilitate the identification of themes. I structured the analysis by creating two projects in Nvivo, one for each organisation – the practical reason for this where the different

languages. This approach moreover proved to be useful, as the codes and themes within them differed. The construction of a timeline throughout the study of the data helped me to consider different publications within their timely context (see Appendix III).

5.4 Coding

This thesis uses thematic content analysis of documents to investigate the positionality of CSOs working with food charity on the European and national German level. To conduct a thematic analysis, the coding requires an interpretative course of action, which is why implicit expressions of the themes are to be taken into account (Bryman, 2016, p.292). My abductive approach to thematic content analysis began with the generation of an initial deductive coding scheme, which was based on the studied literature, the Doughnut as my theoretical framework and the research questions (cf. Vila-Henninger et al., 2022, p.13). At the stage of drafting this initial coding scheme, I had completed an initial reading of the data, meaning that I was able to include my impression of it into shaping this initial coding scheme. Throughout the application of this initial coding scheme, I paid attention to particularities within the studied data, which I turned into codes as part of developing an additional layer of inductive codes, which arose out of the data (cf. Vila-Henninger et al., 2022, p.14).

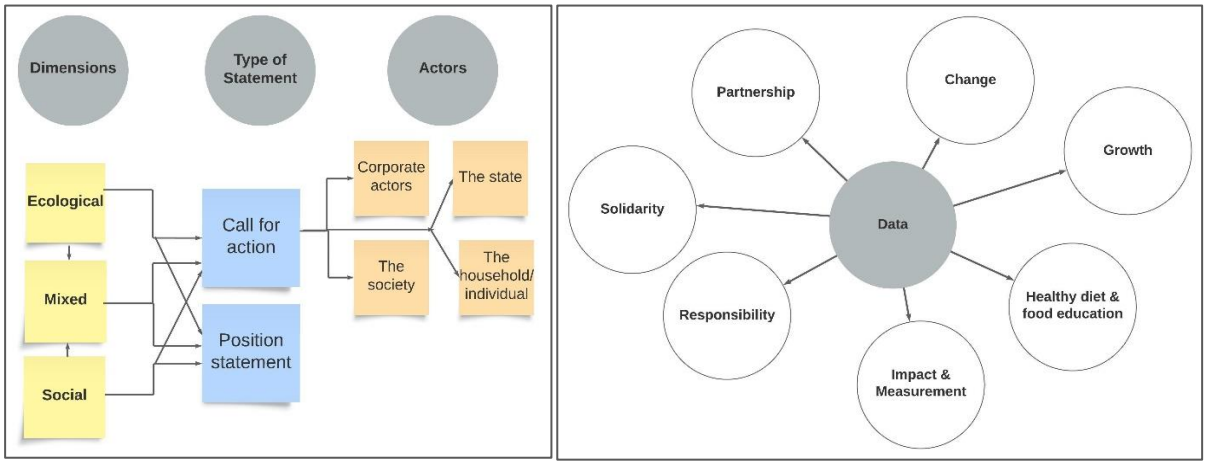

Figure 5 - Deductive codes (left) and inductive codes (right).

In difference to Vila-Henninger et al. (2022) I did not apply inductive codes in an own, second round of coding due to time reasons. Upon completion of the coding, I revisited the applied codes and investigated overlapping layers of code through a matrix coding query in Nvivo. This step is similar to Vila-Henninger et al.'s (2022) code equation and its verification.

The themes described in the analysis developed out of the consideration of passages identified through inductive and deductive codes, along with their reflection in relation to existing

knowledge from previous research and the Doughnut as an essentially abductive process. The themes are grouped around four essential questions (6.1 to 6.4), which reflect key elements of the studied data (see Figure 6 below). From there, four overarching themes (6.5 to 6.8) developed, which offer a further discussion within eco-social research and the Doughnut by integrating findings that are reflected in 6.1 to 6.4 in the larger societal frame.

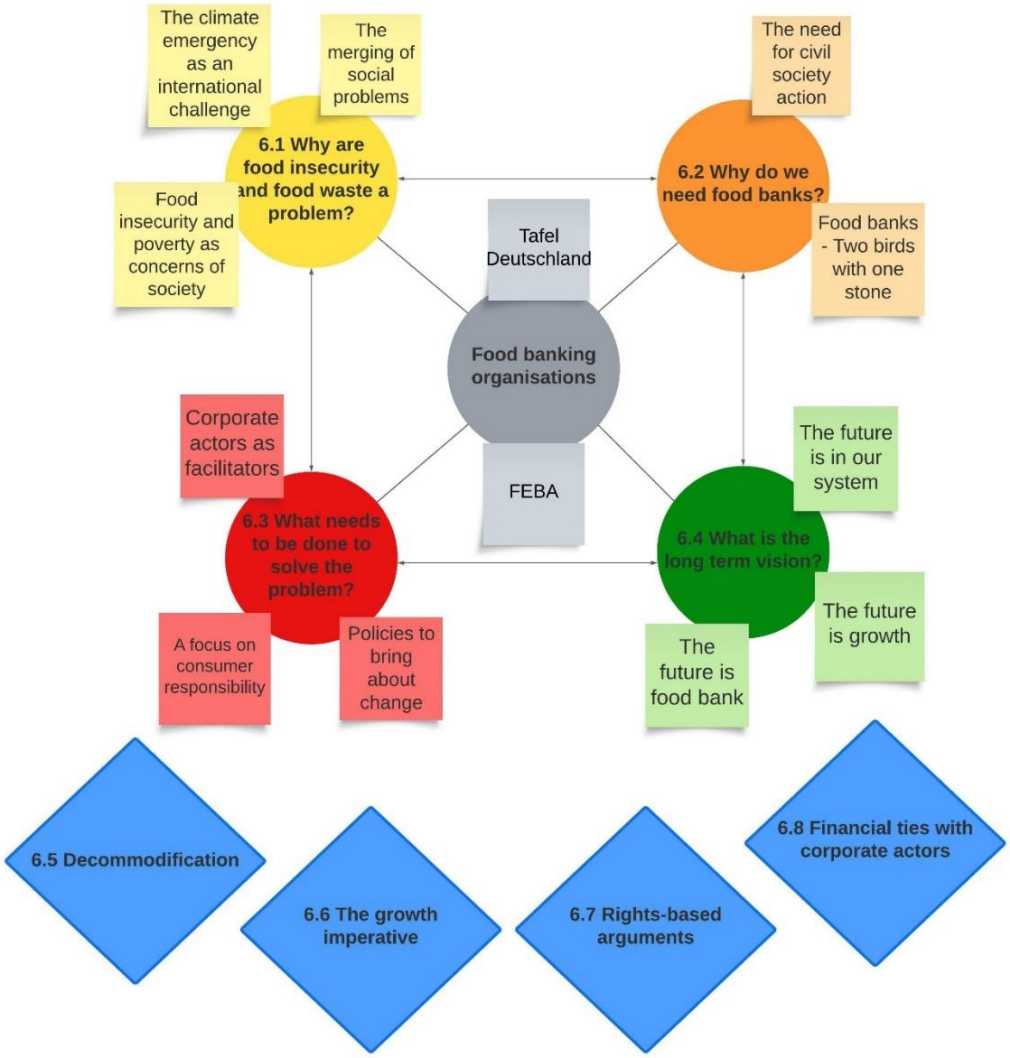

Figure 6 - Overview of themes

5.5 Quality criteria of research

Trustworthiness can be used as a measure to assess qualitative research in social sciences regarding its quality, where the criteria of reliability, replicability and validity that were originally used in quantitative research fall short (cf. Bryman, 2016, p.43). Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest trustworthiness as a quality measure in qualitative research to build on four central elements that are developed in synchrony with classic quantitative quality concepts: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985 in Bryman, 2016, p.44).

Credibility is concerned with the multidimensional nature and perceptiveness of social reality (Bryman, 2016, p.384). It relies on the researcher's adherence to adequate research practice (ibid.). To give my thesis a high degree of credibility, a thorough account of the research process is given within the chapter on its methodology (5.), where the research design, sampling method and data collection, the coding process, as well as limitations and ethical considerations are described. Furthermore, a detailed account of the organisational documents of the analysed data sets, including their source to facilitate verification, is provided (Appendices I&II). Credibility in document studies can furthermore be supported through triangulation, where the analysed data set and the studied phenomena are considered in the light of data from various sources (cf. Bryman, 2016, p.386). As part of my abductive approach, I have moved back and forth between the datasets, previously published literature in the field, as well as the theoretical frame of the Doughnut. This process corresponds to triangulation.

Transferability focusses on the applicability of findings made in qualitative research outside of the specific, limited context of the study (Bryman, 2016, p. 384). Within qualitative research, a rich, detailed description is therefore aimed to be provided, to serve as basis for the evaluation of the possibility to transfer findings to other contexts (ibid.). Through the extensive study of the data and the abductive approach with its inclusion of knowledge from previous research, this thesis provides a detailed account of the findings made in the light of eco-social research and the Doughnut. Consequently, the provided account can serve for future research by serving as contrast or confirmation in a comparable frame.

Dependability as an aspect of trustworthiness requires elements of revision or auditing to be included in the research process (Bryman, 2016, p. 384). Comprehensive records of the relevant procedures and the process provide a basis for review through peers to assure adherence to the protocol (ibid.).Within the process of my research, dependability was met through the discussion and review of proceedings and accounts given by my supervisor, as well as two peers within my study programme, who commented throughout the process and reviewed this thesis.

Confirmability is focused on the transparent and reflected conduct of the researcher in the light of their influence on the process and outcomes, necessary due to the impossibility of absolute objectivity in qualitative research (Bryman, 2016, p.386). To live up to the aspect of confirmability, I have provided a detailed account of my proceedings, as well as a perspective on my positionality in relation to the research topic (see 5.7). The abductive process that involved frequent reflection of findings in the light of previous publications supported a reduction of the application of personal bias on the outcome.

5.6 Limitations and delimitations of this research

Main limitations to this thesis include the limited number of organisations studied and the non-professional translation of quotes from German to English. Within the limited time frame of this thesis, I was able to study one organisation on the national level and one organisation on the EU's supranational level. This is in so far a limitation, as the German context has its own specific history and circumstances, which influence the organisational practice. The research does therefore not reflect a variety of possible aspects and themes prevalent in other EU member states. The passages of the material published by Tafel Deutschland that I decided to include into the research were translated by myself in my capacity as a student of an English-speaking master's programme with German as my mother tongue, and not a professional translator. Thereby it is possible that the translation does not convey the exact notions of the original text.

Delimitations to this research can be identified as the limited scope of the studied data, the non-involvement of actors and service users, as well as the nature of the data in consisting of published documents. The studied data was selected to serve the research purpose, thereby some of the materials published by the organisations were excluded. This concerns first and foremost their press releases, which I decided to exclude from the data set due to their great number with low relevant informational content. Moreover, this research focuses on the study of published documents only, thereby omitting an active involvement of the studied organisations and service users. With the aim of this thesis being focussed on structural aspects of food banking organisations, an involvement of service users was not a priority. Both organisations work on a structural level and do not accommodate service users in their immediate work, which contributed to my decision. As my goal was to study the organisational perspectives, perception and framing of the context of food insecurity and food waste, I decided to base my research on published materials, as they reflect organisational positions and their understanding of the problem context as part of their external communication and advocacy work and provide a consistent material input. The data I used in its characteristic as published data as part of organisational outward-oriented communication is in so far limited, as it exclusively portrays the aspects that are chosen by the publishing organisation as being of relevance. Moreover, the nature of the document study does not offer the possibility of further inquiry where information in the material seems limited or missing. Through my abductive approach and the consideration of previous research, I was however able to identify aspects that are marked by organisational 'silences' as aspects that are not written about, e.g. the topic of human rights and responsibility attributed to corporate actors.

5.7 Ethical considerations

Within the constructionist perspective, the position of the researcher to the studied topic and their experiences, which shape their own construction of reality are of importance (Delanty, 2005, p.140). To increase transparency of the research process and in the aim of conforming to ethical standards in social science research, I am therefore giving an account of my positionality. The origin of this thesis lies in my interest for structural aspects of the welfare state, limitations of public welfare delivery and poverty as a social problem with far-reaching effects. My interest in this case results from developments of dimensions of poverty that I have observed over a period of time and got to know in more in detail through my undergraduate studies in Germany and my graduate studies in Sweden. I have been in contact with food insecurity and food charity organisations as part of my work experience as a professional social worker in Germany, where I delegated clients to food banks when state welfare was delayed or fell short. I have myself no personal experience of poverty or food insecurity.

This thesis is based on documents from two CSOs within the European frame, which have not consented to the use of the material for the purpose of this research. I have taken the decision of proceeding as described above based on two considerations related to the nature of the documents as published, external communication of the organisations. Firstly, both organisations have published these materials openly accessible through their website as part of their public relations and advocacy and in their capacity as stakeholder organisations. Secondly, both organisations are settled within the frame of liberal democracies, in which they act towards and interact with governmental and political authorities, as well as other entities, through the documents in questions. My thesis will thereby not breaching any secrecy or endanger actors through my use of this material within the ethical research principle of harm avoidance and the respect for privacy (cf. Bryman, 2016, p.126 cont.). My above described proceeding did therefore not necessitate a formal request for consent. This complies with the research standards set out by the German Association for Social Work (DGSA), as I am investigating the organisational and professional dimension of the organisational work through the published documents, and not the individual daily reality of private people as subject to research, which would require an informed consent (cf. DGSA, 2020, p.5). It would like to highlight that my proceeding is in accordance with the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity and that I am making all possible efforts to comply with the there-named research principles of reliability, honesty, respect and accountability through transparency in the detailed description of my research approach and process (cf. ALLEA, 2017, p.4). This thereby corresponds with the requirements of the Swedish Research Council, that bases their directives for good research

practice on the European code of conduct (cf. Swedish Research Council, 2017). Through a detailed listing of the used materials, this research is in compliance with the FAIR principles [**F**indable, **A**ccessible, **I**nteroperable and **R**e-usable] (cf. ALLEA, 2017, p.6).

While this thesis does not risk literal harm to individuals as described above, it carries the risk of contributing to an unjust depiction of reality by affecting the public perception of the studied organisations. It could thereby potentially affect the organisational stance within advocacy and their political frame of action. I am reducing this risk to the largest extend possible by backing my own findings and perceptions with existing research and knowledge in the field within an abductive research approach and through thorough consideration of my proceedings and statements under consideration of quality criteria of research (see 5.5.).

6. Findings and analysis

Within this chapter, the findings made through the abductive process are presented. This thesis does not have a comparison as primary object, the goal is rather to consider common and different aspects of the organisations in relation to the Doughnut as an overarching frame, as well as previous research.

6.1 Why are food insecurity and food waste a problem?

6.1.1 The climate emergency as an international challenge

Tafel Deutschland and FEBA describe food waste throughout their publications as a societal problem that is essentially connected to the climate emergency as a central, global challenge relevant for the society, the EU and its member states. On the background of the climate emergency, emissions caused by the production of surplus food, as well as its disposal and biological degradation are described as problematic issues that need to be solved. The unnecessary use of valuable resources such as water and energy is described as wasteful and economic inefficiencies are pointed out. Both organisations advocate for a reduction of food waste through the utilisation of food surpluses for the redistribution to people experiencing poverty through food banks; this is described to require policy development in different areas.

Within the dataset from FEBA, it becomes apparent that food waste and its ecological and economic dimension take precedence in the organisational perspective over food insecurity.

This finding corresponds with the research of Riches (2018)[6], who notices the priority of food waste over food insecurity in a number of international food banking organisations.

> In addition to the real amount of food wasted, the valuable and often scarce resources (…) that go into the production of food are also wasted. This results in serious environmental impacts: according to the FAO, food waste contributes significantly to climate change.
>
> (Tafel Deutschland 2018.3, p.24).

> Food waste is one of the biggest and most profound challenges of our time. (FEBA, 2020.10, p.4).

The way in which both organisations frame food waste as an ecological problem posed to society resonates with the Doughnut and its ecological ceiling, which demands for any activities to be conducted with respect for the limited means of the planet (cf. Raworth, 2017). Following the organisational descriptions, food waste touches upon several of the dimensions of the ecological ceiling, e.g. climate change and land conversion (cf. DEAL, 2020). In accordance with the second principle of the Doughnut, food waste as a contributor to the climate emergency is seen as part of a bigger picture that includes economic, societal and environmental aspects (cf. Raworth, 2017). As we will see in the following, this picture is not comprehensive.

6.1.2 Food insecurity and poverty as concerns of society

Food insecurity is described by both organisations as a facet of the social problem of poverty. Tafel Deutschland problematizes that "[p]overty in Germany is often not self-inflicted but structural. Accordingly, political measures must be taken to combat it." (Tafel Deutschland 2020.01, p.44). The primarily structural nature of poverty in the German context is emphasised and thus a concern for public welfare provision. The currently taken welfare measures are often criticised as insufficient. Organisational statements of Tafel Deutschland are overall concerned with the effects of a low socio-economic status on the social participation and livelihood of vulnerable groups that seek support due to experiences of food insecurity within a wealthy country. A large majority of organisational calls for actions and position statements focus on

[6] References made in the analysis chapter to the theory and previous research exclude page numbers. This is done to increase readability. For an exact referral to the original source, please consult the chapters 3. and 4.

poverty and structural dimensions of it. Structural problems of poverty within the welfare state are addressed by the organisation in the relation to service users, dominant groups among these and the experiences made in contact with them. Thereby, they cover a variety of different social groups experiencing poverty, including families and children, senior citizens, migrants and refugees, unemployed people, recipients of social benefits. Tafel Deutschland describes their service users as being "characterised by a low income, a heterogeneous level of education and a high unemployment rate" (Tafel Deutschland 2020.06, p.6). When referring to the vulnerabilities of service users that local organisations encounter through their work, values that are part of the human rights framework are involved, such as human dignity and the right to an adequate livelihood.

FEBA describes food insecurity as one aspect of the multidimensional problem of poverty, with the FEBA president underlining "that food insecurity is part of a holistic problem. Food Banks are not specialists in poverty reduction as a whole, but traditionally in relieving one aspect of poverty." (FEBA 2020.15, p.20). Poverty and food insecurity are often used by FEBA as standing, abstract terms, which are occasionally developed further regarding the feature of poverty as a societal phenomenon.

FEBA predominantly represents people that experience food insecurity as a group with no other specific features beyond food insecurity as an aspect of poverty. Some differentiations among groups are made in statistics on the impact assessment of FEAD, as well as in the description of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. A group that is repeatedly identified and mentioned within people affected by food insecurity are children. This is partially related to on-going EU policy developments, such as the European Child Guarantee. This contributes to the construction of food insecurity as a moral problem, as it affects children that are commonly understood as a group that requires special protection.

The approach of the two organisations towards food insecurity as an element of poverty relates to aspects that are represented in the social foundation and the included dimension of food (cf. DEAL, 2020). Within considerations of poverty as a multidimensional problem, other elements of the social foundation are indirectly invoked, such as health, income and work (ibid.). The understanding of poverty as a structural problem corresponds partially with the claim of the second Doughnut principle that focuses on the larger societal context due to the included systemic dimension. At the same time, the interconnections of the society with the economy and the environment that the principle emphasises are not included.

6.1.3 The merging of social problems

FEBA and Tafel Deutschland both establish a connection between food waste and food insecurity in their respective organisational logic. This connection is marked by a moral rational that urges action to reduce food waste in the face of prevalent food insecurity. The strong moral implications of this thought construction could be seen as pointing towards the strong moralistic, Christian tradition of food charity and its understanding in the Western context as described in previous research (cf. Lambie-Mumford & Silvasti 2020, p.30 cont.).

Tafel Deutschland constructs food waste as a moral problem beyond the attributed ecological dimension in relating it to existing poverty. Following the organisational reasoning, food waste is a social issue as well as an ecological (and economic issue) as the wasting of food in the face of hunger is morally wrong. Within this reasoning the abundance-scarcity-paradox plays an important role:

> Reducing food waste is an important task, not only with regard to the environment and the economy. It is also a moral duty: around 815 million people worldwide suffer from malnutrition [reference FAO]. In the EU, 23.7 percent of people are poor or at risk of poverty. (Tafel Deutschland, 2018.3, p.24).

FEBA connects the issues of food waste and food insecurity essentially throughout their publications. In their rationale, food waste develops a new potential as a societal problem through the fact that there are people in Europe and the world that experience food insecurity. The organisation seemingly unifies food waste and food insecurity as a single problem for society, as one is represented as problematic in the light of the other. Thereby, the argument of a moral obligation for the collective European society is made in reference to a wealthy region where food insecurity occurs in the light of the abundance-scarcity-paradox:

> Food waste is a huge environmental problem, with 8% of greenhouse gases produced by food rotting in landfills. At the same time, 36.2 million European citizens cannot afford a quality meal every second day [Reference to Eurostat]. (FEBA, 2022.8, p.1).

The strong connectedness of food waste and food insecurity by food banking organisations into one issue is problematized in research as a common approach of food bank organisations, as it

distracts from the different nature and root causes of the problem contexts for the purpose of legitimising food charity activities and food bank services (cf. Riches, 2018).

In the light of the Doughnut, the approach the organisations take by interlinking the two problem areas results in some discrepancies. It could be argued that a perception that is open to the interconnectedness of the social and the ecological sphere aligns with the Doughnut and its eco-social approach. This arguably does not apply here though, as the connections that are made do not arise from factual links in the two problem contexts, but merely from the construction of an argumentative chain that serves the purpose of legitimising organisational action. Thereby, it does not work towards entering the 'safe and just space for humanity' (cf. Raworth, 2017). If the organisations would argue that both problems are symptoms originating from the structurally problematic capitalised food system and its market dynamics, which enhances inequalities through pricing structures and profit maximisation targets, this could be assessed differently (cf. Riches, 2018).

Another potential discrepancy in relation to the Doughnut concerns the required 'change of the goal' to realise human needs within planetary boundaries (cf. 1st Doughnut principle: Raworth, 2017). While the moral obligation drawn from the connection of food waste and food insecurity seemingly changes the goal by aiming at feeding all people and reducing food waste, therein achieving a change as the model requires, it falls short from a comprehensive eco-social perspective. Shortcomings can be identified in relation to food insecurity and the social foundations, as the redistribution of food has proven to be but a short-term relief (cf. Riches, 2018). Beyond that, previous research on food banks shows that the nutritional value of food provided does often not fulfil nutritional requirements and does not eliminate food insecurity in a majority of cases (cf. Oldroyd et al., 2022). Thereby, simple redistribution of surpluses does not fulfil existing human needs. Moreover, the reduction of food waste achieved through food banks redistribution in relation to the total amount of waste, does not address or change the root cause of food waste, which importantly lies in overproduction (cf. Riches, 2018).

6.2 Why do we need food banks?

6.2.1 Food banks – Two birds with one stone

Food banks contribute to the solution of the societal problems of food waste and food insecurity, according to the statements of both organisations. This position is supported through the 'merging' of the societal problems (see 6.1.3). Food banks are in so far portrayed as a good – or even optimal – solution, as they can address both problems and provide a joint answer to

them. In the depiction of Tafel Deutschland, food banks are an important element of civil society that contributes to the reduction of food waste and the alleviation of food insecurity, which is emphasised by quantified impact statements:

> Our food banks have been an interface between social and ecological action for 27 years. With more than 60,000 volunteers, the 951 food banks save about 265,000 tonnes of food. They distribute this food to 1.65 million customers (…). [The food banks] are places for social encounters, assistance and advice in emergency situations. (Tafel Deutschland, 2020.7, p.1).

Within the organisational statements, the contribution of Tafel organisations to national food waste reduction and the national obligation to achieve the UN SDG on food waste reduction is emphasised. The organisation is moreover invested into healthy eating and nutrition, which they claim being contributors to for service users through the variety and types of food that they provide, as well as educational programs offered; for the latter children are a main target group. The implications of healthy nutrition thereby include health as affected by poverty as a benefit of food bank activities beyond food waste reduction and general food provision.

Overall, Tafel Deutschland showcases that food bank organisations are part of the solution to reduce food waste and provide help for people that experience poverty within the currently unbalanced system. It is displayed that the organisational collective makes a societal contribution and acts to comply with the moral duty that the abundance-scarcity-paradox poses, as "[…] 60,000 mostly volunteers work every day to build a bridge between abundance and scarcity" (Tafel Deutschland, 2018.2, p.1). The fact that this work is done mainly on a voluntary basis gives it therein moral high ground.

FEBA describes food banks as key actors for the global solution to food waste and an important contribution to reduce food insecurity. In constructing this argument, food banks are placed within the food system alongside with economic actors:

> Every day, Food Banks around the world ensure food is not wasted from the food supply chain, redistributing it to charities for the benefit of those in need. They address food insecurity, manage surpluses and prevent loss and waste at source, supporting the shift to a more sustainable, equitable and healthier food system for all. […] Food

> Banks are an integral part of the food system because they promote the transition from a linear to a circular economy: what could be lost or wasted is re-valued for the benefit of the economy, the planet, and people. (FEBA president in FEBA, 2021.12, p.19).

The organisational depiction and evaluation follows political objectives of the EU through the emphasis on the circular economy as a main objective to redesign the food system. Food banking as a 'win-win-win' situation is a central line of argumentation of the organisation. The way in which FEBA reasons for the utility of food banks follows their depiction of food insecurity and food waste as closely connected, seemingly unified societal problem (see 6.1.3).

While the organisational framing differs to some extent, with Tafel Deutschland describing food bank activities as part of the solution to food waste and a temporary contribution to poverty alleviation and FEBA considering it as an original solution to food waste and partial poverty alleviation, both organisations see legitimacy in food banking as solution to societal problems.

The strong connection that is established between the two societal problems through a unified solution is critical from the perspective of the Doughnut. First of all, if food waste results from structural elements in the marketised global food system and food insecurity is part of the problem of poverty rooted in systemic societal structure, it is questionable whether charitable surplus redistribution can address either of these structural dimensions. Herein lies an important dissonance with the second guiding principle of the Doughnut as the economy, society and environment are not thought together. The observed way in which the organisations frame food bank services as a 'two in one' solution also blurs the bigger picture that the second guiding principle calls for (cf. Raworth, 2017). If the two systemic problems and their solutions would be considered as connected within the growth-centred marketised food system, its dynamics and the economic patterns of thinking that shape societies and states, this evaluation would look different. This would furthermore require a critical stance of the organisations towards the role of corporate actors in the food system. Such a stance is not taken but rather the opposite, especially when considering FEBAs repeated emphasis of a 'win-win-win' situation for the economy, the environment and the people. This is in opposition with the Doughnut, where environmental and social interest take precedence over traditionalistic economic growth.

The 'win-win-win' perspective has furthermore been problematized in previous research, as the contribution that food redistribution makes to food waste reduction is small compared to the total amount of edible food that turns to waste (cf. Riches, 2018). Moreover, food redistribution

offers short-term relief only to a fraction of food insecure people (ibid.; Loopstra & Tarasuk, 2012) and food bank users are often still food insecure (cf. Oldroyd et al., 2022; Depa et al., 2018). Thereby, food bank activities cannot be understood as an ultimate solution to the societal problems in question.

Food banks as a combined solution stand also in strong contrast to the fifth Doughnut principle that calls for a distributive and just design, seeking the distribution of wealth in all forms (cf. Raworth, 2017). Following my understanding of the Doughnut as a rights-based model, the equal worth and dignity of service users is not recognised in current food bank practice, where the quality and quantity of available options is marked by high degrees of uncertainty and the distribution of food can carry the feeling of stigma and shame (cf. Oldroyd et al., 2022; Garthwaite, 2016). Food banks moreover do not achieve distributive justice, as they are a short-term emergency relief. When considering previous research findings, the discrepancy with a just and distributive design becomes also apparent in the fact that distributed food does not meet nutritional requirements (Oldroyd et al., 2022).

6.2.2 The need for civil society action to complement public welfare

The value of civil society action and its voluntary engagement for societal values is a recurring theme in the data, with both organisations emphasising similar as well as differing notions related to food banks as element of civil society. Tafel Deutschland emphasises the contribution that Tafel organisations make beyond poverty alleviation and food waste reduction as part of civil society, as "voluntary civil society engagement is not a cheap stopgap, but its own contribution to making our society more humane" (Tafel Deutschland, 2019.05, p.16). This is described as the support and development of social cohesion. Herein, the solidary nature of their work and its voluntary basis is often emphasised:

While highlighting their position as an additional, charitable service within civil society that is not part of state welfare and does not fulfil such a function, the organisation also emphasises their voice function to bring societal grievances to public and political attention: "Food banks cannot change society in the long term, but they point to existing grievances." (Tafel Deutschland, 2020.08, p.12).

FEBA points out the non-material contribution of food banking as an act of solidarity and shared humanity, thereby framed as a social contribution of great ideational, moral value. Food banks are represented as carriers of the greater good of humanity and moral values. The following statements shows that the organisation draws parallels to core values of human rights

such as humanity, solidarity and universality, though without making any direct reference to the established concept:

> In a world that is warming up – if not heating up –, where narcissism, populism and self-centrism are threatening the values of solidarity and universality that characterise our movement, it is essential that food banking remains the beacon of concerned humanity that it has been since the inception of our beautiful concept in 1967. (FEBA president in FEBA, 2022.1, p.1).

Beyond the notion of expressed solidarity, FEBA also includes their value as a networking organisation between political, corporate and civil society actors into their contribution to the societal forthcoming of the European community. The organisation considers food banks moreover as a societal contribution through activating potentials of inclusion for people experiencing poverty and social exclusion: "(…) **[F]ood aid can activate activities leading to social inclusion** (sociality, training, job search, etc.)." (FEBA, 2020.13, p.2) [highlighted in original].

The value of shared humanity, solidary action and voluntary activities to support social cohesion essentially correspond with the third guiding principle of the Doughnut on the relevance of human nature (cf. Raworth, 2017). Food banks as CSOs and their predominantly voluntary-based practice can be understood as an expression of individual and collective empathy and the promotion of shared values such as solidarity. The contribution which the organisations make in form of advocacy to gain political attention for existing problems moreover reflects the second guiding principle of the awareness for the bigger picture (cf. Raworth, 2017). In this regard, aspects of the different levels of governance within the EU frame on which the organisations act and advocate can be noted. Tafel Deutschland as spokes-organ of the national frontline organisations is importantly concerned with the problem context of poverty and food insecurity, different groups that are exposed to it and their structural vulnerabilities, also in opposition to governmental and political practice. FEBA instead, which is active on the transnational level, centres their attention on the need of food banks as organisations, whereby the service's target population stands in the background and individual needs are reduced to food provided by food banks.

The European umbrella organisation FEBA is predominantly concerned with grievances that affect organisational practice, not the service users as such. In the national frame, Tafel

Deutschland advocates for organisational matters as well, e.g. the request for state funding, and takes position concerning some food waste and different poverty issues that are not internal, structural concerns of their organisations. In difference to this, FEBA is strongly involved in ongoing political processes on the EU level, as well as the monitoring of food bank-associated purposes for knowledge redistribution. Therein, little organisational initiative in bringing up societal topics is reflected in a predominantly reactive approach. Perspectives on possible reasons for this could be financial dependencies, as developed further in section 7.4. To stay within Raworth image of the bigger picture, it can be stated that the transmission of concerns becomes blurry in its delivery to political actors due to a shift of focus on the different governance levels. Here, it could be interesting to see whether similar dynamics apply to other national context and organisations as well.

6.3 What needs to be done to solve the problems?

6.3.1 Policies to bring about change

The food banking organisations both attribute great importance to policy interventions to approach the problem areas of food waste and food insecurity. Tafel Deutschland sees the state in the responsibility to effectively solve the problems of food waste in the longer run, FEBA expects the political actors on the EU level to establish a binding approach and standards to the problem areas.

Tafel Deutschland puts a strong emphasis on the role of the state in solving these societal problems in differentiation from supplementary and non-governmental nature of food banks. The organisation advocates for a number of public welfare measures to tackle these societal issues, including legislation, service provision and public investments, as well as public funding for the Tafel organisations due to their ecological contribution through food waste reduction:

> The Tafel food banks are not part of the welfare state system in Germany. (…) [I]t remains the task of the State to ensure an adequate minimum standard of living for all and to combat the causes of poverty as well as food waste in a sustainable manner through political projects. (Tafel Deutschland, 2020.1, p.16).

The dimension of legislation concerns the reduction of food waste as well as the eradication of poverty through income redistribution. The latter is mainly addressed in terms of calls for a substantial increase of the basic income scheme. Concretely requested legislative measures to

reduce food waste include an adaptation of taxation law on VAT to facilitate food donations from retailers and producers, as well as adaptations in food safety regulations. The organisations main concern is that government action needs to consider all levels of the production chain. In relation to the Doughnut, this conflicts with the second guiding principle (cf. Raworth, 2017) as it concerns an isolated element of the problematic to develop a small scale solution, which does not take all three entities of environment, society and economy into consideration. Furthermore, suggested regulations do not inspire greater awareness and consideration for natural resources in the economic realm.

The 'Social Platform Climate Protection' (Tafel Deutschland, 2020.02), which Tafel Deutschland co-signed as part of the Paritätische [national non-statutory welfare organisation] together with other main welfare organisations, formulates civil society demands to political actors that are grounded in a construction of social and ecological dimensions as interconnected, thereby demanding solutions for climate protective measures that incorporate social dimensions. Climate mitigation policies in the midst of the climate emergency are requested to be socially adapted to avoid regressive effects for low-income households. These requests do not fully comply with the distributive and just design that the fifth guiding principle of the Doughnut (cf. Raworth) calls for. However, they address the disproportionate burden that climate mitigation policies pose disproportionately for low-income households that Büchs et al. (2011) problematise and connect with the need for adapted welfare state interventions.

FEBA considers an expansion of food banking as **the** solution to reduce food waste and approach food insecurity. The organisation supports the establishment of a circular economy in accordance with the EU strategy and portrays food banks as important actors in realising this shift within the food system:

> Food redistribution is a beneficial solution to addressing food insecurity, to managing surplus food as well as preventing food loss and waste at source and to shifting from a linear to a circular society. (FEBA, 2020.10, p.1).

Connecting this great usefulness to current circumstances, the organisation calls for more political recognition and support of the EU and national governments for food banks to further reduce food waste and food insecurity. Overall, the positions of FEBA are very appreciative and in-line with EU action and decision-making, with few critiques being brought up. Current matters are predominantly expressed in an appreciative, positive manner. An example for this are the organisational monitoring reports, that do not critically comment on the on-going

political debates and decisions as it could be expected, but that primarily reproduce EU communications (further reflections in 7.4). Meanwhile, FEBA sees the political actors on the EU level in the responsibility to establish a binding approach and standards to poverty, hereby referring to the European Pillar of Social Rights. The position FEBA takes here in presenting food banking as an adequate solution, conflicts with findings of previous research regarding the impact of food banks on food waste reduction and food insecurity alleviation (cf. Riches, 2018; Oldroyd et al, 2022). Additionally, it has to be kept in mind that FEBA is an interest representation of food banking organisations, which makes the continued existence of food banks their essential concern. This could be a reason why FEBA would not have the interest to realise structural food waste reduction, as it would undergo organisational legitimacy and endanger their organisational continuity.

The uncritical support for circular economy as a concept based on green growth can moreover be criticised to neglect the respect for planetary boundaries and social inclusiveness (cf. Corvellec et al., 2022) that the Doughnut calls for (cf. Raworth, 2017). The organisation does not evaluate the circular economy, instead it reproduces the rationale of the EU agenda, thereby following its growth-centred rationale, which dissonates with the Doughnut as a growth agnostic model (cf. Raworth, 2017).

FEBA moreover emphasises the need for the EU-wide implementation of statistical tools with a fixed methodology to measure food waste as this would allow to gain further insight into the phenomenon and its evolution. This in return could allow to realise new facets of food waste and work on seeing a bigger picture in accordance with the second guiding principle of the Doughnut (cf. Raworth, 2017). It is questionable, how open and inclusive the organisational and political interpretation of such data would be though, as well as what degree of validity the measures would have.

Overall, it can be resumed that the calls for redistribution through policy implementation mainly target income redistribution, which falls short in relation to the Doughnut vision of a just and distributive system (cf. Raworth, 2017). The large share of responsibility attributed by both organisations to the state can also be understood as a sign of ‘detached’ thinking with regards to the economy and the society. It could be argued that this simply recognises the authoritative position of the political entities, but such a perspective would essentially neglect the power interplay of corporate actors in the food system and their influence (and interests) in food waste production and surplus redistribution, which can serve as good publicity as part of CSR strategies (cf. Riches, 2018).

6.3.2 A focus on consumer responsibility

Beyond state measure, the society as well as the individual or the individual household are addressed and their necessary contribution to solve the problems of food waste and food insecurity are addressed by FEBA and Tafel Deutschland. Tafel Deutschland sees need for action in the domain of the society and the individual level to solve the moral injustice of food waste and food insecurity in a rich society, expressed through the abundance-scarcity-paradox. The responsibility of consumers for the reduction of food waste through a change in consuming habits is emphasised various times, e.g. when the Tafel chairman states: "I believe that each and every individual and every system must recognise and assume their responsibility in order to bring about lasting change for the better." (Tafel Deutschland, 2020.08, p.12). The need to change consumer patterns is therein highlighted as a moral responsibility. The solutions to reduce food waste in individual households is advocated to be more conscious planning, as well as more education that the state should provide. The latter is requested several times to be integrated into school education.

> The most waste occurs in private households: per capita, around 82kg of edible food ends up being thrown away. (…) It would be easy to remedy this situation: through better [individual] planning (…), as well as through education, this mountain of food waste could be reduced importantly. (Tafel Deutschland, 2019.1, p.36)

This approach of individualising the responsibility for food waste by shifting it to the individual household is strongly criticised by Riches (2018) when taken up by international stakeholders such as the FAO, as it ignores the corporate dimension and its impact on consumer habits. Respecting the efforts that corporations in the food industry put into advertisement and marketing to inspire consumer wants and turn them into perceived needs, I would follow Riches criticism. In the light of the Doughnut, this is another blur in the bigger picture of the second guiding principles, which leads to a fragmented vision that does not involve the economy in equal terms as the society and the state (cf. Raworth, 2017).

FEBA addresses the level of the consumer and the considerable amount of food waste that is produced at this stage by calling for political action to better educate citizens through the dispersion of information on date marking in food products. This is emphasised as needed as "[FEBA members] highlight the confusion especially at consumer level. Due to this lack of information, huge quantities of good food are daily thrown away" (FEBA, 2021.11, p.12). This is brought up by Tafel Deutschland as part of calls for governmental action as well. FEBA

considers education as a solution to approach food waste at this level, as organisational food recovery poses difficulties at the individual level.

Both organisations address the production of food waste at the household level and see the need to reach behavioural changes of the consumers by means of education. This aligns with Raworth call for the recognition of the value of natural resources and their role for humanity in the second guiding principle of the Doughnut (cf. Raworth, 2017). At the same time the emphasis put on the consumer level opposes this principle, as no redistribution of the importance between actors is undertaken, thereby leaving corporate actors out of this pictures and failing to recognise their impact and the effects of market dynamics on society as well as nature (ibid.). This joins Riches (2018) criticism, as developed above.

6.3.3 Corporate actors as facilitators

Corporate actors on different levels of the food production industry are portrayed by both organisations as being a part of the solution to food waste reduction and food insecurity alleviation through food bank action in their capacity as donors. Beyond in-kind donations from food producers, this also applies to economic actors from various sectors that make financial donations to support food bank activities. Tafel Deutschland mentions corporate donors within the scope of acknowledgements in their newsletter as well as the annual reports. These include multinational supermarket chains (e.g. Lidl, Aldi), groups of large companies in the food retail sector (e.g. Metro Group, REWE Group), transnational corporate food producers (e.g. Mondelez, Kellogg's, Nestlé Wagner, Unilever, Cargill) as well as corporate actors within other fields such as logistics (e.g. Dachser Food Logistics) or financial services (e.g. BlackRock). Some donations are marked as being enabled by third actors, such as FEBA, the Charities Aid Foundation of America and the GFN (e.g. BlackRock). Meanwhile, FEBA does similar acknowledgements in their annual reports and establishes a special report format in 2022 for acknowledgements to corporate partners (FEBA, 2022.13). The donors of FEBA are situated in the international sphere and are part of a variety of business branches such as pharmaceuticals (AdvanzPharma), with a significant number of them being connected to the food industry (e.g. Billa, Campofrio Food Group, Tokiomarine HCC, Penny).

Tafel Deutschland expresses the necessity to expand corporate partnerships and cooperation with economic actors in the food industry to recover larger amounts of produced surplus food and collect donations to support their activities. The organisation emphasises the existing potentials for in-kind donations also in relation to the state when advocating for an introduction of public funding for Tafel organisations to showcase the potential for possible ecological

achievements of extended organisational practice: “[W]ith about 1.2 million tons of avoidable food waste in food processing per year, the donation potential is many times (45 times!) higher [Schmidt et al., 2019].” (Tafel Deutschland, 2020.4, p.5).

FEBA considers an expansion of its network of private and corporate actors as a relevant measure to contribute to the work of food banks and thereby reduce food waste and food insecurity. Within their publications they highlight the singular opportunities their position provides them with in connecting food banks and corporate actors:

> FEBA is the only Europe-wide organisation which coordinates and supports the work of Food Banks in Europe and is the best positioned body in Brussels to be the contact point between its national network of 30 members and the private sector. (…) FEBA facilitated the connection between the companies and the Food Banks, in some cases locally (…). (FEBA, 2022.13, p.7)

The organisations moreover advertise the benefits of food banks within the above described pattern of a ‘win-win-win’ outcome for the food production sector, planet and people (see 6.2.1). In some cases, this is particularly emphasised regarding its economic dimension through the use of economic vocabulary:

> Since their establishment [food banks] have addressed systemic inefficiencies and misfunctions of the market providing a tangible solution with spillover effects on food business operators, the planet and the people. (FEBA, 2022.05, p.5)

The important role that corporate actors play in the organisational framing of food waste recovery and redistribution to serve an ecological and social purpose in food banking can also be found in the policy adaptations that the organisations request on both governance levels. Many of them are targeted at lifting legislative hurdles to food donations through taxation and extensive food hygiene requirements that are unfavourable for donating companies. The solutions that the organisations lobby for here oppose an eco-social understanding of policies, as they do not consider environmental and social consequences these could have as well, but merely focus on the traditional food bank model (cf. 3.2).

The influence of corporate actors is moreover potentially reflected in the small amount of criticism directed towards the economic sphere and corporate actors, to whom little to no

responsibility for food waste production through surpluses is attributed. Here, the critique that Riches (2018) voices towards the linkages between food banking organisation and corporate actors, as well as the influence the latter hold within the donation-based food bank concept, open up space for a critical reflection in relation to the Doughnut. Returning to the second Doughnut principle of the consideration of the bigger picture under inclusion of the dimensions of economy, environment and people, the reliance on corporate surpluses jeopardises a strong hold in the ecological ceiling, as the food system and its practices remain unaddressed (cf. Raworth 2017). The same applies to limitations regarding the social foundations, especially when considering the just and redistributive design that the fifth Doughnut principle calls for (cf. Raworth 2017). While the organisations themselves do not propagate growth opportunities for economic actors, another silence is telling: the benefits that food donations have for companies as donated food surpluses safes them costly waste management and disposal, as a representative from LIDL Romania mentions when describing CSR actions together with a local food bank (FEBA, 2022.12, p.24). Both organisations do not include this aspect as a claim into their calls for action. Even though avoiding costs does not correspond to classic economic growth, this aspect shows that food donation bears financial opportunities for corporate actors. To conclude, the question arises why corporate actors within the food industries are portrayed as being an essential part of the solution, while their share in the generation of food waste as a problem is left out. This will be further discussed in section 7.4.

6.4 What is the long-term vision?

6.4.1 The future is food bank

Both organisations include food banks into their vision of the future. The role they attribute to food banks contains different nuances. Tafel Deutschland understand its member organisations as pillars of the civil society that will keep reducing food waste through the redistribution to people in need, rightfully as a supplementary service to the recipients beyond social benefits, but preferably with public funding based on their ecological contribution to food waste reduction. FEBA instead envisions food banks as a facilitator of food waste reduction serving a social cause and importantly contributing to the realisation of a circular economic model. The organisation itself functions in this scenario as a networking-body that connects food banks and corporate donors, as well as the political sphere of the EU with food banks through the representation of their concerns and the dispersion of EU policies to the food banks. A highlight in this presentation remains the triple win for economy, environment and people. Both organisations project an expansion of food bank operations.

Concerning the future of food banks, the documents from Tafel Deutschland contain an important shift in the organisations' self-understanding and their long-term vision of practice, expressed in the extensive information document (Tafel Deutschland, 2020.6) that was released together with the position statement calling for state funding (Tafel Deutschland, 2020.5):

> From the point of view of Tafel Deutschland, the organisations have become an important entity in society. The initial understanding that food banks should abolish themselves has changed. Instead, Tafel branches will remain necessary, as neither food waste nor poverty will be eliminated by the state in the foreseeable future. (Tafel Deutschland, 2020.6, p.19).

The German national food bank movement on which's top Tafel Deutschland is positioned, was founded in the 1990s in the aim of working towards a shift in public welfare practice and provision that would eradicate poverty and achieve a substantial decrease in food waste, so that the organisation could cease to exist. The understanding of the organisation as an important player within welfare delivery and society as expressed here, and the self-conception as an influential entity beyond the service delivery is diverging from this original goal. Setting this in relation to previous research, the call for general state funding can be understood as the last step to a full institutionalisation of Tafel food banks in Germany. This is criticised by Milbourne as it limits potentials to structurally overcome food insecurity and poverty (cf. Milbourne, 2020 cited after FEBA, 2020.15). This statement also proofs the great extent to which food banks have become normalised and institutionalised already. The renunciation from the initial goal can also be associated with path dependency of the organisation as an institution with an inherent self-interest for continuity of their operations.

FEBAs main emphasis remains the 'win-win-win' benefit of food donations for the environment, the economy and the society in depicting the future of food banks, as well as the future of the economic and food system in terms of a transition to the circular economy.

> (…) Food donation is not only an environmentally-sensitive, business-friendly, and socially responsible alternative, but also a relevant driver of food security. Besides that, it is a key pillar in the endeavour to improve the resilience of the food supply chain and foster sustainability of the food system at large. (FEBA, 2020.11, p.1)

As an essential development to coordinate activities in the future, FEBA identifies the measurement of food bank impact. In the studied period, this is concretised through two impact reports on the development of a universal measurement tool for member organisations and its initial testing phase (FEBA, 2021.14; 2022.14).

> Capturing the most value from data begins with excellence in identifying, measuring and storing that data (…) and ends with an organization which is able to complement analytics with human talent to implement and communicate relevant insights. (FEBA, 2021.14, p.1)

This endeavour to approach the organisational future as well as the future of food banks is insightful, as it showcases the great influence of growth-oriented economic thinking in spheres beyond the economy. What has been seen throughout the public sectors as a result of the neo-liberal NPM agenda, is equally impacting the non-governmental sphere and the civil society, where legitimacy can only be achieved through a numerically measured, verifiable outcome. Though this is common in the current practice within welfare organisations, it does stand in contrast with the Doughnut, which rejects the growth-paradigm and calls for its deconstruction (cf. Raworth, 2017).

The visions of the future that both organisations express are marked by organisational continuity as well as the expansion of activities. This opposes the Doughnut, which strives for the development of a distributive and just systemic design (cf. Raworth, 2017), as these visions of the future solidify the normalisation and institutionalisation of food banks. Thereby, it does not lead to substantial structural solution for food waste and food insecurity. In return, the system that is envisioned does not become more just in terms of wealth distribution to comply with the social foundations, nor does it follow a more regenerative approach as food waste and surplus foods as a resource to food banks is of utmost importance for the vision of both organisations (cf. Raworth, 2017).

The visions of the future moreover do not express the integration of a comprehensive way of dynamic thinking that the fourth Doughnut principle calls for (cf. Raworth, 2017). While the dynamics within the current system are considered – the tensions and circumstance between state and economy – the maxims of learning and adaptation for improvement are only applied to these limited aspects. Thereby, existing knowledge from scientific research that provides numerous starting points for critical self-reflection is seemingly left aside. Those concern the

problematics of the constant uncertainty of donations and the availability of food in food banks as well as the discrepancy between provided food and recipient's needs and the emotional burden that service user's experience (cf. Oldroyd, 2022; Douglas et al., 2015; Garthwaite, 2016). The silence on human rights as an essential dimension for the social foundation of the Doughnut moreover limits the vision of the reality in terms of the bigger picture where matters and the spheres of the economy, society and the environment are interwoven (cf. Raworth, 2017). This connects to Riches (2018) critique on food banks, that dismantles the solidarity claims of food banks that individualise needs and thereby problems of structural poverty. The author considers this individualisation of needs as opposing a human rights centred understanding of solidarity that considers their realisation as a solidary act of shared humanity (cf. Riches, 2018). Limitations that are illustrated when it comes to the fourth Doughnut principle of the integration of dynamic thinking can be related to path dependent behavioural patterns in normalised and institutionalised organisational structures in the field of food banking.

6.4.2 The future is growth

Growth is a recurring theme in the analysed data. Tafel Deutschland expresses ambitions for growth especially in relation to food recovery in terms of surpluses from producers and related infrastructure and organisational structures. FEBA is focussed on the growth of the network of members throughout Europe, as well the number of corporate partnerships and the interest representation through the proof of impact.

To be able to access and process additional donations, especially larger quantities offered by producers, a number of which the organisation had to reject in the past due to a lack of processing capacities, Tafel Deutschland sees the need to importantly develop their logistic infrastructure. This extends to the digitalisation process for the planning and distribution to local organisations. The goal is to build a national infrastructure of adapted storage facilities and redistribution infrastructure to be able to take on large donations and redistribute them to local organisations nationwide. This project is the main argument in the efforts of Tafel Deutschland to receive public funding for the national, regional and local organisations:

> With secure and stable public funding at federal and state level for the expansion and development of logistics centres (…), for full-time staff and for digitalisation, the food banks could double their capacity to accept and pass on donations within a year. (Tafel Deutschland, 2020.6, p.15)

Moreover, the organisation sees the need to grow the current body of employed personnel to develop their human infrastructure to organise donation processes and for volunteer management. These growth ambitions essentially conflict with the Doughnut's growth agnostic approach, as growth becomes the mean for what the organisations perceives as human and environmental thriving (cf. Raworth, 2017). Considering the great interest of economic actors in the food industry in food recovery activities of food banks, the question arises whether food recovery does reduce food waste in fact, as it takes away incentives from producers to effectively avoid surpluses (cf. Riches, 2018). The organisational interest in public funding can furthermore be considered as a facilitator of further institutionalisation and normalisation.

FEBA's interest in growth of the network through the recruitment and integration of new member organisations within the European region is described as better representing the organisational landscape on the EU level. It can moreover be assumed that this could increase the organisation's legitimacy and give more leverage to their claims in the political sphere, along with making them a more appealing partner in the economic sphere. The organisational efforts to establish a shared tool to measure the impact of food banking organisation throughout Europe and the generated informational value would subsequently benefit from a larger number of member organisations. It can be concluded that FEBA's objective in growth and improvements in these dimensions serves the overarching goal of growing influence in the political decision-making process and in the eyes of corporate actors. Here, it can be noted that FEBA has fully entered the transnational sphere of the EU only in 2018 with its relocation to Brussels, which can signify that they are still working on establishing their position in the political arena. Therefore, the growth of influence can be vital for FEBA continued existence. In this sense, the organisational way of thinking might be somewhat dynamic as required in the fourth Doughnut principle, though it is targeted at the inherent institutional interest and not at ecological and social sustainability (cf. Raworth, 2017).

Growth, in its economic as well as conceptual dimension, as a central element of the visions of both organisations regarding the future conflicts essentially with the Doughnut model. The abandonment of growth as a prime principle arising from the powerful economic discourse is the first step to work on getting inside the Doughnut (cf. Raworth, 2017). This is developed further with regards to the imperative growth paradigm in section 7.2. Moreover, the growth related aspirations, particularly the growth of the organisational operations as well as the model of the circular economy that proclaims green growth, conflict with the conceptualisation of sustainability from a perspective of eco-social research and policy (cf. 3.2). The growth of food

banking organisations can be understood as conflicting sustainability goals, as research has shown that their work is effectively not achieving ecological or social justice (cf. 3.1). The implicit centeredness on growth-based system is equally conflicting with the perspective of eco-social research and the Doughnut.

6.4.3 The future is in our system

The Doughnut requires substantial systemic changes to achieve social and ecological sustainability. Even though the Doughnut and its guiding principles for change are formulated in a general manner and do not provide concrete measures for action as addressed by critics, it can be stated that changes that follow these principles would transform the structures of the society and the economy as they are known today (cf. Raworth, 2017).

Far-ranging change however is not incorporated in the long-term vision of food banking organisations as represented in the datasets. Instead, both studied organisations rely strongly on the current status quo: Tafel Deutschland in aiming at state funding that is most likely synonymous with a consolidation within the state welfare system and the expansion of corporate partnerships, and FEBA through its high degree of adaptation to EU directives and discourse, as well as further bridging to the corporate world. Without going into the possible dependencies that arise from financial support, this overview highlights the high degree of systemic immanence in the perspectives of both organisations, which bear little transformative potential. Of course, this argument could be judged to be redundant as these organisations are confronted daily with the system that surrounds them. I would hold against that the climate emergency in its urgency requires organisations that address relevant matters on different governance levels, to consider the complex world that they act in.

Respecting that both organisations use scientific knowledge and findings when it serves their argumentative purpose, the integration of dynamic thinking within the systemic context to realise sustainability as described in the fourth Doughnut principle seems within organisational reach (cf. Raworth, 2016). This could include the evaluation of a wider range of research to initiate a process of learning and adaptation. Here, a shortcoming of the Doughnut becomes apparent, which has been addressed by critics: its lack to recognise the impact of conflicting interest (cf. Milanovic, 2018). Despite the proclaimed organisational goals of food waste reduction for climate protection and redistribution of surpluses for poverty alleviation, the intrinsic self-interest of the organisation as an entity that seeks to assure continued existence is a factor to be considered. Relating this to Riches' criticism of food banks as an expression of

corporate interest, there can be even more interests that affect sustainability objectives (cf. Riches, 2018).

6.5 Decommodification

Food, one of the most basic needs for human subsistence, is practically entirely commodified in contemporary society, which makes low disposable income the essential reason for experiences of food insecurity in a part of the world where the supply of food is abundant. Tafel Deutschland voices repeatedly the impact of low household income on food security, connecting these statements to calls for an increase in state income redistribution schemes of social benefits. FEBA does not enter into any details about national state support, instead the organisation appeals more generally to highlight the living situations of people that experience poverty. Respecting the concern that food banking organisations have for food, food insecurity and the strong emphasis that both organisations put on the abundance-scarcity-paradox, an interesting find of this research is the fact that neither of the actors touches upon the underlying problem, that is food as a commodity. It would certainly be an unpopular call among corporate actors in the food industry, whose interest is the generation of financial profit from the production and sale of food products. The least to say is, that holding on to the food system as it is, meaning importantly governed by economic and financial interest, can be understood as an expression of system immanent thinking and considering the long tradition of food banks, also an aspect of path dependency (cf. Riches, 2018).

But commodification goes far beyond the matter of food and stood at the origin of the Western welfare states invention in the 19th century (cf. Kuhnle & Sander, 2010). Decommodification as the detachment of the livelihood of people from their participation in paid labour, is a main feature of state welfare, materialized in policies of social transfer payments such as sick and parental leave or unemployment benefits and other forms of income support when people cannot participate in the labour market. With Tafel Deutschland being concerned with the latter in their calls for action addressed to the German government to increase the level of social benefits of all kinds to cover recipients' needs for food and social participation, this dimension of decommodification gains relevance for this case. These changes, exclusively targeted at a general increase of different forms of income support, have little transformative potential and maintain the existing status quo of a structurally inequitable system in which vulnerable groups experience disadvantages and discrimination. Here, eco-social research suggests more far-reaching forms of decommodification through financial transfers, such as the Participation Income that Dunkelow and Murphy (2022) suggest: a new variant of basic income yet with a

condition that is centred on individual engagement through social, ecological as well as democratic participatory activities to achieve sustainable outcomes and increase social cohesion (Dunkelow & Murphy, 2022, p. 510 cont.). Considering the experience of food bank users that can involve feelings of stigma, fear and shame (cf. Douglas et al., 2015; Garthwaite, 2016), the non-stigmatising potentials of Participation Income that McGann and Murphy (2023) describe bear potential to correspond with human needs. This type of policy would be also well motivated by the fifth Doughnut principle of a distributive and just design (cf. Raworth, 2017).

Relatable to decommodification, FEBA emphasises in their position paper on the reinforcement of a social Europe, a reaction to a European Commission communication, how food is an essential service and that food aid as provided by food banks can contribute to activities that enhance social inclusion (see quote in 6.2.2; FEBA, 2020.13, p.2). The organisation specifies such activation potentials as "sociality, training, job search, etc." (FEBA, 2020.13, p.2) and states joint to it that "the provision of food is a real way of access to paths for the sustainable reintegration of people and prerequisite for social inclusion" (ibid.). Within eco-social research, Dunkelow and Murphy (2022) argue for a redefinition of purpose within activation measures to realise ecological and social sustainability, which would require to move away from workfare centred commodification of the individuals' capacity to more equitable, participatory work environments. An aspect which the researchers bring up here concerns the low remunerations and often precarious work frame that needs to be replaced by adequately paid work opportunities (cf. Dunkelow & Murphy, 2022). Food banks as organisations based on voluntarism could hardly provide such opportunities, as regular employment is rare due to the funding situation. The case of Tafel Germany illustrates this, as Tafel organisations offer unemployed people the possibility to work a so-called 'One Euro Job', which is a national employment policy measure that is aimed at providing a reintegration into the labour market; the measure does not provide an actual income but only a small allowance that workers receive along with social transfer payments over a limited period of time. Such a practice also stands in contrast with the just and distributive design required by the fifth Doughnut principles that advocates for a redistribution of all forms of wealth (cf. Raworth, 2017). The described idea of activation meanwhile confirms with neo-liberal concepts of workfare activation, where an image of people as a self-interested, calculated versions of the Homo economicus is displayed instead of the social, empathic human image promoted by the Doughnut model (cf. Raworth, 2017). Such an understanding essentially follows the growth paradigm, which equally conflicts with the Doughnut and eco-social policy calls of the degrowth movement.

6.6 The growth imperative

Growth is a central theme in the long-term visions of both organisations (see 6.4.2). Tafel Deutschland envisions growth of the logistic and personnel infrastructure to increase the amount of food they can save from large scale production; FEBA is mainly focussed on growing their network of members as well as their influence and corporate partnerships. The paradigm of the growth imperative is enshrined in economic thinking and permeates all aspects of human thinking in a general manner due to the precedence that the economy takes within capitalist economic and societal order (cf. Raworth, 2017). And it is also this placement of growth at the top of organisational priorities and the endorsement of the growth imperative of the public discourse that the Doughnut as well as the eco-social research and policies problematize in a finite planetary system with high levels of inequality (cf. 3.1; 3.2; 4.2). Eco-social research from a degrowth or post-growth position and the Doughnut that can be situated within it, stand by the position that infinite growth in a finite system cannot conform to principles of ecological and social sustainability. The Doughnut in its international orientation considers inequalities worldwide and the fact that people in developed economies benefit from an overuse of resources, while suffering the least from the climate emergency as of now (cf. Raworth, 2017). In the following I will discuss ways in which the studied organisations adopt the growth-oriented organisational strategies, by focusing on the project of Tafel Deutschland to expand the organisational infrastructure as an example for a possible expansion of food bank activity.

The plan of Tafel Deutschland to grow the organisation's capacity to recover large scale surpluses based on public funding can be seen critically from an eco-social perspective of the Doughnut for several reasons. One critical aspect concerns the risk of surplus food at risk of becoming waste turning effectively into a good that is sought after; or to phrase it more economically, a demand for food waste develops that facilitates a continued supply of excessive food production. But this somewhat 'market' can fail, when crisis and austerity measures make companies revaluate the potentials that lie in the donated surpluses. This phenomenon is described by Tafel Deutschland, as well as other national food banking organisations in the reports of FEBA in relation to developments after the beginning of the war in Ukraine. When the armed conflict led to steeply increasing energy prices that affected food retailers significantly and took a toll on their profit margins, surpluses that retailers would commonly have donated were sold off with special conditions instead of being donated. A local Tafel organisation described that "orders were better matched to the sale, so there [was] less left over" (Tafel Deutschland, 2022.2, p.15). Here the food waste reduction target is reached better by the retailers themselves, which could be seen as an achievement, but it becomes an issue for the

food banks that rely on these donations. Apart from this illustration of the general volatility of food donations, it points towards profit maximisation as main interest of donating corporate actors. Thereby, the hypothesis arises that related corporate social acts are of corporate interest as long as they do not interfere with this. Current studies within CSR in the light of the Covid-19 pandemic pose the question whether CSR activities will remain at its pre-crisis level as part of philanthropic efforts or whether they will be re-examined and reduced as part of corporate strategies targeted at profit maximisation (cf. Schwartz & Kay, 2023; Levy, 2021, p.564; Zhao, 2021). As for now, there is no certainty through research. Either way, it can be understood that organisational growth in terms of food recovery is bound to the growth and profit of donating companies, leading to a strong dependence on market developments and opening the view to food charity as a phenomenon originating in wealthy, developed states to fulfil corporate interests, including needs for favourable social profiling (cf. Riches, 2018). Viewed from this perspective, food banks in their current form are not a step forward into the Doughnut and towards holistic sustainability, as it conflicts with their integration into market logics oriented after profit maximization and their ideological ligation (cf. Raworth. 2017).

Moreover, growing a CSO's infrastructure through state funding as a tool to tackle food waste that results from overproduction on the side of the food industry does not seem equitable. Here, the organisational aims to grow their operations to solve problems that originate from the corporate striving for growth and profit maximization. This showcases the extent to which the growth imperative has permeated the problem conception of food waste as well as the construction of its solution, which can be connected to Riches (2018) criticisms on corporate power and influence in food charity. The expansion of the organisational infrastructure of storage and distribution can also be related back to the use of resources and a sustainable approach to their use: Companies within the food sector have a highly developed infrastructure in place to handle food of any kind. The organisation calls for public funds to build up similar structures to be able to handle the overproduction of these same companies. The question in how far such a plan is in accordance with a sustainable use of the limited amount of resources and in whose best interest such a development would be, suggests itself. Lastly, I see a conflict in a targeted increase of large scale donations from food processing companies in relation to the organisations' proclaimed mission to support a healthy diet of service users. This related to the concept of food security that includes adequate nutrition for a healthy lifestyle and the wellbeing of people as element of the Doughnut. As described in the background (see 2.1.1) the industrialised nature of food production with its extensive processing leads to the generation of products that score high in palatability and shelf-life, but are of low nutritional value with a

high energy density. When looking at corporate donors of Tafel Deutschland, as well as companies donating to FEBA, a large number of producers of ultra-processed food products appear, such as Kellogg's, Mars Food, Mondelez, Danone, The Coca Cola Company and PepsiCo. Highly and ultra-processed foods are evaluated critically in nutritional science and generally recommended to be consumed with moderation (cf. Mertens et al., 2022). Consequently, distributing surpluses of this kind to people that cannot make the choice for a healthy diet due to financial reasons does not serve a purpose of ecological or social sustainability. This becomes especially apparent in the light of social determinants of health.

It can be resumed that Tafel Deutschland as well as FEBA would need to concretely consider an application of the seventh Doughnut principle to deconstruct the importance of growth. Thereby, the focus of organisational practice would need to shift towards human wellbeing and planetary boundaries within the complex context they act in, which would mean a shift of goal as stated in the first Doughnut principle (cf. Raworth, 2017).

6.7 Rights-based arguments

FEBA and Tafel Deutschland emphasise the values that their organisational work within food charity is based on and advocate for values that are part of the human rights framework. However, remarkably both organisations do not refer to human rights despite invoking essential elements of them. The absence of references to human rights from both organisations, even though both are confronted with food insecurity as a matter deeply concerned with the right to food and the right to an adequate livelihood that corresponds to human dignity, surprised me when studying the datasets. In my understanding of the Doughnut as a human rights-based model, this is a relevant notion within the research findings. Within FEBAs documents, human rights are mentioned, but exclusively as part of EU communications or by external experts and not as organisational statements. Tafel Deutschland refers to central values represented in human rights such as human dignity, describes essential human rights, such as the right to education or the right to socio-cultural participation, and points out shortcomings within the German welfare state context. However, human rights are not used as a principal concept in their documents. FEBA meanwhile refers to values that are represented within human rights as well, such as universality and shared humanity, but does not use human rights as a concept either. Those are even intertwined with solidarity as a core position of food bank organisations within present times and the US-American food banking tradition (cf. Riches, 2018). At some point, the FEBA president argues that food donation does not oppose or reduce human dignity, one of the most basic concepts within human rights, but that it is an expression of solidarity and

love in a deeply human relationship (cf. FEBA, 2019.2, p.11; see 6.2.2). While the notion of this statement is arguably in alignment with the great lines of human rights, it can also be read as a paternalistic understanding of charity, rooted in a Christian religious tradition as described by previous research on food banks (cf. Lambie-Mumford & Silvasti, 2020). Considering that food insecurity in the observed context is closely tied to economic means, this perception can reinforce inequalities. In comparison to a human rights-centred understanding, this conceptualisation falls short, as it refers to solidarity, but more importantly to charitable support, which opposes an understanding of human rights as an unequivocal entitlement (cf. Riches, 2018).

An entitlement as it arises from a legal right is rejected by Tafel Deutschland in the distinction they make between their food bank services and traditional state welfare services (see 6.3.1). The organisation distances itself from the public welfare services and most importantly from the idea of legal entitlement to their services. This is done in relation to the state, from whom the organisation receives no regular funding. The organisational recognition of human rights as a concept could be interpreted as a recognition of an entitlement to food bank services under the right to food. As food banks provide emergency aid, I would argue that such an understanding does not hold up. Instead, invoking human rights could be a powerful argument and an ideological lever towards the state, as Germany – as well as the other EU member states – has ratified relevant UN human rights instruments. The high degree of development could furthermore be used by the organisation to pressure for comprehensive governmental efforts to realise the right to food despite its progressive nature as a positive state obligation (cf. 2.1.2). This could increase the compliance with the Doughnut's social foundation and would furthermore comply with an inclusive understanding of economy, society and environment, if the overall focus was to shift away from market-centred efficiency and growth along with less importance being attributed to corporate interests (cf. Raworth, 2017). This would then conform to the second Doughnut principle of the awareness of the larger context, as well as the first principle on the change of goal away from growth and towards human wellbeing (ibid.). For the latter, an approach that includes the human rights to safety and health in their interrelation to the environment as human habitat could be developed to incorporate the ecological dimension along with the right to food within an understanding of eco-social sustainability.

Similarly to Tafel Deutschland, FEBA does not directly involve human rights into their own statements, but human rights are invoked by some of the key note speakers, whose contribution to conferences or forums is included into reports. One of them is of particular interest, as the speaker takes a position that is somewhat opposing to the described approach of FEBA:

> If food poverty is linked to human rights, social injustice, and exclusion, then the answer is not to simply give more food, but to find broader adequate answers as a government. […]. There is a danger of Food Banks being taken for granted in the austerity environment and become normalized and institutionalized. (Paul Milbourne, Professor of Human Geography at Cardiff University, as in FEBA, 2020.15, p.19).

Here, a strong argument is built that calls for the solution to food insecurity as systemic change on the basis of human rights. This stands in contrast with the high extent of systemic immanence that is prevalent in the documents of FEBA and Tafel Deutschland, which base their vision on the current status quo within food production, food distribution and excess. With their vision of the future lacking fundamental systemic changes, the approach to the problem area is marked by low levels of transformative potential. Moreover, Milbourne points towards the limitation to the realisation of food as a human rights conception within a system marked by austerity measures that has normalised and institutionalised food bank services (cf. ibid.). This position can also be viewed as opposing growth within food banking when considering food insecurity as a human right infringement that lacks governmental response. Such a train of thought could be a reason that neither Tafel Deutschland nor FEBA refer to human rights.

The absence of statements explicitly referring to human rights within the organisational documentation remains a surprising finding, for which different explanations can be discussed. When it comes to the Doughnut, the adaptation of a human rights-based narrative and reasoning could signify new approaches to the problem context of food waste and food insecurity in the light of structural poverty. This could bring about a different vision of the organisational goal centred on human thriving and wellbeing in their interconnection with the environment, as conceptualised by the first and second Doughnut principle (cf. Raworth, 2017). An explicit rootedness in human rights would as well promote a social and empathic image of humans and a notion of shared humanity, as included in the third Doughnut principle (ibid.).

6.8 Financial ties with the corporate sector

The studied food banking organisations on both governance levels have a large number of donors from the corporate sector. Many of them are active in or involved with food production, processing and retail. Some work within logistics and contribute in-kind as well as financial donations. Companies from other sectors such as financial services or pharmaceuticals provide financial donations only. Tafel Deutschland does not receive any regular public funding and is

therefore dependent on donations, with government agencies financially supporting certain aspects of the work of Tafel Deutschland and its members through project funding, e.g. the Federal Ministry for Food and Agriculture through the project "Tafel macht Zukunft – gemeinsam digital" ["Tafel makes the future – digital together"] to develop the organisations digital infrastructure (2019-2022), or the Federal Ministry of Education and Research through the project "Kultur macht stark" ["Culture makes strong"] that supports local projects that foster socio-cultural participation of children (2018-2022). FEBA receives public funds in form of subsidies from the EU under a framework agreement and donations from private actors that they also support member organisations with. Both organisations moreover receive funds from philanthropic organisations and foundations, some of them related to corporate actors.

Throughout the study of organisational documents, criticism addressed to the actors that provide main shares of organisational funding were expressed in a very general manner or voiced but seldom. It is for example remarkable, how little both organisations advocate for corporate actors to effectively reduce food waste other than through surplus donations, or criticize the power of corporate interests in the food provision system and their impact on the phenomenon of scarcity in abundance. Both organisations refer to this paradox repeatedly, but only to build a moral argument in favour of food banks within society and at the individual level. This finding confirms the multi-layered connections of food banks and the corporate sphere that Riches (2018) criticises as obstructing their social and ecological mission. Both organisations show an individualised understanding of the matter of food waste and express the need for behavioural changes of the society as a collective of individuals. This is also observed in relation to the numerous statistics that both organisations generate and use, which highlight that households are the main producer of food waste. However, the food industry oriented to profit maximisation artificially fosters the users' subjective need for new products through the generation of trends. Moreover, the attempts to psychologically influence decision making in food products in numerous ways, from brand presentation and advertisements up to the strategic positioning of products in grocery stores, as well the strategic use of smells, are well documented (cf. Folkvord, 2019). It is in this respect worth noting the food bank organisations' silence on the role and responsibility of the food industry.

The need for changes throughout the food supply chain is addressed to political entities of the public sphere, while not specifically discussing the role of corporate actors. Whilst Tafel Deutschland is very openly critical towards the state and repeatedly points out welfare shortcomings, FEBA is rarely critical towards EU policies and displays more appreciative

attitudes, including the simply, uncommented display of EU policies and processes. Legitimate claims and criticisms towards corporate actors within the food supply chain seem obvious when studying the structural context of food waste. As Riches (2018) raises in his food bank critique, implications of corporate profit interests and the resulting pricing structures, which affect food insecurity in developed countries, can be brought up as well. The question arises whether the dependence on and interest in further donations motivates this in its silence partial attitude toward donors and funders. In fact, a closer look at the disclosure on received funds, provided in the annual reports of both organisations, shows the important share that private donations constitute compared to public sources of funding (see figure below). Tafel Deutschland's activities are entirely reliant on donations from corporate actors. For FEBA, the EU subsidies provide a steady funding base and the amount of donations varies, while remaining at a higher level than the subsidies within the observed period in all years. This could potentially be an influence on the organisational position regarding the relevance of growth and eventually limit transformative potentials regarding paradigmatic deconstruction of growth as suggested by the Doughnut (cf. Raworth, 2017).

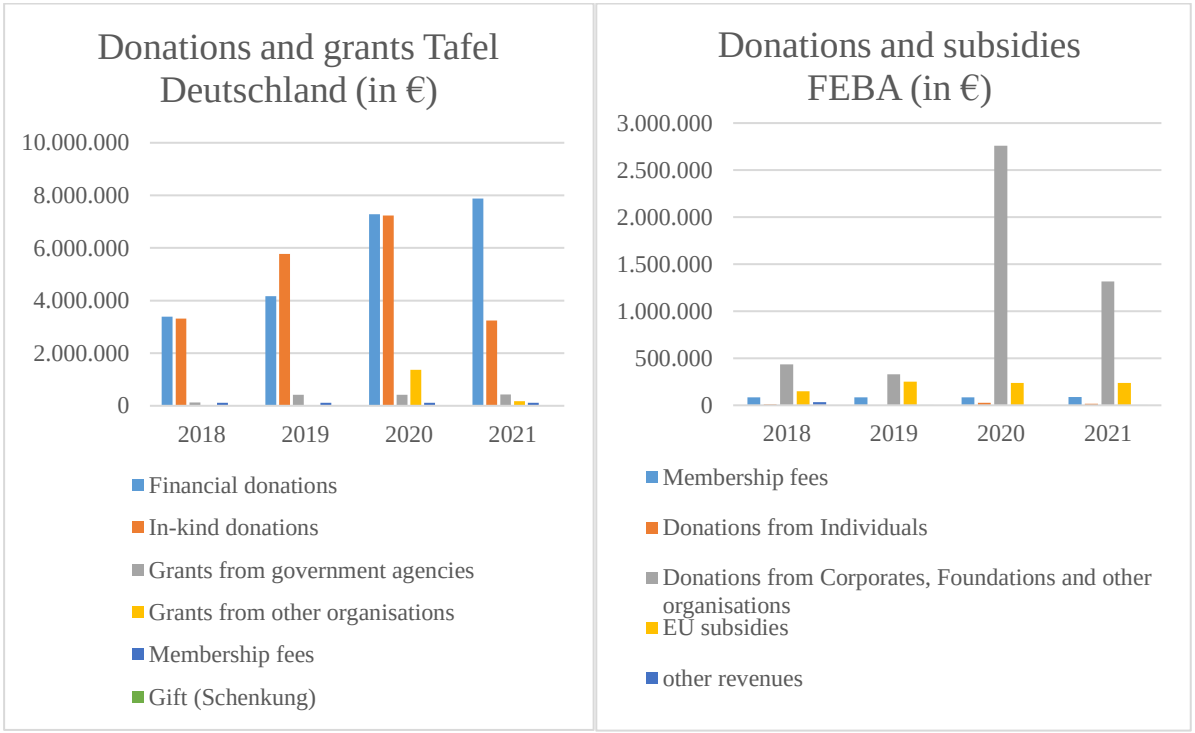

Figure 7 - Disclosure on received funds of donations and public grants/subsidies (Tafel Deutschland, 2019.1, 2020.1, 2021.1, 2022.1; FEBA, 2019.1, 2020.1, 2021.1, 2022.1)

Within the image of the Doughnut, a conclusion can be drawn that the bigger picture of the economy, society and environment as integrally interwoven aspects becomes potentially distorted through financial dependencies (cf. Raworth, 2017). This inhibits a holistic vision and

a wider range in possible solutions, as well as the frame in which organisations can advocate. Moreover, the influence of corporate actors on food banks that Riches (2018) problematizes in relation to the vision of food bank organisations on ecological and social issues becomes apparent, which counteracts approaches that confirm with eco-social policy suggestions. Considering the public funding that Tafel Deutschland currently advocates for, it once more raises the concern of further institutionalisation (cf. Milbourne, 2020). This could mean that the organisation would revise their critical perspective on welfare state action regarding food waste reduction and poverty alleviation, leading to more streamlined positions that would potentially consider ecological and social issues in more harmonised ways.

Lastly, another critical insight that the analysis of data brought about are the connections of the studied organisations with corporate actors and the potential influence these hold. Tafel Deutschland and FEBA are both connected with the GFN, an international organisation invested in food bank lobbyism based in the USA. Both organisations get access to funds through this network, and the FEBA president and the president of the GFN are currently represented on the board of the respective other organisation. One of the prominent corporate partners of the GFN, that also makes financial donations to FEBA and Tafel Germany is BlackRock, one of the top three investment companies worldwide, that controlled assets of over 9 trillion USD in the first quarter of 2023 (Brush, 2023). The financial and corporate interest of companies such as Blackrock can be expected to be driven by the strong interest in profit maximization and corporate growth corresponding to the expectations from their numerous clients and investors. The commingling of these expansive corporate actors pursuing profit maximization and non-profit actors such as food banks can be seen as seemingly in a conflict with the Doughnut. This is particularly pronounced in the core values of the model that aim at rebuilding our economic system with alternative goals of sustainable needs satisfaction (cf. Raworth, 2017). Considering the advocacy work that Tafel Deutschland and FEBA do and the influence that they hold in their respective political context, the question arises in how far corporate actors could exert pressure to make organisations comply with or lobby according to their interest.

7. Conclusion

Food banks are often portrayed as a ‘win-win-win’ solution for the environment, the society and the economy. This thesis scrutinises this notion by closely investigating two organisations active within food banking on different governance levels within the EU in the light of the Doughnut as part of eco-social research. To conclude this thesis, the following chapter will

resume main findings in relation to the investigated research questions. Moreover, it will provide critical reflections on the Doughnut resulting from the research process and address opportunities for future research.

Considering the scope of the food bank organisations' activities in terms of the number of people and social organisations supported and the amount of food surplus that is saved from going to waste, it is undeniable that the work of food banks has an impact in the current societal context. Meanwhile, this impact needs to be put in relation to the total amount of food waste that is generated at different levels of the food system. There is moreover a need for the contextualisation of food bank services as emergency food aid that might provide short term relief, but do not overcome food insecurity, as previous research shows. The study of organisational documents from FEBA and Tafel Deutschland and their approach to food waste and food insecurity has shown that both organisations describe them as relevant social and ecological problems posed to society. However, seen in the light of the Doughnut model and its eco-social understanding of sustainability, the displayed rationales and suggested solutions have important limitations.

Tafel Deutschland and FEBA do not display a comprehensive understanding of food waste and food insecurity as an aspect of poverty, or an awareness for complex interrelations of the economy, the society and the environment. Their positions on food waste within the context of the food system are predominantly articulated by attributing the responsibility to bring about solutions to the state and society. This thesis has furthermore brought up several aspects that show discrepancies between organisational portrayal and existing academic research knowledge and eco-social conceptualisations, while the role of corporate actors in the food industry is left out. Their view on food waste and this silence can potentially be explained by the organisations' financial dependencies on corporate actors, and in the case of FEBA also the EU, as main funders of organisational activities. An aspect that is hardly ever put forward in the organisational portrayal includes the benefits that arise from food bank action for corporate actors, namely that the rechannelling of food surpluses saves companies along the supply chain the considerable costs for disposing of food waste. Both organisations consider food insecurity as a facet of systemic poverty, but the extent to which they engage with poverty varies – from a strong interest and engagement of Tafel Deutschland to a rather generic approach of FEBA, with their main focus lying on the issue of food waste instead.

The solutions that Tafel Deutschland and FEBA suggest to overcome food waste and their long-term visions are marked by high degrees of systemic immanence and meagre transformative

potential, essentially expressed in the prominent role that food banks play in their portrayal of the future. In the chapters dealing with the Doughnut as theoretical framework for this thesis as well as in the previous research in the field of eco-social policy, the current economic system governed by the goal of perpetual economic growth has been critically discussed. The calls from both organisations for continuous expansion of their activities, for instance by attracting private and public funding, have a discursive affinity with the growth paradigm. In their visions of the future, uncritical endorsement and the imperative of own organisational growth begs a question: can the amount of surplus food continue to remain at the current level (or even higher), as long as the food charity landscape also 'scales-up' accordingly? This train of thoughts does not correspond with the concept of sustainability, may it be considered from a social, an ecological or an eco-social perspective. While human rights are essential for the conceptualisation and realisation of eco-social sustainability within eco-social research and policy, as well as the Doughnut, both organisations remain silent about them.

7.1 A critical perspective on the Doughnut

The analysis of the organisational position statements and calls for action from an eco-social perspective in the light of Raworth's Doughnut model has led me to critically reflect on the model itself as well. Two major limitations of the model have come to my mind: the lack of consideration of political will and conflicting interests, as well as the informational infrastructure required for a possible implementation of transformative policies that aim at a shift towards the Doughnut.

The lack of consideration for the impact of political will and conflicting interests of different stakeholders is raised as an aspect by critics of the 'Doughnut Economy' (cf. Horwitz, 2017; Milanovic, 2018). The study of the two food banking organisations has also brought attention to the political sphere and policy endeavours that address the societal problems of food waste and food insecurity. The governmental and political action currently taken does not display a comprehensive understanding of eco-social sustainability, but reflects attitudes marked by the growth imperative paradigm. The interest of corporate actors in food banking activities and organisations, as well as the influence they presumably hold due to financial ties, are likely to steer organisational communication and interests, as criticisms on food banks suggest (cf. Riches, 2018). Both aspects show that a neglect of the influence of political will and conflicting interests is an essential hurdle for the realisation of the Doughnut in a world that is bound to the growth imperative. Therefore, an extension of the Doughnut model would need to address these

shortcomings to facilitate an implementation of policies centred on an eco-social understanding of sustainability within the food system.

When considering a hypothetical implementation of the Doughnut in the supranational frame of the EU, that could in fact be a relevant practice area on a scale beyond the national sphere, I moreover noted the problem that the need for an extensive informational infrastructure poses for a possible implementation. The studied organisations that interact on different levels of the EU's multi-level governance indicate with their observed membership structure a difficulty in informational transmission. While Tafel Deutschland as an informal welfare deliverer in the German national context advocates extensively for social issues related to poverty, FEBA as an umbrella organisations that represents food banking organisations on the higher structural level of the EU is merely focussed on the dimension of food waste. Both themes are represented and addressed on both levels, but to a significantly different extent. Seemingly, a membrane divides these spheres that is not fully permeable, with additionally intersecting self-interest of the respective organisation as a relevant factor. Of course, this might be an isolated case of Tafel Deutschland as a FEBA member with interests that differ from the majority of representatives of food banks from other countries. Presuming that it is not, this gives an idea of the infrastructure that would be required to effectively disseminate the essential principles of the Doughnut. On the one hand, considering that ecological concerns of the climate emergency ought to be addressed at the international level, any public interventions, policies, and reform ideas need to be effectively transmitted to the lower levels of governance including the EU and the national levels. On the other hand, social concerns such as poverty, which have long been in the hands of the sovereign nation states, are in need of being brought up to the higher governance levels. A realisation of the Doughnut, integrating the ecological and social concerns of sustainability transition, would therefore require a large-scale communicative structure to keep a balance between the social foundation and the ecological ceiling. This appears to me as a main obstacle for the implementation of the Doughnut, especially when introducing the dimension of diverging interests among different societal actors into the equation.

7.2 Perspectives on further research

This thesis, in its aim to explore and analyse activities of food banking organisations on different governance levels of the EU within an eco-social research frame, has opened perspectives on possibilities for further research. With the interconnections to the food systems, this thesis has shown that there is great potential for eco-social research and eco-social policies in exploring the marketised, capitalist food system and its linkage to food waste and food

insecurity as ecological and social problems of our times. The globalised nature of the food system makes it particularly relevant for eco-social research in relation to the climate emergency as a complex global challenge.

The frame of EU multi-level governance has provided insight into dynamics that affect eco-social sustainability and its realisation. An extension of this thesis' project e.g. through the inclusion of other national food banking organisations, additional regional and local levels of governance or a focus on interdependences in different welfare state types could provide further insight into relevant interrelationships. An approach through the lens of provisioning systems, as developed by Fanning et al. (2020), in a combination with multi-level governance seems equally promising to explore the challenges posed to principles of eco-social sustainability, potentially within the frame of the Doughnut model.

In its nature as a document study, this thesis provides insights into organisational positions in a rather static form. Future research could build on these findings as a starting point and develop qualitative interview-based, as well as quantitative research approaches. The findings of this thesis raise different questions, several of them are related to ties between the organisations and funders, which can be addressed in a further interview study with these, as well as additional organisations to investigate critical interlinkages and resulting dynamics between food banking organisations and business actors.

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Appendices

Appendix I – Dataset European Food Banks Federation (FEBA)

The elements of the dataset are listed in the chronological order of their publication within the year they refer to. Some reports, especially annual reports, are commonly published in the following year; they are grouped at the end of the year that they represent.

Year	Reference	Type of document & Number of pages
2018	FEBA (2019.01) *Towards the Future Together. FEBA Annual Report 2018.* Available at: https://www.eurofoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/FEBA_Annual-Report_2018_final.pdf [Status: 15.03.2023].	Annual report *24 pages*
2019	FEBA (2019.02) *FEBA Annual Convention. Towards the next decade, together.* Available at: https://www.eurofoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/FEBA_Convention_Report_final_nb.pdf [Status: 15.03.2023].	Other activity report *24 pages*
2019	FEBA (2019.03) *FEAD and the European Food Banks Federation. 2019 Implementation Report.* Available at: https://www.eurofoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/FEAD_Implementation_Report_online.pdf [Status: 15.03.2023].	EU monitoring document *12 pages*
2019	FEBA (2020.01) *European Food Banks Federation Annual Report 2019*. Available at: https://www.eurofoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/FEBA_2019_Annual_Report_FINAL.pdf [Status: 15.03.2023].	Annual report *24 pages*
2020	FEBA (2020.02) *FEBA EU Monitoring Report January 2020.* Available at: https://www.eurofoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/FEBA-EU-Monitoring-Report_January-2020.pdf [Status: 15.03.2023].	EU monitoring document *9 pages*
2020	FEBA (2020.03) *New Circular Economy Action Plan. FEBA Consultation on the Roadmap.* Available at: http://www.eurofoodbank.eu/images/cont/position-paper-newcirculareconomy--march2020_file.pdf [Status: 15.03.2023].	Position paper *3 pages*

2020	FEBA (2020.04) *FEBA EU Monitoring Report February 2020*. Available at: https://www.eurofoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/FEBA-EU-Monitoring-Report_February-2020.pdf [Status: 15.03.2023].	EU monitoring document *6 pages*
2020	FEBA (2020.05) *FEBA EU Monitoring Report March – April 2020*. Available at: https://www.eurofoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/FEBA_EU_Monitoring_MarchApril2020_FINAL.pdf [Status: 15.03.2023].	EU monitoring document *8 pages*
2020	FEBA (2020.06) *FEBA EU Monitoring Report Mai 2020.* Available at: https://www.eurofoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/FEBA_EU_Monitoring_May2020.pdf [Status: 15.03.2023].	EU monitoring document *7 pages*
2020	FEBA (2020.07) *EU Monitoring Report June 2020.* Available at: https://www.eurofoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/FEBA_EU_Monitoring_June2020.pdf [Status: 15.03.2023].	EU monitoring document *9 pages*
2020	FEBA (2020.08) *FEBA EU Monitoring Report July 2020*. Available at: https://www.eurofoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/FEBA_EU_Monitoring_July2020.pdf [Status: 15.03.2023].	EU monitoring document *6 pages*
2020	FEBA (2020.09) *FEBA EU Monitoring Report September – October 2020.* Available at: https://www.eurofoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/FEBA_EU_Monitoring_SeptOct2020_bis.pdf [Status: 15.03.2023].	EU monitoring document *14 pages*
2020	FEBA (2020.10) *European Food Banks: concrete answers for the new food system. Position paper on the Farm to Fork Strategy.* Available at: https://lp.eurofoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/FEBA_F2F_PositionPaper_Oct2020_FINAL.pdf [Status: 23.03.2023].	Position paper *5 pages*
2020	FEBA (2020.11) *Consultation on the European Child Guarantee Feedback from the European Food Banks Federation (FEBA)* . Available at: https://lp.eurofoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/FEBA_Consultation_ChildGuarantee_071020.pdf [Status: 23.03.2023].	Position paper *3 pages*

2020	FEBA (2020.12) *FEBA EU Monitoring Report November – December 2020*. Available at: https://www.eurofoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/FEBA_EU_Monitoring_NovDec2020.pdf [Status: 15.03.2023].	EU monitoring document *10 pages*
2020	FEBA (2020.13) *Have your say on reinforcing Social Europe Contribution from the European Food Banks Federation (FEBA)* . Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=23612&langId=de [Status: 23.03.2023].	Position paper *4 pages*
2020	FEBA (2020.14) *FEBA EU Working Group 2020 Report*. Available at: https://www.eurofoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/FEBA_EUWG_2020REPORT_2602.pdf [Status: 15.03.2023].	EU monitoring document *36 pages*
2020	FEBA (2020.15) *FEBA Annual Forum on Food Aid and Social Inclusion. European Food Banks Federation: competences and creativity to feed the future.* Available at: https://www.eurofoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/FEBA_Competences_and_Creativity_Report_final.pdf [Status: 15.03.2023].	Other activity report *23 pages*
2020	FEBA (2020.16) *FEAD and the European Food Banks Federation. 2020 Implementation Report.* Available at: https://www.eurofoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/2020_FEBA_FEAD_interactive_FINAL.pdf [Status: 15.03.2023]	EU monitoring document *15 pages*
2020	FEBA (2021.01) *European Food Banks Federation Annual Report 2020.* Available at: https://www.eurofoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/FEBA_2020_AR_print_FINAL.pdf [Status: 15.03.2023].	Annual report *52 pages*
2021	FEBA (2021.02) *Subject: Feedback on the roadmap on the contingency plan for ensuring food supply and food security in the EU* . Available at: https://www.eurofoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/FEBA_consultation_contingency-plan-food-supply-and-food-security_130121_submitted.pdf [Status: 15.03.2023]	Position paper *3 pages*

2021	FEBA (2021.03*) FEBA EU Monitoring Report January 2021.* Available at: https://www.eurofoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/FEBA_EU_Monitoring_Jan2021.pdf [Status: 15.03.2023].	EU monitoring document *4 pages*
2021	FEBA (2021.04) *FEBA EU Monitoring Report March 2021*. Available at: https://www.eurofoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/FEBA_EU_Monitoring_March2021.pdf [Status: 15.03.2023].	EU monitoring document *8 pages*
2021	FEBA (2021.05) *FEBA EU Monitoring Report April – May 2021*. Available at: https://www.eurofoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/FEBA_EU_Monitoring_AprilMay2021.pdf [Status: 15.03.2023].	EU monitoring document *9 pages*
2021	FEBA (2021.06) *FEBA EU Monitoring Report June 2021.* Available at: https://www.eurofoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/FEBA_EU_Monitoring_June2021.pdf [Status: 15.03.2023].	EU monitoring document *7 pages*
2021	FEBA (2021.07) *FEBA EU Monitoring Report July – August 2021*. Available at: https://www.eurofoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/FEBA_EU_Monitoring_JulyAugust2021.pdf [Status: 15.03.2023].	EU monitoring document *6 pages*
2021	FEBA (2021.08) *FEBA EU Monitoring Report September 2021.* Available at: https://www.eurofoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/FEBA_EU_Monitoring_September2021.pdf [Status: 15.03.2023].	EU monitoring document *5 pages*
2021	FEBA (2021.09) *FEBA EU Monitoring Report October - November 2021.* Available at: https://www.eurofoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/FEBA_EU_Monitoring_OctoberNovember2021.pdf [Status: 15.03.2023].	EU monitoring document *8 pages*
2021	FEBA (202.101) *Proposal for a revision of Directive 2008/98/EC on waste – food waste reduction target. Position paper. Available* at: https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/13223-Food-waste-reduction-targets/F2746283_en [Status: 15.03.2023].	Position paper *3 pages*
2021	FEBA (2021.11) *FEBA EU Working Group 2021 Report*. Available at: https://www.eurofoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/1803_FEBA_EU_WG_interactive_Report.pdf [Status: 15.03.2023].	EU monitoring document *22 pages*

2021	FEBA (2021.12) *FEBA Annual Forum on Food Aid and Social Inclusion Report 2021. Fruits and vegetables for human development: let's take action!* Available at: https://www.eurofoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/FEBA_Annual_Forum_interactive_Report_final.pdf [Status: 15.03.2023].	Other activity report *35 pages*
2021	FEBA (2021.13) *FEAD, REACT-EU and the European Food Banks Federation. 2021 Implementation Report.* Available at: https://www.eurofoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/FEBA_FEAD_REACT_2021_Report_interactive_FINAL.pdf [Status: 15.03.2023].	EU monitoring document *23 pages*
2021	FEBA (2021.14) *The Future of Food Banks in Europe. Quantifying the Impact of European Food Banks. From Farm to Fork. Year 1 Final Report.* Available at: https://www.eurofoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/FEBA_DC_Final_2020_Report.pdf [Status: 15.03.2023].	Other activity report *12 pages*
2021	FEBA (2022.1) *European Food Banks Federation Annual Report 2021*. Available at: https://www.eurofoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/FEBA_2021_Annual_Report_nb.pdf [Status: 15.03.2023].	Annual report *36 pages*
2022	FEBA (2022.2) *FEBA EU Monitoring Report January 2022.* Available at: https://www.eurofoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/FEBA_EU_Monitoring_January_2022.pdf [Status: 15.03.2023].	EU monitoring document *7 pages*
2022	FEBA (2022.3) *FEBA EU Monitoring Report February – April 2022*. Available at: https://www.eurofoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/FEBA_EU_Monitoring_FebApril_2022.pdf [Status: 15.03.2023].	EU monitoring document *10 pages*
2022	FEBA (2022.4) *War in Ukraine: repercussions on food security in Europe. An alarm call from FEBA and its members*. Available at: https://www.eurofoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Ukraine-crisis_update-from-FEBA_040422-1.pdf [Status: 15.03.2023].	Position paper *4 pages*
2022	FEBA (2022.5) *Food Donation to Prevent Food Waste. FEBA's position on the proposal for EU-level food waste reduction targets*. Available at:	Position paper *17 pages*

	https://www.eurofoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/FEBA_Policy_Paper_Donation_Prevents_Waste_final-2.pdf [Status: 15.03.2023].	
2022	FEBA (2022.6) *FEBA EU Monitoring Report 2022 May – June 2022*. Available at: https://www.eurofoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/FEBA_EU_Monitoring_May_June.pdf [Status: 15.03.2023].	EU monitoring document *6 pages*
2022	FEBA (2022.7) *Assessment of FEBA member's activities July 2021 to June 2022*. Available at: https://www.eurofoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/FEBA_report_assessment_2021_2022_web.pdf [Status: 15.03.2023].	Other activity report *15 pages*
2022	FEBA (2022.8) *European Food System Framework Initiative. The position of FEBA and its members.* Available at: https://www.eurofoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Sustainable-Food-System-Initiative_Position-paper_-FEBA_120722.pdf [Status: 15.03.2023].	Position paper *3 pages*
2022	FEBA (2022.9) *FEBA EU Monitoring Report July – September 2022*. Available at: https://www.eurofoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/FEBA_EU_Monitoring_JulSept_2022_final.pdf [Status: 15.03.2023].	EU monitoring document *12 pages*
2022	FEBA (2022.10) *FEBA EU Working Group 2022 Report*. Available at: https://www.eurofoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/FEBA_2022EU_WG_Report_interactive.pdf [Status: 15.03.2023].	EU monitoring document *27 pages*
2022	FEBA (2020.11) *Main drivers of food security. FEBA's response to the public consultation paper circulated among the Advisory Group for Sustainable Food Systems* . Available at: https://www.eurofoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/AGSFS_written-confribution_FEBA_271022.pdf [Status: 15.03.2023].	Position paper *1 page*
2022	FEBA (2022.12) *FEBA Annual Forum on Food Aid and Social Inclusion. Strengthening food systems by supporting the resilience and*	Other activity report *34 pages*

	capacity of Food Banks. Report 2022. Available at: https://www.eurofoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/FEBA_2022_Annual_Forum_Report_interactive.pdf [Status: 15.03.2023].	
2022	FEBA (2022.13) *FEBA Partnerships & Capacity Building. 2022 Report.* Available at: https://www.eurofoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/2912_FEBA_Partnership_Capacity_2022_Report_FINAL_compressed.pdf [Status: 15.03.2023].	Other activity report *28 pages*
2022	FEBA (2022.14) *The Future of Food Banks in Europe. Quantifying the Impact of European Food Banks. From Farm to Fork. Year 2 Final Report.* Available at: https://www.eurofoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/0607_FEBA_DC_Final_Report_Y2.pdf [Status: 15.03.2023].	Other activity report *12 pages*
2022	FEBA (2023) *FEBA EU Monitoring Report October – December 2022*. Available at: https://www.eurofoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/FEBA_EU_Monitoring_OctDec_final.pdf [Status: 15.02.2023].	EU monitoring document *10 pages*

Appendix II – Dataset Tafel Deutschland

The documents of the German food banking organisation are listed with their original name in German language, followed by a translation to English in square brackets [ ].

The elements of the dataset are listed in the chronological order of their publication within the year they refer to. Some reports, especially annual reports, are commonly published in the following year; they are grouped at the end of the year that they represent.

Year	Reference	Type of document & Number of pages
2018	Tafel Deutschland (2018.1) *Positionspapier zur Abschaffung des Mindesthaltbarkeitsdatums und zur Verringerung der Lebensmittelverschwendung. [Position paper on the abolition of the best-before dates and the reduction of food waste]*. Available at: https://www.tafel.de/fileadmin/media/Positionen/PDF/2018_03_16_MHD_Positionspapier.pdf [Status: 15.03.2023].	Position paper *3 pages*
2018	Tafel Deutschland (2018.2) *Gemeinsame Erklärung „Soziale Gerechtigkeit schaffen – Gemeinsam gegen Armut und Ausgrenzung". [Joint Declaration "Creating Social Justice - Together against Poverty and Exclusion]*. Available at: https://www.tafel.de/fileadmin/media/Presse/Pressemitteilungen/PDF/2018/2018-09-18_gem_Erklaerung_final.pdf [Status: 15.03.2023].	Position paper *3 pages*
2018	Tafel Deutschland (2018.3) *Feedback 2018.* Available at: https://www.tafel.de/fileadmin/media/Publikationen/Tafel-Magazin/PDF/Feedback_Magazin_2018_web_Doppelseiten.pdf [Status: 15.03.2023].	Newsletter *23 pages*
2018	Tafel Deutschland (2019.1) *Tafel Deutschland e.V. Jahresbericht 2018. [Tafel Deutschland e.V. Annual Report 2018]*. Available at: https://www.tafel.de/fileadmin/media/Publikationen/Jahresberichte/PDF/20190620_Tafel_Jahresbericht2018_Web.pdf [Status: 15.03.2023].	Annual report *39 pages*
2019	Tafel Deutschland (2019.2) *Grundsatzpapier Europa Unser Bekenntnis zu Europa, unsere Hoffnung auf Europa. [Policy Paper Europe. Our commitment to Europe, our hope for*	Position paper *2 pages*

	Europe.] Available at: https://www.tafel.de/fileadmin/media/Positionen/PDF/2019-04-11_Grundsatzpapier_Europa.pdf [Status: 15.03.2023].	
2019	Tafel Deutschland (2019.3) *Stellungnahme: Tafel Deutschland zum Gesetz gegen Lebensmittelverschwendung. [Statement: Tafel Deutschland on the law against food waste.]* Available at: https://www.tafel.de/fileadmin/media/Ueber_uns/Der_Dachverband/2019-05-17_Stellungnahme_Lebensmittelverschwendung.pdf [Status: 15.03.2023].	Position paper *2 pages*
2019	Tafel Deutschland (2019.4) *Positionspapier zum Mindesthaltbarkeitsdatum (MHD) und zur Wertschätzung von Lebensmitteln. [Position paper on the best-before date (BBD) and food appreciation.]* Available at: https://www.tafel.de/fileadmin/media/Positionen/PDF/2019_05_09_MHD_Positionspapier.pdf [Status: 15.03.2023].	Position paper *4 pages*
2019	Tafel Deutschland (2019.5) *Feedback 2019*. Available at: https://www.tafel.de/fileadmin/media/Publikationen/Tafel-Magazin/PDF/Feeback_Magazin_2019_web.pdf [Status: 15.03.2023].	Newsletter *23 pages*
2019	Tafel Deutschland (2020.1) *Tafel Deutschland e.V. Jahresbericht 2019. [Tafel Deutschland e.V. Annual Report 2019]*. Available at: https://www.tafel.de/fileadmin/media/Publikationen/Jahresberichte/PDF/Jahresbericht_2019_ES_web.pdf [Status: 15.03.2023].	Annual report *71 pages*
2020	Tafel Deutschland (2020.2) *Sozialplatform Klimaschutz. Zivilgesellschaftliche Forderungen an die Politik. [Social platform climate protection. Civil society demands on politics]*. Cosignatory as member of Der Paritätische. Available at: https://www.der-paritaetische.de/fileadmin/user_upload/Schwerpunkte/Klima/SozialPlattformKlimaschutz_Final.pdf [Status: 15.03.2023].	Position paper *3 pages*
2020	Tafel Deutschland (2020.3) *100 Euro mehr sofort. Solidarisch für sozialen Zusammenhalt und gegen die Krise. [100 euros more immediately. Solidary for social cohesion and against the crisis.]* Joint appeal. Available at:	Position paper *1 page*

	https://www.tafel.de/fileadmin/media/Positionen/PDF/100Euro MehrSofort_Aufruf.pdf [Status: 15.03.2023].	
2020	Tafel Deutschland (2020.4) *Stellungnahme zur öffentlichen Anhörung des Ausschusses für Ernährung und Landwirtschaft zu dem Antrag der Fraktion BÜNDNIS 90/DIE GRÜNEN „Lebensmittelverschwendung stoppen“ (BT-Drs. 19/14358). [Statement for the public hearing of the Committee on Food and Agriculture on the motion of the parliamentary group Green party "Stopping food waste" (BT-Drs. 19/14358)]. Available at: https://www.tafel.de/fileadmin/media/2020-06-29_Stellungnahme_Einzelsachv._Evelin_Schulz.pdf* [Status: 15.03.2023].	Position paper *8 pages*
2020	Tafel Deutschland (2020.5) *Forderung einer staatlichen Grundfinanzierung der Tafel-Arbeit. Positionspapier der Tafel Deutschland e.V. [Demand for basic state funding of Tafel work Position paper of Tafel Deutschland e.V.]* Available at: https://www.tafel.de/fileadmin/media/2020-06-29_Positionspapier_Grundfinanzierung.pdf [Status: 15.03.2023].	Position paper *4 pages*
2020	Tafel Deutschland (2020.6) *Informationen zur staatlichen Grundfinanzierung der Arbeit der Tafel-Bewegung in Deutschland. [Information on the basic state funding of the work of the Tafel movement in Germany.]* Available at: https://www.tafel.de/fileadmin/media/Positionen/PDF/2020-07-03_Ausfuehrliche_Hintergrundinformationen_Grundfinanzierung.pdf [Status: 15.03.2023].	Position paper *23 pages*
2020	Tafel Deutschland (2020.7) *Stellungnahme zur öffentlichen Anhörung des Ausschusses für Recht und Verbraucherschutz zu dem Antrag der Abgeordneten Niema Movassat, Dr. André Hahn, Gökay Akbulut, weiterer Abgeordneter und der Fraktion DIE LINKE „Containern von Lebensmitteln entkriminalisieren“ (BT-Drs. 19/9345). [Statement on the public hearing of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Consumer Protection Committee on the motion by Niema Movassat, Dr. André Hahn, Gökay Akbulut, other deputies and the parliamentary group DIE LINKE "Decriminalising the containerisation of food" (BT-Drs. 19/9345)]*. Available at:	Position paper *5 pages*

	https://www.tafel.de/fileadmin/media/Ueber_uns /Aktuelle_Meldungen/2020/2020-12-10_Stellungnahme_Containern.pdf [Status: 15.03.2023].	
2020	Tafel Deutschland (2020.8) *Tafel-Magazin 2020. [Tafel Newsletter 2020].* Available at: https://www.tafel.de/fileadmin/media/Publikationen/Tafel-Magazin/PDF/2020_Tafel-Magazin.pdf [Status: 15.03.2023].	Newsletter *19 pages*
2020	Tafel Deutschland (2021.1) *Tafel Deutschland e.V. Jahresbericht 2020. [Tafel Deutschland e.V. Annual Report 2020].* Available at: https://www.tafel.de/fileadmin/media/Publikationen/Jahresberichte/PDF/Tafel_Deutschland_Jahresbericht_2020_ES.pdf [Status: 15.03.2023].	Annual report *62 pages*
2021	Tafel Deutschland (2021.2) *Soforthilfe für die Armen – Jetzt! Solidarisch für sozialen Zusammenhalt und gegen die Krise. [Emergency aid for the poor - now! In solidarity for social cohesion and against the crisis.]* Joint appeal. Available at: https://www.tafel.de/fileadmin/media/Ueber_uns/Aktuelle_Meldungen/2021/2021-01-25_Aufruf_Soforthilfen.pdf [Status: 15.03.2023].	Position paper *1 page*
2021	Tafel Deutschland (2021.3) *Kinderrechte ins Grundgesetz – aber richtig! [Children's rights in the Constitution - but properly!].* Joint appeal. Available at: https://kinderrechte-ins-grundgesetz.de/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Appell_Kinderrechte-ins-Grundgesetz-aber-richtig_FINAL.pdf [Status: 15.03.2023].	Position paper *1 page*
2021	Tafel Deutschland (2021.4) *Tafel-Magazin 2021. [Tafel Newsletter 2021].* Available at: https://www.tafel.de/fileadmin/media/Publikationen/Tafel-Magazin/PDF/2022-01-10_Tafel_bei_uns_2021_Web.pdf [Status: 15.03.2023].	Newsletter *35 pages*
2021	Tafel Deutschland (2022.1) *Tafel Deutschland e.V. Jahresbericht 2021. [Tafel Deutschland e.V. Annual Report 2020].* Available at: https://www.tafel.de/fileadmin/media/Publikationen/Jahresberichte/PDF/Tafel_Deutschland_JB_21_Einzelseiten_Web.pdf [Status: 15.03.2023].	Annual report *70 pages*
2022	Tafel Deutschland (2022.2) *Offener Brief zum Schutz vor Energiesperren und Wohnungskündigungen. [Open letter on*	Position paper *2 pages*

	protection against energy cut-offs and flat evictions.] Joint appeal. Available at: https://www.tafel.de/fileadmin/media/Positionen/PDF/2022-12-06_offner_Brief_Energiesperren_Kuendigungsmoratorium_W._Schmidt.pdf [Status: 15.03.2023].	
2022	Tafel Deutschland (2022.3) *Tafel-Magazin 2022. [Tafel Newsletter 2022].* Available at: https://www.tafel.de/fileadmin/media/Publikationen/Magazin_bei_uns/PDF/2023-01-16_Tafel_bei_uns_2022_DS.pdf [Status: 15.02.2023].	Newsletter *35 pages*

Appendix III – Timeline developed during coding