

# Preface

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

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

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

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

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Inequalities

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