



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

Changing Families,
Changing Food.

Food choice and family context

Principal Investigators

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Summary

This project will examine the food practices and choices of a small number of families living in a rural area of South Yorkshire, England. Using ethnographic and other qualitative research techniques, the project sets out to explore the diverse meanings and various roles that food plays within families living in a rural area, and

the changing nature of food consumption within these families. In addition, the project will also seek to situate these data within an overall understanding of how families living in rural areas respond to changing public and policy discourses about food.

Royal Holloway
University of London

The Leverhulme Trust

www.sheffield.ac.uk/familiesandfood

Research questions

- How do families in rural areas understand and speak about the changing role of food in everyday family life?
- How do families in rural areas position themselves in relation to dominant discourses about food consumption?
- To what extent are food choices shaped by social, psychological and other factors, in addition to 'tastes and personal choices'?
- What influence do different family members have over food choices and how is this influence negotiated in practice?



Research design

- Semi-structured interviews with families,
- School observation,
- Ethnographic observation focusing on key time such as shopping and meal times,
- Accessing the programme's timeline data to obtain information on rural families

The 'Changing Families, Changing Food' Programme

'*Changing Families, Changing Food*' is a major inter-disciplinary research programme, funded by The Leverhulme Trust. The Programme began in October 2005 and will run for just over three years.

It is organised into three research strands on: pregnancy and motherhood; childhood and family life; and family and community. Focusing on contemporary Britain, the Programme also includes some international comparisons and a 'time-line' to establish the quantitative and qualitative nature of social changes affecting families and food over the last century.

The Programme is coordinated by Peter Jackson (Director of Research for the Social Sciences at Sheffield University) and is based in ICoSS (the University's new social science facility). The Programme involves colleagues from Clinical Sciences, East Asian Studies, Geography, Nursing and Midwifery, the School for Health and Related Research and Sociological Studies at Sheffield in collaboration with colleagues in Health and Social Care at Royal Holloway, University of London.

The research takes food as the lens through which to observe recent changes in family life and examines how changes in family form have affected patterns of food consumption. The Programme's findings are expected to contribute to current debates about obesity and nutrition, media and consumption, food choice and deprivation.

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