



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

Changing Families,
Changing Food.

Food provision and the media

Principal Investigator

Margo Barker (Human Nutrition Unit)

Co-applicants

Graham Smith (School of Health and Related Research)

Peter Jackson (Geography)

Researcher

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Summary

The aim of this study is to explore media representation of women and food from the 1940s to the beginning of the 21st Century. Its specific objectives are to:

- explore secular changes in family structures and ideologies and women's roles through a historical and discursive analysis of food writing (food provision, cooking practices and content of family meals) in women's magazines.
- document the effects of changing family structure and women's roles on cooking practice and dietary intake.

Royal Holloway
University of London

The Leverhulme Trust

www.sheffield.ac.uk/familiesandfood

Research questions

- Are there secular trends in how the relationship between women and food is represented in women's magazines?
- Do any changes resonate with wider socio-cultural change in the family context?
- Will trends in food writing impact on meal composition and nutrient intake?



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Research design

This is a time-series study of the content of food writing in women's magazines from 1960 to 2005. Two popular women's magazines *Woman and Home* and *Woman's Own* have been chosen for analysis, because of their high circulation rates (both current and historical), their specific readership demographics, and their accessibility in the British Library Archives and other archives.

Woman's Own is published weekly, while *Woman & Home* is published monthly.

Current circulation figures for *Woman's Own* are 424,292, and *Woman & Home* 327,554. Back copies are available from 1926 and 1932, respectively.

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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