



The  
University  
Of  
Sheffield.

Changing Families,  
Changing Food.



# Men, children and food

## Principal Investigator

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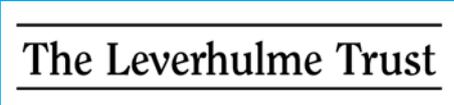
## Summary

This research will explore the effects on men and children of men's involvement or non-involvement with family food practices – such as shopping, cooking and the organisation of meal-times. In doing this we aim to identify the food practices of both men and children; to develop an understanding of the extent to which their preferences and practices are mutually influential, affecting their self-identities and their conceptions of each another; and to examine how these practices and the concomitant relationships are constitutive of and relate to changing families.

The study will be based in three distinct geographical areas: inner-city Sheffield, an ex-coal-mining area in South Yorkshire and rural Derbyshire. The findings from this project will contribute to our knowledge of men's current roles in 'feeding the family' and to our understanding of how fathers and children view 'feeding the family' in the wider context of family roles, relations and structures. This will ultimately inform our understanding of the relationship between food, gender and changing family lives.



Royal Holloway  
University of London

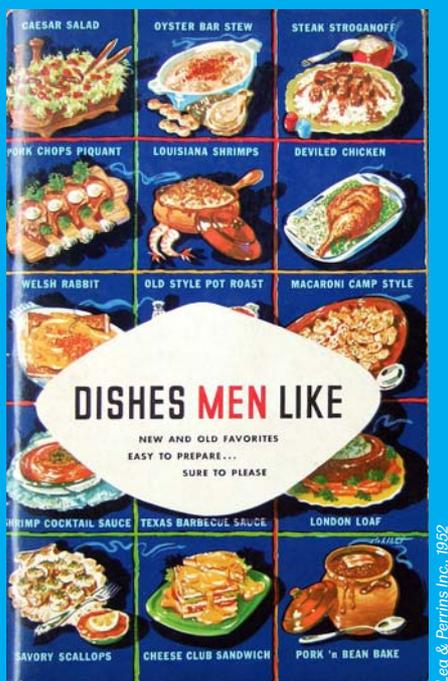


The Leverhulme Trust

[www.sheffield.ac.uk/familiesandfood](http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/familiesandfood)

## Research questions

- What do men do in relation to food?
- How do children understand and use food inside and outside the home?
- What is the relationship between men's and children's conceptions and practices of food?
- How is food used as a means of negotiating with and relating to others, so constituting identities of self, family and gender?
- Do class, ethnicity and geography relate to the food practices of men and children?
- How do these food practices of men and children reflect and affect changes in family lives?



## Research design

The research will be carried out using a range of qualitative methodologies, including:

- Participant and non-participant observation in schools;
- Arts based activities in relation to food practices;
- At least one focus group with men in each of the recruitment areas;
- Semi-structured interviews with 20 families (whether under one roof or not, two parent, single parent or re-constituted families) in each area;
- Ethnographic observation of up to three households in each area, exploring key times with food practices, e.g. shopping and meal-times;

We will also draw on the qualitative and quantitative timeline aspects of the programme in order to access data regarding men's food practices at different points in the twentieth century.

## 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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