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University  
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Sheffield.

Changing Families,  
Changing Food.

# Food, eating and social trends

## Principal Investigators

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## Summary

The 'Food, eating and social trends' (FEAST) project will construct a timeline and international comparator dataset on the consumption and availability of food. The timeline will cover most of the last century and the international coverage will be global, at least

for more recent years. The bulk of good quantitative data is unlikely to directly tell us about the changing family in relation to food (except for rich nations in recent years); but that data should indirectly inform our understanding.

Royal Holloway  
University of London

The Leverhulme Trust

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

## Research questions

- What sources of good quality data are available?
- Can international datasets such as the FAO food balance sheets and ILO data on food prices by type, year and country be used for this project?
- Can we measure a globalisation or convergence of world food consumption in the last century? (In addition to counter global patterns).
- Can NFS, FES, FRS and other British surveys be sampled around census years from the mid 20th century onwards to provide a detailed timeline of consumption by family in Britain coincident with the main data on changing family structure?
- Can consumption by quantity be geographically disaggregated across the UK in recent years (not by inference from type two diabetes)?
- Do those who eat together vote together? (or some similar slightly more tangential question of interest to at least one of the principal investigators).
- Can we use evidence of food consumption to define class groupings in Britain, both socially and geographically?



## Research design

The statistical interrogation and mapping of existing quantitative international and national datasets on agriculture, food consumption and demographic trends.

## 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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