

Institution: Coventry University
Unit of Assessment: 19
Title of case study: Influencing Policy and Practice for Sustainable Food Communities
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>Research into 'Food and Sustainable Communities' has become increasingly applied and impact-oriented during the current REF census period, reflecting a diversification in funding sources and a growing recognition of the significance, quality and international reach of the research undertaken. This research has delivered national and international impact in the following key areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact on practitioners and professional services, influencing and enabling the work of Non-Governmental Organisations working in support of the local food economy and community food growing sector in the United Kingdom; • Impact on public policy and services, informing the development of new Common Agricultural Policy measures to promote sustainable agricultural livelihoods and farm product quality.
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>From the late 1990s, Coventry University's research on food networks, rural and regional development generated an international reputation. The early work began with several EU funded projects (RIPPLE, 1997-9; SUPPLIERS and SPRITE, 2001-4), led by Professor Ilbery¹, with Kneafsey as co-applicant on the latter two projects. The projects resulted in several frequently cited papers in 3* and 4* journals [1,2]. The Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) also funded research to examine the impact of the England Rural Development Programme in relation to local food networks in England (2003-5). These early projects played an important role in the Unit establishing international research agendas around local and regional foods, food quality and sustainable rural development. Since 2003 Kneafsey has developed a particular focus on the notion of 'alternative' discourses and practices in relation to food. Kneafsey led an ESRC-AHRC funded project on 'Reconnecting Producers, Consumers and Food: Alternative Food Networks' (2003-7) which resulted in a research monograph [4] that was referenced in a call for papers at the 2012 World Congress of Rural Sociology in Lisbon, and the publication of several journal papers [3,5].</p> <p>Building on the strong academic record generated during 1997-2007, research since 2008 has become increasingly policy and impact oriented under Kneafsey's leadership. Much of the funding for this period has been drawn from policy making or campaigning organisations in the food and community sector. In the policy sector Kneafsey (in partnership with Warwick University) has undertaken research commissioned by Defra which investigated consumer perceptions of food security. Outputs from this work included an invited contribution to a special issue of the Journal of Rural Studies [6]. More recently, Kneafsey's team has completed research for the European Commission which has informed the development of policy initiatives to promote short food chains. In the non-governmental sector, the team has undertaken work on local food mapping for the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) and is currently evaluating the impact of interventions to promote community food production for Garden Organic (formerly the Henry Doubleday Research Association, HDRA). The total value of research funding generated during the period 2008 to present is £1,660,740.</p>
<p>3. References to the research</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ilbery, B. and Kneafsey, M. (2000) Producer constructions of quality in regional speciality food production: A case study from south west England, <i>Journal of Rural Studies</i>, 16 (2): 217-230 (Impact Factor 1.786; Citations 128) 2. Kneafsey, M., Ilbery, B., & Jenkins, T. (2001) Exploring the Dimensions of Culture Economies in Rural West Wales, <i>Sociologia Ruralis</i>, 41 (3): 296-310 (Impact Factor 1.022; Citations 38) 3. Holloway, L. Cox, R., Venn, L., Kneafsey, M., Dowler, E., Tuomainen, H. (2006) Managing sustainable farmed landscape through 'alternative' food networks: a case study from Italy,

¹ Prof Ilbery left Coventry University in 2006 and is now Emeritus Professor and Associate of SURGE.

Impact case study (REF3b)

- Geographical Journal, 172 (3), 219-229 (Impact Factor 1.635; Citations 14)
4. Kneafsey, M., Holloway, L., Venn, L., Dowler, E., Cox, R., Tuomainen, H. (2008) Reconnecting consumers, producers and food: exploring alternatives. Oxford: Berg. (Citations 48)
 5. Dowler, E., **Kneafsey**, M., Cox, R., Holloway, L. (2009) 'Doing food differently': Reconnecting biological and social relationships through care for food, Sociological Review 57 (SUPPL. 2): 200-221 (5-Year Impact Factor 2012: 1.220; Citations 3)
 6. **Kneafsey**, M. Dowler, E., Lambie-Mumford, H., Inman, A. & Collier, R. (2013) Consumers and food security: uncertain or empowered? Journal of Rural Studies 29: 101-112 (Impact Factor 1.786; Citations 4)

Selected Research Grants

- 1997 – 1999: Ilbery B. EU 4th Framework £1,176,400, Regional Images and the Promotion of Quality Products and Services (RIPPLE). Coventry was the co-ordinating centre.
- 2001-2004: Ilbery, B. and **Kneafsey**, M. EU 5th Framework, £130,000, Supporting and Promoting Rural Integrated Tourism in Europe's Lagging Regions (SPRITE).
- 2001-2004: Ilbery, B. and **Kneafsey**, M. EU 5th Framework, £128,000, Supply Chains Linking Food SMEs in Europe's Lagging Rural Regions (SUPPLIERS).
- 2003 – 2007: **Kneafsey**, M., Holloway, L., Cox, R., Dowler, E., ESRC/AHRC Cultures of Consumption £205,890, Reconnecting Consumers, Food and Producers: 'Alternative' Food Networks?
- 2008 – 2009: **Kneafsey**, M., Dowler E. Lambie, H. Campaign to Protect Rural England £54,778, Mapping Local FoodWebs
- 2009 -10: **Kneafsey**, M. [led by Warwick University, Dr R Collier], Defra, £30,420, Consumer Insights into Food Security and Food Prices
- 2011-13: **Kneafsey**, M., Cheese, E. Garden Organic, £36,624, Evaluating the Impact of the 'Master Gardener' Programme
- 2011-13: **Kneafsey**, M. and Venn, L. European Commission, £47,000 Short Food Supply Chains in the EU – A State of Play

4. Details of the impact

The narrative is presented chronologically, in order to demonstrate how the impact has built over time, expanding to exert international influence.

Example 1. Use of research findings by non-governmental organization and members of the public to lobby government and other stakeholders

In 2008 **Kneafsey** (PI), in a joint bid with Dowler (Warwick University) was awarded £54,778 to design a local foodwebs 'Action Pack' for the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE). The contract was won through competitive process and feedback from the CPRE at the time indicated that the track record of the applicants in the arena of local food networks was a decisive factor in the decision to award the contract. Drawing on funding secured from the Big Lottery Local Food Fund, the CPRE commissioned the Coventry-led team to develop a toolkit which would enable community 'action groups' to map the social, environmental and economic impacts of local foodwebs. **Kneafsey's** team developed and piloted a prototype action pack and provided training sessions and supporting materials to CPRE personnel who would use the pack. The pack was further tested in six locations by the CPRE before being rolled out to an additional 13 areas. The mapping reports for all of these 19 locations, as well as a major National Report have been published online (see below). The National Report was launched at the Houses of Parliament on 12 June 2012, attended by 23 peers and MPs. The CPRE's Senior Policy Campaigner stated that "**Kneafsey's** work significantly informed the CPRE's National Report" and her and colleagues' contribution is acknowledged in the all of the 19 location reports, plus the National Report. Text provided by **Kneafsey** et al in a literature review (defining the concepts of 'local food' and 'foodwebs') was reproduced in the National Report [a]. In addition, the tools which **Kneafsey** et al designed in the original toolkit [b] have been further developed and adapted for online access (see below). The toolkit has been translated into French and was downloaded over 200 times within the UK and Europe.

The CPRE's Senior Rural Policy Campaigner stated that "*they wouldn't have had the time or expertise to develop these tools alone*" and in addition, **Kneafsey's** involvement was essential as

“it is important for the presentation of the research that they had the support of an independent University”. This, in his words, gave *“credibility”* to the results from the Action Pack and *“strengthened”* the activities of the CPRE as *“the stamp of the University made sure we were asking sensible questions and that the research was rigorous”*. He acknowledged that follow-on impacts from the Action Pack had their *“genesis in Kneafsey’s initial work”* and stated that *“Kneafsey helped bring the importance of foodwebs into the public consciousness”*. The Action Pack has continued to have utility for a number of community groups including *“local authorities, community groups and primary schools.”* (For example <http://tinyurl.com/nt7awt2>). The CPRE used data generated through use of the Action Pack to support their successful campaign to stop the construction of a large supermarket in Ledbury, Herefordshire. Using the results generated by local volunteers using the Action Pack, campaigners presented a report to the Herefordshire Council Planning Committee on 22 February 2012, which demonstrated the potential damaging effect of a proposed supermarket on local foodwebs. The successful case put forward by the CPRE and supported by results obtained through use of the Action Pack and training materials designed by **Kneafsey’s** team is referenced in the minutes of Herefordshire Council Planning Committee [c]. In addition, the recent 2013 UK Labour Policy Review ‘Feeding the Nation’ [d] references the CPRE’s National Report (**Kneafsey’s** contribution to which has already been detailed). In summary, this case demonstrates existing and continuing impact from **Kneafsey’s** work, primarily through her leadership of design of research tools and training materials which have facilitated successful lobbying activities of the CPRE which are, in turn, influencing local and national policy developments.

Example 2. Use of research findings by non-governmental organisation to achieve programme expansion and hence increased delivery of health and well-being and social benefits.

Research completed and still ongoing for Garden Organic (formerly the Henry Doubleday Research Association), the UK’s leading charity promoting organic gardening and growing, has contributed to the success of the organization in achieving significant additional funding. After competitive tender, Coventry University (PI **Kneafsey**) was commissioned to undertake an evaluation of the impact of Garden Organic’s ‘Master Gardener’ programme, which is funded by the Big Lottery’s Local Food Fund [f, h]. Through the programme, Garden Organic has recruited, trained and supported more than 400 volunteers who in turn have mentored 4000 households in London, Warwickshire, Norfolk and Lincolnshire to grow their own food. The evaluation [e] published online (2012) provided independent and rigorous evidence of the wide range of socio-economic, environmental and health benefits of the Master Gardener initiative for the volunteers and the households involved. According to the Master Gardener Programme Manager at Garden Organic, the added benefit of contracting Coventry University and especially **Kneafsey** was that it allowed them to state that on the basis of *“independent”* research that the programme *“makes a difference”*. The evidence revealed in **Kneafsey’s** research has already been used by Garden Organic to support a successful bid to secure £200,000 of further funding for the programme, including a commission from Lincolnshire Public Health [g]. The Lincolnshire volunteer co-ordinator confirmed that without being able to evidence the impact of the Master Gardener programme through **Kneafsey’s** evaluation, *“without a doubt that Master Gardener programme wouldn’t have happened”*. The Programme Manager also confirmed that *“it was a rare opportunity for us [to apply for this funding] and Coventry University allowed us to capitalize on this opportunity”*. Additional long term funding has also been secured from Medway Public Health, and Rye Hill Prison with bids again being supported by the evidence provided from the evaluation.

Kneafsey’s research has supported the Unit’s agenda for co-creation and co-delivery, working alongside end-users. For example, **Kneafsey** and her team delivered basic research and ethics training to the volunteer coordinators, in order to increase the data collection capacity of the Master Gardener programme and enhance its long term sustainability. The Programme Manager believes that the Coventry research has impacted upon the charity’s ability to develop the business model. He commented that the evaluation had moved from being an *‘additional’* activity to a *‘central’* component of the programme and stated that the research *“is fundamental to the charity’s business strategy”*. He went on to comment that *“Coventry University findings have also benefited Garden Organic by inspiring and motivating our volunteer Master Gardeners. First, when researchers Moya Kneafsey and Elizabeth Cheese presented the findings at our national*

conference with 200 food growing mentors. Next, when I have presented findings during training for new and experienced volunteers. And most recently, through national and local press exposure in print, radio, and television.” He added that “Coventry University’s research team have taken personal interest in designing a bespoke approach to suit the needs of Garden Organic. As well as increase the scope and quality of the research by training the Master Gardener Programme team to take part in data collection.”

Example. 3 Use of research to inform European agricultural policy

The third example of impact derives from research completed for the European Commission, which investigated the state of play of Short Food Supply Chains and Local Food Systems in the European Union [i, j, k, l]. This contract was won after a competitive process to which **Kneafsey** was invited to apply after the research commissioner identified **Kneafsey** due to her international reputation for research in ‘short food chains’ and having been aware of her work for the CPRE. Whilst there has been a political will to develop policies to support small-scale farmers in the EU, there was a lack of evidence regarding the social and economic benefits of short food chains and local food systems. The Project Officer at the Joint Research Centre in Seville, responsible for commissioning the research on behalf of the Directorate General for Agriculture, noted that he was “*more than satisfied*” with the report and specifically that the Commission felt that **Kneafsey** had delivered “*more value than the money we offered*”. **Kneafsey** was invited to Brussels in April 2012 and February 2013 to present the research to stakeholders including DG Agriculture’s Advisory Group in Product Quality and was also invited to the European Rural Development Network’s Mediterranean Cluster conference on short food chains in October 2012. The Project Officer stressed that the policy implications of the report were “*starting to happen now*” and it is currently being used as a “*key element*” in drafting of a policy report for the European Parliament which will be debated in January 2014. In addition, a conference (‘Food From Here’) was hosted at Coventry on 3rd July 2013, featuring international speakers and a special address from a representative of the European Commission, attracting international delegates from local and community food sectors [m].

Conclusion

This case study demonstrates that **Kneafsey’s** research has had **impact on practitioners and professional services**, influencing CPRE’s work on local food and Garden Organic’s work on community organic food production. In addition, the research has had an **impact on public policy and services** providing evidence to the European Commission on the social and economic benefits of short food chains and local food systems to inform future policy.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

- a) Campaign to Protect Rural England: National Report on Foodwebs mapping <http://tinyurl.com/cple4tu>
- b) Campaign to Protect Rural England: Online Action Pack <http://tinyurl.com/9vqg99y>
- c) Minutes of Herefordshire Council Planning Committee Ref N113051/F <http://tinyurl.com/pwalql7>
- d) UK Labour Policy Review 2013 ‘Feeding the nation’ <http://tinyurl.com/pmlhv97>
- e) Master Gardener evaluation quoting **Kneafsey** <http://tinyurl.com/pxqx3ox>.
- f) Master Gardener video of **Kneafsey**, 266 views - Nov 2013 <http://tinyurl.com/nktoqg8>
- g) Article by the Lincolnshire volunteer co-ordinator discusses the benefits of the Master Gardener Programme and refers to **Kneafsey’s** work <http://tinyurl.com/pcfmbd2>
- h) Article about Master Gardener, quoting **Kneafsey** <http://tinyurl.com/getztc4>
- i) Short Food Supply Chains Final Report <http://tinyurl.com/ofnbdyd>
- j) **Kneafsey** Short Food Supply Chains, Guardian 29th July 2013 <http://tinyurl.com/ogk657m>
- k) Short Food Supply Chains Article on Farmdrop, an online shop that allows consumers to buy direct from producers via a community group. Post includes a line stating “We highly recommend reading **Kneafsey’s** recent article in the Guardian.” <http://farmdrop.tumblr.com>
- l) Article in the Greenwise magazine, independent daily resource and information service supporting UK business in the green economy <http://tinyurl.com/nggzwgw>
- m) ‘Food From Here’ conference independent report <http://tinyurl.com/geflbxid>