

Institution: City University London
Unit of Assessment: 23 Sociology
Title of case study: Integrated and Sustainable Food Systems: Influencing Policy-Makers
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>The Centre for Food Policy (CFP) at City University London has analysed the food system's dynamics and impacts and how policy shapes and addresses its challenges. CFP influence has taken two forms:</p> <p>(1) Injecting the case for integrated policy analysis into policy debates. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing Ecological Public Health as a reasoned intellectual framework, for instance in the Chief Scientist's Foresight Obesity project as a unifying perspective, binding different disciplines and data in the much-cited obesity 'systems map'. • Shaping food policy discourse, manifest in Defra's <i>Food 2030</i> policy framework (2010). • Taking the case to the food industry, during and after the food commodity price 'spike' (2007 to 2008) and the horsemeat scandal (2013). <p>(2) Advising high-level policy-makers. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposing in 2005 the creation of and then serving on (2008 to 10) the Council of Food Policy Advisors. • Advising the Cabinet Office for its <i>Food Matters</i> policy report (2008) which led to the creation of a Cabinet sub-committee, the Domestic Affairs (Food) Committee (DA(F)), chaired by Hilary Benn. • Appointment to the Expert Advisory Group on Obesity (2008 to 2010) following the Foresight obesity project and advising the £0.3bn <i>Healthy Weight Healthy Lives</i> programme. • Advising United Nations bodies on integrated policy. • Being appointed as members of the Cabinet Office review of food policy (2008). • Providing 'inside track' Whitehall briefings to ministers, civil servants, commissions and Select Committees as requested, e.g., on food security following the commodity price 'spike' (2008 to 2009). • Prime Ministerial appointment to the UK Sustainable Development Commission enabling leadership and actions inside government e.g., on food security and sustainability. • Appointment to Ireland's <i>SafeFood</i> Advisory Committee.
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>For over 20 years (at City University London since 2002), the CFP has researched and promoted a complex, integrated approach to food policy, arguing that a new paradigm is emerging and merits support. This integrated approach demands more robust and contextually-grounded policy frameworks. Accordingly, our modern social science-based policy analysis relocates policy-making from being the prime preserve of governments to a continuing negotiation between multiple actors in potentially (and sometimes actually) contested space. The result is a multi-level and multi-sectoral analysis which captures the dynamics between policy-makers concerning the role of food in society, health, ecosystems, industry and economy. The CFP team (comprising Professors Tim Lang and Martin Caraher and Dr David Barling, with Research Assistants and Honorary Fellows) has researched these dynamics through grant-aided and independent research projects and direct participation. CFP policy is to work with and for the public (non-profit) interest. Since 2002, we have researched:</p> <p>(1) <u>The complexity of food policy analysis (Barling, Caraher, Lang and Honorary Fellows).</u></p> <p>We have explored how to juxtapose and synthesise disparate bodies of evidence on food's impact on public health, environment, social justice and consumer choice. Our analysis was first mapped out in <i>Social Policy & Administration</i> (2002) and extended in <i>Food Policy</i> (OUP 2009; Highly Commended BMA book awards 2010) and <i>Ethical Traceability</i> (Springer 2008). In each, we progressively built the case for food systems change. The 'evidence-based policy' approach, epitomised by the medical Cochrane Collaboration thinking, while appropriate for some issues, does not fully capture the realities of food policy change. Our analysis continues (see Grants below). Specifically, Lang co-wrote and led 5 papers at the Sustainable Development Commission. Barling was a member of the EU <i>ESF/COST Forward Look: European Food Systems in a Changing World</i> (published 2009) where he, Lang and Rayner (CFP Fellow) wrote a 'state-of-the-</p>

art' paper on European Food Retail and Consumption trends. This work now seeks new metrics as part of a global International Network for Food and Obesity Research, Monitoring & Action Support (INFORMAS) collaboration led by Auckland and Deakin Universities, with an externally funded PhD.

(2) **Policy analysis of food security as sustainability (Barling and Lang)**. CFP research contributed to policy thinking about food and sustainability and argued that sustainability requires capacities not just for production and supply but also for environmental and social capacities (*Food Wars*, 2004). Food Security and Sustainability Policy Research was conducted in (a) funded research reports (Esmeé Fairburn Foundation and Soil Association grants, 2006, summarised in *J Royal Society Arts*, 2008) by Barling and Lang (2006 to 2010) and amplified and deepened with the Chatham House Food Futures project (2006 to 2009); (b) the development of a 6-cell 'omni-standards' multi-factor check-list for food sustainability, first presented to the Institute of British Geographers, then incorporated and expanded at the Sustainable Development Commission by Lang (2006 to 2011); (c) special research by Barling and Lang for UNEP's *Avoiding Future Famines* (2012) contribution to the UN Rio+20 conference (2012) on sustainable consumption and production. This work continues (see Grants section).

(3) **The development of Ecological Public Health (EPH) as an integrating framework for twenty-first century public health (Lang, Rayner, Caraher)**. EPH is 'big picture' theorisation. It suggests that policy-makers need to reconnect the social and biological traditions of ecological thinking. Here CFP has suggested new heuristics for how to deal with complexity. We suggest policy-makers can order what may otherwise appear a policy 'jumble' by using four 'dimensions' – material, bio-physiological, social and cultural – to manage complex information. Our research on EPH began in the early 2000s. It matured in research on obesity for government (*Obesity Reviews* 2008) and in *Food Policy* (2009, Oxford University Press). It was fully articulated as an intellectual framework in *Ecological Public Health* (Routledge, 2012; Highly Commended BMA 2013). Lang and Rayner's *BMJ* (2012) article on EPH has had over 12,000 views online. We are now applying this framework to various policy 'hotspots' e.g., (a) antibiotic over-use (Lang and Rayner: forthcoming *Public Health* special issue, 8 papers); (b) corporate dominance of public governance, e.g., UK Department of Health's Responsibility Deals (papers in *The Lancet* 2010 and *BMJ* 2010); (c) Caraher's role in an Australian Health & Medical Research Council Aus\$1.5M project on food and obesity.

3. References to the research

1. Lang T., Rayner G., Rayner M., Barling D., & Millstone E. (2005). [Policy Councils on Food, Nutrition & Physical Activity: the UK as a case study](#). *Public Health Nutrition*, 8(1), 11-19.
2. Lang T. & Heasman M. (2004). *Food Wars: the global battle for minds, mouths and markets*. London: Earthscan
3. Barling D., Lang T., & Caraher M. (2002). [Joined-up Food Policy? The trials of Governance, Public Policy and the Food System](#). *Social Policy & Administration*, 36(6), 556-575.
4. Lang T., Barling D., & Caraher, M. (2009). *Food Policy: integrating health, environment & society*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
5. Rayner G. & Lang T. (2012). *Ecological Public Health: reshaping the conditions for good health*. Abingdon: Routledge/Earthscan
6. Lang T. & Barling D. (2012). [Food Security and Food Sustainability: reformulating the debate](#). *Geographical Journal*, 178(4), 313–326.

Key Research Grants

1. **Transparent Food: Quality and Integrity in food – a challenge for chain communication and transparency research** [December 2009 to November 2011]. EU 7th Framework Research Framework Co-operation and Support Action, with 10 partners for a total grant of €995,094 of which City's grant was €89,874. Grant Agreement No: 245003. DB Work Package co-ordinator and Principal Investigator City University London. www.transparentfood.eu. Developed on work from 6th Framework Ethical Traceability project
2. **SENSE: HarmoniSed ENvironmental Sustainability in the European food and drink chain** [February 2012 to January 2015] is an EU 7th Research Framework collaborative research project under the Knowledge Based Bio-Economy theme, with 23 partners including

universities, research institutes and SMEs which runs for 3 years with a total grant of €0.89m from which City's grant is €150,736. Grant agreement No: 288974. DB Work Package co-ordinator and Principal Investigator City University London. This develops methodologies for assessing the environmental (and social) sustainability of food products for utilisation by SMEs and applies it to the EU's Sustainability Policy agenda. www.senseproject.eu.

3. **GLAMUR: Global and Local food chain Assessment: a Multidimensional performance-based approach** [February 2013 to January 2016] is an EU 7th Framework collaborative research project under the KBBE theme, with 15 academic partners which runs for 3 years with a total grant of €2.93m from which City's grant is €228,585. Grant agreement No: 311778. CFP Work Package co-ordinator and Principal Investigator City University London. www.glamur.eu. Develops new methodological approach to food systems change.
4. **FoodLinks** [2011 to 2014] EU 7th Framework – is looking at knowledge brokerage between policy-makers, academics and NGOs to improve sustainable consumption and production of food and to improve communities of practice. www.foodlinkscommunity.net. Total Value: €1.5M / CFP share €120.62k. CFP WP leader on Foodlinks project as well (on public procurement of sustainable food community of practice)

The quality of this research is very high; it has had a major influence on the agenda in its field.

4. Details of the impact

The CFP has influenced food policy by injecting ideas into policy discourse and influencing high-level policy-makers and bodies in the UK and internationally. Here we provide seven examples.

(i) Establishment of the Council of Food Policy Advisors

As a result of proposals in a CFP paper [2005, see section 2], the Council of Food Policy Advisors was created in 2008 by Hilary Benn, then Secretary of State for the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). Council membership represented diverse sectors and experience to help drive Government thinking on how to identify priorities and integrate appropriate policy across sectors. Lang was appointed to the Council. This body was widely credited with championing a new drive for (and integration of) food policy issues in central government, e.g., generating the Fruit and Vegetables Taskforce, normalising the notion of sustainable diets and helping formulate Defra's landmark *Food 2030* policy framework to address the impact of food consumption on both human and environmental health and the general unsustainability of the food system [1], [2], [3].

(ii) 'Food Matters' policy report

When he became Prime Minister, Gordon Brown responded to CFP analysis in *Social Policy & Administration* (2002) by requesting the first UK review of integrated food policy since the Ministry of Food was abolished in 1955. The review prioritised health and environmental outcomes. Lang and Barling were invited to become two of the six-strong advisory group. A civil servant on CFP's MSc was seconded back to co-write the report. The publication of the data summary (January 2008) and the *Food Matters* final report (July 2008 [4]) were widely welcomed in policy circles and fuelled a seven month internal Whitehall debate which resulted in the creation of a new Cabinet Sub-Committee – the Domestic Affairs (Food) Committee (DA(F)) – to lead on better integration of industry, health, environment and cultural thinking. The DA(F) was chaired by Hilary Benn at the Ministerial level, with a cross-UK senior civil servant liaison committee created in parallel between England and Devolved Administrations.

(iii) Sustainable Development Commission Reports

The Prime Minister appointed CFP Director, Lang, to the Government's Sustainable Development Commission (SDC). Lang led and co-authored a series of SDC reports issuing formal advice to Government, including *Looking Back, Looking Forward: Sustainability and UK Food Policy 2000-2011* (March 2011) [5] and *Food Security and Sustainability: the perfect mix* (July 2009) [6].

(iv) Tackling Obesity

The CFP accepted an invitation from the Chief Scientist's Foresight programme in December 2005 to summarise the role of policy in tackling obesity. This was the only policy strand of work undertaken in the major "Tackling Obesities" project and final report. CFP proposals on the need to address ecological public health and 'policy cacophony' helped drive the rare collaboration of three Departments of State and resulted in the £0.3 billion 'Healthy Weight Healthy Lives' programme

2007 to 2010 [7]. Two CFP members were appointed to the Expert Advisory Group and played active parts in design and delivery until its closure by the Coalition in 2011.

(v) Influence on Food Companies

The CFP is regularly invited to be a ‘firm but acceptable critic’ to food companies by giving speeches, having private meetings, auditing and critiquing industry practice. Examples since 2008 are: meeting Marks & Spencer about *Plan A* (2009, 2010); speaking at two Waitrose closed strategy meetings (2011 and 2012); addressing the UK grain trade (2013); discussing with IGD (a food industry research body with 750 corporate members) how to address the ‘omni-standards’ for the auditing of food sustainability which are now emerging with WRAP and IGD [8]. To obviate conflicts of interest the CFP does not accept funding from the food industry.

(vi) Cabinet Office, Whitehall Briefings and Select Committee Enquiries

The CFP has frequently provided private UK Cabinet Office and Whitehall briefings and representation at Select Committee Enquiries. Examples include: (a) Barling advised the creation of new UK food security indicators (2008 to 10); (b) Lang asked to meet the Chair of the Environmental Audit Committee (EAC) before the Food Security inquiry about its remit and goal, after the SDC’s closure; (c) appearing before the EAC sustainable food inquiry (CFP Honorary Fellow Clutterbuck was an EAC advisor); (d) appearing before the EFRA committee inquiry into food security [9].

(vii) European Union policies

The CFP was invited to present a paper on Common Agricultural Policy reform to EU Commissioners for Health and Agriculture by the pan-EU NGO Agriculture and Rural Consortium in 2010 [10]. CFP 6th and 7th Framework projects inform policy-making on environment and knowledge-based bio-economy via EU Directorate General (DG) Research, a long-term impact. Barling was invited to be expert advisor to the DG Sanco food chain committee. Caraher was appointed to Ireland’s influential *SafeFood* Advisory Committee in 2010.

(viii) United Nations

The CFP’s work on integrated policy has been referenced by multiple agencies in the UN system. Professor Olivier De Schutter, Special Rapporteur on Right to Food, read *Food Wars* as he began his term and says this was one of his early influences [11]. In 2009, he invited Lang to advise on Responsibilities of Transnational Corporations in the food sector, co-organised with the European Centre for Constitutional and Human Rights and supported by the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

- [1] Hilary Benn MP.
- [2] First report from the Council of Food Policy Advisors:
<http://archive.defra.gov.uk/foodfarm/food/policy/council/pdf/cfpa-rpt-090914.pdf>.
- [3] Second Report of the Council of Food Policy Advisors “Food: a recipe for a healthy, sustainable and successful future”:
<http://archive.defra.gov.uk/foodfarm/food/policy/council/pdf/cfpa-rpt-100315.pdf>.
- [4] *Food Matters* policy report, July 2008:
www.foodsecurity.ac.uk/assets/pdfs/cabinet-office-food-matters.pdf.
- [5] *Looking Back, Looking Forward: Sustainability and UK Food Policy 2000-2011* (March 2011)
www.sd-commission.org.uk/data/files/publications/FoodPolicy10_Report_final_w.pdf.
- [6] *Food Security and Sustainability: the perfect mix.* (July 2009).
www.sd-commission.org.uk/data/files/publications/SDCFoodSecurityPositionPaper.pdf.
- [7] *Healthy Weight, Healthy Lives: A Cross-Government Strategy for England*, available on request.
- [8] <http://www.igd.com/our-expertise/Sustainability/CSR/4721/Environmental-Sustainability-Matrix-Understand-sustainability-issues-across-the-supply-chain/> (and individual IDG contacts)
- [9] EFRA Committee Food Security inquiry (reported 2009); EAC Sustainable Food inquiry (reported 2012): <http://tinyurl.com/ormynijg>.
- [10] Contacts from European Public Health and Agriculture Consortium.
- [11] UN Special Rapporteur on Right to Food (UN Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights).