

Institution: City University London
Unit of Assessment: 23 Sociology
Title of case study: Food Citizenship and the Public Interest
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>The Centre for Food Policy (CFP) at City University London uses applied research to develop 'public interest' approaches to understanding the relations between food systems and consumers. A key focus is the tension between 'food citizenship' and consumerism. Our research has long asked how food policy-makers can address and improve citizenship interests when faced with both 'old' social divisions (inequalities, poverty, poor market access) and 'new' pressures (energy-water-biodiversity footprints, environmental knowledge deficits, de- and re-skilling). Our impact has been in promoting policies to reshape the conditions for good, low impact consumption through:</p> <p>(a) generating high-level debate about sustainable diets (what to eat) at population and individual levels; (b) identifying and mapping the cultural and spatial realities that shape consumer choices; and (c) foregrounding the challenge of health literacy. CFP proposals have gained traction in food policy locally, regionally and internationally (including Europe, the USA and Australia), helped by our long and close relations with civil society organisations (including the United Nations) and with growing impact on government and companies, including the major supermarkets.</p> <p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>For over 20 years (since 2002 at City University London), the CFP has researched the complex dynamics reshaping the consumer relationship to food systems. We conceptualise this relationship as a tension between food consumerism and citizenship. In line with our commitment to researching the 'public interest' in food policy, we are interested in how consumers collectively may make the transition to what we term 'food democracy' (see: www.foodfirst.org/en/node/2868). The CFP team comprises Professors Tim Lang and Martin Caraher and Dr David Barling. We study specific examples to see where the public interest lies and whether problems are framed to support citizenship. Our research may be grouped thus:</p> <p>a) Re-defining 'good diet' as 'sustainable diet' (Lang, Barling, Caraher)</p> <p>Nutritionists and official guidelines recommend consumers eat fish, yet fish-stock data justify concerns about unsustainability. The CFP researched such examples as evidence of general contradictions between evidence and reality in health, environmental and price signals. In <i>Development Policy Review</i> (2003), <i>Public Health Nutrition</i> (2005), <i>Health Promotion International</i> (2006), <i>Proceedings of Nutrition Society</i> (2013), <i>Food Policy</i> (OUP, 2009) and <i>Unmanageable Consumer</i> (Sage, 2006), we explored the limitations of choice for consumers, prefiguring the 'choice-editing' argument adopted by the Sustainable Development Commission (SDC). The case that environmental impact can lower if health advice is followed was made for SDC's <i>Setting the Table</i> (2009), but this would require major behaviour change. Following that, Lang developed a 'poly-values' or 'omni-standards' model as a way of capturing the competing and diverse demands on consumer choice. Barling explored the food system transitions shaping citizenship in two 7th Framework projects, <i>FoodLinks</i> and <i>PureFood</i> (see Grants, below). Caraher has injected the local and inequalities dimension of the food 'offer' (see below). Barling and Lang summarised the food waste and sustainable diets challenges for the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) (2012) which made sustainable diets a key recommendation.</p> <p>b) Changed localities where consumers eat: role of local state (Caraher and Barling)</p> <p>Barling has researched English local government urban food strategies (EU 7th Framework <i>Purefood</i> Marie Curie project, 2010 to 2014), with a PhD researcher funded for three years. In City & Hackney Health Authority London, Caraher mapped fast food sellers in relation to proximity to schools, defining the visual and physical walk-to-school experience. In Preston, Lancashire, he explored whether consumers could access healthy food in local shops and at what cost. In Tower Hamlets, he focused on the prevalence and spread of fast food outlets, finding that around schools, fast food outnumbered 'healthier' outlets five to one. At city scale he compared the differential response to fast-food outlet proliferation in London and New York (NYC), finding that NYC was more active and engaged across multiple fronts (from planning to consumer education), whereas London prioritised health education over policy intervention. With Machell, then a research assistant (now a PhD student), Caraher researched the role of food co-operatives in London and NYC as possible ameliorating forces, empowering citizens to eat better and live healthier.</p>

c) Health literacy within food citizenship (Caraher and Lang)

Caraher and Lang began research on the then unfashionable issue of cooking skills in 1993 and deepened their analysis between 2008 and 2013. Caraher conducted the first intervention trial to see whether teaching cooking skills affects children's fruit and vegetables consumption; it does (*Appetite* 2012). In Liverpool, he investigated community-based cooking interventions with families and schools and found that the impact of intervention lasts longer than expected. Caraher was an original (2008 to 2009) and also update (2013) co-author of the Hastings systematic review of marketing impact on children's food intake. Lang researched the scenarios of consumer and food system changes for Chatham House in a small academic team (between 2006 and 2009) and theorised the shift from consumers seeking 'value-for-money' in food to 'values-for-money' (*Environment & Planning A* 2010). Caraher conducted studies in Preston (2008) and Hackney (*Revista Portuguesa de Saude Publica* 2009 and since) which showed how local environments shape health options by sapping children's spending power. In Preston, people's eating habits and consequent health were constrained by food costs in local shops. In two papers (*JHEI of Australia* 2011; *Food Transgressions* 2013), he criticises the idea that the lifestyles of low income consumers are to blame for poor diets, arguing that resource mal-distribution is more significant.

3. References to the research

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

Publications

1. Caraher M., Seeley A., Wu M., & Lloyd S. (2013). [When chefs adopt a school? An evaluation of a cooking intervention in English primary schools](#). *Appetite*, 62, 50–59.
2. Lang T. & Barling D. (2013). [Nutrition and Sustainability: an emerging food policy discourse](#). *Proceedings of the Nutrition Society*, 72(1), 1-12.
3. Lang T. (2010). [From 'value-for-money' to 'values-for-money'? Ethical food and policy in Europe](#). *Environment & Planning A*, 42(8), 1814-1832.
4. Lloyd S., Lawton J., Caraher M., et al. (2010). [A Tale of Two Localities: Healthy Eating on a Restricted Income](#). *Health Education Journal*, 70, 48-56.
5. Bowyer S., Caraher M., et al (2009). [Shopping for Food: Lessons from a British Borough](#), *British Food Journal*, 111(5), 452-474.
6. Alder J., Barling D., Dugan P., et al. (2012) *Avoiding Future Famines: Strengthening the Ecological Foundation of Food Security through Sustainable Food Systems*. Nairobi, Kenya: United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). ISBN: 978-92-807-3261-0.

Grants

- PureFood [Dec 2010- May 2014] EU 7th Framework is a Marie Curie project considering urban, peri-urban and regional food dynamics to enlarge scientific understanding of alternative food networks and to train early stage researchers. <http://purefoodnetwork.eu>. Total value €2.8m / CFP share €250k.
- Worshipful Company of Cooks – to evaluate effectiveness of Chefs Adopt a School (CAAS). This was to conduct a first intervention trial to assess whether teaching children to cook made a difference to food consumption. CFP value: £32.75k.
- Can Cook (community interest company in Liverpool). 2010-12 Evaluation of Can Cook activities in Liverpool £40k with £3k extension funding.
- Big Lottery / Sustain (2011-12) Evaluation of Making Local Food Work Co-op projects £30k.
- Dept Public Health LB Haringey (2013) Fast Food Mapping in Haringey. Total Value: £15k.
- Caraher was also a beneficiary of [collaborative research grant-aided elsewhere](#), including:
 - Thinker in Residence at Deakin University in Melbourne in 2012/13. This was an award of Aus\$20k for c. 3 months' presence in two tranches.
 - Fellow at Curtin University for Healthways (West Australia) for two months, 2009.
 - Contribution to Professor John Coveney's (2012-13) research on trust makers and brokers in the Australian food chain. Total value: Aus\$300k / CFP Share: pro bono / researcher paid directly in Australia.
 - Health & Medical Research Council A\$1.5m grant to create Deakin University Centre for Obesity Policy Control: Caraher working pro bono.

4. Details of the impact

CFP impact was visible in key parts of the food consumer-citizen transition debate, with particular engagement with a core group of NGOs: Sustain, Friends of the Earth, World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and the UK Food Group.

Sustainable diets

(a) International: Lang was invited to co-chair the 2010 process of producing the first global definition of Sustainable Diets, under the auspices of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and Bioversity International (part of the UN's global Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research). The definition is now widely cited and Lang's role acknowledged (e.g., International Union of Nutritional Science World Congress, Burlingame speech, September 2013) [1]. Lang was invited to present sustainable diets to the European Commission meeting on mainstreaming sustainable lifestyles in Brussels (22.08.11). He gave invited papers on sustainable diets to UN bodies (FAO, UN Environment Programme, World Health Organization (WHO)) and argued that consumers need more coherent advice from industry and government. He addressed WHO's planning meetings for the International Conference on Nutrition 2 (ICN2) (2013) and the FAO (2013). He gave an invited keynote on the European sustainable diets experience (the sole non-US presentation) to the US National Academies of Science's Institute of Medicine, Washington DC at a two-day science conference preparing for the 5-year review of US dietary guidelines (2013) [2]. He addressed governmental meetings on sustainable diets: e.g., France DuALINE (Paris, 2010), Netherlands Food Agency 10th Anniversary Conference (Rotterdam, 2010) and contributed to the Netherlands sustainable food position (2011).

(b) NGOs/ Organised Civil Society: The CFP presented at NGO meetings between 2011 and 2013 and actively helped to create a 31 NGO *Eating-Better* alliance launched in July 2013. WWF, the world's largest conservation NGO, cites CFP as the inspiration for its *Livewell* project created by WWF to link health and environmental criteria in population advice and replace the government's *Eatwell* plate. This is now being rolled out across Europe and globally by WWF [3]. Due to his research on public procurement, Barling was asked to chair the Good Food on a Public Plate Project (public procurement of sustainable local food, 2005 ff) and Good Food for Our Money Campaign (2009 ff) at Sustain, shaping public policy interest in this sphere, e.g., at the London Olympics on fish policy [4].

(c) Food Industry: After resistance in the 1990s and 2000s, the sustainable diet argument now receives industry attention. Rayner (Honorary CFP Fellow) and Lang were invited members of the European Heart Network Working Party on working with Industry (2010) and clarified 'terms of engagement'. Barling and Lang were invited to meet retailers e.g., Marks & Spencer, Waitrose and Tesco regularly (between 2008 and 2013). In a 2010 article in *The Grocer*, following summary research on declining soil health, Lang challenged retailers to help consumers to conserve soil. In 2011, Asda completed its soil guide [5].

(d) Foundations and Funders: Lang was invited to review nutrition and environment work for the Boards of the Wellcome Trust (2011) and Carasso Foundation (2013). Lang was invited to join the Carasso Foundation (international, Paris-based) Science Committee, which is now exploring the CFP's proposal for an international commission on sustainable diets.

(e) UK Government: Following the SDC sustainable diet recommendations, Lang was consulted by the UK Food Standards Agency (FSA), Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and Department of Health, which led to the FSA creating the *Integrated Advice to Consumers* programme (noted by many government processes in Europe, North America, Australia but closed by the UK Government in 2010).[6] Between 2011 and 2012 the Environmental Audit Committee held a Sustainable Food inquiry and supported the CFP call for clarification of sustainable diets.

Changed localities (Caraher and Lang)

CFP research on changed localities has achieved impact through:

(a) Local Authorities: Caraher's mapping of fast food outlets around schools (conducted for Preston and City & Hackney) is now being replicated in four cities: Glasgow, Sandwell, Oldham and London (in many of its boroughs). The Mayor of London worked with the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health to produce a *Takeaways Toolkit* for local authority use, citing Caraher (2013) [7]. This work was cited by the UK Research Councils as an example of impact. It is also cited in the *London Health Inequalities Strategy* (August 2009), the Greater London Authority and Mayor's strategy. Caraher was invited to be a member of the London Food Board between 2007 and 2009

and advised the Mayor of London's food strategy; Lang stood in for him (2009 ff). Glasgow's Centre for Population Health drew on Caraher's work in Tower Hamlets. Caraher's work has also emphasised the role of planning to protect consumers from excessive fast food offer. It contributed to the development of National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) Public Health Guidance on the Prevention of Cardiovascular Disease (Caraher was a member of the group which developed the Guidance) and also informed a NICE group on planning (of which he was also a member) as a public health issue. The role of planning is also being developed in Australia, with Caraher invited onto the Brisbane Queensland University of Technology planning team on health literacy (2012 to 13) and the Melbourne City review (2013) [8].

(b) NGO / Civil Society: The CFP is cited as directly inspiring the creation of *Incredible Edible Todmorden* by Pam Warhurst (ex-Forestry Commission chair and Todmorden resident) [9]. This is the much-lauded civic initiative revitalising a post-industrial Lancashire town through citizenship action on food, now an international small town network growing food in urban space. It is presented as the urban model in Jonathan Porritt's utopian book *The World We Made* (2013). Lang also regularly advises the Transition Towns movement.

(c) Government: Caraher was invited onto the Scottish Government's Food and Drink Policy aiming for sustainable localism. He is also a member of the Advisory Committee, Scottish Strategic Research Programme 2011-2016; and was a member of the Scottish Government's 'think-tank' on 'Local versus Global for Scottish Food Producers & Consumers' (2011).

Food Citizenship as health literacy (Caraher, Lang, Barling)

The CFP has a long record on the research of health within citizenship. Examples include:

a) Food and Cooking Skills: Caraher and Lang began work on this in the 1990s. Between 2008 and 2010 Caraher led a cooking intervention trial which became key evidence supporting NGO pressure for cooking to be reintroduced in English schools, successfully negotiating the transition from Labour to the Coalition. They were consulted in (and informed) behind-the-scenes discussions in the Dimpleby and Vincent *School Food Plan* presented to Secretary of State Michael Gove (2012) [10]. Caraher and Lang are frequently asked to advise those lobbying for reform. Since 2008, they regularly meet Jamie Oliver, Raymond Blanc, the Academy of Culinary Arts (top chefs) and a wide group of NGO and public health bodies. The CFP was invited by Jamie Oliver and the Prince of Wales to a stakeholder meeting on cooking and food skills, prior to the School Food Plan publication. The CFP hosted its 1st (now annual) Food Symposium on Food Skills in October 2010). A day earlier, the UK Government launched its own joint Skills Council review of skills needed in the food industry which reported in 2011.

b) Food provenance. Lang's notion of *Food Miles* continues to get traction, both critical and laudatory, in the issue of shortening supply chains to build consumer trust. Barling's work on Ethical Traceability (EU research and book) informed CFP public engagement following the EU horsemeat scandal (2013) which exposed long chain failings in governance. Lang undertook 70 media interviews in six weeks. Confidential industry engagement followed (e.g., Marks & Spencer, Tesco, Asda-Walmart) with Tesco committing to reduce the length and complexity of supply chains to meet consumer trust concerns [11]. Following the National Audit Office report on horsemeat (2013), Lang was invited to meet and discuss the citizenship critique with the entire Food Standards Agency Board (5th November 2013) and with the Chief Executive 'one-to-one' in August and November.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

- [1] Attendee at 2013 International Union of Nutritional Science.
- [2] Institute of Medicine final report due out early 2014.
www.iom.edu/Activities/Nutrition/FoodForum/2013-MAY-07.aspx
- [3] Contact at WWF.
- [4] Contact at Sustain.
- [5] Asda: <http://your.asda.com/aislespy-sustainable-sourcing/asda-and-leaf-launch-sustainable-soils-guide>
- [6] FSA www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/iacreport.pdf.
- [7] CIEH Takeaway Toolkit www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/TakeawaysToolkit_0.pdf.
- [8] President, Public Health Association of Australia.
- [9] www.incredibleedible.org.uk/#/how-it-started/4556951294.
- [10] Coordinator, School Food Plan.
- [11] Tesco and Society report 2013 www.tescopl.com/index.asp?pageid=81.