



Association of American Geographers Annual Meeting

AAG 2017 CFP: People-Centred Food Policy

'Nutrition Justice: Policy, Parents and Child Fatness'Abstract

Contemporary phenomenon of childhood obesity is a product of modern capitalism - a multifactorial problem including social gradient.

With background concern for child health, individualising and responsabilising policy discourses place greatest burden on poorest parents. This is bound within deficit model. Parents' food practices are under the microscope. There is little research about their food policy experiences and solutions.

Drawn from my PhD - a qualitative critical policy analysis set within the local state - this paper focuses on views of policy recipients, predominantly working class parents, with children medically described as obese. Theoretical framework is Critical Theory and Marxism.

Economic liberalisation, witnessed in everyday life through zero hour contracts, shifts and scheduled hours, erodes family food practices. Community food environments are characterised by nutritionally poor food outlets. Democracy deficits include urban planning: fast food outlets and gentrification. Parents are aware that profit is placed before child health.

Hegemonic and governmentality processes within policy produce stigma and division that penetrate community and family life. Policy generates anxieties and anger. While parents take '*ultimate responsibility*' government gives the '*impression*' of helping. Food companies are '*allowed*' to sell unhealthy foods. There is strong sense of nutritional injustice around children's foods and poor health: '*we don't cost anything, when they bury us*'.

Parents believe they should inform policy and articulate changes that support universalism and collectivism, democratic reforms of food system, local state and employment rights.

Oppression, integral to profit, is mediated by policy. New deliberative, integrated and emancipatory policy direction is needed.

Keywords: Critical policy analysis, obesity, parents' solutions, democracy deficit, emancipatory policy