

Nutrition Justice Policy, Parents and Child Fatness

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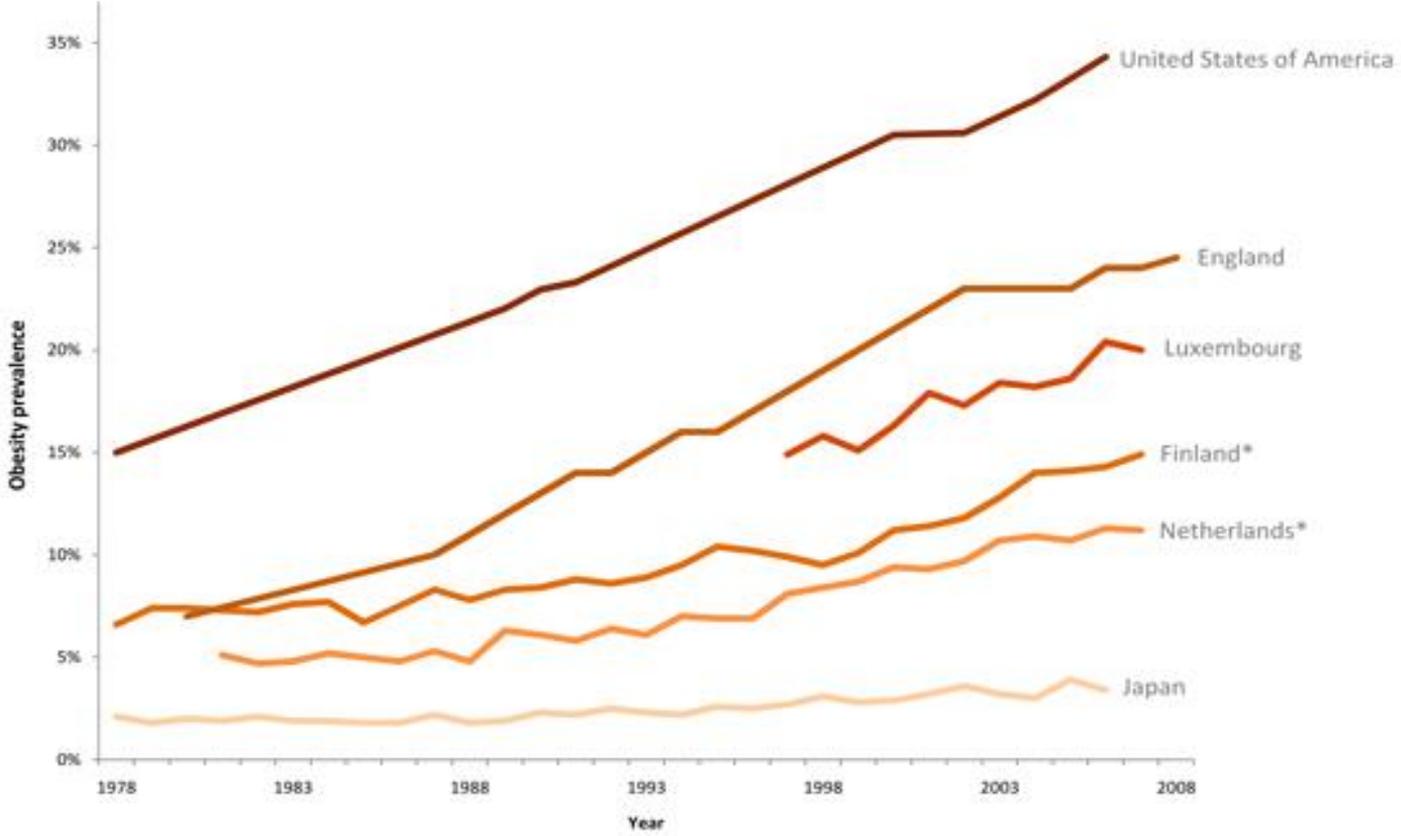
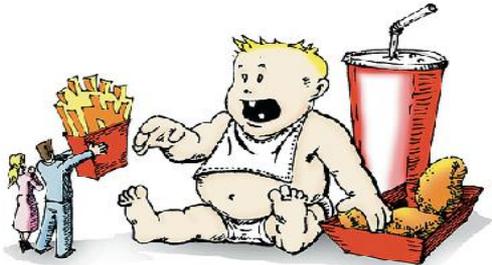
Diego Rivera Triumph of the Revolution - Distribution of Food



Nutrition Justice Policy, Parents and Child Fatness

- Background and research design
- Parents and policy process: food and public health
 - Fear based policy, hegemony and governmentality
 - Responsibilities
 - Whose responsibility?
 - Ultimate responsibility
 - Responsibilisation
 - Social divisions
 - NCMP, blame and stigma in communities
 - Parent-child relationship and stigma in families
 - Social class – material conditions and practices
 - Symbolic violence of food environments
 - Parents and policy
 - Involvement
 - Solutions
 - Conclusions

Child obesity



Research design

Critical policy analysis

- Theoretical framework : Foucault, Bourdieu, Marx
- Conceptual tool based on two policy triangles: Food (Lang 2005) Health (Walt,1994) and WPR (Bacchi, 2009)
- Document analysis of food-related obesity policy
- Thirty two semi structured interviews: policy makers, implementers and parent-recipients of policy
- Purposive sampling : parents predominantly ‘working class’ with children aged 2 – 15 years categorised as obese by BMI
- Based in setting of the local state, an inner London borough – interface with everyday life

Aim

- Explore disconnects between state and working class parents of children with obesity
- Explore the relevance of social class
- Inform policy and practice
- Move forward parents’ influence on food policy

Policy process

Anxiety and fear, hegemony and governmentality

'Nine out of 10 of our kids today could grow up with dangerous amounts of fat in their bodies. This can cause life-threatening diseases like cancer, type 2 diabetes and heart disease'



Killing your child



Samina,
mum of 2

'They do say it's like a disease...that's why I find it scary... like I think I want my children to be healthier just because I know it's dangerous for their health. It's a health risk'



'if trends continue as forecast, by 2050 only one in ten of the adult population will be a healthy weight.'



Responsibilities

Whose responsibility?

Parents took 'ultimate responsibility'

Bedria

*Economy and the government everything just linked together....It's one big chain just goes around and we're just in **the middle** and we're the one who just picks up!...It can be parents first because it's us who's responsible for what goes into my child's mouth...*



Responsibilities

Responsibilising processes

Andrea

*I think we are **getting the message** but they still don't seem to be doing anything about it....you're still **allowing** all these products to be sold because you want the revenue from them.*

- *Its all about money – strong theme*
- Comparisons made with tobacco control



NCMP

Parent vs parent

Leyla

*...obviously when you get the **letter** of your child's measurements...you assume it's the **parents fault** straight way. If you heard your child's obese or whatever, parents are going to talk, people are going to talk and assume that the **parents are obese** as well. Or you know, **neglecting the child, don't care, just feed it to shut it up.***

Liz

....it's the parents. It's the other parents.



Social divisions Parent vs children

Kerry

*...the first child wouldn't eat anything as a child and she's grown up to be a **real health freak**. **She doesn't eat anything bad**. She knows when to stop eating before she goes to bed, she exercising three, four times a week **and she is a beautiful slim healthy girl**.*

*Now the second child she is completely different um she will **eat for England**... I'm hoping in a couple years she'll start looking at boys and **think about her appearance**... yeh I can see that her intake with **fatty foods, processed foods**.*



Material conditions Work

Liz

....I think it's a case of, it's the hours. If I didn't have to work the hours that I do or my husband the hours he did the kids would be eating healthily. Does that make sense?

- Volunteer work was common
- Zero hours contract
- Benefits and work debate suggested issues about rights to raise children in optimal ways – including nutrition



Social class division

Social class differences powerfully symbolised by 'the nanny'

Leyla (talking about snacking)

*...Because the children are bored (and) maybe parents are stressed, maybe depressed, you know. It's just an ongoing battle. Whereas the **higher class, the nannies** can say 'it's all prepared'. They say what time snacks will be (and) they can give them something healthier*

Lena

...I just know that they get an area of lower class people, just do what they do without thinking, shaping and monitoring you know, they just live.

Symbolic violence

Food environment

Leyla



*it's keeping the adults on their liquor, the kids on the sweets and then the take-aways for dinner... **It's what we're seeing everyday so all we think about is sweets and drinks...** It's like the betting shops. We've got so many betting shops... a lot more people are doing it... it's not good.*

Food environment

In contrast, affluent area



Felecia

Now that looks pretty. Its looks like something that would be more healthy....it looks like a little health food shop... it's not life threatening



Parents Policy making process

- Community level process of informing policy
- Community level forums at schools, children centres and local meetings
- Parents suggested power of community

Maya

We as people — as a community or— if it starts off with whatever— need to take ownership of it as well.

Policy makers described:

- ‘Democracy deficit’
- Audits as means of parents informing policy



Policy

Health centred not weight centred

Andrea

...maybe we're making too much a thing of people being overweight?just because your thin doesn't mean you're healthy.... especially when it comes to children... Almost saying you're overweight so you're the one who's unhealthy!

...So maybe the problem is let's stop focusing on young children just because they're overweight let's focus on the whole class

- There was support for community level interventions



Parents' food policy solutions

Parents put forward food policy solutions in three main areas

- Work and welfare
- Food industry and government
- Community and local state



Work and welfare

- Reduce working hours and increase incomes
- Food vouchers with benefits
- Non-taxable food vouchers additional to wages
- Right for parents to raise children with sufficient resources



Food industry and government

- Greater regulation of advertising
- Change product placements in supermarkets to promote health
- Clear food labelling
- Ingredients that promote health
- Access to foods of best nutritional quality
-
- Mandatory 'responsibility' deals
- Reduce the costs of healthy foods
- Not increase taxes/costs of unhealthy foods



Community and local state

- Provision of guidance and social eating community level - e.g. Sure Start and schools
- Nutrition on school curriculum
- Democratic planning system
- Remove most fast food outlets
- Redesign high streets – affordable butchers, bakers, grocers with foods fresh from farm



Conclusions

- Disconnects run throughout policy framework
- Policy can be an unintended instrument of weight and class stigmatisation
- Policy should be integrated across food, public health, employment and welfare (and others)
- Need an emancipatory not oppressive policies
- Disconnects are systemic of neo-liberal capitalism

Going forward

- Critical pedagogic work with parents based on their solutions
- Possible activity with Unite the union

Thank you for listening and any questions?

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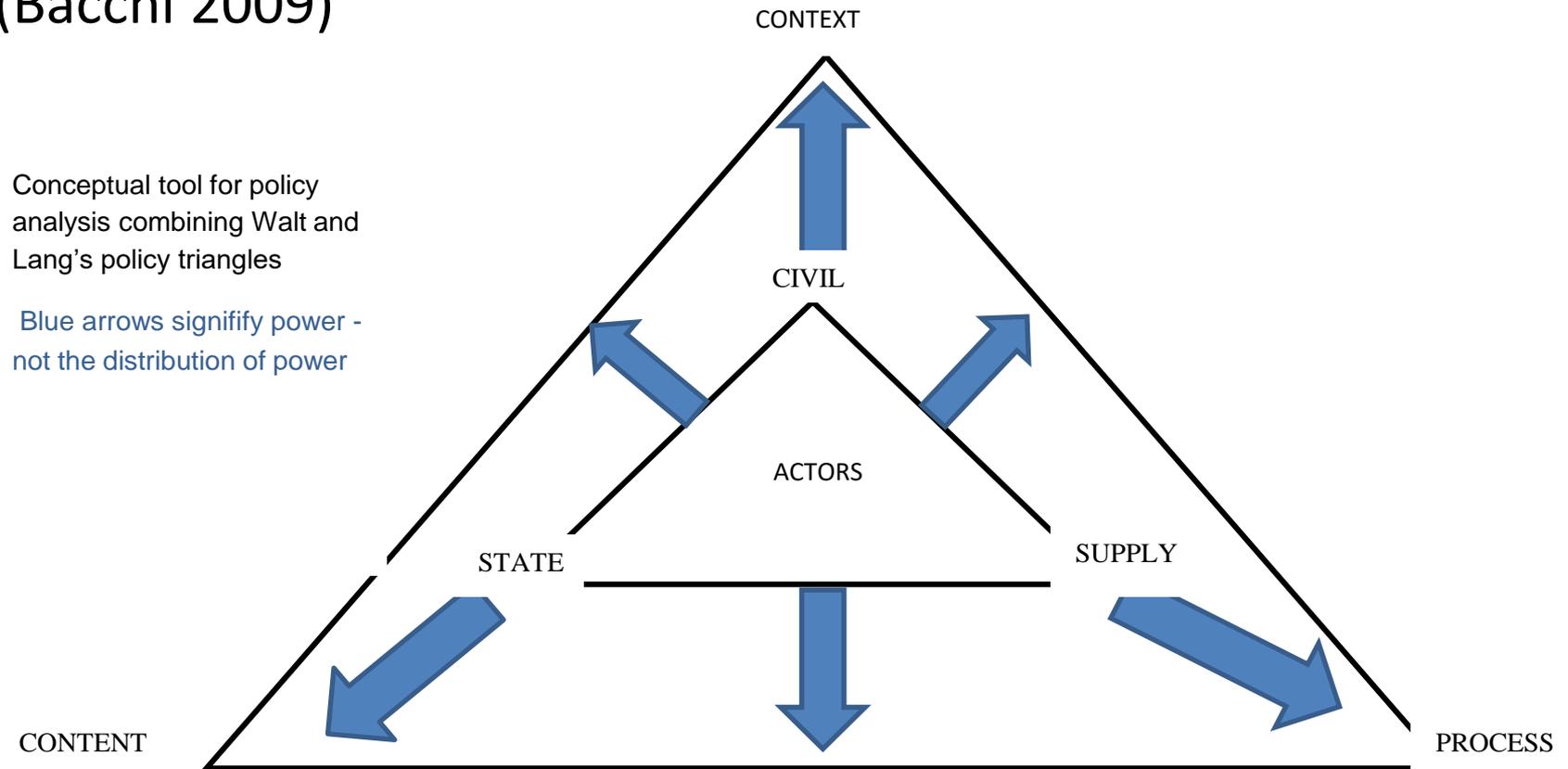


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Policy analysis tools

1. Conceptual triangle 2. 'What's Problem Represented to be' (Bacchi 2009)



Sources: Lang (2005); Walt and Gilson, 1994 (in Buse et al, 2005)

Parent Sample

Age	Gender	Ethnic group	Post code	Occup	Edu.	Household type	State bens	Housing tenure	Assigned* social class
23 to 54	13 – F 2 - M	1 Russian/Azerb. 3 Black African 2 Turkish Cypriot 2 White English 1 Black British 1 White/ Black Caribbean 1 Pakistani/Arab 2 Black Caribbean 1 Asian/Caribbn 1 other	All in lowest 2 deciles of MSOA 2 on deciles 5/6	Child - care workers Adult - care workers Bus drivers Admin. Nurse Teacher	13 – second. level 2 -degree level	7 one family lone parent 7 one family couple 1 not say	9 Yes	12 social 3 home owners 1 not say	13 working class 2 middle class

* Defining social class using Clement, W and Myles, J. 1997