

**Food Citizenship and Obesity**  
**Supervisory Team: Dr Debbie Desrochers and Professor Edmund Thompson**

The worldwide prevalence of obesity has significant health and economic consequences. Public Health England estimates that obesity is responsible for more than 30,000 deaths each year and, due to the harm obesity causes to an individual's life and ability to contribute to economic growth, it is estimated that the cost to society is £27 billion (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-matters-obesity-and-the-food-environment>.)

Obesity results from the unequal trade-off between the consumption of food versus the consumption of physical activity. On the food consumption side of this equation, consumers make decisions on what to eat and how much to eat (Wansink 2004). To facilitate better decision making on these dimensions, governments around the globe mandate the provision of the nutritional content of foods (for a review of such labels, please see Chapter 6 of Tarbella and Burchi 2016). Given the significant costs to society, these food decisions are an important aspect of responsible food citizenship and, consequently, imply that to eat unhealthy foods would be irresponsible and irrational (De Tavernier 2012) and demonstrate a disregard for society. However, this focus on individual choices seems to blame the victim and ignore other factors in food consumption decisions (Fox et. al 2018), including food wellbeing (FWB), which reflects the psychological, physical, emotional, and social relationships individuals and society have with food (Block et al 2011).

This project, therefore, is to define the concept of food citizenship and investigate its impact on obesity and society.