

9

Lobbying and Resistance with regard to
Policy on Bovine Tuberculosis in Britain,
1900–1939: An Inside/Outside Model

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INTRODUCTION

One of the most interesting and challenging problems related to bovine tuberculosis in Britain in the first half of the twentieth century is explaining the nature of policy-making, its implementation through legislation and regulation, and the outcomes in terms of disease in both animals and humans. Above all, we must account for why it was known and widely accepted in the 1920s and early 1930s that 40 percent of the milking herd was infected, yet why it was not until the 1950s that the radical measures of a major, nationwide slaughter campaign were put in place.

This chapter seeks to understand this slow and tortuous progress of policy by reference to the discursive balance between those activists for and those against change.¹ The struggle between progressive and conservative forces was visible at all levels of the food chain, but the argument here will focus on the voices and actions of selected individuals as representatives of views expressed inside and outside Westminster and Whitehall. My present interest, then, is in agency, although it will become clear that the actions of my case study actors, in both their access to the powerful and their influence upon their decisions, were heavily constrained by the nature and structure of governance.

A widespread distinction is made in the literature on public policy-making between interest groups that have the ear of government and those that are marginalized.² First Grant and then

Table 9.1
 Categories of Access and Influence

	<i>Inside</i>	<i>Outside</i>
Core	Politicians and others close to decision-making process with strong networks of influence	Reasonably well-connected and resourceful individuals but limited real influence
Peripheral	Politicians and civil servants with intimate knowledge of facts and process but limited power to change policy	Skills, knowledge, with some access and perhaps a media profile but little influence on policy

Maloney, Jordan, and McLaughlin have discussed this distinction as a simple insider/outsider binary, in terms of both status and strategy.³ Their insights have been valuable but are of limited applicability to this study because they were dealing with Britain after 1945, when the nature and intensity of lobbying by interest groups and the canvassing of opinion by governments had shifted gear. As Martin Smith has pointed out, before 1939 the central state had only loose ties with those wishing to influence policy from outside Westminster, and the present research confirms that policy input from outside was indeed limited for bovine tuberculosis.⁴ Where messages did penetrate the consciousness of politicians and civil servants, they tended to be from a relatively small number of sources: a few dairy and medical scientists; farmers' representatives, especially the National Farmers' Union; and a few wealthy individuals who moved in the same social world as the decision makers.

The heterogeneity of access to policy-makers and influence upon them was noticeable, especially in the 1920s and 1930s. For the sake of the present argument, I will reduce this complexity to a stylized distinction between four groups of actors. These groups are derived from a simple 2x2 matrix of inside/outside and core/peripheral (table 1).

First, there were what I shall call "core outsiders." These were people with wide interests, abilities, and resources, but limited effectiveness. Like Wilfred Buckley, whose case study I will develop below, they may even have served for a period in government or in an advisory capacity, but the contacts they made were acquaintances rather than friendships or alliances, and their influence was never strong. Buckley, for instance, was used by politicians to trial difficult policies, very much on their terms rather than his. Other examples of core outsiders are Sir William Savage, a medical officer

of health and a prolific author on bovine tuberculosis; Sir Graham Selby Wilson, a scientist who championed pasteurization; and Robert Stenhouse Williams, who ran the National Institute for Research in Dairying.⁵

Second, there were “core insiders.” Such people may have been high-profile politicians, for example Walter Elliot and Christopher Addison, whose office empowered them to initiate change.⁶ Core insiders may also have been lower in profile, like Waldorf Astor, wielding influence directly and indirectly; or they may have been specialists who used narrower channels of access, for example Sir John Boyd Orr, who was originally a laboratory scientist but who became a politician and eventually headed the Food and Agriculture Organization.⁷

Third, we have “peripheral outsiders.” There are many possible categories here. Olga Nethersole, the subject of another case study, had no influence but plenty of access. There were some, such as Ben Davies, whose advanced technical expertise was already covered within the circle, and there were others whose views were too extreme or eccentric to allow insider status. Viscount Lynton, who had interests in both agriculture and fascism, was one such.⁸

Fourth, there were the “peripheral insiders,” who had less access, less influence, less power. This might have been because of their subordinate role in Whitehall, as was the case with the two civil servants discussed below. It might, as with Sir Edward Grigg, have been because of a tour of duty overseas in the Empire, thus weakening ties at the centre, or it might have been because bovine tuberculosis was only a marginal concern of otherwise senior politicians, such as MPs George Courthope, Sir Edward Strachie, Eleanor Rathbone, and Charles Bathurst.⁹

This chapter will not cover arguments between ministries in Whitehall. They will be discussed elsewhere.¹⁰ Nor will it debate the strategies and tactics of political parties, professional bodies, or lobbying organizations.¹¹ The concern here is rather with selected individuals who in some way represent a mode of policy-related activity.

In undertaking this approach, I have been influenced by two theoretical literatures beyond policy studies.¹² First, there is what Nigel Thrift has called a non-representational theory that privileges action.¹³ His ontological focus is different from mine, yet there is inspiration enough in his notion of “performativity.” This notion

comes from socio-linguistics in the context of speech acts, the idea there being that performative speech *creates* the truth, but there are also roots in Erving Goffman's interactionist sociology and Judith Butler's identity performances. In the present discussion the concept highlights the activities through which our selected actors attempted, by the deployment of resources, rhetoric, and persuasion to win access to decision makers and influence the policy process.

Second there is the conventions theory of Laurent Thévenot and Luc Boltanski.¹⁴ They are leaders of the French "pragmatic turn" in social theory and their program is an attempt to reconstruct the notion of human action.¹⁵ They are less motivated by an understanding of intentionality than by the constitutive nature of action. For them it is important to build from below a grasp of the way people come to appreciate their commonality and coordinate their efforts into conventions of action. Thévenot and Boltanski are sceptical of any theory of institutional structure that does not take such regimes of engagement into account, and their approach is encouraging for the micro-focus adopted in the present paper because of their interest in the capability and competences that agents bring to any situation of social negotiation.

CORE OUTSIDER: WILFRED BUCKLEY (1873-1933)

The subject of my first case study, Wilfred Buckley, came from a family of wealthy Birmingham merchants.¹⁶ He had no previous farming experience, but in 1906 leased a thousand acres in Hampshire. His interest in clean milk production seems to have been informed by an earlier experience when, in 1902, his daughter had contracted bovine tuberculosis.¹⁷

Buckley's performance for our purposes was essentially twofold. First, he campaigned for the creation of a clean and honest milk trade, believing that, given the will, it was possible to produce pure milk, without added water and without the germs of infectious disease. Although this idea is taken for granted amongst the public in Britain today, to many at the beginning of the twentieth century it seemed idealistic to the point of naivety. Because the structural and procedural changes that Buckley advocated for the cowshed would have been expensive to implement, he became the *bête noir* of farmers and the milk trade, who branded him a dilettante. One trade paper went further: "in a word Mr Buckley is the enemy."¹⁸

It is not difficult to see why farmers resented Buckley's views. In 1924, for instance, he wrote to the Ministry of Agriculture (MAF) arguing that no compensation should be given to farmers for the compulsory slaughter of diseased cattle under the Tuberculosis Order because "a producer is acting immorally in selling milk from a cow that is suffering from the diseases enumerated in the Order."¹⁹ He argued instead for cattle insurance. In his moral crusade, one might have thought that Buckley was most likely to find common cause with consumers, but one of his unlikely allies was Ben Davies, a director of one the largest dairy corporations, United Dairies. Talking about clean and disease-free production methods, Davies argued that it was farmers who should bear the responsibility. "Those surely are merely the fundamental decencies of the production of human food, and failure to observe them must be regarded as a culpable and penal offence involving even disqualification as a producer."²⁰

Second, in essence, Buckley's public life was devoted to the translation of American methods of clean milk production into the British sphere. He had married an American heiress and made regular business visits to New York connected with his family's trading company. He was therefore in a privileged position to see innovations in action and to judge their suitability for the somewhat different conditions on this side of the Atlantic.

His principal platform was as the co-founder and Chairman of the National Clean Milk Society (NCMS), (1915–28). The aim of this organization was educational: producing pamphlets, distributing films and lantern slides, mounting exhibits at agricultural shows, and holding lectures, mainly given by Buckley himself in every part of the country. He opposed legislation as coercive, claiming to prefer persuasion.²¹ The council of the NCMS was comprised of the great and the good, including the King's surgeon, Sir Frederick Treves, and a number of other doctors.

Buckley's farm became a showcase for his ideas. In 1910–11 a committee chaired by Sir Thomas Barlow, president of the Royal College of Physicians, undertook practical experiments there on clean milk production. Their recommendation to the Local Government Board was the adoption of the American-style system of milk certification for cleanliness advocated by Buckley. The inclusion of an enabling provision in the Milk and Dairies Act of 1914 was a direct outcome.²² A related American idea was the "score card

system” of judging the cleanliness of milk production, first introduced in the District of Columbia in 1904.²³ Buckley’s enthusiasm for the system eventually persuaded the city authorities in Birmingham and Bradford to try it in 1915 and from there it spread.

Buckley is interesting and unusual because of his total focus on the issue. He seems to have been unconcerned about party or class-based politics and was oblivious to criticism. Just before he died of cancer in 1933, he reminisced that 1912–13 had been a turning point in his activist career. He had been unable to get support from his richer friends, “but when I went to the Labour people I got help. Henderson said: ‘the crumbs will drop from the rich man’s table.’ That is the expression he used, and that is why the Labour Party adopted the idea of grades of milk.”²⁴ These contacts bore fruit when in August 1917 he was asked by Lord Rhondda to become director of milk supplies at the Ministry of Food. Very quickly he managed to persuade his patron to allow licences and higher prices for hygienic producers. Lord Rhondda died before the regulations came into force, but the new food controller, John Clynes, was favourable, and grading was established.

Wilfred Buckley had enemies not only in the dairy industry but also in Whitehall. The chief veterinary officer, Stuart Stockman, was particularly scathing about his opposition to compensation for the slaughter of tuberculous cattle: “He has got his own Grade A herd, achieved without compensation, earning premium for milk, so doesn’t want too many competitors.”²⁵ Such cynicism was almost certainly misplaced, but Buckley does not seem to have been sensitive to the public perception of his actions.

For all of his commitment and energy, Buckley was certainly not a sophisticated political operator. As chairman of a sub-committee of the Astor Committee in 1918 he recommended the nationalisation of the wholesale milk trade.²⁶ This recommendation appealed to the food controller but to virtually no-one else, and it lasted only six months.²⁷ The following year he was involved in a major spat over milk prices. His committee had imposed a zonal pricing system in which farmers would be paid less in the South West zone, where costs of production were said to be lower. Any milk travelling from one zone to another was to pass through a government-controlled clearing house. But this system was over-complicated, and anyway information about the costs of production was scarce because most farmers did not keep records. There was even talk of consumers

having to register and of milk delivery rounds being rationalized. This time Buckley was forced to resign; although as a face-saving measure he stayed on as a technical adviser on milk to the Ministry of Food until it was finally wound up in March 1921.²⁸

Buckley may have been unsuccessful as a civil servant but he was in his element as a committee man. He seems to have been involved on a voluntary basis in most of the milk-related committees that mattered in the decade or so after the First World War. I have already mentioned his role in the Astor Committee, and to this we might add the Tuberculin Committee (jointly sponsored by the Medical Research Council (MRC) and the Agricultural Research Council), by which his farm was used to judge whether the tuberculin test would affect the fat content of milk.²⁹ In addition, he was a member of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Condensed Milk, 1920. He was a founding member of the National Milk Publicity Council (NMPC) in the same year, its chairman from 1922 to 1924, and a leading light in its encouragement of school milk in 1928. From 1924 he was a member of the government's Milk Advisory Committee (MAC). He also somehow found the time to organize a series of high-profile annual National Milk Conferences, 1922–24, which discussed clean milk, tuberculosis, and pasteurization, and, out of government, he made visits to ministers as a member of several official delegations on the subject of milk.³⁰

Buckley was also a frequent letter writer. Much of his output was directed to prominent individuals or to the Ministries of Agriculture and Health; the *Times* and the *Observer* were other favoured outlets, especially for his views on the need for both the milk trade and their customers to be educated on the requirement for a better standard of product.³¹ The opinions expressed were at times radical, for instance in 1912 when he wrote to the *Times* arguing that pasteurization was not necessary if milk was produced in clean conditions from tuberculin-tested cattle. This was vintage Buckley, in a sense stating the obvious but ignoring the practical difficulties in achieving the ideal.

Overall, Buckley was very active across a wide range of performances (table 2). He was used by Lloyd George's government as a lightning conductor for difficult policies, and he never shirked controversy.³² Buckley used his contacts in political circles to move his agenda forward, but he lacked several of the resources cited by Keith Dowding as a *sine qua non* for powerful bargaining: legiti-

Table 9.2
A Summary of Performances

	<i>Buckley</i>	<i>Astor</i>	<i>Nethersole</i>	<i>Dale & Blackshaw</i>
Personal contacts	✓	✓	✓	✓
Media	✓		✓	
Official debates		✓	✓	
Delegations to ministries	✓		✓	
Parliamentary committees	✓	✓		✓
Whitehall bureaucracy	✓	✓		✓
Quangos	✓			
Trade and professional	✓			
Private societies	✓	✓	✓	

mate authority, incentives to affect the interests of others, and an unchallenged reputation.³³

CORE INSIDER: WALDORF ASTOR (1879–1952)

Waldorf Astor was not a high-profile politician. According to a perceptive comment in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, “he was a committee man, rather than an individualist, and for this reason his influence on affairs was not always easy to trace.” He is probably best known for being the son of a wealthy New York property developer, husband of Britain’s first female member of Parliament, and host of the Nazi appeasers, the Cliveden set.³⁴ I want to argue that we should attribute to him achievements in his own right in the area of milk and tuberculosis policy.

Astor was unable to serve in the First World War because of the bovine tuberculosis that he is said to have caught in 1905. Nevertheless, he busied himself as Unionist MP for Plymouth (1911–19), then in the House of Lords as Viscount Astor when his father died. He was a member of the Round Table Group of Conservative MPs, along with Ned Grigg, later one of the architects of a new milk marketing system, and he was appointed parliamentary secretary to Lloyd George in 1917, parliamentary secretary to the Ministry of Food in 1918, parliamentary secretary in the Ministry of Health from 1919 to 1921, and, later, British delegate to League of Nations in 1931.³⁵ As proprietor of the *Observer*, Astor was in a position to exert considerable influence. He frequently published letters and

articles on tuberculosis by the likes of Wilfred Buckley, despite the occasional protests of his editor.³⁶

Although on some policy issues a social radical, nevertheless Astor was by political instinct a gradualist. A quotation from his writings in 1920 illustrates this point: “It would be almost criminal folly to try to improve the whole [milk] supply quickly by coercion. We should drive too many farmers out of business. What we want to do is to set out to encourage improvement ... over a period of, say, 10 to 15 years.”³⁷ His program for the reduction of bovine tuberculosis was very similar to Buckley’s. They both advocated graded milk, to which Astor added ideas about “attested herds” and free milk for women entitled to maternity benefit.³⁸

Waldorf Astor made an important contribution as a chairman of parliamentary committees. In 1912 he chaired the Local Government Board’s important Departmental Committee on Tuberculosis.³⁹ This was set up to make practical suggestions arising from the scientific work of the Royal Commission that finished its work and reported in 1911. One of their principal recommendations was the establishment of a Medical Research Committee, whose task would be to organize and promote research on tuberculosis.⁴⁰ One can see Astor’s hand in the declaration by his committee that “the ultimate eradication of animal tuberculosis is not impossible of achievement, but is likely to be a slow process.”

The second Astor Committee, sitting from 1917 to 1919, was another departmental committee, this time on the Production and Distribution of Milk.⁴¹ Here he highlighted a possible accredited herd scheme based on recent American experience.⁴² There were also recommendations to improve tuberculin testing: the manufacture of the tuberculin by the government laboratory at Weybridge; the standardization of the tuberculin dose; and free testing for farmers entering an accreditation scheme. A version of the accredited herd idea was eventually implemented in the form of “Attested Herds” from 1935 onwards, when it became the most important single policy move towards the elimination of bovine tuberculosis. But in 1919 it was not practical politics, and, anyway, the committee’s positive achievements were soon overshadowed by the political crisis of milk prices in the winter of 1918–19, mentioned above, and by an avalanche of criticism of its advocacy of state participation in both the wholesale and the retail milk trades.

In 1920 Waldorf Astor, who by then was parliamentary secretary at the Ministry of Health, arranged for a £1,000 one-off grant to the National Clean Milk Society, of which both he and Buckley were patrons. This rather naïf piece of favouritism cannot have endeared him to many, and it is perhaps not surprising that in 1922 and 1923, when Whitehall was looking for a chairman for its new MAC, he was passed over in favour of “someone who was more independent.”⁴³ This was the time (1922–24) when he was president of the NMPC and therefore could be said to have had an axe to grind.⁴⁴

Out of government Astor was an energetic and astute lobbyist. He seems to have concentrated on four groups of contacts. First, there were medical scientists who had knowledge of tuberculosis and could therefore add weight to his own lay views. An example is Dr C.J. Martin, the director of the Lister Institute of Preventive Medicine, whom in 1914 Astor asked to write letters to the *Times* and an article in the *New Statesman*. Then there were several influential rural MPs and members of the House of Lords who were interested in milk and disease and who were approached for their opinions or persuaded to vote on a particular bill. Astor was also regularly in touch with senior civil servants, such as Sir Arthur Robinson of the Ministry of Health, who in 1923 asked him to act as an intermediary with the Labour Party leaders over the Milk and Dairy (Amendment) Bill, which they were opposing because it did not go far enough over certified milk. Finally, there were occasional private meetings with ministers throughout the 1920s and 1930s.⁴⁵

Deploying his contacts in the latter two categories, Astor’s lobbying certainly forced a response in Whitehall. In 1925 he was particularly exercised by milk grading, the only means by which the public could distinguish disease-free milk. In July he told Sir George Newman, chief medical officer of the Ministry of Health, that he was unhappy with the grades then in operation and that he was planning a deputation to the minister or questions in the House of Lords.⁴⁶ While politicians and civil servants seem to have favoured a simplification of the grades at that point, they were conscious that milk had been such a difficult political issue over the previous fifteen years or so and had a clear preference for a quiet Whitehall compromise rather than an open debate: “The only way to get a satisfactory solution to a question of this kind is to confer with the parties interested. A formal deputation to the Minister is not the way to get down to the problem – still less questions in parliament

... I think if you could tell Lord Astor that an informal conference with him and his friends would be the best way of opening the ball it would be advisable to do so.”⁴⁷

Astor was quietly invited to the Ministry and brought with him Wilfred Buckley and George Dallas, a Labour MP who specialised in food and agriculture issues. Their opening salvo was that “the Ministry had been negligent in the milk question.”⁴⁸ After that they proposed a new set of grades and demanded that local authorities should be allowed to make labelling, bottling, and pasteurization compulsory in their own districts if they so wished.⁴⁹ This was effectively the program of the NCMS, of which Astor and Buckley were the leading lights. Lest he should be mistaken for a dewy-eyed romantic, Astor later wrote to Neville Chamberlain, then minister of health, stressing that he thought his staged plan was realistic: “Ideally all milk sold should be officially labelled. Everyone would then know what he was buying. It is not practical politics to do this now for the whole country, but the aim of the government should be to reach such a policy in say 10–15 years time.”⁵⁰

The Ministries of Health and Agriculture held a meeting at the level of parliamentary secretary (Lord Bledisloe for Agriculture and Sir H. Kingsley Wood for Health) to discuss Astor’s intervention. They concluded that for numerous reasons his scheme was unworkable. One reason was the logistical problem of organizing a nationwide system of bacteriological sampling. Another was that “the time is not yet ripe for any alteration with regard to Grade ‘A’ milk.” They preferred instead to put their faith in a propaganda drive to “create a public opinion in favour of clean milk, and a public demand for it.”⁵¹

In sum, what was Astor’s achievement? I suggest that he did as much as any politician in the period 1900–39 (other than Christopher Addison and Walter Elliot) to get milk onto the health agenda. He did not seek out the newspaper headline writers but made countless discreet interventions in Whitehall, Westminster, and beyond and acted as a catalyst for change.

PERIPHERAL OUTSIDER: OLGA NETHERSOLE
(1870–1951)

Olga Nethersole was an actress-manager who made a good living at the turn of the century from what at the time were considered somewhat risqué plays. Upon retirement she was involved with the Red

Cross in the First World War and in 1917 founded the People's League of Health (PLH) with the aim of encouraging preventative medicine. She started campaigning proper in 1920, and her first interest in bovine tuberculosis seems to have been in 1929.⁵² Margaret Barnett has written at length on Nethersole's efforts in this direction, concluding that on balance they were positive.⁵³ I want to add further thoughts on her influence and impact.

Nethersole must have been a very persuasive person because she attracted dozens of participants to PLH committees and as general supporters. The famous "Survey of Tuberculosis of Bovine Origin," formally published in January 1932, for instance, is prefaced with lists of supporters. In addition to the patronage of King George V, there were nineteen titled vice-presidents, a medical council of ninety-one, and a general bovine tuberculosis committee of sixty-five, including Wilfred Buckley.⁵⁴ Given Nethersole's recruitment methods, some of these people were not very active, and a few were apparently even surprised to see their names mentioned. Arguably, most names were little more than bunting, just there for show. Nevertheless, the three sub-committees that actually prepared the raw material for the survey and then wrote the report were made up of those who were truly at the forefront of knowledge and activism on bovine tuberculosis: medical men (William Savage, William Hunter), scientists (Graham Selby Wilson, James Macintosh, Jack Drummond, Norman Wright, and Robert Stenhouse Williams), politicians (Sir Archibald Weighall), and milk traders (Edward Freeth and James Sadler). This was a resource of big-hitters the like of which had rarely been assembled as witnesses to an official enquiry such as a royal commission, let alone a private and purely voluntary effort organized by one woman.

Olga Nethersole may have been exceptionally good at networking, but she faced opposition. One example will suffice. In March 1930, Stanley Griffiths, one of the most prominent laboratory researchers on tuberculosis, wrote to his employer, Walter Fletcher, secretary of the MRC. Griffiths had received an invitation from the PLH to serve on its bovine tuberculosis committee. He was afraid that it would interfere with his work and sought advice.⁵⁵ The reply is revealing: "I am afraid I know all about this People's League, and it is becoming a great nuisance. It is sheer impertinence to ask you to waste your time in the manner proposed, with a mixed lot of charlatans and advertisers (with one or two honest men who have

been had for mugs and ought to have known better). I not only think you're right in refusing, but I think you ought to refuse."⁵⁶

Later he urged Griffiths to "tell Olga Nethersole to go to blazes."⁵⁷ Fletcher also wrote to a number of his associates to warn them that the MRC did not approve of the PLH.

I note your name as a member of a fantastic "sub-committee on bovine tuberculosis" appointed by the People's League of Health. This thing was due to an agitation by a tiresome busy-body called [Dr Gordon] Tippet, reacting upon dear Miss Nethersole, who *is* the League of Health. It is an absurdity because it is composed of 30 to 40 persons, most of whom know nothing of the subject at first hand. It has grown just as snowballs do grow, man after man being flattered by Miss Nethersole into joining, and each name being used to catch others. I am disturbed by seeing your name as a member. This embarrasses us.⁵⁸

A similar attitude was taken at the Ministry of Health, where the permanent secretary instructed that "Miss O. Nethersole should be put in her place, with firmness but with the politeness customary to you."⁵⁹

It is worth recalling that this was a very active period in the history of policy-making on bovine tuberculosis. There was an inter-departmental committee in 1930/31.⁶⁰ In 1931 there was a short debate in the House of Lords, memorable mainly for a powerful speech on the need for change by Lord Moynihan of Leeds, president of Royal College of Surgeons.⁶¹ The MRC launched three relevant reports between 1930 and 1933.⁶² In 1932 the Reorganization Commission on Milk began its deliberations and took evidence on disease and heat treatment, and the Gowland Hopkins Committee met for the first time, leading up to the publication of its report in 1934.⁶³ In 1933 the City of Manchester held a referendum on the subject of pasteurization, showing the extraordinary depth of feeling on this potential method of protecting the public.⁶⁴ In short, there was a ferment of ideas about policy options, and the PLH report represented an opportunity for those already engaged in this debate to fire another salvo, to the discomfort of the vested interests at the MRC and the Ministry of Health. Nethersole provided a convenient platform at just the right time. There was little that was

new in the report of the PLH, but it undoubtedly made an impact, judging from the frequent citations in the media and various political fora.

The PLH continued until 1950, although it had long since lost its voice and had fallen into debt.⁶⁵ Apart from this one brief triumph and one or two other notorious excursions into health politics, it was largely ineffective in political terms, apart from being a general irritant in Whitehall. The PLH is an example of what we might call a “pseudo network,” one without real depth, without rhizomic power.

PERIPHERAL INSIDERS: J.F. BLACKSHAW AND
H.E. DALE

All the actors discussed so far were busy and effective to one degree or another. However, their impact was limited: graded milk was very slow to be adopted, compulsory pasteurization was delayed, and, as milk consumption expanded in the 1930s, the risk of tuberculosis increased. Was it that progressives were swimming in a sea of indifference, or was it that they were meeting organized resistance? No and yes.

As I have shown in other papers, the opposition to the changes (legislative, technical) that would have reduced the risk of bovine tuberculosis was comprised of ideologues and vested interests.⁶⁶ The former were mainly in the anti-pasteurization camp (organists, etc.), the latter in the farming industry and parts of the milk trade. Throughout the early twentieth century, food and milk were never political priorities, and it was therefore relatively easy to disrupt any legislation that came forward. Labour was the only political party to take milk seriously, but their periods in office were short, and even during the first National Government (1931–35) Ramsay MacDonald gave the Ministries of Agriculture and Health to Conservatives.

A major shift came in 1933 when Walter Elliot set up the Milk Marketing Board as a corporate institution dominated by the farmers. He ceded power to them, making reforms by the Ministry of Agriculture & Fisheries (MAF) even more difficult. It took reforms in the Second World War, the Labour victory in 1945, and Tom Williams, a dedicated minister of agriculture, to start genuine and fundamental change.

What was the performance of the MAF in the 1920s and 1930s? It is best summed up in the activities of two figures in nodal bureaucratic positions: J.F. Blackshaw, dairy commissioner, and H.E. Dale, principal assistant secretary. A very crude encapsulation of their views on radical change to eliminate bovine tuberculosis would have been: it can't be done because it is too big a problem, change would damage the farming industry, and the science is uncertain. In these arguments they were entraining and translating the "interests" of farmers and farm animals and drawing very considerable strength from the lobbying of agricultural groups. They showed no grasp of what today we call the precautionary principle, the principle that, where unambiguous proof of cause and effect is not available, it is necessary to act with a duty of care.

Although they were on every relevant committee in Whitehall and many outside, Blackshaw and Dale are mainly visible in the private papers of the MAF in the National Archives. The hand-written "minutes" are often the most revealing. Here are three quotations that make this point.

Dale (1932): If one admits the evil [of bovine tuberculosis], the question is, is the means suggested for dealing immediately with it likely to produce more or less evil in the long run to the community? If you get 5,000 or 10,000 or 15,000 people [farmers] ruined, what is going to be the effect on the wives and children of those men?⁶⁷

Blackshaw (1933): So far as I can see, if tuberculosis were eradicated universally by all farmers equally it is at least doubtful whether there would be any gain to the industry. The cost of producing milk would presumably be reduced, but if the reduction were universal it would merely mean that pretty soon the price would fall and everyone except the customer would be where he was before.⁶⁸

Blackshaw (1934): It is perhaps a pity that these people [the PLH], as well as the [Hopkins] committee, persisted in looking at this matter from the platform of the idealist and not the platform of the practical possibilist. In my view it would not be practicable at the present time to require that all milk produced for consumption must be of Grade A standard when it leaves the farm. Any attempt to administer such a regulation in the present state of affairs would quickly result in a milk shortage.⁶⁹

In short, these civil servants used every opportunity open to them, both in outside committees and behind closed doors in the ministry, to prevent costly change. The Ministry of Health dubbed Blackshaw and Dale “the more old fashioned part of the Ministry [of Agriculture],” and there seems to have been a collective sigh of relief when they both retired in 1935.⁷⁰ Their careers were a testament to the effectiveness of what Michel de Certeau would have recognised as their everyday tactical resistance.⁷¹

DISCUSSION

Bob Jessop sees the state as a “site, generator and product of strategies.” In his view “any theory of the state must produce an informed analysis of the strategic calculations and practices of the actors involved and of the interaction between agents and the state structures. However the relationship is always dynamic and dialectical.”⁷² The present chapter has attempted to add a further layer of understanding to recent reconstructions of the complex nature of bovine tuberculosis policy-making in Britain before the Second World War. There is a risk, however, that such a short chapter might give the impression of a reductive view of state action. It is therefore important to make two cautionary points.

First, the slow advance in policy with regard to bovine tuberculosis did not mean a lack of progress across the board. Several initiatives *were* undertaken by government, although most improvements came from the commercial world. Graded milk, for instance, was introduced in 1917 and relaunched in 1923, although it did not have much impact in our period.⁷³ There was also the idea of attested herds, which was altogether more significant, starting a year or two before the Second World War. Finally, and most important, pasteurization was introduced gradually by dairy companies in the inter-war period. This method of heat treatment was primarily designed to increase the shelf life of retail milk, but in its technically most efficient guises, it had the beneficial side effect of killing the mycobacteria that had been passed on by infectious cows.

Second, the local state was heavily involved in making and implementing policy with regard to bovine tuberculosis. My discussion here has been London-focused, but a fully nuanced model must account for the geographically uneven responses of local authori-

ties, with large cities such as Manchester, Liverpool, and Glasgow in the lead.⁷⁴

I see the next step in this research as accommodating the view of Marsh and Smith that policy studies must move beyond the structure/agency dichotomy.⁷⁵ Actor network theory, or what in Deleuzian terms has been renamed actant rhizomic theory, provides a convenient and well-tried means of taking interest networks seriously as agents in their own right. ANT sets aside binary oppositions such as inside/outside and deals instead with heterogeneous associations: networks made up of people, technology, animals. For Bruno Latour's laboratory scientists, their ability to put their ideas forward and exert influence depends upon their resources of hardware, their working methods, their network of contacts. My campaigners for action with regard to bovine tuberculosis needed to entrain wide networks of different actors in order to get their way. Actors build networks by translating the interests of others into their own cause. This may involve hybrids of social and natural phenomena, for instance representing the interests of cattle in a debate about a zoonosis. Campaigners can therefore be seen as speaking on behalf of both people and animals.

In the context of a different cattle disease, bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), Steve Hinchliffe has looked at what is involved in making a policy decision. His conclusion involves the extent to which nature can be known and the knowing of indeterminacy. Significantly, the science of BSE/CJD has proved to be slippery and uncertain in a way that is very reminiscent of bovine tuberculosis. The time scales and many of the details of the two zoonoses are rather different, yet Hinchliffe's commentary on policy-making is highly relevant also for bovine tuberculosis: "The production of a policy is a struggle to align all manner of people, utterances, departments and knowledges ... A ... policy does not ... survive or fall on its own merits. It is a networked achievement."⁷⁶

CONCLUSION

The accompanying figure sketches the actor space of policy-making with regard to bovine tuberculosis. It shows some of the interrelationships that I have discussed, but it is not a power map. Complex versions of such relationship diagrams have been subjected to



Figure 9.1
The actor space of policy-making

mathematical network analysis by sociologists, and it is interesting to note that a software industry has recently emerged to assist corporations concerned about the efficiency of interaction amongst their staff.⁷⁷

My conclusion is that bovine tuberculosis lived and thrived in a relational world. Delays in policy formation were caused by the inability of actors such as Buckley, Astor, and Nethersole to make the necessary extensions of their projects into the parts of Whitehall that mattered. In addition, there was no meeting of minds. Dale and Blackshaw had no empathy with consumer causes, because they felt that they themselves were employed solely to protect the farming industry. What they apparently could not see was that the interests of farming were to an extent bound up with creating trust in the food chain. This issue is still crucial today.

The balance between progressives and conservatives remained very much in the favour of the latter camp throughout our period. However, the Second World War broke the log-jam, with the capacity of conservative politicians and civil servants greatly reduced, and the situation after 1945 was different again. There was much closer collaboration between the governments and interest groups, and the political will to slaughter large numbers of infected cattle around the country reached its peak in the 1950s.

My insider/outsider classification of activism has served its purpose, but further work will stress the interweaving of individual and group projects. It remains to be seen whether there is clearer evidence of networked achievements in policy-making than has been shown in the present chapter.

NOTES

- 1 I am grateful to the Wellcome Trust for the financial support provided for the research for this chapter and to the other delegates at the Sheffield Conference for their constructive criticism my paper.
- 2 David Marsh and Rob A.W. Rhodes (eds.), *Policy Networks in British Governance* (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1992); Rob A.W. Rhodes, *Understanding Governance: Policy Networks, Governance, Reflexivity and Accountability* (Buckingham: Open University Press 1997); Wyn Grant, *Pressure Groups and British Politics* (Basingstoke: Macmillan 2000); Mark Bevir and Rod A.W. Rhodes, *Interpreting British Governance* (London: Routledge 2003).
- 3 Wyn Grant, "Insider Groups, Outsider Groups and Interest Group Strategies in Britain," *University of Warwick Department of Politics Working Paper* No. 19 (1978); William A. Maloney, Grant Jordan, and Andrew M. McLaughlin, "Interest Groups and Public Policy: the Insider/Outsider Model Revisited," *Journal of Public Policy* 14 (1994):17–38.
- 4 Martin J. Smith, *The Politics of Agricultural Support in Britain: The Development of the Agricultural Policy Community* (Aldershot: Dartmouth 1990).
- 5 William Savage (1872–1961) was medical officer of health for Somerset, Graham Wilson (1895–1987) developed laboratory methods of testing milk quality, and Robert Williams (1871–1932) was a prominent advocate of clean milk production.
- 6 Walter Elliot (1888–1959) and Christopher Addison (1869–1951), later Viscount Addison, during their careers were both ministers of health and ministers of agriculture.
- 7 John Orr (1880–1971), later Lord Boyd-Orr, was an MP for the brief period of 1945–46.
- 8 Viscount Lympington (1898–1984) later became the Earl of Portsmouth.
- 9 Grigg (1879–1955), later Baron Altrincham, was governor of Kenya 1925–30; George Courthope (1877–1955), later Baron Courthope; Sir Edward Strachie (1858–1936); Eleanor Rathbone (1872–1946); and Charles Bathurst (1867–1958), later Viscount Bledisloe.

- 10 Peter J. Atkins, "White Heat in Whitehall: Inter-departmental Friction and Its Impact upon Food Safety Policy, the Example of Milk, 1930–35," unpublished ms., 2006c.
- 11 Peter J. Atkins, "'Your Enemy the Cow': Actors, Networks and Competitive Interests in the Medical, Veterinary and Administrative Debate about Bovine Tuberculosis in Britain, circa 1800–1964," unpublished ms., 2006a.
- 12 These two theoretical contexts informed my preliminary thinking about the scale at which to pitch my analysis and the emphasis upon activities rather than structures. I do not, in this paper at least, adopt their vocabulary or their epistemologies.
- 13 Nigel Thrift, "Steps to an Ecology of Place," in Doreen Massey, John Allen, and Phil Sarre (eds.), *Human Geography Today* (Cambridge: Polity Press 1999), 295–322.
- 14 Luc Boltanski and Laurent Thévenot, *De la Justification* (Paris: Gallimard 1991); Laurent Thévenot, "Pragmatic Regimes Governing the Engagement with the World," in Theodore R. Schatzki, Karin Knorr Cetina, and Eike von Savigny (eds.), *The Practice Turn in Contemporary Theory* (London: Routledge 2001), 56–73.
- 15 Thomas Bénatouïl, "A Tale of Two Sociologies: The Critical and the Pragmatic Stance in Contemporary French Sociology," *European Journal of Social Theory* 2 (1999): 379–96; Peter Wagner, *A History and Theory of the Social Sciences* (London: Sage 2001).
- 16 Obituaries: *The Times*, 28 October 1933, 7, and 1 November 7; *Milk Industry* 14 (1933), 84.
- 17 Philip Sheail, "Hampshire Man and the Quest for Clean Milk," *Hampshire* (March 1981): 60–2.
- 18 *The Dairyman, the Cowkeeper, and Dairyman's Journal* (January 1919): 101.
- 19 National Archives (NA): MAF 35/309. Tuberculosis Orders were used as a means of the compulsory slaughter of diseased animals.
- 20 B. Davies, "Practical and Scientific Problems of the Milk Supply and Their Laboratory Control," *Journal of the Royal Sanitary Institute* 54 (1934): 486–501, 488.
- 21 Wilfred Buckley, "Limits of Pasteurization: Better Milk Means More Business," *The Milk Industry* 2, 8 (February 1922): 79–81.
- 22 This gave powers to the Local Government Board to designate and regulate certified milk. The postponement of this legislation in 1915 was a disappointment.
- 23 The cleanliness of the following items was scored: cows, cowshed, utensils, the milk room, and milking and milk handling methods.

- 24 NA: CAB 58/186, Economic Advisory Council, Report, Proceedings and Memoranda of Committee on Cattle Diseases (EAC (CD) Series, 88-109A), 1932-34, vol. 3, Memorandum no. 99: Stenographic notes of the evidence of Wilfred Buckley.
- 25 NA: MAF 35/309.
- 26 Departmental Committee on the Production and Distribution of Milk, 1917-19.
- 27 Wholesale Milk Dealers (Control) Order 1918, *Statutory Rules and Orders* no. 24.
- 28 There were further controversial episodes in the 1920s: for instance in 1926 Buckley gave evidence to the Food Council that short measure was endemic. This caused such an outcry in the milk trade that the farmers and retailers demanded that he should repudiated by the NMPC for whom he was then working. When the latter refused, the relationship between the National Farmers Union and the NMPC deteriorated to breaking point. NA: MAF/52/7, TD/428.
- 29 NA: MH 56/110.
- 30 For instance, twice in March 1914 he made visits to the Local Government Board as a delegate of the Agricultural Organization Society and then the Barlow Committee arguing for milk certification. NA: MH 80/5.
- 31 Waldorf Astor was proprietor of the *Observer* and was therefore predisposed to giving Buckley a voice because of his own interest in milk.
- 32 One example of his boldness was his appointment as organizer-in-chief of London's milk supply during the General Strike of 1926.
- 33 Keith Dowding, "Model or Metaphor? A Critical Review of the Policy Network Approach," *Political Studies* 43 (1995):136-58.
- 34 His father was William Waldorf Astor, owner of the Waldorf Astoria hotel, and his wife was Nancy Astor.
- 35 In 1936 he became chairman of the Joint Committee of Agricultural, Economic and Health Experts appointed by the League, which later became the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.
- 36 University of Reading Archives, Astor Papers, MS1066/1/1023.
- 37 Waldorf Astor, "The Production of Pure Milk," *The Farmers' Union Year Book*, section 7 (1920/21): 1-6.
- 38 Reading University Archives, Astor Papers: MS1066/1/1019; *Parliamentary Debates* 61 (1914) 1023-67.
- 39 Waldorf Astor (chairman), Departmental Committee on Tuberculosis, Interim Report, British Parliamentary Papers 1912-13 (Cd 6164), xlviii.1; Final Report, British Parliamentary Papers 1912-13 (Cd 6641), xlviii. 29; Appendix, British Parliamentary Papers 1912-13 (Cd 6654), xlviii.47.

- 40 Christopher Addison was a member of the Departmental Committee, and both he and Astor were on the subsequent Medical Research Committee.
- 41 Waldorf Astor (chairman), Departmental Committee on Production and Distribution of Milk, *First Interim Report*, British Parliamentary Papers 1917–18 (Cd 8608), xvi.1003; *Second Interim Report*, British Parliamentary Papers 1917–18 (Cd 8886), xvi.1011; *Third Interim Report*, British Parliamentary Papers 1919 (Cmd 315), xxv.615; *Final Report*, British Parliamentary Papers 1919 (Cmd 483), vvx.645.
- 42 This would have meant payments to farmers for milk of a higher than average bacteriological quality.
- 43 NA: MH 56/75, 23 October 1923, Floud to Robinson.
- 44 His only other official work in this area came in 1934 when he chaired a Milk Marketing Board committee advising on activities involving expenditure under the Milk Act (1934) for milk publicity and school milk.
- 45 The best source for these various activities is the Astor Papers in the University of Reading Archives.
- 46 Astor wanted a hierarchy of grades, such as A, B, and C, rather than grades of vague relative merit, such as Grade A and Certified.
- 47 NA: MH/56/77. R.B. Cross, undated minute [July 1925].
- 48 NA: MH/56/77. Memo from Newman, 16 July 1925. ‘Negligent’ here referred to the continuing loss of life from tuberculosis and the need for a tightening of the regulations.
- 49 NA: MH/56/77. Letter from Lord Astor to Sir George Newman, 11 July 1925. There were to be six grades in the proposed system, ranked according to bacteriological quality and whether the milk had been tuberculin tested and pasteurized. Coloured milk tops were to be used as markers for the consumer.
- 50 NA: MH/56/77. Astor to Chamberlain, 31 July 1925, with the salutation “Dear Neville.”
- 51 NA: MH/56/77. Memo by Beckett, 16 September 1925, Beckett summarising the meeting between Lord Bledisloe and Sir Kingsley Wood.
- 52 NA: FD 1/1649.
- 53 Margaret Barnett, “The People’s League of Health and the Campaign against Bovine Tuberculosis in the 1930s,” in David F. Smith and Jim Phillips (eds.), *Food, Science, Policy and Regulation in the Twentieth Century: International and Comparative Perspectives* (London: Routledge 2000), 69–82.
- 54 The Medical Council comprised a formidable list of surgeons, physicians, and medical officers of health, including one lord, one lady, twenty-five knights and six professors.

- 55 NA: FD 1/1649. Griffiths to Fletcher, 13 March 1930.
- 56 NA: FD 1/1649. Fletcher to Griffiths, 17 March 1930.
- 57 NA: FD 1/1649. Fletcher to Griffiths, 23 May 1930.
- 58 NA: FD 1/1649. Fletcher to Dreyer, Hopkins, and MacNalty, 7 May 1930.
- 59 NA: MH 56/101. Robinson to Butcher, 15 December 1934.
- 60 Atkins, "White Heat in Whitehall."
- 61 *Parliamentary Debates*, 10 February 1931, cols. 891–8. This debate had been organized by Viscount Astor.
- 62 H.H. Scott, "Tuberculosis in Man and Lower Animals," *Medical Research Council, Special Report Series*, 149 (1930); John W.S. Blacklock, "Tuberculous Disease in Children," *Medical Research Council, Special Report Series*, 172 (1932); Lewis S. Jordan, "The Eradication of Bovine Tuberculosis," *Medical Research Council, Special Reports Series*, 184 (1933).
- 63 NA: MH 56/100; Sir Frederick Hopkins (chairman), *Report of the Economic Advisory Council on Milk Cattle Diseases*, British Parliamentary Papers 1933–34 (Cmd 4591), ix. 427.
- 64 Peter J. Atkins, "The Pasteurization of England: The Science, Culture and Health Implications of Milk Processing, 1900–1950," in David F. Smith and Jim Phillips (eds.), *Food, Science, Policy and Regulation in the Twentieth Century: International and Comparative Perspectives* (London: Routledge 2000), 37–51.
- 65 NA: FD 1/1649. Olga Nethersole died the following year.
- 66 Atkins, "Pasteurization of England"; Atkins, "Your Enemy the Cow"; Peter J. Atkins, "Getting into the In-tray: The Pre-history of a Policy Network: Pressure Groups and Bovine Tuberculosis, 1850–1950," unpublished ms., 2006b; Atkins, "White Heat in Whitehall"; Peter J. Atkins, "The Glasgow Case: Meat, Disease and Regulation, 1889–1924," *Agricultural History Review* 52 (2004): 161–82.
- 67 NA: CAB 58/185, Economic Advisory Council, Report, Proceedings and Memoranda of Committee on Cattle Diseases (EAC (CD) Series, 26–87), 1932–34, vol. 2, Memorandum no. 35: "Compulsory Pasteurization of Milk in Towns," stenographic notes of the evidence of the representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, 14 December 1932.
- 68 NA: MAF/35/435. Dale to Blackshaw, 27 May 1933.
- 69 NA: MAF 35/554. Blackshaw, 21 September 1934.
- 70 NA: MH/56/85. Beckett to Maclachlan, 23 May 1935.
- 71 Ian Buchanan, *Michel de Certeau: Cultural Theorist* (London: Sage 2000), 89.

- 72 Bob Jessop, *State Theory: Putting the Capitalist State in Its Place* (Cambridge: Polity Press 1990).
- 73 Under the 1923 provisions, producers of Certified and Grade A (TT) milk had to have cows that were tuberculin-tested, with milk free from tuberculosis; the cows of Grade A and Grade A (Pasteurized) producers had to be inspected every three months by a vet and certified free of clinical tuberculosis.
- 74 Atkins, "Getting into the In-tray."
- 75 David Marsh and Martin J. Smith, "Understanding Policy Networks: Towards a Dialectical Approach," *Political Studies* 48 (2000):4-21.
- 76 Steve Hinchliffe, "Indeterminacy In-decisions: Science, Policy and Politics in the BSE Crisis," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 26 (2000):182-204, 194.
- 77 See Stanley Wasserman and Katherine Faust, *Social Network Analysis: Methods and Applications* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1994); <http://www.orgnet.com/sna.html> (accessed September 2003); but for a critique see Mustafa Emirbayer and Jeff Goodwin, "Network Analysis, Culture, and the Problems of Agency," *American Journal of Sociology* 99 (1994): 1411-54.