

Institution: Keele University

Unit of Assessment: C21 Politics and International Studies

a. Context: Almost all the staff in Politics and International Relations from SPIRE (School of Politics, Philosophy, International Relations and the Environment) engaged with non-academic organisations and actors in their research activity in this period. The impact of this is evident at local, national and international levels with an extensive range of groups, including local communities, Third Sector organisations, political parties, the general public, UK, EU and UN political institutions, national governments of other countries, and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). There are two main types of impact: **(1) direct work with specific users**, such as governments, political parties, voters, environmental activists, war veterans, and local communities, achieved through formal and informal collaborative partnerships and consultancies and **(2) contributions to public debate** through public engagement.

b. Approach to impact

(1) Direct work with and for specific users: Staff have worked with governments and international organisations, applying their research to inform policy. As a result of his research on the Indian Ocean Region, Doyle was appointed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs in 2013 as one of only four Australians to be an advisor to the Indian and Australian Governments' Indian Ocean Security Task Force. Support from SPIRE enabled him to take part in meetings in Kenya and India, including rearranging and covering his teaching responsibilities. This is routine practice in order to allow colleagues the flexibility to take advantage of major opportunities for impact. Other instances in which this principle was followed included: **Ryan's authorship of reports on policing and security for the Montenegrin Ministry of the Interior (funded by the OSCE) and for the Irish government**, (the Department of Foreign Affairs commented that this had 'contributed significantly' to its decisions on funding security projects in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus); **Ladrech's consultancy for the EU Parliament** on funding for Party Foundations, which led to changes in its policy in 2008; and **Doherty's co-authorship of a report and training for the Environment Agency** on its relationships with Special Interest Groups (2008).

(2) Contributions to public debate through public engagement: In the UK, research briefings were given at the House of Commons by Sheikh (on Poverty and Islamic Radicalisation, January 2010); Luther (for the special interest group on Austria, February 2009); and the House of Lords (Dobson for a DEFRA roundtable on attitudes towards sustainability, October 2010). Luther's research on Austrian politics has led to regular high-level contact with the British and Austrian governments, for which he was honoured by the Austrian Government in April 2009, and he worked with European social-democratic party foundations as an invited expert in two panels on democratic legitimacy (January and February 2013). Luther and Gökay have taken part in part in Chatham House/RIIIA Working Groups, the results of one of which, on the Global Economic crisis in November 2009, were published in a report by the City of London. In addition, many staff have given research-based talks to a wide range of non-academic audiences, such as the Indian Council of World Affairs (Doyle, June 2011); Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (Catney, April 2010); National Council for Voluntary Organisations (Doherty, June 2008); and the Department of Energy and Climate Change (Dobson, July 2013), all of which arose from Research Council-funded projects, which had been designed to ensure pathways to impact.

Keele European Parties Research Unit was the UK team (led by Carter) in the EU-Profiler project,

Impact template (REF3a)

which was designed to allow voters to find which parties in the 2009 European Parliamentary elections were closest to their own policy preferences. There were 419,323 visits to the UK site – and the Profiler project, co-ordinated by the European University Institute – won the World e-Democracy Forum award in 2009 for its contribution to public knowledge and debate. In March 2012 Doherty co-organised a two-day workshop with Sciences Po Rennes and Aston University, for activists from Britain and France who had been prosecuted for protest actions, and their defence lawyers. This was the first occasion of its kind, contributing to capacity building through the exchange of knowledge of legal processes and the development of an informal cross-national network. SPIRE also organises specific events targeted at the local public – including symposia on the US 2008 and UK 2010 elections attended by local schools, and on Turkish protests and the situation in Syria in 2013. This is complemented by SPIRE’s support for the externally-oriented World Affairs Programme, which has over 400 current members and attracts high-profile speakers from the world of politics and public affairs (including George Osborne, Baroness Shirley Williams and Lord Winston in this period).

The expertise and resources provided by Keele’s Research and Enterprise Services and the Faculty Research Office (FRO) contributed to impact through the provision of legal, financial and communications advice and through University-level initiatives. Because Keele joined the European Institute for Technology-funded Knowledge and Innovation Community on Climate Change, SPIRE was able to host one of three practitioner Pioneers into Practice who came to Keele from other EU countries in 2013 to learn about the research on environmental politics within the School. A recent FRO appointment focuses on ensuring impact and public engagement are embedded in all our routine practices, grant applications and strategic planning, and the creation of a new Directorate of Marketing and Communications (MAC) in 2011, and consequent specialist PR advice, has led to increased national media profile for the School through appearances on BBC TV *Breakfast* (Herbert, 6/11/2012 and 1/09/2013); *The Politics Show* (Dobson 24/03/2012) and Radio 4 *Analysis* (Dobson 9/10/2011); BBC Radio 5 Live, *Drive* (Catney 30/7/2013); the *Victoria Derbyshire Show* (Doherty 24/4/2013); a *BBC History* podcast on the Falklands war (Parr 5/4/2013); and Gökay will take part in a BBC programme in which academics analyse the 2013 BBC4 series *The Ottomans*. SPIRE staff have also written research commentaries for the media: Newey wrote regularly for the *London Review of Books* while in SPIRE; Gökay wrote articles on human rights and protests in Turkey in 2012 and 2013; Dobson wrote seven articles on climate change and environmentalism (2008-12) for *Open Democracy*; and Doherty’s research on direct action was featured in *The Financial Times* (1/10/2009) and influenced the Reader’s Editor of *The Observer* to take the unprecedented decision to disavow an article on ‘eco-terrorism’ post-publication (23/11/2008). This is in addition to the numerous interviews and background briefings given by staff to national and international newspapers and broadcast media (too many to list in the space available).

c. Strategy and plans

The REF period has seen a step change increase in our levels of engagement with external groups. This is consistent with the impact agenda of the REF, but goes well beyond it, and reflects a longstanding commitment by SPIRE to viewing academic research as a contribution to the public sphere. In the past, this was particularly evident in the field of human rights and the environment, as the two impact case studies attest. A notable additional example is Matthew Paterson (Keele 1994-2005, now Ottawa) whose research on climate change politics, published before he left Keele, was instrumental in his appointment as a Lead Author for the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (2010-14). What has changed is that we now

Impact template (REF3a)

have a systematic set of procedures, supported by expertise and resources from the wider University, that builds in planning to maximise impact as integral to all SPIRE's research (through regular review of the plans of individuals, the School and the Research Institute), and recognises work with non-academic groups and impact as elements in calculating time for research, plans for research leave, annual appraisals and promotions. Staff promoted in this period for whom the impact of their research beyond academia made a significant contribution included Gökay, Ladrech and Luther (to Professorships) and Carter, Catney, Herbert and Parr (to Senior Lectureships).

Recognising that the direct work relationships with non-academic groups weaken when neglected, a core element of our future strategy is based on planning to sustain relationships with strategically significant partner groups. The underlying principle is that, where it is possible, the co-production of knowledge with research subjects strengthens impact. Thus we have invested in professionally produced videos for the ESRC/EPSRC Energy and Communities 'Reducing Energy Consumption through Community Knowledge Networks' project involving Dobson, Catney and MacGregor, and members of the communities that were subjects of the research. This project has been actively engaged in developing local community networks for alleviating fuel poverty and promoting energy conservation, and this work is continuing after the RCUK funding ends. Other partner groups have invested in our research because they recognise its value. Gökay's strong links with policy-makers resulted in the Turkish government funding an ongoing seminar series at Keele on Modern Turkey, launched by the Turkish Ambassador in 2012. Collaboration with Stoke City Council (led by Catney) developed directly from an ESRC project, which resulted in the Council jointly funding a PhD studentship to investigate the governance of Stoke and Staffordshire's Local Enterprise Partnership. These principles have been embedded in research practice in SPIRE for many years but are now supported at University-level by specific resources and expertise (for example, on media training) that will enable us to sustain ties with research users in the future.

We also aim to continue the kinds of contribution to public knowledge and debate outlined in *section b*, maintaining successful current practices, but adding to them with new initiatives, such as the bite-sized open access research digests summarising research projects, to be launched in 2014 (the production of which will be assisted by the MAC Directorate at Keele). This initiative is a direct response to suggestions from media advisers at Keele and journalists about how to increase impact and we are confident that it will lead to greater use of our research by the public.

d. Relationship to case studies

The strategic approach outlined in *section c* is informed by the experience of successful impact in the two case studies. Both were the outcome of long-term investments in building partnerships with non-academic groups, which enabled the co-production of knowledge: Dobson through ties with green activists and Thornberry through his work for NGOs such as Minority Rights Group, both of which began in the 1990s. The impact outlined in the case studies was informed by related work in SPIRE and mutual learning about impact beyond academia. Dobson's work with the Green Party and Green House has synergies with Doherty and Doyle's work with Friends of the Earth and other green activists, while Thornberry's UN work links with Ryan's on post-conflict policing. Doyle's work with the Indian Ocean Research Group, Doherty's for the Environment Agency, and the engagement with local community and Third Sector groups through the Reducing Energy Consumption through Community Knowledge Networks RCUK project, demonstrate that staff have an established practice of bringing their research to other groups.