

Institution: Loughborough University
Unit of Assessment: D27 Area Studies
Title of case study: International Social Research Methods: Enhancement of Analysis, Resources and Training
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>This case study focuses on the impact of research undertaken within the European Research Centre (ERC) and the Centre for the Study of International Governance at Loughborough University between 1993 and 2009, primarily by Professor Linda Hantrais (1993-2008 and now Emeritus). The impact of the research has been created through high quality cross-national socio-demographic analysis which has underpinned policy formation and delivery at the European and national levels, with particular reference to social policy, citizenship and family policy. It has had a substantial further impact by generating advances in international comparative research methods and training.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>Between 1993 and 2013, staff attached to the department of Politics, History and international Relations, Loughborough University (PHIR - previously European Studies and then Politics, International Relations and European Studies) conducted a series of major projects applying and developing cross-national research methods to issues of European social policy and citizenship. The leading role in the activity was taken by Professor Linda Hantrais (Professor in the unit until 2008 – now Emeritus professor in the unit), who is a leading expert on issues of cross-national and international research and has applied these to a range of European and national policy issues. This case study focuses on Professor Hantrais' work and its later impact. Two interrelated elements are key to this research:</p> <p>(1) Cross-National Research Seminars, International Social Research Methods Training Workshops, and Network Building (1993-2013): this work, organised for much of the period through the European Research Centre under the leadership of Professor Linda Hantrais, focused on the theoretical, methodological, managerial and practical issues involved in research that crosses national boundaries and on the application of such research in policy analysis. The Cross-National Research Group ran a series of seminars and training events, throughout the 1990s and the early 2000s, which attracted funding from the Economic and Social Research Council, Centre National de Recherches Scientifiques Franco-British Programme, Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft and European Commission, and produced seven series of <i>Cross-National Research Papers</i> that were published by the ERC during the late 1990s and early 2000s (a total of 38 issues of collected papers). The work of the Unit led to the publication of a cross-national research methods source book (1996), a special issue of the <i>International Journal of Social Research Methodology</i> (1999, reissued as a book in 2007), a single-authored book [3.6] on <i>International Comparative Research: theory, methods and practice</i> (plus a web companion in 2012 and an e-book in 2013). Further ESRC funding was obtained for a consultancy to develop and roll out a training programme in International Social Research Methods across the UK and abroad under the Researcher Development Initiative in 2010-12, resulting in a sustainable databank of International Social Research Methods Case Studies (http://www.restore.ac.uk/ISResMeth/).</p> <p>(2) Research on European Social Policy and Comparisons of Family Policies in Europe (1994-2013): This work took the form in its early stages of a workshop-centred project on concepts and contexts in comparisons of family policies in Europe, funded by the ESRC, the Caisse Nationale des Allocations Familiales and the European Commission (1994-96). This later led to two major projects funded by the European Commission and coordinated in the ERC: (i) 'The Interaction Between Family Policies and Social Protection in the Context of Recent and Future Socio-Demographic Change' (1997-1998), which produced a number of <i>Cross-National Research Papers</i> (http://www.xnat.org.uk), refereed journal articles [for example 3.1] and an edited volume [3.2]; (ii) <i>Improving Policy Responses and Outcomes to Socio-Economic Challenges</i> (IPOSEC) (funded under FP5, 2000-2003), which involved an eleven-nation comparative study and produced</p>

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a wide range of policy papers, books [for example 3.3], articles, [for example 3.4] and reports. Both of the European-funded projects, in conjunction with three editions of *Social Policy in the European Union* [3.5] involved extensive interaction with officials and other practitioners as part of the fieldwork and dissemination process and resulted in Professor Hantrais being invited to act as expert advisor to DG Employment's High Level Group of Experts on Demographic Issues (2007-12), and as editor and advisor for the Commission's 2008 and 2010 Demographic Reports.

These two strands of research have come together during the period 2008-13 to provide the foundation for new initiatives in international social research methods, and this is the basis for the claim of impact made below.

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

- 3.1. Hantrais, L. (1999), Socio-Demographic Change, Policy Impacts and Outcomes in Social Europe, *Journal of European Social Policy* 9(4), 291-309, ISSN 0958-9287 (199911)9:4. (key reference in international journal)
- 3.2. Hantrais, L. (ed) (2000), *Gendered Policies in Europe: Reconciling Employment and Family Life*, London: Macmillan, New York: St Martin's Press, ISBN 978-0333739822. (strong research text from leading publisher)
- 3.3. Hantrais, L. (2004), *Family Policy Matters: Responding to Family Change in Europe*. Policy Press, ISBN 978-1861344717. (major analysis and synthesis of findings from key ESRC and EU funded projects)
- 3.4. Hantrais, L. (2005), Combining methods: a key to understanding complexity in European societies, *European Societies*, 7(3), 399–421, DOI 10.1080/14616690500194035. (much-cited reference on international research methods)
- 3.5. Hantrais, L. (1995, 2000, 2007) *Social Policy in the European Union* (1st, 2nd and 3rd editions), London: Macmillan, New York: St Martin's Press, ISBN 0-333-61389-9, 0-333-92008-2, 0-230-01309-0. (classic research based text submitted to successive RAEs)
- 3.6. Hantrais, L. (2009) *International Comparative Research: Theory, Methods and Practice*. Basingstoke: Palgrave/Macmillan, New York: St Martin's Press, ISBN 978-0230217683 [URL for the web companion: www.palgrave.com/research/hantrais] (framed the entire RDI international research methods agenda and has led to the development of key innovations)

Key Research Grants

ESRC, Review of European funding opportunities for UK Social Scientists, £6968 (May–August 1997). Hantrais PI.

ESRC/SPA Advanced Research Training Workshops for Postgraduates 1998, awarded £1,300 to convene a workshop on Cross-national research methods, Loughborough, 25 March 1998. Hantrais PI.

European Commission Directorate General V, Employment, Industrial Relations and Social Affairs, Tender no. V/02/97: Interaction between Family Policies and Social Protection in the Context of Recent and Future Socio-demographic Changes, ECU 199,769, for a multinational, interdisciplinary study, including a state-of-the-art review, cases studies and evaluation (October 1997–September 1998). Hantrais PI.

ESRC, Training Board Consultancy on the International Dimension in Postgraduate Research Training, £4999 (September 2001–March 2002). Hantrais PI

IPOSEC: European Commission Framework Programme 5, Improving Policy Responses and Outcomes to Socio-Economic Challenges: changing family structures, policy and practice (IPOSEC) (amount awarded 996,660 euros April 2000 to March 2003, contract no. HPSE-CT-1999-00031). Hantrais PI.

European Commission, DG Research and Development Consultancy, Expert Reviewer of projects on the theme of Family and Welfare; €25,650, December 2002–December 2004. Hantrais PI.

ESRC Seminar Competition, funding requested £15,000 for 6 seminars, September 2003–March

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2005 (award number RES-451-26-0020). Hantrais PI.

European Science Foundation/Research Councils, Evaluation of ESF Scheme for European Collaborative Research Projects in the Social Sciences, 1 March–31 May 2004, funding Requested €22,000 (ref: CE/HS/09). Hantrais PI.

ESRC RDI, Jointly held award between London School of Economics/Social Research Association under the ESRC Researcher Development Initiative, Round 4, of £54,964 to support the development of an International Social Research Training Programme (1 May 2010 to 31 July 2012 (with Linda Hantrais as Academic Consultant). Hantrais Co-I.

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

The reach of the impact achieved by this research has extended to governmental and official bodies at the European level, and to educational groupings both nationally and internationally. This is indicated by: (i) Engagement of a large number of academics, officials and Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) representatives in a common project (The seven series of Cross-National Research Papers involved 234 authors from 16 countries, and IPROSEC covered 11 countries, and the impact on those involved has extended significantly into the 2008-2013 period) [5.1]; (ii) Creation of a large cross-national network of researchers including young researchers with an explicit focus on enhancement of their training and professional skills (opportunities for them to acquire skills and publish) (13 non-UK partners and 20 research assistants for IPROSEC and 8 core team members for the ESRC seminar competition award in 6 countries; events held in Paris and Tallinn). Again, this has had significant resonances in the later careers of those involved [5.1,]; (iii) Transfer and sharing of knowledge through workshops, policy papers, reports, policy recommendations (see above) [5.2, 5.3, 5.4]; (iv) The ESRC training programme in International Social Research Methods involved the design and organisation of a launch event (May 2010) to assess research training needs in academia, government, private and NGO sectors throughout the UK [5.4, 5.5]. Seven workshops were held during the funding period in London, Paris and Nantes, in cooperation with the British Library, British Council in London and Paris, the Society for Research in Higher Education and Réseau des Maisons des Sciences de l'Homme, for experienced researchers seeking to develop their competence in international research methods [5.3, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6, 5.7, 5.8]. The success of the work carried out under the award has been recognised through requests to extend the programme to postgraduate/postdoctoral research students (Bristol and Leeds) and to run further workshops at venues in France (Rennes, Lille) after the end of the life of the project [5.4]. To date, a total of almost 200 participants have benefitted directly from the training provision; (v) A database of International Social Research Methods Case Studies has been developed hosted by the ESRC's National Centre for Research Methods, and Palgrave has launched a web companion for *International Comparative Methods*, which has also been made available as an e-book, thereby extending the reach of the project worldwide [5.4, 5.5, 5.6, 5.7, 5.8]; (vi) The International Social Research Council is interested in including international social research methods training in its fellowship scheme. This is proving to be an area of training that is underdeveloped in other countries. Publicity about the launch of the databank has, for example, brought requests from researchers in South Africa and Slovakia. The research has thus reached a wide range of audiences at several levels: education and training beyond the host institution, policy officials, networks of professionals and researchers in a variety of national and cross-national contexts.

The significance of the impact generated by the research is indicated by: (i) Creation of an enhanced knowledge base for policy innovation and for the enhancement of international research methods. The IPROSEC and related projects have been particularly important in incorporating 'new' EU Member States that entered the Union in 2004, and extending the network to them, creating new knowledge from what was often a low base and disseminating good practice in cross-national social (policy) research [5.1, 5.2, 5.4]; (ii) The International Social Research Training project has resulted in the creation of research methods resource in the form of an on-line data bank of International Social Research Methods Case Studies, based on a Framework, developed in large part from the *International Comparative Research* web companion, under the auspices of the ESRC Re-Store initiative. The website is proving to be a valuable resource for researchers embarking on international research projects both in policy studies and in other areas of social science research [5.4, 5.5, 5.6, 5.7, 5.8]. In the ESRC impact report on the RDI project, the

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Framework is cited as a key innovation; (iii) The methods and training activities encompassed by the International Social Research Methods project have had a strategic impact by contributing to the development of a national infrastructure for researcher development, and this has reached beyond the UK through the provision of international training and the on-line databank, which have acted as a catalyst for further research and training activities [5.3, 5.4]. The activities have fostered innovation through a novel focus on the development of flexible-use training materials, and the on-line databank provides a sustainable baseline for the engagement of further participants [5.3, 5.4, 5.7]. (iv) As Chair of the International Advisory Group of the Academy of Social Sciences, drawing on her international network of contacts, her international social research methods training provision and interest in the research–policy interface, Professor Hantrais is coordinating a programme of seminars entitled ‘Social Science Evidence and the Policy Process: International Insights’, starting in October 2013 [5.2, 5.4, 5.5]. (v) SAGE are including the International Social Research Methods Case Studies in their on-line collection of SAGE Methods Cases, and Professor Hantrais has accepted an invitation to be on the SAGE Review Panel [5.7]. The research has thus had substantial significance for policy debate and formation during the 2008-2013 period, especially in the area of international social research methods drawing upon extensive comparative and cross-national work.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

The following sources of corroboration can be made available at request.

- 5.1. Professor of Social Policy, University of Tartu (letter)
- 5.2. Policy Officer, European Commission, DG EMPL (letter)
- 5.3. Head – Science and Society, British Council (letter)
- 5.4. Director Education-Training Ltd (letter)
- 5.5. Head of Social Science, British Library (pdf file of notes on ReStore website)
- 5.6. ESRC RDI Programme Director (PowerPoint presentation)
- 5.7. Lecturer in Education Management, University of Leeds (letter)
- 5.8. RDI Workshops Feedback (word file)