

**Impact template (REF3a)**

<p><b>Institution:</b> University of Sheffield</p> <hr/> <p><b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 27 - Area Studies</p> <hr/> <p><b>a. Context</b></p> <p>This Unit consists of Area Studies researchers drawn from across the Faculty of Social Sciences including the School of East Asian Studies, the School of Management, the Department of Politics and the Department of Economics who together constitute the Faculty of Social Sciences' Area Studies Methods group.</p> <p>There are two main categories of non-academic user groups, beneficiaries and audiences for the Unit's research: 1) government policymakers at the international, national, or sub-national level; and 2) civil society organisations, businesses, the media and the wider public.</p> <p>The Unit's research has improved the evidence-base, formulation and development of policies and practices in relation to a variety of societal challenges (such as poverty reduction) within Europe, Africa, East Asia, South Asia and Latin America and has enriched public knowledge, perceptions and awareness of the politics, economy, society and culture in these areas.</p> <hr/> <p><b>b. Approach to impact</b></p> <p>The main <b>mechanisms for reaching policymakers are evidence, reports, expert committee testimony, advice and briefings, seminars and workshops.</b> Examples of contributions to policy debates and policymaking internationally and nationally include: <b>evidence</b> by Taylor to the House of Lords on EU enlargement to help their lordships understand and formulate a policy response to this issue; <b>expert testimony</b> by Clark before the United Nations to inform policy on international justice and reconciliation; advice, in the form of <b>reports and briefings</b>, by Mosley to the World Bank and Rwanda Ministry of Local Government on the design and implementation of microfinance packages for use by NGOs; and <b>briefing</b> by Rodgers of the current UK ambassador to the Ukraine on business opportunities for UK business and by Hook of the current UK ambassador to Japan to enhance and enlarge his knowledge and understanding of Japanese politics and international relations. Conrad's <b>seminar</b> presentation on Japanese pensions, Dryburgh's on East Asian territorial disputes, Dobson's on Japan and the G8, Hook's on Japanese approaches to Free Trade Agreements and Matanle's on Japan's rural depopulation have enhanced user knowledge and understanding through high-level seminars at the FCO typically attended by 20-30 invitees from across Whitehall, including the Cabinet Office, HM Treasury, Ministry of Defence, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, the FCO and three other departments. As the Head, Asia Pacific Research Group at the FCO stated in a letter of thanks, 'the impact of the seminars will be made broader and more longer lasting through our collaborative effort in publishing the series' presentations as a volume of policy papers.' Rodgers has given tailored <b>advice</b> to the FCO on state corporatism and corruption in Russia and the Ukraine to help FCO officials guide UK businesses engaged with these two economies. Bache has contributed to the Committee of the Regions First Atelier on challenges in multi-level governance and to the European Court of Auditors on Croatia's capacity to manage post-access funding.</p> <p>Illustrative of <b>workshops</b> as a mechanism to enhance and enlarge knowledge and understanding in order to make targeted contributions to the policy debate is a UK-Japan G8 workshop held in Sheffield in March/April 2008 with international experts including Dobson delivering impact to the UK's G8 sous-sherpa in negotiating common areas of cooperation with Japan e.g. ODA. Significance is evidenced in particular by Hook's impact on the policymaking process through his work as a Director of the UK-Japan 21<sup>st</sup> Century Group. He has been a participant in the bilateral policy debate on UK-Japan defence collaboration, with the Group's report presented to the UK and Japanese prime ministers and action already taken on bilateral defence cooperation by identifying UK equipment such as protective chemical suits for purchase by the Japanese Ministry of Defence. Matanle has helped inform policy debate and policymaking at the subnational level, as illustrated by his advice to Derby county council on issues related to the implications for the UK of Japanese depopulation and aging.</p> <p>The main mechanism for reaching the second main group of users - <b>civil society, business, and broader public engagement</b> - is <b>social media, media appearances, lectures, exhibition narratives and schools and community outreach</b>, which aim at enhancing and enlarging knowledge beyond policy circles. Harrison's work on African politics has been the subject of a blog</p>
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hosted on the Sheffield Political Economy and Research Institute's (SPERI) website which has been promoted to policy makers, journalist and the public through **twitter and facebook**. Dobson has been a regular contributor to **press briefings** at the sites of the G8 and G20 summits since 2008 and has enhanced knowledge and understanding of Japan's role in these two sites of governance. Clark has been interviewed on how Croatia is dealing with its troubled past in the Brussels-based magazine, MO. Conrad's work on the pension system in Japan as an aging society has enhanced knowledge and understanding through the Japanese and German media as well as the UK's. His interview on German **radio** about the Japanese economy and currency issues is an example of the European reach of his research to enlarge and expand knowledge and understanding as impact (2010). The range and significance of Watanabe's research on the activities of Japanese community unions has been two-fold – the creation of effective, on-going alliances between unions and social movement NGOs concerned with poverty in Japan, and through these alliances the development of more effective action policies. Reach to the local business community is evidenced through the creation of the Sheffield Confucius Institute China Business Club (CBC) which hosts regular Breakfast Business Briefings to keep local businesses abreast of developments in Chinese commercial affairs, society and politics. Exemplifying how significance of impact is achieved in the business community is Matanle's **lecture** to the Economist Group in Tokyo, where he enhanced and enlarged the knowledge of senior executives about the implications for business strategy of depopulation in rural Japan as well as Conrad's **presentations** at the professional body of Japanese pension actuaries (2010, 2011). Pendleton's work on the socio-political meaning of memorial sites in Japan demonstrated the reach and the range of our impact through writing a narrative for the **exhibition** 'A Focus on Memory' (20 October, 2012 – 13 January, 2013) hosted at the Usher Gallery, Lincoln.

One significant feature of the work of this unit is the delivery of public engagement impact in our **outreach** work with the local community and schools based on research in second-language acquisition, story-telling and teacher training in Chinese language, coordinated through the University's Confucius Institute. Zhao has used her research in second language acquisition to develop the language skills of the Chinese community in Sheffield. Impact has thus been delivered to members of the local community of all ages, who have become literate or proficient in the Chinese language. Success of the training is evidenced by the decision of three local schools to launch Confucius Classrooms, providing regular Chinese language and culture lessons on a weekly basis in school. Enhancing and enlarging knowledge of Chinese culture has been particularly successful through Lili Chen's pioneering training of teachers in story-telling as a mechanism to counter the outdated knowledge of 'a China of bound feet and pigtailed' in the local community and schools. Storytellers trained by Chen are now hugely popular in local schools and at Sheffield community events such as "Off The Shelf". These stories deliver impact by challenging stereotypical views of China and enhancing and enlarging the local community's and children's knowledge and understanding of China in the contemporary world. The significance of Zhao's research into second language acquisition is captured by the career development of new Chinese language teachers - one of the most rewarding parts of the Unit's work in the local community. The delivery of impact in terms of this career development of teachers of Chinese language teaching skills is exemplified by one who recently moved from being a teacher to become the Head of a Chinese School.

Strategies and plans to maximise impact within this Unit are supported by the Faculty of Social Sciences through the Research Exchange for the Social Sciences (RESS) which acts as a knowledge exchange gateway. Its mission is to develop high-level partnerships with non-academic users, to promote engagement with research users throughout the research process, support KE funding applications, share best practice in impact enhancement and develop methodologies of co-production. RESS has received £1.5m of HEIF support over the last five years and is led by senior academics supported by a team of postdoctoral researchers and business development managers. RESS is responsible for the implementation of the University's Innovation, Impact and Knowledge Exchange (IIKE) Strategy within the Faculty and for the delivery of the Impact and KE objectives within the Faculty's Research and Innovation Strategy. RESS offers organisational support, access to networks and bespoke funds to help develop partnerships, undertake collaborative projects, host and organise user events and to develop staff and postdoctoral exchange and internship opportunities. It coordinates the ESRC Festival of Social Science in Sheffield and leads the White Rose Social Science DTC Collaborators Club. Researchers from this Unit have benefitted from

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RESS support in a variety of ways: Popli and Rodgers have participated in the ESRC Festival of Social Science; RESS developed a series of briefing notes for NGOs working in the Development field (including Mosley).

At Department and Research Centre level impact is supported a) by discussions of future impact strategy co-ordinated by the Research Committees, led by Impact Officer or Impact Champions, b) by the general oversight of the strategy by departmental Research Committees, c) by discussions on impact strategy as an item in the regular staff meetings and at departmental away days, d) by the mentoring of individual staff members' focus on impact through the annual staff review and development process and through specific support e.g. for the development of Pathways to Impact as part of the funding application process. To illustrate, Matanle received financial support from the School of East Asian Studies to speak at the Economist event in Tokyo. SPERI and SIID promote the work of researchers within the Unit using social media strategies (e.g. Harrison's blog noted above).

More generally, the University supports impact through its overall mission as a civic university 'to create, discover, share and apply knowledge through teaching and research in ways that make a difference;' Specifically: its *Innovation, Impact and Knowledge Exchange* (IIKE) strategy was revised in 2012 to strengthen our already strong commitment to the impact agenda, and the IIKE Committee offers funds to support collaborative initiatives throughout the University.

### c. Strategy and plans

The main goal from 2014 is to enhance the mechanisms established to extend the reach and significance of our individual and collective impact in line with the future research strategy set out in REF 5. To achieve this we will:

1. develop impact from excellent research that continues to address the grand challenges and societal problems faced at the regional and global levels;
2. continue to embed impact within individual research planning and career development discussions to encourage greater use of internal support, including that offered by SPERI, SIID, RESS and the Public Engagement team;
3. work with the Research Exchange for the Social Science to develop and share knowledge of best practice in user engagement across the Area Studies community (e.g. building on the work with the FCO);
4. seek to engage more widely in direct public debate to facilitate the acceptance of new perspectives and take-up and application of research findings. This will be supported by encouraging greater participation of staff in media training, and building stronger links with the University's Public Engagement with Research Team as well as through greater direct engagement with external media.

### d. Relationship to case studies

Two case studies have been selected to illustrate the impact opportunity creation and impact delivery of the Unit's research along different pathways:

The first case study on Dobson's research into Japan's role in the G8 and G20 summits illustrates impact on the policy-making debate at the international and national levels, as well as public engagement by improving the quality of the media's knowledge, understanding and reportage of the G8, G20 and Japan's role therein. It is an example of the impact generated through the work of the research cluster on Regionalisation and Globalisation.

The second case study on Matanle's research into employment and population dynamics in post-industrial Japan demonstrates impact on the policy-making debate at the local, national and international level. The work contributes to the quality of evidence for and the arguments about understanding the on-going depopulation in rural Japan and the role of local Japanese political bodies in decision making as well as the importance of the Japanese case to the UK. It is an example of the impact generated through the work of the research cluster on Social Change and Transition in East Asia.