

<p>Institution: University of Aberdeen</p>
<p>Unit of Assessment: UoA – 21 Politics and International Studies</p>
<p>a. Context</p> <p>Researchers in the Department of Politics & International Relations (PIR) investigate some of the most critical political problems facing contemporary democracies, at several levels of analysis: local/sub-national, national, and regional/international. These topics range from disputes over power-sharing in multi-ethnic states to concerns about political representation in democratic republics to debates about the future role of the European Union (EU) and other experiments in regional governance and international organisation. The Department also pursues a high degree of interdisciplinary research on more focused topics, such as energy policy, environmental policy, health policy, and identity politics (gender and ethnicity), all of which span the traditional division between domestic/comparative and international politics. Each of these issues offers PIR researchers opportunities for impact with a wide range of local, national, and international actors.</p> <p>PIR research impacts generally involve public policies/services and questions of democratic governance, especially in Europe but with increasing attention to the developing world. In addition to the public at large, our main beneficiaries tend to be national/sub-national government agencies, international organisations, and non-governmental organisations. Among governments, impacts can be seen in Bosnia, Cyprus, Ireland, Nepal, Spain, the former Soviet Union, and Scotland/UK. Major international organisations involved in our impact activities include the European Union (EU) and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), while major civil society partners have included the Royal Institute for International Affairs, the Swedish Institute of International Affairs, the Real Institute Elcano (Spain), the Istituto Affari Internazionali (Italy), the Polish Institute of International Affairs, the World Future Council, and ENGAGE (a civil society organisation devoted to peace-building). Public engagement by PIR staff members also takes place through the internet and international media outlets (the BBC, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, ITV, Al-Jazeera's Inside Story, Affari Italiani, <u>The Herald</u>, <u>Deutsche Welle</u>, Australia's SBS, France24, <u>Holyrood</u> magazine, Radio Pacifica, <u>The Scotsman</u>, and <u>Scotland on Sunday</u>).</p>
<p>b. Approach to impact</p> <p>Our approach to impact is informed, initially, by the specific projects initiated by PIR staff members and various University research groups. All researchers are assisted by the University in pursuing external funding and in building impacts into all grant proposals, which provides an initial opportunity to consider possible impact activities and relevant non-academic partners. At the Department level, PIR actively fosters an impact dimension to our research culture by: 1) building relationships with key non-academic partners who might benefit from our research; 2) collaborating with those partners to deliver services or reports based on our research; 3) disseminating our specific research findings to stakeholders; and 4) publicizing and promoting our work to a larger audience to improve public understanding and create opportunities for engagement with new stakeholders. We also regularly evaluate our impact activities through annual Research Development Reviews of all research-active PIR staff members. Taken together, these efforts act as a feedback loop to help improve and expand our impact profile on an ongoing basis.</p> <p><u>1) Building relationships with non-academic partners:</u> PIR pursues respected and influential non-academic partners that might benefit from our research, and responds to relevant calls or appeals for assistance by non-academic partners. We also attempt to act in an advisory capacity, formally and informally, when interacting with key policy-makers in the conduct of our research. For example, Bain was one of only five people invited to participate in the briefings of Tim Cole, who recently (2012) assumed the role of the UK's Ambassador to Cuba. McEvoy was invited to contribute to the debate over European minority rights protections, power-sharing, and peace-building by attending a European Commission-sponsored symposium on this topic in Norway. The event brought together 16 academics, policy-makers, and representatives from non-governmental organisations. She has also had extensive interactions with EU member state diplomats, EU policy-makers, and non-governmental organisations (i.e., the Democratization Policy Council, International Alert, Minority Rights Group International, and Peace Direct) in Bosnia and Macedonia in the conduct of her research. Oelsner was awarded a British Academy/Leverhulme grant for a project on new security configurations in Latin America. The project brings together regional organisations, academics, and policy-makers to discuss regional security transformations and their international impact through two workshops (one in Rio de Janeiro, one in London). Smith's European Research Council grant provided numerous opportunities for direct engagement</p>

with EU policymakers (in the Commission, the Council of the EU, the EU Military Staff, and the European External Action Service). His work on the European External Action Service contributed to public debates about the reform of this institution (in part by providing written background briefing material to the House of Lords EU Sub-committee on External Affairs). He also contributed his research-based input into the 'European Global Strategy 2013' project developed by the Swedish foreign ministry in cooperation with four major think tanks: the Swedish Institute of International Affairs, the Real Institute Elcano (Spain), the Instituto Affari Internazionali (Italy), and the Polish Institute of International Affairs. **Teti**, our expert in Middle Eastern politics, was invited to give a presentation on Egypt's trade union movement at the UK's Department for International Development. **Vij** was invited to deliver the keynote address on the topic of 'Spaces/Places of Sociality in Zones of Abandonment' to an audience of over 100 academics, government officials, and representatives of non-governmental organisations at Ritsumeikan University (Kyoto, Japan) in the aftermath of the 2011 earthquake and tsunami in Japan.

2) Collaboration to deliver services and other outputs: Once we have identified a non-academic partner (or similar outlet) to help maximize the impact of our research, especially research of an applied nature (i.e., public policy or institutional reform), we work with that partner to undertake specific activities, and/or to produce specific outputs, in order to meet the needs of our partners as well as other civil society stakeholders. **Haerpfers** EU-funded project on 'Health in Times of Transition' helped to improve the public understanding of health policies in the form of working papers and advice given to public authorities in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, and Ukraine. Similarly, **Keating** was commissioned by the SIGMA (Support for Improvement in Government and Management) initiative, a joint project of the OECD and the EU. He was tasked to undertake a study of federalism with reference to Bosnia to help foster greater understanding of the issues at stake and of the implications of EU accession. **Keating** was also invited by the German development agency to lead a series of discussions about federalism with civil society groups in Nepal; and by the civil society group Engage to undertake a similar exercise in Cyprus. Our most recent hire, **Toke**, enhances Aberdeen's expertise in public policy and policy networks, mainly regarding UK energy/environmental issues. He has produced two public interest books on energy policy to help raise awareness and improve the public understanding of this topic. With this research, he has influenced the UK's adoption of a system of feed-in tariffs for small renewable energy projects as well as the larger debate over the issue of electricity prices in the Government's 'Electricity Market Reform' programme. He has also worked with non-governmental organisations in this area, such as his work for the World Future Council. At the international level, **Toke** was invited to join a group of experts advising the European Green Group of Members of the European Parliament about developing EU Renewable Energy policy.

3) Post-delivery dissemination of research outputs: **Keating's** findings on constitutional reform and regional devolution were partly disseminated through the OECD's SIGMA website and other open source internet outlets, while he also engaged with policy-makers and the public through a series of presentations at seminars in Bosnia, before representatives of all the ethnic communities. His related work on paradiplomacy (that is, diplomacy conducted between sub-national political units) was published on the website of the Scottish Parliament. He also produced an on-line directory of local and regional government in Europe to aid practitioners in the conduct of paradiplomacy. **Toke's** commissioned report on EU Renewable Energy policy is publicly available on the internet. In 2012, Friends of the Earth published his report, 'A Proven Solution: How to Grow Renewables with a Fixed Feed-in Tariff', to help publicize and influence policy on this issue. He also recently completed a collaborative ESRC-funded project on 'Delivering Renewable Energy Under Devolution,' which resulted in research outputs that have been cited by the media as part of the current debate over Scottish independence and Scotland's potential for sustainable energy.

4) Publicizing and promoting our work to a larger audience: In addition to the delivery of advice, services, and project-specific outputs noted above, we generate wider interest in our projects through dissemination in the media and related outlets, such as the internet. Given the topicality of PIR research in current public debates about political issues, staff members take advantage of numerous opportunities to engage citizens in our work and contribute to the public understanding of politics and international relations. Our experts on Scottish politics (**Bennie** and **Keating**) have generated impacts in the form of public engagement (in the media and in the UK and Scottish parliaments) regarding debates over the questions of constitutional devolution in general and Scottish independence in particular. The University of Aberdeen and the London School of

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Hygiene and Tropical Medicine produced a short (31 min.) documentary film on **Haerpfer's** health project for presentation to the World Health Organization Observatory (also released on YouTube). **Smith** regularly engages with the public, the media, policy-makers, and other academics through his active use of Twitter (over 1,300 followers); in this capacity he often answers direct questions from the media and the public. **Teti** and **Toke** are building Twitter readerships in their areas of expertise, while **Toke** also publicizes his work on energy and the environment through his 'Green Energy' blog. He also regularly contributes commentary to The Huffington Post, the Energy Economist, Utility Weekly, and other media outlets. In some cases our efforts have been institutionalised into permanent forums, as with **Keating's** role as co-founder and co-director of the Scottish Policy Innovation Forum and his similar roles with the Scotland in the World Forum. **Keating's** ESRC funding also enabled the development of ScotHub, a 'one stop shop' internet portal for sharing ideas about public policy and management in Scotland.

c. Strategy and plans

PIR holds regular discussions about the organisation of our main research themes and the coordination of our impact activities within and across these themes: Political Organisation and Participation, Conflict and Security, Comparative Politics, and IR Theory. Our impact-related work is often framed in terms of one or more of these areas, most of which also involve several research groups at Aberdeen (the Centre for Global Security and Governance, the Interdisciplinary Approaches to Violence cluster, the New Europe Centre, the Centre for Gender Studies, and the European Centre for Survey Research). With these themes and groups identified, PIR can provide input into collective decisions in the School of Social Science and related research units regarding the allocation of resources for impact: travel, research colloquia, research centres, and outreach activities. This helps us identify funding opportunities that might result in new impact activities, new best practices regarding impact, or new ways of generating/measuring impact. Through our annual Research Development Reviews, as well as the peer review of grant applications (most of which involve an impact element), we make a regular census of our research outputs/plans, funding applications, and potential impact activities. These findings inform our general strategy.

At the University level, a very supportive Communications Unit produces and distributes press releases about our research, as well as advises staff members about media outlets and arranges media events or interviews. Impact is also a criterion in several funding schemes offered by the University, a signatory to the 2012 Public Engagement Manifesto. The University has also identified several wider topics, such as Energy and Conflict Resolution, where strategic recruitment has been undertaken. PIR has already benefited from this investment with **Toke's** appointment; his work on energy/environmental politics has produced several policy-related impacts as noted above. His recruitment has expanded our expertise in energy/environmental policy (an interest shared by **Bennie** and **Bernhagen**), which should provide new opportunities for impact activities given the high-profile nature of these policy domains in current debates about sustainable economic development. The recent large grant won by **Haerpfer** (with **Teti** as a supporting investigator), on Political Change in the Arab World, takes a broad approach to developing relationships with non-academic partners and is specifically directed at the involvement of civil society groups and non-governmental organisations. Thanks to a large (£2.5 million) EU grant, they are currently involved in a project that will directly engage with civil society and democratisation advocates in the Arab world. Finally, PIR will make seven full-time appointments by 2014, and we are now undertaking a review of our priorities to determine how to proceed with this major recruitment opportunity in order to enhance our research profile and impact activities.

d. Relationship to case studies

Our two case studies reflect core research themes where our impacts on political behaviour have been particularly intensive and well-documented. The cases also involve the impact of our work on the public understanding of social issues. The case study on Public Policy Innovation, Learning, and Transfer (**Keating**) involves the application of new forms of policy networking, learning, and collaboration on particularly complex or stubborn modern policy problems. EU Strategy (**Smith**) involves the relationship between institutional reform, capacity-building, and policy performance in the context of the EU's efforts to become a more coherent and effective global actor. These cases also involve a wide range of stakeholders: civil society groups, international non-governmental organisations, businesses, unions, civil servants, politicians, think tanks, and foreign ministries.