

Institution: University of Aberdeen
Unit of Assessment: UoA 21 Politics and International Studies
Title of case study: Public Policy Innovation, Learning, and Transfer
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>Professor Michael Keating has worked on various aspects of public policy-making in Scotland and abroad, supported primarily by the ESRC and Leverhulme Trust. Impact has taken the form of a series of collaborative academic-practitioner engagements, involving civil servants, politicians, and civil society actors. These events have focused on establishing a common vocabulary and core concepts, while exploring difficult issues in public policy and facilitating mutual learning between academics and practitioners. Insights from these encounters have been institutionalised in the Scottish Policy Innovation Forum, as well as ongoing seminars, public lectures, innovative training courses for civil servants, and informal discussions.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>Aberdeen has been a leading centre for research into public policy, policy communities, and policy learning, particularly in a European/EU context, for several decades. Professor Keating, along with former Aberdeen PIR staff members Paul Cairney and Richard Rose, has been particularly active in this area. Rose led the Centre for the Study of Public Policy at Aberdeen for much of the past decade, producing several key works on policy learning (reference #1), while Keating's work on 'devolution' in the United Kingdom frames the issue as part of a wider process of government restructuring or spatial rescaling which is transforming the nation-state across Europe and beyond. Systems of policy-making and regulation, previously bounded by coterminous state boundaries, are migrating to supra-national, sub-state, and transnational levels. As different policy fields are regulated at different levels, the old social compromises and trade-offs previously accommodated within the nation-state may become more difficult. Keating's research addresses this dilemma by analysing processes of policy-making, policy innovation, and policy learning/transfer in terms of devolved or regional politics in contemporary democracies. In the Scottish context, Keating's research on public policy-making under devolution was conducted with funding under the ESRC programme on Devolution and Constitutional Change, the Leverhulme programme on Nations and Regions, and an ESRC Professorial Fellowship.</p> <p>The first ESRC project (2001-04; £120,000) examined policy-making after devolution, charting the adaptation from the Scottish Office to the Scottish Executive, financial allocations, and policy making in rural development and higher education. The data included interviews carried out in Scotland, England, Wales, and Northern Ireland with representatives of interest groups, civil servants and politicians; a detailed analysis of Scottish and English spending patterns; and an examination of legislative outputs and surveys to assess public opinion on key issues. Among the key findings was the insight that Scottish and Welsh policy-making became more consultative and transparent after devolution. In addition, the Scottish/Welsh approach is more consensual and negotiated than policy-making in Whitehall and gives more scope for public sector professionals and interest groups. Key findings were published in Keating's book <u>The Government of Scotland</u> (reference #2), which examined institutions and processes of public policy and substantive policies in several key fields. The book demonstrated that Scotland has developed a distinct policy style and that its substantive policies are increasingly divergent from the rest of the UK, particularly in public service delivery. It also noted that while the administrative performance of devolved institutions was admirable, there had been a distinct lack of policy innovation.</p> <p>The Leverhulme grant noted above (2000-05; Aberdeen's portion: £80,000) funded a study of how interest groups adapt to devolution and the emergence of territorial policy communities in the four nations of the UK. Keating and Cairney proposed the concept of 'territorial policy communities' to designate territorially bounded constellations of actors within and across policy sectors, emerging in response to the rescaling of government. Using the UK's four distinct models of devolution (Scotland, Wales, North East England, and Northern Ireland) and information from 300 interviews conducted with interest group representatives, the researchers tested the effects of stronger and weaker forms of devolution on the territorialization of interest groups. The project found that devolution had indeed resulted in a territorialization of policy communities and the creation of new</p>

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forms of horizontal co-operation and competition. During Cairney's time at Aberdeen, he was a research fellow on the ESRC and Leverhulme projects noted above, and he and Keating received funding from the Nuffield Foundation (2006-07) £5122) to complete work on policy styles and policy communities, particularly in the UK context (references #3, #4, and #5).

In 2009, Keating received an ESRC Follow-On grant (£21,000) linked to the original ESRC project. This grant allowed him to engage with policy makers in Scotland, focusing on how to promote policy innovation (reference #6). Methods included the construction of an internet portal to provide information on research in public policy in Scotland and two joint academic-practitioner seminars that examined comparative experience of policy innovation and learning in multi-level systems. Outcomes included the development of teaching materials for post-experience courses in policy-making.

Finally, between 2010 and 2013 Keating held an ESRC professorial fellowship (£361,828) to research devolution, territorial policy communities, and policy making across five European states. In 2013, Keating was awarded a one-year ESRC senior fellowship (£194,477) under the UK and Scotland Programme. This project is intended to improve the evidence base for the Scottish referendum of 2013 and examines the experience of small independent and devolved jurisdictions comparable to Scotland. Also in 2013, an interdisciplinary team from five institutions won a Large Grant from ESRC under the UK and Scotland Programme (Aberdeen's portion: £300,000), whose aim is to improve the evidence base for the referendum for the benefit for policy makers, stakeholders and citizens. There is a programme for dissemination of through seminars, web-based publications, social media, and briefings for policy-makers.

3. References to the research

1. Richard Rose, Learning from Comparative Public Policy: A Practical Guide (Routledge, 2005).
2. Michael Keating, The Government of Scotland. Public Policy Making after Devolution (Edinburgh University Press, 2005. 2nd edition, 2010).
3. Michael Keating, 'Policy Divergence and Convergence in Scotland under Devolution', Regional Studies 39/4 (2005): 453-63. DOI: 10.1080/00343400500128481
4. Paul Cairney, 'Has Devolution Changed the British Policy Style?' British Politics 3/3 (2008): 350-72. DOI: 10.1057/bp.2008.15
5. Michael Keating, Paul Cairney, and Eve Hepburn, 'Territorial Policy Communities and Devolution in the UK', Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy and Society (2008): 1-16. DOI: 10.1093/cjres/rsn024
6. Michael Keating and Paul Cairney, 'The New Scottish Statute Book: The Scottish Parliament's Legislative Record since 1999', in Charlie Jeffery and James Mitchell (eds), The Scottish Parliament 1999-2009. The First Decade (Luath Press, 2009): 37-42.

4. Details of the impact

A critical challenge to Scotland's new system of devolved government is the making and implementation of public policy in areas where Scotland has primary or sole authority. Thanks to his research, Keating has been called upon to advise policy makers, collaborate with civil servants, and provide an expert perspective through the media. In this role, he attempts to facilitate a two-way exchange of views between academics and practitioners to help improve policy learning.

Following the first ESRC project, Keating was invited by Scottish civil servants to collaborate on fostering policy innovation. One result was the Scottish Policy Innovation Forum (SPIF), a group of academics and practitioners who for five years have been holding regular seminars, conferences, and meetings to consider innovation in various fields. SPIF meetings bring together policymakers and researchers to discuss innovative strategies for public policy and feature short presentations in which academics make policy recommendations to be discussed by attendees. Keating's own research has featured in meetings on 'Innovation' (23/3/08), the 'Scottish Policy Innovation Forum' (4/09/2009), and 'The New English Localism' (30/4/12). The ESRC Follow-On grant was used to organize two academic-practitioner seminars in 2010: one on policy transfer and policy learning at the devolved level; and one on policy styles and processes (with support from the German Consul General in Scotland). Seminar participants included senior civil servants from the Scottish Government, Wales, and Whitehall, officials of agencies, and academic colleagues from Scotland

and other European countries. The project's final report was published in the journal Scottish Affairs (Winter 2011), and individual papers from the seminars were published as a special issue of Regional and Federal Studies (22/3: 2012), edited by Keating and Cairney.

Between 2008-11 Michael Keating and Richard Rose ran the 'Scotland in the World' seminars, bringing distinguished academics to Scotland to lecture to mixed academic-practitioner audiences. The principal aim of these events was to allow international public policy experts to contribute their experience of working in a world of interdependent states and to broaden ongoing conversations on Scotland's constitutional future though events aimed at policy advisers and directors, civil servants, parliamentarians, the diplomatic corps, and media correspondents. The series was launched by the First Minister and seminars were attended by prominent politicians, civil servants, European Commission and European Parliament officials, and members of the Edinburgh consular corps. In the Forum's inaugural lecture (04/02/08), First Minister Alex Salmond said, "The Scottish Government has launched a National Conversation with the people of Scotland. This conversation is about the country that we wish to be - and the changes we must make to meet our ambitions... The Forum that we are launching today will be a major part of this conversation, drawing in views across the academic world and internationally."

Since the launch, Forum speakers have included the Prime Minister of Finland and Jeffrey Weinberg, legislative attorney to the White House Office of Management and Budget. A seminar on the experience of Catalonia was attended by the former Presiding Officer of the Scottish Parliament, the former First Minister, and prominent figures in Scottish public life. A seminar on the Irish experience was attended by the consuls-general of Ireland and Germany, the Scottish representative to the EU, and the representatives in Scotland of the European Commission and the European Parliament. These events, informed by Keating's large body of comparative research on policy learning, gave sub-national (or devolved) policy-makers from several European countries the opportunity to share practical ideas and best practices regarding their own experiences with this form of governance.

In 2010, Keating was invited by the Scottish Government to lead a series of training courses on policy skills, with a team drawn from five universities. The basic text is Keating's book The Government of Scotland. The course has been run eight times for around 20 civil servants on each occasion. Departing from the conventional training format, it introduces key ideas and concepts, then provides an opportunity for civil servants to reflect on their own experiences and explore the scope for, and constraints on, policy innovation, particularly during times of public spending reductions. Evaluations have consistently been highly positive; the course employs teaching materials developed as part of Keating's ESRC Devolution and Public Policy research and Cairney was a member of the teaching team until February 2013. Also in 2010, Keating was invited to participate in meetings to discuss the Scottish Government's policy-making framework and its contribution to the UK reform programme. This fed into the reform of policy-making and the Scottish policy cycle, although not all the nuances introduced by the academic participants survived. He also presented at a meeting of local authority representatives on the reform of cohesion policy organized by the European Commission representative in Scotland.

Keating has been closely involved in regular discussions about establishing a more permanent policy institute for Scotland. He collaborated with Robert Black, recently retired Auditor General, on this, chairing two stakeholders' meetings in the summer of 2011. The outcome was the Royal Society of Edinburgh's (RSE) Fellows Public Services Reform Group, which it is hoped will develop in the years to come. Keating also contributed to the RSE submission on the impact of the Lisbon Treaty on Scotland. The resulting Advice Paper was alluded to in a Parliamentary debate on 09/12/10, when Helen Eadie, MSP, said: 'I refer to the evidence that was given by Professor Michael Keating, who said it is vital that the Parliament agrees - among others - the committee's recommendation that there be established a formal mechanism for dispute resolution covering all areas where the UK as a member state, may have a different opinion from the devolved Scottish Parliament.' Keating also helped organise the RSE's 'Franco-Scottish Policy Seminar' (02/10/12) on policy innovation, youth employment and training polices.

As a member of the British Academy (BA), Keating also serves on steering committee for the joint BA/RSE initiative on Enlightening the Constitutional Debate. This involves a series of monthly seminars in 2013-14, with summary findings on the academics' web sites; Keating organized the seminar on Europe held in April 2013. Taken together, these efforts have facilitated the emergence of a permanent network of academics and policy practitioners who know each other and exchange ideas in a variety of forums. This network plays an increasingly important role in informing the public debate regarding the future of devolved government in general, and the issue of Scottish independence in particular. Keating's ESRC Large Grant funding under the UK and Scotland Programme will ensure this effort continues at least until the referendum itself in 2014.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

1. Scottish Government, training course on Policy Skills

They will confirm that Professor Keating developed and taught a course for Scottish Government civil servants based on his work on public policy making in Scotland. The course is taught twice a year.

<http://www.abdn.ac.uk/mediareleases/release.php?id=1200>

2. Inaugural Alex Salmond address to the Scotland in the World Forum

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/News/Speeches/Speeches/First-Minister/scotland-in-the-world>

3. Royal Society of Edinburgh Advice Paper, "Scotland and the UK: Cooperation and Communication Between Governments"

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmselect/cm Scotaf/256/256.pdf>

4. Helen Eadie's comments in Scottish Parliament 09/12/2010

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/28862.aspx?r=6026&mode=html>

5. Scottish Policy Innovation Forum organising committee

<http://www.gla.ac.uk/schools/law/about/spif/whoweare/>

6. 'Scottish Affairs' quarterly reports on the Scottish Policy Innovation Forum

<http://www.scottishaffairs.org/backiss/2011.html#top>

7. Michael Keating's report on Franco-Scottish seminar October 2012

http://www.royalsoced.org.uk/cms/files/events/reports/2012-2013/franco_scottish_seminar.pdf