

Institution: University of Leeds
Unit of Assessment: 21 Politics and International Studies
<p>a. Context</p> <p>The School of Politics and International Studies has developed wide-ranging impact from its research both in terms of international reach and in its significance in key strategic areas. Our principal non-academic beneficiaries and audiences are: (1) National Executives and Legislatures, (2) National and International Non-Governmental Organisations, (3) Marginalised Populations, and (4) Informing Public Debates. The diverse array of impact activities in the school reflects research agendas that are directed towards the emerging areas of the world and political problems of the 21st century. Our case studies showcase the international impact of POLIS research (Thailand, the European Union, Afghanistan, Kenya and India). More broadly, our researchers have considerable experience of knowledge exchange and impact. Staff have advised or briefed policy-makers (McCargo, Robinson, Theakston) and practitioners (Dyer, Crawford) or have used knowledge exchange to maximise the potential impact of their research (Davies, Ralph). As illustrated below the school has a range of impact activity that has mattered to Foreign Governments (Ghana, Thailand, Kenya, United States), International Organisations (UN, NATO, EU), the UK Government (DFID, FCO, Home Office), think-tanks (Foreign Policy Centre, Theos, Saferworld) and International NGOs (Action Aid) which has informed wider public understanding of politics, international relations and development. Going forward, we are deepening a <i>culture of impact</i> throughout the school, influencing research agendas, strategic appointments and creating support structures to foster the development of future impact at all levels of the school.</p>
<p>b. Approach to impact</p> <p>The school's current approach to impact is based on underpinning our impact activities with high-quality research (see REF 5); maximising opportunities for engagement with non-academic audiences and beneficiaries and developing partnerships with policy-makers and NGOs fostering rapport and trust. There are seven mechanisms through which we maximise impact opportunities:</p> <p>1. Making Research Comprehensible and User-Friendly: The school has produced a range of outputs tailored to convey research findings for specific research beneficiaries and audiences. Examples include: (1) Robinson's <i>European Parliament</i> commissioned reports on 'The Implications of EIB and EBRD co-financing for the EU Budget' and on 'The Implications of EIB and EBRD co-financing for the EU Budget - follow up' (Case Study (CS) 2). (2) Hayton's co-authored <i>Institute for Public Policy Research</i> publication "Beyond the Constitution? Englishness in a post-devolved Britain" (3) Edyvane's AHRC report "Living Together: The Temporal Dimension of Civic Health". (4) Evans' Chatham House and <i>Hope not Hate</i> pamphlet "From voting to violence? Far right extremism in Britain" the findings of which were also reported on Channel 4 news. (5) Theakston's <i>History & Policy</i> paper, 'What next for Gordon Brown', and his piece on former PMs commissioned for the official Number 10 website. (6) And Dyer's <i>Education for Nomads</i> report for the <i>International Institute for Environment and Development</i> requested by Ministry of Development for Northern Kenya and Other Arid Lands (MDNKOAL) (CS 1).</p> <p>2. Ensuring Quick and Easy Access to our Research Base: The school has developed a strong web presence, designed to capture research strengths, burgeoning interests and importantly provide a portal to the policy community. The website contains a working paper series that presents the school's latest research, there are videos and recorded interviews where colleagues discuss their findings in accessible language. The website also showcases examples of our impact activity (e.g. EU parliamentary debates discussing Robinson's report (CS2)).</p> <p>3. Using Think-tanks to Develop Contacts and Partners: The school developed links with several think-tanks with good connections to the policy community. Examples include: (1) Berger chaired a working group on "The Link between Transnational Terrorism and Failed States: The Case of Yemen" for the <i>Academic Peace Orchestra</i>. This was a track II initiative run by the <i>Frankfurt Institute for Peace</i> and involved policy-makers from the region; producing briefing papers submitted to decision-makers in the Middle East and to the international media. Davies and Ralph used HEIF money in partnership with <i>The Foreign Policy Centre</i> to support presentations held in Parliament to showcase their research. Participants included a Foreign Office Minister, Shadow Cabinet members and diplomats from various embassies. Crawford has presented to <i>Action Aid International</i> on his participatory democracy project. Beresford was commissioned by <i>Demos</i> to write a discussion paper "Populism in South Africa" and has used HEIF money to travel to South Africa to develop contacts with policy-makers in the ANC, NGOs (Ahmed Kathrada Foundation)</p>

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and the media (Mail & Guardian) to develop future impact activities (see section c).

4. Informing and Engaging with Policy-makers and NGOs: **Theakston** fed in lessons from his research on junior ministers in evidence to the UK Parliament's Public Administration Committee's report on Smaller Government: What Do Ministers Do? (2010); and **Theakston** and **Heppell** gave written evidence, based on their research, and participated in a briefing seminar with MPs on parliament's Political and Constitutional Reform Committee, for its report on The Role and Powers of the Prime Minister (2011). **Davies** co-authored evidence on British public attitudes to international relations and **Ralph** has written evidence on the Special Relationship for the Foreign Affairs Select Committee. **McCargo** has presented his work on the Insurgency in Southern Thailand to two Thai Parliamentary Subcommittees in 2009 and 2012 (CS3). **Craig** has briefed the FCO on Israeli security concerns, assisted the Metropolitan Police War Crimes Unit and has sat on the Crown Prosecution War Crimes Community Involvement Panel. In terms of NGOs **Beresford** has presented his findings to the South African National Union of Mineworkers and the Ahmed Kathrada Foundation both of which are impact partners for an ESRC grant bid on South African Public Attitudes to Democratic Consolidation .

5. Using Social Media to Extend our Reach and Maintain Our Contacts: Academics in the school present their research findings on twitter (**Beresford, Edney, Edyvane, Evans, Hayton, Ralph**). **Davies** uses Facebook to maintain contact with US State Department officials, who are now involved with current ESRC applications. Several colleagues blog their research findings (**Beresford, Ralph, Hayton**).

6. Developing a Media Presence: The Faculty has a dedicated press officer, experienced in many arms of the media, who assists with dissemination opportunities. Members of the school have become established 'expert commentators' on research on the Middle East (**Berger**), on South Africa (**Beresford**), British Parliamentary Politics (**Theakston**), Thailand (**McCargo**) and Gender politics (**Dean**) appearing on television (e.g. BBC News 24, Al Jazeera) radio broadcasts (radio 5, radio 4) , in the printed media (e.g. Guardian, Time Magazine) and online (BBC).

7. Developing an 'Impact Infrastructure': The School enjoys a range of support from the Faculty and the University, much of this directed at increasing the utilisation of our research. We have dedicated Research and Impact Support Officers in the school and faculty assisting new research applicants to develop the partnership potential of their bids using an existing portfolio of exemplars of good practice from across the faculty. The school holds yearly impact workshops where current impact case study authors and external speakers come to discuss impact. Bi-annual review forms specifically discuss impact and the school Research Committee develop plans with researchers to maximise their impact opportunities.

c. Strategy and plans

Impact will remain a central feature of POLIS activity post REF 2014. The school will continue to maintain its strategic response to the current impact agenda (see section B) and will enhance those activities following a strategic vision. The school research committee, augmented with current case study authors (as impact mentors) will review impact performance against a set of qualitative and quantitative benchmarks. The strategy post 2014 is based around eight objectives:

1. The Creation of Impact Mentors: Current case study authors will advise staff and postgraduate researchers about impact activities and provide feedback on pathways to impact strategy. The school has developed considerable expertise in relation to the EU and also in emerging areas around the world (Thailand, Egypt, Malawi, Uganda, South Africa, China), and is strongly committed to extending impact beyond the developed world. Impact mentors have established a skill set that can enhance this objective.

2. Expand Involvement in University of Leeds Sector Hubs: The school aims to develop further interdisciplinary linkages within the University. The university has invested over £6 million in the creation of sector hubs that work with business and policy-makers to create centres of excellence. POLIS will deepen its involvement with this developing university approach with greater participation in the Cultural and Creative Industries, Food Security, Professional Services and Energy Hubs, providing a social science analysis to enhance both research outputs and impact activity. The school is a leading member of the Leeds Social Science Institute which has strong links with external partners and research users.

3. Expand National and International Partnerships: The school already has close links with a variety of external partners (the EU, the Thai Government, the UN, the FCO, the Foreign Policy Centre). and plans to develop new partnerships using our extensive links as part of the *World*

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Universities Network (a partnership of nineteen universities across six continents) and also build on our links with legislative bodies in the UK, Canada and United States (the school runs parliamentary placement schemes in these countries).

4. Involving Beneficiaries in the Research Cycle: POLIS aims to deepen current relationships with our impact partners embedding them in new research projects at the design, implementation and dissemination stages, as well as respond to their advice about how to influence public policy.

5. Support Developing Areas of Impact: POLIS is committed to investing internal resources, both financial and administrative, to support new impact initiatives. For example, the new *Responsibility to Protect and Prosecute* cluster is developing partnerships with the FCO, the UN, the State Department and think-tanks impacting on policy and public awareness of issues surrounding foreign policy interventions. Impact plans and potential are key criteria in our decision-making on bids from POLIS staff and research centres for funding from the School's Strategic Research Investment Fund, which provides pump-priming funding of £20K per year (see REF 5).

6. Appointment Strategy and Staff Development: The school factors into its appointment decisions the capacity or potential of candidates to engage with non-academic audiences and generate impact, although academic excellence will remain the key driver. Impact and public dissemination activities and plans are discussed at the Annual Academic Reviews each staff member has with the HoS, the DoR and their research group leader (see REF 5). Mentoring will be central to developing impact from innovative research where impact pathways are less obvious.

7. Increase External Funding for Knowledge Exchange and Impact: Current internal peer-review structures designed to enhance research capacity will widen their scope to include reviewing knowledge exchange bids. ESRC peer-review college members, impact mentors, peer-review reading groups and university hubs will be central to this strategic objective.

8. The Development of Impact Tracking Methods: Robinson is currently developing methods to trace impact for the EU which will be applied in conjunction with the POLIS research and impact committee working with colleagues to consider and plan for the complex process of tracing impact.

Future Impact Activities: Potential Areas include: (1) Examining UK foreign policy interventions and the Responsibility to Protect (as part of an ESRC funded seminar series that engages with government officials and academics) (**Gallagher, Ralph**); (2) impact on US-UK foreign policy towards Pakistan and Saudi Arabia (**Davies, Berger**) with partners from the US Secretary of State's personal research office, the FCO, the EU and the UN, underpinned by an ESRC grant (under review); (3) Deepening **Berger's** impact on Middle Eastern regional stability (see section b); (4) Impact on South African government's social policies, again with partners from the ANC and various societal actors (**Beresford, Evans**); (5) influencing the activities of development aid NGOs (**Anderson, Crawford, Dyer**).

d. Relationship to case studies

Our three case studies have been selected to demonstrate the global reach of our impact activities, and our strategic commitment to investigating emerging areas of the world. The school's international focus resulted in impact in the developed world (European Union) and in the developing world (Thailand, Kenya, India and Afghanistan) reflecting the diverse range of activities in the school. All case studies have benefitted from: (1) a long-standing commitment to the consideration of impact at the conceptualisation stage of research projects, (2) support of a dedicated Research and Impact administrator, (3) internal peer-review and reading groups that focus on impact, and (4) Faculty/School funding to support national and international visits to enhance and track impact and to document corroboration (to India, Brussels and Wilton Park). Our impact is based on a commitment to supporting the production of world leading research, through sabbaticals and internal review leading to an award-winning book and over 50 publications on Thailand (**McCargo**), internationally excellent publications on the European Union (**Robinson**) and becoming the international authority on pastoralist education (**Dyer**). An outward-facing strategy that highlights research excellence, access to our research base and the development of non-academic networks has resulted in all of our case study authors being approached from outside the academy to apply their skills to 'real-world' problems. The process of developing impact case studies has strengthened our approach to generating future impacts by establishing impact mentors, developing skill sets to garner corroboration from western institutions (which is difficult) and in the developing world (which is incredibly difficult) and creating methods to trace the impact of our activities.