

**Impact case study (REF3b)**

<b>Institution:</b> University of Warwick
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> Politics and International Studies
<b>Title of case study:</b> China and the Changing Global Order: Informing Policy and Influencing Practitioner Debate
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b></p> <p>The impact of Professor Breslin’s research has spanned two programmes of activity: 1) informing UK policy debates about EU-China relations by engaging with Government and Opposition members; and 2) shaping debates about Chinese politics among international practitioners through European and East Asian policy networks. Based on two decades of research, Breslin has systematically highlighted the importance of understanding the domestic drivers of Chinese foreign policy in formulating responses to China’s rise. Most notably, he points to the way in which domestic development agendas spill over into international relations. This core insight has benefited a range of key governmental and non-governmental stakeholders in formulating their strategies toward and engagement with China.</p>
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b></p> <p>In 2007 Breslin published a major academic study entitled <i>China and the Global Political Economy</i>. He argued that, in a relatively short period, the growth of investment to China and resulting increase in Chinese trade had reconfigured the East Asian regional economy and was altering global financial and resource flows. The project focused on the interplay between domestic politics in China and the transition from socialism on the one hand, and the on-going evolution of global production networks on the other. The research findings demonstrated that while events in China have considerable global significance, this importance does not necessarily equate with the ‘power’ that some already ascribe to China. While recognising that global economic integration has contributed to the reduction of poverty, it also pointed to the emergence of new social cleavages and the changing basis of communist party rule.</p> <p>Since 2007 Breslin’s programme of research has focused primarily on the state’s management of economic and social change, and how these domestic dynamics influence China’s international behaviour. This includes disaggregating different dimensions of China’s growing external influence – both material and ideational (including the concept of ‘soft power’) – and considering how these factors inform Chinese preferences within the East Asian region, relationships with other developing states and perceptions of the legitimacy of the current global order. It also entails emphasising the increasing diversity of both interests and actors in China’s international interactions. This agenda has been pursued along two related axes: i) Chinese political economy in the context of the 2008 financial crisis; and ii) the implications of China’s growing economic reach and assertive foreign policy for international relations more generally.</p> <p>Chinese responses to the global financial crisis (both in terms of policy responses and also perceptions of Chinese power) provide an ideal context to study these issues. China’s performance during the crisis relative to other (Western) states has led many to ask if China provides a better ‘model’ of development than Western paradigms. It has also resulted in a stronger self-confidence in China in asserting and defending ‘core’ interests and calling for changes to the distribution of global power. Nevertheless, there remains a reluctance to take on further global leadership roles and within China itself there is a renewed focus on long-term structural economic problems that need to be addressed.</p> <p>The second stream of research has been specifically policy related work on Chinese global reach and the political, economic and security challenges this poses for EU-China relations in particular. Between 2006 and 2008 Breslin was a member of a six-party consortium awarded €400,000 under the EU FP6 programme to work on EU-Asia relations. In 2011 Breslin was included in a successful €2 million bid from Chatham House to act as the Politics expert for the EU-China Research and Advice Network (ECRAN). This project was designed to enhance European policy-makers’ understanding of development in China and runs through to 2014. In addition, from 2011 Breslin has acted as Senior Scientist of ‘Global Re-Ordering: Evolution through European Networks’ (GR:EEN), an FP7 funded programme hosted at Warwick involving 16 international universities and think tanks. Breslin’s own research is integral to the project and focuses on changing conceptions of security in China, Chinese views of multi-polarity and EU-China relations.</p>

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In summary, Breslin's underpinning research has yielded the following conclusions, which form the basis of his impact work among UK policy makers and international policy-making communities:

- Domestically, there is an increasingly diverse constellation of actors and interests shaping Chinese foreign policy. There has been a decline in the importance of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs while economic institutions and companies are becoming more influential in guiding foreign policy preferences. Western policy makers need to understand this complexity in order to reflect upon and update their relations with China.
- Externally, Chinese actors are evermore central to international relations, particularly in the Latin American and Caribbean contexts. This poses a new set of challenges to existing EU and US powers in those regions and security relations in South East Asia. Western powers have a diminishing ability to promote favoured policies in view of China's global rise.

### 3. References to the research

1. S. Breslin (2012) 'Paradigm(s) Shifting? Responding to China's Response to the Global Financial Crisis' in Wyn Grant and Graham Wilson (eds.) *The Consequences of the Global Financial Crisis: The Rhetoric of Reform and Regulation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 226-46. Peer-reviewed book chapter.
2. S. Breslin (2011) 'The 'China Model' and the Global Financial Crisis: From Friedrich List to a Chinese Mode of Governance?' *International Affairs* 87(6), pp. 1323-1343 [2012 impact factor 1.062]. Peer-reviewed journal article.
3. S. Breslin (2010) 'China's Emerging Global Role: Dissatisfied Responsible Great Power', *Politics*, 30(1), pp. 52-62 [2012 impact factor 0.604]. Peer-reviewed journal article.
4. S. Breslin (2010) 'The EU and Asia Within an Evolving Global Order: What is Europe? Where is Asia?' *East Asia: An International Quarterly* 27(1), pp.1-13. Peer-reviewed journal article.
5. S. Breslin (2009) 'Understanding China's Regional Rise: Interpretations, Identities, and Implications', *International Affairs*, 85(4), pp. 779-813 [2012 impact factor 1.062]. Peer-reviewed journal article.
6. S. Breslin (2007, 2009) *China and the Global Political Economy* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan). Single-authored peer-reviewed research monograph published as part of the International Political Economy Series.

### Associated grants:

1. S. Breslin, Senior Scientist, 'Global Re-Ordering: Evolution through European Networks' (GR:EEN). FP7 programme hosted at Warwick with a total value of €10M (2011-15).
2. S. Breslin, Co-Investigator, 'EU-China Research and Advice Network' (ECRAN). Hosted at Chatham House with a total value of €2M (2011-14).

### 4. Details of the impact

Breslin has used his extensive knowledge of Chinese politics and international relations to inform and advise a range of non-academic beneficiaries including policy-makers, businesses, journalists and the wider public. His expertise has been sought both formally and informally and he has become established as one of the leading providers of advice to national and international government officials on issues around UK and EU relations with China. He regularly engages in and helps to shape public debate via contributions to major international media outlets such as *The Global Times*, *The Guardian* and *The Independent*.

#### Informing UK government policy towards China

Breslin has harnessed the key insights of his underpinning research to inform and shape the UK government's policy towards China via sustained expert briefings delivered directly to Ministers and officials (sources 1, 2, 3 and 6). In 2010 Breslin provided oral evidence based on his EU-China research to the House of Lords Foreign Affairs Sub-Committee. A report entitled 'Stars and Dragons: The EU and China' (2010) was published, which features Breslin's commentary on the decline in Chinese interest in EU governance relative to individual EU Member States (source 2).

In October 2012 Breslin gave a briefing on 'Major Policy Challenges for the New China Leadership' to the Foreign Affairs Select Committee. This fed the findings of his research directly into elite UK thinking about the political and economic challenges facing the new Chinese leadership. The Chair of the Foreign Affairs Select Committee described the presentation as "brilliant" and "essential" to the work of the Committee (cited in source 5). In the same month, Breslin also delivered a

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presentation on 'China Engages Africa: Who (or What) is China and What does it Want?' to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO). This informed FCO thinking around how the UK might find ways of working productively with China on joint development projects in Africa (source 3). The event led to subsequent participation in policy discussions, a new FCO strategy on responding to China's relationship with Africa and a policy conference in Beijing on Chinese involvement in the Maxone River Development Zone including the Ambassadors of Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia (source 3). In July 2013 Breslin was invited to act as one of the expert witnesses for the Foreign Affairs Committee's one-off evidence session on government policy towards China in view of the leadership change, Beijing's foreign policies and Chinese overseas economic activities. The Chair of the Committee said that Breslin's evidence "greatly enhanced the Committee's understanding" of these issues, "informed Members' thinking" about them and "influenced any future work of the Committee" on UK policy towards China (source 1).

One of the primary impact mechanisms through which Breslin has informed UK policy debates is via his Associate Fellowship of Chatham House, London (source 5). In 2011 the University of Pennsylvania's Global Go-To Think Tanks Survey ranked Chatham House as the world's number one think tank outside the US. Through his Fellowship, Breslin has prepared numerous policy briefing papers and presentations based on the findings of his underpinning research. He has shared these findings with a wide range of key stakeholders in debates about UK policy towards China. In 2010 Breslin was invited to give the prestigious Chatham House 'Director's Nominee's Breakfast' talk on 'Domestic Drivers of China's Global Role' to a specially-invited audience of leading policy-makers and business people. He has produced policy briefings that are available online and in hard copy on request including:

- (2010) 'Online Chinese Nationalism' (with Simon Chen)  
<http://www.chathamhouse.org/publications/papers/view/109458> (accessed 30/9/13)
- (2011) 'The soft notion of China's soft power'  
<http://www.chathamhouse.org/publications/papers/view/109577> (accessed 30/9/13)
- (2012) 'China and the International Human Rights System' (with Sonya Sceats)  
<http://www.chathamhouse.org/research/international-law/current-projects/china-and-international-human-rights-system> (accessed 30/9/13)

The latter, which has also been translated into Chinese, was launched on 29 October 2012 at Chatham House to an audience of over 100 invited guests with a pre-launch at the Houses of Parliament (source 4). It was described by the Amnesty International Representative to the United Nations in Geneva and former Canadian diplomat as "a must read for anyone doing UN human rights work" (cited in source 5). The Director of Chatham House acknowledges that "we benefit enormously from [Breslin's] involvement in events [...] and in the support that [he] provides overall to our on-going programme of research" (source 5).

**Shaping international policy and practitioner debates on China**

Breslin has shaped international policy and practitioner debates on Chinese domestic and international politics through the organisation of high-profile events designed to stimulate knowledge exchange between academics and policy-makers (sources 8, 9 and 10). At the 2011 launch event of the GR:EEN programme in Brussels he spoke alongside the Chief Economist (DG Trade) and DG Research and Innovation from the European Commission and the Chief Economist from the World Trade Organization. In direct response to requests from foreign policy experts in the Commission, GR:EEN organised a special workshop where an invited group of specialists from the BRICS discussed with the Bureau of European Policy Advisors (BEPA) their views of the EU's global role in April 2011. In 2012 Breslin was asked to talk to the Caribbean Council (a specialist trade advisory and public affairs company) on China's growing interests in the region (source 7). As a result of this meeting, and having read a number of Breslin's scholarly publications, in January 2013 the Council decided to set up a specialist China Discussion Group including members from the private sector, government and NGOs (source 7). Breslin was invited to become one of the core members and organisers.

Breslin has worked extensively with influential European think tanks to provide expert briefings and analysis (source 8). He has given policy briefings at two think tanks associated with the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In April 2012 he presented on the nature of China and the multipolar

world at a workshop on 'The West and the BRICs' at the *Italian Istituto Affari Internazionali*. He has also delivered two presentations at the *Istituto per gli Studi di Politica Internazionale* (ISPI) in Milan, the second of which has been published as an ISPI policy paper on China and the Arab Awakening.

Breslin is also the Key Expert in Politics for the Europe China Research and Advice Network (ECRAN), a programme run by Chatham House designed to further enhance the capacity of European policy-makers to monitor and assess current developments in China and their impact on the EU and on EU-China relations (source 5). This entails identifying areas of interest to the European External Action Service (EEAS), commissioning papers and evaluating reports prior to their submission. The EEAS also request short papers and briefings. In addition to these core functions, in 2011 Breslin spoke at an ECRAN policy event in Berlin attended by representatives from the German Council of Foreign Relations and the German Ambassador to China on the foreign policy objectives of the Chinese leadership. This was followed in 2012 by a presentation at an event to accompany the EU-China Strategic Dialogue on how Chinese conceptions of the global order influence policy towards Europe. In January 2013 Breslin was invited to brief the EEAS Asia team on the rise of nationalism in China and the implications for EU politics.

## 5. Sources to corroborate the impact

### Evidence of informing UK government policy towards China

1. **UK Foreign Affairs Committee.** A letter dated 4 July 2013 received from the Chair of the Committee confirms Breslin's role as an expert witness for the 2 July evidence session on Government policy toward China (available on request). The source corroborates claims about Breslin's role in informing the Committee's understanding of China's domestic and international politics.
2. **House of Lords Foreign Affairs Committee.** 'Stars and Dragons: The EU and China', 7<sup>th</sup> Report of Session 2009-10 cites Breslin's evidence and role in enhancing the Committee's understanding of contemporary Chinese politics throughout (pp.12, 17-18, 25, 30, 34-5, 50,74, 88). Available on request and online: <http://bit.ly/19OVmWS>
3. **UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office.** A letter from the FCO dated 9 July 2012 provides evidence of the adoption of Breslin's advice about the importance of engaging African regional organisations to triangulate relations with China (available on request).
4. **Chatham House Human Rights Report.** The Report cites the impact of Breslin's research findings on human rights in China. Available on request and online: <http://bit.ly/1aRozml>
5. **Director of Communications, Chatham House.** An email from the source dated 30 October 2012 corroborates claims about Breslin's impact work with the Royal Institute of International Affairs (available on request).
6. **Commons Select Committee.** 'MPs take evidence on the UK's policy towards China', 27 June, 2013. Available on request and online: <http://bit.ly/H5Yirb>

### Evidence of shaping international policy and practitioner debates on China:

7. **Ambassador, Embassy of the Republic of Sierra Leone, China.** On request the source can confirm the influence of Breslin's work on the Caribbean Council.
8. **Chairman of ISPI.** Letter dated 11 October 2012 demonstrates the impact of Breslin's engagement with and ability to influence the work of leading think tanks (available on request).
9. **J Fox and F Godement** 'A power audit of EU-China Relations', European Council on Foreign Relations. A policy report that cites Breslin's research on EU-China relations available on request and online: <http://bit.ly/19OVO7u>
10. **Newsweek**, 'The Party Reaches Out Online'. Breslin's research on the internet in China was the subject of an article published on 3 October, 2010. Available on request and online: <http://bit.ly/1qO0QX>