

Institution: De Montfort University
Unit of Assessment: UoA 19 Business & Management Studies
<p>a. Context</p> <p>Main non-academic user groups, beneficiaries or audiences for the unit's research:</p> <p><i>Governmental bodies and agencies.</i> A range of governmental and quasi-governmental bodies are integral to the work of the Public Governance (PubGov) group. These bodies, often co-producers in research, include local authorities, the Electoral Reform Society, patient representative groups and advisory bodies such as the Local Government Association and the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE). Individual researchers have been consulted by central government departments, particularly the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), parliamentary commissions, the Equality and Human Rights Commission and housing agencies. Housing researchers have advised the World Bank, the UN and the government of Flanders on social housing and the rental market.</p> <p><i>Corporate users and business support agencies.</i> Researchers have worked closely with SMEs, ethnic-minority businesses and large multinationals, as well as with agencies supporting SMEs. For example, L. Glover and colleagues in HRM/OB have worked for many years with a major engineering firm on the processes of organisational change.</p> <p><i>Local stakeholders.</i> The Unit has forged significant partnerships with local stakeholders as part of its approach to research. Thus PubGov researchers have developed research collaborations with the local County Council and City Council to support organisational development in areas like strategic commissioning and political leadership; these collaborations include funded doctoral studentships. Researchers on ethnic minority business have organized business mentoring for minority firms in Leicester.</p> <p>Main types of impact: Impact on policy and practice has been mainly economic, commercial and organisational, through work aiming to improve the effectiveness of business and of public sector bodies from local authorities to health and housing agencies. However, there have also been societal impacts through work on accountability of public bodies and on community engagement.</p> <p>b. Approach to impact: The Unit has concentrated on four main areas of impact:</p> <p>1. <i>User communication and engagement:</i> communicating the practical implications of research through policy blogs, practitioner seminars and knowledge exchange networks, as well as articles in practitioner journals (e.g. <i>Public Finance</i>) and research feedback workshops aimed at users. Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Policy Exchanges blog (http://policyex.dmu.ac.uk/) run by PubGov with University 'Research Innovation Funding' between December 2010 and October 2011 to promote "dialogue between researchers, policy makers and practitioners about the challenges we face as a society"; the blog generated 37 posts in that time. • a civic leadership forum, organised by PubGov (Copus and Davies), on policy development for public leaders across Leicestershire (including local authorities, police and health). • an annual practitioner-focused conference on ethnic minority business run by the Centre for Research on Ethnic Minority Entrepreneurship (CREME) (Ram), and a CREME seminar series on small business and entrepreneurship, engaging practitioners as well as academics. • a research-informed short course on local authority commissioning, developed by PubGov. • a conference organised by Davies in September 2013 for academics and activists on 'urban crisis', with plenary sessions presented by activists on strategies for opposing airport expansion and on urban crisis in Latin America. • an ESRC-funded seminar series (January 2009–September 2010) on Policy as Practice run by Griggs in collaboration with the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE). <p>2. <i>Improving business support:</i> drawing on primary research to influence business support in areas such as access to finance and IT skills for ethnic minority business. CREME researchers have developed structures of support for small and ethnic minority business (EMB). Where necessary, CREME has set up new intermediary organisations to address 'institutional failure'. The UoA's work also provides support for larger business through contract research.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CREME (Ram and Woldesenbet) established the "Enterprise and Diversity Alliance" (EDA)

with the support of the regional development agency, Barclays Bank and the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants. The EDA provides research-informed support for businesses run by ethnic minorities, women and young people on access to finance and to supply chain opportunities. Working with companies such as Hewlett-Packard and Mott Macdonald, it has promoted schemes for the recruitment of business mentors.

- Similarly, CREME pioneered, with ESRC Knowledge Exchange funding, a new, self-sustaining model of business support, based on 'peer-to-peer' networks for different ethnic minority business groups, including Bangladeshis and African-Caribbeans.

3. *Developing practitioner tools*: practical, research-based tools and systems for practitioners in business and local government. For example:

- In HRM/OB, L. Glover and Butler's work with a major multinational engineering firm on organisational change and employee partnership has entailed close engagement with the company since the mid-1990s. Researchers used findings to advise the firm on the impact of a major organisational change programme and developed a longitudinal survey instrument to track staff attitudes on a range of HR issues, including job satisfaction, trust and safety.
- CREME (Ram, Woldesenbet) developed a national "how to" guide on supplier diversity for the EHRC. As mentioned, it has also pioneered 'peer mentoring' for ethnic minority entrepreneurs.
- PubGov's KTP (Griggs and [Durose]) worked with APSE to develop tools and guides, helping APSE to address the challenges of reduced public expenditure for service delivery (2011–13). The work comprised systematic reviews of the role of cooperatives and mutuals in service delivery, guidance on innovation and shared services, and national surveys to inform good practice in areas such as public health and youth unemployment.

4. *Policy advice for central / local government*: providing advice to policy-makers, conducting research-informed policy debate and evaluative studies of policy and institutional design, e.g.

- Copus (PubGov) gave evidence (2012) to the parliamentary Political and Constitutional Reform Committee on codifying the relationship between central and local government, and advised Bob Neill, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at DCLG, on directly elected mayors (2011).
- Payne (HRM/OB) has influenced international public debate on skills; for example, Noella Eddington, the lead advisor to the Queensland government on skills formation, said of his work (over a decade until 2012) that he 'can claim to have had a significant impact on Queensland Skills Policy'.
- Ram (EMB/CREME) has helped shape debate on the role and needs of ethnic-minority business in the UK. In 2010, Ram was appointed a member of the Equalities Advisory Group (EAG) to advise BIS on business diversity issues.
- Since 2008, PubGov researchers have advised on the institutional design and evaluation of local service delivery, e.g. neighbourhood working for the Derby Community Safety Partnership ([Durose], [Leach] and Roberts); Preventing Violent Extremism programmes in Derby, Leicester and Nottingham (Hamalainen, [Lowndes]); neighbourhoods and "the ensuring council" (Griggs, Roberts); place-based empowerment, with the University of Southampton, for the DCLG ([Durose], [Lowndes], [Pratchett]); community capacity across neighbourhoods, for the AHRC and Peterborough Council (Roberts).

(Note: names in square brackets left the Unit in the census period.)

An important part of the Unit's approach to impact is its explicit *reflection* on paths to impact, the effectiveness of impact and its relationship to the research process. This is evidenced by:

1. *Exploring "co-production"*, that is the 'involvement of communities in framing, undertaking and analysing the research'. Hamalainen and Jones won an AHRC Connected Communities award, which engaged practitioners in analysing the different meanings given to 'community'. Durose won a further AHRC award to explore the concept and practice of coproduction with academic researchers and research users. The practical use of co-production is seen in the work of Durose on neighbourhood empowerment; in Griggs and Durose's long-term collaboration with APSE; and in the engagement of local users in research design, e.g. the appointment of two local GP practitioners and three local government practitioners to advise on research and development needs in commissioning and organisational transformation (see below).

2. *Elaborating “engaged scholarship”*. Ram, with colleagues, has published journal articles (e.g. in *Management Learning*) outlining a theoretically-informed approach to user engagement, ‘vertically integrating’ insights of research with ‘real’ business practice through practical advice and support to businesses and intermediary organisations. Like coproduction, engaged scholarship, borrowing from theories of ‘critical action learning’, emphasises subjectivity and the importance of power.

3. *Research as Practice*. Unit researchers have used an ESRC seminar series in collaboration with APSE (Griggs) to explore the notion of research as practice, focusing on researchers’ engagement with ‘what policymakers actually do’. Building on the outcomes of this series, three experienced policy practitioners, Michael Hughes (Audit Commission), Ines Newman (formerly of the Local Government Information Unit) and Roger Lawrence (Leader of Wolverhampton Council), were appointed in 2012 as research associates to collaborate with PubGov researchers in the designing of new forms of practitioner engagement and impact generation.

Support mechanisms

Impact initiatives have drawn on external funding from users (including central and local government, regional agencies and private corporations) as well as research council funding. CREME has made use of ESRC Knowledge Exchange opportunities and an ESRC-funded KTP has been key to PubGov’s work with APSE. The Unit has drawn guidance on impact from the University’s Research, Business & Innovation directorate (RBI), particularly on access to sources of funding oriented to impact. Researchers have made use of HEIF funding to enhance the impact of their work, e.g. in a study of organisational resilience in the West Midlands fire service (Herbane, Macpherson), and CREME’s work on supplier diversity (Ram). The Unit has also secured a number of practice-oriented doctoral bursaries from competitive rounds within the University, e.g. for work with Leicestershire County Council on strategic commissioning. PubGov won funding from the University’s ‘Revolving Investment Fund’ for its ‘Policy Exchanges’ blog (see above).

Relationships with key users have developed, often over many years, through their direct engagement in research design. The aim is to focus research on producing usable knowledge. This has been done, as noted, by leveraging KE and KTP funding from research council sources including the ESRC (Ram; Griggs and [Durose]; Oxley) and AHRC ([Durose], Hamalainen, K. Jones, Roberts), and from corporate users of research (e.g. L. Glover and Butler). The role of the faculty Business Development Manager (BDM) in engaging with external partners for the delivery of tailored teaching and contract research provides another avenue for building research relationships with practitioners. User relationships are structured into the design and objectives of CREME; its guiding principles are ‘engaged scholarship’, ‘transforming practice’ by working with stakeholders and ‘outstanding engagement and dissemination’ through knowledge networking.

c. Strategy and plans: Impact strategy is in line with the 2013 University Research strategy and the evolving understanding of ‘impact’ emerging from the funding and research councils. Impact plans have been put forward by the current faculty head of research (Griggs) to develop ‘research into practice’; enhance the value-added of user engagement; advise researchers on funding opportunities oriented to practice; advise on converting practitioner-oriented research into good academic output; and carry out annual evaluations of research impact. Impact is already built into the modus operandi of CREME and PubGov. Current plans will help develop a more systematic approach to impact across the UoA, including in more ‘academic-focused’ groups such as HRM/OB. New modes of engagement will be encouraged, such as building strategic research partnerships with shared priorities and making joint research bids with key users (e.g. APSE, People for Places). The Unit will continue to draw on Faculty research funding (see Environment template) to promote impact. It will also exploit the substantial organisational and financial support of the University, administered through the RBI.

d. Relationship to case studies: Impact case studies have been selected to reflect the ‘structured-in’ approach to impact of CREME and PubGov in particular. Both groups see it as integral to their research programme, aiming to generate evidence-based guidance for their practice. Through support for coproduction and ‘engaged scholarship’, researchers seek to develop long-term collaborative research partnerships with users, engaging them both in research design and in the research process itself.