

Institution: University of Southampton
Unit of Assessment: 21 Politics and International Studies
<p>a. Context</p> <p>Politics and International Relations (the UoA) comprises 13.54 FTE staff and has an international reputation in the areas of <i>Governance and Public Policy</i>, <i>Political Analysis and Design</i> and <i>Social and Political Theory</i>. PAIR coordinates its dissemination and impact strategies through the Centre for Citizenship, Governance and Globalisation (C2G2, on Twitter as @C2G2Soton), established in 2009, supplemented since 2012 for dissemination purposes by the blog <i>Politics Upside Down</i> which has had 6,127 views since October and 90 posts. Our Twitter feed @sotonpolitics has more than 536 followers and 749 (re)tweets) and our impact activities are further enhanced through Public Policy@Southampton (PP@S), an external facing public engagement initiative in which the University has made a strategic investment.</p> <p>C2G2 engages in problem-based research intended to shape the understanding and guide the actions of political agents in order to improve the ‘intelligence’ of governance and promote the ‘common good’. As such it is necessarily concerned to build a focus on dissemination and impact (where the former may, variously, facilitate, cause or constitute the latter) into its research projects and, indeed, into the research process.</p> <p>There are five main types of beneficiary of our research:</p> <p>Governments: For example, Stoker’s on-going research on ‘nudge’ and ‘think’ strategies of civic behaviour change which has influenced UK Coalition government thinking and led to invitations from the governments of Australia and New Zealand; Owen’s research on transnational citizenship and electoral rights led to his participation as an ‘expert commentator’ at the EU Committee of the Regions Forum on implementing the 2013 Citizen’s Agenda at regional/local levels and his presentation to the First EU-Level Conference on the Year of the Citizen 2013 on equal access to participation for citizens at EU-level.</p> <p>International Agencies: e.g. Riggiozzi and Diana Tussie (Director at FLACSO Argentina) prepared a background study commissioned by the United Nations Development Program on regional provisions for human development in MERCOSUR, CAN and ASEAN (‘Regional Integration and Human Development: A Pathway for Africa’, New York: UNDP, 2011).</p> <p>International and UK Non-governmental organisations: e.g. Stoker’s on-going research on <i>anti-politics</i> in partnership with the Hansard Society; Zwolski’s research on European security governance which led to his invited participation in (and the University of Southampton’s (UoS) affiliate membership of) the EU Non-Proliferation Consortium as well as their dissemination of two of his articles through their website. Furthermore, building on Zwolski’s research concerning the EU and climate security, UoS was invited to become an Institutional Member of the Global Military Advisory Council on Climate Change.</p> <p>The Public: e.g. Jennings’ research on the risks involved in staging an Olympics led to more than five television and radio interviews as well as an interview with Associated Press syndicated to over 200 news outlets and to advisory engagement in the planning for the 2014 Glasgow Commonwealth Games.</p>
<p>b. Approach to impact</p> <p>Since the institution of C2G2 in 2009, PAIR’s approach to impact has involved a simple set of guiding principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem-based research has limited value unless disseminated to relevant political actors. • Dissemination is continuous with impact. • Building relationships and partnerships with other research communities and user groups supports dissemination and impact as well as creating future research agendas, resources and opportunities. <p>Putting these principles into practice has been accomplished through a range of mechanisms designed to support a research culture in which a concern with dissemination and impact is not seen as an additional ‘add on’ to research but as integral to the research process. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Routinisation of dissemination. It is now common practice that staff will write up accessible

abstracts of their publications and research reports for non-academic audiences which are posted on the blog *Politics Upside Down* and tweeted from @sotonpolitics and/or @C2G2Soton. Staff are also encouraged to write for other academic and policy blog sites; for example, Jennings runs the site *Olymponomics* and contributes regularly to the polling observatory on the Nottingham blog *Ballots and Bullets*, while Owen has contributed to the EUDO, Our Kingdom, Politics in Spires and Political Studies Association (PSA) blogs. These activities are supplemented by more targeted forms of dissemination often through users: for example, Kelso and Stoker's contribution to 'What's Trust Got to Do With It?' - a Hansard Society Briefing Paper examining public trust in and expectations of politicians based on work conducted by the Hansard Society, the PSA and C2G2. This paper was distributed to 2500 members on the Hansard Society mailing list including UK national politicians, and downloaded 3260 times from the Hansard Society website (May 2010). Similarly, Owen participated in the EUDO dissemination conference 'Inclusive Democracy in Europe' at the European Parliament in 2012, and he engaged with EU politicians, policy advocates and academics in a EUDO blog debate on EU Citizenship (17,537 views as of July 2013). A number of staff – Bentley, Kelso, Jennings, Riggiozzi and Stoker - have become regular contributors to both local and national radio and TV, collectively making over 70 appearances since 2008.

- **Establishing strong relationship with users.** For example, Stoker has built a long-term relationship with the Department of Communities and Local Government: '*Gerry Stoker and his team have enormous credibility.*' (Ariana Haberis, senior civil servant, DCLG) that has enhanced the impact of his work on responding to political disaffection. This process is supported through the 'normalisation' of user engagement accomplished by regular seminars/lectures by practitioners (e.g. Tom Steinberg, Founder of *MySociety*; Ross Ferguson, Government Digital Service); events incorporating policy-makers (e.g., the November 2012 conference *The EU as an International Climate Actor*); and one year (renewable) Visiting Research Fellowships in C2G2 for non-academic users (e.g., Dan Corry, former head of Gordon Brown's policy unit) to advise on forms of user engagement as well as funding for researchers to participate in governmental and non-governmental research/policy fora.
- **Building a focus on dissemination and impact into the research process.** This is approached through (i) formal processes: issues of research dissemination and impact are addressed in annual personal professional development reviews, not least in order to identify good practice and professional training opportunities, and in the review process for grant applications, and (ii) informal processes: research 'brainstorming' sessions run by C2G2 and consultation with C2G2's non-academic fellows. We have also built sessions on dissemination and impact into our postgraduate training programme in order to support their development.

C2G2 recognises that there are several potential pathways to impact which may have different relationships to the research process and that these may involve different temporal structures. Our general approach has been to build on existing links with users in order to cultivate long-term relationships with key policy actors as well as to maximize involvement in current public engagements by accepting media invitations and invitations to speak at public engagements (for example, Stoker, Jennings and Kelso have spoken to more than 50 government and civil society-organised events, including presentations to Australian, Brazilian, Japanese and UK Parliaments). The primary pathways to impact that we have followed include:

- **Co-production with users of resources to affect policy and practice** – e.g. the involvement of Smith in the development of *participedia*, an open knowledge platform on democratic innovations developed by a consortium of academic and civil society organisations from across the world to support civic participation projects and used by the World Bank, the Bertelsmann Foundation, Chilean Innovation Programme, European Institute for Public Participation, Institute for Local Government (US), Involve (UK), Deliberative Democracy Coalition (US) and Open Democracy (UK). (see Impact Case Study 2)
- **Organisation of events focused at research users** – for example, the launch of the final report of the *Rediscovering the Civic* project (Smith and Stoker, CIs) engaged Greg Clark, Minister for Decentralisation, who later wrote to Stoker explaining how it had affected his thinking about 'Big Society' and has since engaged with Stoker in further policy events (see Impact Case Study 1).

- **Contracts to deliver evidence to support the policy process** – e.g. Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) funded research (involving Stoker and Smith) that influenced the policies enacted in the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 (see Impact Case Study 2).
- **Publications in outlets read by policy makers** – e.g. ‘Nudge, Nudge, Think, Think’ (Smith and Stoker co-authors) in *Political Quarterly* picked up in the RSA Director’s blog and publication of book with the same title in a free-to-access format with Bloomsbury Academic to maximise reach with 9567 downloads as of July 2013 (in top 5 of Bloomsbury Open titles) – this has supported uptake by governmental and non-governmental actors, and Stoker’s pamphlet ‘Building a new politics’ for the British Academy Policy Unit circulated to key policy makers.

c. Strategy and plans

Our immediate strategy is three-fold:

- **C2G2 will play a central role in promoting the impact agenda** not only amongst colleagues and postgraduates through the approaches discussed above, but also across the discipline of politics. Our Impact Champion, Stoker, has developed the intellectual ground for a commitment to impact, not as an afterthought, but as a central activity for academics, leading debates in the profession about the relevance of political science and the possibility of developing a ‘design’ arm to our work that offers solutions to citizens and policy makers as well as identifies problems and challenges. He is the member of the executive of the Political Studies Association who leads on ‘Research and Impact’. In short, C2G2 aims to maximise the potential for impact by leading the debate about impact.
- **C2G2 will continue to provide dedicated funds to colleagues and PhD students** to underwrite impact activity, supplemented by funds available within the School of Social Sciences. The possibilities for impact emerge not only from work that is funded by the Research Councils and other bodies, but also from scholarship that does not attract such support. C2G2 has set aside a fund of £20K per annum to enable staff to engage with stakeholders in order to maximise the impact of the Unit’s work.
- **C2G2 will engage with PP@S to further enhance the impact of its research.** Links between the two initiatives are ensured since Stoker is also the director of PP@S and the activities and ethos of C2G2 influenced its design. PP@S is primarily responsible for funding and supporting strategic engagement events between key policy makers and academics from the unit. PP@S co-ordinates annual competitions for policy commissions and workshops across the University. The ‘reach’ of these events is extended through the posting of podcasts, blogs and policy briefings on the PP@S website which are promoted through multi-platform social media campaigns orchestrated by the PP@S team.

d. Relationship to case studies

The case studies support the diverse approach to achieving impact adopted by members of the UoA.

- *Case Study 1: Nudge, Nudge, Think, Think: Shaping Change in Civic Behaviour*
The impact evidenced in this case study exemplifies the importance of writing in policy-relevant outlets (*Political Quarterly* article picked up by RSA Chief Exec’s blog); engagement with formal Commissions (2020 Public Services Commission); organising timely events targeted at users (e.g. The Minister for Decentralisation, Greg Clark); accepting invitations to seminars (e.g. with David Halpern, Chief of the Government’s Behavioural Insights Team; Institute for Government workshop on behaviour change; DCLG research seminar; etc.); accepting media invitations (e.g. Stoker on *Today* programme 23rd August 2010, 8th June 2011 and 3rd May 2013)
- *Case Study 2: Responding to political disaffection and disengagement*
The impact evidenced in this case study exemplifies similar routes to impact as in Case Study 1, although with the additional approach of engaging in collaborative projects / co-production with users – in particular on-going relationships with the international non-profit organisation *Participedia* and the UK-focused Hansard Society; and the impact of contractual relationships – in particular with DCLG to provide a review of evidence which led to an impact on parliamentary debates (e.g. on the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009).