

<p>Institution: University of Leeds</p> <p>Unit of Assessment: D33</p> <p>a. Context</p> <p>Leeds' research strengths in the study of contemporary religion, in local and global contexts, lead us to understand impact and public engagement as integral to our research. Our work with local religious communities through the Community Religions Project and the Centre for Religion and Public Life (CRPL) now spans more than 35 years. Our commitment to embedding impact fully in research applies to philosophy of religion, theology and biblical studies, as well as religious studies. The main non-academic beneficiaries and audiences for our research are: firstly, faith communities (locally and globally) and their members, as they seek to understand and shape their place in the contemporary public sphere; secondly, public and third-sector organisations (local, national and international) for whom understanding religion is of increasing importance; and, thirdly, the media, educators, and others who help to form public understanding of religion. Almost all our core research activity has led directly or indirectly to impact in one of these areas. Impact and engagement in our research is also embedded into our teaching, through research-based learning modules that engage students with external partner organisations.</p> <p>b. Approach to impact</p> <p>Key features of our impact strategy are (i) embedding the impact agenda at all levels and across all areas of research, recognising and supporting researchers' impact activities; (ii) forming and maintaining working partnerships with key stakeholders locally, nationally and internationally; (iii) facilitating conversations around our research with non-academic organisations, so that impact informs all stages of the research process; (iv) drawing on institutional funding, structures and expertise to enable researchers to develop innovative impact programmes; (v) seeking opportunities to contribute to high-profile public debate and public education.</p> <p><i>(i) Embedding the Impact Agenda and Supporting Researchers</i> Our staff have made major contributions to impact work across the discipline. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case study 1 highlights Knott's AHRC Programme Director's Impact Fellowship. Evidence of our excellent impact culture submitted for the application included a national event on Knowledge Transfer and Impact in the Arts and Humanities (2009), co-ordinated by Knott and attended by AHRC staff and an international audience of academics and stakeholders. • From 2005-2010, Tomalin was a key researcher (50% buyout) on the DFID-funded programme 'Religion and Development'. This programme and its research outputs, several of which are authored by her, are directly beneficial to DFID and to major international NGOs, and have been taken up in reports by UN agencies. Since the programme ended, a key part of her ongoing work has been to develop its impact: she is the editor of a 2011 book commissioned by Oxfam to make key recent research (including her own) in religion and development available to practitioners, and has participated in research seminars with relevant non-academic partners. • McLoughlin's work with the British Museum (case study 1) arose through his initiative. Building on expertise developed through the CRPL, he was able to identify the need for significant new research with impact in the context of the Hajj exhibition, and to offer this to the British Museum as an opportunity for outreach to Muslim communities. • Lindsay (AHRC Doctoral Award holder) was given a School Postgraduate Impact Fellowship for a project on arts and humanities impact on public policy, developing skills relevant to her PhD project on religion and security policy. <p>Our whole-unit commitment to impact was demonstrated in the public events to mark the 35th anniversary of Leeds' pioneering Community Religions Project (case study 1). A major exhibition featured examples of publicly-engaged research with impact by staff and students, and was also a networking event for the formation of new research partnerships with local religious communities, public- and third-sector bodies (attendees included Leeds City Council, a local interfaith network, Jewish and Sikh cultural organisations). This event was supported by School and University funding, as well as a grant from the HEA; it was hosted in the University's central exhibition venue. To track the event's effectiveness and assess opportunities for future work, recorded interviews were conducted, and written comments (further valuable data) were collected from attendees.</p> <p><i>(ii) Building and Maintaining Partnerships</i> We have a number of long-standing partnerships with public- and third-sector stakeholders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have worked with West Yorkshire Police (WYP) and with the Los Angeles Police
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Department (LAPD) developing the impact of McFadyen's ongoing work on theology, policing and justice and **McLoughlin** and Prideaux's work on religious communities and the state. A Fulbright project by a LAPD officer in 2007 was followed by a round-table discussion in 2009 on policing and community cohesion, drawing on Leeds research, and involving LAPD and WYP. In 2011, we used links with WYP (as well as the Home Office, for whom we undertook a major piece of commissioned research in 2006) to host an invited conference on religion, policing and security. Here we launched a research report on policing and religious diversity, and also presented research by **McLoughlin**, Knott and AHRC-funded research students Francis and Lindsay. We are in ongoing communication with attendees at the conference, to track the impact of our research; a subsequent round-table on religio-cultural factors in street grooming has led to a HEIF-funded project for McFadyen and Lindsay in partnership with local NGOs and a policing consultant.

- Lindsay and Starkey (AHRC-funded students) with **Tomalin** organised a seminar for local government on religion and the "Big Society", which has led to a longer-term partnership with Leeds City Council and a Council grant for further research.
- **Tomalin's** partnership with Southall Black Sisters, related to her work on dowry, has led to a major ESRC grant application (currently under review).
- Among faith communities, established partners include the Leeds Church Institute – resulting recently in the establishment of a high-profile annual public lecture on religion and public life. With the Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust Chaplaincy, collaborative research on the multi-religious Faith Centre has directly informed planning for the future of the Centre. Links with the Anglican Diocese of Ripon and Leeds have enabled engagement with **Ward** and Sadgrove's research on sexuality and global Anglicanism (case study 2).

(iii) *Facilitating Conversations* Commitment to impact throughout the research process means establishing mechanisms to engage with stakeholders at every stage from planning to publication. The creation of the 'Religion and Society@Leeds' research network (from 2008) had the explicit aim of enabling participation by, and conversation with, non-academic partners and stakeholders. Full-day research meetings (up to four a year) have been publicised through our networks of contacts in public- and third-sector organisations including faith communities; they have been attended regularly by up to twenty non-academic organisations as well as staff and students from across the University. They have the further benefit of enabling postgraduate students to communicate their research to non-academic audiences, further embedding impact and public engagement into our research culture, and more broadly into the disciplinary culture of TRS as a subject. Direct results of the research days have included the use of our research in shaping and reviewing the Anglican Communion's "Continuing Indaba" process (see case study 2).

(iv) *Drawing on Institutional Support* HEIF funding administered by the University has supported our impact work on religion and policing (see above). The Faculty of Arts established in 2006/7 a "seed-corn" fund to support innovation in impact activities, from which **Muers** received a grant in 2009-10 for developing two adult education courses, and **Tomalin** in 2010 for her work on dowry and in 2012 for the "Big Society" seminar (see above). A scholarship scheme funded by Leeds alumni has supported work with the Leeds hospitals chaplaincy (see above) and with a local voluntary organisation (contributing to their reflection on volunteer experience and training). The Faculty has developed a publicly-available collection of case studies of excellence in impact and innovation, to which we have contributed examples. Support and training from the Leeds Humanities Research Institute (LHRI) has helped research students (Lindsay, Starkey, Singh, Barton and others) to develop the impact of their work. The School Director of Impact (currently **Tomalin**) co-ordinates this work across Philosophy, Religion and the History of Science.

(v) *Contributing to Public Debate and Education*

Our staff have considerable experience and expertise in media engagement. For example:

- **Skrimshire** has presented his research on eschatology on Radio 4 *Beyond Belief*; Singh (AHRC/ESRC Collaborative Doctoral student and later postdoctoral fellow) has presented his work on the transmission of Sikh identity in local and national media;
- **Scrutton** has received extensive media training as a shortlisted candidate for Radio 3's "New Generation Thinkers" programme.

We also seek and create opportunities to discuss our work face-to-face with audiences to whom it is of general and specific interest. For example:

- Research from **Muers'** AHRC project on vegetarianism (2006-2009) was presented, along

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with research by **Burley** and AHRC-funded student Barton, at a national conference for activists, academics and other interested parties in 2009, organised jointly with the Christian Vegetarian Association UK and held at the University; the research presented has been used in subsequent CVAUK publications.

- **Stiebert** gave a series of talks to the William Temple Foundation in York on her research on ideology and the Hebrew Bible.

Public education events have also been an important feature of Knott's Impact Fellowship (case study 1) and of the follow-up to **Ward** and Sadgrove's research on sexuality and the Anglican Communion (case study 2). Impact on education in schools is a significant feature of our work. Besides **Knott's** development of a major educational resource on diaspora (case study 1), **Prideaux** addressed a national symposium of Religious Studies teachers in July 2012 on the CRP.

c. Strategy and plans

A major component of future impact strategy, in alignment with the strategy of the Faculty and the University as a whole, is our participation in the University's £850k Centre for Impact and Innovation in the Arts (Arts Engaged), established in 2012. The Centre is managed by academic experts and employs five postdoctoral Impact and Innovation Fellows; it acts as a base for the sharing and dissemination of good practice in impact and innovation. In developing the case for Arts Engaged, the CRPL was noted as an area of existing strength, and on the basis of his excellent impact track record and impact-oriented research plans (on South Asian music and religious identity), Leeds TRS postgraduate Singh was appointed as an Arts Engaged Fellow. We anticipate using these new resources to support a focus on specific and creative pathways to impact at every stage of a research project, working with dedicated impact and innovation specialists as projects develop.

We will identify, and review annually, key impact and engagement themes to focus our activity. Current themes are religion, diaspora and diversity (case study 1) religion, gender and sexuality (case study 2), religion, policing and security, and religion and international development – with an emerging theme of religion and health.

To support our work on these themes and the impact of our research more generally, we will:

- maintain and develop our long-term partnerships as the context for larger-scale projects (e.g. an emerging project on healthcare chaplaincy, drawing on **Scrutton's** expertise)
- continue a programme of open research events with non-academic partners and contacts (e.g. major events on contemporary African religion planned for 2014 led by **van Klinken**)
- draw on institutional seedcorn funding to create new and extended research projects with international and national impact (e.g. **McLoughlin's** further work on Hajj, working with Hajj tour operators and most recently with the British Council; **Tomalin** on dowry; **McFadyen** on street grooming).

d. Relationship to case studies

As the above narrative shows, the submitted case studies exemplify the unit's commitment to public engagement as an integral part of the research agenda (case study 1 draws on a long history of engaged research with impact linked to the CRP; case study 2 shows research *with* religious communities being used *for* the benefit of these and other religious communities). They arise from and feed into both new and long-established partnerships (in case study 1 with the British Museum, Leeds Museums and the Citizenship Foundation among others; in case study 2 with local, regional, national and international Anglican bodies). They contribute to and are furthered by facilitated conversations with academic and non-academic participants (in case study 1, the events organised by Knott; in case study 2, the research day that led directly to new impacts). They have received institutional support, for example in the development of grant applications, the freeing of staff time (particularly Knott's) for impact work, and the hosting of events. They have contributed to public debate and education (the Hajj exhibition and the schools resources in case study 1, the Continuing Indaba process and local discussion events in case study 2).

The case studies are also integrated into our future impact strategy, forming the basis of our first two impact and engagement themes (see above). **McLoughlin** and **Tomalin** (*re* case study 1, Hajj and dowry) and **van Klinken** (*re* case study 2, Christianity and sexuality in Africa) have received or are seeking funding for major pieces of engaged research that will extend the range of external partners, and broaden and deepen the policy contributions, of these case studies.