

Institution: SOAS
Unit of Assessment: 24A: Anthropology and Development Studies: Social Anthropology
a. Context

Our cutting-edge research in Africa and Asia attracts and affects diverse audiences: within the regions themselves, through broader public awareness, and in institutions of international policymaking. Without exhausting this range of impacts, we would highlight three broad types.

Research designed to influence national and/or international policy directly. In such research the collaborations through which to deliver impact must be built from the outset. The London International Development Centre (LIDC) facilitates large-scale, interdisciplinary, policy-relevant research collaborations across six Bloomsbury Colleges of the University of London. An example is the £3.5m grant-funded Leverhulme Centre for Integrative Research on Agriculture (LCIRAH): West and Hull are members of the Management Committee, and Hull makes a crucial anthropological contribution to strands on livelihoods, food consumption and health in South Africa. The work has been presented to the All Party Parliamentary Group on Agriculture and Food for Development (March 2013); Hull authored an LCIRAH policy brief on the role of gender in agriculture and health.

Research applicable to policy (or the legal process) that has demonstrably influenced it, but was not directly carried out for this purpose. The department encourages dissemination of findings in ways that will come to the attention of those who may use them, and ensures that academic staff have the time and incentive to accept requests that ensue. For instance, as well as providing expert witness reports for asylum cases in the UK, Canada, USA and Israel (Campbell, 20 such since 2009), SOAS anthropologists have contributed to *Country Guidance Reports* for the UK's Advisory Panel that have been cited both by lawyers and on UNHCR's 'REFWORLD' database, and have influenced claims for asylum made, for example, by Eritreans and Ethiopians. Expertise on caste discrimination has been contributed to stakeholder-focused research for the *Equalities and Human Rights Commission* (EHRC) considering how caste is to be included in the *UK Equalities Act (2010)* (Mosse 2013). We provide diplomatic briefings for UK and other countries: Afghan and Central Asian societies (including FCO); border regions and ICT technology in conflict resolution (UK, Norwegian and German FOs); and advise business and development agencies: Afghan and Pakistani business leaders and policy makers, and the tourist and hotel industry (e.g. on Chinese tourism in Europe, or tourism development to Ethiopia).

Research that is designed to widen public exposure to diverse cultural and social forms through collaboration with art and culture organizations. Research-based documentary films, exhibitions, and catalogues: a year-long exhibition at the *Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History*, and photographs, maps, architectural drawings, documentary film, and public lectures at the *Royal Institute of British Architects*, drew public attention to the remarkable Djenne masons of Mali, with potential tourism-boosting impacts (Marchand); the major international touring exhibition *Central Nigeria Unmasked: Arts of the Benue River Valley* showed a large public the relevance of ethnographic research for the appreciation of African art (Fardon). Examples of direct collaboration with artists include that with the art collective CAMP (<http://www.camputer.org/>) on Indian Ocean exhibitions (Simpson) leading to a well-reviewed film shown at dOCUMENTA11 in Germany (2012), the 2013 Sharjah Biennial, and the Experimental section of the London film festival (2013). In the performing arts, the Department's Centre for Migration and Diaspora Studies is working with third sector arts organizations on oral history projects involving Ugandan Asians, and South Asian theatre in post-war Britain, which include workshops, lectures and exhibitions.

Additional to these categories is research either planned with policy relevance from the outset, or arising from professional engagement, which aims to promote public questioning of the assumptions that lie behind policy. Instances include: new, critical anthropological approaches to policy, programme reviews and social research capacity building (Mosse on aid policy and participatory development); post-disaster reconstruction (Simpson); geographical indication of origin and food safety regimes (West).

These overlapping types of research impact involve three distinct audiences: **(1) policy-makers**, in national governments and international organizations (World Bank, DfID), or in NGOs; **(2)**

Impact template (REF3a)

professionals (legal, media) and community organizations using research processes and outputs to engage with policy, whether on aid, agriculture, food, migration, asylum, or anti-discrimination. The researched communities may themselves be research users, for whom sharing knowledge provides a means to extend capacities or promote critical, reflexive awareness. Current collaborations of this kind include: furniture makers, stone masons and architectural conservators looking to enhance appreciation of the intelligence of practical skills and counter the devaluation of labour in the modern world (Marchand); Islamic charities in Indonesia and UK deepening their understanding of philanthropy (Retsikas: Pondok Infak Mulia [pseudonym], UK Islamic Relief); and NGOs and campaigns for Dalit rights enhancing activist learning (Mosse: Social Watch-Tamil Nadu, the National Campaign for Dalit Human Rights). **(3)** An informed **general public** that attends exhibitions and watches films, and is influenced by both, provides our third audience.

b. Approach to impact

The types of impact we have sought (outlined above) have entailed diverse and flexible strategies, including: direct collaboration with non-academic users in externally funded projects; the creative use of research leave to develop wider impact as well as academic outputs; and an imaginative approach to consultancy work and secondments. In terms of shared methodology, we engage in applied or commissioned work arising from our research and expertise both to explore opportunities for influence and impact, but additionally to deepen practical understanding of the subjects of study, whether international development agencies, NGO networks, museums and galleries, the UK asylum system and law-making, or craft industries through vocational training and apprenticeship. The Department's philosophy challenges a clear distinction between pure and applied anthropology, putting 'practice into theory', as well as 'theory into practice'. User-engagement and feedback is routinely built into the design of externally-funded projects that are subject to internal peer review (and ethical approval) with reciprocity in mind. Our approach is consistent with the impact planning anticipated by research council funders, but we extend it wherever possible to all research to achieve a unified strategy for impact.

One of the consequences has been the building of enduring relationships through repeated engagement with a number of key economic, cultural and diplomatic non-academic users (e.g. Mosse with the World Bank and Indian NGOs; Marchand with RIBA; Marsden with FCO). The significance and reach of the impact is enhanced by the development of relationships with key external users over time. The same consideration has been extended to other areas of research-related activity: for instance, the Marie Curie CoHaB programme was built around secondments to community (migrant rights) organizations and links to a migrant lawyers association and a film production training centre in Mumbai. Not all opportunities for non-academic engagement are embraced, and we monitor the funding environment closely for consistency with the ethics of our professional association (the ASA): the most productive engagement and the widest impacts occur, in our experience, from the integrity of a critical anthropological perspective.

In terms of infrastructure, the Bloomsbury colleges' *London International Development Centre* (founded in 2008 with strong SOAS involvement) has provided an essential platform for policy-engaged research dissemination. Membership of SOAS Centres (Food Studies; Migration and Diaspora Studies; Water and Development; Gender Studies; the numerous Regional Centres) affords regular exchanges with policymakers, activists, and the media. As an instance, the Food Centre's 'Food Forum' includes professionals from the Food Standards Agency, Action Against Hunger, Waitrose, BBC Radio 4 (Food Programme), the Food Ethics Council and elsewhere. The Centre for Migration & Diaspora hosts programmes like 'Somali Week' attracting community and user interest. SOAS hosts the *Royal African Society*, Britain's leading Africanist organization and a highly effective channel of influence for Africanist anthropologists (e.g., through the Africa All Party Parliamentary Group). SOAS's central London exhibition space, the Brunei Gallery showcases some of our research to wider audiences (for instance on Central and South Asia). The Anthropology Department has been represented on the Gallery Advisory Panel since its inception.

c. Strategy and plans

For our overall approach to types of impact, please consult section **a)**. SOAS's institutional resources (see **b)**) help the unit to plan non-academic engagement. All individuals are expected to develop engagement plans according to their research interests. Some examples of on-going

research projects include Marchand's collaborative public works: with Djenne masons involving development of their own camera-work for film-making (a major exhibition at the Smithsonian, and in the Brunei Gallery), with the Building Crafts College and craftspeople. Marchand plans an exhibition on 'Hand-Made' that will explore craft skill and the intelligent hand at work and fieldwork-based documentary films. Work with Plymouth College of Art and UK designer-makers aims to promote craft (primarily building crafts) in education and as a potential and viable career path for young people in the UK. Fardon is exploring a second collaboration with the Fowler Museum.

Through its research partners, Mosse's ESRC *Caste Out of Development* collaborative research project has and will continue to contribute to: legal innovation for Dalit-focused development budgeting (Scheduled Castes Sub-Plan in Andhra Pradesh), a regional (Tamil Nadu) Land Rights Federation, and the National Coordination Group on the eradication of manual scavenging. An impact plan for future work will direct policy attention to the relevance of caste in development with UK and international aid policymakers and corporates, and aim to enhance activist awareness of the dilemmas of identity-based strategies countering poverty, dispossession and exploitation.

Simpson's ambitious project of village restudies in India plans to undertake film projects for wider dissemination, the translation of classic ethnographies into vernacular languages and intends collaboration with the Anthropological Survey of India. An emerging research agenda on road-building in India develops Simpson's existing collaboration with the CAMP art collective to reassess attitudes towards road-building both in South Asia and the funding agencies.

Hull's work on gender, agriculture and health will be channelled to policymaking through the LCIRAH inter-sectoral and interdisciplinary platform. Ambitious new SOAS Institutes for China and South Asia, and the SOAS School of Arts will provide in-house resources for collaboration and impact.

d. Relationship to case studies

The three case studies illustrate several aspects of our evolving approach to impact. The field-based ethnographic research in **Mosse's** case study arose initially from consultancy work, but was then continued as grant-funded research (reviewed at departmental level) which aimed to provide a novel approach to questions of aid policy and practice relevant across a variety of sectors and agencies. When this proved influential in the World Bank, Mosse sought to extend impact through review and advisory work including in Indonesia (World Bank) and on Chinese development aid (as member of the 8-person International Advisory Committee of the China International Development Research Network). Mosse was supported both through research leave and by institutional support when his research provoked controversy.

Fardon's case study emerged from a combination of: long-term intensive ethnographic research, inter-disciplinarity (notably his participation in/leadership of seminars and conferences through the SOAS Department of the History of Art and Archaeology and the Centre of African Studies), involvement in the Brunei Gallery Advisory Panel for over a decade, SOAS library resources, and collaboration with overseas art and culture organizations. The project emerged slowly, rather than being the subject of a major grant application in the UK (as opposed to USA), but Fardon's participation would have been impossible without access to some travel funds and completion during a post-Headship sabbatical year.

Marchand's case study resembles Fardon's in its interdisciplinarity (anthropology and architecture), use of different media (photography, film), and collaboration with major museums and public venues to widen public exposure to ethnographic material. Like Mosse's it involved an interweaving of participation in professional practice (as a trained architect and apprentice builder and woodworker) and ethnographic observation that was included in internally reviewed and supported major grant applications. Participants have enabled research dissemination (e.g., through film-making). Like Mosse's case, though thus far less controversially, the research aims at informing the self-understanding of research collaborators as well as the public, while highlighting issues of relevance to policy (on craft, further education or school curricula).