

Institution: Brunel University

Unit of Assessment: 20 – Law

a. Context

Our main non-academic user groups include domestic, foreign and international judicial tribunals, governmental and quasi-governmental decision makers and policy makers, international organisations and institutions, legal practitioners, law students, pressure groups, non-governmental organisations, and private individuals. The benefits of our research activity are global in nature. This has a direct relationship with the research carried out in our Research Centres and Groups, members of which feature prominently in our case studies.

The broad base of our research activity has generated wide ranging impacts on domestic, sub-regional, regional and global policy issues; innovation in thinking regarding research, teaching and learning; and creativity in pushing back the boundaries of knowledge about legal systems, culture and society. It has informed and shaped public and political debate on a number of issues, both in the UK and abroad. For example, **Chigara's** work on the limits of the emergent Southern African Development Community (SADC) sub-regional Tribunal's jurisprudence on land issues and human rights has informed and steered executive policy on the scope and functions of the SADC leading to its suspension and review of its mandate in 2010-12. Similarly, our research has challenged established norms, modes of thought or practices (**Olowofoyeku, Xanthaki, Easton**), and contributed to campaigns for social, political and legal change (**Xanthaki, Easton, Olowofoyeku, Corbett**). Our research has also had impacts on policy considerations of UN institutions (**Chigara, Xanthaki**) and on practitioners and professional services (**Olowofoyeku, Heitsch, Bantekas**).

Furthermore, there have been impacts on public policy, law and services. Our research has aided the development of legal principles (**Heitsch, Olowofoyeku, Xanthaki**), has influenced the work of NGOs (**Chigara, Xanthaki, Easton**), helped to improve public understanding of social and human rights issues (**Easton, Kaganas, Xanthaki, Chigara**), and shaped the teaching of law and the development of the legal curriculum in law schools (**Kaganas**). These ever strengthening developments confirm the efficacy of the cross-linkage and mentoring approaches that we promote within the School and with professional entities within our areas of research (e.g. **Ferretti's** and **Reifa's** collaborations with the European Commission; **Xanthaki's** and **Chigara's** collaborations with the UN OHCHR).

b. Approach to impact

We seek to generate impact by pursuing research that has both intellectual and practical application by presenting innovative approaches or solutions to problems that face society in general, and the stakeholders in the legal system in particular. Staff are encouraged to engage with end-users in order to gain insights into the challenges of users. Senior staff already engaged with end-users adopt mentees that shadow them with a view to strengthening the same collaborations or to developing their own. The University's **Knowledge Transfer Scheme** gives staff the opportunity to spend time embedded with the user base, in order to develop further their own skills, develop required research agendas, and to disseminate their own research outside academia (**Corbett's** extant secondment to **Criminal Justice Practitioners**).

We encourage the dissemination of our research outside of the formal publications of articles and books. Our staff are encouraged to present papers at both domestic and international conferences. The School has a generous conference allowance to facilitate this. Staff and research students also engage actively in the University's **Public Lecture Series**, where our staff deliver open lectures on contentious areas of their research which are of general interest to the public (**Riefa, Olowofoyeku**). Members of the public make up the majority of the audience at these lectures, including representatives from political and social pressure groups and think-tanks. One recent lecture (by **Olowofoyeku** on "The Right to Die") generated lengthy correspondence with the spokesperson for the pressure group "*Dignity in Dying*" who had attended the lecture.

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We also have the advantage of the rich infrastructure provided by the University as part of its strategy for improving the visibility and access to our research, and hence our potential impact. These include *Brunel University Research Archive (BURA)*, an institutional repository, established in 2007 to provide an on-line archive of all research outputs; and the *Brunel Research Archive Database (BRAD)* which hosts staff research outputs. BRAD and BURA are now linked. The University's **Open Access Mandate**, established in 2010, is supported by an **Open Access Publishing Fund**. These measures support the free access to our research by potential users, and help promote the serendipitous creation of impact. The University's *Research Support and Development Office (RSDO)* supports staff in completing the impact requirements of grant submissions. The University has a long-standing programme of supporting research dissemination through an external public relations company, which also supports School level events, and individual research projects.

Finally, our **Research Centres** and **Research Groups** provide us with a rich forum for constructing and disseminating our research, and for building relationships with external organisations. This has witnessed recent talks at the School by (*inter alia*) the 2003 Nobel Peace Laureate, **Shirin Ebadi**; **Rabinder Singh QC** (as he then was); **Philippe Sands QC**; and by the legal staff of the European Banking Authority, and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO).

c. Strategy and plans

Our strategy is to engage with user groups and legal practitioners in order to stay in tune with the current questions that face the profession and society in general. Our professional student placements, an integral part of our LLB sandwich course (taken by about 30% of our LLB students) form an integral part of our strategy to engage with end users. The sandwich placements involve a high degree of staff interaction with end users that have aided facilitation of mutual collaborations, including with **IBB Solicitors** (Andrew Olins), **Criminal Defence Solicitors** (John Navani), and **Darlingtons Solicitors** (David Rosen). LLB sandwich students spend one year on professional placement with law firms, chambers, local authority legal departments, central government departments, and corporate in-house legal departments. Each student has a placement tutor from among the academic staff. Each tutor is required to visit his/her placement student at work during the course of the placement, maintain contact with the student and his/her student's supervisors at the place of work. Each student writes a 5,000 word reflective research report at the end of the placement year, addressing legal issues that arose during the placement. By the end of this process, each member of academic staff has had a thorough engagement with the student's employer, and, in supervising the student's report, has gained a deep insight into legal issues that the student experienced during his/her year. These insights often feed into subsequent research. Finally, we engage actively with NGOs at both domestic and international levels, and with government departments, producing reports, etc. for them.

We encourage effective dissemination to end users by publishing in forums and outlets that are most accessible to our user base. So, in addition to UK journals, our researchers publish widely in European, American, African, and other international journals, to mention a few. Very often, these are local, regional, or continental journals that are the closest to the target audiences. This strategy bears excellent fruit, as a significant proportion of our research activity has been of immediate benefit to potential users. So, to take one example, our research in public law, international law, and human rights, aims at providing answers for domestic, regional and international tribunals and policy-makers. For instance, **Chigara's** work with the UN/German sponsored Academic Partnership for Environment and Development Innovations in Africa (APEDIA), the SADC Law Development Association, United Nations Intergovernmental Working Group on the Effective Implementation of the Durban Declaration against Racism, Xenophobia and related intolerance, has been of benefit in providing further understanding and finding appropriate measures for the end of discrimination in Africa. The School has also encouraged and supported **Xanthaki's** work with the United Nations Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and UN officials, and has hosted the 2012 Workshop co-organised with the UN which engaged in helping draft the 2012 UN Study on Indigenous Languages and Cultures. Similarly, **Corbett's** work with *Transport for London* on speed cameras, culminating in reports for them, has been of immense benefit to the

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community, and has helped to save lives.

Furthermore, the School encourages staff to disseminate their work and to engage with local and international press, where appropriate and beneficial. **Easton, Giannouloupoulos**, and **Olowofoyeku**, among others, have engaged with the local and international press, including television interviews (**Giannouloupoulos**), newspaper interviews (**Easton**), international press interviews (**Olowofoyeku**), international pressure groups (**Olowofoyeku**), and with the legal profession, sometimes providing expert opinion in both domestic and international litigation that are referenced in the judgements (**Rehman, Olowofoyeku**). Our research is also used directly by practitioners internationally, informing, or forming the basis of arguments in *amicus* briefs before the US Supreme Court, and the Cambodian and German courts (**Bantekas, Heitsch**), and being cited in judgements in Germany, the UK, Canada, New Zealand, and Australia (**Heitsch, Olowofoyeku**).

We believe that the widest possible dissemination and visibility of excellent research in outlets that are accessible to users of our research is required to achieve the best impact. Our strategy for achieving this is to embed further our approaches towards research and publication, and to make full use of the institutional infrastructure. We will continue to push particularly the Knowledge Transfer scheme, and to ensure that our staff routinely submit their outputs to the University's **BRAD** and **BURA** research databases. We will focus more on the development and enhancement of crucial external relationships, to continue to engage actively with the Public Lecture Series, to organise conferences and workshops on topical issues, and to take full advantage of the public relations consultants engaged by the University to help further disseminate our research.

d. Relationship to case studies

We have learnt valuable lessons from our case studies, which inform our future strategy. **Corbett's** work has taught us that there is great value in engaging with issues that are of great importance to NGOs such as Transport for London, and that such engagement can have dramatic societal impact, including reducing death and serious injury, thereby enhancing the value and quality of human life and leading to significant cost savings for the health service. We have learnt from **Easton** that engagement with think-tanks, pressure groups, and with government consultations can give our research a meaningful impact on society, and on the rights of voiceless groups such as prisoners. **Heitsch** and **Olowofoyeku** have shown us that leading edge doctrinal research that engages with issues facing practitioners and judicial decision-makers can have significant impact on the forensic process, judicial reasoning, and judicial decision-making. **Olowofoyeku's** work has again demonstrated to us the value of challenging established norms, which can, if well-grounded, enhance the quality of judicial decision-making and the development of the law and legal reasoning.

Finally, our case studies confirm to us that our strategy of not prescribing any particular research methodology is justified. They demonstrate to us the value of excellent empirical and socio-legal research and doctrinal research, and that all kinds of approaches to the study of law can generate high quality outcomes.