

Institution: London School of Economics and Political Science
Unit of Assessment: 36: Communication, Cultural and Media Studies, Library and Information Management
Title of case study: Promoting citizen interests in information society policy
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>Robin Mansell's research has impacted on government policy and corporate strategy in the areas of copyright and the Internet, investment in broadband networks, and arrangements for achieving network security and individual privacy protection. These are all key components of what has come to be known as information society policy. Her work has challenged policy makers to respond to the legitimate interests of citizens as well as to those of government and corporate stakeholders. These impacts are particularly visible in shifts in information society policy at the international level to include greater attention to citizen interests and in national policy debates about the future of copyright and business and government responses to the need for secure networks that also protect citizens' privacy.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p><i>Research Programme and Key Findings:</i> Innovations in digital technologies and the diffusion of the Internet and mobile telephony are often expected to bring an end to poverty, to boost economic growth, and to lead to socially inclusive societies. Professor Robin Mansell's research has challenged this one-dimensional view that markets and technology will deliver these benefits. The research underpinning the impact has three main strands: the development of policies for digital technology; the dynamics of copyright infringement; and network security and citizens' privacy.</p> <p>With respect to <i>policies for digital technology</i>, the proliferation of digital media and information applications is spawning high hopes for economic prosperity and countless improvements in citizens' lives. The dominant claim in policy forums is that the diffusion of digital technologies in the market will address problems of uneven access to networks and services, enabling everyone to participate in society. Professor Mansell's research has demonstrated that these accounts are informed by a one-dimensional model of technological change. Policies developed from them lead to imbalances where citizens' interests in open access to the Internet and trusted information services are neglected in favour of corporate interests in the commercial value of digital information, or state interests in monitoring citizens' online activities to prevent crime and terrorist threats. For example, her research has analysed information society policies aimed at creating incentives for network infrastructure development, the expansion of creative output using the Internet, and policies for data protection at the global, regional and national levels. She has shown how they often privilege market-led developments, the financial goals of companies, or the interests of the state in security. There is far less concern in developing policies and strategies for the design and use of digital technologies and services that take account of the interests of citizens and of distinctive local economic, political or social aspirations. This research has demonstrated that innovations in the digital world are not the inevitable outcome of technology or the market, but the result of the complex interaction of cultural, social, political and economic choices [1, 2, 3]. Mansell also has examined justifications for public and private investment in broadband networks, in the United States, Europe and elsewhere, showing that policy overemphasises supply side measures (the push for faster broadband networks) and neglects the demand side (fostering skills and online participation). She has shown that the result is continuing barriers to inclusive digital services, creating challenges for citizens to participate in the online world effectively [4].</p> <p>Mansell's research on the economic and behavioural determinants of <i>copyright infringement</i> has challenged assumptions underpinning claims about the scale of the impact of digital 'piracy' on the creative industry. Her work has shown why the industry claims about citizen responses to the criminalisation of online copyright infringement are flawed in the light of evidence of actual online</p>

behaviour and the emergence of a strong online sharing culture. Her analysis of evidence on the online culture and the varied experiences of countries has shown that the impact of legislation that targets illegal downloading of music, films and television programmes by citizens is ambiguous at best. It neglects the fact that the creative industry is changing its business models and adapting to the online world in innovative ways that, in some cases, build on the sharing culture. Legislation aimed at suppressing this culture can be counterproductive for the industry and inhibit citizen use of the Internet [5].

Her research on the technical and social factors that influence *network security and citizens' online privacy* has shown decisively why there is a risk that some of the technical capabilities of the Internet which enable the monitoring of citizen online activities, or result in inadvertent or intentional disclosure of their information, could be used in ways that threaten privacy. The Internet provides the means to analyse this information for targeted advertising and to monitor individuals. Her research has revealed the differences between policy makers' *assumptions* about how these technologies are being used to combat online crime and terrorist threats, and how they actually are being used by companies, states and individuals. She has shown that policy makers often place undue trust in technology to protect citizens and assume that prevailing digital technology uses are consistent with citizens' democratic rights to privacy and freedom of expression, showing the real danger that the technology could be used in ways that infringe on citizens' rights. [6]

Key Researcher: Professor Robin Mansell has been at LSE since January 2001.

3. References to the research

[1] Mansell, R. et al. (2007) 'The Challenges of ICTs' in R. Mansell, et al. *The Oxford Handbook of Information and Communication Technologies*, Oxford University Press, pp. 1-28, peer reviewed manuscript, sales 1,536 (11/07-03/13). <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/20604/>

[2] Mansell, R. and Raboy, M. (2011) 'Introduction: Foundations of the Theory and Practice of Global Media and Communication Policy', in R. Mansell and M. Raboy (eds) *The Handbook of Global Media and Communication Policy*, Wiley-Blackwell, pp. 1-20, peer reviewed manuscript, sales 560 (08/11-03/13) <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/29153/>

[3] Mansell, R (2011) 'Power and Interests in Information and Communication and Development: Exogenous and Endogenous Discourses in Contention', *Journal of International Development*, online first at <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/jid.1805/abstract>, peer reviewed. DOI: 10.1002/jid.1805

[4] Mansell, R. and Steinmueller, W. E. (2013) 'Digital Infrastructures, Economies and Public Policies: Contending Rationales and Outcome Assessment Strategies' in W. H. Dutton (ed) *The Oxford Handbook of Internet Studies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 509-530, peer reviewed by external readers. DOI: 10.1177/1461444812470429

[5] Mansell, R. and Steinmueller, W. E. (2013) 'Copyright Infringement Online: The Case of the Digital Economy Act Judicial Review in the United Kingdom', *New Media & Society*, online first at <http://nms.sagepub.com/content/early/2013/01/08/1461444812470429.abstract>, peer reviewed DOI: 10.1177/1461444812470429

[6] Mansell, R. and Collins, B. S. (eds) (2005) *Trust and Crime in Information Societies*, Edward Elgar Publishers, pp.11-55, Sales 556 (04/05-03/13), reviewed by Office of Science and Technology Foresight participants in the Cyber Trust and Cyber Crime Foresight project. <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/9000/>

Evidence of Quality: peer-reviewed publications; research funding since 2001 from the UK Government's Department for International Development, Prime Minister's Strategy Unit, and Office of Science and Technology, the European Commission, the Centre International Development Research Canada, and the Dutch Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

4. Details of the impact

Mansell's research has impacted on information society policies by influencing policy makers to acknowledge the complexity of change in the digital world and the legitimate claims of all stakeholders, including citizens. In the mid-1990s, the narrative emphasised rapid change in digital technologies and the rate of diffusion in the market. It neglected citizen interests in trusted services, privacy and affordable access. Drawing on Mansell's research, in 2005, UNESCO signalled a major shift towards information, or knowledge, society policy with a focus on people, fairness and equity in the digital world. Mansell's research had demonstrated that when citizen interests are neglected, the chances of achieving inclusive policy goals are much reduced. Her persistent advocacy of citizen-centred policy in United Nations agency forums has influenced subsequent policy; as a result, policies implemented by government and third sector organisations more often reflect privacy, safety, online freedoms and equitable access to networks. For example, Mansell's work for UNESCO was reflected in its 2008-13 Medium-Term Strategy [A]. She authored UNESCO's World Report, *Renewing the Knowledge Societies Vision* in 2013 [B]. Many of her recommendations were repeated in UNESCO's recommendations for the United Nations review of the Millennium Goals [C]. The report is approved for publication by UNESCO and world distribution in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Portuguese, Spanish and Russian in 2014, in time to influence the final deliberations on the Millennium Goals that bear on how policies concerned with digital technologies can contribute to inclusive development.

The impact of Mansell's research on policies aimed at increasing investment in broadband networks has extended to regions such as Latin America and the Caribbean. Policies in this region increasingly are incorporating the idea of 'open development'. This gives much greater attention to demand, diverse user needs, open (in contrast to proprietary) digital services, and equitable access. Based on her research on regional strategies aimed at developing network infrastructures in the US and Europe, she was invited to present her recommendations on behalf of regional civil society organisations, and the Canadian International Development Research Centre, at the Fourth Ministerial Meeting on the Information Society for Latin American and the Caribbean Region in Uruguay in 2013.

Mansell's research has impacted on measures aimed at curtailing copyright infringement resulting in moderation of ill-conceived measures to combat online 'piracy' and agreement to independently assess the impact of the Digital Economy Act 2010 in the UK. The creative industry argues that legislation is needed to reduce online 'piracy' or copyright infringement. The Act introduced measures to monitor the activities of Internet users suspected of infringing copyright. This was challenged in the Administrative High Court by Internet Service Providers (who are obliged to provide data about their customers under the Act) because of its implications for citizen privacy and their competitiveness. Mansell served as expert witness on behalf of British Telecom and TalkTalk in the Judicial Review. Her evidence was used to challenge claims by creative industry about the costs of copyright infringement to their businesses and to support the argument that copyright enforcement must be proportional, taking into account changing online cultural norms [D]. Her evidence was quoted and found to be very finely balanced with government and creative industry counterarguments [E]. The court accepted the case for an initial one year implementation of the Act so as to assess whether the measures have the impacts on copyright infringement claimed by the industry. The implementation of the Act by the regulator, Ofcom, has been delayed and is not to be introduced until at least 2015. The impact here was to credibly challenge the creative industry and government claims about the proportionality of the Act.

In policy concerned with Internet security and privacy, Mansell's research influenced policies concerning the use of intrusive surveillance technologies. Post 9/11, some police authorities and politicians strongly advocated swift implementation of privacy invasive uses of the Internet to combat serious online crime and terrorist threats. Mansell's report on Cyber Trust and Crime Prevention for the Office of Science and Technology Foresight concluded that strategies to improve the security and trustworthiness of networks must minimise breaches of citizen privacy if they are to be effective and consistent with democratic values [F]. The social science input to a twelve-month deliberation process, involving stakeholders from the Home Office, MI6 and technology and digital service specialists, was led by Mansell as lead expert representing all the

social sciences, including economics. The result of this work was that stakeholders started to see why technical fixes to security risks are very partial answers to the development of online trust and the protection of citizen rights to privacy. This work continues to influence policy debates. For example, when the Communications Data Bill 2013 in the UK was proposed, it was seen by civil society groups as increasing the risk to citizens' rights to privacy, resulting in evidence-based objections which drew partly on Mansell's work for the Foresight project.

Wider Implications: When citizen interests are neglected by those who make policy around digital information, there is a high risk that people will be excluded from the local and global benefits that come with access to the Internet. The risk is also high that they will be subject to intrusive surveillance and threats to their privacy. Mansell's emphasis on a citizen-centred policy has influenced choices about how digital networks and services are developed and used. This has material consequences for whether citizens benefit from their information societies. With moves by governments to suppress copyright infringement, to allow inspection of emails and private communications, and to promote massive investment in broadband networks, effective advocacy of citizen-centred policies based on systematic empirical evidence is vital. It is one means of restraining the excesses of state and business enthusiasm for digital technologies that put citizens at risk. These impacts are important to foster consent in democratic societies.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

All Sources listed below can also be seen at https://apps.lse.ac.uk/impact/case_study/view/83

[A] Mansell, R. (2008) Communication and Information: Towards a Prospective Research Agenda, Report on a Workshop, UNESCO, Paris, 20-21 December 2007

http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CI/CI/pdf/programme_doc_iamcr_report.pdf.

[B] Mansell, R. and Tremblay, G. (2013) 'Renewing the Knowledge Societies Vision',

http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CI/CI/pdf/wsis/WSIS_10_Event/UNESCO_KS_11_February_2013.pdf.

[C] UNESCO (2013) 'Towards Knowledge Societies for Peace and Sustainable Development', First WSIS+10 Review Event, Final Recommendations', 25-27 Feb,

http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CI/CI/pdf/wsis/WSIS_10_Event/wsis10_recommendations_en.pdf

[D] Mansell, R. and Steinmueller, W. E. (2010) 'British Telecommunications plc ("BT") and TalkTalk Telecom Group Limited v Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills ("BIS") In the matter of an intended claim', prepared for BT, London, 1 July and further evidence in 2011

[http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/36152/1/British_Telecommunications_plc_\(author_version\).pdf](http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/36152/1/British_Telecommunications_plc_(author_version).pdf)

[E] BT & TalkTalk v. S. S. Business, Innovation and Skills and Interested Parties, [2011] EWHC

1021 (Admin), 20 Apr, at <http://www.judiciary.gov.uk/Resources/JCO/Documents/Judgments/bt-v-bis.pdf>

[F] Collins, B. S. and Mansell, R. (2004) 'Cyber Trust and Crime Prevention: Synthesis of the State of the Art Science Reviews', OST Foresight Project on CyberTrust and Crime Prevention, at

<http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/foresight/docs/cyber/synthesis%20of%20the%20science%20reviews.pdf>

Testimonial: Director Knowledge Societies Division, UNESCO. Source file:

<https://apps.lse.ac.uk/impact/download/file/1027>

Testimonial: Facebook, Director of Policy, UK and Ireland. Source file:

<https://apps.lse.ac.uk/impact/download/file/1028>

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