

Institution: Royal Holloway, University of London
Unit of Assessment: 21, Politics and International Studies
Title of case study: Youth, citizenship and politics: the social role of higher education
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>Recent decades have witnessed a rapid decline in youth participation in UK electoral politics, in terms of both voting and party membership. Many authors and political commentators view this situation as marking a crisis in British democracy. Sloam's research and his collaboration with user groups have addressed this important issue and strengthened efforts to engage young people in politics, broadly conceived. In particular, his work has highlighted the growing 'participation gaps' between rich and poor young people in the UK and between young people in the UK and across the European Union. Sloam's work on teaching and learning within political science, on citizenship education and on the social role of higher education has informed policy and practice within the educational sector. His research on young people's political participation in British democracy has advanced knowledge about the nature of young people's politics, helping policy-makers form strategy, approaches and indices to create better engagement with the next generation of citizens.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>Two main bodies of research underpin Sloam's impact:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Young people's participation in politics. After working at the University of Birmingham as a research fellow and co-applicant on the EU FP5 project, 'EUYOUPART: Political Participation of Young People in Europe – Development of Indicators for Comparative Research in the European Union', 2003-05, Sloam joined the Unit in 2005 and produced analysis confirming that today's young people have very personalised conceptions of citizenship and politics, in accordance with their more diverse values and lifestyles as compared with older cohorts (viii). This study and later analysis of survey data confirmed that existing research of civic engagement and political participation could not explain today's democratic politics because it relied on narrow conceptions of 'politics' and failed to explore properly both the diversity of forms of participation within the current generation of young people and the large differences in participation that exist – especially in new forms of engagement – due to socio-economic status and civic culture (i, iii). In this context, youth participation in politics is disturbingly low in the UK compared to other West European states (ii). These findings informed Sloam's impactful research as he pursued a research agenda that has been youth-focussed, multi-disciplinary and comparative, with outputs that include his recent edited volume of the Hansard Society journal, <i>Parliamentary Affairs</i> (iv), and articles in prominent international journals such as <i>Comparative Political Studies</i> (iii) and <i>West European Politics</i> (i). 2. Teaching and Learning, Citizenship Education, the Social Role of Higher Education. Sloam's work adopts a constructivist approach to teaching and learning that dovetails with a Deweyan belief that all effective education is fundamentally based on the individual's experiences in and of democracy (v, vii). His research on citizenship education in schools demonstrates how these insights are realised in practice. Key indicators of the effectiveness of citizenship education are the school's 'democratic/participatory ethos' and the extent to which teaching practice draws on pupils' experience outside the school environment. In this context, Sloam contributed research on citizenship education to the 'revitalizing politics' debate led by Colin Hay, Gerry Stoker and the Hansard Society (vi). In the UK, the Crick Report led to the introduction of citizenship education in English secondary schools in 2002. However, unlike the United States, there has been very little academic study or policy reflection on civic and political education in higher education in the UK. In 2011, working with HEFCE, Sloam convened a major conference, 'A Pedagogy of Civic Engagement for Higher Education'. Its focus explicitly built on his own research and it acted as a forum both to discuss ideas and to influence the practice of teachers/lecturers and administrators within the sector. Sloam also undertook original research in the US with colleagues at the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching to investigate how best practice can be transferred to the UK (for example through 'service learning'). This research directly informed Sloam's collaboration with HEFCE and fed into his work as a Discipline Associate of the Higher Education Academy in 2010/11.

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3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)**Publications**

- i. (2013a) "Voice and Equality": Young People's Politics in the European Union', *West European Politics* 36(4), pp.836-858.
- ii. (2013b) 'The "Outraged Young": How Young Europeans are Reshaping the Political Landscape', *Political Insight* 4(1), pp.4-7.
- iii. (2012) 'New Voice, Less Equal: the Civic and Political Engagement of Young People in the United States and Europe', *Comparative Political Studies* (Online first 3 September 2012).
- iv. (2012) Guest-edited special issue of *Parliamentary Affairs* 65(1) on 'Youth, Citizenship and Politics'.
- v. (2010) Guest-edited special issue of *Journal of Political Science Education* 6(4) on 'Youth, Citizenship and Political Science Education'.
- vi. (2009) with Ben M. Kisby, 'Revitalising Politics: The Role of Citizenship Education' 2009 *Representation* 45(3) (special issue edited by Gerry Stoker and Colin Hay), pp. 313-34.
- vii. (2008) 'Teaching Democracy: the Role of Political Science Education', *British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 10(3), pp.509-24.
- viii. (2007) 'Rebooting Democracy: Youth Participation in Politics the UK', *Parliamentary Affairs* 60(4), pp. 548-67.

Research grants:

1. Higher Education Discipline Associate for Sociology, Anthropology and Politics, 2010/11, £1,500 (used to support Royal Holloway workshop on experiential learning).
2. Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) grant of £7,000 for 'A Pedagogy of Civic Engagement for Higher Education' conference, April 2011.
3. Royal Holloway Humanities and Arts Research Centre (HARC) Fellow, 2012/13: 'Crisis and Transition: Youth Participation in British Democracy, £3,500 (used to fund two March 2013 workshops for academics and policy makers aimed at improving efforts to engage young people in democracy).

Evidence of research quality

Sloam's 2007 *Parliamentary Affairs* article has been heavily cited and has consistently ranked as the journal's most cited from the previous two years, most recently as of 1 October 2013 (see <http://pa.oxfordjournals.org/reports/most-cited>). After its publication he was invited to edit a special issue of the journal on 'Youth, Citizenship and Politics', which was published in 2012. Sloam was also invited onto the editorial board of the American Political Science Association sponsored *Journal of Political Science Education* and edited a special issue of this journal on 'Youth, Citizenship and Political Science Education' in 2010. Sloam's outputs have been cited in numerous reports on young people's politics, including the Youth Citizenship Commission final report in the UK, a 2010 Canadian Parliament report on 'Youth Civic Engagement' and a 2013 European Commission report, 'Political participation and EU Citizenship: Perceptions and Behaviours of Young People'. It is also cited in a report by the Intergenerational Foundation, 'The Rise of Gerontocracy? Addressing the intergenerational democratic deficit'. Sloam's publications have been cited by leading scholars in the UK such as Paul Whitely (Essex) and internationally, including Mark Hooghe (KU Leuven), Concepción Naval (Navarra) and Erik Amna (Örebro).

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

Building on his work as co-founder of the PSA Young People's Politics Specialist Group and the APSA Working Group on Young People's Politics, Sloam established a substantial network of over 200 academics and user groups working in this area during the REF period. Exploiting this network helped him generate engagements and impacts for his research. After representatives from the Intergenerational Foundation, Shout Out UK and Portsmouth City Council attended his April 2011 HEFCE-funded conference, the Intergenerational Foundation appointed Sloam as an advisor, where he is assisting with the development of a European intergenerational fairness index, Shout Out UK appointed him to an ambassadorial role, through which he supports their work on citizenship education and youth engagement in schools, and Portsmouth City Council invited him to be a keynote speaker at its Local Democracy Week (14-18 October 2013). Similarly, after his March 2013 workshops on youth participation in British democracy, which were attended by

representatives of StudentVoice, Sloam began work on a collaboration to assess the effectiveness of the organisation's leadership and outreach programmes, Sloam's research achieved impact during the period by: 1) influencing UK policy debate and decision-making about young people and political engagement; and 2) creating space to debate the social role of higher education in the UK.

Evidence Sloam presented to the Youth Citizenship Commission in 2009 had a direct influence on key policy makers and the government. The Commission, which met from 2008 to 2009 and reported to the government in June 2009 ('Making the connection. Building youth citizenship in the UK: Final report of the Youth Citizenship Commission', Ministry of Justice), was charged with examining what citizenship means to young people; exploring how citizenship and political engagement among young people can be improved; and leading a consultation on whether the voting age should be lowered. It reported directly to the Secretary of State for Justice and to the Prime Minister, and issued two final reports in 2009 to which the government formally responded. According to the Chair of the Commission 'there is clear evidence that government accepted the overwhelming majority of the Commission's recommendations'.

Members of the Commission have confirmed that Sloam made very important contributions to its deliberations. The Chair affirmed that Sloam provided 'perhaps the most important [contributions] offered by any academic, beyond those who sat on the Commission' and that given how 'the Commission's recommendations were overwhelmingly accepted and implemented, Dr. Sloam's work [was] of direct policy relevance.' According to another member of the Commission, Sloam's *Parliamentary Affairs* article (viii) had considerable influence in informing them on the nature of the problems to be addressed and their possible solutions, and was widely read by Commission members. It is cited in the Commission's published literature review. The Commission members held that Sloam made a 'convincing case' in asserting that the issue of youth political disengagement emanates from alienation and lack of political structures, contrary to the commonly held view that it was the result of political apathy. The most crucial and influential pieces of evidence were in respect of Sloam's portrayal of how young people were excluded from policy deliberation structures within both local government and central government departments. In addition, Sloam's research highlighted information deficits regarding opportunities for young people to become engaged in community or institutional activity. It has been confirmed that as a result of these findings the Youth Citizenship Commission developed specific proposals such as youth representation on local council departmental decision-making bodies to help address both the democratic and information deficits. Sloam's overriding argument concerning the need to empower young people through specific structural changes and adopting new attitudes towards the inclusion of youth within decision-making bodies became the Commission's dominant approach to addressing youth disengagement. The full list of Commission recommendations in the final report greatly reflect Sloam's article. Having utilised his academic research, the Commission invited Sloam to provide a direct submission to its evidence-gathering processes. This was duly undertaken and Sloam's contribution, based upon the above themes, is acknowledged in the final report. For these reasons the Commission Chair affirmed that 'Dr Sloam can justifiably claim significant policy impact in this sphere'.

The second strand of Sloam's underpinning research had an impact on policy debate about the social role of higher education. On 5-6 November 2008 he presented on the subject of citizenship education at a Westminster conference, 'Revitalising Politics', organised by Colin Hay and Gerry Stoker and attended by policymakers and Members of Parliament (<http://tinyurl.com/lbn58ww>), and he later participated in an 8-9 December 2010 Regional Seminar on 'Youth Participation and Democracy' organised by the Inter Parliamentary Union at Portcullis House, Westminster (<http://tinyurl.com/mvjffq4>), contributing an article to the *IPU Review* issue on the event where he discussed both citizenship education and broader strategies to engage young people in politics. In 2010 Sloam won funding from HEFCE to convene a conference, 'A Pedagogy of Civic Engagement for Higher Education', at Royal Holloway on 15 April 2011. Speakers included Prof. Benjamin R. Barber and representatives of Demos/Civworld. The event brought together experts and stakeholders, including the chief executives of Universities UK and the Higher Education Academy and the Research Director of HEFCE, to improve evidence-based practice in civic education in UK higher education. It was a deliberative exercise that provided the basis for a report

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produced for HEFCE that was presented to the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills. The *Times Higher Education Supplement* wrote an article about the conference, linking its themes and discussions to issues around funding cuts and the government's 'Big Society' aspirations.

Sloam was appointed as a Discipline Associate for Sociology, Anthropology and Politics at the Higher Education Academy in 2010/11, bringing his Deweyan approach to bear on promoting the role of evidence-based 'experiential learning' in political science education. He was also invited by the German Federal Agency for Political Education to help develop a 'Networking European Citizenship Initiative', participating in development events for NECE in June and October 2013 and attending a meeting in the Hague on 14-16 November 2013.

Sloam's continued involvement in the strategy and activities of Shout Out UK, the Intergenerational Foundation, Portsmouth City Council, StudentVoice and the German Federal Agency for Political Education demonstrate the sustainability of the relationships and impact activities he has built within this REF period. The Intergenerational Foundation's Co-founder testifies to Sloam's importance to their work, writing that, 'Dr Sloam's expertise on the political engagement of young people has been crucial to the Intergenerational Foundation's work promoting the rights of younger and future generations in policy-making. He serves on IF's Advisory Board and acts as an expert sounding board to ensure that research relevant to his area of expertise is conducted robustly'. His comments also highlight the importance of Sloam's ability to contextualise British politics within European political trends: 'Dr Sloam's knowledge of youth voting patterns and youth engagement with politics has been crucial to IF's latest work which involves assessing the feasibility of extending the UK Intergenerational Fairness Index to cover all 27 European countries. This groundbreaking work attempts to compare intergenerational fairness across borders and will, we hope, provide both country specific and pan-European evidence of the intergenerational imbalance of policies'. Sloam is currently moving forward with research to assess StudentVoice's leadership and outreach programmes, with a recent funding bid to the British Academy (decision pending).

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

1. Evidence that the government accepted the overwhelming majority of the Youth Citizenship Commission's recommendations is found in its response document, 'An Agenda for Youth Engagement' (<http://tinyurl.com/msgtwnz>).
2. Sloam's influence on the Youth Citizenship Commission is evidenced by written testimonials from two Commission members, including the Chair.
3. A written testimonial provides evidence of Sloam's influence as an advisor to the Intergenerational Foundation.
4. A written testimonial from Portsmouth City Council provides evidence of Sloam's involvement in the Council's 'Local Democracy Week'.
5. Sloam's status as Shout Out UK ambassador is corroborated at: <http://tinyurl.com/mqplqzq>.
6. A letter from the Director of StudentVoice in support of Sloam's British Academy application testifies to the importance of his current research to evaluate their engagement programmes.
7. Information corroborating the aims, scope and contributors for Sloam's April 2011 HEFCE-funded conference is available at: <http://tinyurl.com/kbnu2zw>.
8. Information corroborating the aims, scope and contributors for Sloam's 2013 workshops on youth participation in British democracy is available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ld8ecqg>.
9. The *Times Higher Education Supplement* article on Sloam's HEFCE-funded conference provides evidence of its impact and is located at: <http://tinyurl.com/q2bn226>.
10. The reach and impact of Sloam's work is evidenced by its being cited in reports by the Canadian Parliament (<http://tinyurl.com/kewdtxs>), the European Commission (<http://tinyurl.com/kh5ku75>) and the Intergeneration Foundation (<http://tinyurl.com/d875zb8>).
11. The Autumn 2011 C-SAP newsletter corroborates Sloam's activities as Discipline Associate for Sociology, Anthropology and Politics, 2010/11 (copy available on request).
12. Sloam's participation in the December 2010 Inter Parliamentary Union seminar on youth participation is corroborated by the article he contributed to the *IPU Review* (Issue 33, Spring 2011) (copy available on request).