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| <p>Institution: Royal Holloway, University of London</p> |
| <p>Unit of Assessment: 21, Politics and International Relations</p> |
| <p>a. Context</p> <p>The Unit was established in 2004, developed through the appointment of early and mid-career scholars, and required time to achieve critical masses of researchers in key areas. These factors constrained the range and nature of achievable impacts in the period. Nevertheless, the Unit is strongly committed to fostering the non-academic impact of its research and achieved a broad range of impacts only partially captured in its case studies. The main non-academic users, beneficiaries and audiences for the Unit's research are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policymakers at national (Parliamentary committees, the Youth Citizenship Commission and OFCOM in the UK; the Obama Administration and German MoD abroad), European (the European Commission, European Parliament and Council of Europe) and international (NATO, the International Commission on Missing Persons (ICMP)) levels of governance. • NGOs, think tanks, civic and religious associations (Hansard, Finsbury Park Mosque). • Opinion polling firms and those who interpret public opinion (journalists, politicians). • Private sector companies and entrepreneurs working in digital media and politics. • Citizens and public service organisations in the UK, Europe, North America and Asia. <p>The Unit's research and expertise impacted its beneficiaries and users in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy and regulatory debate was stimulated by findings on semantic polling and informed by theorisation and findings on young people's politics, foreign and defence policy, media and security and parliamentary ethics (Allen, O'Loughlin, Sloam, Williams and others). • Research on the new budgetary rules introduced by the Lisbon Treaty (Benedetto) led to evidence being given to the European Parliament's Budget Committee and to more effective training of EU finance officials. • Public debate was enhanced and politicians held to account by the dissemination of findings on ethical attitudes towards the conduct of political affairs (Allen's work on elite and mass attitudes toward political ethics and distrust of politicians was cited by <i>The Independent</i> in the aftermath of the 2011 London riots, eliciting responses from the Prime Minister's Office as well as Liberal Democrat and Conservative councillors, party activists and bloggers). • Public awareness was raised of the context and detail of policy problems through public events led by Unit research centres ('AV referendum', 'NHS: Whose Choice?', 'The Future of Higher Education', 'Europe in Crisis') and by numerous media contributions. • A television station in Georgia, carrying out research overseen by a member of the Unit (Heath), was able to announce the results of an exit poll that accurately showed the defeat of the government ahead of the final results being confirmed. • A commercial organisation was able to enter public opinion research and patent a product (O'Loughlin). |
| <p>b. Approach to impact</p> <p>The Unit's approach during the period was to support researchers to identify and engage with key beneficiaries and users so as to establish sustained relationships with them; to create concrete channels to communicate their research in institutional and public domains; and where possible to follow through with monitoring and development of subsequent impacts.</p> <p>During the period the Unit used the following mechanisms to publicise research and maximise engagement, so as to collect information and enhance potential for impact:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Engagement opportunities such as conferences, workshops, and visiting speaker events heightened awareness of the Unit's research profile and its high quality researchers. These generated sustained relationships with several organisations including NATO (Williams), the EU (Benedetto), Ipsos Mori (Heath), the BBC (O'Loughlin) and numerous civic associations. 2. A Unit Impact Officer supported the effective development and management of impact strategies by liaising with Unit researchers, its Director of Research and the institution's Communications and External Relations team to create media coverage of high profile studies and events, and by gathering and monitoring impact data. <p>From this foundation, the following mechanisms at individual, research centre, Unit and institution levels were used to channel research towards impacts:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Researchers used advisory and consultancy roles to apply their research and enhance its impact potential. Benedetto advised the European Parliament, European Commission and |

European Maritime Safety Agency; Chadwick advised the Cabinet Office on e-petitions; Heath carried out consultancy work on public opinion and the 2012 Georgian elections and oversaw Maestro TV's exit poll of the elections; Miskimmon advised the Committee of the Regions on EU External Affairs and European Neighbourhood Policy; Nettelfield was consultant to the ICMP's Director-General; Sloam advised the Intergenerational Foundation, Shout Out UK, the Uprising Project and Student Voice; Williams held positions with NATO, the Democratic Congressional Party, the German Defence Ministry and the private firm Cassidian.

2. **Staff recruitment** was informed by the potential for enhancing the impact of one or more of the Unit's **research centres**, such as Williams's potential with respect to research in the Centre for Global and Transnational Politics (**CGTP**) and the Centre for European Politics (**CEP**) given his strong links with security policymakers in NATO and the US; Dyson's potential given the impact already achieved by his research on the adaptations of military doctrine made in light of Afghanistan and Iraq on training British and German military officers; and Nettelfield's potential given her work for the ICMP and the impact of her first book, whose findings were used to support bids by the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia for increased funding for their outreach programme.
3. **Research centres funded impact activities** that fostered relationships with non-academic groups, including high profile and **knowledge transfer events** featuring external speakers from government, media, NGOs and cultural institutions. Many events raised public awareness, such as the Centre for Social Science (**CSS**)'s 'Whose NHS?' external launch event, which was part of the ESRC Festival of Social Science, and CEP's 'Financial Crisis' (Vince Cable) and 'Future of Higher Education' (David Willetts) public events. Others created forums for stakeholders to discuss ongoing crises, such as the New Political Communication Unit (**NPCU**)'s *Media, War & Conflict* conference (NATO, FDL Development and Albany Associates). Centres also opened space for stakeholders to reflect on impact. Through NPCU, Demos's Jamie Bartlett hosted a participatory seminar on think tank research. CSS's 2013 workshop, 'Academic Engagement with Policy and Programme Stakeholders', included speakers from the Cabinet Office, Department of Health and Institute for Strategic Dialogue.
4. The Unit's Director of Research and Impact Officer supported staff to develop **impact strategies** for external funding applications, and the Unit's **internal peer-review** process included evaluation of impact strategies when assessing draft proposals. Impact strategies were part of the review and agreement of **individual research plans**. Probationary staff had **research mentors** who advised on impact within overall research strategies.
5. The Unit made strategic use of **leave periods** and **teaching relief** to further potential impacts. Williams was granted leave to take up a Bosch Fellowship, and Nettelfield was relieved of teaching during her first term to complete research in progress for the ICMP.
6. The Unit also **welcomed policymakers** into its research culture as **visiting researchers**: Prof John Sloboda (Oxford Research Group) held a 2-year position with CGTP; Patton Smith, Nicholas Gilby and Andrew Clearly (all Ipsos Mori) are honorary research associates with the Centre for Social Sciences (CSS); Air Cdre William Boothby (retired Deputy Head of Legal Services for the RAF) is a visiting researcher and teacher.
7. The Unit drew on **institutional support** for impact activities in the form of: 1) Funding from a **Research Strategy Fund** and a **Faculty Research Initiative Fund** to stage events and begin research projects that could lead to large funding bids with impact potential; 2) Cross-Unit mentoring through the Faculty's **On Track Researcher Development Scheme**; 3) Support from the **Research & Enterprise** unit to formulate a **European research strategy** and take advantage of the institution's link to the Brussels-based research service, Interface Europe, which advised on EU Commission and FP7 bids by Benedetto and O'Loughlin; 4) Support provided by five institutional-level **research themes** launched in 2013 to promote impact activities (the Unit's Halperin serving as 'Champion' for the 'Identity, Place and Mobility' theme).

To monitor the effects of activities and develop further potential impacts, the Unit:

1. Coordinated post-event **feedback surveys** or used **third-party surveys**. Researchers used **opinion-measurement handsets** before and after public events to evaluate the impact of debates (the conclusion of the 2011 'AV Referendum' roundtable, for example, showed the public audience switching from 49% to 65% in favour of AV over the course of the event).
2. Monitored the use of Unit research in journalistic, commercial and teaching materials.

Impact template (REF3a)

3. The Impact Officer and Director of Research selected **research reports** to use as **news items** on the Unit, centre and institutional websites and in flyers for public events.

The Unit used the institution's **research information system**, PURE, as an online platform to present its research activity. It is available for open search by Google and other search engines and the Unit has used its functionalities proactively to create an information hub for its research. Staff from the institution's Communications and External Relations team work directly with the Unit to publicise its research and promote engagement, and maintains an **experts register** of the institution's staff, facilitating communication with external bodies.

c. Strategy and plans

The Unit's future goals are: 1) to continue developing the impact of existing research, both where impacts have already been achieved and where research is at the level of activities that may lead to impact; 2) to exploit the impact potential of new Unit researchers, including Dyson (UK and European strategic cultures), Jakobi (global crime governance), Nettelfield (human rights, post-conflict reconstruction and democratisation) and Vaccari (social media in politics); 3) to exploit areas that have reached the size and depth for impactful collaborative research, such as strategic narratives (Bentley, Miskimmon, O'Loughlin), internet politics (Chadwick, Vaccari), political behaviour and electoral politics (Allen, Heath, Sloam, Smets) and transnational human security.

The Unit's strategy to advance these goals will continue the approaches to impact outlined above and will add new mechanisms to enhance impact. These will include: 1) Adding a Unit **Communications Officer** who will develop strategies for publicising research activity, monitoring usage of online and open-access resources and expanding effective mechanisms for collection and logging of evidence of impact, working with the Unit's Impact Officer and the institution's Communications Office; 2) Expanding the Unit's long-term relationships via 'Politics in Action', a credit-bearing **placement course** for final year undergraduates currently being validated for 2014/15. While primarily an educational initiative, this new course will routinize research-user engagements and will also introduce the Unit to potential new users of its research; 3) Developing **CSS's remit** to strengthen social science training, bring together social science researchers from across the institution and engage with policymakers and other user groups; 4) Exploiting the institution's new **research themes**, which are tasked with supporting cross-disciplinary and impactful research; 5) Establishing a **Unit Steering Group** to oversee engagement and impact activities and plans. This Group will include not only the Head of Department, Director of Research, Impact and Communications Officers, research centre directors and conveners of the placement scheme, but also representatives from external user groups, in the first instance including members of the Cabinet Office, Ipsos-Mori and Demos with whom Unit researchers already have strong relationships. The Group's remit will ensure that Unit research has a fruitful two-way relationship with politics, policy, culture and economy, including but not limited to achieving beneficial impacts. User members will contribute to reviewing the impact dimensions of research grant applications and will offer their expertise more generally to the Steering Group's work.

d. Relationship to case studies

The Unit's case studies demonstrate how three early/mid-career scholars, each attaining his PhD during the RAE period, realised their impact potential in the REF. They relate to key areas of the Unit's research: youth citizenship and politics; new media, radicalisation and security risks; strategic narratives; and international conflict and security. Their different routes to impact informed both the Unit's approach during the period and its strategies for the future. Sloam exemplifies how the cultivation of strong relationships with users can be maximised to produce greater impact, and the role of one of the research centres (CEP) in supporting the successful use of knowledge transfer events. Sloam's research on citizenship education has also informed the development of our forthcoming undergraduate placement programme. O'Loughlin too exemplifies the support provided by a centre (NPCU) for events, as well as the role the centre's PGR students can play as research assistants and co-authors of publications. Williams illustrates the use of consultancy and advisory roles, and exemplifies the Unit's strategic use of leave to pursue opportunities for impact. Williams's development of his external public profile provides a model for others in the Unit, and helped the Unit realize the need for a Communications Officer. All three case studies exemplify a rolling trajectory based not on one discrete impact but on iterative and often non-linear sets of projects, engagements and impacts throughout the cycle, demonstrating the strong and growing networks that are a foundation for the future impact of these and many other Unit researchers.