

<p>Institution: Manchester Metropolitan University</p> <p>Unit of Assessment: C23 Sociology</p> <p>a. Context Researchers within the UoA who work on Identities & Rights produce work that aims to be of 'real world' benefit within the spheres of public policy, law, and to provide evidence-based research that influences the work of legal practitioners and professional services. Significant strands of this work are additionally directed towards the social welfare of particular groups and communities. Elsewhere within the Unit, the beneficiaries of the research within the Urban Cultures & Infrastructures group are broadly: communities whose awareness and/or behaviour in relation to the local urban environment have been modified; professional and local interest groups whose knowledge of, or practice in relation to, the urban environment has been enhanced. The remainder of our academic research takes place within the Knowledge, Discourse & Society group. This theory-driven work contributes to a discourse around public attitudes and values, as well as providing an insight into issues and phenomena relating to creativity, culture and society, not least through the avenue of government policy.</p> <p>b. Approach to impact Historically, the academic work of the UoA has consciously engaged with non-academic users in ways that have had profound benefits for particular groups and communities. This work has included a focus on (i) human rights and discrimination, (ii) the use of research findings for the development of professional practice, and (iii) re-thinking norms around questions of gender and identity. A diverse range of users, groups and organisations have felt the impact of work that has been carried out in the Unit. The unit's commitment to the added value of academic research has also provided unexpected opportunities for non-academic impact. Over the course of the second half of the current assessment period the UoA's and the University's approach to public engagement and communal outreach has begun to change significantly in response to the new Impact agenda. By 2013 impact generation had become fully integrated into the research process – e.g., in Binnie, Klesse and Whittle's engagement with transnational LGBT communities – and was increasingly planned and co-ordinated. By the end of the census period public engagement was constitutive of the research carried out in the UoA, and had begun to catalyse both tried-and-tested and new pathways to Impact generation.</p> <p>The reach of our work within the Identities & Rights theme/strand is demonstrated, for instance, by contributions to public/policy debates, and through the direct challenge it poses to outmoded norms and values that have not kept pace with changes in society. Waughray's exemplary efforts have taken shape through her relationship with the UK Dalit community, and have reached far in advocating for an end to caste discrimination – this is work that has been recognised for its importance by legislators in Parliament (fully detailed in Impact Case Study). Likewise, Binnie, Klesse and Whittle have actively engaged with LGBT communities in the UK and across Europe, and Cook with government agencies and charities in relation to the status and treatment of women and children in society. In other words, our academic work on Identity and Inequality has contributed directly to improvements in how social inclusion is conceived and practised. It has furthermore aspired to bring to light the self-knowledge of individuals, communities, and an understanding of their rights within the law.</p> <p>Research within this area focuses on rights to address questions regarding quality of life and harm mitigation. The welfare of women in respect of land rights, assets and livelihoods provides a focus for the work of Arun and Jacobs, for instance, and their respective work has had an influence on shaping policies of NGOs, private organisations and quasi-governmental bodies – Jacobs's work was recognised by UN agency, the Food and Agriculture Organisation's (FAO), and in <i>Agriculture for Development</i>, the World Bank World Development Report of 2008 (http://go.worldbank.org/2DNNMCBG10); Arun's work was recognised in the UNCTAD 2010 <i>Information Economy Report</i> (http://unctad.org/en/docs/ier2010_embargo2010_en.pdf).</p> <p>Looking at the diverse range of organisations and communities who have benefited from the academic work of researchers in the Urban Cultures & Infrastructures group, one detects another distinctive aspect of MMU Sociology. Edensor and Millington's work on illumination has drawn professional interest from light designers, especially through the LUCI Association (Lighting Urban Community International) and The PLDA (Professional Lighting Design Association), who wish to explore new ways of devising lighting strategies for more sustainable futures. Our research also develops novel approaches to how local users see their urban environment. For instance, Holloway's co-curated 2008 international 'festival' of Psychogeography, <i>TRIP</i> ('Territories</p>

Reimagined International Perspectives') (<http://trip2008.wordpress.com/>), involved a series of walks through the city wherein participants (members of the public) were encouraged to reassess their relationship with the city in a manner that departed from their everyday, mundane encounters with it. **Miles** designed Impacts08, the programme for research into the impacts of Liverpool's European Capital of Culture, which has informed DCMS policy around the value of culture including their hosting of knowledge-transfer seminars on this subject. **Miles'** work on culture-led regeneration is also being used to directly inform the development of an emerging cultural economy in Brazil in conjunction with the British Council.

Knowledge, Discourse & Society is a research theme that provides room for the development of theoretical and idea-driven work, and has produced impacts through two main avenues: (i) public engagement activities and (ii) impacts on cultural mediators. In the first case, the impact of **Meyer's** work on the sexualisation of children and paedophilia developed new discourses of harm and risk, and resulted in a public impact through expert commentary on BBC radio and TV; similarly **Latham's** work on cosmetic surgery informed public debates in the national press, while **Edwards'** expertise on 'protest' movements enlivened his contributions to the high-profile *London Review of Books* blog (where he is able to directly engage with other contributors). The beneficiaries of **Scanlan's** work have ranged from mainstream and niche audiences to users in creative and artistic contexts, who thus act as a bridge between his ideas and much larger public audiences. His work on 'waste', for instance, was the inspiration behind a 2009 exhibition in India titled 'Re-claim / Re-cite / Re-cycle' (Travancore Gallery, Delhi, India), and led him to a prominent role as an expert contributor to the 2012 BBC TV series, 'The Secret Life of Rubbish', and to an engagement with the Wellcome Collection in the early development of a major 2011 public exhibition on the theme of 'Dirt'. The impact of his work has been achieved through the emergence of new pedagogies that seek to view society within an ecological context. Scanlan's work on Van Halen meanwhile, was published as an 8000 word cover story in the magazine *Classic Rock*, reaching an estimated audience of 200,000 readers. **Young's** research has enabled him to develop a relationship with the Romanian Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, and to advise the government on policy issues relating to heritage. Together, for example, they developed an online system for local authorities to supplement their transition to the status of 'creative centres', thus permitting a variety of NGOs, state agencies and stakeholders to benefit from Romania's local and national heritage. **Young** extended his connections with Romania when he helped the local authority (commune) of Bacia, Transylvania, formulate their local economic development strategy. Due in large part to his academic work on the cultural and historical geography of the body and statue of Dr Petru Groza (the first post-WWII Communist leader of Romania) the commune prioritised this figure as a cultural attraction.

c. Strategy and plans The Sociology UoA at MMU has developed an impact strategy founded on a commitment to a notion of sociology designed to inform social change rather than simply describe it, from which a wide range of non-academic stakeholders have been able to benefit. This strategy feeds into the University's complementary Research and Knowledge Strategy. This strategy is implemented locally by the Institute of Humanities and Social Science Research considers Impact to be a core element of all research activity.

Since 2008 MMU has been a partner in the Manchester Beacon for Public Engagement project (funded by RCUK, HEFCE, Wellcome Trust). Our approach complies with RCUK's Concordat for Engaging the Public in Research and we are a signatory to the Manifesto for Public Engagement <https://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/why-does-it-matter/manifesto/signatories/manchester-metroplitan-university> Within the University's new Research and Knowledge Exchange (RKE) agenda, public engagement is understood as a critical pathway to impact generation as well as subsequent commercial enterprise and income generation. One step towards ensuring a greater involvement and collaboration of non-academic stakeholders and research 'end users' in our work has been to introduce professional media training for all Institute researchers. This was provided by BBC reporter, Trevor Barnes, whose expertise in media presentation is also utilised by the UK government. A second step is to ensure that all staff are fully engaged with social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter) and professional networking (LinkedIn, academia.edu) as a medium for RKE activity.

Researchers in the Sociology UoA are encouraged to conceptualise impact from the start as

Impact template (REF3a)

integral to their research agendas. Evidence for impact is now a mandatory part of both all new project design through an internal Peer Review process as well as all academic staff's 5-year research plans. Following the identification of our target audiences and key stakeholders the goal of the Institute is to effectively cultivate these contacts by involving them more actively in the research we do: to build awareness, encourage participation, enable them to influence and exploit the benefits generated by our research – as was the case in, e.g., **Holloway's** involvement in the development and running of Manchester's *Urbis Research Forum*; in **Whittle's** long-standing transgender rights campaigning; and in **Waughray's** advocacy on behalf of the Dalit community. Such examples point to the crucial importance of engagement activities and communication channels: notably through our out-facing 'Humanities in Public' festival of research events and activities (<http://www.hssr.mmu.ac.uk/hip/welcome/>)

The articulation of our goals and strategic planning regarding Impact generation in Sociology has been advanced through an on-going process of auditing, capacity building and implementation designed to put Impact at the heart of the UoA's research. Resources being implemented at a university and faculty level include training on: effective dissemination (to spread awareness of our research more effectively); impact (generation and measurement/tracking) and 'scholarly entrepreneurialism'; dissemination of examples of effective impact generation; financial support for the development and maintenance of relationships with networks of audiences and beneficiaries, and development of a fit-for-purpose institutional infrastructure for gathering and recording evidence of research impact.

The nature of our investigations into a contemporary world in constant transition across a range of domains (cultural, social-structural, socio-legal, global and geographical) has ensured that our research has, for some time now, reached outwards from each of the UoA's thematic specialisms, and in ways that the subsequent Impact agenda (developed half-way through the current period) has encouraged us to broaden and refine.

The University's Research and Knowledge Exchange Strategy, requires the necessary fusion of research with knowledge exchange with equity of priority, irrespective of funding. It is in this context that the UoA as our Impact Case Studies will make clear, is producing knowledge and research that aims to be of significant real-world benefit to a diverse array of policy makers, legal practitioners, individuals and communities – and, indeed, wider public audiences representative of culture and society more generally.

d. Relationship to case studies The distinctive nature of the types of impact illustrated in our chosen case studies reveals not only the extent and diversity of the end-users, stakeholders and communities involved, but also the very real strengths of the Centre for Transitions in Society and Space (<http://ctss-mmu.co.uk/>) cross-disciplinary agenda for research.

Unit research in **Identities & Rights**, which had an impact within the spheres of public policy, law, and which aims to benefit particular groups within society, is exemplified in two case studies: the 'European and Global LGBT Rights' case study (**Binnie, Klesse, Whittle**), which reveals how human rights law, standards of care, and health policies can be shaped through public engagement and the use of academic knowledge to enlarge public debate and change society; and the 'Caste Discrimination' case study (**Waughray**) which, through advice provided to government lobbyists and members of the House of Lords, has contributed towards securing an explicit prohibition of caste discrimination.

The main non-academic beneficiaries of research in **Urban Cultures & Infrastructures** in the period of assessment have been local interest groups (in the UK and elsewhere) and professional societies, representing publics and other bodies whose awareness and/or behaviour in relation to the urban environment has been enhanced, such as those detailed in the 'Geographies of Illumination' case study (**Edensor and Millington**), which looks at the impact of sociological research on the practice of sustainable urban lighting design. This research demonstrates the potential value of applying theory and research in professional contexts with which the Social Sciences have not traditionally engaged.

Given the more theoretical and idea-driven nature of research within the **Knowledge, Discourse & Society** theme, its impacts are diffused more organically both culturally and socially via mass media channels and often in unanticipated ways that challenge conventional ways of thinking.