

<p>Institution: London School of Economics and Political Science</p>
<p>Unit of Assessment: 23: Sociology</p>
<p>a. Context</p> <p>The Department is committed to ‘public sociology’, articulated in the terms of reference of the Department Research Committee, which seeks to communicate our research to a wide audience. We use public and private sector consultancy work, media bulletins and articles, short courses for professionals, public and official reports, expert witnessing, advisory work and outreach through public events and through the social media to showcase our work. We engage with and shape debates and practices within public policy, political practice, social movements, civil society, regulation, education, and the urban environment. Working through our research clusters, we seek to define, promote and inform public debate about class, gender and racial inequality, urbanism, public health, neoliberalism, the state, the family, non-state violence, financialisation, social movements, political parties and trade unions, work and migration and human rights. Since 2008 colleagues have worked with 80 non-academic user groups, beneficiaries and non-academic audiences, involving public and private sector consultancy work, media bulletins and articles, monitoring, short courses for legal professionals, public and official reports, expert witnessing, advisory work and outreach through public events.</p>
<p>b. Approach to impact</p> <p>LSE Sociology links its core research activities to impact strategies through the infrastructure provided by its research clusters. These are harnessed to a programme of extensive engagement activities and policies which ensure that all staff are supported to deliver the maximum impact.</p> <p>Research clusters. Since 2008 our public sociology has been linked to the re-organisation of the Department’s Research Clusters. Each of the three research clusters has identified specific constituencies of users and publics where deep relationships can be sustained, and each has an infrastructure in place to ensure the impact of its work. Each Centre has a designated Centre Manager, charged with running public events, co-ordinating impact and involving non-academic constituencies. Graduates from the MSc programmes associated with the Research Clusters – in City Design and Social Science; Economy, Risk and Society; Political Sociology, and Human Rights - typically move into affiliated professional fields in architecture, design, law and public policy and help to ensure wider visibility for our research. We also run short courses in human rights for legal and government professionals. <i>Urban Change, Culture and Connection</i> works closely with LSE Cities, which is dedicated to outreach activities (annual <i>Urban Age</i> conferences in world cities attended by over 4,500 delegates and a website displaying research work has attracted over one million hits since inception), research consultancy for national and city governments (the Dutch Government, cities of Stockholm, Copenhagen, Genova, Parma), collaborations with municipal and international organisations (Greater London Authority, World Bank, ICLEI), and involvement in transformative urban projects (the London Olympics). Staff advise national and international government agencies (UN Habitat, the Airports Commission, Rockefeller Foundation, Bloomberg Philanthropies) and have a strong media presence. The centre’s comparative work on cities is considered an authoritative independent source and regularly used and quoted by the media, reports and policy. <i>Economies, Risk and Technology</i> has been underpinned by the ESRC Centre for Risk and Regulation (CARR), which had a significant impact outside academia through a wide range of activities and publications involving practitioners and policy makers. Central to CARR’s communication strategy is its bi-annual magazine <i>Risk & Regulation</i>, which was accessed online 141,711 times from January to October 2008 alone, with 39 per cent of contacts who received <i>Risk & Regulation</i> and CARR updates in 2008-2009 being from non-academic sectors such as regulatory bodies, business and government. CARR has worked with the UK Food Standards Agency; the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills; the Bank of England; the Treasury and the Financial Services Authority. CARR staff commented and consulted on the key regulatory and risk management issues of the day, notably food safety. <i>Politics, Human Rights and Injustice</i> is home to the Centre for the Study of Human Rights which has three inter-disciplinary Research Groups regularly organising public events. The Centre organises a high profile, well-attended public events programme and has a loyal public following with around 3,500 self-subscribers to its monthly electronic newsletter and around 3,000 for its Twitter feed. Each of the Centre’s currently funded research projects works directly with non-academic partners - for example, capacity building work with NGOs in Russia and the</p>

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Commonwealth of Independent States to develop their human rights activities to legally support activists or ex-convicts, or engagement with UK politicians and policy makers regarding proposed changes to the UK Human Rights Act. The Centre's Laboratory for Advanced Research on the Global Economy is developing an online portal on investment and human rights that is aimed at lawyers, institutional investors and lenders, governments, NGOs and human rights practitioners. The Centre's popular Visiting Fellows scheme enables experienced human rights practitioners to engage with recent research and academic debates relevant to their professional practice. The Centre has worked closely with the Ministry of Justice, Joint Committee on Human Rights, Human Rights Commission, Amnesty International, Liberty, the Council for Assisting Refugee Academics, Rausing Trust and Atlantic Philanthropies.

Public engagement. Via free and open public events, the UOA seeks to enable scholars, practitioners, journalists, policy makers and interested individuals from the public, private, commercial and non-governmental sectors to examine critical issues in our core research foci. More implicitly, through its culture the UOA encourages its research staff to interact directly with social, community and cultural partners, commercial partners/clients, and public sector partners/clients where opportunities are identified to do so e.g. through meetings, contributing to external events and workshops. The UOA's public events have attracted high profile practitioners and academics from the UK and abroad and from a diversity of domains. These have included natural scientists, leaders from the business and political world, civil servants, judges, barristers, solicitors, legislators (or those involved in the legislative process), regulators, business people and NGO representatives. Each research cluster delivers high profile engagement events. LSE Cities' *Urban Age* conferences alone, which bring together urban policy-makers, politicians, civic leaders, architects and planners – have attracted speakers and delegates from over 50 cities and 30 countries since 2008.

Our staff has enjoyed great success in ensuring strong media coverage for their research. Savage's research on the BBC Great British Class Survey was the highest profile sociological news story of 2013, with over 7 million hits on the BBC website and media coverage across the world. In addition, 13 current colleagues have had their work profiled over 70 times in major media sources in the UK, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Greece, India, Italy, Japan, Norway, Russia, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Turkey, and the US, including Cubukcu's commentary on social protest in Istanbul covered extensively in the Guardian, New York Times, and Al Jazeera.

Enhancing staff capacity to deliver impact. The LSE devolves HEIF funding to Departments to encourage active knowledge exchange, and £113k has been spent in the UOA specifically from this budget. Colleagues are encouraged to make active use of LSE's media training (which is a compulsory part of the induction programme for new academics), the Press Office, public events support and promotion, conferences office, LSE Enterprise consultancy and the LSE Research Division. The LSE Experts web page allows our expertise to be showcased to a wide audience. We work widely with the LSE's very effective Impact and Policy and Politics blog (who publicised Savage's work with the BBC on the Great British Class Survey). More generally the Department's recruitment policy is informed by the potential of candidates, and research cluster meetings are expected to explore how the non-academic networks of participants can be used to advance their work. We recognise that research with the strongest impact is often externally funded, and we are seeking to enhance research funding, boosted by the LSE's new Research Incentives Policy, which provides considerable incentives for grant holders.

c. Strategy and plans

Departmental investments. Current and future strategy is being framed to strengthen the Department's contribution to public sociology and engagement through a vibrant public events programme, the work of the Centres and through wider dissemination of the research conducted by Department members. In 2012 a newly-designated Research Impact Manager was appointed in the Department to identify external bodies potentially interested in working with faculty. We are currently investing in a dedicated communications team, who are strengthening the social media profile of the Department. The platforms and tools used to do this (including public events, website, expert seminars, social media) are regularly evaluated both in quantitative terms (e.g. number of website hits) and in terms of their quality (e.g. feedback functionality on the UOA's website).

Research Centres. Each of our Research Centres has its own impact strategy. The Governing Board of LSE Cities has agreed a 5-year development plan (2013-18) based on three core activity areas – research, education and outreach – which includes a dynamic public events and lecture programme aimed at urban decision-makers (in UK and abroad); short-courses, executive masters and summer school programmes; advisory projects with public and private agencies, and a focused publications and web-based (including social media) strategy that will continue to ensure a truly international and cross-disciplinary reach which contributes to knowledge exchange and dissemination of core research (e.g. the European Metromonitor initiative, *Urban Age* newspapers and books, evolving comparative global city database). LSE Cities has an Advisory Board composed of urban academics, policy-makers and commentators drawn from major world cities.

Impact has been central to the founding mission of the Centre for the Study of Human Rights (2000, expanded in 2004 and 2013) and constitutes a key part of its Development Plan (2011-16.) Therefore, the Centre's Development Plan objectives include: generating new partnership projects and research collaborations with governments and international human rights NGOs that can demonstrate significant change in human rights policy areas; developing ethical corporate sponsorships and secondments; involving practitioner alumni more directly in Centre activities; appointing external non-academic members to the Centre's Advisory Board and Chairperson position; and establishing a research initiative or 'observatory' focused on human rights policy engagement and linked to a practitioner symposium. The certificate course programme is also planned to expand in two areas: to engage international corporations in business and human rights areas; and to develop practitioner-focused human rights advocacy training. The Centre also plans to expand the LSE Scholars At Risk project and its associated Reconnect with Research programme, in partnership with relevant NGOs and foundations. The Economies, Risk and Technologies cluster is developing its impact strategy following the end of core funding for CARR with continuing advice to regulators and also future research projects on risk regulation and its enforcement and impact in the UK and abroad.

d. Relationship to case studies

The Department selected three case studies from a total of eight. Those not chosen were (a) the work of Francesca Klug from the Centre of Human Rights on changing UK Human Rights legislation; (b) the work of Nikolas Rose and the BIOS research centre on the neuro-sciences; (c) JP Pardo-Guerra's work developing initiatives in international financial markets, (d) Janet Foster's work improving the effectiveness of neighbourhood policing, and (e) Mike Savage's work with the BBC on the Great British Class Survey. In all cases, there was evidence of the depth and range of impact which goes beyond the broad public engagement that is typically widespread across all our research activities. They also demonstrate the ways in which the UOA is directed explicitly towards external engagement beyond the academy in order to generate public and professional debate around key areas of concern for the UOA – economies, risk, technology, politics, human rights, injustice, and urban space and change – and for sociology as a discipline more broadly.

We ultimately decided to select three case studies which did not depend on the impact of one specific project or intervention, but which showed repeated and cumulative interventions over several years. The various strategies the UOA deploys – from high profile public debates, workshops and conferences that bring together academics and practitioners in a wide variety of fields, to running professional training courses, to consultancy and expert advice to public and private bodies, to formulating and writing policy recommendations, to media dissemination of research and knowledge, and online podcasting of public events – are all manifest in the three submitted Case Studies. We were also keen to showcase case studies where there is a clear international and global dimension to our work.

These three case studies have also shown a reflexive and recursive embedding of our best impact work, whereby our continuing programmes of research were informed by these engagements. The selected ICS have therefore informed the development of the UOA's approach to impact on non-academic user groups, beneficiaries and audiences. This has been achieved in two ways: by bringing together academics, professionals, activists and other practitioners in order to advance generate new dialogues between theory, history and practice; and the use of traditional and new media to engage creatively with non-academic audiences.