

<p><b>Institution:</b> University of Cambridge</p>
<p><b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 23</p>
<p><b>a. Context</b></p> <p>The main non-academic user groups, beneficiaries and audiences for the research carried out by the Department of Sociology at Cambridge are (i) government officials, government commissions and policy-makers; (ii) charities, NGOs and civil society groups; (iii) industry stakeholders; and (iv) the general public. The main types of impact for our research are the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Impact on public policy:</b> some of our research has had, and continues to have, an impact on public policy, both in the UK and internationally. This ranges from our researchers being invited to present written evidence to legislative bodies, government commissions and public inquiries, such as the House of Commons, the Women and Work Commission and the Leveson Inquiry, to extensive references to our research in parliamentary debates and documents feeding into the legislative process in the UK and elsewhere.</li> <li>• <b>Health and welfare impacts:</b> research carried out in the Department on the political economy of public health has documented the impact of economic policies on public health and mortality and has stimulated widespread public debate on these issues.</li> <li>• <b>Economic, commercial and organizational impacts:</b> some of our research on particular sectors of the economy, ranging from the pharmaceutical industry to the book publishing industry, has been taken up and discussed by stakeholders and had an impact on their understanding and practices.</li> <li>• <b>Impact on practitioners:</b> our research has also had an impact on practitioners and professionals in different arenas of social life – for example, on non-academic writers and authors.</li> <li>• <b>Impact on creativity and culture:</b> many aspects of our research have had a broader cultural impact in terms of stimulating public debate and informing and shaping public attitudes and understandings. Our research has received widespread coverage in the media, and in some cases it has led to the production of cultural artefacts such as documentary films that have been broadcast internationally.</li> </ul> <p><b>b. Approach to impact</b></p> <p>The Department recognizes that there are many different forms of impact, that impact is not a unilinear process and that it is likely to vary from one type of research to another. Some research has an immediate policy relevance while other forms of research may have benefits that are less direct and emerge only over time. Similarly, research can stimulate debate beyond the academy and lead to a gradual change in the ways that certain issues are understood, thereby affecting or even transforming the knowledge, views, perceptions and opinions of individuals and groups outside the academy, without necessarily resulting in specific changes in government policy or in the policies and practices of individuals or organizations. The Department therefore adopts a flexible, pluralistic and context-specific approach to impact. We encourage all of our staff to think proactively and creatively about the kinds of impact that would be appropriate and achievable for the research they are doing or planning to do, recognizing that this will vary from one researcher and project to another. In concrete terms this includes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early discussions with funding bodies to identify potential end-users and beneficiaries and to specify potential connections between research objectives and policy-related outcomes.</li> <li>• Thinking about the kinds of stakeholders that could be involved in planning, developing and carrying out the research, ranging from policy-makers and civil society organizations to professionals, employees and citizens.</li> <li>• Thinking about potential economic and organizational implications of the research in terms of improved workplace practices, new business models and the creative use of new technologies, among other things.</li> <li>• Thinking about the wider implications of the research in terms of its potential contribution to public debate, whether through media coverage or through public presentations, documentaries, TV programmes, etc.</li> <li>• Planning conferences at the end of research projects that include end-users, beneficiaries</li> </ul>

and stakeholders in order to maximize the uptake of the research and its impact on interested parties and communities.

The Department actively encourages staff to engage in outreach activities, such as participating in the Cambridge Festival of Ideas (which runs for two weeks every October, hosts around 180 events and has around 15,000 visitors) and talking about their research at the Hay Festival, the Bristol Festival of Ideas and similar events. The Department works closely with the Cambridge Public Policy initiative (CPP) and Brendan Burchell is on the steering committee; CPP has a very active outreach programme for policy users, including hosting policy fellows (normally senior civil servants). The University also provides support in the form of a Public Engagement Team which specializes in training on impact strategy, communicating with the media (old and new) and linking researchers in Cambridge to international and local NGOs.

### c. Strategy and plans

The Department's strategy with regard to impact is twofold: first, to build on the approach described above and ensure that it is implemented as effectively as possible; and second, to make strategic appointments and encourage and support new research in ways and in areas that will maximize our capacity to generate impact both in the short term and in the long term.

With regard to implementation, the Research Committee of the Department has produced a short document describing its approach to impact and outlining the resources available in the Department and the University to increase impact; this document has been discussed at departmental meetings to ensure that all members of staff are fully aware of the importance of this issue. All new grant applications are assessed by the Research Committee in terms of their potential for generating impact among other things. In the planning phases of all grant applications, researchers are asked to think about the different ways in which their research could have an impact beyond the academic community and about how they could involve beneficiaries and stake holders in the research. Once a new research project is underway, the Research Committee actively monitors impact-related developments and takes steps where appropriate to encourage, strengthen and support these developments.

With regard to strategic appointments, the Department has, over the last five years, prioritized the appointment of outstanding researchers who can take the lead in developing major new research initiatives in ways and in areas that will have a significant impact. Examples include:

- The appointment of Larry King to a Readership in Economic Sociology with a view to developing a new research initiative in the political economy of public health; we expect this research to have a significant long-term impact on public policy, on stakeholders in relevant industries and on public debate about the effects of economic policies.
- The appointment of David Stuckler to a Lectureship in order to strengthen the initiative in the political economy of public health by developing cutting-edge research on the impact of austerity on public health.
- The appointment of Sarah Franklin to the Professorship of Sociology with a view to developing a new research programme in reproductive sociology, building on her existing work on IVF, biomedicine and stem cell research; we expect this programme to have a long-term impact on public policy, on stakeholders in the biomedical industries and on public debate.
- The appointment of Maria Iacovou to a Readership in Quantitative Sociology with a view to developing new research initiatives using advanced quantitative methods; this will increase our capacity to influence policy-makers, government commissions and charities through the development of rigorous empirical research.

While these new appointments have strengthened the capacity of the Department to generate high-quality research that will have significant impact beyond the academy, we are also working closely with all members of staff to assist them in developing their research in ways that will maximize impact. For example:

- Jacqueline Scott has been granted a year's sabbatical to develop a major new research initiative concerning families and migration. This examines residential mobility and family

## Impact template (REF3a)

support across the life course, with an emphasis on the way mobility and immobility can disrupt social support. We expect this research to have a significant impact on public policy and ramifications for both childcare and care of the elderly.

- John Thompson has been supported by the Department to develop a successful new grant application to the Mellon Foundation and has been given a year's sabbatical to develop a new research project on the digital revolution in publishing. The research will focus on digital start-ups and innovative forms of digital publishing; it has the potential to develop new business models and to stimulate new forms of cultural creativity.

In addition to these departmental initiatives, the School of Humanities and Social Sciences (to which the Department of Sociology belongs) has secured investment from the Philomathia Foundation to facilitate policy-related social science research that engages directly with public policy. The Department has been awarded £110k from the Philomathia fund for a research associate to work with Scott and Franklin on (in)fertility, education and reproductive health. The fund will also support activity and symposia that seek to promote policy-related impact.

Cambridge has been selected by the ESRC as one of three pilot centres for acceleration of research impact, beginning in June 2013. This will provide targeted funding of £500k for generating impact from social science research and supporting pilot activity; promoting non-academic secondments for researchers and academic staff; support for researchers to hone approaches to engagement with non-academic stakeholders; and training courses to equip academics with appropriate skills, such as communicating effectively with users and non-specialist audiences.

**d. Relationship to case studies**

The three case studies chosen by the Department illustrate some of the different ways that our research is generating impact beyond the academy and in different parts of the world.

**1 Gender roles and family changes**

This case study is based on research carried out by Scott and others involved in the Network on Gender Inequalities in Production and Reproduction (GeNet). The research has had an impact on policy-makers, government commissions and charities. Scott and her colleagues cultivated links with public bodies and charities to make sure their findings were taken into consideration by them and they actively engaged in a variety of outreach activities to generate public debate in the UK and internationally.

**2 The transformation of the book publishing industry in Britain and the US**

This case study is based on research undertaken by Thompson on the transformation of the book publishing industry. The research has had an impact on those working in the publishing industry, on associated professions dependent on this industry, on libraries and their acquisition policies and on public debates. Thompson has worked closely with stakeholders – including publishers, writers and their respective organizations – to maximize the uptake of his research and has engaged in a variety of media and outreach activities in the UK and internationally.

**3 The political economy of public health**

This case study is based on research carried out by King and his research group. Their work has had an impact on stakeholders in the UK, Poland and across Europe, has influenced policy debates concerning the impact of austerity policies among other things and has received extensive media coverage both in the UK and internationally. King and his colleagues have increased the impact by publishing their results in high-profile journals such as *The Lancet*, engaging with governments and NGOs and giving testimony on the health impact of austerity to legislative bodies and international institutions including the House of Commons and the WHO.