

<b>Institution:</b> <b>University of Sunderland</b>
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> <b>30 - History</b>
<b>Title of case study:</b> <b>Current Controversies - Historical Research That Informs Social Policy Debates</b>
<b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words)

Staff are concerned as public intellectuals in debating policies that closely affect personal life and happiness, taking part in current social policy debates on adoption policy and on assisted suicide. Their participation is shaped by their historical research at the University of Sunderland within a framework of engagement with modern political debates on social issues which have become of acute concern to the general public.

Impact is demonstrated with reference to the way that the terms of debates have been shaped and re-drawn by this participation, in the media (particularly radio), in Parliament, and amongst healthcare professionals in the UK, and in the parallel controversies of the USA, Japan and South Korea.

**2. Underpinning research** (indicative maximum 500 words) The underpinning research is based on two continuing research programmes, one into transracial and transnational adoption policy and the other into the issue of assisted suicide. Both reflect the interdisciplinary character of much work in the History Unit which has close relationships with the social sciences and philosophy.

**Adoption Policy** The research into adoption policy has been undertaken by Dr P. Hayes since his appointment to Sunderland in 1993. It has been supported by grants from the Japan Foundation and from the ESRC. The research can be divided into four areas.

(1) *The debate over transracial adoption in the USA and UK.* The history of opposition to transracial adoption in the USA is rooted largely in an ideology of black separatism. The research concludes that this opposition is not evidence-based (publications 1993, 1995, 2003).

(2) *Adoption reform in the Far East.* There is historical evidence of a gradual shift in attitudes towards adoption that place less emphasis on traditional concerns with lineage and more on the intrinsic value of family life. This shift is congruent with the policy recommendation that there should be a greater emphasis on a child's right to a family life (publications 2006, 2007, 2008, 2008, 2011).

(3) *Intercountry adoption regulations.* Analysis of policy debates around the Hague Convention since the early 1990s identify a continuing conflict over regulating the practice. Hayes argues that the Hague regulations against *independent* adoptions should be relaxed to allow scope for parental initiatives (Hayes, 2011 – listed in [http://www.hcch.net/index\\_en.php?act=conventions.publications&dtid=1&cid=69](http://www.hcch.net/index_en.php?act=conventions.publications&dtid=1&cid=69) the Hague Conference on Private International Law (HCCH) bibliography).

**Assisted Suicide** Kevin Yuill has conducted research into the debate on assisted suicide since before his appointment from 1996 to the present, culminating in his 2013 publication of a monograph with Palgrave Macmillan.

The research might be summed up as using insights gained in a historical investigation of the rise of the issue of assisted suicide to inform a contemporary discussion. Besides, in examining its original appearance in the United States and the United Kingdom prior to WWII, Yuill investigated the openness to breaching the suicide taboo occurring in the 1970s (in some ways, this was a continuation of earlier research into the Nixon presidency, and the rise of new social movements). (Yuill, 2013).

The research established the relationship of the rise of assisted suicide issue with that of “third wave” feminism’s focus on the body, the decline of mainstream religion, and the erosion of medical authority. The research also challenges the identification of the rise of interest in assisted suicide with advances in medical technology, demonstrating instead that it was attitudes towards

**Impact case study (REF3b)**

technology rather than the technology itself that propelled interest in assisted suicide. (publications 2008, 2013)

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

**PETER HAYES [Senior Lecturer]**

(1) P Hayes (2003), 'Giving due consideration to ethnicity in adoption placements--a principled approach', *Child and Family Law Quarterly*, 15, 3: 255-268

URL: [http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=2030959](http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2030959)

(2) P Hayes and HE Kim (2008), 'Openness in Korean Adoptions: From Family Line to Family Life' *Adoption Quarterly* 10 3/4: 53-78

DOI: 10.1080/10926750802163196

(3) P. Hayes (2011), The Legality and Ethics of Independent Intercountry Adoption Under the Hague Convention *International Journal of Law Policy and the Family* 25: 3, 288-317.

In REF2.

In addition, Peter obtained a grant, ESRC, Grant Ref: RES-000-22-1840, 'Intercountry adoption: a comparative analysis of its effect on domestic adoption', 1.9.2006-1.9.2009 (£58,011).

**KEVIN YUILL [Senior Lecturer]**

(5) K. Yuill (2005) , "In the Wake of Terry Schiavo, the Real Slippery Slope," *Journal of Cancer Pain and Symptom Palliation*, Volume 1, Issue 2, 43-6

(6) K. Yuill (2006), "Refuting Arguments in Favor of Physician-Assisted Suicide" in Sylvia Louise Engdahl, *Euthanasia* (Cengage Gale), pp.94-100

(7) K. Yuill (2013), *Assisted Suicide: The Liberal, Humanist Case Against Legalization* (Palgrave MacMillan)

*Research Quality*

Publications 1-6 are in refereed journals 7 is a monograph.

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

In both areas of public and political concern, Hayes and Yuill have actively participated in debates and consultations, seeking to engage sympathetically with others in evaluating the problems of different policy prescriptions. In both areas, the critical engagement with the issues and the debates with alternative views or policies have been bolstered by the academic research listed above.

**Adoption**

(1) *Transracial Adoption*.

Note that there is considerable previous activity as a background to the current assessment period, representing a longstanding engagement with a crucial issue of debate about adoption policy.

## Impact case study (REF3b)

Evidence that the research identified here has impacted on government policies and on guidance supported by the committee discussion of what became The Adoption And Children Act 2002. In debate on 27.11.2001, Tim Loughton, then an Opposition MP, referred approvingly and in some detail to the Parliamentary submission by Hayes -see

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200102/cmstand/special/st011127/pm/11127s02.htm>

The research has been disseminated and contributed to public debate in the national media e.g. P Hayes participated in BBC 1 The Big Question, 'Should Adoption Be Colour Blind' 15.11.2009

Note: While it is only inferential and cannot be completely demonstrated, in 2011 the by-then Children's Minister Tim Loughton MP published the government's Guidance On Adoption. This guidance, which was revised In June 2013, goes some way towards meeting the arguments for transracial adoption put forward In the research. For example compare the following passages Hayes 2003 (opening para p. 255): "Where decision making in adoption focuses on ethnicity, almost inevitably this results in less attention being given to other critical factors relevant to the successful outcome of the placement... It is not In the best interests of children to give too much weight to ethnicity in placement decisions."

Guidance 2013 (4.6): "It is important that social workers avoid 'labelling' a child or placing the child's ethnicity above other relevant characteristics without good cause when looking for an adoptive family for the child."

(2) Adoption Reform In Far East. In Korea, the research helps to inform the preparation of prospective adopters applying to SWS Adoption Service in the city of Busan. In Japan the research was disseminated at meetings aimed at adoption practitioners and adoptive parents, including one at Waseda University In 2008. The response to these sessions encouraged the translation of a revised version of P. Hayes And T. Habu Adoption In Japan (Nihon No Yoshi Engomi: Shakaiteki Yogo Sesaku No Ī Chi Zsu Ke Du To Tembo Tokyo: Akashi Shoten 2011, P. 357.) Prospective adoptive parents have used the research to learn of the process of adoption In Japan [see website at 5.3 below, citing Hayes and Habu]

(3) Regulation Of International Adoption. P. Hayes has been asked to contribute to a question and answer feature on international adoption on the OUP Blog for adoption month (November 2013). In the USA the research has helped to inform the speeches and writings of Professor Elizabeth Bartholet, a leading advocate of reform in international adoption.

## Assisted Suicide

The research conducted has both benefited from and led to active public engagement. The various communities that have benefited from dissemination include Humanists in the North-East (who invited Kevin Yuill to debate with Bill Etherington) and an international audience. The engagement in debate takes the form of many different forms of media and communication:

1) The publication by the author of articles In The [New York Times](#) (30 March 2013, also online)

2) Debates With Debbie Purdy (10 November 2009), Professor Ray Tallis, Former MP Bill Etherington and Lecture/Seminar at Manchester University Medical Ethics Classes. For a TV Debate With Debbie Purdy under The title 'Unbearable Suffering', click on with CTRL + Left click "[Unbearable Suffering: An Argument Against Assisted Dying](#)" (2010). It has been viewed 5,727 times on *Youtube* and attracted 91 comments. It was screened by the Lancashire Humanist Society in a [meeting](#) on assisted suicide attended by 40 people.

2) The research has led to an invitation to speak on the Radio 4 programme *Moral Maze* (3 February 2010).

**Impact case study (REF3b)**

- 4) The book has been reviewed in the *British Medical Journal* , at <http://blogs.bmj.com/medical-ethics/2013/07/03/book-review-kevin-yuill-assisted-suicide-the-liberal-humanist-case-against-legalization-2/>

**5. Sources to corroborate the impact** (indicative maximum of 10 references)**Adoption****Transracial adoption**

- (1) Government guidance on adoption is available at: <http://www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/statutory/g0072314/guidance>
- (2) Hayes's participation in BBC1's *The Big Question* : 'Should Adoption be Colour-Blind?' can be viewed at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WUefzYGGsS0> (2009)

**Far East Adoption**

- (3) A Blog by prospective adoptive parents making use of—and further disseminating-- the research is at: <http://sophelajapan.blogspot.co.uk/2013/07/howtoadoptinjapan.html>

**Adoption and Early Puberty**

- (4) An online medical magazine disseminating research findings is at: <http://www.healio.com/pediatrics/journals/pedann/%7Bd7aa311f-6dc6-4ecd-bddc-8d4f4f5bd752%7D/trend-watch>

**Assisted Suicide**

- (5) Sunday Dialogue, "Choosing How We Die" *New York Times*, 30 March 2013 and associated discussion.
- (6) 'Death is not a tonic for society's ills' *Spiked-online.com* 18 April 2013; an earlier article is still being cited - see [Care Not Killing Australia](#), citing 'Ten Myths about Assisted Suicide' (*Spiked* online, 2002)