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Impact of Social Sciences & Humanities

4-5 October 2018, Copenhagen

HC Andersen Castle, 11.30-12.45

(National) Science Policy

David Sweeney (Chair)

Sarah Foxen

Milena Žic-Fuchs



Impact of Social Sciences & Humanities

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(National) Science Policy

David Sweeney

Executive Chair, Research

England



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HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT
PARLIAMENTARY OFFICE OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

What the UK Parliament is doing to
facilitate and support policy impact,
and three take away lessons

Dr Sarah Foxen, Knowledge Exchange Manager
Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology

AESISNET Impact of SSH | 5 October 2018

 @SarahFoxen | @POST_UK


The UK Parliament values research

- Academic research is really important to, and valued by, the UK Parliament
- However, it is not feeding into Parliament as much as it could

(See: ['The use of research evidence in Parliament'](#) for more)



Supporting and encouraging engagement



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Research impact at the UK Parliament

Everything you need to know to engage with Parliament as a researcher.


What interests Parliament? **Why engage with Parliament?**

How Parliament uses research **Ways to engage with Parliament**


 

Parliament and the Research Excellence Framework



Find out more about Parliament and the 2014 and 2021 Research Excellence Framework exercises.

What does the UK Parliament do?



Find out more about the role of Parliament.



The UK Parliament and REF 2014

- 20% of case studies (n= 1,282) outlined substantive engagement with Parliament ([more here](#))
- So, engaging with Parliament is a way for researchers to have demonstrable impact
- However, policy impact can be risky, difficult to evidence and often involves an element of serendipity
- Moreover, the policy world (who's who and what do they do) can be difficult to understand... and therefore write about in a REF impact case study



The UK Parliament and REF 2021

- JAN 2018: Meeting between staff from legislatures, Research England and REF panel chairs
 - Research England explaining more about the REF
 - Legislatures explaining how we use research and what we see as impact
 - All having a conversation about reconciling different understanding of impact, and how we can support academics to have REF-able policy impact
- SPRING 2018: Legislatures co-write a briefing on ‘Research Impact in Legislatures’ to feed into the REF assessors’ discussions whilst drafting guidelines and panel criteria.



Research Impact in Legislatures



Cynulliad
Cenedlaethol
Cymru

National
Assembly for
Wales



September 2018

Research Impact and Legislatures



The Research Excellence Framework (REF) is the UK's system for assessing the quality of

Overview

- Substantive engagement with the UK Parliament was mentioned in 20% of REF2014 impact case studies.
- Research can feed in through direct and indirect routes and can be actively sought out or sent in proactively by external organisations.
- Impacts arising from engaging with legislatures include influencing government policy, external organisations, and legislatures themselves (such as internal



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The UK Parliament and REF 2021

- JULY 2018: Research England release draft guidelines and criteria for REF2021...



The UK Parliament and REF 2021: Types of policy impact

- Research is used by parliamentarians to develop proposals for new legislation through Private Members' Bills, or to assist scrutiny of legislation and inform amendments to other bills such as those introduced by Government.

- Research helps to highlight issues of concern to parliamentarians and contributes to new analysis of existing issues.
- Research helps parliamentarians and staff to identify inquiry topics, shape the focus of inquiries, inform questioning of witnesses, and underpin recommendations.
- Research equips parliamentarians, their staff, and legislative staff with new analytical or technical skills, or refreshes existing ones.

September 2018 Research Impact and Legislatures Page 2


questions, usually work to tight timescales, and need access to trusted information on contested and complex issues from a range of sources.

To be most useful, research should be:

- Relevant to the issue at hand or question being posed and provided in a timely manner;
- Credible (from a well-known or trusted source, and/or produced with credible or appropriate methods);
- Independently produced or transparent about amounts and sources of funding or support.

People in legislatures generally use pre-existing research rather than conducting new primary research because of the deadlines they work to (although there are exceptions). The focus is on re-interpreting and analysing such research and ensuring that it is presented clearly and concisely.

Figure 1: A Committee of the National Assembly for Wales



Health and Social Care Committee – Inquiry into new psychotropic substances – Report Launch, 2016

How does research feed into legislatures?
Research can be fed in directly or indirectly, as part of a specific parliamentary process or less formally, requested or provided proactively. Specifically research can be fed in:

- Directly in response to requests, through unsolicited or targeted proactive contact, via seminars or workshops attended by Members, their staff or legislature staff;
- As part of specific parliamentary processes such as committee inquiries, scrutiny of legislation or the budget consideration of public petitions, and plenary debates;
- Through informal parliamentary processes such as submissions to, or in seminars held by, All-Party or Cross-Party groups;
- Via intermediaries in the legislature, such as the in-house libraries and research services, or committee staff who produce briefings, scope potential topics to focus on, organise events, and may host fellowships;
- Indirectly, via mainstream media or social media, via external third-party organisations such as charities or non-governmental organisations (NGOs), constituents, or lobby organisations.

Types of research impact in legislatures
Research can have many different types of impact including direct or instrumental impact on policy or practice, indirect or conceptual impact on the understanding of issues, and capacity-building impact on technical or personal skill development. Boxes 1-4 outline examples of different impacts in each of the UK legislatures.

Box 1: Example of research impact in Wales
The Research Service of the National Assembly for Wales is piloting an academic knowledge scheme to bring senior academics to the Research Service to work on a specific topic that relates to their area of expertise. As part of this scheme, an academic from Swansea University produced information and a briefing on suicide and self-harm which helped the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee to define the scope of its inquiry into the effectiveness of the Welsh Government's prevention strategy 'Talk to Me 2'.

Box 2: Example of research impact in Westminster
Academics from the University of Dublin met with the Social and General Statistics team in the House of Commons Library to develop a Consultancy Explorer. The Explorer provides social and economic statistics on UK parliamentary constituencies and enables comparison between constituencies and regions.

Box 3: Example of research impact in Scotland
The Scottish Parliament Information Centre (SPICe) has organised a programme of e-learning seminars for Members, their staff, and legislative staff. The aim of this is to develop understanding and awareness of issues and encourage engagement and debate among a spectrum of attendees. Academics are invited to submit proposals to speak at seminars, most often on the impact of Brexit for different policy areas. As of May 2018, there had been 17 seminars, at which 33 academics briefed Members. Total attendance across all the seminars was nearly 600, including 158 Members.

Box 4: Example of research impact from Northern Ireland
The Knowledge Exchange Seminar Series (KESSE) is an annual seminar series that enables academics to present research findings on issues that are relevant to government in Northern Ireland. It is delivered jointly by the Assembly's Research and Information Service (RAIS) and three universities in Northern Ireland. Examples of research impact arising from KESSE include an academic from Queen's University Belfast delivering a KESSE briefing in March 2014, which was the foundation paper informing the Assembly and Executive Review Committee in its Review on Women in Politics.

Research can, and often does, make a substantial difference to the work of a legislature. It can influence legislatures directly, or be a route for impact onto other actors including Government and other external organisations. Examples of the types of impact that can be achieved through legislatures are provided below.

Government policy
Research can be used by parliamentarians to develop proposals for new policies or to suggest amendments to current policy. For example, following a briefing on marine microplastic pollution by POST, the Environmental Audit Committee's 2016 inquiry into the environmental impact of microplastics helped to generate a public petition and influenced a government ban on plastic microbeads.³

Public expenditure
Research can assist parliamentarians in checking plans for new taxes and ensuring that public money is spent fairly and efficiently. An example of legislatures' impact on government plans for public expenditure came in 2015 when a vote by the House of Lords to delay cuts to tax credits led

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to the government dropping its proposals. Research from the Institute of Fiscal Studies was cited in the debate.⁴

External organisations
Research can help to highlight issues of concern to parliamentarians and contribute new analysis of existing issues. For example, in 2017 the Scottish Parliament Information Centre (SPICe) commissioned the Scottish Association for Marine Science (SAMS) to produce a report examining the scientific evidence on the scale of different environmental impacts of the salmon farming industry and approaches to mitigating those impacts.⁵ The Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee drew heavily on the report and evidence from SAMS academics was extensively cited in its evidence sessions.⁶ This has led to the Scottish Salmon Producers Organisation publishing more data about the level of sea lice on salmon farms.⁷

Legislation
A core function of legislatures is making legislation. Research can be used by parliamentarians to develop proposals for new legislation through Private Members' Bills, or to assist scrutiny of legislation and inform amendments to other bills such as those introduced by Government. For example, academics from five universities (Kent University, Manchester Metropolitan University, Queen's University Belfast, The Open University, and Ulster University) presented briefings on key considerations relating to Abortion Policy and Law as part of the Northern Ireland Knowledge Exchange Seminar Series (see Box 4). Members drew on these briefings during an Assembly plenary debate in November 2016.

Parliamentary debates
Research can help to flag up issues for parliamentarians to focus on in debates, or help to reframe discussions about topics and contribute new understandings or knowledge. For example, research by an academic at the University of Bristol fed into the Government's rules on plain tobacco packaging which came into force in May 2016. Events in the UK Parliament in 2013 helped raise awareness of research on standardised tobacco packaging, and kept the topic on the parliamentary agenda.

Committees
Research can help parliamentarians and staff to identify inquiry topics, shape the focus of inquiries, inform questioning of witnesses, and underpin recommendations. For example, in 2017 an academic at Cardiff University provided an evidence base for the Welsh Climate Change and Rural Affairs Committee's scrutiny of the Welsh Government's programme of Bovine TB eradication.⁸ This highlighted the challenges facing the veterinary profession in light of the UK's decision to leave the European Union and its potential implications for Bovine TB in Wales.

Skills of people in legislatures
Research can equip parliamentarians, their staff, and legislature staff with new analytical or technical skills, or refresh existing ones. For example, the House of Commons, Scottish Parliament and the Welsh Assembly provide professional development courses for Members and staff that are delivered in conjunction with academics. This includes training on core procedural matters, such as legislation and passing a budget, as well as on activities designed to enhance core skills, such as speaking, effective questioning and online communications.

Parliamentary procedures and services
Research can be used to change current processes or services, or identify new services to be provided. For example, evidence submissions and informal conversations between an academic at SOAS University of London and legislature staff led to the 2014 House of Commons Administration Committee recommendation to replace the annual survey of Members and Members' Staff with a detailed series of interviews. The academic trained parliamentary staff on qualitative interviewing and has continued to provide advice on the scope and design of subsequent projects.

The quality of parliamentary work
Researchers can peer review draft briefings to ensure they are accurate, balanced and impartial. For example, academics are frequently called upon to review draft briefings produced by the different legislatures' research services on topical policy issues, legislation, and in advance of parliamentary debates.

Figure 2: Research impact on standardised tobacco packaging



Events in the UK Parliament in 2013 helped raise awareness of research on standardised tobacco packaging, which came into force in 2016.

Legislatures and REF2014
Over 6,000 impact case studies were submitted to the 2014 Research Excellence Framework (REF2014). Many of these referred to substantive engagement with all four of the UK legislatures. Analysis by POST showed that one in five case studies mentioned engagement with the UK Parliament.⁹ Academics engaged in 23 different ways, the most common being through reference to them or their research and through submitting evidence – either written or oral (see Figure 3). Academics also reported engaging with 22 different parts of the UK Parliament (see Figure 4). Whilst encouraging, a study POST undertook on the use of research evidence in the UK Parliament found that the academic sector lagged far behind the third sector in terms of evidence submissions to committees.¹ The Scottish Parliament has also conducted analyses on REF2014 impact case studies¹⁰ and a King's College London analysis of impact of Welsh universities illustrated impact through engagement with the Welsh Assembly.¹¹

The UK Parliament and REF 2021: Indicators of reach and significance

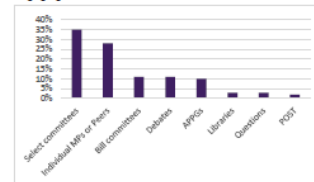
- Direct citations of research in parliamentary publications such as Hansard, committee reports, evidence submissions, or briefings.
- Acknowledgements to researchers on webpages, in reports or briefings.

- Analysis by third-party organisations of parliamentary proceedings or processes, for example studies of the passage of particular pieces of legislation.

Figure 3: Ways academics reported engaging with the UK Parliament in REF2014



Figure 4: Parts of UK Parliament that academics reported engaging with in REF2014



Demonstrating research impact

Commonly agreed and objective measures of impact are hard to come by.¹² It is not always possible to attribute research impact because:

- Impacts can take a long time to be realised;
- Research is usually only one of many different considerations;
- Many different actors are involved in legislature processes and they may not be explicit about the research they use;
- Legislature processes are not always transparent in how research is selected and/or what research is used;
- Information or data to trace the route of research into and through legislatures, may not be publicly available or routinely collected;
- It may not be possible to find information or data to demonstrate that research has stopped something happening, changed the focus of an already agreed policy, or reframed the debate about an issue;
- Impact can be based on a body of research accumulated over years or even decades – it need not be tied to specific outputs.

A persuasive and credible narrative is necessary to describe how impact was achieved. This could include outlining the chain of activities and/or events that occurred (either consecutively or at the same time), which led to the impact claimed. Impact claims that are supported and triangulated

by different sources of evidence are likely to be more convincing.¹³ Evidence to demonstrate impact include:

- Direct citations of research in parliamentary publications such as Hansard, committee reports, evidence submissions, or briefings;
- Implicit references to research in the use of the same, or similar, language within parliamentary publications or transcripts;
- Evidence of direct engagement, such as an appointment as an Adviser to a committee, or a secondment or placement as an embedded expert or fellow within a legislature;
- Quantitative indicators or statistics on the numbers of attendees or participants at a research event, or website analytics for online briefings;
- Qualitative feedback from participants or attendees;
- Data to show close working relationships with Members or staff, for example, the number of meetings held, minutes from these meetings, membership of working groups, co-authoring of publications;
- Press or social media data from events, workshops, or parliamentary proceedings;
- Acknowledgements to researchers on webpages, reports or briefings;
- Informal anecdotes from conversations with people within and outside legislatures;
- (Exceptionally) testimonials from Members, committees or officials may be available;
- Analysis by third-party organisations of parliamentary proceedings or processes, for example studies of the passage of particular pieces of legislation.

More information and guidance on engaging with the UK Parliament is available at: <https://www.parliament.uk/research-impact>

Endnotes

- 1 Kenny, C., Rose, D. C., Hobbs, A., Tyler, C. & Sliedrecht, J. (2017) *The Role of Research in the UK Parliament*. London, UK, Houses of Parliament.
- 2 OECD (2015) *Scientific advice for policy making: the role and responsibility of agencies*. OECD, Paris, France.
- 3 Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (2018) *World-leading proposals ban latest pesticide*. UK Government.
- 4 House of Lords Debate, 26 October 2015. *Tax Credits (Income Thresholds and Determination of Rates) (Amendment) Regulations 2015*. UK Parliament.
- 5 Scottish Association for Marine Science (2018) *Review of the environmental impacts of salmon farming in Scotland*, Issue 1.
- 6 Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee (2018) *Environmental impacts of Salmon Farming Inquiry*. Scottish Parliament.
- 7 Scottish Salmon Producers Organisation (2018) *Salmon survival and mortality data*.
- 8 Climate Change, Environment and Rural Affairs Committee (2017) *Private meeting: Wednesday 20 November 2017, 10.15am*. Welsh Assembly.
- 9 Kenny, C. (October 2015) *The impact of academics on Parliament*. USE Impact of Social Sciences Blog.
- 10 McQuillan (2017) *Case Study: Experiences of REF in the Scottish Parliament*. Internal review by the Scottish Parliament Information Centre.
- 11 Heavell, K. & Hincks-Kaples, S. (2017) *The impact of academic research from Welsh universities*. The Policy Institute, King's College London.
- 12 Teräsvä, E., Smallman, M., Lock, S.J., Johnson, C. & Austwick, M.Z. (2016) *Research excellence – integrating research impact in the REF*. PLUS ONE 11(12).
- 13 Research Excellence Framework (2015) *Research Excellence Framework 2014: Diving report by main panels and sub-panels 16 to 26*. REF.

- Quantitative indicators or statistics on the numbers of attendees or participants at a research event, or website analytics for online briefings.

- Qualitative feedback from participants or attendees at research events.
- Data to show close working relationships with Members or staff, for example, the number of meetings held, minutes from these meetings, membership of working groups, co-authoring of publications.
- Testimonials from Members, Committees or officials, where available.





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Take away lessons
for achieving national policy impact

Lesson 1

Get the right people together – literally in the same place



Lesson 2

Researchers, policymakers and those in the middle need to better understand each other's worlds



Lesson 3

Take things from the abstract to concrete, and do it with shared understanding and language



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4-5 October 2018, Copenhagen

(National) Science Policy

Milena Žic-Fuchs

*Professor of Linguistics at the University of Zagreb,
& former Croatian Minister of Science and Technology*

➤ Traditional/societal 'impact'

- links and challenges in both types of 'impact'

- Differences within the EU, especially pertaining to ‘societal impact’ of research
 - the necessity of conceptualizing and advocating, especially ‘societal impact’
- Traditional/societal ‘impact’ in the context of SSH research at national and EU level
- The increase of ‘impact’ through the interaction of domains

Excellence as ‘impact’

“**Excellence as the core underlying principle ensures quality.** Having excellence as the main criterion for allocating funding has helped **the first scientific publications** of Horizon 2020 to be cited already at twice the world average rate. **Patents** produced through the program are of higher quality and likely **commercial value** than similar patents produced elsewhere. Horizon 2020 already has supported some 17 Nobel-prize winners.”

➤ traditional measures of excellence

Horizon 2020 interim evaluation: maximising the impact of EU research and Innovation

Brussels, 11. 1. 2018.

How to increase 'visibility' and showcase 'impact'?

- the path to a 'holistic' approach

A brief historical overview of documents that attempt to include
'non-article' and 'non-book' indicators of excellence → one of
the challenges of expanding traditional 'impact'

This kind of thinking is also reflected in the
San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment

DORA (December 2012)

- “...for the purpose of research assessment **consider the value and impact of all research outputs** (including datasets and software).”

The Leiden Manifesto for research metrics

(Diane Hicks et al., Vol. 520, *Nature* 2015)

- states that the abuse of research metrics has become too widespread to ignore
- stress on „regional outputs”, especially important in SSH, in which research is more regionally and nationally engaged
- **outputs in ‘national’ languages**
 - **this is still an unresolved issue**



How to stress the necessity of including different kinds of metrics that are already evident?

„Next-generation metrics: [Responsible metrics and evaluation for open science](https://ec.europa.eu/research/openscience/pdf/report.pdf). Report of the European Commission Expert Group on Altmetrics“.
<https://ec.europa.eu/research/openscience/pdf/report.pdf>.

- **The changing landscape of evaluation.**
 - An opportunity for SSH research.

- **Again, differences within Europe, differences especially pertaining to EU-13.**

(UK-REF evaluations)

- **This brief overview shows that even what can come under the heading of ‘traditional impact’ is **not resolved** and needs **constant updating and revision**.**

Future 'impacts' in the EU

Lamy Report

The public value of Social Sciences and Humanities and their contributions to the next European research framework programme *Horizon Europe 2021-2027*, which will be organized in **three pillars – Open Science, Global Challenges and Open Innovation.**

Lamy Report

Recommendation 11: Better capture and communicate impacts.

- The post-2020 EU R&I programme **needs a definition of impact that goes beyond GDP**
 - **impact on science, skills and competences, competitiveness of European industry, innovation practices, performance of Member States, and on policy-making**
- The Commission should work with Member States to develop a system to measure the impacts of EU R&I programmes **at national level in a comparable way**, with an agreed core set of impact indicators that everybody will use.
 - **a common basis for all EU members**

Lamy Report

**Recommendation 11: Better capture and communicate impacts.
(continued)**

- **Communication on relevance and impacts to citizens will be improved by moving from individual success stories to portfolio analysis.**
- Beneficiaries of EU R&I funding should become principal communicators on impact – they must be sure that what they do is responsive and **responsible to society at large**.

- Suggestion to Commission (and all member states) that **they should develop a common action** in exchange of best practices **how to make science and citizens talk**

Recommendation 8: Mobilise and involve citizens

- The Netherlands and Denmark already have successful initiatives for involving citizens for R&I agenda setting.
- The necessity of a better understanding of social change, maximum use of social media (link to *alt-metrics*), etc.

Humanities in the Context of ‘Interdisciplinarity’: Understanding Innovation

- Inter/Multi/Transdisciplinarity – Achieving Synergy
- **The Humanities and Social Sciences** not only address global issues inherent in the Grand Challenges, **but also identify and research cultural (national) differences or ‘different cultures of knowledge’**. All Grand Challenges are by their nature **societal** and often **global** in nature, but inherently anchored in **specific cultural domains**.

During the work of the Lamy Group quite a number of meetings were held with stakeholders and researchers from the “innovation world”.

- to Pascal Lamy’s direct question as to what is the most important feature of ‘innovation’, the answer was always **‘multidisciplinarity’**

- **The challenge of fostering ‘multidisciplinarity’**
- The challenge of raising the awareness of the SSH community to engage not just in disciplinary endeavors, but also in **‘multidisciplinary missions’**

- **'Impact' should be seen as a **multilayered concept** that bridges the so-called traditional and links it to the so-called societal**
- **'Impact' should be viewed in its entirety and this concept **should be equally spread throughout the EU****



THANK YOU!



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(National) Science Policy

Panel discussion and Q&A

David Sweeney (Chair)

Sarah Foxen

Milena Žic-Fuchs



Impact of Social Sciences & Humanities

4-5 October 2018, Copenhagen

(National) Science Policy

Chair: David Sweeney

Executive Chair, Research England

Type your recommendation here



Impact of Social Sciences & Humanities

4-5 October 2018, Copenhagen

Next up:

12.45-13.45 Lunch

13.45-15.45 Plenary Closing

Lumbye Hall