**Impact case study (REF3b)**

**Institution:** Royal Holloway, University of London

**Unit of Assessment:** 21, Politics and International Studies

**Title of case study:** NATO and the Changing Nature of International Security from Europe toSouth Asia

**1. Summary of the impact** (indicative maximum 100 words)

This case study refers to the REF-period impact achieved by Michael J. Williams, who joined the Unit in 2008. His research comprises a number of projects that bring new understandings of risk to bear on the evolution and development of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) since 1949, the conceptualization of security in the post-9/11 world and NATO’s role in promoting security in the transatlantic area via ‘out of area’ missions such as the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan. Williams combined advisory roles and a strong public profile developed over the period to bring his research to politicians, policymakers and publics both nationally and internationally, engagements that supported the achievement of non-academic impacts of his work. His research has informed the thinking of policy-makers, military officials, international organizations and development actors dealing with security and development, contributed to policy formation at national and international levels, and raised public awareness of the difficulties of policy coordination in conflict and development initiatives.

**2. Underpinning research** (indicative maximum 500 words)

The underpinning research for this case study divides into two broad strands:

* 1. **Innovative theoretical research applied to the study of NATO**:Williams’swork makes anoriginal contribution to research on the evolution of the nature of threats by applying Ulrich

Beck’s ‘risk society’ thesis to the analysis of NATO’s evolution as a security organisation. The risk society thesis proposes that the move from modernity into late and post-modernity compels the evolution of a society’s views of security from a reactive stance towards a more proactive position. Consequently, NATO’s original security rationale, predicated on the defence against communism, had to be adapted to encompass new, more amorphously defined security risks such as ‘terrorism’ and ‘climate change’. Williams’s theoretical contribution not only accounts for how and why NATO survived the end of the Cold War, but also indicates the reasons for its development over the subsequent 20 years. Beyond the academy this research has implications for policy-makers dealing with the development of security and foreign policies at the strategic level.

* 1. **Civil-Military Relations in Post-Conflict Reconstruction**: This applied research exploredthe relationship between civilian government, civilian non-governmental actors and military forces in conflict zones, with Williams’s field research focusing on Afghanistan. It relates to the first strand in that it speaks to NATO’s evolution into a proactive security risk manager via the war in Kosovo and more recently its mission in Afghanistan. A chief obstacle facing NATO has been how to provide ‘security’ in an Afghan context where the traditional equation of military power with security, which envisions security in terms of freedom from invasion or subjugation by a foreign power, has become problematic. Williams’s research demonstrates how security in Afghanistan must be embedded in a development agenda aiming to provide ‘human security’ by improving health care, education and justice systems. This requires the cooperation of diverse actors who have historically had conflictual relations with one another. Williams’s research focused on efforts to plan and coordinate civilian and military assets, and involved interviews and on the ground case studies of civil-military planning and operations.

1. **References to the research** (indicative maximum of six references)
2. (2009) *NATO, Risk and Security Management: From Kosovo to Kandahar*. Routledge.
3. (2011) *The Good War: NATO and the Liberal Conscience in Afghanistan*. Palgrave.
4. (2011) ‘(Un)Sustainable Peacebuilding: NATO’s Suitability for Postconflict Reconstruction in Multiactor Environments’, *Global Governance*, 17.1:115-134.
5. (2011) ‘Empire Lite Revisited: NATO, the Comprehensive Approach and State-building in Afghanistan*’,* *International Peacekeeping*, 18.1:64-78.
6. (2012) ‘Political-Military Lessons from U.S. Operations in Vietnam and Afghanistan’, *PRISM:* *Journal of the National Defense University,* 3.4:91-107.
7. (2013) ‘Enduring, but Irrelevant? Britain, NATO and the future of the Atlantic alliance’,

*International Politics*, 50.3:360-386.

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**Key research grants:**

1. Robert Bosch Alumni Grant ($2,500) (October 2013)
2. Robert Bosch Fellowship, German Ministry of Defence and Cassidian (Sept 2012 – June 2013)
3. University of London Central Research Fund (£2,000) (2010/11 academic year)
4. Faculty Research Initiative Fund (£1,000), Royal Holloway (2010/11 academic year)
5. Resident Fellowship, Nuffield College, Oxford University (Sept – Dec 2010)
6. Investigator on NATO-NGO relations, ‘Research Partnership on Postwar State-building) funded by Carnegie Corporation, New York, (total grant: $1 million), with Roland Paris (Ottawa) as Principal Investigator (2009-2011).
7. Workshop and Research Grant, US Department of Defence ($25,000 USD) (2008)
8. Strategic Studies Research Grant, NATO Allied Command Transformation (£21,500) (2008)

**Evidence of quality:**

Williams has produced two research monographs published by well-respected commercial academic presses, with a third co-authored monograph forthcoming in 2014 with CUP. His work has been reviewed in a number of top-tier journals and received critical acclaim from leading scholars in the field. The review of *NATO, Risk and Security Management* in *International Affairs*

(86: 3, 2010, p. 770-1) concluded that Williams’s ‘excellent’ book ‘adds to the existing literature with a fresh look’ that questions the ‘traditional analyses’ and is a ‘valuable contribution’ to the literature. The *RUSI Journal* labelled *The Good War* and its underpinning research a ‘thought-provoking indictment of good men who were clearly out of their depth’ (December 2011). Martin

Bayly’s review of *The Good War* in *e-IR* holds that the work succeeds in ‘helpfully outlining and providing a framework for understanding NATO’s problems in Afghanistan….In dealing with NATO specifically Williams takes a necessarily open-minded view of the analytical problem’.

Williams’s research has led to visiting positions at Wesleyan University (USA) and the Rothermere American Institute (Oxford University) during the REF period. He has given high profile talks on the evolution of NATO at the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst (22 May 2009), the Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University (17 February 2010), the Royal Netherlands Defence Academy (25 February 2010), Chatham House (21 April 2010), the European University Institute (24-26 April 2010), the UK Royal Defence Academy (10 November 2010), the University of Melbourne (28 January 2012) and Carnegie Europe, Brussels (20 November 2012). He has spoken on the challenges and developments in the field of civil-military relations at the Center for European Policy Analysis (23 July 2009), the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung Berlin (26 November 2012), the German Parliamentary Society in Berlin (27 Feb 2013), and numerous times at the London School of Economics.

Williams’s fast developing research profile helped him win a Bosch Fellowship, which is awarded to a very small number of highly accomplished young Americans from academia and other professions. Through this fellowship, held from September 2012 to June 2013. Williams worked as a special assistant to the German Parliamentary State Secretary for Defence, advising on NATO issues and German security policy with relation to NATO, and with the private firm Cassidian (Airbus Military), advising on their transatlantic and European strategies.

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

Williams combined engagements with media and policy users and formal advisory roles to establish a powerful profile conducive to achieving impact. Through these efforts, he informed policy and public debate throughout the REF period. Williams frequently served as an analytical source for major international news outlets, appearing on CNN, BBC, Al Jazeera, and Sky News. He published 27 articles in *The Guardian* in the period and served as a panellist on CNN

International’s ‘Connect the World with Becky Anderson’. Williams is also a founding member and frequent contributor to Atlantic-Community.org, the world’s first and pre-eminent open foreign policy think tank, established in 2007 to engage the public, students, academic researchers and policymakers in an open and transparent discussion of international affairs. Williams has taken on these roles as a way to influence the wider public debate on various issues related to his research expertise by providing counterpoints and information not readily available to the public. His rationale is that in a democracy the public has ultimate oversight of policy through elections and

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the pressure it can bring to bear on elected policymakers, so that the role of the research expert is to facilitate discussion helpful to a democratic society. Williams’s efforts produced an emergent dynamic, where, for example, his *Guardian* writings led to invitations for television appearances, and his presence in public debate attracted the attention of policymakers who requested his involvement in their deliberations with invitations, for example, to provide parliamentary testimony and to engage in policy discussions with party officials.

Williams’s research and expertise led to his inclusion in international policy-planning exercises and consultative assignments with the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, NATO Allied Command Transformation, the US Joint Forces Command, the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the UK Ministry of Defence and the House of Commons Defence Select Committee. He was selected three times as a ‘transatlantic opinion leader’ by NATO, and taken on select trips in 2006, 2008 and 2012 to the mission in Afghanistan. Williams was selected because of the influence of his research and media work on NATO policy, and the trips were designed to allow NATO policymakers to garner external analysis and to ‘red team’ NATO operations. The visits also facilitated Williams’s research by putting him in contact with key officials on the ground, and allowed him to feed back further recommendations to NATO HQ. Williams was also named to the Media Advisory Group of the Ministry of Defence in recognition of the impact of his analysis for international news outlets on public opinion. He provided briefings for the senior leadership of the Conservative, Liberal Democrat and Labour Parties. His work has been requested for official parliamentary inquiries and was subsequently published by Parliament. Williams served as a foreign policy advisor Barack Obama’s 2008 campaign, specifically advising on NATO’s role in Afghanistan. He co-authored the campaign’s official policy paper on Afghanistan with Barney

Rubin (NYU) and Seth Jones (RAND).

Williams’s research has had particular impact on three users during the REF period.

1. **UK Labour Party defence policy**. Williams made specific contributions to the official

Opposition’s Shadow Defence Review from 2012 to 2013, whose work will feed into a 2014 White Paper on Labour’s defence and security strategy that will underpin its 2015 manifesto stance. He attended three roundtable discussions and advised the Labour team on issues including the UK’s nuclear posture, the regional sources of likely future threats, the principles that should shape UK counter-terror strategies overseas and future force structure. The

Shadow Secretary of State for Defence recognised the important ways in which Williams’s close collaboration with practitioners and officials in both the West and in Afghanistan informed his research, noting that he ‘has a breadth of knowledge which is vital and valuable for our work and in each discussion he has provided the group with specific insights from his work overseas, in particular from his knowledge of US policy-making in the security field’. The Shadow Secretary further confirmed: ‘The impact of Mike’s contribution has been to identify the areas which the Shadow Defence Team must consider and research in detail in order to produce a meaningful White Paper, and to provide specific policy ideas which we will reflect on as we develop our platform’. He also highlighted specific policy ideas Williams helped Labour assess, including ‘how to define UK strategic interests overseas, a key element of our consultation paper, and…how the UK should respond to the threat of militancy in North and

West Africa, which has helped Labour to develop a position which is distinct from that of the

UK Government’. He affirmed that Williams’s work on defence and restructuring ‘will feed in to our White Paper’. Williams also edited the final version the Shadow Secretary’s speech to the Henry Jackson Society (10 July 2012) that discussed the ethics and norms of international humanitarian intervention undertaken by NATO and other organisations.

1. **German Parliamentary State Secretary for Defence and Cassidian (Airbus Military).**

Through his Bosch Fellowship, Williams worked on a series of projects in the German Ministry of Defence, advising the Parliamentary State Secretary on Afghan National Army (ANA) developments and producing a report identifying ways that Germany can influence better European defence coordination despite the pressures of European austerity measures. He carried out a briefing on the strategic situation in Afghanistan for the Secretary, providing him with information to question the German High Representative for Afghanistan on his

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presentation of the situation on the ground. The Bosch Fellowship also gave Williams the opportunity to work for Cassidian in their Future Concepts Division, providing strategic insight and recommendations to the CEO and Board of Directors on issues relevant to the organisation’s future business plans. Williams advised on whether Cassidian should pursue transatlantic versus European-only projects. The company was at the time focussed on mainly transatlantic relations. Williams supported continuing this but advised that a dedicated focus on joint European projects was also needed. Cassidian is now in the process of restructuring to focus on increasing in-house capacity so as not be as reliant on US manufacturers (and therefore also US politicians).

* 1. **NATO Policy Makers – Emerging Security Challenges and Operations**. Williams’ workwas utilised extensively by NATO HQ in Brussels and NATO Allied Command Transformation in Norfolk, VA. His research on civil-military relations in Afghanistan provided NATO with critical analysis of current operations and influenced the development of future NATO doctrine and policy. NATO has undertaken a process of developing a new strategic concept and new operational framework, and Williams has been involved since 2006 in the discussions and deliberations of this process. He was originally contracted by NATO Allied Command Transformation in Norfolk in 2006 (with US Joint Forces Command), 2007 and 2008 to conduct various studies on security environment, on the impact of emerging security challenges on the organisation and on alliance cohesion. He has subsequently continued to work with the Office of the Secretary General, Office of Policy Planning and Office of Emerging Security Challenges to help frame the debate and provide foundation documents for review by allied states to assist in their development of a new strategic concept. The 2012 trip to Afghanistan was in relation to this work. The Press Officer for the Public Diplomacy

Division of NATO HQ said of Williams’s tours of Afghanistan and his subsequent advice that he ‘provided highly valuable insight and analysis on a wide range of issues, ranging from the tactical aspects of counter-insurgency operations, the Afghan-Pakistani interplay, the development of civil-military relations, NATO's cooperation with other international organizations within the comprehensive approach construct and the Atlantic

Alliance’s partnerships with Central Asian Republics and Russia’. The Press Officer also noted Williams’s role in a number of important outreach initiatives based on the findings of the tours. The NATO Assistant Secretary General for Emerging Security Challenges confirms that the work of the Carnegie Corporation funded project to which Williams contributed had a direct impact on NATO discussions and thinking on future civil-military policy. He also affirmed the value of the feedback Williams provided from his three trips to Afghanistan and that Williams’s ‘work on the interface between military forces, civilian diplomats and civilian non-governmental workers, has helped develop a better common understanding of the mutual interests and different operating procedures of these organizations’ and ‘provided insight into how NATO policy-makers should think about these challenges and how the

Alliance might respond to similar challenges in the future’. The Assistant Secretary General further maintained that ‘Michael Williams’s work has certainly been beneficial and influential to [NATO’s] thinking’.

1. **Sources to corroborate the impact** (indicative maximum of 10 references)
2. Written testimonial from the Shadow Secretary of State for Defence corroborates Williams’s impact on UK Labour Party defence policy.
3. Written testimonial from the Head of the Office of the German Parliamentary State Secretary of Defence corroborates Williams’s impact on the PSS’s views and policy positions.
4. Written testimonial from the Assistant Secretary General for Emerging Security Challenges, NATO HQ corroborates Williams’s contribution to NATO thinking on civil-military policy.
5. Written testimonial from the Press Officer of the Office of the Spokesperson, NATO HQ, corroborates Williams’s role as a Transatlantic Opinion Leader and the impact of his visits to Afghanistan and the insights fed back to NATO therefrom.
6. Written testimonial from Cassidian (Airbus Military) corroborates Williams’s role in their

Future Concepts Division and the impact of his advice on the company’s future plans.

1. Williams’s 2012/13 Bosch Fellowship is corroborated by: <http://tinyurl.com/ppx8ua2>
2. Williams’s contributions to *The Guardian* can be found at [http://tinyurl.com/napqbva**.**](http://tinyurl.com/napqbva)

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**Impact case study (REF3b)**

**Institution:** Royal Holloway, University of London

**Unit of Assessment:** 21, Politics and International Studies

**Title of case study:** Political Communication in the New Media Ecology

**1. Summary of the impact** (indicative maximum 100 words)

Ben O’Loughlin led and participated in a series of grant-funded collaborative projects that explored the nexus between media and security, provided a foundation for innovations in political communication theory and practice, and impacted upon government, business and media organisations. The iteration of projects and outputs integrated qualitative and quantitative, behavioural and interpretive methodologies, which in turn revealed emergent relationships between policy, media and publics in global, multilingual media ecologies. O’Loughlin’s collaborations with Linguamatics Ltd, the BBC World

Service and the House of Lords have led the application of these new methodologies and created policy debate on the ethics of their use.

**2. Underpinning research** (indicative maximum 500 words)

The impact generated is underpinned by three intersecting strands of research:

1. After joining the UoA in 2006, O’Loughlin published a body of work exploring the interaction of **security and media, policy and publics** (i-v). This research showed how discrepancies between the views of policy and media elites on the one side and those of publics on the other side about a range of security threats led to public dissatisfaction with the substance, procedural process and pace of ‘war on terror’ policies and to a government legitimacy deficit. Through grant-funded projects for the ESRC (2007-10), Centre for the Protection of National Infrastructure (2008-09) and Technology Strategy Board (2009-10), O’Loughlin generated analysis of the role of broadcast and post-broadcast media in radicalisation processes. Research demonstrated how journalists, policymakers and citizens were uncertain about the nature of radicalisation, yet also dependent on mainstream news reporting that uncritically reflected those uncertainties. This amplified anxiety and reduced trust in news. Research also demonstrated how new networked gate-keeping functions in the digital media ecology enabled jihadist groups to reach differentiated audiences (v).
2. **Semantic polling**. O’Loughlin created the concept ‘semantic polling’ to refer to Big Datamining and analysis used to generate ‘intelligence’ about the meaning of texts available in publicly-available social media (vi). In 2009-10 he collaborated with the Cambridge data firm Linguamatics Ltd to develop (patented) methodologies for monitoring Twitter for security risks in a TSB-funded project. This allowed him to develop concepts and methods for monitoring public opinion more generally. This work has extremely broad application beyond war and terrorism because responses to pandemics, financial crises and natural disasters have all been diffused through new media ecologies, triggering new information dynamics through which publics have come to understand events. O’Loughlin’s analysis revealed the repertoires of communication used by citizens in new media spaces and the ways elites seek to manage their reputations, information flows and the ‘movement’ of public conversation. O’Loughlin conducted semantic polling during the 2010 UK General

Election and for the BBC during the 2012 London Olympics, co-leading a project, ‘Tweeting the Olympics’, to explore how multilingual overseas audiences responded to London, the Olympics and the BBC’s representation of each.

1. **Strategic narratives**. Strand 1’s explanation of the circulation of jihadist narratives andWestern government counter-narratives and Strand 2’s development of digital methodologies to trace narrative circulations combined to enable O’Loughlin to pursue research into how strategic narratives are formed, projected and interpreted in international relations generally. This new research developed through a series of strategic narrative workshops (International Studies Association catalytic workshop, 2009; American Political Science Association Political Communication section workshop, 2010; and European Consortium for Political Research standing group section, 2010) and produced a strategic narratives monograph in 2013 (vii). O’Loughlin’s BBC ‘Tweeting the Olympics’ and strategic narratives research led to his appointment on 8 July 2013 as Specialist Advisor to the

House of Lords Select Committee on Soft Power and the UK’s Influence, bringing him into direct dialogue with those tasked with forming and projecting UK narratives and those in

government and publicly-funded cultural institutions tasked with measuring their impact. Each strand of underpinning research has an interdisciplinary remit, involving collaborations with computer scientists, sociologists, psychologists and political scientists. The ISA, APSA and ECPR

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workshops each included scholars from history, journalism, sociology and diplomacy studies. Such an approach is necessary to address the difficulties of researching political communication today.

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

**Publications:**

1. (with A. Hoskins) (2007) *Television and Terror*. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan.
2. (with A. Hoskins) (2010) *War and Media: The Emergence of Diffused War*. Cambridge: Polity.
3. (with A. N. Awan and A. Hoskins) (2011) *Radicalisation and Media: Terrorism and Connectivity* *in the New Media Ecology*. London: Routledge.
4. (2011) ‘Images as weapons of war? Representation, mediation and interpretation’, *Review of* *International Studies*, 37:71-91.
5. (with A. Hoskins) (2010) ‘Security Journalism and ‘the mainstream’ in Britain since 7/7: translating terror but inciting violence?’ *International Affairs*, 86.4:903-924.
6. (with N. Anstead) (2011) ‘The Emerging Viewertariat and BBC Question Time: Television

Debate and Real Time Commenting Online’, *International Journal of Press/Politics*, 16.4:440-462.

1. (with A. Miskimmon and L. Roselle) (2013) *Strategic Narratives: Communication Power and the* *New World Order*. New York: Routledge.

**Key research grants:**

1. (with A. N. Awan and A. Hoskins), ‘Legitimising the discourses of radicalisation: Political violence in the new media ecology’, ESRC October 2007 – January 2010 £239,184.22 + FEC then £25,000.00 additional grant to extend existing project.
2. (with A. Hoskins, P. Rayson and P. Taylor) ‘Developing our Understanding of the Language of Extremism and its Potential for Predicting Risk’. Centre for the Protection of National Infrastructure (CPNI) October 2008 – March 2009 £179,000.
3. (with Linguamatics Ltd) ‘Monitoring of complex information infrastructure by mining external signals’, Technology Strategy Board (TSB) September 2009 – September 2010 £120,000.

**Evidence of quality:**

O’Loughlin has published this case study research in the house journals of the Political Studies

Association (*Political Studies*), the British International Studies Association (*Review of International* *Studies*) and the Royal Institute for International Affairs (*International Affairs*). *Ethnopolitics* (9:2,2010) devoted a special section to this research, with responses by leading scholars in the US, UK and Australia. *War and Media* has been cited 56 times, and it is testament to its theoretical grounding that its first review was published in *Radical Philosophy*, where University of

Amsterdam’s Joyce Goggin called it ‘a thoroughgoing and meticulous study’. Katherina Niemeyer of Université Paris II wrote, ‘*War and Media* put a scientific bomb in our reflection on contemporary warfare thinking’ in her review in the *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*. Columbia University’s Brigitte Nacos called *Radicalisation and Media* ‘a first rate book’ in her review for *Critical Studies on Terrorism*. The ESRC awarded ‘Legitimising the Discourses of Radicalisation’an ‘Outstanding’ grade and provided additional funding to extend the project. It led to an invitation to bid to the CPNI (successful). Other researchers secured project grants building on the trajectory of O’Loughlin multi-methodology studies, applying the framework of integrated study of media, publics and policymakers to different cases, e.g. Jarvis & Lister’s ‘Anti-Terrorism, Citizenship and

Security in the UK’, Economic and Social Research Council, Award ref: RES-000-22-3765; and Hoskins’s ‘Conflicts of Memory: Mediating and Commemorating the 2005 London Bombings’, Arts and Humanities Research Council, Award ref: AH/E002579/1.

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

Research on **Security and Media, Policy and Publics** informed a series of engagements that contributed to reflections on and reformulations of counter-terrorism policy and its media coverage by UK and overseas governments and by the public. It also created new spaces for reflection.

* Contributions to ongoing UK security policy thinking: (i) Home Office, Countering Online Radicalisation Working Group, October 2008. Private meeting to establish the ‘evidence base’ the Home Office was seeking; (ii) Presentation of interim findings of radicalisation project at FCO, 17 September 2008; (iii) House of Commons, presentation on the theme ‘The “War on Terror” By Any Other Name: Ethical Dimensions of Foreign Policy’, 25 February 2009; (iv) Centre for the Protection of National Infrastructure, presentation of CPNI project findings to security agencies, 22 April 2009 and 2 March 2010. Dorset Police claimed that O’Loughlin’s work (presented at the ‘Responding to Extremisms: media roles and responsibilities' conference at Bournemouth University, 15 July 2011) put the issues

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around extremisms and media portrayal into a wider spotlight, ensuring that the Police Force’s policy review processes were based on as wide as spectrum as possible.

* Contributions to ongoing overseas policy and media conceptualisations of terrorism and radicalisation: European Security Research and Innovation Forum (ESRIF), European Commission, ‘Mediatization and Communication’, Brussels, 4 September 2008; National Security Coordination Secretariat (NSCS), Singapore, 1-4 November 2009; Al-Jazeera,

‘Perspectives on Terrorism, Violence and Resistance’, Doha, 26-27 September 2010.

* Spaces of reflection for policymakers, journalists and NGOs: (i) Media and Radicalisation Symposium, Royal Holloway, 15 September 2009 and end of project conference, Warwick

University. (ii) Presentation to Finsbury Park/North London Mosque, 8 June 2010. **Semantic Polling Research** created debate on an entirely new and unexplored methodologybeing deployed in public opinion research. O’Loughlin’s analysis with Linguamatics was used in the BBC’s 2010 General Election coverage and mentioned in the *New York Times* (31 October 2010). Linguamatics was able to move from data mining medical journal texts to mining public social media data and thereby enter public opinion research. It won a patent on its text analysis software I2E. On 14 September 2009 O’Loughlin convened a semantic polling event featuring presentations by the FCO, the private company, Information Options, and the activist/marketing group, We Are Social, and attended by Oxfam, DSTL, YouGov, the BBC and the European Commission.

O’Loughlin’s research both stimulated debate and changed the practice of organisations. His work with Linguamatics in 2008 and from 2009 with Nick Anstead (a former PhD student in

O’Loughlin’s New Political Communication Unit and now a Lecturer at LSE) engaged practitioners during the research process and led to a Hansard launch event of Anstead/O’Loughlin’s policy brief on 5 July 2012, with attendees from the BBC, Department of Culture, Media and Sport, pollsters Ipsos-Mori, Angus Reid, YouGov, ComRes, Tweetminster and the British Polling Council, and semantic polling companies Linguamatics and Semiocast. O’Loughlin and Anstead later presented on the implications of semantic polling for citizens’ social media use and its regulation at a 17 May 2013 OFCOM event, ‘Adult Media Use and Literacy’. The Council of Europe invited O’Loughlin to give evidence on developments on the internet and politics in March 2013. Based on that presentation, the Council decided to instigate a debate about semantic polling at the November 2013 World Forum for Democracy and it will feature in the Council’s December 2013 final report.

O’Loughlin’s expertise in semantic polling led to an invitation from BBC World Service (BBCWS) to conduct social media analysis of audience responses to the 2012 London Olympics, in collaboration with Marie Gillespie (Open University). This work has impacted upon editorial policy and the BBC’s audience research practice. The BBC had already conducted sentiment analysis and basic network analysis, but the BBC Trust’s remit requires it to find ways to measure

‘buzz’, ‘reach’ and ‘the global conversation’. This required greater conceptual clarity and methodological innovation, and O’Loughlin and Gillespie’s research of English, Persian, Russian and Arabic audiences contributed to this by delineating the role of identity and community in generating various affective and cognitive responses. O’Loughlin and Gillespie were invited to present their report for the BBCWS at the main international industry gathering, CIBAR (Conference of International Audience Researchers), in November 2012 in Salford.

Tweeting the Olympics helped BBCWS reshape its editorial and social media strategies for future global events. The BBCWS Head of Audiences said, ‘It was useful to pinpoint what exactly was good and what was less so and work on improvements for similar events in the future’, and that the research would ‘help inform further social media activity across the language services’.

The impact of O’Loughlin’s earlier research on how online conversation moves during events was evident in a statement by the BBCWS Digital Insight manager, who said, ‘For me the most important take out was about how the conversation morphed throughout an event – from the emotional, to the informational and finally to the contextual. The fact that the former types of conversation were the most dominant in the twittersphere was really important to us – as it’s not something we really engage with at the moment (focussing more on the contextual) and raises the very important question as to whether we need to engage with these types of conversations more in order to take social users with us into the journey towards more analytical content’. The manager also confirmed that these findings were fed into editorial policy: ‘This has been something we’ve discussed with senior management and is now being used by us to help us in our ongoing social listening activity and is acting as a loose framework to help us better analyse social conversation’. The impact of the semantic polling methodology was evidenced by feedback from the BBC Global

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News Online Journalism & Innovation Editor, who said: ‘The research methodology in combining scientific computational calculations with human coding is unique and offered useful insights [into] qualitative and quantitative analysis. The research and the findings highlighted the need to have proper social media staffing when covering big events. It was also useful in comparing two different approached to using twitter in covering big events: Automated module VS. Live tweeting combined with live pages’. He further confirmed that, ‘I have included the lessons learnt from this research in my social media strategy for BBC Arabic’.

O’Loughlin’s work on **strategic narratives** and public diplomacy was recognised as early as 2008 when he was asked to contribute to an 18 May 2008 *New York Times* article on Russia’s development of the English-language news channel Russia Today to promote its image abroad. However, the most direct impact of O’Loughlin’s work is demonstrated in his role as Specialist Advisor to the House of Lords Select Committee on Soft Power and the UK’s Influence from July

2013. O’Loughlin advises on the selection of witnesses from politics, business and culture who are invited to give evidence, on the questions they are asked, and on how written evidence is interpreted. The Committee Clerk has written that O’Loughlin’s ‘knowledge of academic debates around strategic narratives and changing global media environments has directly influenced the drafting of possible questions for the assistance of Committee members in evidence sessions with high-profile witnesses from organisations such as the British Council, the Ministry of Defence, and UK Trade and Industry’, and has further testified to the influence of O’Loughlin’s research on measuring the ‘impact’ of narratives, saying that O’Loughlin ‘successfully assisted the Committee with understanding how some of the more nebulous concepts that are used in the relevant literature – and by witnesses – might best be pinned down, such as by recognising the distinction drawn between outputs (for instance, the number of website ”hits” that the British Museum receives) and outcomes (for instance, the change in attitudes about the UK that witnesses might have seen as a result of their actions)’. The Committee’s final report is due in March 2014.

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

1. Numerous invitations to open and closed discussions with the FCO, Home Office and security services during the period corroborate the contributions of O’Loughlin’s research to the UK government’s reflections and reformulation of counter-terrorism policy.
2. Documentation of O’Loughlin’s participation in open policy debates in Parliament, Finsbury Park Mosque, Al-Jazeera in Doha and the Council of Europe, and of the participation of numerous policy, media and NGO stakeholders in O’Loughlin’s events at Royal Holloway, corroborate his contributions to public and expert awareness of media and security.
3. Coverage by the *New York Times* [(http://nyti.ms/16C684o)](http://nyti.ms/16C684o) and the BBC [(http://bbc.in/dtzsBB)](http://bbc.in/dtzsBB) corroborates the impact of semantic polling with Linguamatics.
4. The take-up of semantic polling by a private sector company is evidenced by Linguamatics winning patents for its I2E software. The most relevant is U.S. Patent Application No. 12/899,478: Providing users with a preview of text mining results from queries over unstructured or semi-structured text [(http://bit.ly/177URru)](http://bit.ly/177URru).
5. Evidence that semantic polling research stimulated debate and agendas is found in the Council of Europe’s March 2013 draft report (private but available on request) and the inclusion as a topic for the Council’s World Forum on Democracy [(http://bit.ly/187Abiq](http://bit.ly/187Abiq)).
6. Evidence that semantic polling is now used by the BBC: Powerpoint report for the BBC, ‘The 2012 London Olympic Games, the BBC World Service and Twitter’, January 2013: <http://bit.ly/14Ky0jH>(login on request, access to members and conference attendees).
7. Letters from the Head of Audiences at BBCWS, the BBCWS Digital Insight Manager, and the BBC Global News’ Online Journalism & Innovation Editor corroborate the impact of semantic polling research through Tweeting the Olympics.
8. A letter from the Clerk of the House of Lords Soft Power Committee corroborates the impact of

O’Loughlin’s strategic narratives research and expertise on the Committee’s work. The Committee’s transcripts are located on its website at: <http://bit.ly/12roqVr>

1. A testimonial from a Dorset Police Inspector corroborates the impact of O’Loughlin’s research on the police force’s understanding of the effects of media coverage on radicalisation and on its subsequent review processes.
2. The 18 May 2008 *NYT* article on Russia Today, which quotes O’Loughlin and corroborates the early impact of his strategic narratives research, is located at: [http://nyti.ms/18oy65x.](http://nyti.ms/18oy65x)

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**Impact case study (REF3b)**

**Institution:** Royal Holloway, University of London

**Unit of Assessment:** 21, Politics and International Studies

**Title of case study:** Youth, citizenship and politics: the social role of higher education

**1. Summary of the impact** (indicative maximum 100 words)

Recent decades have witnessed a rapid decline in youth participation in UK electoral politics, in terms of both voting and party membership. Many authors and political commentators view this situation as marking a crisis in British democracy. Sloam’s research and his collaboration with user groups have addressed this important issue and strengthened efforts to engage young people in politics, broadly conceived. In particular, his work has highlighted the growing ‘participation gaps’ between rich and poor young people in the UK and between young people in the UK and across the European Union. Sloam’s work on teaching and learning within political science, on citizenship education and on the social role of higher education has informed policy and practice within the educational sector. His research on young people’s political participation in British democracy has advanced knowledge about the nature of young people’s politics, helping policy-makers form strategy, approaches and indices to create better engagement with the next generation of citizens.

**2. Underpinning research** (indicative maximum 500 words)

Two main bodies of research underpin Sloam’s impact:

1. **Young people’s participation in politics.** After working at the University of Birmingham asa research fellow and co-applicant on the EU FP5 project, ‘EUYOUPART: Political Participation of Young People in Europe – Development of Indicators for Comparative Research in the European Union‘, 2003-05, Sloam joined the Unit in 2005 and produced analysis confirming that today’s young people have very personalised conceptions of citizenship and politics, in accordance with their more diverse values and lifestyles as compared with older cohorts (viii). This study and later analysis of survey data confirmed that existing research of civic engagement and political participation could not explain today’s democratic politics because it relied on narrow conceptions of ‘politics’ and failed to explore properly both the diversity of forms of participation within the current generation of young people and the large differences in participation that exist – especially in new forms of engagement – due to socio-economic status and civic culture (i, iii). In this context, youth participation in politics is disturbingly low in the UK compared to other West European states

(ii). These findings informed Sloam’s impactful research as he pursued a research agenda that has been youth-focussed, multi-disciplinary and comparative, with outputs that include his recent edited volume of the Hansard Society journal, *Parliamentary Affairs* (iv), and articles in prominent international journals such as *Comparative Political Studies* (iii) and

*West European Politics* (i)*.*

1. **Teaching and Learning, Citizenship Education, the Social Role of Higher Education.**

Sloam’s work adopts a constructivist approach to teaching and learning that dovetails with a Deweyan belief that all effective education is fundamentally based on the individual’s experiences in and of democracy (v, vii). His research on citizenship education in schools demonstrates how these insights are realised in practice. Key indicators of the effectiveness of citizenship education are the school’s ‘democratic/participatory ethos’ and the extent to which teaching practice draws on pupils’ experience outside the school environment. In this context, Sloam contributed research on citizenship education to the ‘revitalizing politics’ debate led by Colin Hay, Gerry Stoker and the Hansard Society (vi). In the UK, the Crick Report led to the introduction of citizenship education in English secondary schools in 2002. However, unlike the United States, there has been very little academic study or policy reflection on civic and political education in higher education in the UK. In 2011, working with HEFCE, Sloam convened a major conference, ‘A Pedagogy of Civic Engagement for Higher Education’. Its focus explicitly built on his own research and it acted as a forum both to discuss ideas and to influence the practice of teachers/lecturers and administrators within the sector. Sloam also undertook original research in the US with colleagues at the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching to investigate how best practice can be transferred to the UK (for example through ‘service learning’). This research directly informed Sloam’s collaboration with HEFCE and fed into his work as a Discipline Associate of the Higher Education Academy in 2010/11.

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**Impact case study (REF3b)**

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

**Publications**

1. (2013a) ‘“Voice and Equality”: Young People’s Politics in the European Union’, *West European* *Politics* 36(4), pp.836-858.
2. (2013b) ‘The “Outraged Young”*:* How Young Europeans are Reshaping the Political

Landscape’, *Political Insight* 4(1), pp.4-7.

1. (2012) 'New Voice, Less Equal: the Civic and Political Engagement of Young People in the United States and Europe', *Comparative Political Studies* (Online first 3 September 2012).
2. (2012) Guest-edited special issue of *Parliamentary Affairs* 65(1) on ‘Youth, Citizenship and Politics’.
3. (2010) Guest-edited special issue of *Journal of Political Science Education* 6(4) on ‘Youth, Citizenship and Political Science Education’.
4. (2009) with Ben M. Kisby, ‘Revitalising Politics: The Role of Citizenship Education’ 2009 *Representation* 45(3) (special issue edited by Gerry Stoker and Colin Hay), pp. 313-34.
5. (2008) ‘Teaching Democracy: the Role of Political Science Education’, *British Journal of* *Politics and International Relations* 10(3), pp.509-24.
6. (2007) ‘Rebooting Democracy: Youth Participation in Politics the UK’, *Parliamentary Affairs*

60(4), pp. 548-67.

**Research grants:**

1. Higher Education Discipline Associate for Sociology, Anthropology and Politics, 2010/11, £1,500 (used to support Royal Holloway workshop on experiential learning).
2. Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) grant of £7,000 for ‘A Pedagogy of Civic Engagement for Higher Education’ conference, April 2011.
3. Royal Holloway Humanities and Arts Research Centre (HARC) Fellow, 2012/13: ‘Crisis and Transition: Youth Participation in British Democracy, £3,500 (used to fund two March 2013 workshops for academics and policy makers aimed at improving efforts to engage young people in democracy).

**Evidence of research quality**

Sloam’s 2007 *Parliamentary Affairs* article has been heavily cited and has consistently ranked as the journal’s most cited from the previous two years, most recently as of 1 October 2013 (see <http://pa.oxfordjournals.org/reports/most-cited>). After its publication he was invited to edit a special issue of the journal on ‘Youth, Citizenship and Politics’, which was published in 2012. Sloam was also invited onto the editorial board of the American Political Science Association sponsored

*Journal of Political Science Education* and edited a special issue of this journal on ‘Youth,Citizenship and Political Science Education’ in 2010. Sloam’s outputs have been cited in numerous reports on young people’s politics, including the Youth Citizenship Commission final report in the UK, a 2010 Canadian Parliament report on ‘Youth Civic Engagement’ and a 2013 European Commission report, ‘Political participation and EU Citizenship: Perceptions and Behaviours of Young People’. It is also cited in a report by the Intergenerational Foundation, ‘The Rise of Gerontocracy? Addressing the intergenerational democratic deficit’. Sloam’s publications have been cited by leading scholars in the UK such as Paul Whitely (Essex) and internationally, including Mark Hooghe (KU Leuven), Concepción Naval (Navarra) and Erik Amna (Örebro).

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

Building on his work as co-founder of the PSA Young People's Politics Specialist Group and the APSA Working Group on Young People's Politics, Sloam established a substantial network of over 200 academics and user groups working in this area during the REF period. Exploiting this network helped him generate engagements and impacts for his research. After representatives from the Intergenerational Foundation, Shout Out UK and Portsmouth City Council attended his April 2011 HEFCE-funded conference, the Intergenerational Foundation appointed Sloam as an advisor, where he is assisting with the development of a European intergenerational fairness index, Shout Out UK appointed him to an ambassadorial role, through which he supports their work on citizenship education and youth engagement in schools, and Portsmouth City Council invited him to be a keynote speaker at its Local Democracy Week (14-18 October 2013). Similarly, after his March 2013 workshops on youth participation in British democracy, which were attended by

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**Impact case study (REF3b)**

representatives of StudentVoice, Sloam began work on a collaboration to assess the effectiveness of the organisation’s leadership and outreach programmes, Sloam’s research achieved impact during the period by: 1) influencing UK policy debate and decision-making about young people and political engagement; and 2) creating space to debate the social role of higher education in the UK.

Evidence Sloam presented to the Youth Citizenship Commission in 2009 had a direct influence on key policy makers and the government. The Commission, which met from 2008 to 2009 and reported to the government in June 2009 (*‘*Making the connection. Building youth citizenship in the UK: Final report of the Youth Citizenship Commission’, Ministry of Justice), was charged with examining what citizenship means to young people; exploring how citizenship and political engagement among young people can be improved; and leading a consultation on whether the voting age should be lowered. It reported directly to the Secretary of State for Justice and to the Prime Minister, and issued two final reports in 2009 to which the government formally responded. According to the Chair of the Commission ‘there is clear evidence that government accepted the overwhelming majority of the Commission’s recommendations’.

Members of the Commission have confirmed that Sloam made very important contributions to its deliberations. The Chair affirmed that Sloam provided ‘perhaps the most important [contributions] offered by any academic, beyond those who sat on the Commission’ and that given how ‘the

Commission’s recommendations were overwhelming accepted and implemented, Dr. Sloam’s work

[was] of direct policy relevance.’ According to another member of the Commission, Sloam’s *Parliamentary Affairs* article (viii) had considerable influence in informing them on the nature of theproblems to be addressed and their possible solutions, and was widely read by Commission members. It is cited in the Commission’s published literature review. The Commission members held that Sloam made a ‘convincing case’ in asserting that the issue of youth political disengagement emanates from alienation and lack of political structures, contrary to the commonly held view that it was the result of political apathy. The most crucial and influential pieces of evidence were in respect of Sloam’s portrayal of how young people were excluded from policy deliberation structures within both local government and central government departments. In addition, Sloam’s research highlighted information deficits regarding opportunities for young people to become engaged in community or institutional activity. It has been confirmed that as a result of these findings the Youth Citizenship Commission developed specific proposals such as youth representation on local council departmental decision-making bodies to help address both the democratic and information deficits. Sloam’s overriding argument concerning the need to empower young people through specific structural changes and adopting new attitudes towards the inclusion of youth within decision-making bodies became the Commission’s dominant approach to addressing youth disengagement. The full list of Commission recommendations in the final report greatly reflect Sloam’s article. Having utilised his academic research, the Commission invited Sloam to provide a direct submission to its evidence-gathering processes. This was duly undertaken and Sloam’s contribution, based upon the above themes, is acknowledged in the final report. For these reasons the Commission Chair affirmed that ‘Dr Sloam can justifiably claim significant policy impact in this sphere’.

The second strand of Sloam’s underpinning research had an impact on policy debate about the social role of higher education. On 5-6 November 2008 he presented on the subject of citizenship education at a Westminster conference, ‘Revitalising Politics’, organised by Colin Hay and Gerry Stoker and attended by policymakers and Members of Parliament [(http://tinyurl.com/lbn58ww](http://tinyurl.com/lbn58ww)), and he later participated in an 8-9 December 2010 Regional Seminar on ‘Youth Participation and Democracy’ organised by the Inter Parliamentary Union at Portcullis House, Westminster (<http://tinyurl.com/mvjffq4>), contributing an article to the *IPU Review* issue on the event where he discussed both citizenship education and broader strategies to engage young people in politics. In 2010 Sloam won funding from HEFCE to convene a conference, ‘A Pedagogy of Civic Engagement for Higher Education’, at Royal Holloway on 15 April 2011. Speakers included Prof. Benjamin R. Barber and representatives of Demos/Civworld. The event brought together experts and stakeholders, including the chief executives of Universities UK and the Higher Education Academy and the Research Director of HEFCE, to improve evidence-based practice in civic education in UK higher education. It was a deliberative exercise that provided the basis for a report

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produced for HEFCE that was presented to the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills. The *Times Higher Education Supplement* wrote an article about the conference, linking its themes anddiscussions to issues around funding cuts and the government’s ‘Big Society’ aspirations.

Sloam was appointed as a Discipline Associate for Sociology, Anthropology and Politics at the Higher Education Academy in 2010/11, bringing his Deweyan approach to bear on promoting the role of evidence-based ‘experiential learning’ in political science education. He was also invited by the German Federal Agency for Political Education to help develop a ‘Networking European Citizenship Initiative’, participating in development events for NECE in June and October 2013 and attending a meeting in the Hague on 14-16 November 2013.

Sloam’s continued involvement in the strategy and activities of Shout Out UK, the Intergenerational Foundation, Portsmouth City Council, StudentVoice and the German Federal Agency for Political Education demonstrate the sustainability of the relationships and impact activities he has built within this REF period. The Intergenerational Foundation’s Co-founder testifies to Sloam’s importance to their work, writing that, ‘Dr Sloam’s expertise on the political engagement of young people has been crucial to the Intergenerational Foundation's work promoting the rights of younger and future generations in policy-making. He serves on IF's Advisory Board and acts as an expert sounding board to ensure that research relevant to his area of expertise is conducted robustly’. His comments also highlight the importance of Sloam’s ability to contextualise British politics within

European political trends: ‘Dr Sloam's knowledge of youth voting patterns and youth engagement with politics has been crucial to IF's latest work which involves assessing the feasibility of extending the UK Intergenerational Fairness Index to cover all 27 European countries. This groundbreaking work attempts to compare intergenerational fairness across borders and will, we hope, provide both country specific and pan-European evidence of the intergenerational imbalance of policies’. Sloam is currently moving forward with research to assess StudentVoice’s leadership and outreach programmes, with a recent funding bid to the British Academy (decision pending).

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

1. Evidence that the government accepted the overwhelming majority of the Youth Citizenship

Commission’s recommendations is found in its response document, ‘An Agenda for Youth Engagement’ [(http://tinyurl.com/msgtwnz)](http://tinyurl.com/msgtwnz).

1. Sloam’s influence on the Youth Citizenship Commission is evidenced by written testimonials from two Commission members, including the Chair.
2. A written testimonial provides evidence of Sloam’s influence as an advisor to the

Intergenerational Foundation.

1. A written testimonial from Portsmouth City Council provides evidence of Sloam’s involvement in the Council’s ‘Local Democracy Week’.
2. Sloam’s status as Shout Out UK ambassador is corroborated at: [http://tinyurl.com/mqplqzq.](http://tinyurl.com/mqplqzq)
3. A letter from the Director of StudentVoice in support of Sloam’s British Academy application testifies to the importance of his current research to evaluate their engagement programmes.
4. Information corroborating the aims, scope and contributors for Sloam’s April 2011 HEFCE-funded conference is available at: [http://tinyurl.com/kbnu2zw.](http://tinyurl.com/kbnu2zw)
5. Information corroborating the aims, scope and contributors for Sloam’s 2013 workshops on youth participation in British democracy is available at: [http://tinyurl.com/ld8ecgg.](http://tinyurl.com/ld8ecgg)
6. The *Times Higher Education Supplement* article on Sloam’s HECFE-funded conference provides evidence of its impact and is located at: [http://tinyurl.com/q2bn226.](http://tinyurl.com/q2bn226)
7. The reach and impact of Sloam’s work is evidenced by its being cited in reports by the

Canadian Parliament [(http://tinyurl.com/kewdtxs](http://tinyurl.com/kewdtxs)), the European Commission [(http://tinyurl.com/kh5ku75)](http://tinyurl.com/kh5ku75) and the Intergeneration Foundation [(http://tinyurl.com/d875zb8](http://tinyurl.com/d875zb8)).

1. The Autumn 2011 C-SAP newsletter corroborates Sloam’s activities as Discipline Associate for

Sociology, Anthropology and Politics, 2010/11 (copy available on request).

1. Sloam’s participation in the December 2010 Inter Parliamentary Union seminar on youth participation is corroborated by the article he contributed to the *IPU Review* (Issue 33, Spring 2011) (copy available on request).