Interacting with stakeholders

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DSPI

Who am I?

- **Social/family demographer**
- My research = **population and policy in Asia**
  - Family planning (esp. in China)
  - Family policy (esp. in low fertility E Asia)
  - Changing structure of family (esp. in China and SE Asia)
  - Sex-selective abortion (esp. in China and Nepal)
  - Designing adequate measurement systems (esp. in Iraq)
- **Training**: BA History; ESRC 1+3 Econ/Soc History MPhil, PhD Historical Geography.

What do you want?

- Hints and tips?
  - Policy briefs?
  - Media exposure?
  - Blogs? Social media?
  - 'Stakeholder workshops?
  - Flowers? Chocolates?

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- **No easy short-cut**
- Requires epistemological reimagining

My journey (!)

- **The study of history**: 'for its own sake'? 'Learn from it'?

- Cambridge: latter…

- ESRC 1+3 on registration in industrialising UK

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- # 'Because its interesting'

- Arguably easier to be 'policy neutral' / 'stakeholder ignorant'

Postdoc work

- **Oxford, Vienna**
  - Contemporary demography
  - Begin work on Asia
- Good stuff, and all things above – but **little traction**
- *Frustrating!*
- But beginning of deeper engagement with stakeholders – **start to understand why**

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- Because there is a **research puzzle**?
- Because the **data** are there?
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- Valid of course…
  - But how to justify (post hoc) engagement from stakeholders

Addressing a need

- Because there is a **problem/issue** that needs to be (re)solved?

- Who **defines** the problem/issue (& strategy)?
  - The **researcher**?
    - *Intellectual independence*
    - *Risk lack of alignment/traction*
  - The **stakeholder**?
    - *Often plenty of opportunities; more likely to gain traction*
    - *Risk becoming a 'lapdog'; can be politicised; can 'lose' identity as an independent researcher*

Combination of the two

- *Researcher* and *stakeholder* have distinct, but overlapping, **needs** and **assets**
- Research issue
  - 'need answer/support/affirmation' 'relevance and impact'
- Skills
  - 'insight and execution' '(greater?) academic training / neutrality and independence?'
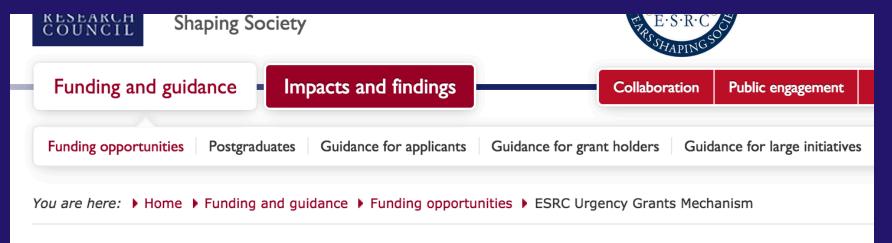- Maximise and synergise these needs/assets

Integrating stakeholder engagement from (before) the start

- '**Second guess**' what the stakeholders want to know (though deep engagement with lit.)
- **Engage pre-research design**
- Compare their **needs** with your **expectations** and design project
- Engage as **advisory board**
- Constant **interaction** and discussion
- Build **relationships** – these are people too
- **Then** *post hoc* KE activities

Calls for research

- Much pre-engagement **already performed**
- ESRC (etc.) deep engagement with stakeholders
- Funded research **dependent upon engagement and outcomes**
- More and more **specific calls** respond to this

Extreme version of this

Shaping Society

Funding and guidance | Impacts and findings | Collaboration | Public engagement

Funding opportunities | Postgraduates | Guidance for applicants | Guidance for grant holders | Guidance for large initiatives

You are here: ▶ Home ▶ Funding and guidance ▶ Funding opportunities ▶ ESRC Urgency Grants Mechanism

ESRC Urgency Grants Mechanism

ESRC Urgent Research Grants: Strategic call for proposals related to the Mediterranean migration crisis

In July 2013, ESRC piloted an Urgency Grants Mechanism, managed on a responsive mode basis, to respond to rare and unforeseen events where there is a strong case for immediate social science research. Following a review of the pilot scheme, Urgent Research Grants are now run on a strategic basis, with ESRC inviting calls for projects in areas deemed to require rapid action.

We are now opening an Urgent Research Grant all for projects related to the currently unfolding migration crisis in

My own work

- Chinese NHFPC; Municipality of Beijing; Taiwanese Labor Affairs Council; Hong Kong Government etc.
  - Various policy changes and developments
- **United Nations Population Division**
  - Global population projections
  - 2014 ESRC 'Celebrating Impact' Award ('Outstanding International Impact')
  - YouTube video

How?

- Engagement **from research design**
- **Ongoing** engagement
- **Relevance** explicit
- **Scientifically justified** and robust
- *Relationships*
  - Cordial and friendly
  - Not 'this is wrong' but ' how can we improve?'
  - A journey taken together

How does this relate to DPhils?

- Necessity post-completion
- Even if: (a) not already engaged, (b) not necessary to make policy recommendations

How does this relate to DPhils?

- **Engagement still critical**
  - Stakeholders can be *critical* 'witnesses'
  - Link to exploring **policy relevance**
  - **Locating** your research for others and for you
  - Impact *desirable* even if not *necessary*
  - Building network of contacts for afterwards
- Finding the **bad/cynical** as well as the **good**
  - Be cautious…

My final tips

- Stakeholder engagement = **like politics itself**

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- 90% relationships and reputation; 10% 'action' [maybe 80:20]

My final tips

- Stakeholder engagement = like politics itself

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- Recognise each other as '**different equals**'

- Build a relationship of mutual respect through **excellent science** and **amicable dealings**

Write a great DPhil

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Be interesting/interested

Write a great DPhil

Be interesting/interested

Be nice

Write a great DPhil

Be interesting/interested

Be nice

Buy them flowers/chocolates