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19 Introduction Susan Molyneux-Hodgson, Associate Dean for Research, SSIS

Welcome to our first College of Social Sciences and International Studies research report, covering the eventful 2020-2021 academic year. We hope an overview of research highlights will become an annual publication that draws attention to, and celebrates, the exciting research work that is going on across all our departments.

Suffice to say, this is only a selection of a vast array of research related activity, demonstrating our resilience in research, even in the pandemic-interrupted year. In compiling the material, we have aimed to give a sense of both the depth and breadth of activity and of causes for celebration, so it is by no means comprehensive, just a (purposive) sampling of what we have achieved.

Staff have responded with incredible innovation to the challenges that the 2020-21 year put before us. Online training for PGRs, video-based conferences, research debates using a chat function, global conversations, novel solutions to online research ethics … the numerous ways in which people have adapted and experimented has highlighted our inherent capacity to reflect and act as scholars and colleagues.

Ongoing success with EU funding programmes is tremendous to see and gives impetus to maintain good levels of interaction with our contacts and networks across the rest of Europe. Deadlines for some EU work programmes are already within sight and we increasingly see calls for proposals from many funders that have short notice periods. This shows the need for us to develop flexible research plans – at individual, group, Department and College level – with pipelines of ideas and contacts, to be able to respond when the timing is right. It has been impressive to see people accessing new funding sources and learning about new funding opportunities at this time. Recent workshops we have run on interdisciplinary opportunities have been incredibly exciting and are the start of conversations that will go into the next academic year. New routes for knowledge exchange, social innovation and academic debate, are beginning.

Inevitably, when producing a review, it will involve saying farewell to some people. Marc Valeri will be stepping back from his exemplary time as DPGR in College and we welcome Alex Prichard into the role; Jane Elliott ably oversaw our response to the demands of impact, included for the REF, and her role will be revised in readiness for the post-REF period; there will be shuffles in department DoRs, DDSs and DoIs. We also saw departures from our valued research support team. I would like to say a huge ‘thank you’ for your service to the collective endeavour. Many new research active colleagues will arrive from this autumn and I know you will join me in welcoming them into our research fold.

We can expect 2021-22 to bring new challenges and opportunities. We will hear the outcome of the most recent REF exercise and the implications for funding in the sector. The funding landscape is presenting new openings – often of an interdisciplinary nature – alongside our more usual funding outlets: our opportunities are, in many senses, expanding.

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Some of these will require some of us to cross boundaries we may not have done before ... meet people we may never have imagined talking to let alone researching alongside; finding ways to generate knowledge and impact whatever the context. What the past year has shown us, and is evident from this review, is, we are already good at doing this in even the most unusual circumstances.

Susan Molyneux-Hodgson, Associate Dean for Research, SSIS
Overview

2020-21 has been a year like no other. Despite the challenges posed by a global pandemic and a REF submission, as a College we have continued to deliver outstanding research:

- Securing £4.88m of funding for future projects, with a further £2m pending subject to contract
- Submitting applications totalling £34.5m
- Publishing 23 books, 72 chapters and 234 journal articles
- Supervising 52 students to PhD completion

Some of Our Funders

TWICEASGOOD: Inequality in Female Electoral Representation

Susan Banducci (Politics) has been awarded a European Research Council (ERC) Advanced Grant to examine the causes of persistent inequality in female electoral representation globally. The research will explore why there are more male than female politicians around the world, and investigate if sexism, discrimination and violence are to blame.

The TWICEASGOOD project, worth close to £2.5m, will examine if there is a ‘gender penalty’ faced by women candidates. Researchers will investigate the causes and consequences of sexism in campaigns, and how it varies in different countries and cultures. They will also explore if there is a relationship between sexism and gender-based violence in election campaigns.

The project will assess the role of the media, both traditional and social, in reflecting or promoting sexism and violence against women political candidates. The team will collect data from voters via observations, surveys and experiments. Researchers will spend time with candidates on the campaign trail, observing interactions with the media and voters, and exploring how gender may affect their path to political office. This data will be analysed alongside online interactions across a variety of electoral and cultural contexts.

The project and its findings will play an important role in paving the way for more socially just and representative political systems.

SSIS Applications and Awards (£m)

“Our investigation into gender bias in electoral politics will break new ground and lead to a more complete understanding of the persistent inequality in women’s representation around the world.”

Susan Banducci
A Philosophy of Open Science

“We will explore the inequities affecting research around the world and facilitate transnational collaboration that acknowledges the value of diverse methods and perspectives.”

Sabina Leonelli

Sabina Leonelli (Sociology, Philosophy and Anthropology) has been awarded a European Research Council (ERC) Consolidator Grant worth over £1.5m for a major project to support the global implementation of open science. Open science is the practice of making research results and data accessible to anyone and everyone. By promoting transparency and information sharing, open science is transforming research and presenting novel challenges to research communities. For the first time, this project will articulate a philosophy of this movement, facilitating exchanges across different types of research environments and promoting best practice.

By focusing on plant and agricultural research, the project will contribute to tackling two key challenges – food security and planetary health. Sabina’s team will observe researchers at work in diverse research environments around the world, as well as working with policymakers attempting to implement open science.

The work will help to address current concerns about how open science can operate between scientists working with vastly different resources and will showcase how exchanges of information between scientists can boost research excellence.

China and Contemporary Development in the Middle East

Adam Hanieh, newly appointed in the Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies, has been awarded Carnegie funding worth over £400,000 for his research project ‘Supporting Knowledge and Mapping Regional Connections: China and Contemporary Development in the Middle East’. The aim is to explore, map and analyse the economic and humanitarian influence of China in the Middle East.

Existing research on China and the Middle East has focused almost exclusively on the significance of the Middle East’s oil exports to China’s geopolitical ambitions in the region. This focus on oil overlooks China’s growing power throughout a range of other essential sectors in the Middle East, including financial markets, business and commercial activities, labour markets, and humanitarian and civil society initiatives. The rapidly evolving role of China in these sectors holds potentially crucial consequences for patterns of future social and economic development in the Middle East, yet these implications have not been adequately explored or analysed.

The project will ask how the interdependencies established through these four sectors are shaping socio-economic development in the Middle East, with a particular focus on patterns of inequality and marginalisation. In doing so, the project will produce a detailed understanding of the various actors, networks, and flows – both state and non-state – that connect China and the Middle East today.

The research will be multi-sited and region-wide in scope, going beyond the standard focus on bilateral connections between China and a handful of core countries. In addition to delivering new knowledge on cross-regional connections between China and the Middle East, the project will strengthen international academic networks and research collaboration. The project places a very strong emphasis on mentorship and training of early career researchers in the Middle East, which will contribute to longer term capacity building for knowledge production in the region.
Generation Covid and Social Mobility

With colleagues at London School of Economics, Lee Elliot Major has recently won a UKRI grant ‘Generation Covid and Social Mobility: Evidence and Policy’ to produce a detailed assessment of Covid-19’s impact on education and employment opportunities facing younger generations and to study the long-term consequences for social mobility in the UK.

The starting point of the empirical analysis is to show how children’s educational environment has been affected by the pandemic and how opportunities for learning from home differ by socioeconomic status. The study will document how differences across individuals in parental time inputs, monetary inputs (such as online tutoring), and access to online schooling resources, differ by socioeconomic background. The study aims to quantify how these inputs combine to produce marketable skills and will discuss policies to remedy the falls in inputs and ensure that the talent of children who have missed out on key instruction time does not go unfulfilled.

The research team will look at how individuals from different backgrounds have had different labour market outcomes during lockdown. In particular, the project will consider evidence and policies surrounding school and university admissions, vocational training and reskilling, and more general labour market policies such as job guarantees. The team will present a series of policy proposals aimed at preventing current economic inequalities being further exacerbated by Covid-19.

The research project will make use of a range of datasets that follow young people as they age: Understanding Society, the Millennium Cohort Study and Next Steps. These datasets allow researchers to link home environments with labour market outcomes for birth cohorts and contain data looking at how the Covid-19 pandemic has affected study participants. In order to gauge public support, the research team will carry out a survey asking members of the public their views on the redistributive policies that the team is proposing.

GLAM-E Lab

Andrea Wallace, Mathilde Pavis and Gary Stringer, in partnership with Michael Weinber (Engelberg Center on Innovation Law and Policy, NYU) and Jason Schultz (NYU Law School), have been awarded over £300,000 by the Arts and Humanities Research Council for the GLAM-E Lab research project.

This project works with UK and US cultural institutions and community organisations to support with legal, technical and ethical issues related to the digitization of cultural heritage resources. The Lab Participants include the Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Black Southwest Network, New York State Museum, Nomad and Insider Art.

The Lab aims to provide smaller and less well-resourced organisations with information and expertise regarding a range of legal issues, including:

- rights clearance and intellectual property rights management of material cultural heritage
- intellectual property rights and open access frameworks for digital cultural heritage
- the design of cultural permissions and access parameters (or prohibitions) through extensive consultation with communities of origin
- 2D and 3D digitization of complex objects
- virtual and immersive technologies
- intangible cultural heritage and oral histories
- knowledge production, equity and narratives around cultural heritage
- contractual and licensing agreements with third parties
- privacy, confidentiality and data protection
- the creation, management and sustainability of community archives

The Lab will explore what existing resources and platforms can be adapted to the needs of smaller and less well-resourced institutions and organisations to close gaps in expertise related to knowledge, law and technology. The project will establish what new opportunities flow from open access programs that may lead to new connections or revenue generation for sustainable digital initiatives.
Our Postgraduate Research Community

Doctoral students are a huge part of the SSIS community with 607 students currently based in the College. In the past academic year, 52 students have successfully completed, and we have awarded £529,000 of scholarships for students starting in September 2021.

Our students go on to establish themselves within a wide range of careers, including academia. Alongside their research projects, many PGRs do amazing outreach and impact work and support their peers through conferences and networking, gaining vital skills along the way.

The Long Night
Building on her PhD work relating to the use of sleeping medication in older people, Georgia Smith has recently been awarded a Mildred Blaxter Post-Doctoral Fellowship by the Foundation for the Sociology of Health and Illness. Georgia’s project is entitled ‘The Long Night: A Sociological Exploration of the Pharmacological Cultures of Sleep in Later Life’. Georgia completed her undergraduate degree at the University of Exeter before completing an ESRC funded PhD in 2020. Her PhD research explored the experiences of older adults using prescribed sleeping medication, paying particular attention to discourses around dependence and addiction. Placing the night ‘centre stage’, she argued that the consumption of sleeping tablets can be conceptualised as ‘emotional management’. Via use, older individuals can elude the emotional, physical and psychic threats of night-time.

Young Lawyers Committee of the Human Rights Lawyers Association
In March 2021, Mollie Gascoigne, a second-year doctoral student in Exeter Law School, was invited to join the Young Lawyers Committee of the Human Rights Lawyers Association. The Human Rights Lawyers Association (HRLA) is a forum for legal professionals and people interested in the law to discuss human rights issues. The committee is tasked with organising a careers day and judicial review mooting. The committee will also inform Mollie’s research. She will gain practical understanding of human rights works and specifically human rights analysis of legal gender recognition. The committee provides a mechanism for her to disseminate her findings too, as she can incorporate her research into the various events and outputs of the committee.

GIAS: Global Islamic Archaeology Showcase 2020
The Global Islamic Archaeology Showcase (GIAS) was an online conference initiated and organised by Hannah Parsons-Morgan and Awek Teklehamnont Araya, two PhD candidates from the Centre for Islamic Archaeology, based in the Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies (IAIS). Held on 24 September and 3 October 2020, GIAS was a free online conference that brought together early career researchers working within the field of Islamic archaeology regardless of geographical or chronological focus. A broad range of topics was covered – from shipwrecks to inscriptions, architecture to ceramics – spanning the continents of Africa, Asia and Europe, from the 7th to the 20th century.

Surrogacy: Health and Wellbeing
Based at the Wellcome Centre for Cultures and Environments of Health, Zaina Mahmoud is a final year PhD student whose research focuses on the impact of the legal and health frameworks regulating surrogacy. She was recently awarded funding to organise a conference from the Society of Legal Scholars’ Small Projects and Events Fund. This conference, due to take place in 2022, will bring together academics, practitioners and stakeholders to discuss future directions in surrogacy regulation. Alongside collaborators, Zaina has also designed an interactive storytelling game for the Being Human Festival 2021. The online game invites participants to think about surrogacy from stakeholders’ perspectives (e.g. intended parent and surrogate) in different jurisdictions, adding them to ‘play’ as different characters.

InSPAration: Impact and Dissemination Workshop
In early July 2021, PGRs in SPA organised a workshop on impact and dissemination in preparation for a conference in October 2021 titled, ‘Research Impact in a Digital Culture’. The July workshop offered InSPAration conference presenters a chance to explore what is meant by impact; how it can be achieved and how to use recording and streaming software effectively. Given an increasingly virtual conference culture, the workshop offered students a head start in academia’s ‘new normal’ – a digital world.

AI in the Boardroom: let the law be in the driving seat
Pete Underwood, based in Law, published a paper discussing law in relation to the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in the boardroom. He argued AI can be used in three key ways in the corporate world:
1. To tackle corporate short-termism
2. To assist in considering wider societal interests, digesting big data on a daily basis
3. To enable directors to achieve the Environmental Social Governance goals of the company

Ethics via Lego!
Warren Speed (PGR student and GSE Ethics SIG Convenor) and Karen Kenny (LEGOS Serious Play Facilitator) organised a set of three workshops in July 2021 focused on exploring the LEGO Serious Play facilitation methodology. Open to all GSE staff and students, the workshops used the methodology to ‘Build confidence in ethics in educational research’.
Early Career Successes

Beat of Our Hearts
Charlotte Jones (SPA) and Fred Cooper (History), both based in the Wellcome Centre for Cultures and Environments of Health, have been successful in obtaining funding from UK Research and Innovation’s Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) for a new theatre engagement project focused on addressing the loneliness experienced as a result of LGBTIQ&A marginalisation.

‘The Beat of Our Hearts – staging new histories of LGBTIQ&A loneliness’ will run in partnership with playwright Natalie McGrath, the Intercom Trust and the Exeter Northcott Theatre. The project will deliver a programme of engagement with groups in Devon and Cornwall. This will culminate in a festival of public events, including an original theatrical performance on the recent histories of LGBTIQ&A loneliness.

Hidden Histories of Environmental Science
Davide Pettinato, Catriona McKinnon, Kevin Gaston (ESI) and Saniya Chervualli-Contractor (Coventry University) have been awarded two Leverhulme Early Career awards. These awards are highly competitive: to have two new projects starting within one department in a single year is a significant achievement.

Forensic Citizenship: Science and expertise in Latin America
Arendy Cruz Santiago will explore the politics of searching for the disappeared in Mexico. When governments fail to investigate disappearances and human rights abuses, relatives of victims of violence in Latin America take investigations in their own hands by creating alternative systems of evidence collection and analysis to those provided by the State. This project unearths the historical development of these alternative forensic grassroots practices that have emerged in Argentina and Colombia. By combining qualitative empirical research, along with archival and documentary examination, Forensic Citizenship will be the first international comparative research of its kind.

A New Philosophy of Biology for a New Century
Tyler Brunet will be joining us from Cambridge University to explore philosophical approaches to molecular biology. Revitalized by recent successes within molecular biology, this century has seen the development of two new ontologies for bioscience: mechanism and processualism. This is not confined to philosophy: working biologists also fruitfully mix mechanistic and processual concepts in their practice and theory. This research will explore how these two perspectives can be reconciled in order to provide a unified view of life at the molecular level.

Policy@Exeter
Policy@Exeter’s vision is simple: to act as cross-disciplinary community of practice that builds capacity for policy learning and change.

Social-science led, Policy@Exeter is a platform to enable university-wide knowledge exchange and collaboration for the benefit of all researchers. This platform will enable the development of conceptual, empirical and applied methods and approaches to meet the complex grand challenges faced by societies around the world. It will offer analysis in, and for, policy actors, concentrating on prescriptive techniques, tools and processes that can help on the ground.

Led by Claire Dunlop, Policy@Exeter has recently launched its website, offering a wealth of resources for researchers at any career level wanting to engage with policy: how-to guides, templates, case studies, video interviews and much more.

Alongside the website Policy@Exeter runs a programme of events to create opportunities for researchers to engage with policymakers at regional, national and international level and to give researchers the skills they need to communicate with MPs and other policymakers. Highlights from the programme include:

Policy Impact Workshop with ‘Sense about Science’
In October 2021, a bespoke, one-day in person workshop for 40 researchers will run on how to communicate research effectively to policymakers and opinion-formers. This event will include a ‘policy panel’, with local MPs and senior policy makers and a ‘media panel’ with senior journalists and communicators.

Tender Writing Workshop
Policy@Exeter worked with Bridget Sealey (Consultant) during 2020-2021 to organise an event for academics to support them in applying for Government tenders.

Engaging with Select Committees Workshop
Policy@Exeter worked with Tomas Williams, Senior Education and Engagement Officer for UK Parliament to run a workshop on Engaging with Select Committees.

Arts and Humanities Policy Engagement
Policy@Exeter partnered with the Institute for Government, a leading independent think tank which aims to improve government effectiveness through research and analysis. Together they have developed and delivered a bespoke training course to facilitate policy engagement for researchers working in the arts and humanities.

In 2021/22, Policy@Exeter will be officially launched and build momentum across its programme of activity.

“By far the most well organised workshop of this type that I have ever attended.”

“Sessions were incredibly accessible, practical, info packed and very engaging.”
Building Our Partnerships

Digital Societies

Existing expertise is being pulled together to develop a Digital Societies strand in SSIS, with the support of IIB and in collaboration with a selection of external partners. The College is at the forefront of research that is questioning, critiquing and challenging a wide array of practices and innovations, with a particular focus on understanding the ethical, philosophical, legal and social dimensions of living in an increasingly digitalised world.

Current areas include:

- Data justice – e.g. the ethical implications of data usage, and challenges to justice in a datalled world
- Data studies – interrogating the processes and implications of digitalisation and data practices
- Digital social science – using and developing innovative digital methods for social science research

Recent online workshops have included ‘Equitable Digital Societies’ and ‘Trustworthy Autonomous Marine Systems’.

Up to 2021, there are three Alan Turing Fellows within SSIS, and new fellows will be announced later in the year:

- Susan Banducci
- Sabina Leonelli
- Niccolò Tempini

Through 2021-22, we will be looking to develop the Digital Societies theme further, seeking to deepen links with external partners, such as The Ada Lovelace Institute, policymakers in local and national government, and partners within industry. This research theme is rich with funding options and with opportunities to work across disciplines and externally.

Social Justice

Working in close partnership with Devon and Cornwall Police (DCP), the Policing and Evidence Group (PEG) is dedicated to identifying how research can inform, engage with and challenge practice within policing and the criminal justice system more widely. PEG is an interdisciplinary team of researchers with expertise in criminology, law, public health, psychology and sociology. This collaboration has been instrumental in Abi Dymond’s work into the use of police force and Dana Wilson-Kovacs’ work into digital forensics.

Since 2018, Dreolin Fleischer has worked as a Research Fellow embedded in Devon and Cornwall Police (DCP). Funding has come from both Exeter and DCP, as well as ESRC IAA grant awards. The work focuses on academic-practitioner partnerships within policing, as well as knowledge creation, exchange, and translation. Dreolin’s embedded role helps to inform her other research work: a Research Fellow position on a realist evaluation of a Behaviour Change Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (BC IDVA) intervention for non-statutory domestic abuse perpetrators and a (recently completed) project on (de)escalation in police use of force incidents involving TASER, funded by the Policing Lab.

Food and the Environment

SSIS is strengthening research partnerships across the agricultural, food and environmental sectors. As part of RENEW – the University’s NERC Changing the Environment application – new links were established between SSIS and a number of partners including Natural England and the National Trust. The CRPR (Centre for Rural Policy Research) is also a key focus for this area of work.

Researchers within CRPR have collaborated with DEFRA to explore ‘what works’ for farmers in relation to schemes to reward environmental land management (ELM). The findings identified a number of enablers and barriers to success, as well as environmental, social and economic outcomes associated with collaborative environmental land management.

CRPR has worked with a range of other external partners to conduct research into areas such as social isolation, loneliness and mental health problems; and alternative sources of labour within agriculture, for example, supporting individuals who are homeless, ex-military, from disadvantaged backgrounds or recently released from prison to gain new skills and work within farming:

- Farming Community Network
- Farming Health Hub
- The Arthur Rank Centre
- The Worshipful Company of Farmers

Locally, CRPR is working with Good Food Exeter to identify how to scale-up of farm-to-fork strategies and make agro-ecological and local food more accessible to lower-income groups in Devon.

Across the University, the Food Studies Network facilitates knowledge exchange of all aspect of food production and consumption: environmental, social justice, health and wellbeing. The network creates links between Exeter and external partners through food-focused teaching, lectures, seminars, workshops, conferences, research opportunities and outcomes.

Contact: foodstudies@exeter.ac.uk.
Researching a Pandemic

Since the start of the Covid-19 crisis, SSIS has been responsive to the emerging research needs. Twelve Covid-19 related research projects have been funded in the past year, focused on topics ranging from education to farming and food systems to human rights. Several of the projects were resourced via the UKRI-ESRC C-19 Call.

It is clear that both longstanding and novel, social, legal and political challenges will need to be addressed over the long term and we expect our social scientists will be at the forefront of research and innovation into the impacts of Covid-19. A small selection of the work is described here.

Vaccine Passports
What is more important: public health or individual freedom?
Ana Beduschi was awarded just under £100,000 by ESRC to investigate ‘the human rights implications of digital certificates for health status verification’.

The UK government is considering introducing ‘immunity passports’. The digital certificates could record information about immunity, vaccination status and test results. This information could then be used to determine what rights individuals have (whether they can return to work or travel to certain destinations) and create a new distinction between individuals based on their health status. This poses human rights considerations.

The technologies adopted during the current pandemic will have a lasting impact on our societies. They will shape how we evaluate the trade-offs between data privacy, human rights, and public health interests and create a new benchmark in this area.

This project will evaluate whether and how digital certificates for health status affect our individual freedom?

Distrust and Conspiracy
Do anti-establishment sentiments and distrust in elites and experts limit the ability of governments to effectively deal with Covid-19?
Florian Stoeckel is the Principal Investigator of the project ‘Distrust, Conspiracies and the Political Challenges of Coping with Covid-19’. The project is funded by the British Academy and is being conducted with co-investigators, Sofia Vasilopoulou (University of York) and Jason Reifler (Exeter).

Working across the UK, Germany and Italy, the project will examine how anti-establishment distrust correlates with attitudes to the coronavirus crisis. The team aims to understand how citizens process Covid-19-related misinformation. Findings from the research will have important implications for policy responses to public health crises and advance our theoretical understanding of misperceptions.

An initial paper analysing the relationship between parental hesitancy to childhood vaccines reported in public opinion surveys and actual vaccine up-take was published in the journal, Vaccine (June 2021). This analysis was carried out by Florian, together with Jason Reifler, Ben Lyons (University of Utah) and Charlie Carter (LSE).

‘Assessing the link between survey responses and actual uptake is important because public opinion survey data on vaccine hesitancy is only useful if it is in fact related to behaviour’.
Florian Stoeckel

Food System Impacts of Covid-19
A research team from the Centre for Rural Policy Research led by Michael Winter OBE, has been awarded over £180,000 by the UKRI-ESRC to examine the impacts of Covid-19 on the UK’s food system. The project will explore how the supply chain was affected across key commodities: dairy, fish, flour, fresh fruit and vegetables and meat.

The team will conduct online research covering media and social media stories of supply chain issues and concerns. The research team has also established a panel of experts for England drawn from each of the five main food sectors, as well as industry representative bodies, and nutrition specialists. Researchers will hold fortnightly ‘Team’ calls with the panel members and produce monthly bulletins. This up-to-date intelligence will feed directly into policymaking.

Pandemic Times: Covid-19, Popular Mobilisation, and Socioeconomic Inequalities in Lebanon
Lebanon is a crucial case for understanding how the Covid-19 pandemic might be affecting socioeconomic and political dynamics in the Middle East. Political instability within Lebanon is fuelled by a range of factors: social inequality; a large refugee population from neighbouring Syria; and different sectarian communities. A grant from the British Academy to Adam Hanieh will enable fieldwork in Lebanon, with research outputs including a transcription of selected interviews for a leading Middle East-related website, alongside academic articles.

Centre for Social Mobility
The Centre for Social Mobility has kept in close contact with government advisers and officials in order to communicate the impact of Covid-19 on educational and employment outcomes and how this, in turn, will impact on social mobility.

In April 2020, Lee Elliot Major, together with Emily Tyers (a Teacher of Human Science at Ivybridge Community College) and Robin Chu (CEO of CoachBright) published a proposal for a national tutoring service. Following this, a £350m, government funded National Tutoring Programme (NTP) has been launched to provide targeted support for those children and young people who most need help.

In addition, the Centre has led on three submissions to the Parliamentary Committee on Education regarding the impact of Covid-19 on education. These have been submitted in partnership with leading think tanks and other universities such as University College Dublin. The research has involved University of Exeter students: masters student Joanna Merrett and PhD candidate Malcolm Richards were co-authors of a paper on home education, together with Anna Mountford-Zimdars.

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New Media and Revolution: Resistance and Dissent in Pre-uprising Syria
by Billie Jeanne Brownlee
Published by McGill-Queen’s University Press (2020)

From online dissent to street protest: exploring the seeds of Syria’s revolution through the development of new media and information technologies.

The Arab Spring did not arise out of nowhere. It was the physical manifestation of more than a decade of new media diffusion, use, and experimentation that empowered ordinary people during their everyday lives. In this book, Billie Jeanne Brownlee offers a refreshing insight into the way new media can facilitate a culture of resistance and dissent in authoritarian states. Investigating the root causes of the Syrian uprising of 2011, New Media and Revolution shows how acts of online resistance prepared the ground for better-organised street mobilisation.

Popeye and Curly: 120 Days in Medieval Baghdad
Written and illustrated by Emily Selove, Senior Lecturer of Medieval Arabic Language and Literature
Published by Silver Goat Media (2021)

Enjoy one hundred and twenty scenes from the vibrant city of Abbasid Baghdad, starring book-loving author Popeye (Al-Jahiz) and winebibbing poet Curly (Abu Nuwas), along with their friends Coral (a singing girl) and the Caliph of one of the world’s most influential empires in history. Each episode is derived from historical sources, and designed to entertain, educate, and amaze.

Exeter-Habib Seminars: Islam After Colonialism
This innovative online seminar series was a collaboration between the University of Exeter and Habib University in Karachi, Pakistan. The webinars brought together experts in history, political thought, critical theory and related fields to discuss the transformation of Islam in the wake of colonialism in a South Asian context. The series, which ran throughout 2021, aired on Zoom and was then broadcast on YouTube and Facebook, attracting over 20,000 views.

Conversations with Ilan Pappe
Ilan Pappe presented a series of conversations with leading thinkers, academics and activists: Angela Davis; Noam Chomsky; Paul Gilroy; Judith Butler; Yannis Varoufakis and Nadine El-Enany. Topics discussed included: colonial violence and anticolonial resistance; crisis and disobedience; impasse, internationalism and radical change; and the progression towards transnational movements for justice.

Instagram Research Publication
In a world-first, William Gallois’s research was simultaneously published on Instagram and in an academic journal (the American Historical Review). ‘An Illumination of a Floating World’ explores the lasting legacy of one of Algeria’s most influential modern artists, Mohammed Racim as a means of thinking about decolonial approaches to the imperial past and to scholarship on north Africa and Islamic art more generally.

Not only can an Instagram account circulate scores – or hundreds or thousands – of hitherto unpublished images, but its mode of formatting allows writers to produce hybrid forms of commentary, in which the ordering, layering and rhythm of sequences of images plays as large a part in the making of meaning as any accompanying textual analysis.

Oral Histories of the Sinjari Yazidis
Working in partnership with the Kashkul arts and research institute of the American University of Iraq at Sulaimani (AUIS), Christine Robins was awarded an AHRC grant for a project entitled ‘Sinjar Lives: Oral Histories from the IDP camps of Northern Iraq’.

In 2014, 300,000 Yazidis were expelled from their home on Mount Sinjar in Northern Iraq by genocidal attacks at the hands of so-called ‘Islamic state’ (Da’esh). Some 200,000 remain in internally displaced people (IDP) camps in the Kurdistan region.

The project will enable the Sinjar Yazidis (aka Yazidis/Ezidis) to become researchers and curators of their cultural history through using smart phones to record oral histories. This will be a case study in egalitarian archiving, developing methodology and practice in crisis situations. For local people, it will be a unique witness to Iraq’s multicultural past, spoken in voices that are rarely heard.

exeter.ac.uk/iais/research
Graduate School of Education

INSIDE

Christopher Boyle is the principal investigator and George Koutsouris is the co-investigator of ‘Integrating Special needs Individuals into Digital Holistic Education’ (INSIDE), funded by ESRC-MOST. The ‘INSIDE’ is an innovative project which focuses on the social inclusion of Special Education Needs (SEN) students, specifically focusing on the use of digital resources to support the needs of SEN pupils.

The project is coordinated by Antalya Provincial Directory of National Education (AMONE) within the partnership of Akdeniz University (AU), The University of Exeter (UNEXE), The University of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU), The University College Dublin and AIJU.

The project will create an opportunity for teachers to explore how school closures (due to Covid-19) impacted on English teaching in a project entitled ‘Teaching English when Schools are Closed: Experiences and lessons learnt for the future about teaching English remotely’. The project will aim to reflect on and share their experiences, giving ‘voice’ to professionals who have negotiated an unprecedented challenge.

The research builds on an Exeter rapid response survey exploring the impact of school closure, which features among the evidence the Education Select Committee is considering for future policy development.

Digital Literacies for Foreign Language Teachers

Working in Partnership with National Taiwan Normal University, Li Li has been awarded an ESRC-MOST Networking Grant (2021-2022) for a project entitled: ‘Digital literacies for Second/Foreign Language Teachers’. This project is a co-funded project by ESRC and Taiwan Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST).

The research will shed light on issues around digital literacies, including inequality, power and social identities and enable researchers in the field of digital literacies to share the best practice and enhance knowledge exchange across cultures.

Teaching English Remotely

Annabel Watson has received funding from BERA (British Educational Research Association) to explore how school closures (due to Covid-19) impacted on English teaching in a project entitled ‘Teaching English when Schools are Closed: Experiences and lessons learnt for the future about teaching English remotely’. The project will create an opportunity for teachers to reflect on and share their experiences, giving ‘voice’ to professionals who have negotiated an unprecedented challenge.

The research builds on an Exeter rapid response survey exploring the impact of school closure, which features among the evidence the Education Select Committee is considering for future policy development.

Silver Stories Pilot Project

Working in collaboration with Silver Stories charity, George Koutsouris has been awarded funding from the ESRC IAA Co-creation Fund to conduct a 12-month pilot evaluation project of the Silver Stories programme. The project involves school age children reading to older people and aims to tackle both social isolation/wellbeing issues and reading difficulties. The research will evaluate how the Silver Stories programme works and its potential outcomes for social wellbeing and literacy. The co-investigators are Patricia Nash and Brahim Norwich.

Review of Evidence on Implementation in Education

Darren Moore has received funding from the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) for a research project to review evidence of implementation in education. Co-applicants include Dave Hall (GSE), colleagues from the College of Medicine and Health, and at University of Cardiff and University of Plymouth.

The project aims to develop a rich understanding of effective schools and how they put new approaches into practice. The project seeks to develop a rich understanding of effective implementation in schools, integrating the best available international research evidence with insights on current implementation practices in schools. The research will be used by the EEF to inform an update to the guidance report, ‘Putting Evidence to Work: A School’s Guide to Implementation’.

STEM Education in Qatar

Working in collaboration with Qatar University, Nasser Mansour has received funding from Qatar National Research Fund for a project entitled: ‘Promoting the Sustainable Development of K12 STEM Education in Qatar in a Digital Age’.

In this work, the research team will aim to design and implement new conceptual frameworks, technology enhancement, and pedagogy to enhance skills and competences needed for sustainable development of STEM education in Qatar, as well as use pedagogical, psychological, and health sciences to evaluate and enhance outcomes of student learning. Exeter University will lead on a project focused on ‘Enhancing STEM teaching through teacher professional development’.

Global Thought

Li Li has set up an interdisciplinary research network between Exeter and Fudan University (Shanghai, China), supported by the University’s Global Partnership Development Fund. The Exeter-Fudan Global Thought Network facilitates cross-cultural exchange and collaboration between academics and PGRs in social sciences and humanities in SSIS and at Fudan University. The network has launched projects examining citizen empowerment in global perspective, Liberalism and Confucianism in China and Europe, and immigration and social opportunities.

exeter.ac.uk/education/research
were fewer opportunities for those at risk and with less social contact, there increased domestic violence and its warning signs during the pandemic.

During the pandemic, domestic violence behaviours of those who witness domestic abuse have increased, putting a strain on the system. The ground-breaking project was awarded funding by Public Health Wales to explore to investigate radical new solutions to stop abuse in the home. The Wales Violence Prevention Unit, Rachel Fenton has been awarded funding by Public Health Wales to investigate radical new solutions to stop abuse in the home.

Domestic Abuse: Bystander Research

In collaboration with the Wales Violence Prevention Unit, Rachel Fenton has been awarded funding by Public Health Wales to explore to investigate radical new solutions to stop abuse in the home. The ground-breaking work will look at the experiences and behaviours of those who witness domestic abuse and its warning signs during the pandemic.

During the pandemic, domestic violence increased and with less social contact, there were fewer opportunities for those at risk to seek support or for bystanders, such as concerned family, friends, volunteers and colleagues, to intervene. However, there are new opportunities for different groups of people, including neighbours, colleagues in virtual meetings and delivery drivers, to spot the warning signs of abuse and take safe action. The research will help develop long-term bystander intervention training programmes which will be invaluable to equip more people in society with the knowledge and skills necessary to safely intervene when they are witness to or have concerns about abuse.

This work builds on Rachel’s prior work into domestic abuse which has led to the development of the Intervention Initiative, a free training resource for universities and further education settings to prevent sexual harassment, sexual coercion, rape and domestic abuse through empowering students to act as prosocial citizens and safely intervene to challenge behaviours around sexual harassment or violence.

Watermarks and 3D Printing: A system for licensing

James Griffin has been awarded an AHRC grant to develop further the impact of a 3D-printing digital watermarking system which was developed in a project led by the University of Exeter.

3D printing is increasingly important as a means to redistribute the manufacturing of products. World trade may transform from one around distributing products, to one around distributing digitalised product designs: manufacturing will become de-globalised and be placed nearer consumers. Intellectual property rights are difficult to enforce against end-consumers in the emerging world of personal 3D printing.

The digital watermark system allows for 3DP companies to be able to legally license the use of their works using a digital platform.

The digital watermark system was designed to develop further the impact of a 3D-printing system for licensing in the emerging world of personal 3D printing.

Forced Migrants in Higher Education

Working with Nick Gill (Geography), Ben Hudson has been awarded an SSIS ADR Discretionary grant to explore the engagement of Higher Education Institutions with students from forced migration backgrounds.

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), only 3% of refugees presently access higher education (HE), compared to a 37% global HE access rate. UK universities have responded promisingly by offering ‘sanctuary scholarships’ to students from forced migration backgrounds. Nevertheless, the sector’s overall response remains uncoordinated, piecemeal and under-ambitious. This project aims to catalyse a much-needed step-change in the engagement of universities with students from forced migration backgrounds.

Community Advice and Support Services

The Community Justice Hub and Policy Clinic has been awarded an education incubator grant to examine some of the prominent issues identified by CASS+ (Community Advice and Support Services), a local charity that works alongside courts in Devon and Cornwall to support offenders and victims.

Two students from law and criminology backgrounds will develop projects to address underlying social issues that impact criminal justice, such as housing and mental health support. Working in collaboration with CASS+, they will create a working group to host a series of workshops with key stakeholders.

This collaboration with CASS+ has been facilitated by the Community Law Clinic which has enabled law students to work with local organisations to support members of the public with real life legal issues.
Politics

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office Fellowship

In March 2021, David Lewis was awarded funding from the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) to extend his secondment working as a Research Fellow in government until August 2022. This secondment follows his earlier ESRC/AHRC Knowledge Exchange Fellowship (March 2019-February 2021). These awards provide the opportunity for Fellows to be seconded into the FCDO to work alongside, advise and influence policymakers. David works in the FCDO on Russian foreign policy in the Eastern Research Group. The role provides many opportunities to contribute to a better UK understanding of Russia and its role in the world through research, analysis and briefings, and engagement in internal policy debates. The aim of these Fellowships is not only to provide an opportunity for direct impact on analysis and foreign policy, but also to create deeper engagement between academia and the policy world and to build long-term, two-way relationships between Exeter and the FCDO.

An example of how this relationship impacts on research is the publication of ‘Regional Powers and Post-NATO Afghanistan’ NDC Research Paper No. 30 edited by David Lewis and Aniseh Bassiri Tabrizi and published by NATO Defence College, Rome (June 2021).

Warnings from the Archive: A Century of British Intervention in the Middle East

This interdisciplinary project explores two official inquiries, one hundred years apart, into British military intervention in Iraq: the 1917 Mesopotamia Commission into the failures of Britain’s military effort during the First World War in Mesopotamia, and the 2016 Iraq ‘Chilcot’ Inquiry into Britain’s role in the 2003 US-led invasion and occupation of Iraq. Both enquiries offered a remarkably similar verdict: the failure in both cases was one of poor planning and execution. The similarity was so striking that the Chilcot inquiry referred to the Mesopotamia Commission as the ‘first Iraq inquiry’. Yet to date, there has been no comparative research of either inquiry.

This project will examine these inquiries to get beneath official thinking and reveal the contexts, values, cultures and beliefs that have shaped British grand strategy; the lessons learnt – and lost – from a century of intervention; and the voices heard and unheard. Funded by the Leverhulme Trust, the project is led by Owen Thomas and supported by Catrina Pennell (History) and Margot Tudor (Politics).

NERC Changing the Environment Bid

Catrina McKinnon played an integral role in the development of the £10m interdisciplinary RENEW application to the NERC (Natural Environment Research Council) ‘Changing the Environment’ call. The application includes involvement from across all the Colleges, and if successful will see Catriona acting as a Co-Director. A number of other colleagues from Politics and SPA were also involved in getting this complex application submitted. We will find out whether it is successful later in the year, but have established partnerships and opportunities for the future whatever the outcome.

Kleptocracy and Professional Services

How it is possible to attain security, promote development and the international rule of law, while simultaneously enabling kleptocracy on a global scale?

London’s financial, legal and related professional service sectors are world leaders whose scale and innovation has transformed the UK’s international role. While much of their service provision supports legitimate capital, they are also known for providing a safe haven for secret money and their support of grand corruption in states characterised as ‘kleptocracies’.

John Heathershaw has been awarded the Saki Ruth Dockrill Fellowship in Contemporary History and International Security to explore: ‘British professional services, Eurasian kleptocrats and the transformation of international security in the post-Cold War era’. The study provides the first comparative and historical study of the transnational ties between British professional service providers and their Post-Soviet Eurasian clients. The project studies the lawyers, bankers and other professionals who act as enablers of the laundering of their money and reputations.

This fellowship is one of ten that has been funded jointly by the British Academy and Leverhulme Trust to bring to fruition a career-defining project.

G7 Protests

A number of SSIS academics were involved in media activity surrounding the G7 summit in Cornwall in June. Clare Saunders’ expertise was much in demand, and she, alongside researchers Anya Barbieri and Molly Bond were asked by the University to observe and report on the protests.

Fiscal Citizenship in Migrant Societies

Oliver James is a Co-Investigator on a new three-year (from March 2021), £1.3m project funded jointly by the SSHRC (Canada), DFG (Germany) and the ESRC.

Taxation is necessary for the proper functioning of the modern state. The project investigates the role of citizenship in attitudes and behaviour towards cooperating with tax systems. The research includes assessing the impact of demographic change and migration on taxpaying norms and how to promote effective interaction between citizens and tax authorities.

exeter.ac.uk/politics/research
Sociology, Philosophy and Anthropology

Digital Forensics
Dana Wilson-Kovacs, Brian Rappert and Lauren Redfern (PhD candidate, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine) published a paper entitled ‘Dirty Work? Policing Online Indecency in Digital Forensics’ (June, 2021).
More than 80% of the work undertaken by digital forensics examiners deals with images of sexual abuse of children. Using ethnographic observations and interviews with practitioners, police officers and senior managers in four constableurries in England, the article examines the tension-ridden place for managing extensive contact with indecent images of children and argues that despite handling of transgressive material, digital forensic examiners distance themselves from imputations of being ‘dirty’ workers.
The paper is part of the ESRC-funded grant ‘Digital Forensics in Policing: an Ethnographic Analysis of Current Practice’ which examines the organisational resources, operational demands and professional values relating to the application of digital forensics in police investigations in England and Wales, that started in 2018 and continues to build momentum.

The Use of Force within Policing
Following her PhD research into taser use in England and Wales (2013-17), Abi Dymond was invited to join a police-led strategic review into the reporting of force used in policing. Her survey results and recommendations contributed directly to the new national use of force reporting system. Previous to this work, data was only collected on the use of firearms, attenuating energy projectiles and tasers. To further pursue this work, Abi was awarded an ESRC Future Research Leader's Award (2017-2020) which has led to the publication of data analysis related to the use of police force. The data was collected using the reporting system that Abi helped to design and implement.

Farmer Wellbeing
Led by Matt Lobley, a major new study will aim to better understand the mental and physical wellbeing issues facing agricultural workers. The research will be the largest survey ever undertaken to gain an understanding directly from farming people of the stresses they face and the impacts of these challenges.
The work is commissioned by The Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institution, (RABI), which has worked with a number of key stakeholders to help develop the survey including the NFU, NFU Cymru, Defra, Welsh Government, the Worshipful Company of Farmers, the National Rural Mental Health Forum, the Prince’s Countryside Fund, Farmers Weekly and Farmers Guardian.
It is hoped there will be 26,000 responses to the survey across England and Wales. As well as establishing the health status of members of the agricultural community, for the first time this research will explore the relationship between mental health and well-being, physical health and the health of the business.

Health and Wellbeing Benefits of the Southwest Coast Path
Carolyn Petersen authored a report entitled ‘The Southwest Coast Path Health and Wellbeing’.
Commissioned by the Southwest Coast Path Association, the research looked at different approaches to measuring the benefits of walking and spending time in green and blue spaces. Two methodologies were used to calculate the economic benefits, firstly to measure the number of premature deaths avoided by walking the Coast Path, and then a separate calculation to estimate the healthcare savings linked to a reduction in ill health and disease. The research calculated health and wellbeing benefits of over £75m for people walking Britain’s longest National Trail.

“Through this research we now are starting to better understand the economic value of these health benefits to society — benefits which dwarf the costs of maintaining and enhancing this world-class trail.”
Julian Gray, Director of the Southwest Coast Path Association

Brexit-Covid Britain
Katharine Tyler was awarded an ESRC UKRI rapid response grant to explore Identity, Inequality and the Media in Brexit-Covid-19-Britain, building on an existing ESRC project.
Covid-19 and Brexit are extraordinary social and political processes that are occurring simultaneously. These events are exposing inequalities across British society.

Understanding these inequalities, how they have been framed by the media and their potential effects on social and political polarisation is crucial to answering how British society and democracy will emerge from both Brexit and Covid-19.
The research team will integrate in-depth interviews conducted across England with panel survey data and analysis of national and local media data. They will also conduct six months of ethnographic research with participants across the Northeast, East Midlands and Southwest of England that were previously interviewed as part of the team’s Brexit project. The team will collaborate with an artist to co-produce an art installation that will convey the inequalities of Covid-19 and Brexit identified as part of the research.
The research team is interdisciplinary, comprising social anthropologists, political scientists and a human geographer: co-investigators Dan Stevens and Susan Banducci (Exeter, Politics), Katharine Degnen (Newcastle, Social Anthropology), and Co-I Researchers: Joshua Blamire (SPA, Exeter) and Laszlo Horvath (Politics, Exeter), and Research Fellow Andrew Jones (Politics), and artist in residence Helen Snell.
Ethics

Covid-19 has directly impacted the way we do research, meaning that the College’s Research Ethics Committee has made some significant changes in the last year:

1. Trailblazing new online methods of research and participant informed consent for the entire university. The process of online consent for qualitative online interviews using Microsoft Forms was developed in SSIS and then subsequently rolled out across the University.

2. Introducing new streamlined methods for amendment and extensions of approved studies. A simple one page form to encapsulate proposed changes, rather than a rewrite of the ethics proposal.

3. Devising a protocol for registering externally reviewed studies when our researchers collaborate on studies with other institutions. This avoids dual ethics review except where absolutely necessary.

4. Introducing the University’s new ethics operating system which will go fully live in the next academic year.

5. Implementing an ‘Ethics Surgeries’ series, where researchers can get feedback before submitting an application. This pre-application approach – when it is likely most valuable and potentially saves time with later amendments – has been a huge success and particularly popular with PGR students who are happy to just come and listen to other people’s questions so they can learn.

Research Excellence Framework 2021

One of the most time-consuming activities of the past year for many staff was the culmination of the Research Excellence Framework (REF) cycle.

157 universities are participating in REF 2021. Over 185,000 research outputs have been submitted for assessment by expert panels and several SSIS staff are involved in the review processes for our disciplines. Around 6,700 case studies, describing specific examples of research impact, will also be reviewed.

SSIS submitted 538 research outputs and 21 impact case studies, representing a selection of our quality outputs from the previous seven years. Over the course of the REF period we awarded 630 PhDs and brought in £40m of grant income.

SSIS has been influencing policy in a wide range of areas, including food, agriculture and the environment; policing and criminal justice; domestic violence and divorce law; foreign policy; education and social mobility; digital life, data justice and open science; human rights, child labour and modern slavery.

Thanks go to the College admin team, led by Ellie Anderson, who provided amazing support throughout the REF process.

Future Opportunities

In addition to the activity awarded funding this year, and work continuing and completed in 2020/21, planning continues for future research activity.

A recent hustings event for early stage ideas highlighted the breadth of activity within the College, with projects presented on: The Meaning and Making of British Italophilia (Chris Thorpe, SPA); Platforms without Borders: Examining Migrant Labour on Global On-Demand Labour Platforms (James Muldoon, Politics); Digital Collections + Intellectual Property Repatriation for Decolonial Futures (Mathilde Pavis and Andrea Wallace, Law); Climate Change Induced Displacement in the UK (Ben Hudson, Law); and Deep Ecology and Psychedelic Phenomenology (Peter Hughes, SPA).

We are also awaiting the outcome of a number of large applications across the College, with 2021/22 shaping up to be an exciting year.
Get in Touch

If you have any research related queries please contact ssis-adr@exeter.ac.uk

Pictured left to right: Susan Molyneux-Hodgson (Associate Dean for Research), Suzie Masterman (Research Services, IIB and Doctoral College Business Partner) and Rebecca Thomson (PA to the ADR).

Further Information

The University Research Toolkit can be found here and information about many of the projects featured in this report, along with other can be found on the University's Research and Innovation pages.

For College information please look at the SharePoint site.

Funder Guidance

Links to applicant guidance from some major funders are below. Please be aware individual schemes will have different and specific rules and guidance.

British Academy  
European Research Council  
Horizon Europe  
Leverhulme Trust  
Nuffield  
Nuffield