ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RESEARCH COUNCIL
IMPACT REPORT

For awards ending on or after 1 November 2009

This Impact Report should be completed and submitted using the grant reference as the email subject to reportsofficer@esrc.ac.uk on or before the due date.

Completion of this Impact Report is mandatory. It will not be possible to edit this Impact Report at a later date, as it is designed to provide a statement of the impacts of your project to date 12 months after your grant ends.

Please note that the Impact Report will only be accepted if all sections have been completed in full. If a section does not apply to you, please enter ‘n/a’. Grant holders will not be eligible for further ESRC funding until the Report is accepted. (Please see Section 5 of the ESRC Research Funding Guide for details.)

Please refer to the Guidance notes when completing this Impact Report. In particular, the notes explain what the ESRC means by ‘impact’.

| Grant Reference | RES-062-23-0722 |
| Grant Title     | Study of the Scottish National Party |
| Grant Start Date| 1 Sept 2007 |
| Grant End Date  | 30 Nov 2009 |
| Total Amount    | £ 219, 614.40 |

Grant holding Institution: University of Strathclyde

Grant Holder: Professor James Mitchell

Grant Holder's Contact Details:
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Co-Investigators (as per project application):
- Professor James Mitchell (University of Strathclyde)
- Dr Robert Johns (University of Strathclyde)
- Dr Lynn Bennie (University of Aberdeen)
1. SCIENTIFIC IMPACT

Please summarise below the scientific impact(s) your project has had. [Max 250 words]

i. Comprehensive and comparable data set on SNP membership.
ii. Challenging established methods and theories
iii. Understanding of party transition

DATA SET:
A data set of 7,112 responses from SNP members to a 23 page questionnaire (response rate of 53.9%) is now available to all scholars. The survey replicated many questions used in other surveys of party members in public opinion surveys, allowing for comparative analysis (both with parties in the UK and elsewhere and with the general public). It is the most comprehensive data set on the SNP collected to date.

NEW METHODS AND THEORIES:
Our survey and interviews challenge established ways of studying some of the key concepts involved in the study. We have demonstrated a greater pluralism in conceptions of national identity than has traditionally been expected of nationalists; revealed a link between gender and political aspects of nationalism that has been largely missed in the literature to date; and exposed the gap between scholars’ explanations of party membership and members’ own explanations for joining.

PARTY IN TRANSITION:
The study occurred shortly after the SNP came to power for the first time and only a decade after devolution. It therefore offers an important insight into a party at a particularly interesting point in time. The SNP has moved from being an amateur-activist to a more electoral-professional type of party, a process clearly traced in the elite interviews. Through our survey data, we can also observe how activists and ordinary members react to this transformation of the party.

Please outline the findings and outputs from your project which have had the scientific impact(s) outlined in 1A. [Max 250 words]

Three key areas:

NATIONAL IDENTITY
Assumptions that national identity can be understood along a continuum from ethnic to civic forms are challenged with evidence that members predominantly view national identity in pluralist terms i.e. there are many ways of being Scottish.

GENDER GAP
Women are far less likely to join the party, tallying with evidence from voting studies that the party’s electoral support is disproportionately male. The major gender difference is willingness to support independence highlighting the possibility that the concept or discourse surrounding it is gendered and appeals less to women.

REASONS FOR JOINING:
An open-ended question on why members joined the party produced a substantial set of responses which were used to test theories that previously relied on responses to closed questions. The study reveals that most members cite independence as a reason for joining the party. By comparison, family/social links, material rewards, SNP leaders and party recruitment methods are unimportant.
Outputs:
‘Membership Motivations: Why Join the SNP?’, EPOP Annual Conference, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, 28-30 August 2009

C Please outline how these impacts were achieved. [Max 250 words]

The two main means through which this impact has occurred have been:

i. Publications

ii. Conference and other dissemination

Outputs:

Conference and other papers:
‘Membership Motivations: Why Join the SNP?’, EPOP Annual Conference, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, 28-30 August 2009
Findings presented at seminars at Queens Belfast and University of Cardiff, both in 2009.

In addition, we have submitted the study data for archiving with ESDS, thus making them available to the research community.
D Please outline who the findings and outputs outlined above had an impact upon. This can include specific academics/researchers through to broader academic groups. [Max 250 words]

Our findings are relevant to academics working on nationalism, Scottish politics, political participation and parties. It is still too early to ascertain the specific impact these findings will have on those research communities. However, there has been significant interest in our work. Some of its comparative potential was realised at the 2010 PSA conference at a panel on “Devolution and Nationalist Parties in the UK”.

2. ECONOMIC AND SOCIETAL IMPACT

A Please summarise below the economic and societal impact(s) your project has had. [Max 250 words]

There has been – and continues to be – commentary and debate following the dissemination of our findings.

B Please outline the findings and outputs from your project which have had the economic and societal impact(s) outlined in 2A. [Max 250 words]

Results challenging conventional wisdom about the party have had most impact. Since Scottish nationalism had been characterised as youthful radicalism and the SNP stereotyped as a “woman’s party”, there was interest in our findings that the membership has an average age of 59 (older than in other British parties apart from the Conservatives) and is more male (68%) than those other parties. The gender finding has generated particular debate within the party. See the contributions from Jennifer Dempsie, former Special Adviser to Alex Salmond, in Scotland on Sunday (1 August 2010) and on the Weber Shandwick website: http://www.scotlandvotes.com/blog/jennifer-dempsie-winning-over-female-voters-crucial-to-snp-ambitions. Joan McAlpine, former Deputy Editor of the Herald and SNP candidate, remarked on her blog that this ESRC research project had provoked the discussion on women and the SNP which had resulted in a debate at the SNP’s Women’s Network and at the Positively Independent conference: http://bellacaledonia.org.uk/2010/11/14/go-lassies-go/.

Outputs:


C Please outline how these impacts were achieved. (Max 250 words)

From the early days of the project, non-academic engagement and dissemination relied on and benefited from good relations with the SNP. These activities involved:

- A project website which posted details of the study, its methodology and main findings: (http://www.strath.ac.uk/humanities/courses/politics/staff/mitchelljamesprof/snp/)

- Presentations to SNP groups: SNP Headquarters, Dumbarton, Edinburgh, Kircaldy, and Banff and Buchan.


- Engagement with media: Interview with James Mitchell on the study on BBC Radio 4’s Westminster Hour, 12 October 2008; Article for Holyrood Magazine, a Scottish current affairs magazine; Various news reports using the data.

- Depositing of data-set and code-book in the ESRC Data Archive.

D Please outline who the findings and outputs outlined above had an impact upon. This can be at a broad societal level through to specific individuals or groups. (Max 250 words)

From a broad societal level through to the media, those involved in public policy and political parties, most visibly the SNP and its membership.

3. UNEXPECTED AND POTENTIAL FUTURE IMPACTS

A Unexpected Impacts

Please note which, if any, of the impacts that your research has had were unexpected at the outset of the research, explaining where possible why you think this was the case. (Max 250 words)

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B Potential Future Impacts

If you have a clear idea of the impact your research is likely to have in the future please detail these below. (Max 250 words)

We expect our data and results to become part of the knowledge base for comparative work in the fields of party membership and nationalism studies. Our findings are also likely to continue to resonate in internal debates within the SNP.
4. IMPACT LIMITATIONS

A Limited scientific impact

Please state below any major scientific difficulties that have limited the scientific impact of your research. The statement should refer to an effect on *impact* rather than simply detail research difficulties. [Max 250 words]

B Limited economic and societal impact

ESRC recognises that some of the research it funds will not have an economic or societal impact in the short term. Please explain briefly below if this is the case for your project, and refer to your grant application where relevant. [Max 250 words]

C No impact to date

Please note that ESRC projects are evaluated on the basis of their scientific and/or economic and societal impact. Grant holders are expected to report any future impacts as they occur using the Impact Record, downloadable from the ESRC Society Today website.

If you have no impacts at this stage, please give reasons below. [Max 250 words]
5. DECLARATIONS

Please read the statements below. Submitting this Impact Report to reportsofficer@esrc.ac.uk confirms your agreement.

i) This Impact Report is an accurate statement of the impacts of the research project to date. All co-investigators named in the proposal to ESRC or appointed subsequently have seen and approved the Report.

ii) Details of any subsequent impacts will be submitted via an Impact Record as they occur.

Thank you for completing this Impact Report. Your Impact Report will be considered along with your End of Award Report in the evaluation of your research.

You are now invited to complete the confidential Nominations form, which will assist with the evaluation of your project.
NOMINATED OUTPUTS

Please nominate a maximum of two outputs from your research which you would like to be considered as part of the evaluation.

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<tr>
<th>Output type</th>
<th>Publication details</th>
<th>Uploaded to ESRC Society Today?</th>
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Please email your completed Impact Report, including the Nominations section, to reportsofficer@esrc.ac.uk, using your grant reference number as the email subject.