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## **Paths to Public Influence: Social Science in Policy, Debate and Understanding**

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## INTRODUCTION

First, I would like to express my thanks to the Campaign for Social Science; to the Academy of Social Sciences; to SAGE; and to all of those who help to advance and deepen social science knowledge and increase public awareness of its importance.

The Campaign is not, to my mind, simply a project of self-interest for social scientists. It is a project about insuring the necessary knowledge that should be available for public policy, for debate and for understanding. This is important to our society but also globally.

I have spent my day dealing with an issue about public influence and public communication and indeed social science. Though in one sense ephemeral, it may illustrate something relevant. The issue involves a daft rugby club that circulated a homophobic and misogynistic pamphlet at LSE's Freshers Fair. University administrators around the country (and indeed the world) deal with such problems more frequently than we would wish. But let me mark the transition from my day dominated by crisis management to this talk by noting the common themes.

Bias and abuse towards women and towards gay (or LGBTQ) people are of course pressing ethical concerns. But they are also issues on which social science research has cast considerable light. I think we understand the issue of bias better because of social science. We have a better grasp both of what it means for some to denigrate others and of the consequences of such denigration because of social science. We have a better understanding of gender and sexual orientations. Social science provides research-based knowledge of the harm done by hate speech and also informs debates over the extent to which this should be censored and what problems there might be with different policies. It informs us on problems with well-intentioned responses: like offering tolerance to people who want and deserve - not tolerance - but respect and inclusion. It analyses the relationships among psychological and social abuse or injuries and material inequalities in education and careers. Social science helps us understand the role of social movement mobilisations, organisational and government policies, and laws in trying to change behaviour – and also the limits of such efforts at behavioural change and the roles of a variety of incentive systems both planned and unplanned. Not least of all, social science helps us understand the workings of the media in calling attention to but also sometimes amplifying issues like that caused by my daft (and now dissolved) Men's Rugby Club.

I won't continue with charting the many contributions made by social science to this broad cluster of policy questions, public debates and challenges to

understanding, but the case allows me to make three opening points.

First: social science has a public influence through several different channels and in several different ways. In particular, its influence is felt as much in the way it contributes to broad patterns of understanding and knowledge as in specific policy formulations. Its influence is felt in changing the terms and quality of debates as well as in fixed and definite instructions to policy makers or others.

Second: social science informs us about nearly every aspect of social life and about how they relate to each other. It is not just on those issues that government officials have chosen to make the immediate issues of state policy that knowledge proves useful. Indeed, one of the issues that we sometimes face in demonstrating the use of social science is that the influence is pervasive enough that it shapes entire conversations and is seldom confined simply to immediate contributions to a policy debate on a particular topic. It changes thinking in a wide way. It informs management in many different kinds of organisations. Indeed this is sometimes a problem because, in forming clear-cut policy, decisions by high-level public actors sometimes get more credit and this can distort even evaluation efforts like REF impact case studies that depend on being able to draw a fairly discrete relationship.

Third: although social science has a great deal of influence, social scientists are not always very good at understanding their own influence or making sure it is as great as it should be. Take the media: we study the media and still we don't learn to write clearly or to give journalists information that informs and on schedules they can use. So there is a bit of a task before us as well as before government officials or before others in making use of social science knowledge. Social science knowledge, after all, is partly about us and ought to give us some guidance in doing a better job.

I would like to solve all the problems pertaining to this in tonight's talk, but alas I cannot. Instead, since this is meant to be a short talk and motivational as well as informational, let me speak briefly to each of five points.

## THE NEED FOR UNITY

First: I should say in advance that our hosts really wanted me to give a talk on the similarities and differences between the US and the UK. I'll mention some, but this is not a talk primarily on the differences between the UK and the US. However, I will gesture towards this by starting with the phrase '*e pluribus unum*' and the very idea of 'United We Stand.'

Notice how in my opening remarks I spoke of 'social science'. The relevant contributions have of course been made by researchers in specific disciplines and

specialities using specific research methods and theories. So, the work on gender and sexual orientation, or the effects of policies trying to deal with them is done by psychologists, by sociologists; some of it is quantitative, some of it is qualitative and so forth. We are much, much, better at distinguishing ourselves into groups based on these disciplinary methodological and theoretical differences, than we need to be. We are not nearly adept enough at finding common ground and articulating public messages on a shared basis. I would wish (although it is not really something I am going to fight or argue about, because I think it is a losing battle) we didn't speak of 'social sciences'. I would wish that we were a bit more like our colleagues who speak of 'the scientific method', who speak of 'science'. And I think in many ways we would have purchase speaking of 'social science' that we don't have when we speak always of the social sciences and quickly shift into speaking of our own discipline. Within our own disciplines we take one or another camp, based on methodological or theoretical or topical differences. I think we continually undercut the message by not unifying it.

All the disciplines are relevant, but one of the issues we face is that there has been a pulling apart. I won't try to go into this in detail, but citations across disciplinary boundaries, for example citations of anthropologists by sociologists, in fact all sort of interdisciplinary citations, are down. I think this is true in all the major journals of all our fields. I know this best in sociology, my own field, but it is true across the board. Now it happens there has been a shift. Anthropology was the other field most cited by sociologists fifty years ago but it is down and economics is up – but citations outside the field are down in general. We are dis-united and I think we weaken ourselves by being dis-united in this way. We weaken ourselves intellectually, not just in terms of a PR campaign to get attention, but in terms of our very work. Some of this is due to the growth of social sciences: disciplines have gotten bigger and more internally differentiated - and that is part of why the conversations are more internal - but it is still, I think, a liability and a weakness.

Happily, there is some new relationship building: there are many more links between psychology and economics than there were fifty years ago. If there were time it would be worth looking at the rise of behavioural economics and how it takes place. It is instructive because it is a story, not just of individual scholars doing what they were doing and happening to find work in neighbouring fields, and not just issuing in 'nudge policies', but starting with them. Starting, for example, with the Russell Sage Foundation and others trying to bring together groups to make sure that there was communication between psychologists and economists. Trying to do some digesting of the work of one discipline to reveal where others might make

access to it. Instead of saying, "Economists, go and read psychology", developing guides to what would actually help make useful links in different problem areas of research. I think this is often the case and it points to the extent to which, in fact, successful collaboration is often a product of relations in a larger ecology of funders, of policy makers, of universities and their leaders, of academic disciplines and individual scholars. We need to take a broader view of how intellectual innovation happens.

We have an implicit list of the disciplines involved in 'the social sciences' I think. Most of us do in our minds. We can rattle it off and we might make a variety of judgements. It would have been absolute consensus in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century that statistics was one of those disciplines. Statistics was a social science, certainly at the LSE. It has long been regarded this way. It was one of the founding disciplines that created the Social Science Research Council, which was created in the 1920s at Rockefeller behest, precisely in order to create interdisciplinary social science. Indeed the word 'interdiscipline' was first used in the founding meetings of the SSRC. But the disciplines would not be an automatic consensus list: geography was not included, statistics was. Now, my point is not that this was right or wrong, but that we need to look more widely and that some of these interconnections grow with fields that we might not previously have thought of as social science or might still not think of as social science, but that are closely interwoven into our collaborative areas.

One of the biggest changes is the growth of interdisciplinary professional fields that include social science but are not defined by social science disciplines. Business schools are a big example of this, and management is an interdisciplinary field. There is nothing wrong with this, though means that people who might be collaborating between organisational sociology or organisational psychology, some other kinds of related studies, are apt to be found in management departments, rather than in the disciplinary departments. The same goes for a variety of other topical areas. This is not bad, it just means that we need to adjust to changes in our academic ecology.

One of the biggest changes in social science in the US - I'm going to guess that with less strength the same thing could be said here, but it's a guess because I'm not entirely sure of it - is that the social sciences have been reconfigured by the near-secession of economics to stand by itself and of psychology to join the natural and life sciences. This is a problem if we let it happen all the way. It has not yet gone to the extreme, but it is an issue. Economics has grown dramatically in size. The scale of economics stands alone more often. It has developed its own complex internal structure with, as I said, relatively fewer connections to other disciplines. Psychology has been transformed by the rise of

different methodologies in orientation, not just experimental but linked to laboratory methodologies, to brain scans, to a variety of other technologies that often bring psychologists closer to colleagues of the natural sciences.

Again, this is not right or wrong, but it is a challenge to social science, and ultimately to the impact of social science, if key fields are reorganised and begin to think of themselves less clearly as social science. Some colleagues in the Economics department at the LSE said they would prefer if we didn't speak of ourselves as being a university devoted to the social sciences, but would always say, 'economics and social science'.

Now, this sort of thing, whatever else it may mean about local issues, is an impediment to the work we do to have a public influence. I think that the unity of social science is in question, as well as its influence, its thriving, its funding, and we would do well to work on this.

Now, in emphasising unity, what I mean is – in part – that we need ways to pursue quality that do not always get caught up in fights that equate the issue of quality with more or less factional positions in various fields. It is very important that we find ways to talk about what is good work that cut across specific fields.

Every university faces this with promotion committees. How do you compare the achievements and set common standards for: A mathematical modeller? Somebody who works with large statistical data sets? Somebody who conducts experiments? Somebody who does comparative historical research? We face this all the time. We all know it as a practical question but we have a relatively impoverished language for it and relatively impoverished metrics. One of the things that we need, very intensively I think, is an ability to identify and respect quality across these various divisions of social science or I think we undercut the public perception of each and all of them to some extent.

This is not only about how we talk but how we work, both in and across disciplines. In fact certain people, as I hinted with references to management before, work less in disciplines and more in interdisciplinary fields. It could be that management simply becomes a new discipline and that is one possible evolution. But we also work in issue areas. It is worth asking how well we attend to and include multidisciplinary work on different issues and themes. Not necessarily non-disciplinary work but work that bring different angles together. You look at climate change or financial markets or urbanisation and cities or global healthcare. You are looking at things that do not come organised by academic disciplines. The problems in the world almost never come organised by academic disciplines. Funny thing! They come in ways that require attention from various different kinds of disciplinary angles, and we all

know that this is good, but it is worth thinking of a few things in this connection. I'll be really brief but empirical about it. Social scientists are, interestingly, extraordinarily less likely to publish collaboratively than colleagues in natural and physical science. It is as though, despite the name *social science* we all believe in a 19<sup>th</sup> Century theory of genius, in which we must express our inner essence in sole-authored publications. We are less likely to collaborate internationally than the natural and the physical sciences. Some of that has to do with the roles of intensive and expensive equipment: if you're doing applied physics and you depend on the CERN or other kinds of facilities you will end up in large-scale structures of collaboration. But this is not all.

It is worth looking at articles. I urge you to go look at some science journals and see the articles that are published by 10, 20, 350 co-authors. 350 implies a social phenomenon of a large scale academic collaboration. There are people who are in that list because of their mastery of a particular bit of equipment. There are people who are in that list because of their mastery of a particular technique for putting that equipment to use in an experiment. There are people in that list because they had the original idea. There are others who did the statistical analysis, and so forth. And they come from different organisations. They manage to work and accomplish things that they could not possibly accomplish entirely as individuals. We have to ask about this - not just, 'Oh, how do we do it?' but 'How do we learn it?' Because this is a learned skill. One advantage for many of our colleagues in the natural and physical sciences is the laboratory structure. It is normal to work, and to come up, doing your degrees, in the context of laboratories. These, after all, are social organisations in which people collaborate and learn collaboration. Collaboration is a learned skill, at least in part. It is not simply an innate characteristic or something that you can easily do the day you decide to do it. You have to learn something about how to work in other kinds of organisational structures, how to write co-operatively, and so forth. There is research on this: when I say, 'Social scientists heed your own research!' there are studies of collaboration. There is actually a very good scientific knowledge of the way collaboration works, of the kind of training that supports it, how people learn to be multidisciplinary, and so forth.

Sometimes this multidisciplinaryity goes on all in one head. Gardner Lindzey once famously said that was the best kind. But not always. So we may have a social organisational system to develop, and a set of skills to learn, to enable greater co-operation and collaboration. There is also the issue of settings for mutual learning, of ways in which the relations among our fields are furthered by places coming together. This can be Oxbridge colleges; this can be the senior dining room of any of a number of institutions. It is also things like the Centre for Advanced Study in the Behavioural Sciences,

another recipient of Sara Miller McCune's philanthropy for which we should be thankful. But not just that one: there are other centres for advanced study that bring people together and create the opportunity for sustained contact and relationships among people from different fields, who can then begin to know each other and their perspectives better.

We need respect for different jobs in a division of labour. There are a variety of different tasks; there are a variety of different styles of work. For us to be mostly involved in claiming to be better than our immediate neighbours may actually mean we are involved in undermining the general credence of social science too much of the time.

### INFLUENCE FROM SYNTHESIS

Second point: influence comes not just from decisive findings, but also from effective synthesis. We seek 'to know the causes of things', we undertake causal analysis, but not to produce a series of silver bullets. Relatively few findings, even in natural science and many fewer in social science, operate as silver bullets, that is a single finding from a single study able to completely solve a policy problem or any other kind of problem. It is putting together the findings from multiple studies that is often crucial. We create a larger, more complex model, we try to improve its explanatory efficacy, and so forth. This is another kind of division of labour, even if it is not marked by co-authorship: the many different contributors to a common model - some of them improving explanatory capacity by 2%, some of them fundamentally recasting the way that we think about an area - are important. We need to recognise it, reward it and see it. Synthesis doesn't need to mean a tome. I think people have an image immediately of a huge and ponderous book, or a textbook. Indeed in social science we surprisingly often leave the task of knitting larger fields together to those who are writing for first or second year undergraduates rather than at more advanced levels - including indeed for policy makers.

Some of the most important synthesis, I think, involves bringing together the knowledge needed to address problems. Not just reporting that knowledge, or analysing it, but synthesising it. Bringing it together from the different formats and different particular studies and different disciplines to enable it to connect to specific problems. The problems might be applied, they might be purely analytic academic problems but it's getting the work together, getting different lines of research to speak to each other that is important.

We have a very weak incentive system for synthesis. We are much more prone to reward the original finding than the work that puts findings together across different studies, and this too, I think, weakens some of our impact.

In medical science there's a concept of 'translational research'. There have been some efforts to try to bring this into social science. The notion is that, not surprisingly, physicians practising medicine do not read all the reports of experiments in basic science or even of clinical trials. To achieve better practice in their various areas they are aided by synthesis. But it's a kind of research. Part of what the name signals but it's a reality as well as a name, is that there is whole branch of research that puts together the different findings into useable clinical practice and that is rewarded *as* research. It is not some different activity separate from research. The same is true in engineering: it takes not just wide reading but new thinking and research to integrate knowledge from physics and chemistry, materials science and nanotechnology into practical problem solving.

In the translational research model, one of the things that is given pride of place is an idea formulated in social science: the idea of attending to unanticipated consequences. For the sociologists in the room: Robert K Merton (1936) "Unanticipated Consequences of Purposive Social Action". Merton uniquely coined the term but not the idea. The idea is pervasive in social science that there are all matter of unintended consequences to intentional purposive action. And one of the tasks of translational research is to find the unintended consequences of the original experimental results. Generally these focused - and usually reported as focused - entirely on the intended primary relationship. The same thing ought to apply to us. And it relates to that growing but under-recognised field of social science, of studying the policy implementations themselves, of learning from the efforts to put things into practice, learning what the unintended consequences were. Studying interventions to promote economic development, studying what works in urban growth, studying any of a variety of fields. We learn not only the model that predicts what happens, but also the things that are left out of that model that we need to study.

Now, it is also an issue for synthesis to bring together the best knowledge of your field, the state of the art, and not only your own last study.

I will make this point by anecdote, and again it relates to my US life, but it is not a US point, it is a United Nations point. At the SSRC we created a service to mobilise social scientists for the United Nations around particular issues and indeed places. You are sending a peace-keeping mission to 'x' country: how do you get the generals who are in charge of it up to speed on what is going on, who are the factions in the wars, what is happening.? You are planning an AIDS response: how do you do it? So we were mobilising social scientists and this seemed like a great idea. We got funding. Interestingly, DfID was our first major partner for this.

The UN was immediately receptive and we had a queue of people. But we had a problem with the social scientists.

We would get the social scientists their hour, or their five minutes, or their chance to give a memo to major policy makers and they would only report on their own work. You would get somebody ten minutes at the Security Council, and you would think that they would get the idea that for ten minutes at the Security Council there are two things to know: one, ten minutes actually only last a little bit of time and you had better decide in advance what your main point is; and two, they don't care about your last study: they want the state of the art knowledge of your field. They want to know what your field can contribute. Is it to addressing ethnic conflict, is it communicable disease? Either way, they are interested in what your whole field has to offer, not in what tiny addition you personally made to what it has to offer. We are terribly maladroit at giving that kind of short summary of what the state of the art knowledge is of our larger fields. We like to start such conversations off by saying, 'Well, in my latest study I found "x"', and we usually tend to want to knock down conventional wisdom. We usually say that as: 'People usually believe "y", but I found "x"'. This is not very helpful, to the Security Council or to other policymakers.

So we need to think about synthesis in that sense (and also perhaps training in how to speak to policymakers). But, synthesis also involves some of what Charles Tilly once called 'big questions, large structures and huge comparisons' - the framework within which to situate more particular knowledge. And that is actually a field of study as well: understanding the global framework in which specific findings apply, understanding the context, which may make a huge amount of difference. We have lots of pursuit of more or less universal law-like statements intended to apply everywhere, and much less research into what you could think of as scope conditions, including knowledge of the particular local contexts in which they get applied and in which the seemingly general tends to work somewhat differently, somewhat distinctively.

### THE IMPORTANCE OF RELATIONSHIPS

Third: relationships are important. If you want research to have an impact, it is not enough to think just about dissemination. The idea of dissemination is, I think, a problematic idea. We have a notion that we do research and then we disseminate it. One of the good things about the REF Impact Case Study model is that it has begun to counter this. It is not just how many people read your study, it is not just getting it out; it is particular identifiable relationships that matter. We often think that doing the research we want to do is the first step, and then trying to call attention to it after the fact is the model for having an impact. I would

predict that when we look at the impact case studies in aggregate, what we will find is that that is not the model: people did not just 'do the research' and then try to find somebody who was interested in it. The research developed in a relationship, with potential end users and others who had a desire for better knowledge. Dissemination is a weak model for having an impact: it is just to do what you want and then try to sell it around.

We should consider more often involving potential users in our studies – not just because we need access to their organisations, but in the design and the development of the very questions asked, if we want to have an impact. That does not mean that social scientists should give up their role in asserting that one or another framing of the question is better, that there are better ways to ask questions - there are - but that the discussion about that will shape a relationship, potentially with end users. Likewise, it is a very weak model to just do your research and hope that Malcolm Gladwell will discover it. There are a variety of social scientists that operate on this model for having an impact. They do their research; they publish it, then sit in cafes waiting for Malcolm to show up. Sometimes Paul Krugman mentions it in his column - that's an alternative path - but these are weak paths, and again build weak relationships.

We might think about what we can do collectively, not just individualistically, to build relationships with people who write well with social science knowledge. Some people do this individually: their co-authored books give testimony to it, but it is an issue for all of us. What kind of division of labour? I can give another Sara Miller McCune example of this: when Sarah founded the journal that is now *Pacific Standard*, one of the ideas was that social scientists would write lots of the articles. It turns out that journalists write most of the articles, translating the social science into a form which the readers will actually read. We could say, 'Oh that's terrible, we should all learn to write better'. And I think that would be a good idea. But, we could also consider that there is a division of labour here. How do we maximise it? How do we build relationships? Do we invite the journalists? Do we invite other non-fiction writers (who are not necessarily journalists but serious non-fiction writers) into the community of social scientists? Do some people who get PhDs become those writers, those journalists? Gillian Tett, for example, with her PhD in social anthropology, is doing exceptional work for the Financial Times. We have a variety of potential models for building division of labour that is fruitful, for taking into our own hands and solving something that we usually treat as a source of jokes or mild despair.

Media are crucial to the public influence of social science, but it is up to us to make them work better. I

think that is partly relationships. Of course the media are changing. The old legacy media are not the whole story. You reach a smaller and smaller audience by writing that piece for the *Guardian*. Blogging matters more and more, and use of other kinds of new media, but also working with media is a matter of mastering schedules and rhythms: figuring out when to release a particular study, when to contact the journalists, how to do this.

Work with policymakers and government has the same concern. Policymakers and government are often interested in certain social science knowledge. On Thursday. They will stay interested until Friday. One Thursday, one Friday, one week, one month. They're interested when the issue is coming to the fore. It might be longer than my caricature of two days, but we need to think about the time frames within which knowledge is usable. This has some interesting impacts. Not just that we need relationships to know when the knowledge is going to connect and have the impact, but also that most impact comes from work that is already available but mobilised in a timely fashion. Most of the impact of social science work cannot be based on doing new research after the policymakers decide that they need to know about something. But we often still respond to the policymakers, 'We can find out the answer for you, give us a grant' rather than, 'Yes, we will tell you what's known in our community now'. The relationships are again the key, but the relationships - we need to be clear - are not just at the top. It is not just the Minister you went to Cambridge with, it is often a relatively junior aide who is tasked with getting together the information to be able to deliver the legislation or the policy, and we need to build these links widely and socially.

Here is a UK-US difference. One of the very biggest differences between US and UK social science with regard to having impact is the much greater prominence of think-tanks in the US and the extent to which they act as a buffer between academic social science and policymakers and government officials. They do this so successfully partly because they tailor their work to that task, partly because they can respond in a timely fashion. So the American Enterprise Institute or Brookings, or many smaller or more partisan think-tanks, are ready to mobilise knowledge on the schedule when people in government and policy-making are ready to use it. The academics generally aren't: they say, 'I'll get to that in July and August, when I have time free from my teaching schedule'. It is hard to eliminate this tension, but it is something to think about and work on.

Actually, in the UK we're much better than that. DfID goes much more often to academics for knowledge to improve its development policies than the US Agency for International Development. The connections are

better: we should use but also work to maintain those connections. The chances of having that kind of policy connection relationship are much better here.

There are a whole series of other issues and since I promised I would say something about the US and the UK, here is another point. This relates to a major problem in the US right now: the politicisation of funding, or rather, of funding cuts. This is not totally unknown to the UK, it is just something that has been going on for 35 years, rather than three. But it is also distinctive in the US in a couple of ways. I will point to the bigger difference, which is a good-news story. The US has a far more pluralistic science funding system than the UK, so those politicised government cuts - or just government cuts out of necessity because there is no money in the budget because so much is going into health care - have a different impact if there is much more reliance on single source government funding. About three-quarters of US government funding for social science is not affected by the proposed cuts in social science because it does not come from any science budget: it is the Department of Agriculture, funding work on rural livelihoods; it is in the Department of Defense, which is a very large research funder, and increasingly interested in social science knowledge (this may not be what you want but it is true). So the very pluralisation is an issue worth thinking about. There is also the plurality of states. The fifty states make different policy arenas; make for experiments, which the social scientists study, which is often a very positive interaction with policymaking. And most of all, the government provides a smaller proportion of total funding for social science. Foundations are much more important. And indeed, philanthropic funding to individual universities supports the research of social scientists.

I am going to run out of time if I go into this in too much detail. There are plenty of problems that are similar, but I will point to two or three differences. It is the case in both countries that there is an over-optimistic vision of economic development and other benefits from techno-science. Techno-science may or may not deliver on this but it also skews funding toward certain areas. In both countries - in this case, even more in the UK - there tends to be too much late stage funding. Even in the techno-science world, too much of the funding comes at the last steps before commercialisation or application, rather than fairly early on. But this applies to social science and other fields as well: the model of how funding and science should interact is extended from techno-science to social science and it works much less well. It tends to exaggerate the role of technical expertise as the dominant mode of impact.

Sadly, in both countries - but in this case I think worse in the US - there has been a sort of turn against

scholarship, a turn against more theoretical knowledge, more underlying scholarship. And I do not just mean blue skies basic science research, I mean knowing what is going on. Remember, part of the message has been that it is our ability to translate the general knowledge of our fields into effective policy - or an empirical basis for effective policy - that is so needed. If we only each know our latest new findings and there is no reward for scholarship, we are in trouble. We need to read and to put serious thinking into integrating fields of knowledge. This is not at odds with building connections to business and other professional or practical fields; it is a condition of doing it better.

## THE MULTIPLE PUBLICS OF SOCIAL SCIENCE INFLUENCE

Fourth: the publics of social science public influence are many and varied. I can state this rather quickly. There is not just 'the' or 'a' public, and different publics are reached in different ways, indeed even by different media. This is obvious, but we do not think about it quite often enough. I think that social sciences in particular - more than natural and physical science, more than humanities - have a public orientation as part of their heritage. The social sciences grew up trying to speak truth to power, or at the very least talking to power. Social sciences were much more state-oriented. States were the actors that social science tried to reach with its knowledge. And so we are at a disadvantage if there is a redistribution of action, in which the central state, the national state, is less important in turning our ideas and our work into policy or into influence. And in some places this has happened. States have reduced their engagement in trying to build better societies. But of course, the state simply doesn't define everything.

This is also an issue about the difference between expert knowledge and a more democratic vision of knowledge. To what extent are we concerned with the wide circulation of knowledge? Knowledge informing social movements? Knowledge informing campaigns of various kinds? Knowledge informing NGOs? Knowledge informing businesses? A variety of different kinds of actors. A great debate about this - the Dewey-Lippmann debate in the US context - was about the idea of the public. In essence, Lippmann, a great journalist, said the public was a phantom, there was no public. Really everything was done by inside dealing of experts. John Dewey, the pragmatist philosopher, tried to argue the case for democratic publics. He acknowledged that to some extent publics were evanescent, they came and went with issues but there was an ability for scientific knowledge to improve the quality of public debate, to improve the pressures that came from the wider public. Now you can decide which side you are on. I would suggest both are important, but we are much more geared up to do the inside knowledge connection than we are geared up to recognise some of the roles of the broad public.

We tend to describe the latter as popularising and assume that it is less high quality knowledge, which may or may not be true at all. But thinking about the insider knowledge has changed because it is very institution specific now. It is not simply the state in general, it is education, or it is the NHS, or it is specific international economic policy making organisations. How do you influence the World Bank or the IMF, and so forth. And so the connections we need to build and the way we need to think of this world is not just a matter of speaking truth to power. As I have suggested we need a range of relationships: knowledge-forming and then knowledge-sharing relationships. We should have specific institutions in mind, and institutions in the private sector as importantly as in the public sector.

Unfortunately our historical bias is that we built up better channels nationally than globally, public than private, with a central state rather than a range of institutions. So we have some work to do adjusting to a changing organisation of policy-making.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF TEACHING

Fifth point. Teaching is perhaps our biggest pathway to influence. In all our discussions of influence we have tended to emphasise the impact of research. We seek to demonstrate the way in which particular new findings from new scientific research generate an impact. This is hugely important. The new findings are important. We need the funding that goes to support that research. We need to keep renewing and advancing knowledge. But teaching is the biggest pathway to influence. Almost all social scientists will have more impact through their students' future work and their students' lives as citizens than they will have as researchers, and we should keep that in our minds.

Teaching is changing, so we should pay attention. We should not model everything we do on the way we were taught. Our students are not necessarily growing up to be us. We need to improve; we need to rethink teaching; we need to put social science knowledge into how teaching is changing. But it is an area in which to aim for excellence, just as much as research. It is not an area in which merely to avoid embarrassment, or to collect the fees for your institution. It is an area in which to aim for excellence and it is extraordinarily important.

I do not always echo David Willetts, who was described in tonight's introduction as being very upbeat in last year's Campaign for Social Science Annual Lecture. But I am going to close by saying, 'Be upbeat!' I am not closing by saying that my assessment of all of this empirical evidence before us is that being upbeat is warranted. I think the glass is either half-full or half-empty. My advice is to look at it as half-full every time you set out to have an influence.