

**H&P seminar:
How Historians Can Shape Policy**

**1 JUNE 2011, 4-5.45PM
KING'S COLLEGE, LONDON**

**Old Committee Room, 2nd floor, King's Building,
Strand Campus, Aldwych, WC2R 2LS**

- Coffee/tea will be available **from 3.45pm.**
 - The Old Committee Room (OCR) is on the second floor of the King's Building:
Enter via the main Strand reception, walk past the lifts and one set of stairs (on your left). Either take the next set of stairs (also on your left) up two long flights to the second floor, where the OCR is on your right. Or, from Strand reception, walk straight along the ground floor corridor until you reach the lifts on the left, go to the second floor and turn right down the corridor – the OCR will be on your left.
 - For directions to the Strand campus:
<http://www.kcl.ac.uk/campuslife/visit/directions/strand.aspx>
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Agenda

3.45pm: Tea/coffee

4pm: Welcome and Introduction (Alastair Reid, Chris Bowlby and Fiona Holland)

4.15pm: Part A: Understanding the Process of Making Policy
(M&E researcher)

4.55pm: Part B: Refining H&P Activity within Policy-Making Processes
(Alastair Reid)

5.35pm: Conclusion (Alastair and Chris)

5.45pm: Drinks

H&P Seminar: How Historians Can Shape Policy

The Invitation

You are invited to this special H&P seminar to explore the nature of policy making in order to understand how H&P and its member historians can better input into that process – i.e. with greater effect and increased frequency. All participants in this event – historians, policy makers and journalists – are key stakeholders with a connection to and knowledge of H&P, either as members, advisors, having used H&P's services or taken part in recent evaluation interviews. This seminar is inspired by and part of H&P's Monitoring and Evaluation Programme, which is now in Phase 2.

The discussion, conducted under Chatham House rules, will feed into the final report of Phase 2 and, importantly, help improve existing methods of support offered by H&P to its stakeholders as well as finding new ways of fulfilling its core objective. Thus, this seminar seeks to contribute meaningfully to H&P's operation, impact and sustainability.

Background

In 2009-10, galvanised by one its core supporters, Esmee Fairbairn, H&P evaluated its historian members' views of the network. By gauging their experiences and perceptions of H&P's operation and efficacy, this research helped illustrate the network's impacts and identify improvements. Phase 2 of this Monitoring and Evaluation process comprised interviews with policy makers and journalists. The feedback and ideas that emerged during these interviews provides the springboard for this seminar.

THE SEMINAR AGENDA

Introduction (Chris Bowlby and Fiona Holland)

H&P's mission is to connect historians, policy makers and journalists in order to improve public policy. It does this through:

- Publishing accessible, high quality history with policy implications clearly articulated via the active H&P website
- Promoting historians' reflections (opinion pieces) to the media on topical issues and events
- Organising events that bring historians and policy makers together to discuss and understand the historical context to current concerns – so that the implications of history are considered in the formulation of policies, strategies and legislation
- Seeking coverage in quality media of historians' research and its relevance to important issues today.

Formal evaluation and anecdotal feedback - from civil servants, historians and journalists - affirms the value of H&P's existence – for positioning history in the policy-making process, and as a hub bridging academia and the broader public. Given this affirmation, the aim of this workshop is to discuss and identify practical ways to improve what H&P does in terms of its ultimate aim – contributing to better public policy and thus improving social wellbeing.

One way of doing this is to bring together H&P's key stakeholders to consider the process of policy making in theory and then better understand how H&P can intervene in this process in practice.

Thus, the seminar will be structured into:

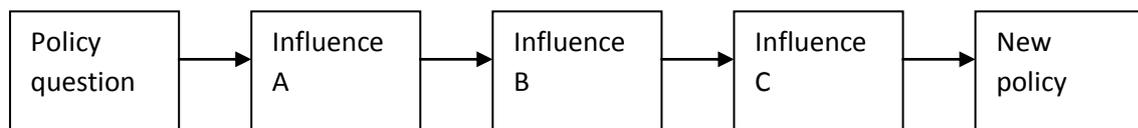
Part A: Understanding the Process of Making Policy

Part B: Refining H&P Activity within Policy-Making Processes

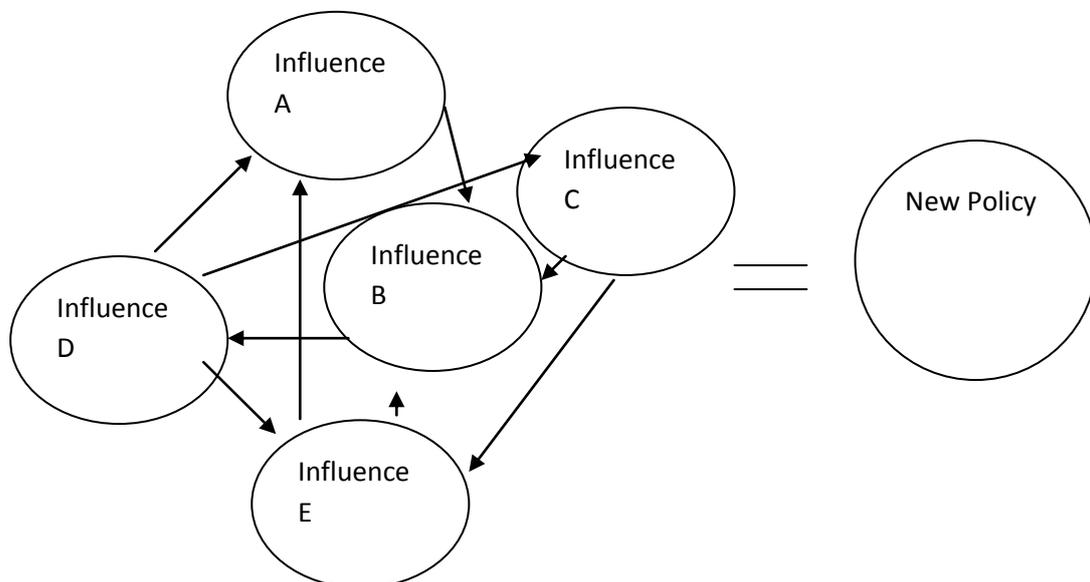
Part A: Understanding the Process of Making Policy (M&E researcher)

During the recent evaluation we asked interviewees to think of a time when they have influenced policy making. This led to some interesting debates and challenges. This challenge was not to the aim of H&P (i.e. ‘connecting historians, policy makers and the media’) but challenges to the process of getting there (i.e. the process of policy making).

Some interviewees described a ‘linear model’ of policy making:



Others argued that the question assumed a linear model, whereas in reality the process of policy making was more amorphous, fluid and 'fuzzy.' Several interviewees raised the importance of context, wherein policy formation took place among a maelstrom of factors in rapidly changing environments. This model might be illustrated like this:



This begs several important questions: what is the process of policy making in reality? Is it ever purely linear or contextual or somewhere in between? Who actually makes policy? How does influence happen?

Part B: Refining H&P Activity within Policy-Making Processes (Alastair Reid)

Bearing in mind the key themes emerging from the above discussion, what can H&P do to better support the connection between historians, policy makers and journalists? To kick-start discussion, it might help to consider the relative importance of H&P's various activities.

Which of the following should be prioritized, changed or even abandoned?

H&P activity	Rank each activity 1-3 according to importance (1 = most important)
Policy papers	
Opinion pieces	
Case studies	
Publicity campaigns (for media coverage)	
Seminars with policy makers	
Co-publishing or linking of H&P papers	

- Could existing tools be refined or new activities devised?
- What else could H&P do to 'influence' the policy-making process?
- Are some areas of policy more amenable to influence, based on H&P's experience? (We will hear about examples of H&P's engagement in this session)
- What do different stakeholder groups want from H&P – are these things the same and if not, what are the implications for the network's activities?

Conclusion (Alastair and Chris)

Summing up of key themes and ideas, and outlining of next steps. These include:

- Circulation of the report of the discussion (anonymised) to all participants for any omissions/additions (and to those who expressed interest but couldn't attend).
- Incorporation of key themes into the Phase 2 M&E report, which will feature in funding proposals scheduled for July 2011.
- Upload summary seminar report to the H&P website.
- Consideration of ideas and improvements by the H&P partners at their next meeting (16 June 2011).
- External Relations Office schedules and implements ideas suggested at the seminar and agreed by H&P partners.

All participants are welcome to continue the discussion over drinks at King's.