

From Public Engagement to Policy Impact

# The Landscapes of Secrecy

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PUBLIC POLICY



Landscapes of Secrecy was a half-million pound AHRC-funded collaboration between the Universities of Warwick and Nottingham. It explored the history of the CIA's public image. The AHRC awarded a one-year Follow-on Fund grant for impact and engagement work.





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## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

The main project prioritised public engagement. It culminated in a two-day public conference in Nottingham, followed by a one-day event for postgraduates. The 300 attendees were largely unconnected to research or academia. To attract delegates, the team emailed learned societies and third sector organisations, and used targeted internet marketing. Conference proceedings were recorded and are free to download via popular sites like Wikipedia. Our project web-site has received over 4.51 million 'hits' since its 2011 launch. This was expensive at £3,000, but helped us to progress to impact.

## POLICY ENGAGEMENT



The success of the conference alerted us to surprising interest from government and policymakers, including the Cabinet Office, Ministry of

Defence, Foreign Office, DA-Notice, SOCA and the intelligence and security agencies.

## RELATIONSHIPS

Our most important lesson was the importance of investing time in relationship building. Our colleagues typically judge their networking success by the number of business cards they collect. In fact the better approach is to cultivate fewer links, but in more depth. Building strong personal relationships means that people will remember you and help you – even acting as advocates for your work inside policy.

## POLICY PARTNERS

Think tanks and third sector bodies are always looking for new ideas. If you want to engage with

UK Government but are not London-based, find partners with whom to run events in London. We have enjoyed working with the Industry and Parliament Trust, which has helped us to host networking events and seminars at the Houses of Parliament, attended by MPs and people from industry. We are also working with them to produce policy briefs.

## OVERSEAS IMPACT

We are working with a Swiss think tank, The Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, that writes multi-lingual policy handbooks for countries undergoing security sector reform. Its focus is how to do lawful and accountable intelligence. The team have been asked to write "Oversight Toolkit 10" addressing relations between intelligence services and journalists. We have not created every impact pathway ourselves. Our partners often have much better dissemination channels.

## EARLY INCLUSION

It is advisable to involve policy partners from the project's outset, especially when forming research questions. This will ensure that pathways constitute more than dissemination exercises and pleasant conversations.

