

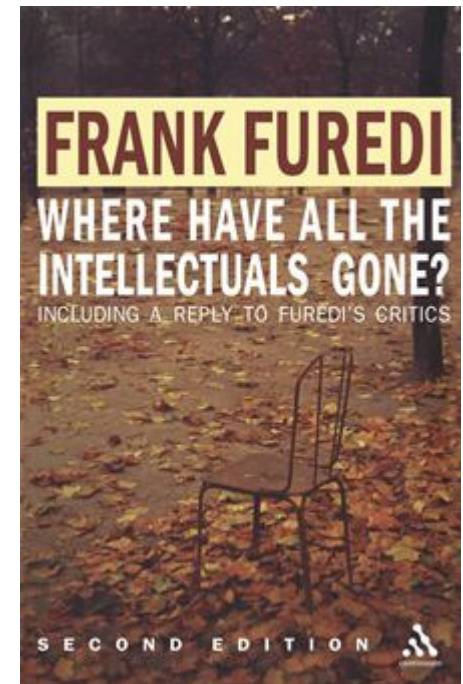
IMPACT: Grounding the Ivory Tower?

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GEES (CURS)

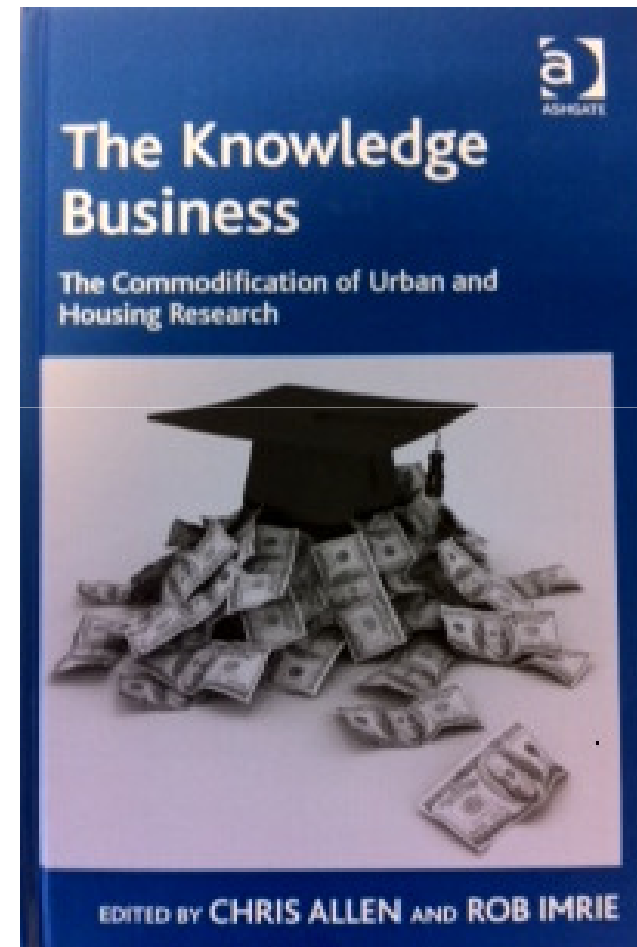
The University and public affairs

- Traditionally the university was viewed as a counterbalance to the State in promoting (democratic) free-thinking and the unfettered development of ideas and knowledge
- The ivory tower (good and bad connotations)



The academy and commercial gain

- More recently universities have become increasingly 'entrepreneurial' and connected to—or even led by—an array of political and economic agendas.
- Public service ethos versus privatisation
- Greater emphasis is now placed by institutions on commercial spin-offs, business incubation and efforts to harness and protect intellectual property



Refocus on 'impact'



- Simultaneously, it is proposed that universities have an *essential role to play in the* achievement of knowledge transfer and exchange with policy and professional communities.
- REF impact statements
- As stipulated by Research Councils UK (RCUK), knowledge transfer and dissemination is now *central to research outputs*:
- *As the public bodies charged with investing taxpayers money in science and research, the Research Councils take very seriously their responsibilities in making the outputs from this research publicly available—not just to other researchers, but also to potential users in business, government and the public sector, and also to the public*

(www.rcuk.ac.uk/research/outputs).

Types of impacts

- ‘**Instrumental**’ (influencing policy, practice and behaviours)
- ‘**Conceptual**’ (helping policy understanding and contributing to debates)
- ‘**Capacity building**’ (CPD and skill development)



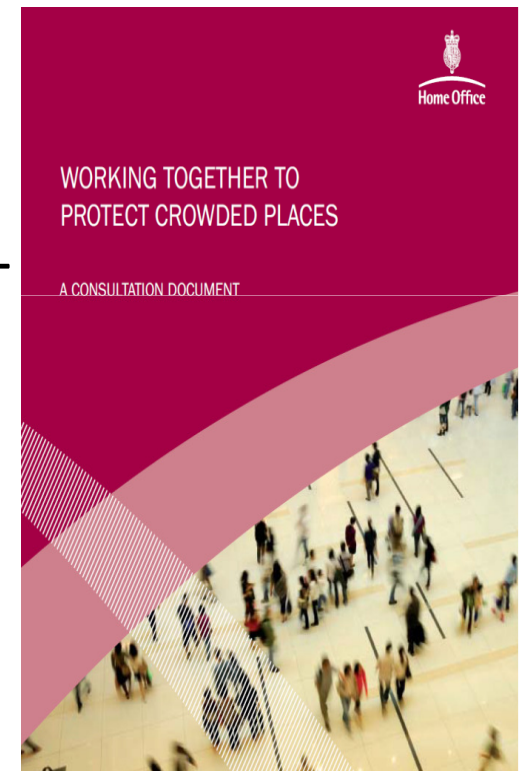
Urban Planning as applied geography (or geography with purpose)

- Examples of impact in practice
- Over the last 5 years with RCUK and National Govt
- Focus on countering terrorism in public places in proportionate ways....
- Multiple pathways to impact
- A range of project partners
- Constraints and coping strategies



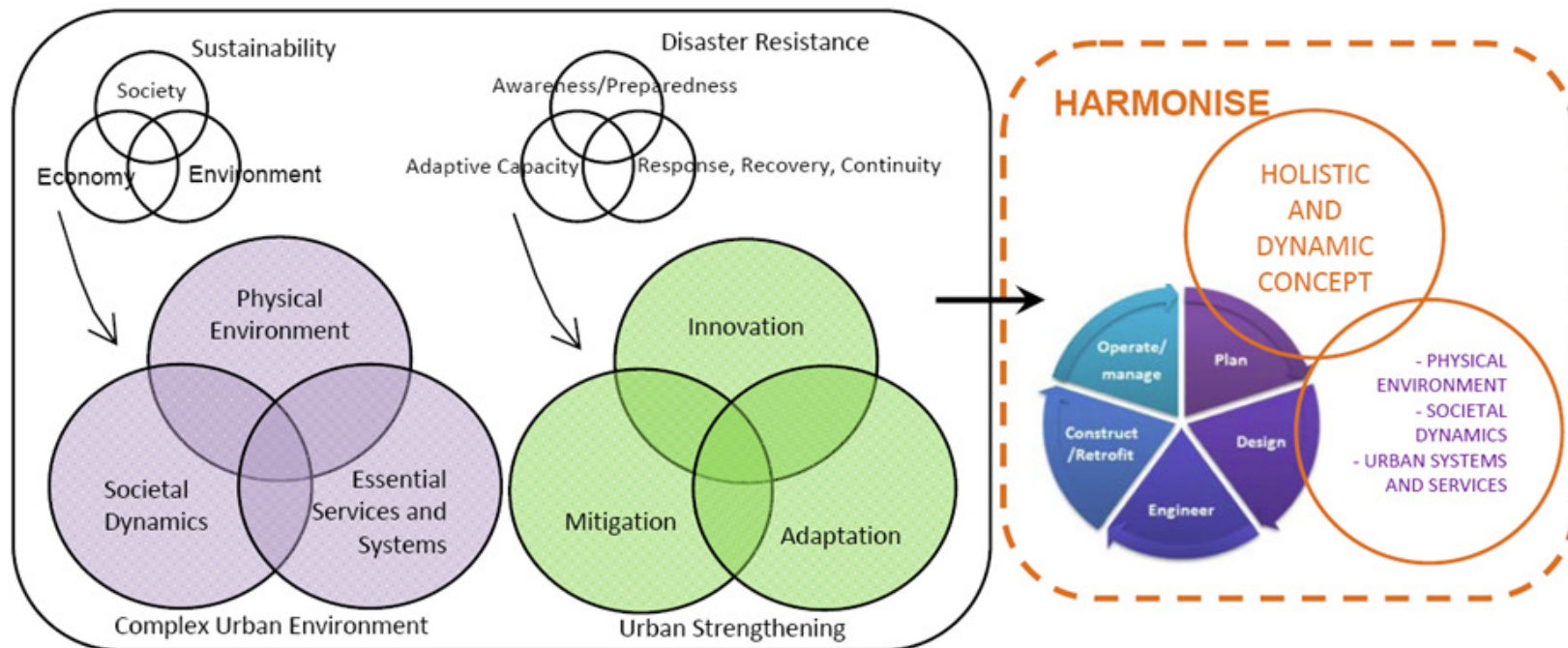
‘Instrumental’ (influencing policy, practice and behaviours)

- Fed into government reviews of counter-terrorism
- Worked directly with practice communities to inform their activities (co-production of knowledge)
- Shaped their behaviours through encouraging wider stakeholder engagement (interactive tool hosted on Govt Website)
- Trade press/media



‘Conceptual’ (helping policy understanding and contributing to debates)

- Connected to a range of global policy communities in CT
- Contributed to a range of emerging academic debates (proportionality, responsibilisation, urban resilience)
- REF papers and books
- Further EU finding to continue to do this



‘Capacity building’ (CPD and skill development)

- Delivery of direct training with ACPO
- Worked with ODA
- Helped devise simulated training tools for use by all police forces and built environment professionals
- Tools also utilised in teaching for the next generation of planners



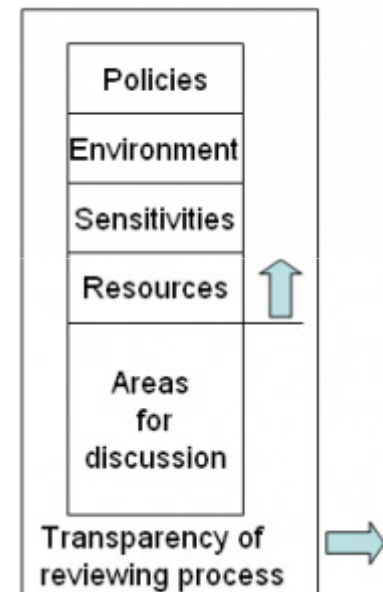
Problems

- Access to Govt as a double edged sword (privileges and prohibitions)
- Timescales and culture
- Sensitive information and trust
- Publication restrictions
- Autonomy
- Working with the State seen as bad by some academics
- Negotiating complex relationships



Critical friendship as a coping strategy

- The 'coping strategy' adopted was the model of the 'critical friend', drawn from public policy literature
- Unsettles the traditional power relationship between the researcher and the researched.
- More than evaluation - 'critical friendship' entails a more engaged role, holding a mirror to those involved, and helping them reflect on their own practice.
- Co-production of knowledge and retention of academic independence



Refs

- For a fully description of this research pleas see the following
- O'Hare, P., **Coaffee, J.** and Hawkesworth, M. (2010) Managing sensitive relations in co-produced planning research, *Public Money and Management*, 30 (4) 243-251
- O'Hare, P, **Coaffee, J.** and Hawkesworth, M. (2010) Managing Sensitive Social Relations in Planning Policy Research: Co-Production and Critical Friendship in the Enterprising University in Allen, C and Imrie, R. *The Knowledge Business: The Commodification of Urban and Housing Research*, Ashgate, Farnham, 149-168