

<p>Institution: University of Cambridge</p>
<p>Unit of Assessment: UoA29</p>
<p>Title of case study: Universities and society</p>
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words) Stefan Collini's research on the character of universities and their relations to their host societies has had a major impact on public discourse in Britain. Grounded in historical evidence concerning the growth of institutions and disciplines, and on the ways public debate about the functions of universities has evolved since the mid-nineteenth century, it has influenced political argument about legislation, the content of reporting on higher education, and public understanding of universities more generally. There is extensive evidence for the uptake of these ideas in documents produced by public bodies, citations in the media, and other published reports on policy debates.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words) Collini has been a member of the Faculty of English in the University of Cambridge since 1986 and has held the position of Professor of Intellectual History and English Literature since 2000. At several points between 1993 and 2012, he has undertaken research into the history and character of universities and academic disciplines in their relation with wider publics. This research has concentrated on the question of the distinctive role of universities in modern societies as providers of various forms of disinterested analytical understanding. It has identified recurring patterns of tension between the utilitarian purposes society has attempted to impose on universities and the open-ended drive to extend understanding at the heart of all science and scholarship. This research has challenged unreflective assumptions about 'the two cultures' (see his substantial Introductions and Notes to [1] and [6]), and about contrasts between 'the ivory tower' and 'the real world' (see [2] and [5]). It has provided concrete evidence of the mutual involvement of disciplinary evolution and institutional development within a wider framework of social and educational policy.</p> <p>Collini's research has taken the form of a series of linked studies of some of the central issues and episodes in the history of debates about universities in Britain, from its Victorian beginnings, through the Snow-Leavis debate and the discussions surrounding the Robbins report, and on to particular controversies arising out of legislation or policy proposals from the 1980s onwards. This research paid particular attention to society's changing expectations about universities and the public role of scholars and scientists, especially as 'public intellectuals'. Collini's findings have acquired significant cultural authority from their relation to the larger body of his scholarly work on the role of intellectuals and ideas in public debate in modern societies, especially Britain, represented most prominently by the substantial monographs, <i>Absent Minds: Intellectuals in Britain</i> (Oxford, 2006) and <i>Common Reading: Critics, Historians, Publics</i> (Oxford, 2008), the most significant chapters from which, for the claims made by this case study, have been singled out in references [3] and [4]. The implications of this line of research for present circumstances have been most fully developed in <i>What Are Universities For?</i> (2012) [5], a book in which Collini draws together and distils the results of much of his research over the previous twenty years as well as rehearsing some more topical interventions.</p> <p>Turning to his comparative research into the history and character of universities and academic disciplines in their relation with wider publics across a broader scenario, Collini's investigations into European systems of higher education has been chiefly pursued through his close interaction with the Centre de l'histoire moderne et contemporaine in Paris, directed by Professor Christophe Charle. With administrative support, funded partly by the Leverhulme Trust in 2010, Collini has been able to assemble detailed evidence to support claims about disciplinary development with the compilation of a database on staff working in the field of English studies within British universities in the twentieth century.</p>
<p>3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)</p> <p>1 Stefan Collini (ed.), C.P. Snow, <i>The Two Cultures</i> (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).</p>

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2 Stefan Collini, Ch 12: 'Against Prodspeak: "research" in the humanities'; Ch 14: 'Company histories: CamU PLC and SocAnth Ltd'; Ch 16; 'Before another tribunal: the idea of the "non-specialist" public' in *English Pasts: Essays in History and Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

3 Stefan Collini, Ch 20: 'Long Views I: specialization and its discontents', in *Absent Minds: Intellectuals in Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

4 Stefan Collini, Ch 24: 'HiEdBiz: universities and their publics', in *Common Reading: Critics, Historians, Publics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

5 Stefan Collini, *What Are Universities For?* (London: Penguin Books, 2012)

6 Stefan Collini (ed.), F.R. Leavis, *Two Cultures? The Significance of C.P. Snow* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

All these publications were peer-reviewed for major presses, and they were extensively reviewed in both the scholarly journals and beyond (lists of reviews available on request) – e.g. [5] was described as 'erudite, well argued, carefully researched, a fine addition to the debate about the purpose of university education'. In addition, the quality of Collini's research has been recognised by a succession of external awards, including a Fellowship at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton (Sept 1994 to June 1995), the 'Thank-Offering to Britain' Fellowship from the British Academy (Oct 1999 to June 2000), a Leverhulme Major Research Fellowship (Oct 2007 to Sept 2010), and the Birkelund Fellowship, National Humanities Center, North Carolina, USA (Sept 2012 to May 2013). These awards all paid either full salary or the costs of a full-time replacement (except the NHC which paid a fixed stipend of \$60,000).

All outputs can be supplied by the University of Cambridge on request.

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

Beneficiaries of impact from Collini's research include higher education policymakers, both in the UK and abroad and those who work in universities. The wider public have also engaged significantly in the debates and issues which Collini's research has raised. Collini's study has also had economic impact through book sales – for example, *What Are Universities For?* sold 8,000 copies in its first year [1].

Impact on Public Discourse

Collini's research has had widespread impact on public discourse about higher education in general and the humanities in particular. One reviewer wrote that, 'Stefan Collini has undoubtedly done a great service to the university community in channelling criticisms of the current state of higher education in the UK into popular public discourse' [2]. This has occurred through a wide variety of channels, including a considerable number of articles and talks in the mainstream media, articles in more specialist media, public appearances and contributions to public events. Examples include: (i) Collini's article in the *Guardian* ('University "Market" is a Con': 19 August 2011 [3]), which attracted over 191 responses; (ii) His articles in the *London Review of Books* ('Browne's Gamble': 4 November 2010 [4] and 'From Robbins to McKinsey': 25 August 2011 [5]); (iii) His book *What are Universities For?*, which received numerous reviews in the national and international press (from the *Financial Times* to the *Economist* to the *Australian Book Review*); (iv) A Youtube video of Collini speaking at the RSA on 5 March 2012 about *What are Universities For?*, has received well over 11,000 viewers [6]; (v) His invitation to be a member of the Presidential Panel on 'The Humanities and the Future of the University' at Harvard University, 30 April 2013, a public debate which the *Harvard Gazette* reported as drawing 'a capacity crowd', [7]; (vi) His invitation also to be a major contributor (along with David Willetts and others) to the public debate about what it means to be a modern university in a globalised era, which formed part of Zamyn's

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inaugural cultural forum on Global Citizenship. This was a series of major events held at Tate Modern, 3 June 2013, ahead of the G8 summit which was held later that month [8].

Impact on Policy Making

Collini's arguments have been publicly acknowledged and discussed by David Willetts, presently Minister for Higher Education, most notably in a major speech defending government policy (1 March 2011) [9] and in an article in the *THE* (1 March 2012) [10]. This in turn led to further responses to Collini's work from the public and fostered additional debate. As a direct result of his research findings, Collini was invited on two occasions (18 January 2011 and 22 February 2012) to address the All-Party Parliamentary Universities Group (composed of MPs, Peers, and Vice-Chancellors) at discussion-meetings at Westminster. When a major public debate was held on 'The Future of Higher Education in Scotland', Collini was again invited to be a speaker; both his talk, 'The English Problem and "the Scottish Solution"', and his *LRB* piece 'From Robbins to McKinsey' were cited in the subsequent report of the Review of Higher Education Governance in Scotland (2012) [11].

Impact on Public Services (Universities)

Collini's research has been used in the management and planning in a number of HEIs internationally. For example, his work has been drawn upon by the University of Toronto in a university-wide planning exercise and by the Board of Governors of the University College Plymouth St Mark and St John. The Vice President and Provost, University of Toronto, attests that Collini's work 'has informed my own strategic planning', including the strategic review of her University that she led in 2011-12, *Towards 2030: the View from 2012*, in which she spoke to 'the view so nicely articulated by Professor Collini — how higher education enriches both individuals and societies and the importance of this rich education in a rapidly-changing economic and political landscape'. She describes *What are Universities for?* and his *LRB* articles as 'exemplars of today's best thinking about the role of universities' and their author as 'a passionate defender of plain and meaningful expression', concluding: 'For this alone we all owe him an enormous debt.' [12] The Chair of the Board of Governors at the University College Plymouth St Mark and St John circulated a copy of [5] to each member of the Board of Governors (25 members). [13]

Collini's research has also impacted on employees of universities and the unions who represent them. Lecturers from Czech universities used Collini's work as a basis from which to campaign against high education reform, including extracts in a brochure and reporting (15 August 2012) that 'the protests were partially successful since they led to resignation of the ministry of education' [14]. UNISON, the largest education union in the UK with over 300,000 members, cited his research in its evidence to Government on the reform of Higher Education. They declared their agreement with 'much of the analysis by Stefan Collini ... in his article for the London Review of Books in November 2010. This dissected the ideology and exposed the weaknesses within the Browne report'. [15]

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

[1] Person 1 (Editor, Penguin Books Ltd)

[2] <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/2012/05/27/book-review-what-are-universities-for-by-stefan-collini/>

[3] <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2011/aug/19/university-market-white-paper>

[4] <http://www.lrb.co.uk/v32/n21/stefan-collini/brownes-gamble>

[5] <http://www.lrb.co.uk/v33/n16/stefan-collini/from-robbins-to-mckinsey>

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[6] Collini's lecture at the RSA:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W5cPBHFwT3Q>

[7] <http://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2013/05/oh-the-humanities/>

[8] <http://www.zamyn.org/programmes.html>

[9] David Willetts' speech:

<http://www.bis.gov.uk/news/speeches/david-willetts-arts-humanities-social-sciences>

[10] David Willetts' article: <http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/story.asp?storycode=419209>;

[11] <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0038/00386841.pdf>

[12] Letter, 23 April 2013, from Person 2 (Vice President and Provost, University of Toronto)

[13] E-mail from Person 3 (Chair of Board of Governors, University College Plymouth St Mark and St John) 15.9.12

[14] E-mails from Person 4 (Lecturer in Philosophy, Charles University, Prague) 16.1.12 and 15.8.12

[15] UNISON, evidence to government:

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201012/cmselect/cmbis/885/885we31.htm>