

Institution: University of Warwick		
Unit of Assessment: D28 - History		
Title of case study: Standards in Public Life: Connecting History and Policy		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2013-2020		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Mark Knights Mark Philp	Professor Professor	02/07/2007 – present 01/10/2013 – present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2014-2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>Doubts about the financial and ethical probity of politicians are a familiar feature of historical and contemporary public discourse. Philp and Knights have worked in collaboration and individually on the history and political theory relating to understandings of public office and its corruption. Their research findings have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) influenced the UK's Committee on Standards in Public Life (CSPL)'s identification of standards and interpretation of principles in relation to particular roles within government and the administration, and in relation to wider concerns about misconduct, intimidation and public trust, and have underpinned recommendations for best practice and regulatory reform ii) informed UK and EU policy makers and NGOs about the lessons from history regarding the path-dependence of constructions of public office and corruption iii) influenced policy and practice in the EU and Kenya in relation to public office and corruption. 		
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>Through joint workshops, joint research projects and networks, and extensive discussion of each other's work since 2013, Philp and Knights developed and tested their insight that public office and its ethos and structure have evolved historically in different ways in different contexts and in relation to different dimensions of government activity (e.g. politics, the administration, the judiciary). They have explored the implications of this insight for policy concerning conceptions of institutional probity in different contexts. As a result, they have framed their contributions to government policies on malfeasance and corruption in ways that are sensitive to local understandings.</p> <p>Their work emphasises three key themes:</p> <p>1) The importance of context. Their stress here is on how the evolution of standards of public office and its corruption responds to historical pressures that vary across different national contexts. Philp's research is rooted in political realism (3.2) in relation to the definition and understanding of office and corruption (3.1; 3.3). His work highlights contextualised ethics (as opposed to morality) of office, the conflict of values and the limits of impartiality. Knights' research on Britain (and its empire) in the pre-modern era shows that anti-corruption strategies from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries were the product of unique contextual factors. He demonstrates that time and will are needed to change political, social, religious, legal and economic cultures, challenging the 'big bang' account of transformative political change. For both, standards of office are part of a larger story about state formation and the local contexts</p>		

that shape cultural values and governance frameworks and create path-dependencies that can assist or inhibit reforms. This joint stress on context informed an AHRC GCRF Highlight Notice grant (led by Philp 2016-18) comparing the histories of public office in Kenya, Mexico and the UK.

2) **Accountability.** Philp's research has distinguished different types of accountability and emphasised its tensions with political agency. He has encouraged more careful differentiation between administrative and political office (2014, 5.1), emphasising the latter's distinctive demands and the British public's often poor understanding of these. This insight contributes to more tailored and measured interpretations of the principles governing of public life in British politics and public administration. Knights emphasises the importance of the idea of trust in holding officers to account and in the evolution of accountability mechanisms (3.6). His work uses case studies to explore the mindsets of those in major public offices, the challenges of holding officers to account, the shifting and contested boundaries between licit and illicit behaviour, and the varied nature of the debates in wider society that affect how officers behave (3.4; 3.5).

3) **Alignment.** Both researchers stress the importance, and the difficulties, of aligning practices in the political system with the expectations of a wider public, to enable intelligent forms of accountability and enhance trust (3.3). Philp's work on realism and political conduct has guided his advisory work with the Committee of Standards in Public Life. Knights' historical research into differences between political, administrative, colonial and corporate office shows that Britain developed very distinctive conceptions of public office and its responsibilities, thereby underlining its limitations as a model for other cultures (3.4; 3.5; 3.6).

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

Philp and Knights have published articles in peer-reviewed journals and edited collections:

1. **Philp, Mark** (2015) *The Definition of Political Corruption*. In: Heywood, Paul, (ed.) Routledge Handbook of Political Corruption. London: New York Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, pp. 17-29. ISBN: 9780415617789
2. **Philp, Mark** (2018) *Politics and the "Pure of Heart": Realism and Corruption*. In: Sleat, Matt, (ed) Politics Recovered: Realist Thought in Theory and Practice. New York: Columbia University Press, 194-217. doi:10.7312/slea17528
3. **Philp, Mark** (2018) *The corruption of politics*. Social Philosophy and Policy, 35 (2). pp. 73-93. doi:10.1017/S026505251900013X
4. **Knights, Mark** (2018) *Anticorruption in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Britain*. In: Kroeze, Ronald, Vitória, André and Geltner, Guy (eds.) Anti-Corruption in History: From Antiquity to the Modern Era. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 181-195. ISBN: 9780198809975
5. **Knights, Mark** (2018) *Corruption as the abuse of entrusted power*. In: Parisi, Nicoletta and Potesta, Gian Luca and Rinoldi, Dino, (eds.) Prevenire la corruzione. Questioni e modelli emergenti tra diritto, etica ed economia. Napoli: Editoriale Scientifica. ISBN: 9788893911818
6. **Knights, Mark** (2018) *Explaining away corruption in pre-modern Britain*. Social Philosophy and Policy, 35 (2). pp. 94-117. doi:10.1017/S0265052519000141

Funding: **Philp, Mark** (PI) and **Smith, Benjamin**, Constructions of Public Office, AHRC GCRF Highlight Notice, AH/P006299/1, November 2016-October 2018. **GBP48,554.**

Philp, Mark, Training trainers for ethical challenges in public office, GCRF (from UKRI Quality-Related Funding), March 2019-July 2019. **GBP13,176.**

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

Knights' and Philp's work has achieved three forms of impact: influencing the UK government and its ethical framework; influencing European approaches to corruption; and influencing public understanding of corruption and the demands of public office.

Influencing UK Government Policies

Philp's research has informed public standards debates through his long-term relationship (since 2001) with the Committee on Standards in Public Life (CSPL). The CSPL is an advisory non-departmental public body, sponsored by the Cabinet Office. The Committee advises the Prime Minister on ethical standards across the whole of public life in England, monitoring and reporting on issues relating to the standards of conduct of all public office holders. Philp chairs its Research Advisory Board, plays a key part in the drafting of papers and submissions of evidence, and attends its monthly meetings.

Philp's contributions to the CSPL's July 2014 *Ethics in Practice* report, for instance, led the Committee to commission his 'Public Ethics and Political Judgment' paper, to address whether normal workplace solutions to standards issues such as induction should apply to politicians. In the preface to the paper Lord Bew, then Chair of the CSPL, stated that Philp's work helped them understand that existing principles 'remain central in the challenge to raise ethical standards in the twenty first century' (5.1). The CSPL now stresses the importance of induction in informing public office holders of ethical standards and induction is now offered to all new MPs. Lord Bew summarised Philp's involvement by saying 'Mark has led in terms of research ideas and outcomes, and offered invaluable advice with regard to policy development with high impact on the Committee's work and output' (5.2). In a January 2016 meeting between the CSPL and The Commons Standards Committee, Lord Bew specifically praised the influence of Philp's research into the distinctive challenges of public office.

Philp's research has likewise informed the CSPL's work on MP's outside interests (March 2018), Intimidation (Autumn, 2017), and Artificial Intelligence and Ethics (May 2019). Philp also shaped the CSPL review of 'public private' partnerships. Although there was pressure from the corporate sector to waive 'selflessness' for firms bidding for government contracts, Philp successfully made the case to the CSPL for seeing this as an appropriate principle for those acting under PPI contracts (5.2).

In 2017, Philp was appointed as a formal consultant on the report to the Prime Minister on Intimidation in Public Life, for which he wrote briefing papers, acted as commentator in public evidence sessions and responded to multiple drafts. He in particular identified the importance of cross-party collaboration in tackling intimidation, which was emphasised in the report (5.3). Cross-party meetings were subsequently facilitated by the CSPL (November 2018, March and May 2019); the Jo Cox Foundation has also responded to these initiatives. (5.4). Describing the report, the Prime Minister stated: 'Their report makes sobering reading....It presents a credible plan of action to help build a more civil public debate and I welcome its recommendations...the government will act on the Committee's recommendations' (6 February 2018, 5.4). As a direct result of the report, the Government has committed to legislating to create a new offence of intimidation of candidates (5.4).

Following the succession of Lord Evans as Chair of the CSPL, Philp contributed extensively to the Committee's 2020 report on the challenges posed to public standards by new AI technologies (5.2; 5.3), while also supporting the secretariat in a range of areas concerning the promotion of public standards, including recommendations regarding harassment and bullying in Parliament. Alongside his ongoing work with the CSPL, Philp has contributed to the Law Commission Inquiry into Misconduct (to which Knights also made a submission) and to the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee inquiry into the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments (5.5).

Influence on European governance

Knights' research was presented to the Council of Europe's Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy, at a meeting in December 2016 chaired by Michele Nicoletti, now the President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. Nicoletti drew extensively on Knights' research for a report on corruption, using it as a case study to stress the importance of understanding national contexts. In the report Nicoletti wrote: 'I will borrow his analysis to show the impact of the building of the modern State on corruption ... Professor Knights concluded that we need more academic and policy attention to be paid to the ways in which corruption was, and is embedded in social and cultural values, which change slowly but provide the essential environment in which the institutional reforms take place' (5.6). That report was presented to the European Assembly and led directly to an EU resolution in the European Assembly on promoting integrity in governance [Resolution 2170, 2017].

Knights has also influenced other European agencies. For instance, in February 2018 Knights was one of 40 international experts invited to a Strasbourg Round Table on 'Council of Europe Co-operation Activities against Economic Crime'. The resultant report detailing policy action points was then included in the EU's 'Action Against Corruption: Cooperation Highlights 2018' (5.7, p.8).

Informing understandings of corruption

Knights' work has attracted considerable attention, encouraging a wider societal reflection on corruption and standards in office. His report, and ethical case study, for Transparency International were downloaded 4,611 and 840 times respectively between September 2016 and July 2020 (5.8). He has given talks in many public fora, speaking 3 times in the Putney Debates organised by Oxford University's Law Faculty, which were live-streamed beyond the physical audience (videos received 1,338 views, 5.8); to the Swedish Quality of Government Institute; to publics in Liverpool, Newcastle, London, Coventry; and via popular magazines such as *History Today* (circulation 18,161) and *BBC History Magazine* (circulation 97,550), as well as via his blog, which relates past corruption scandals to the present (5.9).

Philp and Knights' joint AHRC project on 'Constructions of public office' in Kenya, Mexico and the UK led to work with Strathmore University in Nairobi drawing in a range of public officials from the Kenyan Public Service and from County Administrations to discuss problems faced. In a subsequent GCRF Accelerator-Fund project the team developed a suite of resources, including a training system using the 2010 Kenyan Constitution (which itself draws heavily on the CSPL's principles). The project integrated more local and contextual understandings into programmes for training and staff development, so as to enable a more targeted approach to risks of inefficiency, corruption, and malfeasance. The training system was developed through bespoke workshops provided by the team, which successfully helped middle-rank public officials negotiate the conflicting pressures they experience. One participant from the Auditor General's Office said he had found the workshops useful in guiding his work 'by focusing more on the principles of integrity rather than the laws on ethics and integrity in public office per se' (5.10). These workshops drew the attention of the Office of the President and were attended by the Director of Public Prosecutions.

GCRF funding to develop training workshops for trainers enabled further work in Kenya, in association with Strathmore, with the results being brought together on the project's [website](#). A further follow-up project to take the methods into the County administrations in Kenya is currently awaiting the resolution of the challenges of Covid-19.

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

1. Paper: *Public Ethics and Political Judgment*, Mark Philp, July 2014
2. Statements from CSPL members

3. CSPL Reports: Intimidation in Public Life (p.53 for quote from Mark Philp); AI and Public Standards
4. Intimidation Report Response: Prime Minister's Speech on Standard's in Public Life and a Joint Statement on Intimidatory Behaviour
5. Written Responses to Consultations (PACAC Inquiring into the role and effectiveness of ACoBA; Law Commission Consultation into Reforming Misconduct in Public Office)
6. Council of Europe Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy Report: Corruption as Governance: A Barrier to Institutional and Efficiency and Progress
7. Council of Europe Action against Economic Crime Cooperation Highlights 2018
8. Download and viewers statistics
9. Articles by Knights
10. Constructions of Public Office Training Feedback