

Institution: Oxford Brookes University		
Unit of Assessment: 19, Politics and International Studies		
Title of case study: Shaping debates on UK trade policy and Brexit		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2003–2019		
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:
Dr Stephen Hurt	Reader in International Relations	[text removed for publication]
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2015–2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
1. Summary of the impact		
<p>Dr Hurt's research on the EU's trade and development relationship with African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) states has had a direct impact on contemporary debates on UK trade policy. A significant consequence of Brexit is that the UK government will become responsible for international trade policy for the first time in decades. Dr Hurt has been a key expert and contributor at governmental level to policy debates and discussions as the UK prepares to negotiate trade agreements with new partners. Accumulated findings from Dr Hurt's research have had an impact at national and international level with both policymakers and important civil society organisations. Key beneficiaries include the Department for International Trade and the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Africa. Dr Hurt has also contributed to wider public debate through his work with the Trade Justice Movement (TJM).</p>		
2. Underpinning research		
<p>Following the outcome of the EU Referendum in June 2016, Dr Hurt's longstanding research on the EU's relationship with ACP states now has significance for domestic policymaking. As a result of Brexit, responsibility for the UK's trading arrangements with third countries moves from Brussels to Westminster.</p> <p>Orthodox opinion within the debate on future UK trade policy with Africa has focused on two key aspects. First, the need to preserve the terms of access to the UK market for African exporters by 'rolling-over' the EU's existing arrangements. Second, the longer-term opportunities for 'Global Britain' to explore hitherto untapped export markets in the continent. Dr Hurt's central research findings have enabled him to challenge this framing of the debate. His research provides insights into the contentious nature of the EU's trade and development policy to Africa and the agency that African states and civil society actors have exerted in previous negotiations with the EU.</p> <p>In a highly-cited 2003 article, published in <i>Third World Quarterly</i>, Dr Hurt developed a critique of the EU's claim that its relationship with ACP states is based on 'partnership'. Subsequent articles have built on this initial research by conducting a detailed examination of the trade component of this relationship and in particular, the negotiation of Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) with ACP states [R1, R2, R3]. More recently, Dr Hurt has published an article evaluating the scope for African agency in the negotiations towards a new agreement between the EU and ACP states [R6].</p> <p>Through his research, Dr Hurt has highlighted how the hegemonic dominance of neoliberalism within political elites has underpinned important changes to the EU's relationship with ACP states [R1]. In particular, how the consensus on the developmental benefits of free trade has been embedded within the EU's trade and development policy [R1, R2]. Dr Hurt has problematized this approach in a number of ways. First, his work has been important in challenging the shift to reciprocal trade liberalisation reflected in EPAs by showing how the EU's desire to include behind-the-border issues during EPA negotiations with ACP states, limits the policy space of African states</p>		

and their ability to pursue alternative development strategies [R1]. Secondly, it has demonstrated how the EU's deployment of development discourse has been used as a 'weapon of the weak' by African states during the EPA negotiations [R2]. Thirdly, Dr Hurt has evaluated the consequences of EPAs for organised labour, emphasising the limitations of the way that the EU has adopted the International Labour Organisation's 'Decent Work' agenda [R3]. From 2013–16 Dr Hurt was a recipient of Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) funding as a co-investigator for a seminar series examining UK-Africa relations [R4]. This resulted in a series of outputs including his own research demonstrating the discursive impact of TJM (a UK coalition of nearly 60 civil society organisations) upon Africa campaigning in the UK [R5].

There is clear evidence that Dr Hurt's central research findings have contributed to debates on the UK's future trade policy with African states. For example, one of the central recommendations of a 2017 APPG for Africa inquiry (see below) was that '*future trade agreements made with African countries and trade blocs must allow adequate policy space for them to choose their own development paths and support regional integration and development priorities*'.

3. References to the research

- R1. (2012) 'The EU-SADC Economic Partnership Agreement Negotiations: 'locking in' the neoliberal development model in southern Africa?', *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 33, No. 3, pp. 495-510. DOI: 10.1080/01436597.2012.657486 [Submitted to REF 2014, 76 Google Scholar citations].
- R2. (2013) [with Donna Lee and Ulrike Lorenz-Carl] 'The Argumentative Dimension to the EU-Africa EPAs', *International Negotiation*, Vol. 18, No. 1, pp. 67-87. DOI: doi.org/10.1163/15718069-12341250 [Submitted to REF 2014, 54 Google Scholar citations].
- R3. (2016) 'The EU's Economic Partnership Agreements with Africa: 'Decent Work' and the Challenge of Trade Union Solidarity', *Third World Thematics: A TWQ Journal*, Vol. 1, No. 4, pp. 547-562. DOI: 10.1080/23802014.2016.1305871 [6 Google Scholar citations].
- R4. (2013-16) Economic and Social Research Council, Co-Investigator, Seminar Series on 'British Africa policy after Labour: Coalition, austerity, continuity and change', Awarded £26,956 (ES/L000725/1).
- R5. (2019) 'British Campaigns for African Development: The Trade Justice Movement' in Danielle Beswick, Jonathan Fisher and Stephen R. Hurt (eds), *Britain and Africa in the 21st Century: Between Ambition and Pragmatism*, Manchester: Manchester University Press. ISBN:9781526134134
- R6. (2020) 'African Agency and EU-ACP Relations beyond the Cotonou Agreement', *Journal of Contemporary European Research*, Vol. 16, No. 2, pp. 139-162. DOI: 10.30950/jcer.v16i2.1075

4. Details of the impact

The specific impact of the findings from the research conducted by Dr Hurt has been achieved through their widespread inclusion in the contemporary policy debate on the nature of the UK's trade policy after Brexit. This debate has been led by the formation of the Department for International Trade (DIT) in July 2016. Drawing on the research findings summarised above, Dr Hurt has extended the scope of this debate by emphasising the structural consequences of UK trade policy for Africa's development prospects. This is of significance given the commitments made by the UK government to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and in particular the focus on eradicating poverty (Goal 1), decent work and sustainable economic growth (Goal 8) and reducing inequality within and between countries (Goal 10).

The reach of this impact has been extended in two important and related aspects. First, Dr Hurt has been directly engaged with a wide range of important decision makers, which included an invitation to a policy roundtable chaired by Tom Josephs (Director of Policy in DIT). The other main feature of the impact has been in working collaboratively with the Trade Justice Movement (TJM) to promote an alternative UK trade policy rooted in the idea of 'trade justice'. In a letter Ruth

Bergan (Coordinator of TJM) thanked Dr Hurt for his '*contributions to our campaigning work in promoting trade justice*' [S1].

Extending the scope of the debate on UK trade policy and Africa

Dr Hurt has been working closely with the APPG for Africa since 2015 when it began work on a report into the impacts of the EU's EPAs with African states. He was invited by Henrietta Bailey-Morgan (Policy & Research Coordinator of the APPG for Africa) to suggest what the key themes of this report should be during the initial planning phase of the inquiry [S2]. Following the outcome of the Brexit referendum in June 2016, the focus of this inquiry was updated to consider the lessons from the EPA negotiations for future UK trade policy post-Brexit. Dr Hurt produced a briefing paper based on his prior research in this area, which led to a further meeting in London with Ms Bailey-Morgan and a member of the Royal African Society to discuss the terms of reference of the inquiry.

The final report, published by the APPG for Africa in February 2017, included a set of 11 essays including one by Dr Hurt entitled 'UK-Africa Trade Within and Outside of the European Union: From Lomé to Brexit' [S3]. This report has since been cited in a parliamentary debate by the Chair of the APPG for Africa, Chi Onwurah MP on 9 March 2017 [S4a], in a question raised in the House of Lords by Lord Oates on 25 April 2017 [S4b] and in a debate in the House of Lords by Lord Mendelsohn on 27 November 2017 [S4c].

In March 2018, the report was also submitted to a House of Commons International Trade Committee inquiry into 'The UK's future trade relationships with developing countries, particularly those in the Commonwealth'. In a letter after publication of the report, the APPG for Africa thanked Dr Hurt for his '*expert advice, by way of various e-mails, conversations and a briefing paper [which] was invaluable when planning out the key thematic questions for the inquiry and essay series*' [S2].

In October 2017, DIT published a White Paper entitled 'Preparing for our future UK trade policy'. Dr Hurt submitted written evidence to the consultation process that followed. His analysis focused on the fourth of the five principles outlined in the White Paper, namely 'supporting developing countries to reduce poverty'. As a result of his submission Dr Hurt was invited, together with three other academics, to a two-hour stakeholder engagement roundtable with leading officials from DIT to discuss this evidence. A letter from DIT following the roundtable, acknowledged that Dr Hurt's '*focus on the EU's trade and development policy to ACP states and the additional points ... raised in connection with the Trade Bill helped us gain a better understanding of the issues and will inform our future policy*' [S5].

In December 2017, Dr Hurt submitted written evidence to a House of Commons International Trade Committee inquiry into how the UK can replicate the rights it currently has under EU trade agreements after Brexit. This evidence was published on the parliamentary website and was referenced on three occasions in the Committee's final report [S6]. It put forward the case for why the UK government should abandon its desire to replicate EPAs after Brexit and how a unilateral trade preference scheme, would better meet both Africa's development needs and the UK's obligations to deliver on the UN SDGs.

In July 2018, the reach of this impact was extended to the EU-level of policymaking when Dr Hurt was invited by Emma McClarkin MEP to speak as the only academic expert, alongside three policymakers including Paul Walters (Head of Trade Agreements with Developing Countries in DIT), at a Commonwealth Forum roundtable meeting on 'The future of EPAs in the UK after Brexit' held at the European Parliament in Brussels. This event was attended by a number of key stakeholders including diplomatic representation from many ACP states. In a letter after this event, Ms McClarkin thanked Dr Hurt for his insights and in particular his focus on the '*underlying assumptions of how "development" is understood within EPAs and how African states have been able to exert agency within their negotiations with the European Commission ... [which] supported many of the points raised by the speaker from the ACP Secretariat*' [S7].

Given the focus on international development within Dr Hurt's impact on the UK trade policy debate, he was also able to contribute to analysis commissioned by the Department for International Development (DFID). He was invited by Evert-Jan Quak (Institute for Development Studies) in July 2018 to provide expert comment for a DFID report on 'The EU and its member states' trade support programmes for Economic Partnership Agreements'. This report included

both an acknowledgement of this contribution and citations to Hurt's academic research [S8].

In addition, Dr Hurt has influenced broader public understandings of the debate on UK-Africa relations through his contributions to the media. In January 2020 he was interviewed live on Sky News TV ahead of the opening address by PM Boris Johnson to the UK-Africa Investment Summit held in London. Dr Hurt was then commissioned to write an article for Oxford Analytica outlining his reflections on the Investment Summit and its wider significance for post-Brexit relations between the UK and Africa. Dr Hurt also co-authored an article with Chi Onwurah MP for 'African Arguments', which is the Royal African Society's pan-African news platform in December 2020, in order to publicise the key arguments of the APPG for Africa Policy Briefing published in November 2020 (see below).

Extending the reach of the campaign for trade justice

Dr Hurt's contributions to UK debates on trade policy have also involved collaboration with the work of TJM. TJM is a significant coalition that includes a wide range of civil society organisations. Dr Hurt has shared the insights of his published research on TJM and its role within wider development campaigning in the UK with Ruth Bergan and other key members of the network.

This engagement has included the recording of a podcast, designed to facilitate more public understanding of the work of TJM, which was published on its website in August 2017. Dr Hurt was asked to discuss the legacies of EPAs in relation to progressive, alternative approaches to trade as the UK designs its post-Brexit trade policies. Ruth Bergan thanked Dr Hurt for this particular contribution noting that '*your extensive knowledge, based on your published research ... provided some insightful reflections on EPAs and UK policy post-Brexit*' [S1].

Since then Dr Hurt has continued to support TJM's more recent campaign work to improve the democratic accountability of future UK trade policymaking. This included signing a letter published in The Daily Telegraph on 20 October 2017 and contributing to a strategic planning event in London on 4 April 2018. Dr Hurt set out the key principles of a more progressive UK trade policy to Africa in his own written submission to The House of Lords International Relations and Defence Committee inquiry on 'The UK and Sub-Saharan Africa' in October 2019. This evidence, which outlined how the UK's post-Brexit trade policy should be cognizant of Africa's own continental development plans, was cited eight times in the final report [S9].

Significantly, Dr Hurt has facilitated cooperation between the APPG for Trade Justice (formed in January 2019) and the APPG for Africa. This resulted in the organisation of a parliamentary symposium on 'UK-Africa Trade and Brexit' held on 21 January 2020 [S10]. This event was referenced in a parliamentary debate by Chi Onwurah MP on 13 January 2020 [S11]. At the symposium, Dr Hurt disseminated the key lessons of his research on EU-ACP trade relations and their significance for future UK-Africa trade arrangements. His presentation featured on a panel alongside Vera Songwe (Executive Secretary of the UN Economic Commission for Africa), Liz May (formerly of Traidcraft) and Paul Walters (DIT). Dr Hurt then led the concluding roundtable discussion with diplomatic representatives from 15 different African countries.

A number of important African policymakers spoke at the event including Akinwumi Adesina (President of the African Development Bank), Paulina Elago (Executive Secretary of SACU Secretariat) and Mukhisa Kituyi (Secretary General of UN Conference on Trade and Development). Eleven MPs and Lords (including the UK Minister for Africa) attended the symposium and in total 120 people from a range of spheres including civil servants, academics, corporates and NGOs were present. An evaluation survey was completed by 30 participants and overall the event was given an average rating of 8.6 out of 10. The Impact Partnership Evaluation Report of the symposium demonstrated that most attendees agreed that Brexit provides an opportunity to re-think UK-Africa trade relations to ensure that future arrangements are mutually beneficial [S12]. Following the symposium, Dr Hurt was appointed as lead author of a Policy Briefing on 'UK-Africa Trade after Brexit: Challenges and Opportunities', which was published by the APPG for Africa and Royal African Society in November 2020 [S13]. This 20-page document sets out in detail the key themes of the symposium and concludes with a series of recommendations for the UK Government and trade policymakers. Chi Onwurah MP and Lord Chidgey (APPG for Africa Chairs) sent a letter to the Minister for Trade Policy in the UK

Government on 29 October 2020 (and a follow-up email on 16 December) highlighting the key arguments of the Policy Briefing and were still awaiting a direct response by the end of 2020.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

- S1. Letter from Ruth Bergan (Coordinator of the Trade Justice Movement) confirming Dr Hurt's contributions to their campaign work on trade justice in relation to Brexit and UK trade policy.
- S2. Letter from Henrietta Bailey-Morgan (Policy & Research Coordinator of the APPG for Africa) confirming Dr Hurt's central role in shaping the terms of reference of their inquiry into EPAs and the consequences for UK trade policy with Africa after Brexit.
- S3. 'UK-Africa Trade Within and Outside of the European Union: From Lomé to Brexit' in APPG for Africa, *The Future of Africa-UK Trade and Development Cooperation Relations in the Transitional and Post Brexit Period*, London: Royal African Society (February 2017).
- S4. Citations in Hansard of reference made to the APPG for Africa report by Chi Onwurah MP, 9 March 2017 [S4a], Lord Oates, 25 April 2017 [S4b] and Lord Mendelsohn 27 November 2017 [S4c].
- S5. Letter from the Department for International Trade confirming Dr Hurt's input into the consultation process after the publication of the Trade White Paper in November 2017.
- S6. Report of House of Commons International Trade Committee inquiry into how the UK can replicate the rights it currently has under EU trade agreements after Brexit (March 2018). The UK Government published its response in May 2018.
- S7. Letter from Emma McClarkin MEP confirming the impact of Dr Hurt's presentation to the Commonwealth Forum event on 'The future of EPAs in the UK after Brexit', held in Brussels in July 2018.
- S8. Expert comment for IDS report, commissioned by the Department for International Development, on aid for trade and EPAs (July 2018).
- S9. Report of House of Lords International Relations and Defence Select Committee inquiry into 'The UK and Sub-Saharan Africa: prosperity, peace and development co-operation' (July 2020). The UK Government published its response in October 2020.
- S10. Organiser and speaker at Parliamentary Symposium on 'UK-Africa Trade and Brexit', House of Commons, 21 January 2020.
- S11. Citation in Hansard of reference made to the Parliamentary Symposium on 'UK-Africa Trade and Brexit' by Chi Onwurah MP, 13 January 2020.
- S12. Impact Partnership Evaluation Report on Parliamentary Symposium on UK-Africa Trade and Brexit, April 2020 (with APPG for Africa and Royal African Society).
- S13. Policy Briefing on 'UK-Africa Trade after Brexit: Challenges and Opportunities' for APPG for Africa (November 2020).