**JRF programme paper:**
**Globalisation**

# The impact of foreign policy on local communities

**Rachel Briggs**

**November 2010**

This paper:
- Explains how the nature of UK foreign policy has changed;
- demonstrates how local authorities and local communities have built their own international links; and
- discusses how globalisation has brought local communities into contact with UK foreign policy and how it affects them.

This paper was commissioned by Joseph Rowntree Foundation as part of its programme on Globalisation, which explores the impacts of globalisation on the UK and its effects on communities and people in poverty.

Contact:
Teresa Hanley
teresa_hanley@dsl.pipex.com

# Contents

# Introduction

Foreign policy is the group of strategies employed by a state to safeguard its national interests and achieve its goals. It has long been the preserve of Foreign Ministries, Prime Ministers and a select group of dignitaries and elites, working together at national and international levels. For a country like the UK, with its history of naval pre-eminence, legacy of Empire and associated international links, and a tendency to punch above its weight globally, foreign policy has always been a national strategic priority.

In the last twenty years, a number of factors have changed the nature of foreign policy – our national priorities, how it is done, who is affected and who takes part. These include the emergence of a new world order and new partners like China and India; rapid inward migration which has made the UK's population more diverse and dynamic; the heightened influence of multi-lateral forums, such as the EU; growing interdependence between 'domestic' and 'foreign' policy due to globalisation; and the blurring of boundaries between 'home' and 'abroad'.

Once a narrow area of policy conducted by a small and closed group of people, foreign policy now reaches into almost all areas of public and private policy. As a result, its impact on communities has grown. Foreign policy touches many aspects of everyday life, from housing and jobs to community relations, identity and political mobilisation. This essay will explore the impacts on communities, and look at how traditional and new foreign policy actors are protecting communities from the excesses of globalisation or helping them to exploit the opportunities on offer.

# A new world order and new international partners

This new era of foreign policy can be traced to the fall of the Berlin Wall, when the Cold War stand-off between the United States (US) and the Soviet Union came to an end. Since then, a multi-polar world has emerged with new superpowers like China and India challenging the might of the US. But power is not just shifting from one country to another; there has also been a move towards 'soft' power – the ability to attract and persuade – alongside traditional 'hard' power, which is the ability to coerce through military or economic means (Nye, 2005)[1.] The British Government is working hard to establish diplomatic, business, and cultural ties with these countries, and other heavyweights like Brazil and South Africa.

Governments have always used cultural means to meet their objectives, but in recent years a new range of cultural and social 'diplomats' have gained renewed status, from universities and scientists, to museums and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) (Bound *et al.*, 2007). The importance placed on their contribution can be seen in the Prime Minister's trade delegation to India in July 2010. To promote Britain's soft power, delegates included Ministers responsible for foreign policy, the treasury, business, culture, universities and energy; senior executives from over 30 companies and industry bodies; the chief executives of national cultural and sporting institutions; senior managers from the top universities and research councils; local government leaders; and technology entrepreneurs and commentators (*The Guardian*, 2010).

# The growth of local-to-local international links

These connections do impact on communities in the long-term, but are difficult to map or measure. Similar kinds of international relationships are also being developed at local and regional levels by towns and cities, most of which now have international strategies. These connections have a more direct bearing on communities. For example, Leeds has established partnerships with cities that share a similar industrial or social base in order to bring new trade and investment opportunities to the city region: Brno, Colombo, Dortmund, Durban, Hangzhou, Lille, Louisville, Siegen, Brasov, Nis, Saint Mary, and Stockholm. It also focuses much of its international work on maximising the potential of Leeds' strong connections to other countries through its diaspora communities. Newcastle's International Action Plan is largely concerned with attracting people to work, study and live in the city region. This rests not just on selling the city's skill-base, but also shifting perceptions of the once heavily industrialised area, pushing its cultural credentials through, for example, the Northern Lights Film Festival and the Culture 10 programme.

Numerous benefits can emerge for communities when towns and cities adopt their own locally-specific foreign policy: increased trade and investment can bring jobs and prosperity; partnerships can help local authorities to learn from best practice elsewhere in order to improve service delivery; staff exchanges between councils and local authorities can enhance employees' understanding of cultural difference and thus improve services for minority communities; and twinning events and festivals help to celebrate diversity and raise global consciousness among local residents (Local Government Association). While these benefits are intuitive and drive the continuation of these strategies, it should be noted that there is still a paucity of data to track them directly, an area of study that would benefit from greater attention.

Where they do occur, benefits are not always shared evenly because some places are better at leveraging them. For example, while the UK is successful at competing for inward investment, it is unevenly distributed across the country. It attracts around 20 per cent of all EU foreign direct investment project announcements, but almost half of these are in London, the South East and the East of England (Brown, 2008).

The communities worst hit by the current economic downturn are those that were still suffering the legacy of industrial restructuring and previous recessions. In other words, those areas that lost out at the hands of globalisation last time round and losing out again, and the disparities are widening. There is an almost tenfold difference between the best (Cambridge) and worst (Hull) performing cities in terms of the rise in the number of people claiming Job Seeker's Allowance, with the gap between these two cities widening by 70 per cent since the start of the recession. In Hull, there are now around sixteen job seekers for every vacancy (Centre for Cities, 2010). This suggests that foreign and international policy is an ever more vital element of success for towns and cities across the UK.

Questions remain about the extent to which local authorities are prioritising the needs of their poorest communities. In the rush to attract investment, are they putting communities at the heart of their international strategies? And to what extent are international connections maximised? Some places build long-term and meaningful

partnerships – such as that between Newcastle and Malmo – but for others contact is piecemeal. When council officials and local authority chiefs go on overseas trips and exchanges, it is vital that they explain the tangible value they add to communities. There is a danger that they could undermine public confidence, and be a drain on limited resources. The importance of personal political leadership should not be underestimated, either, whether in terms of prioritising international connections or ensuring that they are not made to the detriment of an area's poorer residents.

It is often difficult to answer these questions because there is a disconnect between studies from different research disciplines; those who study foreign policy and globalisation very seldom come into contact with researchers examining community conditions at the local level. Very rarely are international and domestic perspectives brought together to offer a critical review of the extent to which an area's foreign policy is benefiting its most needy residents.

# The role of the education sector as an international connector

Higher education is one of the most important players in a local area's foreign policy. Educational institutions are acting as de-facto 'diplomats' as they expand their work overseas, and they also play a role in the UK, especially through the rise of international students.

The number of non-EU students has more than doubled in a decade, from 117,290 in 1998/9 (BBC, 2009) to 251,310 in 2008/9 (UK Council for International Student Affairs). The top ten sending countries in 2008/9 were China, India, Nigeria, Malaysia, USA, Pakistan, Hong Kong, Canada, Taiwan and Saudi Arabia, so these students are helping to enhance connections with many of the UK's new priority partners. There are 85,000 Chinese students currently being educated in Britain or at UK campuses in China (Hague, 2010). Latest figures show the upward trends continue; the number of Tier 4[2] and other student visas issued in the first quarter of 2010 was up 25 per cent compared to the same period in 2009, with the weakened pound making the UK an attractive destination (IPPR, 2010). It is not yet clear how the government's planned cap on net immigration to the UK will impact specifically on overseas students. (Travis, 2010)

The economic benefits for the receiving places can be considerable. For example, Newcastle – for whom international student attraction is a key element of its international plan – estimates that they generate an annual income of £23 million to the city (Newcastle City Council). There is also evidence to suggest that places with higher levels of people educated to NVQ4 and above, and high-skilled economies, have suffered much less as a result of the economic downturn (Centre for Cities, 2010), which means that universities are uniquely well placed to join together an area's local and international strategies.

Research also shows that students with higher levels of cross-cultural interaction at university tend to know more about, and are better able to accept, different cultures; have better general knowledge, critical thinking ability, and problem solving skills; and have higher intellectual and social self-confidence than their peers with lower levels of interaction (Chang, 2006). However, these benefits are not evenly shared across communities, because access to higher education remains limited, especially within the poorest communities. While young people from the twelve richest categories account for 23.8 per cent of the UK's population, but produce 54.6 per cent of the students at the top universities, the thirteen poorest categories make up less than 6.3 per cent of students in these universities, but account for 21.8 per cent of the UK population (Shepherd, 2009).

The arrival of international students can also place a strain on resources. They tend to skew the local private rented housing market, pushing up prices beyond the reach of many; they compete with locals for part-time jobs, such as low-skilled hospitality work; and they place a strain on amenities, such as recreation, medical and other public facilities (Briggs and Beider, 2010, forthcoming). In some cases, these tensions have escalated into verbal or physical abuse, and research shows that international students studying in the UK have a more negative experience than their

counterparts in other European countries (Archer, 2010). This links to broader issues of community cohesion, which are covered in a later section.

# Migration, diversity and the impact on communities

Immigration has considerably changed the face of Britain. According to the Labour Force Survey, the foreign-born population of the UK increased from 6.2 per cent in 1997 to 11.4 per cent in 2009, of whom almost half (45 per cent) arrived in the UK since 1999 (Rutter, 2010). Immigration is one of the top concerns for Britons; they ranked 'race relations/immigration/immigrants' as the second most important issue facing Britain in 2010 (Ipsos Mori, 2010), and in 2008, three-quarters said they thought Britain accepts too many asylum seekers (Ipsos Mori, 2008). It is therefore perhaps not surprising that the Coalition Government has announced plans to introduce a cap on net immigration to the UK, although there are disagreements at the heart of government about how to manage the limits and where the exemptions should lie (Travis, 2010). Immigration to the UK is often linked directly or indirectly to the UK's foreign policy activities, whether due to former colonial and Commonwealth ties, or as a result of Britain's interventions in countries such as Kosovo or Afghanistan which have increased refugee flows into the country.

Although the net effect for the country is positive (in terms of jobs creation, investment, diaspora links, and cultural exchange), there have been dramatic impacts on local labour markets in areas of highest migrant settlement, where there is competition for jobs between locals and migrant workers. The increased supply of unskilled labour is also driving down wages, hitting the poorest hardest (Toynbee, 2003). Many are finding themselves priced out of their local housing market, partly due to international students, but also as prices have risen and impacted on the private rental market. The government has announced it is conducting its own review of the social impact of migration, including on public services (Travis, 2010).

Where careful management and local governance arrangements are not in place, areas facing rapid immigration can be prone to social tensions (Home Office, 2001). In the most extreme cases, this can lead to violence such as occurred in the summer of 2001 in a number of towns in Northern England (BBC). One consequence of those riots has been the introduction of tension monitoring arrangements involving local authorities, police, community groups and others. This helps to avert problems in the early stages. Another consequence of the economic, social and cultural change that has occurred is gang culture, which can play on divides created by diversity by operating on ethnic and racial terms. A report from the Centre for Social Justice ascribes its rise to a number of interlocking factors that are similar to those driving poor cohesion (Centre for Social Justice, 2009).

In most places, though, tensions bubble away insidiously under the surface, but have a lasting impact on ordinary people and long-term life chances. The effect is often worse for poorer communities; research shows that deprivation – not diversity – is by far the single most important influence on poor cohesion. Analysis of the Citizenship Survey shows that an area's measure of cohesion will depend upon a series of interacting factors: the characteristics and history of the area; residents' personal socio-demographic characteristics; and residents' attitudes (Laurence, 2008). And research carried out for the 2007 Commission on Integration and Cohesion found that four factors had the greatest influence on cohesion: deprivation/affluence; whether an area is rural or urban; whether the area is experiencing new migration and so was stable or changing in population terms; and in some urban areas,

whether they had experienced industrial decline within the last 30 years (CLG, 2007).

Much has been done to try to tackle these problems. The previous government established the Migration Impacts Fund, which gave out £35 million in 2009-10 (CLG, 2009), but this was scrapped quietly by the new Communities Secretary in August 2010 (Wintour, 2010). It also provided £34 million over three years to local authorities to address cohesion problems, including those related to rapid and substantial inward migration. It should be noted, however, that this funding focused almost exclusively on cross-community activities, rather than work to tackle the underlying drivers identified in the government's own research. It is not yet clear whether or how community cohesion will survive the change in government, or if instead it will be subsumed within the 'Big Society' agenda (BBC, 2010).

# The response of local areas to the challenges posed by migration and poor community relations

Local actors are engaged in all manner of activities to improve community relations, build bridges between different groups, and help communities to build a positive sense of their own identity within the UK.

For example, museums and galleries run education and community outreach programmes. The V&A's Shamiana project brought together South Asian women of all ages to work to create original textile panels in styles inspired by the collections of the V&A and other museums. Some of the work was strongly rooted in traditional South Asian textile traditions, while other pieces revealed the interaction of contemporary British and Asian cultures and art forms. Many of the pieces produced were exhibited at the V&A and then toured other countries. The project demonstrated how the work of cultural institutions can build links with diaspora communities, facilitate relevant contact overseas, and convey an important message about the place of new groups within the UK (Bound *et al.*, 2007).

Further education colleges play an important role in managing the community cohesion impacts of immigration by helping new arrivals to integrate into local communities. Data from the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and Education Departments in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales suggest that 37,995 non-EU students were enrolled in further education institutions in 2006–7. Many were newly arrived asylum seekers and refugees, and colleges help them to develop their fluency in English – probably the most critical factor in determining labour market participation among asylum seekers (Bloch, 2004) – and other skills, to find work and improve their social and economic outcomes, as well as help them to integrate into local and national cultures (Spencer, 2007).

Research shows that participation in adult learning can have a sizeable impact on social attitudes which help communities come to terms with the changes brought by immigration, and that there is a close association between adult participation in further education and engagement in civic and social activities (Field, 2005). Another study comparing adults engaged in further education with similar adults who were not, found that involvement in academic, vocational, work-related or leisure-oriented further education contributed towards positive attitudinal change and heightened civic and political involvement. Participation among those taking one or two FE courses was 34 per cent higher than those who were not. The latter study also showed that attitudinal change came through involvement in a range of courses, not just the more academic. For example, racial tolerance among adults between the ages of 33 and 42 taking three to ten leisure courses increased by 73 per cent more than would be expected had they not taken the courses (Feinstein and Hammond, 2004).

# The growing impact of the European Union on local communities

The European Union (EU) has been a critical element of UK foreign policy for decades; 40 per cent of our exports go to countries that use the Euro (Lidington, 2010), and local authorities are responsible for delivering around 70 per cent of EU laws and policies that impact on the UK. Despite its Eurosceptic tone in opposition, the new Conservative Foreign Secretary has used his early speeches to made positive noises about Europe, and will seek to enhance Britain's influence by, for instance, increasing the number of British staff at the European Commission (Hague, 2010). Official figures suggest that the UK gets a relatively good deal from its membership, paying less per head than countries such as Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, Luxembourg and Sweden (Brady, 2009).

The EU can often seem like a distant influence, but it is having an increasing impact on all manner of aspects of what would traditionally be deemed our 'domestic' areas of policy, right down to the community level. EU funding makes an important contribution to regeneration in the UK, with the European Regional Development Fund alone investing €3.2 billion (£2.8 billion) across England (CLG, 2009). The impacts on communities are obvious, in terms of jobs creation, the improvement of public services and infrastructure, and enhancement of the local environment.

Warwickshire County Council covers an area badly affected by the shrinking rural economy. It has worked with farmers to identify new market opportunities and overcome barriers to their exploitation thanks to INTERREG funding (a community initiative that aims to stimulate interregional cooperation in the EU) and close cooperation between research institutions in Warwickshire and Europe. The work is part of DISTRICT (developing industrial strategies through innovative clusters and technologies), an EU interregional project designed to support the transition from traditional to knowledge-based economies. The local authority has worked in partnership with the University of Warwick, RASE at Stoneleigh Park and the Warwickshire Rural Hub, as well as partners in Germany and Sweden (Warwickshire County Council, 2007).

It is not surprising that local authorities have focused a large proportion of their international strategies on attracting funding from the EU. However, the enlargement of the Union has reduced the amount of resource available in the UK, at a time when local authorities are also feeling the pinch from dwindling central government funding. It is not yet clear how this will impact on communities, but there is certain to be less funding for these kinds of projects. Local areas also feel under pressure to show how their international work relates to the interests of citizens at home which can make the considerable preparation and groundwork needed for these kinds of bids difficult to justify publicly.

Ordinary citizens have few chances to influence EU policy. The EU does commit considerable resources to encouraging active citizenship at the EU level, and the Stockholm Programme puts forward an agenda for an open Europe serving and protecting its citizens, with participation in the democratic life of the Union one of its key aims (Council of the European Union, 2009). But in reality there are very few

opportunities for ordinary citizens to impact on the EU's activities, except for every four years in European Parliamentary elections. It is therefore unsurprising that few Britons feel the EU has legitimacy (Bogdanor, 2007).

Links with Europe also impact on communities in the UK through direct person-to-person contact. More Britons than ever before are travelling overseas, the vast majority of them to Europe. There are 70 million trips abroad each year, three times as many as in the 1980s, and whether for business or pleasure, these trips help to broaden horizons and encourage cultural interaction. Around ten per cent of British nationals now live outside the UK; 5.6 million are permanently based overseas and a further half million live abroad for part of the year. The countries with the highest concentration are Australia, Spain, the US, Canada and France (Tim Finch, 2010). The tradition of town twinning, which came about after the end of the Second World War, is still going strong. It is supported by the EU through a scheme established in 1989 with an annual budget of €12 million (correct for 2003) allocated to 1300 projects.

# Foreign policy for the masses

To say that foreign policy has traditionally been an elite activity is no exaggeration; it is the accuracy of the depiction of the ambassador's reception in the Ferrero Rocher advert that makes it so funny. While much of this 'ceremony' remains, and the most important decisions continue to be made behind closed doors, there is a growing acceptance of the need – and merit – of greater public engagement. This is partly because foreign policy touches the lives of ordinary citizens more than ever before. It is also due to the fact that global 24/7 media has raised awareness by beaming scenes from the other side of the world direct into our living rooms and iPads. And the dominance of foreign and security stories since 9/11 has no doubt intensified the effect of the other two factors.

Over the last decade, defence and foreign affairs have gone from marginal to mainstream concerns. In 2000, they were ranked as the 19th most important issue in the minds of British adults with just 2 per cent ranking them as 'an important issue' (Ipsos Mori, 2000). By August 2010, they were in seventh place with 17 per cent describing them as the most important issues facing the country (Ipsos Mori, 2010). Their position oscillates depending on events, with their peak arriving in 2006 when they were in second place, ahead of the NHS/hospitals (Ipsos Mori, 2006b).

Increased public interest and awareness has had a number of impacts on the way foreign policy is managed. First, there has been a clear move from large-scale strategic priorities towards those that are anchored in the immediate needs of British citizens. William Hague has refreshed Foreign Office priorities around three objectives: safeguarding Britain's national security, building Britain's prosperity, and supporting British citizens around the world (FCO, 2010). Privately, civil servants within the department say the steer from their political masters has been to focus on adding value to business in order to increase jobs and investment, in order to bring back home the benefits of Britain's influence abroad.[3] Of course, British foreign policy has always been rooted in British needs and interests, but the focus is now much more on immediate practical benefits for citizens alongside long-term strategic returns for the nation as a whole.

Second, the FCO now positions its international network of diplomats and embassies as a resource for the whole government. This was first signalled by former Foreign Secretary, David Miliband, in 2008 in the FCO's *New Strategic Framework*. On the order of priorities facing his department, he wrote, "The first task is running a global network for the whole of the British government. So we see our 260 posts abroad now not as the Foreign Office's network but as a global government asset which is working for all parts of the UK government." (O'Toole, 2008) The significance of this shift should not be underestimated.

Third, the FCO places much greater emphasis on its services for British citizens, especially through consular work. Once considered the backwater of the department and perceived as somewhere to tread water until the next career-enhancing opportunity arose, citizen-focused services are now are the heart of the department's work. The shift had been taking place for some time (Briggs, 2002) but was clearly signalled in Miliband's *New Strategic Framework*, "The second [task] is delivering essential services for the people who pay our wages, the British taxpayer." (O'Toole,

2008) Over 2,000 FCO staff take part in consular work; in 2008/9 the team helped 2.1 million British travellers; in the same year, its travel advice was updated 4,000 times; and the 'Know Before You Go' campaign reached 29 million British nationals (FCO, 2009).

In all of these ways – citizen-focused priorities, a network serving the country rather than the department, and heightened priority placed on direct services for the British public – the FCO is making significant progress towards placing ordinary citizens and communities at the heart of what it does.

Other government departments are also responding to these changes and understand that to serve communities at home they must operate internationally and engage directly in foreign policy. For example, The Department for Business Innovation and Skills provides guidance to senior managers in higher and further education institutions on how to manage local tensions arising from increased numbers of international students; the Department for Communities and Local Government coordinates the local response to global health pandemics to ensure local authorities distribute information and resources to communities; the Department for Health benchmarks health outcomes so that British patients receive internationally competitive standards of care; and the Department for Work and Pensions ensures that the one in ten Britons who live overseas receive the correct benefits and entitlements. Table 1 below describes a selection of the foreign policy work of other government departments, but is not intended to be exhaustive.

**Table 1: The role of some government departments in foreign policy**

| Government department | Types of foreign policy activities |
|---|---|
| Cabinet Office | International economic affairs; energy and climate change; employment and social affairs; EU institutional issues |
| Department for Business, Innovation and Skills | Support for key business sectors to enhance international competitiveness; globalisation of higher and further education; international students to the UK; international science and innovation |
| Department for Communities and Local Government | Regional economic development; cohesion and migration; preventing violent extremism; coordinating response to health pandemics at local level; regional development in the face of the financial crisis; managing the European Regional Development Fund in England; Thames Gateway and Olympics Legacy |
| Department for Media, Culture and Sport | Representing cultural sectors in Europe and other international forums; working with British Council; cultural diplomacy |
| Department for Education | Citizenship teaching; schools twinning and exchanges; international best practice in teaching |
| Department for Energy and Climate Change | Large part of the department's work is conducted overseas or in partnership with multilateral or bilateral partners |
| Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs | Sustainable development and climate change |

| Department of Health | International best practice to improve health at home; work internationally to tackle communicable diseases; international standards; benchmarking health care; getting value for money from contributions to World Health Organisation (WHO) and Council of Europe; global health diplomacy |
|---|---|
| Department for Transport | Aviation; shipping; international vehicle standards; climate change; EU transport policy |
| Department for Work and Pensions | Benefits and contributions to Britons living overseas |

# The end of the home-abroad distinction

Trends over the last decade have marked the end of the distinction between home and abroad. This is partly a function of the globalisation process, and also because today's challenges fail to respect national borders. It is also enhanced by global media, which brings citizens into contact with even the most remote issues although obviously in a somewhat selective way. The fact that foreign and security issues have been at the forefront of politics for much of the past decade will also have had an impact, from 9/11 and the so-called 'war on terror', to interventions in places like Kosovo in 1999, Sierra Leone in 2000, and the more controversial invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq in 2001 and 2003 respectively.

As a result, foreign policy activities overseas have greater resonance at home. At a time when faith in the political process has reached an all time low, issues of foreign and security policy have mobilised large numbers of Britons who wish to hold their politicians to account for the actions taken in their name. Perhaps the best-known example of this is the Stop the War Coalition, which was formed on 21 September 2001 in the aftermath of 9/11. It is credited with organising the largest public demonstration in British history on 15 February 2003 in the build up to the invasion of Iraq; police estimated there were 750,000 protestors, but organisers put the number at nearer two million. (BBC, 2003) The group's enduring influence is evidenced by its disruption of Tony Blair's book tour, with the former Prime Minister forced to cancel a London signing and the launch reception at Tate Modern in September 2010 (BBC, 2010).

The military campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan may have been unpopular, but the public's support for servicemen and women has grown. The vast majority (87 per cent) agree that the British armed forces are among the best in the world (Ipsos Mori, 2006a); and Armed Forces Day has over half a million fans on Facebook (Armed Forces Day, 2010). The success of the charity, Help for Heroes, exemplifies this support. It was launched in September 2007 to provide better facilities for wounded British servicemen and women, and has raised £55 million to date. It has the backing of some of the biggest newspapers, including *The Sun* and *The Sunday Times*, the latter of which made it one of the beneficiaries of its Christmas appeal in 2007 from which £674,000 was raised. It has also attracted a string of celebrity patrons, and proof that its cause had been taken on board by the nation came when an 'X Factor' charity single was released in 2009 and went straight to number one in the charts (Wikipedia, 2010).

The public's support has not been restricted to British soldiers. In 2008, a quarter of a million people signed a petition to put pressure on the government to provide Gurkha veterans who served in the British army before 2007 the right to settle in Britain. The Gurkha Justice Campaign, fronted by national sweetheart Joanna Lumley, gathered pace, taking the government by surprise and offering a reminder of the perils for a government of being out of step with public opinion on foreign policy. The Labour Government was forced to back down, and the law has now been changed.

The declining distinction between home and abroad is affecting policies directed towards communities, as exemplified by domestic counter-terrorism where the direct

impact on Muslim communities has been considerable. Many feel indiscriminately targeted by anti-terror law; a literature review conducted by DSTL found that many Muslims perceived some aspects of counter-terrorist legislation to be unfair, unjust and discriminatory; there was lower support among Muslims than non-Muslims for counter-terrorism measures, and a sense that they violated civil liberties and human rights; and when discussing counter-terrorist legislation, UK Muslims articulated a lack of trust in the police and had less confidence that they would be treated fairly by UK authorities (DSTL, 2010).

The overall climate created by the 'war on terror' has had other impacts on Muslim communities. Media reporting about Muslims is overwhelmingly negative; a report by Insted Consultancy found that in 12 out of every 19 papers studied, every article covering Muslims was negative; 96 per cent of tabloid coverage was negative; and 89 per cent of broadcast reporting was negative. It found that Muslims in the national press were portrayed as being a threat to traditional British customs, that there was little or no common ground between the West and Islam, and that the tone of language in many articles was emotive, immoderate, alarmist, or abusive (Insted Consultancy, 2007). Research sponsored by the Home Office found that, amongst blogs read by UK Muslims, there were more anti-Islamic blogs than pro-Islamic blogs (RICU, 2010). And other research has shown that Muslims are subject to physical and verbal attacks because of their religion (Jones and Oborne, 2008; Githens-Mazer and Lambert, 2010).

One of the consequences of this declining distinction is that, as well as 'domestic' government departments becoming involved in foreign policy, the FCO is also engaged in work within the UK, something that would have been unthinkable of only a few years ago. Former Foreign Secretary, David Miliband, launched the 'Bringing Foreign Policy Home' campaign in October 2008 to explain the interdependence between foreign and domestic policy (FCO, 2009).

As part of this, the FCO announced in 2009 that its ambassadors based in Muslim-majority countries would hold discussions with Muslim communities in the UK; the previous Foreign Secretary and Ministers held regular 'roadshows' in communities across the country; and efforts are made to link up the FCO's work to tackle terrorism with that of domestic departments. This is most clearly embodied in the Office for Security and Counter-Terrorism (OSCT) in the Home Office, a unit which was formed to bring joined-up approaches between the Home Office, Foreign Office and the Department for Communities and Local Government.

# Conclusion

This essay has argued that a number of significant changes have occurred to British foreign policy which mean it now has an everyday impact on communities across the UK. It has gone from being the preserve of a closed group of policy-makers and diplomats, to a cross-government and cross-society endeavour. Foreign policy is no longer something that happens within one government department; it is a national activity and involves actors of different types at the local, regional, national and international levels.

The essay has shown that there are many impacts on communities, both positive and negative, and has highlighted the most important: local transnational links among cities and regions can facilitate targeted investment and cultural exchange but sometimes distract attention from the needs of poorer communities, especially when local areas are looking shift into the knowledge economy. The opportunities offered by the globalisation of key sectors, such as education, can bring benefits to those institutions and their students, and have also helped to protect some local areas from the impact of the financial crisis, but they can also raise community tensions as competition increases for jobs, housing, and resources. Similarly, the evidence suggests that migration is a net contributor to the UK, but in areas experiencing rapid inwards migration community tensions can follow, with local actors working hard to prevent this from happening.

The essay has also shown that ordinary citizens are increasingly coming into contact with foreign policy, through travel, exchanges and media coverage, and this has helped to ignite a new generation of politically active citizens who are keen to hold their politicians to account for the foreign policy decisions made in their name. This, along with a series of other factors, has increased the focus on public accountability and a foreign policy at the service of citizens. Some groups, such as Muslims, have suffered as the global war on terror has played out in domestic security policies at home.

The foreign policy of today is fundamentally different to that of even a decade ago, and the range of impacts on communities across the UK is clear. However, there is still considerable work to be done to understand the exact nature of the relationship, as a disconnect persists between those studying foreign policy and international relations on the one hand, and those interested in domestic and social affairs on the other. It will take some time before the academic study and measurement of these trends catches up with the reality.

There is also an important disparity between the different types of people and organisations described in this essay. While it is true to say that government departments are beginning to work together horizontally on foreign and international policy, many of the vertical and diagonal connections have yet to be made between government departments, regional bodies, local authorities, community and civil society bodies, universities, business and individual citizens, working seamlessly towards shared foreign policy goals. And if all these actors have a role to play, a new form of partnership is required, locked into new structures and cultures of working, to ensure that the UK can bring all its assets and interests to bear in meeting its new foreign policy priorities but in a way that is fair for all.

In conclusion, the essay leaves us with four potential areas for future study:

- More local authorities are developing 'foreign policies' for their local areas. What are they doing? What value does this work bring for their residents and citizens? Are some activities more beneficial than others? How can they ensure local citizens understand this work and have due democratic oversight? And how can local areas ensure that in the race to attract investment, they do not forget their poorer citizens?

- The gap between local authorities in terms of their foreign policy success is widening and this risks exacerbating pre-existing economic divides across the country. Do some areas need additional support to prevent them falling further behind? What support do they need, and how would this best be delivered? And how will this be impacted on by some of the new government's announced changes, such as the closure of regional development agencies, the threatened loss of regional government offices, and the devolution of greater powers to and less oversight of local authorities?

- Foreign policy is a much higher priority for the British public, as evidenced by its rise in importance in polls and a number of high profile campaigns. But do these campaigns reflect the real priorities of the British public, or are they influenced by and mediated through editorial judgements by major media outlets? Do some causes win over others because they are more media-friendly, or is their success due to the skills and capacity of their organisers? How could different issue groups be helped to increase their capacity in light of the new media landscape?

- The fact that foreign policy is opening up is undoubtedly a good thing. But with so many people involved, who is conducting the orchestra? Can government play this role, or do we need new structures, mechanisms and cultures of engagement and decision making to reflect this new reality? Or is the picture so complex now that we should avoid the temptation to direct?

# Endnotes

[1]That is not to say that hard power is not still important; in fact some would argue we have seen more of it in the last ten years than we have for a long time, not least given the number of foreign invasions in which the UK has been involved. The point to be made here is that soft power has risen to prominence and now sits alongside hard power.

[2] Tier four of the points-based immigration system focuses on overseas students wishing to gain entry clearance to study in the UK. More information about the system as it applies to students can be found via the UK Border Agency's website: www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/studyingintheuk/

[3] The author's private discussions with a number of FCO civil servants.

# References

Archer, W., Jones, E., Davison, J. (2010) *A UK Guide to Enhancing the International Student Experience*. London: UK HE International Unit

Armed Forces Day (2010), retrieved 10 September 2010:
www.armedforcesday.org.uk

BBC (19 July 2010) *David Cameron launches Tories' 'big society' plan.* Retrieved 16 September 2010, from BBC: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-10680062

BBC (16 February 2003) *Million march against Iraq.* Retrieved 10 September 2010, from BBC: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/2765041.stm

BBC (6 September 2010) *Tony Blair cancels book signing amid protest fears.* Retrieved 10 September 2010, from BBC: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-11197376

BBC (24 September 2009), UK rise in international students. Retrieved 25 Aug 2010, from BBC: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/education/8271287.stm

Bloch, A. (2004) *Making it Work: Refugee employment in the UK.* London: ippr

Bogdanor, V. (2007) *Legitimacy, Accountability and Democracy in the European Union.* London: The Federal Trust

Bound, K., Briggs, R., Holden, J. and Jones, S. (2007) *Cultural Diplomacy.* London: Demos

Brady, H., 'The Dis-Uniting Kingdom? Britain needs to decide whether it's in or out of the EU', *The Wall Street Journal*, 30 June 2009

Briggs, R. (2002) *Travel Advice.* London: The Foreign Policy Centre.

CLG (2009) *Communities and Local Government Annual Report, 2008–09.* London: CLG.

Brown, H. (2008) *UK Cities in the Global Economy.* Newcastle: Centre for Cities

Centre for Cities (2010) *Cities Outlook 2010.* Newcastle: Centre for Cities

Centre for Social Justice (2009) *Dying to belong: An in-depth review of street gangs in Britain.* London: Centre for Social Justice

Chang, M.J., Denson., N., Sanez, V. and Misa, K. (2006) The Educational Benefits of Sustaining Cross-Racial Interaction among Undergraduates, *Journal of Higher Education*, 77 (3): pp.430–455

DSTL (2010) *What perceptions do the UK public have concerning the impact of counter-terrorism legislation implemented since 2000?* London: Home Office

Duggan, K. and Kagan, C. (2009) *Breaking Down Barriers: Universities and communities working together.* Manchester: Research Institute for Health and Social Change

FCO (2009) *Departmental Report 2008/09.* London: FCO

FCO (2010) Retrieved 25 July  2010, from FCO: www.fco.gov.uk

FCO (2009, June 23) *Freedom of Information Request: 0271-09.* Retrieved September 16, 2010, from FCO: http://foi.fco.gov.uk/content/en/foi-releases/2009/bringing-foreign-policy-home

Feinstein, L., and Hammond, C. (2004) 'The Contribution of Adult Learning to Health and Social Capital', *Oxford Review of Education,* 30 (2) pp.199–221

Field, J. (2005) *Social Capital and Lifelong Learning.* Bristol: Policy Press

Finch, T, and Andrew, H. (2010). *Global Brit: Making the most of the British diaspora.* London: IPPR

*The Guardian* (28 July 2010), retrieved 8 September 2010 from www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/jul/28/david-cameron-india-delegation

Githens-Mazer, J. and Lambert, R. (2010), *Islamophobia and Anti-Muslim Hate Crime: A London case study.* Exeter: European Muslim Research Centre

Hague, W. (1 July 2010) *Britain's Foreign Policy in a Networked World.* Retrieved 25 July 2010, from FCO: www.fco.gov.uk

Home Office (2001) *Community Cohesion: A report of the independent review team.* London: Home Office

Insted Consultancy (2007) *The Search for Common Ground: Muslims, non-Muslims and the UK media.* London: GLA

Ipsos Mori (2000) *Ipsos Mori Issues Index* from http://www.ipsos-mori.com/researchpublications/researcharchive/poll.aspx?oItemId=1674

Ipsos Mori (2006a) *Britain Today*. Retrieved from Ipsos Mori: www.ipsos-mori.com/researchpublications/researcharchive/poll.aspx?oItemId=376

Ipsos Mori (2006b) *Ipsos Mori Issues Index* from http://www.ipsos-mori.com/researchpublications/researcharchive/poll.aspx?oItemID=339&view=wide

Ipsos Mori (2008) *BBC Survey on Trust Issues*. Retrieved 10 September 2010 from Ipsos Mori: www.ipsos-mori.com/researchpublications/researcharchive/poll.aspx?oItemId=150

Ipsos Mori (2010) *Ipsos Mori Issues Index, August 2010* from http://www.ipsos-mori.com/Assets/Docs/Polls/Aug10Issuesindextopline.PDF

IPPR (2010) *May 2010 Migration Statistics*: IPPR Briefing. London: ippr

Jones, J. and Oborne, P. (2008) *Muslims Under Siege: Alienating vulnerable communities.* London: Democratic Audit, Human Rights Centre, University of Essex

Lambert, R. and Githen-Mazer, J. (2010). *Islamophobia and Anti-Muslim Hate Crime: A London case study.* Exeter: European Muslim Research Centre

Laurence, J. and Heath, A. (2008) *Predictors of Community Cohesion: Multi-level modelling of the 2005 Citizenship Survey.* London: CLG

LGA (2010) *Leaders' survey on the impact of the economic downturn: Key messages.* London: LGA

Lidington, D. (2010) UK Policy in Europe. FCO: London

Nye, J. (2005) *Soft Power.* PublicAffairs

O'Toole, M. (2008) *More foreign, less office.* Retrieved September 10, 2010, from Civil Service Live Network: http://network.civilservicelive.com/pg/pages/view/262063

RICU (2010) *Estimating network size and tracking information dissemination among Islamic blogs.* London: Home Office

Rutter, J. (2010) 'The Global College' in D.T.J. (Ed) *Colleges 2020.* London: IPPR

Shepherd, J. (2009) Universities don't like common people, do they? *The Guardian*

Spencer, S. (2007) *Refugees and Other New Migrants: A review of the evidence on successful approaches to integration.* Oxford: COMPAS

Toynbee, P. (2003). *Hard Work: Life in low-pay Britain.* London: Bloomsbury Publishing

Travis, A. (2010). *Immigration cap and curb on overseas students threaten to divide cabinet.* Retrieved September 16, 2010, from *The Guardian*: http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2010/jun/28/immigration-cap-overseas-students-quota

Warwickshire County Council (2007) *European Union and International Strategy*, retrieved 20 July 2010, www.warwickshire.gov.uk/web/corporate/pages.nsf/Links/D175C80E070E95948025737E00558B53/$file/E&I+Strategy+.pdf

Wikipedia (2010) *Help for Heroes.* Retrieved 10 September 2010, from Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Help_For_Heroes

Wintour, P. (2010) *Fund to ease impact of immigration scrapped by stealth.* Retrieved September 16, 2010, from *The Guardian*: http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2010/aug/06/fund-impact-immigration-scrapped

# About the author

**Rachel Briggs**
Independent Analyst, Institute for Strategic Dialogue
Senior Research Fellow, the Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies