POLITICS & GOVERNANCE
As the clock counts down to the UK referendum on whether to leave or stay a part of the European Union, Nick Stevens looks at what factors might influence voters’ opinions.
Following the Conservative party’s majority win of the 2015 general election, Prime Minister David Cameron re-iterated his commitment to hold an in/out referendum on membership of the European Union – a commitment first pledged in a speech he gave at the Bloomberg offices in London on 23 January 2013. The Prime Minister cited three reasons why the British people would support a referendum: problems in the Eurozone driving fundamental change in Europe; a crisis of European competitiveness, as other nations across the world soar ahead; and a gap between the EU and its citizens that represents a lack of democratic accountability and consent. He has promised to renegotiate Britain’s relationship with the 27 other members of the European Union and to put it to a public vote by 2017 at the latest with speculation that the vote could be as early as spring 2016. The EU Referendum Bill outlined in the 2015 Queen’s speech paves the way for this referendum on EU membership.

Historically, what have been the Union’s achievements? “European integration has certainly provided significant general benefits,” says Professor Anand Menon, research co-ordinator for the ESRC initiative on The UK in a Changing Europe. “It played a role (albeit not as central as some of its most ardent supporters are wont to claim) in preserving peace following the Second World War; it helped to entrench democracy in Greece, Spain and Portugal following their accession; and it was crucial in ensuring peaceful transitions to liberal democracy in the countries of East and Central Europe. But none of these undertakings now achieve the popular resonance they once did.

Professor Menon says that, today, the benefits of EU membership are mixed: “Like any body charged with making distributive decisions, the Union benefits some citizens more than others. For example, while some farmers may benefit from the Common Agricultural Policy, consumers have to pay more for food. And while social regulations might generate costs for employers, they offer greater protection for employees.”

**A CHANGING DEBATE**

Much has changed since David Cameron originally promised a referendum back in 2013. For a start, in the run-up to a general election, UKIP, with its anti-EU position and firm stance on economic migration, was threatening to take votes from the Conservatives in the heartlands of the South-East. The Conservatives now have a majority in the Commons and, with the next election almost five years away, the political calculations have changed. Moreover, in terms of the substance of the debate, the discussion has moved to formulating a co-ordinated European response to helping the thousands of refugees who are fleeing Syria and other countries for the relative safety of Europe. And while the problems of the Greek deficit have not gone away, the Eurozone crisis and potential meltdown of Europe’s single currency are not at the danger levels of recent years.

So, while many British people were, in the run-up to the general election, clearly concerned about free movement of people within Europe, are they now as sceptical about the value of European Union? “Politicians have gambled both ways on this,” says Professor Menon. “All the polling on the issue indicates that only a minority of voters really care that much about the EU.”

But what polls do indicate is that many people are yet to make up their minds and, in this context, Professor Menon argues the Prime Minister’s much vaunted renegotiation of the terms of Britain’s EU membership may be crucial. “While, given the practical impossibility of changing the treaties before 2018, the Prime Minister will probably not secure all that much, how he sells what he gets will matter immensely when it comes to convincing wavering voters.”

**TRADING PLACES**

What are the likely economic effects on UK trade if it leaves the EU? Would we be worse or better off and would our trading position in the world be diminished? “That depends fundamentally on the kind of relationship the UK manages to negotiate with the EU should it leave,” says Professor Menon.

He outlines possible options: exit could entail a complete break, with the UK relying on the World Trade Organization (WTO) rules to regulate its trade with the Union. In this case, he says, the potential effects are significant, as these rules do not forbid all tariffs, while doing virtually nothing to address non-tariff barriers. Or the UK could negotiate a deal with the Union that sees it adopt a position like that of Norway or Switzerland. Professor Menon says: “While the relationship of each with the EU is different, they both enjoy at least some access to the single market. Both, however, have to comply with EU regulations.
Voters’ issues

The public’s concerns about being part of the EU include immigration, with the debate heightened in recent years by Nigel Farage and the UKIP party.

The devil will be in the detail and much will depend on the way in which negotiations between the UK and EU proceed, and whether other member states are willing to offer generous terms to London. Professor Menon says: “A referendum vote in favour of leaving will not be the end of the matter, as British and EU negotiators will need to agree on a mutually acceptable new relationship. Currently, the Union lacks the kind of overall narrative used to legitimise integration as a project in other member states. Consequently, debates in the UK have a ‘cost-benefit’ feel about them. Of crucial importance to the referendum campaign will be not only arguments about these costs and benefits, but also the degree of traction gained by those stressing non-material issues such as the loss of democratic control or the threat to British identity supposedly posed by membership.”

Supporters of the Union argue that the UK’s membership of the EU gives it greater global influence, particularly with countries such as the US. Professor Menon says: “Officials in the Obama administration have stated, publicly and privately, that they would like to see the UK remain in the EU. The reason given tends to be that the UK benefits from membership and will enjoy far greater international influence within than outside the Union. It is also the case that successive American administrations have seen significant benefits for themselves in having the UK within the EU. Britain is seen as an ally on economic issues such as liberalisation of the market and the protection of the financial services sector.” He says that in the area of security, many in Washington see London as a useful bulwark against schemes to provide the EU with more autonomy that might lead to it becoming a competitor to NATO. But it remains to be seen how vocal US officials are once the campaign itself starts, and what impact their interventions might have.

Looking to more urgent issues affecting the EU, what is the likely long-term European response to the refugee crisis? Is there an efficient centralised action EU countries can take to distinguish between economic migration and refugees and respond appropriately? “The likely response will continue to be a mixture of fudge and half-hearted action,” says Professor Menon. “The EU has no means of imposing solutions on member states and, as long as these latter remain divided, it will be extremely difficult to come to an agreed common position that can deal with a problem on this scale. What may come to Europe’s aid in the short term is the weather. As winter draws in, the Mediterranean becomes increasingly hard to cross, which means the flow of migrants will tail off – before resuming, no doubt, once weather conditions improve.”

ukandeu.ac.uk

Nick Stevens is Editor of Britain in 2016.
As more women seem to be stepping up into political office, what are the role model effects of women in politics?

Raising the share of women in government is not just a matter of fairness or diversity

**IN A DRAMATIC CHANGE** to the political landscape, the share of women in the UK Parliament rose to a third in the 2015 general election, and their share in Cabinet to 42 per cent. The Fawcett Society remarked: "We're excited to see what these new ministers will bring to the government, and we're certain they'll serve as great role models for other women engaged in politics!" (Guardian, 8 May 2015).

While the scarcity of female role models has often been proposed as a reason for the persistence of gender gaps in leadership positions in politics and in the corporate and university sectors, there is limited rigorous evidence of role model effects. Simple associations that emerge from small numbers, and with no adjustment for the process that leads to women initially coming to power, are open to alternative interpretations.

We investigated role model effects in Indian politics. Specifically, we tested whether a woman winning a seat in a state legislative assembly leads to more women candidates contesting in the next election from her constituency. Raising the share of women candidates appears to be a crucial step towards raising the share of women in government. In India in 1980-2007, women comprised only 4.4 per cent of all candidates, but 5.5 per cent of state legislators. In the 2015 UK election, the share of women was 26 per cent among candidates, and 29 per cent among MPs. Thus, conditional upon contesting, women exhibit stronger chances of winning than men.

**WOMEN'S WINNING WAYS**
The challenge facing researchers concerned with identification of causal effects of women winning is that women tend to win elections in areas where voter preferences are aligned with women's preferences. To isolate the gender of the winner from voter preferences, we used a sample of close elections between men and women on the premise that, in a close election, the gender of the winner is 'quasi-random'. We found that a woman winning led to an 8.5 percentage point increase in the share of women candidates. This was driven by an increased propensity of incumbent women to re-contest, and this has substantive significance since, on average, 34 per cent of female incumbents and 28 per cent of male incumbents in India do not re-contest.

However, there was no entry of new women candidates. We found no evidence that this was because of a shortage of suitable women or because of gender-specific constraints (such as family commitments or women's lesser willingness to compete). Instead, our investigations point to institutionalised barriers to entry, possibly perpetuated by parties (who determine which candidates run).

India is known to have ‘two halves’, one marked by greater societal gender bias than the other. We exploited this division to investigate how role model effects varied with societal gender bias. We found that in the more biased region a woman's electoral victory was followed by a decline in the share of new women candidates (especially in parties headed by men), and in the chances of a woman winning again. This is consistent with ‘male backlash’, cohering with previous evidence that men react negatively to women performing non-traditional roles. In contrast, in the ‘better half’ of India, incumbent women were more likely to contest than incumbent men, the share of new women was stable, and a woman was more likely to win the next election.

Given the recent increase in women's representation in Britain's government, research investigating role model effects in UK politics is begging to be done. The UK still compares unfavourably with the parliament of Sweden (45 per cent), Belgium (41.3 per cent), Iceland (39.7 per cent), Argentina (36.6 per cent) and Burundi (30.5 per cent), for instance.

Raising the share of women in government is not just a matter of fairness or diversity. A growing body of evidence, including our own work, indicates that it has substantive effects, resulting in policy choices that more effectively represent the interests of women and children, and that this is not at the cost of economic growth.


Sonia Bhalotra is Professor of Economics at the University of Essex. Fellow researchers Irma Clots-Figueras and Lakshmi Iyer.
RIDING HIGH

Mounted police in neighbourhoods boost public trust

Mounted police units on neighbourhood patrols can boost levels of public confidence in the police, according to the first in-depth study of the use of horses in policing. While the number of mounted sections across England, Scotland and Wales fell from 17 in 2012 to 12 in 2014, a joint research project commissioned by the Association of Chief Police Officers finds clear evidence that mounted police units make a ‘demonstrable and measurable impact’.

During an 18-month study, researchers Dr Ben Bradford and Dr Chris Giacomantonio assessed the impact of mounted units in different roles. They examined public reactions to mounted units on neighbourhood patrols, at a music festival, and at football matches and public demonstrations, and found that while it’s often assumed that mounted police are primarily for crowd control, they actually spend more time and appear to have substantial value elsewhere, particularly in neighbourhood policing.

Increased visibility of officers is a primary benefit of using mounted units in neighbourhood patrols. In trials in community settings, police on horseback generated around six times more public interest than foot patrols, with the horse and rider combination acting as an ambassador and ‘ice-breaker’ for the police. People came up to make a fuss of the horse before having a quick conversation with the officer.

It had its counterpart in Ireland, in the perception that the executed leaders of the Easter Rising of 1916 had sacrificed themselves in a Christlike manner because, as their ideologue Patrick Pearse put it, ‘from the graves of patriot men and women spring living nations’.

New martyrs

How do people regard our heroes from the past?

The Autumn of 2015 sees the centenary of the execution of Edith Cavell, the British nurse condemned by the occupying German forces in Belgium for assisting the escape of allied soldiers. The shooting of a female non-combatant outraged British and international public opinion and Cavell was hailed as a martyr to unbridled German militarism and aggression.

Similar language was apparent in influential responses to the deaths of soldiers themselves, notably from the Bishop of London, Arthur Winnington-Ingram. After the war, the symbolism of Reginald Blomfield’s iconic design of the Cross of Sacrifice, the central monument of British war cemeteries, containing a sword within a cross, conveyed a similar implicit message. The association of patriotic and Christian sacrifice was explicit in the language of John Arkwright’s hymn ‘O valiant hearts’, popular in the aftermath of the war:

These were his servants, in his steps they trod, Following through death the martyred Son of God.
A RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT

Does the UK’s involvement in the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003 make it responsible for offering asylum to those fleeing IS?

In August 2014, the UK began to contribute to air strikes against Islamic State (IS) militants after they seized territory in Iraq. For the UK, this marked a troubling return to Iraq, given its role in the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003, which overthrew Saddam Hussein’s regime and, in the eyes of some, had sown the seeds of the crisis in 2014. Indeed, the UK’s then-leader of the opposition, Ed Miliband, stated to the House of Commons on 26 September 2014 that the UK had a ‘heightened responsibility’ to act because it had helped to create the context in which IS had emerged.

The UK government has presented these air strikes mainly in terms of national security, given the concern that some Britons have travelled to the Middle East to join IS, and may seek to return. The strikes have also been seen as an attempt to protect the Iraqi people from IS’s brutality. At the United Nations in 2005, all states, including the UK, committed themselves to a ‘responsibility to protect’ (R2P) populations from atrocities, including genocide and crimes against humanity. IS’s persecution of religious minorities raised the possibility that states, including the UK, would have a responsibility to protect Iraqis from the actions of IS.

Yet has the UK’s contribution to combating IS been appropriate, and is it enough? Political philosophers make a distinction between general and special responsibilities when considering how states and individuals should act: a general responsibility is shared by everyone; a special responsibility is a more demanding responsibility we may have because of a particular relationship or connection we have to others. This is relevant to R2P because both states and academics have mostly viewed R2P as a general responsibility, and the UK government has, without using that language explicitly, presented its action in Iraq in these terms.

A SPECIAL BURDEN

But it is possible to argue that the UK bears a more demanding special responsibility to protect Iraqis from the crimes of IS. The kinds of connection or relationship that establishes someone’s special responsibility towards another might be the fact that someone has caused another person harm, which is often seen as creating an obligation to put that harm right, especially if it was caused unjustly.

Many have argued that the invasion of Iraq in 2003, in which the UK played an important supporting role, caused great damage to Iraqis. The invasion destroyed the Iraqi state, which allowed a hugely destructive civil war in Iraq to emerge. Although some commentators have argued that the invasion directly created IS, all that is needed to show that the states that intervened, including the UK, bear a special responsibility to protect Iraqis is that the invasion left Iraq extremely vulnerable to external shock. After IS gained strength in Syria, it went on to deliver exactly this kind of shock. Seen in this light, the UK’s insistence that it only ‘do its bit’ to defeat IS may seem to be an instrumental and rhetorical way of limiting its responsibility.

Refugees cross the Syrian border into Turkey in June 2015. Turkey took in tens of thousands of Syrian Refugees as the crisis grew – should the UK be doing more?

Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi is leader of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), and the most wanted man in the world, according to the US government’s Rewards for Justice programme, which has put a $10 million reward for information that leads to his capture.

Source: www.rewardsforjustice.net This programme contributes to the fight against international terrorism.
States and academics have not only largely viewed R2P as a general responsibility, but also mainly as a foreign policy issue. R2P has, from its beginnings, been closely associated with military intervention aimed at halting atrocities. In contrast, welcoming refugees fleeing atrocities by granting them asylum is not often seen as being part of R2P. The perilous journeys of refugees across the Mediterranean, and the strain placed on countries in the Middle East, such as Jordan and Turkey, by the presence of huge numbers of Syrian refugees, is generally not seen as a challenge for R2P.

Yet asylum is an obvious way in which states such as the UK can fulfil their R2P towards Iraqis and others at risk of atrocities. When atrocities begin or are impending, people's natural reaction is to flee. Often, they cannot return immediately. Using asylum to fulfil the R2P can become especially important if military intervention is too risky and might make the situation worse, or if there is not enough political support for it. Although the newly elected Tory government has pushed to expand its air strikes against IS into Syria, there is little public appetite to commit to sending ground troops to defeat IS. Intervention in Syria has been vetoed by two permanent members of the UN Security Council, Russia and China, was voted down in the British parliament in 2013 and has been complicated by Russia's recent deployment. When military intervention is not politically possible, states such as the UK should not despair and claim that nothing can be done to fulfil their R2P. Admitting refugees fleeing those atrocities is an obvious alternative.

Asylum is an even more important way in which the UK can fulfil its R2P given its special responsibility to protect Iraqis. If the UK only had a general responsibility to protect, which it shared with all other states, its contribution to air strikes against IS might be seen as being enough. Because of the UK’s special responsibility to protect, it needs to go beyond these air strikes and use all measures at its disposal to discharge this responsibility, which includes taking its share of Iraq's refugees.

WORLDWIDE REFUGEE FIGURES

Definitions

- **Forcibly displaced persons** – People that leave everything they have behind them to flee from war, persecution or terror.
- **Refugee** – According to the 1951 Refugee Convention, a refugee is someone who ‘owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country.’
- **Asylum seekers** – Refugees who have fled their homes as refugees do, but their claim to refugee status is not yet definitively evaluated in the country to which they have fled.
- **Internally displaced persons** – People who have not crossed an international border but have moved to a different region than the one they call home within their own country.
- ** Stateless persons** do not have a recognised nationality and do not belong to any country.
- **Returnees** – Former refugees who return to their own countries or regions of origin after a period of time in exile.

**Figures**

- As of June 2015, the number of forcibly displaced worldwide is 59.5 million.
- Developing countries host over 86% of the world’s refugees, compared to 70% 10 years ago.
- An estimated 13.9 million people were newly displaced due to conflict or persecution, including 2.9 million new refugees.
- In 2014, the country hosting the largest number of refugees was Turkey, with 1.59 million refugees.
- By the end of 2014, Syria had become the world’s top source country of refugees. Afghanistan had held this position for more than three decades. Today, on average, almost one out of every four refugees is Syrian, with 95 per cent located in surrounding countries.
- Last year, 51% of refugees were under 18 years old. This is the highest figure for child refugees in more than a decade.

Source: For more details visit www.unhcr.org.uk; www.un.org/en

**Professor Jason Ralph is Marie Curie Fellow and Honorary Professor, University of Queensland, Professor of International Relations, and James Souter is a Post-Doctoral Research Fellow at the School of Politics and International Studies, both University of Leeds.**

Research for this article was undertaken as part of a project entitled The Responsibility to Protect in the Context of the Continuing ‘War on Terror’: A Study of Liberal Interventionism and the Syrian Crisis
WHAT DOES WORK?

Government spends huge amounts on local growth policies with little evidence of their impact. The What Works Centre for Local Economic Growth aims to find more.

THE DEVOLUTION AGENDA has finally been pushed to the top of the Whitehall to-do list. Giving cities more power over how they are run, it is hoped, will bring governance that is more responsive to local needs and therefore more effective. Whether or not this is the case remains to be seen.

But devolution also offers a unique opportunity to improve policymaking in other ways. In particular, devolution provides the opportunity to experiment more in our policy approaches, something that should be central to improving policy in the long run.

Why is such experimentation important? Because we have very little high-quality evidence on what works in many areas of policy. Take, for example, local economic growth – the main focus of the What Works Centre for Local Economic Growth. When we began our process of systematic reviews, we were looking for high-quality evaluation evidence on the impact of these policies. We wanted to draw lessons from these past evaluations that would help guide future decision-making.

Given our knowledge of the evidence base, we were always a little pessimistic about how many evaluations we would be able to consider. But we hoped that a systematic review would throw up a lot more evidence and that our principle task would be deciding which findings would be of most use to policymakers and presenting those in a manner that would not be overwhelming them with information.

Unfortunately, our initial pessimism was not misplaced. Our team has trawled through thousands of research papers, government evaluations and think tank reports on our topics, looking for robust evidence on the impact of local growth policies. What we have found, for most policy areas, is a tiny number of robust evaluations addressing effectiveness: 71 for employment training (the largest number), 36 for sports and culture, 29 for transport, 27 for access to finance, 23 for business advice, 21 for estate renewal, 16 for broadband, and none at all for public realm improvements. The amount of money that the government is spending on these policy areas without knowing whether or not they are having the desired impact is stunning.

INCENTIVES FOR EVALUATION

In a time of tightening budgets, devolution presents an ideal opportunity to improve the evidence base about what works. But we will only learn from experimentation at the local level if it is accompanied by rigorous evaluation. Unfortunately, government is often wary about committing itself to robust and open evaluation of policy – partly because it perceives that the cost of ‘failure’ is so high.

To help address this problem, we are placing increasing emphasis on evaluating ‘what works better’. That is, in trying to figure out whether different types of delivery of the same policy can make a difference to cost effectiveness. To take just one example – instead of asking if business advice services work, we try to examine whether expensive intensive support or a not-so-expensive set of web resources offer better value for money.

Variations in local policy offer an ideal opportunity to compare different approaches. But we also need to recognise that the incentives for local government to properly evaluate remain weak. The financial incentives are small when the bulk of the money is coming from someone else (usually central government) and there are significant externalities – the lessons from costly failure benefit all, but the approbation falls on local policy makers. Central government will need to play a role in fixing these incentives. If they do, I am hopeful that more local experimentation will help fill those major evidence gaps that our systematic reviews have exposed.

www.whatworksgrowth.org

Henry Overman is Director, What Works Centre for Local Economic Growth and Professor in Economic Geography at the London School of Economics.
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TALKING POLITICS

The gap between how politicians and the people of the UK speak

IN THE RUN-UP to the 2015 UK general election, we heard a lot from the leaders of the main rival political parties. What was noticeable was that the party leaders liked to return to the same concepts over and over again, particularly when it came to the economy. Words like ‘austerity’, ‘debt’ and ‘deficit’ appeared to define the central debates of this election. In the seven-way ITV Leaders’ Debate on 2 April 2015, for example, the word ‘austerity’ was uttered the equivalent of 1.030 times per million words, ‘debt’ 1,254 times per million words, and ‘deficit’ a substantial 1,567 times per million words.

Such words, however, do not seem typical of the words that speakers of English in Britain use in conversation. But what is typical? Researchers at the ESRC Centre for Corpus Approaches to Social Science (CASS) at Lancaster University are working with Cambridge University Press to conduct a large-scale research project looking at how spoken British English is changing over time. The researchers are collecting hundreds of hours of recordings of everyday conversation between speakers from all over the UK, and analysing the millions of words of transcripts of these recordings. This collection of transcripts is called the Spoken British National Corpus 2014. The research finds that there’s a considerable language gap between the way that the politicians speak and the way that the people of the UK speak.

By looking in the corpus it’s quickly apparent that some of the words politicians use are far from frequent – the word ‘debt’ occurs 13 times per million words, ‘deficit’ only three times per million words, and ‘austerity’ only one time in five million words. It seems that the British public hardly ever actually use these words in everyday conversation. Noting what the British public did not talk about very much led the researchers to find out what they did talk about when chatting about politics. They found that the way that UK speakers talk about politics has evolved over the last 20 years.

By comparing their corpus to a similar set of transcripts from recordings collected over 20 years ago, the researchers found that words and phrases such as ‘Member of Parliament’ (and its abbreviated form ‘MP’), ‘parliament’, ‘prime minister’, ‘Westminster’, ‘council’, ‘election’ and ‘vote’ each occur less frequently now than they did in the 1990s. The fall of ‘election’ to only a fifth of its frequency in the 1990s is particularly interesting. It implies that the British public are not discussing such events as much as they once were.

However, the researchers noticed that some political topics have risen pretty dramatically over the last 20 years. Words such as ‘politician’, ‘politics’, ‘political’ and ‘government’ have all risen in use.

It also appears that the notion of British nationality has become more salient in the conversation of UK speakers between the two time periods. The word ‘British’ has more than doubled in use. Interestingly, the term ‘immigration’ is now 13 times as frequent as it was in the 1990s, and the word ‘immigrant(s)’ more than four times as frequent. The researchers discovered that half of the mentions of ‘immigrant(s)’ are preceded by the word ‘illegal’. This suggests that an association between immigration and criminality is strong in the minds of the speakers in the 2010s data.

There is still much more to be found out from the data – and you could help. If you are interested in contributing to the work on everyday spoken English the research team is still collecting recordings from speakers of British English. For more information on the project and how to contribute, visit the website below.

cass.lancs.ac.uk

Tony McEnery and Robbie Love, ESRC Centre for Corpus Approaches to Social Science (CASS), Lancaster University.

WHAT’S NEW?

The Oxford English Dictionary adds new words once they have had a while to establish themselves. Some notable new entries this year include:

Crowdfund (v) To fund a project by raising money from a large number of people, each of whom contributes a relatively small amount, typically via the internet.

Leggings (n) Tight-fitting stretch leggings for women, styled to resemble denim jeans.

Photobomb (v) Spoil a photograph by unexpectedly appearing in the camera’s field of view as the picture is taken, typically as a practical joke.

Staycation (n) A holiday spent in one’s home country rather than abroad, or spent at home involving day trips.

Sext (n) Send (someone) sexually explicit photographs or messages via mobile phone.

Totes (adv) Very, extremely; (modifying a verb) definitely, absolutely.

Twerk (v) Dance to popular music in a sexually provocative manner with thrusting hip movements and a low, squatting stance. This was in use in English as a noun by (originally spelled ‘twirk’), referring to ‘a twisting or jerking movement’.

Source: public.oed.com

www.oxforddictionaries.com

Crowdfunding. Combining a relatively small amount of money from a large number of people to fund a project.

Twerk. A verb to dance to popular music in a sexually provocative manner with thrusting hip movements and a low, squatting stance. This was in use in English as a noun by (originally spelled ‘twirk’), referring to ‘a twisting or jerking movement’.

Source: public.oed.com/whatsnew

Staycation. A holiday spent in one’s home country rather than abroad, or spent at home involving day trips.

Toutes. Very, extremely; (modifying a verb) definitely, absolutely.

Leggings. Tight-fitting stretch leggings for women, styled to resemble denim jeans.

Photobomb. Spoil a photograph by unexpectedly appearing in the camera’s field of view as the picture is taken, typically as a practical joke.
PRISON

Behaviour behind bars

How does very long-term imprisonment from early adulthood affect prisoners?

WHEN LOOKING AT the problems of long-term imprisonment from an early age, the most severe problems relate primarily to missing others outside prison and feeling that one’s life is being lost or wasted, findings that have been revealed by research by Dr Ben Crewe, Dr Susie Hulley and Dr Serena Wright at the Institute of Criminology, University of Cambridge. The least severe are emotional/psychological, such as fears about mental health and psychological integrity, although it should be borne in mind that the study does not include prisoners who have been transferred to secure psychiatric hospitals, ie, those who might be experiencing acute forms of psychological distress and psychiatric disorder.

The study shows that early-phase prisoners generally experience the problems of confinement as being more severe than those further into their sentences. This is because long-term prisoners, following an initial period of ‘entry shock’ and ‘temporal vertigo’, reflect on their predicament and the offences they have committed, and seek to establish new identities and find some meaning in their lives.

They also establish strategies for managing time and gaining forms of control over their lives, which enable them to psychologically survive their extreme predicament.

The fact that problem severity does not seem to increase by sentence stage has been interpreted in previous studies as evidence that long-term imprisonment does not have cumulative effects. But the Cambridge study finds that long-term prisoners become ‘over-adapted’ to their environment in ways that may cause problems for life after release.

The most severe problems relate primarily to missing others outside

The differences between the experiences of male and female prisoners serving very long sentences from an early age are significant, with female prisoners reporting consistently higher problem severity. The survey also shows that late-stage prisoners become progressively less loyal to other prisoners, less hostile to staff, and less committed to an ‘inmate code’ than those in earlier sentence stages. This is significant, since it might be expected that prisoners would become more socialised into an inmate culture as time proceeds, or would be most committed to it in the mid-phase of the sentence.

RESIGNATION

Despite common feelings of injustice and resentment among interviewees, primarily due to Joint Enterprise sentences, and the very long minimum terms that are now awarded for murder, most were resigned to their predicament, and to the ‘risks of resistance’, and few held the prison or its staff responsible for their general predicament. They differentiated between the wider criminal justice system and the prison system specifically.

The study’s findings represent a significant addition to understanding of the experiences and adaptations of very long-term prisoners, and how prison changes people.

RESIGNATION

www.crim.cam.ac.uk/research/ltp_from_young_adulthood

CHAISING VOTES

Face-to-face methods of contacting voters are more successful than digital and social media contacts in ensuring people turn out to vote, says a University of Manchester study of online voter contact during the US 2012 Presidential election and the UK 2010 general election. Despite increased attention given to online campaigning through the internet, email and social media, the study shows that more personal contacting of voters remains the ‘gold standard’ in terms of mobilising turnout on election day. Web campaigning does appear useful in sustaining levels of involvement among party activists and those already involved in helping with the campaign.

A two-step approach helps voter mobilisation and disseminating the campaign message by digital means can support activists who then go on and engage in wider offline personalised canvassing.


Professor Rachel Gibson, University of Manchester

APPROVING OF WAR

Researchers from the University of Essex explored whether the foreign policy attitudes of the UK’s younger voters differ to older people. When all age groups were asked whether the UK was right to use military force in Afghanistan and Iraq, those who disapproved of UK involvement outnumbered those who approved by more than two to one. In terms of the Syrian civil war, 52 per cent of those 30 and under supported Britain enforcing a no-fly zone over Syria, compared to 45 per cent of over 43s. There does however remain widespread scepticism across all age groups concerning Britain engaging peacefully or militarily with other countries.

www.iser.essex.ac.uk

Professor Thomas J Scotto, University of Essex
Most adolescent crime is not just youthful opportunism

A STUDY OF TEENAGERS and the community in Peterborough over 10 years shows that most adolescent crime is not just youthful opportunism but the combined result of personal characteristics and environmental factors. The Peterborough Adolescent and Young Adult Development Study (PADS+) at Cambridge's Institute of Criminology, tracked in detail the criminal activities of around 700 young people and explored how these relate to both their personal characteristics and social environments.

The young people self-reported about 16,000 crimes during the study period — dominant types being violence, vandalism and shoplifting. While crime is often perceived to be a natural part of teenage life the findings show that a third of teenagers committed no crimes at all, and the vast majority of the rest only occasionally — one or two minor crimes a year on average. The bulk of offences were committed by a small group with around four per cent responsible for almost half the crime and the overwhelming majority of the most serious property crimes, such as burglaries, robberies and car theft. Often beginning before the age of 12, the most persistent offenders in the study also committed a wide range of offences.

The study, conducted by Professor Per-Olof Wikström, suggests that a major reason why certain young people refrain from crime is that their morality simply prevents them from even seeing crime as a possible course of action in the first place.

The researchers found two main characteristics in teenagers resistant to committing crime, who they describe as 'crime-averse' — namely, a personal morality that closely matches the law and greater self-control. Young people at the other end of the spectrum don't care very much about breaking the rules of the law and tend to be impulsive and short-sighted, leaving them more vulnerable to the temptations of crime — they are 'crime-prone'. The 16 per cent most 'crime-prone' young people committed 60 per cent of the crimes, while the 16 per cent most 'crime-averse' were only responsible for 0.5 per cent of the crimes.

HOT SPOTS
The findings show that crime is not only concentrated to a small group of young people, but also in certain times and places — known as 'hot spots'. In many previous studies, crime hot spots have often been explained by the fact that they occur in areas where opportunities for crime are plentiful. The study shows that crime hot spots are not only a consequence of opportunity but also the moral context — the level of enforcement of key common rules of conduct — in which these opportunities occur, and the presence of 'crime-prone' young people.

The research finds that prevention needs to focus on developing policies that affect children and young people's moral education and cognitive nurturing — which aids the development of greater self-control — and policies that help minimise the emergence of moral contexts conducive to crime.

www.cam.ac.uk/research/news/morality-prevents-crime#sthash.5GQGHjzV.dpuf

YOUTH CRIME

Criminal intent

Does evidence support the idea that young people will inevitably commit crime in certain environments?
IN 2010, 144,000 POLICE officers were employed in England and Wales, an increase over the previous decade of around 17,000. Public commitments by politicians to ‘put more police on the street’ and to tackle an increasing variety of crime, ranging from cybercrime to sexual abuse, underlay this trend. During the decade from 2001 to 2010, the number of crimes reported by the Crime Survey for England and Wales fell by over 20 per cent. The equation seemed simple: more police meant lower crime rates.

Since 2010, public spending cuts arising from the government's austerity programme mean that, after accounting for inflation, spending on the police has fallen by around 16 per cent and the number of police officers has fallen by almost 17,000. What has happened to crime rates? In fact, they have continued to fall: fewer police has not (at least, yet) resulted in higher crime rates.

Clearly there are complex issues and bodies such as the National Audit Office and Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary are noting that some forces will become stretched to the limit in their capacity to handle crime with likely cuts to police spending over the next parliament. Statements from senior police officers that, for example, the police will not be automatically called out to burglaries add to the air of a police service in crisis.

KEEPING UP STANDARDS

With the decline in police numbers it becomes ever more important that officers are trained to a high and professional standard. This is the core message underpinning both Sir Thomas Winsor’s recent review of police pay and employment conditions, and the establishment of a national College of Policing to improve standards of policing, and of recruits in particular. It is one potential way to ‘square the circle’ of reducing crime further with a smaller workforce.

Can the police still manage crime as public spending declines?

OPINION

FEWER POLICE, MORE CRIME?

By Richard Disney and Rowena Crawford

FEWER POLICE, MORE CRIME?

Fewer police have not resulted in higher crime rates

Since the mid-2000s, a national assessment for police applicants has applied a common minimum standard to entrants across all police forces. Would-be recruits are required to satisfy a range of sophisticated assessments including written, interactive and psychometric tests of communication skills, respect for race and diversity, problem-solving and team-working. In ESRC-funded work, researchers at the Institute for Fiscal Studies have investigated the relationship between the scores applicants achieve on these tests and their characteristics (such as sex, age and educational qualifications), the nature of the labour market in their local area, and the level and composition of crime dealt with by their local police force.

The research shows that applicants’ performance in the assessment depends partly on observable personal characteristics: women perform better than men; those with at least A-levels or equivalents perform better than those with fewer qualifications; and those with previous experience in the police service (for example, as a Police Community Support Officer) fare better than those without. But the local environment also matters: where outside wages are higher, the average quality of applicants is lower. And where total crime rates are higher, or the proportion of crime that is violent is higher, the quality of applicants is also lower.

There is scope for forces to select applicants more carefully - for example, some police forces consistently put forward very few women to the national assessment - but there are also wider considerations, such as whether police wages should vary across the country to reflect the differential nature of policing.

It is not just individual officer performance that matters though. Organisational innovation also lies at the heart of police effectiveness. The introduction of locally elected Police and Crime Commissioners in late 2012 was intended to improve the accountability of local police forces and increase the efficiency of service delivery. It remains to be seen whether the hiring of professional ‘super cops’ will improve the quality of overall policing, particularly in the context of continuing declining spending.

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www.ifs.org.uk/publications/7937
HERE COME THE GIRLS!
How women figured in the 2015 general election

WOMEN ON TOP
The highest-ever number and proportion of women MPs were elected in 2015’s general election. Worldwide other female MPs are doing well in other national parliaments. In Rwanda, 64% of MPs are female – the highest percentage in a recent survey across 190 countries*. The UK was listed 29th. There are also currently 21 international female heads of government† – Germany’s Angela Merkel is the longest-standing incumbent at 10 years in office.

INFOGRAPHIC: TIDY DESIGNS
How women figured in the 2015 general election

WOMEN IN POLITICS

THERESA VILLIERS MP
Secretary of State for Northern Ireland
CONSTITUENCY: Chipping Barnet
MAJORITY: 14.5%

ELIZABETH TRUSS MP
Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
CONSTITUENCY: South West Norfolk
MAJORITY: 27.5%

THERESA MAY MP
Home Secretary
CONSTITUENCY: Maidenhead
MAJORITY: 54%

NICOLA STURGEON
First Minister of Scotland

ANNA SOUBRY MP
Minister for Small Business, Industry and Enterprise
CONSTITUENCY: Broxtowe
MAJORITY: 14%

PENNY MORDAUNT MP
Minister for State for the Armed Forces
CONSTITUENCY: Portsmouth North
MAJORITY: 23%

AMBER RUDD MP
Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change
CONSTITUENCY: Hastings and Rye
MAJORITY: 9.4%

THE BARONESS STOWELL OF BEESTON MBE
Leader of the House of Lords and Lord Privy Seal
Holds one of the oldest offices of state, one of only three women in over 700 years to hold the position.

PRITI PATEL MP
Minister of State (Department for Work and Pensions)
CONSTITUENCY: Witham
MAJORITY: 41.5%

NICKY MORGAN MP
Secretary of State for Education
CONSTITUENCY: Loughborough
MAJORITY: 17.5%

BARONESS ANELAY OF ST. JOHNS DBE
Minister of State (Foreign and Commonwealth Office)

NADINE DORRIES MP
Secretary of State for Health
CONSTITUENCY: Mid Bedfordshire
MAJORITY: 40%

CLAIRE PERRY MP
CONSTITUENCY: Devizes
MAJORITY: 42%

JUSTINE GREENING MP
Secretary of State for International Development
CONSTITUENCY: Putney
MAJORITY: 24%

THE KEY
CONSservative cabinet ministers
ALSO attend cabinet
Significant other Tories
Labour Shadow cabinet
Significant other Labour
SNP
Green party
Plaid Cymru
SDLP
Independent

KEY

Women 191 in total, 29.4%
Men 459 in total, 70.6%
Conservative 68 in total, 35%
Labour 99 in total, 52%
SNP 20 in total, 11%
Other 4 in total, 2%

TOTAL WOMEN ELECTED
191
TOTAL MPS ELECTED
650

*Recent survey across 190 countries
†21 international female heads of government