

Issues and ideas for a better world

A collection of ideas from the
Policy Idol 2017 finalists



October 2017

About the Policy Institute at King's College London

The Policy Institute at King's addresses complex policy and practice challenges with rigorous research, academic expertise and analysis focused on improving outcomes. Our vision is to contribute to building an ecosystem that enables the translation of research to inform policy and practice, and the translation of policy and practice needs into a demand-focused research culture. We do this by bringing diverse groups together, facilitating engagement between academic, business, philanthropic, clinical and policy communities around current and future societal issues.

Policy Idol is funded by an Impact Acceleration Account from the Economic and Social Research Council

Preface

King's has as its vision to make the world a better place, and the Policy Institute is committed to helping it achieve that goal – not only through its research and analysis, but also through training the next generation who will go on to shape policy and serve society in the future.

That is why, every year, we hold Policy Idol, a competition open to students and staff at King's, in which we help them to think deeply and creatively about pressing societal issues and how to solve them.

Individuals and teams from a range of disciplines compete, with just three minutes to pitch their world-changing policy idea to an expert panel of judges. A live final awaits the 10 who make it through, with those selected receiving bespoke training in policy analysis and communications to help them perfect their pitches.

This year's final was hosted by Mark Easton, BBC News Home Editor, who was once again a fantastically entertaining and engaging compère for the evening. I chaired the judging panel, which was made up of Polly Toynbee, author and *Guardian* columnist; Dr Dan Poulter, MP for Central Suffolk and North Ipswich; and Professor Frans Berkhout, Executive Dean of the Faculty of Social Science & Public Policy at King's.

The standard of the pitches was extremely high, and congratulations are due to all those who made it to the final. Particular praise must go to Louis Phelps, who was the overall winner of Policy Idol 2017 and also won the audience prize, for his pitch on the need to reduce meat consumption and innovate in food production.

Meena Nayar and Gemma Scott were awarded the runner-up prize for substance, for their presentation on how to tackle the growing problem of smartphone addiction, and Luca Brockmann and Antonio Manzi Gari won the runner-up prize for style with their pitch on the need to regulate

Uruguay's shadow waste collection industry and better protect those who work in it.

You can read these policy proposals, as well as those from the other finalists, in this publication. We were looking for excellence, and I'm sure you'll agree the finalists really delivered. The passion and rigor that they brought to the task fills me with confidence that the next generation will be well-equipped to take on the societal challenges of the future.

I hope you enjoy reading these ideas as much I enjoyed judging them.

Professor Jennifer Rubin

Director of the Policy Institute at King's



Acknowledgements

Throughout the heat stage of the competition, there were a number of individuals who gave up their time to help select the finalists whose work appears in this collection. Heartfelt thanks go to:

- ♦ **Louise Arseneault**, Professor of Developmental Psychology at the Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology & Neuroscience at King's College London
- ♦ **Kate Barker**, business economist and former member of the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee
- ♦ **Charlene Brennan**, Corporate Affairs Manager at Hewlett Packard
- ♦ **Charles Clarke**, former MP and Home Secretary
- ♦ **Bobby Duffy**, Managing Director of Ipsos MORI
- ♦ **Jonathan Grant**, Assistant Principal for Strategic Initiatives & Public Policy at King's College London and Professor of Public Policy at the Policy Institute
- ♦ **James Grierson**, Advisor at the Government Property Unit at the Cabinet Office
- ♦ **Jeremy Jennings**, Head of School and Professor of Political Theory at the School of Politics & Economics at King's College London
- ♦ **Paul Lewis**, Reader in Economics and Public Policy at King's College London
- ♦ **Polly Mackenzie**, Director of Money and Mental Health and former Special Adviser to the Deputy Prime Minister, Nick Clegg
- ♦ **Martin Moore**, Director of the Centre for the Study of Media, Communication and Power at King's College London

- ♦ **Jo Moriarty**, Senior Research Fellow and Deputy Director of the Social Care Workforce Research Unit at King's College London
- ♦ **Elizabeth Pisani**, Director of Ternyata Ltd.
- ♦ **Mike Rann**, CEO of Rann Strategy Group and former Premier of South Australia
- ♦ **Simon Robertson**, investment banker and founder of Simon Robertson Associates
- ♦ **Alice Sherwood**, former management consultant and television producer for the BBC, ITV and Channel 4

Thanks must also go to:

- ♦ The judges, who did an excellent job putting the finalists through their paces, with probing questions to get them thinking and push them further.
- ♦ Rachel Hesketh, Dr Saba Hinrichs-Krapels, Adam Kamenetzky, Erin Montague, Dr Sarah Rawlings, Alice Sherwood and Dr Ben Wilkinson for mentoring the finalists as part of their training.
- ♦ Mark Easton for once again being an outstanding compère.
- ♦ Ross Pow for leading the training session, and Dr Sarah Rawlings, Emma Kinloch and George Murkin for organising the competition and producing this publication.

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Martin Leach and Matt Lewis



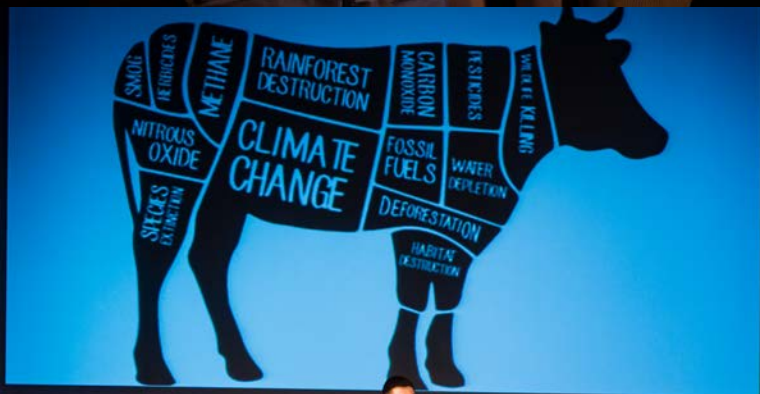
Policy Idol

KING'S
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Mark Easton, host of Policy Idol 2017



Louis Phelps collects his winners' trophy from former Home Secretary and King's Visiting Professor Charles Clarke



Louis makes his pitch to the judges and live audience

1 | The future of UK food production: Reducing meat consumption and fostering innovation

Louis Phelps

Overall winner of Policy Idol 2017 and winner of the audience prize

Louis Phelps is studying for a MA in International Political Economy in the Department of Political Economy at King's College London.

1 | The future of UK food production: Reducing meat consumption and fostering innovation

Meat consumption has reached unprecedented levels. Global production is now at 300 million tonnes each year and is predicted to increase 75 per cent by 2050.¹ The industry currently generates around 15 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions, more than the entire transport sector.² What's more, this may be a conservative estimate, with some studies suggesting that meat production accounts for as much as 51 per cent of total emissions.³ Livestock farming is also the leading cause of deforestation and species loss, and is responsible for increasing global food insecurity, with 44 per cent of the world's grain harvest used to feed livestock while hundreds of millions of people continue to suffer from hunger.⁴ As well as environmental damage, meat consumption is also contributing to declining public health. Here in the UK we eat around 210 grams of meat a day, double the global average, and with high meat diets increasing the risk of heart disease, stroke, and obesity, this is putting extra pressure on our already stretched health services.⁵

The solution is clear: we need to transition to a lower meat diet. A reduction to recommended healthy levels of 70 grams a day could cut emissions by a third and promote better health.⁶ As we know, eating less meat is already an emerging trend; nearly a third of the UK population has cut down on its meat intake in the last 12

1 Wellesley, L. & Froggatt, A. (2015). 'Changing Climate, Changing Diets: Pathways to Lower Meat Consumption', Chatham House: The Royal Institute of International Affairs, pp. 1-58.

2 Ibid.

3 Goodland, R. & Anhang, J. (2009). 'Livestock and Climate Change: What if the Key Actors in Climate Change are Cows, Pigs, and Chickens?', World Watch, pp. 10-19.

4 FAO (2006). *Livestock's Long Shadow: Environmental Issues and Options*, pp. 1-377.

5 Raphaely, T. & Marinova, D. (2015). *Impact of Meat Consumption on Health and Environmental Sustainability* (London: IGI Global).

6 Wellesley & Froggatt, vii.

months.⁷ This policy aims to accelerate this process by raising awareness and increasing the cost of meat while simultaneously making our agricultural sector more dynamic and sustainable. To achieve this, the policy has three main stages: a public awareness campaign, subsidy withdrawal, and investment in improving current practices and developing alternative industries.

The first part of the policy comprises a campaign to raise public awareness of the links between high meat consumption and environmental damage. A recent study by Chatham House conducted focus groups in 12 countries, including the UK, and found that awareness of this relationship is particularly low and that populations expect governments to take the lead on this issue. A key conclusion of the study was that governments overestimate potential public opposition to policies tackling high meat consumption.⁸ This campaign therefore aims to lay the foundations for the subsidy changes and initiate a shift in public attitudes towards meat, reframing it as a luxury product rather than a staple part of our diets.

The second stage of the policy is subsidy withdrawal. Currently, our farmers receive around £2 billion a year in direct subsidy payments and a further £600 million in rural development payments from the EU under the Common Agricultural Policy.⁹ After the UK leaves the EU, these payments will end, but the Chancellor has committed to match current funding levels until 2020.¹⁰ From this point onwards I propose the gradual withdrawal of financial support to the livestock sector. With reducing subsidies, the price of meat will rise to reflect the true cost of production, easing consumer demand and reducing consumption. Temporary tariffs will stop imported meat undercutting

7 Lee, L. & Simpson, I. (2016). 'Are we Eating Less Meat? A British Social Attitudes Report', NatCen, pp. 1-21.

8 Wellesley & Froggatt, vii.

9 Daneshkhu, S. (2016). 'British Farmers prepare for end to Direct Subsidies after Brexit', *Financial Times*. 7 August 2016. <https://www.ft.com/content/f88a6556-5b0f-11e6-9f70-badea1b336d4> (accessed 22.02.17).

10 gov.uk (2016). 'Chancellor Philip Hammond guarantees EU funding beyond date UK leaves EU'. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/chancellor-philip-hammond-guarantees-eu-funding-beyond-date-uk-leaves-the-eu> (accessed 22.02.17).

domestic supply and protect farmers during the initial stages of the policy.

Increasing the price of a commodity is the most effective way of reducing consumption, as demonstrated by the success of the recently introduced plastic bag charge, which has seen usage drop by 85 per cent in England.¹¹ While the drop in meat consumption would be less sudden and dramatic, the fact that meat purchases in the UK declined by 11.5 per cent in 2008, at the height of the financial crisis, suggests that an economic approach such as this has the potential to generate a significant reduction in consumer demand.¹² Moreover, subsidy withdrawal has numerous advantages over a direct meat tax or increase in VAT. Withdrawing subsidies has the benefit of targeting both supply *and* demand, thereby maximising the intended effects while being likely to encounter less public resistance than a direct tax as a less interventionist approach. In fact, this policy can be seen as an absolute reduction in government intervention, with the current situation one in which low-cost meat is being subsidised.

The third stage of the policy is to make the funding previously used for subsidies available for two alternative purposes. The first is to help farmers remaining in the livestock industry increase efficiency to become profitable without the need for subsidies. New Zealand offers an example in this regard. Agricultural subsidies were withdrawn overnight in 1985 and productivity increased dramatically, with New Zealand's agricultural sector now one of the most dynamic and productive in the world.¹³ The aim of this policy, therefore, is not to eliminate the livestock sector, but to make it smaller, more efficient, and more sustainable, and one that can compete internationally in terms of quality.

11 Smithers, R. (2016). 'England's plastic bag usage drops 85% since 5p charge introduced', *The Guardian*, 30 July 2016. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2016/jul/30/england-plastic-bag-usage-drops-85-per-cent-since-5p-charged-introduced> (accessed 23.02.17).

12 Chalabi, M. (2013). 'Comparing Carnivores: UK Meat Consumption', *The Guardian*, 5 June 2013. <https://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2013/jun/05/meat-consumption-uk-global-trends#data> (accessed 23.02.17).

13 Smith, L. (2017). 'New Zealand shows British Farmers how to Embrace Brexit', *Financial Times*, 8 February 2017. <https://www.ft.com/content/117f5f10-ed57-11e6-ba01-119a44939bb6> (accessed 25.02.17).



Louis talks with Mark Easton

Its second purpose will be to support farmers leaving the industry to transition to new methods of food production and different land uses. These could be relatively straightforward alternatives, such as reforesting land, expanding wetland areas, or creating agri-tourism sites. On the other hand, they could be more innovative solutions, such as creating vertical crop farms, making plant-based meat alternatives, or producing in-vitro meat grown from stem cells in the lab. These industries have the potential to be more profitable for farmers while providing increased consumer choice, improving public health, and fighting climate change. By advancing current practices and investing in these new sectors, in the long term this policy aims to create a more dynamic agricultural sector that is not dependent on government support to survive.

We have, then, an opportunity to make our diets healthier and our agricultural sector more varied and sustainable. By withdrawing financial support to the livestock sector and using that funding to improve current practices and develop new industries, we can simultaneously reduce our meat consumption and its effects on the planet and public health while creating a more dynamic and profitable agricultural sector that benefits farmers and consumers alike. On a broader level, this is a chance for the UK to initiate a global shift towards low-meat diets while leading the way in agricultural innovation.

Policy Idol 2017

Gemma Scott (l) and Meena Nayar (r), winners of the substance prize



Meena and Gemma deliver their pitch

2 | Smartphone addiction: An emerging global digital epidemic

Meena Nayar and Gemma Scott

Runners-up (substance)

Meena Nayar is a doctor and integrated academic trainee in rehabilitation medicine at the Cicely Saunders Institute of Palliative Care and Rehabilitation at King's College London.

Gemma Scott is a doctor working in clinical radiology at King's College Hospital, London.

2 | Smartphone addiction: An emerging global digital epidemic

Smartphone use has increased exponentially in the last decade, with more than 2.3 billion users worldwide in 2017.¹ Smartphones have made staying in touch easier and given us constant access to the internet and social media, with many of us now seemingly unable to function without one. However, emerging scientific research suggests that many of us are becoming addicted to our smartphones, leading to a host of negative health and social consequences.

Smartphones are now in the pockets of two thirds of UK adults, an increase of a quarter since 2012.² Specifically, 90 per cent of 16 to 24-year-olds now own a smartphone, and this has doubled since 2012.³ Users spend an average of two hours per day online and check their phones, on average, 200 times per day.⁴

The rapid expansion in smartphone ownership is due to a variety of factors. Smartphone technology is becoming more advanced every year, and there has been a huge increase in the availability of 4G internet. It is cheaper and easier than ever to own a smartphone and be connected to the internet on the go. These advances make it increasingly difficult to live without a smartphone in today's society, with many of us now shopping and banking on our smartphones, as well as keeping in touch with each other wherever we are in the world.

However, there is an increasing body of research to suggest that heavy smartphone use has many detrimental health and social consequences and can lead to addiction. Smartphone addiction is now being talked about among

1 Statista (2017). 'Smartphone users worldwide 2014-2020'.

2 Ofcom (2015). 'Ofcom Communications and Market Report 2015'.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

researchers and the media, and many people now admit to being addicted to their phones.⁵ Research shows that when smartphone users send and receive messages and complete tasks on their smartphones, dopamine is released in the brain. This is the brain's pleasure chemical and is directly linked to addictive behaviours, such as smoking and gambling.⁶ Dopamine itself doesn't last long in the brain, explaining why addicts repeatedly go back for more. This may explain the constant checking seen in those who use smartphones and the 'withdrawal' that people feel when they are without them.

Heavy smartphone users have higher levels of anxiety and depression than non-smartphone users.⁷ Smartphone use at night has been linked to insomnia and sleep disorders, especially in children and teenagers.⁸ There is a strong association between bedtime media device use and inadequate sleep quantity in children.⁹ Nearly 70 per cent of people admit sleeping next to their phone, with many admitting to checking their phones as soon as they wake up.¹⁰

Our policy to overcome smartphone addiction is to start by setting up a Digital Impact Research Institute (DIRI), in partnership with Ofcom, the communications and telecoms regulator. The Institute would have both research and regulatory powers and would provide information to the public and industry, as well as lobbying the government to influence public health initiatives.

The DIRI would analyse data on this issue and would have the power to conduct its own well-designed research into smartphone addiction. Using this research, awareness

5 De-Sola Gutiérrez, J., Rodríguez de Fonseca, F. & Rubio, G. (2016). 'Cell-Phone Addiction: A Review', *Frontiers in Psychiatry*, 7:175.

6 Ibid.

7 Demirci, K., Akgönlü, M. & Akpınar, A. (2015). 'Relationship of Smartphone Use Severity with Sleep Quality, Depression, and Anxiety in University Students', *Journal of Behavioral Addictions*, 4(2), pp. 85-92.

8 Gamble, A. L., D'Rozario, A. L., Bartlett, D. J., Williams, S., Bin, Y. S. et al. (2014). 'Adolescent Sleep Patterns and Night-Time Technology Use: Results of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation's Big Sleep Survey', *PLOS ONE* 9(11): e111700.

9 Carter, B., Rees, P., Hale, L., Bhattacharjee, D. & Paradkar, M. S. (2016) 'Association Between Portable Screen-Based Media Device Access or Use and Sleep Outcomes: A Systematic Review and Meta-analysis', *JAMA Pediatrics*, 170(12):1202-1208.

10 Bank of America (2015) 'Trends in Consumer Mobility Report'.

of smartphone addiction would be raised through the DIRI website, as well as work with Public Health England to set up campaigns in schools and public places. The DIRI would also have the power to lobby schools and education leaders to ban smartphone use in the classroom and set up smartphone-free areas in cafes, bars and restaurants. The DIRI would also work with the highways agency and local councils to erect warning signs on pavements for pedestrians who use smartphones while crossing the road, a behaviour which increases the risk of being involved in an accident, according to the Automobile Association.¹¹

In partnership with Ofcom, the DIRI would have the power to lobby mobile phone manufacturers to make handsets which have in-built settings to prevent addiction, such as warnings on daily usage, and to make screens which have a 'night mode' that can prevent insomnia and sleep problems. Warnings could also be placed on smartphone packaging.

We believe that everyone can have healthier relationships with their smartphones, but we need to empower users to make healthy choices, such as those we make about our diet, alcohol and other aspects of our lives. We believe our policy will go a long way in addressing the issue of smartphone addiction, so that we can have healthier relationships with our smartphones and with each other.

¹¹ The Automobile Association (AA) 'Pedestrian Smartphone distraction'. <https://www.theaa.com/newsroom/aa-news-2016/pedestrian-smart-phone-distraction.html>



Meena and Gemma rehearse their pitch



Antonio Manzi Gari (l) and Luca Brockman (r) pitch their policy idea to the judges



Luca and Antonio receive their runners-up (style) prize from Charles Clarke

3 | Enhancing the working conditions of the ‘clasificadores’ in Uruguay by regulating the shadow trash market

**Luca Brockmann and
Antonio Manzi Gari**

Runners-up (style)

Luca Brockmann and Antonio Manzi Gari are both studying for an MSc in Public Policy and Management in the School of Management and Business at King's College London.

3 | Enhancing the working conditions of the 'clasificadores' in Uruguay by regulating the shadow trash market

Even though Uruguay was picked in 2013 as country of the year by the *Economist*,¹ mainly due to its progressive social reforms, it still faces deeply entrenched social problems. Among these is the situation of the informal waste collectors, the 'clasificadores', whose main source of income is generated by searching for recyclable materials in landfills and residential waste containers which they can take to deposits or recycling plants to be sold. From the limited data available,² we estimate that around 4,000 households in Uruguay depend on this 'trash market' as their main source of income, which translates to about 18,000 people. Moreover, more than 5,500 of them (28 per cent) are estimated to be children under the age of 14.³

In many cases, clasificadores sort through collected waste in their homes, which leads to an accumulation of trash in and around their households, presenting health and hygiene hazards not only for the clasificadores but also their families. In their transactions with the recycling plants, clasificadores also have little bargaining power and must take whatever they get for the materials. This means that, despite being an important link in the recycling chain, clasificadores get paid

1 The *Economist* (2013). 'Earth's got talent: The Economist's country of the year'. <https://www.economist.com/news/leaders/21591872-resilient-ireland-booming-south-sudan-tumultuous-turkey-our-country-year-earths-got>

2 The quantification of clasificadores has been a challenge to government authorities, mostly due to data limitations, outdated records, and the partially cyclical nature of the activity. Furthermore, the numbers presented by the capital city government are strongly contested by the Union of Clasificadores, so we took the average of the City government number (around 3,000 in the capital city) and the Union number (around 9,000 nationwide). Source for the government number in footnote 3, Unions estimate obtained from a personal phone interview to the president of the Union and confirmed in an interview with a local newspaper on February 2017: Reilly, A. L. (2017). 'IMM impide con policías ingreso de hurgadores a Felipe Cardoso', *El País*. <http://www.elpais.com.uy/informacion/imm-impide-policias-ingreso-hurgadores.html>

3 Intendencia de Montevideo, (2013). 'Intendencia present informe sobre clasificadores'. <http://www.montevideo.gub.uy/institucional/noticias/intendencia-presento-informe-sobre-clasificadores>

very little for their work, with 96.5 per cent of households exhibiting some type of poverty, and 60 per cent being chronically poor.⁴

On the waste-generating side of the chain there are three main actors: households, who deposit all their waste in residential containers; industrial companies, which generate industrial waste and have their own regulatory process to discard or recycle it; and public and private enterprises, such as offices, small supermarkets, etc, which generate commercial waste that, in most cases, includes a vast amount of recyclable materials, such as cardboard boxes, plastics, paper and glass.

In the capital city, Montevideo, these public and private companies mentioned above must submit a Waste Disposal Plan to the City Hall detailing all the waste that they will be generating, where it will be stored and how it will be disposed of.⁵ Subsequently, companies must hire an approved waste transport company and pay to get their waste removed. However, there is no requirement to classify this waste, and most of it ends up directly in the landfill, losing valuable recyclable materials in the process. In reality, many companies do not comply with the Waste Disposal Plan,⁶ and proceed to discard their waste illegally in residential containers, on an illegal dump, or pay someone, who could be a clasificador, to get rid of the trash for less money.⁷ It is in this situation where we see an opportunity to gradually include clasificadores into the formal system and enhance their working and living conditions.

To do this, we propose bringing together and connecting small and medium-sized enterprises to clasificadores through an online central government platform that would allow companies to offer their recyclable materials to these

4 Ibid.

5 Intendencia de Montevideo (no date available). 'Normativa para empresas Comercios e instituciones'. <http://www.montevideo.gub.uy/servicios-y-sociedad/limpieza/normativa-para-empresas-comercios-e-instituciones>

6 Intendencia de Montevideo (2016). 'Se duplica cantidad de comercios que presentan declaración jurada sobre residuos'. <http://www.montevideo.gub.uy/institucional/noticias/se-duplica-cantidad-de-comercios-que-presentan-declaracion-jurada-sobre-residuos>

7 Based on the existence of illegal dumps and personal interviews with four business owners and an expert on the waste market.

classifiers, giving them direct access to the materials that provide their income. But how would this work?

Instead of having to engage in the bureaucratic process of filling out the Waste Disposal Plan, companies could register and simply list the type and amount of recyclable waste they aim to dispose of on the online platform. On the other side, clasificadores would also register to be part of the platform, getting access to the recyclable materials offered by the companies and selecting what exactly they want to pick up where and at what time. The platform would also have a two-sided review system. On the one hand, companies could give a lower rating for clasificadores who consistently fail to comply with their selected timeslot. On the other hand, clasificadores could rate the companies according to the veracity of the materials they offered and if they were available on the assigned timeslot. This would provide incentives for reliability and quality services. Furthermore, clasificadores could later input the price they received for their materials from recycling plants, thus increasing the transparency of prices in the waste market.

Overseeing all of this would be a government agency which would obtain information about the companies participating, the quantities being recycled, the prices being paid, and most importantly, identifying clasificadores, which would allow the government to better target social policies towards them.

This proposal aims to create a win-win-win situation. For companies, it would involve less bureaucracy and cheaper disposal of waste. For government, it would provide better oversight of the waste market, with real-time information. Most importantly, for clasificadores it would give them direct access to the materials they sell, meaning they could avoid having to go through residential waste and spend that time instead going directly to the sources of recyclable materials, thus increasing the amount they can sell. Furthermore, this would begin connecting them to the formal system, having direct contact with companies and better access to government services.

This proposal, as a first phase, aims to provide better conditions for most clasificadores, unlike other initiatives,⁸ which, although seem to be very helpful, have only reached a very limited number.

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- 8 Construction of classification plants have provided formal jobs for a fraction of clasificadores; efforts to transform cooperatives of clasificadores into transport companies have also reached only a few of them. Since April 2017, a new programme to switch some clasificadores' horse-pulled carts for motorbike carts has been launched, but the main issue is still not being addressed.



Antonio and Luca on stage



4 | Revitalising democracy by engaging the youth

Imran Hyder

Imran Hyder is studying for a Master of Laws (LLM) in the Dickson Poon School of Law at King's College London.

4 | Revitalising democracy by engaging the youth

Young people's low civic knowledge and understanding, and their lack of engagement with public issues, are well-detailed problems that plague many Western democracies.¹ Up until the turnaround at the Brexit referendum and the 2017 general election, youth turnout for elections in the UK had been in decline since 1992, from around 66 per cent in the general elections preceding that date,² to only 43 per cent of 18 to 24-year-olds turning out to vote in the 2015 general election.³ Youth turnout for the preceding 2014 EU parliamentary elections was an appalling 28 per cent.⁴ Two years later, around 60 per cent of registered young voters in the UK went to the polls for the Brexit referendum,⁵ and a similar percentage of 64 per cent has voted in the 2017 general election.⁶ So what was behind the decline and the recent apparent reversal, and how do we move forward?

Research shows that 55 per cent of 18-year-olds from the UK 'lack confidence about their knowledge and understanding of British politics, with only 36 per cent having confidence in such matters.'⁷ Polling data from the Netherlands shows a divide along educational lines, with

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- 1 Davies, I. & Issitt, J. (2005). 'Reflections on citizenship education in Australia, Canada and England', *Comparative Education*, 41:4, p. 393.
 - 2 Muthoo, A. (2015). 'Why aren't young people voting?' <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/about/london/policy-lab/projects/voting/background>
 - 3 Ipsos MORI (2015). 'How Britain voted in 2015'. <https://www.ipsos-mori.com/researchpublications/researcharchive/3575/How-Britain-voted-in-2015.aspx>
 - 4 Pall, A. (2014). 'Why don't young people vote?', *EU Observer*, 7 November 2014. <https://euobserver.com/opinion/12643>
 - 5 Helm, T. (2016). 'EU referendum: youth turnout almost twice as high as first thought', *The Observer*, 10 July 2016. <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/jul/09/young-people-referendum-turnout-brexit-twice-as-high>
 - 6 Burn-Murdoch, J. (2017). 'Youth turnout at general election highest in 25 years, data show', *Financial Times*, 20 June 2017. <https://www.ft.com/content/6734cdde-550b-11e7-9fed-c19e2700005f>
 - 7 Henn, M. & Foard, N. (2011). 'Young People, Political Participation and Trust in Britain', *Parliamentary Affairs*, 65:47.

trust in democracy and knowledge of politics increasing with level of education.⁸ In the UK, a corresponding improvement in turnout for elections among those with a higher level of education is evident as well.⁹

Clearly, in 2017, some effort has been made to address this 'decline into apathy' of young people with regards to participation in politics.¹⁰ According to the *Financial Times*, 'a youth-focused Labour campaign, through both official and unofficial channels, is partly responsible for the uptick in engagement among younger voters'.¹¹ However, similar campaigns in the 2017 general election in the Netherlands failed to improve youth turnout.¹² Specifically trying to engage young voters during an election campaign itself seems to be able to yield some success, but to enact a more fundamental change, a comprehensive approach is required.

A collaborative paper by the Council of Europe and the European Commission recommends several changes that would improve youth participation in politics, with an emphasis on connecting participation to empowerment and agency.¹³ In the Netherlands, schools that offer a higher level of education also offer more facilities to give students positive experiences with democracy, such as debates on society and involvement in decision-making, which result in higher levels of understanding and political participation.¹⁴

Positive experiences with democracy can also be stimulated by using simulations. A report by the Higher Education Academy recommends simulations as a way to offer a more engaging method to integrate substantive knowledge about a subject.¹⁵ Simulations are very good for exploring complicated political issues that contain many

8 Broer, T. & Pleij, S. (2016). 'Vernieuw de democratie! En snel!, Vrij Nederland.

9 Muthoo (op. cit.)

10 Ibid.

11 Burn-Murdoch (op. cit.)

12 Jasper Piersma, 'Jonge kiezer blijkt toch minder te gaan stemmen' (Het Parool, 16 March 2017).

13 Pleyers, G. & Karbach, N. (2014). 'Analytical paper on Youth Participation. What do we mean by "participation"?' Brussels: Council of Europe 2014, pp. 1-6.

14 Broer & Pleij (op. cit.)

15 Usherwood, S. (2015). *Simulations in Politics: a guide to best practice*, The Higher Education Academy, pp. 4-5.

dimensions and factors.¹⁶ By participating in simulations, students can develop a much finer appreciation of complex topics like politics than they would through more conventional approaches.¹⁷

Simulation, participation and empowerment can come together through involvement in youth forums or councils. According to the Local Government Group, this type of public participation also addresses concerns regarding a 'crisis of legitimacy' for government.¹⁸ Organisations such as the UK Youth Parliament, local youth councils and young mayors, but also European youth parliaments (EYP) and Model United Nations (MUN), can strengthen legitimacy for decision-makers and demonstrate accountability to young people.¹⁹ Beyond improving legitimacy and accountability, the involvement of youth councillors in public decision-making improved the quality of youth services and/or saved the local council money.²⁰

Taking into account such research, youth participation in politics could be improved by increasing civic education and offering more opportunities to experience democracy through simulations and real empowerment. A three-pronged approach that integrates schools, civil society, and government could achieve the desired results.

The first prong consists of expanding the citizenship education that is currently part of the UK national curriculum in Key Stages 1 to 4. Adding political simulations to this programme would give students the opportunity to actively develop an understanding of citizenship, politics and democracy. This programme should also be adopted as a compulsory course in sixth-form colleges, further education courses and undergraduate higher education courses.

The second prong involves close cooperation between schools and organised simulation organisations such as EYP and MUN, which should liaise with a central coordination

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Local Government Group (2011). *Valuing young voices, strengthening democracy the contribution made by youth engagement*, pp. 12-15.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.



The judges listen to Imran's pitch

body, to ensure there are no geographic or socio-economic barriers to participation. As the British Youth Council (BYC) already runs a number of democratic youth-led networks,²¹ including the UK Youth Parliament, the Young Mayor Network, and the Local Youth Council Network, the BYC should be given the opportunity, authority and funding to expand these networks.

The third prong is a legislative push to establish youth councils at all municipal and national levels of government. This will create representative institutions for young people and strengthen the link between chosen representatives and young people.²² An important aspect of this is true empowerment, using youth representation to influence policy outcomes.²³ The youth councils should therefore receive statutory powers to advise government at set times during the year on set topics, and receive a reasoned reply within an appropriate term.

By combining education, simulation and real influence in this manner, youth participation in politics can be improved, and thus democracy strengthened.

²¹ British Youth Council (2016). *Annual review 2015/16: young voices stronger together*.

²² Pleviers & Karbach (op. cit.), pp. 1-6.

²³ Ibid.



Emma Wynne-Bannister (l) and Sarah Williams (r)

5 | **Non-custodial community programmes for non-violent female criminals in the UK**

Sarah Williams and Emma Wynne-Bannister are both studying for an MSc in Global Health and Social Justice in the Department of Global Health & Social Medicine at King's College London.

5 | Non-custodial community programs for non-violent female criminals in the UK

In the UK, approximately 9,000 women are imprisoned each year for non-violent crimes such as shoplifting, parking violations and non-payment of a TV licence. This includes around 5,000 women who are remanded in custody before being given a non-custodial sentence.¹ A typical confinement is six months or less, a paradoxical situation in which these women are imprisoned just long enough for benefits to cease, but insufficient time to secure alternatives (the rate of official homelessness on discharge from prison sits at almost 40 per cent). As a result, many of these women get caught in a cycle of re-offending and re-imprisonment – a cycle that is costing the UK economy approximately £200 million each year.²

More than half of women in contact with the UK criminal justice system are victims themselves, with backgrounds that include sexual abuse and domestic violence. Around 60 per cent have a drug habit, including alcohol misuse, and almost all have poor mental health.³ It is estimated that up to two thirds are mothers, most of whom have lone parent responsibility. Of the 17,000 children separated from their mothers each year, only 5 per cent remain in the family residence. More than 16,000 children are separated from both their primary caregiver and their home. Moreover, nearly two thirds of boys who have a parent in prison will go

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- 1 Ministry of Justice (2016). 'Statistics on Women and the Criminal Justice System 2015'. https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/572043/women-and-the-criminal-justice-system-statistics-2015.pdf
 - 2 Prison Reform Trust (2016). *Bromley Briefings: Prison Factfile Autumn 2016*. <http://www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/Publications/Factfile>
 - 3 Prison Reform Trust (2011). *Reforming Women's Justice: Final Report of the Women's Justice Taskforce*. <http://www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/Portals/0/Documents/Women's%20Justice%20Taskforce%20Report.pdf>

on to commit some kind of crime themselves – perpetuating the negative cycle across genders and generations.⁴

Most worrying are female prisoner self-harm statistics. Despite comprising only 5 per cent of the total prison population, women account for a quarter of all self-harm injuries. In the period from January 2015 to December 2016 there were 22 female prison suicides, a huge increase from the previous record of eight in a year.⁵

But the situation does not need to be this way. Instead of sending these women to prison, the UK could adopt a policy of imposing community service and support sentences instead. These sentences would be delivered through local women's centres, and would entail the women undertaking community service as a punitive measure, but also receiving mandatory counselling and psychological support. In addition, they would receive compulsory training, education and the opportunity to convert a criminal record into a broader CV and official references, increasing the likelihood of gaining secure employment on completion of the programme.

This government-driven policy would harness and develop the services already provided by non-governmental organisations, the NHS, local councils and the criminal justice system. The £40,000 per year it costs to keep each of these women imprisoned would be diverted to provide secure, dedicated funding for these centres, with the possibility of governmental savings as the programmes are almost a tenth of the cost per person according to the Ministry of Justice's figures from 2016.⁶ Furthermore, the savings could be reinvested to increase the number of women's centres across the UK and potentially broaden the scope of the service offered, to support prevention of offending.

4 Social Care Institute for Excellence (2008) *Children's and families resource guide 11: Children of prisoners – maintaining family ties*, SCIE: London, and Murray, J. & Farrington, D. (2005). 'Parental Imprisonment: Effects on Boys' Antisocial Behaviour and Delinquency through the Life-Course', *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 46:1269-78.

5 Prison Reform Trust (2017). *Why focus on reducing women's imprisonment?* <http://www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/Portals/0/Documents/why%20focus%20on%20reducing%20women's%20imprisonment%20BL.pdf>

6 Ministry of Justice (2016) 'Costs per place and costs per prisoner – National Offender Management Service annual report and accounts 2015-16 management information addendum'.

Coordinated services would allow improved outcome evaluation, along with research into funding models such as social impact bonds (whereby the centres are funded on a payment-by-results basis). There is evidence to show that this policy model reduces re-offending and improves the social return – not least by keeping families together.⁷ Women account for only 5 per cent of the prison population, so addressing their needs first can serve as a pilot study with the long-term potential for roll-out to male, non-violent criminals.

The United Nations recognised the need to seek alternatives to imprisonment over a decade ago, citing an example where a move to more non-custodial sentences in Kazakhstan led to a reduction in the overall crime rate.⁸ The Nordic countries have also adopted more socially inclusive penal methods, outside of prisons, that have significantly reduced recidivism.⁹ It is time for the UK to follow suit and adopt a cheaper alternative that reduces re-offending, improves health and wellbeing, and ends the negative social cycle for families, wider society and future generations.

7 Social Finance Organisation (2015). *Social Finance Case Studies: Peterborough Prison Social Impact Bond*. www.socialfinance.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Case-Studies.pdf

8 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2007). *Handbook of basic principles and promising practices on Alternatives to Imprisonment*. www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/crimeprevention/Handbook_of_basic_principles_and_promising_practices_on_Alternatives_to_Imprisonment.pdf

9 Kristofferson, R. (2010) 'Relapse study in the correctional services of the Nordic countries' *EuroVista*, Vol 2. No. 3, pp. 169-76.

A REFORMATION OF REFORMATION:

From custodial sentences to community service and care for women who commit non-violent crimes in the U.K.



Emma and Sarah on stage with Mark Easton

Guardian columnist Polly Toynbee gives her feedback on the pitch





From l-r: Oliver Marks, Katie-Louise Marvin, Emma Shleifer and Paul Ng



The finalists on stage before their presentation

6 | The fight against homelessness

Oliver Marks, Katie-Louise Marvin, Paul Ng and Emma Shleifer

Oliver Marks, Katie-Louise Marvin, Paul Ng and Emma Shleifer are all in their first year studying for a BA in War Studies in the Department of War Studies at King's College London.

6 | The fight against homelessness

Homelessness is around us all the time yet we barely notice it. Many of us prefer to put the problem down as something out of our control. It is time we face the facts: homelessness is getting worse. Since 2010, it has increased by over 30 per cent nationwide.¹ This is largely due to increased housing costs forcing more people onto the streets, and inefficient management of the issue.²

Rough sleepers face gargantuan problems. The traumas of living on the streets and resulting health problems combine to reduce an individual's average lifespan to a mere 47 years, in a country where people usually live to 81.³ The average homeless person is four times more likely to attend A&E every year, costing the NHS nearly £85 million annually.⁴

Government policy since 2010 has been flawed. £500 million has been invested in homelessness aid since then, yet frontline care services have reported seeing real funding halved.⁵ ⁶ While correlation does not imply causation, the fact that homelessness has more than doubled in the same period is arguably an indictment of current policy. Policy leans heavily on the charitable sector, and while this is certainly valuable,

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- 1 New Policy Institute (2017). 'Is Poverty In The UK In 2016 Caused By Employment, Habit Or Circumstance?', p. 7. <http://www.npi.org.uk/blog/income-and-poverty/poverty-uk-2016-caused-by-employment-habit-or-circumstance/>
 - 2 Shelter England (2017). 'Eviction Of Private Tenants'. Web. 8 January 2017.
 - 3 Vivat, B., Kennedy, P., Daley, J., Hewett, N., Low, J., Stone, P., Riley, J. & Shulman, C. 2016. *What Do Previously Homeless People In London, UK, Think About Advance Care Planning (ACP) And End Of Life Care (EOLC)? A Qualitative Investigation*. Ebook. 1st ed. 9th World Research Congress of the European Association for Palliative Care.
 - 4 Homeless Link (2017). 'Homelessness And Health Research', p. 8. <http://www.homeless.org.uk/facts/our-research/homelessness-and-health-research>
 - 5 Richardson, H. (2016). 'More than 250,000 are homeless in England - Shelter', BBC News. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-38157410>
 - 6 Foster, D. (2016). 'Rough sleeping in England is soaring. It's a scandal – but we can fix it', *The Guardian*, 21 December 2016. <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2016/dec/21/homelessness-england-rising-scandal-rough-sleeping>

the government ultimately has the responsibility to aid such individuals alongside charity. Without effective and appropriately directed funding, it cannot hope to fulfil this responsibility. A great deal has been invested in the problem, but it is not going where it is needed. As homelessness looks set to grow in the coming years, as the government continually cuts funding, relief services will come under greater pressure and be less able to aid those at risk of homelessness. The economic pressures of Brexit will inevitably take their toll on those at risk of homelessness, and it will become vital to take substantial preventative measures to head off an untenable situation. Efficient, timely redirection of funding is needed to avert a crisis.

There is equally a distinct lack of policy direction for dealing with homelessness in government strategy. There are no real policies in place to aid single men (aged 26 to 65) on the streets, despite them accounting for the largest single group of homeless individuals, at 79 per cent.⁷ Even within government there is an awareness of the need for change. Clive Betts, then chair of the Communities and Local Government Select Committee, stated in 2015 that, 'The scale of homelessness is now such that a renewed Government strategy is a must.' Yet since then little effort has been made to adequately rethink policy.⁸ Recent bills have met little progress, largely because they are attempting to impose a strategy we know has failed onto a system that is facing increasing challenges. Clearly we need to redirect funds and adapt existing structures towards a new, needs-based system.

Housing and work alone do not solve homelessness. Measures should be adapted to the individual as much as possible. Tailoring them to the three most prevalent groups among the homeless population would be a step in the right direction. In the first group, physically and mentally healthy

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- 7 Trust for London (2017). 'Homelessness | Poverty Indicators | London's Poverty Report'. http://www.londonpovertyprofile.org.uk/indicators/topics/homelessness/?gclid=Cj0KEQiAwMLDBRDCh_r9SmvQ_88BEiQA6zuAQ0uk3C7oNfGFueNZULBIARqSHp6K_moiFKiQQEqNWwlaAr3s8P8HAQ
- 8 House of Commons Communities and Local Government Select Committee (2016). 'Government must renew strategy for tackling homelessness, say MPs', 18 August 2016. <https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/communities-and-local-government-committee/news-parliament-2015/homelessness-report-published-16-17/>

individuals who are ‘simply’ out of work would benefit from the following approaches:

1. Simplifying the procedure to gain access to existing government-provided benefit schemes, as current systems require excessively complex paperwork.
2. Vocational training through an apprenticeship structure.
3. Government-sponsored monthly pensions issued partly in the form of housing credit, with the remaining amount providing manageable basic income structure.
4. Preference matching: matching current market demands to a person’s skills. For instance, skilled trades currently have vacancy rates of 43 per cent.⁹

Individuals suffering from physical and/or mental health issues, and those suffering from substance abuse issues, are the second and third groups of people suffering from homelessness, accounting for 80 per cent and 39 per cent of the UK homeless population respectively, as individuals often suffer from more than one health problem.¹⁰ People in these two groups would benefit from being placed under medical care in existing facilities, or, if they are willing and it is medically appropriate to do so, placed in a household as part of a system adapted from the current foster-care system.

However, such a needs-based approach requires decentralised authority in order to be carried out at the local level. While the governmental policy outlined above would be the guideline, finer implementation details would be carried out at the city-council level. Funds to support this policy would be redirected from current, ineffective homelessness policies.

Homelessness creates highly stigmatised and marginalised individuals. Learning from recent successful case studies such as Alberta, Canada, where homelessness is successfully

9 UK Commission for Employment and Skills (2016). ‘Employer Skills Survey 2015’, 1st ed. London, p. 48.

10 Homeless Link (2017). ‘Homelessness And Health Research’. <http://www.homeless.org.uk/facts/our-research/homelessness-and-health-research>



Paul Ng takes his turn to try and convince the judges

declining after implementing a programme of housing and targeted support,¹¹ the UK has a unique chance to mitigate the worsening problem of homelessness rather than manage it with unsuccessful shelter systems. In this fight, needs-based social reintegration is key. It is about time we tackle homelessness head-on, solving rather than managing.

11 Burns, K. K. & Richter, S. (2011). 'Alberta's Urban Homelessness Research Capacities: A Comprehensive Environmental Scan from 1990 to 2010', *Canadian Journal of Urban Research*, Winnipeg 20.2, pp. 71-90.

Carlyn Greenfield (l) and Carina Uchida (r)



7 | Life on the margins: Undocumented immigrant abuse in the US

Carlyn Greenfield and Carina Uchida

Carlyn Greenfield and Carina Uchida are both in their second year studying for a BA in International Relations in the Department of War Studies at King's College London.

7 | Life on the margins: Undocumented immigrant abuse in the US

Undocumented immigration has been a focal point of the Trump administration's policies and a hot topic in the recent presidential election. In the United States, undocumented immigrants have no right to work, to legal representation or to appeal deportation. These limitations lead them to become vulnerable to forms of exploitation, such as human trafficking, as they easily fall under the radar and are silenced through their legal status.

It is estimated that approximately 14,500 to 17,500 people are trafficked every year into the United States,¹ although in reality this figure may be higher due to limitations in the data gathering. Their abuse, whether legally, financially or mentally, is easily masked due to the inability of undocumented immigrants to report to authorities. The American economy runs on undocumented work, and this clear violation of human rights can no longer stand.²

At the federal level, there are systems in place to assist victims of human trafficking, namely the T-visa. The 'T' non-immigrant status was created through the passing of the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act (VTVPA) in 2000, making 5,000 T-visas available to victims every year.³ The T-Visa gives undocumented immigrants temporary US citizenship, for four years, leading to permanent resident status.⁴ Between 2002 and

1 The Human Smuggling and Trafficking Centre (2006). 'Fact Sheet: Distinctions between Human Smuggling and Human Trafficking', United States Government, p. 2.

2 United Nations Human Rights Commission (2014). 'Human Rights and Human Trafficking', United Nations, Fact Sheet no. 36, p. 5. http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/FS36_en.pdf

3 US Citizenship and Immigration Services (2011). 'Victims of Human Trafficking: T Nonimmigrant Status', Department of Homeland Security, 3 October 2011, <https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/victims-human-trafficking-other-crimes/victims-human-trafficking-t-nonimmigrant-status>

4 Ibid.

2016, however, only 9,964 visas had been given out, well below the 70,000 available during that period. The low volume of visas awarded could be partially attributed to how stringent the visa process is: the visa requires a high level of documentation, requires the victim to be willing to testify against the trafficker, and victims are not allowed to work while the visa is being processed – which can take over a year. This creates a situation where a victim who has few resources or is extremely intimidated by their trafficker may be unwilling to come forward. Furthermore, the scope of crimes considered when determining eligibility for a T-visa are extremely limited and specific – for example, requiring proof of force, fraud and coercion.

Considering all of this, reforms to the current T-visa system are needed. In Canada, the requirement for victims of human trafficking to be willing to testify against their trafficker was removed, which led to more victims coming forward.⁵ Given the low number of applications, it is crucial that the T-visa is made more widely available: this would mean synchronisation between government websites so all necessary information is concise and clear, and ensuring information is available in other languages such as Spanish. (The two primary countries of origin for human trafficking are Mexico and the Philippines, with those with limited English abilities being especially at risk.⁶) Finally, the scope of abuse considered to determine eligibility for a T-visa should be broadened. Wage theft, while common and may constitute involuntary servitude, is difficult to prove under the current requirements.

This is highlighted through the story of Nicky Diaz Santillan, an undocumented immigrant and maid of former Ebay CEO Meg Whitman. Santillan sued Whitman for ‘exploitation, emotional and financial abuse’,⁷ however, since it is not covered under trafficking laws, Santillan,

5 Government of Canada (2012). ‘National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking’, Public Safety Canada, 3 December 2012. <https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrcs/pblctns/ntnl-ctn-pln-cmbt/index-en.aspx#toc-02.1>

6 United States Department of State (2016). ‘Trafficking in Persons Report’, June 2016, p. 388, <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/258876.pdf>

7 Montopoli, B. (2010). ‘Meg Whitman Housekeeper Nicky Diaz Santillan Claims Mistreatment, Unfair Termination’, CBS News, 29 September 2010. <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/meg-whitman-housekeeper-nicky-diaz-santillan-claims-mistreatment-unfair-termination/>

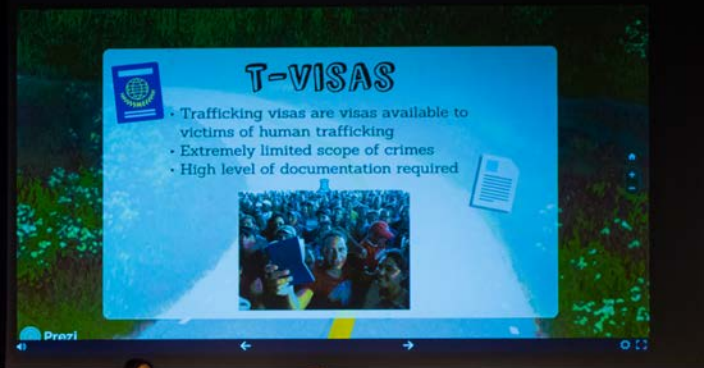
as an undocumented worker, was powerless to get out of the situation until it received media attention. The current scope of crimes affects individuals in vulnerable contexts, which should not be tolerated. Despite mass media allegations for and against Santillan, it is clear that undocumented immigrants who are victims of human trafficking have lesser access to legal representation, a precarious condition in proportion to incidence rates.

At the local level, state governments can support T-visa applicants through stipends, food banks, and shelters, as applicants cannot work while the visa is being processed. Programmes set up in sanctuary cities could be a model for these. They are cities and states that have laws limiting the amount local police can cooperate with the federal government in relation to immigration. These protect undocumented immigrants from being detained and deported, as they are less likely to be handed to Immigration Customs Enforcement (ICE). Additionally, local governments should look to reach out to their constituents, making them aware of the T-visa programme and helping to boost the number of victims applying.⁸

A ground-level initiative is essential to ensure that T-visas are accessible to those in need. As such, civil society initiatives should be encouraged in the form of community gatherings in public spaces such as schools, churches and community centres. These meetings should be informal events that allow those who feel marginalised in society to reintegrate and receive adequate information regarding the T-visa application process and any form of support necessary. These meetings will be crucial in closing the data gap on the experiences of victims and undocumented immigrants in general, by collecting individual experiences and crucial information. Consequently, they can be used for future long-term policymaking without excluding the individual experiences of human trafficking.

The balance between top-down and bottom-up solutions is the only way to ensure that the complexities of human trafficking are dealt with both structurally and personally.

8 Department of State (2016). 'Trafficking in Persons Report', June 2016, p. 388. <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/258876.pdf>



Carina and Carlyn try to impress the judges and audience

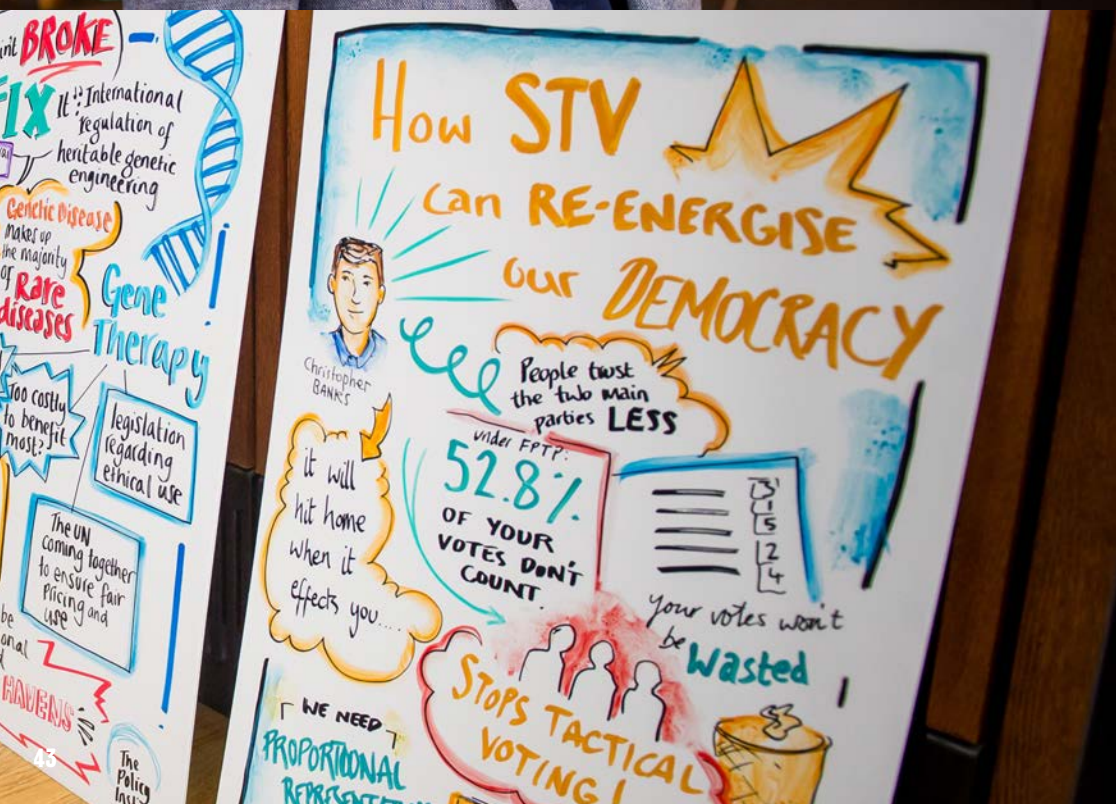
Changing the conversation around human trafficking is key to reducing the stigma surrounding the issue. Despite human trafficking being commonly associated with sex trafficking, a San Diego University study showed that 31 per cent of undocumented immigrants were or are victims of labour trafficking.⁹ There is a need to change the focus towards victims of labour trafficking, which by definition is modern slavery.¹⁰

Human trafficking, in whatever form, is a severe violation of human rights and should not be normalised in a developed country such as the United States. Current policies are not sufficient to provide safety to the high number of victims currently being trafficked. By reforming all levels of policy, the United States can bring security to more undocumented immigrants who are marginalised and vulnerable.

9 Zhang, SX., (2012) 'Looking for a Hidden Population: Trafficking of Migrant Laborers in San Diego County', United States Department of Justice, pp. 1-154.

10 US Department of State (2017). 'What is Modern Slavery', United States Government. <https://www.state.gov/j/tip/what/>

LLB student
Christopher Banks



8 | How the single transferable vote can re-energise our democracy

Christopher Banks

Christopher Banks is in his second year studying for an LLB in Politics, Philosophy and Law in the Dickson Poon School of Law at King's College London.

8 | How the single transferable vote can re-energise our democracy

If the electoral nosebleeds delivered to establishment politicians in 2016 and 2017 taught us anything, it was that people are fed up with being ignored and taken for granted by their elected representatives. Yet when the UK next goes to the polls, it will do so using an electoral system that leads to both – the first-past-the-post (FPTP) electoral system, which divides the UK into 650 similarly sized constituencies and elects, by plurality, one MP from each.

One of the big stories of the 2015 UK general election, aside from the unexpected Conservative majority, was the surge of the Scottish National Party (SNP). Remarkably, the party managed to surge from a base of six seats to take 56 of the 59 available in Scotland. However, in order to win 95 per cent of Scotland's parliamentary seats the SNP needed just 50 per cent of the total vote.¹ This represents nearly 9 per cent of the total seats in parliament from just under 5 per cent of the total vote. UKIP on the other hand ran a campaign more widely spread across all parts of the UK, and greatly exceeded the total number of votes of the SNP. They received nearly 13 per cent of votes cast nationally, but were rewarded with just a single seat. If we look at electoral systems as a method of translating voter opinion into parliamentary representation, a scenario where the SNP can win just over a third of the total votes of UKIP but walk away with 56 times the number of seats appears perverse.

Aside from these numerical inconsistencies, the FPTP system generally tends to favour larger political parties that benefit from a greater national vote – in the 2015 general election, the Conservative Party won a parliamentary

1 BBC (2015). 'Election 2015: Results'. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/election/2015/results> (accessed 23.04.17).

majority on just under 37 per cent of the total vote.² Proponents of FPTP see this as a benefit of the system. By favouring larger parties, the system is more likely to deliver a single-party majority government that supporters of FPTP argue provides stable governance. This, though, has become a convenient excuse for large parties losing support, as FPTP naturally favours a two-party system.³ This was appropriate in 1951, when the Conservative and Labour Parties held a combined share of almost 97 per cent of the vote.⁴ Fast forward to 2015, where voters have begun to seek alternatives outside of the UK's traditional political dichotomy, the two main parties of British politics only won approximately 67 per cent of the vote between them,⁵ but retained nearly 87 per cent of the seats combined.⁶ This is due to the nature of an electoral system that requires parties to win a plurality in small individual seats. It is therefore difficult for parties with a smaller average national vote to gain sufficient support to obtain a plurality in individual constituencies. The 2017 election saw the emergence of campaigns such as Tactical2017,⁷ which encouraged voters to cast their vote tactically in order to co-ordinate efforts against the Conservative Party in particular. A deeply polarised election saw the combined vote share of the major parties jump to 82.3 per cent.⁸ Yet far from being a victory for FPTP, the election still provided an artificial numerical boost to the Conservative Party, this time, however, failing to provide the country with a majority government. Proponents of FPTP have often cited its ability to produce stable majority governments as one of its strengths. Given that two of the last three elections have now produced hung parliaments but have continued to produce disproportionate numerical outcomes, such a defence appears weakened.

2 Ibid.

3 Duverger, M. (1972). 'Duverger's Law: Party Politics and Pressure Groups', New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, pp. 23-32.

4 BBC (1997). Politics 97: 1951 Election Result. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/special/politics97/background/pastelec/ge51.shtml> (accessed 23.04.17).

5 BBC (2015).

6 Ibid.

7 Tactical2017, 'Unite against the Tories'. <https://www.tactical2017.com/> (accessed 19.07.17).

8 BBC (2017). 'Results of the 2017 General Election'. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/election/2017/results> (accessed: 19.07.17).

A new system is needed that reflects the nation's choices better and encompasses the views of more individual voters than is currently the case. The single transferable vote (STV) uses larger, multi-member constituencies usually consisting of three or four members. Multi-member constituencies allow parties to stand multiple candidates. The enlargement of constituencies makes battles more competitive, as parties previously unable to win a plurality in a small area, can compete for one of the three or four seats in the larger constituency.

Voters rank the candidates on the ballot paper in order of preference, marking 1, 2, 3, etc, next to their choices. In order to be elected, a candidate must reach the 'quota' which is calculated according to the formula below:

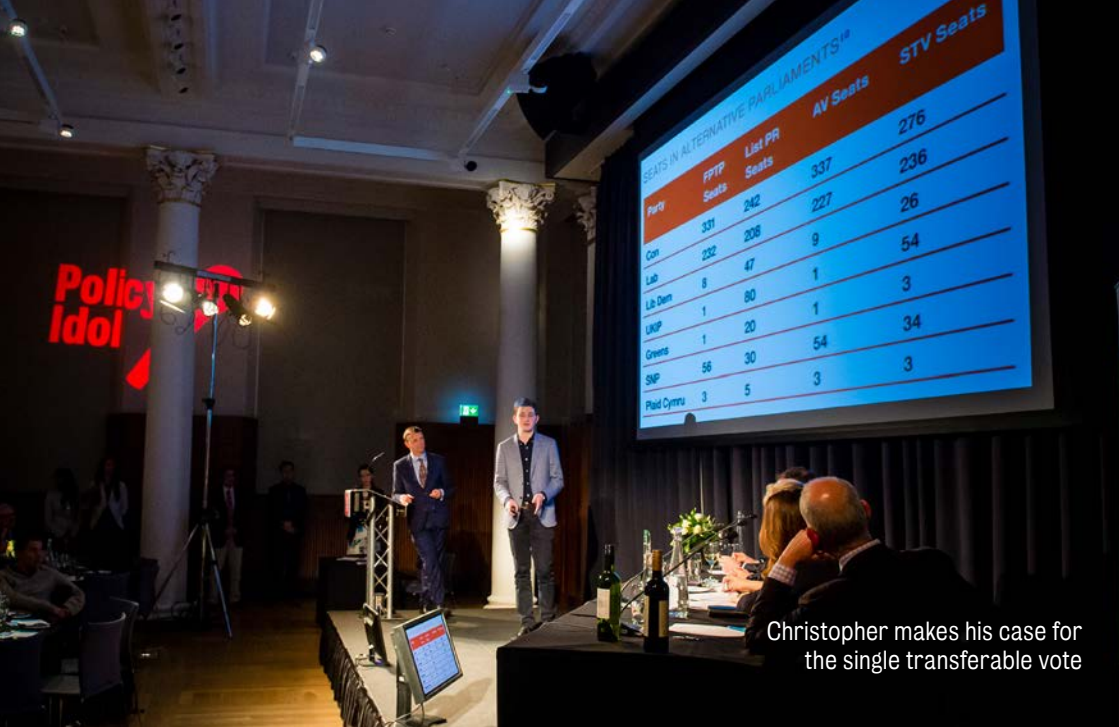
$$\frac{\text{Total number of valid ballot papers}}{\text{Number of seats available} + 1}$$

Vote distribution starts with distribution of the first preferences. Any candidate above the quota wins a seat, and their surplus votes are distributed according to the second preferences of the surplus voters. If no candidate is above the winning quota, the candidate with the least number of votes is eliminated and their second preference votes are distributed to other candidates. This process continues until all seats have been won.⁹ This allows voters who vote for parties that are not elected to have their vote transferred to their second preference.

Evidence from Ireland, which uses STV as its electoral system, suggests that the accuracy of seat distribution compared to total votes cast is considerably better.¹⁰ In addition to this, the counting system gives voters a considerably more flexible choice, whereby current calls

9 The Electoral Reform Society (2017). 'What is STV?' <https://www.electoral-reform.org.uk/sites/default/files/What-is-STV.pdf> (accessed 23.04.17).

10 Irish Times (2016). 'Election 2016: Results Hub'. <http://www.irishtimes.com/election-2016/results-hub> (accessed 23.04.17).



Christopher makes his case for the single transferable vote

for tactical voting and progressive alliances would not be necessary.^{11 12}

Government at the highest level should be fundamentally about representing the concerns of the wider electorate. In a democracy where even the heavyweight parties of politics are made to work for every seat, voters can be assured that their specific concerns will not be overlooked. The UK needs a 21st-century voting system for 21st-century politics. STV can reflect the new dynamism and variation in our choices, while contradicting the adage that voting is a waste of time – incentivising the voter to make their voice heard.

- 11 Stone, J. (2017). 'Green Party calls for talks with Labour and Lib Dem leaderships over anti-Tory alliance'. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/progressive-alliance-greens-labour-lib-dems-anti-tory-pact-a7689986.html> (accessed 23.04/17).
- 12 Bowler, S. & Grofman, B. (2000). 'Introduction: STV as an Embedded Institution', pp. 1-14, in Bowler, S. & Grofman, B. (eds) *Elections in Australia, Ireland, and Malta under the Single Transferable Vote*, Michigan University Press.



9 | 'If it isn't broken, don't fix it': The international regulation of heritable genetic engineering

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9 | 'If it isn't broken, don't fix it': The international regulation of heritable genetic engineering

Genetic disease makes up the majority of rare diseases.¹ There are 7,000 different rare diseases, and most have no known cure. Three quarters of them affect children, 30 per cent of whom do not live long enough to celebrate their fifth birthday.² That's 350 million people worldwide.

Cost-efficient techniques to make precise changes to the human gene have been a longstanding goal of biomedical research due to their application in gene therapy and the replacement of defective genes. Enter CRISPR (clustered regularly interspaced short palindromic repeats), which act as a pair of 'molecular scissors' that can detect, accurately cut and then destroy defective DNA that causes rare diseases.³ This technology has opened up a plethora of possibilities that did not exist before.

However, there are particular ethical and technical barriers that mar the development of this technology. For example, some fear that, ethically, this is a slippery slope to 'designer babies'.⁴ This is especially true where genes are modified in the sex cells (germline editing), as this creates permanent changes in the genetic make-up of future generations. Critics argue that allowing the modification of the human germline to eliminate heritable rare diseases will blow the door wide open to eugenics,⁵ but others argue this isn't the case.⁶

1 Rare Disease UK (2016). 'What is A Rare Disease?'. <http://www.raredisease.org.uk/what-is-a-rare-disease/> (accessed 21.01.17).

2 Global Genes (2015). 'RARE Diseases: Facts and Statistics'. <https://globalgenes.org/rare-diseases-facts-statistics/> (accessed 21.01.17).

3 Doudna, J. (2015). 'We Can Now Edit Our DNA, but Let's Do It Wisely', TED. www.ted.com/talks/jennifer_doudna_we_can_now_edit_our_dna_but_let_s_do_it_wisely (accessed 15.03.17).

4 Knoepfler, P. (2015). 'The Ethical Dilemma of Designer Babies', TED. www.ted.com/talks/paul_knoepfler_the_ethical_dilemma_of_designer_babies (accessed 15.03.17).

5 Pollack, R. (2015). 'Eugenics Lurk in The Shadow of CRISPR', *Science*, Vol. 348, Issue 6237.

6 Launis, V. (2002). 'Human Gene Therapy and The Slippery Slope Argument', *Medicine, Health Care and Philosophy*, Vol. 5, Issue 2, pp 169–179.

A significant technical barrier is that pharmaceutical companies lack financial incentives to research rare disease, and treatment solutions are often not cost-effective – as was highlighted at this year’s World Economic Forum.⁷ There are also patent and licensing complexities. For example, the ongoing legal battle for patent interference surrounding the CRISPR technology in the US may impact upon licensing, which in turn may hinder new research and access to this technology.⁸

And CRISPR, while being the best we currently have, is not perfect. It can confuse similar gene sequences and make ‘off-target’ cuts that can lead to the activation of harmful genes or the suppression of useful genes.⁹ Further refinement of CRISPR is necessary.

An international body is needed to oversee and regulate the use of CRISPR for germline editing. This could be under the auspices of the Nagoya Protocol of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity – and specifically the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization (ABS). By bringing international stakeholders together, including pharmaceutical companies, scientists, technology companies and advocacy groups, the body could fulfil a useful role in defining guidelines – akin to the publication of guidelines in relation to stem cells by the International Society for Stem Cell Research.

The body could also consider whether moratoriums on specific areas of research (eg those involving human embryos) are needed and can help raise important issues to do with value-based pricing, to drive economic competition and innovation.

7 Ornskov, F. (2017). ‘The Future of Treating Rare Diseases’, World Economic Forum, 12 January 2017. <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2017/01/the-future-of-treating-rare-diseases/> (accessed 20.03.17).

8 Grens, K. (2016). ‘That Other CRISPR Patent Dispute’, *The Scientist*, 31 August 2016. www.the-scientist.com/?articles.view/articleNo/46921/title/That-Other-CRISPR-Patent-Dispute/ (accessed 28 December 2016).

9 Begley, S. (2016). ‘Do CRISPR Enthusiasts Have Their Head in The Sand About the Safety of Gene Editing?’, *STAT*, 18 July 2016. www.statnews.com/2016/07/18/crispr-off-target-effects/ (accessed 16 December 2016).

Millions have suffered while we wait for a cure for thousands of rare genetic diseases. CRISPR is the closest that science has come to a viable solution. It is time the world comes together to govern this process.



Policy Idol 2017



Jeevitha presents
her policy idea

"If it aint **BROKE**
dont **FIX** It"

Jeevitha Thurai Rathnam

International
regulation of
heritable genetic
engineering

Genetic Disease
makes up
the majority
of

**Rare
Diseases**

**Gene
Therapy**



Martin Leach (l) and
Matt Lewis (r)

Martin and Matt make
their case to the judges



10 | The imperative for philosophy at Key Stage 2

Martin Leach and Matt Lewis

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10 | The imperative for philosophy at Key Stage 2

In an era now dominated by ‘fake news’, ‘alternative facts’ and ‘post-truths’, the need for critical thinking has never been greater. A proliferation of digital information has transformed online media into a contested and confused space. For 30 years we have complacently believed in the irreversible progress of liberal democracy. Francis Fukuyama had confidently foretold of the ‘End of History’, of social reform fuelled by pervasive information and the power of the internet. But we were wrong. There was a powerful corresponding trend of Brexit buses, ‘Breaking Point’ posters, and the Bowling Green ‘massacre’. Strategic and progressive thought has become marginalised. To be ‘an expert’ is to be denigrated and to be ‘liberal’ is now a pejorative term. Polarity and radicalisation pervade where there was once an aspiration for tolerance and cosmopolitanism.

However, in 2017, public information is still being interpreted through educational conventions inherited from the 20th century. With 91 per cent of Key Stage 2 (KS2) children having access to web-enabled devices,¹ and with an increasing number turning to popular and unregulated information sources, our digital natives remain ill-prepared to discern qualitative integrity amid the quantitative mass of data they consume. A number of disparate initiatives have attempted to respond to this changing environment, but typically they too readily shoehorn children’s intrinsic critical thinking into a series of contested binaries: of good and evil, authentic and inauthentic, and true and false. These certainly do not comprise a coherent strategic response, and indeed are the

1 OFCOM (2015). ‘Children and parents: media use and attitudes report’, pp. 6-12. https://www.ofcom.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0024/78513/childrens_parents_nov2015.pdf

very binaries populist movements have proved so effective at systematically undermining.

Introducing the teaching of epistemology – the study of what is knowledge, how it is acquired, and whether it is objectively credible – as a KS2 foundation subject of the national curriculum would instead implant the critical interrogation of our sources of ‘knowledge’ at the heart of 21st century schooling. To rely on Years 7-13 to foster a child’s inquiry is also too late: biases and prejudices are already confirmed. Instead, the opportunity arises to develop thinking skills that can underpin the fundamentals of citizenship taught as a foundation subject at KS3 and KS4.

As lives increasingly transcend national boundaries, young adults must increasingly learn to collaborate with others of diverse cultural origins and appreciate different ideas. The requirement for a strategic response has been internationally recognised by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and we are a year from the inaugural Programme for International Student Assessment of how our schools prepare students to deal with the new digital environment. Epistemology provides the basis for what the OECD Director of Education, Andreas Schleicher, has described as the development of ‘global competencies’.²

A small but important study, independently published by Durham University in 2015, has shown what can be achieved with this policy.³ A randomised controlled trial in 48 primary schools compared more than 1,500 pupils who took philosophy lessons over the course of a year with a further 1,500 who did not, but then took the lessons the following year. The main emphasis of the intervention was to allow pupils to think and ask questions, but also to make critical assessments of the assumptions that lie behind the answers and the criteria used to make judgements.

2 OECD (2016). ‘Global competency for an inclusive world’. <https://www.oecd.org/education/Global-competency-for-an-inclusive-world.pdf>

3 Gerard, S., Siddiqui, N. & See, H. (2015). ‘Philosophy for Children: Evaluation report’, Durham University. http://teachingphilosophy-flsp.org/images/philosophy-in-the-world/Philosophy_for_Children.pdf

Children who had the philosophy lessons first showed a dramatic improvement in cognitive ability tests across mathematics, reading and writing, with those from disadvantaged backgrounds displaying the most pronounced progress. Pupils demonstrated an improving ability to think logically and critically, to voice their opinion, to use appropriate language in argumentation, and to listen to the views and opinions of others.

But it is the non-cognitive benefits observed that reach deeply into so many social issues of today. Feedback from teachers throughout the trial suggests that the philosophy sessions created an opportunity to engage with pupils and develop a whole school culture of thinking, listening, speaking and using logical arguments. Observed improvements in playground disagreements, respect for diversity and greater inclusivity, reversing the trends so often found in our increasingly atomised society.

No past generation has ever had access to so much information, so fast: this policy provides a basic cognitive framework for tackling extreme behaviour and threats against evidence-based discourse.



Matt discusses fake news and a post-truth world



Martin argues for the importance of philosophy



The Policy Idol final judges and host Mark Easton (centre).
From l-r: Dr Dan Poulter MP, Polly Toynbee, Professor
Jennifer Rubin and Professor Frans Berkhout

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