

Understanding Society

Economic crises, election victories, new challenges

December 2012



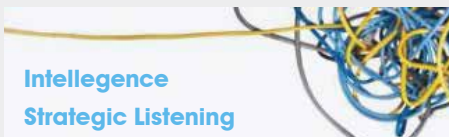
In brief

Do you need to know what senior public service managers think? Use our omnibus survey of public sector leaders to tap into the opinions of those managing change in the public sector.



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Intelligence, by Ipsos MORI, helps you to integrate social listening with your business and communications strategy. Bringing together social listening methods and our expert analysts, we help clients identify and understand the reputation issues affecting business success.



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Kings College London, one of the UK's premier research universities, and Ipsos MORI have formed a partnership to bring together researchers from both institutions to develop opportunities and enhance the impact of the work they both do.

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Foreword

Welcome to the latest international edition of the Ipsos MORI Social Research Institute's *Understanding Society*.

In this issue we bring together experts from the global Ipsos network to consider the period of change many nations have witnessed over the last few years, since the 2007/8 global economic crisis.

The economy is clearly an area where public opinion and confidence plays a vital role. Our new international polling data released in this publication indicates a division in global attitudes, with Europe (and to a lesser extent the USA) much more focused on economic uncertainty and unemployment than other regions. Most strikingly, large proportions of the population in many European countries believe they have seen a step change their country may never recover from.

In times of change and uncertainty, there is a temptation to “hunker down” as Robert Putnam, the distinguished US academic, calls it. That tendency is often seen in hardening attitudes towards immigration, and again our polling shows this is most marked in parts of Europe. We examine attitudes towards reintroducing border controls in the Schengen area of mainland Europe, something of a touchstone issue for “mistrust among citizens”.

These concerns on the economy, austerity, immigration and the changing global balance of power have all been themes at the ballot box this year. We present analysis of three elections on three continents – in the USA, France and Venezuela – reflecting the global diversity of Ipsos' election polling

expertise. Election polling as a discipline is undergoing a transformation and we discuss some of the implications for the democratic process.

We have also seen governments around the world wake up to more subtle ways of affecting societal change by applying lessons from behavioural economics and social psychology. Policy of any kind that takes insufficient account of how people actually behave (rather than what they say, or what we assume) is unlikely to have its full potential effect.

We are therefore delighted to include an interview with Dr David Halpern, Director of the Behavioural Insights Team in the UK Prime Minister's Office. The Behavioural Insights Team is one of the world's first dedicated government units set up to systematically apply these insights to policy-making. Dr Halpern discusses how the unit looks internationally for best practice and is increasingly working with governments and other bodies around the world.

The interview raises the broader point of the importance of testing the effectiveness of any government intervention, reflecting the concern about demonstrating impact and cost-effectiveness in austere times. Programme evaluation is a growing aspect of Ipsos' work, and in this edition, we take a particular look at Ipsos India's evaluation of a national flagship programme, The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, to achieve Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in the state.

Staying with international development, we outline our new global polling on attitudes to foreign aid spending. We

are at a crucial point for the future of international development policy and foreign aid. The MDGs end in 2015, and the planning for what comes next is underway. These discussions are happening in a very different context to when MDGs were first set-up. Many are increasingly worried, as Bill Gates puts it, about the “growing legion of critics” of aid spending. Our data, showing citizens' lack of knowledge and support, suggests they may be right to be concerned.

Finally, recent years have seen enormous technological advancement, including the explosion of social media and networking. New challenges have emerged and helping children, often heavy internet users, navigate the online world is just one of them, as outlined in our discussion of our work for the London School of Economics' EU Kids Online programme.

We hope you enjoy this update on public policy issues around the world. Ipsos MORI remains committed to sharing the messages from our research, in the belief that a better understanding of public opinion and behaviour will lead to better policy. If you would like to discuss any of the messages in this report, or wish to learn more, please get in touch.



Bobby Duffy

Managing Director
Ipsos MORI Social Research Institute

The economic crisis: five years on



Daniel Cameron



Gideon Skinner

It's beginning to feel like a long time since the global economic crisis began. After the subprime mortgage market collapsed in 2007 and banks came close to doing the same the following year, the worldwide downturn has run deeper and lasted longer than many people hoped. Those who predicted the recovery would be slow and painful have, so far, been proved right.

More recently, the economic indicators have shown some encouraging signs, with low levels of growth returning to all but the worst performing economies. Overall, the IMF currently forecasts that the world economy will grow by 3.3% in 2012, slightly below its prediction of 3.6% earlier this year¹. However, growth is still patchy, public debt remains high in many countries, and consumer demand is sluggish. The Euro area in particular is finding it hard to regain the confidence of the markets and is now officially in its second recession in the last three years². Using austerity to reduce public debt is controversial, with some – not least the IMF – warning about the risk that this approach could hinder wider economic recovery³.

Meanwhile the pace of growth in previously robust emerging economies has begun to slow too – another sign that we are a long way from getting through this crisis. The UN expects that growth in Argentina and Brazil during 2012 will be lower than previously predicted because of the weak global economy⁴. Whether emerging economic superpower China can continue its rapid growth (9.9% on average over the last 35 years) is fiercely debated by economists, and is even the subject of a bet between the Economist newspaper and a Professor at Beijing Business School⁵.

If the economics continue to look challenging at best, the politics of the global recession have not been easy either. President Barack Obama won a second term in the US despite a backdrop of high unemployment and slow growth, but other incumbents facing the electorate in struggling economies have been much less successful. According to one think tank there seems to be an increasing tendency for electorates to vote not along ideological lines but 'to retain the incumbent government if things are going well and to replace them if things are going badly'⁶. Elections since

the recession began have largely borne this out, at least in Europe: Spain rejected its social democratic government in 2011, technocrats have been drafted in to steady the ship in Italy, and the French opted for a change of President earlier this year.

All of this means it is hardly surprising that coverage of the economy in Europe and the US continues to strike a pessimistic tone. Many warn that things will never be the same again, particularly in the established economies of the west. Some have even tried to argue capitalism itself is under threat. But what have the last five years been like for ordinary people across the world? Is it a global crisis or a regional one? And what do people think about the future prospects for their country? Do they feel they are now headed in the right direction, or are they expecting more economic gloom?

The Global @dvisor study, conducted regularly by Ipsos since 2007, allows us to track how public opinion across the world has shifted as the crisis unfolded. In its most recent World Economic Outlook, the IMF highlights that one of the brakes on growth is a general feeling of uncertainty. The report argues that:

“If uncertainty could be decreased, the recovery could well turn out to be stronger than currently forecast.”

The way business leaders and policy makers feel about the global economy will be vital for the recovery. But how citizens perceive the economic future for themselves and their country matters too. Without growing consumer confidence and increased consumer spending the recovery will, at the very least, continue to stutter. Five years on, how have citizen’s priorities and perceptions changed since

before the crisis? And how do they see the future for themselves, their children and their countries?

The first thing our Global @dvisor data highlights is how different the experience of the last five years has been in different regions and countries. While in some parts of the world people feel their country has suffered very badly, others are much more positive, even enthusiastic, about how things have gone. There is also a clear pattern as people consider the future. Citizens generally expect that their country’s fortunes will remain largely unchanged, whether they feel things have been good or bad since the economic crisis began. This is particularly the case when people look forward five years, but also as they consider whether their country will ever be the same again.

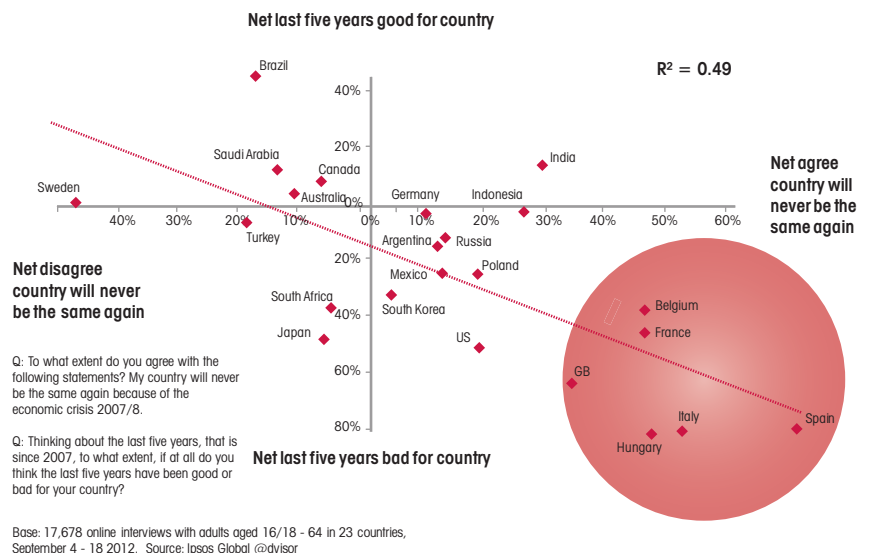
European countries are the most negative. Spain, Hungary, Italy, Great Britain, France and Belgium lead the way in thinking the last five years have been bad, and that their country will

never be the same again. People in the US are similarly negative about the last five years but slightly more optimistic that their country can recover from the crisis. But there are countries where citizens are much more positive: emerging economies characterised by rapid growth such as Brazil and Saudi Arabia; and some established economies which have weathered the storm much better than their counterparts elsewhere, including Canada, Australia, Sweden and Germany.

There is also a strong relationship between a country’s GDP growth over the last five years and citizen perceptions of how well things have gone during that time. As we might expect, people in countries which have performed well economically are much more likely to think things have been good.

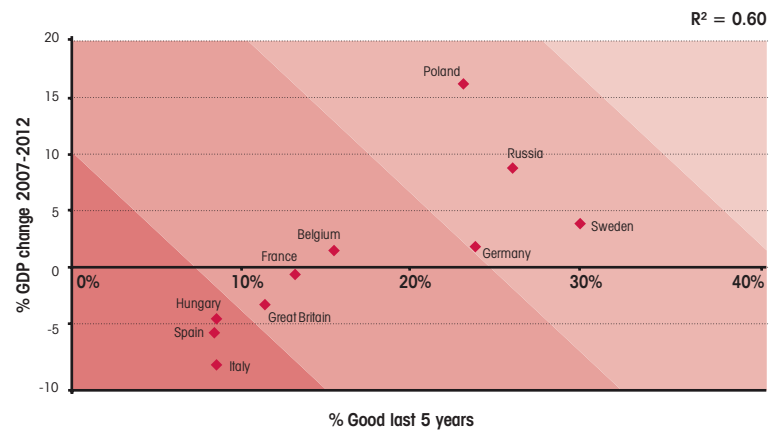
Looking specifically at Europe – the most negative region – even here we see that experience has not been uniform. Spain, Italy, Hungary and Great Britain are clustered at the bottom left of the

The impact of the last five years has been felt most in European countries hardest hit by the crisis



It is important not to give the impression that the economy is all that matters. Each country faces its own unique mix of concerns and challenges that will need to be addressed to improve life for its citizens, from tackling unemployment to reducing crime and improving education.

GDP change and perceptions over the last 5 years in Europe



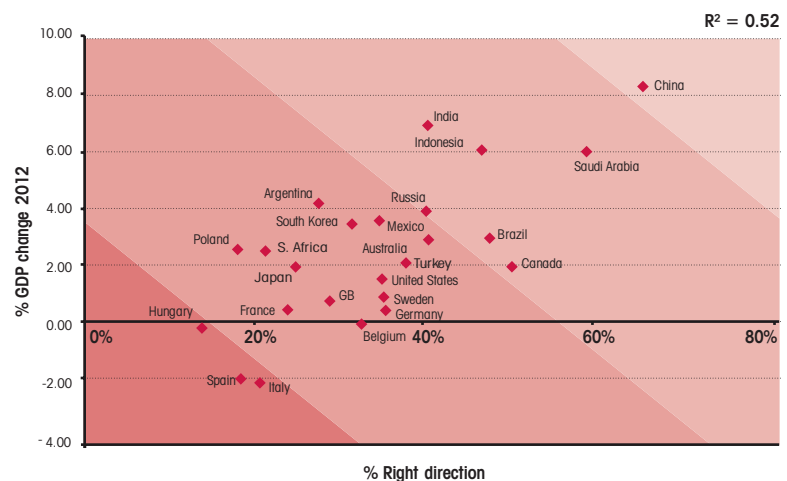
Base: 8,061 online interviews with adults aged 16/18-64 in 10 European countries, September 4-18 2012. Source: Ipsos Global @dvisor / International Monetary Fund, World Outlook Database % GDP change: actual in 2007 and estimated in 2012

chart. Their economies have shrunk over the last five years and citizens are unimpressed with how things have gone in their country. France and Belgium fare little better.

On the other hand, people in Poland, Russia, Sweden and Germany are significantly more upbeat as they look back over the downturn. Germany and Sweden in particular are interesting cases: their economies have grown only slightly, yet citizens are more positive than we might expect, perhaps as they reflect on how bad things have been for some of their European neighbours.

There is a clear political dimension to all of this too. Politicians need to be able to convince their electorates that whatever the challenges there is some hope for the future. The difficulty of this task for some governments is apparent when we compare GDP change in the last year with citizens' feelings about whether their country is headed in the right direction or not. The relationship is a fairly strong one with few obvious outliers, but again a familiar pattern emerges, with European economies clustered at the bottom left. Citizens in countries which have suffered economically are far from convinced that a corner has been turned.

Headed in the right direction?



Base: 18,680 online interviews with adults aged 16/18-64 in 24 countries, September 4 - 18 2012. Source: Ipsos Global @dvisor. GDP change 2012 based on GDP constant prices - estimated change figure from IMF.

All of the findings described so far emphasise that perceptions of how well a country is doing are, at least to some extent, shaped by how well its economy is performing. As a result there is a clear, repeated pattern: citizens in some European countries have been especially hard hit, but this is not necessarily being replicated around the world. So other factors must be important too – the economy is not the only story. What do we know about the main issues that concern people in different countries? How have they changed since 2007?

Perhaps unsurprisingly, unemployment and jobs is now the top issue worrying the world. Back in 2007 it was in fourth spot behind crime, poverty and corruption. It is now the main concern in 11 of the 24 Global @dvisor countries, dominating in much of Europe and the US – while five years ago only three countries ranked unemployment as their top concern. This shows how much the economy has shaped what people worry about across the globe.

But the detailed picture is more complex, reflecting the different experiences of the

last five years in each country and the specific national challenges each faces. Crime and violence is the top issue in Argentina, Mexico, South Africa and Australia, and a close second in Brazil. Corruption worries citizens most in India and Indonesia, while health care is the main issue in two contrasting economies: Canada and Brazil.

Digging past these top concerns there is much more nuance too: for example, poverty remains a big issue in Russia and China, education features strongly in Argentina and Mexico, and maintaining welfare is perceived as a significant problem in China and Japan. It is easy to generalise about the challenges facing the world, but our data points to the risk of not understanding citizen perceptions if the story is oversimplified or told only from the perspective of those countries facing economic hardship.

Overall, what do we know about perceptions over the last five years? Well, they have undoubtedly been shaped by how well the economy has performed, both nationally and globally. Looking to the short and medium term, whether

citizens feel their country is headed in right direction or not is closely linked to recent economic performance. Most people expect things to be as good or bad over the next five years as they were over the previous five.

Even so it is important not to give the impression that the economy is all that matters. Each country faces its own unique mix of concerns and challenges that will need to be addressed to improve life for its citizens, from tackling unemployment to reducing crime and improving education.

But let's come back to where the economy – and the crisis – clearly has mattered. The events of 2007 may have been felt in most places around the world, but in terms of a generation defining shift in public perceptions there is no doubt where the crisis has hit deepest and hardest. As Europe enters recession again, strikes against austerity are once again happening across the continent. During the last five years France has lost its AAA credit rating, Belgium has been through a political crisis, Great Britain has suffered a double dip recession with warnings of more on the way, and the economies of Spain, Italy and Hungary are still shrinking. Even five years on where we are headed is still unclear. One thing we do know is that for much of Europe at least, things will never be the same again. ■

1. <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2012/02/pdf/text.pdf>

2. <http://world.time.com/2012/11/15/its-official-eurozone-enters-second-recession-in-three-years/>

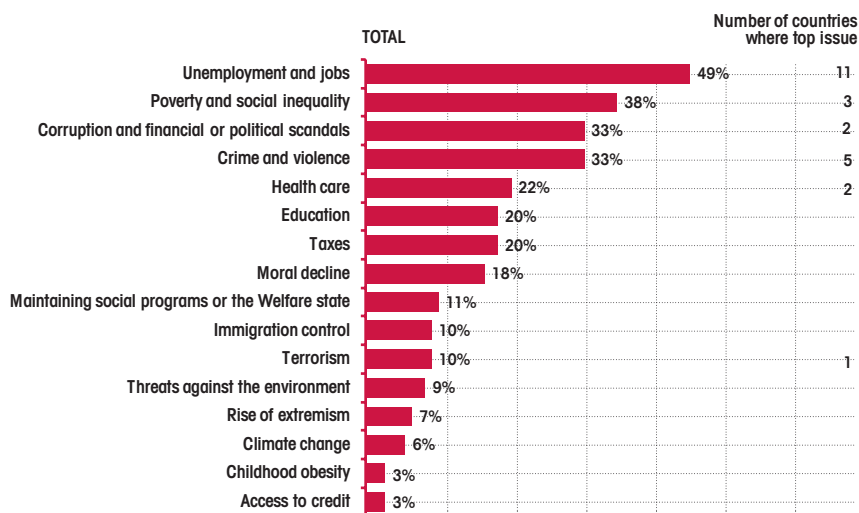
3. <http://online.wsj.com/article/BT-CO-20121108-717465.html>

4. <http://www.eclac.cl/cgi-bin/getProd.asp?xml=/publicaciones/xml/1/48061/P48061.xml&xsl=/tpl-ij/p9f.xsl&base=/tpl/top-bottom.xsl>

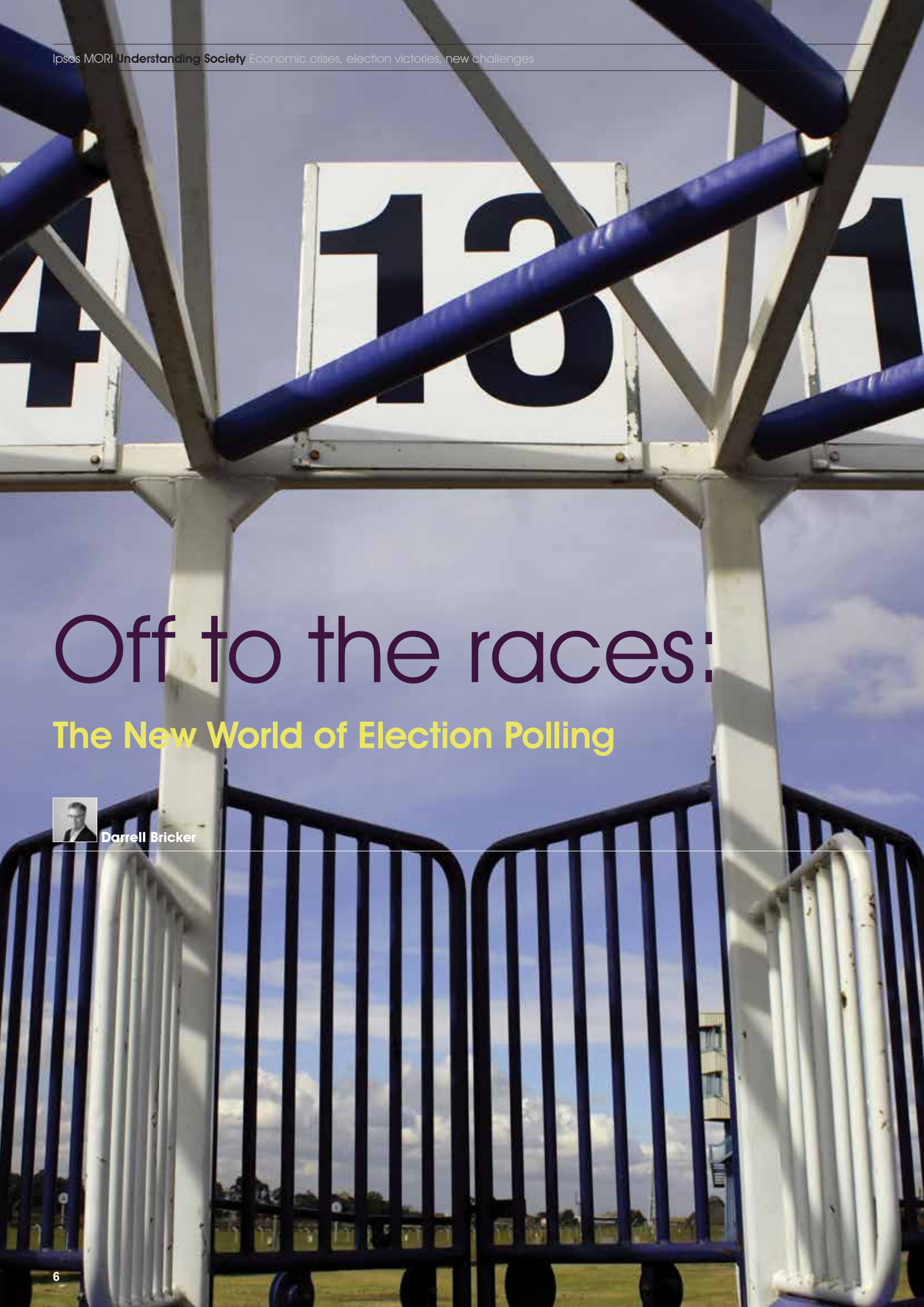
5. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-19897695>

6. <http://www.ippr.org/juncture/171/9124/elections-in-hard-times>

Global Summary - Most Worrying Issues:



Base: All Respondents: n=18680
Source: Ipsos Global @dvisor online interviews with adults in 24 countries



Off to the races:

The New World of Election Polling



Darrell Bricker

During the 2012 presidential elections in the United States, it was difficult to avoid the media blitz that surrounded the contest. News channels around the world followed each of the race's twists and turns, with a constant stream of predictions, debates, sound bites from commentators and general campaign news from the trail. Indeed Ipsos played a part, with our work being hailed as one of the most accurate in the race.

Given this exposure, you might be forgiven for thinking this is the only major election this year. But there has been a presidential election this year on five continents of the globe, with over twenty-five presidential races from France to Yemen, Iceland to Mexico. This of course does not include the many parliamentary and legislative elections, which also took place in 2012. Just as in the elections in the US, there were countless national issues at stake in the results¹.

Ipsos around the World

Ipsos undertakes election polling in 32 countries and indeed, this edition of *Understanding Society* includes a detailed look at the presidential elections and our election polling in the USA, Venezuela and France. However, these were not the only races we followed.

For example, in Mexico our team followed the elections, which saw the return, after twelve years, of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) and a new president in Enrique Pena Nieto. This is something of a political comeback for the PRI, which many wrote off as a political force when it was voted out of government in 2000. During the run-up to the elections, opinion polls were debated

and criticized like never before, with different research agencies sometimes giving widely varying results.

Ipsos conducted six monthly polls to understand how Mexicans would vote, and its final poll, released ten days ahead of the election, proved the most accurate of all the published data. We predicted the PRI's electoral victory with a seven-point lead over the National Action Party, its nearest rivals. The final lead was 6.5 points² with Mr Pena Nieto receiving 38.21% of the vote, his rival Mr Lopez Obrador with 31.59%.

In the Netherlands, Prime Minister Mark Rutte's Liberal government (led by his party the People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD)), fell after the right-euroscaptic Party for Freedom (PVV) refused to sanction the austerity measures the government sought. This caused an early election in September 2012, a litmus test on the Euro and European Union issues in a more austere climate.

Ipsos conducted election polling during the long run-up to election day, from June to September and an exit poll for our TV and media partners, NOS and RTL4. It showed that more than 25% of voters cast their votes strategically mainly for the centre parties, the VVD or the Labour Party (PvdA). Indeed, 43% of ex-PVV voters who chose a different party this time said they had done so because the PVV had no chance of being included in government, meaning a vote for the PVV was a wasted vote. Results were once again very close to our exit poll. The VVD won the most votes (26.6%), accruing 41 seats (an increase of 10); our polling predicted that the VVD would be the largest party with 24.3% of the vote and 37 seats³.

Egyptian presidential and legislative elections in May and June 2012 saw a very different set of challenges for Ipsos' 140-strong local team. With 35% of voters still to make up their minds just days ahead of the election, a formal prediction would have been on shaky ground. These were the first elections after the 2011 Egyptian revolution during the Arab Spring. To some extent, this was borne out by uncertainty and controversy over the results⁴. On 24 June 2012, Egypt's election commission announced that Muslim Brotherhood candidate, Mohammed Morsi, won the presidential runoff. The commission said Mr Morsi took 51.7% of the vote versus 48.3% for his main rival Ahmed Shafik, the last prime minister under deposed leader, Hosni Mubarak.

The run up to this historic presidential election saw a sudden surge in the public's appetite for polls concurrent with a revival of political life. The factors for successful election polling are still to establish themselves to some degree in Egypt. For instance, deciding on an accurate sample is far harder in this fast-changing political environment thanks partially to the large number of candidates and their lack of established ideologies. Expect more to come in the future from our Egyptian team, however.

There has been a presidential election this year on five continents of the globe

What our election work – a smattering of which we have just described here - tells us is that to be successful and accurate, pollsters need two perspectives: global and local. To pick out important trends and make accurate predictions requires analysis of multiple races across election cycles. For instance, analysis of our election polls over the decades shows incumbents maintain a structural advantage in any race over the challenger, frequently able to draw on the prestige of the office they already hold and the brand recognition they have built up. A trend we saw at work in the 2012 US elections and the Venezuelan elections, it is a trend we witness frequently in elections around the globe.

In some instances, however, the incumbency factor itself leads to the downfall of the incumbent, where perhaps the incumbent has not proven himself worthy of the office. To predict this apparently against the grain result, the pollster needs to understand the local context within which the race is taking place. This we see at work in the demise of Nicholas Sarkozy's premiership.

Preserving the dignity of the office of the president was an important factor in the minds of the French electors, an issue more easily picked out with an insider's view of French politics.

Developments in Election Polling

It goes without saying of course, that sound methodology and field processes are a prerequisite for accurate polling. Today, however, new factors are now required from the pollster. It is not just the scale of our polling that is changing, but also how we do it.

Election polling was once a reasonably straightforward activity. Most pollsters followed the same pathway to success - a probability sample of the electorate surveyed using a validated and reliable data collection method (either face-to-face, or landline telephone), a bit of minor weighting to adjust for demography, partisanship and turnout, and you were assured of a respectable showing on Election Day.

This has all changed over the last decade. Some of this was caused by the decline in response rates for traditional data collection methods. Some was caused by pollsters experimenting with new technologies and techniques. Nevertheless, the biggest change is associated with the largest client for election polling - the media.

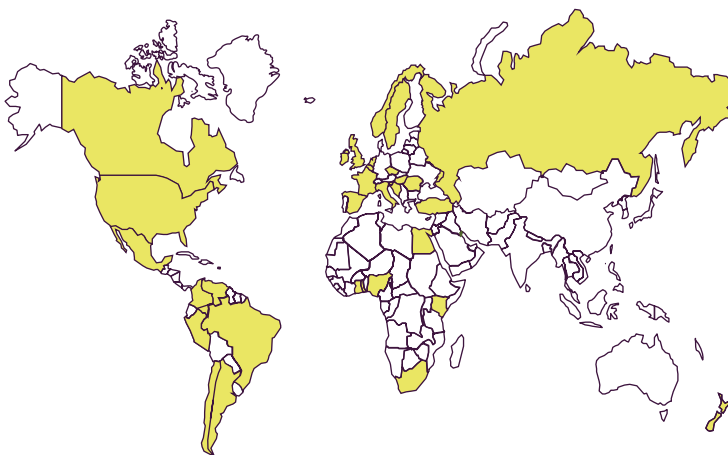
Previously, most major media outlets had a proprietary relationship with the polls they published, hiring their own pollster and using them exclusively. Journalists participated in the development and analysis of their polls, branded what they released, and defended their results.

My, how times have changed. While some media outlets still operate according to the best standards of the past (Reuters is a good example of this), many have walked away from "owning" their own polls. Yes, budgets are a major consideration. Parts of the media have had a difficult time adjusting to the digital age, and are under financial pressure. There is also a need to get more productivity out of their newsrooms (the same or fewer reporters preparing content for both traditional and digital platforms), which has understandably reduced the resources and attention dedicated to polls.

The polling industry is also complicit in creating a race to the bottom in terms of poll quality. Operators desperate to attract media attention have flooded the press with free polls, sometimes of questionable quality. And, those hard-pressed reporters, who can lack both the expertise and time, publish them with the hope that someone somewhere has done some due diligence.

Where we conduct political polls

- Argentina
- Belgium
- Brazil
- Canada
- Chile
- Croatia
- Colombia
- Czech Republic
- Egypt
- France
- Ghana
- Hungary
- Ireland
- Italy
- Kenya
- Kuwait
- Mexico
- New Zealand
- Netherlands
- Nigeria
- Norway
- Peru
- Puerto Rico
- Russia
- Serbia
- South Africa
- Spain
- Sweden
- Turkey
- United Kingdom
- United States
- Venezuela





What is especially troubling is the practice of publishing polls that buck prevailing trends. Rather than treating a divergent poll as an outlier, reporters delight in publishing the contrary to make a splash. Since they have invested nothing in the divergent poll, it is easy to throw the “incompetent” pollster under the bus. After all, when was the last time you saw a media outlet publish a correction taking the blame for publishing a bum poll?

All of this is bad for democracy and can disrupt elections.

The old days are not coming back but it is no good participating in the race to the bottom. Pollsters only ought to produce election polls that they can be proud of. As part of this effort, the onus is on the research industry to help inform journalists and the public about how quality polls are done (see our new YouTube Channel series “You Have a Right to Know⁵”), as well as participate in industry debates about best practices. Indeed, this publication is also one part of Ipsos’ way of doing just that.

So, what is new in election polling? The media do not have the money to pay for old-style probability surveys. While Ipsos still does probability sampling and traditional data collection in most markets, increasingly we are moving to non-probability samples coupled with on-line data collection methods.

The first Ipsos team to bring on-line methods to election polling was our Canadian Public Affairs team, using on-line methods since 2000 as part of their election-polling program. They have used on-line surveys to not only track issues and party support during campaigns, but they have also pioneered the love of on-

line methods for instant debate reaction polls and Election Day exit polls.

In the most recent Presidential Election in France, our local polling team successfully ran parallel daily on-line tracking surveys (along with their telephone tracking), and several other countries are now also looking into the possibility of using on-line methods for their election polls.

Coming back to the US, our strong performance was in no small part down to our willingness to embrace new techniques. The work that our US polling team conducted for their recent national elections is the most extensive on-line political polling Ipsos has ever done. This included daily on-line tracking for Reuters for several weeks that expanded into local polls in key swing states. Not only have these surveys received a tremendous amount of media coverage, we are analysing what the US team did to assist in improving the quality of all our on-line research generally.

Our US election team has also been at the forefront in developing a new standardised measure for on-line survey quality called a “credibility interval” that can be used to communicate how much confidence a particular survey result should be given. This is leading edge thinking which has sparked a healthy debate among survey practitioners across the US. The American Association of Public Opinion Research (AAPOR)

published recently an encouraging opinion about the use of credibility intervals for non-probability surveys. Stay tuned for more developments on this front.

In the end, moving to on-line means a continuous stream of data during elections. More data means an ability to track discrete moves in opinion as they happen, as well as creating the capacity to drill down to specific sub-segments of the voting population that are usually under-surveyed. For example, in Canada, our exit poll was able to capture information from over 1,000 members of the lesbian, gay and transgendered community on their political views and voting behaviour.

What we are doing will not only pay off in terms of improving the quality of election research, it should also help anybody interested in the future of market research and anyone looking to understand how most of us think when it comes to casting our vote. ■

1. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/02/21/elections-2012_n_1247826.html, http://www.electionguide.org/search-results.php?type=1&country=&search_year=2012&submitted=1&submit.x=42&submit.y=18

2. Resultados Electorales - <http://www.ipsos-bimsa.com.mx/public/public1.aspx>

3. Politieke Barometer in Detail - Week 37 <http://www.ipsos-nederland.nl/content.asp?targetid=1095>

4. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-18528121>

5. <http://spotlight.ipsos-na.com/index.php/public-affairs/questionnaire-design-you-have-a-right-to-know/>

The 2012 American Election: A Game of Inches



Clifford Young



Julia Clark

Ipsos undertook a monumental data collection effort this year in partnership with our media client Thomson Reuters. We collected a total of over 163,000 interviews between January 1st and November 6th 2012. This included 11,000 interviews a month, booster surveys in key swing states and among key subgroup populations (e.g. veterans, Hispanics, recent college grads, etc), daily tracking of voting intention ratings, an unparalleled interactive data tool¹, and a live, on-the-day Exit Poll of nearly 42,000 Americans who had cast a vote. All of this data collection was undertaken online using Ipsos's unique blended sampling approach², which allows us to include both panel and non-panel sample in our surveys. And the proof is in the pudding: independent sources ranked us one of the most accurate³ pollsters of the 2012 election cycle.

1. <http://elections.reuters.com/#poll>

2. http://www.ipsos-na.com/dl/pdf/knowledge-ideas/public-affairs/ipsosPA_POV_OurBraveNewWorld.pdf

3. http://www.fordham.edu/images/academics/graduate_schools/gsas/elections_and_campaign_/poll_accuracy_2012_presidential_election_updated_1530pm_110712.pdf

For some, US election night 2012 was a mystery – for others it was a ‘done deal’. Ipsos fell into the latter category. As the world knows by now, election night 2012 returned Barack Obama to the White House for four more years. The popular vote gave Obama 51% of the electorate’s votes, compared to 48% for Romney – and the Electoral College returned 332 votes for Obama, well past the 270 required to win.

As Ipsos predicted in April¹, Obama won comfortably. And our performance on election night was what pollsters dream of... we were spot-on in our national vote projection and our state projections were extremely accurate as well. Our record for accuracy in American elections, first established in 2008 and 2010, holds firm!

But aside from patting our own backs, our main task since election day has been to put this election in perspective: what does it mean about the American electorate now and in the future? And what does it mean for the two parties, the

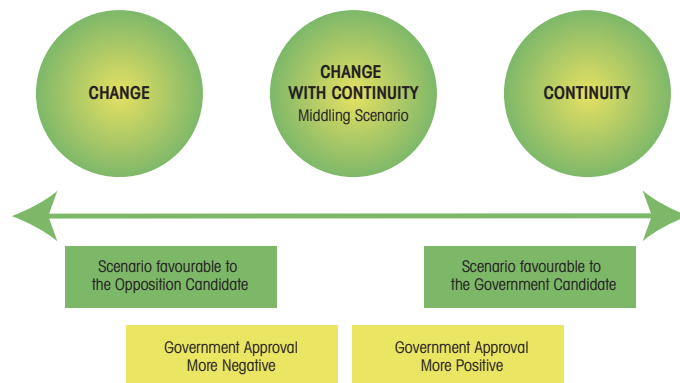


Democrats and Republicans, and how they may adapt in the years ahead?

Fundamentally, this election was a referendum on Obama. Our own political forecasting model, based on hundreds of elections around the world, indicated that Obama had about an 85% probability of winning reelection and re-taking the White House. Why? Let us explain the logic:

- Presidential elections at their core are about voters' relative 'desire for change'. When things are going well, voters want continuity and typically go with the government (party-in-power) candidate. We call these 'continuity' elections. In contrast, when things are going poorly, voters normally desire change and turn to the opposition (party-out-of-power) candidates. We call these 'change' elections.
- Continuity elections usually happen when the economy is doing well, the administration has avoided political

Desire for change Election Typology



scandals, and military actions have been successful and/or brief. Change elections are those where the economy is in the gutter, body counts are increasing, and/or political scandals have just exploded.

- About 30% of all elections are neither change nor continuity but something in the middle. We call these 'middling' elections. Middling elections are characterized by marginal economies and discontent with foreign affairs.

Middling elections are a bit trickier to predict because other factors play a role, such as incumbency, the power of personality, and the efficiency of the campaigns themselves.

- Roughly speaking, desire for change can be measured in any number of ways including right track/wrong track questions, presidential approval ratings, and economic optimism. If we use presidential approval ratings as our indicator, change elections correspond

to approval ratings below 40 points; middling elections range from 40 to 50 points, and continuity election 50 points or more.

- Incumbent candidates have a decided electoral advantage. Indeed, our data shows that, on average, incumbent candidates have an almost four-fold (3.6) advantage over opponents.

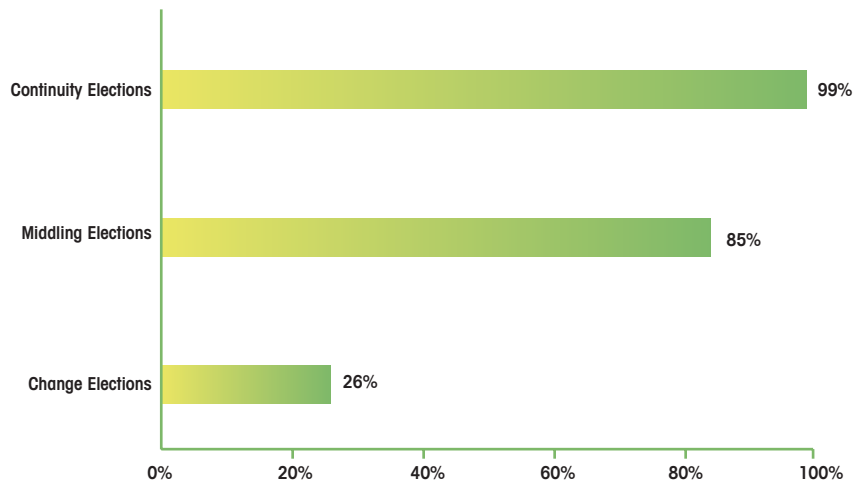
So, given this context, how did Obama stack up against this model? Very well, in fact.

This year's election was a middling scenario. Obama was at an advantage, however, due to his fairly good approval ratings (mid-high 40s), his incumbency, and the efficient Democratic 'ground game²', which becomes more critical in a middling scenario. Campaign efficiency matters a great deal and the Obama camp was more effective on this front than Romney's team.

The reason the Obama team was so efficient was that they realized that this election was going to be a 'game of inches', and that the critical factor was going to be their 'get out the vote' effort – they needed to replicate as far as possible the result they had in 2008. To do this, they needed to ensure that young people and minorities turned out again. And in order to achieve this, they took a leaf from the Republican playbook and utilized wedge issues to get their supporters to the voting booth.

The Obama team focused on social 'wedge' issues to get their base to turn out: same-sex marriage, abortion and women's rights, and the auto bailout. The Romney team, on the other hand, focused on the economy and deficit reduction in an effort to appeal to independents

Probability of incumbent winning in...



•SOURCE: Ipsos modeling based on 187 executive branch elections in 35 countries; percents are estimated probabilities

Best candidate on the issue		Total Registered Voters	Total Registered Voters Independents	Total Registered Voters Undecided
Job and unemployment	Obama	40%	25%	8%
	Romney	41%	31%	16%
Auto industry	Obama	43%	33%	20%
	Romney	29%	18%	9%
Women's rights	Obama	50%	43%	35%
	Romney	26%	15%	7%
Gay marriage	Obama	45%	37%	25%
	Romney	27%	16%	11%
US Economy	Obama	39%	23%	10%
	Romney	42%	34%	16%

and undecideds. The GOP was focused on winning these groups because they believed that was the way to win in the critical swing states; they were convinced that turnout would be lower in 2012 than 2008 and that Obama's base wouldn't come out again for him.

However, they miscalculated. Obama was able to energize his base to get out and vote by a combined strategy of encouraging early voting and 'scaring' people to the ballot box by using wedge issues effectively. Both of these tactics were also fully integrated with the data-centered ground operation the Democrats ran in swing states, which also focused on wedge issues.

The table above shows how each candidate was seen on the issues among all Registered Voters (RVs), all Independents, and all RVs who are undecided. It shows just how big a lead Obama had – even among Independents – on social 'wedge' issues like the auto industry, women's rights, and same-sex marriage. While Romney led on the most important issue to voters – jobs and the economy – among independents and undecideds, his lead on these was small among the electorate as a whole, and Obama dominated on all other issues. And in the end, turnout by the base was more important than winning over undecided voters (who are less likely to actually vote). The Obama team was betting on this fact, and it paid off.

On November 6th, the electorate broke in predictable ways: younger, minority Americans voted for Obama and older, white Americans voted for Romney (see table below). This replicated the winning coalition for Obama in 2008, and is why Romney was so blindsided by his loss – he won among Independents and thought that would seal the deal due to the aforementioned assumption about lower turnout among young and minority voters. But what Romney hadn't counted on was the younger and minority groups turning up again this year and casting votes for Obama – which they did in great numbers.

So what does this all mean long-term? There are a lot of theories out there about how this election is a critical turning point or pivotal moment. Our view is simpler: this election doesn't mean much long-term. However, it is clear that the long-term demographic trend in the United States is towards a less white and more socially liberal population. This will certainly impact on the way in which both parties interact with the electorate, and ultimately how they legislate.

In our view, the biggest take-away from this election is the 'win' for the trifecta of Big Data, continuous polling, and modeling. The Obama ground game utilized unprecedented data tools and analytics to support their 'get out the vote' efforts, especially in swing states. The pollsters collected more data, and published it more frequently, than ever before – by election day there were six daily tracking polls (Ipsos included!) being published in addition to the 40 or 50 additional pollsters publishing numbers less frequently. And the modelers³ had a field day – after bearing the brunt of much criticism from both parties, model-based approaches (again, Ipsos's

included) won the day. The pundits and partisans who predicted Romney wins via 'mysticism and yard signs'⁴ and 'gut feelings'⁵ lost out this election – hard data and science prevailed.

Perhaps this election says more about the methods used and the amount of data produced than anything else. We are hopeful – indeed, optimistic – that partisan punditry and uninformed guessing will begin to take a backseat to

professional data analysis, modeling, and projective polling. ■

1. <http://spotlight.ipsos-na.com/index.php/public-affairs/much-ado-about-nothing-obama-will-be-president-again-in-2013/>

2. <http://thehill.com/blogs/hillicon-valley/technology/266987-data-drove-obamas-ground-game>

3. <http://fivethirtyeight.blogs.nytimes.com/>

4. <http://blogs.wsj.com/peggynoonan/2012/11/05/monday-morning/>

5. <http://video.foxnews.com/v/1947655634001/behind-dick-morris-big-romney-victory-prediction>

Exit poll results		OBAMA	ROMNEY	DIFFERENCE
Gender	Men	48	50	-2
	Women	52	46	+6
Party ID	Democrat	93	6	+87
	Republican	6	93	-87
	Independent	43	50	-7
Age	18-34	63	34	+29
	35-54	52	46	+6
	55+	43	56	-13
Race / Ethnicity	White	41	57	-16
	Black	96	3	+93
	Hispanic	70	28	+42
	Asian	67	32	+35
	Other	51	45	+6
Household Income	Under \$25k	61	37	+24
	\$25k-\$75k	51	48	+3
	\$75k+	46	52	-6
Education	No college	50	48	+2
	Some college	50	47	+3
	College grad +	51	47	+4
Region	New England	59	39	+20
	Mid-Atlantic	59	40	+19
	East North Central	52	46	+6
	West North Central	46	52	-6
	South Atlantic	50	49	+1
	East South Central	39	59	-20
	West South Central	40	59	-19
	Pacific	44	54	-10

Source: Reuters / Ipsos

The French Elections:

Missed Promises and Mistrust



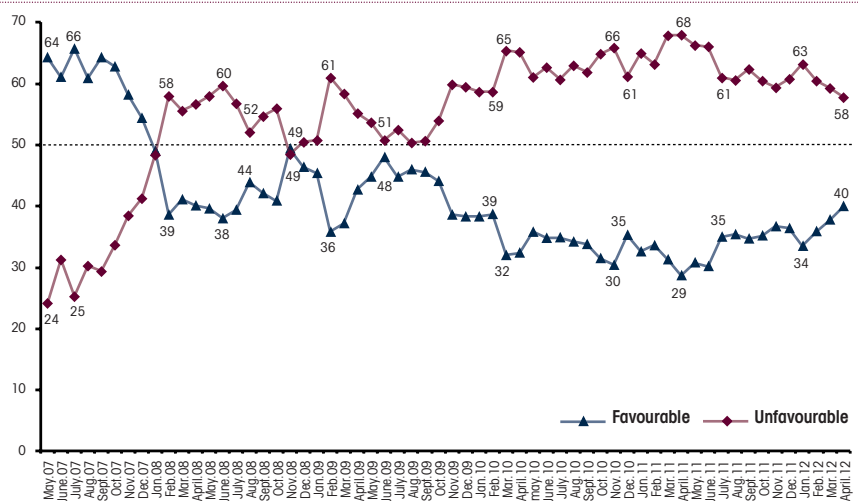
Brice Teinturier

Contrary to what we often hear or read, it was not the October 2008 economic and financial crisis that triggered the collapse of French President Nicolas Sarkozy's popularity. The decline actually began earlier, between October 2007 and February 2008 (see Graph 1), with Mr Sarkozy's ruling centre-right party's defeat in the March 2008 local elections the first results of this.

Two factors (of differing importance) coincided during the first seven months of Mr Sarkozy's five-year presidential mandate: the absence of tangible results from his policies, and the President's open disregard for the unwritten code of practice that had hitherto guided the exercise of the presidential office in France.

The perceived absence of tangible achievement is the more important of the two and, arguably, lies at the heart of all other factors. The basis of Mr Sarkozy's personal brand, and his 2007 presidential election victory, were both built on the idea that he could and would achieve

Chart 1: Nicolas Sarkozy's Popularity May 2007 to April 2012



concrete results, in terms of employment, economic growth, purchasing power and security. In particular, he had promised to tackle unemployment, an issue that had pervaded French politics since the late 1970s with the ruling parties seemingly unable to offer a solution. Despite this, Mr Sarkozy's promise of actual results gave rise to optimism.

His plan to restore faith in the French political system was two-pronged. Firstly,

he contended that a rejuvenation of an old ideology built around the values of work, personal responsibility, commitment and the respect of authority was necessary. Secondly, he promised to place action at the heart of politics to create a dynamic presidency, in sharp contrast to the "lazy kings" style of government the public had witnessed previously.

The Sarkozy brand stemmed from the dynamism and focus on results he first showed during his time as *ministre de l'intérieur* in Jean-Pierre Raffarin's (UMP) first two governments from May 2002 to March 2004. However, within the first few months of his presidency, this image was shattered.

The first blow came in October 2007, thanks to a fall in real disposable incomes. Many working and lower-middle class voters became dissatisfied, and resentful of the failure of real incomes to keep up with inflation. This negative sentiment concerning personal purchasing power was not helped by the President's statement during a press conference in January 2008: "What do you expect, the coffers are empty". In other areas, such as security and employment, Mr Sarkozy was accused of being hyperactive, yet achieving no actual results. This hit at the very core of the brand he had painstakingly built around himself, and the very foundation of 'Sarkozyism' began to crumble.

In addition, the President engaged in behaviour, in both his personal and professional life, which had serious consequences. These transgressions fell into two categories: his attitude to money, and his attitude to partisan politics.

Mr Sarkozy had an explicit plan to rehabilitate wealth as a legitimate symbol of success in French society, along with work, individual merit and talent. One policy designed to achieve this was the tax-shield, whereby no taxpayer would pay more than 50% of their revenues in taxes. It was a popular policy among many sectors of society, including working class voters. However, by holidaying on the yacht belonging to billionaire

businessperson Vincent Bolloré, increasing the President's salary and openly demonstrating his penchant for luxury, he permanently shattered the rapport with the public he had created, coming to be seen as a "President of the rich".

The second crucial issue was Mr Sarkozy's attitude to partisan politics. His desire to reinforce party politics and stir up opposition showed his disdain for the usual etiquette of the presidential office and further fuelled his decline in popularity. Instead of positioning himself as a unifying agent, rising above political divisions, he presented himself as a right-wing president, with a tendency to dismiss the bi-partisanship of past presidents such as Mitterrand or Chirac as hypocrisy. He also pitted different groups within French society against each other: civil servants vs. private sector employees; working people vs. those living off benefits; those on the sidelines vs. the men of action. His hope was to give French society a new dynamic, but instead this tactic simply highlighted social discord, painting the President as pugnacious, not the strong-willed but unifying figure the French people expected.

By breaking from the traditional expectations of the presidency, Mr Sarkozy unnecessarily upset a large proportion of the French public. Had this partisanship gone hand in hand with tangible results he would perhaps have been perceived as radical but effective. In the absence of results, instead he appeared out of touch with the people.

All this was then compounded by goings-on in the President's private life – his separation from his wife Cécilia Sarkozy

and marriage to singer and model, Carla Bruni – highlighting all was not well in the Palais de l'Élysée.

The consequences of mistrust

In this renewed state of general mistrust, the realisation that a man like Nicolas Sarkozy, known for his energy and dynamism, was unable to produce results sent a shock wave through the entire political system. Now deemed to be ineffective, he should at the very least be sincere and honest, offering a unifying presence and at a very minimum, be able to understand the problems of ordinary people, so French commentators argued.

These views, articulated in the French press, were born out in the findings from the various waves of Ipsos' Présidoscopie polling (Table 1). By the time the presidential campaigns began in April 2012, Mr Sarkozy was perceived as unfriendly, insincere, dishonest, someone who does not understand people's problems and widely suspected of not keeping his promises. In April 2012, Mr Sarkozy only scored higher than François Hollande – his socialist challenger - with regard to dynamism and charisma.

Table 1: Presidential Candidates' Images

For each one of the following phrases, indicate which characteristic applies (very well, well, badly or very badly) to each of the following people?	François Hollande		Nicolas Sarkozy	
	Well	Badly	Well	Badly
He has principles	68	32	67	33
He is honest	59	41	37	63
He is likeable	59	41	39	61
He is sincere	55	45	38	62
He is competent	52	48	56	44
He understands the problems of people like me	52	48	34	66
He is energetic	48	52	77	23
He is presidential	46	54	67	33
He will deliver his commitments	46	54	38	62
He worries you	36	64	45	55

Ipsos Public Affairs - Presidioscopie – Ipsos / Logica Business Consulting for Le Monde, Le CEVIPOF, la Fondapol et la Fondation Jean Jaures – Wave 10 (April 2012)

It appeared that the President's image had been irrevocably damaged during the first few months of his mandate, and that defeat in the next election was already on the cards.

Electoral defeat was by no means a foregone conclusion, however. Mr Sarkozy had the majority of his term remaining to show proof of policy coherence, consistency and ability to achieve results. Accordingly, 2008 and 2009 was a turning point – Mr Sarkozy could choose to postpone the commitments he made in 2007, in response to the 2008 financial and economic crisis which was building. With almost 3 years of his term remaining, Mr Sarkozy could redefine his positioning and not deviate from it to restore credibility as President.

Instead, however, he changed tack and decided to declare the need for “the overhaul of the capitalist system” and the beginning of a new world to build. The

French public gave him the benefit of the doubt for eight months, and from then to June 2009, Mr Sarkozy's popularity was increasing marginally. Very quickly, though, it became apparent that ‘the world after’ closely resembled ‘the world before’. It was at this point that Mr Sarkozy's position heading into his battle for re-election was fixed – a damaged image and uncertain position on the key issues.

The New Deal

While it may not have been what the President hoped for, 2008 to 2009 was indeed a turning point. Issues of globalisation were now present in French minds and the deficit and the financial crisis were a firm feature. Arguably, only two models and two positions were possible.

Either accept that the political sphere cannot do everything, that the coming

years will be very difficult but that fairness and solidarity will help to ease the situation. In such a context, expectations would be low and it might be difficult to generate much enthusiasm around an election. It was this approach that was adopted by both François Hollande and François Bayrou.

The other option involves designating an enemy, explaining why we are where we are and detailing how we will get out of it. This was the main argument espoused by Jean-Luc Mélenchon and Marine Le Pen, with their enemies international finance and immigrants respectively. These enemies defeated, enthusiasm and hope can then be reborn.

Naturally, each player borrows elements from the other side. François Hollande, although having closely linked himself to the fight against deficits, also tapped into the ‘taming-international-finance’ agenda in order to give further assurances to

his supporters. Though Marine Le Pen continued to paint immigration as “the cause of all our ills”, she also attempted to enhance her economic credibility by speaking out against Europe and the Euro. None of this, however, calls into question the key thesis of their positioning.

Only Nicolas Sarkozy placed himself at an intersection, sometimes with François Bayrou and François Hollande focusing on the issues of the public deficit and defending the Euro but, increasingly towards the end of the campaign, with Marine Le Pen on issues surrounding identity and border controls. This was an attempt to regain ground lost to Le Front National. Since credibility requires consistency, Mr Sarkozy’s paradoxical positioning did little to help his image. His strategy to regain ground from Le Front National fell short since he failed to regain support from the working classes, lost during the early period of his presidency due to his ‘President of the rich’ and the ‘President of the Euro’ images. Instead, Le Front National and centrists actually gained more from it.

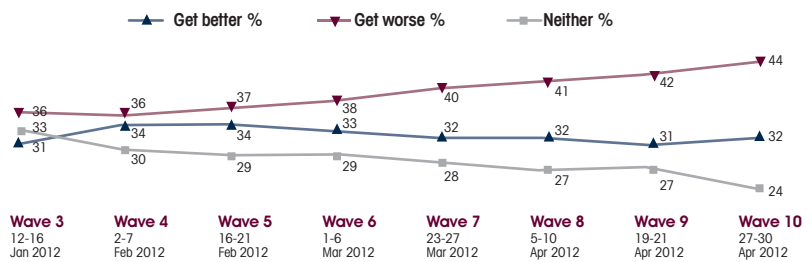
Although the gap between the front-runners did narrow, it was not enough to change the result. An extra fortnight of campaigning would have made no difference – the race was essentially lost two or three years previously – only a change of direction for the presidency at that time could have changed the eventual outcome.

Though he did not manage to defeat him, Nicolas Sarkozy did manage to impair one aspect of François Hollande’s credibility between January and April 2012. Ipsos’ polling in early 2012 showed that there was a small uptake (8 points) in the idea that the election of François Hollande would result in a deterioration

of the situation in France from 36% to 44% (Chart 2). Mr Sarkozy, albeit failing to generate confidence in himself, managed nevertheless to undermine confidence in his opponent.

huge mandate for change. He left being perceived as failing to deliver, criticised for his displays of wealth, and leaving behind over 2.8 million unemployed.

Chart 2: François Hollande’s ability to improve the situation in France, if elected



Question: If François Hollande is elected president of the republic, do you think in the years that follow, the situation in France will...

Presidiopscopie - Ipsos / Logica business Consulting for Le Monde le CEVIPOF, la Fondation Jean Jaurès / April 2012 - Wave 10

The Presidential campaign proper, begun in the autumn of 2011, did introduce some small elements of uncertainty where previously it had been assumed there would be an easy socialist victory. These last-minute shifts in public opinion did not alter the trend recorded over the previous five years, however.

It seemed at times as though a change of president was almost predestined. The midterm elections of 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011 all bore witness to the increasing dissatisfaction with the governing party and the President. With great regularity over the five years, Ipsos’ polling consistently gave a greater share of the vote to the Socialist candidate whether Dominique Strauss-Kahn or François Hollande.

The defeat of this unpopular French President was not simply the result of the global financial crisis or euro zone debt turmoil. It was also down to the intense public dislike of someone seen as the “President of the rich” who came to the Palais de l’Élysée on the back of a

And so it was on 6 May François Hollande won power in France with 51.64% of the popular vote, seemingly breaking from the tide of rightwing European politics seen since the economic crisis begun in 2008. A self-styled Mr. Normal and a moderate social democrat from the centre of the Parti Socialiste, he is the Palais de l’Élysée’s first inhabitant from the left in twenty years.

Postscript

Finally, however if there was an understated air to Mr Hollande’s victory, with growing uncertainty over his ability to deliver, that does seem to have been borne out in the new President’s approval ratings. In October 2012, just months after his election, his approval rating has dropped from 55% to 42%². ■

1. <http://www.ipsos.fr/Presidentielle-2012/panel-electoral.php>

2. <http://www.ipsos.fr/barometre-politique/index.php>



The Venezuelan Elections:

Chávez, Variable Polls, and Bolivarian Missions



Clifford Young



Jaime Seijas

On 7 October 2012, Venezuelans showed up to cast their vote for president on election day, with an unprecedented sign of voter enthusiasm pushing final turnout over 80%. This race pitted Hugo Rafael Chávez Frías, the incumbent and long-sitting president, against the 40-year-old opposition candidate, Henrique Capriles Radonski. Just this on its own would provide sufficient suspense for most. This electoral campaign, however, was one of particular drama and uncertainty.

First, many believed that after years of Chávez dominance, the opposition and Capriles had a real chance of winning, something unheard of in years past. In 2006 for instance, Chávez beat his opponent Rosales by 26 points: a total victory for 'Chavismo', Chávez's unique brand of populist state capitalism.

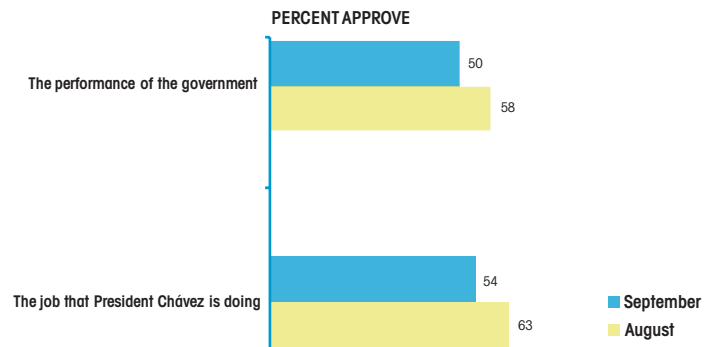
Second, Chávez had been diagnosed with cancer. For a time, many speculated that he might not even run. Once determined that he would, the chatter migrated to 'if he wins and has to later step down, who would be able to succeed him'?

Third, just to add a little spice to the 'telenovela' unfolding, the polls were truly all over the place. Some showed a strong double-digit lead for Chávez, while others gave a slight edge to Capriles. Moreover, until the last minute, many were still undecided who to vote for. Our analysis suggested that undecideds would break 60% for Chávez and 40% for Capriles.

Ultimately, Chávez won with an eleven-point lead (55.14%) over Capriles (44.24%)¹. Ipsos relatively accurately predicted a win with a nine-point lead (47% vs. 38%) and our counsel to clients in the run-up to the elections was

Chávez's popular support weakened but was still strong

Now I would like you to tell me if you approve or disapprove of...



that Chávez would pull through with a near double digit lead, contrary to the prevailing opinion among policy-makers.

The Venezuelan presidential election taught many lessons but also raised as many issues of its own including:

- Why did Chávez win, when so many thought he would not?
- What explains Capriles' strong performance?
- Long-term, where does Venezuelan public opinion sit with Chavismo and state-centric economic management?
- What would happen if Chávez was to step down and another election was called? Would Chávez's successor or the opposition candidate be more likely to win?
- What does the Venezuelan presidential election say about election analysis and polling more broadly? The polls offered extremely mixed results this year; how does one make sense of things in such a confused, low information environment?

To answer these questions, we draw upon two Ipsos polls one conducted in August and the other in September¹, as well as other relevant data.

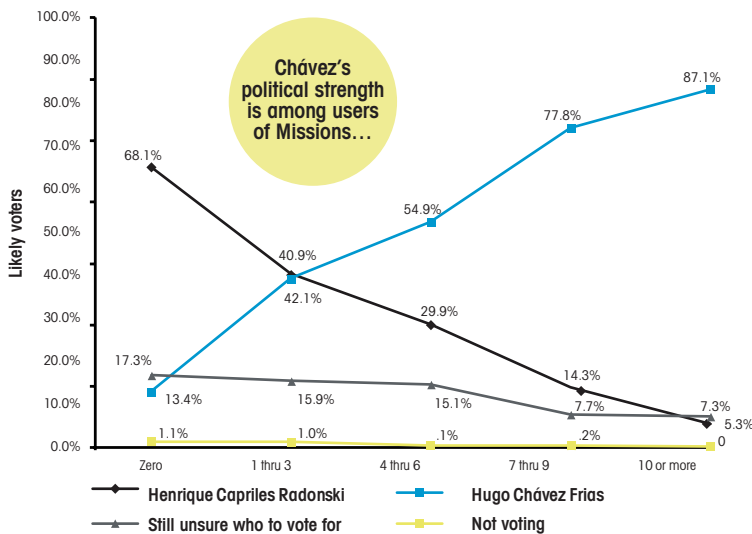
Let us take these issues point by point.

Contrary to the common wisdom of the time, Chávez's victory should not have come as a great surprise. Yes, the Venezuelan economy is not in great shape and crime has skyrocketed in the last decade. Even so, Chávez was still the odds-on favorite for two reasons.

First, never bet against incumbents! Our own analysis of hundreds of elections around the world shows that incumbents have an almost three-fold advantage² over non-incumbents. This together with Chávez's relatively strong approval ratings (54% in September) put his chances of winning at around 80% according to our statistical forecasting models.

In contrast, a Chávez successor running would have had only a 30% chance of winning in the same circumstances, a testament to the power of incumbency but also a leading indicator of the opposition's relative odds if (or when) Chávez does step down.

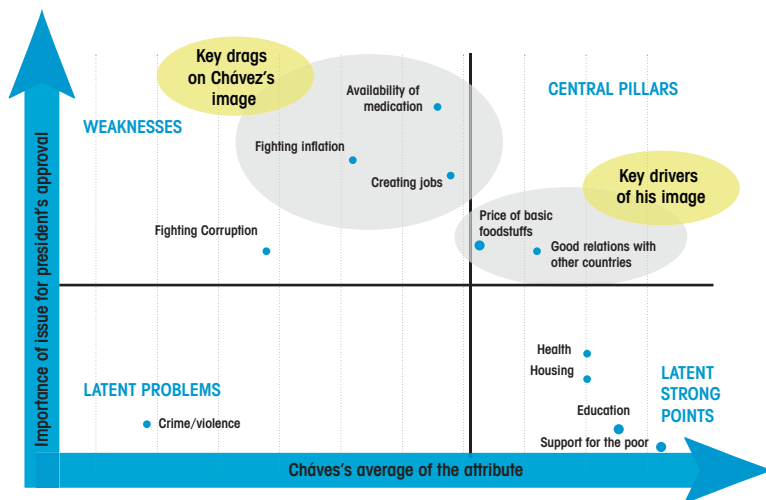
Voter intention by receipt of Bolivarian Missions



Base: Likely voters 2012 Ipsos

Second, following his own political ideology of Bolivarianism and 21st century socialism, Chávez found his strongest popular support among those voters who most benefited from his myriad of targeted social justice, social welfare, anti-poverty, educational, and military recruiting programs known as 'Bolivarian Missions'³. In essence, such programs served as a buffer or cushion against the vagaries of the economy, giving him an advantage. The 'Bolivarian Missions' are a clear example of the importance of targeted social programs in explaining regime stability⁴.

Key Drivers of Chávez's popularity

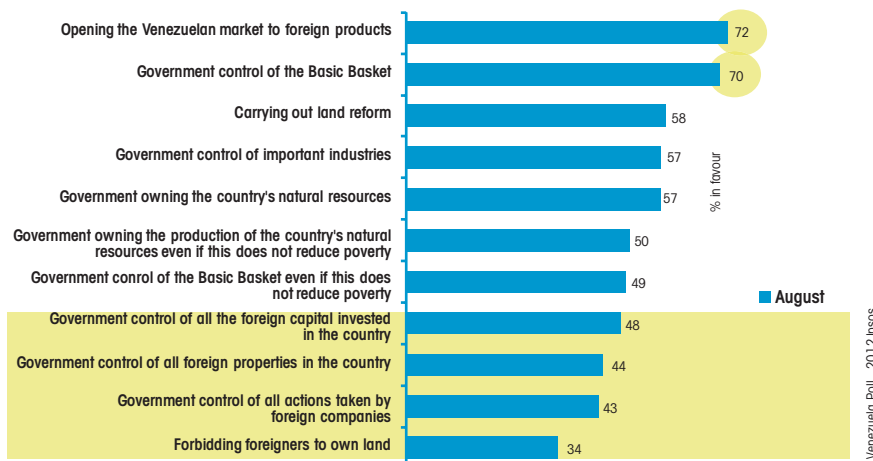


Venezuela Poll 2012 Ipsos

Third, despite Chávez's victory, there is reason to believe Capriles and the opposition is not a 'one hit wonder'. Chávez, while still with strong popular support, is not invincible. Indeed, Venezuelans had serious criticisms of the government's performance on jobs, crime, and corruption. Capriles exploited this during the campaign, being able to show a strong leadership alternative, which stressed good management and policy efficiency. Long-term, these could be winning messages (as illustrated in the chart, see upper left hand quadrant).

Support for Forms of Government Intervention

For each of the actions that I will be mentioning, please tell me if you are in favor or against.



Venezuela Poll 2012 Ipsos

Venezuelan public opinion additionally is not some monolith of 'Chávismo'. Yes, there is strong support for government intervention in the economy, especially when it comes to basic foodstuffs (70% agree that the price of basic foodstuffs should be controlled by the government) and for strong populist leadership (67% believe that a good leader should bend the rules). The Venezuelan DNA is still strongly populist and paternalistic.

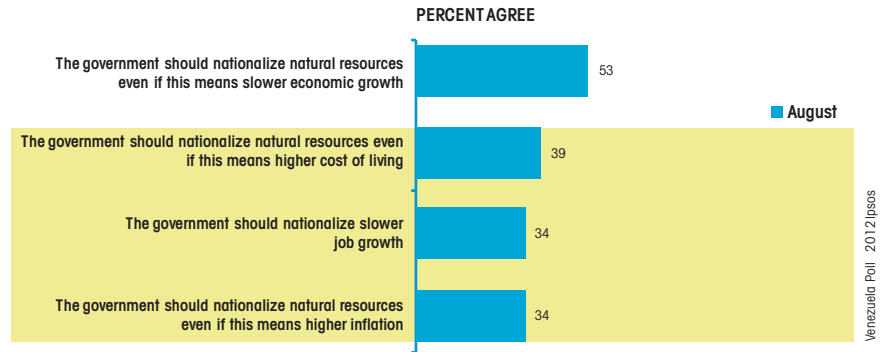
At the same time however, Venezuelans also want less government intervention if this means greater jobs creation and economic growth. Surprisingly, they also generally support foreign capital and greater linkages with the global economy, even as their leaders use them as scapegoats. At their core, Venezuelans are pragmatic. They want some state paternalism but in smaller doses. All this suggests a slow thaw in Venezuelan public opinion, making alternatives to Chávismo possible.

Finally, the Venezuelan election is a cautionary tale of the vagaries of polls and the difficulty of electoral analysis in low information environments (i.e. elections with only a few public polls being published). Indeed, the polls in the weeks before the election ranged from a clear Chávez win to a Capriles victory by the slightest of margins.

Ultimately, this variability underscores the simple rule that no single poll is reliable by itself. Instead, sound election analysis involves triangulation; in essence, the analytic combination of the average of all polls, statistical forecasting models, and the consideration of other indicators like approval ratings and economic confidence. Each of these data put together showed Chávez as the clear favourite. ■

Support for Government control of resources

Now please tell me if you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.



Polling Companies	Date	Chávez	Capriles
IVAD	2 September 2012	50.8	32.4
Hinterlaces	6 September 2012	50	32
Consultores 21	19 September 2012	46.2	48.1
Datanálisis	24 September 2012	47.3	37.2
Hinterlaces	25 September 2012	50	34
Ipsos	30 September 2012	47	38

The Venezuelan election is a cautionary tale of the vagaries of polls and the difficulty of electoral analysis in low information environments where only a few public polls are published.

1. <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/ccc?key=0AonYZs4MzIZbdHFKSGJGUU9jcWJZUFhaaTQ4RUNGMGc#gid=0>

2. <http://spotlight.ipsos-na.com/index.php/public-affairs/much-ado-about-nothing-obama-will-be-president-again-in-2013/>

3. They draw their name from the historical South American hero, Simón Bolívar.

4. Young, C.A., (2007) *The Basis of Popular Support in Latin America: A Special Look at Brazil and Venezuela*, Canning House, London, England.; and Young, C.A with Julia Clark, Chris Garman, and Jason Kemp (2011) *Throw the Bums Out: Public Opinion as a proximate cause for Regime Instability in the Middle East*, Ipsos Working Paper, March 2011, Washington DC.

5. Poll details: Wave 1 August 10-26 2012 n =1,009 Wave 2 September 2012 n = 1,022

Behavioural insight for a better society

Interview with Dr David Halpern of the UK Government's Behavioural Insights Team



Bobby Duffy



David Halpern is Director of the Behavioural Insights Team in the UK Prime Minister's Office, which was set up following the last general election. The Behavioural Insights Team is probably the world's first dedicated government unit designed to employ the insights from behavioural economics and insight, brought to many people's attention with the publication of Nudge by Richard Thaler and Cass Sunstein. The "Nudge Unit", as it is often called, has always looked internationally for good practice and is increasingly focused on working with governments and other bodies around the world.

BD: Can you tell us about the UK Government's Behavioural Insights Team, its aims and the work it has undertaken so far?

DH: The Behavioural Insights Team was set up when the UK coalition government came to power in 2010, and its aim is to bring a lighter touch to and smarter

ways of doing policy development. The essence of it is, if we have a more nuanced account of how people actually make decisions and what guides behaviour, we will have better, more cost effective policy, which is easier for citizens.

BD: What was the trigger for setting it up?

DH: There is a narrow answer and a broader answer. Narrowly, when the Conservative Party was in opposition they had a good look at behavioural insight. They were struck by its possible efficacy as opposed to conventional government mechanisms, notably mandation legislation. In 2010, it had a natural fit with the incoming government, which had an idea of being post-bureaucratic. It should be noted of course, the previous administration did also have an interest in behavioural insights.

More broadly, there were clearly deeper roots as to why behavioural insight was

picked up with such interest across the world. My own view is that in a world where there is so much information on consumers, companies are becoming ever more sophisticated in their use of behavioural approaches, partly by evolution rather than by intent. Now governments cannot ignore the wealth of information and its ubiquity; people see behavioural economics at work all around them.

BD: So I would like to pick up on that point about how fashionable it has become, not just among governments but the whole of the commercial sector, including of course market research. Do you think this is a lasting trend driven by the data available? Or is it something that is going to come in and out of fashion?

DH: The difficulty is our information society is not easily reversible. I think there is no way round using this new level of information we have. We are locked into it.

BD: One of the side effects of this increased focus on behavioural insight as an area of study is the huge proliferation of theoretical models. Which do you think are the most helpful among those models for practically informing thinking and action?

DH: In the early days, we used the Mindspace report¹ by the UK's Institute for Government, which was a framework intended to wade through and boil down very large numbers of papers and literally hundreds of effects, and to sift out some of the less robust effects.

But you can strip down quite a large literature into some simple principles, which policy-makers can then use. It is possible to say, here are a small number of effects, which appear to be robust.

Currently, we are using an even more boiled down model founded on the principle that if you want to change someone's behaviour, make the behaviour change as easy as possible for them to do. If you want someone to pay tax, make it as easy as possible. If you want someone to lose weight, make it as easy as possible.

We write letters, which are extremely difficult to understand. We create processes, which have many barriers and extra steps in them. No one is interested in the guy in the basement who draws up the form or the details of how a process operates. But these small details are incredibly consequential for citizens because that is generally their experience of government, and they are very, very consequential for outcomes. And, if you have one recurrent lesson that comes through our stuff, it is that these small details really matter enormously - absolutely enormously.

Of course, there are many layers and there are many nuances and finer effects, some of which are quite surprising and counter-intuitive. But just to get policy-makers beginning to sign-up to this first principle can give big early wins and then people can always add further complexity at a later stage.

And you do see these behavioural insight approaches across countries, actually, even if they are not using the behavioural insight label. Most governments have something going on in the space.

BD: And you have had some success in saving money through these approaches - it's reported as something like £300m since the Behavioural Insight Team was launched?

DH: We are confident the impact will be very much greater than that. Those savings are the clearly demonstrable ones, in the sense that we have conducted randomised control trials, established the facts and are calculating the savings as the intervention is scaled-up. There are more which are in train.

Much of the focus, and the early wins, were in the areas of tax fraud and error, just because it is a no brainer. You can see rapid results and test the interventions immediately. It helped to prove the credibility of our approach.

In the UK, HMRC² [the UK's tax office] makes 639 million transactions and consumer contacts per year - vast volumes. The cost of people who had not paid their self-assessment tax³ was around £600 million. By adding one line to the letter reminding people to pay, there was a 15% increase in the repayment rate. It was actually, a very

"if you want to change someone's behaviour, make the behaviour change as easy as possible for them to do"

nice line, telling people something which is true; 9 out of 10 people in your area pay their tax on time. Quite a positive and unthreatening message but it turns out to be enormously effective. Moreover, the marginal cost of it is essentially zero because the letters are sent anyway. So that is a very, very nice, early example, and there are many more.

BD: Perhaps some of the criticisms or objections to the unit were initially about how essential social psychology and behavioural insight is at a time of austerity, but that does seem to have been answered by the money-saving power of the actions you are taking. But there are other concerns - for example, are we now moving away from debate with citizens about the way society should be and instead focusing on covertly changing their behaviour? It can seem a bit sneaky.

DH: My own view on it is that we have been very open about what we do and we publish details of what we are doing. You can go to the website and you can see examples of our work on consumer behaviour, health or whatever. Even when we run randomised control trials, quite often we are not only testing the efficacy of the approach, we are actually also testing the acceptability of the intervention with the public.

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To go back to the example of the letter, it is a fair question, how does it feel to receive that letter and how does that compare to the alternative? Most people’s reaction is actually that it is fine, and it is appropriate that people should pay their tax. Nevertheless, it is very important that the government and business should be open.

BD: There is huge international interest in this area and I know that you and your team are looking internationally. In your view, which nations are leading the way in behavioural economics and use of social psychology in public policy?

DH: Countries divide into two tiers: those who are already using behaviour economics and social psychology, and those who are just beginning to consider it. In Britain, we are probably using behavioural economics more systematically than anywhere else, as far as we can tell.

The Americans, however, are doing a lot of work in this area, although in a slightly

different way. In the Obama administration, there has been a lot of interest and use of behavioural economics and social psychology in public policy, particularly in relation to smarter regulation. Indeed, Cass Sunstein, co-author of *Nudge*, has been working in the Whitehouse until recently.

There are also a small number of other countries that are doing a fair amount. Singapore, for example, has quite sophisticated thinking in this area and, increasingly, the Nordic countries – Denmark, Norway, Sweden – are maintaining a growing interest. In Denmark, they have Mindlab, which is using ethnography to understand public service users’ experiences, and then trying to redesign the services around them. The Australians have been very interested too and we have recently agreed work with New South Wales.

BD: Have you seen anything particularly good in other countries in terms of applied approaches to behaviour change?

DH: Many countries have been using, or moving towards using, opt outs instead of opt ins in relation to pensions - in the US, Australia and now the British are following suit. Singapore uses behavioural economics in quite a sophisticated way in congestion charging⁴. It is a very small place with little room for cars. Not only do they now have dashboard-top boxes with variable congestion charging in each car, they signal to drivers the levels of cost as they pass through charging zone gantries.

But it’s also important to note that government is not always the major player in what we decide to eat or how we travelled to work for example. For

example, we have seen some interesting work recently from Norway, done largely by an NGO there, to encourage people to buy more efficient consumer appliances.

Even though using behavioural insights is currently fashionable, there are longstanding examples, which are essentially use nudge approaches, even if they are not framed in the language of behavioural insight. For instance, things like the use of rumble strips on motorways and strips on the road to slow you down as you approach a junction are essentially long-standing behavioural insights at work.

BD: Can you tell us more about what your work with New South Wales is going to involve?

DH: We have actually signed a contract with New South Wales to support them and a member of our team has now gone out there.

In New South Wales, they have quite a broad range of interests in a similar way to we do, from public health to growth to employment. Therefore, we think it is a way for them to be able to rapidly absorb some of the lessons we have learned. We think we will learn a lot from it too and they will gain a lot from our experience. It is really win-win.

BD: You wrote the foreword to our report, *Acceptable Behaviour?*⁵, which considered public opinion on behavioural change interventions in 24 countries. The report showed there was a lot of stated support for specific government interventions – maybe more than we expected. But in the same survey a majority also said they didn’t want government interfering in their lives. So how do we square those findings?

DH: The classic response is that we often want government to sort out the behaviour of other people but not our own. There is clearly a lot of truth to that.

We do look sometimes to government to help us and other citizens to do the right thing by setting the default position. Perhaps this shows that the public are genuinely ambivalent about where the government ought to intervene. When you get to concrete examples, then you tend to prise out a clearer public view. In some cases, people would say actually no we do not think the government should go there. In other cases, as the debate unfolds, people say actually we really do think there is a role for government. It would appear that public acceptability of a given behavioural change intervention is not a static concept but something that evolves over time with the issues.

And you have to say, what is the alternative? If the alternative is mandation, then illustrated in your data is that quite often people would rather not have government telling them what they can and can't do. People tend to be ok with the equivalent of the rumble strip on the motorway. If you really want to drive your car into the central reservation you can, but it does not offend your civil liberties deeply to have a rumble strip there to wake you up if you are falling asleep. And that seems to be about the right space for these approaches.

One of the reasons why governments are pulled into intervening, whether they like it or not, and maybe is a driving force for greater acceptability of intervention, is the way that many consumer markets operate. For example, in the UK there has been debate in recently of years around energy markets. We need a very simple product and a small number

of companies have ended up with literally hundreds of energy price tariffs. Therefore, you start to get push back from consumers for simplification and desire for assistance to make it happen.

BD: What the international data also showed was that there was quite a lot of variation in levels of acceptability amongst the 24 countries and you can understand why, given the differences in cultural history. Will something that works well in one place always work well somewhere else?

DH: It is an interesting question. Clearly, some of the content would be different. Our behaviour is strongly influenced by what we see or think other people around us are doing – what psychologists call 'declarative social norms'. Indeed, our behaviour is generally far more influenced by what we see other people doing than what we think they should be doing. And those norms self-evidently vary from place to place. However, the principle of being influenced in this way remains true from one country to another. It is very hard to believe there is a place in the world where we are not influenced by what we see other people doing. And so the fundamental principles are transferable but there will be some differences of content.

Let's face it, a lot of this literature over the last 50 years, was based on experiments with American college students who may not even be representative within America, let alone beyond it. So that is another reason why it is very important for governments and others who are using these behavioural approaches to test their work. And sometimes, we will get surprises.

BD: You are also very involved in the well-being agenda, which has become a focus for many governments around the world. But how well does that sit with the current economic crisis, where we know that the actions to increase well-being and life satisfaction may not fit very well with the steps we need to take to fight our way to economic recovery?

DH: First, the simple empirical point is that the correlation between GDP per capita and life satisfaction across country is higher than 0.8. So, there is no incompatibility. Growth clearly appears to contribute quite substantially to the life satisfaction and well-being of nations and individuals. However, GDP per capita is unsurprisingly not the only factor well-being boils down to.

But growth measures, such as GDP, do not capture everything. There are some quite well known examples where GDP appears to give rather odd answers. When a tsunami hits or there is an oil spill, GDP figures tend to rise. We do not count the destruction but we do count the rebuilding. Thus, there is a well-rehearsed argument about the inadequacies of GDP and that it is worth supplementing.

"The classic response is that we often want government to sort out the behaviour of other people but not our own"

On a deeper level, concerning the choices that we make in life, of course, income is important to your well-being, but there are many other factors. The UK government has now introduced a large well-being measurement programme, with four questions and a huge sample size of 200,000 a year. You can now see these local area variations and control for factors such as deprivation.

Canada, for example, has done an analysis considering questions such as how a person feels about their neighbours, and if they know their name, and do they trust them, and how long is their commute, and do they live close to water, and all kinds of other factors. Now it is not necessarily for government to drive all those factors but it is to at least reveal the fundamental drivers of well-being to give you a holistic view of what your choices are as a government, as a community and as individuals. I see the well-being agenda as like flipping from a black and white TV to colour. It just gives you these rich extra textures and colours to inform what we do.

BD: So you cannot see well-being or life satisfaction being a target built into policy assessment, so that we track as it moves in one direction or another like economic growth?

DH: We are certainly not at that point in the UK. It is very much more about, using measures of well-being to help us see a wider range of issues in the choices that we make.

In the UK, in order to have some clear thinking on this issue, we have asked Lord (Gus) O'Donnell⁶, to look at how well-being can have real and practical policy implications on the individual level, the community and regional level, and at

the national and global level. He is doing it with Legatum Institute which itself is very interested in cross-national prosperity measures. For Gus, it is very much not just a UK question but also something that raises questions for other countries and for development more broadly.

BD: Are there other countries, which are further down that road to embedding this into policy-making?

DH: Well Bhutan is always quoted, of course, and they sponsored a UN debate in April this year, to think about well-being. The OECD has also certainly been active on the measurement side to try to have some standardisation of measures. On the policy side, I think we are at much earlier stages.

It is also of great interest in the European Commission and for its President, Jose Manuel Barroso. It was striking, at one point he actually sent out in a Christmas letter to European leaders, a book on well-being and happiness. He is certainly thinking about it and perhaps some of the leaders who receive that are too. I think politicians are still wary about being over-prescriptive, particularly at a time when sorting out the economy has to be a number one priority.

BD: And finally then, in your view, what is the one thing we do need to do to make a happier nation?

DH: Well I do not know about a happier nation, but certainly, in your own life, it is other people. The relational agenda or dimension tends to be a little bit neglected.

BD: Well. It's hard to argue with that! Thank you for your time. ■

Biography

Dr David Halpern is a senior fellow at the Institute for Government, currently on secondment to both No.10 and the Cabinet Office full time to head the Behavioural Insight Team.

Dr Halpern previously worked as Chief Analyst in the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit (2001-2007). He led numerous reviews, including the UK Government's Strategic Audits and recent Policy Reviews; set up the Social Exclusion Task Force and drafted its Action Plan; and authored many of the Strategy Unit's most influential papers, such as on Life Satisfaction and on Personal Responsibility and Behaviour Change. Before entering government, Dr Halpern held tenure at the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Cambridge University, where he remains an Affiliated Lecturer. He has also held posts at Nuffield College, Oxford; the Policy Studies Institute, London; and as a Visiting Professor at the Centre for European Studies, Harvard.

He has published widely including books on Hidden Wealth of Nations (2009); Social Capital (2005); Options for Britain: a strategic policy review (1996) and Options for a New Britain (2009), and Mental Health and the Built Environment (1995).

1. <http://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/our-work/better-policy-making/mindspace-behavioural-economics>

2. <http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/>

3. <http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/sa/index.htm>

4. <http://www.dac.dk/en/dac-cities/sustainable-cities-2/show-theme/transport/singapore-the-worlds-first-digital-congestion-charging-system/?bbredirect=true>

5. <http://www.ipsos-mori.com/researchpublications/publications/1454/Acceptable-Behaviour.aspx>

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Europe sans Frontières?



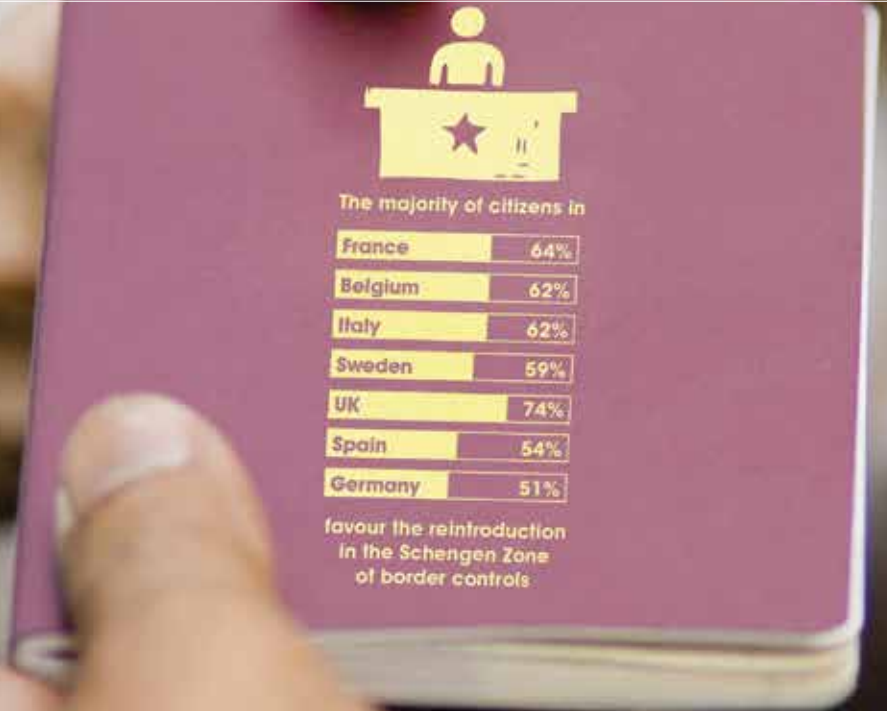
Bobby Duffy



Tom Frere-Smith



Andrew Johnson



Close-run election campaigns often reveal politicians' perceptions of public opinion more clearly than when they are in power. The scramble for votes focuses their minds on what they think people want to hear. Recent elections in Europe have highlighted that political leaders across the spectrum are now much more sensitive to public concerns about immigration.

For example, in the French Presidential elections, Nicolas Sarkozy placed significant emphasis on anti-immigrant rhetoric in the last few weeks of his campaign. Among many pronouncements, this included a threat to remove France from the Schengen area, the zone of passport-free travel in continental Europe. Obviously, this was partly aimed at capturing the votes previously won by Marine Le Pen, the National Front candidate, but it reflected a broader assessment of popular opinion, that in times of crisis, a leader needs to be seen to look after their own citizens first.

Clearly, it did not work for Sarkozy. It would be wrong, however, to think that the election of François Hollande is bringing with it a radical softening of the political discourse on immigration in France. While Hollande was less open than Sarkozy in courting the Le Pen voters, he was willing to acknowledge their anger and promised to ensure it is heard when he is in office, and he has argued that limiting economic immigration is essential in a period of crisis.

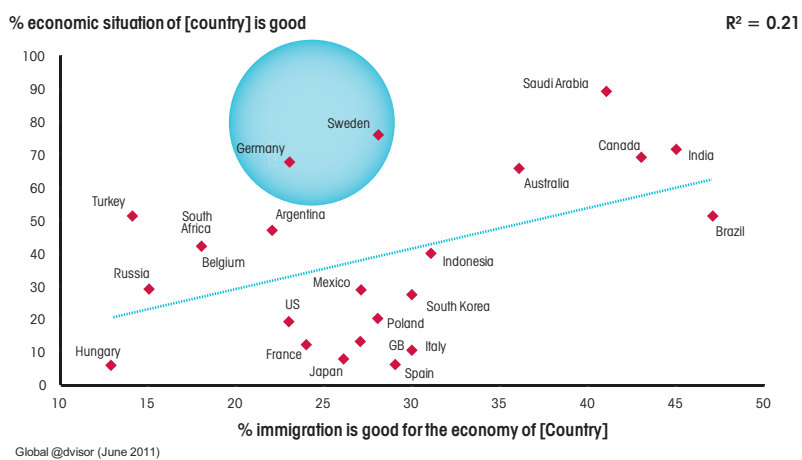
This recognition of public concern about immigration is as politically necessary elsewhere in Europe as it is in France. Across the continent, economic stagnation, high unemployment and public sector cuts provide a context in which immigrants are likely to be seen as

a drain on increasingly finite resources and a threat to limited opportunities, particularly in the workplace.

Our global poll of 24 countries on attitudes to immigration included nine EU member states, and it shows that the majority of people in seven of them

this is not the whole explanation: concern about immigration has been high in many European countries even in times of economic growth. Nevertheless, it does make the point that a more open outlook on immigration in Europe may only follow when citizens are feeling more confident about their economic prospects.

Where consumer confidence is high generally, so tend to be views about the economic impact of immigration



regard immigration as having had a negative impact on their country, with Sweden and Poland the only exceptions. Most citizens think there are too many immigrants in their country, and this tends to correlate most strongly with the perception that immigrants place a burden on public services.

Moreover, the broader economic context is vital to this. There is a range of attitudes towards the economic impact of immigration, but interestingly, these views bear little relation to the actual proportion of immigrants or actual GDP growth in each country. However, there is a much closer link with the overall level of consumer confidence in each country (albeit with some exceptions such as Germany and Sweden, where despite a positive outlook, people are no more likely to think immigration has brought positive economic benefits). Of course,

Europeans' notable focus on the perceived negative aspects of immigration may have also diluted their appreciation of immigration's potential benefits. Compared to countries elsewhere in the world, the survey shows that European citizens are the least willing to accept that immigrants make their country a more interesting place to live.

These negative public attitudes towards immigration are of course influencing political calculations. Sarkozy's threat to remove France from Schengen during the election could be seen as electioneering, but concern with the vulnerability of being in the Schengen zone is real and shared by other member governments, including Germany's, which co-signed the letter to the EU demanding increased rights for nations to reinstate border controls.

The failure to stem illegal migration across the Greek border with Turkey has been a key focus of concern, and that is the main area identified for action in the EU's first "health check" of Schengen, published in the summer.¹ This review found that 75% of illegal immigrants entering the Schengen area originate from Greece. Rather than seeing this as a reason for giving control back to individual countries, the EU concludes that more needs to be done to help Greece control its external borders.

The separate stalling of Romania and Bulgaria's accession to the zone also stems partly from a concern that moving the EU's external border further east will make it even more vulnerable to illegal migration², particularly given that Bulgaria's border with Turkey is as wide as Greece's. Limiting their exposure to the current problems associated with Schengen is seen to be critical by many governments if they are to address the concerns of their citizens.

Nevertheless, EU Commissioners are wary of the extent to which these concerns are causing governments to endanger the freedom of movement, goods and services which is "central to the European project", as highlighted by Cecilia Malmström, who is responsible

Remaining sensitive to these concerns will be important for politicians who are conscious of the need to keep the extreme-Right marginalised.

for Home Affairs at the EC. Malmström is also right to say that "European countries must finally and honestly acknowledge that, like the United States, Canada and Australia, they are lands of immigrants..." – but it is just very difficult to see that happening even in the medium-term.

That is partly because Stefano Manservigi, Director-General at DG Home Affairs is also correct when he says, "the mistrust is among citizens, not just among member states. Schengen is being held hostage to politics for electoral purposes".

More positively, Commissioners, eager to ensure decisions are reached consensually, can point to the fact that six in ten EU citizens think decisions about immigration should be made jointly with the EU rather than unilaterally, according to a 2011 Eurobarometer report.³

However, support for joint decision-making is only likely to exist if it fortifies the EU against unwanted migration; findings from Eurobarometer also show immigration policy is the key area the public want European institutions to strengthen. Security rather than freedom is the name of the day for many Europeans when it comes to managing migration.

And as such, the future of Schengen is in doubt, if you listen to the public at least. Our survey found that a majority of citizens in France (64%), Belgium (62%), Italy (62%), Sweden (59%), Spain (54%) and Germany (51%) favour the reintroduction of border controls in the Schengen zone, while citizens of Britain, a country not even in Schengen, are the most in favour (74%) of bringing borders back to the region! Only in Poland do more people oppose reintroducing border controls than support it. Amongst

those in favour, the need to control immigration and improve security are the reasons most frequently cited.

The task facing national politicians and EU policymakers then is a difficult one. Our findings show immigration is causing profound concerns across Europe; the support for reintroducing border controls implies that membership of Schengen is now seen by most European citizens as a vulnerability rather than an opportunity. Remaining sensitive to these concerns will be important for politicians who are conscious of the need to keep the extreme Right marginalised. EU policymakers, on the other hand, will see it as their responsibility to act as a brake on knee-jerk unilateralism.

A tug of war between the two sides has ensued over the issue of Schengen, and much is at stake. To borrow from Tony Judt, the great European historian, the survival of the European project in the 21st century depends "a lot on how Europeans [respond] to the non-Europeans in their midst and at their borders." As with so much about Europe, external threats appear to do as much to heighten internal tensions as galvanise a common response. Which wins out will be an important indicator of where Europe is heading.

So the EU needs to hold fast in its defence of Schengen. To give ground would not address the real problem — it would just threaten the free movement of people, trade and money that European economies need now more than ever. ■

1. http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-is-new/news/news/2012/20120516_en.htm

2. <http://www.eubusiness.com/news-eu/bulgaria-romania.amv>

3. http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb76/eb76_en.htm

The kids are online, but are they alright?



Steven Ginnis



Julia Pye



Alice Barbosa



Economic recovery is not the only global challenge requiring a global response. The continuing evolution of the internet brings with it both risks and opportunities for children, which require policy makers, industry and parents to work together – across international boundaries – to help children navigate the online world safely. Research conducted by Ipsos MORI for the ‘Kids Online’ project gives some clues about how to approach a thorny issue.

For large parts of the world’s population, the internet has revolutionised many aspects of life, from shopping and music to journalism and learning. A recent report demonstrated the growing importance of the internet to the world economy: over five years, the internet contributed an average 21% in GDP growth in mature countries.¹ Companies that

use the internet more are, on average, more profitable than less heavy users.² The great personal and economic advantages of the internet come with some risks, though. At a personal level, many users are concerned about fraud, internet content, and threats to privacy.³ Nationally and internationally, the growing significance of the internet increases the risks posed by cybercrime and threats to online security: both Interpol and Europol recently announced they will be setting up dedicated units to counter these threats. While many are concerned about these risks, there is also concern about the possible solutions, and particularly government censorship; for example, recent Russian legislation that allows the government to remove sites from the internet deemed unsuitable for children has been criticised as limiting citizens’ freedom.⁴

One great area of debate is how to help today’s generation of ‘digital natives’ safely navigate the internet and take advantage of its many opportunities. Research conducted by Ipsos MORI for the London School of Economics and Political Science’s ‘Kids Online’ project for the European Commission interviewed 1,000 internet-using children aged 9-16 and their parents in each of 25 European countries, as well as Australia and Brazil, using a standard questionnaire and methodology. The research was wide-ranging in scope, but one of its premises was that to protect children against the risks they experience on the internet effectively, we must first properly understand the nature and prevalence of those risks. In this article, we take a brief look at some of those risks and the challenges of protecting children against them.⁵

A shifting challenge

One of the challenges for monitoring and regulating children’s use of the internet is that increasing numbers of ever-younger children are accessing new types of content, and via new platforms: the nature of the risks children are exposed to evolve rapidly, as will the most effective means of protecting children against them.

Findings from recent research underline just how entrenched internet use is among children: 75% of European children aged 6-17 used the internet in 2008, up from 70% in 2005.⁶ What is striking from the EU Kids Online data is how much the internet is a part of everyday life for its young users: 59% of internet-using 9-16 year olds go online every day or almost every day, and 93% at least once a week. On average, when they use the internet, these children spend 88 minutes per day online, with 15-16 year olds spending an average 118 minutes per day on the internet. The findings go some way to endorsing a recent comment made by Google chair Eric Schmidt about today’s children: “if they’re awake, they’re online”⁷.

Children are accessing the internet at younger ages too, which brings the challenge of providing for and protecting these younger users.⁸ EU Kids Online shows that, on average, children first use the internet when they are 9 years old, but this varies by country: in Denmark and Sweden the average age for first accessing the internet is 7. Across Europe, 19% of 9-16 year old internet users had first been online at age 7 or younger.

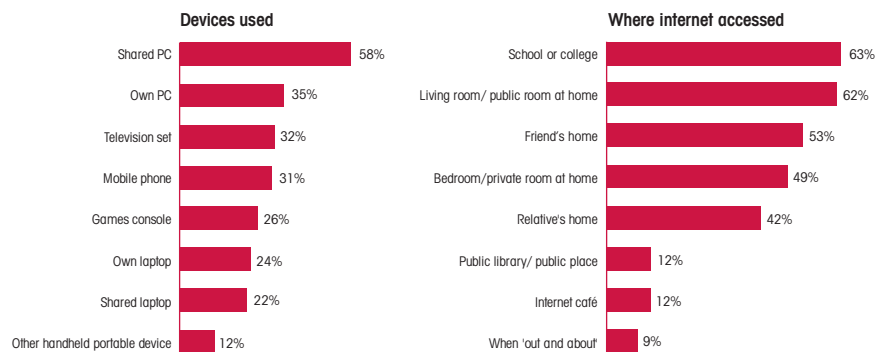
The ways children are accessing the internet are also evolving rapidly. The majority of internet-using children go

online at home or at school (chart 1). However, children are accessing the internet in other locations and via new platforms too: 31% now access the internet from their mobile phone. As smartphone and tablet use expands, EU Kids Online shows that traditional advice to parents about locating PCs in living rooms is becoming redundant.⁹ Likewise, children’s online pursuits change. US research has shown how children’s use of internet chatrooms has become less significant over the past few years, being superseded by social networking sites, and a new set of risks to young users.¹⁰ Across Europe, 38% of 9-12 year olds and 77% of 13-16 year olds have a profile on a social networking site. Regular monitoring of children’s changing online activities will continue to be important.

over half engage in more sophisticated contacts with others such as playing games with others online, sharing files, and downloading films and music. A quarter of children are involved in creating content such as blogging and file sharing.

EU Kids demonstrates the close links between opportunities and risks: children who use the internet more, and who are more proficient users, are also exposed to more risks. This is played out at the national level: countries with higher rates of internet use in general have a higher proportion of children being bothered by things they have seen online. This is particularly the case for the Nordic countries such as Denmark, Estonia, Sweden and Norway (chart 2).

Chart 1: Use of the internet amongst Europe’s children



Base: 25,125 9 - 16 year old children across 25 European countries
Source: EU Kids Online

Opportunity means risk, but risk doesn’t always mean harm

EU Kids shows how children are taking advantage of the opportunities that the internet offers, in terms of learning, creative self-expression, and socialising. Three-quarters of children use the internet to communicate with others, and to read and watch the news, and

For those involved in monitoring and regulating children’s use of the internet - from parents and teachers to policy-makers - the problem is that the best way of protecting children is not necessarily removing their exposure to risk, because this is likely to limit the benefits they gain from going online. The notion of digital exclusion exemplifies this point: in countries with lower rates of internet

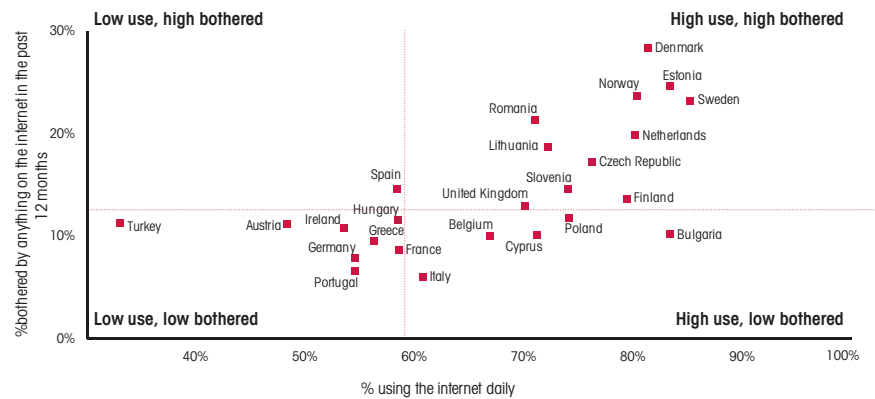
penetration, and for the lowest socio-economic groups in many countries, not being able to access the internet and the opportunities it brings is damaging in itself. Equipping children to deal effectively with the risks they encounter online may be a more effective strategy.

A good case in point is Australia, where there have been concerted efforts to raise awareness of internet safety, and Australian parents are very active in mediating and restricting their children's use of the internet. Despite efforts to protect children from being exposed to risk, Australian children are twice as likely as those in Europe to say things they have seen on the internet have bothered them.¹¹

Children's exposure to risk does not inevitably result in them suffering harm.¹² The great majority (88%) of European children we surveyed said they had not been upset or bothered by going online, or by the risks they'd encountered, although 12% of 9-16 year olds had been bothered by something on the internet. While of course any threat to children is worrying, it falls well short of the 41% of children who reported being exposed to one of the seven risk factors we asked about.¹³

The EU Kids Online survey focussed mainly on children's exposure to four types of risk: seeing sexual images, receiving sexual messages,¹⁴ being bullied and meeting online contacts offline. Of these risks we focussed on, online bullying was the factor that children were most likely to have been upset about if they had experienced it. Six percent had been sent nasty or hurtful messages online, and over half of them were very or fairly upset by it. Other risks, such as meeting people online, or

Chart 2: High uses of the internet are more likely to have been bothered by anything online in the past year



Base: 25,125 9 - 16 year old children across 25 European countries
Source: EU Kids Online

seeing pornographic images, were more prevalent but - in children's eyes at least - less likely to result in harm.¹⁵

Comparing data across countries shows that there is no relationship at a national level between children's levels of exposure to risk and levels of harm;¹⁶ furthermore, there is no relationship either between levels of internet use and harm. The data do not suggest children become desensitised to risk the more they experience - in general, the more risks children have experienced, the more they have been upset by - but instead underline how children's propensity to suffer harm goes beyond simply being exposed to risk, and the amount of risk they've been exposed to.

While the four key risks the survey focused on are deserving of public attention, the data indicate children may be as upset by a range of other risk factors. One in five 11-16 year olds (21%) had seen potentially harmful user-generated content, such as hate sites, pro-anorexia sites or drug forums, in the past year. While we did not ask directly whether children found this content upsetting, 44% of children who had seen this type

of negative user-generated content also said they had been bothered by something they had seen on the internet in the past year. Being alert to the types of content children may find upsetting will be an ongoing challenge.

A national as well as global challenge

Despite being an inherently global issue, the best means of effectively promoting and legislating for safe internet use depends on the national context, and local cultural issues will be important. For example, in contrast to EU countries a high proportion of children in Brazil (35%) access the internet via cybercafés or internet cafes ('lanhouses'), which is not much less than the proportion accessing at school (42%) or in their own living room (40%), meaning that Brazilian parents are relatively limited in their ability to monitor their children's online activities directly. Furthermore, the Kids Online data underlines that online issues often correspond to offline issues: countries with higher rates of offline bullying also have higher rates of online bullying, for example.



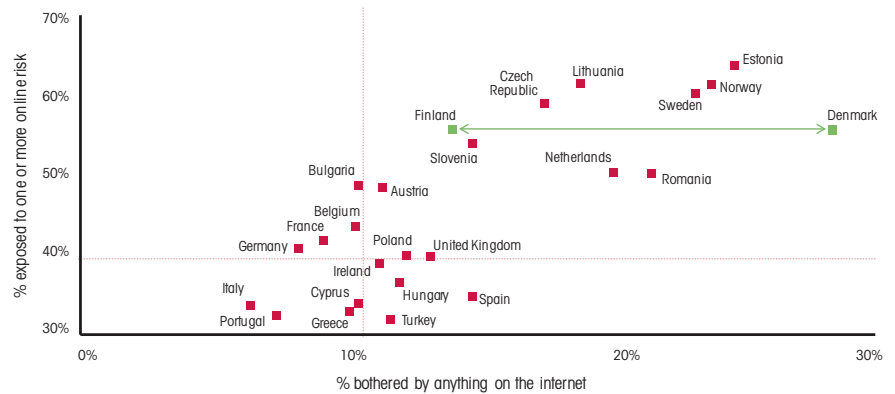
Nevertheless, some comparisons across countries will be instructive in identifying the best ways to protect children. Different regulatory practices are used across countries, with some favouring industry self-regulation and others central legislation; different levels and types of parental mediation are encouraged and promoted in different nations too¹⁷. While there is a broad correspondence between the proportion of children in a country exposed to risk and the proportion who have been bothered by going online, there are some cases where children are exposed to similar levels of risk but experience different levels of concern (see Denmark and Finland, for example, in chart 3). The reasons behind these differences are worthy of further exploration.

Across Europe, **38%** of 9-12 year olds and **77%** of 13-16 year olds have a profile on a social networking site

And finally

Ever-greater numbers of children are taking advantage of the opportunities offered by the internet. In doing so, a large number of children are exposed to risks online, and although most are not bothered by what they see a minority are upset. Coming to a shared agreement, globally and nationally, about the right level of protection for children will be difficult. Equally difficult is determining who – from among parents, teachers, society, the internet industry, and government – is responsible for meeting the many challenges of protecting children. Kids Online will not be the final word on coming to terms with the complex and shifting problems of how best to provide for and protect young internet users, but the research collaboration sets an example of the high value of international coordination on an issue that is global in scale and scope.¹⁸ ■

Chart 3: Exposure to online risk and being bothered by anything online are linked but not always...



Base: 25,125 9 - 16 year old children across 25 European countries
Source: EU Kids Online

One in five 11-16 year olds (21%) had seen potentially harmful user-generated content, such as hate sites, pro-anorexia sites or drug forums, in the past year

1. http://www.mckinsey.com/features/sizing_the_internet_economy

2. http://www.mckinsey.com/features/sizing_the_internet_economy

3. http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/bsp/hi/pdfs/08_03_10_BBC_internet_poll.pdf

4. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-20096274>

5. Findings quoted here relate to the 25 European countries surveyed as part of the first phase of the research.

6. Livingstone, S, and Haddon, L (2009) EU Kids Online: Final report. LSE, London: EU Kids Online. (EC Safer Internet Plus Programme Deliverable D6.5) www.eukidsonline.net

7. <http://www.itpro.co.uk/640864/google-government-controls-are-the-internets-biggest-threat>

8. EuroBarometer data shows that the proportion of young children accessing the internet rose from 43% of 6-9 year olds in 2005 to 60% of 6-10 year olds in 2008 - the age categories used by EuroBarometer changed between 2005 and 2008. Towards a safer use of the Internet for children in the EU – a parents' perspective (2008) http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/sip/docs/eurobarometer/analyticalreport_2008.pdf

9. Livingstone, S, et al (September 2011), Final Report: EU Kids Online II. LSE, London (EC Safer Internet programme Deliverable 8.3). www.eukidsonline.net

10. Findings from the Pew Internet Project quoted in OECD (2011), "The Protection of Children Online: Risks Faced by Children Online and Policies to Protect Them", OECD Digital Economy Papers, No. 179, OECD Publishing.

11. Livingstone, S, et al (September 2011), Final Report: EU Kids Online II. LSE, London (EC Safer Internet programme Deliverable 8.3).

12. Livingstone, S, et al (September 2011), Final Report: EU Kids Online II. LSE, London (EC Safer Internet programme Deliverable 8.3).

13. The seven risks asked about were: seeing sexual images, receiving sexual messages, being bullied, meeting online contacts offline, seeing potentially harmful user-generated content, and experiencing data misuse

14. Asked of 11-16 year olds only

15. For example, 9% of children reported meeting face to face with someone they had first met online, of whom 11% (1% of all children) were upset by the experience.

16. For example, 32% of children in Finland have experienced at least one of the four main risks asked about, of which seven per cent said they were very or fairly upset by at least one of their experiences. In contrast, children in Turkey are half as likely to have experienced one of the risks (16%) but the children who have experienced the risk are four times as likely to say were very or fairly upset (29%).

17. Livingstone, S, and Haddon, L (2009) EU Kids Online: Final report. LSE, London: EU Kids Online. (EC Safer Internet Plus Programme Deliverable D6.5) www.eukidsonline.net

18. Ipsos MORI interviewed 25,142 children aged 9-16 and one of their parents face-to-face in their homes across 25 European countries. Children completed questions about online risks in a private self-completion format. The same methodology was used by Ipsos teams in Australia and Brazil. For more information about the Kids Online project please see www.eukidsonline.net.

Evaluation in international development

Money well spent?



Kelly Beaver



Kate Duxbury



Leila Tavakoli



At the beginning of November, the panel appointed by the UN Secretary General to advise him on the post-2015 international development agenda met for the second time in London. 2015 is the expiry date for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), eight targets ratified at the turn of the millennium with the aim of improving the lives and prospects of those living in lower income countries.

Progress towards the goals has been made. The aim to reduce extreme poverty by half has been achieved five years ahead of schedule, as has the target of halving the proportion of people who lack dependable access to improved sources of drinking water. Primary school enrolment of girls now equals that of boys, and the conditions for more than 200 million people living in slums have improved¹.

Internationally it is clear that more work is needed to join the dots between increasing transparency and increasing public confidence

However, given some ambitious objectives such as reducing the child mortality rate by two-thirds and the maternal mortality rate by three-quarters between 1990 and 2015, it is unlikely the world is going to meet all the deadlines. The High Level Panel has therefore been tasked with recommending how the global community should continue to respond to the challenges of international development in the post-MDG landscape.

One of the three co-Chairs of the panel is the UK Prime Minister, David Cameron. International development appears to be relatively high on Mr Cameron's list of priorities. Back in October 2010, his coalition government announced as part of its Comprehensive Spending Review that increased resources would be allocated to overseas development aid (ODA), despite simultaneously making significant reductions to the budgets of most UK government departments.

This September at the United Nations General Assembly in New York, David Cameron reaffirmed that the UK will meet its goal of spending 0.7% of its gross national income on ODA by 2013. The 0.7% pledge is a multi-national one, shared by all the original member states of the European Union and already being met in five (Norway, Sweden, Netherlands, Denmark and Luxembourg)². However, the UK Prime Minister's recommitment to it is somewhat bold, given the objections to such policies he faces at home.

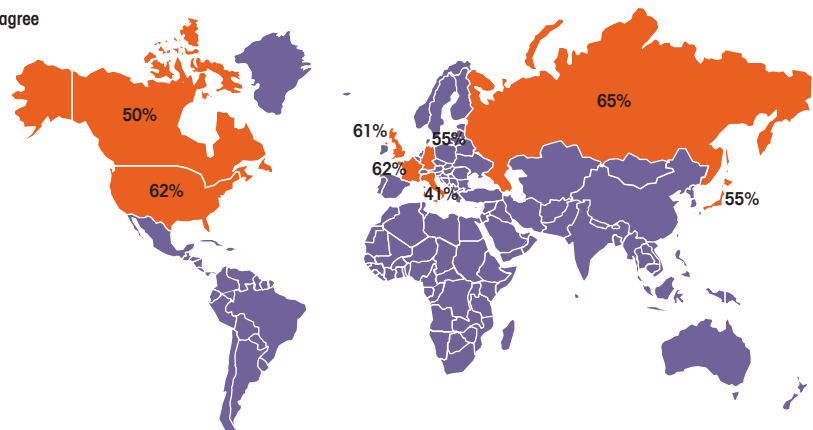
At times of economic austerity, support for overseas development aid comes under pressure. Indeed our latest data shows that over half of the British public think "most of the money the UK government spends on financial aid to poor countries is wasted". This is a view shared by the populations of the traditional donor countries, including six of the G8.

In most G8 countries people think international development aid is wasted

How far do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

Most of the money... government spends on financial aid to poor countries is wasted.

% agree

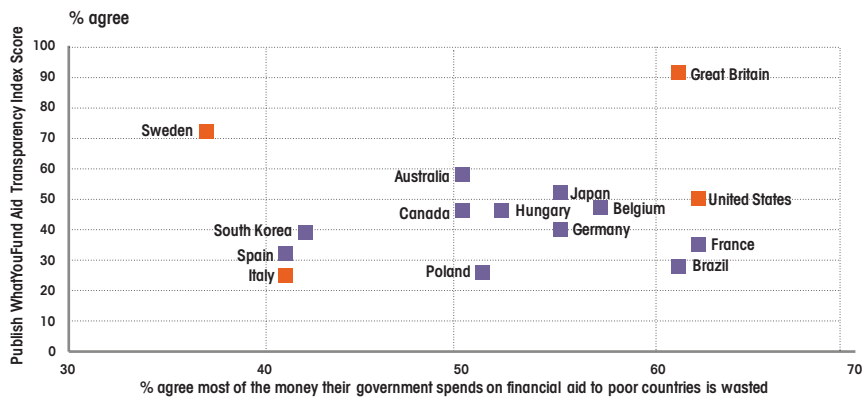


Base: 7622 adults, interviewed online via Global @dviser, 3-17th July 2012

Source: Ipsos MORI

There is little correlation between transparency surrounding aid spending and whether the public think the money is wasted

% who agree that most of the money their government spends on financial aid to poor countries is wasted vs. PublishWhatYouFund Aid Transparency Index Score



Base: 18782 adults, interviewed online via Global @dviser, 3-17th July 2012.

Source: Ipsos MORI and PublishWhatYouFund

This lack of public confidence in spending on overseas development aid is nothing new. What is relatively new, however, is the call for any increase in spending in this field to be accompanied by greater accountability. This is a need David Cameron's government has made concerted efforts to respond to.

Since 2010, it has sought to put mechanisms in place to make the results achieved through international development interventions and spending more transparent to the public. The Independent Commission for Aid Impact (ICAI) has been set up to independently review the impact, effectiveness and value for money of the UK aid budget and report to back to Parliament. The government has also made a commitment under the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) to make information about aid spending easier to find, use and compare.

While the UK government may be seen as leading the way, internationally it is clear that more work is needed to join the dots between increasing transparency and increasing public confidence, as analysis of our own data compared against Publish WhatYouFund's latest

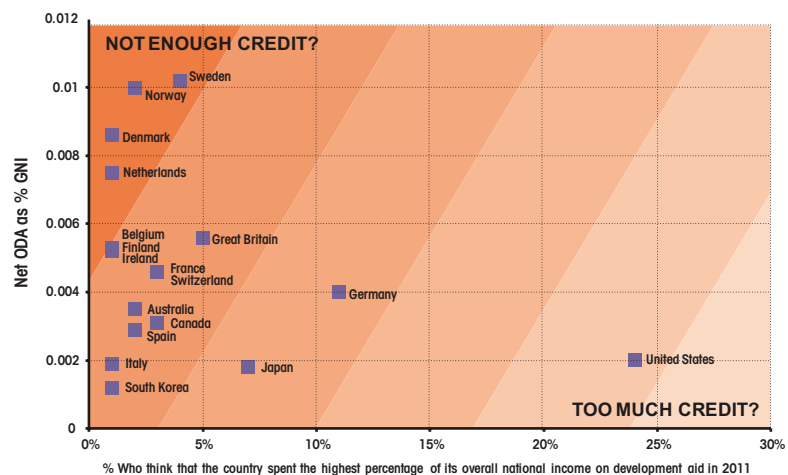
Aid Transparency Index shows³. There is not much correlation between how transparent a government is about its ODA spending and the proportion of its electorate which thinks the spending is wasted. This is particularly evident when comparing the UK and the USA. The UK scores highest on the Aid Transparency Index (no doubt at least partly due to the work of the ICAI and its commitment under IATI), but almost exactly the same proportion of the UK population think most of the money its government spends on aid is wasted as that of the USA population, which has a transparency index score of almost

half that of the UK. Sweden performs the best, scoring relatively highly on the Aid Transparency Index and also has the least critical public view; fewer than two in five agree that their financial aid to poorer countries is wasted. However this is only slightly lower than Italy, which also has a low transparency score. This data suggests that the jump between greater transparency and public support for aid spending is not necessarily automatic.

Our data also shows that those countries which spend the most, proportional to their income, on overseas development aid do not get the credit they deserve from the public. A quarter of people we asked in 15 countries around the world think the USA spent the highest percentage of its overall national income on development aid in 2011 out of a list of countries. It actually spends 0.2% of its gross national income on ODA and Sweden, which spends 1.2% of its gross national income on ODA, is only cited by 4% of those asked as being the biggest spender proportionally. There is clearly a disconnect here between the public's perceptions of international development spending and the reality.

Perceptions of international aid spending do not match reality

% who think that the country spent the highest percentage of its overall national income on development aid in 2011 vs. net overseas development aid as a percentage of gross national income



Base: 18782 adults, interviewed online via Global @dviser, 3-17th July 2012.

Source: Ipsos MORI and OECD, <http://www.oecd.org/dac/aidstatistics/50060310.pdf>

So, whilst mechanisms such as IATI and ICAI, which increase transparency and accountability for aid spending, represent significant progress, it is important to recognise that their true value is limited by the quality of information which they use to produce their assessments. Furthermore while these two are focussed on holding government to account rather than on public views, more broadly it seems as if there is some way to go before the global public can be convinced that ODA spending is achieving all that it should. A significant and growing answer to these questions comes from independent evaluation outputs and hence the quality and rigour of these evaluations has become of paramount importance in the current climate.

As the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) states,

'Robust, independent evaluation of development programmes provides information about what works, what does not and why. This learning contributes to improving the development effectiveness of aid and helps hold donors and partner country governments accountable for results.'⁴⁷

Until recently challenges linked to collecting robust evidence in a development context would all too frequently be cited and accepted in place of robust evidence. The ability to hold donors to account was limited as a result. With a heightened focus on evidence of results from aid spend this is no longer deemed acceptable.

Many donor organisations have been working on developing or improving their evaluation policies in recent years.

For example DFID have been consulting on an update to their 2009 policy⁵, and AusAid⁶ and USAID⁷ have also worked to update theirs. These policies reflect the importance that donor governments are placing on enhancing the quality of evidence available to assess the effectiveness of their aid programmes.

The developing country context undoubtedly presents challenges in collecting robust evidence about what drives the relative success or failure of an intervention. Such challenges include

limited baseline data availability, conflict environments, corruption, and the constrained ability to gather views from the end beneficiaries. However there are now a growing range of tools at the evaluator's disposal, ranging from more scientifically robust methods such as experimental (randomised control trials)⁸ and quasi-experimental approaches through to the new opportunities offered by mobile telephones and SMS surveys to gather beneficiaries' self-reported assessment of the impacts on their lives.

The growth of technology within developing countries, and particularly the widespread use of mobile telephones, provides a multitude of opportunities for providing ongoing monitoring and evaluation of an intervention. This is an opportunity recognised in the ICAI's report *Effectiveness and Value for Money: 'Intended beneficiaries of an aid programme are the best judges of its impact on their lives'*. Although capturing beneficiaries' views may still be difficult, especially in remote geographical areas, with mobile technology this is becoming less of a problem.' This is an approach Ipsos has used among farming communities in rural African communities, as a low-cost feedback loop from farmers.

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation is working with partners in East Africa as part of the Foundation's Agricultural Development initiative to invest across the complete agricultural value chain, from improved seeds and crops to market access and related research. The focus is on small rural households whose livelihoods depend completely on farming activities. The Foundation funds agricultural projects that provide quality farming inputs, supplies, productive farming techniques, access to markets, relevant agricultural information,

and supportive policy on agriculture development. Voice of the Farmer (VoF) was designed to address the challenges of monitoring the effectiveness of these agricultural programs targeting smallholder farmers by providing low-cost, quick, timely, quantitative, regular, scalable research activities that can complement monitoring and evaluation efforts and provide information that allows mid-way project adaptations and guidance for activities. Ipsos was appointed to work alongside agricultural NGOs to assist with a one year pilot project that uses telephony technology (voice survey, SMS, bulk SMS, & inbound calls) to provide frequent feedback from the farmers to the NGOs, allowing NGOs to action and change/refine their interventions accordingly. This involved working with the NGOs to design a Monitoring & Evaluation requirement and tools, and to implement the data collection processes. On average 5,000 voice surveys and 500 SMS surveys were carried out monthly over 8 months.

This project, amongst others, has enabled us to demonstrate that SMS surveys can reach a large proportion of the population in some developing countries and can therefore provide a cost-effective, real-time feedback mechanism.

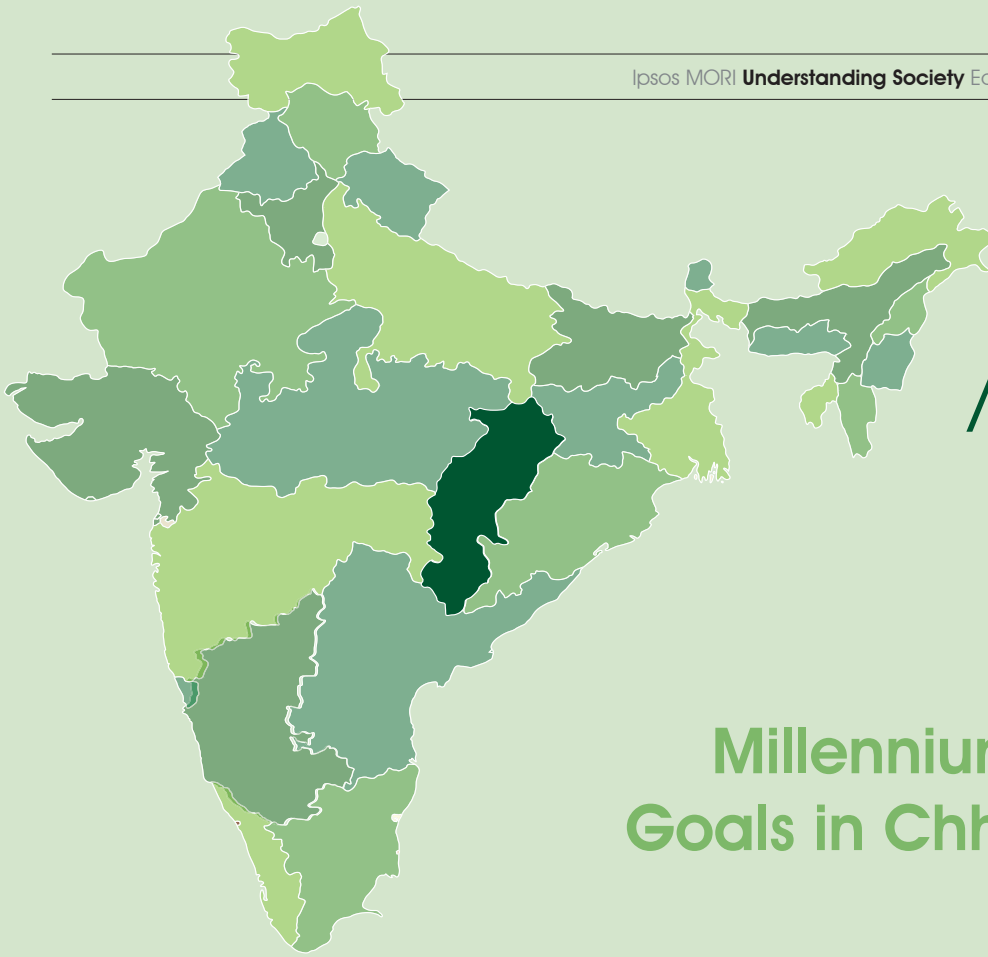


Oxfam have been doing some interesting work which we recently had the opportunity to peer review. Their Effectiveness Review process, which is a form of quasi-experimental approach, attempts to determine with some degree of rigour the difference their interventions have made in developing communities by assessing the effects of the intervention on a group of beneficiaries against the experiences of a group of non-beneficiaries who exhibited similar characteristics. Ensuring understanding and buy-in to the evaluation and research processes from those who are delivering the projects in developing communities was key for the value of this work. In order to deliver this approach, they have been working to build the evaluation and research skills and capabilities of their country team staff so that they had the capacity to assist with the management of the research, but also to understand what the findings meant for them.

Professor Robert Picciotto of Kings College London and previously Director General, Evaluation at the World Bank believes that 'rather than seeking a methodological silver bullet, the widespread public yearning for social accountability will be sated when development evaluations are fully independent and equipped with the full panoply of evaluation tools.' Every evaluation brings with it a different set of objectives, questions and challenges and this means there is no typical or standardised approach to gathering robust evidence. Evaluators must draw on the extending range of tools and select those most appropriate for each different case, to deliver a high quality and appropriate evaluation. ■

Our data also shows that those countries which spend the most, proportional to their income, on overseas development aid do not get the credit they deserve from the public

1. <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/mdg/the-millennium-development-goals-report-2012>
2. <http://www.parliament.uk/briefing-papers/SN03714.pdf>
3. <http://www.publishwhatyoufund.org/index/2012-index/>
4. <http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluationofdevelopmentprogrammes/>
5. <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Documents/publications1/evaluation/evaluation-policy.pdf>
6. <http://www.ode.usaid.gov.au/publications/documents/ode-evaluation-policy.pdf>
7. http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PDACS999.pdf
8. Randomised Control Trials - Development of a randomisation of those eligible for an intervention between treatment groups (those that will be exposed to the intervention) and control groups (those that will not be exposed to the intervention)



A local focus:

Achieving the Millennium Development Goals in Chhattisgarh, India



Tripti Sharma

Background:

In the year 2000, 189 nations signed up to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). A set of 8 goals, 21 targets and 60 indicators to be met by 2015 was agreed, as member nations of the UN committed themselves to end poverty and hunger, promoting human well being and protecting the environment.

There has been criticism of the uneven progress towards reaching the goals. Some countries have realised many of the goals, while others are not on track to realise any. Even within countries such as India, on track to meet some of the development targets, progress has been irregular. In India, there are two trends: notable economic growth and wealth creation and stagnation in key social indicators, particularly among disadvantaged populations in rural areas. This split between the urban and the rural extends almost to two parallel societies with vastly different standards of living and purchasing powers.

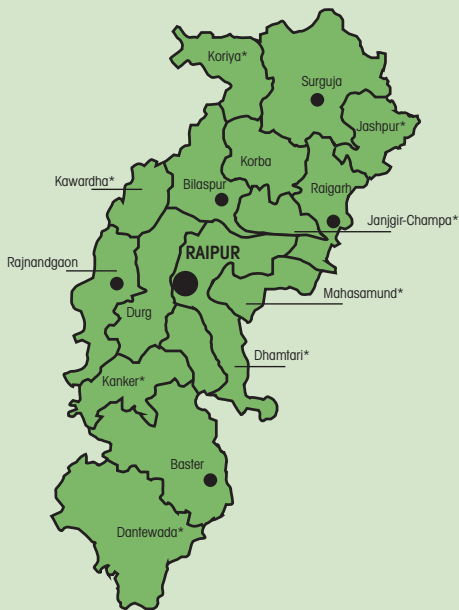
As the deadline approaches, India, like many other developing countries, finds itself in a complex mélange of successes and failures, speed and sluggishness against a backdrop of great expectations.

The current progress, according to the national reporting¹, positions India at a critical juncture. It recognises and confirms the possibility of achieving the goals of eradication of extreme poverty and hunger, achieving universal primary education, promoting gender equality and empowering women, and improving maternal health, but only if changes are made. Literacy, nutrition, maternal mortality, and child mortality have been identified as areas that require redoubled efforts. The responsibility for implementing most of the social sector programmes relating to the MDGs lies with the state governments, who have been given their own targets.

A major task identified for India is improving and strengthening service

delivery and capacity development at district and local levels. As India has geared itself for achieving the MDGs with the launch of various national flagship programmes, strengthening the local service delivery and building capacity is imperative in order to implement and monitor the very large programmes this entails. Social, economic, and political inclusion, decreasing the incidence of violence (gender/caste based) and reduction of regional inequalities require determined effort to promote greater access to basic services by vulnerable groups (such as women, dalits, tribal groups, and religious minorities), including credit and social security, opportunities for decent work, and participation in decision-making. The Eleventh Five Year Plan² addressed these challenges through a mix of resource allocation, incentives for institutional reform of the delivery system, and public-private partnerships.

In an effort to meet the MDGs in the limited time left, the Chhattisgarh state³ government is one of the first states in India to have established an MDG Hub, and UNICEF has extended its partnership to the Department of Panchayat (local government⁴) & Rural Development to support it. This initiative is expected to track aid and give added impetus to the MDG agenda in the state so that a higher priority can be given to issues of nutrition, mother and child health and improved water and sanitation facilities for the poor, children and women in rural areas.



In 2009, the Department of Panchayat and Rural Development through the MDG Hub, with support from UNICEF, commissioned Ipsos' India office to explore and evaluate the national flagship programme, The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), to achieve MDGs in the state.



Ipsos' scope of work was to document case studies from two districts to highlight the potential of the MGNREGA programme in accelerating the achievement of MDGs. The study also focused on understanding the merits of convergence between various departments and programmes for development in rural areas.

The Ipsos enquiry focused on community perceptions of the programme rather than an emphasis on documenting the numerical achievements. However, one of the limitations faced was low or no awareness of MDGs at the grass root level and an absence of a strategy for convergence further limited the discussion on programme potential with stakeholders. To overcome this, a team of researchers carried out the fieldwork over four weeks by visiting the villages, interacting with communities to establish rapport, and to identify potential case studies. The study objective necessitated a participatory research approach that was built on gathering the community perspective of programme outcomes rather than a researchers' point of view.

Key findings and recommendations

Ipsos documented eleven case studies through in-depth interaction with household members. These case studies demonstrated how the employment guarantee through MGNREGA leading to the creation of jobs at the village has benefitted the individuals and households (see the table for snapshots of these case studies). The benefits discussed included continuation of children's education, preventing children being withdrawn from schools, addressing issues of hunger, allowing households and families to have two meals a day (when they had

work through MGNREGA), encouraging drop outs to complete their education, differently abled individuals becoming self-reliant, averting out migration from the village, and other similar examples.

Given below is the snapshot of case studies identified of individuals who were positively affected by MGNREGA and the opportunities it created.

The case studies though did not just identify the benefits of the MGNREGA programme. They also provided an opportunity to discuss emerging issues and ways in which the initiative could be improved in order to maximise its outcomes and influence on achieving the development goals. Based on the learnings and insights gained, Ipsos proposed a framework to strengthen the linkages between development

MGNREGA case studies

Female empowerment

A female sarpanch (elected head of village government) described how the MGNREGA programme has benefited women by increasing confidence, earning, and freedom from alcohol making which was the only income earning opportunity for women in her village.

A housewife shared her achievement with pride and how she is now an example for other women in the village. She completed her education and became a MGNREGA worker, and discussed how women in her village have gained confidence in visiting banks, opening bank accounts, and managing their income.

Achieve universal primary education

A 11 year old girl could return to school after she had to drop out after her father's demise. Her mother - a single parent with limited means - enrolled herself with MGNREGA and the assured income helped her ensure her daughter's access to the basic right to education.

Child mortality

A mother shared a story of how her one year old daughter who was very weak and malnourished was assured of cow milk and fruits that she could afford because of income from MGNREGA. Earlier with one person supporting a family of six they had to sell their cow milk for additional income.

Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

Two men shared how MGNREGA has helped them to stay with their family. They have made best use of employment opportunities created in their own village, thus avoiding the need to migrate to other cities or states for work, as well as being assured of two square meals for their families.

A differently abled person could not secure a job and had reconciled to a life of dependency. He got carpentry work through the forest department in his district as a result of MGNREGA's working with other departments in the district.

programmes for achieving MDGs. This framework identified three themes – convergence, capacity building, and information dissemination – that can be used to develop a road map to help identify actionable measures for achieving development targets.

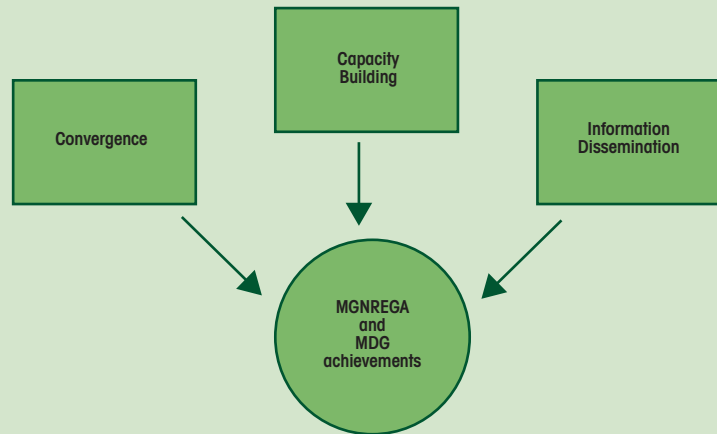
The framework recommends measures that focus on strengthening Panchayat Raj (local government) institutions in order to use resources efficiently as well as ensuring the active engagement of elected representatives at the grass roots. Three aspects in particular that programmes such as MGNREGA need to focus on to improve to accelerate their progress towards the MDGs are as follows: (see chart on the right)

Convergence- A paradigm shift to better coordination

Central ministries and state government departments are implementing various rural development programmes through a set of guidelines and by separate sets of administrative and institutional mechanisms. Even though all the guidelines stipulate inter-programme coordination and convergence, inter-departmental consultation is a rare phenomenon. Though they share the same objectives, most of these programmes operate independently, with a reluctance to use their own funds for projects emanating from other plans. Bureaucratic processes act as a further barrier because of the paper work, lengthy processes, multiple channels and approvals required.

To ensure greater convergence of different vertical programmes there is a need to widely popularize MDGs, and simplify targets and achievement indicators. Currently, consultations with

A framework to improve linkages between development programmes



local communities and other stakeholders at many different levels confirmed that there is a lack of awareness which results in staff and programme planners distancing themselves from MDGs which are viewed as a National Government commitment and not relevant to their department or job functions.

There are several ways though in which this lack of awareness and comprehension could start to be overcome:

- Integrate MDGs into the mandate for local governments: To accelerate the achievement of MDGs at the village level, as a first step it is important to inform and engage Panchayat Raj Institutions in planning, monitoring, and reporting on development goals.
- Evolving a MDG tracking system at panchayat level: Create a cadre of monitoring officers (front-line functionaries of various departments) to track village performance on MDG targets and indicators such as enrolment in schools, literacy rate, share of women in wage employment, contraceptive prevalence rate, etc.

- Decentralised planning and monitoring of MDGs, In addition to merely acting as implementers, PRI's capacity to review schemes and their relevance for the local community needs to be enhanced. A 'bottom-up' approach can help integrate the voices and needs of PRIs in development planning.

Capacity Building – essential for strengthened and empowered service delivery institutions

The current mechanisms for implementing programmes under different ministries/ departments are well structured and have a front line presence at the village level. The department workforce, along with elected representatives, serves as a vital link between the programme and the community. However, there is a huge potential for engaging this existing human resource even further. Building capacities of existing workforces can thus not only improve programme efficiency but also contribute to benefits for citizens in the community. In the context of MGNREGA, the following measures for capacity building were identified:

- Expanding the range of work undertaken: At the Panchayat level, two broad areas - rural connectivity to provide “all-weather access” and renovation of traditional water bodies (for drinking water) - are the focus of the scheme, but a range of other infrastructural improvements demanded by local people can also be undertaken. Thus, capacity building of stakeholders, especially of the PRIs, to facilitate consultations to identify these priorities is essential both to ensure the greater engagement of stakeholders as well as to address the particular infrastructure needs.
- Ensuring greater involvement of women members: Women Panchayat representatives can play an important role in the achievement of MDGs. It is important to capitalize on requirements made for women representation in PRIs and build their capacities to represent women’s issues, encourage women representation and participation and identify measures that meet the needs of women.
- Training and Sensitization: A number of crosscutting themes were identified to improve stakeholders’ interaction with PRIs (for example, the roles and responsibilities of PRIs, district and block level functionaries, and different community structures).

Information Dissemination – a tool for generating demand and accountability

Mass awareness programmes at Panchayat level about various national flagship programmes can present opportunities for interaction as well as cross learning and seeing the big picture. Such programmes present an excellent

opportunity for department functionaries to talk about MDGs and help the community make the link between what is being done and the final outputs. This can also lead to greater demand among the community members, and increased accountability of PRIs in response to this demand.

Social audit and evaluation of programmes, schemes and works completed is another aspect that requires strengthening and increased awareness. To improve this, displaying outcomes of social audits in the village can enhance trust in the achievements of the scheme and generate demand for work.

The findings of the study were further discussed in a high-level stakeholder workshop, which acknowledged the desirability of greater convergence and the challenges inherent in the current compartmentalised planning and delivery of development programmes. In order to maximise the impact of these initiatives, a road map for convergence at Panchayat level is being developed.

With the 2015 deadline for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) fast approaching there have been criticisms of the uneven progress by country and by goal. Some countries have realised many of the goals, while others are not on track to realise any. India is not alone in seeking to improve and strengthen service delivery and capacity development at district and local levels and there are many lessons which can be shared from this study, including the need to engage with local communities and governing structures, and replicating them at a wider level. Ultimately for all countries moving beyond the 2015 deadline there is still a considerable amount of work to be

done, and building a strong evidence base of what has worked well, and in which situations, is key to making the next period of development focus as or more productive than the last. ■

1. http://www.mdgmonitor.org/country_progress.cfm?c=IND&cd=356

2. Since 1951, India has had 11 five year plans. These plans provide direction to the government, ministries, and various departments, PSUs, and other government organizations and form the basis to execute programmes/initiatives aligned with priorities set by the policy makers.

3. Chhattisgarh, a state in central India was carved out of Madhya Pradesh and came into being on 1 November 2000 as the 26th State of the Union. The state of Chhattisgarh has an area of 135,191 sq. km. and a population of 20.83 million. There are 16 districts, 146 blocks, and 20308 villages. The State has population density of 154 per sq. km. (as against the national average of 312). One third of Chhattisgarh’s population is of tribes, mostly in the thickly forested areas in the North and South. The central plains of Chhattisgarh are known as the “Rice Bowl” of Central India. Female literacy has doubled in the last decade, and male literacy is higher than India’s average. Gender ratio is next only to Kerala (highest in India). Chhattisgarh is the one of the richest States in mineral resources. There are mega industries in Steel, Aluminium and Cement.

4. Panchayati or Panchayati Raj is a system of governance in which gram panchayats are the basic units of administration. It has 3 levels: village, block and district.

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