



LSE

Research

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ISSUE 1, SPRING 2010

TOUGH MEDICINE

Health care reform: what the UK
and US can learn from each other

EDITOR

As a journalist and a generalist, I've always wondered what it's really like, over those ivy covered walls and beneath that ivory tower, in the land of academic research. Now I know first hand. While so much of news gathering moves horizontally and at breakneck speed, seldom alighting on any one topic for very long, research at places like the London School of Economics and Political Science dives deeper and stays longer. But I'm also struck by the parallels. Over the last several months, I've been impressed by how much contact there is between research and the real world and by how much engagement there is between researchers and policy makers and between researchers and leading figures in arts and culture, business and commerce. This, of course, is especially true of LSE, given its location in the heart of one of the world's great cities.

The importance of research is unchallenged and has been ever since men and women applied rigour to curiosity. And yet, perhaps because of my somewhat parochial view, distorted by my decades in journalism, I think the role of research in the world is all the more important today because of the decline of traditional journalism. We're all fortunate that academic research is growing at a time when global news gathering is in crisis. We may think we're awash with information thanks to the seemingly boundless Internet and its massed battalions of bloggers, reporters, aggregators, and citizen journalists. But several studies have shown that the vast majority of news stories on the web have been recycled and repackaged from mainstream news organisations. As those organisations cut their staff and limit their scope, a top research institution like LSE, with its global reach and resources, helps to fill the knowledge gap.

Filling that gap is only a small part of the role of research, as it should be. World class research requires breadth and depth and resources. At LSE there are 19 major research centres and scores of smaller entities, enriched by an international student body, a peerless faculty, and partnerships with great universities around the world. LSE has one of the largest concentrations of applied economic, financial and social researchers in the world. One of the tasks of this magazine, in this first of three issues, is to provide a forum for LSE's legions of researchers who – in their investigations and teaching, in debates and panels on campus, in colloquiums abroad and as advisers to institutions and governments – are engaging with the major social and economic policy issues of our time.

Health care is certainly one of those issues. Even though the debate over President Barack Obama's efforts to reform the United States health insurance system has gone on practically since he took office, the wider public discourse has seldom risen above the level of brickbats and name calling.

As an antidote to that, it's a pleasure to provide a canvas for the writers of our cover story. Both Julian Le Grand and Zack Cooper have toiled at the intersection of academia and policy making.

The Richard Titmuss Professor of Social Policy at LSE since 1993, Le Grand is one of the world's foremost experts on health care policy and was a senior policy adviser to Prime Minister Tony Blair between 2003 and 2005. Cooper, a health economist at LSE Health, is an expert on US health care policy and a former aide to several senior British policy makers. Their contributions to *LSE Research*, along with those of many other distinguished LSE students, teachers and alumni, have made my job – and your reading, I trust – a pleasure.

Stryker McGuire
Editor, *LSE Research*



LSE RESEARCH

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COVER IMAGE: PAUL SIMCOCK/GETTY IMAGES

LSE Research is available online at lse.ac.uk/researchandexpertise





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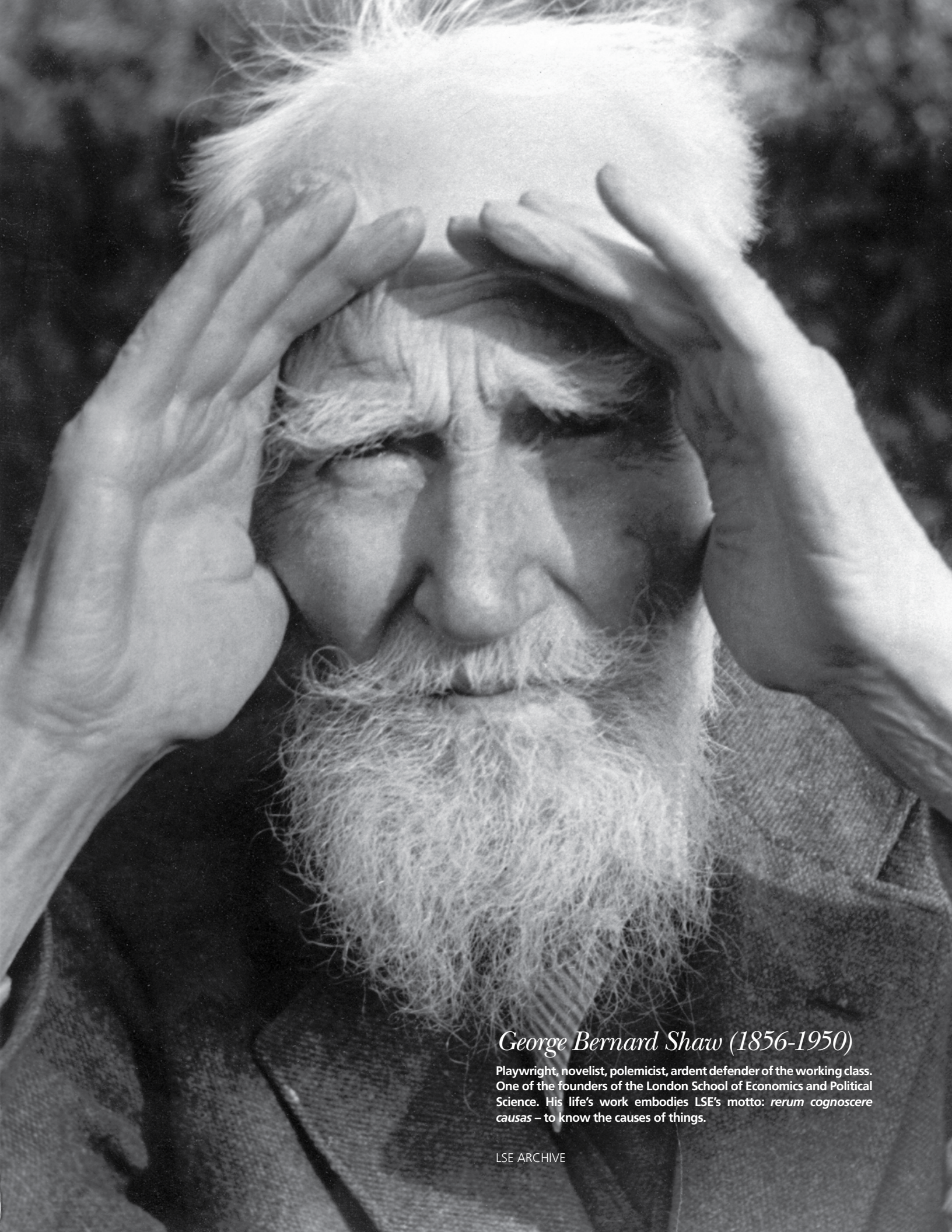
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George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950)

Playwright, novelist, polemicist, ardent defender of the working class. One of the founders of the London School of Economics and Political Science. His life's work embodies LSE's motto: *rerum cognoscere causas* – to know the causes of things.

FINDINGS

Brief summaries of recent research from LSE

Policy interventions needed 'from cradle to grave' to counter entrenched inequalities

27 January 2010



Policy interventions are needed at each life cycle stage to counter the way economic inequalities are reinforced over people's lives and often on to the next generation, says the independent National Equality Panel, chaired by LSE's Professor John Hills.

In their report, 'An anatomy of economic inequality in the UK', the National Equality Panel says that 'deep-seated and systematic differences' remain between social groups across all of the dimensions examined, although some of the widest gaps have narrowed in the last decade, such as between the earnings of women and men, or in the educational qualifications of different ethnic groups.

The report argues that people's origins shape their life chances from cradle to grave. Differences in wealth are associated, for instance, with opportunities such as the ability to buy houses in the catchment areas of the best schools, to afford private education, or to help young people onto the housing ladder. At the other end of life, wealth levels are associated with stark differences in life expectancy after 50.

The panel also found that a tenth of households aged 55-64 have wealth of under £28,000, but a tenth have over £1.3 million (including houses and pension rights).

Significant differences remain in employment and pay between men and women and between minority ethnic groups and the white British population, despite narrowed or reversed qualification gaps. For instance, women aged up to 44 have better qualifications than men on average, but the median woman's hourly pay is 21 per cent below that of the median man.

Those from nearly every minority ethnic group are less likely to be in paid work than white British men and women. Recent research shows clear evidence of discrimination in who is offered job interviews depending on the apparent ethnicity of applicants' names shown in CVs.

Inequality in earnings and in income is high in Britain, both compared with other industrialised countries, and compared with 30 years ago. Over the most recent decade, earnings inequality has narrowed a little and income inequality has stabilised on some measures, but has increased on measures affected by the share going to the very top. The large inequality growth of the 1980s has not been reversed.

The panel identifies 16 areas – from early years to pensions – where policy interventions are needed to tackle inequalities.

Professor Hills said: 'Most people and nearly all political parties subscribe to the ideal of 'equality of opportunity'. But advantage and disadvantage reinforce themselves over the life cycle. It is hard to argue that the large and systematic differences in outcomes which we document result from personal choices made against a background of equality of opportunity, however that is defined.'

The independent National Equality Panel was set up in October 2008 at the invitation of Rt Hon Harriet Harman MP, minister for women and equality. It was asked to investigate how inequalities in people's economic outcomes – such as earnings, incomes and wealth – are related to their characteristics and circumstances – such as gender, age or ethnicity.

People's origins shape their life chances from cradle to grave



Women in the boardroom improve governance but not performance

6 August 2009

Having more women in the boardroom improves a company's governance but can actually have a negative effect on its bottom line, according to LSE research, published in the *Journal of Financial Economics*.

Dr Daniel Ferreira from the Departments of Management and Finance at LSE co-authored a paper which looked at how the behaviour of boards changes when there are more women on them. Dr Ferreira said: 'This is a complicated picture. Our research shows that women directors are doing their jobs very well. But a tough board, with more monitoring, may not always be a good thing. Indeed we see that increased monitoring can be counter-productive in well governed companies.'

5,000 US women unable to access domestic violence services every day

22 September 2009

Five thousand victims of domestic abuse in the United States are unable to access the help they need from federally funded services every day, according to research from LSE published in the journal *Health Affairs*. The survey was conducted over one 24-hour period and found that over 5,000 requests for help could not be met due to a lack of resources: 1,752 of these were for emergency shelter; 1,432 for transitional housing, 1,999 for non-residential services.

Dr Radha Iyengar of LSE's Economics Department said: 'These community based organisations do essential work. They are often the last resort before the emergency room for victims of domestic violence. We know that when women do not have outside options they are more likely to be killed'.

Contraception is 'greenest' technology

10 September 2009

Contraception is almost five times cheaper than conventional green technologies as a means of combating climate change, according to research at LSE.

Thomas Wire, a postgraduate student in Operational Research at LSE, found that each \$7 (£4) spent on basic family planning over the next four decades would reduce global CO₂ emissions by more than a tonne. The UN estimates that 40 per cent of all pregnancies worldwide are unintended. The report, 'Fewer emitters, lower emissions, less cost', was commissioned by the Optimum Population Trust. It concludes that family planning should be seen as one of the primary methods of emissions reduction.



Fear of crime can have a positive effect too, argues new study

27 August 2009

Fear of crime can be helpful as well as harmful, because it spurs some people into taking precautions that make them feel safer, suggests a study from LSE, in association with Keele University, titled 'Functional fear and public insecurities about crime?'

When neither their fear of crime nor the actions they take reduce their quality of life, says the report's author Dr Jonathan Jackson, it is logical to conclude that the fear has had a partly beneficial effect such as taking practical action that makes the respondent feel safer. This should be classified as 'functional fear'.

'For too long, research into fear of crime has assumed that everyone who experiences fear is damaged by it – overlooking the individuals who take precautions and successfully manage the risks,' said Dr Jackson, a lecturer in the Methodology Institute at LSE.

Reducing the number of unintended pregnancies around the world would reduce carbon emissions

During the financial crisis, the London economy has fared better than other, more industrial areas

Serious consequences for patients if sperm donors abruptly withdraw consent

23 October 2009

Patients can face serious consequences if sperm donors in the UK change their mind about their sperm being used in fertility treatment, an LSE study published in the *British Medical Journal* finds.

The authors, who included Peter Sozou from LSE, explored the consequences of donors abruptly withdrawing consent. It can mean a woman who has used a donor to have a child may be unable to have more children who are full biological siblings to the first child.

The report suggests that the removal of donor anonymity, which means they can be contacted by children conceived from donated sperm when they reach the age of 18, could affect the decision to withdraw consent.

Flu study suggests pandemic panic would have more impact than the disease itself

20 November 2009

School closures and fear-induced absence from work are likely to have more impact on the UK economy during a serious influenza pandemic than the disease itself, according to research conducted at LSE and published in the *British Medical Journal*.

Professor Tony Barnett of LSE and colleagues at the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine and the University of Edinburgh replicated various disease scenarios, vaccination programmes, school closures, and 'prophylactic absenteeism'.

'Lessons can be learned from this by policy makers,' said Professor Barnett. 'Clearly, the broader implications for the economy mean that it is important to advise "business as usual" and to ensure that vaccination programmes are implemented early enough to prevent "social network" effect.'

London surviving recession but long-term growth to be more modest than Mayor's London Plan predicts

21 October 2009

London has come through the first two years of the current crisis with less damage to its economy than other more industrial regions, concludes an LSE London report.

But, the report argues, long-term growth is likely to be much more modest than predicted in the Mayor's London Plan, with net job gains expected to average 20,000 rather than the 35,000 suggested by the Mayor.

The report's authors were Ian Gordon, Tony Travers, Christine Whitehead and Kath Scanlon. Professor Whitehead said: 'Much of London's potential success depends on what is happening in the global economy but the most likely outcome is a return to the trend growth path of the past couple of decades – rather than those of the boom years.'

Risk management and regulation of financial institutions research programme launched by LSE and AXA Research Fund

13 October 2009

A major new research programme looking at risk management and the regulation of financial institutions in light of the current financial crisis has been announced by the AXA Research Fund and LSE.

Professor David Webb, director, at the time of announcement, of LSE's Financial Markets Group which will undertake the research, said: 'The current financial crisis has revealed a distance between our understanding of the interconnected behaviour of banks, the structure of the banking systems and layers of regulation. We aim to gain a better understanding of the weakness of the current financial architecture and to assess the scope for greater financial stability through governance and regulation.'





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Expensive, ineffective and they drive people mad – rethink of supermax prisons urgently needed, urges LSE academic

19 October 2009

Supermax prisons – large prisons designed for holding prisoners in strict and prolonged solitary confinement – officially operate to protect society from its most violent and dangerous criminals but in reality are also used to house petty non-violent offenders and the mentally ill.

These were the findings of Dr Sharon Shalev's research, published in a new book *Supermax: controlling risk through solitary confinement*, which calls for an urgent review of the use of solitary confinement as a prison tactic.

'Supermax prisons are expensive, ineffective and they drive people mad,' said Dr Shalev. 'Rather than building more supermax prisons, it is time to acknowledge the failures of solitary confinement and reject its use as a legitimate prison practice in all but the most exceptional circumstances.'

Parents are not welcome as Facebook friends

1 December 2009

Young people don't want to be friends with their parents on Facebook, preferring to keep their social and family lives separate, research by academics at LSE finds.

Professor Anne West, Professor Jane Lewis, and PhD student Peter Currie, from LSE's Department of Social Policy, carried out a study exploring the attitudes of students towards accepting older adults, particularly parents, as Facebook friends. Their article 'Students' Facebook 'friends': public and private spheres' was published online in the *Journal of Youth Studies*. The report said: 'For a number of reasons, parents were rarely Facebook friends and there was a clear view that in general they would not be welcomed.'

New study investigates links between economic crisis and increasing mental health problems

12 November 2009

Demand for treatment for mental health problems has increased over the past 12 months as people struggle to cope with unemployment, debt, home repossession, threat of redundancy and other difficulties caused by the recession.

Martin Knapp, professor of social policy at LSE, in conjunction with the NHS Confederation, published a study examining the relationship between mental health and the economic downturn. It concludes that while it is likely that the demand for mental health provision will rise, funding is likely to fall, causing many potential challenges in the near future.

'Libel tourism' gives libel law a bad name

27 January 2010

The debate over so-called libel tourism – where plaintiffs with few if any links to the UK go to court here to take advantage of restrictive libel laws – has been one-sided, according to a report, 'Something rotten in the state of English libel law?', by Dr Andrew Scott of LSE's Department of Law and his co-author, Professor Alastair Mullis of the University of East Anglia.

'Misuse of an overbroad, and particularly an overly costly, libel regime can impact upon investigative journalism, scientific discussion, and the important work of NGOs,' said Dr Scott. 'However, the reality of most libel actions, which involve bullied and harassed claimants challenging damaging inaccuracies perpetuated by multinational media corporations, has somehow been lost from the debate.'

*A financial crisis
conundrum: demand
for mental health care
will rise as funding
for treatment falls*

Stalking the credit card gene

Advances in genetic testing prompted recent United States legislation to prevent employers and health insurers discriminating against people on genetic grounds. However, groundbreaking research from LSE and the University of California, Davis, on a possible genetic predisposition to indebtedness suggests that it might also be necessary to extend that legislation to include lenders and other financial institutions. **Molly Kaplan and Joanna Bale report.**

Applying for a credit card or mortgage is usually just a case of filling in a few forms, but new research suggesting that debt has a strong genetic link, means that a routine cheek swab might soon become the norm.

According to LSE's Jan-Emmanuel De Neve, humans have a set of genes which, in combination with environmental factors, strongly influence financial decision making. Specifically, variations of the MAOA gene which are used by neurotransmitters in the brain that influence such things as impulsive and addictive behaviour, turn out to be of economic importance. De Neve and his co-author, Professor James Fowler at the University of California, Davis, studied 2,500 US young adults, aged 18 to 26, and found that those with a 'low efficiency' MAOA gene were significantly more likely to be saddled with credit card debt.

MAOA is linked to the neurotransmitters serotonin, dopamine and adrenalin that, among many things, control mood, heart rate and cognitive ability. How efficient they are in producing an enzyme that degrades neurotransmitters affects the likelihood of someone being impulsive and prone to addiction.

De Neve explains: 'The MAOA gene has a number of variations, but typically they're categorised as

high efficiency or low efficiency alleles – basically called MAOA high and MAOA low for obvious reasons, and you can have one high, one low or two highs or two lows depending on what your parents passed along. The low efficiency types have been linked in previous studies to traits such as lack of conscientiousness, impulsivity, and addictive behavior.

'Our research shows that carrying one or both low efficiency alleles of the MAOA gene raises the average likelihood of reporting credit card debt by eight per cent and 16 per cent, respectively.'

The 'nature versus nurture' debate surrounding human behaviour has been around for a long time and recent studies of twins have shown evidence of a strong genetic link to behaviour such as risk taking, the tendency to cooperate, happiness levels and political preferences. The rising availability of DNA analyses, however, is now making it possible for scientists to try to link specific genes to specific behaviours. So, is there a 'debt gene'?

De Neve says: 'No, and there will never be a debt gene simply because credit card behaviour is not a singular discrete trait like blue eyes that you can relate back to a variation of one gene. Credit card borrowing behaviour is the result of a number of genes, the environment, and the interaction between genes and environment.'

Imagine if a bank knew your genetic makeup – and could predict your borrowing behaviour



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He and Professor Fowler used data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health in the United States. One of the questions in the database asked about credit card debt.

De Neve explains: 'It asks people: "Do you have credit card debt, yes or no?" Very simple question. Very simple statement.

'Analysis of the MAOA gene was also in the data and it had already been linked to more impulsive, less conscientious, addictive behaviour. Hence it became an obvious candidate gene to see whether or not it links up with the answers to credit card debt. Lo and behold, when I started running regression analyses on this gene, seeing whether or not it predicts credit card debt reporting, adding controls and running robustness tests, it came in very significantly, and so the paper was born.'

Roughly half the people in the sample had at least one low efficiency MAOA gene allele. Since the sample was representative of the US population, it is likely that about half of all Americans have this debt correlated gene.

The policy implications are significant because individuals have scant guarantee under the law that this genetic information remains private. In 2008, President Bush passed the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act (GINA), but that law only deals with health insurers and employers.

De Neve, a PhD candidate at LSE, explains: 'The welfare implications are really important. GINA sounds great, but it's not a generic act on genetic non-discrimination. It says only health insurers and employers cannot discriminate on the basis of genetics, but it's open for all the rest.

'So if a bank or credit institution would have access to, say, a piece of hair and an envelope with a bit of saliva, they could decipher your genetic make-up and then decide whether or not they adapt a fee or a premium... seemingly without any legal problems. This is why we're suggesting that governments have an act which covers all types of genetic discrimination.'

De Neve urges: 'Watch the movie *Gattaca*. The movie's all about a society in the not so distant future where individual genetic codes are easy to come by. You have two brothers, and one has not been genetically engineered, so he doesn't have access to all the top jobs because he doesn't have the statistical probability of being a good candidate, so there's no point in interviewing him. That kind of scenario is to be avoided at all costs.'

De Neve's inspiration for the study came from his time at Harvard Business School where he researched the impact of credit cards in the US.

He explains: 'Most people in America have credit cards and debit cards and about half of those carry along from month to month a certain

amount of credit card debt, which is huge. In my opinion this kind of borrowing behaviour is one of the underpinnings of the current financial crisis, so the importance is massive for US consumers and US society. It became an obvious candidate of interest for further study.'

He predicts that social scientists will make many more advances by incorporating biology in their research.

'I've only started really looking into the biology of neurotransmitters over the past year, so it's been quite a steep learning curve, but it's exciting at the same time because I really think that most of the advances in social sciences now will come from linking up with the natural sciences.' ■

Jan-Emmanuel De Neve

is a PhD candidate at LSE. His research interests are in economics, politics and behavioural genetics. His academic publications have looked at the economics of voting behaviour and European integration. He has also worked at the European Commission and the UN.

Molly Kaplan earned her master's degree in Media and Communication at LSE in 2009. Joanna Bale is a senior press officer at LSE.

The rise and fall of Al Qaeda

Fawaz Gerges has been studying Al Qaeda for two decades. In this interview with *LSE Research* editor Stryker McGuire he assesses its strength, while **Artemy Kalinovsky** (opposite) focuses on Afghanistan and (on page 17) **Gilles Kepel** describes a personal journey from Europe to the Middle East.

FG: I have been following Al Qaeda since the 1990s, long before it became a household name in America and in the West. My research and writing has focused on how Al Qaeda emerged out of the turmoil and upheaval within the Islamist movement – the radicalisation that occurred among followers of Islam from the 1950s onwards. Al Qaeda is one of the latest mutations of that movement. While the Islamist movement was focused on local jihad, Al Qaeda pursued global jihad.

At the height of its power in the late 1990s, Al Qaeda numbered between 3,000 and 4,000 militants. Today, based on the intelligence services of the United States and the Western powers and independent sources of my own, the numbers range between 300 and 500 militants, fighters and terrorists – 300 in Pakistan and at most 100 in Afghanistan itself. Al Qaeda is a tiny fraction of what it used to be – but I'm not suggesting that the 300 to 500 aren't dangerous.

The numbers are down, but the numbers don't tell the whole story. The most important assets of Al Qaeda – the field lieutenants – have been killed, captured or basically neutralised. This is why Al Qaeda has not been able to carry out critical operations along the lines of the 1990s and 9/11 because its nerve centre – the field lieutenants – have been decimated.

Most crucially, Al Qaeda is facing a massive crisis of authority and legitimacy in the Muslim world. The bulk of Arab and Muslim public opinion has turned against Al Qaeda as a result of the horrible mass killings of civilians – in particular, as far as the Muslim world is concerned. Iraq has turned out to be a graveyard for Al Qaeda.

SM: Can the decline in numbers also be attributed to military success?

FG: Certainly, many members of Al Qaeda have either been captured or killed, but the lack of skilled recruits is key. Al Qaeda faces a crisis of authority as more and more Muslims are realising that Al Qaeda is a dead end. Al Qaeda does not have a blueprint or a vision for the Muslim world and is seen as an enemy of Arabs and Muslims because the overwhelming majority of casualties since 2001 have been Arabs and Muslims.

SM: So it's not really the triumph of American policy, of the 'war on terror' policy, that has resulted in the de-legitimisation of Al Qaeda? Al Qaeda's own tactics and its failure to provide a vision for the Muslim world are what has brought it down.

FG: The so-called global 'war on terror' has given Al Qaeda a great deal of ammunition. It has prolonged the life of the beast. A more effective strategy would have been to go after Al Qaeda by creating links and alliances with the Muslim world. Al Qaeda is not a conventional army and you cannot defeat it on the battlefield. You need to hammer it from within. The most effective means is to convince Arab and Muslim public opinion that the US is not waging war against Islam and Muslims; that the US does not really have ambitions over their land and resources; and that Al Qaeda is a problem for the Muslim world, not for the US itself.

Al Qaeda represents a major challenge for the Arab and Muslim world. The US is what I term a secondary audience and in fact, was a secondary target on 9/11. The major target was, and is, Arab and Muslim public opinion. The challenge facing the Western allies, and particularly the US, is how to win the war of ideas against Al Qaeda. It has taken the Muslim world several years to understand that regardless of what the US does or does not do, Al Qaeda doesn't provide any blueprint for the future. It promises heaven but it delivers dust and death.

Continued page 14...

Al Qaeda is a security nuisance, not an existential threat to America. Obama must break away from the logic of the long war on terror

Afghanistan is the new Afghanistan

Artemy Kalinovsky assesses the American strategy in Afghanistan.

By the middle of next year, the United States military will have sent some 30,000 additional troops to Afghanistan. That will bring the total number of NATO troops in Afghanistan to around 100,000, counting international forces and American troops already on the ground – or about the number the Soviets had in the 1980s. In addition, there will be over 1,000 civilian advisers, now undergoing training in groups of 50 at a mock-Afghan village somewhere in Indiana.

And what will happen during this time? The Taliban will be dealt such a blow that most commanders will decide to lay down their arms and come over to the government; the Afghan National Army will grow in size and gain the ability to provide internal security independently of foreign forces; and the Afghan National Police will move beyond their corrupt ways and start doing their jobs. When it's all over, Afghanistan will be stable and secure enough for the US to be able to start drawing down its forces.

That at least is the hope. The reality could look quite different. The announcement of President Barack Obama's new strategy – only part of which was new – left as many questions open as settled. It seems to presume a number of developments that experts consider highly unlikely.

Take, for example, the Afghan National Army (ANA). Compared to the National Police, the ANA is a coherent security force, but that is not saying much. As Antonio Giustozzi of LSE's Crisis States Research Centre wrote in December in the *RUSI Journal*, assessments of the ANA were often unrealistically rosy during the Bush administration. In fact, it has major problems at every level of organisation and is nowhere near being able to act independently of foreign forces. Retention levels are low, and desertion rates, while improving somewhat, are still high. The solution prescribed at present by the US – increasing the number of mentors – is unlikely to be of much help. As Dr Giustozzi puts it, it might make the problem worse, 'as the numerical expansion of the mentoring effort is unlikely to occur without negative repercussions on the quality and commitment of the mentors'.

The Obama administration's solution to the problem of the corruption surrounding the government of President Hamid Karzai is equally problematic. The current strategy proposes essentially to bypass the central government and work directly with ministries, provincial governments and village leaders on building 'capacity'. Even if this strategy delivers beneficial short-term results, it is unclear how it would actually improve Afghans' faith in the central government. On the contrary, it could encourage them to see the government in Kabul as unnecessary or completely ineffectual. Considering how fragile central authority in Afghanistan is already, and the extent to which Karzai's personal prestige has been undermined as a result of his battles with the Obama administration and the controversial elections, this seems a dangerous way to go.

It is still too early to predict how things will work out, but my LSE research into the Soviet experience in Afghanistan throws up a number of caution flags. There is a danger that this policy will deliver short-term goals without actually doing much to leave behind a stable Afghanistan once international forces depart. The extra troops will certainly make life much more difficult for the Taliban, and the influx of civilian advisers and aid will hopefully facilitate the state-building that Afghanistan sorely needs. But none of this will mean much if 18 months from now the ANA and ANP are not able to start taking over, in a serious way, from international forces; if Karzai does not find a way to establish his authority and root out corruption in his circle; and if provincial governors and ministries are unable to build on the aid being provided now.

As US officials are quick to point out though, 18 months from when the surge began is just the deadline for the start of the withdrawal. This, and the cool-headed way in which Obama took months to study, debate, and develop the current strategy, suggests that the 44th president is prepared to keep US troops there, albeit at presumably lower levels, for as long as is necessary. If that's the case, perhaps the eventual reality will be closer to the hope embodied in Obama's plan and solutions will in fact be found to the problems I have outlined above.

My research into the Soviet experience in Afghanistan during the 1980s throws up a number of caution flags

Artemy Kalinovsky

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Unfortunately, because of the rise in expectations among Arabs and Muslims, Obama has to deliver – on a Palestine settlement, on bringing American troops home from Iraq

SM: What role did the war in Iraq play in prolonging the life of the beast, as you put it?

FG: The war meant that after 2003, Al Qaeda was able to make a convincing argument to the Arab and Muslim worlds that the US was waging a war against the umma, the Muslim community worldwide. After all, no links existed between Al Qaeda and the former Saddam regime. Contrary to what the US said, Iraq did not have any non-conventional weapons. So the argument that was made by Al Qaeda after 2003 resonated with a large number of Arabs and Muslims. That explains why, in a very short period of time, more and more young Arab and Muslim men joined Al Qaeda in Iraq because they believed it was standing up to America's imperialism.

The catastrophic blunder made by Al Qaeda was that instead of capitalising on this particular ideological vacuum created by the Americans, it went on a killing spree. This killing spree in Iraq between 2003 and 2007 reinforced the already existing perception that Al Qaeda does not have a blueprint.

However, even though the bulk of Muslim public opinion has turned against Al Qaeda, there is still a great deal of suspicion about America's intentions. This is why Obama's strategy of outreach to Muslims is critical. Obama is trying to pull the rug from underneath the feet of Al Qaeda and other militant groups by saying: 'No, we are not waging war against Islam and Muslims.' His outreach strategy has a strategic vision.

SM: This is the 'unclenched fist' Obama spoke of in his Cairo speech...

FG: Absolutely.

SM: But is it working? Doesn't the rhetoric need to be complemented by actions that show that Obama means what he says?

FG: Obama's strategy is two-pronged: first, outreach and, second, transformation of America's relations with the Muslim world. The transformation of America's relations with the Arab and Muslim worlds focuses on resolving the pivotal festering conflict between Jews and Palestinians and reducing the American military footprint in the Arab world. Initially, President Obama raised expectations among Arabs and Muslims to a fever pitch. Here was an American speaking in a language of collaboration and peace and importantly, he used his own story. You have an American president saying: 'Members of my own family are Muslims.' Arabs and Muslims were fascinated by this. He wasn't only stating: 'We're not waging war on you.' He emphasised: 'I understand you, I can relate to you. America is not your enemy. I, as the president of the United States, have members of my family who are Muslims.'

The second element of his strategy is this: unfortunately, because of the rise in expectations among Arabs and Muslims, Obama has to deliver a Palestine settlement, the return of American troops home from Iraq and Afghanistan and the distancing of America from the bloody dictators who oppress their populations in the region (the Greater Middle East). My fear is that we are now witnessing a shift in America's strategy based on the realities of the American political system. Obama started out very strong on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and invested some political capital. It's now obvious that the administration is either unwilling to spend that capital or doesn't believe that the two parties are ready for a settlement. You hear more and more voices saying that Obama is no different from his predecessor. The bigger the gap between rhetoric and reality, the more the outreach strategy will be undermined. This could provide ammunition to oppositional forces, particularly in the radical camp which argues along these lines: America is an empire that does not change regardless of who is in power, intends to dominate and subjugate the Muslim world, and is a constant friend of Israel's.

SM: The key then is the Israeli government and settlements? Do you think the American administration is going to be able to move the Israeli government enough to be able to persuade Arabs and Muslims that America has changed?

FG: Obama lost the first round to prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Not only does he not have the political will to nudge Netanyahu to accept a total freeze on settlements, but obviously Obama does not want to invest his political capital on this issue. To Obama, the most important foreign policy priorities are not the Arab-Israeli conflict, but instead, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Al Qaeda, and Iran. Thus, the president has decided not to put more effort than he already has into convincing or forcing Netanyahu to accept a total freeze. It's this change that has now begun to poison the atmosphere between America's foreign policy under Obama and the Arab world.

In fact, America's pro-Western Arab allies are terrified. They're terrified because they have put all their eggs into Obama's basket. They believed that Obama would deliver on the creation of a Palestinian state. The Palestine card is one of the most powerful cards in the hands of the Iranian leadership. By not delivering on Palestine, the Iranian leadership is able to say, look, America has not changed.

The Palestine question is the most pivotal question in the Middle East. It's not just a political question, but an identity one. Arabs and Muslims do not view the conflict with the Jewish state as only a conflict between Arabs and Jews, they view it as an extension of the Western domination of and hegemony of Arab and Muslim lands. This conflict is rooted in their identity. Regardless of what Obama says, if he does not address the most central, pivotal question in the Middle East, the poisonous relationship that exists between the US and the Muslim world will likely remain as it is today.

SM: In that context, doesn't Iran, then, grow stronger and stronger?

FG: This explains why pro-Western, Sunni-based states such as Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait are terrified – because Iran has emerged as the vanguard and the leader of the resistance camp against the US and Israel. Iran is playing the same role as Egypt did under Gamal Abdul Nasser in the 1950s and 1960s. Iran, a Shia-dominated state, is the spearhead against the so-called American-Zionist alliance. If the US does not deliver on an Israeli-Palestinian settlement, Iranian influence will likely increase in the Sunni-dominated Arab world. More and more Sunnis, not only Shias, look towards Iran to deliver on the Israeli-Palestine question. You have a pro-Iranian arc from the Gulf to the Fertile Crescent that is emerging and threatening the pro-Western and pro-American political order in the heart of Sunni-dominated Islam.



Collateral damage, Helmand, Afghanistan
Picture by Susan Schulman

What we need to understand is that the Taliban in Pakistan are much more radical and much more global in their vision than the Taliban in Afghanistan itself

SM: Iraq once comprised part of the balance of power in the region and now does not, right?

FG: This brings me to your central question about the damage that the American global war on terror has done. Historically, as you suggest, the US has played Shia-dominated Iran against Sunni-dominated Iraq. By deposing Saddam Hussein's Sunni regime in Iraq, the US automatically turned Iran into the unrivalled superpower in the Gulf. Washington also removed the Taliban, the hyper-Sunni regime in Kabul. In fact, the question on the table is not why the Iranian leadership is making a bid for hegemony in the Gulf and the Middle East; the question is, why shouldn't the Iranians make a serious bid? After all, America's global war on terror has enabled Iran to become the unrivalled superpower in the Gulf and to expand its influence into the Sunni-based states, including, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, and Iraq. This new reality comes back to the central question of 9/11 and the expansion of America's war on terror.

SM: What can America and NATO do in Afghanistan that could improve the climate in the region?

FG: Afghanistan is one of the most complex countries in the Greater Middle East – and crucial to understanding the region. And I fear that for all Obama's distancing from the war on terror, America's strategy and the military escalation in Afghanistan are still driven by the very monstrous notion of the war on terror. The Taliban is a regressive social movement and not our cup of tea, but the Taliban are not Al Qaeda. They're two different beasts. Al Qaeda is a borderless, rootless, global, and transnational organisation waging war globally. The Taliban is a local militia and social movement dedicated to establishing a regressive state in Afghanistan. The Taliban has never launched an attack on any target outside of Afghanistan. But the military escalation in Afghanistan suggests that the Taliban and Al Qaeda are synonymous. Thus, a military escalation in Afghanistan will likely empower Al Qaeda and will likely consolidate the thin links that exist between Al Qaeda and Afghanistan.

SM: What about links between Afghanistan and Pakistan?

FG: As a result of the expansion of the war on terror, you have thousands of Taliban in Pakistan itself who subscribe not only to the Taliban strategy in Afghanistan but to Al Qaeda's strategy. The Taliban in Pakistan are much more radical and global in their vision than the Taliban in Afghanistan. You cannot understand America's strategy in Afghanistan without understanding America's concern about Pakistan itself. Nuclear Pakistan is the big prize. The Americans are trying to prevent any alliance between the Taliban in Pakistan and the Taliban in Afghanistan. The irony is that while Pakistan is waging war against its own Taliban, the security services in Pakistan are the leading supporters of the Taliban in Afghanistan in terms of providing training, money, weapons, and other support. This is indicative of the predicament which confronts the US.

SM: Why are the Pakistani security services supporting the Taliban in Afghanistan?

FG: One word: India. For the Pakistani security apparatus, the geostrategic conflict with India is much more critical and fundamental than the Taliban in Afghanistan. As far as the Pakistani security services are concerned, any vacuum in Afghanistan would help their rival, India, gain favour and the upper hand in Afghanistan. The US now finds itself at the mercy not only of local players, but also major regional powers.

SM: Is there any good news, anywhere?

FG: Yes, you have a rational leadership in the US – one that appreciates the complexity of the problems. This certainly does not diminish their gravity. Barack Obama is trying to resolve festering regional conflicts, and his inability to do so in his first year does not mean that he will not be able to deliver in the coming years, particularly if he is re-elected. My fear is that Obama has not broken away from the logic of the long war on terror. The American people should be told that Al Qaeda does not represent the same threat that it did in the 1990s. Obama must tell the American people about the differences

between the Taliban and Al Qaeda. I understand Obama's predicament. No American president can go to the American people and declare we are winning the war against Al Qaeda. What if Al Qaeda succeeds in delivering a strike against the American homeland? This would mean the end of his presidency. But this is the kind of discussion and debate Obama must have with the American people. The US is facing a security nuisance from Al Qaeda, but this is not an existential threat, nor a strategic threat to America. ■

Fawaz A Gerges

is a professor of middle eastern politics and international relations at LSE. His research interests include Islam and the political process, mainstream Islamist movements and jihadist groups like Al Qaeda, the politics of the Arab and Muslim worlds in the 20th century, and the Arab-Israeli conflict. He is the author of two recent books, *Journey of the Jihadist: inside Muslim militancy* (Harcourt Press, 2007) and *The Far Enemy: why jihad went global* (Cambridge University Press, 2009). He is currently working on a book about the making of the Arab world from the time of Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser to the role played today by Hezbollah secretary general Hassan Nasrallah.

Europe's Good Neighbour policy

An expert on the politics of the Islamic world, Gilles Kepel describes his personal odyssey from Europe to the Middle East and the role he sees for the European Union in the region.

I came to research the Arab world and the world of Islam by chance. As a young French student studying the Classics I was offered the chance to travel to the Middle East to discover the Greek and Roman cities. I became extremely interested in the people who lived there. So when I came back to France after three months, I started to do Arabic out of curiosity as an undergraduate student. The infrastructure of the French empire still existed, but it was empty. The year I applied to study Arabic at the French Institute in Damascus, I think there were six applicants for 10 positions offered. In the land of the blind, the one-eyed man is king, so I got the position.

Afterwards I went to Sciences Po in Paris. My interest in the contemporary Middle East developed from there. In the 1970s one of the big paradoxes was the development of the Muslim Brotherhood at universities in Egypt – something that was difficult to understand for your average leftie European. After I graduated from Sciences Po, I went to Egypt and spent from 1978 to 1981 researching my PhD. It just so happened one of the groups I was following assassinated President Anwar El Sadat while I was there. Not many people were interested in those Islamist groups at the time, but the day after, plane loads of American students arrived in Egypt to study this issue. But I was two years ahead of them. The book that I published afterwards – *The Prophet and the Pharaoh* – happened to be the first book published in the West on those Islamic movements.

Back in Europe, I continued to follow these movements – both before and after 9/11. That resulted in the trilogy, which I have now finished. It is in the final book that I talk about the expansion and decline of the (Islamist) movement, how it fragmented into radical groups which were soon on the wane.

The arrival of Barack Obama has certainly changed the political landscape for these groups. However, I share the view of Professor Gerges that Obama will face a credibility gap if he cannot deliver on his rhetoric. So for the time being, the United States presidency is looking a little weak and I fear that Obama does not have time on his side. The problem is that there is always an election looming. So Obama's efforts are now focused on the mid-term elections (in November 2010) and the domestic agenda is dominating. This squeezes foreign policy. The big difference between us as Europeans and the Americans when dealing with the Middle East, is that for us the Middle East is neighbourhood rather than foreign policy, perhaps even domestic policy.

From my vantage as a European with a long-term interest in the Middle East, there will be no solution to the Middle Eastern issue without a strong triangulation between Europe, the Gulf and the southern and eastern shores of the Mediterranean – where Europe brings its know-how, its industry, its network of universities, its space of law and also of peace; where the Gulf brings its energy and its cash; and where the southern and eastern shores of the Mediterranean bring their culture and their human resources. If we do not manage to create a zone of co-prosperity, bringing all those things together between the Chinese hammer and the American anvil, we are in dire straits.

By 'we' I mean the European Union, with a particular emphasis on what is called the Three Plus Two – Germany, France and the United Kingdom, along with Italy and Spain. My hope is that now that we have a new high representative of the union for foreign affairs and security policy, a five-year role, we will have a real EU foreign policy which will boost the political dimension of the EU on the international scene. The high representative's job is not about making decisions, but about implementing them. It is my view that the office of the new high representative should be funding research on the Middle East, the sort of research that is undertaken at Sciences Po and LSE, and which informs policy for example, funding a major Middle East European Institute.

I have been working with French presidents on the Middle East, travelling with them to the Gulf, for example. I see people who do not talk to each other, and see my role as an academic to be open and discuss whatever is required. As an academic I am there to provide in-depth knowledge. ■

We must create a zone of co-prosperity as protection from the Chinese hammer and the US anvil

Gilles Kepel

is an expert on the politics of the Islamic world. He holds the rotating Philippe Roman Chair in History and International Affairs at LSE IDEAS during the academic year 2009-10. He is a professor of Middle East and Mediterranean studies at the Institut d'Études Politiques de Paris (Sciences Po). Professor Kepel is a driving force behind a related interdisciplinary undergraduate programme at Science Po's Menton, France, campus as part of a strategic partnership with LSE. He is the chairman of the Eurogolfe Network, which he founded in 2003 as a forum to bring together academics and public and private sector constituencies that have an interest in cultural, social and political developments in the Gulf region. His most recent book is *Beyond Terror and Martyrdom: the future of the Middle East* (Harvard University Press, 2009).

HEALTH

Midway through his State of the Union address at the end of January, Barack Obama got around to mentioning what was supposed to be the signature piece of domestic legislation of a presidency that had begun just a year earlier. 'By now,' he said with a slight, even sly, grin, 'it should be fairly obvious that I didn't take on health care because it was good politics.' Indeed, by that time, United States health care reform was hanging by the slenderest of threads. As Zack Cooper and Julian Le Grand say in their *LSE Research* cover story, President Obama may have made history of a sort by getting as far as he managed to get on reforming America's biggest industry, but he certainly didn't make the kind of difference he had hoped to.

Last summer, when the health care debate in the US really started heating up, we were treated to some simplistic, not to mention often just plain wrong, comparisons between health care in the US and health care in the UK. Amid the banality of the transatlantic rock throwing, what was lost were the lessons that two of the world's great health care systems could learn from each other. In their article, **Julian Le Grand** and **Zack Cooper**, who have worked with policy makers on both sides of the pond, help to set the record straight. In a related piece, **Emily Jackson** explores, from a legal standpoint, what happens when private and public health care collide in the UK.



Competition is a tough medicine to swallow

It should come as no surprise that President Barack Obama's push to reform health care in the United States has encountered formidable obstacles. For starters, health care is big money. The health care industry makes up almost 16 per cent of US GDP, or about \$2.4 trillion in 2009. Anytime anybody tries to restructure that large a chunk of the economy, people are bound to be sceptical, even fearful. In addition to the huge sums of money involved, health care is one of those rare services that everyone engages with at some point in their lives, and often when they or their families are at their most vulnerable. This combination of high financial stakes and the intensity of emotions associated with health care is precisely why no American president has achieved comprehensive health care reform in the last hundred years.

Nor is it any surprise that the US debate over health care has had repercussions elsewhere. In August of last year, the US debate went global, and Britain's National Health Service was drawn

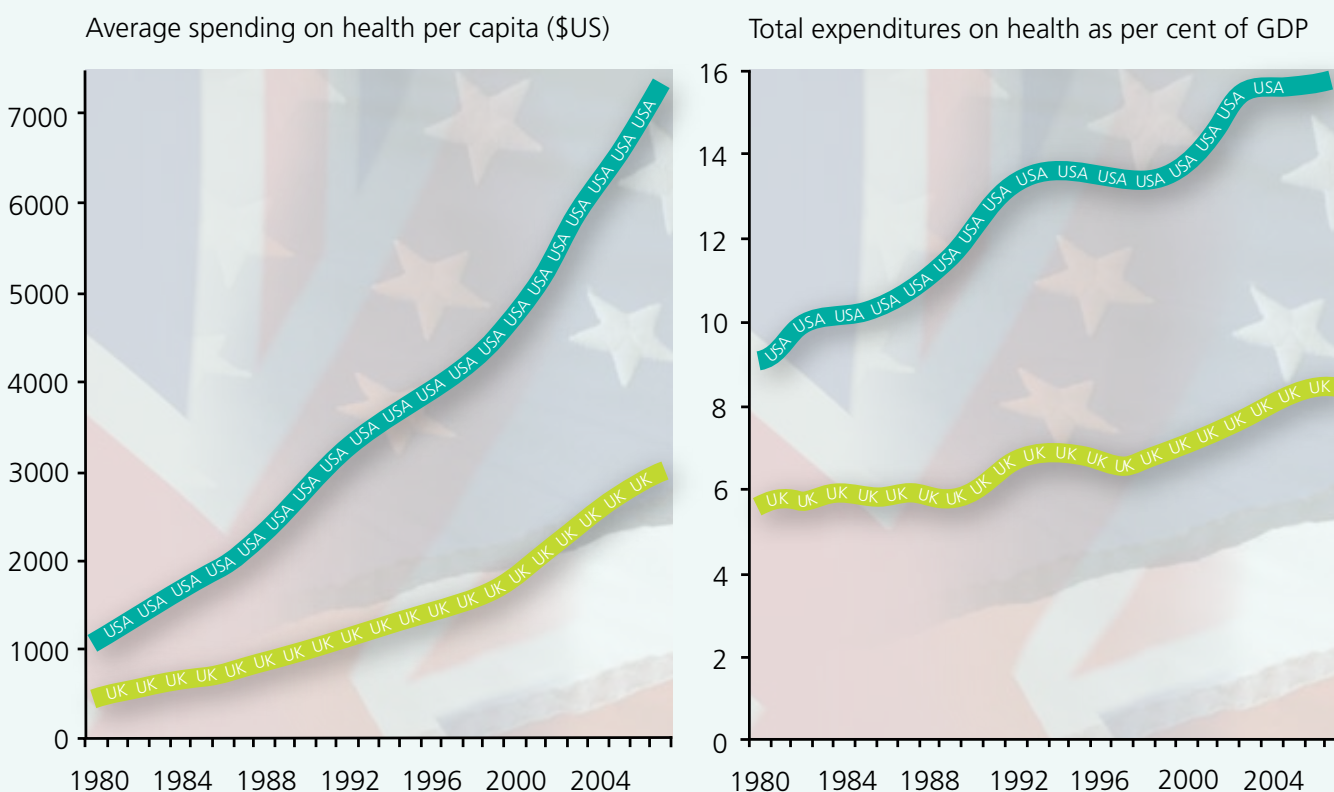
into the fray. Critics of President Obama's reform proposals argued that were the changes he was proposing to become law, they would import to the States many of the perceived shortcomings of the British NHS: long waits, rationing and lacklustre cancer survival. There was talk of 'death panels', rumours that the late Senator Edward Kennedy, a long-time proponent of health care reform, would have been denied care by the NHS, and widespread fear-mongering about 'government run' health care.

In direct response to those accusations, the British started to criticise the US health care system. Proud of the NHS and the role it has played in British society, UK newspapers ran stories about the 46 million Americans who lack health insurance, and cited the often mentioned statistic that the US spends more on health care than any other nation in the world but compares unfavourably in terms of life expectancy.

Unfortunately, rather than looking at what we could learn from each other, both countries focused exclusively on each other's faults, and the debate paralysed progress in both countries. As we will discuss, despite the differences between health care in the US and health care in the UK, there are more similarities between the pathologies that afflict US and UK health care than those tense exchanges of the last year would suggest. Furthermore, although you would never know it from the low level of the transatlantic name calling, which depicted an NHS frozen in time, recent British governments

Britain has been more successful than America at introducing market forces into its health care system

US/UK comparison of spending on health, 1980-2007



SOURCE: OECD HEALTH DATA (JUNE 2009)

have been significantly more successful than the US at introducing radical reforms that really shake up the status quo.

Nearly every developed country, the US and the UK included, is facing pressure to slow the growth in health care spending and to improve the way care is delivered. Unfortunately, there are only two ways to reduce what we spend on health care: either cut services or become more efficient. Clearly, the latter strategy is more appealing than the former. As a result, the challenge that policy makers across the world are facing is developing policies to spur on increases in efficiency.

The NHS and the US health care systems sit at opposite ends of the political spectrum, as was so evident during the brouhaha last year. The NHS is state run, paid for through general taxation, and is a right afforded to every resident of Britain. In contrast, large parts of the US health system are predominantly financed and delivered through private insurers, and in many cases, the more

money an individual spends, the more care they can receive.

However, despite the glaring differences, both the US and the UK are troubled by large, seemingly immovable monopolies that slow innovation and thwart efficiency. In the US, it is private sector insurance companies that enjoy a monopoly that is hampering progress, whereas in the UK, it was the government-run hospital industry that used to hinder improvement. In both countries, as different as the health care systems are, the logical policy response should be similar: more choice for individuals and greater competition in order to break up the powerful monopolies. Unfortunately, at least in the US and the UK, increasing competition in health care is difficult to sell politically.

Four factors make it difficult to put forward competition based reforms in the US and UK, particularly in our current economic climate. First, one of the central challenges with increasing choice and competition in health policy is that these types of reforms do not fit neatly into the boxes of political left or right. Often, it is left-leaning governments like the Labour Party in the UK or Democratic Party in the US that aggressively pursue health care reform. But these types of market based policies don't sit naturally with these parties' core constituencies.

In the US, only the health insurance industry and Major League Baseball are exempt from anti-trust litigation

Many on the left are intuitively hostile to the notion of increasing competition in any market, let alone health care. For them, choice and competition are likely to create winner-takes-all markets. For the committed social democrat, a market oriented world is perceived as one with uncaring capitalists exploiting vulnerable consumers, persuading them to buy superficial trivialities at the expense of the really worthwhile expenditures. Health care, as a result, is no place for the market. These negative associations make it difficult to motivate a left leaning party's political base.

Second, in a recession, it is generally an anathema for policy makers to argue for policies designed to promote market forces and competition while all around them markets are being blamed for job losses, suffering and financial ruin. Combine these political constraints with the standard economic arguments concerning market failure, and there seems to be a powerful argument against letting market reform of any kind near health care.

However, such lines of reasoning, while understandable, are misplaced. Unregulated financial markets have pathologies of their own but these pathologies do not match what ails health care markets. In the NHS or in the health insurance markets in the US there is no direct equivalent to hedge funds, collateralised debt obligations or sub-prime mortgage markets. The types of markets we are proposing in health care would be vastly more regulated and much more akin to those defined by traditional microeconomic theory. Government finance addresses the problems of equity and externalities; informed agents act as purchasers on behalf of patients; and regulation guarantees minimum standards for insurance plans or health care providers. With more competition, high quality health care providers or insurers would be rewarded with larger market shares and sub-standard providers would face incentives to raise their quality or be driven out of the market.

Third, the vast majority of people in both the US and the UK are fairly happy with their health care. In part, this stems from the fact that most people don't generally need to access the health care system on a regular basis. It turns out that over 90 per cent of voters in the last presidential election had health insurance. In addition, while 30 per cent of the US population believes the US health care system should be rebuilt completely, the majority does not. In the UK, even fewer believe in the need to rebuild the system and over 60 per cent of the population is satisfied with the care they receive. Citizens who are not dissatisfied with their care are anxious about what sweeping

reforms will do to their day to day coverage; so are the legislators who represent them. Since reforms encouraging competition will upset the status quo and put financial pressure on significant interest groups – such as doctors in the UK and insurance companies in the US – the easiest way to thwart reform is for those who will be subjected to the reforms to characterise them as a threat to those who are currently happy with their care or their coverage.

Finally, those who will be subjected to more competition will not sit idle as the reforms go ahead. Rather, they will take every opportunity to shape the reforms in a way that will cause them least harm, or if necessary, block the reforms altogether. The balance that policy makers need to strike is over whether blunting the incentives in exchange for getting these groups' support outweighs the risk of maintaining robust incentives but failing to pass comprehensive legislation.

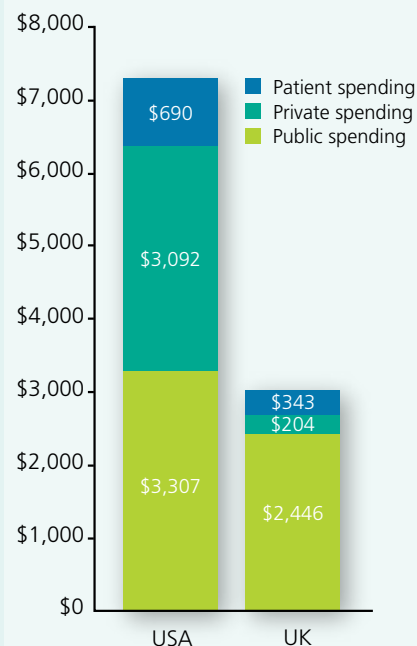
In the US, significantly, the health care insurance industry and Major League Baseball are the only two businesses that are exempt from anti-trust litigation. This exemption has led insurance markets in the US to evolve into nearly pure monopolies – veritable cartels in which the companies have tremendous power and enrollees are left in the dark. In 95 per cent of the insurance markets in the US, a single insurance company controls at least 30 per cent of the market. Similarly, in at least 21 states, a single insurance company controls over half the market. In another 17 states, two companies control more than half of the market share. In Alabama, for example, one insurance company controls approximately 90 per cent of the market, and in Iowa, a single insurance company controls 74 per cent. This is not a market structure that produces good outcomes.

As a result of relatively light regulation in some states, private companies operating in monopoly markets have been able to raise premiums far faster than inflation or the rise in wages. And, because most enrollees have no alternatives, they are forced to take what they're given, regardless of the quality of the plan they get. Unfortunately, despite the presence of a private insurance system in the US, the bulk of Americans have almost no choice over their insurer. There is little switching between insurance companies, there is little comparison shopping, and as a result, there are weak incentives for insurers to lower their prices or raise their quality.

The NHS once suffered from a similar lack of choice. In the UK, patients had no formal choice over which hospital they attended for care or

Health care expenditure per capita by source of funding, 2007

Adjusted for differences in cost of living



SOURCE: OECD HEALTH DATA (JUNE 2009)

which doctor they saw. Hospitals were paid not based on their ability to attract patients, but rather on historical patterns of spending. As a result, other than altruism, hospitals had no incentives to improve their performance, cater to patients' needs or provide patient-centred care. If patients were not happy with the care they were receiving, they had no mechanism to change doctors or hospitals and invoke their right to 'exit'.

This lack of incentives led to all sorts of problems within the NHS. In the absence of incentives, patient waiting times were long, the level of patient service was patchy, and there were huge amounts of variation in quality across NHS providers. Doctors wanted to provide good care, but they were not working in a framework that enabled them to thrive. If a hospital was bloated and inefficient one year, it actually saw its budget for the next year rise, whereas efficient hospitals saw their budgets fall to reflect their lower levels of funding.

But policy makers in London figured out how to tackle the monopolies, and this is where the US can take heed. Beginning in 2001, the British government implemented a set of aggressive reforms to the NHS designed to address some of the glaring deficiencies. At first, the reforms actually increased the role of the government in health care. Policy makers set targets for hospitals; they rewarded hospitals for meeting the targets and penalised them if they didn't. Our LSE colleague Professor

Research we have done on the NHS found that hospital competition probably lowered patient mortality rates

Gwyn Bevan described those days as a time of 'targets and terror' and said management in the NHS at the time harkened back to the kind of state control of services that existed in pre-reform Soviet Russia. Indeed, while the targeting regime worked in the short term, it was eventually recognised as unlikely to offer a long-term solution. Targets alienated the medical professions, encouraged fiddling with the figures, distorted care in many areas and drowned out local decision making.

So, from 2006 onwards, the British government shifted course and began to introduce more patient choice and provider competition into the health care service. These reforms were hugely controversial and generated significant opposition, much as Obama's reform efforts have in the US. Patients were given a range of choices over where they could receive care, the government published information on hospital quality to help patients make informed choices, and hospitals were only paid if they were able to attract patients. Hospitals were given more managerial autonomy, and the government invited private hospitals to compete alongside traditional NHS hospitals to offer care to NHS patients.

By all objective standards, the policies, despite the political tension they created, have been a success. During the period of heaving centralisation in the NHS, productivity actually fell. However, in the years since the market was introduced, almost every measurable indicator of quality has improved. Care quality has risen, waiting times have dropped and patient satisfaction levels are the highest they've been in the NHS in 20 years. Furthermore, the relationship between waiting times and patients' socio-economic status has also changed dramati-

cally. Research we published in the *British Medical Journal* last year pointed out that in 1997, poorer patients were waiting far longer for care than were wealthier patients; today, following the introduction of patient choice, there is little difference in waiting times on the basis of patients' socioeconomic status. So, not only did waiting times fall, public satisfaction rise and productivity increase, but equity was also improved.

Crucially, recent research we have done on the NHS also found that hospital competition likely reduced hospital mortality rates. In a paper titled 'Does hospital competition save lives?', based on work done by LSE Health and LSE's Department of Geography and Environment, we found that hospitals facing greater competition were able to improve their quality of care more quickly than hospitals located in monopoly markets. This is consistent with what theory would predict. As hospitals faced the financial consequences of not being chosen by patients for their care, they responded by stepping up their game and improving quality.

We need similarly inspired market based reforms in the US. When President Obama took office, in January of last year, it initially looked like his administration was going to press ahead with reforms that also placed strong emphasis on increasing choice for individuals and increasing competition in the insurance industry.

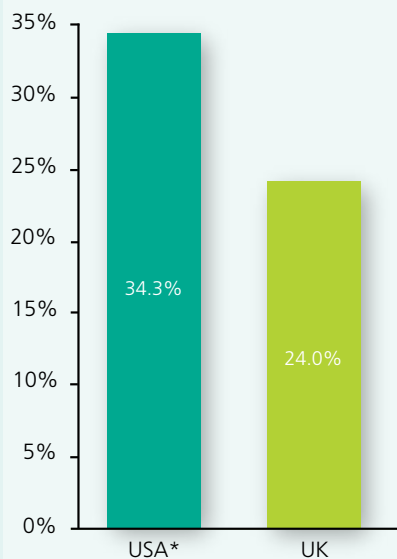
In the early days of the Obama presidency, discussions about health care reform focused on the need to create a powerful insurance exchange – essentially an Amazon.com for health insurance – where individuals could compare insurance plans online and switch between plans if they found a better fit. The insurance exchanges would operate at a federal level and would break the marriage between employment and insurance coverage, allowing individuals to have vastly more choice in selecting their health insurer. The insurance exchanges would create far more competition in insurance markets that would, in turn, produce incentives for insurers to lower their premiums.

Average annual growth rate of real health care spending per capita, 1997-2007



SOURCE: OECD HEALTH DATA (JUNE 2009)

Obesity (BMI>30) prevalence among adult population, 2007



*2006

Body mass index (BMI) estimates are based on national health interview surveys (self-reported data).

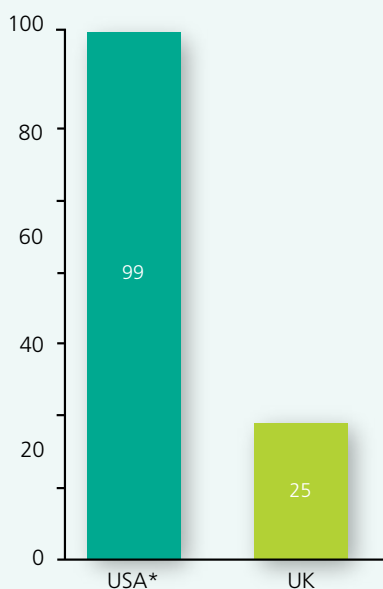
SOURCE: OECD HEALTH DATA (JUNE 2009)

In addition to the exchanges, there was also discussion about creating a so-called public option – a publicly run, not-for-profit insurance company that would compete alongside traditional private insurers. A public insurance option, like the addition of private sector providers in England, would have given more choice to people wanting insurance and exposed traditional insurers to more competition.

However, over time, as the legislation has trundled through both houses of the US Congress, the reforms have gotten significantly watered down. The insurance industry bristled at being exposed to more competition, and some segments of the electorate fretted about government intervention in health care. The insurance exchanges went from being offered at a national level, available to all, to being an option available (or not) on a state by state basis, accessible only to a small fraction of the population that didn't get insurance coverage from employers.

The public option also got marginalised over time. The grand design of a publicly run, not-for-profit insurance company competing on an equal footing with traditional private insurers turned into a smattering of small, state level not-for-profit insurance cooperatives that individual states could choose not to adopt. In essence, choice and competition, which were meant to create incentives for insurers to improve their performance, emerged from the fracas substantially diluted.

Potential years of life lost due to diabetes per 100,000 population, 2007



*2006

SOURCE: OECD HEALTH DATA (JUNE 2009)

There is a deep irony to what has transpired in health policy over the last several years. Unlike the NHS, into which policy makers successfully introduced more and more market forces, it looks highly unlikely that the US health care reforms will do a great deal to introduce more competition into the insurance industry. The NHS, long derided in America as the bastion of government run health care, has seen more success breaking down monopolies than has been achieved in the US.

The American story is not all bad. Obama has taken so many hits on health care reform that whatever emerges from this bruising debate over the short term will disappoint those who wanted structural reform and cheer those who didn't. One of the great paradoxes of the battle over health care is that the reformists – those supposed left wingers who so scared American conservatives – built part of their argument around the case for competition, something that is usually the province of conservatism. It is still possible that when the shouting is over, the US health care insurance market will swallow the medicine of competition and behave a little more like a proper market. And yet, against

the backdrop of the millions of Americans without insurance, the advent of some modest competition will amount to little more than tattered window dressing. In getting as far as he has, Obama has made history, but he hasn't made the kind of difference on health care that he set out to make. ■

Zack Cooper

a PhD candidate, is a health economist at LSE. His research interests include US health policy, comparative health policy, the role of choice and competition in health care, and incentive structure. His current work examines whether increased patient choice and hospital competition have improved quality and shortened waiting times in the English National Health Service. He is beginning work comparing hospital performance in the US, the Netherlands and the UK. He has worked as special assistant to Sir Liam Donaldson, England's chief medical officer, and to the former UK health minister, Lord Darzi. He has also served as an adviser to several other British politicians and policy makers.

Julian Le Grand

has been the Richard Titmuss Professor of Social Policy at LSE since 1993. From 2003 to 2005 he was seconded to 10 Downing Street as senior policy adviser to the prime minister. He is a founding academician of the Academy of Social Sciences, an honorary fellow of the Faculty of Public Health Medicine, and a member of the Group of Societal Policy Analysts advising the president of the European Commission. He has also acted as an adviser to the World Bank, the World Health Organisation, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, HM Treasury, the UK Department of Work and Pensions and the BBC. He is the author, co-author or editor of 18 books, and has written more than 100 refereed journal articles and book chapters on economics, philosophy and public policy.

It looks highly unlikely that the US health care reforms will do a great deal to introduce more competition into the insurance industry

Private drugs, public dilemma

Under new guidance from the Department of Health, NHS patients can be treated with additional private drugs as long as these are delivered separately from public care. A seemingly simple prescription is rattling core NHS values, argues Emily Jackson.

In Britain, the idea that one National Health Service inpatient should be allowed to pay extra to receive a medicine which is unavailable to other inpatients, including those in adjoining hospital beds, has, until recently, seemed out of the question.

Such payments – most commonly for expensive new cancer medicines which the NHS will not fund – were widely believed to fall foul of the principle, contained in the Department of Health's Code of Conduct for Private Practice, that 'a patient cannot be both a private and an NHS patient for the treatment of one condition during a single visit to an NHS organisation'.

Indeed, until 2008 this had been the view of the then Health Secretary, Alan Johnson, who had argued that top-up payments would create a two tier system, in which the better off received preferential treatment. He was persuaded to change his mind, however, and the NHS is now operating under a new policy. The ethical arguments have been heated and will continue, but it is worth setting them aside to consider the practical implications of this policy change.

Following a series of decisions in which cancer drugs which were widely available in Europe and the United States were rejected by the independent National Institute for health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) on the grounds of cost, it became evident that a number of terminally ill patients were struggling to pay for these medicines themselves. While some NHS trusts attempted to find ways to work around the apparent prohibition by arranging for patients to receive self-funded medication at home, most trusts took the view that any patient who wanted to pay for a non-NHS funded medicine would have to opt out of NHS

care altogether, and become a private patient – which would mean that they became responsible for the full costs of their care, including having to pay for other drugs that would ordinarily be freely available on the NHS.

The top-up fees issue came to the public's attention through media coverage of the case of Linda O'Boyle, who had been diagnosed with bowel cancer in 2006 and had received NHS treatment, including chemotherapy, until September 2007. She paid £11,000 for an eight week course of cetuximab, a drug which had not been approved by NICE. As a result, Southend Hospital Trust denied her the basic package of NHS care which she had previously been receiving.

In 2008, the government commissioned a report from Mike Richards, the national clinical director for cancer. The Richards report made a series of recommendations designed to reduce the number of patients in the difficult position of knowing that an effective but unfunded drug exists for their condition. Acknowledging that these steps would not completely eliminate patient demand for privately funded medicines, Richards concluded that: 'NHS patients should be able to receive additional private drugs as long as these are delivered separately from the NHS elements of their care.' Johnson accepted the recommendations, and the Department of Health (DH) issued new policy guidance.

While the number of immediately affected patients is small, this change in policy will have some dramatic implications for the NHS. The rationale behind the separate delivery requirement is straightforward enough. First, the NHS should not be in the business of cross-

subsidising private treatment by, for example, covering the costs of the preparation and administration of a privately funded medicine. Secondly, separate delivery guards against what NHS healthcare professionals regard as a violation of one of the founding principles of the NHS: namely, that the standard of treatment available within the NHS should be based upon clinical need rather than ability to pay.

And yet implementing the separate delivery requirement could pose difficulties. Even in hospitals with private wings, wheeling a seriously ill patient from one unit to another to receive a privately funded medicine may not be practical or clinically advisable. In hospitals without private wings, an area within an NHS ward may have to be designated as 'temporarily private' for the delivery of privately funded medicines. Finding NHS staff willing to deliver private treatment on an NHS ward may also not be easy. Testifying before the House of Commons' Health Select Committee in January 2009, Dr Alison Jones suggested that approximately 50 per cent of NHS oncology specialists would not be willing to provide private medicine. In reality, then, the principle of separate delivery may be preserved – but only by employing what might be described as semantic sleight of hand.

Allowing the delivery of privately funded medicines within the NHS also opens up new marketing opportunities to both the insurance and the pharmaceutical industries. There are already signs that specialist insurance policies are emerging to market cancer specific policies to people who do not yet have a cancer diagnosis. Unlike current insurance packages, most of which cover the full costs of inpatient care as well as all prescribed medicines, premiums for policies which only cover licensed medicines which have not been approved by NICE will be much lower and much more affordable.

WPA Insurance was the first company to set up a top-up only policy following publication of the new Department of Health guidance. Their 'mycancerdrugs' policy covers EMEA licensed 'cancer drugs not available on the NHS and the costs of administering these within the NHS or privately', up to a lifetime benefit of £50,000. This policy is an optional extra, costing £4.20 a month to non-smokers and £10 a month to smokers, on top of the company's basic 'wellness package', which costs £15 per month.

A massive extension of private health insurance in the UK would be an unattractive development. The administrative costs of insurance schemes are high: the US spends more than twice as much



per capita as every other developed nation on health care. One of the reasons why costs in the US are so high is that private insurers invest in complex systems to identify and screen out high cost customers, thereby increasing the alarming number of Americans without health insurance. Indeed WPA's cancer drugs policy is not available to all. Anyone with a first degree relative who has been diagnosed with cancer under the age of 60 is excluded, and coverage is removed for everyone on their 65th birthday.

As for the pharmaceutical industry, top-up fees for expensive cancer drugs present a new marketing opportunity for them as well. Patients with otherwise untreatable cancer and their loved ones may be particularly unresponsive to price. NICE might have ruled that a drug which costs £10,000 and will extend patients' lives by three months is insufficiently cost effective, but if it is one's partner's life that is at stake, while one may not be able to afford £10,000, one is very unlikely to decide that one would prefer to spend the money on something else. While pharmaceutical companies are not permitted to market medicines directly to consumers within the European Union, it is widely accepted that they have effective strategies for marketing medicines to patients indirectly, by subsidising health information websites and patient groups.

The widespread dissemination of health care information via the Internet means that many

patients and their relatives are already well informed about the existence of new and expensive medicines. In his evidence to the Health Select Committee, Professor Karol Sikora estimated that there are around 300 million websites devoted to cancer. A further important question raised by the new DH guidance is whether doctors should now be under a duty to inform patients about the existence of a potentially effective but unfunded treatment. While the arguments in favour of full and frank information disclosure within the doctor-patient relationship are, in my view, overwhelming, some doctors have suggested that a duty to tell all patients about the existence of privately available medicines will lead to the unedifying experience of effectively offering private and unaffordable treatment to patients whom the doctor knows have no resources at all.

As Dr Jacky Davis put it in her evidence to the Health Select Committee: 'I work in a part of London where I am sure most people would not be able to afford top-up drugs. Am I going to sit in front of people who I know are on benefits, with their five children around them, and have to go through all the options because that is what the report requires, knowing damn well that those people absolutely are not going to be able to afford those top-ups? I think that is going to be a great strain on clinicians.'

Another key implication the new guidance has for rationing within the NHS is that it could represent a step towards a two-tier system, in which the NHS offers a basic core service, with patients topping up, in order to receive a better standard of care. Of course, within the NHS there have always been treatments that patients may want, but which the NHS will not necessarily fund, such as tattoo removal or sterilisation reversal. For the core service not to include effective treatment for cancer is, however, qualitatively different. Private elective treatment in the UK has tended to be for procedures which are intended to improve quality of life, or for non-evidence based 'alternative' therapies like homeopathy. Uneven access to these sorts of treatment does not raise difficult equity considerations in the same way as unequal provision of effective cancer treatment. As Rudolf Klein memorably put it in *The New Politics of the NHS*: 'inequalities in the distribution of snake oil do not cause moral anguish.'

In addition to the new Department of Health guidance on top-up fees, a second consequence of the Richards report is that NICE has advised its appraisal committees to consider giving greater weight to quality adjusted life years (QALYs) achieved in the later stages of terminal

diseases when 'treatment is licensed or otherwise indicated, for small patient populations'. The working assumption is that this covers cancers diagnosed in fewer than 7,000 patients a year in the UK.

Of course, the justification for limiting the new guidance to small patient groups is that these are disproportionately likely to be affected by high drugs prices. But as a reason to distinguish between two similarly situated people who are dying, and who each might benefit from a few more months of life which can only be delivered by a particularly expensive medicine, the fact that one of them has fewer other fellow sufferers in the UK is surely a morally irrelevant reason.

More fundamentally, what services or treatments will Primary Care Trusts have to cut in order to fund these expensive new NICE approved medicines? Just because we cannot identify in advance which patients will suffer as a result of protected funding for small patient groups does not mean that there are not real patients who will receive a reduced standard of care as a result. If resources are finite, then as well as deciding which groups should have priority, there is also a need to decide which patients' care should be cut in order to fund these expensive new drugs.

Finally, it is worth bearing in mind that the future of cancer medicine is likely to be the subdividing of cancers into smaller sub-sets of patients who can be treated with medicines which will be effective only in one sub-set, often identified in advance by a genetic test. This has two consequences. First, the number of small patient groups is likely to increase dramatically, and secondly, there will be a growing number of medicines which fail even the enhanced NICE QALY thresholds. In the future, then, few of us will be fortunate enough to be entirely unaffected by the difficult issues raised by the funding of expensive cancer medicines. ■

Emily Jackson

is a professor in the Department of Law, and is a core member of BIOS, an international centre for research and policy on social aspects of the life sciences and biomedicine at LSE. Her principal research interests are in the field of medical law; in recent years, she has been especially interested in end-of-life decision-making and in reproductive issues such as the regulation of assisted conception and embryonic stem cell research. In addition to publishing in these areas, Jackson is a member of a number of regulatory and advisory bodies, including the UK's Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority and the British Medical Association's Medical Ethics Committee.

What happiness research did next

Social science researchers should get out more. Reality based research that is also collaborative and cross-disciplinary is the way ahead for scholars trying to measure happiness, argue Paul Dolan and Robert Metcalfe.

How can we tell what makes us happy? While most people could name specific things which they think make them happy – money, love, a few beers with friends – what causes general happiness to increase across the population is less clear. Nevertheless, it is a central question facing social science research.

In recent years, our understanding of the correlation between happiness and things such as health, wealth and marriage has come a very long way, particularly as more data have become available and the issue of ‘happiness’ has gained more leverage in public discussion. This trend looks set to continue, particularly as policy makers and politicians of all colours are starting to take happiness data seriously. There are two main pitfalls, however, that prevent us from making the vital leap from correlation to causation: these are ‘selection effects’ and ‘reverse causality.’

Take the effects of volunteering as an example. While there is generally a positive association between volunteering and happiness it is possible that those choosing to volunteer are those most likely to benefit from it. This is the selection effect. Likewise, those with greater happiness may be those most likely to volunteer in the first place. So any correlation is also likely to be affected by reverse causality.

We believe that by expanding the methods we use to generate data, we can gain a deeper

insight into what makes people happy. Finding the underlying causes of happiness is the holy grail for policy makers, who, with a limited pot of cash, need to know which projects to fund in order to promote the greatest improvements in wellbeing. If it turns out that the link between volunteering and happiness is only because happier people volunteer, then devoting more resources to volunteering may not be the most effective use of resources.

There are four main approaches to demonstrating causality, ranging from tightly controlled laboratory experiments, where researchers have total control over data, to economists inferring causality from ‘real world’ data, over which researchers have no control. These can be pictured as lying on a spectrum:

No control	
1	Secondary data, inferring causality
2	Secondary data, natural experiment
3	Primary data, field experiment
4	Primary data, laboratory experiment
Total control	

But which is the most effective approach to discover the secret of happiness? At the ‘no control’ end is an analysis of secondary datasets from which causality is inferred. This is generally the preferred method of economists. Here the researcher seeks to show what causes happiness by analysing existing data using econometric methods, such as instrumental variables. This approach seeks to tease out how one factor may have a direct causal effect on happiness. Instrumental variables effectively substitute the factor thought to cause happiness (eg, volunteering) with a variable that is highly correlated with this factor but not correlated with happiness. So, in the case of volunteering, we need a variable that is associated with volunteering but not with happiness. Unfortunately, such a variable is hard to find (education, for example, is highly correlated with volunteering but also, to some degree at least, with happiness).

Analyses of large longitudinal datasets, such as the British Household Panel Survey (BHPS), have used econometric methods to provide insights into the determinants of happiness. It has been shown, for example, that unemployment has a significant and long-lasting adverse effect on happiness. The problem is that most of the things that happen to us, including unemployment, are not entirely outside of our control. It is difficult, therefore, to find instrumental variables that allow us to be confident that we have fully established the magnitude of effects like unemployment (or marriage, income etc) on happiness.

To remove selection effects and reverse causality, the potential cause of happiness being analysed should be unrelated to the behaviour of the individual. Some things, such as being accidentally involved in a large scale disaster, can be analysed by treating secondary data as a natural experiment. For example, by taking advantage of the fact that interviews take place in September each year we have shown the effects of 9/11 on happiness in the UK by using data from the BHPS. The problem is that the opportunities to use natural experiments to show the causes of happiness are very rare.

Field experiments move us much closer to the total control end of the spectrum because the

The problem with laboratory experiments is that some data are artificially created and have no 'real life' context

data are gathered for the specific purposes of determining causality. Randomised controlled trials are the most notable example of field experiments and are widely used by medical researchers. Randomly placing participants in one of two or more arms in a trial allows the researcher to control for selection effects once participants are in the trial and also for reverse causality. A problem with randomised control trials is that those willing to participate may react differently from those unwilling to take part, thus introducing some potential selection bias.

A further problem is randomisation bias, whereby the knowledge of being in a trial may affect behaviour in ways that we are unable to predict before the event. This bias has important implications for many medical treatments, where informed consent is essential for clinical trials.

At the 'total control' end of the spectrum are laboratory experiments. This is generally the preferred approach of psychologists. In this instance, researchers generate their own data from studies designed specifically to show how one variable affects another. The problem is that these data are artificially created and, as such, have no 'real life' context. Without this context we cannot hope to generalise about the causes of happiness.

There are clearly pros and cons with all the methods that can be used to help answer the question of what causes our happiness to increase. Data we have no control over are more true to life, whereas data we can control are much less like the real world. Economists and psychologists have made major advances in the 'science of happiness', one by analysing secondary data and the other by conducting lab experiments. But in order to establish causality in happiness research, as elsewhere, we must take full advantage of all the data and methods available to us. Secondary data that can be used as natural experiments are very useful but the lack of suitable data does limit how far this approach can take us. Field experiments, on the other hand, have not really been used in happiness research but, with innovative designs and the right research partners, they

have the potential to shed light on the causes of happiness.

Take volunteering as an example. Researchers could work with different charitable and volunteer organisations to design and implement different volunteering schemes that seek to control for selection effects (eg, through random recruitment strategies) and reverse causality (eg, by randomising across those who are willing to volunteer). Happiness surveys would be carried out before, during and after the field experiment and would include all those who dropped out or chose not to participate at all. Ideally the participants would not know they are in an experiment to prevent randomisation bias but this may sometimes not be possible because of the need for informed consent.

An important development would be for social science researchers to 'get out more'. More field experiments, collaborating with relevant practitioners, will add to the evidence base and move us closer to an answer to what causes happiness to increase.

With increasing interest from politicians and policy makers the time is now ripe to significantly enhance our understanding of the causes of happiness. This means researchers taking some control of data in a real world environment. That way, perhaps, we could all become a little happier. ■



Impact of happiness research on public policy

The high-profile work of Lord Richard Layard (pictured), the founder director of LSE's Centre for Economic Performance (CEP), has had a significant impact on recent thinking about wellbeing and happiness, helping policy makers approach the seemingly impossible task of how to make people happier.

Among other things, research done by Lord Layard and the Wellbeing Programme at the CEP has strongly influenced the use of cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) to treat depression on the NHS, was key in developing lessons in emotional intelligence in secondary schools, and has prompted the Office for National Statistics to develop ways of measuring societal wellbeing that go beyond economic growth.

Paul Dolan

is a professor of Economics in the Department of Social Policy at LSE. There are two main themes to Dolan's research. One focuses on developing measures of subjective wellbeing that can be used by policy makers to place a value on non-market goods such as health and the environment. The other considers ways in which the lessons of behavioural economics can be used to understand and change individual behaviour. Dolan was awarded a Philip Leverhulme Prize in Economics in 2002 for his contribution to health economics. Having served as an adviser to various UK government departments, Dolan is currently chief academic adviser on economic appraisal for the Government Economic Service.

Robert Metcalfe

an LSE graduate (MSc Human Geography), is Dolan's co-author on this article. Metcalfe is a research fellow at the Smith School of Enterprise and the Environment, Oxford, and Merton College, Oxford.

The pensions crisis in perspective

When pensions were invented, a retirement age of 65 made sense. Today, the great triumph of the 20th century – people living longer healthier lives – threatens to bankrupt pension systems. But don't panic, says **Nick Barr** in this interview with *LSE Research* editor Stryker McGuire.

SM: You've suggested that it's wrong to talk about a pensions 'crisis'.

NB: The pensions problem has several roots. The main one is that people are living longer healthy lives. That is not a problem, but arguably the great triumph of the 20th century. What greater gain in welfare could there be? So that's the great good news. But obviously if people retire at 65 and live longer and longer, it's going to become more and more expensive to provide a pension of given size. Of the range of options to fix the problem, one is that as people live longer and longer, their monthly pension gets smaller and smaller – which seems a dumb way to proceed. The other is that if people are living longer lives, they should work a bit longer and retire a bit later. If, when pensions were invented in the 19th century, instead of picking a fixed retirement age government had chosen one related to life expectancy in some sensible way, I don't think we'd be talking about the pensions crisis now.

SM: Do you think couching it as a pensions crisis has actually created a policy problem that didn't exist?

NB: I think that people who talk of 'crisis' don't understand the problem. I think that there is a separate problem with the 24-hour news agenda that loves crises. Different elements of the problem get conflated. One element in paying for pensions is longer healthier lives. Another, more recent element is that the stock market has tanked so that private pension funds are worth significantly less than a few years ago and that's a separate problem, but it's all lumped together as 'crisis'.

SM: How can pensions cope with the impact of increased life expectancy?

NB: When retirement was invented, the purpose of pensions was to get old, doddering, unproductive workers off the factory floor and the farmyard where they were reducing the productivity of younger workers. In those days it made sense not to do that until people were seriously old and pretty much finished and, when it happened, to say, 'right, you're out of here – you're retired, completely'. Since then two things have happened. We're leading longer lives, but also societies have got richer and therefore we can afford to give people a period of leisure at the end of their working lives. That's a desirable thing to do, but it means that the purpose of retirement has changed. Given the new purpose, the average age of retirement should be later to make pensions affordable, but separately, retirement should not be a walking-off-the-cliff

Societies have got richer and therefore we can afford to give people a period of leisure at the end of their working lives

Cecil and Elma
Picture by Nigel Stead



activity. There should be flexibility in moving from full-time work to full retirement. That would be a desirable move even if there weren't a problem with pensions.

SM: Why is it so difficult for governments and politicians to address this issue?

NB: Economists tend to think that things like prices are technical. But one of the things I've learned is that they are deeply cultural – that people have strong views about what it is right to pay for and what it's not. So an American takes it for granted that you have to pay something for your medical care – so do the French, so do the Germans. In Britain, for a lot of people it's an outrage to have to pay anything for medical care. When it comes to retirement age, people have not only grown up with the idea that it's 65 – they have also grown up with the idea that it is fixed at 65 in perpetuity.

The big political breakthrough that the 2005 report of the UK Pensions Commission helped to make happen was that people in Britain now increasingly realise that retirement age is not a parameter, it's a variable. But though later retirement is desirable – I would say essential – it is good policy to give people plenty of notice.

Public pension spending, % of GDP

	2000	2030	2050
Denmark	10.5	14.5	13.3
France	12.1	16.0	NA
Germany	11.8	15.5	16.9
Greece	12.6	19.6	24.8
Netherlands	7.9	13.1	13.6
Sweden	9.0	11.4	10.7
UK	5.5	5.2	4.4

Source: UK Pensions Commission (2004)

We live longer lives. The average age of retirement should be later to make pensions affordable

So you don't say: 'Sorry, pal, you thought you were retiring next month, but actually you're going to have to work for another five years.' That's bad economics, bad social policy and bad politics.

That means a government has to face the pain of announcing an increase in the retirement age, but the gain will accrue to a government 15 or 20 years down the road. That is asking a lot of governments driven by electoral cycles. So, for instance, the Pensions Commission recommended that state pensionable age in Britain should rise from 65 to 66 in 2024. Now, that's how many elections away. So endorsing that decision required some genuine political courage, for which the government should be applauded.

SM: Why have corporate pensions run into trouble?

NB: For three main reasons. First, if you ask actuaries to predict the future cost of pensions, they always underestimate – largely because there is a general tendency to underestimate the rate of increase in life expectancy. Second, stock markets tanked. And third, during the good times, when stock markets were booming, a significant number of companies took 'contributions holidays', so they weren't contributing much. What should public policy do? For a start, it could make sure that companies contribute enough.

SM: You've said there's no such thing as the single best pension system. Can you point to any that work well?

NB: The Netherlands has a tax-financed, non-contributory pension, together with well-run occupational pensions that in practice are mandatory for the vast body of workers. Those pension plans started off being final salary plans, but that imposed the entire risk on employers. So the Netherlands system has adapted in a very clever way by asking the right question: how should risks be shared between workers, employers and pensioners? They have adjusted their formula so it is a hybrid between



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a defined benefit plan, like a final salary plan, on the one hand, and a defined contribution plan on the other, where the worker gets what is in his or her account.

Another sensible model is Canada, which also has a non-contributory pension supplemented by a state-organised, earnings-related pension rather than private occupational pensions.

In the United States, the state-run Social Security System is a pretty good arrangement. You can argue about whether benefits (and hence contribution) should be higher but as a system it works pretty well. The US government has avoided the mistake that British governments have made – British governments have tinkered with our state pension far too frequently – as a result the system is so complicated that I don't understand it, and my recommendation to people who wish to live long, fruitful lives is that they don't try to understand it either.

SM: What's the common denominator among these sensible plans?

NB: Two things really matter for pensions. One is output growth – because that is how you can afford to pay for more generous pensions for larger populations. And the second is good government. That's much more important than the specific type of pension system a country has. Good government will run a pay as you go system responsibly, it will collect contributions, it won't make silly promises, and it will create the macroeconomic stability and regulatory environment in which private pensions can flourish.

SM: Are there some particularly vulnerable pension systems out there?

NB: One that has been in the news is Greece. There's a slide that I use in some of my lectures that shows projected public pension spending in several European countries. If nothing is done, Greece, will be spending 25 per cent of GDP on pensions by 2050, which is totally unsustainable.

SM: You were asked to review China's pension system, which has to be a mammoth task if ever there was one.

NB: There are two chapters to the China story. In 2004, I was a member of a small group who were asked to advise the Chinese government on pension reform. We wrote a report at the time, which made a series of recommendations. In 2009, pensions policy and social policy more generally came back onto the front burner as part of the preparation of the next five-year plan to be announced later this year. As part of that exercise we were asked to revise our report on pensions and, separately, to write a paper on broader social policy reform which answers the essay question: What policies could the Chinese government adopt in the 12th five year plan that will make coverage of pensions and social benefits as near universal as possible?

So I've spent a lot of time over the last few months working with Peter Diamond of MIT on the pensions paper and with my LSE colleague Howard Glennerster, professor emeritus of social administration and co-director of CASE (Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion), on the social policy paper. Those will feed into a document that will go to the Chinese government. On pensions, since they've raised the issue of universal coverage, we've essentially endorsed our recommendations

from five years ago but added a new one, namely that China should introduce non-contributory tax-financed pensions of the sort they have in the Netherlands, in Canada, and New Zealand and since last year in Chile. Similarly, the paper on social policy argues that tax-financed access to health care and primary and secondary education is essential in a country growing as rapidly as China that wants to invest in the human capital of its population. That's the story, and of course for any academic with an interest in policy, how lucky can you get to be asked to contribute to social policy and pensions policy in a country with 1.3 billion people? ■

Nick Barr

is a professor of public economics. He has done extensive research on the economic theory of the welfare state, especially the economics of pensions, health finance, and the finance of higher education, and is the author of numerous books and articles on these areas. He has had a wide-ranging involvement in policy, including two spells at the World Bank, where he worked from 1990 to 1992 on the design of income transfers and health finance in Central and Eastern Europe and Russia, and from 1995-96 as a principal author of the World Bank's 'World Development Report 1996: from plan to market'. Professor Barr has been an adviser to governments in various countries, including the UK, Chile, China, Hungary and South Africa.

Who put politics into the police?

There must be an election coming. The current debate in Britain about the politicisation of the police is analytically confused and historically amnesiac, with both Labour and the Conservatives looking like participants in an orgy of political cross-dressing. Robert Reiner calls for a little historical perspective.

The most recent bout of political posturing over the politicisation of the police was sparked in September 2009 when Kit Malthouse, the deputy mayor for policing, made a splash in the newspapers with his boasts that his Tory boss, London mayor Boris Johnson, was running the Metropolitan Police Service. Malthouse said he and Johnson, backed by an electoral mandate to do so, 'have our hands on the tiller' of the Met. He asserted that the Johnson regime had 'elbowed the Home Office out of the picture' and would no longer act as a rubber stamp to whatever the force proposed, insisting: 'We do not want to be a passenger on the Met cruise.'

The Conservative Party hierarchy seemed to agree with all or part of this approach. Newspaper accounts have suggested that a Conservative government would fundamentally remodel the current tripartite system of police governance along the lines the mayor's office had adopted. According to media reports, a Conservative government would scrap police authorities across England and Wales and replace them with individually elected commissioners, who would be responsible for the hiring and firing of chief constables and for funding the services.

The police fired back. The then new police commissioner, Sir Paul Stephenson, and Sir Hugh

Orde, the president of the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO), supported by several other police chiefs, responded with a stout reassertion of the constitutional principle of constabulary independence. The Labour party joined in the condemnation. Alan Johnson, the Home Secretary, was quoted as saying: 'The last thing police forces want is politicians telling them how to do their job, which will inevitably happen with elected commissioners.' Thinking better of his own role, Boris Johnson in January stood down as chair of the Metropolitan Police Association, though he installed Kit Malthouse in his place.

This current storm about the politicisation of the police – itself reminiscent of the 1970s and 1980s, when Labour was routinely accusing the Conservatives of politicising the police for their own partisan advantage – has been gathering for several years. In 2005 the Conservatives accused the Labour government of inducing the Met Police commissioner of the day, Sir Ian Blair, and other police chiefs, to lobby Parliament in support of the proposals to extend detention limits for terror suspects to 90 days. Indeed, Sir Ian was routinely accused by Tory tabloids and politicians of being too closely aligned with the Labour government.

And yet, oblivious to any apparent contradiction, the Conservative general election campaign of that same year also trailed the idea of elected

'sheriffs', a move hardly calculated to depoliticise policing. Then, in October 2008, it was Labour's turn to be up in arms. The resignation of Sir Ian as Met commissioner kicked off accusations that Boris Johnson was politicising the police. The Tories were back with their own politicisation complaints the next month, following the arrest and detention of their shadow immigration minister, Damian Green, during a police investigation into leaked government documents. (The Crown Prosecution Service later said it was not going to bring a case against Green.) And so on.

To anyone with a memory stretching beyond the latest headlines these episodes are sadly familiar, as, among others, LSE's David Downes and his co-author Rod Morgan made clear in their 2006 work, *No turning back: the politics of law and order into the millennium*. Throughout the 1970s and 80s, Labour accused the Conservatives of politicising the police for their own partisan advantage. Local democratic accountability was then seen as a left-Labour issue, vigorously opposed by the Conservatives (and by police chiefs, whose opposition has remained constant).

The current debate about police politicisation is both analytically confused and historically amnesiac. As their close etymological roots indicate, police and politics are necessarily closely bound up together. Policing is inherently political in the broad sense, involving the exercise of power, ultimately coercive power, in the name of order and security.

Although this is nowadays usually seen as an uncontroversial – if hard to deliver – social good, policing also has another side, opening it up to controversy. Policing usually targets those who for whatever reason come to be regarded as threatening to prevailing conceptions of order. Policing is inevitably partisan, championing dominant interests (in a democracy hopefully those of the majority) against others.

This was evident at the time of the establishment of the modern British (and American) police in the early 19th century, when there was widespread opposition to the 'new' police, especially from the



XAVI ARNAU/ISTOCK

mass of the population who saw it as a means of oppression.

As I show in my new book *The Politics of the Police*, the architects of the English police, Sir Robert Peel and the commissioners he appointed, deliberately moulded an image of policing designed to confer legitimacy on the highly contested institution. This was the depoliticised model of 'policing by consent' based on the notion of police as 'citizens in uniform,' maintaining an impartial rule of law independent of governments or parties, and with minimal force. The idea was that policing should be seen not as an instrument of class repression but as a service to all. Social justice, the welfare state and community cohesion did the heavy lifting of creating social order, while the new police got credit for an increasing level of public safety from the mid-19th to the mid-20th century.

During the 1970s, the police were increasingly politicised as law and order became a political issue. The police became a Tory-leaning partisan political

lobby. A 'bobby lobby' emerged, spearheaded by public interventions by prominent chief police officers and by the Police Federation's embracing of the Conservative Party's espousal of law and order as an electoral issue. This played a crucial role in Margaret Thatcher's election victory in 1979.

For most of the 1980s the parties became increasingly polarised by their strikingly different positions on crime and order. The Tories seized the electorally winning formula of presenting themselves as tough protectors of the public, castigating Labour for being 'soft on crime' – over-sensitive to civil liberties, in hock to militant trade unions, captured by a social democratic philosophy of crime that supposedly excused criminals as puppets of social factors that drove them to break the law.

This sharp partisan conflict abated in the late 1990s as the parties both moved closer to the centre of the ideological spectrum. So did the overtly partisan lobbying by the police. ACPO reined in its more egregiously outspoken

chief officers and sought to present a more corporate professional front. Paradoxically, ACPO's efforts to tame its chiefs culminated during 1993-94 in the most vigorous lobbying in its history. ACPO campaigned against efforts by the government to restructure the police along 'businesslike', New Public Management (NPM) lines that were meant to deliver a tough dose of quasi-market discipline.

However, although pitched against a Conservative government's proposals, the ACPO campaign attracted considerable cross-party support and was not explicitly partisan. Especially after Michael Howard replaced Kenneth Clarke as home secretary in 1993, the Conservative government became more open to police objections, as suggested by the 1994 Police and Magistrates' Court Act, which represented a reasonably happy compromise. On the other side, the reformed New Labour Party under Tony Blair was also favourable to much of the NPM agenda. In office after 1997, the Blair government implemented the NPM reform agenda with at least as much rigour as the Tories had done. Then the Tories came along and, despite their own history, criticised Labour on the grounds of 'micro management.'

This sort of partisan posturing disguises what is, in fact, a large and important area of agreement. The febrile partisan competition to claim superiority in fighting crime, the dizzying cross-dressing on policy and rhetoric – these headline grabbing controversies conceal the fact that there is an underlying fundamental consensus on law and order. One that has, as I wrote in *Law and Order: an honest citizen's guide to crime and control*, prevailed since 1992. Labour and the Conservatives may disagree on how the police should deliver crime control, but they do not have any principled differences over the balance to be struck between order and liberty, or, to borrow New Labour's mantra, between being tough on crime and tough on the causes of crime. ■

Robert Reiner

is a professor of criminology in the Department of Law, and acting director of LSE's Mannheim Centre for the Study of Criminology and Criminal Justice, one of the largest criminological groupings in Europe. His principal research interests include the politics of policing and the political economy of crime and crime control. His latest books are *Law and Order: an honest citizen's guide to crime and control* (Polity Press, 2007) and *The Politics of the Police* (Oxford University Press, 2010). He is a former president of the British Society of Criminology.

During the 1970s, the police were increasingly politicised as law and order became a political issue

Not-so-strange bedfellows anymore

NGOs and the news media: sometimes it's hard to tell them apart, especially at times of crisis, disaster and devastation. Their uneasy partnership tests traditional assumptions about the roles of news gatherers and aid givers, says **Charlie Beckett.**

To know the causes of things: this has always sounded like more than just an academic motive for LSE research. It implies that to understand something is also to hope to change it for the better.

So when Polis, the journalism think tank, started at LSE four years ago it seemed a good fit for an international media institute to look at how international development non-governmental organisations try to get their messages across via the global news media. Can journalism help development? Moreover, should journalism help development?

There's nothing new about news organisations and NGOs working together. Michael Buerk only got to make his famous 1984 BBC report on the Ethiopian famine by hitching a ride on a relief plane. And since then charities like Oxfam have hired professional journalists to boost their profile through slick public relations operations. NGOs routinely help journalists with information and provide transport to cover development and humanitarian stories. Very often they will actually provide the photographs, case studies and spokespeople to make a broadcast report or to write an article or feature.

Their aim has been to win precious airtime and column inches to promote their work, to boost fundraising and to swing hearts and minds behind their campaigns. It works. Recently the former British prime minister Tony Blair said that NGOs had helped him to push forward his debt relief plans at the G8 summit in Gleneagles,

Scotland, in 2005 by capturing media attention. He said that the high profile of figures like Bob Geldof on the news was a vital way to convince fellow world leaders that public opinion was behind the policies.

With the Internet, this media strategy has moved into a whole new digital world. Now those NGOs can also communicate directly with the public through websites, blogs and social networking sites like Facebook. And the citizen can become part of the storytelling themselves. The new technologies make it easier and more engaging to give a voice to aid workers and the people they work with, without having to find, much less convince, a professional journalist.

To draw attention to its work in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Médecins Sans Frontières adorns its website with blogs by aid workers and films featuring victims of violence talking about rebuilding their lives. The work was done with the help of a professional photojournalism development agency. It is a classic case of an NGO using new media technologies to report on a story that mainstream media might struggle to find time or space to cover.

So in effect, these NGOs are becoming news media organisations. They are reporting the world to the public. They network through mainstream media or they simply do it direct and online. But how well do they do that job? Are there conflicts of interest? Are they being totally honest? Can they be totally honest if their 'journalism' is designed in part to raise funds for their operations?

In the past, journalists always gave NGOs an easy ride. Aid workers were seen as on the side of the angels and a useful way to get around bureaucratic, corrupt or hostile governments and the military both at home and in the field. NGOs provided cover for the journalist and a voice of moral outrage. Often the NGOs would know far more about what was going on in some distant land or forgotten war than some harried hack fighting to meet a deadline on a threadbare budget. But is it a good thing for the news media to become so dependent on

Michael Buerk only got to make his famous 1984 BBC report on the Ethiopian famine by hitching a ride on a relief plane



CORBIS/GIDEON MENDEL

Baidoa, Somalia

NGOs? And is there a problem with NGOs acting as digital news services in their own right? Polis research with journalists and news organisations has revealed some innovative and effective work by NGOs and the news media. But we have also uncovered a lot of anxiety on both sides about their new relationship.

Take the four-year Katine project (www.guardian.co.uk/katine) launched in October 2007 by *The Guardian* newspaper and the development agency AMREF (African Medical and Research Foundation). It sought to replace the annual newspaper Christmas appeal with a long-term engagement between the media organisation and the development workers.

The Katine website now has a wealth of pictures and stories chronicling the efforts to bring more wealth, health and education to the villagers in rural Uganda. By focusing over a period of time on one place, the project has given *Guardian* readers a uniquely detailed and continuous insight into how development works, including the mistakes made. But there has been a culture clash alongside this positive work. Some *Guardian* journalists told Polis that they felt they were being 'spun' by their aid agency partner as a fundraising exercise. In turn AMREF staff said that it was impossible to work under constant media scrutiny.

Not all the fancy new media ideas fit well with the Katine project either. An attempt to get the villagers to blog, for example, failed because they simply lacked the literacy to write regularly about their lives, never mind posting it on the Internet.

Overall, it was probably too expensive and difficult a project for either party to want to repeat. However, it did create a much deeper and more informed story about the complex, subtle and slow-moving narrative of development. And other NGOs have begun similar projects in partnership with different newsrooms.

The fact is that we want NGOs to work against injustice and poverty. We expect them to speak out passionately in favour of policies that advance their goals and support their work. That is quite different from our traditional assumptions

about journalism. We want journalists who are independent, critical and skilled at investigation and honest storytelling.

Our research shows that it is possible to create a kind of networked journalism that allows NGOs and the news media to benefit each other. There is enough space in the digital news communication sphere for lots of different kinds of news. But there are real ethical and practical issues at stake when NGOs become journalists and when the news media relies on aid workers to do their job. In this rapidly changing area Polis has a range of research projects that will continue to monitor the media and development story. One thing is certain: change is not going to slow down while the need for more information on our warming world is only going to grow. ■

Charlie Beckett

is the director of Polis, the journalism think-tank in LSE's Media and Communications Department. Polis is a public forum for debate, research and teaching about the news media in the UK and globally. It holds seminars, conferences and lectures and has published reports on topics such as social media, public broadcasting, financial journalism, humanitarian communication and media and development. Charlie Beckett was a filmmaker and editor at London Weekend Television, the BBC, and ITN's Channel 4 News. He is the author of *SuperMedia* (Wiley Blackwell, 2008), which sets out how journalism is being transformed by technological and other changes and how that will impact on society.

Tricky business: the politics of aid

In the byways and badlands of Afghanistan and other war-torn countries, there is a fundamental tension between development work and humanitarian work. In this debate with Joanna Bale, **Jude Howell** and **Jean S Renouf** argue that it's sometimes hard to separate the aid programmes on the ground from the agendas of donor nations.

JB: Professor Howell, if we begin with Afghanistan, there appears to be an extraordinary amount of aid pouring in. Is it getting through to those who need it most?

JH: It is certainly true that since the overthrow of the Taliban regime and the election of a fledgling democratic government under President Hamid Karzai, Western aid has flooded into Afghanistan and now stands at an estimated \$2.3 billion a year. It is concentrated in southern Afghanistan, in Helmand, which doesn't really make sense when your objectives are poverty reduction – because there's an argument for poverty reduction everywhere in Afghanistan. At the time of our research, one fifth of DFID (the UK Department for International Development) aid and half of all United States aid was focused in the south, so it is clearly being targeted where the securing of those areas is important to Western political interests.

We examined how security policy impinges on aid policy and civil society, and the dilemmas that poses for development agencies, or for an organisation like DFID, which tries to put poverty reduction at the centre of its agenda.

JB: So is aid being used to win hearts and minds against the insurgents?

JH: Yes, but the hearts and minds strategy is illogical. You are bombing people's villages, then bringing in a doctor and building a clinic, and you think that people are going to be thankful and forget that their relatives are killed or missing. I find it extraordinary. It defies understanding.

JB: Jean Renouf, you examined how humanitarian organisations including NGOs and United Nations agencies are spending aid money on managing their security, including the use of private security companies.

JR: I started looking at the place of private security companies in conflict zones five years ago. I had seen them in Iraq when I was working as an aid worker in Basra and Baghdad for a small French NGO, Première Urgence, which provides medical aid and support for refugees. They were working in Iraq several years before the fall of Saddam and therefore had a huge network. We benefited from this when it was time to go to these conflict zones, such as Fallujah, that were closed down. We would negotiate with the US marines who controlled the outer area, and then with the insurgents, so it was really interesting, challenging work.

I then spent several periods in Afghanistan and have concluded that there is little point in spending aid money on armed guards because if they want to hit you, the Taliban or the warlords will just bring more armed militia to outnumber you. Different security strategies exist, including the other option of trying to negotiate with people so that they accept you eventually.

Some experts say that about ten per cent of the aid money in Afghanistan ends in Taliban hands



SUSAN SCHULMAN

Helmand, Afghanistan

Humanitarian organisations try to do no harm, but by going into an area with private security they may be fuelling the war. For instance, they don't always look at who is managing the security company, and in some cases, it is simply a warlord who decided to register his militia as a private security company. However, the use of security companies by humanitarian organisations is limited and most of the time does not include the provision of armed services.

JB: Are there other circumstances where aid ended up in the hands of militia?

JR: There are so many. The most visible was in Somalia when humanitarian agencies would bring in food, some of which was diverted by force, and you know where it ends up – with the militia. The same happened in North Korea. There are many ways to mitigate such risks, for instance, rather than bring in food, you might be involved in infrastructure building that will benefit the population. It's less likely this will be diverted.

JB: So is there any idea about how much aid ends up in the hands of the Taliban in Afghanistan?

JR: Some say about ten per cent of aid money ends in Taliban hands, in particular when money is channelled through contractors. There is evidence that Taliban have been paid to ensure that development and construction projects can go ahead safely.

JB: Professor Howell, did you also look at aid money ending up in Taliban hands?

JH: It wasn't the focus of my research but I think it's probably quite difficult to avoid. In many aid situations there are going to be leakages and Afghanistan is so complex that it's going to be difficult to find a 'pure' route because everyone is going to be implicated in some way, whether through blood ties, friendships or other links. I can imagine also, it might well have started that the person you identify is 'pure' but it might well end up that alliances are formed over time.

One of the findings of our research and what stunned me with the NGOs in Afghanistan was the denial of politics and their own role as political actors in the drama of Afghanistan. They want to adhere to the idea of their own independence but fail to see that local people often cannot easily distinguish between them and the military or United Nations. So they would like to think that they are independent but in reality they are perceived as being linked to the allied forces propping up the Karzai government. Individual workers are then left to negotiate the dilemma for themselves.

JB: Do they really believe they are independent of any political influence, or would it just be bad PR to admit it?

JH: Some do believe they are acting independently. I think most humanitarian actors really do want to distribute aid to where it is needed, independently of whose side anybody is on, but in practice it is very difficult. In Afghanistan it is very difficult to get decent staff because it is so dangerous. Heads of NGOs are saying there is a problem recruiting

The fundamental problem is the tension between the development work and the humanitarian work

high calibre people so they are getting a lot of people who are not reflective about the situation they are in. But it is clear that the hearts and minds strategy definitely implicates NGOs whatever your position might be.

If you are in an NGO then you have to understand how you will be perceived locally and that how you will be perceived will be part of a much larger agenda. One common statement said to us in relation to the number of NGO workers being kidnapped or killed is that when aid is delivered the recipients don't understand who it's from. It's one big blur and they basically think they are all foreign and there's lots of money. They are not going to understand that this is a nice NGO worker who is trying to be independent.

JR: There is a lot of confusion about what an NGO is. In Afghanistan, any new organisation after the fall of the Taliban was called an NGO, even if it was a business. UN humanitarian agencies, such as Unicef and WHO, try to distinguish themselves from other UN agencies by painting the UN logo in blue in their cars while the others are black. But nobody knows the difference.

Some NGOs are very much aware that they are part of this hearts and minds strategy, but others are not reflecting at all. They are just so much into their work. The fundamental problem is the tension between the development and humanitarian work. In simple words, humanitarian work focuses on life-saving emergencies. Development work is about rebuilding, about long-term strategies and working with governments. Each work has its own values, guiding principles and ways of operating. NGOs are very much caught in this dilemma.

JH: Yes, there isn't a clear line between the two because, initially, there were humanitarian needs but now these organisations are doing more development.

JB: What type of organisation, which started out doing humanitarian work, would then transition into development work?

JH: Organisations like Oxfam and Save the Children do both but there are a lot of smaller ones who just do humanitarian work and have ended up staying on to do development.

JB: If, over the course of the next several years, the NATO and military presence diminishes, do you think that it will become easier for NGOs to do their work because there will be less confusion between them and the military effort?

JH: The question is, under what terms they will be present. In the last Taliban period there was the clash between liberal values that NGOs want to promote and illiberal values of the Taliban, particularly around issues of gender. There was some anti-NGO action and some of them withdrew because they didn't want to work under those conditions, but I think we will still see NGOs working in Afghanistan but it will be difficult to predict what conditions will be like because it depends what kind of mess is left.

It's not just about the more explicit hearts and mind strategy in Helmand, but the whole package and do they want to be part of that? Some NGOs, like World Vision, don't want to work with governments, but others go along with it.

If any of these organisations were to raise issues around corruption it would be problematic because everybody knows that many of the MPs and ministers in the Karzai government are former warlords who have committed war crimes or other crimes. Western governments knew that at the time of the Bonn settlement [in December 2001].

JR: I think the whole purpose of the recent Obama strategy is to prepare for an honourable exit strategy, to be able to say in a few years time: 'Now it's Afghanistan's responsibility and we can leave', but I don't think such modalities will last long because the [Afghan] government probably won't have the coherence or the resources. I think it is inevitable that the Taliban will then come back and bring the stability that will be needed.

JH: Yes, when the Taliban originally came to power, everyone was relieved because they brought stability. Western powers didn't mind too much about the Taliban, at least not until 9/11 when the fact they had played host to Osama Bin Laden implicated them in the attacks on the US. Western governments are not too concerned about any violations of gender rights for example. Otherwise, why aren't we doing something in Saudi Arabia? ■

Jude Howell

is a professor in the Department of Social Policy and director of LSE's Centre for Civil Society. Her research interests include the politics of aid and development policy; civil society and development policy, and aid and security. She has conducted research in China, with an emphasis on the social and political dimensions of market reforms, and in India, Mozambique, Kenya, Central Asia and Afghanistan. She has advised, among others, the United Nations Development Programme, the International Labour Organisation, the Ford Foundation, the UK Department for International Development, the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Save the Children, and Christian Aid. Professor Howell is director of the Economic and Social Research Council's Non-Governmental Public Action Programme.

Jean S Renouf

is a PhD research student and a teacher in LSE's Department of International Relations. He advises European humanitarian organisations on security and has worked with aid agencies in Afghanistan, Iraq, Democratic Republic of Congo, Haiti, and North Korea.

The horror! The horror!

Urban crowding and overpopulation

LSE research has had a huge impact on policy makers around the world. LSE researchers have also dissected the ways in which academic research has made its way into the wider world. Here **Jon Adams** looks at how an unlikely piece of American research on rats came to influence the debate on overpopulation.

From Sodom and Gomorrah to Malthus, cities, crowds, overpopulation and vice have long been entwined. On the cusp of the 20th century, the French social psychologist Gustave Le Bon would employ the new vocabulary of the unconscious for his influential *The Crowd: a study of the popular mind* (1896).

Le Bon held the crowd itself culpable for the behaviour of those within it: 'By the mere fact that he forms part of an organised crowd, a man descends several rungs in the ladder of civilisation. Isolated, he may be a cultivated individual; in a crowd, he is a barbarian.' For Le Bon's readership, the perceived dangers of the crowd were made urgent by an unprecedented demographic shift: crowding was intimately tied up with urbanisation, and that in turn with unchecked population growth.

It is an association held to this day. A 2009 London Assembly report into congestion on the Tube described stressed commuters employing ruthless 'dog eat dog' strategies to cope with the crowded conditions, resulting in what the report called 'suspensions of the usual standards of behaviour'.

The link between overpopulation and crowding is uncontroversial – it is trivially true that more people will each have less space. But (despite its familiarity) the transitive link between overpopulation, crowding, and moral decay is much less easy to establish. Looking at how advocates for population control have sought to reinforce that association is the subject of ongoing research by me and my former LSE colleague, the historian of medicine Dr Edmund Ramsden.

Concerns about overpopulation last peaked in the late 1960s, when fears of nuclear conflict met the demographers' calculations for the post war baby boom to generate an eschatological perfect storm: the end was coming in one of two explosions – if not the nuclear bomb, then what biologist Paul R Ehrlich memorably called 'The Population Bomb'. The geneticist James Crow summed it up neatly when, in 1966, he wrote that we were seemingly caught between 'the twin problems... of overpopulation and no population at all'.

During that period, one significant piece of evidential support for the claim that crowding led to social and behavioural pathologies came from an unlikely source: a series of experiments on rats and mice conducted by John B Calhoun, an American ecologist working at the US National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) from 1954 to 1986. As part of the Leverhulme/ESRC 'How Well Do "Facts" Travel?' project at LSE's department of Economic History, we followed the various roles these rodent experiments played in the very prominent arguments about overpopulation in the 1960s and 70s.

The direst predictions of the previous generation of population control proponents failed to transpire



ZHAN TIAN/DREAMSTIME.COM

Mothers failed to build proper nests, or abandoned their young altogether

Calhoun's work was an extension of research into how animal population maintained stable numbers. Calhoun's specific interest was territoriality, and how social hierarchy regulated population levels. At NIMH, Calhoun built what he called a 'rodent universe' and stocked it with a small population of mice. With their immediate needs met, the mice bred quickly. But as the territorial ranges began to overlap, neighbouring groups came into conflict.

Although Calhoun had built what he called a 'mouse paradise', conditions in the pens quickly deteriorated. As population density increased, so too did the frequency and severity of the conflicts, until all normal behavioural patterns broke down and the 'utopia' became what one of his fellow researchers would later describe as 'a hell'.

Young males formed gangs that roamed the pen, attacking females and the young. Mounting occurred indiscriminately – sometimes homosexually, sometimes outside of oestrus. Mothers failed to build proper nests, or abandoned their young altogether. Animals were found with their tails chewed off. Cleaning out the nesting boxes, his assistants would find empty pelts, turned out like the skin of a kiwifruit, the animal within eaten entire.

Perversely, some of the animals seemed to become dependent upon the sensation of crowding: Calhoun witnessed what he termed 'pathological togetherness', with large numbers of animals gathering into a tight huddle around the same feeder or water bottle, despite the availability of alternatives nearby. Meanwhile, others retreated into what he called 'social autism', becoming robotic, zoned-out: perched above the fray they groomed obsessively, only descending at night to eat.

Calhoun called the ethological collapse 'a behavioural sink'. For those already convinced that crowding and high population densities were a cause of moral delinquency, here – it seemed – was the scientific proof. Although Calhoun's effects had been witnessed in rats and mice, the behaviours he described were easily correlated with the existing typology of urban vices: the social drinking, promiscuity, rape, child neglect, gang violence. Cannibalism probably wasn't far away.

Where the usual Malthusian arguments assumed it would be finite space and food supply that would limit the size of a population, Calhoun's experiments suggested

that any exhaustion of supplies would be anticipated by a social and psychological exhaustion. In other words: we would go mad long before we would starve. Malthus was moot.

All of which meant the inevitable apocalypse may be much closer than anyone had thought – may, in fact, already be upon us. The appeal for the population control lobby was obvious: you didn't need to establish imminent resource scarcity, you could simply point to crime and delinquency in our inner cities as harbingers of what was to come. Here in the rat cities of NIMH was a perfect model in miniature of the future we could expect within our own crowded urban centres. Crime rates would continue to soar, violence would become endemic, the urban experience would spiral into a behavioural sink.

But none of that happened. Instead, crime rates generally fell, city life became more desirable, and crime was not disproportionately prevalent in areas of high population density. That has been well documented. No matter. Separated from their laboratory context, and from a scientific community that might draw sober and qualified conclusions, Calhoun's experiments instead became a powerful rhetorical tool for those seeking to condemn the cities and the lifestyles of those within them as immoral.

Calls for population control, for what was once called 'uncrowding', have been muffled in recent decades – partly because the direst predictions of the previous round of population control proponents failed to transpire and partly because the rhetoric became increasingly threatening. One of their slogans (courtesy of philosopher Garrett Hardin) was 'the freedom to breed is intolerable'.

But now the population control advocates are back: in January 2010, a cross-party group of MPs openly called for a cap on UK population, setting the figure at 70 million. The grounds of the debate are slightly different this time around – global warming and terrorism have largely displaced global poverty as the locus of concern – but there are, it seems, very few global problems which would be ameliorated by increasing the size of the global population.

Concerns about humanity's deleterious effect on the natural world bind overpopulation to the wider issue of anthropogenic climate change, while both the discomfort consequent upon physical crowding and the capacity of the urban environment to resolve those dissatisfactions into active networks means that the threat of terrorism also rises. Heralding 'The New Population Bomb', Jack Goldstone has recently argued that

the rapid urban influx occurring in developing nations will lead to civil and political unrest: 'the more heavily urbanised, the more such countries are likely to experience Dickensian poverty and anarchic violence.'

Whether crowded rats will be invoked in a new generation of arguments remains to be seen, but the tone of apocalyptic inevitability is familiar enough. For now, the environmentalist rationale is sufficiently attractive to drive the issue of population control into public discussion and onto the political agenda. But history suggests that links between crowding and moral turpitude will not be far behind. And, of course, it may well be that the squalid social collapse the rodents experienced will yet happen to us – that we simply haven't passed that threshold yet. For as with all the best apocalyptic scenarios, there is always a next time. ■

Jon Adams

came to LSE in 2005 to work on a major Leverhulme Trust-Economic and Social Research Council project, 'How Well Do "Facts" Travel?', in the Department of Economic History. His work there looked at what happens to scientific facts when they are disseminated in, for example, popular-science literature. With Edmund Ramsden (formerly at LSE, now at the University of Exeter), Dr Adams published an essay, 'Escaping the Laboratory: the rodent experiments of John B Calhoun and their cultural influence', in 2008; a second one, 'Rat cities and beehive worlds', is appearing later this year. At present, Dr Adams makes short films about LSE research.



Evidence goes digital

Be forewarned: we leave extensive digital fingerprints wherever we go. They can become potential evidence in a legal dispute or a police investigation, and they exist quite apart from any deliberate attempts at surveillance. They are bound to be found by technical wizardry. Proceed with caution, argues Peter Sommer.

The IT revolution has enabled experimenters and entrepreneurs to launch new data-intensive services, including social networking (Facebook, barely four years old, has 300 million users), multi-media downloads, file-sharing (now in its fourth generation), more extensive e-commerce sites, and more complex and sophisticated e-banking and other financial services sites.

This is where the fingerprints issue comes into play. The personal computer and smart phone keep records of correspondence, transactions, Internet searches as well as documents. In more prosperous homes, where people have been online longer, these digital records may go back more than a decade – there to be found by technicians.

For the last 15 years I have been providing lawyers and the courts with expertise in digital evidence. I have had to identify, preserve, analyse and present such material – or challenge the work of others. Initially I thought I would be concentrating on the sort of cases that make headlines like ‘teenage hacker causes global mayhem’. Although I have had a fair share of these, the cases I have worked on also include murders (husbands killing wives, a criminal murdering a whole family in order to seize their trucking business which was to be redeployed to import narcotics), illegal immigration (58 Chinese nationals dead inside a Dutch lorry at Dover), large scale software piracy (a six month trial at the Old Bailey), terrorism (even longer trials) and international paedophile rings.

My work as a consultant or expert witness has never been that far removed from my academic pursuits. Over time, I have identified a number of research themes:

Computer forensics: Because most popular computer operating systems and applications are proprietary and closed source, much computer forensics is based on reverse engineering – essentially observing the changes that occur to files on a computer while various tasks are

being performed. Armed with the right kind of detective software, an expert can often demonstrate authorship of transactions and documents and reconstruct such events on a computer as the moment-by-moment detail of Internet browsing. As I once had to, this can mean having to research the workings of the hidden ‘restore points’ that Windows operating systems use; these restore points can be used to help rescue crashed systems, but they can also provide a kind of secret history of a particular computer’s usage.

The role of expert evidence: Knowledge of the disciplines of computer and forensic science is one thing. Applying them to a court case or law enforcement investigation involves important issues of law, such as the admissibility of evidence and the role of experts. One problem is that most jurors are likely to find computer evidence hard to understand, which raises concerns about over-influencing a trial.

The potential perils of expert testimony are compounded by the rate of change in information and computer technologies. Digital forensics specialists are forever having to carry out further research and developing new techniques. In the United States, a legal doctrine has evolved to protect the courts from evidence based on junk science. This doctrine allows a judge, prior to full trial, to subject potential expert witness testimony to a test such as whether the forensic procedure was ever the subject of a peer reviewed journal article. Even so, rates of change in digital forensics are faster than the normal cycle of the peer reviewed article. Do you let suspects go free simply because they have used a new computer medium and the related forensic technique is not yet fully tested?

Trust in digital information: In addition to these legal preoccupations there is a larger issue: how much can we trust digital footprints? Sensible organisations don’t wait for court challenges. It might make sense, therefore, for organisations to have in place a forensic readiness programme.

This is now a requirement for UK government departments and, based on my research, I have written a guide for the Information Assurance Advisory Council. Another route is to design information systems from the outset to produce reliable evidence. This has long been a major pre-occupation of my colleagues in LSE’s Department of Management, who have conducted research into how individuals and organisations interact with ICT.

Digital surveillance: It is tempting for law-enforcement agencies to monitor the fast growing forms of Internet communication. This presents challenges that are both technical and legal. As part of the LSE Policy Engagement Network, a cross-disciplinary initiative to conduct national and globally policy-relevant research, colleagues and I have produced a critique of current UK moves in the field of surveillance. Similar issues arise in other countries. The crucial point is to effect a proper balance between competing considerations, including the justified operational need (as in terror cases, for example); the human rights tests of necessity and proportionality; law-enforcement’s technical capabilities; and our ability to hold police and intelligence agencies accountable for their surveillance activities. This is no easy matter, for the existence of many unintended digital records of forensic value makes these deliberations about proper balance even more difficult. All the more reason for us to proceed apace but still cautiously – even if digital technologies are advancing at breakneck speed. ■

Peter Sommer

is a visiting professor in the Information Systems and Innovation Group in LSE’s Department of Management. He is also a visiting reader in the Faculty of Mathematics, Computing and Technology at the Open University.

Economics in 3D

In a regular slot in which policy makers share their views on research **Christian Thimann**, counsellor to the president of the European Central Bank, argues that policy makers need to think in three dimensions.

In the early 15th century, the architect Filippo Brunelleschi made drawings of Florentine buildings that were the first to use linear perspective to represent three dimensional objects. For many historians, this eye opening step was a key breakthrough in both the art and philosophy of the Renaissance.

I had a similar sensation as an economist when becoming more closely involved in policy at the European Central Bank (ECB). I became aware that much of our reasoning as economists takes place along two dimensions: theory and models on the one hand, and empirical applications and data analysis on the other. By contrast, I realised that experienced policy makers at the top continuously reason in three dimensions: like us, they spend a lot of time pondering models and data; but they add a third dimension, which I would call reality.

'Reality' is the full economic context in which decisions are made. It includes information gathered from financial market players and representatives of the real economy, experience from past episodes, knowledge about market structures and market functioning, anticipation of market reactions, and understanding of the political context.

Analysis of 'reality' is more than anecdotal because it too is structured: it follows, first of all, from experience; second, from a systematic canvassing of information from a wide range of well selected sources; and third, from double checking data and perspectives with third parties. It is far from ad hoc or random. Close observation of policy decisions in action confirms that analysis along the third dimension provides an essential perspective; without it, decisions could go badly wrong.

I once asked the paediatrician in a hospital emergency room about the most important indicator in his assessment: was it fever, breathing,

pulse? He replied that it is the general condition of the child. Similarly, good economic policy decisions are based on the general condition of the economy – on a holistic perspective in all three dimensions. In this sense, I have become exposed to Economics in 3D.

Top central bankers spend considerable time in preparing policy decisions. They are aware that the quality of decision rests on the quality of reasoning along all three dimensions. The first two take an army of economists and researchers; the third one takes a few experienced generals.

Economic reasoning and empirical applications play an enormous role in central banks. At the ECB, for example, we have a stand alone research department of about 50 economists, and over 200 economists are employed in our economics, international, financial stability and markets departments. As the central bank of the world's second largest economy, the ECB has strived for excellence in research and analysis. In terms of research output, it is in the first rank of central banks, broadly comparable to the US Federal Reserve Board, and among the top 30 economics faculties worldwide. So how come so much analysis and research is undertaken for policy preparation?

To understand this, it is useful to think of an analogy. Musicians know that the fundamental rhythm in a band is not given by the drummer. Rather, it is the bass player, often less audible and mostly less visible, who determines the rhythm. The role of central banks is like that of the bass player. Central banks, too, are in the background, often less visible than other players in the economy. But by determining short-term interest rates, they fundamentally affect the 'rhythm' of the economy.

Given that their actions have a long-term impact on the economy, central banks strive hard to take the right decisions. Economic analysis is therefore essential and omnipresent. Virtually all that one learns at university is reflected directly or indirectly. I have used a good chunk of the

The beauty of working in a policy relevant context is that it sharpens your vision of economics and the economy through continuous observation



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Brunelleschi's Santa Maria del Fiore, Florence

macroeconomics I learned at LSE. Charlie Bean, who taught it at the time, is now the Bank of England's deputy governor. I have also used much of the microeconomics and public finance taught by Tony Atkinson. With public debt likely to rise to 90 per cent of GDP in both the euro area and the UK, and public debates about compensation and inequality, these issues will gain even more prominence.

I also took economics of industry, with John Sutton. Today, I would focus less on the markets for lemonade, airplanes or software and more on the markets for finance. When studying, I thought of financial markets as reflecting the textbook ideal: atomistic, perfectly competitive and efficient in incorporating information; I now see oligopolistic elements in many segments of the industry, with very relevant implications.

What is the role of scholarly research in central banks? I would say that such research is an indispensable support, stressing both words.

Research is indispensable because it gives structure to deliberations on the economy. Research obliges us to link arguments in a coherent way and trace them back to first principles. Economic models are fantastic frameworks for thinking rigorously about micro-foundations, interlinkages and impact analysis. One out of many examples: research on credibility and persistence in monetary policy helps us to understand why central banks that have a reputation for acting consistently can influence the economy much more effectively through a given change in policy rates.

Research is support because it can never replace judgement based on synthesis of other information and experience. By its very nature, research is far less complex than the real economy in which central banks are operating.

Central bankers are particularly cautious when it comes to models. An economic model represents the economy just as a personal ad

represents a person. The search for a partner indicates a set of variables (background, looks), specifies parameters (tastes, preferences) and sometimes even gives impulse response functions ('should enjoy going to the cinema!'). And yet, the ultimate encounter with the person will reveal that the model was just an approximation, often a tad idealised...

Economics is not simply something we learn at university and subsequently apply in practice. It is something that we continuously learn. The beauty of working in a policy relevant context is that it sharpens your vision of economics and the economy through continuous observation. And gradually you become acquainted with the third dimension of economic reality.

How much does the third dimension matter? I would say that it is essential. In early 2007, in the run-up to the turmoil that subsequently turned into the financial crisis, there were many voices enthusing about the moderation of business cycles, the great financial integration, the decline in spreads, the development of new financial products and the major contribution the financial industry was making to global growth in many parts of the world.

At the same time, there were a few voices that were much more cautious, much more aware that a storm was brewing. The ECB's president, Jean-Claude Trichet, who has 25 years of experience in handling currency crises and over 15 years as head of a central bank, was among them. In January 2007, more than six months before the financial turmoil erupted, he appeared on the front page of the *Financial Times* under the headline, 'Prepare for asset repricing, warns Trichet'. Seven months later, the ECB as well as other central banks had to react rapidly to the turmoil, in some cases providing exceptional liquidity assistance within hours. The rest is history. That's the difference Brunelleschi's perspective can make. ■

Christian Thimann

took an MSc (Econ) at LSE in 1989-90. After having worked for some time in eastern Germany following the fall of the Berlin Wall, he took a PhD (Econ) at the University of Munich and worked at the International Monetary Fund in Washington DC from 1995 to 1998. He joined the European Central Bank in September 1998, became head of division in 2000, and in 2008 was appointed counsellor to the president. The views expressed in this article are the author's.

Notes from a researcher

Part detective, part globetrotter, and full-time scholar, a specialist on the Cold War in Latin America portrays the trials and tribulations, triumphs and breakthroughs of academic research. Welcome to **Tanya Harmer's** world.

This little corner of London

I actually first arrived at LSE as a master's student in 2001 and then returned to do my PhD in International History two years later. So even before I started as a lecturer this year, LSE had already played a big part in my life. It goes without saying that it is, and has been, an inspiring place for me.

Personally, though, what I find so exciting about LSE is how international it is. In a little corner of London, it provides an intellectual home for literally thousands of people from around the world, something that struck me from the moment I first arrived as a rather daunted English graduate student and which continues to strike me in LSE research seminars and in the classroom. Although LSE's facilities and paving stones have changed since I first arrived here, each year always begins the same: Houghton Street, a relatively quiet backstreet of central London, turns into a veritable – often chaotic – thoroughfare of different languages, cultures, society stalls, emerging friendships and mobile phones.

Of course, the view from the inside is rather different from the one I was used to as a student. As a staff member, I've begun to appreciate the complex mechanics of how it all works, and also how many layers and people strive to ensure the research and teaching that goes on here is world class. In the Department of International History alone,

for example, alongside the varied undergraduate and graduate programmes we offer, we have two growing international double degree programmes with universities abroad: LSE-Peking University Double MSc Degree in International Affairs and LSE-Columbia University Double MA Degree in International and World History.

Then there is the ever expanding events programme of public lectures, roundtable discussions and book launches that LSE puts on. At LSE IDEAS, the School's research centre for diplomacy and strategy, there is often an event on every night run by one of its regional international affairs programmes, be it the one for Africa, Southeast Asia or Middle East International Affairs, or the Latin America International Affairs Programme that I am involved in running. And that is only one of many research centres.

Keeping up with everything

It often takes students a few weeks to get used to the variety of challenges and opportunities on offer, be it the enormity of their reading lists and the value of the library's holdings or the juggling of numerous essay deadlines with an ongoing dialogue with professors and peers. From a researcher's point of view, the most challenging aspects of life at LSE that I face are the time constraints. Having said this, the beauty



The thrill of the chase can be fun, and the results so far have been rewarding



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of academia is that we get long periods out of term time when we can pursue our research in more depth. And because my research on Latin American international history requires me to visit archives and conduct research throughout the region, this is crucial.

On a more institutional level, the challenge that LSE faces is that of raising the profile of research on Latin America that is going on here in different departments. There is clearly a great deal of interest about what is going on in Latin America today at LSE, and there are hundreds of Latin Americans at the university. This was demonstrated by the reception President Rafael Correa of Ecuador received when he came to speak at the School in October 2009, or by the turnout at roundtable discussions – be they on regional elections and democracy or on the US-Colombian base agreement – that the Latin America International Affairs Programme has organised this year at LSE IDEAS.

We've also had considerable interest from outside LSE in the Latin America programme's website and have plans to expand our events as well as scholarly exchanges with Latin American researchers. We will continue to collaborate with colleagues throughout the region to stimulate research. Even so, there is far more that could be done given the complexity, enormity and importance of what is going on in Latin America at present.

An ongoing detective process

I see research as something of an ongoing detective process, particularly when it comes to the type of research that I am involved in: history. In my work on the Cold War in Latin America in the early 1970s, I've travelled to Chile, Cuba, Brazil, the US, Spain and Mexico to put together the pieces of the puzzle. In the process, I've been lucky enough to consult recently declassified documents in archives, and where archives remain closed – as is the case in Cuba – I've interviewed those who were eye witnesses and participants in the story I am examining.

Of course, the downside of this detective process is that at the end of a research trip or project, I always get the sense that there is more I could have found out. Then again, the thrill of the chase can be fun and the results so far have been rewarding, both for our understanding of the past, and for our appreciation of how the past has influenced and shaped the present, especially as so many leaders in Latin America today came of age during the period I am especially interested in.

Then of course, there is the coming home part of the process and sharing what you've discovered and understood with colleagues. It is often at home at LSE that more questions, ideas and mysteries unfold and merge with the doubts you already had, sparking new research projects. Or at least that has been my experience so far.

Where research and teaching meet

I am rather passionate about the fact that research and teaching should be intertwined as I believe it helps both the teacher and the student. As a student here at LSE, I benefited enormously from being taught by experts who were genuinely fascinated and inspired by the subjects we covered. And as a new lecturer, it has been great to have the opportunity to design a course on inter-American relations that engages students in the kind of research I'm doing, stimulates discussion around up to date scholarship on Latin America and allows them to participate in intellectual debates concerning the past and its significance for the present.

Certainly, Latin America and inter-American affairs today cannot be understood without a grasp of the history of the region – and what an incredible entangled history of great civilisations, ideas, conquest, revolution and growth it has. The year ahead is going to be a particularly interesting one in this respect, given that the region is celebrating the bicentenary of its independence movement and the hundredth anniversary of the Mexican Revolution.

As I find that discussions in the classroom help me – as well as the students – to think through some of these big ideas, I'm happy to say that I will be given the opportunity to discuss this with a variety of students at LSE and in Latin America – as a lecturer here in the Department of International History, as visiting professor at the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, and as a co-organiser of a postgraduate Latin American summer school on Cold War history that LSE IDEAS will be running in conjunction with the Fundação Getúlio Vargas in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. ■

Tanya Harmer

is a lecturer in the Department of International History. She is a specialist on the Cold War in Latin America and head of the LSE IDEAS Latin America International Affairs Programme. Her most recent research and a forthcoming book focus on the international history of Chile during the presidency of Salvador Allende (1970-73) and Chile's foreign relations with Cuba and the United States during this period. Her current research centres on the Latin Americanisation of the Cold War in the mid-1970s. She is also writing a biography of Allende's daughter, Beatriz.

FOOTNOTES

How to find our research and our academic experts

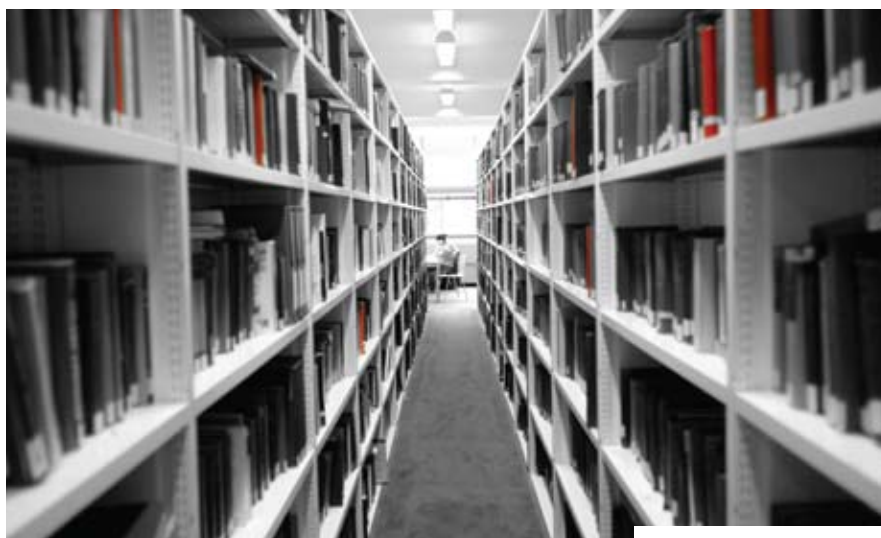
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LSERO can be accessed in its own right, but also via our Experts Directory, run by the External Relations Division. LSE was one of the first universities to compile an easily accessible list of academic experts and publicise their contact details. Originally produced as a booklet, the Experts Directory is now online and can be found at lse.ac.uk/researchAndExpertise/Experts/Home.aspx. It is possible to search by subject, surname, department and even by language.

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Neil Stewart

is an assistant librarian at LSE. The Library, also known as the British Library of Political and Economic Science and home to the online International Bibliography of the Social Sciences, is one of the largest libraries in the world devoted to the economic and social sciences. Stewart is a member of the Library's Information Services team, with responsibility for the LSE's institutional repository, LSE Research Online.

Over the course of one recent month, LSE Research Online registered just under 20,000 hits

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Image: *Untitled, The Golden Road*, Andrew Jackson, 20 x 16 inches, digital c-type print, 2009

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