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Byron Quale

The Young still don't vote for the 'Nasty Party'. An investigation into the perception of the Conservative party brand by younger voters

The 2017 UK General Election saw the Conservative Party not only lose their majority in the Commons, but also revealed that the majority of younger voters tended not to vote Conservative. Following research carried out by Pich et al., (2015) and Pich et al., (2018), this research seeks to build on this previous work by following the same qualitative projective techniques used to assess the brand image and reputation of the UK Conservative Party under the leadership of Theresa May. Using branding theory and political psychology theories of schema and emotions, this study investigates whether there has been a change in the Conservative Party's image since 2015 and why this had an effect on the way people voted at the 2017 General Election. Using a split methodology of secondary polling data to inform the research on how people voted in the 2017 UK General Election. This study then carried out focus groups using qualitative projective techniques as prescribed by Pich et al (2018) to compare the results to previous work into the perception of the Conservative Party's brand. This study finds that, as in previous elections, younger voters tend not to vote for the Conservative Party. In relation to the long-term reputation of the Conservative brand, the image of the party is now seen as 'out of touch', which is associated with Theresa May. This research finds that younger voters have negative emotions toward the Conservative brand. Therefore, because of the party's brand reputation the perception of the Conservative Party by younger voters is one that is out of touch, if not nasty, with a leader that they can't emotionally connect with. This study concludes that age is the dividing line between how people vote and the young still can't vote for the 'nasty party'.

Keywords: political branding; Conservative Party; brand image; brand reputation.

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INTRODUCTION

"There's a lot we need to do in this party of ours. Our base is too narrow and so, occasionally, are our sympathies. You know what some people call us - the nasty party" (Theresa May, 2002)

The 2017 UK General Election saw the Conservative Party not only lose their parliamentary majority, but also revealed younger voters tended not to vote Conservative (YouGov, 2017). The same poll also found that the mean point, at which voters switched to voting Conservative, had moved from 34 to 47 years old (Ibid), thereby indicating that age is the dividing line between how people vote (Curtis, 2017).

One reason why the party struggles to attract younger voters is the persisting image of the Conservatives being a party of the wealthy middle class (Dunleavy *et al*, 2006; Pich *et al*, 2018). As coined by May, the Conservatives are seen as a “nasty party” (2000). According to Helen Lewis, “that phrase stuck because people already believed it” (2015). In relation to the Conservative brand, “even those who voted Conservative during the 1990s often did so for pragmatic reasons, rather than with pride” (Ibid). As Pich *et al*, (2015) and Pich *et al*, (2018) research showed, there is still a persisting negative image of the Conservative Party.

A political party's brand is built over many years and made up of rational and emotional appeal. Emotional appeal relates to desire, where rational appeal is aimed at a voters' reasoning (Riley, 2017). Understanding the public's perception of a party's brand will further the knowledge, by the party, on how to improve their brand appeal. Therefore, there is, in terms of the Conservative Party, a need to understand the long-term brand image and reputation, especially in relation to a voting demographic which voted so overwhelmingly against the party in the 2017 General Election (Yougov, 2017).

There is a small amount of work that has focused solely on the brand image or reputation of the Conservative Party. Where research has been carried out, this has been done under the leadership of David Cameron (Pich *et al*, 2015 and Pich *et al*, 2018) and not under the current leader, Theresa May. This research also only tended to use the Conservative Party as the case study to answer other research questions (Ibid). Therefore, there is a gap in the research since Theresa May became the party leader. This study seeks to gain a greater insight into the current perception, by younger voters aged 18 – 34, of the Conservative Party's brand and whether this has become more negative since David Cameron.

By replicating the work conducted by Pich *et al* (2018) in using qualitative projective techniques, and by using polling data from the British Social Attitudes 34 survey, YouGov, Ipsos Mori and The British Election Survey, this study will also look to establish if the perception of Conservative Party as the “Nasty Party” is one still held by this group of voters. Using branding theory and the political psychology theories of schema and emotions, in relation to how people vote, this study will seek to answer whether there has been a change in the Conservative Party's image since 2015 and, if so, did this have an effect on the way people voted at the 2017 General Election?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Branding and Political Parties

Political science research has recognised that political parties are unable to rely on traditional support from specific voter segments in the population as voters have moved away from their traditional party (Ormrod *et al.*, 2013). Dealignment is therefore a factor in the way voters view political parties. This has resulted in voters deciding on “the basis of a judgment of which party will be best for ‘me’ the voter and ‘my’ personal circumstances” (Lilleker 2006, p.67). This voting behaviour has therefore meant that a party’s brand has become more important as the brand appeal can create desire and appeal to voters and therefore it will have influence on them as they act as a consumer (Schneider, 2004). Good brand names can be an asset to a political party as this can build demand. However, equally, “a reputation built over years may be dismantled virtually overnight by scandal, evidence of misdeed, or even simply competition from a smarter rival” (Scammell 2007, p.179).

Citing Aaker’s (1991) definition, Lloyd notes that the definition has “particular relevance to the political market” (2006, p.59) that “A brand is a distinguishing name and/or symbol (such as a logo) intended to identify the goods or services of either one seller from those of competitors” (Aaker 1991, p7). Research into political branding has been categorised into a “trinity of elements” (Pich *et al.* 2015, p.357), which is made up of the leader, policy and the party itself (Davies & Mian, 2010; Smith & French 2011; Pich *et al.* 2018). The combination of these three elements means that political brands are as complex as they are diverse (Phipps *et al.*, 2010 in Pich *et al.*, 2015). This complexity means for a consumer, to begin to trust a brand, the brands’ message needs to be clear and the message needs to be understandable (Ibid). Political branding is seen as a quick way to disseminate a large amount of information about a party, to the voters by linking common perceptions with a political brand. Where a political party is clearly branded, this can have the added affect as “acting as a risk reducer in the minds of voters” (Lloyd 2006, p.62).

Bigi and Bonera argue because of the “intangible nature of the brand of a political party” (2013), this will complicate the process when it comes to the brand building process. Political parties, in carrying out political activities, provide the tangible factors required for brand building. In doing so, they communicate their values or culture which makes up for the intangible aspect of brand building (Bigi & Bonera, 2013). These two elements will therefore make up the “supply system that guides people’s perceptions and behaviours” (Ibid).

Brand image and identity constitute two very different things. Pich *et al.* argues that brand image is made up of a set of current perceptions or experiences consumers have of the brand (2015). Whereas brand identity is the internal message or values which the brand owners wish to communicate to their consumers (Pich *et al.* 2015). Therefore, according to De Chernatony, understanding the way consumers perceive the brand is important, as “their perceptions may be different from the intended projections” (2007, p.47). The difference between brand image and identity will have an effect on the way voters view a particular political party from the way the party wants voters to view what they stand for. Thus, political brand image is an important part in the study of political branding (Pich *et al.*, 2015).

Understanding the reputation of a brand is complex (Davies and Mian, 2010; Pich *et al.*, 2018). This is especially true when reputation is included with image and identity (Pich *et al.*, 2018). Citing Marwick and Fill (1997), Pich *et al.* states, “the

concept of brand reputation and brand image are often used 'synonymously', which seems to add to the complexity and confusion surrounding the topic" (2018, p.200). Image is the "short term, current perceptions and impressions of the brand" (Ibid). Therefore, reputation is the construct of many images (held by the consumer) that remains consistent over a long period of time (Pich *et al.*, 2018). Political brand image and reputation also remain an area of research that requires further investigation (Pich *et al.*, 2018).

Brand equity is an important factor in branding as it represents the qualities that consumers associate with a brand, which can then lead to trust (Lilleker, 2006). The importance of brand equity cannot be underestimated as it can be "used in times of crisis to reduce loss of trust and militate against negative media coverage" (Lilleker 2006, p.42). The nature of brand equity means that it can also be lost and is "effectively a gift that customers may bestow or withhold; thus, it is a complex source of strength and weakness for companies" (Scammell 2007, p.179). Equity is the aspect of a brand held in the minds of consumers, which they associate with the brand. For example, Lilleker states that McDonalds has brand equity for "cheap, honest, quick food" (2006, p.42).

Scammell argues that undecided voters form the brand equity in regards to political parties (2007) as they relate these aspects to the party at that time. Therefore, political brand equity is different to commercial brand equity, as commercial brands seek to secure the continued support of existing customers (Ibid). This will cause a problem for a political brand, as the brands equity will have "shallow roots and is easily buffeted" (Scammell 2007, p.190). In so doing, political parties are far more susceptible to fluctuations in brand equity. If a political party has a particular equity in an "owned" issue, it will have good equity if voters associate that issue with a current need.

In 2005 two sample groups were asked to comment on a political party's immigration policy. One group was told it was the Conservative Party's policy and the second group was not (French & Smith, 2010). The result showed that there was a lower approval rating with respondents who associated the policy with the Conservative Party, than with the respondents who were not told whose policy it was (Ibid). French and Smith add that once David Cameron was elected as the new party leader and introduced new policies this resulted in a change in the perception of the party (Ibid). Such changes included a softer approach to asylum seekers in the 2010 manifesto (Bale *et al.*, 2011). Thus, the negative brand equity almost disappeared due to his policy of reform (French & Smith, 2010).

Perception of a political brand can be very difficult to change as people do not change their minds easily (Bale, 2008). However, in order for a party to become 'electable', Bale argues that they need to move towards the centre ground, as this is where the majority of the voters are (2008, p.273). To do this, a party needs to indicate to the electorate that it is making this move by appointing new people not linked to the past, de-emphasising 'owned' issues associated with the party and taking over issues (positive) associated with other parties. A party should also point out to the electorate where they went wrong and how they will change (Ibid).

Bartle and Laycock suggest that given the unpopularity of Labour in 2005, there was the potential for the Conservatives to make electoral gains (2006). However, they argue that due to persisting negative perceptions of the party, this did not happen. The party seemed to appeal only to one group in society, the rich, and was fundamentally "stuck in the past" (2006, p.88). This meant that the working class, young and minorities could not relate to the party and resulted in voters failing to 'connect' with them (Ibid).

From his election as leader in 2005, David Cameron became the change the party needed as he represented that break from the past (Green, 2008). Preceding his election, the perception of the party being economically competent was lost (leading to negative brand equity) and the party was linked with scandal (Ibid). Cameron was "young and charismatic" and "articulated a more compassionate response" (Green 2008, p.6). Cameron's main objective was to 'decontaminate' the party brand. He did this by communicating to the electorate that the party was changing and moving to the centre ground (Bale, 2011). In order to engage with voters who had moved to voting Labour, Cameron started talking about issues not associated with the party like the environment, corrosive consumerism and the NHS (Ibid).

The party would also adopt policies that favoured more female and minority candidates, to appeal to the wider electorate. One particular action, which this 'new' Conservative Party took, was to distance itself from the Thatcher years; in doing so, they presented themselves as a "pragmatic and modern alternative to Labour" (Bale 2011, p.285). Once the perception of the Conservative Party had changed in the minds of the electorate, they could then be "persuaded not to discount Conservative ideas automatically because they emanated from a party that was "nasty, selfish, old-fashioned, and incompetent" (Ibid).

The Labour Party following the 1992 election needed to 'rebuild' from the ground up to change the perception of the party by the electorate (Gould, 1998). This would mean getting rid of Clause IV of the party's constitution, which was perceived by the public as "wholesale nationalisation" (1998, p.6). It also meant new principles and a new leader, Tony Blair. Like Cameron, Tony Blair understood the need for change but crucially the Labour Party understood that change would be the only way it could win (Green, 2008). To achieve this change Blair set out to address the perception that Labour was weak on the economy, its left-wing history and the overpowering connection with the unions. Therefore, the perception of the Labour Party under Blair became one that the electorate could vote for (Ibid).

The leaders' brand or image has been argued as a crucial component as it's seen as the central factor that can bring together all the elements of the political offering (Ormrod *et al.*, 2013). Leaders need to be seen to have certain characteristics like credibility, caring, attractive and strength (Ibid). Ormrod *et al* attributes the failure by the Conservative Party to gain electoral success after the 1997 General Election, in part, the inability of the party to "produce leaders who were both attractive and credible" (2013, p.198) There is further evidence from the 2005 General Election that perceptions of trustworthiness "were a powerful predictor of the vote" (Bartle & Laycock 2006, p.88) and that this could also act as a controlling factor for other variables.

This dynamic of the party leaders' perceived image having influence over voters, rather than the voters' opinions on matters, was a factor in the 1987 Election. Leaders, who were seen to be responsive to the public, had more of an influence than the opinions of the voters on economic factors (Stewart & Clarke, 1992; Davies & Mian, 2010). In citing Gopoian, (1993), Davies and Mian suggest that there is a group of voters that are classed as "image voters", those whose decision-making appears unconnected with the policies of competing candidates" (2010, p.332). These voters therefore perceive candidates based on their personality rather than the issues or policies they stand for (Miller *et al.*, 1986; Davies & Mian, 2010). Research by Ben-Ur and Newman (2002), confirmed this when it showed that some of the primary components relating to voting intention were party social imagery and the perception of the candidate (Davies & Mian, 2010). As such a leaders' ability is used as a way for voters to decide on which party to choose.

In a critique of the influence of the leaders' brand, Curtice and Hunjan state, "leader evaluations clearly have far less influence on the way that people vote in parliamentary elections than they do in presidential contests" (2009, p.18). Therefore, due to the form of parliamentary elections Curtice and Hunjan argue "parliamentary elections severely inhibit the degree to which voters are ever likely to use leader evaluations as a basis on which to decide how to vote" (Ibid). Budge *et al* also calls into question the power of the leader's brand and states that in the UK, voters end up electing their MP who in return will vote for the party leader (2007). They argue that the leader's impact is more likely to come from the impact they have on policy.

Although there is research which would call into question the degree to which a leaders' image has an impact on the way the public votes, there is yet further research which suggests that a leaders' brand does play a large part in any election (Stewart & Clarke, 1992; Davies & Mian, 2010). However, Charles Pattie argues that it is the level of a leaders' image and how this will affect the way people vote is one that is called into question (2015).

Political Psychology and Party Perception branding and Political Parties

Although there are many areas that warrant further investigation this section will focus on the role of schema/cognition and emotions, as these have been linked to political branding and voting (Cottam *et al.*, 2016; Jost & Sidanius, 2004; Haralambos & Holborn, 2004).

Schema has been described as the way a person views an issue using a "preexisting assumption about the way the world is organized" (Axelrod 1973, p.1248). In using their schema, people will take information in through a process where they already believe or have an opinion about an issue that they believe to be true and have an emotional connection with (Axelrod, 1973). In relation to voting, the electorate takes an enormous amount of information in. To be able to process all this information voters use heuristic measures (Dahlberg, 2009; Cottam *et al.*, 2016). Dahlberg describes heuristics as "ideologies, cognitive schemas or (held) belief systems" (2009, p.26) that rational voters use as "cost-reducing devices or cognitive shortcuts" (Ibid). In citing Downs, (1957), Dahlberg further suggests voters lack the necessary incentives or time to collect the information to be able to make choices that will improve their lives. In relying on schemas, voters are managing complex

issues they believe in, in a far more economic way by placing these issues in an order they believe to be true (Downs, 1957; Dahlberg, 2009). However, Cottam *et al.*, cites Pratkanis, who states that schema is more complex compared to heuristics (2016, p.173) and that “a heuristic is one simple rule, whereas a schema is an organization of many rules and pieces of data within a domain” (Ibid). Therefore, the complexity of a political schema is far more involved than a simple issue processing one. The information gathering process of schema has also been criticised when it comes to voting (Cottam *et al.*, 2016) as there is very little information about how people gather information. Therefore, “only by understanding how people acquire information can we understand the decision rules and heuristics they use to make a decision” (Cottam *et al.* 2016, p.179).

Positive or the negative feelings voters have for a party or candidate will affect the way they vote (Cottam *et al.*, 2016). Cottam *et al.*, in citing Marcus and Mackuen (1993), state that there are two emotions, enthusiasm and fear (anxiety), which are central in that process when it comes to elections and candidates (Ibid). Marcus *et al.*, (2000) argues that voters choose whom to vote for due to the enthusiasm or anxiety they feel for the candidate. Thereby when voters have an increased level of anxiety, they will seek greater information about the candidate and not rely on habit (Cottam *et al.*, 2016). Marcus *et al.* research found that where voters were enthusiastic about a candidate, they were less likely to examine policies (2000) and when there were anxiety voters would scrutinize candidates more. This, in turn, had a direct correlation with how they voted (Cottam *et al.*, 2016).

Wattenberg's study (1987) found that nearly one in three voters had little or no knowledge about particular politicians, but would nonetheless have strong emotional feelings towards them (Cwalina *et al.*, 2011). Further research, focusing on voting behaviour, found that the emotional feelings toward political parties or their candidate were a good method in predicting how the public would vote (Ibid). Two types of vote making decisions, rationalisation and derivation, has been identified by Holbrook *et al.*, (2001). Derivation is the process “in which decisions are the consequence of an individuals' evaluation of candidates and their features” (Cwalina *et al.* 2011, p.159), whereas voting through rationalisation, is based on a general evaluation. The argument whether the public vote for politicians on a rational or emotional level is one that has tended to move towards the rational, and not the emotional one (Lilleker, 2006). Cwalina *et al.*, supports this view, and indicates that there is a body of research, which supports the concept of voters using rationalisation over derivation when voting (2011). However, Lilleker argues, although there is evidence to suggest “choices made in the voting booth are never made on the basis of liking an individual, or identifying with them, without knowledge of the policies and the possible effects” (2006, p.81) that politicians are able to deliver information to voters in a way that will connect with them (Ibid).

Although the evidence would suggest that voters may feel emotions towards a particular candidate, this does not necessarily mean they will disregard all rational reasoning, and therefore vote purely on feeling. Marcus and Mackuen (2000) research suggest that voters may scrutinise candidates less when they have a positive emotion towards them. When voters hold negative feelings about a candidate or party, voters will be less likely to vote according to partisanship and more likely to seek greater information about the candidate or party (Cottam *et al.*,

2016). Therefore, this would suggest that emotions do play a part in how voters decide how to vote. Citing Akert *et al.* (1994), Cwalina *et al.* states "today people vote with their hearts more than with their minds" (2011, p.160).

METHODOLOGY

This study combined a mixed approach between using polling data from the British Social Attitudes Survey 34 (BSA), Yougov, Ipsos Mori, findings from the British Election Study and focus group discussions, which incorporated qualitative projective techniques. The rationale behind using this mixed approach by using secondary data following on from the General Election was to ground the research in how the target group (18 – 34) voted, as this would have a direct impact on the Conservative Party about any perceptions this group already hold.

The first part of the research used polling data taken before the General Elections in 2015 and 2017. This approach has two aims, firstly, to seek greater clarity of the current overall social position of the United Kingdom. Secondly, linking the data specifically targeting the 18 – 34 age group, and by relating this to the result of the 2017 UK General Election, this research can establish if there are key issues or problems, which differed between the elections. The rationale behind using polling data is that it is still considered to be the best way to predict election outcomes (Kennedy *et al.*, 2017).

Polling Data

The first part of the research used the results from the British Social Attitude 34 Survey to build a foundation of current social attitudes with in the UK. Once this was established, this research analysed the key findings of Prosser *et al.*, (2018) from the British Election Study including polling data from the 2015 and 2017 General Elections. The key points for analytical research included party leader images from David Cameron and Ed Miliband in 2015 and Theresa May and Jeremy Corbyn in 2017. Further areas of comparison were voter priority and party image. In both elections in 2015 and 2017 vote share was compared with leader image and voter priorities. These results were then compared with the BSA 34 findings on social attitudes.

The second part of this research replicated the work conducted by Pich *et al.*, (2018) in using qualitative projective techniques. This study used this technique to build on the research findings to gain a greater understanding of the Conservative Party's brand image. Projective technique activities are easily incorporated into focus group discussions and provide deeper understanding of perceptions and "highlight deep-seated association than stand-alone group discussions" (Pich *et al.* 2018, p.202).

Therefore, this research used the same focus group schedule and projective techniques of association, construction and completion, as Pich *et al.*, (2018). To gain depth of beliefs or perceptions, focus group discussions are considered the best method of research (Malhotra & Birks, 2003; Pich *et al.*, 2018). In relation to processes of social inquiry, Carpini states that "focus groups offer an alternative method that, either in conjunction with more traditional methods [polling] or on

their own, help avoid the oversimplification of these cognitive, social, and political processes" (1994, p.21).

With regards to the research by Pich *et al.*, (2018), this research differed in a number of ways. Pich *et al.*, (2018) research built on the previous research of Pich *et al.*, (2015) which was carried out before the 2010 and 2015 General Elections. This research has been carried out in 2018 after the 2017 General Election. The second difference with previous research was the leader of the Conservative party in 2010 and 2015 was David Cameron. In 2017 the leader of the party was Theresa May. One of the aims of this research is to gauge the long-term brand image or reputation of the Conservative Party; therefore, a change in leadership may present different findings.

Focus Group Discussions

Focus group discussions were carried out between 18th and 26th April 2018. Each focus group began with an overall objective and intended aims section where members were advised on all ethical procedures. Members of the focus group were handed the projective technique booklets and asked to complete demographic data, which included gender, age and political affiliation. The booklets were used to gain deep and meaningful research for the three categories of projective techniques (association, completion and construction (Pich *et al.*, 2018). Pich *et al.* argue that this will "aid the analytical process and help ensure anonymity of participants and the recoding data" (Ibid, p.203). Therefore, members of the group were encouraged to annotate drawings, as this is believed to provide deeper expressions and understanding (Pich *et al.*, 2018). After each section, group members were encouraged to discuss their drawings with the rest of the group. Pich *et al.* states that allowing participants to "reflect and confer on their illustrations" will "strengthen the interpretation process" (2018, p.203). Echo probing, where the researcher asks respondents to elaborate on their answers was also used. This process will also add greater depth and understanding for the researchers, as they will get a better understanding from the participant's perspective (Ibid). However, Pich *et al.* observed that echo probing needs to be conducted in a sensitive way so not to lead participants to give negative findings (2018).

The sample criterion for the research was chosen to represent "young" people between 18 – 34 years old. The rationale for this was due to research findings, and polling data, which indicated that this demographic voted overwhelmingly for other political parties in the 2017 UK General Election.

Following the same method as Pich *et al.* (2018) this research conducted a two-stage process of analysis in the focus group stage. However, this research included an extra level of analysis to include the 2017 General Election results. The first stage would analyse the findings from Prosser *et al.*, (2018) of the British Election Study and polling data from YouGov and Ipsos Mori. Key themes and voting intention were logged and incorporated into the focus group sessions. The second stage of analysis was split into two parts following Pich *et al.*, (2018) method of coarse-grained and fine-grained analysis. This stage consisted of reviewing all booklets to assess emerging themes, priorities and preferred policies. Secondly, the fine-grained stage was to assess these themes for hidden meanings and to correlate with the polling data of image and party policy. Once this data was collected, the findings were then

compared to the results from Pich *et al.* (2015) and Pich *et al.* (2018) in an attempt to assess if there is a continuity of images or perceptions about the Conservative Party.

FINDINGS

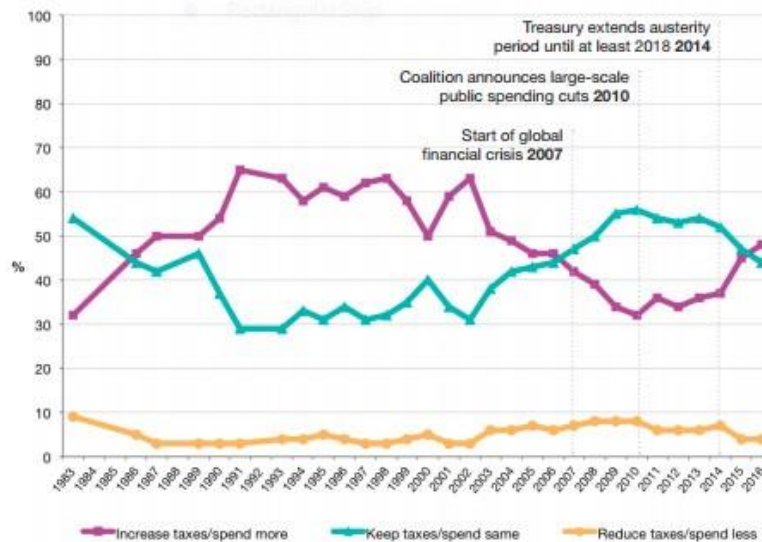
British Social Attitudes 34

Graph 1 indicates that since 2010 there has been a general trend for people wanting tax and spending to rise than to remain the same. The graph also indicates that in 2016 more people wanted to see higher taxation and spending than did not.

Graph 1 (Harding, 2017)

Spotlight

Support for 'tax more, spend more' at highest level in a decade

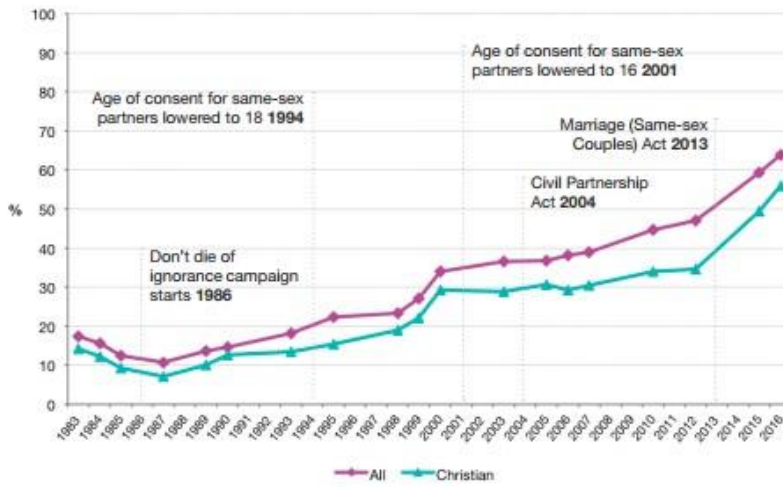


Author: John Curtice, Research Consultant, The National Centre for Social Research, and Professor of Politics, University of Strathclyde

Graph 2 indicates that since 1987 the UK has also seen an increase in acceptance in same sex relationships. Since 2010 this graph also shows that the rate at which people accept same sex relationships has increased faster than any period before. Two-thirds of people, around 64% indicated that same sex relationships are “not wrong at all” (Harding, 2017)

Graph 2 (Harding, 2017)

Acceptance of same-sex relationships has increased quickly in the last four years, especially among Christians



Authors: Kirby Swales, Director of Survey Research Centre, The National Centre for Social Research; Eleanor Attar Taylor, Researcher, The National Centre for Social Research

The table shows results relating to benefits and where people believe the government should prioritise spending. Since 2010, the BSA found that the public favours more spending on benefits for disabled people, single parents and the unemployed, while at the same time support for protecting pensions has fallen by 12%.

	1996	2000	2001	2003	2005	2007	2010	2012	2014	2016
Benefits for disabled people	54	61	57	54	53	54	53	59	60	67
Retirement pensions	71	74	76	79	80	78	72	72	67	60
Child benefits	30	33	35	38	39	42	42	35	37	36
Benefits for single parents	12	15	14	16	15	15	14	14	17	18
Benefits for the unemployed	26	13	12	10	8	7	11	12	13	13
None of these	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	4	3
<i>Unweighted base</i>	3620	3426	3287	3272	3193	3094	3297	3248	2878	2942

(Harding, 2017)

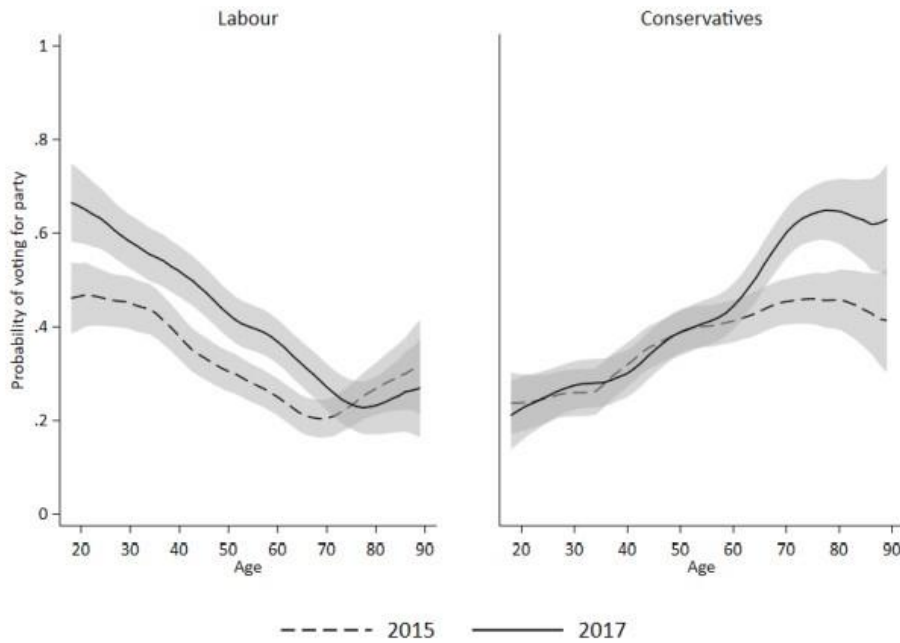
According to the BSA, their results demonstrate that after years of austerity, the British public are now showing signs of wanting more tax to be spent and a greater distribution of income (Harding, 2017). They argue that the UK is far more “socially liberal”, with younger people being the main driver of this trend (Ibid).

2017 General Election

Using the British Election Study, Prosser *et al.* (2018) research compared the elections in 2015 and 2017. Although Prosser *et al.* research called into question the argument that there was a “youth quake” they did find that younger voters tended to vote Labour and that there was an increase in voters between the ages of 24 – 34 voting labour (2018).

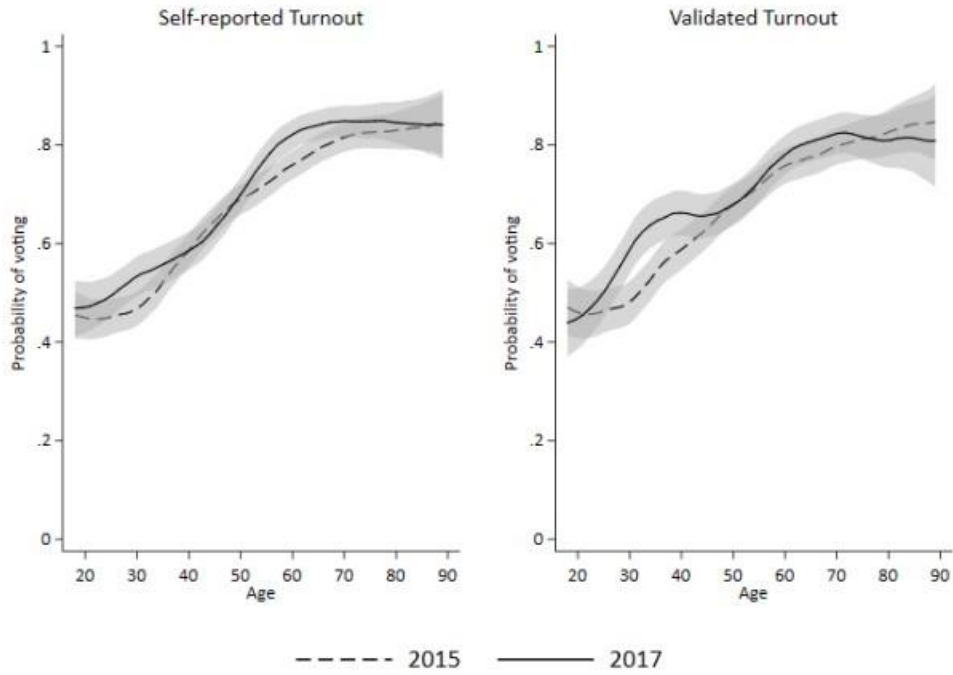
Graph 3 shows the relationship between both parties against age and vote choice. The graph identifies that younger voters were more in favour of voting Labour in both elections and that this increased in 2017.

Graph 3 (Prosser et al., 2018)



Graph 4 shows the results from Prosser *et al.* (2018) research by using nonparametric smoothed local mean analysis of turnout by age using self-reported and validated turnout. Both analyses, validated turnout and self-reported turnout, suggest that there was a distinct increase in voters in 2017 between 20 and 40 years old with a high degree of confidence on the data.

Graph 4 (Prosser et al., 2018)



YouGov

The following tables form part of the findings by YouGov in relation to voting at the 2015 and 2017 General Elections. These tables relate voting intentions to age and perception of political leaders.

The table indicates that in the 2015 election 18 – 29-year olds voted 32% and 30 – 39-year olds voted 36% in favour of the Conservative party.

YouGov / Prospect Survey

What the w

Sample Size: 100000 GB Adults
Fieldwork: 6th - 18th May 2015

	Gender		Age						Age and Gender									
	Total	Male	Female	18-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60+	18-29 Male	30-39 Male	40-49 Male	50-59 Male	60+ Male	18-29 Female	30-39 Female	40-49 Female	50-59 Female	60+ Female
Weighted Sample	100000	48500	51500	18506	18894	15119	19081	28600	9098	9502	7258	9642	13000	9408	9192	7862	9438	15600
Unweighted Sample	100000	51134	48866	11131	14059	16320	20475	38015	4920	6256	7663	10357	21618	8211	7803	8337	10118	16397
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%

Which party did you vote for?

[Asked to respondents who voted; n=92945]

Conservative	38	37	38	32	36	33	36	45	34	38	34	33	44	29	33	33	38	46
Labour	31	29	33	36	34	33	32	25	31	31	31	31	24	41	37	36	32	25
Liberal Democrat	8	8	8	9	8	7	7	7	10	8	7	7	7	8	8	7	7	8
Scottish National Party (SNP)	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	3	5	5	6	6	4	4	5	5	4	3
Plaid Cymru	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	0
United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP)	13	15	12	9	10	14	16	16	10	11	18	18	18	7	9	12	14	14
Green Party	4	4	4	7	5	4	3	2	6	5	4	3	2	8	5	4	3	2
British National Party (BNP)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Don't know	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1

(YouGov, 2015)

This table indicates that in the 2017 election 18 – 29-year olds voted on average 21.3% and 30 – 39-year olds voted 29% in favour of the Conservative Party.

YouGov Survey Results

Sample Size: 52615 GB Adults
Fieldwork: 9th - 13th June 2017

	Age									Gender		Social Grade					
	18-19	20-24	25-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70+	Male	Female	AB	C1	ABC1	C2	DE	C2DE	
Total	1748	4351	3893	8861	9703	8418	10363	5281	25457	27158	14737	15280	29996	11050	11569	22619	
Weighted Sample	52615	1077	2679	3648	7912	8237	10718	12388	5956	25000	27615	24440	13384	37824	6260	8501	14761
Unweighted Sample	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%

Turnout

Did not vote	31	43	41	36	39	34	29	23	18	30	33	21	27	24	37	45	41
Voted	69	57	59	64	61	66	71	77	84	70	67	79	73	76	63	55	59

Which party did you vote for?

[Only asked to those who voted; n=48911]

Conservative	44	19	22	23	29	39	47	58	69	45	43	46	41	44	47	41	44
Labour	41	66	62	63	55	44	37	27	19	39	43	38	43	40	40	44	42
Liberal Democrat	8	9	9	7	8	8	7	7	7	8	7	10	8	9	6	5	6
Scottish National Party (SNP)	3	2	3	3	4	4	4	3	2	4	3	3	4	3	3	4	4
Plaid Cymru	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
UK Independence Party (UKIP)	2	1	1	1	1	2	3	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	2	4	3
Green	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	1
Other	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

(YouGov, 2017)

The following table represents the data regarding the percentage of people who were asked which leader would make the best Prime Minister before both elections. The results from both indicated that David Cameron (2015) and Theresa May (2017) received a higher percentage compared to Ed Miliband and Jeremy Corbyn.

Leaders - Perceptions

Which of these would make the best Prime Minister?

	David Cameron	Ed Miliband	Nick Clegg	Don't Know
2015	%	%	%	%
April 21-22	40	26	6	27
April 7-8	40	24	7	29
March 24-25	39	21	7	34
March 10-11	39	21	4	35
February 24-25	38	19	5	38
February 10-11	36	18	7	39
January 27-28	39	20	4	38
January 13-14	37	19	5	39

(YouGov, 2015)

Best Prime Minister (GB)

From EU Referendum - Present

		Theresa May	Jeremy Corbyn	Not Sure	May Lead
		%	%	%	%
05/06/2017	07/06/2017	43	32	26	11
30/05/2017	31/05/2017	43	30	27	13
24/05/2017	25/05/2017	45	28	27	17
16/05/2017	17/05/2017	46	23	31	23
09/05/2017	10/05/2017	49	21	30	28
02/05/2017	03/05/2017	49	21	29	28
25/04/2017	26/04/2017	48	18	33	30
18/04/2017	19/04/2017	54	15	31	39
12/04/2017	13/04/2017	50	14	36	36
05/04/2017	06/04/2017	49	16	35	33

(YouGov, 2017)

The next tables relate to polling data on leader image, which compared Theresa May to Jeremy Corbyn. For 18 to 24-year olds, Theresa May was judged to be dislikeable

(66%), out of touch (64%), dishonest (58%), weak (44%) and more incompetent (43%). Jeremy Corbyn was judged to be honest (67%), likeable (66%) in touch (63%), more competent (53%) and strong (48%).

For 25 to 49-year olds, Theresa May was judged to be out of touch (59%), dislikeable (53%), dishonest (47%), strong (47%) and more competent (44%). However, for the same age group Jeremy Corby was judged to be honest (52%), likeable (49%), in touch (46%), more competent (40%) and weak (40%).

YouGov Survey Results

WVI

Sample Size: 1937 GB Adults
Fieldwork: 31st May - 1st June 2017

	EU Ref 2016			Vote in 2015					Gender		Age				Social Grade		Region				
	Total	Remain	Leave	Con	Lab	Lib Dem	UKIP	Male	Female	18-24	25-49	50-64	65+	ABC1	C2DE	London	Rest of South	Midlands / Wales	North	Scotland	
Weighted Sample	1937	761	827	546	453	116	186	938	999	225	827	478	407	1104	833	232	643	416	467	178	
Unweighted Sample	1937	910	785	531	472	126	190	888	1051	201	869	502	365	1168	769	194	654	426	477	186	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%

		July 18-19 2016	May 31 - Jun 1 2017																					
Thinking about Theresa May, do you think she is...	Competent or incompetent?	Competent	55	53	48	68	85	32	64	65	50	55	41	44	57	71	54	51	48	59	50	51	50	
		Incompetent	10	32	44	20	7	56	27	23	38	26	43	38	29	16	35	28	36	28	31	35	41	41
		Don't know	34	16	8	14	8	12	9	12	12	19	16	18	14	13	11	21	21	18	15	19	14	10
In touch or out of touch?	In touch	40	32	24	47	65	12	32	43	32	33	18	24	38	51	32	33	23	39	31	32	27	27	
	Out of touch	23	52	68	38	22	80	61	44	66	47	64	59	47	35	55	47	57	47	46	56	64	64	
	Don't know	37	16	8	15	13	8	7	14	12	20	18	17	15	14	13	20	20	14	23	12	9	9	
Strong or weak?	Strong	62	52	46	65	80	36	62	63	48	57	35	47	54	71	52	53	45	55	54	52	50	50	
	Weak	8	31	44	20	9	53	26	21	38	24	44	35	30	15	34	28	36	28	27	32	39	39	
	Don't know	30	17	10	15	12	11	12	15	14	19	21	18	16	13	14	21	19	17	19	16	11	11	
Likeable or dislikeable?	Likeable	36	33	22	49	60	16	28	51	31	35	17	24	39	54	31	35	27	38	31	30	34	34	
	Dislikeable	24	46	64	31	20	71	52	29	50	42	66	53	41	26	51	39	53	41	44	49	54	54	
	Don't know	40	21	14	20	21	14	20	20	19	23	17	23	20	20	17	26	20	21	25	21	12	12	
Honest or dishonest?	Honest	40	32	25	44	63	14	36	38	31	33	16	24	37	51	32	32	29	37	30	28	32	32	
	Dishonest	15	40	54	28	12	65	41	28	45	36	58	47	37	20	44	35	44	33	38	47	50	50	
	Don't know	45	28	21	29	26	21	23	34	24	31	25	28	26	30	24	33	27	29	32	25	18	18	

Sample Size: 1937 GB Adults
Fieldwork: 31st May - 1st June 2017

WVI

	EU Ref 2016			Vote in 2015					Gender		Age				Social Grade		Region				
	Total	Remain	Leave	Con	Lab	Lib Dem	UKIP	Male	Female	18-24	25-49	50-64	65+	ABC1	C2DE	London	Rest of South	Midlands / Wales	North	Scotland	
Weighted Sample	1937	761	827	546	453	116	186	938	999	225	827	478	407	1104	833	232	643	416	467	178	
Unweighted Sample	1937	910	785	531	472	126	190	888	1051	201	869	502	365	1188	769	194	654	426	477	186	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%

		May 20-21	May 31 - Jun 1																					
Thinking about Jeremy Corbyn, do you think he is...	Competent or incompetent?	Competent	29	34	50	20	13	60	41	13	36	32	53	40	28	18	37	30	37	28	32	39	41	
		Incompetent	50	46	35	64	75	21	45	71	45	43	26	38	52	64	46	46	38	52	45	42	42	42
		Don't know	21	20	15	16	12	19	14	16	16	24	21	22	20	18	18	24	25	19	23	19	16	16
In touch or out of touch?	In touch	35	40	56	28	17	68	41	22	41	40	63	46	34	23	45	34	45	34	38	46	47	47	
	Out of touch	48	44	34	61	73	21	47	66	47	40	19	36	52	64	43	45	36	51	42	41	40	40	
	Don't know	17	16	10	13	10	11	12	12	11	20	18	18	13	12	12	21	18	15	20	13	13	13	
Strong or weak?	Strong	25	31	43	19	11	57	34	9	33	28	48	36	25	17	33	27	33	25	29	38	34	34	
	Weak	52	48	39	64	76	25	51	73	49	47	28	40	57	66	48	48	37	55	48	44	48	48	
	Don't know	24	21	18	17	13	18	15	19	18	25	24	24	19	18	19	25	30	20	24	18	17	17	
Likeable or dislikeable?	Likeable	39	46	63	31	31	66	54	27	52	40	66	49	42	31	52	37	46	43	41	51	51	51	
	Dislikeable	38	37	25	53	58	20	31	57	34	38	18	30	43	52	34	40	32	41	36	33	37	37	
	Don't know	23	18	12	16	11	14	16	16	14	22	16	21	15	16	14	23	23	17	22	16	12	12	
Honest or dishonest?	Honest	47	49	71	34	34	74	63	30	56	42	67	52	45	38	56	40	53	46	45	54	53	53	
	Dishonest	22	23	11	37	39	8	13	42	24	23	12	20	29	31	22	25	16	28	23	21	24	24	
	Don't know	31	27	18	29	27	18	24	28	20	35	21	28	26	31	22	35	30	27	31	25	23	23	

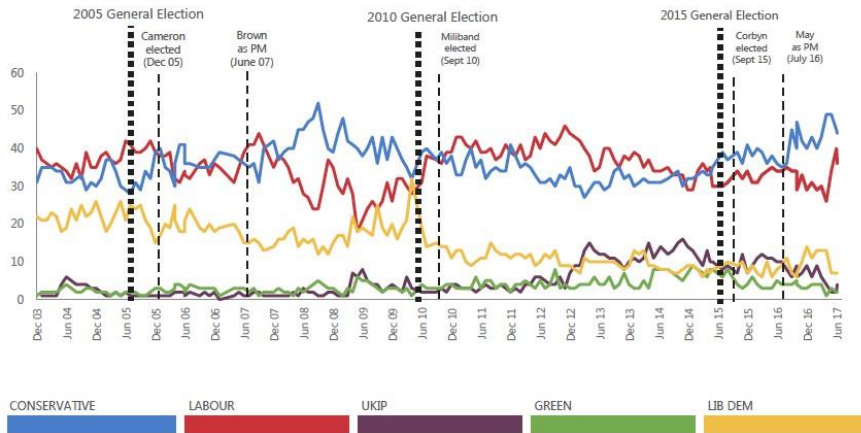
(YouGov, 2017)

Ipsos Mori

The graph shows the voting intention for each party since 2003. During each timeline when there has been a new leader each party has experienced a rise in voting intention. The graph indicates that the Liberal Democrats under Nick Clegg in 2010 and Labour under Jeremy Corbyn in 2017 both received a substantial increase in support during their election campaigns.

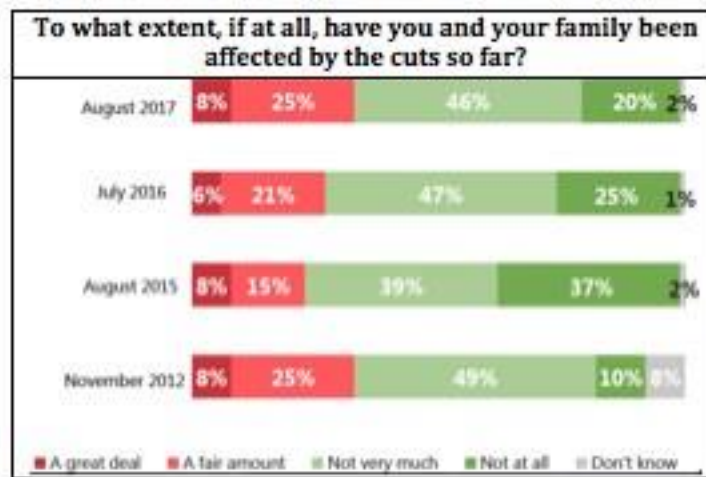
Headline voting intention: December '03 – June '17

HOW WOULD YOU VOTE IF THERE WERE A GENERAL ELECTION TOMORROW?

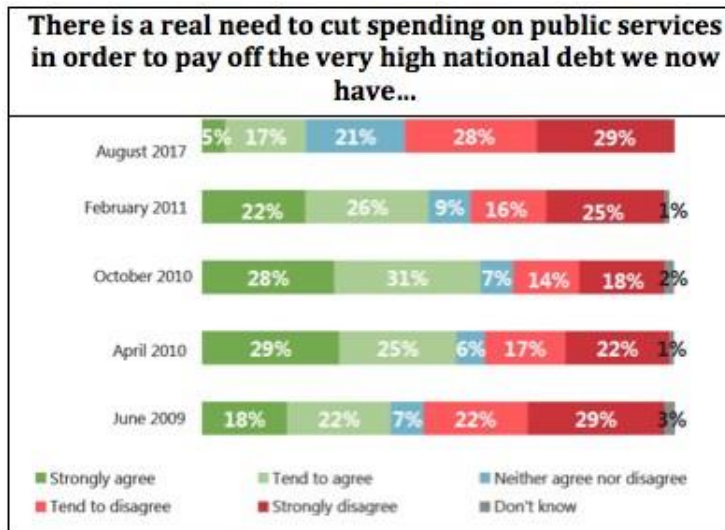


(Ipsos Mori, 2017)

The table shows that austerity is now being felt more by the public with 33% indicating that they are feeling the impact of the cuts. The same levels seen in 2012.



The next table shows the level of support for the cutting of public service spending has reduced to the same levels of 2010. Only 22% of the public believe there is a need to continue to do this.



(Ipsos Mori, 2017)

Focus Group

In reviewing qualitative expressions and to uncover a brands' reputation, this section followed the same sequence as Pich *et al.* (2018). The current-immediate brand image should be identified. Once this has been done, the aggregate of past associations, as identified in Pich *et al.* (2018), will reveal a brands reputation. Pich *et al.* states "incoherent current and past associations are not recognised as longterm 'brand reputation'" (2018, p.203) but are the current brand image. Citing Butler *et al.*, (2011); Smith & French, (2011) and Pich *et al.* (2018), the expressions of a current-immediate political brand image are organised under political party, party policy and party leader.

The Conservative Party

Participants were asked to answer, "When I think of the Conservative part, I think of..." and asked to complete a word association. A number of common themes were identified which included, Margaret Thatcher, Theresa May, Middle-Upper-class, rich, economy, old people, wealth, elitism and being 'out of touch'. Participants were encouraged to discuss their results, which lead the discussions to identify further deep-seated imagery. The exercise identified that floating voters generally associated the economy with the Conservative Party but also negative 'social connections' of being 'out of touch' or nasty. For example, one floating voter stated, "taxing the poor" but that they were "good with money" (FG401). Whereas another stated, "good with money" but being "very bad with real people and they don't care enough" (FG103).

Conservative voters, however, also identified similar negative connections with old people and being out of touch. One Conservative voter stated that they were "thinking about the future and trying to move forward for everyone" but that they were "out of touch" (FG206). Another Conservative voter associated NHS cuts and being out-dated with the party and stated, "they are very unpopular with young people" (FG403). Therefore, the party continued to be linked to Conservative leaders like Margaret Thatcher and Theresa May, party of the rich and being upper-middle-class. However, these associations appear to be linked with deeper associations of being out of touch and uncaring.

Following Pich *et al.* (2018) method, participants were set “constructive” activities, which were designed to uncover current party imagery. In section two (picture association) participants were asked to draw the Conservative Party if it was a person, food, drink, sport, holiday destination and to draw the “Conservative Party as you see it”. During this activity participants were encouraged to discuss their illustrations with group members for greater insight.

During this activity a number of themes surfaced. The two main themes were that of wealth and affluence. However, sub-themes were also attributed to wealth and affluence, which included uncaring (nasty), greed/evil and being out of touch. A large proportion of the participants revealed the party as male, business/banker orientated, upper class and wealthy. However, nearly half of the participants drew female looking illustrations of the ‘party’ as a person. Most of these were labelled “Theresa May” or resembled a woman with bob like hair and a combination of words like “strong” and “stable”. The majority of these drawings were negative in nature and when pressed for an explanation as to why participants drew a female, most described Theresa May and linked her to being uncaring or self-serving.

When participants illustrated the ‘party’ as a food, the same themes of wealth and affluence surfaced, including the sub-themes of uncaring, greed or evil. For example, foods like caviar, steak, foie gras, roast dinners, lobster and cream teas were common. However, illustrations also included writing like “pile of rotten food” by a floating voter (FG302) and a Liberal Democrat voter (FG203) wrote, “stale sandwich” while a Green voter wrote “Rotting fish” (FG202). Relating to the uncaring and greed themes a Green voter drew dead babies on a plate with the writing, “that’s what they eat” (FG205). Therefore, the themes of wealth and affluence were again identified along with the sub themes of uncaring, greed and evil (nasty).

The same themes were identified when participants were asked to illustrate the party as a drink. Nearly half the participants chose champagne or a combination relating to champagne, Whisky, wine, gin and tonic, and cognac. When questioned why participants chose these drinks each focus group agreed that it was because wealthy people consume these drinks. However, a number of participants expressed deeper imagery with a Green voter relating the Conservatives as a drink by drawing a glass with “tears of the poor, disabled, minorities etc.” (FG205). A floating voter (FG303) also chose to express their views by drawing a cup with a skull and bones on it. When questioned about their illustrations, both participants suggested that the Conservative Party didn’t care about poor people and they were toxic. These themes backed up the sub themes of uncaring, greed or evil.

Participants were asked to draw the ‘party’ as a sport. Horse riding or polo was the most commonly identified sport, followed by cricket, golf, foxhunting, tennis, rowing and croquet. As an example, a Conservative voter associated the party with a drawing of a bat and wickets and stated “... or any posh sports really – rugby, cricket, tennis etc.” (FG204). A Labour voter drew a rugby ball as it was “brutish British but considered posh” (FG106). However, a number of participants chose very negative drawings. A Green voters’ illustration was of two people with bats, stating “people bashing or ruining poor people’s lives” (FG205) and a floating voter drew a person riding a horse trampling people stating, “run scum run” (FG503). These illustrations

further the themes of affluence and wealth as well as the sub themes of greed, uncaring and evil.

The holiday destination saw number of common destinations that included the Caribbean, Panama, St Tropez, Monaco, Bath and the Cotswolds. When asked to explain these destinations participants indicated that they were places where wealthy people go. Again, throughout the focus groups a number of participants chose to depict 'destinations' negatively. A Conservative voter illustrated a building stating, "Butlins, no one's happy to be there right now" (FG403) or "Never Never Land" (FG501). A Green voter simply wrote "Somewhere I can't afford" (FG405). Whereas a Labour/Liberal voter wrote "conservatives don't go on holiday, too many 'brown people' and 'foreigners'!" (FG301). Therefore, the wealth and affluence themes were consistent throughout all of the projective techniques.

Participants associated the Conservative Party with themes of wealth and affluence. However, these themes were consistently associated in a negative light, with sub themes of greed, uncaring and being out of touch. Relating to this, the political brand was linked with Theresa May, David Cameron and Margaret Thatcher. Theresa May was consistently depicted as evil or 'out of touch'. Where further themes of business orientated were present these too were seen generally in a more negative than positive way.

Party Policy

Following Pich *et al.* (2018) method to uncover perceptions of Conservative policy "completion and construction techniques" (Ibid) was used. The findings were logged along with the respective technique. These findings were broadly defined by being positive, negative or neutral with regards to Conservative 'policy' (Ibid).

Participants had two pictures of stick figures each with thought and speech bubbles "completion technique" (Pich *et al.*, 2018). Speech bubble represented what you would openly say out in public and the thought bubble is what you would keep to yourself. The first picture stated, "If you wake up following the next UK General Election and find out Labour have won". Participants were asked, "What you say" out aloud and "what you think". The second picture stated, "If you wake up following the next UK General Election and find out the Conservatives have won".

Positive expectations – good for the economy. The majority of the participants were not happy by a Conservative victory. However, some floating voters and one Labour voter along with Conservative voters noted positive associations with the economy. One floating voter was less happy with the outcome but stated, "economy will still be ok" (FG103). Whereas a Labour voter stated, "I'm glad for the economy" (FG102). Similarly, a Conservative voter expressed happy emotions for a "strong economy" (FG503).

These results represented a view, which included all voting identities that a Conservative victory would do well for jobs and the economy. However, going hand in hand with this view, there was a fear that the "working class" would suffer. A floating voter stated, "jobs might be ok but the working class may struggle even more" and a Labour victory would mean, "higher taxes, less employment and will end up borrowing more" (FG502).

Negative - expectations. This “construction” technique (Pich *et al.*, 2018) indicated a Conservative victory would mean no changes in society, the “same old” (FG402), greater taxes for the poor and that “poor people will lose out even more now” (FG501). A Conservative victory would mean “old people ruined it for young people” (FG404). Whereas a Labour victory would mean policies that included fewer jobs and a worsening economy. Participant (FG305) stated, “The economy is doomed” whereas a Green voter stated, “not sure I’ll get a job” (FG405). These responses confirm the image of the Conservatives as being good for the economy but bad socially.

Party Leader – Theresa May

In line with Pich *et al.* (2018) research and to build a picture of the current associations and imagery linked to Theresa May, a ‘word association’ projective technique was used. Participants were asked to write down ‘positive’ and ‘negative’ words associated with Theresa May. Participants were also allowed to explain their answers to the focus group if they chose to do so. Participants were asked to identify both ‘positive’ and ‘negative’ associations - these included strength, hardworking and resilience. However, alongside these core themes further themes of being out of touch, cold, robotic, lacking of a personality and being a weak leader.

The majority of responses were mixed with members from all political affiliations noting that Theresa May had a resilient and strong will but lacked emotions and was cold. One Conservative voter noted that she showed “quiet bravery” and was “diplomatic” but was “cold and posh” (FG403). A floating voter commented that she was “hard working” but “nasty and non-caring” (FG304). A Conservative voter also noted that she was “cracking on with it” and she “won’t back down” and was “caring” but that she was weak with “speaking and soulless” (FG206). When asked to explain the contradictory statements of being soulless but also caring they replied, “I don’t know, I can’t explain why I wrote that” (FG206). A further floating voter wrote, “strong willed and works hard” but was “emotionless, transparent, leadership (weak) and untrustworthy” (FG502).

These themes of resilience, being strong willed, lacking emotions and cold or out of touch were discussed after the activity, the general consensus was that Theresa May, was only trying to save her job and that she really was a weak leader. A Labour voter stated, “really isn’t in touch with British values of the everyday Briton” (FG106) with another stating “only in it for the money” (FG404). Whereas a floating voter stated that Theresa May was “in a bad situation but handling it well” but that she was still “deceitful, too weak – not a leader” (FG103). Along with these themes Theresa May was also linked positively and negatively to Brexit.

CONCLUSION

Polling data shows that the British public are now far more ‘socially liberal’ than ever before. Tolerance for more liberal ideas are far more accepted, especially by older generations. Further evidence shows that voters are in favour of higher taxes and are less inclined to ‘blame’ people less well off in society. Therefore, it can be

argued that voters would tend to support parties that put forward policies that voters perceive to be more socially liberal than conservative.

In relation to the 2017 General Election, the vote share for Labour by 18 – 24-year olds didn't necessarily increase but there was an increase between 24 – 47-year olds. A further troubling issue for the Conservative Party is that in both 2015 and 2017, their leaders were seen to be more 'Prime Ministerial'. In 2015, David Cameron was seen to be 'charismatic' but linked to party 'positive negatives' like being charismatic or young but posh or upper class, whereas Ed Miliband was perceived to be a weak leader. In 2017, Theresa May was seen to be 'uncharismatic' but strong, whereas Jeremy Corbyn was seen to be very 'in touch' and well liked but still a weak leader. This then resulted in two very different outcomes, in 2015, the Conservatives increased their seats in the Commons but in 2017, the party lost their majority. This would therefore suggest that the way the public perceive a leader, or the emotions they associate with that leader, will have an effect on the way they vote.

Further findings demonstrated that when new leaders took over parties there was an increase in support for that party. However, findings also show that issues like austerity and Brexit have an effect on voters. This would therefore suggest that perceptions and emotions, whether about a leader or party policy did play a major role in how people voted in both general elections.

When negative issues are associated with a leaders' brand image, like being out of touch, and a linking theme is associated with negative aspects of a political party's reputation, like being nasty or a party that only supports the wealthy, this will then create 'negative negatives' and can affect or reinforce a voter's schema. In relation to the long-term reputation of the Conservative brand, the research found that the party is still associated with affluence and wealth and being the party of the rich upper-middle class but that it is still 'best' on the economy. Findings also showed that leaders could be strengths or weaknesses for the brand. As in pitch *et al.* (2018) research, the party still has a persisting negative image. The image of the party is now seen as 'out of touch', which is associated with Theresa May, and a party moving backwards which supports austerity and Brexit. This therefore holds negative emotions with younger voters as they voted overwhelmingly to Remain (YouGov, 2016). This can explain the increase in support for the Labour Party in 2017 was down to a loss in emotional connection with Theresa May and the Conservative Party. Therefore, because of the party's brand reputation and with the majority of voters favouring less harsh austerity policies, the perception of the Conservative party by younger voters is one that is out of touch, if not nasty, with a leader that they can't emotionally connect with because of the connotations of these 'negative negatives'. Therefore, age is the dividing line between how people vote and why the young still can't vote for the 'nasty party'.

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