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Whose organs are they anyway?

Gordon Brown has reopened the debate about organ donation. Writing in the Sunday Telegraph, he argued for a system of 'presumed consent' where, unless someone positively chose to register that they did not want their organs to be used, doctors would be allowed to take organs from dead patients without explicit consent. Mr Brown's endorsement follows that of England's Chief Medical Officer, Sir Liam Donaldson, who backed calls for 'presumed consent' last summer.

A Populus survey, conducted online last July, found only a third of the public were categorically opposed to the idea, with 39% in favour and 26% supporting making greater efforts to encourage more people to agree to donate their organs before giving consideration to presumed consent.

But what about Members of Parliament who would have to vote to change the law and who would, almost certainly, be free to vote according to their conscience rather than have to follow a Party line?

The most recent survey of the Populus Parliament Panel suggests that Gordon Brown is in line with a majority (52%) of Labour MPs and that 'presumed consent' has a very good chance of winning the support of the House of Commons. However, a third of MPs (53% of Conservatives) are opposed outright and 29% want to see greater efforts put into making the current donor system work before introducing an 'opt-out'

system. Opponents of the proposition – who argue that the state does not own people’s bodies or have a right to take organs after death – might find that their best argument is to support a new campaign to encourage people to sign up to agree to donate their organs when they die and hope that MPs are prepared to wait before voting for ‘presumed consent’ legislation.

	All	Lab	Con	Lib Dem	Other
A deceased person's organs should always be donated unless they have withdrawn consent	39%	52%	22%	40%	0%
A deceased person's organs should only be donated where they have actively given their consent	32%	20%	53%	30%	33%
Greater efforts should be made to promote the current organ donor system but if that is not sufficient, an opt-out system should then be introduced	29%	28%	25%	30%	67%

Underestimating Hillary

With attention in the US primaries turning to Florida for the Republicans and South Carolina for the Democrats, it is beginning to look as if John McCain’s bid for the Republican nomination is gaining momentum, while the Democratic race remains very tight. After this weekend’s victory in South Carolina, Senator McCain heads to Florida holding a lead in the polls over Rudy Giuliani, whose campaign strategy has been built on achieving a big win in the Sunshine State.

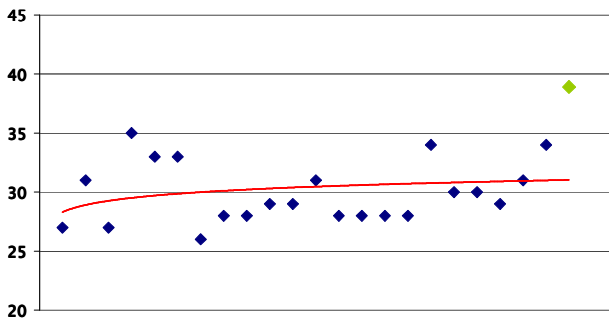
Recent polls in South Carolina give Barack Obama a comfortable lead while Hillary Clinton maintains a solid lead in national polls. On the Democrat side most of the drama in the primary races so far has occurred in New Hampshire. It was judged a ‘must-win state’ for Hillary Clinton, following her clear defeat in the Iowa caucuses – yet all the polls suggested Barack Obama was on course for a very big win. The talk in the run-up to the vote was all about Obama’s unstoppable momentum and the crisis in the Clinton campaign.

The polls, of course, turned out to be wrong. Mrs Clinton won New Hampshire by 2% and the debate immediately began as to what had gone wrong with the polls. There was clear evidence of a late swing to Mrs Clinton from undecided voters and from some of the weaker candidates; she did especially strongly among women (who had backed Obama by a wide margin in Iowa) and some linked this to Mrs Clinton being on the brink of tears in a TV interview on the eve of the vote. But many also speculated that a key factor in the poll error was the so-called ‘Bradley effect’ (named after former Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley) – the supposed tendency of white voters to overstate their likelihood to vote for black candidates. It was an alluring theory, all the more for having such a pseudo-scientific label. But the

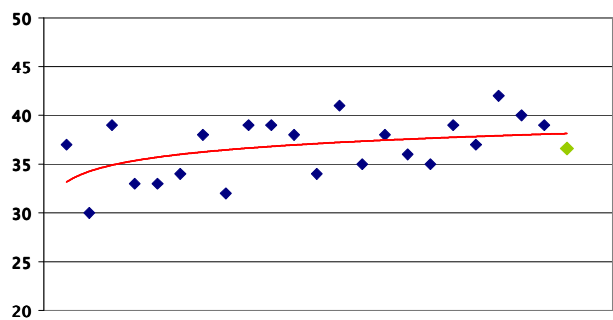
evidence clearly shows that it didn't happen; there was no 'Bradley effect' in New Hampshire.

The graphs below show (the blue dots) the support for Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton in every poll published in New Hampshire between the Iowa caucuses and the primary vote. The green dot shows the share of the vote each actually achieved in the primary. The red line shows the trend line of the polls. When polls are functioning properly they should scatter either side of the trend line and the actual result should be very close to where the trend line finishes. This is exactly what happened with the Obama polls, as the graph clearly shows. The polls did not overstate his support, which is what the 'Bradley effect' theory demands – they got it about right. The error occurred because the polls significantly *understated* Mrs Clinton's support. As the graph shows, the trend line of the polls was in the wrong place – instead of scattering either side of the result, every single poll put her too low. It wasn't just late swing – we can be sure of that because the exit poll was wrong too. The poll bias was not pro-Obama, it was ant-Clinton – probably a result of a 'spiral of silence': Obama-fever was so intense that some voters just didn't want to admit they were planning to vote for Hillary Clinton.

Hillary Clinton – New Hampshire polls (post-Iowa)



Barack Obama – New Hampshire polls (post-Iowa)



The party of...

David Cameron recently set the Conservatives a goal of replacing Labour in the public mind as 'the party of the NHS'. Populus decided to find out how ambitious a target this is. Our latest poll for The Times tested the extent to which some issues, like the NHS, are more strongly associated with one party than the others.

Even though polls now generally show Labour with a very narrow lead over the Conservatives (4% in December) as 'the party most trusted to manage the NHS', they are still regarded as 'the party of the NHS' by twice as many voters (42%) as the Conservatives (21%).

By almost the same margin (43%/21%) the Conservatives are regarded as 'the party that's tougher on law & order'. The Conservative Party is also viewed by more people (35%) than Labour (20%) as 'the party of lower taxes', but Labour holds a slight edge (31%/26%) as 'the party of sound economic management'.

The widest gap between the two main parties was on which was 'the party that's more committed to state education'. 46% named Labour, only 20% the Conservatives.

Only 17% think of the Conservatives as 'the party of fairness' – the only measure on which the Lib Dems fared better (20%) than one of the two bigger parties. 26% think of Labour as 'the party of fairness', but tellingly just as many think that the phrase doesn't apply to any party.

Clinton, Livingstone and Italy – winners in 2008

Earlier this month Populus asked the Populus Network – our panel of nearly 1,000 business, cultural, and political thought leaders – to predict the winners of key contests in 2008. In London's mayoral election the Populus Network overwhelmingly predicts a Ken Livingstone victory – 77% expect Livingstone to secure a third term, with just 21% expecting a win for Conservative challenger Boris Johnson. The Populus Network's confident prediction stands in sharp contrast to the latest YouGov polling on the contest which gave Livingstone a single percent lead over Johnson (45% to 44%.)

When asked about the American Presidential elections, the Populus Network overwhelmingly predicts that a Democrat will win in November. 55% believe that Hillary Clinton will become America's 44th President, with fellow Democrat Barack Obama perceived as her closest rival with 27%. Republican John McCain is favoured by the Populus Network to win the Republican Party nomination, but only 9% expect him to become the next President.

Closer to home, Italy are predicted by one in four opinion formers (26%) to win at Euro 2008, with Germany and France also tipped for success (19% and 13% respectively.)

Long Live King William V?

A Populus poll for the Discovery Channel has discovered broad support for the Monarchy and, in particular, Prince William. The poll of 1,004 adults conducted in December 2007 shows that by a margin of 60% the British public favours Britain remaining a monarchy rather than becoming a republic. The public rejected the statement "the Royal family are out of touch with modern life" by a margin of 10% and over half (53%) see the monarchy as delivering value for money.

Prince William and his partner Kate Middleton are particularly well-regarded. Over half the public think (54% to 37%) that Prince William should be Britain's next King rather than Prince Charles. There is, however, a sharp age divide; among 18 to 24 year olds support for the succession skipping to Prince William stands at 70% while among those between 55 and 64 support drops to 47%, a 23% gap. By a margin of 33% the British public believes "Kate Middleton would make a good addition to the Royal family" but again there is an age divide – with 61% of 18 to 24 year olds but only half of those aged 65 and over agreeing. Support for Prince William does not

translate into interest in his private life however, with only one in five saying they found it interesting to read about Princes William and Harry in the press.

Prince Charles and Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall, do not enjoy such popular support. Only 16% said they wanted to see the Queen abdicate in favour of Prince Charles. Over two thirds (66%) say they admired Diana, Princess of Wales more than they admire Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall. By a small margin, 46% to 42%, people disagree that Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall, is a good ambassador for the Royal Family.

Perhaps the best regarded ambassador for the Royal family remains the Queen with 49% viewing her as the hardest working member of the Royal family – more than every other Royal together (who total just 38%.) The Queen's Golden Jubilee and her 60th wedding anniversary were overshadowed only by the death of Diana, Princess of Wales in forming the views of the public towards the modern Royal family.

Year of Intercultural Dialogue

A poll conducted by Gallup for the European Commission to mark the start of the Year of Intercultural Dialogue has found that across Europe intercultural interactions are the norm and that EU citizens are, on the whole, positive about the benefits such interactions offer.

Nearly three quarters (72%) of EU citizens believe that people with a different background – be it ethnic, religious or national – enrich the cultural life of their country. Those in Ireland and Luxembourg agreed most strongly (both at 84%) that differing backgrounds enriched cultural life, and those in the UK agreed slightly above the EU average (73%). Even in the most sceptical countries – Malta, Cyprus, Bulgaria and Romania – over half think that people of differing backgrounds bring benefits to cultural life.

Those surveyed were asked whether they had interacted with people belonging to a different nationality, religion or ethnic group in the past seven days and, on average across the EU, 65% had done so. Interactions in the UK (76%) are significantly more common than the EU average – indeed, the UK lags behind only Luxembourg and Ireland in the number of intercultural interactions. In only four EU countries – Estonia, Romania, Bulgaria and Poland – did fewer than half have no such interactions within the week previous to the survey. Across the EU, those living in larger urban areas and those with a high level of education had more contact with differing cultures than those in rural areas and with lower educational levels. Older Europeans had less contact than younger Europeans (only half of the over 55s could recall contact with a person of differing national, ethnic or religious backgrounds in the past seven days.)

Two further questions were also asked – whether young people benefited from being in contact with those of other origins and beliefs and whether young people should stick to their family traditions. While both statements found broad support, the belief that young people benefited from contact with those of differing backgrounds

was the more strongly supported of the two (with 83% agreeing, 67% agreed that young people should stick to their family traditions.) The majority of Europeans therefore hold dual beliefs; of being both open to other cultures but also believing that young people should continue their family traditions. Supporters of the first statement were more likely to “very much agree” with the statement than supporters of the second statement (34% to 27%.) In no country did support for contact with those of other origins drop below 50%, but more than half of those in the Netherlands, Denmark and Sweden rejected the idea that young people should stick to their family traditions.

Britain Expected...

Higher mortgage rates, a Royal engagement, a terrorist attack and a Brown premiership were all predicted by the Populus / Times poll in January 2007. But which of these predictions proved accurate and which incorrect? The 90% of Britons predicting higher mortgage rates were, perhaps to their financial detriment, proved right. As were the 73% who predicted that Gordon Brown would become Prime Minister (although the 56% who thought Gordon Brown should call an immediate general election on becoming Prime Minister were left disappointed.)

The 65% (71% among women) who predicted that Prince William would announce his engagement were proved wrong however, with Prince William and long-term partner Kate Middleton actually separating for some of 2007. 61% predicted Britain would suffer a major terrorist attack – while there were failed bombings in London and an attack on Glasgow airport neither caused civilian fatalities.

16% of Britons predicted scientists would discover evidence of extraterrestrial life – slightly fewer than the 19% of Americans who predicted this in a similar Ipsos poll for Associated Press and AOL News. Despite the fears of Americans, America was not hit with a major terrorist attack (predicted by 61%) nor were biological or chemical weapons used in 2007 (predicted by 64%)

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