

Research Agenda and Plans for Policy Engagement

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THE LONDON SCHOOL
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Research Identity

■ **Distributive politics and democratic discontent**

- Right-wing populism
- Climate change politics and policies
- Elites, social media and political communication

■ **Methods**

- Computational methods
- Causal inference

Example: *Public service decline and support for populism*

Does the provision of public goods and services motivate support for populist right parties?

- Public services are the primary ways in which voters learn about the state
- Key to the social contract between the governments and public
- Public services are a key political issue
- Public service quality – especially the NHS – has declined in Britain

The public wants greater spending on the NHS

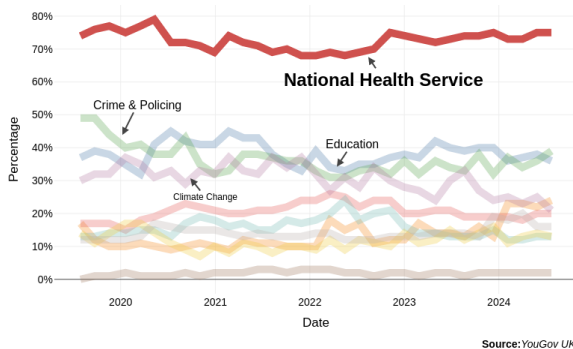


Figure: Where should the government increase public funding?

Do GP practice closures create grievances?

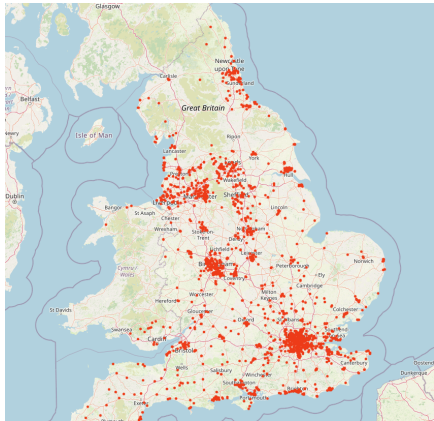
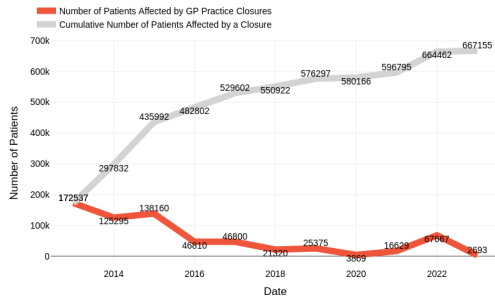
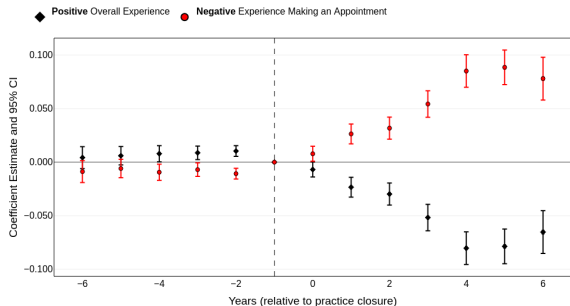


Figure: Patients affected by GP practice closures



GP practice closures reduce patient satisfaction



Coefficient Estimates and 95% confidence intervals.
Data Source: Ipsos MORI GP Patient Survey (2012-2023)

Figure: Dynamic causal effects of GP practice closures patient satisfaction

GP practice closures increase support for the populist right

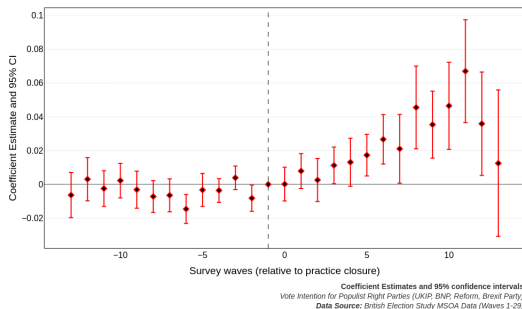


Figure: Dynamic causal effects of GP practice closures on vote intention for populist right party

Populist parties blame immigration for declining NHS

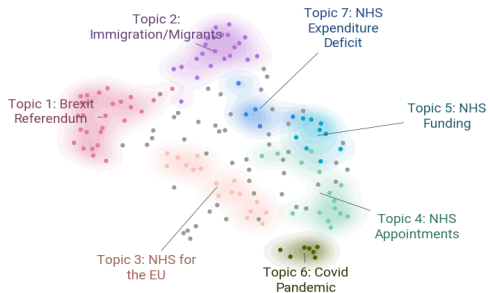


Figure: Topic model of UKIP press releases about the NHS/public services

Local immigration magnifies the effects of practice closures

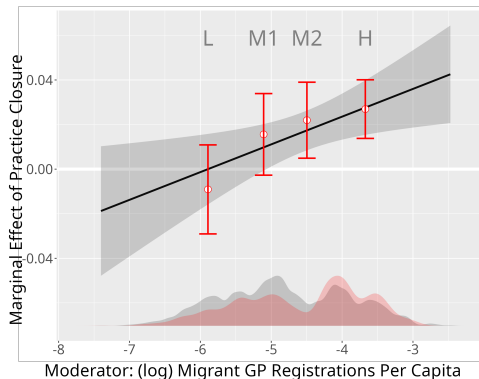


Figure: Conditional treatment effects of closures on support for populist right

Policy Implications of Public Service Decline

- Voters learn about public service quality from interactions with the NHS
- Practice closures cause:
 - Declining patient satisfaction
 - Poorer experiences making an appointment
 - Greater support for anti-establishment parties
- Effects are greater where the populist right's messaging resonates due to higher immigration

Greater public service investment is vital for maintaining public trust

Future Research Agenda

Household Energy Bills and Green Backlash¹

- Public support for climate change policies is crucial
- Increasing costs associated with climate policy threatens public support for Net Zero
- ***Do rising energy bills affect voter support for climate change policies and climate-sceptic parties?***
 - Energy bills → environmental policies & Net Zero
 - Energy bills → climate-sceptic parties

¹Funded by the British Academy

Policy Engagement

■ Wealth inequality

- Visible localised inequality

■ Distributive effects of climate change policies

- The political effects of renewable energy expansion in the UK

■ Public compliance

- Elite cues and noncompliance (*American Political Science Review* - 2025)
- The 2024 UK immigration protests: Normalising the radical right?

Public Policy Engagement

- Blogs posts and accessible writing
 - LSE Blogs, *The Conversation*
- Media coverage
 - *The Guardian*, *FT*, *Social Europe*, etc.
- Interdisciplinary collaboration
 - Annual contributor to the *Lancet* Countdown on Health and Climate Change in Europe
- “Open-door” methods workshops
 - PhD and MSc Collaboration with ESRC DTP

Potential Contributions at the Bennett Institute

■ My contributions to the M.Phil in Public [Digital] Policy at BIPP

- Supervision experience
- Curriculum design
- Institution building

■ Teaching at BIPP

- AI applications to public policy research
- Causal inference for policy evaluation

■ Teaching at POLIS

- Political behavior & Public opinion

Summary

- Research identity: Distributive politics and democratic discontent
 - Research examples: NHS & Green backlash
- Plans for policy engagement
- How I'll contribute to the Bennett Institute and POLIS