

МИНИСТЕРСТВО ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ И НАУКИ РОССИЙСКОЙ ФЕДЕРАЦИИ

Нижегородский государственный университет им. Н.И. Лобачевского

# **Реферирование английского публицистического текста**

Учебно-методическое пособие

Рекомендовано методической комиссией Института филологии и журналистики  
для студентов ННГУ, обучающихся по направлениям подготовки  
45.03.01 «Филология» и 45.04.01 «Филология»

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Предлагаемое учебно-методическое пособие содержит справочный материал по аннотированию и реферированию, а также комплекс практических заданий и аутентичных статей различной жанровой и тематической направленности, способствующих развитию навыков квалифицированного анализа, оценки, реферирования публицистических текстов и ориентированных на формирование лингвострановедческой компетенции студентов.

Методическая разработка предназначена для студентов, обучающихся по направлению 45.03.01 «Филология» и 45.04.01 «Филология» и направленности «Зарубежная филология» Института филологии и журналистики.

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## Предисловие

Реферирование (от лат. *refero* - «сообщаю») представляет собой краткое изложение в письменном виде или в устной форме содержания научного труда (трудов), публицистической литературы или текста по теме с раскрытием его основного содержания по всем затронутым вопросам, сопровождаемое оценкой и выводами референта. Он должен дать объективное представление о характере освещаемой статьи, изложить наиболее существенные моменты ее содержания.

Реферирование рассматривается как один из видов речевой деятельности, которая носит репродуктивный характер. Это интеллектуальный творческий процесс, включающий смысловую компрессию письменных текстов, краткое и обобщенное изложение содержания материала в соответствии с поставленным заданием. Передача содержания без обобщений не является реферированием, а представляет собой обычный пересказ. Лаконичное обобщение информации, не допускающее искажений и субъективных оценок, требует формирования определенных умений и навыков.

В процессе реферирования текста задействованы два метода мышления: анализ и синтез. Анализ позволяет выделить наиболее ценную информацию, отделить второстепенные сведения и данные, т. е. совершить определенные аналитические операции, без которых невозможно извлечь основное содержание оригинала. Одновременно с процессом анализа текста происходит процесс его синтеза, т.е. соединение в логическое целое той основной информации, которая получена в результате аналитических операций. Таким образом, очевидно, что недостаточно усвоить информацию оригинала в целом или по частям (анализ), необходимо научиться выделять главное содержание, кратко его сформулировать и представить в логической последовательности (синтез).

Обобщение является по существу одним из важнейших процессов логического мышления. Приемы обобщения могут быть сведены к двум основным типам: 1) *резюмирующее обобщение* – сведение нескольких однородных положений к их сущности, объединение нескольких положений одной, охватывающей их формулировкой; 2) *выборочное обобщение* – выделение одного наиболее типичного и показательного факта в качестве обобщенной характеристики положений материала. Резюмирующее обобщение раскрывает в ряде фактов и явлений типическое, характерное для их сущности.

В *резюмирующем обобщении* применяются следующие приемы:

- замена частного общим, видового понятия – родовым,
- вскрытие общих признаков у ряда явлений для их объединения,
- сведение ряда явлений к их сущности,
- логическое развитие понятий: замена процесса причиной или следствием, замена причины или следствия процессом, замена одного признака другим.

*Выборочное обобщение* возможно лишь при наличии в реферируемом материале типических фактов и положений, характеризующих существо рассматриваемого вопроса. Умение выделять главное, синтезировать это главное и выражать одну и ту же мысль разными словами, лежит в основе компрессии материала при реферировании.

Процесс реферирования предполагает следующую *последовательность действий*:

1. прогнозирование содержания текста по заголовку текста;
2. ознакомительное чтение первоисточника с целью понимания общего смысла;
3. вторичное внимательное прочтение текста с целью достижения полного понимания содержания. На данном этапе определяются значения незнакомых слов по контексту или словарю. При необходимости требуется обращение к справочным изданиям, энциклопедической и специальной литературе, в том числе на родном языке;
4. определение основной темы первоисточника;
5. проведение смыслового анализа текста с целью выделения абзацев, содержащих информацию, которая подтверждает, раскрывает или уточняет заглавие текста, а следовательно, основную тему;
6. определяется ключевая мысль каждого абзаца, содержащего информацию по теме. Предложения, вызвавшие трудность в понимании, необходимо перевести;
7. распределение материала статьи на три группы по степени его важности:
  - выделение наиболее важных сообщений, требующих точного и полного отражения при реферировании текста, но в измененном виде (другими словами);
  - выделение второстепенной информации, которую следует передать в сокращенном виде;
  - выделение малозначительной информации, которую можно опустить.
8. составление логического плана текста с использованием назывных предложений, формулирующих главную мысль каждого раздела и важнейшие доказательства, подкрепляющие эту мысль. В этом состоит сущность реферирования.

При реферировании англоязычных текстов необходимо учитывать некоторые особенности использования *лексико-грамматических средств*, а именно:

- преобладание сложных синтаксических конструкций, включающих

- причастия, инфинитивные и герундиальные обороты, формы страдательного залога;
- употребление неопределенно-личных предложений, позволяющих сосредоточить внимание читателя только на существенном, например, «анализируют, применяют, рассматривают и т.д.»;
  - преимущественное использование глагольных форм при описании предметной ситуации;
  - номинативность;
  - использование адекватного лексического материала, соответствующего теме.

#### *Основные требования к реферативному изложению*

- ✓ объективность (отбор и изложение только той информации, которая содержится в первичном тексте, но в видоизмененном варианте);
- ✓ полнота (отражение всех существенных идей и положений);
- ✓ адекватный стиль (унифицированная система употребления ключевой терминологии, терминологических словосочетаний, информационно насыщенных фрагментов и языковых средств, взятых из первоисточника, использование соответствующей теме лексики);
- ✓ реферирование исключает использование смысловых повторов, общих фраз, прямой речи и диалогов.

## Introduction

Rendering any text presupposes first and foremost analyzing it from the point of view of different aspects: *germinetic*, *linguistic*, *extra linguistic*, *stylistic*, *communicative*.

*The Germinetic aspect* means understanding the text.

The important point here is that first of all you must be able to differentiate between the topic of the text and the idea, which in many cases may be totally different. In any advertising text, for instance, the topics may vary from describing an attractive lifestyle to presenting typical everyday routine while the idea (or rather a communicative message here) will almost always be “You should buy this product/service”. Secondly, you must realize that the meaning or the meanings (there may be several) are not only expressed explicitly but also implicitly, i.e. you will have to perform a thorough study of the text in order to figure out and to render all the valuable points of the text.

Studying the text from the point of view of the following aspects may be of great help here.

*The Linguistic aspect* of text analysis presupposes understanding the peculiarities its code (language). While analyzing a publicistic text you should pay attention to a number its linguistic features:

- the use of certain vocabulary and cliché phrases, which may both constitute the style of the given text and add to its communicative message;
- the use of articles, which may change or underline some ideas;
- the use of certain grammar structures, peculiar to the English language, which bear semantic value.

*The Extra Linguistic aspect* may turn out to be of great concern. The thing is that it is not only geographical names or names of people that you should pay attention to but also concepts. Similar things may be treated differently by representatives of different cultures. Make sure you do not confuse your own ideas and mentality with the mentality of the author and his or her original recipients. Pay special attention to historical and cultural references as well as to associations they are likely to produce. This will help you understand the implications made by the author and his or her real attitude to the problem.

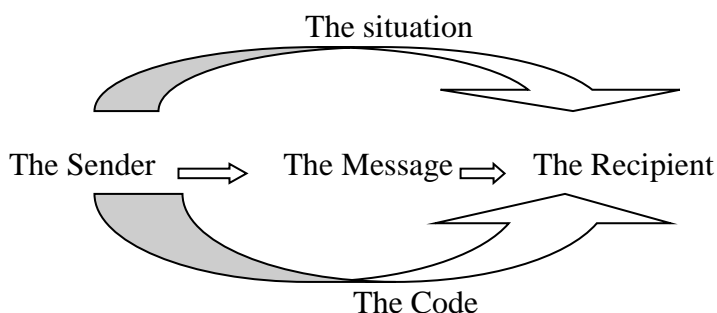
*The Stylistic aspect* involves analyzing the text from the point of view of 3 main branches of stylistics:

- Stylistic semasiology which investigates stylistic phenomena in the sphere of semantics, i.e. in the sphere of meanings, regardless of the form of linguistic units. As distinct from stylistic lexicology or stylistic syntax which deal with words and sentences, stylistic semasiology makes meaning the object of its investigation.

- Stylistic lexicology which presupposes that words pertaining to special spheres of linguistic intercourse possess some fixed stylistic tinge of their own. Regardless of the context, they reveal their attachment to one linguistic sphere or another.
- Stylistic syntax which is the branch of linguistics which investigates the stylistic value of syntactic forms, stylistic functions of syntactic phenomena, their stylistic classifications as well as their appurtenance to sub-languages or styles.

Keep it in mind that every native speaker knows that there exist different ways of expressing people's attitude towards phenomena of objective reality; there are different variants of expressing similar, though not quite identical ideas. Moreover, one can state the existence of different systems of expression within the general system of national language. This fact conditions the existence of stylistics and constitutes its proper object. The use of stylistic devices (especially metaphors based on transfer from one sphere of human activity to another) is very popular in English Mass Media.

*The Communicative aspect* is all about understanding the message of the text, i.e. the idea behind the words, the author's aim. In order to understand it correctly you should take into account all the implicit meanings as well as the communicative situation upon the whole. Here is a scheme of a typical communicative situation:



Make sure you keep it mind that the original situation differs from the situation you perceive the text in. The original recipient may differ from you as well.

*General Plan of Rendering:*

1. The Problem of the article (в широком рассмотрении)
2. The Subject matter of the article (в узком рассмотрении)
3. The author's communicative aim
4. The plot of the article (neither too detailed nor too short)
5. Personal attitude to the problem (no more than 5 sentences)



Special attention should be paid to the vocabulary you use. When rendering an article try to sound authentic. The following phrases may be of help to you to cope with article presentation/rendering:

- The title of the article is
- The heading of the article
- The article under analysis / rendering / consideration / discussion / review is
- The article is entitled
  
- The author of the article is
- The article is published in
- The article is taken from
- The article is written by
  
- The subject / topic / problem / current issue of the article is
- The problem was caused by / resulted from / was a result of
- The objective / main aim of the author is
- The article deals with / tackles / raises / bears on the problem of
- The article is devoted to
- The article presents the latest research into/on .... / a completed analysis of... / a fresh view about/on... / a survey of
- The article outlines the results of an experiment / a research / a survey conducted / carried out to determine / discover
- The article is a new conceptual framework for understanding
- The article provides sample food for thought for the readers
- The subject matter of the article is a sentimental, tragic, banal, romantic, dramatic, etc. story / the relationship / the introduction of
- Here is a current events report
- Here is a front-page review of the Morning Star dated the 10th of October
- The front-page biggest story is about
- The newspaper leads its editorial with commenting on
- The article touches upon
- The article emphasizes...
- The weekly gives full coverage to
- Particular attention is paid to
- The article highlights
- Today's paper is devoted to
- The leading article points out
- The news about....does the biggest headline
- The event gets wide coverage
- The news about... is given much comment on
- The news about... continuous to occupy the central place
- The event is given in splash headline
- The description of... is given prominence
- The paper discusses the situation
- The article reports at length that...
- The article take a critical review of

- The article denounces the actions of
- The article is opposed to
- The article concludes by saying that
- The article draws a conclusion that
- The paper covers a variety of
- The reporter makes it clear that
- The correspondent expresses the view that
- The author stresses the importance/necessity of
- The author comes out against/for
- The author gives a warning that
- The author calls upon
- In conclusion the author suggests that
- Speaking of...it's necessary to emphasize that
- Giving an appraisal /assessment of the situation in... it's necessary to point out that
- There is a mounting concern/tension/danger/excitement over
- There is every reason to believe that
- There is much speculation as whether or not
- It is common knowledge
- It is an open secret that
- It was revealed/disclosed that
- The attention of the Press was focused on
- The article goes on to say that
- The event is widely reported in today's newspapers

### ***Main Body***

#### ***The Author's Technique***

- The author looks at / takes a quick look at / explores / examines the problem of
- The author informs the readers that / describes / characterizes / shows / illustrates / defines / portrays /discusses / demonstrates / introduces / analyses / suggests / recommends
- The author foresees / predicts / claims / contends / admits / asserts / criticizes / acknowledges
- The author brings to light / highlights / stresses / lays stress on / draws the readers' attention to / points out / puts emphasis on / emphasizes / focuses on / comments on
- The communicative aim of the author is to inform / describe / examine / assess / evaluate
- The author reveals the drawbacks (demerits) of / preaches a humane (altruistic, considerate, merciful, etc.) attitude to / mocks at / ridicules / makes a laughing stock of / idealizes / glorifies / declares / proclaims
- The author wants to make us: think, meditate on, ponder over, feel ashamed for smb/smith arouses in us a feeling of (guilt, regret, remorse, sympathy, etc.)
- The author is sure (unlikely, likely) to make us reconsider our attitude to, look inside ourselves, reveal the inner motives of, take sides with, take up a firm attitude, not to jump at conclusions, etc.

### ***Developing Arguments***

- *Sequencing*  
Firstly / First of all / Secondly / Thirdly / Then / Next / After that / Finally / Eventually
- *Addition*  
Furthermore / moreover / in addition to / to add to that / besides / what's more / apart from this
- *Contrast*  
Nevertheless / however / despite this / in spite of / actually / in fact / on the one hand ...on the other hand / although / even though / whereas / at the same time
- *Highlight*  
It's essential / vital / extremely important to understand  
Ultimately / basically / most importantly  
In particular / especially / chiefly / mainly  
If we look at the problem closely  
What it exactly means is
- *Cause and Effect*  
Because of / owing to / due to / for this reason  
Therefore / as a result / hence / accordingly / consequently / as a consequence / thus

### ***Summarizing***

- So to sum up / in brief / to cut it short
- If I can briefly summarize
- Before I finish let me just go over the main points of
- The news which arouses a lot of comments is...
- The newspaper carries the article on...
- All today's papers carry much information on...
- The key-note of the article is...
- The article tackles the problem of ...
- The main talking point is...
- It's hard to predict the course of events in future, but...
- There is some evidence of the improvement/deterioration/aggravation of the situation in
- In this connection it's worth while mentioning the fact...
- There is no mention about...
- No details are given concerning
- It would be wrong to assume that...
- It would be unfair to suggest that...
- It remains to be seen if...

### ***Concluding***

- In conclusion / Taking everything into account / On the whole / as it was previously stated
- I'd like to finish by saying that
- To conclude I'd like to say that
- To reach one's own conclusion
- In conclusion the author admits / contrasts / demonstrates how (if there are some author's thoughts)

### ***Expressing Opinion***

- I'm convinced / I do think / I feel / I tend to think / I would suggest that

- My view is that / As I see it / It seems to me / In my opinion/view / It strikes me that / I'm inclined to believe
- I totally / completely / absolutely agree with
- I fully understand that / I'm in favor of / I support / I share the author's opinion / I see eye to eye with the author on this problem
- The author is correct to point out
- To a certain extent / up to a point I agree with ...but
- I disagree with / I couldn't agree to this / I don't support the idea of / I oppose to the author's idea / I'm afraid that I can't accept
- I share the author's opinion (doubts, hesitation, meditation, etc.).
- I strongly disagree with the author's opinion (view).
- I also feel very strong about smth (charity, mercy, compassion, humaneness, etc.).
- That remains to be
- It would be right/wrong to assume that
- It's fair/unfair to suggest that
- I'd like to offer some information concerning the latest developments in.../news (about /in)
- I'd like to give you the latest news relating...
- That brings me to the end of my report
- That seems to be all I wanted to tell you

*Common connective words*

Addition	Sequence	Result	Contrast
in addition and similarly likewise =as well as besides furthermore moreover and then too what's more not only...but even besides this/that also	first(ly) initially second(ly) etc. to begin with then next earlier/later after this/that following this/that afterwards	as a result thus so therefore consequently it follows that thereby eventually then in that case admittedly this/ which leads to this / which results in	however on the other hand despite in spite of though although but while whereas on the contrary otherwise yet instead of rather than ... nonetheless nevertheless even though compared with in contrast alternatively still
Certainly	Condition	Definition	Summary
obviously certainly needless to say,	if unless whether	refers to means that is	in conclusion in summary lastly

it goes without saying that... of course certainly plainly undoubtedly	provided that as long as for so that whether depending on even if	consists of	finally to sum up to conclude in short
<b>Example</b>	<b>Reason</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
for instance one example for example just as in particular such as namely to illustrate	since as so because (of) due to owing to thanks to the reason why/ for in other words this / which results from	before after since as till / until meanwhile at the moment when whenever as soon as just as	so as in order to so that

***A sample of rendering*** (see the article “*Women in England and Wales having fewer babies than ever before*”, page 46):

The article under analysis is entitled “Women in England and Wales having fewer babies than ever before” and is taken from “The Guardian”. It is written in a publicistic style and represents a typical example of an informative article.

Its opening statement is that according to the Office for National Statistics the average number of children given birth to by women under 45 has significantly dropped nowadays. The author provides a lot of statistic data to prove the point and compares the present day birth rate with the rates of the previous century, which seems quite convincing.

Moreover, the author presents the view points of two ONS specialists on the possible reasons for the current situation. Emily Knipe, from the ONS population statistics division, believes that childlessness is “one of the main drivers” of falling family sizes by the time women reached the end of their childbearing lives. However, Richard Miles, ONS spokesman, states that there are likely to be many reasons why women appear to be having fewer children overall. According to him there are a lot of contributing factors such as education and women’s continuing to work.

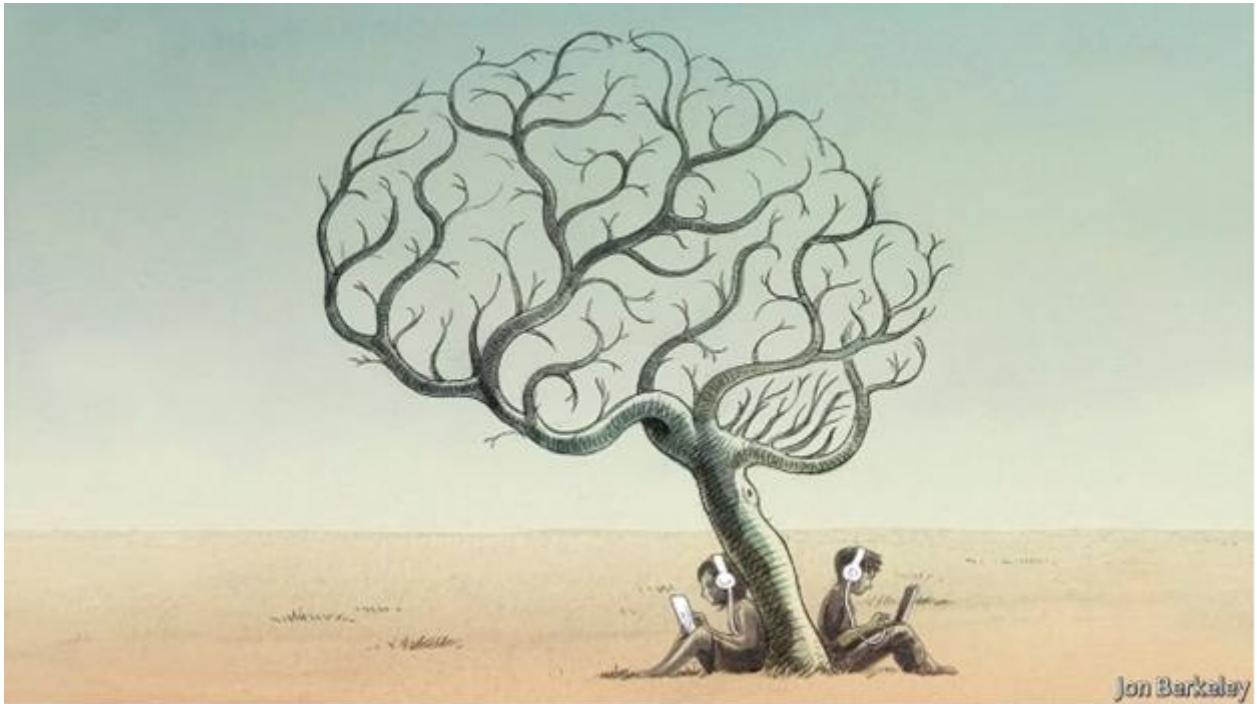
Finally, the author states that current research shows a continuing downward trend in the rate of teenage motherhood as well as in the rate of women having 4 or more children, which, according to ONS, is liable to reflect a general trend in postponing having children to an older age.

As far as I can judge the author does not clearly express his or her attitude to the problem but merely describes the present day situation concerning birth rates. Nevertheless, a slight agitation may be deduced from the usage of such negatively

coloured lexical units as “only about”, “stop”, “the end of childbearing life” and “fall”. To add to that, I would like to mention that the author does not mark teenage motherhood as something negative, which, I assume, shows his favourable attitude to such cases.

My view is that there is absolutely nothing to be anxious about. Taking into consideration the fact that many countries are vastly overpopulated nowadays, I strongly believe that this trend is strictly positive and more that understandable. Firstly, a significant increase in average life span and a decrease in child death rate have recently been observed. Secondly, humanity is no longer in need of increasing its numbers in order to produce enough material goods. And, finally, having fewer children gives people an opportunity to provide them with better care, financial and moral support, which will hopefully lead to better educated, better cultured and therefore happier generations to come.

## UNIT 1 Education



### Education technology

*How the science of learning can get the best out of edtech*

IN 1953 B.F. Skinner visited his daughter's maths class. The Harvard psychologist found every pupil learning the same topic in the same way at the same speed. A few days later he built his first "teaching machine", which let children tackle questions at their own pace. By the mid-1960s similar gizmos were being flogged by door-to-door salesmen. Within a few years, though, enthusiasm for them had fizzled out.

Since then education technology (edtech) has repeated the cycle of hype and flop, even as computers have reshaped almost every other part of life. One reason is the conservatism of teachers and their unions. But another is that the brain-stretching potential of edtech has remained unproven.

Today, however, Skinner's heirs are forcing the sceptics to think again (see [article](#)). Backed by billionaire techies such as Mark Zuckerberg and Bill Gates, schools around the world are using new software to "personalise" learning. This could help hundreds of millions of children stuck in dismal classes—but only if edtech boosters can resist the temptation to revive harmful ideas about how children learn. To succeed, edtech must be at the service of teaching, not the other way around.

#### **Pencils down**

The conventional model of schooling emerged in Prussia in the 18th century. Alternatives have so far failed to teach as many children as efficiently. Classrooms,

hierarchical year-groups, standardised curriculums and fixed timetables are still the norm for most of the world's nearly 1.5bn schoolchildren.

Too many do not reach their potential. In poor countries only a quarter of secondary schoolchildren acquire at least a basic knowledge of maths, reading and science. Even in the mostly rich countries of the OECD about 30% of teenagers fail to reach proficiency in at least one of these subjects.

That share has remained almost unchanged over the past 15 years, during which billions have been spent on IT in schools. By 2012 there was one computer for every two pupils in several rich countries. Australia had more computers than pupils. Handled poorly, devices can distract. A Portuguese study from 2010 found that schools with slow broadband and a ban on sites such as YouTube had better results than high-tech ones.

What matters is how edtech is used. One way it can help is through bespoke instruction. Ever since Philip II of Macedon hired Aristotle to prepare his son Alexander for Greatness, rich parents have paid for tutors. Reformers from São Paulo to Stockholm think that edtech can put individual attention within reach of all pupils. American schools are embracing the model most readily. A third of pupils are in a school district that has pledged to introduce “personalised, digital learning”. The methods of groups like Summit Public Schools, whose software was written for nothing by Facebook engineers, are being copied by hundreds of schools.

In India, where about half of children leave primary school unable to read a simple text, the curriculum goes over many pupils' heads. “Adaptive” software such as Mindspark can work out what a child knows and pose questions accordingly. A recent paper found that Indian children using Mindspark after school made some of the largest gains in maths and reading of any education study in poor countries.

The other way edtech can aid learning is by making schools more productive. In California schools are using software to overhaul the conventional model. Instead of textbooks, pupils have “playlists”, which they use to access online lessons and take tests. The software assesses children's progress, lightening teachers' marking load and giving them insight on their pupils. Saved teachers' time is allocated to other tasks, such as fostering pupils' social skills or one-on-one tuition. A study in 2015 suggested that children in early adopters of this model score better in tests than their peers at other schools.

### **Pay attention at the back**

Such innovation is welcome. But making the best of edtech means getting several things right. First, “personalised learning” must follow the evidence on how children learn. It must not be an excuse to revive pseudoscientific ideas such as “learning styles”: the theory that each child has a particular way of taking in information. Such nonsense leads to schemes like Brain Gym, an “educational kinesiology” programme once backed by the British government, which claimed that some pupils should stretch, bend and emit an “energy yawn” while doing their sums.

A less consequential falsehood is that technology means children do not need to learn facts or learn from a teacher—instead they can just use Google. Some educationalists



go further, arguing that facts get in the way of skills such as creativity and critical thinking. The opposite is true. A memory crammed with knowledge enables these talents. William Shakespeare was drilled in Latin phrases and grammatical rules and yet he penned a few decent plays. In 2015 a vast study of 1,200 education meta-analyses found that, of the 20 most effective ways of boosting learning, nearly all relied on the craft of a teacher.

The second imperative is to make sure that edtech narrows, rather than widens, inequalities in education. Here there are grounds for optimism. Some of the pioneering schools are private ones in Silicon Valley. But many more are run by charter-school groups teaching mostly poor pupils, such as Rocketship and Achievement First—or Summit, where 99% of graduating pupils go on to university and laggards make the most progress relative to their peers in normal classes. A similar pattern can be observed outside America. In studies of edtech in India by J-PAL, a research group, the biggest beneficiaries are children using software to receive remedial education.

Third, the potential for edtech will be realised only if teachers embrace it. They are right to ask for evidence that products work. But scepticism should not turn into Luddism. A good model is São Paulo, where teachers have welcomed Geekie, an adaptive-software company, into public schools.

In 1984 Skinner called opposition to technology the “shame” of education. Given what edtech promises today, closed-mindedness has no place in the classroom.

The Economist, 22/07/2017

### **Studying is stressful – work experience is where the real learning happens**

*Most universities give students around five months holiday a year – plenty of time to do something life-enhancing*

My first year of university felt like a waste of time. I lost hours of sleep over feeling not clever enough, constantly weighing the option of dropping out against my lack of any plan B.

I trudged through the university process, eventually finishing my first year – which was meant to be the “fun year” – with little enthusiasm for the future. But that summer, everything changed. Desperate to break free from my gloomy existence, I applied to work as a senior mentor for the National Citizen Service, a kind of condensed Duke of Edinburgh programme for 15- to 17-year-olds. I was accepted, and was soon in a job for the first time since my year 9 paper round.

It was the perfect summer job: it was well paid, not boring and fairly easy. The experience bolstered my self-confidence, and added a much-needed bullet point to my CV. Both helped in a later successful application to intern at the Raindance Film Festival: a fun few weeks and another bullet point.

My university holidays have proved to be distracting yet productive, the antidote to the all the drudgery of term time. But you obviously don't need to be a

struggling student like me to get something special out of your holidays. Tom Fenton, a fourth year studying history, pushed the boat out further than most by spending his free months working with NGOs around the world. He travelled to Cyprus, Kosovo, Israel and the Palestinian territories.

“I learned an incredible amount,” he says. “It was extremely tough, but challenges are good if you can overcome them and I am so glad I was able to do that.”

Tom’s experiences leave him well placed to offer advice when it comes to applying. “Make opportunities yourself. It’s a slog, it will take ages, you’ll be running into all sorts of cul-de-sacs, and it can be very demoralising.

“But you don’t just come out of your university time with a degree; the experiences it gives you are far more important than being able to recite the words of some pompous philosopher,” he says. “Get out there – have an experience.”

Most universities give you around five months off a year. Kate Wetherell, a third-year physics student, had three empty summer months in her calendar. That’s a lot of time to have on your hands. She decided to use it to start her own jewellery business from scratch.

“It’s been an amazing experience,” she says. “I gained a load of transferable skills, from communication and customer service, to organisation, self-motivation and market awareness. My advice to anyone who is a bit stuck is not to panic. Anyone who has a unique idea can start up a small business, and the summer is the perfect time to try it.”

In 2015 alone, a record 592,290 applications to study were submitted to Ucas. That means we all have a heck of a lot of competition for employment once we graduate. So how do you stand out from the ever-growing crowd of graduates? The answer is easy: spend your holidays doing something different.

The Guardian, 28/12/2016

## **A winning recipe**

*Two big Brazilian education firms, now in the process of merging, show how universities can do both quantity and quality*

### **Learning online and offline**

IN THE United States worries about private, for-profit universities’ high cost and dubious quality abound. A congressional inquiry in 2012 acknowledged that the sector, which trebled enrolment during the previous decade, gave students who were older, poorer and often less well-prepared for further study than those at public or non-profit institutions their best chance of a degree. But it concluded that soaring fees and drop-out rates meant that a majority left with nothing more than extra debt.

Elsewhere in the Americas, though, the story is far more positive. After equally hectic expansion, Brazil’s for-profit institutions have three-quarters of the country’s higher-education market—and fees are low and quality is rising fast. And since a degree boosts wages by a bigger multiple in Brazil than in any other country tracked

by the OECD, a club of mostly rich countries, graduates can make back their tuition fees in just a few years.

Soon Brazil will become home not only to the world's liveliest for-profit education sector, but to its biggest for-profit higher-education firm, too. Last month the antitrust regulator, CADE, approved the purchase by Kroton, the biggest such firm in Brazil, of Anhanguera, the second-biggest, to create a giant with a stockmarket value of around 18 billion reais (\$8 billion).

"Quality [in education] is easy," says Rodrigo Galindo, Kroton's energetic young boss. "And so is quantity. What's difficult is combining the two." The trick, he explains, is to abandon "handcrafted" teaching methods for scalable ones: online course materials and tutors; star teachers' lessons broadcast by satellite; tightly specified franchise agreements with hundreds of local teaching centres staffed by moderators. The company has invested heavily in "adaptive" learning materials—computerised courses that react to users' progress by offering further explanation and examples where answers suggest they are struggling, and moving on swiftly where they are not.

Unopar, a university in Londrina, a foggy city in the south-eastern state of Paraná, was bought by Kroton in 2011 and is one of its best-known brands. A decade ago it became the first institution in Brazil to get federal accreditation for the distance-training of teachers. It soon realised that other degrees could be offered with the same combination of high-quality online materials and weekly attendance at seminars at a local centre. It is now Brazil's biggest provider of distance higher-education, with 150,000 students registered at nearly 500 centres nationwide. The most remote, with 300 students, is in Oriximiná in the Amazonian state of Pará, accessible only by light plane or a 12-hour boat ride from Manaus, the region's main city.

"These courses aren't easy," says Elisa Assis, Unopar's director for distance education. "What they are is flexible." Web-only courses often have high drop-out rates, she explains. One reason for the weekly get-togethers, during which students watch a class broadcast from headquarters followed by a moderated discussion, is to keep students engaged and on track. Their questions give the university instant feedback on how each lesson went, allowing it to improve the course.

The Economist, 28/06/2014

### **Johnson: What is a foreign language worth?**

*Even on conservative estimates, speaking another language translates into a big earnings boost*

JOHNSON is a fan of the Freakonomics books and columns. But this week's podcast makes me wonder if the team of Stephen Dubner and Steven Levitt aren't overstressing themselves a bit. "Is learning a foreign language really worth it?", asks the headline. A reader writes:

My oldest daughter is a college freshman, and not only have I paid for her to study Spanish for the last four or more years — they even do it in grade school now! — but her college is requiring her to study EVEN MORE! What on earth is going on? How did it ever get this far? ... Or to put it in economics terms, where is the ROI?

To sum up the podcast's answers, there are pros and cons to language-learning. The pros are that working in a foreign language can make people make better decisions (research Johnson covered here) and that bilingualism helps with executive function in children and dementia in older people (covered here). The cons: one study finds that the earnings bonus for an American who learns a foreign language is just 2%. If you make \$30,000 a year, sniffs Mr. Dubner, that's just \$600.

But for the sake of provocation, Mr. Dubner seems to have low-balled this. He should know the power of lifetime earnings and compound interest. First, instead of \$30,000, assume a university graduate, who in America is likelier to use a foreign language than someone without university. The average starting salary is almost \$45,000. Imagine that our graduate saves her "language bonus". Compound interest is the most powerful force in the universe (a statement dubiously attributed to Einstein, but nonetheless worth committing to memory). Assuming just a 1% real salary increase per year and a 2% average real return over 40 years, a 2% language bonus turns into an extra \$67,000 (at 2014 value) in your retirement account. Not bad for a few years of "*où est la plume de ma tante?*"

Second, Albert Saiz, the MIT economist who calculated the 2% premium, found quite different premiums for different languages: just 1.5% for Spanish, 2.3% for French and 3.8% for German. This translates into big differences in the language account: your Spanish is worth \$51,000, but French, \$77,000, and German, \$128,000. Humans are famously bad at weighting the future against the present, but if you dangled even a post-dated \$128,000 cheque in front of the average 14-year-old, Goethe and Schiller would be hotter than Facebook.

Why do the languages offer such different returns? It has nothing to do with the inherent qualities of Spanish, of course. The obvious answer is the interplay of supply and demand. This reckons that Spanish-speakers account for a bit more of world GDP than German-speakers do. But an important factor is economic openness. Germany is a trade powerhouse, so its language will be more economically valuable for an outsider than the language of a relatively more closed economy.

But in American context (the one Mr. Saiz studied), the more important factor is probably supply, not demand, of speakers of a given language. Non-Latino Americans might study Spanish because they hear and see so much of it spoken in their country. But that might be the best reason *not* to study the language, from a purely economic point of view. A non-native learner of Spanish will have a hard time competing with a fluent native bilingual for a job requiring both languages. Indeed, Mr. Saiz found worse returns for Spanish study in states with a larger share of Hispanics. Better to learn a language in high demand, but short supply—one reason, no doubt, ambitious American parents are steering their children towards Mandarin.

The drop-off in recent years in the American study of German might be another reason for young people to hit the *Bücher*.

And studies like Mr. Saiz's can only work with the economy the researchers have at hand to study. But of course changes in educational structures can have dynamic effects on entire economies. A list of the richest countries in the world is dominated by open, trade-driven economies. Oil economies aside, the top 10 includes countries where trilingualism is typical, like Luxembourg, Switzerland and Singapore, and small countries like the Scandinavian ones, where English knowledge is excellent.

There are of course many reasons that such countries are rich. But a willingness to learn about export markets, and their languages, is a plausible candidate. One study, led by James Foreman-Peck of Cardiff Business School, has estimated that lack of foreign-language proficiency in Britain costs the economy £48 billion (\$80 billion), or 3.5% of GDP, each year. Even if that number is high, the cost of assuming that foreign customers will learn your language, and never bothering to learn theirs, is certainly a lot greater than zero. So if Mr. Saiz had run his language-premium study against a parallel-universe America, in which the last half-century had been a golden age of language-learning, he might have found a bigger foreign-language bonus (and a bigger GDP pie to divide) in that more open and export-oriented fantasy America. And of course greater investment in foreign-language teaching would have other dynamic effects: more and better teachers and materials, plus a cultural premium on multilingualism, means more people will actually master a language, rather than wasting several years never getting past *la plume de ma tante*, as happens in Britain and America.

To be sure, everything has an opportunity cost. An hour spent learning French is an hour spent not learning something else. But it isn't hard to think of school subjects that provide less return—economically, anyway—than a foreign language. What is the return on investment for history, literature or art? Of course schools are intended to do more than create little GDP-producing machines. (And there are also great non-economic benefits to learning a foreign language.) But if it is GDP you're after, the world isn't learning English as fast as some people think. One optimistic estimate is that half the world's people might speak English by 2050. That leaves billions who will not, and billions of others who remain happier (and more willing to spend money) in their own language.

The Economist, 11/03/2014

### **University vice-chancellors deserve more pay, not less. Here's why**

*Running a university requires a rare combination of skills. Pay peanuts, and you will get monkeys in charge of them*

Yosser Hughes, from *Boys from the Blackstuff*, famously said: "Gissa job – I can do that". Of course, he mostly wasn't qualified for the jobs he was after. He

couldn't do that. Lots of people these days seem to think the job of running a giant university is an easy one, and they could do that.

The reality is, they couldn't. It turns out there is a shortage of applicants for these jobs because, compared with equivalent jobs in the private sector, they are seriously underpaid.

Despite much recent controversy about their remuneration, UK vice-chancellors are not well paid, against their next best alternative employment in education or abroad. Pay should reflect performance, and there is an international market for top talent. If you don't pay adequately, the best people leave and those with no alternatives remain, so quality falls. The best people pay for themselves with higher output.

This is more about the politics of envy than it is about economics. The suggestion from the former education minister Andrew Adonis that vice-chancellors' pay should be capped at £150,000 shows no understanding of labour economics.

Glynis Breakwell, at the University of Bath, is the highest-paid vice-chancellor in the UK. She runs a large business with 17,000 students, of whom 3,500 are from overseas, and employs about 3,000 staff. The university received £123m in research grants last year. According to its financial statement, it had an annual income of £260m in 2016. A recent report suggested that nearly 6000 local jobs are supported by the university.

Breakwell received a £17,000 pay rise in 2016/17, taking her annual salary to £468,000. To put this in context, more than 4,000 City bankers earned over €1m (£887,000) in 2015, approximately double Breakwell's pay. The average pay of a FTSE100 chief executive was £4.5m last year. Amanda Goodall from the Cass Business School has shown that world-class scholars, who have high earning power, make the best leaders of universities.

Overseas students brought in £43.1m to the University of Bath in 2016. To put this in context, Breakwell would, by my calculations, need to recruit fewer than two additional overseas students to cover her pay rise. I suspect she will be able to do that. She looks like a bargain at twice the price.

British vice-chancellors are also underpaid compared with university presidents in the US, where, according to Forbes, the highest-paid president at a private university made over \$5m (£3.8m) last year. The president of Columbia, Lee Bollinger, who was a provost at Dartmouth, where I work, was paid \$2.5m; Amy Gutmann at the University of Pennsylvania was paid \$3m; and Robert Zimmer, president of the University of Chicago, was paid \$2m.

The highest-paid president of a public university, Arizona State, was paid more than \$1.5m last year. Underpay vice-chancellors in the UK, and American universities will grab them. (In the interests of disclosure, I am employed as a professor of economics at a US university, and I used to work in university administration.)

The job of a vice-chancellor is an extremely tough one that few people could, in fact, do. It involves running a giant business, making speeches, coordinating with

national and local politicians, speaking to journalists and doing TV and radio interviews, fundraising, talking to alumni, recruiting staff and being on call 24/7. Recruiting staff into the publish-or-perish world of academia is central to the job. A university is evaluated on both the quality of its research and teaching, and the vice-chancellor is central to that.

The buck ultimately stops with the boss. The vice-chancellor is the voice of the university. If something bad happens, it is the vice-chancellor who has to break the bad news. Theirs is the door at which sexual harassment claims ultimately arrive. Few people have the rare skills to do such a demanding job. Most of those who are qualified for the job – including most professors – wouldn't do the job, as they would have to give up the flexibility they have, and their research work and consulting incomes.

A vice-chancellor's schedule is set for them. The job has a huge effect on family life. There are few places to hide and find privacy. You are always on show, even on the golf course. In the end, there are few qualified and willing applicants. If you pay peanuts, you get monkeys, because markets work. If you don't pay adequate salaries, the best people leave and the worst, who have no alternative, stay, and so quality falls. The public sector pay freeze has affected staff at universities, and it is clearly time for the chancellor to pay them more. But cutting a few thousand quid at the top would be a big mistake.

David Blanchflower is a professor of economics at Dartmouth College, New Hampshire

The Guardian, 22/11/2017

## UNIT 2

### Marriage and family relations



## **In marriage, as in life generally, you are winging it all the time**

*Family life is a shot in the dark. If you get it right – and everyone gets it right some of the time – the payoff is better than gold*

George Orwell wrote: “We have now sunk to a depth at which the restatement of the obvious is the first duty of intelligent men.” He was talking about politics but it also applies to domestic life, where it is terrifyingly easy to lose grasp of the basics – to cease to see the wood for the trees. This being the first column of the year, I’m going to try to state what, to me at least, are the most simple and enduring truths about living as part of a family.

First, and perhaps most easily forgotten as a parent, you are less powerful than you think you are. Children are not blank slates. They arrive with a number of genetic proclivities and if these are strong enough, they are likely to come out – whatever you do, within limits, to suppress or encourage them (obviously, abuse can make a mess of anyone).

They are their own people, not your guinea pigs. They make their own decisions from a very early age – not only about how they behave, but also how they interpret events. One sibling may draw very different conclusions from exactly the same parental action as another. Which is not to suggest you throw your hands up and say, “why bother trying then?” but to understand that whatever you do, it’s never anything better than your best guess and merely part of a wider process.

Quite apart from the wild card of how your children process your behaviour, parental actions can have unpredictable consequences out there in the physical world. You may want them to take regular exercise, and buy them a bike, but then find they get knocked off it and break a leg, or worse. So don’t waste your time beating yourself up when things go wrong – because sometimes they will, and you can’t stop it.

Don’t think you are investing in your children’s future. They are not an investment. They are an act of love. When you become a parent, nothing should be expected in return through the workings of natural justice. This giving – so long and so much – without any promise of reward isn’t easy. All too often I have felt that treacherous whinge tickling the back of my throat – “after all I’ve done for you!”. In response, your children will inform you that they didn’t ask to be born, and there is, I’m afraid to say, no answer to that.

As for that other element of family life – adult relationships – the dynamics are as oblique as those that exist between parents and children. In marriage, as in life generally, you are winging it all the time. Who knows why some unlikely couples thrive while others who are seemingly well suited head for the divorce courts?

I would go only this far – if you can master the skills of respect and communication, you are on the best available path. Passion, “fun”, shared interests, even perhaps love itself must all take a second seat to these fundamentals. For love comes and goes, whereas respect and communication are enduring.



However, honest communication in a close adult relationship is often dauntingly complex given the inadequacies of language, the machinery of denial, the workings of the unconscious and the distortions of emotional need. And respect is not given easily, because it requires a critical measure of self-respect to offer it, even when it is due.

Family life is a shot in the dark. If you get it right – and everyone gets it right some of the time – the payoff is better than gold. Even if you get it wrong, it's still far better than if you never had it at all. One could sum up my conclusions in the phrase “be realistic” – but that would imply that the reality is easily grasped. “Be a grownup” is probably better advice. I only wish I were better at following it.

The Guardian, 06/01/2017

### **British law must recognise Muslim marriage ceremonies**

*If the UK could do it for Quakers 250 years ago, is it too much to ask parliament to consider the needs of newer faith communities?*

When I had my *nikah*, my Islamic marriage ceremony, I considered myself a married man. In the presence of our nearest and dearest, squeezed into my partner's front room in Grimsby, an imam led us through a series of vows and the signing of our marriage certificate before offering a prayer and declaring us husband and wife. It was a beautiful, intimate and uniquely British ceremony, captured by British Muslim TV and featured on Channel 4's documentary *The Truth About Muslim Marriage*. This groundbreaking film highlights the toxic fallout of our legal system's failure to recognise an Islamic marriage as valid.

Three out of five of the British Muslim women surveyed did not, in addition to their *nikah* ceremonies, have a civil marriage, rendering them outside the legal protections and provisions that marriage brings. I can understand why. If you already consider yourself married, the only real reason to have a civil ceremony is to establish protections in case you divorce. But who thinks about divorce when they're getting married?

It's like when your car insurance company calls you to try to sell added legal protection in case you have an accident, but you decline because you're pretty convinced you can drive just fine. In this case, however, no one calls you up. Instead, after having your marriage ceremony, you have to go through the extra rigmarole of giving notice, coughing up a bunch of cash and turning up to the registration office (something my wife and I had the foresight to do, knowing our marriage wasn't yet valid in the eyes of the law). It's no surprise to me, though, that only a fifth of British Muslims under 25 surveyed had a civil ceremony in addition to their *nikah*.

In 1753 the Marriage Act limited ceremonies to registered buildings in order to clamp down on all the secret marriages taking place. Up until this act was passed, which notably made an exception for Quakers and Jewish people, ordained ministers could conduct ceremonies anywhere. This law, which sought to protect women in the 18th

century, today renders hundreds of thousands of women outside the protection of our courts.

Article 9 of the Human Rights Act (1998) enshrines for every UK citizen the “freedom to exercise religion or belief in worship, teaching, practice and observance”. The only way this act can be realised in our ever-evolving society is for the law to accommodate different religious groups and the personal and communal needs of their adherents – on the proviso, of course, that these do not encroach upon the rights of others.

If the UK parliament could accommodate the legal needs of Quakers marrying 250 years ago, is it too much to ask parliament to consider the needs of newer faith communities that are part of the fabric of British society today?

What Muslims are asking for is not without very explicit precedent. In the documentary, Rabbi Herschel Gluck described British Jews benefiting from a marriage “package deal”, going on to say: “When you get married in Jewish law, you’re also getting married in civil law. It does say to a community that you belong.” Furthermore, for centuries British authorities working with Muslim lawmakers had devised an entire legal system for governing Muslim territories under British colonial rule. Anglo-Muhammadan law was not without its issues, but the suggestion that Islamic law and the British legal system are mutually exclusive is just false.

Our government must have the judiciousness to cut through all the furore devised to denigrate several integral aspects of Islam. This is far from being a new debate. The former Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, explicitly advocated integrating the legitimate legal needs of minority religious groups, specifically Muslims, within the British legal system.

The reality is that 21st-century Britain is a kaleidoscope of cultures, a melting pot held together by our unique legal system. Far from the inflexible French model of secularism, secular law in our progressively plural society protects and embraces Britain’s diversity and thus subverts, in theory, the marginalisation of citizens who hold on to multiple identities.

What makes Britain truly great is that my being a citizen here does not require me to abandon any facet of my Muslim identity; nor does my being Muslim necessitate my abandoning the rights and responsibilities that come with citizenship. Far from being at odds with each other, the identities go hand in hand. Opinion polls have found 83% of Muslims “proud to be a British citizen”, 4% higher than the figure for the population as a whole.

Muslims are not just in Britain: we are *of* Britain. And, quite frankly, we’ve had enough of being made to feel like intruders or imposters by an irresponsible media – or, in this case, 18th-century laws that leave so many women vulnerable to exploitation.

The government has long advocated a healthier integration of British Muslims within wider society. Well, genuine integration is more than a two-way street: it’s a spaghetti junction, and I’m not for a second suggesting the process will be easy.

What sort of inclusive message is the government sending to Muslims seeking to protect the more vulnerable amid their communities, when they face so many reasons to feel excluded from society? Yes, there are a lot of nuances to be explored, including conflicting voices from within the Muslim community itself. But as it stands, women in particular are losing out from the protection that the law intends for them.

The real truth about Muslim marriages? They're the same as everyone else's and it's high time the law recognised them as such.

Bilal Hassam is creative director at British Muslim TV

The Guardian, 22/11/2017

### **What I'm really thinking: the twentysomething divorcee**

*We'd been together for six years and romance doesn't last for ever, does it?*

If you invite me to your wedding or hen party, you'll handle me in one of three ways. One: you brief everyone, so there's no chance they'll ask about my relationship status. Two: you shoot me a sympathetic glance when something romantic happens and tell me how tired you are of wedding planning. Three: you don't acknowledge my divorce at all, and treat me exactly the same as every other guest. The third is my favourite. The world already gives me ample reminders that I am different from most people my age.

I was married at 23, divorced by 25. Some of you were at the wedding and have no doubt revisited that day, searching for clues that the marriage was doomed. It turns out there were none; everything was wrong from the start, but we were all too young to notice, or too polite to point it out.

I spent years justifying my decision to continue with the relationship. We had stopped making time for each other, and he paid very little attention to me on our wedding day. But we'd been together six years and romance doesn't last for ever, does it? The best of you were supportive when I repeated this mantra, but there was enough scepticism in your expression to push me to start questioning it.

I am now 27, and in a relationship with a man I'm even more in love with. I attend your weddings, fawn over your colour schemes, feel my heart swell with happiness when you walk down the aisle. I hope to be the sole member of the divorced club for the foreseeable future. But if I see the warning signs in your marriages, I won't hesitate to help you along with that same kind, sceptical expression. That's the least I can do.

The Guardian, 30/09/2017

### **Take it from me, Angela Rayner: It's great to be a granny**

*Becoming a grandparent is unequivocally one of the best things about getting older, as Labour's shadow education secretary will find out*

The Labour MP Angela Rayner has become a grandmother at the age of 37. #Grangela, as she hashtagged herself on Twitter, is lucky to be able to look forward to a long time of it: becoming a grandparent is one of the best things that can happen to you. (I became a grandmother seven weeks ago and was the founding editor of Gransnet, so I know this for a fact.)

Becoming a grandparent is one of the few unequivocally good things about getting older. Forget sudden mysterious bone-aches, the misplaced names of actors, or looking in the mirror and seeing, unaccountably, an old person looking back at you: become a grandparent and these things seem, suddenly, negligible.

There is a theory in evolutionary biology called the grandmother hypothesis, which holds that, basically, all human development is down to grandmothers. It's only because grannies were around to help out with infants that parents ever had their hands free to invent tools, or the headspace to think up the means of production. But the grandmother hypothesis is not just a relic of the evolutionary past; in fact, grandparents are critical to the smooth running of households right here and now.

When I had children, it was unthinkable that I would ask my parents to be involved; now, there is a near-universal expectation that the older generation will pitch in. I recently gave a talk at an investment bank at which everyone in the room had a more-or-less formal and regular childcare arrangement with parents and in-laws, apart from the one person who was a grandmother, who looked after her grandchildren on her day off. All of my daughters' friends have help from grandparents, some for the majority of the working week.

The costs of housing and childcare, plus flatlining incomes, mean many parents would have to give up work if it weren't for free help from grandparents. (Forget all that nonsense about selfish baby boomers – the older generation can't move out of their big houses because half the time they're full of other people's children.)

The BBC Two comedy *Motherland* has skewered this dependency with a running joke that working mother Julia (played by Anna Maxwell Martin) is in a permanent state of outrage that her own mother, Marion (Ellie Haddington), doesn't do more. When Julia splashes across a public swimming pool to berate Marion for claiming she was busy (when she was actually swimming), her mother notes that it's not her fault that Julia hasn't sorted out her childcare. Julia yells back: "I've been too busy looking after your grandchildren."

It is not just exercise that keeps grandmothers from what have become their duties. Some of us – I am speaking personally here – may still have children at school and university. They may also (me again) have elderly parents with dementia, needing daily attention.

And then there's the pressure to go on working. As lifespans increase, the argument is that fit and healthy people should work longer. And so the pension age recedes. All very well, but what are we supposed to live on while we are doing all this childcare and dementia-monitoring?

I have a new grandmother hypothesis: where there is an intractable social problem that no one in government wants to grapple with – unaffordable pensions, an elderly care crisis, or expensive childcare – it should automatically be dumped on grandmothers, because they will do it without complaint.

Well, without a lot of a complaint.

I don't suppose Rayner will have much time for childcare, what with Westminster and the constituency, although she's a remarkable woman – a single parent at 16, shadow education secretary at 37 – so who knows? I was adamant that I didn't want to do childcare before my daughter was pregnant, and now – well, the great thing about becoming a grandparent is that it gives you a different perspective.

As a parent, you're so busy thinking about whether you can put your baby down long enough to get dressed, about whether you're feeding properly, about the sheer weight of responsibility of it all, that you don't have time to think. As a grandparent, you have a longer view. It's humbling to watch your child turn into that astonishingly competent thing, a mother; you can see the arrival of a new person for the miracle it is. I am astonishingly young myself (don't ask) but I would have been thrilled to have these insights at 37.

Geraldine Bedell is a novelist and was the founding editor of Gransnet.

The Guardian, 22/11/2017

### **'Fatherhood penalty' now a risk for men, warns charity**

*Pressure at work is leading more fathers to want to downshift, a study has found, mirroring the employment and pay problems already experienced by mothers*

The UK risks creating a "fatherhood penalty" as an increasing number of men jettison their careers for less demanding jobs which give them more time with their families, according to a major new study.

The 2017 Modern Families Index, published on Monday, is the largest survey of its kind to measure how families achieve a work-life balance.

It finds that nearly half of working fathers (47%) want to downshift to a less stressful job because they cannot balance the demands of work and family life. Just over a third (38%) say they would be willing to take a pay cut to achieve a better work-life balance.

Significantly, these aspirations are more pronounced among younger fathers. The index, produced by the charity Working Families and nursery provider Bright Horizons, found that 53% of millennial fathers want to downshift to a less stressful job while 48% would take a pay cut to achieve a better work-life balance.

The existence of the "motherhood penalty" is well documented. The Fawcett Society campaign group says the penalty results in women being "more likely to work part-time, to be in low-skilled jobs and [to make up] two-thirds of the low-paid".

Sarah Jackson, chief executive of Working Families, says a “fatherhood penalty” is also now emerging.

“Employers need to ensure that work is designed in a way that helps women and men find a good work-life fit,” Jackson said. “Making roles flexible by default, and a healthy dose of realism when it comes to what can be done in the hours available, are absolutely vital. A game-changing first step would be government creating a new, properly paid, extended period of paternity leave.”

Overall, the survey found only one in five families believe they are managing to achieve a balance between the money they bring in and the amount of time they spend together. Over a third of families believe they either have not got enough time or money.

This year’s survey suggests a significant proportion of fathers are playing a more active role in child-rearing. A quarter said that they dropped their children at school or nursery every day. Seven out of ten said that they worked flexibly to fulfil their caring responsibilities.

But the survey also found that many fathers reported working extra hours because it was the only way to deal with their workload and that “being seen to do long hours” was important where they worked. Twice the number of fathers as mothers believe that flexible workers are viewed as less committed by employers.

“It’s clear that the reconciliation of work and family life is now a priority for both mothers and fathers,” said Denise Priest, director of employer partnerships at Bright Horizons. “It is impossible to overstate the positive impact of an understanding and supportive employer – one that adapts to its employees’ needs so that they can progress in their careers. Leading employers are those that protect their employees from parental penalties and provide optimum work and care arrangements.”

The survey found that almost three-quarters of parents said they worked at home in the evenings and at weekends. One in five parents working full time said they put in five extra weeks a year – the equivalent of their annual holiday allowance – in unpaid work, just to keep up with the demands of their job.

Jamie Doward, a journalist for The Guardian.

The Guardian, 14/01/2017

### **Four in 10 British mothers drink in pregnancy - one of worst rates in Europe**

Four in 10 women British women drink during pregnancy with many young professionals binge-drinking in the first few months because they do not realise they are expecting, experts have warned.

The UK has one of the worst rates of drinking while pregnant in the European region, with only Ireland, Denmark and Belarus showing higher figures, according to a new study published in The Lancet Global Health.

The research also found that Britain has one of the highest rates of Foetal Alcohol Syndrome in the world, with an estimated 61.3 cases per 10,000 births -

significantly higher than the global average of 15 out of 10,000 and the 44th worst in Europe.

Foetal alcohol syndrome can leave babies with learning difficulties, behavioural problems, hearing and vision loss, poor growth and organ damage. The problem has been steadily increasing in recent years, with cases jumping by 37 per cent between 2010 and 2013.

Last January Chief Medical Officer Dame Sally Davies issued new guidelines saying there was no safe level of drinking when pregnant, which altered previous advice suggesting a couple of drinks was harmless.

Sandra Butcher, chief executive of the National Organisation for Foetal Alcohol Syndrome UK said: "The latest advice from the UK's chief medical officer is clear, but it has not yet filtered through to all levels of our society.

"If you are pregnant or think you could become pregnant, the safest approach is not to drink alcohol at all."

"These figures show that the UK needs greater national and local attention to issues related to Foetal Alcohol Syndrome.

"We must increase awareness of the risks of drinking during pregnancy and urgently put in place programs people can access across the country to support at-risk women and to diagnosis and support those individuals and families affected by this hidden disability."

Experts said that it was common misconception that drinking in pregnancy was only associated with social deprivation and warned that professional women are increasingly drinking heavily in their first trimester, often because they did not realise they were expecting.

A recent survey at Coombe Maternity Hospital in Dublin, Ireland, found that 80 per cent of women drank around the time of conception.

"Yes, some women struggle with addictions and some are using alcohol to help them cope with high stress in pregnancy," said Pip Williams, founder of the UK & European Birth Mum Network.

"But it is extremely misleading to represent this as a problem only facing one part of society. Binge drinking by young professional women is on the rise. Most women do not know they are pregnant until they are well into the first trimester. FASD affects all levels of our society."

Earlier this month Theresa May pledged funding for increased services for new and expectant mothers as part of her mental health initiatives, and charities said more needed to be done to tackle drinking in pregnancy.

"This is urgently needed and should not be a postcode lottery," said Lee Harvey-Heath, an adult with FASD who founded FASD Devon & Cornwall (FASDDAC).

"The Prime Minister recently pledged to help schools and institutions deal with the 'hidden injustice' of mental health issues. This should include FASD.

"This recent study shows the UK has some of the highest rates of FASD in the world. I was undiagnosed until I was in my 20s, and the trauma and addiction of my

teenage years and early adulthood might have been avoided if proper diagnosis and support had been in place.”

The study, was conducted by researchers from the Canadian Centre for Addiction and Mental Health.

The Telegraph, 14/01/2017

### **Huffing and puffing**

*Some expectant mothers struggle to quit smoking. What can help?*

CIGARETTE packets in France will soon carry a logo warning pregnant women of the dangers of smoking. The addition was prompted by recent data finding that 18% of French expectant mothers admit to smoking right through pregnancy—more than in many other rich countries, where fewer women smoke to start with. The true figure may be higher: blood tests suggest that many pregnant smokers lie about their habit—in studies in Scotland, as many as a quarter.

Most women who smoke give up when they learn that they are pregnant. Getting the rest to follow is hard. The usual approach is to tell them at their first prenatal visit that smoking is bad for the baby, encourage them to call a helpline and offer counselling. Some countries subsidise nicotine patches for pregnant women. The more of these steps are included, the higher the success rate. But even the best programmes get only a tiny fraction of this rump of smokers to break the habit.

Mental-health problems, poverty and domestic abuse all make quitting harder. Poor medical advice may, too: in several countries, including Britain, Bulgaria and France, some women may be told that a few cigarettes a day are better than the stress of cold turkey. That may be the least bad advice for the hopelessly addicted. But it is being given too readily. When health workers smoke themselves they may also be less zealous—and less credible. Surveys in 2009-10 found that a fifth of Spanish and Italian medical students smoked, and almost half of Bulgarian ones.

Some women still believe, despite what they hear, that smoking will not harm their unborn child. They may have smoked during an earlier pregnancy and argue that since the older child seems fine, the younger one will be, too. Such faulty logic can be reinforced by families and peer groups. In some poor areas of Britain a quarter of pregnant women smoke—more than twice the national rate. Just one in a hundred college-educated American women smoke while pregnant, against 17% of high-school dropouts. It is important to help expectant fathers to quit, says Carlo DiClemente of MDQuit, a Maryland smoking-cessation centre. If they keep smoking their partners probably will, too.

One promising approach is paying women to quit. A recent trial in Scotland gave up to £400 (\$590) in shopping vouchers for women who stayed off cigarettes until their babies were born, as well as the usual package of counselling and nicotine patches. The success rate rose from 9% to 23%. If further trials show similar results, the scheme may go nationwide. Even smaller amounts may help: the state of Maryland recently started giving pregnant women who call a smoking-cessation



service up to \$90 in shopping vouchers that can be used to buy items for the baby. To get the full amount they must keep calling after the baby is born. (Figures from many countries suggest that at least half those who quit during pregnancy start again soon after giving birth.)

Such bribery could pay off in the long run. In America smoking-related medical costs for a mother and baby in the first year after birth average well over \$1,500. Britain's National Health Service is estimated to spend between £20m and £88m a year to treat such health problems. But the best way to ensure that women do not smoke when pregnant is to ensure that fewer light up in the first place.

The Economist, 04/05/2014

### **I'm worried about my sister, who is in her 90s and lives alone**

*I'm her only family, but am in my 80s so visiting her is getting more difficult. What are her options for care or housing? Annalisa Barbieri advises a reader*

I am in my 80s and my sister is in her 90s. I am her main carer and only other family member. I visit her several times a week using public transport, a round trip that takes two to three hours. I am happy to do this, but it is getting harder as I get older. I am also growing more concerned for my sister. Although she is fairly sprightly, she has fallen over once but, thankfully, was found quickly. She has an alarm to wear around her neck but doesn't always put it on.

She lives alone in a large house. She has lots of lovely neighbours who look out for her but I still worry. I have suggested a paid carer, but she will not entertain this. I have my own family so cannot move in with her and we do not have the space to have her with us.

She has suggested that maybe she should move into a home, although she keeps changing her mind. I'm not sure what is right for her and feel she is leaving the decision to me.

How can I find out what her options are? Can she move to a nursing home near to where my family and I live so we can visit more easily or does it need to be in her council borough? What are the different homes she could move into and how do I find out which is best for her?

I feel for you. When we all lived close to family, concerns like this were easier to deal with, because popping in and out wasn't such a big deal. But now that families are more fragmented, it is necessary to factor travelling into what is already a full-on caring role.

I consulted Stephen Lowe, care policy adviser at Age UK ([ageuk.org.uk](http://ageuk.org.uk)). There are various options for your sister: employing a live-in/out care worker/assistant might help, and would enable her to continue living at home. She could move into sheltered housing where she would have independence, but would have a warden to call on her or visit regularly, or to "extra care" sheltered housing,

which offers other services. Or she could move into a residential care home, or one that offers nursing if she needs that.

It sounds as if sheltered housing probably wouldn't give your sister what she wants, simply moving her away from all she knows. I understand the importance of staying in her own home and being near people she knows. Some people are able to move into nursing homes, but keep their own homes, at least for a time, while they see how they get on.

But check individual terms and contracts: some residential homes ask you to sign a contract up front – sometimes for lengthy periods – and some could evict your sister with only a month's notice. If she were to move full time into a residential home, she could only take with her what would fit into one room. Understandably, many people find this very stressful.

Lowe suggests that the first thing to do is to establish what sort of care your sister needs – get an assessment from her GP and social services. Anyone who might have care needs is entitled to this. The former will be able to ascertain her medical needs (you may already know this) and social services can help your sister work out what help she needs and the choices available.

Any local authority (LA) care provision is means tested. From the sound of it, if your sister needs to go into care, she would need to pay herself (the value of her home would be taken into account). However, she is not restricted to her local borough: she can choose where she goes. Even if the LA is paying, she can choose, although she may need to top up the fees if it will only pay up to a certain amount.

I'm concerned that you also look after yourself

All residential homes are regulated by the Care Quality Commission (you can find all inspection reports at [cqc.org.uk](http://cqc.org.uk)). But word of mouth, as in all things, is also valuable and, of course, a personal inspection by the person going into the home is vital.

If she decides to go down the paid carer route, a good first step is via the LA, which should be able to advise you on some registered care agencies.

I'm concerned that you also look after yourself. Given what you've told me, perhaps getting a taxi one way at least might help if you or your sister can afford it. You can also ask your council about subsidised taxis for the elderly for your sister, and a carer's assessment for yourself ([carersuk.org](http://carersuk.org); tel 0808 808 7777).

The Guardian, 02/09/2015

### **I am not a good mother, nor do I aspire to be**

*I grimace when people call me a 'good mother'. It's a compliment that carries such a weighted judgement that it's impossible for me to accept it*

It's a tough gig being a woman. For starters, you're judged around whether you're a mother or not. If you are a mother, you're then judged around being a good

one or not. I can't do anything about being a woman and I'm four children too late to regret being a mother, but try and stop me rebelling against being a "good" one. Now before you get your knickers in a knot, of course I love my children – and I do a decent job of caring for them. But I am over the cultural guilt we use around "mothering" to control mothers into "behaving" by curtailing our individuality. It strikes me as no coincidence that the cultures in which mothers are most revered are the same ones in which women are most oppressed. Religion also plays a critical role here; I was raised as a Roman Catholic and Mary – mythically virginal or historically not – has a lot to answer for.

A good mother has all the qualities of a good wife and then some. The transformation is gynaecological, but the expectations are similar – she is selfless, she is a saint. A "new mother" is by default a good one as she has a "clean sheet" (let's leave aside the realities of childbirth and assume she's out of the birthing suite) and gets a laborious pass to martyrdom, but only so long as she is breastfeeding.

From there until about 12 months a good mother's success is measured in grams, specifically the grams her spawn puts on. And in case you're confused about how much exactly that should be, it's enough so that your baby can be described as "chubby", but not enough to be nicknamed "boombah."

A good mother is a smiling mother. She is without foibles and oddities. Her hairdo is practical yet feminine. Her jawline is distinct but soft. Her clothes are fashionable but practical. She is confident and also vulnerable. She is a subtle filigree of implicit contradictions, because although we like our stereotypes, we like the tensions better as long as they are unobtrusive and of little consequence – that is, they don't get in the way of her being and doing what we expect of her.

Good mothers must be extraordinary in the ordinary; they must cut a mean square gourmet lunch with food pyramid considerations, make sure to have on hand a month's supply of Weet-Bix for breakfast and a year's supply of toilet paper, find matching socks under duress, bake perfect school raffle cakes at a moment's notice, and know their seven-times tables – by heart.

Good mothers know how to behave. They don't get drunk at school discos, don't swim naked in lagoons, know the words to anything released in the noughties, or unsubscribe to the school newsletter.

And so I grimace when people call me a "good mother." It's a compliment that carries such a weighted judgement it's impossible for me to accept it. All I hear is the assumed right to control me. An expectation of my behaviour. The dreaded possibility that I have conformed.

The truth is, mothers are innately just like everybody else. Complex and flawed. We cannot, nor should we be expected to, conform to an ideal. It seems obvious, and yet there are insistent messages around good mothering everywhere, every day.

As one friend put it, we are not in the business of producing carbon copies on a production line. It's the bits of "us" that we give our children that make them ours.

I don't want to be put on a pedestal, as if through some strange birthing osmosis I have been elated to godliness when I'm actually being shackled in a box. I have not acquired a taste for the submissive in being a mother.

This is my rebellion. Let your comments be your charge. I will stand my ground. I am not a good mother, nor do I aspire to be.

The Guardian, 30/07/2013

### UNIT 3 Youth problems



#### **Teenagers will always find ways to outwit parents**

*Jamie Oliver has banned his daughter from posting 'porno' selfies, but kids will be kids*

I've got time for Jamie Oliver – at least he tries to stand up for more than his own-branded crockery. This week, the father of five was commenting on teenagers posting provocative selfies online. He's banned his 14-year-old daughter Daisy from posting selfies, and says that some of the photos he's seen of other girls are "quite porno, luscious, pouty, pushing boobs out". Oliver notes that this is the first parental generation to deal with social media, and wonders: why are the girls allowed to do it? Oliver says: "I'm like: Really? Aren't their parents all over that like a rash?"

Well, I have news for Oliver – it's quite probable that parents aren't "letting them do it". And it's almost certain that they're not looking at their daughters' "porno" photos, saying: "You look great there, licking your lips suggestively in that tight top – why don't you put it on Instagram?"

The point being that parents either don't realise that their children are doing it (or at least the extent of it), or they do realise, but they also twig that there no way of

stopping it altogether, short of confiscating all phones and tablets, and locking the children in a padded cell between the ages of 11 and 19. And, believe me, there may be times when that latter option doesn't seem completely out of the question. Many a battleworn parent of a teenager has travelled the trajectory from "Fly, my child, fly fearless and free", to a version of "Off to the tower, Rapunzel, and, if you let down your hair, all Netflix rights will be suspended."

What sometimes seems to be going on is self-willed parental myopia – an often-unconscious reluctance to realise that, while there are always exceptions, their kids are most probably up to everything their friends are up to, or a version of it – either some, or all of the time, either right in front of their faces, or sneaking around behind their backs. It's part of the Secret World of Teenage, and in that designated age-restricted zone, operating within their own circles, it's usually (not always, but usually) harmless and short-lived enough. And, of course, it's not "porno". They're playing – testing boundaries, experimenting with their image – which has always gone on to an extent.

While most parents wouldn't have taken selfies in their youth, let's be honest, it's only because we didn't think of it. Personally, I did a fair bit of prancing about in front of other people's cameras, and, from the looks of it, my self-obsession was in rude health, with rude the operative word – in some photos, the look I appear to be going for is Trafficked Goth.

While it's a bit excruciating, it's also screamingly funny. However – and this is the generational dividing line – back in my day, my cringeworthy cavorting was kept more or less private. As Oliver points out, there's now social media to deal with. Photos have the potential to drop a cluster bomb of far-reaching consequences – ranging from the degradation of revenge porn, problems with future employers, to young kids just not registering that, quite often, it's not just their target peer group that can see the images.

So, Oliver is right, there's plenty to worry about – in terms of short-term behaviour and long-term consequences. As any half-bright celebrity could tell you, the thing they miss the most is their anonymity. Many young people are losing this great privilege, tossing it away for a few "likes", at a time when they're too heartbreakingly young to realise the full implications.

Even sadder, there's no stopping it. Tech-wise at least, most kids would be far savvier than their parents. Too often, this isn't about parents "letting them do it", or failing to stop it – if certain kids want to do it, the truth is they will usually find a way.

The Guardian, 17/11/2017

### **My teenage granddaughter is in a miserable state. She has lost hope**

*Her self-esteem is at rock bottom and when at home she mostly stays in her room. Annalisa Barbieri advises a reader*

I am desperately worried about my teenage granddaughter, who is in a very miserable state. Her self-esteem is at rock bottom, she has no confidence and apparently no hope.

She is a sweet girl who has always been rather shy and quiet but seemed happy. At her primary school, she got good reports, fitted in and had friends. However, she struggled with concentration, particularly regarding written work. This continued into the first two years of secondary education, where she showed ability in art and a particular facility for cooking.

She enjoyed sport until she had an injury. Later, she was involved in Guides and was doing well until, despite successfully undergoing a rigorous weekend away, she failed to get on an overseas trip she had set her heart on. About the same time, she began to develop school phobia and her attendance became erratic.

She managed some GCSE passes but opted to go to college, but gave up after a few months. She was let go from seasonal work in a local shop. Since then, she seems to have spent most of her time at home in her room. She will cook for family occasions and generally join in, but only arrives after she has masked her face in makeup.

The family context is, superficially, very good. My daughter, her mother, is well qualified but has not had a permanent job since she married. My granddaughter's father works in a caring but inadequately paid occupation. My granddaughter and her younger sibling have, at different times, lived with me (I am widowed and have a sizeable property). But it didn't work out well as I got angry and upset with her when she refused to go to school. The situation has got to a point where I fear that without professional help her future is bleak. She has had counselling but it has not been consistent. She has told me that she can talk to people she does not know. She has also told me that medication would be a last resort.

She's your granddaughter, not your daughter, and while I applaud your involvement, where is her mum, your daughter, in all of this?

I contacted Rajni Sharma, a child and adolescent psychotherapist ([childpsychotherapy.org.uk](http://childpsychotherapy.org.uk)), who thought it was "clear how committed you are to your granddaughter and how much you care about her. In contrast, you don't mention your relationship with your daughter."

We both feel this is quite key. For one, why are your daughter and her husband not taking charge of this? "There seems to be," says Sharma, "a muddle between generational roles that may colour your worry." Is there something unsaid, unfinished, unresolved between you and your daughter that this teenager represents? Thwarted ambitions maybe? Disappointments? Sharma felt your granddaughter sounded like "a girl who is open to new experiences and can cope when some don't go to plan. I am curious about frustration and protest underneath her misery and a struggle to get outwardly angry."

Her school refusal would bear this out: a not doing of something, instead, maybe, of getting angry. And maybe she needs to rebel.

I was left wondering how much your granddaughter is the canary in a family situation and whether you are all trying to fix her, because it's easier than fixing something else? There seemed a lot unsaid in your letter.

“She's able to pick herself up and she is resourceful,” Sharma points out, “and not conventionally academic.” And that's OK, isn't it? There was also something of the “setbacks echoing past disappointments [in your granddaughter's pursuits, some of which I have edited to avoid identification], that maybe you worry this is the beginning of serious lifelong failures and difficulties.”

But she's only a teenager. What were you like when you were her age?

Sharma suggests you talk to your daughter and her husband, come up with a strategy to support each other, with them as her parents and you in the supporting granny role – a very valuable position. In supporting her parents, you will be supporting your granddaughter. This leads me to ask: do you trust your daughter's parenting?

It sounds as if your granddaughter responds well to therapy, and this can identify any underlying low mood or anxiety she may have, but as you say, she needs a more consistent approach. (Go to the “find a therapist page” in the link above). It's very important that your granddaughter has somewhere that's all her own to talk. If she then decides, with her therapist, to bring in other family members, then so be it.

You mention self-esteem and confidence. These are built by being listened to, respected, not having feelings minimised and being supported through trial and error. “Being allowed to be yourself and fit into the world,” says Sharma.

The Guardian, 23/07/2017

### **Our shameful policy of locking up young people**

*Frances Crook of the Howard League for Penal Reform says we should be closing down our youth prison system, not expanding it; David Scott says England and Wales stand virtually alone in the EU in the use of child life sentences*

Shauneen Lambe is right that our child prisons are a disgrace and that they are harming children (Youth prisons don't deter criminals. They enable them, 21 November). The answer is to close them down, not to look to other countries that have similar failing institutions. She points to Diagrama, an organisation that runs child jails in Spain, and has been trying to enter the lucrative UK child incarceration market. I have visited some of its jails in Spain and saw Victorian education delivered in bleak and remote establishments. There was nothing we should copy.

It was misjudged of the commissioner of the Metropolitan police to abuse an invitation to speak at a charity's AGM and call for more children – in effect more black boys – to be incarcerated and for longer. We have gone down that path for two centuries and it has been a disaster. It was all the more bizarre as police forces round the country are successfully reducing child contact with the criminal justice system

and there is a good-news story to tell. All experience and research shows that arrest, prosecution and incarceration of children leads to worse outcomes for the child, for victims and for the taxpayer. (Frances Crook, Chief executive, the Howard League for Penal Reform).

Shauneen Lambe correctly highlights the inherent harms and violence of child imprisonment. Yet the truly horrendous experiences of children in prison have failed to create the kind of scandal that might be expected in a modern, progressive and civilised society. Despite a fall in numbers, England and Wales still has the highest incarceration rate for children in western Europe. It also stands virtually alone in the use of child life sentences. Of the 28 EU countries, life imprisonment for children has been abolished in 22. Two children have been sentenced to life imprisonment in France in the last 25 years and one in Ireland. Outside England and Wales, in the EU today only two children are serving life imprisonment. In contrast, 197 life sentences were handed down to children in England and Wales between 2006 and 2016.

Further, in most of the countries within the EU, the minimum age of criminal responsibility (MACR) is 14. The MACR for children in England and Wales is 10, yet bizarrely, under the Pet Animals Act 1951, children under 12 are not deemed legally entitled to buy a pet. According to data from Inquest, 78 people under 21 took their own lives in child prisons between 2007 and 2017. Young people also have less life experience on which to rely to help to deal with problems associated with prison life, or to manage a suicidal impulse when things are looking bleak and hopeless. No civilised society should lock up its children. (Dr David Scott, Ramsbottom, Greater Manchester).

The Guardian, 21/11/2017

## UNIT 4 Upbringing





## **Spoiling my grandchildren might be bad for them, but I can't help it**

*Research suggests that indulgent grandparents like me are harming their health. But I'm happy to make my house a rules-free paradise for them*

Since I became a grandad, the sounds of Friday night have subtly changed in our house. Time was, the coming of the weekend was heralded by the peeling of plastic off pungent chicken madras, the happy snap of a ring-pull from a can of my favourite bitter, and the mournful strains of Coronation Streetsignalling the switching off of an overworked brain. But since Hannah and Paul came into my life, the soundscape has been markedly different.

It goes something like this. Running feet (knowing the sharpness of my hearing, they don't often bother to creep), cupboard doors being wrenched open, the plunk of the lid coming off the biscuit tin followed by frantic scrabbling, presumably aimed at finding the ones with the most chocolate on them. Then there's the tearing of crisp packets, then silence will fall for a short while, only to be shattered by the restarting of an Xbox until the next sacking of my kitchen by the Goths and the Visigoths.

Whatever happened to that charming and comforting notion that grandparents are the "safe" generation?

I know it's my own fault. I could lock up the crisps and the biscuit tin, stop stocking cans of Coke, limit the playing of video games to three minutes a night or ban them altogether. Better still, I could storm out to the kitchen, confiscate all the booty and deliver a stern lecture on the falling-out of their teeth in their 30s, the onset of diabetes in their 40s and, if they survive that, early death at the hands of some other dreaded disease.

I could do, but it's my Friday night too – and I don't want to ruin the weekend with a bout of early-onset carping. I also grew up in a time of sweet rationing, one glass of Tizer on a Sunday lunchtime and only one TV channel. It could just be that I already think I'm doing enough by having the little blighters for the whole of the weekend. Their parents (my daughter and son-in-law), exhausted by the rigours of looking after their own children for three hours every evening, have kindly passed them on to me for the two days of the week when they have to be kept occupied from breakfast to bedtime.

Of course, I know I'm doing wrong. Just this week, research from Glasgow University revealed that overindulgent, virtually immobile, chain-smoking grandads and grannies are allowing children to slob about, eat what they like, fry their brains, and never take exercise because we're all too old and slow to run after them.

The research may well be right. The evidence from my kitchen rather suggests that it is. But can't I be left with just a few illusions? Whatever happened to that charming and comforting notion that grandparents are the "safe" generation? The one above the parents who can easily be confided in and told things that Mum and Dad

can't be trusted to know. The comforting ones who always keep madeira cake in the tin, homemade lemonade in the larder and an inexhaustible supply of peppermints in a jar on the mantelpiece. That we are the providers of a place where children can enter their own dream world without being constantly pursued with rules and regulations.

It could be that we are, in fact, the generation that first let the brakes off a bit, then bred a generation that let them off even more. And now we're all reaping the whirlwind. So where is Saffy from Ab Fab when you need her? The sensible teenager telling both the previous generations that they've got it all wrong and that it's time to be responsible?

I'm interrupted in this reverie by a sound from the kitchen. There goes the biscuit tin again.

Peter White is the BBC's disability affairs correspondent.

The Guardian, 17/11/2017

### **“My daughter felt forgotten”: parents on working late**

*A study has found that up to three in five parents miss their children's bedtime. We asked you how staying at work affects your home life*

According to a study by the charity Working Families, only one in three parents leave work on time. We asked readers to tell us why they work late and how their absence from home affects their families. Some names have been changed to protect identities.

*Tina, 38, analyst, France: Small kids don't need you to earn lots of money, they need you to spend time with them*

There is no culture of presenteeism at my company – no one gets brownie points for staying late. If I chose, I could work at home more (I currently do one day per week at home), and leave earlier. However, I would miss out on social and professional contact, and the career and development opportunities that brings, as well as feeling more part of the team. No one is directly discriminating, but if I am not there, I do not get the opportunities that others do.

My kids would love it if I could pick them up from school. My son was asked recently what he would change if he were boss of the school, and he said: “No after-school club, the parents come every day.” When I do make it, they are so happy to see me there. If I could get home on time I would be with the kids more, to play with them, teach them things and help them with their development. It would give me more time to feel on top of things in life, not just scraping by day to day.

My mother gave up work to bring up three kids. She went back when I was about 11. We clearly benefited enormously from all her input in terms of our education and development. I feel like kids of parents who are around more get a

head start in life. It may seem strange coming from a family where both parents have good jobs and are relatively well paid ... but small kids don't need you to earn lots of money, they need you to spend time with them.

*Tom, 40, financial analyst, the Netherlands: I am sick of staying so late*

Staff reductions with increased workloads make for a permanent sense of job insecurity. As the primary source of family income, covering all expenses, including mortgage and school fees, I feel the pressure to ensure I can continue to support them. I seldom work less than 50 hours a week.

It is often hard on my children, who complain about what time I return home. My wife can be stressed by having to deal with the children for long periods without additional support, and I am sick of staying so late. That said, in the time away from work I do try to ensure that I'm present and available: that we spend good-quality time together, doing things like reading bedtime stories and walking the dog. But I'm a person who also needs alone time, and getting anything like a reasonable balance no longer feels possible.

*Molly, 34, architect, Dublin, Ireland: Having to leave early for work means I can't breastfeed my son*

I think a lot of architects are still recovering from the last recession, which left many of us unemployed or out of the industry for several years. So when the whole office is still there at 7pm it is difficult to be the only one leaving on time each day. It has a terrible impact on us. I have a young son and he will only go to bed for me. If I am home late he goes to bed late and is exhausted and upset. My current office is relatively flexible if I come in early but it is limited. The only reason I stay late is because being unemployed again is worse than the stress of working late and having a tired baby.

An unexpected problem I have is that it affects breastfeeding, because with my working hours it is difficult to be there both when my son wakes and falls asleep. He only has milk at those two times, so some days he misses out on that crucial nutrition. That is an extremely difficult thing for me – to leave early for work with him asleep because he is exhausted, and me knowing he isn't getting his milk.

*Owen, 41, manager, Washington DC, United States: It's affected the kids' concentration at school*

There is more work to do than the staff can deliver. I know that to keep my manager's salary I need to continue to deliver the same results so I end up working until 7 or 8pm. I used to take work home to do after the family dinner when the kids are in bed, but as I get older I find it harder to motivate myself back to work once I've switched off. Hence I stay later. Mealtimes and bedtimes get pushed back. This was fine for a while, but recently it's affected the kids' concentration at school and

even their grades – although I can't say this is definitely the reason, it just feels like it. It also puts a strain on my wife, who has the kids all by herself for longer. If I had more time with my family I think they would be happier as the day-to-day events wouldn't always come second to work.

*Stef, 38, PR manager, Scotland: I probably don't play enough with my kids*

I like my job, so staying later at work is satisfying; I get home around 7.30pm most nights. It also helps to delay having to face the chaos of over-tired children, the bedtime battle and hours of chores that wait for me. I probably don't play enough with my kids; my husband does that more than I do. I end up having very little time with them during the week, but I don't work Friday afternoons so I make up for it then, if I can. Also, my house is an absolute tip – all of the time. If I didn't stay so late at work, my kids might have a better bedtime routine if I were there, as I am strict about trying to get to bed on time.

*Jason, 38, software developer, Nagoya, Japan: We feel guilty when we can't do things as a family*

The primary reason I stay late is the workload. The workload in an average week is about 65 hours, and falling behind is considered a sign of poor performance that can seriously limit a person's career. I have no plans on staying in the same job beyond 45, and this means needing to stay late to stay afloat. Our son is less than a year old and quite an active child. My wife is always exhausted. She just doesn't have time to accomplish everything she needs to do for her work, and everything she wants to do at home. I help out as much as I can with the laundry, dishes, nappies, bottles, and everything else, but there's only so much noise you can make after 10 on a work night. When the weekend comes around, we want to spend as much time together as a family, but end up dedicating half of our waking hours to cleaning. We feel guilty when we can't do things as a family. We feel awful when the house is a mess. But we feel exhausted by nine every night. Going home early would open up our evenings and weekends more.

*Karina, 55, teacher, England: My daughter felt forgotten*

As a teacher, it was impossible to complete work duties in a regular eight hour work day. As a single parent either my teenage daughter spent lots of time alone at home or she had to spend afternoons at my school watching me work. I was tired and completely overwhelmed. My stress levels were sky high and my daughter became resentful of my career, and she and I were on antidepressants. My daughter felt forgotten and acted out by ditching school. The irony of teaching, was that I spent more time with other people's children than I did with my own child.

The Guardian, 28/06/2017

## **Should I tell my adult daughter that the man she calls Dad may not be her father?**

*I want to be honest with her, but I don't want to ruin our relationship. And I don't know whether her father is my ex-husband or a friend of his. Annalisa Barbieri advises a reader*

I am not sure who the father of my daughter is. And I am not sure whether to tell her. She is in her 30s, and mother to a young boy. I was glad she had a boy, as it broke the rather toxic mother-daughter thread in my family. All the women seem to have hated their mothers, as far back as I know about.

My first husband was serially unfaithful, and it was at this time that I had sex with a friend of his (I'm not proud of this). When I got home, my husband forced me to have sex with him. That was the night my daughter was conceived. I divorced my first husband when she was a toddler, so she didn't grow up with him.

My daughter and I had a fraught relationship, as I did with my mother. Both of us have worked really hard on it, and are now very appreciative of one another, and I think we are pretty honest with each other. Since having her son, she understands a lot more about the complexities of motherhood and has admitted as much to me. She had postnatal depression, and this also brought us closer together, as I have tried to be there for her and her lovely husband. She is having psychotherapy, which is great. Like me, she has always wanted to understand herself better, and become better herself.

We are talking about her childhood, about family heritage. Do I tell her that the man she has always called Dad may not be her father? She has a rather difficult relationship with him – he has always disappointed her and has not been there for her. The other man had anxiety and depression that she might have inherited. But I have no idea where he is, or what his situation is. He was married and had a son, who is a few years older than my daughter. He got divorced not long after I divorced my first husband. He did come to see me once and asked if my daughter was his, but I told him it was best to leave things as they were, with her thinking my ex-husband was her father.

All things considered, I am incredibly grateful that we have as good a relationship as we do. But I recognise that it is fragile and can easily be broken. I would welcome your thoughts on this. It has been bubbling under for ages, but now that she is in therapy, would it be useful to her to know?

Your much longer letter had a lot of information about your tumultuous life and I am pleased that you have got to where you are, especially with regard to the positive relationship you now have with your daughter. But you are right, what it boils down to is: do you tell her or not? If you don't, you have to be absolutely sure she won't find out some other way. If you do, you need to carefully manage how you tell her so as not to potentially damage a relationship you have both worked hard on.

I am a big fan of talking therapy, but especially so in this case: I strongly recommend you book yourself some sessions to talk this through so that if you do tell her, you do it in the best way possible and the first time you say this out loud isn't to your daughter. Therapy doesn't have to be expensive, and some places offer it free: ask locally and check out the link below.

Nicola McCarry, a family psychotherapist ([www.aft.org.uk](http://www.aft.org.uk)), came up with some things for you to think about. "Experience has taught me that it's really important for children to know their heritage. If you knew who the father was – and I realise you don't at this stage – it would be important to tell your daughter so she could trace her father [if it was the other man] before he dies and the opportunity is lost to her. But telling her it could be one of two men – would unburdening yourself be burdening your daughter?"

This is why we think it is vital you talk it through in therapy first because some of the details you shared with me need careful handling. You sound very caring and, as McCarry says, protective of your daughter; but I want you to be sure you are not, subconsciously, trying to sabotage a mother-daughter relationship that is going well, when all you have previously known is them going wrong.

Do you have any clues? "Does your daughter look like either man?" asks McCarry. "Has anyone else ever wondered about who her father is? The facts as you have told them are a brutal truth that no child would want to hear about their conception."

On the one hand, you told us about a man who forced you to have sex (which is rape), and the other was a man who seemed to have few positive features. Your daughter will want to know what made you have sex with this other man. "Is there anything," asks McCarry, "which you can bring forward to show his more attractive side? You don't want to lie, but is there something a bit more positive a child, albeit an adult one, may want to hear?"

"You need to think through the risks of telling her versus the risks of not telling her." Telling your daughter may expose her to "shock, despair, maybe betrayal". But if she finds out by accident, these feelings will be stronger still.

The Guardian, 15/09/2017

### **Women in England and Wales having fewer babies than ever before**

*Figures from the Office for National Statistics show women in England and Wales are having fewer children and more are having none*

The number of children a woman is likely to have while of childbearing age has fallen to the lowest level on record.

Women who turned 45 last year had an average of 1.90 children, down from 2.21 for their mothers' generation, according to figures from the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

Teenage motherhood is also dropping, with just 6% of women having had at least one child before their 20th birthday.

In total, 18% of women born in 1971 had no children at all, compared with 11% of women in their mother's generation.

The figures show the average size of families in England and Wales peaked for women born in 1935 and has been falling ever since.

The ONS said the figures, collected from birth registration data going back to the 1930s, defined 45 as the age by which most women had stopped having children. Emily Knipe, from the ONS population statistics division, said childlessness was "one of the main drivers" of falling family sizes by the time women reached the end of their childbearing lives.

But ONS spokesman Richard Miles said there were likely to be many reasons why women appeared to be having fewer children overall. He said: "It's fair to say that we have seen a trend of smaller families overall, but there are a lot of contributing factors to that. Education is a good example, and also continuing to work, so that all fits in with the trend."

The research showed a continuing downward trend in the rate of teenage motherhood, with just 6% of women born in 1996 having at least one child before their 20th birthday, matching rates seen among women born in the 1920s.

Only about one in 10 women who reached the age of 45 in 2016 had four or more children, compared with about one in eight for women born in 1944.

Women born in the 1960s onwards also had fewer children by the time they were 30 than the generations before them.

Overall, women born in 1971 were shown to have had 1.06 children on average by their 30th birthday, compared with 1.8 children for their mothers' generation. This reflected a general trend in postponing having children to an older age, the ONS said.

The Guardian, 24/11/2017

## **Our shameful policy of locking up young people**

*Frances Crook of the Howard League for Penal Reform says we should be closing down our youth prison system, not expanding it; David Scott says England and Wales stand virtually alone in the EU in the use of child life sentences*

Shauneen Lambe is right that our child prisons are a disgrace and that they are harming children (Youth prisons don't deter criminals. They enable them, 21 November). The answer is to close them down, not to look to other countries that have similar failing institutions. She points to Diagrama, an organisation that runs child jails in Spain, and has been trying to enter the lucrative UK child incarceration market. I have visited some of its jails in Spain and saw Victorian education delivered in bleak and remote establishments. There was nothing we should copy.

It was misjudged of the commissioner of the Metropolitan police to abuse an invitation to speak at a charity's AGM and call for more children – in effect more black boys – to be incarcerated and for longer. We have gone down that path for two centuries and it has been a disaster. It was all the more bizarre as police forces round the country are successfully reducing child contact with the criminal justice system and there is a good-news story to tell. All experience and research shows that arrest, prosecution and incarceration of children leads to worse outcomes for the child, for victims and for the taxpayer.

Frances Crook, Chief executive, the Howard League for Penal Reform

Shauneen Lambe correctly highlights the inherent harms and violence of child imprisonment. Yet the truly horrendous experiences of children in prison have failed to create the kind of scandal that might be expected in a modern, progressive and civilised society. Despite a fall in numbers, England and Wales still has the highest incarceration rate for children in western Europe. It also stands virtually alone in the use of child life sentences. Of the 28 EU countries, life imprisonment for children has been abolished in 22. Two children have been sentenced to life imprisonment in France in the last 25 years and one in Ireland. Outside England and Wales, in the EU today only two children are serving life imprisonment. In contrast, 197 life sentences were handed down to children in England and Wales between 2006 and 2016.

Further, in most of the countries within the EU, the minimum age of criminal responsibility (MACR) is 14. The MACR for children in England and Wales is 10, yet bizarrely, under the Pet Animals Act 1951, children under 12 are not deemed legally entitled to buy a pet. According to data from Inquest, 78 people under 21 took their own lives in child prisons between 2007 and 2017. Young people also have less life experience on which to rely to help to deal with problems associated with prison life, or to manage a suicidal impulse when things are looking bleak and hopeless. No civilised society should lock up its children.

Dr David Scott, Ramsbottom, Greater Manchester

## UNIT 5 Mass Media





## **TV is bad for children's education, studies show**

*The more time children spend watching television the poorer they perform academically, according to three studies published on Monday*

Excessive television viewing has been blamed for increasing rates of Childhood obesity and for aggressive behavior, while its impact on schooling have been inconclusive, researchers said.

But studies published on the topic in this month's Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine concluded television viewing tended to have an adverse effect on academic pursuits.

For instance, children in third grade (approximately 8 years old) who had televisions in their bedrooms - and therefore watched more TV - scored lower on standardized tests than those who did not have sets in their rooms.

In contrast, the study found having a home computer with access to the Internet resulted in comparatively higher test scores.

"Consistently, those with a bedroom television but no home computer access had, on average, the lowest scores and those with home computer access but no bedroom television had the highest scores," wrote study author Dina Borzekowski of Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore.

American homes with children have an average of nearly three televisions each, the report said, and children with televisions in their bedrooms averaged nearly 13 hours of viewing a week compared to nearly 11 hours by children who did not have their own sets.

The American Academy of Pediatrics has urged parents to limit children's television viewing to no more than one to two hours per day - and to try to keep younger children away from TV altogether.

### **LIMITED BENEFITS**

In two other studies published in the same journal, children who regularly watched television before the age of 3 ended up with lower test scores later on, and children and adolescents who watched more television were less likely to go on to finish high school or earn a college degree.

University of Washington researchers reported that 59 percent of U.S. children younger than age 2 watch an average of 1.3 hours of television per day, though there is no programming of proven educational value for children that young.

Their analysis of 1,800 children over a decade showed television watching was linked to poorer cognitive development among children younger than 3 and between the ages of 6 and 7.

TV watching appeared to help 3- to 5-year-olds with basic reading recognition and short-term memory, but not reading comprehension or mathematics, so the net effect of television watching is "limited in its beneficial impact," wrote study author Frederick Zimmerman.

Similarly, Robert Hancox of the University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand, found that children and adolescents who watched more television had less educational attainment regardless of their intelligence, socioeconomic status or childhood behavioral problems.

But condemning television as a vast wasteland - government regulator Newton Minow's oft-quoted diatribe against the medium - would be unfair as programming is not "monolithic," an editorial accompanying the studies said.

"Parents should be encouraged to incorporate well-produced, age-appropriate educational TV into their children's lives. Such programming represents a valuable tool for stimulating children's cognitive development," wrote Ariel Chernin and Deborah Linebarger of the University of Pennsylvania.

Health.am, 08/08/2005

### **'Foreign agent' media face scrutiny in Putin's Russia**

*President Putin has approved a controversial law allowing Russia to designate overseas media outlets as "foreign agents", leading to a far higher degree of state scrutiny and possible inspections of their operations.*

Media affected by the law are subject to increased tax audits and must identify themselves on their websites and broadcasts as "foreign agents" — a term associated by most Russians with spies.

Vyacheslav Volodin, the Russian parliamentary speaker, said the measures were aimed at "biased" outlets that oppose Russia's political system. The law was rushed through both houses of parliament in less than two weeks.

It is less than four months until Russia's presidential election, in which Mr Putin is expected to win a fourth term of office. Mr Putin has accused the United States of plotting to meddle in the election. The US is investigating Russian meddling in its own presidential election last year.

The Russian justice ministry said last week that the US government-funded Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty and Voice of America would be labelled foreign agents. Both carry extensive Russian-language reports and broadcasts that are critical of Kremlin policies.

Maria Zakharova, the Russian foreign ministry spokeswoman, said earlier this month that the media law could also result in the expulsion of Moscow-based correspondents from newspapers such as The New York Times and The Washington Post.

Russia says the media law is retaliation for Washington's decision to force the Kremlin-funded RT international news channel to register under the US Foreign

Agent Registration Act. The act was introduced in 1938 to counter Nazi propaganda and usually affects lawyers and lobby groups representing the interests of foreign states.

Mr Volodin called the move “an infringement of fundamental civil rights”. Mr Putin had warned that Russia would retaliate if RT was forced to register as a foreign agent.

US officials say, however, that Russia’s media law is a disproportionate response. John Lansing, the chief executive officer of the US Broadcasting Board of Governors, said: “Russian media, including RT and Sputnik, are free to operate in the United States and can be, and are, carried by US cable television outlets and FM radio stations. However, US international media, including Voice of America and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, are banned from television and radio in Russia.” Jon Huntsman, the US ambassador to Russia, said the White House was “very concerned” about the new law.

The Times, 26/11/2017

### **Too Much Media is Bad For Children**

*Too much media use damages children's health, resulting in higher risk of obesity, tobacco, drug, and alcohol use, and sexual activity*

A new study reveals what good parents already know. Too much media exposure can adversely affect a child’s health. Not only is it important to monitor what children watch and what games they play, but also how many hours a day they interact with media.

Barack Obama has been urging the American people to turn off the television and video games and spend more time with their children. Children spend an average of more than seven hours a day with electronic media, making them a powerful influence on their values and assumptions about life.

#### **Negative Effects of Media Use on Children’s Health**

Overall, 80% of the studies showed that the more hours children spend interacting with media, the more likely they are to develop negative health issues.

The strongest link was found between television viewing and obesity. 96% of the studies showed the more hours children watch television each week, the more likely they will become overweight. Common sense denotes that inactivity, combined with junk food consumption driven by advertisements, will create an obesity problem.

Fourteen studies addressed media use and sexual activity. Thirteen of these, or 93%, showed that more media exposure increases the likelihood of a child engaging in risky sexual behavior.

A strong correlation was also found between media use and drug or alcohol abuse, low academic achievement, and attention deficit hyperactivity behavior. On

the flip side, the study revealed that the fewer hours spent on television each week, the more likely a child would earn a bachelor's degree by age 26.

### **One Positive Result**

Not all the results were negative. According to the executive summary, one study revealed a positive correlation between academic achievement and a certain type of website. Which type of website was not specified.

### **Implications of the Research**

The results of this study send a clear message. Children should spend less time in front of media, get more exercise and interaction with people. Children should be taught media literacy at an early age, and learn how too much media can hurt them. Policymakers should develop public service campaigns that encourage healthy choices. Limits should be set on junk food advertising aimed at children.

### **About the Study**

The National Institutes of Health Department of Clinical Bioethics, (NIH), paired with Common Sense Media to fund a meta analysis of the effects of media use on children's health.

Reviewers of the meta analysis were from NIH, Yale University, and the California Pacific Medical Center. One of the researchers, Dr. Ezekiel Emanuel of the Bioethics Department at the NIH, is the brother of the incoming Chief of Staff, Rahm Emanuel. This is significant because it is hopeful he will have a voice in developing White House policies regarding media.

Report Shows Health Problems Linked to Television and Video Game Use

7/12/2008

## **Paperchase rejecting the Daily Mail is another victory against hatred**

*One of the most vindictive bullies in Britain has the chutzpah to say Paperchase was bullied into dropping its ads. This is a rightwing press lashing out from its death spiral*

Paperchase bowing to pressure from campaigners and committing to no longer advertising in the Daily Mail has upset all the right people. It is a victory for basic decency. Britain's tabloids are among the most hateful and vicious in the western world. They have long dictated what is deemed politically permissible – rallying behind policies that benefit the country's rich elite, and either ignoring or demonising ideas, individuals and movements that challenge our unjust status quo. One of their key roles has been to deflect anger at injustice away from the powerful vested interests at the top, to scapegoats instead: immigrants, refugees, public sector workers, benefit claimants, you name it.

This bigotry has attracted the particular ire of activists, who set up the Stop Funding Hate campaign last year. Its premise is straightforward: if leading brands wish to advertise in and thus associate themselves with tabloids that whip up hatred against, say, Muslims or trans people, then they must be held to account. They are,

after all, financially sustaining these hate campaigns. Stop Funding Hate had an early triumph when, last September, Specsavers pulled an advert from the Daily Express, a newspaper that has treated us to such headlines as “One in five Britons will be ethnics”, “Muslims tell British: go to hell” and “Britain must ban migrants”.

Now Paperchase has apologised for advertising in the Daily Mail, this hate-filled rag has the chutzpah to accuse the company of having “allowed itself to be bullied into apologising”. For the Daily Mail to accuse anyone of bullying reveals an intriguing lack of self-awareness, to say the least. This paper, whose less than glorious history includes cheerleading for the Nazis and Oswald Mosley’s blackshirts, is one of the most vindictive bullies in Britain. It whips up and legitimises hatred. It denounced judges ruling there should be parliamentary oversight of Brexit as “Enemies of the people”, a term you might expect to be bandied around by a totalitarian regime. When Theresa May announced her fateful snap election, the Daily Mail celebrated an opportunity to “Crush the saboteurs”, demonstrating its utter intolerance of political dissent.

But there is a wider story here. The power of the rightwing press is in a death spiral. It once believed it could dictate election results; during the general election, it did indeed pour unprecedented vitriol on a Labour party it tried to delegitimise as terrorist-loving extremists. And what happened? Forty per cent of the electorate voted for Jeremy Corbyn’s party and deprived the Tories of their majority. And the tabloids’ online influence is not growing enough to make up for falling print sales. The average age of a Daily Mail reader is 58, while a younger generation emerges that is well disposed to Corbynism and increasingly hostile to the sort of bigotry peddled by these rags. Don’t get me wrong: this cabal of hatred still wields huge nefarious influence, far more so than Russian bots on Twitter. Leftwing voices are still woefully excluded from the British press, despite the election result. But the corset is loosening: the stranglehold of the rightwing press over our democracy is weakening – and what’s more, it knows it.

Owen Jones is a Guardian columnist.

The Guardian, 21/11/2017

### **If you bought \$5 of bitcoin 7 years ago, you’d be \$4.4 million richer**

*“Bitcoin is better than currency.” - Bill Gates. Bitcoin completely dominates over the USD after increasing almost 900,000 times in the last eight years*

Ever had a case where you wished you had bought something in the past that eventually went up significantly in value? Perhaps a plot in a low-value district which is now worth ten times more? Does that ring a bell? With so many amazing stories surfacing like Kristoffer Koch, Erik Finman, and Jay Smith, it seems the enormous rise of Bitcoin has been officially making ordinary people who invested in Bitcoin into millionaires.

Monday marked the seventh anniversary of what is said to be the first recorded instance of Bitcoins being used in a real-world transaction. Over the course of seven years, Bitcoin's value has multiplied 879,999 times. If an investor had decided to spend five dollars on about 2,000 Bitcoins back then, that stake would be worth \$4.4 million today. With \$1,200 spent on some 480,000 Bitcoins, the investor would be worth at least \$1.1 billion today.

At first, Bitcoin didn't really catch on, and it was solely the domain of the early adopters. There were very few businesses which accepted bitcoin as a payment method, and it was something which was almost frowned upon by most governments. As more and more businesses and governments accepted bitcoin, it gradually went up in value, more and more people were starting to embrace the idea of a decentralized currency, and as more people jumped on board, the price began to rise. Since the beginning of the year 2017, the value of Bitcoin spiked after gaining legitimacy in countries like Japan.

The main advantage of bitcoin is that it is decentralized – meaning, there's no central bank or government which controls it. This freedom is one of the reasons why Investors have come to see the currency as something of a safe-haven-asset in a problematic geopolitical world — and there's been plenty of that in recent months in Europe, Russia, Brazil and the United States. There is also an additional advantage in Bitcoin – there is a mathematical limitation to the number of Bitcoins that can be created, which means – no printing money, so the rules of economy work perfectly. Where there is a limited supply of something, and the demand goes up, the price goes up along with it.

Wences Casares has been called Bitcoin's "patient zero" by the Silicon Valley elite. He got Bill Gates, Reid Hoffman, and countless other luminaries into Bitcoin at gatherings of the rich and famous such as Sun Valley.

The Argentinian-born Casares has founded an internet service provider, a video game company, and a bank, plus he sits on the board of PayPal, but it's Bitcoin that Casares says he's dedicating the rest of his life to, and he now runs a startup called Xapo that stores Bitcoin. At a dinner organized by the cryptocurrency policy group Coin Center in New York last night, Casares delivered the keynote speech, including some advice about how to get into Bitcoin.

The formula, according to Casares? Take 1% or less of what you own, invest in Bitcoin with it, and then forget about it for at least the next five years; ideally the next decade. "You either lose one percent of your net worth, which most people can take, or you make millions," he told a room of cryptocurrency advocates at the Westin in Times Square.

Casares pegs the odds of bitcoin failing completely and going to zero dollars at 20%. "If it fails, it will be worthless," he says. "If it succeeds, in five to seven years a single Bitcoin will be worth more than a million dollars." He puts the chances of success at greater than 50%.

Casares has an interesting reply for those people who believe they have already "missed out" on the bitcoin train and are afraid that they are joining too late. He said

he's seen people who bought bitcoin at cheap prices—as low as \$13 who lost money because they tried to trade their way to profits, while those who bought at high prices even just a month ago have done “spectacularly well” by simply buying and holding.  
eToro (Europe) Ltd, 22/05/2017

## UNIT 6 Politics



### **Just two problems, remainers: what about immigration and sovereignty?**

*In politics there is usually an FAQ knocking around. Now that a car-crash budget has been averted, the most Frequently Asked Question is again: “Is Brexit going to happen?”*

How this question is posed depends on the prejudices of the speaker, ranging from “Brexit must be stopped, mustn’t it?” to “Can the liberal elite treacherously thwart the will of the people?”

It’s unlikely, but possible. Tony Blair gives it a 30% chance. Analysts at the Morgan Stanley bank put it at 10%. Political upsets have come in at longer odds recently. The legal answer is clear. The UK has the option of remaining in the European Union up to the moment it leaves. The triggering of article 50 means the deadline is effectively March 29, 2019, whether or not the prime minister succeeds in her attempt to write that date on the face of the withdrawal bill being debated by MPs.

Right now the possible outcomes for the UK remain “a good deal, no deal or no Brexit” in the words of the European Council president, Donald Tusk. Only a

decisive shift in public opinion against Brexit could snatch the prize away. There is as yet little sign of that happening, but just in case, Theresa May's government is doing what it can to close down the "no Brexit" option early.

That means reaching a deal, because the argument will be over if and when parliament passes the two essential pieces of legislation — the withdrawal bill and a separate statute approving any agreement. The state opening of parliament has been cancelled next year and the budget moved to the autumn, to clear the decks for the rubber stamp as quickly as possible.

Until now the EU side's insistence on dictating the pace of the talks has irritated the British. Things have gone slower than the Brexit secretary, David Davis, would have liked. But if his EU counterpart, Michel Barnier, delivers on his September 2018 deadline, he could end up being a friend because Brussels would like a draft agreement in place by this time next year for ratification by the European parliament.

As Hugo Dixon, one of the leading anti-Brexit activists, admits, opinion polls would need to show a big and consistent margin in favour of remain, perhaps 60:40, before MPs would be bold enough to consider reopening the referendum's 52:48 verdict to leave.

Time is running for out for those still hoping to turn British public opinion round, but they haven't given up yet. On December 5 key campaigners will gather for an "Exit from Brexit" fundraising dinner. They will have to overcome lack of organisation and political leadership if they are to stand any chance. Rival groups are unfurling pro-European banners with varying degrees of commitment to exiting from Brexit. The dinner is a benefit event for Nick Clegg's new think tank, Open Reason, organised by Dinesh Dhamija, who founded Ebookers and is now the Liberal Democrats' deputy treasurer.

Then there are three other organisations, each driven by former journalists who have moved into successful careers in finance. Hugo Dixon is a stalwart remainer who sold Breakingviews to Thomson Reuters and now runs the InFacts website. The economist Anatole Kaletsky is on the board of Best for Britain. Roland Rudd, chief executive of the PR firm Finsbury, is chairman of Open Britain, the successor to Britain Stronger in Europe, the official remain campaign defeated in the referendum. Bruised veterans of Britain Stronger say it mounted a feeble campaign in 2016 because it was held back by No 10 from full-throated advocacy of Britain's EU membership. Former prime minister David Cameron was so confident of victory, it is claimed, that he focused on not upsetting Tory Eurosceptics, whom he expected to have to accommodate afterwards. Open Britain and its allies risk making the same mistake by not explicitly opposing Brexit. It's clear what they think, but they won't spell it out, in deference to corporate backers.

Exit from Brexit's website talks in mealy-mouthed terms of "what we can do to steer the ship on a safer course". The same goes for the dinner's speakers: Clegg, Tory MP Anna Soubry and Labour's Chuka Umunna. Umunna says voters are



entitled to second thoughts if the shiny Audi they thought they had ordered turns out to be an old banger.

The most these campaigners feel empowered to ask for is another referendum. To achieve this, a deal would first have to be agreed, then it would need to be so bad that a majority of MPs felt justified in amending the bill meant to ratify it by calling a fresh referendum instead. Such an outcome would require Tory remainers to join forces with the opposition, something that has so far proved elusive.

Labour had a bad budget week. Philip Hammond's calculated giveaway left many of its foxes gasping for breath. Leader Jeremy Corbyn underlined his indifference on Europe by challenging Brexit at the one session of prime minister's questions bound to be ignored, immediately before the chancellor's statement.

The shadow chancellor, John McDonnell, failed to reduce Labour's deficit on economic competence by repeatedly rejecting requests to discuss the nation's finances in detail as "trite journalism" — that's why "we have iPads" and advisers, he told bemused reporters. He also insisted that it was a media slur to suggest he or Corbyn had not campaigned enthusiastically for remain despite their previous hostility to Europe's capitalist club. Given Labour's difficulties with the economy, hugging Europe ever closer may be its best chance of maintaining Peak Corbyn.

No deal would be a potential bonanza for Corbyn, since frightened voters might turn to Labour. This explains why the cabinet's most ideological Brexiteers have allowed May the financial leeway to buy a deal in return for ensuring that future co-operation with the EU will be severely circumscribed.

Either way, the two main parties are becoming more sharply defined by conflicting attitudes to Europe. So far, public opinion has shifted little, but according to YouGov's tracker headline, attitudes have reversed since the June election. A narrow majority now thinks the referendum decision was wrong. A much larger one says the government is making a bad job of the negotiations.

Ardent remainers insist that the process of leaving the EU is throwing up more bad news than good. They dismiss full order books and high employment as the result of a devalued pound and low productivity. "Even I'm shocked by the Brexit bill," one admitted, "nobody talked about that." Nobody talked much about the impact on Ireland either.

Such issues are live, but they do not address the concerns about sovereignty and migration that underpinned the UK's majority vote to leave the EU. Remain campaigners need to come together to say loudly and clearly what they really think if the answer to that FAQ is to be anything other than "no".

The Times, 26/11/2017

### **Emmerson Mnangagwa hails 'new democracy' in Zimbabwe**

*Former Mugabe right-hand man who is set to become next president gives first speech after return from exile*

Zimbabwe's former vice-president has said the country is witnessing a "new and unfolding democracy", as he returned to a jubilant welcome two weeks after fleeing to South Africa following his sacking by Robert Mugabe.

Emmerson Mnangagwa, a 75-year-old liberation war veteran and stalwart of the ruling Zanu-PF party is to be sworn in as president on Friday. His sacking triggered the political crisis that culminated in the resignation of the 93-year-old Mugabe on Tuesday. Mnangagwa arrived from Johannesburg at a military airbase in Harare on Wednesday afternoon and travelled directly to the Zanu-PF headquarters where a crowd of several hundred had gathered to hear his first speech as president-in-waiting.

"The people have spoken. The voice of the people is the voice of God," he told supporters. "Today we are witnessing the beginning of a new and unfolding democracy." Soldiers controlled admission to the concrete complex, but allowed hawkers to sell ice-creams, bananas and soft drinks. Outside, a makeshift stall selling Zanu-PF T-shirts with the slogan "A New Era" and pennants in the national colours did brisk business.

Many supporters carried placards thanking Mnangagwa for his "resilience and endurance". Nicknamed "the Crocodile" for his fearsome reputation, Mnangagwa has been accused of leading brutal waves of repression against opponents of Zanu-PF and Mugabe. His current popularity, though undoubtedly genuine, is clearly more dependent on the extraordinary events of the last week than any deep knowledge of the former spy chief. "I am here to welcome my leader, our leader," said Nicky Chihwa, a 28-year-old student waving a national flag. "We hope he will be someone who will bring us change. We don't really care who. We just wanted Mugabe to go."

Jennifer Mhlanga, a Zanu-PF MP and member of the party's central committee, said it was important that Mnangagwa felt he had the party's backing. "He needs to know that all this work, to meet all these high expectations, will not simply fall on his shoulders alone. He has all these people with him. The Zanu-PF family will assist him, the family of Zimbabwe will assist him," she said. Mnangagwa's exile in South Africa underlined the important role the powerful neighbour has played during the crisis. Though attempts at diplomatic mediation failed outright, Pretoria offered a crucial haven to Mnangagwa and close allies when they were forced to flee three weeks ago.

Car horns and celebrations greeted the motorcade carrying Mnangagwa as it passed through the Zimbabwean capital on the way to party headquarters, where one small portrait of Mugabe remained on a wall but two large images had been stowed in a corner. There is still much residual respect for Mugabe, and many in Harare say he should be allowed to "rest" rather than face charges or enforced exile. Zanu-PF officials have said that Mugabe and his wife, Grace, will be allowed to live in Zimbabwe. Ziyambi Zambi, a Zanu-PF MP and former minister, said the couple had been guaranteed impunity from prosecution and other unspecified protections.

"There has been an agreement. They are elder statesmen [sic] and will be respected and given their dues. He was our president and he agreed to resign so he

will enjoy the benefits of being an ex-president and his wife too. He is our icon,”  
Zambi said.

Mugabe, who ruled the country with an iron grip for 37 years, finally caved to popular and political pressure on Tuesday, hours after parliament launched proceedings to impeach him. He had refused to leave office during eight days of uncertainty that began with a military takeover last week.

Harare was quiet on Wednesday morning after a night of joyous celebration. Traffic was normal and many people were going to work.

“It’s a new day for Zimbabwe. We are smiling,” said Lovemore Simbeli, 19, as he sold newspapers with front-page headlines announcing Mugabe’s resignation.

Mnangagwa, once one of Mugabe’s closest aides, can count on the support of the armed forces, the massed ranks of Zanu-PF followers across the country, and his own followers in the eastern part of Zimbabwe where he comes from.

Among those who greeted the new leader at the airport were relatives, including nephew Lucius Ngomo, a chief from near the town of Masvingo.

“In the family there are people who you see and who you say will rise up to a high level. He was one of those people,” Ngoma said.

The decision to sack Mnangagwa was a rare tactical error by Mugabe, who appears to have wanted to clear the way to power for his ambitious but unpopular wife and her G40 faction.

While there is widespread respect for Mugabe for his leadership during the brutal liberation wars of the 1960s and 70s, the first lady is viewed differently, with many calling for her trial and imprisonment.

Despite the guarantees offered by Mnangagwa and the military, the former leader may still prefer exile. Dubai, Singapore or Malaysia are considered the most likely destinations. The family is believed to have a substantial property portfolio overseas.

The Guardian, 22/11/2017

### **'I fear a German Trump': Merkel's struggles lead to thoughts of what next**

*Some in Berlin see Angela Merkel as the calm hand that Germany needs and are unsettled by the prospect of new elections*

Petra Leitholdt was far from enthusiastic about the prospect of new elections in Germany. “It’s just a waste of time, energy and resources,” the 51-year-old said, standing on the bustling market square of Hermannplatz in the Neukölln district of Berlin.

“I for one wouldn’t vote any differently than I did on September 24. I weighed up my options then and would make the same decision if there was another vote. But I think Angela Merkel will come out on top again anyway, although maybe strengthened.”

Her mother, Irmgard, 80, nodded furiously. Her arm looped into her daughter's as they made their way home, the two said they enjoyed talking about politics but felt it had failed their neighbourhood and Germany as a whole. "Under Merkel, inequality has risen, the gap between rich and poor is getting wider, child poverty is on the rise and there's been no real effort put into trying to control rents in this area, which makes life really tough for many," said Irmgard. "I don't think Merkel is to blame for that, but I also don't think she has much say over what happens. Democracy is very flawed." Petra Leitholdt hoped nevertheless that the shock to Merkel of having to stand again if new elections were called might "make her think more about interests at home. I get such a strong impression of a leader who is there for Europe but not really for the Germans. Maybe that would change."

Achim (not his real name) drew on a cigarette and took a sip of his pils outside a newsagents on Karl-Marx-Strasse. The former visa administrator, 57, said German elections always made him nervous. "You just cannot trust the Germans, as history has shown," he said. "I think they are the most intelligent sheep in the world. I constantly worry what Germany might unleash on the world, particularly with Britain leaving the EU, which just gives Germany more power in Europe. And I fear what might happen in this current climate of uncertainty if Merkel is unseated."

He was a strong advocate of Merkel, although he said that did not necessarily mean he voted for her. He said he could not imagine a better leader for Germany. "Of course she's made mistakes," he said. "The refugee decision was right morally but wrong politically – it was too much of a churchy thing for her to do. And it has got her into the mess she's in now. But with all the drama going on in the rest of the world – from Saudi Arabia to Russia, Turkey to Syria, the US to Britain – she's absolutely the calm hand we need, and I'd hope she'll get re-elected."

Timothy, 32, who did not want to give his surname, said he was ill informed about politics. "But I feel the potential turmoil that could follow if Germany is plunged into political uncertainty," he said, buying a coffee. "For Europe and for Germany. Germany is being seen as a bit of a political anchor and that could be in danger."

Wiping up his coffee bar, a converted VW camper van, Hassan, 37, a recent arrival from Turkey via the US with his German wife, said he was happy to have been able to make a life for his family in Germany. "It's stable, it's social, and even the large amount of bureaucracy one has to deal with I appreciate because it's a sign that politics has control." He too appreciated the calm hand of Merkel – "she's very self-controlled, she doesn't give into machos like Putin and Erdoğan" – and feared what might come after her.

"I feel safe and secure now, but imagine if [the far-right populists] Alternative für Deutschland were to get into power on the back of the political mess we have now. Then where might that leave me and my family?"

Samaha Bagdadi, 47, a service worker, said she too feared a sharpening in tone of anti-foreigner rhetoric. "Fundamentally the world needs a huge political rethink," she said, pushing her bike home from work on Karl-Marx-Strasse. "But at least under

Merkel I think the country is polite and decent, though I fear the powers working behind the scenes, and I fear who might govern Germany if she is no longer in power. We've seen what's happened in the US, and how people's language and behaviour is being shaped by Donald Trump. Well, I fear a German Trump. Or worse. I think people are susceptible to that."

The Guardian, 22/11/2017

### **Collapse of German coalition talks underlines Merkel's weaknesses**

*The FDP's Lindner has been painted as the villain but the chancellor must bear some responsibility for other parties' reluctance to work with her CDU*

After exploratory talks to form Germany's next government collapsed in dramatic fashion shortly before midnight on Sunday, the culprit was quickly found: Christian Lindner, the cocksure leader of the pro-business Free Democratic party (FDP) who had staged a well-orchestrated walkout, makes an all-too convincing villain of the piece.

But in the coming weeks German media will have to ask whether the real reason for the political paralysis in Europe's biggest economy ultimately lies with another politician: Angela Merkel, the incumbent chancellor. Merkel's party colleagues and Green politicians had unanimously pointed their fingers at Lindner on Sunday night, insisting they had seen sufficient common ground for a compromise. Some of them voiced suspicions that the pro-business party had never really believed in their political enterprise in the first place.

Exactly which of his party's red lines the coalition talks had overstepped, Lindner has been unable to convincingly explain. Green party co-leader Katrin Göring-Eckardt on Monday claimed that the FDP had called off the talks in spite of victories in key policy areas. In a country where political stability is valued as highly as it is in Germany, accusations of recklessness could haunt the traditional ally to Merkel's CDU for years to come.

And yet the coalition talks of the last month have shown that a "Jamaica" coalition – so nicknamed because the colours of the Greens, the CDU and the FDP mirror those of the Jamaican flag – would likely have been an unstable one, filled with distrust and prone to imminent collapse. "It is better for a governing alliance to collapse before it has been forged than for it to drag itself through the legislative period in disharmony," conservative broadsheet Frankfurt Allgemeine Zeitung opined on Monday morning.

The FDP's petulance, and the Social Democrats' unwillingness to open up talks about another "grand coalition" with the CDU, are directly linked to the Merkel question: both parties suffered existential setbacks after going into government with a chancellor who has become an expert at adopting and coopting other parties' key policies.

“In the last few weeks, Merkel has been like the hinge of a door that opens to both sides of the political spectrum,” said Gero Neugebauer, a political scientist at Berlin’s Free University. “But that strategy hasn’t worked, and the debate about Lindner’s betrayal is already moving on to a debate about Merkel’s failure.” It remains possible that moral outrage about the FDP walkout could form the emotional glue for a governing coalition between the CDU and the Greens, but this would be 42 seats short of a majority and have to rally support from other parties on a policy-by-policy basis: an unprecedented situation for a fresh government in post-war Germany.

But both a minority government or fresh elections will first involve the authority of Merkel’s chancellorship being tested in the Bundestag. To engineer a no-confidence vote that would trigger new polls, Merkel would first have to be formally voted in as Germany’s chancellor. If she fails to gain a sufficient majority, her loss of power will come even sharper into focus.

Yet even if there were to be new elections in spring next year it is possible that Merkel could run again. Seventeen years after she took charge of Germany’s conservative party, there are still no credible candidates for a coup at the top, nor candidates with her blessing that look ready to take over the helm. For now, the only party in Germany calling on Merkel to go is the far-right Alternative für Deutschland. The end of Merkel may be closer than it has ever been. But when it comes, it will still be because she has decided to jump, rather than because she was pushed.

The Guardian, 20/11/2017

### **Germany’s crisis means uncertainty for Europe. But it won’t be fatal**

*The continent has been rattled at a time when it has so many unresolved issues.*

*Macron’s plans, however, will be key – and Merkel is not finished yet*

The collapse of Germany’s coalition talks is the latest shock to hit Europe. No one saw it coming. Of course the blow is of a different nature from the banking crisis, the war in Ukraine, the refugee crisis, Brexit, Trump, Poland and Hungary’s democratic backsliding, or Catalan secessionism. Germany’s politics look upended but the fundamentals are still in place: the postwar democratic set-up is hardly under threat. Still, this is rattling stuff. Europe’s powerhouse is in unknown political territory at a time when so much remains unresolved across the continent. And Germany’s political uncertainty means yet more uncertainty for the EU. Yet doomsayers shouldn’t assume that this crisis has to be fatal.

Nowhere outside Germany is the political breakdown being watched more closely than in France. Emmanuel Macron had set his sights on the German election as the starting point of his plan for a European “renaissance” alongside Merkel. On Monday, Macron did not hide his concern, saying it was not in France’s interest that “things become tense” in Germany. “We must move forward,” he added. But the worries go deeper than Germany’s internal problems. If Merkel was supposed to be the leader of the free world in the era of Trump and Brexit then what might the future

look like without her? Far-right websites have been humming with glee at the news that Merkel has now run into deep difficulty.

There is little doubt about which forces might seek to capitalise on these events. Merkel has been a favourite punch bag for populists and extremists, left and right alike. Germany's clout in Europe under her tenure has been much disparaged, not least by Putin and Trump. And the EU was meant to be "catching the winds in its sails" this year, as Jean-Claude Juncker said. But now what? The German crisis may or may not be solved through new elections, but to assess what it means for Europe, how Macron plays his cards will be a key factor.

Macron's France is on a bit of a high these days, and pulling Europe out of a difficult decade is one of the president's biggest ambitions. He has built up a close relationship with Merkel, and together they had announced a "plan" for Europe to be implemented once Merkel had overcome her election hurdle. The trouble now is the clock is ticking. After the summer of 2018 campaigning for the 2019 European parliament elections gets under way. That's a key political moment for Macron, who wants his République En Marche party to somehow be replicated across Europe through transnational lists which would then fill the departing UK's 73 seats. Add to this Italy's elections – due early 2018 – with the populist, anti-migrant Five Star Movement worryingly strong, and it becomes obvious that Europe does not need this German impasse.

Another German election could delay everything for months on end: fixing the eurozone, resolving the future relationship with Britain, dealing with the Balkans, delivering on trade deals, regulating globalisation, saving the Paris climate accord, building up European defence, solving Ukraine and the rest of it. As Britain pulls out of Europe, the dynamics of the Franco-German alliance have become absolutely paramount. Macron needs Germany if he is to succeed in at least creating the impression that he can transform France into a trailblazing European power. Germany needs France to allay continental perceptions that it has become too domineering and is acting selfishly.

But let's keep things in perspective. Germany remains a strong democracy. Its economy is thriving. The country's anchoring in the EU is not in doubt. Its main political parties all agree on the need to preserve the European project which, as Konrad Adenauer said in the 1950s, would be the road to Germany's rehabilitation and its wellbeing. Merkel has repeatedly said this year: "Germany can do well only if Europe does well." No serious politician contradicted her.

To a degree, the current trouble says more about German provincialism than it does about German might or hubris, or indeed any debate in Germany on a grand design for the country's future or for Europe as a whole. Frank-Walter Steinmeier, the German president, wasn't wrong when he warned on Monday that concern would only grow among his neighbours if the leaders of Europe's largest nation did not rise to their responsibilities.

Against that backdrop, Macron projects self-confidence while Merkel looks jaded. Yet Macron depends on the outcome in Germany more than anything else. At

home, he has contained domestic opposition to his labour market reforms and his ratings are up. It is not good news for him that Merkel is now weakened. At the same time, talk of Merkel's political demise has been going on since the 2015 refugee crisis, and yet she is still around.

Macron is now waiting to see how he can secure the benefits of a relationship he's so keenly invested in. These questions aren't just central to two political careers – one just starting, the other of almost record duration. They are central to a whole continent.

Natalie Nougayrède is a Guardian columnist.

The Guardian, 21/11/2017

## UNIT 7 Diplomacy and war



### **Putin brings Iran and Turkey together in bold Syria peace plan**

*Russian leader meets Iranian and Turkish counterparts amid flurry of diplomatic activity, with US and EU sidelined*

A peace settlement to end the six-year Syrian civil war will require compromise by all sides, including the Assad government, Vladimir Putin has said as the presidents of Iran and Turkey arrived in the Black Sea resort of Sochi amid some of the most audacious Russian diplomatic activity in decades.

The summit between the three powers, all deeply involved in the conflict, is designed to pave the way for a settlement likely to leave Syria's Russian- and Iranian-backed president, Bashar al-Assad, in power within a reformed Syrian constitution.



It follows the near-collapse of the Syrian opposition since Moscow's armed intervention in 2015 and the military defeat of Islamic State in all of the major towns and cities that were under its control.

"The militants in Syria have sustained a decisive blow and now there is a realistic chance to end the multi-year civil war," Putin declared as he hosted Iran's Hassan Rouhani and Turkey's Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in Sochi. "The Syrian people will have to determine their own future and agree on the principles of their own statehood. It is obvious that the process of reform will not be easy and will require compromises and concessions from all participants, including of course the government of Syria."

Putin hosted Assad in Sochi on Monday and extracted a more emollient tone than normal. He insisted on Wednesday that Assad was committed to a peace process, constitutional reform and free elections.

The Russian leader also held a frantic round of telephone diplomacy with other world leaders including Saudi Arabia's King Salman, Israel's Benjamin Netanyahu and Donald Trump.

Putin urged Iran and Turkey to start a discussion with him on the reconstruction of Syria. "Given the colossal scale of the destruction it would be possible to think together about the development of a comprehensive program for Syria," he said.

He claimed military de-escalation zones had reduced the levels of violence and hundreds of thousands of refugees were returning home. The three-way summit endorsed his plan for a Syrian national dialogue congress to be held in Russia in December. The meeting is intended to help frame a constitution for an integrated Syria, including the terms of presidential elections in which Assad would be entitled to stand.

But in a sign of the difficulties ahead, Erdoğan is insisting Syrian Kurds are excluded from the congress on the grounds that the Kurds are linked with Turkish Kurdish groups that Turkey says are terrorists. Syrian Kurds have been instrumental in the defeat of Isis as part of the US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces.

Erdoğan was once one of the main backers of the splintered Syrian opposition but is now primarily focused on what Turkey sees as the Kurdish threat on its border. Rouhani said the grounds for a political settlement had been laid but he argued it was "unacceptable" for foreign troops not invited into Syria by the government to remain in the country – a reference to US troops in the north-east of the country.

Separately, Israel is demanding that the Iranian military presence inside Syria is reined back, especially near the occupied Golan Heights.

The UN special envoy Staffan de Mistura will be briefed on Putin's plans in Moscow on Thursday.

Simultaneously, Syrian opposition leaders are meeting in Saudi Arabia to choose a new negotiating team and platform for UN-sponsored peace talks in Geneva that are due to restart on 28 November.

The reconstitution and expansion of the negotiating team has already led to mass resignations by prominent Syrian opposition figures including the former chair of the High Negotiations Committee, Riyad Hijab. Those who have resigned complain that the international community, especially Russia, is trying to force them to accept that Assad can remain in office despite his brutal tactics in the civil war, including the UN-documented use of chemical weapons.

They also claim Putin, despite his denials, is undermining the UN peace process in favour of a separate peace track with Russian-selected delegates to the national dialogue congress.

De Mistura told the opposition delegates they could instil a new dynamic into the Geneva talks if they could agree “a cohesive, representative, strategically wise, effective team that reflects the diversity of the Syrian society and is ready to negotiate without preconditions, in the same way as the government will be expected to do.”

The flurry of diplomatic activity underlines the degree to which the US and the EU have been sidelined from the process.

The Guardian, 22/11/2017

### **Vladimir Putin briefs Donald Trump on plan to end Syrian civil war**

*After meeting with Bashar al-Assad, Russian president plans summit with leaders of Turkey and Iran, bypassing UN*

Vladimir Putin has sought Donald Trump’s broad endorsement for his plan to bring the Syrian civil war to a close on largely Russian and Iranian terms, after the defeat of Islamic State and the repeated pushbacks of Syrian rebels.

Putin briefed his American counterpart on the phone for more than an hour, as the Russian president prepared to host a summit in the Black Sea resort of Sochi with the leaders of Turkey and Iran – two other powers heavily involved in the conflict in Syria.

The summit, a display of Russia’s restored influence in the Middle East, is expected to discuss Putin’s plans for fresh deconfliction zones and a Syrian national dialogue to draw up a new Syrian constitution that would leave President Bashar al-Assad entrenched and entitled to stand for election again.

Moscow said Putin, in his talks with Trump, conveyed “the message of the necessity to keep the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Syria, and to reach a political settlement based on principals to be worked out in a full-scale negotiation process in Syria”.

Increasingly confident that he has marginalised both pluralist and Islamist groups still holding out against Assad, Putin plans to hold a Syrian national dialogue in early December to which he will invite hundreds of Syrian groups that have reached reconciliation agreements with Assad.

Western diplomats fear Putin has decided in effect to bypass the deadlocked UN Syrian peace process in Geneva, which is due to restart on 28 November, and will instead oversee a parallel peace track.

Western diplomats are urging Putin to recognise that an imposed settlement that leaves dissidents excluded will only lead to further bloodshed, and a European refusal to provide reconstruction funds.

In the run-up to the trilateral summit, Putin hosted Assad in Sochi for four hours of talks on Monday, where they asserted that the military stage of the conflict was coming to an end. The talks were not disclosed until Assad had returned to Damascus.

It was the first time the two men had met since Assad visited Moscow in October 2015 to discuss the surprise Russian military intervention in Syria to protect the Syrian leader from inexorable defeat.

In the four-hour meeting, Putin told Assad, according to the Kremlin: “We’re still a long way off fully defeating terrorism. But as far as concerns our work ... on Syrian territory, the military operation is coming to an end.

“Now the most important thing, of course, is to move on to the political questions, and I note with satisfaction your readiness to work with all those who want peace and a solution to the conflict.

In carefully scripted words, Assad told the Russian leader: “At this stage, especially after we achieved victory over terrorists, it is in our interests to move forward with the political process.”

Although Tuesday’s Putin-Trump call also covered Ukraine, North Korea and Afghanistan, the focus was on Putin setting out the terms of his diplomatic push to end the Syrian civil war.

Putin’s peace plan will leave tens of thousands of Iranian militia inside Syria, and arguably Iran is emerging as the single biggest victor from the conflict.

But Putin is facing problems persuading Turkey, long-term backers of the Syrian opposition, that any settlement will not strengthen Kurdish independence forces in Northern Syria. The Turkish president, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, regards the Syrian Kurds, the key military force in pushing back against Isis in Raqqa, as inextricably linked with Kurdish PKK forces, which Turkey says is operating as a terrorist group inside its borders.

The US has also said it will keep a military presence inside Syria, partly to ensure that the integrity of the UN peace process is maintained.

In a sign that a triumphant Putin is dividing a demoralised opposition, 10 senior figures in the Syrian opposition umbrella group, the High Negotiations Committee, resigned including Riyad Hijab, the former Syrian prime minister. They protested that their negotiating team were being pressured into accepting that any peace deal will leave Assad in office.

The Russian foreign minister, Sergei Lavrov, welcomed the resignation of Hijab and his allies, saying: “The retreat of radically minded opposition figures from playing the main role will make it possible to unite this motley opposition – internal

and external – on a more reasonable, realistic and constructive platform. We will support the efforts made by Saudi Arabia in this respect.”

The new negotiating team was due to be formed in two days of talks in Riyadh due to commence on Wednesday.

The pressure for a revised negotiating team has largely come from Saudi Arabia. Riyadh has backed the HNC since 2015, but appears to have concluded the decisive tilt in the military balance to Assad over the past year means it is no longer realistic to make Assad’s removal a precondition for talks.

The Guardian, 22/11/2017

## UNIT 8 Crime and Punishment



### Culture of Impunity

*Violent crime is rising sharply and the new figures cannot be explained away. Amber Rudd needs to face down the prime minister and go back to stop and search*

Total recorded crime in England and Wales rose last year by 10 per cent. Knife crime was up by twice as much. The increase in gun crime was even sharper. Overall there were 175,000 “crimes against the person”, 18 per cent more than in 2015. Very often mitigating circumstances allow politicians to explain away troubling crime statistics, but not this time. The latest violent crime numbers are unambiguous and fresh evidence of a moped-borne spate of muggings and robberies is uploaded daily to YouTube.

When policies have unintended consequences it can be convenient for policymakers to muddy the waters, but the picture on crime is clear. After many years of progress, the numbers are going in the wrong direction and criminals are going

undeterred. The moped gangs are symptomatic of a culture of impunity that has been allowed to grow as police numbers have fallen to their lowest level in 30 years and the use of stop and search has plunged even further.

Keeping crime down is the most important part of Amber Rudd's job description. So far the home secretary's response to the rise in crime, which cannot be attributed simply to better reporting, has been underwhelming. There will be a consultation on new laws to tackle knife crime. There may be restrictions on the sale of acids and other corrosive substances. There will be an "action plan" on acid attacks that will include new police guidance on searching potential perpetrators.

Why wait? The powers available to police to stop and search, provided they explain their reasons, are extensive. The use of these powers has fallen by three quarters in three years because of instructions from Theresa May when she was home secretary. They were issued out of concern that young black males were being targeted unfairly. They may have been, but circumstances have changed and Ms Rudd needs to act. The new Metropolitan Police commissioner, Cressida Dick, has spoken of her willingness to sanction increased use of stop and search if necessary. It is necessary now.

Figures from the Crime Survey of England and Wales are traditionally released at the same time as those for crime recorded by police. This year is no exception and the former paint a sunnier picture than the latter, suggesting overall crime has in fact fallen. However, the survey tends to miss "high harm, low volume" crimes such as violent assault and murder. Furthermore, it shows a decrease over the past seven years only when fraud and cybercrime are excluded from the count.

Supporters of the prime minister point to her time as home secretary, when a decline in violent crime that started in 1997 continued. Unfortunately this only throws the past year's increase into sharper relief. The lesson is that hard-won gains are easily lost and Conservatives are as capable of losing them as anyone. Two trends not itemised in the recorded crime figures are no less alarming for that. One is the number of acid attacks, which trebled in the six months to April. The other is the growing proportion of thefts for which no suspect is identified, let alone arrested. This now stands at nearly three quarters. If moped gangs are the tip of an iceberg of impunity, this is the iceberg itself.

Ms Rudd needs to move swiftly to raise the cost to opportunistic criminals of carrying guns, knives, acid or any other weapon. Putting more police back on the streets would be one approach but arguably not the best use of public money. A return to more widespread use of stop and search is another. Body cameras carried by police ensure accountability. Racial profiling by police is odious but safeguards against it are improving and the need for a change of police tactics is urgent. The home secretary has been in post a year, with plenty of distractions but no excuse. Public safety must be her top priority.

The Times, 21/07/2017

## How Not to Respond to the Rising Murder Rate

This week the F.B.I. released its annual tally of crime in the United States, and the picture it paints is troubling. In 2016, there were 17,250 homicides, an increase of more than 8.5 percent from the previous year. This comes on the heels of a 12 percent rise in 2015, bringing the total increase over two years to nearly 22 percent — the largest two-year increase in homicide in 25 years.

Violent crime — which includes rapes, robberies and assaults, in addition to homicides — is also up, but less so, rising 4 percent, after a 4 percent increase in 2015.

What to make of this two-year spike in death and violence is unclear, but you can be certain of this: Partisans on all sides will seek to spin this situation to their advantage. And that's a problem that stunts productive conversation about solutions.

Criminal justice reformers will worry that fear of violent crime could slow the momentum of their movement. As a result, they'll play down the data that says it's increasing. They'll say that it's too soon to call this a trend, that a few neighborhoods in a few cities are driving the numbers, and remind us that overall rates of violence remain near historical lows.

Opponents of true reform, including President Trump and Attorney General Jeff Sessions, will do far worse. They will likely use the latest numbers to push the culture-war-fueling narrative about “American carnage” that Mr. Trump described in his Inaugural Address. They'll double down on outdated tough-on-crime strategies like aggressive prosecutions, mandatory minimum sentencing and drug education and follow a strategy that my colleague David Kennedy, a criminal justice researcher and director of the National Network for Safe Communities, recently called a “criminologist's nightmare. And then nothing will change. When it comes to how the country deals with crime, impasse and stalemate will win the day.

This is not new: Progressives consistently argue that crime is simply the result of socioeconomic root causes such as poverty, unemployment, and poor education. But the fact that crime rates declined during the Great Depression and remained low during the Great Recession indicate that's not the case — in reality, crime rates often rise and fall independently of such measures. Conservatives often assert that crime is a matter of values, even though research shows that most people living in dangerous neighborhoods despise the violence they see in their communities.

For years, some scholars claimed that mass incarceration was caused by the war on drugs, but it was the aggressive punishment of violence, not drugs, that pushed our incarceration rates sky high. Law-and-order relics link drug use and violence. But today's drug epidemic, the opioid crisis, took hold years before the rise in violent crime and has few proven connections with violence to date.

Many argue that guns are the crux of that problem, so they push for legal restrictions on them. Most gun crimes, however, are perpetrated with weapons that are already illegally possessed under the laws on the books today. Others insist that guns are the solution, as they could allow law-abiding people to protect themselves

from crime — even though states with permissive gun laws tend to have higher rates of gun violence, and that households with guns are more, not less, likely to suffer gun injuries.

We need a new national dialogue on crime, one that is less about ideology and more about evidence. The current conversation oversimplifies complex issues, emphasizes blame over responsibility, and encourages deadlock instead of progress. We need to move from argument winning to problem solving, recognizing that all these issues are related to one another, and especially to the violence that needlessly claims so many lives.

The conventional wisdom tells us if we want to reduce violent crime, we should look elsewhere: to poverty, culture, drugs or guns. Decades of data says otherwise: When a colleague and I surveyed over 1,400 studies on anti-violence efforts, we learned that to control violence, one must account for it directly by focusing on the small numbers of places, people and behaviors that disproportionately drive the problem. The best approach is to tackle the hardest cases with a combination of empathy and resolve, offering assistance if it will be accepted but also accountability for brutal behavior.

Here's a proven approach that deserves more support: Mr. Kennedy's National Network for Safe Communities supports local efforts to reduce violence, minimize incarceration, and improve police-community relationships. Civic, community and criminal justice leaders confront criminals with a simple message: "The killing must end now. If you let us, we will help you. If you make us, we will stop you." Those willing to turn away from violence are offered services and support, while those who will not are confronted with coordinated law enforcement action. A systematic review found that this strategy reduced crime and violence in nine out of 10 studies, with homicide reductions of 34 percent to 63 percent.

Let's not deny or diminish the immense suffering of victims of crime and communities that are plagued by violence. And let's refuse to exploit that suffering by using it to sow fear among Americans. Setting aside the politics will give us the best chance to stop the senseless killing in our country.

The New York Times, 26/09/2017

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