

MPS' OUTSIDE INTERESTS CONJOINT SURVEY ANALYSIS

To further investigate public attitudes towards MPs' outside interests, a survey experiment was conducted to test how the public view different outside interests MPs hold. The purpose of the survey is not to examine the extent of public concern about outside interests, but rather to test attitudes towards the relative acceptability of different outside interests.

This conjoint survey experiment was analysed jointly by the Committee on Standards in Public Life and Professor Philip Cowley at Queen Mary University of London (QMUL) and Professor Rosie Campbell at Birkbeck, University of London. The project was jointly funded by CSPL and the Mile End Institute at QMUL.

The survey was fielded by YouGov between Monday 23 and Wednesday 25 April 2018. 3,309 individuals answered the survey. Each person was asked to pick their preferred option out of five pairs of MPs, therefore there are 16,545 choices to analyse (n = 33,090). A sample question is shown below.

SAMPLE QUESTION

You will now be shown information on five pairs of hypothetical MPs. For each pair, please state which one you would prefer to have as your MP.

MP 1

- She has been in the House of Commons for **3** years.
- Before entering politics she was a **lawyer**.
- Her political interests include **education**.
- Now that she is in Parliament, she spends **2** hours a week working as a **business director**, for which she is paid **nothing**.

MP 2

- He has been in the House of Commons for **3** years.
- Before entering politics he was a **political advisor**.
- His political interests include **health**.
- Now that he is in Parliament, he spends **2** hours a week working as a **Cabinet Minister**, for which he is paid **£3,000**.

Based on this information, which ONE of these two MPs would you prefer to have as your MP?

MP1 / MP2

Three key aspects of outside interests were tested: the nature of the interest, the time spent on it, and the money earned as a result. Four other variables are included in the analysis: gender, time in office, an MPs' job before entering Parliament, and political interests.

The full results of the conditional logit regression model used to analyse the findings are overleaf (results are presented as odds ratios, so a variable has a positive impact if the value is greater than 1, and a negative impact if it is less than 1). These results are also consistent with an Ordinary Least Squares regression analysis with respondent-clustered standard errors, conducted for robustness.

Key findings:

- MPs are significantly less popular the more they are paid for their outside interests. In general, a candidate who earns £30,000 from an outside interest is 3.7 times less popular than a candidate who earns nothing from an outside interest.
- In relation to the time spent on outside interests, the results are particularly interesting:
 - MPs who spend time on interests outside Parliament (such as Business directors or lawyers) are less popular.
 - MPs who spend more time on outside interests inside politics (e.g. Cabinet ministers) are more popular than those who spend less time on activities outside of politics.
 - This suggests that the public differentiate between the acceptability of time spent on different activities depending on whether it is inside or outside of politics.

Other findings:

- In these hypothetical scenarios, female MPs are seen to more popular than male MPs; this is consistent with the existing literature on candidate choice – see Campbell & Cowley (2014).
- The most popular job for MPs before they enter Parliament is Doctor, the least popular is Banker. Again, this is consistent with existing work (Campell and Cowley 2013)
- Similarly, health is the most popular political interest, and finance and foreign policy are the least popular.
- Respondents prefer MPs who have more experience in office.

Campbell, Rosie and Philip Cowley (2013) 'Rich Man, Poor Man, Politician Man: Wealth Effects in a Candidate Biography Survey Experiment', *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations Vol 16, Issue 1, pp. 56 - 74*

Campbell, Rosie and Philip Cowley (2014) 'What Voters Want: Reactions to Candidate Characteristics in a Survey Experiment', *Political Studies Vol 62, Issue 4, pp. 745 - 765*

	Full Sample (n=33,090)			Cabinet Minister (n=2,966)			Business Director (n=2,966)		
	Odds Ratio		SE	Odds Ratio		SE	Odds Ratio		SE
Gender									
Reference: Male									
Female	1.13	***	0.03	1.25	*	0.11	1.25	*	0.11
Years in office									
Reference: 3 years									
8 years	1.14	***	0.04	1.03		0.11	1.25	*	0.13
21 years	1.33	***	0.04	1.45	***	0.17	1.32	*	0.15
Job before Parliament									
Reference: Political Advisor									
Lawyer	1.32	***	0.06	1.29		0.19	1.49	**	0.22
Director of a private company	1.04		0.04	0.90		0.12	1.07		0.14
Doctor	1.74	***	0.08	1.70	***	0.25	2.03	***	0.29
Banker	0.83	***	0.03	0.77	*	0.10	0.78	*	0.11
Political interests									
Reference: Education									
Foreign policy	0.71	***	0.03	0.84		0.11	0.68	***	0.08
Health	1.08	**	0.04	1.30	*	0.16	1.10		0.14
Finance	0.74	***	0.03	0.93		0.11	0.69	***	0.09
Hours on outside interest									
Reference: 2 Hours									
6 Hours	1.18	***	0.04	1.40	***	0.15	0.95		0.10
15 Hours	1.35	***	0.04	1.79	***	0.21	0.95		0.10
Outside interest									
Reference: Chair of a Select Committee									
Lawyer	0.80	***	0.06						
Business director	0.78	***	0.03						
Doctor	1.57	***	0.12						
Cabinet Minister	1.05		0.03						
Salary from outside interest									
Reference: no salary									
£3,000	0.60	***	0.02	0.57	***	0.06	0.51	***	0.06
£30,000	0.28	***	0.01	0.26	***	0.03	0.20	***	0.03