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You can read this issue of Populus Perspective online at [www.populus.co.uk](http://www.populus.co.uk).

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### Honeymoon Bounce

A year ago Populus research revealed that the defining reaction of voters to the prospect of Gordon Brown becoming Labour leader was uncertainty. A large tranche of the electorate was simply unsure what he'd be like as Prime Minister, what would change and what would not. This created a complex 'churning' of votes when polls asked people to think about what they'd do when/if Mr Brown took over. The net effect was to suggest that the Conservative poll lead would be likely to increase when Tony Blair handed over to his Chancellor.

In fact, of course, the reverse has happened. Mr Brown succeeded during the transition period and in the first few weeks of his Premiership, in reassuring those voters who were uneasy about what sort of Prime Minister he would be. Undoubtedly helped by a testing period for the Conservatives, beginning with their internal argument about policy towards grammar schools, the 'Brown bounce' is the talk of Westminster, prompting speculation about a snap general election in the autumn.

Full details of our recent polls on politics – and all other published polls – are available on our newly revamped website in a fully searchable poll archive. The table below shows the average support for each of the three main parties in published polls during the four distinct phases of this Parliament so far. These

figures show that the ‘Brown bounce’ has added around 5.6% to Labour’s vote, compared with the period before he took over – a slightly bigger bounce than the 4.7% boost that David Cameron brought for the Conservatives when he became leader.

<b>Phases of the Parliament</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>Labour</b>	<b>Conservative</b>	<b>Lib Dem</b>	<b>Net lead</b>
Phase 1: Post-election continuity	5/05 – 12/05	38.9%	31.8%	21.1%	<i>Labour +7.1%</i>
Phase 2: Cameron bounce	12/05 – 4/06	36.3%	36.5%	18.7%	<i>Conservative +0.2%</i>
Phase 3: Blair’s long goodbye	4/06 – 6/07	32.3%	37.3%	18.4%	<i>Conservative +5.0%</i>
Phase 4: Brown bounce	Since 06/07	37.9%	34.5%	16.2%	<i>Labour +3.4%</i>

Links – <http://www.populus.co.uk/poll-archive.html>, <http://www.populus.co.uk> and [http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/columnists/guest\\_contributors/article1074461.ece](http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/columnists/guest_contributors/article1074461.ece)

### **Hands off My Body**

Last month, England’s Chief Medical Officer, Sir Liam Donaldson, recommended that unless people explicitly opt-out then, in the event of their death, it would be presumed that they had given consent to their organs being used for transplant. Sir Liam believes that ‘presumed consent’ is necessary to tackle the growing waiting list for organ transplants. Opponents, however, argue that the state does not own people’s bodies or have a right to take organs after death.

A new Populus poll casts some interesting light on the public’s reaction to Sir Liam’s suggestion. Nearly four out of ten people (39%) support Sir Liam’s position but nearly as many (34%) believe that a person’s organs should only be donated where they have actively given their consent. A quarter of respondents to our online survey, however, say they’d like to see greater efforts to promote the current organ donor system but that if this is not successful an opt-out system should be considered. It seems that the British people are willing to consider ‘presumed consent’ but the case is not yet made.

### **Golden Brown**

Underlying the restoration of Labour’s poll advantage, after 14 months of Tory lead (the longest such period for more than 20 years,) are some big shifts in attitudes to Gordon Brown himself. The latest Populus poll for The Times probed perceptions of the personal attributes of the three main party leaders.

Voters are no more likely to think Mr Brown is ‘charismatic’ now he is Prime Minister than they did when he was Chancellor: only about one in four do so, and David Cameron enjoys a 20%+ lead on this. The Tory leader also scores highest for being ‘likable’, but Gordon Brown’s rating on this attribute has risen by 20% since last autumn. The new Prime Minister has seen similarly large increases in the number

regarding him as 'caring about the problems of ordinary people', 'having what it takes to be a good Prime Minister', 'sticking to what he believes, not giving into pressure' and being 'strong', a key measure for any leader and one on which Mr Brown currently leads his Conservative opposite number by more than 30%.

Links – <http://www.populus.co.uk/the-times-political-attitudes-290707.html>

## The Real Thing

Coca-Cola has usurped Sony as the 'best brand' in the view of American consumers, according to the latest annual survey by Harris Interactive. The poll of over 2,000 US adults invites respondents to 'think about the brands or names of products and services you know' and then asks the entirely unprompted question 'Considering everything, which three brands do you consider the best?'

Sony has come out on top of the list for each of the last seven years, but has dropped to second place in the new poll, conducted in July. Sony, which has never been lower than third, is also one of only two brands to have featured every year since the annual survey was established in 1995 (the other being Ford, which comes fifth this year). Two brands in last year's top ten – Hewlett Packard and General Electric – have dropped out this year, replaced by Microsoft and Pepsi-Cola.

It is a double-whammy for Coca-Cola – ranking as 'best brand' in the views of US consumers for the first time, while retaining its position as the world's 'most valuable brand' in the annual study by leading branding agency Interbrand (in association with Business Week).

2007 Rank	Most valuable brand [source: Interbrand]	'Best brand' [source: Harris Interactive]
1	Coca-Cola	Coca-Cola
2	Microsoft	Sony
3	IBM	Toyota
4	General Electric	Dell
5	Nokia	Ford
6	Toyota	Kraft Foods
7	Intel	Pepsi-Cola
8	McDonalds	Microsoft
9	Disney	Apple
10	Mercedes	Honda

## Another Clinton in the White House

The start of the US Presidential primary process is now less than five months away. New Hampshire – traditionally venue for the second electoral test of the primary

season, following the less formal 'caucuses' of Iowa – seems set this time to go first, having signalled the intention to bring forward voting day to January 8th in response to an attempt by Nevada to insert its own primary between the two traditional starting states.

Polls in New Hampshire put Mitt Romney well ahead in the Republican race, though, having been Governor of the adjacent state of Massachusetts, a win for him there will be both expected and discounted by analysts.

On the Democrat side, Senator Barack Obama will be hoping that the state will deliver him some crucial momentum. He has been closing Hillary Clinton's longstanding lead in New Hampshire and it could be a must-win state for him by January since he also trails Mrs Clinton not only in Iowa, but also in South Carolina and Florida, the next two states to vote and in New York and California which between them account for more than half of all the delegates at stake on February 5th when (at present) 18 states all hold their primaries in what has been dubbed 'Tsunami Tuesday'.

The Republican race is less clear-cut. Mr Romney has established a clear lead in Iowa, as well as New Hampshire, but is running a poor fourth in South Carolina, which comes next and in Florida, which follows. Rudy Giuliani holds small poll leads in both these states – just ahead of former Senator Fred Thompson, who has still not formally announced his candidacy – and a rather larger lead in California as well as his home state of New York. The resilience of the Giuliani campaign has surprised many commentators. Despite the early strength of Mitt Romney, only Mr Thompson, the grizzled actor/politician, is generally perceived to stand between Mr Giuliani and the party's nomination for President.

The Presidential election itself now looks more evenly poised. Until the last month or so polls have habitually shown Hillary Clinton comfortably losing a head-to-head race with either John McCain (once the Republican front-runner, whose campaign is now virtually defunct) or former Mayor Giuliani. The latest polls put Mrs Clinton well ahead of either Fred Thompson or Mitt Romney, and edging ahead of Mr Giuliani. The Iowa Electronic Markets – which put a spot-price on the probability of different Presidential outcomes, with an impressive record of accuracy – currently says that Mrs Clinton is twice as likely as Senator Obama to be the candidate, and projects that the Democratic candidate will win the Presidential election 52/48.

Links – <http://www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/2008/president/>

### **Something for the Weekend**

Whenever the General Election does come – and, according to the latest Populus Parliament Panel survey most MPs expect that won't be until the summer of 2009 –

turnout will again be a crucial factor. So our latest poll of MPs put a number of options to them for increasing voter participation.

The most popular choice was to move voting from Thursday to the weekend – three quarters of MPs backed this suggestion with nearly 91% of Labour MPs in favour. Conservatives are more evenly split – 54% support the move, while 46% are opposed.

61% of Labour MPs would make it compulsory to vote but 97% of Tories and 77% of Liberal Democrats are opposed. There's also a significant party divide over the suggestion of increasing the variety of places where polling stations are located, including having them in supermarkets. 84% of Labour MPs support this, while 56% of Conservatives are opposed.

There seems to be little support for electoral reform among MPs – 21% of the Labour MPs surveyed and only 3% of Conservatives supported a more proportional system.

The Populus panel covers nearly a third of all MPs and includes a representative spread from all parties in the House of Commons and a good regional mix. Respondents include front-benchers from each party as well as senior backbenchers, rising stars and influential members of key Parliamentary Committees.

Links – <http://www.populus.co.uk/populus-parliament-panel-product.html>

### **Change Down Under?**

Australian Prime Minister John Howard is regarded as one of the most durable figures in international politics. Thirty years ago he was Treasurer (i.e. Chancellor of the Exchequer) in Malcolm Fraser's government. Twenty years ago he had an unsuccessful stint as Liberal Party leader before being unceremoniously deposed in 1989. Implausibly restored to the leadership six years later, he became Prime Minister at the 1996 election and has been re-elected at the three subsequent elections, becoming in the process the second longest-serving Australian Prime Minister.

Despite his reputation as a political survivor, Mr Howard is running out of time before the next election – which has to be held by January and is expected in October or November – and is struggling to turn around a poll deficit that opened up this time last year and widened markedly when the opposition Australian Labor Party elected former diplomat Kevin Rudd to be their new leader last December.

Links – <http://www.roymorgan.com/news/polls/2007/4192/>

## Why Make Poverty History?

A survey across the 27 EU member states has found significant differences between countries in attitudes towards development aid – with the newest EU members tending to have different attitudes from the longer-established EU nations.

The study recently published by the EU Commission suggests that in general development aid is presumed to be motivated by some aspect of self-interest, rather than any sense of altruism or charity.

Overall the most widely favoured view (28% across the EU) is that richer countries give development aid out of economic self-interest (e.g. poorer countries being able then to afford to buy more products from wealthier countries) or to contribute to global stability (also 28%). But the spread of views ranged from 61% in Cyprus to only 16% in Lithuania taking the former view, and from 13% in Estonia to 59% in the Netherlands agreeing with the latter.

Maltese voters are much the most likely (44% – twice the average for all EU countries) to think development aid is motivated by the desire to ‘encourage democracy and good governance’, while only 7% of Cypriots take this view.

One in five of those surveyed think that the main motivation for the giving of development aid is the desire of wealthier countries to avoid emigration from poorer aid-recipient countries. But voters in the 12 new EU member states are a third more likely than those in the 15 old member countries to believe this. Slightly fewer believe that aid is now motivated by the desire to ‘avoid favourable conditions for terrorism’ (19%) or to ‘gain political allies’ (15%); but in Latvia the latter emerged as the number one motivation (32%), whereas just 3% of Danes regarded it as such.

About one in eight across the EU (12%) think that development aid is motivated by the desire ‘to have a clear conscience’ – with the French (19%) most likely to say this and Romanians (4%) least likely to do so.

The survey found that 11% believe the motive for aid giving is simply the altruistic desire ‘to help people who are in need’. This was the number one answer in Austria (29%) – and by far the least supported option in the UK, where just 1% took this view.

The same survey found that Sub-Saharan Africa is generally accepted as the part of the world most in need of development assistance from Europe – though the numbers taking this view varied from a high of 85% in Denmark to a low of 35% in Lithuania.

In 26 of the 27 EU member states ‘reducing extreme poverty and hunger’ is seen as the top priority goal for development aid (with support for this view ranging from

91% in Cyprus to 52% in Italy). The exception is Estonia, where slightly more voters judge 'combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases' to be a higher priority.

Links - [http://ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs\\_280\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_280_en.pdf)

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