



This is a repository copy of *MPs' expenses: the legacy of a scandal 10 years on*.

White Rose Research Online URL for this paper:

<https://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/213279/>

Version: Accepted Version

Article:

Flinders, M. orcid.org/0000-0003-3585-9010 and Anderson, A. (2022) *MPs' expenses: the legacy of a scandal 10 years on*. *British Politics*, 17 (2). pp. 119-143. ISSN 1746-918X

<https://doi.org/10.1057/s41293-021-00173-9>

This version of the article has been accepted for publication, after peer review (when applicable) and is subject to Springer Nature's AM terms of use, but is not the Version of Record and does not reflect post-acceptance improvements, or any corrections. The Version of Record is available online at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1057/s41293-021-00173-9>

Reuse

Items deposited in White Rose Research Online are protected by copyright, with all rights reserved unless indicated otherwise. They may be downloaded and/or printed for private study, or other acts as permitted by national copyright laws. The publisher or other rights holders may allow further reproduction and re-use of the full text version. This is indicated by the licence information on the White Rose Research Online record for the item.

Takedown

If you consider content in White Rose Research Online to be in breach of UK law, please notify us by emailing eprints@whiterose.ac.uk including the URL of the record and the reason for the withdrawal request.



eprints@whiterose.ac.uk
<https://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/>

MPS EXPENSES: THE LEGACY OF A SCANDAL TEN YEARS ON

Abstract

The main conclusion of the existing research base is that, despite the public anger it ignited, the MPs expenses scandal actually had little impact on British politics. This article questions this conclusion and suggests that the impact of the scandal was far more significant and multi-dimensional than has generally been recognised. Indeed, research suggests that parliament still exists in the shadow of the expenses scandal and that if a longer-term perspective reveals anything it is the failure of the scandal to stimulate a sensible discussion about the price of democracy and the inevitable cost of politics (and therefore politicians).

Key words: Crisis; Disaffection; Expenses; Parliament; Reform; Scandal.

‘If the events of May 2009 are indeed a true watershed as far as long-term electoral behaviour and levels of trust are concerned, then we will have to wait at least some time before we can make firm conclusions on the future data’, Alex Kelso (2009) noted, and ‘[in] this respect, caution is still required before announcing a shift to anti-politics or to the expansion of the politically disillusioned’. Ten years on from the crisis and with the availability of fresh data it is now possible to engage in a detailed analysis of the social, political and institutional consequences of this episode in British parliamentary history. Is parliament still ‘on its knees’, as Kelso suggested it was in 2009, in the wake of the scandal ten years ago? One way of approaching this question is to start, as it were, at the end rather than the beginning of the historical period being examined. As such, the stark findings of the Hansard Society’s (2019) *Audit of Political Engagement 16* could be interpreted as suggesting that the rise in anti-political sentiment and political disillusionment (that many commentators predicted would be a consequence of the scandal) has indeed come into fruition. The absence of counterfactuals and the multiplicity of intervening variables clearly makes the intellectual credibility of such simplistic conclusions highly problematic. Putting the same point slightly differently, even a decade later ‘caution is still required’ – to quote Kelso – in assessing the long-term legacy of the MPs expenses scandal.

Nevertheless, the central argument of this article is that the MPs expenses scandal has had a greater impact on British politics than is generally recognised. It is also possible to suggest (our second argument) that the scandal also had a powerful cultural affect both within and beyond the Palace of Westminster to the extent that it continues to cast a long shadow over Westminster. Our third and final argument is that if there is ‘unfinished business’ *vis-à-vis* MPs expenses then it relates not to regulatory or institutional structures but to the cultivation of a balanced and wide-ranging conversation about the value of democracy and the inevitable cost of politics (and therefore of politicians). We do not seek to suggest in any way at all that the MPs expenses scandal is in any way directly or exclusively responsible for the rise of UKIP or the contemporary travails concerning Brexit. Instead we seek to posit the scandal as just one – albeit particularly significant – episode in a series of events that have cumulatively served to erode public trust in political institutions, political processes and politicians. These arguments are based on a mixed-methods approach that included: (i) a landscape review of institutional reforms from 2009-2019; (ii) the analysis of datasets concerning parliamentary behaviour and social attitudes; (iii) a review of recent documentary material; (iv) plus the findings of 27 semi-structured interviews with current and former MPs, journalists, polling specialists, parliamentary staff, academics and a representative of the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority (IPSA).¹

¹ During 2019 three BBC documentaries were commissioned and broadcast which re-interviewed prominent figures with some relationship to the scandal. Taken together these provided a rich source of new data. The first was the BBC Newsnight Special *Expenses: The Scandal that Changed Britain* (broadcast 25 March 2019), the second was a special edition of the BBC Radio 4 *The Reunion* programme (broadcast 25 March 2019), and the third was a major BBC Radio 4 documentary *MPs Expenses: Legacy of a Scandal* (broadcast 7 May 2019). One of the authors of this article was the writer and presenter of this latter programme and has therefore been able to access a large amount of interview data and insights that were not used in the final documentary.

This article is divided into four sections. The first provides a brief account of the MPs expenses scandal with a distinctive focus on the historical context. The second section reviews the existing research base and argues that the view that the MPs expenses scandal had a limited impact is the general position within the literature. The third and most substantive section argues that the slightly longer timeframe that is now available facilitates a different conclusion regarding the extent of change. The scandal did not lead to transformational or radical change – it really was ‘a very British revolution’ (Bell 2010) – but it did shape the nature and form of parliamentary politics in important ways that have generally not been recognised. The fourth section returns to the question of whether parliament is still ‘on its knees’ and asks whether the scandal should ultimately be interpreted as a missed opportunity to cultivate a meaningful discussion with the public about the cost of democracy, politics, and politicians.

I. The Scandal

On May 7 2009 revelations published by *The Telegraph* rocked British politics – an ‘incendiary device’, as Kelso described it, ‘thrown directly at the political establishment’ - by revealing how MPs had used and apparently abused the House of Commons expenses system for personal gain (Kelso, 2009, p. 334). From duck houses to moat cleaning and from kit-kats to bath plugs – not to mention the ‘John Lewis list’ or the ‘flipping of homes’ – it is almost impossible to over-state the scale and intensity of public anger. Day-after-day and drip-by-drip *The Telegraph* published stories that seemed to confirm the very worst beliefs of a public that was already highly sceptical about politicians. The public’s concerns regarding the arrogance and incompetence of their MPs was compounded by the fact that MPs had at first tried to exempt their expenses from the *Freedom of Information Act*, had then embarked on a long-legal attempt to block the release of information and had then planned to release information in a highly redacted manner, and was then amplified by the subsequent attempts of many MPs to justify their behaviour. In June 2009 the pollster Sir Robert Worcester told one parliamentary committee ‘The public are sullen, some even mutinous’ (House of Commons Reform Committee 2009, p. 7). Notions of the ‘demonization’ of MPs might appear far-fetched now that the initial impact of the scandal has faded but during interviews MPs (former and current) remembered the strength and anger of public feeling that had been unleashed (See Byrne and Theakston 2016, p. 693; Tinkler and Mehta 2016, p. 14).

It’s hard for those who weren’t in there to understand just what it was like. It was like being in a war zone or battlefield – we were all under attack...just waiting to see who was going to be next to get the dreaded phone call (MP, interview with one of the authors, April 2019).

Ann Cryer who as MP for Keighley from 1997-2010 experienced the MPs from the inside, recounted the emotional strain it placed on all members of the Commons to the extent that the Whips even felt it necessary to place some MPs under ‘suicide watch’ due to concerns about their mental wellbeing (The Reunion, Parliamentary Expenses Scandal 2019). The scandal brought down the Speaker of the House of Commons, Michael Martin, who became the first Speaker to resign under duress since 1695; it led to the resignation of several ministers and the decision by a large number of MPs to announce their intention to stand down at the next General Election; to the launch of several police investigations into fraud, tax evasion and the misappropriation of public money; and the eventual arrest and conviction of six MPs. It is therefore not surprising that the 2010 General Election witnessed one of the largest rates of legislative turnover in the post-war era (House of Commons Library 2018) or that the British Social Attitudes Survey indicated a dramatic drop in public confidence in politicians, political processes and political institutions (NatCen Social Research 2010; 2012).²

What is possibly more surprising (and also generally unacknowledged in the wider literature) is that if the MPs expenses scandal counts as a crisis then it was undoubtedly a *creeping* crisis. Creeping in the sense that the scandal emerged out of a deeper failure of successive post-war governments to openly address the issue of MPs pay and expenses. The antecedents of the scandal are to be found in almost a century of fudge and prevarication whereby recommendations for an increase in MPs pay were consistently rejected by Prime Ministers who feared a public backlash (see Judge 1984). Over time the position of MPs relative to other

professions reduced in terms of salaries and discontent grew on the backbenches. The conundrum was therefore how to improve the financial position of MPs without actually being seen by the public to have done so. It was in the response to this puzzle that the seeds of the MPs' crisis were sown.

The Additional Costs Allowance (ACA) that had been introduced in 1971 to allow MPs to fulfil their parliamentary duties gradually mutated into what was seen by many politicians as an extension of their salary. 'They would shy away from making recommended pay increases', as Sir John Baker, former chair of the Senior Salaries Review Commission, explained 'but there was a nod and a wink that the expenses system would be interpreted liberally and in the round...through swings-and-roundabouts MPs would always be alright' (The Reunion, Parliamentary Expenses Scandal 2019). In April 2009 the ACA rate was £24,222 and included mortgage interest payments, furniture, repairs, maintenance and utility bills. Critically, the ACA worked on a 'no-receipts-and-very-few-questions' basis that assumed MPs were sufficiently honourable not to abuse the system and that there was no need to trouble the public with any information about how much MPs were claiming (or for what). What emerged from this strategy of evading the issue of MPs pay, on the one hand, and fudging the issue of expenses, on the other, was a secretive culture of entitlement that was increasingly out of line with the transparency and audit cultures being imposed across the public sector. A small number of MPs openly rejected the temptations of the expenses system and sought to highlight the likely consequences should 'the bloated putrefactions of patronage' be exposed to the public. In 1992, for example, Tony Wright – then a backbench Labour MP – wrote about the 'Palace of Low-Grade Corruptions' and the need to 'wind-up the old rackets and clean-up Westminster' (Wright 1992). His warning was not heeded.

II. Short- And Medium-Term Analyses

The previous section recounted a classically British account of 'muddling through' *vis-à-vis* MPs pay and expenses. This strategy functioned until it came into direct conflict with the government's own freedom of information legislation in 2005. It is important to acknowledge three contextual factors in order to understand the gravity and impact of the scandal and quite why commentators questioned whether the entire basis of parliamentary democracy might well be in jeopardy. The first relates to the nature of the crisis. British parliamentary politics had not been immune from scandals during the previous fifty years but these generally revolved around the behaviour of specific individuals, or at worst governments (they also tended to involve sex and not money). The MPs expenses scandal, by contrast, appeared to be *systemic* in nature and, as such, tainted the whole political class (and involved money but not sex). It also occurred (secondly) in the wake of the global financial crisis and at a time when politicians were making the case for austerity measures thereby creating a sharper sense of 'them and us' based around a sense of moral double standards. The third contextual factor has generally been overlooked in the existing literature and focuses on the existence of a fertile socio-political climate for what might be termed 'crisis creation' by the media. As one former Labour MP put it,

Looking back, I can't help feeling that to some extent we brought it on ourselves. We spent the 1980s and 1990s lobbing accusations of sleaze and corruption at the Tory governments and in some cases it was totally warranted. But it all came back to haunt us later on when the expenses issue exploded...we'd created a climate when most of the public already thought we were scumbags and so the expenses just confirmed what the public thought (MP, interview with one of the authors, April 2019).

Deborah Mattinson, who was a special adviser to the Prime Minister at the time of the scandal, offers a slightly different perspective:

Sleaze, back in the 1990s was all about the Tories and the party that had been in power a long time and people were looking for something different...I don't know if it is cyclical exactly but in a sense whenever people bother to vote it is sort of a triumph of hope over experience... They are looking for a new way of doing politics and hoping that they'll find it. They hoped they found it with Labour in 1997 and that particular scandal very much stuck to the Tories whereas I think the expenses scandal was a plague on all your houses (MPs Expenses: Legacy of a Scandal 2019).

But what exactly does the existing research base tell us about the impact or legacy of the MPs expenses scandal? In this regard Jennifer van Heerde-Hudson and Orlanda Ward's *The 2009 British MPs' Expenses Scandal: Origins, Evolution and Consequences* (2014) provides a critical reference point with a simple conclusion: 'We argue that despite some early predictions, the scandal was limited in its impact: the purported 'revolution' never occurred'. The main aim of this article is to question the degree to which this conclusion remains an accurate characterisation of the legacy of the scandal (*qua*. Kelso, above) and the degree to which early assessments may now demand revision or amendment. With this in mind it is possible to categorise the main forms of impact that were identified by scholars in the short- to medium-term aftermath of the crisis within three main categories: *social* effects, *electoral* impacts and *institutional* reforms (see Table 1).

**Table 1. The Impact of the MPs Expenses Scandal:
Landscape Review of Short- and Medium-Term Analyses**

EFFECT	MEANING	ASSESSMENT
<i>Social</i>	Impact on public attitudes & framing	Moderate (negative but mainly in terms of reinforcing pre-existing negativity)
<i>Electoral</i>	Impact on electoral behaviour & recruitment	Minimal (Public anger did not have a major impact on 2010 General Election)
<i>Institutional</i>	Impact on governing structure & outreach	Minimal (Reform limited to the creation of IPSA)

The consequences of the scandal in terms of its impact on public trust and confidence in politics was always likely to be severe. Survey data from May to June 2009 showed that very few members of the public were not aware of the scandal and that the vast majority were unsurprisingly angry and disappointed. Public trust in politics, although not high before the scandal, fell even further (Hansard Society 2010). On any number of indicators, the social effects of the scandal were as uniformly negative as they were intense, with 70% of the public stating that MPs were 'out of touch' with the day-to-day lives of their constituents (YouGov 2010). Due to the manner in which public attitudes were already highly critical the statistics have been generally interpreted not as a 'collapse in trust' but as confirming pre-existing attitudes and hardening the public's commitment to a 'bad faith model of politics' (Flinders 2012). 'Far from worsening an anti-politics mood in the country' Charles Pattie and Ron Johnson concluded, 'the scandal seems only to have confirmed the public's already poor opinion of politicians' (Pattie and Johnson 2012).

Given the apparent social effects and the existing research base on the way in which scandals translate into electoral effects, the logical assumption was that the MPs expenses scandal would have had significant implications for voting behaviour. Although there is some evidence that MPs involved in the scandal did worse than their less tainted colleagues, the overall finding from the combined research base is that the effects were relatively muted: among sitting MPs the electoral cost of implication in the scandal appears to have been a mere 1.5% (Vivyan, Wagner and Tarlov 2012). One explanation for this dampened effect a large number of MPs 'jumped before they were pushed' and did not stand for re-election (Larcinese and Sircar 2017). Although 'high-status' MPs were no more likely to have abused the expenses system, research suggests they were the focus of more intense media attacks, as were female MPs (Graffin 2013). Where electoral competition in a constituency was tight, political partisanship seemed to trump voters demands for electoral accountability (Eggers 2014). If the scandal mainly reinforced pre-existing biases and had a limited effect on the 2010 General Election, then what does the existing research base suggest was the main political impact of the MPs expenses scandal? The answer revolves around an *institutional* response and the creation of the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority (IPSA). And yet even here the research base remains slim with descriptive accounts that are often combined with a warning about the unintended consequences of 'kneejerk reactions' and suggestions that IPSA's 'long-term existence is not assured' (Parpworth 2010; vanHeerde-Hudson and Ward 2014).

The central argument of this section is that our understanding of the legacy of the MPs expenses scandal remains limited and the research that does exist suggests that the scandal had a very limited impact. This reflects the extent to which the greater part of the existing scholarship was written within 36 months of the scandal and has therefore not been able to adopt a slightly broader lens or draw-upon recently published

data and analysis. Put very simply, the short- and medium-term analyses published between 2009 and 2014 tend to emphasise electoral and psephological perspectives (to the detriment of the cultural and institutional) and share a common conclusion that ‘the longer-term impact seems surprisingly slight’ (Pattie and Johnson 2012, p. 748). The next section draws upon new research and a slightly longer timeframe to assess if this initial conclusion remains correct.

III. A Medium- To Long-Term Analysis

The MPs expenses scandal remains a major episode in British parliamentary history and the aim of this article is to assess its legacy now that a decade has elapsed since *The Telegraph* first broke the story. The previous section offered a very brief review of the existing research base on the scandal in order to highlight that the conventional academic view is that it had a fairly limited impact. This deduction is interesting given the scale of public anger and opprobrium generated by the issue. ‘[T]he revolution never happened’, as Alan Renwick and his co-authors concluded in 2011, ‘with a few exceptions where we see significant scandal effects, the full force of public anger never really took hold, particularly in electoral terms’ (Renwick, Lamb and Numan 2011). Our argument is not that a revolution *did* occur and it is certainly true that the post-scandal surge in discussions about the need for constitutional reform dissipated fairly rapidly. Could it be, however, that there were more ‘scandal effects’ (social, electoral or institutional) that were not (or *could not*) have been recognised in the immediate aftermath of the scandal? Putting the same point slightly differently, might a slightly longer time-frame reveal the full effects of the scandal in a way initial analyses did not? In this regard, our answer to this question is summarised in Table 2 (below).

**Table 2. The Impact of the MPs Expenses Scandal:
Landscape Review of Medium- and Long-Term Analyses**

EFFECT	MEANING	SHORT-/MEDIUM-TERM ASSESSMENT	MEDIUM-/LONGER TERM ASSESSMENT
<i>Social</i>	Impact on public attitudes & framing	Moderate	Significant (redefined dominant cultural reference points, shift in nature of anti-politics)
<i>Electoral</i>	Impact on electoral behaviour & recruitment	Minimal	Moderate (<i>demand</i> -side dynamics facilitated a culture shift and spill-over effects)
<i>Institutional</i>	Impact on governing structure & outreach	Minimal	Significant (election of new Speaker, Wright reforms, ‘Right to Recall’)

As Table 2 illustrates, our main argument is that the impact of the MPs expenses scandal was slightly more extensive than is commonly recognised. While many relevant issues *have* been the focus of extensive research, what tends to be missing is any explicit link or acknowledgement of the role the expenses scandal played in terms of fuelling these changes. In other areas, such as in relation to social attitudes, it is only the collection of fresh data that allows us to suggest connections and consequences that could not have been identified in the short- to medium- term studies. Three caveats must be given before exploring Table 2 in more detail. Firstly, the passage of time clearly makes forging direct causal links increasingly problematic due to the existence of intervening variables. Secondly, in some areas our argument rests – to a greater or lesser extent – on *the perception* of key political actors that a link exists and we acknowledge that perception is not the same as reality. We do however suggest that beliefs and interpretations – the stories that actors tell – still matter. Thirdly, this section seeks to forge connections and substantiate what is in reality an initial hypothesis or proto-theory; it does not (and could not) provide an exhaustive account of each and every variable. Our argument is not that an unrecognised political ‘revolution’ occurred in the wake of the MPs expenses scandal but simply that the legacy effects may have been slightly broader and more significant than is commonly recognised.

3.1 Social Effects

The short-term impact of the MPs expenses scandal on public trust in politics and politicians was fairly clear and dramatic, irrespective of whether this initial fury translated into significant electoral effects. As Figure 1 (below) illustrates, the latest survey evidence suggests a further decline in public confidence (and it's noteworthy that the MP's expenses scandal is highlighted as a dominant historical reference point by the authors of this research against which to compare contemporary social values).

Figure 1. Which of these statements best describes your opinion on the present system of governing?

Source: Hansard Society, (2019) Audit of Political Engagement 16

The challenge, however, lies in proving that any credible link exists between the initial scandal in 2009 and the current situation, especially given the current parliamentary deadlock surrounding Brexit. Two pieces of evidence suggest that at least some form of causal link may well exist. The first seam of evidence comes from interviews with current MPs and political journalists who remain adamant that the MPs expenses scandal does indeed continue to cast a dark shadow over parliament. The following quotes provide illustrative examples of this concern.

I came in to the House in 2010 and was therefore completely untainted by the scandal... and it was a scandal... but we don't seem to be able to leave the issue behind. To put it to bed... It's like a wound that just won't heal (MP, interview with one of the authors, April 2019).

Expenses remains a big issue... Of course it does...it was the system imploding and some of the things that came out were never going to be forgotten about quickly. It's also true that politicians have themselves not allowed the issue to rest...especially at the local level where the claims of the sitting MPs are frequently the focus of destructive but completely immature attacks by opposition parties (journalist, interview with one of the authors, April 2019).

That finger still lies on us today...where people are deeply suspicious and worried about whether their MP is on the make (Lord Blunkett, MPs Expenses: Legacy of a Scandal 2019).

And yet, as already conceded, the existence of a *perception* amongst those working within Westminster that a longer-term legacy effect continues to exist is not the same as substantive evidence. For this the work of Nick Clarke and his colleagues on folk theories, political interaction and the rise of anti-politics provides an arguably firmer and complementary second seam of research (Clarke et al 2018).

Clarke *et al's* analysis and compartmentalisation of the diary entries provided by Mass Observation panellists suggests that public cynicism about politicians is *not* particularly new but that *it is* possible to identify a distinctive shift in the tone and nature of anti-political sentiment following the MPs expenses scandal. This challenges the short-term analyses by commentators who in the immediate aftermath of the scandal argued that '[T]he public outcry at the expenses scandal of 2009 represents merely the latest impassioned chapter in public dissatisfaction with politicians and the political system, *not the emergence of a new narrative* [emphasis added]' (Fox 2009). Recent longitudinal research suggests that in the wake of the scandal there *was the emergence of a new narrative* in the form of new cultural reference points or folk theories through which views about politicians were communicated and to some extent reinforced and altered. In the immediate post-war period politicians were commonly viewed as 'self-seekers', 'place-seekers' and 'social-climbers' but the dominant social lens was largely benign and reflected a healthy scepticism and the dominant civic culture at the time. What appears to have changed in the wake of the MPs expenses scandal is that new stories and sharper characters have been added to this traditional storyline – 'expense fiddlers', 'pigs', 'snouts-in-the-trough' (Clarke et al 2018). More specifically, it is possible to argue that allusions to duck houses and moat cleaning emerged as the dominant cultural reference points that served to dramatically and negatively inflect public attitudes. Furthermore, the traditional view that politicians tended to be self-interested and rarely

straight-talking was now – the research of Clarke *et al.* (2018) illustrates with great precision – overlaid with the view that politicians were ‘out of touch’ and that they were ‘all the same’. The expenses scandal apparently gave renewed justification and a strong evidence base to support long standing social suspicions.

Combing the analysis provided in *The Good Politician* with the research conducted for this article it is possible to make a further argument that relates to a distinct shift in the tone and tenor of British politics which is often discussed within concerns regarding the decline of civility and is currently the focus of a parliamentary inquiry (see The Joint Committee of Human Rights 2019). The MPs expenses scandal is viewed by many contemporary politicians and observers as representing a critical moment when a more malign and angry mode of public feeling emerged. The following statement by a long-serving MP captures a wider concern.

The expenses scandal changed something... I’m not sure what but I always felt that the relationship between the public and MPs never really recovered...in some ways that anger that first really surfaced back then has never really gone away and it may even have got worse. (MP, Interview with one of the authors, May 2019).

This also finds evidence in the Mass Observation analysis conducted by Clarke *et al.* What distinguishes contemporary anti-political sentiment from previous modes is that today it is associated with anger, disgust, depression and loathing. Critically, for many respondents, the main reason for this seems to be associated with the MPs’ expenses scandal. We are not suggesting that a simple or direct causal link can be made between the MPs expenses scandal and contemporary social attitudes. We suggest instead that there is evidence to propose that in a variety of important ways the perception of the scandal (within Parliament), and particularly its impact in terms of *framing politics* (beyond Parliament), continues to exert a significant legacy effect.

3.2 *Electoral Effects*

The fact that the electoral impact of the MPs expenses scandal seems to have been less dramatic than might have been expected has already been discussed (above). And yet this sub-section draws on recent research to highlight two issues that have arguably been overlooked in the existing research base. The first related to the potential relationship between the expenses scandal and the subsequent ‘populist surge’, the second to the manner in which the scandal led to a change in political recruitment processes which may, in turn, have influenced a change in culture at Westminster.

The first issue relates to the degree to which the UK’s populist parties – primarily the UK Independence Party (UKIP) – were able to funnel the anger and frustration generated by the expenses scandal into electoral support. Our argument here is that (in line with the work of Clarke *et al.*, above) the impact of the scandal was arguably indirect in that it provided UKIP with a powerful emotive stick with which to beat the mainstream parties who had been implicated in the scandal. It is therefore not surprising that UKIP began emphasising ‘its anti-establishment credentials, thereby connecting growing public disillusionment with mainstream politicians fuelled by the MP’s expenses scandal in 2009’ (Deacon and Wing 2016). This strategy was epitomised at the launch of UKIP’s 2010 General Election campaign with its main poster depicting the leaders of the three main parties above the slogan ‘Sod The Lot’ (Lynch and Whitaker 2013). The disproportional nature of the simple plurality electoral system meant that although UKIP secured nearly a million votes it did not secure any seats. But by 2013, notably when UKIP secured 27.8% of the vote in the Eastleigh by-election, it was becoming clear that UKIP’s rhetorical strategy of defining ‘them’ and ‘us’ was beginning to bear fruit. Looking back, Tim Aker – who was Head of Policy at the Taxpayer’s Alliance but would go on to become a member of the European Parliament for UKIP – highlights the manner in which the scandal created what he terms ‘an opening’,

Breath-taking, absolutely astonishing... people claiming for moats, for gardeners but the things that most people phoned-up about were the trivial and small things...buying biscuits ... remembrance wreaths... It was not so much the big ticket items... but when they [the public] see figures that relate to them they went absolutely ballistic at it. And for the first time all of the Westminster parties were tarred with it, no one got away. Had the Taxpayer’s Alliance decided that ‘we’re going to become a political party’ Could the Taxpayer’s Alliance have filled that void instead of UKIP? We’ll never know (MPs Expenses: Legacy of a Scandal 2019).

But UKIP did – to a greater or lesser extent – emerge to fill the void and our argument is simply that any short- to medium-term analysis of the link between the potential impact of the expenses scandal and whether it played at least some role in fuelling populist pressures cannot close-down the discussion on the basis of UKIP’s failure to break through in the 2009 European elections or the 2010 General election. The scandal *may* have helped establish a particularly rich, fertile and long-lasting terrain – through its impact on public trust and the emergence of harder ‘them’ and ‘us’ narratives – that has played at least some role in facilitating the emergent fracturing of the party system. This flows into a second electoral *legacy* argument which focuses on the manner in which the scandal may have ‘opened-up’ space for a distinctive cohort of MPs to enter the Commons.

This argument is subtle in the sense that although the scandal did not have an immediate effect in terms of ‘unfreezing’ the dominant party system we suggest it did have an important and demonstrable effect in terms of ushering in a new generation (or ‘fresh wave’ as several interviewees termed it) of post-2010 MPs who rejected elements of the pre-existing parliamentary culture. In the wake of the scandal David Cameron promised a ‘new politics’ with a ‘transformative effect...taking power from the party elites and the old-boy networks and giving it to the people’ which he achieved, to some extent, by open-up the Conservative candidates’ list for the 2010 General Election and introducing the widespread use of open primaries in order to bring in some ‘new blood’ (*The Guardian* 2009; Cameron 2009). What’s particularly interesting looking back at Cameron’s speeches at the time, especially given our previous argument in this sub-section about populism, is that he adopted an explicitly populist stance. Although his rhetorical emphasis was anti-elitist, anti-establishment and anti-political, in reality this was an acceleration of party reforms that had in fact been in progress for some time. Yet, as candidate selection was to some extent taken ‘out of the hands of parties’ it was possible for a raft of candidates to win selection who may have been unlikely to have done so under traditional procedures in less scandalous times (Childs and Evans 2012). Moreover, a significant number of the ‘Class of 2010’ had campaigned explicitly on the fact that they had no previous political experience (i.e. they were ‘untainted’ as one interviewee put it), that they would adopt an independent approach, and promote the need to change the culture and workings of the House. Michael Crick was political editor at BBC’s *Newsnight* programme in 2009,

I thought the Class of 2010 were perhaps the strongest since about 1945...you did have some really bright people with extraordinary pasts...people like Bob Stewart, Rory Stewart, Kwazi Kwarteng, Sam Giymah on the Conservative side, Chukka Umunna on the Labour side, Lisa Nandy and so on... I think it was a result of the clear out that had happened because of the expenses thing and the whole atmosphere where politicians were just so incredibly unpopular...The 149 resignations did give an opportunity for the parties to pick some new people and the Conservative Party seized that opportunity in particular and chose some people – in some cases people who really did not have that political a background – who’d excelled in other fields. (The Reunion, Parliamentary Expenses Scandal 2019).

‘A refreshing (and uncontaminated) tonic’ was how Tony Wright (2014) once characterised the influx of new post-2010 MPs and other noteworthy members of this group who have subsequently developed a reputation for independent thinking include Caroline Lucas, Anna Soubry, George Eustice, Nicholas Boles, Robert Halfon, Rachel Reeves, Louise Kendall, Nicky Morgan, Gavin Shuker, Sarah Woolaston and Stella Creasy. The 2010-2015 parliament was a period of coalition government which adds a distinctive twist to the traditional understandings of party loyalty and backbench rebellion. And yet one potential indication that a slightly different cultural tide came emerged in the wake of the 2009 expenses scandal is the fact that coalition MPs rebelled in over a third of divisions (35%) which trumped the previous record of 28% held by the previous 2005-2010 parliament. Several interviews also drew-attention to the fact that a majority of those MPs that broke away in February 2019 to establish *ChangeUK* were also members of the ‘Class of 2010’.³ Following on from this is the manner in which members of this cohort were also able to utilise *institutional* reforms that occurred in the wake of the scandal to demonstrate their independence and petition for further reform.

³ Chuka Umunna, Gavin Shuker, Luciana Berger, Chris Leslie, Ann Soubry and Sarah Woolaston.

3.3 Institutional Effects

In many ways the creation of IPSA was the most direct and obvious institutional legacy of the scandal. Established under the *Parliamentary Standards Act 2009*, it assumed responsibility for both setting and administering MPs pay and expenses. In terms of legacy effects, research suggests at least three important elements exist. First and foremost – and contrary to some of the views expressed in the short- and medium-term scholarship – IPSA has not been abolished (*qua*. Van Heerde-Hudson and Ward 2014). Indeed (and secondly) IPSA now has relevance and visibility on the international stage in terms of promoting ‘best practice’ and good governance *vis-a-vis* MPs pay and expenses.⁴ The creation of the Australian Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority in 2017 was directly inspired by the perceived success of IPSA. A third effect relates to the balance between pay and expenses and the broad sense, expressed by interviewees, that the system had become more punitive in the wake of the MPs expenses scandal. This effect may have unintended consequences that had not previously been subject to open acknowledgement or debate (discussed in Part IV, below).

The second legacy relates to the election of John Bercow as the Speaker for the House of Commons as a direct consequence of the expenses scandal. The argument here is that the scandal led to the election of a very specific type of candidate who explicitly acknowledged the need for a reform agenda. ‘I wanted it because I felt that there was a task to be undertaken’, John Bercow has acknowledged, especially in relation to ‘helping parliament get off its knees’ (*The Guardian* 2014). In this regard MPs, journalists and the vast majority of interviewees acknowledged that it would be difficult not to acknowledge Bercow’s tenure as a reforming Speaker and the window of opportunity created by the expenses scandal helped facilitate his appointment. Natascha Engel, who was MP for North East Derbyshire between 2005 and 2017 and was Deputy Chair of Ways and Means from June 2015 to June 2017, noted,

[Bercow] has made a huge difference an absolutely huge difference and Parliament is very different under his speakership than it was previously. John Bercow has gone out of his way to be an ambassador for parliament and his reach is very wide and he speaks a lot! Which former speakers didn’t do...so I think he has had a huge impact in terms of the image of parliament... He has challenged the rules and has asked ‘why?’ when told that something has to happen in a certain way. He has also brought a lot more informality to parliament – which a lot of people don’t like – but other people do and a lot have just thought ‘It is the 21st century after all! Definitely he has consciously been a moderniser and a changer. (Interview with one of the authors, April 2019).

The journalist Michael Crick echoed this view,

John Bercow for all his faults - and the allegations of bullying and loving the sound of his own voice – has been a tremendous reformer and a champion of backbench rights when it comes to holding the government to account...ministers have to do a lot more when it comes to answering to parliament and that has been a jolly good thing... and Bercow, I think, exploited the bad odour that Parliament had with the general public at the time [of the expenses] and he and other reformers said ‘Look, we are so unpopular something needs to change!, Politics needs to change!’ and he used that to push through some changes which have really made parliament much more effective. (MPs Expenses: Legacy of a Scandal 2019).

Since the expenses scandal John Bercow has (i) added public engagement to the core duties of the role of the Speaker in an attempt to act as an ambassador *for* parliament (discussed below); (ii) he has opened-up the Palace of Westminster (including the Speakers Apartments) to the public, with one key element being the creation of the new Parliamentary Education Centre (see Figure 2, below); and (iii) through his granting of significantly more Urgent Questions than his recent predecessors (Figure 3, below).

Figure 2. Visits to the UK Parliament (2000–2014)

Source: Leston-Bandeira 2016, p. 508

⁴ In March 2019, for example, IPSA hosted the inaugural ‘International Parliamentary Regulators Conference’ in London with representatives from fourteen countries.

Figure 3. Number of Urgent Questions asked by Session

Source: House of Commons Library 2019.

Our argument is that the MPs expenses scandal created the context within which John Bercow was elected into an explicitly modernisation-focused interpretation of the Speaker's role. This focus on modernisation leads into a further (and third) institutional impact which revolves around another MP who recognised and sought to exploit an opening. 'I was sitting at home in the garden' Tony Wright, the former MP for Cannock Chase 1997-2010 noted, when this scandal was at its height thinking 'what the hell are we going to do about all this?'

So I wrote to Gordon Brown saying 'Why don't we use this as a moment to try and do things to parliament to give it back some credibility – make it matter more and that way restore its reputation?' Before I knew it he'd set up the committee, and I was chairing it – on the reform of the House of Commons...so yes, out of the scandal – because it would not have happened in normal times...in normal times what we call the 'usual channels' here would have blocked all that...all the attempts by the Commons to get more control over its own timetable, for example, or getting election to select committees...in normal times this would have been blocked but this was not normal times – all resistance had collapsed – and we really had a full run and I think we took full advantage of it (MPs Expenses: Legacy of a Scandal 2019; see also Russell 2011).

The 'full run' led to the *Rebuilding the House* report of November 2009 [the Wright Report] which made a series of recommendations that sought to shift the balance of power back towards the executive and the new coalition government of 2010 accepted two key elements: the election of members and chairs of select committees by secret ballot, and the establishment of a Backbench Business Committee (House of Commons Reform Committee 2009). Five years *before* the scandal Tony Wright had written that the 'prospects for parliamentary reform' were unlikely to be positive without some form of shock to the system or disruptive moment (Wright 2004). The expenses scandal provided that shock and a decade *later* our argument is not concerned with the subsequent impact of each reform (although a potted account of the existing literature would suggest that the removal of the Whips patronage over select committees has been significant but the 'usual channels' have been able to block the Wright Committee's stage-II recommendations concerning the creation of a House Business Committee) but with the role of the MPs expenses scandal in facilitating their introduction. Moreover, the Wright reforms were grasped by many of the 'new generation' post-2010 MPs who utilised the direct election of select committee chairs to build a profile within the House (e.g. Sarah Woolaston on the Health Committee & Liaison, Nicky Morgan on the Treasury Committee, Rachel Reeves on the Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee, Robert Halfon on the Education Committee). 'People are now chairing select committees' Tony Wright suggests 'who would never have been able to in the past because the old system would not have allowed them to get there' (Interview with one of the authors, April 2019).

After the Wright Report the role of the scandal receives scant, if any, attention in any of the subsequent parliamentary reports or academics studies. The Liaison Committee report of October 2012, for example, which sets out to 'review committee activity since the 2010 General Election, and the impact of the 2010 Wright reforms' does not mention the MPs expenses (House of Commons Liaison Committee 2012); *Revisiting Rebuilding the House: The Impact of the Wright Reforms* published by the Political and Constitutional Reform Committee in July 2013 mentions the issue of expenses just once (House of Commons Political and Constitutional Reform Committee 2013, p. 5). The work of several leading scholars adopts a similar approach, where the disruptive role of the expenses scandal is often either completely overlooked or reduced to a cursory single reference (see, for example, Bates, Goodwin and McKay 2017).

The final post-scandal *institutional* legacy was the *Recall of MPs Act 2015*. In the aftermath of the expenses scandal the leaders of each of the three main parties all proposed the introduction of some form of recall

mechanism and these commitments were included in their manifestos for the 2010 General Election. Following the general election, the Conservative and Liberal Democrats' Coalition Agreement included a commitment to 'bring forward early legislation to introduce a power of recall, allowing voters to force a by-election where an MP was found to have engaged in serious wrongdoing and having had a petition calling for a by-election signed by 10% of his or her constituents' (Conservatives and Liberal Democrats 2011) During 2010-2015 an extended process of legislative review and amendment was undertaken and the act finally received Royal Assent in March 2015. Since then three recall petitions have been launched – in North Antrim (Aug. 2018), Peterborough (March 2019) and Brecon and Radnorshire (March 2019) – but our aim is simply to highlight the critical point that it was the expenses scandal that created the 'opening' that led to this reform. Several previous bills to introduce a form of recall had failed – such as the *Political Parties and Elections Bill 2008-09* and the *Parliamentary Elections (Recall and Primaries) Bill 2009-10* – but it was the expenses scandal that provided the necessary reform impetus. Moreover, this was a rather slow-burn institutional impact which meant it was not captured in those short- and medium-term analyses of the impact of the MPs expenses scandal. This significant point concludes our substantive analysis and flows into a small number of concluding reflections.

IV. Still On Its Knees?

Within political science crises disasters, fiascos and scandals have long been a topic of intensive inquiry due to the manner in which they commonly create 'windows of opportunity'. That is, periods in which reforms and changes - even transformational shifts in the dominant mode of governance– suddenly become credible policy-options due to the exposure or recognition of specific challenges or events. Whether the opening of a 'window' leads to the introduction of a new reform and whether this engages at the micro, meso or macro-constitutional level depends on the interplay of a vast range of intervening variables. Looking back ten years after the MPs expenses scandal we have drawn upon original research in order to suggest that its legacy effects may have been more significant than what was originally acknowledged within short- to medium-term analyses. There were no mega-constitutional reforms or revolutionary effects in the traditional explicit transformational sense but it can be argued that the scandal triggered a very *British* revolution. There were 'no barricades, tumbrils or guillotines' (Bell 2010) but a series of significant institutional reforms were rather quietly implemented in the wake of the scandal. Moreover, in terms of cultural and electoral effects it is possible to argue that there have been, and continue to be, longer-term consequences. William Lewis, writing in the *New Statesman* (2019) ten years to the day from when he, as editor of *The Telegraph*, broke the MPs expenses scandal, argued that '[N]othing has been done to address the disintegration of trust in our public institutions'. What this article has revealed is that reform *did* occur but that it has clearly not had the intended effect in terms of rebuilding public confidence of trust in politics or politicians. Ten years later parliament arguably remains on its knees.

And yet in terms of understanding the full impact of the MPs expenses scandal it is possible to draw upon the research to highlight the longer term legacy-effects that have not generally been acknowledged in the existing research base or broader commentary. The significance of this omission, however, is that it highlights a critical element of 'unfinished business' that relates directly to the MPs expenses scandal and more broadly to debates concerning public confidence and trust. The view of the majority of former and serving MPs and several other interviewees was that although the practical operational and regulatory issues may have been addressed, what has never been openly tackled is the need for a wider and more balanced conversation about what MPs actually do, why they do it and why that inevitably came with a financial cost. Quite the opposite, one of the unexpected yet critical findings of this project was the belief amongst MPs that the public still demand what was called a 'sackcloth and ashes' approach, whereby a cheap MP was perceived as a good MP as they were not 'on the make'. Data that supports this view is provided in the annual IPSA survey of MPs and their staff, which suggests that around nine out of ten MPs do not claim their full expense allowance - with a key reason for this being they were 'concerned about the claim being published' (IPSA 2017; see also IPSA 2018). Sarah Childs reflected upon why this matters:

For me there is a failure to really investigate what, for example, a single mother from the north east need in terms of provision to participate in politics. I was always reminded of conversations with people who said

that if you just threw out the idea that if you just gave everyone a *pied-à-terre* again then politics would be cheaper... and that presumes certain kinds of families, it presumes a certain kinds of wealth and then you are really recreating a distance between ordinary people and those who go into politics because you can only go into politics with a *pied-à-terre* in London if you either can afford on your own money to bring your family down or that you presume the other partner (normally the mother) stays in the constituency with the children. So I think the scandal threw up new questions but I never got the sense that the debates around how we support MPs really addressed those issues of under-representation and too often it would say 'but there is enough women trying to get into politics so we don't have to think about expenses regimes in the context of the diversity of parliament' and I think that was a mistake (MPs Expenses: Legacy of a Scandal 2019).

Gloria De Piero (MP for Ashfield since 2010) developed this point from a slightly different perspective,

The fact that we have declining numbers of MPs from working class backgrounds...that in a sense I have always felt is a massive contributor to the disconnect between politics and people.... where are their voices in parliament...the care workers, the supermarkets staff, the Amazon packers...where are all those people's voices in parliament? And I think that is a massive, massive challenge – they [the public] just don't think we [MPs] are like them...Things like expenses feed into a perception of that but actually the issue is that they don't see people who look or sound like them, who don't have the same life experience. (Interview with one of the authors, April 2019)

Several MPs actually suggested that, with the benefit of hindsight, the real legacy of the MPs expenses scandal was that it was a missed opportunity. 'What I would have loved to have seen is people [MPs] going back to their constituencies and really talking to people honestly about what the job was and what they made claims for', Natascha Engel suggested, 'I just think we spent a lot of time in parliament trying to sort this out when really the people we should have been talking to were our constituents...lots of people had perfectly legitimate questions about how we do our jobs and we needed to break through that in order to have an honest conversation'. But this 'honest conversation' – the need for which was discussed more broadly in the months after the scandal as, for example, David Hencke (2009) and Tony Wright (2010) asked 'What price and MP?' and 'What are MPs for?' (respectively) – has still not taken place and as a result the issue of expenses remains a politically toxic one. Research suggests that there is more than a hint of truth in Foges' belief that 'So pungent was the ordure heaped on parliament that the stink still hangs around its members. No matter how humble an MP, how modest their expenses, how hard they work, the in-it-for-themselves narrative endures' (*The Times* 2019). This position brings us back full-circle to Alexandra Kelso's 2009 review of the scandal and her conclusion it is mistake to equate an MP's low allowance claims with the assumption that they must therefore be 'good' and not 'on the make': 'A good MP is not one who makes a minimal claim on public funds, but one who can illustrate just how effectively they use the funds they do claim' (Kelso 2009). The main legacy of the MP expenses scandal – despite the *social, electoral* and *institutional* impacts highlighted in this article – appears to be the need for an honest conversation about the price of politics, the value of democracy and therefore the cost of politicians.

REFERENCES

- Bates, S Goodwin, M and McKay, S. (2017) 'Do UK MPs engage more with Select Committees since the Wright Reforms?', *Parliamentary Affairs*, 70, 780-800.
- Bell, M. (2010) *A Very British Revolution: The Expenses Scandal and How to Save Our Democracy*, London, Icon.
- Byrne, C. and Theakston, K. (2016) 'Leaving the House: The Experience of Former Members of Parliament Who Left the House of Commons in 2010', *Parliamentary Affairs*, 69, 686-707.
- Cameron, D. (2009) 'Speech: Fixing Broken Politics', accessed at <https://conservative-speeches.sayit.mysociety.org/speech/601355> on 29 May 2019.
- Childs, S, and Evans, E. (2012) 'Out of the Hands of the Parties: Women's. Legislative Recruitment at Westminster', *Political Quarterly*, 83, 742-748.
- Clarke, N., Jennings, W., Moss, J. and Stoker, G. (2018) *The Good Politician: Folk Theories, Political Interaction and the Rise of Anti-Politics*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Conservatives and Liberal Democrats (2011) Conservative Liberal Democrat coalition negotiations Agreements reached 11 May 2010, London, Conservatives and Liberal Democrats. Accessed at <https://conservativehome.blogs.com/files/conlib-agreement-1.pdf> on 15 May 2019.
- Deacon, D. and Wring, D. (2016) 'The UK Independence Party, Populism and the British News Media', *European Journal of Communication*, 31, 169-184.
- Eggers, A. (2014) 'Partisanship and Electoral Accountability', *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*, 9, 441-72.
- Flinders, M. (2012) *Defending Politics: Why Democracy Matters in the 21st Century*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.
- Fox, R. (2009). 'Engagement and Participation: What the Public Want and How our Politicians Need to Respond', *Parliamentary Affairs*, 62, 673-685.
- Graffin, S. (2013) 'Falls from Grace and the Hazards of High Status', *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 58, 313-345.
- Hansard Society (2010) *Audit of Political Engagement 7*, London, Hansard Society.
- Hansard Society (2019) *Audit of Political Engagement 16*, London, Hansard Society.
- Hencke, D. (2009) 'What Price an MP?', *Public Policy Research*, 16, 78-84.
- House of Commons Liaison Committee (2012) *Select Committee Effectiveness, Resources And Powers: Second Report of Session 2012-13* (HC 697), London, By the authority of the House of Commons.
- House of Commons Library (2018). UK Election Statistics: 1918-2018: 100 years of Elections (Briefing Paper CBP7529). London, By the authority of the House of Commons.

House of Commons Library (2019). Number of Urgent Questions in the House of Commons since 1997 (Parliamentary Information List CBP 08344). London, By the authority of the House of Commons.

House of Commons Political and Constitutional Reform Committee (2013) *Revisiting Rebuilding the House: the impact of the Wright reforms. Third Report of Session 2013–14* (HC82), London, By the authority of the House of Commons.

House of Commons Reform Committee (2009) *Rebuilding the House: First Report of Session 2008-09* (HC 1117), London, By the authority of the House of Commons.

IPSA (2016) *Findings from the Annual Survey of MPs and their Staff*, London, IPSA.

IPSA (2017) *Findings from the Annual Survey of MPs and their Staff*, London, IPSA.

IPSA (2018) *Findings from the Annual Survey of MPs and their Staff*, London, IPSA.

Judge, D. (1984) 'The Politics of MPs Pay', *Parliamentary Affairs*, 37, 59-75.

Kelso, A. (2009) 'Parliament on its Knees: MPs' Expenses and the Crisis of Transparency at Westminster', *Parliamentary Affairs*, 80, 329-338.

Larcinese, V. and Sircar, A. (2017) 'Crime and punishment the British way', *European Journal of Political Economy*, 47, 75-99.

Leston-Bandeira C (2016) 'Why Symbolic Representation Frames Parliament Public Engagement', *BJPIR*, 18, 498-516.

Lynch, P. and Whitaker, R. (2013) 'Rivalry on the Right', *British Politics*, 8, 285-312.

MPs Expenses: Legacy of a Scandal, (2019). BBC Radio 4. 12 May 2019, 17:00.

NatCen Social Research (2010) *British Social Attitudes 2010*, London, NatCen Social Research.

NatCen Social Research (2012) *British Social Attitudes 28*, London, NatCen Social Research.

New Statesman (1996, 9 August) 'Palace of Low Grade Corruptions', In Wright, T. (2012) *Doing Politics*, London, Biteback Publishing.

New Statesman (2019, 1 May) 'MPs' Expenses: a Very British Scandal'.

Parliament (2019) 'Joint committee on Human Rights', accessed at: <https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/joint-select/human-rights-committee/> on 28 May 2019.

Parpworth, N. (2010) 'The Parliamentary Standards Act 2009', *Modern Law Review*, 73, 262-81.

Pattie, C. and Johnston, R. (2012) 'The Electoral Impact of the UK 2009 MPs' Expenses Scandal', *Political Studies*, 60, pp. 730-750.

Renwick, A., Lamb, M. and Numan, B. (2011) 'The MPs expenses scandal and the politics of electoral reform', *Political Quarterly*, 82, 32-41.

- Russell, M. (2011) 'Never allow a good crisis to go to waste', *Parliamentary Affairs*, 64, 612-33.
- The Guardian (2012, 14 August) 'John Bercow Defends his Record'.
- The Guardian; Cameron, D. (2009, 25 May) 'A New Politics: The Post-Bureaucratic Age'.
- The Reunion, Parliamentary Expenses Scandal* (2019). BBC Radio 4. 19 April 2019, 9:00.
- The Times* (2019, 6 May) 'We're Still Paying the Price for the Expenses Scandal'.
- Tinkler, J. and Mehta, N. (2016) Report to the House of Commons Administration Committee on the findings of the interview study with Members on leaving Parliament. London: Department of Information Services.
- vanHeerde-Hudson J. and Ward, O. (2014), 'The 2009 British MPs' Expenses Scandal: Origins, Evolution and Consequences', In vanHeerde-Hudson J. (ed) *The Political Costs of the 2009 British MPs' Expenses Scandal*, London, Palgrave Macmillan.
- vanHeerde-Hudson, J. (2014), 'Should I Stay or Should I go?', In vanHeerde-Hudson, J. (ed) *The Political Costs of the 2009 British MPs' Expenses Scandal*, London, Palgrave Macmillan.
- Vivyan, N., Wagner, M. and Tarlov, J. (2012) 'Representative Misconduct, Voter Perceptions and Accountability', *Electoral Studies*, 31, 750-763.
- Wright, T. (2004) 'Prospects for Parliamentary Reform', *Parliamentary Affairs*, 57(4), 867-876.
- Wright, T. (2010) 'What are MPs for?', *Political Quarterly*, 81, 298-308.
- Wright, T. (2014) 'Inside a Scandal', In vanHeerde-Hudson, J. (ed) *The Political Costs of the 2009 British MPs' Expenses Scandal*, London, Palgrave Macmillan.
- YouGov (2010) 'YouGov / The Sun Survey Results', accessed at http://cdn.yougov.com/today_uk_import/TheSun_BrokenBritain.pdf on 31 May 2019.