

Britain's police are at war with the people

David Gilbertson

guardian.co.uk April 2, 2012

Police officers are increasingly trained to see the community as the enemy. They've forgotten that they are there to serve us

I felt a profound sense of frustration when I read Saturday's Guardian account of another "police racism" allegation against the Metropolitan police. The circumstances of the case, in which an officer is apparently recorded racially abusing a man he's just arrested – are still the subject of investigation. But as someone who spent most of his adult life in policing, two issues are as plain as a pikestaff. First, yet again, there seems to have been an almost total absence of leadership and supervision of junior officers; second, the impact on "real" policing will be profound.

Last Thursday, in Tottenham, I gave the 2012 Bernie Grant Memorial Lecture. To an audience still shell-shocked by the damage to their homes and livelihoods wrought by the riots and failure of policing last August, my theme was the urgent need for the police, particularly in urban communities, to rediscover a service ethos that had been sacrificed on the altar of so-called management efficiency over the past 15 years. In any liberal democracy, policing must be by consent, and you lose that consent immediately if you alienate the community and treat them as the enemy.

Confrontational – yet frightened and defensive – officers are nowadays trained to see the public as a threat to their very existence. Preventive patrolling has been abandoned – notwithstanding the soothing and wholly false spin of the Met, which continually claims to have "bobbies on the beat". Few such officers have been deployed for at least 10 years, and their barely visible replacement – comprised largely of police community support officers, are but a pale imitation of what people expect and deserve.

From Stephen Lawrence to Mark Duggan; from the kettling of peaceful protesters, to the riots of last year; from the manifest incompetence of the first phone-hacking inquiry to allegations of corruption at the Leveson inquiry – a path has been beaten towards the edge of a precipice, and it is time for those concerned about the vital role of policing to challenge what is happening.

In some respects we only have ourselves to blame. People too often accept what they are told by police leaders and politicians, and seldom demand policing be accountable at all times and at every level of interaction. Senior officers continually tell us policing is a complex, dangerous occupation, requiring an almost priest-like sense of vocation and superhuman courage. Hence the pseudo-military terminology applied to most activity, with reference to the "frontline", as if officers spent all their working hours in an environment comparable to the first world war trenches.

But what is missing from an environment where the police regard themselves almost as an army of occupation is any sense of community, any sense that they are part of us. This fundamental attitudinal change is a comparatively recent feature of policing and has undermined the trusted model of policing in our communities developed over many decades. Something has to change – and quickly.

For what is beyond doubt is that the people who suffer most at the hands of drug-dealers, knife crime and "gangsta" gunmen are those at the bottom of the social pyramid. Most are decent people who just want to work, bring up their children, and live their lives unmolested; yet they are regarded by the police as a dangerous underclass who can only be dealt with aggressively.

What incentive will there be for any black British mother on a sink estate to search out her local police to express concern about her son or his friends? Who can be surprised at any hard-working black member of our society taking the view that an organisation that allegedly views him or her as a "n****r" isn't worth their trust? I hope the Met commissioner has this incident at the top of his agenda as his management board meets on Monday.

À L'ATTENTION DES CANDIDATS

- Ne rien écrire sur le texte

- Rendre l'article à l'examineur avant de quitter la salle

LV1 Ang 6
(18.30 30.00)

Brands in China

Pro logo

HONG KONG

Chinese consumers are falling out of love with fakes

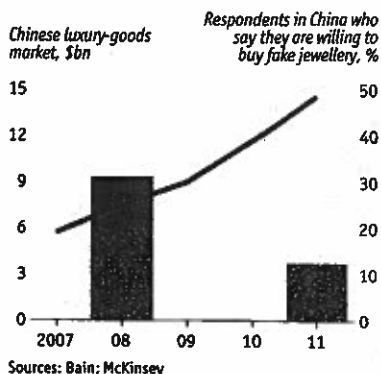
WHEN Da Vinci, a retailer of expensive imported furniture, opened its new showroom in Shanghai recently, it spared no expense. The gallery, over 10,000 square metres spread over four stories, was filled with extravagant pieces from brands such as Armani Casa and Versace Home. The theme of the event was *zhen de jia bu liao* (roughly: "what is genuine cannot be counterfeited").

Yet Da Vinci is embroiled in a scandal. CCTV, an official media outlet, alleged that some of its imported kit may actually have been made locally, shipped overseas or to a bonded warehouse, then brought back into the country to earn an undeserved "imported" seal. The firm hired a public-relations agency to put a more positive spin on the story. Da Vinci claims this involved paying \$150,000 through a broker to a journalist who, it alleges, threatened to run more damaging stories if not paid off.

All parties involved deny wrongdoing. An initial official ruling seemed to clear Da Vinci, but in December the Shanghai authorities slapped fines on the firm for alleged misdeeds including improper labelling. Da Vinci now says it will take the authorities to court to clear its name and has filed a police complaint against the broker and journalist over what it says was an extortion plot.

Whatever the truth behind this murky affair, it has revealed something about

First get rich, then get real



how the attitudes of Chinese consumers are changing. Counterfeiters are no longer popular. Not long ago, Chinese shoppers applauded the fakers for saving them money. Now they scorn them. If it's a fake, the well-heeled sneer, you can't flaunt it.

Fakery is not dead, of course. In 2009, roughly 30% of mobile phones in the country were thought to be *shanzhai*—a popular term for clever fakes. The Business Software Alliance, a trade group, claims that nearly four-fifths of the software sold in China in 2010 was pirated. In December the US Trade Representative issued its annual report on the world's most "notorious" counterfeit markets. Of the 30-odd markets identified, eight were in China. Some, such as Beijing's Silk Street market, are well-known. The report also points the finger at Taobao, an online marketplace owned by Alibaba, China's biggest e-commerce firm. That may be unfair. Taobao has clamped down so hard recently that it is enduring protests by angry vendors.

Still, as China grows richer, life is growing harder for fakers. A recent study of China's luxury market by Bain, a consultancy, concludes that "demand for counterfeit products is decreasing fast." McKinsey, another consultancy, found that the proportion of consumers who said they were willing to buy fake jewellery dropped from 31% in 2008 to 12% last year. This is good news for all brands, not just the blingy ones. "Consumers are looking for the real thing, and they are increasingly willing and able to afford it," say the authors.

Cash-strapped youngsters still love counterfeits, says Chen Junsong of the China Europe International Business School. But those over 30, if they have a bit of mon-

ey, have become extremely brand-conscious. There is a "comparison culture", he observes. People are ridiculed if spotted with a fake Gucci handbag.

Another reason why fakers are under pressure is that Chinese firms now have intellectual property of their own to protect. Brands such as Lenovo (a computer firm) and Haier (a maker of everything from fridges to air-conditioners) are highly valuable and therefore worth defending. The more Chinese innovators gripe about fakery, the more strictly the government enforces the law. It just announced that it aims to stamp out counterfeit software in government offices by the end of this year.

Even sceptical foreign manufacturers believe China is changing. Douglas Clark, an expert on China's intellectual-property regime, points to a survey by the EU-China Chamber of Commerce suggesting that counterfeiting, long the first or second gravest concern of its members, is now third, fourth or not even ranked.

Tougher law enforcement has helped, he says, but so too has the fact that foreign firms have learned how to cope with fakes. Some have set up their own branded retail outlets to control distribution. Glaxo-SmithKline, a British drugs giant, has introduced fake-proof "e-coding" of pills.

Chinese consumers are realising that brands are not just about showing off. They can also send useful signals about quality. A Coke probably won't poison you because it would cause billions of dollars of harm to the Coca-Cola brand if it did.

In December China suffered another scandal involving tainted milk. Shoppers instantly shunned the local firm involved. Nestlé, a Swiss food giant, saw an opportunity. It announced this week that with its local partners it will invest some \$400m to boost its dairy operations in China. ■



The real bling



...and the bonfire of the bogus

A L'ATTENTION DES CANDIDATS

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Life Under Alabama's Harsh Immigration Law

Newsweek Feb 6, 2012

Patrick Symmes

The front door is locked on this brown-and-cream mobile home, an aluminum outpost at the end of a pine-tree trailer park beyond Birmingham, Ala. But the back door flaps open in a winter wind. Inside are a bag of red beans, some pet food, and a pair of high heels. Nothing else. Even the beds are gone. "Six people," a neighbor says in Spanish, struggling to recall something from the anonymity of immigrant life. "Men, women, children. The law came in, and one day they just didn't come home."

The law: that would be H.B. 56, Alabama's attempt at the nation's most rigorous crackdown on illegal immigrants. On Sept. 23, 2011, when H.B. 56 came into effect, it cut off all state and local services to the undocumented. No driver's licenses, no registration for cars, no scholarships, no hiring without a document check. Enrolling in one of Alabama's public colleges requires proof of legal residency in the United States. Hiring, renting property to, or simply "harboring" undocumented foreigners is illegal. H.B. 56's one-signature provision—deputizing local police officers to turn traffic stops into deportation proceedings—assumes powers long reserved to the federal government.

The law had its desired effect, sort of. Illegals did flee. Alabama reported a drop in school enrollment, especially in rural areas. This trailer and about 50 like it in a park of 300 were soon evacuated. Immigrants sold their possessions for cash and drove to Florida or California, wherever they felt safer. But Alabama's crackdown hasn't played out quite as expected. A group of Mexican men unloading a pickup truck explain they fled the state, but after just a month in Florida, they came back. They pointed out an obvious irony: as H.B. 56 scared off some immigrants, others found that jobs were now going begging. And these men had now rented the same trailer for less than they paid in September.

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Most studies calculate that illegal immigration boosts the American economy. Many immigrants contribute to Social Security without being eligible to draw on it. But the net gain in jobs is an abstraction compared with Alabama's low wages and stubborn unemployment, which ran more than 9 percent before the bill. Sponsors of H.B. 56 took credit for a subsequent decline to 8.7 percent unemployment, saying legal workers were getting the jobs of departed illegals

Are the toilet cleaners welcome? Carla and Ruben hide behind drawn blinds every night. They are Costa Ricans who ask to be called by new names. The apartment is cozy; their three handsome sons sit patiently on a white sofa. The couple is educated and middle class but got stuck cleaning toilets for cash in an underground economy. They work to provide for their family, they say, but haven't seen their own parents in 16 years.

Survival in Alabama 2.0: one shopping trip a week, to minimize exposure to the police. A carpool to St. Francis Xavier for the 1 p.m. mass in Spanish. (Parking at the church is easy since H.B. 56; one third of the lot is suddenly free.) When they set out in the morning, they remind their sons—the youngest a U.S. citizen—not to panic if they disappear. Move to your aunt's apartment, the parents say. Stay in school. We'll call you when we land in Costa Rica.

The couple recalls one of the houses they clean weekly. The owner is a "really important" figure in Alabama whom they won't identify. "He speaks against Latinos," Carla notes, "but hires Latinos to clean his house." The man threatened to fire them if they were illegals—then dropped the matter. If H.B. 56 sputters out, it may be because people in Alabama want a clean house more than they want to clean house.

A L'ATTENTION DES CANDIDATS

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20 Aug 16
(18.30 min)

Why Would Scotland Leave the U.K.? by Iain Marin (Wall Street Journal 25/01/12)

Going independent inside the EU no longer makes sense.

Wednesday night is Burns night, that annual celebration of the poet Robert Burns's birthday, when obsessives gather to eat haggis and listen to rambling speeches about Burns's work and life. In Scotland, Nationalists will raise a dram and recite the passages that support the claim that Burns wanted Scotland to be independent from England.

Equally fervent Unionists, who do not want the United Kingdom ripped apart, can point to stanzas that suggest Burns was proudly British. The poet, like many of his countrymen today, was conflicted.

My fellow Scots love nothing more than romanticizing the long Scottish story—reveling in ancient victories over the English that demonstrate national virtue and cursing the defeats, which they blame on bad luck. But the Scots have tended to take a fairly hard-headed approach when it comes to the practical business of the country's constitutional arrangements.

Scotland has done very well being part of a bigger, common endeavor. Its people and industry played a disproportionately large role in the British empire, and even since the empire's decline they have enjoyed considerable clout as part of the U.K. Former Prime Minister Gordon Brown and his chancellor of the exchequer, Alistair Darling, both sit for Scottish constituencies at Westminster and bailed out the stricken Royal Bank of Scotland to the tune of £45 billion during the financial crisis.

When they voted under New Labour in 1997 for "home-rule," it was for limited self-government within the United Kingdom. A parliament was established in Edinburgh for the first time since 1707, but Westminster continues to collect all taxes and handle defense, foreign affairs and welfare provision.

Scotland's nationalist first minister, Alex Salmond, thinks he stands on the brink of changing that. He seeks to persuade Scotland to vote for full independence. Mr. Salmond, having eviscerated the Unionist parties in Scotland at last year's devolved election, has a parliamentary majority in Edinburgh and will hold a referendum on separation in 2014. Not entirely coincidentally, that year will mark the 700th anniversary of the greatest Scottish military victory of them all, when Robert the Bruce routed the forces of England's Edward II. But Mr. Salmond is no anti-English rabble-rouser. Indeed, the first minister was just in London to deliver a lecture to the English, a sport at which he usually excels.

Independence, he claimed, would be good for England as well as Scotland. Rather oddly, he argued that this would make England more left-wing because it would look north to his tartan progressive utopia for inspiration. Ever since Scots opposed the much-needed economic reforms of the Thatcher government, the pompous notion of Scottish exceptionalism has found expression in the bogus idea that the Scots are somehow more compassionate because they are more statist.

Mr. Salmond also presents the proposed breakup of the U.K. as part of an inevitable historical process, arguing that just as the empire came to a natural end, so Britain should be wound up in a spirit of calm in order that both countries become better friends afterwards.

The Scottish National Party certainly has a commanding lead and its leader remains popular, but the polls show that Scots are still not warming to its central policy. Support for independence remains stuck, as it has long been, around the mid-30% mark.

Mr. Salmond's biggest difficulty is Europe and the economic crisis in the euro zone. Since the late 1980s, the nationalist case has been built on the claim that the rise of the European Union meant Scotland could safely opt to leave the supposedly broken-down old partnership with England and join instead the wave of the future: the EU. Independence was recast as outward-looking and internationalist rather than narrow-minded and dangerous.

But today, with the euro zone in such a mess, what exactly is Mr. Salmond asking the Scots to join? The first minister now says he wants an independent Scotland to keep the pound, for the moment, but join the queue to get into the European single currency. The new fiscal rules demanded by Germany mean that Scotland would be swapping London oversight for control by the much more distant Brussels and Berlin. Just ask the Irish, whose draft budgets are already perused in the German capital long before anyone deigns to show the voters in Dublin.

Mr. Salmond also wants England to take on all the liabilities of the nationalized Royal Bank of Scotland, yet after independence he insists it will remain a Scottish institution headquartered in Edinburgh, employing thousands of Scots. Is that credible?

There are a plethora of such questions. I am a fair- and foul-weather Unionist, relishing my dual identity as a patriotic Scot who is also British. But I recognize that many Scots are pragmatists on the subject. In a time of economic stability and prosperity, perhaps they could be persuaded to grant Mr. Salmond his wish. But with Europe and the economy so troubled it is much less likely.

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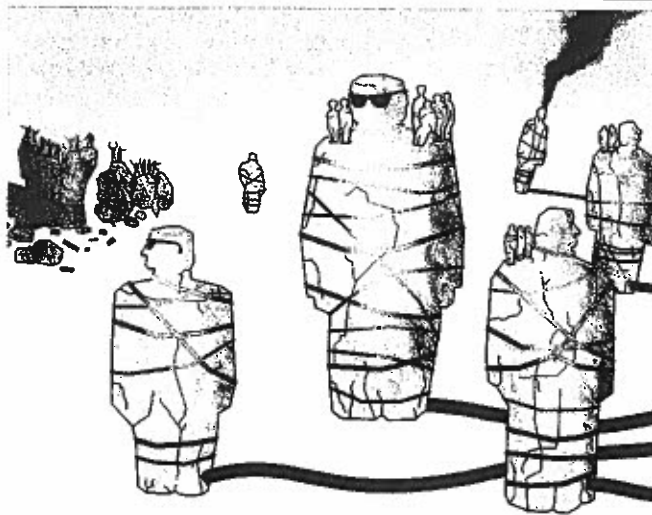
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Free exchange

LV1 Arg 20

(18.30 juin)

Why trade reform matters in the Middle East



A YEAR after the start of the Arab spring, no government in the Middle East has attempted serious economic reform even though it is obvious both that economies are distorted and that discontent over living standards has played a big part in the uprisings. The main reaction by governments has been to buy off further protests by increasing public spending. Saudi Arabia boosted government spending by over 50% between 2008 and 2011.

Although higher oil prices have been enough to finance these rises, much of the extra spending has gone into public-sector wages and consumer subsidies. Food and fuel subsidies are often huge: over 10% of GDP in Egypt. In the region as a whole, fuel subsidies rose from 2.3% of GDP in 2009 to 3.2% in 2011.

These subsidies benefit the rich, keep loss-making firms alive and damage the economy. According to the IMF, the richest fifth of Jordanians capture 40% of fuel-subsidy gains; the poorest fifth get 7%. More important, subsidies exacerbate the region's most important economic problem, which, argue Adeel Malik of the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies and Bassem Awadallah*, a former Jordanian finance minister, is "that it has been unable to develop a private sector that is independent, competitive and integrated with global markets". By distorting domestic prices, subsidising energy-guzzling firms and increasing public-sector wages relative to private-sector ones, the past year's actions have made it even harder to develop a flourishing private sector.

It was hard enough before. The Middle East has strikingly few private companies, less than one-third of the number per person in eastern Europe. Everywhere the state dominates the economy. In Egypt the public sector accounts for 40% of value-added outside agriculture—an unusually large share for a middle-income country. Such private firms as do exist tend to be large and closely connected to the state. The average Middle Eastern company is ten years older than in East Asia or eastern Europe because new entrants are kept out by pervasive red tape. The authors reckon it costs roughly 20 times the average annual income to start a firm in Syria and Yemen (assuming anyone would want to), just over twice the average globally. In a few Arab countries, like Tunisia, some notorious personifications of crony capitalism have fallen foul of political change but the practice has by no means ended.

The weakness of the private sector is typically seen as a do-

mestic problem with domestic solutions, notably privatisation and deregulation. Earlier attempts to strengthen private businesses by pursuing those policies were in practice half-hearted or skewed towards well-connected insiders, tainting the whole process of reform. The risk of the same outcome is a big reason why, in the aftermath of the Arab spring, risk-averse governments have shied away from further efforts to privatise or cut red tape. But, argue Messrs Malik and Awadallah, there is also a regional aspect to the private sector's weakness—the failure to develop regional markets. Here, reform may be politically easier.

Arab companies are globally uncompetitive. The Middle East accounts for less than 1% of world non-fuel exports, compared with 4% from Latin America (a region with a comparable population). Turkey exports five times as much as Egypt, which has a population of similar size. Despite its favourable geographical location the Middle East is rarely part of global supply chains. And of its modest global exports, inter-Arab trade accounts for less than a tenth, barely more than in 1960.

The usual explanation for the failure to trade is the region's resource curse. Because it is so easy to export crude oil, Arab countries have failed to develop significant merchandise exports. And because so many export the same thing—oil—they naturally do not trade with each other. Even if that were the whole story, the region would still need to develop competitive manufacturing or services to cope with demographic change. Oil cannot generate the tens of millions of new jobs that predominantly young Arab countries will need. But it is not the whole story. Arab countries could trade with each other more than they do, and part of the reason that they do not is self-inflicted.

Obstacles to regional trade are legion. Costly "trade logistics"—non-tariff barriers, red tape and poor infrastructure—add 15% to the value of Egyptian clothes and 10% to the total value of all goods shipped in the region. It costs companies an average of 95 man-days a year just to deal with trade bureaucracies. It takes longer and is more expensive to ship goods between two Middle Eastern ports than to send them from the Middle East to America. Such market fragmentation, the authors argue, is the consequence of the region's centralised, state-led economic policies.

Just start somewhere

More trade would have familiar benefits: larger markets should enable firms to reap greater economies of scale, increase returns to investment and adopt more new technology. Just as important in the Middle Eastern context, more open trade would begin the process of dismantling over-centralised states and create a constituency for further economic change.

Of course, trade liberalisation is no substitute for privatisation, financial reform and other domestic measures. But it has a political advantage over those reforms. Because the steps required are relatively small ones (reductions in red tape, for instance) they should provoke less resistance from insiders; and because regional trade can be presented as a pan-Arab goal, it does not have the same taint of "Westernisation" that discredited earlier reform efforts. Regional trade would be only a start. But the main thing is to start somewhere. □

* "The economics of the Arab Spring", OxCarre Research Paper 79, Department of Economics, Oxford University, December 2011.

À L'ATTENTION DES CANDIDATS

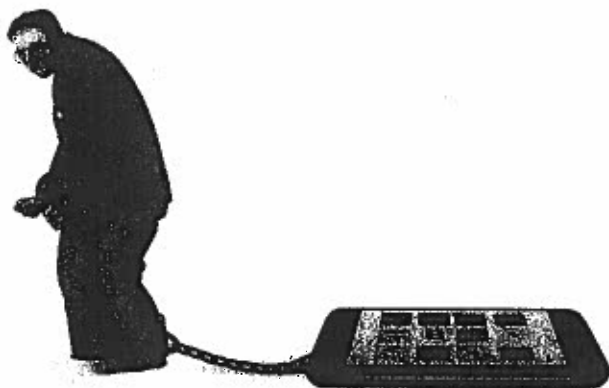
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Schumpeter | Slaves to the smartphone

LV 1 Aug 25
(02-10 juillet)

The horrors of hyperconnectivity—and how to restore a degree of freedom



“THE SERVANT” (1963) is one of those films that it is impossible to forget—a merciless dissection of the relationship between a scheming valet (played by Dirk Bogarde) and his dissolute master (James Fox). The valet exploits his master's weaknesses until he turns the tables: the story ends with a cringing Fox ministering to a lordly Bogarde. The film was an indictment of the class structure of Harold Macmillan's Britain. But it is hard to watch it today without thinking of another fraught relationship—the one between businessfolk and their smartphones.

Smart devices are sometimes empowering. They put a world of information at our fingertips. They free people to work from home instead of squeezing onto a train with malodorous strangers. That is a huge boon for parents seeking flexible work hours. Smartphones and tablets can also promote efficiency by allowing people to get things done in spare moments that would otherwise be wasted, such as while queuing for coffee. They can even help slackers create the illusion that they are working around the clock, by programming their e-mail to be sent at 1am.

But for most people the servant has become the master. Not long ago only doctors were on call all the time. Now everybody is. Bosses think nothing of invading their employees' free time. Work invades the home far more than domestic chores invade the office. Otherwise-sane people check their smartphones obsessively, even during pre-dinner drinks, and send e-mails first thing in the morning and last thing at night.

This is partly because smartphones are addictive: when Martin Lindstrom, a branding guru, tried to identify the ten sounds that affect people most powerfully, he found that a vibrating phone came third, after the Intel chime and a giggling baby. Black-Berrys and iPhones provide relentless stimuli interspersed with rewards. Whenever you check the glowing rectangle, there is a fair chance you will see a message from a client, a herogram from your boss or at least an e-mail from a Nigerian gentleman offering you \$1m if you share your bank details with him. Smartphones are the best excuse yet devised for procrastination. How many people can honestly say that they have never pruned their e-mails to put off tackling more demanding tasks?

Hyperconnectivity exaggerates some of the most destabilising trends in the modern workplace: the decline of certainty (as

organisations abandon bureaucracy in favour of adhocery), the rise of global supply chains and the general cult of flexibility. Smartphones make it easier for managers to change their minds at the last moment: for example, to e-mail a minion at 11pm to tell him he must fly to Pittsburgh tomorrow. The dratted devices also make it easier for managers in one time zone to spoil the evenings of managers in another.

Employees find it ever harder to distinguish between “on-time” and “off-time”—and indeed between real work and make-work. Executives are lumbered with two overlapping workdays: a formal one full of meetings and an informal one spent trying to keep up with the torrent of e-mails and messages.

None of this is good for businesspeople's marriages or mental health. It may be bad for business, too. When bosses change their minds at the last minute, it is hard to plan for the future. And several studies have shown what ought to be common sense: that people think more deeply if they are not constantly distracted.

What can be done to keep smartphones in their place? How can we reap the benefits of connectivity without becoming its slaves? One solution is digital dieting. Just as the abundance of junk food means that people have to be more disciplined about their eating habits, so the abundance of junk information means they have to be more disciplined about their browsing habits. Banning browsing before breakfast can reintroduce a modicum of civilisation. Banning texting at weekends or, say, on Thursdays, can really show the iPhone who is boss.

Together we can outsmart our phones

The problem with this approach is that it works only if you live on a desert island or at the bottom of a lake. In “Sleeping with Your Smartphone”, a forthcoming book, Leslie Perlow of Harvard Business School argues that for most people the only way to break the 24/7 habit is to act collectively rather than individually. She tells the story of how one of the world's most hard-working organisations, the Boston Consulting Group, learned to manage hyperconnectivity better. The firm introduced rules about when people were expected to be offline, and encouraged them to work together to make this possible. Many macho consultants mocked the exercise at first—surely only wimps switch off their smartphones? But eventually it forced people to work more productively while reducing burnout.

Ms Perlow's advice should be taken seriously. The problem of hyperconnectivity will only get worse, as smartphones become smarter and young digital natives take over the workforce. People are handing ever more of their lives over to their phones, just as James Fox handed ever more of his life over to Dirk Bogarde. You can now download personal assistants (such as Apple's Siri) that tell you what is on your schedule, and virtual personal trainers that urge you take more exercise. Ofcom, Britain's telecommunications regulator, says that a startling 60% of teenagers who use smartphones describe themselves as “highly addicted” to their devices. So do 37% of adults.

The faster smartphones become and the more alluring the apps that are devised for them, the stronger the addiction will grow. Spouses can help by tossing the darned devices out of a window or into a bucket of water. But ultimately it is up to companies to outsmart the smartphones by insisting that everyone turn them off from time to time. ■

Gangs are good for society

by Caspar Walsh in the Guardian 10 November 2011

"Gangs" get a bad press. The overused noun is now synonymous with the evils of youth culture and its incumbent violence, drugs, guns and sexual misconduct. There is a lot of rooftop shouting and table banging about the breakdown of teenage society: poor education, dysfunctional families, no respect for the older generations. "Wasn't like that when I was young." This dim view is, at best, misguided. At worst, clouded in denial and cushioned in the fiction of the non-existent "good old days". Societies throughout history have each had their share of unlawful, out-of-control youth.

We hear a lot about an epidemic rise in youth crime. The truth is, youth crime has always been a part of society. It is how society deals with it that dictates its trajectory. Much of the reported rise in youth crime is in direct relation to the huge population increase in recent decades and, crucially, in the way the media choose to report youth crime.

I put the blame for the de-meaning of the word gang squarely on the money hungry, narrative-driven media to ramp up our fear of the fiction of "gangs dominating every street corner". The issue is adrenalised in drama, documentaries and rolling news by repeatedly declaring "gang culture" as the cause of teenage societal meltdown. Gang culture is the widely accepted term used directly in connection with youth violence.

I've been working with young people both in and out of prison for more than 20 years, and what's clear is that gangs in and of themselves are not the problem. I was part of a gang in school and it was all about belonging to a group – it had nothing to do with fighting other gangs. It's when gangs start using violence to control turf and territory and make money that we need to take action. Young people join gangs because it is a crucial part of growing up. Gangs do not always revert to violence. If there are positive, older role models involved with these gangs, they can hold the boundaries essential to stopping them spiralling out of control and turning violent and crime driven. This is key.

Young people are looking for boundaries, and these are explored in gangs and in their social interactions with each other and people outside the gang circle. They will push the boundaries until they reach a wall they are either unable or unwilling to break down. This is an essential part of the process of growing up and becoming an active, law abiding member of society. The proliferation of violence in so many gangs in the UK is largely down to the absence of positive older role models holding the boundary line of acceptable behaviour. Without them, gang culture becomes toxic, loses its moral compass and often resorts to violence in dealing with power struggles and internal conflicts.

But there are many organisations working positively with young people in gangs and helping them through very difficult times in their lives, helping them through the often tough transition of evolving into productive, responsible members of society.

Having stopped my own death slide into crime, drugs and violence, I now choose to balance out media driven, moral "gang" panic with the many positive stories of reconciliation, rehabilitation and community reintegration that I hear about pretty much every day. For me, gang is simply another word for tribe. In essence, gangs are good for society. In a healthy state, they are about the formation of groups that operate under ethical and moral codes of conduct upheld and enforced by the elders of the community.

LV 1 Aug 32
(02.10 juillet)

Britain

The Economist February 4th 2012

Bagehot | Lessons from a great school

Autonomy for schools is producing some remarkable successes. Can others learn from them?



DANIEL RILEY, a young trainee teacher from west London, attended a school so bad that it was shut down while he was there. It was, he recalls with commendable understatement, an “unstructured” place. Fewer than 20% of pupils achieved five good GCSE passes, including mathematics and English (the main benchmark for secondary students, involving exams commonly taken at 16). There were fights. Some, involving knives, ended with arrests. There were drugs—the school drew its pupils from tough housing estates, and gangs prowled at the gates. The teaching was “not inspired,” Mr Riley says, sticking with the understatement. He recalls lessons spent copying texts from books.

As happened to a few dozen failing institutions under the previous Labour government, Mr Riley’s school was turned into an academy—a state school removed from local council control and given new freedoms over staffing and teaching methods. Six years on, Paddington Academy draws its pupils from the same estates. But the school is unrecognisable.

Last summer 69% of pupils met the benchmark for good GCSEs, easily beating the national average. More than half come from homes poor enough to earn free school meals and more than three-quarters do not speak English as a first language, making its intake exceptionally “challenging,” in Whitehall jargon.

Now when Mr Riley meets teenage students they seek advice about university. His dream is to return to Paddington Academy to teach full-time. It is easy to see why. The school is a success, recently earning an “Outstanding” grade from Ofsted school inspectors. It is, more subjectively, an impressive place. It feels calm and academically ambitious. It hums with optimism.

The Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition has put great faith in school autonomy: there are now 1,500 academies in England. A single column cannot pretend to prove that faith right or wrong. Bagehot spent time at Paddington last month with a more modest goal, to look at one successful school and try to discern what makes it different. Two big lessons jumped out.

First, Paddington is built around remarkable people. An unusually high proportion of staff come from Teach First, a programme that sends highly-qualified graduates into challenging schools for at least two years. Staff stay late for homework clubs that run until ten at night (many pupils come from crowded

homes) and volunteer for weekend workshops. A teacher guiding 15-year-olds through a thoughtful debate on British manufacturing was a Treasury economist before switching career. His economics GCSE class is an experiment, part of a policy of promoting more academic subjects. Maths is the most popular subject for the oldest, sixth-form pupils, followed by sciences. Create an expectation that students can take hard subjects, and they will demand them, the teacher says. Thanks to pupil lobbying, the school now offers the astronomy GCSE.

The students’ families—from Africa, Bangladesh, Iraq, Kosovo and the Caribbean in the main—are remarkable, too. Many went through “trials and tribulations” to reach Britain, explains a 15-year-old girl who plans to be a doctor, so “we like a challenge”.

Second, Paddington uses distinctive methods. A motto is: “the street stops at the gates”. There is a strict uniform code, and pupils must remove hooded tops and caps as they arrive. Pupils are educated for the professional world, says a teacher: if they call a boss “Bruv”, value judgments will be made about them. Pupils agree. Using street slang would be an easy option in school, says a teenage boy. Alas, the world “out there” will not be easy.

Competition is embraced. Pupils are ranked on progress against individual targets every six weeks, with results posted publicly on a board. A difficult home life triggers support but not excuses. Some pupils arrive speaking no English: they are offered up to four years’ specialist help, but expectations are not lowered.

Staff enforce the small details of behaviour ceaselessly, with meaningful looks, a warning finger briefly held up, or a word of praise every few seconds. The goal is not Gradgrindian discipline, but the avoidance of bigger confrontations. Good deeds are consistently rewarded, lapses always have consequences. Pupils’ blazer lapels sag with enamel badges for choir, language-learning, mentoring younger pupils and so on. When the school gained its “Outstanding” grade, pupils were crestfallen to hear that this did not bring a badge. The school’s excellent and tireless principal, Oli Tomlinson, finally had “Outstanding” badges made in blue and gold enamel, bearing the Ofsted logo.

No excuses, no barriers

A common charge from academy critics—notably teachers’ unions—is that they practise selection on the sly by excluding difficult pupils. Early on, Paddington did expel some pupils from the old school, but now takes hard cases itself. At a morning meeting, staff discussed the progress of a new pupil rejected by all neighbouring schools: it went well, they agreed, considering it was his first day out of prison. Yet students feel safe. It’s better than primary school here, says a 12 year old: “People respect you.”

Paddington Academy is a brilliant school. That is great for its 1,200 pupils. But for others to benefit, Paddington’s strengths—its remarkable people and methods—must be echoed elsewhere. Methods can be copied. It helps that Paddington is part of a chain of academies sponsored by a charity, the United Learning Trust, driving the spread of good ideas. It also helps that school league tables are being beefed up with much more data, making Paddington’s success more visible. Remarkable people are harder to reproduce. Yet Paddington’s dynamic young teachers talk of their luck at working at a school which transforms lives. Mr Riley, fresh from university, longs to join them. The country needs more Mr Rileys. Schools as inspiring as Paddington are a good first step. □

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Domestic goddess or director-general but not both

Lorna Tilbian

Whatever happened to the notion of Lehmans Sisters being a safer pair of hands?

The latest research from the Bundesbank suggests that a greater proportion of women on bank boards has led to "a more risky conduct of business", before citing "lack of executive level experience" as the cause. It was ever thus. Women take time out to have babies! Similarly, the Norwegian experiment with introducing quotas in 2004 failed because of the time constraint imposed on achieving the 40 per cent target - boards ended up filled with inexperienced heiresses and wives. In my experience, women are more questioning and less likely to indulge in groupthink. As for men being more risk-averse, that is no more borne out in real life - from the number of road accidents (remember Sheila's Wheels, the women-only car insurer) to calamities in the home - than in the boardroom, where there is a greater inclination to make testosterone-fuelled, value-destroying acquisitions at the wrong time and at the wrong price.

By contrast, a study in the

noughties of the best performing US companies highlighted that the ones with relatively more women on the board produced the best return on capital and total shareholder returns. This could just mean women self-select into better businesses. But it also probably reflects good judgment and the fact that the sexual revolution began in America in the 1970s and as a result experienced American women executives have risen through the ranks.

America is probably a generation ahead of the UK in this. Indeed, of the four female chief executives in the FTSE 100, three are American. Britain might have been ahead of the game in having the first western political leader, but it is trailing behind when it comes to producing female business leaders.

As in the UK, the emerging markets have also produced more female political leaders than business leaders - Golda Meir and Indira Gandhi to name but two - but that is already beginning to change as we see Asian women running multinational businesses. Maybe women simply gravitate where the power is - politics in emerging markets and business in developed countries. After all, in poorer

countries women are making the most of microfinance initiatives, creating small businesses to fend for their families, while research shows many men in similar situations squander the money on gambling and alcohol.

Meanwhile, in Europe we tend to be hooked on quotas, such as all-women shortlists for parliamentary positions and quotas to put more

If we want more female directors, there need to be tax breaks for childcare and for looking after aged parents

women into company boardrooms. Until we have more female executive directors, we will not have a crop of more seasoned female non-executive directors who know their way round the boardroom and have a depth of experience to draw on. But for that to happen we need tax breaks for childcare and increasingly for looking after aged parents as well. But equality, like charity, begins at home. Surveys show that women

still undertake the majority of household tasks; for this, read, chores. So most women know that "having it all" means "doing it all" and that is pretty darned difficult. Many women graduates have opted to do one or the other - to be a DG (domestic goddess) at home or a DG (director-general) at work, but not both. It is hard to serve too many masters without short-changing both, and yourself in the process.

Yet there are some grounds for optimism. More than half the British graduates now going into law, medicine and accountancy are female, so more non-executive directors will come through in time. But as the role is more advisory than supervisory, we need entrepreneurial business builders as well as professional box-tickers.

Historically, women have arrived in the boardroom through marketing, accountancy or, increasingly, human resources. But we also need women who have risked their own capital, delivered on a strategy, built a sustainable business model or paid a dividend stream to join boards. As it is, women are more self-sufficient, so when their careers end they have hobbies and homes to focus on while men frequently feel like fish out of

water on retirement and promptly seek to jump back into the boardroom.

That is why some women see boardrooms as old boys' clubs. With about five non-executive directorships each, in many cases they appear to be there primarily to get them out of the house - where the chief executive definitely is a woman. In such instances, it seems that each non-executive directorship provides a different perk: one a personal assistant, one an office, one a chauffeur, one club memberships and the fifth, corporate sponsorship for their favourite sport. Luckily there are five working days in a week...

The fact that companies run by women do well ultimately reflects that to be where they are in the first place in the current environment, they must be very good. When the split between men and women is 50-50, there will be no difference between them. Votes for women have not given us better government.

The writer is an executive director of Numis Corporation and a non-executive director at Jupiter Primadona Growth Trust

John Lewis staff bonus shrinks as group profits fall to £353m

Employees awarded 14% payout, down from 18%

First cut in three years after tough trading in 2011

Zoe Wood

The staff bonus at the John Lewis Partnership has become the latest casualty of the high street downturn after falling annual profits reduced the size of payouts to workers in its department stores and supermarket chain, Waitrose, for the first time in three years.

Its 81,000 staff will get an extra seven weeks' pay in this month's pay packet, compared with the nine-week boost they picked up last year.

Profits at its department stores, in particular, were battered by ferocious discounting elsewhere on the high street. With group profits down 4% at £353.8m, the bonus pool shrank and staff received a bonus equal to 14% of annual salary compared with 18% in 2011.

John Lewis chairman Charlie Mayfield said that after the toughest year for retailers since the onset of the financial crisis it was not surprising the bonus was "somewhat lower". He said: "The bonus does go up and down. It's very important it does, otherwise it would not reflect the performance of the business." The average bonus payment for the last five years is 15%, but it has fallen as low as 4% in 1954.

Mayfield said the retailer was grappling with structural change in the retail market as sales moved from its stores to the internet. Although sales via John Lewis's website surged more than 26%, takings at all its department stores barring Peter Jones in London's Sloane Square were down.



Despite the cut, staff celebrated at the Waitrose in Stratford, east London

"Profound changes are taking place in the retail sector and importantly this was a year when we upped the pace of innovation and investment," Mayfield said. "That came at the price of some short-term profit but leaves us in a good place at the start of this year." Consumer spending had also been reset on a "different trajectory", he added, with no expectation of a return to the retail boom that preceded the credit crunch.

The partnership's annual results are a red-letter day for staff and there were no grumbles among the 800 John Lewis workers at its newest branch, in the West-

field Stratford City shopping centre that backs on to the Olympic park in east London. The figure was greeted with applause and whoops of joy as summer holidays and shopping sprees were brought within reach. John Lewis partner Adam Richardson said: "A bonus is a bonus. I'm not disappointed in the slightest as we can see that other retailers are struggling."

Wendy O'Mahoney, who was unemployed for four years before getting a job at the centre's Waitrose branch when it opened last year, said: "It's more than I expected. I am really happy, it's my first bonus so I am really chuffed."

John Lewis's managing director, Andy Street, said the department store's "never knowingly undersold" pledge, which sees it match rivals' promotions, had cost it almost £24m during the year and was a big factor behind its weak financial performance, with profits down £40.5m to £157.9m on sales of £3.3bn in the year to 28 January.

Its larger sister chain Waitrose, with annual sales of more than £5bn, fared better, although profits still fell 5% to £260.6m. The decline was blamed on heavy investment in 29 new branches as well as a so-called "dark store" in London that is not open to the public but instead used to pick internet orders. Its market share edged up 0.2% to 4.1% during the year with the grocer, aided by successful tie-ups with Delia Smith and Heston Blumenthal, ringing up an extra 400,000 transactions a week.

After a grim 2011 Mayfield was "cautiously optimistic" the trading environment would pick up this year as events such as the Queen's diamond jubilee and the London Olympics buoyed the spirits of consumers. In the five weeks since the end of the reporting period both chains had enjoyed like-for-like sales rises of more than 2%.