

PRESS RELEASE

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Political parties and the Youth Quake

Age has replaced class as the key predictor of voting intention. The Conservatives offered precious little to younger generations in this year's budget, and will have to do more if they want to attract more young people to the party, the Intergenerational Foundation (www.if.org.uk) will conclude today as it publishes an academic audit of political party offers to younger generations at the 2017 General Election.

Peter Dowd, Shadow Chief Secretary to the Treasury, Ben Bradley, Conservative MP, Amelia Womack, Deputy Leader of the Green Party and Lord Paul Tyler of the Liberal Democrats, will respond to the report findings.

"Youth Quake: Young people and the 2017 General Election", authored by Dr James Sloam and Muhammad Rakib Ehsan, Royal Holloway, University of London, investigates turnout by younger generations at the General Election, political party offers, and communications strategies undertaken to appeal to younger voters.

In 2017 18–24 year old turnout was 64%, a very large increase from 43% in 2015. The difference between the participation of 18–24 year olds and all citizens shrank from minus 23 points in 2015 to minus 4 points in 2017.

Angus Hanton, IF Co-founder comments, "This was a huge turnaround from the 2015 election when the median actual voter was already 51 years of age and there were fears that the change in the age profile of voters would lead Britain towards a gerontocracy."

According to the report, the Labour party attracted 62% of 18-24 year olds, contrasting with only 27% for the Conservative party. The gap in support for the two parties was unprecedented in size – 35 percentage points. This was largely achieved by the Labour Party's capture of youth voters from third parties, i.e. Liberal Democrats and Greens, and success in bringing out non-voters.

Dr James Sloam, report author comments, ""The increased youth turnout in 2017 demonstrated that young people are interested in politics. However, the surge in youth participation also reflected a strong reaction against austerity and Brexit. And, supporters of Labour and Jeremy Corbyn were actually less trusting of politicians and parties than the average young person. Clearly there is much political parties can do to better address the issues that affect young people."

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Joint report author, Muhammad Rakib Ehsan adds, ""Britain's young people are not only more likely to consume political information through social media - they are also more likely to trust such information on these platforms. The General Election signalled a new dawn for electioneering in the UK".

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Notes to Editors:

Angus Hanton, IF Co-Founder, and James Sloam, report author, are both available for interview.

Contact liz@if.org.uk mob: 07971 228823 for all media enquiries relating to the research.

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Dr James Sloam is a reader in politics at Royal Holloway, University of London in the Department of Politics and International Relations. His research focuses on young people and political participation in Europe and the United States, and his work in this area has been widely published in academic journals.

Muhammad Rakib Ehsan is a Doctoral Researcher at Royal Holloway, University of London. Research interests include young people's politics and the attitudinal drivers behind Brexit.

The Intergenerational Foundation is a non-party-political charitable think tank, funded by no-strings donations that researches fairness between the generations. IF believes that policy should be fair to all: the old, the young and those to come.