

# Policy Matters



Your weekly digest of policy reports that **matter**.  
Edited by [Toby Green](#) and [Gary Price](#) of *Policy Commons*.

## US election

In case you haven't heard, there's an election to choose the next president of the United States on November 5th. So we thought it time to draw attention to the two main candidates' manifestos (in neutral, alphabetical order):

- **Harris–Walz:** [A New Way Forward for the Middle Class: A Plan to Lower Costs and Create an Opportunity Economy](#)
- **Trump–Vance:** [2024 GOP Platform: Make America Great Again!](#)

And since [eight in ten voters say inflation and the economy](#) are the top issues in the election, here's a [fantastic podcast](#) with Mark Blyth, Professor of International Economics at Brown University, for everyone who doesn't understand inflation and the economy—including the role of central banks and supply shocks. (It's also a great listen for those who think they do.)

Having examined the manifestos, studied the top issues, and listened to the podcast, you'll be primed and ready to compete as an election mastermind in the Financial Times' [Election Game](#).

## Is gossip frivolous?

Gossip is often stereotyped as a frivolous social activity—but is it? A [new preprint](#) finds that gossipers tend to share negative information, which increases cynicism in the community. This leads people to overestimate the scale of selfish behavior in their midst. So perhaps gossip is not as frivolous as it seems...

## What happens when a network goes down?

At 0405 on 8 November 2023, the Australian network provider Optus crashed, with only partial services starting to be restored six hours later. This Australian [government committee report shows what happens](#) when 10 million people, together with major banks, businesses, transport operators, healthcare providers, government departments, and the emergency services, lose their network.

## Trade in services: not immune to borders either

It's well known that trade restrictions and red tape trip up the free flow of goods crossing borders. (Hello, Brexit!) But what about services? Well, wonder no more—because thanks to Brexit, [the evidence is now in](#). Increasing trade restrictions on services leads to more use of local agents, depressing employment for exporting nations like the UK.

## The polarized politics of immigration

Drawing on data from a decade-long survey, [this report examines](#) shifting public attitudes toward immigration and asylum in the UK, including the differences among voters of different parties.

Fieldwork coincided with a period of rioting in Britain, so the report offers a snapshot of public attitudes at a time of heightened tensions.

## Other reports that caught our eye last week:

- [Sinicization of Religion: China's Coercive Religious Policy](#)
- IEA's first-of-a-kind [State of Energy Policy 2024](#) reviews energy policies across sixty countries
- ['Your Data is Stolen and Encrypted': The Ransomware Victim Experience](#)
- [North Korean Activity in the Casino and Gaming Sector: How Do Jurisdictions Respond?](#)

## Topical search

Hurricane Helene's impact in Southeastern US states wasn't the only reason floods were in the news this week. Central Europe, Vietnam, the UK, and Nepal have also seen record rainfall and flooding. A search for [["climate change" NEAR flood](#)] shows that we indexed 317 reports just last week, of which 187 came from our scanning of city websites.

## Policy Commons NEWS

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