

POLSYS Academic appears on BBC Radio 4's Westminster Hour

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Dr Stephen Bates ([/staff/profiles/government-society/bates-stephen.aspx](http://staff/profiles/government-society/bates-stephen.aspx)), Lecturer in Political Science, appeared on BBC Radio 4's Westminster Hour, on Sunday 10th February. Dr Bates spoke about his research undertaken about Prime Minister's Questions, carried out with fellow POLSYS member of staff, Dr. Peter Kerr. The research, detailed below, appeared in **Parliamentary Affairs** (<http://pa.oxfordjournals.org/>) and was co-authored by Stephen Bates, Peter Kerr, Christopher Byrne and Liam Stanley.

Dr. Bates commented on the research: "This article provides a comparative analysis of the opening sessions of Prime Minister's Questions (PMQs) for the last five Prime Ministers in order to test a general perception that PMQs has become increasingly a focal point for shallow political point scoring rather than serious prime ministerial scrutiny. Our data appear to confirm that PMQs has become both rowdier and increasingly dominated by the main party leaders. It also indicates that Prime Ministers are increasingly expected to be able to respond to a wider range of questions, female MPs are as likely to ask helpful questions but less likely to ask unanswerable questions than male counterparts, and MPs are less likely to ask helpful questions and more likely to ask unanswerable questions the longer their parliamentary tenure. More surprisingly perhaps, our findings also suggest that, at the beginning of their premierships at least, Thatcher and Brown appear the most accomplished in terms of the fullness of their answers, and Blair and Cameron the least accomplished."

You can hear Dr. Bates' appearance (for a limited time only) by visiting the BBC website: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p014x7f3> (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p014x7f3>) and the full programme is available to listen to at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b01qhdk3> (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b01qhdk3>).