THE EFFECT OF POST-ELECTORAL COMMUNICATION FRAMES ON ATTITUDES TOWARDS GOVERNMENT: EVIDENCE FROM A SURVEY EXPERIMENT AFTER THE 2015 GENERAL ELECTION

Gabriel Katz, Ekaterina Kolpinskaya, Susan Banducci, Travis Coan and Daniel Stevens

University of Exeter

ES/M010775/1 ‘Media in Context: and the 2015 General Election: How Traditional Media Shape Elections and Governing’
Background
Hypotheses

- H1: Strong party identification and ideological preferences should reduce individuals’ susceptibility to media frames.
- H2: Trust in media intervenes in the relationship between the information about electoral outcomes individuals receive and their perceptions about government strength.
- H3: The high levels of political knowledge and interest in politics have mixed effects on the effect of alternative media frames.
- H4: The seat marginality increases the effect of alternative media frames.
Experiment Design

- **Online panel** – 1,830
  - **Competitive (marginal) constituency** – 21.6%
  - **Safe constituency** – 78.4%
  - **Guardian**
    - ‘Narrow majority’
    - ‘Decisive majority’
  - **Telegraph**
    - ‘Narrow majority’
    - ‘Decisive majority’
  - **Control**
Treatments (1): Guardian vs. Telegraph

The Telegraph

David Cameron wins majority for Conservatives in Election 2015 victory

Prime Minister returns to Downing Street victorious as Ed Balls leads the list of Labour and Lib Dem losses.

By Steven Swinford, Peter Dominiczak, and Barney Henderson
11:25AM BST 08 May 2015

David Cameron has won the general election with an outright majority after Labour was virtually wiped out in Scotland and the Liberal Democrat vote collapsed.

Mr Cameron hailed the "sweetest victory" as his party secured the 323 seats needed to form a government without needing to go into coalition. It came after an electoral earthquake in Scotland, with Nicola Sturgeon’s SNP seeing unprecedented swings and decimating Labour north of the border.

Ed Miliband, the Labour leader, is set to resign after saying that he was "deeply sorry" about the result in Scotland. Ed Balls, the Shadow Chancellor was the biggest scalp of the night, losing his Leeds seat to the Tories.

The Guardian

Cameron prepares to form Conservative government after election victory

Unexpected results deliver Tories overall Commons majority and claim leadership scalps of Ed Miliband, Nick Clegg and Nigel Farage

David Cameron began to form his first government comprised solely of Conservative cabinet members on Friday after being delivered an overall Commons majority by a tumultuous election. The result claimed the scalps of an unprecedented three party leaders in one day as Labour’s Ed Miliband, the Liberal Democrats’ Nick Clegg and Nigel Farage of Ukip announced their resignations.

Cameron and his wife, Samantha, travelled to Buckingham Palace where he accepted the invitation of the Queen to form a government. He later reappointed George Osborne as chancellor, Theresa May as home secretary, Philip Hammond as foreign secretary and Michael Fallon as defence secretary.

In an election suffused with historical and political significance, the Tories won 330 seats, four more than the 326 required for an overall majority, while Labour collapsed to 232, worse than its dismal 2010 performance. The result confounded a string of opinion polls that suggested Labour and the Conservatives were neck and neck, and that Britain was heading for a constitutional stalemate.
Treatments (2): ‘Narrow’ vs. ‘Decisive’ Majority

Conservatives win narrow majority in the general election

David Cameron's party won an unexpected and slim majority on one of the most dramatic nights in British electoral history.

By Jennifer Rushmore
3:58PM BST 8 May 2015

It was the majority that shocked the nation. Months of polling had suggested that the Conservatives and Labour were neck-and-neck during the general election campaign. Victories for the Conservatives south of the border and a virtual clean sweep for the SNP north meant the Labour party did nowhere near as well as expected. The nature of the vote on 7 May determined that the Conservatives have a fragile majority holding only 4 seats more than necessary to govern on their own with Labour virtually wiped out in Scotland and Liberal Democrats losing all but eight seats from their 2010 line-up.

Conservatives win decisive majority in the general election

David Cameron's party stormed to an unexpected outright win on one of the most dramatic nights in British electoral history.

By Jennifer Rushmore
3:58PM BST 8 May 2015

It was the majority that shocked the nation. Months of polling had suggested that the Conservatives and Labour were neck-and-neck during the general election campaign. Big victories for the Conservatives south of the border and a virtual clean sweep for the SNP north meant the Labour party did nowhere near as well as expected. The nature of the vote on 7 May determined that the Conservatives are the clear majority party winner with Labour virtually wiped out in Scotland and Liberal Democrats losing all but eight seats from their 2010 line-up.
Whitbread turns to Lloyds for new chief executive

By Deirdre Hipwell
8:58AM, May 22 2015

Whitbread has found a replacement for its outgoing chief executive and has hired Alison Brittain from the retail division of Lloyds Bank.

The leisure group said that Ms Brittain, 50, who has previously worked at Santander and Barclays and is also a non-executive of Marks & Spencer, would replace Andy Harrison in January.

Mr Harrison surprised the market when he announced his retirement from Whitbread in April citing the “relentless way of life” of a public company.

Market sources had thought the early favourite to replace him was Chris Rogers, the managing director of the leisure group’s Costa Coffee chain.
Findings

1. No evidence of framing effect on average.

2. Treatment effects only significant in marginal constituencies. Subjects exposed to the ‘weak majority’ treatments:
   - were more likely to believe that the government would be able to fulfil its campaign promises and to have an impact on the life of British people;
   - were more likely to believe that, in order for voters to be able to hold governments accountable, it is important to have a strong single-party majority in office.

3. Results seem to be driven by the content of the frame, rather than by the source.
Stay tuned for our research outputs and data releases

https://mediaeffectsresearch.wordpress.com/research-output/

Any questions?