



Understanding Society

THE UK HOUSEHOLD LONGITUDINAL STUDY

Introducing *Understanding Society* for politics research.

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University of Manchester

1st April 2020



University of Essex



An initiative by the Economic and Social Research Council, with scientific leadership by the Institute for Social and Economic Research, University of Essex, and survey delivery by NatGen Social Research and Kantar Public

Outline



- Study overview.
 - What kinds of questions?
Which types of projects might use *Understanding Society*?
 - Documentation and training.
 - Data access.
 - Some existing research:
Depression and Brexit.
'It was the Sun wot won it'.
Benefits and political participation.
-

Understanding Society key features



Household panel study, starting in 2009.

Includes respondents from the British Household Panel Study (started 1991).

- **Household:** everyone in the household contributes.
 - 16 years and over complete the mainstage questionnaire.
 - 10-15 year olds complete a youth questionnaire.
 - 0-9 year olds information collected from their parents.
 - **Panel:** the **same** people are interviewed again each year.
-

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Understanding Society key features

- Ethnic minority and immigrant boost samples.
 - All four countries in the UK.
 - Large sample size.
 - Multi-topic.
 - Geographical data linkage.
-

Politics data



- **After elections: turnout, vote choice.**
 - 2010 and 2015 UK general elections – wave 2 and wave 7 only.
 - 2017 and 2019 UK general elections – across different waves.
 - 1992, 1997, 2001, and 2005 are in the BHPS.
 - 2014 Scottish Independence referendum.
 - 2019 European Parliament elections.
 - Future devolved assembly elections.
 - **EU referendum (wave 8, 2016-17):**
 - Should the United Kingdom remain a member of the European Union or leave the European Union?
 - Remain a member of the European Union OR Leave the European Union.
-

Politics data



Political attitudes:

Party identity and vote intention.

Satisfaction with democracy, duty to vote, efficacy and others.

Party like/dislike scores.

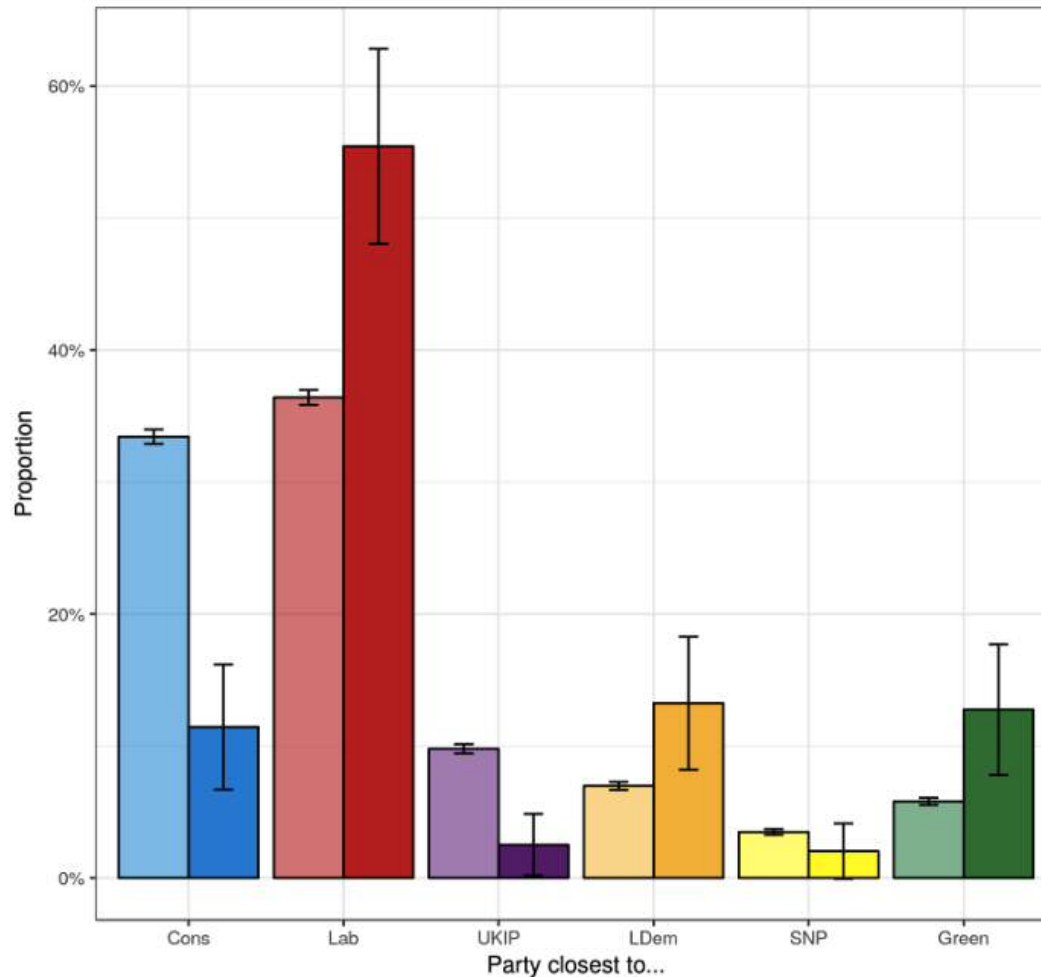
Geographical data linkage to election results.

Local authority and parliamentary constituency geocodes.

Create your own boundaries using GIS (Secure Data Service).

People working in HE are more left-wing

Closest party, general population (lighter bars) and HE staff (darker bars)
Source: Understanding Society Wave 6



Politics data



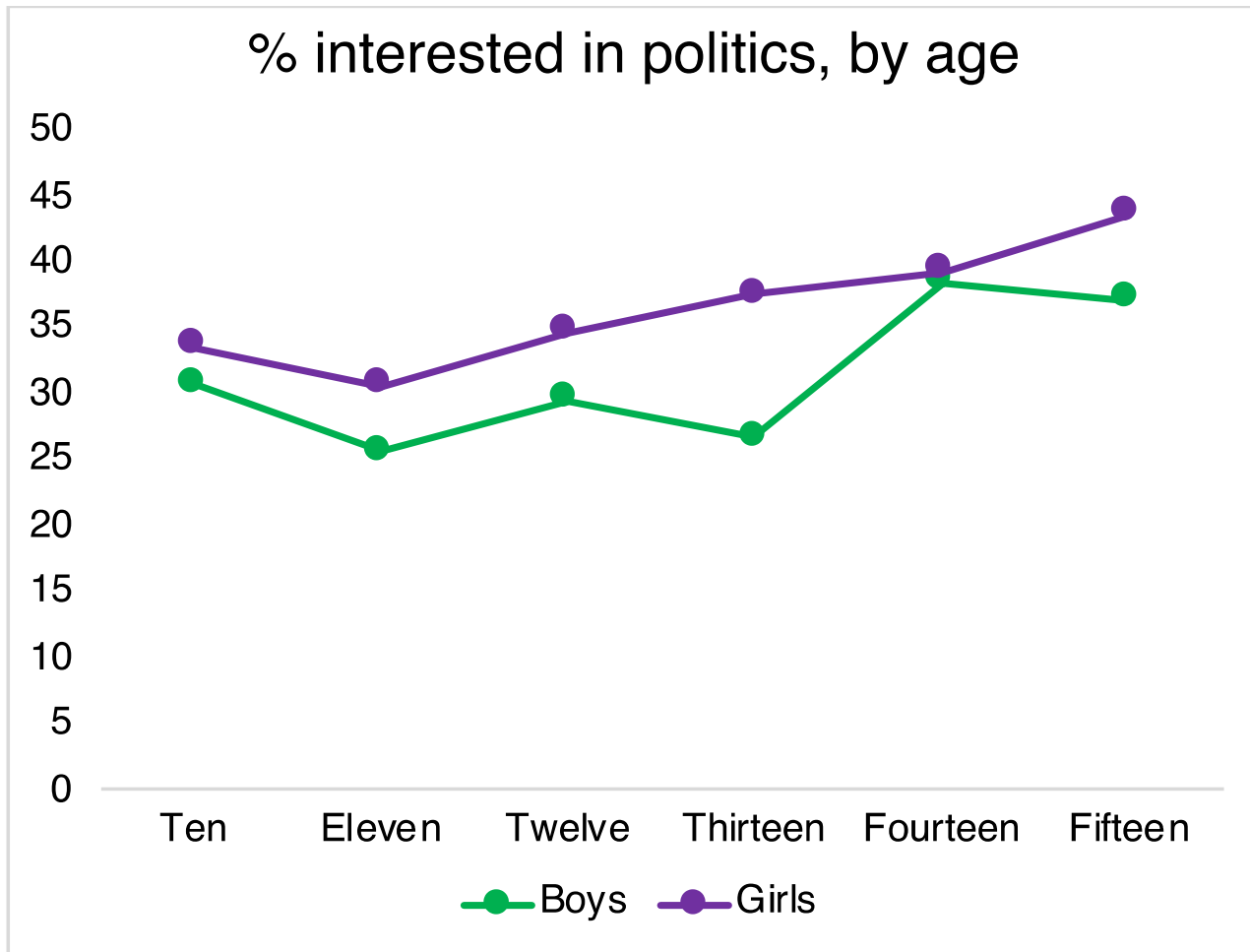
Young people (10-15):

- Who would you vote for?
- How interested are you in politics?

~2,000 to 3,000 observations each wave.

Not every wave – currently waves 3, 5, 7, and 9 of *Understanding Society*, and others in BHPS.

Girls are more interested in politics!



Strengths of *Understanding Society* data



- Long-term political processes.
BHPS-Understanding Society Harmonized Data.
- Dynamics.
- Household context.
- Detailed social, economic and health information.

There is often better data elsewhere on:

- Detailed specific political attitudes.
 - Short term dynamics.
-

Documentation



DATA & DOCUMENTATION ▾

RESEARCH ▾

PARTICIPANTS

ABOUT US ▾

HELP & SUPPORT ▾

BIOMARKERS, GENETICS & EPIGENETICS

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

EDUCATION

EMPLOYMENT

FAMILY & HOUSEHOLDS

POLITICS & SOCIAL ATTITUDES

More ▾

THE UK HOUSEHOLD LONGITUDINAL STUDY

Capturing life in the UK in the 21st century

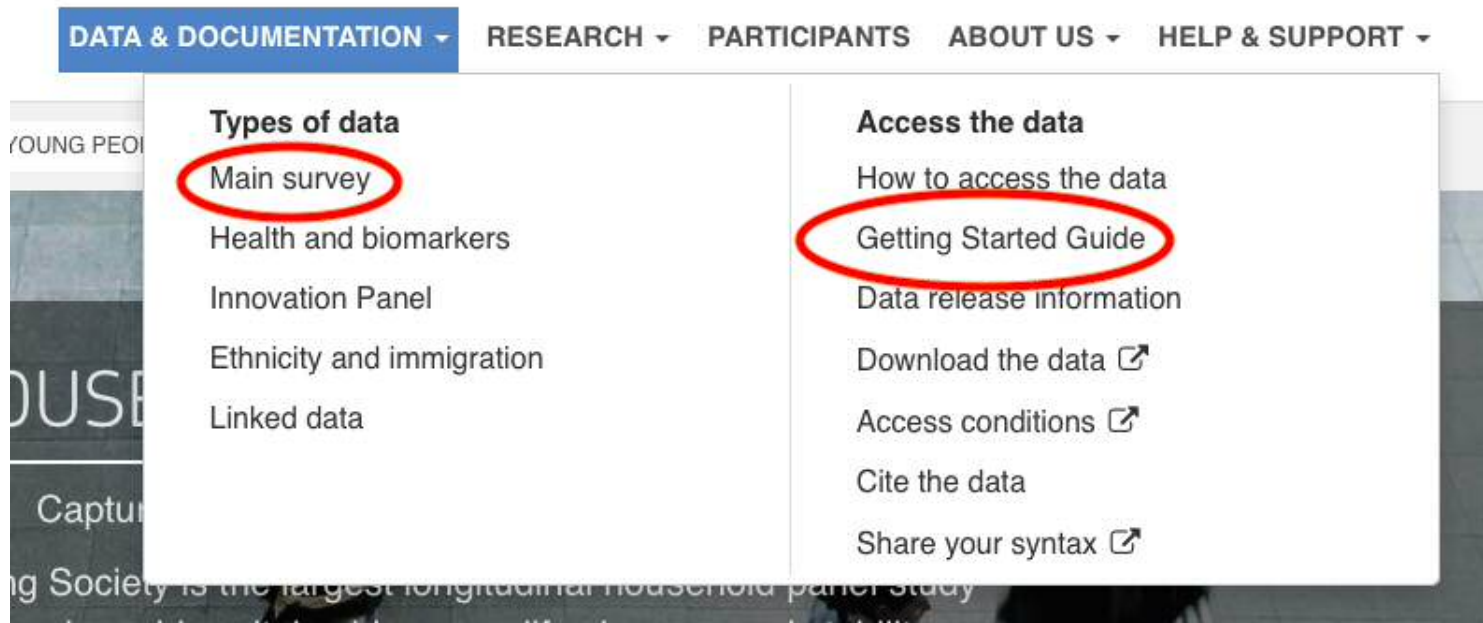
Understanding Society is the largest longitudinal household panel study of its kind and provides vital evidence on life changes and stability

About the study

Using the data

www.understandingsociety.ac.uk

Getting Started Guide



The Getting Started Guide walks you through important steps in accessing and using the data: downloading the data, data structure, navigating the study documentation, where to find further resources.

User support forum

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Understanding Society User Support

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<input type="checkbox"/>	1326	Feedback	Normal	Attitudes Towards Immigration Info		25/03/2020 04:09 PM			<div><div style="width: 75%;"></div></div>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	1324	Feedback	Normal	Childcare by grandparents		27/03/2020 12:04 PM	Data analysis		<div><div style="width: 75%;"></div></div>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	1323	Feedback	Normal	youth self completion longitudinal weight		24/03/2020 04:21 PM			<div><div style="width: 75%;"></div></div>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	1322	Resolved	Normal	Positive and negative events		18/03/2020 12:52 PM	Questionnaire content	M7	<div><div style="width: 100%;"></div></div>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	1321	Resolved	Normal	Self-efficacy module - wave 2		18/03/2020 01:49 PM	Questionnaire content	M2	<div><div style="width: 100%;"></div></div>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	1319	Feedback	High	clarification on jopen variable in UKHLS		23/03/2020 04:25 PM			<div><div style="width: 75%;"></div></div>	

<https://www.understandingsociety.ac.uk/support/projects/support>

Training available



In-person training courses are suspended due to COVID-19 – but will run instead online.

- 20-21st May 2020 and 25-26th November 2020.
- Further information at <https://www.understandingsociety.ac.uk/help/training>
- The course is run simultaneously for users of Stata, SPSS, SAS and R.

Self-guided courses in Stata, SPSS, and SAS are available at any time from

<https://www.understandingsociety.ac.uk/help/training/online>

Data Access

UK Data Service



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Understanding Society

Abstract

FAQ's

Resources

Access data

Abstract

The Understanding Society study, or the United Kingdom Household Longitudinal Study (UKHLS), which began in 2009, is conducted by the Institute for Social and Economic Research (ISER), at the University of Essex. As a multi-topic household survey, the purpose of Understanding Society is to understand social and economic change in Britain at the household and individual levels. It is anticipated that over time the study will permit examination of short- and long-term effects of social and economic change, including policy interventions, on the general wellbeing of the UK population. The Understanding Society study is a successor to the British Household Panel Survey (BHPS). The BHPS sample forms part of Understanding Society from Wave 2 onwards.

<https://beta.ukdataservice.ac.uk/datacatalogue/series/series?id=2000053>

Data Access

UK Data Service



Studies

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Understanding Society: Waves 1- , 2008-



GN 33428

Understanding Society, 2008- : Special Licence Access

GN 33429

Understanding Society: Waves 1- , 2008-: Secure Access

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Access data

GN 33423

Understanding Society: Waves 1- , 2008-

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Which study?!

- Main study, or Innovation Panel?
- End User License, or Special License?
- Anything specific in the dataset name?

Most likely datasets for politics researchers:

- Mainstage *Understanding Society* and harmonized BHPS – SN6614.
 - Special License Access: Westminster constituencies – SN6668.
 - Special License Access: Local authorities – SN6666.
-

Different levels of access for researchers

End User License	Survey responses Direct biomeasures Selected blood analytes Largest geocode links Mortality marker
Special License (Approved Researcher)	Medium sized geographies (1 or 2 levels for a project) More sensitive survey responses
Secure Data Service (Approved/Accredited Researcher), review by Data Access Committee	Linked administrative records Smallest geographies/ or 2+ levels at the same time.
Stored biological specimens, Review by Data Access Committee, REC approval	Extracted DNA Stored blood and plasma

Depression and Brexit

Do you think people with clinical depression were more pro-Leave in 2016, or more pro-Remain?

Depression and Brexit



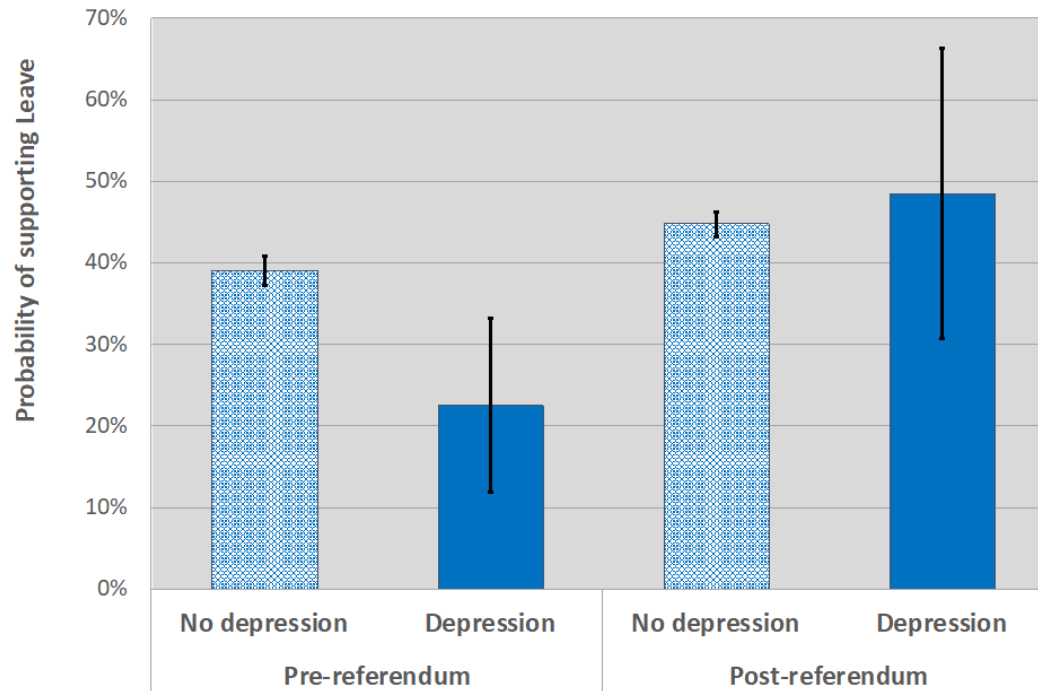
- Depression is rarely considered when thinking about politics
 - is this an oversight?

Status quo bias might affect the kinds of judgements central to electoral choice.

Brexit and status quo bias.

- Pre-referendum: Expectation that those with depression would have a dim view of the change involved in leaving the EU, and been sceptical about any prospect of ‘taking back control’.
 - Post-referendum: status quo has changed.
-

Depression and Brexit



<https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/politics/blog/2020/depression/>

Bernardi, Luca and Robert Johns. "Depression and attitudes to change in referendums: The case of Brexit". Forthcoming in the *European Journal of Political Research*



Does welfare conditionality reduce political participation?

- Work-based welfare conditionality = access to social benefits is predicated on individuals agreeing to certain behaviours.
- Citizen's interactions with the state are likely to shape their views about it and about government responsiveness.

UK case:

- Post-1997, increased resources available for job seekers- but much more intrusive conditionality.
E.g. Work Focused Interviews, case workers.
-

Does welfare conditionality reduce political participation?

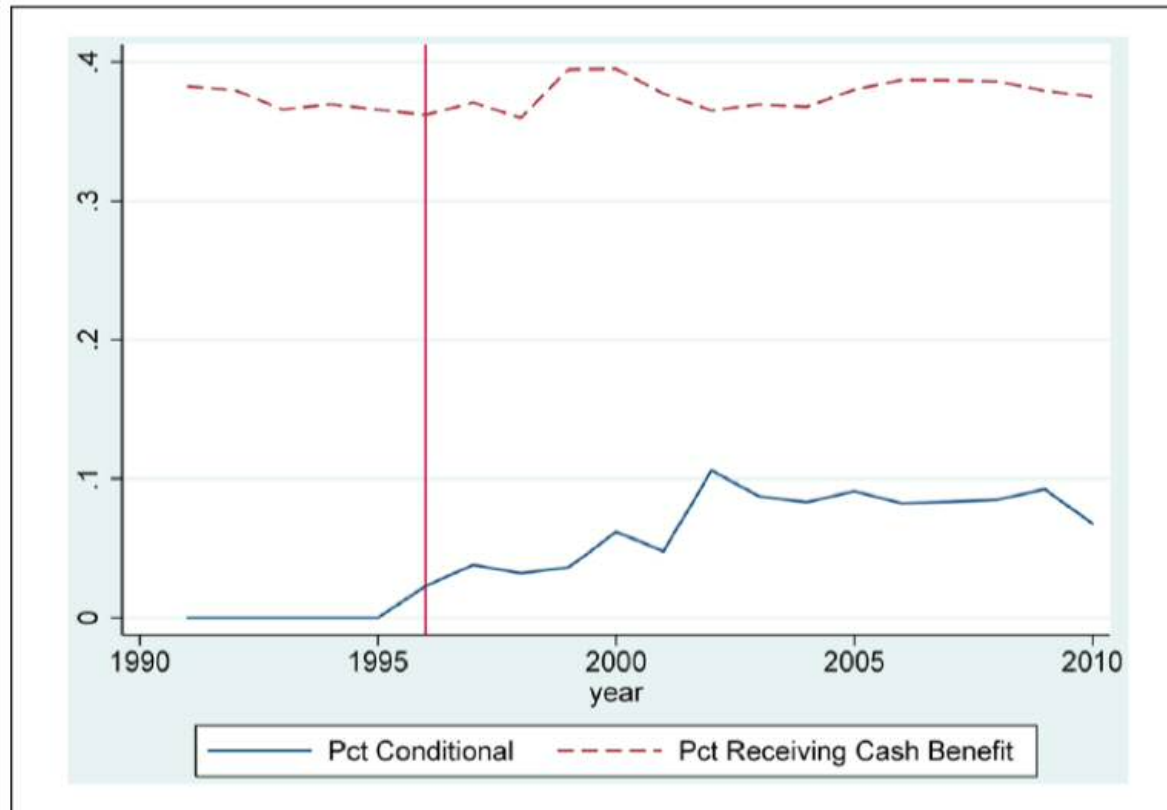


Figure 1. Evolution of conditionality.

Percent of working-age population receiving cash benefits and receiving conditional welfare benefits.

Does welfare conditionality reduce political participation?

Contributory benefit? participation increases.

Conditional benefit? reduced voter turnout, voluntary organisation membership and activity, political efficacy, interest, and personal efficacy.

- Longitudinal.
- Details of benefit receipt.

Watson, S. (2015). Does Welfare Conditionality Reduce Democratic Participation? *Comparative Political Studies*, 48(5), 645–686.



TENNIS HERO ASHE HAS AIDS

By [Name] ... [Text about tennis hero Andre Agassi]

If Kinnock wins today will the last person to leave Britain please turn out the lights



IT'S D-day talks - the day you make the big decision about who you want to run our great country. You agree but there are some things you don't want to influence you in your final judgment on who will be Prime Minister! But it's a bold move with only red hair and two K's in his surname, we're all in for it. Goodnight and thank you for everything.



FREE TODAY

PLUS THE GREAT AMERICAN COMIC

Thursday, April 11, 1992

25p

Published by News Group Newspapers Ltd

IT'S THE SUN WOT WON IT



Winning ... Put on our Page 3 girl



Winning ... Page 1 on pulling the

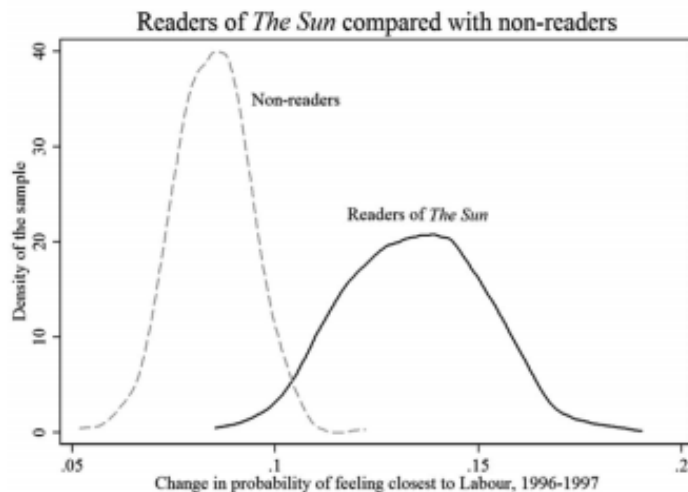
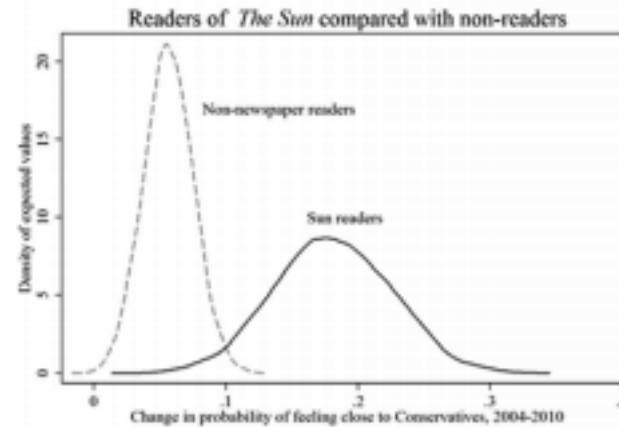
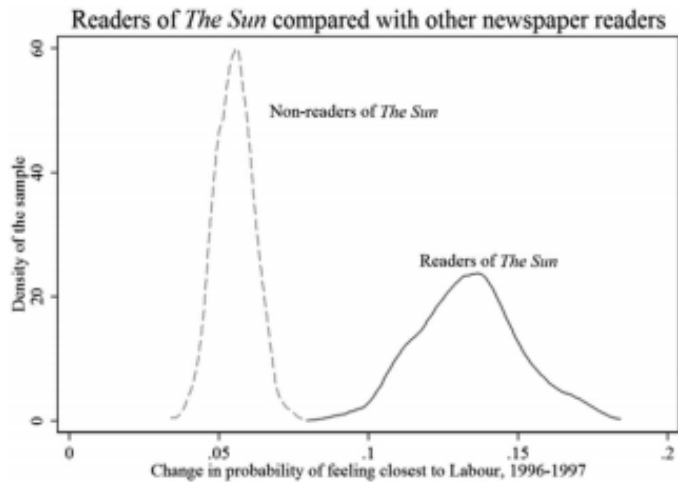
Truth hailed by Tories

By John Cox
TRIUMPHANT! Tory MPs quailed yesterday to say "Thank You My Sun" for keeping John Major back in 10 Number 10.
They heaped our polling day hero upon a shining hero. Kinnock's head in a light bulb - which highlighted the benefits of Labour's rule.
They pointed at the headline with a warning of "Kinnock's head in a light bulb" - which they thought was the best headline for the Sun.
Had they asked about other headlines, they would have said: "Kinnock's head in a light bulb" - which they thought was the best headline for the Sun.
Kinnock's head in a light bulb - which they thought was the best headline for the Sun.
Kinnock's head in a light bulb - which they thought was the best headline for the Sun.

Winning ... Put on our Page 3 girl ... Photo Finish at Parliament yesterday

Winning ... Page 1 on pulling the ... Continued on Page five

Was it the Sun 'Wot Won It'?



Reeves, A., McKee, M., and Stuckler, D., 'It's The Sun Wot Won It': Evidence of media influence on political attitudes and voting from a UK quasi-natural experiment, *Social Science Research* (2015).



Questions?
