



The University of Manchester

The 2015 British Election Study: Voters in Context

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Professor Ed Fieldhouse

Professor Jane Green

Professor Hermann Schmitt

Professor Geoffrey Evans

Professor Cees van der Eijk



Three successful ESRC funding applications

- The 2015 British Election Study: Voters in Context
 - Data collection to enable understanding of the 2015 British election, continuing the series of British Election Studies since 1960.
- The Scottish Independence Referendum and the British Voter: an enhancement to the British Election Study Internet Panel
 - Significant enhancement to the BES online panel study; additional waves in January and September 2014; enlarged samples in all waves up to Summer 2016 (Scottish, Welsh and English), sample of 16–17 year olds.
 - 55,000 additional target interviews in total.
- Enhancing the Impact of the British Election Study
 - Resources for a part-time Impact Fellow/researcher and senior media advisor providing support for dissemination and engagement.



BES 2015: Themes, Study Design, Priorities

- Disengagement, Accountability and Representation
 - Informs the prioritisation of items e.g. trust, turnout, registration, policy responsibility and delivery; issue-scales for longer term comparability
 - Research partnerships and engagement, e.g. Electoral Commission
 - Sampling design and stratification; minimal clustering, response rates for hard-to-reach groups; constituency and campaign characteristics, and socio-economic context, etc.
 - Linking of data, to candidate and campaign characteristics, etc. etc.
 - Need to understand the Scottish Referendum, and other elections.
- Understanding the vote choice and the voter in context
 - Spatial context; socio-economic, political and inter-personal context
 - Political and institutional context; sub-national and cross-national elections
 - Temporal context; the need for panel data and long-term comparability
 - The context of survey measurement; within-survey effects and mode effects



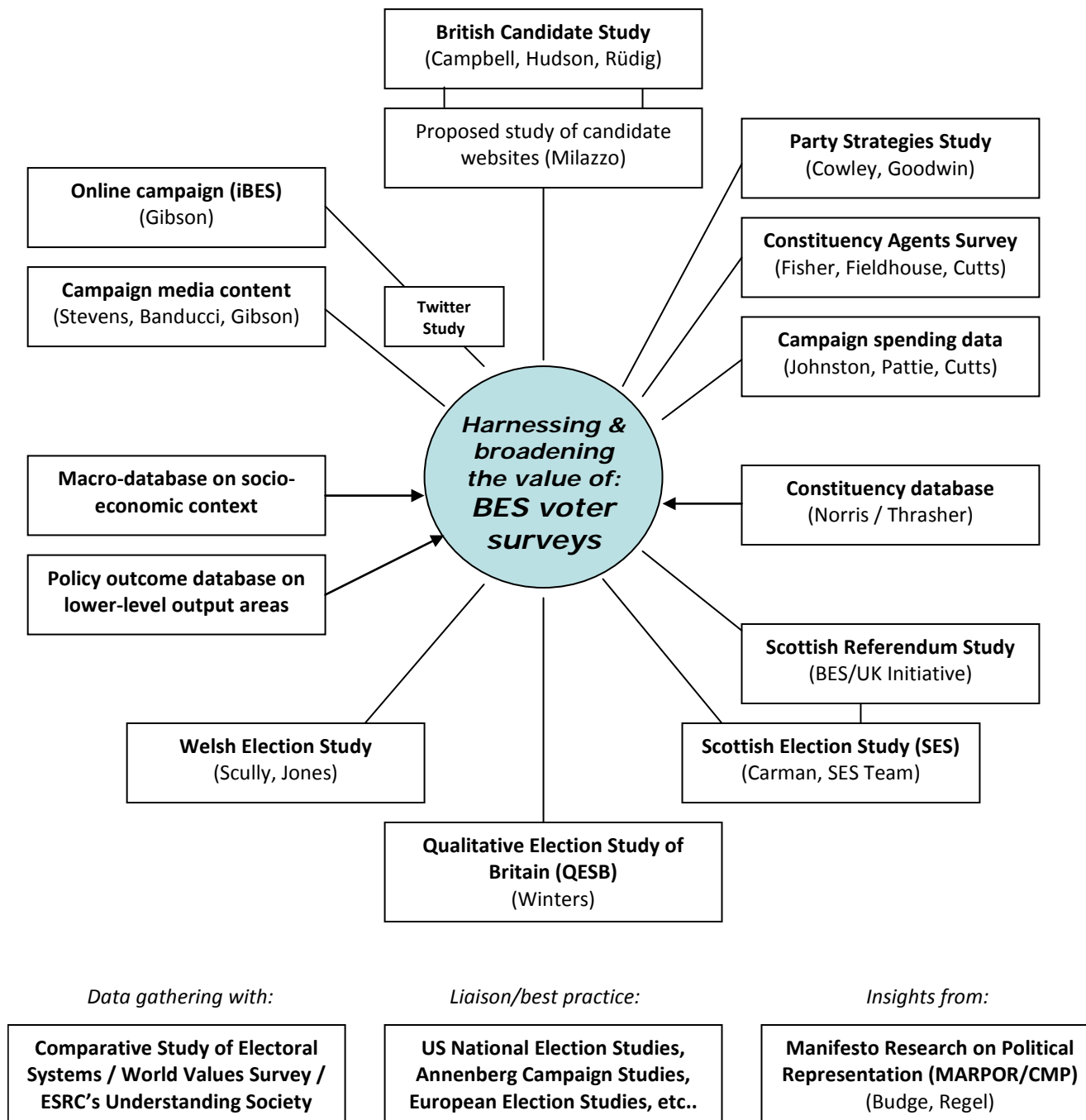
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Broadening the use, scope and impact of the BES

- Prioritising questions of broad interest and importance within and beyond academic interests
 - Themes: Representation, (dis)Engagement and Accountability
- Integrating BES data within a network of complimentary studies
 - Pre-linking of data with studies receiving and/or likely to receive funding
 - Post-linking of data (e.g. constituency characteristics, candidate information)



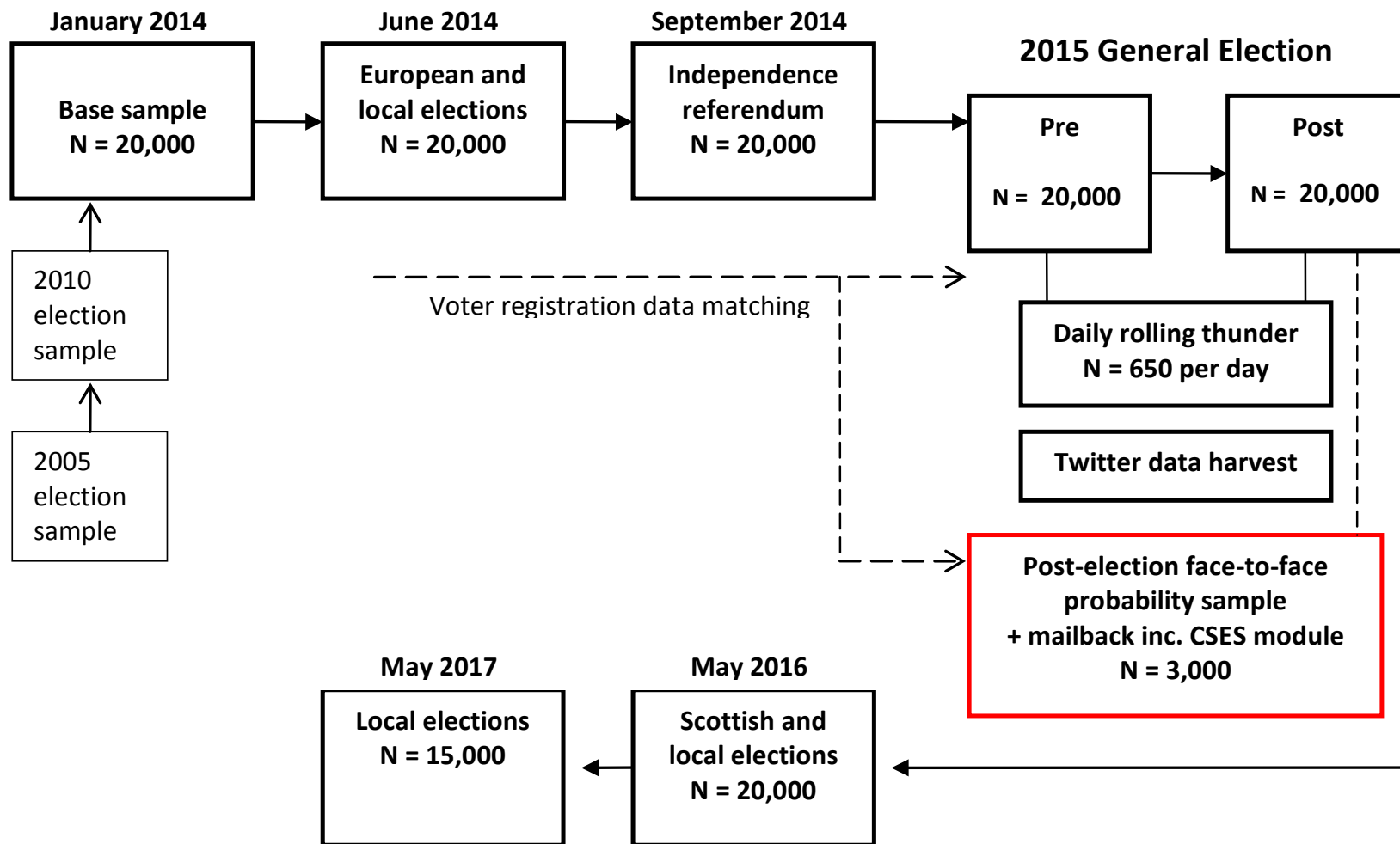


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- Extensive program of engagement and impact
 - Research partnership with the Electoral Commission to study voter registration
 - Close working with the Hansard Society, and others
 - Consultation with non-academic data users and broad-based dissemination
- Innovation and international collaboration
 - Gathering of tweets during the campaign for analysis of priorities and vote choice
 - Mapping project with U.S. and Canadian scholars on perceived local communities
 - Fielding of the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems, and European collaborations
 - International advisory board – and liaison with other national election studies

The BES instruments





Participation, consultation and oversight

- Consultation during planned events and via the BES website 'questionnaire forum', to be advertised and announced widely.
- www.britishelectionstudy.org...coming soon
- Planned meetings with researchers of relevant linked studies for data harmonisation, and with non-academic research partners.
- Opportunities for experiments by international competition in each wave of the panel; reviewed by members of the BES Advisory Board.
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