**Qualitative Election Study of Britain Party Leader Evaluations**  
**Database 2010– 2019, Plus 2014 Supplement**  
**Study and Metadata Description**

**Abstract**: The Qualitative Election Study of Britain (QESB) Party Leader Evaluation Database 2010 – 2019 contains 4,119 words and phrases that evaluate British political party leaders. The data were collected during pre-election focus groups and interviews conducted with participants from England, Scotland and Wales, during the General Election campaigns of 2010, 2015, 2017, and 2019. For the party leader evaluation pre-election component, participants were provided with head shot pictures of the party leaders (depending on where in Britain they lived) taken from the party’s own website. They were instructed to write down words or phrases they associate with each person, and indicate if that association was positive, negative or neutral. The data structure mirrors data structures used in sentiment analysis. Each tab contains a column listing participants’ words and phrases as a string variable; the next two columns list the election year and leader, affective evaluations (relating to, arising from, or influencing feelings or emotions) as a string variable, and the affective evaluation as a numeric scale from negative –1 to positive +1. These data are suitable for sentiment and discourse analysis, or analytic generalization – establishing that a concept exists within a population regardless of the number of people who hold it. In addition, a supplementary dataset is provided which includes leaders’ evaluation data from a 2014 study of residents of Dundee after the Scottish Independence Referendum in 2014 (N = 287).

**Analysis suitability:** These data are suitable for sentiment and discourse analysis, or analytic generalization – establishing that a concept exists within a population regardless of the number of people who hold it. QESB participants were recruited for theoretical reasons – i.e. voters’ attitudes and opinions – and not for representativeness, therefore statistical generalization is not possible from these data. Further, some participants contributed several words, while others contributed fewer, therefore simplistic frequency distribution comparisons cannot be made.

**Data structure:** The data structure mirrors data structures used in sentiment analysis. Each tab contains a column listing participants’ words and phrases as a string variable; the next two columns list the election year and leader, affective evaluations (relating to, arising from, or influencing feelings or emotions) as a string variable, and the affective evaluation as a numeric scale from negative –1 to positive +1, see Table 1.

**Outliers:** The data processing team made notes on unusual or double coded words or phrases in a separate tab called Outliers. Decisions on how outliers were coded are documented there.

**Data formats:** The data are available by wave as either a .xlsx or .csv, or as a pooled dataset with a tab by year and by leader.

**Recruitment**: Focus groups and interviews were conducted in England, Scotland and Wales pre- and post-election. The 2010 –2015 participants were recruited into the QESB panel using a convenience sample from e-mail solicitation plus referrals, and from 2017, Facebook ads were used for recruitment. The PIs over-recruited in each wave and invited participants according to a quota to achieve diversity in partisan affiliation, age, geographic location and employment. To diversify the participant pool, top-up interviews were used to collect data from voters who could not attend an in-person focus groups. Further, online focus groups were used for the same reason. Online participants completed the evaluation exercise before their focus group or interview using a Word or Google document.

**Leader evaluation exercises:** The leaders evaluation pre-election exercise was conducted in the same way in each wave. Participants were provided a sheet with head shot pictures of the party leaders (depending on where in Britain they lived). Party leader pictures were taken from the party’s own website. Participants were instructed to write down words or phrases they associate with each person, and indicate if that association was positive, negative or neutral. Following the silent brainstorming exercise, the focus group moderator would lead the group in a discussion of the positives, negatives and neutral qualities of each leader. The data included in this dataset only includes the words and phrases written down by the participants, and not the subsequent discussion.

**Supplementary dataset:** For completeness, we include the 2014 data. The 2014 data were collected in the aftermath of the Scottish Independence Referendum and only took place in Dundee. In all other respects, the data collection method was the same as in the main QESB waves.

**Access**: The data are sourced from the Qualitative Election Study of Britain 2010-2019 and the 2014 referendum study. The 2010 study is covered by ethical approval from Birkbeck College, London. The 2014 supplement and 2015, 2017, and 2019 waves of the study are covered by ethical approval from the University of Dundee. Commercial use of the data is allowed.

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**Table 1: Leaders Evaluations Metadata Description**

**Qualitative Election Study of Britain, Election Year Waves**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **2010 Variable Label** | **Contents** | **Data Type** |
| leader-evaluation\_text | Participant words & phrases | String |
| eval\_directed\_at | Year and party leader name | String |
| affective\_evaluation | Important and uncoded | String |
| numeric\_code | Positive=1, neutral & uncoded = 0, negative = -1 | Numeric |

N: 665 words for Brown, Cameron, and Clegg.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **2015 Variable Label** | **Contents** | **Data Type** |
| leader-evaluation\_text | Participant words & phrases | String |
| eval\_directed\_at | Year and party leader name | String |
| affective\_evaluation | Important and uncoded | String |
| numeric\_code | Positive=1, neutral & uncoded = 0, negative = -1 | Numeric |

N: 1,767 words for Cameron, Miliband, Clegg, Sturgeon, Wood, Bennett, and Farage

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **2017 Variable Label** | **Contents** | **Data Type** |
| leader-evaluation\_text | Participant words & phrases | String |
| eval\_directed\_at | Year and party leader name | String |
| affective\_evaluation | Important and uncoded | String |
| numeric\_code | Positive=1, neutral & uncoded = 0, negative = -1 | Numeric |

N: 1,011 words for May, Corbyn, Farron, Sturgeon, Wood, Bartley and Lucas, and Nutall

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **2019 Variable Label** | **Contents** | **Data Type** |
| leader-evaluation\_text | Participant words & phrases | String |
| eval\_directed\_at | Year and party leader name | String |
| affective\_evaluation | Important and uncoded | String |
| numeric\_code | Positive=1, neutral & uncoded = 0, negative = -1 | Numeric |

N: 676 words for Johnson, Corbyn, Swinson, Sturgeon, Price, Berry and Bartley, and Farage

**Supplementary dataset: 2014 Dundee**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **2014 Variable Label** | **Contents** | **Data Type** |
| leader-evaluation\_text | Participant words & phrases | String |
| eval\_directed\_at | Year and party leader name | String |
| affective\_evaluation | Important and uncoded | String |
| numeric\_code | Positive=1, neutral & uncoded = 0, negative = -1 | Numeric |

N: 287 words for Cameron, Miliband, Clegg and Sturgeon