



Executive Summary

Title: Dr
Forenames: Kristi
Surname: Winters
Name of employing organisation: Birkbeck, University of London

Proposal

Abstract: National election outcomes are the result of the collective decisions of millions of individuals. Surveys allow researchers to examine the role various factors play in election outcomes; however, most surveys provide only a small place to record individual respondents in their own words. This research project will record and analyze the views and concerns of British citizens before and after the 2010 general election. By conducting interviews and focus groups with people from various geographical areas, backgrounds and ages, this project will investigate, qualitatively, pre- and post-election views on a variety of topics including people's perceptions of the main party leaders, the most important issues facing Britain, civic duty, voting, the appropriate role of government, and reactions to the election results. The qualitative data produced will form the basis of a book contextualizing the results of 2010 general election and supplement ongoing research into the formation of political attitudes and preferences.



Dr Kristi Winters

Small Research Grants - SG round 1 2009

Primary Subjects:	Subject	Subject Group
	Electoral Studies	Politics
	Gender Studies - Politics	Politics

Secondary Subjects:

Classifications

Time Periods:	TimePeriod	
	Contemporary	
Audiences:	Audience	
	Journalists, broadcasters and other media	
	General Public	
Regional Interests:	Region	Region Group
	England	Europe
	Scotland	Europe
	Wales	Europe

Applicant Personal Details

Title: Dr

Forenames: Kristi

Surname: Winters

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Wivenhoe

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Co-Applicants:

Applicant Career Summary

Statement of Qualifications and Career:	Qualification	Date
	Doctor of Philosophy (University of Essex)	2009
	Master of Arts (University of Essex)	2004
	Bachelor of Arts (University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh)	1996
Present appointment:	British Academy Postdoctoral Fellow	
Present employing institution:	Department of Politics, Birkbeck College, University of London	
Present department:		
PhD confirmation:	Yes	
Publications:	Campbell, Rosie, and Kristi Winters (2008). 'Understanding men and women's political interests: evidence from a study of gendered political behaviour,' <i>Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties</i> , 18:1, pp. 53-74. Winters, Kristi, and Rosie Campbell (2007). 'Hearts or Minds: Men, Women and Leader Evaluations in the 2005 General Election', in D. Wring, J. Green, R. Mortimore and S. Atkins (eds.). <i>Political Communications: The General Election Campaign of 2005</i> . Basingstoke: Palgrave McMillan, pp. 184-202. (British Academy grant 40355)	
	Campbell, Rosie, and Kristi Winters (2006). 'The British General Election' in R. Campbell <i>Gender and the Vote in Britain: Beyond the Gender Gap</i> . University of Essex: ECPR, pp. 115-127. (British Academy grant 40355)	
Unpublished research:	My British Academy Postdoctoral fellowship began September 2009. I am in the data-collection phase of my research, hence this application. My writing will begin in earnest once I have collected and analyzed the pre- and post-election data.	
Personal Statement:	I earned my BA in 1996 and worked as a legislative aide to several state-level representatives in the United States from 1998 until 2003. At that point I decided to return to university and earn a graduate degree.	
Where did you hear of this scheme?:	British Academy Postdoctoral Fellowship Induction Day	
Previous support dates:	2009-12 British Academy Postdoctoral Fellowship	
Previous support description (title of project):	Political Man, Political Woman: How sex and gendered perspectives influence political preferences	

Proposal

Subject:	Politics / Electoral Studies
Title of project:	A qualitative British Election Study: using focus groups and interviews to study the 2010 British general election

Abstract: National election outcomes are the result of the collective decisions of millions of individuals. Surveys allow researchers to examine the role various factors play in election outcomes; however, most surveys provide only a small place to record individual respondents in their own words. This research project will record and analyze the views and concerns of British citizens before and after the 2010 general election. By conducting interviews and focus groups with people from various geographical areas, backgrounds and ages, this project will investigate, qualitatively, pre- and post-election views on a variety of topics including people's perceptions of the main party leaders, the most important issues facing Britain, civic duty, voting, the appropriate role of government, and reactions to the election results. The qualitative data produced will form the basis of a book contextualizing the results of 2010 general election and supplement ongoing research into the formation of political attitudes and preferences.

Proposed programme:

As national election occur every four or five years, the timing of this research is especially important. My research investigates the ways in which sex and gendered perspectives influence political preferences. This grant would augment my BAPDF data collection. I will conduct interviews and focus groups to collect data on attitudes and opinions in advance of the 2010 general election. Given my current budget I am able to conduct two pre-election focus groups in the south of England. This funding will provide for additional focus group participants; focus groups in Scotland and Wales; and re-convening participants for post-election focus groups in England, Scotland and Wales. Any in-person/telephone interviews will be funded out of my BAPFD research budget.

The focus groups will explore topics relevant to my postdoctoral research agenda; however, the data collected would also be relevant to other researchers. The aim is to generate data that will: 1) provide insights into the opinions of citizens on politicians, party leaders, political issues and perceptions of civic duty, political alienation, and political activism before and after the general election; and 2) allow analysis of the meaning that underlies their assessments, uncover sources of normative values, make explicit the tacit assumptions participants use to reach their judgements, and possibly identify new research themes.

Methodology: The project will begin in March 2010 and all data will be collected by July 2010. The dates and locations of the focus groups will be determined with the assistance and local expertise of Dr. Rob Johns (Strathclyde) and Professor Roger Scully (Aberystwyth) who have agreed to assist with the logistics and contribute questions related to Scottish and Welsh national politics. I will recruit participants in person. Potential participants will be required to fill out a questionnaire detailing their demographic information. Individuals will be invited to attend in order to broadly reflect the British population. A small incentive will be offered (£25) to increase participation rates and the 90 minute focus groups will take place in the evening to allow full-time workers to participate. Those who are selected will be provided with written information to explain informed consent and the procedures used to ensure their anonymity. These details and forms will be reviewed again verbally at the start of each focus group. The interview schedules will be semi-structured in order to guide the data collection but allow enough flexibility to explore relevant tangents. Individuals may be identified for follow-up phone interviews.

Pre-election participants will be invited to participate in a post-election focus group. The aim is to reconvene the pre-election participants (with top-ups of new participants if necessary) to investigate perceptions of the election results, discussions about national turnout rates, and attitudes toward the newly elected government. Individuals will not be asked to reveal vote choice. Various forms of qualitative analysis (including but not limited to narrative, thematic, and content analysis) will be applied to the data to investigate the topics and themes mentioned above.

The focus groups will be recorded with digital and audio equipment. Transcriptions will be produced for textual analysis. The video, audio and written data will be filed with the UK Data Archive with the appropriate confidentiality requirements.

Planned research outputs:

Monograph: 'In their own words: a qualitative study of the 2010 general election.'

Book chapter in 'Political man, political woman' - the monograph which will be written based upon my post-doctoral research.

Digital resources: Video and audio recordings and transcripts of focus groups and interviews submitted to the UK Data Archive

Plan of action: Assuming a spring (May or June) general election:

Nov 2009- Mar 2010: Submit study design for ethics approval within Department of Government; reserve conference rooms and recording equipment in England, Scotland and Wales; designed participant recruitment strategies, develop the screening questionnaire and design information packets (including explanation of ethical practice and data protection) for selected participants; develop the semi-structured interview schedule in conjunction with local experts.

Mar - Apr 2010: Travel to locations and over-recruit participants; screen to ensure demographic diversity; identify individuals relevant for my post-doctoral research for follow-up interviews. Confirm date, time, and location with selected respondents by letter and reminder phone calls in the days before the focus groups.

Apr - May 2010: Conduct pre-election focus groups; begin preliminary data analysis and identify themes for follow-up in post-election research; conduct phone interviews; develop interview schedule for post-election focus group data collection; produce written transcripts.

May - Jun 2010: Conduct post-election focus groups as soon as possible after the general election; produce written transcripts; conduct one-on-one interviews with identified participants.

May - Dec 2010: Analyze all pre-election and post-election data; begin writing monograph; present findings at relevant conferences; prepare data for deposit with the UK Data Archive; submit proposal to the British Academy Postdoctoral Fellowship Monographs scheme for 'In Their Own Words' with the aim to publish in late 2011 or early 2012.

Plans for publication / dissemination: Conference presentations: 2010 Elections, Public Opinion and Polling Conference and 2011 Political Studies Conference.

British Academy: discuss strategies for media coverage of the research with Kate Turnbull

Web site: Promote my research on my university's website.

Publication: Write monograph proposal for consideration as part of the British Academy Postdoctoral Fellowship Monographs scheme, use the findings in my post-doctoral research.

Digital resource: Yes

Start Date: 01/03/2010

End Date: 31/08/2010

Duration (months): 6

Overseas travel - country:

Overseas travel - country 2:

Overseas travel - country 3:

Overseas travel - institution: No.

Research Leave Granted/Permission Obtained:	No.
Support of BA School or Institute Required/Granted:	No.
Language competence (if applicable):	
Other participants:	Professor Roger Scully, Aberystwyth University Dr. Rob Johns, University of Strathclyde
Role of other participants:	To obtain qualitative data that is sensitive to the perspectives and the national concerns of participants, Professor Roger Scully will provide assistance and expertise in formulating relevant focus group questions related to Welsh politics. Dr. Rob Johns will provide assistance and expertise in formulating relevant focus group questions related to Scottish politics.
Added value of collaboration:	As noted in the Proposed Programme section, this data collection is very time sensitive. Further, expanding my research beyond the south of England will increase the validity of my post-doctoral research finding. Conducting research in England, Scotland and Wales will provide different political contexts and perspectives which would otherwise be missed. In drawing upon the national expertise of Dr. Johns and Professor Scully, it is my intention to sensitize my semi-structured interview schedule to take into account issues specific to national experience which otherwise would go unexplored, including notions of national identity, specific national contexts (e.g. devolution) and political history.
Endangered or Emerging Subject Area:	
Ethical approval obtained:	No, there are no special ethical issues arising. As I plan to conduct focus groups as part of my British Academy postdoctoral fellowship research I will submit my focus group study design for review and approval by 30 November, 2009 to Professor Joni Lovenduski who reviews research for ethical compliance in Birkbeck's Department of Politics.
Ethical approval (more information):	
Source of funding:	No.

Financial Details

Financial details:	Year	Payment type	Justification	Amount Requested
	Year 1	Travel Costs		585.00
	Year 1	Accommodation		600.00
	Year 1	Consumables		3,600.00
	Year 1	Research/clerical assistance		0.00
	Year 1	Other costs		2,562.50
		Total		7,347.50

Total grant requested: 7347.50

Start Date: 01/03/2010

Duration (Years): 1

Justification: The funding for this project is needed primarily for travel, the costs associated with recruiting participants, and the recording and transcription of the focus groups.

Travel: £585

This category was estimated based upon the assumption I would require off-peak train travel to London, Glasgow and Aberystwyth three times: a recruitment trip to find participants and to conduct the pre-election and post-election focus groups.

Accommodation: £600

This category was estimated based upon the assumption I would require overnight accommodation in Glasgow and Aberystwyth (but not London) three nights (maximum £100 per night).

Consumables: £3,600

This category contains the costs of participant fees, renting conference rooms in which to hold the focus groups, light refreshments and recording equipment.

Participant fees: assuming eight people per group at £25 per person, with 9 groups in total (£1,800)

Conference room rentals: 6 conference rooms pre- and post-election with a maximum of £100 per room (£600)

Refreshments: 6 sessions at a maximum of £50 per session (£300)

AV Rentals: Digital video recorders at £100 per time, 6 times (£600); Digital audio recorders at £50 per time, 6 times (£300)

Other: £2562.5

This category contains the costs associated with preparing the data for analysis and deposit with the UK Data Archive.

Transcription services: 9 focus groups of 90 minutes each, approximately 13.5 hrs of discussion. 13.5 hrs of recording at 7 hour per 1 hour of discussion to transcribe equal 94.5 hrs transcription time. 94.5 hours at £25 per hour (£2362.50)

Video editing through Birkbeck: 8 hrs at £25.00 per hour (£200)

Name of private fund: