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**Style over substance? Examining the
significance of 'the personal' in British
media discourse**

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requirements for the Degree of**

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*Jeremy Corbyn following his election as Labour leader, September 2015
(BBC, 2015)*



*David Cameron with wife Samantha following his election as Conservative leader, December 2005
(Macdiarmid/Getty Images, 2005)*

Abstract

According to Langer (2011), the modern media have increasingly used the appearance and personal life of politicians as a ‘frame’ in which to judge their overall competence. This study assesses both the prevalence and nature of media framing of these factors (‘the personal’) for two British political leaders: Jeremy Corbyn and David Cameron. Articles were collected across three national newspapers that featured mentions of ‘the personal’ for these leaders, and then sub-categorised to conduct a content analysis of the framing involved. These were then compared to cross-time UK opinion polls to produce preliminary links between this framing and the public popularity of each leader. It was found that despite his attempts to keep media discourse strictly ‘political’, the media framed ‘the personal’ for Corbyn both more frequently and in a more critical manner than they did for Cameron. In comparing this to the opinion poll data on both Corbyn and Cameron, tentative relationships were found between negative framing of ‘the personal’ and unpopularity with the public. This study therefore demonstrates that ‘the personal’ is of key importance to modern political leaders in the UK.

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Introduction

“I don’t like dragging personal things into my political life. And I think it’s very sad when that happens... people should leave personal stuff out of it if they can.”

Jeremy Corbyn interview with The Guardian, 2015 (Hattenstone, 2015)

“For me this is personal. I am someone who has relied on the NHS...who knows what it’s like when you go to hospital night after night with a sick child in your arms...”

David Cameron speech on the NHS to Conservative Party Conference, 2014 (Williamson, 2014)

With the rise of celebrity culture, the media have become increasingly interested in political leaders as individuals as well as politicians. Langer’s (2011:48) research into the personalisation of UK politics concluded that there was a ‘greater appetite in contemporary media for the discussion of the personal lives and qualities of politicians’. Following his election in 1997, Tony Blair’s premiership strengthened links between a politician’s political vision and their physical appearance/ personal life (summarised by Langer as ‘the personal’). Blair embraced ‘the personal’ and actively incorporated it into the ‘New Labour’ project of which he was the flag-bearer. While his (relatively unsuccessful) successor Gordon Brown spoke about ‘the personal’ rather reluctantly (Langer 2011:52), David Cameron has also welcomed ‘the personal’ as a key part of his overall political identity.

This established relationship between the British media and leaders who shared ‘the personal’ came into question

following Jeremy Corbyn's election as Labour Party leader in September 2015. Historically outwith the political mainstream, Corbyn's political vision did not involve projecting 'the personal' in the manner of Blair or Cameron. His wardrobe rarely included a suit and tie and he expressed his desire to keep his private life firmly separate from his political one (Hattestone, 2015). Given his recent tenure as leader, there has been no comprehensive academic study assessing how Corbyn has been covered in the media, as a result of this nonconforming attitude to 'the personal'.

Most research on 'the personal' involves leaders who do conform to modern expectations regarding their appearance or family values (with even Gordon Brown eventually conducting confessional interviews and bringing his wife on stage at conference [Langer, 2011: 150]). This study therefore seeks to examine the media's treatment of Corbyn as a leader who firmly rebuffs these expectations, even in the face of modern pressures. Content analysis of UK newspapers was conducted over a 10-month period following Corbyn's announcement of his leadership candidacy, and compared alongside coverage of David Cameron. The results of this coverage were then compared to opinion poll data on each leader, to cautiously propose how this coverage may be impacting on the personal popularity of politicians. This dissertation therefore examines two contrasting political approaches to 'the personal', in order to suggest its significance for the success of modern politicians.

The findings indicate that for media coverage of both Cameron and Corbyn, a significant amount of articles contain some reference to 'the personal'. This both reaffirms and extends Langer's (2011) findings, showing 'the personal' is still significantly focused on even when a political leader actively rejects discussing it. As a result of Corbyn's nonconforming to expectations of

publicising 'the personal', my research finds that the press framed him more unfavourably than Cameron. Thus, it must be concluded that actively and effectively utilising 'the personal' is key to the success of a modern British political leader, particularly as a correlation was found between coverage of 'the personal' and popularity with the public.

Literature Review

A variety of research exists on the use of politicians' personal lives as a media 'frame', and on appearance-based responses to political figures. In this chapter I outline literature surrounding each of these issues, then relate these theories to British political leaders in order to develop my hypotheses. I begin, however, by briefly defining media 'framing' as a concept.

Issue framing in the media was described by Cohen (1963:13) as telling people not what to think but what to think about, and research conducted retrospectively has agreed that 'each story is a choice' (Gitlin, 1980:49) and choices by journalists can shape public opinion (Hall Jamieson & Waldman, 2004; Kinder,1998). Hallin (1997:62) states modern news stories are increasingly journalist-centred and that journalists, not candidates, are 'the primary communicator'. While noteworthy, Hallin's research was focused on the USA, as is the case with a great deal of research on media framing of political leaders (with the notable exception of Langer, 2011). By focusing my research on the UK media system, I will attempt to assess whether framing of personal issues are having an effect on British public opinion. Although an explicit link is difficult to establish, I will determine how pervasive frames of 'the personal' are in public political discourse.

The use of 'the personal' as a marketing tool has become increasingly common in recent years, after 'politics as showbiz came into its own in the style-conscious 1980s' (Benjamin,1994:32). In this dissertation, I will apply Langer's (2011) terminology and use 'the personal' to refer to both the private lives and physical appearance

of politicians. 'The personal' as a framing technique is utilised by both the media and politicians themselves, with Gordon studying the use of framing and concluding that fathers use their family-based identity 'as a discursive strategy' (Gordon quoted in Sclafani, 2015:373). Sclafani (2015: 386) analysed how American presidential candidates introduce themselves during debates, finding the most common information provided by candidates involved references to their family members, and that these references helped candidates to present themselves as 'relatable'. Highlighting the extent to which these frames have taken hold, she also found 'candidates would try and "outdo" one another with references to their families' (Sclafani, 2015: 370). For male politicians, increased interest in their family lives is coupled with pressure to conform to 'cultural understandings' about 'masculinity, strength and machismo' rather than the 'weakness' of femininity (Sperling, 2016: 14). They must therefore strike a careful balance between the two in order to project 'the personal' in a media-friendly way, and so the news environment is producing 'an "ideal" male identity' (Croteau & Hoynes, 1992: 157). Modern politics 'demands' a selling of both the personal and political (Busby, 2009: 4), with a requirement that even the 'hobbies and pastimes of [political] candidates are similar to those of the population as a whole' (Busby, 2009: 30). The 'weight of expectations' (Stanyer, 2013: 20) placed upon political actors suggests an obligation to conform to this complex 'ideal' identity in order to be portrayed positively in the media:

...in a time when self-expression and sharing private experience are de rigeur, reticence will seem stuck- up or suspicious (Adut, 2008:209).

Jeremy Corbyn, therefore, risks being viewed as 'suspicious' through his reluctance to 'drag' his personal life into his politics (Hattestone, 2015). He avoids bringing his wife on stage at party conference, talking at length about his three sons or engaging in

photo-opportunities outwith official engagements. He also defies the expectation that politicians must project their hobbies and interests as similar to everyday citizens (as described by Busby, 2009:30). While content analysis of UK news television coverage found a ‘relaxed’ Nigel Farage was filmed drinking beer and smoking cigarettes in public houses (Cushion et al, 2015:318), Corbyn has disclosed he is virtually teetotal (Myres, 2016). Prime Ministers Blair, Brown and Cameron openly discussed their football team allegiances (Marriage, 2010), but the hobby Corbyn discusses publicly is his niche interest in photographing drain hole covers (Kirby, 2015). Following existing literature (particularly research from Busby [2009] and Adut [2008]) Corbyn’s privacy around his personal life and failure to project his interests as conventional should lead to him being portrayed negatively in the press. According to framing theory, press negativity towards Corbyn would then, in turn, be shared by the public. Yet this is doubted by Driessens et al, who studied the perceptions Flemish politicians had of their own professional presentation in the media:

The majority of respondents said...what or how much are disclosed, or to what extent the media control or organize private consumption practices.... depend on the politicians’ personal definition of private life (Driessens et al, 2010:12).

This apparently conflicts the findings of Adut (2008) and Busby (2009), but qualitative interviews with politicians may have resulted in interviewees downplaying the influence of the media relative to their own authority. Denscombe (2014: 201) states that in qualitative interviews there is no clear way to verify an interviewee’s response, questioning Driessen et al’s conclusions. Thus, there is disagreement within the scholarly community about the extent to which an individual politician can control the emphasis the media places on their personal life. Through examining the treatment of ‘the personal’ for Corbyn (and Cameron) I will attempt to assess which of these conflicting contentions applies in the context of the UK media system.

A politician's physical appearance has also become crucial in the modern political world, and several studies suggest that image-based responses to candidates are significant for informing public opinion. While most male political leaders maintain a formal wardrobe of suits and ties, Jeremy Corbyn is known for a more casual appearance- involving not only his clothing but a now infamous beard (Wheeler, 2016). This 'unconventional' appearance could be potentially detrimental, as Sanghvi & Hodges (2015:1683) found several participants said the appearance of a politician would impact on their perceptions of their 'credibility and intelligence'. These 'participants' included both media executives and registered voters, and so their critical assessments of physical appearance could prove ominous for Corbyn and his nonconforming image. Yet as this was qualitative research, it does not determine how a politician's appearance affects actual elections- something Todorov et al (2005) attempted to address. They presented participants with pairs of photographs of candidates from US Senate elections and asked them to predict who was more competent based on appearance. Using this criteria, they found participants correctly judged the actual election winner in 71.6% of pairs (Todorov et al, 2005:1624). Stockemer et al (2014: 1108) similarly identified a statistically significant relationship between candidate attractiveness as ranked by participants, and the vote-share obtained by the same candidates in US elections. While both Stockemer et al and Todorov et al used naïve participants with no prior knowledge of the candidates, I will attempt to assess the importance of appearance among the general public, who are likely to recognise the political leaders involved. Therefore if, as Todorov et al and Stockemer et al suggest, individuals have underlying tendencies to judge based on appearance, then the media's focus on these issues will likely strengthen such tendencies. Laustsen and Petersen (2016) also found attractive politicians were more likely to be successful, using, like Todorov and Stockemer, an experimental study based in North

America. Yet less research on this subject exists in the UK, which may be problematic according to Shephard:

most British voters are less accustomed to candidate-centred judgement. In turn, it might suggest that studies like that reported by Todorov et al (2005)... would yield less impressive if not null findings in Britain (Shephard, 2011: 654).

British candidates were used in a study where participants predicted election outcomes through perceptions of a politician's attractiveness, but the participants were US students (Mattes & Milazzo, 2014). Thus, research still needs to be conducted to determine if the British public respond to candidates less superficially, as Shephard (2011) suggests they will. While my research will not be experimental or based solely on candidates' images, it will examine the potential influence of the British media system as a whole and how it deals with the issue of physical appearance. This should give a wider sense of the impact of appearance on citizens as a larger body, rather than the smaller datasets seen in the above experimental studies. Krogstad and Storvik (2010) highlighted the importance of this macro-level media analysis by examining the great divides that can exist among media environments, even among Western nations. While the French media praised a politician's physical elegance and power, Norwegian leaders who wore 'inelegant or poorly fitting suits' were viewed by the media as 'demonstrating closeness and solidarity with those less fortunate' (Krogstad & Storvik, 2010: 33). Therefore, the individuality of each country's media and citizen response to personal appearance means the lack of UK-based literature on this issue creates a niche for my research.

In examining recent British Prime Ministers relationships with the media, it is clear that Tony Blair and David Cameron embraced the framing of 'the personal' and arguably

benefitted as a result. Tony Blair actively marketed ‘the personal’ as a key part of –rather than addition to- his political credentials:

One of the commonest reasons given for supporting Blair was a belief that in the all-important political battleground of the news media he would come across to the electorate...as the most likeable leader (Jones, 1995:9).

Former journalist Jones discusses how in a meeting Blair became ‘rather agitated’ about his hair, having forgotten his comb, and they then ‘trailed back to the BBC office to retrieve one’ before re-joining the television crew (Jones, 1995:44). Similarly, former spin doctor Alastair Campbell recounts how a government official was instructed to swap clothes with Blair after the Prime Minister’s suit got crumpled on a flight to Egypt. Blair apologised to the official but stressed that his suit was ‘not in good shape’ (Campbell, 2012:127), confirming that Blair recognised the importance of physical appearance as outlined earlier. Blair was arguably the archetypal ‘ideal’ male politician described by Croteau/Hoynes (1992), introducing both his family life and ‘ordinary’ hobbies into public discourse. ‘Blair’s family entered the spotlight many times’ as he spoke openly about being a father of four (Bennister, 2012: 131), while his musical tastes and interest in playing the guitar became common knowledge (Wheeler, 2007). Although there were multiple factors contributing to his electoral victories, his status as ‘Labour’s most successful prime minister’ (Rentoul, 2016) does highlight the benefits of positive media coverage that can be gained from marketing ‘the personal’. Blair’s merging of the private and public spheres has arguably set a precedent for UK leaders who have come after him- I will assess how this affects a leader like Corbyn who naturally shies away from publicity.

In regards to engaging ‘the personal’ in politics, David Cameron is very much the heir to Blair. He has consistently involved his wife Samantha (kissing her on stage after winning the Conservative party leadership) and his three young children, speaking openly about his fourth child Ivan’s disability and death (Williamson, 2014). He appears to endorse Busby’s (2009:4) theory that the public have a ‘demand’ or a ‘right’ to a politician’s personal life, as he was quoted saying that ‘people have a right to know more about me’ (Seawright, 2013:167). In the lead up to the 2015 election Cameron filmed a YouTube documentary with *The Sun* newspaper where cameras were invited into Downing Street, with scenes of Cameron sitting at the kitchen table in casual clothing (The Sun, 2015[x]). The concept that Cameron was thus ‘relatable’ was emphasised by the documentary’s voiceover:

7am... Kids are nowhere to be seen or heard, as Dad sits down over a cuppa and looks at his diary for the day. A typical scene in many homes across Britain... (The Sun, 2015[x]: clip between 2.25 and 2.38)

Cameron appears to perceive benefits of projecting ‘the personal’ in a media-friendly way, which arguably helped contribute to him leading the Conservatives to an unexpected majority victory in the election of 2015 (Swinford et al, 2015). His continuation of Blair’s marketing of ‘the personal’ will likely consolidate this approach to the media as the consensus for UK leaders, and so I will analyse if this then positions a figure like Corbyn as in some way abnormal.

According to Langer (2011:146), Blair and Cameron’s ‘personal style’ and ‘family life’ were used by journalists ‘to assess the credibility of the political project they (re)presented’, as the private and the public blurred into one. Langer (2011:143) examined both appearance and personal life in a content analysis of two British newspapers, comparing Blair and Cameron’s leadership

elections and coding articles for five dimensions of ‘the personal’ (family life, lifestyle, personal appearance, upbringing and religion):

the coverage of Cameron's rise to the party leadership paid more attention to his personal life and qualities than in Blair's case... the politicisation of personal life continued to evolve after him; in fact it actually intensified for Cameron's sample (Langer, 2011:143).

Considering her finding that press focus on politician's private spheres has increased over time -perhaps caused in part by Blair- I will carry out a similar content analysis of newspaper articles to assess the prevalence of these frames ten years on from Cameron's leadership election. In this media environment, I will examine the differences (if any) between how the press frame Cameron, a leader who welcomes ‘the personal’ into politics, and Corbyn, a leader who actively avoids it, thus coming to some conclusion about whether the personalisation of politics can be ‘ignored’ in 2016. By conducting this comparison, it should allow me to assess whether press framing of Corbyn is notably different to how the media cover other major political leaders. It could be the case that he is not criticized any more than other leaders, and so the relative harm to the success of his leadership would be minimal in comparison to others. Although my initial research suggests this will not be the case, the comparison between the two leaders should allow me to determine if framing of Corbyn is disproportionately critical or not. I will also relate the framing of both leaders to their public opinion poll ratings, something Langer calls for in her study:

The research agenda also needs to pay much greater attention to citizens...pursuing a better understanding of how leaders' personae, and in particular the role of the personal, are assessed by the public' (Langer, 2011:182)

However it is important to note, as Langer (2011:4) states, that regardless of a leader's personal appeal, their 'success or failure will ultimately depend on which policies satisfy a sufficient proportion of the population'. The UK's 'capitalistic system of press ownership' (Kauffman, 1985: 325) means most of the newspaper press is 'antagonistic towards increased public expenditure, progressive taxation, trade unions' (Deacon, 2004:12); all of which are all key staples of Corbyn's left-wing policy agenda. It is therefore possible that the press will criticise Corbyn based on his policies, which could equally damage his public opinion ratings. Yet regardless of motivations for the media's attitude towards Corbyn, this study attempts to examine the framing of his leadership around the issue of 'the personal', which remains crucial in addition to issues of policy. Leaders who have spent relatively little time in office need to place a particular focus on 'letting voters know who they are' and 'are likely to seek to try and bond with voters by revealing personal information and attracting the interest of the media' (Stanyer, 2013:65). Relevant to 'new' leaders like Corbyn, Haumer and Donsbach (2009:264) find that 'when individuals do not know how to behave or what to believe, they often copy other people or assimilate group opinions.' The 'group opinion' of the press is generally negative towards Corbyn, with a report by the London School of Economics finding that 67% of opinion piece newspaper articles they coded were 'critical or antagonistic' towards him (Cammaerts et al, 2016: 3). I will aim to extend this research by analysing newspaper reporting on Corbyn in relation to another leader (Cameron) while also relating to opinion polls, which Cammaerts et al did not. By allowing a negative narrative to build up in the press and not proactively marketing his personal life in the way Blair did, it is therefore hypothesised that the negative press attention Corbyn receives will result in negative opinion poll ratings. Modern media cannot be ignored and so 'it is increasingly inadvisable to flatly refuse to reveal the private self', regardless of how 'reluctant or uncomfortable a politician might be' (Langer, 2011:64). According to Langer's theory, such a politician will inevitably be unpopular with

the press and the public, and so this dissertation will assess if that is indeed the case for Corbyn. Apart from Cammaerts et al's report, there is very little research on Corbyn owing to his relatively recent election as leader. The research carried out in this dissertation is thus innovative in that it involves in-depth academic research regarding Corbyn, as well as considering the relationship between a politician's appearance and their public popularity in a specifically British case study.

Hypotheses

Langer (2011) concluded that the prevalence of ‘the personal’ in media framing continued to grow even after Blair, while Busby (2009), Adut (2008) and Stanyer (2013) suggest the press now believe they have a ‘right’ to a politician’s personal sphere. This leads to my first hypothesis: that in this modern media environment Corbyn will be unable to avoid discussion of ‘the personal’, and thus will not have fewer articles about him framed in terms of ‘the personal’ than his counterpart Cameron.

H1) Despite his reluctance to involve ‘the personal’, Jeremy Corbyn’s leadership will not be framed in terms of ‘the personal’ any less frequently than David Cameron’s.

Corbyn fails to comply with expectations regarding ‘the personal’ as outlined by Croteau & Hoynes (1992) and Busby (2009), and initial research showed the press appeared generally critical of his leadership (Cammaerts et al, 2016). It is therefore expected that the framing of ‘the personal’ regarding Corbyn will be more negative than that of Cameron, who actively markets his personal sphere (according to Langer [2011] and Seawright [2013]).

H2) The media’s framing of ‘the personal’ with regards to Corbyn will involve more critical frames and be more negative in tone than it will for Cameron.

The third hypothesis is based on H2 being supported, and tentatively links media framing to public opinion. Research showed negative framing can impact on public opinion (Hall Jamieson & Waldman, 2004; Kinder, 1998), and studies by Todorov et al (2005) and Stockemer et al (2014) found that an individual’s support for a candidate was affected by perceptions of that candidate’s physical

appearance. It is therefore posited the anticipated negative framing of Corbyn in terms of ‘the personal’ will correlate to lower public support for his leadership.

H3) Corbyn will suffer negative poll ratings compared to Cameron in line with the anticipated media criticism of H2.

Methodology

In order to assess the frames used to describe Corbyn and Cameron, I employed content analysis: a ‘systematic’ methodology used to compress volumes of text into ‘fewer content categories’ (Stemler, 2001:1). It is best known for use in ‘describing themes of communication content’ (Drisko & Maschi, 2016: 25), and therefore appropriate for my research in the field of media communication. Content analysis was also valuable for use across my sizeable dataset, as it helps researchers to logically examine large amounts of data according to Drisko and Maschi (2016:25). The content analysis I conducted was mainly quantitative in nature, as it assessed the frequency of the coding patterns I defined in my research. However I also selected quotations from newspaper articles within each of my coding categories, in order to give a richer sense of the issue at hand. This triangulation of quantitative and qualitative analysis is advocated by Hussein (2015: 4), who argues:

when combined together, there is a great possibility of neutralizing the flaws of one method and strengthening the benefits of the other for the better research results.

In the rest of this chapter, I will turn to explaining my choice of newspapers as a dataset, detailing the methods of my content analysis research, and discussing possible flaws in my chosen methodology.

Initially, I approached issue framing in a constructivist manner, as my literature suggested the framing of ‘the personal’ has been constructed by the press and politicians to the point where it is simply assumed to be significant. Yet Druckman (2001:1059) questioned the conventional wisdom on framing by analysing the impact of two media sources, and concluding that framing ‘works’ when attributed to a credible source and ‘fails’ when

not. I therefore chose three ‘credible’ national UK newspapers to assess framing of Corbyn and Cameron’s personal qualities and draw a crude inference of whether these frames impact on public opinion, in the way literature suggests they will. My choice of print newspapers as a media source may be questioned at a time when UK internet users are growing year on year (88% of the public in 2016 [Office for National Statistics, 2016]) and newspaper readership is declining (Jackson, 2015). Yet Peter Mandelson, former Labour director of Communication, stated that newspapers could often inform other broadcasting mediums and that the influence of newspapers on other media sources ‘could not be overlooked’ (Mandelson in Jones, 1995:130). Correspondingly, Druckman (2005:476) examined US newspapers and television broadcasts around election time in relation to a survey of voter awareness, concluding that newspapers, not television news, played a ‘significant role in informing the electorate’. Nonetheless, doubts may be cast on both these conclusions. Mandelson was referring to the period of New Labour (mid 1990s-2007) and Druckman’s study was conducted in 2005, before the internet reached its current popularity and media consumption increasingly shifted online (Ofcom, 2015). However, research into candidate appearance published in 2014 concluded in a similar fashion:

although news organizations do occasionally publish photographs or air footage of politicians, much of what voters learn about candidates’ appearance comes from the way reporters describe them (Hayes et al, 2014:1200).

Newspapers evidently still hold an influential role when it comes to the presentation of politicians and ‘the personal’. Similarly, Langer’s (2011) research used newspapers as a data source, and, since my methods were based closely on hers, newspapers therefore serve as a valid dataset for my research.

To assess media framing, I chose to code three UK national newspapers: *The Sun*, *The Daily Mail* and *The Daily Mirror* (including the Sunday editions for all three papers). The top three national newspapers by average daily circulation in July 2015 were (in descending order) *The Sun*, *The Daily Mail* and *The Daily Mirror* and for weekly circulation it was the Sunday versions of the same three (Media Reform Coalition, 2015). Ideally I would have included more newspapers, but as a sole researcher I was only feasibly able to code a limited number of articles. Given their circulation levels and the fact they are national papers, these titles are those that will have reached the greatest proportion of the UK public, and likely be the most relevant to link to possible opinion poll trends. For my study of a Conservative and Labour leader they should also provide a relatively balanced political outlook: *The Sun* has previously supported both Labour and the Conservatives; *The Daily Mail* supports the Conservatives; *The Daily Mirror* supports Labour (BBC, 2009). In light of Druckman's (2001) conclusions regarding the importance of source credibility for framing, the newspapers I have chosen have all been in publication for at least 50 years, with *The Daily Mail* first published in 1896 (Spartacus Educational, 2017; Guardian Reporter, 1964; Historic Newspapers, 2017). Although I was unable to ask participants to score the credibility of sources like Druckman did, these newspapers are undeniably well-established within the UK press and thus generally credible. *The Daily Mail* is also particularly important to study regarding theory that newspapers influence the wider media environment, as according to Gaber (2014: 473) it 'has convinced journalists and politicians alike that it represents the authentic voice of middle England'. Winning in 'middle England' is considered by politicians to be crucial in winning general elections (Moran, 2005) and so if other media sources view *The Daily Mail* as representative of this they may be inclined to imitate its framing choices.

My process for collecting and coding data was derived from Langer's 2011 study, and then adapted to suit my own research design. I decided to compare the media framing of Corbyn to that of David Cameron, his opposite number as leader of the opposition and also someone who appears to take a very different approach to marketing 'the personal'. I therefore analysed articles across the period when they were both leaders or prospective leaders of their respective parties. This period was between the 3rd June 2015, when Corbyn first announced his leadership bid (Couvée, 2015) and the 24th June 2016, when Cameron announced his resignation (Wright, 2016). I did not compare Corbyn's treatment in the media to that of Cameron's replacement, Theresa May, as literature on gender in the media suggests that as a woman, she would already have higher levels of media scrutiny of her appearance and personal life (Miller & Peake, 2013; Gidengil & Everitt, 2003).

A search was carried out using LexisNexis online archives for each newspaper across the selected time period, filtering articles down to those featuring the 'person' Jeremy Corbyn. I then repeated this process for David Cameron. I included opinion pieces, but omitted letters pages from the public and articles that were exclusive to regional editions of the newspapers (Scotland or Northern Ireland), as they will have reached fewer people and may not have impacted markedly on national opinion polls. This meant that for Jeremy Corbyn, I recorded 377 articles from *The Mail*, 231 articles from *The Sun* and 124 articles from *The Mirror*. For David Cameron, I recorded 777 articles from *The Mail*, 211 articles from *The Sun* and 265 from *The Mirror*. I coded substantially more articles for *The Mail*, as they had no regional versions on Lexis Nexis and so there were more 'usable' articles from this source. In total, there were 732 articles recorded for Jeremy Corbyn and 1253 recorded for David Cameron, with the analysis of these following in the next chapter.

In her comparison of media coverage of the leadership elections of Blair and Cameron, Langer (2011) used five categories that encompassed mentions of ‘the personal’ in media frames: family life, lifestyle, personal appearance, upbringing and religion. For each leader in turn, I read through the articles filtered by my search and looked for any mention of ‘the personal’ in the terms Langer outlined. If it featured any such mention I recorded it with a value of ‘1’, noted a keyword description of the nature of the framing, and placed it into an Excel spreadsheet, and then SPSS. Those articles that did not contain any mention of ‘the personal’ were given a value of ‘0’ and recorded in SPSS alongside those with the value of ‘1’, providing me with the percentage of articles that mentioned ‘the personal’ for each leader. The second stage of my coding process was to examine the keyword Excel spreadsheet containing all articles coded as ‘1’, and look for patterns emerging for each leader. Consistent with anecdotal accounts of the two leaders, after assessing the keywords for each leader it became obvious that Corbyn and Cameron were very different and had contrasting attitudes towards ‘the personal’. I therefore could not use broad themes for both in the way Langer compared Blair and Cameron, so instead developed individual coding patterns for each leader (which I will detail further on in my results section). I analysed the frequency of these individual sub-categories for each leader, and then selected notable examples of each of the sub-categories to demonstrate the type of frame the press were using. Finally, I examined the total list of articles where ‘the personal’ was present over time, to find when the frequency of mentions of ‘the personal’ was highest for each leader. I then compared this to the British opinion poll data on each leader I was able to access from YouGov, for polls conducted between September 2015 and April 2016 (YouGov, 2016 [b]). The opinion polls I used asked (in separate questions) an average of 1600 adults in the UK (weighted by a number of variables such as age, education and location) if they thought

Corbyn and Cameron were ‘doing well’ or ‘doing badly’ (YouGov, 2016 [a]). As all data was taken from publicly available sources, there was no requirement for ethical permission.

There were, however, some limitations to my chosen methodology. In linking the frames I found to opinion poll data, I did not have the capacity to do complex time series analysis, analyse enough time points to conduct such a time series, nor control for other variables likely to be affecting opinion regarding the two candidates. As a result, any evidence I did find of framing’s impact on public opinion is relatively crude and requires further research to be confirmed as valid. Despite this, the comparison between framing and public opinion remains an interesting part of my research that could establish some groundwork around framing effects, and serve as a call to research for others.

By using a hand-coding system, I can ‘claim validity as a central advantage’ (Däubler, 2012: 939) as my coding categories are individually relevant to both Corbyn and Cameron. However, Däubler (2012: 939) warns that whenever an individual codes text, the content analysis procedure ‘faces potential problems with reliability.’ Discussing the use of content analysis in assessing media frames, Matthes and Kohring (2008:259) warn that researchers risk finding frames they are already looking for. This is a bias that could have been present in my research if I was reading articles with a view to supporting my hypotheses -although it was a bias I tried to avoid. While the reliability of my study was potentially compromised by my chosen method, I felt individual coding was the best way to ensure I captured the nuances of ‘the personal’ that may have been included in articles. Moreover, in creating sub-categories specifically relevant to each leader, my research may make replicability easier for future researchers. To examine frames of ‘the personal’ in the press in

future, key word searches could be easily conducted based upon the categories I have developed.

Findings and Discussion

In this chapter, I will discuss the findings of my research and examine each of my three hypotheses in turn (as re-stated below).

H1) Despite his reluctance to involve ‘the personal’, Jeremy Corbyn’s leadership will not be framed in terms of ‘the personal’ any less frequently than David Cameron’s.

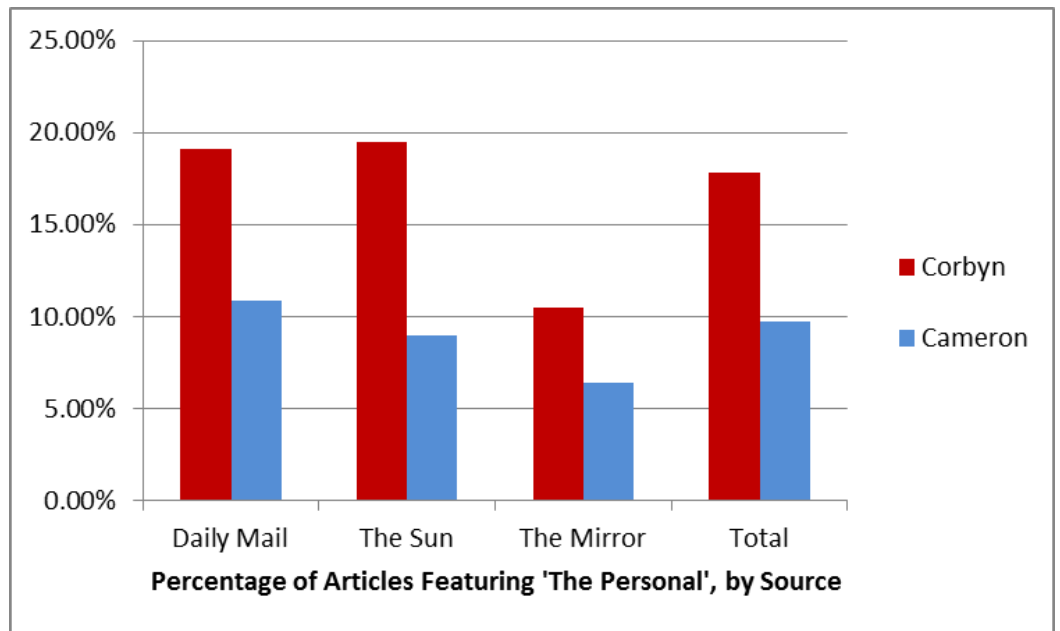
H2) The media’s framing of ‘the personal’ with regards to Corbyn will involve more critical frames, and be more negative in tone than it will for Cameron.

H3) Corbyn will suffer negative poll ratings compared to Cameron in line with the anticipated media criticism of H2.

To assess H1, the percentage of articles coded as containing ‘the personal’ was compared to those without, using a cross-tabs table (see Appendix 1 for full tables). For both leaders, a substantial proportion of articles contained framing of ‘the personal’ in some way.

According to Langer’s criteria across the time period I examined, ‘the personal’ was framed for Jeremy Corbyn in **19%** of articles in *The Daily Mail*, **19.5%** in *The Sun*, and **10.5%** in *The Daily Mirror*. Out of a total of 732 articles on Corbyn across all three newspapers, 130 articles (**17.8%**) mentioned ‘the personal’ in some way.

For David Cameron, across the same time period and using the same criteria, **10.9%** of articles in *The Daily Mail*, **9%** of articles in *The Sun*, and **6.4%** of articles in *The Daily Mirror* mentioned ‘the personal’ in some way. Out of a total of 1253 articles, 121 (**9.7%**) involved framing of ‘the personal’. These figures are outlined in comparison to Corbyn in Graph 1.

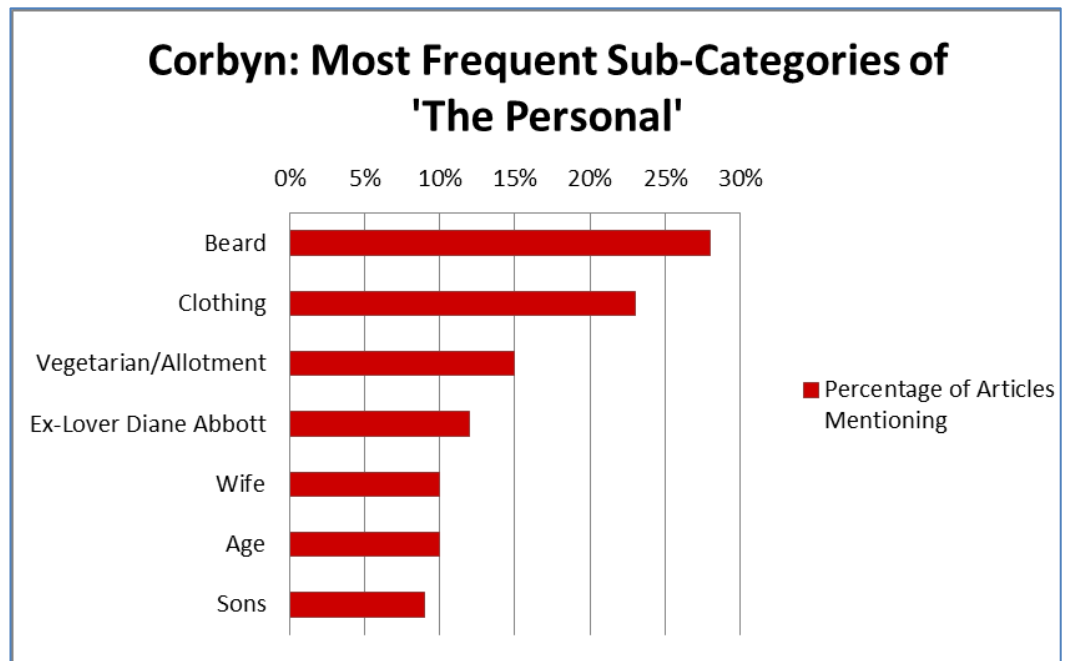


Graph 1- Frequency of 'The Personal' By Source

This evidence appears to support H1, as the media did not frame Corbyn in terms of ‘the personal’ any less than Cameron, despite his attempts to distance himself from such a frame. In fact, my results show that ‘the personal’ was actually discussed in relation to Corbyn more often than for Cameron. Considering that the time period I analysed involved Corbyn’s party leadership contest, this may explain why personal frames were significantly more frequent in articles about him. Unlike Cameron, who had recently won his second term as Prime Minister, the press still had to ‘get to know’ Corbyn and thus discuss aspects of his personal life. Yet given that he had expressed his reluctance to bring ‘the personal’ into politics (Hattenstone, 2015), it is significant to note the press largely ignored this request and covered ‘the personal’ regardless. It is of course also significant that the majority of articles for both Cameron and Corbyn did not mention ‘the personal’, as traditional ‘hard news’ still prevails. Yet despite this, average percentages of 17.8% (Corbyn) and 9.7% (Cameron) for articles featuring ‘the personal’ are substantial figures, especially when many mentions came from within ‘hard news’ stories.

While this dissertation does not attempt to suggest ‘the personal’ is *the* most important issue in the media’s framing of political leaders, the findings of H1 show that it is at least *one* important issue.

To assess H2 (whether framing of ‘the personal’ was more negative for Corbyn than Cameron), I examined patterns within mentions of ‘the personal’ for each leader and then subcategorised these to determine if they were favourable or not. In articles about Corbyn, I found the most frequently used sub categories described his ‘personal’ realm in either a mocking or critical way (as listed in Graph 2).



Graph 2-Most Frequent Sub Categories Used for Corbyn

The subcategory used most often involved references to his beard, which were featured in 27.7% of those articles which mentioned ‘the personal’. ‘Beardie’ or ‘beardie’ was often used as mocking prefix, with *The Daily Mail* on one occasion simply using ‘Beardie’ rather than Corbyn’s name (Hardcastle, 2015). *The Sun* made a point of highlighting the abnormality of a beard as a physical trait for

a political leader, stating that the last bearded prime minister elected was ‘Robert Cecil, in the late 19th century’ (Clarkson, 2015). Corbyn’s beard was repeatedly used to stress this apparent abnormality (‘weirdy beardy’ [The Sun, 2015a] ‘bearded loon’ [The Sun, 2015b]) or physical unattractiveness:

Superficially the least-attractive, white-bearded Leftie
Corbyn... (McKay, 2015)

His beard, along with his clothing, was somehow tied up with his political affiliation, as he was called a ‘bearded lefty’ (Hitchens, 2015) and described in terms of his ‘left-wing beard and Lenin's hat’ (Liddle, 2015).

Corbyn’s shunning of a suit and tie in favour of a more casual wardrobe was also a popular frame to criticise his appearance, with his clothing being mentioned in 23.1% of articles involving ‘the personal’. Almost all of the articles referring to his clothing drew attention to the fact that he dressed unconventionally for a politician, even if they were not necessarily critical in tone. Yet many mentions of his clothing were critical, as he was described as ‘sartorially-challenged’ (Groves & Tozer, 2015) ‘wearing a tacky tracksuit’ (The Sun, 2015[c]) and ‘a shabbily dressed 1980s throwback’ (Kavanagh, 2015[a]). Reference to a ‘1980s throwback’ supports Langer’s (2011:143) assertion that the media compares ‘the personal’ qualities of a leader to ‘the political project they represent’. According to Cammaerts et al (2016:3), the ‘group opinion’ of a large sector of the press was that Corbyn’s policies were outdated or out of touch, and here his clothing and beard are described as similarly so. Additionally, the concept that Corbyn ‘looks like a scruff’ (Malone, 2015) runs throughout mentions of his clothing, with eight separate articles using the word ‘scruff’ or ‘scruffy’. He maintains a ‘dishevelled appearance and wardrobe of ageing jackets, Lenin caps and vests’ (Rawstorne & Thompson, 2015) and is apparently

‘scruffy... in a mismatched blue jacket and trousers with his top shirt button undone’ (Newton Dunn et al, 2015). In one article in *The Daily Mail*, this ‘scruffy’ clothing was used to imply he was in some way mentally unstable, with his ‘top shirt button undone, tie askew, right eye bulging’ (Letts, 2016[a]). That Corbyn’s top button being undone is even worthy of comment shows how high the expected standard of attire has become in order for political leaders to avoid press criticism.

After *The Sun* alleged in September 2015 that Corbyn and senior Labour politician Diane Abbott had a sexual relationship in the 1970s, it became a frequently used sub-frame within ‘the personal’. Mentions continued for several months after the story broke, with 16 separate articles (12.3% of ‘the personal’) referencing the historic relationship. ‘Former-lover’ became a commonplace prefix for Abbott if mentioned in the same story as Corbyn, even when in a ‘hard news’ article:

Jeremy Corbyn last night promoted his former lover Diane Abbott to shadow home secretary... (Groves, 2016)

When discussing his speech in the Commons about terrorism policy, *The Daily Mail* commented that ‘just two MPs were near him - and one of those was his former lover Diane Abbott’ (Slack, 2015 [a]). Similarly, on an official trip to the Calais refugee camp, *The Sun* commented that Corbyn was with ‘wife Laura Alvarez and ex-lover Diane Abbott, shadow international development secretary’ (The Sun, 2016[a]). Abbott was here framed as Corbyn’s ‘ex-lover’ before she was referred to using her official job title as ‘the personal’ takes precedence over factual reporting, and Corbyn’s politics become trivialised.

In articles about Corbyn that mention ‘the personal’, the frame of Diane Abbott as his ‘ex-lover’ was referred to

more frequently than the frame of his wife Laura Alvarez (16 articles compared to 13). It could be suggested that by not actively promoting his marriage or emphasising family values, Corbyn faces increased vulnerability to this type of sensationalist reporting. Where his wife is referenced, 77% of articles that mention her specifically describe Laura as his ‘third wife’, emphasising the unconventionality of Corbyn’s personal life in comparison to other political leaders. Laura’s nationality (as a Mexican) and her age (20 years younger than Corbyn) were also commonly accentuated: ‘Laura Alvarez, a Mexican who, at 46, is two decades his junior’ (Rawstorne & Thompson, 2015).

Another subcategory used to negatively frame Corbyn’s personal realm was that of his age, referenced in 10% of articles discussing ‘the personal’. Aged 67 at the time of writing, articles describing him as a ‘pensioner’ (Vine, 2015) ‘ageing’ (Kavanagh, 2015[b]) and ‘a man of pension age’ (Maguire, 2015) were commonplace. He was also explicitly criticised as old: ‘old beardy’ (Black Dog Mail on Sunday, 2015); ‘old Corbyn’ (Letts, 2016[b]); ‘crazy old Corbyn’ (The Sun, 2016[b]). In comparison to his then 49-year-old counterpart Cameron (Biography, 2016) and 46-year-old predecessor Ed Miliband (Asthana, 2010), this frame further projects Corbyn as in some way deviant from norms surrounding ‘the personal’.

Corbyn’s lifestyle choices -as a vegetarian and keeper of an allotment- were also commonly discussed (15% of articles), but not necessarily in an objective way. His ‘muesli-munching’ (Johnson, 2015) was countered to the machoism of the ‘ideal male’ stereotype earlier outlined by Sperling (2016:14) and Croteau & Hoynes (1992:157):

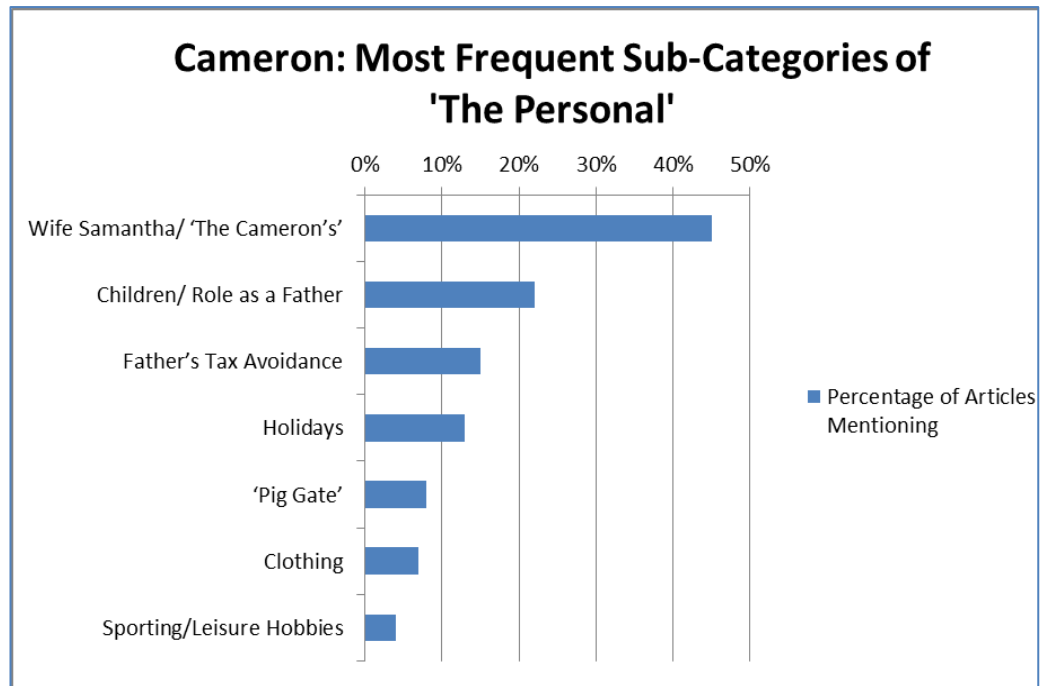
where is the man in this non-smoking, non-drinking,
nondriving vegetarian? (Routledge, 2015)

Taken from the *The Daily Mirror* – a source supposed to be supportive of Labour- ‘the personal’ is instead to attack his very status as a man and questions his suitability for the ‘tough’ world of politics (Croteau & Hoynes, 1992:159). This theme was also seen in *The Daily Mail* where Corbyn was juxtaposed to a ‘traditional’ male politician:

[he]is a reverse image of pro-Palestinian, shell-suited, Left-wing, national-anthem-mumbling, vegetarian, teetotal, pacifist Corbyn (Walters, 2016[a]).

Not only did the media I studied present Corbyn’s personal life and appearance as different from modern political norms, but they also suggested on several occasions that ‘the personal’ showed he was politically incapable too. As Langer suggested (2011:146), the modern media appear to assess the personal and political as an amalgamated ‘project’ an individual represents, rather than entities that can be kept separated.

With regards to articles on David Cameron that referred to ‘the personal’, the frames used were generally-though not exclusively- more favourable (as seen in Graph 3).



Graph 3- Most Frequent Sub-Categories Used For Cameron

Considerable attention was given to either his wife Samantha or to the couple as 'The Camerons' (45.4% in total of 'the personal'). Samantha Cameron was occasionally referred to by the semi-affectionate nickname 'SamCam', with framing of her typically conducted in a familiar manner ('with wife Sam and the kids' [Sabey, 2015]) As may be expected, *The Daily Mail* was particularly positive in framing of her: 'Mrs Cameron, who recently topped Vanity Fair's best dressed list' (Wilkes, 2015), also describing her as a 'successful entrepreneur' (Walters, 2016 [b]). The framing of Samantha created a tone where 'the Camerons' became both relatable and aspirational:

The Camerons have holidayed in Cornwall every summer since he entered Downing Street.' (Stevens, 2015.)

Thus, the prevalence of his wife in articles about David Cameron is likely to make the framing of 'the personal' advantageous for his popularity, particularly when he is referred to as 'a loving and devoted husband' (Young, 2016).

Another sub-category which framed Cameron positively was that of his children or his role as a father, referred to in 22.3% of articles involving ‘the personal’. Corbyn rarely speaks about his three children (mentioned in just 9.2% of his articles involving ‘the personal’), but Cameron openly shares anecdotes of the difficulties of parenting, in a manner similar to Blair (Langer, 2011:118). This frame seems to have been adopted by the press, with *The Daily Mail* reporting on how Cameron banned his children from using electronic devices on Saturdays (Brown, 2016). *The Daily Mirror* followed a similar narrative:

David Cameron last night told how he has struggled to limit the sugar his children Nancy, Elwen and Florence ate (Glaze, 2016).

Despite being purportedly critical of Cameron as a Labour supporting paper, *The Daily Mirror* frames Cameron as familiar and relatable to readers- juxtaposed to how they frame Labour leader Corbyn. Even in articles which were not necessarily critical of Corbyn’s leadership, by using the frames discussed previously *The Daily Mirror* draws attention to elements of Corbyn’s personal life that make him different from the average politician or citizen. Cameron, meanwhile, benefits from framing of ‘the personal’ to make him more ‘human’ and caring:

...the PM's love for his disabled son, and how caring for Ivan turned him into a compassionate politician (Slack, 2015 [b])

The framing of Cameron as relatable and down to earth was furthered by mentions of his sporting interests, covered in 4.1% of articles. *The Sun* mentioned his interest in golf (The Sun, 2016 [c]), while *The Daily Mirror* termed Cameron ‘a keen surfer’ (Glaze, 2015) and described the spot in Cornwall ‘where he and wife Sam like to go surfing’ (Blanchard, 2015 [a]). The Cameron family holiday was also mentioned in 16 articles (13.2%), with

descriptions of him ‘relaxed at a harbour-side cafe with a beer’ (Wilkes, 2015) typical in tone.

Not all the frequently used frames in articles about Cameron were positive, however. The third most common sub-frame involved articles mentioning the revelations that Cameron’s father had set up a tax avoidance company, which the Prime Minister formerly owned shares in. Following these revelations this frame was covered extensively across the month of April, and there were some references to ‘sleaze’ in relation to Cameron (Tapsfield, 2016).

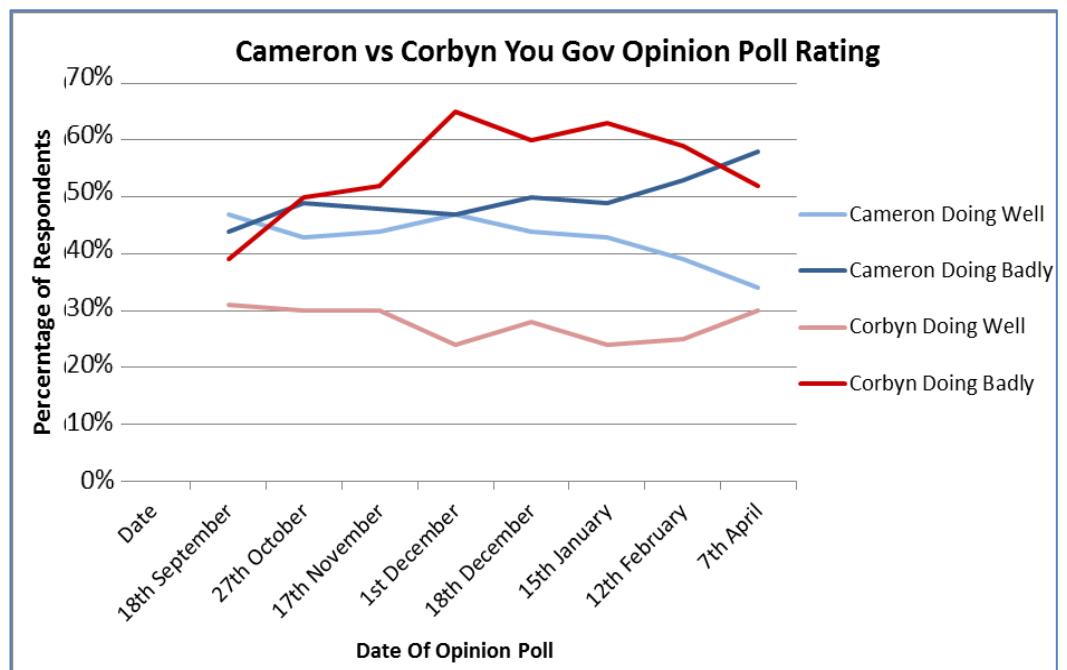
There were also 10 articles (8.2% of ‘the personal’) referring to revelations about Cameron’s life as a university student, where it was alleged he placed his genitals into the mouth of a dead pig. Yet the descriptions of this incident were relatively reserved and factual in nature, with not even the Labour-supporting *Daily Mirror* critical or mocking. The general tone of discussions of this frame were examples like ‘Pig-gate’ (Blanchard, 2015 [b]) and ‘(alleged) pig incident’ (Letts, 2015), which were not necessarily critical of Cameron.

Compared to 23.1% of articles on Corbyn which mentioned his clothing, 7.4% of articles involving Cameron’s personal realm discussed his attire. The manner in which their clothing was described was also starkly different between the two leaders, with Cameron’s largely complimentary or affectionately mocking: ‘well-cut suit’ (Boyle, 2015); ‘trademark navy suit’ (Rainey, 2015); ‘trusty fleece’ (Boyle, 2015). There were some criticisms of his choice to wear inexpensive wellington boots on a visit to flood-hit areas of Britain, with *The Daily Mirror* suggesting it could be a PR stunt (Daily Mirror,

2015). Yet in comparison to Corbyn, the tone of articles which mentioned Cameron's clothing was far less critical. In one opinion piece in *The Daily Mail*, the author was strongly mocking of Cameron's appearance, but not towards his clothing, instead factually describing his 'shirt sleeves' and 'spectacles' (Letts, 2016 [c]). Therefore, it appears that if a politician wishes to focus press attention onto political issues, following an unofficial 'uniform' of suits and ties will reduce the likelihood of their clothing being discussed. In summary, my results appear to support H2 as the coverage of 'the personal' for Corbyn features more detrimental frames than it does for Cameron.

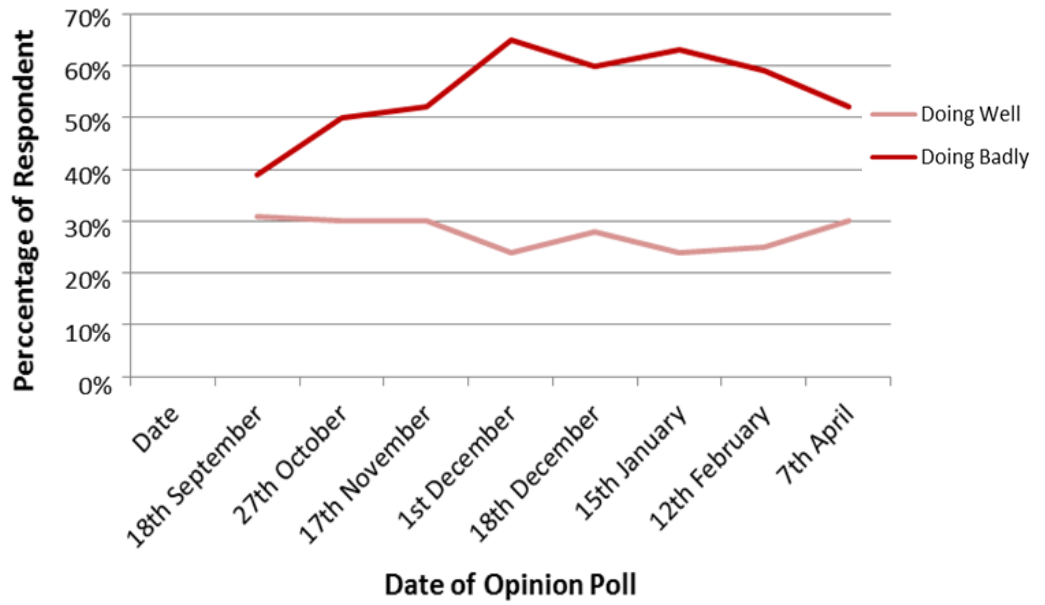
Given H2 is supported by my findings, I will now turn to examining H3, which explores how opinion poll data is linked to the results of H2. Examining publicly available UK opinion poll data conducted by YouGov, figures are available on a roughly monthly basis from September 2015 (around the time of Corbyn's election) until April 2016 (YouGov, 2016 [a]). On average, those who think Corbyn is 'doing well' are far fewer than those who think he is doing 'badly', and less than the amount of people who think Cameron is 'doing well' (see Graph 4). The popularity of Corbyn remains lower than Cameron over time, which could be correlated in at least some way to the media's framing of 'the personal'- but without controlling for more variables it is difficult to argue with confidence. One significant figure is that around 7th April 2016, those who thought Cameron was 'doing badly' exceeded those saying Corbyn was 'doing badly' (58% for Cameron vs 52% for Corbyn). *The Guardian* first published details of David Cameron's father's tax avoidance scheme on the 4th April 2016 (Garside, 2016), two days before opinion poll data was collected for the YouGov study (YouGov, 2016 [b]). This could potentially explain the dip in Cameron's popularity, and

highlight a link between negative press coverage of ‘the personal’ and negative opinion poll ratings. However, according to Donsbach and Hartung (2008:437) there are ‘unavoidable errors’ in results created when there is a lag between collecting opinion poll data and examining outcomes. Similarly, David Cameron’s own previous holdings in his father’s company had not been revealed at the time data was collected (YouGov,2016 [a]), so his fall in popularity could not have been connected to his personal stake in the company. Yet it is possible that the frequency of negative publicity surrounding his father –still part of ‘the personal’ related to Cameron- could have impacted on this rise in those who thought Cameron was ‘doing badly’. If this is the case, it shows how negative framing of ‘the personal’ could be disadvantageous to Cameron as well as to Corbyn.



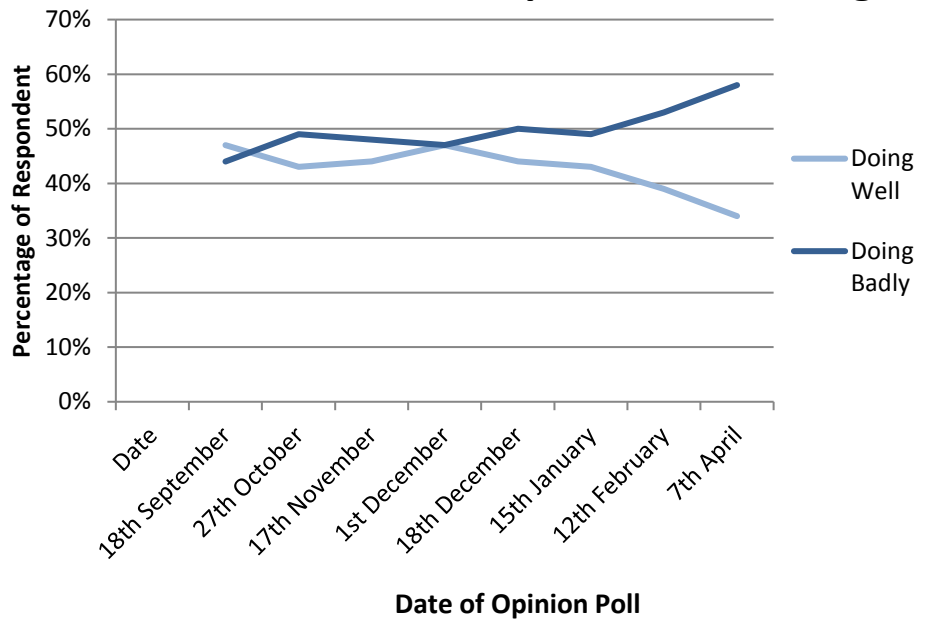
Graph 4-Comparison of Opinion Polls over time for Corbyn and Cameron. Darker shades indicate ‘Doing Badly’ and lighter shades ‘Doing Well’

Corbyn YouGov Opinion Poll Rating



Graph 5- Corbyn Opinion Polls Over Time

Cameron YouGov Opinion Poll Rating



Graph 6- Cameron Opinion Polls Over Time

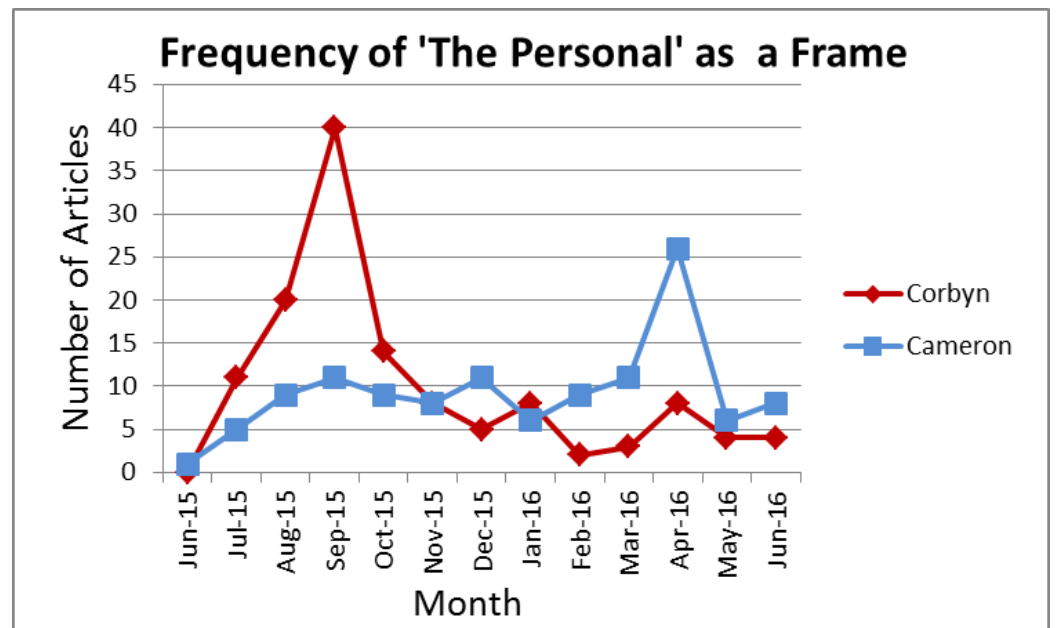
Theory suggests new leaders should have a ‘honeymoon period’ in the press for the initial few months of their leadership (Farnsworth & Lichter, 2012; Hughes, 1995; Goodman, 1997). The case study of Corbyn clearly disputes this, as the press used negative frames with regards to his personal life even before he was elected leader (see Graph 7). In light of this, it is notable that Corbyn’s first YouGov opinion poll as leader of the opposition had a greater proportion of people (39%) thinking he was doing ‘badly’ compared to doing ‘well’ (31%) (Kellner, 2015). This is highly unusual, as since the ‘polling era’ began:

Corbyn is the first new opposition leader to have a negative initial rating. With two, Michael Foot and Iain Duncan Smith, the positive and negative scores were in balance. Everyone else started out with a positive score (Kellner, 2015).

At the outset of his leadership, the public would have known little about Corbyn- and he did not yet suffer splits in his shadow cabinet or incidents like ‘Train Gate’ which later caused him political problems. Instead at this early stage, descriptions from the media or an individual’s initial impression would be the main factors informing opinion polls. The fact that these polls were negative therefore suggests media criticism of ‘the personal’ helped contribute to unpopularity for ‘the person’. It also supports the theory of Stockemer et al (2014) and Todorov et al (2005) surrounding the link between impressions of a politician’s appearance and voting behaviour, and suggests Corbyn’s ‘unconventional’ appearance could have created a negative first impression for the British public. This may have been influenced in part by negative coverage of his beard and clothing, which I found were the most common frames used to cover his personal attributes. As can be seen from Graph 7, the framing of Corbyn in terms of ‘the personal’ peaked in September 2015 as he was announced as leader, and so a possible link between this coverage and his negative initial polling could be made. Even more significantly,

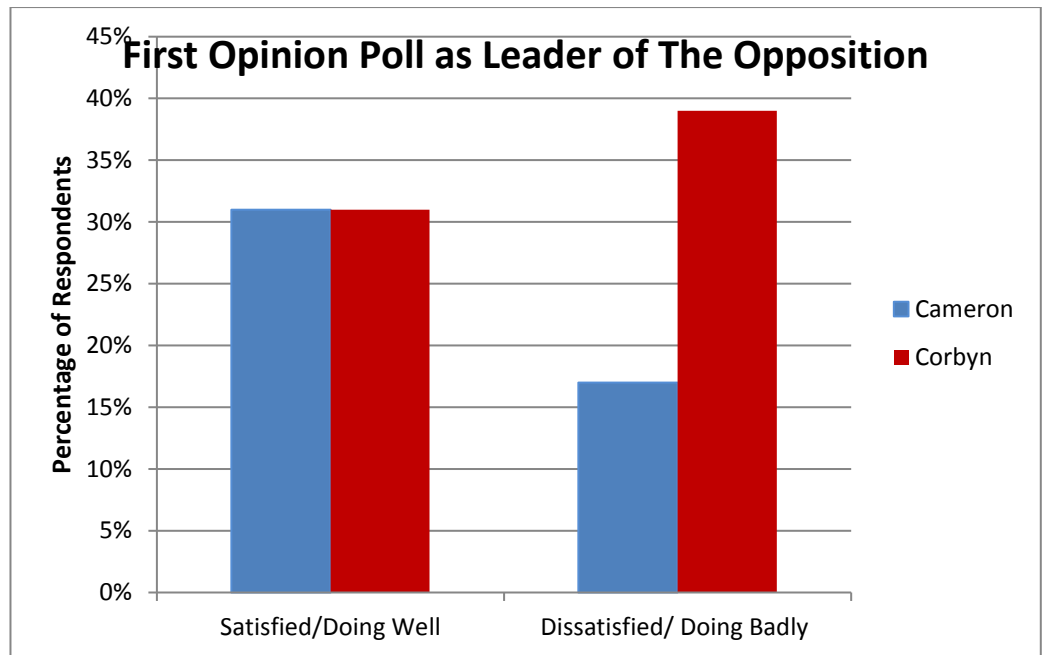
Corbyn’s future popularity could be jeopardised by this initial impression:

History, however, provides no example of a party leader with a relatively low initial score significantly improving on their rating. For the stock of goodwill to grow, it needs to start strongly. (Kellner, 2015)



Graph 7-Frequency of Articles Featuring 'The Personal' over time

As has been shown in this research, Cameron actively marketed ‘the personal’ throughout his political career, including during his own leadership contest in 2005 (Langer, 2011:147). This appeared to show favourably in his first opinion poll as leader in January 2006 (Ipsos MORI, 2016), where 31% were ‘satisfied’ with his leadership compared to 17% who were ‘dissatisfied’ (a slightly different question was asked compared to Corbyn’s). Cameron’s initial polling was therefore considerably less negative than Corbyn (see Graph 8), suggesting that proactively using ‘the personal’ as a media strategy could prove beneficial for all-important first impressions.



Graph 8- Comparison of First Public Opinion Polls

There are evidently a wealth of factors which could affect public opinion polls, and to suggest any significant link between framing of the ‘the personal’ and a leader’s popularity more variables would need to be controlled for. However, my results do allude towards a crude link between negative coverage of ‘the personal’ and negative opinion poll ratings, suggesting tentative support for H3.

Further Discussion

My research appears to support, and crucially extend, Langer's conclusions regarding the prevalence of 'the personal' in modern media discourse. While Langer (2011:165) found 9% of the total newspaper articles she studied made reference to Tony Blair's personal life, I found 9.7% of articles for David Cameron and 17.8% of articles for Jeremy Corbyn referenced 'the personal'. For both Cameron and Corbyn, 'the personal' was integral to the media's discussion of them as political leaders. Blair may have heightened the ties between personal and political, but as Langer suggested (2011:143) his legacy has been maintained in the press even after he left power.

For Jeremy Corbyn, not conforming to expectations of marketing 'the personal' has not made this frame any less prevalent in coverage of him, and has only served to make the framing in question more negative in tone. This disputes Driessens et al's (2012:12) suggestion that politicians could dictate the extent to which their personal life featured in the press, and instead supports the predictions of Busby (2009) and Adut (2008) that rejection of 'the personal' would lead to negative coverage in the press. My results also indicate tentative support for findings by Todorov et al (2005) and Stockemer et al (2014) that a politician's personal appearance citizens' perceptions of candidates.

In light of these findings, it is important to note that the UK remains a parliamentary democracy where people vote directly for MPs and not the leader of political parties. Thus regardless of citizens' perceptions of party leaders they are not directly voting for them; although research has shown the increasing importance of leaders (Foley, 2004). Similarly, it should be noted that Corbyn's time

as Labour leader has faced major disunity within his party and open criticism on his policy stances from senior Labour MPs (Stewart & Elgort, 2016). It is probable that these policy and party problems could have contributed considerably to his overall unpopularity in opinion polls and the press. However, this dissertation has highlighted that while not his only issue, the press coverage of ‘the personal’ is still a significant issue, and one that is likely to prevent the potential success of Corbyn’s leadership.

There were also a number of limitations to this study that may have restricted the conclusions it reached. As previously stated, I would have ideally studied more than three newspapers in order to get a wider sense of the press framing of ‘the personal’ across the UK press. The inclusion of another researcher may be helpful in order to achieve this, while also providing an additional check for potential errors in the individual hand coding method. It may also have been beneficial to study online media or television coverage of the leaders, considering the declining popularity of newspapers as a source of information. Yet as highlighted by a study into intermedia agenda setting (Vliegenthart & Walgrave, 2008:872), newspapers can still be very influential in establishing frames adopted by other forms of media. Moreover, conducting qualitative interviews with newspaper journalists or editors could have been valuable to probe what the origins are of frames adopted by the press. Future research could adopt these techniques to gain more conclusive results, while also conducting further analysis into the links between frames and public opinion. As previously suggested, to find more conclusive links to public opinion than those I suggested, more variables would need to be controlled for and time-series analysis may be required to compare publication of stories to opinion poll fluctuations. Qualitative interviews with citizens may also be valuable to discover exactly how much framing of ‘the personal’ is impacting on citizens’ voting intentions. As discussed by Hussein (2015: 4) the triangulation of quantitative and qualitative

methods can lead to optimal research results, through utilising the strengths of both approaches.

Conclusion

In line with most of the literature outlined in my review, particularly Langer (2011), this study has shown –through examining Corbyn and Cameron- that ‘the personal’ is a significant part of British political discourse. My research has also added to the existing literature: by conducting an academic study involving Jeremy Corbyn (of which there are very few) and by comparing framing of ‘the personal’ to the possible reactions of the British public. All three of my hypotheses were broadly supported, thus endorsing the body of literature that considers ‘the personal’ to be of increasing prevalence and significance.

Jeremy Corbyn’s attempts to keep ‘the personal’ separate from the political appear to have been in vain, as ‘personal’ framing of his leadership was present throughout the time period I studied. The frames used in relation to his leadership were also mainly negative, in contrast to those used in relation to David Cameron. Cameron’s proactive marketing of ‘the personal’ appears to have ultimately improved the tone of coverage of him in the press, with positive ‘relatable’ frames included in even pro-Labour sources. It therefore seems advisable for future British political leaders to simply accept the prevalence of ‘the personal’ and proactively market their own personal ‘sphere’. Future leaders may also have to consider the decisions they make in their personal life even before they enter politics, as highlighted by considerable coverage of Cameron’s behaviour as a student and Corbyn’s historic relationship with Diane Abbott. Yet regardless of the choices they have made, how politicians choose to address ‘the personal’ and market it to their advantage could grant them less critical press coverage.

Where critical coverage of a politician's personal life is present in the media, my results seemed to suggest their popularity with the public could be damaged. This shows 'the personal' is important not just in terms of media dialogue, but in terms of wider implications for a politician's popularity. However, my findings around opinion polls are only a starting point for other researchers to build on using more advanced methods.

Overall, by comparing a leader who embraces 'the personal' to one who rejects it, this study highlights how 'the personal' is now an unavoidable part of British media framing, and is as such worthy of further academic attention.

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Appendix 1

Table 1- Frequency of 'The Personal' for Corbyn- CrossTabs

			'The personal' present in article?		Total
			Yes	No	
Newspaper	Daily Mail	Count	72	305	377
		% within Newspaper	19.1%	80.9%	100.0%
	The Sun	Count	45	186	231
		% within Newspaper	19.5%	80.5%	100.0%
	The Mirror	Count	13	111	124
		% within Newspaper	10.5%	89.5%	100.0%
Total		Count	130	602	732
		% within Newspaper	17.8%	82.2%	100.0%

Table 2- Frequency of 'The Personal' for Cameron- CrossTabs

			'The personal' present in article?		Total
			Yes	No	
Newspaper	Daily Mail	Count	85	692	777
		% within Newspaper	10.9%	89.1%	100.0%
	The Sun	Count	19	192	211
		% within Newspaper	9.0%	91.0%	100.0%
	The Mirror	Count	17	248	265
		% within Newspaper	6.4%	93.6%	100.0%
Total		Count	121	1132	1253
		% within Newspaper	9.7%	90.3%	100.0%