



Existing research suggests that interpersonal connection could influence vote switching, which I argue is more prominent in countries with multiparty democracies, where traditional party alliances were weaker and going through a shock political event. By testing this assumption using the British Election Study, the research suggested that being canvassed increased the likelihood of vote switching in Countries where partisanship was low.

## 1 – BACKGROUND AND THEORY

**Canvassing** is a local campaigning tactic used in elections, where campaigners knock door to door and talk to people to convince them to vote for their party.

### **One-on-one interaction seen in canvassing has an impact on voting choice.**

While the argument is contested this paper argues this is because the research is America-centric. This is evident when class dealignment and a shifting voter psychology would **make voters more open to vote switching**

## 2 – RESEARCH DESIGN AND RESULTS

Using the **British Election study** and data held by the House of Commons, and a specially coded variable voteswitch, I ran three tests:

1. Did canvassing have an impact on voting choice?
2. Did other factors influence someone to vote switch?
3. Did the marginality of the seat have an impact?

My research came **to four main conclusions**

1. While the relationship between canvassing and vote switching was positive, it was **not statistically significant enough** to reject the null. However, a **positive relationship** between vote switching and canvassing was found when voters were canvassed by the **Conservative Party**.
2. Canvassing was more effective in causing vote switching when carried out **in ultra marginal seats**
3. There was a relationship between **other types of local campaigning** and canvassing **increasing vote switching**.
4. **Income had an impact on if voters switched** when canvassed or not, with higher earners vote switching more frequently.

## 3 – IMPLICATIONS OF RESEARCH, CONCLUSION AND FURTHER RESEARCH

The paper **adds to pre-existing literature**, reaffirming the importance of canvassing, contradicting some recent research. The paper however **questions** the prominent pre-existing theory that canvassing main benefit is confirming people's vote for a party. Instead, this research suggests it has the opposite impact, with **canvassing more effective in changing people's vote**. This is evidence that when partisanship is weak, especially in systems which have experienced political shock, **canvassing causes an increase in vote switching**.

The implications support the idea **that inter personal connection impacts voter choice**. This suggests that the America focused research does not allow for all scenarios to be considered and therefore suggests need for further study into this area .

Weaknesses of the paper however mean that many of the **theories suggested need to be developed** to give a full understanding of why this could be the case. Therefore, further research could be undertaken to consider this including a look at the messaging of canvassing, the impact of tactical voting and considering multiple general elections.

## REFERENCES

Broockman, D. and Kalla, J. (2016) 'Durably reducing transphobia: A field experiment on door-to-door canvassing', *Science*, 352(6282), pp. 220–224.

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