

**Section 9– Elezioni e Comportamento di voto**  
**Chairs: Paolo Bellucci, Alessandro Chiaramonte**

**Panel 9.4 Public Opinion and Media Coverage: Is There a Link and How to Study it?**

The relationship between public opinion and media contents is recognized as increasingly relevant during the election campaigns as well as for strengthening Government's support. However the nature of this relationship is still open to question: in many cases whether media leads or follows public opinion is not clear. This is because media content, on the one hand, can reflect the issues and actors that are salient in public debate – providing the general picture of the public sphere. On the other hand, it can drive citizens' opinion, meaning that it does not only mirror but it actually affects public attitudes.

For most citizens, TV, newspapers, and Internet are the only sources of information about parties, candidates, and election manifestos or policies. Media coverage is thus undoubtedly relevant, nonetheless it is difficult to assess whether and to what extent people are affected by these contents in a system where news channels have multiplied, and individual information diets have become complex and specialized.

The aim of this panel is to begin to answer these open questions, by contributing to the scientific debate on voters behaviour and media effects. Contributions to this panel should address the relationship between news consumption and political opinions/attitudes at the theoretical, methodological, and empirical level. National case studies, as well as comparative perspective research, will be particularly welcomed.

**Chairs:** Franca Roncarolo, Paolo Segatti