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The Media Returns to Political Power

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Abstract

This paper estimates the causal effect of access to political power on media coverage. We collect data on media mentions of all the French ministers and parliamentarians from 1996 to 2022. Using a large language model and a difference-in-differences strategy, we show that entering government leads to a sharp increase in media attention, but also improves the favorability of coverage. We provide evidence that favorability gains are concentrated in access-driven stories, consistent with a mechanism of informational dependence between the media and political elites. Finally, we show that women experience gains in attention and favorability comparable to those of men, yet face more stereotyped treatment at appointment. The results suggest a soft form of media capture with implications for accountability and representational inequality.

JEL codes: J16, J71, L82

Keywords: Politics, media, gender

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1 Introduction

In democracies, the media are expected to act as independent watchdogs that inform citizens and hold politicians accountable. In practice, the relationship between the media and those in power is more complex. Journalists rely on politicians for access to information, while politicians can influence the media. When politicians rise to power, this tension intensifies as both the need for scrutiny and the incentives for favorable coverage grow stronger. Because media coverage shapes how citizens see their leaders, it is crucial to understand how these forces play out in practice. This paper asks: how does media coverage of politicians change as they rise to power?

Existing research documents how powerful actors attempt to “capture” the media in order to promote favorable coverage (Besley and Prat, 2006, Szeidl and Szucs, 2021), but important questions remain. First, there is limited evidence on whether and how such dynamics operate in well-established democracies with a formally free press, where capture is likely to take subtle rather than coercive forms. Second, most empirical work focuses on financial channels of influence such as ownership or advertising, while non-financial mechanisms such as access to information remain understudied. Third, it remains unclear whether the media cover all politicians similarly or whether coverage depends on the identity of those who gain power.

We examine this question in the context of France. We assemble a new dataset of 489,283 news articles from France’s three main daily newspapers, covering the 1996-2022 period. The data capture both the volume and the content of coverage for every first-time minister and member of Parliament from one year before to five years after access to their position (Section 3.1). Using a large language model with zero-shot prompting, we classify articles to measure visibility, tone, and framing, validating these measures through manual checks, requested textual evidence and predictive validity (Section 3.2). We identify the causal effect of political power on media coverage using a difference-in-differences comparing first-time ministers (treatment group) with members of Parliament who were never appointed ministers (control group).

We start by studying media visibility (Section 4). Compared with parliamentarians who had similar media exposure before their appointment, new ministers experience an immediate increase of about 300 to 600% in the number of media mentions. The increase persists for nearly five years, although it gradually declines over time. We also assess whether this visibility reflects substantive coverage by looking at the type of articles in which ministers appear. We find that ministers are more often the central figure in stories and also express personal opinions on issues beyond their official portfolio, although these effects fade faster than the overall rise in visibility.

We next examine how political power changes the way politicians are portrayed. Our main outcome measures the share of articles with a positive sentiment toward each politician. Using this measure, we find that ministers receive significantly more positive coverage for about 20 months after their appointment. The estimated effect is sizeable and corresponds to an increase in the share of positive articles of roughly 50–55% relative to the pre-appointment mean. It also lasts nearly as long as they remain in government. This result holds when sentiment is measured using two different large language models and when using an alternative outcome corresponding to the stance of each article toward the politician. We also document that articles increasingly emphasize ministers’ authority, leadership-related attributes, and personality traits. Overall, these findings suggest that access to political power not only increases media exposure but also leads to systematically more favorable portrayals.

We then ask whether the media returns to political power are attached to the position or personal reputation (Section 5.1). To answer this, we examine media coverage once ministers step down. We find that most of the gains in visibility and tone disappear after departure. Former ministers continue to appear in the news more often than comparable parliamentarians, but this effect is limited to raw mentions. The more substantive and favorable dimensions of coverage vanish. Media returns thus appear tightly linked to holding a position of power.

What explains these patterns? We consider several possible mechanisms (Section 5.2). One is ideological alignment: newspapers might be especially favorable toward ministers who share their political ideology. To test this, we analyze tone at the article level, comparing coverage across ideologically aligned and unaligned outlets. We find no evidence of partisan “cheerleading”. Even newspapers on the opposite side of the political spectrum adopt a more positive tone toward politicians entering government. A second possibility is a honeymoon effect, when new leaders enjoy temporarily favorable attention. Yet the effect lasts for nearly two years, far longer than typical honeymoon periods and nearly as long as the average time ministers spend in office. A third explanation is that the more favorable coverage might stem from the different types of stories in which politicians appear once they enter government. However, the results remain unchanged when controlling for articles’ topics and other characteristics.

Our evidence instead points to informational dependence. When journalists rely on ministers for access to information and quotes, proximity to power can shape how news is written. To test this idea, we measure how tone changes depending on whether the article reports or quotes the politician’s views. We find that the more positive coverage is concentrated in access-dependent pieces, consistent with a mechanism of soft media capture. This pattern echoes theoretical models showing that when information is valuable,

the media may moderate their tone to preserve access (Besley and Prat, 2006, Ozerturk, 2022, Kishishita and Sato, 2025).

Finally, we question whether these media returns extend equally to all politicians or whether their identity matters (Section 6). Understanding who captures these media returns connects to a growing literature on representational inequalities in the media. Prior work shows that women are often underrepresented and described in more stereotypical ways (Ash *et al.*, 2022). In politics, female politicians tend to receive less media coverage and are portrayed differently than men (Van der Pas and Aaldering, 2020). We test whether these differences exist once women enter government. Before appointment, female politicians are approximately 20 percentage points less likely than men to receive monthly media coverage, even after accounting for differences in career profiles and experience. After appointment, this gap disappears as both women and men become equally newsworthy. The equalization is consistent across time and measures of prominence, as well as robust to alternative methodological choices.

We also examine gender differences in the content of media coverage along two dimensions: professional evaluation and personal attributes. On the professional side, we find no gender differences in tone, competence, or leadership framing. The main differences arise in personal attributes. Immediately after appointment, news articles are more likely to mention women’s appearance, clothing, or family, and to use gendered language. These differences fade over time but are striking at the moment when visibility peaks. This pattern reveals a subtle form of bias whereby the media do not question women’s competence directly but instead devote greater attention to personal characteristics that can undermine perceptions of authority and leadership (Rohrbach *et al.*, 2023).

This paper contributes to the existing literature in three ways.

First, we add to the quantitative literature on media bias. The existing literature shows how media bias can be shaped by supply-side arguments such as financial considerations (Beattie *et al.*, 2021, Szeidl and Szucs, 2021, Durante *et al.*, 2022), media ownership and journalistic practices (Enikolopov *et al.*, 2011, Martin and McCrain, 2019, Cagé *et al.*, 2022), and local government influence (Zhuang, 2022), as well as demand-side forces like reader ideology (Gentzkow and Shapiro, 2010), event rarity (Mastorocco *et al.*, 2023) and social media (Hatte *et al.*, 2021). We contribute to this literature by focusing on access to political power. We find that individuals who reach positions of power become substantially more visible and also receive more favorable portrayals. The latter pattern is harder to reconcile with the ideal of the media as independent watchdogs. Our analysis suggests that it is driven by articles where ministers express their views, which is consistent with the mechanism of informational dependence. Individuals in power have valuable information and the media may cover these individuals in a more favorable way

to access this information. This mechanism brings empirical support to theoretical works showing how soft forms of media capture can emerge even in democracies with a largely independent press (Besley and Prat, 2006, Ozerturk, 2022, Kishishita and Sato, 2025).

Second, we contribute to the literature on the interplay between political power and the media. Existing research documents how the media can enhance political accountability (Snyder and Strömberg, 2010, Cagé, 2020, Larreguy *et al.*, 2020, Kaplan *et al.*, 2025). It also shows how media coverage influences voting behavior and access to top occupations in politics (DellaVigna and Kaplan, 2007, Enikolopov *et al.*, 2011, Adena *et al.*, 2015, Durante *et al.*, 2019, Caprini, 2023, Couttenier *et al.*, 2024). We contribute to this literature by showing that the causal relationship does not run only from media coverage to political outcomes, but also in the opposite direction. We provide evidence that access to political power substantially improves both the visibility and the favorability of media coverage of those in power. These findings imply that political power has positive media returns. This potentially creates a self-reinforcing relationship whereby media coverage helps politicians gain power, and political power improves media coverage, reinforcing incumbent advantages.

Third, we contribute to a growing literature on representational inequalities in the media. Prior work documents that women are underrepresented and often portrayed in stereotypical ways (Rao and Taboada, 2021, Ash *et al.*, 2022, Adukia *et al.*, 2023). In political science, studies document a gender gap in media representation among politicians (Kahn, 1994, Van der Pas and Aldering, 2020, Van Der Pas, 2022, Thesen and Yildirim, 2023). Yet most of this evidence is cross-sectional and focuses on candidates or mid-level politicians, leaving open questions about how media coverage evolves once individuals reach positions of high power. Examining gender differences in coverage at this stage is important, as women in top positions might serve as role models in politics who can shift gender norms (Fox and Lawless, 2004, Beaman *et al.*, 2009, Bhalotra *et al.*, 2017, Baskaran and Hessami, 2018). We contribute to this literature by following politicians over time through career transitions, allowing us to document how coverage evolves when women become potential role models. Our results suggest that media bias towards powerful women operates less through underrepresentation or questioning their competence than through stereotypical portrayals.

2 Institutional Background

2.1 The Positions of Minister and Member of Parliament

In France, ministerial positions represent the highest tier of political power. They are typically regarded as the sixth most important position in the state.¹

Ministers are appointed by the President of the Republic, based on the Prime Minister's recommendation. They may be appointed at any time during a term, with no requirement for parliamentary experience. The sole prerequisites are French nationality and a minimum age of 18 years. The number of ministerial positions has varied over time, reflecting changing presidential priorities and discretion. From 1980 to 2022, the size of governments has varied from 21 to 45 ministers, leading to the creation, modification, or removal of ministerial titles and responsibilities.²

Ministers wield executive power. They are in charge of overseeing administrative bodies, developing public policies, and proposing legislation. The ministerial hierarchy comprises several tiers: ministers of state and full ministers wielding the most authority, followed by delegated ministers and secretaries of state who typically operate under full ministers' oversight.³ While there are no term limits, turnover is high: between 1997 and 2017, newly appointed ministers served an average of 14 months, or 26 months including reappointments.

In the state hierarchy, ministers are followed by members of Parliament (MPs), who constitute our control group. The majority of ministers were previously MPs (63% in our sample). MPs possess legislative power but lack the direct executive authority of ministers. Their primary responsibilities include drafting and voting on legislation, scrutinizing government action through parliamentary questions, and representing their constituents' interests. The Lower House comprises 577 MPs (*Députés*) elected through a two-round plurality voting system in single-member constituencies. MPs serve fixed five-year terms, in contrast to the shorter tenures of ministers.

2.2 Women's Presence in Government

The context of France is representative of changes in women's presence in politics occurring in the past decades in many developed countries. Over the 1997-2017 period,

¹This ranking follows the official order of precedence in French legislation. The first five positions are held by individual officeholders: the President of the Republic, the Prime Minister, the Presidents of the two Chambers of Parliament and the two former Presidents of Republic.

²For instance, the ministerial position responsible for gender equality was established in 1974, abolished in 1976, reinstated in 1978 under a different designation, abolished again in 1993, and reinstated once more in 1998.

³see <https://www.vie-publique.fr/fiches/19466-quest-ce-quun-ministre-detat-ministre-delegue-secretaire-detat>

women have moved from being largely underrepresented among ministers to a parity of 50%, reflecting societal changes and the introductions of quotas (see Figure A1).

Scholars typically divide this period into two phases (Sineau, 2011). The first phase started in 1997 and coincided with the return of the left to power, accompanied by a commitment to increase the representation of women in politics. Consequently, the proportion of women in government exceeded 30% for the first time. The second phase began in 2012 with the voluntary introduction of a 50% quota for women in government, upheld by all subsequent governments.

3 Data and Text Analysis

3.1 Data Sources

Ministers - We collect information on all French governments to identify individuals appointed as ministers for the first time between 1997 and 2017, yielding 215 first-time ministers.⁴ For each minister, we record the dates of appointment (corresponding to access to political power) and exit, the position title, and whether they later held another ministerial post. We complement this with career history data, identifying whether and when each individual occupied other elected positions before or after serving in government.⁵

Members of Parliament - We collect data on all members of the French National Assembly elected in 1997, 2002, 2007, 2012, and 2017. We apply two restrictions: (i) we keep only MPs who are never appointed ministers over the sample period (never treated), and (ii) we keep only MPs who are mentioned at least once in our newspaper sample. The resulting control group consists of 1,379 unique MPs and 2,307 person-term observations (including re-elections).

Media coverage - For each individual, we collect media mentions from one year before to five years after appointment (or election for MPs) in three national daily newspapers in France: *Le Monde*, *Le Figaro*, *Libération*. Our data include both the printed and online articles when available. We selected these newspapers because they span the main ideological spectrum (left, center, and right) and were considered as the three main national newspapers during the period studied.⁶ We searched for articles containing an

⁴<https://www.data.gouv.fr/fr/datasets/composition-des-gouvernements-de-la-ve-me-republique-1959-2014/>

⁵We collect this information from personal websites and Wikipedia.

⁶*Le Monde* is considered as France's leading daily newspaper and is supposed to stand on the center-left of the political spectrum, *Le Figaro* is considered right-wing, and *Libération* is considered left-wing (see <https://www.eurotopics.net/en/149270/european-press-roundup>). See Section B.1 for more detailed information on newspapers in France.

exact match for the first and last names of politicians on Europresse and Proquest Historical Newspapers. For each article, we record the date, title, full text, and all named mentions of politicians. The resulting dataset spans 1996–2022 and includes 489,283 unique articles.

To study persistence after leaving government, we track media coverage for two years after each minister’s departure, with MPs followed over the same horizon. Unless stated otherwise, all analyses rely on balanced samples.

3.2 Text Analysis

3.2.1 Classification using a LLM

We use a large language model (LLM) to classify our corpus of 489,283 news articles.⁷ This approach addresses two challenges. First, we do not have a pre-existing manually labelled dataset. Consistent manual coding at this scale would require prohibitively resource-intensive coding. Second, we are interested in the mention of characteristics that are relatively rare such as the mention of personal characteristics of ministers (for instance the mention of physical appearance occurs in about 1% of news articles, see Table 1). Manual coding of rare occurrences would likely yield considerable measurement error.

To overcome these constraints, we perform zero-shot classification with OpenAI’s GPT-4o Mini model.⁸ We set the temperature parameter to zero to maximize reproducibility of results. We process each news article individually rather than in batch mode to reduce hallucinations. We validate our measurement procedure through multiple strategies: assessing the predictive validity, requiring explicit textual evidence for a subset of 25,000 news articles, examining a random sample of 200 news articles against human judgments, and measuring the internal coherence of the classification using questions with related content.

We construct a standardized prompt following best practices for text classification (Ziems *et al.*, 2024). We included multiple-choice answers, gave instructions after the context, and requested the responses in JSON format. Additionally, we included “Other” categories to prevent forced classifications in ambiguous cases. The complete prompt is provided in Section B.2.

The prompt contains three parts. First, we quantify the substantive dimensions of

⁷See Korinek (2023) or Dell (2025) for reviews of applications of these models in economics.

⁸We performed this analysis in early 2025. As the field of AI is fast moving, one may wonder how the results would differ using a more recent model such as GPT-5 Mini. Beauchemin *et al.* (2025) compared the performance of many LLMs on different benchmarks of the French language. For zero-shot sentiment analysis, they found an accuracy of respectively 95.52 (GPT-4o Mini), 95.43 (GPT-4.1 Mini) and 96.47 (GPT-5 Mini), suggesting that results would be similar.

visibility in news coverage by measuring: (i) whether the politician is the primary focus of the article, (ii) the politician’s prominence based on Named-Entity Recognition, using both absolute mentions and the share of mentions among all identified persons, (iii) the topical composition of each news article, and (iv) the presence and nature of the politicians’ viewpoints, distinguishing between direct and indirect speech across different domains.

Second, we measure mentions of characteristics highlighted in recent articles on the literature on gender differences in media coverage (see the meta-analysis of [Van der Pas and Aaldering, 2020](#)). We classify whether articles reference a politician’s: (i) physical characteristics, (ii) gender, (iii) family background, (iv) personality traits using the Big Five taxonomy, (v) leadership attributes, and (vi) competence.

Third, we implement a sentiment-stance analysis to directly capture media favorability. Although these two variables are close, we believe that this approach can provide interesting insights. Standard sentiment analysis may indicate positive tone while stance analysis might suggest substantive opposition to a politician’s policy positions, which appears particularly relevant when analyzing media coverage of political figures.

3.2.2 Validation

We perform multiple validation tests. First, we examine the internal coherence of the classification results. As large language models can be sensitive to wording, we evaluate whether questions with similar meanings but different wordings provide consistent answers. For instance, we measure whether a politician is the main subject of an article using two indicators: (i) whether they are the most frequently mentioned individual according to Named-Entity Recognition (NER), and (ii) whether the model directly identifies them as the article’s main focus.⁹ We conduct similar checks for professional evaluation and sentiment classifications.

Second, we assess the predictive validity of the sentiment variable by checking whether it responds plausibly to real-world events ([Grimmer and Stewart, 2013](#)). We focus on two cases. We first examine the 2013 scandal involving Budget Minister Jérôme Cahuzac, who admitted to holding undeclared offshore accounts. This revelation triggered intense media scrutiny and his subsequent resignation. As expected, the share of positive coverage drops sharply following his public admission, while the number of articles mentioning him spikes (Figure B2). The second case exploits partisan bias. Consistent with expectations, sentiment is less positive in coverage by ideologically unaligned newspapers (Table 2,

⁹In the sample of news articles on ministers, these two measures provide the same answer in 95% of the cases. More specifically, ministers are mentioned the most in 15% of news articles, and are classified as the main focus in 10%. We provide additional descriptive statistics in Table B1 on measures of professional evaluation and sentiment/stance analyses.

detailed in Section 5.2.1).

Third, to improve transparency, we modified the prompt to request direct quotes from each article supporting the classification. This approach is especially useful for verifying whether the media mention specific characteristics of politicians. We applied this version to 25,000 randomly selected articles and report the results in Section B.3. We also compare topics in articles classified as professional versus personal ministerial views to assess how the model distinguishes between them.

Finally, we manually validated a subsample of news articles. We focused on variables used in the profile analysis. We reviewed 200 articles classified by the LLM as mentioning a given characteristic and compute the precision of the classification. Our inter-rater validation indicates precision rates of approximately 95%, 93%, 89%, 82% and 78% for the mention of physical appearance, family background, personality, leadership, and competence (at the aggregated level). We prioritize precision over recall because some topics are rare (about 1% of articles) and false positives could bias our estimates of gender differences.¹⁰

3.3 Descriptive Statistics

Our analysis covers 215 first-time ministers, resulting in 224,686 observations at the minister-news article level. For the control group, we identify 1,379 members of Parliament who were never appointed ministers. This results in 264,597 observations at the MP-news article level.¹¹

Table 1 provides descriptive statistics for both groups. In Panel A, we display descriptive statistics at the politician level. About 37% of ministers and 27% of members of Parliament are women. Both groups have similar average birth years, around 1957. Ministers (MPs) receive on average 1,250 (215) media mentions over a period of time ranging from one year before appointment (election) to five years after. Regarding political experience, 63% of ministers have previously served as MPs, indicating that it constitutes the main pathway to ministerial positions. Ministers remain in their first position for an average of 14 months. They can also move to another position in the government. If we include reappointment and transitions, they remain 26.3 months in government on

¹⁰The performance of the LLM for these tasks is relatively high as it consists only in indicating whether a lexical field is present. On items related to professional evaluation (leadership and competence), the precision is lower but we believe that the variables are still informative. First, categories related to competence and leadership are arguably more abstract and difficult to define than mentions of physical characteristics. Second, looking at Table B5, the LLM appears to rely on different linguistic cues than human coders. For instance, when classifying “high competence”, the LLM gave more weight to formal roles, whereas we focused more on adjectives and achievement outcomes. Additionally, by analyzing all the variables related to professional evaluation jointly, we can check consistency.

¹¹MPs can be re-elected, resulting in 2,307 individual-term observations.

average.

In Panel B, descriptive statistics are provided at the news article level. We observe that about 36% of news articles covering ministers mention them as the main person, compared to only 29% for members of Parliament. Physical characteristics and family references appear in a small fraction of articles (about 1-2%) for both groups. Ministers seem to receive more coverage regarding their competence attributes (49% vs 31%) and leadership qualities (58% vs 43%). Finally, news articles tend to portray ministers more positively, with positive sentiment appearing in 14% of minister articles compared to 9% for MPs.

4 The Media Returns to Political Power

4.1 Empirical Strategy

4.1.1 Imputing Event Dates and Matching

Our goal is to quantify the causal effect of access to political power on media coverage. We use a difference-in-differences comparing the media coverage of ministers to that of members of Parliament who were never appointed ministers. We face two empirical challenges: (i) imputing event dates to members of Parliament and (ii) finding the most relevant control group among them.

Imputing event dates for the control group - We have data on all the members of Parliament who have not been appointed as minister over the period 1997-2017. These individuals do not have an event date, as they were never appointed ministers. To assign a date, we randomly assign each current MP one event date corresponding to real appointments, respecting fixed proportions.¹² We repeat this process 500 times to avoid capturing effects specific to any single group of parliamentarians. We then display the average treatment effects with bootstrapped standard errors.

Identifying the most relevant control group - Among the parliamentarians who have never been appointed ministers, it is reasonable to assume that some had the potential to be appointed as ministers while others were never considered. The former constitutes a more relevant control group. To find this subset, our preferred approach consists of assembling a sample of members of Parliament and ministers with similar media coverage prior to the event date. Practically, we perform propensity score matching using the number of media articles per month in $l \in [-12; -3]$. Balance checks and details on the matching process are provided in Section C.1. Two reasons lead us to prefer this

¹²For instance, over the 2002-2007 term, a total number of 74 individuals were appointed ministers over 5 dates. On the first date, 32 individuals were appointed ministers, i.e. 43% of all the ministers. We therefore assign the first date to 43% of parliamentarians over the 2002-2007 term.

method. First, the existing literature indicates that increased media coverage for politicians is associated with improved career trajectories (Caprini, 2023). Second, we find empirical support for this argument. Individuals appointed ministers are significantly more newsworthy before appointment than the average member of Parliament.¹³

As a robustness check, we also use all the incumbent members of Parliament as a control group. The rationale being that those with experience are more likely to be considered as ministers.

4.1.2 Econometric Specification

We use a difference-in-differences strategy. Our treatment group corresponds to individuals who are appointed ministers. Our control group includes members of Parliament who were never appointed ministers (as defined in Section 4.1.1). We estimate the following equation:

$$Y_{i,t} = \sum_l \mu_l D_{i,t}^l * Minister_i + \sum_l \gamma_l D_{i,t}^l + \alpha_i + \lambda_t + \epsilon_{i,t} \quad (1)$$

Where i is the subscript for the individual level, and t for the month level. $D_{i,t}^l$ correspond to the event time dummies. The distribution of events over the period 1997-2017 is depicted in Figure C1. $l > 0$ designates the time periods following the appointment as minister. Since the data set includes media coverage on individuals ranging from 12 months prior to 60 months after appointment as minister, $l \in [-12, +60]$. $Minister_i$ is a dummy that equals 1 (0) if the individual i is a minister (member of Parliament). The individual fixed-effects α_i control for time invariant characteristics. The time fixed-effects λ_t control for time-variant characteristics such as a potential change of media coverage of politicians over time. We do not include the uninteracted $Minister_i$ variable as it is already captured by the individual fixed effects. Given the possibility of heterogeneous dynamic effects across cohorts, we rely on the interaction-weighted estimator of Sun and Abraham (2021).¹⁴ The estimation is performed on a balanced panel, and standard errors are clustered at the individual level.

We chose $l = -2$ as the reference period. This choice is motivated by a potential anticipation effect in $l = -1$. Newspapers may start looking for future ministers, or individuals likely to become ministers may try to increase their media coverage.¹⁵

¹³We did not include a variable indicating political party in the matching process as there are multiple examples of appointed ministers coming from different parties.

¹⁴Unless otherwise specified, we use the estimator of Sun and Abraham (2021). For count outcomes, we instead use Poisson pseudo-maximum likelihood with high-dimensional fixed effects (ppmlhdfc on Stata).

¹⁵As the anticipation effect could already be present in $l = -2$, we also show that the results are robust

4.1.3 Main Outcome Variables

Measuring visibility - We employ multiple measures. First, we compute the extensive and intensive margin by constructing at the monthly level a dummy that equals 1 if the politician is mentioned in the press and the number of media articles mentioning the politician. Second, we use the Named-Entity Recognition results to quantify whether a politician constitutes the main person of the article (i.e. the most frequently mentioned individual).¹⁶ Finally, we assess politicians' capacity to express their personal views and shape the public discourse. The views' domains are coded as: their own portfolio (parliamentary work), other portfolios (constituency), broader political issues, personal views and other topics for ministers (parliamentarians). Our main measure is a dummy that equals 1 (0) if the politician expresses personal (any other) views in a given month.

Measuring tone - We use two measures. The sentiment of each news article towards a given politician is coded as positive, neutral or negative by the LLM. The first measure consists in the monthly share of positive articles. Similarly, using the stance variable, the second measure consists in the monthly share of supportive articles. Our approach is consistent with prior work using tone as a measure of media bias (Puglisi and Snyder Jr, 2015, Durante *et al.*, 2022).

4.2 Results

4.2.1 Effect on Media Visibility

Basic media coverage - We start by studying the effect of access to political power on media mentions. Figure 1 panel (A) displays the results related to the extensive margin. In the 12 months preceding access to government, we observe that the difference between future ministers and members of Parliament is stable, providing support in favor of the common trend.¹⁷ Following appointment, the point estimates indicate that ministers are about 20 percentage points more likely to appear in the news every month. This effect decreases gradually and becomes indistinguishable from zero after 30 months. Next, we use the number of news articles as outcome variable. Panel (B) displays estimated incidence rate ratios. Following the appointment, we observe a sharp increase in the incidence rate ratios peaking at about 6-7 around 12 months after the appointment. After the initial surge, the incidence rate ratios gradually decrease and stabilize around

to using different time periods with $l \in [-6; -1]$.

¹⁶Because the count variables display evidence of overdispersion, we display incidence rate ratios estimated using Poisson pseudo-maximum likelihood regression when we focus on these outcomes. In the Appendix, we replicate the results using OLS estimates and a log-transformation of the outcome variables.

¹⁷The pre-event coefficients are also jointly non significant (F-stat= 0.9).

2, suggesting a persistent effect of the appointment on media visibility.¹⁸

Substantive media coverage - We next study whether this news coverage is substantive. In Figure 1 panel (C), the outcome variable is a dummy that equals 1 if the minister expresses personal views. We observe a spike in the first month after appointment, whereby ministers are about 20 p.p. more likely to express their personal views. This effect declines to about 10 p.p. and remains significant up to 30 months after appointment.¹⁹ Finally, in panel (D), we focus on media mentions in which politicians are the main person in the article (i.e. the most mentioned person). The incidence rate ratios are higher, although not statistically different from those obtained using the monthly number of news articles as outcome.

4.2.2 Effect on Media Tone and Content

Tone of media coverage - The results are described in Figure 2. In Graph (A), we observe the evolution of the monthly share of positive news articles for ministers and members of Parliament. Before appointment, the share is at about 15-20% for future ministers, and 15% for members of Parliament. After appointment, it rises for ministers to nearly 30%, remains at this level for more than 12 months, and then declines to about 20% after 18 months. The gap between the two groups appears to return to its pre-appointment level after about 30 months. Graph (B) plots the difference-in-differences coefficients. These are about 10-15 p.p. after appointment and remain positive and statistically significant for approximately 20 months. The subsequent estimates remain positive but are not statistically significant. Their magnitude hovers around zero after about 30 months. These effects are meaningful both in terms of length and magnitude. Regarding the length, ministers stay on average for 26 months in government, so that the positive effect corresponds to more than 75% of their time in office. Additionally, in terms of magnitude the 10-15 p.p. jump corresponds to an increase in the share of positive articles of roughly 50-55% (scaled by the pre-appointment mean).

Using a balanced panel - The measure of tone is conditional on being mentioned in the media at least once, which excludes politicians who received no media coverage and makes the panel unbalanced. To address potential selection concerns, we assign months without coverage a neutral tone (zero) and replicate the empirical strategy. The results are essentially similar to the above estimates with narrower confidence intervals (Figure C7).

Alternative measures of tone - To verify that our results do not depend on a single

¹⁸We also estimate the coefficients related to the intensive margin with OLS instead of Poisson pseudo-quasi maximum likelihoods using the log transformation of the monthly number of media mentions as outcome variable (Figure C6).

¹⁹In Figure C4, we show a similar pattern, albeit more pronounced, for work-related views.

classification model, we replicate the analysis using DistilCamemBERT.²⁰ For each news article, we extract all the sentences containing a mention of the politician. The model provides a probability indicating whether the sentiment of each sentence is negative, neutral or positive. We then average these probabilities at the level of the article to compute the sentiment of the news article towards a politician. We find results consistent with the above findings. If anything, the period of positive media coverage seems to last slightly longer (Figure C8). Additionally, sentiment does not necessarily imply that the media support a politician. An article may depict a politician positively yet oppose their views or actions. We therefore construct a stance-based measure that classifies each article as supportive or not toward a politician and replicate our analysis using this measure. We find very similar patterns: ministers receive more supportive coverage after appointment, with magnitudes and dynamics close to those obtained with sentiment (Figure C9).

Leadership portrayal and personality traits - We complement the previous results with outcome variables related to the mention of personal characteristics of politicians. Figure C10 shows that mentions of leadership and competence increase by approximately 25 p.p. post-appointment (Panels A and C), gradually declining over 24 months before turning negative after 48 months. We observe that ministers are much more likely to be portrayed as having a strong authority after appointment (Panel B). This contrasts with mentions of high competence (Panel D) which show no significant change. We also study which personality traits of politicians are emphasized. In Figure C12, we observe that newly appointed ministers are more often depicted as conscientious, agreeable, and intellectually capable. Conscientiousness exhibits the strongest initial effect with ministers being approximately 50 p.p. more likely to be characterized with this trait relative to matched MPs. This effect persists at lower magnitudes for nearly 30 months. Agreeableness and Intellect follow similar patterns, while Extraversion and Emotional Stability effects decline more rapidly.

4.3 Robustness Checks

Alternative control group - We demonstrate the robustness of our results to multiple methodological choices. First, we select an alternative control group. We compare ministers to incumbent members of Parliament who are presumably more likely than inexperienced ones to be appointed ministers. Results are similar (Figure C13).

Alternative event times - We next assess the sensitivity of the results to the definition of event times. We vary the reference period, scaling estimates using $l \in [-6; -1]$. The results are essentially unchanged (Figure C14). We also show that our results are

²⁰It corresponds to a model fine-tuned for French-language text: <https://huggingface.co/cmarkea/distilcamembert-base-sentiment>

robust to aggregating the data at a quarterly rather than monthly level (Figure C15).

Alternative estimation method - A recent econometric literature shows that identification and inference can be misleading in the context of staggered event studies design (Goodman-Bacon, 2021, Sun and Abraham, 2021, de Chaisemartin and D’Haultfoeulle, 2020, Callaway and Sant’Anna, 2021). Although all our estimates are computed using the estimation method of Sun and Abraham (2021), one could wonder to what extent our results would change with a different method. To investigate, we implement the estimator of Borusyak *et al.* (2021). The results are depicted in Figure C16. They are essentially similar to the ones obtained with the main regression.

5 Mechanisms

5.1 Are Effects Conditional on Holding Power?

The previous results show that access to political power substantially increases both the visibility and the favorability of media coverage. We now turn to the question of why these positive media returns arise: do they reflect who politicians are or the position they occupy?

One possibility is that journalists update their views about politicians once they enter government. If ministers reveal information about their competence or leadership while holding power, the media may come to see them as higher quality and favorable coverage could persist even after they leave. An alternative is that the returns are tied mainly to holding power itself. In that case, ministers would receive more positive coverage only because of their position, and this advantage should largely vanish once they step down.

To distinguish between these mechanisms, we examine the persistence of media returns after politicians exit government. For each minister, we identify the exact month of departure and estimate the following specification:²¹

$$Y_{i,t} = \sum_l \mu_l D_{i,t}^l * Minister_i + \sum_l \gamma_l D_{i,t}^l + \alpha_i + \lambda_t + \epsilon_{i,t} \quad (2)$$

where $Y_{i,t}$ denotes outcomes related to media returns (visibility or tone) for politician i in month t . $D_{i,t}^l$ corresponds to event-time dummies. There are two key differences with Equation 1. When $l \geq 0$, event times correspond to months *after leaving government* while $l < 0$ correspond to months *before appointment*. This allows us to compare the results on persistence with those on access by using $l = -2$ as a reference period. Additionally,

²¹Note that some individuals switch positions within government. In this case, we define the event as the time in which these individuals leave their last position within government.

$l \in [-12; 24]$ as the data cover all politicians up to two years after they leave government. The estimation is performed on a balanced panel of 12 months before and 24 months after departure for ministers and matched MPs.

Figure 3 reports the coefficients. Panel (A) shows that former ministers continue to receive about twice as much media coverage than comparable MPs up to two years after leaving their position. However, this persistence does not extend to more substantive coverage. Panels (B) and (C) show that mentions where ministers are the main subject or express personal views fade within a few months. Finally, Panel (D) shows that former ministers are no longer portrayed more positively than MPs, with point estimates close to zero or slightly negative.

Overall, these findings indicate that the media returns to political office are largely conditional on holding power. Gains in substantive visibility and favorability fade quickly once politicians step down, suggesting that media advantages are tied to the position itself rather than lasting changes in reputation.

5.2 Why does Political Power Matter?

Having documented that politicians benefit from positive media returns while in power, we now investigate the mechanisms underlying this effect. We exploit mainly within-minister variation, and focus on explaining the more favorable coverage.

5.2.1 Ideological Alignment between Media and Politicians

A possible explanation for the positive tone associated with holding office is that it reflects a partisan bias (Gentzkow and Shapiro, 2010). Newspapers that are politically aligned with a minister’s party may adopt a more favorable tone after appointment, while those on the opposite side may remain neutral or critical. This “cheerleading” mechanism would imply that the more positive coverage is driven by ideological alignment between the media and government.

To test this hypothesis, we focus on within-minister variation and analyze the data at the article level, which allows us to measure tone conditional on visibility and articles’ characteristics. We estimate the following equation:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{PositiveTone}_{aitn} = & \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{InPower}_{it} + \beta_2 \text{Unaligned}_{aitn} \\ & + \beta_3 (\text{InPower}_{it} \times \text{Unaligned}_{aitn}) + X_{aitn} + \lambda_i + \eta_t + \alpha_n + \varepsilon_{aitn}. \end{aligned} \quad (3)$$

where a indexes articles, i politicians, t months, and n newspapers. The dependent variable $\text{PositiveTone}_{aitn}$ equals one if the article’s overall sentiment toward politician

i is classified as positive by our language model. The indicator $InPower_{it}$ equals one when politician i holds a ministerial position in month t . $Unaligned_{aitn}$ equals one if politician i is covered by newspaper n that is ideologically unaligned. Specifically, if the politician is affiliated with a left-wing (right-wing) party and covered by a right-wing (left-wing) newspaper. The interaction term $InPower_{it} \times Unaligned_{aitn}$ captures the change in tone by unaligned newspapers after appointment. If “cheerleading” by aligned outlets explained our main findings, this coefficient should be negative, indicating that only aligned newspapers improve their tone. All regressions include politician (λ_i), month (η_t), and newspaper fixed effects (α_n). We also add control variables X_{aitn} at the article level such as the length of the article and 50 principal components summarizing the top two topics of the articles extracted by the LLM.²² This specification exploits within-politician variation when they move into (and out of) ministerial position, net of month effects and time-invariant newspaper differences.²³

To focus on cases where ideological alignment is well defined, we impose two sample restrictions. First, we limit the analysis to the two newspapers in our dataset that are clearly identified as ideologically right- and left-leaning (*Le Figaro* and *Libération*).²⁴ Second, we restrict the set of politicians to those affiliated with either right- or left-wing parties, excluding centrist figures or those whose ideological orientation is ambiguous (reducing the sample from 215 to 194 ministers).

Table 2 reports the results. Across all specifications, the coefficient on $InPower$ is positive, indicating that articles about ministers tend to be 2 to 6 p.p. more positive. Once we include the $Unaligned$ dummy, this coefficient measures the tone effect within aligned outlets. If the overall tone improvement was driven by ideological allies, we would expect this coefficient to rise in magnitude. In contrast, it remains similar across specifications, suggesting that aligned newspapers are not solely responsible for the effect. The coefficient on $Unaligned$ is negative, showing that ideologically distant newspapers are about 6 to 7 p.p. less positive about politicians. Most importantly, the interaction term is positive and statistically significant. This means that when politicians hold office, even unaligned newspapers become more favorable in their tone. One concern is that these patterns could be driven by changes in the topics discussed around politicians or by other article characteristics. To address this, we add controls for article topics and length

²²To construct the variables related to the themes of the articles, we use the LLM’s unsupervised topic extraction. We summarize the TF-IDF representation of the topics with 50 principal components and include these variables as controls along with article length. Overall, the 50 principal components summarize 17% of the information contained in the TF-IDF representation.

²³This specification is closer to a standard event-study where we compare ministers to themselves depending on the time. We do not use the sample of MPs as a control group because the variable $InPower$ is equal to zero over the entire period for them.

²⁴The third outlet, *Le Monde*, is generally viewed as centrist or center-left and is thus excluded from the main test.

(column 4). The results are essentially unchanged. Only the coefficient on *InPower* becomes slightly smaller.

Overall, these results rule out a simple “cheerleading” interpretation. The more favorable coverage does not originate exclusively from friendly newspapers praising their side, but from a broader shift in coverage shared by ideologically opposed outlets.

5.2.2 Honeymoon Effect

Another potential explanation for our results is related to the honeymoon effect in politics. This effect is usually defined as a short phase after accession to power during which leaders receive unusually lenient treatment from the public. Two considerations make this interpretation unlikely in our setting.

First, the literature views the honeymoon as brief. It typically corresponds to the first 100 days or first quarter, and less often to six to nine months. In contrast, our most conservative estimates show that the increase in favorable tone persists for roughly 20 months, a horizon that is close to the average time ministers spend in government (26 months) and well beyond standard honeymoon definitions. Second, honeymoons are classically linked to an electoral mandate that provides an initial popular credit. The existing work mostly studies presidents ([Castro Cornejo et al., 2022](#)), whereas in our setting ministers are appointed rather than directly elected and therefore do not benefit from a comparable personal mandate.

5.2.3 Dependence on sources

Prior theoretical work emphasizes that media bias can emerge not only from ideology but also from dependence on sources. In the canonical model of [Besley and Prat \(2006\)](#), politicians in well-established democracies can shape news content by influencing the flow of information and “*offering selective access to politicians friendly to media outlets*” ([Besley and Prat, 2006](#), p.731). More recent theoretical contributions show how politicians can strategically ration access to induce favorable reporting ([Ozerturk, 2022](#)), and how journalists may moderate criticism to preserve access in competitive environments ([Kishishita and Sato, 2025](#)). These models predict that favorable coverage is tightly linked to access and to news that depend on direct interaction with politicians such as those that quote or relay their viewpoint.

To investigate this mechanism, we analyze data at the article level (as in [Section 5.2.1](#)). We estimate the following specification:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{PositiveTone}_{aitn} = & \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{InPower}_{it} + \beta_2 \text{ViewsPresent}_{aitn} \\ & + \beta_3 (\text{InPower}_{it} \times \text{ViewsPresent}_{aitn}) + X_{aitn} + \lambda_i + \eta_t + \alpha_n + \varepsilon_{aitn}. \end{aligned} \quad (4)$$

where a indexes articles, i politicians, t months, and n newspapers. The dependent variable $\text{PositiveTone}_{aitn}$ equals one if the article’s overall sentiment toward politician i is classified as positive by our language model. The indicator InPower_{it} equals one when politician i holds ministerial office in month t . $\text{ViewsPresent}_{aitn}$ equals one if article a , published in newspaper n , reports or quotes the politician’s statements. The interaction term captures whether tone becomes more positive in “access-dependent” pieces when the politician is currently a minister. All regressions include politician (λ_i), month (η_t), and newspaper fixed effects (α_n). We also add control variables X_{aitn} at the article level such as the length of the article and 50 principal components summarizing the top two topics of the articles extracted by the LLM.

Table 3 describes the results. Column (1) reproduces the baseline relationship. News articles mentioning ministers in office are significantly more positive. Columns (2)–(5) add measures of access-related content. In columns (2) and (4), we observe that articles reporting politicians’ views are about 27 percentage points more likely to be positive, and those containing a direct quotation about 21 points more likely. Once these controls are included, the coefficient on *In Power* shrinks, suggesting that part of the tone improvement reflects composition effects, whereby politicians are more likely to express their views when ministers. In columns (3) and (5), the interaction terms are positive and statistically significant while the main effect of *In Power* becomes insignificant or negative. This pattern implies that the more favorable coverage is mostly due to differential returns to news articles depicting views of politicians. The results remain stable when controlling for article characteristics such as length and topic composition (columns 4 and 7), indicating that the effect is not simply due to changes in the types of stories written about politicians.

Taken together, these results are consistent with a form of access-driven mechanism. Coverage is more favorable in contexts where the media rely more on their source and where these sources hold more power. This pattern aligns with theories of media capture in which informational dependence may lead to media bias. It could reflect an adjustment in tone by the media as access to powerful sources becomes more valuable.

6 Gender Differences in Media Returns to Power

We now study gender differences in media returns. Prior work has shown that women are underrepresented in the media and that the media convey stereotypes about certain demographic groups (Ash *et al.*, 2022). In politics, evidence suggests that women can be less newsworthy and portrayed differently than men (Van der Pas and Aaldering, 2020). We therefore investigate whether women enjoy similar media gains to men.

6.1 Empirical Strategy

To study gender differences, we use an event-study strategy around the time of appointment as minister. We estimate the following equation:

$$Y_{i,t} = \sum_l \mu_l D_{i,t}^l * Gender_i + \sum_l \gamma_l D_{i,t}^l + \alpha_i + \lambda_t + \epsilon_{i,t} \quad (5)$$

Where i is the subscript for the individual level, and t for the month level. $D_{i,t}^l$ correspond to the event time dummies.²⁵ $l > 0$ designates the time periods following the appointment as minister. Since the data set includes media coverage on individuals ranging from 12 months prior to 60 months after appointment as minister, $l \in [-12, +60]$. $Gender_i$ is a dummy that equals 1 if the individual i is a woman. The individual fixed-effects α_i control for time invariant characteristics. The time fixed-effects λ_t control for time-variant characteristics such as a potential overall change of media coverage of politicians over time. The estimation is performed on a balanced panel and standard errors are clustered at the individual level.

Interpretation - In examining the data, we observe that female politicians receive significantly less media attention than their male counterparts before appointment. Given this pre-existing gap, our identification strategy can be understood as a difference-in-differences approach. Both men and women experience the treatment of ministerial appointment, but the intensity varies by gender.²⁶ As in Section 4, we chose $l = -2$ as the reference period because of a potential anticipation effect in $l = -1$.²⁷

²⁵The distribution of events over the period 1997-2017 is depicted in Figure D1.

²⁶This is comparable to empirical strategies identifying child penalties (as in Angelov *et al.*, 2016 or Kleven *et al.*, 2019)

²⁷Results are robust to using different time periods with $l \in [-6; -1]$ (Figure D2).

6.2 Gender Differences in Media Visibility

6.2.1 Results

Descriptive account - Figure 4 depicts the evolution of the gender gap in media coverage surrounding access to political power. Before appointment, about 65% of male politicians receive at least one media mention per month while 35-40% of women do. This pre-existing gender gap disappears immediately upon ministerial appointment, with nearly 100% of both male and female ministers receiving media coverage in the first month. This high level of media attention gradually declines over time but the gender gap remains closed for about 48 months. Five years after appointment, the coverage rate stabilizes at slightly less than 80% for men and 70% for women which suggests a possible re-emergence of gender differences, albeit smaller than the pre-appointment gap.

Main results - We estimate Equation 5 using two outcome variables: a binary indicator for receiving any media coverage (extensive margin) and the number of media articles (intensive margin). Figure 5 presents these results. Panel (A) shows the extensive margin effects. In the 12 months preceding ministerial appointment, gender differences are stable as point estimates are close to zero. After appointment, women experience a 20-30 p.p. increase in the probability to be mentioned in the media every month, relatively to men (panel (A)). Panel (B) describes the intensive margin effects. Estimates indicate that women ministers receive approximately 2-2.5 times more media mentions per month than their male counterparts in the post-appointment period, compared to the pre-appointment baseline. In the Appendix, we scale these jumps relatively to the pre-appointment gender gap and we show that this gap is closed once women reach power (Figure D3). In other words, women seem to become as newsworthy as men after appointment.

Substantive media coverage - We also study whether the disappearance of the gender gap holds for more substantive indicators of media coverage. First, we update the two outcome variables to focus on news articles that mention ministers as the main person in order to capture important media mentions. Although point estimates are slightly lower for the extensive margin, the effect is essentially similar (Figure D4). We also examine whether female ministers' views are less frequently featured or less quoted using direct speech. The results are displayed in Figure D5. Women appear as likely as men to express views (using direct or indirect speeches) in the media after appointment, while there is a sizeable gap before appointment. Overall, these two pieces of evidence also point towards an equalization of broad media coverage metrics.

Heterogeneity - We find that the effect is similar across the three ideologically diverse newspapers in our sample (Figure D6). We also study the influence of the char-

acteristics of ministerial positions such as their position in the government hierarchy and areas ministers are in charge of. We estimate Equation 5 and include variables controlling for the characteristics of these positions interacted with the event-time dummies. If these characteristics were driving the results, we would expect the coefficients of interest to shrink. Figures D7 and D8 provide evidence that the estimates remain essentially similar when controlling for these characteristics, suggesting that they do not account for the results.

Interpretation - The results suggest that the pre-existing gender gap in media coverage disappears post-appointment. One might wonder whether this gap persists among similarly experienced politicians, which would be consistent with media bias. To investigate, we use a Oaxaca-Blinder-Kitagawa decomposition to quantify how much of the pre-appointment gap can be explained by observable characteristics. We control for detailed career trajectories, including dummies for prior service as MP, senator, or mayor, the number of times elected, cumulative time in office, and age at appointment. Figure D9 displays the results. We find that at most 30% of the initial gender gap in media coverage is attributable to career differences. The bulk of the gap thus arises from differences unrelated to political experience, consistent with a gender bias in pre-appointment coverage, suggesting that access to political power can undo this bias.

6.2.2 Identification Checks

Control group - The short-run impact of event studies relies on a smoothness assumption (see Kleven *et al.*, 2019). In the long-run, this assumption may not hold as media coverage may change for reasons unrelated to ministerial appointment. To address this, we use a control group. As in Section 4, we proxy it with members of Parliament (MP) who had similar pre-event media coverage. Using propensity score matching, we pair future ministers with MPs of the same gender and with similar pre-event media trajectories (details in Section D.2). Figure D11 shows that the gender gap in media coverage closes for the treatment group but persists for the control group for up to five years after the event. This pattern suggests that time-varying confounders are unlikely to explain our long-run estimates.

Exogeneity of the timing – Our identification relies on the timing of ministerial appointments being exogenous to the gender gap in media coverage. The parallel trends in our main analysis are consistent with this assumption. To further address concerns that time-varying unobservables might jointly affect appointment timing and future media coverage differently for men and women, we exploit a 50% gender quota introduced in 2012. The quota, a campaign pledge of the left-wing presidential candidate, was implemented after his election and enforced by subsequent governments, raising the share

of female ministers from 26.5% to 48.6% (Figure A1). Appointments in this period were therefore conditional on the left’s electoral victory, which was arguably hard to anticipate months in advance.²⁸ Replicating our empirical strategy on the subsample of politicians appointed after the quota yields similar effects (Figure D12), suggesting that anticipation effects are not driving our results.

6.3 Gender Differences in Media Tone and Content

6.3.1 Main Outcome Variables

List of outcomes - To define the outcomes, we rely on recent research on gender differences in news coverage in politics (the meta-analysis of [Van der Pas and Aalders, 2020](#)). This literature identifies several dimensions along which gender-differentiated coverage can arise. Female politicians can receive more challenging coverage and be depicted less often as leaders than male politicians. They are also depicted in stereotypical ways more often with their physical appearance, gender, family background, and personality traits being more emphasized than for men. The existing evidence suggests that these stereotypical portrayals can undermine female politicians’ perceived credibility and electoral viability ([Rohrbach et al., 2023](#)).

Professional evaluation - We construct indicators for coverage of politicians’ professional capacities across two dimensions: tone and leadership-attributes. For tone, we measure the monthly share of positive and supportive articles. For leadership-attributes, we use a dummy indicating whether the competence of a politician is mentioned in a given month, as well as the share of news articles that describe the competence as high (conditional on mentioning it).

Stereotypical attributes - We build a set of dummy variables indicating whether stereotypical coverage arises in a given month. These include explicit gender references (coded as 1 if a gender marking is used strictly more than once), family characteristics (disaggregated into children, parenthood, marital status, work-life balance, and other family mentions), physical attributes (appearance, clothing, age, other physical characteristics), and personality traits (classified as agreeableness, intellect, conscientiousness, extraversion, and emotional stability).

Accounting for the absence of coverage - In the main results, we define our outcome variables conditionally on politicians receiving at least one media mention in a given month. Politicians without any media mention are therefore excluded from the sample. This enables a cleaner interpretation of the results by leaving aside changes

²⁸François Hollande was selected as the left-wing candidate in October 2011 (seven months before the May 2012 election). Initially seen as an outsider, he benefited from the withdrawal of Dominique Strauss-Kahn in May 2011 (twelve months before appointment).

in media coverage due to new politicians entering the sample after appointment. For robustness, we release this restriction and find essentially similar results.

6.3.2 Results

Professional evaluation - We first study potential gender differences in professional evaluations.²⁹ The results are displayed in Figure 6. While we observe that ministers receive more positive tone and supportive stance in the months post-appointment, this pattern does not exhibit any gender difference (panels (A) and (B)). We also do not find evidence suggesting that men are more likely to see their competence mentioned or to be depicted with high competence than women (panels (C) and (D)). In the Appendix, we provide similar results on mentions of authority and leadership as well as evidence that women are not more likely to be depicted as communal after appointment (nor men as agentic, see Figures D18 and D19).

Stereotypical attributes - Figure 7 displays the event-study estimates. We observe that gender differences arise after appointment. News articles are about 20-25 p.p. more likely to mention the appearance and clothing (panel (A)) as well as the children (panel (B)) of female politicians at least once at the time of their appointment, relatively to male ones. In the subsequent months, we do not observe any gender differences. This pattern is therefore salient right after appointment, when politicians are more likely to be scrutinized and portrayed in the news. As for gender marking (panel C), the jump is even more striking with women experiencing a 50 p.p. increase in the probability of having gender markers appear in their coverage. This difference remains significant up to 12 months after appointment. Finally, no gender difference emerges in the mentions of personality traits (panel (D)). In Section D.3, we study other dimensions of stereotypical attributes. We find no statistically significant gender differences on age, other family characteristics (marital status, work-life balance and parenthood), and specific personality traits.

Robustness - All the above variables are defined conditionally on having received at least one news article. In the Appendix, we find similar results when we include individuals who have not received any media coverage and set their outcome variables equal to 0 (Figure D20). Finally, we explore whether we have missed interesting patterns in the data. We use a logistic regression with balanced class weights and TF-IDF feature extraction to identify the most discriminative words of gender in the first month post-appointment (Table D1). The patterns are difficult to discern as most terms relate to institutional roles and career trajectories, with substantial overlap in administrative vocabulary (“delegate”, “MP”) between genders.

²⁹The unconditional mentions of all the attributes studied in this Section are depicted in the Appendix Section D.3.

7 Conclusion

In this study, we quantify the causal effect of access to power on media coverage and its implications for gender inequality in media representation. We establish three main findings.

First, access to power leads to an immediate and substantial increase in both the volume and the favorability of media coverage. Newly appointed ministers experience a surge of 300–600% in media mentions, appear more frequently as central figures, and express their personal opinions more often. Turning to the content, we show that ministers are portrayed in more favorable ways. They are more likely to receive positive and supportive media coverage, as well as be described using authoritative terms. These effects persist for nearly as long as ministers remain in office but fade quickly once they leave government, indicating that media returns are attached to the position rather than personal reputation.

Second, we provide evidence suggesting that the more favorable coverage is likely to be driven by informational dependence. We first rule out that the effects are driven by partisan alignment or a honeymoon effect. We then show that the pattern is strongest in articles that quote or report the politician’s statements, consistent with a mechanism of informational dependence. When journalists rely on those in power for access to information, coverage becomes more positive. This suggests a soft form of media capture, highlighting how the media’s need for information can temper its watchdog role even in well-established democracies.

Third, media returns to power are similar for women and men in terms of visibility, but the content of coverage reveals gender differences. Immediately after appointment, news articles are more likely to mention women’s appearance, clothing, or family, and to use gendered language. These differences fade over time but are striking at the moment when visibility peaks. It suggests that gender bias toward politicians in power stems less from unequal visibility or doubts about competence than from subtle stereotyping in how women are portrayed.

These findings have important policy implications for both political accountability and representational inequalities in the media. They suggest that, in well-established democracies, the dependence of journalists on those in power for information may impact how news articles are written. Strengthening transparency in political reporting and diversifying sources of access could help preserve independence. Additionally, the results reveal that women and men benefit equally from these media returns, but women still face a layer of stereotyping at moments of peak visibility. Increasing gender diversity in leadership positions could therefore reduce inequalities in visibility, while addressing

how women in power are portrayed may require complementary tools such as editorial guidelines and content monitoring.

Our results also suggest new research avenues. First, we provided evidence that non-financial mechanisms such as informational dependence can be associated to softer media coverage. Understanding when this informational dependence intensifies and whether mandatory access to individuals in power can mitigate it remains an open question. Second, the gender results invite work on how media portrayals shape perceptions of authority. Future research could study how exposure to gendered framing affects citizens' perceptions of women in politics.

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Tables

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

	<i>Member of Parliament</i>				<i>Minister</i>			
	Mean (1)	S.D. (2)	Min (3)	Max (4)	Mean (5)	S.D. (6)	Min (7)	Max (8)
<i>Panel A: Politician Level</i>								
Woman (1=Yes)	0.27	0.44	0	1	0.37	0.48	0	1
Year of Birth	1956.58	14.04	1911	1993	1957.65	10.99	1931	1986
N Monthly Media Mentions	1.01	4.45	0	126	15.77	33.40	0	326
Total Media Mentions	278.62	856.69	1	14866	1135.15	1165.08	22	6876
MP Before Appointment (1=Yes)	.	.	.	.	0.63	0.48	0	1
N Months in First Position Government	.	.	.	.	14.38	12.94	0	61
Total N Months in Government	.	.	.	.	26.31	16.89	0	70
High Ranked Minister (1=Yes)	.	.	.	.	0.24	0.43	0	1
Observations	1379				215			
<i>Panel B: News Article Level</i>								
Main Person (1=Yes)	0.29	0.46	0	1	0.36	0.48	0	1
Express Any View (1=Yes)	0.66	0.47	0	1	0.69	0.46	0	1
Express Personal Views (1=Yes)	0.01	0.08	0	1	0.01	0.11	0	1
Physical Characteristics (1=Yes)	0.01	0.09	0	1	0.01	0.10	0	1
Family References (1=Yes)	0.02	0.14	0	1	0.02	0.14	0	1
N Gender Marking	0.93	0.36	0	7	1.05	0.35	0	8
Personality Traits (1=Yes)	0.03	0.16	0	1	0.04	0.19	0	1
Competence Attributes (1=Yes)	0.31	0.46	0	1	0.48	0.50	0	1
Leadership Qualities (1=Yes)	0.43	0.50	0	1	0.56	0.50	0	1
Positive Sentiment (1=Yes)	0.14	0.35	0	1	0.21	0.41	0	1
Supportive Stance (1=Yes)	0.15	0.36	0	1	0.22	0.41	0	1
Observations	264597				224686			

Notes: The data come from the compositions of the government and the Lower House from 1997 to 2017 (Panel A). Data on media mentions cover the period 1996-2022 and come from the three main French daily newspapers (Panel B). Columns 1 to 4 correspond to members of Parliament who were never appointed ministers (control group). Column 5 to 8 corresponds to politicians appointed as ministers for the first time (treatment group). Panel A (Panel B) displays descriptive statistics at the politician level (news article level).

Table 2: Mechanisms - Ideological Alignment

<i>Dep. Var.: Positive Tone in the Article (1=Yes)</i>				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
In Power (1=Yes)	0.06*** (0.01)	0.06*** (0.01)	0.05*** (0.01)	0.02*** (0.01)
Unaligned (1=Yes)		-0.06*** (0.01)	-0.07*** (0.01)	-0.06*** (0.01)
Unaligned * In Power			0.03** (0.01)	0.02** (0.01)
Individual FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Month FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Newspaper FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Article Controls	No	No	No	Yes
N Ministers	194	194	194	194
Observations	134621	134621	134621	134621

Notes: * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. The data come from media coverage of politicians appointed as ministers for the first time during the period 1996-2022, members of a left or right-wing party (N=194). The media coverage includes only newspapers clearly labeled as left or right-wing. The time span of the data covers 5 (1) years after (before) appointment. The unit of observation is at the news article level. The outcome variable is a dummy that equals 1 if the tone of the news article is positive towards a given politician. *In Power* is a dummy that equals 1 if the politician is a minister during the month of publication of the article. *In Power* equals 0 when the politician is not minister, i.e. before appointment or after leaving government. *Unaligned* is a dummy that equals 1 if the newspaper is ideologically unaligned with the politician. Specifications of columns 1 to 4 all include individual, month, and newspapers fixed-effects. Article controls include article length (number of words) and 50 principal components summarizing topic content. Standard errors are clustered at the politician level.

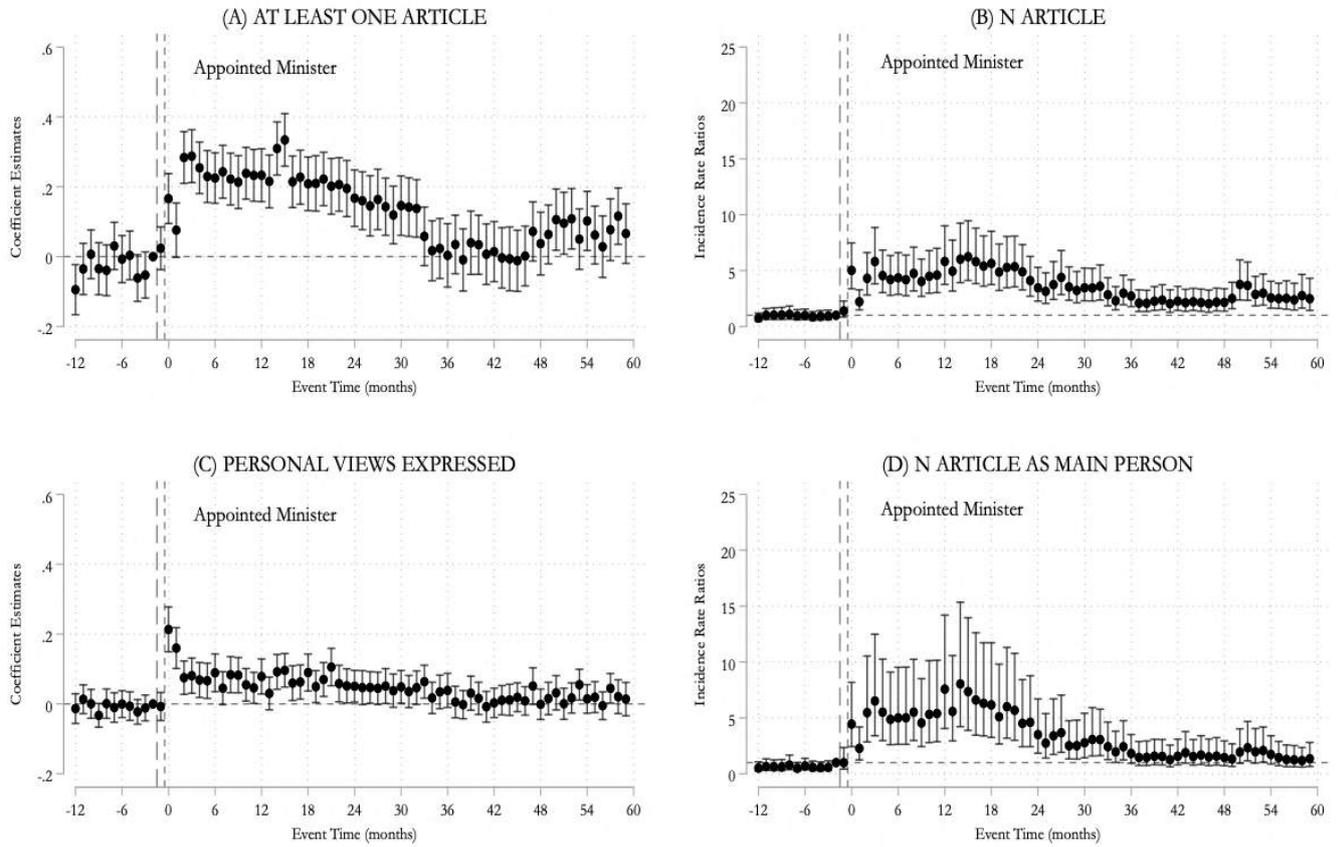
Table 3: Mechanisms - Access to Ministers and Tone

	<i>Dep. Var.: Positive Tone in the Article (1=Yes)</i>						
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
In Power (1=Yes)	0.03*** (0.01)	0.02*** (0.01)	-0.02** (0.01)	-0.02** (0.01)	0.03*** (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)
Views Present (1=Yes)		0.27*** (0.01)	0.25*** (0.01)	0.23*** (0.01)			
Views Present * In Power			0.06*** (0.01)	0.05*** (0.01)			
Direct Quotation (1=Yes)					0.21*** (0.01)	0.20*** (0.01)	0.18*** (0.01)
Direct Quotation * In Power						0.03*** (0.01)	0.02*** (0.01)
Individual FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Month FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Newspaper FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Article Controls	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
N Ministers	215	215	215	215	215	215	215
Observations	224670	224670	224670	224670	224670	224670	224670

Notes: * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. The data come from media coverage of politicians appointed as ministers for the first time during the period 1996-2022 (N=215). The time span of the data covers 5 (1) years after (before) appointment. The unit of observation is at the news article level. The outcome variable is a dummy that equals 1 if the tone of the news article is positive towards a given politician. *In Office* is a dummy that equals 1 if the politician is a minister during the month of publication of the article. *Views Present* is a dummy that equals 1 if the views of the politician are in the article. *Direct Quotation* is a dummy that equals 1 if a direct quotation of the politician is included in the article. Specifications of columns 1 to 7 all include individual, month, and newspapers fixed-effects. Article controls include article length (number of words) and 50 principal components summarizing topic content. Standard errors are clustered at the politician level.

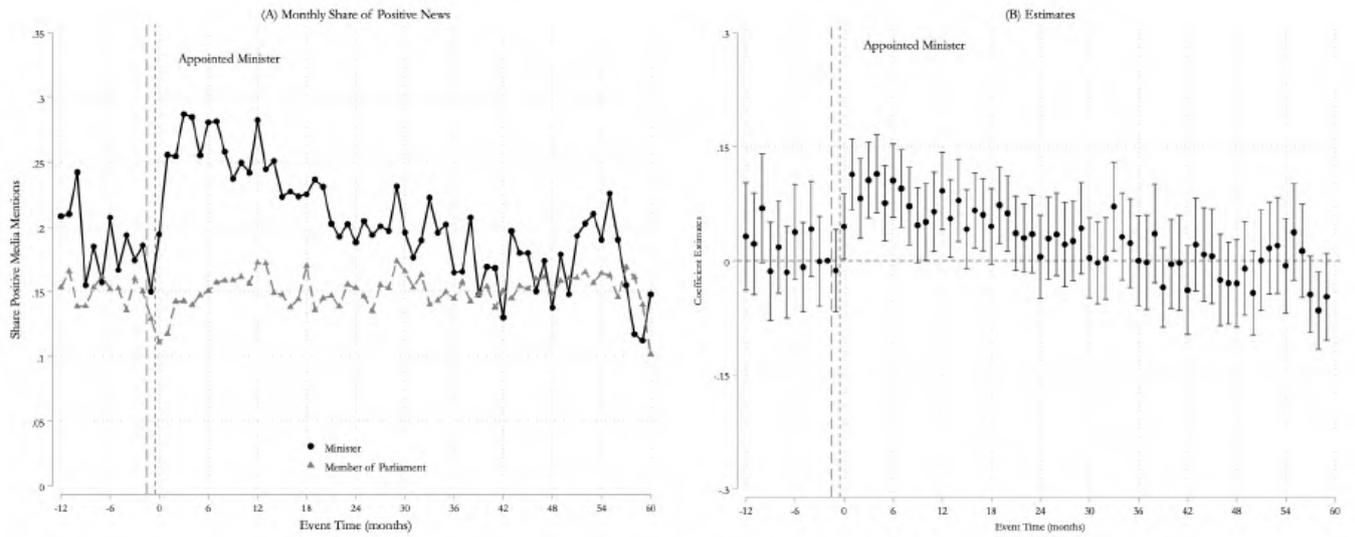
Figures

Figure 1: Effect of Access to Political Power on Media Visibility



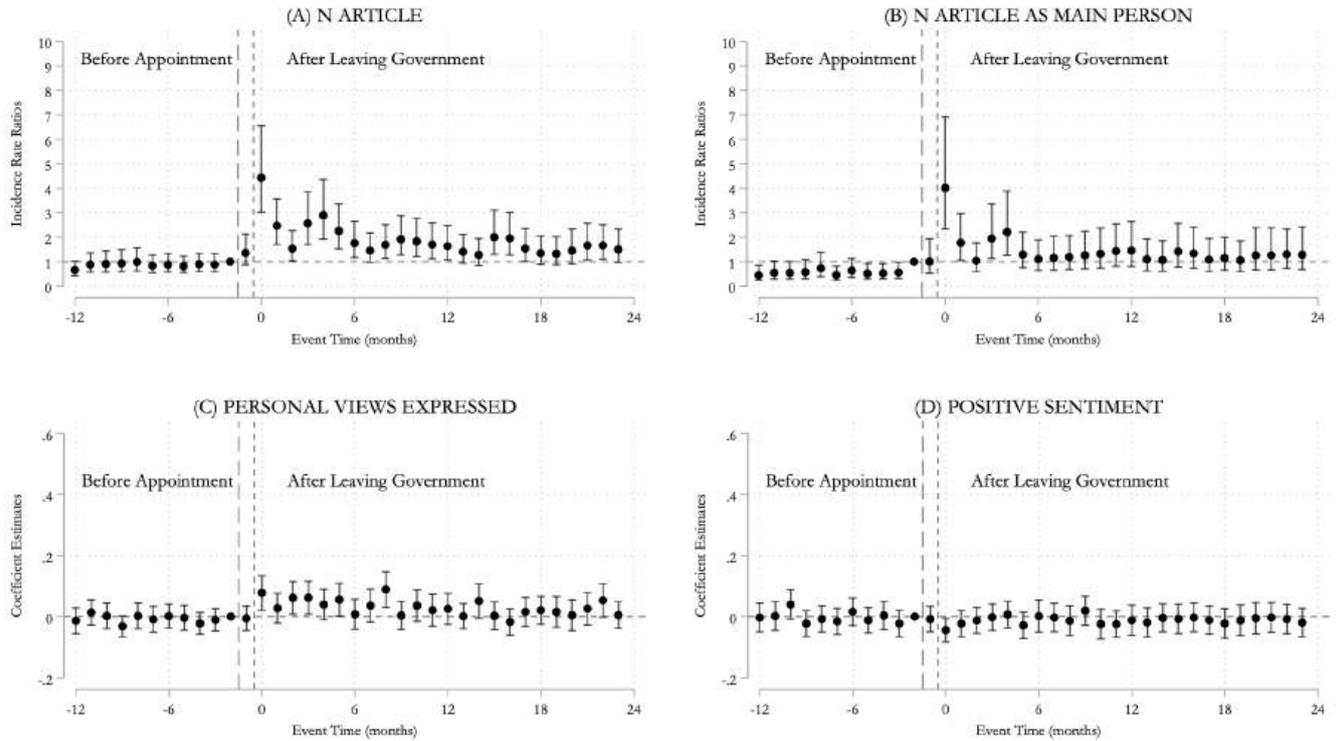
Notes: the data come from media coverage during the period 1996-2022. The outcome variables are respectively a dummy that equals 1 if the politician received media coverage in a given month (A), the monthly number of media mentions (B), a dummy that equals 1 if a minister expresses personal views in a given month (C), the monthly number of media mentions as the main person (D). In panels (B) and (D), the figure displays incidence rate ratios estimated using Poisson pseudo-maximum likelihood regressions. The treatment group consists of politicians appointed as ministers for the first time ($N=215$). The control group consists of members of Parliament never appointed ministers who had similar pre-event media coverage ($N=1,379$). Details on the matching process and event date assignment are provided in Section 4.1.1. The time span of the data covers 5 (1) years after (before) appointment. The figure shows difference in differences coefficients with respect to $l = -2$. Bootstrapped confidence intervals are represented at the 95% level.

Figure 2: Effect of Access to Political Power on Media Tone



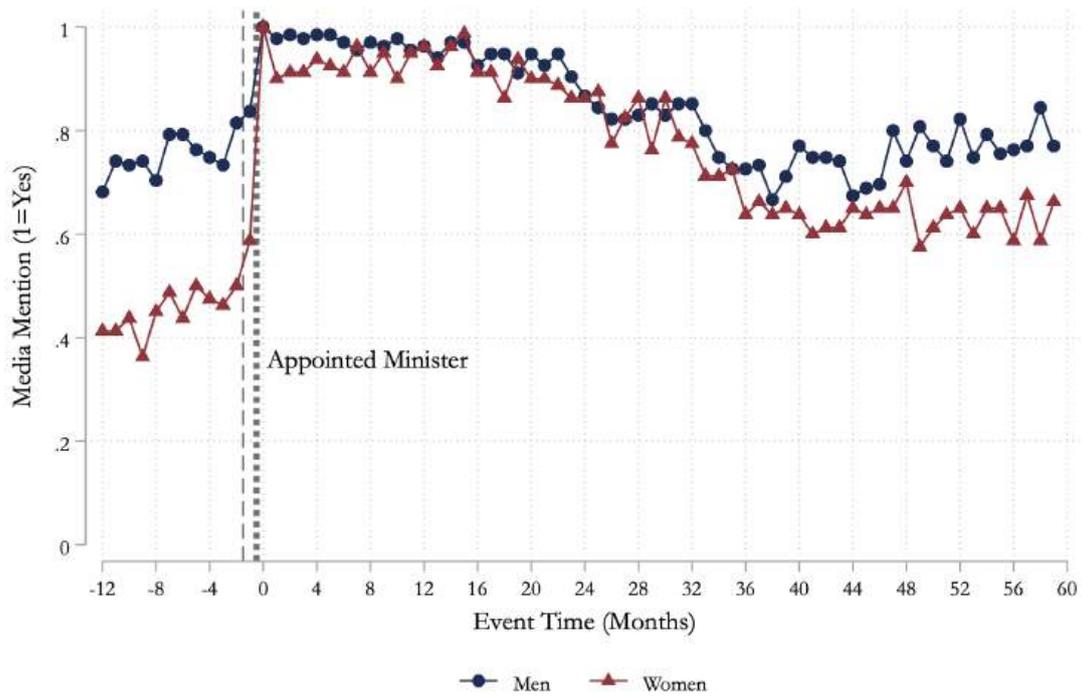
Notes: the data come from media coverage during the period 1996-2022. The outcome variable is the monthly share of positive news articles, computed conditional on having at least one media mention in a given month. Graph (A) displays the average monthly share of positive news articles for ministers (circle) and members of Parliament (triangle). Graph (B) display the difference-in-differences estimates with respect to $l = -2$. The treatment group consists of politicians appointed as ministers for the first time ($N=215$). The control group consists of members of Parliament never appointed ministers who had similar pre-event media coverage ($N=1,379$). Details on the matching process and event date assignment are provided in Section 4.1.1. The time span of the data covers 5 (1) years after (before) appointment. Bootstrapped confidence intervals are represented at the 95% level.

Figure 3: Do Media Returns Persist After Leaving Government?



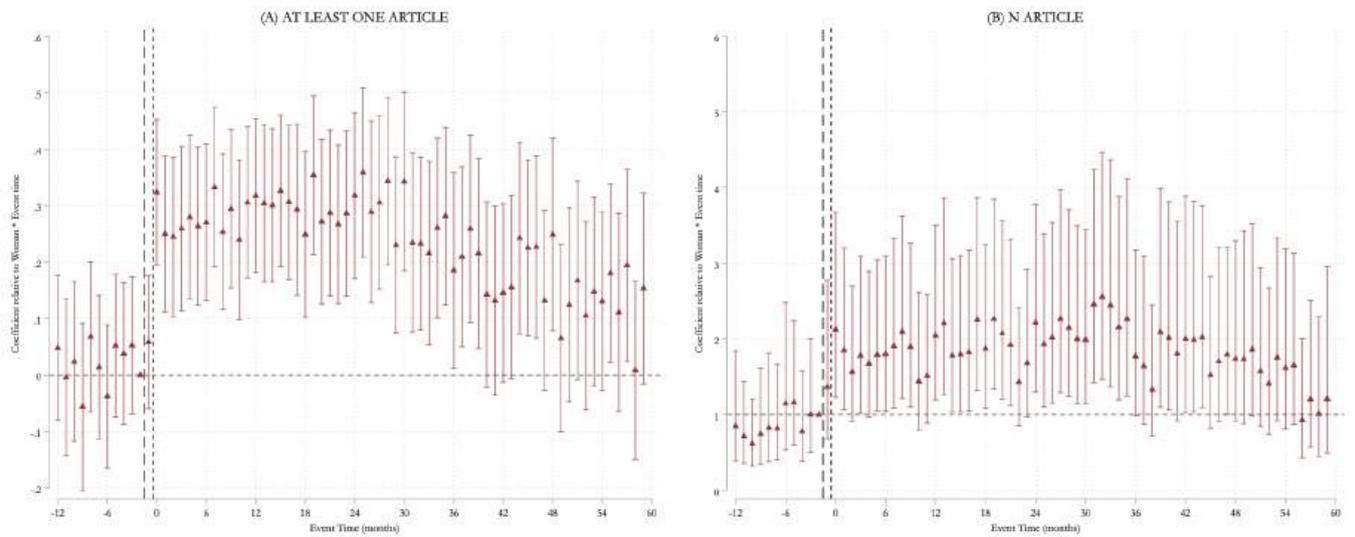
Notes: the data come from media coverage during the period 1996-2022. The outcome variables are the monthly number of media mentions (A), the monthly number of media mentions as main person (B), a dummy that equals 1 if the minister expresses work-related view in a given month (C) and the monthly share of articles with positive sentiment (D). Graph (A) and (B) display incidence rate ratios estimated using Poisson pseudo-maximum likelihood regressions. The treatment group consists of politicians appointed as ministers for the first time ($N=215$). The control group consists of members of Parliament never appointed ministers who had similar pre-event media coverage ($N=1,379$). Details on the matching process and event date assignment are provided in Section 4.1.1. The time span corresponds to 2 (1) years after leaving the government (before appointment). The figure shows difference in differences coefficients with respect to $l = -2$. Bootstrapped confidence intervals are represented at the 95% level.

Figure 4: Access to Power and Gender Gap in Media Mentions - Descriptive



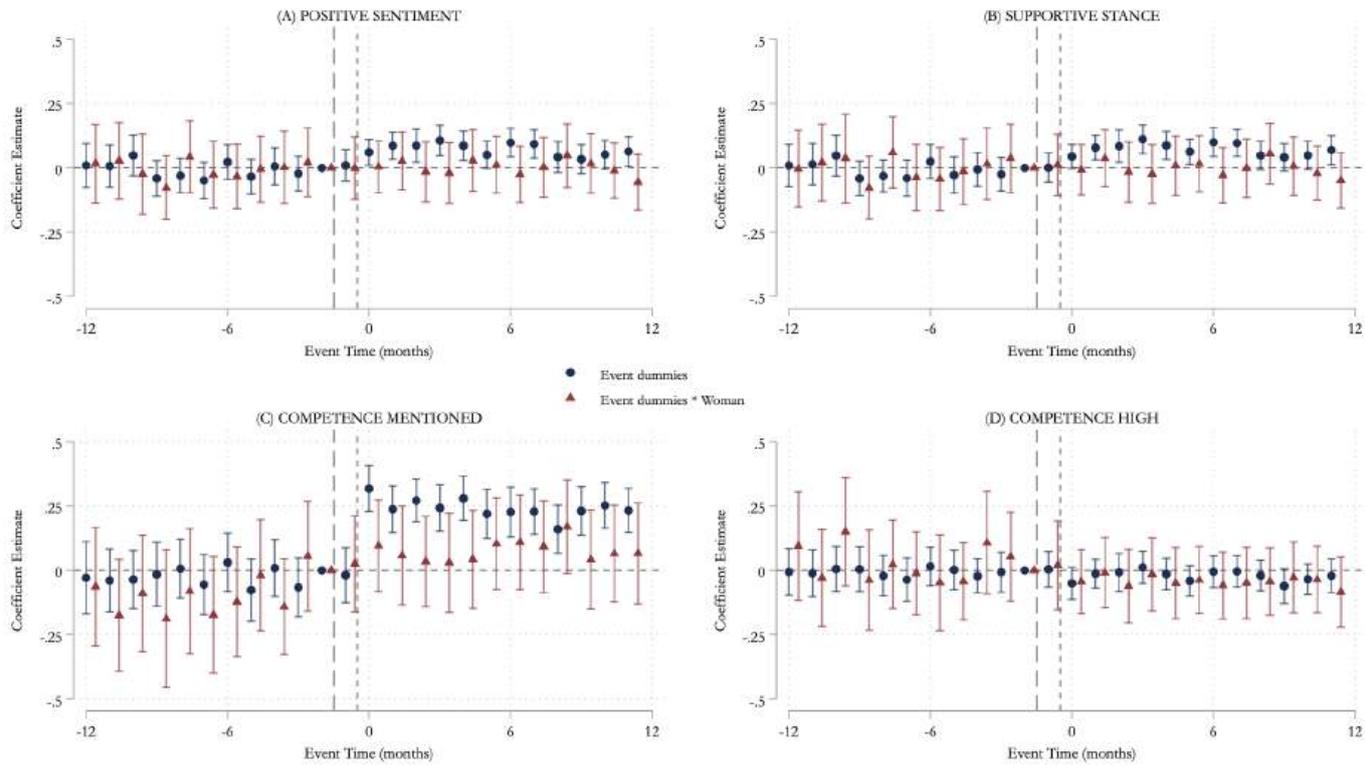
Notes: the data come from media coverage of politicians appointed as ministers for the first time during the period 1996-2022 (N=215). The time span of the data covers 5 (1) years after (before) appointment. The figure shows the share of women (triangle) and men (circle) who receive at least one media mention in a given month. The x-axis corresponds to the month with respect to the date where the individual is appointed minister (x=0).

Figure 5: Media Returns to Political Power by Gender - Visibility Dimensions



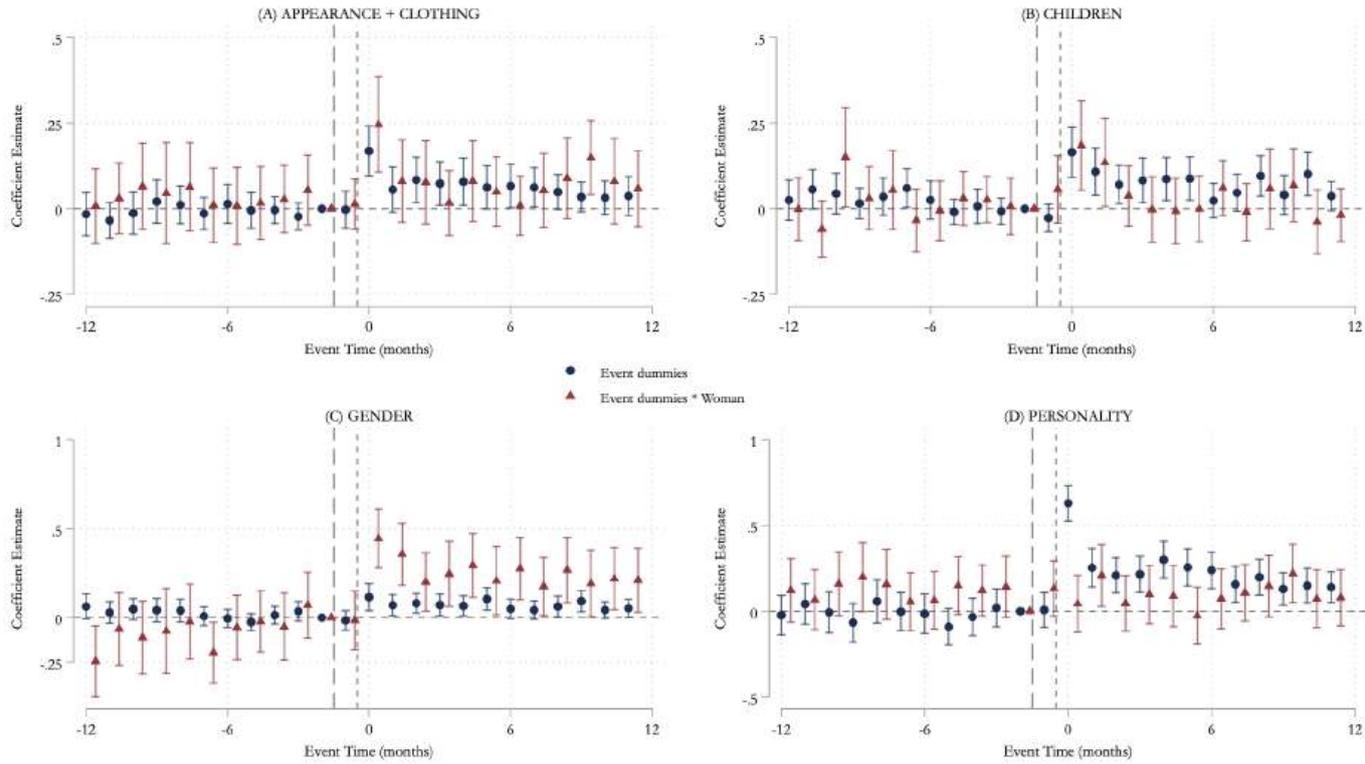
Notes: the data come from media coverage of politicians appointed as ministers for the first time during the period 1996-2022 ($N=215$). The time span corresponds to 5 (1) years after appointment (before appointment). The outcome variables are a dummy that equals 1 if the politician received media coverage in a given month (A) and the monthly number of media mentions (B). In panel (B), the figure displays incidence rate ratios estimated using Poisson pseudo-maximum likelihood regressions. The figure shows difference in differences coefficients related to $EventTime * Woman$, which capture the additional effect of ministerial appointment on media coverage for women relative to men. The reference period is $t = -2$. Confidence intervals are represented at the 95% level.

Figure 6: Media Returns to Political Power by Gender - Professional Dimensions



Notes: the data come from media coverage of politicians appointed as ministers for the first time during the period 1996-2022 ($N=215$). The time span of the data covers 1 (1) year after (before) appointment. The figure shows coefficients related to $EventTime$ and $EventTime * Woman$ relative to the reference month ($t = -2$). Red triangles represent the interaction term (difference between women and men). The total effect for women can be obtained by adding the two coefficients. For panels (A) and (B), the outcome variables consist respectively in the share of news articles with a positive sentiment and a supportive stance towards a given politician. For panels (C) and (D), the outcome variables consist respectively in dummies that equal 1 if the competence of a politician is mentioned and the share of monthly articles depicting the competence as high. Details on the construction of the outcome variables are provided in Section 3.2.1. Confidence intervals are represented at the 95% level.

Figure 7: Media Returns to Political Power by Gender - Stereotypical Dimensions

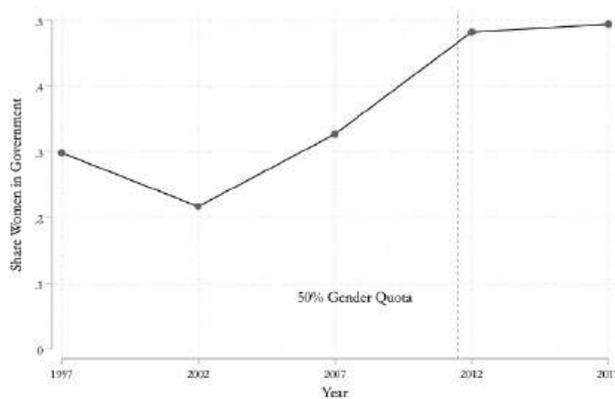


Notes: the data come from media coverage of politicians appointed as ministers for the first time during the period 1996-2022 ($N=215$). The time span of the data covers 1 (1) year after (before) appointment. The figure shows coefficients related to event time dummies and event time dummies interacted with gender (equal to 1 when the politician is a woman), relatively to the reference month ($l = -2$). Red triangles represent the interaction term (difference between women and men). The total effect for women can be obtained by adding the two coefficients. The outcome variables consist in dummies that equal 1 if a topic is associated to a politician in a given month. The topics are respectively mentions of appearance or clothing (A), children (B), gender marking used more than once (C), personality (D). Variables of interest consist in dummy variables equal to 1 if a topic is associated to a politician at least once for a given month. Details on the construction of the outcome variables are provided in Section 3.2.1. Confidence intervals are represented at the 95% level.

Appendix

A Institutional Background

Figure A1: Evolution of the share of women in government



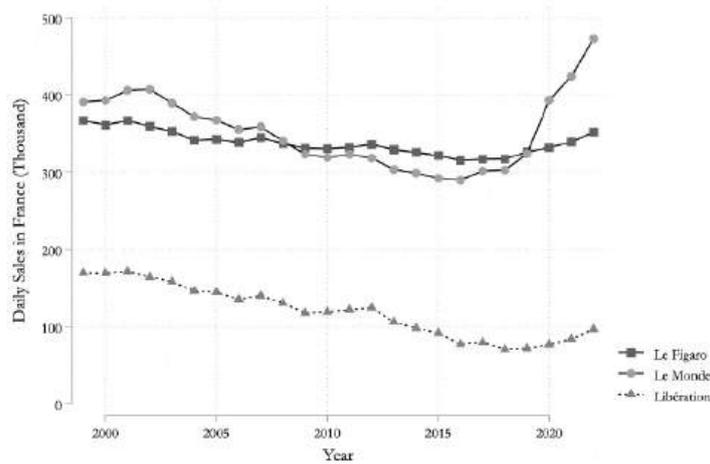
Notes: the data come from the composition of governments over the period 1997-2017. The y-axis displays the average share of government for every 5 year period (1997-2002, 2002-2007, 2007-2012, 2012-2017, 2017-2022). These intervals correspond to Lower House election cycles.

B Data and Text Analysis

B.1 Data

In France, there are 7 national daily newspapers for political and general information: *Le Monde*, *Le Figaro*, *Libération*, *Aujourd'hui en France*, *Les Echos*, *La Croix*, *L'Humanité*.³⁰ We selected *Le Monde*, *Le Figaro* and *Libération* for two reasons. First, we attempted to obtain a sample of newspapers with diverse political ideologies. These three newspapers allow us to have one right-wing (*Le Figaro*), one left-wing (*Libération*) and one newspapers that stands on the center (*Le Monde*) of the political spectrum. Second, they are among the most circulated newspapers over the period. Figure B1 displays the average daily sales of these three newspapers over the period 1999-2020.

Figure B1: Evolution of the sales of newspapers



Notes: the data come from the official sales of newspapers.

³⁰<http://csmp.fr/layout/set/print/ARTICLES/La-Presses/CSMP-La-PQN/La-presse-quotidienne-nationale>

B.2 Text Analysis using a LLM

Main prompt. Below is the main prompt we used to classify news articles. We used it exactly as it is to classify news articles related to ministers. We made a minor change explained below when it concerns MPs. We also added a system prompt described below.

Here are the key pieces of information you'll be working with:

1. The news article:

{news_article}

2. The name of the politician to be analyzed:

{politician_name}

GLOBAL INSTRUCTIONS:

- Please conduct your analysis through the following structured sections.
- Each question must be analyzed independently, disregarding any previous analyses or answers.
- Take your time and proceed step by step, ensuring accuracy in counts and classifications

SECTION 1: BASIC ARTICLE ANALYSIS

1.1 Focus analysis: classify whether {politician_name} is the main focus of the article as Yes or No.

1.2 Perform a comprehensive Named Entity Recognition (NER) to extract all named entities classified as persons in the article. For each person, count the number of mentions (including variations of their name, associated pronouns and nouns referring to them) and calculate the total number of mentions per person.

- Record the total number of mentions of {politician_name}, the total number of mentions of the most mentioned person (including {politician_name}), the total number of unique persons mentioned in the article (including {politician_name}), and the total number of mentions for all persons combined (including {politician_name}).

1.3 Topic analysis: identify the two most frequently discussed topics in the text. For each of these two topics, calculate what percentage of the total

word count is devoted to that topic.

1.4 Voice analysis

1.4.1 Identifying politician's voice

Count all statements that can be clearly attributed to {politician_name}:

- Direct speech: identify and count the words in the direct speech attributed to {politician_name}. Direct speech is any view/statement that is enclosed in quotation marks or attributed explicitly to {politician_name}.
- Indirect speech: identify and count the words in the indirect speech that paraphrases or reports the views/statements of {politician_name}.

Note: Do not count others' opinions about {politician_name}, even if they are referenced as part of the article's discussion.

1.4.2 Content Classification

For each verified view/statement from {politician_name}, classify whether the content is about their Own Portfolio (issues related to their current ministry responsibilities), Other Portfolio (comments about colleagues' portfolios), Political Issues (broader political positions or party matters), Personal Views (private opinions or non-governmental matters), or Other (content that does not fit previous categories). Views/Statements can fall under multiple domains; classify all applicable.

SECTION 2: PROFILE ANALYSIS

2.1 Physical characteristics: classify whether physical characteristics (appearance, age, clothing, other) of {politician_name} are mentioned. If true: count the number of mentions and classify which characteristics of {politician_name} are mentioned (appearance, age, clothing, other). Descriptions may reference multiple characteristics; classify all applicable.

Note: Only count physical characteristics specifically about {politician_name}. Do not count descriptions of other people mentioned in the article.

2.2 Gender marking: classify whether the gender of {politician_name} is mentioned. If true: count the number of mentions.

Note: Only count gender markers specifically about {politician_name}. Do not count gender markers of other people mentioned in the article.

2.3 Family background: classify whether family background (marital status, parenthood, children, work-life balance, other) of {politician_name} is mentioned. If true: count the number of mentions and classify which components of family background of {politician_name} are mentioned (marital status, parenthood, children, work-life balance, other). Descriptions may reference multiple components; classify all applicable.

Note: Only count family information specifically about {politician_name}. Do not count family information about other people mentioned in the article.

2.4 Personality traits: classify whether personality traits of {politician_name} are described using the Big-5 personality traits. If true: count the number of mentions and classify which personality traits of {politician_name} are mentioned from this list:

- Intellect (intelligent, thoughtful, analytical)
- Conscientiousness (organized, responsible, disciplined)
- Extraversion (outgoing, assertive, energetic)
- Agreeableness (cooperative, compassionate, kind)
- Emotional Stability (calm, composed, steady)

Note: Descriptions may reference multiple traits; classify all applicable. Only count personality traits specifically about {politician_name}. Do not count traits of other people mentioned in the article.

2.5 Leadership analysis

2.5.1 Leadership style: classify whether {politician_name} is predominantly portrayed as:

- Agentic (assertive, competitive, decisive)
- Communal (collaborative, supportive, empathetic)
- Neutral (professional, experienced, knowledgeable)

Note: Only analyze leadership style specifically about {politician_name}. Do not consider leadership descriptions of other people mentioned in the article.

2.5.2 Authority framing: classify whether {politician_name} is predominantly portrayed as:

- Strong (clear decision-maker)
- Diminished (dependent on others)
- Neutral (balanced portrayal)

Note: Only analyze authority framing specifically about {politician_name}. Do not consider authority descriptions of other people mentioned in the article

2.6 Competence framing: classify whether the competence of {politician_name} is mentioned. If true: classify whether the competence of {politician_name} is portrayed as High, Low or Neutral.

Note: Only analyze competence mentions specifically about {politician_name}. Do not consider competence descriptions of other people mentioned in the article.

SECTION 3: SENTIMENT AND STANCE ANALYSES

3.1 Sentiment: classify the overall sentiment of the article towards {politician_name} as:

- Positive
- Negative
- Neutral

3.2 Stance: classify this article's stance towards the views/actions/positions/policies of {politician_name} as:

- Supportive if the article expresses support/agreement/approval of the views/actions/positions/policies of {politician_name}
- Opposing if the article criticizes/challenges the views/actions/positions/policies of {politician_name}
- Neutral if the article presents the views/actions/positions/policies of {politician_name} without taking a stance
- Unrelated if the article does not discuss the views/actions/positions/policies of {politician_name}

Quality controls:

- Assign confidence levels based on evidence strength
- Handle mixed categories with percentage estimates

IMPORTANT RULES:

- When a boolean field is FALSE:
- mention_count = []
- classification = null

```

- traits = []
- domains = []

{{
  "article_id": {article_id},
  "politician_name": {politician_name},
  "date": {publication_date},
  "basic_analysis": {{
    "focus": {{
      "main_focus": ["YES", "NO"],
      "confidence": ["HIGH", "MEDIUM", "LOW"]
    }},
    "NER": {{
      "mention_politician": "INT",
      "mention_mostmentionedperson": "INT",
      "numberperson_mentioned": "INT",
      "totalnumber_mention": "INT"
    }},
    "portfolio": {{
      "topics": ["two most prevalent topics here"],
      "topic1_percentagewords": "FLOAT"
      "topic2_percentagewords": "FLOAT"
    }},
    "voice": {{
      "views_present": "BOOLEAN",
      "mention_count": "INT",
      "direct_speech_length": "INT",
      "indirect_speech_length": "INT",
      "domains": ["OWN_PORTFOLIO", "OTHER_PORTFOLIO", "POLITICAL", "PERSONAL", "
OTHER"]
    }},
  }},
  "personal_description": {{
    "physical": {{
      "present": "BOOLEAN",
      "mention_count": "INT",
      "components": ["APPEARANCE", "AGE", "CLOTHING", "OTHER"]
    }},
    "gender": {{

```

```

    "present": "BOOLEAN",
    "mention_count": "INT"
  }},
  "family": {{
    "present": "BOOLEAN",
    "mention_count": "INT",
    "components": ["MARITAL_STATUS", "CHILDREN", "PARENTHOOD", "
WORK_LIFE_BALANCE", "OTHER"]
  }},
  "personality": {{
    "present": "BOOLEAN",
    "traits": ["INTELLECT", "CONSCIENTIOUSNESS", "EXTRAVERSION", "
AGREEABLENESS", "EMOTIONALSTABILITY"]
  }}
}},
"professional": {{
  "leadership": {{
    "present": "BOOLEAN",
    "classification_leadership": ["AGENTIC", "COMMUNAL", "NEUTRAL"],
    "classification_authority": ["STRONG", "DIMINISHED", "NEUTRAL"]
  }},
  "competence": {{
    "present": "BOOLEAN",
    "classification": ["HIGH", "LOW", "NEUTRAL"]
  }}
}},
"stance": {{
  "classification": ["SUPPORTIVE", "OPPOSING", "NEUTRAL", "UNRELATED"],
  "confidence": ["HIGH", "MEDIUM", "LOW"]
}},
"sentiment": {{
  "classification": ["POSITIVE", "NEGATIVE", "NEUTRAL"],
  "confidence": ["HIGH", "MEDIUM", "LOW"]
}},
"analysis_metadata": {{
  "confidence_overall": ["HIGH", "MEDIUM", "LOW"]
}}
}}

```

Members of Parliament. The prompt to classify news articles mentioning MPs is identical to the one above related to ministers. The only difference concerns the classification of views in 1.4.2 as MPs do not have a portfolio. We updated the prompt to include "Constituency Matters" and "Parliamentary Work"

1.4.2 Content Classification

For each verified view/statement from {politician_name}, classify whether the content is about Constituency Matters (local issues, constituent concerns, electoral district matters), Parliamentary Work (committee work, legislative debates, house procedures), Political Issues (broader political positions or party matters), Personal Views (private opinions or non-governmental matters), or Other (content that does not fit previous categories). Views/Statements can fall under multiple domains; classify all applicable.

Parameters. We utilize OpenAI's API. The model chosen is *gpt-4o-mini*. To favor reproducibility and consistency, we specify a temperature of 0. This means that the model's output will be deterministic, favoring the most likely responses without randomness. We also set $\text{top_p} = 1$ which means that all tokens are considered. Finally, we specify the maximum number of tokens to 11,000 based on the characteristics of the data set.

System prompt. We utilize a system prompt to condition the behavior of the model. The system prompt informs the model of its role and expected tasks.

You are an expert in analyzing French news articles. Your task is to classify content, perform topic analysis, extract named entities, evaluate sentiment and stance in a structured and evidence-based manner.

B.3 Validation and Text Statistics

In this section, we provide more information on the classification process of the LLM and descriptive statistics.

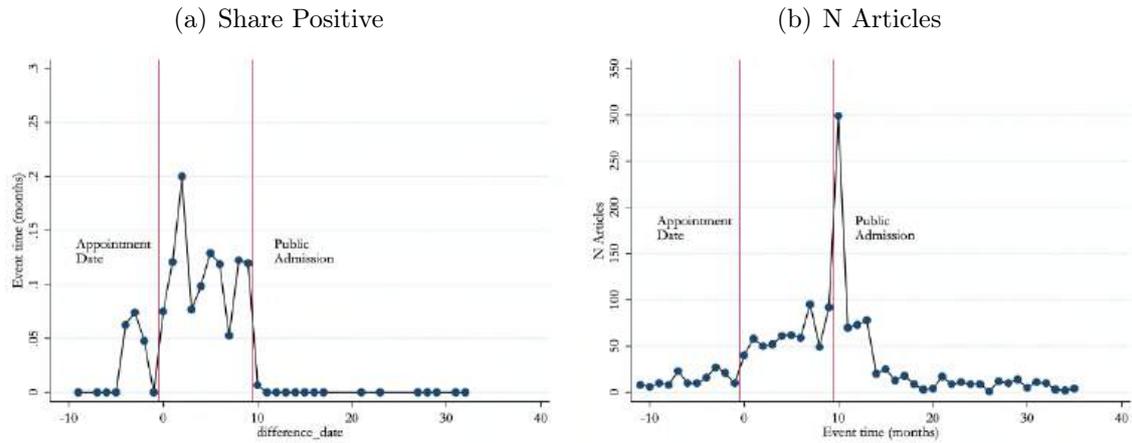
Evidence on the internal coherence of the classification - First, we study to what extent the responses from the LLM are sensitive to prompt wordings. To that end, we included in the prompt multiple questions with close meanings. We focused on information that could be perceived as ambiguous. In Table B1, we display agreement rates across these different questions. We provide results for (i) main focus, (ii) professional evaluation and (iii) sentiment/stance analysis.

Table B1: LLM Classification Agreement Rate Across Different Prompts

Construct	Prompt Formulation A	Prompt Formulation B	Agreement Rate
<i>Panel A: Main Focus Detection</i>			
Main Focus of Article	Is politician X the most mentioned person in the article? (Based on NER counts)	Classify whether the politician is the main focus of the article (Direct classification)	95%
<i>Panel B: Professional Evaluation</i>			
Competence Assessment	Classify whether the competence of the politician is portrayed as High, Low or Neutral	Classify whether the politician’s authority is predominantly portrayed as Strong (clear decision-maker), Diminished (dependent on others), Neutral (balanced portrayal)	82%
<i>Panel C: Sentiment / Stance Evaluation</i>			
Assessment	Classify the overall sentiment of the article towards the politician	Classify this article’s stance towards the views/actions/positions/policies of the politician	98%

Notes: This table provides information on the internal reliability of LLM classifications using differently worded prompts measuring the same constructs. Panel A provides information on our measure of main focus. Panel B provides information on the measures of professional evaluation. Panel C provides information on the differences between sentiment and stance analyses.

Figure B2: Predictive Validity of the Sentiment Analysis



Notes: the data come from media coverage of the minister "Jerome Cahuzac". He was appointed minister of budget on May 16th 2012. He resigned 10 months later and he publicly admitted having offshore bank accounts 11 months later. The graphs show respectively the share of positive news articles (computed on at least 10 news articles) and the number of news articles mentioning him.

Evidence on classification rules - As indicated in Section 3.2, we classify the content of the news article using zero-shot prompting. This means that we do not provide any examples to the LLM. The main advantage of this method is that (i) we don't steer the model in a potentially misleading direction and (ii) we don't need to have a pre-existing labelled dataset (which is absent in our context). Nevertheless, this method may also raise questions such as how the model reaches a given classification decision. To shed light on this process, we randomly selected 25,000 newspaper articles. Using this dataset, we submitted the query to quote in the text the keywords/phrases that lead it to classify the article in this sense.

In practice, we have updated the prompt described above by adding in "*GLOBAL INSTRUCTIONS*" the following sentence:

```
- For each classification, quote the top 1-2 keywords or phrases used in the news article that influenced your decision.
```

Additionally, in the json request, we added a field to return the evidence used by the model. For example, for the classification related to physical characteristics, we updated the json as follows:

```
"physical": {{
  "present": "BOOLEAN",
  "mention_count": "INT",
  "components": ["APPEARANCE", "AGE", "CLOTHING", "OTHER"]
  "evidence_physical": "quote 1-2 keywords/phrases"
}},
```

We provide the resulting evidence in Tables B2, B3, B4, B5 and B6. In these Tables, columns (1) correspond to the exact answers for the top 10 most common expressions (in French). In columns (2) and (3), we processed the evidence to return the unigrams and bigrams (after removing stopwords, accents and stemming). In columns (4), (5) and (6), we provide the English translations.

Table B2: Evidence used by the LLM - Family Background

		<i>French</i>			<i>Translated English</i>			
	Top 10 exact expressions (1)	Unigram (2)	Bigram (3)	Top 10 exact expressions (4)	Unigram (5)	Bigram (6)		
Children	mère de trois enfants mariée, père de quatre enfants, l'institutrice de mon fils de 5 ans, présence ou non d'enfants à charge, le père de ses trois jeunes enfants, ses deux plus jeunes enfants, sa dernière fille, Clara, 18 mois, conversations avec sa fille, époux en secondes noces de Brigitte Taittinger, dix enfants à eux deux, la députée écolo et trésorière du parti, Eva Sas	enfant, fill, deux, a, per, fil, trois, mer, an, mar	enfant, fill, deux, a, per, mer, an, mar	trois enfant, deux enfant, deux fill, per, deux, a deux, mar per, mer trois, petit fill, per quatr	married mother of three, father of four, my 5-year-old son's teacher, whether or not she has any dependent children, the father of her three young children, her two youngest children, her last daughter, Clara, 18 months, conversations with her daughter, second husband of Brigitte Taittinger, ten children between them, the ecologist MP and party treasurer, Eva Sas	child, daughter, two, father, daughter, father two, son, three, has two, married father, mother, year, mother three, baby girl, married father four	three children, two children, four children, daughter, father two, has two, married father, mother three, baby girl, father four	
Marital Status	sa compagne, mère de trois enfants mariée, son compagnon Patrick Ollier, ma femme, candidature de Cecile Dulflot à Paris pose toujours problème, prédécesseur de son mari, Cecilia Sarkozy, en revanche, est de ceux qui l'encouragent, divorce de Cécilia, nouvelle love story avec Carla, remarié, problème en termes de mode de vie	epous, a, mar, enfant, com, pagn, mer, per, famill, compagnon	marie a, trois enfant, mar per, patrick olli, deux enfant, mer trois, compagnon patrick, enfant a, cinq enfant, per deux	his companion, married mother of three, his companion Patrick Ollier, my wife, Cecile Dulflot's candidacy in Paris still poses a problem, her husband's predecessor, Cecilia Sarkozy, on the other hand, is one of those who encourage him, Cecilia's divorce, new love story with Carla, remarried, problem in terms of lifestyle	spouse, has, married has, three child, wife, mar, married father, patrick child, olli, two children, mother partner, three, partner patrick, mother, child has, five children, father, fam- father two	family, partner (masculine)		
Parenthood	mère de deux enfants, congé de maternité, père de quatre enfants, prédécesseur de son mari, le père de ses trois jeunes enfants, ses deux plus jeunes enfants, ce grand-père de 59 ans, mère de onze enfants, revoir mes enfants, sa dernière fille, Clara, 18 mois	enfant, per, fill, mer, a, famill, deux, fil, an, trois	petit fill, quatr enfant, trois enfant, deux fill, mer enfant, jeun enfant, per enfant, per famill	mother of two, maternity leave, father of four, her husband's predecessor, the father of her three young children, her two youngest children, this 59-year-old grandfather, mother of eleven, see my children again, her last daughter, Clara, 18 months old	child, father, baby girl, four child, dre, three children, two mother, has daughters, mother family, family, two, mother two, two children, son, year, young child, father child, three father family			
Work Balance	remettre à niveau avec nos conjoints, les femmes ont l'obligation d'en faire plus que les hommes, pratiquement perdu sa circonscription, remarié, problème en termes de mode de vie, ces vacances, permettraient de nous remettre à niveau avec nos conjoints, je vie pour mes amis, pour ma famille, vacances dans la région, sa famille, pour avoir une vie familiale plus confortable, passera ainsi une semaine près de Vannes	famill, vi, a, enfant, familial, femm, plus, pass, mer, remettre	vi familial, remetr a, a niveau, niveau conjoint, vi professionnel, entre vi, vi personnel, professionnel vi, femm oblig, oblig fair	get back on level terms with our spouses, women are obliged to do more than men, practically lost his riding, remarried, problem in terms of lifestyle, these vacations, allow us to get back on level terms with our spouses, I live for my friends, for my family, vacations in the region, his family, to have a more comfortable family life, will spend a week near Vannes in this way	family, life, has, level, level partner, professional life, between life, personal life, professional life, woman has to, has to mother, get do back			
Other	neveu de François Mitterrand, beau-père, fils de professeurs de français, entrée de deux de ses soeurs, je suis issue d'une family d'origine populaire, parrainage de son oncle défunt, enfant d'une famille modeste, mère institutrice et père qui faisait les 3x8, les époux cahuzac ne sont pas encore formellement divorcés	fil, per, famill, a, fill, frer, epous, immigr, parent	petit fill, pet fil, fill immigr, secretair etat, fill hark, fil immigr, immigr algerien, neveu francois, francois mitterrand, fil femm	nephew of François Mitterrand, father-in-law, son of French teachers, entry of two of his sisters, I come from a working-class family, godfather of his late uncle, child of a modest family, mother a schoolteacher and father who worked 3x8 shifts, the Cahuzac couple are not yet formally divorced	son, fa- baby girl, baby boy, ther, family, daughter immigrant, sec- has daugh- retary of state, daughter ter, wife, harki, son immigrant, al- brother, gerian immigrant, nephew spouse, im- francois, francois mitter- migrant, rand, son woman parent			

Notes: we requested the LLM to quote the keywords/phrases from the news article that influenced the classification decision. This table displays the resulting evidence. Column (1) corresponds to the top 10 exact expressions quoted by the LLM from the news articles. Column (2) and (3) correspond to the processed expressions after stemming, removing accents and stop words in order to detect aggregate patterns. We stress that the text passed through the LLM corresponds to column (1), i.e. without pre-processing. Columns (4), (5) and (6) correspond to the translations in English.

Table B3: Evidence used by the LLM - Physical Characteristics and Gender Marking

	<i>French</i>			<i>Translated English</i>				
	Top 10 exact expressions (1)	Unigram (2)	Bigram (3)	Top 10 exact expressions (4)	Unigram (5)	Bigram (6)		
<i>Panel A: Physical Characteristics</i>								
Appearance	a les traits tirés, toujours tiré à quatre épingles, derrière son apparence inchangée, carré de cheveux noirs et lèvres carmin, quinquagénaire élégant et chaleureux, jolie brune, bras croisés et visage clos, visage avenant de cet homme calme, son costume de ministre, belles chaussures de ministres, une femme souriante	a, an, visag, costum, tir, cheveux, brun, homm, beau, noir	trait tir, chemis blanc, jol brun, bras crois, proviseur lycee, a trait, toujours tir, tir a, a quatr, derrier ap- parent	has tired features, always dressed to the nines, behind his unchanged appearance, square black hair and carmine lips, elegant and warm fifties, pretty brunette, crossed arms and closed face, pleasant face of this calm man, his minister’s suit, beautiful minister’s shoes, a smiling woman	has, year, tired feature, white shirt, face, suit, pretty brunette, crossed tired, hair, arms, high school head, brunette, has features, to the nines man, beautiful, beautiful, black			
Clothing	pull bleu, revêtue de l’écharpe tricolore, derrière son apparence inchangée, carré de cheveux noirs et lèvres carmin, son costume de ministre, charmante secrétaire d’Etat, toute vêtue de Dior, veste en cuir noir, ne portant pas de cravate, habillé en jeune marié, arrive en duffle-coat sombre	cravat, costum, noir, a, bleu, chemis, vetu, an, gris, blanc	chemis blanc, costum gris, tailleur ros, gris clair, cravat rouge, bras chemis, rob a, cravat bleu, pull bleu, bleu queu	blue sweater, wearing the tricolor scarf, behind her unchanged appearance, square of black hair and carmine lips, her minister’s suit, charming Secretary of State, all dressed in Dior, black leather jacket, wearing no tie, dressed as a groom, arrives in dark duffle-coat	tie, suit, white shirt, grey suit, pink black, has, suit, clear grey, red tie, blue, shirt, shirt-sleeves, dress has, tie, wear, blue, blue sweater grey, white			
Age	34 ans, 53 ans, 58 ans, 69 ans, 32 ans, 60 ans, Il a 36 ans, Parce qu’il est jeune, un homme de 56 ans, quinquagénaire élégant et chaleureux	an, a, age, 38, 34, 60, cravat, costum	38 an, 36 an, 34 an, 60 an, 37 an, 64 an, 57 an, 69 an, 44 an, 53 an	34 years old, 53 years old, 58 years old, 69 years old, 32 years old, 60 years old, He is 36 years old, Because he is young, a 56 year old man, elegant and charming in his fifties	year, has, 38 year, 36 year, 34 year, age, 38, 36, 60 year, 37 year, 64 year, 34, man, 60, 57 year, 69 year, 44 year, tie, suit 53 year			
Other	en père attentif lisant petit ours brun, 3 ans, l’âge de 37 ans, le fumeur de havanes à 12 000 euros, Aurelie Filippetti, 38 ans, il débordait d’énergie, enfouis jusqu’à la tête dans ces chaudes protections, aristocrate de 64 ans, bleme, en short en train de tondre la pelouse, veste rouge	an, a, pull, queu, visag, cet, 38, haut, rondeur	38 an, pull bleu, queu balein, per attent, lis pet, our brun, 53 an, bras crois, crois visag, visag clos	as an attentive father reading Little Brown Bear, 3 years old, age 37, the 12,000-euro Havana smoker, Aurelie Filippetti 38, bursting with energy, buried up to his head in those warm protections, 64-year-old aristocrat, bleme, in shorts mowing the lawn, red jacket	year, has, 38 years, blue sweater, pull, tail, whale tail, father attentionate, reading small, face, this, tionate, man, 38, brown bear, 53 year, high, round crossed armed, crossed face, closed faced			
<i>Panel B: Gender Marking</i>								
	masculin, Monsieur, monsieur, homme, femme, le ministre, secrétaire d’Etat, la ministre, il, femme	ministr, monsieur, etat, secre- tair, homm, femm, masculin, madam, a, president	secretair etat, ministr cul- tur, ministr delegu, premi ministr, etat a, ministr sant, gard sceau, ministr interieur, ancien ministr, port parol	masculine, Sir, sir, man, woman, the minister, secretary of state, the minister (feminine), he, woman	minister, state, secretary, man, woman, masculine, miss, president	secretary of state, min- istry of culture, delegated secretary, state has, health minis- ter, justice minister, inte- rior minister, former min- ister, spokesperson		

Notes: we requested the LLM to quote the keywords/phrases from the news article that influenced the classification decision. This table displays the resulting evidence. Column (1) corresponds to the top 10 exact expressions quoted by the LLM from the news articles. Column (2) and (3) correspond to the processed expressions after stemming, removing accents and stop words in order to detect aggregate patterns. We stress that the text passed through the LLM corresponds to column (1), i.e. without pre-processing. Columns (4), (5) and (6) correspond to the translations in English. For gender marking, French language contains a masculine and a feminine type for most words.

Table B4: Evidence used by the LLM - Personality Traits

	<i>French</i>			<i>Translated English</i>		
	Top 10 exact expressions (1)	Unigram (2)	Bigram (3)	Top 10 exact expressions (4)	Unigram (5)	Bigram (6)
Intellect	analytique, responsable, je suis convaincu, attentionné et gentil, réfléchi et organisé, fasciné par l'intelligence, intelligent, responsable, génie inventif, connaissance parfaite	a, intelligent, faut, polit, tre, homm, tout, travail	attentionné et, capacite, tout, analyt respons, bon sen, a ecout, homm a, system educ, connaiss parfait, franc parl	analytical, responsible, convincing, attentive and kind, thinking and organized, fascinated by intelligence, intelligent, responsible, inventive genius, perfect knowledge	has, intelligent, polite, very, do, all, work	thoughtful and, capacity has, has everything, alytic responsible, common sense, has listened, man has, education system, perfect knowledge, straight talk
Conscientiousness	analytique, responsable, je suis convaincu, réfléchi et organisé, caractère méthodique, connaissance parfaite, intelligent, responsable, probablement un des traits qui caractérisent monsieur Lecornu, urgent de redonner de l'oxygène à l'Etat, développe la liberté de jugement et de conscience, réflexion interministérielle	a, faut, tres, polit, travail, sponsabilit, reform	a tout, attentionné et, anpolit, fair, alyt respons, system educ, bon sen, connaiss parfait, doit etre, a vrai, esprit re-sponsabilit, haut niveau	analytical, responsible, I am convinced, thoughtful and organized, methodical character, perfect knowledge, intelligent, responsible, probably one of the traits that characterize Mr. Lecornu, urgent to restore oxygen to the State, develops freedom of judgment and conscience, interdepartmental thinking	has, has to, very, polite, do, work, responsibility, all, man, reform	has everything, thoughtful, analytic responsible, education system, common sense, perfect knowledge, must be, has really, responsible mind, high level
Agreeableness	ouvert, sympathique, proche des autres, attentionné et gentil, climat détendu, main tendue, homme de dialogue, homme affable et constant, fin diplomate, je trouve que ce serait une excellente candidate	a, tres, tout, ecout, homm, fait, plus, fair, dialogu plus	a ecout, tout mond, a tout, bon volont, peut etre, esprit responsabilit, tre emu, attentionné et, a plus	open, sympathetic, close to others, attentive and kind, relaxed atmosphere, outstretched hand, man of dialogue, affable and constant man, fine diplomat, I think he would be an excellent candidate	has, very, all, listen, man, good, has to, more, do, dialogue	has listened, everybody, has everything, has done, good will, perhaps, responsible, very emotional, thoughtful and, has more
Emotional Stability	calme, posé, climat détendu, main tendue, très travailleuse, très difficile à déstabiliser, relativise les difficultés, cela ne peut pas faciliter la cohabitation, capacité à semer le trouble, situation ne soit pas brillante	a, tre, calm, plus, tout, faut, fair, bien, deter-min, serein	sang froid, a ecout, capacite, a, diffici a, calm pos, peut etre, affich serenit, a vrai, esprit combat, peux plus	calm, composed, relaxed atmosphere, outstretched hand, very hard-working, very difficult to destabilize, relativizes difficulties, this can not facilitate cohabitation, ability to stir up trouble, situation is not brilliant	has, very, calm, more, all, has to, do, good, determined, calm	cold blood, has listened, capacity to, difficult to, calm relaxed, perhaps, shows calm, has really, combative spirit, can more
Extraversion	je fais de la politique avec le souci de l'intérêt collectif, ouvert, les gens l'attendent avec impatience, avec beaucoup d'autorité, de volontarisme et de panache, s'est exclamé, elle sait flinguer Roselyne, elle a du caractère, pour gagner, fréquentes colères	a, tre, tout, plus, parl, homm, bon, ministr, polit	ais, franc parl, premi ministr, a tout, langu bois, tout mond, a beaucoup, fais polit, polit souc, souc interet	I do politics with a concern for the collective interest, open, people expect it with impatience, with a lot of authority, voluntarism and panache, exclaimed, she knows how to shoot Roselyne, she has character, to win, frequent tantrums	has, very, all, more, speak, man, like, good, minister, politics	comfortable, straight talk, prime minister, has all, tongue in cheek, everybody, has a lot, do politics, politics care, care interest

Notes: we requested the LLM to quote the keywords/phrases from the news article that influenced the classification decision. This table displays the resulting evidence. Column (1) corresponds to the top 10 exact expressions quoted by the LLM from the news articles. Column (2) and (3) correspond to the processed expressions after stemming, removing accents and stop words in order to detect aggregate patterns. We stress that the text passed through the LLM corresponds to column (1), i.e. without pre-processing. Columns (4), (5) and (6) correspond to the translations in English.

Table B5: Evidence used by the LLM - Leadership / Authority / Competence

	<i>French</i>			<i>Translated English</i>		
	Top 10 exact expressions (1)	Unigram (2)	Bigram (3)	Top 10 exact expressions (4)	Unigram (5)	Bigram (6)
<i>Leadership</i>						
Agentic	a annoncé, s'est félicité, décisif dans ses actions, a confirmé, courage politique, assertive, décisive, proposition de loi, décisif dans ses propos, décisive action, s'est indigné	a, faut, ministr, plus, gouvern, fair, polit, tout, etre, reform	a annonc, a fait, premi ministr, demand a, pret a, projet loi, lutt contr, appel a, determin a, a decid	announced, welcomed, decisive in his actions, confirmed, political courage, assertive, decisive, bill, decisive in his words, decisive action, outraged	has, ministr, more, do, politics, all, be, reform	must, announced, did, prime minister, minister, asked, ready to, rule, bill, fight against, call to, determined to, decided
Communal	collaborative, coopératif, dialogue social, travailler ensemble, toujours disponible pour représenter la france, rassembler, soutenu par le gouvernement, mobiliser les acteurs non étatiques, rassemblement, ouvrir le dialogue	a, faut, tout, dialogu, fair, social, plus, polit, ministr, cet	appel a, collabor support, lutt contr, tout mond, pret a, dialogu social, a ecout, a fait, a cet, elus local	collaborative, cooperative, social dialogue, working together, always available to represent france, bring together, supported by the government, mobilize non-state actors, rally, open dialogue	has, ministr, all, dialogu, do, alogue, listened did, has politics, this	must, call to, collaborate support, fight against, everybody, ready, to, social disocial, more, alogue, minister, this
<i>Authority</i>						
Strong	a annoncé, décideur, décision claire, porte-parole du gouvernement, secrétaire d'Etat, ministre de l'Interieur, ministre de la culture, secrétaire d'Etat, projet de loi, le ministre de l'Intérieur	a, ministr, gouvern, etat, annonc, decis, president, franc, plus, demand	a annonc, secretair etat, premi ministr, a ete, ministr a, decis clair, ministr interieur, a fait, ministr cultur, etat a	announced, decision maker, clear decision, government spokesman, Secretary of State, Minister of Interior, Minister of Culture, Secretary of State, bill, Minister of the Interior	has, ministr, announce, decide, president, french, more, demand	announced, secretary of state, prime minister, was, minister, clear decision, minister of interior, did, minister of culture, state has
Diminished	dépendant des autres, dépendant des maires, évité de lui rendre hommage, les atteintes aux biens, décapitée, la consigne pour que la loi ALUR ne soit pas appliquée viendrait de Matignon, le rapport de force entre les deux n'est pas pour Edouard Philippe, un partenaire plus soumis que le groupe UMP, les Verts n'ont pas les moyens d'être toxiques, obligé de nommer un homme qu'il déteste, inquiétante frilosité	a, depend, plus, ministr, polit, autorit, gouvern, etat, premi	depend autr, premi ministr, a ete, fac a, sous surveil, francois holland, ministr a, a reuss, entre deux, marg manoeuvr	dependent on others, dependent on mayors, avoided paying tribute to him, property damage, decapitated, the instruction for the ALUR law not to be applied would come from Matignon, the balance of power between the two is not for Edouard Philippe, a more submissive partner than the UMP group, the Greens do not have the means to be toxic, forced to appoint a man he hates, worrying timidity	has, ministr, politics, state, prime	depend other, prime minister, was, faced to, under surveillance, francois holland, minister, has managed, between two, leeway
<i>Competence</i>						
High	a annoncé, projet de loi, proposition de loi, ministre de la culture, a confirmé, ministre de la défense, ministre de la santé, adopté à l'unanimité, ministre de l'intérieur, expertise prouvée	a, ministr, plus, reform, franc, projet, etre, gouvern, loi, polit	projet loi, a ete, a fait, milliard euros, million euros, a annonc, lutt contr, sectre, retair etat, engag a, pret a	announced, bill, proposed law, minister of culture, confirmed, minister of defense, minister of health, unanimously adopted, minister of the interior, proven expertise	has, ministr, reform, french, project, very, rule, politics	bill, was, did billion euros, million euros, announced, fight against, secretary of state, committed to, ready to
Low	gigantesque bévue, poudre aux yeux, échec des négociations, blanchiment de fraude fiscale, sentiment d'amateurisme, préparation insuffisante, mort programmée de l'égalité des chances, elle est nulle, contentieux est lourd, insuffisant et trop tard	a, plus, polit, echec, bilan, ministr, gouvern, tout, ete, tre	a ete, million euros, a perdu, detourn fond, chef etat, mis examen, fond public, mal a, gouvern a, a hauteur	gigantic blunder, smoke and mirrors, failure of negotiations, tax fraud laundering, feeling of amateurism, insufficient preparation, programmed death of equal opportunities, it's void, litigation is heavy, insufficient and too late	has, ministr, politics, failure, review, minister, rule, all, was, very	more, was, million euros, lost, embezzle funds, chief of state, indicted, public fund, struggle to, rule at, at level

Notes: we requested the LLM to quote the keywords/phrases from the news article that influenced the classification decision. This table displays the resulting evidence. Column (1) corresponds to the top 10 exact expressions quoted by the LLM from the news articles. Column (2) and (3) correspond to the processed expressions after stemming, removing accents and stop words in order to detect aggregate patterns. We stress that the text passed through the LLM corresponds to column (1), i.e. without pre-processing. Columns (4), (5) and (6) correspond to the translations in English.

Table B6: Evidence used by the LLM - Views Classification

		<i>French</i>			<i>Translated English</i>		
	Top 10 exact expressions (1)	Unigram (2)	Bigram (3)	Top 10 exact expressions (4)	Unigram (5)	Bigram (6)	
Personal	J'aime les gens passionnés, C'est le troisième événement sportif au monde, grand jour dans ma vie, Quand on fait de la politique, je pense que j'ai les épaules, Je le croyais de papier impérissable, Je n'ai jamais été dans des stratégies d'influence, Repos, lecture, jogging et tennis, Je deviens un entrepreneur, je vis pour mes amis, pour ma famille	a, vi, polit, aim, passion, franc, social	vi prive, leur enfant, au jourd'hui, etre deput, quelqu chose, apercu mar, ment, aim bien, aim gen, gen passion	I love passionate people, It's the third sporting event in the world, Big day in my life, When it comes to politics, I think I've got the shoulders, I thought it was made of imperishable paper, I've never been into influence strategies, Rest, reading, jogging and tennis, I'm becoming an entrepreneur, I live for my friends, for my family	has, life, private life, their kid, today, be MP, something, see do, passion, mar, mar lie, enjoy, enjoy did, france, people, passionate people all, social		
Political	projet de loi, proposition de loi, réforme des retraites, pacte de responsabilité, patriotisme économique, remise à plat de la fiscalité, réforme fiscale, réforme de la SNCF, réforme des institutions	a, reform, polit, franc, ministr, vern, social, plus	projet loi, lutt contr, premi ministr, sarkozy, servic public, proposit loi, appel a, doit etre, aujourd'hui	bill, bill proposal, pension reform, responsibility pact, economic patriotism, tax reform, SNCF reform, institutional reform	a, reform, polit, franc, project, vern, social, more	bill, fight against, prime minister, nicolas sarkozy, public service, bill proposal, call to, must be, today	
Own Portfolio	projet de loi, ministre de la Santé, ministre de la Culture, réforme des retraites, réformes des lycées, plan de cohésion sociale, prime à la casse, réforme du collège, réforme de l'assurance-maladie, proposition de loi	a, reform, loi, ministr, mesur, polit, etat	projet loi, lutt contr, sec retair etat, servic public, etat a, vis a, pouvoir achat, educ national, cohes social, ministr cultur	bill, Minister of Health, Minister of Culture, pension reform, high school reforms, social cohesion plan, scrappage scheme, college reform, health insurance reform, proposed law	has, reform, law, minister, project, measure, france, politics, plan, state	bill proposal, fight against, secretary of state, public service, state has, towards, purchasing power, education, social cohesion, ministry of culture	
Other Portfolio	porte-parole du gouvernement, projet de loi, proposition de loi, réforme fiscale, plan de cohésion sociale, ministre de l'écologie, ministre de la Santé, réforme de l'Etat, ministre de l'Education, ministre de l'intérieur	a, ministr, reform, franc, gouvern, vern, polit, etat, projet, plus, loi	lutt contr, projet loi, sec retair etat, premi ministr, ministr interieur, demand a, nicolas sarkozy, a ete, etat a, ministr cultur	government spokesman, bill, bill proposal, tax reform, social cohesion plan, minister of ecology, minister of health, state reform, minister of education, minister of the interior	has, ministr, france, rule, politics, state, project, more, law	fight against, bill proposal, secretary of state, prime minister, ministry of interior, demand has, nicolas sarkozy, was, state has, ministry of culture	
Other	défendre les couleurs de la droite, liberté d'expression, questions, positions politiques, débat sur l'identité nationale, générosité à ses limites, parti chrétien-démocrate, ducissement monétaire, la sécurité est revenue au coeur de leurs priorités, nommer un homme qu'il déteste	a, contr, etre, droit, reform, etat	lutt contr, doit etre, au jourd'hui, mettr plac, identit national, respons polit, quand mem, claude gueant, servic public, tout mond	defend the colors of the right, freedom of expression, questions, political positions, debate on national identity, generosity has its limits, Christian Democratic Party, monetary ducissement, security is back at the heart of their priorities, name a man he hates	has, politics, against, france, be, more, must, reform, state	fight against, must be, today, settle, national identity, political reform, even though, claude gueant, public service, everybody	

Notes: we requested the LLM to quote the keywords/phrases from the news article that influenced the classification decision. This table displays the resulting evidence. Column (1) corresponds to the top 10 exact expressions quoted by the LLM from the news articles. Column (2) and (3) correspond to the processed expressions after stemming, removing accents and stop words in order to detect aggregate patterns. We stress that the text passed through the LLM corresponds to column (1), i.e. without pre-processing. Columns (4), (5) and (6) correspond to the translations in English.

Figure B4: Word Cloud of Topics from News Articles with Professional Views



Notes: the figure displays the word cloud of the top two topics coded by the LLM from news articles where the minister expresses views coded as "Own portfolio", "Other portfolio" or "political", and where the minister does not express views coded as "personal".

Table B7: Top 10 n-grams from topics

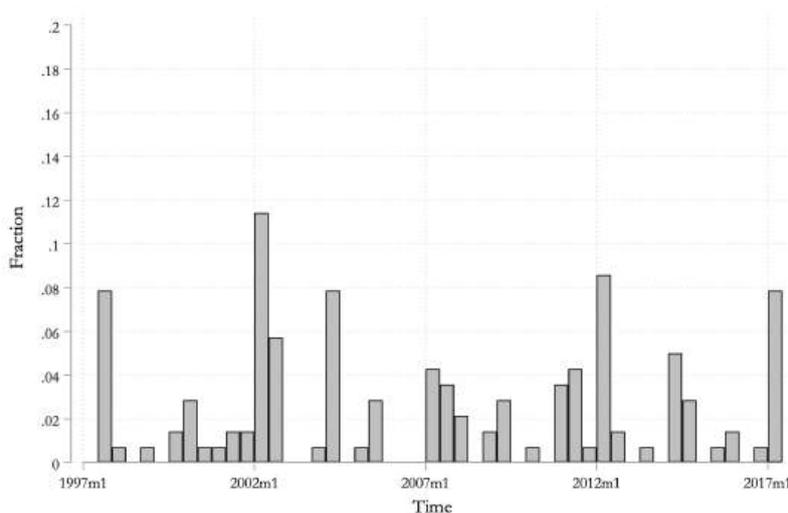
	<i>Personal</i>	<i>Professional</i>
1	political	political
2	personal	government
3	career	policy
4	cultural	reform
5	government	issues
6	life	economic
7	media	education
8	public	dynamics
9	reflections	response
10	relationships	public

Notes: the table displays the top 10 n-grams (1 to 3) of the top two topics coded by the LLM from news articles where the minister expresses views (the absence of bigrams and trigrams suggests that the top-10 n-grams are unigrams). In column 2, Personal views correspond to views coded as "Personal". In column 3, Professional views correspond to views coded as "Own portfolio", "Other portfolio", "Political". We table displays only uni-grams as they are most common.

C The Media Returns to Political Power

C.1 Empirical Strategy

Figure C1: Distribution of appointments



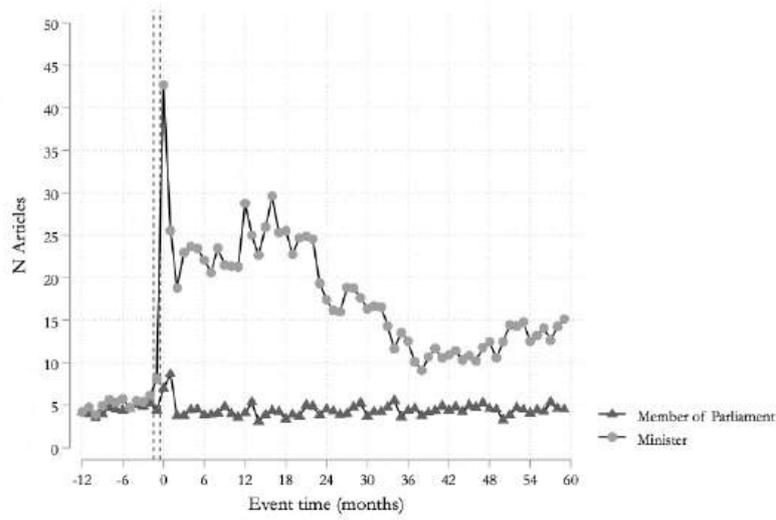
Notes: the figure shows the distribution of ministerial appointment during the period 1997-2017.

Table C1: Balance Checks by Event Time

Event time	Coefficient	Standard Error	p-value	Observations
-12	0.081	0.187	0.664	2513
-11	0.209	0.208	0.315	2513
-10	0.173	0.271	0.522	2513
-9	0.314	0.216	0.147	2513
-8	0.369	0.237	0.120	2513
-7	0.310	0.197	0.115	2513
-6	0.314	0.178	0.077	2513
-5	0.091	0.165	0.583	2513
-4	0.152	0.169	0.368	2513
-3	0.241	0.162	0.139	2513
-2	0.266	0.191	0.163	2513

Notes: the data come from media coverage during the period 1996-2022. Each row represents a separate Poisson regression where the outcome is the number of media mentions and the explanatory variable is a dummy that equals one if the individual is part of the treatment group (politicians appointed as ministers for the first time) and zero otherwise (members of Parliament never appointed as ministers with similar pre-media coverage). Details on the matching process and imputation of the event are provided in Section 4.1.1.

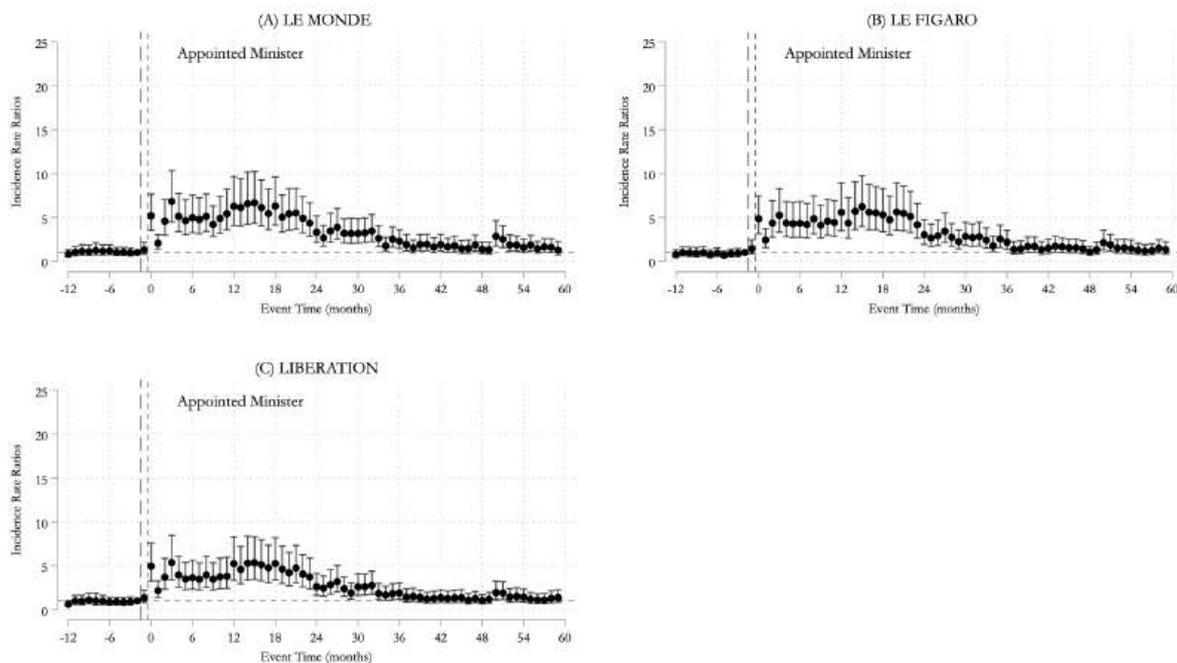
Figure C2: Number of Media Mentions per Month



Notes: the data come from media coverage during the period 1996-2022. The treatment group consists of politicians appointed as ministers for the first time (N=215). The control group consists of members of Parliament never appointed ministers who had similar pre-event media coverage (N=1,379). Details on the matching process and imputation of the event are provided in Section 4.1.1. The time span of the data covers 5 (1) years after (before) appointment. The figure shows the number of news articles received by ministers and MPs for each month.

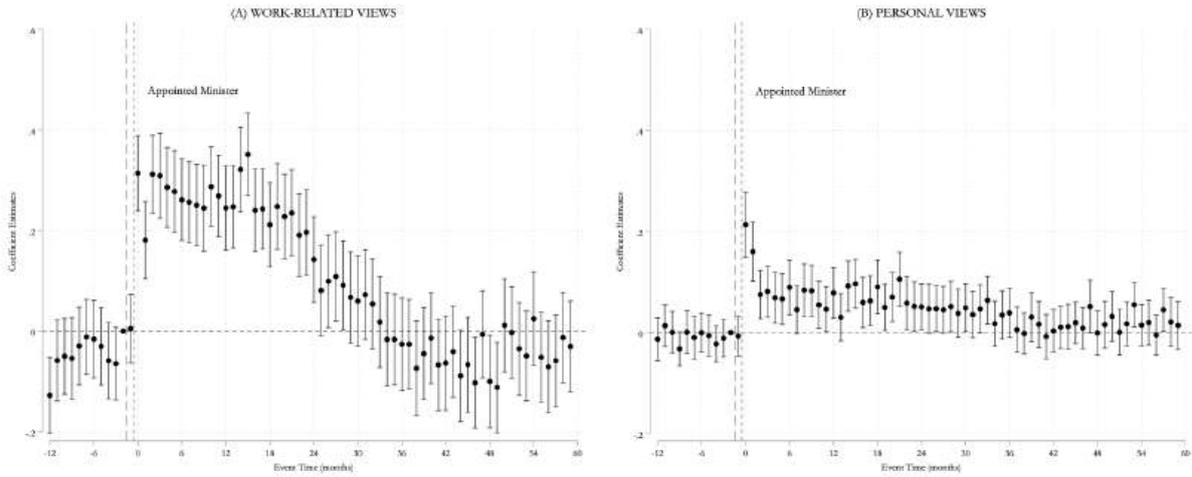
C.2 Effect on Media Visibility

Figure C3: Impact of Access to Power across Newspapers - Intensive Margin



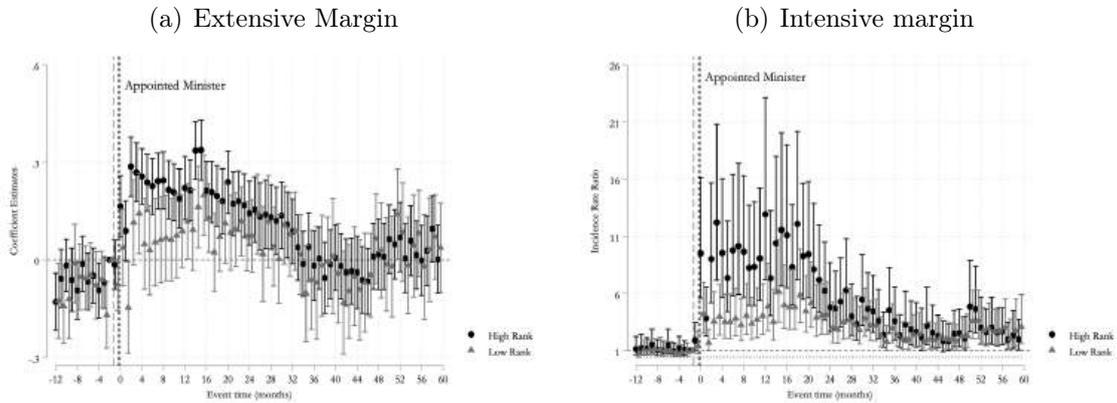
Notes: the data come from media coverage during the period 1996-2022. The treatment group consists of politicians appointed as ministers for the first time ($N=215$). The control group consists of members of Parliament never appointed ministers who had similar pre-event media coverage ($N=1,379$). Details on the matching process and event date assignment are provided in Section 4.1.1. The time span of the data covers 5 (1) years after (before) appointment. Bootstrapped confidence intervals are represented at the 95% level. The outcome is the monthly number of media mentions and the figure displays incidence rate ratios estimated using Poisson pseudo-maximum likelihood regressions with respect to $l = -2$.

Figure C4: Impact of Access to Power on Expressing Views



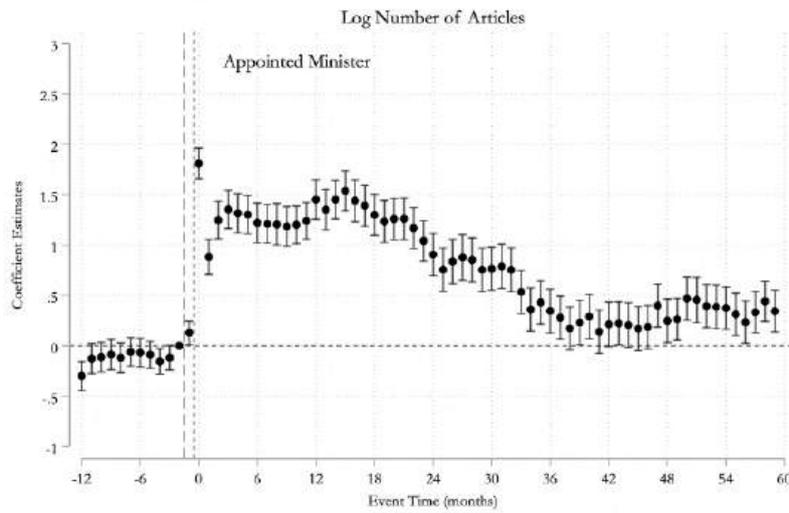
Notes: the data come from media coverage during the period 1996-2022. The treatment group consists of politicians appointed as ministers for the first time ($N=215$). The control group consists of members of Parliament never appointed ministers who had similar pre-event media coverage ($N=1,379$). Details on the matching process and event date assignment are provided in Section 4.1.1. The time span of the data covers 5 (1) years after (before) appointment. Bootstrapped confidence intervals are represented at the 95% level. The outcomes are respectively a dummy that equals 1 if a politician expresses work-related views (classified as own portfolio, other portfolio, political issues for ministers; parliamentary work, constituency matters, political issues for MPs) and personal views .

Figure C5: Effect of Access to Power on Media Mentions - Heterogeneity across Positions



Notes: the data come from media coverage during the period 1996-2022. The treatment group consists of politicians appointed as ministers for the first time ($N=215$). The control group consists of members of Parliament never appointed ministers who had similar pre-event media coverage ($N=1,379$). Details on the matching process and event date assignment are provided in Section 4.1.1. The time span of the data covers 5 (1) years after (before) appointment. The figure shows difference in differences coefficients with respect to $l = -2$. Bootstrapped confidence intervals are represented at the 95% level. In panel (a), the outcome variable is a dummy that equals 1 if the politician received media coverage in a given month. In panel (b), the outcome is the monthly number of media mentions and the figure displays incidence rate ratios estimated using Poisson pseudo-maximum likelihood regressions. High (low) rank corresponds to the ministerial rank within government (see Section 2).

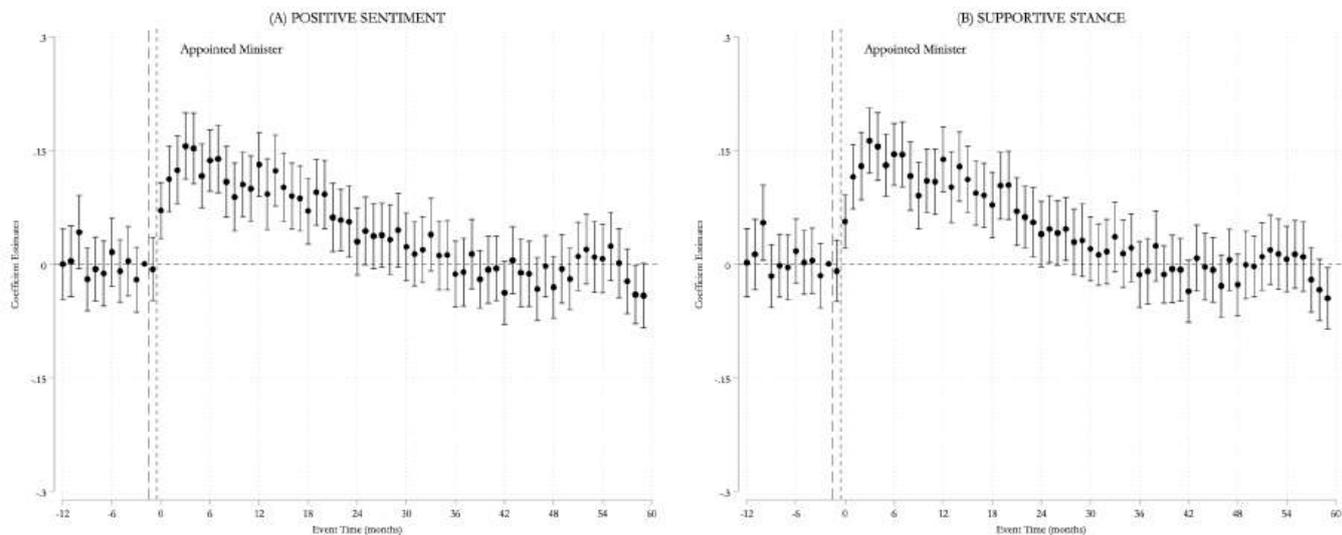
Figure C6: Effect of Access to Power on Media Mentions - Log Transformation



Notes: the data come from media coverage during the period 1996-2022. The treatment group consists of politicians appointed as ministers for the first time (N=215). The control group consists of members of Parliament never appointed ministers who had similar pre-event media coverage (N=1,379). Details on the matching process and event date assignment are provided in Section 4.1.1. The time span of the data covers 5 (1) years after (before) appointment. The figure shows difference in differences coefficients with respect to $l = -2$. Confidence intervals are represented at the 95% level. Coefficients are estimated using OLS. The outcome variable is the log of the number of monthly media mentions (+1 to account for zeros).

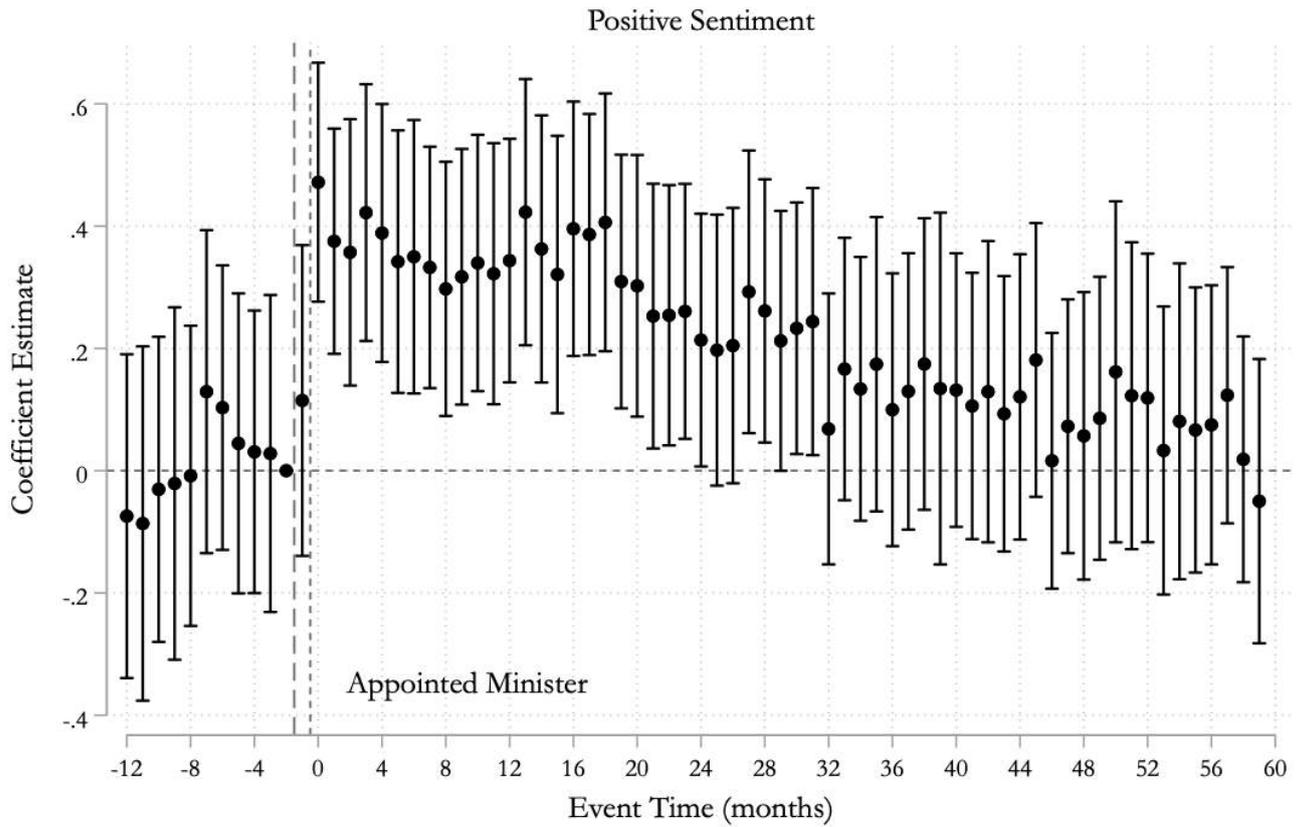
C.3 Effect on Media Tone and Content

Figure C7: Effect of Access to Power on Media Tone - Including Politicians without Media Coverage



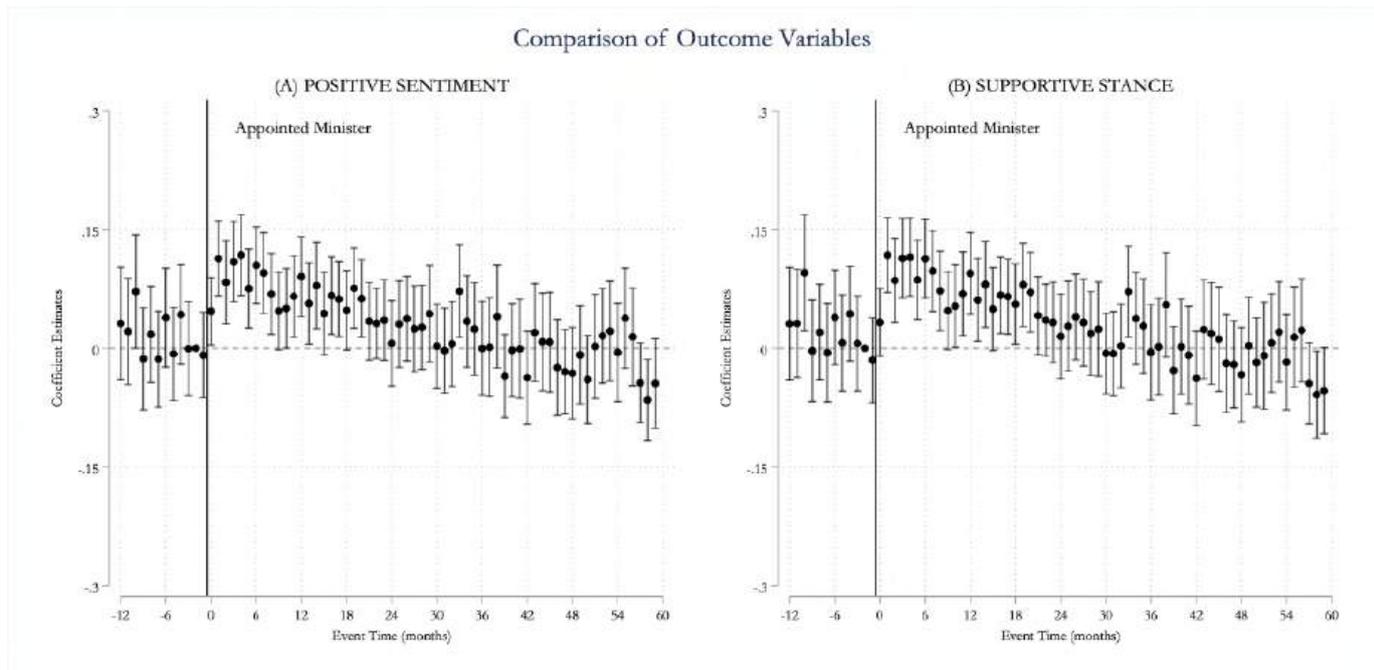
Notes: the data come from media coverage during the period 1996-2022. The treatment group consists of politicians appointed as ministers for the first time ($N=215$). The control group consists of members of Parliament never appointed ministers who had similar pre-event media coverage ($N=1,379$). Details on the matching process and event date assignment are provided in Section 4.1.1. The time span of the data covers 5 (1) years after (before) appointment. The figure shows difference in differences coefficients with respect to $l = -2$. Bootstrapped confidence intervals are represented at the 95% level. The outcome variable is the share of media articles with a positive sentiment. We include politicians without any coverage by assigning them a neutral tone (0).

Figure C8: Effect of Access to Power on Media Tone - Alternative Tone Measure



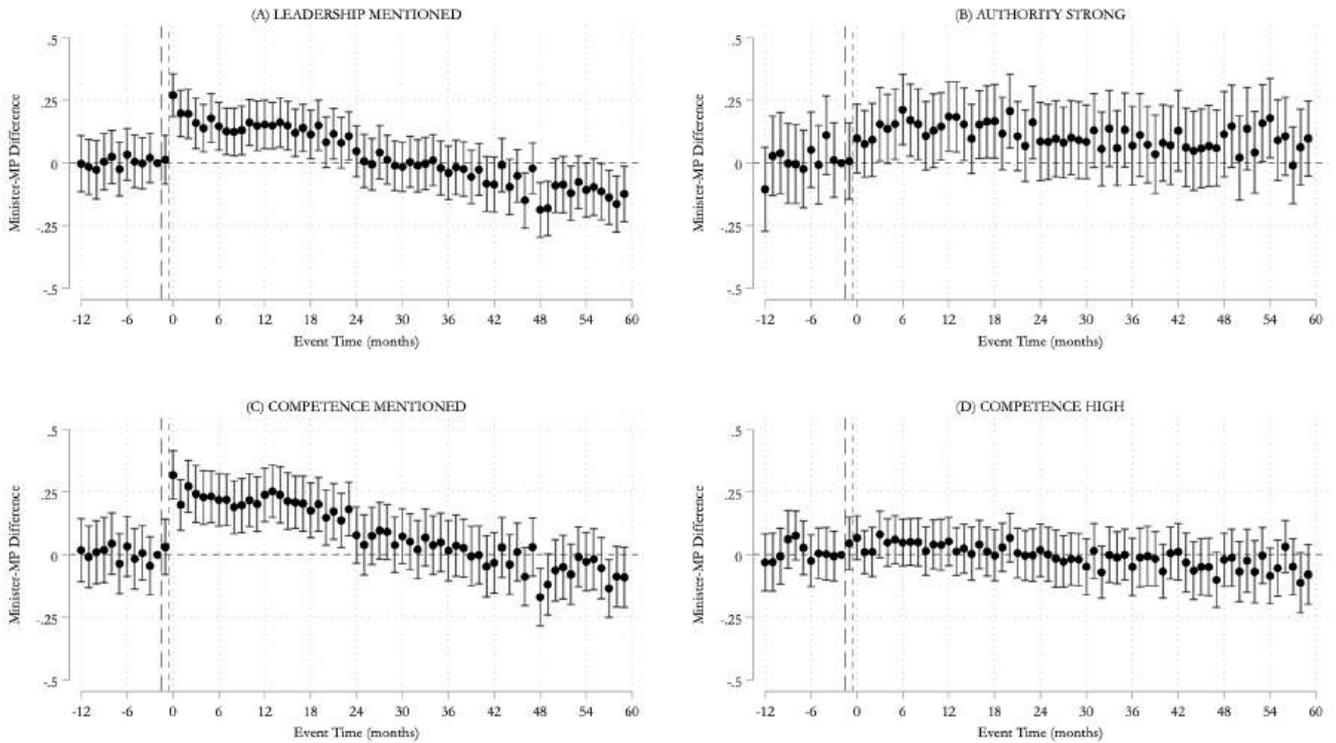
Notes: the data come from media coverage during the period 1996-2022. The treatment group consists of politicians appointed as ministers for the first time (N=215). The control group consists of members of Parliament never appointed ministers who had similar pre-event media coverage (N=1,379). Details on the matching process and event date assignment are provided in Section 4.1.1. The time span of the data covers 5 (1) years after (before) appointment. The figure shows difference in differences coefficients with respect to $l = -2$. Bootstrapped confidence intervals are represented at the 95% level. The outcome variable is the share of media articles with a positive sentiment. This variable is computed with DistilCamemBERT, a large language model fine-tuned for sentiment analysis on the French language.

Figure C9: Effect of Access to Power on Tone and Stance



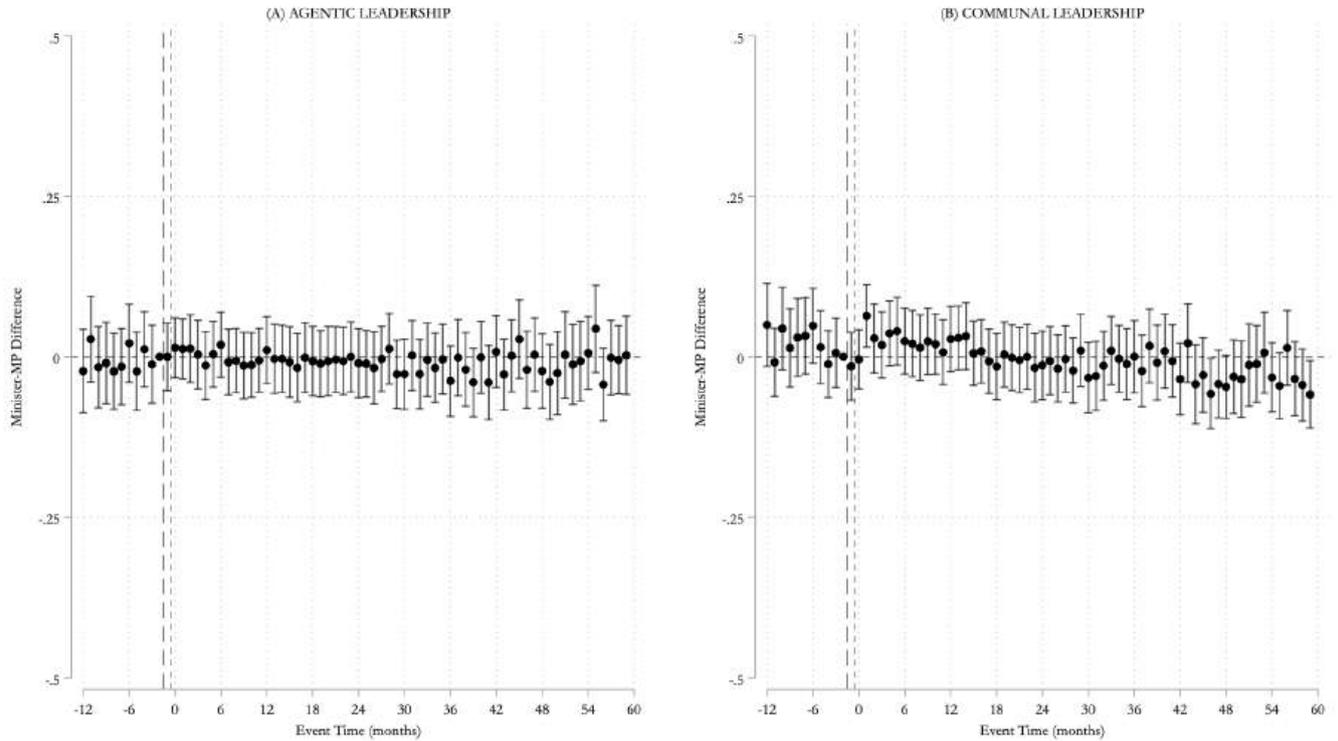
Notes: the data come from media coverage during the period 1996-2022. The treatment group consists of politicians appointed as ministers for the first time ($N=215$). The control group consists of members of Parliament never appointed ministers who had similar pre-event media coverage ($N=1,379$). Details on the matching process and event date assignment are provided in Section 4.1.1. The time span of the data covers 5 (1) years after (before) appointment. The figure shows difference in differences coefficients with respect to $l = -2$. Bootstrapped confidence intervals are represented at the 95% level. The outcome variable is the share of monthly articles with a positive sentiment (A) and a supportive stance (B) towards a politician in a given month.

Figure C10: Effect on Competence and Authority



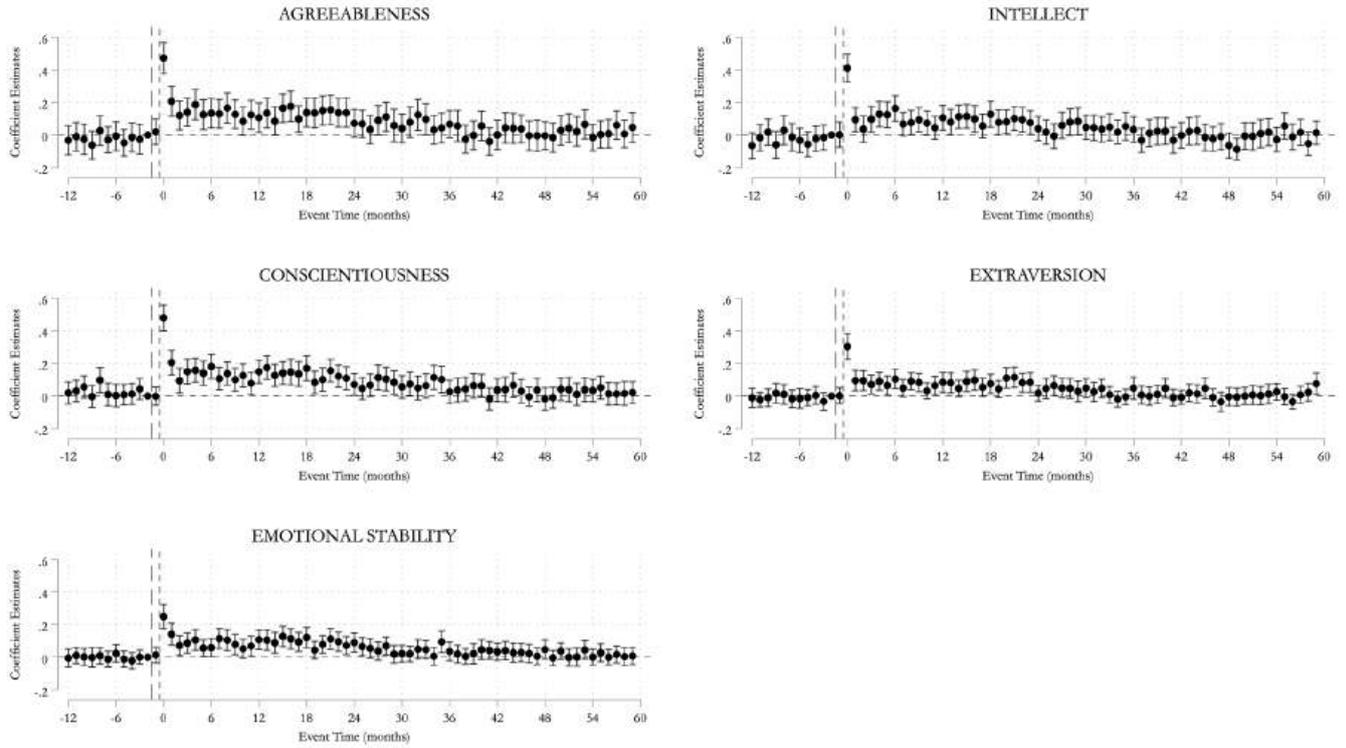
Notes: the data come from media coverage during the period 1996-2022. The treatment group consists of politicians appointed as ministers for the first time ($N=215$). The control group consists of members of Parliament never appointed ministers who had similar pre-event media coverage ($N=1,379$). Details on the matching process and event date assignment are provided in Section 4.1.1. The time span of the data covers 5 (1) years after (before) appointment. The figure shows difference in differences coefficients with respect to $l = -2$. Bootstrapped confidence intervals are represented at the 95% level. The outcome variables consist in dummies that equal 1 if a topic is associated to a politician in a given month. Variables of interest consist in dummy variables equal to 1 if the topic is associated to the politician for a given month (Panel A and C). Conditionally on a topic being mentioned, the outcome variables are the share of news articles portraying a politician with a high competence (Panel B) or a strong authority (Panel B). Details on the construction of outcome variables are provided in Section 3.2.1.

Figure C11: Effect on Type of Leadership



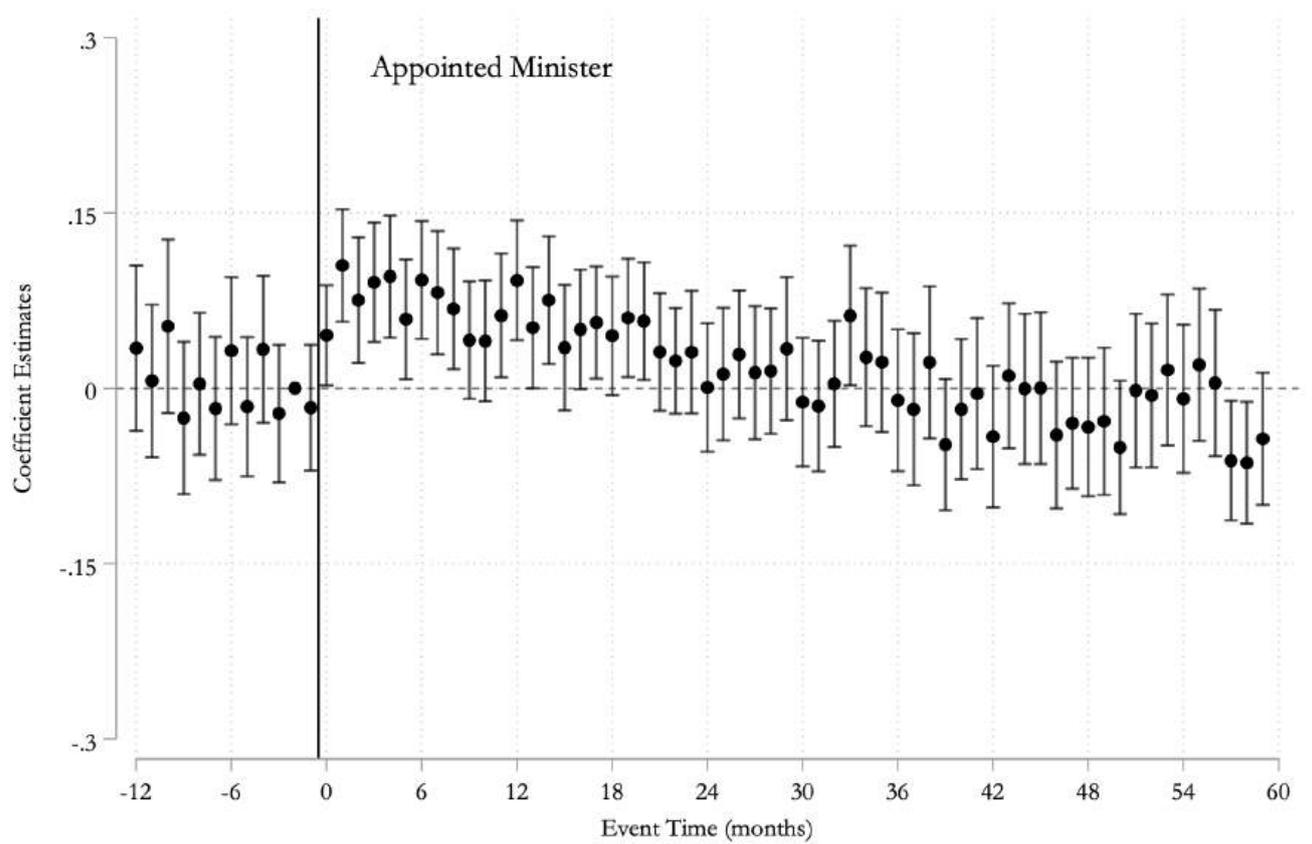
Notes: the data come from media coverage during the period 1996-2022. The treatment group consists of politicians appointed as ministers for the first time ($N=215$). The control group consists of members of Parliament never appointed ministers who had similar pre-event media coverage ($N=1,379$). Details on the matching process and event date assignment are provided in Section 4.1.1. The time span of the data covers 5 (1) years after (before) appointment. The figure shows difference in differences coefficients with respect to $l = -2$. Bootstrapped confidence intervals are represented at the 95% level. The outcome variables consist in dummies that equal 1 if a topic is associated to a politician in a given month. Variables of interest consist in the share of news articles predominantly portraying the leadership of a politician as agentic (Panel A) or communal (Panel B). Details are provided in Section 3.2.1.

Figure C12: Effect on the Mention of Personality Traits



Notes: the data come from media coverage during the period 1996-2022. The treatment group consists of politicians appointed as ministers for the first time ($N=215$). The control group consists of members of Parliament never appointed ministers who had similar pre-event media coverage ($N=1,379$). Details on the matching process and event date assignment are provided in Section 4.1.1. The time span of the data covers 5 (1) years after (before) appointment. The figure shows difference in differences coefficients with respect to $l = -2$. Bootstrapped confidence intervals are represented at the 95% level. The outcome variables consist in dummies that equal 1 if a topic is associated to a politician in a given month. Variables of interest consist in dummy variables equal to 1 if the topic is associated to the politician for a given month. Details are provided in Section 3.2.1.

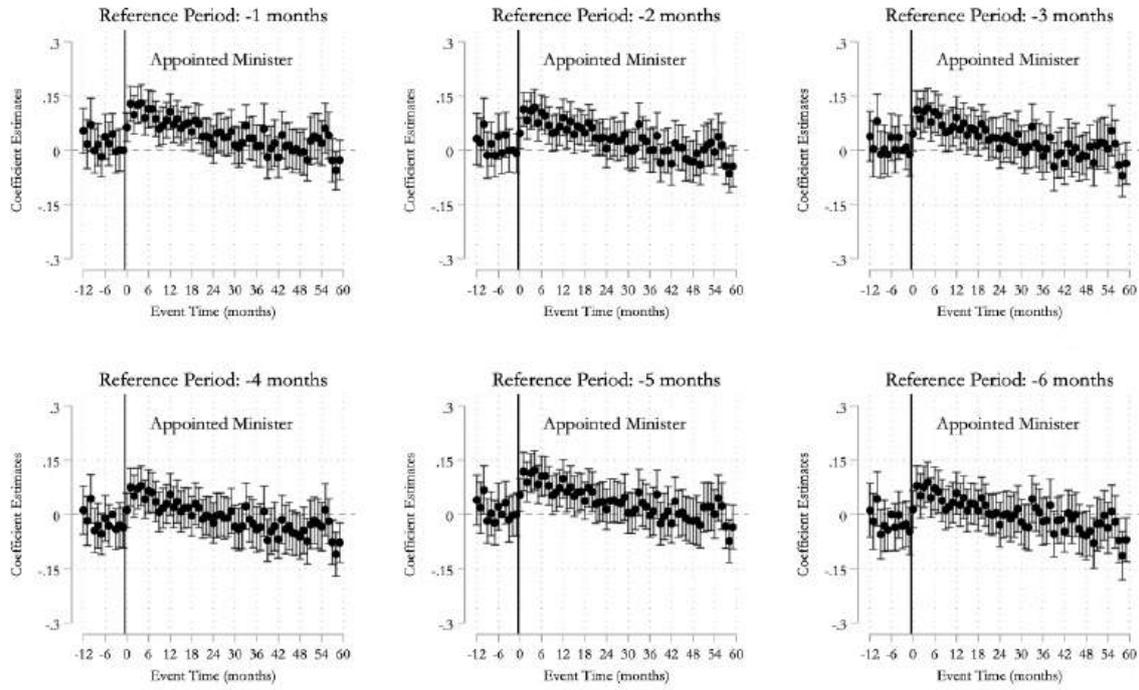
Figure C13: Robustness - Alternative Control Group



Notes: the data come from media coverage during the period 1996-2022. The treatment group consists of politicians appointed as ministers for the first time (N=215). The control group consists of incumbent members of Parliament. The outcome variable is the monthly share of positive news articles, computed conditional on having at least one media mention in a given month. The time span of the data covers 5 (1) years after (before) appointment.

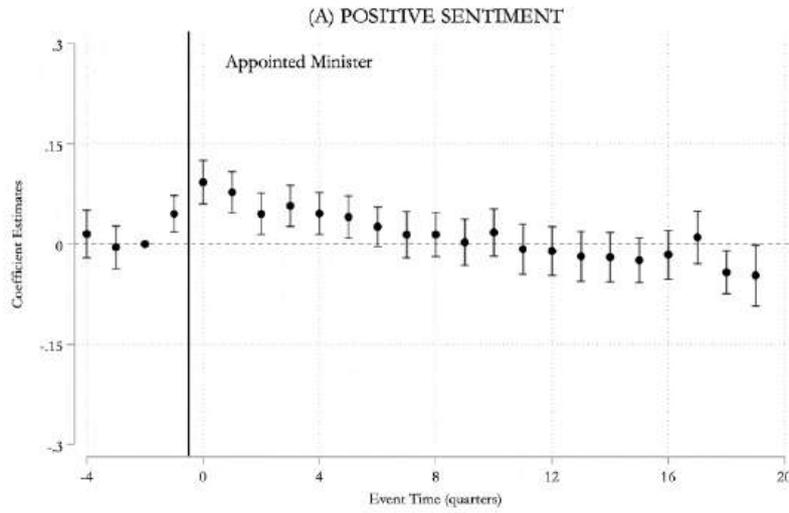
Figure C14: Robustness - Alternative Reference Periods

Robustness Check: Varying Reference Period



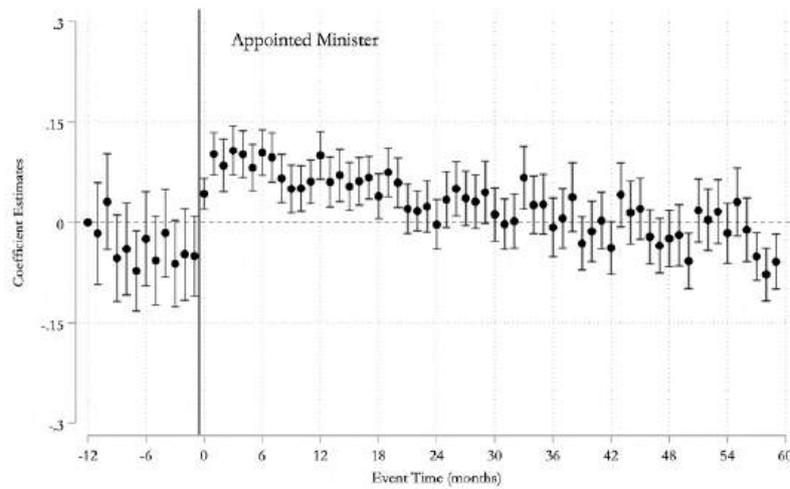
Notes: the data come from media coverage during the period 1996-2022. The treatment group consists of politicians appointed as ministers for the first time ($N=215$). The control group consists of members of Parliament never appointed ministers who had similar pre-event media coverage ($N=1,379$). Details on the matching process and event date assignment are provided in Section 4.1.1. The time span of the data covers 5 (1) years after (before) appointment. The figure shows difference in differences coefficients with respect to different reference periods. Bootstrapped confidence intervals are represented at the 95% level. The outcome is the monthly share of positive news articles, computed conditional on having at least one media mention in a given month.

Figure C15: Effect of Access to Power on Media Tone - Quarterly Level



Notes: the data come from media coverage during the period 1996-2022. The treatment group consists of politicians appointed as ministers for the first time (N=215). The control group consists of members of Parliament never appointed ministers who had similar pre-event media coverage (N=1,379). Details on the matching process and event date assignment are provided in Section 4.1.1. The time span of the data covers 5 (1) years after (before) appointment. The figure shows difference in differences coefficients with respect to $l = -2$. The outcome is the quarterly share of positive news articles about a given politician. The time unit is a quarter (three months). Confidence intervals are represented at the 95% level. Coefficients are estimated using OLS.

Figure C16: Effect of Access to Power on Media Mentions - Alternative Estimation Method

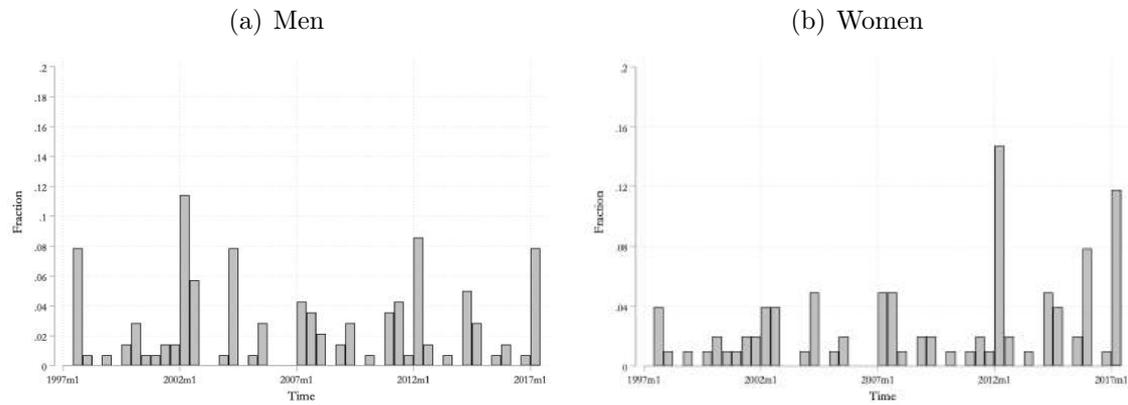


Notes: the data come from media coverage during the period 1996-2022. The outcome variable is the monthly share of positive articles. The treatment group consists of politicians appointed as ministers for the first time ($N=215$). The control group consists of members of Parliament never appointed ministers who had similar pre-event media coverage ($N=1,379$). Details on the matching process and event date assignment are provided in Section 4.1.1. The time span of the data covers 5 (1) years after (before) appointment. The figure shows difference in differences coefficients with respect to $l = -2$. Confidence intervals are represented at the 95% level. The estimation method comes from [Borusyak *et al.* \(2021\)](#). The outcome is the monthly share of positive news articles, computed conditional on having at least one media mention in a given month.

D Gender Differences in the Returns to Power

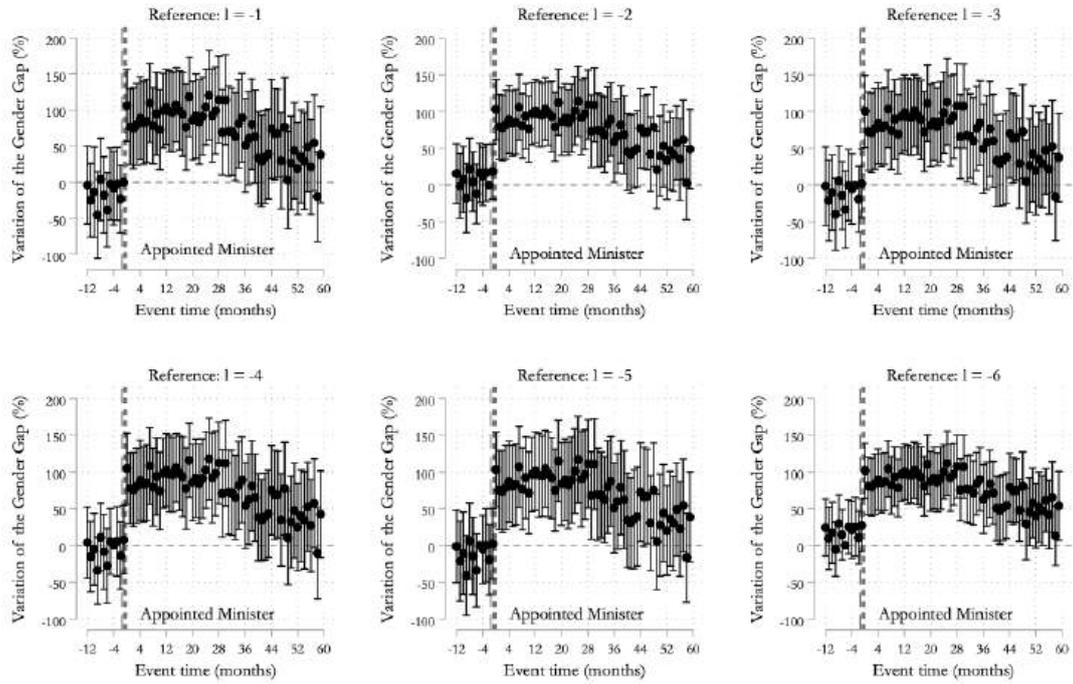
D.1 Gender Differences in Media Visibility - Robustness

Figure D1: Distribution of appointments by gender



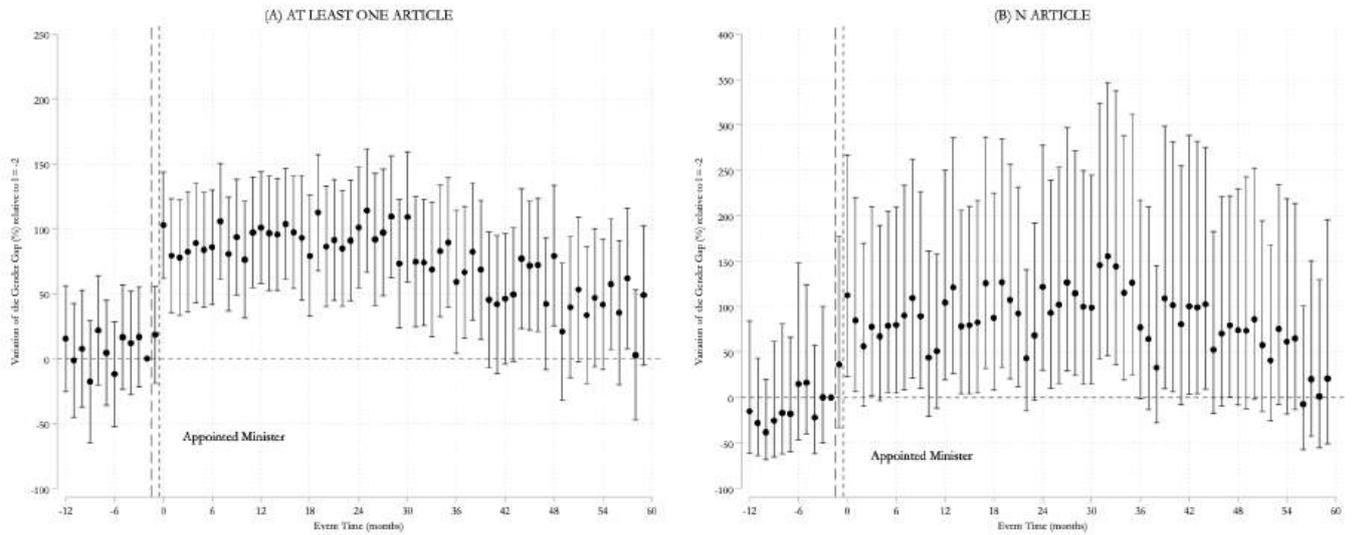
Notes: the figure shows the distribution of appointments for male and female politicians during the period 1997-2017.

Figure D2: Robustness - Using different reference periods



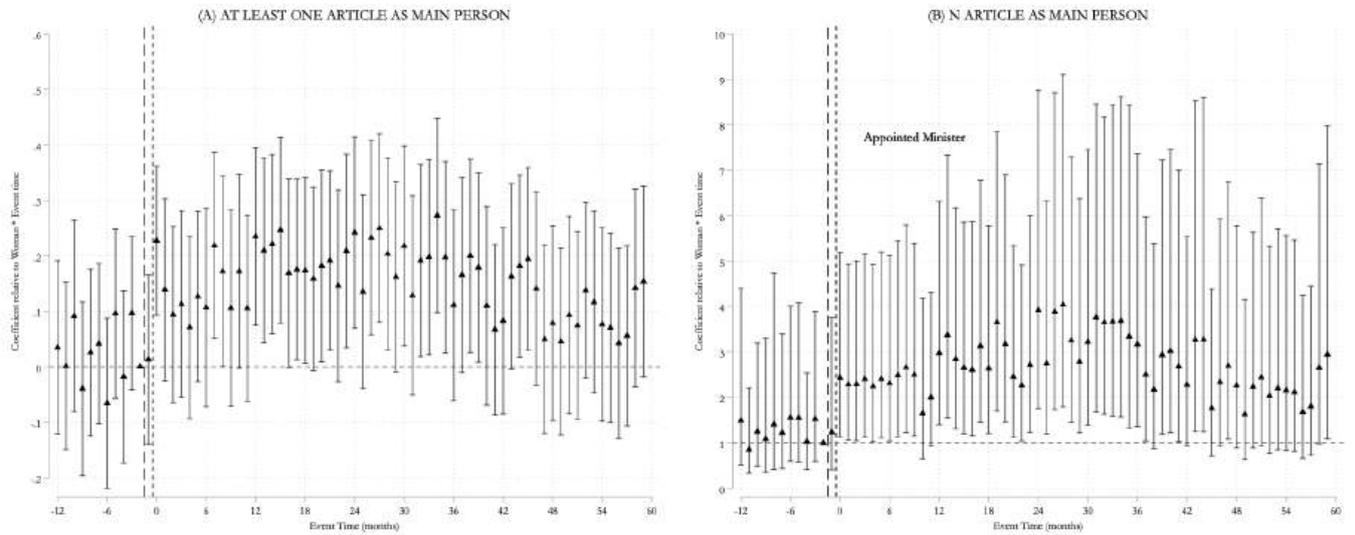
Notes: the data come from media coverage of politicians appointed as ministers for the first time during the period 1996-2022 (N=215). The time span corresponds to 5 (1) years after appointment (before appointment). The figure shows difference in differences coefficients related to $EventTime * Woman$, which capture the additional effect of ministerial appointment on media coverage for women relative to men. Confidence intervals are represented at the 95% level. The outcome variable is a dummy that equals 1 if the politician received media coverage in a given month. The outcome variable is a dummy that equals 1 if the politician received media coverage in a given month.

Figure D3: Access to Power and Gender Gap in Media Mentions - Scaled by Pre-Appointment Gap



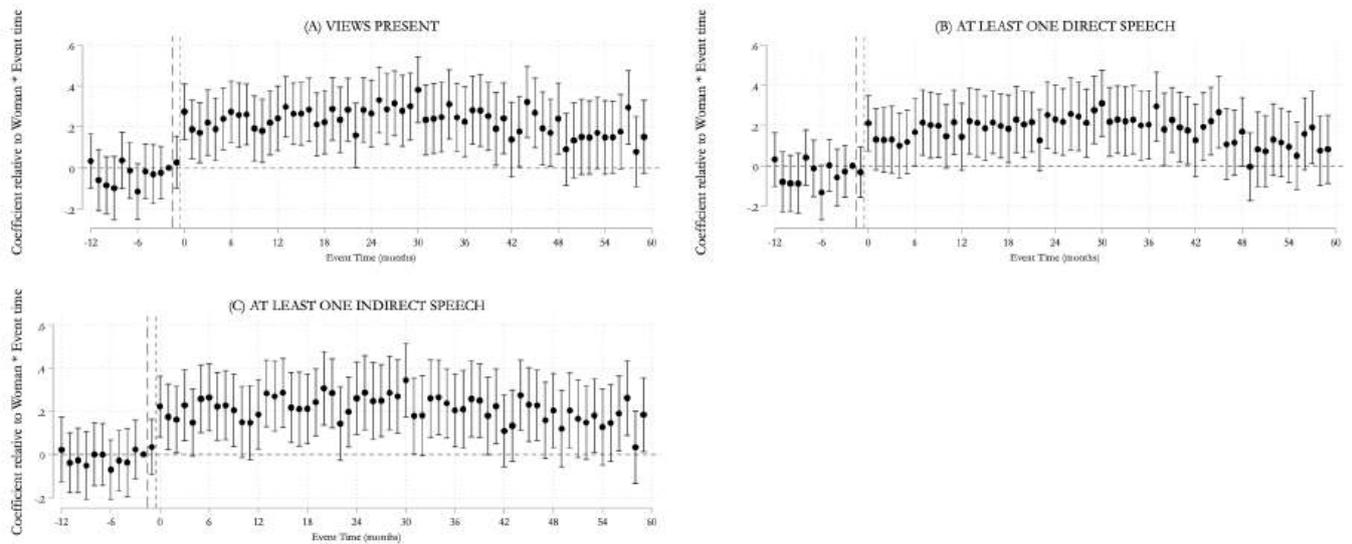
Notes: the data come from media coverage of politicians appointed as ministers for the first time during the period 1996-2022 (N=215). The time span corresponds to 5 (1) years after appointment (before appointment). The figure shows difference in differences coefficients comparing women to men, scaled as a percentage of the pre-existing gender gap in $l = -2$. Confidence intervals are represented at the 95% level. The outcome variables are a dummy that equals 1 if the politician received media coverage in a given month (A) and the monthly number of media mentions (B). In graph (B), the figure displays incidence rate ratios estimated using Poisson pseudo-maximum likelihood regressions. After appointment as ministers, the gender gap in the likelihood of receiving media coverage disappears entirely (Graph A). The gap reduction is estimated at about 100%, then moderates slightly after 30 months, settling at about 55% in the final observed month. Graph (B) describes the intensive margin effects. Post-appointment, estimates indicate that the gender gap is reduced by 100% up to 45 months after appointment. The reduction does not appear to be statistically significant in the last months of the period.

Figure D4: Access to Power and Gender Gap in Media Mentions - Importance of News Coverage



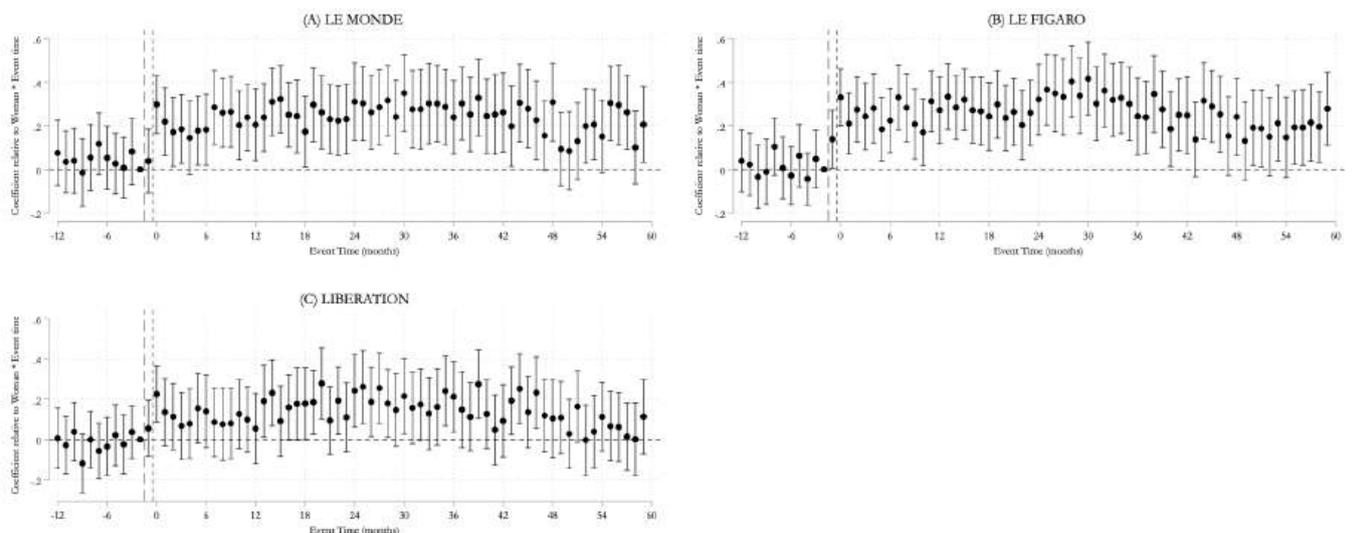
Notes: the data come from media coverage during the period 1996-2022 ($N=215$). The time span corresponds to 5 (1) years after appointment (before appointment). The figure shows difference in differences coefficients related to $EventTime * Woman$, which capture the additional effect of ministerial appointment on media coverage for women relative to men. The reference period is $l = -2$. Confidence intervals are represented at the 95% level. The outcome variables are respectively a dummy that equals 1 if the politician received media coverage in a given month (A), the monthly number of media mentions (B). When the outcome is the number of media mentions, the figure displays incidence rate ratios estimated using Poisson pseudo-maximum likelihood regressions.

Figure D5: Access to Power and Gender Gap in Media Mentions - Views / Direct / Indirect Speech



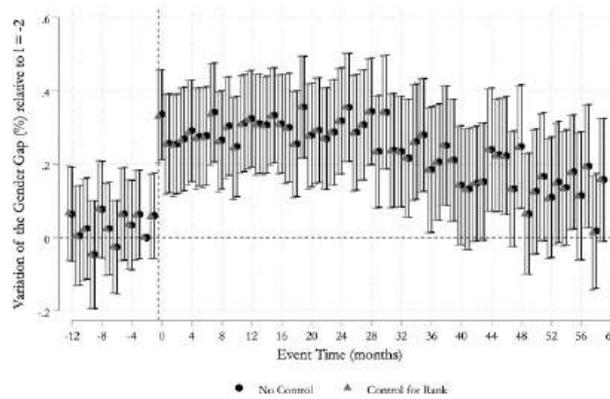
Notes: the data come from media coverage during the period 1996-2022 (N=215). The time span corresponds to 5 (1) years after appointment (before appointment). The figure shows difference in differences coefficients related to $EventTime * Woman$, which capture the additional effect of ministerial appointment on media coverage for women relative to men. The reference period is $l = -2$. Confidence intervals are represented at the 95% level. The outcome variables are respectively a dummy that equals 1 if the politician's views are present in the media (A), was quoted using direct speech (B) or using indirect speech (C).

Figure D6: Gender Gap in Media Mentions across Newspapers



Notes: the data come from media coverage of politicians appointed as ministers for the first time during the period 1996-2022 (N=215). The time span corresponds to 5 (1) years after appointment (before appointment). The figure shows difference in differences coefficients related to $EventTime * Woman$, which capture the additional effect of ministerial appointment on media coverage for women relative to men. The reference period is $l = -2$. Confidence intervals are represented at the 95% level. The outcome variable is a dummy that equals 1 if the politician received media coverage in a given month.

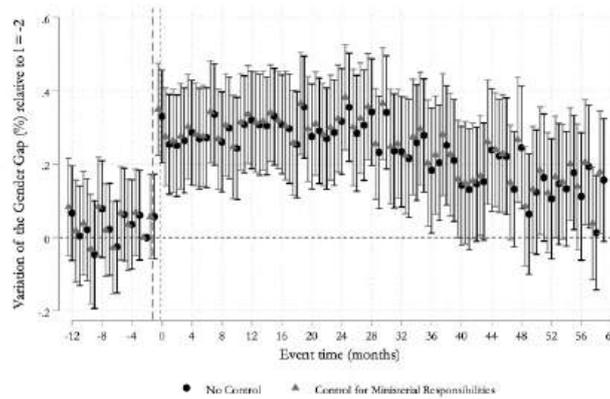
Figure D7: Control for Hierarchical Rank



Notes: the data come from from media coverage of politicians appointed as ministers for the first time during the period 1996-2022 (N=215). The time span corresponds to 5 (1) years after appointment (before appointment). The figure shows difference in differences coefficients related to $EventTime * Woman$, which capture the additional effect of ministerial appointment on media coverage for women relative to men. The reference period is $l = -2$. Confidence intervals are represented at the 95% level. In panel (a), the outcome variable is a dummy that equals 1 if the politician received media coverage in a given month. The outcome variable is a dummy that equals 1 if the politician received media coverage in a given month. "Control for Rank" correspond to a specification controlling for the ministerial rank (2 categories) interacted with event-time dummies.

To create a variable indicating the rank of the ministers, we exploit the ministerial hierarchy. It comprises several tiers: ministers of state and full ministers wielding the most authority, followed by delegated ministers and secretaries of state who typically operate under full ministers' oversight. We create a dummy variable equal to 1 if an individual is a minister of state or full minister and 0 otherwise.

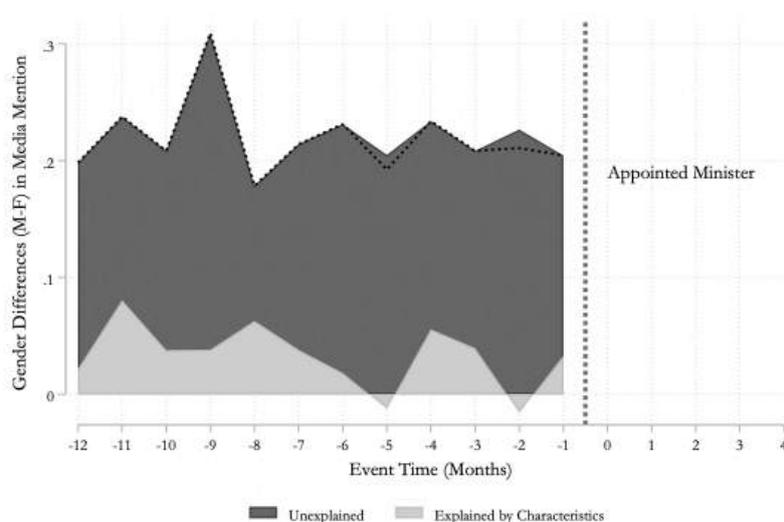
Figure D8: Control for Ministerial Responsibilities



Notes: the data come from media coverage of politicians appointed as ministers for the first time during the period 1996-2022 (N=215). The time span corresponds to 5 (1) years after appointment (before appointment). The figure shows difference in differences coefficients related to $EventTime * Woman$, which capture the additional effect of ministerial appointment on media coverage for women relative to men. The reference period is $l = -2$. Confidence intervals are represented at the 95% level. In panel (a), the outcome variable is a dummy that equals 1 if the politician received media coverage in a given month. The outcome variable is a dummy that equals 1 if the politician received media coverage in a given month. "Control for Ministerial Responsibilities" correspond to a specification controlling for domains the minister is in charge of (2 categories) interacted with event-time dummies.

To create topics of ministerial responsibilities, we regroup areas ministers are in charge of in two categories. We rely on the list used by [Bagues and Campa \(2021\)](#) and distinguish topics that are more likely to be closer to the interests of men, women and those that are neutral. The masculine topics are *agriculture, housing, industry, infrastructure, transport*. The feminine topics are *education, family, gender equality, health, social, solidarity, and youth*. The rest is considered as neutral. We create a dummy variable equal to 1 if the area is considered as "feminine" and 0 otherwise.

Figure D9: Investigating the Origin of the Gender Gap



Notes: the data come from media coverage of politicians appointed as ministers for the first time during the period 1996-2022 (N=215). The time span is restricted to the 12 months before appointment. The figure displays results from a Oaxaca-Blinder-Kitagawa decomposition. The outcome variable is a dummy that equals 1 if the individual is mentioned in the media. Characteristics include a set of dummies indicating whether an individual had been elected MP, senator or mayor in the past, the number of times an individual has been elected, the cumulative time spent in these positions and the age at appointment.

D.2 Identification Checks

In this section, we provide additional details on the construction of the control group and the matching process. As explained in the text, a natural control group consists of individuals who have been considered for appointment as ministers. As the list of potential ministers is not publicly disclosed, we use Members of Parliament who have not been appointed as ministers as a control group. In the framework of event studies, it can be seen as the never treated.

In total, there are 577 members of Parliament (MP) for each term. We first exclude from this group MPs who have been appointed as ministers or who did not receive any media coverage. The resulting group is likely to include high and low profile politicians. The former is more likely to have been considered for appointment than the latter. To distinguish between these two types, we use propensity score matching. We match MPs with ministers based on the media coverage they received in the months preceding the event time. In the framework of event studies, this consists in matching treated with control observations based on pre-trend outcomes.

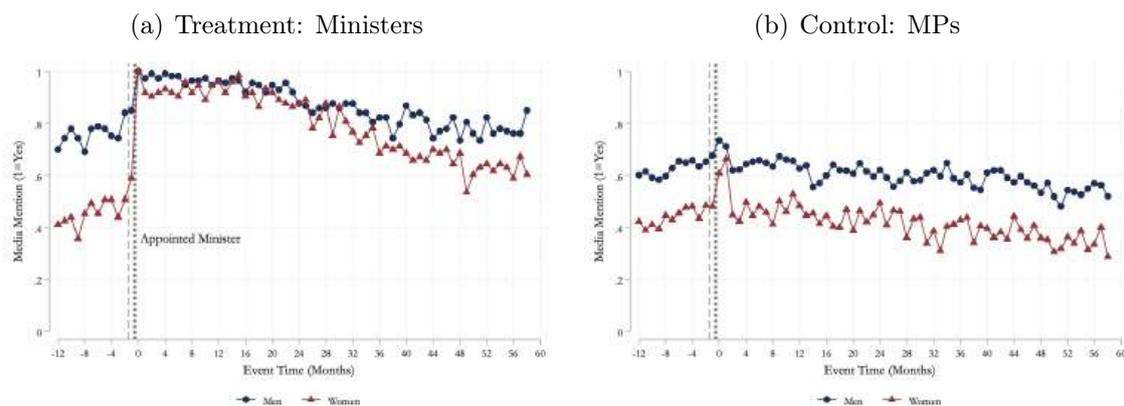
The matching process raises two issues. The first is that we need to define an event time for the never treated. To do so, we list all the event dates when individuals were appointed as ministers (Figure D1 describes the distribution of appointments).³¹ We then randomly assign to each MP an event date. For instance, between the 2002-2007 term in Parliament, a total of 57 individuals were appointed ministers for the first time, over 8 event times. The first event occurred in May 2002 where 21 individuals were appointed ministers for the first time following the presidential elections. This means that 37% (21/57) of individuals appointed ministers for the first time during the 2002-2007 period were appointed in May 2002. We therefore randomly assign this event date to 37% of Members of Parliament. This explains why we observe an increase in the newsworthiness of MPs in the control group around the event time as it often coincides with the timing of parliamentary elections. We repeat this process 500 times. We estimate our event-study specification on all 500 samples. We then compute bootstrap confidence intervals at the 95% level using the distributions of estimates for each event date.

Second, we need to distinguish between high and low profile politicians within MPs. As every MP is matched to an event time as explained above, we are able to compute their media trajectory in the 12 months preceding their "fake" appointment. We match them with real ministers based on the outcome for $l \in [-12; -2]$. Results from the matching

³¹An alternative would be to define random dates for each politician. We prefer assigning event time corresponding to real appointments for two reasons. First, conceptually, government formations generally depend on political events such as the election of a new president or the need to change politics. It is unlikely that they depend on individual trajectories. Second, in practice, the vast majority of event dates include multiple appointments at the same time.

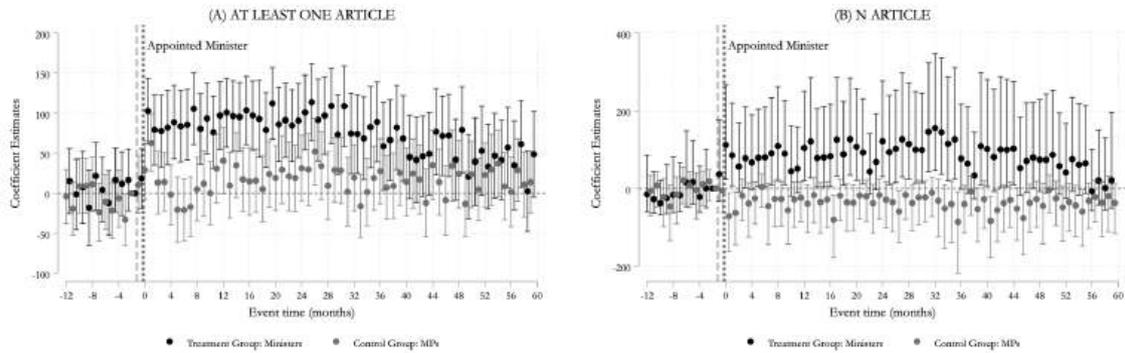
process can be seen in Figure D10. For women, we observe similar media trajectories in the treatment and control group. For men, the media trajectory in the control group is slightly lower than in the treatment group. This indicates that men appointed ministers are on average more newsworthy than male MPs who do not become ministers. We believe that this pattern can bias downwards our estimates as it seems easier to make a smaller gender gap disappear (as observed among MPs).

Figure D10: Descriptive Graph



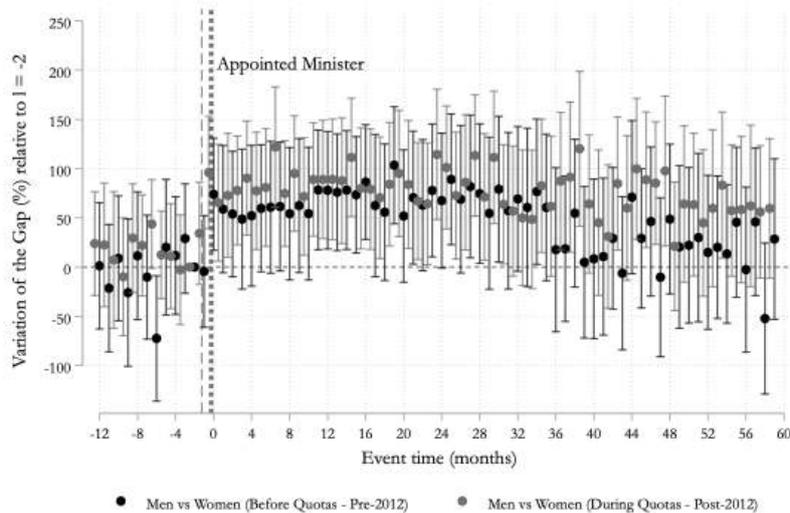
Notes: the data come from media coverage during the period 1996-2022. The treatment group consists of politicians appointed as ministers for the first time (N=215). The control group consists of members of Parliament never appointed ministers with similar pre-event media coverage (N=1,379). Details on the matching process are provided in Section D.2. The y-axis corresponds to the share of individuals who receive at least one media mention. The x-axis corresponds to the month with respect to the date where the individual is appointed minister (x=0).

Figure D11: Media Returns to Political Power by Gender - Using a control group



Notes: the data come from media coverage during the period 1996-2022. The treatment group consists of politicians appointed as ministers for the first time ($N=215$). The control group consists of members of Parliament never appointed ministers who had similar pre-event media coverage ($N=1,379$). Details on the matching process are provided in Section D.2. The figure shows difference in differences coefficients comparing women to men, scaled as a percentage of the pre-existing gender gap in $l = -2$. Bootstrapped confidence intervals are represented at the 95% level. The outcome variables are a dummy that equals 1 if the politician received media coverage in a given month (A) and the monthly number of media mentions (B). In panel (B), the figure displays incidence rate ratios estimated using Poisson pseudo-maximum likelihood regressions.

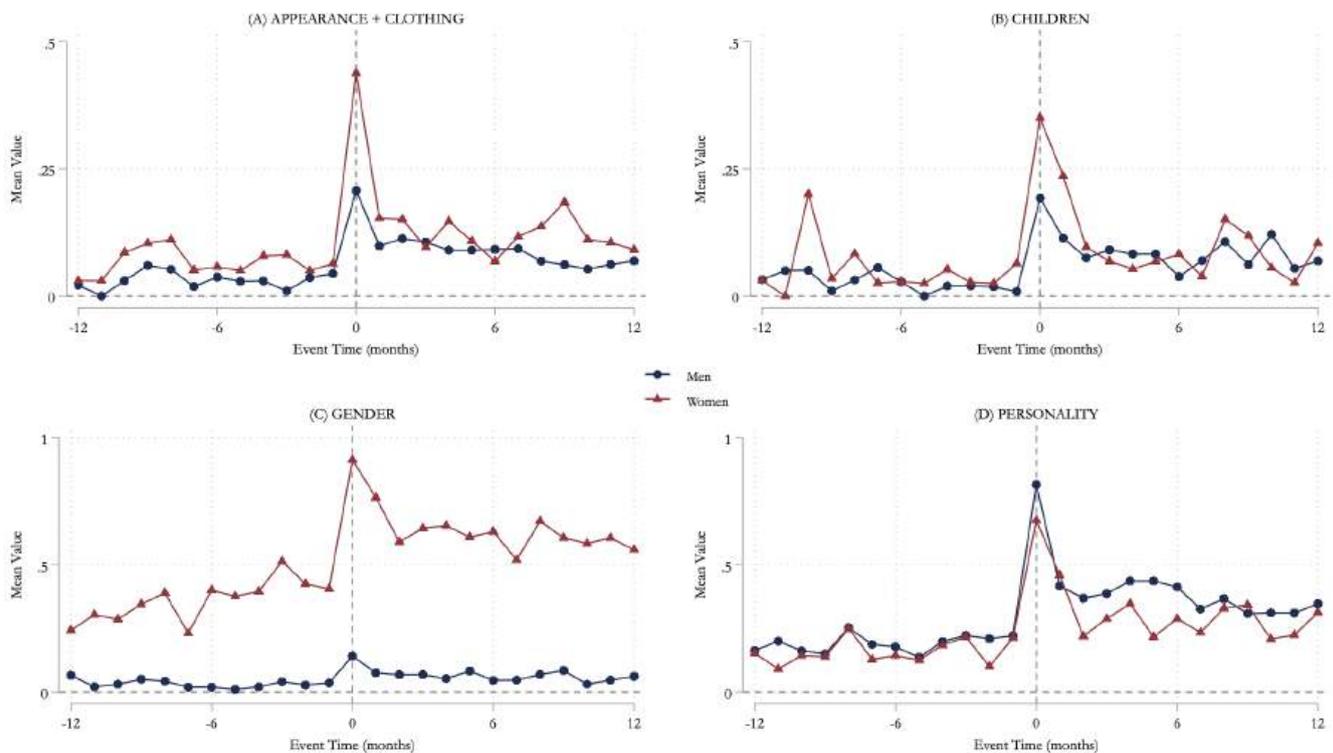
Figure D12: Gender Quotas and the Equalizing Effect of Access to Power



Notes: the data come from media coverage of politicians appointed as ministers for the first time during the period 1996-2022 ($N=215$). The time span corresponds to 5 (1) years after appointment (before appointment). The figure shows difference in differences coefficients, scaled as a percentage of the pre-existing gap in $l = -2$. "Men vs Women (Before Quotas - Pre 2012)" compares female and male politicians appointed before 2012. "Men vs Women (Quota Post-2012)" compares female and male politicians appointed after 2012 in a context of a 50% gender quota. Confidence intervals are represented at the 95% level. The outcome variable is a dummy that equals 1 if the politician received media coverage in a given month.

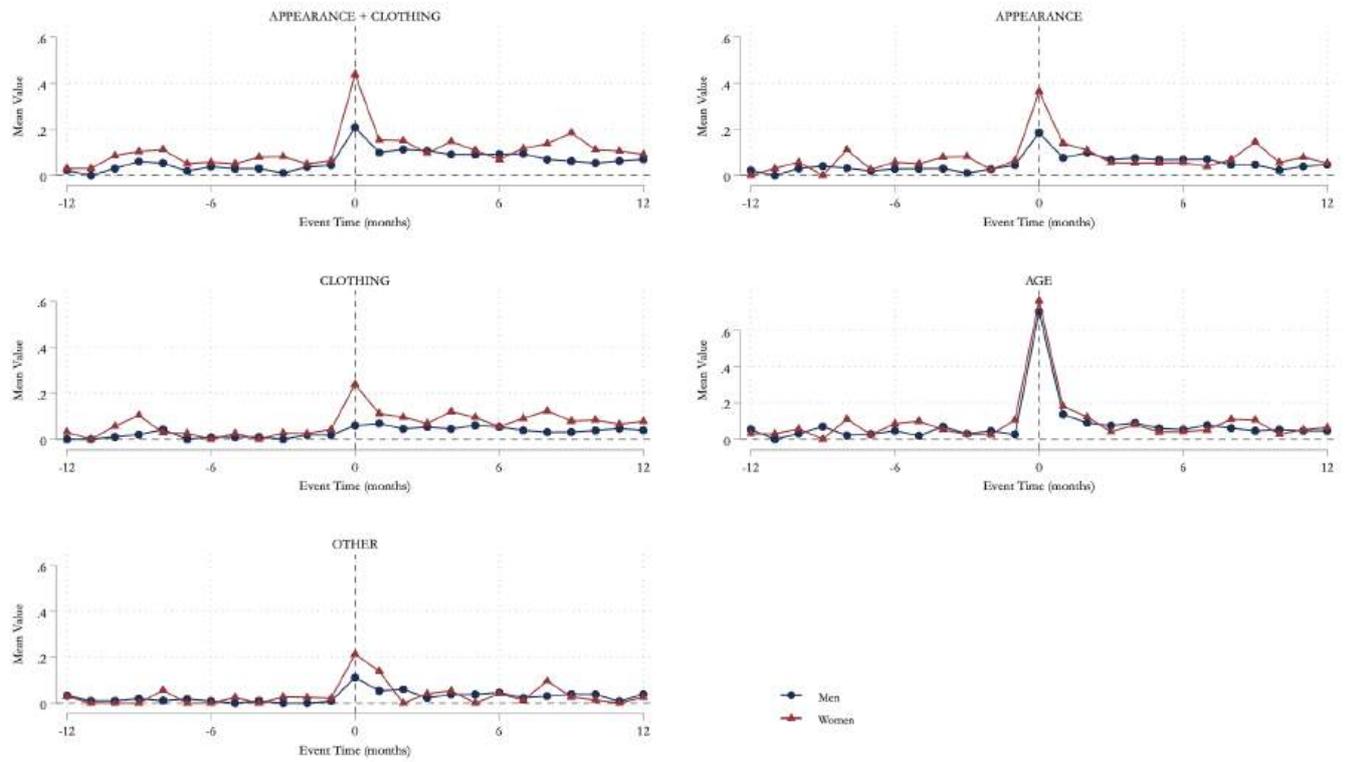
D.3 Gender Differences in Media Tone and Content - Robustness

Figure D13: Unconditional Impact of Access to Power on the Content of News Articles - Stereotypical Topics



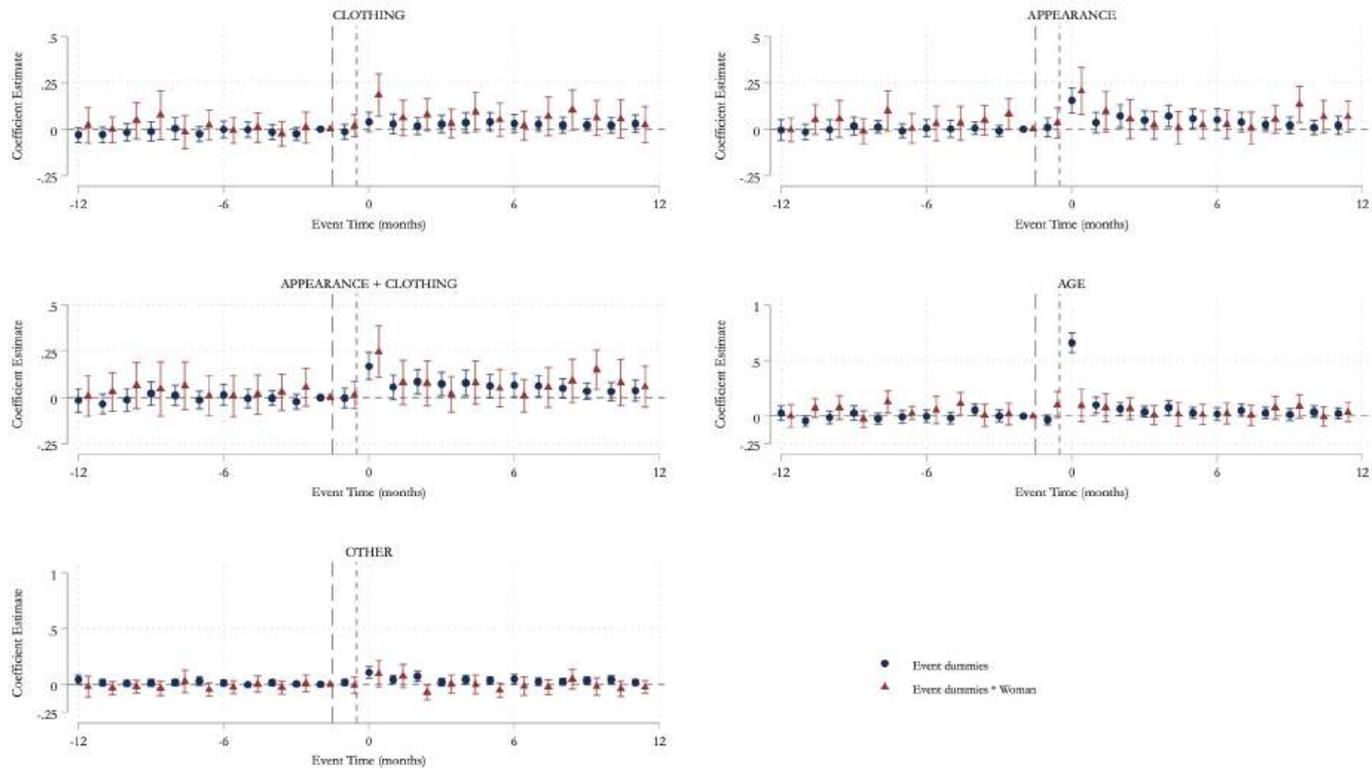
Notes: the data come from media coverage of politicians appointed as ministers for the first time during the period 1996-2022 (N=215). The figure shows the share of women (triangle) and men (circle) for which a given topic is mentioned at least once in a given month. The topics are respectively mentions of appearance or clothing (A), children (B), gender marking used more than once (C), personality (D). This share is computed among individuals who are mentioned in the media. The time span of the data covers 1 (1) year after (before) appointment.

Figure D14: Unconditional Impact of Access to Power on the Content of News Articles - Physical Topics



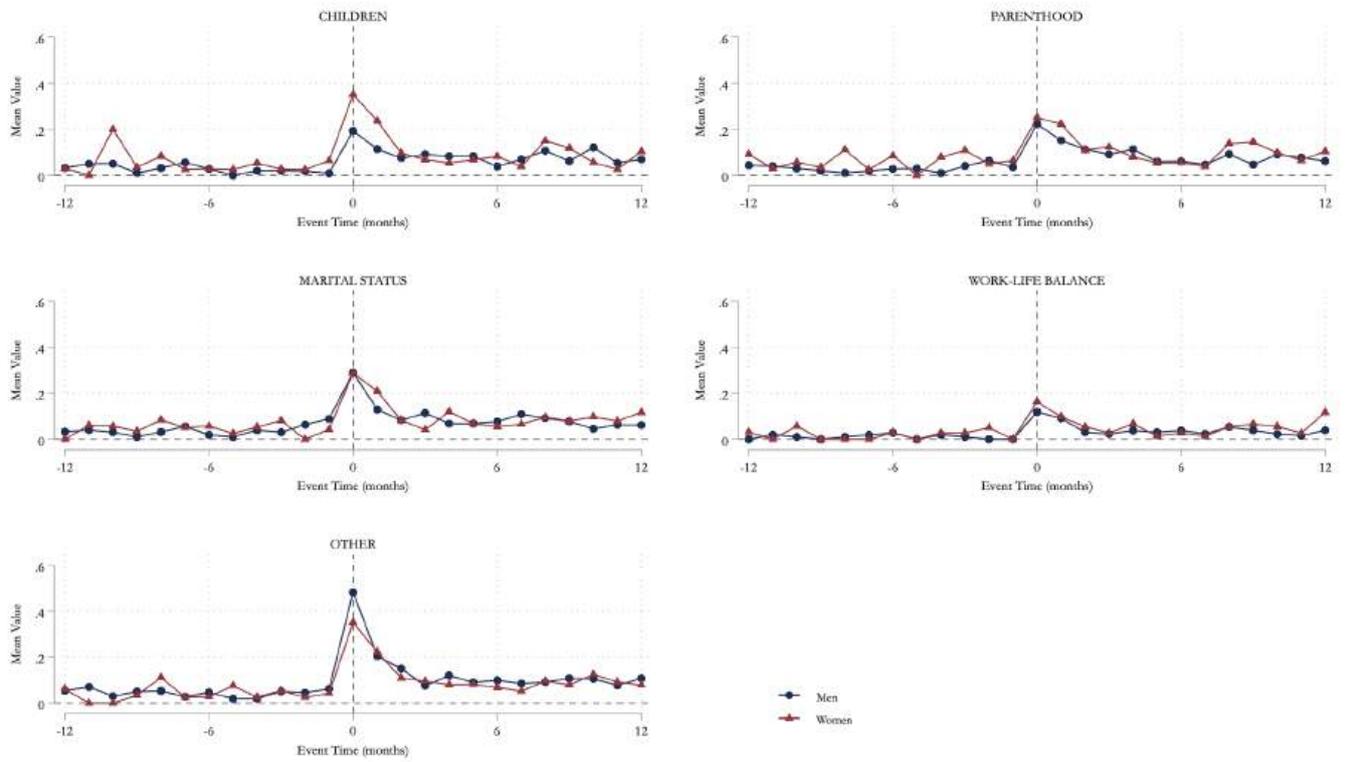
Notes: the data come from media coverage of politicians appointed as ministers for the first time during the period 1996-2022 (N=215). The figure shows the share of individuals for which a given topic is mentioned at least once. This share is computed among individuals who receive news coverage. The time span of the data covers 1 (1) year after (before) appointment.

Figure D15: Impact of Access to Power on the Content of News Articles - Physical Topics



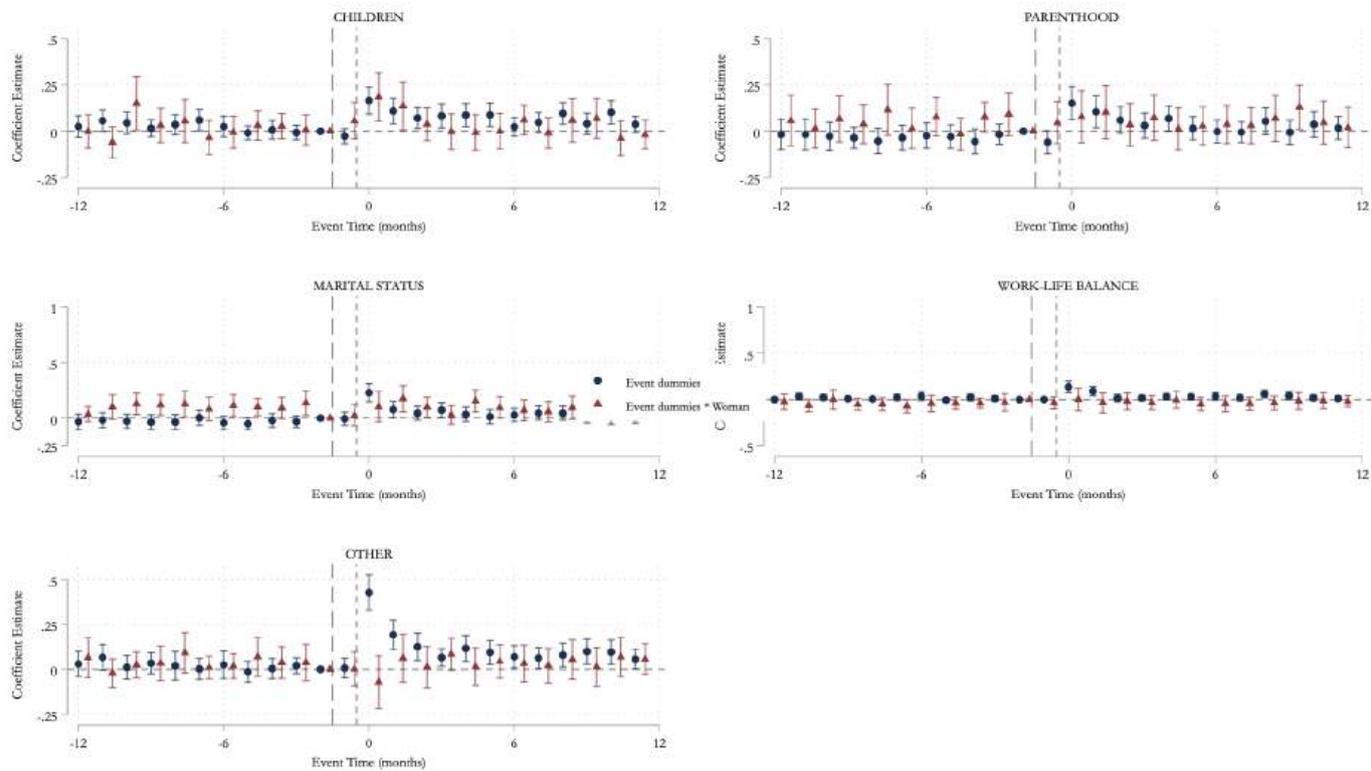
Notes: the data come from media coverage of politicians appointed as ministers for the first time during the period 1996-2022 ($N=215$). The time span of the data covers 1 (1) year after (before) appointment. The figure shows coefficients related to event time dummies and event time dummies interacted with gender (equal to 1 when the politician is a woman), relatively to the reference month ($l = -2$). Red triangles represent the interaction term (difference between women and men). The total effect for women can be obtained by adding the two coefficients. Confidence intervals are represented at the 95% level. The outcome variables consist in dummies that equal 1 if a topic is associated to a politician at least once in a given month. Details are provided in Section 3.2.1.

Figure D16: Unconditional Impact of Access to Power on the Content of News Articles - Family Topics



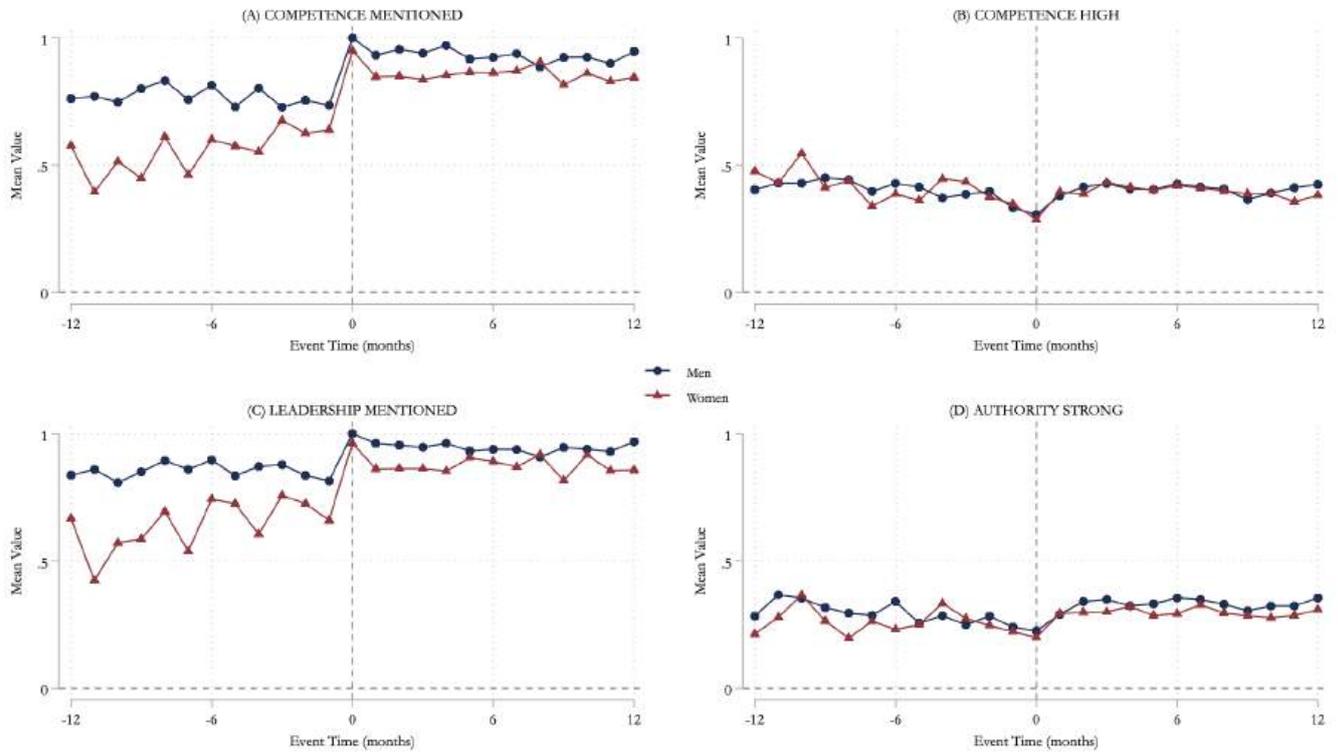
Notes: the data come from media coverage of politicians appointed as ministers for the first time during the period 1996-2022 (N=215). The figure shows the share of individuals for which a given topic is mentioned at least once. This share is computed among individuals who receive news coverage. The time span of the data covers 1 (1) year after (before) appointment.

Figure D17: Impact of Access to Power on the Content of News Articles - Family Topics



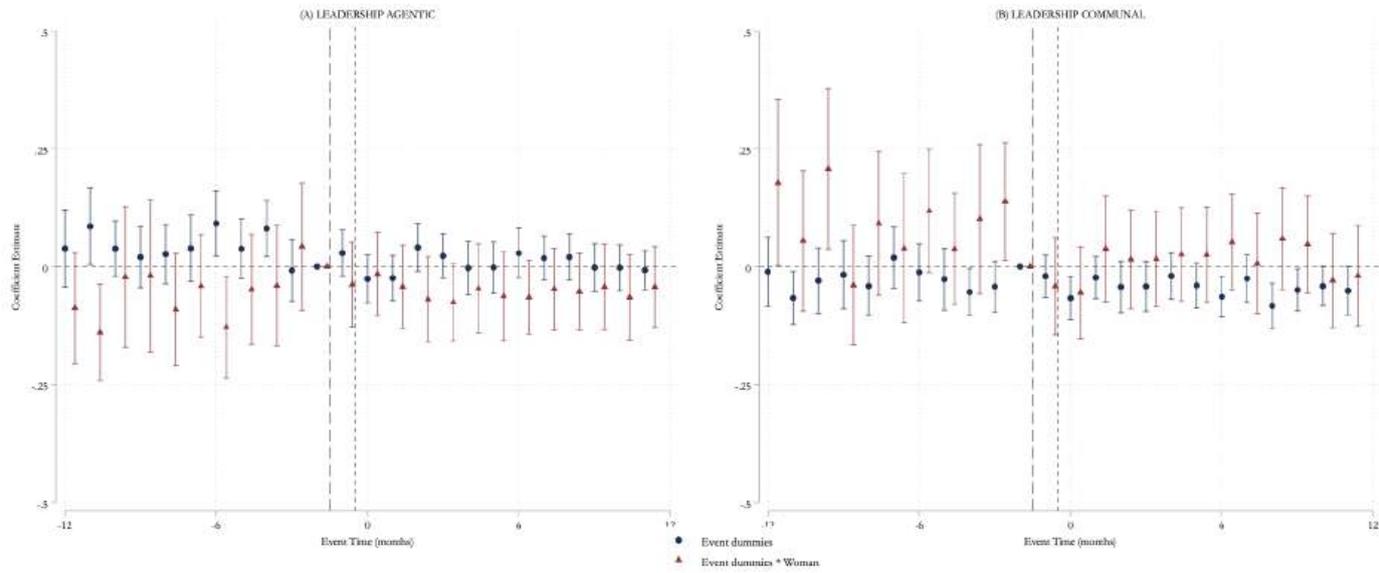
Notes: the data come from media coverage of politicians appointed as ministers for the first time during the period 1996-2022 ($N=215$). The time span of the data covers 1 (1) year after (before) appointment. The figure shows coefficients related to event time dummies and event time dummies interacted with gender (equal to 1 when the politician is a woman), relatively to the reference month ($l = -2$). Red triangles represent the interaction term (difference between women and men). The total effect for women can be obtained by adding the two coefficients. Confidence intervals are represented at the 95% level. The outcome variables consist in dummies that equal 1 if a topic is associated to a politician at least once in a given month. Details are provided in Section 3.2.1.

Figure D18: Unconditional Impact of Access to Power on the Content of News Articles - Professional Evaluation



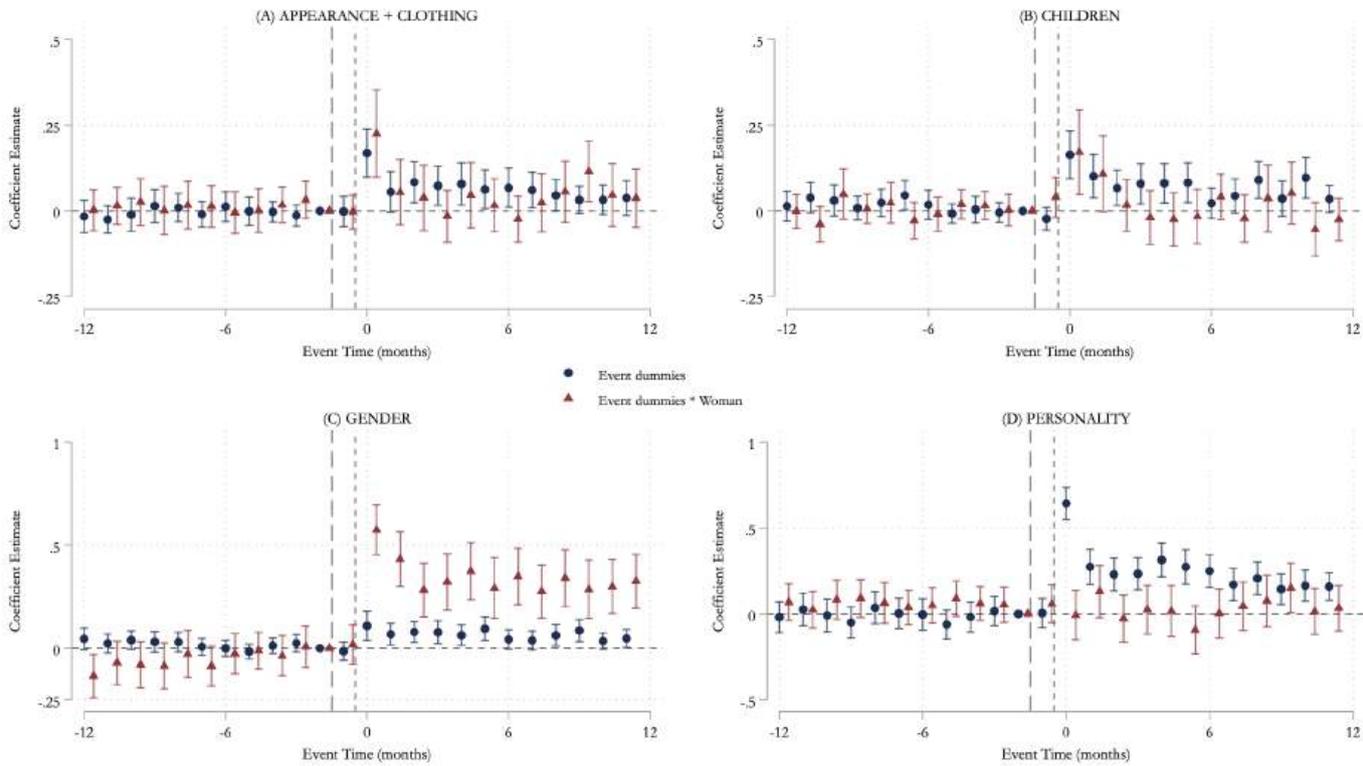
Notes: the data come from media coverage of politicians appointed as ministers for the first time during the period 1996-2022 (N=215). The figure shows the share of individuals for which a given topic is mentioned at least once. This share is computed among individuals who receive news coverage. The time span of the data covers 1 (1) year after (before) appointment.

Figure D19: Impact of Access to Power on the Content of News Articles - Agentic vs Communal Leadership



Notes: the data come from media coverage of politicians appointed as ministers for the first time during the period 1996-2022 ($N=215$). The time span of the data covers 1 (1) year after (before) appointment. The figure shows coefficients related to event time dummies and event time dummies interacted with gender (equal to 1 when the politician is a woman), relatively to the reference month ($l = -2$). Red triangles represent the interaction term (difference between women and men). The total effect for women can be obtained by adding the two coefficients. Confidence intervals are represented at the 95% level. The outcome variables consist in the share of media mentions depicting the politician's leadership as agentic (A) or communal (B) in a given month. Details are provided in Section 3.2.1.

Figure D20: Impact of Access to Power on the Content of News Articles including the full sample - Stereotypical Topics



Notes: the data come from media coverage of politicians appointed as ministers for the first time during the period 1996-2022 ($N=215$). The time span of the data covers 1 (1) year after (before) appointment. The figure shows coefficients related to event time dummies and event time dummies interacted with gender (equal to 1 when the politician is a woman), relatively to the reference month ($l = -2$). Red triangles represent the interaction term (difference between women and men). The total effect for women can be obtained by adding the two coefficients. Confidence intervals are represented at the 95% level. The outcome variables consist in dummies that equal 1 if a topic is associated to a politician at least once in a given month. Ministers who do not receive any media coverage for a given month are coded as 0. Details are provided in Section 3.2.1.

D.4 Gender Differences in Media Tone and Content - Machine Learning Approach

To identify gender-specific patterns in media coverage, we employ a supervised machine learning approach using logistic regression with balanced class weights to account for potential gender imbalances in our sample. Input features are generated using term frequency-inverse document frequency (TF-IDF) vectorization of the article text, which captures the relative importance of words while accounting for their overall frequency in the corpus. We exclude minister names from the analysis to focus on substantive content and require words to appear in at least 5 documents to ensure reliability. The model coefficients are then ranked by absolute magnitude to identify the most predictive words for each gender, with positive coefficients indicating association with female ministers and negative coefficients with male ministers. Results are displayed in Table D1.

Table D1: Top 10 words to predict the gender of ministers

	<i>Men</i>		<i>Women</i>	
	English Translation	French stemmed	English Translation	French stemmed
1	new	nouveau	appointed	nomme
2	MP	deput	woman	femm
3	interior	interieur	delegate	delegue
4	education	educ	new	nouvel
5	mister	monsieur	ecology	ecolog
6	republican	republicain	modem	modem
7	centrist	centrist	charge	charge
8	pact	pact	justice	sceau
9	appeal	appel	MP	depute
10	delegate	delegu	justice	justic

Notes: the data come from news articles mentioning ministers in their first month after appointment over the period 1996-2022. The table shows the top 10 words most predictive of gender obtained using logistic regression with balanced class weights. Explanatory variables consist in a TF-IDF transformation of the pre-processed text, excluding minister names and using unigrams that appear in at least 5 documents. Columns 1 and 2 (resp. 3 and 4) display English translation and original French stemmed words of the top 10 words most strongly associated with male (female) politicians. Additional details: "deput" stands for "depute" which means MP; "modem" designates a centrist party, "sceau" stands for justice