

If you want to win you have to spin: Polis@Conservative Conference

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We move our [fringe meeting show](#) from Manchester to Birmingham next week, from the surreal double-think of Labour's conference to the Conservatives, who are probably pinching themselves at their recent reversal in electoral fortunes.

But is Cameron a triumph of style over substance? Have the Tories given up on ideology and idealism? And if so, does it matter when you are roaring ahead in the polls? If it does matter then is it the fault of shallow and power-hungry politicians or a news media that punishes anyone who thinks aloud or dares to suggest radical change?

We will be [debating](#) this at Conservative party conference on Monday lunchtime at the Copthorne Hotel Jubilee Suite with Andrew Gilligan (evening Standard), Priti Patel (Candidate for Witham), Ben Brogan (Daily Mail) and the shadow secretary of state for DCMS, Jeremy Hunt MP (who is also a very good blogger). Our event partners [YouGovStone](#) conducted a poll of their 'influentials' which concluded this

"Overall, the panel perceives Cameron as an untested leader (88% agree) who is a triumph of style over substance (59% agree). Despite this perception, nearly four in five (78%) on the panel agree that he will lead the Conservatives to victory at the next general election."

But this not just a problem for the Conservatives:

"Seven out of ten (70%) influentials agreed to some extent that the main political parties are ruled by spin doctors. Even more (81%) respondents said that politicians have become more cautious about what they do and say in recent years. The majority of the panel (60%) disagreed that developments in political party communication over the years have improved UK politics. Most notable is that our panel overwhelmingly answered that policy is now all about packaging and not substance. That's three out of four (75%) UK influentials saying style is indeed more important to today's politicians than substance."

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