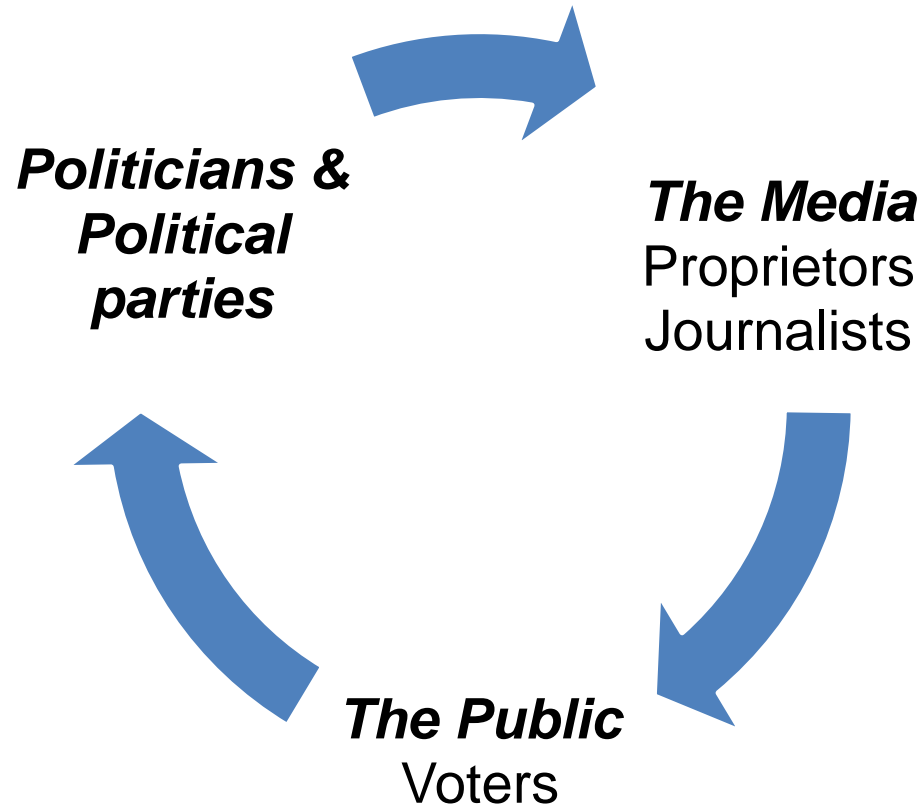


# THE MEDIA AND ELECTIONS



# THE MEDIA AND ELECTIONS

- Media and Politicians interdependent but uneasy relationship
- both sides need the other
  - parties want TV news to feature their message & newspapers to spin their policy pledges, campaign stunts favourably
  - journalists want inside info, access to politicians & “scoops”
  - relationship sustained by former media figures working for parties (e.g. Alistair Campbell – Lab, Amanda Platell, Andy Coulson – Cons, Seumus Milne - Lab)

# THE MEDIA AND ELECTIONS

- each suspicious of the power/influence of the other:
  - politicians think media owners (Murdoch, Desmond) have too much influence and can distort news agenda + worry/complain about possible broadcasting bias
  - media thinks spin drs too concerned to manage access and restricting flow of info to ensure only favourable stories
- interdep most apparent during election campaigns

# TELEVISION

- Crucial medium for election campaigns
- 2015 Survey: 62% said TV coverage very influential in informing them about the general election, parties & policies (but down from 80% in 2005)
  - Radio was cited as very influential by 14%
  - Newspapers at 25%, websites at 17%, talking to family/friends at 14%
- All broadcasters have a duty to give equal treatment to main parties but can still affect campaign
  - TV feature soundbites rather than long speeches, developed policy arguments
  - TV focus on party leaders, encouraging “presidential” politics
  - TVs choice of lead stories can influence campaign
  - parties gear campaigns to TV – e.g. symbolic locations (Lab 2001 election launch at an inner city school). Leaders activities designed to look good on TV rather than being about direct engagement with voters
  - TV debates new in 2010 – How influential were they?
  - TV debates in 2015 – less impact? 7M for April 2<sup>nd</sup> 7 leader debate. 2015 Survey found 38% saying the debates influenced their decision

# TELEVISION

BUT - TV adverts are banned (which keeps cost of elections down) –  
cf USA where elections are hugely more expensive

- TV co.s have to carry election broadcasts – type of Party Pol Broadcast

- allocated to parties on basis of no. of seats contested.
- 2015 survey: 10% said PPBs influential in their decision
- Most PPBs dull but some memorable, esp those focusing on leader's personality and values. -

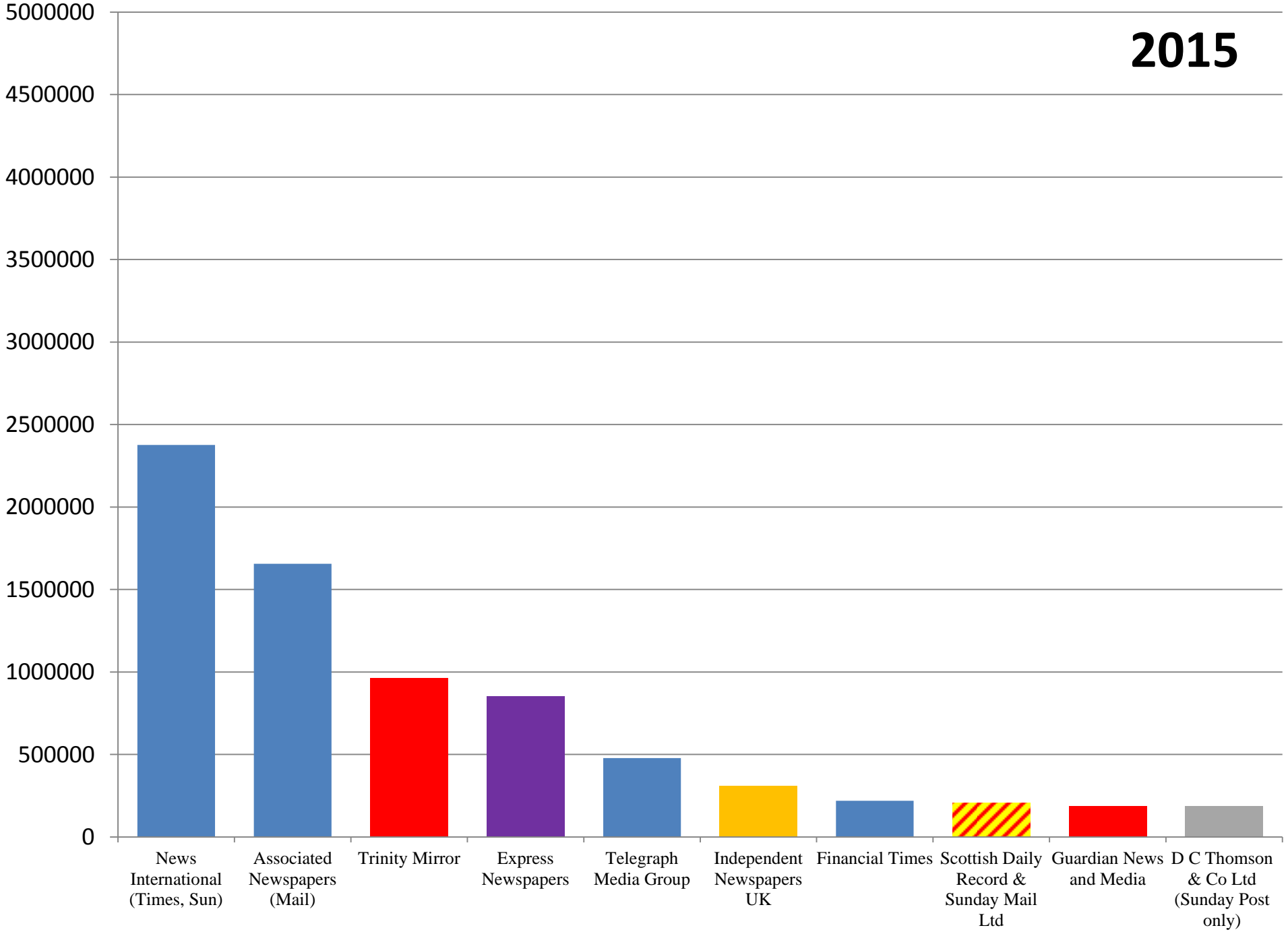
<http://www.theguardian.com/media-network/2015/may/01/tory-labour-party-political-broadcasts-who-won>

- Allows fringe parties such as BNP, Pro-Life Alliance a platform – their PPBs often most controversial.

# NEWSPAPERS

- Newspaper readership still high in UK compared to other countries.
- Newspapers do not have TV's requirement for impartial/balanced coverage
  - To varying degrees they act as cheerleaders for their favoured parties
  - Tabloids esp. often mock the other party and caricature its leader
  - It is expected the newspapers will endorse a party at election time
- BUT – even in 2005 election campaign, 75% of tabloid front pages were non-elect stories

2015



# NEWSPAPERS

- Major swing from 1992 to 1997 in support of papers from Cons to Lab.
  - In 1992 only Mirror and Guardian strongly backed Lab
  - In 1997 only Telegraph, Express and Mail backed Con
  - In 2001 only Telegraph and Sunday Mail backed Con
  - 2005 more complicated:



# 2010 newspaper endorsements

<u>Newspaper</u>		<u>Main endorsement</u>	<u>Sunday Newspaper</u>		<u>Main endorsement</u>
<a href="#"><u>Daily Express</u></a>		Conservative Party	<a href="#"><u>Independent on Sunday</u></a>		Lab or Lib Dems
<a href="#"><u>Daily Mail</u></a>		Conservative Party	<a href="#"><u>Mail on Sunday</u></a>		Conservative Party
<a href="#"><u>Daily Mirror</u></a>		Labour Party	<a href="#"><u>The Observer</u></a>		Liberal Democrats
<a href="#"><u>Daily Telegraph</u></a>		Conservative Party	<a href="#"><u>Sunday Express</u></a>		UK Independence Party
<a href="#"><u>Financial Times</u></a>		Conservative Party	<a href="#"><u>Sunday Mirror</u></a>		Labour Party
<a href="#"><u>The Guardian</u></a>		Liberal Democrats	<a href="#"><u>Sunday People</u></a>		None
<a href="#"><u>The Independent</u></a>		Lab or Lib Dems	<a href="#"><u>Sunday Telegraph</u></a>		Conservative Party
<a href="#"><u>The Sun</u></a>		Conservative Party	<a href="#"><u>News of the World</u></a>		Conservative Party
<a href="#"><u>The Times</u></a>		Conservative Party	<a href="#"><u>Sunday Times</u></a>		Conservative Party

# 2015 newspaper endorsements

<u>Newspaper</u>		<u>Main endorsement</u>	<u>Sunday Newspaper</u>		<u>Main endorsement</u>
<a href="#"><i>Daily Express</i></a>		<b>UKIP</b>	<a href="#"><i>Independent on Sunday</i></a>		<b>(None)</b>
<a href="#"><i>Daily Mail</i></a>		<b>Conservative Party</b>	<a href="#"><i>Mail on Sunday</i></a>		<b>Conservative Party</b>
<a href="#"><i>Daily Mirror</i></a>		<b>Labour Party</b>	<a href="#"><i>The Observer</i></a>		<b>Labour Party</b>
<a href="#"><i>Daily Telegraph</i></a>		<b>Conservative Party</b>	<a href="#"><i>Sunday Express</i></a>		<b>UK Independence Party</b>
<a href="#"><i>Financial Times</i></a>		<b>Conservative Party</b>	<a href="#"><i>Sunday Mirror</i></a>		<b>Labour Party</b>
<a href="#"><i>The Guardian</i></a>		<b>Labour Party</b>	<a href="#"><i>Sunday People</i></a>		<b>Labour Party</b>
<a href="#"><i>The Independent</i></a>		<b>Liberal Democrats</b>	<a href="#"><i>Sunday Telegraph</i></a>		<b>Conservative Party</b>
<a href="#"><i>Metro</i></a>		<b>Conservative Party</b>	<a href="#"><i>Sunday Times</i></a>		<b>Conservative Party</b>
<a href="#"><i>The Sun</i></a>		<b>Conservative Party</b>			
<a href="#"><i>The Times</i></a>		<b>Conservative Party</b>			

# 2017 newspaper endorsements

<u>Newspaper</u>		<u>Main endorsement</u>	<u>Sunday Newspaper</u>		<u>Main endorsement</u>
<a href="#"><u>Daily Express</u></a>	Blue	Conservative Party	<a href="#"><u>Sun on Sunday</u></a>	Blue	Conservative Party
<a href="#"><u>Daily Mail</u></a>	Blue	Conservative Party	<a href="#"><u>Mail on Sunday</u></a>	Blue	Conservative Party
<a href="#"><u>Daily Mirror</u></a>	Red	Labour Party	<a href="#"><u>The Observer</u></a>	Grey	(none but anti-Conservative)
<a href="#"><u>Daily Telegraph</u></a>	Blue	Conservative Party	<a href="#"><u>Sunday Express</u></a>	Blue	Conservative Party
<a href="#"><u>Financial Times</u></a>	Blue	Conservative Party	<a href="#"><u>Sunday Mirror</u></a>	Red	Labour Party
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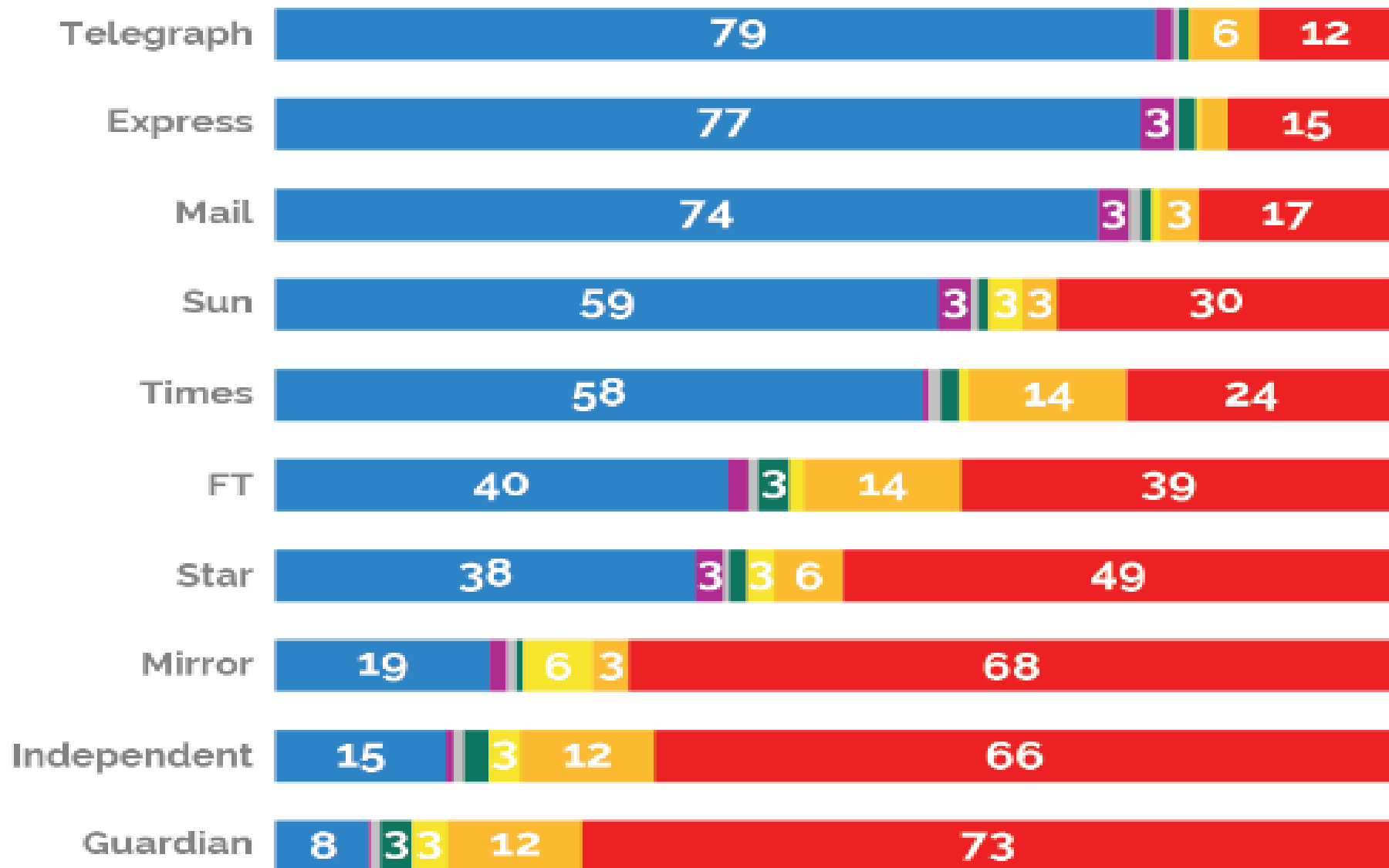
# NEWSPAPERS

- BUT impact on readers and therefore on elections is hotly debated – various different theories
  - Causation
  - Direct influence
  - Reinforce views
  - Little impact
  - Reverse Causation
  - Shifting parties not papers

# Vote by newspaper readership

Based on a survey of 52,615 GB adults about their vote in the 2017 general election

■ Conservative ■ UKIP ■ Other ■ Green ■ SNP ■ Lib Dem ■ Labour



# NEWSPAPERS

## Causation

- directly infl readers to vote in particular way. Also LT influence attitudes to issues such as crime, asylum, sleaze, party leaders.
  - E.g. Sun's influence on 1992 and 1997 elections – took credit for 1992 win + Con chairman credited eds of Sun and Express with swinging the result. Blair courted Sun's owner Murdoch in 1990s and its conversion to Labour ahead of the 97 election seen as v imp.
  - Also widespread negative coverage of William Hague 1998-2001, Miliband 2010-2015
- Some academic evidence that when class/existing attitudes of readers adjusted for, the bias of their newspaper does influence their voting behaviour.
  - 2017 Election: 68% of Mirror readers voted Lab, 79% of Telegraph readers voted Con (c.f. 2005 figures – 66% of Mirror readers voted Lab, 64% of Telegraph readers voted Con)
- + Weakening of party loyalties (partisan dealignment) may make papers more infl than in the past, as voters less tribal

# NEWSPAPERS

## Indirect influence

- not direct infl on voters but do shape agenda, deciding which issues are/ are not significant.
- Interps of issues frame pol debate – e.g. asylum seekers as a threat to law and order, Euro membership stereotyped as simply about national independence.
- Encourages a focus on leaders' personalities
- Radical opinion largely marginalised, given little coverage.

# NEWSPAPERS

## Reinforce existing views

- most voters choose a paper which reflects their political views, which are then reinforced.
  - e.g. 2001 support of readers for 3 main parties

	Con	Lab	Lib Dem
<b>The Sun</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>The Mirror</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>The Mail</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Daily Telegraph</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Independent</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>Guardian</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>34</b>

- Situation in 2005 more complex
  - o Sun pro-Labour but its policy views closer to Cons.
  - o Mirror very pro-Labour but had been strong anti-Iraq war
- 2015-2017 sees pro-Con press splitting from Cameron on EU, pro-Labour press wary of Corbyn



# NEWSPAPERS

## Little impact

- voters selective in the way they obtain pol news. Aware of newspaper biases and adjust for them (trust TV news more). Tend to ignore stories which disagree with their world view (= “Filter effect”) – only take in those which agree with it (reinforcement again).
- In any case, most newspapers do not identify with all the policies of the party they favour and may be considerably at odds with it – e.g. Sun was pro-Lab but v anti-EU; Telegraph was pro-Cameron but anti-EU
  - e.g. survey found that many Sun readers in 1992 thought it was a pro-Labour paper
  - e.g. Lab had endorsement of most papers in 1997 but poll ratings fell slightly during campaign
  - e.g. 2005 election saw little change in polls despite major press support - %s of voters who did switch party were similar for newspaper readers and non-readers.
  - e.g. no paper backed LDs outright in 2005, but they gained support slightly in the campaign and got 10 more seats.
  - e.g. LDs gained endorsements in 2010 while Lab lost backing of papers that supported it in 2005, but little apparent impact on vote for either

# NEWSPAPERS

## Reverse causation

- want to back winners so identify the mood of their readers and shift their pol views accordingly so as not to lose readers
  - e.g. Sun in 1997 & 2009?  
Express in 2001?
- May also seek to find a market niche
  - e.g. Express in 2015

# NEWSPAPERS

## Shifting parties

- maybe the values of the newspaper stays still, but parties seeking its endorsement shift their policies to win its favour.
  - e.g. Labour in 1990s, shifting policies on law and order, etc. to seek Murdoch's approval
  - e.g. Cameron seeking to move Conservatives back to centre ground after 2005

# NEWSPAPERS & THE 2010-17 ELECTIONS

- House of Commons Research Paper: 2010 General Election - <http://www.parliament.uk/briefing-papers/RP10-36> - p74-77
- House of Commons Research Paper: 2015 General Election - <http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-7186/CBP-7186.pdf> - p 53-54
- *Bob Worcester of MORI on role of Newspapers in 2010 election - <https://www.ipsos.com/ipsos-mori/en-uk/was-it-sun-and-times-wot-nearly-won-it>*
- *You Gov election survey - <https://yougov.co.uk/news/2015/06/08/general-election-2015-how-britain-really-voted/> - see media sections*
- *CNBC on 2017 election - <https://www.cnbc.com/2017/06/07/uk-election-newspaper-endorsements-digital-age-politics.html>*

# INTERNET

- Has become v influential in US elections, esp since 2004 when Dem contender Howard Dean mobilised online support v effectively. Seen as key to Obama's success.
  - Used for fundraising and for infl the debate via candidate websites and commentators's blogs – some appearing to be pol indep even tho blogger is closely associated with one side.
  - Opps for ordinary voters to join and infl the debate and the candidates' agendas.
  - Chance for candidates to reach voters directly, without filter of (partisan) US media.
  - Used to mobilise supporters and ensure get-out-the-vote drives
- + new media allows unregulated video ads online anyway – imp for young – so UK ban on broadcast ads may become less significant, campaigns more American?
- + broadcasting is too broad, online narrowcasting maybe more useful  
+ old more numerous & > inclined to vote so targeting young who like new media can be non-productive. -
- <http://www.reelseo.com/uk-general-election-youtube/>

# INTERNET

- Internet much talked about in the UK but until 2017 had not yet had a dramatic effect on elections.
  - In 2005 party websites looked good but very limited interactivity (LDs had most). Not much different in 2010.
  - Most candidates also had personal websites – a good one makes limited diff but a bad one can pull you down?
  - 100s of sites blogged on 2005, 2010 & 2015 – Guardian and BBC the two most popular.
  - Some tried to directly infl the election, e.g. by encouraging tactical voting e.g. [www.tacticalvoter.net](http://www.tacticalvoter.net)
- Since 2005 indiv politicians and parties have experimented with podcasts, notably David Cameron early in his leadership & Brown on YouTube. Some controversy but little major impact.
- 2010 and 2015 elections saw attempts to emulate American internet use. Social media had significant impact on news coverage of the election but showed how hard it is for parties to control this
- Party posters often rapidly spoofed online
- Reuters paper on internet election - <https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/Social%20Media%20and%20the%20Election.pdf>

# INTERNET

- **2015 Panelbase Survey:** People were least likely to be influenced by social media and magazines - <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/election-2015-32673439>
  - Facebook the leading influencer for just 7%, followed by Twitter at 4% and magazines at 2%.
- Other research which has shown that social media can often serve as an "echo chamber" for peoples' own views
- Panelbase's research showed that major media outlets (e.g. BBC, Daily Mail) also "led the online conversation":
  - Of those who said they were most influenced by what they read on websites, 61% said they had read their political information on the BBC News website, followed by newspaper websites at 31% and Sky News at 25%.
- Google searches most influential for 23% of those gathering information online, followed by political party websites at 21%.

# OLD vs NEW MEDIA?

- Overall 2010 & 2015 saw old media, esp. TV dominating the campaign.
  - Debates attracted significant audiences and drove the newspapers' coverage of the election
  - Key election events often unfolded on television, e.g. "Bigotgate" in 2010
- New media provided additional rapid comment, but v hard to identify any major impact on national voting patterns
  - Possible greater impact on local voting patterns?
- But did media coverage make any difference to the results?
  - Had most people made up their minds well before the campaign?
  - Older voters > numerous & > inclined to vote so targeting young who like new media can be non-productive
- Guardian article comparing impact of media - <http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2010/may/02/leaders-debate-media-tv-press?INTCMP=ILCNETTXT3487>
- Iain Dale in the Telegraph - <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/election-2010/7640143/General-Election-2010-This-was-meant-to-be-the-internet-election.-So-what-happened.html>
- Analysis of the use and impact of new media in the 2015 election - <http://www.may2015.com/featured/exclusive-research-how-much-impact-does-the-media-still-have-on-politics/>



# OLD vs NEW MEDIA 2017

- 2017 perhaps saw a breakthrough in the use of the internet and social media in the UK, at least for Labour
  - Much more posted than other parties
  - Much greater increase in Facebook likes than other parties
  - Wider variety of content than other parties
  - Much more engagement by Facebook viewers than other parties
  - Much of the focus on showing Corbyn unfocused by the mainstream media, whom party strategists distrusted
  - But also policy videos/animations, again designed to counter a negative mainstream narrative against the party
  - Plus celebrity endorsements of Corbyn and Labour
  - And a drive to get young voters to register
  - Corbyn election eve rally featuring Clean Bandit and Steve Coogan watched 2.3M times over 24 hours to close of polls
  - Momentum also ran separate campaign – “[Dad, do you hate me?](#)” video watched 7M times: overall the last week saw 12.7M unique users watch its videos 23M times
  - All of this drew on experience of what worked in Corbyn’s two leadership campaigns, with humour, video, positive messages with viral potential
  - Pro-Labour/Corbyn blogs also had wider reach than in previous elections, again with a more disciplined, very positive message and scorn for mainstream media.
- Does this explain rise in Lab vote with key groups?
  - 18-24 Lab vote from 43% in 2015 to 62% in 2017, with turnout rising from 43% to 64%
  - And 25-34 vote up 20% and turnout up 10% too
  - Key article - <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/politicsandpolicy/explaining-labours-facebook-success/>