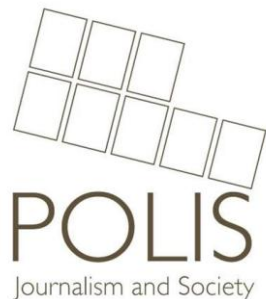


British politics: the role of the media

Gv 311: British Politics course,
Lecture 15 Lent Term 2014

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Today's lecture

- *The function of media in a liberal democracy*
- *the historical context of UK political journalism*
- *The problems facing UK political media*

Next week:

- *How political journalism is changing*
- *The impact of media change on politics*
- *The end of the public sphere?*

What does journalism do for politics?

- **Information**

[facts, records, statistics, events, policies]



- **Deliberation**

[debate, analysis, comment, opinion]



- **Accountability**

[investigation, audit, voice for citizen, campaigns]



The Fourth Estate



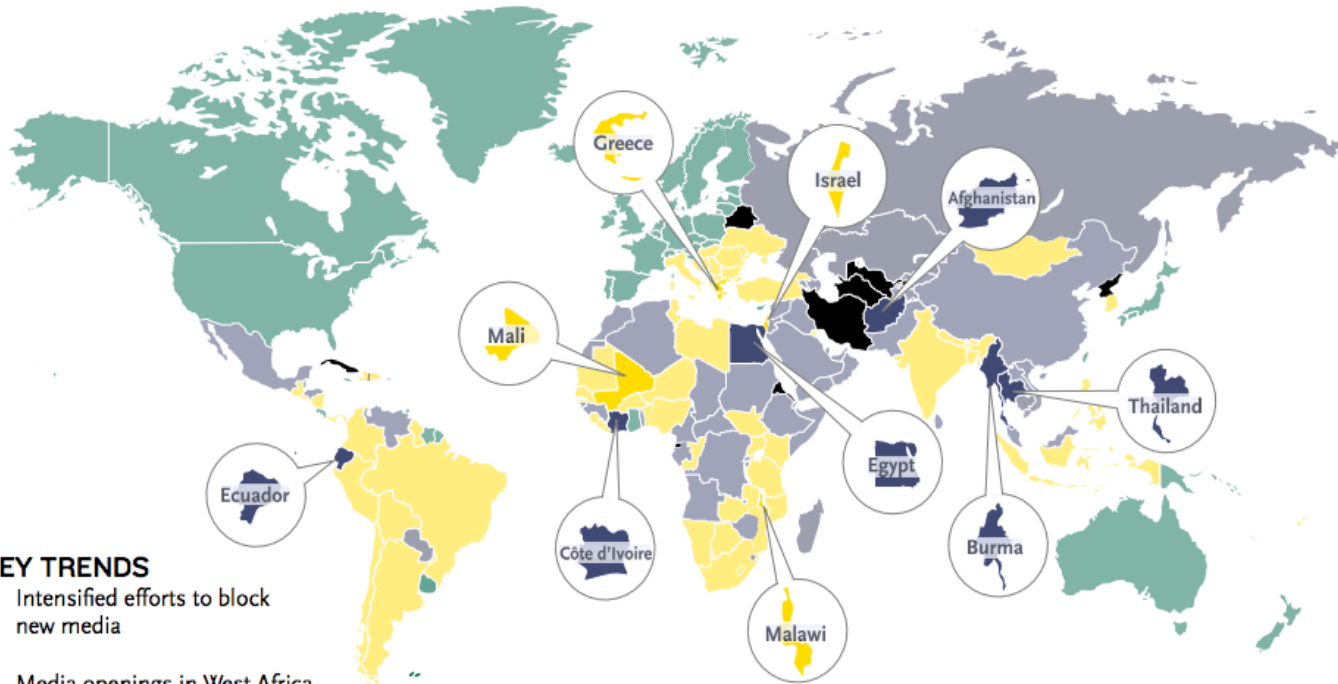
Edmund Burke 1729-1797

“There were three estates in Parliament. But, in the Reporters Gallery yonder, there sits a Fourth Estate” (1787)



FREEDOM OF THE PRESS 2013

COUNTRIES WITH NOTABLE DEVELOPMENTS



KEY TRENDS

- ➔ Intensified efforts to block new media
- ➔ Media openings in West Africa and Asia
- ➔ Press crackdown in Mali and Guinea-Bissau
- ➔ Economic crisis weakens press freedom in EU

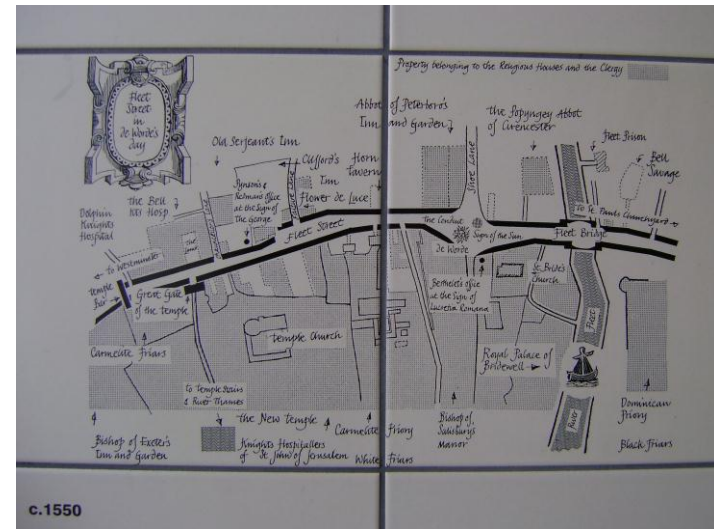


In 2012, only 1 in 6 people lived in countries with a free press.

www.freedomhouse.org

History of news: a battle between press & power

- Inns of court
- Holborn printers
- Covent Garden coffee houses
- Fleet Street national newsrooms
- Broadcasting – public and commercial
- Old Street – Tech City





The problem with political journalism is..?



The (politician's) problem with political journalism is..?

- Unaccountable power
- Bias
- Obsession with process
- Cynicism
- Lack of information
- Lack of expertise
- Loss of local press

The (journalist's) problem with political journalism is..?

- Lack of resources for (political) journalism
- Government secrecy
- Government and party spin and manipulation
- Disintermediation: increased role of social networks & public relations


The (public's) problem with political journalism is..?

- Too complicated
- Too cynical
- Too belligerent, biased
- Too much process
- Boring
- Irrelevant – 'Westminster bubble'
- Too simplistic
- Not critical enough
- Too complicit – not critical or radical enough
- Sensationalist
- Not informed enough about realities of policy-making

Press power?

THE Sun Monday, 24th May 1992 25p **FREE TODAY PLUS THE GREAT AMERICAN COMICS**

IT'S THE SUN WOT WON IT



HERE'S HOW PAGE 3 WILL LOOK UNDER KINNOCK!

PHOTO FINISH
If Kinnock wins today will the last person to leave Britain please turn out the lights

Truth hailed by Tories

TRUMPHTANT Tory MPs queued yesterday to say "Thank You My Sun" for helping John Major back in to Number 10.

They hailed our polling day photo page—showing Neil Kinnock's head in a tight ball— which highlighted the dangers of Labour rule.

They sprang at the headline with it— saying if Kinnock were not the last person to leave Britain switch out the lights.

And they piled aboard when we reported the poll— saying the Tories had won the shape of things to come under Labour.

Even Labour ministers and shadow ministers had nothing to say but praise the Tories to give them a 22 seat majority.

Shadow Environment Secretary Brian Gifford said 10 per cent of voters in Scotland later, are Tory voters.

And the new face of the Tories doesn't keep the imagination. They say we had made Labour weaker than they were at.

Winning Scotland MP David Alton got a majority of 1,000, a swing of over 5.2 per cent from Labour to Labour.

So look at yesterday's poll and our photo page that said it is inevitable all the Tories get-making the ground for the

Continued on Page Two

Winning... Pat on our Page 3 girl

Winning... Page 1 on polling day

Celebrating... only girls Page 3 star Pat Phoenix at Parliament yesterday

PR power?



Triumph of spin?



LoL



Leveson's verdict



- Politicians “developed too close a relationship with the Press in a way which has not been in the public interest’
- Regular political journalism was "in robust good health and performing the vital public interest functions in a vigorous democracy,"

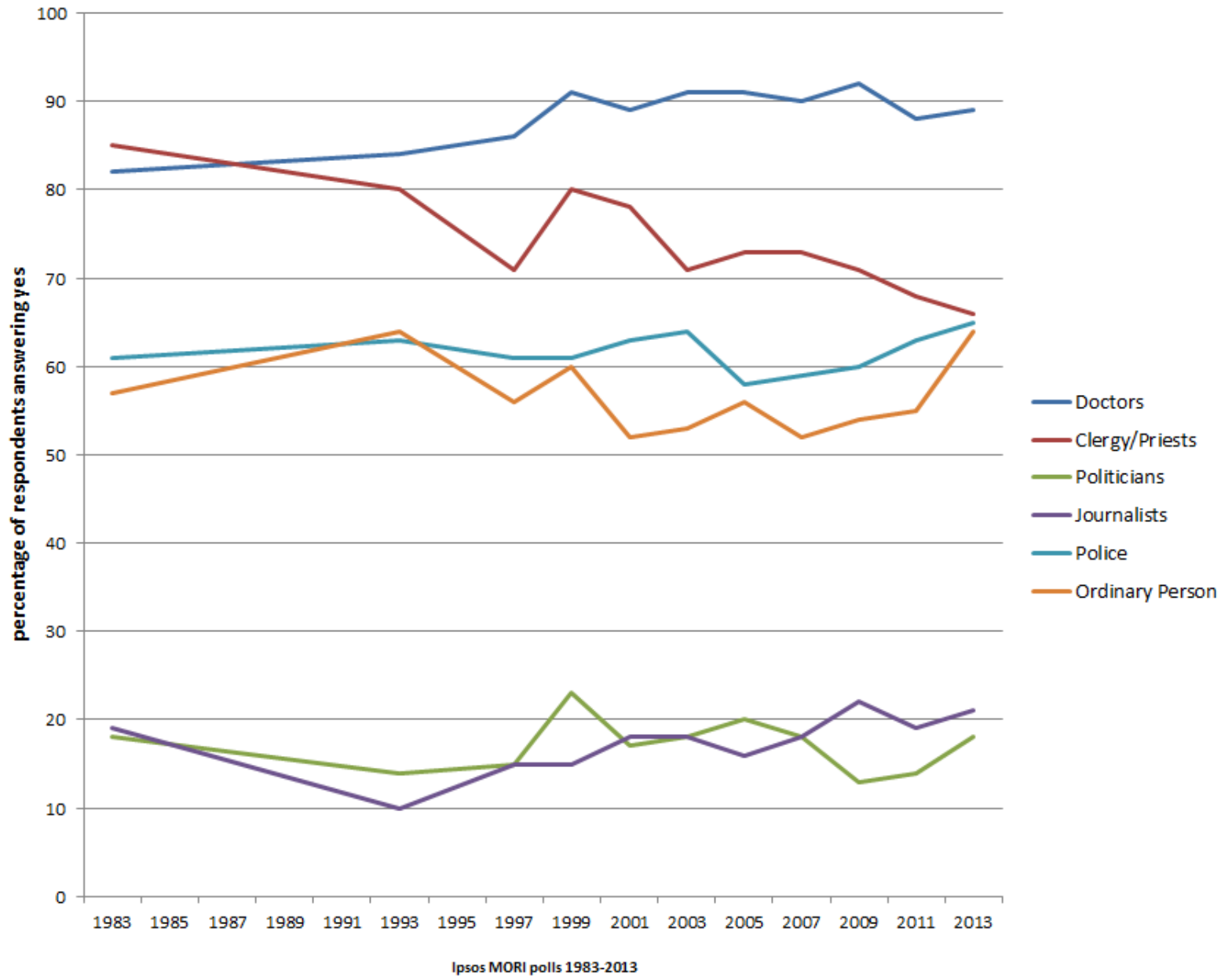
The paradox of political journalism

“The unshackled and irresponsible press sometimes gets it wrong, but I still prefer it, warts and all, to a shackled and responsible one”

Simon Jenkins

The Guardian, May 2007

Would you trust them to tell the truth?



Real problem is engagement, attention & authenticity



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