

British politics: The Changing Role of Journalism

GV311 Feb 2015

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- What is the structural role of journalism in UK politics and how well does it perform?
- How is political journalism changing?
- What impact might that have on democracy?

How did this....



Emily Thornberry MP ✓

@EmilyThornberry



Image from [#Rochester](#)



...lead to this?



Miliband Reveals Anger Over 'Sneering' Tweet

The Labour leader says his close ally Emily Thornberry had to quit as her photo of a flag-draped home was disrespectful.

Fri



Top Stories



Tweets

Tweets & replies

Photos & videos



Emily Thornberry MP @EmilyThornberry · 17h

I apologise for any offence caused by the 3 flag picture. People should fly the England flag with pride!



294

144



It was mainly this



Guido Fawkes 
@GuidoFawkes



Following

Snob RT [@EmilyThornberry](#): Image from
[#Rochester](#)



RETWEETS
23

FAVORITES
17



Plus a lot of this



Though it wouldn't work without this



Unique or a precedent?

- Rochester by-election – damage limitation
- Over-reaction by over-sensitive leader
- Inevitable consequence of febrile networked political media (and polling day media vacuum)
- Toxic combination of anti-Labour blogger (who works for) and anti-Labour newspaper
- Genuine problem with core vote perception of aloof politicians and out of touch Labour elite

What does journalism do for politics?

- **Information**

[facts, records, statistics, events, policies]



- **Deliberation**

[debate, analysis, comment, opinion]



- **Accountability**

[investigation, audit, voice for citizen, campaigns]



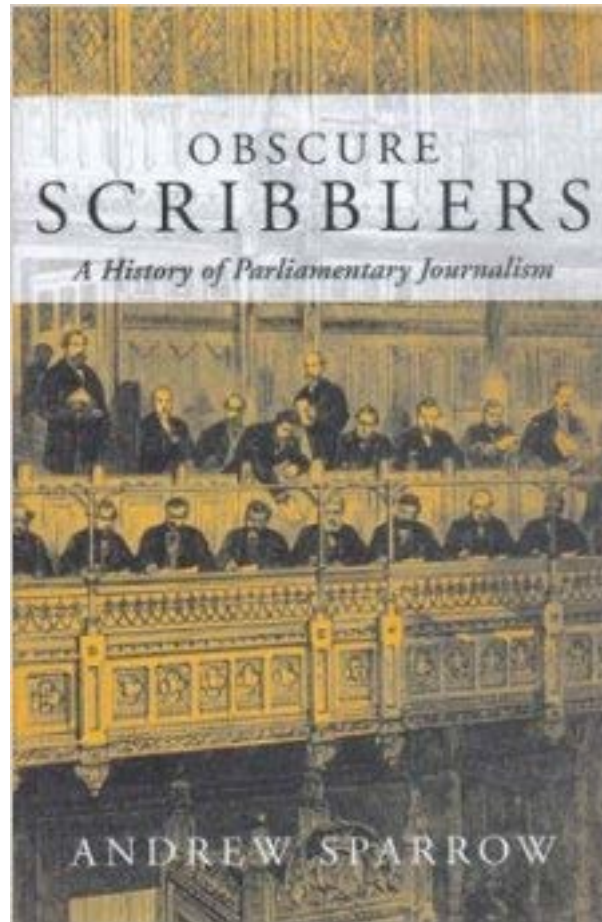
The Fourth Estate



Edmund Burke 1729-1797

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

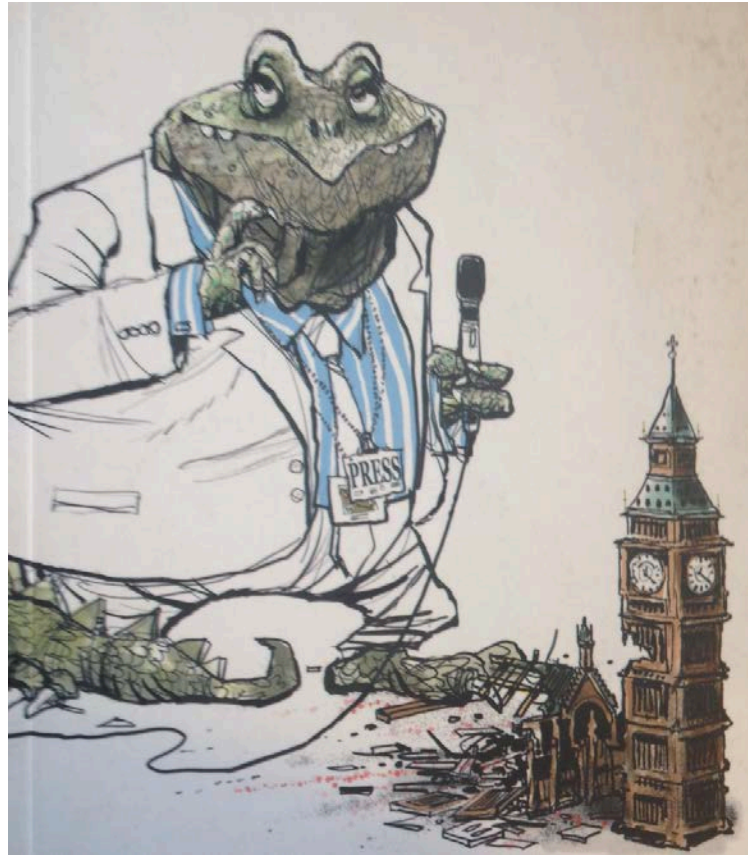
History of news: a battle between press & power



History of news: a battle between press & power

- Inns of court: state PR
- Holborn printers – licensed press
- Covent Garden coffee houses – paid hacks
- Reporting parliament – a controlled Lobby
- Broadcasting – public and commercial – all regulated
- Internet & social media – call for controls

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?



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,"



"All the News That's Fit to Print"

The New York Times

LATE CITY EDITION
 10-1000 PAGES, 10000 COPIES
 TODAY, MONDAY, JUNE 11, 1971
 PRICE: 15¢ (N.Y. METRO AREA)
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**Tricia Nixon Takes Vows
In Garden at White House**

**CITY TO DISCLOSE
BUDGETARY TRIMMS
FOR DEPARTMENTS**

Mayor John Lindsay today announced that the city will disclose the details of its budgetary cuts for the fiscal year 1972.

**Vietnam Archive: Pentagon Study Traces
3 Decades of Growing U. S. Involvement**

A massive study of how the United States went to war in Vietnam, conducted by the Pentagon, shows that the United States had been involved in the country for more than three decades.

**NIXON CRITICIZED
AS NAVY'S MILITARY**

The Navy's military strategy for Vietnam was criticized by some members of Congress.

Vast Review of War Took 1 Year

The review of the Vietnam War took a year to complete.

**U.S. URGES INDIANS
AND PAKISTANS
TO USE RESTRAINT**

The United States urges Indians and Pakistanis to use restraint in their conflict.

First Public Appeal

The first public appeal for the Vietnam War was made today.

The review of the Vietnam War took a year to complete.

Networked Journalism

• Mark Ferguson at LabourList is sceptical about Ashcroft's message.

First, lets do a spot of arithmetic. 25% solid support + 17% new support = 42%. That's the votes Labour have accrued so far, according to Ashcroft, without taking a much firmer line on the deficit. Now I don't know about you, but I'd take a Labour vote of 42% in the General Election. On the current boundaries that could give us a majority of around 80.

Yet the Ashcroft polling suggests Labour could secure the win – and gain an extra 10% of the electorate – by taking a firmer line on the cuts. That may well be true. And who wouldn't want to win 52% of the vote? Imagine the majority then? And Labour would be the first government in a generation to genuinely command the support of a majority of those who voted.

And yet...we all know that life is not that simple, nor should it be. By taking a harder line on cuts (by, for example, accepting Tory spending limits for the early years of a Labour government) we might win a chunk of that 10% of potential Labour voters who are up for grabs. But we'd certainly lose a significant and unknowable % of the 42% who are already supporting us – either long standing party supporters who would see us as too close to the Tories, or former Lib Dems, who might feel let down by a second party in as many years.

• George Eaton at the New Statesman says the research shows that 56% of people would like to see a Labour-led government after the next election.

From the Sun's Tom Newton Dunn.



Tom Newton Dunn
@tnewtondunn

Follow

A senior Lab figure's response to Ashcroft poll: "Always glad of advice from two time losing Tory election boss". A shame if they ignore it.

21 Nov 12

Reply Retweet Favorite

Updated at 11.51am GMT

am GMT

Here's Rachel Reeves, the shadow chief secretary to the Treasury, on the borrowing figures. (See 9.46am.)

George Osborne is borrowing billions more simply to pay

theguardian

News Sport Comment Culture Business Money Life & style Travel Environment

News Politics Politics live: readers' edition

POLITICS LIVE WITH ANDREW SPARROW



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Politics live: readers' edition - Friday 23 November

Share breaking news, leave links to interesting articles online and chat about the week's events in our weekly open thread

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Posted by
Andrew Sparrow and
Guardian readers
Friday 23 November
2012 08.53 GMT
guardian.co.uk
Jump to comments
(357)

Article history

Politics

Series
Politics live: readers'
edition - Politics live with
Andrew Sparrow


More from Politics blog
on

Series







Share news links and your thoughts on the week in politics in our Friday open thread
Photograph: FACUNDO ARRIZABALAGA/EPA


I'm not writing my usual Politics Live blog today, but, as an alternative, here's Politics Live: readers' edition. It's intended to be a place where you can catch up with the latest news and find links to good politics blogs and articles on the web.

non-political political fora



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Mumsnet Talk

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Talk: Customise | Unanswered messages | Getting started | Acronyms | FAQs

Threads: Active | I'm on | I'm watching | I started | Last 15 minutes | Last hour | Last Day

Topics » Am I being unreasonable?pg 1 of 1898 | First | Previous | Next | Last

Note: Please bear in mind that whilst this topic does canvass opinions, it is not a fight club. You may disagree with other posters but we do ask you please to stick to our Talk Guidelines and to be civil. We don't allow personal attacks or troll-hunting. Do please report any. Thanks, MNHQ.

Subject	Replies	Latest
☺ Start a new thread within this topic	-	-
to be annoyed that we are excluded	13	grovel 23/11/12 18:15
to think this 'concept' is bloody ridiculous not to mention dangerous and to ask if anyone else would like to give some feedback?!	33	NoraGainesborough 23/11/12 18:14
to ask my bank to accept that I use my middle name as my first name?	2	PumpkinPositive 23/11/12 18:14
the BBC isn't it time we just got shot of it?	271	NigellaTufnel 23/11/12 18:14
To expect the NHS to pay for me to breast feed	123	Stylelostinlabour 23/11/12 18:14
To think I can't do slings?	29	Sheepasaurus 23/11/12 18:14
AIBU to think that a Carer for a lady with Dementia	23	chocolatesol... 23/11/12 18:14
to use a disabled toilet if I've got the buggy?	255	Sirzy 23/11/12 18:14
To be incensed by Knorr Stock Pots?	132	JenaiMathis 23/11/12 18:13
Who really gets £500+ weekly state benefits?	320	Darkesteyes 23/11/12 18:13
To hate 'the wife'?	86	blueshoes 23/11/12 18:12
or is this a strange thing to say to a child?	145	JamieandtheM... 23/11/12 18:12
It's de finite ly. Please try to learn it	6	lottiegarbanzo 23/11/12 18:11


Mumsnet Talk

"The country's most popular meeting point for parents" *The Times*

Discussions of the dayMost active

The BBC - time to get rid or not?
Got the receipt? - rude gift responses?
Ugg boots - still love or now ugh?
Reflux - best coping tips?
Women bishops - reaction to vote?

Topics | Active | Search



NHS: Dementia Symptoms
Find out about the symptoms of dementia and how the NHS can help.

Your worst nightmare...

...just got worse



The **SNP** would prop up **Ed Miliband** – meaning **chaos for Br**

 **Vote Conservative**



Structural change:

Mixed media – but all networked

- Traditional
‘legacy’ media



Le Monde



- Social news
media



- Social networks



Politicians

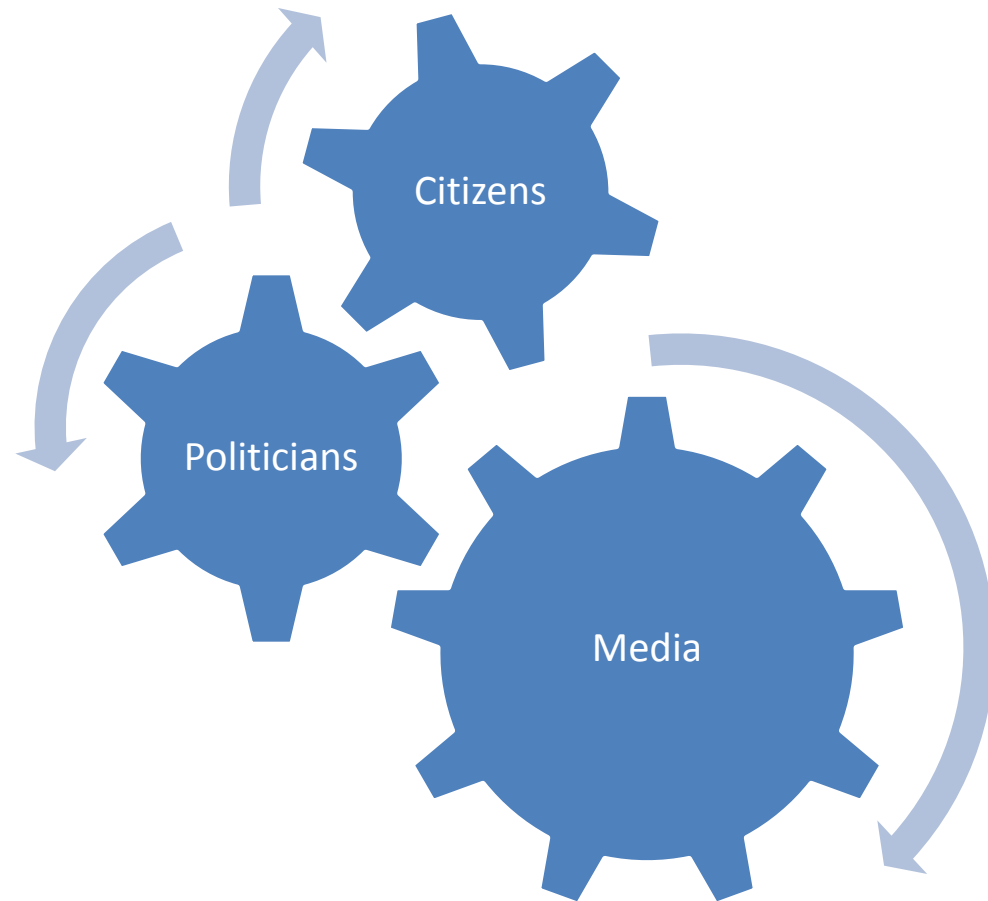


News
Media



Public

Political reporting is now networked



Redefine ‘Journalist’

- **Curator**
- **Partner**
- **Social networker**
- **Specialist**

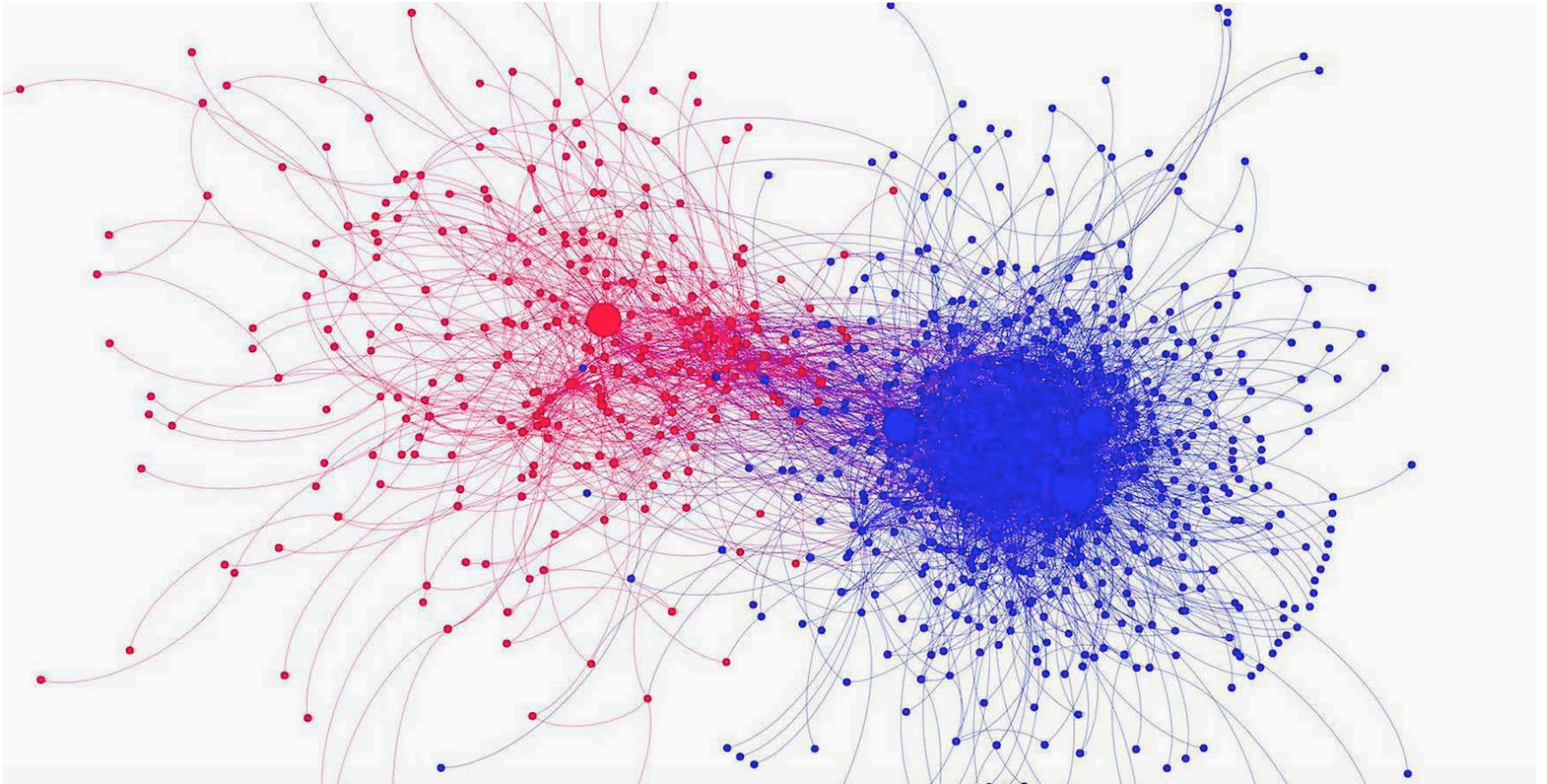
Redefine 'News'

- (Open) Data
- Transient 'liquid' reality
- Relationship not authority
- Contested not objective

What difference does it make?

- Influence – who has it?
- Proportionality – a fair voice?
- Verification – what's true?
- Acceleration – faster, instant, all the time
- Destabilisation – surprise, ambush, reveal
- Superficiality – attention & distraction
- Fragmentation or diversity?

Filter bubbles?



Filter bubbles?



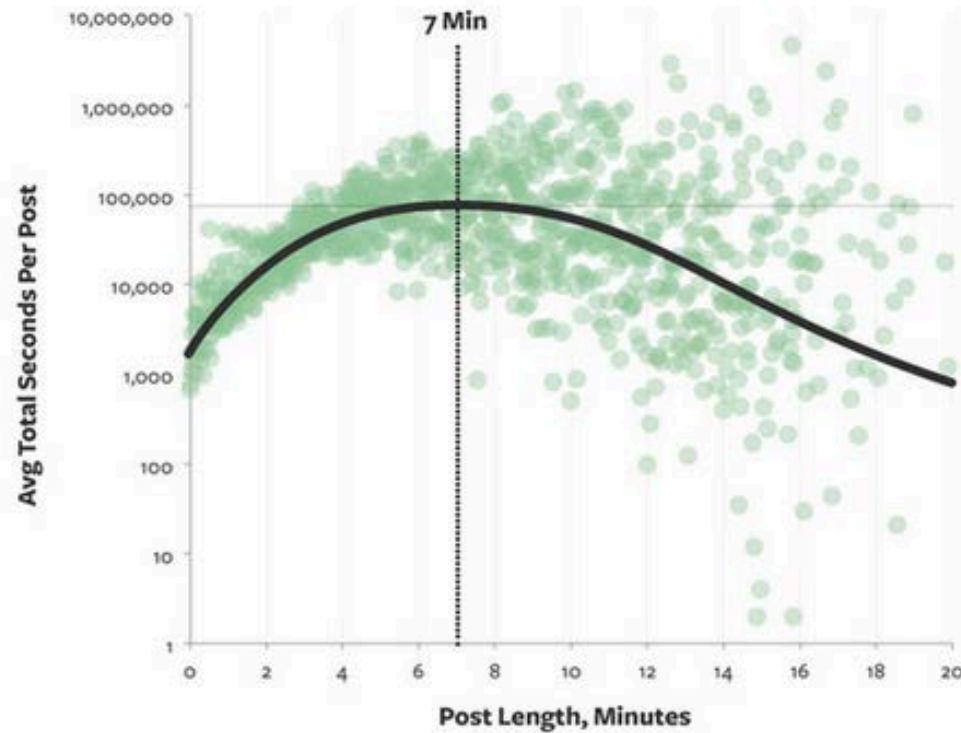
Distraction?

- 1968 average TV soundbite 43"
- 1988 average TV soundbite 9"
- 1892 average newspaper quote 1.7 column inches
- 1916 average newspaper quote 1.0 column inch



Distraction?

Medium's seven minutes



A challenge to politicians



Challenge to journalists



Real problem is engagement, attention
& authenticity



How to get people's attention

21. But ultimately Ed Miliband is the British political champion when it comes to staring at floods.



@CharlieBeckett

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