

FREE Press

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THE MEDIA ELECTION: 5-PAGE SPECIAL REPORT

■ How the papers duped Theresa May

■ How Labour's message got through

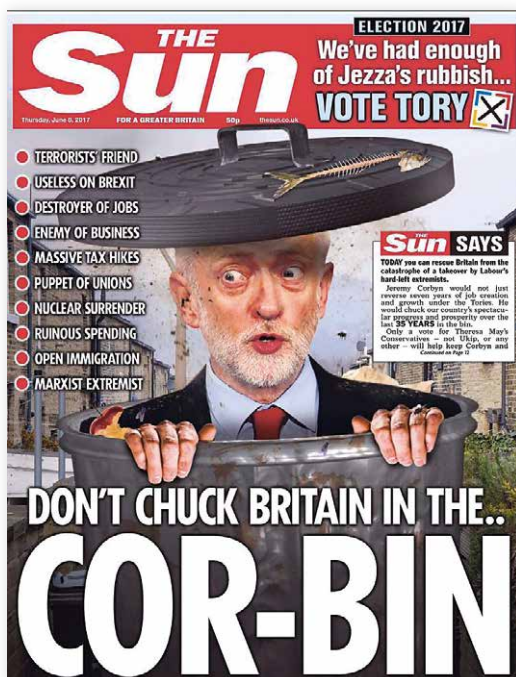
■ The rise of social media, in statistics

■ The parties' media policies

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IT WAS THE SUN WOT LOST IT

Fair TV rules mean Labour message heard



FOR THE Conservatives the 2017 General Election was there for the taking. Then they blew it. It was the national press, their invincible battering ram in the past, that blew it for them.

They had a 20 percent-plus lead in the polls and faced a Labour Party whose leader Jeremy Corbyn had been weakened by persistent attacks from his own party establishment and the press together.

The right-wing papers had won the Tories their election victory in 2015 and the great Brexit triumph a year later; they lionised Prime Minister Theresa May as the strong leader Britain needed.

But they never saw the advance of the online army of social media users, the angry young people, as political correspondent Nicholas Jones puts it in this *Free Press*, "robbed of their future by Brexit".

During the campaign there were

two ghastly terrorist atrocities, both mainly targeting young people, in Manchester and London.

The media went automatically into anti-terror mode. Jeremy Corbyn had been attacked by them many times in the past for his contacts with the IRA and Hamas and here he was, a sitting duck.

They blasted away gleefully at the Labour leadership as "apologists for terror".

It was extraordinary: no-one believed them. Corbyn's poll ratings went up. People saw through the lies, but the Conservatives can't.

This election might well be seen as a watershed. There have been prophesies for more than a decade that the internet and its social media would supplant print, not just as the most popular medium but the most significant. June 8 2017 could turn out to be the day that came true.

Of course, it was the content of Labour's message, expressed in its radical manifesto, that really won the votes, but the changes in media gave people unbiased access to it for the first time.

But there were other things going for Labour. One was the existence of the broadcasting regulations that require TV and radio to be scrupulously impartial and allocate fair time to all parties.

Yet again the papers were sidelined. For the first time since he became Labour leader, Jeremy Corbyn had a fair crack of the whip – especially from the BBC, which had treated him as badly as the right-wing press.

Political correspondents who had patronised and sneered at him now had to report fairly what he said, and people liked the sound of it.

It was a strong validation for public service broadcasting.

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Are hacks up to old tricks again?

For all campaign news and info go to cpbf.org.uk
Email: freepress@cpbf.org.uk

Fake news: what

In today's media, the publication of lies is probably one of the few things that is not changing, says **JONATHAN HARDY**. But it must be dealt with



AS SOON AS Donald Trump called CNN "fake news" last November it was clear the term had spread into a sprawling mess. So there is a case to restrict its use to stories that have no factual basis but are presented as news. That is a big enough concern, from the various agendas and agents of misinformation, to the deeper problem of a misinformed public.

But if the focus is only on the actions of rogue states, the organised alt-right, hate-filled trolls or amoral digital entrepreneurs, the underlying problems will be ignored.

There are four reasons it should be thoroughly dealt with:

1 The Commons media select committee launched an investigation into fake news in January, but that was shut down with the election and that may well be the end of it. There must be a new and wider one.

2 Fake news is not new – remember the headline "Freddie Star Ate My Hamster"? That infamous Sun story of 1986 was completely untrue but agreed with the star's agents, for the publicity – and neither is it a product of digital media alone.

More serious examples are in the long history of stories designed to demonise others by right-wing British newspapers – from attacks on so-called "loony left" councils in the 1980s with their fake news that Labour-controlled London

We need to end the hypocrisy of media denouncing one kind of fake news while embracing another

councils had banned children in their schools from singing *Baa Baa Black Sheep* because it was racist, to more recent stories that councils were banning Christmas so as not to offend Muslims.

Human rights groups, refugee organisations, the European Union, trade unions and many others have all had the treatment.

The newspaper groups that published this stuff are now insisting that the problem lies elsewhere, pointing the finger at digital and social media. But such neat lines can't be drawn.

While well resourced newsrooms working to professional standards could stop fake news, in the weak system of self-regulation that we have, with power in the hands of large corporations and right-wing proprietors, it can thrive.

We need to introduce the reforms proposed by the Leveson Inquiry to toughen self-regulation; fake news should be dealt as part of much wider reforms, with the press put under proper scrutiny.

3 In digital media, fake news is a symptom of a much broader range of problems. Money is made by shareable content, with the tech giants on-selling

Wanted: sheriff for this lawless online town

The internet is outside the law and this can't go on. **GARY HERMAN** says the corporations must be made to take responsibility as publishers for what's on their pages



COMMENTATORS AND politicians see the internet as the mother of all folk devils; a veritable Pandora's box of modern evils: fake news, online bullying, revenge porn, radicalisation, and videos of suicides, murder and gruesome executions.

Many countries would ban such material if it appeared in any other medium, but the internet is different. It's a lawless town.

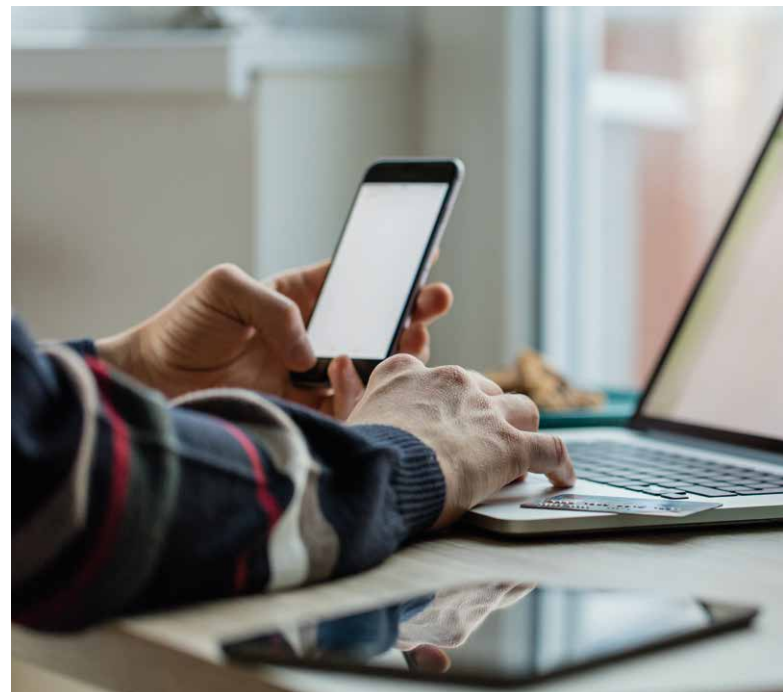
It is – by design – a global medium, intended by its inventors as a distributed network with no organisational hierarchy, central point of control or single administrative authority.

The internet, some say, is the world's first functioning anarchy and, as such, there is no existing method for censoring it or controlling its content.

Politicians find this notion abhorrent and increasingly identify the internet with the companies that create and own so-called "platforms" and "apps" – in effect the websites that people use to access internet content or services.

Some of these have been attracting a lot of flak.

Google, which owns the video streaming site YouTube, has been condemned for running



inappropriate ads or for hosting offensive videos, apparently intended to radicalise Muslim youth or convey anti-semitic messages.

Facebook has been lambasted for publishing fake news designed to subvert democratic process. Facebook also owns WhatsApp, the text messaging service with end-to-end encryption, denounced

as a "safe space" for criminals and terrorists.

Spokespeople from Facebook, Twitter or Google all promise to neutralise the threat of state action by suppressing the worst of the internet.

It's usually too little too late – take down a post here, implement a more effective complaints

else is new?

their data on users. This blurs distinctions between trustworthiness and authority on the one hand, and popularity and shareability on the other. The companies make their money from advertising based on shareability and there is no penalty for lying. This has been called the “hoax economy” in which you can sell anything.

4 There is a particular kind of fake news, which is a communication on behalf of a sponsor. In print these used to be known as “advertorials” – but the whole area of brands getting involved in media content has exploded into what is now known as “native advertising” – that is, according to the Interactive Advertising Bureau: “ads that are so cohesive with page content, assimilated into the design, and consistent with the platform, that the viewer simply feels that they belong”.

Even this is not actually new. “Fake news” was the headline on an article in the US magazine TV Guide in 1992, but the story was about was corporate video news releases (VNRs) – the growing supply of news by brands that was making its way directly into TV news bulletins, because they came free.

P B

The law requires broadcasters to display a “P” logo onscreen when programmes contain product placement. A similar symbol could be required for “branded content” – articles paid for by companies.

WHAT SHOULD be done? There are industry rules that marketing communications must be clearly identified, so that people know when they are being sold to. But they are not working effectively, so we need clearer, consistent labelling.

In UK television, any programme that contains “product placement” – the named use of a product, paid for by the company – must show a P sign. Why not require a similar universal logo for publishers who carry brand sponsored content? Perhaps a B?

We need greater transparency about the commercial sources for news stories, and better regulation keeping editorial and advertising apart. And we need to end the hypocrisy of media outlets denouncing one kind of fake news, like internet lies, while embracing another, like disguised advertising. That’s why Parliament’s inquiry should be expanded to investigate branded content as well as fake news.

For 20 years we’ve lived through the myth that the internet allows anyone to speak and be heard – that’s the upbeat version, while fake news has crystallised the downbeat version, of hate and segregation. The democratic myth ignores the imbalance in resources that shape who is really heard in our media.

So we need media that open up to a wider range of voices – and give audiences the tools to make better informed judgements about all sources. We need to tackle concentration of media ownership and help create more diverse media ecology. We need to press for Google and other large communication firms to pay a levy for public journalism, and ensure greater public oversight over their algorithms and decisions, on which we increasingly rely.



procedure there, or devise a clever algorithm to monitor content for breaches of standards of acceptability.

Taking down a post will not undo the damage it might have done; computer-based complaints procedures are invariably close to useless; and algorithms will never be clever enough to reliably

distinguish a medical illustration, say, from a pornographic image or fake news from realistic satire.

Relying on companies like Google or Facebook to implement an effective global regulatory framework is like asking criminals to police themselves.

Governments, intergovernmental bodies, like the UN, and international public interest bodies, like global trade union federations and the big charities, need to do the job.

But a surprise candidate for sheriff rode to the rescue at the recent Hay-on-Wye literary festival.

The writer and broadcaster Stephen Fry gave a speech saying that companies like Twitter, Facebook and Google should be classified as publishers rather than “platforms”, and so become subject to existing regulatory frameworks, jurisdiction and tax regimes.

The argument is older than the internet. In fact, it goes back to the old world of analogue telephone systems which were classed as “common carriers” like postal services.

They don’t know what’s in the messages they carry and cannot in law be held responsible for their content. If, on the other hand, they monitored their traffic, they would

Twitter, Facebook and Google should be classed as publishers and subject to media regulation

have to assume responsibility for this content.

Companies like Facebook stretch a point by arguing that they too are effectively common carriers. That’s what they mean by “platform”. Responsibility for their content lies with the people who upload the messages, not with them.

This argument is hokum. Fry’s argument, on the other hand, is unassailable. Facebook does impose restrictions on content and employs human monitors, so it’s difficult for the company to maintain that it’s not a publisher.

The problem is that once it admits to being a publisher it can be held responsible for its content. Armies of lawyers specialising in defamation and intellectual property must be standing by.

With around 2 billion active monthly users in the first quarter of 2017, that’s a lot of content to be responsible for. And with great revenue (almost \$28 billion last year) comes great responsibility. But try persuading chief executive Mark Zuckerberg of that.

Luckily, Microsoft has issued a challenge that may provide the bones of a solution.

In February, the company’s president and chief legal officer, Brad Smith, called for the introduction of a Digital Geneva Convention, modelled on the Fourth Geneva Convention intended to protect civilians in time of war.

Smith’s Digital Convention would “commit governments to protecting civilians from nation-state attacks [and cyber-attacks for financial gain] in times of peace”.

For this purpose, Smith envisages technology companies working collectively as a neutral entity to “make the internet a safer place”.

If this plan gets off the ground, and Microsoft certainly has the clout to launch it, it must accept the need to broaden the definition of cyber-attacks to encompass all forms of internet abuse including fake news, bullying, child abuse, revenge porn, hate speech, and the organisation of terror.

THE CPBF ELECTION MANIFESTO

NONE OF the party programmes, not even Labour's, included measures to challenge the power of Big Media, owned by millionaires and big corporations. This is why the

Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom, with the Media Reform Coalition, published its own manifesto for media reform, *Give Truth a Chance*. The CPBF distributed

5,000 copies to groups around the country. *Give Truth a Chance* calls for government action to bring about controls on media ownership; independent and effective

UK GENERAL ELECTION 2017
A Manifesto for Media Reform

GIVE TRUTH A CHANCE

THERE IS public alarm about 'fake news' but who can we rely on for the truth?
It wasn't fringe websites in the USA that first published distortions and lies. Commercial media have been doing it for decades and the public deserve better.
Big Media in the UK are owned by billionaires and big corporations. The press, which claims to claim to be the last in the world, is the least trusted by the public, across the whole of Europe.
The BBC, under huge pressure from the government, is acting more and more like a state-owned broadcaster, and it fails in its duty to reflect the diversity of the UK's population.
We have digital giants like Facebook and Google who are mopping up advertising and using their market power to avoid paying tax.
And a government that finds time to meet Rupert Murdoch, but can't rise above its own self-interest to enforce effective press self-regulation or to help to save our local media.
So what should the government be doing?

CAMPAIGN FOR PRESS AND BROADCASTING FREEDOM

self-regulation of the press; well-funded, independent public service media and protection of citizens' communications rights. Go to www.cpbpf.org.uk/media-manifesto.

Former Free Press editor Granville is honoured

GRANVILLE WILLIAMS, a former editor of *Free Press*, was presented with a certificate recognising his "outstanding achievement" for the labour and trade union movement at the annual meeting of Yorkshire and the Humber region of the TUC in March.

TUC regional secretary Bill Adams presented the award, saying: "Granville has a vast knowledge of trade unions



Granville receives the TUC award from Bill Adams (left)

and a great network of union contacts. He is a keen advocate of press freedom and has been a leading figure in the Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom from the outset.

"Granville has also helped found the Orgreave Campaign for Truth and Justice and his dedication has helped keep that campaign in the headlines".

Last year Granville was presented with a Gold Badge by the National Union of Journalists in recognition of his union work.

"I'm really moved and really honoured," he said. "Getting the gold badge from the NUJ and this from the TUC have been true highlights for me. Being involved in the trade union movement has been a joy in my life and it's about as far from being a chore as it can be."

Granville is a member of the CPBF National Council and co-ordinates the activities of CPBF North.

Wapping remembered in CPBF member's movie

THE TRAGIC story of the great Wapping strike of 1986-87, in which 5,500 sacked media workers lost their jobs, features in a new film on major labour disputes.

Belonging: the Truth Behind the Headlines is an explosive documentary investigating where real power lies in this

country. The film, directed by Morag Livingstone in her first feature-length documentary, shines a spotlight on three industrial disputes, and how the media, government and big business colluded to suppress human rights and democracy.

The film, which premiered in London in May, is told through personal stories of those who lived through the Wapping, Royal Mail and Grangemouth disputes and ultimately highlights what the trade union movement gives communities up against the sinister forces of a largely invisible power—a sense of belonging; and of hope.

"That word 'belonging' kept coming up," Morag says. "It really stuck with

me. And then I did about two month's research on what belonging means and I found that that's what the film is all about – it's about being a collective."

Morag is active in the broadcasting union BECTU, which she represents on the CPBF National Council. She says

she was shocked to discover the extent to which government and business work in concert against the interests of ordinary people. People sit in a room and make decisions that work against us."

At Wapping in east London 30 years ago Rupert Murdoch sacked his entire production and clerical workforce as he moved the production of his four national papers to a new non-union plant.

The workers fought for a year but failed to win back their jobs.

Belonging is screening at union and other meetings around the country and will be available online from August. For a list of screenings or to pre-order a copy visit www.belonging4us.com.



Join the campaign for press and broadcasting freedom

Join online at www.cpbpf.org.uk

MEMBERSHIP RATES PER YEAR

| | |
|---|-----|
| a) Individual membership | £15 |
| b) Unwaged | £6 |
| c) Supporting membership (includes free CPBF publications) | £25 |
| d) Institutions (eg libraries) (includes 10 copies of <i>FREE Press</i>) | £25 |

AFFILIATION BY ORGANISATION

| | |
|---------------------------|------|
| f) Fewer than 500 members | £25 |
| g) 500 to 1,000 | £30 |
| h) 1,000 to 10,000 | £50 |
| i) 10,000 to 50,000 | £115 |
| j) 50,000 to 100,000 | £225 |
| k) Over 100,000 | £450 |

I/We want to join the CPBF and enclose a cheque/PO for £

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Address _____

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Return form to CPBF, 23 Orford Road, London E17 9NL, 07729 846 146, freepress@cpbpf.org.uk

Regulations made coverage fairer

STEPHEN CUSHION of Cardiff University's school of journalism, which closely analysed coverage of the recent general election, says one reason for Labour's relative success was the fact that the regulations forced broadcasters to give the opposition party fairer coverage



Tory papers on polling day; little did they know ...

THE LABOUR Party surprised commentators by attracting over 40 per cent of the electorate in the election. Given that the Conservatives were polling between 16 and 22 points ahead of Labour before the campaign began, this surprise was understandable. The conventional wisdom among journalists and pundits had been that May would land an enhanced majority and Corbyn's brand of left-wing politics would be consigned to history.

But the 2017 election conclusively showed election campaigns really do matter, with the gap between Conservatives and Labour shrinking in the polls over the course of the campaign.

The ways the parties' campaigned also shaped how the media reported the election. The Conservative campaign was widely viewed as highly stage-managed, with a robotic May sticking closely to the script dictated by the party and limiting opportunities for journalists to quiz her. While she opted to duck the TV debates, Corbyn made a last minute decision to appear on one alongside five other party parties.

In contrast to May, the Labour leader also held well attended rallies and passionately promoted his manifesto.

But it was not just campaigning that drove the narrative of campaign coverage. The UK's impartiality rules meant that both the main parties should receive roughly equal time to air their views. At Cardiff University we examined Channel 5 at 5pm, Channel 4 at 7pm, BBC News at Ten, ITV News at Ten and Sky News at 10pm over the six week campaign. We found Conservatives were given slightly more airtime than Labour, partly due to the government response immediately after the terrorist attacks in London and Manchester.

The focus on the two-horse race between Conservative and Labour – representing almost three quarters of time allocated for parties – left little space for alternative perspectives. While broadcasters may argue that their coverage broadly represented how people voted, this overlooks their role in helping to construct, not just

reflect, public opinion.

There were differences between how the minor parties were reported during the campaign, such as the launch of UKIP's and the Greens' manifestos. UKIP received more prominent coverage across all the evening bulletins – about 20 minutes overall on TV news (47.6 per cent share of election coverage) – on the day of its manifesto launch, whereas not every broadcaster covered the Greens' launch at all. When they did it was towards the end of the news and totalled 14 minutes (14.2 per cent share of election coverage).

News events, of course, played a role in determining election coverage, with Ofcom's new rules – agreed just before the campaign – allowing broadcasters more discretion in interpreting the impartiality rules. The smaller parties, including the DUP who are propping up the Conservative government, were almost invisible in Britain throughout the campaign. The DUP made just one or two appearances on each of the bulletins.

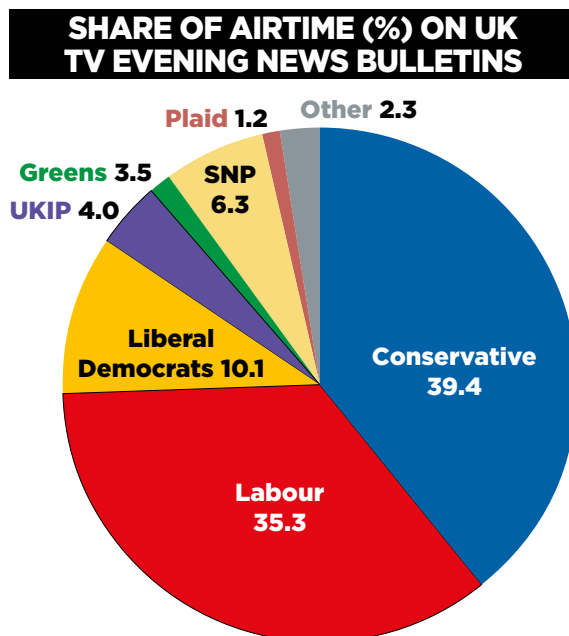
However, for Corbyn and Labour the impartiality rules meant a refreshing change in the news agenda. Since Corbyn was elected, research has shown broadcast media largely focusing on divisions within the Labour party and Corbyn's supposedly poor leadership.

But during the campaign the media spotlight shone brighter on the parties' policies, allowing Labour to showcase their proposals and highlight the ideological differences with the Conservatives.

And yet, while the polls showing a majority of the public favoured many Labour policies, at times correspondents cast doubt on how popular these manifesto pledges were or whether people would be prepared to vote for them. So, for example, after Labour's manifesto was leaked one BBC correspondent concluded:

In the end, Huw, it comes down to faith, which Jeremy Corbyn has in abundance and in public trust which, as of now, he presently lacks and needs to build up if this whole plan is to become a radical plan for government and not simply end up as a sort of curiosity left over after a failed political experiment on June 8.

(BBC, May 11)



Given over 40 per cent of the electorate voted for Corbyn's party, clearly Labour's policies were not as radical as conventional wisdom held. But since almost 1 in 4 election news items were live two-ways during the election campaign, correspondents played a prominent role in setting the agenda.

In the light of how inaccurate reporters were about Corbyn's electoral appeal, broadcasters may want to reconsider relying so heavily on their journalistic judgement about how the public think about politics. Focussing on the parties' policy positions and letting the public judge for themselves might represent a more impartial way of reporting elections in the future.

The issues were the issue

DAVID DEACON
and **DOMINIC WRING**

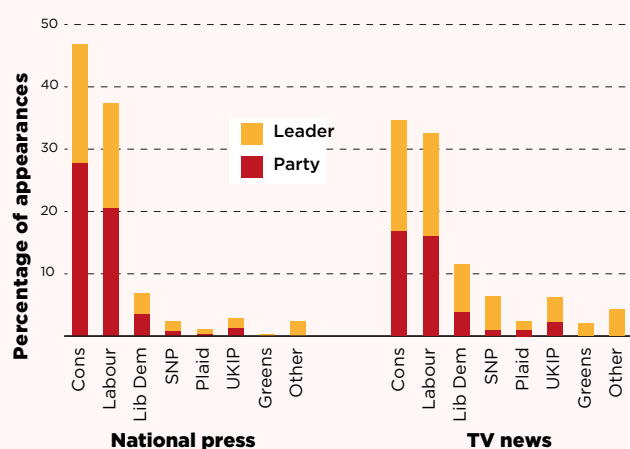
note the positive effects of the reporting with, surprisingly, more attention to the issues than the personalities

THE LEGION of commentators who had spent weeks confidently predicting the outcome were embarrassed when the results were finally announced.

The surprise result has led to a post-mortem into what happened during the campaign that in part has linked the apparent rise in youth electoral participation to an increase in social media activity. Some have begun speculating about the declining significance of more traditional forms of news journalism.

Loughborough University's Centre for Research in Culture and Communication conducted an exhaustive audit of weekday TV (the four major terrestrial bulletins

PROMINENCE OF PARTIES MAY 5 – JUNE 7



SPACE TO ELECTION ISSUES COMPARED WITH 2015

| Issue | 2017 (%) | Difference from 2015 (%) |
|--|----------|--------------------------|
| Electoral process | 32.9 | - 12.5 |
| Brexit/European Union | 10.9 | +7.8 |
| Defence/Military/Security | 7.2 | +4.7 |
| Health and health care provision | 6.7 | = |
| Taxation | 5.7 | -1.1 |
| Economy/Business/Trade | 5.5 | -5.9 |
| Social Security | 4.6 | +2.4 |
| Immigration | 4.2 | +0.8 |
| Devolution/other constitutional issues | 3.3 | -1.0 |
| Standards | 3.0 | -0.3 |
| Education | 2.9 | +1.6 |
| Public services | 2.3 | +1.7 |
| Employment | 1.6 | -0.7 |
| Housing | 1.3 | -1.5 |
| Other issues | 7.9 | |

and Sky) and print reporting (the ten national dailies) in the five formal weeks of the campaign.

Among other noteworthy trends, we found this election experienced a discernible increase in the media attention devoted to substantive matters of policy such as Brexit, security and health, compared with the election of 2015.

Concurrently there was a noticeable decline in so-called "process coverage" of the personalities, polling, spin and other aspects of the race. This more intense interest in the issues can be partly explained by what turned out to be the fortuitous leaking of Labour's manifesto, which enabled the party to trail its core offerings before formally launching them.

By contrast the normally self-assured Conservatives were forced to deny they had abandoned their controversial policy on social care, an initiative that was quickly

derided as the "dementia tax", causing consternation not only among voters but also in the national press.

Newspaper coverage was another focus of our study. It is noteworthy that positive evaluations of the parties, policies and their leaders were obscured by the overwhelming negative tone of print media.

Much of this hostility was directed at Labour and especially leader Jeremy Corbyn – though the Mirror's hostility to the Tories exceeded all others, and its support for Labour outdid all the Conservative papers' for their party, both by some distance.

The broadcasting regulations designed to secure fairness made a difference: the spread of coverage of the parties was more balanced on the screen than through the narrow Tory/Labour prism of the press.

HOW PAPERS LINED UP

AMONG THE national daily papers, the Telegraph, Daily Mail, Express, The Sun, The Times and Financial Times called for Tory votes. The Mirror, Guardian and Morning Star supported Labour.

Likewise the Sunday papers from each publisher did the same; with the exceptions of the Observer and Sunday People, which urged readers to vote tactically against the Conservatives.

What parties said on

Extracts from the manifestos

CONSERVATIVES

At a time when the internet is changing the way people obtain their news, we also need to take steps to protect the reliability and objectivity of information that is essential to our democracy and a free and independent press We will be consistent in our approach to regulation of online and offline media.

Given the comprehensive nature of the first stage of the Leveson Inquiry and given the lengthy investigations by the police and Crown Prosecution Service into alleged wrongdoing, we will not proceed with the second stage of the Leveson Inquiry ...

We will repeal Section 40 of the Crime and Courts Act 2014, which, if enacted, would force media organisations to become members of a flawed regulatory system or risk having to pay the legal costs of both sides in libel and privacy cases, even if they win.

LABOUR

The BBC is a national asset which we should all be proud of We will ensure the BBC and public service broadcasting has a healthy future. Labour is committed to keeping Channel 4 in public ownership.

Victims of phone hacking have been let down by a Conservative government that promised them justice, but failed to follow through. We will implement the recommendations of part one

Paper tigers and Tories believed their own lies

Veteran former BBC political correspondent

NICHOLAS JONES explains how the appalling coverage of the Labour leader worked to the party's advantage



JONES: Treatment of Corbyn 'worst I have ever seen'

IF JEREMY Corbyn was the intended target of the vilest election reporting of recent years, he turned out to be its unintended beneficiary. The true casualty of the bile spewed by Conservative-supporting newspapers was Theresa May.

She was so cocooned by the deadly embrace of the anti-Corbyn hate of Paul Dacre's Daily Mail and Rupert Murdoch's Sun that she was duped into thinking that having been crowned a popular hero by the UK's two biggest selling tabloids, voters were bound to agree.

They all failed to realise the extent to which young people who feel their future had been stolen by Brexit were relying on social media.

Trapped in a phoney propaganda war, May was presented by the Mail and the Sun as an all-conquering hero, fated for her promise to walk away if necessary from the EU negotiations, given that "no deal is better than a bad deal".

Her much-promoted invincibility was bolstered by opinion surveys – commissioned by the same proprietors – that suggested she was the most popular Prime Minister for 40 years, and that the Conservatives had an unassailable lead that could deliver a majority of up to 172 seats.

There was also a misreading of the mood change that was happening within the Parliamentary Labour Party. Amid all the damning headlines about Corbyn the terrorists' friend, there had been a shift in opinion among Labour MPs. Criticism fell away in the growing acclaim for the manifesto pledges to end tuition fees, provide free school meals and maintain the triple lock and winter fuel allowances for pensioners.

Above them the tabloids' anti-Corbyn air war spluttered on, failing to damage the target but still reinforcing a belief in the Tory high command

that the negative campaign techniques of Lynton Crosby would deliver.

With the Mail and the Sun concocting distortions that rivalled the infamous television attack advertisements of a US presidential campaign, there seemed every likelihood that the effectiveness of the unrelenting anti-EU propaganda pumped out before the referendum would once again win over voters come polling day.

Of equal encouragement to May and her colleagues was the calculated pre-election strategy of the Tory press to play down the consequences of a hard Brexit. May's staunchest cheerleaders ignored the impact during those weeks of the transfer of bank and finance jobs to Frankfurt, Dublin and Paris; the loss of academic

The election has exposed the growing impotence of Britain's tabloid tigers

funding; the falling off in industrial investment; or the steady drift away in skilled EU workers.

Instead the Tory press trumpeted the positive message that a government under her "strong and stable leadership" would get the best deal for the UK.

The tabloid denigration of Corbyn and his immediate colleagues was worse even than previous assaults on leaders of the left; in the 1983 general election the tabloids demolished Michael Foot and from then on the Tory press was in the ascendancy and papers such as the Sun, under its editor Kelvin MacKenzie, led the pack.

Then the fight-to-the-death disputes of the

Thatcher years were used by the Tory press to undermine and attack Neil Kinnock in the 1987 and 1992 elections. The similarity between the treatment meted out to Kinnock – and now to Jeremy Corbyn – was that so many of the negative stories were manufactured by the likes of the Sun and Mail.

The narrative about Corbyn being the terrorists' friend was based on regurgitating earlier press coverage of his encounters with Sinn Féin leaders in Northern Ireland, or Hamas and the Palestinians, that dated back 30 years or more.

These stories lacked credibility: John Major and Tony Blair had established comparable lines of communication in preparing for the Northern Ireland peace agreement which had, after all, delivered two decades of peace and stability. In the view of his admirers, Corbyn's readiness to reach out and engage in dialogue was to be praised, not condemned.

The election has finally exposed the growing impotence of Britain's tabloid tigers, even though the printed press does continue to influence, and sometimes mould, the news agenda.

Perhaps the BBC could make a start by including a health warning in press reviews by reminding viewers and listeners of a paper's political affiliation: a quote from the Mail and Sun would be prefaced by the line that this was a paper that had advised readers to vote Leave in the EU Referendum and Conservative in the 2017 general election.

A younger generation might then realise that the UK's much lauded "free press" is in fact a "politicised press", and that the partisan nature of their reportage should not be ignored.

media policy

of the Leveson Inquiry and commence part two which will look into the corporate governance failures that allowed the hacking scandal to occur.

We are concerned about closures of local media outlets and the reductions in number of local journalists. Labour will hold a national review of local media and into the ownership of national media to ensure plurality.

To protect democracy and media freedom, we will take steps to ensure that Ofcom is better able to safeguard a healthy plurality of media ownership and to put in place clearer rules on who is fit and proper to own or run TV and radio stations.

LIBERAL DEMOCRATS

■ In light of the press's failure to engage in

effective self-regulation, seek to ensure delivery of independent self-regulation, and commence part two of the Leveson inquiry as soon as practicable

■ Order Ofcom to launch an immediate full assessment of media plurality in the UK, including a review of the "fit and proper persons test" and whether the communications regulator, and the Competition and Markets Authority, have appropriate powers to deal with concentrations of power in the digital economy

■ THE TORY government's voting pact with the Democratic Unionist Party of Northern Ireland could threaten the future of the BBC. The DUP manifesto described the BBC licence fee as a "highly regressive tax" and pledged to "freeze

then cut or abolish the TV Licence".

The Conservative manifesto said it will ensure pensioners receive free TV licences, which implicit pledges the licence fee's continuation. But top Tories in the past, including former culture secretary John Whittingdale, have questioned its future, if not directly called for its abolition.

Labour's deputy leader and shadow culture secretary, Tom Watson, has written to culture secretary Karen Bradley pledging that Labour would vote down any attempts to reform the licence. "As a firm supporter of the BBC and its current funding model, I urge you to fight hard to ensure that this pledge is not included in any agreement, formal or otherwise, between the Conservative Party and the DUP."

New media over old: w

Online campaigning through social media overwhelmingly tilted towards the Labour Party in the 2017 campaign. It may not in itself

have been the crucial factor that technophiles like to claim – there were several reasons, and no-one knows how many people were impelled

to vote by them – but there's no doubt about the content, nor that they acted as a positive counter-balance to the right-wing press.

Labour won shares battle 20-1

OF THE hundreds of stories shared on social media, only five of 100 most-popular were pro-Tory, according to an analysis the Buzzsumo database by the Press Gazette.

The social media platforms counted were Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google+ and Pinterest.

Of the 100, 45 were anti-Tory/pro-Labour, 46 were neutral (including all poll results stories) and just five were pro-Tory.

The remaining four were judged to be not relevant. 52 had been first published on centre-left-leaning sites, with the Independent, Mirror, Guardian and HuffPo prevalent as well as left-wing ones like The Canary, Skwawkbox and The London Economic.

The Canary claimed more viral stories in the top 100 than the Daily Mail, Telegraph and Express combined. It featured four times, while they appeared just once each.

There are no pro-Conservative stories at all in the top 20, according to Buzzsumo's data.

The most-shared of all was on The London Economic (*image, right*), headlined "This Facebook comment about Jeremy Corbyn is going viral".

It repeats a Facebook comment by Chris Renwick which pours scorn on the portrayal of Jeremy Corbyn by "the media arm of the establishment" and had more than 200,000 shares.

The Independent appears 21 times within the top 100 – the most of any news organisation – the Guardian 17 times and the BBC 14 times. The Sun does not feature at all.

Interestingly, and in a positive comparison with recent national elections in the USA and France, there do not appear to have been any "fake news" stories circulated of any significance. But there were four analysed as "satirical".

| Headline | Publisher | Date | Facebook shares | Twitter shares | All social media |
|---|-------------------------|--------|-----------------|----------------|------------------|
| This Facebook comment about Jeremy Corbyn is going viral | thelondoneconomic.com | May 31 | 136,800 | 5,600 | 142,600 |
| Green Party pulls out of crucial general election seat to help Labour beat Tories | independent.co.uk | Apr 25 | 75,600 | 802 | 76,400 |
| Stop the Tories – Infogram, charts & infographics | infogr.am | Apr 18 | 68,900 | 413 | 69,300 |
| If ever there was a time to vote Labour, it is now | theguardian.com | Apr 25 | 63,500 | 4,500 | 68,200 |
| Labour will scrap university tuition fees if they win general election | independent.co.uk | May 10 | 53,600 | 12,800 | 66,500 |
| NHS workers have spoken. The general election is our only chance of saving the health service | thecanary.co | Apr 24 | 61,900 | 1,600 | 63,500 |
| EU leader: UK would be welcomed back if voters overturn Brexit | theguardian.com | Apr 20 | 52,100 | 6,800 | 59,400 |
| Can't be bothered to vote? If you're young, you simply can't afford not to | theguardian.com | Apr 30 | 52,000 | 3,700 | 55,800 |
| UK hasn't done enough to tackle terrorism, says woman whose job it was to tackle terrorism | newsthump.com | Jun 5 | 48,800 | 1,800 | 50,700 |
| Diane Abbott to replace Rachel Riley on Countdown | southendnewsnetwork.com | Jun 6 | 48,800 | 143 | 48,900 |
| Labour slashes Tory lead to just five points in latest poll taken this week | independent.co.uk | May 25 | 43,600 | 1,900 | 45,500 |
| Election poll shows Labour is ahead in the UK general election | wired.co.uk | Jun 7 | 42,300 | 2,900 | 45,300 |
| Labour and Lib Dems reject Greens' call for electoral pact against Tories | theguardian.com | Apr 19 | 41,900 | 3,100 | 45,100 |
| Young people, here's what no one is telling you about the general election: you could swing it | independent.co.uk | May 12 | 41,800 | 1,700 | 43,600 |
| General election 2017: Campaigning continues | bbc.co.uk | Apr 18 | 20,600 | 22,300 | 43,500 |
| Professor Stephen Hawking backs Labour in general election because Tories would be a 'disaster for NHS and police' | mirror.co.uk | Jun 5 | 33,700 | 9,400 | 43,100 |
| Why should I not vote Conservative? 29 nasty policies you shouldn't forget in the 2017 general election | mirror.co.uk | Apr 28 | 38,700 | 3,500 | 42,200 |
| Theresa May to seek general election on 8 June | bbc.co.uk | Apr 18 | 31,200 | 9,000 | 41,700 |
| General election 2017: Two million apply to register to vote | bbc.co.uk | May 20 | 36,700 | 4,800 | 41,600 |
| Dennis Skinner: Theresa May called an election because of Tory fraud investigation | inews.co.uk | Apr 20 | 38,100 | 1,600 | 39,600 |

Is this a turning point?

Labour's online army raised votes and cash

THE HUGE pro-Labour disparity in online campaigning more than balanced the Tories' predominance in the print media. This was a clear factor in explaining the surprise result, even if Labour did not win.

It was a combination of targeting advertising by the party and supporting organisations like Momentum, together with a massive sharing of pages by tens of thousands of individuals.

Labour ads on Facebook and Twitter reached a much larger number of seats than the Tories. Its messaging was also better-tailored to mobilise voters – using social media to build support rather than attack the Tories; this again in contrast to the crude smearing still prevalent in the tabloid press.

Robert Booth and Alex Hern wrote in the Guardian: "Labour dominated the digital election because the party used Facebook, Twitter and online videos to build and motivate its voter base, rather than to attack the Conservatives."

"In contrast, even in the final hours of the campaign, the Conservatives were using social media to target Labour marginals rather than defend its own vulnerable seats, many of which it went on to lose."

"The Tories were advancing further into Labour territory but weren't defending their own marginals," said Sam Jeffers, the co-founder of Who Targets Me, which tracked more than 7,000 political Facebook adverts sent to 12,000 voters.

"In the final stages we saw lots of Labour ads in Hastings and Rye [where the home secretary, Amber Rudd, almost lost her seat], but no Tory ads." Jeffers said that in the last 48 hours, the Conservatives' social media video encouraging people to get out and vote was viewed less than half as many times as Labour's.

Labour's online army was also able to raise significant funds for the campaign – another long-term threat to the Tories, who have always



enjoyed financial supremacy through donations from big business.

Momentum, for instance, crowdfunded more than £100,000 through the Crowdpac site in the opening weeks of the campaign. It swiftly put these funds to good use, building online tools to help activists find their nearest marginal constituency. Its viral videos reached millions.

Crowdpac founder Paul Hilder commented: "The Conservatives' traditional advantage in getting millionaires to sign big cheques is no longer the silver bullet it once was."

This mobilisation of predominantly young voters suggests that the Tories can no longer

It's about building a movement, and social media provide the glue to bind people together

rely on their dominance of the print media to win elections. Labour mobilised hundreds of thousands of young people through Facebook and Twitter to deliver the result.

Jeremy Corbyn's official Twitter and Facebook pages posted 925 messages over the election campaign, receiving 2.8 million shares – more than 20 times as many as Theresa May's. Her team posted just 159 times, a sixth of Corbyn's total, and they were shared just 130,000 times.

Both Corbyn's Twitter and Facebook pages increased their number of followers about 45 per cent over the campaign, from 850,000 each to more than 1.2 million apiece.

A former press adviser to David Cameron, Giles Kenningham, applauded Labour's "very polished social media presence".

Labour did better even in the area of negative campaigning. Its ads attacking the Conservative

fiasco over its "dementia tax" was picked up by Who Targets Me in more than 200 constituencies; a Tory anti-Corbyn ad, focusing on his comments about shoot to kill, was only seen in about 100 seats.

Jag Singh, the founder of MessageSpace, which buys social media, internet and print advertising and provided services to the Conservative campaign, confirmed that the Tories spent less money on Facebook ads rallying their own supporters than targeting ads at soft Labour voters.

This blunder was based on voter prediction data provided by the party's hired strategists, Lynton Crosby and Jim Messina, which suggested, even until the morning of June 8, that they were on course to win Labour seats.

By contrast, on polling day Labour spent considerable money promoting its hashtag #forthemany on Twitter. Twitter is considered Labour's online stronghold and while buying the rights to promote a single hashtag can cost as much as £50,000, the expense may have been worth it to rally the younger vote, which appears to have played a significant role in Labour's performance.

Jay Singh said: "It's about building a movement, and social media can provide the glue for people to bind together. If your strategy is to poke holes in the other side you don't evoke that emotion of togetherness which is an important factor in getting people to vote."

Kenningham added: "There has been repeated talk about getting young people out to vote, but clearly this time Labour's social media strategy worked. It energised people and got the base out."

"Momentum were pushing out slick attack ads which allowed the Labour party to stay above the fray and the Tories didn't have the equivalent third-party campaigning group in the right-wing space."

That's not entertainment!



The Murdoch bid for total control of Sky TV is coming close to the wire, with the regulator Ofcom due to report as Free Press went to press. The CPBF is heavily involved in the resistance to the takeover, which would seriously reduce the diversity of plurality of Britain's media.

TIM GOPSILL argues that it would do even greater damage than that, by wrecking the crucial balance between regulated broadcasting and the free-for-all of the press. It would mean the end of the great tradition of public service media.



... that's right-wing propaganda

TONIGHT KELVIN'S World is a special on the BBC – why is it so left-wing? – with Nigel Farage on why it refuses to have him on the air. Then at 9 o'clock Katie Hopkins talks to Amanda Platell on why feminists hate women, and Sky News at Ten has a major report on the Muslim plot to take over NATO ...

THIS MIGHT be an evening's offering from Sky News under new ownership if the government gives the green light to the buyout bid from Rupert Murdoch's 21st Century Fox Corporation (21FC). But it wouldn't be funny.

Neither is it a fantasy, because Murdoch himself has said time and again that this is what he would like to make of Sky when he finally gets his hands firmly on the channel. The keyword is "Foxification", that is, the conversion of a UK-style regulated British public-service TV news station into an unregulated US-style right-wing propaganda channel like Murdoch's Fox News.

The ghastly prospect of Sky Foxified is troubling the Office of Communications (Ofcom) as it mulls 21FC's bid to buy up the 60 per cent of Sky that it doesn't already own. One of the grounds on which Culture Secretary Karen Bradley referred the buyout to Ofcom for consideration is the question of the owner's commitment to recognised broadcasting standards.

To be licensed to broadcast in the UK, TV companies must

comply with Ofcom's broadcasting code, which requires that news "is reported with due accuracy and presented with due impartiality".

21FC says that Sky has followed the code since its inception in 1990 and this is true; Sky News is as accurate and impartial as the BBC or ITV, and rather more adventurous. It is admired in the trade for its skill at breaking stories, and has scooped the Royal Television Society "news channel of the year award" eight times in the last 16 years.

But Ofcom has to consider what would likely happen if Murdoch owned 100 per cent instead of 39.1 per cent of Sky Europe, as the company is now known.

At the same time it is conducting its own inquiry into whether the Murdochs are "fit and proper" media owners.

The evidence that they are not is overwhelming: everyone knows about their conduct in the UK, thanks to the revelations of phone-hacking, bribery and corruption, and the consequent Leveson Inquiry, and there's new evidence almost daily from the US, where Fox's has been rocked by a string of scandals of sexual harassment and abuse, in which the former chief executive Roger Ailes and two top presenters were forced to quit.

But in the business-oriented

world of media regulation that doesn't necessarily mean they can't own a TV station. On the strict terms of Bradley's reference to Ofcom, the questions about broadcasting performance will carry more weight.

There's no doubt about Murdoch's record in this area. In the US – and now in Australia, where News Corporation six months ago bought up that country's Sky News channel in the same way that it is attempting here – his TV is the same as his newspapers: brash, biased and shameless. In other words, in permanent breach of UK regulations.

The Murdochs consider regulated news infected with liberal bias and they are 'balancing' it

But who says he wants that in Britain? He does: Rupert Murdoch, who is chairman of 21FC and chief executive of Fox News, in 2007 told a House of

Lords Committee that Sky News (in Britain) would be more popular if it were more like Fox. The minutes of that session read: "Mr Murdoch believed that Sky News would be more popular if it were more like the Fox News Channel. Then it would be a proper alternative to the BBC ..."

Murdoch knows perfectly well that you can't do biased news in Britain; not openly at any rate. But he added that "Sky News could become more like Fox without a

change to the impartiality rules in the UK. For example," he said, "Sky had not yet made the presentational progress that Fox News had."

There is a sinister twist in that last remark. In another interview, with the New York Times in 2003, Murdoch was asked whether Sky would imitate Fox and replied: "I wish. I think that Sky News is very popular and they are doing very well, but they don't have the entertaining talk shows – it is just a rolling half-hour of hard news all the time ... It is BBC lite ... with a liberal bias."

These talk shows on Fox carry the torch that ignites the relentless right-wing fare that comprises its news agenda. Every evening in three hour-long shows Fox fields its top bigots in talk shows that stir up the right-wing smears and conspiracies of the day. Clips from their comments get into the news and they're away ...

Two of these three leading "anchors" have quit in recent months: Megyn Kelly (in protest at sexual harassment she endured) and Bill O'Reilly (shown the door for sexual harassment).

Fox faces rising protests and is under some pressure, but for the moment it is on the winning side; that is, President Trump's. All the "fake news" that circulated during Trump's presidential campaign began in this way. They might have originated on conservative blogs and other obscure websites but it is Fox that injected them into the



Into the shredder with the Leveson report ... demonstrators against the Sky takeover parade puppets of Murdoch and Theresa May outside the Department for Culture, Media and Sport office

mainstream news agenda.

The stories can even be proved wrong but that doesn't much matter because once they are whirring round social media, providing ammunition for conservative activists, they can't be stopped. This is the "Fox Effect": a wilful confusion between comment and news.

FOX'S SLOGAN, understandably much derided, is of course "fair and balanced", because this is how they see the world: regulated news is infected with liberal bias and they are "balancing" it.

That's certainly what Murdoch thinks. In 1989 he delivered the MacTaggart Lecture at the Edinburgh International Television Festival and defined regulated TV as "a service run for the benefit of the people who provide it, rather than the people who watch it."

His son James feels even more strongly.

Giving the same lecture in 2007 he said that it "crowds out the opportunity for profit, hinders the creation of new jobs, and dampens innovation in our sector. And yet the authorities in the UK continue to seek more control and greater intervention ... " (not true!) ... The system is concerned with imposing what it calls impartiality in broadcast news ... it is an impingement on freedom of speech and on the right of people to choose what kind of news to watch. The only reliable, durable, and perpetual

guarantor of independence is profit."

James is just as central to the Sky buy-up as his dad. He is in charge of both sides, as chief executive of 21FC and chairman of Sky TV – which is what he also was when they made their first, ill-fated attempt at the takeover six years ago.

That bid collapsed when the phone-hacking scandal broke in July 2011 and James was whisked off to New York to avoid arrest. Only last year was it deemed safe to bring him back.

This time they think they have got it right and industry opinion, for what it is worth, agrees. But for Ofcom it's far from straightforward.

Here we have a media regulator faced with a global corporation applying to buy up the second 24-hour domestic TV news channel in the country (along with the BBC's), whose bosses constantly pour scorn on the very notion of regulation, and indeed on Ofcom itself, at every public opportunity; and likewise declare their determination to flout or dodge the regulations at issue.

Have the Murdochs got the nerve to win the takeover on empty pledges to follow the rules, then break them? Yes. Have Ofcom got the nerve to turn them down? We will see.

To green-light their bid would destroy the point of the regulatory

regime, which is to maintain statutorily-enforced neutrality in broadcasting to balance the wild partiality of the press. This is the real balance that the Murdochs ignore, because all they are interested in is their profits: that this positive disparity between print and broadcast serves the public well, offering (fairly) reliable news on one hand and freedom of political expression on the other.

The Murdochs have their papers and want to run their broadcasts on the same lines. If they were allowed to, it would destroy the ecology of Britain's political and media culture.

The only protection left then would be Sky's own staff. They have said many times that they don't want to work the Fox way. Even Head of News John Ryley said last time round: "Although it has my admiration, I know that the Fox News model would not be right for Sky News. For some, opinion will be the right path to follow. For us, it is impartiality."

Sky journalists are not of course unionised – no unions allowed in any UK Murdoch newsrooms – and it would be grossly unfair to load them with the weight of resisting a global media empire.

Many on the left and in university media faculties regard the independence of the BBC and the regime of media regulation as bogus, serving to reinforce our elites rather than challenge them. They may well be right, but you won't half miss them when they've gone.

C4 SAFE FROM PRIVATISERS

CHANNEL 4 has been reprieved from the threat of privatisation as the government conceded its defenders' arguments. But it will have to shift much more of its production outside London.

There had been fears the Tories might realise their long-rumoured ambition to hand C4 to the private sector but culture secretary Karen Bradley announced in March that the idea had been dropped. Instead she launched a consultation on

how best C4 can "increase its impact away from its traditional base".

The government wants it to relocate some or all its staff outside London and increase its spending more widely outside the M25.

"We will also assess whether allowing Channel 4 to take bigger stakes in production companies would support the growth of the regional production sector and help Channel 4 diversify revenues and enhance its sustainability," she said.

'Allo, 'Allo! they're at it again – Sun accused of hospital intrusion

THE SUN stands accused of trying to get a reporter into the hospital ward of a victim of the London tower block fire by posing as the victim's friend.

The accusation, if proved true, would be a return to the worst pre-Leveson days of the popular press, when there were no constraints on their journalists using any means to get the stories they wanted. There were cases of reporters and photographers dressing up as doctors to get to celebrities' bedsides.

King's College Hospital is lodging a complaint with the Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO) about the behaviour of the unnamed reporter.

The patient, Mario Gomes, lived on the 21st floor of Grenfell House and was hailed as a hero after going back into the building to find his 12-year-old daughter.

According to the Sun, he agreed by text message to give an interview in hospital to a journalist who had been given his number by another survivor of the disaster.

The Sun said that a different journalist made the approach to staff at the hospital for the interview, which Gomes then declined because the reporter allegedly claimed to be a friend. It denies the reporter attempted to impersonate a friend.

The south London hospital said: "We have formally written to the Sun and will be informing the Independent Press Standards Organisation.

South London Hospital has formally written to the Sun and will inform the IPSO

We are unable to comment on the specifics until our complaint has been investigated."

IPSO applies an editors' code of practice, which includes a rule on how reporters should conduct themselves in hospitals. Clause 8 of the code says: "Journalists must identify themselves and obtain permission from a responsible executive before entering non-public areas of hospitals or similar institutions to pursue inquiries."

The newspaper said: "No reporter has 'impersonated' any family members. The Sun was in contact with one of the people injured in the

Grenfell fire, who provided a detailed phone interview for the newspaper. We then visited him in hospital to get a further interview and photos.

"On arrival the Sun reporter and photographer made hospital staff aware that they were present and had been in touch with the contact. However we were informed the contact had changed his mind on the interview and the Sun promptly left the hospital."

There are reasons why the IPSO code – along with other media codes of conduct – has a dedicated clause on hospitals. One reason is that a hospital is a fairly public place in which it is easy to walk about unchallenged, where newsworthy patients are vulnerable and accessible.

But another is that there have been contentious cases of patients' privacy being violated. The actor Gorden Kaye, who played a cafe owner in a sitcom called 'Allo 'Allo!, was badly injured in 1990 when a huge billboard crashed through the windscreen of his car during a storm.

A reporter and photographer from the Daily Sport put on white coats, walked to his ward and took photos of him in a distressing state, which were published after a High Court bid for an injunction to prevent publication failed.

This became a cause célèbre because the press was itself on trial at the time. The previous year there had been an inquiry into press standards, rather like the Leveson Inquiry 22 years later, as a result of tabloid intrusion, principally snatched photographs of royalty and other celebs.

This inquiry, by David Calcutt QC, had recommended statutory measures against the press, with the establishment of a tribunal with criminal powers. The press was horrified and promised to clean up its act, and the Calcutt proposals were put aside to give them a chance.

The hospital incident shattered the truce.

The Calcutt committee reconvened and again recommended statutory regulation, but the Tory government of John Major caved in to pressure from the press and dropped it. The Press Complaints Commission, IPSO's predecessor, agreed to tighten its Code of Practice, and the hospital clause appeared.

From time to time, when the going gets hot, the papers do restrain their reporters, to be able to claim they've changed for the better. When the pressure is off, things tend to slip back again.

The newspapers' need to maintain profits drives them to ever increasing sensationalism

They had a torrid time again during the Leveson process, when years of intrusive and illegal snooping – and more years of bare-faced denials as the facts slowly came out – caught up with them. For a year or so they played it safe again.

But they keep slipping back. The newspapers' need to maintain profits drives them to ever increasing sensationalism and ever worse disregard for the lives of the people they report, whether they are hospital patients, Labour politicians, refugees, trade unionists, football fans or whoever.

There are two ways to stop this: one is to stop the Big Media corporations, with their insatiable demands for sales, controlling so much of the press. No-one wants laws to control what they can publish but we do need media that are responsive to the sensitivities of the people they write about.

The second is to set up a regulatory system that can offer real redress rather than IPSO's inevitable whitewash.

DON'T TRUST THEM

PUBLIC TRUST in the UK media has fallen to an all-time low, with less than a quarter of people having faith in broadcasting and the press. Last year it fell by 33 per cent from 36 to 24 per cent, according to the annual trust barometer survey by PR firm Edelman. The survey result, for which Edelman interviewed a sample of 1,150 UK residents, put Britain in 22nd place out of 28 developed countries. Top was Indonesia; bottom was Turkey.