

Y12 Politics Term 2—Electoral systems, voting behaviour, elections

Knowledge Organiser Government and Politics Component 1: Topic 3: Elections and Referendums

Functions of Elections

- To elect a representative
- To create a government to rule
- To pass verdict on former govt. performance
- Gives govt. a mandate (legitimacy from consent) to rule
- Gives voters a choice between political parties and their programmes (manifestos)
- Opportunities for political participation

Do our elections need reform?

Elections held in the UK

- Local council elections (for councillors in local areas) (held annually but 1/3 at a time- office held 3 yrs on a rotating basis)
- General elections (for Westminster MPs in constituencies) (currently held on a 5 yr fixed term basis)
- Mayoral elections in key cities/ regions (held every 4 yrs)
- Scottish Parliament elections (MSPs held every 4 yrs)
- Welsh Parliament elections (MSs held every 5 yrs)
- N. Irish assembly elections (held every 5 years)
- Police and Crime Commissioner elections (held every 4 yrs)

The Party System

The party system refers to how many parties can affect policy and compete in the political system. This often (but not always) relates to the electoral system. For many years FPTP guaranteed UK was a 2 party system where it was essentially a race between Conservatives and Labour. However modern developments such as Devolution and Partisan Dealignment have resulted in the emergence of a 3 party (some say 2.5 party system) with the Lib Dems and SNP winning a considerable number of seats. The Devolved Powers have more of a multi-party system as they have more PR used in their elections.

Relation between electoral system and party system

Generally- plurality and majoritarian systems create 2 party systems... this is because there can only be one winner and they are winner TAKE ALL -over-reward winners- usually biggest parties. This would usually lead to a STRONG and STABLE government but not necessarily

Usually proportional systems create multi-party systems... this is because they are multi-member constituencies and power is divided between winners rather than all going to the bigger parties...this often leads to coalition governments/ minority governments as it is hard for one party to win convincingly when there are so many parties

WARNING: Link is not definite - UK has a plurality system and has had coalitions and minority govts- best described as a 2.5 party system as SNP has much power/ influence

Election Systems UK

PLURALITY SYSTEM (MOST VOTES WINS)
FPTP- Westminster Elections/ Council elections Eng/ Wales

MAJORITARIAN SYSTEM (50% +1 to win) Supplementary Vote (SV)- Mayoral Elections e.g. London, Bristol, Liverpool

PROPORTIONAL SYSTEMS (seats awarded prop. To votes) PR List- EU elections STV -Single Transferrable Vote- n. Irish assembly

HYBRID SYSTEMS (Mix FPTP and PR List) AMS Additional Member System -Scottish/ Welsh Parliament elections

Proposed by Jenkins Commission: AV+ (Hybrid PR List and Majoritarian) Proposed by Referendum- AV

Key Words

ELECTION
BALLOT
TURNOUT
MANDATE
MAJORITARIAN SYSTEM
BOUNDARIES
ABSOLUTE MAJORITY
PARTY REPRESENTATION
OVER-REWARD WINNERS
COALITION GOVERNMENT
CONFIDENCE AND SUPPLY
CAMPAIGN
CONSTITUENCY LINK
VOTER FATIGUE
DISSOLUTION OF PARLIAMENT
BIAS
PROPORTIONALITY

REFERENDUM
CONSTITUENCY
BY-ELECTION
VOTING BEHAVIOUR
PROPORTIONAL SYSTEM
ELECTORAL COMMISSION
DROOP QUOTA
PARTY SYSTEM
DISCRIMINATES
STRONG AND STABLE GOVT.
MARGINAL CONSTITUENCY
MANIFESTO AND MANDATE
MULTI-MEMBER CONSTITUENCIES
PROTEST VOTE
TYRANNY OF MAJORITY
NOT BINDING
ACCOUNTABILITY

PARTICIPATION
FIXED-TERM
TACTICAL VOTING
PLURALITY SYSTEM
HYBRID SYSTEM
SIMPLE MAJORITY
D'HONDT SYSTEM
WINNER TAKE ALL
MAJOR PARTIES
SAFE SEAT
LEGITIMACY
REPRESENTATION
VOTER APATHY
DONKEY VOTING
MEDIA INFLUENCE
OPEN/ CLOSED LIST
DISENCHANTED

Is First Past the Post Fit for Purpose in UK?

- Great constituency link since it is single member constituencies - MPs have weekly surgeries/ ask and answer sessions and do respond by email
- It is fair in that every voter gets one vote only
- Winner take all nature usually (but not always) creates a clear winner with a majority to rule- legislation can be passed effectively (although it also creates an elective dictatorship)
- Simple and easy to understand (weak argument since this does not encourage voting and turnout is low- other countries with more complex systems have higher turnout)

	ELECTIONS	REFERENDUM
Binary Choice (YES/NO)	X	✓
Voting for a single issue	X	✓
Choice of candidates/ views	✓	X
Can be local, regional or national	✓	✓
Held at discretion or govt	✓	✓
Held on fixed term basis	✓	X
Campaigns are held	✓	✓
Government decides wording	X	✓
Results are binding	✓	X
Tyranny of majority?	X	✓

The Jenkins Commission 1997

Roy Jenkins (Lab party) was tasked by the Blair government to investigate First Past the Post and evaluate how fit for purpose it was. In addition to different electoral systems in the UK to see if any would be better for democracy and the functions of elections. He had to find a system that:

- Ensured broad proportionality
- Would produce a strong/ stable government
- Extend voter choice further
- Maintain the link between constituency and MP

Below are the results

FPTP	1. X	2. ✓	3. X	4. ✓
SV	1. X	2. ✓	3. X	4. ✓
List	1. X	2. X	3. X	4. ✓
STV	1. ✓	2. X	3. ✓	4. X
AV	1. X	2. X	3. ✓	4. ✓
AMS	1. X	2. X	3. X	4. X

None were a perfect fit so Jenkins recommended another hybrid: AV+ which would maintain link, give choice, some PR AND should lead to single party govt with legitimacy

Y12 Politics Term 2—Electoral systems, voting behaviour and referendums

Knowledge Organiser Government and Politics Component 1: Topic 3: Elections and Referendums

Elections and Referendums



REFERENDUM CASE STUDIES YOU SHOULD KNOW

1975 EU membership referendum
1997-8 Devolution Referendums (separate for Scotland, Wales and N.Ireland)
2011 AV Electoral Reform Referendum
2014 Scottish Independence Referendum
2016 EU membership referendum
You should know- turnout, question, result and % campaigns, government response and impact e.g. 2011 gave government a mandate NOT to reform electoral system

What is a referendum?

- Popular vote on a single issue
- Called by the government but other parties and pressure groups can encourage
- Results are not binding in UK
- Do not replace representative democracy in UK
- Usually on an issue of constitutional importance
- Binary choice- YES/NO

Why are Referendums held?

1. If the government cannot agree/ is deadlocked e.g. Brexit
2. If the constitution will change the power of gov- to give a popular mandate/ legitimacy to do this e.g. Devolution
3. If it is an issue with a sensitive historical context e.g. N. Ireland and Devolution
4. Local council issues e.g. not a national decision- these are often called consultations or proposals
5. If it is a major issue which will effect the constitution
6. (not official but true!) If they govt. does not want accountability!

THE 2015 GENERAL ELECTION

One of the most disproportionate results ever using FPTP- this election was important for several reasons:

1. Clear verdict on Nick Clegg's performance- the Lib Dems were well and truly held "to account" over the coalition agreement and supporting a 200% increase on tuition fees to a whopping £9000 per year after promising in his manifesto (2010) to scrap tuition fees to win the student vote. The Lib Dems lost 48 seats! Owch
2. The SNP rose to electoral success, cleaning out the English parties in Scotland- the SNP were further left than Labour and won a massive 56 out of 59 seats available in Scotland- a clear by-product of devolution and increased nationalism plus austerity
3. UKIP success...and failure... UKIP won 3.8m votes nationally- a result of 5 years of austerity and the 2008 recession- this fuelled RW populism and the tabloid narrative that immigration was the source of all our woes however they only won 1 seat
4. The ridiculous nature of FPTP- UKIP won 3.8m votes and 1 seat, SNP won 1.4m votes and 56 seats. An E-Petition which emerged as a result got over 4m votes however a further one in 2016 received only around 200,000

THE 2011 AV REFERENDUM

One of the electoral systems Jenkins did not recommend saying it would be worse than FPTP was the AV system used in Australia this is like the SV system but the voters get as many preferences as they want rather than just 2. It is not coincidence that Cameron's Conservative government made this the reform option in 2011- The Conservatives would lose out the most if we had a PR system- Cameron wanted to retain FPTP and campaigned vigorously against AV- the population barely turned out to vote in the referendum which was also held at the same time as local elections (which have historically low turnout)- 40% people voted and they voted 60% against electoral reform to AV

It was a victory for Cameron and gave a public mandate to his refusal to reform the electoral system- the results may have been very different after the 2015 election!

Should Referendums be used more frequently in the UK?

YES

- Our elected government does not have an absolute majority- therefore referendums would give their decisions greater LEGITIMACY
- Referendums are pure representation of the view of the electorate- without the need for a "middle man" who may not represent views directly
- Referendums encourage participation- they act as continuous consultation- therefore people feel engaged- also wide publicity around referendums people discuss it more- should in theory encourage political engagement and participation in elections etc- Scottish ref v. high turnout 85%

NO

- Political decisions should not be made on a whim- they are complex and have significant impacts- should be made by professional politicians with access to all the facts (without fake news!) access to research and debates
- Referendums are binary therefore there is no middle-ground for close run campaigns- leading to tyranny of the majority where minority get nothing e.g. Scottish Indep/ Brexit 52%-48%
- Government control it -heavily influence result e.g. AV ref
- Media sways public opinion heavily- very biased esp to RW (Murdoch Press)
- No accountability for govt decisions e.g. Brexit

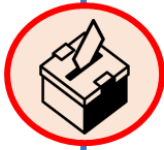
Should we introduce more PR systems into the UK?

- PR systems have multi-member constituencies we would lose the strong constituency link which would negatively affect representation
- Coalitions are more likely as seats are awarded more fairly and proportionately- this means smaller parties would reduce the number of seats won by larger parties- government would be weaker.
- Some argue this would enable extreme political parties on the fringes to gain more seats which would destabilise democracy but this has not happened in majority of European countries with PR - in fact Slovakia, Poland and Greece all have PR and low support for extremist parties. Also if people vote extremist they should have representation (democracy!)
- Does not give proportionate results meaning votes are wasted and smaller parties are distinctly disadvantaged - winners over-rewarded
- Can be argued it does not give govt. legitimacy as more people vote against them than for them and they never get an absolute majority (usually between 33%-40% of those who bother voting, many abstain- low turnout)
- Encourages tactical voting rather than true voting - does not give voters fair choice
- Does not even guarantee "strong and stable govt" 2010 coalition 2015 weak maj, 2017 confidence and supply agreement DUP
- Votes are not of equal weight- marginal constituencies vote counts for more than safe

Smaller Parties

Smaller parties such as UKIP, Brexit, Greens and the SNP have demonstrated they are increasingly important in recent years. As they offer an alternative to Labour/ Conservatives- the larger parties have had to modify their policies to try and appeal to their lost voters. Centralisation of the larger parties has led to UKIP, Brexit party and Greens picking up millions of votes. Furthermore increased nationalism in Scotland due to devolution, has given the SNP the majority of votes in Scotland and a sizeable chunk of Westminster seats.

Whilst these smaller parties may never win control of Parliament- they have clearly had an impact on the policies of the larger parties. The Conservatives and Labour have both moved away from the centre and towards the right and left respectively, partly in an attempt to court some of the voters who have gone to the smaller parties.



how do different regions of the UK vote?

Conservatives have continued to do well in area that are predominantly white, rural or suburban and socially conservative

Labour Since 2005 Labour party support has contracted to industrial urban areas in South Wales, the industrial north and London

urban areas are now increasingly labour strongholds and less inclined to vote conservative

Scottish voters have very different concerns and priorities from the rest of the UK

Labour has lost its dominance in Scotland after concentrating on winning seats in England, while 2017 saw the establishment of the conservative party as the main opposition in Scotland

Southeast England, traditional party politics is becoming far more divided, with votes for UKIP and the Green Party reducing support for the 3 traditional parties

Scotland- left wing, traditionally labour, since 2015 there has been an SNP dominance, return of unionist parties in 2017; opposition to london, specific social and economic positions, impact of devolution

Wales- heavy labour bias, strong levels of support for the conservatives; industrial areas favour labour, rural areas vote conservative or lib dem, far west is more likely to vote nationalist

Northern Ireland- has own party system, split between unionist and nationalist parties; party votes reflect religious and cultural divisions

London- majority labour; increasing ethnic diversity, greater economic disparity, reliance on public services, more socially liberal

rural England- overwhelmingly conservative; mostly white, economically and socially conservative

industrial north of England- mostly labour; higher levels of unemployment, greater rates of poverty and urban decay, greater ethnic diversity
the home counties- predominantly conservative; London commuter belt, made up of C1, B and A classes, mostly white, more conservative than London, economically prosperous

the role of the party leader

*has always been a focus on the image of the party leader

*less pronounced in 1945

*attlee and labour won a landslide majority against the more charismatic Churchill

*would seem to suggest rational choice theory played a role- voters choosing the manifesto that would provide them with the best quality of life in the postwar world

*since then the role of the party leader seems to have become far more important in terms of general elections

*rise of spatial leadership

*voters increasingly make their choice based on party leadership and who would be best placed to be prime minister

*personality and image of the party leader can play a significant role in determining voter behaviour

*role of the party leader- inspire party activists, appear prime ministerial, have a positive media presence, appear strong in leading the party and nation

*media increasingly focus on the character and image of the party leader- far easier to report on a single person than on a range of figures or policies

Age

• younger voters lean left, older voters lean right

• the older the voter, the more likely they are to vote

• % of conservative and UKIP voters increases with age

• % of labour and green voters drops with age

• left wing parties disadvantaged- the younger the voter the less likely they are to vote, Britain's aging population

• social platforms and online polling tend to focus on the young- distorts the reality of what happens in the polling stations, might explain why the labour party often does worse than expected and the conservatives quite often do better

• parties know the significance of age to voting and tend to tailor their policies accordingly

• age is perhaps the key determining factor in how a person will vote

• 47- age at which voters are most likely to move their support from labour to the conservatives

• Jeremy Corbyn's ability to enthuse the young and motivate them to vote- still remained far less likely to vote

• 2017- significant increase in turnout of under 30s

• labour was able to win a significantly higher % of the under 30 vote- conservatives couldn't match in the 50-70 bracket

class

*A- higher managerial and professional workers e.g. business owners, judges

*B- middle managers and professionals e.g. store managers, teachers, lawyers

*C1- clerical workers e.g. office clerks, secretaries

*C2- skilled manual workers e.g. builders, electricians, plumbers

*D- semi skilled and unskilled workers e.g. day labourers, factory workers

*E- unemployed, pensioners, those unable to work

*until the 80s class often determined how a person would vote

*Classes A, B and C1- middle class, tended to vote conservative

*classes C2, D and E- working class, tended to vote labour

*each party had a set of core voters from a distinct social class- economic factors were the top concern for many people

*the two main parties presented a clear, class based choice to the electorate

*1970- 88% of all votes went to the main parties

*since the 70s- economic reforms and changing attitudes in society, decline in the importance of economic issues

*greater concern about social issues- immigration, civil and human rights, crime, welfare provision, attitudes to sex and sexuality, Britain's position in the world

*resulted in class dealignment- voters less likely to be loyal to one party and taking into consideration multiple issues

*increase in floating voters

*elections between 1945 and 1992 were a straight contest between Labour and the conservatives

*by 2015 the contest involved at least 6 key parties all dealing with issues that crossed class lines

gender

*2015- labour's Woman to Woman pink minibus, targeting women who did not vote in the previous election

*2014- David Cameron, 'Britain would lead the change on women's equality'

*2014- Jo Swanson, Lib Dem campaign for equal pay and increased childcare provision

*2010- David Cameron, increase number of female conservative MPs

*1997- Tony Blair, all women shortlists to increase the number of women in parliament

*2017- labour, committed to conducting a gender impact assessment on all policies and legislation

*issue of who women for has shaped some of the policies of the parties and the campaign methods they use

*some debate over whether there is such a thing as the women's vote

*traditionally women are believed to favour the conservatives- labour only won a larger share of the female vote under Tony Blair

*1970- Heath's Conservatives won a surprise victory over Wilson's Labour party

*believed that the housewives had swung the election- promise of economic stability, protection for the price of the weekly shop, stable society

*2015- gender was not a crucial factor in determining votes; only a small male bias towards the conservatives and UKIP, slight female bias towards labour

*2017- female vote split evenly for 2 main parties, conservatives won male vote by 6%

*little difference between men and women on most issues

*exceptions- foreign intervention, nuclear power, nuclear weapons

*men prioritise these, women prioritise health and education

*clear divisions between Corbyn and May over international relation and nuclear power and weapons perhaps explain the conservative victory with male voters

*gender does not explain why the conservatives lost their majority and labour made substantial gains

rational choice theory

*assumes voters will make a rational judgement based on what is in their own best interests

*voters will be fully informed about the various options and will choose the option that is best for them

*winning verdict will reflect what is best for society as a whole

*assumption- voter will conduct a cost/benefit analysis of all options and make their choice accordingly

issue voting

*voters place one issue above all others and cast their vote based on that issue

*judge a party or candidate by their position on the issue

*choose the one that most closely reflect their own opinion

*can mean they vote for a candidate whose other policies would be to their detriment

economic or valence issues

*valence issue- voters have a common preference

*everyone wants a prosperous and successful economy

*no one will vote against a candidate who promises to improve the economy

*cast their vote based one who they believe is best placed to deliver a strong and successful economy

*governing competency

*politicians will be rewarded if they deliver a strong economy

*will be punished at the polls if the economy fails

factors affecting individual voting

*policies- voters consider the policies presented in the party manifestos and make a decision based on which set of policies suits them best, rational choice theory

*key issues- party campaigns increasingly focus on a clear message about 1 issue they think will win them the election, voters increasingly cast their vote based on the issue that is most important to them

*performance in office- voters tend to simplify the election into a referendum on the current government

*leadership- role of the leader has become increasingly important, voters take the view that they are selecting a prime minister; leaders must convince voters that they can be trusted to deliver and are capable of running the country; must deliver this through a likeable and engaging media presence

*image- voters will make their choice based on their perception of the party's image

*tactical voting

ethnicity

*race seems to point to a clear partisan divide in the UK

*white voters lean more to the right, ethnic minority voters lean more to the left

*legacy of anti-minority campaigning by the Conservative Party- Enoch Powell's Rivers of Blood speech 1968, Norman Tebbit's Cricket Test 1990

*concentration of many ethnic minority groups into industrial urban centres e.g. London, Birmingham

*mass immigration in the 50s brought a new wave of workers- often found themselves in urban areas doing industrial labouring

*tensions within the labour movement

*new citizens benefited from labour policies of social equality

*60s and 70s- many conservatives played on white fright and fear about the changing nature of British society to win elections

*these actions and the conservative party's association with a rural and higher class electorate have meant labour has continued to have a great deal of support among ethnic minority voters

*87.1% of the UK population is white British, minority voters are less likely to turn out to vote

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the role of the media in politics

print media

- broadsheet media- deal with weighty political debates, present information in measured way
- tabloid media- populist newspapers, focus more on sensation and entertainment
- magazines- can provide an important check, help to inform high level debates, political and satirical magazines produce detailed reports on political activity, scrutinise the work of politicians

radio media

- news headlines- every radio station has to give regular news broadcasts, basic informative headlines that present information without analysis or bias
- commercial radio- number of talk radio stations designed to engage in political discussion and debate
- bbc radio- many platforms for political discussion, number of flagship political programmes, interview and challenge politicians and public perceptions, phone in shows to encourage political debate

tv media

- news broadcasts- all terrestrial channels are obliged to have regular and impartial news broadcasts, occur at set times and for a set duration
- party political broadcasts- 5 minute broadcasts at set times across the channels, regulations to ensure all parties are given a fair and equal chance to influence public opinion
- news channels- 24 hour news coverage, can drive political events, raising public awareness and hyping events to make them appear more serious
- political programming- extended interviews, discussion of political issues, allows the public to engage and participate

online media

- opinion polls- conducted online, greater frequency, cheaper to run than traditional polls
- blogs- provide sources of information, forum for discussion about political issues
- twitter- can provide an informal poll to assess the popularity of an issue or the performance of politicians, forum for political debate
- campaigning- viral videos, social media, test ideas and messages before committing to traditional media, source of unregulated campaigning
- websites- parties and politicians have their own websites, means to find out about policies, raise issues and donate to the party opinion polls
- role has increased considerably since the 70s
- parties, think tanks, interested individuals and the media all commission a variety to try to work out how the respective parties are faring
- often used to test key policies, leadership performance and the success of a campaign
- used by the media as a starting point for political discussion and reporting
- can be a useful tool to help parties tailor their policies and messages to target key demographics and ensure they appeal to voters' concerns
- can misrepresent public opinion and affect the way in which people vote

the changing role of the media

- report accurately on political events
- provide a commentary on political events and policies
- act as a check and scrutinise the government
- investigate controversies and bring them to public attention
- educate the public on major issues, explain the potential impact of various options
- provide a forum for public debate and discussion, act as a bridge between the electorate and the elected
- media play quite a different role in politics today
- have been many criticisms of the changes to this role
- press and online sources have become overly partisan- mock and ridicule rather than providing informed debate
- have created a national mood of cynicism towards politics by their focus on scandal and corruption
- focus on leaders and personalities has turned politicians into celebrities
- media have made entertainment out of politics
- focus on crises has led to sensationalism and helped create a negative public view of the world
- relentless pressure of 24 hour news- media create stories and issues and give minor issues more prominence than they warrant
- rise of online media platforms- partisan and uninformed debate being presented as fact, parties and mainstream media have lost control of the agenda, more partisan opinion orientated and susceptible electorate who are more superficially aware but less engaged in the issues

what role have the media played between elections?

war reporting

- jingoistic and patriotic reporting of the Falklands War- helped create the impression of Thatcher as the 'iron lady', helped swing public opinion towards her

leaze

- during 1992 parliament
- media reported on a number of sex and corruption scandals that afflicted the conservative party
- led to them being associated with 'leaze'
- fed an impression of the conservatives as 'the nasty party' and one that had abused its time in power
- helped swing public opinion toward the anti leaze Blair and his 1997 campaign 'things can only get better'
- 'Blair'
- BBC reporting and resulting press coverage about a 'dodgy dossier' and 'sexing up' the case for war in Iraq
- became a political scandal
- resulted in the death of weapons inspector David Kelly
- Hutton inquiry exonerated parliament
- fed the impression of Blair as a liar and a 'poodle' of President Bush
- fundamentally damaged his reputation

expenses

- 2009- Daily Telegraph used an FOI request to obtain the records of MP's expenses
- revealed details of wrongful claims and outright abuses by MPs and peers
- £1645 claim for a duck house in a garden
- created a mood of cynicism and distrust in politics

the EU

- EU usually ranks fairly low down voters' list of priorities
- press reporting has made the issue more prominent with politicians
- press successfully began to link the EU to immigration
- UKIP adopted this strategy
- explains why pressure to hold an in/out referendum mounted under media pressure

satire

- rise in political satire since the 60s
- coincided with a decline in the reputation of politicians
- That Was The Week That Was
- programmes began openly mocking politicians
- stage shows like Beyond the Fringe presented mocking impressions of PM Harold Macmillan
- began to undermine the prestige with which politicians were regarded
- Have I Got News For You, Mock the Week, The Thick Of It
- continued to parody politics, providing scrutiny and checks on politicians, feeding a mood of cynicism **towards politics**
- politicians have tried engage with these developing media formats- appearing on the shows to raise their public profile and engage with the electorate
- other politicians have tried to use the appeal of social media
- Ed Miliband interviewed by Russell Brand on youtube channel 'The Trews'
- may have raised his profile with younger voters and those who follow Brand
- caused some loss of credibility, mocked on more traditional media programmes
- young less likely to turn out to vote- social media has so far only provided limited success for politicians hoping to increase electoral support

have the media influenced election results?

1979

- 'Crisis, what crisis?'- headline in the Sun in relation to the winter of discontent
- he never actually said it
- suggested Callaghan was out of touch with ordinary voters
- swung opinion against him
- opinion polls showed Callaghan as labour's strongest asset
- generally ahead of thatcher throughout the campaign

1992

- 'we're alright'- claim made repeatedly by Neil Kinnock at a rally in Sheffield
- TV pictures showing Neil Kinnock as triumphant a week before the election
- alienated some voters
- caused some labour voters to be more apathetic
- unlikely that this on its own had the impact required to explain the different levels of support between the opinion polls and the election results

1997

- Sun switched support to Labour
- Blair met with Rupert Murdoch
- the Sun and much of the rest of the press declared support for labour
- led many voters to switch their allegiance
- press was simply reacting to the prevailing mood of the time
- reflected in the polls- clearly swinging towards labour

2010

- 'I agree with Nick'- statement made repeatedly by Brown and Cameron during the 1st TV leader's debate
- performance of Nick Clegg in the debates raised his profile at the expense of Cameron's
- hung parliament
- Lib Dems only increased their share of the vote by 1%
- lost seats in the election
- MP's expenses scandal exposed by the Daily Telegraph following an FOI request
- undermined the reputation of all MPs
- led to many losing their seats
- labour rejected at the polls
- turnout was 4% higher than in 2005
- labour set to lose anyway after financial collapse in 2008

2015

- TV leaders' debate
- caused issues for all the participants
- Ed Miliband's fall from the stage, over-excited 'hell yes i'm tough enough'
- made him appear less prime ministerial
- opinion polls suggest the debate made no real difference to voting intentions
- confirmed existing impressions

2017

- TV leaders' debate
- May's refusal to participate- means of attacking her, potential weakness
- Jeremy Corbyn participated in the 7 way debate, performed better than expected
- Labour improved in credibility
- May went on to win more votes than in 2010 or 2015
- Corbyn still lost
- 3rd party performers who did well saw no improvement in their vote shares