How do British political parties mobilise and contact voters to

increase turnout?

Submitted by William Stephen King to the University of Exeter

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I certify that all material in this thesis which is not my own work has been identified and that no material has previously been submitted and approved for the award of a degree by this or any other University.

Signature: …………………………………………………..

Abstract

This thesis will explore how British political parties over the period 2010-2017 have developed their mobilisation and contacting methods. Looking at social media, demographics, and other salient issues, I will construct a coherent and clear narrative of how British political parties have reacted to new technology, and what the advantages and disadvantages of doing so are. I shall be looking in particular at youth political mobilisation and contact, as this demographic has a poor election turnout record, so I shall explain why this is and how British political parties are attempting to contact and mobilise them (and how they have done so successfully). Looking at the 2010, 2015, and 2017 General Elections as well as the 2014 EU and 2016 referendums, this will enable me to take a look at Britain in different political times and differing levels of technology, from the first TV debates in 2010 to the first social media election in 2017. Examining how voter contacting has changed and how political parties attempt to use voter contacting to drive up turnout will be key to the thesis, and will illuminate how the evolution in British political parties over time has changed the way parties and voters relate to one another.

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Introduction: Aims, objectives and results

This thesis aims to establish over the 2010-2017 British electoral period how political parties mobilised and contacted voters to support them and increase turnout. Thus, I will look at turnout and mobilisation theory and their application to Britain. I will look at the 2010 General Election, which featured the first British TV debates; the 2014 Scottish Independence Referendum, which indicated how significant and divisive referendums could be; and the 2015 General Election, which featured the first successful national social media campaign by a major British political party and also a completely unexpected result, so how the various political parties mobilised and engaged voters is crucial. I will then study the 2016 European Union (EU) Referendum to see why Remain lost, and how Leave utilised online campaigns and emotive issues to mobilise victory, and finally the 2017 General Election, where I will analyse the social media success of Corbyn's Labour while also examining how the Conservatives lost their majority. I will also examine the social media campaign of the Conservatives and Labour to see why the Conservative campaign suffered in this regard, especially in comparison to Labour. I will also discuss political leadership and how it affects turnout.

I will discuss how in these elections, different mobilisation methods of supporters and voters were used, permitting me to depict how contacting and mobilising methods evolved. I hypothesise that over time, political parties utilised new developments (such as television debates and social media) to re-engage voters and increase turnout. Therefore, I will focus on youth voters, who vote least, as demonstrated later, and I will also analyse social media's effect on elections, both by voters and by political parties. Analysing these will permit me to judge how British political parties

mobilised and contacted supporters from 2010-2017, and allowing further analysis as more literature and studies are released in future years.

I have two hypotheses:

H1: Young voters have increased turnout since 2010.

H2: British political parties have become more adept at using the Internet and social media to influence election results and voter turnout.

These hypotheses are reasonable, and will be reviewed at the end. With my selected case studies and theories, I will fulfil my research objectives.

<u>Methodology</u>

Quantitative data will be employed, with datasets such as the *British Election Study* (BES) and the *Scottish Referendum Study* (SRS). I will analyse demographics as well as contacting/mobilisation methods. Furthermore, I shall also be drawing upon a wide range of literature, from academic journals, newspapers, party political receipts and more, which I will detail in the literature review. During the thesis, I drew upon many databases and journal catalogues such as Web of Science, Google Scholar, JSTOR, the British Library, the *Guardian* archives, the University of Exeter library catalogue and journal database, the EPOP Journals, Rallings and Thrasher's local election series, and more.

 To clarify, the BES is a long-running survey that has been measuring every British election, including referendums, since 1964, and measures demographics such as age, turnout, social media usage, and other elements, making it invaluable for the thesis. It collected data on the EU Referendum as well as the 2010, 2015, and 2017 elections, and has a demographically-diverse database, making filtering variables as

required simple, thus being useful for studying the effect of political mobilisation by British political parties during 2010-2017.

This thesis employs secondary research; I have not carried out my own data collection nor have I interviewed political figures. The BES data is reliable as the BES has been running for many decades, the data has been used previously by many academics and projects, and the data has been cleared ethically, ensuring its acceptability. More advanced quantitative analysis could hypothetically have been used, and if this thesis examined more about the relationship between money spent versus level of turnout, for example, or other detailed methods such as a mixed multi-level regression analysis, I would be doing that. However, analysing voter turnout and party mobilisation over 2010-7 in this case can be done with relatively basic quantitative analysis, ensuring that the thesis is accessible as well as being sophisticated enough for academic readers.

Another benefit of using secondary-data such as the BES is its online accessibility making use of the data easier than otherwise would be. The scope of the data is large, allowing me to customise and analyse as appropriate. One disadvantage of using the BES however is the relative lack of information on such issues as social media and the level of demobilisation. Thus, I have researched other works on these issues, marrying them with the BES data analysis. This made the analysis more effective, as many different sources were utilised.

Johnston recognised secondary data analysis as 'flexible…utilized in several ways… a viable method to utilise in the process of enquiry'.[1] Using secondary data will save

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[1] Johnston, Melissa (2014) Secondary Data Analysis: A Method of which the Time Has Come *Qualitative and Quantitative Methods in Libraries* (*QQML*) 3: pp.619-626. [Online] Located at: www.qqml.net/papers/September_2014_issue/336QQML_Journal_2014_Johnston_Sept_619-626.pdf and accessed 14th April 2019.

time, as Ghauri discussed[2]. Using the BES also allows me to analyse over 2010-7 the elements of party mobilisation and efforts to increase turnout with trustworthy data. I have also used The Nuffield Election study (*The British General Election*) series, having run since the 1945 general election. In particular, I used Cowley and Kavanagh's 2010[3], 2015[4], and 2017[5] General Election works. The series covers British elections in detail, including campaigns, leaders, manifestos, party mobilisation strategies, new technologies, and post-election. Thus, the Nuffield Election series is an excellent resource, and although extra research must be carried out to flesh out under-developed issues in the series (for example, detail concerning the TV debates in the 2010 election was low in the 2010 study, neither was the use of social media in 2015 and 2017, and Labour's 2017 development and usage of apps) they make an excellent research base, even if more works are necessary for the thesis. I would also like to highlight the *Britain Votes* series, in particular the 2015[6] and 2017[7] editions. These are collections of articles concerning the various elections, examining each party's campaign while also looking at issues such as the election itself, the salient issues, and post-election. They are useful, especially considering the large spread of issues that the books cover, and thus are good works for the thesis and background knowledge.

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[2] Ghauri, P. N (2005) *Research methods in Business Studies: A Practical Guide.* Pearson Education, London.

[3] Cowley, Philip and Kavanagh, Dennis (2010) *The British General Election of 2010.* Palgrave Macmillan, London

[4] Cowley, Philip and Kavanagh, Dennis (2015) *The British General Election of 2015.* Palgrave Macmillan, London.

[5] Cowley, Philip and Kavanagh, Dennis (2018) *The British General Election of 2017.* Palgrave Macmillan, London.

[6] Geddes, Andrew and Tonge, Jonathan (eds) (2015) *Britain Votes 2015.* Oxford University Press, Oxford.

[7] Tonge, Jonathan, Leston-Bandeira, Cristina, and Wilks-Heeg, Stuart (2018) *Britain Votes 2017.* Oxford University Press, Oxford.

I have used BES data (as well as the 2014 SRS) as my main quantitative source, excluding data derived from various journals and the like I have used. I did not use other resources such as *The British Household Survey*[8] and *The Next Steps* dataset[9] as the BES has all the necessary thesis information, including turnout variables, data on different methods of voter contact by political parties, data on age and media usage, and other useful information. I could have used the other resources as stated above, but that would have added another layer of unnecessary complexity to the thesis.

Initially, the thesis ran from 2010 to 2015, before it expanded to include the 2016 EU Referendum and the 2017 General Election due to their unexpected resolutions. I chose the 2010-7 period because the crossover from New Labour to the coalition, the Conservative majority and the post-referendum period is fascinating. The growth of the Internet, of contested electoral decisions and of sharply-delineated parties created natural research questions regarding how political parties mobilised and contacted supporters over this period. I chose not to carry out qualitative surveys for this thesis, I do not think a small qualitative research dataset would have assisted me in informing how political parties mobilised their supporters over a large period of time, but if I focussed on one particular constituency or similar analysis, I would have proceeded along that route. However, arguably, a personally-designed survey would have enabled more personal control over the thesis results, but again this would have changed the design of the thesis. Despite this, I have used articles which utilise

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[8] University of Essex, Institute for Social and Economic Research. (2018) *British Household Panel Survey*: Waves 1-18, 1991-2009. [Data Collection] 8th Edition. UK Data Service. SN:5151. [Online] Located at: http://doi.org/10.5255/UKDA-SN5151-2 and accessed 2nd May 2019.

[9] University College London, UCL, Institute of Education, Centre for Longitudinal Studies (2018) *Next Steps: Sweeps 1-8, 2004- 2016*. [Data Collection] 14th Edition. UK Data Service. SN: 5545. [Online] Located at: http://doi.org/10.5255/UKDA-SN-5545-6 and accessed May 2nd 2019.

qualitative data, as their findings are invaluable. I shall consider qualitative analysis for future work, but relying on secondary quantitative, literature and qualitative analysis will suffice for this thesis.

Contribution Made

With the thesis not being a PhD, an original contribution is not the aim. However, it will contribute a solid review of how British politics has evolved in the advent of social media, and how political parties have responded. Whether the youth are more engaged in the era of Corbyn and the Internet will also be resolved to a degree, and will present a future academic source. The thesis will be sufficiently large to carry out a perspective of party mobilisation, yet narrow enough to see how social media and the young can be effectively utilised by political parties for support.

Literature Review

As stated, I am drawing upon a wide range of literature. I will consult data and sources relating to academic theory concerning social media, turnout, party mobilisation and contacting as well as case studies. I will not provide an exhaustive list of all the literature concerning the thesis, but I will provide a solid review of some of the literature. I will separate it into different parts, looking at turnout literature and literature concerned with electoral mobilisation and electoral psychology, both of which will be important. I will also look at voter-contact literature, as party contacting is one of the main elements of the thesis, and a critical literature analysis as well. Furthermore, I will also look at social media literature and how social media has affected British politics and parties, because exploring how political parties have utilised social media and the Internet since 2010 is one of the main thesis elements

Finally, I will also look at the 2010, 2015, and 2017 General Election literature, with caveats for some of the literature as simply not that much time has passed since the 2015 and 2017 elections. In addition, I will look at the 2014 and 2016 referendum literature, as analysing these referendums will enable me to see how referendum campaigns mobilised and contacted various supporters. This in turn will enable a stronger image of how mobilisation and contacting works in the UK in the advent of social media campaigns and issue salience increasing turnout.

(Youth) Turnout literature

I have identified key literature which discuss turnout theory such as Bowler and Donovan's *Democracy, Institutions and Attitudes about Citizen Influence on Government*[10], which discusses how democratic participation can be altered and political motivation can be lessened by political events. It dates 2002 and is United States-focussed, but its relevancy in discussing direct democracy's impact on turnout is undeniable, essential when considering the European Union (EU) and Scottish referendums. Building upon this knowledge will be crucial for the thesis, so although I may not draw upon it directly, it will be essential in building up background knowledge.

Rosenqvist's *Rising to the Occasion? Youth Political Knowledge and the voting age*[11] discusses the wisdom of lowering the voting age below 18. I will discuss 16 year-olds voting in the Scottish referendum chapter as it was permitted during the referendum. Although Rosenqvist is discussing Sweden and how 16 year-olds' lack of political

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[10] Bowler, Shaun and Donovan (Todd (2002) Democracy, Institutions and Attitudes about Citizen Influence on Government. *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol 32, No.2 (Apr 2002). Pp.371-390. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
[11] Rosenqvist, Olof (2017) Rising to the Occasion? Youth Political Knowledge and the voting age. *B.J.Pol.S* Pp.1-12. 7 November 2017.

knowledge suggests granting votes to under 18s would be negative, the application

of this to British politics is valid. Additionally, Henn and Foard's *Young people,*

political participation and trust in Britain[12] discusses how British young voters in are

demobilised and sceptical of formal politics. Although the research stems from 2002,

it is useful as it informs how youth political disengagement has evolved, and a critical

view of political mobilisation in the post-2010 era amongst the youth will occur

throughout the thesis. Thus, Ladner and Milner's 1999 Swiss election analysis[13] and

its demonstration of higher turnout in proportional systems, is essential for studying

how turnout differs across nationalities and systems, although Freitag's 1994

argument that majoritarian systems may have higher turnout must be acknowledged

as well[14]. Indeed, Blais and Carty counter this by arguing that PR systems have a

higher historical turnout than majoritarian ones[15]. However, Saunders believes that

boosting low turnout is anti-democratic[16]. Additionally, Sloam and Henn's youth

turnout work, *Youthquake 2017*[17], explores youth turnout and mobilisation pre and

during the 2017 General Election, is good for general analysis and overview of the

literature, although further sources were also used.

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[12] Henn, Matt and Foard, Nick (2011) *Young People, political participation and trust in Britain* [Online] Located at: http://www.exeter.ac.uk/media/universityofexeter/research/microsites/epop and accessed 6th August 2018.

[13] Ladner, Andreas and Milner, Henry (1999) Do voters turn out more under proportional than majoritarian systems? The evidence from Swiss communal elections. *Electoral Studies* 18, p.235. [Online] Located at: http://www.andreasladner.ch/dokumente/aufsaetze/Electoral_Studies_1999_al_hm.pdf and accessed 13th July 2017.

[14] Freitag, M (1994) Wahlbeteilung in Westlichen Demokratien. Eine Studie zur Erkla rung non Nivenaaunterschieden. Magisterarbeit an der Ruprecht-Karls-Universtat Heidelberg. P.27

[15] Blais, Andre and Carty, RK (1990) Does Proportional representation foster voter turnout? *European Journal of Political Research* 18: P.167 .Kluwer Academic Publishers, Netherlands.

[16] Saunders, Ben (2012) The Democratic Turnout 'Problem'. *Political Studies* Volume 60, Number 2, June 2012 pp. 306-321

[17] Sloam, James and Henn, Matt (2019) *Youthquake 2017: The Rise of Young Cosmopolitans in Britain.* Palgrave Macmillan, London.

There are many different interpretations of turnout theory and how the youth turnout, and I will explore them to construct a foundation for discussing turnout, voter contact and mobilisation. Although many works analysed here are from prior to the period studied or concerning another country, the concepts introduced and the analysis they will inspire justify their inclusion.

Social Media, contacting and mobilisation

Hansen et al's 2011 article *Good Friends, Bad News – Affect and Virality in Twitter*[18] discusses viral Twitter subjects, with 'bad' public news retweeted most, as well as friendly chatter between accounts. Thus, ensuring a positive outlook yet sharing negative news about opponents is the most effective Twitter strategy. Care must be taken as the article is dated a year after the 2010 case study and before the other case studies, but how the article discusses Twitter and the spread of content over it is invaluable, and will be employed during the thesis. Furthermore, Berger and Milkman's 2010 *Social Transmission, Emotion and the Virality of Online Content*[19] argues positive and anger-inducing content goes viral more than sad news, which fits in analysis of social media mobilisation for elections and referendums . Furthermore, Dommett and Temple's *Digital Campaigning: The rise of Facebook and Satellite Campaigns* from 2018[20] identifies the rise of social media campaigns

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[18] Hansen, Lars Kai, Arivdsson, Adam, Nielsen, Finn Arup, Colleoni, Elanor and Etter, Michael (2011) *Good Friends, Bad News Affect and Virality in Twitter.* January 4, Technical University of Denmark [Online] Located at: https://arxiv.org/pdf/1101.05.10v1.pdf and accessed 1st June 2018.
[19] Berger, Jonah and Milkman, Katherine (2010) *Social Transmission, Emotion and the Virality of Online Content.* [Online] Located at: http://opim.wharton.upenn.edu/~kmilkman/Virality.pdf and accessed 6th June 2018.
[20] Dommett, Katherine and Temple, Luke (2018) Digital Campaigning: The Rise of Facebook and Satellite Campaigns *Parliamentary Affairs*, Volume 71, Issue 1, 1 March 2018, Pp.189-202. [Online] Located at: https://doi.org/10.1093/pa/gsx056 and accessed 3rd May 2018. Also located in: Dommett, Katharine and Temple, Luke (2018) Digital Campaigning: The Rise of Facebook and Satellite Campaigns. *Britain Votes 2017.*pp.189-202 (eds) Jonathan Tonge, Cristina Leston-Bandeira and Stuart Wiks-Heeg. Oxford University Press, Oxford.

through British politics and how satellite campaigns were used in 2017 by Labour to contact and mobilise voters. This work shall assist in filling the literature gap of how political parties manipulated social media and the Internet over time. Furthermore, Aldrich et al's work on how digital tools change the nature, extent and impact of electoral party contacting[21] is vital, as it discusses how younger citizens are contacted and mobilised through online political contact, and although the paper was written in 2015 before the EU Referendum and 2017 election, it is crucial in analysing youth political mobilisation. I will also discuss works such as Whiteley and Seyd's[22] 1994 work. It is still worth studying to see how British political mobilisation occurred in the 1990s, providing a good foundation to study mobilisation developments. Linking it up with the current day is Sloam's[23]work on EU referendum youth mobilisation, which discusses how social media was used to mobilise the young for the Referendum. Additionally, works such as *Political Communication in Britain: Campaigning, Media and Polling in the 2017 General Election*, a collection edited by Wring, Mortimore and Atkinson[24], is vital for the 2017 election analysis, as well as its general overview of British political communication.

One concern is that in analysing social media is not to portray it as the ultimate panacea for political mobilisation and engagement. Avoiding 'technological determinism' or assuming that technology drives forward and motivates the

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[21] Alrich, John J, Gibson, R, Bison, K, Cantijosh, Marta and Konitzer, Toibas (2016) Getting out the vote in the social media era: Are Digital tools changing the extent, nature and impact of party contacting in elections? *Party Politics* 2016, Vol.22 (2), p.174.
[22] Whitley, and Seyd (1994) Local Party Campaigning and Electoral Mobilisation in Britain. *The Journal of Politics*. Vol. 56, No.1 (Feb, 1994) pp.242-252. [Online] Located at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/2132356 and accessed 2nd March 2018.
[23] Sloam, James (2018) #Votebecause: Youth Mobilisation for the referendum on British membership of the European Union *New Media and Society* 1- 18. [Online] Located at: https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/146444818766701 and accessed 1st July 2018.
[24] Wring, Dominic, Mortimore, Roger, and Atkinson, Simon (2019) *Political Communication in Britain: Campaigning, Media and Polling in the 2017 General Election*. Palgrave Macmillan, London.

development of society is important, as although social media has undoubtedly affected British politics, it has not totally driven all avenues of political life and society. Thus, discussing Lawrence's *Electing our Masters*[25] will be important for this. Although it was written in 2009 and thus ends before the case studies, the findings it has regarding public gatherings and public engagement in British politics are relevant, especially relating it to social media and TV debates. Indeed, Lawrence discusses how political interaction evolved over the 20th century[26]: 'Whereas… once politicians… helped sustain a public culture of face-to-face political interaction, it is now principally broadcasters who fulfil that role.' Thus, the TV debates further demonstrated this public culture, and the introduction of them was beneficial to voter mobilisation. Furthermore, developments in technology like social media and the Internet echoed the development of the radio and TV being used for political means, with Lawrence again stating this, although making warnings that sound similar to current warnings about political social media and the Internet[27]:

> 'Many of the technological developments of the post-war period had
> the potential to enhance rather than diminish demagogic politics… this
> is not to deny that the new mass media were beginning to transform
> the way that ordinary people interacted with politics and politicians…'

Although the transformative element of TV, the radio, and then the Internet was there, the extent to which social media and technology can effectively mobilise and engage all citizens must be questioned. Although it is certainly useful, not all efforts must be placed in social media, because as Keating and Melis claimed in 2017, social media is not the ultimate solution[28]:

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[25] Lawrence, Jon (2009) *Electing our Masters*: *The Hustings in British Politics from Hogarth to Blair*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.
[26] Ibid, p.13.
[27] Ibid, p.97
[28] Keating, Avril and Melis, Gabriella (2017) Social Media and Youth Political Engagement: Preaching to the Converted or providing a new voice for youth? *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations.* Vol. 19 (4), pp.877-894.

> The principal driver of online political engagement of young Britons… is political interest (even after controlling for socio-demographic characteristics)…we conclude that social media may be providing a new outlet for some young adults: it is not re-engaging the young adults who have already lost interest in politics.

Thus, although social media is useful, it cannot mobilise all, instead just mobilising and engaging those already political, leaving the unengaged as they were. As such, placing such faith in social media must not occur, with instead other avenues of mobilisation and political engagement taking place. It is beyond the skills of one political party in one election to do this, and remobilising and engaging the apathetic 30% of voters will have to occur over a longer period of time. However, this source will be reviewed at the end, especially in the contest of the rest of the thesis, and Lawrence will also be revisited throughout the thesis, especially in regards to how technology has evolved throughout campaigns, and in particular referendums.

<u>Scottish and EU Referendum literature</u>

Why did Scotland stay, and why did Britain vote leave? Antonuzzi et al's work on who voted for Brexit[29] is vital, as it discusses the demographics and motivation behind the Leave vote, which becomes important when analysing voter contacting and mobilisation during the referendum. This is useful as a foundation before going into further analysis with other works. This ties into the issues concerning the Referendum: the young, who vote less than older voters[30], voted in far bigger

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[29] Antonucci, Lorenza, Horvath, Laszlo and Krouwel, Andre (2017) Brexit was not the voice of the working class nor of the uneducated – it was of the squeezed middle. *LSE Politics and Policy*. October 2017. [Online] Located at: http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/politicsandpolicy/brexit-and-the-squeezed-middle and accessed 2nd February 2018.
[30] 2015 British Election Study Internet Panel Waves 8 and 9, found in Curtice, John (2017) Why Leave Won the UK's EU Referendum. *The JCMS Annual Review of the European Union in 2016*. Volume 55, Issue S1, September 2017. Pp19-37. [Online] Located at: https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.12613 and accessed 5th July 2018

numbers to Remain. The EU campaign was dominated by the issues of the NHS, the economy and immigration, with Curtice[31] identifying why Leave won along these lines. Sources such as these will be crucial in exploring mobilisation. Regarding the Scottish Referendum, I will also discuss the SRS as well as the BES. Unfortunately the SRS is not yet publicly available, but research has taken place regarding it which is publicly accessible such as Henderson and Mitchell's work[32]. This discusses why the Better Together campaign succeeded, which will assist in exploring voter contact and mobilisation. I will also utilise the BES, in particular Waves 7[33], 8[34] and 9[35] of the BES Internet Panel, as these took place before, during and after the EU referendum, allowing valuable insight into the referendum and precisely how voters were mobilised and contacted. Furthermore, I will analyse Waves 2[36] and 3[37] as these contain the pre and during Scottish referendum data, which I shall use in the absence of the SRS data..

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[31] Curtice, John (2017) Why Leave Won the UK's EU Referendum: *The JCMS Annual Review of the European Union in 2016*. Volume 55, Issue 51, September 2017. Pp.19-37. [Online] Located at: https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.12613 and accessed 5th July 2018.

[32] Henderson, Alisa and Mitchell, James (2015) *The Scottish Question: Six months on*. Transatlantic Seminar Series, 27 March 2015. [Online] Located at: http://centreonconstitutionalchange.ac.uk/sites/default/files/Scottish%20Referendum%20Study%2027%20March%202015.pdf and accessed 1st May 2018.

[33] Fieldhouse, E., J. Green., G. Evans., H. Schmitt, C. van der Eijk, J. Mellon and C. Prosser (2015) British Election Study Internet Panel Wave 7. [Online] Located at: DOI: 10.15127/1.293723 and accessed 4th September 2017.

[34] Evans, G., E. Fieldhouse., J. Green., H. Schmitt C., van der Eijk., J. Mellon and C. Prosser (2016) British Election Study Internet Panel Wave 8 (*2016 EU Referendum Study, Daily Campaign Survey*) [Online] Located at: DOI: 10.15127/1.293723 and accessed 10th November 2017.

[35] Fieldhouse, E., J. Green., G. Evans., H. Schmitt, C. van der Eijk, J. Mellon and C. Prosser (2015) *British Election Study Internet Panel Wave 9* [Online] Located at: DOI: 10.15127/1.293723 and accessed 6th February 2018.

[36] Fieldhouse, E.J, Green, Evans,. Schmitt H, Van der Eijk C and Mellon, J (2014) *British Election Study Internet Panel Wave 2* [Online] Located at: https://doi.10.15127/1.1293723 and accessed 3rd March 2018.

[37] Fieldhouse, E., J. Green., G. Evans., H. Schmitt, C. van der Eijk and J. Mellon (2014) *British Election Study Internet Panel Wave 3* [Online] Located at: DOI: 10.15127/1.293723 and accessed 5th March 2018.

Going into further analysis, Fieldhouse and Prosser's 2016[38] work on how the Scottish independence referendum negatively impacted Labour demonstrates how the realignment of attitudes post-referendum almost annihilated Scottish Labour. This shows how voters' priorities can radically change, making mobilisation and voter contacting by political parties difficult. As such, I will also study works such as Goodwin and Pickup's 2018 study of campaign effects on public attitudes towards the EU[39] and how this affected voters.

2010, 2015 and 2017 General Election literature

The main debates concerning these elections are: what was the impact of the TV debates, how did the Conservatives win a majority, and how did Corbyn and Labour almost defeat the Conservatives? Answering them, I shall look at the 2010[40], 2015[41] and 2017[42] BES data, as this will enable quantitative analysis of them, and to see how the campaigning strategies used contributed to the results. Furthermore, I will also identify key parts of the literature. For example, Blumler's TV debates work work will be analysed: Blumler has been writing on election debates for fifty years, so he will be very useful[43]. For the 2015 Conservative success, one source I will examine

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[38] Fieldhouse, Edward A. and Prosser, Christopher (2016) *When Attitudes and Behaviour Collide: How the Scottish Independence Referendum Cost Labour. April* 2016. Available at SSRN: https://ssrn.com/abstract=2770996 or http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2770996a and accessed 3rd March 2018.

[39] Goodwin, Matthew, Hix, Simon and Pickup, Mark (2018) For and Against Brexit: A Survey Experiment of the Impact of Campaign Effects on Public Attitudes towards EU Membership. *British Journal of Political Science,* pp.1-15. [Online] Located at: doi.10.1017/S000712341700667 and accessed 4th August 2018.

[40] British Election Study (nd) *British Election Study- Panel Study Data* [Online] Located at: http://www.britishelectionstudy.com/data-objects/panel-study-data/ and accessed 5th March 2018.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Ibid.

[43] Blumler, Jay G *Voters' Responses to the Prime Ministerial Debates: A Rock of (Future?) Ages* p. 37 located in Coleman, Stephen (Ed) (2011) Leaders in the Living Room: The Prime Ministerial Debates of 2010: Evidence, Evaluation, and Some Recommendations *Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism.*

is Foos' research on candidate contact and party support[44], which details how the Conservatives and other parties contacted and mobilised voters. As stated, the material available on 2017 is more limited than others simply due to the short amount of time since the election. However, I have read widely, and have found excellent pieces of scholarship. For example, Curtice and Simpson[45] used statistical and demographic data to work out why turnout increased in 2017, and why this did not help Labour electorally: although more of the already-voting youth voted Labour, there was no 'youthquake'.The BES analysis of the 'youthquake'[46], a phrase used to describe a supposedly large turnout increase amongst previously disengaged youth, details how this did not occur, which will assist the 2017 chapter. As stated, I will also be looking at the Nuffield Election Study series of British Elections, studying 2010[47] 2015[48], and 2017. These works are well-written, have a wealth of evidence and cover a wide range of topics, making them ideal for analysis. Furthermore, I will analyse the Hansard *Audits of Political Engagement*[49], which feature statistics, demographics, election news and other essential information that will assist in the thesis and how political parties mobilised and contacted their supporters. There are

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[44] Foos, Florian (2016) First impressions – lasting impressions. Candidate Contact and Party Support in the 2015 UK General Election. [Online] Located at: http://www.florianfoos.net/resources/Foos_Persuasion.pdf and accessed 3rd March 2018.

[45] Curtice, John and Simpson, Ian (2018) Why Turnout Increased in the 2017 General Election and the Increase Did Not Help Labour *NatCen* March 2018. [Online] Located at: http://www.bsa.natcen.ac.uk/media/39222/why-turnout-increased-in-the-2017-general-election.pdf and accessed 3rd March 2018.

[46] BES Team (2018) The myth of the 2017 'youthquake' *BBC* 29 January. [Online] Located at: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-42747342 and accessed 5th August 2018.

[47] Cowley, Philip and Kavanagh, Dennis (2010) *The British General Election of 2010.* Palgrave MacMillan, London.

[48] Cowley, Philip and Kavanagh, Dennis (2015) *The British General Election of 2015.* Palgrave MacMillan, London.

[49] Fox, Ruth and Blackwell, Joel, (2017) *Audit of Political Engagement 14. The 2017 Report.* Hansard Society, London. https://assets.ctfassets.net/xkbace0jm9pp/1vNBTsOEiYciKEAqWAmEKi/c9cc36b98f60328c0327e313ab37ae0c/Audit_of_political_Engagement_14__2017_.pdf

other works concerning the elections, but these will become apparent throughout the thesis.

Therefore, I have collected a wide-ranging portfolio of literature, and will create a strong thesis that seeks to explore how British political parties mobilise and contact voters to increase turnout. I shall begin by analysing turnout and turnout theory.

Chapter I: A study of turnout in British Politics: Theory, practice, and thoughts

In legitimate elections, political parties and candidates try to win support and votes through promoting policies and candidates, while highlighting the supposed hypocrisies of the opposing parties. Thus, one crucial aspect is increasing voter turnout. Voter turnout is self-evidently defined as voters literally turning out to vote. Thus, political parties have an interest to increase voter turnout to increase election legitimacy. This could be seen as simplifying turnout and how to measure it [50]:

> Did one take the ratio of the number of voters to the entire population, to the population of voting age, to the eligible population or to the number of [registered voters]?

Therefore, looking at exactly how turnout is measured is vital. Also, exactly how elections vary is important, and the variables that affect election conduct and turnout. This chapter shall be primarily concerned with discussing turnout, and how it varies across different British elections with discussion of voter mobilisation in later chapters.

Exploring turnout variation across first and second order elections[51] will now occur. By studying this and turnout variation, a clear exploration of voter mobilisation in different elections and variation of political engagement will be evident. Studying the British electoral registration system and its effect on youth registration and turnout

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[50] Geys, Benny (2006) Explaining Voter Turnout: A review of aggregate-level research *Electoral Studies* 25 (2006) p.638. [Online] Located at: https://www.wzb.eu/sites/default/files/personen/geys.benny.328/electoral_studies_25_4.pdf and accessed 3rd July 2017.
[51] In general terms, first-order elections being defined as General Elections while second-order elections being European elections, local elections, and so on.

will also occur. Defining first and second-order elections is essential, as this informs how people are motivated in different types of elections. Using all of the case studies and analysing all the information, the foundations for analysing voter mobilisation and youth turnout during different elections will be laid. How political leadership and personalisation of voters shapes voter turnout will also be discussed, with the case studies of Nick Clegg in the 2010 election and Theresa May's refusal to debate in the 2017 election debates (and her general campaigning style) as compared to Corbyn's positive perception will be studied. However, I will not focus on it too much throughout the thesis, as otherwise it will become too expansive.

What are primary and secondary order elections?

It is commonly agreed, not least by Reiff and Schmitt, that all British elections bar Parliamentary elections are second-order[52]:

> The "first-order" elections in parliamentary systems are the national parliamentary elections.... In addition to these, however, there …are… "second-order" elections: by-elections, municipal elections,…regional elections, those to a "second-chamber" and the like… many voters cast their votes in these elections not only as a result of conditions obtaining within the specific context of the second-order arena, but also on the basis of factors in the …national political arena....

Most British elections bar General elections are second-order, possibly excluding the devolved assembly elections. It could be assumed that referendums are second-order mostly, but whether the 2016 EU Referendum can be defined as first-order is interesting, as it was a national referendum of national import, and as Denver's

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[52] Reif, Karlheinz and Schmitt, Hermann (1980) Nine Second-Order Elections: A Conceptual Framework for the Analysis of European Election Results *European Journal of Political Research* 8 (1980) pp-3-44.

definition of a first-order election shows[53], it fulfils the criteria. This thesis shall treat the 2016 referendum as first-order, as its impact was similar to a General Election. I will not discuss referendums like the AV or Northwest Assembly referendums.

First-order elections are simple to differentiate from second-order, with Denver stating:

> In first-order elections, there is saturation media coverage, the parties mount intense national and local campaigns, and the electorate usually think it's important who wins… electors are keener… to vote in them.[54]

First-order elections have higher turnout, and they differ in voter mobilisation and supporter strategy. General elections have the highest turnout, with the 2017 election at 69%[55], while UK European election turnout has never exceeded 38%[56]. By-election turnout since 1997 rarely breaches 50%[57][58]; turnout for London Mayoral/Assembly elections has not gone above 45%[59]; the Scottish Parliament election turnout average is 53.06%[60] [61]; the average Welsh Assembly turnout is

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[53] Denver, David (2007) *Elections and Voters in Britain*. Palgrave MacMillan, Basingstoke. P. 26
[54] Ibid.
[55] UK Political Info (nd) *Turnout from 1945 to* 2017 [Online] Located at: http://www.ukpolitical.info/Turnout45.htm and accessed 6th August 2018.
[56] European Parliament (2014) *Results of the 2014 European Elections: United Kingdom*. Nd. [Online] Located at: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/elections2014-results/en/country-results-uk-2014.html and accessed 9th April 2016.
[57] UK Political Info (nd) *By-election turnout since 1997* nd. [Online] Located at: http://www.ukpolitical.info/by-election-turnout.htm and accessed 10th April 2016.
[58] House of Commons Library (2012) *UK Election Statistics 1918-2012. Research Paper 12/42.* 7 August.
[59] Rogers, Simon and Burn-Murdoch, John (2012) *The Guardian* UK Election historic turnouts since 1918. 16 November. [Online] Located at: http://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2012/nov/16/uk-election-turnouts-historic and accessed 8th April 2016.
[60] Scottish Parliament (2011) *Turnout by Region Scottish Parliamentary Elections 1999-2011* n.d. [Online] Located online at: http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/Electionresults/2011%20election/5_Turnout_Region.pdf and accessed 8th April 2016.
[61] Aiton, Andrew, Burnside, Ross, Campbell, Allan, Edwards, Tom, Liddell, Gregg, McIver, Iain, and McQuillenn, Alanis (2016) *SPICe Briefing Election 2016.* 11 May. [Online] Located online at: http://www.parliament.scot/ResearchBriefingsAndFactsheets/S5/SB_16-34_Election_2016.pdf and accessed 28th March 2017.

42%[62]; and Northern Ireland assembly turnout since 1998 averages 61.75%[63] [64]. Thus, British first-order elections have higher turnouts. It must be determined why they have higher turnout than second-order elections and whether the voting system affects turnout.

First-Order Election Turnout and electoral formulas

As Denver discussed, first-order elections are seen as more important due to increased media coverage and thus higher turnout. British first-order elections and local elections use the first-past-the-post system (FPTP)[65], which states that all a candidate must do to win is get more votes, with no vote-redistribution, unlike the AV or the Single Transferable Vote (STV) systems. This contrasts to many British second-order elections, which use different voting systems, such as STV being used in the Northern Ireland Assembly and the Additional Member System (AMS) being used for the Scottish Parliament and others. The Closed Party List is also used for EU Parliamentary elections, which proportionally distributes seats according to vote. Turnout for the 2017 general election was 69%, and second-order elections rarely breach 55%. Thus, analysing the literature on the political science of voting systems, proportionality et al would benefit in seeing how voting systems affect turnout.

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[62] Jennings, Martin (2011) *Assembly Election Results May 2011.* National Assembly for Wales. Nd. [Online] Located at: http://www.assembly.wales/Research%20Documents/2011%20Assembly%20Election%20Results%20-%20Research%20paper-18052011-216014/11-023-English.pdf and accessed 8th April 2016.

[63] Rallings, Colin and Thrasher, Michael (2012) *British Electoral Facts: 1832-2012.* 30 November. London, Biteback Publishing.

[64] Although interestingly turnout in Northern Ireland for European Elections is the highest in the United Kingdom, never dropping below 40%: Electoral Office for Northern Ireland (2017) *NI Assembly Election 2 March 2017.* 2 March. [Online] located at: http://www.eoni.org.uk/getmedia/54ee63a7-2286-464d-bf68-b967a98e5f40/NI-Assembly-Election-2017-Turnout and accessed 28th March 2017.

[65] Otherwise known as single member district plurality (SMDP).

Initially, turnout is *expected* to be higher in PR systems than majoritarian; Ladner and Milner address this in their examination of the proportional Swiss system, stating that proportional representation results in higher turnout[66], and that majoritarian systems result in a large disproportion between votes cast and seats won, resulting in disengaged voters[67], especially those from smaller parties, and therefore as Jackman argues, lower turnout[68]. However, proportional systems having higher turnout is not gospel; for example, Switzerland's 1995 general election turnout was 42.2%[69], far less than the UK General Election 1997 70%[70] turnout. However, Swiss PR system regions have higher turnout than majoritarian regions, and smaller areas tend to be majoritarian rather than PR[71]. Reviewing the argument that majoritarian systems result in higher turnout and are preferred by voters, it is worth reviewing Ladner and Milner, who comment on Freitag's arguments on why majoritarian systems can have higher turnout why voters may prefer majoritarian systems[72]:

> …majority voting [mechanisms] are [simpler] and…stimulate participation; and second, [majoritarian elections] may… matter more to citizens as they can be expected to lead to clear majorities in government rather than to an unpredictable process of coalition formation within a highly fragmented party system.

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[66] Ladner, Andreas and Milner, Henry (1999) Do voters turn out more under proportional than majoritarian systems? The evidence from Swiss communal elections *Electoral Studies* 18 (1999) p.235 [Online] Located at:
http://www.andreasladner.ch/dokumente/aufsaetze/Electoral_Studies_1999_al_hm.pdf and accessed 13th July 2017

[67] Ibid.

[68] Jackman, R.W (1987) Political Institutions and Voter Turnout in the Industrial Democracies. *American Political Science Review* 81 (2) pp.405-423.

[69] Lander and Milner (1999) p.236.

[70] UK Political Info nd.

[71] Lander and Milner (1999) p.244.

[72] Freitag, M (1994) Wahlbeteiligung in Westlichen Demokratien. Eine Studie zur Erkla rung non Nivenaaunterschieden. Magisterarbeit an der Ruprecht-Karls-Universtat Heidelberg. P.27

As majoritarian systems are simpler, more people vote, and people prefer a decisive majoritarian government to coalitions. However, Lijphart stated that the boost to turnout in proportional systems compared to majoritarian systems is 9-12%[73], so arguably proportional turnout will be higher than majoritarian systems.

Proportional systems tend to have higher turnout than majoritarian systems such as FPTP and AV; according to Blais and Carty, PR systems have higher turnout globally[74]. Although the study dates from 1990, the average PR turnout from 1847 until 1990 was 82.1%, while majoritarian systems over this period had a 73.6% turnout[75], demonstrating higher PR turnout. This is evident in Britain's first-order election turnouts being lower than other nations' turnouts since 1997. Also, nations with compulsory voting have higher turnouts than those which without, with average turnout increasing by 11.8% in compulsory turnout nations compared to those without[76], corresponding with Lijphart earlier, and with the UK lacking compulsory turnout, lower UK turnout is explanatory. Brockington argues compulsory voting is one of the strongest indicators of increased turnout[77]. Blais and Carty also argue that proportional representation boosts turnout[78]:

> …Within PR systems, disproportionality did not seem to matter. This suggests that it is the 'symbolic effects' of electoral systems rather than either their consequences for seat-vote

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[73] Lijphart, A (1997) Unequal Participation: Democracy's Unresolved Dilemma. *American Political Science Review* 91 (1) 7
[74] Blais, Andre and Carty, RK (1990) Does Proportional representation foster voter turnout? *European Journal of Political Research* 18: p.167. Kluwer Academic Publishers, Netherlands.
[75] Ibid p.175
[76] Ibid, p.176
[77] Brockington, David (2004) The Paradox of Proportional Representation: The Effect of Party Systems and Coalitions on Individuals' Electoral Competition *Political Studies* 2004, Vol 52, p. 482 [Online] Located at: http://www.ernestoamaral.com/docs/dcp854b-122/brockington(2004).pdf and accessed 4th July 2017
[78] Blais, Andre and Carty, RK (1990) p.179

relationships or the number of parties, that matter to potential voters. PR does foster higher turnout.

The symbolic effect of PR systems results in higher turnout, as voters feel that they will not have 'wasted votes', as seen with Jackman's analysis earlier. However, in cases such as New Zealand, which changed to MMP from SMDP in 1996[79] turnout actually fell in subsequent elections, as Vowles found[80]. However, that seems to be down to specific circumstances such as boundary changes and voter unfamiliarity, so conclusions must not be jumped to. Assumedly, UK elections that used proportional electoral systems would have higher turnout, which will be explored further.

Why is turnout lower in British second-order elections?

Denver earlier stated elections which are deemed as more 'important' have higher turnout and political interest, explaining why turnout is higher in British first-order elections than secondary. If a voter feels consequential, they will vote and politically engage. Returning to the previous Switzerland case, Swiss local elections turnout is lower than similar elections elsewhere as Swiss local elections are viewed more as second-order elections[81]. Interestingly, Ladner and Milner suggest local elections elsewhere do not have significantly lower turnout for local elections/second-order elections than general elections, which is not necessarily true in the UK case. Indeed, British local election and second-order turnouts are often lower than first-order elections, with only concurrent elections increasing local election turnout. As Larcinese suggested, knowledge of political affairs has a sizeable positive influence

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[79] Mixed Member Proportional system, otherwise known as the AMS system previously mentioned
[80] Vowles, Jack (2005) Electoral System Change, Generations, Competitiveness, and Turnout in New Zealand, 1963-2005 *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 40, No.4 (October 2010), p. 875
[81] Ladner et al, (1999) p. 237.

on voting probability with mass media playing an important role in influencing political participation[82]. Furthermore, voters are more likely to vote if they know they are registered[83], and that someone with maximum political knowledge is almost one third more likely to vote than someone with minimum political knowledge, controlling for other variables[84]. Previous voters are 17% more likely to vote,[85] showing that previous political knowledge and voting history increases turnout and voting likelihood .

Combined with low local election turnout, this explains why low participation in second-order elections will remain relatively constant, as voters who have not voted in them before will be less likely to vote. However, Denny and Doyle argue 'the [British[relationship between education and…turnout… is weak. While education plays a small role in determining turnout… cognitive ability and personality play a far greater role.'[86] Thus, in Britain, political knowledge plays a smaller role in turnout, with cognitive ability and personality being more influential. This explains high turnout in British first-order elections: people are often politically aware in these, boosted by the SMDP system in first-order elections, supported by Denver's statement earlier that first-order elections are typified by media saturation, intense political national campaigns a greater sense of importance. According to Karp et al, overall party contact levels are greater in candidate-based systems than in proportional systems, so political information levels are naturally higher in first-order

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[82] Larcinese, Valentino (2007) Does Political Knowledge Increase Turnout? Evidence from the 1997 British General Election *Public Choice*, Vol. 131, No. 3 / 4 (June, 2007) p. 387
[83] Ibid, p 398.
[84] Ibid, p.405.
[85] Ibid p. 405.
[86] Denny, Kevin and Doyle, Orla (2008) Political Interest, Cognitive Ability and Personality: Determinants of Voter Turnout in Britain *British Journal of Political Science,* Vol. 38, No.2 (Apr., 2008), p.308

elections[87], and as second-order elections are naturally less intensive, this explains partly their lower turnout.

To discuss further first-order elections higher turnout, Stewart and Clarke discuss party leader images and how they influence party choice[88], and thus when party leader visibility is naturally higher in first-order elections, turnout increases due to people disliking or liking various party leaders. Combined with Karp et al's[89] theory earlier that party-contact is greater in candidate-based systems, this dovetails with an increased party-leader perception and an increased first-order turnout.

Consider English local election turnout since 1997[90]:
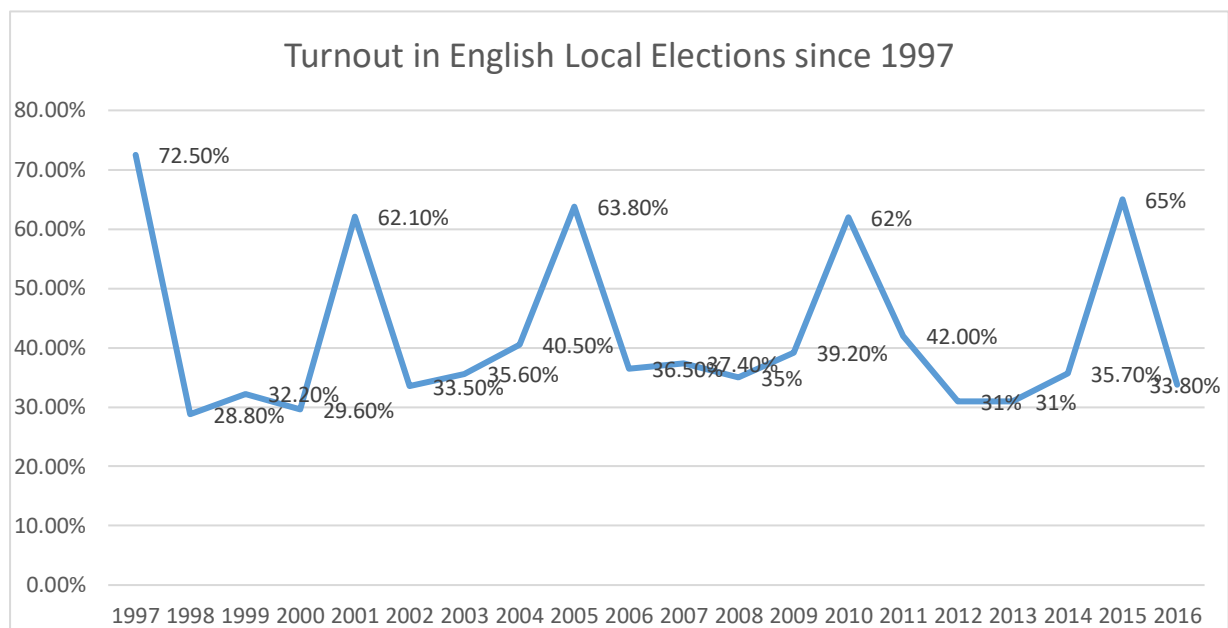
Figure 1: Turnout in Local Elections in England from 1997-2016. Data located in various Local Elections Handbooks and Electoral Commission data.

[87] Karp, Jeffrey, Banducci, Susan and Bowler, Shaun (2007) Getting out the Vote: Party Mobilisation in a Comparative Perspective *B.JPol.S* 38, pp.91-112. Cambridge University Press
[88] Stewart, Marianne C and Clarke, Harold D (1992) The (Un) Importance of Party Leaders: Leader Images and Party Choice in the 1987 British Election *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 54, No.2, (May, 1992), pp.447-470
[89] Karp, Banducci and Bowler (2007)
[90] Rallings, Colin and Thrasher, Michael (2003) *Local Elections in Britain: A Statistical Digest*. Local Government Chronicle Elections Centre, Plymouth. Various other years consulted.

Turnout for these is significantly lower than first-order turnout, although turnout increases whenever they are concurrent with first-order elections, and lower than many other British second-order elections. Thus, if voters are already voting, they will also vote in the local election, as obstacles are almost non-existent. Filer and Kenny support this as well as Carter, who argue that the cost of visiting a voting location is fixed, and unrelated to the number of elections that is voted on there[91][92]. The voting cost of same-day elections is 'spread', reducing cost and theoretically increasing turnout,[93] explaining concurrent local election turnout is higher. The data shows English local election turnout averages 31%, only increasing in general elections. Therefore, it will be worth analysing how voters perceive local government and why local election turnout is lower.

 Trust in local government is low as only 43% trusted councillors and local government in 2008[94], improving to 48% by 2016[95] according to the European Commission, so therefore people are less motivated to vote. Furthermore, candidate recognition is lower due to the more local campaign nature, further reducing voter motivation. Kelley and Mirer indicate that past votes affect voter decisions:[96]

> The voter canvasses his likes and dislikes of the leading
> candidates and major parties… Weighing each like and dislike
> equally, he votes for the candidate toward whom he had the
> greatest …favourable attitudes.... If no candidate has such an
> advantage, the voter votes consistently with his party affiliation, if

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[91] Filer, J.E, Kenny, L.W (1980) Voter turnout and the benefits of voting. *Public Choice* 35, pp.575-585
[92] Carter, J.R (1984) Early Projections and voter turnout in the 1980 presidential election. *Public Choice 43*, p.195-202
[93] Ibid p.201
[94] Parker, Simon, Spires, Phil, Farook, Faizal, and Mean, Melissa (2008) *State of Trust: How to build better relationships between councils and the public* Demos. P.11 [Online] Accessed at: https://www.demos.co.uk/files/Trust_web_ALL%20_032.pdf and accessed on 27th May 2017.
[95] European Commission (2017) *Public Opinion: Trust in Regional Authorities. [Online]* Located at: http://ec.europa.eu/COMMFrontOffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/Chart/getChart/chartType/gridChart//themeKy/18/groupKy/92/savFile/10 and accessed 28th May 2017.
[96] Kelly, S and Mirer, T. M (1974) The Simple act of voting *Am Pol. Sci. Rev.*, 68 (1974), pp.572-591

> he has one. If his attitudes do not incline him towards one
> candidate… and if he does not identify with one of the major
> parties, the voter reaches a null decision.

This can be directly linked to lower second-order turnout, as local elections have lower elections, and political knowledge is less for local election candidates and parties, decreasing turnout. This is clear with the Police Crime and Commissioners' elections, with a low 15% turnout in 2012[97], increasing to 27% in 2016, clearly indicating how British voters were not engaged by the PCC elections, as Kirkland explores[98]. Moving on to the London mayoral and Assembly elections, although turnout increased for the 2008 mayoral election to 45.3%[99], turnout has not gone above this, with previous elections hovering around 35% [100], with 2016 just pushing 45.6%[101]. Voters are not turning out for the devolved London government. As London mayorals are conducted via Supplementary Vote, and Assembly elections are conducted under AMS, the suggestion all British non-FPTP elections will have higher turnout is incorrect. This touches upon Downs' rationality theory which stated that it would be 'rational' to abstain from voting in larger turnout elections, as a single abstention will most likely not affect the result[102]. Riker and Ordeshook also comment on rational voters, arguing that as an election becomes closer and a vote becomes more decisive, the perceived benefit of voting becomes greater. Therefore, a voter is more likely to vote in a close election rather than in an election with a clear

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[97] The Electoral Commission (2013) *Police and Crime Commissioner Elections in England and Wales: Report on the administration of the elections held on 15 November 2012.* London.
[98] Kirkland, Christopher (2015) PCC Elections as a 'failed experiment': What lessons can be learned? *The Political Quarterly,* Volume 86, Issue 3, July-September 2015. Pp.403-410 [Online] Located at: https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/1467-923X.12181 and accessed 5th August 2018.
[99] London Elects (nd) *London Mayoral Election Results* [Online] Located at: https://londonelects.org.uk/im-voter/election-results and accessed 5th August 2018.
[100] Ibid.
[101] Ibid.
[102] Downs, Anthony (1957) *An Economic Theory of Democracy.* New York: Harper and Row

favourite[103]. With these different interpretations of rational voter theory, the disparity in different election turnouts under different electoral systems can be demonstrated.

The link between rational voter hypothesis and non-FPTP systems resulting in higher turnout in British elections may not be immediately evident, but as these elections are conducted under alternative systems or are not seen as relevant (or both), arguably voters as rational actors either think that due to the proportional system, their vote is unnecessary as the system is seen as 'fairer', or that the election doesn't matter, so they abstain. This matter of consequential elections is supported when analysing the two most recent UK referendums in 2014 and 2016. These had a turnout of 84%[104] and 72%[105] respectively, beating turnout for all elections since 1997 and also demonstrates turnout rising in elections perceived as consequential. Blais and Achen develop this further[106], arguing that citizens vote out of duty or strong electoral preferences, and abstaining when these are both absent. This is corroborated by Goldstein and Ridout's work on United States presidential elections[107], which is relevant as the US has a similar FPTP system. They state that the more competitive an election, the higher the turnout, and the more likely political

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[103] Riker, William H and Ordeshook, Peter.C (1968) A theory on the calculus of voting. *American Political Science Review* Volume 62, No.1: pp.25-42 [Online] Located at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/1953324 on 17th July 2017.

[104] BBC (2014) Scottish Referendum Results *BBC* [Online] Located at: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/events/scotland-decides/results and accessed 5th August 2018.

[105] BBC (2016) EU Referendum Results BBC [Online] Located at: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/politics/eu_referendum/results and accessed 5th August 2018.

[106] Blais, Andre and Achen, Christopher (2018) Civic Duty and Voter Turnout. *Political Behaviour*. 26 April [Online] Located at: https://doi.org/10.1007/s11109-018-9459-3 and accessed 6th May 2018.

[107] Goldstein, Kenneth and Ridout, Travis (2002) The Politics of Participation: Mobilisation and Turnout over Time *Political Behaviour*, Vol. 24, No.1 March 2002, pp.3-29 [Online] Located at: http://eds.b.ebscohost.com/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=082d7517-3e0a-44e9-8277-383c64f1ecb8%40sessionmgr101 and accessed 31st May 2017.

parties will attempt voter mobilisation[108]. However, scholarship is not settled with this, with Matsuska arguing[109]:

> '…not a systematic relationship between closeness and turnout…voters are not sensitive to the probability their votes are decisive, and…other parties which found higher turnout for close elections probably detected an increased mobilisation of party elites...'

This study both dates from the early 90s and only considers Californian referendum turnout, but it argues that perceived closeness of votes does not affect turnout, and when it does, it is due to the influence and mobilisation of party elites, and the electoral system. This can be extrapolated over to the UK referendums; party elites dominated both the EU and Scottish independence referendums, with both sides employing anti-elitism rhetoric and appealing to those 'left behind' (i.e. socially and economically disadvantaged). This was pursued particularly by the Leave campaign in the EU referendum, which resulted in those explicitly feeling 'left behind' more likely to vote Leave, as BES data shows[110].

 The Scottish independence r and the EU referendums were highly salient, highly increasing turnout. They were not elections, so the extent voters felt the referendums mattered and were mobilised were significant. This gives credence to previously stating that the referendums should be treated as first-order elections. To conclude, British voter turnout is highest in General Elections and referendums that dominate the discourse, and also how expectations that proportional voting systems would

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[108] Ibid, p.22

[109] Matsuska, John G (1993) Election closeness and voter turnout: Evidence from California ballot propositions *Public Choice* 76. P.313 [Online] Located at: http://www-bcf.usc.edu/~matsusak/Papers/Matsusaka_PC_1993.pdf and accessed July 15th 2017.

[110] The British Election Study Team (2016) Brexit Britain: British Election Study Insights from the post-EU Referendum wave of the BES Internet Panel *The British Election Study* 6th October 2016 [Online] Located at: http://www.britishelectionstudy.com/bes-resources/brexit-britain-british-election-study-insights-from-the-post-eu-referendum-wave-of-the-bes-internet-panel/#.WW9361LMyu4 and accessed 18th July 2017.

increase turnout has not come to pass from examining other UK elections. Across the board, the youth are the least likely to vote. The next section shall explore youth turnout in the 2015 General Election .

Youth turnout in 2015

This is a prelude to the upcoming 2015 chapter. It can be expected that youth turnout, along with other demographics, in any general election will be higher than second-order elections. This is true for 2015; although turnout was low with a 44% 18-24 year-olds turnout[111], average turnout in the 2014 European Election was 44%, showing the low average of turnout. However, paraphrasing Phelps, electoral competition does not explain why there are abstention increases at second-order elections where outcomes are less certain[112]. Therefore, low engagement and turnout for second-order elections are universal issues compared to first-order elections, arguably explained by only 57% of voters having full confidence in election results[113], which may be worse for second-order elections. Phelps[114] argues that young voters abstain in greater numbers despite the level of competition or the perceived closeness of the result. Therefore, low youth turnout motivation must be explored.

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[111] Ipsos-MORI (2015) *How Britain Voted in 2015* [Online] Accessed at https://www.ipsos-mori.com/researchpublications/researcharchive/3575/How-Britain-voted-in-2015.aspx?view=wide on 31st May 2017

[112] Phelps, Edward (2006) Young Adults and Electoral Turnout in Britain: Towards a Generational Model of Political Participation *Sussex European Institute* p.13 [Online] Located at: https://www.sussex.ac.uk/webteam/gateway/file.php?name=sei-working-paper-no-92.pdf&site=266 and accessed 2nd June 2017.

[113] Birch, S (2005) *Explaining confidence in the conduct of elections.* Paper presented at the Elections, Public Opinion and Political Parties Conference, University of Essex, 9-11 September 2005.

[114] Phelps (2006)

Abramson et al[115] conclude FPTP turnout is affected by voters' perception of election closeness and that turnout and closeness of previous elections is relevant. With youth turnout being low since 1992[116], the question is how to reengage them. The ease of voting and motivating people to vote is key; according to a University of Warwick youth turnout study, the young are discouraged to vote as registration, choosing how to vote and voting all take time[117]. According to a Parliamentary Committee voter-engagement report, only 44% of 18-24s voted in 2010, while over 75% of 55 year-olds+ did[118]. Furthermore, as *The Electoral* Commission stated in 2011, a far smaller proportion of the young were registered to vote compared to the elderly[119]:

> The lowest percentage of completeness is recorded by the 17-18 and 19-24 age groups (55% and 56% complete respectively). In contrast, 94% of the 65+ age group were registered.

The elderly are both far more likely to be registered and vote. Furthermore, young voters may be politically disengaged due to their that politics is not aimed at them; with low youth turnout, parties are less inclined to provide beneficial policies for

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[115] Abramson, Paul, Diskin, Abraham and Felsenthal, Dan S (2009) Nonvoting and the decisiveness of electoral outcomes *Political Research Quarterly, 60 (3)* pp. 500-515 [Online] Located : http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/24232/1/Nonvoting_and_the_Decisiveness_of_Electoral_Outcomes_(LSERO).pdf and accessed 1st June 2017.
[116] Henn, Matt and Foard, Nick (2011) *Young people, political participation and trust in Britain.* [Online] Located at: http://www.exeter.ac.uk/media/universityofexeter/research/microsites/epop/papers/Henn_and_Foard_-_Young_People,_Political_Participation_and_Trust_in_Britain.pdf and accessed 1st June 2017.
[117] Muthoo, Abinay (2015) Why Aren't Young People voting? *The Turnout of Young UK Voters* nd. [Online] Located at: https://warwick.ac.uk/about/london/policy-lab/projects/voting/background and accessed 23rd November 2018.
[118] Parliament (2014) *Parliamentary Business* Political and Constitutional Reform – Fourth Report. Constitutional Reform. 10 November. [Online] Located at: http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201415/cmselect/cmpolcon/232/23207.htm#note153 and accessed 29th March 2016.
[119] The Electoral Commission (2011) *Great Britain's Electoral Registers 2011* December. [Online] Located at: http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/145366/Great-Britains-electoral-registers-2011.pdf and accessed 30th March 2016.

them, like pensioners' free heating[120][121]. If elderly beneficial policies are contrasted

with various youth-orientated policies, such as tuition-fee rises and youth housing

benefit cuts[122][123], and that UK youth under-employment is 11%, one of the highest

in the EU, including Greece and Spain,[124] then youth apathy becomes

understandable. To quote the former head of the National Union of Students[125]:

> …There is a combination of reasons [why many young people
> don't vote]…disillusionment, the idea that voting does not make
> any difference to them or the political system does not make any
> difference to them.

This supports the previous evidence that the youth are not catered for. As such,

motivating the youth vote is crucial in increasing youth political engagement, as then

parties will provide attractive youth policies. Discussion of youth engagement and

turnout must mention the ease of voting and voter registration, with concurrent

elections improving voter turnout. However, it would be beneficial to discuss the role

that political leadership plays in shaping voter turnout.

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[120] Hunter, Teresa (2016) *The Daily Telegraph* New State Pension: How much will you get? (2016) 29 March. [Online] Located at: http://www.telegraph.co.uk/pensions-retirement/financial-planning/state-pension-how-much-will-you-get/ and accessed 29th March 2016.
[121] Gov.co.uk. *Gov.co.uk* Winter Fuel Payment nd. [Online] Located at: https://www.gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment/overview and accessed 29th March 2016.
[122] Coughlan, Sean (2010) *BBC* Students facing tuition fees rising to £9000. 3 November. [Online] Located at: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-11677862 and accessed 27th March 2016.
[123] BBC (2015) *BBC* Budget 2015: Osborne unveils National Living Wage. 8 July. [Online] Located at: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-33437115 and accessed 27th March 2016.
[124] Blanchflower, David (2015) *The Independent* 1 February Young People in the UK are suffering from austerity in the UK as well as Greece. [Online]. Located at: http://www.independent.co.uk/news/business/comment/david-blanchflower/david-blanchflower-young-people-are-suffering-from-austerity-in-the-uk-as-well-as-in-greece-10016988.html and accessed 26th March 2016.
[125] Parliament (2014)

<u>Political Leadership and voter turnout</u>

I will discuss the role and theories of political leadership. I will not discuss it to the fullest extent due to the fact that it is a large area of study which would take up the thesis. I will focus on political leadership in the 2010 and 2017 general elections, particularly looking at the rise of Clegg in 2010, May's underperformance and Corbyn's perceived excellent performance in 2017. I will use these as the main case studies with some reference to the other campaigns in the thesis as they are the best cases of political leadership in shaping voter turnout. I will also discuss some of the main theories as they apply to the case studies.

Although Clegg during 2010 (as well as discussion of his Coalition-era unpopularity) will be discussed in detail later, a brief discussion will occur now. Thus, political leadership theory and their mobilisation of voters should be examined. Clarke et al argued that 'leader images serve as cost-effective heuristic devices…that enable voters to judge the…capabilities of rival political parties.[126]' This is arguably one reason why the Liberal Democrats performed well just after the first debate, and why they fell back as the campaign continued. Interestingly, Milazzo and Hammond found leader popularity has a stronger effect in marginal seats[127], which possibly was why Corbyn over-performed in 2017 and why May underperformed. Indeed, Stevens et al found that there was a strong relationship between leader performance and electoral

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[126] Clarke, Harold, Sanders, David, Stewart, C Marianne, and Whiteley, M Paul (2004) *Political Choice in Britain.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.
[127] Milazzo, Caitlin and Hammond, Jesse (2018) The face of the party? Leader personalisation in British campaigns *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties.* Vol. 28, No.3, p.273.

choice[128], which perhaps explains the 2017 result and the Liberal Democrats'

increased 2010 vote-share, even if this did not translate into more seats. However,

leaders who present well and seem charismatic are at a greater advantage than

those not, because as Lenz and Lawson identify, individuals less interested in

politics are inclined to use appearance when determining vote-choice[129]. Thus,

mobilising the unengaged is easier with a positively presented leader, and Clegg's

emergence from being an 'outsider' at the start[130] to becoming the most popular

British politician since Churchill and a 50% increase in the Liberal Democrat polling

share just after the first debate [131] was significant, even as stated, this did not result

in more seats. Thus, political leadership can influence voting decisions and

mobilisation, but it has to be married with popular policies, salient elections and a

consistent engagement drive by parties to result in increased turnout. Indeed, the

Liberal Democrat failure to break through was due to the lack of credibility and belief

held by voters in the party, with Labour and the Conservatives also bringing their full

firepower against the party, ensuring that the party would falter, as explained by

Cutts et al[132].

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[128] Stevens, Daniel, Karp, Jeffrey, and Hodgson, Robert (2011) Party leaders as movers and shakers in British Campaigns? Results from the 2010 Election. *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties* 21 (2): pp.125-145.

[129] Lenz, Gabriel S and Chappell, Lawson (2011) Looking the part: Television leads less informed citizens to vote based on Candidates' Appearance *American Journal of Political Science* 55 (3): pp.574-589

[130] Cowley, Philip and Kavanagh, Dennis (2010) *The British General Election of 2010*. P.179. Palgrave Macmillan: London

[131] Parry, Katy and Richardson, Kay (2011) Political Imagery in the British General Election of 2010: The Curious Case of 'Nick Clegg. *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations.* Volume 13. Issue 4. pp.474-489 [Online] Located at: https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-856X.2011.00452.x and accessed 17th June 2019.

[132] Cutts, David, Fieldhouse, Edward, and Russell, Andrew (2010) The Campaign That Changed Everything And Still Did Not Matter? The Liberal Democrat Campaign and Performance. *Parliamentary Affairs,* Vol.64, No. 4, October 2010, pp.689-707 [Online] Located at: https://doi.org/10.1093/pa/gsg025 and accessed 18th April 2019.

Political leadership being important but not overly so is clear from Clegg being viewed far more positively than any other party leader[133] during and before the election, but on election day, only 12% selected the Liberal Democrats as the party best on the most important issue[134], showing again how policies and party perception influence voter choice and turnout. However, Clegg's campaign impact was undeniable, and was as a result of his leadership and his TV debates role: the party took the opportunity, and although beaten down during the election, there was indeed a Liberal Democrat boost[135]. However, Clegg and the campaign shall be analysed in more detail later. It would be now relevant to discuss how Corbyn won the leadership.

Labour for the 2015 leadership election had a 'one member one vote' policy due to Miliband reforms, which perceived to be more favourable to Labour's right wing. Corbyn was seen as being a leader with integrity and 'not a normal politician', with even rightwing commentators saying:

> By…avoiding…spin and speaking in proper sentences, he may well create a public demand for other, more successful politicians to do the same.[136]

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[133] Clarke, Harold, Sanders, David, Stewart, Marianne, and Whiteley, Paul (2010) Valence Politics and Electoral Choice in Britain 2010 *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties* 21:2, pp.237-253 [Online[Located at: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/17457289.2011.562614?needAccess=true and accessed 2nd April 2019.

[134] Ibid.

[135] Pattie, C and Johnston, R (2011) A Tale of Sound and Fury, Signifying Something? The Impact of the Leaders' Debates in the 2010 UK General Election. *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties.* Volume 21, Issue 2, May 2011, p.175.

[136] Heffer, Simon (2015) *The Telegraph* Corbyn could put an end to the era of spin. 19 September. [Online] Located at: http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/Jeremy_Corbyn/11875325/Corbyn-could-put-an-end-to-the-era-of-spin.html and accessed 7th January 2016.

Heffer's acknowledgement of Corbyn's speaking style taps into why Corbyn was popular. Golin, a PR firm, researched political language in 2015, and reported how voters found typical 'politician-speak' repellant:

> …a third of the British electorate trust candidates less when they lapse into buzzwords and "politician-speak". [They] also believe politicians care less about the issue they are discussing if they resort to prepared speeches…
> More than 60%...believe "a lot of politicians seem to talk without actually saying anything meaningful", while 45% said candidates should speak "plain English".[137]

Corbyn campaigned with the slogan 'Straight talking, honest politics. [138]' Blais and Achen's maxim about turnout being reduced by lack of civic duty and a lack of election preference comes into play[139]: if voters like Corbyn due to his 'normal' nature, then turnout and political interest should increase. As Lawrence said: 'The public had been relegated to 'passive receivers' of a pre-packaged media politics, that was honed…to woo the key target groups identified by scientific polling.[140]' This was done somewhat in the television-dominated era, but was a critique that was posed at politics and still is to a degree. Corbyn's sheer Labour popularity was clear, as he was elected with 59.5% of the vote overall, 59% of full Labour members, 58% of Labour affiliates and 84% of associate Labour members[141].

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[137] Suilt, Micah *PR Week* (2015) The Language of politicians is turning off voters, according to poll 20 April. [Online] Located at: http://www.prweek.com/article/1343290/language-politicians-turning-off-voters-according-poll and accessed 7th February 2016.
[138] Chorley, Matt and McTague, Tom (2015) *The Daily Mail* Jeremy Corbyn promises straight talking honest politics and no cuts 29 September [Online] Located at: http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3253488/Jeremy-Corbyn-promises-straight-talking-honest-politics-speech-Labour-leader.html and accessed 27th June 2018.
[139] Blais and Achen (2018)
[140] Lawrence, Jon (2009) *Electing Our Masters*. P.231. Oxford University Press, Oxford.
[141] Kellner, Peter (2015) An anatomy of Corbyn's victory *YouGov* September 15. [Online] Located at: https://yougov.co.uk/news/2015/09/15/anatomy-corbyns-victory/ and accessed 27th June 2018.

Looking at London YouGov figures from the leadership election, the youth's belief in Corbyn is evident. Corbyn was the choice of 53% of London's youth, with other leadership contenders lagging behind[142]. Corbyn also had the support of 46% of the population[143]. Thus, Corbyn's support amongst the young and population in general was high, across all ages (and most other demographics, apart from Conservative voters) Corbyn was seen as the best possible Labour leader with UKIP voters putting him at an astonishing 62%[144], higher than Labour voters! Significantly, Corbyn's leadership contest support was lowest amongst Labour members pre-2010, and highest amongst those who had joined after post-2015 election, with those in between ranking in the middle[145]. Furthermore, Corbyn's youth support was even higher than YouGov, with 64% youth support[146]. Interestingly, only 5% of Corbyn's supporters stated him as most likely to unite the party and the same again for winning in 2020, with 70% stating that his policies were best for Britain and 65% stating that they represented a clean break from New Labour[147], departing from the status quo. Indeed, Corbyn's refusal to back the caretaker leadership of Harman's support of Conservative welfare cuts, ensured his polling shot up[148]. Thus, although

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[142] N.a (2015) *YouGov* Results for Evening Standard London Labour Leader Poll. 15th August 2015. [Online] Located at: https://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/umiuxdpotn/Results-for-EveningStandard-London-LabourLeader-150812.pdf and accessed 27th June 2018.
[143] ibid
[144] Ibid.
[145] Dorey, Peter (2016) The Longest Suicide Note in History: The Labour Leadership Contest of 2015. *British Politics.* September 2016, Volume 11, Issue 3, p. 259-282. [Online] Located at: https://link.springer.com/article/10.1057/s41293-016-0001-0 and accessed 27th June 2018.
[146] Ibid.
[147] Nd (2015) *YouGov* The Times Survey Results. 21st July 2015 [Online] Located at : https://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/94enqtd1fz/LabourLeadership_150721_day_two_W.pdf and accessed 27th June 2018.
[148] Gaffney, John (2015) *LSE Politics and Policy* Why is Jeremy Corbyn stealing the show? Because he's the only Labour candidate saying anything at all. July 23rd 2015. [Online] Located at: http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/politicsandpolicy/why-is-jeremy-corbyn-stealing-the-show-because-hes-the-only-labour-candidate-saying-anything-at-all/ and accessed 27th June 2018.

Corbyn was unpopular with the rest of the party[149], Labour's activists were more radical and elected him, demonstrating how the 'law of curvilinear disparity', which discusses how political parties memberships tend to be more radical than the MPs, was evident for Corbyn's victory[150] after having been absent from British politics somewhat[151]. There was scepticism about Labour's young voters and if they represented something new for Labour and Britain in general[152], which will be discussed later.

By paying £3 and signing up online, anyone could sign up as a registered Labour supporter and have the right to vote in the leadership contest, which as Chadwick and Stromer-Galley point out, is European-derived[153]:

> We are now in…"multi-speed" party membership along the lines predicted by Margetts's "cyber party" model (Margetts 2006)[154].… Many European parties have introduced mechanisms that blur the boundaries between formal dues paying and looser modes of affiliation. These include primaries; one-off donations rather than regular subscriptions; online consultations, online voting; online petitioning; and simply encouraging individuals to become the party's "news audience" for online newsletters and social media feeds.

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[149] Dorey (2016)

[150] May, J (1973) Opinion structure of political parties: The special law of curvilinear disparity. *Political Studies* 21(2): pp.135–151.

[151] Norris P (1995) May's law of curvilinear disparity revisited: Leaders, officers, members and voters in British political parties. *Party Politics* 1(1): pp.29–47.

[152] Williams, Mischa (2015) *Equal Times* Corbyn's 'youthquake' Labour's frontrunners energises young voters, but can he win? 11 September 2015. [Online] Located at: https://www.equaltimes.org/corbyn-s-youthquake-labour-s?lang=en#.WzOx8VVKiUm and accessed 27th June 2018.

[153] Chadwick, Andrew and Stromer-Galley, Jennifer (2016) Digital Media, Power, and Democracy in Parties and Election Campaigns: Party Decline or Party Renewal? *The International Journal of Press/Politics* 2016, Vol. 21(3) pp. 283–293 [Online] Located at: http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/1940161216646731 and accessed 27th June 2018.

[154] Margetts, Helen (2006) "The Cyber Party." In *The Handbook of Party Politics*, ed. R. S. Katz and W. Crotty pp. 528–35. London: Sage

Social media could potentially mobilise and incentivise supporters; dipping in and out and using online methods could increase engagement and participation. Thus, Labour's membership reached over 600,000[155], although Labour's new members are mostly wealthy city dwellers, who are already politically involved and engaged[156]. As such, Gibson also discussed "the emergence of online "citizen-initiated campaigning" based on "community building, getting out the vote, generating resources and message production"[157]. Labour's attempts at doing this with satellite campaigns shall be discussed later, but Labour's efforts with doing this with the associate memberships are significant. Before that, I will summarise the Corbyn section.

A Corbyn ally summed up his Corbyn thoughts:

> Jeremy is Jeremy. He isn't a rock star politician…he doesn't wear slick clothes, but in a way he is an anti-hero. He's …authentic and he just seems to have resonated with people. [158]

Corbyn's 'normalness' struck a chord with many, as he engaged rather than being 'an average politician', as Crines argued[159]. Many people, even in other parties, thought he was the best possible Labour leader, and he won overwhelmingly. As Olson argues, the Internet can reduce collective action cost[160], so the £3 associated membership as well as Corbyn's focus on online mobilisation and the 'Corbynmania'

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[155] Syal, R. (2016). "Disproportionate Number of Labour's New Members are Wealthy City Dwellers." *The Guardian*, January 21. [Online] Located at: http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/jan/20/293 labours-new-members-mostly-wealthy-city-dwellers-leaked-report and accessed June 28 2018.
[156] Ibid.
[157] Chadwick and Stromer-Galley (2016) p.291.
[158] Wintour and Wyatt, 2015, cited in Diamond, Patrick (2016) Assessing the Performance of UK Opposition Leaders: Jeremy Corbyn's 'Straight Talking, Honest Politics' *Politics and Governance* Volume 4, Issue 2, p.16
[159] Crines, Andrew (2015) *Democratic Audit* Jeremy Corbyn's Rhetoric is effective because his style of engagement contrasts so markedly with the other candidates. [Online] Located at: http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/81061/1/democraticaudit.com-Jeremy%20Corbyns%20rhetoric%20is%20effective%20because%20his%20style%20of%20engagement%20contrasts%20so%20markedly%20with%20the%20o.pdf and accessed 27th June 2018.
[160] Olson, M (1971) *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups,* (revised edition). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

phenomena[161] demonstrated Labour's utilisation of the Internet. Although Corbyn's

supporters were unconcerned with his electability[162], they felt the party had drifted

too far from its roots, and they felt they could trust in him[163] rather than someone

conventionally electable. To an extent, the activists were already there, as is argued

by Vaccari and Valeriani[164]:

> …The Corbyn campaign was based on a hybrid mix of traditional volunteering, where trade unions and a constellation of social movements seemingly played a substantial role, and digitally enabled strategies to recruit registered supporters and distribute the campaign message on social media…the findings shown here suggest that already in 2014, there was a reservoir of citizen campaigners who were not party members but were ready to participate in party-related activities, which the Corbyn campaign tapped into.

Corbyn gained a large majority of post-2015 election members, and almost 90% of

the associated membership, on a total turnout of 76%[165]. To tackle mobilisation and

political engagement, Momentum, a digital campaign group which emerged out of

Corbyn's leadership campaign, undertook online activism to support Corbyn's

leadership and Labour. Momentum explicitly discusses the need to be 'participatory,

[to have] interactive development of leaders and organisers within communities: and

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[161] Heritage, Stuart (2015) Jez We Can: Why Jeremy Corbyn gets the social media vote *The Guardian* [Online] Located at: https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2015/aug/04/jezwecan-jeremy-corbyn-social-media-vote-labour-leadership and accessed 27th June 2018.

[162]Quinn, Thomas (2016) The British Labour Party's Leadership Election of 2015 *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 2016, Vol. 18(4) p.766 [Online] Located at: http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/1369148116664268 and accessed 27th June 2018.

[163]Bale, Tim, Webb, Paul and Poletti, Monica (2016) *LSE Public and Politics Blog* Minority Views: Labour Members had been longing for someone like Corbyn before he was even on the ballot paper 14th March. [Online] Located at: http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/70739/1/blogs.lse.ac.uk-Minority%20views%20Labour%20members%20had%20been%20longing%20for%20someone%20like%20Corbyn%20before%20he%20was%20even%20on%20the%20ball%20%281%29.pdf and accessed 27th June 2018.

[164]Vaccari, Cristian and Valeriani, Augusto (2016) Party Campaigners or Citizen Campaigners? How Social Media Deepen and Broaden Party-Related Engagement. *The International Journal of Press/Politics* 2016, Vol. 21(3) p.306

[165] Crines, Andrew (2015) *Political Insight:* Reforming Labour: The Election of Jeremy Corbyn. December 2015, pp.4-7 [Online] Located at: http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/2041-9066.12105 and accessed 27th June 2018.

people coming up with their own viable alternatives.'[166] Thus, the campaign involved

digital interaction and discussion on a level beyond what had previously occurred in

a leadership contest, which created friction within Labour[167]. However, political

mobilisation and turnout-increasing lessons are clear. Corbyn was seen as new,

grabbing general interest, and Labour's £3 associate membership and Momentum

demonstrated how to engage and mobilise people online politically, which is

paramount for voter mobilisation, as well as comparing them and other political

mobilisation methods to other case studies. Thus, how Corbyn engaged and

mobilised supporters is significant for how leadership can engage voters. This would

come to the fore again in the 2017 election, when May and Corbyn's leadership

affected the election vastly.

May, although popular pre-election[168], ended it much diminished, and Corbyn,

perceived as someone who would lead Labour to certain defeat, ended up boosting

Labour's vote by percentages not seen since 1945[169]. May was seen as aloof and

cold, while Corbyn was not. As voters prefer a genuine leader with good policies

rather than an impersonal leader with bad policies, it was clear how the leadership of

the parties during the election affected the result, and their effect on mobilisation and

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[166] Klug, A., Rees, E., & Schneider, J. (2016). Momentum: A new kind of politics. *Renewal : A Journal of Labour Politics, 24*(2), pp.36-44. [Online] Located at: https://search.proquest.com/docview/1799185426?accountid=10792 and accessed 27th June 2018.
[167] Garland, Jessica (2016) A Wider range of friends: multi-speed organising during the 2015 Labour leadership contest. *The Political Quarterly*, Volume 87, Issue 1. January to March 2016, pp.23-30 [Online] Located at: https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/1467-923X.12217 and accessed 28th June 2018.
[168] Ipsos Mori (2017) *Ipsos Mori* Theresa May's honeymoon continues as Jeremy Corbyn still struggles with public approval. 16 February 2017. [Online] Located at: https://www.ipsos.com/ipsos-mori/en-uk/theresa-mays-honeymoon-continues-jeremy-corbyn-still-struggles-public-approval and accessed 17th June 2019.
[169] Ibid.

turnout. As competence and reliable boosts turnout, according to Miller et a[170] and Lewis-Beck and Nadeau[171], this benefitted May, who was seen throughout the campaign as being more competent and reliable than Corbyn, although this drifted down throughout the campaign[172]. However, voters perceived May more negatively throughout the campaign and Corbyn more positively, especially rating Corbyn highly on honesty and likeability[173]. Indeed, when May's fortune's started to drop as a result of her lack of campaigning finesse, Corbyn's poll-ratings began to increase compared to May's, and was seen as a potential Prime Minister. Bittner identified that empathy and integrity of party leaders affected vote-choice strongest[174], with positive evaluations of party leaders increasing the likelihood of voting for a particular party, and vice versa for negative[175]. However, as Bittner[176], Holmberg and Oscarsson[177] argue, presidential systems have a stronger leader effect than parliamentary ones, although parliamentary majoritarian systems have a stronger electoral effect regarding leaders[178], making the study of this regarding Westminster 2010/7 elections valid.

[170] Miller Arthur H., Wattenberg Martin P., Malanchuk Oksana (1986) Schematic Assessments of Presidential Candidates. *American Political Science Review* 80 (2): pp.521–40
[171] Lewis-Beck, Michael and Nadeau, Richard (2014) Between Leadership and Charisma: The Importance of Leaders. In *Personality Politics? The Role of Leader Evaluations in Democratic Elections*, eds: Lobo Marina C, Curtice John. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
[172] Sprackling, Imogen (2017 *YouGov* Corbyn vs May: how the public sees the two leaders. 6 June. [Online] Located at: https://yougov.co.uk/topics/politics/articles-reports/2017/06/06/corbyn-vs-may-how-public-sees-two-leaders and accessed 18th June 2019.
[173] Ibid.
[174] Bittner, Amanda (2011) *Platform or Personality? The Role of Party Leaders in Elections*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.
[175] Ibid.
[176] Ibid.
[177] Curtice, John and Holmberg, S (2005) Party Leaders and Party Choice. In Thomassen J (editor) *The European Voter: A Comparison Study of Modern Democracies*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.
[178] Curtice, John and Hunlan, Sarinder (2013) Elections as Beauty Contests: Do the Rules Matter? In *Political Leaders and Democratic Elections*, ed. Aarts Kees, Blais, Andre, Schmitt, Hermann. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Although May started off the campaign strongly with a 36% lead as best Prime

Minister over Corbyn[179], her campaigning became ineffective. As Prosser

explains[180]:

> The Conservatives began [by[emphasising May's leadership…
> May promised 'strong and stable' leadership compared to
> Corbyn's 'coalition of chaos'. As the campaign unfolded,
> [emphasising] May proved to be a mistake. She was not a natural
> campaigner. Her interactions with voters were awkward and the
> 'strong and stable' mantra wore thin with voters and the press
> alike. The Conservative campaign also featured…missteps such
> as the announcement of -and rapid backtracking on- changes to
> social care payments (the…dementia tax). Similarly, proposals to
> end the pension triple-lock and introduce means testing for winter
> fuel payments [were met with hostility]…

Thus, this demonstrates May's poor performance, and how leadership perception

can have an effect, along with poor policy and campaigns. In contrast, Labour and

Corbyn were more effective campaigners[181]:

> Labour soon gained momentum… concentrating…opposition to
> austerity and promises to increase funding for public services.
> Many Labour policies – from renationalising the railways to
> abolishing tuition fees – proved popular…especially among
> younger voters. In stark contrast to May, Corbyn was in his
> element on the campaign trail and his popularity soared as May's
> declined.

As the campaign went on, it was clear that a combination of good policies and

leadership impacted Labour and Conservative fortunes: with Corbyn campaigning

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[179] YouGov (2017) *YouGov* YouGov/The Times Survey Results. 19th April. [Online] Located at: http://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/04xxn42p3e/TimesResults_170419_VI_Trackers_GE_W.pdf and accessed 17th June 2019.
[180] Prosser, Christopher (2018) The Strange Death of multi-party Britain: the UK General Election of 2017 *West European Politics*. Volume 41, Issue 5, P.1229. [Online] Located at: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/01402382.2018.1424838?needAccess=true and accessed 17th June 2019.
[181] Ibid.

well and May not, along with well-received policies by Labour and negative

Conservative ones, the polling and leadership deficit was considerably narrowed.

Significantly, as Cowley and Kavanagh find, Labour won more than half of those who

changed their minds during the election, with 19% doing this in total[182]. The TV

debates were important for this. May never went head-to-head versus Corbyn and

the other party leaders. Prosser explains[183]:

> The first national debate consisted of the leaders of the Liberal Democrats, SNP, Plaid Cymru, the Greens, and UKIP, with no representative from the Conservatives or Labour…Corbyn, invigorated by a successful campaign, decided to take part [in the second debate], challenging May to face him. She did not, sending…Amber Rudd instead. Rudd performed well but May's absence was striking and went down poorly with the media and voters alike.

Therefore, along with Labour's campaign judged to be more honest, positive, clear

and relevant to the important issues[184], leadership and policies impacted Labour's

chances. Corbyn narrowed the gap on the question of best Prime Minister to 11

points by the end of the campaign[185], demonstrating the importance of leadership.

With Corbyn's effective handling of the terror attacks in Manchester and London,

which weakened May due to her ministerial history[186], Corbyn came out stronger.

Therefore, Stewart and Clarke's maxim that leader images had strong effects on

party choice[187] was accurate, because as Corbyn's ratings rose, so did Labour's.

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[182] Cowley, Philip and Kavanagh, Dennis (2018) *The British General Election of 2017*. Palgrave Macmillan: London.
[183] Prosser, Christopher (2018) p.1230
[184] Cowley, Philip and Kavanagh, Dennis (2018) p.412
[185] Ibid, p.413.
[186] Prosser, Christopher (2018) p.1230
[187] Stewart, Marianne, and Clarke, Harold (1992) The (un)importance of Party Leaders: Leader Images and Party Choice in the 1987 British Election. *The Journal of Politics*. Vol. 54, No.2, May 1992.

Also, Labour and Corbyn were more popular on social media, but this shall be examined later.

Party leaders act as a mobilising agent and have substantial impact on the likelihood of turning out to vote in Parliamentary elections, as Da Silva identified[188]. Notably, he also identified how this effect was especially strong in dealligned voters[189], which explains why Labour gained so many. Thus, leadership theories and their relevance to the case studies is clear. There is more scope to discuss the effect of media representation of leaders and their construction, but that will take place in other works, and Aaldering et al's work on mediated leader effects would be a good foundation[190].

Thus, the significance of leadership as well as a good manifesto and how that manifesto is communicated is clear. The thesis is not overly concerned with how Corbyn and May's leadership has evolved, as this is again a task for another thesis, but the impact that leadership had in the case studies selected is relevant for mobilisation and engagement analysis. The UK adopted a new voter registration system in 2014, and discussing how voter registration changes can hold down turnout will now occur.

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[188] Da Silva, Frederico Ferreira (2018) Fostering Turnout?: Assessing Party Leaders' capacity to mobilise voters *Electoral Studies*. Volume 56, December 2018, pp.61-79 [Online] Located at: https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0261379418301859 and accessed 18th June 2019.
[189] Ibid.
[190] Aaldering, Loes, Van Der Meer, Tom, and Van der Brug, Wouter (2018) Mediated Leader Effects: The Impact on Newspapers' Portrayal of Party Leadership on Electoral Support. *Int J Press Polit.* 2018. Jan; 23 (1) pp.70-94. [Online] Located at: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5833811/#bibr17-1940161217740696 and accessed 17th June 2019.

New Voter Registration System and turnout

Wolfinger and Rosenstone stated 'the requirement [to register] makes voting a more difficult act than it otherwise would be.'[191] Therefore, Geys argued registration requirements drive down turnout:

> Automatic registration, Election Day registration, and the absence of literacy tests and poll taxes all lead to significant turnout increases…Empirical work… strongly supports the depressing effect on turnout of tighter registration procedures.[192]

Thus, when considering these when discussing the voter registration system introduced in 2014, the effect it had on voter turnout can be discussed further. Arguably, the new system assisted Cameron in winning the 2015 General Election, with an estimated one million voters being left off the register by January 2015, primarily made up of students, other young people, private renters and the mobile[193]. Considering the turnout and Labour vote for the 18-24 demographic was 43% in 2015 as compared to 27% for the Conservatives[194], it is evident how the new system benefitted the Conservatives. Previously, voter registration was conducted via a 'household' system that had one person in the household registering everyone at the address, which was seen as open to fraud. However, it was simple to get registered: for example, universities could register students living in university accommodation instead of students individually registering, increasing student registration. However,

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[191] Rosenstone, S J, Wolfinger, R.E (1978) The effect of registration laws on voter turnout *American Political Science Review 72* pp.22-45

[192] Geys (2006) p.653.

[193] Wheeler, Paul (2015) *The Guardian* Britain's missing voters: why individual voting has been a disaster. 5 February. [Online] Located at: http://www.theguardian.com/public-leaders-network/2015/feb/05/missing-voters-individual-electoral-registration-disaster and accessed 5th May 2016.

[194] Ipsos Mori (2015)

in September 2014, the new system of 'individual voter registration' was introduced. As stated, implementation was poor, and had an adverse effect on political representation.

 The new electoral registers will form the boundaries for the planned reduction of parliamentary seats, thus resulting in a reduction of representation for young people, urban inhabitants, mobile voters (as they will need to reregister every time they move house) and students, resulting in reduced political engagement. Therefore, referring back to Geys, voter registration is evidently more difficult. Therefore, turnout may decrease and decrease political efficacy. The Electoral Commission warned in the 2014 trial for Individual Voter Registration about the risks[195] :

> …areas with a high concentration of certain demographics – students, private renters and especially young adults – are very likely to return a lower match rate. These demographics are also strongly associated with under- registration. These variables are all also associated with population mobility.

With Jackman stating that disproportionality in the translation of votes into legislative seats results in the disincentivisation of voting and lower turnout[196], it is clear that these demographics will be disengaged and unrepresented. Advertising and sending out mobilisation messages are useful for engagement; as Nickerson found in 2008, if a household received a mobilisation message, voting probability rose by around 10% for the message recipients, and voting probability for others in the household

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[195] The Electoral Commission (2013) *Confirmation dry run: results. Individual Voter Registration.* 13 October. [Online] Located at: http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0019/163144/Confirmation-Dry-run-2013-Results-report.pdf and accessed 6th May 2016.

[196] Jackman, Robert W (1987) Political Institutions and Voter Turnout in the Industrial Democracies *The American Political Science Review* Vol 81, No 2 (1987), pp. 405-424. American Political Science Association. Located at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/1961959 and accessed 5th May 2016.

increased around 6%,[197] demonstrating a network of increased probability and voter communication. Therefore, mobilisation and awareness messages are crucial for increasing turnout. The British government did this in March 2016 by nationally dispatching information packs on why Britain should stay in the EU, and what was at stake, while also including the referendum date and how to register to vote[198].

Vonnahme's 2012 research demonstrates that shorter voter deadlines increases turnout, as registration costs are reduced[199]:

> While the results indicate that deadlines are related to both rates of registration and turnout, the effect on turnout is greater. This suggests that shorter deadlines not only affect non-registered voters, but also previously registered voters…[200]

Both newly registered voters and pre-registered voters increase turnout with shorter deadlines. The deadline for the referendum was 7th June 2016, two weeks pre-referendum, which should have increased turnout accordingly. Returning to the packs, they were criticised by Leavers, as they were sent at a £9 million cost and were viewed as one-sided[201]. This perhaps demonstrates that low turnout and youth disengagement were key to Leave's victory, as they were not interested in increasing voter knowledge. When the government announced that the registration deadline would have a 48 hour extension[202], this arguably increased turnout and voter

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[197] Nickerson, D (2008) Is voting contagious? Evidence from two field experiments. *American Political Science Review, 102 (1)*, pp.49-58.

[198] Landale, James (2016) *BBC* EU Referendum: Government to spend £9m on leaflets to every home. 7 April. [Online] Located at: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-eu-referendum-35980571 and accessed 7th May 2016.

[199] Vonnahme, Greg (2012) Registration deadlines and Turnout in Context. *Political Behavior* Vol 34, No 4 (December 2012) pp.765-779. Springer [Online] Located at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/23359656 and accessed 7th May 2016.

[200] Ibid, p. 773

[201] BBC (2016) PM Makes no apology for leaflets. *BBC* 7 April. [Online] Located at: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-eu-referendum-35984991 and accessed 9th October 2016.

[202] Cabinet Office and Hancock, Rt Hon Matthew (2016) *Extending the deadline to register to vote for the EU Referendum: Statement.* 9 June. [Online] Located at:

engagement due to the close deadline. As Nickerson suggests, turnout increases further with previously registered voters through social contagion, making voter reminders and shorter registration periods essential to increasing turnout and political engagement.

Turnout can be restrained in other ways, such as inaccessible polling stations for disabled voters, as Schur et al discuss[203], which can be described as an individual barrier that complicates turnout.

Conclusion

First and second-order elections and their difference has been examined underpinned by theory. Case studies of different British elections, ranging from local elections, devolved elections and General elections occurred in order to lay foundations for later chapters. Levels of turnout over different types of elections, the new registration system and a brief analysis of youth turnout have been analysed and given a theoretical background. The purpose of this is to lay the groundwork for the chapters on youth engagement and party mobilisation in various elections, as knowing the general direction of turnout and how it differs in different elections will be key for the understanding of how political parties mobilise and engage voters. Leadership has also been discussed and the role political leadership can play in mobilising and engaging voters. One key analysis will be seeing how voter

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https://www.gov.uk/government/news/extending-the-deadline-to-register-to-vote-for-the-eu-referendum-statement and accessed 1st March 2017.

[203] Schur, Lisa, Ameri, Mason and Adya, Meera (2017) Disability, Voter Turnout and Polling Place Accessibilty. *Social Science Quarterly*, Volume 98, Issue 5. November 2017. [Online] Located at: https://doi.org/10.1111/ssqu.12373 and accessed 5th March 2018.

engagement and low voter turnout is tackled by political parties. As such, the 2010

case study will be an excellent beginning.

Chapter II: An analysis of the 2010 Election.

In the last chapter, turnout, mobilisation and engagement theory were explored, with electoral systems, election salience, political mobilisation via leadership and more were discussed. This chapter will analyse the 2010 election, using theory discussed in the last chapter and analysing how political parties mobilised and engaged voters, utilising the Internet, the new TV debates, and other methods. Thus, building upon the theory introduced last chapter and using 2010 as a case study, a picture will be built of how political parties mobilised their supporters at this period in time.

British political parties' ability to motivate their supporters have rapidly evolved with the Internet. Parties and political figures must venture beyond canvassing, hustings, leaflet campaigns, TV and radio advertising and other methods of political mobilisation. According to the Office of National Statistics, over 90% of 16-24 year olds used-social media in 2013[204], so mastering this politically is key. However, appealing to the youth is difficult, as seen previously[205]. Youth political disengagement is compounded further after examining turnout. In the 1997 General Election, youth turnout was 68%[206]. The 2001 election had 39%[207], 37% in 2005[208],

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[204] Office of National Statistics (2013) *Social Networking: The UK as a leader in Europe.* 13 June 2013. [Online] Located at: http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/rdit2/internet-access---households-and-individuals/social-networking--the-uk-as-a-leader-in-europe/sty-social-networking-2012.html and accessed 22nd August 2017.

[205] The Electoral Commission (2011) *Great Britain's Electoral Registers 2011* December. [Online] Located at: http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/145366/Great-Britains-electoral-registers-2011.pdf and accessed 30th March 2016.

[206] Jowell, R., and Park, A. (1998). *Young People, Politics and Citizenship: A Disengaged Generation?* London: Citizenship Foundation.

[207] The Electoral Commission (2005) *Election 2005: Turnout, how many, who and why?* London: The Electoral Commission.

[208] Ibid.

and 44% in 2010. In 2015, it dropped to 43%[209], remaining the same for 2017[210],

illustrating the decrease since 1997. Therefore, youth turnout fell by 1% from 2010

to 2017, which could be explained by the changes in the electoral registration

system. In later chapters, the other referendums and elections shall be discussed. I

will be discussing the 2010 General Election during this chapter, before moving onto

later elections in later chapters. A breakdown of the necessary terms will need to

take place to provide context.

What is voter mobilisation, and why is it important?

Norris defines voter mobilisation as increasing voter participation and attention to the

political campaign,[211] so the more voters are mobilised by political parties and by

political figures, the more they participate and engage. Saunders dissents to this,

arguing that low turnout is not an issue, as forcing those who do not want to vote is

anti-democratic[212]. However, this seems to be isolated, as Nyhuis et al for example

discuss encouraging voters with specific voter mobilisation methods[213]. Traditionally,

mobilisation studies focus on how voters are contacted by parties via canvassing,

postal leaflets, telephone contacting, and other such tools[214]. Other studies have

focused on how television advertising and newspapers have affected political

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[209] Ipsos Mori (2015) *How Britain Voted in 2015*. [Online] Located at: https://www.ipsos.com/ipsos-mori/en-uk/how-britain-voted-2015 and accessed 23rd August 2017.
[210] BES Team (2018) The myth of the 2017 'youthquake' *BBC* 29 January 2018. [Online] Located at: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-42747342 and accessed 5th August 2018.
[211] Norris, Pippa (2006) Does the Media Matter? Agenda-Setting, Persuasion and Mobilization Effects in the British General Election Campaign *British Politics*, 1 pp.195-221 Palgrave MacMillan. [Online] Located at: https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1057%2Fpalgrave.bp.4200022.pdf and accessed 23rd August 2017.
[212] Saunders, Ben (2012) The Democratic Turnout 'Problem' *Political Studies* Volume 60, Number 2, June 2012 pp. 306-321
[213] Nyhuis, Martin, Gosselt, Jordy F, and Rosema, Martin (2016) The psychology of electoral mobilisation: a subtle priming experiment *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties*, Vol. 26, No.3, pp.293-311. Routledge
[214] Green, D.P, McGrath, M.C, and Aronow, P.M (2013) Field Experiments and the Study of Voter Turnout *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties* 23, pp.27-48

support and voting likelihood[215]: if your party wins, your trust and belief in the efficacy in the political system increases, as Clark and Acock demonstrated[216]. Therefore, effective mobilisation is essential.

Karp and Banducci's 2007 work[217] discusses political mobilisation and participation in the Eastern Bloc democracies and how the older democracies of France, Britain and the United States differ in this approach. They argue that when parties contact citizens, they are more likely to vote and be politically engaged, so it is in their interest to effectively mobilise supporters. This benefits the political system, as when citizens participate, they are more likely to be satisfied with it and political institutions[218]. Returning to the above however, FPTP systems have lower turnout and political participation because in them, parties have less incentive to mobilise everywhere, and thus voters are less incentivised to vote if not contacted or mobilised[219]. Therefore, in Britain, low youth turnout is compounded by FPTP resulting in low youth political participation and engagement. How British parties have countered this is key, and thus I will analyse the 2010 election.

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[215] Banducci, Susan A and Karp, Jeffrey A (2003) How Elections Change the Way Citizens View the Political System: Campaigns, Media Effects and Electoral Outcomes in Comparative Perspectives. *B.J.Pol.S* 33, pp.443-467.

[216] Clarke and Acock, National Elections and Political attitudes'; Clarke, Harold D and Kornberg, Alan (1992) Do National Elections Affect Perceptions of MP Responsiveness: A Note on the Canadian Case' *Legislative Studies Quarterly,* 17 (1992) pp.183-204

[217] Karp, Jeffrey A and Banducci, Susan A (2007) Party Mobilisation and Political Participation in New and Old Democracies *Party Politics* 2007, 13: p.217

[218] Finkel, Steven (1987). The Effects of Participation on Political Efficacy and Political Support: Evidence from a West German Panel. The Journal of Politics. 49. P.441 [Online] Located at: https://464.10.2307/2131308 and accessed 5th August 2018.

[219] Powell, GB (1980) *Voting Turnout in Thirty Democracies: Partisan, Legal, and Socio-Eocnomic influences: A Comparative Analysis*, ed R. Rose, Beverley Hills, CA. Sage

The 2010 General Election and youth mobilisation

The 2010 election marked New Labour's end. In the election runup, it seemed as if the Conservatives would win outright, defeating Labour and the Liberal Democrats. This did not happen. Thus, by examining the context of the 2010 election, it will be possible to divine how voters were mobilised and engaged by manifestos and party campaigns.

The election took place against after 13 years of Labour. After two Labour Prime Ministers and a financial crash, the election ended up being hung, with a 65.1% turnout, 307 seats and 36.1% for the Conservatives, 29% and 258 seats for Labour, 23% and 57 seats for the Liberal Democrats (a 1% increase in vote-share but a 5 seat drop since 2005)[220]. The Greens won their first seat, and there was also a concerted effort from UKIP and the BNP. Labour could have assembled a rainbow coalition of the other parties, as Quinn et a discuss[221], or conversely, a Conservative-led government was possible. Thus, the Conservatives went into coalition with the Liberal Democrats, resulting in the first Liberal-influenced government since the Second World War. Therefore, an analysis of the various election media issues, particularly the mass media's promotion of 'Cleggmania', when Clegg and the Liberal Democrats were extremely popular, will occur.

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[220] Cowley, Philip and Kavanagh, Dennis (2010) *The British General Election of 2010*. P.351. Palgrave Macmillan, London.

[221] Quinn, Thomas, Bara, Judith & Bartle, John(2011) The UK Coalition Agreement of 2010: Who Won? *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties*, 21:2, pp.295-312. [Online] Located at: DOI: 10.1080/17457289.2011.562610 and accessed 21st May 2019.

Chapter II: An analysis of the 2010 Election.

Over 75% of Britain was online. This was promoted by various bloggers[222] and journalists[223] who proclaimed that with the online and social media activity, 2010 could be considered the first Internet or social media election. However, others were sceptical, with Dale rejecting this notion, focusing on Twitter[224] :

> …Twitter, as a campaigning tool, is useless. Most have so few "followers" that their tweets are irrelevant unless they say something a journalist can make a story out of – and of those followers… only a small minority will be resident in their constituency.

Opinion was divided. However, there were other reasons for 2010's significance. As well as the first coalition in decades as well as the first part-Liberal Democrat government, it also heralded the first television debates in Britain, consisting of three debates between Brown, Cameron and Clegg, which impacted the election and incited 'Cleggmania', which was perceived to boost the Liberal Democrats, with some predicting over 100 seats[225]. Thus, the TV debates were seen as significant[226]:

> …63% of voters used television to get information about the campaign, compared to 47% who read the newspapers, 27% who listened to the radio, and 9% who visited political websites.

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[222] Worth, Jon (2010) Was 2010 the Internet Election? *Progress Online* 18 May. [Online] Located at: http://www.progressonline.org.uk/2010/05/18/was-2010-the-internet-election/ and accessed 5th September 2017.

[223] Arthur, Charles (2010) 2010: The first social media election *The Guardian*. 4 May. [Online] Located at: https://www.theguardian.com/media/2010/apr/30/social-media-election-2010 and accessed 5th September 2017.

[224] Dale, Iain (2010) So this was meant to be the Internet Election. What happened? *The Telegraph* [Online] Located at: http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/election-2010/7640143/General-Election-2010-This-was-meant-to-be-the-internet-election.-So-what-happened.html and accessed 5th September 2017.

[225] Worcester, Sir Robert (2010) *Worcester's Weblog: after the debate* Ipsos Mori 19 April. [Online] Located at: https://www.ipsos.com/ipsos-mori/en-uk/worcesters-weblog-after-debate and accessed 5th September 2017.

[226] Cowley, Philip and Kavanagh, Dennis (2010) *The British General Election*. p.184. Palgrave Macmillan, London.

 Therefore, using the Internet for political purposes was not a priority for most.

Although parties made tentative steps towards adopting an online presence, as

Lilleker and Jackson state, focusing particularly on forums and voter interaction for

electoral success and mobilisation[227], the television debates were the most exciting

new election development. However, various political parties utilised the Internet.

Quoting Cowley and Kavanagh again, 2010 heralded the combination of old and new

media[228]:

> …The general election could hardly be called an internet
> one…Britain still lagged behind the United States [in this
> regard]...Large numbers 'meshed', watching television while
> online, and there were many online reactions to the debates and
> election broadcasts. Most candidates now have a web presence.
> The rise of blogging, social networks, tweets… have made it
> difficult for parties and the traditional print media to exercise…
> control over political messages…and are sure to become more
> important... By contrast, press advertising was markedly reduced
> and party election broadcasts continued to decline…

Therefore, political parties, inspired by the United States, were beginning to realise

the Internet's importance. Manifestos were posted online, satirical videos were made

by the Liberal Democrats, videos accompanied the Labour and Conservative

manifestos, tweets and blogs were utilised by political figures, and party election

broadcasts were released online to mention some steps taken. Labour sold only

9,000 copies of their manifesto in 2005, while in 2010 Labour's online manifesto

cartoon achieved over 100,000 views, the same amount of the manifesto proper was

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[227] Lilleker, Darren G and Jackson, Nigel A (2010) Towards a More Participatory Style of Election Campaigning: The Impact of Web 2.0 on the UK General Election. *Policy and Internet*, Vol 2, Issue. 3, Article 4, 2010, pp.69-98 [Online] Located at: http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/store/10.2202/1944-2866.1064/asset/1944-2866.1064.pdf?v=1&t=j7hj07ha&s=b5c46669f6d2a64c20dc4ee2d7ec0c4899537e71 and accessed 8th September 2017.
[228] Cowley and Kavanagh (2010), pp.332-333.

downloaded[229]. Although there was some superficial online engagement with voters and mobilisation of party members, political parties did not truly engage dialogically with voters and party members, instead relying on a top-down approach, not utilising the Internet's potential.

Data Analysis of the 2010 Election

Political parties during the election were not adept at contacting voters over social media, according to the 2010 BES pre-post election panel. A large Internet panel of voters was interviewed three times: once pre-election in April 2010, once during in May 2010, and once post-election in June 2010 on a large multitude of issues, including contact rates. Although questions exist about the reliability of internet panels as compared to personal or telephone interviews, as Szolnoki and Hoffman state, who argued online panels had issues concerning representativeness[230]. Hoogendorn and Daalmans went further, stating online panels tend to favour highly-educated rich people[231]. Couper also identifies various demographical issues with online panels[232], and Chang and Krosnick are sceptical about using Internet-based data for a representative national sample[233]. However, by taking care, online data collection is valid, as identified by Lindhjem and Navrud[234], and by Sanders et al,

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[229] Ibid p.185.

[230] Szolnoki, Gergely and Hoffman, Dieter (2014) Online, face-to-face and telephone surveys – comparing different sampling methods in wine consumer research *Wine Economics and Policy*, Volume 2, Issue 2, December 2013, pp.57-66. [Online] Located at: https://doi.org/10.1016/.j.wep.2013.10.001 and accessed 14th February 2018.

[231] Hoogendorn, A.W and Daalmans, J (2009) Non-response in the requirement of an Internet Panel based on probability sampling. *Survey Res. Methods*. 3, 2009, pp.59-72.

[232] Couper, MP (2011) The future of modes of data collection. *Public Opinion Q*, 75, (5), pp.889-908

[233] Chang, L and Krosnick, J.A (2009) National surveys via RDD telephone interviewing versus the Internet – comparing sample representativeness and response quality. *Public Opinion Q*, 73, (4) pp.641-678.

[234] Lindhjem, Henrik and Navrud, Stale (2011) Are Internet surveys an alternative to face-to-face interviews in contingent valuation? *Ecological Economics*, Volume 70, Issue 9, 15 July 2011, pp.1628 –1637. [Online] Located at: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecolecon.2011.04.002 and accessed 14th February 2018.

who analysed the 2005 BES and determined if data is properly weighted, Internet

survey data is as reliable as face-to-face[235].

Looking at the pre-campaign data, the contact rate of political parties to voters was

low. However, it is still relevant by providing context on how political parties

contacted potential voters pre-election:

Table I: Pre-Campaign contact % rates for various parties in the 2010 Election.	
British Election Study, 2010 Pre/Post Election Panel	
Party	**Contact Rate**
Conservative	25%
Labour	20%
Liberal Democrat	19%
Conservative and Labour	13%
Conservative and Liberal Democrat	12%
Labour and Liberal Democrat	10%
All three	8%
N: 12296	

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[235] Sanders, D; Clarke H D; Stewart M; and Whiteley P (2007) Does mode matter for modelling political choice? Evidence from the 2005 British Election Study *Political Analysis*, 15, pp.257-285

The Conservatives contacted more voters pre-election than other parties. Only 10% of voters were contacted by all three. The high Conservative contact rate demonstrates the party's aims; it was confident of victory due to consistent poll leads[236], so thus was active in voter contacting. It will be useful to briefly examine the money spent by the three parties during the election, as this will shed light for contact rates analysis[237]:

Campaign duration	Expenditure (£)		
	Conservative	Labour	Liberal Democrat
Long			
Mean	8 263 (28)	4 720 (16)	3 784 (13)
SD	8 202 (28)	6 314 (22)	6 696 (23)
Short			
Mean	7 891 (68)	5 808 (52)	4 541 (40)
SD	3 371 (28)	3 411 (31)	3 889 (34)
Total			
Mean	16 154 (40)	10 529 (26)	8 325 (20)
SD	10 587 (26)	8 797 (22)	9 916 (24)

Figure 2 The amounts spent by the three main parties on their long and short campaigns (the allowed maximum percentage is in parentheses)

 The Conservatives spent the most overall through both campaigns, although significantly, the Liberal Democrats had seemingly spent more than Labour. The weathlier parties have been able to contact more voters,

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[236] UK Polling Report (nd) *UK Polling Report 2005 2010 Polls*. [Online] Located at: http://ukpollingreport.co.uk/voting-intention-2005-2010 and accessed 14th February 2018.
[237] Table taken from Johnston, Ron, Pattie, Charles, Cutts, David, and Fisher, Jordan (2012) Spending, Contacting and voting: the 2010 British General Election in the constituencies *Environment and Planning A* 2012, volume 44, p.1168. [Online] Located online at: http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1068/a44382 and accessed 18th September 2017.

as they were more able to subsidise volunteers, employ media adverts,

utilise the Internet effectively, and so on.

During elections, contact rates increase, and this increased when the panel

was asked both during and post-election if they had been contacted:

Chapter II: An analysis of the 2010 Election.

Table II: Party contact rates during and post-election		
Source: British Election Study 2010, Pre/Post election Panel.		
Party	During Campaign	Post-campaign
Conservative	34%	43%
Labour	31%	40%
Liberal Democrat	27%	38%
Conservative and Labour	23%	31%
Conservative and Liberal Democrat	21%	31%
Liberal Democrat and Labour	19%	29%
All three	16%	26%
Number: 12296		

The Conservatives again beat the others, with 34% voter contact during the election and 43% post-election. Compared to Labour's 31% and 40% and the Liberal

Democrats' 27% and 38%, the Conservatives contacted more voters over all times than the other parties, and it was again rare that all three parties contacted voters during the campaign. Furthermore, there was the same chance of being contacted by both Conservatives and Labour post-campaign as being contacted by the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats. Less than 50% of all voters were contacted by the main political parties before, during and post-election. Therefore, how parties contacted voters and mobilised them will remain important, as different contacting and mobilisation methods will reveal what drove voter engagement and mobilisation. Contact type remains significant: face-to-face campaigning and contact by parties are still significant, as if someone was contacted by a particular party, their voting likelihood is likely to increase, as Johnston et al demonstrate[238].

Using 2010 BES data, the more money spent on elections and the more contacts made by political parties during both campaign periods, the higher the turnout and the lower the voter abstention [239]. Thus, party voter-contact must be analysed. Looking again at the 2010 BES pre-post analysis of from Johnston et al, the Internet use for political contact and mobilisation was underdeveloped[240]:

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[238] Ibid, p.1165, 1175, 1182, and 1182
[239] Ibid, 1183.
[240] Ibid, 1170.

Table III: Types of contact reported by respondents to the BES						
Contact	Wave					
	Campaign			**Post-campaign**		
	C	L	LD	C	L	LD
Telephone	1	2	1	3	4	2
Leaflet	32	29	26	42	37	37
At home	6	4	3	9	7	5
On street	2	1	1	3	2	2
E-Mail	5	2	2	6	3	3
Twitter	1	1	1	1	1	1
Text	a	0	a	1	1	s
Other	a	a	a	a	a	a
% of respondents contacted by number of types of contact						
None	65	68	72	56	60	61
1	25	25	23	30	30	31
2	8	5	4	10	8	6
3	2	1	1	3	2	2
4 +	1	2	1	1	1	1

a= less than 0.5%. C= Conservative, L= Labour, LD= Liberal Democrat

Leafleting was most common, with post-election reporting 42% of Conservative contact was via leaflets, versus 37% for Labour and the Liberal Democrats. Telephone contact was low, with no party reaching above 5% during the campaign or post-campaign, with Labour inching ahead on 2% during the campaign and 4% post-campaign. Home visits were slightly better, with the Conservatives reaching 6% during the campaign and 9% post-campaign, with the other parties just behind. On street contact, the Conservatives reached 2% during the campaign and 3% post-campaign, while Labour and Liberal Democrats are at 1% during and 2% afterwards, demonstrating street contact was not seriously pursued.

 Bearing this in mind, online activism could be perceived as the future, but the social media campaigns were rudimentary. Gibson and Ward in 1998 noticed that the Internet, although slowly adopted, would increasingly dominate British political discussion and mobilisation: "it is not unreasonable to assume that over the next decade party communication and campaigning on the Internet will have moved…toward the mainstream.[241]" This can be seen in 2010 somewhat, although as seen later, the 2015 election was really the first General Election with effective Internet utilisation. The Internet is seen sceptically sometimes however, as Dalton and Wattenberg state[242]:

> …Party members who formerly attended a few meetings might
> take advantage of the [Internet's] communication possibilities…

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[241] Gibson, Rachel, and Ward, Stephen (1998) UK Political Parties and the Internet: Politics as usual in the new media? *Press/Politics 3*, pp.14-38.
[242] Dalton, Russel J and Watternberg, Martin P, Partisan Change and the Democratic Process, p.268, located in *Parties Without Partisans: Political Change in Advanced Industrial Democracies*, ed. Dalton, Russel J and Watternberg, Martin P (2002) Oxford University Press, Oxford.

> but virtual party membership lacks the educational and social
> capital… that come with in-person participation… only a small
> portion of campaign information is likely to come from internet
> sources; the mass media and other traditional communication
> forms will continue to dominate electoral politics.

This was written before the advent of social media, and thus the Internet's capabilities was not fully apparent. However, Dalton and Wattenberg recognition that disparate party members may be able to participate online but is no substitute for active social participation is significant, as well as their argument of mass media and traditional communication dominating electoral politics. Some concessions are made :[243]'new social movements will face fewer organisational start-up costs in an age when people can be quickly brought together through e-mail lists and a website.' With this in mind, an analysis of Twitter will occur.

Twitter utilisation was is in its infancy, as seen from the extremely low Labour Twitter contact, as seen from BES data[244]:

Table IV					
Labour Contact					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	no Facebook, Twitter, YouTube	1201	34.2	99.9	99.9
	Facebook, Twitter, YouTube	1	.0	.1	100.0
	Total	1202	34.2	100.0	
Missing	System	2310	65.8		

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[243] Ibid, p.281
[244] 2010 BES Pre-post Election data

Total	3512	100.0		

With caveats for responses and numbers, 99.9% of respondents were not contacted by Labour over social media! Those who use social media in Britain tend to be younger, as stated previously, and Twitter's viability in campaigning was questioned. To return to Table III, Twitter contact rates were very low, being 1% throughout for all parties, demonstrating that parties either did not see or understand Twitter's opportunity for campaigning. Regardless, the Twitter contact rates were higher texting and 'Other' s, illustrating these methods as irrelevant to the main parties. Furthermore, , large percentages of voters simply were not contacted during the election or post-election, with 65%, 68% and 72% having not been contacted during the election by the Conservatives, Labour and Liberal Democrats respectively, with similar figures post-election. All this suggests contacting all voters was not a priority. This may be due to Britain's electoral system which directs political attention away from safe seats, as studied. Overall, examining Johnston et al again, as they demonstrate the relationship between party spending and number of contacts during the short campaign[245]:

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[245] Johnston et al(2017), p.1173.

Table V: The percentage of voters contacted by each party during the short campaign, according to the amount spent in the respondent's constituencies									
Amount spent %	Number of contacts by party								
	Conservative			Labour			Liberal Democrat		
	0	**1**	**2+**	**0**	**1**	**2+**	**0**	**1**	**2+**
1-25	77	18	5	74	23	3	72	25	3
26-50	70	23	7	64	29	7	63	30	7
51-75	60	29	11	54	33	13	56	34	10
76-100	46	35	19	45	37	18	36	42	22
N=	**6403**	**3461**	**1670**	**6781**	**3490**	**1205**	**6888**	**3554**	**1041**

As spending increased, so did contact. If 1-25% of the maximum constituency spend was spent, the Conservatives contacted 18% of voters once, with the other parties contacting more. This suggests that Labour and the Liberal Democrats were more able or willing to contact voters at least once during this time. However, if the contacts examined is raised to 2+, the Conservatives (apart from in areas with 76-100% spending) contacted the most voters. Clearly, the main parties did not see contacting voters in low-spend constituencies as a priority, with barely 3.6% of all voters across all parties having being contacted 2+ times in these constituencies.

Therefore, in areas less important to the main parties, less money and time was spent by the parties on voter mobilisation and turnout efforts.

Clearly, leaflets remained the primary voter contact: as an Ipsos Mori poll during the election stated, out of all voters contacted, 93% had received leaflets, 21% were by a party representative, and 5% had been telephoned[246]. Although the figures are different to the BES data up above, it is still relevant, as the BES data was conducted and collected via Internet panels, while the Ipsos Mori poll was by telephone. However, I have not mentioned the TV debates and their impact on mobilisation and voter engagement yet. The TV debates were the first ones in general election history, and thus their impact on the 2010 election have to be studied.

Impact of the 2010 TV Debates

I shall not be discussing in detail the history of political televised debates. I will not also be discussing in great detail party political broadcasts as these are not relevant. Instead, the impact the 2010 television debates had on electoral participation, interest, and youth engagement will be analysed, with initial thoughts being that the TV debates resulted in an energised electorate.

In 2010, it was agreed that there would be three General Election debates on three different channels. Although there were concerns that the UK parliamentary system was unsuitable for the personal and promotional nature of televised debates, these were brushed aside, and fafter Blumler and McQuail in 1968 had proposed the introduction of British television debates :'many voters would flock to them…they

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[246] Cowley, Philip and Kavanagh, Dennis (2010) *The British General Election of 2010.* Pp. 241. Palgrave Macmillan, London.

would help to inform large numbers of viewers, including less politically minded ones…and they would counter tendencies towards the routinisation of campaign communication…'[247] they were introduced.

 60% of the first of five research surveys conducted by the Universities of Leeds, Oxford and Wolverhampton pre-debate stating that they would 'definitely or probably' watch the first debate, with the actual figure being 62% of the survey group being exposed to the debate in some way[248]. The debates were perceived positively; 50% of the viewers of each of the debates watched all three, while a significant percentage of the rest had at least watched an hour[249]. Thus, excitement was evident, even if figures dropped slightly for the middle debate[250]. Election debates were being discussed as 'being the spine of the campaign… and will totally change the rhythm.'[251] This was clear from the normally campaign-vital national press conference, being dropped almost completely[252]. This echoed Lawrence's assertion that the [253]'television age would…coincide with [and arguably cause] the near total-eclipse of local party campaigning.', although on a different scale, as other TV election events suffered, with party election broadcasts being shorter, fewer, and

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[247] Blumler, J.G and D.McQuail (1968) *Television in Politics: Its uses and Influence.* London, Faber, 1968.
[248] Blumler, Jay G *Voters' Responses to the Prime Ministerial Debates: A Rock of (Future?) Ages* p. 37 located in Coleman, Stephen (Ed) (2011) Leaders in the Living Room: The Prime Ministerial Debates of 2010: Evidence, Evaluation, and Some Recommendations *Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism*
[249] Coleman, Stephen (Ed) (2011) Leaders in the Living Room: The Prime Ministerial Debates of 2010: Evidence, Evaluation, and Some Recommendations *Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism* p. 3
[250] Wring, D & Ward, S (2010) The Media and the 2010 Campaign: the television election In: A. Geddes and J. Tonge (eds) *Britain Votes 2010.* Oxford. Oxford University Press, pp.217-232.
[251] Cowley and Kavanagh (2010), p.147
[252] Ibid, p.177.
[253] Lawrence, Jon (2009) *Electing Our Masters: From Hogarth to Blair*, p.171 Oxford University Press, Oxford.

scattered over the schedules[254], leaving the TV debates as the most significant media event.

55% of 18-24s stated that from seeing the first debate, they were more interested in the campaign, and 74% of 18-24s said they had learned something about the various parties' policies due to them, as compared to 63% of 55+s[255]. This may have affected turnout, because 2010 youth turnout was 44% as compared to 37% in 2005. The perceived electoral closeness may affected youth turnout, although as seen previously, the scholarship is unsettled, with Matsuska stating that close elections do not necessarily result in higher turnout[256], and Goldstein and Ridout stating they do as well as increasing mobilisation and political engagement[257]. Arguably, the debates resulted in higher mobilisation and youth engagement. They were key to attracting voters less electorally-engaged, because as Pfau stated, debates are the only televised political event that attracts those 'marginally attentive'[258]. As younger voters vote and participate less, television debates were instrumental in engaging the youth voters. To illustrate this further, Table 3.4 from Blumler's work shows the extent to which people who were politically disengaged were engaged by the debates[259]:

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[254] Cowley and Kavanagh (2010)

[255] Coleman, Stephen (2011) p.4

[256] Matsuska, John G (1993) Election closeness and voter turnout: Evidence from California ballot propositions *Public Choice* 76. P313 [Online] Located at: http://www-bcf.usc.edu/~matsusak/Papers/Matsusaka_PC_1993.pdf and accessed 9th March 2018.

[257] Goldstein, Kenneth and Ridout, Travis (2002) The Politics of Participation: Mobilisation and Turnout over Time *Political Behaviour*, Vol. 24, No.1 March 2002, pp.3-29 [Online] Located at: http://eds.b.ebscohost.com/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=082d7517-3e0a-44e9-8277-383c64f1ecb8%40sessionmgr101 and accessed 31st May 2017.

[258] Pfau, M (2003) *The Changing Nature of Presidential Debate Influence in the New Age of Mass Media Communication* 9th Annual Conference on Presidential Rhetoric, Texas A&M University.

[259] Coleman (2011) p.42

Table VI: Interest in politics (per survey wave, %)				
Exposed	V. Interested in politics	Interested in Politics	Somewhat interested in politics	Not interested in politics at all
1st Debate Survey	84	69	56	29
2nd Debate Survey	71	57	39	15
3rd Debate Survey	76	62	41	20

Those already interested in politics watched the debate in large numbers, with this number decreasing the more apathetic the viewer. However, apathetic viewers watched the debates at a 29-15% rate. Thus, electoral debates' potential to mobilise turnout is evident. There is a small significant positive impact by watching the debates (especially the first one) on voting[260], demonstrating their positive effect in regards to mobilisation and engagement. As there was an 8% youth turnout increase from 2005 to 2010, the election debates arguably played a key role in this. The debates' effect on youth mobilisation and election interest is clear, although their effect could be coincidental. Indeed, pre- campaign, only 68% 18-24s definitely or

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[260] Blumler (2011), p.88.

probably intended to vote, while 55+s were 85%, demonstrating youth disinterest in formal politics[261].

The post-election survey revealed that 18-24 year-olds overwhelmingly voted for the Liberal Democrats, with 41% of 18-24s voting for them compared to 26% Conservatives and 27% Labour. This is reflected in the final debates evaluation amongst viewers, who responded very positively to questions about the Liberal Democrats, stating in greater numbers than the Conservatives and Labour that they knew more about the Liberal Democrat party leader, they knew more about Liberal Democrat policies, they helped the viewer to understand national problems, and the Liberal Democrats helped make up minds on how to vote[262]. Thus, the party that had the most youth support and votes was received most positively in the TV debates, showing how the debates boosted youth support nationally, with 49% of 18-24s viewing them positively[263]. How this was mobilised by the Liberal Democrat manifesto, especially the tuition fees pledge, shall be examined later, as well as the media's promoting 'Cleggmania.'

The TV debates arguably contributed election excitement, which instead of being dominated by 'immobilising discourses', as Wahl-Jorgensen argued, resulting in disgust or political disengagement [264], also noted by Blumler and Coleman[265], the election was tinged with excitement, with many voters expressing political interest in politics and election interest due to the debates[266]. However, this may not mean a

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[261] Ibid., p. 42.
[262] Ibid, p.49.
[263] Ibid, p.47.
[264] Wahl-Jorgensen, Karin (2002) Coping with the Meaningless of Politics: Citizenspeak in the 2001 British General Election. *Javnost – The Public,* Vol, 9, 2002, No.3, pp.65-82.
[265] Blumler and Coleman, S (2010) Political Communication in Freefall: The British Case- and others? *International Journal of Press/Politics,* 15/2 (201), pp.139-54
[266] Wahl-Jorgensen, Karin (2010) Did the UK General Election Debates make a Difference? *Antenna- University of Wisconson/Madison* May 11. [Online] Located at:

longterm shift in political perceptions and attitudes; it enlivened the election

campaign, but a longterm political attitudinal shift was unforthcoming[267]. However,

Dutton and Shipley stated[268]:

> …while intention to vote is a complex phenomenon that cannot be
> fully predicted... having watched the first debate in particular had a
> modest but statistically significant impact on…intention to vote.

Arguably, the debates (particularly the first one) positively impacted voting, which

when combined with excitement, demonstrated election debates had a small yet

positive youth turnout impact. The debates also had another impact on interest and

campaign discussion, as debate viewers were more likely to be electorally engaged,

in addition to being more willing to politically use other media and discussion[269].

However, it is worth analysing polling over the election to see the impact.

After the first debate, Clegg and the Liberal Demorats' popularity rose , with the party

polling 21% pre-debate, before rocketing to 32% afterwards, equalling the

Conservatives and 4% ahead of Labour[270]. Clegg's approval went from 45% to 68%

post first debate. However, although this was seen as an unexpected rivalry to the

two main parties, there was form, as the Liberals previously had improved their

electoral position due to political television, as Blumler and McQuail note[271].Russell

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http://blog.commarts.wisc.edu/2010/05/11/uk-general-election-debates-did-they-make-a-difference/
and accessed on 29th March 2018.

[267] Blumler (2011), p.52.

[268] Dutton, William H and Shipley, Andrew. *Appendix A: The role of the debates in shaping political engagement*. p.86 located in Coleman, Stephen (Ed) (2011) Leaders in the Living Room: The Prime Ministerial Debates of 2010: Evidence, Evaluation, and Some Recommendations *Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism*

[269] Ibid, p. 88.

[270] Duffy, Bobby; Mortimore, Roger and Coombs, Helen (2010) General Election 2010 – An Overview. *Ipsos Mori*. [Online] Located at: https://www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/migrations/en-uk/files/Assets/Docs/News/General_Election_2010-An_Overview.PDF and accessed 13th April 2018.

[271] Blumler (1968)

and Fieldhouse[272] and Pattie and Johnston[273] also recognise the Liberal Democrat tendency to perform better at elections due to increased visibility, although previous media visibility during elections was not similar to the TV debates.

The Liberal Democrats actually lost seats, going down to 58 seats from 65, with t vote-share going up from 2005's 22% to 23%[274]. Clegg did not ensure greater electoral support (although the Liberal Democrat vote is arguably distorted by Britain's SMDP system), even if support declined around the third debate[275]. However, Clegg was perceived as the debate victor, with 35% on the BES Internet Panel stating he gave the best performance over the debates[276]. Again, there was no Liberal Democrat surge; Pickup et al concluded the election was dominated by Liberal Democrat polling bias[277], notably.

The election pledge of eliminating tuition fees boosted the Liberal Democrat student vote-share to 45% as compared to 24% for Labour and 21% for the Conservatives, as Anstead notes[278]. After the coalition formation and the Liberal Democrats were perceived to have broken the trust of the electorate, the Liberal Democrats' student support fell to 15%[279]. How popular the Liberal Democrat manifesto and party

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[272] Russell, A and Fieldhouse, E (2004) *Neither Left Nor Right: The Liberal Democrats and the Electorate* (Manchester: Manchester University Press)

[273] Pattie, C.J and Johnston, R.J (2002) Assessing the television campaign: the impact of party election broadcasting on voters' opinions at the 1997 British General Election. *Political Communications,* 19, pp.333-358.

[274] Duffy (2010)

[275] Pattie, C and Johnston, R (2011) A Tale of Sound and Fury, Signifying Something? The Impact of the Leaders' Debates in the 2010 UK General Election. *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties.* Volume 21, Issue 2, May 2011, p.152

[276] Ibid, p.154.

[277] Pickup, Mark; Matthews, J.Scott; Jennings, Will; Ford, Robert, and Fisher, Stephen D (2011) Why did the Polls Overestimate Liberal Democrat Support? Sources of Polling Error in the 2010 British General Election. *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties.* Vol.21, No.2, May 2011, pp.179-209

[278] Anstead, Nick (2013) *The Mediatized Manifesto (or the Strange Case of Nick Clegg.* [Online] Located at: https://www.psa.ac.uk/sites/default/files/1010_531.pdf and accessed 20th May 2019.

[279] Wells, A (2010) The Student Vote *UK Polling Report* [Online] Located at: http://ukpollingreport.co.uk/blog/archives/2894 and accessed 20th May 2019.

actually were during the election must be examined further. This was assisted by Cleggmania dominating the media, with Cowley and Kavanagh commenting that 'Clegg was nearly as popular as Churchill on an 72% approval…over 100,000 Facebook users – more than the… entire membership – had joined a group dedicated to supporting a Liberal Democrat victory.[280]' Thus, support was clear, which was in opposition to the negative reaction Clegg and the Liberal Democrats received from the press, with questions of how British Clegg really was[281] and the *Sun* asking readers to not trust the party[282]. Backlash against these attacks were prevalent on Twitter, with one particular pro-Liberal Democrat and Clegg hashtag becoming the UK's top hashtag[283]. Karp and Stevens are brought to mind here, with their statement of:[284] '…both the amount and the tone of newspaper coverage can affect leadership evaluations which could result in a gain or loss in party support…' demonstrating that with the older voters who actually turnout voting mostly against the Liberal Democrats reading newspapers and the youth mostly not, it does seem that the newspaper evaluations of Clegg had an effect on party support, with the attacks against Clegg and the other elements eventually forcing the party down from the first debate heights.

Whiteley comments on how professional politicians are seen to 'under-perform'[285], and combined with a more informed and critical citizenry[286], especially regarding the debates, may have assisted Clegg's positive perception. Cleggmania was '…a

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[280] Cowley and Kavanagh (2010) p.166.
[281] Ibid.
[282] Ibid.
[283] Ibid, p.167.
[284] Stevens, Daniel and Karp, Jeffrey (2012) Leadership traits and Media Influence in Britain. *Political Studies*: 2012. Vol 60, pp.787-808.
[285] Whiteley, P (2012) *Political Participation in Britain*. Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan.
[286] Norris, Pippa (2011) *Democratic Deficit: Critical Citizens Revisited*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

product of the TV coverage revealing to thousands…for the first time an engaging and intelligent person in post.'[287], which dovetails with an informed and critical citizenry's positive reaction to Clegg. Furthermore, Carvalho and Winters discuss how debate viewers responded positively to Clegg's performance[288], by appearing trustworthy and striking a positive chord with his criticisms of the two main parties[289]. However, Clegg's performance in the later debates was perceived poorly[290], putting him and the party in a negative light. Additionally, Labour won back most voters tempted towards the Liberal Democrats due to a heavy targeting campaign[291], with Johnston and Pattie arguing that 'policies and leaders mattered… and as opinions changed about both so respondents changed their voting intentions.[292]So although the Liberal Democrats improved their vote-share, they performed less well in target-seats and especially in student-heavy seats, converse to expectations.

Students and young people vote less than older populations, and thus in one of the most student-heavy seats, Oxford West and Abingdon, the Liberal Democrats actually lost a seat to the Conservatives[293]. This was reflected in less-than-expected

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[287] Gurling, James (2019) The Liberal Democrat Campaign p.165 in *Political Communication in Britain: Campaigning, Media and Polling in the 2017 General Election* (eds) Dominic Wring, Roger Mortimore, and Simon Atkinson, pp.198-99. Palgrave Macmillan, London.
[288]Carvalho, Edzia, and Winters, Kristi (2015) 'I went with what I always do…' A Qualitative Analysis of 'Cleggmania' and Vote Choice in the 2010 British General Election *Parliamentary Affairs*, Volume 68, Issue 2, April 2015, p.425. [Online] Located at: https://doi.org/10.1093/pa/gst050 and accessed 22nd April 2019.
[289] Ibid.
[290] Allen, Nicholas, Bara, Judith and Bartle, John (2011)' A much Debated campaign' in Allen A and Bartle, J (eds) Britain at the Polls 2010, London, Sage pp.175-202.
[291]Russell, Andrew (2010) Inclusion, exclusion, or obscurity? The 2010 general election and the implications of the Con-Lib coalition for third-party politics in Britain. *British Politics*. Vol.5, 4, p.509. [Online] Located at: https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1057%2Fbp.2010.24.pdf and accessed 12th May 2019.
[292] Johnston, Ron and Pattie, Charles (2011) Where did Labour's votes go? Valence politics and Campaign Effects at the 2010 British General Election *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations* Vol 13 p.299
[293] Cutts, David, Fieldhouse, Edward, and Russell, Andrew (2010) The Campaign That Changed Everything And Still Did Not Matter? The Liberal Democrat Campaign and Performance. *Parliamentary Affairs,* Vol.64, No. 4, October 2010, p.702. [Online] Located at: https://doi.org/10.1093/pa/gsg025 and accessed 18th April 2019.

gains (with indeed some net losses) of highly student areas[294], demonstrating that

although students especially and young people were attracted to the Liberal

Democrats on 30% (with 18-24s being the same and 25-34s voting 29%, with 30%

for Labour and 35% for the Conservatives, with 65s and over voting 44%

Conservative, 31% for Labour, and 16% Liberal Democrat, and the middle-aged (35-

55) voting 25% for the Liberal Democrats, 29% for Labour, and 35% for the

Conservatives[295]), the party did not capitalise. The 2005 Election was actually better

for Liberal Democrat student votes, demonstrating that Labour's introduction of

tuition fees since entering government in 1997 had impacted 2005 more than 2010,

with even some victories in 2001 being thanks to student anger at the fee-supporting

parties of Labour and the Conservatives as Fisher and Hillman demonstrate[296].

Thus, tuition fees and cutting them is not as important as perceived.

 Although some policies were as popular along with Clegg, the party could not break

through. As argued, Labour's core voter-targeting contributed, aided by 29% of

Liberal Democrat voters identifying Labour as their second party-choice compared to

22% for the Conservatives[297]. Alongside fear of Conservative cuts and the relatively

weak Liberal Democrat performance in Labour areas compared to Conservative

areas resulted in a weaker performance seat-wise[298], along with SMDP

disadvantaging third parties. Thus, what can be learned from Cleggmania and the

Liberal Democrats?

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[294] Ibid, p.703.
[295] Cowley and Kavanagh (2010) p.341.
[296] Fisher, Stephen and Hillman, Nick (2014) Do Students Swing Elections? Registration, Turnout, and voting behaviour among full-time students *HEPI Report* P.18 [Online] Located at: https://www.hepi.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Do-students-swing-elections.pdf and accessed 2nd April 2019.
[297] Cutts et al (2010) p.704.
[298] Ibid.

Insufficient voters believed or desired Clegg was a viable Prime Minister or in Liberal Democrat victory[299]. From the media depicting him as a possible British Obama[300] to being hated, Clegg saw extremes. The media did not create Cleggmania, but boosted it, and social media defence of the Liberal Democrats and in campaigning post-election campaigning to persuade the party in securing electoral reform demonstrated their appeal, but insufficient for a breakthrough. However, it is worth considering the debates' impact on Clegg.

The debates influenced voter perception of the parties and their leaders. Pattie and Johnston demonstrated if voters thought a party leader had performed badly in the debate, they were less likely to vote for them, and vice versa[301]. Interestingly, Labour voters who thought Brown performed best were more likely to vote Labour rather than Liberal Democrats about Clegg or Conservatives about Cameron[302], showing Labour loyalty. However, Clegg's performance was the most dominant in shifting support: paraphrasing Johnson and Pattie again, their hypothetical voter became almost a Liberal Democrat convert[303]:

> The biggest effect is that for evaluations of Nick Clegg's performance on the probability of our hypothetical voter shifting to the Liberal Democrats…from a 0.53 probability for someone who thought Clegg was the worst [debater] to a near certain probability for someone who thought him best.

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[299] Ibid, p.689.
[300] Parry, Katy and Richardson, Kay (2011) Nick Clegg's Rise and Fall as a celebrity politician highlights the Deputy Prime Minister as a victim of the increasing personification of British politics *LSE Blogs Politics and Policy* [Online] Located at: http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/39890/1/blogs_lse_ac_uk-Nick_Cleggs_rise_and_fall_as_a_celebrity_politician_highlights_the_Deputy_Prime_Minister_as_a_victim_.pdf and accessed 10th May 2019.
[301] Pattie and Johnston (2011) p.169.
[302] Ibid.
[303] Ibid, pp.173-174.

Cameron and Brown had a smaller similar effect[304]. Thus, without the debates, there would have been no 'Cleggmania', no recalibration to tackle the Liberal Democrats by the other parties, and possibly no coalition. Thus, the debates were hugely influential for the media, the election and mobilisation behind the leader and the Liberal Democrats. To quote again Pattie and Johnston[305]:

> No leader going into a future debate should take the event lightly: debate performance has the power to influence evaluations of leaders, attitudes towards parties and even vote choices.

The impact is clear: the first debate was most influential, as it 'launched Cleggmania…the Liberal Democrat surge...[306]' Thus, Cleggmania, given impetus by the press, occurred before being beaten back by the main parties and with Clegg unable to match first debate heights. However, Clegg's personal ratings remained far higher than either Cameron's or Brown's throughout the campaign and especially post first-debate[307], demonstrating that leadership perceptions do not overall motivate partisanship. Indeed, as Clarke et al detail[308], although the Liberal Democrat manifesto was supported by their voters, it was less supported by Labour or Conservative voters. Clarke et al sum it up[309]:

> '[With the] Liberal Democrats' partisan base [weakness] and their continuing inability to convince voters that they were best suited to handle the economic crisis, their 'surge' ultimately receded.'

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[304] Ibid, 174.
[305] Ibid, p.175
[306] Pattie and Johnston (2011) p.175.
[307] Clarke, Harold, Sanders, David, Stewart, Marianne, and Whiteley, Paul (2010) Valence Politics and Electoral Choice in Britain 2010 *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties* 21:2 P.241 [Online[Located at: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/17457289.2011.562614?needAccess=true and accessed 2nd April 2019.
[308] Ibid, p.249.
[309] Ibid, p.252.

The Liberal Democrat failure, although softened by first debate success, is evident. This is worth discussing, and it is worth revisiting leadership and party leader section for further development on their effect on voter mobilisation and partisanship.

Conclusion

2010 was influential. Firstly, the Conservatives could regain power, even if within coalition. Labour could be defeated, and the Liberal Democrats were an electoral force. The TV debates' introduction was ground-breaking. The Internet began to be seriously used for elections. There was a Youth turnout boost in the election, with the debates arguably assisting this. As the BES states, the vast majority of party contacting and mobilisation came from leaflets, with social media contacting's poor impact evident. Although the debates were less significant in future elections (although still influential), their significance in the 2010 election cannot be overstated, and any analysis of the election and British politics must include them.

It would now be beneficial to look at later elections. I will examine the 2014 Scottish referendum to analyse the electoral mobilisation during it, particularly the youth vote. Looking at how perhaps the Scottish referendum built upon the 2010 election in terms of engagement and mobilisation and the policies and methods utilised will crucial in analysing political engagement and mobilisation. I will not be looking at the 2011 AV referendum in any great detail. For a more detailed AV Referendum analysis, please see King[310].

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[310] King, William (2017) A comparative study of the 'Yes 'vote for the 2011 AV Referendum and 'Remain' for the 2016 EU Referendum. *TOR- The Open Review for the Social Sciences*. Issue 3. [Online] Located at: https://www.swdtp.ac.uk/files/2017/05/TOR-Issue-3-May-17-Final.pdf and accessed on 16th April 2018.

Chapter III: The Scottish Referendum

2010 was marked by the debates, and the stirrings of internet engagement, as well as personality and leadership being present with Clegg's rise. 2014 saw the Scottish referendum, and how people were mobilised and engaged both built upon what occurred in 2010 and launched a new evolution in the nature of political groups and informal politicised communication, which would be present in later elections. Due to the SNP's majority in the 2011 Scottish Parliamentary elections, the Scottish and British governments agreed Scotland would hold an independence referendum in September 2014. The result was 45% Yes to Independence, and 55% to Remaining (or No) in the United Kingdom. I will discuss how youth and other voters were mobilised in the referendum, and the support parameters were for the two sides.

16-17 voting: What was the turnout effect?

The referendum had 84.6% turnout, the biggest turnout of any modern British poll[311].The Electoral Commission highlighted how 90% of voters felt that they either knew a great deal or a fair amount about the referendum when asked on the referendum day[312]. Furthermore, voting was extended to 16-17 year-olds for the first time in Britain[313]. Interestingly, more 16-17 year-olds voted than 18-24s, with a 75% turnout of 16-17 year-olds, compared to 54% of 18-24 , and 25-34s 72% turnout .The

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[311]BBC (2014) Scotland Votes No to Independence. *BBC.* 19 September 2014. [Online] Located at: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-29270441 and accessed 1st May 2018.

[312] Electoral Commission (2014) Scottish Independence Referendum: Report on the referendum held on 18 September 2014. *The Electoral Commission.* December 2014, p.55. [Online Located at: http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0010/179812/Scottish-independence-referendum-report.pdf and accessed 1st May 2018.

[313] Electoral Commission (2014) Scottish Independence Referendum Research: Post-polling day opinion research report. *The Electoral Commission.* November 2014. p.19. [Online] Located at: https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/179807/Scottish-referendum-Public-Opinion-survey-ICM-Report-WEBSITE.pdf and accessed 1st May 2018.

literature agrees, with Zeglovits and Aichholzer stating 16-17 year-olds vote more than 18 year-olds, using Austrian electoral 2008 data, the first European elections to have 16 year-olds voting[314]. Although the source uses a different nation and federal elections, it still bears examination.

High 16-17 turnout could be due to the 'novelty boost' effect, which is when first-time voters vote more than older voters, as Konzelmann et al discuss[315], as well as Bhatti et al[316]. Electoral Commission data corroborates this: 97% of 16-17 voters said they would do again, while only 3% did not know if they would[317]. I have discussed the referendum knowledge the electorate felt they had but I want to discuss the electorate's political interest , as well as how the referendum was discussed amongst voters and the post-referendum politicisation of Scotland. Furthermore, the referendum TV debates as a follow-up to the previous chapter will be examined, particularly if they motivated the young and what effect they had. Finally, I will discuss the referendum's impact on the 2015 General Election

Mobilisation of the Ayes and Nays

Scotland's 2011 election had low turnout, with 50.4% for the regional list and 51.7% for constituencies[318] (as these are MMP election) which can be compared with the 2007 Scottish election turnout rates of 52.4% for the Regional list and 51.7% for

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[314] Zeglovits, Eve and Aichholzer (2014) Are People More Inclined to Vote at 16 than at 18? Evidence for the First-Time Voting Boost Among 16-25 year olds in Austria. *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties*. Volume 24, 2014, Issue 3, pp.351-361. [Online] Located at: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/17457289.2013.872652 and accessed 15th July 2017

[315] Konzelmann, L, Wagner, C and Rattinger, H (2012) Turnout in Germany in the course of time: life cycle and cohort effects on electoral turnout from 1953 to 2049. *Electoral Studies* 31 (1), p250-261.

[316] Bhatti, Y, Hansen, K.M and Wass, H (2012) The relationship between age and turnout: a roller-coaster ride. *Electoral Studies*, 31 (3), pp.588-593.

[317] Electoral Commission (2014), p. 16.

[318] Dar, Allyah (2013) Elections: Turnout. *House of Commons Library*. SN/SG/1467. P.8

constituencies[319], showing a slight drop. This contrasts to the 2010 General Election

Scottish turnout of 63.8%[320], demonstrating how Scotland viewed Westminster

elections as more salient. However, Scotland saw unprecedented political

engagement and mobilisation during the referendum[321], arguably politicising

Scotland and resulting in 71.1% turnout in 2015[322], higher than the average UK

turnout.

Leaflets were the most popular choice across all demographics about receiving

political information and voter contacting, with 36% of voters most preferring this,

with the Internet at 26%, and TV broadcasts at 23%[323]. Social media was only 10%

of people's choice[324],interestingly being categorised differently from the Internet. The

Scottish referendum was, as Buchanan showed, one of the most discussed topics on

British Twitter and Facebook during 2014, illustrating interest and engagement[325].

Polat echoed this, stating online discussions can increase political debate

participation[326], showing online discussions' viability. The viability of the negative

campaign of Better Together as compared to Yes Scotland, the Independence

campaign, as well as independence's supposed risks played well to social media, as

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[319] Ibid.

[320] Ibid, p.14.

[321] Indeed, this was reflected in the 2016 Scottish Election turnout, which was 55.6% for the constituency vote and 55.8% for the regional list, which demonstrates the rise in interest for the Scottish Parliamentary elections, and is detailed in: Aiton, Andrew, Burnside, Ross, Campbell, Allan, Edwards, Tom, Liddell, Gregg, McIver, Iain, and McQuillenn, Alanis (2016) *SPICe Briefing Election 2016.* 11 May. [Online] Located online at: http://www.parliament.scot/ResearchBriefingsAndFactsheets/S5/SB_16-34_Election_2016.pdf and accessed 2nd May 2018.

[322] Ibid.

[323] Electoral Commission (2014) p.24.

[324] Ibid.

[325] Buchanan, M. (2016). 'Liked', 'Shared', Re-tweeted: The Referendum Campaign on Social Media. In Blain N., Hutchison D., & Hassan G. (Eds.), *Scotland's Referendum and the Media: National and International Perspectives* p. 70-82. Edinburgh University Press. [Online] Located at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.3366/j.ctt1bgzd06.10 and accessed on 7th August 2017

[326] Polat, R. K (2005) The Internet and Political Participation: exploring the Explanatory Links. *European Journal of Communication,* 20 (2005) pp.435-459.

Hansen et al argue that negative news content is retweeted more, increasing

reach[327], while negative sentiment is detrimental to retweeting. Negative news about

Scotland's viability as an independent country had more reach due to its negativity,

demonstrating social media's potential. Indeed, as Berger and Milkman state,

positive and anger-inducing content goes viral more[328]. As shall be seen later,

negative messages are not always beneficial.

To return to the referendum TV broadcasts, the fact that they were second in

popularity demonstrates their political potential. It would be thought in reference to

previous chapters that the younger cohort (so 18-24, although 16-17 year olds must

be included due to Scotland) would prefer social media, the internet, and social

activism to other forms of political communication, while older voters would prefer

TV, newspapers, radio and other methods. The data confirms this, as those aged

16-34 preferred online political contact and information, typified as social media,

email and online adverts[329], although as the Electoral Commission said[330]:

> For those…who reported having had enough information on the [two]
> campaigns…to vote… [their] main source of [information] came from
> TV (56%), internet (52%) and leaflets (34%). …Those aged 55+ were
> more likely to report that the TV was their main…information [source]
> while those 16-34 and 35-43 reported the internet as their main
> source….

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[327] Hansen, Lars Kai, Arivdsson, Adam, Nielsen, Finn Arup, Colleoni, Elanor and Etter, Michael. (2011) *Good Friends, Bad News Affect and Virality in Twitter*. January 4, Technical University of Denmark.

[328] Berger, Jonah and Milkman, Katherine (2010) *Social Transmission, Emotion and the Virality of Online Content*. [Online] Located at: http://opim.wharton.upenn.edu/~kmilkman/Virality.pdf and accessed 6th June 2018.

[329] Electoral Commission (2014).

[330] Electoral Commission (2014) Scottish Independence Referendum Research: Post-polling day opinion research report. *The Electoral Commission*. November 2014, p.56. [Online] Located at: https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/179807/Scottish-referendum-Public-Opinion-survey-ICM-Report-WEBSITE.pdf and accessed 3rd August 2018.

With ICM stating 16-17 year-olds are most likely out of any age group to state their preferred political communication method was online[331], this further demonstrates younger voters preferring online political communication, with older voters preferring TV[332]. As noted, 90% of voters felt they knew a great amount about the referendum. However, there seems to be a turnout limit, as the highest referendum turnout was 91% in East Dunbartonshire[333], fitting with the percentage who knew a great amount about the referendum. However, 16-34s stated they were less clear on the information available and the referendum consequences[334], showing the necessity of greater mobilisation and information amongst the youth, and why there was such heavy youth targeting. As discussed, leaflets are the most popular way to express political information, and the UK and Scottish governments both produced a referendum information booklet to go to all Scottish households. Just over 50% viewed the Scottish government booklet as helpful, while 38% thought the same about the UK government booklet[335], showing some mobilisation by the leaflets. However, it is worth examining how the Yes/No demographics break down, before moving onto SNP membership discussion and Scotland's politicisation.

Political advertising has been argued to have almost no effect on turnout. Instead, it excels at changing political attitudes and vote-shares for political candidates and parties, as Spenkuch and Tonatti argue[336]. Thus, the political advertising during the referendum[337] may not have affected turnout, but the result overall. Thus,

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[331] Ibid.
[332] Ibid.
[333] MacInnes, Ayres, Hawkins (2014) Scottish Independence Referendum 2014: Analysis of Results. *House of Commons Library.* Research Paper 14/50. 30 September 2014, p.4
[334] Electoral Commission (2014) p.24
[335] Ibid, p.28
[336] Spenkuch, Jorg L and Tonatti, David (2018) *Political Advertising and Election Results*. [Online] Located at: http://www.kellogg.northwestern.edu/faculty/spenkuch/research/advertising.pdf and accessed 3rd May 2018.
[337] MacInnes (2014)

demographic contact rates should be analysed, especially the *Better Together* voter

contacting efforts during the referendum:
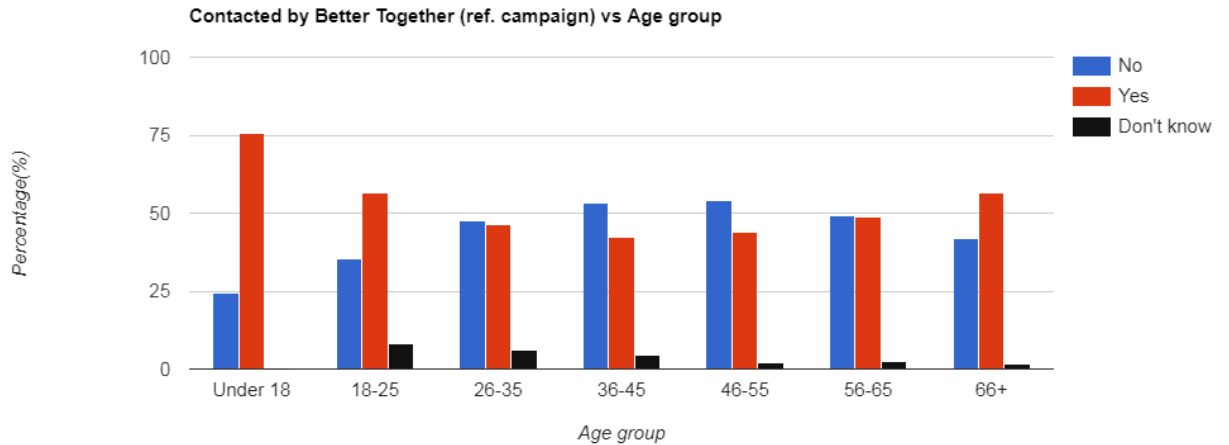
Figure 3 Source: British Election Study, Panel study data 2014 (N=2,414)

The campaign contacted more under-18s than other groups, with 18-25s and the

66+ group being equal. This may be because the younger cohorts were most likely

to vote independence, while the 66+ demographic were more likely to vote No. The

middle cohort (defined here as 26-65 year-olds) were not contacted by Better

Together as much. Therefore, Better Together contacted the young and the elderly

more compared to other age groups, as the middle aged cohort is similar until the

56-65 year olds. If a comparison is made with *Yes Scotland* with the same

parameters:
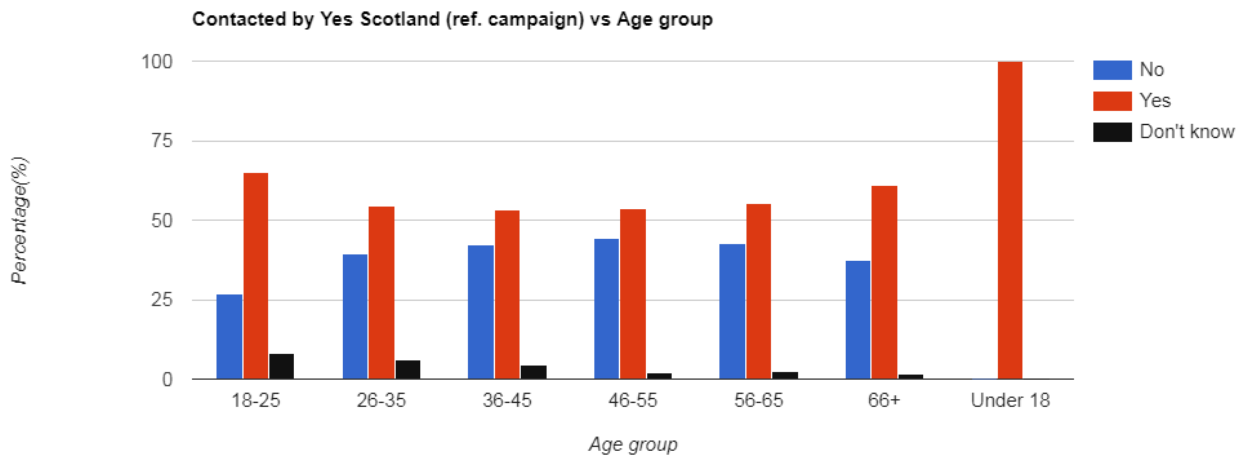
Figure 4 Source: British election Study, Panel study data 2014 (N=2,414)

Although the under-18s had low numbers, (even if they were pursued by Yes

Scotland), 18-25s cohort were clearly still targeted in larger numbers by the Yes

Scotland campaign, as well as the 66+ cohort. Thus, Yes Scotland carried out similar

demographic targeting as Better Together, with 60% of 26-35s being contacted, with

the 36-45, 46-55, and 56-65 age-ranges all having similar rates of contact for both

Yes and No, with a slight variation of people recording no contact by Yes Scotland.

Thus, Yes Scotland was actually better at contacting a wider demographic than

Better Together, although they also made more effort to contact the youth.

Rosenqvist investigated under 18s voting, arguing against it due to their lack of

political knowledge[338]. As before, analysing how the votes break down will be key to

seeing how political campaigns mobilise supporters, especially with an emotive

subject as Scottish independence.

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[338] Rosenqvist, Olof (2017) Rising to the Occasion? Youth Political Knowledge and the Voting Age. *B.J. Pol.S* P.-12 7 November 2017. [Online] Located at: https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/british-journal-of-political-science/article/rising-to-the-occasion-youth-political-knowledge-and-the-voting-age/B52EB949B70DED5EACDA6B2932D3C017 and accessed 5th August 2018.

Yes Scotland and Better Together

I will looking at SRS data, as well as other sources. The study itself is publicly unavailable, but as stated, many different academics used its data from it for various articles and presentations, enabling me to use them.

With Mitchell and Henderson's analysis of the No result, it occurred due to older voters[339] voting No. If only voters under 50 voted, Scotland would be independent[340]; 16-18 voters had a large 62.5% Yes vote, compared to 37.5% against[341], giving credence to the heavy youth contacting. It is worth noting that a September 2015 BBC article which also commented on the SRS stated the opposite, with the 16-19 cohort voting 54% to remain in the UK[342]. However, I will carry on with the interpretation that 16-19 year olds voted for independence, and discussion of why the other article varied will have to take place in other works.

More women voted to stay than men at 56.6% and 46.5% respectively[343], and the working class voted heavily to remain compared to the middle class, with a working class Yes vote of 53.6% compared to a middle class Yes vote of 41.7%[344]. With the previous evidence that middle class and elderly voters have higher turnout[345], evidently these were why Scotland is not independent. Furthermore, they were already politically mobilised and engaged, and although the youth were politically

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[339] Older being those aged 50 and above.
[340] Henderson, Alisa and Mitchell, James (2015) *The Scottish Question: Six months on*. Transatlantic Seminar Series, 27 March 2015. [Online] Located at: http://centreonconstitutionalchange.ac.uk/sites/default/files/Scottish%20Referendum%20Study%2027%20March%202015.pdf and accessed 1st May 2018.
[341] Ibid, p.6.
[342] Fraser, Douglas (2014) Study examines referendum demographics *BBC* 18 September [Online] Located at: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-glasgow-west-34283948 and accessed 8th June 2018.
[343] Henderson (2015) p.4
[344] Ibid.
[345] Although it is interesting that 16-19 voters as noted had a 75% turnout rate.

interested in the referendum, Better Together's mobilisation determined their victory.

Particularly why the youth turned out to vote for the referendum is evident when low

youth turnout is examined: although young people may be disengaged from formal

politics, they are politically interested in causes, which Scottish independence

arguably is[346]. Thus, they were effectively mobilised by the campaigns.

Dassonneville argued short-term socio-economic structures are becoming more

influential than long-term factors on turnout and electoral decisions[347]. Looking

further at the reasons for the vote result, Ashcroft's poll post-referendum stated that

Yes voters perceived the NHS to be the second most important issue in deciding

how to vote at 54%[348], while No voters perceived it as 36%[349]. The most important

factor in Yes voters in determining their vote was being disaffected from Westminster

politics, with 74% of Yes voters stating this as their top reason[350], contrasting to No

voters, with 4% of them thought it was the most important factor. Notably, those

wealthier and more satisfied with life voted against independence, while those not

voted Yes.

There were two television debates during the referendum, which hoped to repeat the

success of the 2010 debates. However, the literature suggests this did not occur. As

MacDonald and Mao argue, the debates did not significantly affect the final

results[351], and neither did the devolution promise made by the main three UK party

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[346] Eichhorn (2015), Breeze, Gorringe, Jamieson and Rosie (2017)
[347] Dassoneville, Ruth (2016) Volatile Voters, short term choices? An analysis of the vote choice determinants of stable and volatile voters in Great Britain. *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties.* Volume 25, Number 3, August 2016, pp.273-293
[348] Lord Ashcroft Polls (2014) Post—referendum Scotland Poll 18-19 September 2014. *Lord Ashcroft Polling.* [Online] located at: http://lordashcroftpolls.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Lord-Ashcroft-Polls-Referendum-day-poll-summary-1409191.pdf and accessed 3rd May 2018.
[349] Ibid.
[350] Ibid.
[351] MacDonald, Ronald and Mao, Xuxin (2015) *An Alternative Way of Predicting the Outcome of the Scottish Independence Referendum: the Information in the ether.* 11 Feb. [Online] Located at: https://www.gla.ac.uk/media/media_392985_en.pdf and accessed 3rd May 2018.

leaders. The debates' lack of impact is bolstered by Henderson and Mitchell's SRS report which stated that 64.4% of the Scottish electorate viewed the debates as having no impact as they were already decided, 29.1% stating that they made them think but didn't affect their vote, 5.1% stating that they seriously got them thinking about the other side, and finally 1.4% stating that the debates totally changed their vote[352]. Thus, clearly the debates had little effect on voter decisions. When voters researched referendum information online, swing voters leant more towards No[353], which arguably could be said to be risk and negative news content as discussed earlier with Hansen et al, being more viral[354]. Taking Dassonneville again[355], this correlates with previous discussion concerning short-term economic factors being more influential than long-term factors in electoral decisions, but only due to gradually weakening long-term factors[356]. How do you mobilise if this is the case?

The referendum was dominated by currency, the EU, and Scotland's potential. As Johns states, the Scottish electorate were unconcerned with national identity, nor devolved powers, the Union was not seen optimistically, but neither was there widespread independence pessimism[357]. Indeed, fear of the unknown and the future were dominated, as well as voter life satisfaction. Quoting Johns again, the more willing the voter was in taking risks, the higher chance of voting independence[358]. Combined with voters who felt they would be personally better off in an independent

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[352] Henderson and Mitchell (2015), p.19.
[353] Ibid, p.19.
[354] Hansen et al (2011)
[355] Dassonneville (2016)
[356] Ibid.
[357] Johns, Rob (2014) *Why Scotland Voted No.* Presented at the Department of Politics & International Relations, Royal Holloway, University of London, 30 September 2014. [Online] Located at: http://blogs.sps.ed.ac.uk/scottishreferendumstudy/files/2015/01/RHUL-slides.pdf and accessed 3rd May 2018.
[358] Ibid.

Scotland being more likely to vote Yes[359], economic risk was the deciding factor, bringing to mind rational choice theory in voting decisions, as Blais critiques[360]. Also, areas which had suffered public service cuts were more likely to vote Yes. Thus, mobilisation could only go so far; even with 85% turnout, No won. New voters made little difference to the overall result[361], so stating that Yes would have won if they turned out more young voters is fallacious. Revisting risk, this is often decisive in referendums, as Naudeau et al discuss how risk-taking attitudes had a modest but significant impact on individual choice and the outcome of the 1995 Quebec independence referendum[362]. Addressing risks that people are wary of is crucial to any referendum, and thus the literature should be explored, in particular Hallahan [363],and Strömbäck's work, which discusses political media framing[364].

Tthe young were mobilised effectively, and turnout was high. Counter to 2010, the Scottish TV debates were not as influential and that the youngest cohort turned out higher than a lot of older voters. There are parallels between the 2016 EU and the 2014 Scottish referendum, particularly on how socio-economic divisions affected the vote (for example, the more deprived the area, the more likely the voter was to vote

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[359] Ibid.

[360] Blais, Andre (2000) What is the Cost of voting? In *To Vote or Not to Vote: The Merits and Limits of Rational Choice Theory* (p.83). Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press. [Online] Located at: doi:10.2307/j.ctt5hjrrf.8 and accessed 17th April 2018.

[361] Dassonneville (2016)

[362] Nadeau, Richard & Martin, Pierre & Blais, André. (1999). Attitude Toward Risk-Taking and Individual Choice in the Quebec Referendum on Sovereignty. *British Journal of Political Science*. 29. [Online] Located at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/316674645_Attitude_Toward_Risk-Taking_and_Individual_Choice_in_the_Quebec_Referendum_on_Sovereignty and accessed 14th May 2018.

[363] Hallahan, Kirk (2009) Seven Models of Framing: Implications for Public Relations*, Journal of Public Relations Research*, 11:3, pp.205-242, [Online[Located at: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1207/s1532754xjprr1103_02 and accessed 14th May 2018.

[364] Strömbäck, Jesper (2010) Mediatization and perceptions of the media's political influence. *Journalism Studies, 12:4,* pp.423-439 [Online] Located at: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/1461670X.2010.523583 and accessed 14th May 2018.

Yes or Leave)[365]. However, the ongoing politicisation Scotland due to the referendum is necessary to discuss.

The Politicisation of Scotland and the aftereffects of the referendum

David Cameron's post-referendum focus on England rankled with the Scottish independence campaign[366]. Cameron discussed the high turnout, high civic engagement[367] and particularly youth engagement.

Youth turnout was high[368], and the 18-24 cohort turned out higher than the same group in the 2010 UK general election[369], demonstrating young Scots' political interest during the referendum. NatCen explored this, stating that in 2016 and three years prior, Scottish political engagement increased, with 69% of Scots doing some kind of political activity, compared to 61% who did the same in 2013, increasing by 8%[370]. When analysed, the referendum effect is clear[371]:

> Of the 69% who had registered their views on an issue, 3 in 10 did
> so specifically in relation to the… referendum. Moreover…
> younger people were more likely to have taken part in an activity
> related to the independence referendum than older age groups
> (44% of 18-29 year-olds compared with 26% of 65+s).

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[365] Johns, Rob (2014)

[366] BBC (2014) In full: David Cameron's statement on the UK's future. *BBC.* 19 September [Online] Located at: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-29271765 and accessed on 15th May 2018.

[367] Ibid.

[368] Eichhorn, D J., Kenealy, D., Parry, R., Paterson, L. and Remond, A. (2015) .Voting At 16 – What Next? 16–17 Year Olds. *British Journal of Sociology 68(4)* Political Attitudes and Civic Education. London School of Economics and Political Science 2017 Edinburgh: Academy of Government Briefing.

[369] See previous chapter.

[370] Montagu, Ian (2016) Political Engagement highest since devolution *NatCen.* 2nd September 2016. [Online] Located at: http://www.natcen.ac.uk/blog/political-engagement-highest-since-devolution and accessed 17th April 2018.

[371] Ibid.

Thus, the young were more driven by the referendum than the elderly, so although the elderly are more politically engaged, the referendum was significant in political engagement. If BES data from September 2014 through to early 2015 is examined, the referendum impact is clear:

Attention to Politics vs Age group
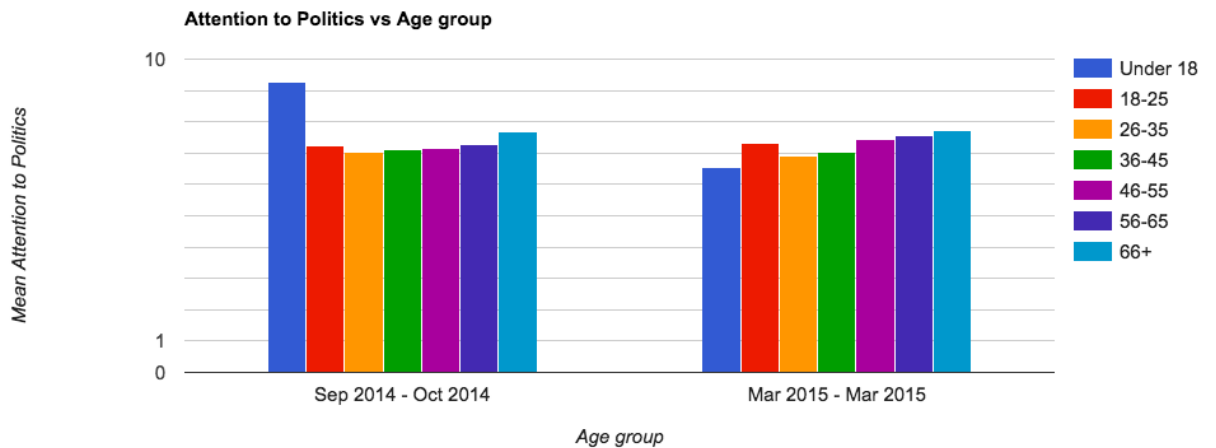
Source: British Election Study, **Panel study data** 2014 - 2015 (N=5,151)

> *View data table*

Figure 5 British Election Study, Panel Study data 2014-2015 (n= 5,151)

Significantly during the referendum and immediately afterwards, under 18s were politically interested by 9.27 out of 10, much higher than other demographics, although the most elderly voters during September-October 2014 were the second most politically attentive. However, if contrasted to March 2015, under-18s' political interest dramatically fell from October to March 2015, arguably due to them unable to vote in general elections. However, 65% of Scottish 18-24 year-olds said that they would definitely vote in the 2015 General Election as compared to 34% of their

English counterparts[372], demonstrating the referendum's mobilising effect. The older

generations' political interest only increased slightly. However, 16-17 year-olds'

demobilisation due to voting restrictions can be corroborated by Breeze et al's

interviewing 16-17 year-olds post-referendum [373]:

> …I [voted] in the Referendum, the most important thing…and now I
> [can't] vote in the General Election, that's pretty crap.

Evidently, the youth were angry and politically disengaged post-referendum, and so

political engagement stalled. However, as Breeze argues, by the referendum's very

nature (as there were dozens of small organisations on both sides) enabled youth

participation and engagement: to quote Marsh and Akram, these groups represented

a rise in alternative forms of politics which crossed between 'the social, the socio-

political and political'[374].

The informal, fluid yet political nature of these organisations could be why the

referendum engaged the youth; as Bang states, supposed disengaged youth

'may…be the most active in more informal…governance networks and practices'[375].

Referring to Marsh and Akram again, the referendum bridged youths uninterested in

formal politics and politics itself, as it 'spanned the…porous boundary between

traditional and new forms of political participation.'[376] It also galvanised formal politics

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[372] Eichhorn, J, Kenealy, D, Parry, R, Paterson, L and Remond, A (2015) Voting at 16 – What next? 16-17 year olds'. *Political Attitudes and Civic Education*. Edinburgh Academy of Government Briefing. P.2

[373] Breeze, Maddie, Gorringe, Hugo, Jamieson, Lynn and Rosie, Michael (2017) Becoming independent: political participation and youth transitions in the Scottish referendum. *The British Journal of Sociology 2017*, Volume 68, Issue 4. [Online] Located at: https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/1468-4446.12288 and accessed 24th April 2018.

[374] Marsh, D. and Akram, S. (*2015)* 'Political Participation and Citizen Engagement: Beyond the Mainstream', *Policy Studies 36(6):* pp.523–31.

[375] Bang, HP (2009) Yes We Can: Identity Politics and Project Politics for a Late-Modern World. *Urban Research and Practice*. 2 (2): pp.117-37.

[376] Breeze et al(2017) p.529.

with ' …under-18 year-olds who [felt no affiliation] to any political party declined'[377].

Thus, social media is important to political engagement, as Eichhorn states the

importance of informal political learning within social networks and peer groups[378],

demonstrating the success of the referendum. Referring to Lawrence, his statement

'Public involvement transformed the credibility and hence the perceived legitimacy of

mediated politics...[379]' although concerned with political television, can be used for

understanding the effect of these irreverent social groupings on politics, giving

Scottish politics and politics itself a credibility that did not exist before, leading to

Scotland's politicisation.

 As seen, Scottish 16-17 year-olds being the most online cohort demonstrates social

media's potential. The referendum's crucial nature was vital in its perception as

significant and why there was much political engagement, as it was seen as a 'lived

experience', as highlighted by Bang, Marsh and Akram[380] rather than impersonal

formal politics and Parliament (both Scottish and British). Rubin's work on how

young people can develop political ideas and 'develop civic identities as reactions to

personal everyday experiences'[381] corresponds with how these groups and social

networks can be used to politically mobilise and engage. Thus, society and politics

being 'experienced' engages voters. The referendum's significance and the youth's

role reflected in the turnout. This phenomenon was recorded in Breeze et al's work,

which recorded how young voters joined political parties and became more involved

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[377] Eichhorn, J, Kenealy, D, Parry, R, Paterson, L and Remond, A (2015) Voting at 16 – What next?
16-17 year olds'. *Political Attitudes and Civic Education*. Edinburgh Academy of Government Briefing.
[378] Ibid.
[379] Lawrence, Jon (2009) *Electing Our Masters*. P.232. Oxford University Press, Oxford.
[380] Breeze et al al (2017) and Marsh and Akram (2015)
[381] Rubin, B. (2007) "There's Still Not Justice": Youth Civic Identity Development amid Distinct School
and Community Contexts'. *Teachers College Record* 109 Pp.449–81.

in Scottish politics, formal and otherwise, due to the referendum[382]. However, care must be taken to not conclude that the referendum definitely resulted in a newly engaged Scottish electorate, but it was significant.

Any political awareness and mobilisation discussion must include the enormous rise in Scottish party membership. SNP membership went from 25,000 to over 42,000 directly post-referendum[383]. Furthermore, Scottish Green membership significantly rose, octupling to over 9000 by September 2015[384][385]. SNP membership settled at 118,000 in May 2018, almost as large as the Conservative Party[386], illuminating the SNP's dominance of Scotland. These parties all campaigned for independence, which perhaps demonstrates how Yes politically engaged more successfully while the No side mobilised to defend the status quo without actually getting involved in politics per se. Thus, it is worth studying Henderson's SRS analysis[387]:

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[382] Breeze et al (2017)

[383] Whitaker, Andrew (2016) *The Scotsman* SNP Membership jumps by 89,460 to over 115,000. 17 February. [Online] Located at: http://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/snp-membership-jumps-by-89-460-to-over-115-000-1-4033361 and accessed 9th May 2016.

[384] BBC (2014) Scottish Referendum: 'Yes' Parties See Surge in Members. *BBC.* 22 September. [Online] Available at: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-29311147 and accessed 17th May 2018.

[385] Kennouche, S (2015) In Numbers: Scottish political Party Membership. *The Scotsman.* 2 October [Online] Located at: https://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/general-election/in-numbers-scottish-political-party-membership-1-3905167 and accessed 18th May 2018.

[386] Audikas, Lukas, Dempsey, Noel, and Keen, Richard. (2018) Membership of UK Political Parties. *House of Commons Library Briefing Paper Number SN05125,* May 2018. P.12

[387] Henderson and Mitchell (2015), p.33.

Levels of political interest over the course of the campaign
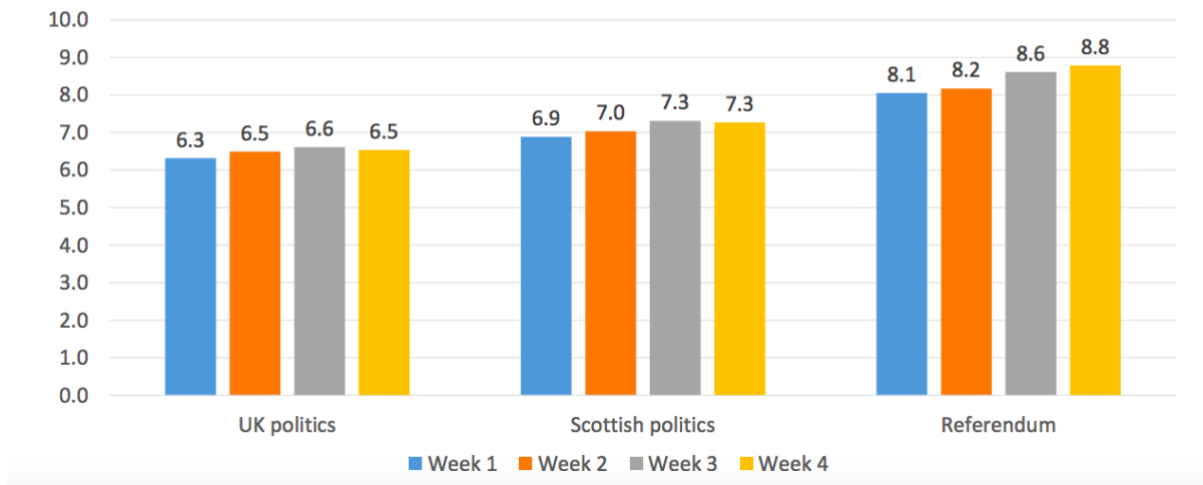
Figure 6 Scottish Referendum Data

UK political interest barely increased during the campaign's last four weeks, while Scottish politics interest increased along with referendum interest. Therefore, the referendum mobilised Scottish and referendum politics interest, fitting with reduced turnout at the 2015 and 2017 General Elections. Across all levels, there was less interest in UK politics than Scottish or referendum politics, concluded as UK politics being regarded less importantly. Thus, the referendum mobilised and engaged voters. To use more Henderson, the Yes and No voter disparity may illustrate why Yes party membership increased, and why Scottish political engagement increased[388]:

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[388] Ibid, p.37.

What do you think will happen to levels of political involvement – both your own and in the Scottish public as a whole – once the referendum is over?
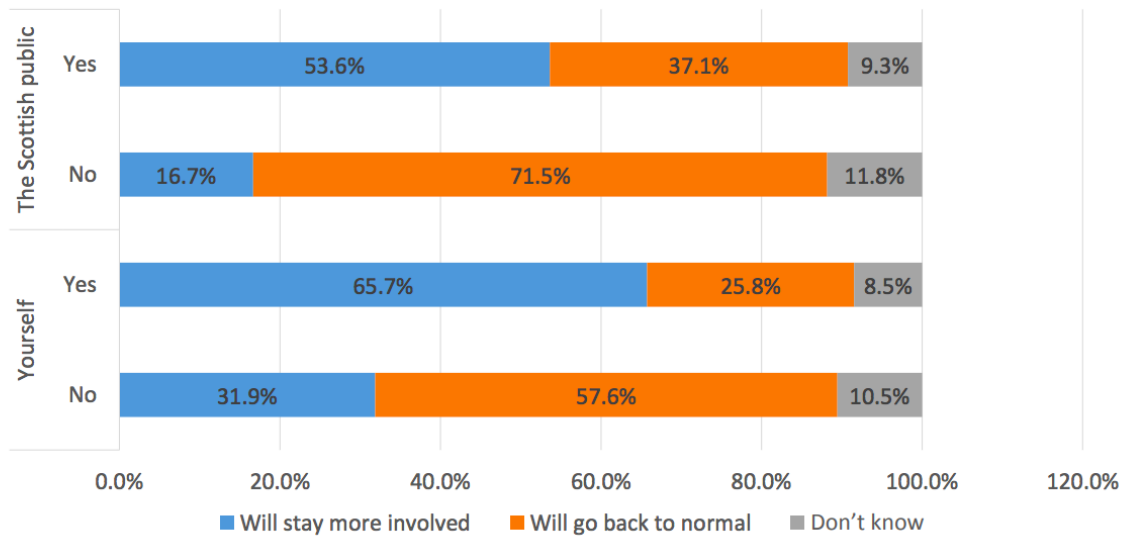
Figure 7 Scottish Referendum Data

Yes voters perceived political involvement and engagement would rise post-referendum, with personal involvement estimation being enormous at 65.7% compared to 25.8%, while No voters both perceived Scotland and individuals would be far less involved politically, with the Scottish public estimated 71.5% to becoming less involved and 31.9% more involvement. Thus, Yes tapped into potential political reengagement. As seen, No voters overwhelmingly were satisfied with Westminster politics[389], while Yes voters felt otherwise[390]. Therefore, Yes' youth engagement countered Sloam's assertion that 'politics itself for the young has negative connotations'[391].

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[389] Lord Ashcroft Polls (2014)
[390] Ibid.
[391] Sloam, J (2007) *Rebooting Democracy: Youth Participation in Politics in the UK. Parliamentary Affairs*. 60 (4): p.556.

What does the referendum mean?

The referendum would change Scottish voter allegiances. Most Yes voters voted SNP in 2015, with post-referendum data demonstrating 70% of Yes voters intended to vote SNP, with only 10% for Labour, as Fieldhouse and Prosser discussed[392], with eventually over 90% of Yes voters voting SNP at 2015[393] leading to Labour's Scottish collapse, only recovering slightly in 2017. No voters did not enormously change intentions bar slight Conservative rise. Thus, an attitudinal and voting intensions realignment occurred due to the referendum (or in public policy language, the 'punctuated equilibrium'[394]) radicalness.

The referendum mobilised many Scots, including for the first time 16-17 year-olds being brought into formal politics, tempered with Rosenqvist's argument that granting votes to under-18s is inadvisable due to their lacking political knowledge[395]. Leaflets and TV remained the most popular for people gaining their opinions, with the Internet fast becoming a mobilising and communicative force. Contrary to 2010, the TV debates were perceived insignificantly. The different goals held by the two campaigns gave a hint of the 2015 General Election, and how risk played a role. Social media and internet communication came into relief by youth engagement on social media[396] and politically involving the youth in politics was evident by the referendum, with high youth turnout and engagement. Political interest and attention

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[392] Fieldhouse and Prosser (2016) When Attitudes and Behaviour collide: how a referendum can upset the party system. *British Election Study*. 28th April. [Online] Located at: http://www.britishelectionstudy.com/bes-resources/when-attitudes-and-behaviour-collide-how-a-referendum-can-upset-the-party-system/#.WvF-Q9Mvz-Z and accessed 4th February 2018.

[393] Ibid.

[394] Fieldhouse, Edward A. and Prosser, Christopher (2016) *When Attitudes and Behaviour Collide: How the Scottish Independence Referendum Cost Labour*. April 2016. [Online] Located at: https://ssrn.com/abstract=2770996 and accessed 3rd March 2018.

[395] Rosenqvist (2017)

[396] Although it has to be noted that social media and the Internet are not entirely dominated by the young!

rising during it supports the importance of campaigns, and mobilisation of voters can have an effect. As such, the Scottish referendum informs how voter mobilisation was changing, which impacted both voter choice and mobilisation. The referendum being a 'lived experience' and what this means politically is key. Thus, I will look at the 2015 General Election and how the main parties mobilised supporters. Although 2015 fell back in somewhat from 2014 in regards to political communication, the continuing growth of social media and the youth's evolving engagement with politics ensures the 2015 analysis will be useful in determining political mobilisation and engagement..

Chapter IV: The 2015 UK General Election

The last chapter discussed the evolution of political mobilisation, especially amongst the young and on social media. The Scottish referendum was arguably significant in this regard. How the parties built on the messages from the referendum, as well as the five years of political campaigning, issues, and technology development since 2010 would be significant. Thus, this chapter will build upon thoughts and concepts discussed in the last chapter and previously, detailing how British political parties mobilised and engaged voters over time.

This chapter will examine how the main parties used social media, the Internet, and traditional mobilisation to mobilise in 2015. It will unconcerned with the precise election events, but instead with how the main political parties mobilised supporters for greater turnout and engagement. I will demonstrate that social media was utilised more effectively by political parties as both campaigning and mobilising tools. However, social media and the Internet's use as campaigning tools will not foster greater political participation and mobilisation if used exclusively, especially among those unlikely to vote, and social media was not used to its full potential, instead acting as another method of campaign instead of engagingly, as Fletcher discusses[397]. The television debates will also be examined to see if they had the same mobilising effect as in 2010. The 2010 and 2015 BES data will be examined to see if party contact rates had evolved from 2010, as social media spending and political party social media participation may have varied.

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[397] Fletcher, David (2015) *The Guardian* Welcome to the social media election that never was. 27 April. [Online] Located at: www.theguardian.com/media-network/2015/apr/27/social-media-general-election-political-parties and accessed 6th August 2018.

Voters' political engagement through social media and the Internet will also be studied. Thus, an explanation of the 2015 General Election and voter mobilisation will become clear, as well as political participation and engagement-boosting. Discussing youth voting and mobilisation in the election is key to revealing how parties mobilised and engaged reluctant voters.

An explanation of youth voting (and other age groups) during the election

The 2010 election had a 44% turnout for the 18-24 cohort[398]. As an August 2015 Ipsos Mori poll said, in 2015, the same cohort turnout was 43%[399], turnout for 25-34 year-olds was 54%, and those aged 55+ had 78%[400]. Turnout increased by 1% from 2010's 65% to 66% in 2015[401], and youth turnout decreased 1%, while the slightly older cohort increased their turnout. This will be analysed by discussing how parties contacted and mobilised voters.

 With the Liberal Democrats in 2010 having policies as free university tuition, the youth were seemingly attracted[402], even if this resulted in less votes than hoped. With the Liberal Democrat participation in the 2010-5 coalition, they declined dramatically across all demographics, with their student and youth strongholds virtually eliminated, demonstrated by their youth support dropping from 30% to 5%[403]. The Conservatives won, pushing Labour back and eviscerating the Liberal

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[398] Parliament (2014) *Parliamentary Business* Political and Constitutional Reform – Fourth Report. Constitutional Reform. 10 November. [Online] Located at: http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201415/cmselect/cmpolcon/232/23207.htm#note153 and accessed 29th March 2016.
[399] Ipsos Mori (2015) *How Britain Voted in 2015.* 26 August. [Online] Located: https://www.ipsos-mori.com/researchpublications/researcharchive/3575/How-Britain-voted-in-2015.aspx?view=wide and accessed 30th March 2016.
[400] Ibid.
[401] Ibid.
[402] Blumler (2011) p.88
[403] Ipsos Mori (2015)

Democrats. Thus, how the demographics broke down party-wise must be examined, as this will illuminate the youth vote and the results.

I will discuss the Conservatives, Labour, Liberal Democrat and UKIP s, as they were the four national political parties campaigning in the election, with the Greens campaigning separately across the UK. I will not discuss enormously the nationalist parties or the Northern Irish parties. I will primarily be interested in the age demographic. To begin, I will look at the 2015 BES data, analysing data before, during and post-campaign:
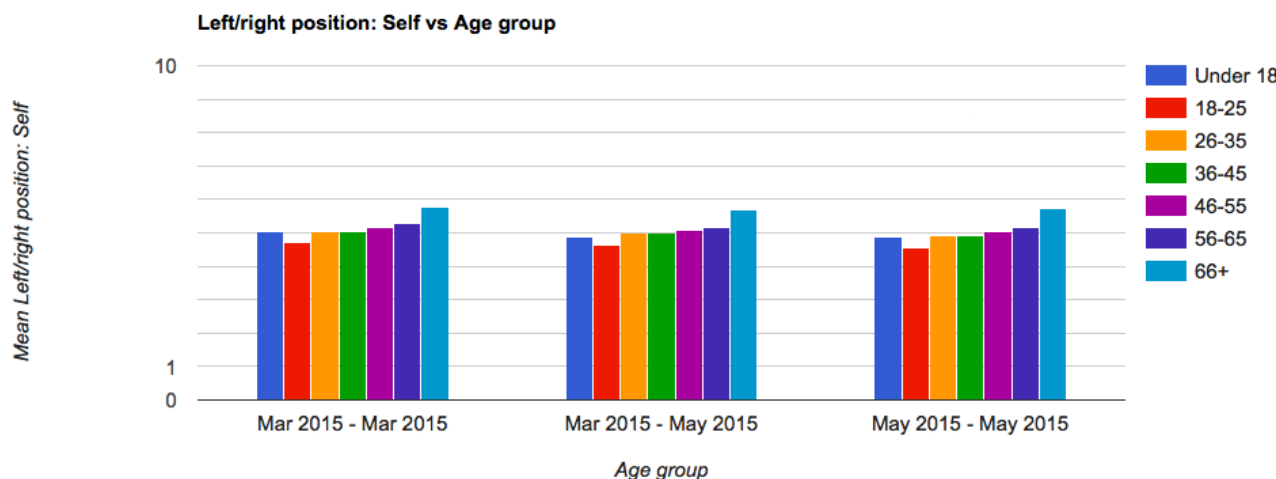
Source: British Election Study, Panel study data 2015 (N=74,279)

Figure 8 British Election Study, Panel Study Data 2015 n= 74,279

This data is across Great Britain. Seemingly, the younger the voter (bar under-18s) the more left-wing they are. Thus, left-wing parties struggling to make an impact electorally seems to hold, as older voters are more likely to be right-wing and turnout

more. However, the table is how people self-identify politically, so it may not correspond to actual political choices, as centrist parties would have performed better. Younger voters both turnout less and are less politically interested than older voters, so how political parties contact potential voters will change by demographics.

The Conservatives won unexpectedly, gaining 24 seats to 330 on 36.8% vote-share (0.8% increase)[404]. Home-owners, the elderly (those aged 60:, 45% to Labour's 25%), the wealthy, with £20K-39K earners going 37% Conservative compared to 32% Labour, £40k to £69k 42% Conservative and 29% Labour, and finally £70k earners voting 51% Conservative compared to Labour's 23% dominated the Tory vote. Their support from the privately employed was 43% to Labour's 26%, 37% of those with A-Levels or less and 38% of those with GCSE education or less[405], and those paying mortgages, owning homes outright, and privately renting, with 47%, 42% and 34% respectively voting Conservative, according to YouGov research post-election[406]. Also significant are Conservative voters' newspaper choice: they were a majority of *Sun*, *Times*, *Express*, *Mail* and *Telegraph* readers, while not winning *Guardian, Mirror, Independent* and *Star* readers[407]. Significantly, the Conservatives received a minority of BAME[408] , 23% to Labour's 65% , according to the Ipsos Mori post-election[409], compared to the Conservatives winning 39% of whites versus Labour's 28%[410].

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[404] Hawkins, Oliver, Keen, Richard and Nakatudde, Nambassa (2016) *House of Commons Library* General Election 2015 Briefing Paper Number CBP7186. 28 July. P 11.
[405] Kellner, Peter (2015) General Election 2015: How Britain really voted. *YouGov*. June 8. [Online] Located at: https://yougov.co.uk/news/2015/06/08/general-election-2015-how-britain-really-voted/ and accessed 26th May 2018.
[406] Ibid.
[407] Ibid.
[408] Black Asian Minority Ethnic
[409] Ipsos Mori (2015) How Britain Voted in 2015 *Ipsos Mori*. 26 August. [Online] Located at: https://www.ipsos.com/ipsos-mori/en-uk/how-britain-voted-2015 and accessed 10th April 2018.
[410] Ibid.

Thus, the Conservatives gained a majority of votes across many demographics, not gaining majority support of socially-housed and BAME citizens as well as the poor and public-sector workers. Therefore, how the Conservatives communicated and mobilised voters differed from Labour's.

Labour performed slightly better than 2010, with a 30.4% voteshare and 9.3 million votes, a 1.5% increase[411]. However, Labour lost 26 seats, down to 232. According to the above YouGov data, the young (18-29) dominated Labour's vote with 36% compared to the Conservatives' 32% [412], while only having 25% of over 65+s. Labour also were supported by women under 50, and never had male majority support at any age[413]. Labour also had stronger public sector worker support, with 36% of them voting Labour compared to 33% Conservative. Labour also gained the votes of those earning £20K or less with 36% compared to the Conservatives' 29%. Also, Labour only won a majority of voters in social housing, with 45% to the Conservatives' 20%[414], which when combined with voter-registration changes and the arguable effect social housing and rented accommodation turnout (which Labour lost by a smaller margin), illustrated that Labour failed to sufficiently mobilise voters, and demonstrated their inability to reach higher classes and their perceived economic weakness. This is further demonstrated by looking at the 2015 aggregate Ipsos Mori results[415] and seeing that although Labour managed to get 41% of the DE social class, they lost the other classes to the Conservatives[416], demonstrating Labour's lack of wider appeal. Finally, Labour got 1% less than the Conservatives on

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[411] Hawkins, Keen and Nakatudde (2016)
[412] Kellner (2015)
[413] Ibid.
[414] Ibid.
[415] Which comes to broadly similar conclusions as the YouGov poll, but with a bit of variation.
[416] Ipsos Mori (2015)

university graduates, getting 34% to the Conservative 35%, which is interesting as in 2017, the university educated tended to dominate in voting for Labour[417]. Thus, Labour's electoral support existed amongst the poor, the public sectors and rental sectors, but it was unable to convince enough to vote Labour nor did it assuage the economic concerns voters held towards Labour. The SNP's rise devastated Labour in Scotland, as previously discussed. Exactly how Labour mobilised supporters and tackled Labour weakness will be discussed, but before that, I shall analyse the Liberal Democrat vote.

The Liberal Democrats suffered, being reduced to 8 seats and 2.4 million votes[418], dropping almost to 8% despite hoping to retain 15-30 seats[419]. Looking at the above YouGov and Ipsos data, the Liberal Democrats only gained 7-8% of each demographic, with their only significant outlier being 16% of *Independent* readers voting Liberal Democrat[420]. They performed better amongst richer and older populations, but this topped at 12% amongst AB voters[421]. Interestingly, data indicated the party was more popular when voters were asked to think about their own constituency, demonstrating the MPs were more popular than the party itself[422]. Furthermore, the Liberal Democrats lost fewer votes in seats where the incumbent

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[417] Curtis, Chris (2017) How Britain Voted in the General Election. *YouGov.* 13th June. [Online] Located at: https://yougov.co.uk/news/2017/06/13/how-britain-voted-2017-general-election/ and accessed 6th August 2018.
[418] Hawkins, Oliver, Keen, Richard and Nakatudde, Nambassa (2016) *House of Commons Library* General Election 2015 Briefing Paper Number CBP7186. 28 July. P.11
[419] May2015 (2015) *Election 2015:* New regional poll suggests Lib Dems will win fewer than 19 seats across UK. *May2015* 15 April 2015. [Online] Located at:.http://may2015.com/ideas/election-2015-new-regional-poll-suggests-lib-dems-will-win-fewer-than-19-seats-across-uk/ and accessed 31st May 2018.
[420] Hawkins et al (2016) and Kellner (2015)
[421] Hawkins, Oliver, Keen, Richard and Nakatudde, Nambassa (2016) *House of Commons Library* General Election 2015 Briefing Paper Number CBP7186. 28 July. P.53.
[422] Cutts, David and Russell, Andrew (2015) From Coalition to catastrophe: The Electoral Meltdown of the Liberal Democrats. *Parliamentary Affairs*. Volume 68, Issue suppl_1, 1 September 2015, pp. 70-87 [Online] Located at: https://doi.org/10.1093/pa/gsv028 and accessed 1st June 2018.

stood compared to new Liberal Democrat candidates hoping to retain it[423], although this was rather muted. Also, Clegg's descent into unpopularity had a significant vote-drag, even if pre-election reports were sceptical[424]. However, the Liberal Democrats received a seat for every percentage point they received (although millions more votes than the SNP, and dozens fewer seats) unlike UKIP.

UKIP received 3.8 million votes, one seat, 12.6% voteshare, and third in vote total[425] They came first in the 2014 European elections, although European Parliamentary elections are conducted under proportional representation, and are second-order elections, demonstrating new parties' difficulty breaking through UK's FPTP system. Before 2015, UKIP hoped to gain Labour areas such as Dudley and Rotherham[426] due to UKIP-friendly demographics of those areas of elderly, working-class, male, lesser-educated and whiter populations, as Ford and Goodwin discuss[427]. This illuminates electoral-shift towards UKIP, and evolution of how political parties communicated and campaigns changing.

As YouGov and Ipsos show, UKIP's foundation was evident. UKIP had more support across all ages than the Liberal Democrats[428] of around 11-14%, with youth support being 9%, the same figure as the Liberal Democrats. According to Ipsos, 18-24 year-olds voted 8% UKIP, 3% more than the Liberal Democrats and equal to the Greens, demonstrating the Liberal Democrat decline and the rise of UKIP amongst this

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[423] Ibid.

[424] Blumenau, Jack (2015) *Do Party leader approval ratings predict election outcomes?* LSE Politics and Party Blog. 17 February. [Online] Located at: http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/72304/1/blogs.lse.ac.uk-Do%20party%20leader%20approval%20ratings%20predict%20election%20outcomes.pdf and accessed 14th June 2018.

[425] Hawkins et al (2016), p.11.

[426] Ferguson, Mark (2014) 5 Labour Seats at Risk from UKIP *LabourList.* 4 August. [Online] Located at: https://labourlist.org/2014/08/5-labour-seats-at-risk-from-ukip/ and accessed 25th May 2018.

[427] Ford, Robert and Goodwin, Matthew (2014) *Revolt on the Right: Explaining Support for the Radical Right in Britain.* P. 172. Routledge, London.

[428] Kellner (2015)

group[429]. Seemingly, the older the voter, the higher the UKIP vote with 30-39 year-olds 10% for UKIP, 40-49s 14%, 50-59 year-olds voting 16%, and finally 65+s voting 16%[430], similar to older groups voting more for Conservatives. Also, white and poorer voters were more likely to vote UKIP[431] maybe explained by their migrant-hostile policies[432], and also significantly, the lesser educated the voter, the more likely they would vote UKIP, with 20% with GCSEs or less voting UKIP as compared to only 6% of the university-educated[433].. Although Europe featured less than in 2017, it was still significant, even if Euroscepticism was not more prevalent in 2015 than it was in 2012, which was when UKIP's polling numbers began to rise, as explained in the BSA findings post-election[434].

The findings discusses how UKIP supporters are relatively left-wing economically[435], relatively right-wing socially and also feeling alienated from main parties and government[436]. Whitaker's and Lynch support this, arguing UKIP's 2009 election support as well as afterwards stemmed from alienated, Eurosceptic voters concerned about migration[437]. Thus, UKIP's 2015 support came from the alienated, who distrusted government, older and whiter, and poorer compared to other party supporters. There was Conservative concern of a mass exodus of Conservative voters to UKIP. However, Webb et al detailed only 5% of Conservative members

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[429] Ipsos Mori (2015)
[430] Kellner (2015)
[431] Kellner and Ipsos Mori (2015)
[432] Ipsos Mori (2015)
[433] Kellner (2015)
[434] Curtice, John and Ormston, Rachel (2016) British Social Attitudes Key Findings *British Social Attitudes Survey* 32 p.1: [online] Located at: http://www.bsa.natcen.ac.uk/media/38973/bsa32_keyfindings.pdf and accessed 20th March 2016
[435] Ibid.
[436] Ibid.
[437] Whitaker, Richard and Lynch, Philip (2011) Explaining Support for the UK Independence Party at the 2009 European Parliamentary Elections. *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties*. Vol.21, No.3, pp.359-379. August 2011.

actually voted for UKIP in 2015[438]. This demonstrates that UKIP posed a slight Conservative risk, but UKIP's demographics leant more towards harming Labour. Thus, it is evident what motivated UKIP's support.

With the above analysis in mind, it is worth exploring the various party campaigns and how they contacted voters during and post-election to see the impact contacting voters had on turnout. As such, voter contacting methods of the parties will be examined, using the 2015 *BES* campaign data. I will first exclude the ages from 25 and above, then I will examine those aged 65+, and then finally all the age demographics:

Table I: Types of contact reported by respondents to the British Election Study survey – Controlled by 18-24 year olds.				
Waves – **British Election Study – Wave 5 during Election, and Wave 6 post-election.**				
Campaign/Post Campaign. Contact rate measured in %.				
Contact	Con	Lab	LD	UKIP
Telephone	0.3/ 1.1	0.5/ 2.3	0.3/ 1.1	0.0/ 0.1
Leaflet	8.6/ 35.6	11.6/ 43.6	6.4/ 25.7	4.7/ 21.3
At home	0.7/ 4.1	1.6/ 8.3	0.3/ 2.2	0.1/ 0.8

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[438] Webb, Paul, Bale, Tim and Poletti, Monica (2017) 'All Mouth and No Trousers' How many Conservative Party Members voted for UKIP in 2015 – and why did they do so? *Politics* Vol.37, (4), pp.432-444

Street	0.5/ 1.5	0.7/ 2.7	0.3/ 0.8	0.1/ 0.7
Email	1.9/ 7.7	3.1/ 11.7	1/ 4.0	0.4/ 1.4
Text	0.3/ 1.3	0.3/ 1	0.2/ 0.5	0.0/ 0.2
Other	0.1/ 0.7	0.3/ 0.8	0.1/ 0.4	0.1/ 0.1
Overall	12.4/ 52	18.1/ 70.4	8.6/ 34.7	5.4/ 24.6
N= 3046 for campaign, 2906 for post-campaign				

I excluded Twitter, unlike in the 2010 chapter; the 2015 data has a larger range of social media data, which I will utilise later. Again, significantly, leaflets were the most popular way across all parties in contacting young voters (and indeed all voters) with email being second and others far behind, although Labour home visits were high. Labour had the most impact in contacting younger voters, with again leaflets being the most significant, with an 18% lead over the Conservatives post-election and a 6% lead during. The Conservatives were second in contacting 18-24 year olds, with the Liberal Democrats and UKIP behind. Comparing UKIP's contacting and mobilising efforts to the Liberal Democrats, notably UKIP contacted fewer people but received far more votes. Looking at post-campaign figures, not a lot changed,

apart from more youth contact, and leafleting confirmed as the most popular method, with texting and telephoning at the bottom. Notably, there may be an under-estimation of total voter-contact[439]. I will now utilise the same data but for those aged 65+ to see how the elderly were contacted:

Table II: Types of contact reported by respondents to the British Election Study survey – Controlled by 65+ year olds.				
Waves – **British Election Study – Wave 5 during Election, and Wave 6 post-election.**				
Campaign/Post Campaign. Contact rate measured in %				
Contact	Con	Lab	LD	UKIP
Telephone	0.6/ 3.9	1.1/ 5.3	0.5/ 2.1	0.2/ 0.5
Leaflet	11.5/ 40.6	11/ 40.1	8.0/ 28	5.9/ 23.8
At home	2.3/ 9.6	2.1/ 9.5	0.8/ 3.6	0.3/ 1.7
Street	0.4/ 1.9	0.5/ 2.3	0.2/ 0.9	0.2/ 0.8

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[439] Cowley and Kavanagh (2015) *The British General Election of 2015*. P.273. Palgrave MacMillan, London.

Email	2.7/ 12.3	2.0/ 8.6	1/ 5.2	0.6/ 2.7
Text	0.2/ 1.3	0.2/ 1	0.0/ 0.4	0.1/ 0.2
Other	0.3/ 0.8	0.2/ 0.4	0.1/ 0.3	0.1/ 0.4
Overall	18/ 70.4	17.1/ 67.2	10.6/ 40.5	7.4/ 29.3
N= 5935 for campaign, 5835 for post-campaign				

Comparing the two tables: across most metrics, more effort was made by all parties to contact and mobilise voters aged 65+ than for the young (bar Labour's leafleting, which had a higher youth contact-rate). Furthermore, the Conservatives had a higher elderly email contact-rate, with 2.7% campaign-contact and 12.3% post-campaign compared to 1.9% and 7.7% for the young, demonstrating the Conservatives' main demographic targets. UKIP contact-rates universally for the elderly were higher than their young vote, fitting with UKIP voters being often older, and also that older voters

are more likely to participate in formal politics. I will not go through every result, but it demonstrates that political parties (apart from Labour youth leafleting (and email)) made more effort in 2015 to contact elderly voters, with the Conservatives contacting the most, and a far closer race between them and Labour compared to youth-contacting.

It is possible to see entire electorate contact-rates post-campaign by examining Cowley and Kavanagh's *The British Election of 2015*[440]:

Table III: Voter Contact during the Campaign (%)				
Types of Contact	Con	Lab	LD	UKIP
Phone	2	3	1	-
Leaflet/letter	34	38	23	21
At home	7	10	3	1
Street	2	3	1	1
Email	9	9	4	1
Text	1	1	-	
Overall	39	43	25	22
Waves 6: BES, Core weighting.				

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[440] Cowley and Kavanagh (2015) *The British General Election of 2015*. P.273. Palgrave MacMillan, London.

Labour evidently leads. Emails dominated voter contacting, only being beaten by Labour's home visits, although they were popular amongst Conservatives too. Although care must be taken not to overstate the mobilisation impact of social media, it is significant. As discussed, social media was first properly exploited in British elections in 2015, even if not as significantly as 2017. The Conservatives being second in contact perhaps demonstrates their social media usage, and their lesser reliance on normal contacting.

The Conservatives won a majority of demographics and the election. Labour only managed some demographics. The Liberal Democrats gained 8% per demographic, far from their strong student and youth support from 2010 and before, while UKIP had stronger support than them generally. The result was unexpected; instead of Labour in power, there was a Conservative majority, only one UKIP MP, Liberal Democrat collapse, and Labour lost seats. However, with the serious emergence of social media, political communication and mobilisation opportunities changed.

Despite the drive for youth political participation, the young felt political stake, nor did they feel that parties spoke to them, as Fox states, although he notes that using the term 'alienated young people' is problematic, as it suggests there is only one form of political engagement[441], with young people finding politicians and politics alienating, not politics in itself[442]. Labour proposed lowering the voting age to 16, but this did not tap into how political parties and Labour in particular contacted and

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[441] Fox, Stuart (2015) How can we get more young people voting in elections? Start by abandoning the myth of 'politically alienated youth' *Democratic Audit*. 1st October 2015. [Online] Located at: http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/80997/1/democraticaudit.com-How%20can%20we%20get%20more%20young%20people%20voting%20in%20elections%20Start%20by%20abandoning%20the%20myth%20of%20politically%20alie.pdf and accessed 15th June 2018.
[442] Wittenberg, Daniel (2013) *The Guardian* Most young people are interested in politics but alienated by politicians. 31 October 2013. [Online] Located at: https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/oct/31/young-people-interested-politics-alienated and accssed 15th June 2018.

mobilised youth support, with only a 4% lead amongst the 18-29s compared to the Conservatives. However, contacting youth would be a key aim of all.

Social networks during 2015 and online mobilisation

In 2015, 72% of British adult Internet users used social media, demonstrating political parties' validity in using the Internet seriously[443].. Perhaps the most famous social media campaign during the election was the Conservative one concerning Miliband and the prospect of Salmond commanding him in a hung parliament[444], and the most lasting memorywas Cameron's 'chaos' tweet[445]. Thus I will discuss social media's mobilisation and engagement. I will exploit the 2015 BES data during and post-election, as this discusses how social media was used and how people responded as well as voters mobilising others via social media. How online campaigning is more of a 'bubble' than thought will be discussed, as Conover et al hilight[446]. All of this will demonstrate how parties in 2015 mobilised and engaged voters.

Firstly, I shall discuss the spending receipts of the main political parties, as this explores how much the various political parties invested in social media mobilisation. The Conservatives' Facebook 2015 election expenditure was £1.2 million out of a

[443] Ellis, James (2015) Key Social Media Statistics from Ofcom's Communications Market Report. *Econsultancy* August 19 2015. [Online] Located at: https://ecosultancy.com/blog/66824-key-social-media-statistics-from-ofcom-s-communications-market-report/ accessed 31st May 2018.
[444] Flinders, Matthew (2015) The General Rejection? Political Disengagement, Disaffected Democrats and 'Doing Politics' Differently, *Parliamentary Affairs*, Volume 68, Issue suppl_1, 1 September 2015, Pp. 241–45 [Online] Located at: https://doi.org/10.1093/pa/gsv038 and accessed 19th June 2018.
[445] Vesey-Bone, Joe (2015) *The Independent* People are resharing this David Cameron Tweet from last year and we can see why. 10 July [Online] Located at: https://www.indy100.com/article/people-are-resharing-this-david-cameron-tweet-from-last-year-and-we-can-see-why--b1g3rDtFBZ and accessed 19th June 2018.
[446] Conover, MD, Goncalves, B, Flammini, A, and Menczer F (2012) Partisan Asymmetries in online political activity *EPJ Data Sci*, 1 (1) (2012), pp.1-19 [Online] Located at: https://epjdatascience.springeropen.com/articles/10.1140/epjds6 and accessed 23rd June 2018.

total Tory expenditure of £15.6 million[447][448]. Compared to Labour's expenditure of

£16,000 over the same period[449], arguably the Conservatives were more visible on

Facebook than Labour, perhaps signifying why Labour lost, even though young

people are more engaged with social media. UKIP's expenses were £91,322[450] over

the same period, so UKIP spent more on Facebook than Labour, significant as one

of UKIP's strategies was targeting Labour strongholds[451], as Ford and Goodwin

identify::[452]

> The ideal seats for UKIP share key characteristics: … lots of 'left
> behind' voters who …are the most receptive to UKIP... These ideal
> seats also have very low numbers of voters who…remain resistant to
> UKIP, including university graduates, ethnic minorities and people in
> professional and economically secure occupations… if UKIP stood a
> strong candidate and knocked on plenty of doors – they would probably
> find the most voters receptive to their message.

UKIP only won one seat in 2015; the huge majorities of some UKIP-friendly Labour

seats protected Labour MPs, such as Stoke-on-Trent North[453], with a 10,000 majority

in 2010, reduced to 5,000 in 2015, despite an 18.6% UKIP vote-share increase [454].

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[447] Stewart, Rebecca (2016) *The Drum* General Election 2016 ad spend: The Conservatives spent over £1m more than Labour on Facebook. 20 January. [Online] Located at: http://www.thedrum.com/news/2016/01/20/general-election-2015-ad-spend-conservatives-spent-over-1m-more-labour-facebook and accessed 11th April 2016.

[448] Electoral Commission (2016) *Electoral Commission* Electoral Commission releases UK Parliamentary General Election campaign expenditure returns of more than £250,000. 20 January. [Online] Located at: http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/journalist/electoral-commission-media-centre/news-releases-donations/electoral-commission-releases-uk-parliamentary-general-election-campaign-expenditure-returns-of-more-than-250,000 and accessed 15th February 2016.

[449] Ibid

[450] Ibid

[451] Bennett, Owen (2014) *The Express* Nigel Farage claims that UKIP are 'parking tanks on Labour's lawn' September 26. [Online] Located at: http://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/515720/Nigel-Farage-Ukip-plotting-northen-seat-takeover-next-election and accessed 13th April 2016.

[452] Ford, Robert and Goodwin, Matthew (2014) *LabourList* The top 100 UKIP leaning Labour seats. September 3. [Online] Located at: http://labourlist.org/2014/09/the-top-100-ukip-leaning-labour-seats/ and accessed 13th April 2016.

[453] Goodwin, Matthew (2014) *The Independent* From Plymouth to Grimsby – the seats Labour risks losing. 3 August. [Online] Located at: http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/from-plymouth-to-grimsby-the-seats-labour-risks-losing-9645349.html and accessed 13th April 2016.

[454] Electoral Calculus (2015) ElectData 2015. [Online] Located at: http://www.electoralcalculus.co.uk/electdata_2015.txt and accessed 13th April 2016.

However, UKIP did not rise above this, being decimated in the 2017 General Election as will be seen. Also, as seen from the demographic data, UKIP did not beat Labour in almost any demographic, showing that perhaps focusing on social media on certain seats was UKIP's only viable strategy, as they were unable to match Labour's or the Conservatives' level in a first-order election. This maybe demonstrates social media limitations.

Returning back to social media expenses, the Liberal Democrats spent £22,245 from May 2014-May 2015[455]. As their 2015 seat target was 30-35[456], arguably a national social media campaign was unnecessary, and instead seats that were defensible were targeted online, like UKIP. This was necessary, because although the Liberal Democrats had received 23% of the vote and 57 seats in 2010[457], they plummeted in seat and vote numbers in 2015. Thus, in 2015, the main parties did not fully exploit social media, and engaged in a very unidirectional and paternalistic way, instead of being dialogic and interactive.

Alistair Campbell stated that 'the genius of social media and…Facebook is the concept of the friend. We trust our friends.'[458] Facebook was dominant, with Twitter being 'where only the journalists are… it's not where people are.'[459] As such, Labour reached 16 million people on their Facebook page in their best month, and the Conservatives managed to reach 17 million a week during the campaign[460]. With the

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[455] Electoral Commission (2016)
[456] Watt, Nicholas and Wintour, Patrick (2015) *The Guardian* Inside the Lib Dem Campaign: party navigates perilous electoral waters. 17 February. [Online] Located at: http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2015/feb/17/inside-nick-clegg-lib-dem-general-election-campaign and accessed 13th April 2016.
[457] BBC (2010) *BBC General 2010 Election Results.* Nd. [Online] Located at: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/election2010/results/ and accessed 18th April 2016.
[458] Campbell, Alistair (2015) Newspaper Election Coverage is beyond parody *The Guardian* 7 May 2015.
[459] Cowley and Kavanagh (2015) p.150.
[460] Ibid.

ability to quickly disseminate information, the potential for social media was clear, even if care must be taken to not overstate this. As McDonald, Ladd and Lenz argue, although the work is from 2009, newspaper endorsements have a significant effect on voters, as an estimated 10-25% of tabloid readers whose papers switched their endorsement to Labour in 1997 voted Labour in 1997[461], which indicates that the print media in 2015 could still be strong, with a mobilising effect. Indeed, examining the data, UKIP was endorsed by the *Express*, although still resulting in a bigger Conservative vote than UKIP amongst the readership (44% to 33%), the fact that the stories the *Express* wrote about were broadly sympathetic to the Conservatives helped them, as well as demonstrating that switching was positive for UKIP[462]. As a majority of papers backed the Conservatives or a coalition-continuation, it is evident why this negatively affected Labour[463].

Although Labour hoped that using online communication would be beneficial, as more of its demographic and voters were online, the Conservatives' having more money and their greater embracing of the digital realm put paid to that, as well as the argument that mobilising the young and disaffected by social media may not be possible. To discuss Leyva*,* although those who use social media politically regularly have a weakly positive correlation with offline formal and informal political engagement while still being a 'slacktivist' online[464], those already demographically (so richer and more educated) and psychologically likely to politically engage have a much greater level of political engagement, both online and offline. Thus, frequent

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[461] McDonald Ladd, Jonathan and S Lenz, Gabriel (2009) Exploiting a Rare Communication Shift to Document the Persuasive Power of the News Media *American Journal of Political Science,* Vol. 53, No. 2(April 2009), pp.394-410.
[462] Cowley and Kavangh (2015) p.351.
[463] Geber, Ivor *The Tory Press Rides Again* in Jackson and Thorsen (eds) *UK Election Analysis 2015*
[464] Someone who does not engage beyond the most perfunctory political activity, such as the signing of petitions online.

social media consumption does not mobilise or engage many beyond those who would be engaged or mobilised anyway[465]. Additionally, Min's argument that simply accessing web technologies and social media is not enough to ensure political mobilisation and engagement[466] demonstrates that although social media and online tools are somewhat useful, it does not encourage those not online or the politically unengaged. Therefore, if political parties do use social media effectively, it must be an interactive and two-way process between voters and parties, which will engage and mobilisie voters and non-voters alike. If not, then political social media activism is effectively a 'bubble'.

Looking at Fisher et al, although campaigning online was strengthened in 2015, face-to-face campaigning results in stronger electoral benefits, which is one reason why the types of voter contact detailed above were significant[467]. The Conservatives utilised their campaigning skills effectively in 2015 as well as the general circumstances of the vote[468]. The paper also argues that constituency and thus electoral campaigns matter to the overall result[469]. This perhaps explains why the Conservatives won: being ahead in various issues, they campaigned effectively, turning wavering voters into supporters who were then mobilised to vote, as Foos argued in 2016 concerning candidate contact and party support[470]. Therefore, stating

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[465] Leyva, Rodolfo (2016) Exploring UK Millennials' Social Media Consumption Patterns and Participation in Elections, Activism and 'Slacktivism' *Social Science Computer Review*. Vol. 35, (4), pp.462-479

[466] Min, S J (2010) From the digital divide to the democratic divide: Internet Skills, political interest, and the second-level digital divide in political interest use. *Journal of Information Technology & Politics*, 7, pp.22-35.

[467] Fisher, Justin, Cutts, David, Fieldhouse, Edward and Rottweiler, Bettina (2015) Constituency Campaigning at the 2015 General Election. *EPOP Conference Paper.* [Online] Located at: http://buratest.brunel.ac.uk/bitstream/2438/11618/Fulltext.pdf and accessed 23rd April 2018.

[468] Ibid.

[469] Ibid, pp. 16-18.

[470] Foos, Florian (2016) First impressions – lasting impressions: Candidate Contact and Party Support in the 2015 UK General Election. [Online] Located at: http://www.florianfoos.net/resources/Foos_persuasion.pdf and accessed 3rd March 2018.

that social media was solely the reason for Conservative victory is incorrect: although the Conservatives had a greater reach on social media, social media does not effectively bring in new voters, as stated. It instead drives the politically engaged and mobilised, which is good for the Conservatives (and potentially the Liberal Democrats) but is not so good for Labour's traditional base, although with the middle-classening and rising educational levels of current Labour voters and members[471], this may evolve.

However, studying Vaccari and Valeriani's 2016 work, particularly how social media deepens and broadens party-related engagement, social media can revitalise party activities amongst party members as well as non-party members who discuss politics on social media[472], with these discussions narrowing the party-engagement divide between members and non-members[473]. Thus, social media may benefit political mobilisation and engagement, even though how it drives up participation of the politically disengaged needs to be discussed more. This can be interpreted from the Vaccari work[474]:

> Not only do social media contribute to hybridising repertoires of party *activism* but they are also promoting a hybridisation of party *activists*, bringing together older and newer types of participants who may have different views of party engagement and different reasons for taking part...

Thus, social media can mobilise, but only if done well and tied in with offline party activism. Indeed, Wojcieszack and Mutz argue that social media's apolitical nature

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[471] Curtis (2017)
[472] Vaccari, Cirstian and Valeriani, Augusto (2016) Party Campaigners or Citizen Campaigners? How Social Media Deepen and Broaden Party-Related Engagement. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 2016, Vol. 21 (3), pp.294-312. [Online] Located at: http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/1940161216642152 and accessed 3rd April 2018.
[473] Ibid.
[474] Ibid, p.305.

can attract those disinclined to engage with political institutions[475]. Gibson and Cantijoch agree, arguing that digital media may 'upgrade' political discussion into a 'more [actively engaging] participatory form…'[476], demonstrating how social media, if *participatory and dialogic*, can mobilise political participation and turnout. Thus, the Conservatives' 2015 campaign may have mobilised some, but it was not as polished as Labour's 2017 digital campaign. Norris discussed in 2003 (so before social media's rise) how the Internet was a reinforcing mechanism for those already politically involved and engaged[477], so over time, political parties utilised the web and social media more to engage voters. This is essential to political success, because as argued by Webb et al, campaign work done by supporters may match or exceed that done by party-members, with individual party-members doing more than non-member supporters[478] and more intense activities too, although lower-intensity work is carried out by non-party members.

However, Baumgartner argued in 2010 that social media users were no more inclined to politically participate than users of other media[479]. This paper discussed the US 2008 presidential primaries, but it still is worth studying as a FPTP system. One reason why Conservatives performed well can be found in Conover et al's 2012

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[475] Wojcoeszak, Magdalene E. and Mutz, C Diana (2009) Online Groups and Political Discourse: Do Online Discussion Spaces Facilitate Exposure to Political Disagreement? *Journal of Communication*, 59 (1) pp.40-56

[476] Gibson, Rachel and Cantijoch, Marta (2013) Conceptualising and Measuring Participation in the Age of the Internet: Is Online Political Engagement Really Different to Online? *The Journal of Politics* 75 (3): pp.701-16

[477] Norris, Pippa (2003) Preaching to the Converted? Pluralism, Participation and Party Websites *Party Politics* 9 (1): pp.21-45

[478] Webb, Paul, Poletti, Monica and Bale, Tim (2017) So who really does the donkey work in 'multi-speed membership parties?' Comparing the election campaign activity of party members and party supporters *Electoral Studies*, Volume 46, April 2017, pp.64-74 [Online] Located at: https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S026137941630405X and accessed 15th March 2018.

[479] Baumgartner, Jody C and Morris, Jonathan (2010) My FaceTube Politics: Social Networking Websites and Political Engagement of Young Adults. *Social Science Computer Review*. Volume 28, Number 1, February 2010, pp.24-44. [Online] Located at: http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0894439309334325 and accessed 20th June 2018.

paper, which although again US-focussed, demonstrates right-wing social media communities:

> …exhibit greater levels of political activity, a more tightly interconnected social structure, and a communication network… that facilitates the rapid and broad dissemination of political information.[480]

This may explain the Conservatives' work on social media and their victory. Although they had fewer members and supporters overall than Labour[481], they were favoured by the fact that the economy, taxation, the election process and living standards were salient on the public agenda throughout the election, with Labour unable to take advantage of the NHS being its strongest point as it was only discussed 3.7% of the time[482]. Therefore, even with Labour's greater support-base, the Conservatives having more money for social media and their dominance of main campaign issues ensured Labour's disadvantage. A rational choice approach could arguably be the reason for Conservative success, but Petracca argues otherwise:

> …By assuming that self-interest is an empirically established component of human nature, rational choice theory…perpetuates a political life which is antithetical to important tenets of normative democratic theory…[483]

Thus, dominance of friendly issues to the Conservatives during the campaign, and Cameron's perceived charisma ensured victory, as well as their greater utilisation of social media and the Internet. Although other arguments shall be examined, what can be seen is thus: social media use by British political parties had developed to the

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[480] Conover et al (2012) p.1
[481] Webb et al (2017)
[482] Deacon, David, Downey, John Stanyer, James and Wring, Dominic (2015) *News Media Performance in the 2015 General Election Campaign* in Jackson and Thorsen (eds) *UK Election Analysis 2015*
[483] Petracca, Mark P (1991) The Rational Choice Approach to Politics: A Challenge to Democratic Theory *The Review of Politics*, Vol. 53, No. 2 (Spring 1991) pp.289-319 [Online] Located at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/1407756 and accessed 25th June 2015.

stage where it had moved beyond perfunctory engagement of the already mobilised

and motivated, and had begun to bleed into offline campaigning. The Conservatives

being richer were able to exploit new media, despite their smaller membership than

Labour. This was done via the Conservatives' use of microtargeting, which as

explained by Zuiderveen et al, is[484]:

> "a…type of personalised communication that involves collecting
> information about people, and using that information to show them
> targeted political advertisements."

Indeed, as Roper states, although the UK cannot completely replicate the

microtargeting style of the US due to UK campaign restrictions, the Conservatives

'understood who the persuadable voters were, where they were, and what consistent

message might appeal to them. Labour did not use digital technology to target key

voters.[485]' The microtargeting done by the Conservatives and the focus on key

issues which resulted in Conservative victory is in further evidence by Ross, who

stated that[486]:

> Using Facebook…the Tories [identified] the key concerns of small
> groups of undecided voters, for example women in their 40s who
> were concerned about schools and GP opening hours, in specific
> districts of key marginal seats… During the final days, these voters
> were targeted repeatedly, on the phone, via websites and in
> person on the doorstep.

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[484] Zuiderveen Bourgesius, Frederik J, Möller, Judith, Kruikemeier, Sanne, O Fathaigh, Ronan, Irion, Kristina, Dobber, Tom, Bodo, Balazs and De Vrees, Claes (2018) *Utrecht Law Review* Online Political Micotargeting: Promises and Threats for Democracy. Volume 14, Issue 1, 2018. P.82 [Online] Located at: https://poseidon01.ssrn.com/delivery.php?ID=727098123007095067094064112119017072052025093049028051091115073078022031070108074018029005000115006016107028020100081017109078019007013060013111116074028021003075021013085074001102095066099086020089068007106006011091076028102066112010097005064067098&EXT=pdf and accessed 18th June 2019.
[485] Roper, Caitlin (nd) *Targeting Persuadable Voters through Social Media: The Use of Twitter in the 2015 UK General Election* [Online] Located at: https://gspm.gwu.edu/sites/g/files/zaxdzs2286/f/downloads/MC%20edits%20Working%20Paper_v1-2.pdf and accessed 16th June 2019.
[486] Ross, Tim (2015) *The Telegraph* Secrets of the Tories' election 'war room' 16 May 2015. [Online] Located at: https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/11609570/Secrets-of-the-Tories-election-war-room.html and accessed 19th June 2019.

Therefore, the Conservative focus on specific issues and microtargeting, buoyed by Facebook and relentless contact after their issues were highlighted and noted, ensured a victory as well as the effective employment of social media[487], even if it was somewhat of a one-sided, paternalistic usage. Their use of microtargeting benefitted them electorally, with Zuiderveen et al commenting how 'online political microtargeting helped the Conservatives to win… key marginal seats and the election…[488]' Indeed, Zuiderveen et al argue that microtargeting may actually benefit political engagement and mobilisation, as it may 'reach citizens who ignore traditional media, and it can interest people in politics via tailored messages. Microtargeting might thus increase information, interest in politics, and electoral turnout'[489]. Thus, how the Conservatives used social media meant that Labour were defeated, and the Liberal Democrats lost their West Country stronghold, being focussed upon relentlessly by the Conservatives' microtargeting. However, the way that they did this was not truly conducive towards a dialogic and engaging social media presence.

It was not until 2017 that UK political parties (mostly Labour) truly managed engaged with social media, and this really resulted in greater mobilisation and engagement of supporters, as shall be discussed later. However, the Conservatives mobilised and engaged people somewhat with their 2015 social media campaign. With that, I will discuss young voters, and non-voters.

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[487] Moore, Martin (2016) Facebook, the Conservatives, and the Risk to fair and free elections. *The Political Quarterly* Volume 87, Issue 3, July-September 2016, pp.424-430 [Online] Located at: https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-923X.12291 and accessed 19th June 2019.
[488] Zuiderveen Bourgesius, Frederik J, Möller, Judith, Kruikemeier, Sanne, O Fathaigh, Ronan, Irion, Kristina, Dobber, Tom, Bodo, Balazs and De Vrees, Claes (2018) P.84.
[489] Ibid, p.85.

Differentiating between different voters/non-voters is crucial, as the differences

between a young voter (taking young to be 18-24) and an elderly voter (55+) by their

political belief and life experience are large. The young are more likely to be using

social media and digital technology, as demonstrated by the *BES* 2015 data which

stated that 18-25 year olds were the largest user-group on both Facebook and

Twitter in March 2015 [490]. Social media however was distrusted, as seen in the 2014

Audit of Political Participation, which stated only 7% of voters viewed it as 'an

effective means of holding politicians to account'[491]. Regarding the election[492], most

commentators and users thought that Labour would be the largest party[493]. This

corresponds with Barnett's belief that digital platforms and social media are an echo

chamber rather than a megaphone, demonstrating social media's mobilising force

may not be the most effective[494].

Although many people in 2015 had online access, people rarely used the Internet for

directly political means, with political information being dissipated in an apolitical

perception. Thus, I will examine BES data regarding election social media, as there

is unfortunately insufficient social media data post-election. However, I will analyse

data concerning political information shared on websites, on social media platforms,

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[490] Fieldhouse, E., J. Green., G. Evans., H. Schmitt, and C. van der Eijk (2015) *Preliminary British Election Study Internet Panel Wave 4.* Located at: https://blogs.exeter.ac.uk/exeterblog/blog/2015/05/15/is-social-media-the-answer-to-getting-youth-engaged-in-electoral-politics/ and accessed 18th January 2016.
[491] Hansard (2014) *Audit of Political Engagement 11 2014 Edition*. Located at: http://www.hansardsociety.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Audit-of-Political-Engagement-11-2014.pdf and accessed 16th January 2016.
[492] Durrani, Arif (2015) *Media Week* Labour Party winning social media Election Battle 27 April. [Online] Located at: http://www.mediaweek.co.uk/article/1344640/labour-party-winning-social-media-election-battle and accessed 29th January 2016.
[493] Polling Observatory (2015) *May 2015* Election 2015: Academics predict Labour will win 20 more seats than Tories and form the next government 16 March. [Online] Located at: http://www.may2015.com/featured/election-2015-academics-predict-labour-will-win-20-more-seats-than-tories-and-form-next-government/ and accessed 28th January 2016.
[494] Barnett, Steven (2015) *Four Reasons why a Partisan Press Helped win it for the Tories* in Jackson, Dan and Thorsen, Einar (eds) *UK Election Analysis 2015: Media, Voters and the Campaign.* Bournemouth University Centre of the Study of Journalism, Culture and Community

and so on. Thus, social media, although useful, should not be used solely to increase political mobilisation and engagement. I will initially use the whole dataset, and then will break it down further demographically:

Table IV: Social Media and Internet Activity by voters during the 2015 Election Campaign utilising British Election Study data.				
Waves – British Election Study- Wave 5 during election. Measured in %.				
% of people who shared information				
Variable	**YES**	**NO**		**Don't know**
Sharing political content via online platform/another website	1.5	97.1		1.4/
Shared political content on Facebook	10.8	54.8		1.4
Shared political content on Twitter	5.9	21.8		1.4

Shared political content through email	2.7	95.9		1.4
Shared political content through instant messaging	1.5	97.1		1.4
Signed up online to help a party or candidate	2.7	5.9		0.1
Other than Twitter or Facebook, have you visited the website of a candidate?	8.7	90.2		1.1
Have you tried to persuade somebody which party they should vote for?	11.3	86.8		1.8

Twitter	YES	NO	Don't follow politics on Twitter	Don't know
Do you use Twitter?	28.1	71.5	n/a	0.4
Do you follow candidates or parties on Twitter for political information?	8.5	4.6	14.1	1.0
Do you follow other people on Twitter (commentators, journalists etc) for political info?	10.7	2.4	14.0	1.0
Do you follow people you personally know on Twitter for political info?	6.9	6.2	1.0	14.0

Facebook	YES	NO	Don't follow politics on Facebook	Don't know
Do you use Facebook?	66.5	33.1	n/a	0.4
Do you follow candidates or parties on Facebook for political information?	17.1	5.8	41.8	1.8
Do you get Facebook political information off people you know personally?	9.8	13.1	41.8	1.8
N= 30725				

In the election, few used social media politically. However, nearly 67% used

Facebook, as compared to 28.5% using Twitter, making the emphasis on Facebook

valid as a campaigning strategy. Also, 10% used Twitter for political information and contacting, with 17% following candidates or parties on Facebook for political information, and 10% of Facebook users getting political information off of personal contacts. However, these are far more than those sharing political content via email, instant messenger, other online platforms and those signed up online to assist candidates. Interestingly, 11.3% tried to persuade others which party they should vote for and nearly 9% visited candidates' websites. Thus, it seems that social media and the Internet are not enormously useful for political mobilisation and contact. However, examining 18-24 year olds, there is clearly more online mobilisation potential:

Table V: Social Media and Internet Activity by voters aged 18-25 during the 2015 Election Campaign utilising British Election Study data.				
Waves – BES- Wave 5 during election. Measured in %.				
% of people who shared information				
Variable	**YES**	**NO**		**Don't know**
Sharing political content via online platform/another website	2.7	92.7		4.7

Shared political content on Facebook	13.5	70.8		4.7
Shared political content on Twitter	12.6	39.0		4.7
Shared political content through email	2.6	92.6		4.7
Shared political content through instant messaging	6.2	89.1		4.7
Signed up online to help a party or candidate	5.5	11.3		0.3
Other than Twitter or Facebook, have you visited the	17.1	79.7		3.2

website of a candidate?				
Have you tried to persuade somebody which party they should vote for?	20.4	73.3		6.3
Twitter	**YES**	**NO**	**Don't follow politics on Twitter**	**Don't know**
Do you use Twitter?	53.2	45.4	n/a	1.4
Do you follow candidates or parties on Twitter for political information?	19.8	8.7	21.3	3.4
Do you follow other people on Twitter (commentators,	23.0	5.5	21.3	3.4

journalists etc) for political info?				
Do you follow people you personally know on Twitter for political info?	18.8	9.7	21.3	3.4
Facebook	**YES**	**NO**	**Don't follow politics on Facebook**	**Don't know**
Do you use Facebook?	87.3	11.6	n/a	1.4
Do you follow candidates or parties on Facebook for political information?	34.3	8.1	40.0	4.9
Do you get Facebook political information off	17.5	24.9	40.0	4.9

people you know personally?				
N= 3046				

Firstly, compared to the whole population, more young people use both Twitter and Facebook, with 53.2% of them using Twitter compared to 28.1% overall, and 87% using Facebook as compared to 66.5% overall. On almost every single metric, the youth are more engaged online politically (apart from email, which is 2.6% compared to 2.7% overall, but the small youth N must be considered) and also tried to persuade others on vote-choice by 10% compared to overall. Furthermore, the political parties seemed to be less engaged regarding this; it seemed to be organic, and that people discussed politics and encouraged others to vote despite political parties, with the youth especially doing this. As already discussed, although the political parties were realising the Internet's importance (somewhat utilising Kent and Taylor's five strategies in building, maintaining and developing dialogic online relationships of building a loop, relaying useful information, ensuring return visits, ensuring interface intuitiveness and ensuring visitor conservation by creating an uncluttered web format[495]), it was underdeveloped. Using the framework of Kent and Taylor, the Conservatives employed at least some these strategies, with the relaying of useful information via YouTube adverts and microtargeting. However, there was not a large usage beyond this, with no serious attempts made to use clear software,

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[495] Kent, Michael L and Taylor, Maureen (1998) Building Dialogic Relationships Through the World Wide Web *Public Relations Review*, 24 (3), pp.321-334.

uncluttered web formats, dialogic relationships and more, instead relying on

microtargeting and videos as previously said. The other parties were not much

better, although Labour was more organic in their social media messaging. Kent and

Taylor shall be revisited at the end to see how their theories applied to the other

party campaigns in other elections, but introducing their strategies now will give

important context to the rest of the thesis. Kent and Taylor's work could be argued to

be outdated somewhat with their focus on individual websites, as is befitting their

1998 publication, but in the age of apps and social media in general, their validity is

still existent. Parties in 2015 used social media and the Internet in an old-style

campaigning style rather than embracing their new advantages. How parties in 2015

engaged with them to mobilise and increase turnout is discussed by Aldrich et al:

> …Although…official online contact from parties and candidates…reach
> a smaller audience than offline methods, the gap is much smaller in the
> US than in the UK...[496]

Ignoring US comparisons, UK parties (although 2010 election data) were not good at

contacting voters online, with it being noted that:

> …the online version was particularly important in mobilising younger
> voters to get involved… informal political online contacting… is much
> higher in the UK than…the US…while UK parties have not yet 'bought'
> into digital [voter] communication… voters…are…comfortable with
> sharing election…information online.[497]

Therefore, British informal political online contacting is high, with the voters

cheerfully communicating election material between themselves, mobilising each

other. Political parties in 2015 were mobilising persuasion efforts online, as Jackson

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[496] Aldrich, John H, Gibson,Bison, K Rachel, Cantijosh, Marta and Konitzer, Tobias (2016) Getting out the vote in the social media era: Are digital tools changing the extent, nature and impact of party contacting in elections? *Party Politics* 2016, Vol 22 (2), p.174
[497] Ibid, pp.174-175

discussed[498], but although there was campaign and candidate discussion online,

campaign activity done mostly offline, with it being far greater for persuasion and

mobilisation. As seen above, the youth are more politically engaged in sharing

political material and persuading others than those who actually turn out in the

highest amount, so perhaps discussing youth political engagement as low is

incorrect, as Smith and Thompson state, arguing that youth engagement and

participation is beyond just low turnout, and how youth alienation is unsurprising

when youth-orientated policies are decided by ageing political elites[499].Youth political

activity and discussion online was seen with the 'Milifandom', with Miliband

becoming a youth meme, which as Hills states, indicates 'an engagement with

politics and speaking back to media and political elites…'[500].

Translating political interest and engagement to turnout is a key party issue, and one

that was not really addressed in the election. The Milifandom is significant, because

as previously discussed, there are arguments about whether political and civic

engagement is driven down with Internet usage. Bouillanne discussed its potential to

drive up political and civic engagement, but only with a small positive effect, and it

also depends on previous political interest and online access[501]. However, with

something as informal yet political as the Milifandom, a spontaneous Labour fan

creation on social media, the British online voter is able to politically communicate,

[498] Jackson, Nigel (2015) *Online Persuasion at the 2015 General Election* in Jackson, Dan and Thorsen, Einar (eds) *UK Election Analysis 2015: Media, Voters and the Campaign.* Bournemouth University Centre of the Study of Journalism, Culture and Community. P.46
[499] Smith, L and Thompson, S (2015) Tuning out or Tuned Out? A Critical Discourse Analysis of Youth Political Participation in Britain *Journal of Political Communications,* 3 (2): p.298
[500] Hills, Matt (2015) *The 'most unlikely' or 'most deserved cult': citizen-fans and the authenticity of Milifandom* in Jackson, Dan and Thorsen, Einar (eds) *UK Election Analysis 2015: Media, Voters and the Campaign.* Bournemouth University Centre of the Study of Journalism, Culture and Community. P.89
[501]Boulianne, Shelley (2009) Does Internet Use Affect Engagement? A MetaAnalysis of Research, Political Communication, 26:2, pp 193-211. [Online] Located at: 10.1080/10584600902854363 and accessed on 23rd June 2018.

but parties must create interactive voter dialogue. However, there was discussion online of election material, in particular the TV debates, which occurred again. These were not as significant as in 2010 but still bear examination, particularly the effect that the party leaders and policies addressed during the debates had on campaigning and party support/mobilisation.

2015 TV Election Debates

The TV debates were not the novelty they were previously. They differed from the previous debates in that seven party leaders took part in multiple formats and variation of leaders, depriving any debate discussion being 'Prime-Ministerial' in outlook and style[502], as realistically only two leaders had any chance of becoming Prime Minister. Examining the BES 2015 election data, interest in the debates dipped over time:

Table VI: % of voters who watched the 2015 General Election TV Debates			
Wave 5: BES Data during election. All data.			
First debate	**Yes**	**No**	**Don't Know**
	38.7	31.6	1.3
Second debate	22.5	29.8	1.1

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[502] Benoit WL, Benoit-Bryan JM (2013) Debates come to the United Kingdom: A functional analysis of the 2010 British prime minister election debates. *Communication Quarterly* 61(4): pp.463–478.

Third debate	7.0	10.1	0.4
N: 30725			

Around 40% of the population watched the first debate, which was less than the interest in the 2010 debates. After this, interest radically declined, to 22.5% and 7% watching the debates respectively. Cowley and Kavanagh noted that TV debate bulletins were at 48% in the first campaign week, dipping to 18% in week three, 18% in week five, and hovering at 5% in the week afterwards,[503] illustrating their lack of dominance compared to 2010. The coverage the election debates received was influenced by online chatter, as highlighted by Pedersen et al, which stated how Farage dominated discussion on Twitter during the debate, and also afterwards where Miliband was perceived as slow to condemn him[504]. This is in accordance with UKIP supporters' growing strength and social media activity, as noted by Ridge-Newman[505]. Miliband attempted to use the TV debates to burnish his image, netting him positive coverage and a rapturous social media response, however the Conservatives reacted to this in their campaign both on and offline, demonstrating

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[503] Cowley and Kavanagh (2015) p.284.
[504] Pedersen, Sarah, Baxter, Graeme, Burnett, Simon, MacLeod, Iain, Goker, Ayse, Heron, Michael, Isaacs, John, Elyan, Eyad and Kaliciak, Leszek (2015) *Twitter Response to televised political debates in Election 2015* in Jackson, Dan and Thorsen, Einar (eds) *UK Election Analysis 2015: Media, Voters and the Campaign.* Bournemouth University Centre of the Study of Journalism, Culture and Community. P.73
[505] Ridge-Newman, Anthony (2015) *UKIP Facebooking the Tories in General Election 2015* in Jackson, Dan and Thorsen, Einar (eds) *UK Election Analysis 2015: Media, Voters and the Campaign.* Bournemouth University Centre of the Study of Journalism, Culture and Community. P.75

how debates still shaped the campaigns, as Dayan and Katz explore in their media events study[506].

Miliband tripping up (literally) at the end of the fourth debate may have negatively impacted him electorally, according to Shepherd and Johns' argument of voters being affected by visual images as much as words[507], but this seemingly had little negative impact on Twitter, which had Miliband as the winner versus Cameron. Despite this, Cameron was ahead, polling 44% to Miliband's 38%[508]. Thus, social media being a bubble was demonstrated again, and the TV debates may have contributed by being perhaps more performative than policy-based, which Coleman and Moss explored in their TV debates work[509]. Despite this, although debate interest declined, with fewer people watching them at all stages than previously, they still drove campaign interest, and were utilised by smaller parties to pursue their 'niche agendas'. This was especially visible in debates featuring Farage. As Allen et al demonstrated, he overwhelmingly discussed Europe, the British constitution and immigration in his opening and closing statements[510], with the other minor party leaders doing similar for their issues, although they did not exclusively discuss their party strengths as Downs expected[511]. As stated earlier, Farage was one of the most searched for politicians in Britain, especially during the TV debates,[512] and although

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[506] Dayan, Daniel and Katz, Elihu (1992) *Media Events*. Harvard University Press, Harvard.

[507] Shephard M, Johns R (2012) Face for radio? How viewers and listeners reacted differently to the third leaders' debate in 2010. *British Journal of Politics & International* Relations 14(1): pp.1–18.

[508] Cowley and Kavanagh (2015) p.288.

[509] Coleman, Stephen and Moss, Giles (2016) Rethinking TV Debates: What Citizens are Entitled to Expect. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*. Vol 21, (1) pp.3-24 [Online] Located at: http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/1940161215609732 and accessed 5th August 2018.

[510] Allen, Nicholas, Bara, Judith and Bartle, John (2017) Finding a niche? Challenge parties and issue emphasis in the 2015 televised leaders' debates *Political Studies Association* Volume 19, Issue 4, pp.807-823 [Online] Located at: http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1369148117715014 and accessed 18th October 2017.

[511] Downs, Anthony (1957) *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. New York, Harper.

[512] Trevisan, Filippo and Reilly, Paul (2015) *UKIP: The Web's Darling?* in Jackson, Dan and Thorsen, Einar (eds) *UK Election Analysis 2015: Media, Voters and the Campaign.* Bournemouth University Centre of the Study of Journalism, Culture and Community. Pp.76-77

UKIP received 3.8 million votes, they only won one seat: there was no electoral breakthrough, despite social media interest. Consequently, the election debates were centred around the party leaders, and how voters perceived the various party leaders affected the eventual vote, as discussed by Garzia in 2012, arguing that party leaders affect the electorates' voting decision[513]. Thus, the 2015 debates did not mobilise those insufficiently politically interested but they influenced or cemented vote-choice. Although the TV debates were twinned with other television and online events, Cowley and Kavanagh stated: '…these networked initiatives had some impact, it was largely on young people already interested in politics.'[514]. Therefore, although there was heavy social media interaction and interest regarding the debates, they did not have the impact of 2010, reinvigorating existing voters instead but failing to politicise new ones.

Post-election and conclusion

The Conservatives won. Miliband resigned, having taken Labour backwards in seats. Clegg resigned, the Liberal Democrats in ruins. Although UKIP came third in vote-share, they acquired one seat, and Farage resigned. The Greens managed a million votes yet only one MP, and the SNP dominated Scotland. Thus began soul-searching. The Internet and particularly Twitter predicted a Labour victory, along with most of the polls. Why did they lose? It was clear that the Conservatives defeated Labour via their arguments and campaigning. The TV debates were neutral or mildly bad for Miliband, while Cameron succeeded. Miliband and Labour were unappealing to the electorate, and Scotland was lost. The Conservatives ran an excellent micro-

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[513] Garzia, D. (2012), Party and Leader Effects in Parliamentary Elections: Towards a Reassessment. *Politics*, 32: pp. 175-185. [Online] Located at: doi:10.1111/j.1467-9256.2012.01443.x and accessed 7th July 2018.
[514] Cowley and Kavanagh (2015) p.290

targeting campaign and YouTube videos on social media, assisted by persistent negativity towards Miliband and Labour, as Roper explores[515]. Furthermore, Labour's focus on peer-to-peer sharing and focusing on its core audience did not succeed, with their focus on Twitter and relying on retweets and message sharing not preventing a Conservative victory, which differed from the Conservative focus on targeting specific voters with specific messages, as Roper details[516]. However, elements such as the Milifandom were interesting, tapping into an irreverence yet politically motivated series of messages which had the potential to engage and mobilise.

As Jennings and Stoker stated in 2016, England was cleaved in twain politically, with one being cosmopolitan and global, and the other inward-looking, more English in identity, and negative about immigration[517]. The next chapter will discuss the European Referendum of 2016, and the Internet's impact on the 2017 election. I will seek to explore how mobilisation and engagement evolved from the 2015 election, and whether the techniques adopted by the main parties were further developed or whether their methods remained static. The approach taken by some in the Scottish referendum of informal groups politically engaged and mobilised would be one that would be taken up again in the 2016 EU referendum, and the 2017 election especially.

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[515] Roper, Caitlin (2018) pp.1-13
[516] Ibid, p.12
[517] Jennings, Will and Stoker, Gerry (2016) The Bifurcation of Politics: Two Englands. *The Political Quarterly.* Volume 87, Issue 3. July-September 2016. pp.372-382. [Online] Located at: https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-923x.12228 and accessed on July 14th 2018.

Chapter V: The EU Referendum and the 2017 General Election

The last chapter discussed the 2015 election, and how parties mobilised voters. It was over halfway through the period of study, and thus was useful to analyse how parties mobilised their supporters. The Conservatives' online mobilisation techniques were based around microtargeting various demographics and individuals of said demographics rather than peer-to-peer sharing as utilised by Labour. Although Labour seemed to be dominant on Twitter and somewhat on Facebook, the Conservatives had spent far more on Facebook and through judicious targeting and messaging, gained a majority. Thus, I will be examining how mobilisation and engagement evolved from this during this chapter examining the EU Referendum and the 2017 election, and how the campaigns/parties mobilised their supporters and potential voters, building upon the work and lessons learned in 2015.

During this final chapter, I will discuss the 2016 EU Referendum, and how the opposing sides of the referendum both engaged and mobilised their supporters.[518] As such, I aim to find coherent explanations for how the referendum mobilised support across all levels of society, and how voters were mobilised using such tools as social media and various issues. I will look at what had been learned from the 2015 General Election, and whether this resulted in greater voter mobilisation. Towards this, I will look at the 2017 General Election, as the development of social media mobilisation and voter mobilisation was significant, and as discussed previously, how political parties used the Internet and social media to increase

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[518] I shall be looking at social media and the Internet during the EU referendum, although I hasten to add that I will not be focusing on any claims of Russian engagement or perceived cheating as this is not relevant for the thesis, and will just lead to distraction.

turnout and participation had developed slowly, so looking at the election where it truly was significant is paramount.

An analysis of the EU Referendum of 2016 will shed light on youth mobilisation, and how political mobilisation and turnout were focussed upon during the EU Referendum. Initially, I theorise that the EU Referendum utilised many different elements of voter mobilisation, and that developments over many different elections resulted in a true mobilising force, resulting in a high turnout of 72%. Whether this was due to voters being invested in the EU issue and turning out for that reason or whether the high turnout was due to voter mobilisation and engagement efforts by both sides will be seen. Furthermore, this will enable me to see how mobilisation differs across elections and referendums, and combining this with the earlier analysis based on the Scottish referendum and the previous elections, I will create a case concerning how voter mobilisation and engagement has evolved in Britain in both referendums and elections from 2010 to 2017.

The EU Referendum

Britain voted to leave the EU on 23rd June 2016 on 52%, with a 48% Remain vote. I will look at voter mobilisation and how voters were contacted and engaged.

As Becker and el found, urban areas had low turnout; indeed, six London local authority areas had a turnout of less than 65% compared to a UK 72%, with significantly Remain support being strongest in London, arguably affecting the result[519]. This is significant for how Remain broke down, as well as why Leave did

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[519] Becker, Sascha, Fetzer, Thiemo and Novy, Dennis (2016) Who voted for Brexit? A Comprehensive District-Level Analysis. *Centre for Competitive Advantage in the Global Economy* October 2016, No. 305. P.13.

not succeed there generally. Indeed, urban areas had less turnout overall than the rest of the country. Urban dwellers tend to be younger than the rest of the population, and thus lower turnout.

The older the voter, the higher likelihood they had of voting and voting Leave. This is evident from BES data:

Table I: Voter breakdown for EU vote				
British Election Study: Wave 9, post-EU Referendum				
Ages	**Turnout**	**Voted Remain**	**Voted Leave**	**Don't Know**
18-25	87.5%	74.4%	25.3%	0.3%
26-35	88.8%	62.4%	37%	0.4%
18-35 Combined (young)	88.3%	66.8%	32.8%	0.4%
36-45	92.2%	54.0%	45.3%	0.7%
46-55	94.6%	46.9%	52.4%	0.7%
36-55 Combined (middle aged)	93.6%	49.8%	49.5%	0.7%
56-65	96.4%	44.6%	54.7%	0.7%
66+	98.0%	40.5%	58.8%	0.6
56+ Combined	97.1%	42.8%	56.5%	0.7%
N: 2185 for 18-25, 3781 for 26-				

35, 5966 for 18-35, 4166 for 36-45, 5796 for 46-55, 9912 for 36-55, 7924 for 55- 65, 5854 for 66+ and 13778 for 56+ (All percentages exclude missing cases)				

Taking note of the higher turnout than actually occurred due to the nature of BES data, the older the voter, the more likely they voted Leave and voted in general; this is corroborated by the Natcen referendum report which found that 93% of 65+ voters voted compared to 60% of 18-34s[520]. This is also evident from a YouGov poll taken immediately post-referendum, which stated that 71% of those aged 18-24 voted Remain, with 25-49 year-olds voting 54% Remain, 50-64 year olds voting 60% to Leave, and those aged 65+ voting 64% to Leave[521], with Labour voters voting 65% Remain, Conservative voters voting 61% Leave, 80% of Greens Remain, UKIP 95% Leave, and the Liberal Democrats voting 68% Remain[522]. Younger voters voted Remain significantly, while older voters voted Leave. Labour voters' heavy backing of Remain had consequences during the 2017 election[523]. Furthermore,

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[520] Swales, Kirby (2016) Understanding the Leave Vote *NatCen* p..19 [Online] Located at: natcen.ac.uk/media/1319222/natcen_brexplanations-report-final-web2.pdf and accessed 5th July 2018.
[521] Moore, Peter (2016) How Britain Voted *YouGov* June 27. [Online] Located at: https://yougov.co.uk/2016/06/27/how-britain-voted and accessed 1st July 2018.
[522] Ibid.
[523] Ibid.

Conservatives backed Leave, directly opposite to how the majority of Conservative MPs voted, while Greens and Liberal Democrats voted heavily to Remain, and UKIP voted Leave enormously[524]. Looking at demographic breakdown of the parties will illuminate further, but now it would be useful to study voter mobilisation and young voters.

Youth Voters in the EU Referendum

As discussed, mobilising voters and increasing turnout is linked to voter engagement, be that through social media, traditional voter-contacting, non-traditional political activism and politically active groups. Beaumont emphasises the importance of socio-political learning by experiencing political action and discourse in a politically active community[525]. Sloam explored this phenomena by studying mobilisation of young people for the European Referendum[526] and how social media drove this, showing how over the past few elections, British political actors and participants began to properly utilise social media to mobilise and increase turnout. Indeed, as Garcia-Castanon et al stated, young people become politically engaged due to 'the conduits and forces behind their own participation in offline politics because of online political activity'[527]. This was done to greater effect with Momentum and Labour in 2017 with utilisation of social networks to promote political participation[528], as Rosenstone and Hansen identified social networks' ability to

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[524] Ibid.

[525] Beaumont, E (2011) Promoting political agency, addressing political inequality: a multilevel model of internal political efficacy. *The Journal of Politics.* 73 (1): pp.216-231.

[526] Sloam, James (2018) #Votebecause: Youth Mobilisation for the referendum on British membership of the European Union *New Media and Society* pp.1- 18. [Online] Located at: https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/146444818766701 and accessed 1st July 2018.

[527] Garcia-Castanon, M, Rank A and Barreto M (2011) Plugged in or tuned out? Youth, race, and Internet usage in the 2008 election. *Journal of Political Marketing*, 10, (1-2) pp.115-138

[528] Pickard, S (2018) Momentum and the movementist 'Corbynistas': young people regenerating the Labour Party in Britain. In: Pickard S and Bessant J (eds) *Young People Re-generating Politics in Times of Crises*. Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, pp.115-137.

reduce the cost of obtaining political information[529]. As discussed previously, young people were politically interested but were turned off by formal politics, with young people feeling that politics and the news media were aimed at and dominated by older adults, as Buckingham identified[530], so both Remain and Leave tried to engage the young on social media to increase turnout and mobilisation.

Knowledge ensures political participation, as Gestil and Levine discussed[531]. A YouGov poll just pre-referendum stated 39% of 18-24 year-olds had political interest in the campaign, with 49% certain to vote, with full-time students being 44% and 56% respectively[532]. Importantly, the young stated they were more likely to vote in the referendum than in previous elections

 Despite this, over 50% of the young were not certain to vote and 61% had no political interest in the EU vote. This is far less than other European countries: Hix highlights how youth in other European nations have higher interest and positivity towards the EU[533]. Thus, Beaumont's maxim about how socio-political learning and political education is constructed within political networks would be crucial. Also, Vitak et al's work demonstrating Facebook political activity and exposure to it predicts offline and online political behaviour, with intense Facebook activity being negatively related to political activity[534] is vital. Thus, the more intense the social

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[529] Rosenstone, S and Hansen J (1993) *Mobilisation, Participation and Democracy in America*. New York: Macmillan.
[530] Buckingham, D (2000) *The Making of Citizens: Young People, News, and Politics*. London: Taylor & Francis.
[531] Gastil, J and Levine, P (eds) (2005) *The Deliberative Democracy Handbook: Strategies for Effective Civic Engagement in the Twenty-First Century.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, p.308.
[532] Sloam (2018) p.6.
[533] Hix, S (2015) Most Brits know little about the EU (and those that do don't necessarily like it) *LSE Blog*. [Online] Located at: http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/brexit/2015/11/30/most-brits-know-little-about-the-eu-and-those-that-do-dont-necessarily-like-it/ and accessed 1st July 2018.
[534] Vitak, J., Zube, P., Smock, A., Carr, C. Ellison, N., & Lampe, C. (2009) *"Poking" people to participate: Facebook and political participation in the 2008 election*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Communication Association, Chicago, IL, May.

media use, the less likely a voter is to vote. Johnson et al further investigate, stating

that relying on social networks for information provides an insignificant positive vote

likelihood, while relying on YouTube provides a significant negative likelihood,

although social media use shows a significant likelihood to participate in political

discussion on and offline, while pre-existing political interest is much stronger and

significant for this[535]. Although this concerns the US, it has vital elements to inform

on turnout and political engagement. Goodwin et al discussed campaign effects'

impact on public attitudes towards the EU, and found that the referendum had a high

potential for pro-EU arguments, but they were not made to the same degree as

Leave, as shall be seen[536]. It is worth examining what motivated people to vote how

they did.

Goodwin and Heath demonstrated in their August 2016 EU Referendum paper how

demographics affected the vote[537]:

> …Turnout was generally higher in pro-Leave areas…public support for
> Leave closely mapped past support for UKIP…support for Leave was
> more polarised along education lines than UKIP support ever was.

Turnout being higher in pro-Leave areas is notable. Leave was supported by many

Labour voting areas and UKIP-targeted areas, for example Blackpool and Wales, but

performed badly in Scotland (38%), London (40.1%) and Northern Ireland

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[535]Johnson, Thomas, Zhang, Weiwu, Birchard, Shannon, and Seltzer, Trent (2011) *United We Stand? Online Social Network Sites and Civic Engagement* pp.198-200 located in (eds) Zizi Papacharissi (2011) *A Networked Self: Identity, Community and Culture on Social network sites.* Routledge, London.

[536] Goodwin, Matthew, Hix, Simon and Pickup, Mark (2018) For and Against Brexit: A Survey Experiment of the Impact of Campaign Effects on Public Attitudes towards EU Membership. *British Journal of Political Science,* pp.1-15. [Online] Located at: doi.10.1017/S000712341700667 and accessed 4th August 2018.

[537] Goodwin, Matthew., and Heath, Oliver (2016) The 2016 Referendum, Brexit and the Left Behind: An Aggregate-level Analysis of the Result. *The Political Quarterley.* Volume 87, Issue 3, July-September 2016. Pp.323-332. [Online] Located at: https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com.doi/full/10.1111/1467-923x.12285 and accessed 3rd July 2018.

(44.1%)[538]. Significantly, those areas with a population aged 65 and over had a very strong positive turnout coefficient, those with no qualifications had a very strong negative turnout coefficient, those areas with non-white voters had a very strong negative coefficient, areas with a strong 2014 UKIP vote had a strong positive relationship, and a higher turnout in the same EU elections having a positive turnout effect with finally London and Scotland having a negative insignificant turnout effect[539]. Thus, areas with educated voters, elderly UKIP voters and those with high turnout in the previous EU elections were more likely to vote, with London and Scotland as well as non-white and young voters having low turnout. Significantly the more educated the voter, the less likely they voted Leave.

Looking at Heath and Goodwin again, the Leave vote was much higher in authorities with numbers of low-educated people, and vice versa with the highly educated.[540] They demonstrate that fifteen of the twenty 'least educated' areas voted Leave, while every single of the twenty most educated areas voted Remain[541], which is significant: as was seen in the previous chapters, Labour and the Liberal Democrats were supported by the most educated, and the Conservatives and UKIP gained the support of the least educated, while Labour were supported by the poorest. However, in the referendum, most Labour constituencies actually voted Leave, causing issues for Labour's EU policy, as Hanretty illustrates[542]. Hanretty also states that Leave was strongest in less-economically developed areas, with low education levels and heavily white areas. This contrasts with strong Remain areas such as

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[538] Ibid
[539] Ibid
[540] Ibid.
[541] Ibid.
[542] Hanretty, C (2016) Most Labour MPs Represent a Constituency that voted Leave *Medium* [Online] Located at: https://medium.com/@chrishanretty/most-labour-mps-represent-a-constituency-that-voted-leave-36f13210f5c6 and accessed 11th July 2018.

Lambeth and Hackney, the City of London, Edinburgh, and Cambridge, with the fifty

strongest Remain local authorities in either London or Scotland[543]. Leave being

strongest in poorer areas is counter to what would have been thought as Labour

areas which 'should' have voted Remain as Labour officially backed Remain.

However, Goodwin and Ford discuss the relation between UKIP and 'traditional'

Labour voters[544]. It is worth considering what immigration attitudes and ethnic

diversity had on the result[545]:

> There is…a negative relationship between the level of EU migration
> …and the level of support for leaving the EU… communities that had
> the fewest recent immigrants from the EU that were the most likely to
> [vote] leave…. Of the twenty places with the fewest EU migrants,
> fifteen voted…leave... By contrast, of the twenty places with the most
> EU migrants, eighteen voted…remain….[In] the areas…most receptive
> to …Leave… there were hardly any EU migrants…

Thus, the higher the EU population, the more likely it voted Remain. Detailing

mobilisation is still necessary.

Mobilisation in the EU Referendum

Facebook and Twitter were used for mobilisation on either side, as Cookson and

Gordon highlighted[546]. As Bond et al argued, seeing a political message on a

friend's page can affect voting behaviour[547]. Vicario et al discussed how the two

campaigns segregated themselves on Facebook, increasing polarisation and

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[543] Ibid.
[544] Ford, Robert and Goodwin, Matthew (2014) *Revolt on the Right: Explaining Public Support for the Radical Right in Britain*. Abingdon, Routledge
[545] Goodwin and Heath (2016)
[546] Cookson, R., and Gordon, S (2016) EU Referendum Campaigns Make Facebook Their Friend *The Financial Times* 25th April.
[547] Bond R, Farriss, C, Jones, J, Kramer, A, Marlow, C, and Settle, J (2012) A 61-Million person Experiment in Social Influence and Political Mobilisation' *Nature*. 489, pp.295-298

polarising narratives within the campaigns[548] and decreasing intergroup

communication. Thus, mobilising the most supporters and the evolution of

arguments would be key to success. As previously stated, Twitter is not used widely,

but the politically active use it. As Matsuo and Benoit state, Leave dominated

Twitter[549]:

> ….Leave were in a better position on Twitter [with] a larger volume
> of tweets, [hashtags and tweets to follow] conveyed positive
> messages, and offered a wider range of pro-Leave accounts to
> follow.

Leave were more effective on Twitter, focusing on immigration, motivating Leave

voters[550]. The more positive messages, greater tweet volume and the wide range of

tweets to follow meant that Leave was more popular on Twitter. As Hansen et al

argued in 2011, positive Twitter messages unrelated to news are retweeted more,

while messages that are negative and news-related tend to be retweeted more,

which occurred with Leave's Twitter success[551]. With Leave voters caring most about

immigration and Remain voters about the economy, as was learned from the BES

post-EU Referendum panel wave[552], in addition to Matsuo and Benoit's discussion of

Leave voters engaging with hashtags such as #immigration and #Migrationcrisis[553]

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[548] Del Vicaro, Michela, Zollo, Fabiana, Caldarelli, Guido, Scala, Antonio and Quattrociocchi, Walter (2017) Mapping Social Dynamics on Facebook: The Brexit Debate. *Social Networks.* 50, March 2017. [Online] Located at: doi:10.1016/j.socnet.2017/02/002 and accessed 25th June.

[549] Matsuo, Akitaka and Benoit, Kenneth (2017) More Positive, assertive and forward-looking: how Leave won Twitter. *LSE Blogs.* 16th March. [Online] Located at: blogs.lse.ac.uk-More%20positive%20assertive%20and%20forward%20looking%20how%20leave%20won%20twitter/ and accessed 3rd July 2018.

[550] Ibid.

[551] Hansen, Lars Kai, Arivdsson, Adam, Nielsen, Finn Arup, Colleoni, Elanor and Etter, Michael. (2011) *Good Friends, Bad News Affect and Virality in Twitter.* January 4, Technical University of Denmark. [Online] Located at: https://arxiv.org/pdf/1101.05.10v1.pdf and accessed 1st June 2018.

[552] British Election Study team (2016) Brexit Britain: British Election Study Insights from the post-EU Referendum wave of the BES Internet panel. *British Election Study.* 6th October 2016. [Online] Located at: www.britishelectionstudy.com/bes-resources/brexit-britain-british-election-study-insights-from-the-post-eu-referendum-wave-of-the-bes-internet-panel/#.W0YEsSPMyu7 and accessed 2nd June 2018.

[553] Matsuo and Benoit (2017)

and Leave's prominence on social media, what motivated Leave is evident. Leave

social media was, to restate Matsuo and Benoit, centred on a nexus of political and

campaign accounts such as Nigel Farage, UKIP, and Vote_Leave, while Remain

was centred on accounts such as Robert Peston, the Guardian and the BBC[554].

Combined with Leave's positivity on Twitter and focus on non-news accounts and

hashtags based on Leave's driving force, fitting in with the negative news-related

tweets, this illustrates how Leave motivated and mobilised, although caveats must

be had to the extent to which social media can mobilise voters. Leave voters also

believed at 90% that the economy would be better after leaving, while 93% Remain

voters believed it would get worse, while 69% of Leave voters (and 31% of Remain

voters) thought nothing would change as Curtice notes[555], demonstrating why Leave

voters were motivated more: although Remain were seemingly equally determined,

Remain turnout was slightly lower. This is visible from the NatCen report again[556]:

> The Referendum attracted a group of 'new voters' who did not
> participate in [2015]…A majority (60%) of this group voted
> Leave…. Turnout [was decisive]... Those who said they leant
> towards Remain in the [referendum] run-up… were more likely to
> not vote (19% vs 11% of Leave supporters). If turnout among
> …both sides had been equal, the vote would… [be]… closer.

By bringing together non-voters, and with some Remain voters not voting, Leave

won. Thus, Leave's campaign had more traction. Immigration and the economy

being salient ensured Leave's victory, especially with their positive message.

Curtice's BES data findings illustrate how the Referendum highlighted Britain's

divide. 91% of Remain voters disagreed that the EU undermined Britain's identity,

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[554] Ibid.
[555] Curtice, John (2017) Why Leave Won the UK's EU Referendum. *The JCMS Annual Review of the European Union in 2016*. Volume 55, Issue S1, September 2017, pp.19-37. [Online] Located at: https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.12613 and accessed 5th July 2018.
[556] Swales (2016) p. 2.

while 82% of Leave voters agreed, showing how a lower Remain turnout benefitted

Leave, and combined with 70% of Leave voters thinking immigration would decrease

if Britain left demonstrates the reasons for the vote result[557]. The issues were more

salient and Leave communicated their message better and tapped into 'those left

behind', as Goodwin and Heath have identified[558]. Additionally, Curtice again

identified what voters thought the consequences of leaving were: 55% thought that

immigration would decrease, 33% thought that the NHS would improve, and 23%

thought the economy would get worse[559].

Dominating social media, the issues, and a more proactive campaign, Leave

mobilised and engaged more voters. Using social media to engage with and mobilise

supporters is crucial, as Howard and Kollanyi analysed in 2016, arguing the Leave

campaign's use of bots[560] was remarkable[561]:

> …30% of voters will decide how to vote in the week before the
> election, with half of these on polling day…bots over social media
> heightens the risk of massive cascades of information at a time
> when voters will be thinking about their opinions and canvassing
> their social networks for [friends and family]…sentiments... political
> bots have a small but strategic role in… referendum
> conversations…hashtags associated with the argument for
> leaving…dominate…

Leave's campaign utilised bots, and thus contributed to the dominance of Leave on

social media. However, I will not be discussing bots beyond this: as stated

previously, focusing too much on bots will prove to be a distraction. There are other

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[557] 2015 British Election Study Internet Panel Waves 8 and 9, found in Curtice, John (2017) Why Leave Won the UK's EU Referendum. *The JCMS Annual Review of the European Union in 2016*. Volume 55, Issue S1, September 2017. Pp.19-37. [Online] Located at: https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.12613 and accessed 5th July 2018.
[558] Goodwin and Heath (2016)
[559] Curtice (2017)
[560] Automated social media accounts
[561] Howard, Philip N and Kallanyi, Bence (2016) Bots, #StrongerIn, and #Brexit: Computational Propaganda during the UK-EU Referendum. *ComProp* Research Note 2016.1 p.5 [Online] Located at: https://ssrn.com/abstract/2798311 and accessed 13th July 2018.

elements which I argue has had a higher impact on voter mobilisation and political engagement, and especially with bots not utilising social media in a dialogic and participatory way, which prevents true mobilisation and political participation and instead just mobilises those already political, as highlighted by Gibson and Cantijoch[562]. Furthermore, Narayanan et al's 2017 research demonstrated the role bots played in the campaign, revealing they had little impact, little visibility and were not shared widely[563], although further analysis must be taken regarding the 'large number of accounts both human and automated that shared polarising and provocative content over…social media in days leading up to the referendum.' Analysis by Bastos and Mercea concluded '…botnet [activity]… was relatively minor compared to the overall conversations during the Referendum campaign.'[564] Thus, I shall leave the bot discussion for further analysis. With that, the traditional media's role and the impact it played within the EU referendum will occur.

During this, the focus will be on traditional media such as television and newspapers, and how they affected the overall result and impact. Cushion and Lewis discussed the role media coverage played during the referendum, highlighting the claims made by the two campaigns, such as the £350 million per week for the NHS claim made by Leave[565]. The coverage tended to be dominated by Conservative infighting or

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[562] Gibson, Rachel and Cantijoch, Marta (2013) Conceptualising and Measuring Participation in the Age of the Internet: Is Online Political Engagement Really Different to Online? *The Journal of Politics* 75 (3) pp.701-16.

[563] Narayanan, Vidya, Howard, Philip, Kollanyi, Bence, and Elsewah, Mona (2017) Russian Involvement and Junk News during Brexit *COMPROP* 19 December. [Online] Located at: https://comprop.oii.ox.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/89/2017/12/Russia-and-Brexit-v27.pdf and accessed 2nd May 2019.

[564] Bastos, Marco and Mercea, Dan (2017) The Brexit botnet and user-generated Hyperpartisan news. *Social Science Computer Review*. Vol 37, Issue 1, pp.38-54. [Online] Located at: https://doi.org/10.1177/0894439317734157 and accessed 2nd May 2019.

[565] Cushion, Stephen and Lewis, Justin (2017) Impartiality, statistical tit-for-tats and the construction of balance: UK television news reporting of the 2016 EU Referendum. *European Journal of Communication* 2017, Vol. 32, Issue 3), pp.219-220. [Online] Located at: http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.117/0267323117695736 and accessed 13th July 2018.

incorrect statistics presented without explanation, confusing and ill-informing voters.[566] Indeed, they stated 'the reliance on claims and counter-claims by leading Conservative politicians did little to advance public understanding of the [EU], and…perpetuated… a…long-standing negative associations the British media have been reporting for many decades.[567]' This again was highlighted by Leave's usage of the 'blatant untruth… of the claim that the UK could not stop Turkey joining the EU.'[568] However, negative reaction also came about to the Treasury's claim prior to the referendum concerning 500,000 jobs disappearing and GDP lowering by 3.6% in the event of a Leave vote[569], prompting a furious row between the two sides. Evidently, Leave was well-served by the conduct and presentation of the media, and how the reporting of the debate was ill-served by the conduct of the television media, which discussed by Cushion and Lewis[570]:

> …independent expert analysis and testimony was sucked into the partisan binary between leave and remain campaigners, while journalists were reluctant to challenge or contextualise claims and counter-claims. Journalists were, in this sense, constrained by the [broadcasters'] operational definition of impartiality.

Thus, television media's coverage of the referendum was flawed as it was disengaged with the issues, and was frivolous instead of analytical. Cushion and Lewis' analysis is concerned with the study of the television media, but it is worth noting it in relation to the impact of the media coverage of the newspapers and other such media.

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[566] Cushion, Stephen and Lewis, Justin (2017) pp.219-220.
[567] Ibid, p.208.
[568] Cowley, Philip and Kavanagh, Dennis (2018) *The British General Election of 2017*.
[569] HM Treasury (2016) HM Treasury Analysis: The Immediate Economic Impact of Leaving the EU. *Gov.UK* nd. [Online] Located at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/524967/hm_treasury_a nalysis_the_immediate_economic_impact_of_leaving_the_eu_web.pdf and accessed 2nd April 2019.
[570] Cushion, Stephen and Lewis, Justin (2017) p.208

I will not detail every campaign event, but I will highlight the issues covered and their effect on the campaign and voter mobilisation. How the issues were mobilising in themselves is important, and will be discussed in regards to media coverage. As discussed earlier, there was much rancour with the media and the referendum issues, with Moore and Ramsay discussing in their work on UK media referendum coverage the 'rancorous…bitter way in which the referendum…was fought was…reflected in and enhanced by the media coverage…many news outlets encouraged and stoked the partisanship.[571]' I will mostly use Moore and Ramsay's work during this section, as it encompasses the media coverage, although other works will be drawn upon.

Three topics dominated referendum discussion and coverage: the economy, immigration, and finally health distantly third, with warnings of Brexit repercussions being dismissed by the press as Remain scaremongering, and the media's tendency to link immigration to the economic issues raised by Leave[572]. Furthermore, specific nations and nationalities were negatively targeted, with the fiction of Turkey's potential EU entry being particularly raised by Leave[573] and Albania, Romania, Poland, and Bulgaria being negatively targeted[574]. Combined with the Leave supporting newspapers of *The Sun, The Daily Mail, Daily Express, The Daily Telegraph, and The Sunday Times* outnumbering the Remain supporting newspapers of *The Mirror, The Guardian, The Independent and The Financial Times*

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[571] Moore, Martin and Ramsay, Gordon (2017) UK Media Coverage of the 2016 EU Referendum Campaign. *Centre for the Study of Media, Communication and Power* May. P.167 [Online] Located at: www.media-diversity.org/en/additional-files/UK-media-coverage-of-the-2016-EU-Referendum-campaign.pdf and accessed 2nd April 2019.
[572] Ibid, p.8.
[573] Ibid, p.100.
[574] Ibid.

in salience and readership, as Firmstone demonstrated[575], ensured that the

campaign issues would be framed in a Leave-friendly way, which were made more

often and with higher ferocity than the Remain media[576], with compelling, patriotic

language being employed more by the Leave-supporting papers[577]. Returning to

Firmstone again, the similarity to the TV media's framing of the issues in a battle

between the two campaigns instead of sober and serious analysis was a feature of

both sides of the newspaper media[578]. The extent to which

The extent to which the Leave campaign was assisted by perceptions of loss of

sovereignty to Brussels, immigration concerns, and the salience of Europe to British

politics is important and how the media's referendum coverage assisted this. Using

Gavin's exploration of the media's impact on the referendum, I will explore these

attitudes in the media's political discourse, and how the salience of these elements in

media coverage mobilised voters somewhat[579]. Although this thesis will not go into

enormous depth over these attitudes, they are important to recognise in the context

of referendum coverage. As Gavin states: '…the media's capacity to reinforce pre-

existing attitudes – whether these attitudes relate to the EU, immigration, benefit

fraud, or climate change – is…significant. Moreover, [reinforcing forces]… also have

potentially important repercussions for public misperceptions…So even if

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[575] Firmstone, Julie (2016) Newspapers' editorial opinions during the referendum campaign in Jackson, Daniel, Thorsen, Einar and Wring, Dominic (eds) *EU Referendum Analysis 2016: Media, Voters and the Campaign.* Bournemouth University Centre of the Study of Journalism, Culture and Community. P.36[Online] Located at: https://meandeurope.com/wp-content/uploads/EU-Referendum-Analysis-2016-Jackson-Thorsen-and-Wring-v2.pdf and accessed 15th April 2019.
[576] Ibid.
[577] Ibid.
[578] Ibid.
[579] Gavin, N. T (2018) Media definitely do matter: Brexit, immigration, climate change and beyond. *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 20 (4), pp.827-845. [Online] Located at: https://doi.org/10.1177/1369148118799260 and accessed 2nd May 2019.

reinforcement is the media's only impact…remember that the results can… be

consequential….'[580]

Therefore, as Sanders and Gavin found, the media's impact on economic perception

is evident[581], showing how the papers' focus upon these issues was significant, as

supported by McCombs' confirmation of the media's agenda-setting power[582].

McCombs wrote this in 2005 before the true rise of the Internet and digital

engagement in the UK, but it is significant still, especially as Leave tended to be

backed by those less digitally literate and elderly, as stated before. Gavin's 2007

work on UK media stories impacting the EU's salience in Britain can be paired with

this[583], demonstrating the prevailing attitude towards the EU that was prevalent in the

British media during the referendum and before. Furthermore, recalling Moore and

Ramsay's findings that Brexit economic issues and general economic issues[584] were

increasingly linked to immigration in the media, as well as 'coverage of…immigration

[effects] were overwhelmingly negative. Migrants were blamed for… Britain's

economic and social problems – most notably for putting unsustainable pressure on

public services… the majority of negative coverage of specific foreign nationals was

published by three news sites: the *Express, the Daily Mail,* and the *Sun.*[585]' it is clear

what the main issues had been interpreted as. Fitzgerald and Smoczynski detailed

the unfounded claims made by the UK media about the immigrant threat to the UK's

economy, security and the NHS[586], with Balch and Balabonova also describing these

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[580] Ibid, p.840.
[581] Sanders, D and Gavin, NT (2004) Television News, economic perceptions and political preferences in Britain, 1997-2001. *Journal of Politics*. 66 (4): pp.1245-1266.
[582] McCombs, M (2005) A look at agenda-setting: Past, present and future. *Journalism Studies* 6 (4): pp.543-557.
[583] Gavin, NT (2007) *Press and Television in British Politics.* London, Palgrave Macmillan.
[584] Moore and Ramsay (2017) p.8
[585] Ibid, p.
[586] Fitzgerald, I, and Smoczynski, R (2015) Anti-Polish migrant moral panic in the UK: Rethinking employment insecurities and moral regulation. *Czech Sociological Review* 51 (3): pp.339-361.

claims[587], thus ensuring that this issue framing would carry on throughout the referendum, particularly migration's perception as a threat to the UK. Cheregi has also detailed how the UK media historically over-emphasised immigration numbers[588], so when the referendum media coverage emphasised migration's supposed negative impact, this benefitted Leave. In addition to the 'persistent and strongly critical coverage of what was often characterised as the EU's exercise of sovereignty over Britain'[589], which Daddow highlighted as a feature of the British press before the EU campaign[590], Hawkins' analysis of decades of media criticism of the EU was linked to disapproval of the EU in itself is self-evident[591]. Thus, as the economy was the most covered issue, with 7028 articles during the campaign, followed by immigration on 4383 articles, and then health with 1638 articles (the £350 million per week to the NHS pledge being prominent)[592] demonstrates how these issues combined to benefit Leave, especially when sovereignty was discussed in over 2000 articles in the context of the economy and immigration. Therefore, the dominant media attitudes that had dominated the British press reached a climax in the EU campaign, and as previously seen with older voters reading newspapers more than younger voters, this helps explain the Leave vote. I will not discuss the exact motivations behind the Leave vote,, but it is important to discuss it briefly.

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[587] Balch, A and Balabanova, E (2014) Ethics, Politics and Migration: Public debates on the free movement of Romanians and Bulgarians in the UK, 2006-2013. *Politics* 36 (1): pp.19-35.

[588]Cheregi, B (2015) The discursive construction of Romanian immigration in the British media: Digitised press vs television documentaries. *Romanian Journal of Communication and Public Relations.* 17 (2) pp.53-73.

[589] Gavin NT (2018) p.840

[590] Daddow, O (2012) The UK Media and 'Europe': From permissive consensus to destructive dissent. *International Affairs* 88 (6): pp.1219-1236.

[591] Hawkins, B (2012) Nation, separation and threat: An analysis of British media discourses on the European Union treaty reform process. *Journal of Common Market Studies* 50 (4): pp.561-577.

[592] Moore and Ramsay (2017) p.8

As Sloam and Henn argue, young people perceived the economy as far more important than immigration, in sharp contrast to citizens over 65 years old[593], which as voter turnout being stronger amongst the elderly than the young as seen before, the domination of the Leave press and also Leave on social media, demonstrates the dominance of Leave-friendly messages. Indeed, as Deacon found: '…[Factoring in the] strength of papers' endorsements and …their circulation…size, [the] Leave campaign has an 82% to 18% advantage over Remain.' [594] Barnett added that: 'The barrage of headlines designed to reinforce campaign slogans will have shored up Leave strategists with confidence to pursue their simple message… an orchestrated tabloid campaign around EU pen-pushing bureaucrats, EU costs to the United Kingdom and untrammelled EU immigration lent itself perfectly to the oft-repeated mantra of Take Back Control.'[595] Thus, traditional newspaper's impact in the EU referendum campaign is evident.

The dominating attitudes in the media coverage assisted are commonly held by the older population (65+) who both voted in large numbers to leave the EU and also who vote the most regardless. With the Leave campaign dominating social and traditional media, the extent to which people were engaged, some of the reasons why voters chose to leave the EU and why certain issues were salient become clearer. However, social media is important, and must be discussed further. Iosifidis

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[593] Sloam, J and Henn, M (2019) *Youthquake 2017: The Rise of Young Cosmopolitans in Britain*. Palgrave, London. P.76.
[594] Loughborough University (2016) *Centre for Research in Communication and Culture*. Report 5, Media Coverage of EU Referendum. June 27. [Online] Located at: http://blog.lboro.ac.uk and accessed 2nd March 2019.
[595] Barnett, Steven (2016) How our Mainstream Media Failed Democracy *Referendum Analysis* November 22. [Online] Located at: http://www.referendumanalysis.eu/eu-referendum-analysis-2016/section-4/how-our-mainstream-media-failed-democracy and accessed 22nd March 2019.

and Wheeler discuss this ably, along with further exploration of the Leave

campaign's highlighted issues.

 Iosifidis and Wheeler's EU referendum analysis highlighted how the Leave

campaign focussed on Turkey imminent EU entry as well the claim that leaving the

EU would result in a £350m weekly bonus for the NHS, both of which were incorrect,

but crucially tapped into the main issues of immigration and more NHS money, along

with the Leave statement of 'we want our country back'[596]. The exploitation of the

traditional and social media to spread messages as well as social media's ability to

interact with other voters and networks quickly compared to a sclerotic Remain

campaign resulted Leave winning.

 Polonski discusses in more detail Leave's dominance on social media[597]:

> Leave… had routinely outmuscled [Remain]… with a more
> powerful and emotional message across all social media
> platforms, leading to the activation of a greater number of
> [grassroots] Leave supporters…dominating on Facebook, Twitter
> and Instagram, influencing swathes of undecided voters… twice as
> many Brexit supporters on Instagram, and five times more active
> than Remain… seven to one outnumbering on Twitter…the three
> most frequently used hashtags came from Leave [and were
> positive]… using the Internet, the Leave camp was able to create
> the perception of wide-ranging public support…their message was
> simple, intuitive, and emotionally charged…

Leave dominated with a simpler message, a beneficial media environment, and they

appealed to emotion by using the salience of immigration to increase turnout, while

successfully targeting voters, as Mullen argues: 'the Leave campaign was much

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[596] Iosifidis, Petros and Wheeler, Mark (2018) Modern Political Communication and Web 2.0 in Representative Democracies *Javnost – The Public Journal of the European Institute for Communication and Culture* Volume 25, 2018, Issue 1-2: The Liquefaction of Publicness: Communication, Democracy and the Public Sphere. Pp.110-118 [Online] Located at: https://doi.org/10.1080/13183222.2018/1418962 and accessed 5th July 2018.
[597] Polonski, Vyacheslav (2016) Impact of social media on the outcome of the EU Referendum *EU Referendum Analysis 2016*.

more successful at targeting than…Remain…'[598]. Along with the most widely read

papers backing Leave[599], Remain's complacency may have also contributed their

defeat: as Zhang points out (as well as arguing higher education was the dominant

factor between Remain and Leave voters), the foregone conclusion that Remain was

guaranteed victory combined with Leave's significant mobilising of voters who had

not engaged in general elections, Remain lost[600].

What can be learned?

From discussing how Brexit was made in England and Brexit's link to the rise of

English nationalism (along with immigration concerns and a willingness to take

risks)[601], to nostalgia powered by the tendency to identify as a Leave voter and with

a loss of control[602] and the divide between cosmopolitan and 'backwater' locations,

with 'backwater' locations being vexed by the EU, immigration and nostalgia, as

Jennings and Stoker argue[603], there are many discussion points. Looking at voter

mobilisation in the referendum, Leave voters were up against the main political and

economic forces in Britain, but prevailed due to a greater belief in their campaign,

Remain complacency, a greater social media and Internet targeting campaign, and a

friendly media environment. By focusing on immigration, the NHS, and Britain's

global role, along with simple, strong messaging, Leave mobilised their supporters to

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[598] Mullen, Andrew (2016) Leave versus Remain: The digital battle. *EU Referendum Analysis 2016*.
[599] Swales (2016) p.10
[600] Zhang, Aihua (2018) New Findings on Key Factors Influencing the UK's referendum on Leaving the EU *World Development*, Volume 102, February 2018, pp.304-314. P.313 [Online] Located at: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2017.07.017 and accessed 5th July 2018.
[601] Henderson, Alisa, Jeffrey, Charlie, Wincott, Dan and Wyn Jones, Richard (2017) How Brexit was made in England. *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*. Volume 19, Issue 4, pp.631-46. [Online] Located at: https://doi.org/10.1177/1369148117730542 and accessed 13th July 2018.
[602] British Election Study.
[603] Jennings, Will, and Stoker, Jerry (2016) The Bifurcation of Politics: Two Englands *The Political Quarterly,* Volume 87, Issue 3, July-September 2016. pp.372-382. [Online] Located at: https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-923x.12228 and accessed 13th July 2018.

turnout more than Remain, which additionally had the benefit of older voters overwhelmingly voting Leave, as they turn out at much higher levels than younger voters. The use of tools such as Instagram and apps assisted with Leave's success, along with the self-segregation of the two campaigns on social media, as Weaver et al discuss[604] and the differing style of messages and accounts used by the two campaigns assisted with driving up positive engagement with Leave. Voter mobilisation methods were built upon from previous elections, and the combination of salient issues, micro-targeting, the nature of referendums and an effective social media campaign resulted in high turnout.

Leave's media domination, both televised and off, helped to swing the argument towards the Leave campaign, and benefitted them in the referendum, especially regarding issues of immigration, sovereignty and health. It is worth exploring further works on this, such as Fox and Pearce's work on Euroscepticism's generational decay, which confirms that British youth are the most supportive of EU membership due to 'their experience of the EU in their formative years, their relationships with domestic political institutions, and their access to education'[605], which correlates with Down and Wilson's 2013 findings of people becoming more Eurosceptic with age, as they are less likely to benefit from freedom of movement, for example[606]. The importance of Europe in many people's minds drove up turnout, and effectively mobilised them on social and traditional media as well as in turning out to vote.

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[604] Weaver, Ian S, Williams, Hywel, Cioroianu, Iulia, Williams, Matthew, Coan, Travis and Banducci, Susan (2018) Dynamic social media affiliations among UK politicians *Social Networks*, Volume 54, July 2018, pp.132-144 [Online] Located at: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socnet.2018/01/008 and accessed 4th June 2018.
[605] Fox, Stuart and Pearce, Sioned (2018) The Generational Decay of Euroscepticism in the UK and the EU Referendum *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties,* 2018, Vol. 28, No. 1, p.19.
[606] Down, I and Wilson, CJ (2013) A Rising Generation of Europeans? Life-Cycle and Cohort Effects on Support for 'Europe'. *European Journal of Political Research.* 52: pp.431-456.

The 2017 Election

I shall discuss the 2017 election and how the various parties mobilised their supporters, looking at contacting and mobilisation methods including leaflets, online methods, home visits, and so on. I will also analyse the TV debates, the voter demographics, and other such variables which may offer clues on how mobilisation increased turnout. I hypothesise that the main parties or at least some of them fully engaged with social media and the Internet realising their potential. I will also look at campaigning apps, Labour's particularly, and what effect they had on mobilising Labour supporters before and during the 2017 election. I will also be looking at the relatively poor performance of the Conservative social media campaign. Looking at youth mobilisation and what impact if any the EU referendum had on turnout and mobilisation will also be crucial. Thus, I will construct a solid explanation of how the parties in the election mobilised their supporters. I shall also be looking at the impact of the 'youthquake' . I will initially look at the election background and how the political parties contacted voters prior to the election as well as data taken during the election. The scholarship on the election is not as developed as it could be because it has not been that long since the election, so this is a preliminary investigation. However, I will draw upon the work of *Britain Votes 2017*, although I stress that I already have drawn upon the individual papers within the edited volume that makes up the work. I will also use *The British General Election of 2015* and *The British General Election of 2017,* as although I have touched upon them already, they are excellent sources of information for analysis of the various elections and the comparisons I wish to draw. Using them alone will not suffice, but they will be a good foundation.

Background of the 2017 election

With Conservative dominance in the polls and Labour enfeebled, victory seemed assured. Thus, May in April 2017 declared that a general election for June. Over the campaign, the Conservative polling fell while Labour's rose[607], although a Tory majority was still within grasp. However, the election resulted[608] in the Conservatives on 42.4% (318 seats) of the vote, gaining 5.5% since 2015, Labour on 40% (262) gaining 9.5%, the Liberal Democrats on 7.4% (12), going backwards by 0.5%, the SNP on 3% (35), losing 1.7%, UKIP on 1.8% (0), losing 10.8%, and the Greens on 1.6%, going backwards by 2.1% (1)[609]. The Conservatives undertook a confidence deal with the DUP (10 seats), counter to pre-election expectation . Labour's support rise was unprecedented, as was UKIP's collapse and the Liberal Democrats' slight revival. I will discuss what motivated and mobilised the main parties during the election, and the voter demographics. Again, I will look at social media and whether the parties were adept at using it, or whether it was still conducted under the same methods as before which did not engage new or uninterested voters.

Initially, I shall be again looking at contact rates. In particular, the rates before, during and post-election, examining Labour, the Conservatives, the Liberal Democrats, and UKIP, as they are the only parties who run in all areas of the UK, with the Scottish Greens being separate and Northern Ireland being its own case:

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[607] Rentoul, John (2017) General Election polls: how they've changed since Theresa May made her shock announcement *The Independent* [Online] Located at: https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/latest-general-election-polls-how-they-changed-2017-campaign-labour-conservatives-jeremy-corbyn-a7774671.html and accessed 18th July 2018.
[608] BBC (2017) 2017 General Election Results *BBC* June 2017. [Online] Located at: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/election/2017/results/england and accessed 20th July 2018.
[609] Ibid.

Table II: Types of contact reported by respondents to the British Election Study survey.				
Waves – **British Election Study – Wave 11 pre-election and Wave 12 during the election.**				
Pre-Campaign/Campaign. Contact rate measured in %.				
Contact	**Con**	**Lab**	**LD**	**UKIP**
Telephone	0.2/ 0.4	0.6/ 0.9	0.3/ 0.3	0.0/ 0.0
Leaflet	12.5/ 15.3	12.5/ 15.9	8.3/ 10.2	1.8/ 2.2
At home	1.8/ 1.8	2.6/ 2.8	1.2/ 0.8	0.1/ 0.1
Street	0.3/ 0.6	0.7/ 1.2	0.2/ 0.3	0.0/ 0.0
Email	3.6/ 3.0	6.6/ 5.4	2.2/ 1.9	0.3/ 0.2
Text	0.7/ 1.1	2.0/ 2.4	0.7/ 0.8	0.1/ 0.1
Other	0.1/ 2.4	0.2/ 2.6	0.1/ 1.6	0.0/ 0.4
Overall	19.2/ 24.6	25.2/ 31.2	13/ 15.9	2.3/ 3.0

N= 31014 for pre-campaign, 34464 for campaign	

The pre-campaign and campaign contact rates are significant compared to the 2015 and 2010 General Elections. The main parties contacted people more during the 2010 pre-campaign, with 25% of voters being contacted by the Conservatives, 20% for Labour, and 19% for the Liberal Democrats, with UKIP not being a major party yet[610]. Thus, the Liberal Democrats had less contact than in 2010. This could be explained by the Liberal Democrats being bigger and had higher expectations then. Labour contacting more people prior to 2017 can be explained by the party's bigger membership in 2017, while the greater Conservative 2010 contact rate could be explained by the party being perceived to be on the cusp of government. The 2015 pre-campaign rates in 2015 are also significant as compared to 2017, as the Conservatives had a higher contact rate during the pre-2015 election period of 22% as compared to 19.2% while Labour had a 2015 higher contact rate, with the Liberal Democrats being higher in 2017 on 13% as compared to 11.1%, and UKIP having a pre-campaign contact rate in 2015 of 5.9%, demonstrating the falling UKIP and Liberal Democrat fortunes[611]. Again, Labour seems to be consistently higher in 2017 compared to previous elections, perhaps explained by higher membership as well as various other demographics, and as McKibbin highlights in his exploration of how the referendums affected the General Election vote and Labour's voter makeup[612].

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[610] Please see Chapter Two for full details on this.
[611] Wave 4 of March 2015 pre-campaign wave British election Study Data.
[612] McKibbin, Ross (2017) In the Shadow of the Referendums *The Political Quarterly* Volume 88, Issue 3, July-September 2017, pp.382-285 [Online] Located at: https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-923x.12398 and accessed 20th July 2018.

Turning to the during-campaign rates, the Conservatives had a 24.6% contact rate, Labour had a higher 31.2%, Liberal Democrats on 15.9%, and UKIP on 3%, demonstrating their fall since 2015. Looking at the 2010 figures, the Conservative contact-rate was 47% during the election, 39% for Labour and 34% for the Liberal Democrats, which when compared to the 2017 data, arguably demonstrates how political parties targeted far less voters generally in order to gain more voters in relevant constituencies.

Table III bears examination:

Table III: Types of contact reported by respondents to the British Election Study survey.				
Waves – **British Election Study – Wave 13 post-election survey.**				
Post-Campaign contact rate measured in %.				
Contact	**Con**	**Lab**	**LD**	**UKIP**
Telephone	1.1	2.2	0.8	0.0
Leaflet	29.9	31.2	19.2	5.1
At home	4.0	7.1	1.9	0.2
Street	0.9	2.5	0.6	0.1
Email	4.8	8.0	2.9	0.3
Text	2.2	4.9	1.6	0.2
Other	0.3	0.6	0.2	0.1
Overall	43.2	56.5	27.2	6

N= 31197 post-campaign.	

Leaflets remain the most popular, with 31.2% voters having been contacted by Labour, 29.9% for the Conservatives, 19.2% for the Liberal Democrats and 5.1% for UKIP, with email, texting and home visits being the other methods. Labour dominated in voter-contacting, with a 56.5% contact-rate, compared to the Conservatives' 43.2%. Compared to the 2015 data, Labour were much better at contacting, with the other parties far behind. UKIP's contact rates were low, dropping from 22% to 6% from 2015. The Conservatives improved their contact rates by 4% compared to 2015, while the Liberal Democrats only increased theirs by 2.2%.

The 2010 post-campaign data numbers are higher, but the 2010 data is of a different polling format to the 2015 and 2017 data, which may help explain this. Despite that, Labour contacted more voters in 2017, with 55% being contacted in 2010 compared to 56.5% for 2017, but the Conservatives contacted more voters in 2010 with 65% contact compared to 2017's 43.2%, and the Liberal Democrats contacted 50% 2010[613]. Kavanagh and Cowley discuss the 2010 intense leafleting operation, illustration how it occurred on a greater scale than in other elections[614]. The Conservatives were far more effective at voter-contacting until 2017, with Labour barely contacting more people in 2015 while being beaten in 2010. Labour contact success arguably contributed to their surprise election success. UKIP's decline was also evident from their poor contacting. Thus, Labour's ability to contact and mobilise

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[613] See Chapter II for more information on this. Please also note that I did not include UKIP in the 2010 figures as UKIP was not a significant political party then.
[614] Cowley, Philip and Kavanagh, Dennis (2010) *The British General Election of 2010*, p.242. Palgrave Macmillan, London.

their supporters is evident, with other parties only really matching them on leafleting. However, the data significantly excludes social media data, which had been growing in importance over the past few elections.

Labour's manifesto may have contributed to their success. For example, the manifesto was received well, especially regarding its youth appeal, as Sloam and Henn explain[615]. These pledges included introducing rent controls, reversing housing benefit abolition for 18-21 year olds, abolishing university tuition fees, the bugbear of the Liberal Democrats from 2010-5, and abolishing zero-hours contracts[616]. Although the Liberal Democrats also had some youth policies, including their firm commitment to remain in the EU, Sloam and Henn argue that 'their perceived lack of credibility on issues such as public services, higher education and austerity [cancelled out their support for young people].[617]' Along these lines, the Conservatives restated previous policies and commitments, such as boosting youth employment and apprenticeships, with barely 0.1457% of the manifesto being dedicated to youth-orientated policies[618].The Conservative electoral campaign was set firmly towards older and Leave voters, which backfired once the so-called dementia tax and the removal of the 'triple-lock' on pensions planned by the party in a majority government was made clear[619]. Out of all the manifestos, Labour's was seen as most successful, with Sloam and Henn demonstrating that 'around a quarter of Labour supporters (of all

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[615] Sloam, James and Henn, Matt (2019) *Youthquake 2017: The Rise of Young Cosmopolitans in Britain*, p.93. Palgrave Macmillan, London.
[616] Ibid.
[617] Ibid, p.94.
[618] Ibid.
[619] Ibid, p.95.

ages) [cited] the party's manifesto as the most important reason for voting

Labour[620][621]'

As Labour backed such popular policies as eliminating tuition fees, social housing

investment and Conservatives and other parties were outgunned. Labour's

manifesto was exceedingly popular amongst the young and generally: 'young people

were attracted to Corbyn's perceived authenticity and policy programme… the

Labour Party appealed directly to this demographic through proposed investments in

education and housing, and by guaranteeing workers' rights… [inversely] the

successful pursuit of UKIP voters by the Conservative Party were…naturally

repellent to many younger voters…[622]'

It is worth noting that according to an ICM 2017 poll taken just before the election,

why Labour's manifesto and strategy were successful becomes clear: 'The

differences between 18-21 year-olds and all 18-24 year-olds over their prioritisation

of materialist issues were less surprising… the younger group were more concerned

about university tuition fees whilst the older group were more focused upon jobs and

housing.[623]' Labour's strong defence of the NHS paid dividends, as according to

Ashcroft Polling, 18-24 year olds prioritise the NHS as the most important electoral

issue, with 27% of this demographic choosing the NHS as the most important[624].

Brexit was at 15%, with young voters apparently happy with Labour's softer Brexit

option. Next at 13% was austerity, poverty and inequality, education at 10%, and the

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[620] Ibid, p.95
[621] Yougov (2017b) *Why people voted Labour or Conservative at the 2017 General Election.* [Online] Located at: https://yougov.co.uk/news/2017/07/11-why-people-voted-labour-or-conservative-2017-gener and accessed 27th April 2019.
[622] Sloam and Henn (2019) pp.110-111.
[623] ICM (2017) *Hope not Hate/National Union of Teachers 18-24 poll.* [Online] Located at: https://icmunlimited.com/wp-cotent-uploads/2017-06/2017_hopenothate_18-24s_poll.pdf and accessed 1st March 2019. Located in: Sloam and Henn (2019) pp.106-107.
[624] Sloam and Henn (2019) p.105

economy and jobs at 8%. Thus, although eliminating tuition fees was certainly eye-catching and may have contributed to Labour winning seats like Canterbury where it had never won before, arguably Labour's manifesto as a whole was successful, and claims that tuition fees alone swung it for Labour's success are incorrect, with instead Labour's whole manifesto and the campaign explaining this. Corbyn's perception as authentic and principled also served him and Labour well, as Flinders argues[625]. With all this, Labour's rise in support, both amongst the youth and generally, demonstrates how Labour's campaign and manifesto commitments succeeded. This can be seen by examining Labour's appeal amongst the youth demographic (and beyond), with Sloam and Henn noting that Labour's 2017 lead over the Conservatives was 29% amongst 25-34 year old voters and 16 points amongst 35-44 year olds, making it clear how Labour's policies and messages reverberated with a significant section of the electorate[626]. Again, this is further highlighted by discussing how Labour's performance amongst these demographics had improved since 2010: all three main parties were on around 30% support from the youngest electoral cohort, and in 2015, 18-24 year olds supported Labour over the Conservatives by 42-28%[627], with 62% voting for Labour compared to only 27% for the Conservatives[628]. The Liberal Democrats crashed from their 2010 heights, going to 4% from 30% in 2015, and Labour improving on their 2010 share amongst the youth vote by 11%[629]. Therefore, Labour's policies and manifesto attracted the

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[625] Flinders, Matthew (2018) The (anti-) politics of the general election: Funnelling frustration in a divided democracy. *Parliamentary Affairs*, 71 (1) pp.222-236.
[626] Sloam and Henn (2019) p.101.
[627] Ibid.
[628] Ipsos Mori (2017) *How Britain Voted in the 2017 Election*. 20 June. [Online] Located at: https://www.ipsos.com/ipsos-mori/en-uk/how-britain-voted-2017-electionand accessed 28th March 2019.
[629] Sloam and Henn (2019) p.102.

young, with tuition fees being attractive but not the overwhelming driving policy that drove Labour's vote so highly.

 Having analysed why Labour's manifesto was so popular amongst the young, it makes sense to turn to social media, where the young dominate, to see what the effect this had on election turnout and mobilisation.

Social Media usage in the 2017 election

 I discussed previously how previous British electoral contests had not really engaged on social media, bar outliers in Scotland in 2014, the 2015 election somewhat and the EU Referendum. By looking at social media contact rates, I will demonstrate how this had changed in 2017:

Table IV: Social Media and Internet Activity by voters during the 2017 British General Election				
Waves – British Election Study- Wave 12 during election. Measured in %				
% of people who shared information.				
Variable				
Facebook	**Yes**	**No**	**Don't follow politics on this**	**Don't know**
Do you use Facebook?	68.4	31		0.5
Do you get political information on Facebook from	14.8	13.4	37.6	2.6

candidates or parties?				
Do you get political information from people you know on Facebook?	22.3	5.9	37.6	2.6
Have you shared political content on Facebook?	12.7	54.4	n/a	2.0
Twitter				
Do you use Twitter?	28.6	70.6		0.8
Do you share political content on Twitter?	5.9	22.2	n/a	2.0
Do you get political information from candidates or parties?	8.0	5.1	14.2	1.3
Do you get Twitter political info from other people (commentators,	11.0	2.1	14.2	1.3

journalists, etc)?				
Do you get political information from someone you know personally?	6.8	6.3	14.2	1.3
Miscellaneous				
Do you share political content through email?	1.9	96.1	n/a	2.0
Do you share political content through instant messaging?	1.9	96.1	n/a	2.0
Do you share political content on another website/online platform?	1.3	96.7	n/a	2.0
N: 34464				

Significantly, 68.4% of the population use Facebook, almost a 2% increase on 2015, although interestingly there is a drop of 2.3% from those who follow candidates or parties on Facebook for political information, even if there is a 4% drop who said they do not follow politics on Facebook, demonstrating Facebook's increasing politicisation. Political information being received by other people sharing it on

Facebook is up from 2015, with 9.8% stating that they received political information in this way in 2015, and 22.3% stating this in 2017, demonstrating social media's potential. 12.7% shared political information on Facebook in 2017, compared to 10.8% in 2015, again showing how Facebook was becoming politicised, but not due to the political parties, which perhaps demonstrates how voters relied more on more viral content informally rather than from parties.

Only 0.5% more people used Twitter in 2017, and 5.9% in both 2017 and 2015 shared political content on Twitter, with 8% less using Twitter to follow candidates and parties in 2017 compared to 2015's 8.5%, demonstrating Twitter's insignificance again, even with the lessons of the Leave campaign on Twitter. 0.3% less got information from commentators and journalists in 2017, and 0.1% less got political information on Twitter from personal contacts in 2017 compared to 2015, showing although Twitter had more people on it than in 2015 actually was not used politically as much in 2017. Also in 2017, only 1.9% of people shared political content via email as compared to 2.7% in 2015, showing that more people were sharing content on Facebook and using Facebook politically rather than other Internet methods of sharing information, including Twitter. Interestingly, more people shared political content through instant messenger in 2017 (1.9%) than in 2015 (1.5%). Only 1.3% of voters shared political content on another website or online platform in 2017.

Political parties used social media less as a top-down tool but a communicative method that could be embraced by party members and the wider public, not being so based in formal politics. As Margetts discussed in 2017, social media may have won

the 2017 General Election, with Labour having a far more effective and innovative

social media operation than other parties[630]:

> …[The Conservatives] run a central Facebook page and Twitter
> account that pump out announcements to [their followers], but in
> 2017…Labour had been working away on a far more wide-ranging
> and innovative social presence across platforms from the time that
> Corbyn took over as leader, giving them a base of followers and
> networks that could be used to mount an efficient advertising
> strategy and outreach campaign, particularly among young
> people… where social media 'won' for Labour was among younger
> age groups who are turning away from Facebook and spending
> increasing proportions of their time on 'mobile first' platforms,
> particularly Instagram (with ten million UK users, mostly under
> thirty) and Snapchat (used by half of 18-34 year olds).… While the
> Conservatives are reputed to have spent more than £1 million on
> direct advertising with Facebook…nearly ten million people
> watched pro-Labour videos on Facebook that cost less than
> £2000… the Labour manifesto was regarded as positive, which
> helped their case.

Labour's greater social media activity and mobilisation assisted in their good result,

as Sloam and Henn highlight in detail in *Youthquake 2017[631]*. This demonstrates

Labour's use of social media in a more intelligent way than before. The argument

that to effectively exploit social media and the Internet, an informal political

communication atmosphere should exist, with political parties engaging in informal

dialogue. As discussed previously, Eichhorn et al highlight informal political learning

amongst social networks and peer groups[632], demonstrating how Labour's

recognition of this paid dividends. To return to Margetts, Labour used young artists

not usually political, such as JME's interview with Corbyn, which was viewed over

2.5 million times, and the #Grime4Corbyn movement with Stormzy et al[633]. Thus,

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[630] Margetts, Helen (2017) Why Social Media May have Won the 2017 General Election *The Political Quarterly,* Volume 88, Issue 3, July-September 2017. P.386-390. [Online] Located at: https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-923X.12408 and accessed 20th July 2018.
[631] Sloam, James and Henn, Matt (2019) *Youthquake 2017: The Rise of Young Cosmopolitans in Britain*, pp.96-97. Palgrave Macmillan, London.
[632] Eichhorn, J, Kenealy, D, Parry, R, Paterson, L and Remond, A (2015) Voting at 16 – What next? 16-17 year olds'. *Political Attitudes and Civic Education*. Edinburgh Academy of Government Briefing.
[633] Margetts, Helen. (2017)

Labour performed excellently on this front, with a huge shift to Labour amongst the young[634] as Ford identified, stating that Labour's performance was particularly strong in constituencies with large concentrations of young voters[635], as previously explored. In contrast, the over-60s voted overwhelmingly Conservative, whereas Labour saw its vote share increase in all other age groups[636]. As helped the Conservatives during 2015, Labour's social media by using Facebook and Snapchat adverts assisted in campaigning[637], and showed online campaigning's viability. Indeed, as Ford noted, Labour dominated the other parties on social media contacting during the election campaign, with almost double the contacts of the Conservatives[638].

Social, activist groups (such as Momentum) involved with Labour also assisted, with hundreds of new volunteers being involved in physical campaigning[639]. Momentum's videos were viewed by 12.7 million[640], and 10,000 volunteers on election-day knocked on over a million doors to mobilise voters[641]. Therefore, with a large membership tied into what Chadwick describes as a party-as-a-movement[642], which

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[634] If not quite the 'youthquake' that had been discussed after the election with reports of an enormous increase in youth turnout, then a 'youth tremor' with the youth shifting to Labour in heavy numbers, if not a significant overall increase in youth turnout
[635] Ford, Robert (2017) 'The New Electoral Map of Britain: From the Revenge of Remainers to the Upending of Class Politics' *Observer* 11 June. [Online] Located at: https://www.guardian.com/politics/2017/jun/11/new-electoral-map-for-britain-revenge-of-remainers-to-upending-class-politics and accessed 27th July 2018.
[636] Goes, Eunice (2018) 'Jez, We Can!' Labour's Campaign: Defeat with a Taste of Victory. *Parliamentary affairs,* Volume 71, Issue 1, March 2018. pp. 59-71. [Online] Located at: https://doi.org.10.1093/pa/gsx062 and accessed 1st July 2018. Located in: Goes, Eunice 'Jez, We can!' Labour's Campaign: Defeat with a Taste of Victory. *Britain Votes 2017* pp.59-71 (eds) Jonathan Tonge, Cristina Leston-Bandeira and Stuart Wilks-Heeg.
[637] Ibid
[638] Twitter (2017) @GoodwinMJ. 22 August 2017. [Online] Located at: https://twitter.com/GoodWinMJ/status/899900238114291713 and accessed 4th September 2017.
[639] Goes, Eunice (2018).
[640] Peggs, A (2017) How Momentum Changed British Politics Forever. *Huffington Post*. 12 June. [Online] Located at: http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/adam-peggs/momentum-jeremy-corbyn-b_17054254.html and accessed 29th July 2018.
[641] Goes, Eunice (2018).
[642] Chadwick, Andrew (2017) Corbyn, Labour, Digital Media and the 2017 UK Election. In Thorsen, E., Jackson D., Lilleker D. (eds) *UK Election Analysis 2017,* p.89. [Online] Located at:

was similar to what occurred in the Scottish referendum, as Marsh and Akram

highlighted with their focus on 'the social, the socio-political and political', Labour

created an engaging political movement[643]. Labour's focus on viral video content

was important, as Segesten[644] and Fletcher discuss in their respective analyses of

Labour's mobilisation efforts[645]. Labour's developing of their internet presence

beyond advertising and party websites was crucial, making it a useful mobilisation

tool. The apps and campaign groups used by Labour were crucial in gaining support,

with Momentum utilising the *Calling for Corbyn* app, which used phones, computers

and tablets to canvass potential voters and supporters, which was combined with

social media integration and a Momentum hashtag, directly tying this to both

Momentum and Labour, as Pickard describes[646]. Momentum's other apps directly

assisted Labour, including *My Nearest Marginal* as Dommett and Temple identify[647],

which the Conservatives were unable to match, with Cowley and Kavanagh

highlighting how Labour-supporting groups outstripped both the reach and number of

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http://eprints.bournemouth.ac.uk/10/UKElectionAnalysis2017_Thorsen-Jackson-and-Lilleker_v1.pdf
and accessed on 15th July 2018.

[643] Marsh, D. and Akram, S. (*2015*)'Political Participation and Citizen Engagement: Beyond the Mainstream', *Policy Studies 36(6):* pp.523–31

[644] Segesten A. D., Bossetta M. (2017) 'Sharing is Caring': Labour Supporters use of Social Media'. In Thorsen E., Jackson D., Lilleker D. (eds) *UK Election Analysis 2017*. [Online] Located at: http://eprints.bournemouth.ac.uk/29374/10/UKElectionAnalysis2017_Thorsen-Jackson-and-Lilleker_v1.pdf

[645] Fletcher R (2017) 'Labour's Social Media Campaign: More Post, More Video, and More Interaction' In Thorsen E, Jackson D, and Lilleker D (eds) *UK Election Analysis 2017* [Online] Located at: http://eprints.bournemouth.ac.uk/29374/10/UKElectionAnalysis2017_Thorsen-Jackson-and-Lilleker_v1.pdf and accessed 15th July 2018.

[646] Pickard, Sarah (2018) Momentum and the Movementist 'Corbynistas': Young People Regenerating the Labour Party in Britain p125.. In: Pickard, Sarah, Bessant, J (eds) *Young People Re-Generating Politics in Times of Crises*. Palgrave Studies in Young People and politics. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham. [Online] Located at: http://link.spinger.com/content/pdf/10.1007%2F978-3-319-58250-4.pdf and accessed 4th April 2019.

[647] Dommett, Katherine and Temple, Luke (2018) Digital Campaigning: The Rise of Facebook and Satellite Campaigns *Parliamentary Affairs*, Volume 71, Issue 1, 1 March 2018, p.194. [Online] Located at: https://doi.org/10.1093/pa/gsx056 and accessed 3rd May 2018. Also located in: Dommett, Katharine and Temple, Luke (2018) Digital Campaigning: The Rise of Facebook and Satellite Campaigns. *Britain Votes 2017*.pp.194 (eds) Jonathan Tonge, Cristina Leston-Bandeira and Stuart Wiks-Heeg. Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Conservative ones[648]. Indeed, they further highlight how more Labour and Corbyn-supporting stories were shared online than right-wing/Conservative-supporting stories [649], demonstrating the reach of Labour's message. Combined with Labour's embrace of SnapChat, with Labour's Snapchat filter having 36 million views and being used by 7.7 million people[650], Labour's reach and usage of new technology is demonstrably better compared to the Conservatives, especially compared to the Conservatives abandoning SnapChat[651]. Despite this, Labour member and grandee reaction was mixed, with Dommett highlighting how concern over Momentum apps wasin existence, although the potential benefits were welcomed[652]. As Chadwick discussed, online interactions when combined with political engagement and mobilisation in 'the real world' are the most effective[653], thus demonstrating how Momentum's app-use combined with Labour's large membership benefitted Labour. Analysing Momentum's usage of apps is somewhat difficult currently due to the lack of literature, so future work on this must take place.

Looking further at Momentum and Labour's app usage, their impact compared to other parties is evident. As Ross and McTague reported, more than 100,000 individuals used '*My Nearest Marginal'* to campaign in 100+ seats nationally, assisting in taking twenty-five of the thirty Momentum target constituencies[654], a

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[648] Cowley, Philip and Kavanagh, Dennis (2018) *The British General Election of 2017.* P.310. Palgrave Macmillan, London.
[649] Ibid, p.311.
[650] Ibid, p.308.
[651] Ibid.
[652] Dommett, Katharine (2018) Roadblocks to Interactive Digital Adoption? Elite Perspectives of Party Practices in the UK. *Party Politics.* [Online] Located at: https://doi.org/10.1177/1354068818761196 and accessed 5th April 2019.
[653] Chadwick, Andrew (2017) *The Hybrid media system: Politics and Power.* New York, Oxford University Press.
[654] Ross, Tim and McTague, Tom (2017) *Betting the House: The Inside Story of the 2017 Election.* [Online] Located at: https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=kQA7DwAAQBAJ&P and accessed 15th March 2019.

million doors canvassed on election-day[655] and 10,000 Momentum volunteers on the same day, tackling political activism's perceived slide[656]. McDowell-Naylor discussed this further, demonstrating how Labour used technological innovation, socially mobilised citizens and a large membership[657] which once aligned with social-media activism, translated into party politics, as Chadwick again discussed[658], illustrated how Momentum and Labour utilised their large membership.

Although analysis occurred regarding Momentum, with Shabi[659] and Armstrong[660] analysing Momentum's impact, with Shabi in particular commenting on how Momentum and Labour drew inspiration from the Bernie Sanders 2016 campaign [661], which is work for a future paper, looking at apps in too much depth will not take place now. Indeed, looking at the Momentum campaign, the element of satellite campaigns as discussed in the introduction and elsewhere comes to light, particularly the 'My Nearest Marginal' app. This fits Edwards' 'democratic intermediaries' theory, which benefits parties during election campaigns, being linked to political parties both informally and formally, as with Momentum[662]. Thus, Momentum's role, although bearing closer examination in the role of citizen-based campaigning of that similar to

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[655] Ibid.

[656] Rees, E (17 February 2017) Momentum Election Results (noreply@peoplesmomentum.com). Email to: Momentum Members.

[657] McDowell-Naylor, Declan (2019) #GE2017: Digital Media and the Campaigns in *Political Communication in Britain: Campaigning, Media and Polling in the 2017 General Election* (eds) Dominic Wring, Roger Mortimore, and Simon Atkinson, pp.198-99. Palgrave Macmillan, London.

[658] Chadwick, Andrew (2017) Corbyn, Labour, digital media, and the 2017 UK election. *Medium*. June 9 [Online] Located at: https://medium.com/@andrew.chadwick/corbyn-labour-digitial-media-and-the-2017-uk-election-ac0af06ea235 and accessed 1st May 2019.

[659] Shabi, Rachel (2017) This is how Labour nearly won in the UK *The Nation*. June 29. [Online] Located at: http://www.thenation.com/article/this-is-how-labour-nearly-won-in-the-uk and accessed 22nd April 2019.

[660] Armstrong, Stephen (2017) Momentum's new activism app could change politics forever. Wired.co.uk. September 26. [Online] Located at: https:///wired.co.uk/article/momentum-app-labour-party-conference and accessed 10th April 2019.

[661] Shabi, Rachel (2017)

[662] Edwards, A (2006) ICT Strategies of Democratic Intermediaries: A view on the Political System in the Digital Age. Information Polity, 11, pp.163-176.

the Scottish referendum independence-linked groups, and as highlighted by

Gibson[663], and Vaccari and Valeriani argue, which particularly discuss 'new digital

foot soldiers…emerge and allow existing members to expand their repertoires'[664],

demonstrates how app and new technologies usage holds with new explorations of

party-membership and party affiliations as discussed. As more work is done on this,

more be illuminated, but as Dommett and Temple argue, Momentum's apps and

quasi-independence from Labour are important to voter mobilisation and external

groups,[665]:

'…The lack of direct access to a reserve army of additional volunteers renders

parties reliant either on…productive…intermediary bodies, or…their own systems by

which to capture contact information and attempt to involve such individuals in party

activities… yet [these] may undermine [the benefits of] satellite campaigns:… they

are flexible…not integrated into official party campaigns. They appeal to activists

who consider themselves as 'doers'… not 'joiners'[666]

Thus, the importance of apps, Momentum and externally-linked party organisations

remains evident, and future analysis will be fascinating. The usage of such tools by

Labour and Momentum are relevant in discussing informally-linked party

membership and party mobilisation. Bonotti highlighted that participating in party

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[663] Gibson, R (2015) Party Change, Social Media, and the Rise of 'Citizen-initiated' Campaigning', *Party Politics*, 21, pp.183-197

[664] Vaccari C. and Valeriani, A (2016) Party Campaigners or Citizen Campaigners? How Social Media Deepen and Broaden Party-Related Engagement. International Journal of Press/Politics, 21, pp. 294-312.

[665] Dommett, Katherine and Temple, Luke (2018) Digital Campaigning: The Rise of Facebook and Satellite Campaigns *Parliamentary Affairs*, Volume 71, Issue 1, 1 March 2018, P.198. [Online] Located at: https://doi.org/10.1093/pa/gsx056 and accessed 3rd May 2018. Also located in: Dommett, Katharine and Temple, Luke (2018) Digital Campaigning: The Rise of Facebook and Satellite Campaigns. *Britain Votes 2017.* p.198 (eds) Jonathan Tonge, Cristina Leston-Bandeira and Stuart Wiks-Heeg. Oxford University Press, Oxford.

[666] Scarrow, S (2015) *Beyond Party Members*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

politics via party members, supporters, activists or voting produced benefits and

incentivised voters, demonstrating how Labour's 2017 approach was beneficial[667].

Ward and Wring discuss the shortcomings of the other parties in 2017[668]:

> …[the Conservative campaign] was too controlled, too negative, too-
> top-down, inflexible, and appeared to want to simply replicate…the
> 2015 campaign tactics… the party forgot the social element to social
> media… much emphasis was placed on micro-targeted ads via
> Facebook…these failed to resonate and were much less likely to be
> shared…

The Conservatives went backwards from 2015. Labour dominated Twitter, with

Corbyn's account gaining twice as many retweets and mentions as May's and four

times as many as the official Labour and Conservative party accounts, with Labour

having more hashtags and friendly accounts than the Conservatives, as Kaminska et

al discovered[669]. Although the Greens attempted Snapchat, they did not succeed as

much as Labour, with the Liberal Democrats virtually vanished, not appearing in the

top 20 election-hashtag groupings[670]. UKIP were further behind, with the party

chairman requesting that their candidates should close their own social media sites

due to the difficulties UKIP candidates caused the party on social media[671]. Labour

were much further ahead, with Turner and Kahn recognising how Labour won over

young voters by '[tweeting] more, posting more, and [sharing] more than all of its

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[667] Bonotti, Matteo (2012) Partisanship and Political Obligation. *Politics*. Volume 32, Issue 3, 3 September 2012, pp.153-161 [Online] Located at: https://doi.org/10.111/j.1467-9256.2012.01440.x and accessed 24th June 2018.
[668] Ward, Stephen and Wring, Dominic (2018) Out with the Old, In with the New? The Media Campaign *Parliamentary Affairs,* Volume 71, Issue 1, 1 March 2018. pp.203-221 [Online] Located at: https://doi.org/10.1093/pa/gsx057 and accessed 20th July 2018. Also located in: Ward, Stephen and Wring, Dominic (2018) Out with the Old, In with the New? The Media Campaign. *Britain Votes 2017*. pp.203-221. (eds) Jonathan Tonge, Cristina Leston-Bandeira and Stuart Wilks-Heeg. Oxford University Press, Oxford.
[669] Kaminska M., Gallacher J.D, Yasseri T and Howard, P.N (2017) Social Media and News Sources During the 2017 UK General Election. Data Memo, 5 June, *Oxford Internet Institute*. [Online] Located at: http://comprop.oii.ox.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/89/2017/06/Social_Media-and-News-Siurces-during-the-2017-UK-General-Election.pdf and accessed 30th July 2018.
[670] Ibid.
[671] Ward and Wring (2018).

rivals.'[672] It shall be worth visiting why the Conservatives' 2017 social media campaign was less successful than 2015's.

Labour's usage of decentralised, networked, citizen-led social media campaigning, as Gibson identified[673], which focused on the ability of social media to enable participation and campaign activists direct the campaign clearly paid dividends, compared to the other model of data- driven social media campaigning, as used by the Conservatives as well as Leave during the EU Campaign. Anstead identified how the Conservatives did this, analysing how data was gathered to target and mobilise voters[674]. Labour's ability to utilise social media beyond a party extension demonstrated its viability as a mobilisation tool, although again social media is not a complete panacea, as to refer again to Mellon and Prosser, they argue that social media users (once controlled for age, gender and education) are not statistically different from non-social users on political attention, values or political behaviour[675], even if without these they are actually less likely to vote, younger, and be better educated than non-users, as well as being more politically attentive. Furthermore, Vromen et al[676] discuss how social media[677] can be used to politically engage voters with formal politics, with overcoming young voters' scepticism towards formal politics

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[672] Turner, G., Kahn J (2017) 'UK Labour's Savvy Use of Social Media Helped Win Young Voters' *Bloomberg*. 6 11 June. [Online] Located at: https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-06-11-u-k-labour-s-savvy-use-of-social-media-helped-win-young-voters and accessed 30th July 2018.
[673] Gibson, R (2015) Party Change, Social Media, and the Rise of 'Citizen-initiated' Campaigning', *Party Politics*, 21, pp.183-197
[674] Anstead, N (2017) Data-driven campaigning in the 2015 UK General Election. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 22, pp.294-313
[675] Mellon, Jonathan and Prosser, Christopher (2017) Twitter and Facebook are not representative of the general population: Political Attitudes and demographics of British social media users. *Research and Politics*. . Volume 4, Issue 3. July 13, pp.1-9 [Online] Located at: https://doi.org/10.1177/2053168017720008 and accessed 25th June 2018.
[676] Vromen, Ariadne, Loader D Brian, Xenos, A Michael and Bailo, Francesco (2016) Everyday Making Through Facebook Engagement: Young Citizens' Political Interactions in Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States. *Political Studies*. Vol 64 (3), P.513. [Online] Located at: https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0032321715614012 and accessed 1st July 2018.
[677] Facebook in particular.

being the challenge, as Henn and Foard highlight[678]. Vromen et al discuss that focusing on social media as a panacea for voter mobilisation and engagement is not optimal, with parties needing to assist young people in formal political participation[679]. Thus, Labour's tying in external organisations followed this path, and the youth's turn (and other demographics) to the side of Labour was beneficial. Therefore, I have demonstrated how Labour and other parties used social media to mobilise voters, and how Labour relatively succeeded in using social media to engage voters online as well as enabling them to participate in offline political activity.

The Conservative's 2017 social media messaging compared to their 2015 effort and Labour's was not as well-developed, and contributed to their near-electoral defeat. As Cowley and Kavanagh state: 'Conservative targeting [in 2017] appeared much less successful, whilst Labour enjoyed considerable success as a result of material shared peer to peer.[680]' This demonstrates the Conservatives being less successful than 2015, and Labour doing somewhat better. Labour performing better concerning social media benefitted them and their voter-base, as 'given the decline of press readership, especially amongst the young, the new forms of social media are a way for politicians to communicate with a group which has hitherto been difficult to reach'[681].

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[678] Henn M and Foard N (2014) Make the Vote Meaningful for Young People – Not Compulsory. *The Conversation,* 25 April. [Online] Located at: http://theconversation.com/make-the-vote-meaningful-for-young-people-not-compulsory-25939 and accessed 30th July 2018.
[679] Vromen et al (2016) p.529.
[680] Cowley, Philip and Kavanagh, Dennis (2018) *The British General Election of 2017.*Palgrave, London. p.306
[681] Ibid.

Despite 2015's lesson seemingly being that highly-targeted paid advertising worked best, and that organically-shared content by party supporters was less effective[682], the inverse was apparently true for 2017. The 2017 Conservative digital team was less developed than 2015, with the two digital election gurus of Craig Elder and Tom Edmonds relying on a team recruited by Conservative HQ instead of bringing along their own team[683]. Additionally, the nature of the snap election damaged them, as 'in 2015, they had been able to draw upon at least 18 months of preparation… as well as building up data from emails and doorstep conversations. In 2017…almost none of the necessary preparatory work had been done. [684]'   Furthermore, Corbyn had three times the followers as May on Facebook and Twitter[685]. This benefitted Labour and hampered the Conservatives, with such tools as Snapchat (as previously discussed) being utilised by Labour whilst being abandoned by the Conservatives, with Labour utilising Snap Ads as poll-reminders, and over 600,000 voters using Labour's Snapchat polling station finder[686]. Despite this seemingly demonstrating that organic spread over social media was more advantageous than paid online campaigning, arguably, both were complementary to one another, as Labour spent £35,000 on Facebook to add 230,000 followers to their page, with 220,000 joining organically, with over 23 million people seeing Labour's Facebook page[687].

 Corbyn and Labour inspired a rush of anti-Conservative activity which developed more Labour trust and support than prior to the election. Klotz's work can be built upon here, as Cameron effectively utilised the nascent political internet and social

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[682] Ibid.
[683] Ibid.
[684] Ibid.
[685] Ibid.
[686] Ibid, p.308.
[687] Ibid, p.308-9.

media in the late 2000s with *Web Cameron* and *Ask David* in contrast to Brown's clunky YouTube use, May's and the Conservatives' ineffective 2017 use of the Internet and social media paled in comparison to Labour's [688].

Another reason for worse Conservative performance compared to 2015 was the huge spread in anti-Conservative websites and social groups, such as *The Canary, 38 Degrees*, and more, with Conservative campaigners lamenting that 'we can't go into another [election] relying on just the Taxpayer's Alliance and the Countryside Alliance.[689]' As such, this disadvantaged the Conservatives in a way not possible in 2015, demonstrated by the number of stories shared criticising the Conservatives than those supporting them, with the most viral election piece being Labour-supporting by a left-wing website[690]. As previously, the poor Conservative performance contrasted to previous years. In 2010, there was a strong Conservative youth wing, with the party mobilising grassroots digital campaigning, along with Facebook mobilisation and rallies[691]. This dwindled in 2015 and 2017, with Conservative grassroots mobilisation online reaching a nadir in 2017, with 'a renewed focus on Cambridge-Analytica-style data-driven and highly centralised…targeted techniques'[692], which although somewhat successful in 2015, suffered in contrast to Labour in 2017, especially with younger Conservatives rejecting the uninspiring Conservative campaigning online environment[693]. Moreover, as Sloam and Henn state:

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[688] Klotz, R (2014) Sources and formats of campaign information on YouTube. In A.M.G Solo (ed) *Political Campaigning in the information age.* Hersey, IGI Global.
[689] Ibid, p.310.
[690] Ibid, p.311.
[691] Ridge-Newman, Anthony (2014) *Cameron's Conservatives and the Internet: Change, Culture and Cyber-Toryism.* Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan.
[692] Ridge-Newman A and Mitchell, M (2016) Digital political marketing. In D.G Lilleker and M. Pack (eds), *Political Marketing and the 2015 UK General Election*, pp.99-116. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
[693] Ibid.

> …Labour… – particularly…Jeremy Corbyn – dominated a social
> media space where political information is well-trusted and
> relatively highly consumed by Britain's… young…[694]

Therefore, why Labour performed well and the Conservatives did not is evident. With unprecedented youth support for Labour and high levels of youth activism[695], this benefitted Labour, especially with Ofcom's research demonstrating that in the 65+ age group, fewer than 8% used any form of online or social media sites for news, with 40% of 16-24 year-olds finding news on social media.[696] Additionally, only 9% of 18-24 year-olds read print newspapers in contrast to 24% of all age groups and 40% of over 65s[697], and with the two largest newspapers in circulation (and online) leaning towards the Conservatives, which benefitted them, as Philips demonstrates[698]. However, it should recognised social media is not the ultimate electoral mobilisation tool: as Elvestad and Philips argue, social media confirms pre-existing biases rather persuading or informing[699], with simple, emotive messages (as in the EU referendum) being the best way to utilise it[700].

However, the Conservative failure make traction with young voters or potential Labour defectors was evident, with a failure of messaging meaning that although

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[694] Sloam, James, and Henn, Matt (2019) *Youthquake 2017: The Rise of Young Cosmopolicans in Britain.* P.111. Palgrave Macmillan, London.

[695] Pickard, S (2018) Momentum and the movementist 'Corbynistas'. In S. Pickard and J. Bessant (eds) *Young people re-generating politics in times of crisis*, pp.115-137. Cham, Palgrave.

[696] Ofcom (2017a) *News Consumption in the UK: 2016.* London: Ofcom. [Online] Located at: https://www.ofcom.org/uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0017/103625/news-consumption-uk-2016.pdf and accessed 2nd May 2019.

[697] Sloam, James and Henn, Matt (2019) Sloam, James, and Henn, Matt (2019) *Youthquake 2017: The Rise of Young Cosmopolicans in Britain.* P.96. Palgrave Macmillan, London

[698] Philips, Angela (2019) The Agenda Setting Role of Newspapers in the UK 2017 Elections p.86. In *Political Communication in Britain: Campaigning, Media and Polling in the 2017 General Election* (eds) Dominic Wring, Roger Mortimore, and Simon Atkinson, p.86. Palgrave Macmillan, London.

[699] Elvestad, E and Philips, A (2018b) The net generation will revolutionise the way we relate to news. In E.Elvestad and A. Philips (eds). *Misunderstanding news audiences: seven myths of the social media era.* London: Routledge.

[700] Conroy M, Feezell,J.T, and Guerrero, M (2012) Facebook and political engagement: A study of online political group membership and online political engagement. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 28 (5). Pp.1535-1546.

some of them had voted Leave in the EU referendum, '…they now found [in the 2017 election] that they were being asked to support a government offering nothing more…than 'strength and stability'.[701]' Along with the perceived uninspiring leader, campaign and manifesto of the Conservatives and May as contrasted to Corbyn, Labour and Labour's manifesto which were seen as positive[702] and Corbyn's campaigning being perceived positively, Labour mobilised both online and offline and almost defeated the Conservatives. The Conservatives had forgotten their 2015 lessons and their 2015 online strategy: as recorded by Elder and Edmonds in 2015: 'be where your audience is – and ignore the places they aren't.'[703] The Conservatives not doing this in 2017 regarding Snapchat and disregarding their campaign tools, along with their weak 2017 campaign, ensured that their social media and digital campaigning operation was far weaker in 2017. As Rhodes summarised[704]:

> 'A perfect storm of Corbyn's unspun personality, honest
> approach…and non-mainstream message, a sense of
> establishment scepticism and waning backing for austerity
> measures…[705] which was reflected in the Labour…manifesto,
> coupled with digital-media activism, an enthusiasm for movement-
> led politics and a terrible campaign by the [Conservatives] also
> helped Labour. Momentum's organisationally enabled
> campaigning suited this… and formulated…activist agency with
> their inclusive messaging and horizontally structured organising,
> which empowered individuals… to…make a (political) difference.'

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[701] Philips, Angela (2019) p.94.

[702] Rhodes, Abi (2019) Movement-led Electoral Campaigning p.179. *Political Communication in Britain: Campaigning, Media and Polling in the 2017 General Election* (eds) Dominic Wring, Roger Mortimore, and Simon Atkinson, p.179. Palgrave Macmillan, London.

[703] Cowley, Philip and Kavanagh, Dennis (2015) *The British General Election of 2015*. P.150. Palgrave, London.

[704] Rhodes, Abi (2019) Movement-led Electoral Campaigning p.183 *Political Communication in Britain: Campaigning, Media and Polling in the 2017 General Election* (eds) Dominic Wring, Roger Mortimore, and Simon Atkinson, p.183. Palgrave Macmillan, London.

[705] Clery, E Curtice, J, and Harding, R (2016) *British Social Attitudes: the 34th Report*. London: NatCen Social Research. [Online] Located at: www.bsa.natcen.ac.uk and accessed 1st April 2019.

Thus, the Conservatives' failure to address this along with the lack of a coherent message and a complacent campaign ensured that their social media campaigning would suffer. Although steps have been made to address this with a call for a Conservative version of Momentum[706], the effect of this will remain to be seen. Clearly, however, a focus on policy as well as the popularity and perception of party leaders is vital for study of social media mobilisation, and if it is truly mobilising, as arguments have been made that Labour performed to higher expectations due to the election taking place when British voters were tiring of austerity, as Goes discusses[707]. However, the Labour social media campaign was more successful than the Conservatives'. However, the relatively new development of the TV debates as well as other social media effects cannot be ignored, and thus it would be prudent to examine them.

TV Debates, social media effects and demographics

I shall look at the TV debates to discover if they had as big an impact as previous elections. I previously discussed the role that May's reluctance to participate in the 2017 leader debates as well as her subpar campaigning relative to Corbyn played in the election, but I will revisit them here. I will also examine voter demographics of the main parties and what motivated said voters.

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[706] Sloam, James and Henn, Matthew (2019) p.111.
[707] Goes, Eunice (2018) 'Jez, We Can!' Labour's Campaign: Defeat with a Taste of Victory. *Parliamentary affairs,* Volume 71, Issue 1, March 2018. P.64. [Online] Located at: https://doi.org.10.1093/pa/gsx062 and accessed 1st July 2018. Located in: Goes, Eunice 'Jez, We can!' Labour's Campaign: Defeat with a Taste of Victory. *Britain Votes 2017* p.64 (eds) Jonathan Tonge, Cristina Leston-Bandeira and Stuart Wilks-Heeg.

Table V: Attention paid to the debates during the 2017 TV election debates and other elements			
Waves: British Election Study – Wave 12 election survey used.			
Variable	Yes	No	Don't know
Did you see or hear all or part of the Channel 4 and Sky news programme 'Battle for Number 10'?	6.5	72.2	2.3
Did you see or hear all or part of the nationally televised debate among the five party leaders?	12.1	45.4	2.6
Did you see or hear all or part of the televised debates between representatives of the main parties?	6.2	14.7	0.5
Have you listened to or	19.2	78.4	2.4

watched a party election broadcast?			
Did anything happen during the election campaign that changed your view of any of the main political parties?	31.5	64.1	1.1
N: 31997			

Only 6.5% of the population watched the first debate, with 12.1% watching the five

party leader debate. This is far less than for previous elections[708][709]. According to the

Hansard Society, debates or interviews with party leaders or other politicians were

the most important source of information in deciding whether and who to vote for[710],

with 74% agreeing that they were the most important with only 25% being reached

by them, so although less people watched the debates as previously, their

significance was clear. 69% agreed (and were reached by) news programmes were

the most important[711]. 72% thought that discussions and conversations with people

were the most important, while 50% viewed social media discussions in this way with

21% being reached by them, showing that old media methods (as well as personal

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[708] See the previous chapter, especially BES Wave 5 data.
[709] See chapter II.
[710] Hansard Society (2018) *Audit of Political Engagement 15* p.25 [Online] Located at:
https://assets.ctfassets.net/rdwvqctnt75b/iHWHYym8BquqsMQ64oaEC/5c151f5dc7302f37633977500
f68c104/publication__hansard-society-audit-of-political-engagement-15-2018.pdf and accessed 5th
June 2018.
[711] Ibid.

discussions) were important in engaging people politically in elections. Interestingly, political activity by parties was 46% for importance on only 17% reach, demonstrating the validity of Labour's social media campaign by facilitating offline participation and a less paternalistic approach[712]. Thus, although the debates were not viewed by many people, discussion about them and their perceived importance dominated. Interestingly, although leaflets as seen above and in the previous chapters were the most prevalent way of party contact and mobilisation, only 34% stated they were important in their voting decision, the lowest score for importance, questioning their effectiveness, even if they raise awareness[713]. Other forms of online political engagement should be discussed as well. Theresa May however did not participate in the debates fully or at all, but please revisit the theory chapter for further discussion on this and political leadership.

48% stated that they had done no online political engagement during the last year[714], while 29% had watched politically related online content, with only 19% visiting political websites or social media accounts, and only 12% stated they followed a politician or political party on social media[715]. Only 17% said they had shared something politically related on social media, which is significant if compared to 2015, which were less than this, demonstrating social media's viability as a political communication and engagement tool had matured[716]. Furthermore, looking at the age breakdown, targeting youth on social media was viable, even its effectiveness may be questioned, as Vromen et al argued.

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[712] Ibid.
[713] Ibid, p 5.
[714] Ibid, p 28.
[715] Ibid.
[716] See Table IV in Chapter IV.

Quoting again from Hansard, age is significant in determining political activity online, as 43% of 18-34 year-olds watched politically related videos online in the 2017 election compared to 15% of 55+s[717]. Furthermore, 29% of 18-34 year-olds visited the social media account of a politician or political party compared to 12% of those aged 55+[718], showing how social media youth targeting by political parties was viable, and less so for older voters. This is reinforced by 63% of politically interested 18-34s have watched online political content, compared to 20% of over 55s. This could argue social media mobilisation only works with those already politically interested, as Bouillane argued[719]. However, 55% think that social media broadens political debate by giving a voice to people who would not normally take part, and 40% think that social media breaks down barriers between voters, politicians, and political parties, showing social media's potential. Furthermore, the youth seem more interested in social media campaigns than older voters, despite misgivings regarding social media's effectiveness providing nuanced views and political engagement[720].

On the youthquake, many commentators surmised that the election result came about due to large youth turnout, with one post-election poll suggesting youth turnout (18-24 year olds) increased by 16%[721]. However, as Prosser et al discovered, there was no evidence of a youth surge, with turnout in the youngest age group actually

[717] Hansard (2018) pp.27-28.
[718] Ibid P.29.
[719] Boulianne, Shelley (2009) Does Internet Use Affect Engagement? A MetaAnalysis of Research, political Communication, 26:2, pp.193-211 [Online] Located at :10.1080/10584600902854363 and accessed on 23rd June 2018.
[720] Hansard (2018) p.30.
[721] Skinner, Gideon, Mortimore, Roger (2017) How Britain voted in the 2017 election. *Ipsos Mori*. 20 June. [Online] Located at: https://www.ipsos.com/ipsos-mori/en-uk/how-britain-voted-2017-election and accessed 31st July 2018.

being lower in 2017 than 2015[722]. Also, there was not a large youth turnout, but instead 'Labour's share of the vote increased.. [but] this is not the same as a surge in youth turnout. Labour was more popular amongst younger voters in 2015 and Labour's popularity increased amongst all except [for the] 70+'[723]. Thus, Labour gained a higher youth vote proportion, but there was not a higher general youth turnout, although there was a 2.5% increase in turnout overall%.

As McKibbin demonstrates, Labour and Conservative demographics were in flux[724]:

> [Labour] swings [were] strongest in socially mixed 'wealthier' seats…social class is only one [variable]. Labour is...the party of the educated man –even more the educated woman – as it is of the working man. Labour lost…several…working class and 'poor' constituencies to… Tories… [some] of these areas were former mining seats and once Labour's heartland, which…voted Leave….Where industry and unions once tied people to Labour… these are gone, leaving voters only with…socially conservative and insular culture to shape their politics.

Thus, 'traditional' Labour areas were lost somewhat to the Conservatives, while they gained such seats as Kensington, Canterbury and towns such as Plymouth, demonstrating how Labour's vote was typified by the younger, wealthier urban voter, while the Conservatives were typified by poor, socially conservative towns and suburbs which typically voted Leave. Jackson argues that Labour's success came about partly from a radical manifesto, which attracted younger voters alienated by

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[722] Prosser, Chris, Fieldhouse, Ed, Green, Jane, Mellon, Jonathan, Mellon, and Evans, Geoff (2018) The Myth of the 2017 youthquake election *British Election Study*. 29 January. [Online] Located at: http://www.britishelectionstudy.com/bes-impact/the-myth-of-the-2017-youthquake-election/#.W2Cc3X-1uUk and accessed 6th April 2018.
[723] Ibid.
[724] McKibbin, Ross (2017) In the Shadow of the Referendums *The Political Quarterly* Volume 88, Issue 3, July-September 2017, pp.382-285 [Online] Located at: https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-923x.12398 and accessed 20th July 2018.

the Conservative stance on Brexit[725]. Also, according to Jennings and Stoker, Labour increased its vote in constituencies with a higher share of 'precariat' and emerging social workers while the Conservatives increased in less populated towns, rural areas, and less diverse, older populations[726]. To quote further[727]:

> …Brexit support was associated with an [increased] Conservative vote and a decrease in the Labour vote between 2005 and 2017. The coefficient...is twice as large for Labour, indicating a stronger relationship between the forces that underpinned Brexit and long-term change in Labour's vote.

Thus, Labour's relative success (with areas of no qualifications, graduates, white Britons and younger voters)[728] was by appealing more heavily to these areas with a strong manifesto and the Conservative stance on Brexit, as well as Labour's ambiguous Brexit strategy. Although this divide was not brought into existence as a result of the EU vote, it highlighted it[729]:

> …Over the past decade Labour support has been gradually getting younger, more well educated, and more 'liberal'….voters moving to both the Conservatives and non-voting in 2017 from Labour voting in 2005 are more authoritarian… than those who remained Labour voters (and gained ones between 2005 and 2017)…This process…seems to be have [been heightened] through the EU Referendum…

Thus, Labour's social media focus makes sense, as well as utilising the membership to mobilise voters, while the Conservatives' embracing of Brexit and more socially

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[725] Jackson, Ben (2017) Commentary: The Politics of the Labour Manifesto. *The Political Quarterly,* Vol 88, No.3, July-September 2017. [Online] Located at: https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/1467-923X.12402 and accessed 27th April 2018.
[726] Jennings, Will and Stoker, Gerry (2017) Tilting Towards the Cosmopolitan Axis? Political Change in England and the 2017 General Election. *The Political Quarterly*, Volume 88, Issue 3, July-September 2017, pp.359-369. [Online] Located at: https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-923X.12403 and accessed 3rd March 2018.
[727] Ibid.
[728] Ibid.
[729] Surridge, Paula (2017) How the Labour vote reflects a values-based realignment of the British electorate *LSE British Politics and Policy*. 4th September 2017. [Online] Located at: http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/politicsandpolicy/how-the-labour-vote-reflects-a-values-based-realignment-among-the-british-electorate/ and accessed 16th May 2018.

conservative policies[730] assisted in gaining ground elsewhere, although as Heath and Goodwin discussed, this backfired against the Conservatives in seats such as Canterbury and some London seats[731], although they also found that heavy Brexit-voting areas had very positive effects on Conservative vote-share, as well as areas which had a heavy UKIP vote-fall[732]. However, only in extremely heavy Leave areas did the Conservatives performed much better than Labour, with Labour doing well nationally and the Conservatives making progress in Leave areas but performing badly in Remain areas[733]. Labour was assisted by the lack of focus on Brexit during the campaign to quote Whiteley et al's argument.[734]

Goes discusses other electoral influences:

> Voters who are more [politically] interested or knowledgeable…tend to be more ideological or policy-orientated whilst less aware voters…are [leader] influenced[735]… when political parties offer genuine choice to voters (such as this election)…ideological position questions become more important whereas…party leader reputations and their stances on the issues…become less important[736]… Labour's surge and the noticeable decline in the voteshare of the smaller parties…suggests the ideological positioning of the main parties influences voting behaviour.

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[730] As well as somewhat of an economic nationalist tone from their manifesto

[731] Heath, Oliver and Goodwin, Matthew (2017) The 2017 General Election, Brexit and the Return to Two-Party Politics: An Aggregate-Level Analysis of the Result *The Political Quarterly,* July-September 2017, pp 345-358. 24 July 2017. [Online] Located at: https://doi.org.10.1111/1467-923X.12405 and accessed 5th August 2017.

[732] Ibid.

[733] Ibid.

[734] Whiteley, P, Clarke H., Goodwin M (2017) Was This a Brexit Election After All? Tracking Party Support Among Leave and Remain Voters. *LSE Brexit.* 6th June. [Online] Located at https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/brexit/2017/06/15/was-this-a-brexit-election-after-all-election-tracking-party-support-among-leave-and-remain-voters and accessed 30th April 2018.

[735] Bartle, J (2005) Homogenuous Models and Heterogeneous Voters *Political Studies*, 53, pp.653-675

[736] Green, J and Holbolt S.B (2008) Owning the Issue Agenda: Party Strategies and Vote Choices in British Elections. *Electoral Studies,* 27, pp.460-476.

Thus, voters who are politically aware are more ideological and policy-focused while those less interested are leader-influenced. However, in times of genuine political choice, as Curtice describes 2017 as being post-referendum[737], and corroborated by Curtice and Simpson, who found that voters in the election who thought that there was a great deal of difference between the parties was 45%[738], party leader reputations decreased, and this with party ideologies contributed to the main parties' vote-share, as Curtice describes[739]:

> Social conservatives swung towards… Conservatives, social liberals were attracted towards Labour –a process that [explains] why neither the party of social conservatism, UKIP, nor that of social liberalism, the Liberal Democrats, [electorally] prospered…

Their manifestos and the electoral backdrop meant that the two main parties would gain the majority vote-share. However, although there was a very slight turnout increase, this did not benefit Labour especially, as Curtice and Simpson explain:

> This development [more likeliness to vote]…had relatively little to do with…the appeal of Labour's campaign…. Most of the increased turnout amongst the youngest cohort…was [evident] in the 2015 election, and… the 2016 referendum. [2017] witnessed…the continuation [of that]. There is little evidence Labour…benefitted from the increased turnout...Labour would be unwise to presume that winning over the previously disengaged will ensure [future] [victory].

Labour must mobilise existing voters more to win, and the Conservatives must up their campaigning and mobilisation efforts to overcome limitations of their smaller, older membership, as Bale argues[740].

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[737] Curtice, J (2017) *Has Brexit Reshaped British Politics?* NatCen Social Research. [Online] Located at: http://whatukthinks.org/eu/analysis/has-brexit-reshaped-british-politics and accessed 1st August 2018.

[738] Curtice, John and Simpson, Ian (2018) Why Turnout Increased in the 2017 General Election and the Increase Did Not Help Labour *NatCen* March 2018. [Online] Located at: http://www.bsa.natcen.ac.uk/media/39222/why-turnout-increased-in-the-2017-general-election.pdf and accessed 3rd March 2018.

[739] Curtice, John (2017) *Has Brexit Reshaped British Politics?* p21 NatCen, London.

[740] Bale, T (2017) Was it the Labour Doorstep or the Labour Smartphone that Swung it for Jeremy? *UK Election Analysis* p.70 [Online] Located at:

As was seen from Goes, voters with varying political knowledge have different motivations. Those more politically knowledgeable are policy-concerned, and those with less are leader-concerned. Dorey[741] discusses how Corbyn's popularity rose during the campaign, with May's reputation suffering, and Parry[742] described Corbyn's seemingly more 'accessible' nature and his campaign, which arguably contributed to his support amongst those less politically aware, which when combined with Labour's well-received manifesto, could explain the high Labour vote. Thus, utilising social media and satellite campaigns (as Vaccari and Valeriani argue[743], enables 'digital foot soldiers and allow existing members to expand their repertoires') mobilised supporters and the political, but is ineffective at mobilising the unengaged. If demographic details from Hansard[744] are analysed, mobilisation details are clear:

Table VI: Demographics of the 2017 vote						
Hansard Audit of Political Engagement 15						
Age/certainty to vote	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+
	44%	49%	55%	69%	68%	75%	76%
Interest in politics	41%	49%	53%	64%	65%	62%	62%

http://eprints.bournemouth.ac.uk/29374/10/UKElectionAnalysis2017-Thorsen-Jackson-and-Lilleker_v1.pdf and accessed 1st August 2018.

[741] Dorey, Pete (2017) A Tale of Two Leadership Campaigns *UK Election Analysis* p.123 [Online] Located at: http://eprints.bournemouth.ac.uk/29374/10/UKElectionAnalysis2017-Thorsen-Jackson-and-Lilleker_v1.pdf and accessed 1st August 2018.

[742] Parry, Kate (2017) Seeing Jeremy Corbyn and not seeing Theresa May: the promise of civic spectatorship. *UK Election Analysis* p.124 [Online] Located at: http://eprints.bournemouth.ac.uk/29374/10/UKElectionAnalysis2017-Thorsen-Jackson-and-Lilleker_v1.pdf and accessed 1st August 2018.

[743] Vaccari C., Valeriani A (2016) Party Campaigners or Citizen Campaigners? How Social Media Deepen and Broaden Party-Related Engagement. *International Journal of Press/Politics*, 21, pp.294-312.

[744] Hansard Society (2018) *Audit of Political Engagement 15* pp.47-50 [Online] Located at: https://assets.ctfassets.net/rdwvqctnt75b/iHWHYym8BgugsMQ64oaEC/5c151f5dc7302f37633977500f68c104/publication__hansard-society-audit-of-political-engagement-15-2018.pdf and accessed 5th June 2018.

(very/fairly interested)							
Knowledge of politics (a fair amount at least)	39%	35%	52%	56%	63%	68%	52%
Satisfied with present system of governing	28%	31%	22%	26%	31%	33%	35%
Getting involved is effective	41%	34%	36%	37%	30%	33%	29%

Social Class demographics				
Variable	AB	C1	C2	DE
Certainty to vote (absolutely certain – 10/10)	79%	69%	44%	49%
Interest in politics (very/fairly interested)	81%	63%	36%	43%
Knowledge of politics (knows at least a fair amount)	75%	55%	36%	36%
Satisfaction with present system of governing	36%	31%	22%	25%

Getting involved is effective	39%	34%	25%	37%
Remain and Leave				
Variable	Remain		Leave	
Certain to vote	75%		71%	
Interest in politics	72%		60%	
Knowledge of politics (knows at least a fair amount)	67%		54%	
Satisfaction with present system of governing	28%		32%	
Getting involved is effective	38%		34%	

The older the voter, the more likely they vote, the higher their political interest and knowledge, and the more they're satisfied with the system[745]. Thus it is evident why older voters vote more, raising issues about Labour's social media focus. Moving onto social demographics, the higher the class, the higher the vote, and although AB voters are the most politically interested, DE are more interested than C2, which is interesting, and is worth exploring in future . Finally, looking at Remain and Leave demographics, Remain is more certain to vote, has higher interest and knowledge of politics, and feels that getting involved is effective. However, Leave is more satisfied with the system of governing, which can be explained by the fact that Leave won.

Conclusion

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[745] Apart from a dip for 25-34 year olds and over 75s+

I reviewed the EU Referendum and the 2017 election.. I also focussed on the Labour and the Conservatives conflict, as they were the most significant parties. With Labour's usage of social media and looser membership structures to boost activism, as discussed by Chadwick and Stromer-Galley[746], as well as the emergence of Momentum which advocated digital activism and politicisation, Labour was well positioned. In regards to the EU Referendum, Leave having a greater social media and Internet targeting campaign and a stronger campaign resulted in voter mobilisation and Leave winning. By focussing on salient issues such as the immigration and the NHS, mobilisation occurred, and using elements such as Instagram and apps also worked. Positive engagements and a coherent, confident message defeated Remain and ensured high turnout, with the older voters who favoured Leave heavily turning out.

In 2017, Labour excelled at voter-contact. Social media's importance necessitated parties to efficiently utilise it, and although the Conservatives ran an effective data-driven campaign in 2015, Labour's social media campaign, their large membership, and their effective usage of Corbyn and the Labour manifesto ensured strength.. Labour's effective use of online campaigns and a decentralised networked membership campaign which disseminated information and discussion of relevant points demonstrated their viability, and coupled with popular policies and an energised leader, Labour nearly won. The Conservatives suffered from a lack of social media engagement, neglecting the tactics that had brought them relative success in 2010 and victory in 2015. Although initial fears that new Labour members

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[746] Chadwick and Stromer Galley (2016)

would not actively campaign proved false [747], Labour's failure to win outright and mobilise enough supporters demonstrates Labour's inability to mobilise voters and the young, querying how much the youth can be mobilised .However, the Conservatives were hampered by their small membership, their Brexit policy, and their leader, with all of these impacting negatively on mobilisation and voter-contact, resulting in difficulties for both parties. The smaller parties will struggle until the two parties adopt similar policies, and the stakes are perceived as less high. The TV debates were not seen as many people in 2017, but the conversations it inspired ensured that they remained good for mobilisation. Labour was assisted by receiving the votes of many educated and wealthy individuals, but their youth support hampered them as they vote far less.

British politics is in flux but social media's viability to exercise previously existing voters is demonstrable. How to mobilise non-voters is unclear, as well as how the main two parties will escape their rut and effectively appeal to other voters. The focus is seemingly on how to replicate successes such as Momentum's campaign in the election, and with peer-to-peer, organic social media campaigns being the most effective, how the other parties react to this will be the key question in British politics over the next electoral cycles. The Conservative social media campaign suffered from their highs of 2015, and the party must analyse how and where it went wrong, with difficult questions to answer on policy, leadership, and representation.

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[747] Poletti M, Bale T, Webb P (2016) Explaining the pro-Corbyn Surge in Labour membership *LSE Public and Politics Blog* 16 November. [Online] Located at: http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/politicsandpolicy/explaining-the-pro-corbyn-surge-in-labours-membership/ and accessed 1st August 2018.

Conclusion

The thesis focus has been the evolution of campaigning, from the TV debates' introduction to the Internet's and social media's impact. Examining the two hypotheses posed in the introduction again**:**

H1: Young voters have increased turnout since 2010.

H2: British political parties have become more adept at using the Internet and social media to influence election results and voter turnout.

H1 was somewhat correct. Young voters have turned out more since 2010, with 44% in 2010, 75% for the Scottish referendum, 43% in 2015, around 60% for the EU Referendum, and although if the young are counted as 18-24, their turnout was initially reported as incredibly high in 2017 with reports of 16% turnout boost, but in fact youth turnout flatlined in 2017[748]. Although Corbyn and Labour performed well in 2017, gaining an enormous swing of the already-voting young, they did not mobilise new voters to vote for Labour or even to vote, with turnout barely increasing to 69%. Looking at the literature, Gibson et al argue that relying on the Internet will lead to a narrowing of politically-engaged citizens by reinforcing existing engagement levels, locking out potential voters[749]. The paper stems from 2005, so before the social networks, but it still acts as a warning to not over-rely on the Internet and social media to attract young voters, and that any online mobilisation must occur with a

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[748] Prosser, Chris, Fieldhouse, Ed, Green, Jane, Mellon, Jonathan, Mellon, and Evans, Geoff (2018) The Myth of the 2017 youthquake election *British Election Study*. 29 January. [Online] Located at: http://www.britishelectionstudy.com/bes-impact/the-myth-of-the-2017-youthquake-election/#.W2Cc3X-1uUk and accessed 6th April 2018.
[749] Gibson, K Rachel, Lusoli, Wainer and Ward, Stephen (2005) Online Participation in the UK: Testing a 'Contextualised' Model of Internet Effects. *BJPIR* Volume 7, Issue 4, November 2005, pp.561-583.

change in Parliamentary politics otherwise existing participation patterns will be

reinforced, as Lusoli et al discussed in 2005[750]. Corbyn's Labour arguably attempted

this during the election and with the satellite campaigns such as Momentum. Thus,

youth turnout remained more or less static by 2017, having fluctuated throughout the

seven years, and more work should continue to see the ultimate youth turnout trend.

H2 was correct for some political parties. From the slow starts and blogs of 2010 to

the Conservatives' micro-targeting campaign in 2015 to the Snapchat and

Momentum satellite campaigns in 2017, online and social media use evolved

enormously. Although the exciting element about 2010 was the TV debates which

shook up the election and engaged people, 2015 defined them less, instead largely

featuring the Conservative micro-targeting and their enormous social media budget,

which was the first time that a British political party had utilised the Internet's

potential, with the Conservatives winning, although whether Labour could have

challenged this is debated. However, Labour's innovative use of social media to

mobilise and contact voters was inspired, and resulted in 2017 being hailed as the

first social media election. It is arguable whether Labour's social media campaign

contributed to their better-than-expected showing, and to what extent Corbyn himself

was responsible for Labour's rise. I will conclude that some political parties were

adept at social media, with the Conservatives not developing beyond 2015, Labour

adopting an inspiring, informal and dialogic campaigning atmosphere, and the other

parties not managing to be impactful. Thus, the next general election will show if the

political parties have learned the lessons of the past, and whether their contacting

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[750] Lusoli, Wainer, Ward, Stephen and Gibson, Rachel (2006) (Re)Connecting Politics? Parliament, the Public and the Internet. *Parliamentary Affairs*, Volume 59, Issue 1, 1 January, pp.24-42.

and mobilising efforts will be online-focused, for the benefits that will bring, or whether the old methods of leafleting, face to face meetings and so on will continue to be the main methods. Labour is best-placed to prosper with their large membership and satellite campaigns, which are weapons that the other parties do not have. Political parties still have to tackle the salient issues be it the NHS, defence, the economy or other issues, regardless of the strength of feeling on social media and what was expected to happen, as occurred to Labour in 2015.

With all of these in mind, it is worth revisiting Kent and Taylor's five strategies. This shall only be brief, as using them as the basis of an entire thesis or piece of work would necessitate a radical reordering of the thesis, and Beverley illustrates how large public-scale institutions such as universities use Kent and Taylor's five strategies, demonstrating the viability of using them for this purpose[751]. However, discussing their usefulness will add an interesting bookend to some of the discussions in the thesis. When quoted earlier, they were used for the purpose of further expansion of a particular point, but they are important in the field. To quote earlier:

> "Kent and Taylor's five strategies in building, maintaining and developing dialogic online relationships of building a loop, relaying useful information, ensuring return visits, ensuring interface intuitiveness and ensuring visitor conservation by creating an uncluttered web format[752]"

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[751] Beverly, Jason Antwuan (2013) Public Relations Models and Dialogic Communication in the Twitterverse: An Analysis of How Colleges and Universities are Engaging their Public Through Twitter. *Dissertations*. 159 [Online] Located at: https://aquila.usm.edu/dissertations/159 and accessed 27th June 2019.

[752] Kent, Michael L and Taylor, Maureen (1998) Building Dialogic Relationships Through the World Wide Web *Public Relations Review*, 24 (3), pp.321-334.

Conclusion

Thus, greater analysis is needed regarding Kent and Taylor, as there is excellent scope for this analysis. In particular, analysing the extent to which the 2016 EU Referendum and the 2017 General Election social media campaigns (particularly Labour and Momentum's apps and web campaigns) reflected the five strategies, and to what extent they truly were dialogic and engaging, revealing more of how mobilising those elements were. However, that will be discussed in a future paper, and although recognising their importance is vital, exploring the mobilising effects of social media and the Internet in regards to these case studies needs to be tackled.

The extent to which social media and the Internet can be a true panacea to low political activism is key to this topic. The findings of the case studies tells different conclusions and further potential exploration about how political parties in Britain mobilise their supporters.

In 2010, it was found that the TV debates did impact the election, inspiring new confidence in leadership due to Clegg while demonstrating that perceptions still have on electoral success: the Liberal Democrats and Clegg were not seen as credible or potential to lead the country, and although there was some evidence of online mobilisation with voters communicating to each other via social media about political issues, particularly concerning Clegg, social media and online methods were not properly utilised by the parties yet, with although a strong Conservative network in existence, not utilised to the extent it could have been. Leaflets and traditional methods of contacting remained the most popular voter contacting method, and future elections and referendums would pave the way for a dialogic social media presence. Blogs and experiments such as WebCameron were the main online tools used, and these were used in a way that was uninteresting to the disengaged. Thus,

how future referendums and elections would build upon 2010 would remain to be seen.

 Looking at the Scottish 2014 referendum, it will be worth analysing in future work the effect political leadership and political rhetoric had on the result, as this is an important area of study. Also, the referendum saw political yet irreverent social media and social groupings which although again were political, were not formally linked to the main parties. The different motivators behind the Yes and No voters (as seen in the relevant chapter) also bear examination further, but the further evolution of how social media and online mobilisation occurred in British politics, feeding into 2015 and beyond, was fascinating, and although 2014 demonstrated that a campaign could not be won by relying on online mobilisation and social media alone, instead also needing to win on the dominant political issues as well, it could result in remarkable effects.

2015 was a surprise Conservative victory. Although Labour had attempted a peer-to-peer networking social media movement (Twitter especially) in an attempt to mobilise and engage its core vote, social media's tendency to only mobilise and engage those already political ensured that this tactic would not work, along with the fact that the Conservatives used micro-targeting on Facebook in conjunction with traditional voter contacting and dominance of the main issues, resulting in a Labour defeat. As such, micro-targeting, strong messaging, and a dominance of the issues mobilised and engaged voters to vote Conservative. Of particular note for future study is Endres and Kelly's work on microtargeting, which identifies (although in a US context) how younger voters are less likely to be targeted and older voters are

more likely to be so, due to their longer voting history and political nature[753]. Hersh's work on microtargeting and campaign perception of voters is also of note, due to the exploration of how parties mobilise and engage supporters[754]. In future, examination of the leaders during the 2015 election would be excellent, as although the 2010 and 2017 election analysis touched upon these, there is scope for exploration about the leader effect on 2015, in particular concerning the effect Clegg, Miliband, Farage and Cameron had on their parties and how their presence mobilised and engaged voters. Sparks of the irreverent yet political social media movements that were initially seen in 2010 with Clegg and 2014 to a greater degree with independence-linked social movements were seen with the Milifandom movement, but Labour's mobilisation of voters and their supporters was not done to the same extent as the Conservatives, and the Conservatives' exploitation of their Liberal Democrat coalition partners ensured that they would gain a majority. However, lessons learned during this election would carry on to the next election and referendum.

The 2016 referendum saw another evolution in political campaigning. Although far more work can be done regarding the effects concerning the mobilisation and engagement of voters during the election, and more work has been done on this by others, the main issue that can be taken away from this is that the Leave campaign had a far more positive, engaging message than Remain, and it dominated the main issues of the NHS, immigration, and sovereignty far more effectively than Remain did. With Leave possessing good messaging online and the incoherency from Remain, as well as Remain's inability to counter the arguments from Leave, Leave

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[753] Endres, Kyle and Kelly, Kristin J (2018) Does Microtargeting Matter? Campaign Contact Strategies and Young Voters. *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties.* Volume 28, Number 1, February 2018, pp.1-18.
[754] Hersh, Eitan D (2015) *Hacking the Electorate: How Campaigns Perceive Voters.* New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

won. Leave's gaining of those who did not care too much about risk was important to their victory. The tendency of the older generations to vote more than the younger ones also helped Leave's victory, as older voters are more likely to vote Leave, and with younger voters leaning heavily towards Remain, this hampered Remain somewhat. Furthermore, the fact that the two campaigns were rather self-segregating on social media ensured that Remain's message would not get over on social media to possible supporters also is significant. Finally, it seemed that in 2016 the dominant media narrative that favoured Leave was still important, as the majority of the media's narrative and issues was friendly to Leave and did not help the Remain side gain traction. However, although claims have been made that bots were important to the result, care must be taken to not put this as the sole reason why Remain lost. As such, the social media mobilisation of Leave, the friendly demographic to Leave, the fact that Leave voters tended to vote more, and the media message ensured that Leave would win. The mobilisation and engagement of voters in 2016 was higher than in any previous referendum however at 72% turnout, indicating that if an electoral poll is viewed as significant, then there will be a corresponding response. In future, again leadership could be looked at, in particular the extent to which the various campaign and party leaders had on the referendum result.

The 2017 general election signified a further evolution in how political parties mobilised and engaged their supporters in Britain. As already stated in the chapter, Labour's usage of peer-to-peer, organically shared networks on social media and with their large membership and campaigning groups ensured a near defeat for the Conservatives, and the Conservatives' combination of bad communication strategy,

poor policies, poor campaigning from May resulted in a reverse of what occurred in 2015. As discussed, the usage of satellite campaigns by Labour in the form of Momentum and the apps used by this, for example *My Nearest Marginal*, connected social media with offline political mobilisation, which although the disengaged and demobilised were still not truly engaged, with turnout decreasing from the EU referendum and increasing slightly from the 2015 election to 69%, demonstrated that Labour's development and usage of social media campaigns and methods were somewhat efficient at actually mobilising the Labour support network and Labour voters. As such, Stromer-Galley and Chadwick's analysis deserves further analysis regarding this, and any work that develops on this thesis would do well to regard them. Of course, the extent to which social media can mobilise voters and engage voters is to be questioned as a result of this, because although Labour had the superior social and digital media campaign, they did not win, as the Conservatives held superior numbers on the key issues of the election and of the leadership, which although Corbyn improved immeasurably over the course of the campaign, still did not beat May. Thus, how the political parties mobilise and engage their supporters off and online in the future shall remain to be seen, but Labour's tactics deserve further study and analysis, as well as how likely voters are to change their minds over the course of election campaigns, as this will be key to analysing how elections are fought and how voters are mobilised. The nature of the effect policies have on party campaigns and mobilisation tactics has been studied in the context of the studied elections, especially 2017, but a policy-focused analysis would be viable.

To summarise, this thesis concludes that political parties mobilised and engaged their supporters in ways that remained constant and also by utilising new techniques

such as television debates, social media, microtargeting, satellite campaigns, apps, and many more. The thesis summarises and explores over time how parties did this. Drawing upon works such as the BES, the Nuffield Election series, thinkers such as Curtice, Bang, and more, and commenting on the divide between peer-to-peer and microtargeting social media campaigns, the thesis has made a wide-ranging and quality contribution to the field of democratic participation and mobilisation theory.

The hypotheses were somewhat correct, and further analysis will hopefully reveal the motivations behind the young in Britain tending not to vote and how political parties mobilise and engage their supporters. The youthquake as well as 2017 deserves further analysis, which will be done over time.. To revisit Keating and Melis: 'This generation of youth may therefore be the first generation to reflect the mobilising potential of social media and the Internet in general…[755]' Although political parties should not rely on social media and the Internet to solve mobilisation issues, a time may come in the future when social media and the Internet can be used to their fullest extent. Thus, Bang, Marsh and Akram, who discuss the 'lived' experience of politics and Rubin's identification of how young people are politicised with reactions to everyday experiences demonstrate how youth experience of social media and the Internet, growing by the day, and epochal events such as elections and referendums, will mobilise and engage voters as appropriate. Early on, parties were close to understanding it, even if parties ultimately backed away from their potential, such as Lawrence discussing WebCameron, a video blog set up by Cameron in 2006, and how its more interactive and dialogic elements were gradually

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[755] Keating, Avril and Melis, Gabriella (2017) Social Media and youth political engagement: Preaching to the converted or providing a new voice for youth? *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations* Vol. 19 (4) p.891

shut down by the party[756]. Of course, as some are not mobilised by social media, as Keating and Avril again state[757], so again political parties must take social media as just one part of mobilisation and political engagement, as once again Keating and Avril identify: 'Political, educational and cultural solutions [are needed] to this problem, and not just a technical one[758].' However, as Theocharis and Quintelier identify[759], friends and family posting links or expressing political opinions can trigger political interest, and non-political online activity can lead to political activity. So although social media and the Internet are not the ultimate solution for formal political disengagement, they can very much assist in one part in solving that issue. These authors should be analysed more in future works, along with closer examination of what exactly mobilises voters, especially the young.

Future speculation

There is future discussion potential: for example, Scotland actually had a decreased level of turnout from the Scottish referendum[760], with one of the lowest turnouts for the EU and 2017 election campaigns, which hugely damaged the SNP seat total and enabled Conservative government, raising questions of what would have happened if Scotland had kept their 85% Scottish referendum turnout. I also would have liked to discuss voter registration further, as I feel that the new voter registration system from 2014 would be excellent in analysing youth registration and engagement, as the current system could be arguably discriminatory against them. Multi-annual

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[756] Lawrence (2009) p.251
[757] Ibid, p.877.
[758] Ibid, p.891.
[759] Theocharis, Y and Quintelier, E (2014) Stimulating citizenship or expanding entertainment? The effect of Facebook on adolescent participation. *New Media & Society*. 18: pp.817-836.
[760] Sim, Philip (2017) Election 2017: Scotland's result in numbers *BBC News* 12 June. [Online] Located at: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-40246330 and accessed on 6th August 2018.

quantitative analyses would be the best way to analyse this, so there is future potential. Utilising resources such as the *British Household Survey*, a dataset which has followed the same representative of thousands of households since 1991, in any future work may help to complement future work, as I did not include it in this thesis due to brevity and all the information that I needed to access being available with the BES dataset. Furthermore, the EU Referendum has far more analytical possibility, and there is far more to analyse regarding voter mobilisation, contact, issue salience and issue mobilisation than I could get into, so a further analysis at the various issues, demographic driving forces, turnout and mobilisation methods would be rewarding. The referendum was significant in British history, and further analysis of it is necessary to determine what can be learned from it and how it currently affects Britain and beyond.

Additionally, I analysed the effects of the leader on electoral turnout, mobilisation and contact, but there is more room for analysis. Milazzo and Hammond discussed how leader personalisation in British campaigns on leaflets can influence the result[761], which although used in the thesis, could be the basis of further leadership analysis in a future thesis or paper, and thus bears closer examination. Schumacher and Giger[762] discuss the extent to which leadership-dominated parties change, which in the era of Corbynism being so dominant and May being less so, will become more important. Corbyn's politics and leadership of Labour needs more academic

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[761] Milazzo, Caitlin and Hammond, Jesse (2018) The face of the party? Leader personalisation in British campaigns *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties* Volume 28, Number 3, August 2018 Pp.263-283

[762] Schumacher, Gijs and Giger, Nathalie (2018) Do leadership-dominated parties change more? *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties* Volume 28, Number 3, August 2018 pp.349-361

analysis, and Crines et al's work on how Labour and Corbyn[763] have interacted with

one another is fascinating, as it has consequences for how the party relates to and

motivates the public, making studying Corbyn's leadership essential. I also feel that

work on Voter Advice Applications and their mobilisation of supporters will be useful,

building upon Wall et al's workl[764], as they directly tap into digital communication and

potential mobilisation. It will also be worth carrying out a comparison of other

countries to see how political parties internationally have mobilised and contacted

supporters, so for example analysing and comparing Trump's successful presidential

election to Corbyn's almost-victory in 2017, both unexpected, and their similarities

deserve analysing, even if Corbyn 'and Trump's politics are completely opposed. A

comparison of how voters have been mobilised through the ages by different

methods, perhaps by building upon Lawrence's *Electing Our Masters*, and using it to

analyse voter mobilisation. It could be considered that social media and the Internet

are just the resurrection of the local meeting as popularised in the 19th century and

killed off by the television age, as discussed by Lawrence[765], but again future

analysis will explore this. Rainsford, who specialises in analysing youth politics and

youth engagement, will be of interest as well, and so any future analysis will take her

work into account. Aldrich, Gibson, Cantijoch and Konitzer's[766]work on electronic

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[763] Crines, Andrew Scott, Jeffery David and Heppell, Timothy (2018) The British Labour Party and leadership election mandate(s) of Jeremy Corbyn: patterns of opinion and opposition within the Parliamentary Labour Party. *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties* Volume 28, Number 3, August 2018 pp.361-380

[764] Wall, Matthew, Krouwel, Andre and Vitelio, Thomas (2012) Do voters follow the recommendations of voter advice application websites? A study of the effects of kieskompas.nl on its users vote choice in the 2010 Dutch Legislative Elections. *Party Politics*, Volume 20, Issue 3, pp.416-428. March 7. [Online] Located at: https://doi.org/10.1177/1354068811436054 and accessed on 6th August 2018.

[765] Lawrence, Jon (2009) *Electing Our Masters.* Oxford University Press: Oxford.

[766] Alrich,John H, Gibson, K Rachel, Cantijoch, Marta and Konitzer, Tobias (2016) Getting Out the vote in the social medie era: Are digital tools changing the way extent, nature and impact of party contacting in elections? *Party Politics* 2016, Vol 22 (2) pp.165-178

party contacting in elections will also be utilised more in future analysis, as their work is directly relevant to this subject.

Concluding remarks

Throughout this thesis, I looked at three general elections and two referendums. I found that as British politics and parties evolve, they are sometimes slow at keeping up with technology, but generally at least one party will utilise new methods. It will remain to be seen if other political parties manage to successfully utilise social media to Labour's extent, and if anyone can come up with an answer to the young's refusal to politically engage and vote. The next election will present new opportunities, and whether other parties can match Labour's social media focus, or if it is advisable for them to do so will be future work. Although politicians in the early 1950s welcomed the television age as [767]'[they] were quite pleased to see the back of the 'unconvinced spectator' who was more interested in frivolity and entertainment than political argument' as Lawrence discusses, social media's potential, especially with irreverent, informal yet political groups such as what occurred in 2014 and 2017, has opened up British politics again to the 'unconvinced spectator', and political parties and politicians must be prepared to deal with political 'frivolity and entertainment', lest they be swept away.

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[767] Lawrence (2009) p.145

Conclusion

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