Raphael Saint Bris

Digital communication in French and UK political elections. Fake news, targeted ads and social medias

Diploma Thesis

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RESEARCH THESIS

Digital communication in French and UK political elections: fake news, targeted ads and social medias.

Written by Raphaël Saint Bris

Under the supervision of Nicolas Péchenart

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I. Introduction

Political communication has been dramatically changed from the end of 20th century with the democratisation of new communication technics and the launch of commercial communication satellites. This digital revolution allowed the growth of mass media especially in news, politics and advertising through new technologies as television, internet and mobile phone. The fact of the matter is liberalisation of mass media have also triggered a rise of competition which brought about intrusive press focusing on political personalities issues from the late 70's. In reaction to this media political treatment, politicians decided to protect themselves by handling and controlling their communication to show a preferred or rewarding image. This period is embodied by the arrival of spin doctors and communication specialists on candidate team's standing in political elections. For example, Jacques Séguéla, a French figure of advertising have been known to running Mitterrand political campaign and led him to victory in both 1981 and 1988. Similarly, Alastair Campbell, public spin doctor of Tony Blair had been handling the labour prime minister communication and helped him to win 1997 UK general elections. Nowadays, this professionalization of communication is still present but has evolved. Politicians and elections candidates have entered social medias in order to perfect their political image and reach undecided people.

More recently, politicians have struggled to handle their communication and elections have been overwhelmed by scandals and rumours provoking unexpected changes and opinion poll errors. On one hand, during 2012 and 2017 French presidential elections, Dominik Strauss Khan affair, Sarkozy-Gaddafi Gate or Penelope Gate have contributed in changing the future of French election results. On the other hand, scandals during recent United Kingdom elections didn't affect too much the results of polling. Causes are that scandals weren't as big as those which happened along French elections and it is also due to a higher confidence from citizens in political UK system.

These scandals come mostly from the expansion of investigation medias and whistle-blower websites seeking out confidential, new leaks and secret information provided by anonymous sources. For instance, Mediapart, a French Whistleblower website revealed some confidential documents in several affairs concerning French major politicians reconsidering their legitimacy to embody French people. This website is behind the revelation of secret

documents during 2012 presidential elections suggesting the sponsorship from the Libyan dictator regime to Nicolas Sarkozy 2007 presidential campaign. If the traditional press didn't take much over from these surprising revelations, social medias relayed this information largely.

Digital communication and especially social medias seems to have established themselves as a mandatory tool for citizens and politicians in order to communicate around political subjects. Just like The United States 2016 Presidential Elections has showed to the world the growing influence of social medias into major elections. Likewise, targeted advertising and fake news have played a key role in shaping American elections and they have put in the hearth of the debate the issue of ethics in digital communication.

Politicians find out the utility of using social medias tools to handle their image and convince people to vote for them. Outside Europe, the most recent famous example was Donald Trump twitter communication and its targeted advertising use during US presidential elections. The actual president of United States recruited a digital communication team of 100 experts targeting undecided people across US by sending them pro-trump news.

Most of politicians have succeed in mastering their political image by using new communication technologies but some of them have also benefit from a large amount of fake news shared by their militants. For example, it appears that people who were campaigning for winner Donald Trump candidate have been much more active in sharing fake news likewise campaigning on social medias during the primary campaign than Hilary Clinton supporters did. During French presidential elections as well, extreme right-wing from Marine Le Pen used a large amount of fake news shared on internet to deprive of credit other parties but people were less receptive than American citizens.

An other strong recent change which aroused me interest for that dissertation topic is that polls and national recognised press forecast have been failed in two major elections, vote for Brexit and US elections. The fact of the matter is that people were more hesitating about their vote than previous elections and a great quantity of them gave unsure information to pollsters. These last-minute elections might also down to a particular media treatment inspired by tabloids, social buzz and rumours which favoured last moment swings. Then, maybe the most important issue which could partly explain polls failure and the blindness from traditional

press is the responsibility from Facebook hyper-personalized news feed along American elections. According to Parmy Olson, a Forbes investigation journalist, this feed ¨prioritize stories that have you nodding in agreement and shows your comments will give you a constant stream of dopamine hits¨. Consequently, everyone is looking out for him and is not able to see different arguments. It could possibly explain why the traditional press were unanimous for a Clinton victory and might conducted some trump voters ashamed to tell the truth to pollsters.

Otherwise, the recent and current context of political elections in UK and in France have been underlined by a dominating use of digital communication from politicians but also several actors like lobbies, whistle-blowers, militants, international press and electors. The main reason is that social networks allow all those actors including citizens to communicate with thousands of unique people after a click. Finally, this new technic of communication gives the opportunity for every citizen without distinction to involve better in electoral campaigning. But it remains likely expose to dangers more than traditional communication including paper press and television. For instance, digital is more favourable to fake news because information isn't regulated. Then, new technologies enable people to show different behaviours because they feel protect behind their computer from judgements and politically correct. For all these reasons, digital communication is definitely different from traditional communication.

Consequently, digital communication is an inevitable issue when analysing and comparing political campaigning practices. Nevertheless, it seems hard to define clearly the real influence of digital communication and especially social medias on people's political opinions during elections. Even if digital communication is easier than ever before, it seems to pay up for relevancy and credibility with social medias personalised feeds and fake news. Whilst digital communication doesn't have borders, its uses are different regarding the country culture and political system.

That's why, I choose to compare two different political system countries in order to have a largest view of digital communication practices. The parliamentary constitutional monarchy in the United Kingdom and the semi-presidential republic in France. Therefore, it is significant to wonder what is the impact of digital communication on UK and French political campaigning

When comparing French and UK elections campaigning, it is important to highlight the different process of elections in each country. In France, presidential elections call citizens to a direct universal suffrage to elect the president who will name the prime minister. Then, the legislatives elections will elect the parliament majority and would change the prime minister and its government if the majority is different from the president party. This is called "la cohabitation". The last French cohabitation dated back to 1997 when the right-wing president Jacques Chirac has named the leftist Lionel Jospin as prime minister due to a left-wing parliamentary majority. On the contrary, in United Kingdom, the general elections correspond to the French legislatives elections where citizens are called to vote in a direct universal suffrage as well to elect members of parliaments. If no parties collected the overall majority which represents 326 seats, parties have to form a coalition. Then, the prime minister is named by the commons and the size of its party is constitutionally irrelevant. Recently in UK, during 2010 and 2017 general elections, votes have resulted in hung parliament.

To begin with, the first section will focus on fundamental practices of political communication in order to bring an overall contextualisation to the dissertation. Then, the second and third section will respectively analyse the French and UK political communication and campaigning characteristics. The objective here will be to bring some tendencies out. Finally, the last section will aim to confront these two country practices in order to evaluate the role of digital communication on political campaigning and draw some hypothesis.

This first part would be a recap of all major political communication authors' theories with an analysis of last decade principal elections to give support to the theoretical analysis. Then, the second part will consist in bringing answers to hypothesis by confronting them with a qualitative study among English and French citizens politically involved or not.

II. Literature Review

This literature review aims to define better the purpose of this dissertation and contextualize the problem. First of all, to succeed in doing this study, I will compare major political communication authors and theoreticians in order to have a full understanding of the topic. I will answer to these following questions. What is political communication and where does it come from? Does political communication is a threat or reinforcement to Democracy? What is digital communication and how can we measure its political impact? Secondly, I will go in the heart of the subject with an analysis of both French and Britain political communication among last electoral campaigns with the help of articles and books. This comparison will aim to confirm the assumption that digital communication practices and its influence on public opinion are different among these two countries. To do that, I would highlight the role of digital communication, its actors and its several types of use through examples in order to measure how it has been shaped general UK and presidential French elections. From this review, I would try to draw new hypothesis in order to have a more complete and deeper answer.

A. Fundamental notions of political communication

First, let's do a quick overview of obvious questions to contextualise the political communication. What is Political communication? It is difficult to provide a clear definition of these terms because both political and communication refers to a broad variety of explanations. Denton and Woodward[1] have given a definition for political communication which is "pure discussion about the allocation of public resources (revenues), official authorities (legal, executive and legislative power) and official sanctions". This definition focuses particularly on the political system whereas political actors don't always communicate on rational political issues. They are also using collective imaginary, symbols and emotions to influence public opinion and constitute their political image. Otherwise, this analysis remains limited despite its quality because it doesn't deal with actors who are involved in the political communication process. According to Pippa Norris[2] who purposes a more encompassing definition, "Political communications is an interactive process concerning the transmission of information among politicians, the news media and the public". This definition shows that political communication is interactive because it plays with a lot of different actors and can either go downwards from authorities to citizens, upwards from public opinion to governments or in a horizontal way among politicians.

The second question that could help to understand in an historic way this notion would be Where does political communication come from? It seems obvious to say that political communication was born at the beginning of humanity when people have begun to live in society which needed rules and therefore, a political system. Indeed, according to Aristotle "Man is by nature a social animal", that's why humans communicate amongst themselves. The allegory of the cave from the philosopher and politician Plato[3] gives also an answer to that question. As a reminder, Plato tells a story of prisoners who have always been living in an underground cave unenlightened. The prisoners do not know that they are in jail. Then Plato supposes that a prisoner is forced to get out from the cave and to see the sunlight. After a while, he got accustomed and he is able to reason about it. Then when the free prisoner would return to the cave and will attempt to convince the others prisoners that the world outside is superior to the cave, others won't trust him and might be ready to kill anyone who

[1] Denton and Woodward, Political communication in America, 1990
[2] Pippa Norris, Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, 2004

[3] Plato, The Republic book VII. Penguin group inc. pp. 365-401, 514a-520a

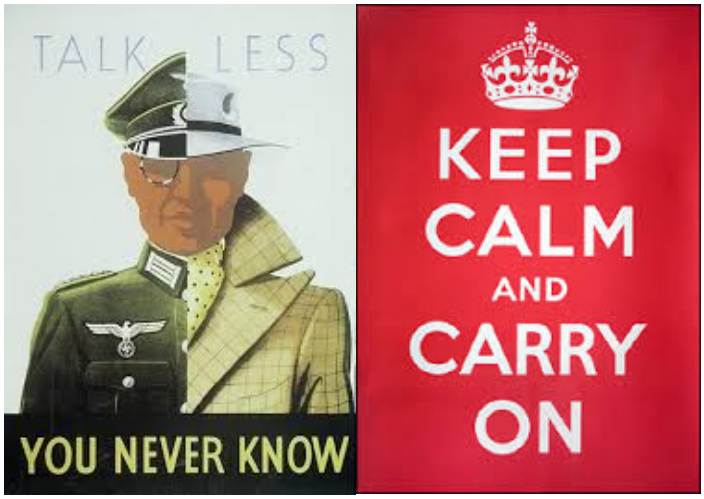
tried to get them out of their cave. Hannah Arendt[4] who defends the political interpretation of this allegory suggests that "Plato wanted to apply his own theory of ideas to politics". Anyway, it is clear that Plato uses this metaphor to convey a message with the help of rhetoric in order to influence the Athens citizen way of thinking. Therefore, political communication has been existed from first human disagreements in society and by deduction, political ideas is inherent to communication because they have to be discussed to exist in society.

1. The influence of political communication

As Hannah Arendt have been suggested in her reading of Plato's cave allegory, the aim of the philosopher is to enlighten Athenians about his ideas in order to save democracy from ignorance and sophists, teachers who were using rhetoric techniques only to deceive. Thus, it is easy to deduce that political communication first purpose is a matter of influence.
During 20th century, three main schools of thoughts have justified the influence of political communication one after the other. First of all, there have been pre-war theories of mass propaganda. Studies regarding mass communication in the 1920's and 1930's have point out the growing reach of newspapers on public opinion. Walter Lippman in his first essay named Public Opinion[5] supposed that "the growth in circulation of the popular press, developments in advertising and the new media of moving pictures had decisively changed the ability of leaders to manipulate the public opinion." The apparition of mass propaganda match with a new way of manufacture of consent and made more reachable the art of persuasion. The effects of mass communication were seen as harmful for democracies just as Lippman has predicted. Indeed, these premonitions come true with the use of posters and broad anti-semitic propaganda by authoritarian regimes. Nevertheless, this time also proved the efficacy of medias to sway public opinion for preserving democracy. For instance, the BBC radio belonging to the British government was actively involved on political resistance communication by broadcasting some propaganda messages from Charles de Gaulle and Winston Churchill. Then, UK government came up with a diversity of slogans displayed on posters to reinforce patriotism. This period has seen the use of a large array of medias with posters, comic books, cartoons, radio, movies, animation, magazines and leaflets.

[4] Miguel Abensour, Against the Sovereignty of Philosophy over Politics: Arendt's reading of Plato's cave allegory
[5] Public opinion, Water Lippman, 1922

Figure 1: Creative posters and slogans in UK during WW2[6]



An other theory, the theories of partisan reinforcement from Columbia University has challenged the effect of mass propaganda. Paul Lazarsfeld demonstrated by using modern techniques of panel surveys that the main impact of 1940 American electoral campaign was reinforcement not change, as "partisans were strengthened in their voting choice". In 1997, the polls fail to predict the victory of UK Labour and this event conducts to reconsider Lazarsfeld studies based on panel surveys. This fact announces the arrival of a new theory called cognitive, agenda-setting and persuasion effects trying to explain why Tony Blair, leader of Labour party won the elections. The idea is that political communication enables people to make a more reasoned choice and even changing their vote. Scholars account for this trend by highlighting three ways of media influence during Blair elections. First of all, the agenda setting which prioritise the political schedule and call for civic engagement. Then, the political persuasion which is use my medias and politicians to convince people of a candidate or party program.

This theory is by far the most relevant today to understand poll's error and explain the influence of political communication on people's vote. Now that we have delimited on what political communication could influence, it is logical regarding the subject which compare French and British democratic systems, to understand the link between democracy and strategic communication.

[6] https://uk.pinterest.com/explore/ww2-propaganda-posters/

2. Democracy and strategic communication

According to Cambridge dictionary website, Democracy is "a system of government based on this belief, in which power is either held by elective representatives or directly by the people themselves"[7]. Nevertheless, this belief is impossible to literally exist because representatives never represent every parts of the population. That's why government tend to be democratic as much as possible with different systems but they can't be entirely democratic. In order to reach the more equality of representation between people, it must be more than one leader and powers have to be separated. The French Lumieres time during the 18th century was a great period of thinking and new political ideas concerning how does a better and more equal government could work. One of the major idea which came up was to separate the owner of each power. The first who advances this future base of democracy called Montesquieu[8] saying in 1748 "It is necessary from the very nature of things that power should be a check to power. This is achieved through the separation of the executive, legislative and judicial powers of government".

However, democracy is not only a matter a political system, it is also bounded with communication between people and gathering different opinions to make the most representative decision. So the main question would be How the use of strategic communication can influence democracy? Denton and Woodward[9] said "that the crucial factor that makes communication political is not the source of the message, but its content and purpose." This quote shows that communication needed to be consider as a political level because if it is not controlled, she would easily become a treat to the Democracy.

Last century use of bad propaganda by Nazis has shown the dangers of communication and its wrong impact on politics. That's the reason why communication has been turned professional from the end of 20th century with the arrival of spin doctors into politician team. The best way to tackle negative propaganda is to do positive propaganda. Alexis de Tocqueville[10] stated "it is easier for the world to accept a simple lie than a complex truth". This sentence explains the reasons why propaganda is so much efficient and why the political strategic communication tended to be simple. This is why modern politicians have been surrounded by communication

[7] http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/democracy
[8] Montesquieu, The Spirit of the Laws, 1748. Chapter 1, Forms of Government.
[9] Denton and Woodward, Political communication in America, 1990
[10] Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy In America, 1835

experts using the same methods, simple slogans and catchy sentences than mass media propaganda in order to restore the balance.

Therefore, communication helps democracy to slightly exist if there are at least two different communications against the other, generally mass media and politicians. On the contrary, if the strengths of communication come from the same source, then it would become a real threat for the democracy and the representation of people.

3. What is digital political communication all about?

Digital political communication is a new way used by people to communicate around politics. It is including the use of news technologies, phones, tablets and computers in order to communicate with others on social medias and websites linked more or less with politics.

Then, digital communication allowed a big change which enables people to become their own politics medias for the others. This can have dangerous outcomes because people tend to less check and compare their sources than journalists due to the fact that official medias have to keep their objectivity reputation if they still want to be read.

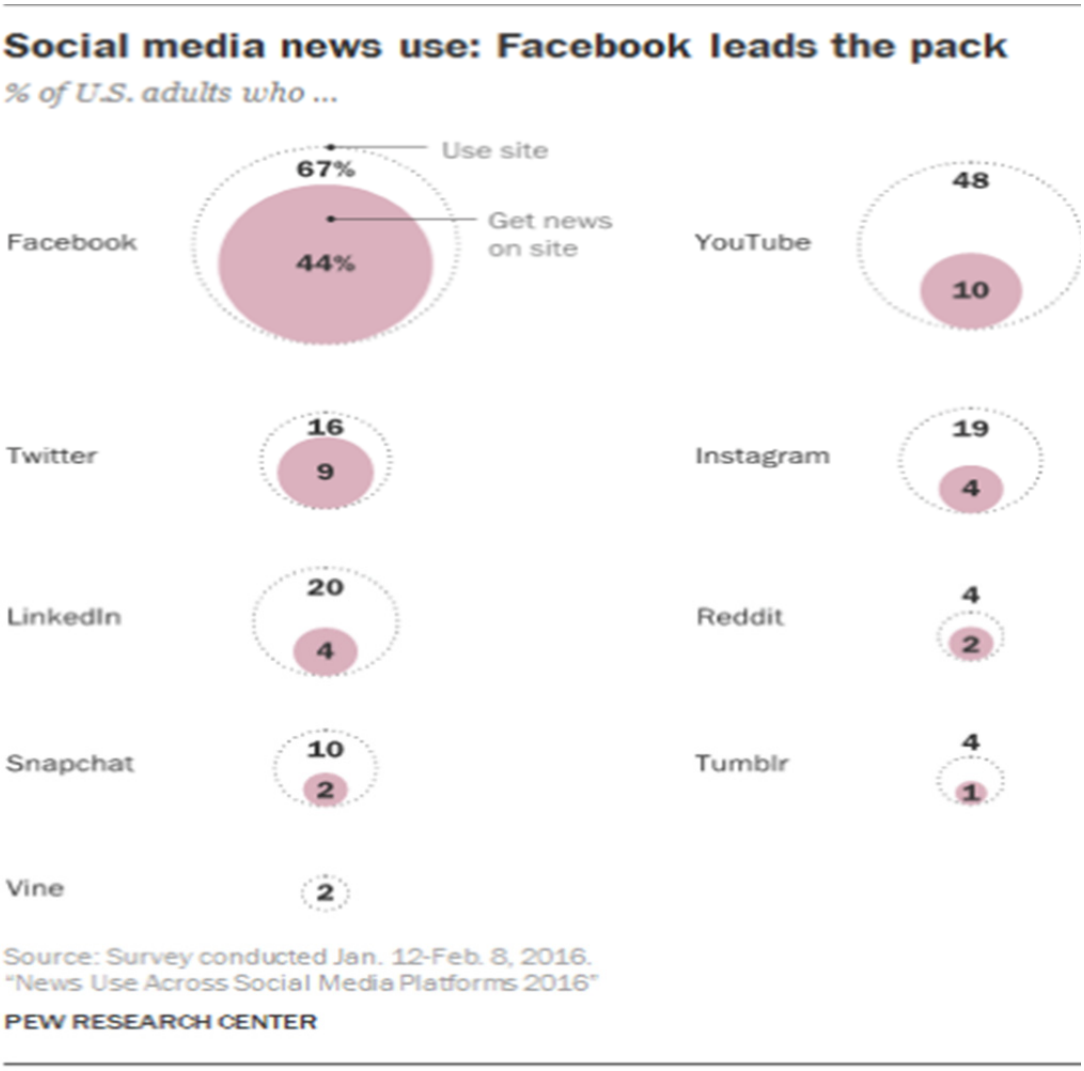
For example, a representative study[11] led between the 12th January and 8th February 2016 on 4654 members of Pew Research Center's American Trends Pannel highlighted the lack of comparing practices in their information treatment. The response to their study points out that "a majority (64%) get news on just one, most commonly Facebook. About a quarter (26%) gets news on two of those sites. Just one-in-ten get news on three or more". An other study comparing the social medias news use during the same period shows that Facebook is the most used by U.S adults and is by far the most used to get news.

11 http://www.journalism.org/2016/05/26/news-use-across-social-media-platforms-2016/

Figure 1: Most social media news consumers only get news on one site



Figure 2: Social media news use



The fact of the matter is that Facebook have been developed an algorithm which is the hyper-personalised feed. This tool gathers same kind of news in our feeds in order to feel good. For example, if you click one article, you will get in your feed a shared opinion article with the one you just read. Consequently, this is a vicious circle because not only people stay on one website but also they are pushed to read always the same news among similar sources.

However, it still offers the chance to people to share their point of views with anyone. Then, it gives an other mean to communicate for political parties and enable them being accessible every time to answer questions. Besides, it permits the emergence of wistle-blowers and political investigation websites which reinforce democracy by seeking more transparency. Finally, digital political communication does change traditional communication because it is accessible for everyone. Also, in a way, it reinforces democracy enabling a diversity of new

actors to enter the public debate whilst it still can be a threat because it easily set people in a bubble.

B. French digital communication among electoral campaigns

Regarding last elections, it appears that French political communication and use of digital are became inseparable likewise in United Kingdom and within most of countries of the world. The reason is that internet and social medias are accessible almost everywhere and 49,7 % population of the world uses internet according to Internet World Stats[12]. However, whilst countries identity and culture have been facing globalisation through the use of internet, I would say that political digital communication practices are different when comparing two countries. This is why, in order to confirm this assumption, I decided to compare France and United Kingdom political digital practices. Indeed, I think that the culture and the relation of citizens with communication might influence how digital communication is used concerning politics.

First, I will try to explain the French political communication, its discipline and regulation. Afterwards, I would make a comparison of the use of digital communication and especially social medias between 2012 and 2017 presidential elections in order to measure concretely the importance of political internet communication. Finally, I will try to understand how does fake news and targeted advertising have been used during French elections and what are their impacts.

1. The political conservative communication French touch

When comparing communication in France with the one in United States and United Kingdom, it appears that French use of communication arrived much more lately than these English-speaking countries. From the 1930's, communication tools are already employed by U.S president, Franklin D. Roosevelt through his fireside chats between 1933 and 1944. He was the first to use the radio, a mass media, to talk directly with millions of Americans about his political vision. Meanwhile, Winston Churchill, prime minister of United Kingdom was already a master for delivering powerful speeches and slogans in order to gather people behind him through plenty of radio broadcasts. On the contrary, it is only from 1954 that mass

[12] http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm

media tools are used seriously by a French politician. Indeed, The French prime minister, Pierre Mendes France starts a weekly basis radio programme called "les causeries radiophoniques du samedi" to speak directly to French citizens.

Then, political communication became a full study discipline in United States at the dawn of the 1940's with Lazarsfeld and Columbia University first empirical studies regarding the media power on public opinion. Those researches around political communication enable the integration of mass communication techniques in the American political campaigning like the use of polls to predict the elections results. On the opposite, the use of voting intentions in French campaigning came much later in 1965 during Charles de Gaulle presidential victory. Polls succeeded in announcing a second ballot against all journalist statements. During these elections, a centrist candidate, Jean Lecanuet is the first French politician to use mass medias, posters and a communication team during campaigning.

From that time, there is a starting generalisation of marketing political techniques among the French politician sphere. A big change comes when the first French television debate during 1974 second round presidential elections succeed in gathering 25 millions of viewers. During the 1980's, every main parties are surrounded by a communication team and spin doctors as Jacques Seguela, an advertiser who helped the socialist leader to win two presidential elections in a row. At the same time, marketing practices like teasing and political benchmarking are largely experimented in the political field by Jacques Chirac and Francois Mitterrand.

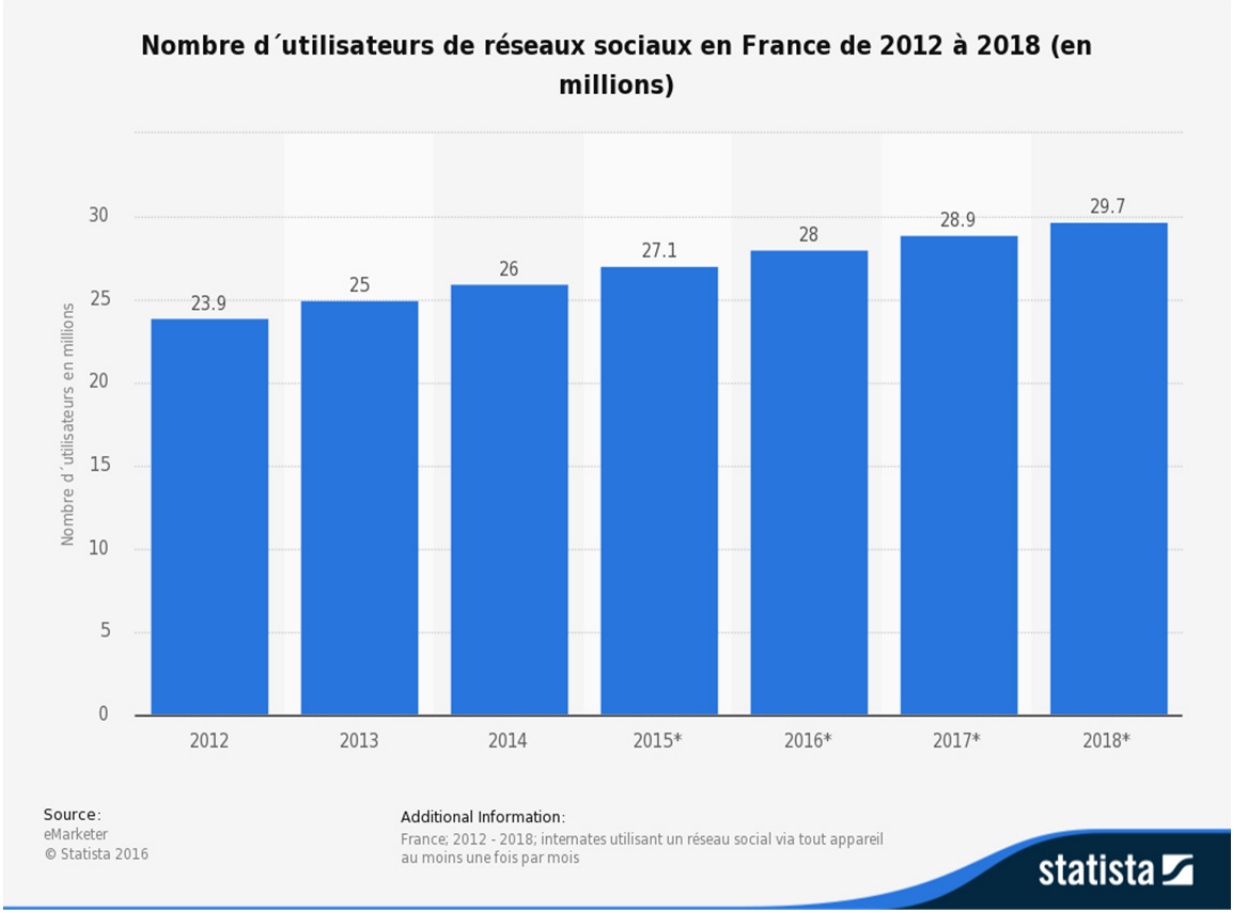
However, French political regulations concerning the use of communication become meanwhile really restrictive. For instance, the 15TH January 1990[13], advertising spots are forbidden and communication budgets for campaigning are limited due to some scandals. Besides, the creation of the CSA "Conseil superieur de l'audiovisuel" in 1989 guarantees on television and radio medias a strict equality of speech for each candidates during presidential elections run up and asked for an equity between candidates speaking time during others political elections. This strict regulation on traditional medias use for politicians have had probably a decisive impact in the important utilisation of social medias during last French presidential elections.

[13] https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000000341734

2. The use of social medias along 2012 and 2017 presidential elections

The use of digital communication during French presidential elections is quiet interesting when comparing 2012 and 2017 elections. I chose to compare presidential elections and not an other type of elections because these elections are the most covered by medias and they are mostly to gather the main part of the population. Although Barack Obama gets to victory by leading his 2008 presidential campaign on social medias, 2007 French presidential campaigning was really reserved on social medias. However, 2012 French presidential campaigning have been more digitally involved. Indeed, according to the chart below, the number of social media users in France has been constantly growing from 2012.

Figure 1: Part of social medias users between 2012 and 2018 in France (million)



During 2012 French presidential elections, there are 24 million of social medias users whereas along 2017 presidential elections, almost 30 million of French people are social medias users. This significant raise points out the digital potential growth for politicians. It is more

interesting for them because social medias are used by 84% of less than 40 years old people[14] and young people get the most higher abstention rate regarding elections. According to l'Observatoire de la Jeunesse[15], abstention rate for people between 18 and 35 years old reached 30 % during 2012 presidential second round and according to an IFOP study[16], abstention rate along 2017 presidential second round went to 33% for millennials. Therefore, use of social medias by politicians is a major stake to talk directly with undecided people or non-voters in France. Besides, their vote is known as decisive for a tight election.

[14] http://www.blogdumoderateur.com/50-chiffres-medias-sociaux-2017/
[15] http://www.injep.fr/sites/default/files/documents/JES13_vote_des_jeunes_BD.pdf
[16] http://www.francetvinfo.fr/elections/presidentielle/presidentielle-jeunes-seniors-ouvriers-cadres-chomeurs-qui-a-vote-quoi-au-second-tour_2179999.html

Figure 2: Popularity of candidates on Facebook and Twitter during 2012 presidential elections[17]

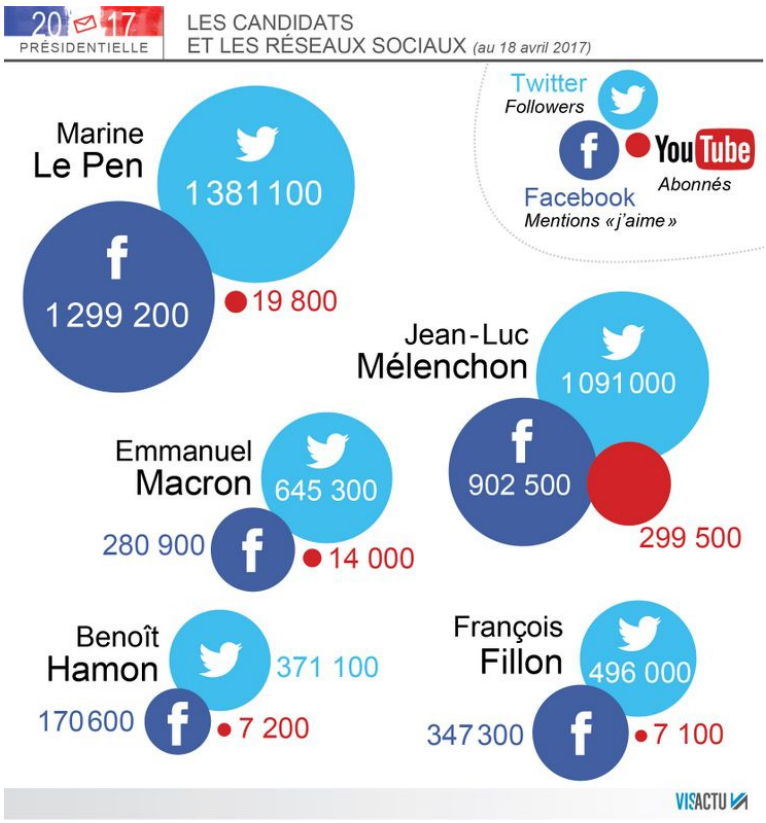


[17] http://www.huffingtonpost.fr/2012/04/20/twitter-facebook-election-presidentielle_n_1441939.html

Those graphs show that the final two candidates on the second round, Nicolas Sarkozy and Francois Hollande were the most popular on Facebook and Twitter. Consequently, social medias are a powerful indication to vote intentions even it is not totally reliable because Nicolas Sarkosy had more followers on Facebook than other candidates but lost the elections.

As well in 2017, social medias are again a good clue to understand vote intentions and its use seems to be more impactful than 2012 elections. For instance, the candidate Jean Luc Melenchon who wasn't really welcomed by general traditional press created his Youtube channel to discuss directly with new audiences and reach especially young people who represent the main undecided part of the population. Thanks to his videos, he built himself a strong notoriety on internet and succeeded in gathering 300 000 suscribers. Florian Philipot, the vice-president of Front National used the same strategy and if it didn't work as well due to critics on the video format, he received a lot of exposure.

Figure 3: Candidates and social media popularity during 2017 presidential elections[18]



[18] https://www.franceculture.fr/politique/les-reseaux-en-campagne-vaste-audience-et-petites-manipulations

This chart enables to see again the existing link between social medias popularity and real intentions of votes. Indeed, the three candidates who get the best score on the first round are the three more popular on social medias, Marine Lepen, Jean Luc Melenchon and Emmanuel Macron.

However, the notoriety on social medias has to be nuanced as the graph shows. Marine Le Pen who was the winner of social medias election lost by far against Macron during the run-up whereas he had two times less of followers on Twitter and Facebook. Meanwhile, social medias in France have definitely enabled extreme right and left parties to get exposure and to catch their speaking time that traditional medias don't give to that kind of parties. The digital communication run by parties along 2017 presidential elections have been more powerful than along 2012 ones because it enabled a significant exposure for non traditional parties. Indeed, thanks to social medias use, Front national and La France Insoumise from Melenchon collected the main part of millennial votes. Nevertheless, it is important to notice that use of social medias didn't raise the turnout of young voter because the abstention rate has increased of 3 percentage points regarding 2012 presidential elections. Although social medias have been playing a key role for exposure along the two last presidential elections in France, the use of digital strategies and tools as fake news and targeted advertising have helped candidate visibility.

3. Targeted advertising and fake news impact on French elections

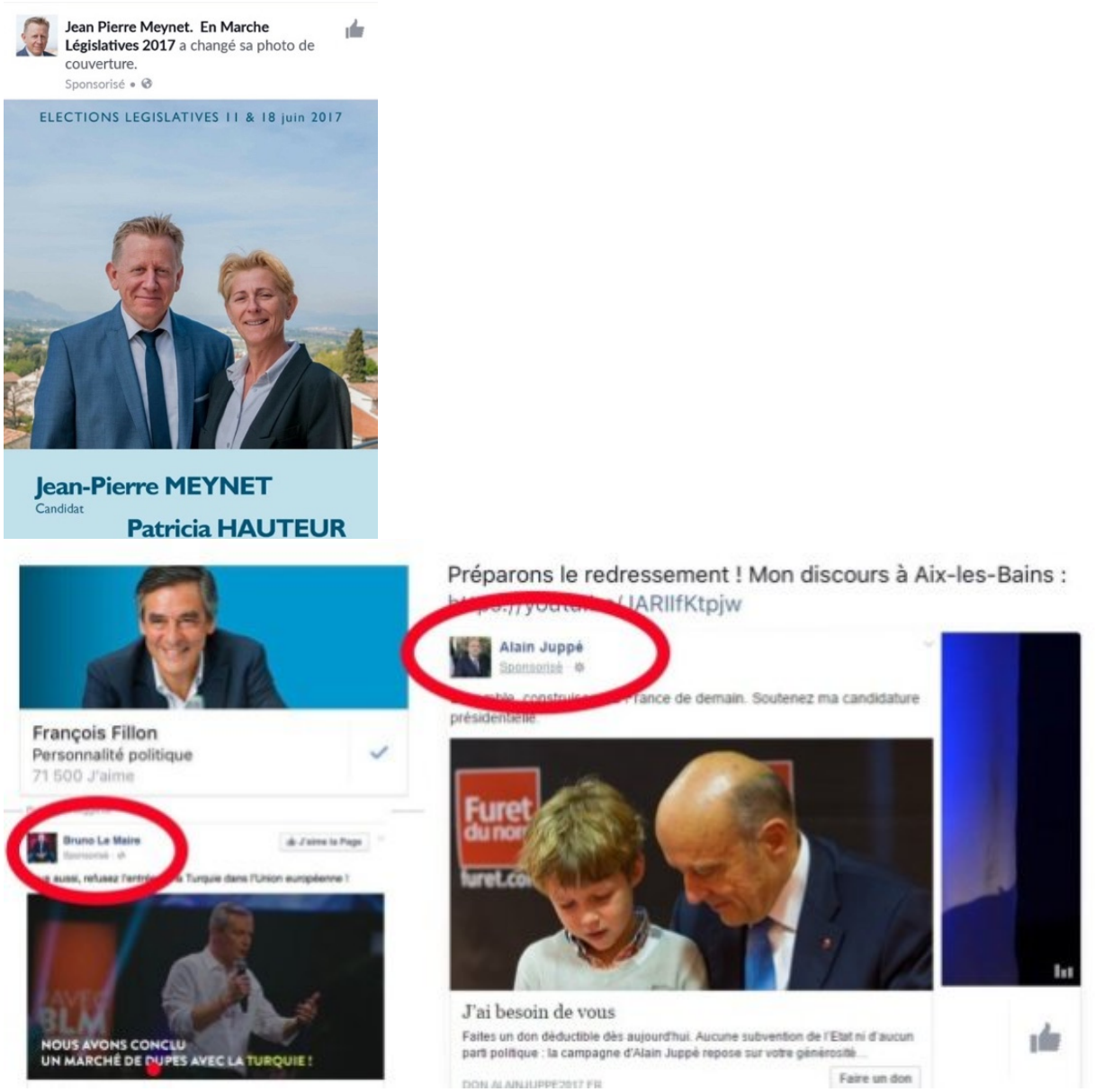
The aim of French presidential candidates during these two last elections has been to show a more accessible image to young people by using different digital advertising tools. This has been realised by a strong digital communication budget increase between 2012 and 2017 elections. For instance, during presidential of 2012, social medias budget represented 2 million euros on 16,8 million total budget for the two main parties, le parti socialiste (PS) et l'Union pour un Mouvement Populaire (UMP). Those digital spends were by far the most important comparing other parties and its important to notice that these two parties went to the presidential ballots. During last 2017 presidential elections, candidates decided to spend less money on meetings and did much less gatherings comparing to 2012 presidential elections. The money they saved by doing that have been reinvested on digital communication and particularly, targeted advertising. Official budget repartition of 2017 candidates are not already pushed alive but all experts tend to figure that digital spends were much higher than

2012 elections for each parties. As a significant clue, some main candidates like Fillon, Macron and Melenchon have signed a contract with Big Data firms[19] in order to target undecided voters. These companies use powerful machine learning software able to gathering enough data on social medias users to provide a personalised advert. This method has been largely used by Trump communication team to convince non-voters to rally the republican candidate. This technic worked pretty well because he won the presidential American elections.

Nevertheless, United States regulation regarding communication practices allows completely this kind of marketing practices whereas French law forbids every commercial advertising from whatever electronic communication means to a 75 000 euros penalty according to the L52-1 article from electoral code since 2011. However, French parties and especially right party during right primary have still spent a consequent amount of money to use Facebook targeted advertising in order to collect donations and to rally people's vote. As well during 2017 French legislatives, some En Marche candidates have used the same kind of Facebook advertising.

[19] https://www.sciencesetavenir.fr/high-tech/data/big-data-reseaux-sociaux-l-election-presidentielle-sous-influence-numerique_112662

Figure 1: Targeted advertising from "En Marche" and "Les Republicains"[20][21]



Whilst the law didn't condemn anybody, the use of targeted advertising is not a legal practice and it explains the fact that it has not been broadly used by parties during French presidential elections.

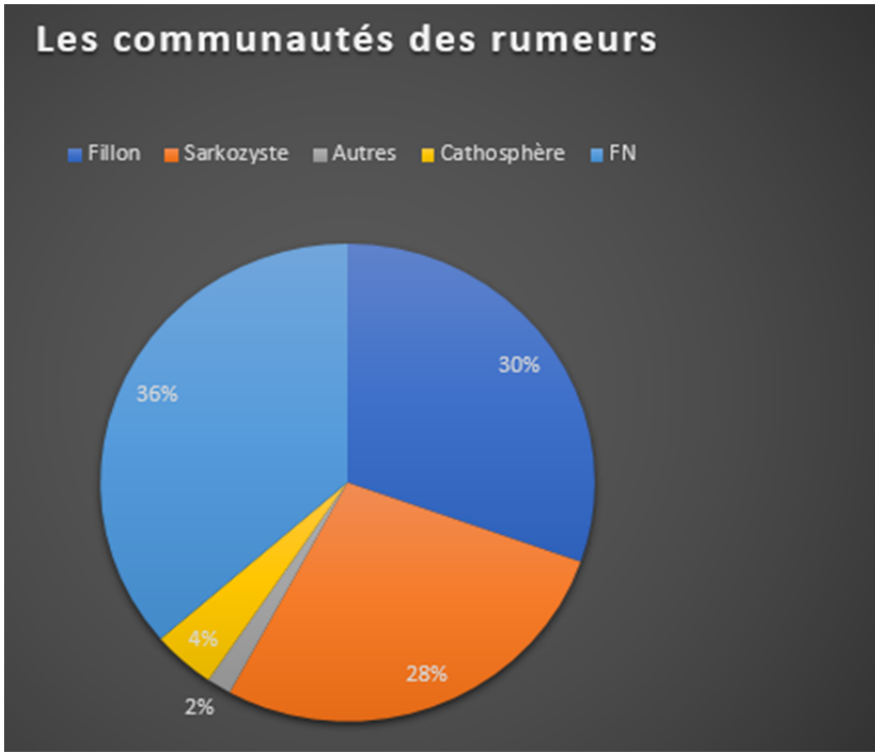
Otherwise, Fake news has definitely got a strong impact over French elections. A study led by the Bamako Social agency based in London have analysed 8 million links shared on French political elections and collected from 800 websites between 1st November 2016 and 4th april

[20] http://www.huffingtonpost.fr/2016/04/10/publicite-politique-facebook-botte-secrete-primaire-droite_n_9530520.html
[21] http://www.francetvinfo.fr/internet/reseaux-sociaux/legislatives-les-candidats-ont-ils-le-droit-de-se-payer-des-posts-sponsorises-sur-facebook-ou-twitter_2212394.html

2017 to measure the impact of fake news.[22] They concluded that one on four links shared among social medias concerning French elections came from fake news publishers.

Besides, fake news has been part entirely of communication strategies by some parties and especially, the Front National one. The most famous example is when Marine Lepen, the leader of far-right party accused Emmanuel Macron to have an offshore bank account in Las Bahamas during second round TV debate. Yet, this information was a fake one and came from two propaganda Russian websites called Sputnik and Russia Today known to share and create fake news around internet.

Figure 2: Twitter fake news communities during French 2017 presidential elections[23]



The Belgium researcher, Nicolas Vanderbiest published a study on 20th April 2017 to understand where fakes news on Twitter came from during 2017 presidential elections by using a clustering algorithm. His results shown that republican and front national parties where by far the main providers of fake news. He concluded also that the main factor which

[22]https://static1.squarespace.com/static/58495e3329687f8bfbb3f25c/t/58f5b4cd2994ca075dfa803c/1492497618893/Role+and+Impact+of+Non-Traditional+Publishers+in+the+French+Presidential+Election+-+Report+1+-+Bakamo.pdf
[23] Nicolas Vanderbiest, Reputatiolab, 20 April 2017

makes fake news viral is the number of sharing because the more they are read and shared, the more they can become credible.

Nevertheless, if fake news cannot be regulated on internet, some online newspapers tried to decrypt the arrival of fake news sooner. For instance, le monde website has created a site called “les decodeurs” which enable internet users to control their sources in order to see which information is fake news.

Figure 3: Les decodeurs, Investigation website against fake news



Consequently, Fakes news has been largely used in the last French elections but didn’t finally favour the parties which based their digital communication on it like the Front National did. It seems that French people were enough informed to distinguish fake from real news

C. British digital communication among electoral campaigns

Roger Mortimore, director of Political Analysis at Ipsos Mori London explains[24] "since our series of book began with a volume on the 1979 british election, political communication is unquestionably a central facet of the modern democratic process in United Kingdom."

Indeed, political communication since the world war ended has been a decisive part of the puzzle during general British elections. The reasons which may explain its preponderant role is the fact that United Kingdom electorate is much more volatile and heterogeneous than the French one. For instance, the participation rate for general elections never passed 80% since 1955 and reached the lower score of 59,6% on 2001 elections[25] whereas the turnout in France is usually higher than 80% since 30 years and the smaller participation rate represents 75 % reached during 2017 second round presidential elections[26]. These numbers confirm that the british electorate is much less politically involved than French people. Whilst abstention is a constant issue in United Kingdom, young people vote turnout and general participation is growing since 2010 general elections. This makes interrogate the impact of modern communication practices among electoral campaigns.

My plan would be similar to the second part concerning French digital communication. In the first place, I will try to contextualise the general communication in Britain and highlight the main cultural applications through several examples. In the second place, I would give an interest in the use of social medias during political previous elections including the European Union referendum. To conclude, I will bring an analysis of the fake news and targeted advertising use to measure their impact on campaigning results.

[24] Political communication in Britain in the 2010 general elections, Ed PALGRAVE, Roger Mortimore, Dominic Wring and Simon Atkinson.
[25] http://www.ukpolitical.info/Turnout45.htm
[26] http://www.lemonde.fr/election-presidentielle-2017/article/2017/05/07/presidentielle-2017-abstention-record-pour-un-second-tour-depuis-l-election-de-1969_5123757_4854003.html

1. British tabloids, spin doctors and sensationalistic communication

First of all, United Kingdom has always been a precursor in term of effective communication. The born of tabloids which stands for sensationalistic newspaper using short sentences, short paragraphs, catchy visuals and slogans is by far the most relevant example of British communication. For instance, The Daily Mirror, a daily british tabloid newspaper founded in 1903 and still publish today due to an easy-to-read-manner and a sensational make up. As well, The Sun and the Daily Mirror are famous tabloids.

Figure 1: Main Tabloids in UK



According to James Stanyer[27], "In Britain, news broadcasters have largely come to regard their viewers as having a limited apetite". Indeed, the conventional politics is seen as unlikely to attract audience. This is the reason why Tabloids always talk about leading political personalities rather than day-to-day policy. Even conventional broadsheet press like the Telegraph or the Guardian have reduced the cover of political subjects regarding a study of Stanyer. This should explain the weak participation and the lack of interest in general elections from British citizens.

Although the term Spin doctor came from United States, it seems that it appeared first in Britain with the creation in 1929 of the Prime Minister's Press Secretary post by Ramsay Macdonald. According to Bryan McNair[28], this role was originally to "enabling journalists' access to information, communicating decisions to the media and feeding back media reportage". This function has been politicised and became central during the golden age of

[27] James Stanyer, Modern Political Communication, 2017, p109
[28] Bryan McNair, An introduction du Political communication, 1995, p147

spin doctors which happened from 1980's to the 2000's early in United Kingdom. For instance, Sir Bernard Ingham was the chief press secretary of Margaret Thatcher from 1979 to 1990. He was known to be effective propagandist for the Thatcherite cause using news management techniques and controlling entirely the communication of her prime minister.

Then, 1990's and early 2000's represented a new period of modern communication which was based on critic the opposition. It started with conservatives who hired the advertising agency Saatchi & Saatchi which run powerful but negative campaign criticising the opposition. Finally, seeing that conservative dark ads worked well, labours under Alastair Campbell communication chief decided to play the same game during 2001 general UK elections. That campaign was a great success and helped Tony Blair to win the general elections.

Figure 2: Advert from Conservatives created by Saatchi & Saatchi agency, 1991[29]

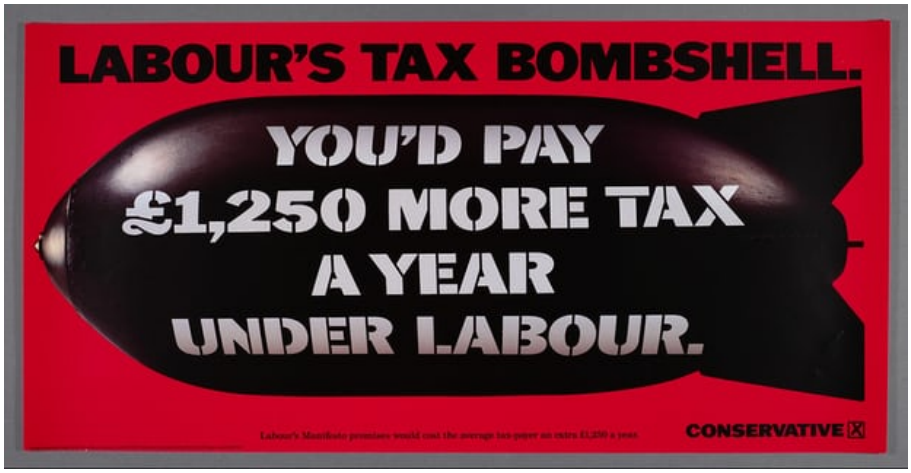


Figure 3: Advert from Labours created by Trevor Beattie, 2001



[29] https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2015/apr/03/the-10-best-british-political-posters

Creativity and humour are criterion who are really important in campaigning communication whereas it much more discreet in France. Indeed, the more political advertising is sensationalistic and out of the box, the more there are chances being a success over british population.

Regarding political advertising, British communication guidance is more flexible than French one. "Ofcom" standing for office for communication is the official agency which deals with party election broadcast regulation on TV and on Radios. Ofcom makes a difference concerning airtime between major and others parties. In March 2015, the agency declared that UKIP, the pro-brexit party should be regarded as a major party due to its growing notoriety. Ofcom have set minimum airtime which represents at least two broadcasts for major parties and one broadcast for non-larger parties. According to Adam Baxter[30], "the concept of due impartiality in Oxfom's code is deliberately flexible" whereas in France there is an equality of treatment in terms of the broadcasting airtime. Since the communication acts of 2003, political advertisement spots are forbid on TV but are allowed on non-broadcast media like newspapers and tabloids.

2. Social medias utilisation during Brexit, 2015 and 2017 general elections

The use of social medias within United Kingdom is much higher than French use. Indeed, over 65 million total inhabitants, they were 38 million active social medias users in 2016[31] whereas 30 million used social medias in 2013. As a reminder, only 28 million people in France were using social medias actively in 2016. If millennials are the most represented part of the population on UK social medias (46%), the 55+ are really involved too because they embody 19 % on the total users. That use of social medias is really significant and constitute a high potential for politician communication to reach younger and older people.

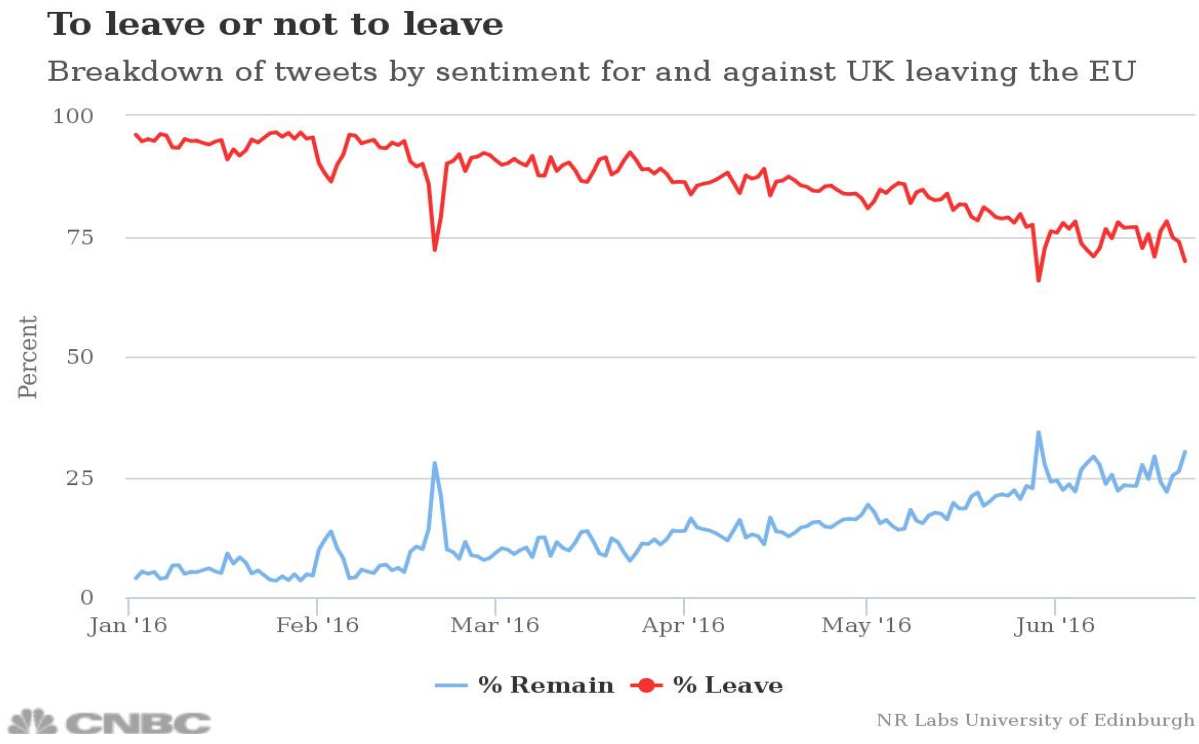
Nevertheless, the turnout during general elections is lower than French participation because it reached only 65 %, 66 % and 68% respectively for 2010, 2015 and 2017 general elections. Then, the turnout during European Union referendum went to 72%. Furthermore, the abstention rate for millennials is much higher in UK than in France because it usually

[30] Political Communication In Britain, palgrave, 2017, p200
[31] https://www.clicky.co.uk/2016/07/social-media-stats-2013-vs-2016/

represents 60% of the young population. As a reminder, it is only of 30% in France. However, whilst the average participation for young voters stayed at 40 % along 2015 general elections, the turnout of millennials has known a significant raise since. First, the EU referendum gathered a 65 % participation rate among millennials, "which is closer to the population average than could have been expected" according to James Endersby, director of an insight agency[32]. Second, 2017 general elections have shown an increase of 14 percentage points on 2015 to reach 55% of turnout.[33] Therefore, it is interesting to analyse the link between digital political communication and social medias users to understand if it has impacted the turnout rate.

First of all, the 2016 EU referendum example in UK has shown that social medias analysis could be interesting in a way to understand the influence on polls.

Figure 1: Tweets concerning the leave or the remain during EU Referendum Campaigning[34]

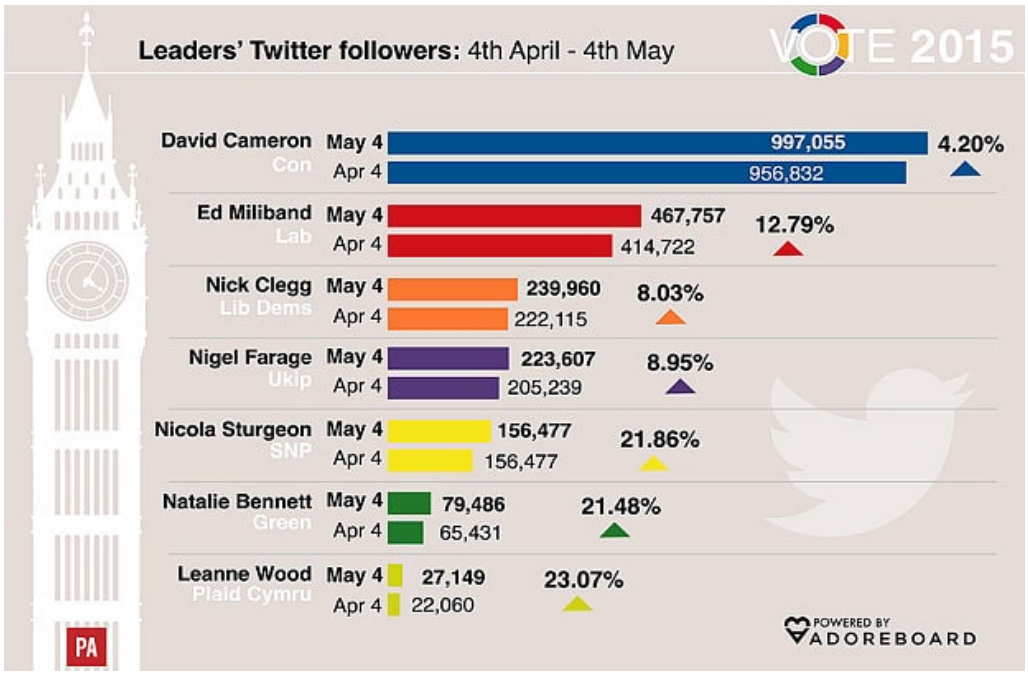


[32] http://opinium.co.uk/did-young-people-bother-to-vote-in-the-eu-referendum/
[33] https://www.theguardian.com/politics/datablog/ng-interactive/2017/jun/20/young-voters-class-and-turnout-how-britain-voted-in-2017
[34] http://www.dmnews.com/social-media/what-we-can-learn-from-the-postmortem-on-brexit-social-media/article/505354/

This graph is really interesting because it points out the massive usage of tweets for the leave and the lack of involvement from remains voters. It proves also the influence of social medias on people vote intentions because UK finally vote the leave whereas traditional polls have planned the remain and consequently fail to predict the results. According to Vyacheslav Polonski[35], scientist at the University of Oxford, social medias have unquestionably swayed the results of Brexit. He led a large scale study on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook and his data analysis showed that "not only did Brexit supporters have a more powerful and emotional message, but they were also more effective in the use of social media".

As well, social medias seemed to have influence both 2015 and 2017 general elections. For instance, during 2015 general elections, it is interesting to notice that those who succeeded in getting the most followers on social medias like twitter won the higher part of seats in the house of commons.

Figure 2: Leaders twitter followers during 2015 general elections[36]

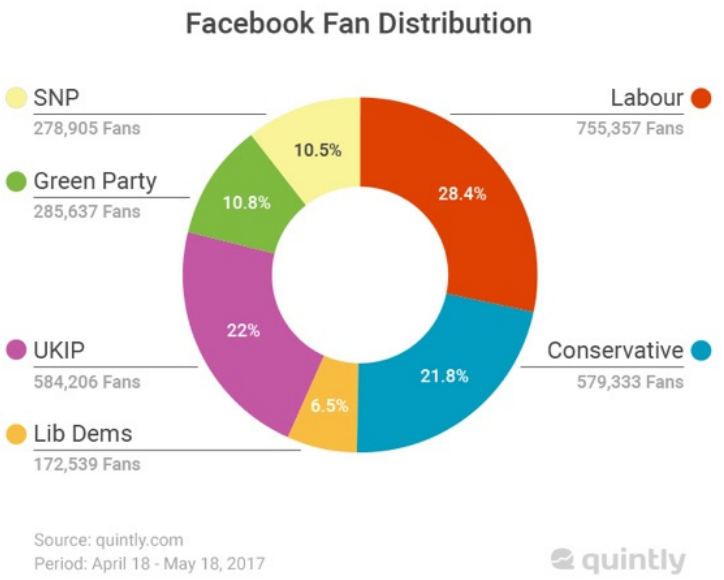


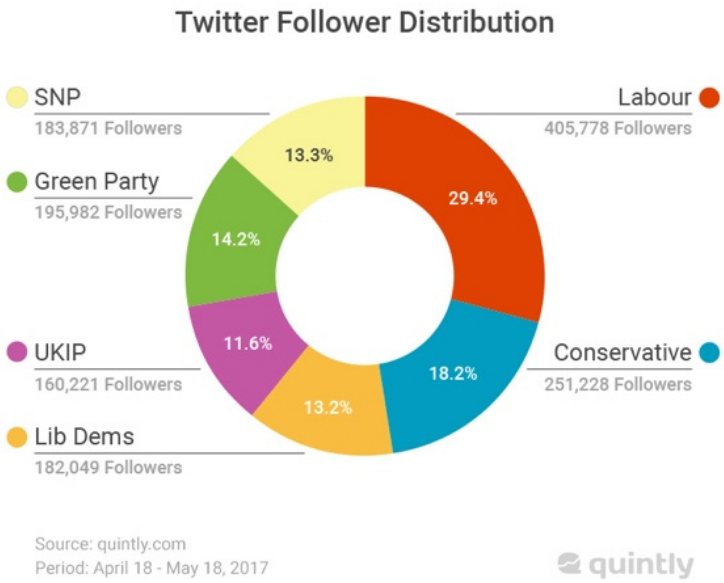
As the graph shows, David Cameron, leader of the conservative party gathered almost 1 million fan on Twitter whereas Ed Miliband had two times less. This high number of followers enabled him to get a much higher exposure than Labour leader among younger

[35] http://www.referendumanalysis.eu/eu-referendum-analysis-2016/section-7-social-media/impact-of-social-media-on-the-outcome-of-the-eu-referendum/
[36] http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/general-election-2015/11585233/Election-2015-Which-party-has-won-the-social-media-war.html

people who are the most undecided. Nevertheless, Labours took their revenge on 2017 general elections by using a powerful digital communication on social medias using videos, pictures and slogans for making messages more shareable.

Figure 3: Facebook and twitter fan distribution over 2017 general elections[37]





[37] https://www.quintly.com/blog/2017/05/general-election-on-social-media/

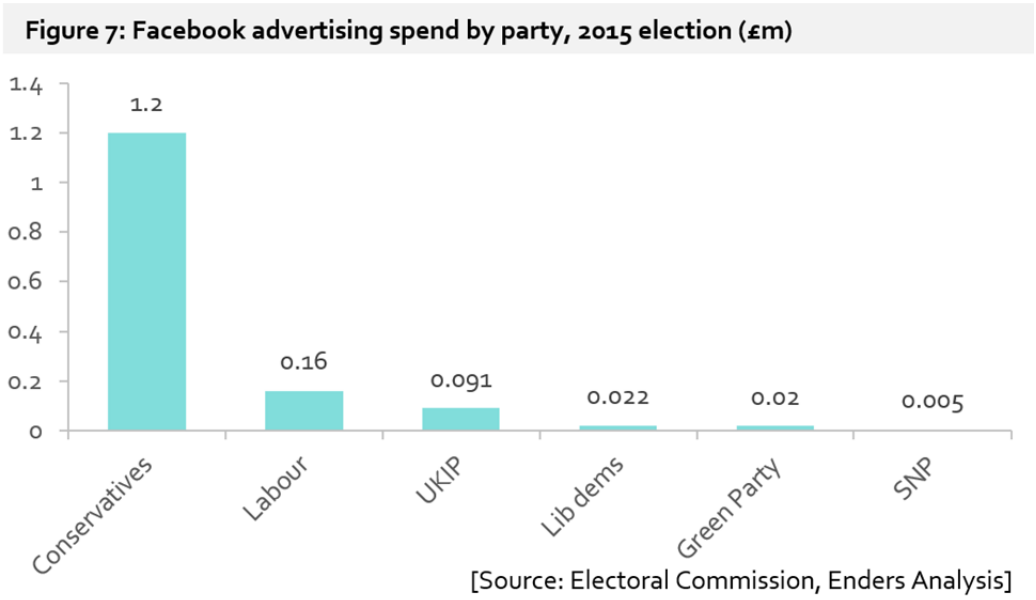
Indeed, Labours have been more present on Facebook and Twitter than conservatives did. They gathered 200 000 more fans on Facebook and 150 000 more fans on twitter than conservatives which enabled them to get a lot more exposure. Then, labours also called massively young people to vote by doing a digital campaign on social medias focus on the need to grow the turnout. Finally, it seems that the digital strategy of Labours paid well because they gathered 68% of young votes during 2017 general elections, much more than during last elections. Nevertheless, Labours didn't win the elections so the sway of social medias have to be nuanced.

Therefore, the use of social medias has been played a key role on parties campaigning during 2015 and 2017 general elections likewise along EU referendum. Social medias enabled UK parties to get definitely more exposure along millennials and non-voters people. Meanwhile, last elections and referendum has also been swayed by the use of fakes news and targeted advertising

3. The role of targeted advertising and fake news on British campaigning

Targeted advertising is by far one of the most important tools on digital campaign for British parties. Concerning regulation, Facebook targeted advertisings are not banned by the British law contrary to France. The advertising Standarts Authority (ASA) which is the UK independent regulator of advertising over all medias only control and take action against misleading, harmful or offensive ads. That is to say that it allows every political targeted ad.
The "dark ads" as it used to call in UK, because they gathered information on the social user by secret means, have been generally and largely used by major parties and particularly, the conservative party during last elections.

Figure 1: Facebook advertising spend by party during 2015 general elections[38]



During 2015 general elections, conservatives spent 1, 2 million of euros in targeting undecided voters across the web by tailoring advertising to their profiles thanks to facebook and google data. It results that this targeted ads able conservatives to reach 17 million people[39] a week and thus, boost their awareness and exposure much more than labour who reached only 16 million in their best month. To catch their late, labour party have invested in big data software called Promote in order to target people with the right message at the best time during 2017 general elections. Each conservatives and Labour have spent 1 million into targeting advertising on Facebook during last elections.

As well, according to the Independent Online, during the EU referendum and the leave victory, vote leave spent 98% of 6, 8 million overall budgets on digital advertising and targeted ads. If it is impossible to measure the real impact of targeted advertising, it is still the best tool today to reach people by tailoring an ad to their sensibility and emotions. Furthermore, parties which have spend a large amount of money on targeted advertising in UK won the elections like conservatives during 2015 general elections and vote leave during E.U referendum. Therefore, targeted advertising is a powerful political communication tool to sway public opinion in UK. However, if dark ads are not banned by British law, there are a number of investigations led by the Information Commissioner's Office which question the

[38] Electoral commission, Enders Analysis, 2015
[39] http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/election-facebook-dark-targeted-ads-tories-labour-do-something-a7745341.html

legality over possible breaches of UK data collecting law[40]. Indeed, political parties are considered to break the law if they gathered individual data to target people.

Otherwise, fake news got a strong impact during UK last elections and EU referendum likewise French presidential elections. However, the impact seemed to have more consequences. The vote leave which conduct to Brexit is the main example of fakes news swaying.

Figure 2: Bus advertising fake news for vote leave during 2016 EU referendum



This slogan was one of the main arguments of the vote leave campaign whereas the figure was unchecked. BBC reality check has proved that UK wasn't sending 350 million a week to European Union but 161 million a week. This kind of fake news has been largely shared during the referendum and has brought confusion among British electors. For example, a graph has caught the main words surrounding Turkey on twitter during the debate.

[40] https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2017/may/17/inquiry-launched-into-how-uk-parties-target-voters-through-social-media

Figure 3: Rumours and fake news on Twitter during Brexit conversation[41]



This graph shows that rumours concerning turkey joining the European Union are the most shared on Twitter whereas there are no official statements which declare that turkey would join the EU. UK fake news came from right and far-right parties most of the time. Conservatives during 2017 general elections have extensively shared fake news against Jeremy Corbyn and labour party. For example, they widely shared a "misleading edit of Corbyn interview for Sky News cut to suggest he didn't condemn bombings on IRA".[42]

Otherwise, Tories digital campaign on Facebook has been pronounced by an offensive against labour with the publication of negative advertisings. This method of campaigning looks like Trump communication which was focus on the send of negative or fake news to the opposition in order to bring confusion over the adverse electorate.

[41]https://twitter.com/BritishLogic/status/746257136695508992/photo/1?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw&ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.brandwatch.com%2Fblog%2Freact-brexit-post-truth%2F

[42] https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2017/jun/02/labour-accuses-tories-of-fake-news-over-video-of-corbyn-ira-comments

Figure 4: Negative ads in targeted advertising used by Tories during 2017 general elections[43]



The aim of this communication is to deprive of credit the adverse candidate by insisting largely on little failures and using manipulation technics to get exposure among people. By bringing confusion through negatives ads sometimes mixed with fake news, Trump succeeded in making Hilary Clinton, the most untrusted political candidate in United States. Vote leave campaign was also a matter of negatives ads and fake news communication. The main arguments from the leave consisted in attacking Europe by highlighting all the negative points without weigh up the pros and the cons. Through this offensive communication, they managed to focusing the entirely debate on Europe bad points avoiding to talk about the situation post-Brexit and in which way it could have a negative impact on UK. Therefore, negative ads represent a bigger danger than fake news because it is a combination of subjective attacks on irrelevant or fake situations.

The Oxford Internet Institute led a study over the first week during 2017 general elections suggesting that "one on eight political stories shared on twitter in the run-up to 2017 general elections is from a junk news source"[44]. The study found also that British people on twitter were sharing much less of Russian news source than French citizens corresponding to fake

[43] http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/blogs-trending-40059846
[44] http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-40098804

news most of the time. Nevertheless, researchers added that Uk Twitter users shared "marginally worse quality news than france" but "far better than those in the US". However some regulations have been launched to struggle fake news recently. For example, Facebook have reacted after the general criticism of his role in alimenting the phenomenon. Consequently, they deleted thousands of UK accounts[45] which were spreading fake news and revamped their news feed to struggle against the filter bubble which swayed US elections. Facebook has also launched an advertising campaign on UK papers press to prevent about fake news phenomenon and helping people to spot fake news on social medias[46]

Finally, when regarding traditional UK press, it seems that fake news is entirely part of the communication of Tabloids culture. For instance, the daily mail had been condemned many times to convey false information and rumours along personalities. Last widely spread fake news which came from this newspaper was the announce that Melania Trump, the first lady of united states has been an escort girl before met Donald Trump. Others tabloids like the Sun and the daily mirror have been both condemn paying damages due to fake news spreading in a lot of several cases. So, fake news is a key element in the media UK culture because they participate to the sensationalistic communication spread by tabloids which works well to catch most of British reader attentions.

[46] https://www.cnet.com/uk/news/fake-news-whats-the-story-at-the-uk-general-election/

D. Conclusion & hypothesis

The campaigning practices over social medias in UK and in France during last elections has had a significant impact on public opinion and had been decisive in some points. The growing use of social medias both in Uk and in France enabled parties to target more people than along traditional press. It also permits to political candidates to discuss directly with citizens without medium before them. Besides, social medias give the opportunity to parties which are not offered much airtime by traditional medias to catch their speaking time. It appeared that both in UK and in France, the use of social medias has been overused by right and far-right parties.

In UK, Tabloids and British people are not much involved into politics as the really low turnout rate since 50 years has been showed. Nevertheless, political subjects have been a main feed subject over UK social medias and young population. Social medias have definitely played a key role in the growing participation especially among young people during EU referendum and 2017 general elections. In France, traditional newspapers give to political subjects a foreground space and French people are more politicised than British people as the turnout rate in France showed. Whilst, social medias have known a significant raise in numbers of users in France, they are still less used than UK. As well, the participation rate in France has decreased from 2012 during presidential elections, so social medias didn't get a quantitative impact in France.
Nevertheless, there was definitely a qualitative sway in the electorate consolidation and gathering as the high number of followers for Marine Lepen and Melenchon have proved during 2017 presidential elections.

Digital communication during campaigning in UK and in France has been pronounced by a significant use of targeting advertising. In France, targeting advertising has been used mainly by the centrist candidate Macron, the front national and the right party. They all have signed a contract with big data firms enabling the targeting of million users with a tailored message. Nevertheless, there is little information about the real budget spent by candidates during 2017 elections whereas it represented already 2 million euros during 2012 elections for the right and left party. If the law isn't really explicit concerning facebook targeting advertisings, there is still a strict interdiction in France for commercial ads during campaigning. This must explain why targeting advertising budgets are not revealed by parties. However, the use of

targeting advertising seems to be similar than UK. Targeted advertising in UK have been used differently along EU referendum and general elections. If the budget during 2015 general elections was much lower than 2012 French presidential elections, spends in digital advertising reached more than 6 million for the vote leave. This massive use of dark ads has definitely favour the Brexit victory. Therefore, targeted advertising have shown that he could have an important impact on public opinion.

Concerning the use of fake news in France and UK and their impact over public opinion, social medias in France have spread much more fake news than Britain does. One on four link shared on social medias came from fake news publishers according to a study whereas one on eight twitter links in UK were hoax. Then, the parties which based their communication strategies on fake news both in France and in UK have succeeded in gathering a large amount of voters. Nevertheless, Front national didn't win the 2017 presidential elections with this strategy whereas vote leave during EU referendum won thanks partly to this strategy. Then, conservatives during 2017 general elections have massively used negative ads, a combination of fake news and subjective interpretation. They get the higher number of seats but finally didn't win the overall majority. Consequently, if French have been more surrounded by fake news on social medias during last elections, british have been more swayed by them in their vote. This could be explained by the importance of cultural sensationalist press which frequently shares fake news and makes people more credible.

Finally, the hypothesis I draw from this literature review is that digital communication campaigning has a bigger influence on public political opinion in UK than in France. That political digital communication is including social medias campaigning, targeted advertising and fake news strategy from political parties.

III. Field Research

The field research aims to confirm or refute the assumptions drawn during the literature review. There are two different means to investigate among people, either the qualitative or the quantitative study. Each one has assets and drawbacks because no one gives a perfect answer. Indeed, quantitative study describes by trying to number a situation or a fact whereas qualitative seek to understand the tendencies through an analysis of perceptions and behaviours. The searcher has to avoid bias when he runs either a quantitative research or a qualitative study. For instance, a questionnaire to be objective should not include some qualitative words in the questions content because it might influence the respondent.

I decided to run a qualitative study instead of a quantitative study for two main reasons. First, a quantitative study would be too difficult to organize because my subject concerns two countries and deal with all citizens. Therefore, I wouldn't have gathered enough people to represent all sides of population both in UK and in France in order to be objective. Second, I found difficult for my topic to ask in a questionnaire if they felt influenced by fake news because the definition is really subjective according to what you read and what you consider as relevant news.

Consequently, for a sensitive study like mine, a quantitative research would contain too much bias for being relevant. That's why I preferred a qualitative research rather than a quantitative in order to have the possibility to see the bias and to bypass them. If objectivity is really hard to reach in the field research, searchers always tend to objectivity. To do that, the student has to forecast any bias that he could face during his investigation. It is what I have tried to do during my qualitative study by following the methodology of the focus group.

A. Methodology

The aim of a focus group is to bring different people together into a discussion in order to compare their perceptions, believes and their feelings toward a subject. The focus group suggests that participant is rational and able to transpose his environment at speaking.
Nevertheless, it can be hard to run a focus group when the subject is highly emotional because emotions represent a bias to objectivity. That's why it is better to invite participants who are

not emotionally charged on the subject. I decided to run a mixed focus group with French and British people in order to analyse and compare their perceptions, behaviours and opinions regarding my subject.

The methodology I applied was the following one. I gathered 5 people between 23 and 28 years old, 4 French Londoners and 1 British native. There were two girls and three guys. The place was a cosy terrace bar in London Fields, East London. I set the appointment at 5pm on Sunday to make people come. We had our own table and I was in the middle of the table in order that everyone could hear me. I started the debate with a presentation of my topic and an explanation of the focus group purpose. I tried to get rid off any questions on the format by explaining in advance the rules that I would follow. Then, I recorded the debate, passing my phone to every participant one after the other. Every five participants have been talking 10 minutes overall. Only Ray, the British guy, talked more than 10 minutes. He spoke over 15 minutes because I asked him three more questions to get deeper insights and to gain a better value of his interview. In the end, I get a 55 minutes record on my phone.

Otherwise, it was hard to choose a targeting population for my study. Indeed, my topic dealt with all sides of the population who can be reached by social medias. Nevertheless, I have found that millennials generation were by far the main representative part of social medias users. The focus group don't use probability or random sample which is a subset of the population. It usually use convenience sample according to MMG connect[47]. Consequently, I have invited millennials who represents the main sample of my targeted population.

Then, focus group can contain between 5 and 10 people. I finally had 5 people who could come on 10 people invited. Besides, during focus group, the facilitator has to ask a few questions only to enable participants to provide deeper insights into the subject. The researcher has to avoid specific or limitative questions which allow a yes/no answer.

[47] http://www.mmgconnect.com/projects/userfiles/file/focusgroupbrief.pdf

B. Objectives

My purpose in doing this focus group was to understand how does French and British millennials perceived the digital communication of political parties during last elections. Then, my aim was to evaluate the influence of political communication on social medias among social networks users who are especially millennials. I also wanted to know about which communication technic was the most powerful among young voters, which one permit parties to get the most exposure and which one has the most impact. Also, one of my objectives was to get their feelings about the use of targeting advertising and fake news as a digital marketing tool by political parties. Finally, I wanted to compare the influence on public opinion from British and French digital communication.

C. Results

The first question I asked was to measure the interest of the participants in politics and last elections in order to contextualise the debate and to introduce everyone. All participants declared having followed last elections and everyone said he was quiet interested or involved into politics. Nevertheless, not everyone has been enquiring about both UK and French elections. Theo and Julia followed only French elections, Ray kept behind Uk general elections. Then Bryan and Celine have been informed about both elections.

Concerning the use of medias to get inform, they all consume social medias as Facebook, newspapers online websites or digital applications. Nevertheless, Ray declared “I generally like to watch 30 minutes of breakfast BBC news in the morning when I wake up. As well for Celine who agrees “I watch a bit of France TV on weekends occasionally. It is nice to see visual information, I like seeing politicians speaking, the way they express themselves.” So, TV medias is enjoyed as well. Then, the most credible and objective information medias are generally the public medias. Ray quoted the BBC for Britain whereas Theo and Julia talked about France Televisions and France Info news. Bryan and Ray tried to read both sides newspapers to have a big picture of the political news. For instance, Ray affirmed “I prefer to read more traditional news channel, like BBC, guardian, its one of my favourite, CNN, the telegraph, daily mail, or daily express just to have an idea of the other side is thinking”. What they said join the fact that millennials read news mainly on social medias. Nevertheless, it

seems that young people are aware of the importance of sources and tend to prefer public press considered to be more objective than independent or commercial medias.

Next question was focused on the visibility of fake news on social medias and their influence. On fake news definition, everyone agrees that this term is hard to define because there are different fake news and you never know if what you read is fake or is true especially on Facebook. Bryan suggests that "fake news is when some people try to make up some information" usually with catchy sentences and emotional headlines. According to Theo, fake articles are not generally come from political parties but "shady news information especially", Then, for Theo and Julia fakes news are alimented particularly thanks to social medias. But, Ray said that the worrying point on social medias is that "80 % of people are just lazy, so they just read that and believe on this." As well for Celine, social medias are a strong generator of fake news. She feels that "we are literally surrounded by fake assumptions. That's why I am super picky about the medias I read. So many times, I read stuff very quickly on Facebook and I said come on, what the fuck…" Even if social medias feeds are not controlled, it seems that some initiatives are taken to tackle the fake news issue. For example, Celine added "Le monde actually is doing really well in trying to taking all stupid things that people are saying, with les Decodeurs. Like see, this is not the reality with bringing some facts. They do that weekly and its amazing because it's a question of education."

Finally, Celine explained that fakes news in France mainly come from far-right party, le Front National and Russian websites as Russia Today website. Theo agrees and adds that "Political party from Marine Le Pen was sharing news completely non-branded politically. They have a website per county." He also took the example of the migrants misleading news which are communicated by Front National in order to play with fear and to rally people to their causes. So, the communication strategy of Front National is essentially based on fake news spreading and fear playing. Consequently, it works pretty well in France because Marine Le Pen reached the second round during presidential elections.

In UK, Ray points out the irrelevant treatment of information by some tabloids, like the daily mail but said that "Social medias also enable more fake news than traditional press". According to Ray, there is a real confusion of information in the Uk traditional medias which lead to "a polarisation in politics specially here in the UK, people swing further right or further left and anything in the middle like the BBC is being untrusted because it doesn't

shout the eco chamber what they want to hear". Indeed, it does agree with the fact that culture of fake news in UK is widely spread by tabloids and social medias whereas the French traditional press is more controlled by journalism and non-misleading information codes. Moreover, it seems that fakes news brings such a lot of confusion in the UK that even information from objective public medias is sometimes contested.
Otherwise, Ray explains that fake news usually plays with fear to divide people. He took the example of the MP Jo Cox murder by a far-right militant which the daily mail has been trying to justify by misleading assumption as a rational act whereas it was a racist action. Ray suggests that there is a link with fake news and extreme-right parties. Indeed, he reminded that Daily Mail has supported black shirts, the Uk nazi party during the 30's has "always supportive extreme views". Nevertheless, it seems that some initiatives are taken to diminish the impact of fake news. For instance, Ray explained that "The UK website of Russia Today was shutdown for six months because their accounts have been frozen by the UK bank, in an effort to stop the broadcaster from operating in the country."

Then, I asked them what does make a communication campaign powerful along last British and French 2017 elections. My aim was to understand what campaigning practices were perceived as efficient to their opinions. According to Theo, the communication campaign from Jean-Luc Melenchon on YouTube has been really powerful among young people. He said that his younger brother who voted for Melenchon found "He is the only candidate that takes the time to makes videos and post them on Youtube. And answer to the questions that really people wants". Theo also adds that youtube communication has played a key role to reach a younger audience for Melanchon because he took the codes of what the generation consume at the moment and show that he could talk the same way than young people. To Julia, a good communication is "more about something new more than actual programs". She took the example of anti-system parties which beat traditional left and right parties during the first presidential round. They succeed in convincing people because they offered a new political vision. Bryan and Celine explained that is also a matter of being accessible and answering to every question. To them, it was the winning strategy of Macron who "was always talking with people and accessible. His strategy was also to argument every answer to convince people going on his side." Meanwhile, according to Celine, when Francois Fillon, the republican candidate failed in this exercise, his notoriety has decreased.

Otherwise, the main thing which was quoted to a powerful political communication was the use of social medias. Theo talked about youtube, Celine said that politicians image success is about living with his time. Bryan added that it's a matter of being accessible on social medias and sharing a lot of positive stuffs as Macron did and publish on several platforms for being more accessible. For instance, Bryan suggested that it was better to communicate "not always on one platform but different platforms at the same time so everyone can be related to you. That's why it can bring different audiences to you, different populations and sides to your common ideas." Therefore, the accessibility on social medias by politicians was really appreciated by millennials during both Uk and French elections.

Talking about the nature of the message communicated by political parties during French and UK elections, it appeared that negative ads have been efficient in both countries. Indeed, Ray explained that "In a comparison here in UK, I would say that the differences is that the conservative campaign during the general elections was really negative, it was full about attacks of the opposition". What he said join the fact that conservative strategy has been largely surrounded by dark ads to deprive of credit Jeremy Corbyn. Nevertheless, to Ray, the impact of the negative campaign has been destructive for the conservatives. On the contrary, labours have benefited from younger votes thanks to a more positive campaign by the use of more point of views than pure attacks. Whilst it helped conservatives to get the higher number of seats during 2017 general elections, their negative campaign was pretty ineffective and counter-productive among the 68% of young people who voted for Corbyn. If the negative campaign seemed to have a bad effect on 2017 general elections, it is definitely a matter of success in some points when regarding the leave vote strategy during the EU referendum in Uk and the front national success during the 2017 French presidential elections. Then, it is important to remind that millennials were the main Front National electorate during first presidential elections round. So negatives ads mixed to fake news spread on social medias have still swayed the public opinion. To Celine, the main important communication characteristic is the charisma of the candidate and it has to be mixed with the ability "to gather people around positive ideas".

Therefore, they all agrees with two kinds of powerful communication campaigning. First, the one which plays on fears by the use of negative advertising and fake news among social medias. It is currently the one which success in Trump elections and Brexit according to Celine. Second, the one which plays with charisma and positive ideas by the use of targeted

advertising and social medias. Finally, they all agrees that an efficient communication campaign is particularly a matter of accessibility, transparency and freshness.

The next question I asked was focus on the influence of targeting advertising and hyper-personalised feed on social medias. My purpose was to understand how they perceived the influence of these tools. Everyone did agree that the filter bubble which makes you feed tailored to what you like is really dangerous and is a threat to the democracy. There are different consequences to this tool. First of all, Theo said "It completely shuts any debate, shuts you from seeing things from another angle and try to understand facts from an objective point of view". Then, to Julia "It's also opposite with what social medias is supposed to do because social medias is all about sharing views, ideas, gathering information and see things from another perspective." Finally, Ray concluded that it makes "staying yourself far from other ideas and that's not democracy is all about. Democracy is about the fact we may not agree but we can come to some kind of agreements in the end." Their opinions join the fact that the hyper-personalised feed has been proved for being responsible of the polls fail to predict the Brexit and Trump victory. It was related to the polls fails because it kept people in their bubble according to their friends feed. So, people were unable to see opposite opinion and change their way of thinking.

Concerning Targeted advertising, nobody remembers having been targeted by a party during last elections so it was a bit difficult to gather their opinion on it. Nevertheless, Ray explained that this digital communication tool was largely used in UK and it had a real impact on public opinion and "continue to reinforce the political opinion more than anything." For him, the tone in targeted advertising is the most important thing to convince people. "The thing is the tone of labours and conservative's campaign, conservatives are really negative. Even thought, they still have more votes, they lost a lot of votes to labour because the tone is so different. People are sick of austerity, cuts, being reminded to live in fear whereas the labours are saying, we are going to do a lot of investments into public services such welfare… Basically, it's just changing moods and changing the language of the tone. I think more people went to labour from the conservatives this time because of the positivity in their message. I would say also their online campaign were quite effective." This testimony shows that targeted advertising uses the same strategy than traditional advertising in newspapers. Although, targeted advertising online enables to tailor a message according to the data user's profile, it is still a matter of speech and appropriate tone according to Ray. However, targeted advertising

is a dangerous tool because it gathers most of the time secret user data to provide a tailored message to the user and manipulate him. Then, it becomes most dangerous when targeted advertising is mixed with fake news or negative advertisings. This was the case during Brexit, the vote leave camp spent more than 6 million in digital communication and targeted advertising and they spread a large amount of fake news targeting undecided people through big data firms over social medias. The same use was made by Trump during US elections and it has proved to work really well.

IV. Strategic Recommendations

The influence of digital communication among British and French elections has been constantly increased from the Barack Obama and his social medias communication victory during the 2008 U.S presidential elections. Digital communication has become a decisive tool for political parties to target the young electorate and also has given more exposure to original parties or non-traditional views. In a sense, it enforced the visibility of parties which aren't offered equal media covers by traditional press. Meanwhile, it also enabled the spread of fake news and negative advertisings which are less present in the traditional press.

The use of social medias is perceived to be a powerful political communication tool. With 28 million of French users and 10 million more in UK, social medias have become a real stake for political parties. The notoriety of political parties in social medias have been confirming the main vote intentions tendencies. The main example was during Brexit where people have been sharing a lot on twitter for vote leave and much less for the remain side. This has definitely weighed on the final results.

Then, the country culture played a key role when regarding the influence of political communication campaigning on people opinion. This was the point to compare France and United Kingdom communication because it enabled to highlight the impact of culture in the different use and interpretation of political communication. Thus, the political communication in France could be defined by a more conservative approach, that is to say that political subjects are generally described deeply and like they are in the medias. On the contrary, UK press and tabloids used to reserve a really small place for political subjects and focus mainly on scandals, rumours and leader life. This is widely related to the culture. In France, political

communication has been regulated and medias are frequently controlled to see the quality of their sources. The French law is consequently strict with objectivity in political communication. Whereas in UK, the culture of tabloids has spread the sensationalist need into political communication. When comparing UK and French political communication, Uk communication has always been more sensational, chocking, humoristic, cynical, creative than French communication much more conservative. Moreover, the regulation of political communication is more flexible than the one in France. For instance, Britain enables politicians to use targeted advertising and let all TV and radio channels to offer the speaking time they want to candidates.

The British culture explains why British people are more credible to fake news on social medias. The Brexit is the best example to understand this phenomenon. People have been overreacted on tweets spreading rumours and misleading information because they were the most attractive tweets to British people. Then, it participated to create a bubble of fake news including rumours and negative ads over social medias bringing confusion to the debate and giving a lot exposure for vote leave. Therefore, the culture played definitely a key role in the interpretation of political news. An other relevant example is the fact that there was usually two times more of fake news shared among French social medias than british social medias along 2017 general and presidential elections. Whilst, fake news has represented one on four links shared on social medias during 2017 campaigning and the communication of Marine Lepen was based on a fake news and negative advertising strategy, she didn't succeed in winning the presidential elections. That means that the majority of French people were less more forewarned on fake news than British did. Fake news represents an anti-democratic problematic which can have huge consequences on political elections, that's why there is a need to spot them.

During the focus group, we discuss around the issue on how we can detect fake news and why people detect more easily fake news than others. Celine answered that it was particularly a matter of education. What she said join the initiatives of les decodeurs in France and the facebook tips in UK to teach people how to spot fake news. Ray added that it was "a question of personal-responsibility". Indeed, one other recommendation that could be done to prevent the influence of fake news is to get into the habit of comparing by ourselves the sources for every article we read through social medias or websites.

The influence of digital campaigning has also been revealed with the use of targeted advertisings by political parties along general elections, EU referendum and presidential elections. Targeted advertising have been largely used among conservatives and Labour parties in UK. Nevertheless, it is hard to measure the influence of that marketing tool which use algorithm to tailor a propaganda message to the user profile. Again, this practice can be considered as anti-democratic because some parties have a higher budget and reach more people than others. That's happened in United States during 2016 presidential elections. Trump spent much more money in targeted advertising than Hilary Clinton. As well, conservatives spent one million more than labour party during 2015 general elections. This kind of advertising is forbidden in France but some parties did use it on non-presidential elections. United Kingdom should banish partly these practices when an investigation would show that some targeted advertising software is using personal data without user agreements. Therefore, dark ads and big data firms represent a bigger part of digital political campaigning in Britain than in France due to a most strict regulation regarding this kind of advertising.

To conclude, the impact of political digital communication among public opinion in France and in United Kingdom is increasing from years to years. Social medias have revealed to be a powerful tool for politicians to raise turnout, get more exposure and convince millennials. However, digital communication has also had a negative impact on democracy by the wide spread of fake news which can only be tackle by more education and personal responsibility. Then, targeted advertising on social medias like facebook can also have a negative impact when it is used largely because it questions the democracy and private life respect principle by using personal data to convey a tailored message. Nevertheless, the political digital communication has also a positive impact on public opinion because it enabled minority parties or new parties to gain into visibility and to raise awareness easily among people.

A good example of the impact of digital political communication is the one of Allons Enfants, a small political party launched three years ago and gathering mainly people between 18 and 25 years old. They based all their communication on social medias. They finally got 14, 37 % of votes along 2014 Saint cloud municipal elections.

Nevertheless, social medias can also be a threat when regarding the impact of the filter bubble on Brexit and 2016 United States Elections. That's why it is important to always seeking other sources of news to have the most objective information. Finally, digital political

communication in both United Kingdom and France has a really broad impact on public opinion but suffer from a lack of regulations which enables anti-democratic practices.

V. Appendices

Focus Group

Recording time : 55 minutes.

Presentation of the focus group objective

The aim of a focus group is to bring different people together into a discussion in order to compare their perceptions, believes and their feelings toward a subject.

Presentation of my topic

My topic is the influence of digital communication on UK and French political campaigning. I choose this topic because I think that digital communication is an inevitable issue when analysing and comparing political campaigning practices. Nevertheless, it seems hard to define clearly the real influence of digital communication and especially social medias on people's political opinions during elections.

Why do I need your opinion?

I need your opinion on this issue to have better insights for understanding the real influence of digital political communication among UK and French last elections.

Why do a focus group is the most relevant to respond to my topic?

A focus group is relevant because it works on the assumption that interviewees are able to give back an objective analysis of their environment. This method is qualitative which aims to go deeper in the interview and answers than a quantitative research. Then, my topic affects everyone who is an internet user and old enough to vote. Therefore, a quantitative research would be too much fastidious to run if I want to answer to my hypothesis.

Why do I compare two political systems?

First, I choose to compare two different political system countries in order to have a largest view and a better understanding of digital communication practices. Second, I wanted to know how far a country culture can influence or not the perceptions regarding digital communication around politics.

I would ask you about your relations with politics and news media in the first place. Then, I am going to interrogate you about your feelings and perceptions about last political elections

digital campaigning. I will keep a neutral tone during the entire interview in order to not influence your answers.

1) **How are you interested in politics? Did you follow last presidential and legislatives elections both in UK and in France?**

Theo: I am exposed a lot to politics because I am interested in politics related to my country, in France. I consuming on daily basis news online. I have a lot of interest in this topic.

Julia: I am not very politically engaged. But during the presidential campaign, I was very interested because I was also scared of the Lepen possibilities being elected. I look on a daily basis online papers. Concerning general elections, I even registered to vote but in the end I couldn't vote.

Ray: I am quite politically engaged, I try to keep it subjective so both right and left articles I try to read. I am quite biased to be fair so I will read more left articles. I try to have a better understanding of the situation is going on. Obviously, I am more interested in UK politics because the effects are already here. I did conversing door to door for the liberal democrats as well but we didn't win.

Bryan: I am a quite into politics, not that much. I am like in forums through my friends, kind of. Like open space where they shared articles so they make me read stuff. Some people I know are much into politics, like in French politics and UK politics. Some agree more right-hand, some are more Macron side, so that was like a big debate. It is always interesting to know why people vote for this one or the other.

Celine: I didn't felt really engaged with the UK elections because of course I couldn't vote. It was more like observations rather than being part, having debate. Of course, I was really informed because one of my colleagues at work is very political, so every lunch break we have read the news about UK politics. Anyway I couldn't have any impact on it, so I stay very distant from the UK elections. However, for French elections, I was much more engaged. Even thought, being abroad made me feel less engaged in a way concerning French elections. I didn't read daily articles about the French elections. I have been informed on a weekly basis on what was going on. Social medias really helped me to being informed. Also I liked kind of

mainstream medias, like Konbini which share political information in a funny way and it was more accessible. Since the first TV debate with the 12 candidates, it was the starting point for me. From that point, I was really engaged and followed everything because it was more concrete and candidates were talking about programs.

2) **By which means, did you take information to follow last elections? And which kind of medias do you trust the most?**

Theo: I tent to trust more the public medias because I have the feeling that any other commercial or not state medias can be influenced or biased. If I read news in UK, I would think that BBC news is more objective than something from the guardian or the telegraph. Same in France, I consume mostly France info and France Television News. In terms of medias, I only consumed digital and applications. I don't read press or watch TV.

Julia: Usually, I consume news from what people share on Facebook. I only consume news online, Lemonde.fr and Liberation. I don't but any newspapers. I go only on official medias pretty much.

Ray: I use Facebook but my newsfeed comes through from things like the guardian and others newspapers, like news site. I prefer to read more traditional news channel, like BBC, guardian, its one of my favourite, CNN, the telegraph, daily mail, or daily express just to have an idea of the other side is thinking. I generally like to watch 30 minutes of breakfast BBC news in the morning when I wake up. My favourite one is Channel 4 news, it's a bit more biased but at the same time I find they are quite subjective and try to get down the answers in a sense rather than just trying to spin the story so I quite like them as well. Its like a wild breath. I read more left wining articles than the other side. I am not a big fan of citizen journalism because I find that the information isn't always collaborative so you can't always prove of what they are saying is true. I trust the BBC because they doing research, they proving their sources and they are good to telling you the facts of what happened. Also, they are publicly funded but they are not stay controlled. They are just as critical of any governments since they have been there. I really like the BBC in the way that they socialise the middle ground (a position of compromise).

People on the right said it biased to the left and people on the left said it biased to the right. So, in my eyes, it must be doing something good.

Bryan: Usually about France, I go for le monde or les Echos. Because they are more economic facts related. You have economist and actors who gives explanations with data, they shared their inputs or states of mind. You can go more into the deep. It's good for my understanding of the two sides. Usually the UK, it's the Guardian, the Telegraph and BBC. I trust the one which have the more information, the more sources and I try to have two different sides as well. I don't watch TV or read traditional press.

Celine: On the English side, the guardian is my go to source information, I really love the way they treat the information. Others medias for me are just wrong. I won't take the papers on the tube, its just pissing me off. For the French medias, its le monde application, mainly this. I watch a bit of France TV on weekends occasionally. It's nice to see visual information, I like seeing politicians speaking, the way they express themselves. I like the format of the TV news.

3) **What is fake news for you? Have you heard about fake news during last elections and how do think they can influence the public opinion?**

Theo: I don't really know what fake news is because I have never been exposed to fake news. I only go to one source on news, I don't look at what my contacts on social networks post because I don't trust it. I assume that they are going to post something that they agree with. I think that fake news is commonly spread over the internet because people share it. People who find something they like in the news, they will probably share it because people share more easily news which are reflected their opinions. Fakes news can spread really quickly across social networks and I would say it is something that comes from a non-established institution. Most of the time, fake news article that you find online are not necessarily representing political opinion of someone but presenting the truth in a certain angle, those ones, they are not associated with a political party but they come from shady news information. Because they are not that well-known, I think that news only live through the share they have with social networks.

Julia: The one fake news I can think about, that was the rumour of Macron being gay before the elections whereas he covered a magazine with his wife. The aims of the fake news were to destroy his character, feeling him dishonest and deprived him of credit. Then he replied in the Tetu magazine. And they were a battle of medias which was interesting.

Ray: I don't know, for me fake news is quiet broad in what fake news can be. So it can be completely made of articles like that. I give you a good example, in the run up to the referendum last year, there was a labour Member of Parliament called Jo Cox who was gun down by a far-right extremist. When basically he was arrested, they went to his home and find far-right extreme papers everywhere. And classic example, I read on the headline from the mail online, the way they expand this, did near nausea murder Jo over fear it looses his council house he grew up in, terrorist property would be occupied by an immigrant family and the MP wouldn't help. See, that's not true, he murdered Jo Cox because he was a terrorist and a racist, so you know the way they expand this used to blame her in a sense, him shooting her because she wouldn't help him to keep his house. That's Ludacris. Things like that, I consider it to be fake news, because the way they spend it, its in a sense to distort the actual picture of who this person was, why he did what he did and the fact that in a sense he was trying to change or makes people fear divided with each other. And the Daily mail is for me, a provider of fake news because it seems they have an issue when it points out things like… the original family who run this newspaper where actually members of the British Nazi party in the 1930's. They supported this group called the black shirts, in a sense the Nazi party of the UK. They always support extreme views and they always trying to distract or having a discussion away where the point should be. So That for me, Fake news is when you trying to mask the truth in something else and this too much of that now, that's why, I really didn't like reading the mail. But I read it because I need to understand what people are reading and why they believe and why they said what they are saying. Social medias also enable more fake news than traditional press.

Julia: It seems that on Facebook, you have big titles and you are more trouble to identify what its wrong or what it's right.

Ray: Exactly, let's take someone who is willing to think more beyond that headline and think is this actually true? How's that actually happened? 80 % of people are just lazy, so they just read that and believe on this and that's the worrying point. It's the way that fake news noticed

and the way they keep pumping this stuff out. It's incredibly worrying that people believes things like this. But you know, with freedom of speech, you have the right to say it, the question is, is it right to say it?

4) **How can you detect fake news?**

Ray: It's all about education really. What is worrying is BBC is becoming distrusted. You notice a polarisation in politics specially here in the UK, people swing further right or further left and anything in the middle is being untrusted because it doesn't shout the eco chamber what they want to hear. I will say personal responsibility more than anything else. I don't really know how you can tackle this, I would say, just be careful what you're reading, really. You always need to thing about it, does it sounds true? Does it sound like the type of people who would do that? Then if you don't believe it or you have some doubts, read it from another source and try to put it together. That's what I would say.

Bryan: To me fake news is when someone like some people tries to make up some information. Its usually catchy, it goes to people emotion. Oh like it made this, it made that, its not like really facts or explanations. Or if there are explanations, it is just try to explain stuff but the ground base is totally wrong. Its like really quick links on some stuffs they cannot made up to make assumptions. Social medias because people are quiet instant and the bubble is build up a bit, its like the snowball effect. It goes from 2 people sharing to 100 people sharing and so on. Those people don't have any channels to promote their publications and stuff, they have only to use a computer, internet access and their fingers. Only with this, you can make up news really easily. If you look at the 80's, it could be fake news but it comes from less people. Now, everyone can make fake news, it's not just like big people.

Ray: That a fact I agree with is when Donald Trump is questioned or facing someone is doesn't agree with, it's just immediately that he will scream fake news. Regarding how much facts he has behind him as well he was just believed what he said without regarding proves being front of it.

Bryan: In one country, Indonesia they have campaign even now where they said that cigarette is healthy if you smoke like 5 cigarettes a day, you become less hill. One guy said, I have 5

cigarettes a day and I used to be hill two months ago and its just went off. Its like misleading information.

Celine: I feel we are literally surrounded by fake assumptions. That's why I am super picky about the medias I read. So many times, I read stuff very quickly on Facebook and I said come on, what the fuck… Also, even before the campaign in France, we saw a lot of fake news with the migrant crisis. Oh the migrants are taking our jobs. They are committing terrorist attacks. For me, it's really started like this, like biased, assumptions and fake stuffs. Le monde actually are doing really well in trying to taking all stupid things that people are saying, with les Decodeurs. Like see, this is not the reality with bringing some facts. They do that weekly and it's amazing because it's a question of education. So fake news in a campaign like Marine Le Pen who was a generator of fake news, it was ridiculous. It's always like very playing with emotions. For me, people could really educated themselves and really control the sources. Also, something really funny, Le Garofi, it's a big joke website. They just say shit and it's funny. But medias in others countries took their information and thought they were real like many times. Russian medias in France as well are huge generator of fake news like Russia Today website.

Ray: I know this is so bad. The UK website of Russia Today was shutdown for six months because their accounts have been frozen by the UK bank, in an effort to stop the broadcaster from operating in the country.

Celine: I mean it's so dodgy. Also the Facebook live news is full of fake news. For me, it's a question of education.

Theo: Political party from Marine Le Pen was sharing news completely non-branded politically. They have a website per county. These fakes articles are about immigrants and they shared those articles only on a local level. So people think that the migrants are only two streets from them.

Ray: Of course, the daily mail is a classic, it is only pure hate.

5) **What's make a political communication powerful when you see last elections, the French presidential and the British legislatives?**

Theo: I have a brother who is much younger than me. First, he voted for the French presidential elections. He was also for the left party, Melenchon because for him, it was the only candidate that was accessible. In a way, that the guy has a youtube channel and the execution of it was wanted to appear amateur. He told me that he is the only candidate that takes the time to makes videos and post them on Youtube. And answer to the questions that really people wants. I think that it was smart from the communication team. Thanks to that, they have reached a younger audience which is basically not interested in politics by going where they are on Youtube and by taking the codes of what the generation consume at the moment, all the bloggers basically. The candidate was doing weekly blogs than others candidates were not doing. Then, he got the votes to my brother generation like that as well. Of course it's not only that, but the format helped really much to deliver a message powerful and reach the younger generation.

Ray: In a comparison here in UK, I would say that the differences is that the conservative campaign during the general elections was really negative, it was full about attacks of the opposition, calling Jeremy Corbyn, the leader of the opposition and attacks terribly simplified because he shared a platform at a pro-Palestine conference with Khaled, a former terrorist from the Popular Front for the Liberation of the Palestine. They wouldn't drop this and they kept repeating all these negative things, all of the press were against the labour leader. That's kind of things have switched off the vote of youngers voters, who are reading a lot from social medias and news like this. But the older generation still rely heavily on this. So you see, there is a colorization in the vote for conservatives, usually the older generation and who's voting for the opposition, the labour party? Usually, the younger generation. I think it's more of a positive message, because if we trying to resonate, the labours are pretty much to say issues that affects all of us like the NHS, education, and infrastructure. And they use more point of views than pure attacks. That's pretty much why the conservatives get difficulties to win general and legislatives elections.

Celine: For me, what makes a good campaign or a communication plan is of course a leader who is charismatic because in the end, it matters a lot. We saw with the socialist party leader Hamon, lot of people said he wasn't charismatic even for me he was. But I think it's very subjective. I think the communication team did not do a great job because they never recorder that low vote. This is a big fail for the social party. Probably because making the leader

charismatic and accessible. It is also a combination of having a real program and having ideals. You have to gather people around positive ideas and not around fear as the front national did. Sadly, powerful campaign is also the one that plays with fear, that's actually super efficient unfortunately. The nature of human being is being scared. You have to encourage people being more positive, if you don't, it's really easy to withdraw to yourself. Brexit and Trump were all about it. Thanks god, it didn't happen in France.

Ray: I think with Trump in the US specifically as well, there is a polarisation because also I think there is a demographic split, you know the white Christian lower working class male and they constitute a majority. And politicians have seen this, there is fear, suspicion and hanger from this demographic which is quiet broad. And sub-communities are popping up and they don't like the fact that there is a brown face on the television, on politics and on power. People like trump feed on this fear of because they don't look like you, they aren't like you. And it's a very negative message but the thing its work really well and he did work really well during the referendum here because again white working class people were credible about fear of immigration. Like immigrants are taking your jobs, your school places, your places on the hospital, your seat on the bus and it was ridiculous. But they just kept playing on this card.

Theo: But I think it's not only the problem of the older generation because the younger generation is into a society that put more emphasis on the feelings, emotion and the entertainment. That's why drives people vote more than the facts. You are in the society that you are going to vote for the candidate who makes you feel the most secure. If you are exposed to a digital campaign, you are less control of what the political campaign can do. Like they can really play with that more on TV or through the press. Even the younger generation is really exposed to that.

Julia: What happened in France in the second round, where there left the two anti-system candidates, Le Front National and En Marche. In these elections, it was a lot, we don't want traditional parties. Its more about something new more than actual programs. Actually macron, he has the same ideas pretty much but he embodies some kind of renew. That was a good strategy.

Bryan: For me, it is also about facing questions from people. You have to take the time to always answer people even if its annoying. For example, Macron was always talking with

people and accessible. His strategy was also to argument every answer to convince people going on his side. You have not being scared of answering question, you have to be open with everyone.

Celine: Yes, like Fillon during his campaign so many times met with people. For example, he went to meet nurses in a hospital. Of course, nurses are angry because they are exploited, they work a huge amount of hours with poor conditions of work. And they were asking to Fillon how can you explain this? And He didn't answer to anything and he literally left.

Ray: I would like to say something similar here in the UK. In the run-up to our general elections, Theresa May refused to take part in public debates, she would not get involved. She sent her home secretary or her defence secretary to stand in her place. She wouldn't take questions from the public. She was so arrogant in the fact she would win the majority or have control from these elections. She just needed to be a loofah from the public and not really understand the people she meant to be representing or helping. I will say in the most recent example of this, which was the terrifying fire from London tower block. You know, she turned up and just met the emergency services for ten minutes then left. And you have the leader of opposition working in the crowd, you have the queen going there and meeting the people. And Theresa May said it was all about security reasons. If the queen can do it, why can't she? This is why for me the older former politics really are beginning to die because they don't relate to us, they aren't part of us. We have seen it as this spectacular example with her there, she is just so robotic and lack sympathy for the crowd and the people around her.

Bryan: Also is good if politicians can access to every kind of population like young people on Facebook. For example, Macron has a lot of videos on Facebook and millions of views because he was showing the very good moments in the debate. And it's advertised on their platforms, so you can have always access on it. And if it's like as well on the medias, people can have access to it. It must be broad to young people and to old people in different ways even like meeting on newspapers as well on social medias or internet so everyone can access on what you think. Not always on one platform but different platforms at the same time so everyone can be related to you. That's why it can bring different audiences to you, different populations and sides to your common ideas.

Celine: It's also living with his time. They can't just do official speeches on TV at 8 a clock in the evening. It's like also being accessible because people who are 18 years old, they probably wont watch Tv at all anyway. So they did the Snapchat thing during the first campaign and I mean it's good, you have to live with your time. If you don't know what is Snapchat, just go back home.

6) **Have you heard about the hyper-personalised feed on social medias? Does that influence your political opinion?**

Theo: Yes, it influences your opinion but just reinforce what you already think. So it's very dangerous because it keeps you locked in your own ideology and your own bubble. You will only read stuff that reflects your own opinion without ever challenging them. So that is really wrong because it is the opposite of democracy. It completely shuts any debate, shuts you from seeing things from another angle and tries to understand facts from an objective point of view. It cuts you from exchanging with the other side.

Julia: It's also opposite with what social medias is supposed to do because social medias is all about sharing views, ideas, gathering information and see things from another perspective. This is only narrowing your ideas.

Theo: To be fair, if you look at the way of social medias is build and all the other mechanisms you can have in social medias. You can like things, retweet things. There are no technical tools that allow you to say I disagree or I don't understand that. To me the social medias is build to comfort you and again you always vote for your emotions and something you makes you feel good. If you only consume political news from a platform, there are to make you feel good rather than make you understanding things. The problem that there is right now with democracy will only escalate and wont be stop.

Ray: I kind of agree with what he said. Because this is why I say that there is a polarisation between left and right because people are beginning to seat in their eco chambers and people are more sharing their point of views into that eco chamber that everyone agrees and it's like a big spiral. Regardless how angry makes me to read things in the daily mail, I still read them because I need to understand how someone else is it. I think that's good to have an opposite point of view to kind get into the middle. Otherwise, you do end up, in a sense, staying

yourself far from other ideas and that's not democracy is all about. Democracy is about the fact we may not agree but we can come to some kind of agreements in the end.

7) **Do you think targeted advertising influence political opinion as well?**

Ray: It does continue to reinforce the political opinion more than anything. The thing is the tone of labours and conservative's campaign, conservatives is really negative. Even thought, they still have more votes, they lost a lot of votes to labour because the tone is so different. People are sick of austerity, cuts, being reminded to live in fear whereas the labours are saying, we are going to do a lot of investments into public services such welfare… Basically, it's just changing moods and changing the language of the tone. I think more people went to labour from the conservatives this time because of the positivity in their message. I would say also their online campaign were quite effective.

8) **Which people do you think digital communication influence the most?**

Ray: Young people definitely.

Theo: Yes. Also because I think that online there is less regulations. The time of speech is not counted online. So all the political parties can do technically whatever they want. That kind be quiet dangerous, when they target especially the youngest audience because they have the less background in a political life. So they can be easily targeted and manipulated because nobody is online controlling what the political parties are saying.

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