# Podcasting, political elites and the democratic crisis in the United Kingdom

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Political elites have adopted 'cosy' careers in podcasting alongside their newfound political 'frenemies', further undermining the media's democratic function

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### 'The first real podcast election'

With nearly half of the world's population casting their vote, 2024 was declared a 'super year' for elections. However, it turned out to be a year in which democracy reached a new crisis point, with electorates across the globe returning greater numbers of authoritarian and populist governments, and disillusionment and lack of interest among the voting public reaching new heights. We are living in an age of post-democracy: politics has gradually slipped back into the control of unelected elites as democratic institutions have been hollowed out, producing a political 'void' which is reinforced by parties turning to technocratic and market-oriented principles.[1] In the United Kingdom, trust in the political system reached its own nadir, with the 2024 general election seeing the lowest turnout, by share of population, of any

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British general election since the beginning of universal suffrage.[2]

The media have played a major part in this process of hollowing out, and their democratic function of holding power to account was markedly absent during the election 'super-year'. The mainstream media's role in defending the economic, social, and political agendas of elite groups in society was evident as they propagandised on behalf of the powerful interests that financed them.[3] During the 2024 general election campaign an emerging media format reinforced this trend: an increasing number of political podcasts were hosted by members of the political elite.

Political podcasts were consumed during the election period at a level which rivalled that of traditional media coverage.[4] Lewis Goodall, podcast co-host of *The News Agents*, commented on this trend, arguing that 2024 was 'without doubt the first real podcast election, in the sense that there are now so many providers and so many shows offering top-class analysis'.[5] The broad appeal and relevance of news podcasts means they drive some of the highest levels of podcast consumption in the United Kingdom, and this competitive market has seen news and political podcasts become a place for experimental audio journalism imbued with greater intimacy and emotion.[6] The significance of the intimate listening experience is one of podcasting's most defining traits, and to study intimacy within podcasting is to take a step towards understanding its underlying power relations.[7] Nowhere is this power dynamic clearer in podcasting than in the popular format of two or more members of the political elite from opposing parties sharing a platform to discuss the news, something that was trailblazed by *The Rest Is Politics*, hosted by Alastair Campbell and Rory Stewart. This winning formula of members of the political elite from different sides of the divide talking politics with an emphasis on civility - 'agreeing to disagree' - has subsequently been adopted by several more past and present politicians, including George Osborne, Ed Balls and Jess Phillips, all of whom have embarked on 'cosy' careers in podcasting with newfound political 'frenemies'.

The proliferation of political podcasts has generally been considered a positive thing for media and democracy, allowing citizens to access news and political commentary via a medium which encourages a greater degree of in-depth storytelling. However, the domination of podcasts hosted by members of the political elite calls into question this optimistic view: many of these podcasts do little more than offer established politicians a vehicle to rehabilitate their personal and political legacies, and to uphold elite consensus on political debate.

# Podcasting, political elites and democratic crisis

Ultimately, the democratic potential of podcasting is undermined when it is put into the wider political context within which they have thrived: low voter turnout; low trust in politics and the media; a crisis of democracy; and a sharp turn towards populist alternatives.

This article focuses on the phenomenon of these podcasts hosted by members of the political elite, looking at them from the perspective of journalism's proximity to power. Based on a thematic analysis of political podcasts published during the early weeks of the 2024 general election campaign, it poses questions about the nature and role of podcasts fronted by members of the political elite as they engaged in this novel form of political communication in an age of post-democracy.[8] The table below outlines the podcasts analysed, alongside background information on each of the political figures who featured. Five main themes and eleven sub-themes emerged in the research, which could be grouped into three categories: tone, narrative device, and framing. The results are shown below in Tables 1 and 2.

Analysis of the podcasts found that each of them adopted an intimate tone which centred and humanised politicians, providing an effective means for members of the political elite to rehabilitate their public image while simultaneously asserting establishment viewpoints. This, in turn, drew attention to the social capital and power relations associated with podcast production and listening. Ultimately, political podcasting serves as yet another illustration of the failure of mainstream news media to hold power to account, and of the work it does to protect elite interests.

## 'The listeners treat the hosts like friends'

A range of tones and devices were used by the elite podcast hosts to foster intimacy with the listener, enabling them to present themselves as 'relatable' and 'human', and offering them a means to rehabilitate their image in the eyes of the general public. This evidences a move towards a more personalised and intimate style of journalism: these podcasts offered audiences a relatable and convivial style of political discussion, complete with humour, narrative storytelling and emotional expression. Personal anecdotes and emotional expression were woven into political commentary, though this personalised framing mostly had little bearing on the political point being made. For instance, in a discussion on the first televised debate between Rishi Sunak and Keir Starmer, Alastair Campbell provided personal context on his home

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## Table 1: Podcasts, presenters and politics

| Podcast | Presenter | Political background |
|---|---|---|
| *The Rest Is Politics*<br><br>Produced by Goalhanger | Alastair Campbell | Labour Party Campaign Director in opposition (1994-1997), Tony Blair's Official Spokesperson (1997-2000), Downing Street Director of Communications (2000-2003). |
| | Rory Stewart | Conservative ministerial roles including Africa (2016-18) and Prisons (2018-19), and Secretary of State for International Development (2019). Conservative leadership candidate (2019). |
| *Political Currency*<br><br>Produced by Persephonica | Ed Balls | Labour Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families (2007-2010), and later Shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer (2011-2015). |
| | George Osborne | Conservative Chancellor of the Exchequer (2010-2016) and First Secretary of State under David Cameron (2015-2016). |
| *Electoral Dysfunction*<br><br>Produced by Sky News | Jess Phillips | Sitting Labour MP (since 2015) and Labour leadership candidate (2020). |
| | Ruth Davidson | Leader of the Scottish Conservative Party (2011-2021). |
| | Harriet Harman | Labour MP (1982-2024), Secretary of State for Social Security and the first Minister for Women (1997-1998). Acting Leader of the Opposition (2010). |
| *How To Win An Election*<br><br>Produced by Times Radio | Peter Mandelson | Labour's Director of Communications (1985-1990) and Labour MP (1992-2004). |
| | Daniel Finkelstein | Advisor to Conservative Prime Minister John Major, and Conservative Party leader William Hague (1995-2001). Conservative Peer in the House of Lords (since 2013). |
| | Polly Mackenzie | Liberal Democrat Director of Policy for Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg (2010-2015). |

## Table 2: Themes and sub-themes of the podcasts

| Main theme | Sub-theme |
|---|---|
| Tone: Humour and conviviality | Humour, irony, innuendo<br>Interpersonal host relationships |
| Narrative device: Creating intimacy | Mention of home and family life<br>Personal feelings, emotions, anecdotes |
| Narrative device: Audience participation | Calls for audience interaction<br>Reference to the audience as political 'nerds' |
| Framing: Electoral politics | Discussion on electoral strategy<br>Discussion on policy |
| Framing: Politics of the centre-ground | Discussion on right-wing populism<br>Discussion on the 'hard' left<br>Politics of competency, civility, 'anti-ideology' |

life to 'set the scene' for his commentary:

> Alastair Campbell: *I watched it with Fiona* [his wife] *and Rory* [his son]. *Fiona was just sort of occasionally laughing at funny things that people were saying on Twitter. I discovered that she had a sweepstake going with Callum, our other son, about when Keir Starmer would say that his dad was a toolmaker.*[9]

Emotional expression was a common narrative device used by political elites to create a sense of intimacy and connection with the listener. This was particularly common when former politicians were conveying their own understanding of, and experience with, the political process. This quote from George Osborne was one of many that illustrated this:

> George Osborne: *The one* [general election] *that I really enjoyed was 2001, my first one in Cheshire… I had an absolutely lovely time. I have sort of visions of it being sunny, standing in Wilmslow town centre with balloons, handing out leaflets, knocking on doors. It was just sort of blissful.*[10]

As the Chancellor of the Exchequer from 2010 to 2016, George Osborne is best known to the public as the driving force behind the United Kingdom's project of economic austerity, seen by many as the most destructive policy in modern British history, and as the underlying cause of the crises in public services the country currently faces. Nevertheless, here we are encouraged to separate the politician from the outcomes of their policies, and to see Osborne's career as something endearing and, fundamentally, human. This rhetoric emphasising the human experience of the political process, rather than the objective outcomes of government, was common in the sample. Listeners were not encouraged to engage with the process of government through a critical lens, but instead to understand politics on an individual level, seeing those who yield power at the top of government as 'regular people' we should empathise with, regardless of their political impact.

A narrative device found in every episode of the podcasts looked at was the push for audience interaction and participation. Every episode contained several calls to action, for instance via email, WhatsApp and voice note. In one episode of *How To Win An Election*, audience interaction took the form of listeners writing jingles to be played out on the podcast. Episodes from *The Rest Is Politics* were broadcast live on YouTube, allowing the hosts to engage in real time with their listeners and answer

their questions, whilst *Electoral Dysfunction* adopted its own language to talk about their audience as a fanbase, calling them 'dysfunctioners'. When engaging with their listeners, there were several references to the audience being perceived by their hosts as 'political nerds', and more 'into politics' than the typical citizen. The target audience was outlined to be people who view politics as a 'special interest' rather than people committed to a specific political ideology or identity. This chimes with the overall tone and framing within the sample of politics as a 'hobby' and a topic suitable for convivial and light-hearted discussion.

The four podcasts analysed presented a domesticated, affable view of politics, which was often paired with soft irony and a middle-brow sense of humour, as, for instance, seen in the podcast title *Electoral Dysfunction*. *The Rest Is Politics* embraced a rhetoric of political conviviality from the beginning, with a self-professed mission of 'bringing back the lost art of disagreeing agreeably'. This 'agreeableness' was an overriding theme across the sample: episodes featured leading members of the major parties - Labour, Conservative, Liberal Democrat and the Scottish National Party - who, though seemingly representing different viewpoints, were able to do so without conflict. In reality, this was mostly possible because instances of genuine disagreement were few and far between. This resonates with a society characterised by post-democracy, in which the character of party rivalry has become 'ever more bland and vapid'.[11] The founder of Goalhanger, which makes *The Rest Is Politics*, noted the intimacy created by these podcasts and the para-social relationship the listeners forge with their presenters: 'they [listeners] get very close to the people in their ears… We find that when we do live events, the listeners treat the hosts like friends, like they already know them'.[12] The use of podcasting as a successful tactic for rehabilitation was even candidly acknowledged:

> Ed Balls: *People shake their fists at me… They say 'I used to really, really, really not like George Osborne and* [because of] *this podcast I'm warming to him. How have you done this to me?' And I just say, you know, what can I say?*
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> George Osborne: *I never got the chance to use* Strictly Come Dancing *to rehabilitate myself to the British public. I'm having to use this podcast!*[13]

In promoting the launch of this podcast, George Osborne commented: 'Ed and I are frenemies - once bitter foes, and now firm friends'.[14] The joking reference to *Strictly*

unashamedly acknowledges the opportunities for members of the political elite to use the media to humanise themselves in the public eye, while the podcast itself is symptomatic of a political establishment that ultimately seeks to protect its own interests, despite historic political disagreements. Ever since Britain was plunged into economic disaster in 2008, there has been a concerted attempt to redirect anger away from the powerful.[15] Media and political elites are jointly implicated in these efforts, and these political podcasts are an emerging and effective means for the establishment to achieve this aim. By framing members of political elites as 'friends', not only with each other but with the listeners as well, they create a sense of intimacy and loyalty within the audience, which helps to divert scrutiny away from themselves and the political establishment, upholding the status quo.

## 'A dangerous road for democracy to take'?

This convivial style reinforces the way political discussion was framed in the podcasts: the hosts were largely united in their approach to ideology and electoral politics. My analysis was based on podcasts that took place over the first three full weeks of the general election campaign but, despite the political significance of this period, the podcasts lacked serious discussion on policy, class struggle, political history or crisis. Politics was discussed in a light-hearted tone, with a focus on electoral strategy, the antics of Westminster, speculation about the polls, campaign gaffes, and 'insider' perspectives on how campaigns operate. There was a distinct lack of urgency around discussion of the major decisions the country faced, for instance on the climate emergency, the housing crisis, or the cost of living. When discussion on policy did arise, it was often in relation to how the policy in question could 'win elections', rather than to any consideration of which ideological direction was in the best interest of the country. This was, perhaps unsurprisingly, particularly true of the podcast *How To Win An Election*. In one dialogue on the Labour campaign's lack of policy detail, Peter Mandelson quipped: 'then continue the podcast with, you know, not "how to win an election", but "how to manage power". But first of all, they've got to get there'.[16] This is the classic logic of a market-oriented party, where satisfying voter demands in order to win power becomes largely a question of marketing.

One of the main consequences of this marketing approach to electoral competition has been the convergence of policy between the main parties, and the

fighting of elections across an increasingly narrow range of the policy spectrum. The competition to occupy the centre ground leads to a convergence in policy, which leaves voters with little choice at the ballot box and reduces the stakes of the contest, meaning that the choice put to many 'rational consumers' is to 'rationally disengage'.[17] The seemingly low stakes nature of the 2024 general election was praised in many of the podcasts, including through comparisons with the more ideological and energising election that took place in 2019, when the two main parties were led by Jeremy Corbyn and Boris Johnson:

> George Osborne: *I would make this observation: Keir Starmer and Rishi Sunak are two decent, intelligent, public-spirited individuals, and obviously the country is basically safe in either of their hands… And if they're a little bit dull compared to Corbyn and Boris, maybe that's a dullness we can live with.*[18]

In an age of political marketing, parties are forced to differentiate themselves on the basis of personal branding, the managerial and charismatic qualities of party leaders taking precedence over ideological issues and conflicting interests. This perspective was picked up in other podcasts, and the ideals of competency, trust, civility and management were venerated. Keir Starmer, in particular, was applauded for his skilful and 'anti-ideological' approach to leadership:

> Peter Mandelson: *He has a decency, he knows what he wants to do, and I think he has a compass. Keir Starmer has a moral compass, not an ideological compass, and that's what I like. This is not a left-right thing.*[19]

Across all the podcasts, 'ideology' was generally viewed as having inherent negative connotations. Peter Mandelson's rejection of 'left-right' politics, or those driven by an 'ideological compass', is emblematic of the current anti-populist or 'anti-politics' mood of political elites. Osborne's comment below exemplifies this position, where the fact that neither Keir Starmer nor Rishi Sunak can inspire much enthusiasm amongst the general public is seen as a sign that politics is 'working':

> George Osborne: *I think we are in a post-populist age in the UK, and that's a good thing. If you think of the 2019 election, it was Jeremy Corbyn versus Boris Johnson, and they were certainly both lively characters. They could both get stadiums cheering and laughing. But was that such a great choice for our country?*[20]

# Podcasting, political elites and democratic crisis

The ideological mood of the podcasts was heavily skewed towards technocracy and neoliberalism: radical policy agendas were not considered; the threat of populism was not taken seriously; and popular engagement with protest and political organising was treated with derision. Amidst this overwhelmingly convivial atmosphere, the only time genuine tension was picked up in the analysis was when the radical or 'hard' left was discussed, and there was little space given to reflection or debate on policies - such as public ownership or climate action - that might address the several crises facing the country.

At other times the podcasts reflected the democratic crisis inadvertently, as when topics such as the 'hollowing out' of the public sphere was candidly discussed, even embraced, by its elite hosts, for instance with regard to the role of lobbyists.[21] The close relationship between political elites and other powerful interests was also reflected in the over-representation of business and political leaders engaging with the podcasts as listeners. In the episodes analysed there were four separate examples of this type of interaction, including audience-led correspondence from the director of the British Venture Capital Association, and a senior manager from Deloitte who organised an event attended to by George Osborne. As well as making passing references to the hollowing out of the public sphere, the podcast hosts did also acknowledge an underlying democratic crisis during the election, with several references to low turnout and declining trust in politics. However, demand-side explanations were put forward for this phenomenon, with the 'threat to democracy' being seen as stemming from political agitators and a loss of 'civility' and 'respect' amongst the electorate. This rhetoric came up following an incident when a member of the public threw a milkshake at Nigel Farage:

> Ruth Davidson: *It doesn't matter if you can't stand what they stand for. It doesn't matter if you think they are inciting violence within the country. You have to make sure that in a parliamentary democracy people are allowed to speak their truth. The way you win is with arguments, it is not by throwing milkshakes.*[22]

In this quote, the threat to parliamentary democracy comes not from the far-right populist standing in the election, but rather in the equivalence that is made between a single act of protest and inciting violence. The irony here is that, whilst there is an awareness of a 'threat to democracy', the suggested remedy is discouragement of political protest; demobilisation of the electorate; and a tolerance of right-wing

populism. Supply-side explanations were also put forward for the decline in political participation, reflecting some moments of reflection, although with varying degrees of self-awareness. Some podcast hosts pointed to the need to improve the image of politics as a way to 'fix' democracy. Harriet Harman, speaking as a guest host on *Electoral Dysfunction*, stated her desire to see something about 'cleaning up politics' and tackling 'corruption' in the Labour manifesto as a way to win back voter trust.[23] The issue of politicians failing to communicate with the public was also picked up, Rory Stewart in one discussion lamenting the robotic speech of the candidates.[24] Whilst this was an acknowledgement of the highly-manufactured language politicians use during campaigns, there is some irony in the fact that Rory Stewart was reflecting on this issue alongside Alastair Campbell, who is credited with introducing political marketing and 'spin' to British politics in the 1990s. The legacy of Campbell's desire to ensure 'the message' is always delivered as the party wishes is regarded by many as one of the main causes for the lack of public trust in politicians in Britain today.

Overall, the politicians were found either to misdiagnose the causes of the democratic crisis, or to dismiss the problem altogether. The comment below exemplifies these perspectives, in a response to a listener's question about the current sense of despondency with politicians:

> Ed Balls: *In a democracy we need people who are willing to go through the trauma and pain of getting elected in order to serve in parliament. And if we are down about them, we think they're all the same, they're just in it for themselves... Why do we bother? That is a dangerous road for democracy to take.*

> George Osborne: *Where I can hopefully be more reassuring is it's always the case in every generation people say the politicians aren't what they used to be… There's always a sense that things were better in the past.*[25]

In reality, the 'dangerous road for democracy' is the result not of the attitudes of the electorate, but of the attitudes and behaviour of the political establishment and its intertwinement with the media. When political elites seek to blame the consequence of their actions on the public, the public is disillusioned even further. The 'anti-political' mood of these podcasts reflects a growing trend within contemporary political communications. Tony Blair found success with his 'indifferent' political

style, once famously declaring: 'I was never really into politics. I don't feel myself a politician even now'.[26] Similarly, in his first speech as Prime Minister, Keir Starmer announced that the public can look forward to 'less politics' intruding on their lives: 'You have given us a clear mandate… To restore service and respect to politics, end the era of noisy performance, and tread more lightly on your lives'.[27] This 'anti-political' approach may have won Labour the election, but deriding political engagement does not sit well with the growing agitation of the British public, who are suffering from a cost of living crisis, the looming threat of climate catastrophe, and the continued degradation of public services. Failure to address these demands only galvanises a far-right who are all too ready to prey on people's despair. In the weeks immediately following the general election, the United Kingdom did not begin to enjoy a politics that 'trod lightly'; instead, it witnessed violent and widespread rioting across the country, fuelled by an anti-immigrant and racist insurgency. As Tribune Magazine wrote: 'voters are not merely interested in a politics that 'treads lightly' on their lives. They want a politics that materially improves them'.[28]

## 'The politicians can pick and choose much more now'

Not long after the United Kingdom's general election, the role of podcasting in elections took on a distinctly different dynamic in the United States, where their 'first podcast election' was battled out between the candidates themselves, in their many appearances on more accessible 'chatty ents' formats such as *Call Her Daddy* and *The Joe Rogan Experience*. Donald Trump's appearance on several 'alpha male' podcasts formed a fundamental part of his election-winning media strategy, whilst Kamala Harris's failure to appear on *The Joe Rogan Experience* podcast was seen as a critical error in her campaign. The US media landscape is notably different in other respects: members of the American political elite often take a more traditional approach, turning up for long-form interviews rather than centring themselves as media figures in their own right.[29] Such global variations largely stem from structural differences in how the political and media elite operate in each country. What remains consistent, however, is the increasing use of podcasting by the political class, whether as guests or hosts, as a means of putting forward their agenda to the public during an election period. As George Osborne proudly mused, 'the politicians can pick and choose much more now… They've got lots of ways of getting their message across'.[30]

The podcast industry is maturing, and so is the use of podcasting as a political

tool, which warrants further attention and analysis. The study of political elites within podcasting could be counterbalanced by looking at the potential organisational power of podcasts for marginalised and activist groups. More generally, the field of podcast studies would benefit from further exploration into audience interpretations and motivations for listening to podcasts: those opposite the microphone form only one part of the communicative process.

It is only in the past few years that podcasting has truly taken off as an established component of the media landscape, with new voices finding expression and alternative practices of journalism finding ever-growing audiences. However, the proliferation of podcasts hosted by members of the political elite, owned by legacy media organisations, and distributed and monetised by global streaming platforms, has meant that the full realisation of the democratic potential of podcasting is by no means certain. The history of communications technology shows that whenever innovative content and forms of production appear that offer the potential for radical change, such prospects are almost always blocked, or their potential is appropriated by powerful institutions.[31] Nevertheless, hugely successful podcasts like *The Rest Is Politics* do demonstrate the potential of podcasting to build sizeable digital communities; foster connection with the public; and create popular political narratives. As a medium which can, at its best, offer long-form political discussion that cuts through a fragmented media ecosystem, podcasting could offer a way to challenge not only the establishment's use of the format, but the hegemonic narratives they have built.[32] It could provide a framework for anyone seeking to build a democratic media for the future. Ultimately, a better understanding of new media in a post-democracy will play an important part in addressing the question of how a truly democratic media can be achieved, without which a truly democratic society is not possible.

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## Notes

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report shows', *Guardian*, 12 July 2024: https://www.theguardian.com/politics/article/2024/jul/12/lowest-turnout-in-uk-general-election-since-universal-suffrage-report-shows.

3. As discussed, for example, in Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media,* The Bodley Head, London, 2002.

4. Edison Podcast Metrics, *The UK Podcast Consumer 2024*, 2024: https://www.edisonresearch.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/The-UK-Podcast-Consumer-2024-Presentation.pdf.

5. Ruth Davidson, Lewis Goodall and Tony Pastor, *Political Podcasts – Who's Listening?,* The Media Show, BBC Radio 4, 19 June 2024 (Podcast): https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m00208g8.

6. Mia Lindgren, 'Intimacy and Emotions in Podcast Journalism: A Study of Award-Winning Australian and British Podcasts', *Journalism Practice*, Vol 17 No 4, 2021: https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2021.1943497.

7. Alyn Euritt, *Podcasting as an Intimate Medium*, Routledge, London, 2022.

8. The sample was determined by presenter background and the size of listenership, using podcast charts as an indication of popularity. The podcasts needed to publish at least once a week and focus on topics related to British politics. Data collection took place from Monday 27 May 2024 to Friday 14 June 2024, the first three full weeks of the election period. The episodes chosen for the sample were also selected with a mind to keeping the topics covered varied, and publication days spread out.

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10. Ed Balls and George Osborne, *EMQs: Election Questions Special*, *Political Currency*, 27 May 2024 (Podcast): https://pod.link/1706536336/episode/2aac97bff8aa1e661ba48777dd2b7d76.

11. Crouch, *Coping with Post Democracy*.

12. Davidson et al, *Political Podcasts*.

13. Ed Balls and George Osborne, *EMQs: Punches, Paxman, and Parachuted Candidates*, *Political Currency*, 10 June 2024 (Podcast): https://pod.link/1706536336/episode/ed3899a581c7a50ed006e54e9b878f98.

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16. Matt Chorley, Daniel Finkelstein, Polly Mackenzie and Peter Mandelson, *How To Fight Farage*, *How To Win An Election*, 4 June 2024 (Podcast): https://podcasts.apple.com/gb/podcast/how-to-fight-farage/id1712827143?i=1000657789830.

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20. Balls and Osborne, *EMQs: Election Questions Special.*

21. Balls and Osborne, *Punches, Paxman and Parachuted Candidates*.

22. Ruth Davidson, Harriet Harman, and Beth Rigby, *What could be in the party manifestos?*, *Electoral Dysfunction*. 7 June 2024 (Podcast): https://pod.link/1613562765/episode/f6cd44a439fad382ceba40bea1af4ad8

23. Davidson et al, *What could be in the party manifestos?*

24. Alastair Campbell and Rory Stewart, *Diane Abbott, Nigel Farage, and how to plan a campaign*, *The Rest Is Politics*, 30 May 2024 (Podcast):

https://pod.link/1611374685/episode/ce6b50bd1add897b5916985a6cc91004.

25. Balls and Osborne, *EMQs: Election Questions Special.*

26. Cited in Peter Mair, op cit.

27. Cited in BBC, *Work of change begins - Keir Starmer's No 10 speech in full*, BBC News, 5 July 2024: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/crgewjwqqq4o.

28. Tribune, *Treading Too Lightly*, Tribune Magazine, 20 February 2024: https://tribunemag.co.uk/2024/02/treading-too-lightly.

29. It is worth noting that examples of this style of podcasting do exist in the United States, including *This is Gavin Newsom*, hosted by the Governor of California, *The Rest Is Politics US*, hosted by former White House Director of Communications Anthony Scaramucci, and *Pod Save America,* hosted by former political aides to Barack Obama. However, they have made less of an impact on the wider US podcast market than they have in the UK.

30. Balls and Osborne, *Punches, Paxman and Parachuted Candidates*.

31. Natalie Fenton, 'Drowning or waving? new media, journalism and democracy', *New Media, Old News: Journalism & Democracy in the Digital Age*, Sage Publications Ltd, 2009: https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446280010.

32. Daniel Eales, *First as tragedy, second as podcasts*, Red Pepper, 6 March 2024: https://www.redpepper.org.uk/culture-media/media/first-as-tragedy-second-as-podcasts/.