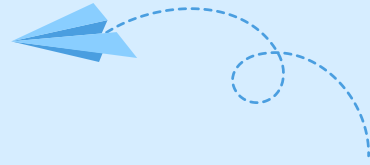




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Article Analyses About Brexit

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ARTICLE ANALYSES ABOUT BREXIT

Media houses have been very instrumental in shaping how voters in the Brexit referendum casted their votes. In essence, the debate regarding whether the United Kingdom should stay or leave the European Union brings new evidence on the effect of the media in shaping public opinion. Major media houses such as *the Mail on Sunday*, *the Guardian*, *the Sun*, *the Express* and *the Telegraph* among others had differing opinions about what was best for the UK as seen in their articles. For the purpose of this paper, two articles from two major media houses - the Sun and the Mail on Sunday - are analyzed, in a bid to explicate how media shapes public opinion.

A great supporter of the idea of remaining within the European Union, *the Mail on Sunday*, has published various articles urging voters to oppose the call for the UK to detach itself from the European Union. The tabloid, which is jointly owned by General Trust and Daily Mail, is pro-conservative and has been very vocal in opposing the view that the UK should leave the European Union. In an article written by the late Labor MP Jo Cox and published June 18th, the tabloid presents facts to express why leaving the European Union would not be a solution to the migration problem that the country is facing. Cox's article revolves mainly around the issue of migration and the effects that the Brexit referendum would have on the issue. In this article, the author objectively notes that Brexit was not a guarantee that the number EU immigrants would be reduced (Cox, 2016). On the contrary, the author warns that the liberal approach adopted by the leave camp had the potential to lead to an increase in non-EU

immigration. Whilst not supporting immigration, the author notes that EU migrants in the UK contributed 20 billion pounds to the UK economy, which is far more than what they receive in benefits (Cox, 2016). The article ends by noting that there are numerous benefits of remaining within the EU including business opportunities and warns that leaving the EU would only hurt the UK economy.

In contrast with *The Mail on Sunday*, *The Sun* has been very active in the leave camp, urging its readers to vote in favor of the UK leaving the European Union. Another tabloid, *The Sun* is owned by News UK and is also pro-conservative. However, and unlike its counterpart above, *The Sun* has all along been in favor of Brexit. The paper, which has provoked controversy on many occasions in past years, was at one time a great supporter of the EU. However, in its editorial article published on 13th June, the article urges the public to vote 'leave.' The article uses issues of Greece's bankruptcy and immigration as a basis for its position, arguing that remaining in EU would only drive the UK towards a more German-dominated state ("We urge our readers," 2016). In an effort to convince the reader, the editorial article points out that if the UK continued to stay within the EU, the problem of immigration would worsen and so would wages and the general public welfare. But while presenting the reader with all this, the article fails to incorporate facts to justify why it is calling for citizens to vote in favor of Brexit. As such, the tabloid appears to be using propaganda as a way of persuading its readers. One of the controversies is that during this period, the paper has also given column inches to air concerns and warns readers of impending

economic disaster if the UK stays in the EU. Based on this observation, the paper seems to be confusing its readers by misinforming them on the consequences of Brexit.

Arguably, there is no need for the government to censor *The Mail on Sunday* but there is every reason to censor *The Sun*. It is important to note here that among the main reasons for media censorship is to ensure that the public is fed the truth and to discourage media houses from using their position as influencers for popularity, greed and profitability. At times, media houses give skewed information to remain in the market. Such is the case with *The Sun* which arguably took the opportunity of the Brexit debate to increase its popularity. On one hand, the tabloid encourages voters to vote in favor of Brexit while on the other hand it gives column inches to authors to air their opposing views to the Brexit call. Clearly, the motive of the tabloid as a trusted media outlet is not to inform the public but rather to remain profitable. *The Mail on Sunday* on the other hand uses facts and objectivity in informing and influencing public opinion. This is evident in the analyzed article and is reflected in the stance of the newspaper in its anti-leave campaign.

In conclusion, the media plays an important role in shaping public opinion on different matters. The Brexit debate presents a good example of how media influences the public in relation to making important political decisions. This can be through the use of facts or propaganda as witnessed in the editorial article appearing in *The Sun* and which was aimed at convincing voters to support the Brexit call. On the other hand,



the article appearing in *The Mail on Sunday* employs facts to inform readers and leaves them to make their own judgments on the issue. In this context, *The Sun* fails by spreading wrong information and is thus worthy of government censorship.