THE IMPACT OF MEDIA-COVERED CORRUPTION SCANDALS ON ANTI-CORRUPTION LEGISLATION FOR MEMBERS OF THE UK PARLIAMENT (2006 – 2023)

By

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Authors Declaration

I, the undersigned, Aleksei Chumakov, candidate for Masters of Public Policy, declare herewith that the present thesis is exclusively my own work, based on my research.

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Abstract

This thesis investigates the role of media coverage in shaping anti-corruption legislation for UK MPs from 2006 to 2023. It analyses how media reports on corruption scandals drive legislative changes, examining the dynamics between media exposure, public response, and policy actions. Using qualitative methods, the study combines content analysis of media articles with survey data on public opinion to evaluate legislative effectiveness.

Key findings reveal that media scrutiny promptly mobilises legislative action by exposing misconduct and galvanising public demand for accountability. However, several factors weaken these reforms. Institutional inertia and political resistance often dilute the effectiveness of new laws. Legislative measures typically react to specific incidents rather than tackling systemic corruption.

The thesis contributes new insights into the influence of media on political accountability and governance. It confirms that while media is critical in initiating reforms, enduring change demands comprehensive legislative strategies addressing the fundamental causes of corruption.

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List of Abbreviations

IPSA: Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority

PPE: Personal Protective Equipment

FSA: Financial Services Authority

NAO: National Audit Office

HMRC: Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs

ICO: Information Commissioner's Office

NHS: National Health Service

UN: United Nations

EU: European Union

ECHR: European Court of Human Rights

OECD: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

NGO: Non-Governmental Organisation

DPA: Data Protection Act

MoD: Ministry of Defence

DfID: Department for International Development

CSR: Corporate Social Responsibility

Introduction

"Corruption is the cancer at the heart of so many of our problems in the modern world" (Cameron, 2016). This powerful statement by former British Prime Minister David Cameron was published in The Guardian on 11 May 2016, before the International Anti-Corruption Summit in London. However, corruption in Parliament is even more dangerous because it undermines democracy and public trust. In the United Kingdom, a series of high-profile corruption scandals involving Members of Parliament (MPs) has shaken public trust and prompted significant legislative action. This thesis critically examines the impact of media-covered corruption scandals on developing and implementing anti-corruption legislation for UK MPs from 2006 to 2023.

Media coverage of corruption scandals is a vital catalyst for legislative change, thrusting unethical practices into the public spotlight and demanding accountability (Entman, 2012, p. 18). The British press has historically played a pivotal role in exposing political corruption, from the "Cash for Questions" (Doig, 1998) scandal to the more recent "Owen Paterson Lobbying Scandal" (Walker, 2021). These revelations galvanise public opinion and compel policymakers to enact reforms to prevent future misconduct.

The interplay between media coverage and legislative action is intricate. Intense media attention often results in swift governmental responses, introducing new laws and regulations to address revealed deficiencies (Walgrave *et al.,* 2017). For instance, the "MPs' Expenses Scandal" of 2009 exposed widespread abuse of parliamentary expense claims, resulting in the establishment of the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority (IPSA) and comprehensive reforms to the expenses system (Crewe, 2024). Also, media coverage can highlight the limitations of existing legislation, spurring calls for further refinement and enforcement.

Despite the legislative responsiveness to media-driven revelations, the effectiveness of these measures in curbing corruption remains debatable. Critics argue that new laws and regulations introduced after scandals may suffer from poor implementation and enforcement due to institutional inertia, political resistance, and inadequate oversight mechanisms (Klitgaard *et al.*, 2000, p.12). Furthermore, the focus on high-profile cases can divert attention from systemic issues, leading to fragmented reforms that fail to address the root causes of corruption (Gray, 2015).

Focusing on the UK provides a rich context for exploring the interplay between media coverage and legislative responses to corruption. The UK's vibrant press and well-documented parliamentary scandals present a unique landscape for scrutinising how media influence can translate into political action. The UK's strong democratic traditions and transparent legal framework facilitate an environment where media exposés can lead to substantial political and legal consequences, making the UK an ideal case study.

This research is significant because it has the potential to inform future policy development and enhance the effectiveness of anti-corruption measures. By identifying the strengths and weaknesses of past legislative responses, this thesis contributes to an understanding of how media coverage can drive meaningful reform and promote integrity within the political system. Ultimately, this study underscores the importance of vigilant media, robust legal frameworks, and proactive governance in the ongoing fight against political corruption.

This thesis is structured to critically analyse the impact of media-covered corruption scandals on anti-corruption legislation involving UK MPs. Chapter 1 reviews existing literature and outlines theoretical approaches. Chapter 2 details the methodology, explaining the research design, data collection, and analysis techniques. Chapter 3 provides a historical context of major corruption scandals from 2006 to 2023. Chapter 4 analyses the legislative changes

implemented in response to these scandals. The conclusion synthesises the findings, discusses policy implications, and offers recommendations for future research.

As we delve deeper, let me revisit Cameron's comparison: does the media act as a cure for the cancer of corruption, or is it merely a comforting sweetened pill?

Chapter 1 – Literature Review

This literature review critically examines the theoretical frameworks and existing research relevant to understanding the impact of media-covered corruption scandals on anti-corruption legislation for Members of the UK Parliament (MPs). It aims to provide a comprehensive evaluation of how media exposure influences legislative changes, the effectiveness of these measures, and the role of public opinion in shaping policy outcomes.

1.1 Theoretical Framework

1.1.1 Public Choice Theory

Building on the Principal-Agent Theory, the Public Choice Theory, articulated by Buchanan and Tullock (2003), describes politicians as self-interested actors akin to market participants. This perspective is critical for understanding legislative behaviour in corruption scandals, suggesting that decisions are often driven more by personal gain than public service. The "Cash for Questions" scandal exemplifies politicians acting in self-interest rather than public duty, where MPs accepted bribes to pose questions in parliament (Doig, 1998). This theory underscores the challenge of aligning political incentives with public good.

1.1.2 Agenda-Setting Theory

The agenda-setting theory, proposed by McCombs and Shaw (1972), posits that the media significantly influences the public's perception of essential issues. This theory suggests that the media does not tell people what to think but rather what to think about. The media shapes the public agenda by selecting and emphasising certain topics, increasing public awareness and concern about specific issues (McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Dearing & Rogers, 1996).

In the context of UK parliamentary corruption scandals, media coverage plays a pivotal role in bringing these issues to the forefront of public discourse. For instance, the MPs' Expenses Scandal (2009) gained significant media attention, highlighting MPs' widespread misuse of public funds. The intense media focus on this scandal led to a national outcry, putting immense pressure on Parliament to address the issue through legislative reforms. This demonstrates how agenda-setting theory can explain the media's role in legislative prioritising problems (Van Aelst & Walgrave, 2011).

1.1.3 Framing Theory

Entman (1993) discussed framing theory, which explains how media shapes information perception by selecting certain aspects of a perceived reality and making them more salient. This process involves highlighting specific angles, contexts, or interpretations of events, influencing the audience's understanding and evaluation of issues (Entman, 1993; Chong & Druckman, 2007).

For example, during the Cash for Honours scandal (2006), media outlets framed the issue as a significant breach of ethical standards. This intensified public outrage and pressured MPs to address the perceived corruption. By framing the scandal regarding moral and ethical violations, the media shaped the narrative to demand stringent legislative reforms. This highlights the role of framing in driving anti-corruption measures by influencing how the public perceives the severity and implications of corruption scandals (e.g., Marimba, 2017).

1.1.4 Information Asymmetry Theory

Information asymmetry theory, introduced by Akerlof (1970), describes situations where one party in a transaction has more or better information than the other, leading to imbalances. This

imbalance can lead to market failures and unethical behaviour as the less informed party is disadvantaged (Akerlof, 1970; Stiglitz, 2000).

Media coverage of corruption scandals helps to bridge the information gap between the public and MPs. When the media exposes misconduct, it levels the informational playing field, enabling the public to hold politicians accountable. The MPs' Expenses Scandal (2009) serves as a prime example where detailed investigative reporting eliminated information asymmetry, leading to significant legislative changes such as the establishment of the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority (IPSA) (Kelso, 2009). This demonstrates how reducing information asymmetry through media exposure can drive legislative reform (Stapenhurst, 2000).

1.1.5 Theory of Democratic Power of Transparency

Fung's (2013) theory of "Infotopia" revolves around the concept that transparency, when paired with robust information dissemination mechanisms, can unleash significant democratic power. This theory suggests that when information about government actions, policies, and decision-making processes is freely available and easily accessible to the public, it can lead to more informed and engaged citizens. Such transparency enables public scrutiny, fosters accountability, and promotes better governance (e.g., Hood, 2006). Fung argues that transparency transforms passive citizens into active participants in the democratic process, enhancing public trust and driving political and social reforms (Fung, 2013).

In the context of UK parliamentary corruption scandals, Fung's theory of Infotopia highlights the role of media as a crucial mechanism for information dissemination. Media coverage of scandals such as the MPs' Expenses Scandal (2009) exemplifies how transparency and public access to information can galvanise public opinion and demand for legislative reforms.

1.1.6 Moral Panic Theory

Moral panic theory, proposed by Cohen (1972), explains how media can create widespread fear and concern over issues perceived as threats to societal norms and values. This heightened anxiety, often disproportionate to the actual danger, can lead to public outcry and demands for immediate action. Media-induced moral panics can significantly influence public opinion and prompt swift policy responses (Cohen, 1972; Goode & Ben-Yehuda, 2010).

In the context of UK parliamentary corruption, media-induced moral panics can precipitate rapid legislative responses. For example, the Owen Paterson Lobbying Scandal (2021) demonstrated how intense media coverage of Paterson's lobbying activities created a moral panic regarding the integrity of political processes. The scandal resulted in urgent discussions and proposals for stricter lobbying regulations.

Theoretical frameworks illustrate how media shapes perception and legislative behaviour in corruption scandals. Each theory highlights different mechanisms, from politicians' self-interest to public opinion formation. However, more than these theories are needed to capture the media's practical impact fully. The real-world influence of media in uncovering corruption and prompting legislative responses demands deeper scrutiny. The following section critically examines how media acts as a democratic watchdog and catalyst for change while addressing its significant challenges and limitations in this role.

1.2 Media's Role in Uncovering Corruption

Media plays a pivotal role in detecting, exposing, and subsequent political and legislative responses to corruption. By investigating the relationship between media coverage and anti-corruption efforts, this literature review seeks to understand how the press functions as both a watchdog and a catalyst for reform in the context of political corruption.

1.2.1 The Media as a Watchdog

The foundational role of the media in democracy is to act as a watchdog, scrutinising the actions of public officials and exposing misconduct to the public. White (2008) argues that an active, free press is essential for democratic governance because it ensures that information about governmental and corporate misconduct reaches the electorate, who can then make informed decisions. The exposure of the "MPs' Expenses Scandal" in the UK by The Daily Telegraph in 2009 serves as a prime example, where meticulous reporting unveiled widespread misuse of public funds by Members of Parliament, leading to public outrage and subsequent reforms (Kelso, 2013).

1.2.2 The Catalytic Role of Media in Legislative Change

The media's role extends beyond exposure and framing to acting as a catalyst for legislative change. According to Camaj (2013), when corruption is brought to light, the media can ignite public demand for reform and policy change. This is evident in the introduction of the Parliamentary Standards Act 2009 following the "MPs' Expenses Scandal," where media exposure and subsequent public pressure led directly to legislative action to prevent such abuses in the future (Kelso, 2009).

1.2.3 Challenges and Limitations of Media Influence

Despite these strengths, the media's role in combating corruption faces significant challenges and limitations. Ownership patterns and political affiliations can influence editorial policies, potentially limiting the scope and depth of corruption coverage (Hanretty, 2014). Moreover, sensationalism can lead to overemphasising individual scandals at the expense of systemic issues, reducing the potential for comprehensive reforms (Cohen *et al.*, 2017). Additionally,

the phenomenon of "scandal fatigue" can desensitise the public to corruption news, diminishing the impact of media exposure over time (Warren & Barton, 2019).

1.2.4 Media Strategies and Effectiveness

Investigative journalism is one of the most influential media strategies in fighting corruption. Boydstun (2013) highlights that investigative reporting, which often involves deep dives into complex systems, can unearth embedded patterns of corruption that need to be apparent from surface-level reporting. However, such journalism requires significant resources and expertise and often faces legal and political pushback, as evidenced by the global response to the release of the Panama Papers in 2016, which exposed widespread international financial corruption (Obermayer & Obermaier, 2017).

The literature suggests that while the media plays a crucial role in uncovering and responding to corruption, its effectiveness is contingent upon the freedom of the press, journalistic integrity, and public engagement (e.g., Norris, 2009). Effective media engagement in anti-corruption efforts requires a delicate balance between exposure, maintaining public interest, and advocating for systematic change.

3. Research Gap

Despite substantial literature on the media's watchdog role in exposing corruption, there must be a critical gap in understanding how these exposures influence anti-corruption legislation. It often overlooks how sustained media scrutiny translates into long-term legislative reforms and effective implementation. Additionally, the predominant focus on high-profile scandals tends to yield fragmented, reactive policies rather than comprehensive systemic reforms. The dynamic interplay between media, civil society, and legislative bodies in driving these legislative changes still needs to be explored.

Chapter 2 – Research Design

This research design outlines the methodology for investigating the impact of media-covered corruption scandals on anti-corruption legislation for Members of the UK Parliament (MPs) from 2006 to 2023. The study employs qualitative methods to comprehensively evaluate the relationship between media coverage, legislative changes, and public opinion.

2.1 Social Constructivism in Research Design

This research uses a social constructivist approach. Social constructivism asserts that reality is shaped by social interactions and shared understandings (Berger & Luckmann, 2016). This perspective is ideal for examining how media narratives about corruption influence public opinion and legislative actions. The media constructs and disseminates these narratives, shaping how corruption is perceived and addressed (Goffman, 1974; Fairclough, 1995).

This approach focuses on media framing, agenda-setting, public perception, and legislative responses. Media coverage sets the agenda and frames corruption scandals in specific ways (Entman, 1993). This influences public opinion, which in turn pressures legislators. By analysing media content and its impact on legislation, this study uncovers the constructed nature of corruption narratives and their legislative effects (McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Gamson & Modigliani, 1989).

2.2 Research Objectives and Questions

The study's objectives are to dissect how media coverage of corruption scandals influences subsequent legislative changes and to understand the role of the media in shaping public opinion and legislative priorities.

2.2.1 Research Puzzle

The heart of this study lies in exploring the intricate and dynamic relationship between how corruption scandals are covered in the media and the legislative responses that follow in the UK Parliament. I am figuring out how and why media exposure of corruption drives lawmakers to enact changes and whether these changes tackle the underlying corruption issues. Corruption continues despite numerous high-profile scandals making headlines and undergoing intense scrutiny by the media. This persistent issue raises severe doubts about the effectiveness of the laws passed and the actual role the media plays in influencing public policy. Through this research, I aim to dig deeper into these critical issues and uncover what happens behind the scenes when corruption is brought into the public eye.

2.2.2 Research Questions

To unravel the intricate relationship between media coverage and legislative responses to corruption scandals involving UK MPs, this study focuses on three key research questions.

1. How have media-covered corruption scandals influenced the creation and amendment of anti-corruption laws for UK MPs? This question investigates whether the spotlight from media coverage prompts lawmakers to initiate or revise laws. It directly explores the causal relationship between media exposure and legislative action, helping to clarify what motivates lawmakers to respond to exposed scandals.

2. **What legislative changes have been implemented in response to significant scandals since 2006?** This question documents the legislative changes enacted following major scandals. It seeks to determine whether these changes are superficial or substantial, directly contributing to the puzzle by assessing the effectiveness of legislative responses.

3. How has the media highlighted corruption and influenced legislative action? This question examines the press's role in exposing corruption and shaping the legislative agenda. It assesses how media framing and public engagement influence policymaking, tying back to our central puzzle about the impact of media on legislative processes.

2.3 Methodology

In this study, I employ qualitative methods to profoundly investigate the impact of media coverage on corruption scandals and the subsequent legislative responses within the UK Parliament from 2006 to 2023.

My research begins with a content analysis of media coverage of significant UK corruption scandals. I select leading newspapers such as The Guardian, The Times, and The Telegraph, along with online platforms like BBC News and Sky News, as primary data sources. I chose these media outlets due to their broad readership, reputation for in-depth investigative journalism, and their influence on public opinion and policy in the UK. The steps I follow include:

1. Scandal selection. I identify key corruption scandals from the specified period.
2. Data collection. I systematically gather articles and reports related to these scandals.
3. Content Analysis. I conduct content analysis to identify themes, framing techniques, and coverage intensity. This helps me understand the media's portrayal and agenda-setting role in these scandals.

Additionally, I conduct case studies on specific incidents, such as the "MPs' Expenses Scandal" (2009), "Cash for Honours" (2006), and the "Owen Paterson Lobbying Scandal" (2021). I scrutinise official reports, parliamentary records, and legislative documents to understand how media exposure influences legislative changes and the effectiveness of these reforms.

2.3.1 Independent Variable

Media Coverage of Corruption Scandals. I explore beyond mere article counts, delving into the intensity of coverage and the framing techniques used by major media outlets. I assess the emphasis placed on scandals through front-page prominence and editorial perspectives, alongside evaluating the narratives used, such as portraying issues as crises or moral failings. This allows me to understand the quality and tone of the media's influence on public discourse.

2.3.2 Dependent Variables

Legislative Changes. I investigate the substantive content of these legislative actions. This involves looking at how laws are debated and framed within Parliament and what specific corruption issues they aim to address, providing insight into whether these laws are superficial or offer meaningful reforms.

2.3.3 Control Variables

Political Context. I analyse the influence of the political landscape, including the party in power and significant political events, on how corruption is reported and addressed. This involves a qualitative review of political dynamics and how they might shape media coverage and legislative responses at different times.

2.4 Ethical Considerations

Given the sensitive nature of corruption and its profound impact on public trust and governance, ethical considerations are paramount in this study. To address these concerns, I have worked with media content, legislative documents, and publicly available survey data,

avoiding methods like interviews that could potentially expose individuals to risk or ethical dilemmas.

Confidentiality and Data Sensitivity. Since the research involves analysing publicly available data, privacy and personal data protection issues do not arise in the traditional sense. However, care is taken to ensure that all data is handled concerning the context in which it was collected, maintaining the integrity of the information and the subjects involved, even when they are public figures or entities.

Impartiality and Bias. I apply analytical methods and use multiple sources for media content to mitigate potential biases in media analysis. This approach helps to balance perspectives and reduces the risk of skewing the analysis towards a particular narrative or outcome.

Use of Public Data. Focusing on publicly available data also ensures transparency in my research methodology. It allows the study to be replicated and verified by others, enhancing the credibility and scholarly value of the findings. Furthermore, it respects the privacy and anonymity of individuals by relying solely on data already in the public domain.

Chapter 3 – Case Studies of Corruption Scandals in the UK Parliament

This chapter presents key corruption scandals involving Members of Parliament (MPs) in the United Kingdom from 2006 to 2023. Each case is examined thoroughly, focusing on the nature of the corruption, media coverage, public reaction, and legislative responses (see Annex 1: Case Studies of Media, Public, and Legislative Reactions to Corruption Scandals).

3.1 Case Study "Cash for Honours" (2006)

The "Cash for Honours" scandal involved allegations that political parties offered life peerages in exchange for large donations (The Guardian, 2010). The scandal centred around the Labour Party under Tony Blair's leadership. It was alleged that several wealthy individuals who had made significant loans to the party were subsequently nominated for peerages (The Guardian, 2010).

Media Coverage

The media was instrumental in uncovering the scandal, with investigative journalists from *The Guardian* (2007) and *BBC News* (2006) leading the charge. These outlets conducted deep dives into the Labour Party's financial dealings, revealing a pattern of large donations followed by nominations for honours. The coverage included leaked emails, confidential testimonies, and detailed financial records, painting a compelling picture of corruption (*BBC News,* 2006; *The Guardian,* 2007).

Public Reaction

Public reaction was highly critical. There was widespread condemnation of selling honours, which many viewed as a blatant misuse of the honours system for political gain. The scandal damaged the reputation of the Labour Party and fueled public cynicism towards the political establishment. Citizens and opposition parties called for thorough investigations and significant reforms to restore trust in the political process.

Legislative Response

The scandal led to re-emphasising the Honours (Prevention of Abuses) Act 1925 and increased scrutiny of political donations (Electoral Commission, 2020; GOV.UK, 2024). Although no new laws were passed immediately, the scandal intensified the debate about the need for reform in the honours system and political funding. It also prompted the establishment of the Electoral Commission's power to investigate political donations and the creation of stricter guidelines for nominations to the House of Lords.

3.2 Case Study "MPs' Expenses Scandal" (2009)

The "MPs' Expenses Scandal" was one of British history's most significant political scandals. It involved widespread abuse of the parliamentary expense claims system by MPs, who claimed expenses for personal items, second homes, and other non-essential expenditures (Rayner & Winnett, 2009). The scandal revealed how MPs exploited lax rules to enrich themselves at the taxpayer's expense, with claims ranging from moat cleaning to luxury home renovations.

Media Coverage

The Daily Telegraph was pivotal in exposing the scandal (Rayner & Winnett, 2009). The newspaper obtained a complete set of expense claim documents and published articles detailing the abuses. The Telegraph's coverage was methodical, releasing new information daily and

keeping the story in the headlines for weeks. This strategy ensured sustained public outrage and kept the pressure on Parliament to act.

Public Reaction

The public reaction was one of anger and disillusionment. Many citizens viewed the scandal as evidence of a systemic culture of entitlement and corruption among MPs. There were public protests, and many MPs faced fierce criticism from their constituents. The scandal also led to a significant decline in public trust in the political system, with calls for greater transparency and accountability (Brook & Gillan, 2009).

Legislative Response

The scandal resulted in the establishment of the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority (IPSA), which oversees MPs' expenses and enforces stricter regulations (Flinders, 2019). Additionally, extensive reforms were made to the expenses system to enhance transparency and prevent future abuses. These reforms included new rules for claiming expenses, regular audits, and a public database of MPs' expenses for greater scrutiny.

3.3 Case Study "David Laws Expenses Scandal" (2010)

David Laws, the Chief Secretary to the Treasury, was found to have claimed expenses to pay rent to his partner, which was a breach of parliamentary rules (Peev, 2011). Laws had claimed over £40,000 in rent expenses while concealing his relationship to avoid disclosing his sexuality (Peev, 2011). This misuse of funds was viewed as a significant ethical violation, especially given Laws' high-profile role in managing public finances.

Media Coverage

The media, notably *The Guardian* and *The Times*, focused on the specifics of Laws' expense claims and the breach of parliamentary standards (The Guardian, 2010; Gray & Hurst, 2010). The coverage highlighted the discrepancy between Laws' public role in financial management and his misuse of public funds. The press also delved into the ethical implications of his actions, balancing the violation of rules with sensitivity towards his circumstances.

Public Reaction

Public reaction was critical, though somewhat mitigated by Laws' prompt resignation and apology. While some expressed sympathy for his situation, the overall sentiment was that public officials should adhere strictly to expense rules. The scandal reinforced the perception that there were persistent issues with MPs' expenses, necessitating continued oversight and reform (Gray & Hurst, 2010).

Legislative Response

While no new legislation was explicitly introduced due to this scandal, it underscored the importance of the reforms introduced in the wake of the 2009 expenses scandal. The case reinforced the role of IPSA in maintaining oversight of MPs' expenses.

3.4 Case Study "Cash for Influence" (2010)

The "Cash for Influence" scandal involved MPs and peers offering to influence legislation in exchange for money. Undercover reporters from *The Sunday Times* posed as lobbyists and caught MPs on tape offering their services for cash (Coates, 2010). MPs, including Geoff Hoon and Stephen Byers, were recorded discussing how they could use their positions to affect policy in return for payment.

Media Coverage

The Sunday Times' investigative reporting was central to the scandal, providing concrete evidence of the MPs' unethical behaviour (Coates, 2010). The media coverage was extensive and damning, focusing on the specific instances of MPs offering their influence for money. The detailed recordings and transcripts published by *The Sunday Times* left little room for doubt about the MPs' intentions (Coates, 2010; Morris, 2009).

Public Reaction

The public was outraged by the blatant corruption and the ease with which MPs were willing to compromise their positions for personal gain. The scandal reinforced negative perceptions of MPs and their susceptibility to corruption (Morris, 2009). There were widespread calls for immediate action to address these ethical breaches and restore trust in the parliamentary process (Lefort, 2010).

Legislative Response

The scandal led to immediate suspensions and resignations of the MPs involved. It also reinforced the need for the Lobbying Act 2014, which aimed to regulate lobbying activities and prevent such abuses in the future. The Act required lobbyists to register and disclose their activities, thereby increasing transparency and accountability in the legislative process.

3.5 Case Study "Cash for Access" (2015)

The "Cash for Access" scandal involved former ministers Jack Straw and Malcolm Rifkind, who were filmed offering to use their political connections to benefit private companies in exchange for payment. Channel 4's Dispatches programme and *The Telegraph* undercover investigated the scandal (Channel 4 Dispatches, 2015; The Telegraph, 2015).

Media Coverage

Channel 4 and *The Telegraph* jointly conducted the investigation and broadcast the findings (Ward & Walton, 2015). The media coverage highlighted the unethical practices of former high-ranking officials and their willingness to sell access and influence. Detailed footage and transcripts of the undercover meetings were made public, demonstrating how Straw and Rifkind offered their services (Channel 4 Dispatches, 2015; The Telegraph, 2015).

Public Reaction

The public reaction was shocked and disappointed, as the scandal involved well-respected former ministers. The revelations led to a significant public outcry and heightened calls for stricter regulations on lobbying and former politicians' post-office activities (Channel 4 Dispatches, 2015; The Telegraph, 2015).

Legislative Response

The scandal contributed to ongoing discussions about tightening regulations on lobbying and conflicts of interest. Although no immediate new legislation was passed, it influenced the broader political accountability debate. The case highlighted the need for clear rules governing the conduct of former ministers and their interactions with the private sector.

3.6 Case Study "Jennifer Arcuri and Boris Johnson" (2019)

The scandal involved allegations that Boris Johnson gave favourable treatment to Jennifer Arcuri's businesses while he was Mayor of London. Arcuri, an American businesswoman, reportedly received grants and access to trade missions that she might not have been eligible for without her relationship with Johnson (BBC News, 2019; The Times, 2020).

Media Coverage

Media outlets, including *BBC News* and *The Times*, provided extensive coverage of the allegations, focusing on the potential conflict of interest and the ethical implications of Johnson's actions (BBC News, 2019; The Times, 2020). The coverage included detailed accounts of the grants awarded to Arcuri's companies and the context of their relationship (BBC News, 2020; The Times, 2020).

Public Reaction

The public reaction was mixed; some expressed outrage over potential misconduct, while others dismissed the allegations as politically motivated. Nonetheless, the scandal intensified scrutiny of Johnson's actions and decision-making processes, leading to calls for more stringent oversight of public officials (BBC News, 2020; The Times, 2020).

Legislative Response

Although no immediate legislative changes were made, the scandal highlighted the need for more precise guidelines and stricter enforcement of conflict-of-interest rules for public officials. It also prompted discussions about the transparency of the mayoral office and other public positions (BBC News, 2020; The Times, 2020).

3.7 Case Study "Owen Paterson Lobbying Scandal" (2021)

Owen Paterson, a Conservative MP, was found to have breached lobbying rules by contacting ministers on behalf of companies paying him for consultancy services. This blatant breach of parliamentary standards highlighted lobbying practices and conflicts of interest within Parliament (BBC News, 2021; Walker, 2021).

Media Coverage

Major news outlets, including *BBC News* and *The Guardian*, covered the scandal extensively. The coverage focused on the details of Paterson's actions, the companies involved, and the systemic issues within parliamentary lobbying regulations. It also included in-depth analyses of parliamentary rules and how they were breached (BBC News, 2021; Walker, 2021).

Public Reaction

Public reaction was critical, prompting significant pressure on Parliament to address lobbying and conflicts of interest. Paterson's subsequent resignation fueled public demands for reform and accountability within Parliament (BBC News, 2021; Walker, 2021).

Legislative Response

The scandal resulted in a review of the parliamentary standards system and stricter enforcement of lobbying rules. Calls for more robust regulations to prevent similar breaches in the future, including proposals for a complete overhaul of lobbying rules and enhanced transparency measures, were made (BBC News, 2021).

3.8 Case Study "Greensill Scandal" (2021)

The "Greensill Scandal" involved former Prime Minister David Cameron lobbying ministers on behalf of Greensill Capital, raising questions about access and influence in government decision-making processes (Neate, 2023). Cameron was found to have contacted several ministers, including the Chancellor, to secure financial support for Greensill Capital during the COVID-19 pandemic (Transparency International, 2021).

Media Coverage

Extensive coverage by *The Guardian* and *The Financial Times* focused on the potential conflicts of interest and the ethical implications of Cameron's lobbying efforts (Neate, 2023; Pickard, O'Murchu, & Smith, 2021). The media highlighted the lack of transparency in lobbying activities and the potential for undue influence by former high-ranking officials (Neate, 2023).

Public Reaction

The public expressed significant concern over the influence of private interests on public policy. The scandal prompted widespread discussions about the revolving door between politics and business and the need for stricter controls on lobbying by former officials (Pickard, O'Murchu, & Smith, 2021).

Legislative Response

The scandal called for a more robust regulatory framework for lobbying and increased transparency in government contracts. Although specific legislative changes were still under discussion, the scandal underscored the need for comprehensive reforms to ensure accountability and prevent conflicts of interest.

3.9 Case Study "Michelle Mone PPE Scandal" (2023)

Conservative peer Michelle Mone was accused of profiting from government PPE contracts awarded to a company she had ties to during the COVID-19 pandemic. The scandal raised serious concerns about conflicts of interest and the misuse of public funds during a national crisis (Davies & Conn, 2023).

Media Coverage

The Guardian and *BBC News* detailed the allegations, focusing on the procurement process and Mone's connections to the company (Davies & Conn, 2023; Morton, 2023). The media scrutiny highlighted potential abuses in emergency procurement processes and the ethical implications of Mone's actions (Davies & Conn, 2023; Morton, 2023).

Public Reaction

The public's reaction was outrage, particularly given the context of the pandemic and the critical need for PPE. The scandal intensified calls for accountability and stricter regulations on government procurement, especially in emergencies (Davies & Conn, 2023; Morton, 2023).

Legislative Response

The scandal increased scrutiny of emergency procurement processes and calls for tighter regulations to prevent similar conflicts of interest. The government faced pressure to ensure transparency and integrity in awarding contracts, leading to proposals for new guidelines and oversight mechanisms for emergency procurement (Morton, 2023).

Chapter 4 – Analysis of Corruption Scandals in the UK Parliament

In this chapter, I examine major corruption scandals that have rocked the UK Parliament from 2006 to 2023. I classify these scandals based on their nature and the misconduct involved. Each case study provides a detailed look at the specifics of the corruption, the media's role in uncovering it, the public's reaction, and the legislative responses that followed. By examining these scandals, I aim to understand how different types of corruption trigger various legislative actions.

4.1 Typology of Corruption Scandals

When examining the major corruption scandals that impacted the UK Parliament from 2006 to 2023, it is essential to classify these scandals to understand their nature and implications better. The typologies outlined below provide a framework for understanding the corruption and misconduct observed.

Transactional Corruption

Transactional corruption involves explicit exchanges where political positions or decisions are traded for financial or material gains. The "Cash for Honours" scandal is a prime example, where political parties allegedly offered life peerages in exchange for large donations. Similarly, the "Cash for Influence" scandal revealed MPs willing to influence legislation for monetary compensation.

Exploitation of Entitlements

This typology includes scandals such as the "MPs' Expenses Scandal" and the "David Laws Expenses Scandal." MPs misused the parliamentary expense system for personal gain in these

cases, exploiting entitlements intended for official duties. The "MPs' Expenses Scandal" involved widespread abuse, with MPs claiming expenses for personal items and non-essential expenditures.

Undue Influence and Access

Scandals such as the "Greensill Scandal" and "Cash for Access" involve former officials and MPs leveraging their political positions to benefit private interests. The "Greensill Scandal" saw former Prime Minister David Cameron lobbying for Greensill Capital, raising concerns about the revolving door between politics and business. The "Cash for Access" scandal exposed former ministers offering to use their connections for financial gain.

Conflict of Interest

The "Michelle Mone PPE Scandal" highlights conflicts of interest in government procurement processes, particularly during emergencies. Michelle Mone, a Conservative peer, was accused of profiting from government PPE contracts awarded to a company she had ties to during the COVID-19 pandemic. This scandal raises serious concerns about the integrity of procurement processes and the potential for abuse during crises.

Each typology of scandal reveals specific weaknesses in the UK's political and regulatory systems. Transactional corruption directly threatens democratic values by commodifying political influence. Exploitation of entitlements indicates systemic flaws in expense oversight. Undue influence and access scandals point to the necessity for stringent lobbying regulations, while conflicts of interest in procurement stress the importance of transparency in public contracting.

4.2 Typology of Media Reactions

In the aftermath of corruption scandals in the UK Parliament from 2006 to 2023, the media's and legislators' responses have played crucial roles in shaping public perception and instituting reforms. This section categorises and critically analyses the different reactions of these key stakeholders.

Investigative Journalism

Investigative journalism has been crucial in exposing corruption. For instance, The Guardian and BBC News uncovered the "Cash for Honours" scandal, while The Sunday Times played a critical role in the "Cash for Influence" scandal. These investigations involve deep dives into financial records, interviews, and detailed analysis, providing concrete evidence of wrongdoing. However, financial constraints and potential political pressures often limit the media's ability to sustain such investigative efforts (Bennet *et al*., 2008).

Sustained Coverage

Sustained media coverage can both maintain public attention and pressure politicians to respond, but it often skews towards sensationalism. The Daily Telegraph's release of expense claims during the "MPs' Expenses Scandal" kept the issue in the headlines for weeks (Rayner & Winnett, 2009). While this coverage ensures accountability, it risks prioritising scandal over substantive policy discussion, reducing the quality of public discourse.

Critical Editorials and Op-Eds

Editorials and opinion pieces provide critical analysis and call for reforms. During the "Greensill Scandal", major newspapers ran editorials questioning the ethics of lobbying by former officials. While these pieces are influential, their impact can be limited if they are perceived as politically biassed or fail to translate into concrete legislative action.

4.3 Legislative Reactions

Legislative responses to corruption scandals vary in their approach and effectiveness. These can be categorised into several types:

Establishment of Regulatory Bodies

The "MPs' Expenses Scandal" led to the creation of the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority (IPSA), highlighting the need for independent oversight. However, the effectiveness of such bodies depends on their autonomy and resources. IPSA has faced criticism for being reactive rather than proactive, and its impact on preventing future abuses remains debated (Hough, 2017).

Enactment of New Legislation

New laws, such as the Lobbying Act 2014 following the "Cash for Influence" scandal, aim to close regulatory gaps. However, these laws often face criticism for being too narrow or not fully enforced (e.g., Grant, 2021). The Lobbying Act, for example, has been criticised for its limited scope and failure to address all forms of lobbying effectively (Solaiman, 2023).

Enhancement of Existing Laws

Strengthening existing regulations, as seen after the "Cash for Honours" scandal, where there was a re-emphasis on the Honours (Prevention of Abuses) Act 1925, often signals a recognition of gaps in enforcement rather than a complete overhaul. This approach can be seen as insufficient when deeper systemic issues are at play.

Procedural Reforms

Procedural changes introduce new mechanisms for handling complaints and mandatory training. While these reforms are necessary, their effectiveness depends on rigorous implementation and cultural change within institutions, which is often slow and resistant.

No reaction. There are instances where no legislative response follows a scandal, leaving existing problems unaddressed.

4.4 Comparative Analysis of Media, Public, and Legislative Reactions to Corruption Scandals

This analysis compares media, public and legislative responses to significant corruption scandals in the UK Parliament between 2006 and 2023. By examining the varied reactions to each scandal, the table highlights the effectiveness and limitations of the actions taken by different stakeholders. This analysis reveals the complexities and challenges in addressing corruption within the political system and underscores the need for comprehensive and sustained efforts to ensure accountability and transparency.

4.4.1 Legislative Outcomes of Corruption Scandals

The analysis examines how each scandal's nature influences the legislative response's extent and effectiveness. It reflects on the complexities of political accountability and reform dynamics (see Annex 2: Legislative Responses to Corruption Scandals in the UK Parliament (2006-2023)).

Transactional Corruption: Inconsistencies in Response

Transactional corruption involves explicit quid pro quo arrangements that undermine the integrity of democratic processes. Notable cases include:

a) Cash for Honours (2006). Despite the egregious nature of trading honours for financial benefits, the legislative response must be more substantiated and limited to re-emphasising existing laws. This lack of robust legislative action highlights a significant gap in political will to confront high-level political corruption and suggests a possible deference to political elites within established parties.

b) Cash for Influence (2010). In contrast, this scandal resulted in the Lobbying Act 2014, a delayed yet meaningful legislative response to curb the overt sale of political influence. However, the extent to which this act has effectively curtailed such practices remains debatable, indicating potential shortcomings in its scope and enforcement.

Exploitation of Entitlements: Reactive rather than Proactive Reforms

This typology is exemplified by scandals that expose the misuse of parliamentary allowances and expenses:

a) MPs' Expenses Scandal (2009). The establishment of IPSA and comprehensive expense reforms were direct consequences of public outrage. This response, while significant, can be critiqued as reactive rather than indicative of a proactive approach to strengthening parliamentary integrity. It raises questions about the effectiveness of oversight mechanisms that only tighten in response to publicised misconduct.

b) David Laws Expenses Scandal (2010). The absence of new legislation following this individual case of misuse suggests a reliance on earlier reforms (post-2009 scandal). It highlights a potentially complacent legislative approach to recurrent issues of entitlement exploitation.

Undue Influence and Access: A Reluctance to Establish Rigorous Controls

Scandals that involve leveraging political positions for private gain pose severe threats to the principles of public service:

Greensill Scandal (2021) and Cash for Access (2015) – The legislative hesitance observed in these cases, where no immediate robust laws were enacted, underscores a systemic reluctance to enforce stringent controls over the interactions between private interests and public officials.

Conflict of Interest: The Slow Wheels of Reform

Conflicts of interest, particularly in procurement processes, highlight vulnerabilities in public sector integrity:

Michelle Mone PPE Scandal (2023). Despite increased scrutiny, more decisive legislative action is needed following this scandal, which exemplifies the slow pace of reform in areas prone to conflicts of interest. This scenario indicates a broader issue with the agility and resolve of legislative bodies to address and rectify corruption swiftly and effectively.

The typological analysis reveals that while some corruption scandals have led to legislative changes, often, these reforms are reactive, limited, or delayed. This pattern suggests an overarching issue with legislative frameworks' preventive and proactive capacities in addressing corruption.

4.4.2 Constraints on Legislative Changes

Complexity and Direct Impact. Scandals involving complex ethical and legal issues, such as the **Cash for Honours (2006)** and the relationship scandal involving **Jennifer Arcuri and Boris Johnson (2019)**, tend to result in minimal legislative changes. These cases often see a

reiteration of existing laws rather than the creation of new legislative frameworks, suggesting a reluctance to tackle ethically ambiguous issues that do not directly disrupt parliamentary operations.

Political Consequences and Resolutions. Immediate political repercussions, such as resignations or suspensions, often preclude further legislative action. The **David Laws Expenses Scandal (2010)** illustrates this pattern, where swift personal consequences – Laws' resignation – superseded the need for broader legislative reform, reflecting perhaps a perception that the issue had been sufficiently addressed.

Media Sensationalism. When media coverage focuses more on sensationalism than systemic analysis, legislative responses tend to be less profound.

Sustainability of Public and Media Pressure. The longevity of public and media pressure plays a critical role in determining legislative outcomes. Scandals that quickly recede from the public eye, such as the **Greensill Scandal (2021)**, witness sluggish or non-existent legislative responses, highlighting the necessity for sustained advocacy and scrutiny to effect meaningful reforms.

4.4.4 Catalysts for Reforms

Intense Media Coverage. When corruption scandals are prominently featured in the media, they capture public attention and provoke public outrage. This was observed in the "MPs' Expenses Scandal", where detailed reporting by media outlets like The Daily Telegraph ignited significant public backlash and immediate legislative action. The media informs the public and pressures policymakers to respond to the crisis of confidence in political institutions.

Public Outrage and Engagement. Public response to media revelations plays a crucial role in driving legislative change. Strong public reactions, as seen in the response to various

scandals, often force the hand of legislators to introduce reforms to quell public discontent and restore trust.

Concrete Evidence and Investigative Reporting. Investigative journalism that uncovers undeniable evidence of wrongdoing tends to have a more significant impact on prompting legislative changes. The thorough documentation of abuses, such as those revealed during the "Cash for Questions" affair, provides the factual basis to harden public and political resolve to implement reforms.

4.4.5 Inhibitors of Reforms

Institutional inertia and political resistance. Even when scandals are exposed and public pressure mounts, institutional inertia – resistance within the political system to change longstanding practices – can significantly slow the reform process. Additionally, political resistance from those who benefit from the status quo or fear political fallout can impede meaningful changes.

Fragmented reforms and the need for comprehensive solutions. Legislative responses to scandals often address only the specific issues highlighted by the media rather than tackling underlying systemic problems. This can lead to fragmented reforms that do not prevent future corruption. For instance, while the Lobbying Act of 2014 addressed some aspects of lobbying practices, critics argue it needed to be more comprehensive to effectively cover all dimensions of lobbying activities (Solaiman, 2023).

Scandal fatigue and sensationalism. When corruption scandals become too frequent, the public may become desensitised to new revelations, a phenomenon known as scandal fatigue. This reduces the impact of media coverage and diminishes public pressure for change. Additionally, when media coverage is driven by sensationalism rather than in-depth analysis,

it may fail to foster a nuanced understanding of the issues, leading to less informed public pressure for reform. A lack of sustained pressure frequently undercuts the effectiveness of legislative responses.

4.5 Limitations and Future Directions

The media plays a crucial role in exposing corruption and prompting initial legislative responses, acting as a catalyst for reform. However, its influence often leads to reactive, superficial changes rather than addressing systemic issues comprehensively. Institutional inertia, political resistance, and sensationalism can undermine the effectiveness of these reforms. Therefore, while the media is vital in highlighting corruption, it often serves more as a comforting sweetened pill than a definitive cure, necessitating sustained public engagement and proactive legislative efforts to achieve meaningful, long-term anti-corruption measures.

The study acknowledges the limitation that correlation does not imply causation; legislative changes following media coverage do not necessarily result from that coverage. Generalisations should be made cautiously, as different political systems may react uniquely to media exposure. Moreover, intuitive assumptions about media impact might oversimplify the complex dynamics. However, the findings provide new insights into how media scrutiny can mobilise public opinion and pressure policymakers into action, revealing the media's significant yet complex role in shaping legislative agendas. This research underscores the importance of media as a catalyst for reform while highlighting the need for comprehensive and proactive legislative measures.

Future research should include comparative studies across different political systems to understand the varying effects of media influence. Additionally, examining the role of social media in mobilising public opinion and its interaction with traditional media could provide

deeper insights into contemporary media dynamics. Investigating the impact of media ownership and political affiliations on reporting and subsequent legislative actions could further elucidate the complex relationship between media and politics.

Conclusion

This thesis has analysed the dynamic interplay between media coverage, public opinion, and legislative action in the context of corruption scandals involving UK Members of Parliament from 2006 to 2023. Through a comprehensive examination of major scandals, this research has identified both the catalysts for and the impediments to effective legislative reforms to curb corruption.

The findings reveal that while media exposure of corruption scandals is crucial in catalysing legislative changes, the actual effectiveness of these reforms is inconsistent. High-profile media coverage, as seen in the "MPs' Expenses Scandal", successfully pressured lawmakers to establish the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority (IPSA) and overhaul the expenses system. However, the focus on sensational individual misconduct often overshadows systemic issues, leading to sometimes superficial reforms that fail to address the underlying causes of corruption.

Moreover, the research underscores that legislative responses are frequently reactive rather than proactive. Laws and regulations introduced post-scandal, such as the Lobbying Act of 2014, often suffer from limitations in scope and enforcement, exacerbated by political resistance and institutional inertia. This reactive nature indicates a legislative body more often spurred into action by public outrage rather than by a steadfast commitment to integrity and transparency.

The role of the media is pivotal in shaping public perceptions and legislative outcomes. By spotlighting unethical practices and holding MPs accountable, the media acts as a vital mechanism in the democratic process. However, the media's influence has limitations.

Ownership biases, sensationalism, and scandal fatigue can diminish the impact of reporting on systemic corruption, reducing the potential for thorough and meaningful reforms.

This thesis contributes to understanding how media coverage influences legislative action on corruption. It provides insight into the strengths and weaknesses of past legislative responses, offering a foundation for future policy development to enhance the effectiveness of anti-corruption measures. The study advocates for robust legal frameworks, proactive governance, and vigilant media to combat political corruption's perennial challenge.

In conclusion, while significant strides have been made in legislative responsiveness to corruption scandals, much remains to be done to create durable and effective anti-corruption measures. Future reforms must address corruption's symptoms and systemic roots, ensuring integrity and accountability within the political system.

Annex 1 – Case Studies of Media, Public, and Legislative Reactions to Corruption Scandals

Case Study	Media Reaction	Public Reaction	Legislative Reaction
Cash for Honours (2006)	Investigative journalism by The Guardian and BBC News uncovered the scandal, but faced significant pushback from political entities, limiting further exposure.	Widespread condemnation and cynicism, but ultimately limited impact on long-term public trust.	No new laws were passed; merely re-emphasised existing laws, showing a lack of substantial legislative reform.
MPs' Expenses Scandal (2009)	The Daily Telegraph's sustained coverage was crucial but also led to sensationalism, as it focused more on scandal than on systemic issues.	Public outrage and protests, yet MPs' systemic entitlement culture persisted.	Establishment of IPSA and expense reforms were reactive measures; questions remain about their long-term effectiveness.
David Laws Expenses Scandal (2010)	The Guardian and The Times' detailed coverage highlighted the breach, but some media outlets reported biasedly.	Public reaction was critical but mitigated by his resignation; overall, limited pressure for further reforms.	No new legislation was introduced, reflecting a failure to address the deeper issues within the expense system.

Cash for Influence (2010)	The Sunday Times provided concrete evidence, but media coverage waned quickly, reducing sustained pressure.	Initial public outrage, but no long-term mobilisation or significant public pressure for reform.	Immediate suspensions and resignations were reactive; the Lobbying Act 2014 came too late and had limited scope.
Cash for Access (2015)	Joint investigation by Channel 4 and The Telegraph exposed the scandal, but the impact was dampened by media's perceived sensationalism (Channel 4 Dispatches, 2015)	Shock and disappointment, especially with well-respected figures involved, yet the outrage was short-lived (Channel 4 Dispatches, 2015)	Discussions about lobbying regulations were influenced but no immediate legislation followed, showing reluctance for swift action (Channel 4 Dispatches, 2015).
Jennifer Arcuri and Boris Johnson (2019)	Extensive coverage by BBC News and The Times focused on conflict of interest but often framed within political rivalries, reducing perceived objectivity (BBC News, 2020; The Times, 2020).	Mixed reactions; some viewed the outrage as politically motivated, diluting the call for accountability (BBC News, 2020; The Times, 2020).	No immediate legislative changes were made; highlighted but did not resolve the need for stricter conflict-of-interest guidelines (BBC News, 2020; The Times, 2020).
Owen Paterson Lobbying Scandal (2021)	Extensive reporting by BBC News and The Guardian highlighted breaches but quickly moved on, limiting long-term impact (BBC News, 2021; The Guardian, 2021).	Public reaction was critical, but legislative action needed to be faster and more to restore full trust (BBC News, 2021; The Guardian, 2021).	A review of parliamentary standards was initiated, but enforcement of lobbying rules remained weak and inconsistent (BBC News, 2021; The Guardian, 2021).

Greensill Scandal (2021)	In-depth coverage by The Guardian and Financial Times exposed conflicts but failed to maintain long-term pressure for change (The Guardian, 2021; Financial Times, 2021).	There is significant concern over private influence but no sustained public campaign for reform (The Guardian, 2021; Financial Times, 2021).	Calls for a regulatory framework were made, yet legislative action was slow, hesitating to tackle lobbying effectively (The Guardian, 2021; Financial Times, 2021).
Michelle Mone PPE Scandal (2023)	BBC News and The Guardian's detailed reports focused on procurement processes but were often framed within the larger pandemic context, diluting their impact (BBC News, 2023; The Guardian, 2023).	There is public outrage, especially given the pandemic context, yet no long-term mobilisation for procurement reforms (BBC News, 2023; The Guardian, 2023).	Increased scrutiny was called for, but tighter regulations were implemented slowly and faced political resistance (BBC News, 2023; The Guardian, 2023).

Annex 2 – Legislative Responses to Corruption Scandals in the UK Parliament

Legislation	Year Enacted	Scandal Influenced	Key Provisions	Criticisms
Honours (Prevention of Abuses) Act 1925 (Re-emphasized)	1925	Cash for Honours (2006)	Criminalises the sale or purchase of honours for financial or other inducements.	Seen as outdated lacking modern enforcement mechanisms. Insufficient penalties and oversight.
Parliamentary Standards Act 2009	2009	MPs' Expenses Scandal (2009)	Establishes the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority (IPSA). Mandates transparent regulation of MPs' expenses.	Reactive legislation needs more proactive measures. IPSA's effectiveness questioned due to limited scope.
Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority (IPSA)	2009	MPs' Expenses Scandal (2009)	Regulates MPs' business costs, expenses, and compliance. Implements systematic audits and compliance checks.	Criticised for being a reactionary measure. Long-term impact and comprehensive compliance are debatable.
The Bribery Act 2010	2010	Cash for Influence (2010)	Introduces offences for active and passive bribery. Establishes corporate liability for failing to prevent bribery.	Enforcement challenges due to the complex nature of bribery. Limited effectiveness in addressing lobbying issues.

The Ministerial Code (Revised)	Multiple	David Laws Expenses Scandal (2010)	Sets out standards for ministerial conduct. Addresses conflicts of interest and ethical guidelines.	Perceived as insufficiently enforced. Dependent on political will for enforcement.
Lobbying (Transparency) Act 2014	2014	Cash for Influence (2010)	Requires lobbyists to register and disclose lobbying activities. It aims to ensure transparency in lobbying.	Limited scope, covering only consultant lobbyists. Does not address in-house lobbyists and broader lobbying activities.
Transparency of Lobbying, Non-Party Campaigning and Trade Union Administration Act 2014	2014	Various lobbying scandals	Regulates third-party lobbying. Increases transparency in political campaigning and trade union administration.	Criticised for not covering all dimensions of lobbying. Limited enforcement and practical application issues.
House of Lords Reform Act 2014	2014	Ongoing concerns about appointments	Introduces reforms aimed at improving the transparency and accountability of appointments to the House of Lords.	Incremental reforms rather than comprehensive overhaul. Slow to address systemic issues.
Code of Conduct for Members of Parliament (Revised)	Multiple	MPs' Expenses Scandal (2009), Owen Paterson Lobbying Scandal (2021)	Establishes stricter guidelines on MPs' conduct, expenses, and lobbying. Enhances conflict of interest rules.	Implementation and enforcement challenges. Criticised for lack of robust enforcement mechanisms.

Procurement Policy Notes (PPNs)	Multiple	Michelle Mone PPE Scandal (2023)	Enhances transparency and integrity in public procurement processes. Provides guidelines for emergency procurement.	Slow implementation and faced political resistance. Questions about long-term compliance and effectiveness.

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