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Political Poster Adaptations on Twitter:
Digital Culture, Media Logics and
Mediatisation

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Abstract

Opportunities afforded through digital culture have changed the way citizens contribute to political discourse. Recent technological advances and the widespread adoption of Web 2.0 mean that through social media, regular citizens can communicate using a variety of mediums through a single channel.

Using UKIP's 2016 Breaking Point poster as a case study, this research aims to understand how digital technology allows citizens to adapt party political posters and distribute them on Twitter. It also seeks to interpret how the meaning of these adapted images change throughout these iterations and to understand why they were created.

Media logics and mediatisation are both examined through the work as potential frameworks through which the creation of iterations and distribution of them on Twitter can be explained. Mediatisation through the course of this work relates to how non-media actors produce and distribute content which adheres to the norms of social media, representing the transformation of political practices and behaviour. Through analysing the Breaking Point poster, the research aims to address how mediatisation can explain why the subsequent iterations were created. Social media logics and network media logics are also both considered, as they complement the social media processes which take place on Twitter helping to identify mediatisation in the Breaking Point iterations.

To understand the roles of mediatisation and media logics on the iterations found on Twitter, a semiotic analysis has been completed for each iteration, looking at the denotation, connotations and anchoring as well as intertextuality and recontextualisation.

Through this research, the three key research areas of digital culture, media logics and mediatisation will be investigated to help explain how the iterations were created and why they were distributed on Twitter. As iterations made to be distributed on social media are analysed, the effects of social constructivist mediatisation become apparent alongside media logics and the influence of digital culture.

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1. Introduction

The topic of Brexit has been at the forefront of news in the United Kingdom (UK) since David Cameron announced the decision to hold a referendum on the country's membership of the European Union (EU). Ever since, the UK has been transfixed on the process of leaving the EU, with the daily news cycle being full of the latest plot twists.

Instrumental to the eventual result was the role of campaigning by both sides (pro and anti-EU), which saw over £32 million (The Electoral Commission, 2019) spent by political parties, campaigns and individuals encouraging voters to support their respective sides.

Campaigning in the 21st century is conducted through a variety of means and has been increasingly carried out through digital means. Digital opportunities mean that campaigns can reach potential citizens who may have been inaccessible through traditional means.

Visually led communications have been an integral aspect of the campaigning process throughout recent history and this research addresses how this mode of communication has moved into the digital sphere. Understanding how this mode of address has translated into the digital environment is the basis of my research. Therefore, the research question for this work is:

How do affordances in digital culture allow polarising party political referendum advertising posters to be adapted and distributed on Twitter?

Examining a piece of communication which was widely recognised and initiated the creation of several versions of the original online based on its notoriety provides a case study through which the research question can be addressed. For these reasons, I decided to focus the work on the UKIP Breaking Point poster, created for the 2016 EU referendum. Breaking Point became one of the most recognisable pieces of communication associated

with the argument to leave the EU. Using the Breaking Point poster provided an opportunity to analyse the prevalence and importance of digital political communication in the period of campaigning ahead of the Brexit vote. The study aims to understand the role of visual communications in this era of digitalisation, and how political discourse surrounding visual political imagery is repurposed by individuals to transmit altered messages. Breaking Point is a multimodal text, which combines elements of written text alongside a photograph that forms the background of the poster.

The original photograph used in the background of the poster was taken by photographer Jeff Mitchell and features refugees on the Slovenian border in Rigonce. According to Wyatt (2016) the photograph was taken in October 2015, before the date of the referendum was announced on 20 February 2016 (BBC News, 2016). The refugees pictured were fleeing war-torn countries such as Syria and Afghanistan having just arrived off a train from Croatia and were walking around 8 kilometres to the Slovenian border. In a Guardian interview with Ben Beaumont-Thomas (2016), Jeff Mitchell identifies the refugees in the Breaking Point poster as “men”, who were “younger and fitter, more able to get transport.” Subsequently it was these features of the image which became obvious and apparent in the adapted images distributed on social media, as gender and ethnicity based rhetoric quickly became attached to Jeff Mitchell’s image.

As with any single piece of text, there are several external factors which could also be said to have had an influence over the original text and how it gained notoriety. The date the UKIP poster was released was also notable in UK politics for a more solemn reason, as it was the day that MP Jo Cox was murdered on the streets of her own constituency of Batley and Spen. She was stabbed and shot by Thomas Mair, a constituent who had been involved with

white supremacist groups and considered Cox a 'collaborator' for her inclusive messages and endorsement of diversity and immigration (Jones, 2019). Her inaugural parliamentary speech in 2015 which discussed her constituents having more in common than that which divided them was widely shared after her death. The fact that UKIP's Breaking Point poster was released on the same day as the murder of MP Jo Cox meant the two events would be forever bound together.

The poster had only attracted minor interest when it was released on advertising vans. Now it became the focus of a public debate about whether Farage was stirring up racial hatred, and whether an atmosphere of 'fearing the other' had fuelled both Cox's killing and Leave's lead in the polls. (Shipman, 2016 p.384)

Shipman (2016) highlights how initial interest surrounding the poster had been limited, as the mobile billboards which featured the Breaking Point poster made their way around London after the initial poster launch with Nigel Farage earlier in the day. However, after the subsequent events, a media storm gathered around the poster, with Breaking Point becoming a lightning rod for the criticism of language used in politics.

Ensuing conversation about the nature and influence of the original poster meant that it was widely seen, being shared by both traditional and new media, as the poster became a media story itself. This demonstration of hybrid media and how content traverses different channels of communications will be discussed in the literature review and further examined through the analysis.

On Channel 4 News (2016) on 20 June 2016, Farage was repeatedly asked whether he would apologise for the Breaking Point poster and its racial undertones by host Krishnan Guru-Murthy. This sort of scrutiny over the posters content and underlying themes may not have occurred if not for the murder of Jo Cox. These factors ensured that the image stayed in the

public consciousness and part of the news cycle for an extended period, and social media provided an additional opportunity for the topic to be discussed. The provocative nature of the content meant that the poster prompted many responses, demonstrating the polarising effect of the EU debate through the microcosm of Breaking Point.

The role of social media and the ongoing process of digitalisation has had an increasing effect on politics and political discourse. This is evident through the increased scrutiny on social media giants like *Facebook*, whose chairman and founder, Mark Zuckerberg has testified in front of the U.S Congress multiple times in recent years. More recently, *Twitter* CEO Jack Dorsey announced ahead of the 2019 UK General Election that *Twitter* would be banning political advertisements from appearing in users' feeds. This involvement of politics in social media and vice-versa is a subject that is continuing to develop and the research conducted through this work aims to help uncover and address a small section of this issue.

1.1 Research Questions

The key question this research addresses is: How do affordances in digital culture allow polarising party political referendum advertising posters to be adapted and distributed on Twitter?

To help address this question, two sub-questions have been set to help formulate the research:

- How does recontextualisation through digital adaptation change meaning in iterations of the Breaking Point poster published on *Twitter*?
- What role do mediatisation and media logics play in this recontextualisation process?

The key research question has largely been defined and explained in the earlier section of the introduction and seeks to explore how digital culture enables the UKIP's Breaking Point poster to be adapted and then distributed on *Twitter*.

The first sub-question examines how the increasing digitisation of society allows members of the public to express their opinions in a way that was not previously available. It is framed by key research question and seeks to address how meaning is inserted through the recontextualised adaptations of the Breaking Point poster. The research seeks to understand how social media users distribute recontextualised material to support their ideologies and perspectives on topics through using technology available to them in the modern era. Each of the adapted images of Breaking Point used on *Twitter* studied throughout this work will be referred to as iterations of Breaking Point, with the original poster serving as the first iteration. When used in science and maths, an iteration is defined as “the process of successive approximations used as a technique for solving a mathematical

problem” (Rennie & Law, 2019). In this work, the adapted versions of Breaking Point distributed on *Twitter* are described as iterations. Analysed chronologically in this work, each of the adaptations will be analysed individually but also as part of a thread, charting how the original poster was adapted to change its meaning.

Throughout the iterations used in the piece, the changes in narrative will be analysed. In the case of the research, the mathematical problem is comparable to the research questions, and the iterations of Breaking Point chronologically serve as successive approximations which will help to address these research questions.

The aspect of recontextualisation, replacing the original situation in which the image was first viewed, helps with understanding different preferred readings of the texts. According to Harcup (2014), a preferred reading is “when members of an audience accept information at face value and/or absorb whatever message or ideology may be contained within a piece of communication.” The preferred reading of a text can change as the original text is altered and repurposed as a new iteration. Throughout this work the preferred reading of each adaptation will be considered, providing an insight into why the iteration was created and the messages it sought to transmit through this preferred reading will be addressed. How these changes occur from one iteration to the next will be charted through the journey Breaking Point takes through a set period of time. Each of these iterations will be analysed from several perspectives: firstly, through a semiotic analysis looking at the denotation, connotation and anchoring and secondly, through the aspects of intertextuality and recontextualisation. Through these tools which breakdown each iteration, the roles of the core concepts discussed in the literature review (digital culture, media logics and mediatisation) can be analysed.

The second sub-question considers the roles that media logics and mediatisation play as part of the process of distribution of iterations of Breaking Point. The theory of media logics is discussed in the literature review, which looks at various media logics theories and compares them. The original mass media logics theory conceived by Altheide and Snow in 1979 (Altheide, 2013) has been developed to consider newer forms of technology and their impact of communication processes. Throughout the literature review, mass media logics, social media logics and network media logics are discussed alongside hybrid media theory, with relevant elements of each featuring in the analysis. Understanding media logics as a conceptual framework may help to demonstrate how political content is produced and distributed through the analysis of Breaking Point and its subsequent *Twitter* iterations.

Mediatisation is a central theme of the work and is drawn upon throughout the research.

Mediatisation “provides a conceptual framework for understanding how an ever expanding media sphere interacts with and shapes public communication” (Veltmer & Sorenson, 2016 p.4). Through the Breaking Point poster and its subsequent iterations, the process of mediatisation is analysed. Twitter, the social media platform on which the adapted versions of Breaking Point have been distributed, plays the role of public communication, with the iterations of the Breaking Point poster serving as examples of how the public sphere interacts with the political sphere. Throughout this research, how non-media actors conform to norms and practices of social media and political communication is analysed. Each of the research questions relates to a key concept (digital culture, media logics and mediatisation) which is further analysed in the literature review. These concepts help to provide a platform of understanding which forms the foundational knowledge for the

iteration analysis. Throughout the dissertation, the poster will be referred to as Breaking Point, as it is in this incarnation which it is most familiar.

1.2 Rationale

The research aims to examine the interplay between popular and political culture. This relationship is examined through an understanding of how the UK's 2016 referendum on European Union membership led to the creation of the Breaking Point poster, which provided the catalyst for the subsequent iterations shared on social media analysed in this work. These iterations of the original poster were been modified and redistributed to provoke and convey a different preferred reading to the original incarnation.

In this rationale section, I explain why the research focused on posters before going onto explore what led to the decision to focus on Breaking Point as the case study. Additionally, there is justification for the use of *Twitter* as the social media example to find adapted iterations of the poster. Following this, the timeframe used in the work is detailed, helping to define the parameters of the research.

There are several reasons why I decided to focus on how posters have been adopted. Billboard adverts have been a prominent form of political advertising in recent history, featuring images created by political parties to encourage voters to support them in upcoming elections. Alongside leaflets and other party-political campaigning methods, this was the primary means through which visually led messaging could reach the voting public. Examining this topic of visual political communications provided an opportunity to examine how posters are now used are used in the Web 2.0 era.

The iterations included in this work demonstrate the ways in which regular citizens have adapted communications to change their messaging. The adaptation of political messaging could have previously only taken place on the television, radio and print media through satirical comedy and phone-ins, or directly to representatives through meetings, hustings or

letters. Even in these circumstances, the opportunity for the adaptation of political advertising was further limited due to the number of gatekeepers which impacted the opportunity for distribution of content.

Gatekeeping is the process of culling and crafting countless bits of information into the limited number of messages that reach people each day, and it is the center of the media's role in modern public life. (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009 p.1)

Those who are in control of this process of gatekeeping (i.e. editors and press barons in the case of newspapers) are gatekeepers who can control the exchange of information and content. Web 2.0 and social media provide an environment in which non-media actors can adapt political content freely, without external gatekeepers restricting production and distribution opportunities. Users themselves become the gatekeepers on social media.

Focusing the research on multimodal posters offers an alternative to researching purely written communication and provides an opportunity through which digital culture and other contributory factors can also be analysed, as it is through modern technology posters have become so much more easily and effectively adaptable. The varied interpretations of visual communications also meant that multiple perspectives of a single text could be analysed. Analysing how political imagery transformed in the digital age is an area of interest, and through this research, a part of this transformation is examined.

The choice of the individual poster which formed the case study of the research was crucial to enabling the research questions to be addressed. To analyse how the adaptation took place, different iterations of a single poster circulated on social media have been analysed, to show how citizens change messages from the original text. Part of the reason Breaking Point was chosen is because it was responsible for so many subsequent iterations due to the polarising nature of the topic, which relied on emotive topics and encouraged interaction.

This is where having a polarising text can be effective. Polarisation can be defined as a reflection of ideological differentiation between groups (Sartori, 1976). In this case, the political polarisation can be seen initially through Breaking Point in opposing views over Brexit and continuing through the iterations that cover different topics. How the iterations depict and emphasise different political ideologies and perspectives is one of the reasons *Twitter* users felt passionate enough to tweet about them. Such polarisation has often led to binary positions on these topics, which makes Breaking Point a fertile case study for the research.

Additionally, the provocative nature of the poster elicited reactions from both supporters and critics meaning that the notoriety of the poster grew, thus making it recognisable enough to adapt and still be familiar. This factor meant that many iterations of Breaking Point appeared online, with regular citizens taking it upon themselves to adapt versions and redistribute them on social media. As Morrison (2016) comments below, it is clear to see how critics of the poster could interpret it, causing a reaction which helped to contribute to the media circus which surrounded it during the launch.

Far from depicting a line of European Union economic migrants, let alone one entering the United Kingdom, it showed a line of non-EU refugees crossing the Croatia-Slovenia border... Not since Saatchi and Saatchi recruited an army of young Conservatives to stage a similarly sinuous fake dole queue for its epochal 1979 'Labour isn't Working' campaign had such a deceitfully anonymised procession been constructed in the service of British political propaganda. (Morrison 2016)

This creation of provocative material appeared to initiate the creation of multiple other iterations with varying preferred readings. Morrison's (2016) analysis highlights how the creation of confrontational political communications was not something completely new, as he references material which predates the digital era. As a result of these factors, analysing

Breaking Point and the subsequent iterations provided an opportunity to examine a landmark piece of political propaganda which spawned iterations worthy of analysis.

The iterations of the Breaking Point poster that have been analysed in this work were created between 16 June 2016 and 31 December 2018. The timeframe starts on the date the original Breaking Point poster was released on social media and to the press. The long tail effect of online material means that content continues to be reused and recycled long after its initial release, but due to the time period which this research was been conducted, the end date represents an appropriate point to gather adaptations that take into consideration the longtail as well as iterations created during the EU referendum campaigning period. The inclusion of iterations which were first used over two years after the original Breaking Point poster was released means a wider variety of recontextualised material can be analysed, which cover topics in the news cycles of the day.

This case study uses a single text as a starting point from which the analysis develops and provides an understanding of how visual texts are repurposed and recontextualised to transmit a different meaning. It provides an example of how non-media/political actors, using their social media accounts, distribute content in line with the norms of the channels they communicate on and which they hope will appeal to their network of social media acquaintances. The success of these distributed iterations comes down to followers who will likely have similar views interacting with the message, but also through opposition to the original content intended to provoke reactions from opponents.

For clarity, I have based the research on one single poster, the United Kingdom Independence Party's (UKIP) Breaking Point. Using a poster that gathered widespread attention and was produced within the last few years, helps to best demonstrate political

discourse on social media. Selecting a poster from the mid-2010s onwards means that the text had its prime shelf life during the era of social media, resulting in more material to analyse. The major British political events of the previously mentioned period include the 2015 and 2017 General Elections as well as the 2016 European Union Referendum. Widely regarded as one of the most significant events in recent British political history, the EU Referendum provided an opportunity to analyse visual political communications materials and the discourse they sparked. For these reasons, the focus of the research is on the Breaking Point poster created by UKIP and released on 16 June 2016, one week before the European Union Referendum.

To best answer the research question about the online adaptation of polarising political advertising, I have decided to focus on iterations of the Breaking Point poster distributed on one particular social media platform. The analysis of posters on a single social media platform allows for a manageable number of iterations to be identified and analysed, leading to the creation of a more rigorously researched thesis. I used *Twitter*, for a number of reasons, chief among them is the prevalence of political actors and material on it. According to Ausserhofer & Maireder (2013 p291), “the increasing use of *Twitter* by politicians, journalists, political strategists and citizens has made it an important part of the networked sphere in which political issues are publicly negotiated.” Analysing a social media platform closely associated with political discourse provides the opportunity to analyse content produced by political actors themselves – this, coupled with the previously mentioned reasons, made *Twitter* the perfect social media network to use in this case study. Additionally, *Twitter* allows easier access to social media posts than many other social networks, making it a useful platform through which to conduct the research. This

transparency means that iterations distributed on the platform are easier to find and analyse.

1.3 Structure of Dissertation

The research is divided into the following five chapters: introduction, literature review, methodology, analysis and conclusion.

Throughout the literature review, there is an overview of the current work which pertains to the three key areas of digital culture, mediatisation and media logics. These topics are significant subjects which underpin large sections of the research, and in the literature review, the merits and demerits of each are considered, before concluding by refining the definitions used in this research.

Digital culture is the first key area, which first analyses what each word individually represents. Briefly, digital culture references the principles, practices and processes that surround the recent innovation of Web 2.0 and the channels and mediums developed around it. Introducing and understanding digital culture provides a background of the environment in which the Breaking Point iterations were produced and distributed.

Media logics is the second key area studied in the literature review section. Media logics provides a conceptual framework for the production, distribution and media usage of content. Altheide and Snow's original mass media logics theory provides the background from which the review develops. Due to the nature of this research which focuses on new media, the review then goes onto consider the theories of social media logics and network media logics, which are more closely aligned to the research.

Mediatisation is the final key concept examined in the literature review. The term features in the second sub-question alongside media logics and is a recurrent theme throughout the work. Mediatisation denotes the changing relationship between media and politics whereby

political actors increasingly adopt the logics of the media. However, through this work I argue that due to digital culture, it is non-media actors who are increasingly adopting these norms and logics on social media increasingly, as they continue to produce and redistribute adapted political texts. The relative merits and appropriate relevant aspects of each of these topics are critiqued and go onto be refined before being employed in the analysis chapter.

The methodology is broken down into two areas: sampling and data collection and method of analysis. The sampling and data collection section features a table of the iterations that have been analysed and develops the detail of how the research was conducted. This section also includes the rationales for using both *Twitter* and *TinEye* in the research. The second section of the methodology is the method of analysis, which explains why a combination of semiotics and Ruth Wodak's DHA (Discourse Historical Analysis) - which explores recontextualisation and intertextuality and their application on visual texts - were used to analyse the iterations. Using this combination of semiotics plus aspects of DHA allowed the concepts examined in the literature review to be seen in the iterations. This final section of the methodology also contains definitions of a selection of the key terms used in the analysis chapter: denotation, connotation, anchorage, recontextualisation and intertextuality.

Following the methodology, there is an analysis of the iterations, the core element of the research. In the analysis chapter, there is a breakdown of each iteration accompanied by sections explaining how each of the key terms has influenced the iteration. Using these key terms to interrogate the iterations also enables the key concepts discussed in the literature review to be identified in the different iterations of *Breaking Point*.

Finally, the conclusion revisits the research questions, and examines how they have been addressed and what can be determined and answered through the research.

2. Literature Review

The literature review covers three core areas: digital culture, media logics and mediatisation. In the digital culture section of the literature review there will be an explanation and analysis of the term, followed by a further analysis of relevant theories and concepts which are specifically related to the research that fit under the broad area of digital culture such as Web 2.0, social media and hybrid media theory.

The second key concept explored is media logics. The logics section starts with an overview of Altheide and Snow's (1979) original mass media logic concept. From there, social media logics and network logics are examined, theories which develop the original mass media logics theory. These logics acknowledge and consider modern communication technologies and are therefore more accurately aligned to the research. The various aspects of each of the logic theories are then analysed with specific consideration toward the work in the analysis section.

The final key concept explored in this literature review is mediatisation. Mediatisation is the central theme in understanding how the iterations being examined were initially created. Mediatisation is "the simultaneous analysis of media transformation and the related social transformation of everyday life, culture and society" (Krotz, 2017 p.106). Through this research, the transformation of how non-media/political actors interact and distribute adapted political posters will be analysed through the case study of the Breaking Point poster and *Twitter*.

2.1 Digital Culture

The development of technology has had a profound effect on everyday life and the communications structures which surround it. The sheer volume of technological interactions the average person has in 21st century life and their necessity means they are an integral part of daily life. It is this transition and the changes brought through these technological innovations which are encompassed under one single term: digital culture.

At its very core, digital culture means the interactions between human and computer (Wiggins, 2019 p.21). However, in the context of the upcoming work it represents much more. To help best define what digital culture represents, it is best consider what each individual word means, to obtain a better grasp of what the overall phrase represents.

The term digital has come to mean far more than simply discrete data or machines that use such data. To speak of the digital is to call up, metonymically, the whole panoply of virtual simulacra, instantaneous communication, ubiquitous media and global connectivity that constitutes much of our contemporary experience. (Gere, 2008 p.15)

Gere (2008) highlights the term 'digital' as representing more than simply the changes born through advances in technology. Over the past few decades, the digital revolution has led to an increasing reliance on digital technology, equipment and machinery as part of industry, products and services that have changed and affected the day-to-day lives of citizens around the globe. Gere points out how digital adoption has changed how we communicate and interact with each other daily has also been affected by these changes. Key to Gere's interpretation of the term is the essence of experiencing change due to digital advances.

Even platforms that were not initially launched for the mobile web, such as Facebook or Twitter, have shown the importance of mobile technology in the user experience, especially in integrating and connecting to other services, as users share updates and content wherever they are and whenever. (Highfield, 2016 p.16)

Changes such as the introduction of *Apple's* first *iPhone* and the subsequent adoption of smartphones are also likely to have sped up this process of change by providing convenient mobile access to the digital sphere. According to Battsby (2019), most social media users in the UK access social network platforms through mobile phone applications. This adoption of social media platforms through mobile phone apps has been a crucial step in encouraging social media to grow. It allows users to distribute and redistribute content easily. Through these digital advances, more individuals can interact with content including material created professionally and distributed in non-digital spheres, which then makes its way onto social media networks.

The word 'culture' is perhaps a term which is more difficult to accurately define succinctly. Cultural theorist Raymond Williams' (2013) definition of the introduction of culture relates to sections of society moving away from the prevailing *modus operandi*. He describes the introduction of culture through an explanation which combines two distinct elements:

The emergence of culture as an abstraction and an absolute: an emergence which, in a very complex way, merges two general responses – first, the recognition of the practical separation of certain moral and intellectual activities from the driven impetus of a new kind of society; second, the emphasis of these activities, as a court of human appeal, to be set over the processes of practical social judgement and yet to offer itself as a mitigating and rallying alternative. (Williams, 2013 p.ii)

Williams examines the introduction of a new culture as a shift away from the normal principles, practices and process of the moment. Digital culture does not represent something which is completely new, but rather it marks a departure through a change in intellectual activities. In the case of digital culture, these changes have been brought about through technological innovations and the consequential transformation in the communication channels which individuals use to communicate. The success of digital culture as an alternative can be judged through its widespread adoption. Social Media is a

frequent part of everyday life for billions around the world. In the last few years *Facebook* has reached 2 billion monthly users across the globe (Yurieff, 2017) and *YouTube* was the third most popular 'television channel' in the UK (Furness, 2019). These forms of media were initially conceived and then adopted as an alternative, as Williams acknowledges. Digital culture has steadily become a more integral part of wider society, consequently displaying its validity and becoming ever more prevalent.

Williams' analysis charts the introduction of new cultures more widely, but his observations perfectly summarise the introduction of digital culture: the initial first slow adoption before it is recognised more widely. Though the focus of various cultures is different, how new cultures make their entrance is often broadly similar. How new cultures spread and grow is often organic; the new culture gradually becomes more popular and as it does so, the mainstream media gradually takes notice. This was certainly the case for digital culture, which came about through technical innovation.

Binding these two words together, you begin to gather an idea about the all-encompassing nature of the term and how it has permeated through wider society to become a prevalent culture. Through the technological breakthroughs, digital technology opened up a variety of opportunities. Digital culture and what it represented offered opportunities for engagers to participate in activities, regardless of physical boundaries which previously restricted communications and the exchange of ideas. Many of these opportunities have been afforded through digital society thanks to the introduction of Web 2.0.

Web 2.0 is a version of the web that is open to ordinary users and where they can add their content. It refers to the sites and spaces on the internet where user can put their own words, pictures, sounds and video. (Brown, 2009 p.1)

Web 2.0's ubiquity in this digital era allows contributors with very little prior formal knowledge of adaption and distribution of content to participate through the lowering of barriers to entry. Put simply, Web 2.0 has brought about a more user-friendly experience, allowing more people to use, access, produce and distribute content on the internet. Improved and convenient interfaces allow participation to increase thanks to ease of access coupled with increasing accessibility through widespread adoption of smartphones, as mentioned earlier. It is these factors of Web 2.0 which are integral to social media, one of the defining creations of digital culture. Web 2.0 and its increased usability have paved the way for the internet to become an opportunity for innovation and disruption.

The consequential effects of the introduction of Web 2.0 have been described as a power shift: "In practice, it signifies the transfer of control of the internet, and ultimately the central platform for communication, from the few to the many" (Brown, 2009 p.2).

Web 2.0 represents a reorganization of the relations between producers and their audiences in a maturing Internet market, as well as a set of approaches adopted by companies seeking to harness mass creativity, collectivism, and peer production. (Van Dijck and Nieborg, 2009 cited in Jenkins, Ford & Green 2013, p.49)

This encouragement of democratisation and giving an opportunity to users to contribute by removing many of the traditional gatekeepers who previously guarded the ability to spread messages to the masses is a crucial and defining aspect of Web 2.0. This shifting relationship between producers and audiences has been brought to fruition through Web 2.0 and the opportunities it has provided. This dynamic has led to the introduction of the term 'prosumers' relating to those who are creators as well as receivers, a role created through.

With the performance of hybrid roles like that of "prosumer" (Toffler 1980)... there is a sense that supply and demand now connect in more efficient, and perhaps more democratic, ways than they did before Web 2.0. (Ross, 2014 p.158)

Social media is an example of an environment in which consumers are often producers and the defined lines which existed between such roles in traditional media have been blurred thanks to Web 2.0.

The increased opportunities that Web 2.0 affords does not end there. More power is given to consumers, who can choose their programming more selectively and are not consigned to absorbing whatever gatekeepers choose to distribute through linear programming.

Through social media for example, users have the opportunity to only follow the contributors they want to follow, thus giving users more control over their consumption.

The effects of this ability to actively affect media consumption also has other implications, and one example of this is echo-chambers.

Echo-chambers are defined “as a process of self-selection that confines communication to ideologically-aligned cliques” (Bastos, Mercea & Baronchelli, 2018 p.1). In a space where the media and content that appears in a ‘newsfeed’ is largely self-determined, the opportunity for counter-arguments to proliferate the newsfeed is unlikely and the stranglehold of confirmation bias is more likely to take hold. In the case of adapted Breaking Point posters, these ideologically driven iterations would be likely shared with like-minded individuals, who are likely to have similar perspectives on the topic. Social media is perhaps the environment in which the effects of echo-chambers can be most easily identified. Social media can be defined as:

A group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content. (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010 p.61)

It is because of social media that the iterations analysed in this research have been distributed. Thanks to social media, created through the development of Web 2.0, users can

distribute content easily to their followers, and more generally through Web 2.0, the iterations analysed in this research could be created by regular users. Kaplan & Haenlein (2010) highlight the increased interactions brought about through social media and the increase of UGC (user-generated content). This emphasis on UGC highlights the role of prosumers and how users of social media are now responsible for the output of media, through peer-to-peer networks. Social media provides a tangible example of the increased participatory element which has been stimulated by digital culture. It is social media that is the defining communication structure of the Web 2.0 generation, and the positives and negatives of Web 2.0 can perhaps be most clearly seen through social media.

A participatory culture is a culture with relatively low barriers to artistic expression and civic engagement, strong support for creating and sharing one's creations, and some type of informal mentorship whereby what is known by the most experienced is passed along to novices. (Jenkins, 2009 p.3)

Participatory culture existed before digital culture; however, it is digital culture that has allowed participatory culture to develop, through technological advances removing barriers to entry and allowing consumers to also be producers. This digital culture which allows for an increased participation level has paved the way for a furthering of democratisation, affording regular citizens an opportunity to contribute to discourses. This opportunity for participation was brought about through the power of Web 2.0. Jenkins' definition of participatory culture closely aligns with the research undertaken, analysing how regular citizens create and distribute their own adapted versions of political content. However, it is thanks to technological breakthroughs and the development of the surrounding digital culture that these opportunities exist. Consequently, when digital culture is considered in this work, it often acknowledges elements of participatory culture. The civic engagement referenced by Jenkins (2009) is directly evidenced in this research through social media,

which allows citizens to easily communicate, demonstrating this participatory culture in effect. Digital culture has afforded individuals these opportunities for participation through the introduction of Web 2.0.

Participatory media theory has the tendency to isolate the concept of participation, and to ignore the conditions of possibility of its relevance, appreciation and significance...This decontextualization also leads to the belief that the societal appreciation for and impact of participatory practices will not be affected by the political-ideological, communicative-cultural and communicative-structural context. (Carpentier, 2009 p.441)

However, this early consideration of web 2.0 and its encouragement of democratisation as a universal good is superficial, because as Carpentier (2009, p.441) discusses, offering up the chance to participate neglects to explain that there may be drawbacks. The introduction of the 'political-ideological, communicative-cultural and the communicative-structural context' has created forums on social media which were unknown before the wider adoption of digital culture. How ideologically driven content, such as the iterations analysed in this work, affects consumers is not yet fully known, as more time needs to elapse to review the full ramifications of these new communications structures and their impact on areas of political discourse.

Carpentier's acknowledgement of participatory media not being the universal good is an important point, as it more accurately portrays participation on social media for what it is. The iterations analysed in this work will address some of the issues Carpentier mentions, such as how political/ideological material is contextualised. As Carpentier identifies, the removal of socio-political and ideological factors leads to an over-simplification of media theory.

There are other areas in which social media changes may not be seen as universal goods.

Social media can be said to have changed the power structures of media, but power has shifted from the press barons to social media companies rather than to consumers. This process in effect keeps power in the hands of the few over the many individuals using social media. Large companies can still influence the masses and now can now segment audiences through the volume of data they collect.

In this research, *Twitter* is the social media platform used to locate iterations of Breaking Point. *Twitter* is a social media platform on which 280-character messages (updated from 140 character in late 2017) can be sent between users in the form of 'tweets' (BBC News, 2017). A range of different media can be included in such tweets, which allow additional stories to be placed within the message, including images, videos and GIFs, as well as other interactive features such as polls. As such, complex information and stories can be told through *Twitter* despite the constraints of characters limits: "though restricted to 140 characters, Twitter has simple yet powerful methods of connecting tweets to larger themes, specific people, and groups" (Murthy, 2013 p.21). Murthy mentions how *Twitter* can connect with large themes, and this, alongside the prominence of political actors and discourse which takes place on the platform, makes it one of the most appropriate social networks to examine. This ability to closely associate itself with big themes and politics in particular is also outlined by De Kosnik & Feldman (2019, p.8): "although Twitter is a corporate enterprise that has no explicit commitment to politics of any kind, it appeared that the platform was frequently serving as a political networked space."

Additionally, *Twitter* can allow and encourage users to contribute to trending content and current discussions through #hashtags and moments. According to Marwick & boyd (2011,

p.145), “like much social media, Twitter creates a ‘context collapse’ in which multiple audiences, usually thought of as separate, co-exist in a single social context.” This context collapse means that iterations of Breaking Point in this work are likely not all derived from the same demographic or subsection of society but rather represent broader views on different topics.

Social media users engage with a diverse range of news sources and topics in the curation and consumption of current affairs. Most crucially, this is not happening on Twitter alone, since this platform is ‘inextricably linked to other so-called Web 2.0 services, as well as to the information and media sphere in general. (Highfield, 2016 p.70)

This large base of engaged users also leads to other potential changes in political discourse. The way that ‘everyday politics’ has permeated through social media and encouraged users is one example of this. According to Boyte (2005), everyday politics is something which is populist and civic, meaning that it is of the people, not of governments or campaigns. This people-centric approach naturally lends itself to social media.

Politics then is not just formal, as shaped and discussed by established political actors and the mainstream media, but highly informal. Everyday political talk features occasional contributions by individuals who are loosely connected (if at all), but who have their own personal interests, perspectives and issues of importance. (Highfield, 2016 p.17)

How everyday politics is defined and dissected by Highfield (2016) illustrates its suitability to social media. The concept of everyday politics will help to understand how users who engage in everyday politics may have created and distributed some of the iterations. Everyday politics also provides some insight into how and why those who distributed iterations of Breaking Point became aware and involved with the poster and topics covered. Highfield outlines this:

The political is featured in far more contexts and practices than just blatant and explicit ‘politics’, taking advantage of the social and cultural affordances and

functions of social media... social media offer myriad ways for discussing and participating in political contexts. (Highfield, 2016 p.138)

All the features; of participation, Web 2.0. and social media have been created through the introduction of digital culture and it is these features, the improvement in usability and functionality, which means that the technology is used more often, offering a route for a culture to grow from the innovation.

Although technology has always played a role in politics, it wields more influence than ever before. There is a greater volume of political information, more instant communications than ever before between leaders and followers, and more opportunities for voters to exert control over the message. (Johnson, 2011 cited in Perloff, 2014 p.38)

It is this opportunity for voters to exert control over the message which this research identifies and analyses through the iterations of Breaking Point. It is thanks to Web 2.0 and digital culture that this environment and opportunity exists, and it is on social media through which citizens can exert control, and in the case of this research adapt the meaning of political posters. Due to the lack of gatekeepers, discussed earlier as a positive effect, there is no true regulation of the content posted, meaning that lies and false information can easily be spread, and in the case of this research narratives can easily be imprinted on party political posters.

To summarise, the role of digital culture on political discourse is an ever-changing one, due to the technological advances driving it. Digital culture has changed the way we ingest information surrounding politics and political discourse: "Whereas once politicians were remote figures who sat in parliament, now they appear on our TVs, computers and smartphones" (Savigny, 2017 p.5). Savigny highlights the changes in consumption of political information in the modern era. These changes have been brought about through the

introduction of this digital culture, where on-demand and convenient media is available through a tap of a screen.

Digital culture provides the opportunity for regular citizens to participate in political discourse, and it is because of those opportunities that adaptation of political posters is analysed through this research. How these Breaking Point iterations, created in an environment of removed gatekeepers and barriers to entry, can be adapted and redistributed with altered messages is the basis of the analysis chapter.

2.2 Media Logics

The theory of (mass) media logic was popularised by David Altheide & Robert Snow (1979), who sought to exemplify the structures through which messages infiltrated and spread throughout mass media of the time. Van Dijck & Poell (2013, p.3) explain mass media logic as “a set of principles or common sense rationality cultivated in and by media institutions that penetrates every public domain and dominates its organizing structures.”

Altheide & Snow (1979, cited in Van Dijck & Poell 2013, p.3) note that “in contemporary society, every institution has become part of media culture: changes have occurred in every major institution that are a result of media logic presenting and interpreting activity in those organisations.” This original proclamation from Altheide & Snow shows media influence has permeated through to areas outside the media institutions themselves. Politics represents one of the key institutional activities of modern-day democratic society and is unquestionably closely linked to the media culture.

Altheide (2013, p.225) observes that “media logic is defined as a form of communication, and the process through which media transmit and communicate information.” Mass media logic identifies mass media (broadcast and newspapers) producers as self-validators in their role in society by promoting themselves as representative of society.

However, Altheide & Snow conclude that rather than being neutral platforms that represent wider society, media organisations exert influence in a subtle way. Van Dijck & Poell (2013, p.4) say that this happens by “operating as filters through which some people get more exposure than others.” This prominence given to certain individuals representing certain organisations allows them to not only play the role of an industry expert solely as a result of specific knowledge, but rather the fact that they fit within the parameters which the media

wants them to fit. This interpretation validates the 'institutionalist' account of mediatization, in which actors adjust their behaviour to best fit within the parameters set by the media. This relates to the idea of how citizens are being influenced by media logics.

The key element of media logics is that institutional media forms not only help shape and guide content and numerous everyday activities, but also that audiences-as-actors normalize these forms and use them as reality maintenance tools (Altheide, 2013 p.225). Through these logics, press barons and other major media influencers maintained control over the media by reaffirming their role within it, as gatekeepers and conduits through which society consumed information.

Mass media logics could potentially be used to further understand this research, however academics have developed the original theory first suggested by Altheide & Snow to more accurately reflect the communication structures of the modern era. Van Dijck & Poell (2013) and Klinger & Svensson (2015) have revised Altheide & Snow's (1979) original observations for the 21st century. Van Dijck & Poell (2013, p.1) observe how the traditional implications of mass media logic can be applied to social media: "far from being the neutral platforms for everyone, social media have changed the conditions and rules of social interaction." Much like the mass media logics that existed before, the platform claims inherent neutrality on topics, instead pushing the idea that what the audience chooses to consume is their own decision. These aspects of digital culture were brought up in the earlier chapter in which the power dynamic of social media was discussed. Though the perception of democratisation of media exists, the power to control social media exists in the hands of a few, and many of those with influence in the mainstream media sphere have retained their influence in the digital sphere.

The processes, principles and practices of the media have shifted from the traditional linear nature of mass media logic due to the intervention of Web 2.0 into social media logics.

Allowing discourse to flow more freely and providing increased opportunities for regular users to respond to influential actors and are some examples of changes which have arisen through the on-demand active consumption of social media. However, the effects of social media logics work in some similar ways to mass media logics by not directly interacting with and addressing ideologically driven content, but still supporting it on their platforms: “like mass media, social media have the ability to transport their logic outside of the platforms that generate them, while their distinctive...strategies tend to remain implicit or appear ‘natural’” (Van Dijck & Poell, 2013 p.5).

Twitter is also an example of a social media which appears to continuously be developing and influencing in different ways, and platformisation is one key example of this.

Platformisation of cultural production is the “penetration of economic, governmental, and infrastructural extensions of digital platforms into the web and app ecosystems, fundamentally affecting the operations of the cultural industries” (Nieborg & Poell, 2018 p.4276)

As a tool for understanding the interplay between popular and political culture, the theoretical framework set out by Nieborg and Poell (2018) helps to provide an understanding of how this relationship manifests on social media. In the case of this research, platformisation can help to establish the role and influence that Twitter has on political discussions. The developing nature of social media, means that this influence and change in dynamics can happen without being overt. This shift is described by Nieborg and Poell (2018, p.4276) as: “it obscures how social media and other digital services, labeled as

platforms, not just facilitate socioeconomic, cultural, and political interaction, but very much organize and steer this interaction.” How *Breaking Point* is adapted throughout these iterations will help to provide some insight into this relationship and interplay between social media and politics and provide some understanding of how *Twitter* now helps to steer political discourse. There is a clear link between how Van Dijk & Poell (2013) discuss this conscious attempt for social media to appear neutral and how Nieborg & Poell (2018) outline how - through platformisation – social media and other digital services now not only influence but can almost dictate the direction of other cultural and political activity. The wide-reaching influence which social media wields means that neutrality when wading into socioeconomic/cultural/political interactions cannot truly exist.

Van Dijck and Poell (2013) have quantified the four key elements which explain social media logics as a distinct mechanism; programmability, popularity, connectivity and datafication.

Programmability can hence be defined as the ability of a social media platform to trigger and steer users’ creative or communicative contributions, while users, through their interaction with these coded environments, may in turn influence the flow of communication and information activated by such a platform. (Van Dijck & Poell, 2013 p.5)

Whereas programming through traditional media was set at the behest of the gatekeepers in charge of scheduling for a mass media audience, social media allows the audience to dictate their own programming and media consumption schedule. However, programming has also changed through the producers, as consumers now have the opportunity to create content and become producers themselves. The increase in data introduced through digital culture means that there are also other opportunities for producers. Greater audience segmentation and targeting means that producers can create programming which they want to resonate with a particular audience or use to achieve virality. Social media also

means that producers are not just creating one specific type of content, but rather they appear as multimedia companies producing content for a variety of media through a single channel. This shift in programming demonstrates one of the key ways that programmability has changed through Web 2.0. These changes have had an effect on the wider field of digital culture, and also specifically on the upcoming area of research. Factors such as suggestions or 'you might like...' sections contribute to influencing the user through the underlying algorithms that make up social media networks. Algorithms involved with the dissemination of content on social media, are the processes through which content is prioritised users' feeds.

There is a manipulative role played by the configuration of algorithms on Facebook, our own cognitive preferences lead us to develop contexts in which filter bubbles and echo chambers are stimulated, creating a fertile terrain for fake news to grow. (Borges & Gambarato, 2019 p.605)

By promoting certain content, users, channels and experiences, algorithms remove neutrality and allow social media networks to promote content that benefits them in some way. On *Twitter*, this takes place through following topics you may like, moments to interact with or suggested follows in addition to more obvious sponsored material which appears in users' timelines. In comparison to *Facebook*, *Twitter* has a comparatively more transparent feed algorithm, as users' actions are listed chronologically, with the most recent first. However, Twitter uses other ways such as #hashtags, moments and sponsored material to highlight and promote certain tweets and content.

Though the lack of gatekeepers and editorial policy means that regular social media users can contribute to conversations, it also means that there is a lack of monitoring of accuracy, which means that false information can spread, and spread quickly. This lack of regulation means that nefarious and criminal activity is difficult to detect and shut down effectively.

These factors ensure that conspiracy theories can manifest and gain traction online quickly through social media, showcasing one of the potential pitfalls of the form. This effect can be seen in the iterations analysed in the research and are partially brought about through 'programmability'.

Popularity is the second key element which helps to explain social media logics. The fact that broadcast media has been the dominant form of media over much of the previous era allowed television (in particular) to exert an influence over mass society. Social media's influence over wider society is similar but operates in a different way: "popularity is conditioned by both algorithmic and socio-economic components" (Van Dijck & Poell, 2013 p.7). For example, *Twitter* has one of the clearest and visual examples of how popularity is a crucial factor of social media logics. When a *Twitter* account is first created, the accounts it recommends following are ones which are already prominent and have influence on the platform, demonstrating these algorithms in effect. This means that the platform allows popular users' followers to continue growing and gaining further influence.

The popularity factor of social media logics is also visible in another way, through the influence of these prominent users. For example, the number of followers an account has on *Twitter* represents one of the in-built value systems which social media uses.

In spite of the platform's egalitarian image, some people on Twitter are more influential than others, partly because the platform tends to be dominated by a few users with large followings, partly because the platforms assigns more weight to highly viable users. (Van Dijck & Poell, 2013 p.7)

These value systems have also started to affect areas external to digital culture, as gaining prominence through social media can lead to those same actors transmitting their messages

through the codes of more traditional media more regularly, as media content does not exist in a vacuum, but rather as part of a network of inter-dependent information flows.

The Breaking Point poster does not exist solely on social media – it has been seen and shared on various older and newer forms of media. This is partly the intention of texts like Breaking Point, released to the traditional media in the form of a poster launch event, but also online through UKIP's official accounts. These texts are created to be effective on different channels of communication and can be analysed through hybrid media theory.

The hybrid media system is built upon interactions among older and newer media logics-where logics are defined as technologies, genres, norms, behaviours, and organisational forms-in the reflexively connected fields of media and politics.
(Chadwick, 2017 p.4)

Chadwick's (2017) understanding of hybrid media theory accounts for the introduction of digital media into the media system that was in place previously. Instead of an outright usurping of the previous media system, digital media has become intertwined with previous media forms, leading to a coexistence in which the practices of old and new media are interdependent. This is evidenced in the later analysis through Breaking Point, which in this work features iterations shared on *Twitter*, but which was also seen on television, in newspapers and discussed on the radio. These media and channels have their own respective logics, yet they also work interdependently. Content and text from one channel with its own logics can hop across to another channel before being recycled by the logics process within another channel. Hybrid media theory helps to illustrate how the interdependent nature of logics operate and though social media logics is one conceptual framework to work through, it is part of a wider framework of media logics. "Media logics in the hybrid media system are created by media, political actors and publics, where power is held not just by the first two groups" (Highfield, 2016 p.18).

When first developed, social media networks provided opportunities to improve communications by providing a platform through which connections could be made instantly and easily. This was done by allowing users to stay involved with their interests and friends through these platforms, eliminating the physical distance than separated users and enabling users to interact conveniently and instantly.

Connectivity is one of the foremost and obvious points of difference between mass media logics and social media logics, as it is the ability to interact across borders which is highlighted in many social media networks' mission statements. The sense of community and working together are recurrent themes which are embedded within the narrative of social media platforms.

But as Van Dijck & Poell (2013, p.8) note, "even if human connectedness or 'participation' is still a valid part of social media's logic, a more encompassing and accurate term to capture this element of logic is connectivity." In social media logic, the connectivity element refers to the methods through which social media networks encourage users to interact with other individual users. However, unlike traditional media, social media allows users to forge their own connections with a variety of users, organisations and channels, often through suggestions provided by the platform. The more the user indicates their preferences on a particular platform, the more of a role the social media algorithm plays in promoting content catered to the specific interests of that user through their previous actions. This encouragement of participation through social media is also referenced earlier in the digital culture section, highlighting the heightened connected nature of social media.

This heightened connectivity means that political discourse can play out regardless of the location of the users. Political town halls, formerly an opportunity for local constituents to

voice their opinions, are now events with an instantaneous global reach. If social media users want to voice their opinions, ask questions and hold those in power to account, they can do so easily and instantly - but conversely the effects may be less clear and taken for granted.

The fourth element is datafication. According to Cukier & Mayer-Schoenberger (2013) datafication is:

Characterized by the ability to render into data many aspects of the world that have never been quantified before... For example location has been datafied, first with the invention of longitude and latitude, and more recently with GPS satellite systems. (2013, p.29)

In this generation, where information is considered power, data is being gathered at an unprecedented rate. Information about media consumption exists like it never could have done in the media societies of yesteryear. This allows data trails and digital footprints to be analysed in ways never before comprehended or considered. This analysis has led to market segmentation and an ability to target political communication to very specific audiences.

The power of big data to be aggregated and used by private companies is something which has many potential drawbacks. According to McFarland and McFarland (2015, p.1), "these data sets are often 'found data' arising from purely observational sources rather than data derived under strict rules of a statistically designed experiment." The technology available to the Web 2.0 generation allows researchers to harvest, extrapolate and interpret data and information to find hitherto unknown trends and analysis. This datafication also poses major questions about political discourse and ethics which have begun to exist in digital culture. There is also a security concern, as many feel this information all being held by a single private company represents a honeypot for hackers. The role of datafication does not

feature explicitly in the research, however it is a contributory factor of the social media logics theory that marks a departure from earlier forms of communication. The removal of datafication as a serious consideration of the research leaves the topics of programmability, popularity and connectivity, which can be linked and aligned to areas of network logics.

Network media logics (Klinger & Svensson, 2015) also developed from Altheide and Snow's original work, and in the case of the present research, it will be used in tandem with social media logics. Network media logics helps to explain the operational nature of the connectivity element of social media logics, due to the non-linear programming of social media.

Klinger & Svensson identify three key areas in which they differentiate between mass media logic and network media logics: production, distribution and media usage (Table 1).

Table 1. Mass media logic and network media logic.

	Mass Media Logic	Network Media Logic
Production	Expensive information selection and content generation by professional journalists according to news values	Inexpensive information selection and content generation by (lay) users according to their individual preferences and attention maximizing
Distribution	Content selected by expert/professional gatekeepers – based on established news values – distributed to a paying fixed audience of subscribers	Users are like intermediaries, distributing popular content, sometimes like a chain letter, within networks of like-minded others
Media Usage	Location bound mass audience with limited selective exposure oriented towards passive consumption of information, based on professional selection.	Interest-bound and like-minded peer networks with highly selective exposure oriented towards interaction through practices of updating

(Klinger & Svensson, 2015 p.1246)

Production relates to many of the unique aspects of social media and digital culture referenced earlier, such as the increase in UGC and fewer barriers to entry giving the

average person the potential to interact with fellow users of social platforms across the world. These changes brought about through social media networks mark a departure from the previous process of media consumption.

The production dimension highlights how Web 2.0 allows content to be created more easily and with less of a financial outlay in comparison to previous mass media production.

Distribution is a key factor, especially when considering the role of social media on the research area. It is Web 2.0 which has allowed for the removal of barriers to entry and gatekeepers, meaning that regular internet users can publish their content when they want and potentially reach all every corner of the globe.

The distinction of network media logics from other logics can be more clearly seen in the role of 'media usage', which relates to understanding that the social groups which develop online allow users to indulge in like-minded forums in which they feel comfortable contributing in. Social media places mutual interest ahead of geographical proximity, so these environments where peers can interact allow more organic niche conversation to flow. Again, this leads to situations like echo-chambers and filter bubbles raised in the digital culture section, where individuals only indulge in media which complements their ideological and political beliefs.

Network media looks more specifically at the production and distribution of content using the communication structures of Web 2.0 including social media. Popularity and connectivity, elements of social media logics, are both linked to the distribution aspect of network media logics but network media logics more accurately reflects the communications structures of messages sent through social media, and how both media and non-political actors create and distribute media which adheres to media norms of the

channels they communicate through. The network media logics more accurately reflect the process the dissertation examines, understanding how political texts are adapted and the role of mediatization in the process. However, elements of the programmability dimension of social media logics will also be considered in the dissertation.

The use of logics has also faced criticism with Brants & Van Praag (2015, p.395) observing that “the phenomena that they cover and the empirical proof of their existence and growing presence are at best ambiguous”. Much of this critique lies in the nature of what a popular concept is.

The problem with popular concepts is often a lack of consensus over their definition. That goes for mediatization and media logic too, respectively and interdependently. (Brants & Van Praag, 2015 p.396)

Naturally, social media does not operate in isolation from all other forms of media and as such it is difficult to fully gauge the impact and fully attribute the principles, practices and processes to the concept.

Throughout this research, the first three elements of social media logics (programmability, popularity and connectivity) will be used to evaluate the iterations alongside the dimensions of network media logics, which help to evaluate the role of mediatization. Additionally, the roles of hybrid media theory and platformisation will be considered where appropriate.

2.3 Mediatisation

The online discourse created by conversations about politics is a natural fit to demonstrate the process of mediatisation: “as a concept mediatization denotes the processes through which core elements of a cultural or social activity (e.g. politics, religion, language) assume media form” (Hjarvard 2007, cited in Couldry 2008 p.376). The naturally polarising and discourse encouraging nature of politics allows this research to demonstrate this process of mediatisation in its full effect. This research seeks to further understand the relationship between social media adaptations of political advertising. In this environment “the mediatization of politics describes the process by which media are exerting growing influence over political processes” (Hjarvard 2008, cited in Witschge, 2014 p.342). The media’s role influences processes, principles and practices that extend into politics, demonstrating a transformation in political discourse.

The term “mediatisation” emerged in public and among scholars, along with the media transformation already described, in the 1990s. People observed that media were becoming more and more relevant for human activities and social relations, and for other areas of life on micro, mezzo and macro levels; for example, social relations, working processes and the economy. (Sowinska, 2016 cited in Krotz, 2017 p.106)

The term mediatisation has become increasingly prevalent in both academic and public circles since the 1990s and Sowinska articulates how ‘the media’ have permeated through industries so much that the norms of those areas have been transformed by media processes.

“Mediatization is a term that, by its very structure, implies historical change; that is, something or someone that is becoming ever more ‘ized’” (Deacon & Stayner 2014, p.1036), therefore, the fluid and ever-changing nature of the term makes it difficult to fully define, especially due to the rapid progression of politics on social media analysed in this work.

Broadly, the definition of mediatisation falls into one of two categories – ‘institutionalist’ and ‘social constructivist’ (Hepp et al, 2013).

In institutionalist accounts, mediatization is seen as a process in which non-media social actors have to adapt to ‘media’s rules, aims, production logics, and constraints’. (Mazzoleni and Schulz, 1999 cited in Deacon & Stayner 2014, p.1033)

This institutionalist definition, in the context of this research, looks at how users have distributed content which adheres to the norms of social media platforms, despite them not being media actors. The institutional element refers to how large organisations work within these parameters to ensure that their content adheres to the relevant media norms.

In social constructivist accounts, it is seen as a process in which changing information and communication technologies (ICTs) drive ‘the changing communicative construction of culture and society’. (Hepp, 2013 cited in Deacon & Stayner, 2014 p.1033)

In this second definition, mediatisation is explained as a process by which technological developments provide the catalyst which changes the communication patterns and norms of culture and influence wider society. The fact that this research focuses on social media, a communication opportunity developed through Web 2.0 (changing information and communication technologies), summarises how closely aligned this definition is to the research in this dissertation. Mediatisation shapes the processes of discourse which take place, in this case, political interactions on social media.

Social media represents a communication structure in which the effects of mediatisation can be seen, and this transformation can be seen through the research carried out in this dissertation: “mediatisation, as some argue, aptly describes the systemic impact of media innovations on the transformation of sociocultural practices and institutions” (Pentzold, 2018 p.927). Social Media is a sociocultural practice in which the effects of mediatisation can be seen, through the way non-media actors behave when discussing politics on social

media platforms. Pentzold (2018) mentions institutions, which are naturally associated with the 'institutionalist' mediatisation definition and it is the sociocultural changes which provide the grounds for the research conducted in this dissertation. This represents a shift from the usual alignment of mediatisation and political communication. Traditionally, this institutionalist approach has been more commonly used in the area of research.

The discussion on the institutionalist approach to mediatization, which has been dominant in the field of journalism studies and political communication (Couldry and Hepp 2013, 196)... In this approach, the focus is on the interrelation between media institutions and political actors (Witschge, 2014 p.343)

However, in this research, it is not actors with an insight into the media sphere who appear to be creating and distributing the iterations discussed in this work. Mediatisation is usually applied to political actors, but this work considers what happens to this process within digital culture involving non-political actors. Regular social media users are not members of the political establishment and institutions but rather normal citizens. In the case of the iterations studied, both definitions of mediatisation can be drawn out, and are discussed through the analysis and conclusion section.

The two definitions of mediatisation broadly match aspects of media logics. The institutionalist account follows many of the same points as mass media logics, in which large organisations (or institutions) represent the status quo of political communications.

However, the social constructivist definition of mediatisation relates to how communications systems are driving the changes in the construction of culture, which also aligns with platformisation. The social constructivist account and network and social media logics that non-media actors are contributing to, adhering to and helping to drive forward, contribute to shaping the processes and media influence on political communication.

Therefore, the definition of mediatisation used throughout this dissertation will consider the social constructivist perspective of mediatisation as it outlines how the process links non-media actors to political communication, how culture has impacted communication structures and how mediatisation operates within digital culture when applied to non-media/political actors.

3. Methodology

The research seeks to answer the research question and sub-questions through analysing the iterations of the United Kingdom Independence Party's (UKIP) Breaking Point poster, released on 16 June 2016. The research questions are restated below for reference:

- How do affordances in digital culture allow polarising party political referendum advertising posters to be adapted and distributed on Twitter?
- How does recontextualisation through digital adaptation change meaning in iterations of the Breaking Point poster published on Twitter?
- What role do mediatisation and media logics play in this recontextualisation process?

3.1 Sampling and Data Collection

The reasons for focusing on UKIP's 2016 Breaking Point poster were discussed in the introduction, which outlined the key factors of being newsworthy enough for alternate iterations to be produced. Additionally, the effect on polarisation of the issue and the provocative nature of the text meant that it was appropriate to focus the research on Breaking Point. These factors meant that there was an opportunity to analyse the process of mediatisation.

There were several reasons for focusing on *Twitter* as the social network site to study including the prevalence of political actors on the site, and consequently the volume of political discourse which takes place on the platform. Furthermore, comments made on the platform are more visible than on many other social media platforms and features such as hashtags make it easier to research specific topics and find particular comments. The research question relates to the use of Web 2.0 technologies and social media and *Twitter*

specifically exemplify this. *Twitter* also supports images, meaning that adapted iterations could easily be sent through tweets. These factors, combined with the relatively easy level of access compared to other social media networks meant that *Twitter* was chosen as the platform to provide the basis for research activity.

However, it is important to acknowledge that this research does not represent how all social media poster-based political adaptation takes place but exists to identify how this process manifests through a case study on *Twitter*. It cannot necessarily be directly applied to how political discourse surrounding visual communications operates on other social media platforms. This is also the case when applying the work to wider society, as *Twitter* discourse does not necessarily reflect broader society.

To identify the iterations of the Breaking Point poster on *Twitter*, *TinEye's* image search tool was used. *TinEye* is an image search and recognition company whose reverse image search tool allows users to insert a URL address or choose a file which *TinEye* uses to search through its index, highlighting uses of the image online. This reverse image search service was a crucial tool in allowing this research to be conducted.

TinEye search results can identify different versions of the original image, so by searching for Breaking Point , results include UKIP's original tweet including the poster on *Twitter*, alongside adapted iterations of the original text. This ability to find iterations through this tool helped improve the quality of the research.

The research used the Breaking Point image used in UKIP's (@UKIP) tweet on 16 June 2016, the first known use of the poster on *Twitter* as the source image. The reverse image search tool used needed to be able to identify iterations of the Breaking Point poster used on *Twitter* and identify threads in which they were used. Several reverse image search tools

were considered, but *TinEye* was chosen for several reasons. Firstly, the ability to filter results and find uses of the image on particular platforms and domains (i.e. *Twitter*). This meant that searching for iterations that had only been used on certain social media sites was possible, thus eradicating manual searching through these means.

TinEye's search results identify duplicates and altered versions of the original image, meaning that the results are all directly linked to the original. As Wyrosdic (2018) says, "TinEye does not recognize the people or objects in an image, it identifies the specific image that was uploaded. Therefore, TinEye will not find 'similar' images." Wyrosdic (2018) identifies *TinEye* as the first website to use image identification technology and recognises its ability to quickly compare the original image with results as one of its best uses, a feature which was very useful in establishing the iterations analysed in this work.

The fact *TinEye* is a free service which allows users to create an account and save results was also important, as it meant that financial restraints did not directly hamper the research. *TinEye*'s tool does have some limitations, as the search results cannot be easily formatted and then collected. To counter this, a table of iterations has been created and inserted (Table 2).

TinEye searches for duplicates of the original image, as well as modified versions. As a result, *TinEye* and naked eye searches were used to remove duplicates. Additionally, multiple uses of the same iterations were included in the search results, which meant that additional naked eye tests were used to eradicate duplicated or near-duplicates. For example, the second iteration analysed features Nigel Farage at the poster launch to the press. Due to the number of journalists at the location taking photos of Farage unveiling the poster, there are several angles of this same image. The research conducted has not analysed each of these

photos individually as they feature the same visuals and composition only a single version of each iteration remained in the research.

TinEye's search algorithm also meant that satirical versions such as the one created by campaign group *LedByDonkey's* were not caught in the search as none of the metadata was the same for both images, despite it appearing to be very similar to the naked eye and a clear attempt to satirise the original. Therefore, this version and others like it have not been included in the research.

The initial search results for the Breaking Point picture identified Jeff Mitchell's original photograph, which was sourced from before Breaking Point was released. Therefore, this iteration was not included as a iteration in the analysis. However Jeff Mitchell's original photograph, which forms some part of all of the iterations, is discussed throughout the work more generally rather than being considered as one of the iterations.

To find the iterations of the original poster, a search through *TinEye* of the original Breaking Point poster was conducted, returning 1,587 results. From that point the domain filter was used to eradicate non-relevant iterations and to identify results only from 'Twitter.com'.

This data cleanse found 85 results, which included search results which were first used before 16 June 2016 as well as duplicates of iterations which appeared to contain the same material with no difference to the naked eye. Iterations that were first used before 16 June 2016 were then discounted, as they could not have been influenced by the Breaking Point poster. Thereafter, the iterations which were duplicated were discounted alongside 'screenshotted' results, which featured the capturing of the content on a computer or mobile screen inserted as an image itself. Though these results could have potentially been analysed, the remit of the research is not that broad, and analysis of these 'iterations' would




neither have helped answer the initial research question nor the sub-questions identified in the introduction, as these 'iterations' have not been adapted and redistributed intentionally, but rather for ease of use or to change the channel of communication.

Though the first two iterations were not specifically designed for social media (the original Breaking Point poster and the poster launch event iteration), they were both used on *Twitter* during the timeframe set out in the research, and including these iterations designed for the mass media would help to distinguish the differences between the process of mediatisation for social media adaptations of the material, and these iterations created by and for the traditional mass media. Having this spectrum included in the research would also help portray the full narrative arc for a piece of visual political communication.

These results were then placed chronologically in the table below, listing the original Breaking Point poster as the first iteration. This order can be seen in both the table of iterations and is mirrored in the analysis. This ordering helps in clarifying which iterations are being discussed at any one point and also helps any overarching narrative arcs which span the iterations to be more easily found.

Table 2 – List of iterations analysed

<u>Iteration number:</u>	<u>Iteration name:</u>	<u>Date of Twitter post:</u>	<u>Link:</u>	<u>Image:</u>
1	UKIP's original Breaking Point poster	16/06/2016	https://Twitter.com/ukip/status/743382813542494212?lang=en	
2	UKIP's Breaking Point poster at the poster launch	16/06/2016	https://Twitter.com/Nigel_Farage/status/743445822298169347	
3	Breaking Point comparison with Nazi documentary	16/06/2016	https://Twitter.com/melancholeric	
4	Not one woman	22/07/2016	https://Twitter.com/AnnCoulter/status/737746115630530562	
5	Where's Aisha?	15/08/2016	https://Twitter.com/SeNosEstaYendo	

6	Blue dot adult males	14/02/2017	https://Twitter.com/search?q=%23ToImmigrantsWithLove	
7	Annotated conspiracy	30/01/2018	https://Twitter.com/Khanoisseur/status/823766032829419520	 <p>Nigel Farage's Leave/Brexit poster designed to weaponize the refugee crisis-created by Putin-Assad as a means to break up the EU and dismantle NATO</p>
8	Hillary and the democrats	28/11/2018	https://Twitter.com/CNN/status/1053445714485936129	

N.B. The Twitter links were originally found through the TinEye results from the initial search. Some of the links are now broken and no longer lead to the threads in which they were used.

3.2 Method of Analysis

To analyse the iterations, an approach which combines elements of semiotics and DHA (Discourse Historical Analysis) has been used to create a method through which every iteration is investigated. These elements combine to create five key terms which guide the analysis of iterations.

“One of the most prevalent analytical approaches to the image has been the so-called ‘science of signs’, semiotics.” (Manghani, 2013 p.3), and in study, a semiotic analysis using denotation, connotation and anchoring will help to identify what is in each iteration and how they explain the messaging of each iteration, through the interpretation of signs.

Denotation is the first key term which is integral to understanding the iterations in the research. The definition of denotation relates to the obvious features of a text. It is a face-value description, which only looks at the detail which exists in the text: “the first order of signification is that of denotation: at this level there is a sign consisting of a signifier and a signified” (Chandler & Munday, 2016).

This is a particularly pertinent term when considering images, which are more open to interpretation than linguistic texts. In the case of the Breaking Point poster, the denotation establishes the visceral differences between the iterations, providing a platform for the rest of the analysis through the remaining key terms.

Connotation relates to possible interpretations of a text. This includes the preferred reading of a text, but can also include interpretations which are personal and subjective, led by the experiences and cultural knowledge of the receiver:

Connotation is a second order of signification (though not secondary in significance) which uses the denotative sign (signifier and signified) as its signifier and attaches to it an additional signified. (Chandler & Munday, 2016)

When exploring the connotations of a text there is an opportunity to find out about a range of potential other meanings inferred through the text. Throughout the analysis, connotations of iterations are used to examine the potential other readings of texts as well as the preferred readings of iterations.

The connotative readings throughout the analysis of iterations may be more detailed than a casual reader may observe. Due to the nature of the topic and the extensive reading around the subjects which has been conducted, the understanding of potential connotations may be more in depth, providing a background about the iterations. For instance, understanding where another text is from and what it depicts informs why the iterations have been created and distributed. Therefore, in certain iterations surrounding online content and additional context is understood and discussed so that historical links and intertextuality can be fully explored.

Anchoring is a term that allows readers of a text to be guided to one particular meaning from a source which can be interpreted in a number of ways. For example, a caption can anchor the image, and direct the reader to a particular reading of the overall text. Anchoring is a two-way process and can be used to describe the relationship between text and an accompanying image in the case of Breaking Point. This meaning makes the term useful in directing an audience towards a particular interpretation or definition of a text. In the case of visually led modes of communication such as Breaking Point iterations the concept of anchoring directs the reader to an intended meaning, using written text including captions, taglines and headlines. This helps to transmit a preferred reading directly from a text, an

essential trait for a piece of communications aimed at promoting a cause. Often the terms anchoring and connotation overlap and as a result these terms have sometimes been included in the same section in the analysis of the iterations.

The semiotic breakdown of the iterations will help to explain the messages of the text, and digital culture, media logics and mediatisation will be more clearly established. Additionally, the links between the iterations are easier to see when broken down in this fashion.

In addition to these semiotic tools, intertextuality and recontextualisation are also used to help analyse the iterations. The techniques of analysis of imagery through intertextuality and recontextualisation are based on Ruth Wodak's (2015) DHA (discourse historical analysis). Recontextualisation and intertextuality have often been used before to analyse written texts, but Ruth Wodak applies them to visual texts, thus expanding the potential understanding of a text.

Both features drawn from DHA explain the various changes in the meaning and messages of iterations. They help explain the narrative change from the question of the UK being inside or outside of the European Union to a wider question surrounding migration and the refugee crisis or any other topic which Jeff Mitchell's image goes onto be used to cover.

Recontextualisation is crucial in understanding how the studied texts change their meanings due to the different environments in which they are found.

By taking an argument, a topic, a genre or a discursive practice out of context and restating/realising it in a new context, we first observe the process of de-contextualisation, and then, when the element is implemented in a new context, of recontextualisation. The element then acquires a new meaning, because, as Wittgenstien (1967) has rightly claimed, meanings are formed in use. (Wodak, 2015 p.32)

Recontextualisation is perhaps the most important key term in regard to the analysis, as it identifies how the meanings of texts change between iterations. The role of recontextualisation in this work is also the catalyst which helps to define new iterations of the original Breaking Point poster. Recontextualisation serves as perhaps the defining key term which distinguishes one iteration from another, indicating why it features in the research sub-question.

In the case of Breaking Point, the original poster was itself a recontextualisation of the original image, in which refugees fleeing war-torn locations in the Middle East were portrayed as EU migrants making their way towards the UK. *Twitter* allows users to distribute and redistribute content easily and posit recontextualised stories through a lack of barriers to entry and no real gatekeepers. Establishing recontextualisation in the iterations helps to understand where political texts have been adapted, in turn contributing to addressing the research questions. Additionally, the production dimension of network media logics will become apparent through the way social media users have recontextualised the original Breaking Point poster.

Intertextuality helps to identify the nuances punctuated through the various iterations by comparing the iterations with each other and analysing the similarities.

The way in which one text may incorporate or reference another and/or may be understood by the audience within the context of other texts... At a more complex level, intertextuality means that no text stands in complete isolation. (Harcup, 2014)

Understanding and using intertextuality allows the research to predicate itself on external texts, therefore giving the analysis additional context. This allows the reader to gain a further insight and knowledge into the information provided through a text, having the ability to change the preferred reading of a text. Primarily seen as a literary term, in this

research intertextuality is used as a tool to analyse the differences between iterations. The iterations which followed the original often drew inspiration from elsewhere, meaning that intertextuality not only exists between the iterations, but also between individual iterations and external sources. Being aware of this intertextuality means being aware of a wider array of potential connotations, and this intertextuality often guides the preferred reading. Again, like what was noted in the connotation section earlier, due to the range and depth of research conducted around the topic and iterations, intertextuality is seen where the casual reader of an iteration may not realise.

In the case of the research conducted in this work, intertextuality and recontextualisation have been used to help illustrate the differences between iterations of UKIP's Breaking Point poster on *Twitter*. These key terms provide a basic formula through which every iteration is analysed in the following chapter. Naturally, these key terms are connected to each other and reliant on one another for the development of arguments.

For example, denotation and intertextuality are linked in the analysis of the iterations. Denotation looks at the features that are laid out directly in an iteration, from which intertextuality goes on to distinguish and examine the differences between respective iterations. The same goes for the relationship between connotation, anchoring and recontextualisation. The preferred reading of the texts, in the case of many of these iterations, is driven forward through anchored written text which transmits the crucial messages of the iteration. Recontextualisation, in the case of Breaking Point, provides an understanding of how the original image, when inserted into a new iteration, is interpreted and understood in its newly altered guise in a new context. Due to the linked nature of the

key terms, the analysis of the iteration's features overlap when considering how each of these aspects plays a role in each iteration.

Additionally, each of the key concepts examined in the literature review (digital culture, media logics and mediatisation) are also considered throughout the analysis of the iterations, alongside other theories and concepts explored in the literature review where appropriate.

4. Analysis of Iterations

This chapter provides an analysis of the iterations of UKIP's Breaking Point poster found following a search for *Twitter* domain results through *TinEye*. UKIP's original Breaking Point poster, which serves as the first iteration of the research, provides a platform that the research builds upon.

For each iteration, there is a general overview featuring a semiotic analysis. This includes a descriptive analysis of both the denoted and connoted meanings. The aim of this section is to provide detail analysis of each iteration, helping to distinguish the preferred reading of each piece of communication and is unique from other iterations. There will be a breakdown of how each of the five key terms identified in the methodology (denotation, connotation, anchoring, recontextualisation and intertextuality) can help in understanding the transformations that take place between the iterations. Each of these key terms is interdependent on the others, therefore the attempts to analyse the influence of all these aspects of the works leads to some overlaps in the analysis. The breakdown into these key terms also helps to uncover the role of digital culture, mediatisation and media logics as well as several other concepts and theories examined in the literature review.

The first two iterations represent the original poster and a photograph taken at the launch. Both these iterations provide examples of how mass media has operated, before moving on to the following iterations developed and distributed through social media and Web 2.0. Including these iterations helps to demonstrate how these two logics operate side by side in digital culture, and how the narrative arc of one single political poster changes throughout the iterations.

4.1 First Iteration – UKIP’s original Breaking Point poster



This is the original Breaking Point poster from which the subsequent iterations were derived. The poster was released during the campaigning period, one week before the EU referendum. According to Hutcheon (2017) in *The Herald*, UKIP’s Breaking Point poster was created by Edinburgh based firm *Family Advertising Limited*, who were paid £100,000 for the work. It was first used on *Twitter* by UKIP’s official account (@UKIP) on Thursday 16 June 2016 (<https://Twitter.com/ukip/status/743421601081884673?lang=en>) and represents the first time that Jeff Mitchell’s photograph was used on Twitter to discuss the UK’s membership of the EU.

Denotation

The photograph which Jeff Mitchell captured forms the background of the poster. It features a snaking line of people making their way towards the camera, across a grassy field. The line is not single file, but rather features people walking ten abreast, wide representing more of a march. All those captured in the poster appear to be walking together in one

direction, towards the reader. The faces in the foreground are in focus, and as the line disappears into the distance, the faces become blurred.

Additionally, the captions, slogans and emblems also play a role in making the poster multimodal. The most visible words on the poster are 'BREAKING POINT' written in bright red capital letters across part of Jeff Mitchell's photo that is empty of people. Below it, the words 'The EU has failed us all' are written in white. At the bottom of the poster, there is a black semi-translucent banner supporting four key pieces of information. On the far-right of the poster is the UKIP logo. Next to that is an instructive statement saying, 'Leave the European Union ON 23rd JUNE'. Written in fine white print below is the URL (Uniform Resource Locator) 'votetoleavetheeu.co.uk'. The final aspect of the banner is the slogan, 'We must break free of the EU and take back control of our borders.'

Intertextuality

The intertextuality of this original piece comes from the comparison and similarity between the Breaking Point poster and the original photograph which forms the background of the poster. It transforms the meaning of the original photo taken by Mitchell, through the anchoring captions which provide the major difference between the iterations.

Mitchell's photograph, which is easily identifiable in the background, is the link which binds all the iterations together. Though the photograph goes on to represent something else by transmitting different messages to the original, there is a clear link between this Breaking Point poster and Mitchell's original photograph.

Anchoring and Connotation

Anchoring helps to direct readers towards an intended understanding and interpretation of a text. In this case, the text on the poster plays a large role in anchoring the poster and attaching meaning to its visual aspects. In the case of the iterations in the analysis, it is done through either additional words or images that adorn the original photography which alter the preferred reading.

Many of these denotated features and details represent more than the tangible written text and images on paper. Firstly, there is the background photograph captured by Jeff Mitchell. The line of refugees making their way towards the camera suggests that they are heading towards 'us' – the reader. This combined with the anchored writing (We must break free of the EU and take back control of our borders) suggests that these people making their way towards camera may actually be coming to the UK. There is a perception of motion in the photo, indicating that the line of people in the poster is moving towards the camera as the individuals queue to get their opportunity to make their way towards the viewer of the text. By using Mitchell's photo as the background, the poster implies that the queue of people represents swathes of immigrants who want to enter the UK. The narrative of the poster is defined through the written text and it is this specific interpretation which helps anchor the piece and provide meaning. These captions and phrases are strategically attached to anchor meaning to the poster.

Mitchell's use of a specific lens to capture the photograph plays a vital role in the framing of this iteration. Mitchell's choice of a compression lens to capture the photo adds further emphasis to the line of people he was capturing in the photograph. By compressing the photo, the photograph gives the illusion that there are more people crammed into the line, adding depth and width to the shot. This effect of cramming more people into the

photograph helps to convey the message of overcrowding. This message works in tandem with the key anchoring statement. Additionally, the volume of individuals trying to make their way towards the border being illustrated becomes a point of focus for UKIP. All these signs and messages combine to create a clear message intended to persuade the electorate to vote to leave the EU. It is from this point that Mitchell's photograph becomes a signifier for the question surrounding the UK's membership of the EU. The original photo would have been seen by members of the public to illustrate the refugee issues which were in the news in the UK and around the world. By using this photograph which already represented something unrelated to the EU, on a piece of anti-EU propaganda, it conflates the issues surrounding the EU's free movement with the ongoing refugee 'crisis' with people fleeing war-torn countries for a new life in the safety of Europe.

Using a multimodal format (text and imagery) means that the messages of the piece can be transmitted and consumed more easily by individuals, as there are multiple elements that can be interpreted. Use of communication competence (an ability to use communications patterns to create effective messages) to help transmit the message to the receivers helped the poster gain as much attention as it did. The original creation of the poster as a billboard advertisement means that these traits (few words, striking visual imagery) allow the poster's intention to be more easily interpreted and understood by the reader. This uncomplicated and uncluttered style helps the poster resonate as the lack of words helps the intended audience understand the messaging easily. By using the visually led medium, there is less reliance on style shifting as there would be with verbal communication. Style shifting is the act of modifying communication method to help the message reach its intended audience (Eckert & Rickford, 2007 p.143). Avoiding the use of style shifting here helps to convey the

messaging more effectively to a broad audience. Using non-verbal communication allows readers to interpret the message and understand the intended message of the piece more easily, and the use of visuals helps to allude to topics and narratives without being explicit. The words are also incisive, creating an impression of a siege mentality against 'the establishment' (represented by the volume of prominent 'remain' voices) and outside interference that can only be avoided through voting leave in the referendum.

The obvious connoted meaning transmitted through the 'Leave the European Union - ON 23rd JUNE' words are coupled with the design which displays a cross on a ballot paper against a white background. The choice of white as a background colour attracts the reader's attention towards the area, as it stands out against the other colours. Additionally, the featuring of the cross on the ballot paper helps associate an action with the piece and implies how to heed the advice of the poster, by voting in the upcoming referendum.

The use of the web address in the bottom corner helps to further the argument in another online space and allows the reader to find out more information about the subject elsewhere. Furthermore, the URL re-emphasises the poster's message.

Arguments for political causes are often fought on emotional levels to best connect with the intended audience, and to help leave a lasting impression on the consciousness. Attaching emotive meanings to political arguments encourages citizens to support a cause as a conviction. By approaching subjects that are emotive, surrounding issues such as identity, democracy and Britishness, the text helps to invoke emotion which may support the poster's cause. The 'take back control of our borders' line suggests that Britain is not currently in charge of its own decisions. 'We must break free of the EU' also suggests that the UK is being led by the EU down a sub-optimal path, by decision-makers who do not have

the UK's best interests at heart. These words in combination create a scathing criticism of the EU and the UK's role and a perceived lack of opportunity within it. The Breaking Point poster implements intentional message mixing to utilise this strategy. The message mixing could make the readers of the text believe that leaving the EU may result in the end of refugees making their way across Europe towards the UK. This insinuated meaning implies that, to prevent this happening, the reader should vote to leave the EU. The referendum question regarding the UK's membership of the EU does not directly involve refugees, and the anti-immigration message pushed by UKIP is related to free movement and not refugees fleeing their homelands:

The party has successfully connected its main core, the European Union, to immigration, which is migration from Eastern Europe to the UK. The European Union is accused therefore to be the gridlock for uncontrolled and open-door assumed as the main cause of British decadence. (Tournier-Sol, 2015 cited in Veneziani, 2017)

Nigel Farage, leader of UKIP at the time of the referendum, frequently cited immigration as the “the biggest single issue facing this country” (Farage 2013, cited in Tournier-Sol, 2015 p.146). Therefore, it is not surprising that immigration had a crucial role to play for UKIP ahead of the EU referendum. This is no more obvious than in the Breaking Point poster, which identifies the line of people as a queue waiting to enter the UK.

Europe dominated Ukip's entire world view, but the issue did not excite the people anywhere near to the same extent. It did not have enough power to propel Ukip from the margins to the mainstream. This was abundantly clear in the polls, which each month asked people to list the top issues facing Britain. Since 2005, Europe had appeared among the five most pressing issues on only one occasion and even then it had been ranked fifth. But immigration was a different story. It was routinely among the top three. By the spring of 2014 it was second only to the economy and would soon be the most important issue of all. (Goodwin & Milazzo 2015, p.9)

By connecting these two distinct issues together, Farage and UKIP were able to attract a wider audience by appealing to a subject they believed the British public was most

concerned about - immigration. Connecting these two issues gave their anti-EU stance an opportunity to resonate with the audience by appealing to one of the biggest genuine worries the British public has. As Goodwin and Milazzo (2015, p.9) mention, the issue of immigration had been steadily rising up the list of issues which Britons considered to be important. The Breaking Point poster insinuates that voting to leave the European Union would help to resolve this issue, thus making it an appealing prospect.

One of the most frequently used phrases by UKIP ahead of the 2016 European Union referendum was 'take back control of our borders'. It features on the poster and is one of the most emotive aspects of the poster, as the use of the word 'our' conveys ownership. It is also this line which anchors the anti-immigration message to the poster most accurately and unequivocally.

The 'BREAKING POINT' message plays the most defining role of all the text used on the poster. The words suggest action needs to be taken immediately, otherwise there will be serious repercussions which will affect 'you' (the reader). The point size and the contrast of the red font against the green background makes the phrase stand out and use of red writing contributes to this through its association with warning and danger signs. The phrase 'Breaking Point' also plays on the emotive aspects that the poster seeks to invoke. The expressive communication chiefly aims to provoke the reader into believing that a key element surrounding their identity as an individual and as a citizen of the UK was at threat. The emotive language which exists in this poster and in subsequent iterations preys on this conversation surrounding identity and nationalism, which manifested itself in wider discourse than that which is explored in this area of work. In the scenario posited by the poster, the only way to prevent this threat was to vote to leave the EU and in doing so,

retain 'Britishness', an ambiguous term that was weaponised by both sides during the period of campaigning in the run up to the referendum.

"Ideas about difference are now voiced in complex combinations of adherence to values, expressions of culture and entitlement to resources, which are all linked to origins, residence and integration" (Clarke & Garner 2010, p.60). To identify these nuanced differences about those who are considered British and those who are not is difficult, however these key elements (values and expressions of origins, residence and integration) are frequently brought up as the factors which contribute to conversations about the unique aspects of Britishness.

However, as Clarke & Garner (2010, p.61) go on to say, "one important function of these discourses is to constantly reformulate and justify boundaries separating the national 'we' from the foreign and/or abject 'they'." Positing questions about identity and creating an 'us vs them' mentality were ways of exploiting difference, a strategy that proved effective in spreading the messages intended through the preferred reading. In this iteration of the Breaking Point poster, it is clear to see how these issues surrounding identity were implemented tactically to improve the potential effectiveness of the communications.

Otherness was a theory developed by Edward Said in his book *Orientalism* (1978). He defined orientalism as a Western attitude which points towards the East as more primitive and less developed. It is in this scenario in which the idea of the 'other' comes into play, as the existing Western culture would view Eastern culture as the 'other'. The race of the individuals in the Breaking Point poster positions them as the 'other' wanting to try and make their way to the UK.

The effect of otherness cannot be quantified, however the decision to select this photo as the background for the poster appears to be more than a coincidence. The faces visible would be typical in an image trying to convey this message without implicitly drawing attention to it. This visceral difference between the intended audience (those with 'British' heritage) and the refugee population in the poster creates a point of difference which was exploited by UKIP to benefit their argument and helped to reiterate the conflation of the refugee crisis and European migration. These traits, which the Breaking Point poster tapped into, was able to exploit the fears of the electorate.

These aspects of the poster soon came under scrutiny, due to the murder of MP Jo Cox. The impact of Cox's murder meant that there was more attention paid to the poster, which focused on the role of identity politics, due to the rhetoric of her killer Thomas Mair.

The poster had only attracted minor interest when it was released on advertising vans. Now it became the focus of a public debate about whether Farage was stirring up racial hatred, and whether an atmosphere of 'fearing the other' had fuelled both Cox's killing and Leave's lead in the polls. (Shipman, 2016 p.384)

The clothes of those in the poster also helps anchor the interpretation that the people are hoping to resettle and start a new life. The bags they carry and the thick winterwear which they wear suggests that they have travelled vast distances through harsh environments to get to their present point. This look of exhaustion is also mirrored by the facial expressions of those in the foreground, who know they still have a way to travel on their journey.

The role of mass communication linkage is key here - it helps associate the needs of the audience, 'the public stance on the increasing view that immigration was becoming a problem', with the producer, UKIP, suggesting leaving the EU would help to curtail

immigration. This action and solution style poster encourages those reading it to take action and support the UKIP's cause.

Recontextualisation

The recontextualisation of these iterations exists in how Mitchell's photograph is placed in another context. Mitchell's photograph was recontextualised through the anchored messages providing a new preferred reading and by transmitting alternate messages to the original photo. This poster represents the first time that Mitchell's photograph was adapted, but the adaption in this iteration was carried out by UKIP, a political party, representing an institution of the mediatisation process. This iteration was created by an institution and thus features political actors adhering to media norms. This iteration also aligns with mass media logics, and demonstrates its hybrid nature having been created as a physical poster with the intention of sharing through social media and being effective in online spaces.

It's original context, as a photograph providing commentary on refugees moving into Europe, had been recontextualised to visualise EU economic migration as a potential threat to the UK. The key to interpreting this recontextualisation is being aware of where the original photograph was taken. However, many of the readers would likely first see the photograph as part of UKIP's Breaking Point poster, thus linking the poster to a debate about the UK's membership of the EU.

It is also interesting to note how this original photo was not credited by UKIP in the Breaking Point poster, giving further support to the argument that this photograph was expected to first be seen in this context and should be associated with arguments about migration from Europe into the UK. Creating the illusion that the photo was first used in this environment

helps to support the argument and messages spread by this iteration. This manifestation meant that UKIP successfully recontextualised the photograph to support their arguments. From this point on, recontextualisation continues to develop as each iteration is introduced. As Mitchell's photo is used from iteration to iteration, this recontextualisation leads to an increase in another area of analysis for this work – intertextuality.

4.2 Second Iteration – UKIP’s Breaking Point poster at the poster launch



This iteration was also first seen on 16 June 2016, the same date as the previous iteration. It captures the launch of the Breaking Point poster to the traditional media. The original poster (the previous iteration) had circulated on social media in advance of this unveiling with Nigel Farage. Many of the photographers and journalists were there to see the launch of the poster, but also to see and hear from Farage himself. The opportunity to hear from Farage was a draw, as the leader of UKIP and perhaps the foremost spokesperson of the cause to leave the EU was an alluring prospect to members of the press.

As a result of this iteration being taken from the unveiling of the Breaking Point poster, many versions of this iteration of the poster exist, each unique due to the angles the photographers captured during the poster launch. Due to the similarity in content, the different images containing the same material have not been individually analysed and the analysis for this iteration pertains to photographs of this event as a collective.

Denotation

Due to the first iteration featuring in the background, there are many similarities which can be denoted as identical from the two iterations. However, the iteration still several key denotative features which distinguish it as a separate iteration in its own right.

Nigel Farage is stood in front of the mobile billboard actively engaging the onlookers and directing them towards him and the poster behind him. The signs, logos, captions and numbers which are printed between the wheel arches on the side of the vehicle advertise the company that had provided the mobile billboards. There is a 'BRITAIN STRONGER IN EUROPE' placard being placed in front of the mobile billboard by a protester. The similarities between this iteration and the following iteration suggest there is a high level of intertextuality between these two iterations of the Breaking Point poster. All these transformations combine to create a new iteration, which signifies much more than meets the eye on the first glance.

Intertextuality

This iteration directly links with the previous iteration as it features UKIP's Breaking Point poster verbatim, thus the same messages are sent, resulting in a similar preferred reading. The addition of the pro-EU poster in the corner is one of the points of difference from the previous iteration, which adds a layer of context.

The key difference of Farage in front of the poster between the two iterations is so effective that the photograph then went on to be parodied and recognised as a signifier for the leave movement. It is this familiarity which was partly responsible for how further iterations of the poster were created. Farage was the embodiment of the cause to leave the EU and his

presence acted as a further sign of the messages attempted to be transmitted through the text. His presence was also the key contributing factor to the aspect of intertextuality at play between this iteration and the previous one. The introduction of Farage acts as the key signifier of difference between the iterations, in ways discussed in the following section.

Connotation and Anchoring

Much like the first iteration of the Breaking Point poster, the original poster in the background has a preferred reading encouraging readers to endorse an anti-EU view at the ballot box. The signs in the poster featured within the iteration remain the same, and the introduction of Farage helps to cement this meaning further. His presence adds to the 'leave' message emanating from the poster, helping to reaffirm its intentions. However, the additional text outside of the poster, including Farage, is included to initiate conversation and make the content newsworthy, sparking interest in the poster and the arguments being made.

Firstly, there is Farage himself and what he represents. Different viewers of the iteration will interpret it in different ways, depending on the experiences and subjective politics of the individuals. These individual perspectives can lead to the image of Farage conjuring up a variety of emotions, from passionate dislike to unequivocal support and the apathy in between. Farage was a divisive figure with many supporters and critics. The reader's perception of Farage would affect how they consumed the material and how readers perceived the text. The subjectivity of the reader would mean that alternate interpretations and readings could be gathered from a single text. Readers who viewed Farage negatively may have been discouraged from listening to messages he endorsed. Whereas supporters would see value in his messages. However, objectively, considering the number of features

anchoring and attaching the leave EU rhetoric, there would be little doubt as to the intentions of the poster.

Due to his popularity and reputation, it could be foreseen that Farage being a prominent person at the poster launch would garner more attention from the press. This is also important to consider when evaluating how the iteration was created. Though it is a snapshot of a moment in time, it was a poster unveiling to the media and was a manufactured iteration. Furthermore, in addition to his reputation, there is Farage's influence as one of the individuals who drove forward the debate about the UK's membership of the EU. There is also something to be examined in Farage's body posture and position as well as understanding the overall context of the situation he is in.

In this iteration, Farage is stood in front of UKIP's Breaking Point poster, at the initial unveiling of the poster on 16 June 2016, a week before the EU referendum (Stewart & Mason, 2016). At the time of the 2016 referendum, Farage was a Member of the European Parliament for South East England and had been leader of UKIP since November 2010: "it cannot be denied that since 2010, when Nigel Farage was re-elected as UKIP leader, the party has experienced a remarkable surge in popularity" (Ford & Goodwin, 2014 p3 cited in Crines & Heppel, 2016 p.232).

As leader of a party known for its anti-EU position, Farage was often the spokesperson for anti-EU causes in the national press, giving him prominence within the media. The rapid improvement in UKIP's election results under his leadership combined with his populist stance meant that he quickly became one the key faces of the leave campaign.

This additional press interest in UKIP and Farage has been verified by Cushion et al (2015), who carried out a study on UKIP and television coverage in the EU elections of 2009 and 2014: “we found little to support any clear party political bias in soundbites, in imagebites UKIP and Nigel Farage appeared more than other parties and their leaders” (Cushion et al, 2015 p.320). This meant that Farage’s popularity not only existed in the digital culture, but also in the wider mainstream media, which helped the poster launch gain more attention. An increased appearance of imagebites featuring UKIP and Nigel Farage means that television news viewers would likely be more familiar with him than other politicians at the same level. Viewers were thus visually overexposed to Farage and UKIP, and it was this familiarity which resulted in this iteration, with Farage stood in front of the poster that went on to become one of the most commonly seen iterations to be published in the press. The familiarity of Farage allows the poster to resonate with the intended audience and the messaging of the text becomes more apparent through his inclusion.

This could be said to be an example of mass media logics, and how seemingly neutral platforms can exert influence in a subtle way. Van Dijck & Poell (2013, p.4) observe that this happens by “operating as filters through which some people get more exposure than others.” Cushion et al’s (2015) study highlights how Farage and UKIP obtained more exposure from the mainstream television press in comparison to politicians and parties at a comparable level. Van Dijck and Poell (2013, p.7) also acknowledge how this influence could continue through social media:

In spite of the platform’s egalitarian image, some people on Twitter are more influential than others, partly because the platform tends to be dominated by a few users with large followings, partly because the platforms assigns more weight to highly viable users. (Van Dijck & Poell, 2013 p.7)

Farage's influence over political proceedings continued to permeate through to mainstream culture from the point at which he was elected as leader of UKIP in 2014. This influence was best displayed through the rapid improvement of UKIP's election results and how Farage was a prominent member of the Leave.EU campaign which increased his status. It was these factors that went onto help this iteration resonate, through the artificial creation of a newsworthy iteration which would create a 'buzz' at its launch.

In the May 2014 European Parliamentary elections, UKIP finished in first place, with over 4.3 million votes and 26.6% of the national vote (Ford & Goodwin 2014, p.227). Finishing first in a nationwide election was clearly an achievement, and as leader of the party, Farage found a new level of notoriety. These results and the increasing support for UKIP indicate the influence Farage had within the party and managed to exert onto the wider electorate.

Farage's influence and his party's increasing vote share is seen as one of the key reasons Prime Minister David Cameron decided to include a vote on the UK's membership of the EU as part of his 2015 Conservative general election manifesto. Cameron, chose to have a referendum as he "hoped it would undermine the apparent threat from the Conservatives' electoral chance apparently being posed by increased support in the polls for the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP), which was campaigning for a referendum on the EU" (Curtice, 2017 p.24).

Whether just for the prospect of creating polarising content, Farage often creates a media storm wherever he goes, and this poster launch was no different. His influence since the referendum continued to grow and expanded well beyond the social media bounds being explored here. The fact that this poster unveiling garnered the amount of attention it did pays testament to this. At the time of the referendum, UKIP were known as Farage's party,

and their anti-EU stance was well known. This link was only further enhanced in the period of campaigning prior to the referendum. This is an example of how profiting from the cult of Farage was often more effective than selling the UKIP brand, as it was Farage and not necessarily UKIP, that often attracted the headlines.

The prominence of Farage's name over the UKIP brand is seen in the mainstream press. In a 2016 *Guardian* article referencing how the poster was reported to the police, the headline referring to UKIP's Breaking Point poster called it "Nigel Farage's anti-migrant poster" (Stewart & Mason, 2016). Part of this interpretation is due to the political persuasion of the newspaper, but the fact that it is referenced as Farage's poster and not UKIP's is telling. It reaffirms the influence which Farage wielded over the EU debate. Additionally, the image being used on the website to accompany the story was this iteration with Nigel. This is an example of how his influence was crucial in making the Breaking Point poster resonate with the audience. The use of the phrase anti-migrant also suggests what those with an opposing perspective to UKIP about the EU and migration may think of the poster.

As mentioned above, the murder of Jo Cox drew more attention to the Breaking Point poster, and as leader of UKIP and a key member of the LEAVE.EU campaign, Farage was often questioned about the poster and its potential effect on the electorate. In an interview with Krishnan Guru-Murthy (Channel 4 News, 2016, June 20), Farage was repeatedly asked whether he wanted to apologise about the misleading nature of the poster, with the host asking how many of these people in the poster were trying to make it to Britain. Farage was expected to answer these questions as leader of UKIP but also because of his brand association with anti-EU and anti-immigrant rhetoric.

Additionally, the 'BRITAIN STRONGER IN EUROPE' poster held into view by someone out of shot aimed to offer an alternative to the UKIP communication material in the piece. The addition of the 'Stronger in Europe' poster, placed in front of the van displaying the Breaking Point poster, is small and unlikely to detract from the overall message. The only true effect is that it offers the alternative, trying to take away some of the impetus from the campaign launch and anchor the meaning of the poster in a different way from UKIP's intention. The stark difference in these opinions highlights the magnitude of the polarisation in this debate, and how these binary opposite views existed in both the digital culture but also in wider society. This photographed iteration of Farage and the original Breaking Point poster alongside the pro-EU poster displays this juxtaposition in a real-life setting through a single iteration. If the intention in the creation of this text was to provoke and benefit from the polarised nature of politics, then Farage and UKIP did this effectively through this iteration. The introduction of Farage and all that he represents reinforces the anti-EU message of the piece. He does this by being there to unveil the poster to the mainstream press. Farage endorses the poster through his body language and his direction, thus maintaining the preferred reading of the text.

Recontextualisation

Similarities between this and the previous iteration of the poster are clear and as such, recontextualisation is not an overriding theme. The messages conveyed by the piece are still in keeping with UKIP's Breaking Point poster and the strong anti-EU sentiment is still the clear overarching message. This is strengthened through the introduction of Farage directing attention towards the poster.

The only point of difference that can be argued to have any counter influence is the pro-EU poster which is found in a very minor position. It is an attempt by a pro-remain campaigner to change the narrative of the poster by introducing the 'Stronger In Europe' poster whilst the press took photos. However, it does little to change the message transmitted through the iteration.

There is a recontextualisation that takes place in another way through this iteration, as a change in the mode of address is evident. The original poster (iteration 1) was first used in a digital format but was created as a multimodal poster which could work effectively in physical and digital spaces, and thus featured on a physical mobile billboard in the back of this iteration. According to Roux & Van der Walldt (2016) and Taylor, Franke & Bang (2006 cited in Jun et al, 2016 p.16) "OOH (Out of home) media (e.g. billboards) can receive massive exposure to pedestrians and drivers and are very effective in terms of consumer exposure." In addition to this, a press event to launch the poster would also help raise awareness of UKIP's messaging.

This iteration is a photograph of a poster launch and despite starting out as a physical billboard advertisement, it went on to go through the social media adaptation process despite it initially attempting to gain traction through audiences viewing the poster on the side of a van. This iteration is one of the most obvious examples of hybrid media theory in effect, as different types of media all are interdependent. It was the mainstream mass media that was invited to the launch of UKIP's Breaking Point poster, and it was this iteration that ended up in several version of the newspapers. However, it was also used in online editions of newspapers (as can be seen in Stewart & Mason, 2016). The fact that it was included as an iteration in this work also demonstrates how it was also used on *Twitter*.

The poster and Farage then became part of a wider national story following Jo Cox's murder, and that resulted in Breaking Point being featured and discussed on Channel 4 News. Finally, the clip referenced was uploaded by Channel 4 News to *YouTube*. This snapshot of Breaking Point's journey demonstrates hybrid media in effect – interactions by older and newer media logics in the reflexively connected field of politics (Chadwick 2017).

These first two iterations fall more in line with mass media logics and the institutionalist definition of mediatisation as they were created and manufactured by political institutions (political parties and the press). However, the iterations henceforth appear to have been created and distributed on social media intentionally. It is in these iterations where the transition of mediatisation from institutionalist to social constructivist and from mass media logics to more alignment with network media logics and social media logics.

4.3 Third Iteration – Breaking Point comparison with Nazi documentary



This is the third iteration of the poster found after UKIP released their Breaking Point poster.

Its first use on *Twitter* was 16 June 2016, the same date as the previous iterations. There was also another version of this iteration that was circulated, featuring the top two and bottom left image in a vertical format, however due to the similarities I have only included the above version in this analysis.

Denotation

This third iteration features the Breaking Point poster alongside three other screenshots.

The Breaking Point poster in the top left is taken from the first iteration and appears to be exactly the same version as the UKIP original.

The following two images appear to show the same still with different captions. Both in black and white, the composition of the images is directly comparable to Jeff Mitchell's photograph, which forms the background of the first image. There is a similar line of people snaking their way towards the camera, which again is placed above the crowd of people,

which features men and women, making their way forward. The visual similarities of the land and angle of the line mirrors the line making their way towards the reader in the Breaking Point poster. The point of difference between these two images is found in the captions that anchor them. One image has the caption 'who flooded Europe's cities after the last war' followed by an image with the caption 'parasites, undermining their host countries.'

The fourth image which makes up this iteration is a zoomed in shot of the line, with people dressed for bad weather and carrying large parcels. The accompanying caption with this fourth image is 'and bringing with them crime, corruption and chaos.'

Intertextuality

According to a *Guardian* article (2016) by Heather Stewart and Rowena Mason, the screenshots were directly taken from a BBC documentary showing images of Nazi propaganda, and are placed next to the Breaking Point poster in a storyboard style, to identify a comparison between them. This third iteration once again features UKIP's Breaking Point poster in its entirety, however, this iteration's meaning has changed due to the recontextualisation and intertextuality at play.

In addition to the Breaking Point poster (iteration 1) featuring verbatim as one of the four images, there are also layers of intertextuality between the screenshots of the Nazi propaganda documentary footage. The textual relationship between the Breaking Point poster and the Nazi propaganda develops another narrative that can be explored through understanding the roles of connotation and anchoring in the next section. This intertextual relationship may not be apparent to readers of the iteration who have not seen the Nazi

documentary in question. As such, some of the connotations interpreted through this section of analysis may not necessarily be ones which appear obvious to readers without this prior context.

Connotations and Anchoring

It is noteworthy that the captions on the screenshots have been retained. There is a use of provocative vocabulary in the captions, referencing immigrants who ‘flooded Europe’s cities’ whilst ‘undermining their host countries’, ‘and bringing with them crime, corruption and chaos’. There is an insinuation that the UKIP Breaking Point poster stands for the same ideas as Nazis due to the similarity of the two texts. These words anchor further meaning to the screenshots of Nazi Germany and play an important role in distinguishing the comparative pictures as negative. On first viewing and without further context, it is difficult to identify where and when the screenshots have been taken from. The anchored captions help alleviate the necessity for background information about the screenshots being published alongside the iteration. This also helps further identify the iteration as an inherently anti-UKIP iteration of the poster.

The messaging of this iteration is made clearer through the anchoring provided. The language used is more synonymous with an infestation of rodents or insects ‘flooding Europe’s cities’ and referring to them as ‘parasites’. When PM David Cameron described migrants crossing the Mediterranean Sea in 2015 as a ‘swarm’ he faced a backlash from many members of the press and public (BBC News, 2015). His language received condemnation at the time, with critics calling it dehumanising. By adding similar rhetoric and anchoring the UKIP Breaking Point poster to it, parallels can be inferred by the

juxtaposition of the iterations. The phrases included in the captions are graphic and exhibit what may be considered as inappropriate language considering the subject matter.

The fact that these documentary images are in black and white also provides further context to the iteration. They may imply that the style and message of the Breaking Point poster are outdated and out of touch with the modern era. Additionally, the fact that the images are back and white and refer to a previous point in history helps to validate them as original footage.

In an era of digital culture, no great abundance of time and resources would have been required to make this iteration, meaning that it could be quickly and effectively produced and distributed. Creating this iteration would not take much photo editing knowledge and it could then be shared easily through social media. This ability for non-specialist computer users to create this content exists because of the present digital culture. The greater base knowledge of editing and the lack of gatekeepers allows a user to create such a picture and publish it through social media easily in comparison to how difficult it would have been to publicise this view before the era of Web 2.0. This relates directly to the production dimension of network media logics, which references the inexpensive information and content selection (Klinger & Svensson, 2015 p.1246) features that directly led to the creation of this iteration.

The comparison made by this iteration went on to appear in newspaper and web articles, outside of the traditional sphere from which the iteration initially resided. This ability for material created in the social media sphere to make its way into wider culture shows the power of social media in the era of Web 2.0. This demonstrates the distribution and media usage capacity of network media logics. Like-minded users redistribute material to other

like-minded individuals, and this means that others in mainstream media circles would be more likely to be exposed to it, for it then be redistributed in accordance with mass media logics. The “highly selective exposure oriented towards interaction” referenced by Klinger & Svensson (2015 p.1246) could explain how the original material was not only redistributed, but recontextualised through this media usage dimension, in which it was likely adapted by a social media user. This influence of social media also demonstrates the social constructivist definition of mediatisation, in which changing technology is affecting the communication construction of culture. Social media allows users to interact with political advertising in this way, and these interactions help to develop culture and society - in this case, digital culture.

Though the initial UKIP poster was created to advocate an anti-EU message, by being placed next to images of Nazi Germany, the iteration transmits a different message to the previous iteration. In the initial Breaking Point poster and the iteration with Nigel Farage in front, the anti-EU message was prevalent, as they were part of public relations events to draw attention to UKIP and their perspective on the EU. Despite this iteration featuring the Breaking Point poster, there is a clear change in the preferred reading.

Polarisation surrounding the topic of the EU means that often people who talked and wrote about the subject were often seen as having a pro-remain or anti-EU agenda due to the binary nature of the topic. The topics covered by these iterations often cover provocative subject matter from a specific perspective, demonstrating this polarisation in action.

Additionally, the element of polarisation was potentially amplified through the binary choice given to the electorate in the referendum, meaning that a nuanced take was difficult to convey and therefore individuals and institutions appeared to be only pro or anti EU.

For this iteration the role of polarisation in the EU membership debate meant that this material could be identified as a criticism of the original poster. As such, this iteration would be identified as a pro-remain text, as it compares UKIPs poster to Nazi Germany, which represents an ideology largely seen as abhorrent. However, in this iteration, the comparisons with Nazi Germany and the content of the captions means that the iteration was likely created and distributed by those who acknowledged that there had been a change in the preferred reading of the text from the original poster.

This perspective of the poster and what it represented was not an anomaly, as George Osbourne, the then-UK Chancellor of the Exchequer, called the Breaking Point poster a “disgusting and vile poster...which had echoes of literature used in the 1930s” (Riley-Smith, 2016). Farage’s fellow leave campaigner Michael Gove (ITV, 2016) said that he “shuddered” when he first saw the poster. These perspectives indicate that the comparisons made in this iteration between the poster and Nazi Germany were not only seen through this iteration, but also seen more widely.

Social media also provides an opportunity for a variety of users to respond immediately and directly to posts, adding to the overall discourse surrounding the original post. This iteration was posted in direct reply to UKIP posting the digital version of their Breaking Point poster on the morning of 16 June 2016. It can be viewed as part of the conversational thread which trailed UKIP’s original post. This interaction demonstrates the connectivity element of social media logics, in which users are encouraged to interact with each other.

Understanding how this iteration was created and aimed to disseminate information shows how the transmission of political messaging has changed in the Web 2.0 era and how the

production element of network media logics operates. The distribution element is particularly obvious, as it displays how quickly such iterations were spread.

The creation and distribution of this iteration were reliant upon digital culture and the opportunities afforded by Web 2.0. Previously, only certain individuals with both the resources and knowledge would have been able to create this content. The comparative range of plentiful opportunities in the modern era mean that this content can be created and distributed swiftly. This is an example of the power of political communication in digital culture.

“Within hours, Twitter users had pointed out the image’s inadvertent similarity to Nazi propaganda footage of migrants shown in a BBC documentary from 2005” (Stewart & Mason, 2016). The frequency of tweets featuring the same comparison between the Breaking Point poster and documentary help to illustrate the use of network logics. It is unlikely that all the users came up with the comparison individually, but rather using material circulated by like-minded users. It is in these forums shared by like-minded users in which ideas like this can be shared and gain traction and also contribute to confirmation bias for those who connote the preferred reading in the same way this analysis has. Parallels between Klinger & Svensson’s ‘like-minded networks’ and echo-chambers can be drawn, as they both allude to how users only consume the information they want, especially when considering such a polarising issue. The EU referendum exacerbated polarisation with its binary choice - the results of this partisanship are clear in how politically opposing supporters each viewed the same material and perceived the opposition differently.

Recontextualisation

This is the first example of how the original message of the poster has been largely removed, despite featuring in its entirety in this iteration, due to the poster's insertion into a new context through the introduction of the screenshots of Nazi propaganda. Thanks to these changes, the message being transmitted through the text changes, as do the denotations and connotations.

This is perhaps the iteration in which the role of recontextualisation is most obvious in terms of the original Breaking Point poster. The original is placed into a new context with further detail providing new messages and provoking an alternate discourse. The meaning of the poster changes from communication supporting the UK leaving the EU to criticising the reasons behind supporting such a poster. This direct change from one preferred reading to a diametrically opposed reading shows how polarisation was in effect throughout the EU referendum campaign period.

4.4 Fourth Iteration – Not one woman



Denotation and Intertextuality

This iteration was first seen on *Twitter* on Friday 22 July 2016 and features Jeff Mitchell's original photo, with large text at the top, stating 'Not one woman'. This is coupled with more text at the bottom reading: 'These are not refugees. They're enemy soldiers'. This is written in a large impact font, with a black outline and white fill. At the bottom right of the image, there is a small black logo featuring three triangles located within a circle.

Intertextually, this iteration features the same Jeff Michell photo in the background, identifying it as an iteration of the original UKIP Breaking Point poster. But the topic of the poster has changed from the previous iterations, which focused on the UK's membership of the EU.

This iteration marks a departure from the continuation of texts which covered the same topic as the original Breaking Point poster. Instead of continuing a narrative discussing the UK's membership of the EU, this iteration focuses on the refugee issue, going back to the original context Mitchell's photograph captured. Therefore, this iteration serves as a development of intertextuality, displaying how the same photo can still represent the topic it originally represented.

Connotation and Anchoring

It is easy to perceive the preferred reading of this iteration as emitting anti-immigration rhetoric that is not necessarily linked to the EU as the previous iteration was. Instead of alluding to EU freedom of movement and socio-economic migration, it is focused on refugees leaving war-torn places. It represents a departure in meaning being transmitted from the rest of the iterations, focusing on the intentions of the refugees in the image.

The font used in this iteration, which anchors the new meaning to the text is commonly associated with memes, providing a likely indication of how the iteration was created. This is evidence of mediatisation, where non-media actors conform to the communication norms of the channel. In the case of memes, a 'prosumer' led media style, the iteration provides evidence of the changing communication structures noted in social constructivism. This written text plays a crucial role in anchoring the meaning to the text, allowing it to emit a different preferred reading to the previous iterations.

Dawkins (2006) first coined the term meme to define small units of culture transmitted from person to person, and the more general flow and flux of culture. Dawkins originally compared a meme to a virus; in the way it spreads. Since then, through the development of

digital culture, the word meme has gone onto represent something more specific online, however the obvious viral nature of content remains, and demonstrates an exchange of ideas, content and data. When talking about social media sites including *Twitter*, Shifman (2014, p.8) says “such sites represent ‘express paths’ for meme diffusion.” Memes in the specific form outlined with a font style and format are a quintessential example of digital culture through Web 2.0. innovations.

This iteration clearly plays on two tropes which emphasise gender and race through conspiracy. Firstly, highlighting the lack of women: Jeff Mitchell (Beaumont-Thomas, 2016) alluded to the reason for this was a result of the long arduous physical journey required to migrate over these long distances. This direction from the anchored written text makes the reader instantly view the iteration through a gendered lens. The user insinuates that the lack of women in the photo means that the men in the photo are soldiers aiming to cause havoc on foreign territory. Additionally, through this interpretation, there is a suggestion that if women were featured in the photograph, then the iteration would not depict ‘soldiers’.

The second trope in this conspiracy narrative involves race. It is the basis of race which creates the narrative of sleeper soldiers making their way into the country and this is the line which is highlighted through this iteration. The ethnicity of the individuals in this iteration plays on tropes about the nationality of those that want to do harm to their country. This trope uses some of the techniques like the previous iterations, using ‘otherness’ to create division and exploit the polarised nature of the debate.

Recontextualisation

The defining characteristic of this iteration is the use of recontextualisation. Who created this original iteration is not known, and it is entirely possible that the creator of this iteration made it after only seeing the original Jeff Mitchell photo. Or perhaps it was only first circulated on *Twitter* on this date but was created much earlier. Whatever the reason, the context in which the narrative is placed through this iteration is so distant from the original UKIP Breaking Point poster that it appears to cover the initial topic which Jeff Mitchell sought to cover through his photograph – the migration of refugees from the Middle East. However, it directs a new narrative and seeks to promote a conspiracy to profit from polarisation. It is clear how through the repeated conflation of the issues of refugees, immigration and the EU, that the distinctions between them can become blurred as various topics are conveyed through this one photograph.

There is also a lack of context about the topic from the creator of the iteration, as the creator has sought to imprint a conspiracy narrative, thus removing it from the messaging of the Breaking Point poster. If the iteration was created after seeing the Jeff Mitchell photo, then the role of intertextuality is more prominent, as it represents the messaging of the photo coming full circle through recontextualisation.

Digital Culture allows social media users to insert their own narrative on texts through adaptation. The opportunity for programmability, a dimension of social media logics, helps to explain how through social media, users are steered toward creative and communicative contributions. Iterations featuring social media users' adaptations of political advertising provide evidence of this.

4.5 Fifth Iteration – Where's Aisha?



WHERE'S AISHA?
FIND 3 WOMEN AND 5 KIDS

Denotation

This 5th iteration of the Breaking Point poster was first used on *Twitter* on 15 August 2016 according to TinEye. Like the previous iteration, this version does not feature UKIP's Breaking Point poster, but rather Jeff Mitchell's original photograph as the central image of the piece, which takes the majority of the space in the iteration and features a bold black border around the edge. It is a version of the photo which is slightly zoomed in, thus cutting off the edges of the original.

Under the photo there are two lines stating, 'WHERE'S AISHA?' and 'FIND 3 WOMEN AND 5 KIDS'. The first question is written in a bold, large font, coloured in blue and red. The second question is written in a slightly smaller point size in black writing.

Intertextuality

This iteration replicates features from multiple previous iterations. It has physical similarities to aspects of all the previous iterations examined due to Jeff Mitchell's photograph being the prominent image which confirms its position as an iteration of the Breaking Point poster. However, the recontextualisation of this iteration through anchoring appears to focus on the refugee crisis and the migration from war-torn areas as opposed to EU-related economic migration. As such, it feels like this iteration more naturally follows the narrative arc of the original photograph captured by Mitchell as opposed to the Breaking Point poster created by UKIP. However, much like the previous iterations, the racial and gendered undertones play a key role in the message

There is a lack of narrative structure: understanding the messaging of the text is more difficult than previous iterations. This is one of the effects of digital culture, which enables regular citizens to adapt content. The production dimension of network media logics highlights inexpensive content generation which serves individual preferences and maximises attention. The drawback of such an opportunity is the creation of amateur content in which the messaging is not clear. This is the case for this iteration, which appears to have a similar preferred reading to the previous iteration but contains messaging which is more difficult to interpret.

The date this iteration was first used on *Twitter* also provides insight into its intention, as it was first used after the 2016 EU referendum. It shows how after the EU referendum, the photograph was used to cover refugees.

The font type is like the font and colour scheme used in the puzzle book *Where's Wally?* This plays on subliminal messaging inserts a layer of gamification, which would help draw people in to interact with the piece of communication. The call to action included in the iteration is also simple and adheres to the childlike style that would be employed by the real *Where's Wally?* It helps to add a further layer of context through the addition of a potential reading into the typeface, font and colouring. The anchored words are clear to read; however, their intentions are harder to establish.

Connotations and Anchoring

For this iteration, the anchoring will be analysed first, to help determine where and how the connotations are established. There are two questions which anchor meaning to the original photograph by Jeff Mitchell. The questions ask 'Where's Aisha?' and 'Find 3 women and 5 kids'. Aside from these details and the cropped version of Mitchell's photograph, there are no other notable features anchored to the iteration. The fact that these written words are both questions means that the communications included in this piece of text are active and engage the reader. This gives the reader a task - to try and find a woman and children in the photo. However, this may not be the actual intention of the text. The anchoring text rather serves as a rhetorical point to highlight that there are few women and children in the photo.

The connotations of this iteration are more subjective and dependent on the interpretation of the reader. The first of the two anchored questions, which asks 'Where's Aisha?', is

vague. Whether it is a reference to a popular saying, a famous individual or something else is unknown. When considering the anchoring provided by the following line, 'find 3 women and 5 kids', the potential meaning of the previous line becomes slightly less murky. The lack of women in the photo is clearly a focus for the individual who produced it, much like some of the other iterations which have focussed on the gender of the individuals.

The potential rhetorical aspect of 'find 3 women and 5 kids' could serve to highlight the gender imbalance of the people captured in the photograph. Aisha is a woman's name with Arabic roots. The role of 'Aisha' may be to represent a generic woman who would be in the photo if there was a greater gender balance. The Arabic roots of the name may also be a reference to the origins of many of the refugees in the line snaking its way into Europe. In his interview with Ben Beaumont-Thomas of *The Guardian*, Mitchell mentioned his reasons for the gender and age of the people he captured in the photo. He said they were generally fit individuals, men who were ready to work and had survived a long journey. This would be a potential reason for why most of the people in the photograph appear to be men. It is likely that the reason the gender was pointed out by the creator was to highlight how these did not appear to be physically the refugees most in need of help. The counter argument is similar to the argument put forward by Mitchell, that only the physically fit are capable of trekking through the harsh environments on the long walk to Europe.

Additionally, the anchoring statements appear to be sarcastic, because of the way they highlight a lack of women and children in the photo. The statements are rhetorical, as they pose statements as questions, hoping to engage the reader and make them sympathetic to their perspective.

These are some of the potential connoted readings of this text, however due to the relatively vague nature of the anchored text associated with the iteration, it is difficult to establish an intended reading.

Recontextualisation

There is a high level of recontextualisation, as the anchored comments suggest that the topic of the text pertains to the refugee crisis as opposed to the EU referendum as per UKIP's original Breaking Point poster. However, if the iteration is considered as a direct response to Mitchell's photograph, then it can be looked at from another perspective, continuing the narrative and developing a conspiracy in addition to further enhancing the power of the message and the ideology of the creators/distributors.

This non-uniformity in the chronology of creation, production and use of iterations is a consequence of the digital age and social media. Again, it is the non-linear process of mediatisation that means that the cause and effect of each iteration cannot be fully examined in the same way as traditional media. The effects of institutionalist mediatisation are likely at play here, working in tandem with network media logics. The distributor has created something which they hope would resonate with their audience, using a combination of the medium, message and channel to their best effect. The operational nature of network logics means that the audience is expected to be like-minded, and therefore the opportunity for resonance with the audience is greater, meaning that the communication would gain more traction and potentially have more of an effect.

4.6 Sixth Iteration – Blue dot adult males



Denotation

This iteration is largely formed directly by Jeff Mitchell's original photograph, much like the previous two iterations. There does not appear to be any editing which has affected the original dimension or framing of the photo.

There is one key difference which distinguishes this iteration from Mitchell's original photo - the introduction of colour and accompanying text. There is a large blue dot in the vacant grassy space on the left, alongside an equals sign, on the other side of which it says 'ADULT MALE' in large blue capitalised writing. There are also blue dots attached to all the individuals in the photo, which cover the faces of the individuals.

Intertextuality

Regarding the similarity of rhetoric, this iteration most closely resembles the previous two iterations, as they all support a shared reference to gender. Network media logics, may dictate that these were-shared by like-minded individuals who may exist in the same social spheres on social media.

Unlike the original Breaking Point poster, this iteration does not focus on the issue of the UK's membership of the EU. Instead it focuses the narrative on the issue of migration, as per Mitchell's original photo. This implies that the image directly relates to the refugee crisis and the issue of migration, and the gender heavy interpretation of the text suggests that lack of children and women is an issue within migration.

The photo in this iteration changed very little from the original, aside from the obvious use of blue dots to highlight all the males in the foreground of the iteration.

Connotation and Anchoring

The preferred reading of the text appears through the identification of the gender of those in the photo. The iteration does this effectively through its use of colour, making it easily readable.

The key details in this iteration which anchor meaning are the blue dots added to the original photo. The large blue dot, equals sign and 'ADULT MALE' sign words appear together on the left-hand side of the iteration and are grouped together. The fact that the blue dot covers the faces of those in the photo also infers a level of anonymity on those in the iteration through the change.

This key identifies the meaning of the text illustrating how those in the photo all appear to be male. The use of colour and a simple key also helps to continue using visual communications traits such as limiting written detail and allowing the information to be easily digestible for the reader. The use of a key helps to clarify the meaning of the text, by anchoring the use of colour to the text. Through common association the reader is expected to identify the use of a key despite no explicit text describing it as such. The key and blue dots combine to engender the fear of immigrants.

Recontextualisation

Though chronologically this iteration came after the EU referendum, it appears to have been used in the photograph's original context referencing the refugee crisis. This makes the question surrounding intertextuality more intricate as it is possible this iteration was created directly as a response to Mitchell's original photo, meaning that the content has been recontextualised in a slightly different fashion, to help illustrate a point about the refugee crisis as opposed to issues surrounding the EU.

The use of this iteration to illustrate issues about refugee migration shows how visual communications are dexterous unlike many other forms of media, due to the variety of interpretations than can be garnered from the same text. It is digital culture which enables such a variety of meanings to be placed on a single image. The extended shelf life and long tail effect of digital media means that a single photograph can continue to remain in the public consciousness long after its first use. This gives opportunities to social media users to adapt this content, demonstrating the production and distribution elements of network media logics.

4.7 Seventh Iteration – Annotated conspiracy



Nigel Farage's Leave/Brexit poster designed to weaponizs the refugee crisis-created by Putin-Assad as a means to break up the EU and dismantle NATO

(Border added to define the edge of the iteration)

Denotation

Denotatively, this iteration - which was first seen on *Twitter* on 30 Jan 2018 - is very similar to the second iteration examined, with one key difference: an annotation which anchors this iteration to a new caption.

It features a large red arrow pointing out from the poster, leading to a caption that reads 'Nigel Farage's Leave/Brexit poster designed to weaponizs [sic] the refugee crisis- created by

Putin-Assad as a means to break up the EU and dismantle NATO'. This sentence is written in large red writing below the image.

It appears that the image which the caption is below is iteration 2, featuring Farage stood in front of the mobile billboard unveiling the Breaking Point poster.

Intertextuality

The issue of the EU and the refugee crisis were both issues highlighted by this iteration. The earlier mentioned conflation of issues has likely played some part in combining these messages, meaning that there is now a common association between the EU, EU migration and the refugee crisis.

This iteration develops already established links, by attaching new theories surrounding the involvement of Syria's Bashar al-Assad and Russia's Vladimir Putin, which allows the iteration to develop and continue to provide intertextual links to related media created hereafter. As such, the linkages established through iteration means that it has an intertextual relationship with all the previous iterations reviewed in this dissertation.

Connotation and Anchoring

The written words in the material are clear and obvious in this iteration through the bright red text which operates as a warning via colour symbolism. The sentiments of this iteration are also relatively easy to decipher: the messaging appears to take a pro-remain position by criticising the intentions of those who chose to vote leave.

The message anchored to the text helps to derive the connotation of the iteration. It does this in a simple fashion which does not require the reader to decipher a complicated meaning.

The messaging identifies a conspiracy to try and dismantle major international organisations (EU and NATO) assigned through the arrow and the written text. The anchoring also involves the leaders of Russia and Syria in the poster, suggesting that they can profit from the dismantling of the EU and NATO. The use of leaders such as al-Assad and Putin suggests that there is a global perspective promoting Britain leaving the EU that would not benefit British nationals. The use of these divisive leaders draws attention to the poster. Both are leaders of countries which have had direct involvement in the Middle East crisis that has resulted in the displacement of refugees who have headed to Europe.

It is this polarised environment of digital culture which allows these perspectives on events to manifest. Web 2.0 and the digital culture allow these views to often go unchallenged through the lack of gatekeepers and barriers to entry of self-creation of content and publication. This lack of regulation means that these more extreme opinions and conspiracies can spread without as much pushback as regulated media would expected to be subjected to (in the UK at least). This again represents the drawback of self-selection of programmability from social media logics, and how this can lead to echo-chambers, in which only like-minded opinions are heard. Technology has meant that due to the way we consume information, the social constructivist nature of mediatisation becomes clear - the culture of only consuming content which is complementary to your own perspective is a change in the communicative construction of society.

Admittedly, the potential impressions of the piece are dependent on the number of followers the user has who shares such material and the ability for the material to attract likes and retweets in the case of *Twitter*. Network media logics recognises that the likely audience is going to be sympathetic to these arguments as the consumers are probably like-minded. Network media logics also help to explain why the iteration features some spelling and grammatical errors.

Recontextualisation

Due to the variety of issues the anchored caption raises, recontextualisation can be seen to have taken place. This iteration arguably recontextualises all the previous iterations by conflating and mentioning the refugee crisis, the EU and NATO. It is this conflation which leads to this iteration developing how Mitchell's photo can be used. The association of NATO is one that until this point has not previously been mentioned through this text, and again recontextualises the original photo as well as *Breaking Point*, putting the focus of the text on another area of discourse. Putin and al-Assad have not previously been associated with this photo and the mention of their names also represents a recontextualisation, moving the iteration on to represent other issues. The role of conspiracy and the subsequent change of narrative is the core area which drives the recontextualisation of this iteration. It is again an example of social constructivism, in which non-media actors are driving the narrative of the original photograph forward into other areas of discourse.

4.8 Eighth Iteration – Hillary and the democrats



Denotation

This seventh iteration of the Breaking Point poster uses Jeff Mitchell's original photo as the background and the key visual element of the iteration. There are two key pieces of written text anchored to the iteration. At the top it reads, 'Why do Hillary and the Democrats support open borders and oppose voter ID laws?', underneath which is the answer 'So they can flood the ballot with the votes of illegal aliens looking to live off the U.S. government.'

All the text in the iteration uses the Impact typeface commonly associated with memes. It includes white text a black border to exaggerates the text's features, helping to highlight the message.

In the bottom right corner of this image, there is a website URL – makeameme.org., written in a semi-translucent white typeface.

Intertextuality

This iteration continues the development of intertextuality exhibited by the journey the original poster has taken. This iteration supports a different cause, despite having a similar physical resemblance to the previous iterations that argued for and against various issues. This may suggest that because of the notoriety of the original Breaking Poster and the fact that the leave argument succeeded, the creator has learnt from UKIP's strategic use of the photo.

Due to the way the anchored messages appear to focus on immigration, this iteration has more in common with the iterations first used on *Twitter* after the 2016 EU referendum. Generally, the iterations after this point focus on refugee and migration issues, much like this iteration. However, this iteration is more explicit in defining what it sees as the problem causing these issues - the Democratic Party. To the creator, it appears that the embodiment of the Democrats is Hillary Clinton, likely due to her long association with the party as a former presidential candidate, First Lady and Secretary of State.

Again, the use of the meme typeface and style develops the intertextual meaning, indicating that the iteration is a product of digital culture.

Connotation and Anchoring

This iteration establishes several views on contentious issues in US politics, chiefly surrounding the Democratic Party, illegal immigration and voter ID laws. The issues addressed and the perspective used suggests the connotation of the text is a criticism of the

Democratic Party and many of their values. The tone of the rhetoric indicates that it was produced by a critic, likely a Republican voter.

The Democrat's pro-immigration message in comparison to the Republicans anti-immigration approach is the likely reason for this message creation. It also indicates that the message was likely created by someone who is politically right leaning. It is clear through these references that the distributor is likely to be a US citizen, thus developing the previous intertextuality derived from previous iterations.

The key detail that anchors this iteration is the meme text which provides meaning to Mitchell's photo. It anchors a narrative about immigration and voter ID laws in the United States of America (USA). It drives forward a meaning which has not yet been explored in the previous iterations surrounding immigration in the USA. The use of a meme typeface exemplifies mediatisation in effect, in which non-media actors are creating content adapted to the media's rules, aims and production logics (Mazzoleni & Schulz, 1999). This is an example of the production dimension of network media logics in effect. The written text in the bottom right corner identifies a website, the URL of which suggests how this iteration was created. This stamp is likely to be a consequence of using this website when creating the iteration and confirms the use of a meme style.

The use of Hillary Clinton's first name assumes that the reader can interpret who is meant, indicating the power of the topic and person mentioned. In a previous iteration, a single first name was used to little effect, as the first name Aisha is not associated with a single individual as strongly as the name Hillary is in US politics. Hillary Clinton acts as a lightning rod for the relatively immigration positive Democrats. This is likely due to the role she had

as Donald Trump's opponent in the 2016 presidential election, a man who took a notoriously hard line on illegal immigration.

In the US, where political partisanship runs deep, the animosity shown towards the political opposition is scathing, and this iteration is no different. The iteration poses problems and sees the Democrats and Hillary Clinton as the root of the problem. This is the polarisation debate being replicated from the EU referendum being imprinted on US politics. It also claims that there are political decisions being made for long term gains, playing into the conspiracy theory narrative which implies that Hillary and the Democrats would benefit from the introduction of more illegal immigrants entering the US. This partisanship provides an opportunity to identify the distribution element of social media logics in effect, in which like-minded individuals consume this content, thus continuing the cycle of partisanship.

The second sentence anchors the creator's reason for why the Democrats have a pro-immigration stance in comparison to the Republicans. The reason identified is so that illegal immigrants can come into the country and vote for the Democrats once they become US citizens. This iteration text anchors these meanings, but also helps demonstrate the role of partisanship in US politics, in which the binary nature of debate is commonplace.

Recontextualisation

This iteration uses the original Jeff Mitchell photograph for a different cause, however there are some similarities to previous iterations. It focuses on migration, much like many of the previous iterations, however the focus of the result of migration is different. Gender is not alluded to, nor is the similarity of the picture to images captured at an earlier point in history.

It points to an argument which has not yet been represented in this debate and pertains to a different area of the world than the previous iterations appeared to focus on. Mitchell's original photograph has been repurposed for a debate about illegal immigration from the USA's southern border, as opposed to the refugee crisis working its way into Europe from the Middle East. However, the same photo and style of communication have been used to illustrate these points.

The change to focus on American politics also illustrates how the photo has become successful in displaying and highlighting an issue, and as a result has been used to try and promote a new argument. It now represents illegal migration on a different continent in North America as opposed to refugees fleeing the Middle East for Europe. For the creator of the iteration, the people in the photo are likely not refugees from war-torn locations in the Middle East but rather illegal immigrants from Central America making their way towards the USA to leach off the state. This provides an example of the programmability of social media logics in digital culture, in which users can manipulate and influence the flow of communication through their creative communication contributions.

5. Conclusion

The research aimed to explore the interplay between popular and political culture, through an examination of the Breaking Point poster and its subsequent iterations distributed on social media. This case study addressed the question:

- How do affordances in digital culture allow polarising party political referendum advertising posters to be adapted and distributed on Twitter?

To address this research question, two sub-questions are also considered in the conclusion:

- How does recontextualisation through digital adaptation change meaning in iterations of the Breaking Point poster published on Twitter?
- What role do mediatisation and media logics play in this recontextualisation process?

The second sub-question will be considered first. It is partly about the role media logics play in the recontextualisation process demonstrated throughout the iterations. Network media logics and social media logics can both be said to have influenced how content like the iterations examined in this work are produced and distributed. The distribution of content to like-minded individuals means that there is an increased opportunity for resonance.

These users are already distributing to an audience that is sympathetic their opinions, either through knowing them or through valuing their opinions and following them (in the case of *Twitter*).

The theory of network media logics would also help to explain the traction that social media content gets, by ensuring that the audience is similarly minded to the creator/distributor.

This possible use of network media logic is also connected to the social constructivist

definition of mediatisation, which would explain that users post material which is adapted to the rules of the medium. These two elements in combination explain the messaging behind some of the iterations. In the case of the research conducted, iterations 4-6 which highlighted the gender of the individuals in the poster, would likely have anchored messaging to these tropes to appeal to the same audience. These filter bubbles would increase the chance of echo-chambers, but also validate the distribution and media usage dimensions of network media logics through the way content is consumed by like-minded others with selective exposure.

This change in the preferred reading continued throughout the rest of the iterations, as narratives about migration in different areas around the globe, gender and ethnicity all fuelled iterations and aimed to promote various perspectives. These can all be claimed to have been produced by non-media actors employing mediatisation i.e. distributing content which adheres to the principles, practices and process of social media generally and *Twitter* in particular. Through digital culture, these audience members are active consumers, and their role helps to validate network media logics, through social media users' production and distribution of content. It's digital culture which enables users through the environment created to participate in everyday politics, and engage in political discourse as much or as little as they choose.

As part of the second sub-question, the role of mediatisation as a theoretical framework to understand the recontextualised iterations is addressed. In the literature review, two definitions of mediatisation were established: institutionalist and social constructivist. It is the social constructivist forms which can be seen in operation through the adaptation of political imagery when it is done by non-media actors on *Twitter*. However, I would argue

that the first two iterations, which are traditional iterations created by 'institutions' (a political party and the mainstream print, radio and television press at the poster unveiling), are evidence of institutional mediatisation. It is when the iterations transition to political images adapted and distributed on social media that social constructivism is seen, through how the development of information technology (social media and Web 2.0) has changed the communication structures of culture (allowing citizens to contribute to political discourse more easily). This social constructivism shows how non-media actors are empowered to create content which adheres to the norms of the media channels they communicate through. This definition of mediatisation explains how political posters have been adapted. Social constructivism identifies mediatisation as a process through which information technology powers change in culture and society. The Breaking Point iterations show how narratives placed on political posters by non-media actors have increased as a direct result of technological advances in communication structures.

This transition between the iterations can also be seen through logics. Mass media logics govern how the first two iterations were created and distributed, whereas iterations 3-8 demonstrate a combination of social media and network logics. This transition in the later iterations can also be used to demonstrate the effects of platformisation, by showing how social media platforms are now helping to shift and direct the interactions in key cultural areas – in this case politics. Breaking Point started out photograph of refugees fleeing their homelands for safety, and UKIP used it to represent an anti-EU sentiment. It was Twitter and Web 2.0 properties which meant that that the production, distribution and circulation of cultural content (Breaking Point) was shaped by the extension of a social media platform into other infrastructures. Platformisation is also shaping political communications in other

ways, as mentioned in the introduction, *Twitter* now bans political advertisements on the platform. These changes in platform governance would affect a similar poster to *Breaking Point*, and demonstrate how platformisation is continuing to exert influence over other cultural industries.

Non-media actors acknowledging the role of media logics does not necessarily result in clear messaging, in fact there is a clear distinction through which the iterations created by amateurs can be identified, however the opportunity to produce, distribute and use social media to contribute to discourse is apparent. The iterations of *Breaking Point* demonstrate the inexpensive information selection and content generation according to preference – the production element of network media logics. Modern digital culture allows this to happen, and it is through digital culture that the opportunity for these logics to operate exists.

The first sub-question and the key research question will be concluded together and rely on many of the central themes uncovered in the literature review. Firstly, the role of digital culture, defined in the literature review, played a major role in the creation of iterations 3-8. Digital culture provides the setting that allows citizens to gain increased accessibility to communication technology, affording them the opportunity to communicate and express their opinion through wider-reaching platforms ever before. The result of the increased participation encouraged by Web 2.0 means that regular citizens could both access and contribute to media like never before.

In the case of modifying political meaning through recontextualisation, the decrease in barriers to entry and increased accessibility through technological advances allows citizens to modify and adapt content easily, efficiently and cost effectively. This is evidenced through the production dimension of network media logics. All of the iterations analysed

demonstrate a recontextualisation of some sort in action, but iterations 3-8 appear to show how this opportunity to create and distribute has been afforded to regular citizens. It is because if those changes that recontextualisation enables the preferred readings of the iterations to change, meaning that the texts transmit different messages to that which the original Breaking Point poster did. This is how recontextualisation through digital adaptation changes meanings in iterations of Breaking Point on *Twitter*. Iterations (iteration 3-8) have been produced and distributed in a manner which would not have been possible without the intervention of digital culture. Digital culture has fostered an environment in which social network platforms could be created leading to the opportunity for the adaptation of political imagery, through ease of access and usability. The continuation of using the original photograph to transmit alternate messages identifies how changes to preferred readings occur ostensibly through the anchored captions that signify recontextualisation in each of the iterations, which drive forward the changes in meaning. The Breaking Point poster itself was an iteration of a photograph that documented another issue (refugee migration), and it was this progressive movement in meaning and preferred reading which continued throughout the rest of the iterations.

The non-linear nature of digital culture, social media and Web 2.0 means that the responses to political advertising are not subject to the number of gatekeepers which would have existed in a more analogue era and as a result can be distributed at any time. If the poster was created during a previous generation, the only ways to express opinions to a large audience would have been through a radio or television 'phone-in' programme about politics, or in the comments section of a magazine or newspaper. Those barriers to entry are far greater, and even avoided, expressing opinions about a piece of visual material would

likely be far more difficult through pure literature. Additionally, the opportunity to adapt the original photo or Breaking Point poster to support a tangential opinion or cause through recontextualisation would also be greatly limited. To use an edited version to support an argument about the gender of the immigrants making their way to whichever region the iteration is about, or to use the photo to hastily put together an argument about the links between Brexit, the EU and NATO and the aims of Bashar Al-Assad and Vladimir Putin through an anchored message attached to the original photo used in the Breaking Point poster would not have existed without digital culture.

Throughout the iterations, race, gender and polarising messages continually appear, indicating a theme in the quality of communication. These issues are drawn from the original photograph, but social media iterations highlight these elements through their recontextualisations. The role of polarisation is especially prevalent, as it appears throughout all the iterations, as the iterations are outspoken and frank. Social media and *Twitter* in particular are not platforms designed for nuance, and despite this research looking at images (which do not have to adhere to the 140/280-character limit), this tone can be clearly identified as a thread throughout. Many of the iterations demonstrate the polarisation and the division created through an 'us vs them' mentality, a theme which permeates throughout as a result of the platforms and mode of address they are communicated through. Additionally, the polarisation often leads to conspiracy theories and unsubstantiated claims, which are given equal space due to a lack of gatekeepers.

The research suggests that it is clear that political content is being adapted like never before because of digital technology. Digital culture enables these opportunities, giving regular citizens a voice and creating a comfortable setting for these topics to be discussed. Media

logics in their various guises alongside mediatisation can help to illustrate these changes through the journey taken by adapted and recontextualised iterations of *Breaking Point* through this analysis. The way non-media actors create and distribute content in the digital era is hugely influential because of the number of opportunities for adaptation available and these actions are changing the accepted norms of political discourse on *Twitter*. Regular citizens now have the ability to adapt political imagery in their role as 'prosumers' and it is mediatisation in its social constructivist form that embodies this changing relationship between political and popular culture.

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