Brexit on Facebook

How was Facebook used to gain votes on Brexit?

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Abstract

This dissertation analyses a national political campaign on social media to explore its role in 21st-century politics. The European Union Referendum 2016 is the selected election, Facebook is the platform, and the United Kingdom is the nation. Political campaigning, social media, and public opinion are the three main topics of this dissertation, forming a triangle for investigation. To ensure impartiality and fairness, the study considers both sides of the campaign: Leave and Remain. On the Leave side, there is a Facebook page called Vote Leave, and on the Remain side, one which is called Labour Party. Since supporters often create many digital pages on social media for political campaigns, it is impossible to analyse them all. The criteria for this research involved selecting the two main official pages from each campaign, based on a scientific analysis of how both sides conducted their campaigns online. These two teams are examined through their Facebook posts during the campaign for the British Referendum. Facebook was the dominant social media platform in the UK at the time, according to the Office of Communications (OFCOM). The analysis focuses particularly on posts shared on Facebook. The research design is centred on content analysis, drawing on previous studies. The content analysis employs a hybrid model over six months, examining Facebook posts from both the Brexit and Bremain sides. The mixed model includes all posts from 1 January 2016 to 23 June 2016, the day of the Referendum. Before the main analysis, a pilot study was conducted to examine each post's content and identify key themes such as Immigration, Economy, the NHS, the European Union, Industry, Education, and Housing. These topics were comprehensively included in the official analysis as they highlighted the principal tactics used by both groups on social media. For example, during the pilot, immigration emerged as a prominent issue, leading to its inclusion in the thematic categories to capture Brexit-related subjects. The refined model ensured that all themes relevant to the Referendum were accurately identified. The results indicated that immigration was the primary concern for British voters. The study found that the Vote Leave Facebook page was more organised and consistent than the Labour Party, which may have contributed to its victory over Remain. Furthermore, marketing, propaganda, persuasion, and semiotics are essential tools for clarifying the reasons that led Vote Leave to work better than the Labour Party in the digital world. Eventually, data collected from both Facebook pages demonstrated that Vote Leave shared 597 posts while the Labour Party shared 296 posts, which presents a larger difference between them. So, the highest level of activity was achieved by Vote Leave Facebook, which had a percentage of 67% of all posts published, whereas the Labour Party had just 33%. It was found that the winner utilised the canon theories from political campaigns in social media to change voters' minds. Thus, it can be considered: how was Facebook used to influence votes on the Brexit Referendum 2016?

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Acknowledgements

Since I was a child, my ambition was to be a teacher, but when I grew up, I decided to become a journalist instead. I did my Bachelor's Degree in journalism and worked as a journalist; however, my childhood dream to be a teacher has persisted and since resurfaced in my heart once again. Time was passing and, as stated by the Brazilian writer João Guimarães Rosa, we cannot avoid fate. Hence, I chose to return to my first dream: teaching. Currently, I am preparing to become a university lecturer to achieve my happiness and to help others realise their dreams through education. The path is not unchallenging, nevertheless, I am nearly there because the next step will be the final one: a PhD. That will be extraordinary! The philosopher Socrates said that to know thyself is the beginning of wisdom. Yes, it is the start because gaining knowledge is a long journey. However, we are not alone thanks to the people who help me along this path.

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Chapter 1
Introduction

There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,

Than are dreamt of in our philosophy.

(Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, 1944, p. 54)

Introduction

William Shakespeare wrote in *Hamlet* that there are more things around us than we ever thought. Hence, even though prior research has been conducted regarding the European Union Referendum 2016, there are still more aspects to analyse and more answers to obtain throughout the campaign than ever before. Political campaigns, social media and public opinion are the subjects of interest for this master's academic dissertation. They will be discussed through the context of media, in particular social media, as it is a major model of communication in contemporary society. Social media has a different perspective compared to mainstream media. Consequently, the way public opinion is influenced has been changing. Political parties and politicians have been using these online platforms to share content instead of traditional adverts on TV and radio. The algorithms that capture people's attention are key to reaching voters in campaigns and achieving their goals using established propaganda methods.

It is important to analyse how the two main sides of the EU Campaign 2016 managed their social media during their campaigns for and against Brexit. The group supporting Brexit organised their platform called Vote Leave, while the opposing team was named Stronger in Europe. Stronger in Europe did not launch its campaign as a united group, so it was divided into two main forces: the Labour Party and the Conservative Party. On the Leave side, a united campaign was created with only one official Facebook page, Vote Leave, and on the Remain side, there was no specific page made for this referendum. Therefore, this dissertation focuses on the main parties that officially supported the UK to stay in the EU, the Labour Party and the Conservative Party. It is worth noting that the Conservative Party and the Unionists from Northern Ireland are represented together on social media, forming one page called Conservatives. Furthermore, the Conservative Party did not share content regarding the Brexit campaign. Instead, they were sharing its policies from the Conservative government, which was ruling the British Parliament at the time, so the Conservatives were pulled out of this research because it does not matter for the investigation of this work. Therefore, the Remain campaign had the Labour Party, which was the one that developed a social media campaign and was posting content on its platform. For this dissertation, analysis of Facebook posts from the Vote Leave page representing the Leave side and the Labour Party page on behalf of the Remain group were chosen.

The public sphere and public opinion are two essential terms for this study, so, they must be elucidated. Habermas (1989, p. 11) in *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* describes the word "public" as a reference to something that is usually shared among people and, save a few exceptions, anyone can make use of. Otherwise, a thing that is restricted or not open to the population is called "private". "Public" represents groups, whereas "private" refers to individuals. These two words, public and private, must be treated as representations of interest. However, regarding the public, there are two definitions for this literature: the public sphere and public opinion. These definitions are important because the main source of data comes from social media. The boom of social media is similar to the rise of newspapers in the eighteenth century among the working class, which Habermas (1989, p.20) called the public sphere. Thus, the public sphere is represented through the media, while public opinion refers to the audience.

The main themes in this analysis include the political campaign as a key national event, social media as a public sphere, propaganda rooted in nationalist sentiment, voter persuasion, and Facebook as the modern communication vehicle, which has attracted attention from scholars and journalists. Therefore, this research will evaluate a political campaign rooted one of the purest essences of human nature, politics. It constitutes the main system in society due to its power to shape lives through policies. Politics is the driving force of society, capable of either worsening or improving a community. Whether individuals like or dislike politics, it will continue to exist for better or worse. As Aristotle (1991, p. 1987) stated, man is by nature a political animal. Moreover, in 2016, 95% of adults with social media accounts had a Facebook profile, according to *Adults' Media Use and Attitudes* (OFCOM, 2017, p.54). It was the largest platform among the British public at that time. It demonstrates the significance of social media among voters for Brexit.

One of the most significant changes to the public sphere that has influenced politics is social media. As Facebook was the most popular social media platform among internet users in 2016, and both the Leave and Remain sides engaged with it, it is necessary to study their political campaigns in this expanded public sphere shaped by technological advancements. This new platform has impacted daily life and important moments, such as a national campaign that determines a country's future. In the UK in 2016, Facebook was the main platform used to gather votes for the Referendum. Therefore, it is crucial to examine how the two main sides operated. This dissertation works with content analysis employing quantitative and qualitative methods to assess how Vote Leave and the Labour Party used Facebook to influence voters on Brexit.

Chapter 2
Literature Review

Imagine people living in a cavernous cell down under the ground; at the far end of the cave, a long way off, there's an entrance open to the outside world.

(Plato, *Republic,* 2008, p. 240)

2.1 Overview

In the classic *Republic,* Plato induces the reader to wonder about the horizons that surround them through the dialogue between Socrates and Glaucon regarding *The Cave.* This literature review aims to study texts written before seeing others' perspectives, which have been produced and used to open minds to wider thoughts, which will be referenced in this dissertation. There is an extensive range of publications regarding political campaigns, social media and public opinion. However, this focuses on how Facebook was used to influence the British public to vote in the Brexit Referendum. Also, it examines the United Kingdom's societal structure through its bourgeois sphere, maintaining nationalism as a political agenda.

Theories, such as *Politics* based on Aristotle, are necessary in the enhancement process of this research. For example; *The Transformation of Public Sphere* by Jürgen Habermas to reflect the advent of the bourgeois class and the use of media by them; *Marketing* Classified by Robert Ormrod as a new setting in modern politics to build strategy for the development of a campaign; *Propaganda* by Edward Bernays on how it transforms culture and changes minds; *Persuasion*, according to Garth Jowett and Victoria O'Donnell, to find and develop tactics in order to convince people; *Public Opinion* by Walter Lippmann to understand how behaviour changes according to the circumstances of time and place; and *Semiotic* designed by Ferdinand Saussure to classify the meaning of the posts on texts, photos and videos.

Social media platforms were used as mass media tools to persuade people; however, the tactics employed seem similar to traditional methods, which political campaigns previously used on television and radio. Propaganda, as the primary strategy to influence the audience's psyche, remains significant on social media. It provided a setting to sway those unsure of their stance. Notably, propaganda on Facebook has greater influence due to the information about registered users. Social media often employs chaos as a tactic because algorithms favour messages that generate more reactions. These responses typically stem from messages that provoke hatred and outrage among users. Barneys (2005, p. 39) explains that propaganda was designed to organise chaos, making Facebook an ideal platform for the Leave and Remain campaigns to operate on. Nonetheless, understanding why both sides utilised this space is key, and it appears the side that emerged victorious applied traditional propaganda methods within this new platform and succeeded.

2.2 Previous Studies on How Social Media Was Used in the Brexit Referendum

2.2.1 EU Referendum Analysis 2016: Media, Voters and the Campaign

One of the studies referencing the Referendum analysed the impact of social media on Brexit by Polonski (2016, pp. 94-95), a network scientist at the University of Oxford. He studied voters' behaviour from Instagram, capturing 30 weeks of data, and analysing over 18k users and 30k posts. Looking at those numbers, he found that the Leave group was five times more active than Remain. On average, Instagram posts from the members of the Leave camp received 26% more likes and 20% more comments, while the most active users in the dataset were also all campaigning for Leave. Moreover, the most popular hashtags among social media users belonged to the Brexit public, which were: #Brexit, #Beleave and #VoteLeave. In the online space, Leave was able to create an atmosphere in which they presented themselves as having an advantage and, perhaps, it attracted many more voters to back Brexit.

For Polonski, the way messages were shared on Instagram by Leave helped them to gain more followers for their campaign. Regarding messages, they were more intuitive, simple, and emotional. On social media, messages should look like those which the Leave group shared with their users: intuitive, based on feelings touching people through their beliefs and angers; simple, easy to understand without making the public think too much and become disengaged; and emotional, encouraging people to agree with and share its content to a wider audience. These types of factors are the best at reaching more people on the digital web.

Scientists argue that, as the Leave campaign focused its strategy on the digital world, maybe it built a false sense in the Remain camp that the perception of wide-ranging public support would only be on the internet. Hence, Remain believed that on the ground, where people live their real lives, would be different. This perception of Leave supporters on opposite sides led to a pro-EU confidence, resulting in less action through the internet. They believed that British people would never vote for being outside of the European Union, for those who were in favour did not make sense, however, a political campaign is a war of words, where those who have the best strategy to convince the public will be the winner.

2.2.2 Cambridge Analytica, Data and Algorithm

The Cambridge Analytica scandal is well known due to Carole Cadwalladr, an investigative journalist for *The Guardian*. She started her investigation looking into the connection between powerful people in the United Kingdom and the United States. Cambridge Analytica was a company founded in 2014. It describes itself as an enterprise that uses data to change audience behaviour. Alexander Nix was its CEO, Steve Bannon was its vice-president, Robert Mercer was its hedge fund billionaire, and Aleksandr Kogan is a professor of data at Cambridge University, who is the main character in collecting data for this company. Data is hugely important for a state, a party or a politician to apply in their campaigns and use to describe people's behaviour, which is an important tool for planning a campaign and targeting them. Cadwalladr says that whoever owns this data owns the future.

The scheme worked due to an app built by Aleksandr Kogan, which paid people to participate in a survey on Facebook through his app. While Facebook's users were answering questions, this app was stealing their data for Cambridge Analytica, even though the app harvested data from those users' Facebook friends. Cambridge Analytica picked users' Facebook data to identify target voters and then designed targeted messaging to influence public opinion about Brexit. Cambridge Analytica sent messages to users according to its objective until it felt that would be enough to change users' minds. The data helped design the type of Facebook user for spreading messages, which would be more suitable for changing minds. Facebook did not apply the survey, however, it was an instrument used for doing that through Cambridge Analytica. Data must be protected by whoever owns it, and Facebook did not fulfil its duty in that. For instance, they collected data such as magazine subscriptions, trips, phone numbers, email addresses, and even people's addresses. Furthermore, they collected personality reactions, likes and comments on Facebook posts and what they were posting there too.

This theory has been headlining news in *The Guardian* and mainstream media since it was revealed. Also, it was a source for the documentary *The Great Hack*, where Cadwalladr was one of its characters. Theories regarding a huge political campaign, such as the Brexit Referendum, have been coming out. Data and algorithms are important because they are part of a complex process invented by social media platforms such as Facebook. Thus, it was an important detail unveiled about a scheme that influenced the public during the election process through social media. This phenomenon was reflected in depth by Carole Cadwalladr, in *The Great Hack* (2019): "These platforms, which were

created to connect us, have been weapons, and it's impossible to know what is what because it's happening on exactly the same platforms that we chat to our friends or share baby photos. Nothing is what it seems." It was not a data company or an algorithm company, it was a full service, which worked as a propaganda machine.

2.2.3 Facebook as the Main Problem in Democratic Elections

Facebook is considered a challenge for some scholars, such as Siva Vaidhyanathan. He argues (2018, p. 161) that the problem regarding free and fair elections is not companies that use data from Facebook. He states that since this digital platform found a way to be its source of profit through advertising, it has been selling spaces for all types of propaganda for political campaigns in many countries worldwide. Facebook is not a source for entrepreneurs, such as Cambridge Analytica, to take advantage of and make money because its strategy is to make profits for itself. Facebook became aware of the path to influence politics and used it to benefit itself, instead of leaving others to do it themselves.

Vaidhyanathan (2018, p. 166) declares that Cambridge Analytica, which used data from Facebook to target electors, was not the problem, the real trouble for democracy and politics is Facebook because it continues to exist and influence elections across the world without punishment. Facebook has become the new consultant for politicians due to the specific target of its members who are there sharing their details and culture, even their choices about gender, ethnicity, religion, and sexual orientation. Facebook knows the characteristics of its audience better than it understands public relations agencies. He classifies (2018, pp. 4-30) his criticisms regarding Facebook in stages: pollution, refers to how Facebook works with feelings, for example, love and hate; motivation and deliberation, explains how Facebook is a sphere where its structure was designed to connect people for a purpose; the age of sophistry, draws a parallel with the sophists who were intellectuals in Ancient Greece that worked with rhetoric; the great scramble, which shows Facebook as a huge stage where people try to show up their ideologies, their feelings, their politics and their lives; how to think about media and technology, which reflects that media is available because of technology. As technology has become more sophisticated, the media has become more complex as well; the miseducation of Mark Zuckerberg describes that there is a difference between education and miseducation; and confessions,

the author admitted that he was addicted to Facebook and he understood how easy it is for people to get into it.

This theory is committed to proving that social media has transformed the minds of voters and created an issue in society. The book's contents are: The Problem with Facebook is Facebook; The Pleasure Machine; The Surveillance Machine; The Attention Machine; The Benevolence Machine; The Protest Machine; The Politics Machine; The Disinformation Machine; and The Nonsense Machine. As can be seen, the author describes Facebook as a machine that serves the desires of its public. The contribution of this work is the focus on Facebook as an object that acts in various ways.

2.3 Critical Assessment of the Literature

The literature regarding Brexit has been expanding since 2016. Studies to understand the reasons which make Britons vote against their continent are released by academics and journalists. Plenty of them blame social media, some blame the campaign itself, and others justify the distance between the Remain group and the grassroots movement. As this dissertation aims to find out how both sides utilised Facebook, it will focus on theories that have evolved around this referendum and social media.

Polonski (2016) analyses the results in this matter in his article *EU Referendum Analysis 2016: Media, Voters and the Campaign*. It analyses the campaign on Instagram with in-depth criticism of how the Leave campaign worked better on social media. Its analysis focuses on the way the message was released through Instagram, showing its tactics and forms. Moreover, he observes social media as a place where people do not go in-depth, he believes that the Leave group worked with straightforward messages to gain viewers and convince them to share the content with more people. However, it is not the best choice to analyse social media at this time because Facebook was the most popular platform in the UK in 2016, according to OXFAM data. Its research conducted on Instagram was important to demonstrate how the Leave group resonated with people's minds through its simple and emotional messages.

The *Data and the Algorithm* investigated by *The Guardian* is a huge work from extensive investigative journalism. It developed an essential discussion about the limits of social media in political campaign

and their rights to use data from their members for political purposes. As social media obtains details and feelings from their users, they know better than a poll company how a person tends to vote for a candidate or not. This issue regarding advertising through these platforms was highlighted, but nothing happened to Facebook, which is still advertising and being used in politics on both sides, left and right. The main importance of this finding was the reflection on the right of privacy of the people on these digital platforms.

The book *Anti-Social Media* by Vaidhyanathan is a reference to know better about Facebook through a historical and sociological perspective and to be aware of its methods to conquer users and make a profit from it. He enlightens the most popular social media in the world and calls readers to a critical look at it. He did a sociological analysis of human beings' behaviour, explaining how easy it is to be on social media in order to avoid real life problems. He shows the motives of people staying on Facebook and being delighted by something that can be harmful to them. Also, he (2018, p. 180) is more apocalyptic in regards to Facebook. He is convinced that democracy has been assaulted on a worldwide scale by the internet. He affirms that scholars at the Oxford Internet Institute have tracked armies of volunteers and "bots", or automated profiles, as they move propaganda across Facebook and Twitter.

All these theories above are important for this literature and criticisms about the conditions in which social media has been working in political campaigns. Academics and journalists have been investigating to understand what is going on due to the power of social media. Each of them with theories and assignments to achieve a common goal, keeping democracy working. A complex subject like that needs more investigation to explain from different angles and better understand how these digital corporations, such as Facebook, have been operating in elections using classic tools in the new platform of communication, where people are starting to be more aware of their powerful role through this complex system.

2.4 How this Dissertation Differs from Previous Studies

This dissertation differs from previous studies in many aspects. First, this analysis works on social media, looking at one official Facebook page from both sides, Vote Leave and the Labour Party. Secondly, this investigation works on the most popular social media in Britain at the time. Third, this

research will bring canon theories written for the mainstream and apply them in a new platform called Facebook. This new research aims to understand how a political campaign was managed on social media using traditional tactics that came from the mainstream, such as propaganda, persuasion and semiotics.

Numerous studies are focusing on social media; however, they do not address some issues, such as how both sides influence public opinion. Theories are based on hypotheses, hypotheses are supported by actions, and actions can prove theories. This dissertation works with the hypothesis that Leave used social media more effectively than Remain did. From this hypothesis, theories are developed to explain the actions and tactics. Propaganda is one of the most important tools for a political campaign, yet studies have not examined its role in Brexit. Additionally, the traditional model of calling people to stay or join comes from classical persuasion, but it was not investigated in this Referendum. These historical tools were used to persuade the British public, shaping public opinion during the campaign.

Bernays (2005, pp. 9-10) explains that propaganda is a method created by Pope Gregory XV for the Catholic Church in the 17th century to spread Catholicism across the New World and to contain Protestantism at the time. Even a department responsible for that was created, the Office for the Propaganda of the Faith (*Congregatio de propaganda fide).* Then, propaganda was incorporated into politics through the development of the public sphere. It has to be highlighted that propaganda is not considered random, it must be planned before being implemented. One action proves that the Remain group was disorganised due to a lack of union, which could be called Vote Remain, as the Leave side did Vote Leave. One part of Remain, the Conservative Party, did not do propaganda, and the other, the Labour Party, worked on its own as it was in a different camp, even though both were in the same field.

Another topic that this dissertation looks at is public opinion, perhaps the most important theme in society to consider in a political campaign. Public opinion is the feelings of people and must be heard by those who want to gain voters. The most important issue which was shown during the campaign was immigration. The Labour Party was silent instead of showing the benefits of immigration for a country like Britain. When somebody is attacked and does not defend themselves, the probability is to fail and lose the battle, and a political campaign is a war of words with opinions, perspectives, and persuasion.

Persuasion is another topic that this dissertation differs from others. Since Ancient Greece, it has been an art to convince the oppositions. The sophists worked very well, the Romans kept it and, in the contemporaneous politics, it was still strong enough to change minds. Persuasion is a way to talk to the public without hurting them and to try to be on their side, even the politicians are not. Persuasion can convince people that their argument is the best for those people who are in focus.

This research could say that it is analysing Leave and Remain on Facebook pages because, when an opinion poll is done, it does not interview the whole population, but a sample. Hence, as an institution of opinion polls such as IPSOS, this research has chosen two Facebook pages from both sides, Vote Leave and Labour Party, to be studied and aims for a result that represents the political campaign on the Facebook platform regarding the European Union Referendum 2016. Thus, it is an unpublished theme.

2.5 Politics as Simple Compound

Aristotle (1991, p. 1986) states that in politics, societal problems should be tackled in parts, making it easier to achieve the whole. Politics is a war of words, and a war is won by fighting many battles. To be the winner, each battle should be fought separately, one after the other, until victory is achieved. It is the thought of Aristotle, who is considered one of the greatest philosophers of all time, and he was the tutor of Alexander of Macedonia; therefore, he understands the art of politics to gain power and govern. Studying the Labour Party campaign on Facebook, it shows that Labour was fighting to win two political wars: the EU Referendum and the local elections. Even battles should be fought in parts, Labour decided to fight for two wars, something out of control in politics. This indicates a lack of strategy and working in parts. Whilst the Vote Leave Facebook campaign was sharing content exclusively related to Brexit, it was fighting just one war.

The Greek thinker (1991, p. 1986) goes so far as to defend that, in politics, the compound should be solved in a simple manner. He agrees that politics itself is complex, and it is the role of politicians to make it easier to work and realise their goals. A complex issue for the Britons during the campaign was seeing the Conservative Party and Labour Party defending Brexit. It is not a simple agreement between the historic rivals in British politics. Moreover, the Remain side wanted to be everywhere, tackling all

issues at once. The Labour Party aimed to criticise Conservative Party policies while campaigning for the UK to stay in the EU. The Conservative Party continued its usual social work without explicitly defending the EU, while David Cameron, leader of the Conservative Party and Prime Minister, was advocating for that. It is complex for the public. Thus, it allowed the Leave side to build a simple message in which the establishment was together against the people.

Aristotle (1991, p. 1988) says that human beings have a social instinct, and he created the state for their benefit. Furthermore, he argues that a society separated from law and justice can be the worst creation of nature. It is important to reflect on posts that were shared on Facebook without a source to verify, which means that when there is no law or surveillance, human beings can do what they want. For instance, Vote Leave Facebook was posting a banner stating that £ 350 million per week was being sent from the UK to the EU, which could be spent on the NHS. It was a lie because the campaign never proved the source. Nevertheless, the Labour Party Facebook did not go after the Leave to unveil this disinformation. Social media is an example of Aristotle's theory that humans need a law or surveillance to keep society working well for everyone.

2.5 Social Media as a Public Sphere

The transformation of the public sphere came together with the rise of the bourgeoisie. This new social class arose while mercantilism was falling and capitalism was rising, transforming the stratification of modern society. Habermas (1989, p. 26) wrote about the public sphere's transformation with the advent of capitalism in Western societies such as Great Britain. This happened because of the increased power of the bourgeois and literacy among the people, resulting in the spread of journals in different societies. In the Middle Ages, literacy was concentrated among the Church and the nobles. In the eighteenth century, while the bourgeois was spreading, public opinion started to be transformed due to newspapers. The press was among the population as a public sphere to discuss their problems and resulting in changing minds.

Habermas (1989, p. 23) classifies those who were really 'burghers' in the bourgeois sphere in the historical event. He divides the people into the working class, scholars and capitalists (merchants, bankers, entrepreneurs, and manufacturers). The capitalists dominated the public sphere through the

press. The conservative description of the bourgeois class refers to the wealthy because those who hold power through the capitalist system influenced public opinion and , as a result, they took part in the government too. Newspapers were created to discuss politics by scholars in the early development of the bourgeois public sphere, and were absorbed by businessmen. Facebook was invented at the university as a community for students to interact with each other in an academic setting, and then became a company only for profit and power. That can prove that capitalism is a system that absolves its opponents, instead of eliminating them for its benefit.

The transformation of the public sphere came with the transformation of communication throughout the last few centuries, which has become more complex to manage. Traditional media, such as newspapers and television, influenced people; nowadays, social media is trying to overcome it. However, the hierarchy between them is the main difference. For instance, traditional media share content from the top to the bottom, like a pyramid. Meanwhile, social media spreads its products like it was at an agora in Ancient Greece, arising from multiple parts, and its design creates an idea of more freedom on these new platforms. In the era of social media, the public sphere has changed its operation model. Big tech companies such as Facebook, Instagram, and X have become popular with new audiences. Moreover, these platforms try to show up as a democratic space for people to interact with them. This sentiment of democracy can be wrong, as people are influenced to see what they want due to algorithms. However, this action does not change social media as a public sphere where people are discussing issues about their lives and politics.

The idea of a place to debate politics or other subjects which matter to human beings was developed in Greek city-states, by the ancestors of Western philosophy, with Socrates emerging and so on. Also, it was in Greece where democracy was created through the public sphere, in a place called the Agora in Athens. At the time, discussions were face to face, a sphere more real than what is seen nowadays, the virtual sphere. Both are spheres with their merits, however, the problem is that the digital sphere among populations right now is controlled by robots, and it has an owner, such as Mark Zuckerberg, with his personal interests. Hence, it is a place where people build groups and interact between them without listening to different visions. For instance, the platforms which have been analysed in this dissertation are pages that only post their ideas about national issues in Britain, such as Brexit. It is important to remember that the bourgeois class is still in command of politics and the means of production, so the new transformation of the public sphere is happening by the bourgeois class again through social media.

2.6 Propaganda and Nationalism

Jowett and O'Donnell (2019, p. 6) define propaganda as a deliberate, systematic process to shape perceptions, manipulate minds, and configure behaviours to reach the response desired by the propagandist. It is deliberate because it is planned with intention and premeditation, all types of prospectives are analysed and the most effective method to elevate an ideology or keep an advantage is put into practice; systematic due to the organization through its department among governs and companies, they create departments to precise and organised study, analyse and create propaganda to their public; shape perceptions is the mechanism used to communicate to the audience such as images and texts.

Tactics of propaganda were used on the Vote Leave and Labour Party Facebook pages. The method could be seen as simple, however, it is complex because it needs to show the audience that each post matters to them. To understand wild propaganda and how it has worked since the last century, Edward Bernays (2005, p. 47) explains the methods by which this machine of changing minds works. He states that when the revolutions happened in Europe around the Enlightenment, the revolutionaries promised to get power from the king and the aristocracy to give it to the bourgeois, the people. At the time, only the clergy and the nobles were educated. Literacy was introduced through public schools, aiming to educate the common people to control their environment. It was a type of propaganda which made promises to gain public opinion. In politics, parties work like that, making promises to voters. Look at the revolutions in England and France that happened due to promises of a better life for all who were miserable and suffering from the injustice coming from the king.

In 2016, the British people were unsatisfied with the government, meanwhile, a conservative movement was growing in politics, blaming the European Union as the main cause of the weak economy in the United Kingdom. Looking at the Leave page on Facebook, its campaign was based on showing that all problems in Britain were the EU's fault. For instance, the issue about the NHS came from the quantity of immigrant arrivals, who were overwhelming the public service, and those people were coming to the UK due to the EU laws, so for them, the solution was to build its own system.

History shows nationalism as a method used by England to maintain its power and influence over its countries in the United Kingdom. In the Brexit campaign, the Leave group played nationalism as a sentimental role among the population. Edward Barney (2005, p. 113-117) helps to understand the structure of the propaganda mechanism in political issues, designing its framework such as budget, spending money, emotions, candidate x programme, interesting group, and platform, which is the main theme of this dissertation. Social media platforms like Facebook served as a device for the British Leave team to target public opinion by boosting the sentiment of nationalism: pride in being British.

2.7 Persuasion Through Brexit Voters

Jowett and O'Donnell (2019, p. 31) classify persuasion as interactive and necessary for both sides, the persuader and the persuaded, due to its transactional interest. The persuader is the propagandist responsible for planning tactics such as well well-written speech to persuade the persuaded. Persuasion is a component of propaganda; it is the meaning of the message that is being transmitted through the messenger. Persuasion can be understood as the content inside a text, a photo or a video.

Persuasion aims to convince the persuaded that the goal is a component which benefits all sides, through forms such as propaganda and public relations. For instance, in Brexit, the Leave side was making propaganda and sharing the advantages for all British people, the lower, middle and upper classes. Meanwhile, the Labour Party were directed to talk to the people who are more familiar with Labour policies.

The process of persuasion is interactive between the persuader and the persuaded. Both of them want to fulfil their wishes regarding something that is important. For example, in political campaigns, a voter wants the waiting time in the hospital to be solved, and the politician wants to convince him that his party will fix this problem. It looks like a vote of confidence in somebody because there is no selling in this transaction. The Conservative Party and the Labour Party have been in power before the Referendum, so, this trust between electors and these party would be less than those people who were making componing a new group called Leave. Furthermore, the tactics used by the Leave side to persuade people is part of a qualitative study that can show the reasons behind the numbers in Brexit.

Chomsky (1997, pp. 10-11) states that the media, through the powerful and intellectual elite, plays a role in society by providing entertainment and information. It transmits values, beliefs, and behaviours that the public should follow as part of the social structure. Nevertheless, the analogy is that social media creates an environment where people are part of a larger community worldwide, yet it also inherently focuses on their own prejudices and nationalism. Ultimately, Facebook, as a public sphere, functions as a tool to encode messages of nationalism for the British audience.

2.8 Public Opinion as It is

Public opinion is the mindset of a society, the thoughts of the people, the beliefs of human beings, the values of the audience, and the opinion of the public. This is the most complex system, which can be changed by working in the long process through propaganda tactics. However, the propaganda that can overcome public opinion cannot appear as manipulative or as a trick. Public opinion is formed throughout the generations with family, friends, communities, and government. It belongs to all societies across human History. Each epoch, each public opinion, but its presence is always in people's minds.

Public opinion can be volatile and is subject to propaganda and persuasion. People in the 1990s never would have thought that Britain would leave the European Union. It proves that in a political campaign, the most important thing is public opinion. Lippmann (2004, p. 107) defines it as the collective soul, national mind, and a spirit of the age that touch emotions through happiness and hatred. It can be interpreted as something that can be sophisticated and improved or simple and worse. The question is how this general mindset is built and who influences this construction. If it looks at the history of humanity, as history is told by those who win the war, the influence is made by those who have money, prestigious and belong to a class that is dominant.

In electoral time, parties prepared to go out and read what is going on above the human body. As Plato thought, perfection is in the idea of plans because reality is imperfect. So, to convince people that the neighbourhood can be better, the community can progress more, and the nation can develop in advance, and politicians should understand people's minds. To get through this, some behaviour can reveal public opinion, and a serious political campaign might work from this observation. For instance,

in Western society during the Medieval Age, the public opinion agreed that the king was a leader of a kingdom because the Divine had chosen him to be in charge of his population. In the Modern Age, public opinion validates the idea that to represent the country, somebody must be elected by the people and become the president of the nation.

People go where their minds think they must go, and voters elect who their minds think should be their governments. That is the point a political campaign must look into deeply and decide step by step what propaganda is right to target those who need to be on their side. Usually, human beings tend to be with those who say that they are with them. Moreover, voters like to be heard by the parties, even though they cannot fully trust them. History shows that, throughout time, institutions such as churches were responsible for shaping public opinion. However, it has changed. Media is a powerful influencer in society, and public opinion has been formed by big tech like Facebook.

2.9 The Research Question

The current academic works, referenced during the course of this chapter, have contributed significantly to the research question that was revealed through the investigation. They are essential to reflecting on the media in general, digital media in particular. These theories reveal a lack of opportunities to analyse a historic event, such as a referendum in Europe. Authors cited in this dissertation are the light in the dark path to clarify complex questions to reach the aim of this writing.

The *Adults' Media and Attitudes Report 2017* by OFCOM affirms that, in 2016, Facebook was used by 95% of internet users. This data is the main argument to defend the investigation on this platform instead of others like Instagram or X. This research is searching for answers that, perhaps, have not been explored yet for many reasons. One of these answers might be the changing of policy in the parties and their distance from the voters. As can be seen, the team that supported Brexit was made up of people who were angry with Labour and the Conservatives. Proof of that is the creation of Reform UK by Nigel Farage, one of the main leaders for Brexit.

IPSOS polls revealed data that can be connected to posts from both groups during the campaign. Research that can be linked to the themes shared on Facebook by the Vote Leave and Labour Party.

For instance, it might not be a coincidence that the most important issue for the British people in 2016 was immigration, and the majority of posts on Facebook by Vote Leave were about it. Coincidences can happen in life and politics as well. However, in a campaign, the chance that it is just a coincidence is lower. As this is scientific research, it must look at what does happen and not what could happen.

This dissertation will endeavour to follow ethical principles clarified by Tiidenberg (2017, p. 466-479), who wrote about the significance of private and public on Facebook. So, it meant that a page such as the Vote Leave can be studied with ethics due to it being a public online social media space built to share materials about public interest, the Referendum 2016 in the UK. Furthermore, the additional relationship created between a researcher and a participant is not an issue here because this work is accessed from the database, Vote Leave and Labour Party Facebook online addresses.

Based on the academic theorists' viewpoints and data from institutions such as OFCOM and IPSOS, this dissertation aims to answer the question proposed in this work. Conducting content analysis, specifically on Facebook, this project will analyse the winning group's use of this platform to change the public sphere to gain voters and achieve success in its political Brexit campaign. The overarching purpose of this research is to examine how the Leave bloc represented by Vote Leave page and Labour Party page on behalf of Remain bloc worked on Facebook to achieve their goals with Brexit. This purpose will answer the following question:

How was Facebook used to obtain votes in the Brexit Referendum 2016?

Chapter 3
Methodology

... As in other departments of science, so in politics, the compound should always be resolved into the simple elements or least parts of the whole...

(Aristotle, *Politics*, 1991, p. 1986)

3.1 Outline

This research follows Aristotle's statement (1991, p. 1986) that in science, the whole should be divided into parts to figure out how to understand its complexity, such as a political campaign in this dissertation. This work must be classified into two types of content analysis, quantitative and qualitative. These methods of analysis will be essential in finding an answer to this proposal. Newman (1997, pp. 272–273) argues that content analysis is a technique for analysing, collecting data, and understanding the meaning of words, pictures, symbols, and messages communicated through media. As this dissertation aims to discover how social media influenced Brexit through its posts, it makes sense to go deeper using content analyses to prove how Vote Leave and the Labour Party worked through their posts on Facebook.

Both a quantitative and qualitative content analysis will be conducted in this dissertation. A quantitative analysis will be carried out using the two main Facebook accounts of the two groups, Vote Leave and Labour Party, to determine how many posts were published over a six-month period before Referendum Day. These accounts will be categorised into themes, such as the number of posts about immigration and healthcare. This approach will help identify the most prominent topic in the Brexit discussion. MacNamara (2005, p. 4) describes the role of quantitative content analysis as an activity to collect data about media content, including topics or issues, volume of mentions, messages identified by keywords in context (KWIC), circulation of the media (audience reach), and frequency. Therefore, analysing the Facebook pages of Vote Leave and Labour Party quantitatively can reveal their main themes by the volume of posts, providing a scientific understanding of their campaigns.

The official Facebook pages of the Leave and Remain campaigns were selected because they are the official platforms where content began to circulate in the media. When an opinion poll about an election is conducted by an organisation such as IPSOS, it does not survey everyone, but works with a sample of the population to gather data and then share the results. Hence, this research chose the Labour Party from the Remain side as its sample because the Conservative Party did not share content during the EU campaign, and Vote Leave from the Leave side. On the Remain side, the Conservative Party and Labour Party were regarded as the most significant due to their number of Members of Parliament. There are 650 Members of Parliament in the House of Commons elected by the public. In

2016, the Conservatives held 304 and Labour 215; together, they accounted for 519. The main criteria for selecting these parties was their number of Members of Parliament.

3.2 Quantitative Analysis

MacNamara (2005, p. 4) defines quantitative content analysis as collecting data belonging to the media, looking for numbers such as how many times a specific topic was shared, the volume of mentions, and the frequency of themes. The quantitative analysis does not mean the effect of the frequency and the measure of the impact on the audience; it is advised to use another method to get the meaning, the qualitative research, to support it. MacNamara (2005, p. 5) affirms that quantitative content analysis is considered the most scientific method due to its work with numbers. For instance, the quantity of posts that the Vote Leave and Labour Party shared during a period of six months will be analysed, as well as how many times a specific issue was mentioned more times than another one. This part of the research is focused on "account for how many times", accountability, and not "why how many times", significance. As quantitative analysis does not mean the frequency and the measure of the impact on the audience, it is advised to use another method to get the meaning, the qualitative analysis, to support it.

3.3 Qualitative Analysis

MacNamara (2005, p. 5) argues that a qualitative analysis examines the relationship between the media product and its most likely audience, aiming to uncover the true meaning of the message. A qualitative content analysis explores the meaning behind the account derived from the quantitative analysis. It is important to understand the context in which the messages were shared, the reasons why some pictures were posted, and the motives that led some texts to be written to convince the voters. Furthermore, to interpret it effectively, the analysis should consider the triangle of public, media, and context. For instance, qualitative analysis helps in the understanding of the reasons why a campaign worked closer to the manual of marketing using some specific tactics through propaganda and methods of persuasion, while the other side did not. Qualitative analysis is a tool that reveals what the propaganda was omitting and what it was emphasising. This allows one to see what the propaganda was pretending to be or to conceal the truth. This can only be determined through

quantitative analysis. For this research, it is essential to employ both methods, qualitative and quantitative, to verify whether the results of the data are supported by these theories, or if there is a conflict between them instead.

3.4 Definition of the Research Problem

The media very often juxtaposes the Brexit Referendum and social media. There are a plethora of articles in the public domain which blame social media for the Leave victory. This theme frequently provokes a hot debate between the liberals and the nationalists in Britain. This often results in stereotypes being made of those who voted for Remain, as being liberal and progressive, and of those who voted for Leave, as being nationalists and even xenophobic or racist. In this vein, this dissertation investigates this subject in the landscape of the referendum with a focus on the medium of social media represented by Facebook. Thus, this research is defined by a single question: How was Facebook used to influence votes in the Brexit referendum? Particularly, this research aims to investigate if the campaign made by both sides, Leave and Remain, is undermined by the mainstream media, which means whether Remain lost because Facebook was mainly responsible or if Leave did a better campaign in the digital world. Through the method of content analysis, it will be possible to conduct a thorough study of the material produced by Vote Leave and the Labour Party shared on their platforms, concerning their campaigns.

3.5 Selection of the Media and Sample

Before constructing a coding schedule, a number of metrics must be defined. To prepare the metrics and timetable for this research, two main sources of data regarding the British public were used, IPSOS and OFCOM. These institutions offered content such as polls that can connect with the study due to the results presented in the election. IPSOS, regarding public opinion themes such as health care and immigration, and OFCOM about the main media consumed by the voters in 2016. The amalgamation of these two databases is of high value for this work.

It was chosen to document the posts of the Vote Leave and Labour Party campaigns on Facebook because it is an important chapter in world history. The two main sides of this campaign are comprised

of their two main social media pages. Two of the primary focuses of the analysis were to show both sides' behaviours and provide a more balanced viewpoint. Given the transformation of the public sphere, social media has become an important source of content consumed and content produced. Utilising the Facebook pages of each party enhances the results of this work and helps to better understand contemporary politics.

The analysis focuses on the six months before the elections. The dates were chosen because they are close to election day, when the politicians work harder and consequently produce more content to be shared on their media. The six months were arranged as follows:

Month 1: January 1 – 31 2016 | Month 2: February 1 – 29 2016
Month 3: March 1 – 31 2016 | Month 4: April 1 – 30 2016
Month 5: May 1 – 31 2016 | Month 6: June 1 – 23 2016

3.6 Classification of Analytical Categories

3.6.1 Definition of Social Media

In the introduction of *Social Media: Communication, Sharing and Visibility* Graham Meikle divides communication into two types to classify social media. For him, public communication was once described as the media, including newspapers, magazines, television, radio, music, cinema, video games, and books. All of them were made for the public without their interference or interaction. Whereas personal communication refers to phone calls, emails, text messages, and letters. These are forms of communication between friends, lovers, colleagues, and families. Until now, the separation between public communication, the media, and personal communication, the platform, has been evident as these technologies have been used to share private content with close people. Social media changes this definition because the way it operates is new, putting together the public and personal communication and leaving the public sans discernment about public and private.

Meikle (2016, pp. 4-7) says that social media is a platform provided by the public. The audience creates content, such as images, and posts it. Then, people respond to the shared content, and the poster reacts to them. During the process of posting and feedback, everything is carried out by social media users. It concludes that social media does not produce anything in an exchange to permit people to use it. It is a space where people leave their data, which is utilised by the platform to generate profits. It is also a sphere where people build networks through connecting with friends, colleagues, and sometimes with people they have never met, as suggested by the platform. It is entirely different from traditional media like BBC or RTE, which produce their content with professional staff, and the audience consumes their products without participating directly in the production process. Thus, social media is a networked database platform that combines public and personal communication.

Upon examination of the selected timetable regarding the posts on Facebook, the content was classified based on issues that British people were interested in at the time. Posts are all types of messages, such as a photo with a text, a video with a text or just a text itself is a post as well. Standardised categories were created to obtain more classification about the most important topics for the election. Some of these topics were based on IPSOS polls, as it is an institution that has worked with the public for a long time, and other categories were created by this research as a necessity due to their absence in the IPSOS data. The patterned topics classified in this analysis are as follows:

3.6.2 Promotional team

It shows people working for the campaign daily on the streets or visiting people's homes door-to-door. Additionally, there are posts asking people to sign up for the campaign and purchase souvenirs related to it to support the cause economically.

3.6.3 Immigration

There are two types of posts, the first one regarding the Vote Leave Facebook page presents migration as negative for Britain, usually showing issues that the British have and linking them to immigration as the cause of these issues. The second one is from the Labour Party, which appears positively, usually

linking it to the economic trade, such as the necessity for workers to keep the growth of the British economy.

3.6.4 Economy

It is about jobs, workers' rights, wages and industry. Vote Leave presents the stagnation of the economy and unemployment as the consequence of the European Union and immigration. The Labour Party tries to show that there is no high unemployment and says that the EU is important for the development of the economy.

3.6.5 Health (NHS)

The Vote Leave portrays long waiting times in hospitals, and the lack of doctors as a consequence of the high number of immigrants. The Labour Party worked in illustrating the importance of workers from abroad in this area; however, in many fewer posts, during the six months of the campaign, Labour posted about this topic just in May and June**.**

3.6.6 Education

The Vote Leave manifested the problem of full schools due to the high numbers of immigrants in the British Educational System. Whilst the Labour Party throughout the six months of the campaign did not mention anything about education, linking it to Brexit and the EU.

3.6.7 Security

Vote Leave exposes the unsafe atmosphere and violence as a problem that comes from the uncontrolled border due to the European Union, so it means that the problem is related to

immigration, too. The Labour Party attempts to show that the UK in the EU is safer because of the cooperation between countries from the same continent, but it is a smaller proportion of posts.

3.6.8 Bank Holiday

The Vote Leave and the Labour Party, both of them, were posting regarding a commemorative day, such as Women's Day.

3.6.9 European Union

This focuses on posts about the European Union only. Vote Leave describes the European Commission as an institution that blocks laws approved in Westminster, and the exit from the EU will make Britain independent. Also, it shares content about money. Vote Leave says the United Kingdom was sending money to the European Union every week, spending on the luxury of transport, hotels, and flights for the commission and staff from the EU, instead of spending on Britain's issues.

3.6.10 Calling people to Leave or Remain (nothing specific)

These are posts without a specific theme. They were just asking people to vote, for instance, Vote Leave was sharing posts with the phrase "Vote Leave" or "Take back Control", and the Labour Party was sharing "Vote Remain" or "Stronger in Europe". Also, there are statements and videos that come from celebrities and politicians declaring their votes for the Leave or Remain groups.

3.6.11 Labour Criticising Conservative Government

The Conservative Party was the ruling party at the time when the Brexit campaign was running. The government's policies were being implemented. The Labour Party was its opposition, so during the six months before the Referendum Day, it was criticising the Conservative government.

3.7 Data Preparation and Analysis

The process of collecting data from Facebook took place over three months, from January to March 2025. All posts shared between 1st January and 23rd June 2016 on the official Facebook pages of Vote Leave and the Labour Party were gathered. In July 2025, data from the Conservative Party's Facebook page was also collected to improve the analysis of the Remain group; however, it was not used in this research due to the absence of content regarding Brexit.

The collected data was organised in Microsoft Excel to facilitate analysis. The software helped arrange and segment the content, making it easier to examine. Screenshots of all posts *from Vote Leave and Labour Party were* archived; images and text were reviewed as needed, and videos shared on platforms by both sides were watched to understand the context and classify their categories. The entered data was checked to ensure that nothing was missed and that no errors had been made. Although the process of collecting social media data was time-consuming, it was a vital source for this research to analyse information and achieve its objectives.

This is the initial overview of the studies related to this research, which will be followed by an analysis in the next chapter. There, comparisons will help to understand each side of the voters, providing answers to various questions regarding this work. To support the process of this content analysis, all data collected over a period of six months will be examined based on authors who can shed light on how Vote Leave and the Labour Party operated on Facebook. Theories and insights will pave the way to discovering other reasons that may explain what truly happened.

3.8 Challenges in this Journey

The potential challenges throughout this journey, which may hamper this research study, were: the hurdle to account for all posts by the Vote Leave and Labour Party groups on their Facebook pages; analysing data coming from both sides posts on their Facebook Pages; examining data from *The Office of Communications* (OFCOM) to make connections with these two groups; deciphering whether images are negative or positive, which then may be subjective and therefore hard to classify; and reading text from Vote Leave and Labour Party posts.

To solve some of these obstacles, organisation was the main topic practised throughout this course. Regarding the account of all posts, a schedule was created to look at each of them and classify them. While researching them, it was also crucial to; research with patience as it was essential to understand the data and see what could be useful for this work; read and classify images with impartiality; see if the nationalism issue was important in this election; understand the attitudes of the voters; understand what the definition of nationalism meant in this context.

The idea that Brexit happened because of a hypothesis, which might not be true, is revealed in this dissertation. This is a work based on data from those who worked for it, in favour of or against. Here, reality should override the imaginary due to scientific study and referenced scholars, who are the basis of this content analysis. In this methodology chapter, plenty of sources and writers were presented. These will all be in the next chapter, the analysis.

Since this theme was chosen for this dissertation, impartiality was one of the primary aims, as this is mandatory in academic research. Also, creating this work with a deadline and trying to utilise all available resources, such as primary sources from Facebook and secondary sources from newspapers, was another challenge. The next chapter is going to be the climax of this journey because it will respond to the question that was raised back in the beginning.

Chapter 4
Analysis

All human sciences have travelled along that path. Arriving at infinitesimals, mathematics, the most exact of sciences, abandons the process of analysis and enters on the new process of the integration of unknown, infinitely small, quantity. Abandoning the conception of cause, mathematics seeks law, that is, the property common to all unknown, infinitely small, elements.

(Tolstoi, *War and Peace*, 2010, p. 1306)

4.1 Context

The great writer Tolstoi, at the end of *War and Peace* (2010, p. 1306), reflects on science. He searched for a definition of exact science, especially in the context of humanity and its beliefs. He believed that mathematics came first, mainly due to being the main way in which scientists work and express their discoveries. This research, then, also uses exact science, maths, due to the data presented such numbers of posts and themes, which was collected from Facebook pages on both sides of the political spectrum.

For six months, before the Referendum Day on 23rd June 2016, 893 posts were shared on the Vote Leave and Labour Party Facebook pages. These two groups worked differently to achieve the same objective: to convince people that their campaigns would be the best for them. Vote Leave shared 597 posts and the Labour Party 296 posts. All of them were spreading videos, images and texts. However, their tactics were far different. Figure 1 (Vote Leave and Labour Party, 2016) demonstrates that Leave was more proactive than Labour:

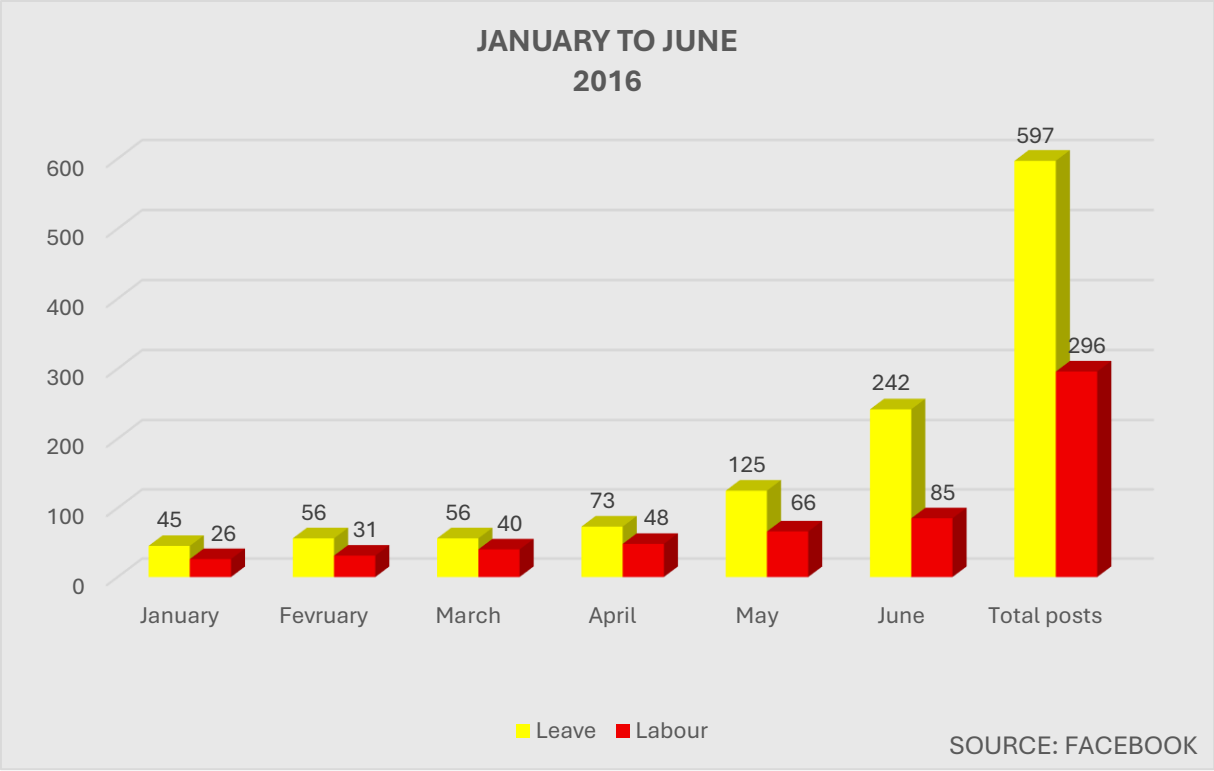

Figure 1: Number of posts shared by Vote Leave and Labour Party (Facebook, 2016)

Social media was created to make a profit from influencing people and gaining power. Political events define who has control of a country and how a nation looks towards the future. These vehicles are owned by someone interested in business and success; consequently, these corporations will try to interfere in any way possible to influence others. However, Facebook, as the new public sphere, aimed to do both. Facebook was the main social media among the British population in the UK in 2016, as reported by OFCOM, and 95% of social media users had a profile account on Facebook, whilst WhatsApp had 45%, Instagram had 31%, and YouTube had 30%.

Themes, such as propaganda and persuasion, are based on the literature review presented in *Chapter 2.* Some scholars shall help to clarify this academic work, such as Edward Bernays in propaganda, Jürgen Habermas in the public sphere, and Walter Lipman in public opinion. Based on them, the research will analyse the impact of social media on public opinion. Moreover, reports from *Adults' Media Use and Attitudes* published by The Office of Communications (OFCOM*),* polls from the IPSOS and data from Facebook will be integrated in order to interpret this content analysis. To start, it presents a general outlook in the charts about the entire research, from January to June, regarding the main topics mentioned in the Vote Leave and Labour Party pages. Figure 2 (Vote Leave and Labour Party, 2016) shows that the highest level of activity was achieved by Vote Leave Facebook, which had a percentage of 67% of all posts published, whereas the Labour Party had just 33%:

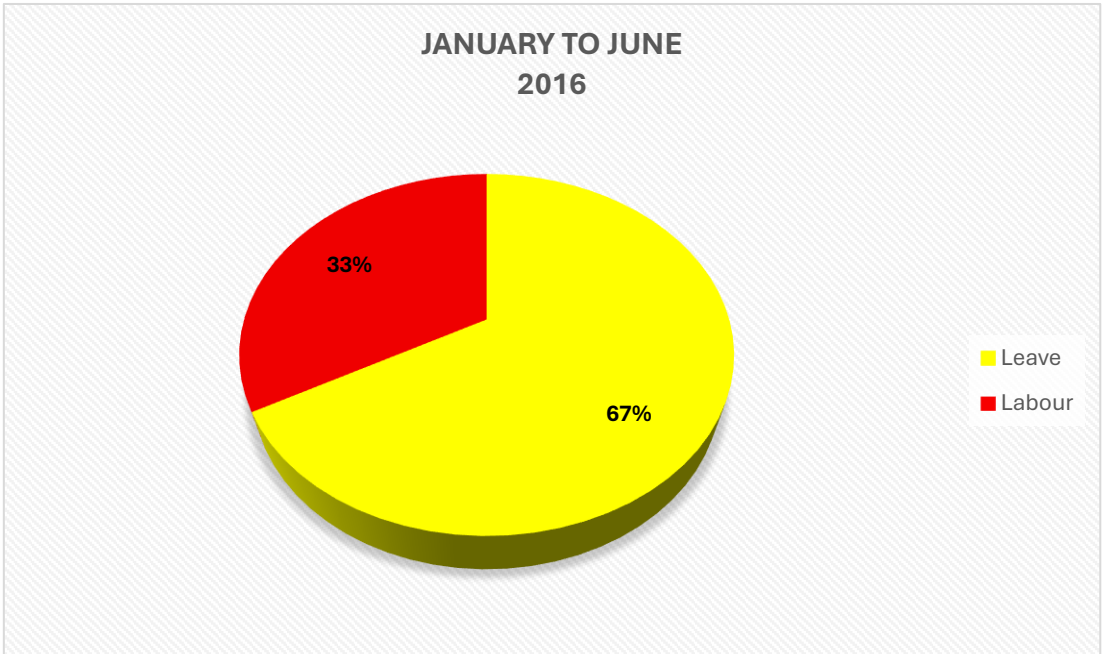

Figure 2: Percentage of posts shared by Vote Leave and Labour Party (Facebook, 2016)

4.2 Overview of Research in Charts by Numbers

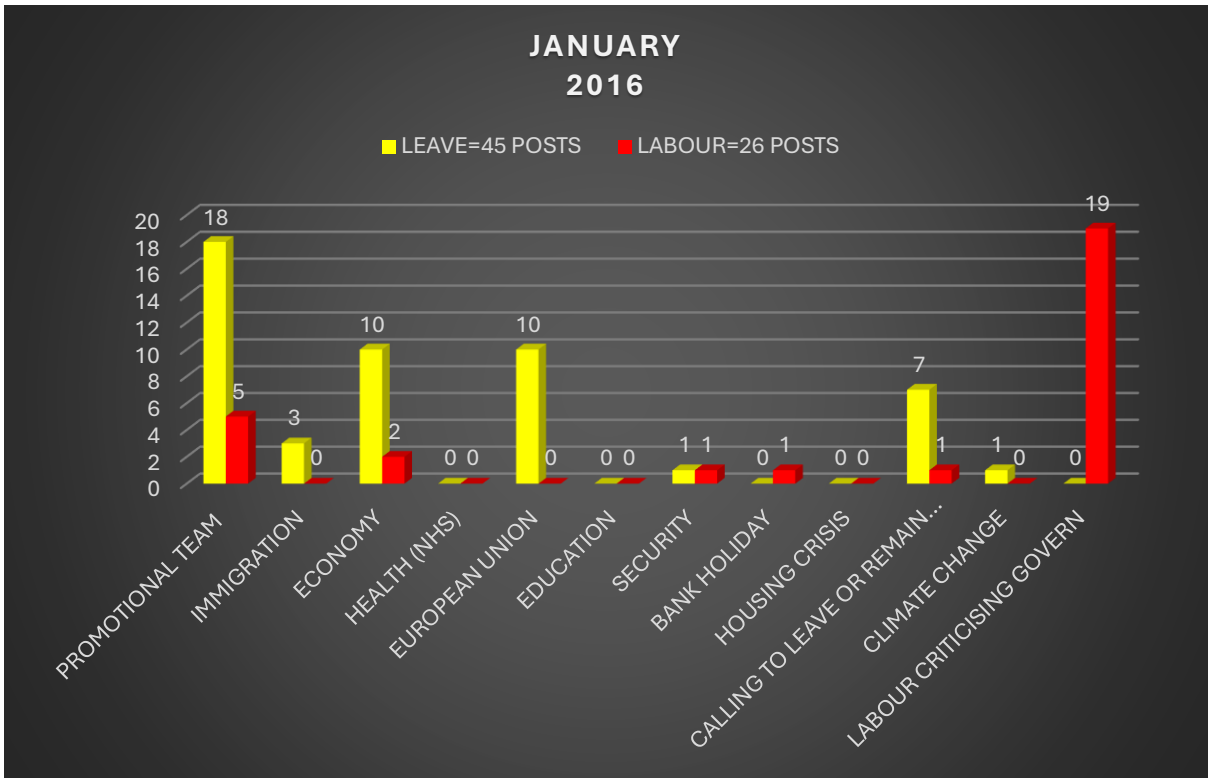

Figure 3: Number of posts shared by Vote Leave and Labour Party in January (Facebook, 2016)

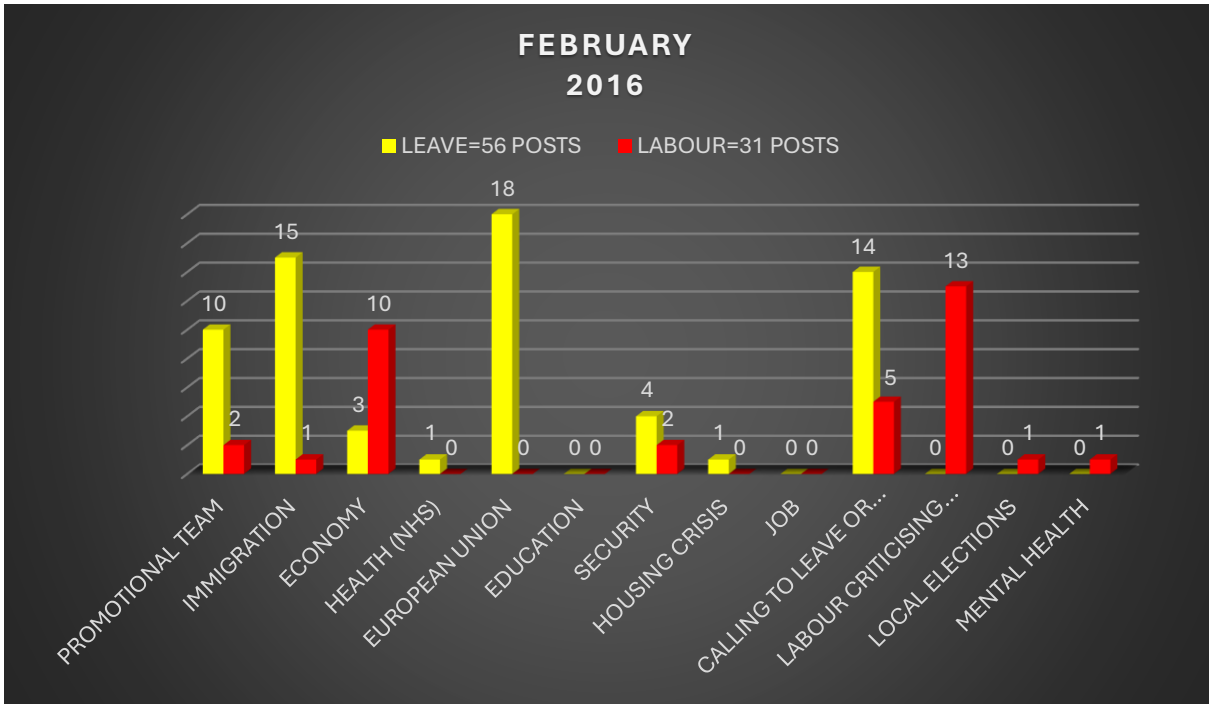

Figure 4: Number of posts shared by Vote Leave and Labour Party in February (Facebook, 2016)

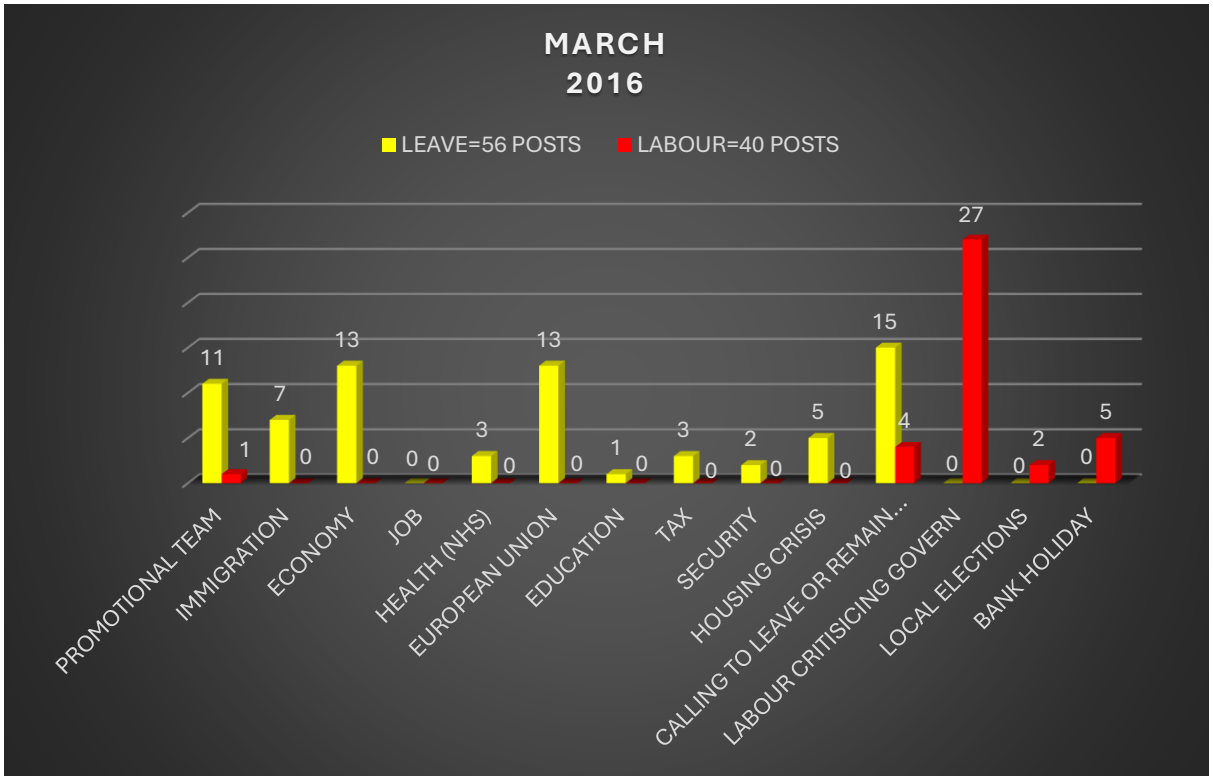

Figure 5: Number of posts shared by Vote Leave and Labour Party in March (Facebook, 2016)

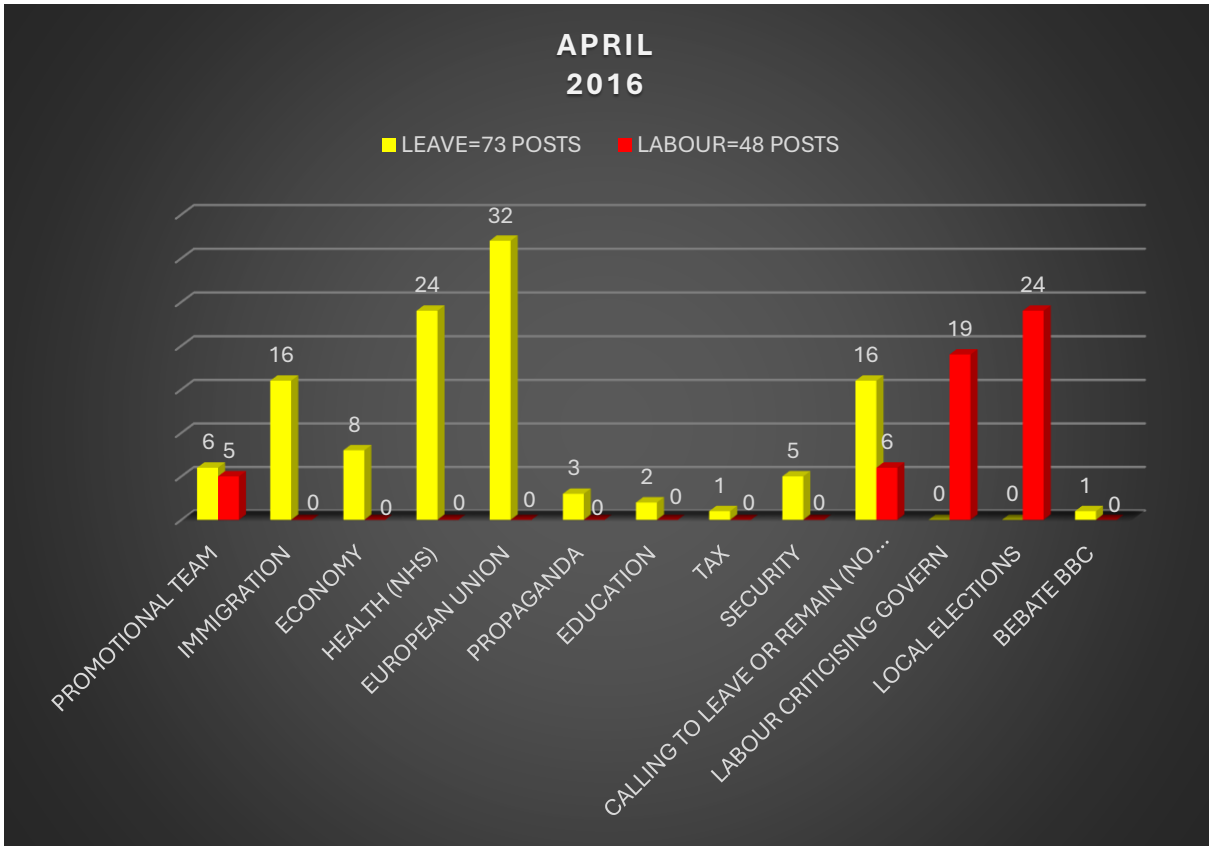

Figure 6: Number of posts shared by Vote Leave and Labour Party in April (Facebook, 2016)

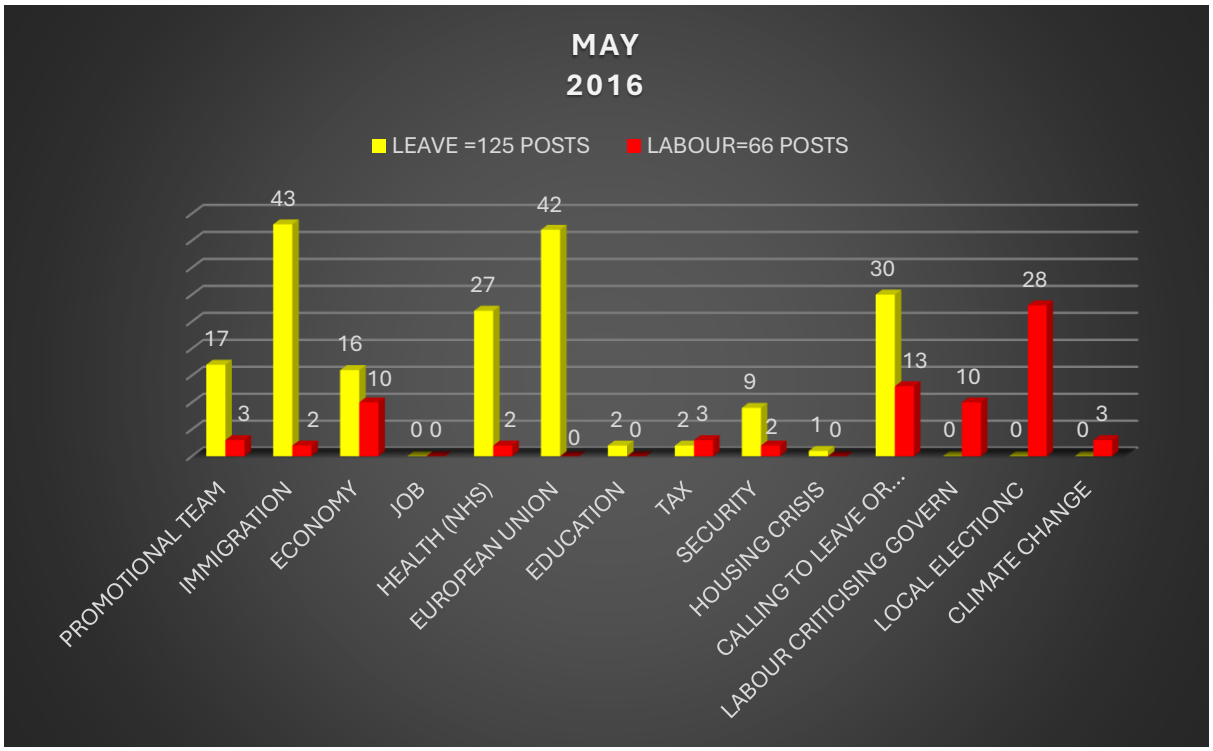

Figure 7: Number of posts shared by Vote Leave and Labour Party in May (Facebook, 2016)

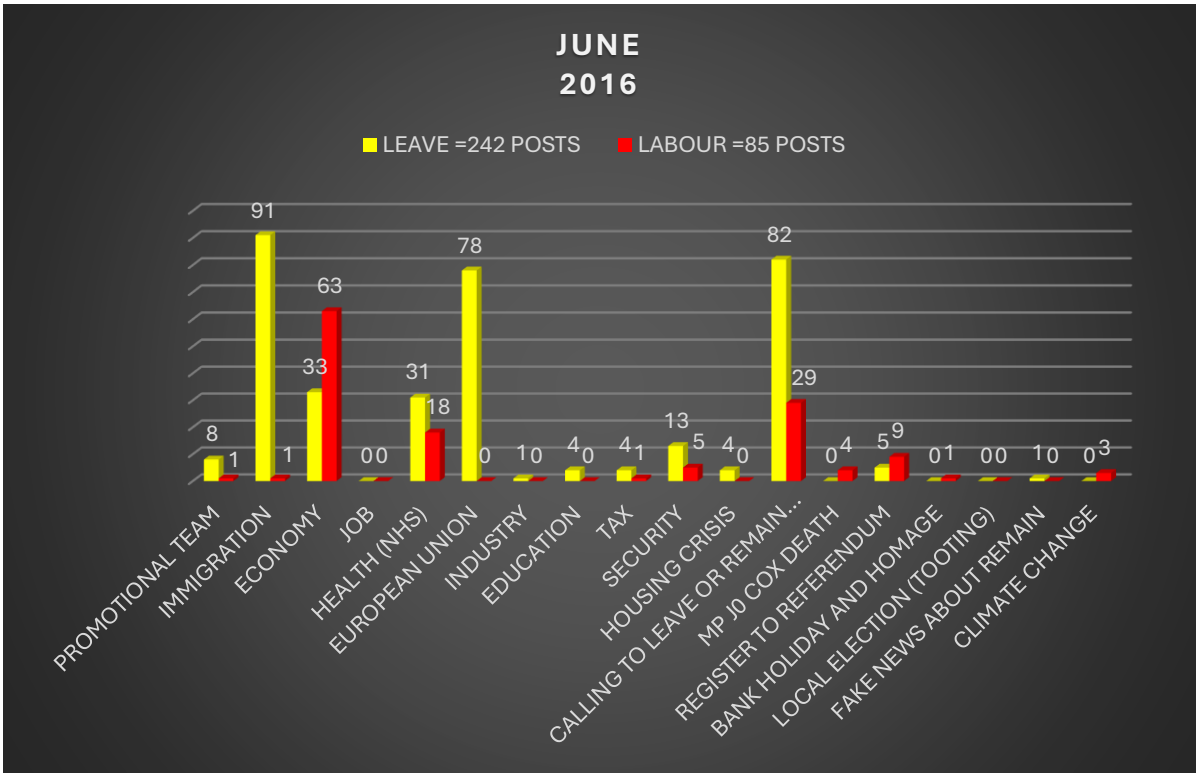

Figure 8: Number of posts shared by Vote Leave and Labour Party in June (Facebook, 2016)

4.3 Overview of Research in Charts by Percentage

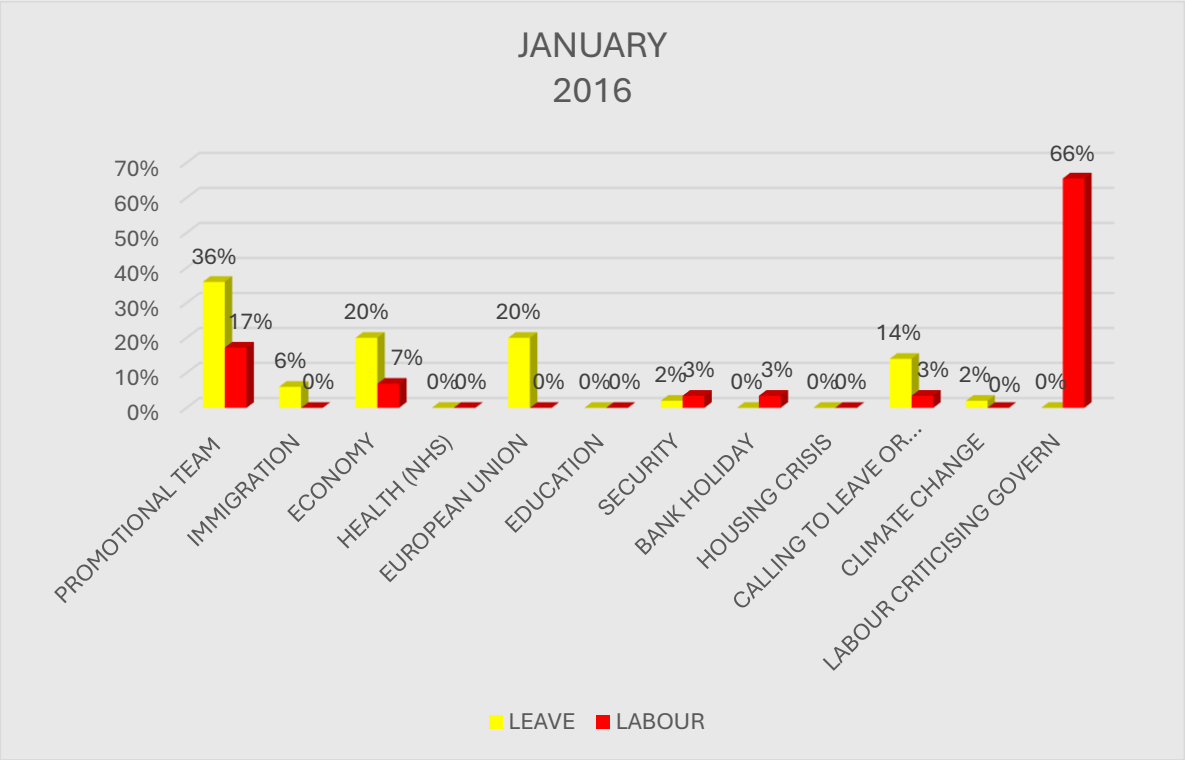

Figure 9: Percentage of mentions shared by Vote Leave and Labour Party in Jan. (Facebook, 2016)

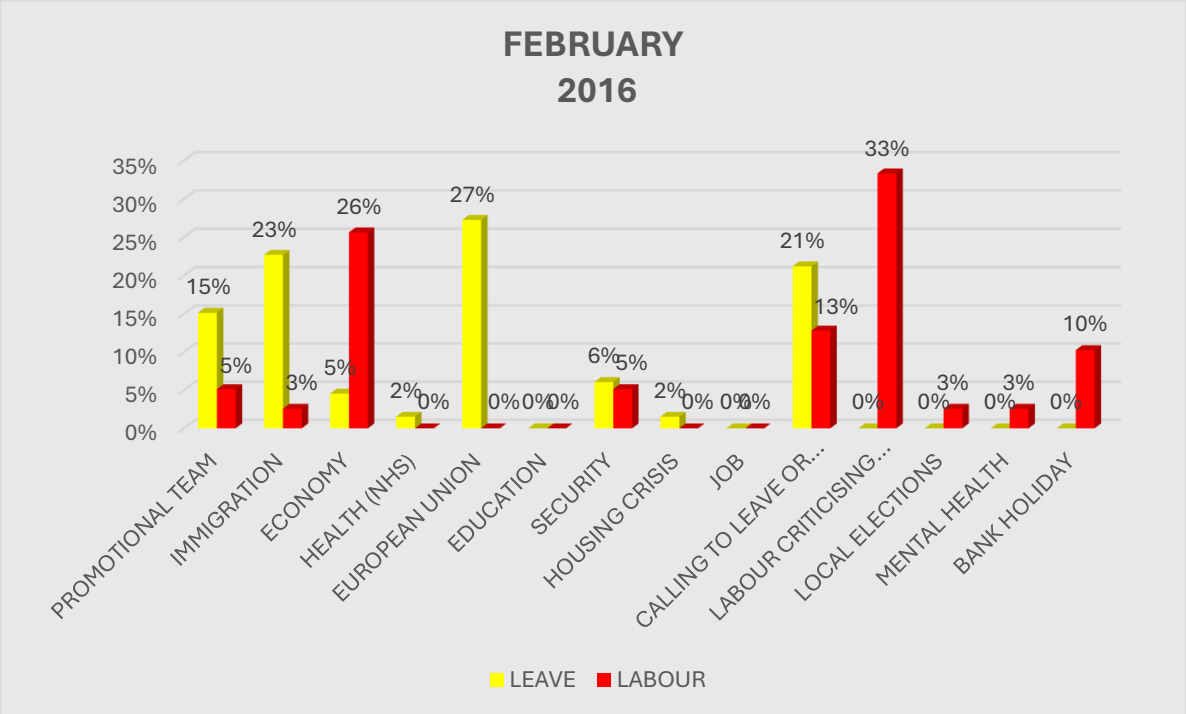

Figure 10: Percentage of mentions shared by Vote Leave and Labour Party in Feb. (Facebook, 2016)

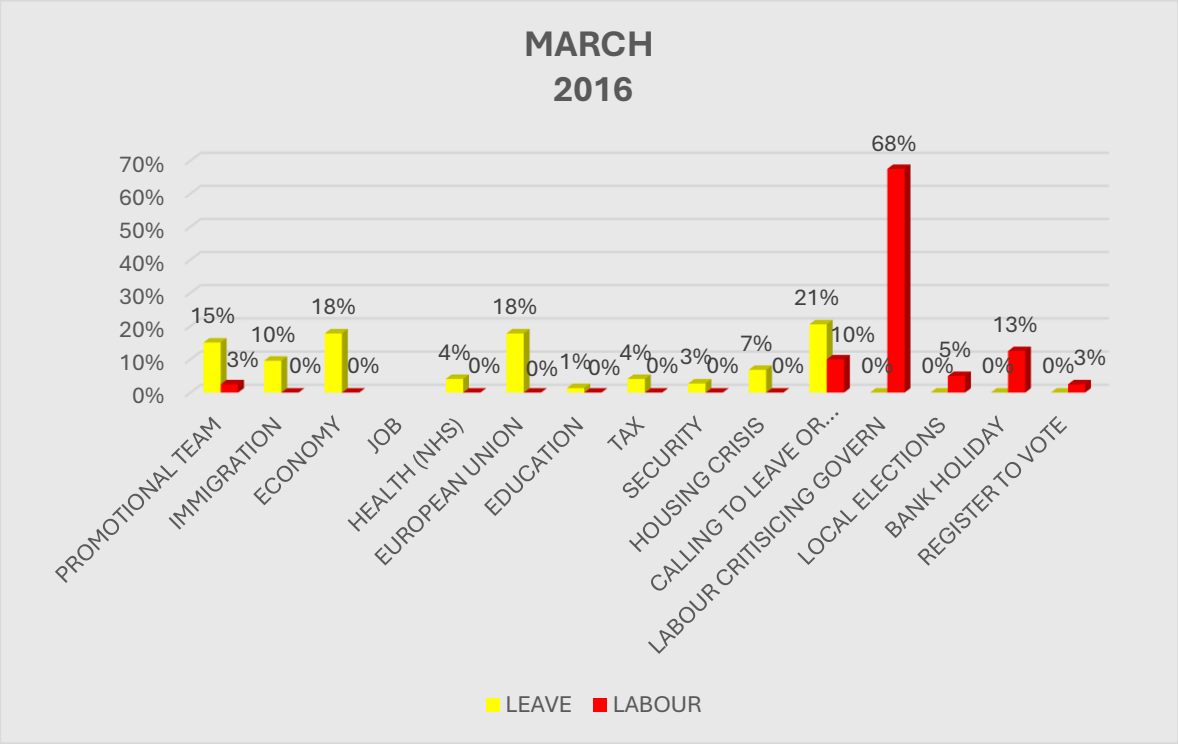

Figure 11: Percentage of mentions shared by Vote Leave and Labour Party in Mar. (Facebook, 2016)

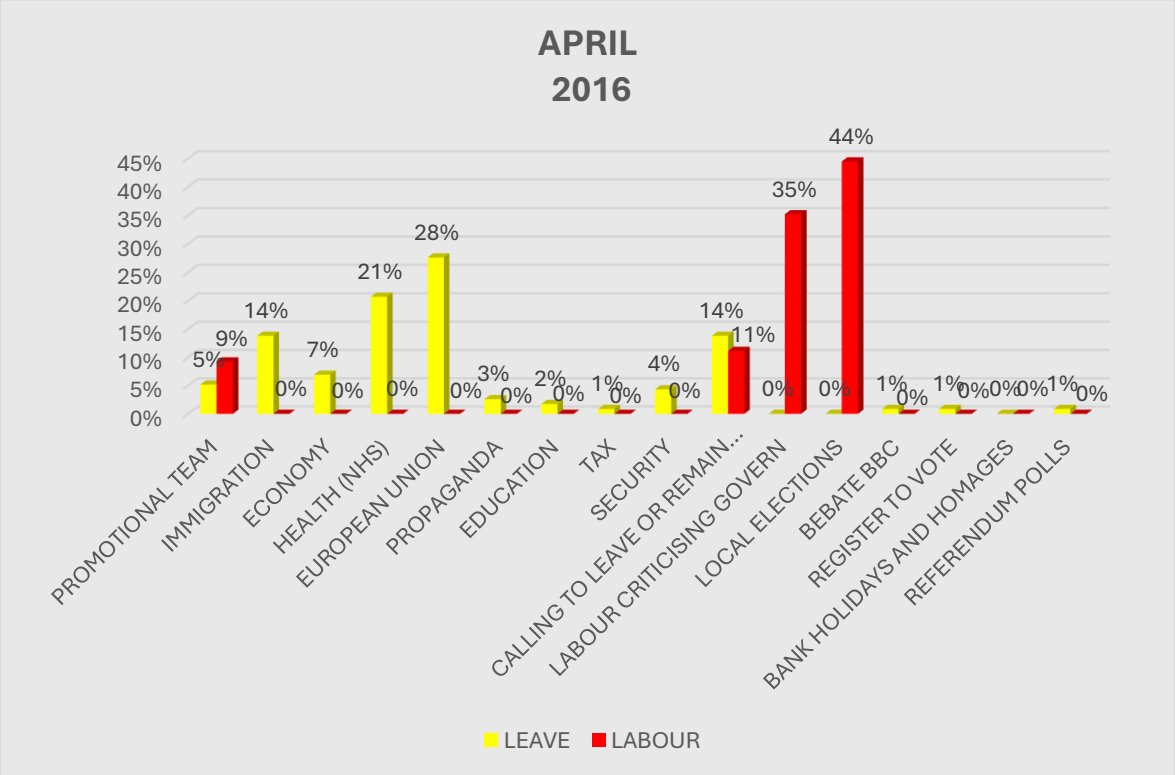

Figure 12: Percentage of mentions shared by Vote Leave and Labour Party in Apr. (Facebook, 2016)

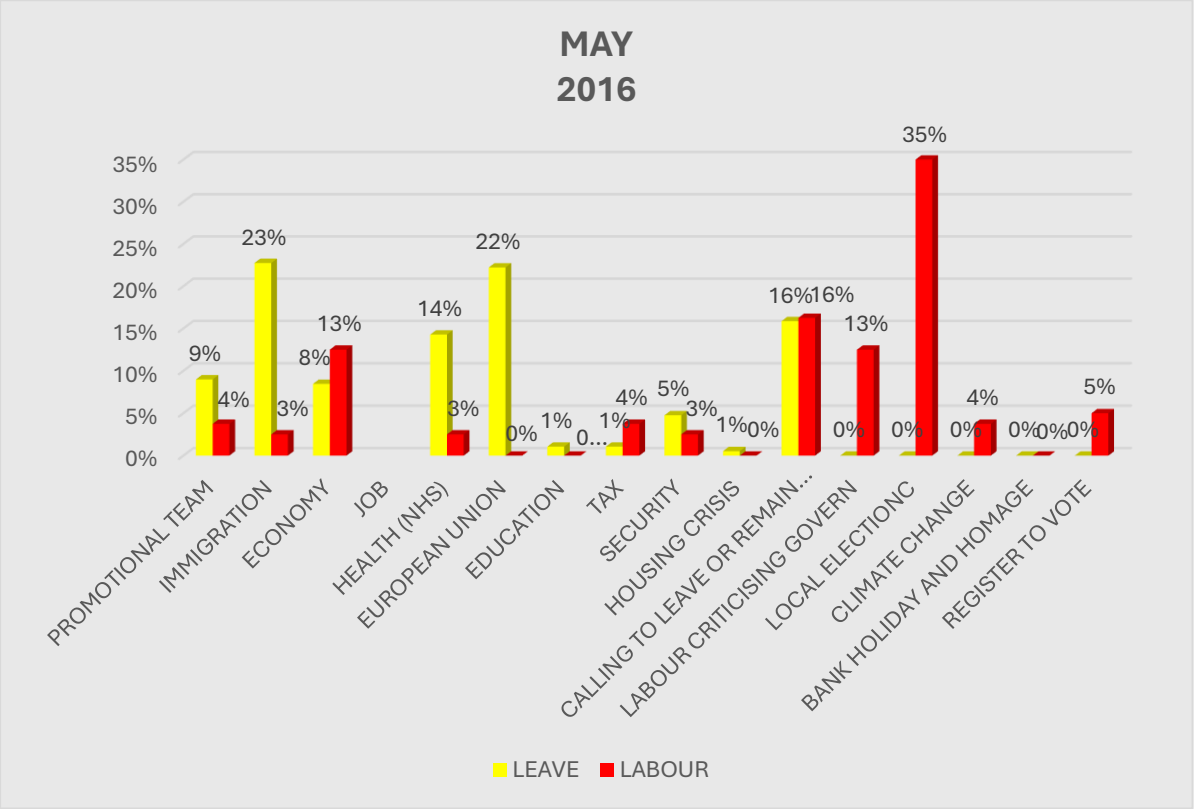

Figure 13: Percentage of mentions shared by Vote Leave and Labour Party in May (Facebook, 2016)

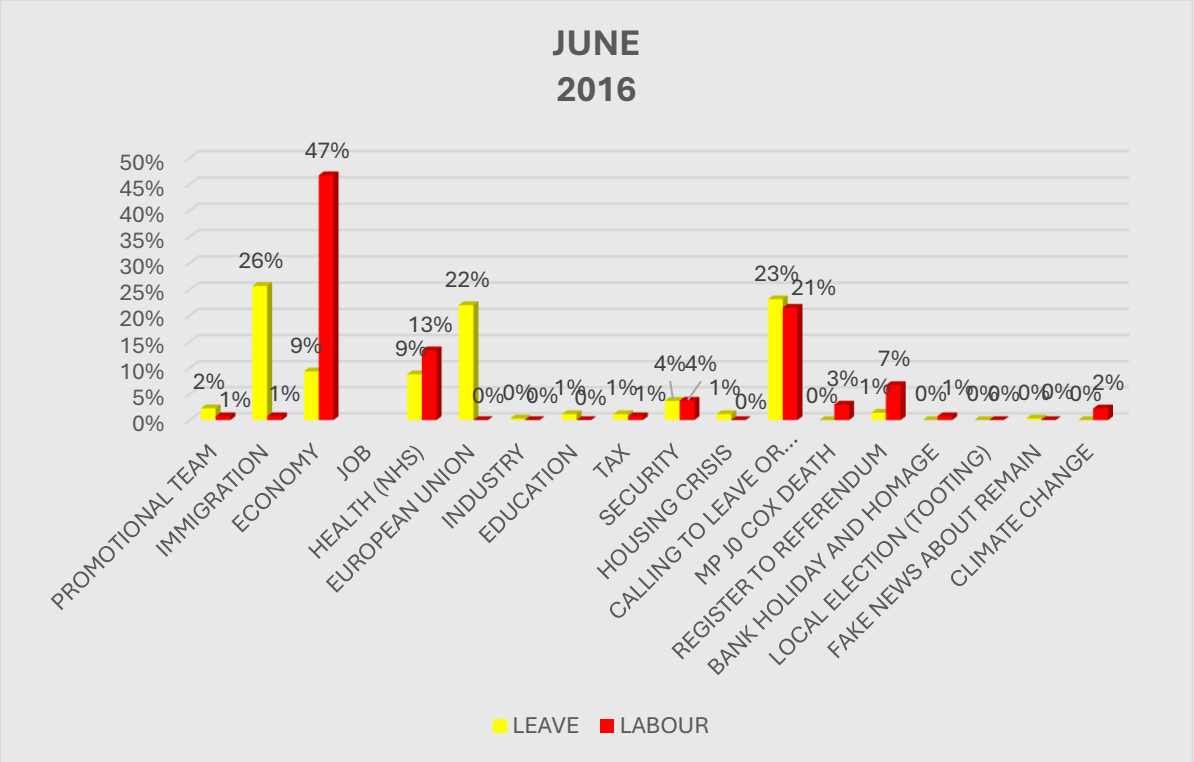

Figure 14: Percentage of mentions shared by Vote Leave and Labour Party in June (Facebook, 2016)

4.4 Marketing for the Campaign

There is a necessary strategy for building a campaign: marketing. This strategy should be organised with a focus on people because they are the authorities who will decide, through a ballot, the winner. This strategy needs to work for communication to convince the public that your product, in this case a political party, is the best for them. An election is a product which is on the market to be bought by customers. This product needs a space to be sold: a platform. This platform needs a form to communicate to the public: propaganda. This form needs content to attract the audience: persuasion. All these actions belong to marketing.

There are two types of marketing, commercial and political. The main difference between them is the goal; the commercial wants to sell a product, and the political wants to sell a policy or, in other words, a manifesto. Ormrod (2012, p. 13) defines political marketing as an outlook from which to understand occurrences in the political sphere, and an approximate that seeks to facilitate the exchange of values and beliefs through interactions in the electoral system to manage interests among the voters, politicians and state. It is a triadic engagement. In marketing, there are tools to ensure that the strategy development by the marketing team will achieve its goal. The three main ones are public relations, propaganda and advertising. Marketing is the broad body responsible for developing the plan, which involves choosing the tools of communication that best suit the campaign. It should be clear enough to convey clarity for the audience and conquer them more easily.

Public relations work on the relationship between the institution or company and its public through press releases and sponsorships, such as philanthropy. Propaganda works on ideologies that can change behaviour through government speech, the educational system and influencers. Furthermore, intellectuals who are considered authorities in a subject can be used to convince people, and actions such as rallies and interviews are tools to spread propaganda. Advertising is the business of trying to persuade people to buy products or services, such as a laptop. As can be seen, all of these are tactics used in a political campaign because they are instruments to wheedle people.

4.4.1 Marketing on Vote Leave and Labour Party campaigns

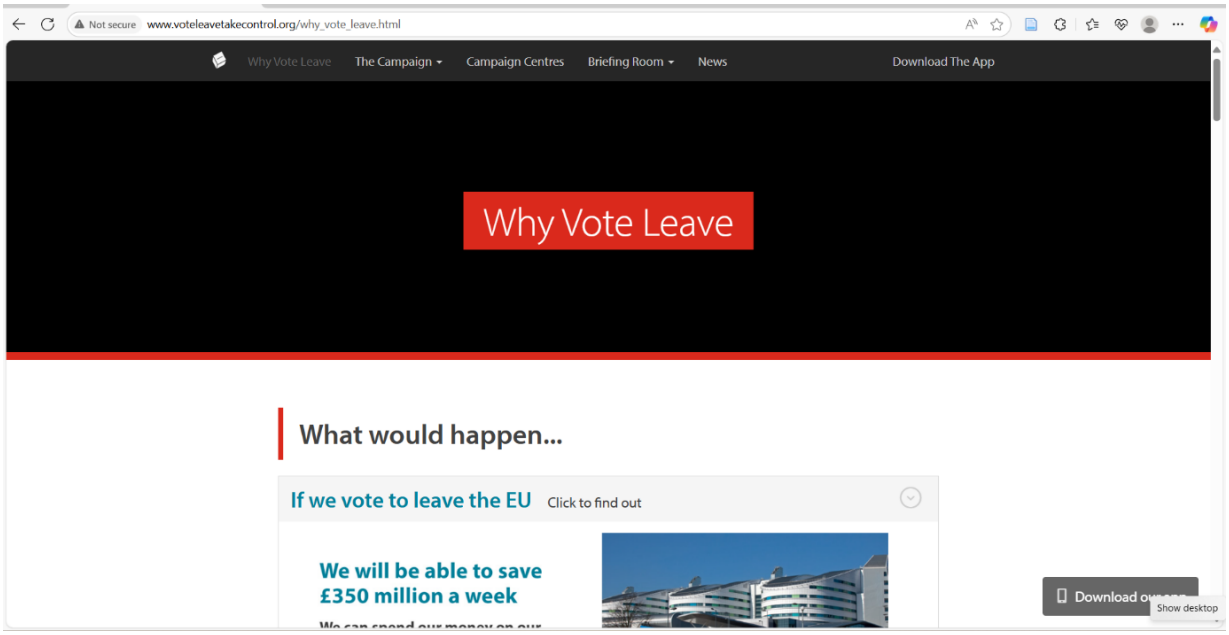

Figure 15: Vote Leave (Website, 2016)

The marketing on Vote Leave and Labour Party campaigns was different during the European Union Referendum. The Leave side was well structured, and the Labour side was disorderly. Leave built a harmonious and united campaign, as the marketing manual tells, and called it Vote Leave, while the Remain campaign was divided into two main factions, the Labour Party and the Conservative Party. Each of them shares their content by themselves without a common programme. From a marketing perspective, it is an awful strategy. Looking in-depth, it was worse because of the size of the campaign itself, which was affecting the future of the United Kingdom and the European Union.

The entire group of people who wanted to work against the EU became part of the Vote Leave team. It does not matter if a person comes as independent, Labour or Conservative, all of them belong to one group called Vote Leave. Leave had a website, which is still active right now, with sections such as: Why Vote Leave, The Campaign with subsections Outreach Groups, Campaign Resources, Spread the Word, social media, Campaign Centres, and Briefing Room, with the subsections: Key Speeches, Interviews, and op-eds, news, and Download the App. Meanwhile, the official Remain group, split between Labour and Conservatives, did not have a website to disseminate its content.

Marketing is the strategy developed before the campaign starts. It is hugely important due to its role in the plan of action to make the best decisions in the campaign. The Remain side was composed of

the Labour Party, which was the most vocal pro-EU party, and the Conservative Party, which was the party responsible for calling for the Referendum. Even at a crucial moment like the most important election in Europe for decades, they organised among themselves to work during the campaign. Thus, something would go wrong by the end. This lack of connection between Labour and Conservative transmits to the public a feeling of mistrust, something that marketing avoids when building a strategy for a political election. It looks like the Remain side did not have efficient marketing in their campaign or, if had, it did not integrate it well.

4.5 Tactics of Propaganda

Bernays (2005, p. 168) affirms that propaganda will exist forever due to its tools to organise chaos in society and cause it to believe in something which makes them happy. Propaganda is the art of creating a narrative and convincing the audience that it is the best one for them. It proves how the tactic of propaganda is important to achieve a victory. Brexit shows it, the Leave side was united in one bloc called Vote Leave and generating its propaganda with a massive presence on social media. Meanwhile, the Remain side was divided into two blocs without leadership, the Labour Party and the Conservative Party, both of which are historic enemies, and one piece of Leave propaganda was presenting them as an establishment that was only interested in themselves. Figure 16 (Labour Party, 2016) presents the level of criticism from Labour to the Conservatives:

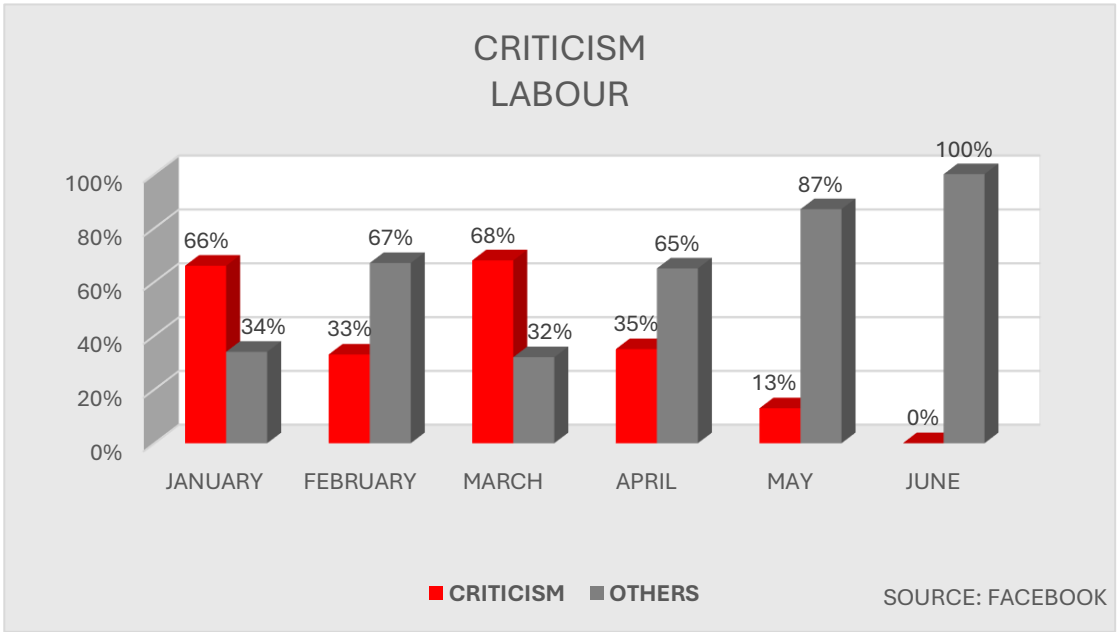

Figure 16: Vote Leave (Website, 2016)

Once a political campaign has decided what it wants to achieve, it must focus on the aims of its subject and design a project which is close to its goals, says Bernays (2005, p. 167). Propaganda has a duty to convince the public and make them feel that they belong to something, so a campaign must be organised to conquer those who are well known and those who are indecisive and can be reached. During the six months of the campaign, the Labour Party was criticising the Conservative Party, both of which belonged to Remain. In January, among all of Labour's posts, 66% were against the Conservatives' policies, in February 33%, in March 68%, in April 35%, in May 13%; and in June, there was no criticism. In March, the month which had the highest level of criticism against Conservatives, themes important for the British voters like immigration, the NHS and the European Union were not mentioned on Labour Facebook. Jowett and O'Donnell (2019, pp. 267-283) proposed 10 categories to examine propaganda in its terms as will be represented and analysed.

4.5.1 The Ideology and Purpose of the Propaganda

The analysis based on ideology must identify the beliefs, values, attitudes, and behaviours of a political campaign. The primary aim of propaganda is to gain acceptance from the targeted audience. Ideology is vital for a political campaign, and clarity is essential to ensure the audience understands it. For example, David Cameron is a politician from the Conservative Party with liberal economic policies favouring neo-liberalism, where the State should be minimal and free from interference in the free market, while Jeremy Corbyn from the Labour Party's ideology is rooted in social democracy, advocating for a larger State that cares about education, housing, security, jobs, and the economy. These two parties have contrasting ideologies and could not work together to achieve their propaganda's goal: to win the referendum and keep Britain in the European Union.

Their beliefs in opposite manifestos regarding the development of the country, and their values about their duties to the British State are mainly incompatible, and their attitudes towards budget spending led them to have opposite behaviours. Throughout the campaign, while Vote Leave was attacking the European Union, the Labour Party was criticising the Conservative Party. One of the posts was shared on the 13th of April 2016 Labour Party shared this text on its Facebook page criticising the Conservative government regarding a school plan:

> The Tory Government plans to force all primary and secondary schools to become academies. This is a top-down, costly plan that nobody wants and that the schools don't need. Labour fiercely opposes these plans. Our schools are facing huge challenges: falling budgets; chronic shortages of teachers; not enough good school places. But the Tories aren't focused on driving up standards and solving these problems, instead they obsess over school structures. We believe every child deserves an excellent education. We're standing up with parents, head teachers and local government leaders to stop this unnecessary reorganisation of our schools.

This highlights a significant difference in values, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours between the two main representatives of the Pro EU side. Since propaganda exploits these customs, it is nearly impossible to craft propaganda for these two members of the Remain camp. The Labour Party issued more criticisms in the six months leading up to Referendum Day. Critics of the Housing Crisis, such as those shared on 19th April, include the following:

> It's clear that the government is losing the argument on its extreme Housing Bill right across the board." John Healey MP, Labour's Shadow Housing Secretary, responds to last night's vote in the House of Lords which saw the government's plan to force sharp rent increases for families in social housing defeated for the sixth time. Opposition came from all sides, exposing how extreme these plans really are.

This proves the huge disconnection between the two main groups, which were working for Britain to stay in the European Union. They never had similar ideologies; however, they could have had a ceasefire during the campaign time and worked together, showing the voters a common cause.

4.5.2 The context in which the propaganda occurs

The analyst who produces propaganda must understand the context in which it is being released. This includes knowing the expectations about the social system, the public mood, and the key issues affecting the people. Propaganda is like a seed; it may flourish in fertile soil, and for a seed to grow on land, the farmer needs to know if that land is suitable for cultivation. The background is one of the most important tools when working with propaganda because it informs the plan, which is designed to spread it and conquer public opinion.

Jowett and O'Donnell (2019, p. 269) describe a historical background that propaganda uses to convince its audience, the model for social action, myth, which is usually represented by a figure, such as

Abraham Lincoln, who came from a poor background, and how he became a lawyer and achieved the highest post in the United States, the Presidency. Also, the myth can be represented by a nation, in this case, Great Britain. It is not only "Britain", but also "Great" as well. It presents the myth of a country that was in Europe, however, yet was still isolated by water from the rest of the continent. Also, it is a country that wrote an extensive narrative regarding the Second War and Winston Churchill who was seen as a hero who saved Europe from Nazism, even though the Soviet Union is responsible for the defeat of the Nazis on the Eastern Front. It is a nation which was an Empire over many centuries, and colonising half of the world. As has been said, they were the Empire in which the sun never sets. While the Labour Party was talking about dependence and showing how it would be a disaster if Britain exits the European relationship. Some of the discussion among Vote Leave was that Great Britain would walk alone, sans European help or influence. Boris Johnson created a rhetoric that the 24th of June 2016 would be Independence Day for Britain, presenting this country as a colony of the European Union. Figure 17 (Vote Leave, 2016) demonstrates Boris Johnson's speeches about that:

Figure 17: Boris Johnson's speeches at a rally for the Brexit campaign (Facebook, 2016)

One of the examples of how British people have this myth that they can go on alone is proven in some posts throughout the Brexit campaign. Michael Howard was the leader of the Conservative Party from 2003–2005, and he published an article in *The Telegraph* on the 26th of February 2016, which was shared by the Leave Facebook page a day after and highlighted this paragraph:

> The very facts that make it certain that the UK could thrive as an independent country – we are the fifth largest economy in the world, the most important military power in Europe and the country with by far the most stable and deep-rooted institutions – make us very valuable members of the EU. We would be sorely missed.

Following this same thought about Britain like a nation that does not need help and can survive better alone, Michal Gove, co-convener of the Vote Leave stated:

> The UK economy will prosper after we Vote Leave. Companies want to invest here because of our highly skilled workforce, strong legal system and because English is the language of business. The strengths of British economy are the ingenuity, hard work, dedication, and sheer inventiveness of the British people.

4.5.3 Identification of the Propagandist

Figure 18: Posts shared by Vote Leave and Labour Party (Facebook, 2016)

The Brexit Referendum was composed by some propagandists on both sides. The identification of leaders is necessary to build a bridge between the parties and the audience. The recognition of the

propagandist helps or damages the campaign due to the charisma they might have or lack. Some propaganda conceals its propagandist because he or she can prejudice the achievement, for instance, if the propagandist is a person who can do more damage than benefits. For Brexit, the Remain side had as its propagandists David Cameron and Jeremy Corbyn, while the Leave side had Nigel Farage and Boris Johnson. It is interesting to stress that the Conservative Party is split into two factions, David Cameron with Remain and Boris Johnson with Leave. So, these propagandists did not have a chance to show unity on this subject. The prime minister, as a national figure, who was suffering attacks from the Labour Party in Parliament, could not show his strength, even with people such as Boris Johnson, who was the mayor of London at the time. However, through the development of the campaign, the Leave achieved total identification with its propagandist, who was Boris Johnson. Boris Johnson was the one who concentrated on speeches and statements. He was the politician who went to the market to talk to the people, a classic image from a serious campaign. It can be seen in Figure 19 (Vote Leave, 2016):

Figure 19: Post shared by Vote Leave about Johnson campaigning in the market (Facebook, 2016)

4.5.4 The structure of the propaganda organisation

Many people belong to the campaign, but some of them fight for it, and those people must be included as members of it and not as followers due to human beings feelings as belonging to the important crow of it. When people do not have correspondence from something which they are supporting, they might give up and become an enemy. It is safer when a person who is faithful to the party ideology is included in it, as a member of the campaign. Vote Leave was posting well-known people when they declared their votes. For instance, Dame Joan Collins came out to support Leave and they pushed this into the public eye immediately. Figure 20 (Vote Leave, 2016) proves this tactic:

Figure 20: Post shared by Vote Leave of Joan Collins' support for Leave (Facebook, 2016)

4.5.5 The target audience

The propagandist should choose a target audience because it is necessary to be successful. Selecting the target, the propagandist knows who he is looking for and what voters want to hear from the politician, making it easier to write a message, draw a post and record a video. Then, the campaign can choose where to share its content. The mass media, such as television, still influence spectators; however, with social media, the path to focus on a specific group is now quick and simple. Data from social media such as Facebook can show how its users are acting and define a strategy for targeting

them. Data is essential to target people, and Vote Leave appeared to know that and used it to its benefit. For instance, from January to June 2016, Ipsos MORI polls shared regarding issues facing Britain presented immigration as the main worry for the Britons. In January, 46% came in second, NHS with 38%; in February, 44% with NHS 38%; in March, 46% with NHS 34%; in April, 41% with NHS 39%; in May, 38% with NHS 33%; and in June, 48% with NHS 37%. Immigration was the principal theme during the process of campaign for the Referendum, and it looks like the Labour Party did not pay attention to the polls or avoid them. If a topic is highlighted by the voters, it should be explored during the electoral process, no matter the focus. Vote Leave was negatively posting about immigration, and the role of the Labour Party would have been shown to the audience, a positive way about that. Figure 21 (Vote Leave and Labour Party, 2016) describes these numbers:

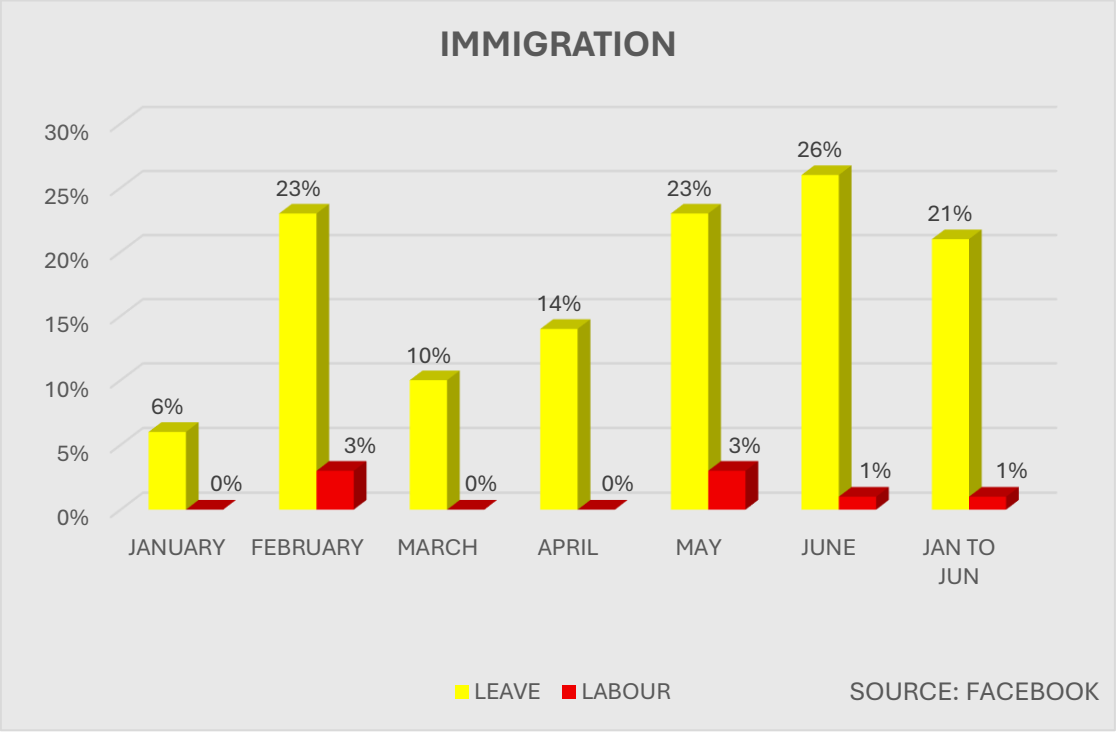

Figure 21: Percentage of immigration shared by Vote Leave and Labour Party (Facebook, 2016)

4.5.6 Media utilisation techniques

Propaganda should be shared through all vehicles of communication available. It should be spread according to the media in each area. On the one hand, in some places, such as cosmopolitan cities, there is television, radio, the Internet, posters, monuments, poetry, music, cinema, museums, libraries,

and events, which can be used to influence the audience. On the other hand, villages and rural areas or even poor towns, are not covered by these forms of media, and the propagandist must use other techniques to gain voters, such as door-to-door calls and rallies. Looking at the Brexit campaign, which happened in a developed country where most of the population has access to the Internet and they are active on social media, the utilisation techniques were built to talk to those people online. At the time, the largest population in Britain had a Facebook account, and it was the principal platform to work on. However, the traditional rallies and door-to-door were in action to reach the maximum number of supporters on their side. Figure 22 (Vote Leave, 2016) demonstrates that Vote Leave is the one which shared this work on its platform, and the Labour Party did not post anything regarding it during the six months of the campaign on Facebook:

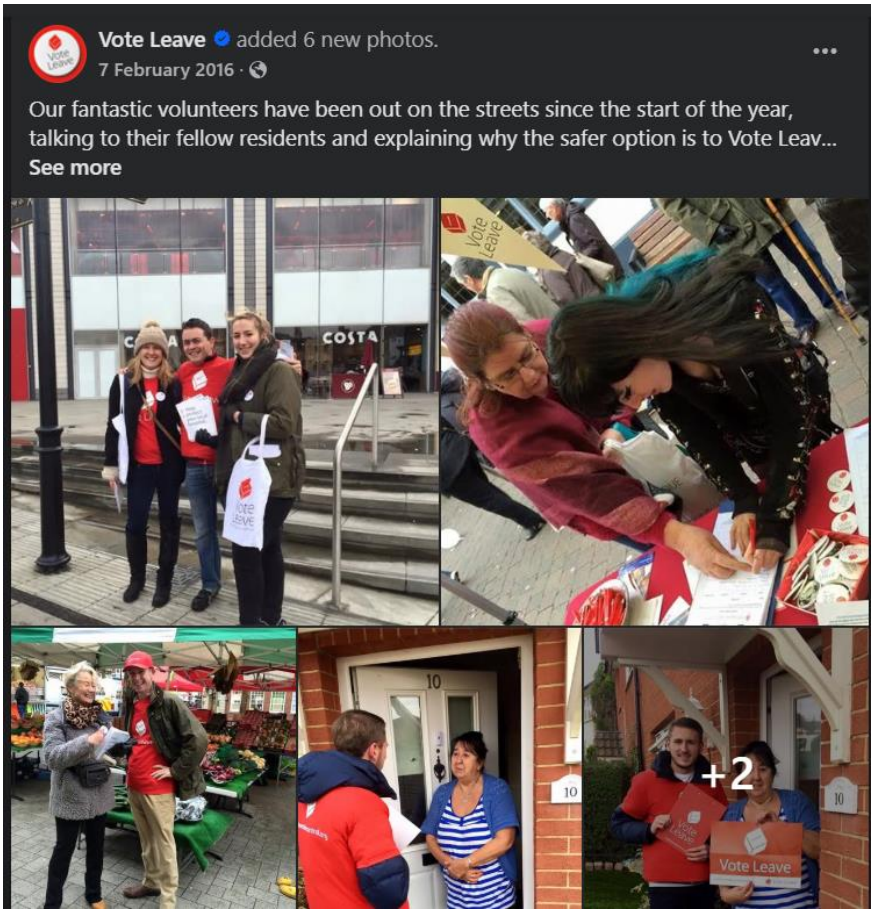

Figure 22: Post of Vote Leave visiting people door-to-door (Facebook, 2016)

4.5.7 Audience reaction to various techniques

It means that a whole campaign should look outside of its box. For example, it is essential to see what is going on through newspapers' comments, radio programmes and other media that might be influential in the region where the campaign is happening, instead of observing the place where their campaign's channel works, such as their own social media. When data is analysed about the themes, it looks like the Labourers who were not working abroad are a bubble. The NHS was the second issue for the British voters during the campaign, yet it did not appear frequently throughout its posts on Facebook. IPSOS presented statistics that in January 38% of people in the UK were worried about health care, in February were 38%, in March were 34%, in April 39%, in May 33%, and in June 37%. All months demonstrated a high number of the population who cared about the situation of the NHS in the UK. Moreover, Leave was talking about this topic during its campaign and used people's sentiment, as can be seen below in Figure 23 (Vote Leave and Labour Party, 2016):

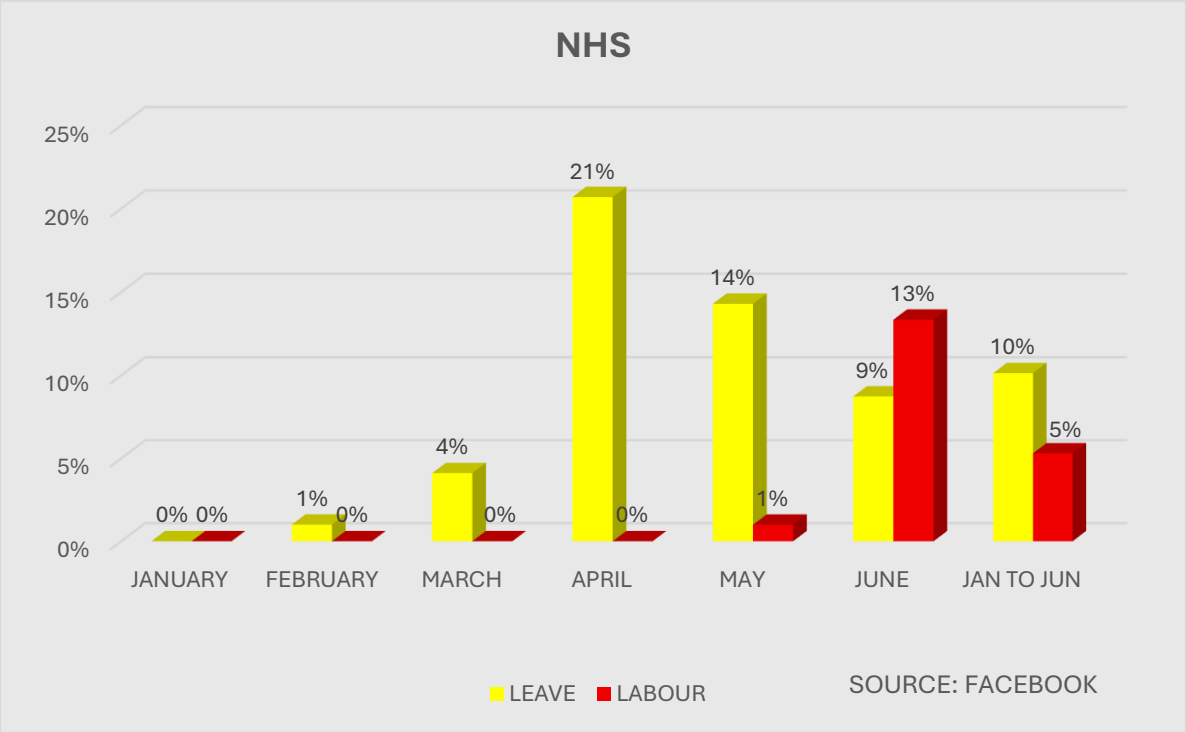

Figure 23: Posts of Vote Leave and Labour Party about NHS (Facebook, 2016)

4.5.8 Effects and evaluation

This is the moment that shows the result of success or failure. All strategies developed during the campaign must be analysed. Wonders, if done differently, would have other types of outcomes that

should be studied. Looking at the ideology which have worked; the context in which contents were shared; the identification between the messages and the public; the organization in the group; if the chosen media could be better for its purpose; its techniques would be worked more efficiently; the audience reaction was more positive or negative; and the counterpropaganda was necessary or discarded. Looking at the Brexit Referendum 2016, it can be seen that Vote Leave worked harder, posting more on Facebook and targeting the main issues according to opinion polls from institutes such as IPSOS.

On 17th February 2017, Mark Zuckerberg posted a manifesto called *Building Global Community* on his Facebook page. This exposed his views regarding the goals of his platform. His statement was divided into topics such as supportive communities, safe community, informed community, civically-engaged community and inclusive communities. In the civically-engaged communities, he clarifies the role of Facebook in politics:

> Beyond voting, the greatest opportunity is helping people stay engaged with the issues that matter to them every day, not just every few years at the ballot box. We can help establish direct dialogue and accountability between people and our elected leaders. In India, Prime Minister Modi has asked his ministers to share their meetings and information on Facebook so they can hear direct feedback from citizens. In Kenya, whole villages are in WhatsApp groups together, including their representatives. In recent campaigns around the world -- from India and Indonesia across Europe to the United States -- we've seen the candidate with the largest and most engaged following on Facebook usually wins. Just as TV became the primary medium for civic communication in the 1960s, social media is becoming this in the 21st century.

Mark Zuckerberg affirms that the candidate with the largest and most engaged following on Facebook usually wins. That is proof of how powerful this platform has become in society since it was created in 2004. It is a valuable argument because the Vote Leave page had more interaction with its users than the *Labour Party* during the campaign. For instance, in January, Leave posted 45 times and Labour 26; in February, 56 for Leave and 31 for Labour; in March, Leave shared 56 and Labour 40; in April, 73 for Leave and 48 for Labour; in May, Leave posted 125 while Labour just 66; and in June, the month of the referendum, Leave posted 242 and Labour less than one hundred, only 85. This analysis supports Zuckerberg's assertion that Facebook’s owner is correct, so it is not merely an opinion, but a fact, because nobody understands Facebook better than its creator. The main question is how the Leave group discovered this information, which provided the foundation for Vote Leave to work on Facebook

as required. It is necessary to remind you that Facebook was accused of granting permission for Cambridge Analytica to collect data from its platform and sell it to a pro-Brexit team.

4.6 Types of Propaganda

Jowett and O'Donnell (2019, p. 17-23) classify forms of propaganda in communication. They may help to achieve voters easily. There are three types of propaganda to be worked in campaigns that can persuade the public in different ways. These three main paths to cover that propaganda is propaganda is used by governments, corporations, and media. They do that to make the message more complex and avoid some arguments against them. All of them are used on all sides and are valuable for the achievement of the campaign goals. They are called white, black and grey.

4.6.1 White Propaganda

White propaganda is content that can be traced to its source, is accurate, and presents a message close to the truth. It is a form of propaganda that attempts to show the public that the sender is on the right side with the correct ideology, and people can trust it. Its goal is to build a positive relationship with the audience and enhance its credibility. Usually, national celebrations that focus on patriotism, such as celebrating an Olympic winner as a hero, are examples of white propaganda; it is true, but also biased. In a political campaign, politicians use their influence among newspapers and through public relations or even by newspaper owners' interests, propaganda can be done, taking advantage of this vehicle's credibility. The Vote Leave page was posting articles from newspapers that were defending Brexit. It is a white propaganda with a clear medium, sources and ideology.

The Sun was one of the newspapers that openly supported the Leave campaign and ran headlines in favour of Brexit. The Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism at Oxford University published research showing that the *Daily Mail* included the most pro-Leave articles, followed by the *Daily Express*, *Daily Star*, *The Sun*, and *Daily Telegraph*. The newspapers with the most pro-Remain articles were, in order, the *Daily Mirror*, *The Guardian*, and the *Financial Times*. As that study demonstrates, journalism was involved in propaganda on both sides, confirming that white propaganda was effective and still exists in contemporary politics. For instance, on 14th June 2016, *The Sun* published a headline

that is pure propaganda instead of news. It is clear that this communication vehicle is calling its audience to vote against Remain. Figure 24 (Vote Leave, 2016) was posted on a Vote Leave page and, since it is true, it is considered white propaganda:

Figure 24: Post of *The Sun's* supports Leave shared by Vote Leave (Facebook, 2016)

4.6.2 Gray Propaganda

Gray propaganda is in the middle. It is between white and black. Its source is not clear and may be identified or not. It is used to create misunderstandings about an issue that people may have doubts about, such as when a corporation advertises an annual achievement that cannot be realised. The

propagandist uses a well-acquainted source by the audience to build credibility. The problem is that, in some cases, the public cannot confirm if the source really released that information.

During the campaign, the Vote Leave page posted about Turkey being part of the EU, which was shared without total confidence in that information. This shows a prospect, but the way it was shared on Facebook makes it seem as though the future membership of Turkey in the EU was confirmed. In this case, the propagandist (Leave) secretly put the original message in a recognised source (the British Embassy), then the message is interpreted as true and sent to the receiver as news, which is propaganda modified to look like news. Jowett and O'Donnell (2019, p. 25) referred to this as a legitimating source model. It is grey propaganda because it is using official information from the British Government, however, is not true that Turkey would join the EU. Figure 25 (Vote Leave, 2016) clarifies that:

Figure 25: Post shared by Vote Leave about Turkey in the EU (Facebook, 2016)

4.6.3 Black Propaganda

Black propaganda is one in which the source is hidden, or a false authority is credited. It is made by lies, conspiracy theories and disinformation. Disinformation must be highlighted in black propaganda because it looks like a news story, but it is deliberately false. It is used to build public outrage and deception. This form of propaganda is usually used to support racism, nationalism and narratives about enemies in war.

In the Referendum campaign, the Vote Leave page shared loads of that type of propaganda. In this post, the Leave campaign affirms that the UK is giving 2 billion to Macedonia, Serbia, Albania, Montenegro, and Turkey to join the EU. Characteristics that classify it as black propaganda are that there is no source in the text or in the image. Moreover, they designed a "Fact Check" on the bottom to make the narrative look like it is verified as professional journalism. This tactic creates something similar to a news story to convince the reader that it is true. The only difference is that, on social media, this disinformation spreads extremely fast through the internet. On this post, more than 11 thousand followers shared it. In Figure 26 (Vote Leave, 2016), the propagandist creates a deflective source, in this case Vote Leave, which apparently is a confident source with "Fact Check", and then sent it to the receiver who might believe it:

Figure 26: Post shared by Vote Leave about new possible EU members (Facebook, 2016)

4.7 Changing Public Opinion

Lippmann (2004, p. 9) states that the methodology in which public relations must work is changing public opinion, which means that it is the path for a successful political campaign to succeed. He talks about a triangular relation; they are the three most important themes to be observed by it: the scene of action; the human picture of that scene; and the human response to that picture. The scene of action is the truth as it is, there is no imagination, but reality about what has happened; the second one is the human picture of the scene, it is the interpretation with a subjective vision, each mind and each own world; and the last one is the human response to that picture, as in people interpretation and reaction, which is the most important one for those who are working with public opinion.

Public opinion influences people's minds. The thoughts of the audience are the best source of what is going on in their heads. This means that to build a successful campaign, it is necessary to consider opinion polls. Currently, this research shows how both sides used or did not use one of the most respected opinion polls. According to IPSOS polls from January to March, the top three issues were: immigration, the NHS, and the economy. From April to June, the main issues remained the same: immigration, the NHS, and the EU. Comparing the three main issues for British voters in 2016 with the main themes posted by Vote Leave and the Labour Party. Look at the charts to see how these two Facebook pages were used to share their three principal topics during that period.

VOTE LEAVE

JANUARY	**Promo Team 36%**	**Economy 20%**	**European Union 14%**	**Others 30%**
FEBRUARY	**European Union 27%**	**Immigration 23%**	**Calling to Leave 21%**	**Others 29%**
MARCH	**Calling to Leave 21%**	**European Union 18%**	**Economy 15%**	**Others 46%**
APRIL	**European Union 28%**	**NHS 21%**	**Immigration 14%**	**Others 37%**
MAY	**Immigration 23%**	**European Union 22%**	**Calling to Leave 16%**	**Others 39%**
JUNE	**Immigration 2 6%**	**Calling to Leave 23%**	**European Union 22%**	**Others 29%**

LABOUR PARTY

JANUARY	**Critic Govern 66%**	**Promo Team 17%**	**Economy 7%**	**Others 10%**
FEBRUARY	**Critic Govern 33%**	**Economy 26%**	**Calling to Remain 13%**	**Others 28%**
MARCH	**Critic Govern 68%**	**Bank Holiday 13%**	**Calling to Remain 10%**	**Others 9%**
APRIL	**Local Elections 44%**	**Critic Govern 35%**	**Calling to Remain 11%**	**Others 10%**
MAY	**Local Elections 35%**	**Calling to Remain 16%**	**Critic Govern 13%**	**Others 36%**
JUNE	**Economy 47%**	**Calling to Remain 21%**	**NHS 13%**	**Others 19%**

4.8 Persuasion on Camp

Persuasion is a technique that tries to influence the persuadee through beliefs, attitudes, intentions, and behaviour. Persuasion is considered the art of convincing minds. It is in propaganda and rhetoric, two principal tools for a campaign such as Brexit. Aristotle (1991, pp. 2152-2153) in his book *Rhetoric* affirms that rhetoric and dialectic are counterparts. He says that these two forms of expression belong to human beings. Some speakers have to practice in order to become masters and for others it can be spontaneous. Hence, rhetoric and dialectic are part of human being's communication and a form of persuasion. Persuasion is a sort of demonstration to convince the public through deduction between them. It is something essential in politics and political campaigns. Jowett and O'Donnell (2019, p. 31) define persuasion as a process that, through communication, influences others and can result in the changing of opinions. Persuasion is a transactional path that both sides should win. Even if the persuader takes advantage, people will be persuaded if their needs are attended to. Persuaders must know their public's needs to build the persuasion and make sense of the proposal. It means that both sides are dependent form each other. Persuasion is the content of propaganda and rhetoric. There are two trials for governing a community: by army or by words. The last one can only be won by persuasion.

During the Referendum campaign, *Vote Leave* had immigration as the main issue in its posts. Hence, the Labour Party accused them of discrimination against immigrants. As the election would decide if Britain would stay in the EU, it meant that European people would continue with free access to the UK, except non-Europeans. Thus, Vote Leave shared a rhetoric video accusing the Labour Party of discriminating against non-EU immigrants. That is persuasion in a political campaign, discussing the same topic in a different argument as can be confirmed in Figure 27 (Vote Leave, 2016):

Figure 27: Post shared by Vote Leave about Discrimination (Facebook, 2016)

4.8.1 Averse Persuasion: Labour Helping Leave Indirectly

The Labour Party critics of the Conservative government also helped Vote Leave. As the Labour Party and the Conservative Party government were in favour of the European Union, both sides would have worked better if they had had a ceasefire between them during the Brexit Referendum campaign. People are living their lives outside this complex political box. When they see two groups fighting on one issue in the morning and being friends in another topic in the afternoon, they misunderstand this relationship and, even though they get upset, look at them as hypocrites. The Remain side did not

follow the basic rule of propaganda affecting Labour Party posts on Facebook, as a reflected of that. It gave Vote Leave more chances to develop its argument and attack the weakness of its enemy. This is an analysis based in fact on the social media from both sides.

One of the main debates was regarding the NHS. IPSOS polls showed that from January to June 2016, NHS was the second highest issue for Britons. Therefore, Vote Leave was posting on Facebook regarding this theme frequently, affirming that hospitals were overwhelmed because a lot of immigrants were entering the UK. Moreover, Labour showed the problem with GP doctors as a failure of the Conservative government, even at the time of the Referendum campaign. It is a creation of misunderstandings in the campaign, confusing the voters, indirectly helping Leave. The Labour Party, as a supporter of Remain and an opposite of Vote Leave, was criticising the situation of health care in Britain during the campaign time. Labour Party Post on 10th March 2016 by Heidi Alexander MP, Labour's shadow health secretary, responds to today's NHS England figures, which reveal that A&E performance in the first month of the year is the worst on record. Key performance targets were missed across almost every standard and just 88.7% of patients were seen within four hours in A&E departments:

> These shocking figures prove that Tory health policies are failing patients and failing the NHS. On this Government's watch more patients are waiting too long for treatment, more ambulances are taking too long to arrive, and more older people are stuck in hospital because they cannot be safely discharged. The uncomfortable truth for Ministers is that this is a crisis of their own making.

Bernays (2005, P.112) states that politicians might know what voters want and what they will accept because they understand their necessities and claims. Politicians go to the street talking to the public in campaigns, and as they are listening to the people, they find out what is going on in society, so politicians know what they must do to gain votes. However, politicians are not in control of spreading the mass communication of their ideas, they are not in charge of how the message might arrive in the minds of people and sometimes, even if they know the problem, they do not know how to make the audience trust them. Labour knew that people were angry at the NHS and that was a problem for the ruling government, which was with them in the Remain campaign, but Labour did not know how to transmit the message to voters at a time when any post would be essential for a voter's decision.

The problem of health care in the UK was happening before the campaign, Labour had been in the government before the Conservative Party, thus, both parties would avoid talking about this issue and focus on the benefits of Britain being in the EU, but Instead, they did not build a common platform, which could have developed tactics to make a pro-EU campaign closer to the reality of the people. Leave is saying that the cause of the NHS being damaged is because of immigration, however, the Remain campaign focused on a strategy to defend the NHS. As one part kept criticising the NHS, this allowed the Leave side to say that there was a problem regarding to NHS. Bernays (2005, p. 113) affirms that the public does not usually believe in politics and it makes it hard to campaign and gain voters, so a platform with a strategy is essential for a successful campaign. In a campaign, a party or a politician cannot be on two sides, they must two choose one and build a narrative for that.

4.9 Semiotic Understanding

A political campaign is full of signs, and it is necessary to look at it with a semiotic outlook. To understand it, this work is referenced by Ferdinand Saussure, one of the most well-known linguists and considered to be the father of modern linguistics. As communication has its own language, it needs to understand its meaning. Saussure (1959, p. 14) describes language as a precise object in the miscellaneous mass of speech facts among human beings. He studied in depth semiology, which is the study of signs and symbols. As this dissertation is looking for the interpretation of some images and text, semiology is crucial for understanding some of these complex issues in a political campaign, where politicians use semiotic photos, which induce voters to think about them and vote for them.

Saussure (1959, pp. 65-66) defines a sign as a psychological concept, or more like an image-sound. The conception (signified) of a tree is formed in the mind , which is the reason why when a person learns a second language, they know what a tree is in their mind and if a teacher describes the tree's characteristics sans saying the name, the student will know that the teacher is talking about a tree. An abstract concept in the imagination is built through life experiences and the acquisition of knowledge. It means that words change through their writing, however, a picture of something has a universal meaning and can get a specific significance with a specific intention. All images come with a message and in this message laid its meaning. It is composed of a text (signifier) to complement the concept (signified), which together form the sign. The example in Figure 28 (Vote Leave, 2016) analysis it comes from a baby's:

Figure 28: Post shared by Vote Leave about the NHS (Facebook, 2016)

Babies are human beings whom most people feel sorry for if something goes wrong with them. Babies touch people's hearts easily with their innocence and fragility. This is a picture posted on Facebook to talk about the second most important issue to voters in the UK, the NHS. An image is one of the most powerful instruments for a campaign. Vote Leave could say that some babies were not being well cared for by the government because the EU, the political group, could write a text about an outrage case in a hospital, which happened to a baby; instead, they just post a sensitive photo of a baby, helplessly awaiting assistance. Moreover, it was written, "How in debt is your local NHS?". Social media works with small pieces of text and pictures to easily attract attention and, through a psychological scheme, touch the audience. As Saussure says: words can change but the object stays the same. The Labour Party could use this tactic, showing child refugees suffering in boats to show their fragility and needs. Instead, it did not act in this way and did not touch the souls of the people to open their minds regarding other children as well. Look at Figure 29 (Labour Party, 2016) below, regarding the same topic, the NHS:

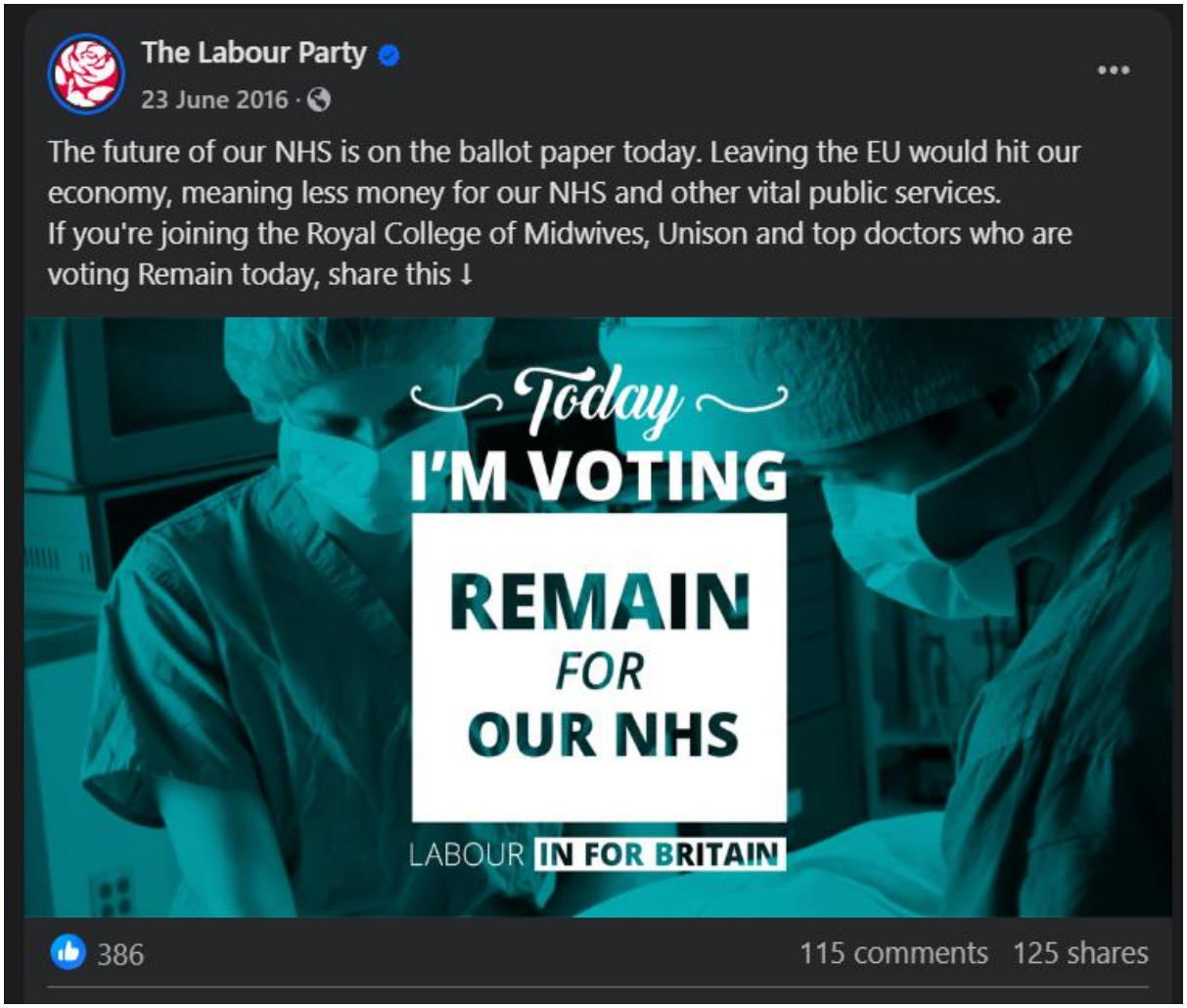

Figure 29: Post shared by Labour Party about the NHS (Facebook, 2016)

This is the photo shared by Labour Party about the NHS to convince people to vote Remain. First, there is no sensitive content in the image that could call attention from the voters. Second, the image is not clear enough to touch hearts with what is being shown. Third, the picture is covered by the name "Remain for our NHS". It is a picture that, at first contact with the audience's eyes, does not make them look at it deeply and reflect on the issue of the NHS. The psychological strategy described by Saussure (1959, p. 65-66) is not working in the Labour propaganda. They shared an image of two health professionals working, which does not mean anything bad. It looks like a normal photo without a purpose.

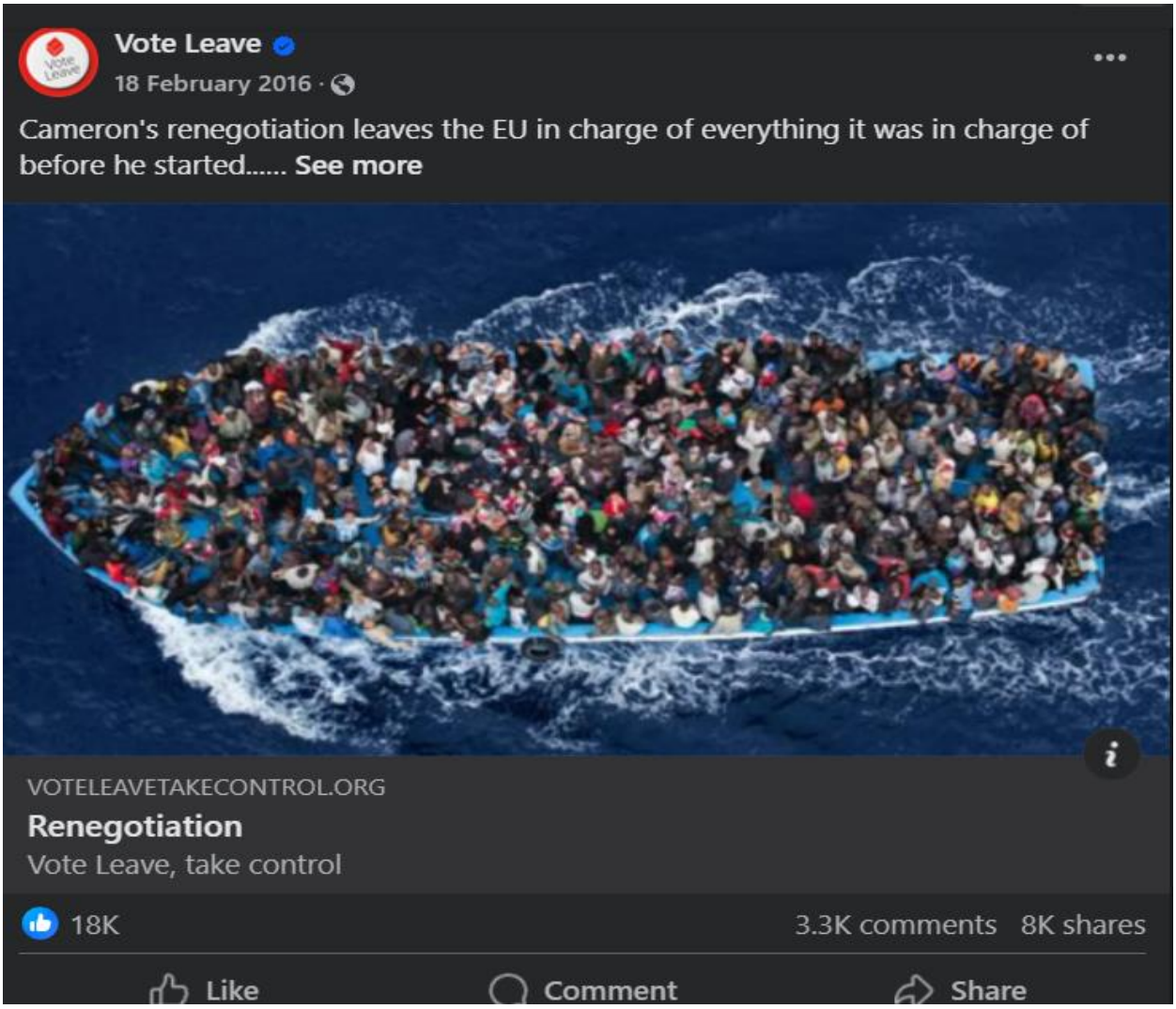

Figure 30: Post shared by Vote Leave about Immigration (Facebook, 2016)

Some pictures are well recognised by society, and if it is shared in the digital world, the intention from the publisher may be received by the public. Figure 30 (Vote Leave, 2016), posted during the campaign on the 18th February 2016, illustrates a lot of people on a boat in the water. The first analysis of it is the concept is that it is clearly a boat overwhelmed with people. This concept is universal; however, in the context of Britain, another relation with this photo is created, such as a sound-image, which means it is a boat coming in from abroad with immigrants to the UK. It is known that people use boats to go to Britain illegally; therefore, when a picture is posted to talk about an issue which a lot of people are against, it creates a negative meaning. The concept (signified) about what it is and the sound-image (signifier) about the context explore an issue, and it looks like it is true that it is happening, which could be seen as a risk for British voters. The slogan used by the Leave "Take Back Control" finalised the sign regarding this issue. The Vote Leave post used this as an image that shows full transport as a dangerous action happening because the EU will change with Brexit.

Figure 31: Post shared by Vote Leave about Immigration (Facebook, 2016)

Figure 31 (Vote Leave, 2016) comparing the power of a photo to a picture may make why semiotic matters more understandable. Compare the photo to this picture above. The first photo is a post about boats with people, which caught people's attention at first sight. This photo can shock eyes and has 18 thousand likes, more than 3 thousand comments and over 8 thousand shares. This is an image talking about immigration, an issue for British society. The second picture is talking about immigration as well, but it is a designed map showing predictions of the number of immigrants. The reactions are weaker with 8 thousand reactions, around 1 thousand comments and a few more than 6 thousand shares. The effect on the Facebook followers shows that a picture that represents human beings as they are touches the public more.

4.10 The Digital Revolution and Contra-Revolution

The physicist Isaac Newton, in his Law of Gravity, theorised that for every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction. Over the past three decades, Western governments with left-wing, left, or centre-left inclinations have been winning elections. In the United States, the world watched as the first black president was elected after more than two hundred years of independence. Barack Obama was the first politician to utilise this technology in his journey to the White House. In November 2008, during the election, the Democratic candidate had approximately 2.5 million followers on his social media, while his opponent, McCain, had nearly a quarter of that number. Chang (2010, p. 5) in the article *Obama and the Power of Social Media and Technology* states that traditional campaigns mainly focused on garnering two things from supporters: votes and money. The Obama team's grassroots efforts centred around asking voters for a third element: time, symbolising involvement and engagement. This was the new digital revolution driven by social media, which led to the election of someone unlikely, a black man from a country marked by slavery and apartheid between white and black people.

The counter-revolution gained momentum on social media, and currently, there are more factors to consider in the political campaign. These new models of technology are constantly transforming, and a fresh wave of conservative sentiment has been rising in response to the liberal growth, in which Barack Obama was seen as the world's leading figure. In 2016, the right wing in the UK did what the left wing did in 2008 in the USA, use social media in large amounts during the European Union Referendum. Vaidhyanathan (2018, p. 146) titles Facebook as *The Politics Machine*, which learned from past elections and began to tailor political campaigns that influence voters, cast as a strategic space to manipulate minds, generate revenue through data, and sell targeted advertisements. However, this time, the right wing is exploiting this platform to target individuals who are more susceptible to posts blaming refugees for problems, like the NHS backlog in the UK, and encouraging people to vote to move away from the EU, so they will not have to wait in queues for appointments. Meanwhile, the counter-revolution has been spreading across social media globally, while the left-wing remained confident that it would not achieve success. The level of engagement shown by Obama's supporters in 2008 was similar to that of Brexit supporters in 2016, as both groups were more proactive. For example, in May, the Labour Party posted only 66 times, whereas Vote Leave posted 125 times, almost double. Additionally, on 1st May, Leave shared a video that garnered 7 thousand likes and 3 thousand shares, while Labour did not post anything that day.

The counter-revolution has been rising with social media, where people can post anything at any time without consequences. After the left-wing bloc lost the Cold War with the end of the Soviet Union, they decided to focus on a specific issue, the culture war, such as feminism and LGBTQ+. If it goes back to traditional socialism, those topics were not significant; the left-wing has always fought for a revolution that could transform workers' lives for the better through revolution to gain power and control of the goods. Karl Marx wrote about a revolution in which workers would take control of factories and put an end to exploitation. He never discussed feminism or LGBTQ+ issues because the socialist system was designed to address the exploitation of the working class. On 21st November 1989, the Berlin Wall fell, marking the end of the Soviet Union and its economic system, resulting in the triumph of capitalism and the right wing. Hence, the left needed to seek a different kind of issue to fight for. As the culture war defends those marginalised, just as socialism defended workers, they shifted their focus to this agenda. There is a problem with this due to the forgetting of the working class. It marks a shift from economic issues to cultural issues. Consequently, poverty rised in the UK. See data in Figure 32 (JRF, 2016):

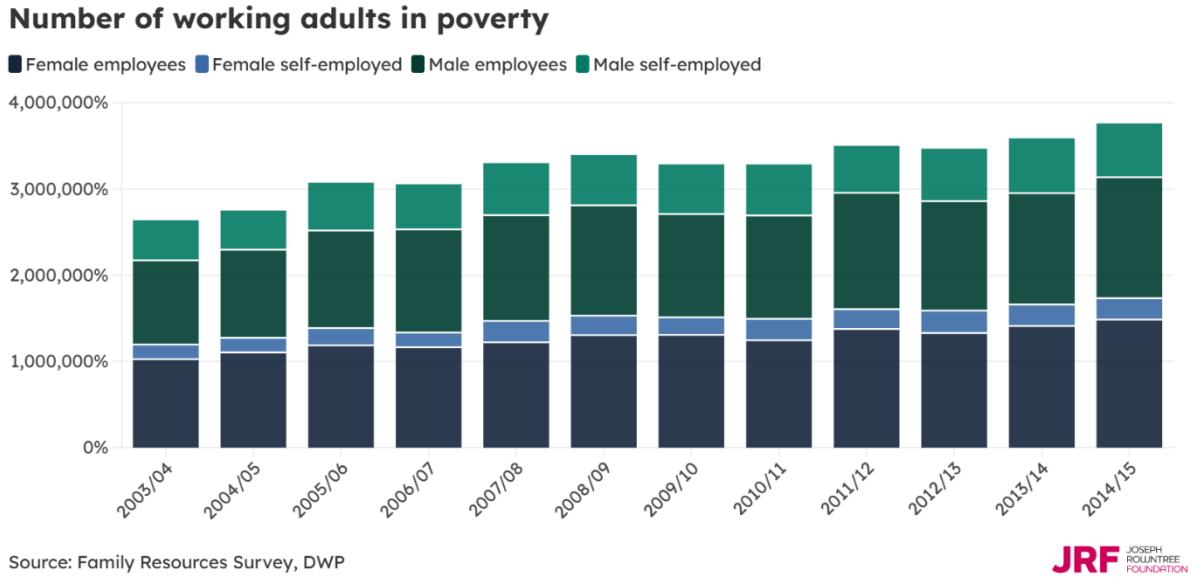

Figure 32: Number of poverty in the UK (JRF, 2016)

Data from The House of Commons Library in its report *Home ownership & renting: demographics* (p. 21) in the UK in 2006, 69% of its population were Owner-occupying, and in 2016 was 64%. Private renting up from 11% of the UK population to 17%. The data (p. 23) is worse for those 25-34, for instance, in 2006, 55% of them were owner-occupying and in 2016, only 39%. *Monitoring poverty and social exclusion 2016* (MPSE) released by Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) presented that between

2005 and 2015, the number of workers in a household in poverty increased by over 1 million. Moreover, the number of private renters in poverty has doubled over this decade. There are now as many private renters in poverty as social renters. Rent accounts for at least a third of income for more than 70% of private renters in poverty. The working class, as orphans, desired somebody to adopt them. In the 20th century, a worker belonging to the lower class could buy a house in the United Kingdom; in 2016, they were struggling to rent one. The right wing found it, and even though they are the people who have always been exploiting the working class, they built propaganda and started working on issues which those orphans would easily be targeted, such as housing crisis, economy, health care and immigration, being linked with those problems.

4.11 Outcomes

It is hoped that the findings from this research provide direct outcomes presenting the importance of understanding propaganda, persuasion and public opinion in political campaigns through social media in the contemporary era. It proves the crucial role of this platform in politics due to the sharing of political content by parties to achieve their goals.

As was analysed in this chapter, Vote Leave started its campaign having more advantages because the united group turned around the Leave group. Therefore, the strategy developed through marketing became easier to manage on Facebook rather than the Labour Party, which was practically alone in posting its content regarding the EU Referendum. Moreover, the tactics of propaganda were far away from the Labour Party social media, while Vote Leave was following the manual, such as the ideologies of the public, taking advantage of the context in which content was shared, having a leader to represent the group, and targeting the main issue claimed by the Britons in the polls.

Elections have evolved to public opinion, which means the sentiment of the people. Vote Leave Facebook was endeavouring to persuade voters through sensitive posts, such as the baby, regarding the NHS, which can be seen by comparing the results of its likes, shares and comments to Labour Party on the same topic. It was studied that Vote Leave to persuade the electors showed itself as closer to their demands, resulting in identification between the campaign and the public. Furthermore, Vote Leave used lies through its posts with gray and black propaganda to convince people to join its side.

As a campaign is not journalism, it is propaganda. The Leave campaign had a stronger effect on public opinion.

Eventually, the Labour Party was a confident group that thought the Referendum had been won. The numbers presented in this analysis prove the large difference between the Vote Leave and Labour Party on Facebook. The account moves this research to say that Vote Leave worked better than the Labour Party during all six months of analysis. As a hypothesis that Facebook was an important tool in this election, it can be stated that those who knew how to work on this platform faster and more intensely did a great job and, for this, got Brexit done.

Chapter 5
Conclusion

"We are governed, our minds moulded, our tastes formed,
our ideas suggested, largely by men we have never heard of..."

(Bernays, *Propaganda*, 2005, p. 37)

Conclusion

In his classic book *Propaganda*, Bernays (2005, p. 37) reflects on those who govern the people, affirming that voters do not know who is governing them. This led to a reflection that candidates are unknown to voters, so the role of a campaign is to acquaint its candidates and policies. In recent years, the debate about the reasons why Brexit happened have been discussed in all types of media and in many academic institutions across the world. Among these many sides and aspects, this dissertation aimed to tackle a different angle regarding this issue: how was Facebook used to gain votes on Brexit Referendum 2016?

The main findings during this six-month investigation on Facebook, from January to June of 2016, revealed that, on one hand, the Leave side was united in one group and campaign harmoniously; but on the other, the Remain campaign was divided and disorganised, splitting supporters into Labour and Conservative. Moreover, the Conservatives did not campaign on their Facebook page, resulting in the Labour Party working alone on this platform. Vote Leave shared 597 posts on its Facebook page during the six months of the campaign, while the Labour Party shared 296 posts. Regarding the mentioned topics, Vote Leave shared 849 times and Labour Party 377. Through these numbers, it can be seen that the Leave page was more proactive and worked harder than Labour. Also, Leave did not discuss local elections as the Conservatives and Labour, instead, Leave was focused only on the Referendum, which was coming up for the British voters. Vote Leave was totally concentrated on its issue, and the Labour Party was dispersed between the Referendum and the local elections, such as choosing the mayor of London. Moreover, they were split between Conservatives and Labourers, giving an advantage to Leave to work freely and unitedly.

During this research, it was found that Vote Leave's Facebook worked better at following the guidelines of marketing, propaganda, and persuasion, which means that it knew how to manage a successful political campaign to gain voters. However, this does not imply that Leave was telling the truth; political campaigns often employ lies as a strategy, and the party suffering from them should expose this. Vote Leave was posting data about immigration without a source, and the Labour Party kept itself quiet without dismissing them. Many important works have been done since 2016, most of them blaming the Leave camp for its victory, saying that it acted unfairly during the campaign, which is not a false claim. Others have blamed Facebook for using society to achieve its main goal, profit, which is true

and is part of a company that is in the market to make money. It is time for those who voted and campaigned to Remain to look to themselves and learn from their own mistakes. The losers should do an examination about what could be done and what was not done; why so many people were angry with the establishment, the European Union and their politics in the UK, such as the Conservatives and Labour parties. This research can prove that the Remain group have their faults in many forms, first they were split and fighting at a crucial moment, the campaign which both were defending; second, the Conservatives opted not to share content on its platforms regarding the Referendum; and third, the group from the Remain side, the Labour Party, which were sharing content about the Referendum, did not use the correct tactics.

Data about poverty showed that a part of the British people were forgotten by the Conservative Party and Labour Party, among them, those who are in poverty, as data presented a rise of more than 1 million over a decade. Thus, the Vote Leave propaganda on Facebook targeted those angry with the establishment and saw that the vote to exit the EU was a mix of outrage and protest against these politicians; hence, they were susceptible to turning to those who promised a different future. Furthermore, Vote Leave constructed momentum on these platforms by being more proactive with their staff visiting people in their homes or going to the streets every week and posting this content on social media to incentivise others to come together with them. It was a Facebook page connected to the polls and working with an agenda, leading voters to its camp and, as a result, having more engagement, something which is vital for a political campaign.

To conclude, Vote Leave was more proactive, focusing solely on Brexit; employed better semiotics with more emotional message, such as the boat with refugees; used propaganda tactics like grey and black to hide sources manipulating numbers and misleading data; operated cleverly but ethically in immoral manner, yet it still managed to overpower Facebook with many more posts, hence, more efficiency. Whilst the Labour Party was more distracted, sharing content about Brexit and Local Elections; managing to campaign sans propaganda tactics, transmitting weaker messages; using Facebook less, sharing a smaller quantity of posts and, as a result, a poorer campaign. Thus, as Facebook was the dominant social media platform in this election, it gave Vote Leave an advantage to win the Brexit Referendum 2016.

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Appendices

	A	B	C	D	E
1	**JANUARY**	**LEAVE=45 POSTS**	**LABOUR=26 POSTS**	LEAVE	LABOUR
2	PROMOTIONAL TEAM	18	5	36%	17%
3	IMMIGRATION	3	0	6%	0%
4	ECONOMY	10	2	20%	7%
5	HEALTH (NHS)	0	0	0%	0%
6	EUROPEAN UNION	10	0	20%	0%
7	EDUCATION	0	0	0%	0%
8	SECURITY	1	1	2%	3%
9	BANK HOLIDAY	0	1	0%	3%
10	HOUSING CRISIS	0	0	0%	0%
11	CALLING TO LEAVE OR REMAIN (NO SPECIFI	7	1	14%	3%
12	CLIMATE CHANGE	1	0	2%	0%
13	LABOUR CRITICISING GOVERN	0	19	0%	66%
14	JOBS	0	0	0%	0%
15	LOCAL ELECTIONS	0	0	0%	0%
16	**TOTAL MENTIONS**	**50**	**29**	100%	100%

	A	B	C	D	E
1	**FEBRUARY**	**LEAVE=56 POSTS**	**LABOUR=31 POSTS**	LEAVE	LABOUR
2	PROMOTIONAL TEAM	10	2	15%	5%
3	IMMIGRATION	15	1	23%	3%
4	ECONOMY	3	10	5%	26%
5	HEALTH (NHS)	1	0	2%	0%
6	EUROPEAN UNION	18	0	27%	0%
7	EDUCATION	0	0	0%	0%
8	SECURITY	4	2	6%	5%
9	HOUSING CRISIS	1	0	2%	0%
10	JOB	0	0	0%	0%
11	CALLING TO LEAVE OR REMAIN (NO SPECIFI	14	5	21%	13%
12	LABOUR CRITICISING GOVERN	0	13	0%	33%
13	LOCAL ELECTIONS	0	1	0%	3%
14	MENTAL HEALTH	0	1	0%	3%
15	BANK HOLIDAY	0	4	0%	10%
16	**TOTAL MENTIONS**	**66**	**39**	**100%**	**100%**

	A	B	C	D	E
1	**MARCH**	**LEAVE=56 POSTS**	**LABOUR=40 POSTS**	LEAVE	LABOUR
2	PROMOTIONAL TEAM	11	1	15%	3%
3	IMMIGRATION	7	0	10%	0%
4	ECONOMY	13	0	18%	0%
5	JOB	0	0	0%	0%
6	HEALTH (NHS)	3	0	4%	0%
7	EUROPEAN UNION	13	0	18%	0%
8	EDUCATION	1	0	1%	0%
9	TAX	3	0	4%	0%
10	SECURITY	2	0	3%	0%
11	HOUSING CRISIS	5	0	7%	0%
12	CALLING TO LEAVE OR REMAIN (NO SPECIFIC)	15	4	21%	10%
13	LABOUR CRITISICING GOVERN	0	27	0%	68%
14	LOCAL ELECTIONS	0	2	0%	5%
15	BANK HOLIDAY	0	5	0%	13%
16	REGISTER TO VOTE	0	1	0%	3%
17	**TOTAL MENTIONS**	**73**	**40**	**100%**	**100%**

	A	B	C	D	E
1	**APRIL**	**LEAVE=73 POSTS**	**LABOUR=48 POSTS**	LEAVE	LABOUR
2	PROMOTIONAL TEAM	6	5	5%	9%
3	IMMIGRATION	16	0	14%	0%
4	ECONOMY	8	0	7%	0%
5	HEALTH (NHS)	24	0	21%	0%
6	EUROPEAN UNION	32	0	28%	0%
7	PROPAGANDA	3	0	3%	0%
8	EDUCATION	2	0	2%	0%
9	TAX	1	0	1%	0%
10	SECURITY	5	0	4%	0%
11	CALLING TO LEAVE OR REMAIN (NO SPECIFIC)	16	6	14%	11%
12	LABOUR CRITICISING GOVERN	0	19	0%	35%
13	LOCAL ELECTIONS	0	24	0%	44%
14	BEBATE BBC	1	0	1%	0%
15	REGISTER TO VOTE	1	0	1%	0%
16	BANK HOLIDAYS AND HOMAGES	0	0	0%	0%
17	REFERENDUM POLLS	1	0	1%	0%
18	**TOTAL MENTIONS**	**116**	**54**	**100%**	**100%**

	A	B	C	D	E
1	**MAY**	**LEAVE =125 POSTS**	**LABOUR=66 POSTS**	LEAVE	LABOUR
2	PROMOTIONAL TEAM	17	3	9%	4%
3	IMMIGRATION	43	2	23%	3%
4	ECONOMY	16	10	8%	13%
5	JOB	0	0	0%	0%
6	HEALTH (NHS)	27	2	14%	3%
7	EUROPEAN UNION	42	0	22%	0%
8	EDUCATION	2	0	1%	0%
9	TAX	2	3	1%	4%
10	SECURITY	9	2	5%	3%
11	HOUSING CRISIS	1	0	1%	0%
12	CALLING TO LEAVE OR REMAIN (NO SPECIFIC)	30	13	16%	16%
13	LABOUR CRITICISING GOVERN	0	10	0%	13%
14	LOCAL ELECTIONC	0	28	0%	35%
15	CLIMATE CHANGE	0	3	0%	4%
16	BANK HOLIDAY AND HOMAGE	0	0	0%	0%
17	REGISTER TO VOTE	0	4	0%	5%
18	**TOTAL MENTIONS**	**189**	**80**	**100%**	**100%**

	A	B	C	D	E
1	**JUNE**	**LEAVE =242 POSTS**	**LABOUR =85 POSTS**	LEAVE	LABOUR
2	PROMOTIONAL TEAM	8	1	2%	1%
3	IMMIGRATION	91	1	26%	1%
4	ECONOMY	33	63	9%	47%
5	JOB	0	0	0%	0%
6	HEALTH (NHS)	31	18	9%	13%
7	EUROPEAN UNION	78	0	22%	0%
8	INDUSTRY	1	0	0%	0%
9	EDUCATION	4	0	1%	0%
10	TAX	4	1	1%	1%
11	SECURITY	13	5	4%	4%
12	HOUSING CRISIS	4	0	1%	0%
13	CALLING TO LEAVE OR REMAIN (NO SPECIFIC)	82	29	23%	21%
14	MP J0 COX DEATH	0	4	0%	3%
15	REGISTER TO REFERENDUM	5	9	1%	7%
16	BANK HOLIDAY AND HOMAGE	0	1	0%	1%
17	LOCAL ELECTION (TOOTING)	0	0	0%	0%
18	FAKE NEWS ABOUT REMAIN	1	0	0%	0%
19	CLIMATE CHANGE	0	3	0%	2%
20	**TOTAL MENTION**	**355**	**135**	**100%**	**100%**

	A	B
1	**JANUARY**	**CONSERVATIVES=29 POSTS**
2	PROMOTIONAL TEAM	0
3	IMMIGRATION PROGRAMME	1
4	ECONOMY	0
5	HEALTH (NHS)	2
6	EDUCATION	2
7	SECURITY	2
8	TAX	0
9	BANK HOLIDAY	3
10	HOUSING PROGRAMME	4
11	CLIMATE CHANGE	0
12	JOB	6
13	CONSERVATIVES CRITICISING LABOUR	1
14	LOCAL ELECTIONS	11
15	**TOTAL MENTIONS**	**32**

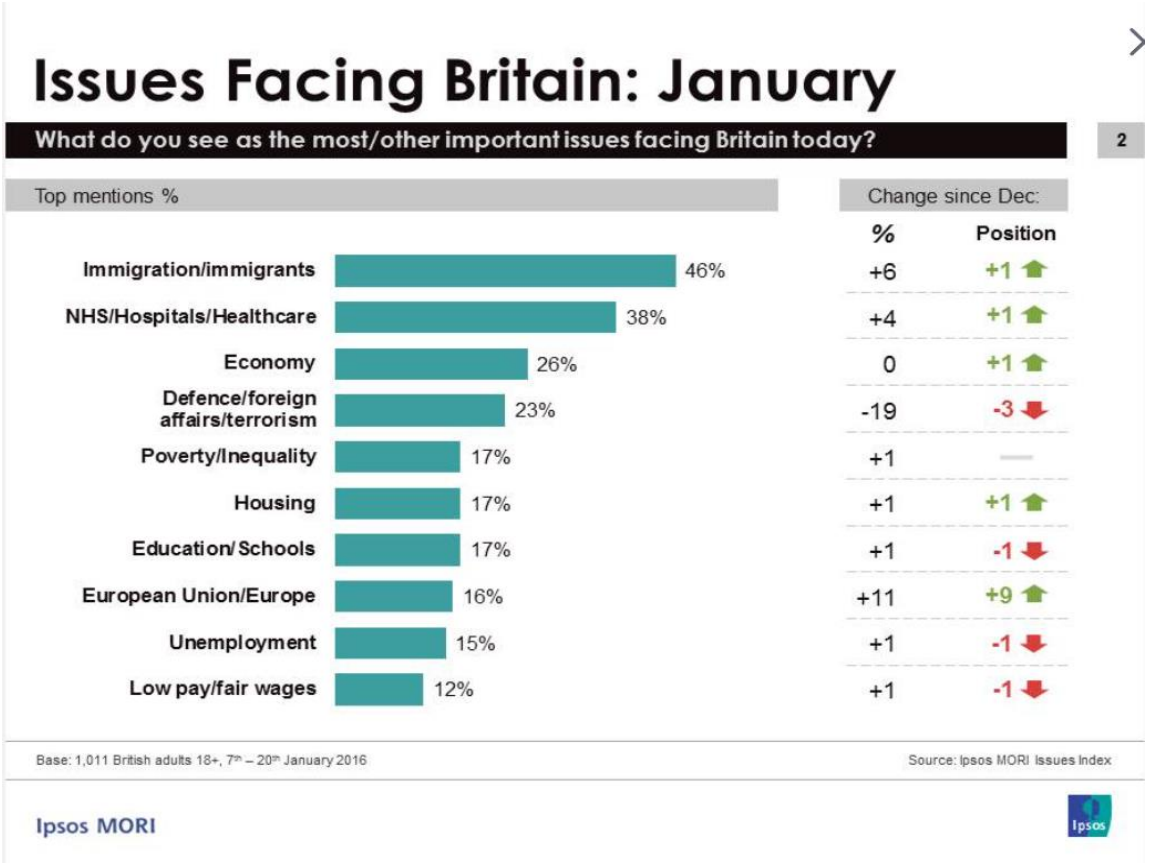
	A	B
1	**FEBRUARY**	**CONSERVATIVES=23 POSTS**
2	PROMOTIONAL TEAM	1
3	IMMIGRATION PROGRAMME	0
4	ECONOMY	1
5	HEALTH (NHS)	0
6	EDUCATION	4
7	TAX	0
8	SECURITY	1
9	HOUSING PROGRAMME	3
10	JOB	4
11	CONSERVATIVES CRITICISING LABOUR	1
12	LOCAL ELECTIONS	9
13	MENTAL HEALTH	1
14	GOVERN DEVOLVING POWER TO SCOTLAND	1
15	BANK HOLIDAY	1
16	**TOTAL MENTIONS**	**27**

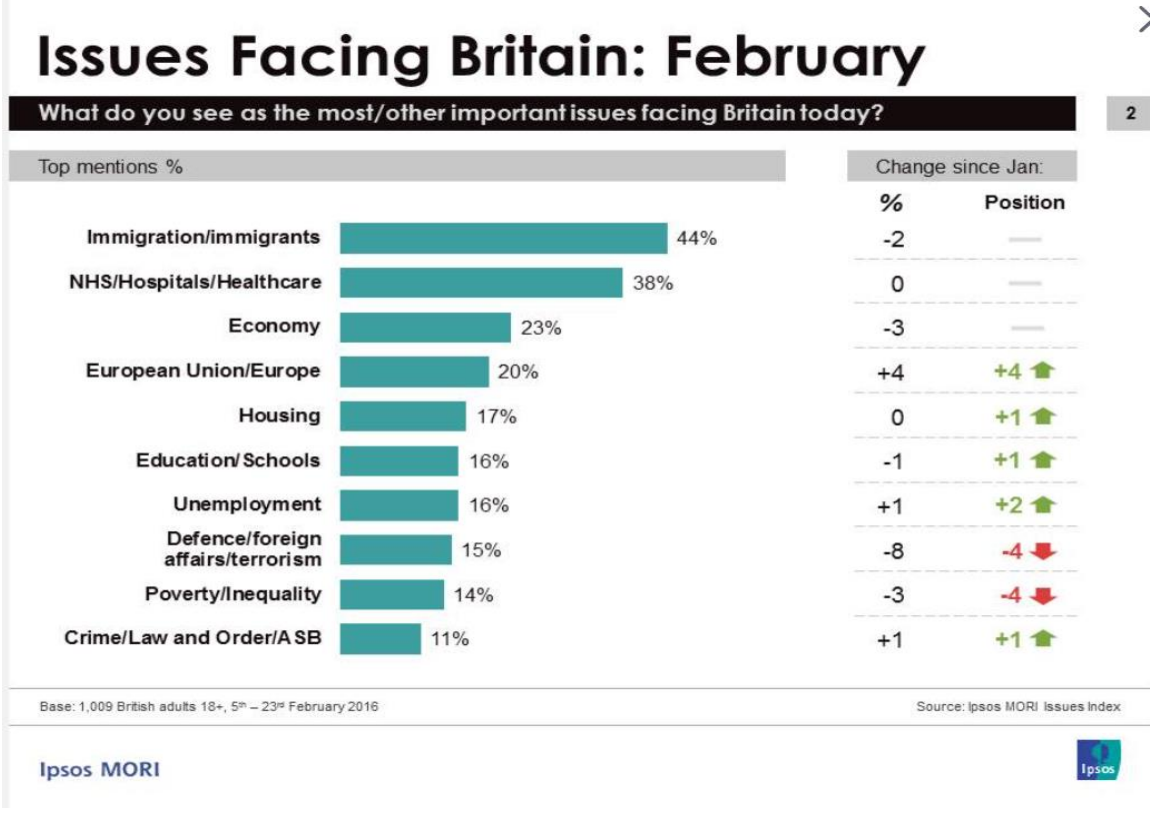
	A	B
1	**MARCH**	**CONSERVATIVES=22 POSTS**
2	PROMOTIONAL TEAM	1
3	IMMIGRATION PROGRAMME	0
4	ECONOMY	9
5	JOB	2
6	TAX	0
7	HEALTH (NHS)	0
8	EUROPEAN UNION	1
9	EDUCATION	5
10	SECURITY	0
11	HOUSING PROGRAMME	0
12	LOCAL ELECTIONS	10
13	BANK HOLIDAY	0
14	REGISTER TO VOTE	0
15	**TOTAL MENTIONS**	**28**

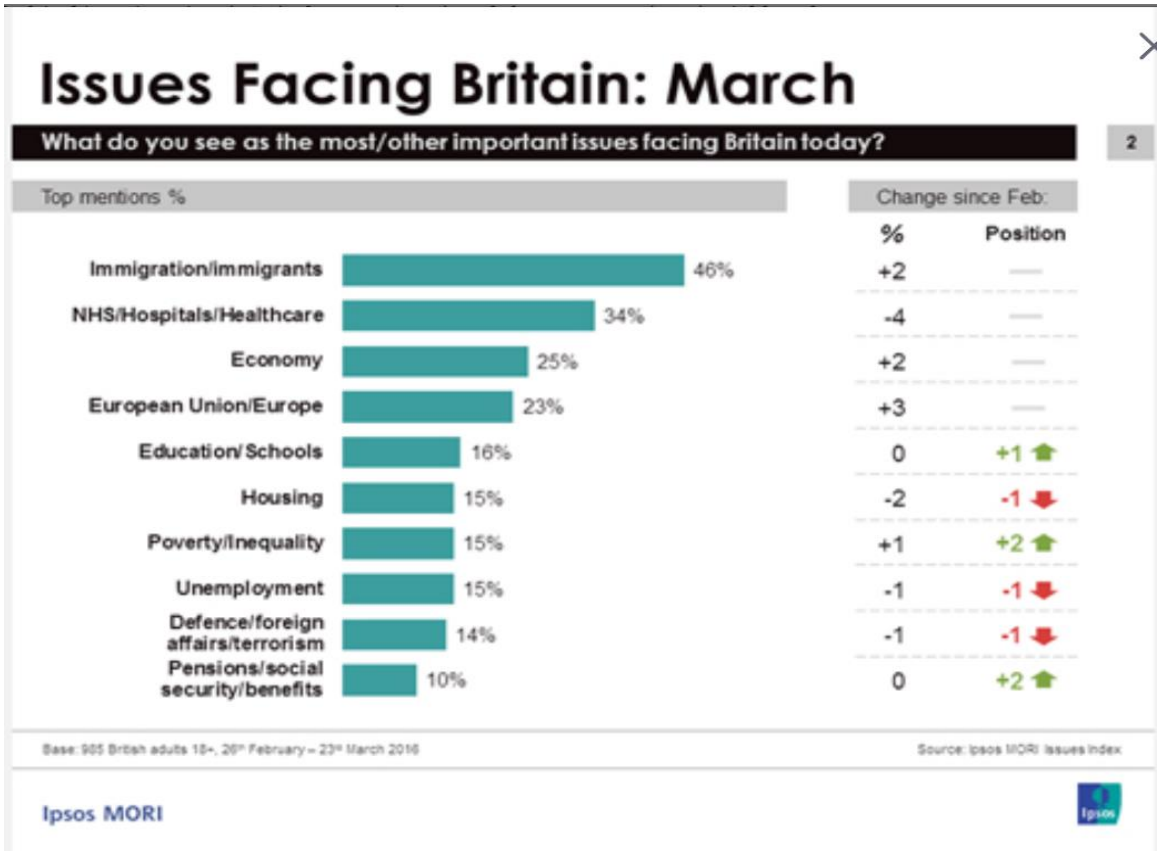
	A	B
1	**APRIL**	**CONSERVATIVES=28 POSTS**
2	PROMOTIONAL TEAM	0
3	IMMIGRATION PROGRAMME	0
4	ECONOMY	6
5	HEALTH (NHS)	0
6	PROPAGANDA	0
7	EDUCATION	0
8	TAX	1
9	SECURITY	2
10	LOCAL ELECTIONS	14
11	GENERAL SPEECH	2
12	REGISTER TO VOTE	1
13	BANK HOLIDAY AND HOMAGE	4
14	**TOTAL MENTIONS**	**30**

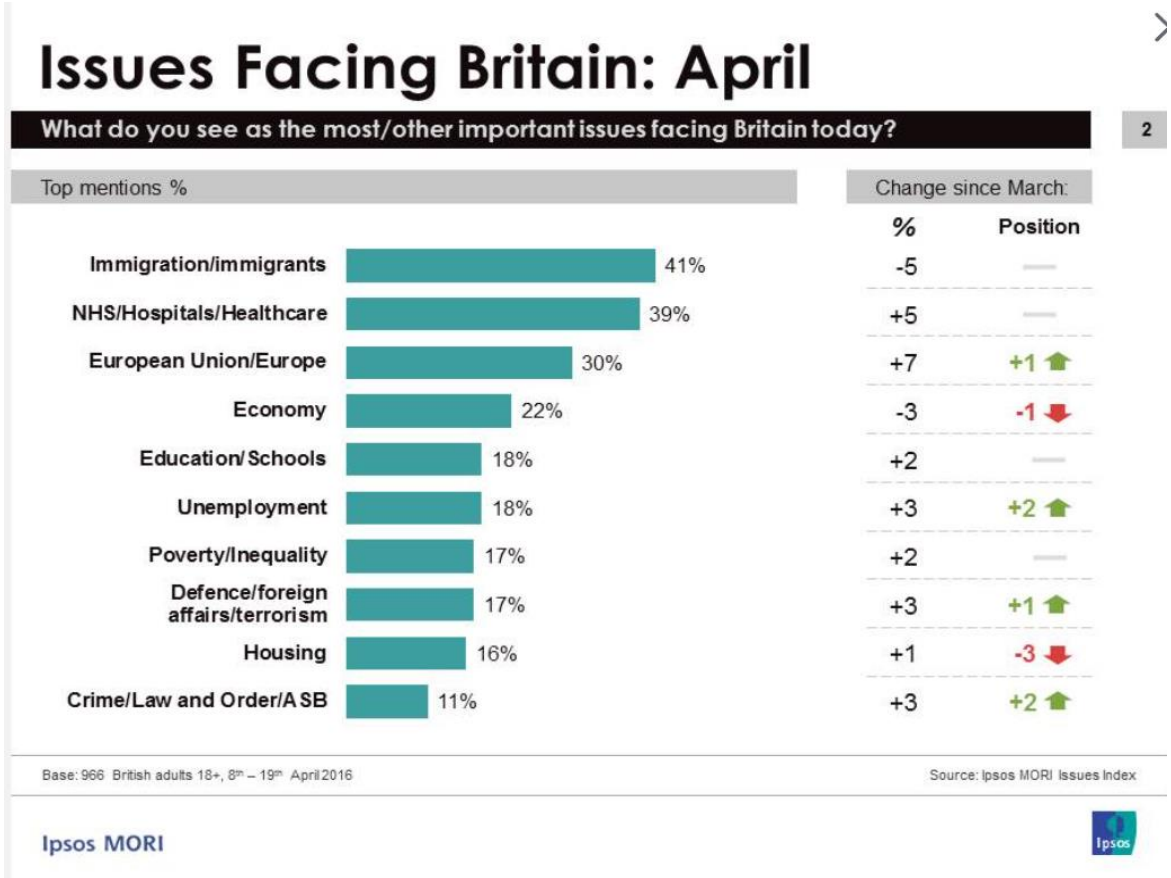
	A	B
1	**MAY**	**CONSERVATIVES=20 POSTS**
2	PROMOTIONAL TEAM	0
3	IMMIGRATION PROGRAMME	0
4	ECONOMY	1
5	JOB	2
6	HEALTH (NHS)	0
7	EUROPEAN UNION	0
8	EDUCATION	0
9	TAX	2
10	SECURITY	1
11	HOUSING PROGRAMME	0
12	LOCAL ELECTIONS	9
13	CLIMATE CHANGE	0
14	BANK HOLIDAY AND HOMAGE	4
15	SOCIAL PROGRAMME	2
16	REGISTER TO VOTE	0
17	**TOTAL MENTIONS**	**21**

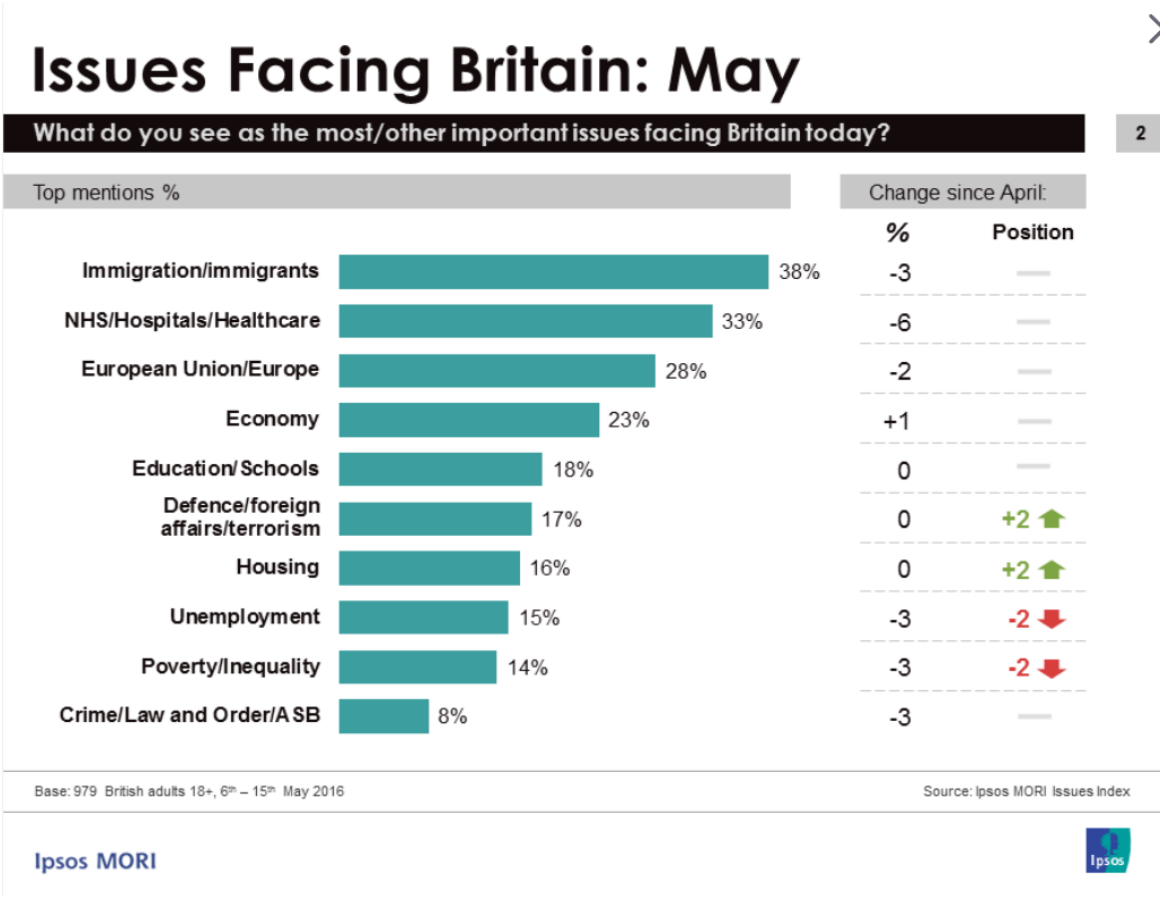
	A	B
1	**JUNE**	**CONSERVATIVES=13 POSTS**
2	PROMOTIONAL TEAM	0
3	IMMIGRATION PROGRAMME	0
4	ECONOMY	3
5	JOB	1
6	TAX	0
7	HEALTH (NHS)	0
8	INDUSTRY	1
9	EDUCATION	1
10	SECURITY	0
11	HOUSING PROGRAMME	0
12	MP JO COX DEATH	3
13	CONSERVATIVES CRITICISING LABOUR	2
14	BANK HOLIDAY AND HOMAGE	1
15	LOCAL ELECTIONS (TOOTING)	3
16	CLIMATE CHANGE	0
17	**TOTAL MENTIONS**	**15**

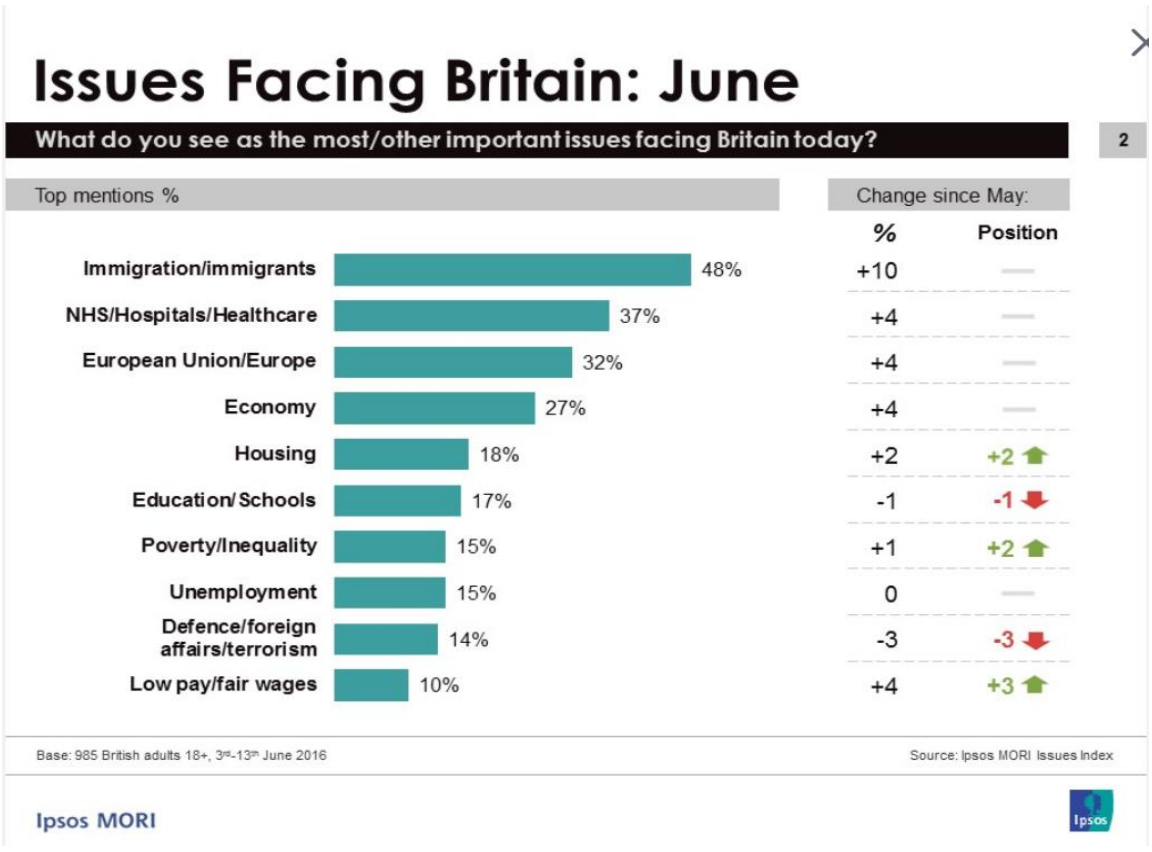

Issues Facing Britain: January
What do you see as the most/other important issues facing Britain today?
2
Top mentions %
Change since Dec:
% Position
Immigration/immigrants 46% +6 +1
NHS/Hospitals/Healthcare 38% +4 +1
Economy 26% 0 +1
Defence/foreign affairs/terrorism 23% -19 -3
Poverty/Inequality 17% +1 —
Housing 17% +1 +1
Education/Schools 17% +1 -1
European Union/Europe 16% +11 +9
Unemployment 15% +1 -1
Low pay/fair wages 12% +1 -1
Base: 1,011 British adults 18+, 7th – 20th January 2016
Source: Ipsos MORI Issues Index
Ipsos MORI


Issues Facing Britain: February
What do you see as the most/other important issues facing Britain today?
2
Top mentions %
Change since Jan:
% Position
Immigration/immigrants 44% -2 —
NHS/Hospitals/Healthcare 38% 0 —
Economy 23% -3 —
European Union/Europe 20% +4 +4
Housing 17% 0 +1
Education/Schools 16% -1 +1
Unemployment 16% +1 +2
Defence/foreign affairs/terrorism 15% -8 -4
Poverty/Inequality 14% -3 -4
Crime/Law and Order/ASB 11% +1 +1
Base: 1,009 British adults 18+, 5th – 23rd February 2016
Source: Ipsos MORI Issues Index
Ipsos MORI


Issues Facing Britain: March
What do you see as the most/other important issues facing Britain today?
2
Top mentions %
Change since Feb:
% Position
Immigration/immigrants 46% +2 —
NHS/Hospitals/Healthcare 34% -4 —
Economy 25% +2 —
European Union/Europe 23% +3 —
Education/Schools 16% 0 +1
Housing 15% -2 -1
Poverty/Inequality 15% +1 +2
Unemployment 15% -1 -1
Defence/foreign affairs/terrorism 14% -1 -1
Pensions/social security/benefits 10% 0 +2
Base: 905 British adults 18+, 26th February – 23rd March 2016
Source: Ipsos MORI Issues Index
Ipsos MORI


Issues Facing Britain: April
What do you see as the most/other important issues facing Britain today?
2
Top mentions %
Change since March:
% Position
Immigration/immigrants 41% -5 —
NHS/Hospitals/Healthcare 39% +5 —
European Union/Europe 30% +7 +1
Economy 22% -3 -1
Education/Schools 18% +2 —
Unemployment 18% +3 +2
Poverty/Inequality 17% +2 —
Defence/foreign affairs/terrorism 17% +3 +1
Housing 16% +1 -3
Crime/Law and Order/ASB 11% +3 +2
Base: 966 British adults 18+, 8th – 19th April 2016
Source: Ipsos MORI Issues Index
Ipsos MORI


Issues Facing Britain: May
What do you see as the most/other important issues facing Britain today?
2
Top mentions %
Change since April:
% Position
Immigration/immigrants 38% -3
NHS/Hospitals/Healthcare 33% -6
European Union/Europe 28% -2
Economy 23% +1
Education/Schools 18% 0
Defence/foreign affairs/terrorism 17% 0 +2
Housing 16% 0 +2
Unemployment 15% -3 -2
Poverty/Inequality 14% -3 -2
Crime/Law and Order/ASB 8% -3
Base: 979 British adults 18+, 6th – 15th May 2016
Source: Ipsos MORI Issues Index
Ipsos MORI


Issues Facing Britain: June
What do you see as the most/other important issues facing Britain today?
2
Top mentions %
Change since May:
% Position
Immigration/immigrants 48% +10
NHS/Hospitals/Healthcare 37% +4
European Union/Europe 32% +4
Economy 27% +4
Housing 18% +2 +2
Education/Schools 17% -1 -1
Poverty/Inequality 15% +1 +2
Unemployment 15% 0
Defence/foreign affairs/terrorism 14% -3 -3
Low pay/fair wages 10% +4 +3
Base: 985 British adults 18+, 3rd-13th June 2016
Source: Ipsos MORI Issues Index
Ipsos MORI