

The Revelations About Cambridge Analytica Indicate Clearly that Western Governments Are Subverting Democracy

By [Kitty S Jones](#)

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This carefully research article by Kitty S. Jones (first published on March 20, 2019) provides us with an understanding of what happened to the U.K. on election night, December 12, 2019.

It informs us on the insidious election strategies envisaged by the Tories to destroy the Welfare State, using advanced digital PR technologies, social media and voter profiling procedures, on behalf of powerful financial interests.

The objective of this dirty game was to suck British voters into electing an incompetent proxy government headed by a prime minister whose mandate (in consultation with the Trump presidency) was to trigger a divisive and deep-seated economic and social crisis.

According to Kitty S. Jones:

*“Profit-seeking private PR companies are paid to brand, market, engineer a following, build trust and credibility and generally *sell* the practice of *managing* the spread of information... Most of these companies use ‘behavioural science’ strategies (a euphemism for psychological warfare) to do so.*

It’s a dark world where governments pay to be advised not to talk about “capitalism,” but instead discuss “economic freedom” , “business friendly policies” or the “free market”.

What is described in this article are the techniques used by the Tories to “subvert democracy” in Britain’s snap October 2017 elections. Similar techniques were applied in relation to the December 2019 General Elections, which have led the United Kingdom into a political impasse.

Michel Chossudovsky, December 16, 2019

I wrote an article about [Cambridge Analytica, the commodification of voter decision making and the marketisation of democracy](#), along with [previous articles](#) about western government [strategies](#) for subverting democracy. I have also extensively criticised governments’ use of ‘[behavioural economics](#)’, and the authoritarian “neuroliberal” turn more generally.

Within the neoliberal framework, it seems that anything which may be commodified and marketised is, including our consumer preferences, Facebook likes, behaviours, emotions, subconscious inclinations, cognitive habits, perceptions and decisions. If companies like *Cambridge Analytica* could mine and sell our souls, they would do so in much the same way they did their own collective conscience.

The CEO of Cambridge Analytica has been suspended, Alexander Nix, has been suspended. However, Nix is a symptom of a problem, rather than being the problem itself.

Cambridge Analytica is just the tip of a very dirty, subterranean iceberg. It's worth keeping in mind that without paying clients, among which are governments, antidemocratic companies like this would not thrive and profit. The extensive Public Relations (PR) and 'strategic communications' industry, along with the 'behavioural economics' technocrats, are all working on sustaining power relations and extending corporate and right wing political interests.

The hidden persuaders behind the Conservative government

During last year's general election [2017], the government used a number of companies that bear a lot of similarity to Cambridge Analytic during their election campaign.

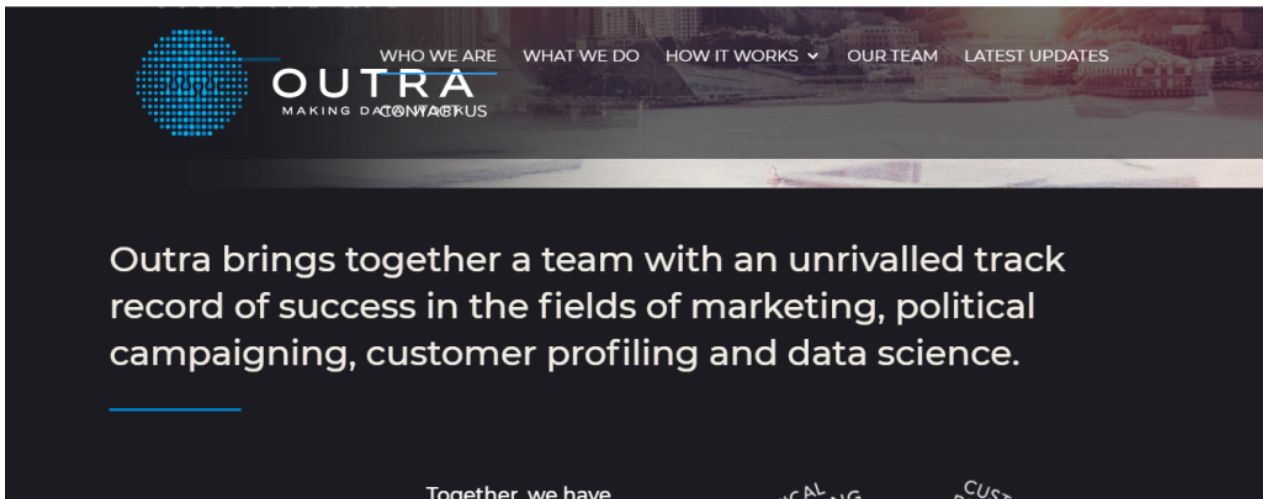
- 
- Polling, market research, and intelligence employing the latest tools and techniques.
 - Identifying and communicating behaviour changing messages.
 - Skillful and experienced counsel and campaign execution.
 - Management of multiple channels of communication, against tight budgets and timelines.

From the *Crosby Textor Group* [site](#)

The government used data from *Experian* ([paid £683,636.34](#)),
Reed Consultancy ([paid £178,558.03](#)),
Google Analytics ([paid £1,020,232.17](#)),
Facebook ([paid £3,177,416.68](#)),

Twitter was [paid £56,504.32](#), to "research, canvass and advertise" their party 'brand'. And [£76,800 was spent advertising](#) through *Express Newspapers*.

Another company that the Conservatives used for their campaign, [paying them £120,000](#) for market research and canvassing, is [Outra](#). Jim Messina is the executive director, and the team includes Lynton Crosby.



However, Crosby Textor ([listed as CTF](#)) also [earned £4,037,400](#) for market research/canvassing.

The [Messina Group Inc](#) were also [paid £544,153.57](#) for transport, advertising, market research and canvassing. This company uses [data analytics and 'intelligence' services](#). The company [conducts](#) *"Targeted Ads Programs [....] ensuring precise targeting via Facebook, geo-targeting, zipcodes, IP addresses, and other tactics"*.

Crosby and Messina made staggering amounts of money from the Conservative's election campaign, using three separate, listed companies between them.

The company [also says](#):

We Consolidate Data From ANY Data Source Including:



Apparently, the Messina Group are in a ['strategic partnership'](#) with Outra, *"serving as one of Outra's primary advisors on data, analytics, and 'customer engagement'."*

(See also: [World leaders across 5 continents trust TMG with the highest stakes in politics.](#))

British electoral law forbids co-ordination between different campaign groups, which must all comply with strict spending limits. If they plan tactics or co-ordinate together, the organisations must share a cap on spending.

Combobulate Limited, which is listed as a management consultancy, [earned £43,200](#) for research/canvassing and for 'unsolicited material to electors'.

[Populus Data Solutions](#), who say they provide "state of the art data capture", [were paid £196,452](#) for research/canvassing and 'unsolicited material to electors'. This company have also developed the use of biometrics - facial coding in particular.

[St Ives management services](#) (SIMS) were [paid £3,556,030.91](#), for research/canvassing, 'unsolicited material to electors', advertising, overheads and general administration, media



and rallies, and manifesto material.

[Edmonds Elder Ltd](#), a digital consultancy, [were paid £156,240.00](#) for advertising. The site says the company also provides services in [vague sounding 'government affairs'](#) :

"We use cutting-edge digital techniques to help government affairs teams make the case for their policy and regulatory positions – harnessing support from communities across the country to ensure a positive outcome."

Craig Elder [is also](#) the [Conservative party's digital director](#). Tom Edmonds was the [Conservative party's 'creative director' between 2013 and 2015](#).

[Hines Digital](#) who is a partner of [Edmonds Elder Ltd](#), ["is a conservative digital agency that builds strong brands, huge email lists, and big league fundraising revenue for our clients, helping conservative campaigns & causes, and companies, achieve their goals."](#)

It says on the site that *"Hines worked with conservative campaigns & causes in fifteen U.S. states and nine countries."* The company designed the 'digital infrastructure' of [Theresa May's leadership campaign](#) launch in 2016, they built her website (but aren't listed in election expenses.) Hines says:

"That timely initial website launch proved invaluable. Approximately 35% of her overall email list signed up on that first day, a significant shot in the arm on Day One made possible because her team—led in part by our partners at [Edmonds Elder](#)—was prepared to capitalize on the day's earned media through effective online organizing.

Overall, the initial holding page saw a 18% conversion rate on day one—meaning nearly 1/5 people who visited the website signed up to join the campaign. That's a fantastic response to a site optimized for supporter recruitment."

AN APPROACH THAT'S PROVEN

Our approach is proven at the highest level, under the greatest pressure – putting digital at the heart of the Conservatives' acclaimed 2015 election campaign, securing the Party's first majority in over two decades.

Read the lessons for all businesses and organisations from the UK's first digital election (originally published in the Daily Telegraph)

EDMONDS ELDER



And: "We are experts at identifying people online – and targeting them to drive the activity your organisation needs."

With political adverts that are targeted and 'dark', which aren't fact checked as only the person targeted gets to see them.

[Walker Media Limited](#) are a digital marketing and media company, they facilitate [Facebook adverts and campaigns](#), among other services. They were paid [£798,610.21 from the Conservatives' election campaign](#). One of their other social media marketing campaigns listed on their site is for ["The Outdoor and Hunting Industry"](#).

Simon Davis serves as the Chief Executive Officer at *Walker Media Holdings Limited* and *Blue 449*. Davis served as Managing Director of *Walker Media at M&C Saatchi plc*, a global PR and advertising company, who have worked for the Conservatives before, designing campaign posters and anti-Labour adverts – including the controversial 'New Labour, New Danger' one in particular.

There are a few subsidiaries of this company which include ["harnessing data to find, engage and convert customers efficiently through digital media."](#) M&C Saatchi acquired the online media 'intelligence agency' [Human Digital](#), whose *"innovative approach marries rich behavioural insight with robust metrics."*

Under the 1998 Data Protection Act, it can be illegal to process 'sensitive' data – a category that includes 'political opinions' – without explicit consent from the individuals concerned, though consent is only one of a number of conditions under which sensitive personal data may be legally processed. Despite numerous attempts to contact Conservative HQ last week, the party refused to say if they used any data, modelling or insight gathered during either the election or the referendum campaigns.

There is a whole submerged world of actors making huge profits from data mining and analytics, 'targeted audience segmentation', behaviour change techniques, 'strategic communications and political lobbying. Much of the PR industry is built upon the same territory of interests: financial profit, maintaining power relations and supporting the vested interests of the privileged class. The subterranean operations of the surveillance and persuasion industry and citizen manipulation has become the establishment's normative tool of authoritarian control, and it is hidden in plain view.

[Blue Telecoms](#) were [paid £375,882.56](#) for 'unsolicited material to electors' and 'advertising'. It says on their site that *Blue Telecoms* is a trading name for [Direct Market Solutions](#)

[Ltd.](#) The company director is [Sascha Lopez](#) , a businessman who stood as a local council candidate for the Tories in the 2017 local elections. He is also an active director of the *Lopez Group*, although that company's accounts are very overdue, there is an [active proposal to strike off](#) on the government's Companies House page. If directors are late in filing their company accounts, and don't reply to warnings from Companies House, their company can be struck-off the Companies House register and therefore cease to exist. Other [companies he was active in have been liquidated \(3\) and dissolved \(2\).](#)

A Channel Four investigation uncovered underhand and potentially unlawful practices at the centre, in calls made on behalf of the Conservative Party. These allegations include:

- Paid canvassing on behalf of Conservative election candidates – illegal under election law.
- Political cold calling to prohibited numbers
- Misleading calls claiming to be from an “independent market research company” which does not appear to exist

The Conservative Party have admitted it had commissioned *Blue Telecoms* to carry out “market research and direct marketing calls” during the campaign, but insisted the calls were legal.

The government is attempting to align citizen perceptions, decisions and behaviours with the desired outcomes of the government, turning democracy on its head

The internet has rapidly become an environment in which citizens and populations are being sorted, profiled, typed, categorised, ranked and “managed”, based on data mining mass surveillance and psycho-profiling.

It was only a matter of time before the powerful tools of digital tracking and corporate surveillance, including techniques designed for manipulating opinions and behaviours, shifted from the realm of PR, product and service marketing to politics and voter targeting. The markets for personal data have always been markets for behavioural control also. And markets of behavioural control are composed of those who sell opportunities to influence behaviour for profit and those who purchase such opportunities.

Theresa May 'wants to use an army of computerised Trump "mind-readers" to help her win the next Election'

- Tory chiefs have been in talks with polling data experts Cambridge Analytica
- British company uses computers to 'mine' huge amounts of data on voters
- Then it builds different personality profiles to try to target voters' concerns

By BRENDAN CARLIN FOR THE MAIL ON SUNDAY

PUBLISHED: 01:25, 18 December 2016 | UPDATED: 05:36, 18 December 2016



177 View comments

Theresa May wants to deploy an army of computerised 'mind-readers' to help her win the next Election, sources claim.

Tory chiefs have been in talks with Cambridge Analytica, the polling data experts credited with playing a key role in Donald Trump's presidential victory.

The British company, run by Old Etonian Alexander Nix, 40, uses computers to 'mine' huge amounts of data on voters – including Facebook likes, favourite foods, TV shows and even football clubs.



Theresa May wants to deploy an army of computerised 'mind-readers' to help her win the next Election, sources claim

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Profit-seeking private PR companies are paid to brand, market, engineer a following, build trust and credibility and generally *sell* the practice of *managing* the spread of information between an individual or an organisation (such as a business, government agency, the media) and the public.

Most of these companies use 'behavioural science' strategies (a euphemism for psychological warfare) to do so.

It's a dark world where governments pay to be advised not to talk about "capitalism," but instead discuss "economic freedom", "business friendly policies" or the "free market".

Austerity is simply translated into "balancing the budget" or "living within our means".

The political coercion of sick and disabled people to look for work by cutting their lifeline support is “equality and social justice” or “helping to move them closer to employment”.

Propaganda and deception is “strategic communications” and “PR”.

Psychological coercion is “behavioural science”.

The democratic opposition are described as “virtue signallers”, “snowflakes”, “marxists”, “militants” and “the hard left.”

Chris Wylie on Cambridge Analytica, microsurveillance, information weapons and the politics of psychological warfare.

[PR is concerned](#) with selling products, persons, governments and policies, corporations, and other institutions. In addition to marketing products, PR has been variously used to attract investments, influence legislation, raise companies’ public profiles, put a positive spin on policies, disasters, [undermine citizens campaigns](#), gain public support for conducting warfare and to change the public perception of repressive regimes.

The revolving door of mutually exclusive political and corporate favour operates by keeping up the spin.

The company at the centre of the *Facebook* data breach has boasted of using honey traps, fake news campaigns and operations with ex-spies to swing election campaigns around the world, the recent *Channel 4* investigation has revealed.

Executives from *Cambridge Analytica* spoke to undercover reporters from *Channel 4 News* about the “dark arts” used by the company to “help” clients, which included entrapping rival candidates in fake bribery stings and hiring prostitutes to seduce them.

In one filmed exchange, the company chief executive, Alexander Nix, is recorded telling reporters: *“It sounds a dreadful thing to say, but these are things that don’t necessarily need to be true as long as they’re believed.”*

The excellent *Channel 4 News* investigation, broadcast on Monday, despite threats of legal action from the company, comes two days after the *Observer* reported that *Cambridge Analytica* had unauthorised access to [tens of millions of Facebook profiles](#) in one of the social media company’s biggest data breaches.

Nix detailed the deception, glorified propaganda techniques, entrapment and other dirty tricks that the company would be prepared to pull for money behind the scenes to help its clients. When the *Channel 4* reporter asked if *Cambridge Analytica* could offer investigations into the damaging secrets of rivals, Nix said it worked with former spies from Britain and Israel to look for political dirt. He also volunteered that his team were ready to go further than an ‘investigation’.

“Oh, we do a lot more than that,” Nix said. “Deep digging is interesting, but you know equally effective can be just to go and speak to the incumbents and to offer them a deal that’s too good to be true and make sure that that’s video recorded.”

“You know these sort of tactics are very effective, instantly having video evidence of

corruption."

Nix suggested one possible scenario, in which the managing director of *Cambridge Analytica's* political division, Mark Turnbull, would pose as a wealthy developer looking to exchange campaign finance for land. *"I'm a master of disguise,"* Turnbull said.

Another option, Nix suggested, would be to create a sex scandal. *"Send some girls around to the candidate's house, we have lots of history of things,"* he told the reporter. *"We could bring some Ukrainians in on holiday with us, you know what I'm saying."*

He added that these were "hypothetical scenarios", but suggested his ideas were based on precedent. *"Please don't pay too much attention to what I'm saying, because I'm just giving you examples of what can be done, what has been done."*

The company stays out of the spotlight partly because *Cambridge Analytica* works hard to cover traces of its operations, Nix said, using a shifting network of names and front groups.

"We're used to operating through different vehicles, in the shadows, and I look forward to building a very long-term and secretive relationship with you," Nix said during a phone call with the source.

Cambridge Analytica sometimes contracts under a different name, so that there are no records of its involvement, Turnbull said. That does not only protect the company, but also makes its work more efficient, he says on record.

"It has to happen without anyone thinking it's propaganda, because the moment you think 'that's propaganda' the next question is: 'Who's put that out?'"

He added: *"It may be that we have to contract under a different name ... a different entity, with a different name, so that no record exists with our name attached to this at all."*

Nix also offered details regarding the services of professional ex-spies from Britain and Israel. *"We have two projects at the moment, which involve doing deep depth research on the opposition and providing source [...] really damaging source material, that we can decide how to deploy in the course of the campaign."*

Cambridge Analytica said the *Channel 4 News* investigation contained *"false claims, factual inaccuracies and substantial mischaracterisations."*

The company accused *Channel 4* of setting out to entrap staff by initiating a conversation about unethical practices. The company rejects any suggestion that they used fake news, honey traps, bribes or entrapment.

A company spokesperson said: *"We entirely refute any allegation that Cambridge Analytica or any of its affiliates use entrapment, bribes or so-called 'honey-traps' for any purpose whatsoever ... Cambridge Analytica does not use untrue material for any purpose."*

Facebook's own little investigation



Carole Cadwalladr
@carolecadwalla

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BREAKING: Facebook WAS inside Cambridge Analytica's office but have now "stood down" following dramatic intervention by UK Information Commissioner's Office..

9:19 PM - 19 Mar 2018

6,766 Retweets 10,842 Likes



343 6.8K 11K

Facebook seems to have missed its opportunity to get a handle on the Cambridge Analytica scandal, having been told to stay out of its offices by the UK Information Commissioners Office.

Digital forensics firm Stroz Friedberg was hired by *Facebook* yesterday "to conduct a comprehensive audit of Cambridge Analytica," according to a *Facebook* [announcement](#). Apparently the private company at the centre of the scandal was happy to give *Facebook* full access to its servers and systems but the UK Information Commissioners Office (ICO), which is 'sponsored by the governmental department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, apparently had other ideas.

"On 7 March, my office issued a Demand for Access to records and data in the hands of Cambridge Analytica," said Information Commissioner Elizabeth Denham.

"Cambridge Analytica has not responded by the deadline provided; therefore, we are seeking a warrant to obtain information and access to systems and evidence related to our investigation.

"On 19 March, Facebook announced that it will stand down its search of Cambridge Analytica's premises at our request. Such a search would potentially compromise a regulatory investigation."

It's not known how long *Facebook*, via its proxies, had access to *Cambridge Analytica's* files and how much investigating it managed to do, but being kicked out by the ICO is presumably a major inconvenience.

The Information Commissioner, Denham, has criticised *Cambridge Analytica* for being "uncooperative" with her investigation, and she confirmed that the watchdog will apply for a warrant to examine the company's activities.

The bottom line

It is fundamentally wrong for private companies and authoritarian governments to use /alter public information, use personal information, data mining, psychological profiling, targeted 'strategic communications' (a euphemism for propaganda) , 'behavioural science', 'social science insights' and military grade psyops – in short, deception – in order to manipulate citizens' decision-making, perceptions and behaviours in order to profit and maintain their power.

All of this has profound and dark implications for democracy, or at least what is left of it. Totalitarians throughout history have sought to change the perceptions, decisions and behaviours of populations. These are the intentions and actions of tyrants.

Governments in so-called democratic nations are assumed to seek to be elected or remain in office on the basis of the preferences of voters, their accountable policies and their capacity for public representation – based on those meritocratic principles that they preach to everyone else.

The fact that governments are paying – using taxpayers' money – to attempt to manipulate the electorate – regardless of whether or not the methodologies used actually work – speaks volumes about government intentions, their lack of transparency, their disregard of citizens' agency, their disdain for human rights, lack of respect for civil liberties and utter contempt for anything remotely resembling democratic accountability.

The Channel 4 News exposé of Cambridge Analytica

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