



Cambridge
Analytica

How do we prevent it happening again?

facebook

Outline

1. 2018 Cambridge Analytica scandal and aftermath
2. Response to scandal
3. Ethical concerns raised
 - a. Data Breach
 - b. Consent
 - c. Psychological warfare
4. Discussion points
 - a. What impact did CA actually have?
 - b. Do our political choices belong to you?
5. Preventing future instances of data misuse for political campaigns

2018 Cambridge Analytica Scandal

- In March 2018, the Guardian and the New York times reported that the data company had accessed personal data of over 87 million facebook profiles
- This data was used to provide targeted political advertisements during the 2016 US Presidential election
- CA's methodology involve data mining and analysis in order to precisely tailor campaign materials to audiences and, as whistleblower Christopher Wylie put it, 'target their inner demons.'



Response

- May 2018 - Cambridge Analytica filed for bankruptcy
- June 2018 - UK Information Commissioner fined Facebook £500,000 saying the company had "contravened the law by failing to safeguard people's information".
- July 2019 Facebook fined \$5 billion by the US Federal Trade Commission



Ethical issues #1: Data breach

- In 2010, Facebook launched 'Open Graph API' - which allowed app developers to access user data
- 2013 Kogan's app "thisisyourdigitallife" gives CA access to millions of fb user's personal data

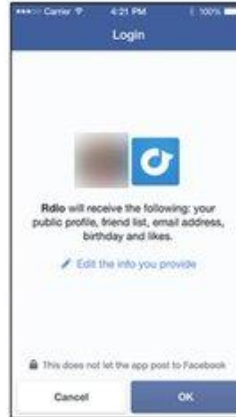


Ethical Issues #2: Consent

- Richard Wolffe - “We trust our friends more than any institution - a vulnerability that Cambridge Analytica exploited”



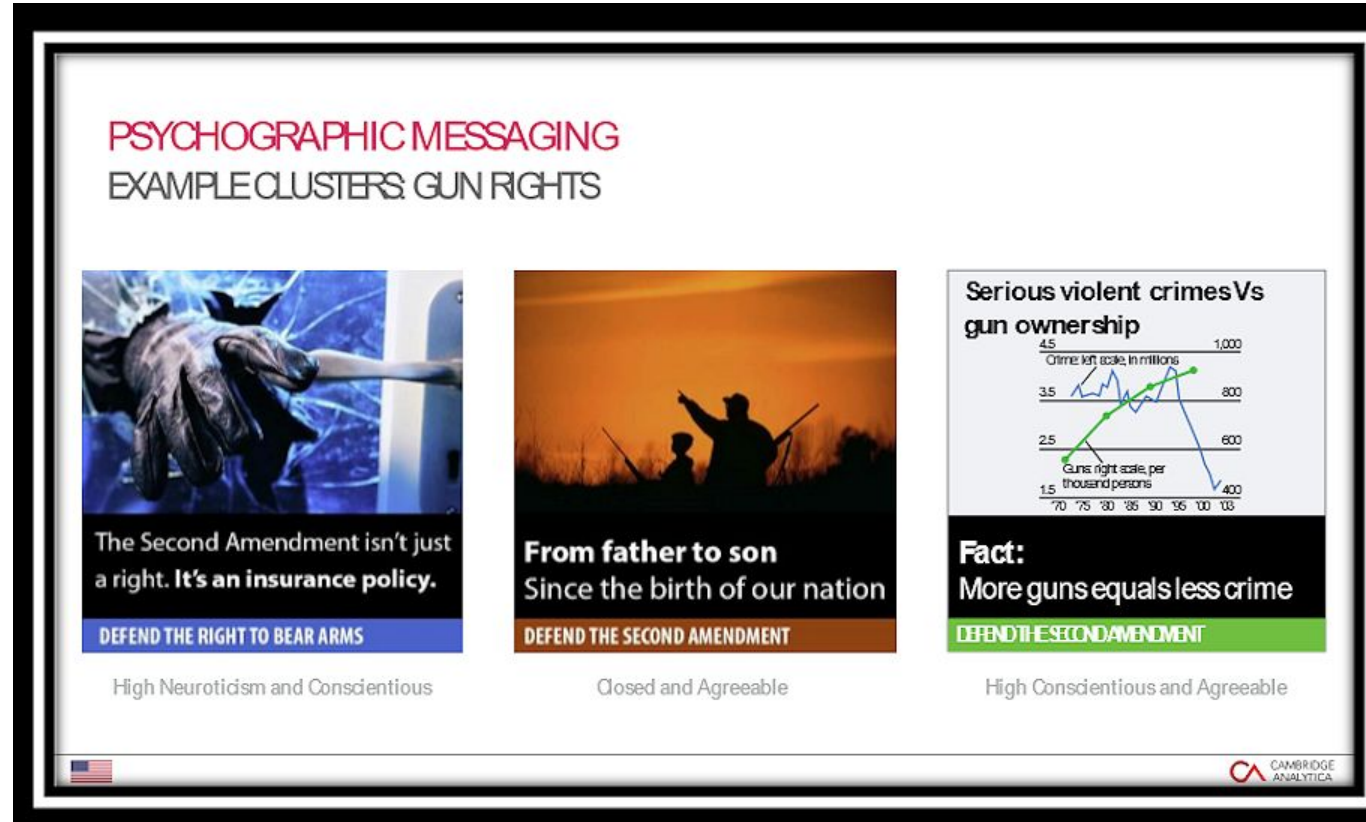
Users only had two options:
"Allow" or "Don't Allow"



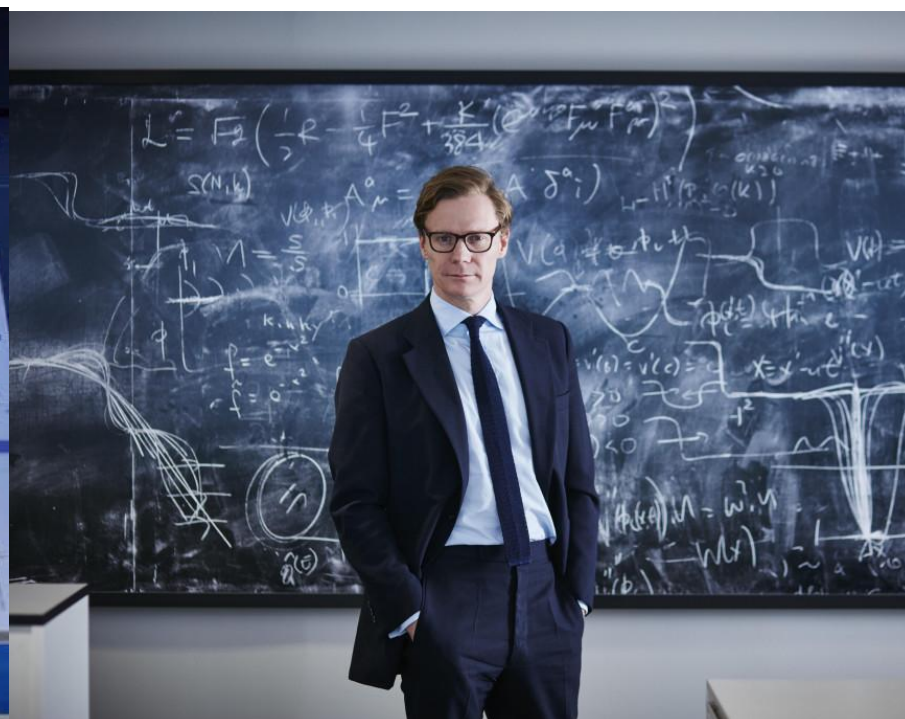
Now you can pick and choose which data you provide

Ethical Issue #3: Psychological manipulation

- “You are playing with the psychology of an entire country without their consent’
Christopher Wylie

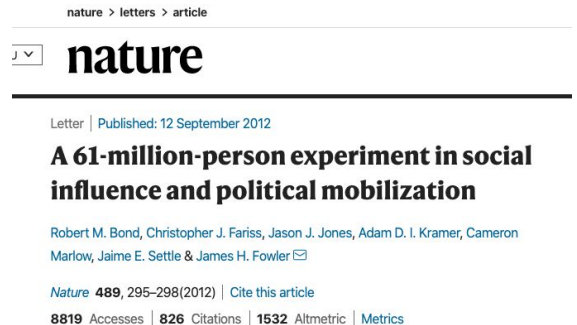


Masters of psychological warfare?



Data Hype

- The debate over the impact of CA on the turbulent political events of 2016
- A 2012 study of impact of Facebook prompts on voter turnout found that 'those who saw the social message were 2% more likely to click the 'I voted' button and 0.3% more likely to seek information about a polling place than those who received the informational message, and 0.4% more likely to head to the polls than either other group.
- Has CA's impact been overstated?



- While firms like CA are often portrayed as masters of psychological manipulation, worth remembering that campaigns rarely make a lot of difference in election outcomes
- Paul Lazarsfeld: most campaign effects are really reinforcement effects
- ‘Once someone already holds an opinion, they’ll buy into messages that support their pre-existing view.’ Do ads really make us start thinking differently?

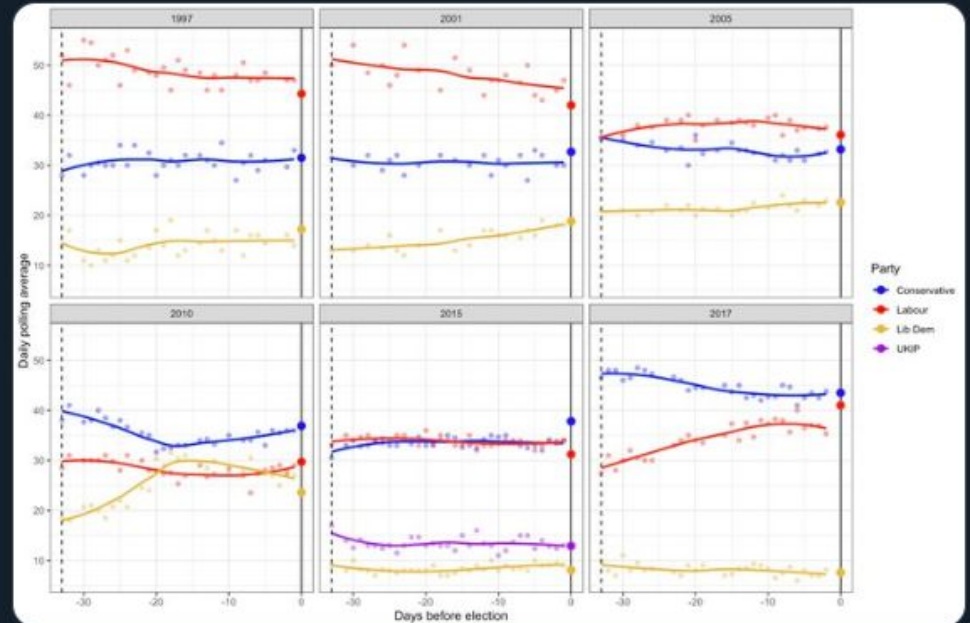


Rob Ford Retweeted



Laura Bronner
@laurabronner

While of course a lot can happen between now and December 12th, it's worth noting that 2017 was sort of an outlier in terms of just how much changed in the pre-election period.





ELSEVIER

Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Social Science Research

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/ssresearch



'It's *The Sun* Wot Won It': Evidence of media influence on political attitudes and voting from a UK quasi-natural experiment

Aaron Reeves ^{a, *}, Martin McKee ^b, David Stuckler ^{a, b}

^a Department of Sociology, University of Oxford, England, United Kingdom

^b London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, London, England, United Kingdom

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 9 February 2015

Received in revised form 28 July 2015

Accepted 5 November 2015

Available online xxx

ABSTRACT

Do print media significantly impact political attitudes and party identification? To examine this question, we draw on a rare quasi-natural experiment that occurred when *The Sun*, a right-leaning UK tabloid, shifted its support to the Labour party in 1997 and back to the Conservative party in 2010. We compared changes in party identification and political

Are your political opinions your own?



William Hogarth, *The Polling* (from the *Humours of an Election* series), 1755.

‘The idea that your vote is like property, something that you own and that should be hidden away and treasured, is a relatively recent one.’ Sam Wetherell



Preventing future instances of data misuse for political campaigns

- Reach of political messages “should be earned, not bought’ Jack Dorsey (Twitter CEO)
- UK electoral law ‘not fit for purpose’
 - Compulsory code of ethics for data companies overseen by independent regulator



House of Commons
Digital, Culture, Media and
Sport Committee

**Disinformation and
'fake news': Final Report**

Eighth Report of Session 2017–19

US & Canada

Twitter to ban all political advertising

31 October 2019



Social media regulation debate



REUTERS

Jack Dorsey said details would follow in November

Twitter is to ban all political advertising worldwide, saving that the reach of

Did CA meet the standards of the RSS?

1. 'Seek to enhance the value of data science for society'
2. 'Avoid harm'
3. 'Apply and maintain professional competence'
4. 'Seek to preserve or increase trustworthiness'
5. 'Maintain accountability and oversight'