Bots, Hashtags and Fake Social Media: How Facebook Psychological Operations (PSYOPS) Divide and Conquer America

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"Analytica's personality model has allowed it to create a personality profile for every adult in the U.S. – 220 million of them, each with up to 5,000 data points."

Much of this is done through Facebook dark posts, which are only visible to those being targeted.... Bots, or fake social media profiles, have become its foot soldiers – an army of political robots used to control conversations on social media and silence and intimidate journalists and others who might undermine their messaging....

This post features excerpts from my new report which can be read here.

In a Bloomberg interview, Analytica's CEO **Alexander Nix** explained:

> "Your behavior is driven by your personality and actually the more you can understand about people's personality as psychological drivers, the more you can actually start to really tap in to why and how they make their decisions. We call this behavioral microtargeting and this is really our secret sauce, if you like. This is what we're bringing to America."

By leveraging automated emotional manipulation alongside swarms of bots, Facebook dark posts, A/B testing, and fake news networks, a company called Cambridge Analytica has activated an invisible machine that preys on the personalities of individual voters to create large shifts in public opinion....

It was a piece of a much bigger and darker puzzle – a Weaponized AI Propaganda Machine being used to manipulate our opinions and behavior to advance specific political agendas.

This new wave has brought the world something exponentially more insidious – personalized, adaptive, and ultimately addictive propaganda. Silicon Valley spent the last ten years building platforms whose natural end state is digital addiction....

> "This is a propaganda machine. It's targeting people individually to recruit them.... It's a level of social engineering that I've never seen before. They're capturing people and then keeping them on an emotional leash and never letting them go," said professor **Jonathan Albright**.

Led by Dr. Philip Howard, the team's Principal Investigator, Woolley and his colleagues have

been tracking the use of bots in political organizing since 2010. That's when Howard, buried deep in research about the role Twitter played in the Arab Spring, first noticed thousands of bots co-opting hashtags used by protesters....

The world these informants revealed is an international network of governments, consultancies (often with owners or top management just one degree away from official government actors), and individuals who build and maintain massive networks of bots to amplify the messages of political actors, spread messages counter to those of their opponents, and silence those whose views or ideas might threaten those same political actors.

They also frequently respond automatically to Twitter users who use certain keywords or hashtags — often with pre-written slurs, insults or threats....

They assume fake identities with distinct personalities and their responses to other users online are specific, intended to change their opinions or those of their followers by attacking their viewpoints....

Never has such a radical, international political movement had the precision and power of this kind of propaganda technology.... Elections in 2018 and 2020 won't be a contest of ideas, but a battle of automated behavior change...

[Imagine an election campaign with] 250 million algorithmic versions of their political message all updating in real-time, personalized to precisely fit the worldview and attack the insecurities of their targets...

Instead of having to deal with misleading politicians, we may soon witness a cambrian explosion of pathologically-lying political and corporate bots that constantly improve at manipulating us.

While Facebook and Twitter get most of the attention, Google, YouTube and fake websites also play pivotal roles:

> "Albright started looking into the 'fake news problem'. As a part of his research, Albright scraped 306 fake news sites to determine how exactly they were all connected to each other and the mainstream news ecosystem. What he found was unprecedented — a network of 23,000 pages and 1.3 million hyperlinks....
>
> They have been able to game Search Engine Optimization, increasing the visibility of fake and biased news anytime someone Googles.... 'This network,' Albright wrote in a post exploring his findings, 'is triggered on-demand to spread false, hyper-biased, and politically-loaded information.'...
>
> 'I scraped the trackers on these sites and I was absolutely dumbfounded. Every time someone likes one of these posts on Facebook or visits one of these websites, the scripts are then following you around the web. And this enables data-mining and influencing companies like Cambridge Analytica to precisely target individuals, to follow them around the web, and to send them highly personalised political messages.'...
>
> The web of fake and biased news that Albright uncovered created a propaganda wave that Cambridge Analytica could ride and then amplify. The more fake news that users engage with, the more addictive Analytica's

personality engagement algorithms can become....

Albright's most-recent research focuses on an artificial intelligence that automatically creates YouTube videos about news and current events.... It spooled out nearly 80,000 videos... in just a few days....

Instead of battling press conferences and opinion articles, public opinion about companies and politicians may turn into multi-billion dollar battles between competing algorithms, each deployed to sway public sentiment.

Stock trading algorithms already exist that analyze millions of Tweets and online posts in real-time and make trades in a matter of milliseconds based on changes in public sentiment. Algorithmic trading and 'algorithmic public opinion' are already connected. It's likely they will continue to converge...."

With behavioral microtargeting, politicians now know exactly what to communicate to each individual to win their allegiance. Our last two presidential elections are proof of that.

In 2012, with the support of Facebook employees the Obama campaign sucked up all Facebook data on every American citizen who has ever used their platform. Once they knew all of our "likes" and who our "friends" were, the "whole social graph," it was like taking candy from a baby. They were able to manipulate us on an unprecedented level; knowing exactly what to say to each individual and even going as far as to tell people what friends they should share specifically tailored messages with.

Then, in 2016, the Trump campaign hired SCL's infamous **Cambridge Analytica**, of which Trump's Chief Campaign Strategist **Steve Bannon** was a Vice President and founding board member.

SCL Group

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

SCL Group[1] (formerly **Strategic Communication Laboratories**[1]) is a private British behavioural research and strategic communication company.[2] In the United States, SCL has gained public recognition mainly through its affiliated corporation Cambridge Analytica.[3] It performs data mining and data analysis on its audience. Based on results, communications will be specifically targeted to key audience groups to modify behaviour in accordance with the goal of SCL's client. The company describes itself as a "global election management agency".[4] London-based SCL was founded by Nigel Oakes who serves as its CEO.[5]

Like the Obama campaign in the previous presidential election cycle, Cambridge Analytica also leveraged Facebook data. CEO Alexander Nix summed up their work for the Trump campaign by saying:

"We did all the research, all the data, all the analytics, all the targeting, we ran all the digital campaign, the television campaign and our data informed all the strategy."

For more detailed information on how they handled the Trump campaign, here is a Channel 4 News report:

"Mr. Turnbull described how the company could create proxy organisations to discreetly feed negative material about opposition candidates on to the Internet and social media.

He said:

'Sometimes you can use proxy organisations who are already there. You feed

them. They are civil society organisations. Charities or activist groups, and we use them – feed them the material and they do the work…. We just put information into the bloodstream of the internet and then watch it grow, give it a little push every now and again over time to watch it take shape. And so this stuff infiltrates the online community and expands, but with no branding – so it's unattributable, untrackable.'

Cambridge Analytica's senior executives were also filmed discussing a twin-track strategy to campaigning, putting out positive messages through the official **Donald J Trump** for President campaign, while negative material was pushed out through outside organisations.

Cambridge Analytica's chief data scientist Dr Tayler said:

'As part of it, sometimes you have to separate it from the political campaign itself. So in America you know there are independent expenditure groups running behind the campaign… Super PACs. Political Action Committees.

So, campaigns are normally subject to limits about how much money they can raise. Whereas outside groups can raise an unlimited amount. So the campaign will use their finite resources for things like persuasion and mobilisation and then they leave the 'air war' they call it, like the negative attack ads to other affiliated groups.'

In a different meeting, Mr Turnbull described how the company created the 'Defeat Crooked Hilary' brand of attack ads, that were funded by the Make America Number 1 super-PAC and watched more than 30 million times during the campaign.

Coordination between an official election campaign and any outside groups is illegal under US election law."

As Nix (image on the right) also said:
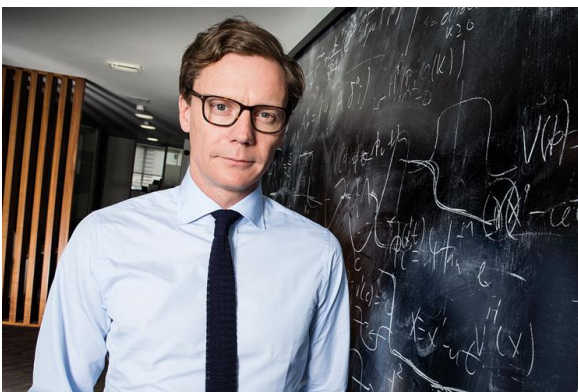
"Many of our clients don't want to be seen to be working with a foreign company… so often we set up, if we are working then we can set up fake IDs and websites, we can be students doing research projects attached to a university, we can be tourists, there's so many options we can look at. I have lots of experience in this."

When questioned by the undercover reporter about his meeting with Republicans and Democrats on Capitol Hill regarding their investigation into presidential election interference, Mr. Nix scoffed at it and dismissively said:

"They're politicians, they're not technical. They don't understand how it works."

He went on to say,

"They don't understand because the candidate never is involved. He's told what to do by the campaign team."

The undercover reporter then asked,

"So the candidate is the puppet?"

"Always, in every election, or nearly," replied Mr. Nix, before breaking into a chuckle.

When you analyze political demographics, you find that liberals tend to hope for the best, while conservatives tend to fear the worst. With Obama we had an amazing public speaker who knew all the right things to say to evoke liberal hopes. With Trump, we have a Reality TV host who knows all the right things to say to stoke conservative fears.

Is Mr. Nix right? Are politicians PSYOP puppets of covert Intel interests who are actually running the show?

4) Full Spectrum Dominance, Psychological Operations (PSYOPS)

"To subdue the enemy without fighting is the highest skill."~ **Sun Tzu**, The Art of War

In addition to using surveillance and illegal activities to create "behavioral change" in targeted individuals and populations worldwide, SCL specializes in psychological operations (PSYOPS).

As SCL's Mark Turnbull describes it:

"The two fundamental human drivers are hopes and fears, and many of those are unspoken and unconscious. You didn't know that was a fear until you saw something that just evoked that reaction from you. And our job is to drop the bucket further down the well than anybody else, to understand what are those really deep-seated, underlying fears, concerns.

It is no good fighting an election campaign on the facts, because actually it is all about emotion."

Keep in mind what SCL's Alexander Nix said,

"these are things that don't necessarily need to be true, as long as they're believed."

Turnbull continued:

> "We just put information into the bloodstream of the internet, and then, watch it grow, give it a little push every now and again... like a remote control."

For insight into how that "remote control" manipulates the minds of the masses, let's read how SCL describes their "behavioral change" programs:

> "SCL Group provides data, analytics and strategy to governments and military organizations worldwide.
>
> We have taken on the challenge of big data in the intelligence community. We augment IC data with our own ongoing proprietary quantitative research and our behavioral data sets.
>
> Our industry-leading data scientists use this data to build predictive models using machine learning, so that analysts are able to focus their time and tools on the right data subsets."

In a section on "Psychographic Market Segmentation" SCL says:

> "The barrage of media and communication noise becomes impossible for the audience to process, psychographic segmentation is proving most effective.
>
> SCL uses advanced psychological models to segment audience data into usable target sub markets. This dramatically increases the effectiveness for each segment."

SCL is by no means the only Global Private Military company engaged in these psychological operations. Palantir, SAIC, AggregateIQ, DataTrust and i360 Themis are all significant players. After all, Big Data is a fast-growing multi-billion dollar industry. It is a dream come true for advertisers and Intel PSYOPs experts. It's a boom market, and U.S. Intel agencies, such as the NSA and CIA are leading the charge.

They are using everything that we do on our computers, mobile phones, televisions and credit cards — every purchase, change of the channel, online search, website-visited, comment, like, friend, follower, private message, email, text, phone call — every digital thought-print is recorded and fed into Big Data analytics and algorithms to create your "personality profile," so they can predict, manipulate and increasingly control your behavior.

This is a major front in what the Pentagon calls "Full Spectrum Dominance Psychological Operations."

The 4th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution is now null and void. Privacy laws have become absurdly corrupt.

In a significant way, our computers and mobile devices are an externalization and extension of our minds. Our cell phones are deeply infiltrated by Artificial Intelligence (AI) algorithmic bots and PSYOPS agents.

Make no mistake, they can "drop the bucket further down the well" of your consciousness

then you realize, and may know your "hopes and fears" better than you do.

If you think that is an exaggeration, or some futuristic dystopian conspiracy theory, consider Artificial Intelligence created by **Dr. Michal Kosinski**, who specializes in Psychometrics, Big Data and Social Psychology.

Dr. Kosinski reveals, "with a mere ten 'likes' as input his model could appraise a person's character better than an average coworker. With seventy, it could 'know' a subject better than a friend; with 150 likes, better than their parents. With 300 likes, Kosinski's machine could predict a subject's behavior better than their partner. With even more likes it could exceed what a person thinks they know about themselves."

Now ask yourself: How many social media posts have you "liked"?

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*This article was originally posted on the [David DeGraw's Facebook](). **David DeGraw** is a frequent contributor to Global Research*

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