

This is an election in an era of mass propaganda

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There are three reasonable reactions to the suggestion that the Tories have, according to an opinion poll for the [Observer](#), a 19% lead in public support at present with 47% supposedly intending to vote for them.

First, you can reasonably doubt the accuracy of the polls. They have been decidedly wrong on occasion in the past. It is entirely possible that for all sorts of reasons they are again.

Second, you can presume the Tories are winning because they are persuading the electorate of the merits of their case.

Or, third, you can decide the public has lost the ability to think rationally given that what the Tories are offering them is so clearly against their best interests.

Since the faults in opinion polls are known I see little point spending time discussing that issue.

The other two issues are related, of course. Let me view them through the medium of the second question.

The Tories are having a terrible campaign.

They sacked a whole host of MPs to ensure cohesion in their ranks before the election began.

They were winning the case for Brexit in Parliament before the election was called. They called it anyway, claiming this was not true.

One of their prime election assets, Jacob Rees-Mogg, gaffed so badly on Grenfell before the election really got going that he has been silenced ever since.

Most of the rest of the Cabinet have also to be hidden, so bad are they. Indeed, so bad that Matt Hancock is considered an electoral asset.

The Prime Minister has lied so many times that interviewers are now blatant about saying he has. Even Fiona Bruce calls him out.

And so far they have announced almost nothing they will do.

Apart that is, from delivering an 'oven-ready' Brexit, a phrase so hackneyed people now groan when they hear it.

This is not a bad campaign. It is a dire campaign unless, that is, you believe that only Brexit matters.

There the Tories have done a deal with Farage. There will be a price to pay.

And they have persistently said Brexit will be done by 31 January, which is merely when, at the earliest, the next and much harder round of talks begin, about which the Tories have not given a hint of preparedness.

Perhaps most angering, Johnson pretends he has nothing to do with the Tory treacle record, as if nine years of Tory government have nothing to do with him.

So austerity, stagnant real wages, growing inequality, universal credit, no house building, the bedroom tax, a 15% decline in the exchange rate since 2016, public services in crisis and record levels of household debt that threaten the stability of his economy are matters on which he and his party are in denial even if they all happened as a result of their policy.

Objectively, most people are worse off now than in 2010. They have worse public services. They have more limited hopes if they can correctly appraise their prospects.

And the Tories are saying nothing at all about what they will do about any of this.

Instead the only talk is of Brexit.

But Brexit was unknown to almost anyone as an idea, let alone an objective, a decade ago.

The truth is that we must have a trade deal with our EU partners, come what may, and eventually will.

And the reality is that of the pressing issues facing this country Brexit comes immeasurably far behind the climate crisis, and yet Johnson is going to refuse to debate that issue.

Objectively, then, the Tories are running a dire campaign. And if opinion polls are anything like right they are winning.

Why is that? It can only be because of media manipulation. The continual messaging that Brexit is all that matters has worked. And let's not be in denial: the evidence that marketing works is all around us and permeates almost all our lives. In that case let's not be arrogant enough to presume otherwise or accept any claim that this issue has become the electorate's obsession for any other reason. Massive effort has created the toxic, self-destructive view that Brexit must be delivered.

So, the Tories are running a highly successful campaign.

And the electorate has lost the rational ability to think about it, or they would not be supporting it in the numbers that they are.

We are seeing what happens when there is a collective loss of sense as a result of massive media manipulation - call it propaganda if you like - in this election.

It may still change.

The Tory bubble may burst.

Their manifesto may include crippling gaffes. Their ability to spot them is measured on the Duke of York scale.

But maybe the Tories will maintain their momentum as well.

The question then is what happens when people realise that Brexit either remains a long and winding road, or a deeply uncomfortable, and very hard place. Irrational behaviour frequently leads to remorse. This election might do that.

Too late to reverse Brexit though.

Too late to tackle climate change too, maybe.

Too late for hope, then.

And that's a really dark prospect that might have to be addressed against the background of a majority Tory government.

But only if the polls are right.