and informs banks, credit companies, and other institutions about a victim's possible identity theft.

Despite the availability of services such as ITAC, the best defense for consumers is to have knowledge and awareness of identity theft. Consumers should also be aware of their rights in order to protect themselves and to take the proper actions toward eliminating fraudulent information from their credit reports.

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See Also: Anderson, Anna (Anastasia); Bush, George W.; Internet: E-Mail Scams.

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Ideology

Ideology can be defined as two interrelated concept at an individual and a social level. First, it represents a set of beliefs that an individual holds to maintain one's identity and goals, especially goals related to one's group membership. Second, ideology is a set of beliefs that a society reinforces to its members to maximize control over the status quo with minimal conflict. Lying and deception play a role here when an individual and/or a society attempts to uphold these sets of beliefs. The first concept is related to how an individual deceives oneself, whereas the latter is related to how a society deceives its members.

Self-deception based on the first definition of ideology is exercised through cognitive control of individuals, both at the perceptual and conceptual levels of social judgments. Mass deception based on the second definition of ideology is exercised by symbols and cultural practices orienting people's understanding in such a way that they accept the current way of doing things. Psychologists advance knowledge about relationships between ideology and self-deception, while sociologists develop understanding about the interconnectedness of ideology and mass deception.

Self-Deception: Ideology as a Perceptual Filter Toward the Social World

Self-deception based on one's ideological bias can be found from basic perceptual judgments to sophisticated higher order reasoning. Recent research in cognitive psychology sees ideological bias as a failure of information processing. This bias consists of stereotyped reasoning in which new information is distorted in order to make it conform to existing beliefs. People are far from the detached information processors that normative models of human judgments would prescribe. The term *bounded rationality* means that people are prone to systematic predictable cognitive biases. People are prone to systematic and predictable errors in making judgments and decisions because of ideological links between target judgments and the group to which the people feel they belong—in other words, revealing their "ideology-bounded rationality." People appear to be motivated by various factors to reach conclusions that color the self in a favorable position, leaving one immersed in self-deception.

Group affiliation can bias people to perceive the same stimulus differently and to draw inferences that protect and promote the interests of their in-group, as people derive their self-esteem in part from the meaningful groups to which

they belong. A classic demonstration of this self-deception based on social categorization can be found in Albert Hastorf and Hadley Cantril's "They saw a game" study. In this study, although students at Dartmouth and Princeton Universities viewed the same film of their respective school's football teams on November 23, 1951, it seemed from the results that they had watched two different games. While Dartmouth students tended to see Princeton's rule violations and Dartmouth's appropriate responses, Princeton students saw a continuing pattern of Dartmouth's rough play and occasional Princeton reprisals. The students from the two schools saw their side as the hero and the other side as the villain, regardless of reality.

As mentioned above, self-deception based on one's own desirable state of mind (ideology) is not only found in higher order reasoning, such as the fairness of play in a football game, but can also be found in perceptual judgments. For example, Emily Balcetis and David Dunning found that thirsty undergraduates see a water bottle in front of them located closer than it actually is. In relation to political ideology, Eugene Caruso and his colleagues have demonstrated that during the 2008 presidential campaign, Democrats perceived the face of Barack Obama to be lighter, whereas strong Republicans tended to see Obama's skin tone as darker than did liberals. Visual representations of the candidate fit coherently with the desire to see one's own group members positively.

This self-deception is not only the case for competitive contexts such as sports or politics. In a study by Jonathon Schuldt and Norbert Schwarz, people who identified themselves as caring more about proenvironmental values thought Oreo cookies made with organic flour and sugar had fewer calories than normal Oreo cookies. Obviously, however, the two products in actuality contain the same number of calories.

Contrary to the truism "seeing is believing," what actually happens is that "believing is seeing." People see what they want to see or see how they want to see. Self-deception based on ideology goes well beyond visual perception or conceptual judgments based on visual representation. Emerging works in motivated social cognition suggest that this perceptual distortion can happen in hearing, tasting, and even smelling. For example, organic and/or fair-trade chocolate tastes better

A customer contemplates her selections in a chocolate shop in Zurich, March 2010. Research in motivated social cognition suggest that perceptual distortion can occur in the senses. For example, supporters of organic and/or fair-trade chocolate report that their ideologically supported chocolate tastes better.

to those who are supporters of fair-trade policies. Even in the face of simple perceptual facts, people often find themselves falling prey to just plain wrong ideas, exhibiting self-deception because of ideology.

Self-deception as a consequence of ideology produces a variety of social psychological by-products as well. Ideological bias can lead people to pluralistic ignorance—an erroneous perception of the relationship between one's own opinions and those of the majority. Misreading public opinion consistent with one's own opinion, an individual is actually in the majority but falsely believes he or she is in the minority. This self-deception of opinion climate because of one's ideology can also happen the other way around, producing false consensus. False consensus is the inaccurate perception that other's beliefs are similar to one's own belief, when they are not similar in reality.

Taking a step forward, false consensus also includes seeing one's judgments and behavioral

decisions as more socially desirable and commonly accepted, while considering alternatives as inadequate and deviant. Projecting one's own ideology (beliefs and values) in seeing other's social judgments leads people to hold these self-deceptions about generalized others in a society. The cases of pluralistic ignorance and false consensus are well witnessed in American history. For example, a series of studies in the 1970s—when the racial conflict was at its peak in the United States—reported that while college students overestimated the support for affirmative action on campus, people depicted most Caucasians as being against racial equality in their communities.

Mass Deception: Ideology as Construction in the Service of Power

Mass deception based on a society's need to maintain the pre-existing order goes back to Greek mythology. Myths provide answers and explanations for everyday questions. However, myths are not necessarily true but actually are more often fictional stories created in order to maintain order in society. Among Joseph Campbell's four functions of myth—the mystical (awe-inspiring), cosmological (describing the nature of the universe), sociological (supporting or validating certain social orders), and pedagogical (providing models for living) functions—the relevance of myth here pertains to the latter two, not the former two.

In the modern era myth gives way to ideology. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels employ the generic term *ideology* in order to explain how cultures are structured in ways that enable a group in a society to maintain control. Ideology does not necessarily refer only to a process in which groups deliberately plan to oppress people or alter their understanding about how their interpretations of the social world should be. Ideology can be more broadly defined as any attempt to naturalize social practices that have a deep historical origin.

Dominant social classes or institutions in society use symbol systems and social entities such as values and attitudes in such a way as to legitimize the current state, order, or power structures and make them seem "natural." For example, an argument like "men are better at math and science, whereas women are better at languages" can be a strategic effort to naturalize alleged differences between women and men, naturalizing the superiority of one gender. The historical roots of social expectations about men and women are deleted here, and what is left is an historical stereotype of gender roles. This is also the case for racism. It endorses social practices reflecting the belief that human beings can be categorized into distinct biological groups called race, which assign a certain group of people with specific "natural" attributes.

In contemporary society, ideology permeates the general public as mass deception through various channels. One of those outlets in which individuals can easily find ideology is popular culture, such as soap operas, movies, and popular music. For example, the movie *Independence Day*, which had a huge box-office success, depicts a war against the aliens from outer space with naturalizing racial differences through action-packed spectacle and computer graphics. In the movie, the three main characters—the president of United States, a scientist, and a soldier—struggle against the attacking aliens. Here, the president who takes charge in the war against the aliens is played by a white Caucasian actor; the scientist who uses his brain to attack the aliens is depicted as Jewish; and the soldier who is shown in most of the physical engagements (hand-to-hand fighting) against the aliens is played by an African American actor. The roles played by these three characters/actors reiterate cultural stereotypes about race and ethnicity, strengthening this ideology to its audience members.

In addition to media content, various social institutions play a significant role in molding cognitive and affective interpretations of the social world consistent with ideologies. Louis Althusser dubbed these social institutions, such as schools, churches, and even families, the "ideological state apparatus." According to Antonio Gramsci, these institutions combined with cultural practices, such as literature and media entertainment, to provide hegemony (legitimacy) to certain ideas (ideologies).

Historically, ideology has been a focal point of criticism. The first critic of ideology was Napoleon Bonaparte. Specifically, he criticized the "ideologues," meaning a group of theorists at the time that provided arguments based on the human need for self-serving illusion as opposed to the need for political reality. At first, the criticism was mainly about a detachment of theory from

reality (the discrepancy between an idea and how the social world works). Later, Marx and Engels employed the term *ideology* as an agent of "false consciousness."

What is interesting about ideology as mass deception is the fact that an ideology can be called out as an ideology only when it is discovered as unnatural. This notion can be exemplified by the popular anecdote appearing in the movie *The Matrix*. People in *The Matrix* (signifying a society with mass deception based on ideology) do not realize that they live in the Matrix. If one takes the blue pill and stays in the state of "ignorance is bliss," one cannot realize that one is succumbing to ideology. It is only when one takes the red pill that one can see the bitter reality.

Critical theorists have long tried to identify ideologies. For example, Roland Barthes analyzed the operation of the mass deception process based on ideology (social order) in everyday life with an example of a photograph on the magazine cover of *Paris Match*. The photo displays a young soldier in a French colonial country. The soldier, wearing the military uniform of France, is shown giving a salute to the French flag. On the surface, it is a young soldier from a French colonial country in his uniform. But in closer analysis, what the photo means, according to Barthes, is the ideology that France is a great nation; France gives an equal opportunity to its colonial people with no racial discrimination. The reason why it is difficult to call this out as ideology is because people often overlook its meaning and see it as a mere magazine photo.

Conclusion

Ideology plays a significant role in both self-deception and mass deception. Although the very definitions and mechanisms by which ideology works in deception vary in terms of the level of analysis, both psychological and sociological approaches to the role of ideology in self- and mass deception reveal a crucial implication: Deception based on ideology can change human history. The reason why people should pay attention to and reflect on their own ideology with constant vigilance lies here.

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See Also: Bok, Sissela; Internet: Facebook and Social Media Sites; Manipulation; Movies, Lying in; Myth; Napoleon Bonaparte; Projection; Rationality; Self-Deception; Self-Justification.

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Impression

Like a footprint pressed into the sand, where there is an impression, something remains in presence by virtue of its mark, as if it were the very essence of the thing. Thus, there are good impressions, false impressions—frightening, awkward, and ridiculous impressions—all sorts of impressions that persist as traces of the people, locations, or events they represent. Nothing can present all facets and perspectives of itself at once; even a dot on a page looks completely different under a microscope. Thus, we have only limited knowledge of things, only impressions to go by. As Ginsberg famously said, "America, this is the impression I get from looking in the television set."

With respect to persons, this is also true. Others cannot know everything about who a person is; they cannot even know this of themselves. Nevertheless, they often take up momentary impressions, as if this solves the puzzle of the other person.

Common expressions such as "first impressions last," and "be sure to make a good impression" exist because where first impressions succeed, they persist, and where they fail, it is hard to recover from them. For example, Mr. Darcy of *Pride and Prejudice*, originally titled *First Impressions,* initially seemed "the proudest, most disagreeable man in the world."

Self-consciousness arises when individuals realize that others will and do form impressions of