

## Civic Ignorance



Civic ignorance describes how well a group or person ignores the civic ideas, problems, or solutions of those surrounding them. The need to solve problems intelligently and taking account of all solutions is cast away in favor of the quick, the easy, and the brutal. Maybe the problem will just go away? Critics of this should be marginalized, ignored or otherwise disabled or destroyed.

## Violence



Much can be achieved through dominance and submission by using violence. If the subject cannot be subdued psychologically through fear, then injury can be inflicted. If injury is not enough, then the subject can ultimately be eliminated by murder. This is ultimately the underlying threat of violence.

## Environmental Degradation



The natural environment; including but not limited to soil, water, air, flora, and fauna, has a natural balance. Through pollution, over usage, and lack of stewardship, the balance is broken causing the natural networks that sustain life on this planet to suffer.

## Consumerism



Quality of life is ultimately measured by on the acquisition and display of material goods. At the heart of consumerism is the thought that the “good life” can be purchased. Consumerism also contains a set of standards through which people can be judged based on material wealth.

# Semantic Manipulation



Certain words, phrases, or ideas become taboo in societies due to their negative definitions. When these definitions prevent governments or corporations from their goals, they may sidestep the problem by redefining words to manipulate the public into accepting something they otherwise would not accept.

# Fundamentalism



Fundamentalism is a term for a range of rigid and extreme beliefs. Fundamentalism is found all over the world. It's often religious when one group's gods and laws are absolutely true and all others are absolutely false. Some typical characteristics are: exclusionism, strict adherence to certain doctrines, an acceptance of violence, xenophobia, and a belief in the end of the world. Fundamentalism — and not just the religious kind — is fundamental for perpetuating worldwide turmoil.

# Compartmentalized Knowledge



Knowledge is effectively compartmentalized (or put into "compartments") when different people not only have access to certain types of knowledge but are actually denied formally or via social norms or personal preferences from going beyond their allowable sphere. Academics often do this to draw boundaries around their own disciplines, thus preventing perceived encroachment and interdisciplinary research.

# Distorting History



The historical record can be altered by teaching events that did not happen, altering events that did happen, or omitting events altogether. Over time, knowledge of the truth will die with those witnessed it, and the alternate version will be universally accepted as true.

# Dumbing Down

Today's Lesson

Dumbing Down

The general population cannot understand complex issues and may even be confused into conflict by certain controversial topics. This can be avoided if topics are dumbed down into easily understood emotionally charged debates that cannot be easily argued with.

# Forbidden Knowledge



This is the industrial strength version of Compartmentalization of Knowledge anti-pattern. This occurs when knowing or pursuing some knowledge is actually denied to a certain group of people under the threat of penalty, as when the U.S. Center for Disease Control (CDC) being told they can't study guns as a "Public health issue."

# Opacity



Sometimes information is kept secret from citizens. This is useful when hiding corruption, money laundering, vote buying, tax evasion, etc. With Opacity in place, over the years elite business and governments can distance themselves further and further away from any controls on them.

# Hidden Agendas



Society expects its leaders to keep their agendas transparent and in line with the agenda of the groups they represent, however, this is rarely the case. Those in power often have agendas that aren't in line with the public's expectations of them, and for this reason they may choose to keep these agendas hidden.

# Corruption and Fraud



Corruption and fraud are, in this context, when an entity in power does things that are dishonest or contrary to commonly accepted ethics and laws. This generally involves bribes or intimidation behind the scene. Profit and power are usually the driving force behind such actions. Go figure.

# Social Darwinism



Some people are just weaker than others and have less power or opportunity to take power. The idea of Social Darwinism is that it is natural that these people fail, and that society shouldn't feel responsible for taking care of these people. Basically, it's a dog eat dog world.

# Denialism



This is the adherence to certain beliefs proven to be untrue – or refusing to accept as truth something that has been proven to be true. Denialism can be motivated by religious beliefs, self-interest, or as a defense mechanism out of fear or discomfort. Inculcating knee-jerk distrust for particular people or groups is often a useful part of denialism.

# Eye for an Eye — Retribution



Equivalent exchange by way of exact behavior. This is the idea that, "doing unto others the same as has been done unto you," is the true balance of justice. This approach, diligently adhered to, motivates a perpetual cycle of violence. An eye for an eye doesn't leave the whole world blind, just people who go around poking out other people's eyes!



## Cultural imperialism



This is the way in which powerful cultures present their culture as the most acceptable lifestyle, and condemn the cultural practices of others. Some cultural nuances are acceptable, but if it contradicts the values of the dominant culture, those ideals must be eliminated.

## Ultra-nationalism



This is the belief that your country of choice is bar none, hands down, the best country in the world. No other country comes close and your countries interests are more important than all other countries interests...combined. Without the violence and intimidation that accompanies this anti-pattern, the people and groups who employ would seem a lot more humorous.

## Education, Inc.



The Privatization of education helps reverse the idea of high quality free education that potentially undergirds a truly democratic way of life. Privatizing education can reinforce the division of society into *haves* and *have-nots*. It can support elite instruction on the one hand and cheap, possibly online training on the other augmented of course with a non-stop barrage of standardized testing. It can erode the role of dedicated teachers and substitute with business goals and software.

## Criminalizing Poverty



Poverty can be one of the most dangerous things to the stability of a society. It is especially dangerous to those in power if poverty is viewed as being a failure of the system. If the poverty stricken are viewed as being personally responsible for their state however, then it is seen as their fault and not those in positions of power.

## Assembly Line Education



This method of educating students was invented during the industrial revolution, when the main goal of public education was to move children through a school system to become “cogs” in the machine of society. Although that time has passed, our main system of education has not. Standardized testing is a big help here since it removes the particular circumstances of the students and promotes teaching to the test. This kind of education is cheap, if nothing else.

## Mock Public Space



Mock public space is generally physical or virtual “community” space that people perceive as “public” but in reality disallow many aspects of “public-ness” that are important to democracies; free speech for one. A privately owned social-media website, or a mall would both be examples of this pattern.

## Professional Obfuscation



The complexities of the world often make reasoning about it very difficult. In many public deliberations it can be useful if this situation remains impenetrable and unsettled. Spreading false information, campaigning to hide the truth, and arguing against the validity of certain studies can all be forms of this pattern. Public relations corporations are available to do this work — if the client has the necessary funds. One of the best cases of this is the case of the cigarette industry in the United States.

## Sustaining World Hunger



Due to factors like poverty, displacement of resources, and environmental degradation many in the world go hungry every day. One of the largest factors may well be that food is viewed as a commodity to be purchased and sold, and not a human right. In this way “the market” is responsible, not individuals, corporations, or the world community.

## Profit-motivated Health Care



Pharmaceutical and health insurance companies profit off of disease and injury, and so it is in their fiscal interest to keep patients ill and/or injured. Band-aid "solutions" and expensive procedures target symptoms, instead than causes of diseases in this pattern. Health through prevention should be studiously avoided as it leads to "prevention" in profits as well.

## Monopoly



Monopolies exist when one institution (or a small number of institutions) control all access to something, generally a commodity, information, or a service. In the absence of external controls, the monopolist institution can (and almost inevitably does) make up the rules all by themselves, and rarely to the benefit of the many.

## Silenced Voices



Words are powerful, and the stories they make can topple governments. The voices of the oppressed can sometimes carry an emotional appeal so strong that organizations and governments will actively censor them to maintain the status quo. Some voices must be silenced to maintain "law and order." This rationale for silencing some voices — violently in many cases — has stood the test of time as it offers a defensible excuse for tacit compliance.

## Fear Mongering



Fear is a very big motivator, perhaps one of the biggest motivators for human behavior. Since it is such an effective motivator it is often used to influence entire societies toward specific ends. When people are stifled with fear they think less clearly and can become easier to manipulate and control.

## Focus on Deficiencies



This pattern suggests that the way that people in dominant positions look at a community, school, country, etc. is to focus on its deficiencies; what's broken or dysfunctional. Thus, one can "diagnose" a community for its "diseases" such as crime, drug use, broken families, or "loose morals."

## Activism Delegitimization



Dissenters, especially those who are active in their dissent can be delegitimized in order to take away their ability to be taken seriously by the public. This is very effective when done thru mass media outlets. One very effective form of de-legitimization is ridicule because it spreads easily and avoids actually examining the situation.

## Media Monopolies



If most major media outlets are controlled by a small number of corporations pro-business perspectives and propaganda that aligns with the special interests of those corporations can dominate the public conversation. Information that challenges or opposes those interests can be ignored or delegitimized. Amazing progress has been made: From over 80 companies just 40 years ago, now five corporations control a large percentage of the information that American citizens see.

## "Balance" Deception



A journalistic practice whereby one side will be presented and then, with equal time allotment, the "other side" will be presented. This pattern can be very effective at obscuring the issue; leading to a situation where it appears that there are two equally credible ways to view an issue, when in fact there may not be. Currently this is being used to suggest that the phenomenon is not established scientific fact.



## Advertising-Funded Media



This pattern presents the system wherein media stations are primarily funded by selling advertising time to others. This time is often very expensive and favors large companies. This creates a system in which the media answers not to the public, but to the companies that are paying for the advertising time.

## Weapons of Mass Distraction



Societal distractions can be naturally occurring or manufactured in such a way as to distract people and subvert their attention away from social and civic issues of public concern. If properly occupied by such distractions, public outcry can be better controlled and their attention diverted to issues of unimportance such as the private lives of movie stars.

## Dehumanization



Dehumanization works by portraying subsets of people who aren't in line with the goals of the state as less than human. This representation will eventually permeate the minds of the population. As the public adopts this attitude, they can eventually view the target peoples as less than human.

## Racism



Racism is the overt and covert, conscious and subconscious, belief that people of different ethnicities have less intrinsic worth than others. The belief that certain ethnicities are inferior or superior can become internalized and expressed subtly through actions or words that demean or dehumanize others.

# Xenophobia



An “Us and Them” mentality that leads to extreme prejudices against a group of people. News coverage often subtly encourages xenophobic beliefs for hidden political agendas. This is a common tool used during times of war or in the marketing of war.

# Societal Apathy



Societal Apathy is a collective indifference toward issues of concern. A society that is socially apathetic towards its own sense of purpose might lack the civic intelligence to overcome adversities it encounters. Another form is directed outward upon groups of people so as to ignore their situation by seeing the troubles that they face as eternal, unchangeable, and ultimately not worth thinking about.

# Unacknowledged Privilege



Although privilege is rampant in virtually any society, it's generally the best-kept non-secret. Suggesting that others have it suggests that you are just unhappy you don't have. Acknowledging it in yourself acknowledges that you don't really deserve the position you're in. Unacknowledged privilege can not only help you into areas that you might not be otherwise qualified for, but can buy you out of negative consequences that you might otherwise have to face.