

DECEPTION AND COLLECTIVE ACTION

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Virtually all studies of social choice, both normative and descriptive, assume that the actors involved in collective decision making express their preferences accurately, that deceptions are not practiced. Yet even the most cursory examination of actual situations denies this fundamental assumption: statesmen deceive in the conduct of foreign affairs, committee members dissimulate when a group decision must be made, family members deceive each other in a variety of situations, the statements of candidates during elections are generally accepted as a web of deceptions, and the arguments of bureaucrats in any social choice process are acknowledged to be deceptions designed to hide their true preferences and advance their material and political interests. Clearly then, most analyses of collective actions are at variance with the reality that deceptions are frequent and pervasive when social choices are made. Our understanding of collective actions will be improved by increasing our understanding of deception and its role in the social choice process. In this article I will present some speculations about deception in social interaction, and its role in collective decision making. Some results of empirical research on deception will also be presented.

Previous studies of deception

The treatment of deception in the literature of social science is quite curious. Many theorists and empirical investigators have considered deception, but somehow it has managed to avoid careful, systematic scrutiny. Usually it has been dealt with as a single element in the study of some larger problem, occasionally as the subject of the study itself; only rarely has the role of deception in social choice been considered. No behavioral scientist has focussed the analytic

and empirical tools of the social sciences on the phenomenon of deception to give us a thorough understanding of deceptive behavior.

The origins of the study of deception can be traced to Machiavelli who, interestingly, analyzed political, collective actions. Machiavelli's attitude toward deception is one that is still common today; he was ambivalent, considering it distasteful but necessary. In *The Prince and the Discourses* he said, "Although deceit is detestable in all other things, yet in the conduct of war it is laudable and honorable; and a commander who vanquishes an enemy by strategem is equally praised with one who gains victory by force" (Machiavelli, 1940, p. 526). Despite his distaste for deceit (with the one exception in war), Machiavelli was still able to recommend its use. He advises the prince to appear to be merciful, faithful, humane, sincere, and religious; to appear to have these characteristics is useful, to observe them always is dangerous. He also advises any man who wishes to change the government of a state to retain the semblance of the old forms so that it may seem to the people that no change has taken place, even though the institutions are drastically changed. He advises a prince that when circumstances force him to take some action that benefits the people he should attribute the action to his own generosity and liberality. Finally, he advises the leader that "it may at times be the highest wisdom to simulate folly" (Machiavelli, 1940, p. 403). Thus, at least in his public writings, Machiavelli found deception to be necessary but distasteful.

More contemporary studies of deception have been done by sociologists and social psychologists, particularly Erving Goffman. Some of these studies have dealt with deception in social choice situations. Others have considered deception in situations involving communication and social interaction. These more contemporary studies of deception can be traced back to the speculations of Simmel, who considered problems of knowledge, truth, and falsehood in social interactions. Simmel's treatment of truthfulness and lying stemmed from his analyses of relations which people have with each other, which, in turn, are based on the knowledge they have of one another. Successful interaction, Simmel believed, depended on adequate and accurate information. Simmel was struck by the importance knowledge of another person had for the actual relationship; he concluded: "Our relationships thus develop upon the basis of reciprocal knowledge, and this knowledge upon the basis of the actual relations. Both are inextricably interwoven. In their alternation with sociological interaction, they reveal interaction as one of the points where being and conceiving make their mysterious unity empirically felt" (Wolff, 1950, p. 309). For Simmel the

essential aspect of the lie is that the deceiver hides his true beliefs from the other person. He points out that in both the lie and the erroneous communication the receiver of the communication obtains false knowledge or information; what is specific to the lie is that the deceived person has false information about the private opinion of the deceiver (Wolff, 1950, p. 312).

Some of Simmel's analyses are normative : he condemns deception as "ethically negative" although he does say that the lie can have sociological significance; it restricts knowledge. However, the thrust of Simmel's argument is that deception harms social relationships : it is ethically objectionable. He also argues that in more simple circumstances, in small groups and primitive societies, the lie is less harmful than in modern, complex societies which are dependent on the faith in the honesty of the other. "We base our gravest decisions on a complex system of conceptions, most of which presuppose the confidence that we will not be betrayed. Under modern conditions, the lie, therefore, becomes something much more devastating than it was earlier, something which questions the very foundations of our life." (Wolff, 1950, p. 313).

Simmel offers two other speculations of interest : the more intimate is the personal relationship, the less permissible is deception; and that the lie can be used by the more powerful and more intelligent to control the less intelligent and the weak (Wolff, 1950, p. 313-314).

The analysis of this paper, hopefully, avoids the grossly normative statements that are characteristic of Simmel's work, and so many public discussions of deception. For some, deception is a prohibited and despicable behavior, yet it is generally recognized that it is frequent. For many, the practice of deception is seen to violate an important but imprecisely defined norm. The analysis of this paper will make clear that our norms concerning deceptive behavior are ill-defined and imprecise, and as a result it is difficult, if not impossible, to conform to any societal norm concerning deception.

Glaser and Strauss (1965) in a fascinating monograph, *Awareness of Dying*, discuss the deceptive behavior that takes place when a patient is hospitalized and dying. They have written a descriptive and analytic account of the social interactions that occur among patients, nurses, physicians, and family members when an individual is discovered to have a terminal illness. In this situation many of the interactions result in collective actions and deception is frequent.

Glaser and Strauss argue that the social interactions that occur in a hospital when a patient has a terminal illness are best described and understood using an "awareness theory." The patient and those he

interacts with may be in any one of four states : closed awareness, suspicion awareness, mutual pretense, and open awareness. Much deception takes place in the first three states while more frank discussion characterizes the fourth state.

In the state of *closed awareness* the hospital staff, and possibly the patient's relatives, are aware that the patient is dying, but the patient is unaware of his impending death. Frequently deception occurs to prevent the patient from realizing he is going to die. The patient may get clues to his condition and begin a quest for information. This is called the state of *suspicion awareness*, and again deception is practiced frequently by the hospital staff. When patient and staff both know that the patient is dying but pretend otherwise, Glaser and Strauss say that a context of *mutual pretense* exists. The deceptions that occur in this state are more complicated for people say things they know are not true and all involved are aware that the participants of this interaction are aware of the deceptions. Finally, when both staff and patient know that the patient is dying and they acknowledge it in their actions the situation is called *open awareness*. Deception is not as frequent in this situation but some deception may occur about the time or mode of death if the staff members believe the time to be sooner than the patient expects or the mode unpleasant.

Lyman and Scott (1970, pp. 63-66) analyze deception within a larger framework, an analysis of social interaction as gamelike. Their discussion of deception is brief and while it recognizes the basic facts that deceptions are "not only noticeable features of social life but even required patterns of behavior in specially designed situations," and that they are often the expected mode of conduct, their treatment of deception follows very much in the line of previous work. They distinguish between the *situated* and the *occasional falsifier*, and the *career deceiver*. They take the very usual view that occasional deception and deceptions required by the situation (usually to spare the feelings of others) stem from a moral evaluation of the situation that justifies deception. For Lyman and Scott the essence of deception "is the placement of the individual or group to be deceived into one frame of meaning, while the deceiver is operating in quite another" (Lyman and Scott, 1970, p. 64). This conception of deception follows from their fundamental assumption that the world is essentially without meaning and that meaning is socially constructed by actors, and that it is not the task of the sociologist to attempt to discover any "real" or objective meaning. It is not surprising then that this assumption leads Lyman and Scott to focus their attention on what they call the career deceiver : the

magician, the confidence man and the espionage agent, and the techniques they use to make deception successful. Although they do not say so explicitly, it is reasonable to assume that Lyman and Scott would believe that their analysis of these deviant or unusual situations would shed light on the more usual deceptions of everyday life.

Christie and Geis (1970) conducted a program of research using a *machiavellian personality scale* that yielded results that bear on the analysis and study of deception. Christie and Geis constructed a scale that enables us to identify persons who agree with a set of propositions that identify them as manipulative and deceptive. Christie and Geis did a number of studies that yielded interesting results: High-mach subjects looked the interrogator in the eye while denying cheating more than low-machs, and they lied more plausibly; high-machs were more successful in a conflict of interest bargaining situation. While these results are of considerable interest to students of deceptive behavior these studies too do not consider or test specific propositions about deceptive behavior. Christie and Geis focussed their attention on a particular, manipulative and deceptive personality type or character trait, and they proceeded to study the characteristics of this type or trait. From their work we learn that deception is associated with a variety of behaviors in a particular, hypothesized, character type; but from the work on machiavellianism we learn nothing about deception among ordinary, non-machiavellian persons.

The most extensive treatment of deception in the social psychological literature can be found in the work of Erving Goffman (1959, 1961, 1963a, 1963b, 1969). He has produced an *oeuvre* of unprecedented brilliance that describes and analyzes face-to-face social interaction and behavior in organizations. Much of his analysis deals with deception. A detailed treatment of his views about deception would require an article itself but some discussion of his ideas is necessary.

Goffman (1959) employs what he calls a *dramaturgical approach* or the perspective of the theatrical performance, and this presents some serious problems to the student of deception. This view of social interaction leads him to view behavior as a performance in which we do not conceive of the statements that people make as representations or misrepresentations of their view of reality. Rather people are on a stage, acting; sometimes saying what they believe to be true, and other times uttering the lines of some drama in which they play a part. This view of social interaction leads Goffman to blur the distinction between the accurate representation of one's true

beliefs and deceptive statements, those designed to communicate what the actor believes not to be true. However, Goffman is not completely consistent, he does on occasion write as if people know their true beliefs and can express them as when he makes a distinction between cynical and sincere performances and when he says "that there is hardly a legitimate everyday vocation or relationship whose performers do not engage in concealed practices which are incompatible with fostered impressions" (Goffman, 1959, p. 64).

Goffman's works are filled with examples of deception. In the monograph *Stigma* he offers us lengthy discussions of how a person with some defect manages information about his failing (1963, p. 42). In *Asylums* (1961) Goffman describes the many practices mental patients employ to "get by" in mental hospitals. In *Strategic Interaction* Goffman (1969) offers lengthy and detailed analyses of the deceptions of intelligence agents. Goffman's works taken as a whole can be seen as descriptive-analytic discussions of deceptive behavior in face-to-face interaction and in organizations.

The one treatment of collective decision making that deals with deception, albeit indirectly, is Farquharson's (1969) discussion of *strategic voting*. Strictly speaking this analysis does not deal with deception, rather it considers the problem of how a participant in a social choice process should vote to obtain the outcome he prefers most. Farquharson argues that in certain situations a voter should express a preference for a less preferred alternative to obtain the outcome he desires. Stated this way the proposition is obvious but Farquharson offers two theorems that provide us with a somewhat more precise analysis of strategic voting. What is of interest to us here is that in some situations strategic voting will require deception. Where voting is secret and no one need explain the reasons for his vote a participant may vote strategically, contrary to his true preferences, make no comment and hence not practice any deception. However, in many if not most situations, participants must explain or justify their vote. When this is the case, participants rarely make a candid statement indicating that, although they prefer alternative A to B for such and such reasons they voted for B so that A would be the outcome selected. In such situations voters often produce a web of deceptions which are simultaneously designed to justify their preference both for alternative B and ultimately the selection of A. Strategic voting is frequently accompanied by a set of complex deceptions, especially in parliamentary voting situations where the voter may have to justify his vote to a diverse set of constituents.

Deceptions in committee decisions

Situations in which groups of people must make a decision or come to some agreement, situations in which interests and preferences are in conflict, lend themselves particularly to the practice of deception. In committee meetings in a variety of situations deceptions are essential because the members of the committee may not be able to state publicly their actual beliefs; it would be inadvisable, unacceptable, or disadvantageous for them to offer their true beliefs. For example, a committee in a hospital, university, or large corporation may be deciding whether or not to hire a particular person. The candidate is politically allied with one group or faction of the committee. These sponsoring members of the committee have proposed a candidate who is quite well suited to, and qualified for, the position. This fact is known to all the committee members and would be agreed upon if all committee members expressed their true beliefs. Yet the opposing group, in all likelihood, would neither acknowledge the man's competence and appropriateness for the position nor would they express their opposition to him on the true grounds, that they do not want to hire an ally of an opposing faction. The opposing group would, in all likelihood, point out some genuine weakness in the candidate's qualifications or raise another issue about whether a different type of person with a different set of qualifications should be hired. Other possible issues might be raised. Perhaps the candidate wants too high a salary, or is unlikely to come if offered the position; or it might be said that he is not the kind of person who would fit in well in the organization, or that he was difficult to get along with. The sponsors of the candidate after spending some small amount of time defending the candidate's competence, might abandon this line of discussion because they would be aware that the stated objections are not the genuine ones, the ones that must be overcome. The sponsors of the candidate might argue that the candidate is not their own ally, rather he has interests and ideas similar to those who oppose him. In short, both the sponsoring group and the opposing group within the committee will offer arguments that they believe to be valid, arguments they believe to be invalid, and arguments they believe to be irrelevant in support of their position, because the true issue is one that cannot be discussed openly.

We may consider business negotiations as a type of collective choice process, as when two negotiators must settle on a price within a range of possible prices. In such a situation one businessman may say to another that he paid ten dollars for a particular item, and that

he must sell it for at least fourteen dollars to remain in business; but that in this special case he will make an exception and allow the sale to be completed at a price of thirteen dollars. The buyer believes that the seller has paid only eight or nine dollars for the item and, although he cannot be completely certain that the seller did not pay ten dollars, he believes that the seller is deceiving him. Yet, he will not say, "that's not true, I know that you probably paid only eight or nine dollars for the item." Rather, the buyer will respond to the deception with another deception saying "thirteen dollars is too much, I can't pay it," even though the buyer could very well pay that amount and earn a fair profit or make an advantageous agreement. Both parties know they are deceiving each other and they know that each is aware of the deceptions.

Deceptions in situations of collective action exist within a complex framework of interaction: the deceiver frequently makes statements he knows are not true and he believes the person he is speaking to is probably aware that he is deceiving. It frequently happens that one or both parties are deceiving, both parties are aware that deception is occurring, and both parties accept the deceptions they offer and the deceptions of the other party. In addition, both parties are aware that the other party may be aware of the entire situation. This complex situation of deception and awareness is the rule rather than the exception in social choice situations.

A notion of trust based on deceptions (i-Trust)

An experimental study of behavior in a three-person, zero-sum game unexpectedly elicited many deceptions during the negotiations that were part of the procedures. And, surprisingly, the participants in this collective decision procedure then developed an unusual notion of trust (called *i-trust*) that served to provide stability to a conflict that was inherently unstable and that produced complicated negotiations, agreements, deceptions, and broken promises (Lieberman, 1964).

The study was one in a program of research designed to see how closely actual behavior conformed to the prescriptions of normative solutions of two-person and three-person games. The theory of games of strategy attempts to increase our understanding of social conflict by analyzing conflicts for quantifiable objects or commodities and prescribing rational solutions for such conflicts. A number of studies have been done comparing actual behavior in a variety of situations to the prescriptions of the formal theory.

One such game which produced many deceptions and led to a

recognition of an unusual notion of trust was a three-person, zero-sum, majority game played by three participants (designated 1, 2, 3). Each player by a personal move chose the number of one of the two other players. If two chose each other's number, a couple or coalition was formed. Three distinct couples were possible; on any one play of the game only one couple or none at all could occur. The coalition that formed won an amount of money from the third player. The winning pair had to decide, by the use of written communications, how to divide the winnings. The subjects played 40 repetitions of the game described by the following payoff function :

If coalition (1,2) formed, the coalition received 10 cents from player 3.

If coalition (1,3) formed, the coalition received 8 cents from player 2.

If coalition (2,3) formed, the coalition received 6 cents from player 1.

The relationships among the three players are quite intricate. One might think that a simple way of resolving the conflict would be for players 1 and 2 to form a permanent coalition and divide their winnings equally. When this does occur, however, it immediately becomes obvious to player 3 that it is advantageous for him to form a coalition with one of the two others. He can make an offer to player 1 to form a coalition with him, from which player 1 can receive more than the 5 cents he can receive together with player 2. It is even advantageous for player 3 to offer 7 cents or even 8 cents to player 1. Thus, player 1 is tempted to break his coalition with player 2 and take the full 8 cents from player 3. Seeing this, player 2 can then make a more attractive offer to 3 or 1. The process can be repeated.

The three players quickly learned to see the complexities of the situation. What occurred was instability, offer and counter-offer, acceptance, rejection, deception, and the "double cross." Coalitions formed and were changed; in not one of the eight groups did a coalition form on the first trial and remain constant through all the forty plays of the game.

The quantitative results are not the main point of interest here, but they are worth mentioning. The coalition of players 1 and 2 which yielded the largest payoff occurred on 35.3 % of the plays of the game; the coalition of 1 and 3 occurred 18.1 % of the time, and the 2,3 coalition, the one that yielded the smallest payoff, occurred

with the greatest frequency, 39.4 % of the time. No coalition formed 7.2 % of the time. After a coalition was formed and a play of the game completed the coalition partners had to divide the winnings of that play. Solution theory prescribes an uneven division of the winnings but the actual behavior did not conform to the normative theory. A majority of the divisions took the form of a 50-50 split.

The way in which some of the subjects come to resolve the tangled situation facing them is the point of major interest here. The situation the subjects found themselves in was perplexing. The structure of the game offered no way to resolve the conflict. Some behavioral standards or criteria for the resolution of the conflict had to develop. The nature of the game made complex negotiations inevitable. The agreements, breaking of agreements, and deceptions that occurred led to an interesting result. From observations of the subjects' behavior, and an analysis of their messages, it became obvious that in a number of games the players came to realize that a maximum return on one or two plays of the game was not important. It was far more profitable to enter into a stable, continuing agreement with one other player. Since defection was not an infrequent occurrence, an intuitive notion of trust was significant in determining which coalitions formed and held together. The subjects stated that they would enter into coalitions with the player they trusted, the one they believed would not be tempted to defect from their coalition for a more attractive offer on a subsequent play of the game.

In five of the eight groups that played the game a notion of trust was developed. The notion of trust contained the element of the desire to maximize one's payoff, and this could be done best by entering into a stable coalition with one other player. The elements of giving a pledge, making a commitment, and fulfilling the pledge or commitment were present.

In three of the five groups that developed the notion, the actual word "trust," or some variation of it such as "trustworthy," was used. In the two games where the specific word "trust" was not used, obvious equivalents were present. For example, one player said: "I have found that I cannot take 1 at his word. Disappointed as I am, I would be willing to listen to any offer you make."

A particularly clear example of how the notion helped to resolve the conflict situation is illustrated by the following description of the play of one of the groups. Prior to the first play of the game, player 1 made an offer to 2, and 2 accepted. Then player 3 made an offer to 1, and player 2 made an offer to 3. Players 1 and 2 saw the complexities and the possible dangers, reinstated their initial

agreement, and took the 10 cents from player 3, completing the first play of the game. This coalition occurred on the second play also. On the third play of the game, player 3 offered player 1 one cent more than he was receiving from 2 and formed a coalition with him. On the fourth play, players 2 and 3 decided to form a coalition and split the earnings in half. They pointed out to each other that player 1 had alternated between the two of them on the initial trials. Before the sixth play, in response to an offer, player 2 said to 1, "I cannot trust you." Before the eighth play, 3 said to 1 that he, 3, and 2 could trust each other. On the eleventh trial, player 1 was still trying to destroy the (2,3) coalition and made the statement, "If you don't trust me there is no use making further offers. You will note that I have played 2's every time since my last offer." This was an attempt on 1's part to have 2 trust him. Finally on the fourteenth trial, player 1 made a last attempt to separate the (2,3) coalition. He said to player 3, "If you trust me I will offer you a four-four split." Although this would have enabled player 3 to make more money than he was receiving with 2, 3 declined the more lucrative offer and continued his coalition with 2.

Another example illustrates the same point. In another of the groups, the notion of trust pervaded the entire bargaining process. By the tenth trial player 2 had broken an alliance with 1; players 2 and 3 were in a coalition. Player 1 said to 3: "Two broke an alliance. Want the 6-2 now?" Player 3 responded: "If I broke my alliance with him [meaning player 2] I'd be no better than him. I owe him one hand. Next time around I'll consider it." The subjects, sensing the importance of the stable alliance, but not wishing to commit themselves for all the remaining plays of the game, discovered the technique of making agreements for two, three, or a greater but limited number of moves. If a player defected after the agreement was completed he could still be trusted.

In this group the longest unbroken alliance (between players 3 and 1) lasted between trials 15 and 28 when player 3 said to 2: "A long time with you has been doubtful. I must trust 1 and he can trust me. If I leave him, you'll wonder if I might leave you. Then if you two team up, I'll have nowhere to turn." The alliance between 1 and 3 lasted through the 28th trial.

From the 29th to the 38th trial, the coalition (1,2) held together. Player 2 appealed to 1 by saying: "I broke no promises, I merely withdrew proposals." On the last two trials the (1,3) coalition again formed, 1 deserted 2, and 2 said, "I can no longer trust you but must offer 3 a deal." That threat was to no avail — player 3 accepted an offer from 1 and the game concluded. In this case the game

concluded with all the players emphasizing the importance of trust, but each making deals with others. However, they did keep their limited agreements.

The notion of trust appeared to emerge inductively as the bargaining proceeded. The study was designed to answer the previous questions about coalition formation in a three-person game situation; as the participants experienced offer, counter-offer, agreement, and deception, they came to realize the importance of being able to rely on a partner who would fulfill his commitments. The study was not designed to investigate the phenomenon of trust — the result was an unanticipated finding — and so it is difficult to say whether some subjects were aware of the importance of a trust notion from the very beginning of the bargaining, and that the notion just became more explicit as the negotiations proceeded, or whether the subjects were initially unaware of its importance. However, the notion did not appear immediately in the groups in which it was important, but occurred after the subjects had some experience with deception and defection and came to realize that a reputation for unreliability was damaging.

The Definition of i-Trust

Before specifying just what is meant by the term *i-Trust*, we can consider the connotations of the term which are not involved. These are the personal-moral connotations. Such elements are present and important when the term is used to describe personal relations, but they are much less important and often absent when we consider the relations among nations. We may say, "I trust my young son to tell me the truth about what he plans to do when he goes to visit a friend, even though he knows that, if I disapprove of his plans, I may prevent him from visiting that friend." But we do not expect to trust a prime minister to tell us the truth of what he plans to do about the Suez Canal, if this will defeat his purpose and be contrary to his nation's interests.

Yet the notion of trust cannot be dispensed with entirely, because certain expectations and obligations that have some striking similarity to the common usage of the term do arise among nations; and these expectations and obligations are often fulfilled. The notion *i-Trust* to be defined here may be descriptive not only of the behavior of the twenty-four college students who played a particular three-person game, but may also be descriptive of the behavior of actors in more impersonal collective decision situations.

The elements that comprise the concept are as follows : *i-Trust* is a belief or expectation about behavior in a situation in which the

problem of forming a stable coalition structure is important. It is necessary to form a stable, continuing alliance because such a situation often yields the greatest payoff to the members of the coalition. Without allies, the players will lose what they value and so they strive for the largest payoff to the coalition. The expectation which we have named *i-Trust* is the belief that the parties involved in an agreement will actually do what they have agreed to do; they will fulfill their commitment not only when it is obviously advantageous for them to do so, but even when it may be disadvantageous, when they must sacrifice some immediate gain.

However, the belief does not require that the person take an action that is clearly contrary to an important self-interest. The person who sacrifices some immediate gain to fulfill a commitment believes he is acting in his own interest, because his interests transcend the increased immediate gain he might make if he defected from a coalition. His interests lie in preserving his alliance, which is what yields him his maximum gain. An attractive offer may be tempting but it also may be ephemeral and dangerous. He keeps agreements so that he will be trusted, so that his partner in turn will stay with him and the coalition will grow rich. Often the present situation is unclear; each person cannot see plainly what he should do, what actions he should take, what behavior will best further his long-term interests. In such a situation, where one's interests are not clear, an unbreakable alliance which yields some gain is preferable to the uncertainty of a swiftly changing coalition structure, with the possibility that one may be left without allies. In such a situation, a large single gain is often not at all attractive.

Definition of Deception

Until this point no attempt has been made to define deception, rather we have relied on the reader's intuition to supply satisfactory meaning. But this is not enough because a close look at the notion of deception tells us that its meaning is not at all clear. There are many unanswered questions: shall we simply say that a deception exists when a person states something he believes to be untrue? Or must the person who hears the statement believe it, for a deception to have occurred? And what about those statements that are so vague and uncertain, so open to interpretation or so much a matter of opinion, that one can hardly say that one statement is true and another deceitful. In committee meetings is it appropriate to say someone has deceived when the speaker and all present are fully aware that the statements made are not believed by the speaker to be

true? A thorough definition, discussion and explication of the term deception would require a separate article itself and is beyond the scope of this paper. For our purposes here, because the conduct of rigorous empirical research requires simplification, we define a deception as a statement made by one person to one or more others where the speaker says something other than what he believes to be true. We do not require that the listener believe the statement to be true nor do we require that the statement in fact be true (or false). The essential element of our definition is that the speaker make a statement other than what he believes to be true.

With this definition it is possible to identify three kinds of deception: a situation in which a person believes a proposition to be true and states the opposite of it; a situation in which a person believes a proposition and states a variation of it; and a situation in which a person believes a proposition but omits stating it. The first type of deception is called a *negation deception*, and this type of deception is frequently practiced by children, although adults also deceive in this way. For example, a child who is prohibited from watching television may, in his parents' absence, have committed the prohibited act. When asked he will say, "I did not watch television".

The second type of deception can be denoted as a *variant deception*. A person may in reality believe that he does not want his organization to hire a particular candidate for a position because that candidate will be an ally of his opponents within the organization. He neither says what he truly believes, that he does not want the person hired, nor does he say the reverse, I do want the person hired; rather he states some other proposition, that the candidate has some other characteristic that makes him undesirable. A variant deception is a statement that is a variation of the true belief of the person making the statement but it is not the opposite of his true belief.

When a person omits making a statement that he believes to be true he may or may not be practicing a deception, depending on a number of factors, including the importance of the statement, the situation it is part of, and the expectations of the participants involved. When a person can reasonably be expected to state a proposition and when he does not, we say he commits a *deception by omission*. For example, when one is purchasing a house the seller is not obligated to volunteer information about any flaws or weaknesses of the house; however, if the buyer asks the seller to tell him whether there are any flaws in the structure, plumbing, roof, wiring, etc., the seller may not withhold this information. The law requires that a seller give accurate answers to questions about the condition of a house. Even more significantly, if a wife on a given

afternoon purchases a dress at a department store and spends the rest of the afternoon with her lover, and upon returning home her husband asks her whether anything interesting happened that day and the wife says that she purchased the dress but omits to tell her husband about her lover, we commonly say that the wife has been unfaithful and the husband has been deceived. In fact, even if the husband does not ask the wife what she has done, but if the wife makes love to another man without telling her husband we commonly say that the husband has been deceived. If a wife makes love to another man and tells her husband she may be considered unfaithful but the husband is not considered to have been deceived. Thus, deception by omission seems only to occur in very important, salient, or significant situations, where the people involved believe the situation to be so significant that the truth must be told. In some cases it should be volunteered even when it is not asked for. Much depends upon the definition of the situation that the participants hold — so that some cases of extra-marital intercourse may not be a deception. For example, when the practicing parties are discreet and the culture accepts extra-marital affairs we generally do not believe deception has occurred. In certain Latin countries, for example, if a husband has a mistress and keeps her in conventional ways (away from his family), maintains his family ties, and fulfills his obligations to his family it is understood that his behavior is acceptable and not deceptive. It is expected that a husband does not discuss his mistress with his wife, and that he is not deceiving his wife if he has a mistress but is a responsible husband. Thus deception by omission is very dependent upon the definition of the situation held by the participants.

The functions of deception

Deception appears to serve two primary functions for those who practice it : it enables people to avoid the unpleasant or unacceptable personal situations that would arise if one always told the truth, but more importantly it serves as a useful and necessary tool to advance one's self-interest. The first function of deception is less important in collective decision situations. The second use of deception, to advance one's economic or personal interests, is to be found everywhere. Stockbrokers give questionable information to their clients to make sales and earn commissions; salesmen misrepresent the characteristics of their products to increase their sales; politicians take political positions to earn votes; union leaders exaggerate the difficulties of the tasks of workers to earn higher pay for their

constituents, the workers; administrators withhold their true beliefs to succeed in their tasks and advance their careers; workers receiving piece rates limit their productivity to maintain a fixed income; bureaucrats misrepresent the difficulty and complexity of their tasks to obtain promotions; committee members do not state their true beliefs in order to obtain a favorable outcome; children misrepresent reality to avoid punishments; clergymen misrepresent their beliefs to their congregation — if one looks carefully all, or almost all, people deceive with some frequency to advance their interests.

Analysis of normative beliefs about deception

In this paper I argue that most people in contemporary industrial society deceive constantly and repeatedly, but few believe that one need not be truthful when dealing with others, that one may deceive as freely and as frequently as one wishes. Many people believe that one should, in general, be truthful when dealing with others. The norms people hold about truth and deception are a complicated matter; some believe that very little or no deception is acceptable, others believe that frequent and significant deceptions are justifiable or desirable, still others believe that deception is permissible in certain situations and relationships, while it is impermissible at other times — and some people rarely consider the acceptability of deception. Whatever our beliefs about deception are, whether they are very salient and specific, or whether they are mainly implicit and rarely verbalized, we all have a set of beliefs that influence our behavior, that tell us when we should and should not deceive. To increase our understanding of these norms an empirical study was done which yielded information about beliefs about the acceptability and unacceptability of deception. One hundred and sixty-five undergraduate students of the University of Pittsburgh completed a questionnaire that contained items that yielded information about the respondents' normative beliefs about deception. Table 1 presents some interesting results.

The responses to items 1.1 and 1.2 confirm our hypothesis that there is a general belief that one should be truthful when dealing with others; more than 95 % of our respondents agreed with statements to that effect. However when telling the truth will cause pain to oneself 38 % of our respondents believe that deception is acceptable and when telling the truth will cause pain to another person 57 % of our respondents believe deception is acceptable. Twelve percent believe that deception is never acceptable; 87 % believe it is acceptable sometimes; and only 2 % believe it is always

TABLE 1
NORMATIVE BELIEFS ABOUT DECEPTION

Item No.	Item	Agree	Percent Disagree	No opinion
1.1	In general people should be truthful when dealing with others	95.6	2.2	2.2
1.2	Whenever possible people should be truthful to others	97.2	1.2	1.6
1.3	A person should tell the truth even if it is painful to the other person	51.6	37.8	10.6
1.4	A person should tell the truth even if it is painful to the other person	29.9	56.7	13.4
1.5	Deception is never acceptable	12.1	84.0	3.9
1.6	Deception is acceptable sometimes	86.8	10.4	2.8
1.7	Deception is always acceptable	2.2	95.1	2.7
1.8	A person should tell the truth in all situations	21.6	70.7	7.7
1.9	A person should tell the truth no matter how much difficulty it will cause	27.7	63.4	8.9

N = 165

acceptable. Only a minority of our respondents (22 %) believe that one should tell the truth in all situations and 28 % believe that one should tell the truth no matter how much difficulty it will cause. These results indicate that our respondents hold the general belief in truthfulness but are aware that there are times when one should deceive; few believe that deception is never acceptable but even fewer believe it is always acceptable. Some believe that it is acceptable to deceive if it will cause difficulty or pain to oneself or another person.

Deception in Collective Decisions

There are two related questions that are worthy of some comment: when in a collective decision situation is it appropriate or morally justified to deceive; and when is it rational or efficient to use deception? The first question has been considered by philosophers (Beck and Orr, 1970) and is really outside the spirit of the present discussion; the present work does shed some light on the efficient use of deceptions in social choice. Studies of social choice and the three-person game study described here give us some insight into these questions.

Machiavelli argued and contemporary politicians are fully aware that deception is an inevitable component of the political process. Recent work on social choice increases our understanding of why this is so. A number of investigators have shown that in an election process the person who takes a position close to the mean (or median) of the preferences of those who vote is most likely to be elected (Davis and Hinich, 1968). Practicing politicians may not have any explicit understanding of the mathematical processes involved in elections, but they certainly have intuitive understanding of these processes. They soon learn that although their own true beliefs are not irrelevant in the political wars they certainly cannot express these beliefs. Inevitably their communications must be strategic, they must state that they believe and stand for the position that is close to the mean of the preferences of their constituents. Thus deception becomes inevitable unless the politician is willing to sacrifice his career, something that happens on occasion but is not the ordinary occurrence in political life.

The three-person game study yielded some interesting insights into the efficient use of deception: the practice of deception did not lead to being excluded from the winning coalition, but the reputation for being deceptive or unreliable did. Many of the subjects deceived the other subjects but it was not until the participants realized they could form stable coalitions by labelling one of the players a deceiver or an unreliable partner that a subject was excluded. What this experiment tells us is that in situations where stable coalitions are required in order to receive rewards it is not the practice of deception that is damaging but it is the reputation for deception that is harmful. The players of this kind of game are aware that deception is frequent but at some point it becomes useful to label another person a deceiver so as to render him an unfit partner for a stable coalition — an interesting insight into the use and efficacy of deception in social choice situations.

Conclusions

This paper argues that analyses of collective action have neglected the role deception plays in social choice processes and then proceeds to consider the problem. It argues and gives examples designed to show that deception is a pervasive characteristic of collective decision making, indeed in all situations of social interaction. The results of two empirical studies are presented which yield evidence about, and insights into, the role deception plays in social interaction and social choice processes.

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