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Ethics, Implications, and Approaches: The Neuropolitics of Consumption

Perfect expressions of benevolence exist solely in theory, myth, and humanity's own naïveté. This is true on both an individual and a societal level. Historically, the interactions between the governing and the governed have been marked by a continual pattern of exploitative practices. When self-interest is a motivation, no governing body or dominant authority within a given domain can act for the sole benefit of its subjects. It is no wonder, then, that this same relationship dynamic seen between a government and its citizens can also be observed in other social power hierarchies: the powerful and the powerless, the educators and the educated, the marketers and those they market to. A key characteristic of this imbalance is the dominant group's ability to regulate the propagation of knowledge. Availability of information does not entail the proportionate and imperative dissemination of such information. Such is the case with the neuropolitics of consumption, where the exploitation of human neurocognitive processes for the sake of coercing consumer behavior is a routine and well-established phenomenon. Despite this understanding within scientific communities, there is an apparent disconnect on a broader societal level between the available information on the matter and whose hands this information reaches. The enduring lack of notice regarding such a discrepancy calls into question the benevolence of the dominant market participants who clearly perpetuate this issue. In an effort to protect individual autonomy, responsibility, and overall well-being, this deliberate concealment

of information and subsequent mass-scale knowledge gap should be counteracted through targeted society-wide educational efforts.

Works Cited