





Nov 12, 2015













### Reed College, Humanities 110, Spring and Fall 2017





# Puzzle: The sudden emergence of a new moral culture of "safetyism"

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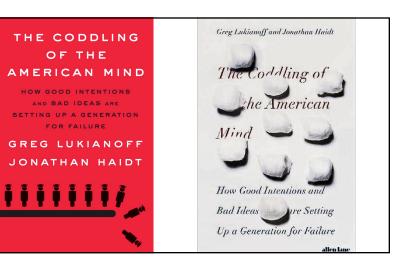
Students THINK they are

fragile, in a dangerous/hostile

• Safe spaces

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- Trigger warnings country and <u>university</u>; need protection from words, books,
- Microaggressions
- Bias response teams
- "Matrices of oppression"
- Call-out culture, often for single words



### The Six Causal Threads

- 1) Political polarization, with purification of the faculty
- 2) Rising <u>anxiety and depression</u> for iGen, immersed in <u>social media</u>
- 3) Paranoid parenting
- 4) Decline of free play
- 5) Growth of bureaucracy and moral dependence
- 6) Rising passion for <u>social justice</u> with shift to "equal outcomes" SJ, not proportional-procedural SJ

### The Three Great Untruths

Great Untruth	Psych Principle Violated
What doesn't kill you makes you weaker	Children are antifragile
Always trust your feelings	We are all prone to emotional reasoning and the confirmation bias
Life is a battle between good people and evil people	We are all prone to tribalism and dichotomous thinking

Bad Idea #1

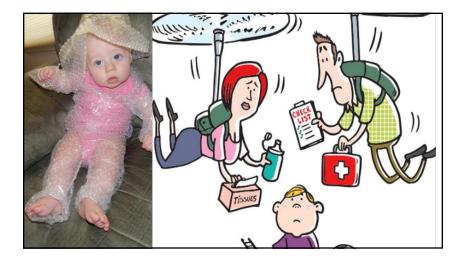
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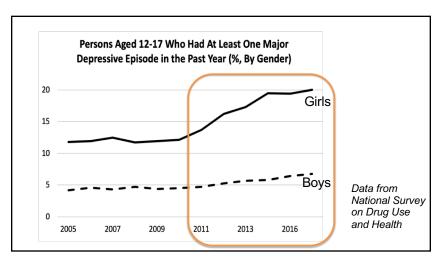
What doesn't kill you makes you weaker

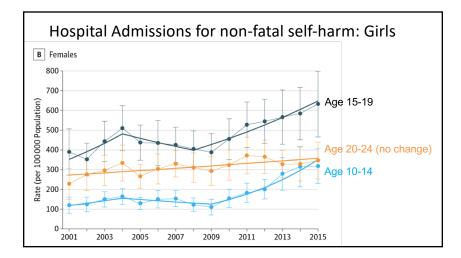
### Psych Principle #1: People are Anti-Fragile

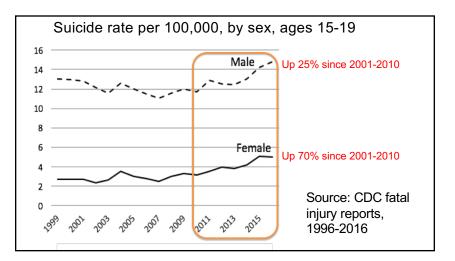
What doesn't kill me makes me stronger. (Friedrich Nietzsche, 1888)







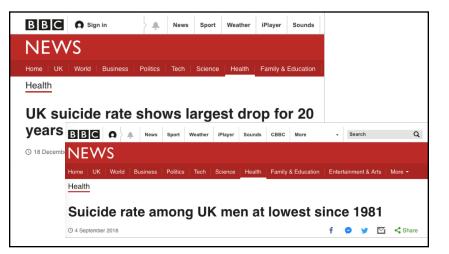


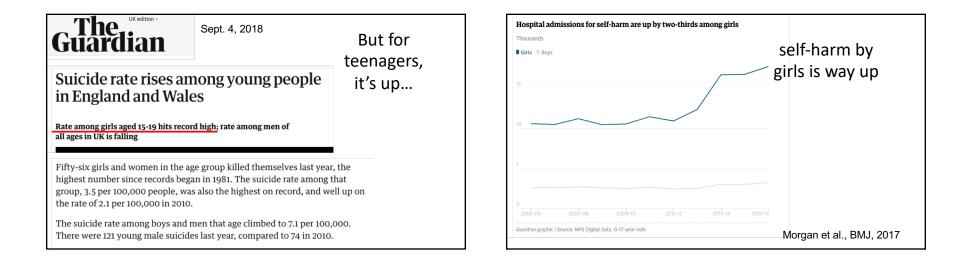




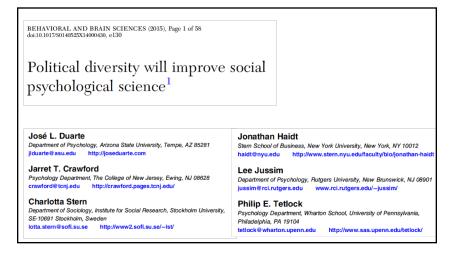


# Women Sept 2018 UK survey finds sharp decline in<br/>happiness of young women and girls Sept 2018 Exams and social media blamed for finding that only 25% of<br/>respondents describe themselves as very happy Sept 2018









### Duarte et al. (2015) 4 claims:

1) Psych once had political diversity; now gone

2) Lack of diversity <u>undermines scientific validity</u>

3) Increased diversity would improve the science

4) Under-rep of non-libs is from combo of selfselection, hostile climate, and discrimination

### Motivated Scholarship

If we WANT to believe X, we ask: "<u>Can-</u>I-Believe-It?" If we DON'T want to, we ask: "<u>Must-</u>I-Believe-It?"

- Scholarship undertaken to support a political agenda almost always "succeeds."
- Scholar rarely believes she was biased
- Motivated scholarship often propagates pleasing falsehoods that cannot be recalled
- Damage is contained if we can count on "institutionalized disconfirmation"

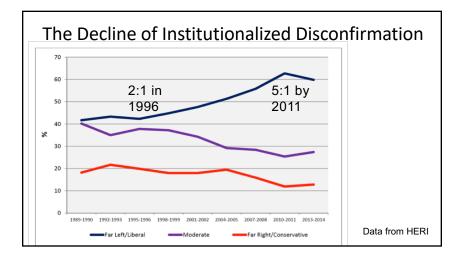
### **Confirmation bias**

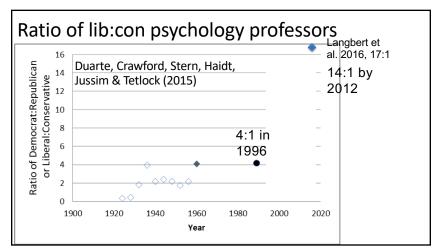
- --<u>Peer review process breaks down without viewpoint</u> diversity
- --Bar is lowered for politically desirable manuscripts and IRB proposals; <u>raised</u> for undesirable projects and findings: Abramowitz, Gomes, & Abramowitz (1975); Ceci, Peters, & Plotkin (1985)

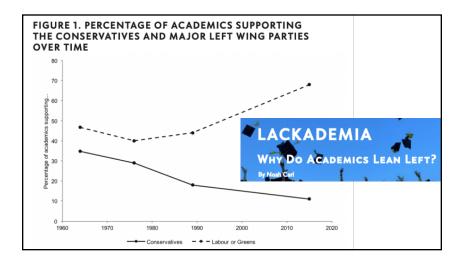
### **Minority Influence**

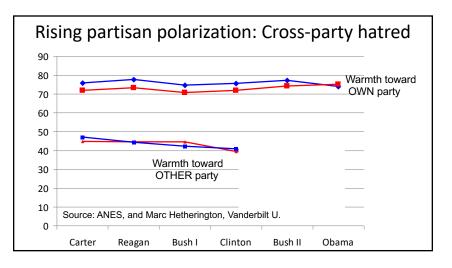
--Homogeneous majorities at risk of groupthink

- --<u>Dissenting minority causes deeper thinking and</u> sometimes wins the argument
- --<u>Viewpoint diversity improves work groups</u>; race and gender diversity less clear.











"<u>He who knows only his own side of the</u> <u>case knows little of that.</u> His reasons may be good, and no one may have been able to refute them. But if he is equally unable to refute the reasons on the opposite side, <u>if he does not so much as know what they</u> <u>are</u>, he has no ground for preferring either opinion..."

--J.S. Mill, 1859

### On Liberty



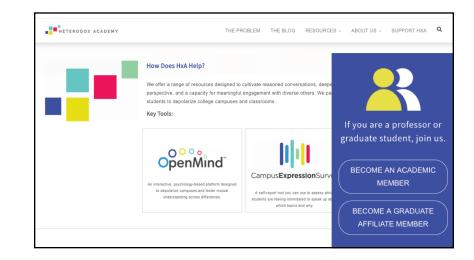
John Stuart Mill

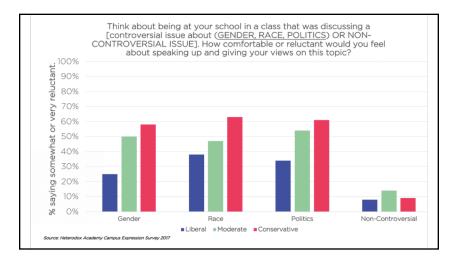
### Heterodox Academy

We are a politically diverse group of more than 2,300 professors and graduate students who have come together to improve the quality of research and education in universities by increasing viewpoint diversity, mutual understanding, and constructive disagreement.

### How Does HxA Help?

We offer a range of resources designed to cultivate reasoned conversations, deeper empathy, the ability to see beyond one's own perspective, and a capacity for meaningful engagement with diverse others. We partner with professors, administrators, and students to depolarize college campuses and classrooms.







During my first days at Smith, I witnessed countless conversations that consisted of one person telling the other that their opinion was wrong. The word "offensive" was almost always included... members of my freshman class quickly assimilated to this new way of non-thinking. They could soon detect a politically incorrect view and call the person out on their "mistake."

<u>I began to voice my opinion less often t</u>o avoid being berated and judged by a community that claims to represent the free expression of ideas. <u>I learned</u>, along with every other student, to walk on eggshells for fear that I may say something <u>"offensive</u>." That is the social norm here. Is there an ideological monoculture at British universities, and does it matter?

Jonathan Haidt, NYU-Stern

Policy Exchange Nov. 22, 2018