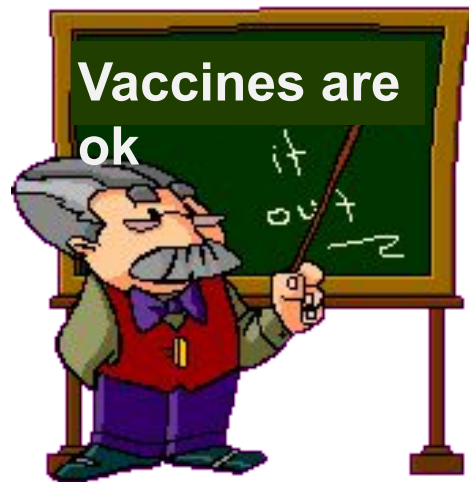


Epistemic challenges to liberal democracy – conspiracy theories, disinformation and the role of education



Is this the reset?

Who is Bill Gates?

#SaveThe Children



Jeremy.hayward@ucl.ac.uk

A photograph of a large crowd of people at a protest or demonstration. In the foreground, the back of a person's head and shoulders is visible. They are wearing a dark jacket with a patch on the back that says "DRUG FREE" at the top, features a syringe with a red prohibition sign over it, and "CHOOSE YOURSELF" at the bottom. The crowd in the background is dense, with many people holding up smartphones to take pictures or videos. Some people are holding signs, and a megaphone is visible in the upper part of the crowd. The entire image has a semi-transparent red overlay.

Conspiracy Theories in the Classroom

Guidance for teachers

Jeremy Hayward & Gemma Gronland

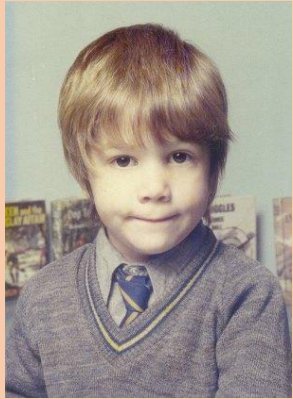
Available from www.since911.com

UKRI
Infodemic project

UKRI
Everything is Connected
<https://sites.manchester.ac.uk/eic/>

Me

Today



3 Channels

Books

Newspapers

Debates about content

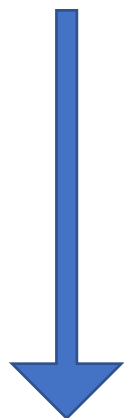
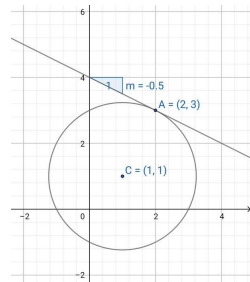
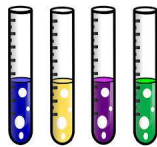


Unlimited content

No real editorship

Run by advertising companies

Algorithms/AI



Official,
'legitimate'
knowledge



Official vs unofficial knowledge

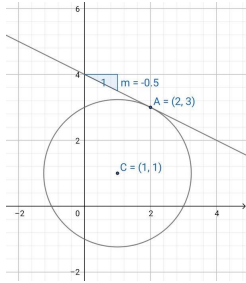
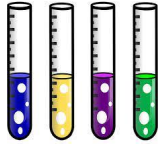


Folk, popular,
'illegitimate
knowledge'/ideas



'the velocity and scale of knowledge exchange... is unique' with "illegitimate knowledge" now enjoy[ing] mass participation' (Birchall 2006: 5).

Knowledge turn

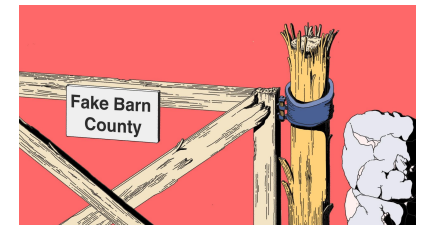
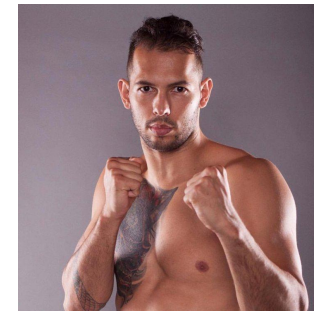


Great Fire of London 1666
Hercules had 12 tasks

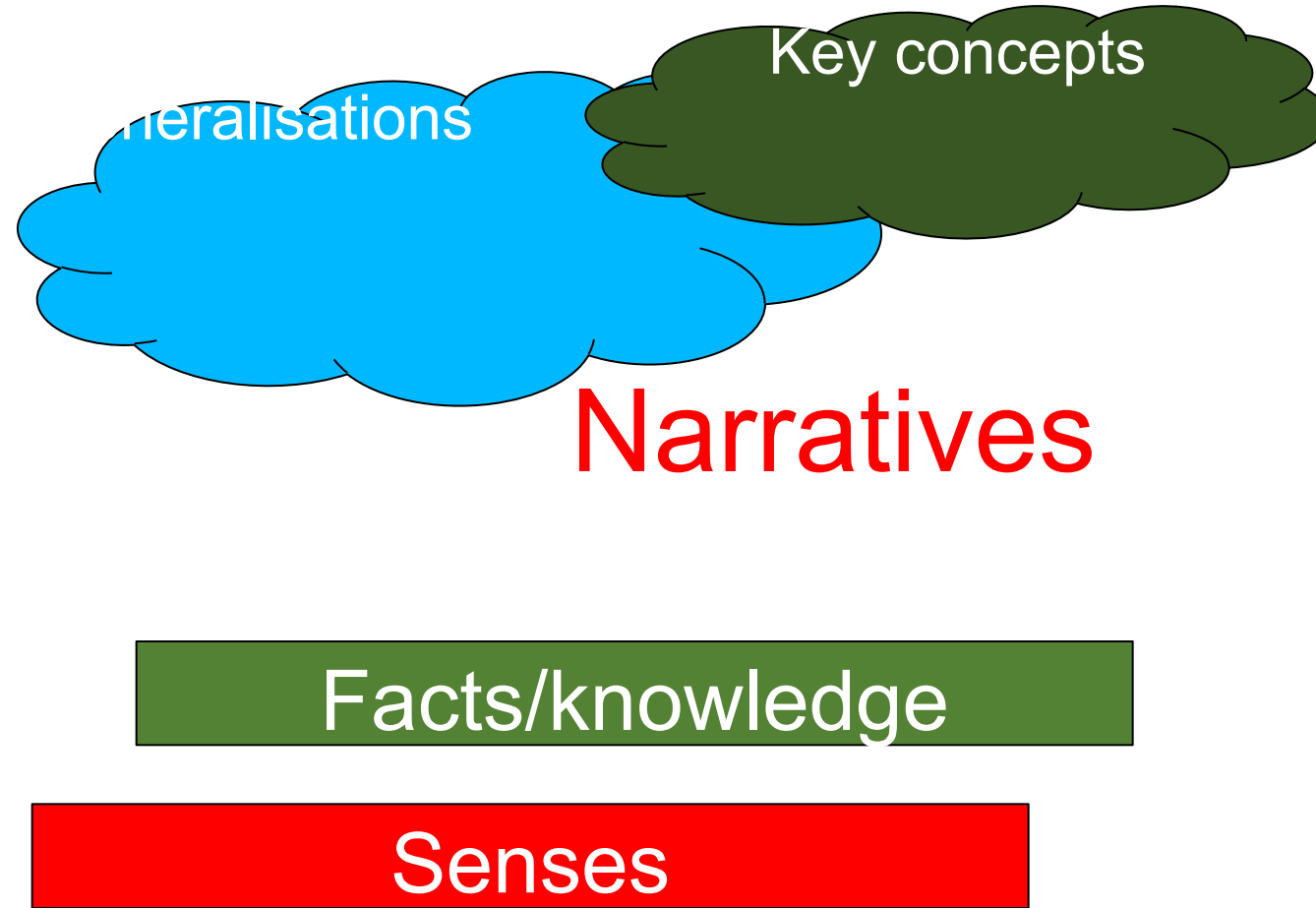
Cultural literacy
Canonical knowledge
(Hirsch, 1983)

Powerful knowledge
Specialized, abstract context
independent knowledge
(Young & Muller 2016:110-111)

1. *Why so much knowledge?*
2. *Do schools provide skills to discern knowledge in deceptive environments?*
3. *Leaves students open to power of narratives*



Moffett's ladder of abstraction



Moffett, J. (1968). *Teaching the universe of discourse: A theory of discourse*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.

Bruner, J. (1991). 'The Narrative Construction of Reality' in *Critical Inquiry* 18:1 1-21

Zagzebski, L (1996) *Virtues of the Mind : An Inquiry into the Nature of Virtue and the Ethical Foundations of Knowledge* Cambridge: CUP



Intellectual virtues

- open-mindedness in collecting and appraising evidence
- fairness in evaluating the arguments of others
- intellectual humility
- intellectual perseverance, diligence, care and thoroughness
- adaptability of intellect
- being able to recognize reliable authority
- insight into persons, problems, theories

Intellectual skills

- verbal skills: skills of speaking and writing
- fact-finding skills
- logical skills: skills of performing deductive and inductive reasoning. Ability to think up counterexamples
- explanatory skills, e.g. ability to think up insightful analogies
- mathematical skills and skills of quantitative reasoning
- spatial reasoning skills, e.g., skills at working puzzles p.114



Spreading A) dangerous ideas B) my side bias, but also C) what is the internalised model of disagreement?

- False news 70 percent more likely to be retweeted than true ones.



- False news stories cascade is between 10-20 times faster than real news stories/facts (Vosoughi et al. 2018).



Conspiracy theory

A theory that

Significant events are not as they seem and are planned by secretive powerful groups

Counter to official/publicly accepted versions

Definition is disputed e.g., Coady (2006), Keeley (1999), Cassam (2019)



Conspiracy theories – emerging findings

Birchall, C. & Knight, P. (2023)

<http://infodemic.eu/>

Characteristics of Covid-19 Conspiracy Theories

- **Mobilising:** Increasingly taken to the streets, displaying conspiracy theories on. (Capitol riots, UK:159 Phone masts attacked, protests outside schools)
- **Convergence:** The combination of previously distinct conspiracy theories, e.g. anti-vaxx + Qanon, great reset.
- **Enmeshed:** Now difficult to isolate conspiracy theories from other modes of information
- **Grievances:** Some conspiracy belief may be formed from grievances (some legitimate)



Motives/correlates

Epistemic: Understand, agency, conjunction fallacy etc

Existential: Powerless, loss of control, times of crisis

Social: In-group image, agency, vs sheeple, associated with losing, socio-economic

(Sutton and Douglas 2022)



Threats to democracy as a result of belief - correlations

Loss of trust in government (possible causation)

Distrust in Science – climate change, covid

Loss of engagement with mainstream political process

Engagement with extreme actions. Protest, violence, vandalism

Outgroup hatred

(Summary from Sutton and Douglas 2022)

Opportunity cost

Displacement: Ignoring key issues, misdirected energy



Epistemic Challenge to Liberal Democracy

Liberal democracy & reasonable pluralism relies on a conception of public reason (or truth)

Citizens must avoid imposing comprehensive doctrines on others. Policy and deliberation should use public standards of reasons, including “plain truths now widely accepted, or available, to citizens generally,” e.g. the non-controversial conclusions of science (Rawls 1996, 224–225).



Counter 1: Conspiracy believers support system (Jolley et al 2018)

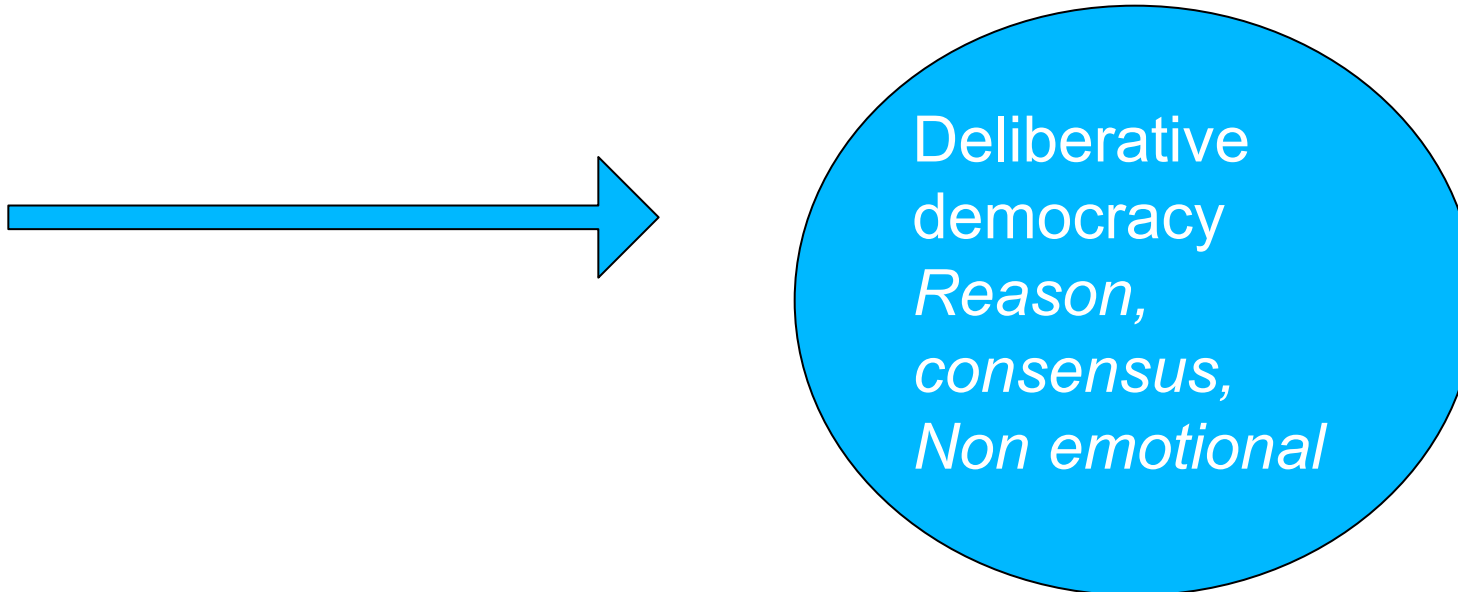
Counter 2: Conspiracy believers use reason (Mittendorf 2023)



Chantal Mouffe's "Agonistic Democracy"



Deliberative Democracy is failing

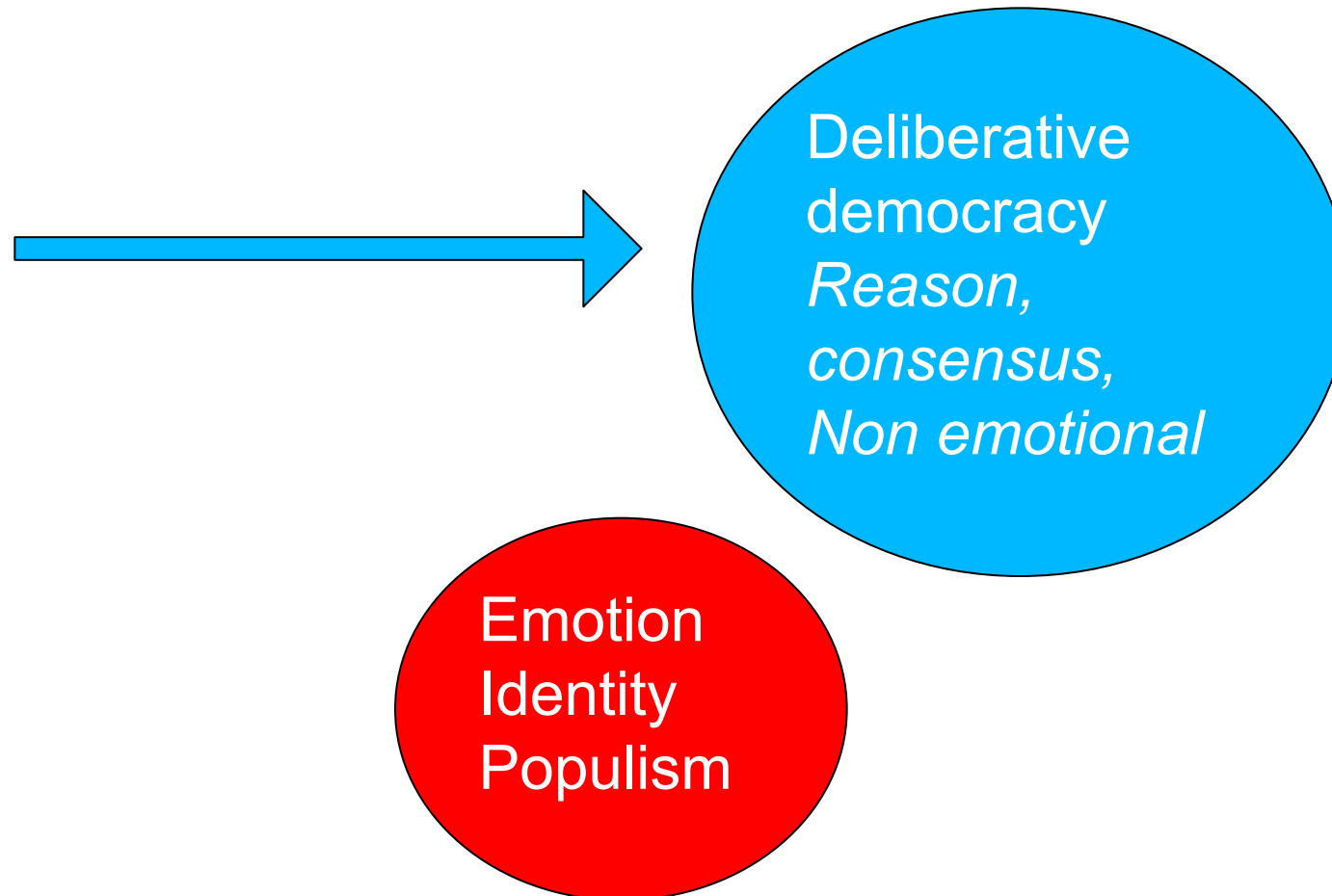


Mouffe, C. (1999). Deliberative Democracy or Agonistic Pluralism?

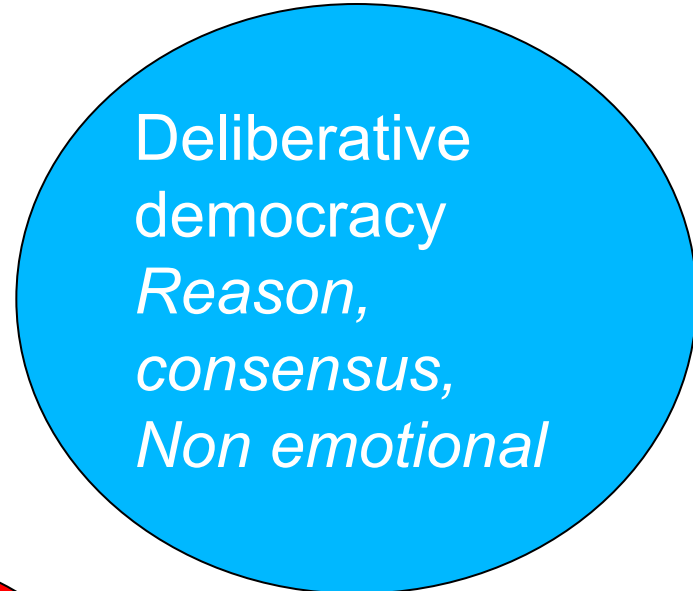
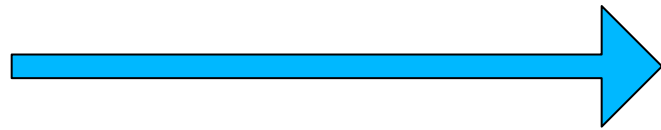
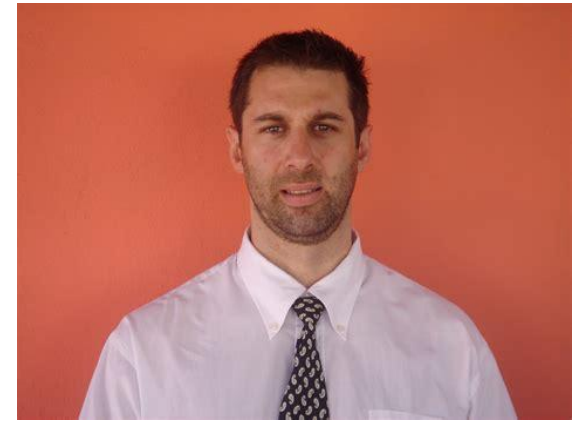
Chantal Mouffe's "Agonistic Democracy"



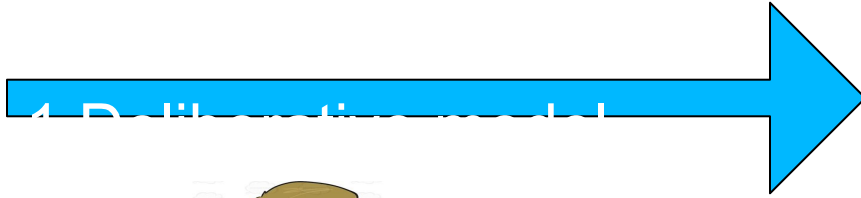
Mouffe, C. (1999). *Deliberative Democracy or Agonistic Pluralism?*



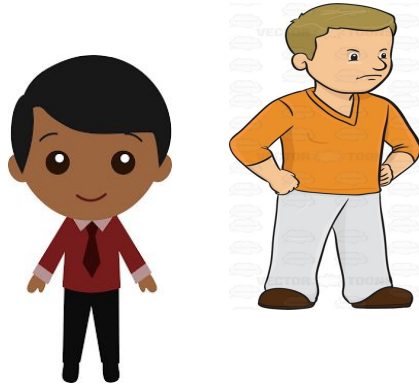
Zembylas, M. (2020). The Affective Modes of Right-Wing Populism: Trump Pedagogy and Lessons for Democratic Education. *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, 39(2), 151-166



Deliberative VS Agonistic Model



Reason
Consensus
Transcendent



Nature of democracy
Adversarial
Acknowledge
identity & emotion



Enemy
Hatred
Antagonism

Hot cognition

Motivated reasoning

System 1

Intuition. Gut feel
Emotions. Prior
Attitude. Memory.

Cognitive Psychology

Humans are not as
rational as we think.
Motivated reasoning.
'Hot' Cognition model.
Ego-centric.
System 2 is employed
to justify System 1.
(Lawyer)



System 2

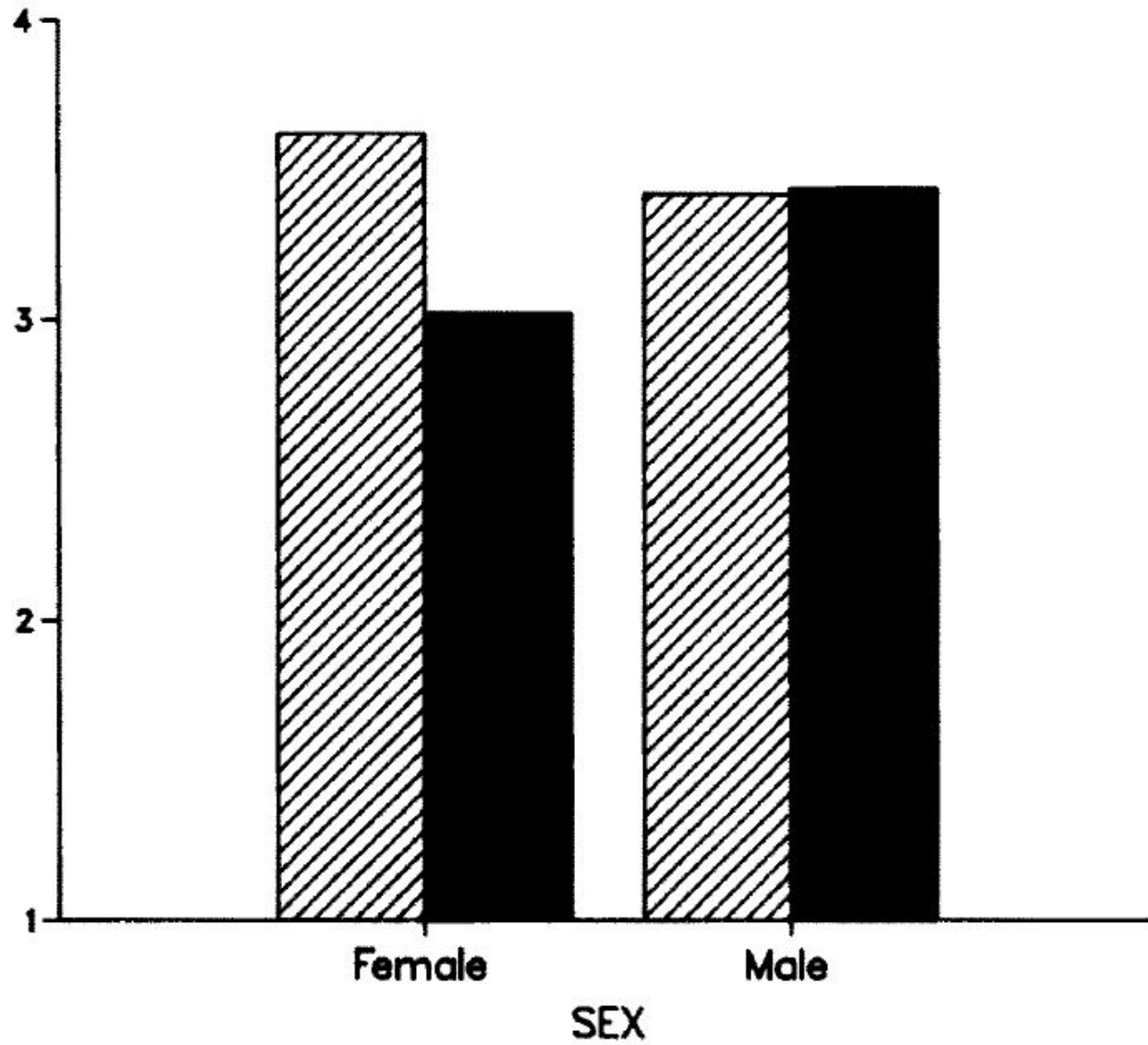
Reason. Evidence.
Critical thinking.

Enlightenment model (Cartesian model)

Thought is conscious,
humans are rational,
decisions are based on
reason. Reasoning is
neutral/unemotional
cold. System 2 keeps
System 1 in check
(Scientist)

MOTIVATED INFERENCE

Caffeine and Fibrocystic Disease



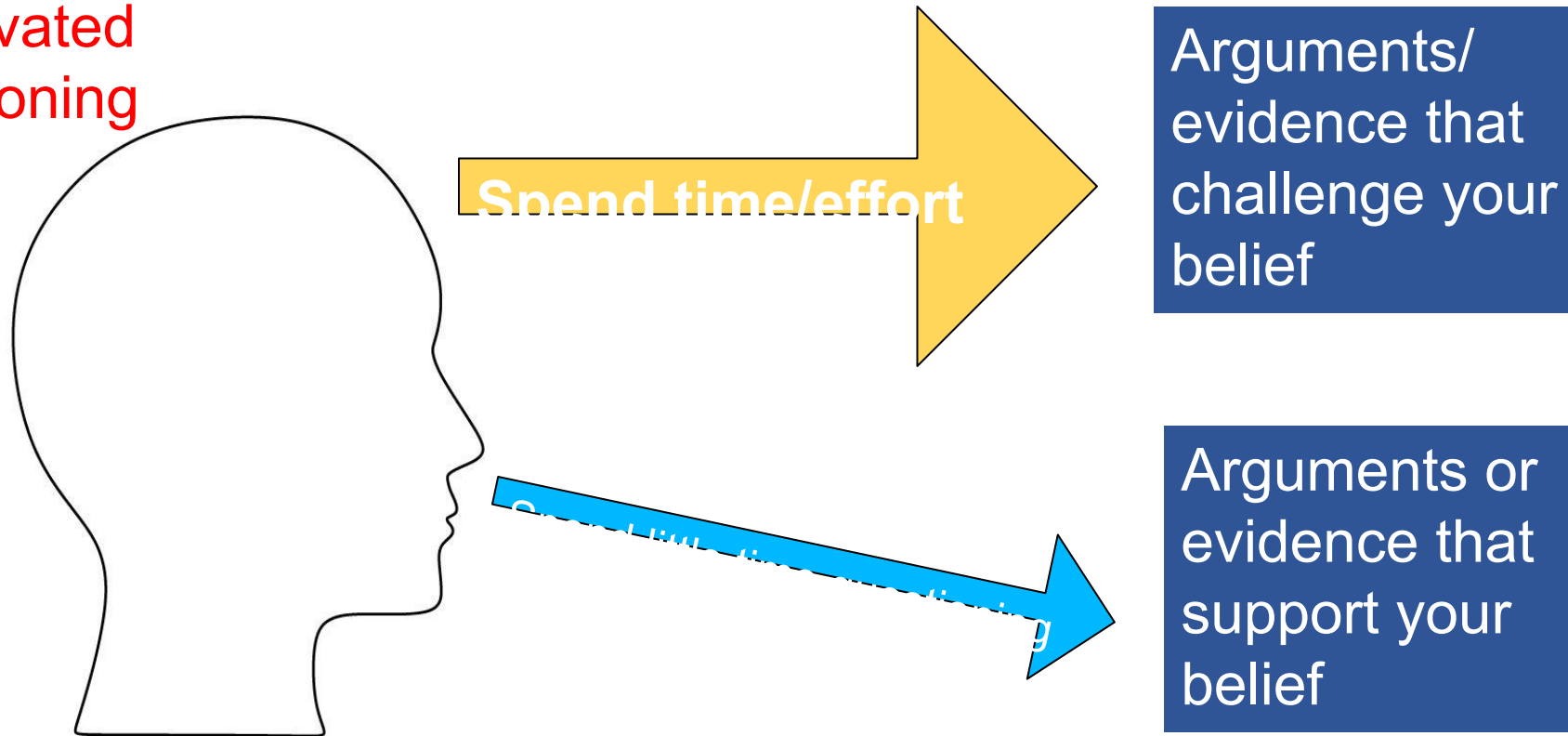
Kunda, Z. (1987).
Motivated Inference.
Journal of Personality
and Social
Psychology, 53(4),
636-647.

Legend
▨ low caffeine
■ heavy caffeine

System 1

Signs of
motivated
reasoning

Disconfirmation bias

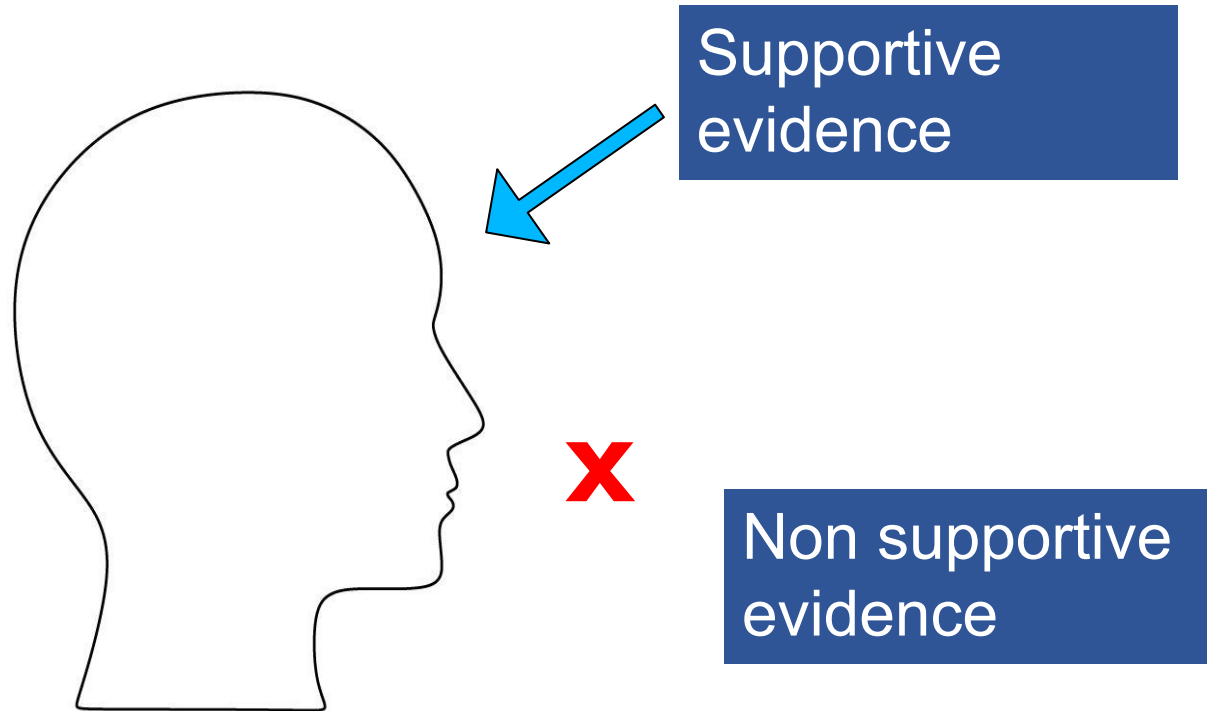


Tendency to spend much longer discounting and criticising arguments/evidence that does not support your prior beliefs e.g. Medical test. Evaluating arguments

System 1

Signs of
motivated
reasoning

Confirmation bias



Tendency to highlight information that supports your view and ignore evidence that challenges this.

Hastorf, A. H., & Cantril, H. (1954) 'They saw a game: A case study.' in *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 49, 129-134.

Lenker, M. (2016) 'Motivated Reasoning, Political Information, and Information Literacy Education' in *Libraries and the Academy*, Volume 16 (3) 511-528

American public is edging towards ideological extremes, driven, in part by the public's habit of consuming political information...

"By selecting sources of political news that tend to confirm their existing positions, consumers of media reinforce both their initial convictions on political matters and their distrust of those who view the issues differently" (p.511)

(selective exposure)



University of
Kent

SAFER SCROLLING

How algorithms popularise and gamify
online hate and misogyny for young people

After five days, all archetypes saw a four-fold increase in the level of misogynistic content being presented on their “For You” page (increasing from 13% misogynistic content to 56%)

<https://www.ascl.org.uk/ASCL/media/ASCL/Help%20and%20advice/Inclusion/Safer-scrolling.pdf>

Incel 1.0

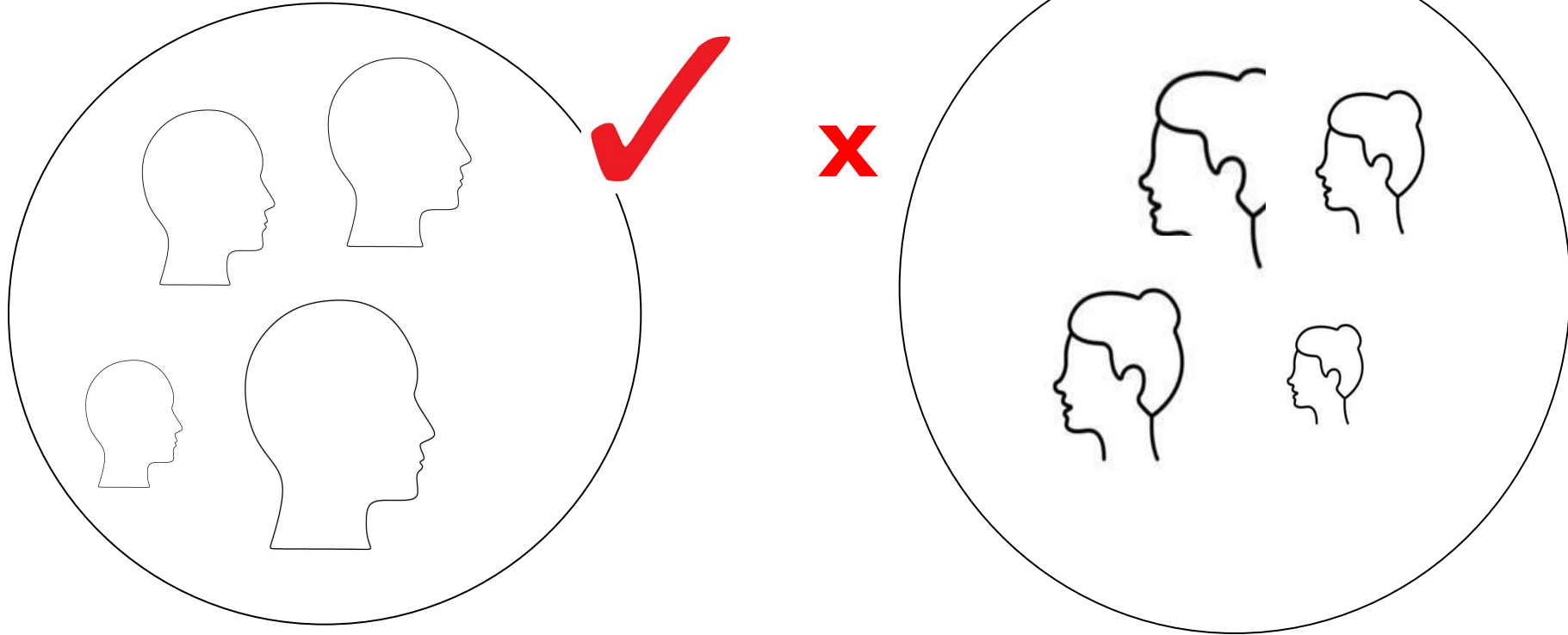
Incel 2.0

System 1

types of
motivated
reasoning

In group/outgroup bias

Sport
Age
Gender
Ethnicity
Religion
etc

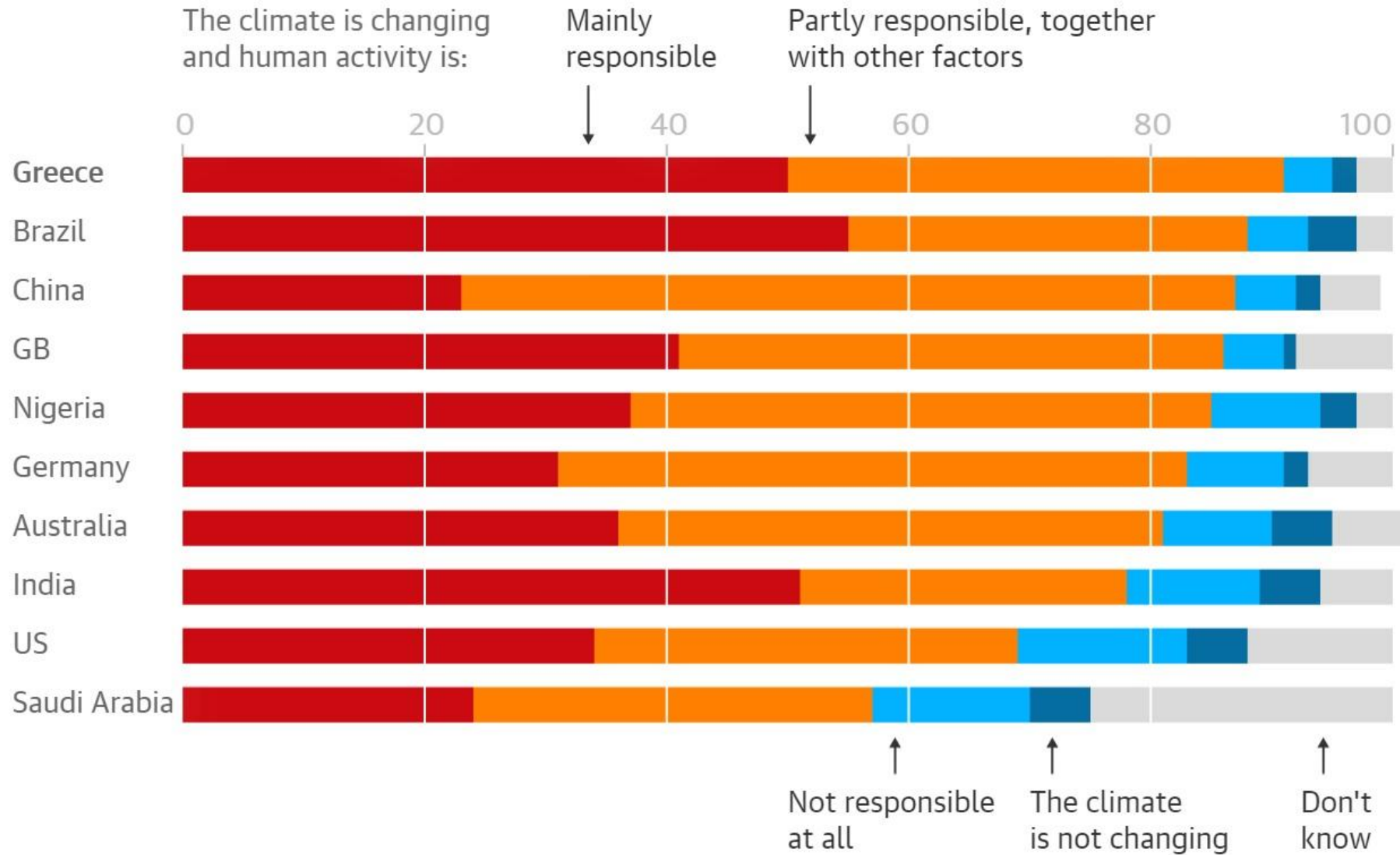


Tendency to look favourably on in group and less favourably on out group

Tajfel, H. (1970) Experiments in intergroup discrimination. *Scientific American*, 223, 96-102

Robbers
cave

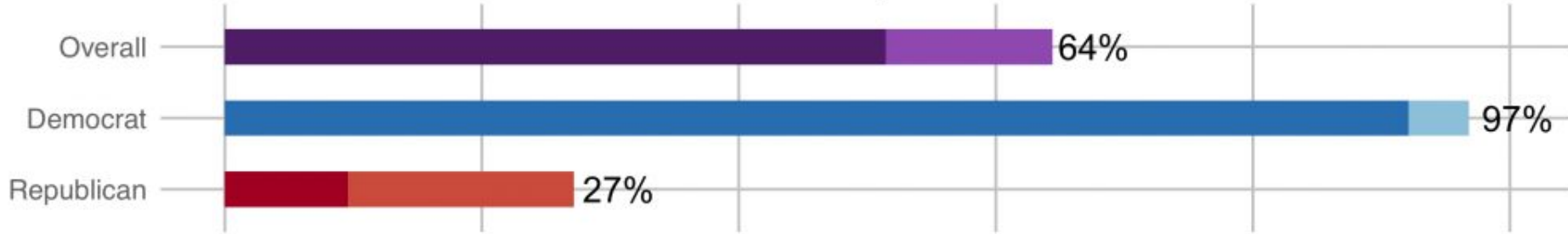
91% of people in Greece believe human activity is mainly or partly responsible for climate change



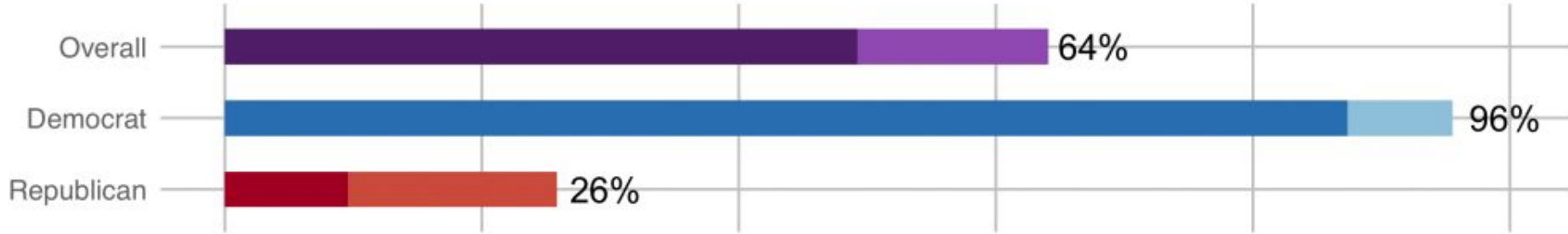
Guardian graphic. Source: YouGov-Cambridge Globalism Project

Biden rightful winner

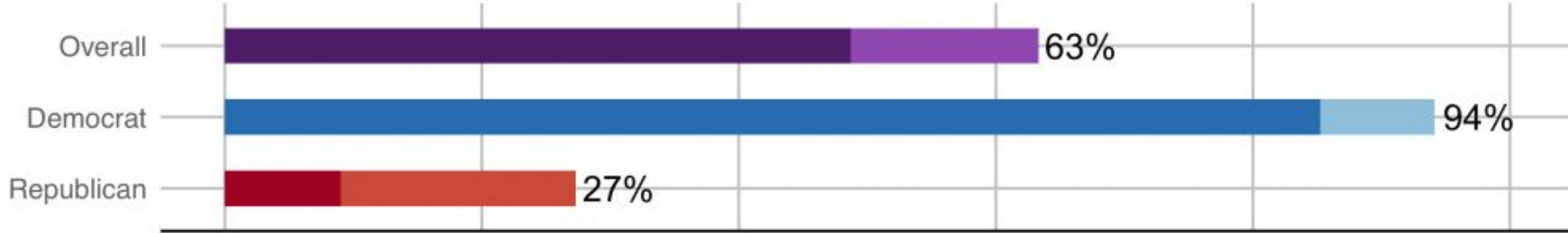
February 2021



June 2021



November 2021



Darker shades are "Very confident" and lighter shades are "Somewhat confident."
Source: @BrightLineWatch - November 2021

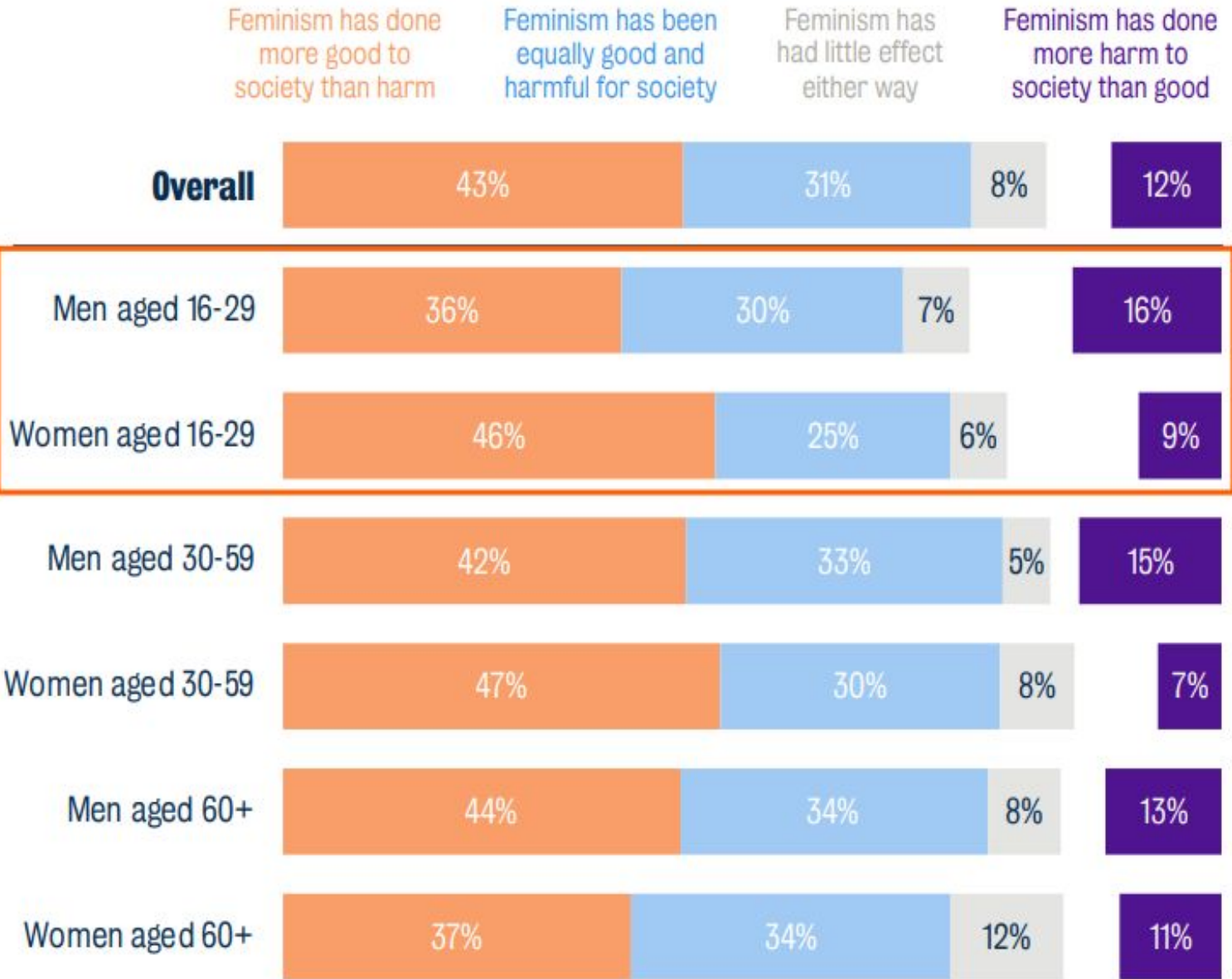
Young men are notably less positive than young women about the impact of feminism

46% of women aged 16 to 29 think feminism has done more good to society than harm – 10 percentage points higher than the share of men of the same age who feel this way. And among this age group, one in six (16%) men say feminism has done more harm than good, compared with one in 11 (9%) women.

Ipsos KING'S GLOBAL INSTITUTE FOR WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP THE POLICY INSTITUTE KING'S College LONDON

Emerging tensions? How younger generations are dividing on masculinity and gender equality

Which of the following comes closest to your view about the overall impact of feminism on British society?

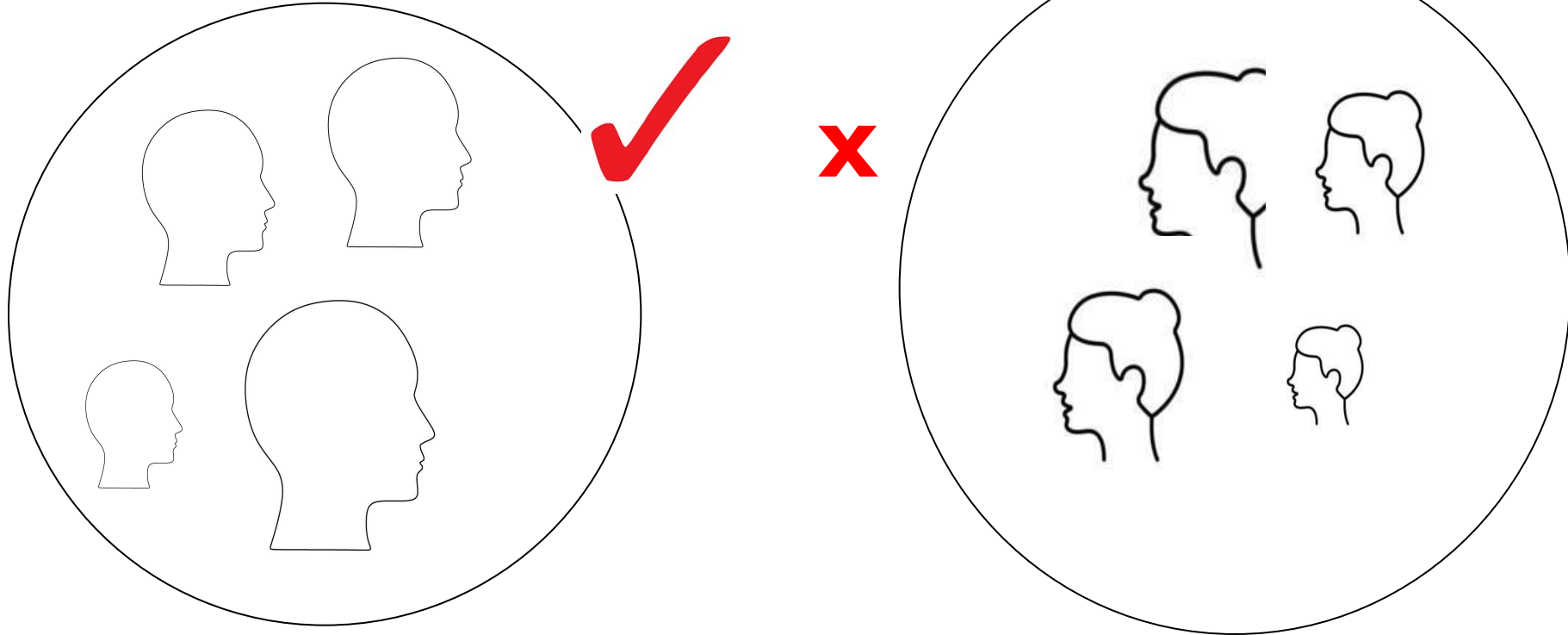


System 1

types of
motivated
reasoning

In group/outgroup bias

Sport
Age
Gender
Ethnicity
Religion
etc

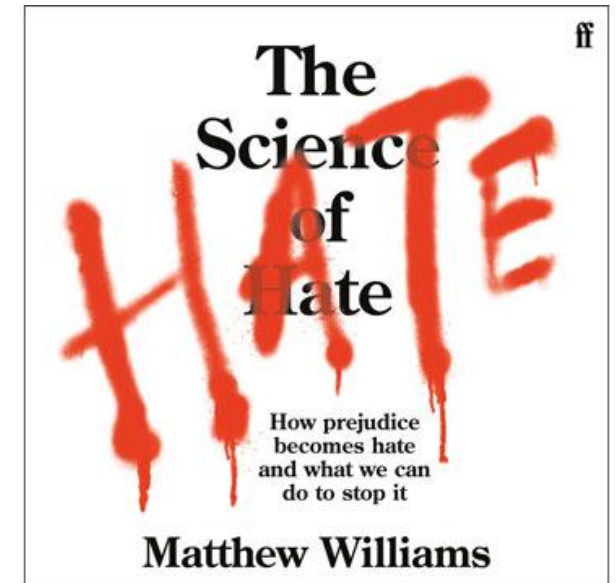
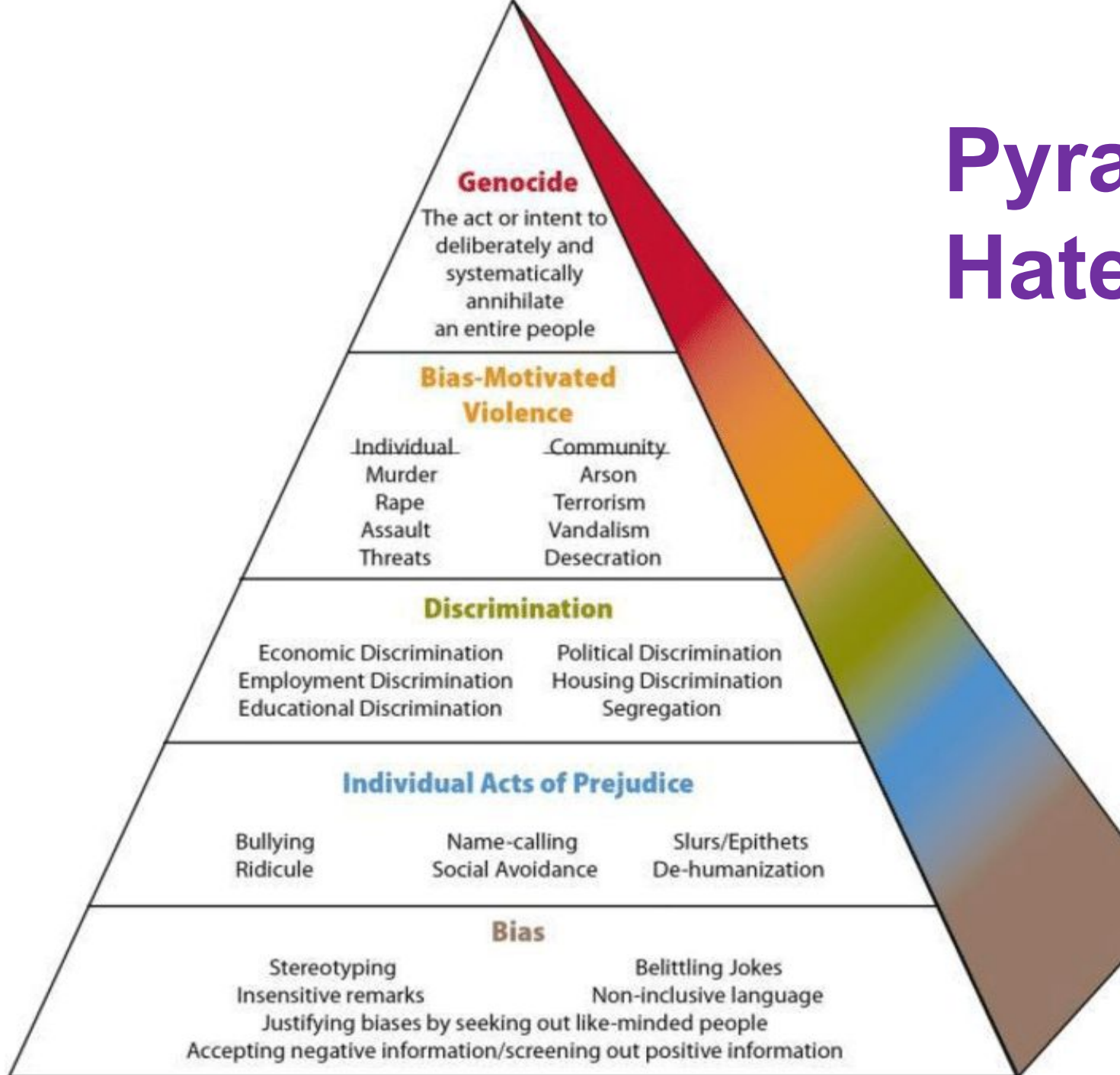


Tendency to look favourably on in group and less favourably on out group

Tajfel, H. (1970) Experiments in intergroup discrimination. *Scientific American*, 223, 96-102

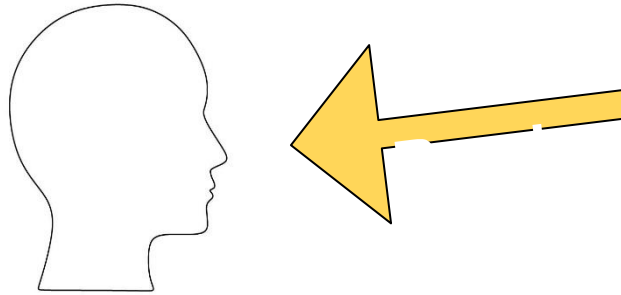
Robbers
cave

Pyramid of Hate



Backfire Effect & Polarization

Become
MORE
convinced of
your belief



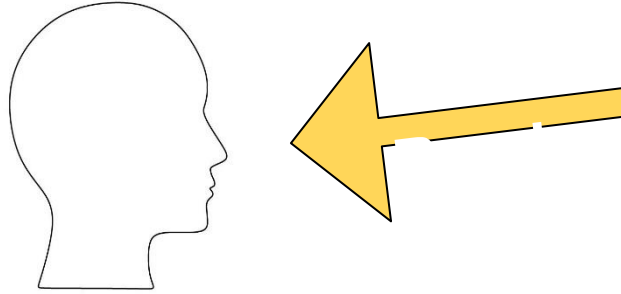
Arguments/
evidence that
challenge
your belief

Climate Change & Evolution

- Amongst religious believers, those who exhibit stronger system 2 thinking & have greater scientific literacy are **more** likely to reject evolution of humans.
 - Those sceptical of climate change become **more** sceptical as scientific literacy increases (and those concerned become more concerned).
 - *“The source of the public conflict over climate change is not too little rationality but in a sense too much.” (p.14)*
 - These become identity-protective beliefs
- Kahan, D. M. (2015) ‘Climate-Science Communication and the Measurement Problem’ in *Advances in Political Psychology*, Vol. 36(1) 1-43
(Also see Lawson, A. E., & Worsnop, W. A. (2006)).

Backfire Effect & Polarization

Become
MORE
convinced of
your belief



Arguments/
evidence that
challenge
your belief

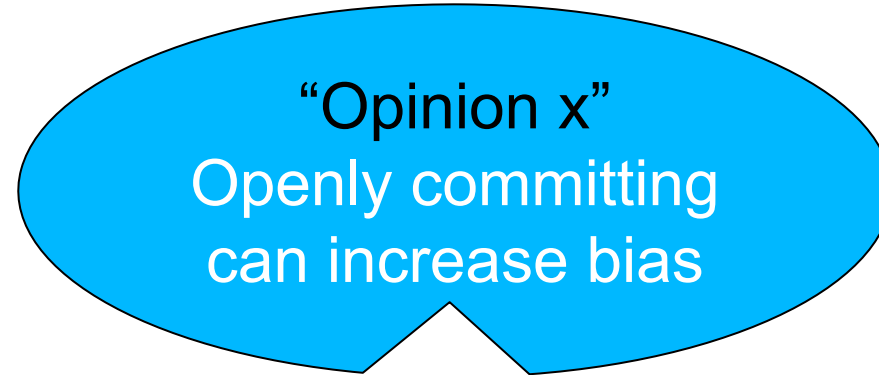
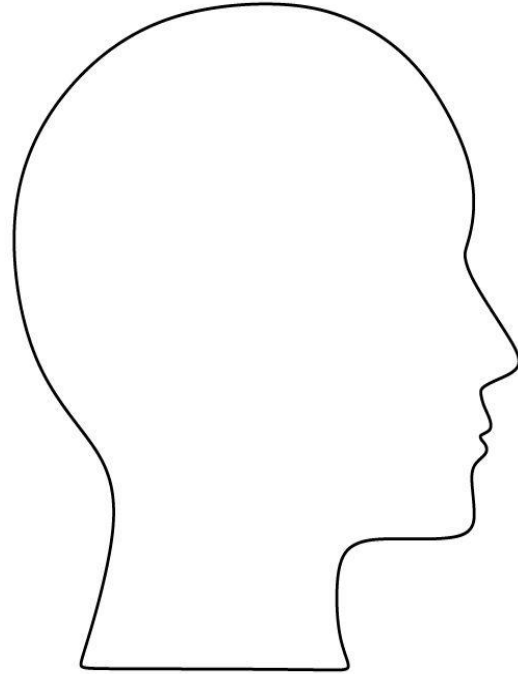
Student's understanding of science seems to improve if identity is not threatened (Lawson & Worsnop 2006).

When identity protective beliefs become threatened reasoning becomes increasingly 'motivated' Kahan, D. M. (2015)

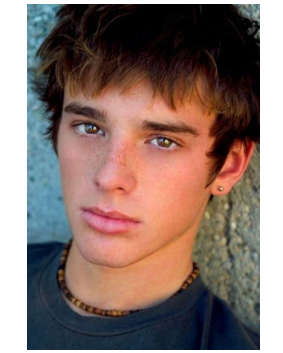
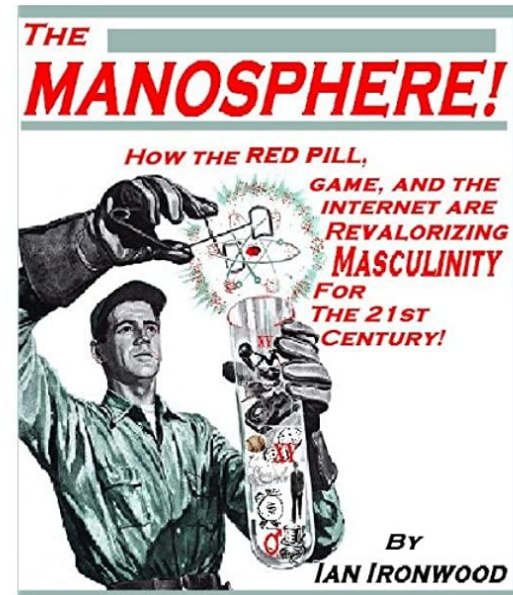
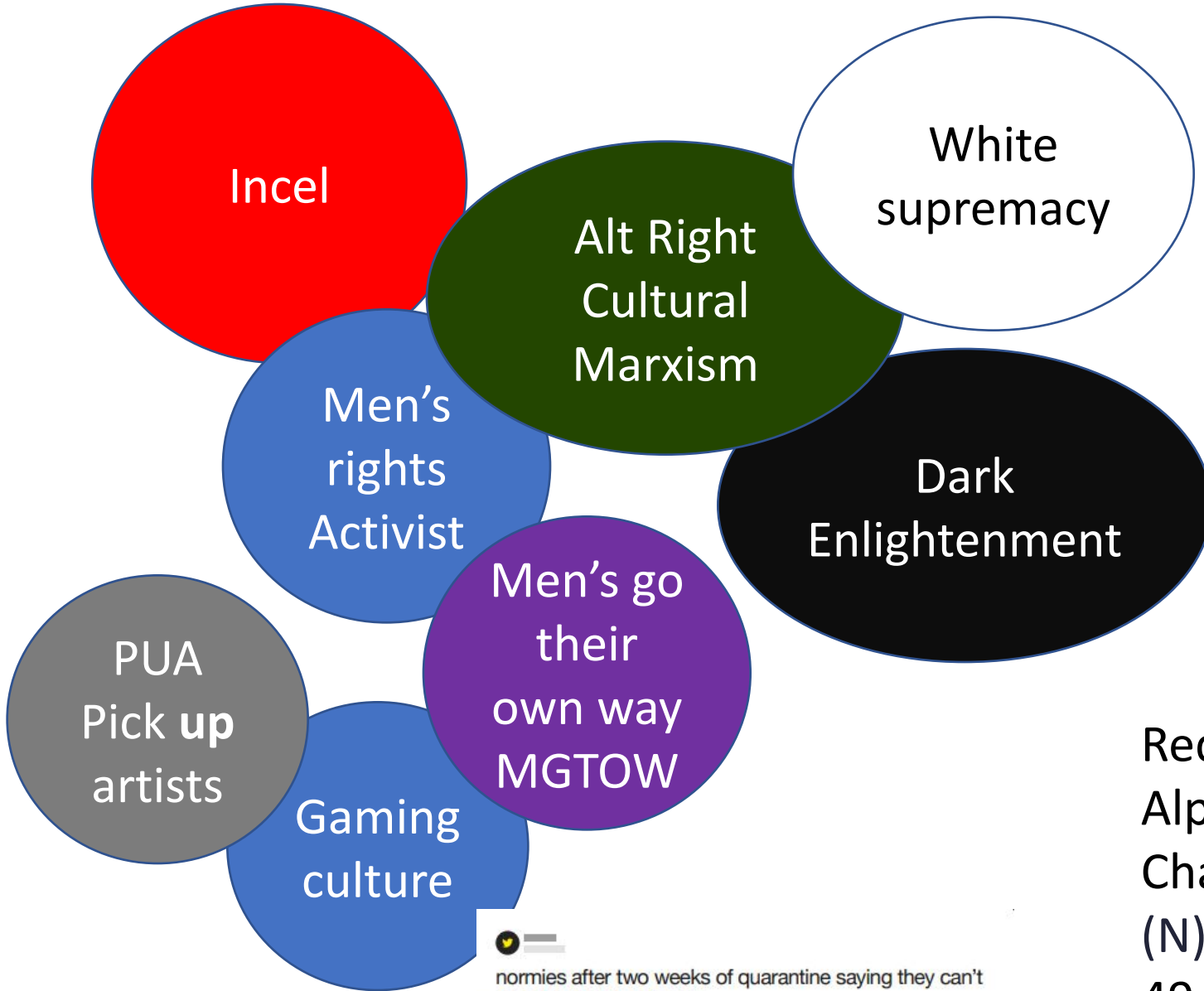
Even if rational thought is the aim, then there are arguments to include 2nd order claims/evidentials.

System 1
Signs of
motivated
reasoning

Bolstering



Reasoning should be even more biased once the reasoner has already stated her opinion, thereby increasing the pressure on her to justify it rather than moving away from it. This phenomenon is called bolstering. (Mercier and Sperber 2011:67)

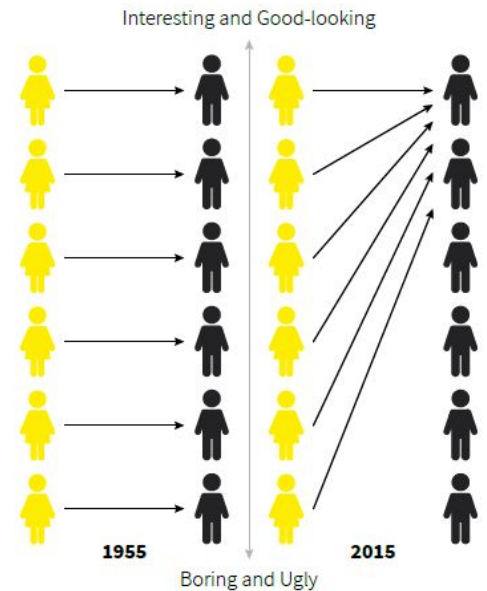


Red, Blue, Black Pill
 Alpha/Beta
 Chad/Stacy/Becky
 (N)Awalt
 49er
 Nice Guy
 Elliot Roger

normies after two weeks of quarantine saying they can't stand it, want to die etc

incels have to live for decades without any contact or intimacy with an opposite sex because all women hate ugly men, we just get ignored or laughed at when we try

4 Retweets 16 Likes

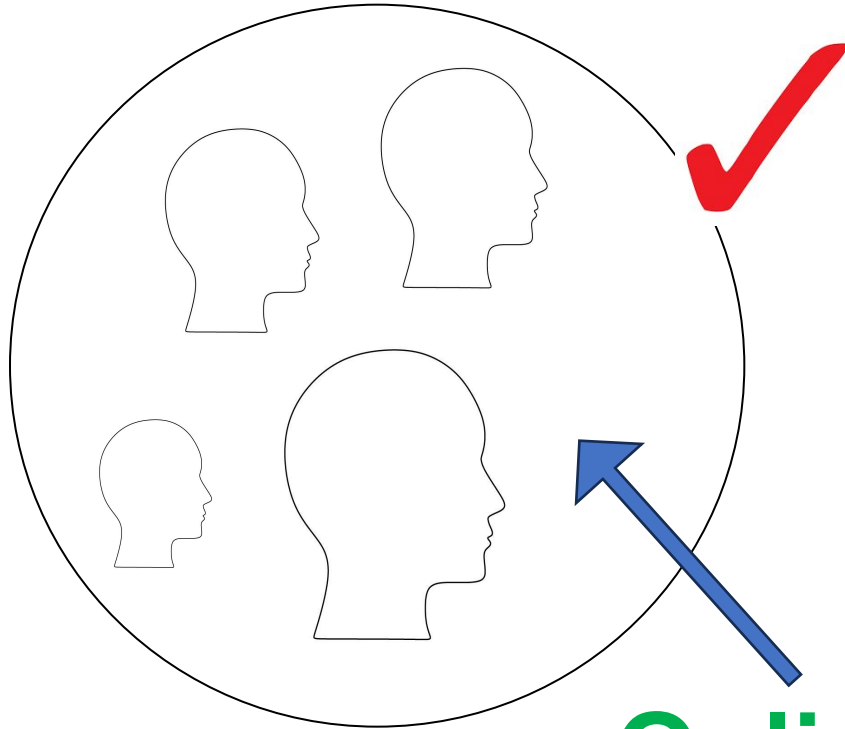


System 1

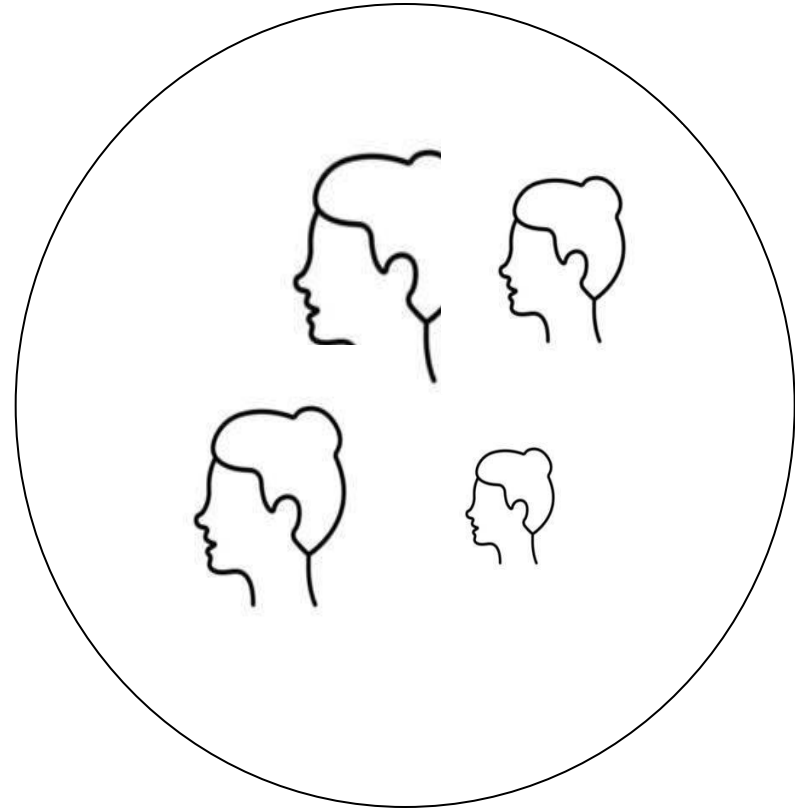
types of
motivated
reasoning

In group/outgroup bias

Sport
Age
Gender
Ethnicity
Religion
etc



x



Online
Narrative



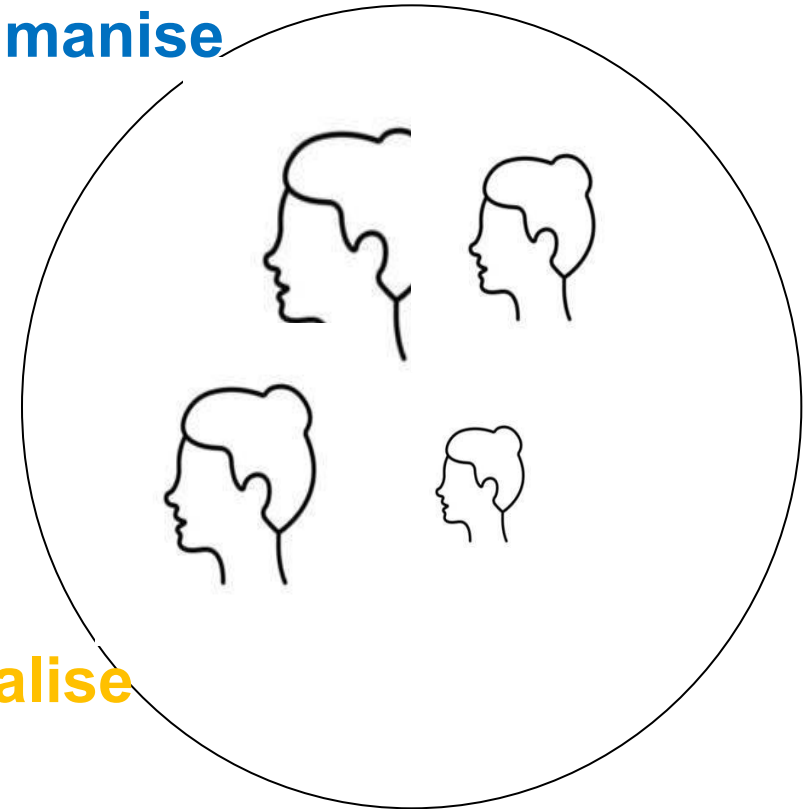
Robber
cave

System 1

types of
motivated
reasoning

In group/outgroup bias

Depersonalise/dehumanise



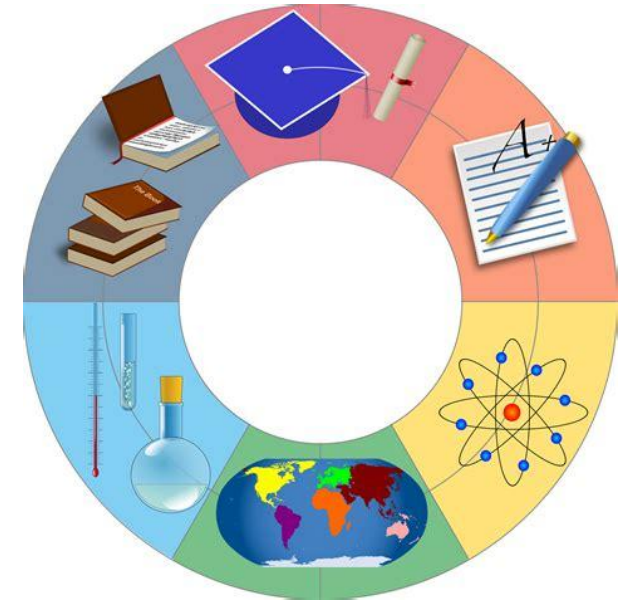
Empathy/Personalise



▪ Williams, M (2021) *The Science of Hate* London: Faber & Faber

Possible Solutions

- Epistemic turn (Epistemic virtue)
- Media literacy
- Meta cognition and biases
- Counter narratives





Conspiracy, disinformation and dangerous ideas. Young people & schools



Vulnerable to mis/disinformation



Study of 263 American university students

- Two thirds did not discover that first 'news' story was satirical
- 95% were not able to identify the lobbying group that produced the second
- Students' methods of evaluating were not reliable and relied on such things as the 'look' of a web page. (Wineburg et al. 2020)
- Students in Finland (with Critical thinking embedded) did much better (Horn & Veermans 2019).

Conspiracy theories and schools



- Pedagogy around conspiracy theory is new
- Understanding around teaching/discussion of conspiracy is limited
- Little known about young people and conspiracy theories.
Jolley et al. (2021).
 - *Starts around age of 14*
 - *Might be a part of an 'alternative' identity*
 - *Conspiracies can be playful*

Conspiracy theories – Teacher experiences in the classroom

Adapted from Table 3. *How frequently have you encountered extremist views in the classroom?* (Taylor et al. 2021:32)

	Fairly regularly	A few times	Once or twice	Never
Conspiracy theories	20.8	36.5	19.8	11.5
Racism	8.3	35.4	40.6	5.2
Homophobia	10.4	31.3	36.5	11.5
Islamophobia	5.2	24.0	32.3	27.1
Extremist views on women	4.2	24.0	34.4	26.0
Far right extremism	1	18.8	27.1	41.7
Anti-Semitism	2.1	6.3	36	53.1

Jerome et al (2024)
5,284 (Secondary Teachers)

62% had heard CTs in last 2 years.

41% variation of a global secretive elite

25% mentioning climate scepticism

66% opened up conversation
33% closed down



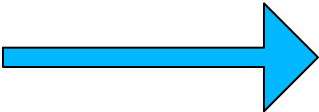
Responding to conspiracy theory



Two kinds of education responses

What counts as evidence?

Proactive/planned



That's not true, we know who the terrorists were?

Reactive/unplanned

9/11 was an inside job



Proactive approaches – what works with adults?

(O'Mahony et al. 2023) – Systematic review (25 studies)

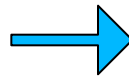
- Media literacy (*some effect on misinformation*)
- Critical thinking (*more effective*)
- Debunking (*not effective*)
- Prebunking/inoculation (*some effect*)
- Priming (*not effective*)
- Ridicule (*very small effect*)



Inoculation/Prebunking

Compton et al. (2021)

Pre threat



1. Awareness of threat

2a. Weak version of threat

2b. Counter arguments

2bi Fact based

2bii Logic based

Active vs Passive



<https://inoculation.science/inoculation-videos/>

Proactive approach

Peters, R. & Johannesen, H. (2020). What is actually true? Approaches to teaching conspiracy theories and alternative narratives in history lessons.

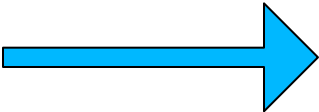
- Two lower secondary schools in Denmark
- Took a metacognitive/critical thinking approach (Structures of conspiracy, Sources, Popper/falsification, debunking)
- One student gave a highly sophisticated presentation on why theories that Hitler survived WW2 were wrong. However the student then stated that he believed Hitler survived.

“The teacher was increasingly worried about his students’ existential involvement in the theories, which prompted him to remark, “What if my students find the guy who dares to question the authorities really cool and start believing in conspiracy theories?” This ethical concern was justified... Even though this male student admitted the importance of critical source evaluation, he and a classmate later both stated that the 9/11 terror attack was a ‘false flag operation’ carried out by the US administration, and that it is necessary to be critical of any official explanations”. p.19

Two kinds of education responses

What counts as evidence?

Proactive/planned



That's not true, we know who the terrorists were?

Reactive/unplanned

9/11 was an inside job



A Parallel Universe: Conspiracy Theories and the Limits of Education Johannes Drerup <http://justiceinschools.org>

- Case study case is set in Germany at a comprehensive school for children aged 11-18.
- `Querdenker'-movement, whose political views relied heavily on different types of conspiracy theories. Rallies attended by far right.
- Peter repeatedly raises conspiracy theories. Teacher tries to engage in discussion. Some students start to support Peter. Others are stressed or roll their eyes.

Which Lens? (Adapted from Zemblyas 2021)



1. Epistemic lens (teacher default)

Conspiracy as mistaken belief or a 'crippled epistemology'. Class discussion may be effective by correcting errors or understanding of 'evidence'

2. Psychological lens

Conspiracy caused by and supporting cognitive biases. (Motivated reasoning, identity, paranoia). Plays role(s) in identity. Discussion not likely to be effective, may even re-enforce the belief.

3. Political lens

Conspiracy theory as politically motivated/propaganda. Designed/Causing spread mistrust and hate. Discussion is of little use and serves to legitimise and/or spread. Treat some forms as hate speech (Cassam 2019)

Responding to conspiracy

Counter if appropriate

Try not to get drawn into first order discussions on facts. Conspiracy theories are not falsifiable (as the lack of evidence, or evidence against, counts as evidence)

Use logic-based approaches (general arguments)

A) Loose lips

B) Nature of how real conspiracies are uncovered

Get student to see themselves as a critical thinker, not a conspiracy thinker

Quieten if repeated or unlikely to be productive. Have a chat later – determine level of involvement

Quieting

A) Inappropriate/Unacceptable

B) harmful/pointless

This not to say that teacher should stop all unacceptable comments.
Sometimes it is beneficial to run with them.

1) Knowing where the line is

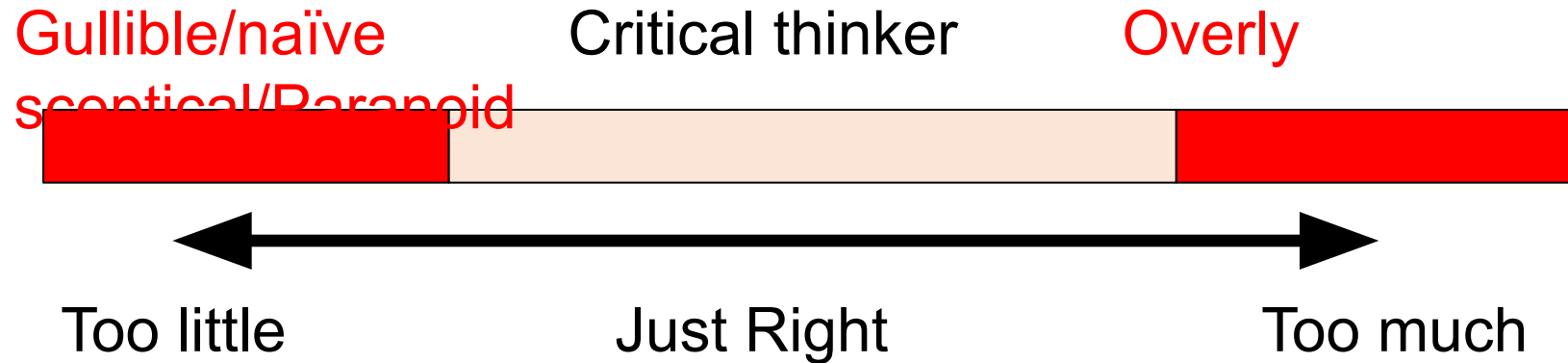
2) Drawing the line

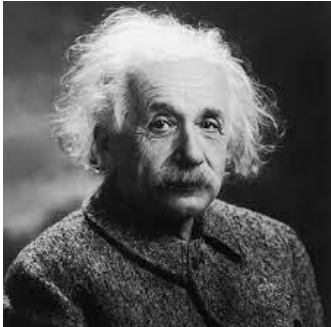
3) Enforcing the line



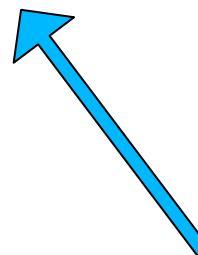
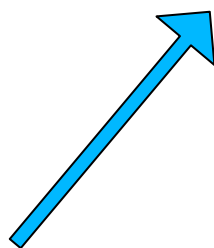
Aristotle's doctrine of the mean

SCEPTICISM



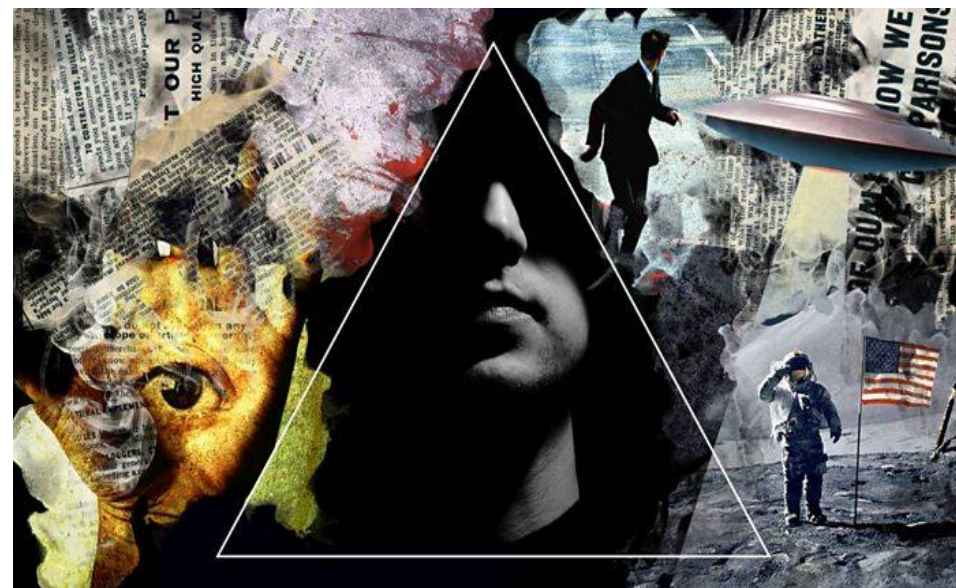


Critical thinker



Mainstream

Alternative/Conspiracy thinker

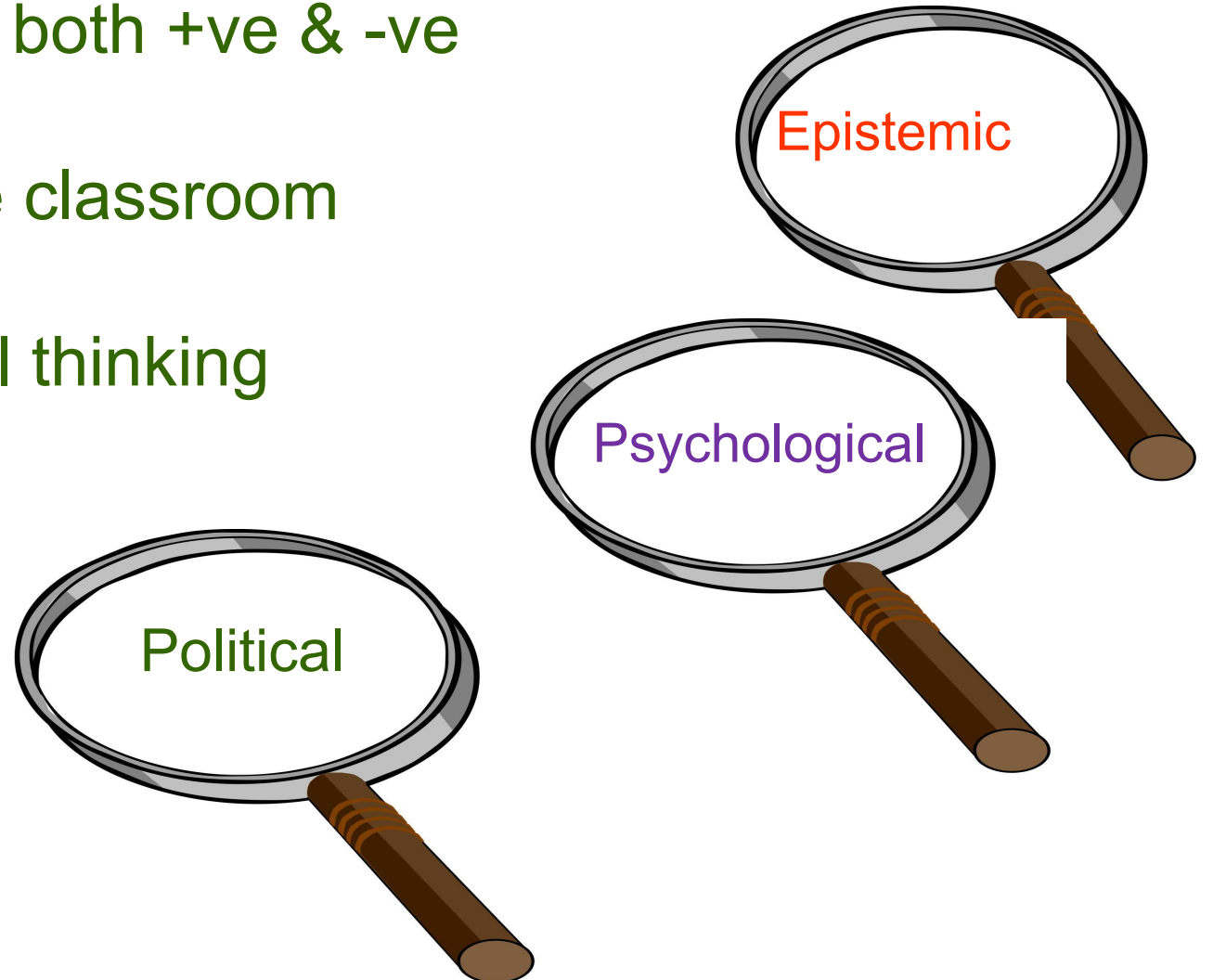


How to quieten?

May involve a loss of “face” both +ve & -ve

Taking discussion out of the classroom

Develop identity as a critical thinking



References

- Bomstad, L. (1995). Advocating procedural neutrality. *Teaching Philosophy*, 18(3), 197-210.
- Bridges D (1979) *Education, Democracy and Discussion* Slough: NFER
- Cotton, D. (2006) Teaching controversial environmental issues: neutrality and balance in the reality of the classroom, *Educational Research*, 48:2, 223-241,
- Jerome L, Hayward J, Easy J & Newmanturner A (2003) *The Citizenship Co-ordinator's Handbook* Cheltenham: Nelson Thornes
- Geller, R. (2020) Teacher political disclosure in contentious times: A "responsibility to speak up" or "fair and balanced"? Theory and Research in Social Education, 48(2), 182-210. classroom, *Educational Research*, 48:2, 223-241'
- Hayward J (2007) 'Values, beliefs and the citizenship teacher' in Gearon L ed (2007) *A practical guide to teaching citizenship in the secondary school* Oxon: Routledge
- Kelly D. M. & Minnes Brandes, G. (2001) 'Shifting Out of "Neutral": Beginning Teachers' Struggles with Teaching for Social Justice' in *Canadian Journal of Education* 26 (4) : 437–454
- Kelly, T. (1986) 'Discussing controversial issues: four perspectives on the teacher's role', in *Theory and Research in Social Education* 14 (2) pp.113-138
- Miller-Lane, J., Denton, E., & May, A. (2006) 'Social studies teachers' views on committed impartiality and discussion.'
- O'Neil, Rick, 1991. "Values Education and Neutrality in University Teaching" *Thinking* 9:4, pp. 34-36.
- Pring, R. (1999) 'Political education: relevance of the humanities', in *Oxford Review of Education* 25 (1-2).
- QCA (1998) *Education for Citizenship and the Teaching of Democracy in Schools* London: QCA (aka the Crick Report)

References

QCA/DfES (2001) *Schemes of Work for key stage 3: Teacher's guide* London: QCA/DfES (QCA/01/776)

Siegel, H. (1988) *Educating Reason: Rationality, Critical Thinking and Education*, London: Routledge.

Schuitema, J., Radstake, H., van de Pol, J. & Veugelers, W. (2018) Guiding classroom discussions for democratic citizenship education, *Educational Studies*, 44:4, 377-407,

Stenhouse L (1970) *The Humanities Project: an introduction* London: Heinemann

Stenhouse L (1983) *Authority, Education and Emancipation* London, Heinemann.

Stradling R, Noctor M & Baines B (eds) (1984) *Teaching Controversial Issues*, London: Edward Arnold

Verma G (ed) (1980) *The Impact of Innovation* Norwich: CARE Occasional Publications No. 9 UEA

Warnock, M. (1975). 'The Neutral Teacher'. In M.J. Taylor (Ed.), *Progress and Problems in Moral Education*. Windsor, NFER Pub. Company Ltd., pp. 103-112.

Yacek, D. (2018) 'Think Controversially: The Psychological Condition for Teaching Controversial Issues' in *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 52(1), pp71-86.

Young, I. M. (2000). *Inclusion and democracy*. New York: Oxford University Press.

References

- Berman, D.S. & Stoddard, J.D. (2021) “It’s a Growing and Serious Problem:” Teaching 9/11 to Combat Misinformation and Conspiracy Theories, *The Social Studies*, DOI: 10.1080/00377996.2021.1929054
- Birchall, C & Knight, P. (2023) *Conspiracy Theories in the time of Covid 19* Oxford:Routledge
- Brooks, J. (2022). Conspiracy Theories in the Classroom. *The National Teaching & Learning Forum*, 31(4), 1–3. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ntlf.30326>
- Cassam, Q. (2019) *Conspiracy Theories*. Cambridge: Polity Press
- Coady, D. (2006) ‘An introduction to the philosophical debate about conspiracy theories’ in Coady, D. (ed.) *Conspiracy Theories: The Philosophical Debate* Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Ltd.
- Compton, J., Linden, S., Cook, J., & Basol, M. (2021). Inoculation theory in the post-truth era: Extant findings and new frontiers for contested science, misinformation, and conspiracy theories. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, 15(6)
- Dow, B. J. et al. (2021) The COVID-19 pandemic and the search for structure: Social media and conspiracy theories. *Social and personality psychology compass*. [Online] 15 (9), e12636–n/a.
- Douglas, K. M. & Sutton, R. M. (2023) What Are Conspiracy Theories? A Definitional Approach to Their Correlates, Consequences, and Communication. *Annual review of psychology*. [Online] 74 (1), 271–298.

Drerup, H (2022) A Parallel Universe: Conspiracy Theories and the Limits of Education <http://justiceinschools.org>

Horn, S., & Veermans, K. (2019). Critical thinking efficacy and transfer skills defend against 'fake news' at an international school in Finland. *Journal of Research in International Education*, 18(1), 23-41.

Huguet, A. (et al) 2019 , *Exploring Media Literacy Education as a Tool for Mitigating Truth Decay*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2019

Jerome, L., Liddle, A. and Young, H. (2020) *The Deliberative Classroom*. London: Middlesex University.

Jerome, L., Kisby, B., & McKay, S. (2024). Combatting conspiracies in the classroom: Teacher strategies and perceived outcomes. *British Educational Research Journal*.

Jolley, D., Douglas, K. M., & Sutton, R. M. (2018). Blaming a few bad apples to save a threatened barrel: The system-justifying function of conspiracy theories. *Political Psychology*, 39(2), 465-478.

Jolley, D. (2020) Conspiracy Theories in the Classroom: Problems and Potential Solutions. *Religions* (Basel, Switzerland), 11(494), p.494.

Jolley, D., Douglas, K., Skipper, Y., Thomas, E., & Cookson, D. (2021). Measuring adolescents' beliefs in conspiracy theories: Development and validation of the Adolescent Conspiracy Beliefs Questionnaire (ACBQ). *British Journal of Developmental Psychology* pp.

Keeley B (1999) Of Conspiracy Theories. *The Journal of Philosophy* 96:3 pp.109-126

Kymlicka, W. (2002). *Contemporary Political Philosophy: An Introduction* Oxford: OUP (2nd edition)

Mercier, H. & Sperber, D. (2011) 'Why do humans reason? Arguments for an argumentative theory' in *Behavioural and Brain Sciences* 34, 57–111

Mittendorf, W. (2023). Conspiracy Theories and Democratic Legitimacy. *Social Epistemology*, 1-13.

O'Mahony C, Brassil M, Murphy G, Linehan C (2023) The efficacy of interventions in reducing belief in conspiracy theories: A systematic review. PLoS ONE 18(4): e0280902. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0280902>

Nyhan, B. & Reifler, J. (2010) When Corrections Fail: The Persistence of Political Misperceptions. *Political behavior*. [Online] 32 (2), 303–330.

OSCE ODIHR (undated) *Challenging Conspiracy Theories, Teaching Aid 4*. www.osce.org/odihr/441101

Peters, R. A., & Johannesen, H. J. (2020). What is actually true? Approaches to teaching conspiracy theories and alternative narratives in history lessons. *Acta Didactica Norden*, 14(4), 26-sider.

Reid, E., Johnson, H. and Levinson, M. (2019) Politics, Partisanship, and Pedagogy: What should be controversial in K-12 classrooms? Section in M. Levinson and J. Fay (Eds) *Democratic Schools in Discord*, pp.177-208. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard Education Press.

- Sibbett, L. (2022). Critical democratic education in practice: Evidence from an experienced Teacher's classroom. *The Journal of Social Studies Research*, 46(1), 35-52.
- Sosa, E. (2007). *A virtue epistemology: Apt belief and reflective knowledge* (Vol. I). Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Stoddard, J. (2019) *Teaching 9/11 and the war on terror: national survey of secondary teachers*.
- Sunstein, C. R., & Vermeule, A. (2009). Symposium on conspiracy theories conspiracy theories: Causes and cures. *Journal of Political Philosophy*, 17(2), 202–227.
- Taylor, B., Mills, M., Elwick, A., Pillinger, C., Gronland, G., Hayward, J., Hextall, I. & Panjwani, F. (2021). *Addressing Extremism Through the Classroom. A Research Report from the Centre for Teachers & Teaching Research*, London: UCL Institute of Education. <https://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/id/eprint/10133809/>
- Wineburg, S. et al. (2020) *Educating for Misunderstanding: How Approaches to Teaching Digital Literacy Make Students Susceptible to Scammers, Rogues, Bad Actors, and Hate Mongers* Working Paper A-21322, Stanford History Education Group, Stanford University. Retrieved from <https://purl.stanford.edu/mf412bt5333>
- Zagzebski, L (1996) *Virtues of the Mind : An Inquiry into the Nature of Virtue and the Ethical Foundations* Cambridge: CUP
- Zembylas, M (2021) Moving beyond debunking conspiracy theories from a narrow epistemic lens: ethical and political implications for education. *Pedagogy, Culture & Society*, 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14681366.2021.1948911>

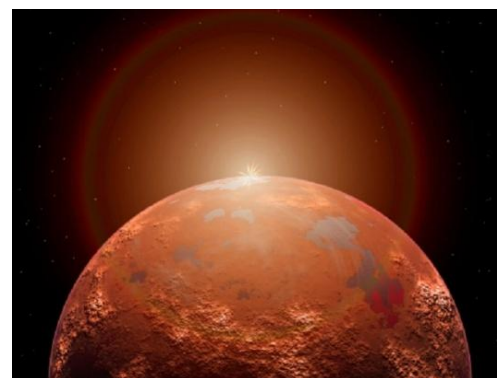
more sensitive
(emotional)



(disputed/able)

less controversial

more controversial



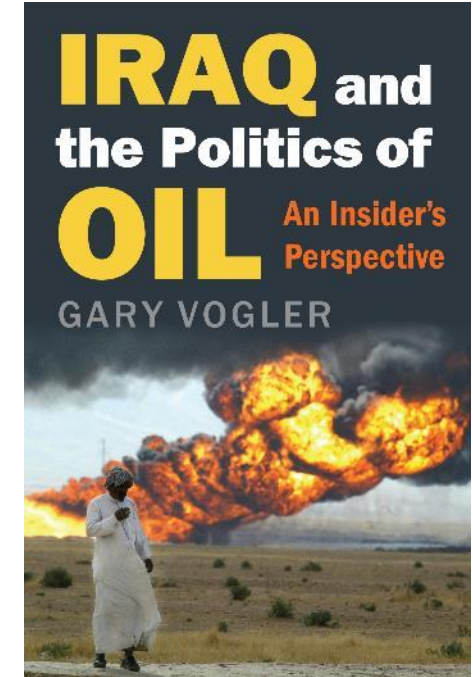
less sensitive

Conspiracy theories - terminology



1

2



**A theory of conspiracy
conspiracy theory**

**A conspiracy theory
Conspiracy theory**



**Conspiracy theories counter cultural, the
oppose official/publicly accepted
understandings of events**