The Radicalization of the American Academy

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Introduction

This chapter reviews evidence regarding the radicalization of the American academy, including real-world events and results from national surveys. We focus primarily on the American academy because we are most familiar with it.

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Why a chapter on the radicalization of the academy? Academic institutions exist for two primary purposes: (1) To educate young adults; (2) Through scholarship, to seek truth, wisdom, understanding, and insight. Indeed, along with media and scientific private enterprises (e.g., biotech, pharmaceutical, and engineering companies) it is one of the main institutions in the democratic west organized around discovering and disseminating truths. However, the goals of discovery and education become compromised when the academy places higher value on political or activist agendas. In this review, after documenting the extreme political skew of the American academy, we focus mainly on evidence regarding the ways in which that skew has proven a fertile ground for the production of bizarre, inflammatory claims that are generally unhinged from scientific evidence.

This chapter is not "balanced" in the sense that it focuses almost entirely on left-wing extremism in the academy, with almost no reference to right-wing extremism. That is because, as we shall show, the Far Left is massively overrepresented in the American academy, and there is hardly much Right to speak of. The study of right-wing extremism is important and interested readers can find many sources that address it (e.g., Altemeyer 1981); but it has little relevance to understanding the American academy in 2022.

Defining Terms

Because our analysis focuses on the academy in the United States, our terms are selected to apply to it and are not intended to describe other countries.

> *Left*: Anyone from center-Left people who votes mostly for Democrats, to radical Marxists, intersectionalists, critical (race) theorists, and Social Justice Advocates.
> *Right*: Anyone from center-Right who votes mostly Republican, to fascists and White supremacists.
> *Radicals*: Those endorsing beliefs on any extreme end of the political spectrum.
> *Activist*: Anyone seeking to achieve political goals as a participant, instigator, or leader of any sort of group effort.
> *Extremism*: A tendency in behavior, group identity, and belief toward profound convictions opposed to universal human rights, liberal democracy, and rule of law and/or advocating the supremacy of a certain group (racial, religious, political, economic, social, etc., e.g., Trip et al. 2019).

In order to understand and contextualize this review of left-wing extremism in the American academy, this chapter is organized as follows. First, we briefly review recent research on the political psychology of left-wing extremism and authoritarianism to provide a sense of some of its common manifestations outside of academia. Second, we address the radicalization of academia itself.

We review real-world events that we consider to be manifestations of left-wing extremism in academia. Although there are far more events than we could possibly include in this sort of review, those included are concrete manifestations of academic extremism. These stories should not be interpreted in the same manner as experiments or surveys. They are presented here to *augment*, but not replace, other forms of scientific analysis.

The third section focuses on scientific analysis by reviewing large-scale survey evidence regarding the political beliefs of academics, including endorsements of censorship and purging colleagues with whom they disagree, and the implementation of political exclusion and censorship policies by major academic organizations. The final section reviews some of the ways the embrace of Far Left political activism has led to unjustified and even bizarre social scientific claims, and constitutes an ongoing threat to research integrity.

The Psychology of Left-Wing Extremism and Authoritarianism

Although there is no single authoritative definition of authoritarianism, modern scholarship emphasizes dogmatism, intolerance of outgroups, a rejection of individual rights in subordination to group identities, aggressiveness toward one's opponents (Altemeyer 1981, 1996; Costello et al. 2022; Conway et al. 2018). Authoritarian beliefs and attitudes are those that reject fundamental human rights, such as freedom of speech and press, and due process protections. One may hold an authoritarian belief in one domain (e.g., speech) without holding it in another (freedom of religion). The point is not that the *person* is "an authoritarian;" it is, instead, that the person holds one or more implicitly authoritarian beliefs or values. We next review the evidence of authoritarian beliefs and values on the American left.

Support for Restricting Speech

Although both liberals and conservatives endorse speech restrictions on campus (but for different issues), liberals and women are far more likely to support speech restrictions, and to consider hate speech itself a form of violence (Ekins 2017; Clark and Winegard 2022). For example, in CATO's survey of 2300 Americans, Democrats favored government restrictions on hate speech more than did Republicans (52% v. 27%), liberals more than conservatives (47% v. 23%), and women favored them more than men did (48% to 32%).

Liberals and women supported government restrictions not merely on hate speech, but on "offensive" speech (Ekins 2017). Majorities of Democrats, liberals, and women reported favoring new laws making it illegal to say "offensive" things about Black people (endorsements from 51–61%). Conversely, majorities of Republicans, conservatives, and men opposed such laws (opposition ranging from 64 to 72%). Furthermore, majorities of Democrats, liberals,

and women reported endorsing hate speech as a form of violence (59–66%); although substantial portions of Republicans, conservatives, and men also did so, it was at considerably lower levels (40–43%). At the same time that majorities consider hate speech a form of violence, 1/3 of those identifying as "very liberal" in the American National Election Study endorsed the use of actual violence to achieve political goals (Goldberg 2021).

Support for Restricting Academic Freedom

A recent study of over 500 college students (Rausch et al., 2023) found results broadly consistent with the CATO (Ekins 2017) study. The more that the students endorsed social justice, the less they endorsed academic freedom ($r = -0.15$), advancing knowledge ($r = -0.38$) and academic rigor ($r = -0.39$). Women were less supportive of academic freedom, advancing knowledge, and academic rigor, but placed more value on social justice and emotional well-being than did men. Although some have made the case that social justice movements have historically benefited from free speech protections (Mchangama 2022), in the twenty-first century, social justice and free speech are psychologically inversely related.

The Psychology of Left-Wing Authoritarianism

The recent blossoming of research on Left-Wing Authoritarianism (LWA) also provides important insights into possible manifestations in academia. Conway et al. (2018) simply took existing measures of right-wing authoritarianism and flipped the ideological affinity of the targets. As they wrote (p. 7), they took items such as this one: "It's always better to trust the judgment of the proper authorities in government and religion than to listen to the noisy rabble-rousers in our society who are trying to create doubts in people's minds" and simply changed the target, so that "For the LWA scale, this item was adapted to read 'It's always better to trust the judgment of the proper authorities in science with respect to issues like global warming and evolution than to listen to the noisy rabble-rousers in our society who are trying to create doubts in people's minds.'" Despite 50 years of social psychologists claiming to be unable to find much evidence of LWA in the democratic west, Conway et al.'s (2018) simple change of target was enough to reveal comparable levels of LWA and RWA in their samples. Furthermore, Conway et al. demonstrated strong relations between LWA and dogmatism and prejudice against religious minorities (comparable to findings of strong relations of RWA to prejudice against ethnic minorities).

Recent work by Costello et al. (2022) has been the most ambitious of the new assessments of LWA, including scale development, rigorous psychometric analysis, and validation work across five samples (including over 2000 Mechanical Turk workers and a sample of over 4000 obtained from YourMorals.Org). Key findings were that LWA primarily manifests as support for

"top-down censorship" (willingness to deploy authorities to limit right-wing beliefs and behavior), "anti-hierarchical aggression" (support for punishing those in power, overthrowing the established order, and political violence), and "conventionalism" (high adherence to norms espoused by revolutionary authorities). Even after controlling for political ideology, high LWA was associated with dogmatism, support for banning right-wing speakers, preference for political control over individual liberty, political intolerance and prejudice against political opponents, support for lethal political violence, and social vigilantism (imposing one's views and morals on others).

Follow-up research has further validated Costello et al.'s scale by showing that those holding strong LWA attitudes supported a whole toolbox of authoritarian measures to cope with the COVID-19 pandemic (Manson 2020). Specifically, LWA correlated with support for violating basic human rights, such as *prohibiting* misinformation ($r = 0.37$), *restricting* right to protest against the government ($r = 0.40$), and restricting rights to jury trials ($r = 0.41$). In addition, LWA also predicted support for all sorts of heavy-handed government measures, such as mandatory person-tracking apps for phones ($r = 0.32$), surveillance of churches ($r = 0.49$), and the government running the economy ($r = 0.41$).

The Radicalization of the American Academy

In the next sections, we present evidence documenting the left-wing radicalization of academia. That evidence is presented in two parts. The first part reports recent real-world events of "acceptable" and "unacceptable" discourse in academia, events which, though anecdotal, provide a good introduction to how Far Left extremism manifests. The second part reviews the now-considerable quantitative evidence from surveys regarding the Far Left skew of academia, and the presence of a large minority of Far Left extremists.

Real-World Events Emblematic of the Radicalization of Academia

Radicalization can manifest in many ways, but two of the most common are: (1) One make almost any statement, no matter how bizarre, unjustified, or inflammatory, and if it is framed as some sort of social justice, have a very nice career; (2) If one criticizes some aspect of social justice in academia, one is at serious risk of being denounced, public shamed, sanctioned or ostracized. We give examples of each next.

Rutgers

White people are villains. Brittany Cooper, a tenured Rutgers professor of Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies, in an interview on *The Root* (2021) stated: "White people are committed to being villains in the aggregate," which she then followed up with, "We gotta take these motherf***ers out but we

can't say that. I don't believe in a project of violence." Although there was a public outcry about this statement, Cooper has not, as far as we know, suffered professional damage, disinvitations, or deplatforming, as have others for challenging social justice shibboleths.

Chancellor and Provost apologize for condemning antisemitism after being denounced. In May 2021, intense fighting between Israel and Hamas in Gaza triggered a spate of attacks on Jews and synagogues in the U.S. (Goldstein 2021; Graham and Stack 2021). In response, the Rutgers Chancellor-Provost's Office released a statement that read: "We are saddened by and greatly concerned about the sharp rise in hostile sentiments and anti-Semitic violence in the United States. Recent incidents of hate directed toward Jewish members of our community again remind us of what history has to teach us." The statement also condemned "all forms of bigotry, prejudice, discrimination, xenophobia, and oppression, in whatever ways they may be expressed" (Sales 2021).

The following day, this statement was denounced by the Rutgers chapter of the Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP 2021) on the grounds that it "conveniently ignore[d] the extent to which Palestinians have been brutalized by Israel's occupation and bombing of Gaza," and "cannot be separated from widespread attempts to conflate antizionism with antisemitism…" What is going on here, however, is the reverse—SJP, by denouncing the condemnation of antisemitic attacks *in America*, is justifying or deflecting criticism of such attacks on the grounds of antizionism. Contra the SJP denunciation, Human Rights Watch (Goldstein 2021) unambiguously acknowledged that "just as it is a hate crime to attack an Asian American for how China's authoritarian rulers may have handled Covid," it is antisemitic to treat American Jews as if they embody the Israeli government.

If this was *just* another example of SJP engaging in antisemitism under the guise of antizionism, it would not say much about the academy in general or Rutgers in particular. What makes this event relevant to this chapter is the response of the Chancellor's & Provost's Offices to the SJP denunciation. It was emblematic of one of the themes of this chapter: One can make almost any claim, no matter how bizarre, inflammatory, or hate-mongering, and, as long as it is framed as some form of "social justice," one will receive widespread support and credibility from within academia. On cue, the Chancellor's and Provost's offices released an obsequious public apology laced with social justice buzzwords, including: "We understand that intent and impact are two different things…In hindsight, it is clear to us that the message failed to communicate support for our Palestinian community… We sincerely apologize for the hurt this has caused…we will take the lesson learned here to heart, and pledge our commitment to doing better."

It probably would have ended there, but for the loud public outcry *from outside of Rutgers*, protesting the absurdity and offensiveness of *apologizing for condemning antisemitic attacks in the U.S.* In response to those public protests, the President of Rutgers, released an obfuscatory statement: "Rutgers deplores

hatred and bigotry in all forms. We have not, nor would we ever, apologize for standing against anti-Semitism. Neither hatred nor bigotry has a place at Rutgers, nor should they have a place anywhere in the world. At Rutgers we believe that anti-Semitism, anti-Hinduism, Islamophobia and all forms of racism, intolerance and xenophobia are unacceptable wherever and whenever they occur (Graham and Stack 2021)."[1] The entire affair was reported and summarized at NJ.com (Panico 2021) and testifies to the effectiveness that even bizarre and unsubstantiated allegations of some sort of "ism" have at extracting confessions of guilt (even when none exists) at even the highest levels of academia.

Yale

In April 2021, New York psychiatrist Aruna Khilanani was invited by the School of Medicine's Child Study Center to give a lecture at Yale's weekly educational forum for medical faculty, students, and staff known as Grand Rounds. The talk was titled "The Psychopathic Problem of the White Mind," and was the topic of an exposé by Herzog (2021). In her talk, Khilanani made numerous bizarre statements, such as: "White people are out of their minds and they have been for a long time," and the "cost of talking to White people at all is the cost of your own life as they suck you dry. There are no good apples out there. White people make my blood boil." In case you did not get her point, she added, "I had fantasies of unloading a revolver into the head of any white person that got in my way, burying their body and wiping my bloody hands as I walked away relatively guiltless with a bounce in my step…".

One might dismiss this as the ravings of an aggrieved lunatic, but neither the Yale notables who invited her, nor many of those who heard her speak, seemed to think so. During the question and answer period after the talk, several members of the audience expressed fawning admiration with comments like:

> Thank you for shaking [things] up; I feel shaken up in a good way…
> Thank you for this…it's the truth…
> I really appreciate your comments.

Much like the Rutgers antisemitism incident, Yale only distanced itself from Khilanani *after* there was loud outcry from the general public (Colon 2021). In academia, you can make all sorts of bizarre claims if you frame them as some form of social justice.

The Saga of Dorian Abbot

Dorian Abbot is a professor of geophysical sciences at the University of Chicago. In 2021, he posted videos on YouTube critical of the manner in which Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) was being implemented there

(Abbot 2022). He was immediately denounced by graduate students, some professors, and at least one postdoc in a public letter and mob on Twitter. Those denouncing him called for restrictions on his teaching and mentorship, and called on others to also denounce him and anyone who supported him.

Shortly thereafter, Abbot's scholarship on the ecology of exoplanets earned him an invitation to speak at MIT's Carlson Lecture, which is devoted to bringing important scientific advances to the general public. But, after publishing an editorial in Newsweek critical of DEI, a Twitter mob and MIT graduate students denounced him, and successfully pressured the lecture organizers to disinvite him. Similarly, David Romps—once Director of the Berkeley Atmospheric Sciences Center—proposed inviting Dorian to present his research at the BASC. This produced an uprising of outrage among the faculty, leading to Romps' resignation (Crane 2021).

The *Saga of Dorian Abbot* is not a scientific study, but it is more than a lone anecdote; it is emblematic of the modern implementation of social justice. Academics in three major influential institutions, Chicago, MIT, and Berkeley denounced, deplatformed, or sought to punish Dorian for the legitimate expression of views they opposed, in the name of social justice. This is exactly what one would expect if the inverse relationship between support for social justice and free speech found in surveys characterizes large swaths of academia, and emblematic of the manner in which if one criticizes social justice, one risks professional sanction.

The Radicalization of the American Academy: Results from Surveys

The stories about Yale, Rutgers, and Dorian Abbot are mere anecdotes, albeit anecdotes from major and influential universities. However, our argument is not that the radicalization of the academy is something that manifests in a few unusual anecdotes; it is that these anecdotes constitute the tip of a very large iceberg. We now turn our attention to that iceberg by reviewing studies of the politics of the (mostly American) academy. The American Academy does not merely skew Left, it skews extremely Left in two senses: (1) The skew itself is extreme; and (2) people who self-describe as being on the extreme Left of the American political spectrum are vastly overrepresented. The next section, then, is in three parts: (1) A brief review of Americans' political distribution (for comparison); (2) A review of the evidence regarding the extremity of the political skew in academia; and (3) A review of studies assessing how many faculty identify as being on the extreme Left.

The Political Distribution of Americans

As of October 2022, 29% of Americans identified as Democrats, 33% as Republicans, and 35% as Independents (Gallup 2022). The "Hidden Tribes" study of 8,000 participants found that only 8% of Americans identify as "progressives," the furthest Left of all the groups in their study (Hawkins et al.

2018). Results from a Pew Research Center survey produced similar patterns. The most extreme Left, the Progressive Left, were 6% of the population and "have very liberal views on virtually every issue and support far-reaching changes to address racial injustice and expand the social safety net." (Pew Research Center 2021).

The Political Distribution of Academics

Surveys conducted over the past 50 years investigating the ideological composition of university faculty have consistently demonstrated that faculty (particularly in the social sciences and humanities) are decidedly on the Left side of the political spectrum (see Honeycutt and Jussim 2020 for a review) and this skew is growing. Honeycutt and Freberg (2017) reported that in their sample of university professors from four California state universities ($n = 618$), 71.1% identified as liberal, 15% moderate, and 13.8% conservative. Other recent work using faculty voter registration data has found that faculty registered as Democrats outnumber Republican faculty in every academia area, with an overall ratio of 8.5 Democrats for every one Republican (Langbert 2018; Langbert and Stevens 2021) but with (sometimes much) larger ratios in most social science and humanities fields (the fields most likely to address political and politicized topics). Thus, at the most basic level, and consistent across many different data sources collected at different times using varying methods, the political identity of academics has been and continues to skew further Left.

However, it is not just that the skew is extreme, it is that the Far Left is massively overrepresented in academia (compared to the single digit representation in the population). To see this ongoing change, it is instructive to compare the results of the most recent survey of academics' politics with older work. Gross and Simmons (2014) recruited a national sample of 1417 American professors in 2006 and is one of few studies to assess levels of left-wing extremism. Honeycutt (2022) asked similar questions of a large national sample of tenured/tenure-track American professors ($n = 1861$). Findings of the two surveys are shown in Table 19.1. More faculty members identified as part of the extreme Left in 2022 (compared to 2006), and even more graduate students identified in the Left-extremes than faculty. Today's graduate students are tomorrow's faculty, so it appears that the Left skew of the faculty is likely to become more extreme (in senses of both statistical skew and political extremism) in the future.

Targets: Experiences with Authoritarian Behavior

Many studies report evidence of a hostile environment within academia for scholars on the Right or those who criticize certain beliefs or values held sacred by some on the Left (many of whom may themselves hold left-wing political views). One survey of 292 social psychologists found conservatives reported experiencing a hostile work environment to a much greater extent

Table 19.1 Faculty and graduate students identifying as radical, political activist, Marxist, or Socialist, and those who "selected at least one of these."

	Gross and Simmons (2014)—Faculty	*Honeycutt (2022)—Faculty*	*Honeycutt (2022)— Graduate Students*
Radical	11.2%	17.2%	33.7%
Activist	13.5%	22.3%	25.4%
Marxist	3%	7.9%	20.4%
Socialist	Not asked	26.0%	43.9%
Selected at least one	Unable to determine	40.4%	57.8%

Percent of faculty who indicated these labels described them at least moderately well (i.e., with a score of 4 or higher)

than did liberals (means of 4.7 and 1.9, respectively, scale from 1 [not at all] to 7 [very much]; Inbar and Lammers 2012). This was then replicated and extended in a study of 618 academics from across the disciplines in California state universities (Honeycutt and Freberg 2017) and in an international (2/3 European, 22% U.S.) sample of philosophers (Peters et al. 2020). Kaufmann (2021) curated survey results from a variety of sources in both the U.S. and U.K. and found that right-wing academics reported four to eight times higher levels of being threatened by disciplinary action than did left-wing academics. Both a hostile environment and being targeted with punishment for political views reflect one of the key elements of authoritarianism: aggression directed toward one's political opponents.

Perpetrators: Endorsement of Authoritarian Behavior

Willingness to discriminate on political grounds. Many academics openly declare blatant hostility to conservatives. Depending on the measure and the cutoff, 30–80% of academics across several surveys *explicitly state* that they would discriminate against conservative viewpoints and individuals in hiring, publication, grants, or conference presentations (Honeycutt and Freberg 2017; Inbar and Lammers 2012; Peters et al. 2020). All of these surveys used the scale midpoint (say, 4 on a 1–7 scale ranging from not at all to very much) as the cutoff for "willingness to discriminate." If one were to use a cutoff of 2 (reflecting anything above "not at all") the proportion approaches 80% (Jussim et al. 2015). A recent nationwide survey of over 1800 academics and 1700 graduate students (future academics) from across the disciplines found similar results (Honeycutt 2022).

Whether these results can be taken at face value, however, is unclear. Perhaps social desirability concerns depress willingness to report willingness to discriminate. Even if we take the findings at face value, these results may help

explain the slow exile/exodus of conservatives from academia. Academia is not completely closed to conservative students, but when large enough minorities of academics express overt hostility to conservatives, it is difficult for most conservative students to avoid it completely. As such experiences of hostility accumulate, many who might otherwise be interested in careers in academia may decide to avoid working in professions where they are at unusually high risk of a hostile work environment. Similarly, at the faculty level, whether it is job search committees, paper reviews, or grant panels, it usually only takes one or two negative voices to torpedo a possible job interview, paper acceptance, or grant funding. Although some can enter academia and succeed despite these headwinds, it will be far more difficult for them to do so than for left-wing students and academics, who face little or no such political headwinds.

Punishing opponents. The Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression (FIRE) maintains a Scholars Under Fire database (FIRE 2022; see also German and Stevens 2021, 2022). Scholars are considered "under fire" when they are targeted for professional punishment for engaging in forms of speech that are protected either under the U.S. Constitution or principles of academic freedom (German and Stevens 2021, p. 6). FIRE's database counts being subjected to some sort of formal investigation as being under fire, even if the target is ultimately exonerated. This is because the time, stress, and resources necessary to defend oneself in the face of such investigations is plausibly viewed as its own form of punishment, whether or not the target is ultimately vindicated. Furthermore, as well-documented by analyses of the McCarthyism of the 1940s and 1950s (Schrecker 1986), such investigations tend to have a widespread chilling effect on speech, because even those not investigated get the message that one's career may be at risk if one expresses the targeted viewpoints and therefore self-censor.

FIRE's database currently includes incidences going back to 2015 and is a living record in that it increases as new scholars come under fire. As of this writing, it documents over 700 scholars who have come under fire. In 2021 alone, FIRE tracked over 200 such targeting incidents, with almost half involving scholars targeted from their Left. FIRE's database provides ample evidence of such attacks from the Right (more than half), but these are almost entirely from outside of academia, rather than from inside, and, as such, are not relevant to this chapter on extremism *within* academia. Nearly all the attacks from *within* the academy came from the Left. Given the base rate of a massive disproportion of faculty on the left, it is likely that most scholars under fire were also on the political Left. However, they were either not as Far Left as the people targeting them, or they were targeted because they challenged or criticized some belief or value held sacred by academics on the Left. Intolerance of political opponents and attempts to punish or censor them is a hallmark of authoritarianism.

The numbers in FIRE's database might be dismissible as small given that they occur in a country with hundreds of thousands of professors. However, FIRE's database almost surely *underestimates* the number of faculty who have

been targeted by academic left-wing mobs, because we know of events that did not rise to FIRE's attention or meet their selection criteria, some of which can be found in Stevens et al. (2018), and others which can be found in Shields and Dunn (2016). It is a near-certainty that far more incidents of shunning and ostracism, not to mention reputation-smearing whisper campaigns, interviews-never-received, promotions never granted, jobs never offered, and the like have occurred than will ever be recorded. It also does not take many such incidents for faculty to "get the message" and self-censor to avoid career-damaging punishment, which may explain the much higher levels of self-censorship among conservative faculty (Kaufmann 2021).

Academic demography and grassroots endorsement of censorship and the erosion of support for academic freedom. Willingness to censor one's opponents is one of the central features of left-wing authoritarianism (Costello et al. 2022) and there is ample evidence of endorsement of censorship throughout academia. Most scholars under fire in FIRE's database were targeted for their speech (as opposed to, e.g., their behavior). In addition, however, there are widespread and growing grassroots support and organizational efforts for eroding academic freedom protections. These are discussed next.

One example is the Princeton Faculty Letter (2020), which called for Princeton to: "*Constitute a committee composed entirely of faculty that would oversee the investigation and discipline of racist behaviors, incidents, research, and publication on the part of faculty, following a protocol for grievance and appeal to be spelled out in Rules and Procedures of the Faculty. Guidelines on what counts as racist behavior, incidents, research, and publication will be authored by a faculty committee for incorporation into the same set of rules and procedures.*" Whereas harassing any member of a university community (e.g., by targeting them with slurs) is legitimately prohibited, expressing *ideas* that some people consider racist are well within the protections afforded by academic freedom. Indeed, this captures one of the problems with this type of censorship: What counts as "racist" is so inherently ambiguous that such a policy would inherently infringe on open discourse around controversial topics involving race simply by virtue of chilling such discussions through fear of punishment. Although Princeton University has not yet adopted this policy, the fact that hundreds of faculty, graduate students, and alumni signed on to the open letter advocating for top-down censorship serves as evidence of grassroots support for it.

We documented in the prior section on the psychology of left-wing extremism how Democrats, liberals, and women are far more supportive of censorship than are Republicans, conservatives, or men. We next review evidence on how these national trends are manifesting in academia.

A recent survey of over 1000 North American academics (Kaufmann 2021) found that those who were younger, minorities, or women, and who identified as either Far Left or as activists, were more likely to support a campaign to dismiss a colleague on political grounds. This survey found that about half of younger Far Left academics support such a campaign, a proportion that

declines among academics who are older or less Far Left. When asked about prioritizing social justice or academic freedom, younger academics, women, and Far Left activists endorsed social justice more so than did older academics, men, and those not on the Far Left.

Similarly, results of a survey of 468 professors found that men (60%) were more likely than women (40%) to endorse the idea that "scholars should be completely free to pursue research questions without fear of institutional punishment for their research conclusions" (Clark and Winegard 2022). In the same survey, when asked about whether scientists should prioritize truth or equity, 66% of men whereas 43% of women prioritized truth. Although women only rarely responded with a blunt "no" or "equity" to these questions, majorities chose the response option, "it's complicated." What exactly was meant by this was not explored in this study. Nonetheless, such a result is consistent with national surveys described earlier (Ekins 2017; Rausch et al., 2023) showing greater support for censorship among women. Because these results are correlational, we do not know what causes what. Nonetheless, descriptively, the demographic groups that have, so far, been less supportive of free speech and academic freedom are becoming more represented, and more influential, in the academy.

Institutional and Organizational Implementation of Censorship and Political Intolerance

The combination of grassroots support and activists who capture positions of leadership and power means that powerful institutions and organizations within academia are being recruited to implement censorial policies and political discrimination against both people and ideas. We next review some of the manifestations of this sort of institutional/organizational capture.

Censorship policy, Nature. Nature is a family of very high impact journals. Unfortunately, its scientific standards are also in the process of being compromised through censorship-by-policy in the name of social justice. Nature's new ethical guidelines (Nature Human Behaviour 2022) include this: "Harms can also arise indirectly, as a result of the publication of a research project or a piece of scholarly communication—for instance, stigmatization of a vulnerable human group or potential use of the results of research for unintended purposes (e.g., public policies that undermine human rights or misuse of information to threaten public health)." In an article titled The Fall of Nature, Winegard (2022) argued that "Editors will now enjoy unprecedented power to reject articles on the basis of nebulous moral concerns and anticipated harms."

This problem is further compounded by the finding identified in recent research showing that people tended to overestimate others' harmful reactions to studies and underestimate their benevolent reactions (Clark, et al., 2023). For example, after reading about real findings showing that child abuse produces few long-term effects on adults, people estimated that over 30% of readers would take child abuse less seriously (a harmful reaction), whereas only

about 12% did take it less seriously. Similarly, people estimated that under 60% would call for more research on child abuse (a benevolent reaction), whereas over 75% did so. However, Clark et al. (2023) did not examine academics. Thus, we do not know for sure that overestimation of harms manifests in a similar manner among their reviewers. But the policy itself does nothing to ensure against either such overestimation, or that there is any consideration of whether the benefits of censoring something controversial outweigh the costs.

Censorship practices at The National Institutes for Health (NIH). NIH is a vast network of U.S. institutions that, among their many missions, disburses tens of billions of dollars in funding to support scientific research. It is funded by taxpayer dollars, which one might think would come with a requirement to make data as widely available as possible. But this is not the case, at least not according to a report by University of Minnesota geneticist James Lee (2022) which stated:

> My colleagues at other universities and I have run into problems involving applications to study the relationships among intelligence, education, and health outcomes. Sometimes, NIH denies access to some of the attributes that I have just mentioned, on the grounds that studying their genetic basis is 'stigmatizing.' Sometimes, it demands updates about ongoing research, with the implied threat that it could withdraw usage if it does not receive satisfactory answers. In some cases, NIH has retroactively withdrawn access for research it had previously approved.
>
> Note that none of the studies I am referring to include inquiries into race or sex differences. Apparently, NIH is clamping down on a broad range of attempts to explore the relationship between genetics and intelligence.

Such practices violate the spirit if not the letter of NIH's own policy, which states this: "The NIH GDS (Genetic Data Sharing) policy explicitly encourages the broadest possible use of findings and development of products/technologies from the use of NIH-funded genomic data to promote maximum public benefit" (NIH 2014). Although that policy was adopted in 2014, it was recently reaffirmed (NIH 2022). "Maximum public benefit" probably gives the NIH wiggle room to argue that censoring certain types of usage does not technically violate their policy, as long as NIH decision-makers believe there is potential for "harm" resulting from that usage (as with Nature). Should they make such an argument, we would have two replies: (1) The evidence that liberals vastly overestimate certain types of harm (reviewed previously herein) provides no basis for having confidence that NIH will engage in censorship in either a judicious or politically neutral manner; (2) However justified they believe such censorship is, it is still censorship.

Mandatory diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) statements as compelled speech or censorship. Although the meaning of the terms "diversity," "equity," and "inclusion" is often either not articulated or articulated but used in ways that contravene that articulation (Honeycutt and Jussim, 2023), in general,

DEI involves efforts to ensure academia welcomes people from underrepresented or marginalized groups. In the American academy, mandatory DEI statements for applicants for academic jobs have become widely implemented with astonishing rapidity, and the momentum for their spread is still rising (Maranto et al. 2022). Although the different types of diversity are nearly infinite (Jussim, 2023), DEI in academia is typically narrowly focused on a set of demographic categories for whom the Left desires special protections (see Honeycutt and Jussim 2022, for a report documenting both the prevalence and disingenuousness with which DEI programs are being implemented, with specific references to a slew of University of California system schools (Berkeley, Davis, Irvine, San Diego, UCLA) and Minnesota, NYU, Oregon, Texas, Rutgers, University of Pennsylvania, Vassar, Cornell, and Brandeis).

The most benevolent interpretation of these developments is that they constitute incentivizing and enforcing (through selection of personnel with "good" DEI statements) individual affirmative action-like efforts. In this context, however, it is worth noting that race, ethnicity, and gender-based preference policies are far left of the American mainstream. For example, California, the most populous state in the U.S., with over 10% of the country's entire population, a state in which White people are a minority, and which is one of the most liberal states in the country, has voted twice to *ban* affirmative action in hiring (Friedersdorf 2020). Similarly, national surveys also show widespread opposition to affirmative action. In a national Pew survey, over 70% of Americans stated that they believed that race should not be a factor in college admissions, including large majorities of Black (59%) and Hispanic (68%) respondents (Gómez 2022). In another Pew survey, over 70% said race should not be considered in employment decisions, including 54% of Black and 69% of Hispanic respondents (Horowitz 2019).

Thus, even at its most benevolent, DEI promotes policies far Left of the American mainstream. But there are also good reasons to doubt that mandated DEI statements are entirely benevolent. One is that they can constitute a political litmus test, ensuring that academia selects for endorsement of a Far Left view of "social justice." Worse, requiring a "good" DEI statement as a condition of admission or employment is a form of compelled speech or censorship.

People who desire a job in academia, admission to a graduate program, or to present at a scientific conference, but also oppose affirmative action/DEI and yet are required to write a DEI statement as the price of admission, have a difficult choice: Write a statement disingenuously professing allegiance to the DEI political agenda in order to have a career, write one (thereby formally meeting the requirement) that rejects allegiance to DEI, or degrade their career prospects or advancement by not applying to programs that require DEI statements.

If they chose to write a disingenuous statement, DEI statement mandates constitute a form of organizationally compelled speech, though it is not compelled by the state (unless it is a state university). If they write a statement

rejecting allegiance to DEI ideology and policies, and this counts against them, it is also a form of compelled speech. If would-be applicants instead chose not to apply, mandatory DEI statements function as a form of organizational censorship. Many people seem to erroneously believe that censorship is something only the government can do. Any institution, organization, business, group, or individual who successfully prevents expression or dissemination of an idea has engaged in censorship. The prevention does not need to be *absolute*; a platform that removes a book for sale in response to an outrage mob is engaging in censorship *on that platform*, even if the author can distribute it on other platforms. In the U.S., private censorship is generally legal; private actors, whether corporate, institutional, organizational, or even social media outrage mobs can legally censor anything they like. It is still censorship, just not state censorship.

Mandatory DEI statements *that must endorse particular practices* can function as a form of censorship because anyone unwilling to endorse DEI political activism/affirmative action or specific types of DEI actions/activities will likely be prevented from having opportunities for jobs in which they can conduct and disseminate scientific research. Similarly, when DEI statements are required for any who wish to present at academic conferences, anyone who opposes affirmative action-like practices, and refuses to lie about it will be prevented from presenting. Thus, the policy restricts dissemination of science for non-scientific reasons and, as such, constitutes censorship.

This is not hypothetical; it is happening now. DEI statements that fail to endorse the "right" types of diversity are indeed being treated as disqualifying (Honeycutt and Jussim 2022). University administrators and at least one professional society president have admitted that they are used as an "additive" component of an application (building in discrimination against those who do not provide one or who provide statements deemed "poor" by virtue of not endorsing social justice dogmas and practices). Yet other times, officials claim DEI statements are only one component of an application but, instead, use them as an initial screen, meaning that DEI statements below some threshold of meeting progressive values are precluded from further consideration (Honeycutt and Jussim 2022). This institutionalizes political viewpoint discrimination.

Threats to Science

The radicalization of academia means that, as demonstrated throughout this chapter, Far Left ideology has infused itself not only into who gets hired, but into what topics and findings major journals will publish, professional societies will permit to be presented, and major grant agencies will support. There are, however, more subtle ways in which radicalization manifests. In this section, we review some of the ways it leads to production of dubious or even entirely invalid "scientific" claims in the peer reviewed literature.

Peer Reviewed Journals: Bizarre Claims and Practices in the Name of Social Justice

Grievance Studies Affair. Beginning in 2017, as part of an academic whistle-blowing operation, Lindsay et al. (2018) wrote twenty academic papers all of which made radical social justice claims. Within a year, seven were accepted for publication in peer reviewed journals. Two were given "revise and resubmits," which usually indicates a paper is on a path to acceptance (the review process was never finalized because these papers were withdrawn when the sting-like nature of the affair was exposed). *Affilia*, a journal of feminist social work, accepted their treatise consisting of rewritten excerpts from *Mein Kampf* using "intersectionalism" in the place of "our movement." Claims in the 9 papers included advocating for white students to be chained to desks (to experience oppression), and that to prevent rape culture, men should be (metaphorically) leashed like dogs. The latter paper received honorary recognition from the journal it was published in, Gender, Place, and Culture.

Parasitic Whiteness. An article appearing in the Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association was titled On Having Whiteness (Moss 2021). Its abstract includes the following statement: "Parasitic Whiteness renders its hosts appetites voracious, insatiable, and perverse. These deformed appetites particularly target non-white peoples. Once established, these appetites are nearly impossible to eliminate." Perhaps the best comment on this statement is its similarity to a passage from Mein Kampf (Hitler 1925/1999, p. 16): "This pestilential adulteration of the blood, of which hundreds of thousands of our people take no account, is being systematically practiced by the Jew to-day. Systematically these negroid parasites in our national body corrupt our innocent fair-haired girls and thus destroy something which can no longer be replaced in this world."

The degradation of Nature. A recent paper in Nature: Geoscience made the strong claim that minorities in geoscience face a "hostile obstacle course" to their professional advancement (Berhe et al. 2022). Its centerpiece was what would in any other context be considered a political cartoon: It shows a White man and a Black woman, professionally dressed, at the base of a staircase; to head up the staircase, the White man has a few minor obstacles, like orange cones; the Black woman faces a staircase laced with barbed wire, spikes, fire, and landmines, and with a ball and chain locked to her ankle. This is a political cartoon, not scientific theory or evidence; and nothing quite says "politicization of science" better than Nature publishing a political cartoon as the centerpiece of a supposedly scientific article.

But it gets worse. The thematic claim of the article is this quote (p. 2): "…the experience for minoritized scholars is more like a vicious or hostile obstacle course.[5,6,7,8,9,10]" 5–10 are citations. In scientific scholarship, citations typically document the scientific evidence on which claims are made. Not here. Citation 5 is to a tweet declaring that engineering constitutes a hostile obstacle course for Black engineering PhDs. Citation 6 is a report interpreting

a dream of a Black woman. Citation 7 involves interviews with 28 graduate students. References 6 and 7 do not even rise to the level of pseudoscience (which usually does have *some evidence,* even if misrepresented or misinterpreted), 8's sample size is meaninglessly tiny. We stopped fact-checking the list of citations at that point. That the reviewers and editor considered this a scientific article worth publishing is a damning indictment reflecting the corruption of peer review. It attests to the recurring theme of this chapter that one can make all sorts of unjustified claims in academia if framed as some form of social justice, and even get published in the apex scientific journal Nature.

Social science on politicized issues is pervasively dubious. Space limitations prohibit a thorough review of the many ways in which social justice has corrupted social science. Therefore, we briefly mention additional failures of social science purporting to advance some form of social justice and direct readers to relevant reviews and critiques.

So many of the many strong claims once common about implicit bias (supposed unconscious racism that is pervasive and powerful) have either been debunked or rendered dubious (Corneille and Hütter 2020; Jussim et al., in press; Machery 2022) that some scientists have called for abandonment of the term altogether (Corneille and Béna 2022). Racial resentment scales, once widely believed to capture subtle forms of prejudice, often capture nonracial political beliefs and attitudes (Cramer 2020). Rather than being powerful and pervasive, self-fulfilling prophecies are usually weak, fragile, and fleeting (Jussim 2012). Pre-registered tests of gender-based stereotype threat have, so far, all failed (Finnigan and Corker 2016; Flore et al. 2018). Microaggression research is characterized by strong claims but weak evidence (Cantu and Jussim 2021; Lilienfeld 2017). Rather than being broadly inaccurate, studies of racial, gender, and age stereotypes generally find moderate to high levels of accuracy (Jussim et al. 2016). Experimental studies of "system justification" (psychological processes relied on by conservatives to justify inequality and oppression) show the hallmarks of being unlikely to replicate (Sotola and Credé 2022). Studies advancing social justice or environmentalism were overrepresented among those that triggered psychology's replication crisis (Honeycutt and Jussim, 2023). And this is an incomplete list (see Crawford and Jussim 2018; Honeycutt and Jussim 2020, 2023, for more).

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, we have reviewed evidence for the radicalization of the (mostly but not exclusively) American academy and some of its downstream consequences. Surveys of faculty show overrepresentation of the Left in the American academy, including massive overrepresentation of people holding Far Left views. A recent national survey has found that these developments appear to be seeping into the American consciousness—although most Americans underestimate the political skew of academia, the greater the perceived

skew, the less credibility they ascribe to its scholarship (Marietta and Barker 2019). Downstream consequences include:

1. the regular expression of bizarre and inflammatory statements, unhinged from anything recognizable as scientific evidence, by academics in both formal presentations and the peer reviewed literature if those statements are framed as advancing social justice;
2. a rise in authoritarian behavior manifesting as regular attacks seeking to punish academics who express views that violate values and beliefs held sacred on the political Left;
3. explicit endorsement and implementation of censorship of ideas critical of or which challenge social justice values and policies; and
4. the regular appearance in the peer reviewed literature of unjustified claims about the power and pervasiveness of various phenomena that provided useful rhetorical ammunition for advancing claims about social justice.

There are many things that could be done to address these problems. Universities could implement stronger protections of free speech and academic freedom. The government could make funding contingent on universities providing such protections. Universities could proactively seek greater political diversity among newly hired faculty. Within existing academia, faculty committed to pluralism, neutrality, and objectivity (no matter how difficult those may be to achieve) can form new organizations that eschew political litmus tests and censorship. However, we are not optimistic about any of these potential solutions being widely adopted anytime soon. If little or nothing is done, the American academy is on a course to become the intellectual wing of Far Left political movements, providing some indeterminate mix of actual advances to knowledge and propaganda masquerading as scholarship.

Notes

1. Herzog obtained the recording of the talk and the question and answer period afterwards. She then shared that recording with one of the authors of the this chapter (Jussim).

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