

# The Political Culture of Young Britain

Eric Kaufmann

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## About the Author

**Eric Kaufmann** is a Senior Fellow at Policy Exchange and Professor of Politics at Birkbeck College, University of London. A political scientist, Kaufmann is the author of numerous books, examining the impact of ideological and population shifts on identity and politics. These include *Shall the Religious Inherit the Earth* (Profile 2010) and *Whiteshift: Populism, Immigration, and the Future of White Majorities* (Penguin 2018).

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# Contents

About the Author	4
Introduction	7
Key Findings	7
Part I: The Demographics and Politics of Young Britain	10
Political Beliefs	10
Media	13
Attitudes to Speech Boundaries	13
Why Don't White Males Attend University?	18
Ideology, Sexuality and Mental Health	23
The Rise in LGBT Identification	23
Mental Health	24
Part II: Young People's Views on Culture War Issues	28
Political Intolerance	30
Part III Schooling and Critical Social Justice Content	33
Teaching about British History and Society	40
CRT's Impact on Race Relations	42
CSJ and Mental Health	44
Policy Recommendations	45
Conclusion	48

# Introduction

In his book *Small Men on the Wrong Side of History*, the journalist Ed West argues that conservatism is dying in Britain. Young people, especially women, are overwhelmingly left-wing on cultural questions. He points to the rise of Christianity, which similarly brooked largest among young women in the first centuries AD, then broke through as the established creed of the Roman Empire.<sup>1</sup> Progressivism in cultural matters has also become overwhelmingly dominant among the status elite in the English-speaking world, and this, claims West, sets the tone for the socialization of young and aspiring people. For West, the Left has a ‘moral monopoly, so that those outside of the faith are under an unspoken obligation to prove their moral worth’ by denouncing those to their right, whereas there is no such obligation on a leftist to set red lines to their extreme left to be considered moral.<sup>2</sup>

Is West’s contention accurate? In an attempt to find out, this report examines the demographics and political beliefs of a sample of 1,542 18-20 year-old British young people surveyed by YouGov between 14 April and 6 May 2022.<sup>3</sup> Links to the questions and crosstabulations can be found here. Its focus is on mapping the culturally-left youth culture that West so prominently identified in his book, and which underpins progressive parties’ overwhelming 60-point advantage over conservative parties among young people.<sup>4</sup> The study design allows me to examine which forces, such as education and social media, are reproducing this culture, and what its consequences are for, among other things, expressive freedom, national identity, minority progress and wellbeing.<sup>5</sup>

## Key Findings

- A majority, 59 percent, of British school leavers say they have either been taught, or heard from an adult at school, about at least one of ‘white privilege’, ‘unconscious bias’ and ‘systemic racism’, three concepts associated with applied Critical Race Theory (CRT). This rises to 73 percent if we include Critical Social Justice (CSJ) approaches to gender, notably the idea of ‘patriarchy’ or that there are many genders.
- Two-thirds of young people taught CSJ concepts say they were not told that there are respectable counterarguments to these ideas. This suggests that several million children may have been taught these radical left ideas as truth.
- 46 percent of White and Asian young people exposed to all 5 CSJ concepts in school say they would not have felt comfortable

1. Stark, R. (1996). *The rise of Christianity: a sociologist reconsiders history*. Princeton, N.J., Princeton University Press.
2. West, E. (2020). *Small Men on the Wrong Side of History: The Decline, Fall and Unlikely Return of Conservatism*, Hachette UK.
3. [https://policyexchange.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/BirkbeckUniversity\\_Results\\_220512\\_schoolleavers.xlsx](https://policyexchange.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/BirkbeckUniversity_Results_220512_schoolleavers.xlsx)
4. YouGov/The Times Voting Intention survey, May 18-19, 2022.
5. Throughout this report, claims about causal forces are derived from multivariate regression models in which the variable is statistically significant at  $p < .05$  or below.

criticizing a black schoolmate compared to 30 percent of White and Asian individuals exposed to no CSJ concepts, a significant negative effect

- 40 percent of those exposed to all 5 CSJ concepts in school say they felt fearful of being shamed, punished or expelled for voicing their opinions on controversial subjects compared to 17 percent of individuals exposed to no CSJ concepts, a significant negative effect
- Leave supporters and conservatives are around twice as likely as Remain-supporting or left-wing respondents to say they feared being shamed, punished or expelled for voicing their opinions on controversial subjects in school
- Just 34 percent of Remain-supporting young people would be comfortable dating a Leaver, while 66 percent of Leavers would comfortably date a Remainer
- Overall, 4 in 10 Remain supporters would hire a Remainer over a Leaver for a job; however, those who discriminate in dating are much more likely to discriminate in hiring. While 2 in 10 Remain supporters who are very comfortable with the idea of dating a Leaver would hire a Remainer over a Leaver for a job instead of remaining neutral, this rises to 8 in 10 among Remainers who would be very uncomfortable dating a Leaver
- Young minorities are significantly less left-wing, politically-correct and polarized than young whites, suggesting that they are less affected by the dominant youth culture
- Around 1 in 4 young people identify as LGBT
- 46 percent of LGBT young people say they are sad or anxious most of the time compared to 28 percent of heterosexual respondents
- 43 percent of young women are sad or anxious most of the time compared to 25 percent of young men
- Those who had the grades to enter university but have chosen not to attend are less left-wing, but not more right-wing, than those who plan to attend, or are already at, university
- Those who had the grades to enter university but have chosen not to are less supportive of political correctness than those who attend, or plan to attend, university. However, political beliefs and culture war attitudes account for only a small portion of why fewer men go to university and do not explain why whites attend university at lower rates than minorities
- Those who plan to attend university are as left-wing and supportive of political correctness as those attending, suggesting that schools, social networks, media and psychology, rather than university content, is the main transmission belt for cultural left attitudes
- Young people who work are somewhat more right-leaning than those who do not, but are not more conservative on cultural issues
- Social media and peers account for the lion's share of how young people come into contact with CRT. Schools are less important,



but appear to heighten pupils' threat perceptions

- Ideology, rather than psychological fragility or social media use, predicts young people's relatively cultural socialist position on the culture wars, even as psychology is also important.
- The report recommends that Ofsted be made more accountable to Parliament, that Ofsted should issue clearer impartiality guidance, and that this be enforced as part of the inspections regime
- The report recommends that curriculum materials be made available to parents upon request, and that outside providers must accede to their materials being made available to parents before they can be engaged by a school
- The report recommends that Ofsted and DfE guidance define 'structural' approaches to racism and sexism as political, not moral: as contested rather than consensus values that cannot be taught as fact without breaching section 406/407 duties
- The report recommends a review of the reporting routes for parents and teachers who wish to pursue complaints of breaches in impartiality
- The report recommends a review of how political impartiality duties are taught in teacher training
- The report recommends a rebalancing of the curriculum from an equalities/harm perspective toward classical liberal ideals of free expression and tolerance for opposing political beliefs
- The report recommends a more nuanced approach to historical episodes where Britain or its leaders have not met contemporary moral standards, such as colonialism, by placing these in world historical context

This report is divided into three parts, covering 1) the demographics and politics of young people, 2) young people's views on culture war issues and 3) Critical Social Justice content in class and its effects. This is followed by policy recommendations, most of which pertain to findings in part III. Policies flowing from parts I and II will largely be addressed in a companion report on culture war attitudes in the electorate. Those who are principally interested in the findings on schooling may wish to skip directly to Part III.

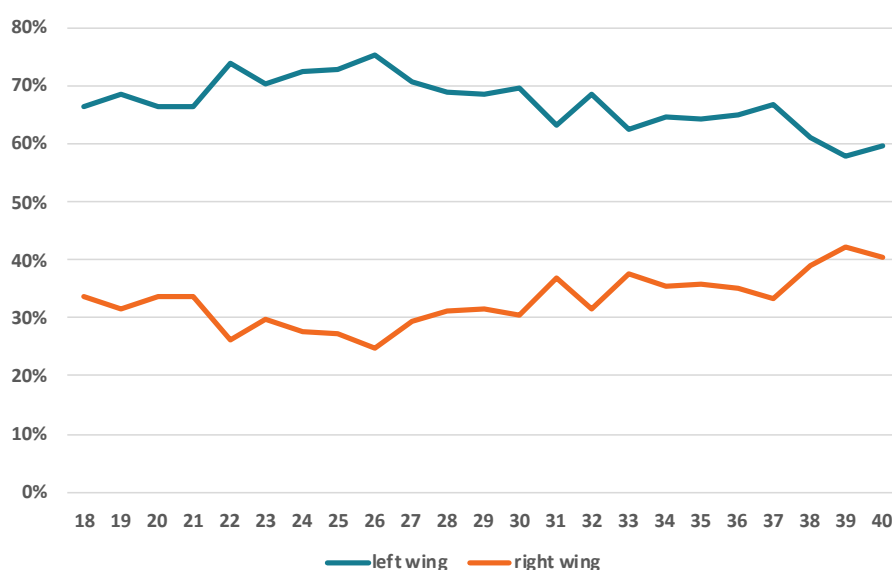
# Part I: The Demographics and Politics of Young Britain

## Political Beliefs

Politically and ideologically, respondents lean well to the left of the average Briton. Figure 1, based on party identification with the right (Tories, Brexit Party) and left (Liberal Democrat, Labour, Green) shows that 18-20 year-olds lean left by a 2:1 margin. Excluding those who don't know, around 67 percent identify with a left-liberal party and 33 percent with a right party.

The 18-21 group is slightly more conservative than those aged 22-32, who lean left by a somewhat greater 70-30 margin, but is still heavily left-leaning. The slight conservative tilt among the 18-21s compared to those over 22 helps explain why the 18-24 group shows a left:right ratio closer to 77-23 in 2019 election surveys.<sup>6</sup> While previous data suggested that Gen-Z (18-25) who came to electoral maturity after Brexit were becoming more conservative than Millennials (26-40), 2022 data indicates that this trend has flatlined. 18 year-olds are similar to 37 year-olds but the youngest are no longer becoming more conservative. This suggests that those who lived through the Brexit vote shifted left, but young people who grew up after the vote have reverted somewhat to a pre-Brexit pattern of partisanship.<sup>7</sup>

Figure 1: Left-Right Identification, by Age



6. Ashcroft, Lord. 'How Britain voted and why: My 2019 general election post-vote poll,' *Lordashcrofthpolls.com*, 13 December 2019

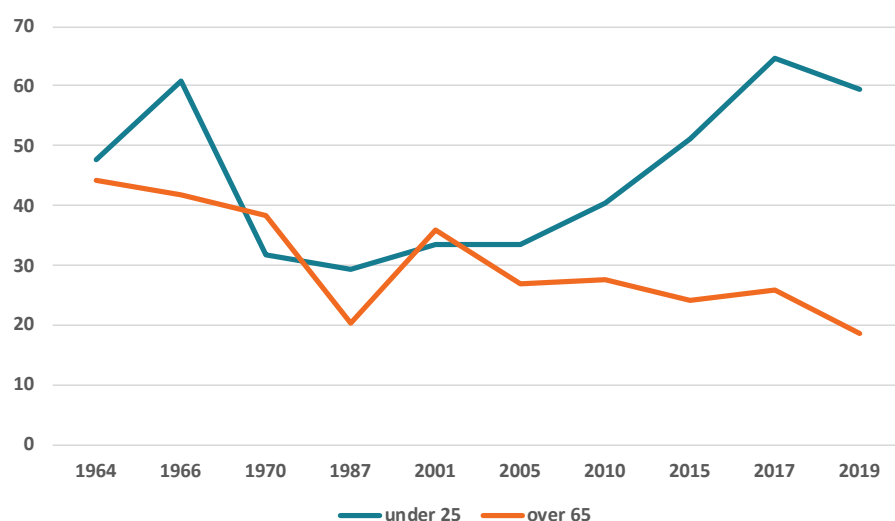
7. Kaufmann, Eric. 'Are young people turning to the Right?,' *Unherd*, July 8, 2020.

Source: YouGov Profiles, 15 June, 2022. N=52,140 excluding missing, centrist and don't know responses.

This 2:1 left-to-right ratio is high in historical terms. In 1997, for example, 40 percent of those under 35 identified as left-wing and 34 percent as right-wing. Voting measures allow us to look even further back. Doing so in figure 2 shows that between 1964 and 2005, and taking account of noise from a small sample of young people, there was little consistent difference between under-25s and over-65s in their propensity to vote Labour. Since 2005, the age gap in Labour voting has steadily expanded, from 6 points in that year to 13 points in 2010 to 40 points in 2019.

The big youthquake appears to have taken place between 2010, when young people were relatively evenly split between Labour and the Tories, and 2015, when a 15-point gap opened up. Post-Brexit elections deepened the trend, and by 2019, Labour led the Tories among the under-25s by a whopping 35 points.

**Figure 2: Labour Vote Share among decideds, by Age, 1964-2019**



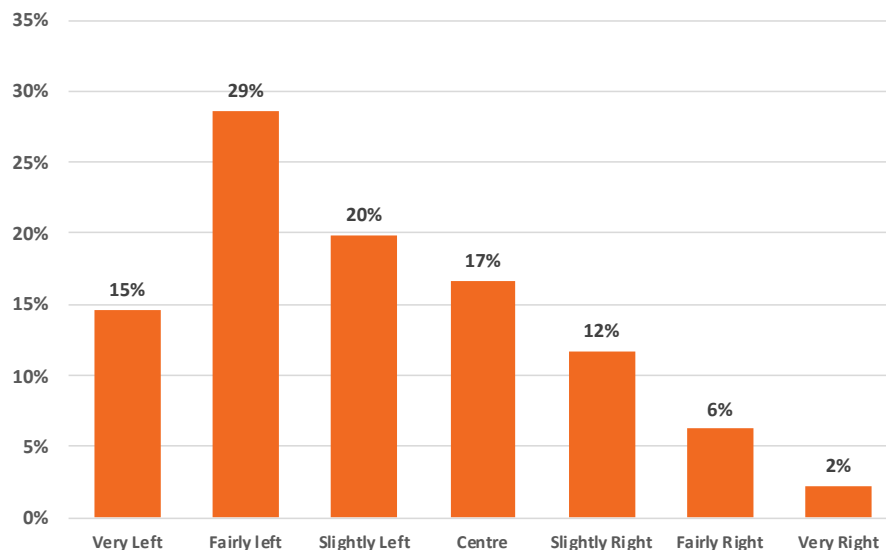
*Source: British Election Studies, 1964-2019.*

Brexit is clearly an important issue in the youth realignment. In terms of Brexit support, 63 percent of 18-20s in my YouGov survey sympathise with Remain and only 15 percent with Leave, compared to a roughly even split in the electorate. Among the 20 year-olds in the sample who were old enough to have voted in 2019, half chose Labour, another quarter selected another progressive party such as Green or Liberal Democrat, and just 23 percent chose the Conservatives or Brexit Party. This compares with a general election result in which the Tories won 44 percent of the vote.

In terms of self-identified left-right ideology, Figure 3 shows that the modal young person in my survey is 'fairly left' on a 7-point scale from 'very left' to 'very right'. Screening out those who did not know where they stood, 64 percent of young people identified as left-wing and just 20 percent as right wing, suggesting a slight difference from the wider

YouGov Profiles sample of 67-33.<sup>8</sup> Note that in the wider population the figures are 41 percent left and 30 percent right.<sup>9</sup>

**Figure 3: Ideology**



*Source: YouGov 2022. Note: N=1,192. Excludes those who don't know.*

Among these young people, women leaned 5 points more to the left and 13 points less to the right than men, a statistically-significant difference. The youngest, 18 year-olds, leaned about 2 points further right and less left than 19 and 20 year-olds, but this was not a statistically-significant difference.

Ethnic minorities were 6 points more likely than whites to have no ideology and another 5 points more likely to call themselves centrist. Among respondents with an ideological tilt, Figure 4 shows that ethnic minorities were 7 points less left-wing than whites, a statistically-significant difference. The relatively left-leaning slant of whites compared to minorities confounds the story that young people are more cosmopolitan in part because they are diverse. In fact, it is white young people who are especially left-wing compared to older generations of whites, whereas young minorities do not politically differ as much from their elders.<sup>10</sup> Relatedly, South Asian young people in England are more likely to identify as English (as opposed to British) compared to older South Asians, whereas there is no such age pattern among whites.<sup>11</sup>

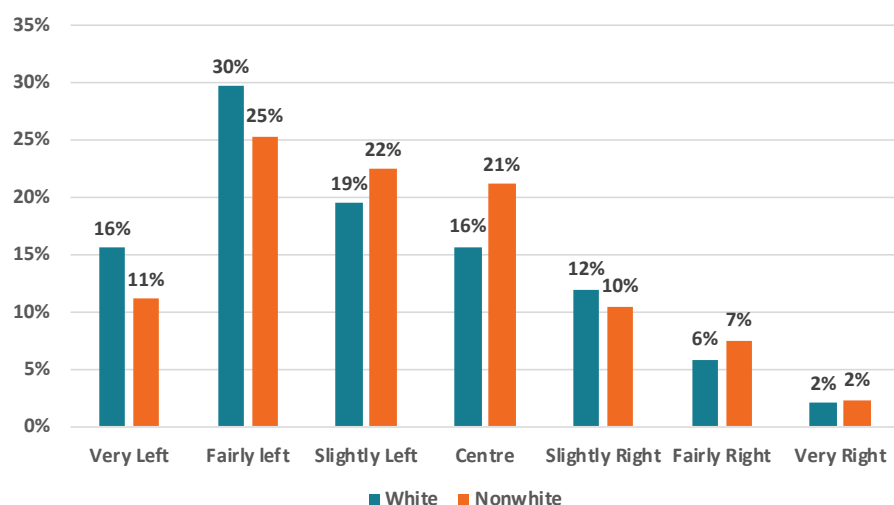
8. YouGov advises that this survey, with fewer missing respondents, may be more accurate than Profiles despite smaller sample size.

9. 'What political alignment is the British Public?,' YouGov tracker, accessed May 22, 2022

10. Sloam, J. and M. Henn (2019). *Youthquake 2017: The rise of young cosmopolitans in Britain*, Springer Nature.

11. Jandu, G. 'Dimensions of Sikh Britishness: Internal Variations in Sikh Hostland National Identity,' PhD dissertation, Birkbeck College, University of London, 2022.

Figure 4: Ideology by Race, Young People



*N= 966 white, 213 nonwhite.*

## Media

In terms of media, 60 percent did not read a major tabloid or broadsheet newspaper. The papers which garnered the highest readership were the *Guardian* (15%) and *Daily Mail* (8%). Those on the left read the *Guardian* at around twice the rate of those on the right (20% vs. 11%), and vice-versa for the *Mail* (6% for leftists, 11% for rightists). Other papers were generally read by fewer than 3 percent of young people.

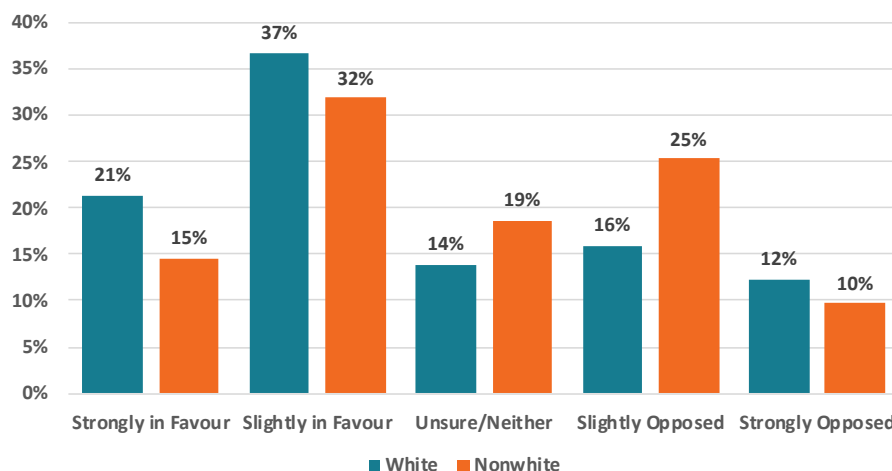
## Attitudes to Speech Boundaries

A question which is correlated with ideology, and has been run by YouGov across a large number of respondents is ‘Thinking about political correctness, are you generally in favour of it (it protects against discrimination), or against it (it stifles freedom of speech)?’ While the general public inclines against PC by a 47-38 margin, the young people in my sample support it 50-27.

Those who identify as being on the right oppose PC by a 66-23 margin whereas those on the left support it 71-15 – a difference of between 45 and 48 points. However, even controlling for ideology, other demographic factors play a role in predicting attitudes to political correctness. For instance, moving from the left to the right in figure 5, ethnic minorities are 11 points less supportive of PC than whites and 4 points more opposed. This may appear to be a counterintuitive finding, but it comports with some US evidence, suggesting that young minorities may not be as affected by the same ‘Great Awakening’ in the culture as whites.<sup>12</sup> Lower racial guilt among minorities may also be a contributing factor to these results.

12. Yglesias, M. (2019). “The Great Awakening.” *Vox*.

**Figure 5: Thinking about political correctness, are you generally in favour of it (it protects against discrimination), or against it (it stifles freedom of speech)?**

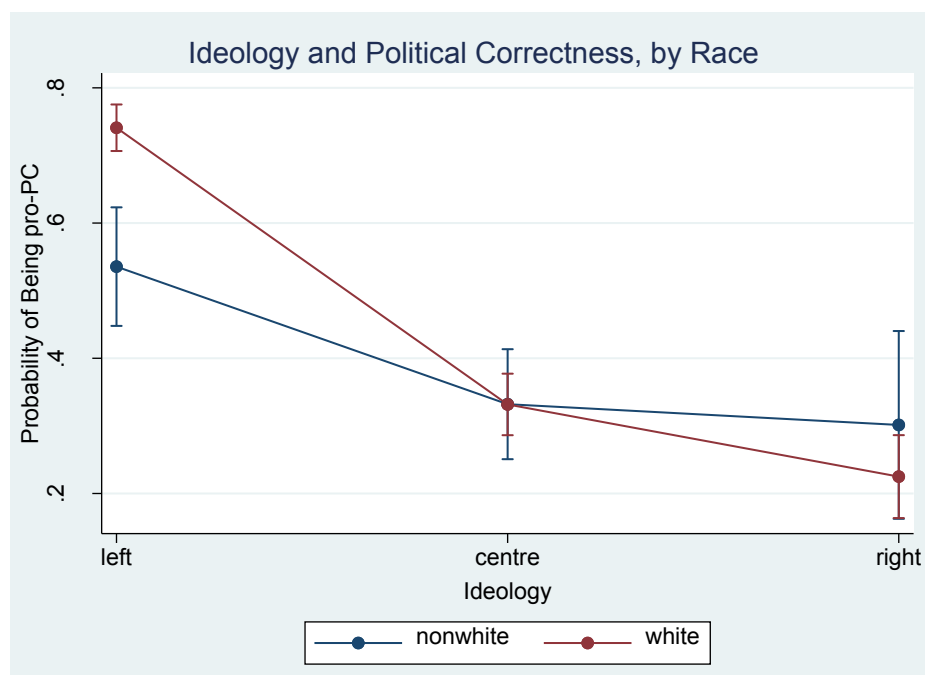


This minority moderation may indicate that young ethnic minorities are more weakly affected by politically-polarizing currents in the wider political and youth culture than young whites. This means they don't package issues together as tightly into ideological bundles. For instance, Figure 6 shows how the relationship between ideology and political correctness is much more closely aligned for white than minority young people. Left-wing whites have a .74 chance of being pro-PC compared to .54 for left-wing ethnic minorities. On the other hand, right-wing whites are 8 points more opposed to PC than right-wing minorities. Whites sort their positions on PC into ideological boxes more than minorities do.

Another reflection of this concerns divisions around Englishness and Brexit. South Asian young people in England are more likely to identify as English (as opposed to British) compared to older South Asians whereas there is no such effect among whites. Moreover, the age gap in Brexit voting is much wider among whites than among South Asians. While Brexit voting is tied to English rather than British national identity among whites, this is not true for South Asians. All of which reinforces the finding that ideological polarization is having a stronger effect within the white majority, with the left-wing youth culture affecting whites more than ethnic minorities.<sup>13</sup>

13. Jandu, 'Dimensions of Sikh Britishness'.

Figure 6



*N=1,509. Pseudo-R2 is .146, with controls for age and gender. Race x ideology interaction is significant at  $p < .01$  level.*

Turning to other demographics in Figure 7, women are 12 points more supportive of PC and 24 points less opposed to it than men, confirming numerous prior studies.<sup>14</sup> Those attending university, or who plan to attend one, are 16 points more supportive of PC and 5 points less opposed to it than those who do not plan to attend.

Finally, LGBT respondents are 24 points more in favour and 11 points less opposed to PC than straight respondents – findings which echo those on American surveys such as the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE) surveys of 57,000 undergraduates which show that LGBT students are more illiberal on free speech questions.<sup>15</sup> All effects are statistically significant. Thus whites, women, those attending or planning to attend university, and LGBT young people support PC more than minority, male, non-university and heterosexual school leavers.

14. See: Kaufmann, E. (2021). "Academic freedom in crisis: Punishment, political discrimination, and self-censorship." *Center for the Study of Partisanship and Ideology* 1; Clark, C. "The Gender Gap in Censorship Support." *Researchgate.net*, accessed May 27, 2022.

15. *Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE) College Free Speech Rankings Surveys, 2020, 2021*. Note that 'LGBT' is shorthand for non-heterosexual though the YouGov question does not distinguish nonbinary heterosexuals from non-heterosexuals.

Figure 7: Thinking about political correctness, are you generally in favour of it (it protects against discrimination), or against it (it stifles freedom of speech)?

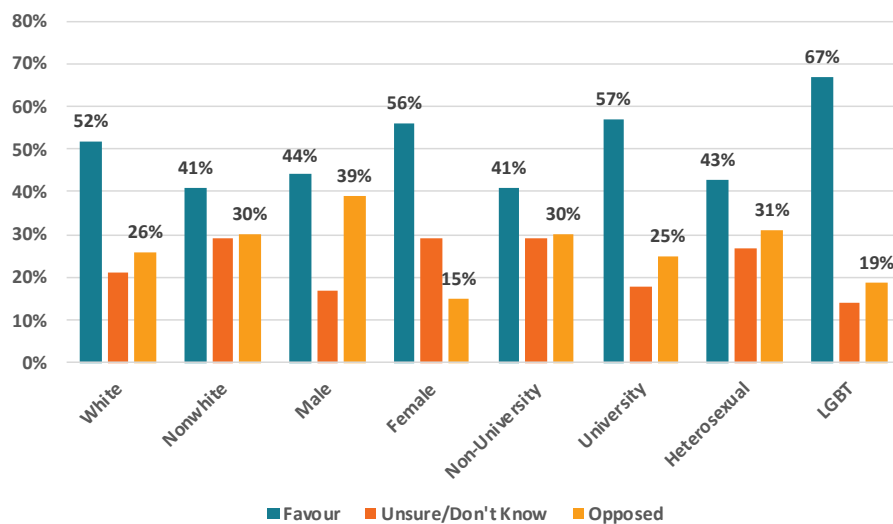


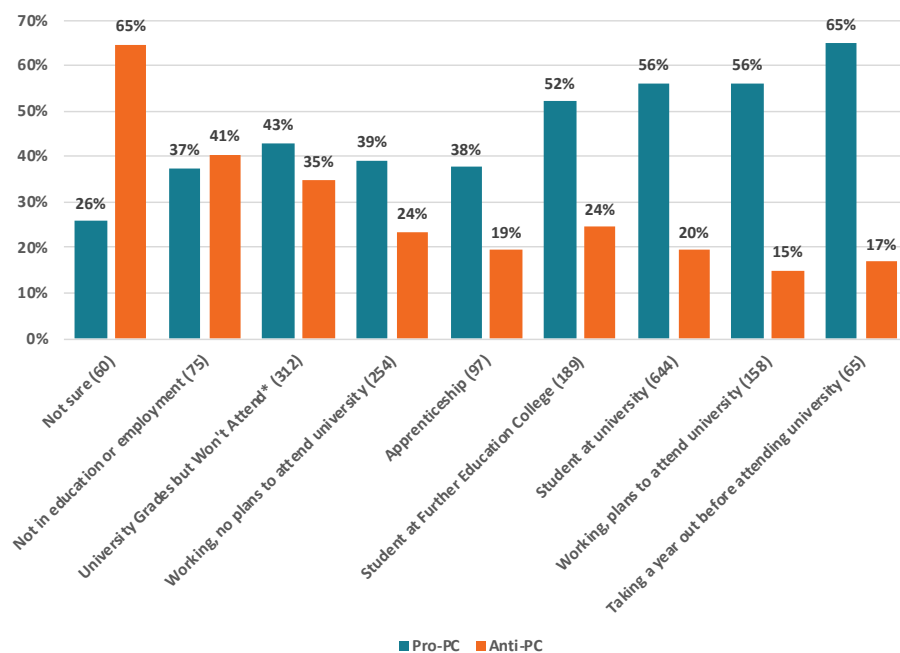
Figure 8 explores the relationship between university and attitudes to political correctness. University students are, if anything, less PC than those intending to attend university, suggesting that factors which lead people to aspire to university rather than university itself appear to inculcate such attitudes. This comports with recent studies.<sup>16</sup> By contrast, students who say they achieved the grades necessary to attend but have elected not to do so are around 15 points less PC than those attending university. Psychological dispositions or social networks which correlate with aspiring to university may explain the finding. Material differences such as social grade, income and region are already taken into account in my model, so do not account for the difference.

Those who refuse to respond to surveys or skip questions are often more supportive of populist right positions due to lower levels of agreeableness, and this emerges among those who said they weren't sure what their current employment or education status was. In addition, those attending Further Education (FE) colleges are somewhat less supportive of PC than university students, but not dramatically so. Apprentices and those who attained university-entry grades but are not intending to go to university differ from the university-bound mainly in being less PC, even as they are not especially anti-PC.

16. Simon, Elizabeth, 'Demystifying the link between higher education and liberal values: A within-sibship analysis of British individuals' attitudes from 1994-2020,' British Journal of Sociology, August 2022



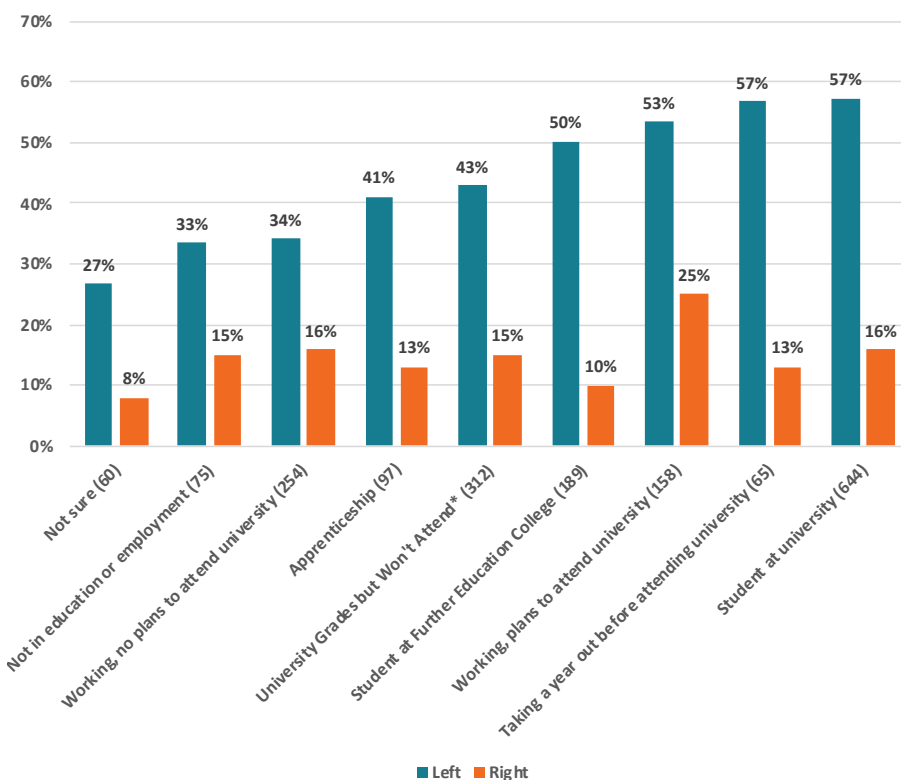
Figure 8: Current Education Status and Support for Political Correctness



*Note: sample size in brackets. \*Those who achieved the grades but are not attending university cross-cut the non-student categories, but all other categories are independent of each other.*

Looking at the same chart with respect to left-right ideology in Figure 9 shows a similar picture, albeit with one important difference. Those who are currently working and who intend to attend university are around 10 points to the right of current students or those taking a year out before going to university. Apprentices, who are likewise employed, lean right of other respondents. These statistically-significant differences suggest that being in employment is associated with a somewhat more right-of-centre outlook even if it is not linked to a more anti-PC worldview. This indicates that employment may incline young people to be more economically right-wing even if it does not alter their cultural values. Finally, the big differences between university- and non-university-oriented young people lies mainly in the fact that the university-oriented are more left-wing and non-university young people more centrist or non-ideological.

Figure 9: Current Education and Ideology



Note: sample size in brackets. \*Those who achieved the grades but are not attending university cross-cut the non-student categories, but all other categories are independent of each other.

### Why Don't White Males Attend University?

One question the survey sought to answer is how best to explain the relatively low share of whites at university. Government statistics show that a lower share of white young people attend university than other groups, and that the gap has been widening since 2007. In 2021, 33 percent of whites went on to university compared to 49 percent of black people, 55 percent of South Asians and 71 percent of Chinese.<sup>17</sup>

The YouGov data shows that 63 percent of ethnic minorities are either attending or planning to attend university compared to 54 percent of whites. Much of this is accounted for by the fact that minorities get better grades than whites, especially white males.<sup>18</sup> In terms of those not attending university, whites were not significantly more likely than minorities to say they had the grades to attend but chose not to. When modelling this relationship, I find that the racial difference in the rate of attending university is not accounted for by racial differences in sexual orientation, ideology, Brexit support, region, mental health or social class. This effect also does not seem to be limited to white males or the white working-class: white women and white middle-class children are equally less likely to attend than their nonwhite counterparts. Whites in the Celtic periphery or North are also not distinctively less likely to attend than

17. 'Entry rates into higher education,' <https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/education-skills-and-training/higher-education/entry-rates-into-higher-education/latest#main-facts-and-figures>, Gov.uk, 9 March, 2022.

18. Payne, Adam, 'Most Ethnic Minorities Perform Better At School Than White Children, New Government Report Claims,' *PoliticsHome*, 31 March 2021.

minorities from the same areas. Something intrinsic to whites - such as values, role models, employment trajectories or social networks – seems to incline them away from university. This may also be because whites have more opportunities in family firms than minorities.

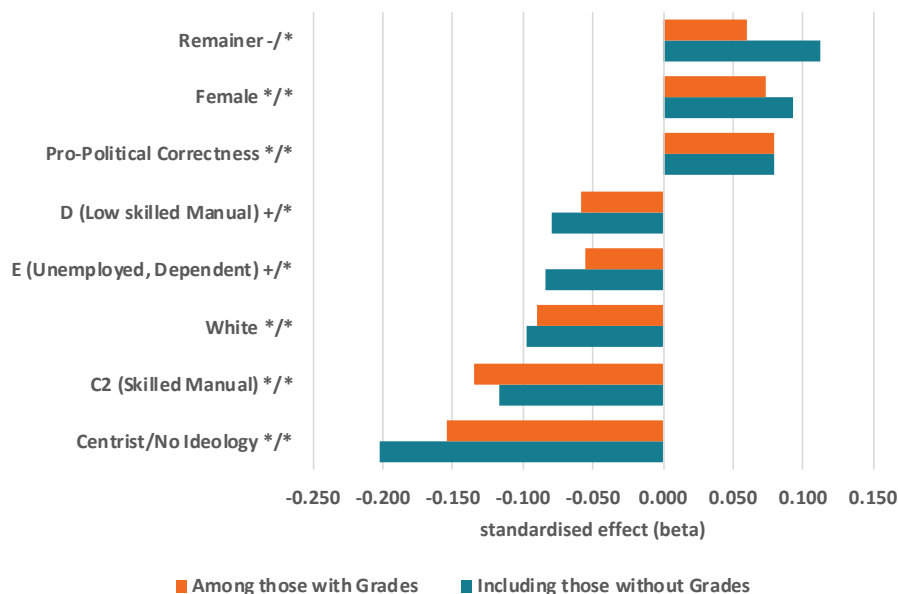
Figure 10 looks at the relationship between various characteristics and the decision to attend university. Negative values indicate factors that predict lower university attendance while positive values indicate characteristics that increase the likelihood of attending university. I use two samples for analysis, one which encompasses everybody, including those who said they did not have the grades to attend university or didn't know, whom I assume had no choice; and a second, narrower pool containing only those who had the grades to enter (i.e. who plan to attend or said they had the grades but were not planning to attend).

In terms of picking out who attends university, the strongest relationship is with those who said they are centrist ideologically or have no ideology, who were least likely to go to university. Within this category, 'don't know' is more powerful than centrist, though both are statistically significant predictors of not attending, or not planning to attend, university. Thus it is apolitical people, or those with limited knowledge about ideology, who are selecting out of university. This could reflect poorer general knowledge, which may be associated with lower grades. Those on the political right are not more likely than those on the left to opt out of university, so this does not appear to be ideologically-motivated.

Remain supporters are more likely to attend university than those with no opinion or Leave supporters. Yet it is noteworthy that among those who said they had the grades to enter university, the effect of being a Remainer is weaker, falling below the level of statistical significance. This suggests that it may not be the political content of being a Leaver, so much as a characteristic (perhaps parents' education) correlated with being a Leaver, that is linked to not achieving entry grades. This explains why Remainers are overrepresented among those attending university.

To be sure, attitudes to political correctness are correlated with being on a university track, with those opposed being significantly less interested in attending than those in favour of PC with neutrals and don't knows in the middle. This suggests that campus ideology could be putting some potential applicants off, and I shall explore this further in a moment. Other factors, such as LGBT identification or anxiety/sadness, are not significant predictors of whether someone decides to pursue a university track.

Figure 10: Predictors of University-Track Young People



Note: \*=statistically significant at  $p < .05$  or less; +=significant at  $p < .1$ ; -=not significant. First notation on left side of each hash mark is for the sample which has entry grades, the second notation right of the hash mark is for the all-inclusive sample. 'University-track' includes those attending, and those who plan to attend, university. Models are run as OLS regressions to produce standardized effects.  $R^2 = .128$ ,  $N = 1,542$ .

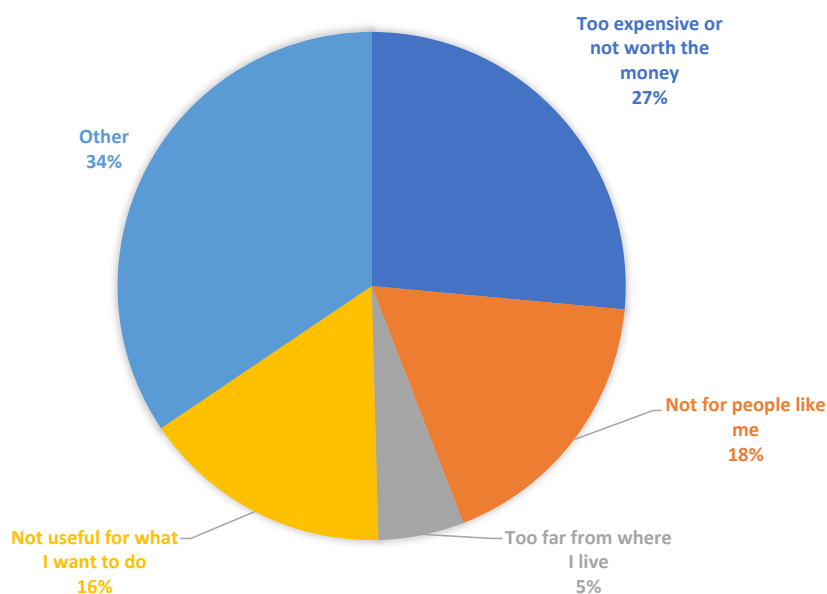
Young people who oppose PC may be put off from attending university but it could equally be the case that they have a different psychological profile (such as lower openness to experience and lower neuroticism) or less academic-focused social networks. The latter would predict greater opposition to both PC and attending university, creating a spurious correlation.

Neither of the more 'intellectual' questions about ideology - left-right self-placement, attitudes to Churchill - predict whether someone intends to go to university, but this could be a function of non-university young people having low political and historical knowledge. By contrast, the PC question may better get at the deep psychological and moral intuitions which underpin ideology.<sup>19</sup>

In order to probe this question, I asked the 238 respondents who said they had the grades to attend university about five potential reasons why they did not go. The results appear in Figure 11. These show a range of responses, with few citing distance considerations. Among the choices offered, cost was cited by 27 percent and a further 18 percent said university was not for 'people like me'.

19. Jost, J. T., et al. (2009). "Political ideology: Its structure, functions, and elective affinities." *Annual review of psychology* 60: 307-337; Haidt, J. (2012). *The righteous mind: Why good people are divided by politics and religion*, Vintage.

**Figure 11: Why did you not attend university? (Among those with grades)**



**N= 238. Includes only those who said they had the grades to enter university but had chosen not to do so.**

In order to evaluate this further, I ran a series of statistical models to predict the reasons for a particular student choosing not to attend university. What emerges is that opposition to political correctness is especially high among those who said they did not wish to attend university because it is ‘not for people like me’. 52 percent of those citing this reason oppose political correctness while just 26 percent support it, a statistically-significant difference. While opposition to political correctness is significantly associated with saying ‘not for people like me’, income and social class were not correlated with giving this answer.

Opposition and support for PC are evenly matched among those who say that university is not useful, poor value for money or too far from where a person lives. Opposition to PC is a significant predictor of why people say university is too expensive and borderline significant for ‘not useful’, but is not significant for the very small ‘too far’ category (probably due to low sample size). Given the general 50-27 pro-PC tilt in the overall sample, those citing any reason for not attending university apart from ‘other’ are all more skeptical of political correctness than the average young person in the survey.

The category that stands out most, however, are the 18 percent of those who opted not to attend despite having the grades and who said university is ‘not for people like me’. Men are also significantly less likely to say university is for people like them than women, and more likely to say that it is poor value for money.

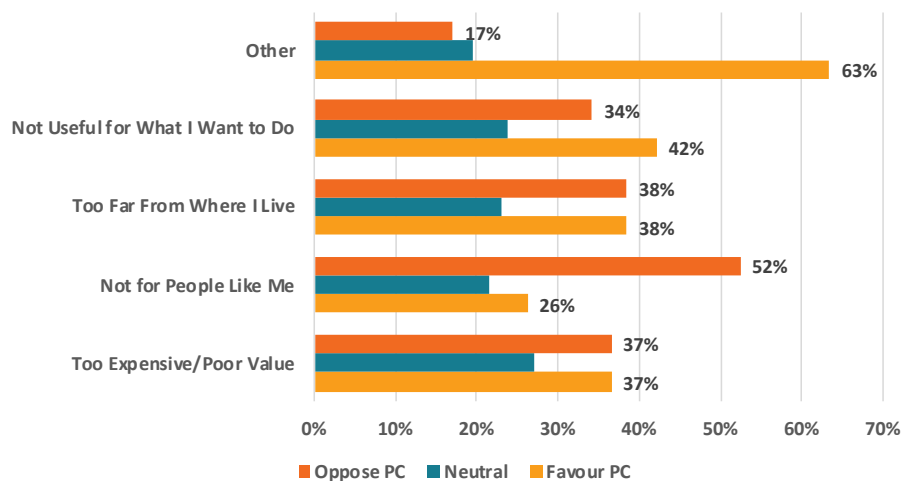
Women, meanwhile, are overrepresented in the ‘other’ category

(perhaps a childcare or caring role?) which is highly supportive of political correctness. Whites and minorities, by contrast, did not differ on the ‘not for people like me’ question. The only racial difference was on distance to university, a reason for non-attendance given by only 15 people, where white people were somewhat underrepresented, suggesting that minorities may experience greater local ties or travel costs preventing them from going to university.

In statistical tests, attitudes to political correctness explain an important part of why men see university as ‘not for people like me’ and why they view it as too expensive or poor value. By contrast, social class makes no significant difference.

These results indicate that psychological dispositions tied to ideology may be deterring a few potential candidates – especially men – from attending university because they see universities as oriented toward political correctness. Having said this, the limited predictive power of left-right ideology, Brexit support and attitudes to Winston Churchill in the preceding Figure 11 indicates that political fit explains but a small part of why men attend at lower rates than women, and does not account at all for why whites attend at lower rates than minorities. The main drivers of race and sex differences would appear to be the conventional ones: prior academic attainment as well as the higher incomes that males without degrees can earn compared to females without degrees.

**Figure 12: Reason for Choosing not to Attend University, by View of Political Correctness**



*N=238. Category Ns: Too Expensive (95), Not For People Like Me (57), Too Far (15), Not Useful (55), Other (89).*

## Ideology, Sexuality and Mental Health

My previous work on Americans under 30 reveals an important correlation between ‘very left’ ideology, LGBT identity and anxiety/depression.<sup>20</sup>

### The Rise in LGBT Identification

The first point to note in Table 1 is the relatively high share of LGBT individuals: 29 percent of 18-20 year-olds in the survey identify as LGBT (gay, lesbian, bisexual, other), with a further 10 percent ticking ‘prefer not to say’ or skipping the question entirely. The wider Yougov sample of 5,407 18-20 year-old individuals has a figure of 26 percent. This number is several multiples higher than that for the general population. With 61 percent responding heterosexual, this means that among UK school leavers, there is one LGBT individual for every 2 heterosexuals.

**Table 1. Sexual Orientation of School Leavers**

Sexuality Freq.	N	%
Heterosexual	934	60.6
Gay or lesbian	126	8.1
Bisexual	250	16.2
Other	73	4.8
Prefer not to say	141	9.1
Skipped	18	1.2
Total	1542	100.0

These numbers comport with figures on Gen-Z from the United States. For instance, 26 percent of students polled in the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education surveys of 37,000 American undergraduates at 150 leading universities identify as LGBT, as do 27 percent of the 9,000 respondents aged 25 and under in the Cooperative Congressional Election Study data and 21 percent of the same age group in Pew’s 12,000-strong survey. The latter, along with the General Social Survey (GSS) shows a sharp age gradation, with low LGBT identification among those aged 40 and over and a much higher level of non-heterosexual identity among those 25 and under compared to the rest. As with these US surveys, the bisexual category is largest, especially among women.<sup>21</sup>

For instance, Table 1 shows 2 bisexuals for every gay or lesbian in my data. Among women, the ratio is 3:1, with 21 percent bisexual and 7 percent lesbian. This again matches findings from analogous US data. The literature would suggest that what is occurring is not so much a more tolerant atmosphere as one in which those who experience intermittent same-sex attraction are increasingly tending to identify as LGBT, especially as bisexual. GSS data indicates that same-sex behaviour has risen at only around 1/3 the rate of LGBT identification, with nearly 6 in 10 female

20. Kaufmann, Eric, *Born This Way?: The Rise of LGBT as a Social and Political Identity*, Center for the Study of Partisanship and Ideology (CSPI), May 30, 2022.

21. *Ibid.*

bisexuals under 30 reporting only male sex partners over the previous 5 years, a rise from just 2 in 10 among female bisexuals during 2008-10.<sup>22</sup>

Having said, this, it is important to note that LGBT young people may be overrepresented in surveys due perhaps to high psychological openness and/or politicization. Thus the census pilot figures from the Office of National Statistics (ONS), drawing on a 320,000 sample, finds that in 2019, only 7.9 percent of 16-24 year olds identified as LGBT compared to around 2 percent of those over 40. While this represents a significant increase over time among the 16-24s, from 3.2 percent in 2012 to 7.6 percent in 2019, and we can expect a continued rise to 2022, the YouGov figures remain three times higher than the census numbers. I find a similar discrepancy for North America, where the proportion of transgender and non-binary young people appears to be 2-3 times larger in surveys than on the census.<sup>23</sup> This is an urgent issue that the polling industry needs to address, as it may also hold clues regarding sampling errors more generally, especially among young people.

Ideology is a very strong correlate of LGBT identification among young people. Nearly half - 49 percent - of the 561 individuals in the survey who categorise themselves as 'very left' (on the leftmost 2 points of a 7-point ideology scale) say they are LGBT. This rises to 52 percent LGBT among very left whites compared to just 19 percent LGBT among the 1,027 young people who do not identify as very left. These figures are very similar to US findings for the under-30s, where those on the far left are over twice as likely as others to identify as non-heterosexual. US figures also show that the rise in LGBT identification since 2008 has disproportionately occurred among 'very liberal' young Americans, who rose from 11 percent LGBT during 2008-10 to 34 percent LGBT in 2021 while other ideological segments were relatively static.<sup>24</sup>

### Mental Health

The mental health crisis among young people, especially during the pandemic, has been well-documented. For instance, nearly 350,000 young people were in touch with NHS child and adolescent psychiatric teams by October 2021 for self-harm or suicidal thoughts, the highest figure on record.<sup>25</sup> A longer-term set of statistics for 16-25 year-olds from the Prince's Trust shows a steady decline in mental health since 2013, as figure 13 shows. In 2021, 56 percent of 16-25 year-olds surveyed by the charity said they always or often feel anxious. 1 in 5 have experienced suicidal thoughts since the pandemic began, 1 in 5 have had a panic attack and 1 in 10 have self-harmed.<sup>26</sup>

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22. Ibid.

23. Ibid.

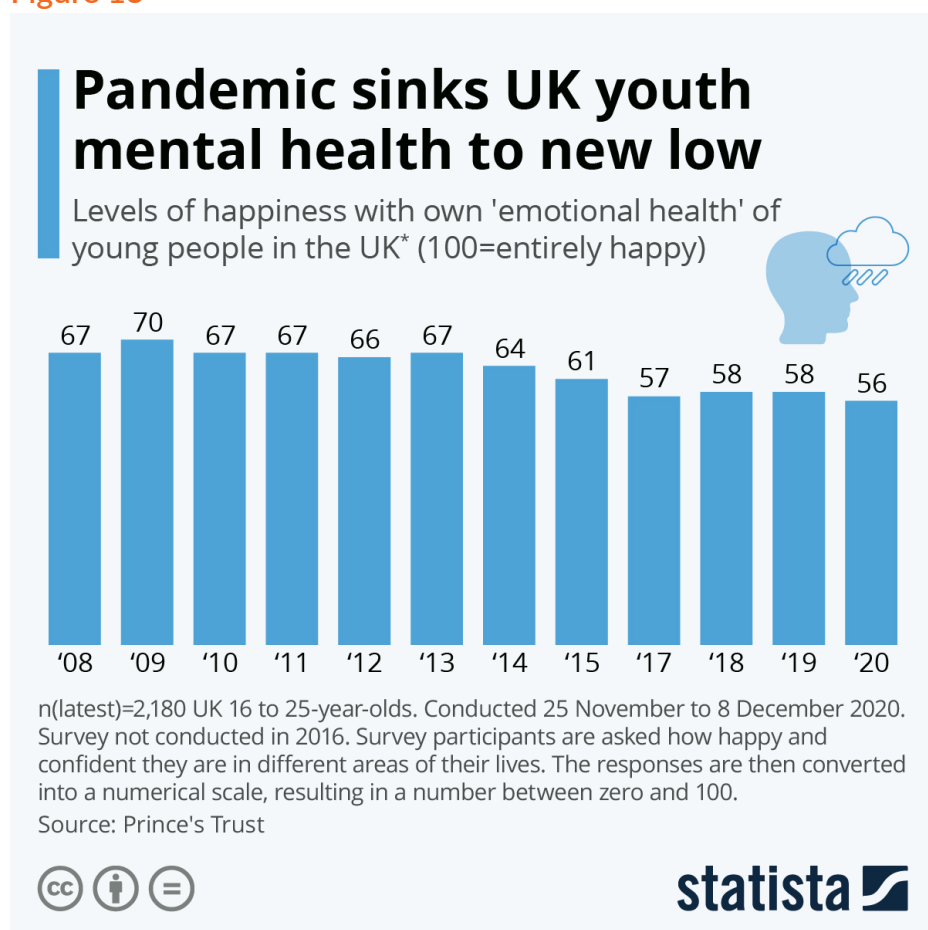
24. Ibid.

25. Jeffreys, Branwen, 'Children's mental health: Huge rise in severe cases, BBC analysis reveals,' BBC, 4 Feb, 2022

26. Prince's Trust Tesco Youth Index 2021.



Figure 13



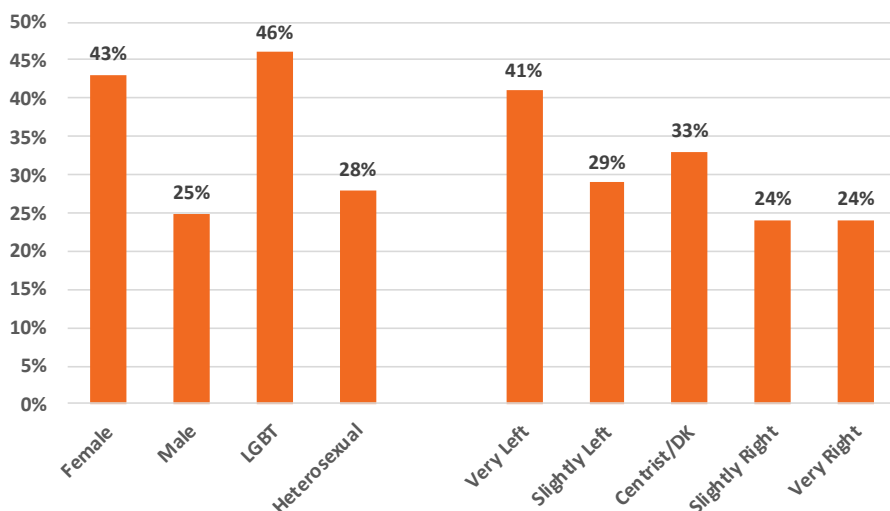
Source: Prince's Trust 2021.

Data from YouGov back up these findings. 34 percent of those surveyed said they felt anxious 'always' or 'almost all the time'. A further 21 percent said they felt this way about half the time. Only 45 percent said they only sometimes (or never) experience sadness and anxiety.

The most important demographic predictors of being anxious or sad are gender and sexuality. While 53 percent of the 60 individuals on social grade E (dependent on welfare) report sadness or anxiety compared to 33 percent of others, the difference in reported sadness/anxiety between the top and bottom quartiles in the income distribution is just 5 points. Here it is also important to note that there are just 60 Grade E respondents, so even as the impact of being welfare-dependent is higher, this category is considerably smaller than being female or LGBT, and hence has a smaller effect on the explanatory power of the overall model.

As Figure 14 shows, women are 18 points more likely to report that they are sad or anxious all or most of the time than men, and LGBT individuals are 18 points more likely to do so than heterosexuals. Very left-wing people are 13 points more likely than slightly left-wing individuals, and 17 points more likely than right-wing individuals, to report that they have persistent anxiety or depression.

Figure 14: Sad or Anxious Most of the Time



In a statistical model predicting which young people have anxiety/depression, the specific effect of being very left (compared to slightly left) is largely eliminated when controlling for being female and LGBT, even as the full left-right spectrum remains significant. This is because being female and very left are strong predictors of being LGBT. In terms of significant predictors of mental health, being female (.19 standardized effect) is somewhat more strongly associated with mental health than being LGBT (.15), but the two are the most important correlates of mental health issues. This is followed by income (.13), with the poor experiencing more sadness and anxiety. Ideology (left predicts more sadness/anxiety), social class (lower predicts more), race (whites have more problems) and student status (students are less sad/anxious than non-students) have similar predictive power (.05-.06), at about a third the effect size of gender and LGBT.

In terms of predicting LGBT identification, left ideology is most important (.32) followed by being female. A cluster analysis of the anxiety/sadness, LGBT and ideology questions shows that one underlying factor explains 48 percent of the variation across all three variables – enough overlap to begin to think of all three as stemming in large part from a common cause.

What might that cause be? Certain big 5 psychological traits, namely openness to experience, conscientiousness and neuroticism, have been shown to underlie mental health, ideology and sexuality (extraversion and agreeableness matter less).<sup>27</sup> As Scott McGreal notes, ‘people identifying as politically liberal tend to be higher on openness to experience and neuroticism and lower on conscientiousness than their conservative counterparts’ while ‘people with mental disorders tend to be highly elevated in neuroticism and are often low in conscientiousness’.<sup>28</sup> Meanwhile, anxiety and depression are substantially higher among LGBT than heterosexual young people. Longitudinal studies which track people

27. McGreal, Scott, ‘Personality Traits, Mental Illness, and Ideology,’ *Psychology Today*, March 17, 2021

28. McGreal, Scott, ‘The Unexpected Relationship Between Ideology and Anxiety,’ *Psychology Today*, September 20, 2021

over time show that women who switch to LGBT identity report greater psychological distress while those who switch to heterosexuality report lower distress.<sup>29</sup> Frequency of various types of social media use (Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, Facebook, etc) does not correlate with mental health. This challenges some accounts while supporting results from recent meta-analyses which find only weak links between social media use and mental health problems.<sup>30</sup>

A final possibility, suggested by Liah Greenfeld of Boston University, is that the greater range of gender and other identity choices in very liberal and LGBT milieus makes it more difficult for people, especially youth, to achieve a stable identity. This creates anomie, which increases the prevalence of mental illness.<sup>31</sup> The twin components of modernism, which involves a horizontal dismantling of tradition and superseding boundaries, and leftism, which entails a vertical levelling of hierarchies associated with group boundaries, provide the motive force behind what I term *left-modernism*, the dominant ideology in western high culture.<sup>32</sup> If Greenfeld's Durkheimian social analysis is correct, then it is less the medium of the internet, and more the message of left-modernist youth culture, that matters. The unmooring of people from traditional structures, roles and sources of meaning may thereby help to explain the youth mental health crisis.

29. Marshal, Michael P. et al. "Suicidality and depression disparities between sexual minority and heterosexual youth: a meta-analytic review." *The Journal of adolescent health : official publication of the Society for Adolescent Medicine* vol. 49,2 (2011): 115-23. doi:10.1016/j.jadohealth.2011.02.005; Campbell, A., et al. (2022). "Sexual Fluidity and Psychological Distress: What Happens When Young Women's Sexual Identities Change?" *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*: 00221465221086335.

30. Lukianoff, G. and J. Haidt (2018). *The coddling of the American mind : how good intentions and bad ideas are setting up a generation for failure*. New York City, Penguin Press, ch. 7; Cunningham, S., et al. (2021). "Social Media and Depression Symptoms: a Meta-Analysis." *Res Child Adolesc Psychopathol* 49(2): 241-253.

31. Greenfeld, L. (2013). *Mind, modernity, madness*. Mind, Modernity, Madness, Harvard University Press.; Greenfeld, L. 'The West's Struggle for Mental Health,' *Wall Street Journal*, May 31, 2022.

32. Kaufmann, E. (2004). *The Rise and Fall of Anglo-America: The Decline of Dominant Ethnicity in the United States*. Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press. On modernism, see Bell, D. (1976). *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism*. New York, NY, Harper Collins.

## Part II: Young People's Views on Culture War Issues

We saw that 50 percent of school leavers support political correctness and only 27 percent oppose it, a far different picture from the 47-37 opposition to PC in the general population. On many contentious culture war issues, young people are evenly divided whereas the population tends to lean closer to 2 to 1 in favour of free speech over restrictions or in favour of support for British historical figures against detractors.

The young population is thus divided over culture war questions rather than a monolith. Attitudes to political correctness carry through into specific questions pertaining to speech or heritage figures who could be considered offensive to historically marginalized race, gender or sexual identity groups. For example, when asked which comes closest to their views of Winston Churchill, respondents broke 21 percent positive, 20 percent negative and 37 percent mixed. When asked whether universities should favour free speech or emotional safety, the balance was fairly even between 'prioritise free speech even if this makes people upset' (43%) and 'prioritise emotional safety, even if this limits free speech' (37%).

Some surveys find even more extreme results, with a June 2022 Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI) report finding that the share of university students who say it is more important that students be protected from discrimination than allow unlimited free speech jumping from 37 percent in 2016 to 61 percent in 2022 while the proportion in favour of unlimited free speech even if offence is caused slid from 27 to 17 percent. More students supported firing academics who offend some students than opposed this, and there were big increases in support for safe spaces, trigger warnings, no-platformings and removing memorials to problematic historical figures.<sup>33</sup>

On all culture wars questions, gender and ideology are similarly-strong predictors of attitudes, with women and those on the left far more supportive of speech restrictions than men and conservatives. This holds even when taking into account the fact that women are more left-wing than men. Figure 15, for instance, shows that just 9 percent of young women in this survey have a positive view of Churchill, with 25 percent negative and the rest mixed or don't know. For men, by contrast, 33 percent have a positive view of Churchill and just 15 percent a negative view, with the rest mixed or don't know.

On free speech versus emotional safety on campus, women break 45-30 for emotional safety over free speech while men go the other way by

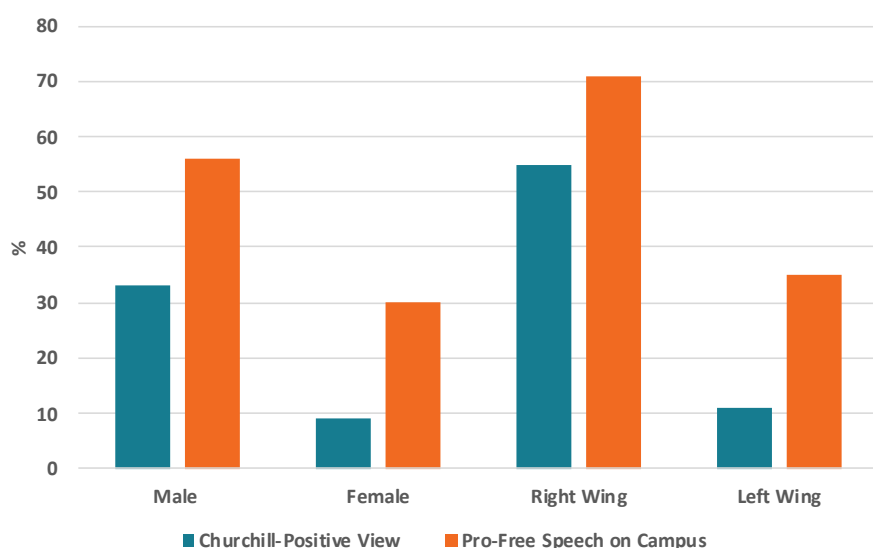
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33. Hillman, Nick, "You can't say that!": What students really think of free speech on campus', HEPI report no 35, June 2022

a 56-29 pro-free speech margin. Differences by ideology are greater than for gender, though the low share of right-wing young people means this has a smaller impact on overall attitudes.

Right-wing respondents back free speech over emotional safety on campus 71-20 while left-wing respondents favour emotional safety 45-30. On Churchill, 55 percent of those on the right have a positive view of him versus just 11 percent on the left. At the ideological extremes, the most left-wing respondents on a 7-point scale (174 individuals) lean 62-4 against Churchill and 57-25 for emotional safety over free speech. The fact the discrepancy is greater over Churchill than free speech indicates that questions pertaining to the defense of heritage are more politically polarizing than those around expressive freedom, even as both display large ideological differences.

Figure 15: Attitudes to Speech Issues, by Category



Sad or anxious young people are significantly more hostile to Churchill and free speech, even when gender and ideology are taken into account. Those who are anxious or sad most of the time support universities prioritizing emotional safety over free speech by a 45-33 margin compared to 33-48 for those who are not anxious or sad most of the time.

Having said this, people's psychological state is a considerably weaker predictor than ideology or even gender. Social media use is also not significant. This means that explanations which focus mainly on the psychological fragility and lack of personal resilience of a young 'snowflake' generation, or on their social media use, largely – though not wholly – miss the mark.<sup>34</sup>

Nonwhites are more negative than whites on Churchill, but do not differ on free speech. Wealthier students, all other things being equal, are more pro-free speech than poorer students. Those in the working class C2 (skilled) and D (semi-skilled or unskilled) social grades are more in favour of free speech than those in the professional/managerial class A and B social grades. LGBT respondents are somewhat more likely to back

34. Lukianoff and Haidt, *The coddling of the American mind*; Hillman, 'You can't say that,' pp. 2, 13.

emotional safety over free speech than the average young person, and are significantly more negative on Churchill than others - even when ideology and gender are taken into consideration.

Finally, those living in wards (i.e. neighbourhoods) with a higher ethnic minority share are significantly more negative on Churchill even when controlling for ideology, race and sociodemographic factors. This appears to be largely due to minority students in more diverse areas rendering a more negative judgment on Churchill, which could indicate that peer or communal influences may be shaping perceptions of Churchill in the 'majority-minority' areas where nearly half of minority British people reside. Minority share in the ward did not, however, affect attitudes to the free speech v. protection from hate speech question.

Is there a role for policy here? It would appear so. A third of respondents read a passage emphasising Britain's heritage of free speech that 'many have died for' while a third read about the harms that speech which 'contravenes social justice' could have on ethnic minorities. There is a significant difference between the two treatment conditions, with the balance shifting from 44-38 in favour of free speech over emotional safety for those who read about free speech to 44-39 in favour of emotional safety over free speech for those who read about speech harm. Much of the shift occurred among the undecided group, which declined 7-9 points among those who read either of the passages compared to those who read nothing. These results reinforce findings from the US that show that students who were taught about the First Amendment are consistently more supportive of freedom of expression<sup>35</sup> than those who were not. My previous work on academic freedom for Policy Exchange, which indicates that young people's views on the free speech question<sup>36</sup> can be swayed by reading a short passage. All of which suggests that a civics curriculum which taught the history and importance of Britain's free speech tradition could go a long way toward protecting cultural liberalism.

### Political Intolerance

One of the questions on the 2020 Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE) student survey in America asks whether a student would be willing to date a Trump supporter. Just 12 percent of Democrat-supporting students, who make up the majority of the sample, indicated they would do so, with 65 percent saying this would be 'impossible' or 'very difficult' and a further 23 percent saying 'somewhat difficult'.

British young people are less politically discriminatory than their American counterparts, but there is still an important reservoir of bias, as revealed in Figure 16. Among the two-thirds of young people in my YouGov survey who support the Remain side, 36 percent said they would be uncomfortable dating a Leave supporter, 34 percent said they would be comfortable and 30 percent were 'neither comfortable nor uncomfortable'. By contrast, just 7 percent of Leave supporters would be uncomfortable dating a Remain supporter. Those with no clear view on Brexit are relatively tolerant, with just 12 percent saying they would not

35. Simpson, T. and E. Kaufmann (2019). "Academic Freedom in the UK." [Policy Exchange](#) 11.

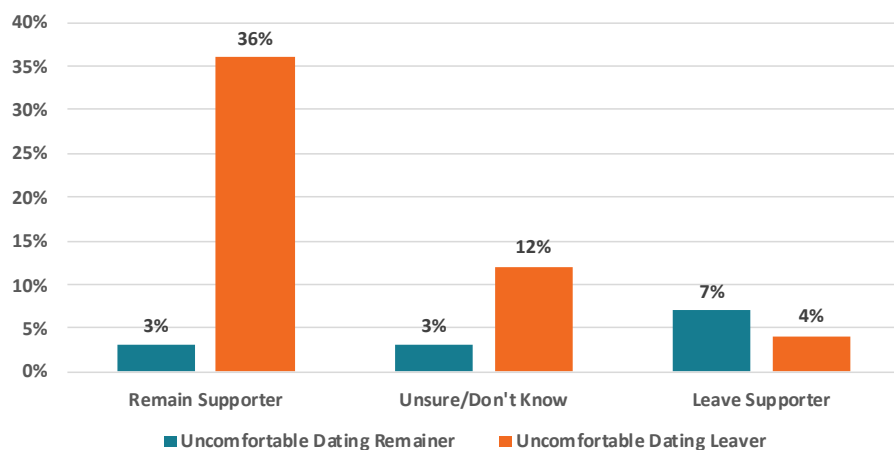
36. Simpson and Kaufmann, 'Academic Freedom in the UK'

be comfortable dating a Leave supporter.

As in the FIRE survey, women are more uncomfortable dating populist right supporters than men, with 46 percent of Remain-supporting women unwilling to date a Leaver and just 25 percent comfortable doing so. This compares to only 26 percent of Remain-supporting men uncomfortable dating a Leaver, with 44 percent comfortable doing so. To some extent this reflects gender sexual dynamics more broadly, with Leave-supporting women 10 points less likely than Leave-supporting men to be comfortable dating a Remainer, but there is an added 10 points' difference for Remain-supporting females which cannot be explained merely by generalized gender dynamics. This is confirmed in statistical analysis, where the effect size for women is much larger for predicting dating a Leaver than dating a Remainer when controlling for social class, race, ideology, being LGBT and Brexit vote.

LGBT Remainers are more discriminatory than heterosexual Remainers, with 48 percent of the former saying they would not date a Leaver compared to 30 percent of heterosexual Remainers. Far left Remainers are the most discriminatory, with 64 percent saying they would not date a Leaver, compared to 16 percent of centrist and right-leaning Remainers. The social grade of an individual Remainer does not affect whether they would date a Leaver, whereas being more left-wing ideologically is the strongest predictor of being unwilling to do so. This suggests that political bias in dating is ideological rather than a proxy for socio-economic status.

**Figure 16: Would you be comfortable dating a Remainer or Leaver? (by Brexit position)**



Dating preferences are a form of free association in a liberal society. Freedom to associate is a core aspect of liberalism, thus people can discriminate when it comes to where they wish to live or who they choose to date, befriend or marry. This is so even as I would maintain that there is an important distinction between having a preference for a certain characteristic in a mate - such as backing Remain or being Chinese - and categorically rejecting someone with a particular characteristic, such as

being a Leaver or an Indian person.

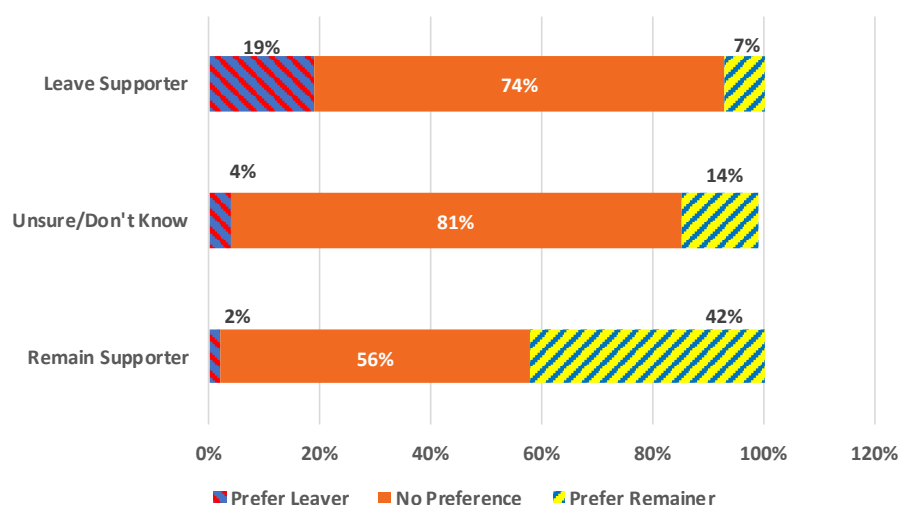
Regardless of people’s choices to discriminate in dating and other forms of association, bias in employment is an entirely different matter. This is illegal unless pertinent to a job, with philosophical belief considered a protected characteristic under European and British law following the Redfearn (2012) and Forstater (2021) cases. While there should be no discrimination on the basis of philosophical belief, one can still distinguish between ‘hard’ forms of discrimination, in which those with certain beliefs are rejected regardless of their merit, and ‘soft’ tie-breaking bias, where political discrimination is applied when two candidates are evenly matched.

In order to test for soft discrimination, I asked, ‘If you had to assess two similarly qualified individuals for a job and knew their Brexit views, who would you be inclined to pick?’ The options were to support someone with one’s own views, or to say it wouldn’t matter.

Figure 17 shows that Remain supporters are more politically discriminatory than Leave supporters. Whereas 19 percent of Leavers would prefer a Leave supporter for the job, fully 42 percent of Remainers would select the Remain supporter. This is unlikely to be a function of Leave-voting correlating with education, class or income since controlling for these variables does not reduce the effect of being a Remain-supporter or leaning left in predicting discrimination against a Leave supporter.

This chimes with a range of UK evidence showing that Remain supporters are more politically discriminatory than Leavers. For instance, a 2019 study showed that on a scale from coldest (0) to warmest (10), Leavers rated Remainers a 4.8 while Remainers scored Leavers a 2.9. While just 8 percent of Leave supporters would mind a close relative marrying a strong Remain supporter, 20 percent of Remain supports would object. Remainers were also less willing than Leavers to have someone from the other Brexit side as an acquaintance, co-worker or neighbour.<sup>37</sup>

Figure 17: Who Would You Prefer for a Job?



37. Matthew Goodwin, Twitter, Mar 29, 2019.



While discrimination in dating is a protected freedom while discrimination in employment is not, attitudes to the two are correlated. Figure 18 shows that 42 percent of Remainers would hire a Remainer over a Leaver if the two were equally qualified rather than having no preference. However, among intolerant Remainers who would not be comfortable dating a Leaver, that figure jumps to 62 percent. By contrast, among tolerant Remainers who would be comfortable dating a Leaver it drops to 28 percent.

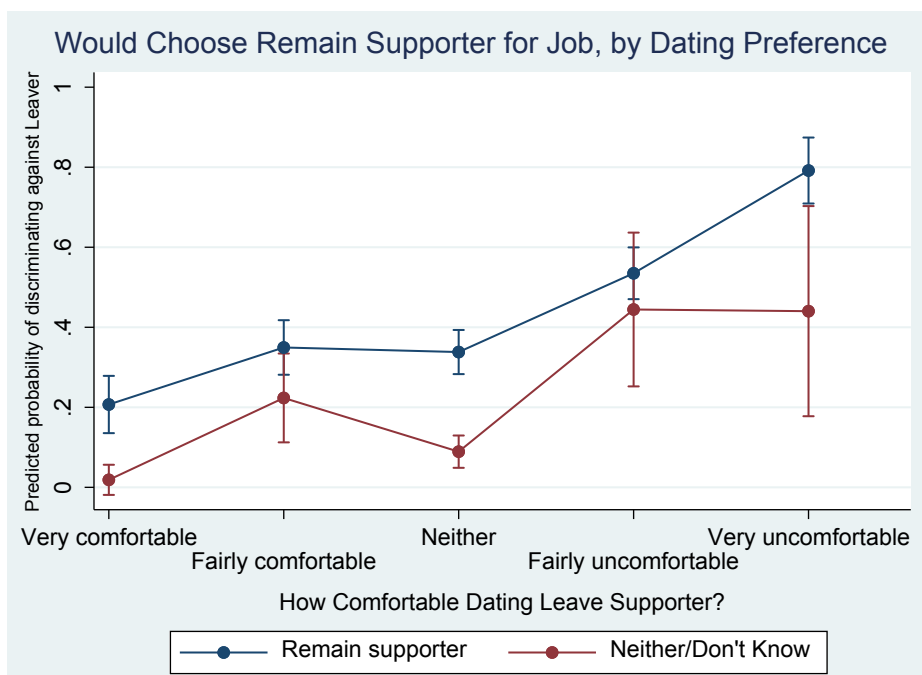
In order to examine this relationship more closely, I examine a person's willingness to soft-discriminate against a Leaver in a job, taking into account a person's Brexit position, willingness to date a Leaver, gender, ideology, race, occupational class, sexual orientation and student status. Figure 18 shows that a Remainer's predicted probability of discriminating against a Leaver rises from .2 for Remainers who would be very comfortable dating a Leaver to .8 for Remainers who would be very uncomfortable dating a Leaver. For those with no Brexit preference, dating discrimination is also important: those with no fixed Brexit view who are most uncomfortable dating a Leaver have over a .4 chance of discriminating in employment compared to zero for those most comfortable dating a Leaver.

Thus when it comes to predicting employment discrimination against a Leaver, whether an individual is willing to date a Leaver is a more important correlate than their views on Brexit itself! This points to aversion toward a political group as a distinct causal force from attachment to a cause. The psychology literature argues that attachment to one's in-group and hatred of an outgroup are different dispositions.<sup>38</sup> This evidence supports this general finding: regardless of the strength of their attachment to remaining in the EU, young people who reject Leavers as an outgroup are less likely to hire them for a job. These results suggest that schools could be doing a better job of teaching about the importance of tolerating opposing political views and upholding political impartiality.

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38. Brewer, M. B. (1999). "The psychology of prejudice: Ingroup love and outgroup hate?" *Journal of social issues* 55(3): 429-444.

Figure 18



Source: Yougov May 2022. N=1,336. Pseudo-R2=.162. Controls for age, gender, race, sexual orientation, ideology and social grade.

### Part III Schooling and Critical Social Justice Content

School leavers in this survey lean left, with fully a third on the far left and a mere 16 percent on the right. They support political correctness by a 50-27 margin and split evenly on prominent culture war issues such as free speech and the record of Winston Churchill – placing them well to the left of the wider population. Why?

Ed West argues that anti-Toryism has been a constituent element of British youth culture since the 1990s and that popular culture is strongly left-leaning.<sup>39</sup> Like West, a range of authors suggest that cohort change – in which attitudes crystallise in young adulthood and carry through the life course - will usher in a shift toward culturally-left values such as limiting speech to protect the emotional safety of marginalized groups.<sup>40</sup> Some point to a distinctly leftist surge in response to austerity and Brexit, though evidence suggests that the young differ from the old mainly in their cosmopolitan cultural attitudes rather than their economic orientations.<sup>41</sup>

A question this raises is where the impetus for culture change is coming from. One source might be the school system. In the United States, political conflict has emerged around the teaching of applied versions of Critical Social Justice (CSJ), consisting of three branches, Critical Race Theory (CRT), Feminism and Gender Studies, and Queer Theory. These theories have a number of common elements including:

39. West, E. (2020). *Small Men on the Wrong Side of History: The Decline, Fall and Unlikely Return of Conservatism*, Hachette UK.

40. Norris, P. and R. Inglehart (2019). *Cultural backlash: Trump, Brexit, and authoritarian populism*, Cambridge University Press.; Sobolewska, M. and R. Ford (2020). *Brexitland: Identity, Diversity and the Reshaping of British Politics*, Cambridge University Press.; Duffy, B. (2021). *Generations: Does When You're Born Shape Who You Are?*, Atlantic Books.

41. Sloam and Henn, *Youthquake 2017*; Grasso, M. T., et al. (2017). "Thatcher's children, Blair's babies, political socialization and trickle-down value change: An age, period and cohort analysis." *British Journal of Political Science*: 1-20.

- Like all socialist theories, a focus on inequality, hierarchy and power
- The transposition of a Marxist victim-oppressor framework from class to identity
- The centering of race, gender and sexual inequalities over material or psychological forms of inequality
- A focus on unmeasurable 'structures' of oppression that advantage whites, males or heterosexuals and disadvantage racial minorities, women and sexual minorities. Inequalities of outcome such as race or gender gaps are used as evidence of both cause and effect, resulting in circular reasoning. That is, gaps are used to identify both 'structures' and the discriminatory effects they are supposed to cause.
- A keen interest in cultural terms and narratives as forces which sustain invisible hierarchies of power and self-esteem, and result in emotional harm or even trauma for minorities
- A rejection of the scientific method, measurement and falsifiability in favour of 'lived experience' and standpoint epistemology<sup>42</sup>

Critical Race Theory (CRT) is a sophisticated meta-theory which argues that neutral liberal principles underlying the law and other elite institutions disguise identity-based power hierarchies, thereby permitting dominant groups to maintain their position. Regardless of one's view of this theory, it deserves a place in academic discussions. However, in school (as opposed to university) classrooms, students are compelled to attend. If they must agree with CRT arguments to satisfy course requirements, this raises freedom of conscience issues for students who object to such content. In addition, UK law prevents teachers from engaging in political indoctrination, and CRT is clearly political, favouring a programme of cultural socialism. The same is true of critical gender or sexuality theory that, along with CRT, make up the totality of Critical Social Justice (CSJ). Such theories also overemphasise ancestral and gender guilt and underplay group achievements, attributing negativity to current members of particular racial and gender categories, thus –where taught as fact – CSJ violates, at least in spirit, white and male pupils' right to equal treatment regardless of race and sex.

Rather than teaching the substance of grand theories like CRT, evidence from American and British schools indicates that teachers or visiting speakers tend to introduce applied versions of critical theories, talking about concrete subcomponents, such as white privilege or patriarchy. Mention of these terms has meanwhile exploded in the media since 2014 following the advent of what Matthew Yglesias terms the 'Great Awakening'. A similar pattern has occurred in Britain.<sup>43</sup>

In Britain, Kemi Badenoch has said that schools should not be teaching white pupils that they have white privilege. However, there is qualitative evidence that this is taking place. Brighton and Hove Council's CRT-based anti-racism programme is a case in point. Though government ministers

42. Pluckrose, H. and J. A. Lindsay (2020). *Cynical Theories: How Activist Scholarship Made Everything about Race, Gender, and Identity—and Why This Harms Everybody*, Pitchstone Publishing (US&CA).

43. Yglesias, M. (2019). "The Great Awakening." *Vox*; Rozado, D. and E. Kaufmann (2022). "The Increasing Frequency of Terms Denoting Political Extremism in US and UK News Media." *Social Sciences* 11(4): 167.

such as Nadhim Zahawi have called for an investigation, the council has managed to superficially amend its programme by removing explicit reference to CRT and be deemed by the Department of Education not to be engaging in political indoctrination. As the Don't Divide Us (DDU) campaign makes clear, a lack of clarity around the definition of racism and impartiality is allowing schools to circumvent the regulations by changing the labels while retaining CRT-based content.<sup>44</sup>

More recently, a DDU report found that 23% of councils promote a CRT-based curriculum, while a further 54% refused to provide DDU with access to its teaching materials. Moreover, 71% of parents said they should have access to teaching materials.<sup>45</sup> Meanwhile, critics contend that talk of CRT is about stoking a culture war. 'There is scant evidence its [CRT's] associated concepts are widespread in British schools,' claims Daniel Trilling. 'A handful of right wing commentators have been trying to import the moral panic into the UK, mainly via the pages of the *Telegraph* and *Spectator*,' he continued.<sup>46</sup> My Yougov survey of school leavers, a relatively representative sample of 18-20 year-olds in the country, decisively refutes Trilling's contention.

The survey asks students whether they have been taught a series of CSJ concepts in class, or by an adult at the school they attended. Figure 19 finds that a majority of students in Britain (59%) encountered Critical Race Theory concepts, rising to 73% when we include both critical race and gender concepts (CSJ). Note also that these figures are conservative in that those who responded 'don't know' were counted as not having heard about these concepts when they may well have. In terms of specific concepts, frequency ranged from the 20 percent of students who were told about there being many genders to 53 percent of students who heard about the patriarchy. Generally speaking, students indicated that they heard these concepts equally from teachers in class and from other adults in school besides their teacher (i.e. from a visiting speaker or administrator).

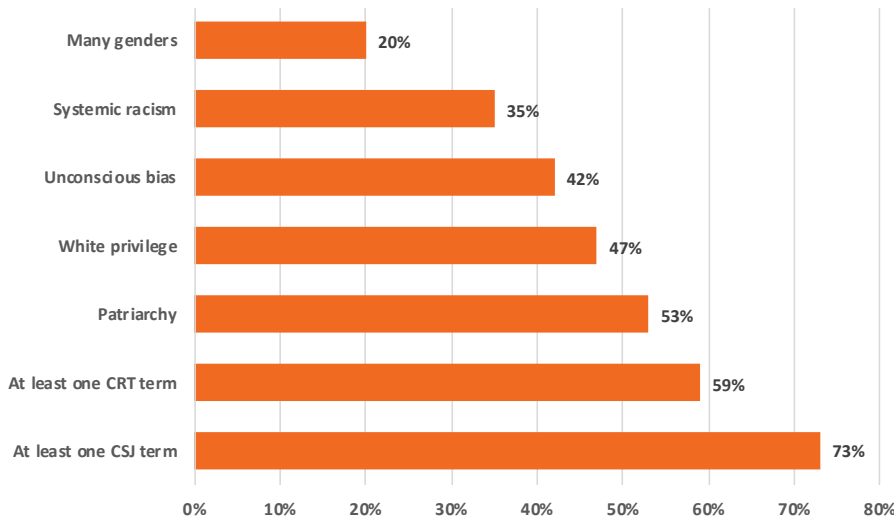
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44. Wood, Vincent, 'Teachers presenting white privilege as fact are breaking the law, minister warns,' *Independent*, 21 October, 2020; Somerville, Ewan, 'Nadhim Zahawi intervenes over council's 'concerning' race lessons for children as young as seven,' *Telegraph*, 5 February 2022; 'DDU Responds to Department for Education Guidelines on Political Impartiality in Schools,' *Don't Divide Us*, 10 March, 2022

45. Who's in charge? A report on councils' anti-racist policies for schools', Don't Divide Us, July 2022

46. Trilling, Daniel, 'Why is the UK government suddenly targeting 'critical race theory?,' *Guardian*, 23 October 2020'

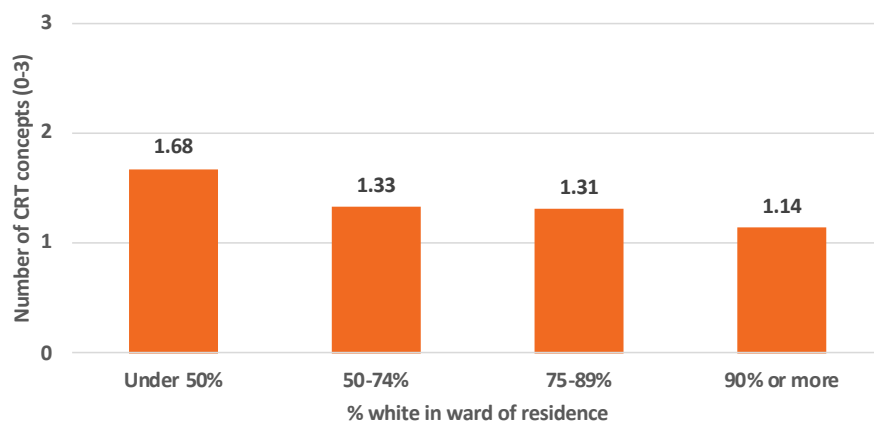
Figure 19: Encountered CSJ Term from Adult in School?



There is also evidence that CSJ has been increasingly introduced over time. Among 18-year olds, who have just recently graduated from school, 79 percent have encountered CSJ. This drops to 74 percent for 19 year-olds and 68 percent for 20 year-olds, precisely the pattern we would expect if these concepts are being increasingly introduced in British schools over time. Age is a strongly statistically-significant predictor of having heard CSJ concepts in school, but there was no significant difference between men and women, or by race, sexuality, ideology or region, in how often these ideas were encountered from adults in school.

Geography does matter somewhat, however. Students who live in wards with a higher share of apartments or other high-density dwellings, a higher nonwhite share, and a lower percentage from the managerial/professional class are more likely to report being taught CRT. Figure 20 shows that those in 'majority-minority' wards are exposed to around half a concept (on a 0-3 scale) more CRT than those in heavily white wards. Share in high-density dwellings is the strongest ward-level predictor of CRT exposure, however. This indicates that inner-city school districts are more likely to teach CRT content.

Figure 20: CRT Concepts Exposed to in School, by % White Residents in Ward

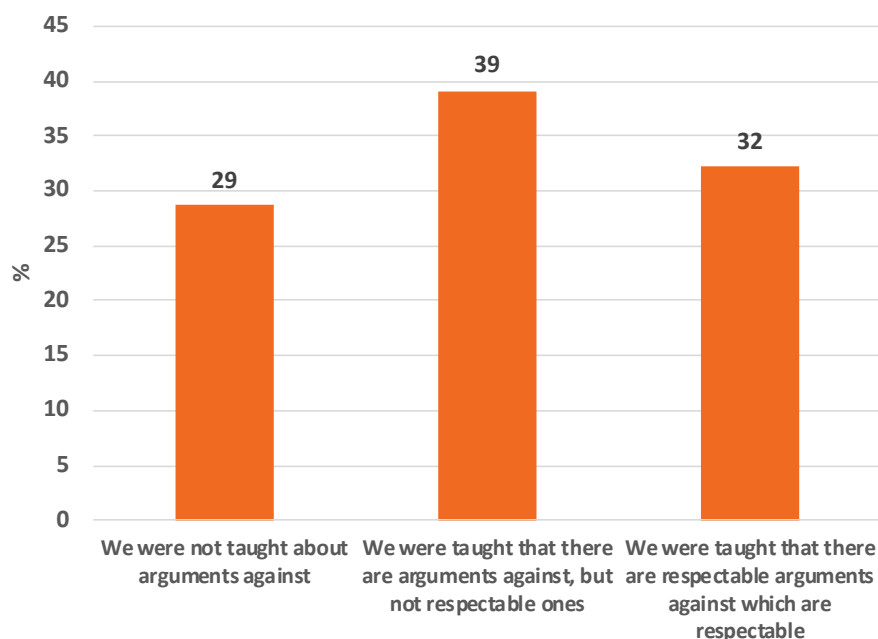


It is one thing for a teacher, administrator or visiting speaker to hold a discussion, quite another to teach CSJ as fact. In order to get at this question, I asked those who had heard about at least one of four CSJ concepts, ‘When you were taught these concepts, what were you taught about arguments against these concepts? If this happened more than once, please think about the most recent time.’ The replies, screening out those who didn’t know or had not heard the concepts, appear in Figure 21.

Results show that 68 percent were either not taught about counterarguments or were told that alternatives were not respectable. Only in a third of instances were students fairly introduced to critiques of these highly contentious ideas. This overall picture therefore indicates that political indoctrination is the rule and not the exception when CSJ is presented in UK schools. This contravenes the government’s political impartiality guidance, which explicitly states that counterarguments must be taught and contentious views not presented as facts.

Older students were somewhat more likely to have heard that there were respectable counterarguments than younger students, suggesting the problem of indoctrination is not abating. Right-leaning students were significantly less likely to report hearing about respectable counterarguments than left-leaning or centrist students, with 80 percent of right-leaning students saying they never heard such arguments. This indicates that conservative students were more likely than others to feel that properly opposing arguments were not given a fair hearing.

Figure 21: Context for CSJ Teaching



*N=555. Excludes respondents who said they didn't know or could not recall what was said about counterarguments, as well as those who said they were not taught these concepts or were unsure if they were taught them.*

When asked whether anyone spoke up to oppose these concepts in class, excluding those who didn't know, 57 percent of young people in the sample said no one spoke up while 43 percent said someone did. This suggests that some discursive resistance is taking place, albeit in a minority of schools. There were no differences by age, gender, sexuality, race or ideology in reporting the likelihood of students challenging CSJ content.

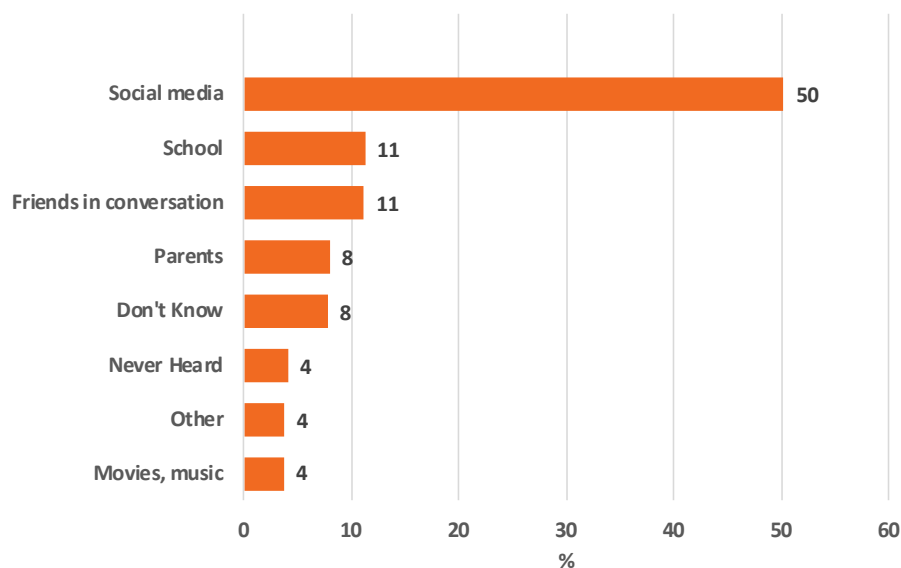
A further question asked people whether they were taught whether discrimination is the main reason for race and gender gaps in income and wealth. The results here were more balanced, with 45 percent of respondents saying that they were not taught this and 36 percent that they were.

While these results suggest there is debate taking place in schools over aspects of CSJ, in two-thirds of cases schools are teaching pupils about core CSJ ideas as facts rather than as one of several respectable points of view.

While schools are exposing pupils to relatively uncritical presentations of CSJ material, it is important to bear in mind that students derive their views from the wider society more than from school. They are notably influenced by social media. Figure 22 shows that when asked where they first heard about one of four CSJ concepts, just 11 percent of young people mentioned school while 50 percent mentioned social media. Excluding the 16 percent who said they didn't know where they first heard the concepts and the 4 percent who had never heard these CSJ terms before, this means that 57 percent of young people first heard these ideas on

social media, with school and friends coming second at around 13 percent apiece. This chimes with a 2019 survey of British undergraduate students I conducted in 2019 in which 67 percent said they thought student views on free speech issues came from social media while just 2 percent credited the views of schoolteachers or university lecturers.<sup>47</sup> Social media may not be affecting mental health, but it appears to be an important conduit for ‘critical’ ideas that originate in universities.

**Figure 22: Where Did You First Hear CSJ Terms?**



*Note: Includes respondents who said they did not hear CSJ terms from adults in school.*

Though social media is the key source for CSJ concepts, it arguably reflects a wider culture rather than a narrowcasted social media ecosystem. Thus heavy users of the ten most popular social media platforms were no more likely than light users or non-users to have first heard CSJ terms on social media.

On the other hand, frequency of *posting* content on Youtube, Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, Snapchat, Reddit and Twitter did increase the likelihood of someone saying they first heard about CSJ on social media, albeit only slightly. Thus more active social media users, who regularly produce content, are somewhat more likely than others to have encountered CSJ concepts on social media.

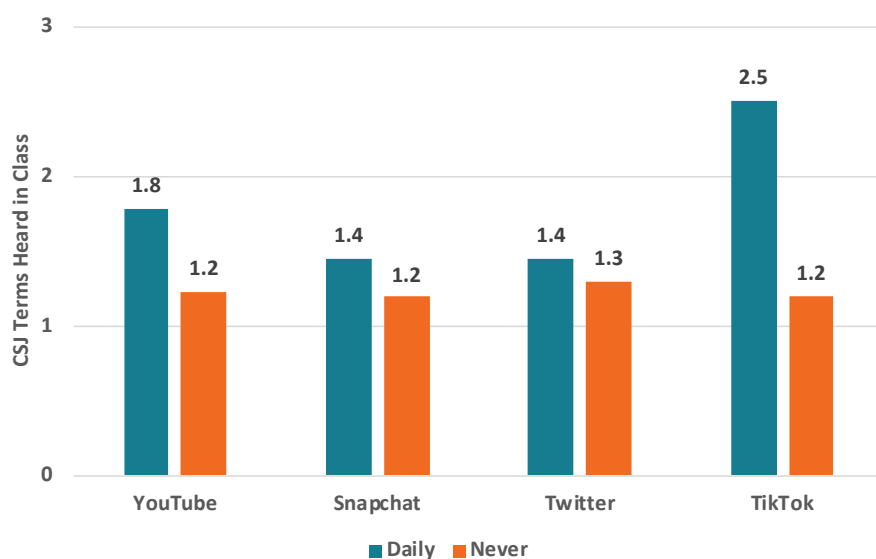
Though the number of those posting content daily is very small, especially on some platforms (such as TikTok), those who post more on social media are also slightly more likely to have heard CSJ terms in class. As Figure 23 illustrates, those who post frequently, especially on YouTube, Snapchat, Tiktok or Facebook, are also somewhat more likely to say they were taught CSJ terms at school. This could indicate that those exposed to CSJ on social media may better remember CSJ content from school (via

47. Simpson, T. and E. Kaufmann (2019). "Academic Freedom in the UK." *Policy Exchange* 11.



mutual reinforcement) than those who are less active on social media, or that they may inhabit more politicised schools and social networks which mutually reinforce each other. Even so, these effects are small overall, and those who are not on any social media networks do not report significant lower CSJ exposure in school than average.

**Figure 23: How Many CSJ Terms Exposed to in Class, by Frequency of Social Media Posting**



*Note: Social media posting frequency significantly predicts CSJ exposure in regression analysis, with controls, for all four sites shown (as well as several others) when excluding non-users. Daily users: Youtube (37), Snapchat (115), Twitter (40), Tiktok (5). Note that approximately 945-985 individuals (i.e. 2 in 3 of the sample) never used these sites.*

CRT exposure does appear to affect student beliefs in some domains. Those taught (as distinct from hearing from an adult) the maximum of 4 CSJ concepts supported political correctness by a 57-43 margin compared to 43-57 for those who had not been taught any CSJ concepts. There is also a significant difference in support for free speech between those who were and were not exposed to CSJ. These results hold when controlling for area and individual characteristics. While I did not ask about student endorsement of each CSJ concept, US research (forthcoming) shows a significant association between exposure to, and endorsement of, specific concepts such as 'systemic racism.'

School is a socializing force, but its impact may lie less in introducing new ideas than in the way it reinforces, or fails to confront, ideological narratives in the wider youth culture. Moreover, regardless of the impact of CSJ on beliefs, schools should convey to pupils an accurate portrayal of the country they will inhabit. An overly negative account of Britain's history and society, or a distortion of its dominant sexual norms, is a dereliction

of this duty. Policy in this area should reflect the values of political impartiality and historical balance. CSJ approaches should be defined as political rather than moral, as contested rather than the consensus.

### Teaching about British History and Society

Many of the claims of applied Critical Race Theory involve taking an iconoclastic or hostile gaze toward history and society. One of the key questions in this debate is where the balance between criticism and celebration, and thus shame and pride, lies. National pride is important for social cohesion, but an honest and objective approach to the warts of history and today's social problems is also vital. How are schools teaching about history and society?

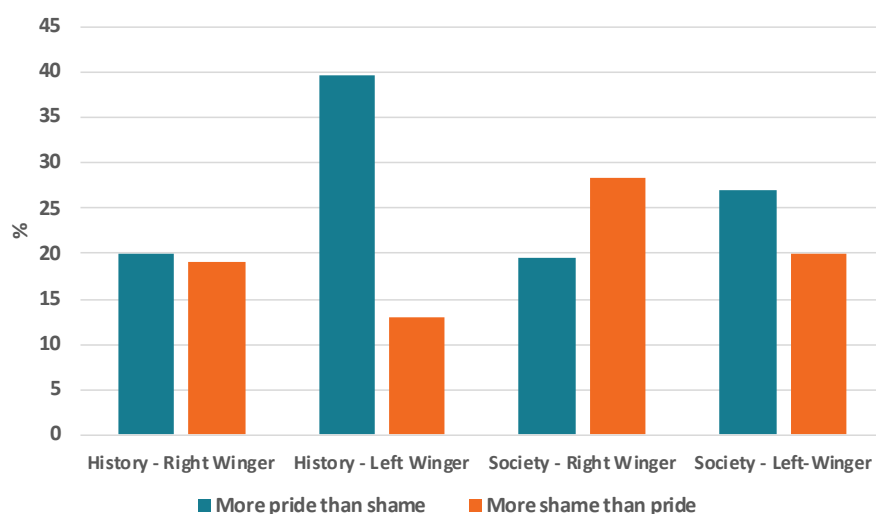
When asked, 'Which best characterises what you were taught about British history,' 32 percent said they were taught more pride than shame, while just 13 percent replied that they were taught more shame than pride. The rest said the mix was even, they couldn't recall, or did not know. When asked about British 'society today', the balance was more even, with 22 percent saying they were taught more pride than shame in British society, 19 percent more shame than pride and the rest neutral or unsure. Perceptions are skewed by ideology, however.

As Figure 24 shows, left-wing young people tend to think they were taught a more celebratory version of the nation's past and present, with 40 percent saying they were taught to view the nation's past with pride and just 13 percent with shame. Right-wing youngsters are only half as likely to say they were taught more pride than shame, with 20 percent saying pride and 19 percent shame. A similar, if less dramatic picture holds for British society, with those on the right perceiving that a more shameful than prideful picture (by a 28-19 margin) was painted by teachers compared to those on the left who said they were taught more pride (27%) than shame (20%) about the country's present.

Women were more likely than men, and white people more likely than minorities, to say they were taught more pride than shame about British history. LGBT respondents were more likely than heterosexual individuals to say they were taught more shame than pride about the past. There were no significant differences between these demographic groups with respect to teaching about the present.

Finally, as expected, those exposed to more CRT concepts are significantly more likely to say they were taught a more shameful version of the country's history and present condition.

**Figure 24: What Were You Taught about Britain's Past and Present, by Ideology**



*Note: Excludes those who said they were taught an equal measure of pride and shame, or were unsure.*

## CRT's Impact on Race Relations

The impact of CSJ in schools on pupil beliefs may be modest, but it appears to have a more noticeable impact on pupil fear. Those who reported hearing more CSJ concepts in school said they were more fearful of being shamed, punished or expelled from school for voicing their opinions on controversial subjects. This effect holds with controls for demographic and ideological variables.

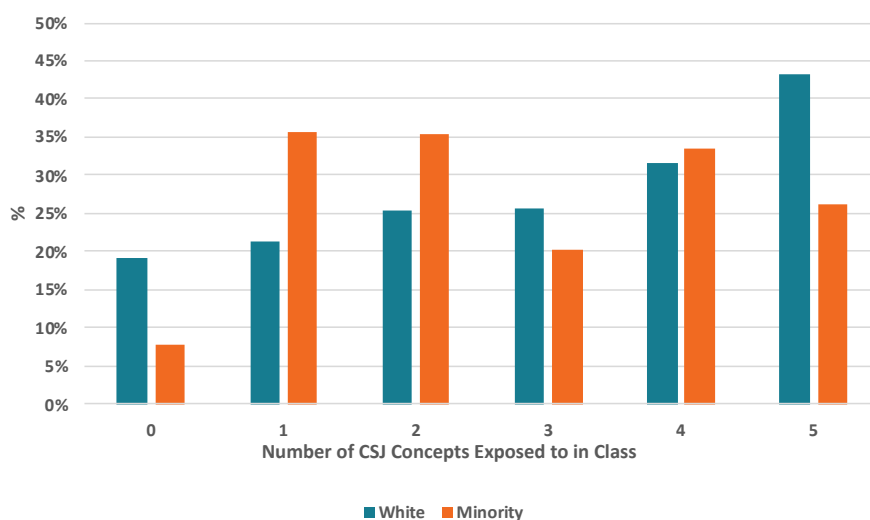
The survey, as noted, asked five questions on CSJ topics, three on race, two on gender. Those who said they had heard all five CSJ ideas were allocated a 5, those who heard none were coded zero, and others were allotted a score in between, creating a 0 to 5 scale of school CSJ exposure. Overall, 59 percent of these young people said they were not fearful of being expelled for controversial speech when in school compared to 25 percent who said they were and 16 percent who were unsure.

The association between hearing more CSJ concepts at school and having been fearful of shaming, punishment or expulsion for expressing opinions while there is statistically-significant at the  $p < .001$  level when controlling for age, gender, sexual orientation, ideology, Brexit support, student status and race. Women and those who went on to university were less likely to say they were fearful to speak their minds. Right-wing and Leave-supporting people were far more likely to say they were fearful than leftists, centrists or Remainers. Thus 23 percent of Remain supporters said they feared being expelled for speech, rising to 42 percent among Leave supporters. Sexuality and race made no difference to fear levels.

Figure 25 shows the relationship between the number of concepts exposed to in school and fear of being expelled. For whites, there is a

gradual rise as exposure increases, with a pronounced increase in fear beyond exposure to 3 concepts. For minorities, there is an initial sharp rise as people move from no exposure to 1 exposure, followed by a relatively static pattern (note that sample sizes are smaller for minorities than for whites, creating more statistical noise). Overall, 25 percent of people were fearful of being shamed, punished or expelled. This rises to 40 percent among those exposed to all 5 CSJ concepts in school and falls to 17 percent among those who did not hear about CSJ while at school.

**Figure 25: Fear of Being Shamed, Punished or Expelled for Speech, by Race and CSJ Exposure**

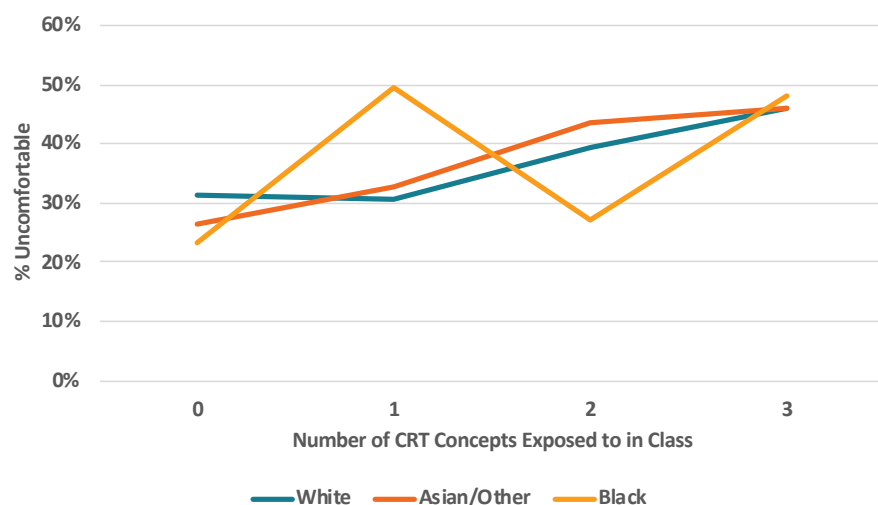


*N=1,220 white and 322 minority. Ns for minorities, by exposure category: 0 (78), 1 (56), 2 (60), 3 (50), 4 (63), 5 (16).*

A second test of this relationship focuses on CRT using the three relatively race-themed questions (white privilege, systemic racism, unconscious bias). The outcome measure is based on the answer to the question, ‘How comfortable would you have been to criticize a Black schoolmate (if none, imagine if there were) during your school years?’

Figure 26 plots the relationship for white, black and Asian/Other respondents. Results show that for whites, Asians and Others, more exposure to CRT is linked to more discomfort criticizing black schoolmates while there is no consistent effect among black respondents. Among non-black respondents, those with the most exposure to CRT are 10-15 points more likely to feel uncomfortable criticizing a black schoolmate. The relationship between CRT exposure and discomfort with criticizing a black schoolmate is significant at the  $p < .001$  level even when controlling for discomfort criticizing a white schoolmate as well as a full range of demographic and ideological controls. Of the other parameters, only being female mattered, and was associated with more reluctance to criticize a black schoolmate.

Figure 26: Uncomfortable Criticising a Black Schoolmate, by Race



*N* = 1,220 White, 250 Asian/Other, 72 Black. Category *N*s range from 12 to 29 for Black, and 46 to 89 for Asian/Other.

In combination, these results indicate that exposure to CSJ concepts (encompassing critical race and gender ideas) in school leads to heightened fear of voicing one's opinion, especially among the right-leaning or Brexit-supporting minority. CRT exposure is linked to significantly higher discomfort with the idea of criticizing a black schoolmate. This suggests, in line with research on diversity training, that a CSJ approach leads to more brittle race relations and an illiberal speech climate. This could prevent classmates from providing each other with much-needed feedback that might improve their performance in both academic and non-academic spheres, holding back minority progress. The net result is that teaching CSJ is associated with chilling speech and stifling constructive criticism while producing no apparent measurable benefit.<sup>48</sup>

### CSJ and Mental Health

There is an indication in the data that students exposed to CSJ concepts in school experience somewhat worse mental health than those who have not been so exposed.

35 percent of those who said they were taught CSJ in school said they were sad or anxious all or most of the time compared to 30 percent of those who said they were not exposed to CSJ. This relationship is significant at the  $p < .05$  level when controlling for race, gender, LGBT identification, ideology, employment/education status and social class. Controls for local area composition by ethnicity, education, income and population density also did not affect the significant association between CSJ instruction and poorer mental health outcomes.

The small share of students who had never heard of CSJ concepts (i.e. via social media or friends) did not differ in mental health. The effect also was not greatly affected by race, gender, sexual orientation or ideology. It

48. Al-Gharbi, Musa. 'Diversity is Important. Diversity-Related Training is Terrible,' *Heterodox Academy*, Sept 16, 2020.

is therefore unclear whether the CSJ teaching itself leads to greater sadness or anxiety in pupils, or whether a factor correlated with being taught CSJ or remembering being taught it is behind the relationship. If CSJ teaching is exacerbating mental health in young people, this is a serious issue and an area that needs further investigation.

### Policy Recommendations

The main policy recommendations of this report expand upon Don't Divide Us (DDU)'s critique of school impartiality guidance following the Brighton and Hove CRT indoctrination débâcle.<sup>49</sup> This report recommends:

1. Though the government has made helpful speeches about the problem of CSJ instruction in schools, the political impartiality guidance for schools (sections 406 and 407) is not binding and schools do not yet believe it is being systematically enforced by Ofsted in a way that would genuinely cause systematic change. This should be addressed through Ofsted guidance, with the potential impact on a school's ratings explicitly laid out, in the same way that guidance has been issued about the teaching of protected characteristics. This should be followed up by comprehensive training for inspectors, so that every school understands that this is something that may be addressed in an inspection
2. Either Government or Ofsted should issue further guidance that makes it clear that the consensus definition of racism does not include unconscious bias or 'systemic racism' based on unintentional disparate impacts or performance gaps (i.e. claims of racism based on unmeasurable 'structures'). The same holds for sexism, transphobia and other concepts which CSJ approaches view as totalizing systems floating apart from individuals. These must be considered contested ideas that cannot be taught as fact, and that doing so is political indoctrination, not the teaching of agreed moral principles
3. As per section 407 of the Education Act (1996), any discussion of CSJ theories must be balanced by classical liberal approaches - or they should not be taught at all. A number of classical liberal organisations have developed useful teaching materials around racism and other identity issues based on a colour-blind approach, which need to be included in equal proportion, at the very least, to any CSJ materials, with no bias in favour of CSJ
4. DfE and Ofsted guidance should specify that the notion of gender identity, the idea that some people innately identify with a gender that differs from their sex at birth, should not be considered a consensus view, but a politically-contested concept. This should either not be taught or should be treated in a balanced way which sets out the case for both gender primordialism, that transgender or non-binary identity emerges in a spontaneous and deeply-rooted way, and gender constructionism, that identifying with

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49. 'DDU Responds to Department for Education Guidelines on Political Impartiality in Schools,' [dontdivideus.com](https://dontdivideus.com), 10 March, 2022

a different gender from one's birth sex is not innate, but arises as a product of cultural narratives interacting with psychological predispositions linked to hormonal changes, same-sex attraction, experiences of bullying/trauma or neurodiverse characteristics such as autism

5. Conduct a rigorous and representative, not qualitative, impact assessment of DEI instruction. If measurable positive effects do not outweigh negative effects in statistical analysis of large-scale datasets, DEI instruction should cease until such time as randomized control trials with reformed curricula can be shown to work
6. Include guidelines as to the age at which CSJ content may be introduced into the classroom, even in the form of contested ideas up for debate
7. In order to ensure that DfE and Ofsted comply with the new guidelines, government must take a proactive role in these organisations. Leaders of these bodies, notably Amanda Spielman of Ofsted, who in a recent speech to the profession urged, 'What balance does demand is being a teacher not a campaigner where matters are contested,' and called on teachers to encourage open-mindedness and evidence-led reasoning, should make this a priority.<sup>50</sup> These bodies require back up and clarity from government to ensure that school leadership teams cannot continue to indoctrinate under the radar, as has occurred in Brighton and Hove
8. Mandate – for both state and independent schools - the use of criteria for impartiality found in the Independent School Standards, Part II, of the Schedule on the Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development of pupils, as used in case law
9. Direct Ofsted to make curriculum impartiality a *sui generis* criterion for inspection
10. Conduct a review of the reporting routes for parents and teachers who wish to pursue complaints of breaches in impartiality. DDU reports that 'the current provision is not fit for use. It is not at all clear where individual complainants should go if their complaint is unresolvable at school or governor level: is it Ofsted, the DfE, local education authorities or the Teacher Regulation Agency? The threshold criteria for identifying a breach need to be clearly articulated and readily available for the public.'
11. Audit teacher-training, clinical psychology training and other accreditation bodies for political impartiality and non-indoctrination using the same standards as above.
12. Ensure that impartiality and non-indoctrination are included in ethical obligations taught during teacher training. This should be linked into the 'Golden Thread' of training from Initial Teacher Training, the Early Career Framework and the National Professional Qualifications so that there is a joint understanding by teachers and leaders as part of their training at all levels.

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50. 'Amanda Spielman's speech to the Festival of Education, 2022,' [www.gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk), 8 July

13. Ensure that teaching about British history and society balances the need to acknowledge when the country has failed to live up to its ideals with the need for national pride, which is important for social cohesion
14. Ensure that teaching of past wrongs such as fascism, slavery or the more negative aspects of colonialism be contextualised by teaching about similar excesses in the non-European past and present, including the excesses of communism and other left-wing movements.. This can be done via the Model History Curriculum, as part of the National Curriculum
15. Ensure that students are taught about the country's free speech traditions and legal protections for freedom of expression. This should include the importance of toleration for those of differing political beliefs. US research consistently shows that students who are taught about the First Amendment in school are more supportive of freedom of speech.<sup>51</sup> UK research, including that in this report, likewise shows that university students who read about Britain's tradition of free speech become significantly more tolerant of speech.<sup>52</sup>
16. Implement Labour peer Baroness Morris of Yardley's Lords Amendment in the Schools Bill about a right for parents to see materials. Specifically, curriculum transparency and requiring schools to provide curriculum materials if asked for
17. End commercial confidentiality for third-party content contractors. Only those who agree beforehand that schools can make their content public (if asked for) can be hired
18. Schools be encouraged to consult widely with parents before changing anti-racist or sex ed policies
19. Transparency for extra-curricular activities and invited speakers at assemblies
20. Ensure political balance and impartiality in extra-curricular activities, drawing on guidance as to where the line lies between contested and consensus ideas
21. DfE and Ofsted guidance should ensure that schools do not make official statements or endorse positions in assemblies or on official walls and noticeboards on issues where a significant share of the public disagree, as this creates a hostile environment for those with countervailing political beliefs. A clear yardstick is for schools to desist from advocating positions on issues that Conservative and Labour voters differ on by more than 20 points.
22. When confronting the youth mental health crisis, policymakers should pay attention to the impact of a boundary-transgressing 'post-structural' youth culture, which encourages non-conformity and vulnerability, on young people's ability to realise a stable identity and improve their mental health outcomes
23. Consider a government commission to review existing legislation as it impinges upon educational goals

51. 'Future of the First Amendment 2022: High schooler views on speech over time,' *Knight Foundation*, May 24, 2022

52. Simpson and Kaufmann, 'Academic Freedom in the UK'



### Conclusion

I began with Ed West's observation that a left-liberal elite and youth culture was transforming western society, weakening classical liberalism and heritage protection to the point that these are becoming minority views in British society. The evidence considered here reinforces many of West's contentions, painting a portrait of a majority left-modernist young population. Education plays a role in reinforcing, or at least failing to challenge, a left-modernist youth culture which stems from social media. This culture is arguably a factor in the rising incidence of mental health problems among young people, yet has attracted little critical attention.

Unless conservative and classical liberal politicians begin to take these issues more seriously by moving beyond public statements and readily-evaded abstract guidelines, it seems likely that cohort change will result in cherished values such as free speech, scientific reason and national heritage losing ground in the years to come. This is further predicted to shift the electoral landscape, making it considerably more difficult for Conservative parties to win office.



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