

WHAT'S GOING ON WITH GEN Z AND CIVIL DISCOURSE?

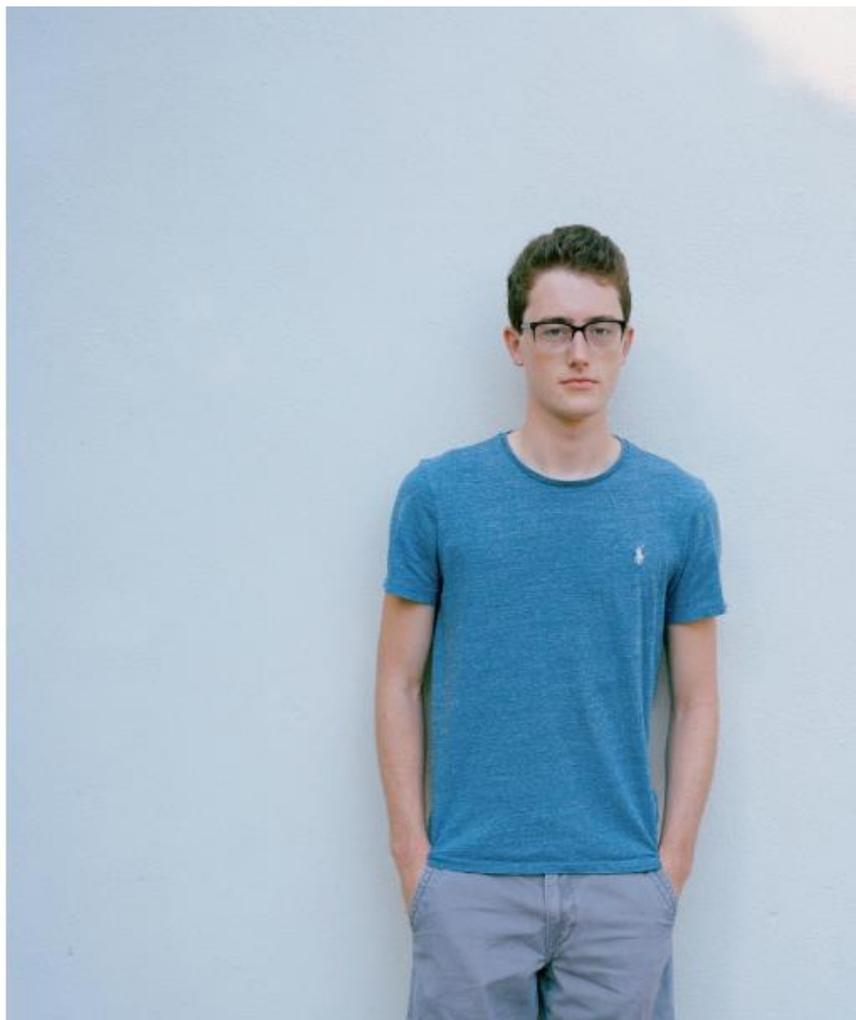


Jonathan Haidt, NYU-Stern

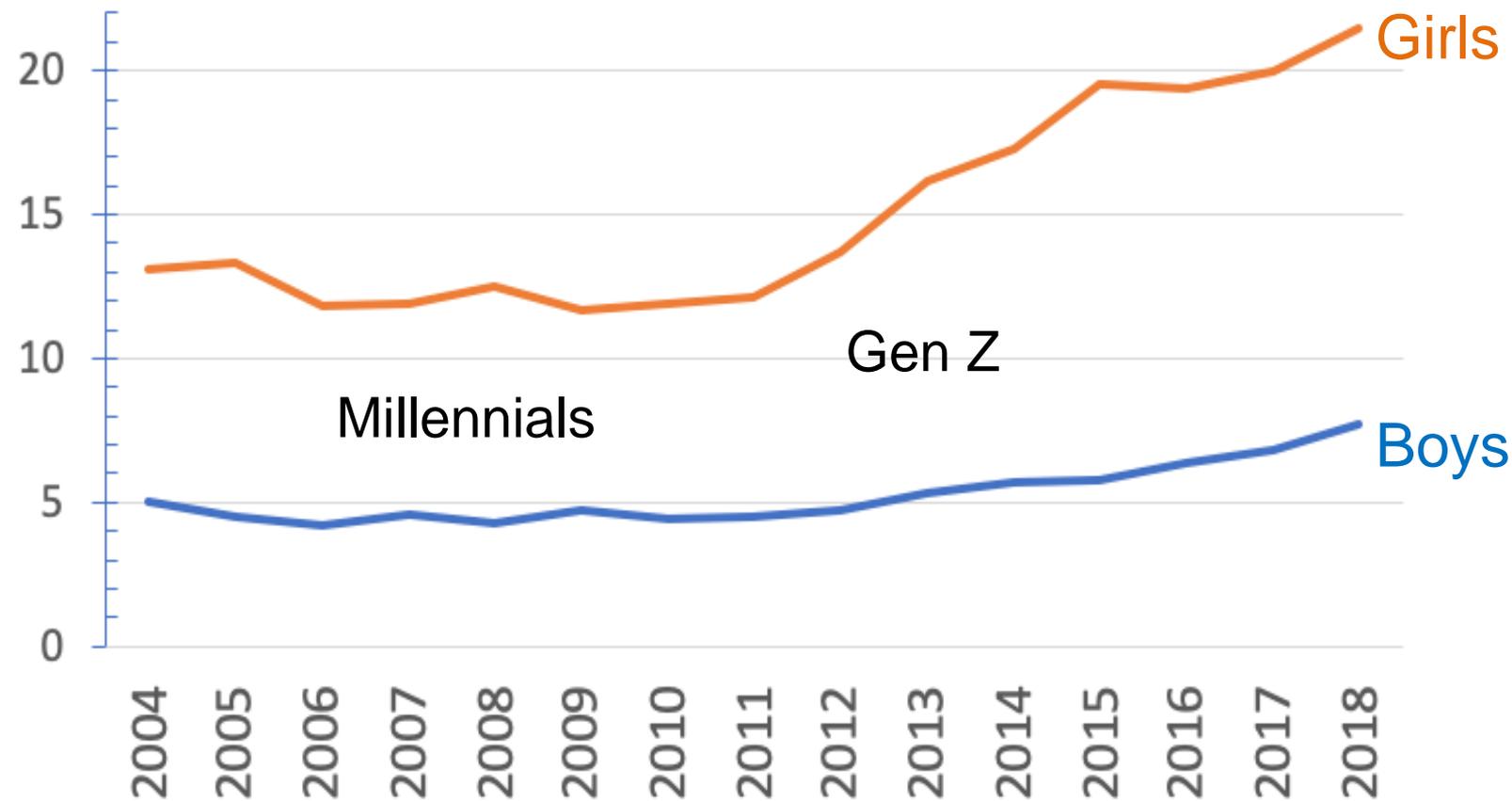
Why Are More American Teenagers Than Ever Suffering From Severe Anxiety?

Parents, therapists and schools are struggling to figure out whether helping anxious teenagers means protecting them or pushing them to face their fears.

By **BENOIT DENIZET-LEWIS** OCT. 11, 2017



% of US Teens who had a major depression in the last year



Source: U.S. National Survey on Drug Use and Health

Younger Americans more likely to report high levels of emotional distress during COVID-19 pandemic

% of U.S. adults who fall into each category of psychological distress



Note: Additive psychological distress scale based on responses to five standard measures of psychological distress adapted from GAD-7, CES-D, Impact to Event Scale-Revised.

Source: Survey of all U.S. adults conducted March 19-24, 2020.

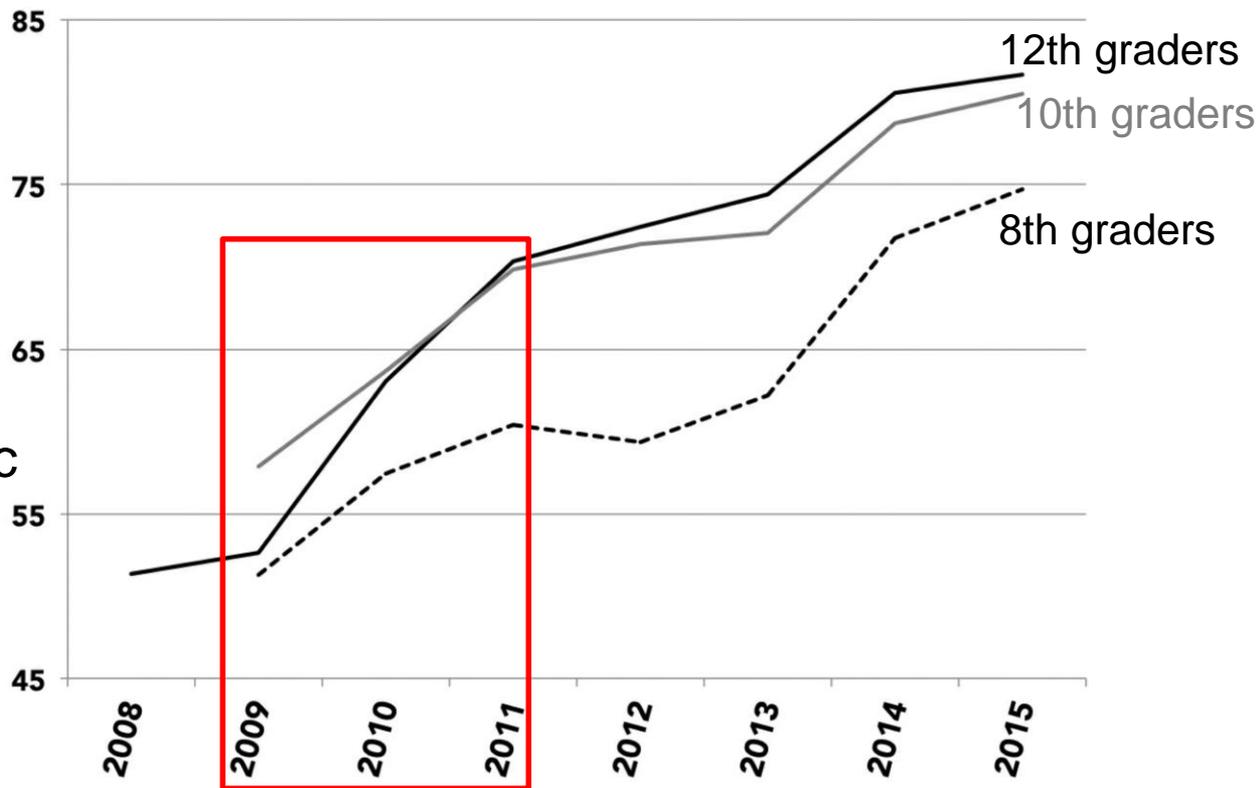
WHY ?

Why is this happening

- At the same time
- In multiple countries
- Biggest impact on pre-teen girls

Social Media Explains the Timing

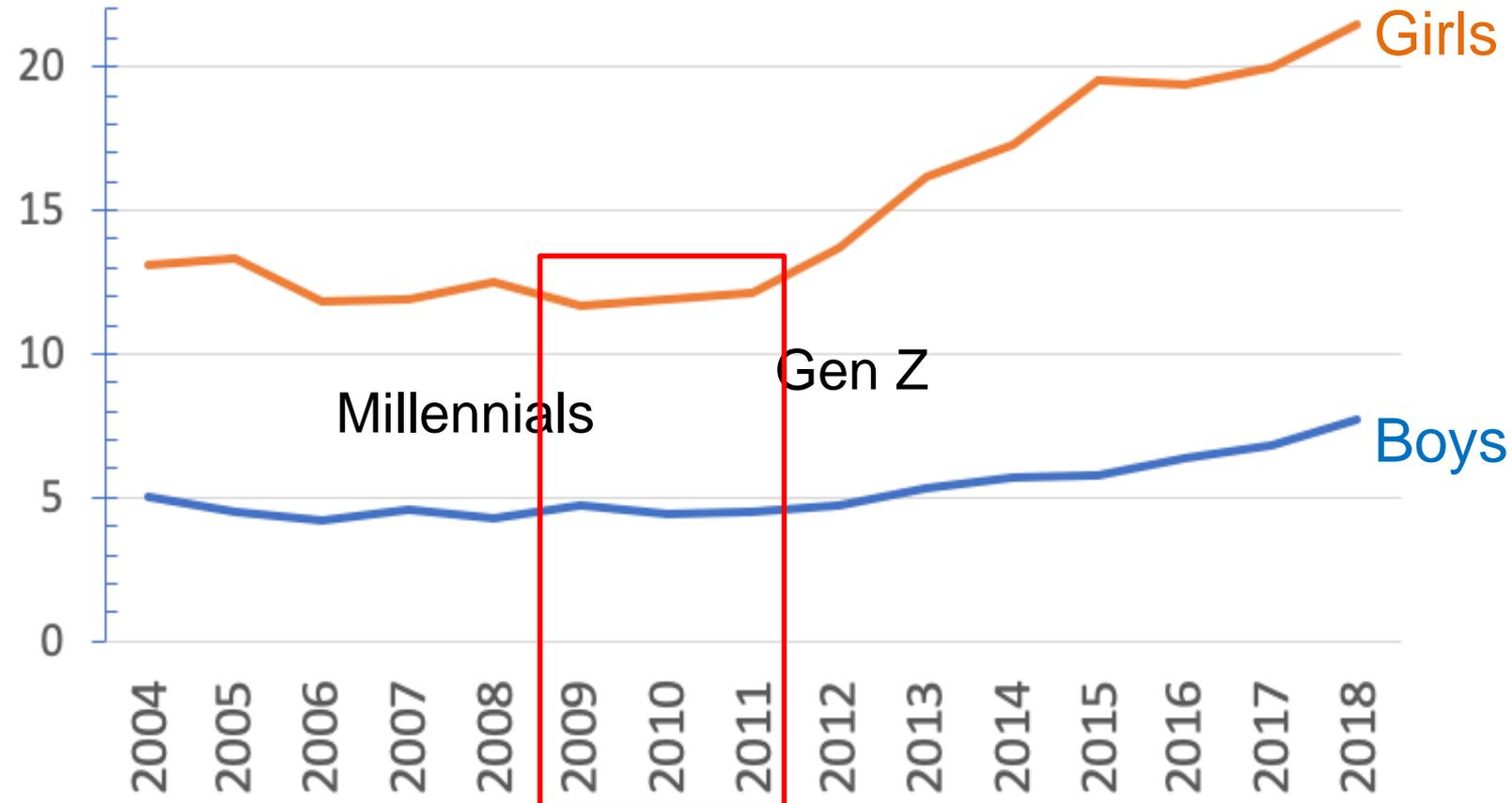
2006: FB opens to all
2007: iPhone
2009: FB adds “Like”
button; Twitter adds
“retweet”; SM becomes
more addictive and toxic
2009-2011: Migration of
teen social life onto
social media in USA



% of 8th, 10th, and 12th graders using social networking sites almost every day.

Source: Monitoring the Future, 2008–2015, graphed by Twenge (2017).

% of US Teens who had a major depression in the last year



Source: U.S. National Survey on Drug Use and Health

Opinion Social media

We're told that too much screen time hurts our kids. Where's the evidence?

The authors of a landmark study argue that social media use has only minor effects on wellbeing. But an entire industry says otherwise

Andrew Przybylski and Amy Orben

Sun 7 Jul 2019 04.00 EDT

The New York Times

Panicking About Your Kids' Phones? New Research Says Don't

A growing number of academics are challenging assumptions about the negative effects of social media and smartphones on children.

Engaging with critics led me to conclude:

Heavy use (not light use)

of social media (not screen time)

Causes increases in depression/anxiety (not other mental health outcomes)

In teens, and especially in girls, and especially in younger teen girls, and especially after 2011.

That's all "dose-response" research; ignores network and emergent effects

Private Communication: a “two way street”



Communication With an Audience



you

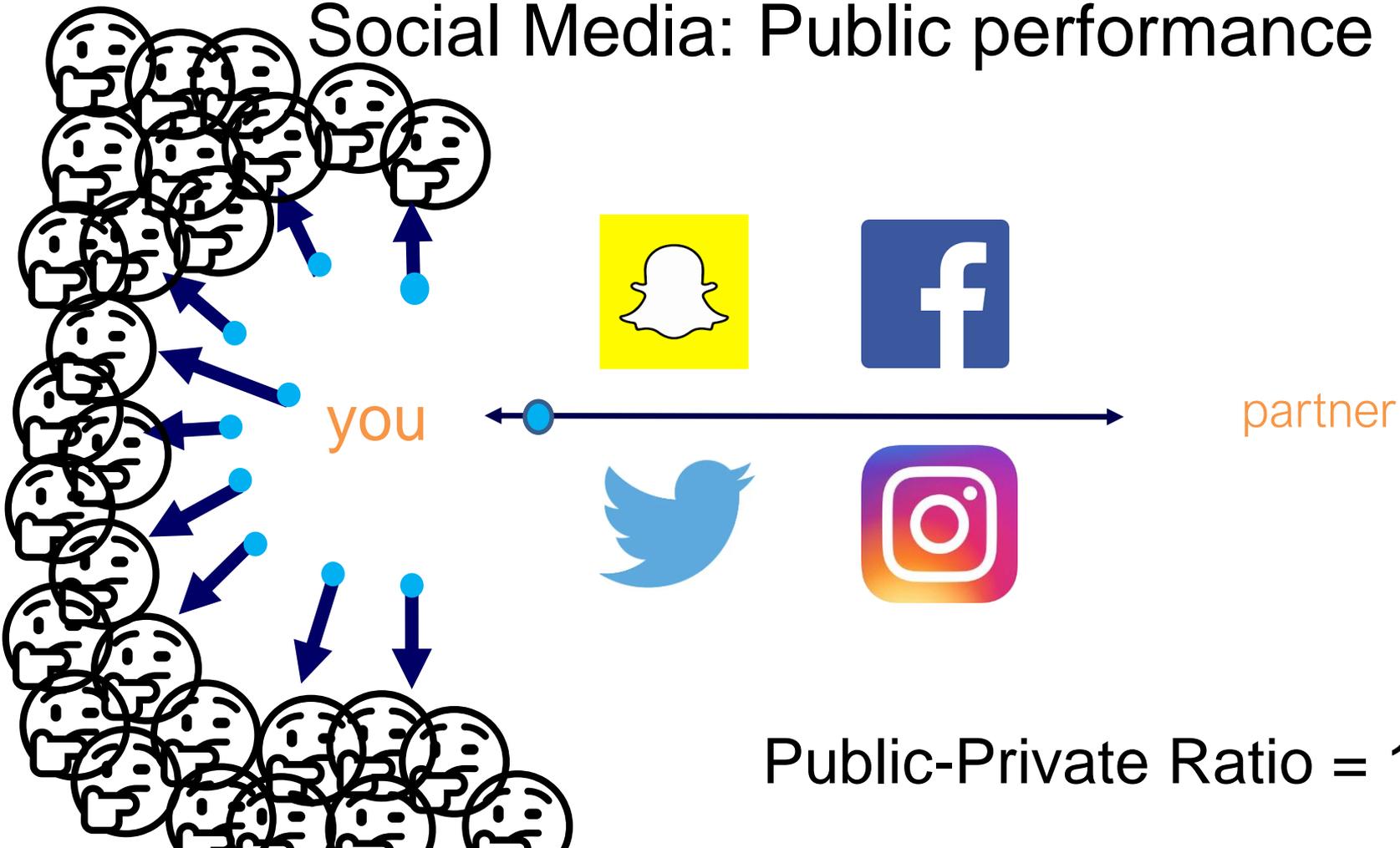


partner



Public-Private Ratio = 2:1

Social Media: Public performance



Public-Private Ratio = 100:1

Psych Principle: People are Anti-Fragile

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





**Nassim
Nicholas
Taleb**

Author of *The Black Swan*

TOUGH TIMES DON'T LAST
TOUGH PEOPLE DO

Antifragile

Things That Gain
From Disorder

'The ultimate model to aspire to'
The Times

Systems that increase in capability, resilience, or robustness as a result of mistakes, faults, attacks, or failures.

"The resilient resists shocks and stays the same; the antifragile gets better."

Examples:

- Bones
- The immune system
- Children



Background for our discussion:

- Rising anxiety and depression since 2011
- Heavy social media use may contribute... and it transforms their social world
- Kids are antifragile, and Americans (and many others) overprotect from real-life autonomous experience



The Sophian

The Independent Newspaper of Smith College

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SEPTEMBER 22, 2016

BY THE SOPHIAN

Walking on Eggshells- How Political Correctness is Changing the Campus Dynamic

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

I began to voice my opinion less often to avoid being berated and judged by a community that claims to represent the free expression of ideas. I learned, along with every other student, to walk on eggshells for fear that I may say something “offensive.” That is the social norm here.

The Three Great Untruths

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