

How can CBS-based interventions decrease affective polarization in political contexts?

Chair: Ebba Karlsson

Panel: Michael Levin, Dennis Tirch, Tony Biglan & Magnus Johansson



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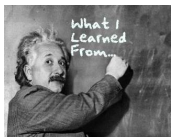
Agenda



- Introduction and background
 - Political psychology and the problem with affective polarization
- Presentation of panel members
- Panel discussion
 - Relevant theoretical frameworks from a CBS perspective?
 - How can we apply this knowledge in society?
 - Meta-reflection – how do we as a community avoid common pitfalls?
- Brief Q&A with participants during each theme



Educational objectives



- Describe theories that explain affective polarization and strategies that are *ineffective* or counterproductive in decreasing polarization
- Describe CBS-based interventions and strategies that aims to increase cooperative and civil behaviors in social and political contexts that can be applied in research and daily life
- Assess outcomes of interventions on different levels and in different contexts

Who am I?

- Clinical psychologist
- Founder of the NGO Poplar
- Teaches political psychology
- Researcher

What is political psychology?

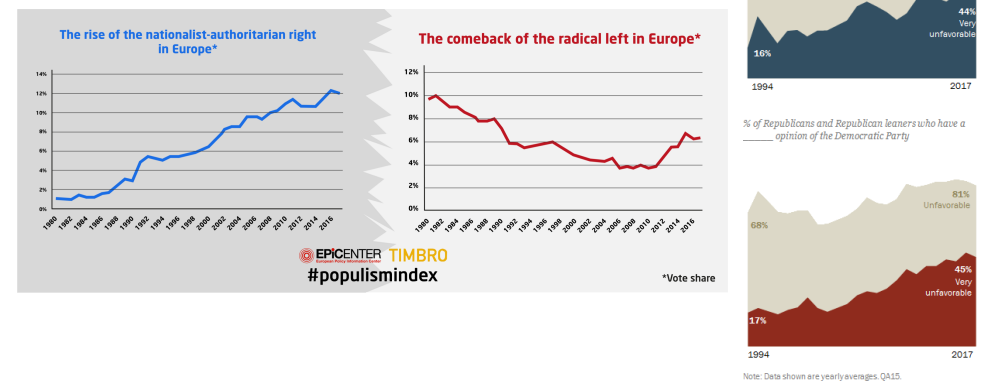
- Interdisciplinary field, including political science and psychology
- Cognitive and social explanations for political behavior
- www.ispp.org
- Not so focused on intervention research



What's the problem?



What's the problem?



An evolutionary perspective

- Our brains evolved to navigate the social environment, not to find the Truth
- *Motivated reasoning* - a kind of psychological self-defense
- Perfectly "rational" if survival depends on being part of a group



So, what NOT to do?



- Education and information is not the answer
- Higher IQ/education → possibly even more biased
- As long as *motivated reasoning* is activated, appealing to logic and reasoning is not going to work

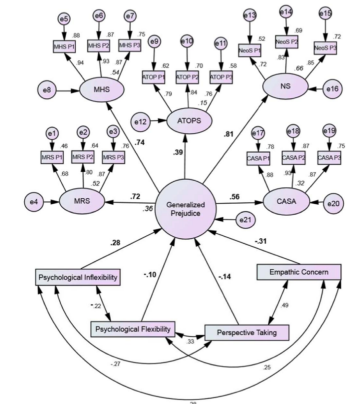
What to do?



- Increase psychological flexibility?
 - Useful ability in political contexts as well?

Michael Levin, PhD, Utah State University

- Generalized prejudice
- Flexible connectedness
 - Perspective taking
 - Empathy
 - Psychological flexibility



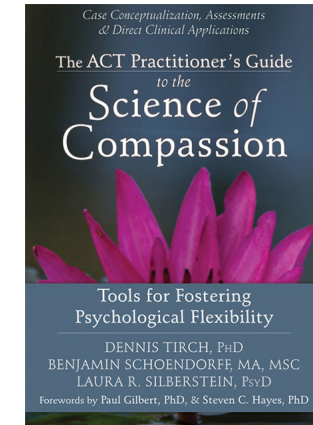
Levin, M. E., Luoma, J. B., Vilardaga, R., Lillis, J., Nobles, R., & Hayes, S. C. (2015). Examining the role of psychological inflexibility, perspective taking, and empathic concern in generalized prejudice. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*

What to do?

- In addition to the skill (PF), motivation is needed
- Investigate compassion training, possibly a complimentary approach, or a more effective method in itself?



Dennis Tirch, PhD, Center for Compassion Focused Therapy

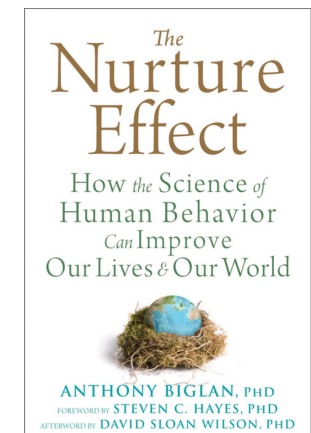
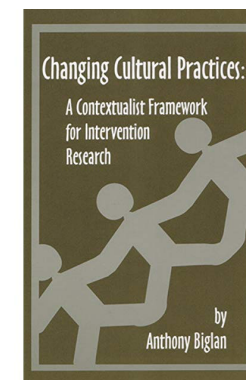


What to do?

- A multi-level CBS perspective
- Create contexts that facilitates civil disagreement
- Changing cultural norms



Tony Biglan, PhD, Oregon Research Institute



Magnus Johansson, PhD Candidate,
OsloMet University

- Creating a measure of Nurturing Environments



Relevant theoretical
frameworks from a CBS
perspective?

How can we apply this
knowledge in society?

How do we as a homogenous
community avoid common
pitfalls?

Thoughts? Ideas? Questions? Feedback?

Thank you!
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