The Psychology of Political Correctness

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Particularly because the term "political correctness" means different things to different people, it is difficult to define. Merriam-Webster's dictionary (eleventh edition) defines PC as "conforming to a belief that language and practices which could offend political sensibilities (as in matters of sex or race) should be eliminated." Though not an authoritative source, Wikipedia's definition reflects the common understanding of PC and its associated controversies:

"Political correctness" . . . is a term used to describe language, ideas, policies, or behavior intended to provide a minimum of offense to racial, cultural, or other identity groups. Political correctness in a critical usage also suggests adherence to political or cultural orthodoxy, and particularly leftwing orthodoxy. Conversely, the term "politically incorrect" is used to refer to language or ideas that may cause offense to some identity groups, or, in a broader sense, that are unconstrained by orthodoxy.

The term itself and its usage are hotly contested. The term "political correctness" is used almost exclusively in a pejorative sense. Those who use the term in a critical fashion often express a concern that public discourse, academia, and the sciences have been dominated by liberal, anti-religious viewpoints . . . Some commentators, usually on the political left, have argued
that the term "political correctness" is a straw man invented by the New Right to discredit what they consider progressive social change, especially around issues of race and gender.¹

In the previous chapter, Klein and Stern provide a social-psychological analysis, based on groupthink theory, of the mechanisms by which university faculties replicate themselves to produce increasingly liberal and less ideologically diverse faculties. In this chapter, we deconstruct the psychological goals and assumptions underlying the foundational principles of the politically correct university—principles that emphasize diversity in race, gender, ethnicity, and sexual orientation but not sociopolitical ideas, and that require "cultural sensitivity" (seen in policies such as speech codes) so that minority and disadvantaged groups do not suffer offense or harm.

Drawing on recent psychological research, we argue that sociopolitical diversity may be the most important form of diversity for achieving the educational benefits that diversity is supposed to produce. In addition, we challenge the assumption that certain viewpoints, research agendas, and speech should be prohibited or curtailed because they will offend and harm minority or disadvantaged groups. Finally, we explore the consequences of political correctness is a political orthodoxy that has a chilling effect on scholarly inquiry and debate. It institutionalizes costly remediation to correct perceived harms against protected groups, but helps some while hurting others (e.g., Lawrence Summers, former president of Harvard).² PC promotes a culture of alleged victimizers and victims rather than one of resilient individuals able to withstand the expected frictions associated with free society.

"Diversity" in Today's Academy

In today's academy, diversity—a concept that originated in higher education—is the central, unifying ethical and pedagogical imperative. The breadth of its application—in faculty hiring, student admissions, scholarship and financial aid distribution, curricula and course design, residence life programs, and extracurricular programs—is remarkable. The diversity doctrine traces its
origins to Justice Powell's opinion in Regents of the University of California v. Bakke, which provided what would later become the U.S. Supreme Court's constitutional rationale for racial preferences in university admissions. The rationale is that racial preferences are justified because of the educational benefits derived from having demographically diverse students (and therefore diverse ideas) in the classroom. Yet the most ardent proponents of diversity frequently dismiss calls for greater intellectual or sociopolitical diversity on campus, seemingly unaware that much of the diversity program was founded on the claim that intellectual diversity in the classroom is essential to good teaching and learning.

In practice, "diversity" in higher education has become a regime that approaches questions through the lens of race, class, and gender, and that tends, almost by definition, to very strongly favor particular political ideologies and to exclude groups that do not share these ideologies. As Klein and Stern document in chapter 2 of this volume, conservatives and libertarians are vastly underrepresented in the academy, especially in the social sciences, humanities, and education. There is less imbalance in fields that are inherently more conservative (e.g., economics, law, business), but there still are significantly more liberal than conservative faculty even in these disciplines. And, although liberals have always outnumbered conservatives in the academy, the trend has been accelerating in recent years—younger faculty are the most politically homogeneous.

The academy's definition and practice of diversity is too narrow and limited; racial, ethnic, and gender diversity are not the only kinds of diversity that we should be striving for. The politically correct university insists that we look beneath the surface of our institutions and social practices to uncover the "false consciousness," power structures, and hidden inequalities it conceals, yet it understands diversity as involving only the most readily apparent physical differences among people. We challenge the assumption that diversity applies only to race, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation, though we readily acknowledge the importance of these forms of diversity. We argue instead for a more inclusive definition of diversity that encompasses intellectual diversity, particularly a diversity of sociopolitical viewpoints in the classroom and in research (especially research on public policy).
In higher education today, the most important differences among people are thought to be racial, ethnic, and gender differences. Three assumptions about human psychology are at the core of this belief:

1) *The Personal Identity Assumption*: People's race, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation are central to their personal identity (or "sense of self") and view of the world, and it is important to recognize and celebrate these identities in pedagogy and university programs.²

2) *The Discrimination Assumption*: People suffer discrimination due to their race, ethnicity, or gender, and this discrimination requires remedies (such as diversity training).⁴

3) *The Educational Benefits Assumption*: With racial, ethnic, and gender diversity comes a diversity of life experiences, values, and ideas; and exposing students to these various perspectives has educational benefits.

As we discuss below, each of these assumptions also applies—and perhaps applies even better—to sociopolitical diversity. Recent psychological research suggests that people's sociopolitical values are a core part of their self-identity, that people are discriminated against on the basis of their sociopolitical beliefs, and that sociopolitical diversity enhances education and scholarship.

**The Personal Identity Assumption**

Because they reflect morality-based differences in how we perceive the world, our sociopolitical values, just like our ethnicity and gender, are fundamental to who we are as individuals. Researchers have found that sociopolitical beliefs are linked to our personality traits and early childhood and family experiences,⁵ and studies show that genetic factors account for about half of the variability in our political beliefs.⁶ The link between
genetic and personality factors and political beliefs suggests that such beliefs derive from, and are basic aspects of, the self. Rooted in our fundamental moral values, sociopolitical worldviews provide meaning and significance to life, and act as a kind of security blanket against life’s uncertainties—even our own mortality. Experimental studies show, for example, that being reminded of death increases both our favorable attitudes toward those having similar political beliefs and our negative attitudes toward those having opposing beliefs. Thus, just as minority students may feel alienated in educational environments lacking minority professors or culturally sensitive course content, conservative students may feel alienated when few (often none) of their professors share or respect their views and when conservative perspectives are excluded from pedagogy. Such alienation decreases the likelihood of academic and vocational success. People often opt out of careers they discover to be inconsistent with, or unsupportive of, their self-identity and fundamental values, and this may partly explain why there are so few conservatives on university faculties. Particularly in the humanities and social sciences (where conservative students report less satisfaction with their courses than their liberal peers), conservative students react negatively to the partisanship that they perceive in these disciplines. Indeed, conservative students have more distant relationships with their professors and apparently have fewer opportunities to conduct research with faculty, as Woessner and Kelly-Woessner show in a previous chapter.

The Discrimination Assumption

People may be discriminated against on the basis of their political beliefs, just as they may be on the basis of ethnicity and gender. People often negatively stereotype those with opposing beliefs and have unconscious biases against them, and these biases drive discriminatory behavior. The aphorism that “opposites attract” could not be more inaccurate. A strong finding from psychological research is that people have greater affinity for those who share their attitudes and often dislike those whose attitudes differ too much from their own, particularly when sociopolitical values are involved. Blood is thicker than water, but sociopolitical values are thicker.
still. Consider a recent study that examined how demographic and attitudinal characteristics of fraternity pledge candidates affect fraternity admissions decisions. The similarity in sociopolitical views between the candidate and fraternity members was more important in admissions decisions than almost any other factor, including race or ethnicity.\textsuperscript{11} Other studies likewise suggest that sociopolitical bias may be stronger than racial or ethnic bias,\textsuperscript{12} perhaps because an opposing sociopolitical worldview challenges our view of the world, our fundamental moral precepts, and ultimately, our own personal identity.

Moreover, research indicates that people make many of their political judgments more or less intuitively, on an emotional level.\textsuperscript{13} Studies show that judgments on sociopolitical issues are better predicted by people's emotional reactions to the issues than by their perceptions of the actual effects of policy alternatives.\textsuperscript{14} Because sociopolitical attitudes tend to be deep-seated, emotionally driven, linked to fundamental personality attributes and core values, and applied in decision making in a largely intuitive and automatic fashion,\textsuperscript{15} there is a human tendency to be biased and prejudiced against the sociopolitical "other."\textsuperscript{16}

Indeed, a certain closed-mindedness exists among many liberal academics who espouse tolerance as a metavalue but who are intolerant of conservatives and conservative views. To succeed in the academy, conservative students and young faculty members frequently feel that they must accommodate themselves to the views of the majority of the faculty. They feel that the academic culture is hostile to their politics, and they hesitate in expressing or exploring nonliberal viewpoints.\textsuperscript{17} Rothman and Lichter's finding (see chapter 4) that conservative academics are underplaced in the academic meritocracy relative to their liberal peers also has implications here; the lack of political diversity among faculty may result in discrimination against conservative scholars in faculty hiring.\textsuperscript{18}

The Educational Benefits Assumption

As the U.S. Supreme Court made clear in the 2003 \textit{Grutter v. Bollinger} decision, affirmative action is legally justified only because of the educational benefits produced by diversity.\textsuperscript{19}
That sociopolitical diversity enhances student learning as well as faculty scholarship has been documented; research demonstrates that exposure to multiple perspectives stimulates critical thinking and creativity, produces more complex reasoning styles and attitudes, improves understanding and decision-making quality, and facilitates values clarification and moral development. In addition, research has shown that people who are part of sociopolitically diverse groups tend to be willing to consider ideas different from their own.

Thus, the political imbalance in academic research on political or public policy issues, and in research in the social sciences and humanities, is unfortunate. Studies show that a scholar's values significantly affect the research questions asked, the way such questions are framed and defined, the interpretation of findings, and even seemingly objective matters like choice of methods for data collection and analysis. If one approaches problems only from a liberal perspective, as the overwhelming majority of academics do, one is likely to get only liberal answers. The fact that the professoriate is overwhelmingly liberal is necessarily going to lead to a much narrower and more myopic research agenda than otherwise would be the case, thereby also narrowing the range of ideas to which students are exposed. Moreover, politically conservative students who wish to explore conservative research paradigms find that there are few, if any, mentors with whom they can work, since their professors are not engaged in, or receptive to, such research. Perhaps this is why conservative students have fewer opportunities to do research with their professors, as documented in an earlier chapter by Woessner and Kelly-Woessner.

The Importance of Sociopolitical Diversity

To be sure, differences in values and life experiences often accompany differences in race, ethnicity, and gender, but the same is true for sociopolitical differences. If we are sensitive to the former, we should be sensitive to the latter. In any event, the demographic or psychological variability within a particular group can be as great as or greater than the variability among groups. In addition, research shows that there is virtually no relationship between demographic diversity and attitudinal diversity. Race, ethnicity,
gender, or sexual orientation is not necessarily the most relevant influence on personal identity and worldview. Each is just one of several influences among a multitude, including the individual's sociopolitical values. To argue that sociopolitical differences cannot be equated with differences like race and gender—and therefore that sociopolitical diversity is not important in higher education—flies in the face of a sizeable and compelling body of research showing the powerful and pervasive effects of sociopolitical value differences on interpersonal relationships (including discriminatory practices) and human performance in school and workplace settings. If, as multicultur­lists believe, human identity is culturally dependent, then sociopolitical values are an important part of that culture and identity. We also must recognize the inevitable discriminatory effects of liberal groupthink, which excludes or marginalizes conservatives and their views. The academy's multicultural project cannot succeed when diversity is defined to include every kind of difference except the one that may matter most.

The PC University's Assumptions about Psychological Harm

PC is foundational to the identity politics that taxonomizes the world into oppressor and victim classes, and then defines the work that needs to be done to remediate the oppression. It is based on a revelatory epistemology associated with a liberal political ideology instead of a scientific ideology. After PC "consciousness raising," one comes to see the world in terms of oppressors and victims. At the outset, we note that this taxonomy poses significant conceptual problems. There is uncertainty about how to parse cultures: the term "Native American" lumps together four hundred distinct Indian nations and tribes; the broad term "Asian-American" does injustice to all the variety of cultures encompassed under the rubric "Asian." In turn, we are uncertain about which groups constitute the oppressor and victim classes; the two become fungible according to the beliefs and motivations of those in the academy charged with enforcing the PC ethic. (Why, for example, are Jews not typically included under higher education's PC umbrella, given historical and contemporary anti-Semitism?)

In viewing human interactions through a political lens (e.g., unequal power relations) and according to the psychological reactions of members
of the victim classes, the PC university relies upon two core psychological assumptions:

1) The Offense/Harm Assumption: Certain viewpoints, activities (particularly speech), or policies offend or harm members of particular groups (usually minority or disadvantaged groups).

2) The Intervention Assumption: The psychological offense or harm is of such a magnitude or kind that preventing or prohibiting it—and in some cases, even punishing the alleged perpetrators—is justified.

Consider, for example, campus speech codes, such as that at Texas Tech, which bans any speech that can cause “reasonable apprehension” or “psychological harm,” or that is “humiliating, demeaning or degrading to any member of the university community.”28 Or consider Texas A&M’s code, which prohibits speech that fails to show “respect for personal feelings.”29 Until a lawsuit was brought challenging its constitutionality, the speech code of the State University of New York at Brockport contained a laundry list of prohibited conduct, including “calling someone an old bag” and telling “jokes making fun of any protected group.”30 As these speech codes and many other university programs and practices illustrate, First Amendment guarantees of free speech are not always available in academia, the very place free speech should be valued.

In addition, PC often implicitly (and sometimes explicitly) contains a third assumption:

3) The Unconscious Assumption: The PC transgressor may be unaware of his or her prejudices because such attitudes are often unconsciously held.31 The alleged perpetrator’s true report of having no intention to offend or harm is therefore insufficient and even irrelevant.

Thus, PC relies on the psychological assumptions that individuals will feel offended and/or be harmed psychologically by violations of PC, that often the offender is not conscious of possessing the prejudices that gave rise to
the offense, and that interventions are necessary to prevent or correct the harm. But let us consider some alternative hypotheses:

1) The offense/harm claim is inaccurate (i.e., there is no harm).
2) The offense/harm claim is not objectively true but is the result of the psychological makeup of those claiming harm.
3) The offense/harm claims and interventions serve to satisfy other individual or group psychological needs; they serve as stalking horses for identity politics and a liberal political orthodoxy disguised as a psychological issue.
4) The intervention will fail to have a restorative effect or will perhaps have even a net harmful effect, on the alleged victims and/or perpetrators.

We explore these hypotheses in the following sections.

Evidence of Harm

Empirical research is needed to determine whether purported violations of PC actually do cause harm. We do not know what percentages of people are offended or harmed by these violations, the magnitude of offense or harm, or the contexts and boundaries of these regularities. In addition, there is no research on the awareness hypothesis: we do not know in how many cases harm was intended and in how many cases unintended. The thresholds for offense and harm should be explicated: Is the victim devastated or just mildly annoyed? Does the victim's self-esteem drop ten points on some scale for at least six months? Does the offense produce posttraumatic stress disorder? It may be the case that while there is offense or harm, it does not reach a significant bar. "I am uncomfortable with . . ." would be a low bar for offense but one that is often used in the world of PC. This bar makes false and dangerous assumptions about the psychological comfortableness of life, freedom, and human interaction. By contrast, "I am traumatized by . . ." would be a high bar, though we hypothesize that diagnosable full or partial posttraumatic stress disorder as a result of (even repeated) PC offenses would be exceedingly rare.
To be sure, a body of research on what is known as "stereotype threat" suggests that the academic and work performance of minorities is impaired by their exposure to negative societal stereotypes, and this might be seen as an argument for prohibiting speech or scholarship that asserts these stereotypes. (Under this theory, Lawrence Summers's suggestion that men and women might have different abilities in math and science had measurable effects on women's success in scientific careers because it reinforced gender stereotypes.) But scholarly inquiry and debate cannot be constrained by attempts to protect people from the alleged harmful effects of scientific knowledge. As Harvard psychology professor Stephen Pinker says, "It's hard to imagine any aspect of public life where ignorance or delusion is better than an awareness of the truth, even an unpleasant one." This is especially true in our colleges and universities, places whose very existence is predicated on the academic freedom to explore and debate a diversity of ideas. In any event, we do not know what kinds of speech and ideas actually are harmful, the type and degree of harm caused, or how the harm may vary across individuals and contexts. Most importantly, we do not know whether greater harm is caused by suppressing "offensive" ideas than by airing and debating them.

Or consider the common assumption in PC that offensive speech (or policies or practices deemed to be noninclusive) will lower the self-esteem of minority or disadvantaged groups. Not only is there a lack of direct empirical evidence to support this assumption, but recent psychological research has called into question the value of self-esteem. By causing people to overestimate their strengths and abilities, high self-esteem may have negative effects on academic and job performance and engender a narcissistic self-concept. In any case, efforts to protect or improve the self-esteem of certain groups may be a zero-sum game: self-esteem is a scarce and contested resource, which individuals [can] gain at the expense of others... Because individuals are, in part, the source of the self-esteem of others, not everyone can attain the highest self-esteem."

Problems with Self-Reports of Harm

Like many psychological experiences, the offense and harm claimed by members of protected groups as a result of particular speech or sociopolitical views...
is usually not objectively observable, but is based instead upon self-report by individuals or groups. Self-reports alone, however, cannot be regarded as authoritative. People have complex motivations that often make their self-reports suspect, even when they are making every effort to be truthful.38 What, then, is the proper role of self-report in these offense and harm claims, and what other evidence should be probative?

First, we should consider who is making the claim of offense or harm. No doubt, some would argue that examining the person(s) or group(s) claiming harm is itself offensive, being nothing more than “victim-blaming.”39 But it is relevant, indeed necessary, to do so. Aristotle suggested that in any argument, three issues are relevant: 1) logos—the logic of the argument; 2) pathos—the emotion associated with the case; and 3) ethos—the character of the speaker.40 In claims of psychological injury, ethos is always an issue. Because the offended person is making a claim about his or her internal states, that person’s psychological makeup is relevant.

Typically, only some members of the relevant class of individuals report offense or harm. Why are these individuals offended while others in the group are not? Perhaps they have “raised consciousnesses,” or are uniquely vulnerable because of past experiences, or are more sensitive or assertive. But some claimants also may be psychologically constituted in problematic ways that go beyond having heightened sensitivity. The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, the taxonomy of mental disorders used by mental health professionals, includes a relatively common class of disorders known as “personality disorders.” A few of these disorders may, in some cases, be implicated in the perception or reporting of offense or harm:

- People with narcissistic personality disorder have “a grandiose sense of self-importance,” “require excessive admiration,” have “a sense of entitlement,” and are “interpersonally exploitive.” They easily sustain “narcissistic injuries” and are readily offended by any comments or behaviors that they perceive to be critical.41

- People with histrionic personality disorder are “uncomfortable in situations in which they are not the center of attention,” “show self-dramatization,” are “suggestible,” and “often act out a role (e.g., ‘victim’ or ‘princess’) in their relationships with others.”42
They may be attracted to the drama of a PC injury for the attention that it provides them.

- People with antisocial personality disorder have a personality makeup characterized by "deceitfulness, irritability and aggressiveness," "a lack of remorse," and "consistent irresponsibility." They may be attracted to the personal gain derived by claiming a PC injury.

- People with borderline personality disorder have an "unstable self-image," "affective instability due to marked reactivity of mood," "inappropriate intense anger," "transient stress-related paranoid ideation," and "a tendency to see offense where there is none." Such characteristics may predispose these individuals to easily take offense and to (perhaps angrily) demand some sort of intervention.

To be clear, we are not suggesting that most PC injury claims are associated with these disorders—only that in some cases those claiming injury may be predisposed toward these disorders, which make them more likely to perceive offense or allege harm to achieve personal gain. Epidemiological studies indicate that about 5 to 10 percent of the population has at least one of these personality disorders, which often co-occur.

Other Psychological Needs Served by PC

Other psychological needs may also be served by PC. Psychological theory and research in the social learning tradition suggest that some maladaptive interpersonal interactions (e.g., those between a parent and oppositional child) occur, in part, because the participants are using coercive control instead of more positive control techniques (e.g., positive reinforcement, communicating rationales). The coercively oriented parent resorts to threats in order to get the oppositional child to obey. The child uses tantrums and other punishing behaviors in a reciprocal attempt to coerce the parent to terminate demands for obedience. This leads to a downward spiral, wherein a great deal of negative emotion is generated as both parties increase their attempts at coercive control.
PC “Helps” Some by Hurting Others

Finally, PC is paradoxical and self-defeating: it seeks to decrease offensive acts toward certain groups through offensive acts toward other groups—that is, it helps some by hurting others. In another chapter in this volume, Wood refers to the “new kind of aristocracy” created by PC, with its hierarchy of privilege based on perceived victimization. This hierarchy also entails a class of victimizers who are accused, explicitly or implicitly, of a range of crimes.

Consider diversity training programs, which are a central feature of the freshman orientation and residence life programs (as well as many other programs) at colleges and universities today. In 2007, for example, the University of Delaware implemented a sensitivity training program that was mandatory for all students living in the university dormitories. The highly ideological program (which had won awards from the American College Personnel Association) was discontinued after protests from students and alumni. It included individual and group sessions with students, training for resident assistants in how to confront students resistant to culturally sensitive viewpoints, and a “zero-tolerance” policy toward any speech or behavior deemed to be insensitive (with incident reports written about students who expressed non-PC viewpoints or resisted the sensitivity training). Attitudinal questionnaires were periodically administered to students, and a file kept on each student’s attitudes and progress toward achieving the program’s educational objectives, which were to raise students’ consciousness about racism, sexism, homophobia, and white oppression. To meet the educational objectives, students were required to recognize, for example, “that systemic oppression exists in our society” and that “white culture is a melting pot of greed, guys, guns, and god.” The training materials defined a racist as “one who is both privileged and socialized on the basis of race by a white supremacist (racist) system. The term applies to all white people (i.e., people of European descent) living in the United States, regardless of class, gender, religion, culture, or sexuality. By this definition, people of color cannot be racists.”

The apparent goal, as one student seemed to suggest, was “to make us feel guilty about the privileges we have, and to convince us of our part in white supremacy... I’m being told it’s wrong to be a white male. The whole system being used seems to be trying to change the students into all holding...
the same views. . . . This is in no way diversity."53 In the sessions, students were required to confess their privilege or oppression and were asked questions about their political views and sexual orientation. Students were strongly urged to participate in various liberal advocacy activities and to “examine [their] textbooks and course work to determine whether [they are] equitable, representative, and multicultural.”54

Consider also the behavior of the professoriate in the Duke lacrosse case. For many Duke professors, “whose careers [had] been devoted toward imposing a race/class/gender worldview on the academy . . . the lacrosse case was too tempting not to exploit. White males who played a sport associated with the Eastern elite were accused of raping a poor, black, local woman.”55 Professors made public speeches and comments opining on the players’ guilt and bad character. No fewer than eighty-eight Duke professors (including 80 percent of professors in African American studies, 72 percent in women’s studies, 60 percent in cultural anthropology, and many professors in the English, foreign languages, history, and art departments) placed an advertisement in the Duke newspaper stating that the university was undergoing a “social disaster” because the students “know themselves to be objects of racism and sexism.” English professor Houston Baker published a letter demanding that the university expel the entire lacrosse team, which he said had been given “license to rape, maraud, deploy hate speech, and feel proud of themselves in the bargain.” His letter repeatedly disparaged the race of the players. But none of these professors retracted their comments or apologized after the players’ innocence was proven, the charges dismissed, and prosecutor Mike Nifong indicted for prosecutorial misconduct. On the contrary, one prominent Duke professor accused the players of perjury and hate crimes. His evidence? They were embodiments of “the perfect white self.”56

All of this leads us to conclude with an observation about the psychological world created by PC. There is an ongoing debate about whether psychological interventions should focus on people’s weaknesses and attempt to shore those up or identify and build upon their strengths. The latter approach, so-called “positive psychology,”57 has been in ascendance in the last few decades, partly in reaction to the older view of individuals as vulnerable and weak. Perhaps the proponents of PC should adopt such an approach. Instead of assuming that life’s bumps require ameliorative
interventions for victims and/or punitive interventions for offenders, the message could be—as research indeed demonstrates—that individuals are often resilient and frequently do not require interventions to save them from life's slings and arrows.

Indeed, not only does PC help some by hurting others, but it may ultimately end up hurting the very people it tries to help.


18. Studies in organizational behavior show that employers (e.g., academic departments in universities) tend to hire those who share their values. See Redding, *Sociopolitical Diversity in Psychology,* 210.


22. Redding, "Sociopolitical Diversity in Psychology."

23. See Mannix and Neale, "What Differences Make a Difference?" 44.


25. At the same time, however, the boundary conditions of "diversity" require definition. Diversity for diversity's sake is problematic. It needs to be constrained by some criteria for assessing legitimacy and value, which is no easy task.

29. Ibid.
30. Ibid.
33. In recent years, psychologists have begun to investigate not just the process and negative effects of stereotyping but also the degree to which stereotypes may be accurate. See, for example, Redding, "Bias on Prejudice." This emerging research suggests that some stereotypes are accurate, that they do not necessarily exaggerate group differences, and that relying in part on stereotypes does not necessarily produce inaccurate judgments about individuals. See Lee J. Assim and Clark R. McCauley, eds., Stereotype Accuracy: Toward Appreciating Group Differences (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 1995). Nonetheless, it is difficult, even dangerous, to talk about group differences... Such candor is bound to provoke accusations of insensitivity and even racism... To evade the accusations and to be politically correct, social scientists avoid a frank discussion of significant cultural differences." Victor Ottati and Yuh-Ting Lee, "Accuracy: A Neglected Component of Stereotype Research," in ibid., 29-62.
35. There is a long list of politically incorrect topics in science, including questions such as these: Do men and woman differ in aptitudes and emotions? Are suicide bombers mentally healthy and morally motivated? Was the decrease in the crime rate during the 1990s due in part to the legalization of abortion? Is the average IQ of Western populations declining because less intelligent people are having more children than smarter people? Although these topics are highly controversial, there is sufficient scientific evidence supporting each of these hypothesis to merit further scientific investigation, and any findings could have potentially significant scientific and policy implications. Stephen Pinker, "In Defense of Dangerous Ideas," Chicago Sun-Times, July 15, 2007.
40. See On Rhetoric.
42. Ibid., 711-14.
43. Ibid., 701-5.
44. Ibid., 706-10.
47. Christina Hoff Sommers and Sally Satel, One Nation under Therapy (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2006).
51. Quoted in Taylor, "Academia's Pervasive PC Rot."
52. Quoted in Kissel, "Habits of Mind" (emphasis added).
53. Quoted in ibid.
54. Ibid.
55. Taylor, "Academia's Pervasive PC Rot."