

CIVITAS

The Radical Progressive University Guide



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*'To acknowledge our faults when we are blamed,
is modesty; to discover them to one's friends in
ingenuousness, is confidence; but to preach them
to all the world, if one does not take care, is pride.'*

Confucius

*'Pride goeth before destruction, and
an haughty spirit before a fall.'*

Proverbs 16:18

Preface

In response to this piece, critics suggested that the fact that some of the data collection rested on media reporting undermined the validity of the research and its conclusions. The argument went that bigger and better universities attracted more media attention and, therefore, the index and the subsequent correlations were actually measuring media interest not radical progressivism.

The methodology, as stated, did encompass reports from media sources but also material taken directly from university websites. Some variables were more reliant on media reporting than others. But the fact of the correlations between a media-reliant variable like trigger-warnings and variables mostly if not entirely sourced directly, such as the transgender-related regulations on speech, anonymous reporting, and Race Equality Charter membership, and the fact that they load onto the same factor, affirm their validity as measurements of the same underlying latent variable.

Any variable that loads onto the same factor in the model used can be said to be a valid measurement of radical progressivism in this light. This is known as 'convergent validity', whereby theoretically-linked variables that correlate, affirm each other as measuring what they purport to measure. This would suggest it is not the case that the data reflect media attention but rather that media attention simply reflects what is going on in the real world. In any case, were it actually true that we were measuring media attention and that there are many of the lesser universities where radical progressivism is present but unmeasured in our data, then this would mean the correlation goes away and the problem attested to in this report is much worse than we had feared.

Other critics expressed surprise that certain universities were higher or lower than their own experiences would suggest. Perhaps this is fair criticism and that this study is constrained by its methodology. Better data would mean more accurate measurement but in mitigation; what we tried to measure was not easily measured. On the other hand, personal but inevitably limited experience is no substitute for a wider and more objective empirical study.

Ultimately, this research does draw attention to a problem in universities, namely their politicisation which deserves more scrutiny and debate. Whatever its limitations, which are by no means damning as its most ardent (and often politically partisan) critics suggested, it has brought more attention to this issue – which surely is something to be welcomed given the vast sums of public money poured into our universities.

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Summary

This briefing assesses the prevalence of so-called radical progressive ideas and practices in British universities.

It is found that 87 out of 140 universities had references to trigger warnings, or content warnings, or 'content notes' – 62 per cent.

79 out of 140 universities had mentions of 'white privilege' in guidance offered to staff and students or on their websites – 56 per cent.

82 out of 140 universities offered materials, training or resources on 'anti-racism' on their websites – 59 per cent.

Drawing on this and data from past Civitas work, an index of 'radical progressivism' is developed. The universities where this is strongest are 1. Cambridge and 2. Oxford.

A strong correlation is evidenced whereby the more elite a university is, the more radical progressive it is ($r=0.56$). To a lesser extent, where students are less satisfied, universities tend to be more radical progressive ($r=-0.31$).

High tariff universities, the most prestigious for students, show on average higher levels of radical progressivism. For instance, 81 per cent of high tariff universities use trigger warnings, compared to just 46 per cent of low tariff ones. 74 per cent of high tariff universities endorse the concept of white privilege, compared to 48 per cent of low tariff. 74 per cent of high tariff universities offer anti-racism training compared to 41 per cent of low tariff universities.

To assess the consistency of universities' new found moralism, we examined the extent of their dealings with China, a country that has been accused of genocide, forced labour, and oppression of religious and ethnic minorities.

117 out of 140 (84 per cent) have significant ties to China, which include research partnerships with Chinese universities and corporations, campuses and offices in mainland China, and Chinese government-sponsored PhD programmes.

Among the top 20 most radical progressive universities, six have so-called 'Confucius Institutes'. These have been accused of being Chinese state propaganda tools as well as intimidation of Chinese students studying in the United Kingdom. The prime minister has pledged to shut these down. Were they randomly distributed, we would expect to see four.

Cambridge, the most radical progressive university, has received £73 million in donations and research grants from Chinese sources, including Huawei, over five years. At the same time, it decries itself for any money that might have been taken in the past derived from the slave trade and rushes to remove artifacts, however tangentially related.

It is concluded that our universities are playing a game of deep hypocrisy, that puts at risk academic freedom while encouraging students into a form of political radicalism that sees race as essential over and above individual merit. Trigger warnings have been shown to have no efficacy and may make matters worse, while 'anti-racism' and 'white privilege' are controversial and contentious ideas that fall apart on inspection.

Universities in the name of 'equality' risk their own ruin through embracing a divisive political ideology, while drawing on vast subsidies from the taxpayer to fund this, since it is thought almost half of student loans will be written off.

Introduction

This briefing is part of a series on the new academic radicalism. It is hard to grasp this intellectually since we are talking about a mutation and splicing of past radicalisms that include Marxism, postmodernism, feminism, Freudianism, and Maoism. While the influences are there, not one of these words is sufficient to sum up this new phenomenon in full. For want of a better term, this briefing refers to ‘radical progressivism’ as it is manifested in ideas and institutionally within our universities.

This can be thought of as a heightened political sensitivity to questions of race, sex, sexuality, and history. It is a worldview that sees human beings as psychologically fragile and suffering from ‘trauma’. They are better understood as members of social groups, not individuals, who exist in ‘power relations’ of dominance and submission. The trauma of individuals stems from their groups’ oppression.

The established academic canon is seen as the perspective of dominant social groups, purposely built to exclude the oppressed and justify their oppression. As Sensoy and DiAngelo have written, ‘All texts are embedded with ideology; the ideology embedded in most mainstream texts functions to reproduce historical relations of unequal power’.¹ Dominant social groups are said to have ‘privilege’ and ‘seeing themselves reflected’ in the classics of literature and science is part of this.

The new radicalism is a form of activism that will tend to make the following demands: protection from upsetting ideas or words that are deemed ‘hateful’ or ‘triggering’, academic staff and students selected in proportion to their population shares not necessarily their accomplishments, that members of dominant groups ‘check their privilege’ and become ‘allies’ to those they oppress, that the curriculum be rewritten to include ‘marginalised’ forms of knowledge, that training is given so that students and academics can spot and control their ‘unconscious bias’, and that a constant vigilance is maintained over departments by politically-minded academics, students, and bureaucrats.

Past Civitas briefings have looked at the numbers of regulations on speech within universities as well as assessing the extent of so-called ‘decolonisation’, anonymous reporting, and participation in Advance HE’s Race Equality Charter.² This publication looks to measure the extent to which universities are utilising ‘trigger warnings’ as well as endorsing the concept of ‘white privilege’. It also assesses the extent to which they are offering ‘anti-racism’ training or guidance to staff and students. Data were collected through a census of universities’ websites as well as reports in the national and local media. These are then combined with data collected for past briefings to produce an index of university radical progressivism. A ranking of the most and least radical progressive universities is then presented.

Correlation analysis then reveals it is the best and most prestigious universities that tend to be the most radical progressive, as well as, to some extent, those where students are least satisfied. Finally, we assess the extent to which universities live up to their new-found moralism by examining their dealings with China, a country that might very well be accused of slavery, genocide, oppression of minorities, and colonialism.

This briefing would not have been possible without the input and painstaking research of Dr Jim McConalogue and Rachel Neal, both of Civitas, on this and past papers.

1 Ozlem Sensoy and Robin DiAngelo, (2017) Is Everyone Really Equal?

2 <https://www.civitas.org.uk/press/academic-freedom-in-our-universities-the-best-and-the-worst> ;
<https://www.civitas.org.uk/publications/free-speech-and-decolonisation-in-british-universities> ;
<https://www.civitas.org.uk/publications/is-the-curbng-of-free-speech-in-universities-most-prevalent-in-those-with-inflated-diversity-grievance-bureaucracies> ;

‘Trigger warnings’, ‘white privilege’, and ‘anti-racism training’ – what are they?

i. Trigger warnings

According to a BBC article, these are ‘a sentence or a few words to caution readers about the content which will follow’. It continues, ‘a trigger is something which causes instant distress in a vulnerable person.’³ They may be applied to audio and visual material, online or offline, as well as written. Lukianoff and Haidt have written that,

‘...some students have called for warnings that Chinua Achebe’s Things Fall Apart describes racial violence and that F. Scott Fitzgerald’s The Great Gatsby portrays misogyny and physical abuse, so that students who have been previously victimised by racism or domestic violence can choose to avoid these works, which they believe might “trigger” a recurrence of past trauma.’⁴

It is estimated that around half of academic institutions in the United States use these.⁵

Proponents argue that trigger warnings allow students with past trauma to brace themselves before encountering subject matter that may upset them. Kate Manne, a philosopher at Cornell University, writes, ‘With appropriate warnings in place, vulnerable students may be able to employ effective anxiety management techniques, by meditating or taking prescribed medication.’⁶ Others contend they help students avoid harmful material and have educational benefits. Critics, such as Lukianoff and Haidt, counter that they only serve to create the fragility they hope to assuage.⁷ Trigger warnings are seen as belittling and infantilising to their critics, with sociologist Frank Furedi describing them as ‘part of a process of turning students into patients.’⁸

One ‘meta-analysis’ study by Bridgland, Jones, and Bellet concluded that the bulk of the scientific literature showed trigger warnings neither increased nor decreased distress, do not encourage avoidance (and may even attract people including those with PTSD symptoms), did not improve education, and cause people to feel more anxious before even seeing the thing they are warned about.⁹ According to author Payton Jones, the better way to treat trauma is instead through therapies that are evidenced as beneficial, such as ‘prolonged exposure therapy’ and ‘cognitive processing therapy’.¹⁰

There is also the suspicion that these sorts of things can be used politically to mark certain works or opinions as standing out, deviant, and in some way forbidden. (See, for instance, attempts to force trigger warnings on pro-life students’ stalls at Oxford student fairs.)¹¹ Trigger warnings may also sometimes be called ‘content warnings’ or ‘content notes’.

3 <https://www.bbc.com/news/blogs-ouch-26295437>

4 <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2015/09/the-coddling-of-the-american-mind/399356>

5 <https://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2016/09/07/492979242/half-of-professors-in-npr-ed-survey-have-used-trigger-warnings>

6 <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/20/opinion/sunday/why-i-use-trigger-warnings.html>

7 <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2015/09/the-coddling-of-the-american-mind/399356>

8 <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-10909339/York-University-puts-trigger-warnings-English-language-course-material.html>

9 <https://osf.io/qav9m>

10 <https://twitter.com/paytonjones/status/1563950340944560128>

11 <https://www.oxfordstudent.com/2022/10/08/students-protest-freshers-fair-anti-abortion-stall>

ii. White privilege

For those supportive of this idea, it is thought of as the advantages that come with having white skin, or the advantage of your skin colour not being an issue at work or when going about your daily life. It is not to say that all white people are necessarily doing well; rather those doing badly would fair even worse if they were not white.

Here are some quotations taken from BBC articles to illustrate these ideas,¹²

'It [white privilege] just means with respect to that one particular thing – your race and skin colour – you do have the luxury of not being able to think about it.' JT Flowers, American rapper.

'Even if you're poor and not doing the best in society, there's still this benefit you get from being white.' Professor Kehinde Andrews, Birmingham City University.

'It doesn't mean you haven't earned your successes but it does mean that your life hasn't been harder because of the colour of your skin.' Courtney Ahn, American designer.

'White privilege doesn't mean you haven't worked hard or you don't deserve the success you've had. It doesn't mean that your life isn't hard or that you've never suffered. It simply means that your skin colour has not been the cause of your hardship or suffering.' John Amaechi, psychologist and former basketball player.

According to an article on Womensday.com, some examples of white privilege are:

- 'Cosmetic' – being able to buy the right shampoo for your hair as well as plasters and bandages that match your skin colour as well as makeup;
- 'Representation' – seeing people who look like you in film, television, and advertisements, encompassing a range of characters and not stereotypes;
- 'Implicit trust' – receiving the benefit of the doubt when you've made a mistake, such as picking up the wrong luggage at the airport;
- 'Safety and Trust in Institutions' – being free to exist in public places without fearing police violence, trusting that the police will help you when you need them, not having to educate children on how to avoid unfair arrest or police persecution;
- 'Avoiding assumptions' – not being prejudged on your character based on your skin colour.¹³

¹² <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/newsbeat-57567647> ;

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zrvkbqt>

¹³ <https://www.womansday.com/life/a32758153/what-is-white-privilege>

To this list, we should probably add skin colour not being an issue at work, including in hiring and promotion decisions. The same article says that white privilege cannot be dispensed with but can be ‘recognised’ and ‘used’ to help ‘those who don’t have access to the same privileges and social protections available to you’. Readers are encouraged to:

‘Advocate for Black and brown people in predominately white spaces. If you’re in a position of power, employ Black and brown people in leadership positions, incorporate stories of Black and brown joy and excellence in otherwise white-washed mediums, and confront racist comments, actions, and beliefs said, done, or held by the white people in your life that would otherwise ignore the thoughts and feelings of Black and brown people.

‘If you hear someone using language that is derogatory or prejudiced against people of color [sic], even if it doesn’t seem flagrantly “racist,” don’t just stay silent. Speak up. Force your white family, friends, and colleagues to look inward and acknowledge how they’re upholding structures that are inherently racist, and how in their words and their actions are working to support those structures.’

When understood in these terms, you see its potential for commanding individuals, based on skin colour, into political activism on the behalf of others, who may not even need or want it. This is when the term becomes a problem and why it has its critics. They contend that the term is divisive and serves to pit ethnic groups against one and other. Equality minister Kemi Badenoch has written,

‘Normalising the term “white privilege” does not eliminate racism, it reinforces the notion that everyone and everything around ethnic minorities is racist and makes the majority white population more conscious about their race and exacerbates feelings of difference, creating a less cohesive society.’¹⁴

Critics will point to disparity in outcomes that show white people doing less well than ethnic minority groups.¹⁵ Perhaps this is to miss the point in that one could simply say the difference would be starker were white privilege not to exist. Nevertheless, there is an empirical critique to be made in that the theory claims all white people have advantages over non-white, yet if you ask the latter how fair their chances have been in seeking promotion, just 12 per cent believe there had been racial discrimination against them. The vast majority believe their promotion chances to be fair.¹⁶ Proponents of white privilege assume all non-white individuals have bad things happen to them because of their skin colour, that do not occur to white people. This is not true. Just because things are more likely to occur, does not mean they do so for all. Relatively few individuals from ethnic minority groups will experience a racial slur or racist violence in a given year.¹⁷

¹⁴ <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2021/06/26/term-white-privilege-careless-divisive>

¹⁵ <https://thecritic.co.uk/issues/december-2019/no-need-to-plead-guilty>

¹⁶ https://policyexchange.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/PEXJ5011_Bittersweet_Success_1116_WEB.pdf

¹⁷ <https://www.civitas.org.uk/content/files/2572-A-Hate-Crime-Policy-WEB.pdf>

Furthermore, it is not true that ethnic minority individuals are dominated by 'whiteness'. A study conducted in 2019 (before the Black Lives Matter protests) found 37 per cent of adverts featured black people, who make up only three per cent of the population;¹⁸ the majority of ethnic minority kids (61 per cent) are in schools where whites are in the minority;¹⁹ ethnic minority communities provide for cultural familiarity in terms of fashion, food, and entertainment. Furthermore, most black people have confidence in their local police.²⁰ The final empirical nail in the coffin of 'white privilege' is the experience of the victims of Pakistani Muslim grooming gangs, most of whom were white, who were described as being regarded by the police 'with contempt'.²¹ It is hard to imagine how their experiences could have been any worse had they not been white.

There is also the potential that this becomes a form of racial oppression whereby whites are browbeaten into accepting themselves as 'racially guilty', despite the fact that in America in 1860, just five per cent of whites owned slaves, and even less here, while according to Thomas Sowell, 'more whites were brought as slaves to North Africa than blacks brought as slaves to the United States or the 13 colonies from which it was formed'.²² Research by Policy Exchange found 40 per cent of 18-20-year-olds taught about 'white privilege' were too afraid to contest these ideas, with some fearful of expulsion.²³ Teaching that whites have unearned privileges will ultimately lead to the conclusion something has to be taken away from them. But what?

Finally, the idea of privileged ethnic groups is one that bares a more than passing resemblance to anti-Semitism, whereby Jews are said to have unearned privileges as well as collective guilt. 'White privilege', for many, will seem like the application of the same ideas only not to Jews, but white people. Since most Jews are white, the question for them will be, what has changed? While there is no parallel in terms of the severity of treatment of Jews in the past, there is similarity in terms of the ideas at play.

iii. Anti-racism training/guidance

First to define 'anti-racism', it is clear from reading the accounts of its proponents that this refers to a form of political activism. It is about confronting racism actively rather than merely passively rejecting it. Here is a quote, again from John Amaechi:

*'Anti-racists are constantly looking around to say, what tools do I have available to make it clear that this is not acceptable? And this, this is what anti-racists do. It's not that they stand up at the dinner table when their uncle's a little bit racist and kick the turkey off. That's not it. But what they do is they say, I'm sorry Uncle John. That's not acceptable. That's racist. Quietly and respectfully. What they do is they make sure that they never miss an opportunity to let the world know where they stand, even if they can't change everything...'*²⁴

However, there is much more to this than scolding your Uncle John, which becomes apparent when reading *How To Be An Anti-Racist* by Ibram X. Kendi, this being the most prominent publication on the matter and therefore taken as authoritative. His contention is that economic differences between racial or ethnic groups denote a condition of 'racial inequity' that is caused by racist policies. This is the crux of 'anti-racism'.

18 <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-711087/Advertisers-trying-hard-demonstrate-diversity.html>

19 <https://demos.co.uk/press-release/61-of-ethnic-minority-kids-in-england-and-90-in-london-begin-year-1-in-schools-where-ethnic-minorities-are-the-majority-of-the-student-body>

20 <https://www.civitas.org.uk/publications/we-need-to-check-your-thinking>

21 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-28942986>

22 <https://thecritic.co.uk/issues/december-2019/no-need-to-plead-guilty>

23 <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-11448541/Almost-half-young-people-Britain-frightened-dispute-idea-white-privilege.html>

24 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zs9n2v4>

As he says,

‘There is no such thing as a nonracist or race-neutral policy. Every policy in every institution in every community in every nation is producing or sustaining either racial inequity or equity between racial groups.’²⁵

For Kendi, racial discrimination on the behalf of individuals is the result of a specific policy. He continues,

‘But if racial discrimination is defined as treating, considering, or making a distinction in favour or against an individual based on that person’s race, then racial discrimination is not inherently racist.’ [Italics added for emphasis.]

What counts is whether or not discrimination ‘is creating equity or inequity’. Thus, we arrive at,

‘The only remedy to racist discrimination is antiracist discrimination.’

For Kendi, anti-racism is about targeting, by political activists, every single rule or institution to see if it contributes to an equality of outcomes, and if not, changing it so that it is racially discriminatory in favour of the group that comes out worse.

There are three problems with this approach. Firstly, it is illegal under the Equality Act 2010, which prohibits racial discrimination. Secondly, as Thomas Sowell has said, groups differ in many ways so there is no reason to expect equality of outcomes, while not all differences are down to race or racism.²⁶ Thirdly, this is immoral in that it would entail treating individuals based on immutable characteristics rather than individual merit. It would have to entail some individuals being treated less favourably when they have done nothing wrong.

For universities to be endorsing ‘anti-racism’ would mean giving their blessing to encouraging students into a form of political activism that sees everything as within its scope, with the aim being to encourage virtue in everyone while chiding everything and everyone who falls short, even though things might not be so black and white. The logical destination of Kendi’s views is that economically more successful groups should be penalised in practices like university admissions, and that would include Jews. This has the hallmarks of a classic totalitarian political worldview that sees everything as political and divides society up into good and bad groups, as identified by Hannah Arendt.²⁷ This is not to say Kendi advocates the extremes with which such ideas are generally associated, but simply to point out the resemblance in terms of ideas and that they must lead somewhere.

²⁵ <https://www.penguin.co.uk/articles/2020/06/ibram-x-kendi-definition-of-antiracist>

²⁶ Thomas Sowell, (2018) *Discrimination and Disparities*.

²⁷ Hannah Arendt, (2017) *The Origins of Totalitarianism*.

‘Anti-racism training’ undertaken or guidance offered by any university will thus open the doors to this ideology. In terms of the ‘training’ itself, take the following example: Equality and Diversity UK is a company offering anti-racism training. According to its website, its course aims to:

- Support people to ‘understand the role of white privilege in racism’;
- Understand ‘Subtle Acts of Exclusion’;
- Understand ‘White privilege, White fragility, and White saviourism’;
- Gain ‘the language, education and knowledge to feel empowered and confident to tackle uncomfortable conversations’; and
- ‘Increase self-awareness, self-care and advocacy and how to use your privilege to effect change.’

The intended outcomes stipulate participants ‘be able to commit to being actively anti-racist and lead by example’, ‘prioritise engagement in this work’, and ‘reduce your fear to advocate, challenge and be ready to turn fear into action’.²⁸ This is much more than simple ‘diversity and inclusion’ or unconscious bias training, which have their flaws too.²⁹ This is a course to turn people into political activists committed to ‘anti-racism’, and thus the ideas of Ibram X. Kendi.

Method

Civitas researchers scoured both university websites and the national/local media for references to ‘trigger warnings’, ‘content warnings’ or ‘content notes’, ‘white privilege’, and ‘anti-racism training’ or official ‘anti-racist’ guidance from universities. This builds on the same approach deployed in past Civitas work.³⁰ Data collection took place in the Autumn of last year (2022), with 140 universities surveyed.

28 <https://equalityanddiversity.co.uk/anti-racism-training.html>

29 <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/unconscious-bias-training-assessment-evidence-effectiveness>

30 <https://www.civitas.org.uk/press/academic-freedom-in-our-universities-the-best-and-the-worst> ;
<https://www.civitas.org.uk/publications/free-speech-and-decolonisation-in-british-universities>

Results

The results of our survey are presented below.

i. Trigger warnings

87 out of 140 universities had references to trigger warnings, or content warnings, or ‘content notes’ – 62 per cent.

Examples include:

- Brunel University’s policy for transgender students says: ‘Any historical content or comparative content containing what is now recognised as transphobic material needs to be clearly labelled with a trigger warning.’³¹
- *The Guardian* newspaper reported, ‘A Durham University student complained that his class was “expected to sit through lectures and tutorials discussing Lavinia’s rape in *Titus Andronicus*”, though he was delighted that “we did get a trigger warning about bestiality with regard to part of the lecture on *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*”.’³²
- According to *The Tab*, ‘Goldsmiths even advises students that they can “take time out” of classes which may include sensitive or offensive material. Trigger warnings at the university include “underage sex, self-harm, drug use, homelessness, AIDS, ‘queer lifestyles’ and religion”.’³³
- According to *The Daily Mail*, the University of Chester ‘puts trigger warning on Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone saying that studying the children’s book “can lead to difficult conversations about gender, race, sexuality, class and identity”.’³⁴

Perhaps the most pointed examples have included trigger warnings slapped on George Orwell’s 1984 as well as DH Lawrence’s *Lady Chatterley’s Lover*. The University of Warwick has even gone so far as to ban the term ‘trigger warning’ itself as it could potentially upset students.³⁵ We might also wonder why young adults are studying children’s books at university, which they will likely have already read.

31 <https://www.brunel.ac.uk/about/administration/policy?id=eeac5b90-df4e-443d-8875-bf1bd41c69f5>

32 <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2016/oct/11/censor-lecturers-trigger-warnings-students-distressed>

33 <https://thetab.com/uk/2016/10/09/lectures-including-trigger-warnings-avoid-upsetting-students-22332>

34 <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-10447317/University-Chester-puts-trigger-warning-Harry-Potter-module-difficult-conversations.html>

35 <https://thetab.com/uk/warwick/2021/11/29/warwick-bans-the-term-trigger-warnings-due-to-its-potential-to-upset-students-39122>

ii. White privilege

79 out of 140 universities had mentions of 'white privilege' in guidance offered to staff and students or on their website – 56 per cent.

Examples include:

- According to *The Metro* 'A workshop at Anglia Ruskin University in East Anglia, entitled *Privilege: The Truth We Don't Tell Ourselves*, asked participants to face 'our privilege in an honest manner and understand exactly how we benefit from racist system'. It warns staff and students that the seminar "seeks to expose the truth about the privileges we unknowingly carry with us in everyday life. The ideas presented might make you feel uncomfortable".³⁶
- Cardiff University's Vice-Chancellor Colin Riordan was quoted by the BBC saying, there was a need for a 'greater understanding, awareness and acknowledgment of white privilege'.³⁷
- Imperial College has a 'How to be a white ally' webpage that encourages students to 'understand that you have White privilege and think about how you can use this privilege to make change and educate others in your community'.³⁸
- The University of St Andrews website has a definition of white privilege: 'the set of social and economic advantages that white people have by virtue of their race in a culture characterised by racial inequality'.³⁹

36 <https://metro.co.uk/2018/03/13/lecturers-told-go-white-privilege-workshops-7382737>

37 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-53113303>

38 <https://www.imperial.ac.uk/equality/resources/race-equality/how-to-be-a-white-ally>

39 <https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/students/advice/recd-support>

iii. Anti-racism training or guidance

82 out of 140 universities offered materials, training or resources on 'anti-racism' on their websites – 59 per cent.

Examples include:

- According to Anglia Ruskin University's website, 'The Race Equality Advocates (formerly known as the BAME Advocates) are a team of students employed by the university to lead and deliver antiracist activities at ARU.'⁴⁰
- Brunel University's website has a 'Your anti-racism support' page that says, 'We are rolling out student Anti-racism training in November via a 2 hour workshop, which will define racism in all its forms, raise awareness and empower students with some practical tips on how to challenge the different forms of racism.'⁴¹
- London South Bank University has a 'white allies at work programme' which 'aims to support participants and organisations to become actively anti-racist rather than simply being 'non racist', so that both staff and citizens experience a more racially inclusive health and care system.'⁴²
- According to *The Daily Mail Online*, students at Durham university were offered 'anti-racism training' after a talk by the journalist Rod Liddle was disrupted by protestors.⁴³
- Queen Mary University of London's website commits to 'training employees on what being anti-racist means.'⁴⁴ It also states 'the School of English and Drama has undertaken a number of initiatives over 2020/21, including hosting three anti-racist workshops which were mandatory for all academic staff to attend.'⁴⁵

Factor analysis

An attempt was made to build an index of university radical progressivism by combing these measures of universities' endorsement of trigger warnings, white privilege, and anti-racism, along with other data on decolonisation, speech regulation, free speech controversies, anonymous reporting of harassment, and membership of Advance HE's Race Equality Charter, gathered as part of Civitas' past work.^{46,47}

40 <https://aru.ac.uk/about-us/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/race-equality>

41 <https://students.brunel.ac.uk/campus/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/anti-racism-at-brunel/your-anti-racism-support>

42 <https://www.lsbu.ac.uk/business/research-enterprise-and-innovation/health-systems-innovation-lab/what-we-do/white-allies-at-work>

43 <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-10761423/Durham-students-condemn-anti-white-indoctrination-sent-training-following-Rod-Liddle-row.html>

44 <https://www.qmul.ac.uk/media/news/2021/pr/queen-mary-commits-to-tower-hamlets-anti-racist-pledge.html>

45 [https://www.qmul.ac.uk/media/black-history-month/Race-Equality-Toolkit_v4-\(2\).pdf](https://www.qmul.ac.uk/media/black-history-month/Race-Equality-Toolkit_v4-(2).pdf)

46 <https://www.civitas.org.uk/press/academic-freedom-in-our-universities-the-best-and-the-worst> ;

<https://www.civitas.org.uk/publications/free-speech-and-decolonisation-in-british-universities> ;

<https://www.civitas.org.uk/publications/is-the-curbng-of-free-speech-in-universities-most-prevalent-in-those-with-inflated-diversity-grievance-bureaucracies> ;

<https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/equality-charters/race-equality-charter/members>

47 Some of these data were collected over a year ago, while our measure of free speech controversies encompasses events spanning over a period of years. Thus, our findings should be interpreted as how radical progressive universities have been over recent years, without necessarily reflecting on their current standing, as things may have changed in the interim.

Factor analysis was undertaken. This is a statistical method of analysis that looks for patterns of association between a set of variables, to assess the extent to which they measure the same underlying ‘latent variable’, also known as a ‘factor’.⁴⁸ It allows you to take many variables and reduce them to fewer variables based on their patterns of inter-correlation. The model produced will allow you to estimate ‘factor scores’, these being measurements of where any given university stands on the derived latent variable or factor.

From the model estimated, one factor was identified, this being interpreted as a measure of university radical progressivism. Estimates of factor scores were computed. This is a standardised variable with a mean of 0 and standard deviation of 1. Scores are interpreted as the number of standard deviations from the mean. It is largely a composite of the following variables: anonymous reporting, anti-racism training, free speech controversies, official commitments to decolonisation, Race Equality Charter membership, transgender-related restrictions on speech, and the presence of trigger warnings. Full details are presented in the Appendix.

Rankings

The 10 most radical progressive universities are presented in the table below.

Table 1. Most radical progressive universities

Rank	Name	Factor score
1	University of Cambridge	2.38
2	University of Oxford	1.96
3	University of Bristol	1.81
4	University College London	1.63
5	Newcastle University	1.62
6	SOAS, University of London	1.6
7	University of East Anglia	1.56
8	University of Warwick	1.51
9	Durham University	1.49
10	University of Exeter	1.42

Source: Civitas analysis.

⁴⁸ A model was estimated and restricted to provide a one factor solution, using the ‘fa’ command in the Psych package for R. This allows the user to specify a mixed correlation matrix, encompassing polychoric, tetrachoric and polyserial correlations to suit the different types of variables used in this analysis. The final sample size was 137, with three cases deleted due to missing data.

The 10 least radical progressive universities are presented below. For the full rankings, refer to the Appendix.

Table 2. Least radical progressive universities

Rank	Name	Factor score
128	The Royal Central School of Speech & Drama	-1.48
129	Cardiff Metropolitan University	-1.48
130	Bishop Grosseteste University	-1.55
131	The University of West London	-1.82
132	Cranfield University	-1.85
133	Teesside University	-1.95
134	Royal College of Music, London	-1.96
135	University of Cumbria	-1.98
136	The University of Buckingham	-1.98
137	Regent's University London	-2.05

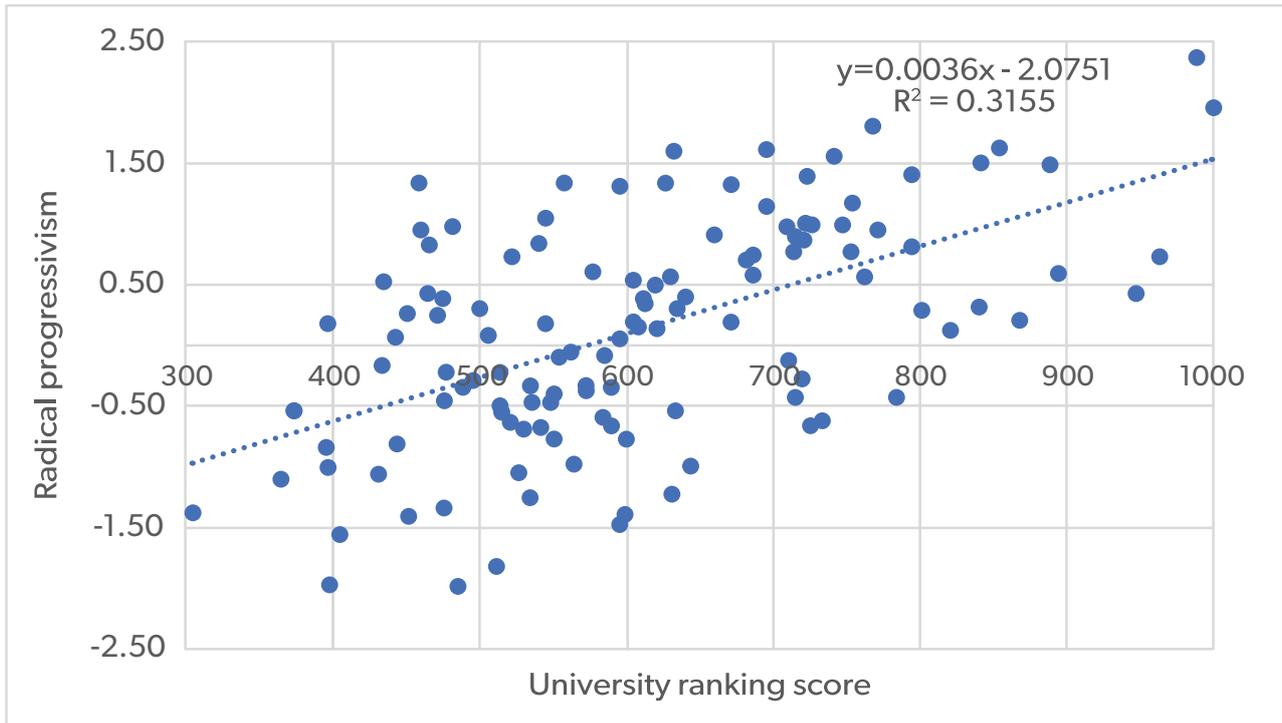
Source: Civitas analysis.

Correlations

Looking at the most and least radical progressive universities, a pattern is suggested whereby the more likely you are to have heard of a university, the more radical progressive it is. This is borne out by correlation analysis that shows a strong statistical relationship between our measure of university radical progressivism and their ranking scores ($r=0.56$), these being the basis for the Complete University Guide's rankings, whereby higher scores equate to better universities. A moderate negative correlation was also identified showing students were less satisfied where university radical progressivism was greater ($r=-0.31$).⁴⁹ These relationships are presented in the graphs below.

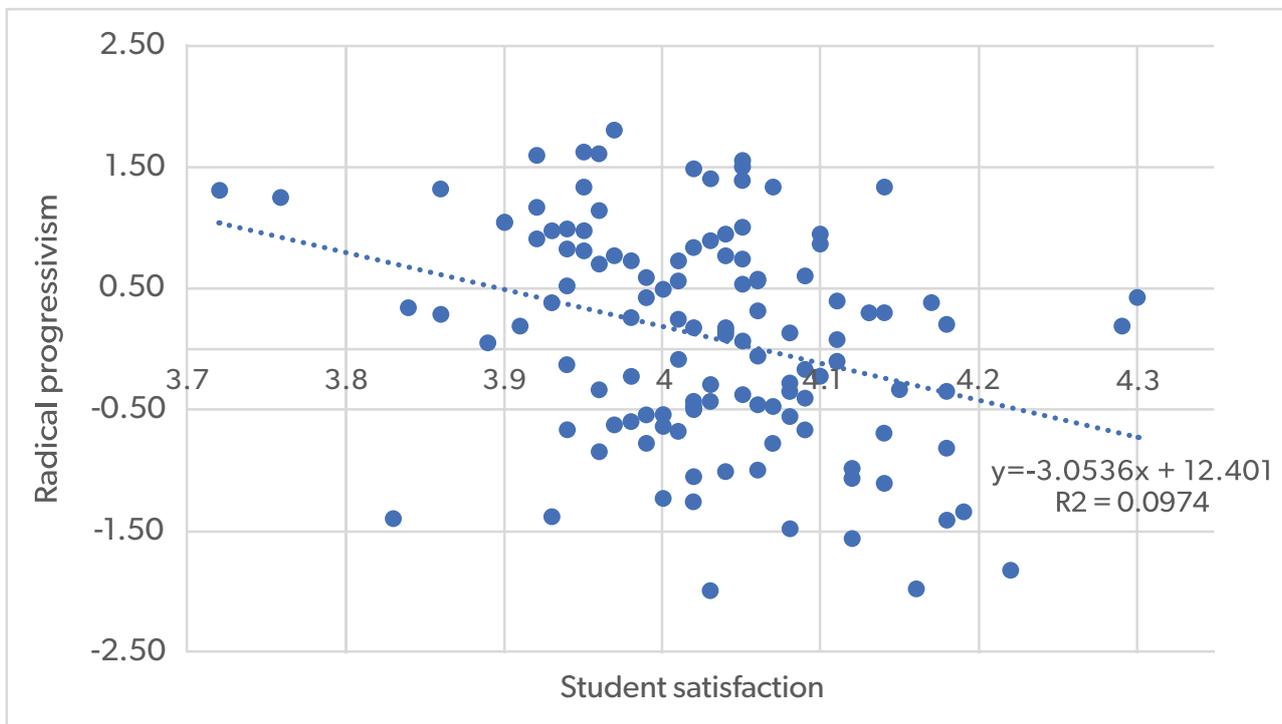
49 Complete University Guide, 'University League Tables 2023', <https://www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/league-tables/rankings> © 2021 Complete University Guide Limited.

Figure 1. University ranking and radical progressivism



Source: Civitas analysis/Complete University Guide.

Figure 2. Student satisfaction and radical progressivism



Source: Civitas analysis/Complete University Guide.

That it is the most prestigious universities where radical progressivism is most pronounced, is underscored by looking at UCAS tariff ratings, these being the average UCAS points needed to get in. Using an official classification, scores are presented as broken down by high, medium and low tariff status in the table below.⁵⁰

Table 3. Radical progressivism by university tariff rating

Tariff score	Average radical progressivism score
High	0.75
Medium	0.12
Low	-0.39

Source: Civitas analysis.

This becomes more apparent when going back to some of the original raw data, as seen in the table below.

Table 4. Percentage of universities with indicators of radical progressivism by tariff rating

Tariff score	Trigger warnings	White privilege endorsement	Anti-racism training/guidance
High	81%	74%	74%
Medium	64%	68%	64%
Low	46%	48%	41%

Source: Civitas analysis.

Why the ‘top’ universities?

The correlation between university ranking and radical progressivism demands some speculation as to why. The sociologist Norbert Elias (1897-1990) argued that as states consolidated their claim to the monopoly on the use of force, so elites came to distinguish themselves more on their manners than on their capacity for violence. Nobles who did not work for a living would invent ways of behaving that marked them out from the hoi polloi.

As manners spread down the social hierarchy through imitation, the nobility would need to develop new ways to keep their distinction alive as well as exclude their upwardly mobile social rivals. One example is eating with a fork – a status symbol for the upper class up until the 17th century, when it then spread to the lower classes, only to be met with the proliferation of salad forks, dinner forks, dessert forks and so forth, arranged on the dinner table to strike fear into those who did not know to ‘start from the outside and move in’.⁵¹

Might we not see something similar at work with morals, whereby those in the top universities who are no longer distinguishable from the crowd through their superior learning, thanks to the expansion of higher education, seeking to distinguish themselves through moral innovations?

⁵⁰ <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/methodology/widening-participation-in-higher-education-methodology>

⁵¹ <https://www.artofmanliness.com/character/etiquette/how-manners-made-the-world>

Another consideration is that the top universities attract the brightest individuals. According to psychologist Linda K. Silverman, from an early age, the most intelligent tend also to be acutely moral. As she puts it, 'A central feature of the gifted experience is their moral sensitivity'.⁵² Couple this with Douglas Murray's contention that most of the major battles for minority groups are already won,⁵³ and you see the potential for moral innovation in the elite universities. We are seeing for the first time, a critical mass of ethnically diverse students with unlimited sexual freedom in a milieu defined by the 1968 generation where protest and political conflict are seen as the most noble form of politics. What are they to do next and how are they to be heroes when the battles are over? The answer would be to invent new ones.

The Ancient Greeks' concept of thymos may also be relevant, meaning the feeling of group status. Previously-excluded minority groups are now looking to assert themselves culturally by seeking to dominate the ways of the past. But without any resistance from a supine university elite, they push for more totem-felling without any measure against which they might be satisfied. In essence we are talking about social anomie, whereby the old social rules no longer apply and so people become destructive, fostering ennui or boredom that demands action. Whatever grievances there are, are against those long dead and so the natural target is their works, namely the Western Canon. Such theorising would fit with the negative correlation between student satisfaction and university radical progressivism. The most able students and university staff at the elite universities will naturally have the most success in doing this.

Perhaps also the better universities are richer and simply can afford these kinds of things more. It is worth pointing out that the three private universities in our data set (Buckingham, Regent's University, and Plymouth Marjon University) all score lowly, with an average of -1.62 compared to an overall mean of 0.

Are universities complicit in genocide, colonialism, and slavery abroad?

As universities rush to look under every stone and put on trial statues of dead white men for their links to slavery, some might wonder why they do not examine their more contemporary dealings.

According to the U.S. Department of State, the Chinese government has,

*'...carried out a mass detention and political indoctrination campaign against Uyghurs, who are predominantly Muslim, and members of other ethnic and religious minority groups... Detention in these camps is intended to erase ethnic and religious identities under the pretext of "vocational training." Forced labour is a central tactic used for this repression.'*⁵⁴

52 <https://www.sengifted.org/post/silverman-moralsensitivity>

53 <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/article-8701499/DOUGLAS-MURRAY-living-Age-Mass-Derangement.html>

54 <https://www.state.gov/forced-labor-in-chinas-xinjiang-region>

Such treatment would fit with the United Nations' definition of genocide,⁵⁵ while splitting the hair between slavery and 'forced labour' is no easy task.

Yet, a census of university websites reveals at least 117 out of 140 (84 per cent) have significant ties to China, which include research partnerships with Chinese universities and corporations, campuses and offices in mainland China, and Chinese government-sponsored PhD programmes. All these entail collaboration with the Chinese Communist Party as well as the state, since such things are unavoidable under China's totalitarian system. While academic collaboration with Chinese academics is to be welcomed in principle, there are inescapable issues that make this an ethical problem.

The charge of hypocrisy becomes more difficult to avoid when we look at the top 20 most radical progressive universities. All have significant ties to China. Take for example the University of Cambridge, which commissioned a report into its historic ties with slavery. It found the university received 'benefactions based on income derived from the slave trade' as well as noting its role in 'educating wealthy slave estate owners' sons.⁵⁶ Jesus College Cambridge attempted to remove a memorial to its 17th century benefactor Tobias Rustat over links to the slave trade, only to be refused by a church 'consistory court'. A spokesman for the college said, 'We are deeply disappointed and shocked by the decision' and would consider an appeal.⁵⁷ The same college further removed a Benin bronze statue of a cockerel in 2016.⁵⁸ St Catherine's College Cambridge removed a bell from public sight, that 'most likely' came from a slave plantation.⁵⁹

Yet the university has received £19 million over five years in research grants from China, which includes £11.2 million from Chinese firm Huawei.⁶⁰ That firm has been accused of developing 'a system that identifies people who appear to be of Uyghur origin among images of pedestrians'.⁶¹ Cambridge has further received £54.3 million in Chinese philanthropy, of which £7.5 million came from Huawei.⁶² 1,900 Chinese students study at Cambridge, around eight per cent of students, who will likely be the sons and daughters of China's ruling elite.⁶³ A lot of money is coming from a politically Communist country that oppresses ethnic minorities, quashes freedom, and threatens the sovereignty of another, Taiwan. Any such invasion would be colonialism. Jesus College has been a known recipient of Chinese funding.⁶⁴

Of the top 20 radical progressive universities, six have so-called 'Confucius Institutes'. These ostensibly promote Chinese culture and understanding globally. Were they distributed randomly, then we would expect to see four. Confucius Institutes are described by the BBC as 'joint ventures' between universities and a 'partner university' in China, all under the auspices of Hanban, a branch of China's education ministry which provides funding.

55 <https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/genocide.shtml>

56 <https://www.cam.ac.uk/stories/legacies-of-enslavement-inquiry>

57 <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/mar/23/church-court-rejects-cambridge-college-bid-to-move-tobias-rustat-slave-trader-memorial>

58 <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2016/mar/08/benin-bronze-row-cambridge-college-removes-cockerel>

59 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-cambridgeshire-48202399>

60 <https://www.cam.ac.uk/a-global-university/china/our-funding-partnerships-with-china>

61 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-55634388>

62 £24.2 million of which comes from Hong Kong sources.

<https://www.cam.ac.uk/a-global-university/china/our-funding-partnerships-with-china>

63 Ibid.

64 <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-10685353/Cambridge-took-cash-high-risk-Beijing-university-research-Chinas-foreign-influence.html>

Critics take a different line, alleging a role in Communist propaganda and control. According to Matt Schrader of the Alliance for Securing Democracy at the German Marshall Fund, 'they are platforms for an authoritarian party that's fundamentally hostile to liberal ideas like free speech and free inquiry to propagate a state-approved narrative.' He further accuses them of 'inappropriate covert activities like intelligence gathering'.⁶⁵ Iain Duncan Smith MP has accused them of intimidation of Chinese students studying in Britain.⁶⁶ Rishi Sunak has pledged to close all 30 Confucius Institutes in the country.⁶⁷

Furthermore, of the top 20 radical progressive universities, four have been identified as having collaborative relationships with Chinese state universities rated as 'high risk' or 'very high risk' for their links to the China's military and intelligence agencies, by the Australian Strategic Policy Institute. Research by Rob Clark of Civitas has detailed their cooperation on scientific projects that while intended for civilian use, may also have military applications, at a time when China threatens Taiwan.⁶⁸ The universities in question are Cambridge, Warwick, Queen Mary University of London, and Birmingham.

Clark's research identifies 13 such universities overall; were they distributed randomly across our index of university radical progressivism, then we would expect to see two in the top 20.

To reiterate, all these examples entail some degree of connection with the Communist Party of China and the Chinese state that oppresses its own people, threatens its neighbours, practices forced labour, and seeks to destroy the way of life of ethnic and religious minorities. Why do the hyper-sensitive standards as applied to the past, not apply to the present where the contemporary wrongs must surely outweigh those of a distant past?

Last year, 143,000 Chinese students were studying in the United Kingdom, up by 50 per cent since 2016, or 32 per cent of all non-EU international students.⁶⁹ It is estimated Chinese students bring in between £1.4 billion to £2.9 billion in fees to British universities.⁷⁰ Such sums will explain the double standards, and why Chinese partner institutions are not asked to 'decolonise' in relation to Taiwan or Tibet for that matter.

This is not necessarily to condemn academic partnership with Chinese academics, with the country being home to many brilliant scientists with whom genuinely fruitful scientific advances can be made. The point is to show how British universities have an extremely high moral standard for the past, but a low one for the present, and that the two are not consistent. We are merely attempting to judge them on their own terms, and find them wanting. Imagine if Cambridge found it had an historic partnership with a hypothetical university in Jamaica in the 18th century, funded by plantation owners. What would its attitude be today?

65 <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-49511231>

66 <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2022-11-01/debates/997662A6-CD71-41C5-BBE9-33FADDB4B974/OverseasChinesePoliceStationsInUKLegalStatus>

67 <https://www.msn.com/en-in/news/other/uk-pm-rishi-sunak-is-looking-to-close-the-confucius-institutes-says-security-minister/ar-AA13E2Dx>

68 <https://www.civitas.org.uk/content/files/One-Year-On-FINAL.pdf>

69 <https://inews.co.uk/news/education/number-china-chinese-students-uk-universities-rises-50-five-years-1421737>

70 According to Save the Student, 'most universities' fees for the majority of subjects fell somewhere between £10,000 and £20,000' for international students. These figures are multiplied by 143,000 to arrive at this estimate.

<https://www.savethestudent.org/international-students/international-student-fees.html>

Caveats

There are two limitations to the data used in this study. Firstly, we only show things like trigger warnings are present within universities, not the full extent to which they are utilised. It may be they are used by just a minority of faculty staff, or they may be widespread. Secondly, because of the method of data collection, we are only aware of what is disclosed by the universities themselves, publicly, or gets picked up by national and local media. Thus, we may understate things.

Conclusion

British universities are clearly in a sorry state, being politically monocultured and unmoored from the general population. According to Noah Carl, around half of the British public support parties of the right, compared to less than 12 per cent of academics.¹ One fifth of academics voted to leave the EU, compared to 51.9 per cent of the electorate. 28.8 per cent wish to increase immigration, compared to nine per cent of the public.²

While scientific developments never cease to amaze, 82 per cent of journal articles in the humanities go uncited.³ From personal experience, the social sciences (and sociology in particular) flounder without any shared standards of methodology that might unite them. Universities have embraced an unforgiving hyper-morality that throws into doubt the cultural and scientific accomplishments we take for granted but that underwrite the standards of living we enjoy.

Matters are confounded by the graduation of the economy, with an oversupply of white-collar professionals and shortages of skilled and unskilled labourers. For many of my parents' generation, their first job was picking potatoes at harvest time. Today, their grandchildren are in university possibly pondering Foucault and Derrida, while fruit and vegetable picking are either mechanised or done by foreign labourers, with mass immigration fuelling division and depopulation and labour shortages in poorer countries.

One poll of graduates found 46 per cent did not think their university education was worth it, while 30 per cent did not need a degree to do their current job.⁴ At the same time, the 'graduate premium' has been declining, this being the difference between graduate and non-graduate earnings.⁵ All this would point to oversupply. This is made possible by student loans – cheap credit – that have expanded the numbers going. But according to the Augar Review into post-18 education and funding, 45 per cent of loans will ultimately be written off, meaning they are picked up by the taxpayer. This subsidy is estimated at £13.7 billion next year.⁶ Degrees are losing their value with grade inflation, evidenced by the share graduating with first class degrees increasing from around 10 per cent to 30 per cent over 10 years.⁷

This briefing has shown how universities are advancing a form of activism that is being foisted upon students and staff. Political innovations based on racial essentialism, that divide people into good and bad, oppressed and oppressor groups, are widespread. Yet, these ideas as well as their practical application, such as trigger warnings, have been shown to be nonsense, leaving little room for political dissent. These phenomena are most pronounced in our elite universities, which castigate themselves for past sins, yet enter into business arrangements with countries such as China. The hypocrisy is undeniable. Government subsidies have fuelled the university boom, leading to labour market distortions and shortages of skilled workers. As universities enter into a form of politics, they threaten the standards of evidence, reason and freedom of inquiry they are grounded upon. Much of this is largely funded by the taxpayer.

1 <http://www.adamsmith.org/research/lackademia-why-do-academics-lean-left>

2 <https://policyexchange.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Academic-freedom-in-the-UK.pdf>

3 <https://www.breitbart.com/tech/2017/05/12/study-82-of-academic-papers-from-the-humanities-are-never-referenced>

4 <https://techround.co.uk/news/is-university-worth-it>

5 <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/news/22-10-2019/return-to-degree-research>

6 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/805127/Review_of_post_18_education_and_funding.pdf

7 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/805127/Review_of_post_18_education_and_funding.pdf

Prospective students who wish to avoid politicisation at university would do well to consider things properly before deciding where to go. We would not wish to put them off applying for a prestigious university just because it is radical progressive, since this will affect the labour market value of any degree subsequently obtained. University applicants should choose their course and institution, aiming high and in the knowledge that our last briefing found that free speech societies or debating clubs also tend to be more likely among the elite universities, if that is what is right for them.⁷¹ However politicised an elite university is, there will still be like-minded individuals for students favouring classical liberal or socially conservative values.

It is not the intention of this briefing to proclaim university as bastions of political brainwashing, but merely to point out their politicisation. For most students, the daily routine will be broadly politically free as they take lectures and seminars that do not touch upon the more politically contentious themes that define the so-called ‘culture wars’.

Nevertheless, there are careful decisions that need to be taken, from vice-chancellors to academics to students, as to whether or not the current condition is defensible and in the individual and country’s interests.

⁷¹ <https://www.civitas.org.uk/publications/free-speech-and-decolonisation-in-british-universities>

Appendix

Table 5. Summary statistics of variables in this study

Variable	Type of variable	Range	Mean	Standard deviation
Trigger warnings	Binary	0-1	0.62	0.49
White privilege	Binary	0-1	0.56	0.5
Anti-racism training/guidance	Binary	0-1	0.59	0.49
Academic advocates of decolonisation	Binary	0-1	0.34	0.48
Official decolonisation statements or policies	Binary	0-1	0.56	0.5
Anonymous reporting of harassment	Binary	0-1	0.59	0.49
Race charter signatory	Binary	0-1	0.66	0.47
Free speech controversies	Count	0-74	6.69	10.29
General regulations on speech	Count	0-697	242.5	109.59
Transgender-related regulations on free speech	Count	0-90	22.35	21.66
University ranking score	Countinous	304-1000	609.74	142.53
Student satisfaction	Countinous	3.72-4.3	4.03	0.09

Source: Civitas analysis.

Table 6. Correlation matrix⁷²

	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII
I. Academic advocates for decolonisation	1											
II. Anonymous reporting of harassment	0.2	1										
III. Anti-racism training/guidance	0.08	0.37	1									
IV. Free Speech Controversies	0.36	0.25	0.38	1								
V. General restrictions on speech	-0.03	0.25	0.12	0	1							
VI. Official policies decolonisation	0.08	0.41	0.32	0.36	0.1	1						
VII. Race charter signatory	0.26	0.32	0.08	0.33	0.07	0.38	1					
VIII. University rank	0.11	0.42	0.41	0.6	0.03	0.39	0.27	1				
IX. Student satisfaction	-0.12	-0.25	-0.22	-0.32	-0.07	-0.3	-0.07	-0.13	1			
X. Trans-related restrictions on speech	0.13	0.34	0.21	0.29	0.39	0.25	0.29	0.23	-0.11	1		
XI. Trigger warnings used	0.05	0.38	0.48	0.34	0.17	0.43	0.17	0.32	-0.15	0.11	1	
XII. White privilege endorsed	0.18	0.53	0.86	0.39	0	0.48	0.42	0.41	-0.28	0.28	0.38	1

Source: Civitas analysis.

⁷² Correlations estimated using 'mixedCor' function in the R Psych package to allow for the different types of variables used. These correlations are a mixture of Pearson's, tetrachoric, polychoric, and polyserial, depending on the combinations of variables in question.

Table 7. Exploratory factor analysis - varimax rotation, substantial loadings in bold font (>0.4, N=137)

Variables	Factor Loading	Uniqueness
Academic advocates of decolonisation	0.28	0.92
Anonymous reporting of harassment	0.64	0.58
Anti-racism training/guidance	0.55	0.70
Free speech controversies	0.58	0.66
General regulations on speech	0.26	0.93
Official decolonisation statements or policies	0.63	0.61
Race charter signatory	0.47	0.78
Transgender-related regulations on speech	0.46	0.79
Trigger warnings	0.57	0.67
Proportion of variance explained	0.26	

Source: Civitas analysis.

The factor loadings in the table above represent the degree of correlation between the observed variable and the factor or 'latent variable'. Those variables with loadings above 0.4 are deemed to be substantially loading onto a factor, and thus a manifestation of the underlying latent variable. The uniqueness scores measure the extent to which the observed variables do their own thing, independent of whatever underlying factors there may be. Factor scores are basically computed by summing the variables as weighted using weights derived from the factor loadings. The higher the factor loading of a given variable, the more bearing it will have on the final index.

This model was estimated and restricted to provide a one factor solution, using the 'fa' command in the Psych package for R. This allows the user to specify a mixed correlation matrix, encompassing polychoric, tetrachoric and polyserial correlations, to suit the different types of variables used in this analysis, as was done.

The model suggests a common factor measuring university radical progressivism, both in terms of ideas and institutional practices, that is captured by the trigger warnings, anti-racism training, Race Equality Charter membership, anonymous reporting, official statements of decolonisation, free speech controversies, and transgender regulations on speech variables. What this means is that universities which score highly on one of these variables also tend to score highly on the others. The underlying correlations are however at times moderate (see Table 7), consistent with the relatively high 'uniqueness' scores. The implication of this is that the phenomena observed can occur anywhere, while there may also be a large degree of censored data.

(Note that the white privilege variable was dropped from the model since it correlated highly with the anti-racist training variable and this was dominating the model. On inspection, it was found this was often because the two would be mentioned on the same webpage. Given the binary nature of these measurements, any university could be deemed 'radical progressive' largely on the basis on just one webpage. It was decided this was an unfair way to do things.)

Table 8. Complete rankings of university radical progressivism

Rank	Name	Factor Score
1	University of Cambridge	2.38
2	University of Oxford	1.96
3	University of Bristol	1.81
4	University College London	1.63
5	Newcastle University	1.62
6	SOAS, University of London	1.6
7	University of East Anglia	1.56
8	University of Warwick	1.51
9	Durham University	1.49
10	University of Exeter	1.42
11	The University of Sheffield	1.4
12	York St John University	1.34
13	University of Portsmouth	1.34
14	Oxford Brookes University	1.34
15	Queen Mary University of London	1.32
16	Goldsmiths, University of London	1.31
17	University of Birmingham	1.17
18	University of Reading	1.14
19	University of Brighton	1.06
20	University of Essex	1.01
21	London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine	1
22	The University of Nottingham	0.99
23	De Montfort University	0.99
24	King's College London	0.99
25	University of Surrey	0.98
26	Leeds Beckett University	0.96
27	University of Glasgow	0.95
28	University of the Arts London	0.91
29	University of Liverpool	0.9
30	University of Dundee	0.87
31	University of Salford	0.85
32	Middlesex University	0.83
33	The University of Manchester	0.82
34	University of Leeds	0.78
35	Royal Holloway, University of London	0.77

Rank	Name	Factor Score
36	University of Stirling	0.74
37	University of Central Lancashire	0.74
38	The London School of Economics and Political Science	0.73
39	University of Leicester	0.7
40	University of Plymouth	0.61
41	Imperial College London	0.59
42	University of Aberdeen	0.58
43	University of York	0.57
44	University of Kent	0.56
45	Keele University	0.54
46	Canterbury Christ Church University	0.52
47	University of Huddersfield	0.49
48	University of St Andrews	0.43
49	London South Bank University	0.42
50	Nottingham Trent University	0.4
51	University of the West of England, Bristol	0.39
52	Bath Spa University	0.39
53	City, University of London	0.34
54	University of Bath	0.32
55	Staffordshire University	0.31
56	University of Lincoln	0.3
57	University of Edinburgh	0.29
58	University of Westminster	0.26
59	University of Winchester	0.24
60	Loughborough University	0.21
61	Aberystwyth University	0.2
62	University of Sussex	0.2
63	University of Wolverhampton	0.18
64	University of Hertfordshire	0.18
65	Manchester Metropolitan University	0.15
66	Coventry University	0.14
67	Lancaster University	0.12
68	University of Derby	0.08
69	Anglia Ruskin University	0.07
70	Brunel University London	0.05
71	Liverpool John Moores University	-0.06

Rank	Name	Factor Score
72	Sheffield Hallam University	-0.08
73	Liverpool Hope University	-0.1
74	Queen's University Belfast	-0.12
75	London Metropolitan University	-0.16
76	The Glasgow School of Art	-0.21
77	The Royal Veterinary College	-0.22
78	University of Greenwich	-0.22
79	Buckinghamshire New University	-0.22
80	Swansea University	-0.28
81	University of Gloucestershire	-0.3
82	Birkbeck, University of London	-0.31
83	University of Chichester	-0.33
84	Robert Gordon University	-0.34
85	Falmouth University	-0.34
86	University of Bradford	-0.34
87	University of Hull	-0.37
88	Edinburgh Napier University	-0.4
89	University of Southampton	-0.42
90	University of Strathclyde	-0.43
91	University of the West of Scotland	-0.45
92	University of Roehampton	-0.47
93	Norwich University of the Arts	-0.47
94	University of Sunderland	-0.49
95	The Open University	-0.49
96	University of East London	-0.53
97	Aston University	-0.54
98	University of South Wales	-0.55
99	Bournemouth University	-0.59
100	Heriot-Watt University	-0.63
101	University of Northampton	-0.64
102	Bangor University	-0.66
103	Cardiff University	-0.66
104	Birmingham City University	-0.68
105	University of Worcester	-0.68
106	Edge Hill University	-0.77
107	Glasgow Caledonian University	-0.78

Rank	Name	Factor Score
108	Plymouth Marjon University	-0.82
109	University of Suffolk	-0.85
110	Guildhall School of Music and Drama	-0.9
111	University of the Highlands and Islands	-0.92
112	Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance	-0.93
113	University of Chester	-0.98
114	Ulster University	-0.99
115	Leeds Trinity University	-1.01
116	Queen Margaret University	-1.04
117	Solent University	-1.07
118	Wrexham Glyndwr University	-1.1
119	University of London	-1.13
120	Northumbria University	-1.23
121	Kingston University	-1.25
122	University of Wales Trinity Saint David	-1.33
123	University of Bedfordshire	-1.38
124	Royal College of Art	-1.4
125	St George's, University of London	-1.4
126	University of Bolton	-1.41
127	London Business School	-1.43
128	The Royal Central School of Speech & Drama	-1.48
129	Cardiff Metropolitan University	-1.48
130	Bishop Grosseteste University	-1.55
131	The University of West London	-1.82
132	Cranfield University	-1.85
133	Teesside University	-1.95
134	Royal College of Music, London	-1.96
135	University of Cumbria	-1.98
136	The University of Buckingham	-1.98
137	Regent's University London	-2.05

Source: Civitas analysis.

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