



THE + RIFT

WHAT IS THE RIFT?

A deep ideological divide has emerged, polarising young men and women, setting them on separate paths and creating distinct cultural camps within a single generation.

We've dubbed this phenomenon **THE RIFT**

THERE IS A GROWING POLITICAL DIVIDE...

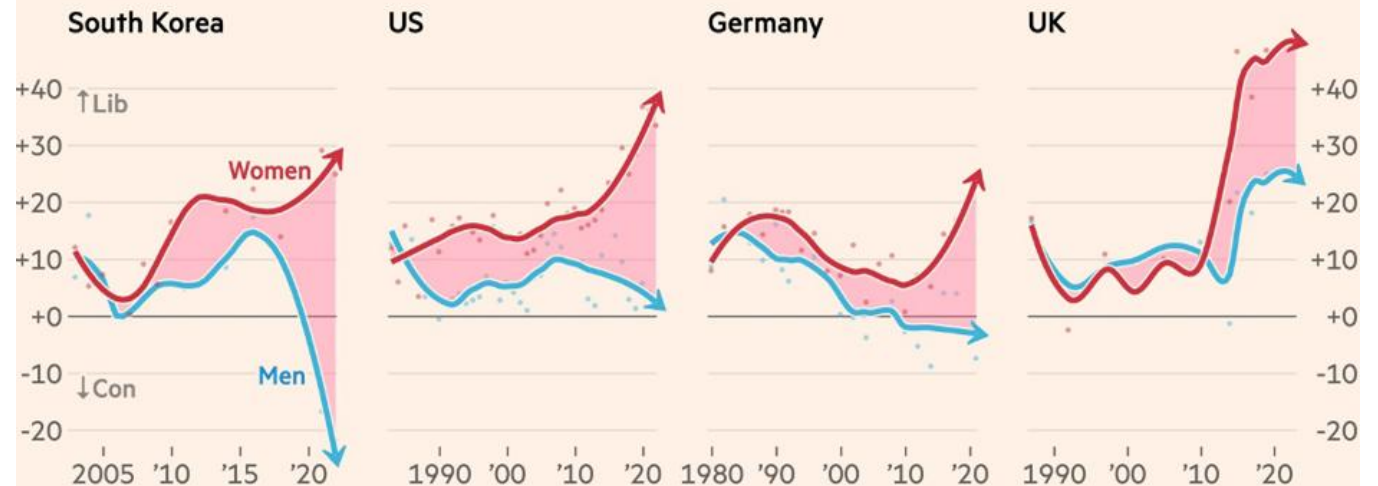
Young men and women have diverged in their voting patterns.

“Young women are becoming more radical. Young men aren't.

Andrew Curry

A wide ideology gap is opening up between young men and women in countries across the world

Political ideology of 18-29s (% liberal minus % conservative), by sex



Sources: Daniel Cox, Survey Center on American Life; Gallup Poll Social Series; FT analysis of General Social Surveys of Korea, Germany & US and the British Election Study. US data is respondent's stated ideology. Other countries show support for liberal and conservative parties
All figures are adjusted for time trend in the overall population
FT graphic: John Burn-Murdoch / @burnmurdoch
© FT

BUT THE RIFT IS ABOUT *CULTURE*, NOT SIMPLY POLITICS

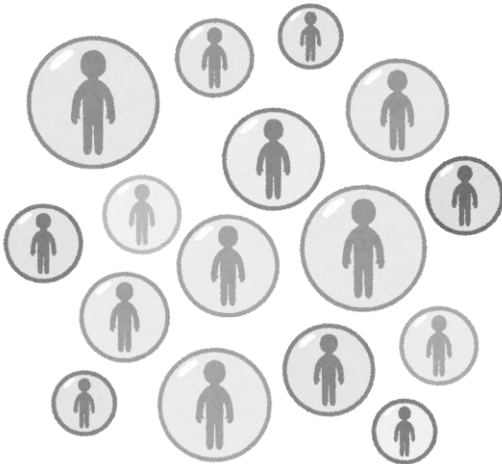
More than merely a political division.

It is a deep cultural and ideological divide polarising young men and women, setting them on different paths and creating two cultural camps within one generation.



WE'VE IDENTIFIED THREE CULTURAL ENGINES: THE ROOTS OF THE PROBLEM

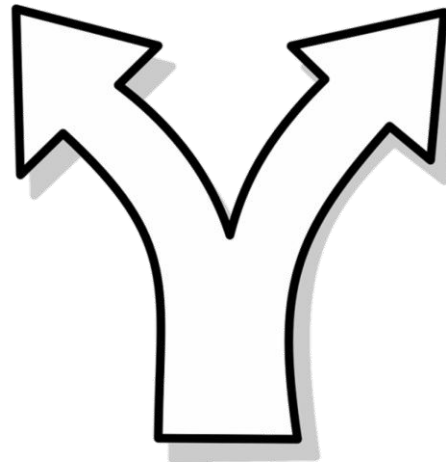
SEPARATE SPACES



Young men and women are occupying different worlds, breeding misunderstanding and resentment



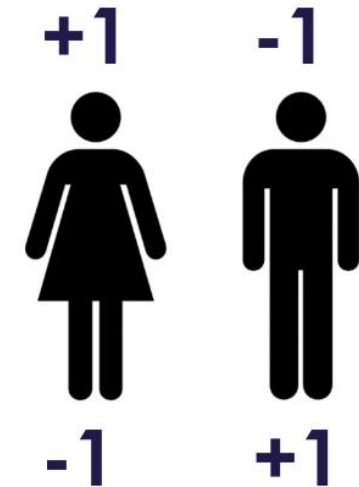
DIVERGENT PATHS



Young women are embracing liberal values and becoming more radical, while their male counterparts are becoming far more conservative



ZERO SUM GAME



Young people are increasingly viewing the success of others as their own loss – making it hard to find common ground



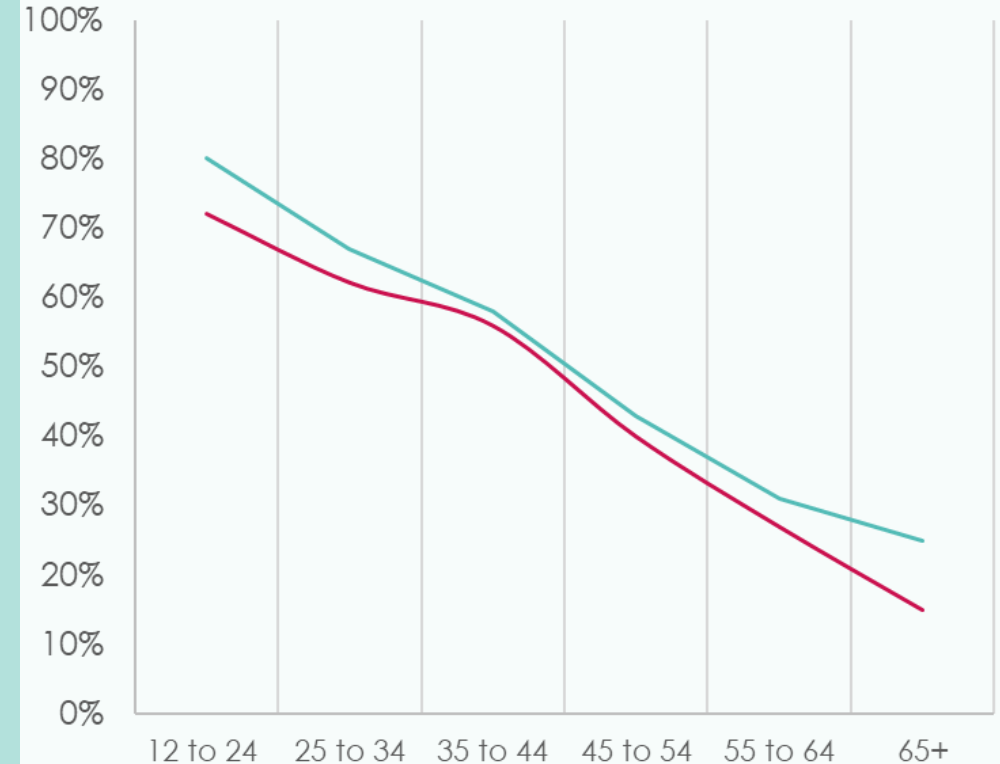
SEPARATE SPACES

There's an increasing segregation between young men and women. They are not only living in separate physical spaces, but also inhabiting different online worlds.

The rise of algorithmic echo chambers on digital platforms has exacerbated this, with men and women being sorted into increasingly separate, antagonistic digital spaces, breeding misunderstanding and resentment; this is fuelling gender wars instead of fostering healthy debate.

And IRL, young people are socialising less, coupling less - this lack of regular, meaningful contact only widens the rift.

% agree "I follow more people of my own gender than the opposite gender on social media"



Source: A7 [T2B Agree NET]: To what extent, if at all, do you agree with the following statements?
Base: 1,519 (Male n = 719 & Female n = 800; Male 12-24 n=101, Female 12-24 n=129)



92%

of teenagers using MUGAs were boys or young men.

Men have fewer friends than ever, and it's harming their health

The "male friendship recession" is having dire consequences.

STARLING

tapestry
a screen engine company



EMANCIPATORY VALUES

CONSOLIDATION VALUES

This is part of a wider shift in the UK's social landscape - what was once a steady move towards a 'gender role revolution' is now stalling, and even unravelling among young men.



34%

43%

43%

Women 55+



57%

52%

48%

Men 55+

Base: 1,519 (Male n = 719 & Female n = 800; Male 12-24 n=101, Female 12-24 n=129)



ZERO-SUM GAME

Economic stagnation plays a pivotal role in amplifying the Rift. In times of economic uncertainty, people are more likely to view the success of others as their own loss – a ‘zero-sum mentality’.

‘Cultural entrepreneurs’, (as coined by social scientist Alice Evans), fuel these perceptions and profit from polarisation, making it even harder to find common ground.

“*The only thing that men and women agree on is that it is better for your career prospects to be the other sex.*

Avivah Wittenberg-Cox



40% women aged **12-24** agree
“if men do better, women will become worse off”

Vs. **26%** among **women 55+**



38% men aged **12-24** agree
“if women do better, men will become worse off”

Vs. **16%** among **men 55+**

DESPITE ALL THIS, THERE'S A GENUINE CURIOSITY & DESIRE FOR UNDERSTANDING



Almost **70%** of both young men and women agree:

“I wish I understood more about what it means to be [a woman / a man] in today's world”



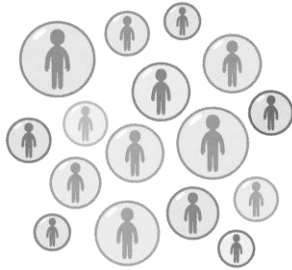
The ultimate, hidden truth of the world, is that it is something that we make, and could just as easily make differently.

Anthropologist
David Graeber



THERE ARE THREE AREAS OF INNOVATION WHERE WE CAN HELP HEAL THE RIFT

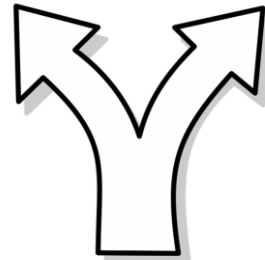
SEPARATE SPACES



ENCOUNTER SPACES

When we are divided by **separate spaces**, can we do better at building **spaces of encounter**? Encounters which drive a better sense of between-ness, interactions which are serendipitous, organic, messy and above all, inclusive of all genders

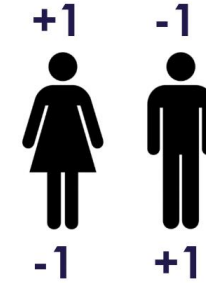
DIVERGENT PATHS



EMPATHY ENGINES

As young men and women set out on **divergent paths**, can we design 'empathy engines' which meet a hidden desire for mutual understanding? Empathy engines act as visceral immersion in what it's like to live life as another gender

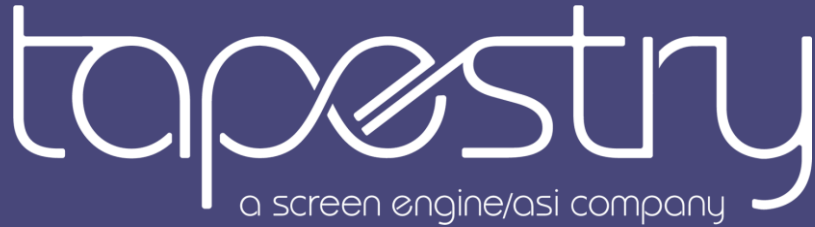
ZERO SUM GAME



SUPERORDINATE GOALS

Superordinate goals reduce conflict between groups by encouraging them to work together as one larger group towards a shared goal or problem they have in common. Helping people feel they don't need to take a side because a rising tide can lift all boats

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



At Tapestry we Make the Complex Beautifully Simple.

Having more data should make it easier to understand what people think and do. But it doesn't, people are contradictory in their opinions and behaviour, so it's easy to get lost in information overload.

We bring clarity to the most complex problems. Our approaches are used by leading companies all over the world and have won us multiple awards. We cut through the noise to provide an essential truth, a clear path and the confidence to make the right decision.



Starling are a cultural insights and futures agency specialising in socio-cultural research, helping brands to think more progressively for the future.

We believe in wild ideas for progressive futures – wild ideas change the world from the edges. Clients need ideas which push them out of their echo chambers.

We're a creative partnership obsessed with understanding why things happen and the poetic rigour of constructing persuasive arguments.



THE + RIFT

For more info contact:



Kevin Thompson
Joint-MD at Tapestry



Rebecca Munns
Research Manager at
Tapestry



Annie Auerbach
Co-Founder at Starling
Strategy



Adam Chmielowski
Co-Founder at Starling
Strategy



THANK YOU TO OUR COLLABORATORS

Adri Reksodipoetro
Ai Huy Luu
Ajeng Putriningrum
Amanda Iegli Tech
Chris Turner
Dave Kaye
Elsje van Niekerk
Giulia Romano
Hannah Marcus
Jase Armstrong
Jemma Ralton
Kevin Thompson
Lisa Stoney
Louisa Heinrich
Louise McLaren
Lucy Proudfoot
Miriam Rayman
Olga Trunova
Preeti Varma
Rebecca Munns
Robin Caroselli
Sheila Njoto
Sophie Gaskill
Steven Lacey
Tom Etheridge
Victor Houghton