

Democracy for What, Democracy for Whom?

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You're conversing with your Department Chair about who will be on the Search Committee to hire a new Dean for the College. Your Chair says he has asked the Interim Dean of the College and spoken with several people in the Provost's Office, but nobody has a clear answer. The next day, you and the entire College are called into the Auditorium for an urgent meeting with the Chair of the Board of Trustees, the University President, and the Provost. They inform you that they hired one of the former U.S. Senators of Florida to be the new Dean of the College. You and your colleagues look at each other in disbelief, and you all think to yourselves, "What type of democratic process is this?"

“No one is born a good citizen, no nation is born a democracy. Rather, both are processes that continue to evolve over a lifetime. Young people must be included from birth.” Kofi Annan

- ❖ Democracy derives from the Greek word "demos" (people) and "kratos" (power or rule) – Power of the People
- ❖ A system of government in which the citizens exercise power directly or elect representatives.

- ❖ **Popular Sovereignty:** The government derives its power from the consent of the governed.
- ❖ **Rule of Law:** Laws apply equally to all citizens, protecting rights and freedoms.
- ❖ **Civil Liberties:** Protection of freedom of speech, press, assembly, and religion.
- ❖ **Political Equality:** All citizens have an equal vote and opportunity in the political process.

- ❖ The United States of America (USA) was established in the late 18th century after British colonial rule.
- ❖ The American experiment was born on July 4, 1776 based on the words of the Declaration of Independence, “We the People...”
- ❖ The purpose was to create a democracy where government that reflects the will of the people and serves their interests.
- ❖ Everyone would have a say, so majority would not rule – the voices of the minority would be heard too
- ❖ One person, one vote

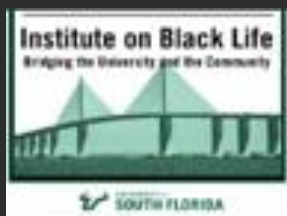
EXCEPT

MAJOR FLAW

- ❖ The words in the Declaration of Independence and US Constitution were not initially written to include people of color, particularly Black/African American or Indigenous people.
- ❖ **Article 1, Sections 2–9 of US Constitution**
- ❖ **Enslaved Blacks were only three-fifths of a White person; slave owners would be apportioned only three-fifths per slave for tax purposes (US Constitution, 1788).**
- ❖ **Dred Scott v. Sandford (1857).** Justice Taney opined:
- ❖ **In the opinion of the court, the legislation and histories of the times, and the language used in the Declaration of Independence, show, that neither the class of persons who had been imported as slaves, nor their descendants, whether they had become free or not, were then acknowledged as a part of the people, nor intended to be included in the general words used in that memorable instrument [Or] when the Constitution was framed and adopted [Negroes] had for more than a century before been regarded as beings of an inferior order, and altogether unfit to associate with the White race, either in social or political relations; and so far inferior, that they had no rights which the White man was bound to respect ... (Scott v. Sandford, 1857, p. 407)**

- ❖ 1ST Amendment – Freedom of Religion, Speech, the Press, and Association
- ❖ 13th Amendment – Abolishes Slavery
- ❖ 14th Amendment – Due Process and Equal Protection
- ❖ 15th, 19th, and 26th Amendments – Right to Vote

- Plato concluded that democracy is defective. Despite its initial attraction in offering freedom and equality to all, a fundamental problem with democracy is that it assigns “a sort of equality to equals and unequals alike” (Republic: 558c5). Thus, democracy fails to distinguish between the wise, who are well qualified to govern, and the uninformed masses who are guided by ignorance and desire (Hannon, 2022).



Information Literacy & Skepticism

Enlightenment Series, October 22, 2024

This Enlightenment Series is under the auspices of the USF Institute on Black Life, USF Black Employee Steering Committee, the USF Black Faculty & Staff Association, and the Racial Justice Initiative.

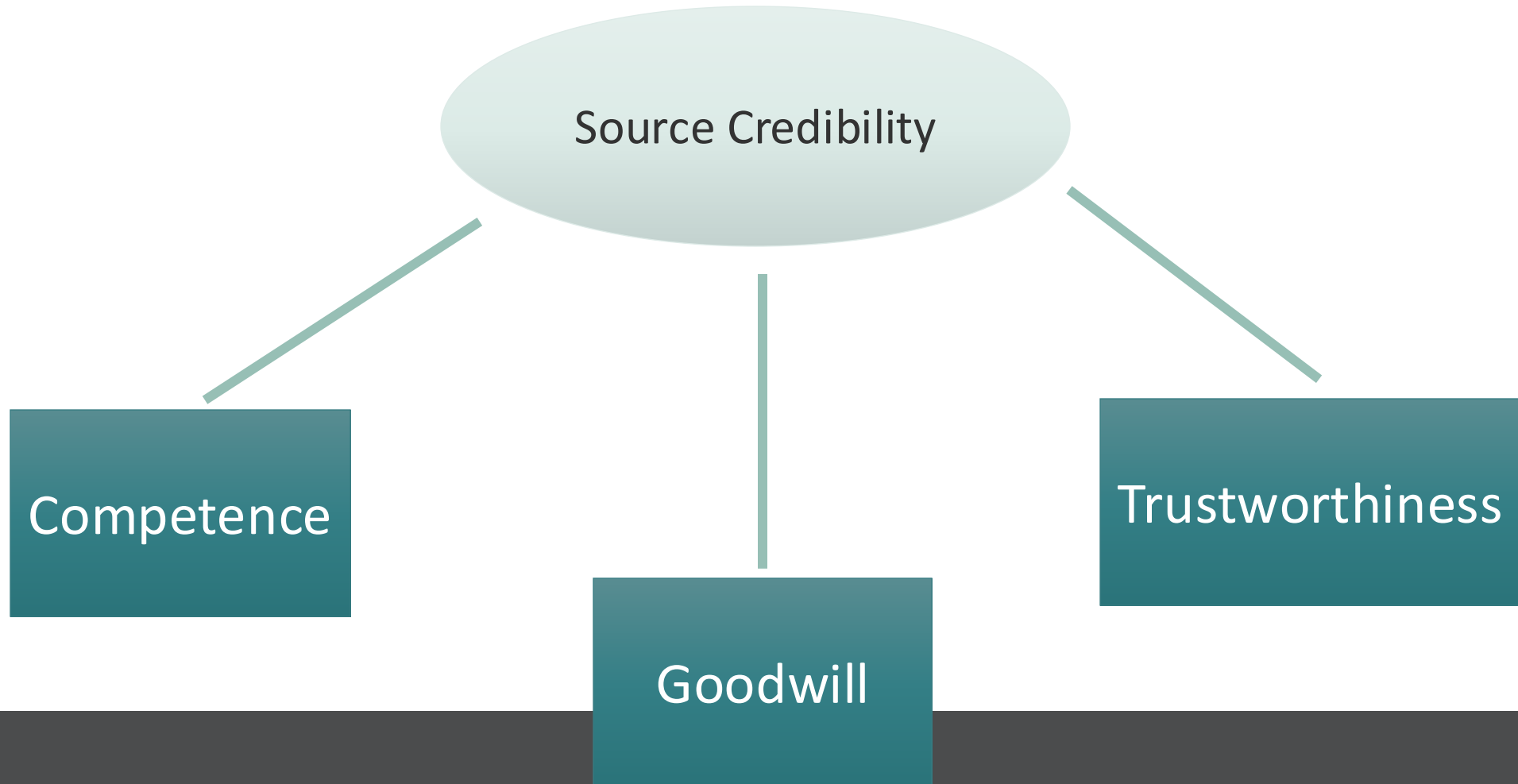


Presentation Preview

- Creating Organizational Authority
 - Credibility
 - Experts and Spokespeople
 - News Coverage
- Checking Organizational Authority
- Fact vs. Opinion

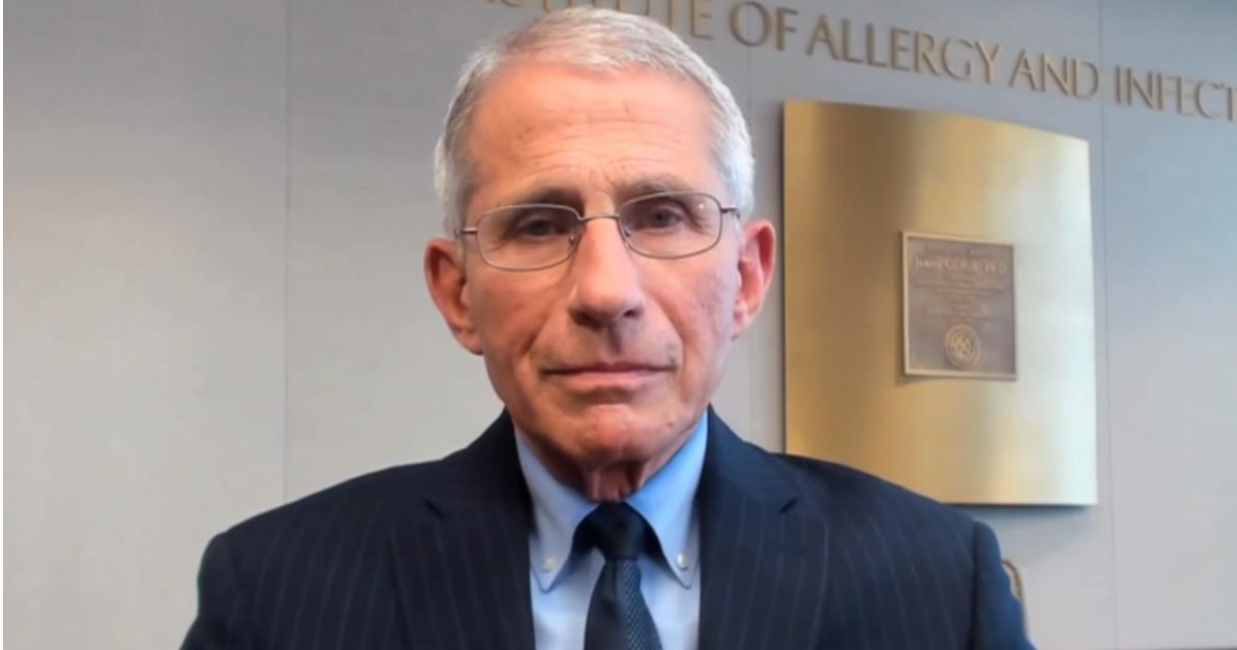
Creating Organizational Authority

Credibility



Creating Organizational Authority

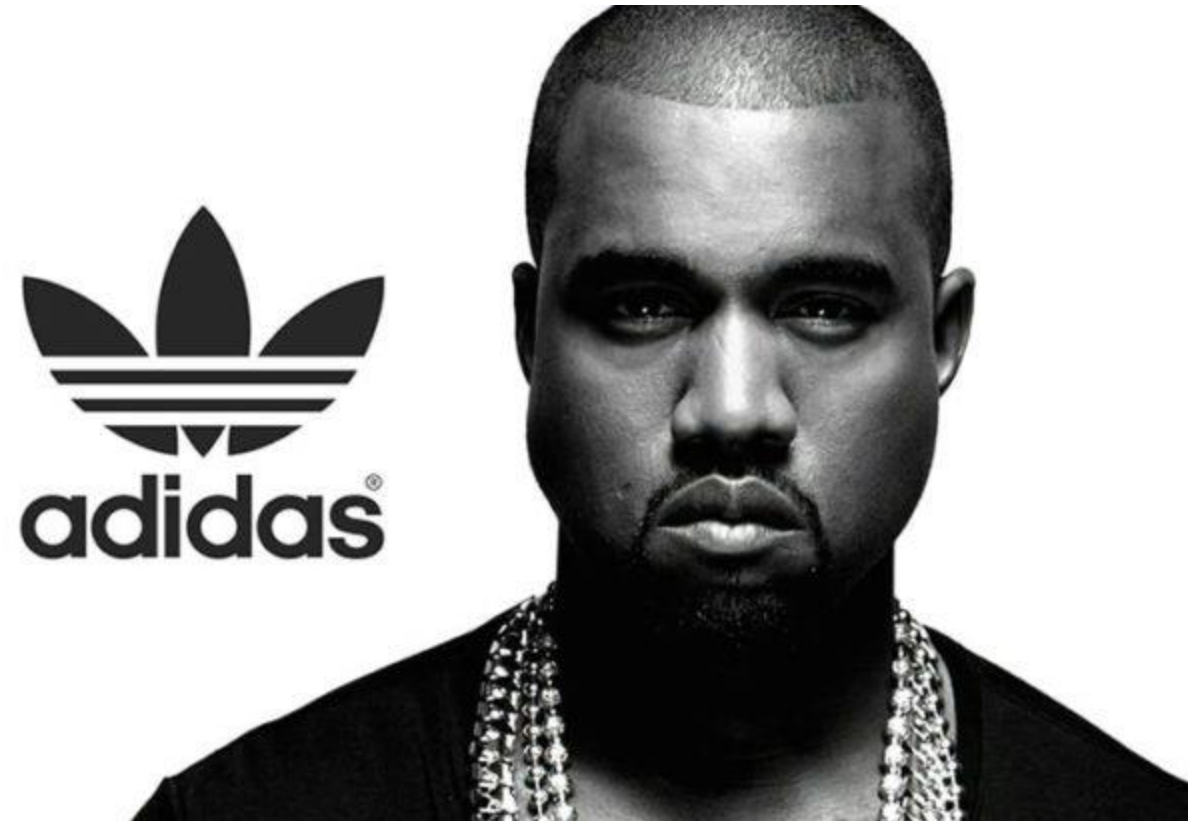
Dr. Anthony Fauci



- Former Director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (1984-2022)
- Former White House Chief Medical Advisor

Creating Organizational Authority

Spokespeople



Creating Organizational Authority

News Coverage

- News treatment of organizational authority via official “expert” sources
 - Government officials with power (or spokespeople)
 - Community or business leaders
 - Academicians/researchers
 - Practitioners in a given area (e.g. consultants)



Creating Organizational Authority

News Coverage

- What classifies a person as an expert for news sources?
 - Knowledge/experience on topic--assumes to transfer trust and competence
 - Perceived prestige of institutional/organizational affiliation (government office, academic institution, company)—assumes to transfer competence

Checking Organizational Authority

Employing Information Skepticism (Not Cynicism)

- Active use of skills during media exposure in order to interpret the meanings of the messages we encounter.

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Checking Organizational Authority

Employing Information Skepticism (Not Cynicism)

Author: Eric Glasser, 10 Tampa Bay
Published: 8:37 AM EDT May 24, 2021
Updated: 3:57 PM EDT May 24, 2021



SAINT PETERSBURG, Fla. — We're hearing from USF scientists who've been out on the water for more than a month now studying the environmental impact from that massive wastewater leak at the former Piney Point phosphate plant in Manatee County.

The first cruise launched on April 7, 2021. The teams have launched a total of five cruises so far, with more scheduled for later in May and into June.

Checking Organizational Authority

Employing Information Skepticism (Not Cynicism)

The logo for the Associated Press, consisting of the letters 'AP' in a bold, black, sans-serif font. Below the letters is a thick red horizontal bar.


Advancing the power of facts

The Associated Press is an independent global news organization dedicated to factual reporting. Founded in 1846, AP today remains the most trusted source of fast, accurate, unbiased news in all formats and the essential provider of the technology and services vital to the news business.



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Checking Organizational Authority

Employing Information Skepticism (Not Cynicism)

The Washington Post
Democracy Dies in Darkness

CORRECTION

Two months after publication of this story, the Georgia secretary of state released an audio recording of President Donald Trump's December phone call with the state's top elections investigator. The recording revealed that The Post misquoted Trump's comments on the call, based on information provided by a source. Trump did not tell the investigator to "find the fraud" or say she would be "a national hero" if she did so. Instead, Trump urged the investigator to scrutinize ballots in Fulton County, Ga., asserting she would find "dishonesty" there. He also told her that she had "the most important job in the country right now." A story about the recording [can be found here](#). The headline and text of this story have been corrected to remove quotes misattributed to Trump.

Checking Organizational Authority

Employing Information Skepticism (Not Cynicism)



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OGN

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Fact vs. Opinion

- Fact
 - Empirically verifiable information
 - Verified by widely accepted evidence
- Opinion
 - Subjective judgment based in cognition
 - Values-based judgment (best/worst, should/ought)

Fact vs. Opinion

Three situations where “information” gets tough

1. Same facts, different interpretations

More than 2,400 U.S. military personnel were killed and more than 20,000 were wounded during the Afghan War.

Whether interpreted as large or small may determine support/opposition to military efforts.

Fact vs. Opinion

Three situations where “information” gets tough

2. Contested Facts

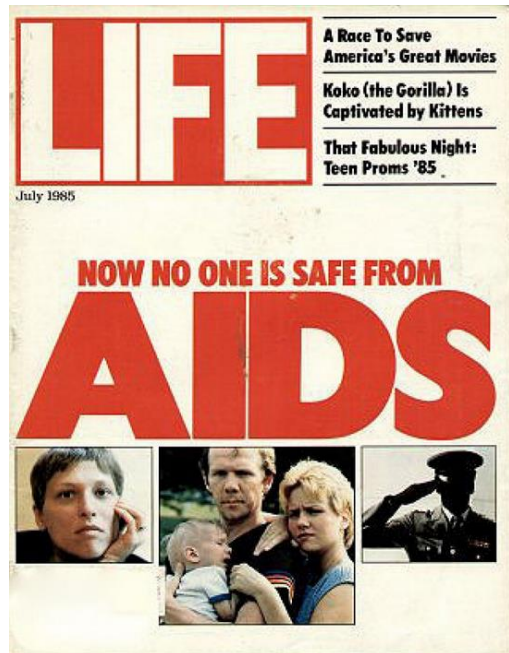
What is the true unemployment rate?

Payroll survey (workers) may tell a different story than the household survey. Nationwide unemployment may differ from local unemployment.

Fact vs. Opinion

Three situations where “information” gets tough:

3. Factually incorrect statements based on best available expert opinion



1985 misperceptions about AIDS included: whether respondents thought someone could contract AIDS (a) by eating food that had been handled by a person with AIDS (19% yes), (b) from a toilet seat (24% yes), (c) from trying on clothes in a department store (14% yes), and (d) from handling money (10% yes).

Fact vs. Opinion

- Pew Research Center Quiz: [Fact v. Opinion](#)
- Poynter Institute [MediaWise](#)

Silence and Sound

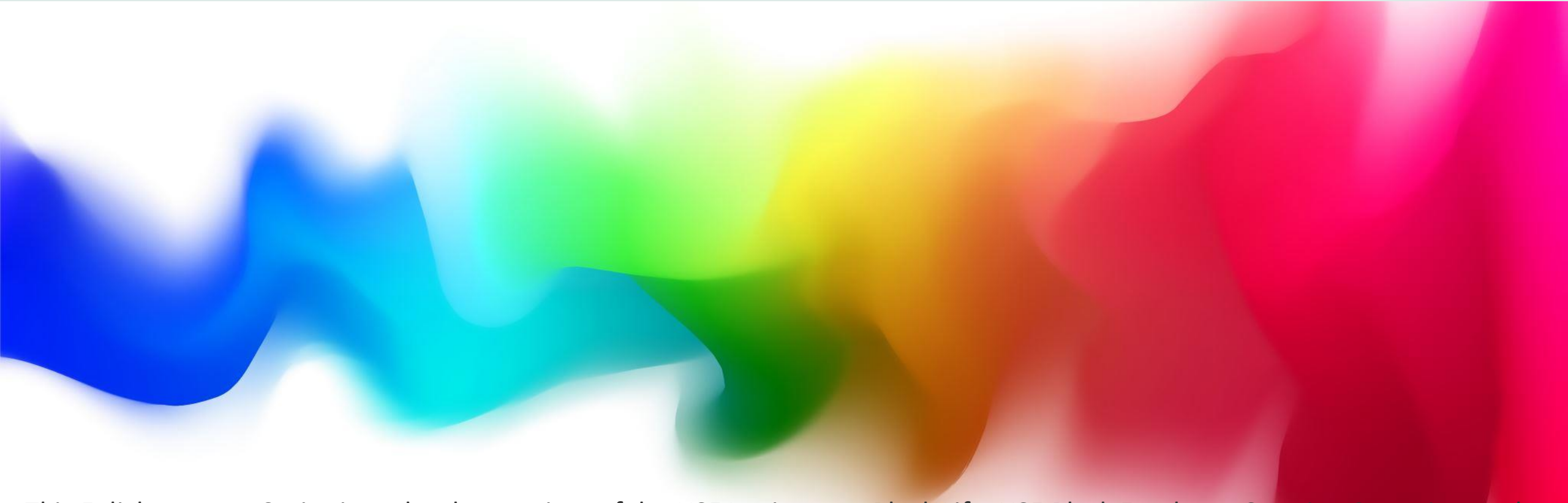
Enlightenment Series

Adriana Novoa

Department of History

University of South Florida

October 22nd, 2024



- “Voice is the expression of ideas and concerns. Silence is the suppression of ideas and concerns. On the surface, they appear to describe the same behavior in different ways. Yet, in this article, we theoretically and empirically demonstrate how they are distinct and why that matters. We hope that future research continues to investigate why, when, and how voice and silence matter for employee and organizational success and well-being.”

Sherf, Elad N, Michael R Parke, and Sofya Isaakyan. “Distinguishing Voice and Silence at Work: Unique Relationships with Perceived Impact, Psychological Safety, and Burnout.” *Academy of Management Journal* 64, no. 1 (2021), 127.

- Voice is not the expression of ideas and concerns.
- Silence is not the suppression of ideas and concerns.
- Sometimes silence can be the complete erasure of reality, the recognition that there is a power that can reduce your same existence to nothingness.
- This emptiness is not about words, it is about the ability to recognize yourself in reality, and reality in yourself, the most complete act of alienation that cannot be expressed in words.
- I grew up in this vacuum as a child and teen trying to make sense of a bloody dictatorship.

- "There is a silence that cannot speak. There is a silence that will not speak"

Obasan, Joy Kogawa

- Some of us carry this experience, it is not about words. It is not something that we need to put in words, but in weight.
- While it is true that words help us to understand difficult experiences, we don't question enough how we feel difficult experiences, particularly as they are happening in front of our eyes.
- I am now find carrying this heaviness all the time.

- Talk that does not communicate anything
- Deliberate ignorance of what others are experiencing.
- Creation of a reality that erase some people.
- A place that is a representation of something that is being destroyed at the same time that its building is being praised. Psychotic reality that cannot be reconciled.

- We need to speak up about the reality of our emotions, of what we are carrying and accumulating every day.
- We need to assert our presence. Just exist and be in a place that is as real as ourselves.
- Solidarity and association are important in our place of work now.
- Democracy cannot speak and will not speak if we do not understand it as an experience that only happens when we act, when we care, and we embody it. It can never be something that just happens, and it is created by an invisible hand, and written in an old paper. Change can only happen because our deliberate effort to carry the weight to make it happen.

