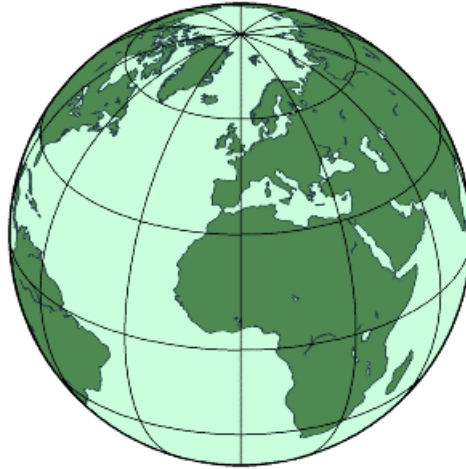


The Bell Curve and the Domino Effect



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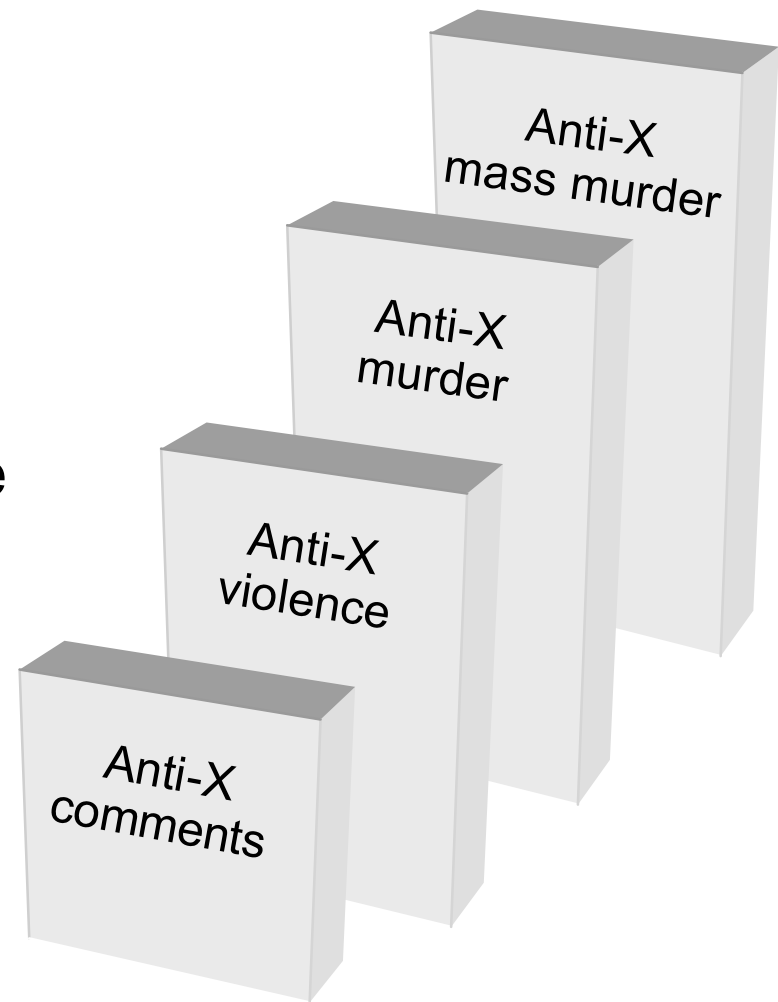
1. Indifference and the domino effect

Indifference

- Many non-X people:
 - Feel uncomfortable when they hear anti-X statements
 - But they do *not* say “Please stop making such comments”
- A person making anti-X statements might interpret the silence:
 - As *agreement* with the statements
 - As *encouragement* to continue making such comments
 - The person might believe “I am saying what most people think”
- An anti-X extremist probably thinks:
 - The unchallenged anti-X statements means most of the public is anti-X
 - “Most people just moan about the X problem. I’m going to *do something* about it.”
 - “I’m doing what the public wants (but are too scared to do)”

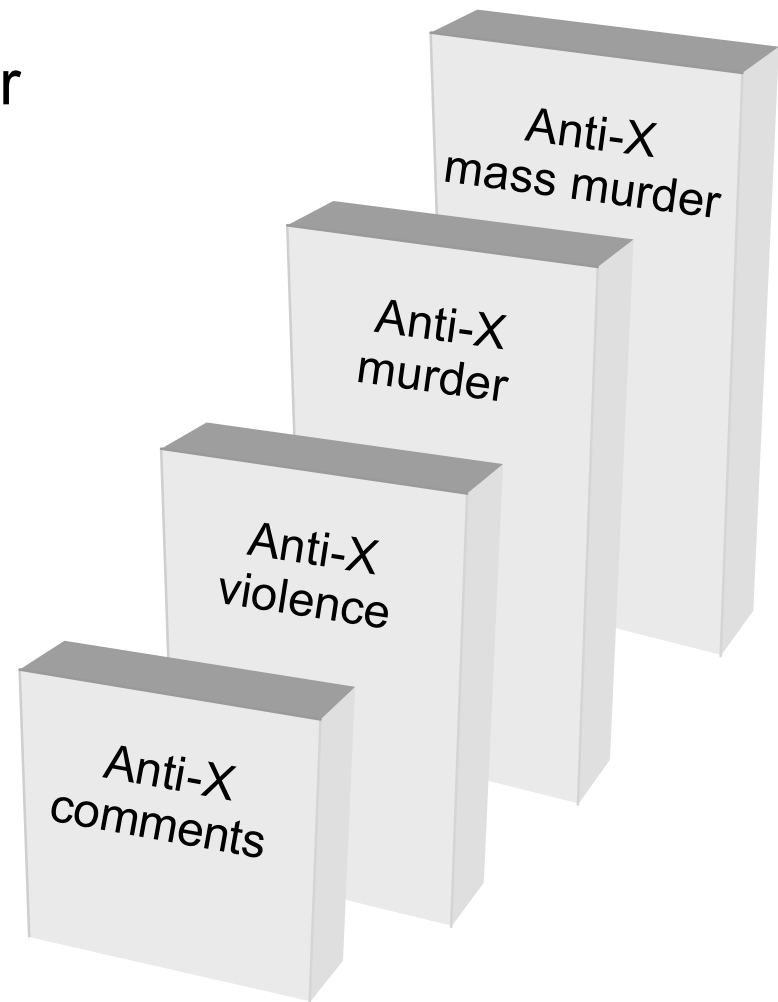
A domino effect

- The silent majority unintentionally create an environment for anti-X violence and occasional murder
- Anti-X comments lead to...
- Anti-X violence, which leads to...
- Anti-X murder, which leads to...
- Anti-X mass murder and genocide



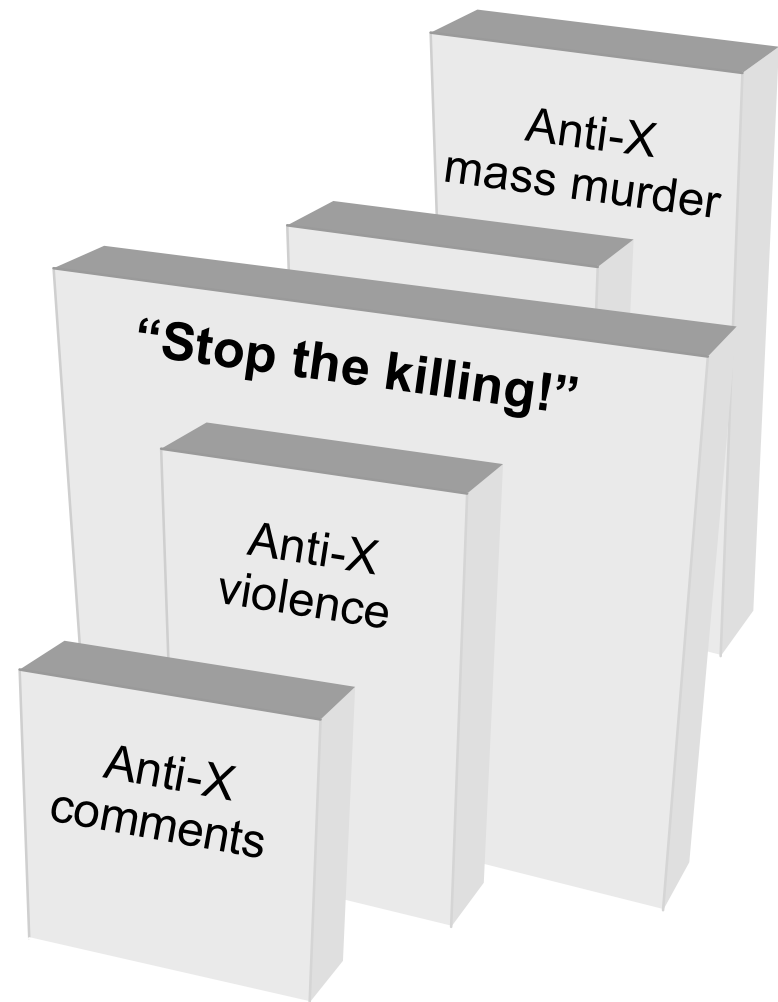
A domino effect (cont')

- The domino effect is usually stopped before it reaches its logical conclusion
- Often, it takes an anti-X murder for the non-X public to proclaim “That’s unacceptable”



A domino effect (cont')

- The public outcry over an anti-X murder temporarily stops further murders
- But it does not stop the anti-X comments or anti-X violence
- Eventually, the public outcry is forgotten, and another murder occurs

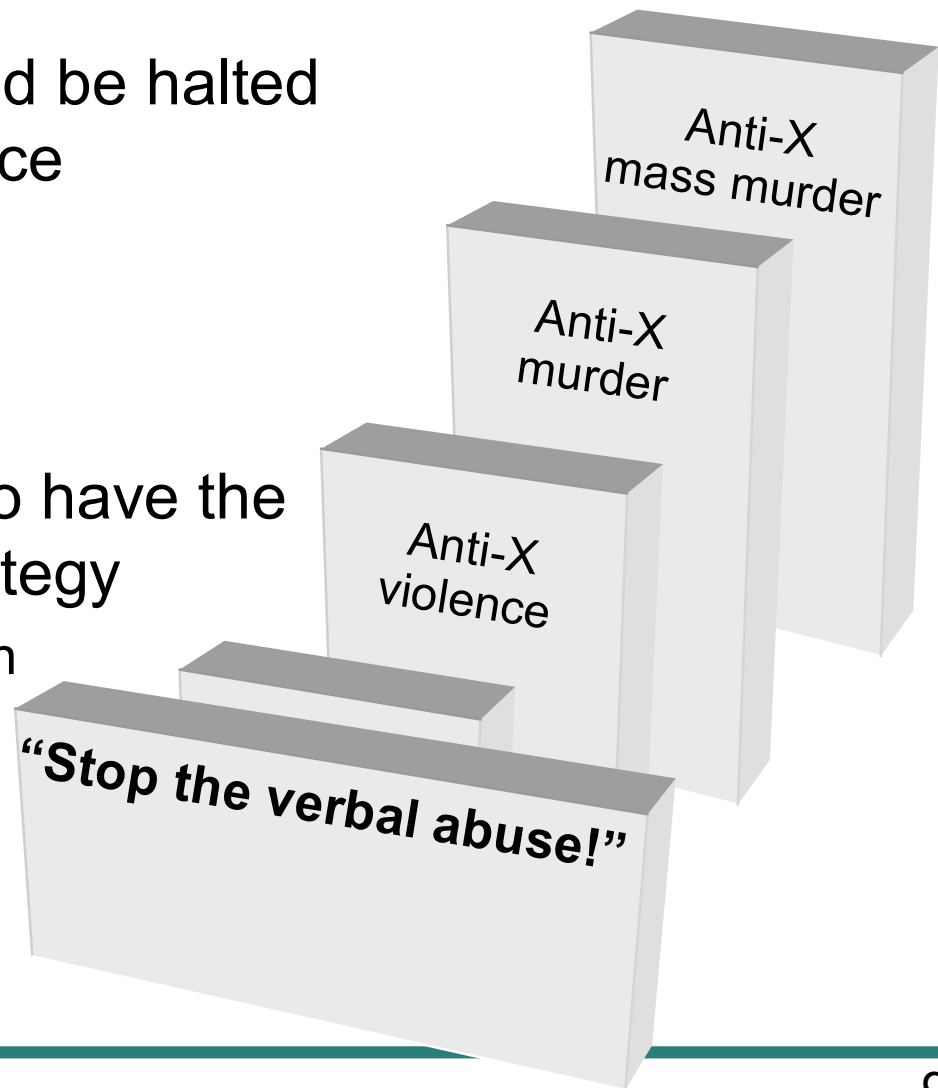


Frequency of hate crimes

- How often does anti-X violence and murder occur?
 - Varies from one “X” group to another
 - And from one country or decade to another
- In many countries, police keep statistics on hate crimes
 - Use an internet search engine to find these statistics
 - Or visit your local police station
 - The figures are probably much higher than you had assumed
- For example, in 2008 in the greater London area, England, there were:
 - Over 1000 racist and religious hate crime incidents reported per month (number of *unreported* incidents is estimated to be 5 times greater)
 - Over 100 homophobic hate crime incidents reported per month (number of *unreported* incidents is estimated to be 10 times greater)

Stopping the domino effect

- If non-X people said “That’s unacceptable” to anti-X comments...
- Then the domino effect would be halted *before* it could lead to violence
- Relevant English proverb: “A stitch in time saves nine”
- Note: it is **non-X people** who have the power to implement this strategy
 - Because peer pressure is much more effective if it comes from **non-X people**



2. Example of an extremist

General Dyer's massacre

- Taken from the Gandhi biography by Louis Fischer
 - Chapter 8 (“Murder”) of Part Two
- Sequence of events:
 - General Dyer issued a proclamation forbidding Indian processions and meetings
 - The proclamation was announced, but not very widely
 - Next day, 10,000–20,000 Indians held a peaceful meeting on some unused ground mostly enclosed by walls
 - General Dyer brought troops inside the entrance of the ground
 - An armoured car could not get through narrow entrance
 - General Dyer, without warning, ordered troops to open fire on the crowd
 - 1650 rounds of ammunition were fired
 - There were 1516 casualties (379 dead plus 1137 wounded)
- An enquiry was held to investigate Dyer's extreme action

General Dyer felt he was doing his duty

- Quotes from transcript of investigation's report indicate that Dyer felt he was doing his duty
- Examples:
 - Dyer explained that "if his orders against holding a meeting were disobeyed he was going to fire at once"
 - "Yes, I think it is quite possible that I could have dispersed them perhaps without firing" but "I was going to punish them."
 - "It was no longer a question of merely dispersing the crowd, but one of producing a sufficient moral effect from a military point of view not only on those who were present, but more especially throughout the Punjab. There could be no question of undue severity."
 - "I thought I would be doing a jolly lot of good."

Conclusion of the report

- The conclusion of Louis Fischer (Gandhi biographer) and the investigation's report:
 - “His unnecessary massacre was the child of British military mentality then dominant in India” which can be characterized as “Force is the only thing that an Asiatic has any respect for.”
- Put simply:
 - The atmosphere in the British military was acceptance and encouragement of violence against Indians
 - This atmosphere resulted in a domino effect with at least one person taking more extreme action

Dyer was not an isolated case

- Gandhi's protest against the salt tax:
 - In India, you needed a license to produce salt
 - The authorities gave these licenses only to English businesses
 - Gandhi organized Satyagraha-based protests:
 - Many Indians made salt
 - No protesters resisted arrest or resorted to violence
- Police response:
 - Estimated 100,000 arrests. And when that did not stop the protests...
 - Police beat protestors (killing some and seriously injuring many)
 - Police cavalry charged a peaceful protest
 - Police fired rifles and machine guns at peaceful protestors
 - An armoured car ran full speed into a crowd and then opened fire with its machine gun (70 dead and 100 injured)
- These extreme actions are examples of a domino effect

3. Anti-X intolerance in the media

Anti-X intolerance in the media

- Summary so far:
 - Anti-X comments lead to anti-X violence
 - Which leads to anti-X murder, and eventually anti-X mass murder
- Anti-X comments made by an individual:
 - Are heard by a small number of people
 - So the encouragement to commit anti-X violence has limited effect
- Anti-X comments in the media (TV, newspapers, radio...):
 - Are read or heard by many more people
 - Readership for the top 10 UK newspapers is 1–8 million each (figures from www.nrs.co.uk)
 - Popular TV shows might be watched by millions of people
 - So the encouragement has a much more extensive effect

How common are anti-X comments in the media?

- Often, anti-X comments are:
 - Stated indirectly or by euphemism
 - Dressed up to sound patriotic
- That makes it difficult for non-X people to recognise a comment as being anti-X
- Exercise: use an Internet search engine for keywords like:
 - Media racism
 - Media homophobia
 - Media Islamophobia
 - Media anti-Semitism
- Anti-X comments in the media are more common than most people realize

4. Anti-X comments made by people in authority

Anti-X comments made by people in authority

- When a person in a position of authority makes anti-X comments, the public is influenced heavily because:
 - The public looks to figures of authority for guidance
 - The anti-X comments are widely reported in the media
- The example on the next slide is from “The Autobiography of Martin Luther King Jr.”:
 - Chapter 8 (“The Violence of Desperate Men”)

Sequence of events

■ Sequence of events:

- King organized a peaceful boycott of segregated buses in Montgomery
- Taxi drivers agreed to offer cheap fares to people in boycott
- Police enforced a minimum taxi fare law to stop the taxi drivers
- Volunteer drivers offered free rides to cover for loss of taxi drivers
- Some white housewives drove black maids to ensure clean houses
- “Divide and conquer” through rumours and misinformation failed to stop the boycott
- The mayor announced a “get tough” policy on TV. He:
 - Claimed the vast majority of whites were opposed to the boycott
 - Asked white employers to stop driving blacks
- All three city commissioners joined the White Citizens Council (a segregationist organization)
- Police started arresting drivers for minor and imaginary traffic violations

Analysis

- Recall motivations of anti-X extremists:
 - “Most people just moan about the X problem. I’m going to *do something* about it.”
 - “I’m doing what the public wants (but are too scared to do)”
- Analysis:
 - The actions of the mayor, city commissioners and police gave important messages to anti-black vigilantes
 - “The majority of white people are opposed to the boycott”
 - “The authorities are getting tough; citizens should too”
- Without understanding the bell curve model’s domino effect:
 - The Mayor and police could deny responsibility for violence
- When you understand of the bell curve model’s domino effect:
 - Their (possibly unintentional) incitement to violence can be clearly seen

Result

- Within a week, King's house was bombed
 - Luckily, nobody was hurt
- The mayor expressed regret that “this unfortunate incident has taken place in our city”
- A colleague of King replied:
 - “You may express your regrets, but you must face the fact that your public statements created the atmosphere for this bombing. This is the end result of your ‘get tough’ policy.”

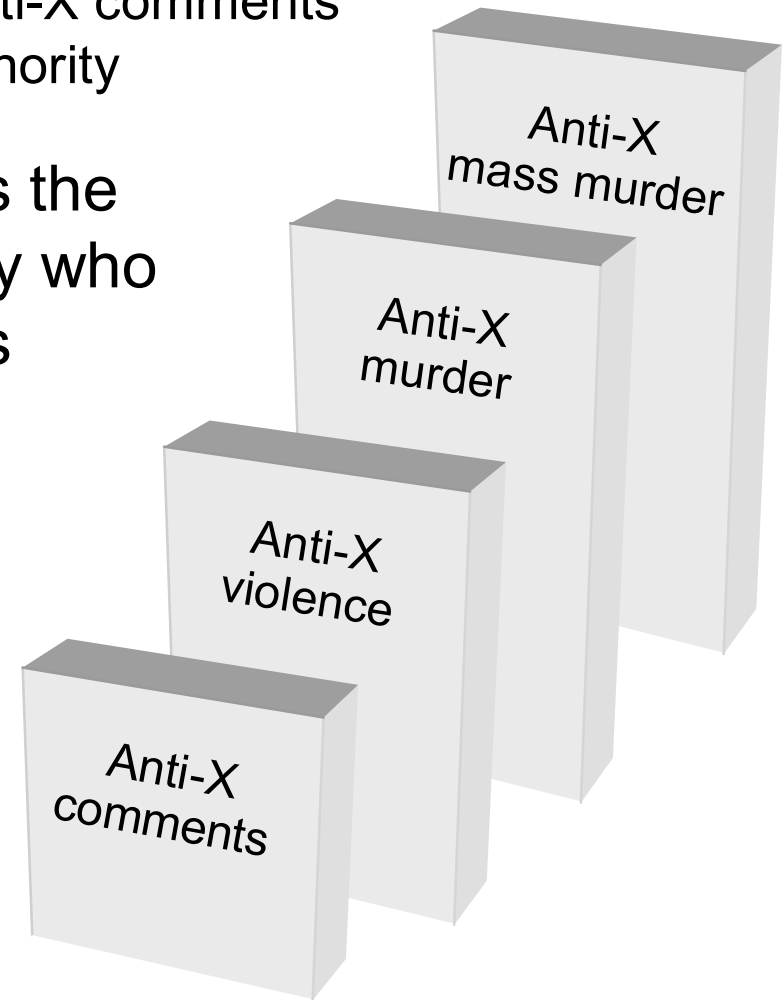
6. Summary

Summary

- The domino effect:

- Anti-X comments lead to anti-X violence, anti-X murder & mass murder
- The domino effect is multiplied when anti-X comments are made by the media or people in authority

- An “enabler” for the domino effect is the indifference of the apathetic majority who don’t say “Stop” to anti-X comments



Summary (cont')

- Famous quotes about indifference:
 - “The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing”, Edmund Burke (1729–1797), an Irish philosopher
 - “Indifference is always the friend of the enemy, for it benefits the aggressor”, Elie Wiesel, holocaust survivor
 - “Evil is obvious only in retrospect”, Gloria Steinem, feminist
- The domino effect of the bell curve helps us to understand how the above quotes apply our everyday lives
- The next chapter explores ways in which activism can tackle this indifference