

Chapter 7

ONLINE SUPPLEMENT

WHAT IS HAPPENING TO BOYS?

In this chapter, I tell a more speculative story about how the Great Rewiring affected boys using a “push-pull” analysis. I showed how the “real world” changed, since the 1970s, in ways that have made it less hospitable to boys and young men—leading many to feel more purposeless, useless, and adrift. That’s the push, away from the real world. I then show how, starting in the 1970s and accelerating through the 2010s, the digital world brought more and more ways for boys to do the agency-building activities they craved, such as exploring, competing, playing at war, mastering skills, watching increasingly realistic pornography, all through a screen, and eventually, one that lives in their pocket. That’s the pull.

I show that the net effect of this push-pull is that boys have—on average, and compared to girls—disconnected more from the real world and invested their time and talents in the virtual world instead. I argue that without more time, effort, enjoyment, and reward in the real world, boys growing up today will be less likely than previous generations to mature into reliable husbands, fathers, and employees.

In this document, Zach and I provide the original, color graphs from the chapter, updated with the latest data. We’ll continue to update these figures. Additionally, you’ll find supplementary graphs that provide additional nuance and insight that were streamlined out of the book for brevity. This document also contains links to our data sources and specific data points for our graphs. Feel free to use these graphs in essays and articles. You do not need to ask for my permission; just be sure to attribute the source as: *Source: Jonathan Haidt, The Anxious Generation, Online Supplement.*

I drew on the following collaborative review documents:

- [*What is happening to boys? A collaborative review*](#)
- [*Digital media effects: A collaborative review*](#)
- [*Free play and mental health: A collaborative review*](#)
- [*Porn use and adolescent health: A collaborative review.*](#)
- [*Video game use and adolescent mental health: A collaborative review.*](#)
- [*Adolescent mood disorders since 2010: A collaborative review.*](#)
- [*Social media and mental health: A collaborative review*](#)
- *I also drew on Appendix A: [*Timeline of The Great Rewiring*](#)*

I also drew on the following Substack Posts from *After Babel*:

- [Haidt \(2023\)](#). *Why I'm Increasingly Worried About Boys, Too*.

NOTES:

- Date created: May 25, 2023, Last Updated: January 22, 2024
- In the spirit of John Stuart Mill, we hope to engage with our skeptics with good faith. Please use any of the data below for your own analyses or to replicate our work. For all data, see:
 - [Slidedeck with all graphs from this chapter](#).
 - [Spreadsheet with all data points used to make the graphs in this chapter](#).
 - Many of the graphs in this book come from the Monitoring the Future database. You can download the dataset used for this book on [GitHub](#).
- Please cite this document and the graphs from this document as Haidt & Rausch (ongoing). *The Anxious Generation, Online Supplement*.

If you are a researcher and would like to notify us about other data or add comments or counterpoints to this document, please request commenting access to the Google Doc, or [contact Haidt](#) directly, and he will set your permissions to add comments to the Google doc, or will paste in your comments. This document is evolving based on feedback.]

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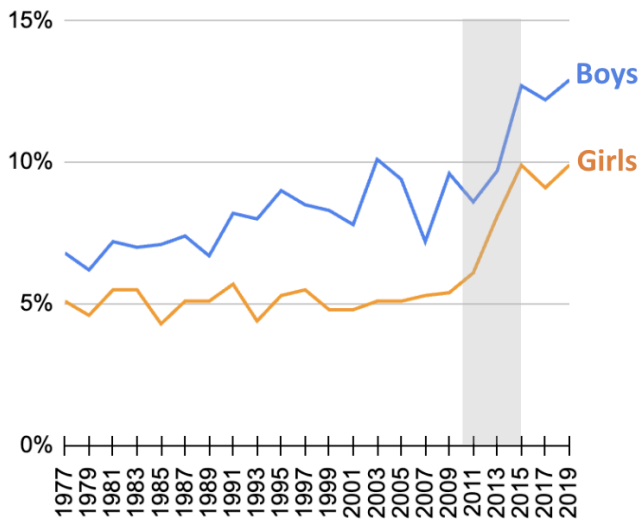
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Intro

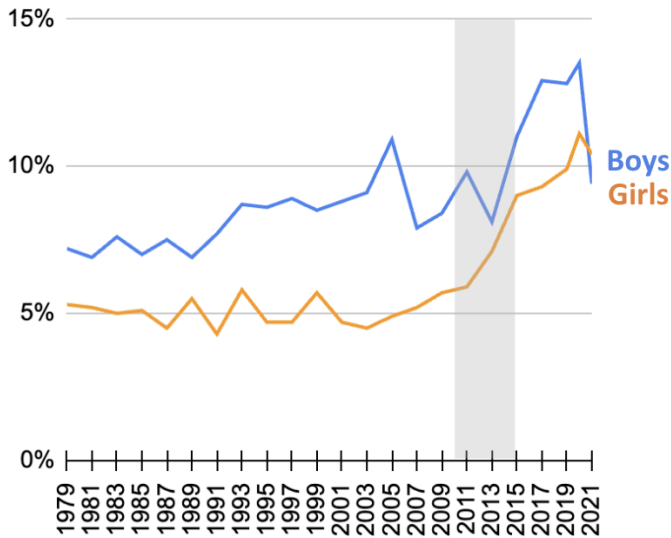
“People like me don't have much of a chance at a successful life”
(USA 12th Graders)



SOURCE: Monitoring the Future (MTF)

Figure S7.0.1 Percent of USA 12th Graders who “Agree or Mostly Agree” with the statement: People like me don’t have much of a chance at a successful life. Source: (Monitoring the Future 1977-2021, 2 Year Buckets, Weighted). [[Zach's spreadsheet](#)] [[MtF Github](#)]

“People like me don't have much of a chance at a successful life” (USA 12th Graders)



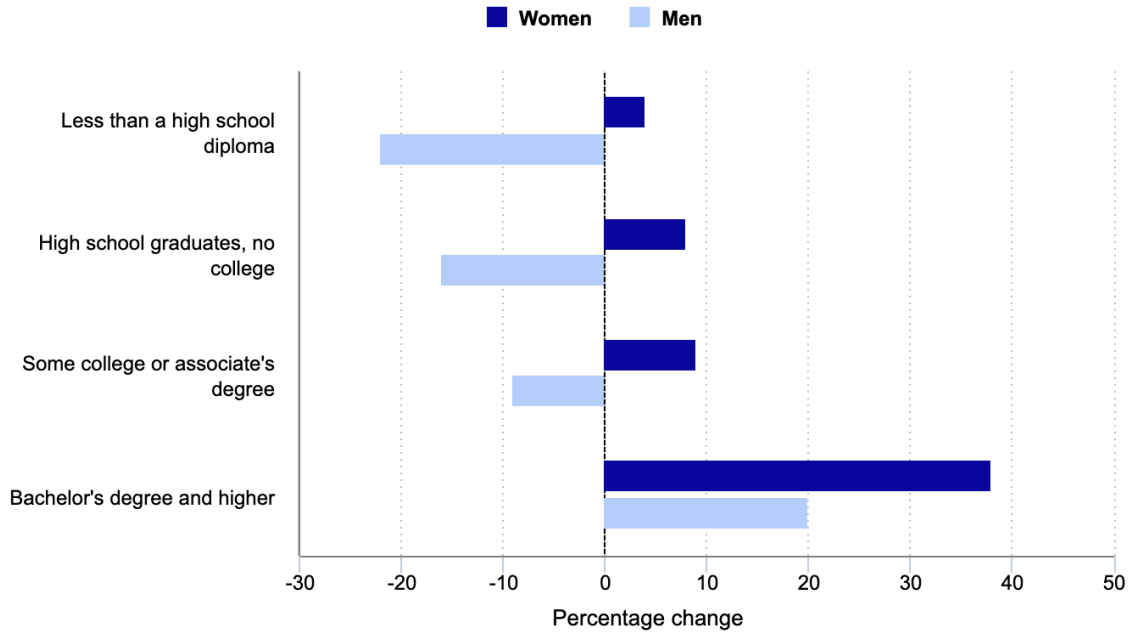
SOURCE: Monitoring the Future (MTF), 2 Year Buckets, Weighted

Figure S7.0.2 Percent of USA 12th Graders who “Agree or Mostly Agree” with the statement: People like me don’t have much of a chance at a successful life. Source: (Monitoring the Future 1977-2021, 1 Year Buckets, Weighted). [[Zach’s spreadsheet](#)] [[MtF Github](#)]

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The Long Decline of Males

Chart 4. Percentage change in inflation-adjusted median usual weekly earnings of women and men, by educational attainment, 1979–2021



Hover over chart to view data.

Note: Data relate to earnings of full-time wage and salary workers, age 25 and older.

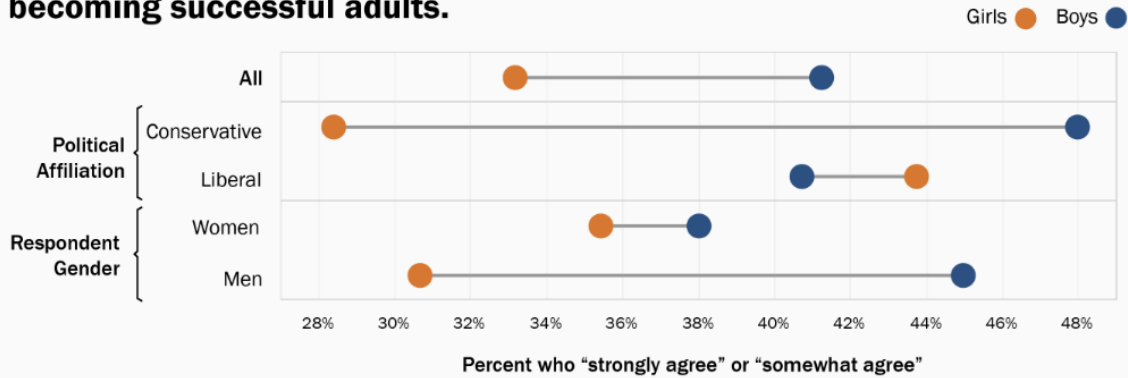
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.



[View Chart Data](#)

Figure S7.1.1 Percentage change in inflation-adjusted median usual weekly earning of women and men, by educational attainment. Source: [Bureau of Labour Statistics](#).

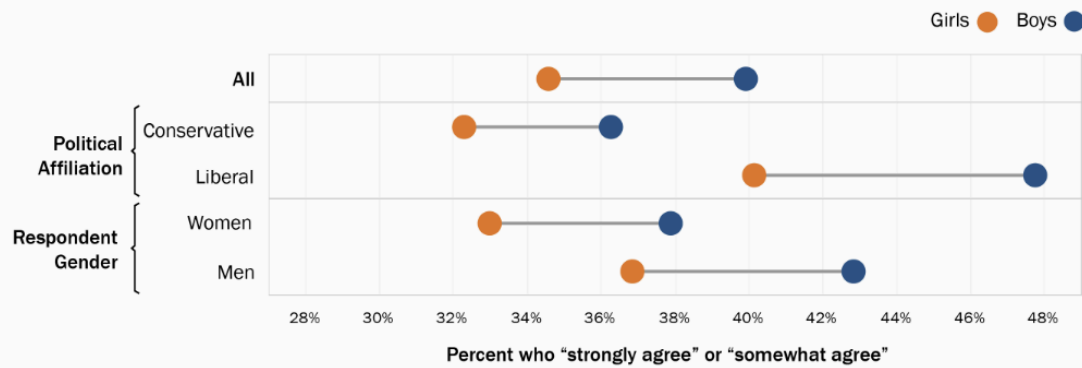
I am worried about girls/boys in the United States in general becoming successful adults.



Source: Authors' calculations using AFS data.

B Future of the Middle Class Initiative
at BROOKINGS

I am worried about my daughter/son becoming a successful adult.



Source: Authors' calculations using AFS data.

B Future of the Middle Class Initiative
at BROOKINGS

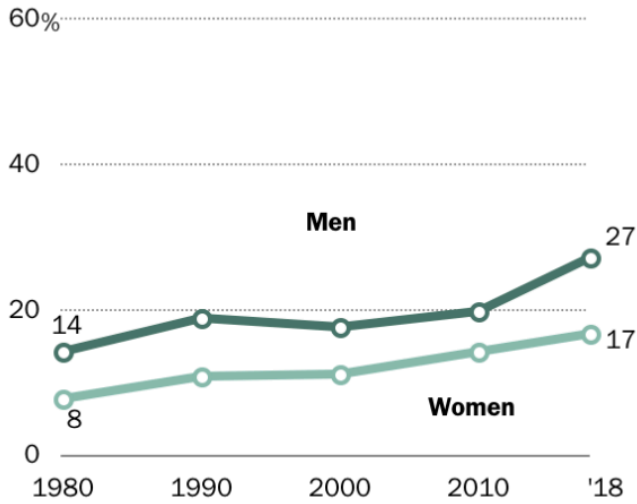
Figure S7.1.2 parent beliefs about the opportunities of boys and girls, and perspectives of their own sons and daughters. Source: [Brookings Institute](https://www.brookings.edu/).

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Boys Who Fail to Launch

More men than women live in their parents' home during young adult years

% of adults ages 25 to 29 who are living in their parents' home, 1980 to 2018



Note: Includes parents of biological, step and adopted children.
Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 1980, 1990, 2000, 2010 and 2018 Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement (IPUMS).
"Majority of Americans Say Parents Are Doing Too Much for Their Young Adult Children"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Figure S6.2.1 Majority of Americans Say Parents Are Doing Too Much for Their Young Adult Children. Source: [Barrosa, Parker, & Fry \(2019\)](#), Pew Research Center.

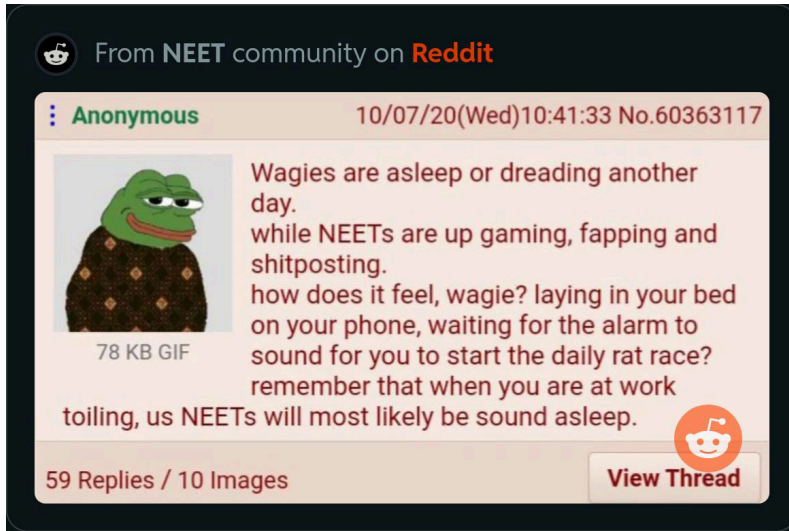
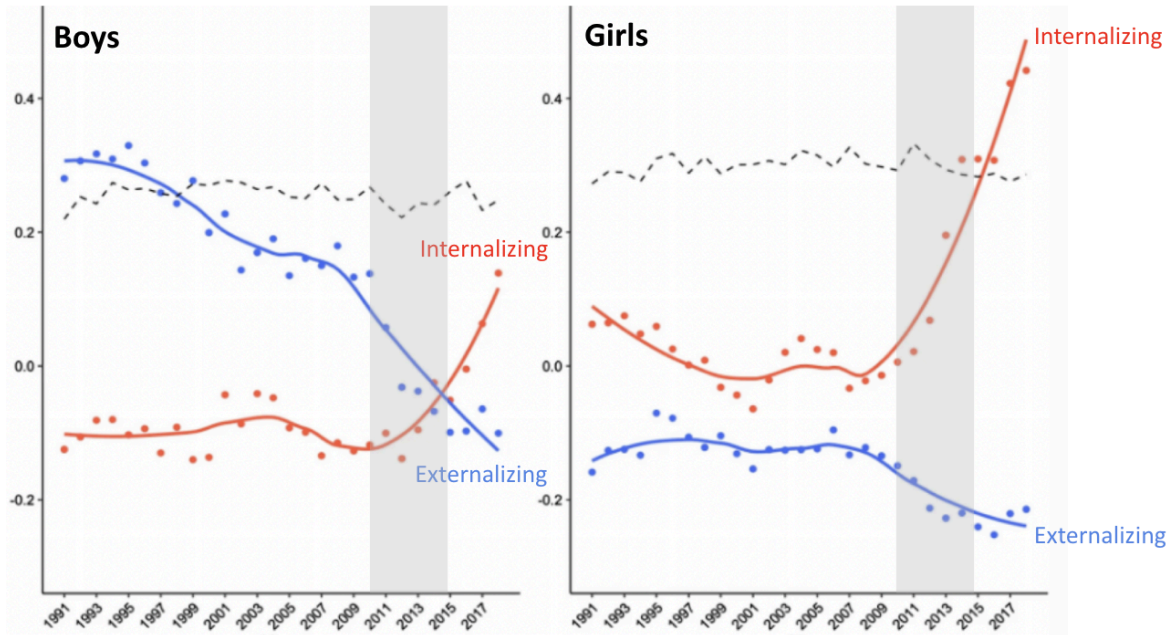


Figure S6.2.2, A post on the social media site, Reddit.

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Boyhood Without Risk

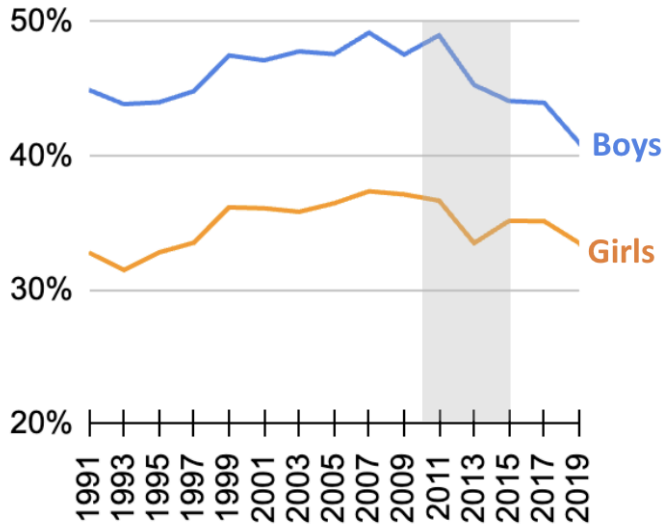
Internalizing and Externalizing Symptoms (USA High Schoolers)



SOURCE: Monitoring the Future (MTF)

Figure S7.3.1: In the 2010s, externalizing scores dropped for both sexes while internalizing scores rose. Gen Z boys now look like Millennial girls from the 1990s. Source: [Askari, Rutherford et al. \(2022\)](#). [Vertical line and labels added by Zach]

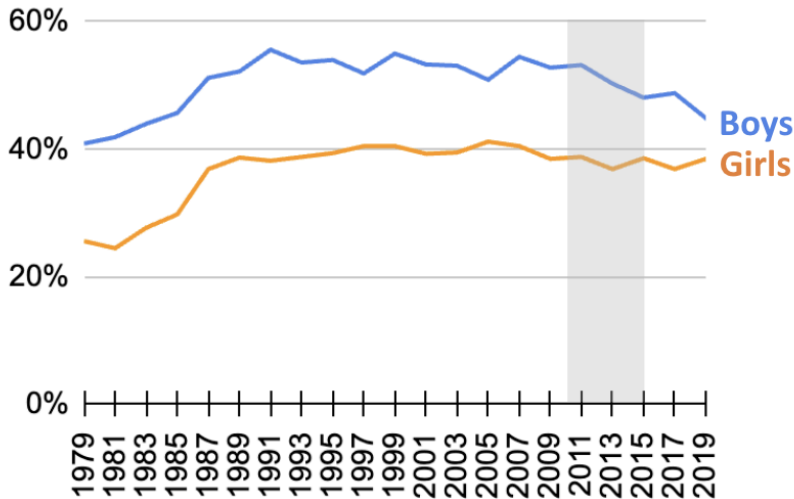
“I like to test myself every now and then by doing something a little risky” (8th, 10th, and 12th Graders)



SOURCE: Monitoring the Future (MTF), 2 year buckets, weighted, all grades

Figure S7.3.2 [Percent of 8th, 10th, and 12th graders (combined) who agreed with the statement “I like to test myself every now and then by doing something a little bit risky.” Source: Monitoring the Future. Last year is 2020, collected just before COVID restrictions. Two-year buckets. [\[Zach’s spreadsheet\]](#) [\[MtF Github\]](#)

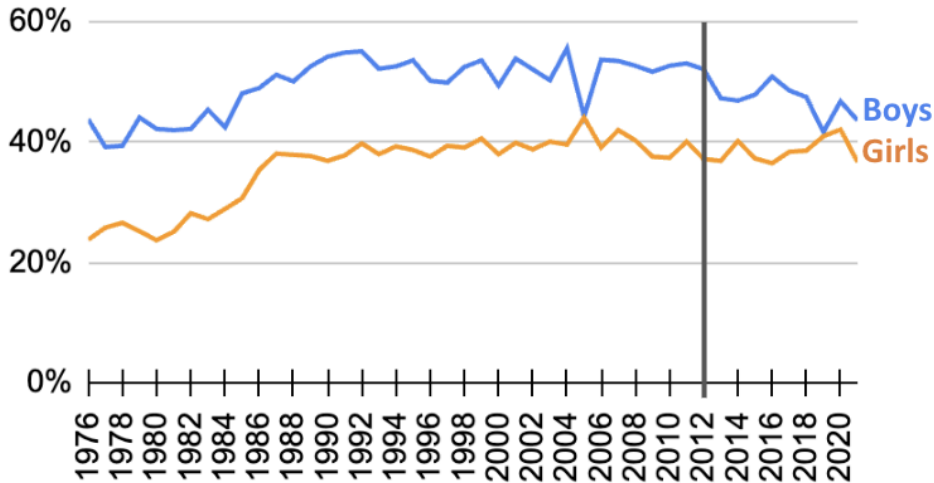
“I like to test myself every now and then by doing something a little risky” (12th Graders)



SOURCE: Monitoring the Future (MTF), 2 year buckets, weighted, 12th graders

Figure S6.1.3 Percent of 12th graders who agreed with the statement “I like to test myself every now and then by doing something a little risky” Source: Monitoring the Future. Two-year buckets. Last year is 2020, collected just before COVID restrictions. [[Zach’s spreadsheet](#)] [[MtF Github](#)]

“I like to test myself every now and then by doing something a little risky” (USA 12th Graders)



SOURCE: Monitoring the Future (MTF)

Figure S6.1.4

Percent of 12th graders who agreed with the statement “I like to test myself every now and then by doing something a little risky” One-year buckets. Source: Monitoring the Future. Last year is 2020, collected just before COVID restrictions. [[Zach’s spreadsheet](#)] [[MtF Github](#)]

U.S. Teens and Adults Admitted to Hospitals for Unintentional Injuries

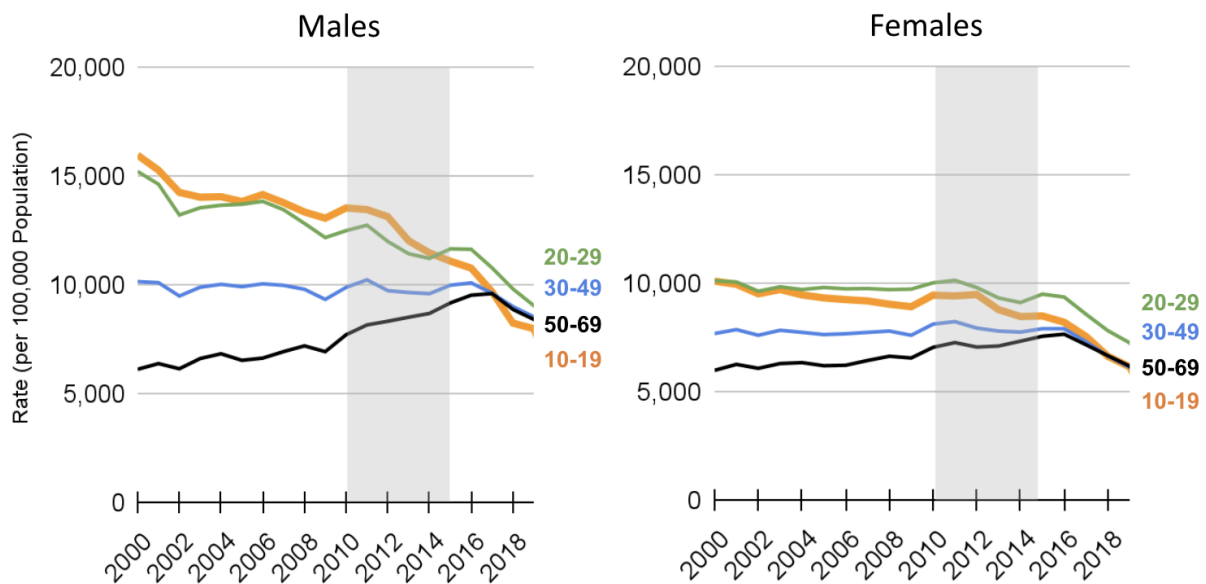


Figure S6.1.4 On the left: U.S. Males admitted to hospitals for unintentional injuries, by age group. On the right: Same, for U.S. females. Black line is ages 10-19, the age group that used to have the highest rates of injury and now has among the lowest. Source: Nonfatal Injury Reports (2000 - 2020), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, [National Center for Injury Prevention and Control](#). This dataset only goes back to 2000. [[Zach's spreadsheet](#)]

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The Virtual World Welcomes Boys

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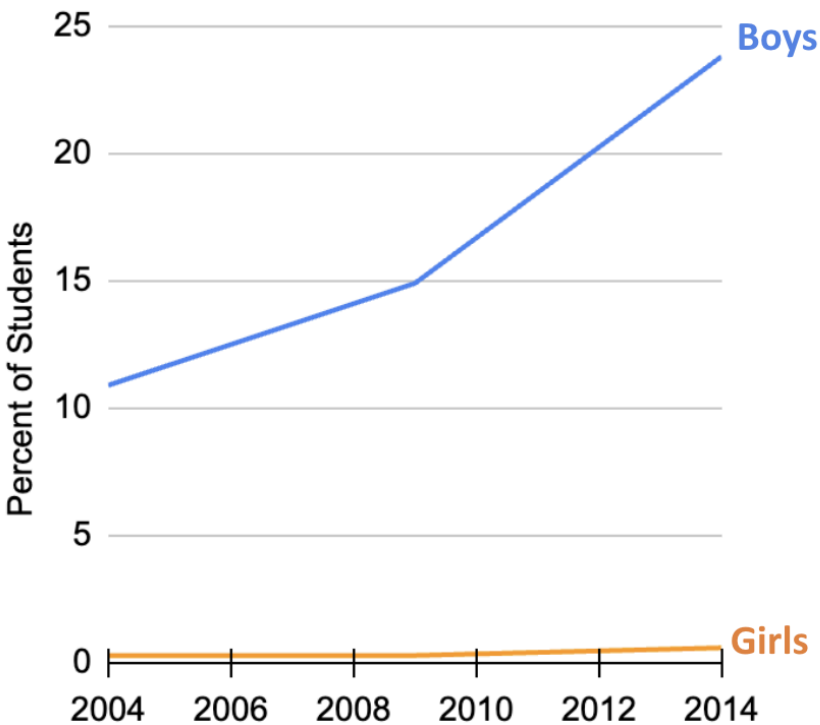
The Virtual World Consumes Boys

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Pornography

Percent of Daily Porn Users (Swedish 12th Graders)



SOURCE: Donevan et al. (2022).

Figure S7.5.1 Percent of Swedish 12th Graders who watch pornography “more or less daily” [Donevan et al. 2022](#). [[Zach’s spreadsheet](#)] [[MtF Github](#)]

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Video Games

On Video Game Addiction: The Game Addiction Scale for Adolescents (GASA) includes seven criteria including:

- **Salience:** Playing a game becomes the most important activity in a person’s life and dominates his or her thinking (preoccupation), feelings (cravings), and behavior (excessive use).
- **Tolerance:** The process whereby someone starts playing games more often, thereby gradually building up the amount of time spent on games.

- **Mood modification:** The subjective experiences that people report as a result of engagement in games. This dimension was previously labeled euphoria (Griffiths, 1995, 1997), referring to a “buzz” or “high” that is derived from an activity. However, mood modification may also include tranquilizing and/or relaxing feelings related to escapism.
- **Withdrawal:** Unpleasant emotions and/or physical effects that occur when game play is suddenly reduced or discontinued. Withdrawal consists mostly of moodiness and irritability, but may also include physiological symptoms, such as shaking.
- **Relapse:** The tendency to repeatedly revert to earlier patterns of game play. Excessive playing patterns are quickly restored after periods of abstinence or control.
- **Conflict:** This refers to all interpersonal conflicts resulting from excessive gaming. Conflicts exist between the player and those around him/her. Conflicts may include arguments and neglect, but also lies and deception.
- **Problems:** This refers to problems caused by excessive game play. It mainly concerns displacement problems as the object of addiction take preference over activities, such as school, work, and socializing. Problems may also arise within the individual, such as intrapsychic conflict and subjective feelings of loss of control.

Source: [Esposito et al. \(2020\)](#). An Investigation into Video Game Addiction in Pre-Adolescents and Adolescents: A Cross-Sectional Study. *Medicina*.

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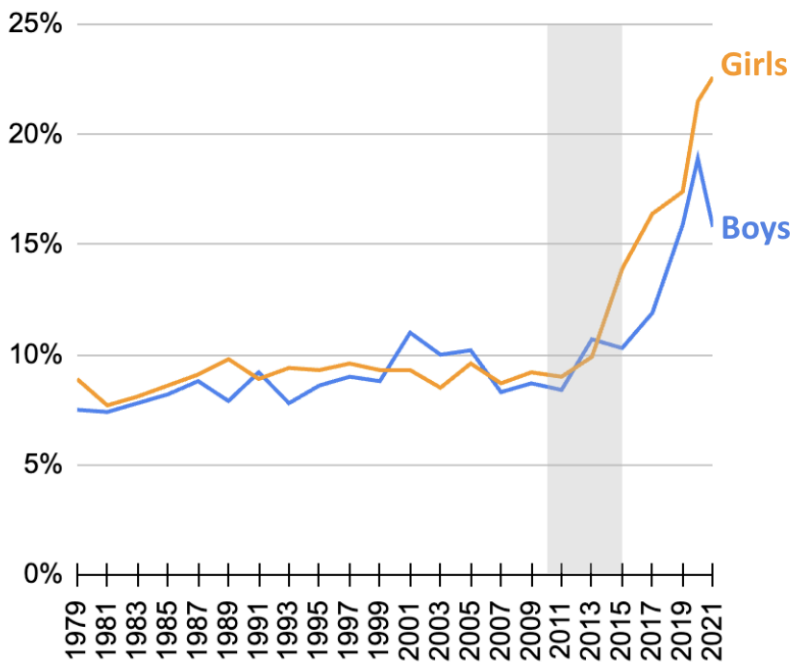
All Screens and No (Real World) Play

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Freedom, Technology, and Meaninglessness

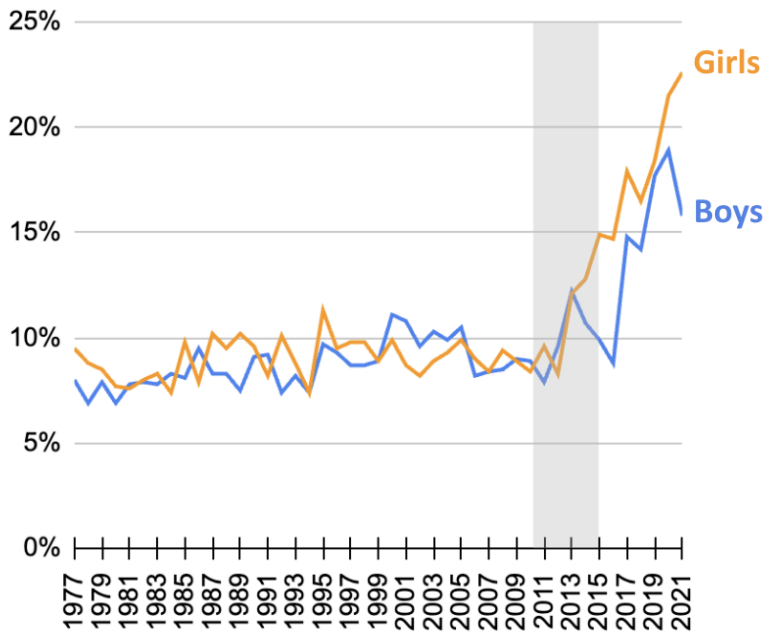
“I Feel That My Life Is Not Very Useful” (USA 12th Graders)



SOURCE: Monitoring the Future (MTF), 2 Year Buckets, Weighted

Figure S7.6.1 Boys and girls suddenly fell into a pit of existential despair, in 2012. Two-year buckets. Source: Monitoring the Future. [\[Zach's spreadsheet\]](#) [\[MtF Github\]](#)

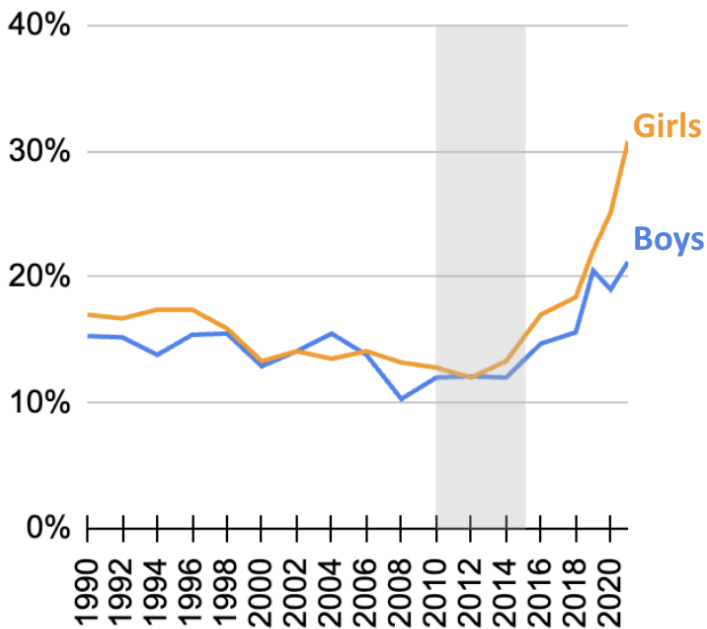
“I Feel That My Life Is Not Very Useful” (USA 12th Graders)



SOURCE: Monitoring the Future (MTF), 1 Year Buckets, Weighted

Figure S7.6.2 Boys and girls suddenly fell into a pit of existential despair, in 2012. (Source: Monitoring the Future, 1 Year Buckets, Weighted). [[Zach's spreadsheet](#)] [[MtF Github](#)]

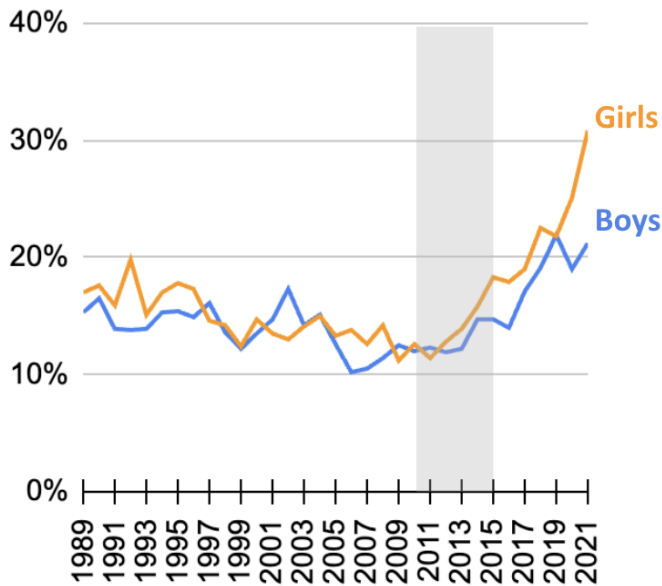
“Life Often Feels Meaningless” (USA 12th Graders)



SOURCE: Monitoring the Future (MTF), 2 Year Buckets, Weighted

Figure S7.6.3 Boys and girls who agree that life often feels meaningless. (Source: Monitoring the Future, 2 Year Buckets, Weighted). [[Zach's spreadsheet](#)] [[MtF Github](#)]

“Life Often Feels Meaningless” (USA 12th Graders)



SOURCE: Monitoring the Future (MTF), 1 Year Buckets, Weighted

Figure S7.6.4 Boys and girls who agree that life often feels meaningless. (Source: Monitoring the Future, 1 Year Buckets, Weighted). [\[Zach's spreadsheet\]](#) [\[MtF Github\]](#)

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Appendices: Post-Publication Additions