

Start with a **healthy community** with a balanced, diverse discourse.

Something happens, and **the balance shifts.**

Maybe some like-minded members join.

Maybe something shifts the members' worldviews.

Or maybe one group of members leave.

The discourse becomes uneven. One view is advantaged over the others.

If the community fails to self-regulate, **the imbalance worsens over time** as the advantaged view becomes stronger.

Those who join are more likely to be like-minded.

Those who leave are more likely to be those who dissent.

When members change their views, they are more likely to favour the advantaged view.

At some point, **a tipping point is reached** and one view prevails.

The community becomes unbearable for dissenters and overwhelming for moderates, who leave or convert.

Social media lets them leave for free.

As old views fade from the collective conscious, so do their moderating effects.

The community has now become **an echo chamber**, (/ek-oh cheym-ber/)

where members encounter only beliefs or opinions that coincide with their own. Their existing views will be reinforced and alternative ideas suppressed.

The remaining ideology is empowered.

Diversity becomes strange, against common sense. Opposing views are obviously wrong, and the collective agreement **breeds intolerance.**

Tribalism strengthens the group's bonds and resolve.

Our beliefs are self-evident.

Agreement affirms our beliefs. Dissent affirms our persecution. Heads we're right; tails you're wrong.

Eventually, the community believes **outsiders are ideological threats**,

and become exclusive as a protective measure.

Extremism distances the group from all outsiders, where even moderate views seem unthinkable.

Uncritical affirmation of the ideology steadily drives out nuance in the discourse.

Extreme views become natural.

ECHO CHAMBERS

have been around for at least as long as humans have organized into groups.

*Social media isn't responsible for their existence—it just takes **mobility, persuasion, randomness, and time.***

But *social media* platforms accelerate mobility. And irresponsibly designed ones accelerate persuasion. What social media is responsible for is for making these effects so much stronger.

Social media makes exclusion effortless.

Social media naturally discourages nuance.

Social media amplifies the intolerant majority voice.