This is a blog post about an article about an article about a series of blog posts about an article. That's only partially tongue-in-cheek.

The controversy surrounding the New York Times Magazine article about Amy Cuddy has been litigated at great length between psychologists and across social media domains. Lines in the sand have been drawn; hot takes have been taken; fevered opinions have been delivered with righteous fervor, hackles raised, alliances made and frayed...this has firmly spilled over into ‘don’t talk about politics at lunch’ land.

Speaking of.

I recently found myself at a lunch where Amy Cuddy was the topic of conversation. The place we were at has delicious small plates and I was trying to figure out my order-of-eating so mostly I was in my own world when the topic came up, but there it was - the Ny times article as the topic du jour. I had just logged off a facebook discussion group on the same topic. In the narrow world of the social sciences, that article got a lot of attention.

My take-away from that lunch: It's hard to keep the thread in this tapestry of conflict, but with each iteration and evolution (convolution?), the question I have found myself going back to is: why are we having this debate?

If one were to poll the most prolific writers in the Cuddy wars, I am not convinced a consensus would emerge.

Normally a debate has a premise. A side argues for, and a side argues against. But what is the premise of this debate? Is it a referendum on Amy Cuddy? Is it a referendum on the replicability in science movement? Is it a referendum on bullying, or misogyny, or tone, or something else entirely?

The self evident answer to one group is the missed point of another. The unfortunate consequence of a debate without a consensus premise is that it swirls instead of moving forward.

So: a call for clarity.

With that said, let’s muddy the waters more.

A facet of this debate which has frustrated me is the persistent, inaccurate assumption of mutual exclusivity. It is not only possible but \*likely\* that all sides are more or less correct. Dr. Cuddy may have over-interpreted her results \*and\* been bullied. There is nothing that prohibits both of these things from being true at once. Dr. Cuddy may have deserved to be singled out because of her prominence \*and\* the magnitude of attention may have gone too far. The replication movement can be right on future direction \*and\* have some bad actors. This is important because it shifts the grounds of the discussion to things that can be done. It’s the difference between being opposed to your peers and arguing a side , and being in accord with your peers and arguing a priority. Lets allow that life is mostly ambiguous and stories mostly aren’t.

Nextr: let’s stop assuming we have any grasp on motive. This is the dark heart of the professional-as-personal. There is not compelling information to suggest that Dr. Cuddy sought out to inflate a claim so that she could get a TED talk in order to launch a book and speaking tour. She co-authored a paper, was, perhaps somewhat hyperbolic in her claims based on very limited information, capitalized on opportunities, and was resistant to a reset on parts of the science. There are mistakes and poor choices in this story, but not necessarily Machiavellian fame-and-fortune seeking deviousness. Nor is it likely or safe to assume that Dr. Gelman and the Colada blog set out with any malicious intent. More likely, they saw some issues, both with methodology and replicability, and pointed them out. As they have done many times before, in a useful and important contribution to the art of science. If we \*have\* to assume motive, let’s give the principles in this story the benefit of the doubt on both sides; better yet, let’s stick with what we know, which, when it comes to why people do what they do, isn’t much. Nor is it likely that Dr. Cuddy or the first iteration critics of her work originally sought the level of publicity this story has generated.

To that end, I think one of the most interesting and useful aspects of this debate, for me, has been to observe the reactions of interested parties, especially on social media forums. For myself, I can speak to methodology, but not to motive. So, all I am qualified to comment on is the text of teh original power posing paper and subsequent replication attempts