Our Righteous Minds

Vanderbilt Osher Life Long Learning Institute
Fall, 2018
Large majorities of both parties say voters cannot agree on basic facts

% who say that when it comes to important issues facing the country, most Republican and Democratic voters...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Disagree not only on plans and policies, but also on basic facts</th>
<th>Can agree on basic facts, even if they often disagree over plans and policies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total 78</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rep/Lean Rep</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conserv</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mod/Lib</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dem/Lean Dem</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cons/Mod</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


PEW RESEARCH CENTER
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disagreement</th>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Emotions</th>
<th>Mindset</th>
<th>Communication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>problem (or issue) oriented</td>
<td>some discomfort (but manageable)</td>
<td>healthy curiosity: how do we solve this problem?</td>
<td>open and clear, on topic and specific</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power Struggle</td>
<td>problem is focused on a person or group—who must be defeated</td>
<td>anxiety, mistrust... wariness... quick to anger, defensiveness</td>
<td>speculation about other’s motives, diagnosis of their dysfunctions</td>
<td>vague assertions, over-generalizations, blaming, complaining personal attacks, intense arguments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Splitting</td>
<td>no longer able to think of staying in relationship</td>
<td>self-righteousness, frequent outrage, paranoia</td>
<td>obsessive thinking about opponents and their sinister goals</td>
<td>diatribes, with focus on “principles,” relentless effort to discredit “other side”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Haidt’s Journey from...

- **Secular...** to appreciating the role of religion in shaping morality and social order
- **Academic...** to acknowledging the limits of abstract, logical reasoning
- **Liberal.** to understanding the moral foundations of conservative political positions
Haidt’s Intellectual Journey...

From a view of Moral Psychology as being primarily
• Rational
• Individualistic
• And based only on Justice and Care

RATIONALIST MORAL SEQUENCE

DILEMMA

REASONED ANALYSIS

MORAL JUDGMENT
Haidt’s Intellectual Journey...

From a view of Moral Psychology as being primarily
• Rational
• Individualistic
• And based only on Justice and Care

To an understanding of morality as
• Intuitive and emotional
• Highly influenced by social constructs
• And multidimensional

Reason Deficiencies
• “seeing that” vs. “reasoning why” (i.e. Kahneman:
System 1 vs. System 2 thinking
Who’s In Charge?

Reason Deficiencies
• “seeing that” vs. “reasoning why” (i.e. Kahneman: System 1 vs. System 2 thinking
• Moral “dumbfounding”
• Confirmation bias
• Can/Must
We are not nearly as objective as we would like to think

The “Can” / “Must” Shift

MUST
Predisposed Against

CAN
Already in Agreement