

NAVIGATING DIVISIVE TOPICS IN TEACHING & RESEARCH

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OVERVIEW: OUR RESEARCH AND TEACHING TOPIC AREAS

NAVIGATING DIVISIVE TOPICS

**Emotion
management**

**Data-driven
analysis**

**Critical
thinking**

**EMOTION
MANAGEMENT
IN THE
CLASSROOM**



The challenge with fear and
guilt



Pro-social emotions



Fear + agency + hope +
responsibility or pride =
engagement

EXAMPLES FROM OUR CLASSROOMS



CLIMATE CHANGE &
SOCIETY



RACIAL & ETHNIC
RELATIONS



SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY
& SOCIETY



**EMOTION
MANAGEMENT
IN RESEARCH**

- Interviews with Minuteman Militia
- Interviews with Climate Change Skeptics

(MORE) EXAMPLES FROM OUR WORK

- “I feel like we’re giving humans too much credit for the larger picture where I think, um, that if you believe in God I think that you have to give Him more credit to a larger, on a larger scale of His control on a situation where **human impact in a world that He created would be miniscule** if any.” (Karen)
- “The UN. **It’s about control, control of the citizens. And power. And, you know what’s called the globalist elite who would like to have a One World government...** You know, eugenicists and stuff like that...The UN has a horrible track record. I mean, in terms of what they’ve done – going into countries, killing people and raping women. It’s usually, they’re not – they’re the United Nations. They’re not the United People. They don’t give a shit about you and I. It’s about power and control.” (Mark)

EXAMPLE OF DATA WRITTEN UP

Boyd (1999) finds that Christians who believe that God is in control are unlikely to be concerned about climate change or are skeptical about its veracity. Our findings indicate that skeptics employing a **religion-inspired narrative** argue that the climate might be changing, but it isn't due to human interference, it is, rather, the will of God and, thus, not something to worry about. For example, Jodie suggests "It's going to happen whether it happens or not. For me, it's all in God's hands." Karen argues that it is anthropocentrism that leads to this false fear of climate change:

"I feel like we're giving humans too much credit for the larger picture where I think that if you believe in God I think that you have to give Him more credit to a larger, on a larger scale of His control on a situation where human impact in a world that He created would be miniscule if any... God has a plan for this world and if He chose to wipe it out by global warming, then He could!"

DATA DRIVEN ANALYSIS IN THE CLASSROOM



Role of opinions



Opinion vs. Data Driven
positions in the classroom

EXAMPLES FROM OUR CLASSROOMS



RACIAL & ETHNIC
RELATIONS



CLIMATE CHANGE &
SOCIETY



SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY,
& SOCIETY

LOW
INFORMATION
SEEKING

HIGH
INFORMATION
SEEKING

Proudly Ignorant

Vigorous, Independent
Thinkers

Bashfully Unaware

Anti-bandwagon (trusts
minority voices)

Grand Conspiracists

**DATA DRIVEN
ANALYSIS IN
RESEARCH**

- Not opinion, not judgement but evidence



**CRITICAL
THINKING
IN THE
CLASSROOM**

- Diversity & Stratification
- Climate Change & Society
- Science, Technology & Society

CRITICAL THINKING IN RESEARCH



What should we
call participants?

Who should
self-identify?
Why?
When?
Where?



Challenging existing
literature



TAKE AWAY

- In the study of politically divisive issues, the lessons we offer our students are the very lessons we need to incorporate in our research.
- Perils of confirmation bias.