

Rapporteur's Report: Might Shared Values Make Partisan Cooperation Possible?

For the May sessions, I displayed the core “Democratic” and “Republican” values articulated on 24 and 25 March and then opened the floor for observations and discussion.

Core Values (as determined during the March 2017 discussion sessions)

24 March

	<u>Core “Republican” Values</u>	<u>Core “Democratic” Values</u>
tier one	Responsibility Liberty Individualism (self-reliance)	Caring Fairness Honesty
tier two	Industriousness Freedom of Choice	Liberty

25 March

<u>Core “Republican” Values</u>	<u>Core “Democratic” Values</u>
Self-Reliance Capitalism Tradition Security Individualism	Human Dignity Equality of Opportunity Assimilation Term Limitations Mutual Respect

The Possibility of Shared Values and the Potential for Cooperation.

Discussion session participants in each May sessions recognized that, for the “Republicans” and “Democrats” who met on 24 March, “liberty” represented a shared value— or commonality (highlighted in yellow) – that could conceivably lead to a pathway for bipartisan cooperation.

Participants also suggested, however, that a single shared value leaves little room to cooperate since here is a good likelihood that policy or legislative prescriptions in pursuit of liberty might infringe upon the other values – non-shared disparate values – to different degrees.

For example, pursuing liberty might not infringe upon any of the core values Republicans listed on 24 March. That is, liberty is essentially compatible with the other “Republican” choices: self-reliance, industriousness and freedom of choice (and perhaps responsibility).

However, liberty might infringe upon two of the Democrats’ values listed, namely caring and fairness, especially if liberty implies a laissez faire approach to governance with regards to the economy for example. The vicissitudes of the marketplace, over which no market participant has control, one might speculate, can impose an enormous cost to the ideals of caring or fairness.

The last statement in the previous paragraph did receive considerable attention; not every participant agreed that the lack of control over, for example, economic (exogenous) factors represented an infringement of fairness. Participants, however, chose not to pursue what would be essentially a deeply philosophical line of reasoning to explore the matter of understanding just what “fairness or caring means – nor, what environmental conditions might represent a lack of fairness or lack of caring.

But it seemed as if every participant clearly recognized, perhaps as a result of the discussion relayed in the previous couple of paragraphs, that the greater commonality with regards to values means that there exists a greater potential for greater cooperation – frictionless cooperation.

Further discussion, however, showed a recognition that even a narrow potential for cooperation can be exploited by both parties. If, for example, Republicans wanted legislation that reflected their desire for more liberty, Democrats might offer to agree to such legislation as long as Republicans made some agreement to help Democrats accomplish one of their other values – as long as it didn’t fully offset the accomplishment of more liberty.

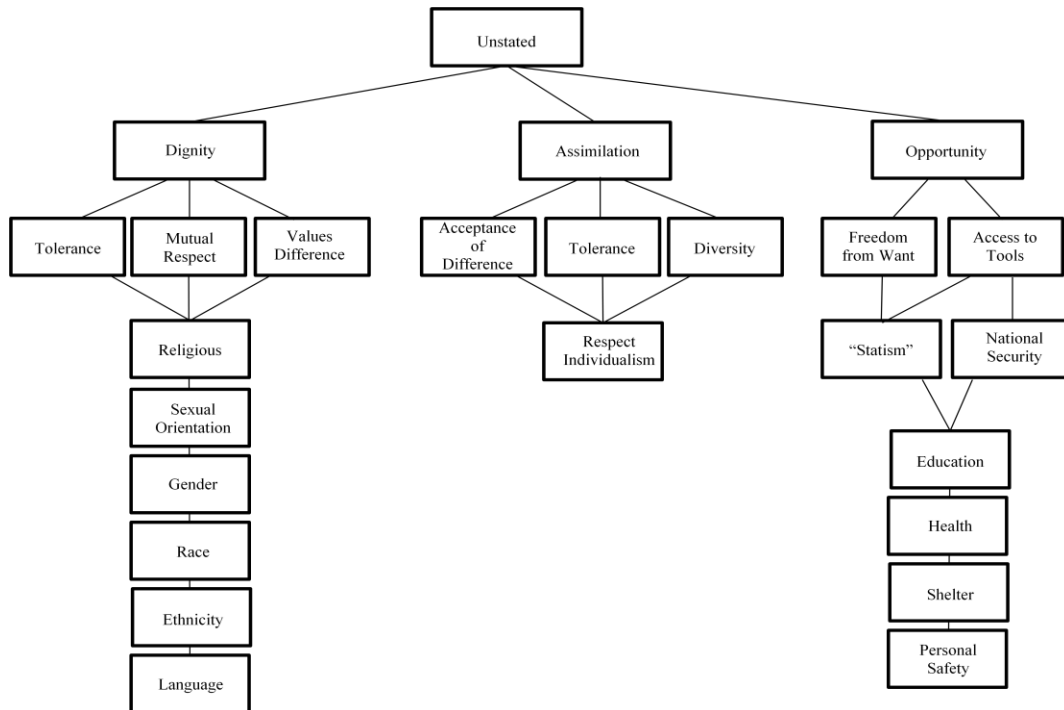
“Words Matter”

Absent a greater number of like values in the lists, “Republican” and “Democratic” participants recognized the possibility that there might be some “hidden values” – values that would be located in lower tiers (i.e. not core values, but supporting or defining values) that might present a greater amount of commonality than is apparent from only observing and thinking about core values.

To discern what the hidden values are, analysts would need to endeavor to understand the precise meaning of each core value is. That understanding, in turn, would allow for the construction of values hierarchies which would exhibit the supporting or defining values that fall under each core value – and thus, exhibit the possibility of greater commonality between “Republican: and “Democratic” values.

Given the time constraints of the discussion sessions, there was very little time to attempt to build a hierarchy. One group did manage to make an effort. That “values tree” or values hierarchy is displayed below. And although there was very little time available to discuss the representation during the discussion session, those who constructed the tree thought that the exercise was useful – of for no other reason than the effort to build a tree forced the members to think about the definition of the higher order values.

A Proposed Values Hierarchy: Shared Republican-Democratic Party Values



The proposed hierarchy does not include an ultimate, or highest order, value. One can imagine that finding a singular value to satisfy both Republicans and Democrats would be challenging.

The hierarchy as written is certainly a draft – one that has not been completely vetted, but the logic is apparent.

Dignity, for example, is a value defined by three supporting values: tolerance, mutual respect and values difference. The values of tolerance and mutual respect are easily recognized to support the notion of “dignity.” The term “values difference” is less clear, perhaps, as it appears to be a verb. And in any case, accepting people with different values would seem to be represented already by the notion of tolerance. The vertical boxes listed appear to be conditions under which a sense of tolerance and mutual respect would need to apply for the value of dignity to be manifested.

The other tier two values can be evaluated similarly. Because the values tree above is indeed a draft, it is unlikely that deep analysis is worthwhile at this point.