

# 1. The Problem of Disagreement

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PHIL 1460  
January 19, 2021

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**Homophily:** people tend to be similar to their friends.

"Birds of a feather flock together"

Deane and Gramlich: Massive disagreements.  
More specifically: *local* agreement, *global* disagreement.

Life harder for Black people?:  
74% of Biden voters; 9% of Trump's.  
Climate change important?  
68% of Biden voters; 11% of Trump's.

Causes of homophily:

- *Selection*: we choose friends who are similar to us.
- *Influence*: our friends change us.

Schoenfeld 2020: our communities have a massive influence on our beliefs.

Example:

- Fred the atheist. Raised in non-religious family.
- *Claim*: would've gotten same basic evidence if raised religious.
- Yet (probably) would've *interpreted* evidence differently.

Arguments, history, etc.

**"You just believe that because..." challenge:** the method by which you formed your beliefs was not reliable.

Thermometer analogy

Fred's response: "I got lucky! Have a reliable community."

Worry: *that very belief* was instilled by his community.

Thermometer gives *itself* an A-rating

Challenge: we can't recover our beliefs *from the perspective of doubt*.

**Question:** In your own case, does this challenge cause you to start doubting some of your opinions (about: who to vote for; what news to trust; climate action; racial inequality; etc.)?

If not, why not?  
If so, how much, and what to do?