MORAL PSYCHOLOGY AND POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS

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ABSTRACT

Theories of moral psychology suggest that American partisans rely on different moral domains to inform their political decision making (Haidt 2012; Lakoff 1996). This project addresses the use of moral framing, language, and traits in American political campaigns. It first examines the language of campaigns to ascertain if Democratic and Republican candidates use moral language in line with moral theories and then attempts to understand if using this language can affect the public in a meaningful way. Overall, the research suggests that campaigns frequently use moral language, though it does not strictly conform to the predictions of existing moral theory frameworks. However, the results suggest that effects of moral campaign messages are real. Specifically, candidates that increase their use of specific moral domains in their advertising increase their support in the polls. Similarly, survey experiment results suggest that Republicans and Democrats prefer candidates who emphasize different moral traits.

DEDICATION

To my lovely wife

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

When we hear discussions of politics that revolve around individuals claiming they are right, and the other person is wrong, they often are laden with a variety of appeals to a moral high ground. Such claims to moral superiority may stem from basic differences in how people view the world. These foundational differences have been studied in psychology (Haidt 2012; Graham et al. 2009; Skitka 2005) and linguistics (Lakoff 1996), and collectively have come to be known as "moral psychology." The central thesis of these theories suggests that Democrats and Republicans see the world through different moral lenses that affects their decisions and causes them to view the world differently. These moral differences are often described as a factor leading to polarization between Republicans and Democrats. Despite lengthy study in how the public makes use of moral values in their everyday life, only recently has research focused on elite use of moral language,[1] though little has focused on elites running for political office.

Though research on the exact nature of morals and values is still being debated (Smith et al. 2016),[2] the framework of these theories can be evaluated in the campaign context in an effort to understand if these theories are correct in that morals may even shape the way people perceive political campaigns. Particularly useful for the study of campaigns are arguments that suggest moral framing can elicit persuasion (Day et al. 2014; Feinberg and Willer 2013). Campaigns

[1] See Neiman et al. (2016) for an example of the study of elite use of moral language.
[2] Debate often revolves around distinct measurement and theory similarities to personality traits (Kugler et al., 2014). See expanded discussion in the conclusion.

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naturally attempt to elicit support for ideas and candidates in a complex environment (Carsey et al. 2011), and thus provide an opportunity to understand how morals may influence elections.

Before discussing the outline of the dissertation, it is important to understand the concepts of morality defined in the project. Theoretically, the project pulls from several frameworks in the study of moral psychology and tests if the expectations of these theories are reflected in a campaign environment. Theories defined by Graham et al. (2009) and Lakoff (1996) are based on the idea that individuals see the world through different moral lenses. Moral Foundations Theory (MFT: Haidt 2012), however, is the main focus of this project.

Haidt's MFT suggests that in the United States liberals and conservatives utilize different moral foundations when making decisions. This research is built on a pluralistic view of morality, where across society, individuals are driven by different moral concepts (Graham et al. 2009; Graham et al. 2011). Rather than basing the concept of morality on enlightenment philosophers and developmental psychologists (see Turiel 1983; Kohlberg 1969),[3] Haidt (2001, 2012) suggests that different individuals (and groups) use morality in making decisions, but tap different moral foundations when doing so. Specifically, as discussed in greater detail in Chapter II, the moral foundations are *care/harm, fairness/proportionality, in-group/loyalty, authority/respect* and *purity/sanctity*. In essence, these foundations help guide individual responses to issues, often leading them to make emotional and sometimes reactionary choices. Empirical support for MFT-that is, evidence that liberals and conservatives make decisions at least in part based on different moral foundations has accumulated in recent years (Graham et al. 2009; Koleva et al. 2012; Graham et al. 2012; Clifford 2016; Franks and Scherr 2015). In the dissertation, this is the primary theory tested due to its wider use in current research.

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[3] This enlightenment concept of morality is frequently seen as only focusing on human rights, rational thought, and compassion.

Similar to Moral Foundations Theory, Lakoff (1996) suggests in Nation as Family theory that liberals and conservatives code their speech with different moral concepts. Lakoff (2002) suggests that politics, particularly the relationship between the public and the elected, can be metaphorically conveyed as the relationship between children and parents. He suggests that conservatives often evoke *strict father* metaphors for morality, while liberals evoke *nurturing family* metaphors for morality. Importantly Lakoff suggests that language choice by ideologues is rooted in underlying principles and guides individual decision making. Haidt (2012) suggests that Lakoff's theory is a building block for MFT, and there are many parallels between the two theories.

Before further discussion of moral psychology, it is important to differentiate the research from the personality trait literature. Unlike personality traits (for a review, for example, of the Big 5 Personality Traits in political science see Gerber et al. 2011), which are thought to be predictive of patterns of thoughts, behaviors, and emotions, but are relatively constant throughout individuals lives (McAdams and Pals 2006), morals as defined by MFT (and to some extent Nation as Family theory) are both culturally and evolutionarily learned, but focus on what individuals see as right and wrong (Haidt 2001; Haidt 2006; and Haidt 2012). They also differ from personality traits in that values like morality nudge individual's perceptions and judgments towards different political concepts through emotion. Individuals often *hold* and are *guided by* values while individuals *have* traits, which influence behavior and beliefs (Roccas et al., 2002). Carmines and D'Amico (2015) suggest that MFT and other values/principles researchers (Schwartz 1992; Feldman 1988; Lakoff 1992) have found evidence that these concepts guide decision-making in a manner cognitively deeper than ideology. Critics of MFT (see Kugler, Jost, and Noorbaloochi 2014) argue that there are many similarities between personality traits

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(particularly authoritarian personalities) and the *in-group/loyalty*, *authority/respect* and *purity/sanctity* moral foundations.[4] Despite this, the evidence for moral foundations suggests they are present at different levels in individuals, and that different types of people react differently when issues are framed using the foundations (Graham et al. 2009; Day et al. 2014).

Bringing MFT and Nation as Family together, a second framework for understanding moral politics is through Skitka et al.'s (2005) research on moral conviction. Moral conviction research focuses on how individuals moralize issues as a measure of issue strength. Skitka and Morgan (2014) suggest that individuals moralize different issues and find that moralized issues are frequently the most important issues to a given individual. The theoretical impact of moral conviction relates to both MFT and Nation as Family in the sense that individuals moralize different concepts, and when they moralize, they often hold stronger attachments and positions than non-moralized views. In short, moral conviction offers theoretical expectations that candidates may moralize issues to show their issue strength (Ansolabehere et al. 2008).

The main goal of this dissertation is to test the theoretical predictions of moral psychology in the arena of political campaigns. Thus far, the literature on political campaigns has not specifically utilized the wealth of research on individuals' moral values. My central question in whether the specific structures theoretically argued in MFT and Nation as Family are evident in American political campaigns. Second, apart from simply understanding if candidates can tap into the moral values of the public, this project also speaks to the current understanding of polarization, particularly in looking at the content of campaign ads and how the public reacts to this information.

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[4] Graham et al. (2009) identifies these as the *binding* moral foundations most associated with conservative Americans.

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Haidt (2012) suggests that some differences between liberals and conservatives in the public can be explained by their underlying propensity to use specific moral foundations. This may suggest that political campaigns that frame issues in moral ways may be contributing to polarization. Indeed, in many cases, individuals or candidates may base their rhetoric on different values. Campaigns may communicate on different moral 'wavelengths,' where Republicans use one set of specific morals, while Democrats use a different set of specific morals. This concept is also featured in Lakoff's (2002) assessment of American politics, as he specifically suggests that the parties use two different language structures. Another central question posed throughout this project blends campaign strategy with expectations of MFT and Nation as Family. Here, the larger question relates to candidates using different morals strategically in their campaigns. Evidence that candidates are strategic has been cited previously, including Druckman, Jacobs, and Ostermeier (2004) who found that the Nixon campaign strategically primed different issues and stances matching Nixon's internal polling to content of ads and speeches. In regards to MFT, strategy is defined broadly as candidates matching their moral rhetoric to the political situation. Thus, I am interested in uncovering evidence of varying uses of moral rhetoric depending upon the candidate's audience and I provide specific expectations in Chapter II.

Apart from the study of polarization and candidate strategy, this project is also relevant to the study of mass political communication and those interested in political psychology. In regard to political communication, the predictions of MFT provide insight into the political language in the US context. According to Bastedo and Lodge (1980), research on language in politics allows insight into individual's inner thought process. In regards to campaign ads, Cho (2008) argues that campaign ads are part of a process that "stimulates information seeking and political conversation" (424). Thus, understanding campaign ads and their impact on the public is useful

for understanding the link between elites and the public. Similarly, studying morals in a campaign setting may help determine some applied merits of MFT in political science. This fits into Carmines and D'Amico's (2015) suggestion that psychological trait and value based research can help understand the foundations of ideology and political behavior.

Thus, the project marries the literature on campaigns and moral psychology by addressing two important questions often asked regarding political campaigns. First, how frequently do candidates use moral language, and do Democrats and Republicans differ in how frequently they make such appeals? Second, do moral campaign appeals influence the public?

Dissertation Roadmap

In the next chapter, I begin by laying out the specific moral psychology theories and their derived hypotheses that are present throughout the project. In order to avoid repetition, the theories are presented with the most detail in Chapter II, but are reinforced in subsequent chapters. After defining the theories and hypotheses, this chapter continues by examining the use of moral language in political campaigns in an effort to see if candidates use these types of appeals. With respect to understanding polarization, this chapter also attempts to understand if candidates, due to their party identification, use moral frames differently. Methodologically, this test uses campaign advertisement data collected by the University of Wisconsin Advertising Project (Goldstein and Rivlin 2005; 2007; 2011) and the Wesleyan Media Project (Fowler et al. 2014; 2015). These two sources provide the text to television political campaign ads since 2000, thereby giving insight into the political communication of candidates. The results in this chapter suggest that campaigns utilize a variety of moral language, and that this language is different between Democrats and Republicans. However, the results also indicate that Republicans and Democrats do not always use the moral language that the theories predict.

The second empirical chapter (Chapter III) attempts to understand whether using moral language as a campaign strategy is effective. Focusing on Moral Foundations Theory, this chapter merges the data collected in the first empirical chapter on ads that include moral language with weekly polling data from Senate and Gubernatorial contests from 2000, 2002, and 2004. In other words, this chapter addresses the aggregated effect of candidates using moral language. Looking at the dynamic change in moral ads across weeks, I find that campaigns that increase moral language that theoretically appeals to both liberals and conservatives are more successful in the polls, while candidates that use ideologically specific sets of moral language struggle in the polls.

The third empirical chapter (Chapter IV) uses two separate survey experiments to measure the impact of moral foundation framing on individuals' assessment of candidates and political ads. The goal of this chapter is to identify and gain causal leverage on whether liberal and conservative individuals react to different foundations in different campaign ad settings. The chapter provides mixed evidence for the effect of Moral Foundations Theory framing, but suggests that Republicans prefer candidates with *binding* moral traits (*authority/respect* and *loyalty/in-group*), while Democrats prefer candidates with *harm/care* and *fairness/reciprocity* moral traits.

The final chapter concludes by first reviewing the previous empirical findings, and then discussing the implications these results have for political campaigns, polarization, political communication, and political psychology. One of the most interesting topics in this conclusion is the role in which morals affect polarization. The results suggest that the public often values different moral appeals, but at the same time also suggest that using moral appeals does not always lead to the campaign's intended consequence. Finally, I also discuss issues of

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measurement of the moral theories and avenues for future research.

As a road map, the following chapters build upon one another. Theory introduced is relied upon heavily, though there are reminders of each tested theory in subsequent chapters. Also note that the project initially looks at three separate moral theories in the first empirical chapter, but only focuses on Moral Foundations Theory in subsequent chapters. This was a discussion made early on in the research process to focus on specificity instead of breadth. Finally, it is important to note that this project only provides some insight into the role of moral politics in political campaigns. With an ongoing debate into measurement issues regarding these moral theories (Smith et al. 2016), these theories may independently change overtime. Regardless, the subsequent chapters provide insight into how campaigns use moral language and traits as they are currently defined.

CHAPTER II

MORALITY IN AMERICAN POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS

Political campaigns in the United States involve candidates competing for the approval and eventually votes of the American public. One growing area of research on campaigns examines the content of candidates' messages (Vavreck 2009; Hart 2009) and even the emotions evoked in these messages (Brader 2006). Yet as political scientists have studied the messages in campaigns, research from psychology, sociology, linguistics, and political science has attempted to understand the role of the language of morality in society and politics. Much of this research has focused on how morality affects individuals' ability to process political information, and how it maps onto individual political behavior (Koleva et al. 2012). Combining these two research agendas, this project looks for evidence of the language of morality in political campaigns.

Within research on morality, this project pulls from two separate strands of research. The first has attempted to understand how different core individual moral values and traits (domains) map onto individual political behavior (Capara et al. 2006). A single strand of this research has suggested that moral reasoning, seen both in Moral Foundations Theory (MFT: Haidt 2001; Graham et al. 2009) and Lakoff's (1996) *Nation as Family* (NAF) theory is central to how liberal and conservatives think about politics. The second strand of research, interested in moral conviction (Skitka et al. 2005), examines how individuals' sense of right and wrong influences attitudes and beliefs.

To date, research on candidate political messages has not incorporated moral psychology as a possible tool to understand the content and strategy of political campaigns. By bringing together these two strands of research, I am interested in understanding how and when a variety of different office seeking candidates, from candidates for state governor to president, use moral language in their political messages, and whether candidates of different parties use different moral language in their campaigns. In order to test for the use of moral language in political campaigns, the project utilizes a new corpora of text transcripts extracted and transcribed from the Wisconsin Advertising Project (Goldstein and Rivlin 2005; 2007; 2011) and the Wesleyan Media Project (Fowler et al. 2014; 2015). Dictionaries used to preform text analysis developed by Graham et al. (2009) and Neiman et al. (2015) are used to identify words that are associated with the theoretical moral categories (domains) from the theories tested. The results suggest that campaign ads do include moral language, but that the differences suggested by both Moral Foundations Theory and Nation as Family theory do not always structure the content of Republican and Democratic political advertisements. Similarly, I find evidence of moral conviction language in both Republican and Democratic ads. The results suggest that Republicans and Democrats use different types of moral language in their ads, and that this phenomenon may help us better understand elite communication and the public's understanding of political campaigns.

Campaign Content

With the advent of intense television ad campaigns (McCubbins 1992), political scientists have attempted to dissect the persuasive appeals and strategies associated with political campaigning. In this work, the field has debated the behavioral effects of simply airing ads (see Krasno and Green 2008; Panagopoulos and Green 2008), and also attempted to understand the

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features and characteristics of these ads. Experimentally, the study of different types of ads has allowed us to determine their effects on persuasion, knowledge, and turnout (Arceneaux 2010). For example, Lau et al. (2007), in a meta-analysis of the field, suggest that negative ads have little impact on winning elections, but that these advertisements do have other effects. They suggest that across the multitude of studies that they do increase knowledge about the campaign and the candidates. More recent work examines both the content and methods of campaigns from a political communication and political psychology framework.

Methodologically, much of this new research on the effect ofpolitical campaign ads has moved to using experimental, survey, and observational data. In many cases, researchers are interested in knowing when candidates use certain types of ads, and if these ads have any impact on a variety of outcomes of interest. For example, Strach et al. (2015) find that in the majority of campaign ads, male voice actors tend to perform voice-overs. Yet, when examining issues designated as "for females," female voice actors perform voice-overs in the ads. Strach et al. suggest that these results indicate that candidates are attempting to become more credible with their viewers on issues that might appeal to different segments of their audience. As a secondary study, they ask individuals which voice they are more likely to trust on certain issues. They find supporting evidence that issues gendered as "female" are more likely to seem credible when a voice-over is performed by a female. Together, all of these researchers (see also Dowling and Wichowsky 2015; Sides and Karch 2007) have broadened the research on campaigns to understand what types of ads candidates use and if these strategies matter to the public. Similar to work that attempted to understand the strategies of campaigns, the literature on psychological values like MFT and NAF provide useful theoretical expectations when considering the political communication involved in campaigns. First, campaigns may be central to the ideologically

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divergent nature of the two dominant parties. Though there has been considerable debate on the amount of polarization in the United States (Abramowitz and Saunders 2008; Fiorina et al. 2008; Gelman 2008), both Lakoff (1992) and Graham et al. (2009) suggest that divergent views of morals may be contributing to polarization or a possible "culture war."[5] They suggest that the *language* of conservatives and liberals is possibly a point of divergence between both parties and the supporters of both parties as their communication only appeals within their own party, or at least is more appealing to their partisans. If political campaigns show evidence of this language, it would suggest that the public sound bites of candidates could be contributing to polarization.

Second, Arceneaux (2012) suggests that there may be evidence that different types of arguments may be more effective than others. Clifford and Jerit (2013) found evidence that use of MFT frames have been used in the debate regarding stem cell research, and that certain frames have the ability to persuade partisans more effectively than others. As campaigns are attempting to reach the public and provide a great deal of information to the public (Cho 2008), understanding how this information is conveyed can provide insights into the relationship between the public and elites.

Apart from studies that examine the characteristics of campaign ads, drawing on research from psychology, political scientists have suggested that emotions and personality characteristics, in particular those featured in campaign ads, may also influence the public. Brader (2006) examines when the emotion of fear is evoked in political campaigns through imagery and music. He suggests that campaigns use emotion frequently despite claims that campaigns should promote rational decision-making. Similarly, Fridkin and Kenny (2011) suggest that campaigns attempt to control communication about the personality traits of

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[5] Both MTF and NAF suggest that polarization is evident in the mass public to some degree. Part of Haidt's (2012) argument hinges upon the fact that both liberals and conservatives believe they are morally right and that the other is morally wrong.

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candidates and their opponents. In 2006 Senate data, they find that the public uses traits to make judgments about candidates and their opponents. Yet, thus far research has not attempted to measure the use or effects of morals or morality in the campaign context. This is somewhat surprising given that research on morality, like emotion and character traits, suggests that underlying information which is often particularly relevant to certain groups of people, can influence issue positions and attitude strength (Feinberg and Willer 2013; Clifford 2015).

Before discussing the role of morality in politics, it is important to understand several problems associated with measuring previous campaign content. Two research projects, the Wisconsin Advertising Project (WiscAds) and Wesleyan Media Project (WMP) have collectively recorded and coded aired ads since the 1996 elections in an effort to track and code the use of ads by campaigns. The downside of WiscAds and WMP is that their coding has been limited to the work done initially by each organization. Though coded content has increased over time, it is still limited to each year's codebook. Problematically, researchers interested in campaigns including different and new potential concepts of interest are limited in their ability to post-hoc analyze these campaign ads.[6] To solve this problem, this project utilizes a new dataset developed by transcribing and scraping the transcripts from both WiscAds and WMP. Coupled with the widespread use of text analysis (Grimmer and Stewart 2013), this new dataset opens up the possibility of extracting concepts that were previously difficult to code.

Morality in Political Campaigns

Research on moral politics has focused on two separate concepts of morality. The first research tradition (Lakoff 1996; Haidt 2001) is primarily interested in understanding how different moral values/foundations (domains) can explain differences in what people believe is

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[6] See work by Winter et al. (2016), Ohl et al. (2016) and Johnston and Kaid (2002) for post-hoc hand coding and mass coding of campaign ads.

right and wrong (Koleva et al. 2012). Both strands suggest that individuals have different concepts of morality that are rooted in evolutionary biology and socialization (Haidt 2012). Particularly, these theories suggest that liberals and conservatives rely on different forms of morality, and it influences their decision making and emotional reaction to certain issues or concepts (Graham et al. 2009). In all of this research, individuals exhibit and emotionally evoke morality on a wide variety of issues in a manner most-often similar to motivated reasoning (Taber and Lodge 2006). The second line of research broadly based upon work by Skitka et al. (2005) focuses on the role of moral conviction in attitude strength. This line of research suggests that individuals have certain attitudes rooted in their personal concept of morality. To a given individual, a moral issue produces a stronger attachment and they often believe that their personal concept of morality should apply universally (Morgan et al. 2014).

Yet despite their differences, both research traditions agree on several important features of morality, and often work in conjunction. First, both see morality as subjective, with certain individuals rooting their morality in different issues or concepts (see Ryan 2016). Second, both traditions suggest that moral views often produce high levels of attitude strength (Skitka et al. 2005). Last, both strands have attempted to understand the role of morality in political discourse, and have looked for patterns in public opinion and even elite communication. Thus, using these theories, this project seeks to address if and when campaigns, as a byproduct of elite rhetoric, use morality to appeal to the public or simply reflect their underlying value structure (Bastido and Lodge 1980). In the next three subsections, I describe the separate theories and their specific hypotheses relating to elite communication.

Moral Foundations Theory

Moral Foundations Theory (MFT) suggests and has found evidence that in the United States liberals and conservatives utilize different moral foundations (domains) when making political decisions and when thinking about politics. This research (see Graham et al. 2009; Graham et al. 2011) is built on a pluralistic view of morality, based partially on a comparative anthropologic assessment of morality across global cultures. Rather than basing the concept of morality on enlightenment philosophers and developmental psychologists (Turiel 1983; Kohlberg 1969), Haidt (2001; 2012) suggests that different individuals (and groups) use morality in making decisions, but tap different moral foundations when doing so. Specifically, the moral foundations described by Haidt (2012) are *care/harm, fairness/proportionality, in-group/loyalty, authority/respect,* and *purity/sanctity*. In essence, these foundations help guide individual responses to issues, often leading them to make emotional and sometimes reactionary choices.

Also central to the literature on MFT and other moral values research is the understanding of morals as a concept and how research on this concept has evolved over time. In previous political science research, Hillygus and Shields (2005) suggest that only certain issues are moral. They suggest for example, that Americans' view on the Iraq War and the economy are less moral than issues like abortion. Yet more recent research, including Ryan (2014) and Kertzer et al. (2014) suggests that morals and morality can be found in a multitude of issues. For example, Ryan (2014) suggests that individuals can appeal to morality or use moral frames for both economic and social issues. Thus, issues like economic redistribution and arguments relating to abortion can both involve morality. Similarly, Skitka and Morgan (2014) argue that morality and religiousness are not always the same, though sometimes, religion may be central to an individual's concept of morality.

Moral Foundations Theory also provides expectations for the values that conservatives and liberals hold (Graham et al. 2009). It suggests that American liberals rely on the *care/harm* and *fairness/proportionality* foundations more so than American conservatives, though conservatives still share these values. The *care/harm* foundation focuses on emotional and physical harm to humans or the physical harm to non-humans (i.e., animals). Someone physically harming someone or something else is considered morally wrong. Helping others is viewed as morally right. The *fairness/proportionality* foundation focuses on cheating and free riding, where cheating or taking advantage of the system is considered morally wrong.

On the other hand, Graham et al. (2009) suggest conservatives also use the other *binding* foundations of *in-group/loyalty, authority/respect,* and *purity/sanctity* in their moral decision making. The *in-group/loyalty* foundation focuses on the individual act of placing themselves or their interests behind or beneath the interests of their given group. Someone acting against the interests of their group is considered morally wrong. The *authority/respect* foundation focuses on disrespect of authority figures or leaders. Someone that disrespects an authority figure, like a teacher or institution, is considered morally wrong. Last, the *purity/sanctity* foundation focuses on disgust towards sexual acts, socially unacceptable or degrading actions, and contamination. It would include situations like sexual promiscuity, public use of drugs or alcohol, and lack of cleanliness as morally wrong.

Table 1: Moral Foundations Theory Domains

Moral Foundation	Definition	Hypothesis
Harm/Care	A moral trait that values the protection of others from physical and/or emotional harm.	Democrats and Republicans should on average use this type of language. Though Democrats should use this language more frequently than Republicans.
Fairness/Proportionality	A moral trait that values equal treatment of individuals. It advocates against any form of cheating.	Democrats and Republicans should on average use this type of language. Though Democrats should use this language more frequently than Republicans.
In-Group/Loyalty	A moral trait that values placing group needs above individuality. It focuses on sacrifice for the "nation."	On average, Republicans should use this foundation more than Democrats.
Authority/Respect	A moral trait that values hierarchy and tradition.	On average, Republicans should use this foundation more than Democrats.
Purity/Sanctity	A moral trait that values cleanliness. It focuses on both the concept of sexual and physical cleanliness.	On average, Republicans should use this foundation more than Democrats.

Note: See Haidt (2012) for an extended discussion of the moral foundations. Haidt often refers to the top two domains as the *individualizing* foundations. He refers to the bottom three domains as the *binding* foundations.

Thus, in the campaign context, Moral Foundations Theory suggests that partisan campaigns would use language consistent with the theory. Table 1 includes definitions of each of the Moral Foundation domains, and the expectations for liberal and conservative language use in the campaign context. Apart from the study of campaign language, the theory also applies to the public. Hypothetically, conservatives are more receptive to language from all of the MFT domains. Yet, they often are less receptive to the domains of *harm/care* and *fairness/proportionality* in comparison to liberals. On the other hand, Democrats are only receptive to language that is from the *harm/care* and *fairness/proportionality* domains.

Nation as Family Theory

Table 2: Lakoff's Nation as Family Metaphors

Moral Foundation	Definition	Hypothesis
Rules/Reinforcement	The metaphoric value associated with hierarchy and respect for the rule of law.	Republicans should use this language more frequently than Democrats.
Self-discipline	The metaphoric value associated with personal control and duty.	Republicans should use this language more frequently than Democrats.
Nurturant/Caregiving	The metaphoric value associated with assisting in the well-being of others.	Democrats should use this language more frequently than Republicans.
Empathy/Openness	The metaphoric value associated with acceptance of others and open dialogue.	Democrats should use this language more frequently than Republicans.

Note: See Lakoff (1996) and Neiman et al. (2015) for an extended discussion of the Nation as Family domains.

A second theory concerning morality, developed by George Lakoff (1996; 2002; 2008) and often referred to as *Nation as Family* (NAF) theory, suggests that a different form of moral reasoning is evident between liberal and conservatives in the United States. Lakoff, a cognitive linguist, suggests that a family metaphor is best used to understand the moral differences between liberals and conservatives. In NAF theory, a conceptual metaphor is evoked in language as it is rooted in individual's cognitive structure.[7] Lakoff (2002) suggests that politics, particularly the relationship between the public and the elected, can be metaphorically conveyed as the relationship between children and parents. He suggests that conservatives often evoke *strict parent* metaphors for morality, while liberals evoke *nurturing family* metaphors for morality.

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[7] A classic example can be found in Lakoff and Johnson (1980) regarding the universality of light and dark and their uses as a cognitive metaphor towards good and evil. See Meier et al.'s (2004) research on how individuals associate negative and positive with dark and light, respectively.

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The conservatives' *strict parent* metaphor of morality in politics is based upon a world where individuals need protection and rules from the government. The family metaphor is built on the concept that in a family, a father protects the family from the outside evils, and that strict rules provide safety. Similarly, the job of the elected is to protect the family, visible in the *strict parent* metaphor, often imposing strict rules and commanding authority.

On the other hand, the liberal family metaphor of *nurturing family* focuses on the way that the elected help the public, focusing on selflessness and community. This family model is built upon the idea that individuals need help to survive, and that encouragement and empathy will help them succeed. The *nurturing family* metaphor is built on the concept that both parents nurture their children to success through encouragement and help. Similarly, individuals are supposed to think about the needs of others, and build a sense of community and work together to better the world.

To Lakoff, these metaphors of morality have become the values that individuals use in their daily lives. Following the schema developed by Neiman et al. (2015), each of the parent metaphors include two separate dimensions within them. Using these moral domain dimensions, Republican ads should use more *Rules/Reinforcement* and *Self-discipline* language than Democratic ads, and Democratic ads should use more *Nurturant/Caregiving* and *Empathy/Openness* language than Republican ads. Table 2 provides a reference table for these hypotheses based upon Lakoff's theory.

Moral Conviction

Moral conviction, as defined by Skitka (2010; 2014) suggests individuals often structure their beliefs on certain issues in moralistic terms. Individuals subjectively see certain issues in a black and white manner that they believe should be applied universally. Like Graham et al.

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(2009), Ryan (2014) suggests that moralizing is evident in a multitude of issues and individuals use it to structure their attitudes. Similarly, Clifford (2015) suggests that individuals can recognize candidates that make decisions using their own morality, and they often display their personal moral standing through their stated beliefs and issue statements. This framework suggests that instead of looking at types of moral domains (like MFT and NAF), using morals as a signal is important in political communication.

Therefore, looking at Democratic and Republican ads, can we detect if campaigns overtly signal their moral intentions to the public? Generally speaking, Brandt et al. (2015) suggest that both liberals and conservatives use morals in everyday life, and thus, there should be little difference between Republicans and Democrats signaling their morals in campaign advertisements. Yet, tracking these signals is important in understanding the role morality plays in the political campaign process. Though specific details are defined for the research design, I utilize Graham et al.'s (2009) general moral language dictionary to determine which campaign ads include general moral language.

Prior Research on Moral Theory and Campaigns

Before outlining my research design and process, I note that there have been several attempts to study moral language usage in politics. Haidt (2012) anecdotally mentions several cases where partisan political candidates have used moral appeals in a manner consistent with his theory. Yet, thus far there has not been any systematic investigation of candidates using language consistent with any moral theory. Neiman et al. (2015) examined the language of politicians in speeches and transcripts from television talk shows, finding that Republicans and Democrats use different words, but do not fit with the theoretical expectations of MFT and NAF. On the other hand, Moses and Gonzales (2015) and Ohl et al. (2013) examined a sample of presidential

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television advertisements and find evidence that the Republican and Democratic candidates since 1980 utilize different moral rhetoric based on Lakoff's *strict father/nurturing parent* language. In both studies they do not use text analysis, but employ coders to determine if an advertisement uses any of Lakoff's *strict father/nurturing parent* metaphors. Outside of political ads, Clifford and Jerit (2013) and Clifford et al. (2015) analyzed the text of stem cell research rhetoric in national newspapers using the MFT dictionary (Graham et al. 2009). Their research examines only two of the moral foundations (*harm/care* and *purity/sanctity*) in assessing elite rhetoric over the issue. They find evidence that those who oppose stem-cell research use rhetoric that is based on the *purity/sanctity* foundation, while proponents of stem-cell research utilize *harm/care* rhetoric. Similarly, in dictionary based text analysis of newspaper ads, Feinberg and Willer (2013) find that environmental issues have been traditionally framed using the *harm/care* foundation.

In short, prior work suggests mixed support for the idea that politicians and candidates use moral language. Therefore, this project seeks to test if partisan political campaign advertisements utilize moral language consistent with moral theories and politics. Specifically, using these values/moral theories and applying them to campaigns, there are several testable hypotheses regarding the content of Democratic and Republican candidates' ads. For the most part, these hypotheses are listed in Tables 1 and 2. First, according to Skitka's (2005) concept of moral conviction, both Republicans and Democrats should equally moralize. Using Moral Foundations Theory, the first hypothesis is that Democratic ads include on average more *harm/care* and *fairness/proportionally* words than Republican ads. Similarly, Moral Foundations Theory hypothesizes that Republican ads should include on average more of the *binding* foundation words (*in-group/loyalty, authority/respect,* and *purity/sanctity*) than Democratic ads.

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Lakoff's theory hypothesizes that Democratic ads include on average more *nurturant family* words than Republican ads. Conversely, his theory suggests that Republican ads include on average more *strict parent* words than Democratic ads.

Research Design

To examine whether candidates use moral language in their campaigns and to test whether Democratic and Republican campaigns differ in their usage, I use campaign ad data for two specific reasons. First, political television ads are relatively widespread. They appear at all levels of office, from presidential to local races (Brader 2006). Second, television ads are aimed at quickly presenting persuasive content (Moses et al. 2015). Other options, such as campaign speeches, are filled with a variety of persuasive content, but records of these speeches, especially in regards to congressional and gubernatorial races, are scarce. I collected the text of television campaign advertisements from 2000 to 2012. Beginning with the Wisconsin Advertising Project's campaign advertisements that are available from races in 2000, 2002, 2004 and 2008[8], the transcribed text was extracted from portable document format (pdf) into plain text files using Adobe Acrobat Pro XI and in some cases, manually reordered/spell checked to match the actual transcript from the original pdf files. In 2010, the Wesleyan Media Project took over the Wisconsin Advertising Project and has provided video files for campaign ads in the 2010 and 2012 races. In order to extract the transcripts, these video files were converted into audio file and transcribed using the IBM Watson Developer Cloud Speech to Text service along with a team of five transcribers that completed the transcription of the ads from the gubernatorial and senatorial races in 2010 and 2012. Using these preprocessing steps the corpora includes 19,528 total unique

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[8] Note that the the Wisconsin Advertising Project did not track campaigns in 2006.

ads with 9,064 Republican and 9,265 Democratic campaign ads. [9] Table 3 includes specific

details on the number of ads from each year and office. After transcription and text reformatting,

the ads were merged with the coded Wesleyan Media Project and Wisconsin Advertising Project

database that provided the election, state, and party information associated with each ad across

each year.

Table 3: Number of Unique and Aired Ads by Contest and Year in Corpus

Year	2000	2002	2004	2008	2010	2012
Presidential	286 (85,901)	NE	580 (735,570)	858 (1,043,852)	NE	NA
Gubernatorial	261 (87,427)	1617 (423,710)	498 (143,684)	313 (186,574)	1555 (1,147,311)	138 (85,068)
Senate	779 (211,358)	849 (233,533)	771 (195,914)	856 (522,447)	1316 (500,969)	1423 (842,367)
House	1280 (367,218)	1717 (437,746)	1371 (391,485)	2231 (540,122)	NT	NT

Note: Cell entries are the number of unique ads followed by the total number of aired campaign ads in parentheses. NE=No Election; NT=Not Transcribed; NA= Not Available. All candidate, party, and outside affiliation ads included. Numbers do not align with WiscAds or WMP counts due to missing text files/video files but coded content and vice-versa.

Due to the existence of known categories prior to the research agenda, I use dictionary

classification methods in accordance with Grimmer and Stewart (2013) to measure morality in

the campaign ad transcripts. Dictionary methods involve a set of words that are used to classify

an individual document from a corpora of documents into a set category. Dictionaries have been

used previously to code words for both NAF and MFT. For the four NAF style categories,

Nieman et al. (2015) created a dictionary by first generating a list of relevant words described in

the theory, finding synonyms, and having independent research assistants validate the words.

Similarly, Graham et al. (2009) created the Moral Foundations Dictionary in an identical manner.

Note that in both cases, the dictionaries were developed using texts other than campaign

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[9] The total number of 19,528 also includes 1,199 other party ads and outside spending groups not denoted as pro-Republican or pro-Democrat.

advertisements. According to Grimmer and Stewart (2013), this can create problems for the application of dictionary methods to alternative types of text, as words may have different meaning in different contexts. Specifically, Graham et al. utilized the dictionary for coding a corpus of religious text. For Nieman et al., the dictionaries were used to classify transcripts from speeches, debates, television shows, and congressional hearings.[10] Due to the number of current studies employing moral psychology dictionaries in different sets of texts (Graham et al 2009; Clifford and Jerit 2013; Neiman et al. 2015; Garten et al. 2016), I have not validated their use in the campaign advertisement transcript database. Dictionaries allow researchers to find words that are associated with a particular concept as a method of classification. For example, words including "wholesome, upright, and adultery" are identified with the *purity/sanctity* MFT foundation, while words including "compassion, exploited, abuse" are identified with the *harm/care* MFT foundation. For the NAF strict parent categories, words like "willpower, responsibility" are identified with the *self-discipline* domain and words like "command and authority" are identified with the *rules-reinforcement* domain. For the NAF nurturing parent categories, words like "compassion and accept" are identified with the *empathy* domain and words like "care and foster" are identified with the *caregiving* domain. A complete list of words in each dictionary can be found in the Appendix Table 3. Finally, to identify the use of blatant moral language, I utilize Graham et al.'s dictionary of general moral language also available in Appendix Table 3. This dictionary includes words that evoke everyday use of morality regardless of value/foundational category and includes works like "ethic*, principled, and moral." Thus, the

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[10] Dictionary methods are far from perfect. According to Grimmer and Stewart (2013), words have many meanings, and dictionaries cannot distinguish these differences. Despite this problem, they are useful, and can expedite the coding process. Other classification methods include machine learning through a set of coded documents. This chapter does not involve hand coding to verify the dictionaries used due to difficulty in generating a coding scheme and the subjective nature of moral framing.

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words suggest a given ad references a distinct appeal to morals/morality.

In order to determine if a unique campaign ad included word(s) from a given dictionary, I utilized Feinerer's (2015) tm (Text Mining in R) package for text cleaning (stemming and stripping) and to create a document term matrix[11]. Using the document term matrix from each unique campaign ad, I matched on dictionary words, creating a new file with each unique campaign ad, the number of total words in each ad, and number of words in each ad that matched each dictionary. In order to determine if a given ad is coded as including a particular domain, I created an indicator variable for each domain if the ad included one or more words from the given domain dictionary.[12] I then matched the text based variables to the pre-coded WiscAds and WMP data.

Results

Table 4 includes the overall percent of total ads using specific domains/values. The first column indicates the count and proportion of unique ads that include each of the specific moral domains. The unique ad column counts creative ads once, and ignores the number of times ads are aired on television. The second column includes the count and number of aired ads that include each of the domains. This aired ad column counts creative ads by totaling the number of times the ad was aired on television. Looking between unique and aired ads, there are not many noticeable differences except for the roughly 18 percentage point difference between the *nurturant/caregiving* proportions. This suggests that there were less created ads with

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[11] I also visually scanned the original document term matrix by looking for possible stemming problems. One particular fix involved making sure that the word pair "Health Care" became "Healthcare" and "Obama Care" became "Obamacare." These are specific policies and not appeals to "care for the sick/elderly/veterans."

[12] See Appendix Tables 1 and 2 for distribution of dictionary words per ad. The median number of moral words per ad is 0 except for MFT *harm/care* and *in-group/loyalty* with medians of 1. I thus set the threshold of including a domain at 1 word per ad. The median total word count per ad is 76.

nurturant/caregiving language, but that these ads were more frequently aired on television.

Given these differences, and the conceptual difference between unique and aired ads, all results

reported include both breakdowns. The practical difference is that aired ad count represents what

the general public sees on television more frequently, while the unique ad count does not

distinguish between the unequal nature of campaigns.

Table 4: Total Dictionary Ad Count by Theory

Dictionary	Count & Proportion of Total Unique Ads	Count & Proportion of Total Aired Ads
Nation as Family Theory (Lakoff 1996)		
Nurturant/Caregiving	8,094 (0.4145)	3,381,716 (0.5918)
Empathy/Openness	1,317 (0.0674)	528,404 (0.0638)
Rules/Reinforcement	5280 (0.2704)	2,231,676 (0.2694)
Self-discipline	1,293 (0.0662)	482,896 (0.0583)
Moral Foundations Theory (Haidt 2012)		
Harm/Care	10,551 (0.5403)	4,393,822 (0.5304)
Fairness/Proportionality	1,122 (0.0575)	433,518 (0.0523)
In-Group/Loyalty	10,646 (0.5452)	4,062,376 (0.4904)
Authority/Respect	6,479 (0.3318)	2,801,587 (0.3381)
Purity/Sanctity	884 (0.0453)	326,565 (0.0394)
General Morality	3,826 (0.1959)	1,539,218 (0.1857)

Note: Counts (and proportions) calculated by denoting if a unique ad includes one or more words in a dictionary. Total Aired Ads calculated by summing up total number of 8,284,543. Ads can include more than one moral foundation.

Table 4 also suggests that proportionally, a large number of campaign ads include moral language, though there is variation in the domains. On the high end in Lakoff's (1996) moral domain typology, between 40 to 60 percent of ads, depending on counting scheme, include *nurturant/caregiving* language. On the low end of Lakoff's typology, both *empathy/openness* and *self-discipline* language are found in roughly six percent of ads. This variation can also be seen in Haidt's (2001) moral foundations. More than 50 percent of ads included *harm/care* or *in-group/loyalty* language, while less than 6 percent of ads had *fairness/proportionality* or *purity/sanctity* language. Lastly, a little less than 20 percent of ads include general moral language similar to Skitka's concept of moral conviction.

Figure 1: Nation as Family Party Proportions - Unique Ads
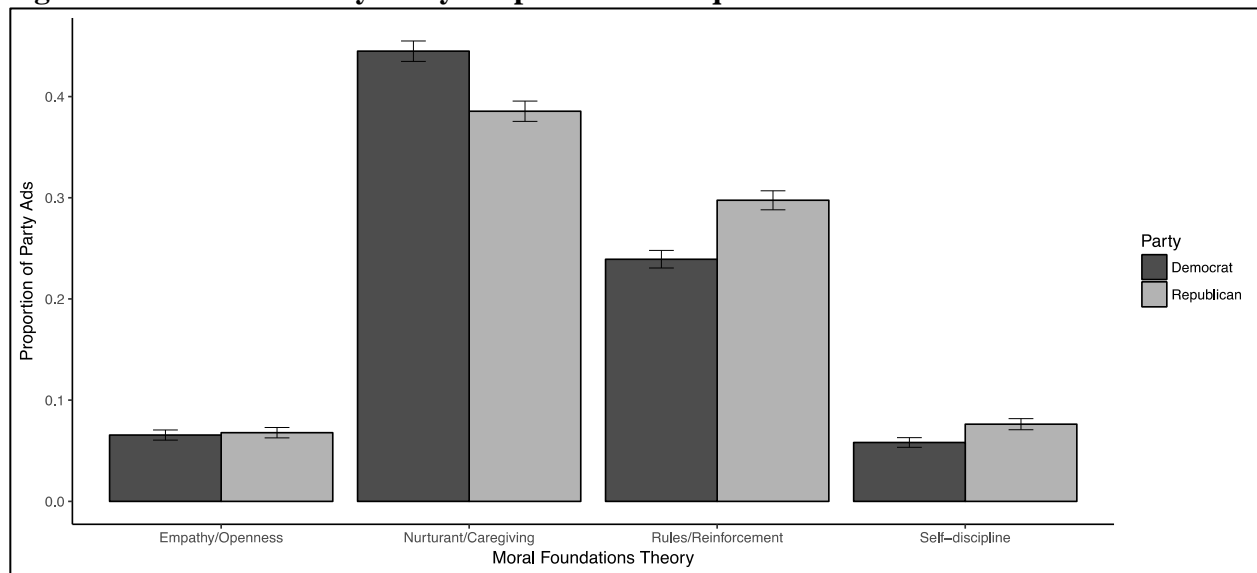
Note: Proportion of total party ads. Error bars indicate 95% confidence intervals calculated from difference in proportions test statistics. Data provided in Appendix Table 1. Unique Democrat Ad N = 9,265; Unique Republican Ad N= 9,064.

In order to test both the Moral Foundations Theory and Nation as Family hypotheses, I begin by examining at the differences in proportions of ads utilizing different moral domains between Republican and Democratic campaign ads. Figure 1 includes the proportion of unique ad specific counts; proportions and difference in proportions test statistics are found in Appendix

Table 1. The results suggest that of the four Nation as Family categories (Neiman et al., 2015), three hypotheses are confirmed utilizing the unique campaign ad count. Both *strict father* domains of *rules/reinforcement* and *self/discipline* are used more frequently by Republicans than Democrats ($p < .001$). Similarly, the *nurturant/caregiving* domain category is used more frequently by Democrats than Republicans ($p<.001$). However, the results do not suggest that Democrats use more *empathy/openness* language as predicted by Nation as Family theory.

Figure 2: Nation as Family Party Proportions - Aired Ads
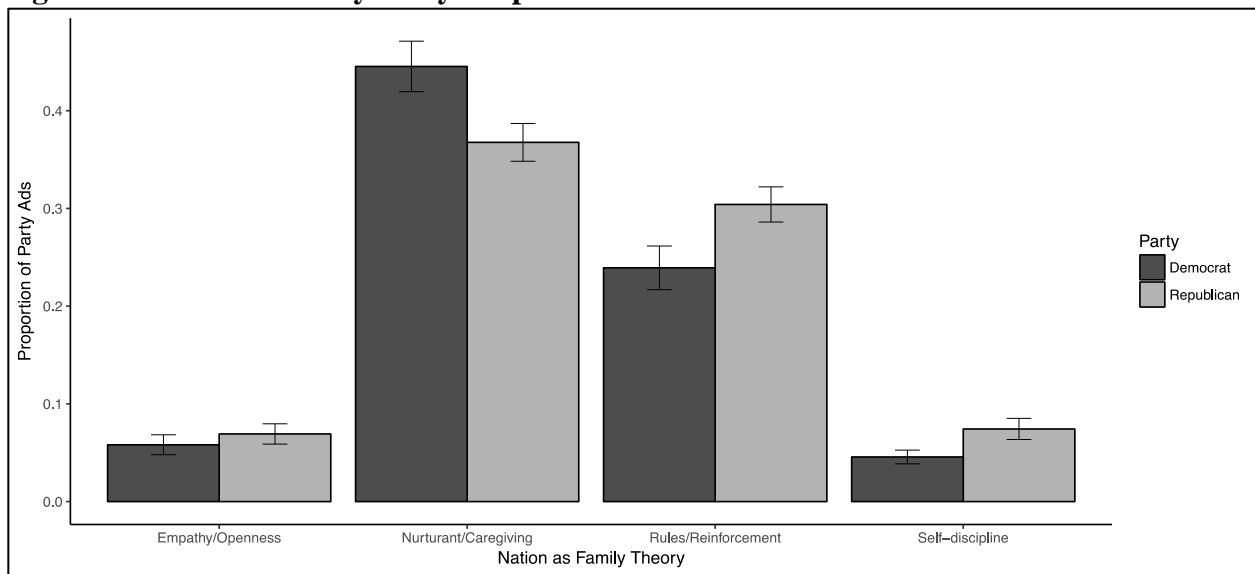
Note: Proportion of aired party ads. Error bars indicate 95% confidence intervals calculated from with clustered standard errors on unique advertisement. Data provided in Appendix Table 1. Democrat Ad N = 4,472,061; Republican Ad N= 3,581,577.

Figure 2 additionally reports the proportion of aired Democratic and Republican campaign ads that utilized moral domain language. Due to the large N in both proportions, I clustered the standard errors based upon the advertisement. The 95% confidence intervals calculated with these standard errors confirm the results in Figure 1 between Republican and Democratic candidates use of Nation as Family language. These proportions, counts, and test statistics for aired ads can be found in Appendix Table 2. Overall, results from the Nation as Family hypotheses relating to the Neiman et al. (2015) categories suggest that Republicans and

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Democrats do use different moral language in their campaign ads. Three of the Nation as Family hypotheses are supported, which suggests that the theory generally speaking holds up in distinguishing differences in campaign language.

Figure 3: Moral Foundations Proportions - Unique Ads
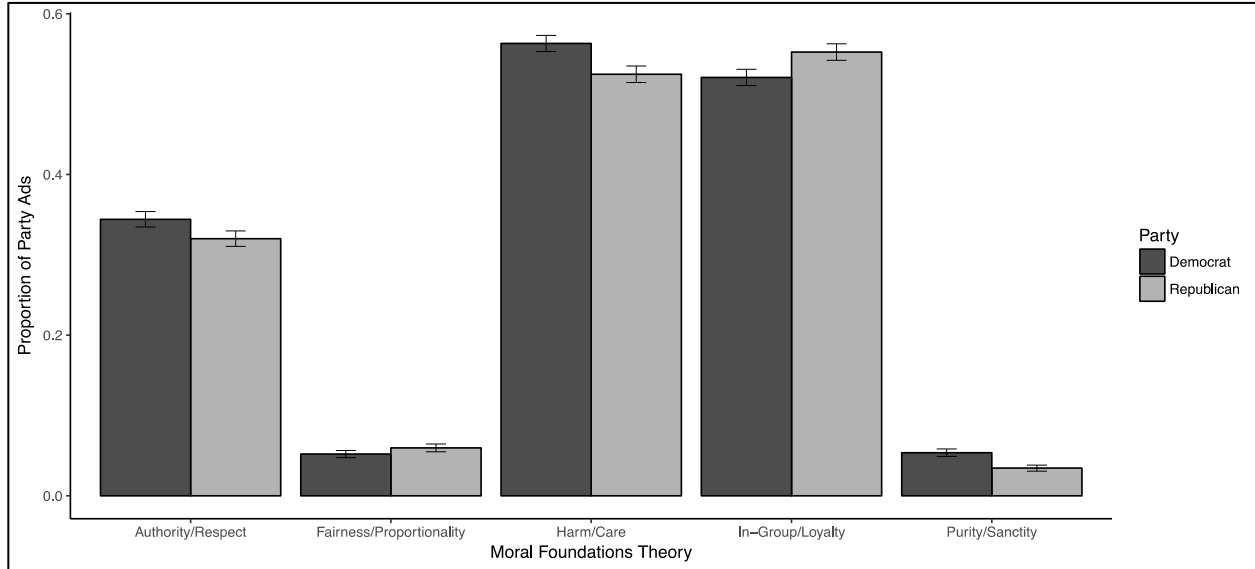
Note: Proportion of total party ads. Error bars indicate 95% confidence intervals calculated from difference in proportions test statistics. Data provided in Appendix Table 1. Democrat Ad N = 9,265; Republican Ad N= 9,064.

Figure 3 reports the unique ad proportions for the Moral Foundations Theory hypotheses. Although the expectation was that Democratic ads generally utilize the *care/harm* and *fairness/proportionality* foundations more than Republicans ads, Figure 3 only confirms the *care/harm* difference (p<.001). However, the lack of difference between Democratic and Republican campaign ads use of *fairness/proportionality* does not necessarily conflict with MFT as Haidt (2012) argues that both Republicans and Democrats utilize this moral domain. There are also expected differences between Democratic and Republican ads relating to the *in-group/loyalty* hypothesis, with Republican ads having more of this type of language than Democratic ads. Despite these confirmations, the results also suggest that Democrats utilize slightly more *authority/respect* and *purity/sanctity* language than Republicans (p<.001). These

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results run counter to the expectations of Moral Foundations Theory. Appendix Table 1 includes the specific counts, proportions, and test statistics reported in Figure 3. Results in Figure 4 report the total aired advertisements proportions with clustered standard errors on unique advertisements. These aired advertisement results confirm the results from Figure 3.

Finally, with respect to moral conviction, Table 4 suggested that overall, between 18 and 19 percent of all ads utilized generic moral language. This suggests that the concept is used, and it is used more frequently than several of the moral domains defined by Moral Foundations Theory and Nation as Family. For unique party ads, Republicans use this general moral language in roughly 20.7 percent of their ads, while Democrats use it in only 18.4 percent of their ads ($p<.001$). This suggests that Republicans utilize this language a bit more frequently than Democrats, though like many of the results, this distinction must take into account the fact that in the aggregate number of ads aired each year, the differences are not extremely large.

**Figure 4: Moral Foundations Proportions - Aired Ads**
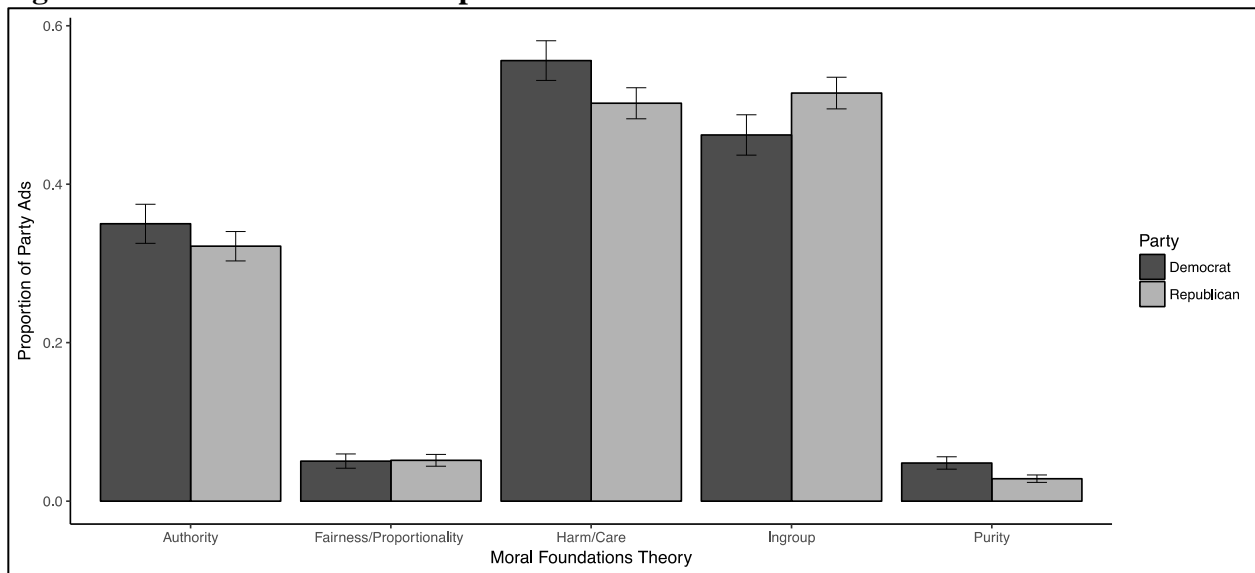
Notes: Proportion of aired party ads. Error bars indicate 95% confidence intervals calculated from with clustered standard errors on unique advertisement. Data provided in Appendix Table 1. Democrat Ad N = 4,472,061; Republican Ad N= 3,581,577.

Conclusion

The results presented in this chapter suggest that moral language exists in political campaign ads, but that the existent theories of morality do not always seem to structure their language. In many cases the data suggest that despite statistically significant differences, the practical difference is relatively low. There are not any cases where the difference in the proportion of ads exceeds 10 percent. Similarly, the results also suggest that depending upon measurement (unique vs. total aired) that the difference can often change from more Republican to more Democrat and vice-versa. Looking at Neiman et al. (2015), the results fit the picture they paint, in which the language is used, but does not follow the specific theoretical expectations. Yet, like they suggest, the results matter for our understanding of elite communication, suggesting that language is not completely predictable or easy to measure.

Importantly, understanding the language of campaign advertisements is relevant to research on the rise in elite polarization. The results may help us understand the divergent nature of the two dominant parties. Though there has been considerable debate on the amount of polarization in the United States (see Abramowitz and Saunders 2008; Fiorina et al. (2008); Gelman 2008), both Lakoff (1992) and Graham et al. (2009) suggest that divergent views of morals may be contributing to polarization or a possible "culture war." They suggest that the *language* of conservatives and liberals is possibly a point of divergence between both parties and their supporters. With experimental evidence that moral language often only appeals to certain groups, the differences in language may be contributing to some amount of partisan discord.

With respect to this project, limitations exist in determining the exact nature of moral language through dictionaries, though there are many limitations to other outside processes including hand-coding. Primarily, training coders in extracting moral language is difficult due to

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the subjective nature of the morals themselves. Winter et al. (2016) point out that this subjectivity is even evident in having coders identify physical objects (e.g., presence of a flag) in a given ad.

In sum, this chapter shows that different partisan ads utilize a wide variety of moral language somewhat consistent with the moral theories of Lakoff (1996) and Haidt (2012). I also provide evidence of general moral framing (Skitka et al. 2005), with Republicans utilizing moral frames slightly more frequently than Democrats. Evidence of these relatively small differences in actual campaign ads from 2000 to 2012 raises the possibility that understanding the effects of this language may be important for understanding political campaigns. For instance, Feinberg and Willer (2014) find evidence that moral framing can alter partisan issue positions, but can this moral framing also influence attitudes towards political candidates in an electoral context? The remainder of this project addresses this question.

CHAPTER III

DYNAMIC MORAL CAMPAIGNS

The results presented in the previous chapter suggest that campaigns do in fact use moral language, and that language is used somewhat in line with the expectations of Moral Foundations Theory (Graham et al. 2009). Yet, despite this evidence of moral language in campaign advertisements, we do not know if this language influences the electorate. Thus, this chapter attempts to measure the impact of moral campaign language on candidate support in an election.

As a reminder, this chapter is limited in only addressing the effects of Moral Foundations Theory. This choice is not intended to devalue Lakoff's (1996) Nation as Family theory. Subsequent work could include addressing the effects of Lakoff's moral domains.

Specifically, the chapter examines the effect of campaign ads with moral language on public support for the candidate measured through weekly opinion polls taken throughout senate and gubernatorial races from 2000 to 2004. In effect this chapter examines the aggregate effect of using moral language in the campaign setting. Testing several hypotheses based upon the MFT framework, the results suggest that candidates that use *harm/care* and *fairness/proportionality* language on average gain support in the polls, while candidates that use *binding* language on average lose support in the polls. These effects hold for both Republican and Democratic candidates running for election.

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Background

A specific goal of studying campaigns is to understand the strategies that campaigns utilize in order to win elections. Research in this area has found that campaigns can have an effect on individual behavior, but that these effects can vary across office and context (Jacobson 2014). One segment of literature that has attempted to understand the impact of campaigns has examined changes in campaign behavior on candidate polling. Methodologically, this literature has focused on understanding how changes in candidate strategy not only affects the outcome of the race, but also affects the behavior of the other candidate (Carsey 2000). This interaction attempts to understand how campaigns can have an impact on the public while controlling for the behaviors of multiple candidates and actors. Unlike experiments that attempt to understand the effect of a change in a single advertising strategy, modeling campaign dynamics helps researchers understand changes in the environment that includes both candidates (Box-Steffensmeier et al. 2009).

In research on campaign dynamics, many studies have utilized weekly polling data from a variety of sources as a method of understanding candidate appeal. With the advent of the Wisconsin Adverting Project and Wesleyan Media Project, researchers have been able to track the number of ads each candidate airs during a specific period of time. Banda and Windett (2016), pairing the Wisconsin Advertising Project with weekly polling averages, find evidence that candidates that increase their negative advertising see a slight positive bump in the polls, but quickly lose support in the long run as a result of increasing their overall negativity. Similarly, Banda and Carsey (2015) found that the type of messaging that candidates use depends upon the type of race. In cases where the candidate is performing well in the primary they begin using a mixed strategy of campaigning on primary (in-party issues) and general election (in and out-

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party issues) topics.

The study of campaign dynamics can also be useful for understanding the impact of moral framing in campaigns. Using methods similar to Banda and Windett's (2015) evaluation of negative advertising, I address how changes in moral language in a given week can influence the candidate's position in the polls. I also assess how one candidates' moral language influences the competitor's use of moral language.

Moral Campaigning

Graham et al. (2009) suggest that Americans react to different forms of morality based upon their ideological background. Liberals and conservatives see the world through different moral lenses, and are more receptive to appeals that fit their particular moral domains. Specifically, Moral Foundations Theory suggests that liberal Americans are more receptive to the moral domains of *harm/care* and *fairness/reciprocity,* while conservative Americans are also receptive to the *binding* moral domains of *authority/respect*, *in-group/loyalty* and *purity/sanctity* (Graham et al. 2009).[13] The theory suggests that these domains are influential to individuals as they regulate their ability to make decisions about society and politics. More importantly, research on these domains suggests that appeals made using different moral domains can elicit support for different policies (Feinberg and Willer 2013).

If this theory is correct in the campaign context, candidates that effectively use the correct type of moral language should be more likely to perform well in the polls. According to Graham et al. (2009), utilizing moral arguments often taps an emotional response that evokes motivated reasoning. Thus, hypothetically, when a candidate airs ads with appealing moral language they should increase their overall support. Yet, it is also important to note that

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[13] See Chapter II for an in-depth discussion of the domains and how MFT suggests they should impact conservatives and liberals.

candidates are not simply appealing to their particular party, but to the entire electorate. This could dampen the effects of the moral language in a real world scenario.

Thus, using MFT as a framework there are several different hypotheses that can be tested when examining the effect of candidate moral language on polling support during political campaigns. As previously mentioned, *harm/care* and *fairness/proportionality* language appeals to both Republicans and Democrats. According to Graham et al. (2009), these foundations appeal to a broad section of the United States as they often relate to concepts of justice and compassion. Republicans and Democrats both want to help the elderly, and do not like it when someone is inflicted with pain. Thus, according to MFT, candidates that utilize *harm/care* or *fairness/proportionality* language should increase their popularity and standing in the polls (Hypothesis 1a and 1b). On the other hand, the *binding* moral foundations should only appeal to conservatives. This suggests that in the campaign context, that when a Republican candidate increases their use of *binding* moral language they should increase their position in the polls (Hypothesis 2).

Hypothesis 1a: As Democrats increase their use of harm/care or fairness/proportionality language in a given week, they should increase their public support in the polls.

Hypothesis 1b: As Republicans increase their use of harm/care or fairness/proportionality language in a given week, they should increase their public support in the polls.

Hypothesis 2: As Republicans increase their use of binding language (authority/respect, in-group/loyalty and purity/sanctity) in a given week, they should increase their public support in the polls.

Data

With the goal of understanding the impact of changes in moral advertising on public opinion of candidates, I utilize a cross-sectional time series of weekly polling averages paired with the number of ads that utilize moral language in a given week. Specifically, the project uses

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senate and gubernatorial general election contests that have data on both polling averages and campaign advertisements. Support for the Democratic candidate was originally collected in Banda and Windett (2016). This data was developed initially in an effort to understand the impact of negative ads on public opinion in the same states and races. The weekly polling data came from the Polling Report and the National Journal's Daily Hotline report. The individual polls were then smoothed using Stimson's (1999) WCalc and encompass up to 12 weeks before each election. Thus, for each race there is a polling average for each week that is represented in terms of the Democratic candidate's advantage. Appendix Figure 4 displays the polling averages for each of the 2000 senate races across the weeks. Importantly, note that each week did not always include a new poll, and that the smoothing algorithm produces estimates of missing weeks. Similarly, due to the limited availability of polling data for state races, races that were non-competitive were not included in the analysis.[14] In total, there are 79 races in the dataset (36 gubernatorial and 43 senate) covering 39 distinct states. The dataset covers 772 weekly observations.

To measure if an individual campaign advertisement utilized moral language, I used dictionary text analysis (Grimmer et al. 2013) on campaign transcripts from the Wisconsin Advertising Project. WiscAds tracks the number of ads that air on major television networks during a given campaign. They also code the ads based upon a variety of factors including the sponsor, the party of the sponsor, and issues discussed in the campaign. Included in the reports were transcripts for each individual ad. After the transcripts were scraped from the original files the text was cleaned and stemmed for text analysis. Specifically, I utilized Graham et al.'s (2009) dictionary to determine the use of Moral Foundations Theory's various moral domains. Using the results from the dictionary, I classify each ad as including a specific moral domain if one word in

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[14] After the results section, I discuss the impact this may have on the results of the models.

the ad matches one of the words or word-root in the dictionary.[15] Using this classification
scheme, I then merged the dictionary results with the original WiscAds database.

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Democrats Polling Average	48.99	8.73	15.59	80.34
Percent Democrat Harm/Fair	52	37	0	100
Percent Republican Harm/Fair	53	40	0	100
Percent Democrat Binding	66	38	0	100
Percent Republican Binding	68	38	0	100
2002	.50	.50	0	1
2004	.23	.42	0	1
Gubernatorial Race	.45	.50	0	1
Republican Incumbent	.30	.50	0	1
Democrat Incumbent	.21	.41	0	1

N = 772

After pairing the moral domain results with the original WiscAds database, I calculate the
percent of ads that each candidate aired each week that included a moral classification. Thus, the
data are arranged so that each observation (*it*) is in a specific race (*i*) and week (*t*). Combining
these two data sources, Table 5 includes descriptive statistics regarding the variables used in the
model. Note that I capture the percent of ads that each candidate airs each week that include
harm/*care* and *fairness*/*proportionality* language[16] and *binding* language. Note that these
variables are then transformed from 0 to 1 to 0 to 100 for interpretability in the model. Thus, a
one unit change in a moral language variable is a one percent change in polling numbers for the
Democratic candidate.

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[15] See Chapter II for an in-depth discussion relating to the dictionary classification procedure.
[16] I use Harm/Fair to denote the two foundations of *harm/care* and *fairness proportionality*. Note
that this is different than *harm/fair*.

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Model

To test the impact of moral ads on candidate support, I estimate a series of Error Correction Models (ECMs) on the time series cross-sectional data. ECMs allow researchers to address the nature of both the short and long term effects of changes in covariates (Woodrich 2009). Specifically, the model accounts for the change and resolution of the equilibrium state of the dependent variable. In an ECM, the dependent variable is the change in the dependent variable between t and $t-1$. An additional important feature of an ECM are the natural fixed effects that occur in the model. In this case, fixed effects are on each individual race (i). Banda and Windett (2016) suggest that these fixed effects in the campaign setting control for race specific constants including race, state, presence of incumbent, and previous campaign situations. Of interest to researchers in an ECM are the short-term effects, which can be described as the effect of a change in an independent variable at time t on the dependent variable at time $t+1$. On the other hand, long term effects calculated through the Long Run Multiplier (LRM) estimate both the short term and long term effect of a change in an independent variable. Long Run Multipliers can be interpreted as the total effect of a unit change in the independent variable on the dependent variable throughout the series (DeBoef and Keele 2008). Error correction models have been used to address the impact of negative adverting (Banda and Windett 2016), campaign strategy (Carsey et al. 2009), and issue ownership (Banda and Carsey 2015) on polling averages and advertisement strategy.

Due to the fact that both candidates' decisions to air advertisements are partially dependent upon their position in the polls and the behavior of the competitor, the model also addresses the dynamic nature of time dependent phenomenon using a seemingly unrelated regression (SUR). In this case, the seemingly unrelated regression also addresses the effects that

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changes in polling position and competitor language has on the choice to air moral advertisements. Therefore, in order to take into account all of these effects the following SUR includes five separate models. The first model addresses the effect of changes in moral ads on the Democrat's polling average. The second model addresses the polling position and other moral ad usage on the Democrat's use of *Harm/Fair*. The third model address the change in polling position and other moral ad usage on the Democrat's usage of *Harm/Fair* language. The fourth model addresses the change in polling position and other moral use on the Democrat's use of *binding* langue. Lastly, the fifth model addresses the change in polling position and other moral ad usage on the Republican's use of *binding* language.

(1) $\Delta DemPoll_{it} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 DemPoll_{it-1} + \beta_2 \Delta DemHarmFair_{it} + \beta_3 DemHarmFair_{t-1} + \beta_4 \Delta RepHarmFair_{it}$
$+ \beta_5 RepHarmFair_{it-1} + \beta_6 \Delta DemBinding_{it} + \beta_7 DemBinding_{it-1} + \beta_8 \Delta RepBinding_{it}$
$+ \beta_9 RepBinding_{it-1} + \beta_X Controls + \varepsilon$

(2) $\Delta DemHarmFair_{it}$
$= \beta_0 + \beta_1 DemHarmFair_{t-1} + \beta_2 \Delta DemPoll_{it} + \beta_3 DemPoll_{it-1} + \beta_4 \Delta RepHarmFair_{it}$
$+ \beta_5 RepHarmFair_{it-1} + \beta_6 \Delta DemBinding_{it} + \beta_7 DemBinding_{it-1} + \beta_8 \Delta RepBinding_{it}$
$+ \beta_9 RepBinding_{it-1} + \beta_x Controls + \varepsilon$

(3) $\Delta RepHarmFair_{it} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 RepHarmFair_{t-1} + \beta_2 \Delta DemPoll_{it} + \beta_3 DemPoll_{it-1} +$
$\beta_4 \Delta DemHarmFair_{it} + \beta_5 DemHarmFair_{it-1} + \beta_6 \Delta DemBinding_{it} + \beta_7 DemBinding_{it-1} +$
$\beta_8 \Delta RepBinding_{it} + \beta_9 RepBinding_{it-1} + \beta_x Controls + \varepsilon$

(4) $\Delta DemBinding_{it}$
$= \beta_0 + \beta_1 DemBinding_{t-1} + \beta_2 \Delta DemPoll_{it} + \beta_3 DemPoll_{it-1} + \beta_4 \Delta RepBinding_{it}$
$+ \beta_5 RepBinding_{it-1} + \beta_6 \Delta DemHarmFair_{it} + \beta_7 DemHarmFair_{t-1} + \beta_8 \Delta RepHarmFair_{it}$
$+ \beta_9 RepHarmFair_{it-1} + \beta_x Controls + \varepsilon$

(5) $\Delta RepBinding_{it}$

$$= \beta_0 + \beta_1 RepBinding_{t-1} + \beta_2 \Delta DemPoll_{it} + \beta_3 DemPoll_{it-1} + \beta_4 \Delta DemBinding_{it}$$
$$+ \beta_5 DemBinding_{it-1} + \beta_6 \Delta DemHarmFair_{it} + \beta_7 DemHarmFair_{t-1} + \beta_8 \Delta RepHarmFair_{it}$$
$$+ \beta_9 RepHarmFair_{it-1} + \beta_x Controls + \varepsilon$$

Note that the variable *DemPoll$_{it}$* is the position of the Democratic candidate from race *i* at week *t*. *DemPoll$_{it-1}$* is the lagged value of the Democrat's position in each race and *ΔDemPoll$_{it}$* is the difference in the Democratic candidate's position from *t-1* to *t*. This is the same in all five models of the SUR. The variable *DemHarmFair* and *RepHarmFair* are the percent of the respective candidates' weekly ads that include *harm/care* and *fairness/proportionality* moral language. Using similar identical notation, *DemHarmFair$_{it-1}$* and *RepHarmFair$_{it-1}$* are the lagged value of the percent and *Δ DemHarmFair$_{it}$ and Δ RepHarmFair$_{it}$* are the first differences in the candidate's percent of ads. Likewise, *DemBinding$_{it}$* and *RepBinding$_{it}$* are the percent of the respective candidates' weekly ads that include *binding* moral language. First difference and lagged notation are the same for these two variables. The control variables in the model can be found in Table 5, and include indicator variables for if the electoral race included a Republican or Democratic incumbent, the year of the election, and if the election was for the gubernatorial seat.

Before discussing the results, using the ECM model, *Hypothesis 1a* would expect that an increase in moral language by the Democratic candidate found in the *DemHarmFair* variables would result in an increase in the Democratic candidate's polling advantage. Thus, the value of the OLS beta coefficient for the first difference and long run multiplier should be positive and statistically significant. For Hypothesis 1b, the value of the OLS beta coefficient for the first difference and long run multiplier for the *RepHarmFair* variable should be negative and

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statistically significant.   In regards to Hypothesis 2, an increase in Republican moral language found in the *RepBinding* variable should result in a decrease in the Democratic candidate's polling advantage. Similar to *Hypothesis 1b* the value of the OLS beta coefficient for the first difference and long run multiplier should be negative and statistically significant.

Results

How do changes in candidates use of moral language affect their position in the polls? The Error Correction Model results found in Table 2 include the five separate equations. The first column addresses the first model in the SUR in which the dependent variable is the Democrat's polling position. This model specifically addresses both hypothesis 1 and hypothesis 2 by looking at the effect of specific candidate's language on the position of the Democrat in the polls. The short term effect estimates are reported in the first difference variables and the long-term effect estimates are found in the long run multipliers.

Table 6: Moral Language Use and Its Effect on Candidate Polling

	Democrat % Support	Democrat Harm/Fair	Republican Harm/Fair	Democrat Binding	Republican Binding
ΔDemocrat Polling	-	1.380*	.2238	-.4817	.4305
		(.4012)	(.4122)	(.3898)	.3825
Democrat Polling$_{(t-1)}$	-.0231	.1754	.0041	-.0618	.1211
	(.0137)	(.1452)	(.1487)	(.1406)	(.1379)
ΔDemocrat Harm/Fair	.0123*	-	-.0187	.5341*	.0214
	(.0035)		(.0389)	(.0337)	(.0361)
Democrat Harm/Fair$_{(t-1)}$	.0037	-.4793*	.0125	.2346*	-.0300
	(.0034)	(.0312)	(.0372)	(.0345)	(.0345)
ΔRepublican Harm/Fair	.0019	-.0179	-	.0718	.3946*
	(.0035)	(.0372)		(.0360)	(.0335)
Republican Harm/Fair$_{(t-1)}$	-.0008	-.0089	-.433	-.0168	.1607*
	(.0032)	(.0337)	(0.030	(.0326)	(.0317)
ΔDemocrat Binding	-.00046	.5598*	.0199	-	.1702*
	(.0037)	(.0360)	(.0402)		(.0370)
Democrat Binding$_{(t-1)}$	-.0024	.3150*	-.0351	-.4879	.1382*
	(.0034)	(.0346)	(.0366)	(.0297)	(.0338)
ΔRepublican Binding	.0042	-.0238	.4579*	.1768*	-
	(.0038)	(.0407)	(.0390)	(.0384)	
Republican Binding$_{(t-1)}$	.0031	-.0330	.2123*	.0883	-.4146*
	(.0032)	(.0337)	(.0340)	(.0325)	(.0279)
Democrat Polling LRM	-	.3661*	.0094	-.1267	-.2921*
		(.1440)	(.1486)	(.1408)	(.1368)
Democrat Harm/Fair LRM	.1616*	-	.0289	.4808*	-.0734*
	(.0038)		(.0372)	(.0322)	(.0344)
Republican Harm/Fair LRM	-.0381*	-.0185	-	-.0344	.3877*
	(.0032)	(.0337)		(.0326)	(.0304)
Democrat Binding LRM	-.1070*	.6572*	-.0812	-	.3334*
	(.0037)	(.0342)	(.0366)		(.0338)
Republican Binding LRM	.1322*	-.0690*	.4907*	.1882*	-
	(.0039)	(.0337)	(.0333)	(.0321)	
2002	-.0716	12.22*	6.660	-13.115*	-7.690
	(.2729)	(2.672)	(2.950)	(2.754)	2.735
2004	-.0164	12.87*	8.161	-14.757*	-12.172
	(.3065)	(3.221)	(3.311)	(3.088)	3.039
Gubernatorial Race	-.0464	-10.653*	-11.904	4.341	1.181
	(.2418)	(2.524)	(2.574)	(2.475)	(2.429)
Republican Incumbent	-.3226	.6825	3.919	.2683	-4.433*
	(.2484)	(2.672)	2.731	(2.586)	(2.533)
Democrat Incumbent	.4610	-1.796	1.484	1.788	-3.571
	(.2570)	(2.731)	2.794	(2.643)	(2.591)
Intercept	.9542	-6.032	8.959	27.03	27.57*
	(.8612)	(9.114)	9.299	(8.726)	8.548

Note: OLS coefficients are reported for the SUR ECM model. Standard Errors are in parenthesis.
* Denotes $p < .05$; n=772 weeks; Harm/Fair and Binding variables were re-scaled from 0-1 to 0-100.

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In the Error Correction Model, the first value of interest is the short term effect that can be found in the *ΔDemocrat Harm/Fair* variable. Note that this variable is statistically significant at the p < .05 level. This result suggests that a one percent increase in the Democrat's use of Harm/Fair language in weekly campaign ads is associated with a .0123 increase in the Democrat's polling average. This result gives some confirmation to Hypothesis 1. Note that the modal first difference in Harm/Fair language by Democrats is 0, with a mean of 1.48 and standard deviation of 33.10.[17] The second value of interest in the ECM is the long run multiplier for the Democrat Harm/Fair percentage. The estimate for this coefficient is also positive and statistically significant at the p < .05 level. This estimate suggests that after controlling for the language of the Republican candidate and the race's current polling average a Democrat that increases their use of Harm/Fair moral language receives a combined increase of .1616 across the short and long-term in their polling advantage. Thus, Democrats that increase their use of Harm/Fair language see increases in their polling average via short and long-term effects.

The results regarding the Republican's use of Harm/Fair are also particularly interesting. As mentioned, MFT suggests that Democrats and Republicans use *harm/care* and *fairness/proportionality* language. Despite the models statistically insignificant estimate of first difference in the Republican's use of Harm/Fair, the long-run multiplier is statistically significant. This result suggests that when Republicans increase their use of Harm/Fair language they also increase their position in the polls (the negative coefficient indicates the Democrat's polling numbers decrease). The coefficient in this case suggests that as a Republican increases their use of Harm/Fair language, there is a .038 decrease in the Democrat's position. This suggests that candidates that increase their use of Harm/Fair language see a bump in the polls

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[17] Histograms of First Differences can be found in Appendix Figure 3.

regardless of their party.

Next, focusing on Hypothesis 2, the first difference in Republican *binding* percentages is not statistically significant at the $p < .05$ level. This suggests that, a Republican candidate increasing their use of *binding* language has no impact on the Democrat's polling average in the short-term. Yet, the long-run multiplier for the Republican *binding* variable indicate that increases in Republican use of *binding* language benefits the Democrat. Controlling for the model covariates, a one percent increase in *binding* moral language by the Republican candidate is associated with a .13 increase in the Democrat's polling advantage over the short and long-term. This suggests that Republicans do not gain from using *binding* language as expected by MFT. One note is that the coefficient for Democrats' usage of *binding* language is negative and statistically significant. This suggests that when a Democrat increases their use of *binding* language by one percent, they see a .1070 decrease in their polling advantage. Thus, the results for the long run multipliers suggest that when both Republicans and Democrats increase their use of *binding* language, they suffer in the polls.

Together these results appear to suggest that *harm/care* and *fairness/proportionality* language has the expected effect on candidate support based upon Moral Foundations Theory. When both Democrats and Republicans increase usage, they perform better in the polls. On the other hand, the results suggest that candidates that use *binding* language seem to suffer in the polls. One possible explanation for this dichotomy is that Republicans and Democrats are both susceptible to *harm/care* and *fairness/proportionality* language. On the other hand, due to the limited appeal of *binding* language, candidates that use this type of moral language may suffer in the aggregate, as it may not appeal to Democrats as much as Republicans.

Conclusion

The results from this chapter suggest that using moral language in campaign ads seems to have some effect on the public. Though the results do not completely align with the theoretical expectations of Moral Foundations Theory, they produce evidence that moral themes may influence voters. It is also interesting that *harm/care* and *fairness/proportionality* language increased support from the general public when both Republican and Democratic candidates use more of it. This importantly fits Graham et al.'s (2009) argument that overall both Democrats and Republicans respond positively to this type of language. Similarly, due to the limited nature of the *binding* language, the aggregate effect may result in an overall negative reaction to this type of language.

It is appropriate to point out several limitations of this study. First, the data is limited to only usage of moral language by candidates in state level races in the early 2000s, and may not be generalizable to more recent elections. Panagopoulos (2016) suggests that campaigns have more recently focused on appealing mainly to their base, not the general public. Candidate language and strategy may have changed over time, and the effect of moral language could also change. Similarly, the results only validate the effect of moral language in contests where there was enough polling data. Most frequently this meant the results are only applicable to contests that had two competitive candidates. The effects could be different in races where candidates are unevenly matched. Regardless, overall the results suggest that candidates that use a broadly accepted moral frame perform better than candidates that use specific moral appeals.

EXPERIMENTAL EVIDENCE FOR MORAL CAMPAIGNS AND CANDIDATES

"We have a *moral* obligation not to spend more than we take in."
-2012 Presidential Candidate Mitt Romney

Building upon evidence that campaigns utilize a wide variety of moral language in their campaign ads, this chapter focuses on measuring how candidates may strategically use moral language to appeal to voters. A growing body of work has shown evidence that rooting arguments in moral appeals can have persuasive effects on issue positions (Feinberg and Willer 2013; Day et al. 2014), but current research has not attempted to understand if moralizing on the part of candidates can increase their favorability. Therefore, the primary aim of this chapter is to determine the extent to which campaigns can effectively utilize moral language when appealing to potential voters.

To measure the impact of moral language, I use two separate survey experiments that address how moral language may be used to influence support for a candidate. The first experiment presents respondents with a hypothetical campaign advertisement that frames a central campaign issue with moral language. The second experiment utilizes a conjoint task in an effort to determine if respondents favorably respond to candidates' moral traits. The results of the first experiment suggest that moral framing in a single campaign ad is not necessarily an effective way of appealing to voters. On the other hand, the conjoint task suggests that Democrats and Republicans favor candidates with different moral traits. Taken together these results suggest that moral issues presented in campaigns can have an effect on candidates, but

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that these effects may be moderated by issues and campaign context.

Prior Related Experimental Research on Campaign Advertisement Effects

Arceneaux (2010) suggests that determining the causals effects of campaign advertisements through experimental research provides insight into how specific strategies may increase or decrease candidate support. Studying campaign effects through experiments has therefore provided a greater understanding of campaigns and the tactics they deploy. From understanding how negative campaigns impact voters' knowledge of candidates to assessing backlash from going negative, experimentally manipulating factors inside campaigns helps understand the effect particular aspects of campaign advertisements have on the mass public.

Within the research on campaign effects, several experimental studies suggest that appeals rooted in psychological theories are effective at persuading voters. For example, Brader (2006) finds experimental evidence that campaign advertisements that induce the emotion of fear can lead to persuasion, while inducing the emotion of enthusiasm can influence participation. One area in which campaigns may strategically frame a campaign is through representations of the candidates. Druckman et al. (2004) find evidence that campaigns strategically frame character traits of their candidate and their opponent. Similarly, Fridkin and Kenny (2011) suggest that after controlling for party identification and issue preferences, the public uses character traits to evaluate candidates. This suggests that providing information about a particular candidate's character traits may be information campaigns may attempt to control. Clifford (2014) suggests that the public uses their personal concepts of morality as means to generalize information about particular candidates. The public also can identify issue positions with different moral concepts, but their ability to identify issues with morals is shaped by their personal moral identity.

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Like many of these factors, manipulating moral frames may help us understand if the public is susceptible to the rhetoric of candidates in a campaign environment. Currently research on moral foundations theory has found experimental evidence that moral frames appeal to different groups. For example, Feinberg and Willer (2013) assess the role of moral framing in views on the environment. They frame appeals for environmental issues using *harm/care* and *purity/sanctity* to see if they persuade partisans of opposing (ideological) positions. They suggest that framing with morals is a process of segmentation, in which certain frames are only relevant to a segment of the population (Levin et al. 1998). Similarly, Day et al. (2014) find that on a variety of political issues segmented moral framing can increase support for both in-partisan and out-partisan issues. Together this research suggests that framing issues though different moral arguments is both effective in solidifying partisans of their own in-partisan preferences, but also persuading partisans of out-partisan issue positions. This suggests that moral framing may be a way for candidates to gain support from their opposing party.

Moral Framing in Political Campaigns

Moral Foundations Theory (Graham et al. 2009) suggests that certain moral domains appeal to certain individuals over others. They suggest that American liberals rely primarily on the domains of *harm/care* and *fairness/proportionality*, while American conservatives rely on all five domains including *in-group/loyalty*, *authority/respect* and *purity/sanctity*. Yet, despite reliance upon these different moral domains, researchers have not attempted to understand if campaigns can frame their campaigns in a manner to elicit support.

Important to MFT is the concept that certain morals appeal to different types of individuals. This concept is often similar to targeted advertisements. Hersh and Schaffner (2013) find evidence that targeting campaign material to different groups (Hispanics and Evangelical

Christians) elicits support from those groups, but can create backlash if exposed to the wrong group. In a similar vein, if certain types of moral domains appeal to Democrats and Republicans in different ways as suggested by MFT (Graham et al 2009), then campaign ads that make moral appeals may elicit differential support from voters.

Using this Moral Foundations Theory framework, I test two sets of hypotheses using two different experiments. The first experiment and hypothesis focuses on understanding if campaigns can elicit support by "going moral." The second experiment and hypotheses address if segmented moral appeals can help boost support for a candidate.

The first hypothesis is built from the theoretical expectations regarding *harm/care* and if candidates can elicit support by using this generally accepted moral domain. This moral domain, according to Haidt (2012), is a common moral thread in American society. The domain specifically focuses on individuals reacting to the harm of others. For example, the domain suggests that people see others being hurt or harmed as morally wrong, and that caring for people exposed to pain/suffering is the "right" thing to do. Important for this experiment is that Graham et al. (2009) suggest that both Republicans and Democrats are emotionally susceptible to arguments that include *harm/care*.

The first experiment randomly presents respondents with a campaign ad that includes moral language or does not. Using the moral domain of *harm/care*, I attempt to address if this generally accepted moral frame is appealing to both Democrats and Republicans. This experiment allows me to address if including moral frames in campaign advertisements increases support for a candidate. In other words, the MFT hypothesis tested is if candidates that use moral language are more likely to be favored.

The second set of hypotheses focus and experiment on comparing moral traits. Do

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Republicans support candidates that are associated with the *binding* moral traits, and do Democrats support candidates that are associated with *harm/care* and *fairness/proportionality* traits. This segmentation hypothesis suggests that when presented with different candidates that Republicans and Democrats are susceptible to candidates with different moral traits based upon MFT's domain distinctions. Thus, Hypothesis 2.1 suggests that Democrats are more willing to support candidates that exhibit traits associated with *harm/care* and *fairness/proportionality* in comparison to the *binding* traits. On the flip side, Hypothesis 2.2 suggests that Republicans are more willing to support candidates that exhibit the *binding* traits in comparison to *harm/care* and *fairness/proportionality*.

Experiment 1: Campaign Ads

I developed a short survey experiment to test if moral framing is effective in appealing to voters in campaign ads. The experiment presents respondents with a hypothetical campaign advertisement in which respondents were randomly presented a non-moral control ad or a moral ad. After recruitment, respondents answered a set of demographic questions and then were presented with a story about a hypothetical Congressional election. The story presented an incumbent and challenger, and information about their respective party affiliations.[18] Respondents were randomized into receiving a Democrat or Republican incumbent and provided information on the candidates and the issues they stressed in their campaigns. In both cases the information was identical, focusing on the elderly and social security. The language of the hypothetical campaign advertisement is displayed in Figure 5.

After reading the short description of the candidates and before reading the campaign ad, respondents were asked to rate the favorability of both incumbent and challenger candidates on a

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[18] See Appendix for exact wording.

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scale from 1 to 7.[19] In this pre-experiment task, the incumbent Republican's favorability rating average was 4.12 (sd.= 1.42), while the Democratic challenger's rating was a 4.38 (sd.= 1.16). When the incumbent was a Democrat, the favorability rating average was 4.36 (sd.= 1.54), while the Republican challenger's rating was 4.26 (sd.= 1.38).

Next, respondents were given the text to one of the campaign advertisements sponsored by the incumbent.[20] In the campaign advertisement, respondents were randomly assigned an ad that used explicit *harm/care* language and a similar ad that did not use explicit *harm/care* language. Specifically, respondents were presented a typical campaign ad that stressed the role of social security using moral *harm/care* language or generic policy language. This topic and the language of the ads were tested before the experiment with a short survey of undergraduate students. These students were asked to rate a set of ads on a *harm/care* scale after being given the definition and several examples of the moral foundation. They were then presented with control and *harm/care* pairings of several ads with different wordings and issues. Using the results, I chose the ad pairing that had the largest difference on the *harm/care* scale between the control and treatment ads. Figure 5 includes the exact wording from both the treatment and control ads. After reading their assigned ad, respondents were then asked to rate the candidates once again on the identical seven-point scale. They then were asked if the election were happening today, if they would support the incumbent candidate.

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[19] Question wording was "Based upon what you have read; how FAVORABLE would you rate *Candidate*- Extremely Unfavorable to Extremely Favorable." This variable was then transformed into a 1-7 point scale.
[20] In future iterations of this experiment, respondents could watch an actual (fake) campaign advertisement.

www.manaraa.com

Figure 5: Experiment 1 Campaign Advertisement Text

Control	Treatment
[Bill Lennox] In Washington they want to risk your retirement in the stock market. In the hands of Wall Street, you could lose everything. [A Senior Citizen] "We all rely on social security every day." [Bill Lennox] I am standing with our seniors and will vote against any bill that would risk your hard-earned retirement. [Group of Senior Citizens] "We stand with Bill Lennox because he represents us in Washington." [Bill Lennox] I am Bill Lennox, candidate for Congress and I approve this message.	[Bill Lennox] In Washington they want to risk your retirement in the stock market. In the hands of Wall Street, you could lose everything. [A Senior Citizen] "Losing our retirement hurts seniors like me." [Bill Lennox] I am standing with our seniors and will vote against any harmful bill that would risk your hard-earned retirement. [Group of Senior Citizens] "We stand with Bill Lennox because he will never abandon us in Washington." [Bill Lennox] I am Bill Lennox, candidate for Congress and I approve this message.

Note: Respondents were randomly assigned to one of the two ads. The highlighted portions of the text indicate the differences in language between the control and treatment advertisement.

Results

This first campaign experiment was conducted in the spring of 2016 on Amazon.com's Mechanical Turk (MTurk) interface. MTurk allows researchers to recruit "MTurk workers" to perform tasks for small payments, including completing surveys. Though not a nationally representative sample, MTurk provides access to samples for a relatively low cost. According to Berinsky et al. (2010), experiments conducted using MTurk have commonly been replicated using more representative samples. Respondents were provided with a small payment of $0.50 to participate in the study. In the MTurk sample there were a total of 622 respondents, and all participants recruited completed the entire survey. Appendix Table 5 includes demographic information for the MTurk sample. Particularly common in MTurk samples are higher percentages of white respondents, Democrats, and women. Despite this generalization, the sample in the survey included 50% male and female respondents.

Figure 6: Effect of Harm/Care Treatment on Rating of Hypothetical Incumbent Candidate
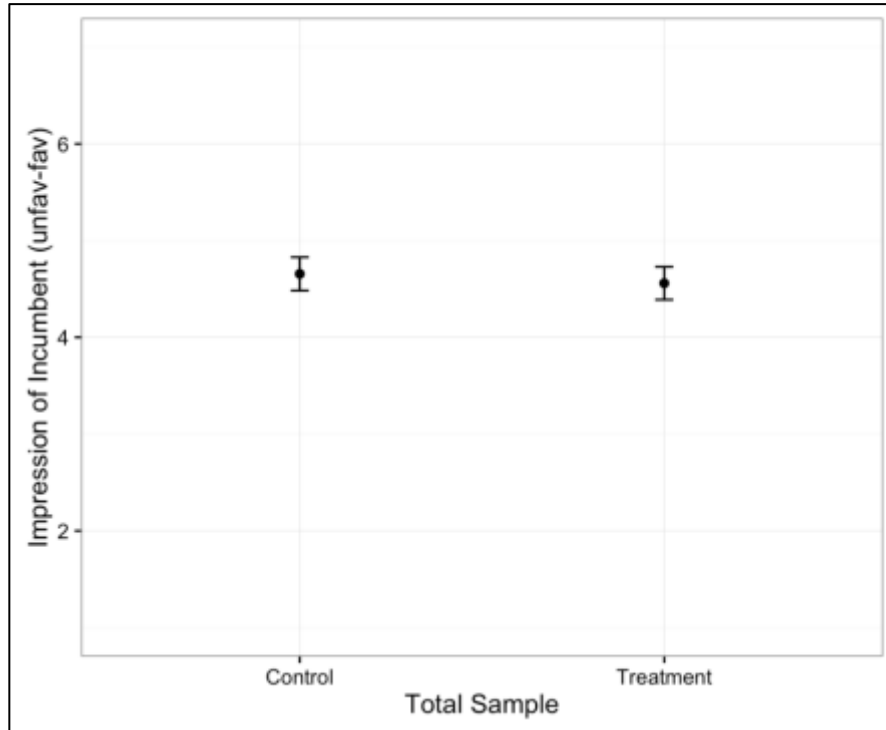
Note: Means, by condition, with 95% confidence intervals. Favorability scaled from 1 to 7.

As both Republican and Democratic respondents should theoretically respond to the moral domain of *harm/care*, I test to see if individuals that received the treatment were more likely to rate the incumbent candidate more favorably. Figure 6 suggests between the control (4.65) and treatment (4.55) groups that there was not a statistically significant difference in rating the favorability of the incumbent candidate ($p=.43$). This suggests that when utilizing overt *harm/care* language that all respondents, regardless of party were no more likely to have a higher favorability of the candidate than the control campaign ad. Finding little evidence for the general hypothesis, I move to testing if these effects are moderated by the party of the respondent.

Figure 7: Effect of Treatment on Incumbent Favorability by Respondent Party ID
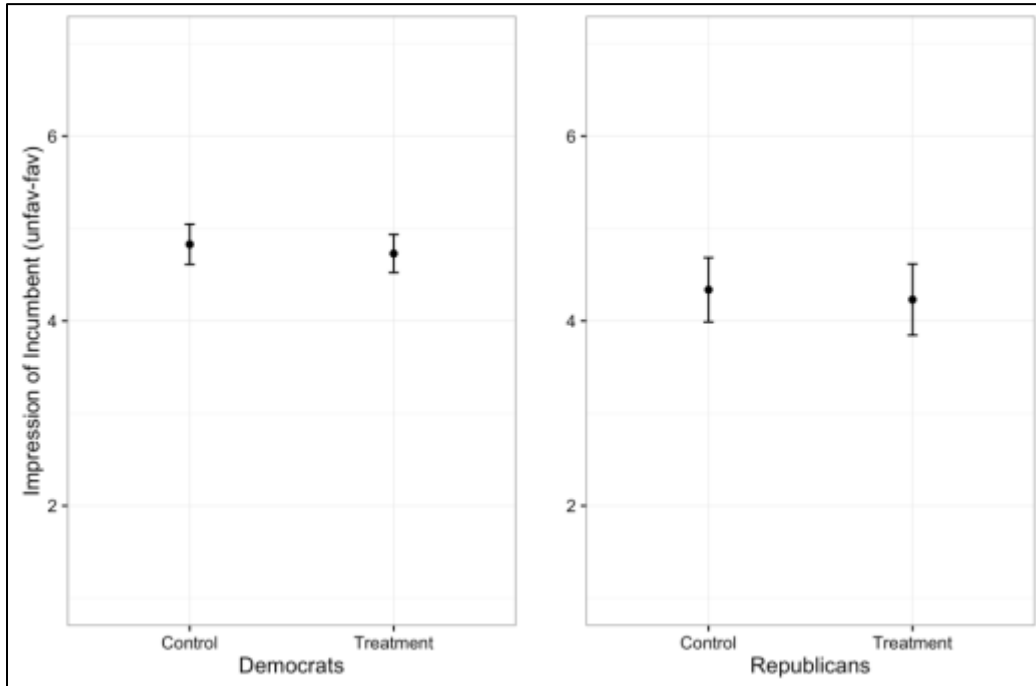
Note: Means, by condition, with 95% confidence intervals. Favorability scaled from 1 to 7.

MFT suggests that American liberals are more likely to respond to *harm/care* language than American conservatives. I test this segmentation Hypothesis 2.1 by looking to see if Democratic respondents are more likely to support the incumbent candidate if they received the treatment ad. The results found in the first panel of Figure 7 suggest that the treatment does not have an effect on Democrats in support for the incumbent candidate (*p*=.68). Here, Democrats that received the control ad rated the candidate at 4.34, while the Democrats that received the treatment ad rated the candidate at 4.23. Looking also at Republicans in the sample, the second panel of Figure 7 suggests that the effect had no impact on Republicans respondents for their support of the incumbent (*p*=.51). This once again provides no evidence of Hypothesis 2.2. Note that respondents that identified as Democrats had a more favorable rating of the incumbent than respondents that identified as Republicans.

Figure 8: Effect of Treatment on Favorability by Incumbent Party
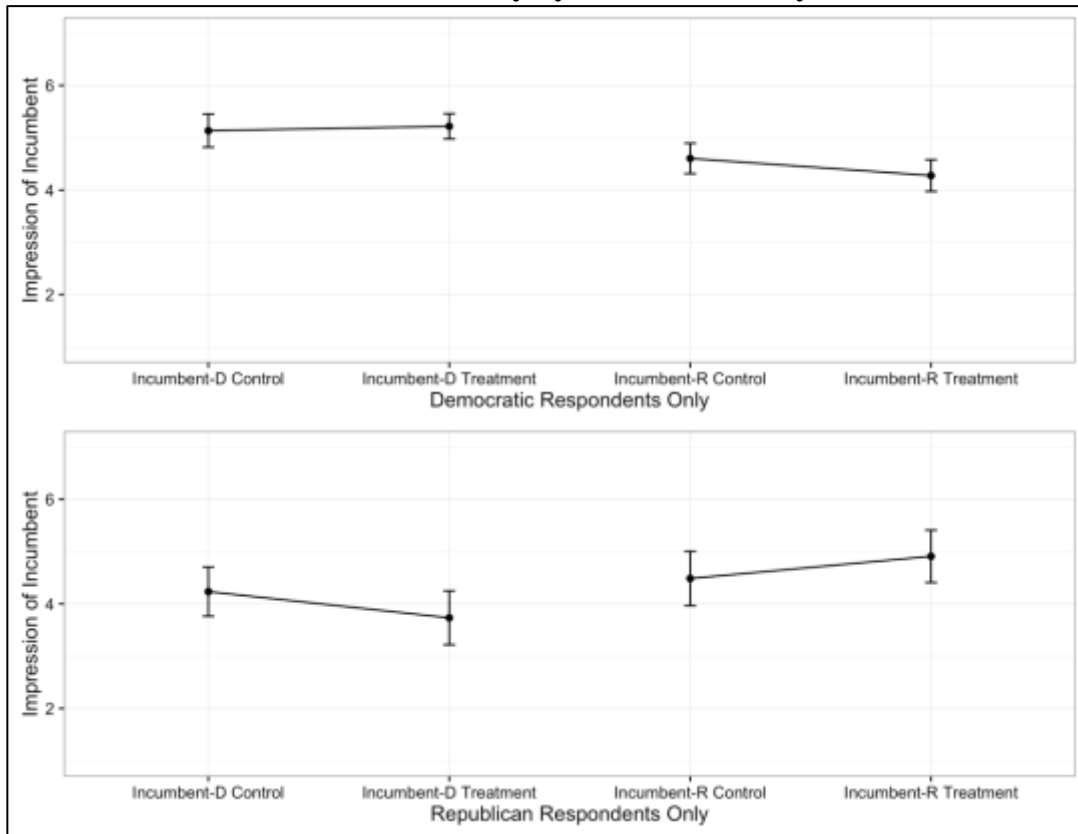
Note: Means, by condition, with 95% confidence intervals. Outcomes standardized (complete sample) with mean=0, SD=1. The means and confidence intervals from just Democratic respondents is in the top panel. The means and confidence intervals from just Republicans respondents is in the bottom panel.

As respondents were presented with a party identification of the incumbent candidate and the challenger, I look to see if Democrats were more likely to support a Democrat if they received the moral treatment and if Republicans were more likely to support a Republican if they received the moral treatment. Results presented in the top left panel of Figure 8 suggest that there is no effect of receiving the *harm/care* ad in comparison to the control ad when looking at Democrats support for a Democratic incumbent (p= .16). Similar results found in the top right hand panel of Figure 8 also suggest that there is no increase in support for the Republican candidate by Democratic respondents when receiving the *harm/care* ad (p=.25). In addition, the bottom panel of Figure 8 suggests that Republicans are no more likely to support the incumbent

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candidate in the treatment condition if they received either a Democratic incumbent (p=.12) or Republican incumbent (p=.67).

Experiment 1: Discussion

The results from the first experiment suggest that if a campaign frames issues using one of the most common moral domains they do not seem to have increased support for their candidate. These results differ from research (Fienberg and Willer 2013) that suggests framing political issues morally can increase support for causes. More interestingly, when looking exclusively at Republican and Democratic respondents, the same pattern emerges. Thus, the experiment provides little evidence to support the idea that going moral can increase a candidate's support and that this lack of impact exists when looking at Republicans and Democrats. Across experiment 1, I find little to no support for Hypotheses 1, 2.1 and 2.2. These results also suggest that candidates that increase the morality of an issue may not always appeal to the public. This may also suggest that elite use of moral conviction (Skitka et al. 2005) may not always appeal to the public.

One potential limitation with this specific experiment is that there were several decisions that could possibly affect the generalizability of the results. Primarily, the experiment only tested one moral domain on one issue area. Individuals may not have reacted to the issue of social security or the moral domain of *harm/care* may not have been noticeable enough to increase support. As social security for the elderly is a generally accepted position, the language could have also been unnoticed. Experiment 2 attempts to address these potential limitations through a different experimental approach.

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Experiment 2: Conjoint Analysis

In a campaign environment, there are a multitude of factors that may impact how individuals react to a campaign. From the crafted messages of a campaign, the public may respond to a variety of aspects of the messaging. In order to identify which aspects of campaigns affect voters, Hainmueller et al. (2014) shows how conjoint analysis can allow researchers to estimate the causal effects of multiple treatments by subjecting respondents to a series of choices. This choice-based conjoint analysis helps determine the effectiveness of a variety of possible treatments in a more realistic manner. Conjoint tasks have respondents choose between, for example, two different candidates based upon a multitude of randomized traits. Examples of conjoint experiments include Hainmueller et al.'s (2014) examination of how different traits affect the public's willingness to allow immigrants into the United States. Similarly, Franchino and Zucchini (2015) examine how candidate ideology affects candidate preference in relation to policy positions and traits. Thus, this second experiment addresses how different moral foundation traits can impact the public's perception of candidates.

In order to test how the framing of moral domains may influence the public, this experiment takes advantage of a conjoint analysis in which moral based characteristics are randomly assigned to respondents. In the context of measuring the role of moral domains in a campaign, this conjoint task presented respondents with several pairs of hypothetical candidates (Candidate A and Candidate B). In each choice set, respondents were first provided with the political party of the pair, which was consistent with their self-identification and asked to choose which candidate they would vote for in a state legislative primary election.[21] This method avoided having respondents choose candidates from different parties, (i.e., respondents were told before the experiment that they would always choose between either Republican or Democratic

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[21] Independents were randomly assigned to a Democrat or Republican primary.

candidates) and focused on a set of characteristics regarding the pair. Respondents then chose

which candidate (between the two options) they felt would fare better in a state legislative

primary. This question stated, "Which candidate would you vote for if they were running in a

(Democratic/Republican) primary in your area?"

Table 7: Conjoint Experiment Moral Trait Descriptions

Moral Foundation Theory Domain	Trait Descriptions
Harm/Care	Caring and sympathetic
Fairness/Proportionality	Fair and honest
Loyalty/In-Group	Patriotic and loyal
Authority/Respect	Respectful and traditional

Note: Trait descriptions generated with the Moral Foundations Dictionary (Graham et al. 2009) and word counts from 2012 senate campaign ads.

Though there were several other treatments (e.g., their name, military experience, years

in community, and number of children) involved in the conjoint task, respondents were given

access to a set of traits that correspond to 4 of the 5 moral foundations.[22] Each of the descriptions

was adapted from the MFT dictionary (Graham et al. 2009) and was a common term in campaign

ad transcripts. Specifically, the conjoint analysis included moral traits for *harm/care*,

fairness/proportionality, *loyalty/in-group*, and *authority/respect*. Each candidate had a

description that stated, "Friends describe as…" and then included the two trait descriptions.

Table 7 includes the wording for the four trait descriptions in the conjoint experiment.

Because this test did not involve a specific campaign advertisement, the focus is on the

effectiveness of priming moral traits of the candidate similar to Clifford (2015). In this case, the

moral traits were defined as "the candidate's friends describe the candidate as." The experiment

thus will allow me to compare if Democrats and Republicans respond to different moral traits as

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[22] I exclude purity/sanctity due to odd and ambiguous descriptions, i.e. "she/he is a pure person."

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expressed in the second set of hypotheses. Thus, do Republican respondents increase their

support for candidates of their own party that have *binding* traits and do Democratic respondents

increase their support for candidates of their own party that have *harm/care* and

fairness/proportionality traits?

Experiment 2 Results

The conjoint analysis was conducted with 212 respondents during the post-election phase

of the 2016 Cooperative Congressional Election Study (CCES). The CCES is conducted by

YouGov/Polimetrix with a 50,000+ person nationally representative sample. Researchers can

access samples of individuals within the CCES to conduct independent research apart from the

common content provided to all researchers utilizing the survey. The CCES under YouGov is a

matched random sample with respondents taking the survey online. Information regarding the

212 respondents from the CCES who completed this conjoint experiment can be found in

Appendix Table 6.[23]

Because respondents completed up to 8 conjoint tasks, there are a total of 3,338

observations or 1,669 pairs of candidates in the dataset. Utilizing a logistic regression with fixed

effects on each respondent, the dependent variable in the conjoint task is if the candidate was

chosen between the two pairs. This method has each candidate as the unit of analysis instead of

the respondents. In analyzing a conjoint task, Hainmueller et al. (2014) demonstrates that

estimates of the effect of the randomized covariates are observed through the average marginal

component effect (AMCE), which is the effect of each covariate on supporting the candidate

taking into account the other randomized covariates. This is effectively the change in probability

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[23] Note that respondents were a subset of a larger conjoint task in which subjects were asked to choose candidates on several other issues/position statements. The 212 respondents were randomly selected to only receive moral frames while the other 625 respondents saw other information. They are excluded from the analysis.

of choosing the candidate given the specific trait. The graphical representation of the AMCEs in

Figure 9 shows the effect of presenting the respondent with one of the moral traits in comparison

to the *harm/care* trait. I have removed the additional effects to aid in interpretation and to avoid

visual complexity, though the coefficients and standard errors can be found in Appendix Table 8.

Figure 9: Average Marginal Component Effects of Moral Traits in Comparison to Harm/Care
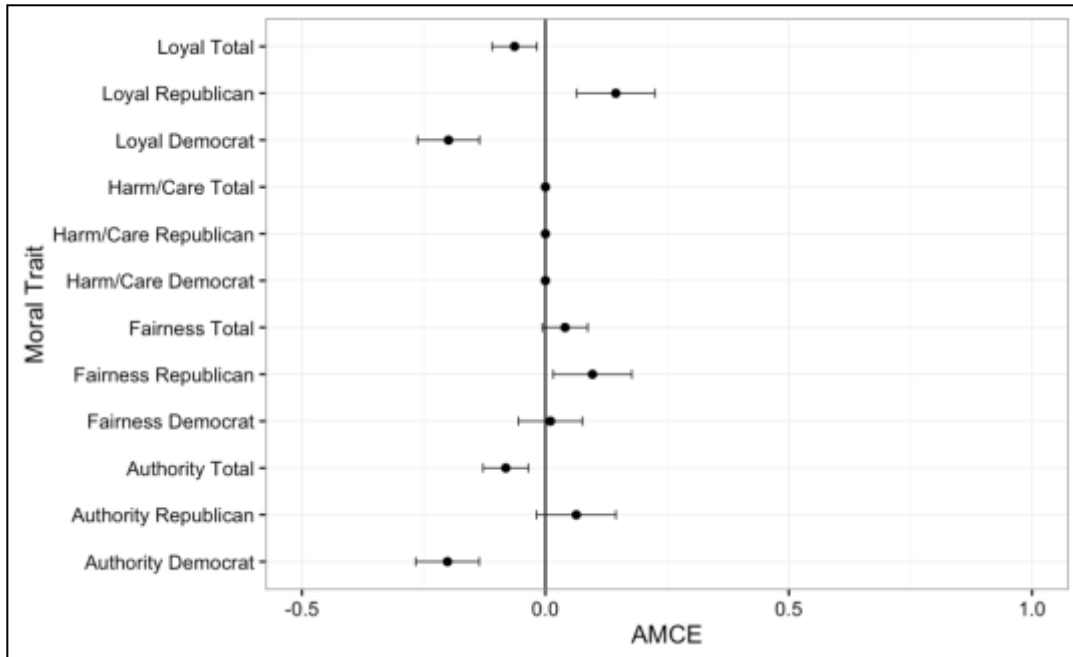
Note: Average Marginal Component Effects can be interpreted as the increase in probability of supporting the candidate when the trait is present.

Looking only at the total sample, I find that in comparison to candidates that are

described with a *harm/care* trait, the total sample is less likely to prefer candidates that are

described as having *loyalty/in-group* traits ($p<.01$) or *authority/respect* traits ($p<.01$). On the

other hand, when comparing candidates that are described with *fairness/proportionality* traits in

comparison to *harm/care* traits, there does not seem to be a statistically significant difference

($p=.09$). Similar results can be found when comparing the *authority/respect* and *loyalty* traits to

the *fairness/proportionality* traits (see Appendix Table 8; *authority/respect* $p<.01$; *loyalty/in-*

group $p<.01$). In the sample, there was no statistically significant difference in support between

candidates that were described by the *authority* traits in relation to *loyalty/in-group* traits (*p*=.49).

Thus, effectively in the entire sample, candidates that were described with *harm/care* and

fairness/proportionality traits were more appealing overall. This suggests that on average, the

general public reacts very differently to different moral traits.

These results suggest all else equal, that if a candidate was described as having *loyalty*

traits in comparison to *harm/care* traits, the candidate was 6 percent less likely to be selected by

respondents. Similarly, if a candidate was described as having *authority* traits in comparison to

harm/care traits, they were 8 percentage points less likely to be selected by respondents in the

total sample. Despite the lack of traditional statistical significance, a candidate that was

described with *fairness/proportionality* moral traits was 4 percentage points more likely to be

selected. It is also important to note these effects can be substantively compared to other

characteristics in the conjoint experiment. For example, if a candidate had held political office

prior to the election they were 13 percentage points (*p*<.01) more likely to be selected. On the

other hand, if the candidate was female they were only 1 percentage points (p=.52) more likely to

be selected in comparison to a male candidate.

The results found in Figure 9 can also help determine if individuals prefer certain moral

traits in comparison to other moral traits based upon their party identification.[24] Specifically, the

results are able to speak to the segmentation Hypothesis 2.1 in which Democrats prefer

harm/care and *fairness/proportionality* moral traits in comparison to the *authority* and *loyalty*

moral traits. Looking exclusively at the subpopulation of Democrats, Figure 9 suggests that a

candidate described with *harm/care* traits is more likely to be chosen than both *authority* (*p*<.01)

and *loyalty* traits (*p*<.01). This result suggests that all else equal a Democratic respondent is 20

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[24] Note that in the partisan section of the analysis, I restrict the results to only include individuals that identify as Republicans or Democrats. The aggregated effects do include individuals that did not identify as partisans.

percentage points less likely to support a candidate that was described as having *authority* moral traits than a candidate that was described as having *harm/care* moral traits. Similarly, Democratic respondents are 19 percentage points less likely to support a candidate that is described as having *loyalty* moral traits in comparison to a candidate described with *harm/care* moral traits. Similar results can be found when comparing the *binding* traits with the *fairness/proportionality* trait (*authority p<.01*; *loyalty*, *p<.01*) These effects are substantially larger than when looking at the total sample. Once again, there is no difference between how Democrats evaluate candidates that are described with *harm/care* moral traits and *fairness/proportionality* moral traits (*p=.76*).

MFT suggests that Republicans should prefer candidates that have the *binding* traits in comparison to *harm/care* and *fairness/proportionality* traits. Assessing Hypothesis 2.2, Figure 9 suggests that Republican respondents prefer *loyalty* traits to *harm/care* traits (*p<.01*). Specifically, this suggests that Republican respondents are 14 percentage points more likely to choose a candidate that is described with *loyalty* moral traits in comparison to *harm/care* moral traits. In regards to the difference between *authority* traits and *harm/care* traits, the results do not reach traditional levels of statistical significance (*p=.13*), though the estimated AMCE is in the direction consistent with the hypothesis. The estimate AMCE suggests that Republicans are 6 percentage points more likely to support a candidate that is described with *authority* moral traits in comparison to *harm/care* moral traits (Recall that the effect was negative for Democrats). When setting the *fairness* trait as the comparison group, there is no significant difference with the *authority* trait (*p=. 42*) and *loyalty* trait (*p=.25*). On the other hand, Republican respondents are more likely to choose the *fairness/proportionality* trait over the *harm/care* trait (*p=.02*). Overall, the results suggest that Republicans are least receptive to *harm/care* candidate traits.

Experiment 2 Discussion

The results from the conjoint experiment suggest that Democrats and Republicans respond to the segmented moral traits as expected by Moral Foundations Theory (Graham et al. 2009). More importantly, the substantive effects of these differences suggest that the public uses character traits to evaluate candidates. This mirrors Fridkin and Kenny's (2011) suggestion that the public focuses on traits when making decisions about candidates. This heuristic is often relatable, and provides individuals information about a candidate.

In terms of evaluating the theoretical expectations of MFT, this chapter provides the most evidence for the theory, as all of the hypotheses were confirmed. First, Democrats prefer candidates described with *harm/care* and *fairness/proportionality* traits. Moreover, they also are less supportive of candidates that are described with the *loyalty* and *authority* traits. Second, Republicans prefer candidates that are described with *authority* and *loyalty* traits over *harm/care* traits. This is particularly interesting because the effect is completely different from Democratic respondents. This also ties into the analysis of Chapter III, where I found that increasing the use of *binding* (*authority* and *loyalty*) language in campaign ads was detrimental to candidates in the aggregate. However, the results from this conjoint experiment suggest that Republicans may indeed respond favorably to the *binding* foundations.

One important note to make is that in the conjoint experiment, partisan respondents were evaluating candidates from their own party. In this case, the results suggest Republicans and Democrats prefer candidates with different moral traits. This has implications for the study of polarization of elite candidates (McCarty, Poole and Rosenthal 2006) because partisans may prefer candidates that have completely different moral traits. It suggests that apart from issue positions, the Democrats and Republicans prefer candidates that are fundamentally different

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from their opponents.

Conclusion

Results from this chapter present two opposing views of the role of morality in political campaigns. The first experiment suggests that increasing the amount of moral language in a campaign advertisement may not have a direct effect on appealing to the public. In contrast, the second experiment suggests that when comparing moral traits, Democrats are more likely to support candidates that exhibit *harm/care* and *fairness/proportionality* traits, while Republicans support candidates that exhibit *authority, loyalty* and *fairness/proportionality* traits. In the larger picture, this chapter suggest that hypotheses based upon MFT have some empirical support, but that the complicated nature of campaigns may muddle their effects.

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CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

This dissertation has found evidence of moral language in campaign advertisements and found some evidence for their effectiveness in attracting voters by utilizing this moral language. Though the results are filled with caveats, the theoretical expectations of moral psychology are both useful for understanding political campaigns and provide insight into the relationship between political elites and the public. As the bulk of the empirical analysis presented in the dissertation focused on Moral Foundations Theory, a decision that was made early on in the research the focus of this concluding chapter will be on Moral Foundations Theory (Graham et al. 2009) and political campaigns. My plan in this concluding chapter is to first quickly summarize the results of the previous chapters and then address the project as a whole by weaving the results together by linking them to the findings in current campaign and polarization literature. Finally, I discuss the limitations of the dissertation project, and possible avenues for future research.

Summary of Findings

The first empirical chapter (Chapter II) used the transcript of political campaign advertisements to determine if campaigns utilize moral language as predicted by Moral Foundations Theory (Graham et al. 2009; Haidt 2012) and Nation as Family Theory (Lakoff 1996). After addressing the aggregated differences in both aired and unique ads, the results

suggest MFT correctly predicted that Democrats use more *harm/care* language than Republicans, and that Republicans used more *in-group/loyalty* language than Democrats. As suggested by MFT, the results showed that Republicans and Democrats equally use *fairness/proportionally* language in campaign ads. On the other hand, the results showed that Democratic candidates use more *authority* and *purity* language than Republicans, a finding that is inconsistent with the predictions of MFT. Lakoff's Nation as Family theory correctly predicted that Republicans use both more *rules*/*reinforcement* and *self-discipline* language than Democrats, and Democrats used more *nurturant/caregiving* language than Republicans. Yet, the results also showed that Republicans used more *empathy/openness* language than Democrats, a finding that is inconsistent with the predictions of Nation as Family theory. Together, the results of this first chapter provide some evidence for the moral psychology theories in real-world practice.

The second empirical chapter (Chapter III) used the coded moral ads from the first empirical chapter to determine if increases in moral language are associated with a candidate's standing in the polls. I found that candidates that increase the proportion of ads that include *harm/care* and *fairness/proportionality* language increase their polling position. Though the effect in increasing this language is present for both Democrats and Republicans, the effect is stronger for Democratic candidates. However, the results suggest that candidates that increase their using of *binding* (*authority*, *loyalty* and *purity*) moral language decrease their polling advantage. These effects could mean that *harm/care* and *fairness*/*proportionality* language are more generally accepted by a wider variety of constituents, and thus increase the support of the candidate. MFT suggests that both Republicans and Democrats utilize and are affected by *harm/care* and *fairness/proportionality* moral domains. However, only conservatives utilize and are affected by the *binding* moral domains, and these effects are negatively seen in the aggregate,

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where both Republicans and Democrats are evaluating the candidate.

The third and final empirical chapter (Chapter IV) found through two separate experiments that moralizing in campaigns may not necessarily increase support for a candidate, but that Democrats and Republics do prefer political candidates with different moral traits. The first experiment found through a campaign advertisement survey experiment that including overt *harm/care* moral language did not increase support from Democratic or Republican respondents. Specifically, respondents were not more likely to support a candidate that used *harm/care* moral language in comparison to policy language in a social security focused advertisement. The second conjoint experiment confirms MFT's predictions that Republicans prefer candidates with *binding* moral traits, while Democrats prefer candidates with *harm/care* and *fairness/proportionality* moral traits.

Moral Campaigns and Existing Research

This research relates to a variety of topics in the study of polarization and political campaigns. First, the results help shed light on Haidt's (2012) claim that moral psychology hinders communication between Republicans and Democrats and may relate to elite polarization (Fiorina et al. 2008) and mass polarization (Abramowitz and Saunders 2008). Haidt argues that morality blinds constructive communication between partisans through motivated reasoning (Taber and Lodge 2006). Chapter II adds insight into this when addressing the use of moral language by partisans in their campaign messages. The results do suggest that campaigns use different moral language, and this may result in candidates speaking to two different audiences. Panagopoulos (2016) suggests that presidential campaigns have increasingly focused on messaging to their base, though Carsey et al. (2011) suggest that other candidates frequently utilize a wide variety of communication strategies dependent upon their current position in the

polls. It is important to note that despite differences in moral language by Republicans and Democrats, that on average they still use similar moral language. For example, there are not large percentage differences between usage of the moral domains. This may be partially due to the nature of campaign advertising. Yet, different moral language may still only appeal to partisans (Day et al. 2014), and in turn, increase polarization.

Additionally, the conjoint experiment suggests that Republicans and Democrats prefer candidates with different moral traits. Republicans prefer Republican candidates that describe themselves with *loyalty*, *authority* and *fairness* moral traits, while Democrats prefer Democratic candidates that describe themselves with *fairness* and *harm/care* moral traits. Hayes (2010) suggests that candidate traits are frequently used heuristics in the voting decision, and they are particularly more important in relatively low information environments (Lupia 1994). Fridkin and Kenney (2011) similarly find that candidates actively manage how the public sees their and their opponent's traits. Thus, it could easily be the case that partisans are choosing candidates that are fundamentally different in nature from the moral traits they exhibit. This could have an impact on the ability of elected officials to compromise. Ryan (2016) suggests that individuals with high levels of moral *loyalty* are less likely to compromise. It could also inherently produce two fundamentally different types of candidates that only appeal to partisans.

This dissertation has added to our understanding of moral psychology by finding several interesting trends. First, throughout the chapters, the moral domains of *harm/care* and *fairness/proportionality* have in some way affected both candidates and the electorate. For example, Chapter III found that candidates are rewarded on average from using both MFT moral domains. Similarly, the results from the conjoint task in the aggregate suggest that these moral domains, in the form of traits, are most liked by potential supporters. This fits Haidt's (2012)

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suggestion[25] that both Republicans and Democrats utilize these two moral domains. Interestingly, Haidt (2012, 180-216) argues that Republicans have the advantage in morality because they utilize all five moral domains. He suggests that having the ability to see different arguments through different moral lenses is advantageous. Yet, the results from Chapter III suggest that in the aggregate this may negatively reflect on a candidate. The results suggest that candidates that use the *binding* moral foundations actually decrease their overall standing in the polls. In sum, it seems that to an aggregated electorate of both conservatives and liberals, that appeals to the *binding* foundations only resonate with conservatives, decreasing their overall support.

Limitations and Future Research

One central aspect of this project has been the relationship between the theoretical expectations of moral psychology and the practical real-world aspects of a political campaign. Looking at the results from Chapter II, Democrats and Republicans utilized a variety of moral language in their campaigns, but the predicted results do not always match reality. Thus, this dissertation adds to our current understanding of moral psychology by noting the differences between moral psychology theory and the political world. This mirrors Neiman et al.'s (2015) suggestion that testing these theories can be affected by the context of language used in the analysis. For instance, Graham et al. (2009) suggest that measuring moral language in political speeches is difficult due to the large variety of jargon involved. The complex nature of campaigns and the issues presented could also influence the speech in campaign advertisements. One important possibility for future research is to dive deeper into the rich text data set created in Chapter II by breaking the moral language down by issue area. This may help uncover nuances

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[25] It is important in the sense that Haidt's (2012) moral theory adds the nuance that conservatives are affected by *harm/care* and *fairness/proportionality*. Lakoff (1996) suggests that liberals and conservatives lack common moral domains.

in campaign language.

This same problem relates to the validity of dictionary text analysis in the project. As Grimmer and Stewart (2013) suggest, validation of coding is central to text analysis efforts. Problematically, the results in Chapter II and Chapter III are dependent upon the coding scheme developed by Graham et al. (2009) and Neiman et al. (2015). Testing the validity of the coding will be necessary. Despite this limitation, Clifford and Jerit (2013) have utilized the MFT dictionary in language from newspaper articles regarding stem-cell research and assessed the validity of *harm/care* and *purity* language with hand-coders. It will be central to future efforts to validate the research findings in Chapter II in a similar manner.

Last, this dissertation does not suggest that Moral Foundations Theory is the "best" or "worst" theory for understanding the role of morality in politics. Instead, the project focuses on how the theory can help us understand the political world. MFT research has found evidence of individuals using moral rhetoric (Clifford and Jerit 2013; Feinberg and Willer 2013), evoking political persuasion (Day et al. 2014) and predicting political behavior (Franks and Scherr 2015). Thus, the research in this project builds upon this work. Despite this research, there are many criticisms of the theory in both its ability to measure morality and its similarity to the personality trait literature. Specifically, Smith et al. (2016) argue that MFT may not be heritable, in that there is limited evidence for the foundations being stable over time. They do point out, however, that this may be due to poor measurement of the foundations in the Moral Foundations Questionnaire (Graham et al. 2009). Similarly, Krugler, Jost, and Noorbaloochi (2014) suggest that the *binding* moral foundations are in effect authoritarian personality traits. Despite these criticisms, moral theories have been useful in understanding how individuals think about politics apart from their partisanship or ideology (Carmines and D'Amico 2015).

Overall, this dissertation has added to the understanding of political campaigns by identifying how moral language can influence voters. Marrying moral psychology and political campaigns has helped identify how communication with voters can be viewed differently by liberals and conservatives. Importantly, this effort to understand how these two fields of study relate has also provided insight into how moral theories fit into the complexities of political campaigns. Campaigns are dynamic (Carsey 2000) and candidates cannot control all of the information available to voters. Yet, despite this complex dynamic, the project found evidence that moral arguments are present, and that they can influence voters.

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APPENDIX

Appendix Figure 1: Count of Nation as Family Words per Ad
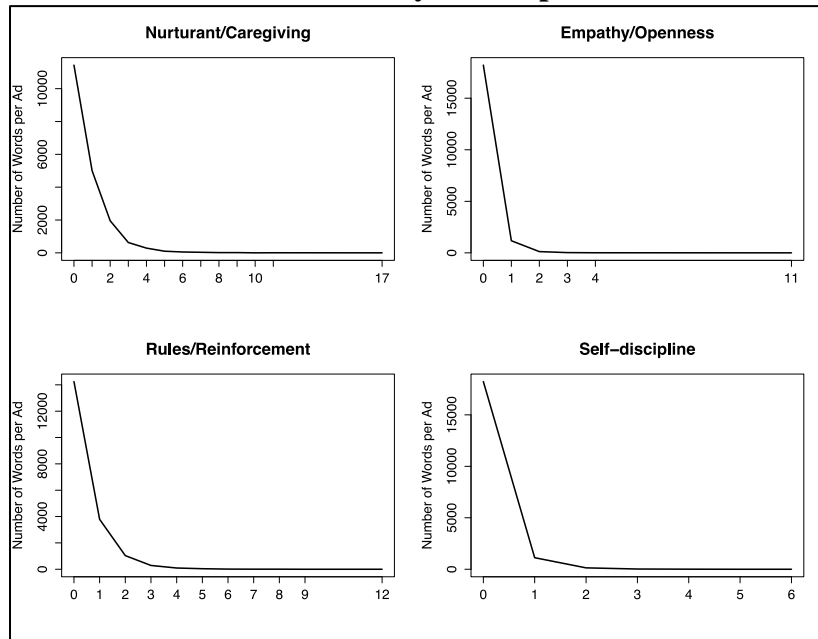
Note: Includes ads that do not have at least 1 dictionary word. This suggests that in most categories, using a minimum of one word per ad is the most apt method for coding an ad as including a given moral domain.

Appendix Figure 2: Count of Moral Foundations Theory and Moral Words per Ad
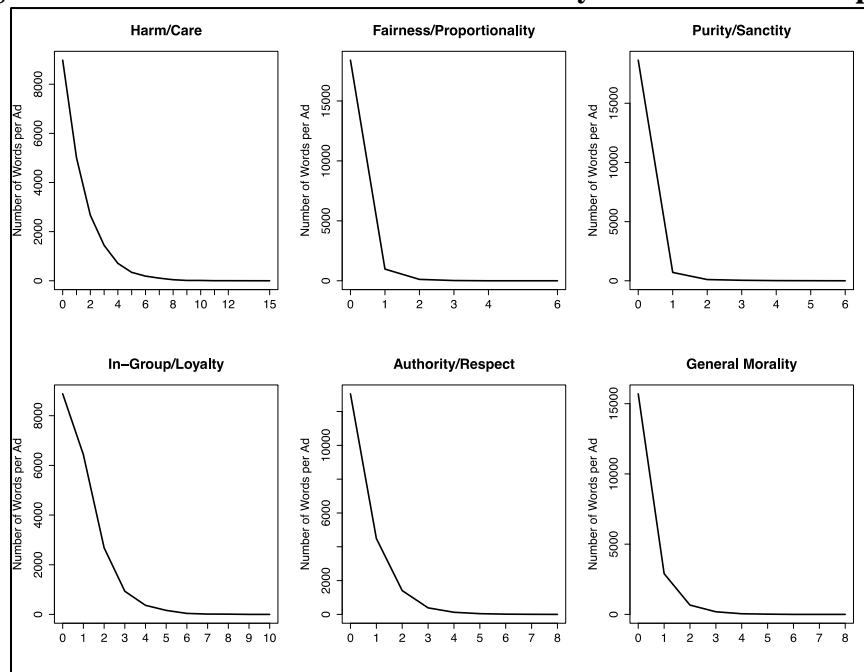
Note: Includes ads that do not have at least 1 dictionary word. This suggests that in most categories, using a minimum of one word per ad is the most apt method for coding an ad as including a given moral domain.

Appendix Table 1: Advertisements Differences in Proportions-Unique Ads

	Democrat Ads	Republican Ads	Z	*p*
Nation As Family				
Nurturant/Caregiving	.445	.386	8.146	<.001
	(4122)	(3495)		
Empathy/Openness	.066	.068	0.634	.529
	(607)	(615)		
Rules/Reinforcement	.239	.298	8.903	<.001
	(2217)	(2697)		
Self-discipline	.058	.076	4.885	<.001
	(539)	(691)		
Moral Foundations Theory				
Harm/Care	.563	.5247	5.215	<.001
	(5217)	(4756)		
Fairness/Proportionality	.0519	.0595	2.260	.023
	(481)	(540)		
In-Group/Loyalty	.5207	.552	4.293	<.001
	(4825)	(5007)		
Authority/Respect	.344	.320	18.668	<.001
	(3189)	(2901)		
Purity/Sanctity	.053	.0344	6.334	.068
	(497)	(312)		
General Morality	.184	.2067	3.73	<.001
	(1713)	(1874)		
Total Ads	9265	9064		

Note: Number of ads in parentheses; proportions are from total number of ads per party; Z scores calculated using difference in proportions test between Republican and Democratic ads. Results used to calculate Figures 1 & 3.

Appendix Table 2: Advertisements Differences in Proportions-Aired Ads

	Democrat Ads	Republican Ads	Z	*p*
Nation As Family				
Nurturant/Caregiving	.445	.367	168.65	<.001
	(1,992,369)	(1,316,156)		
Empathy/Openness	.058	.068	58.28	<.001
	(260,398)	(247,860)		
Rules/Reinforcement	.239	.298	188.47	<.001
	(1,069,598)	(1,089,515)		
Self-discipline	.058	.076	4.885	<.001
	(204,550)	(266,194)		
Moral Foundations Theory				
Harm/Care	.556	.502	5.215	<.001
	(2,486,094)	(1,798,873)		
Fairness/Proportionality	.051	.052	2.260	.023
	(226,333)	(184,812)		
In-Group/Loyalty	.461	.515	4.293	<.001
	(2,062,825)	(1,843,796)		
Authority/Respect	.350	.322	18.668	<.001
	(1,565,105)	(1,152,024)		
Purity/Sanctity	.048	.028	6.334	.068
	(215,986)	(101,134)		
General Morality	.171	.206	3.73	<.001
	(764,844)	(738267)		
Total Ads	4,472,061	3,581,577		

Note: Number of ads in parentheses; proportions are from total number of aired ads per party; Z scores calculated using difference in proportions test between Republican and Democratic ads. Results used to calculate Figures 2 & 4.

Appendix Table 3: Moral Foundations Theory and Nation as Family Dictionaries

Strict Parent Words: Neiman et al. (2015) (*Self-discipline in parenthesis*)

abide	implement	verdict
assign	inflict	warning
authority	jurisdiction	*accountability*
charge	law	*admit*
command	lecture	*conscientiousness*
bylaw	legalize	*decision*
charge	liability	*honesty*
command	conform	*importance*
comply	obligator	*keep up*
consequence	mandate	*maintain*
contractual	obey	*mind*
obligation	order	*obligation*
control	penalize	*realize*
declaration	penalty	*responsibility*
demand	police	*control*
direct	power	*discipline*
domination	punish	*duty*
dominion	force	*strength*
enforcement	regulate	*strength*
follow	reinforce	*sustain*
force	reprimand	*take on*
fortify	restrict	*knowledge*
govern	rule	*undertaking*
guideline	standardize	*value*
power	uphold	*willpower*

Nurturant Family Words: Neiman et al. (2015) (*Empathy/Openness in italics*)

adopt	cure	health
advice	educate	*accept*
aid	encourage	*appreciate*
assist	foster	*be concerned*
be of assistance	gentle	*compassion*
be supportive	give	*condolences*
bestow	support	*consideration*
care	guidance	*empathy*
carry	heal	*openness*
charitable	help	*pity*
cheer up	kindness	*reconcile*
cherish	lend	*sincerity*
coach	look after	*sympathy*
comfort	mend	*tolerate*
contribution	minister	*understand*
cultivate	nurse	*vent*

MFT Harm/Care Words: Graham et al. (2009)

safe	caring	benefit
peace	protect	defend
compassion	shield	guard
empathy	shelter	preserve
sympathy	amity	harm
care	security	suffer

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war	kill	cruel
wars	kills	brutal
warring	killer	abuse
fight	killed	damage
violent	killing	ruin
hurt	endanger	
ravage	destroy	exploit
detriment	stomp	exploits
crush	abandon	exploited
attack	spurn	exploiting
annihilate	impair	wound

_____

MFT Fair/Proportional Words: Graham et al. (2009)

fair	equivalent	bigot
fairness	unbias	discriminate
fair-	tolerant	disproportion
fairmind	equable	inequitable
fairplay	balance	prejudice
equal	homologous	dishonest
justice	unprejudice	unscrupulous
justness	reasonable	dissociate
justify	constant	preference
reciprocity	honest	favoritism
impartial	unfair	segregate
egalitarian	unequal	segregated
rights	bias	exclusion
equity	unjust	exclude
evenness	injustice	

_____

MFT Purity/Sanctity Words: Graham et al. (2009)

pristine	disgust	lax
saint	piety	lewd
indecent	wholesome	maiden
contagion	holy	modesty
celibate	clean	obscene
innocent	upright	pervert
steril	austerity	profane
immaculate	impiety	profligate
unclean	abstinent	promiscuous
humble	adultery	prostitute
abstention	blemish	refined
sin	debase	repulsive
disease	debauche	sacred
pure	defile	sick
decent	desecrate	slut
abstemiousness	dirt	stain
virgin	exploit	taint
limpid	filth	tarnish
unadulterated	gross	tramp
pious	impious	trashy
chastity	integrity	unchaste
depravity	intemperate	virtuous

wanton   wicked
whore   wretched

MFT In-group/Loyal Words: Graham et al. (2009)

together	unison	treacher*
nation*	unite*	disloyal*
homeland*	fellow*	individual*
family	guild	apostas
families	solidarity	apostate
familial	devot*	deserted
group	member	deserter*
loyal*	cliqu*	deserting
patriot*	cohort	deceive*
communal	ally	jilt*
commune*	insider	imposter
communit*	segregat*	miscreant
communis*	foreign*	spy
comrad*	enem*	sequester
cadre	betray*	renegade
collectiv*	treason*	terroris*
joint	traitor*	immigra*

MFT Authority/Respect Words: Graham et al. (2009)

obey*	caste*	defy*
obedien*	position	dissident
duty	complian*	unfaithful
law	command	alienate
lawful*	supremacy	defector
legal*	control	heretic*
duti*	submi*	nonconformist
honor*	allegian*	oppose
respect	serve	protest
respectful*	abide	refuse
respected	defere*	denounce
respects	defer	remonstrate
order*	revere*	riot*
father*	venerat*	obstruct
mother	comply	preserve
motherl*	defian*	loyal*
mothering	rebel*	betray*
mothers	dissent*	treason*
tradition*	subver*	traitor*
hierarch*	disrespect*	treacher*
authorit*	disobe*	disloyal*
permit	sediti*	apostasy
permission	agitat*	apostate
status*	insubordinat*	deserted
rank*	illegal*	deserter*
leader*	lawless*	desertin
class	insurgent	
bourgeoisie	mutinous	

General Moral Words: Graham et al. (2009)

	lesson	goodness
honest	canon	praiseworthy
lawful	doctrine	commendable
legal	noble	character
piety	worth	proper
pious	wicked	laudable
wholesome	wretched	correct
integrity	righteous	wrong
upright	moral	evil
decen*	ethic	immoral
indecen*	value	bad
principle	values	offend
blameless	upstanding	offensive
exemplary	good	transgress
		ideal

Appendix Table 4: Chapter III U.S. Senate and Gubernatorial Election Contests

|	Senate	Gubernatorial
2000	CA, DE, FL, GA, MD, ME, MI, MN, MO, NE, NJ, NV, NY, PA, VA, WA	DE, IN, NC, NH, MO
2002	AL, AR, CO, IA, ME, MN, MO, NH, NC, NJ, OK, OR, SC, TN, TX	AL, AR, AZ, CA, CT,FL, HI, IA, IL, KS, MA, MD, ME, MI, MN, NH, NM, NY, OK, OR, PA, TN, TX, VT, WI,
2004	CO, FL, GA, IL, KY, MO, NC, OK, PA, SC, WI, WA	IN, MO, NC, NH, UT, WA

Note: Electoral Contests from Banda and Windett (2016).

Appendix Figure 3: Histogram of First Differences by Candidate Party and Moral Language
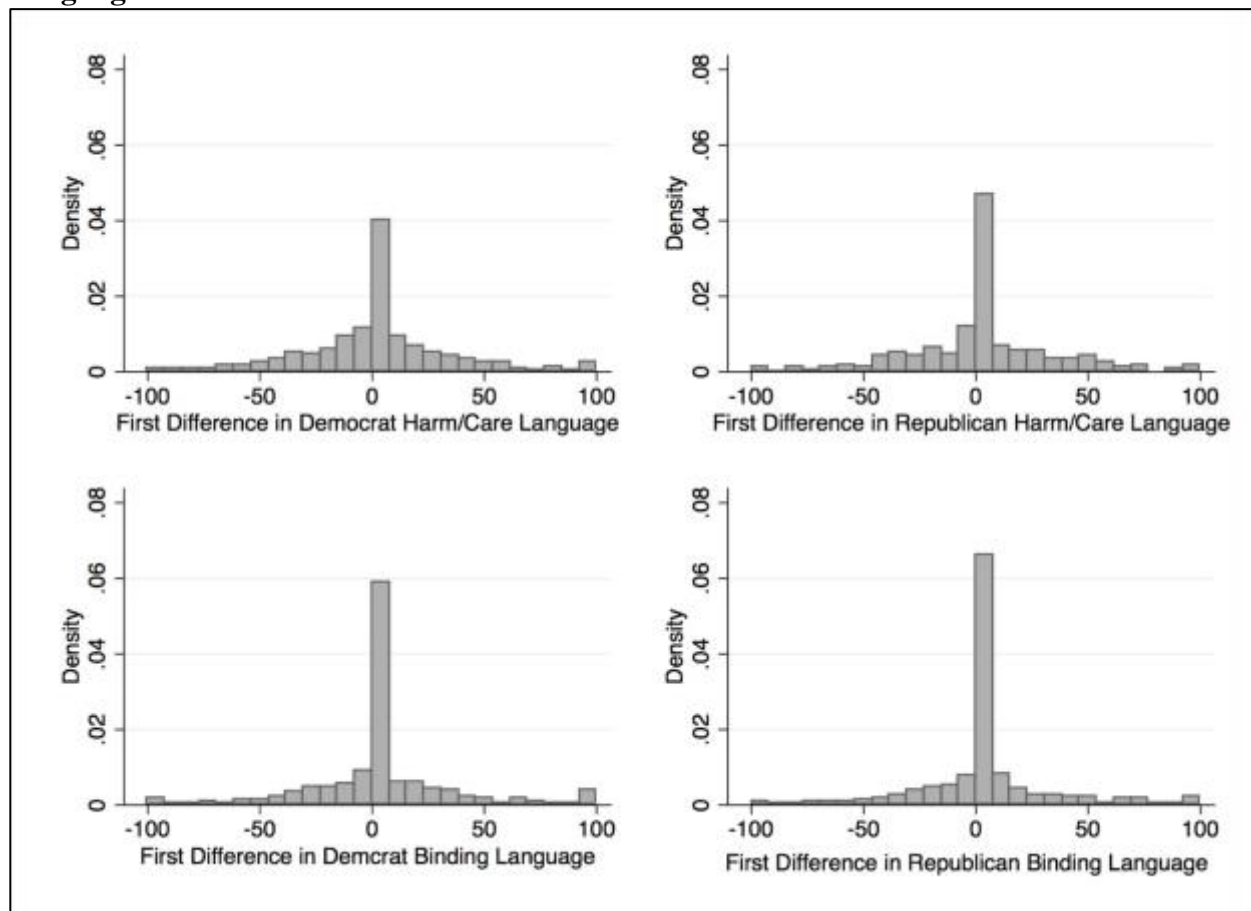
Note: First differences calculated for moral language use across the 720 election cycles weeks. Top two panels address *harm/care* language. Bottom two panels address *binding* language.

Appendix Figure 4: Weekly Democrat Advantage across 2000 Senate Race

Weekly Democrat Advantage across 2000 Senate Races
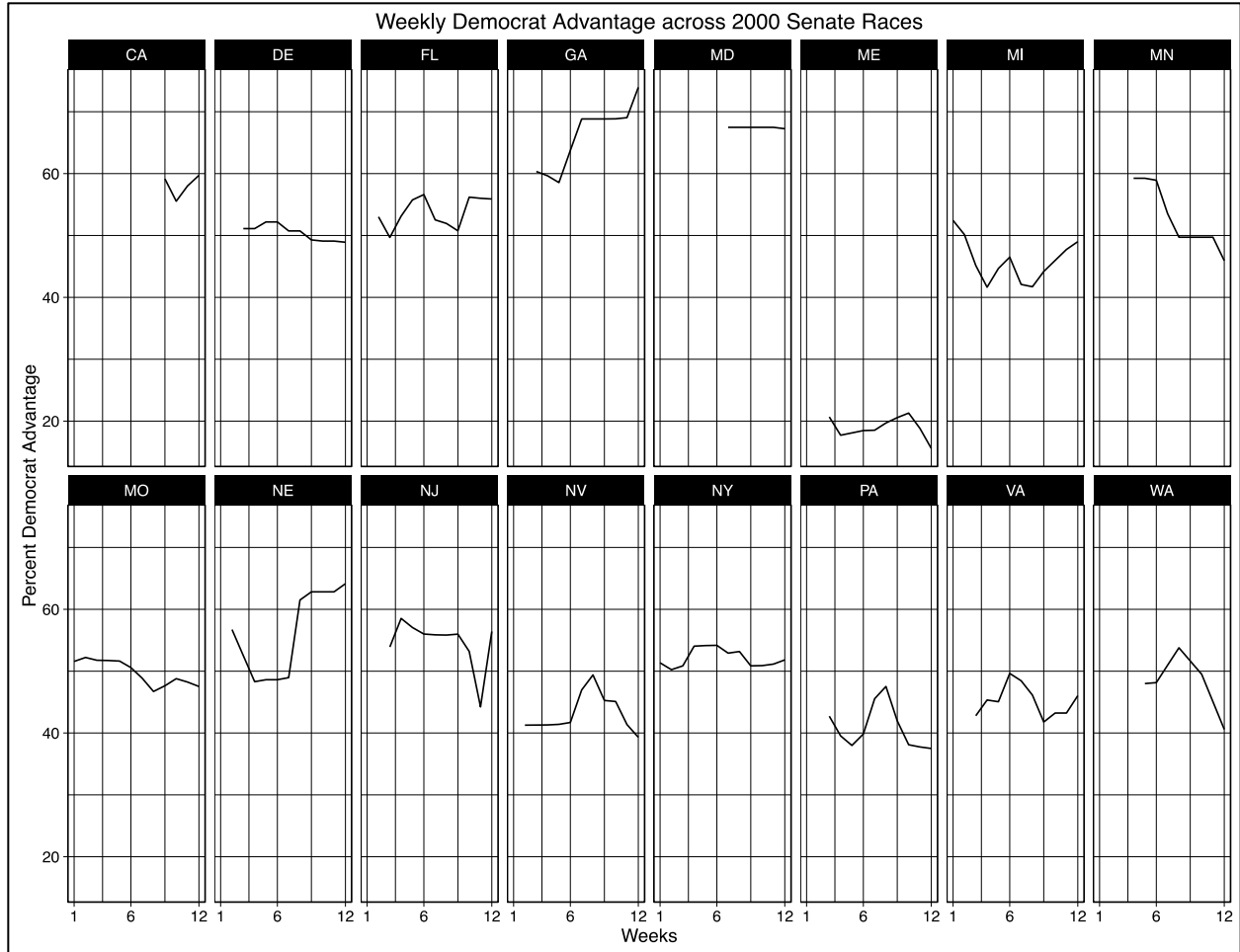
Note: Percent of Democratic candidate's polling averages from the 2000 senate elections. The percentages range for up to 12 weeks of coverage. This data was originally collected in Banda and Windett (2016).

Appendix Table 5: MTurk Sample Characteristics

Sample Characteristics	Proportion or Modal Category
Female	.50
Education (College or More)	.35
Race (White)	.82
Race (Black)	.06
Party ID (Dem)	.46
Party ID (Rep)	.19

N=622

Appendix Table 6: CCES Sample Characteristics

Sample Characteristics	Proportion or Modal Category
Female	.56
Education (College)	.46
Race (White)	.80
Race (Black)	.09
Party ID (Dem)	.48
Party ID (Rep)	.33

N=212

Appendix Table 7: Harm/Care Favorability Experiment Results

	Control	Treatment	p-value
Total Sample	4.66 (.09)	4.46 (.09)	0.43
Democratic Sample	4.34 (.18)	4.23 (.19)	0.69
Republican Sample	4.83 (.11)	4.73 (.11)	0.52
Democrats on Democratic Candidate	5.13 (.16)	5.21 (.12)	0.16
Democrats on Republican Candidate	4.60 (.15)	4.28 (.15)	0.25
Republican on Democratic Candidate	4.23 (.24)	3.73 (.26)	0.68
Republican on Republican Candidate	4.48 (.27)	4.91 (.26)	0.13

Note: Candidate favorability (1-7) by control and treatment group. Standard errors in parenthesis.

Appendix Table 8: Conjoint Analysis AMCE Estimates and Standard Errors

Characteristic	Total Sample AMCE and (SE)	Democratic Respondents AMCE and (SE)	Republican Respondents AMCE and (SE)
Authority	-0.08***	-0.20***	0.06
	(.02)	(.03)	(.04)
Loyalty	-0.06***	-0.20***	0.15***
	(.02)	.03	(.04)
Fairness	0.04*	0.01	0.10**
	(.02)	(.03)	(.04)
Harm/Care	(omitted)	(omitted)	(omitted)
	0.01	0.01	0.01
Female	(.02)	(.03)	(.03)
	-0.02	-0.00	-0.05
Black	(.02)	(.03)	(.04)
	0.01	0.05	-0.04
Hispanic	(.02)	(.03)	(.03)
	0.15***	0.14***	0.21***
Had Experience	(.02)	(.04)	(.04)
	0.16***	0.13***	0.19***
Military Experience	(.02)	(.03)	(.04)
N	3,338	1,590	1,108

Note: Marginal Effects calculated using the Delta method from logistic regression.

Appendix Figure 5: Harm/Care Survey Experiment Text

Below is a short description of a hypothetical Congressional election contest. Please read it carefully and we will ask you some questions about what you have read.

Incumbent Republican (*Democrat*) Bill Lennox and challenger James Cook are two candidates battling for the Colorado 6th district Congressional seat. The election is being waged over a range of issues, including the economy, social security, and healthcare. This race is being closely watched nationwide because it is expected to be very competitive.

Both candidates are working to convince voters that they can help the district that includes many aging residents. The Republican (*Democrat*) Bill incumbent Bill Lennox has accused Cook of having too little experience. Cook is a retired dentist who has never held elected office, and Lennox argues that his 20 years of political experience is best for serving the people of Colorado in Washington. Lennox has a record of working across the aisle, and he has emphasized that in his speeches. Cook, however, was motivated to run because he believes he can bring a fresh voice to Washington.

Question 1: Based on what you have read, how FAVORABLY would you rate Bill Lennox?

  Extremely Favorable - Extremely Unfavorable

On the next page, you will read the transcript of one of the incumbent Republican Bill Lennox' campaign advertisements. After reading the transcript, you will be asked several questions regarding the candidates. Note that names in Green denote the speaker in the ad.

Control

[Bill Lennox] In Washington they want to risk your retirement in the stock market. In the hands of Wall Street, you could lose everything.

[A Senior Citizen] "We all rely on social security every day."

[Bill Lennox] I am standing with our seniors and will vote against any bill that would risk your hard-earned retirement.

[Group of Senior Citizens] "We stand with Bill Lennox because he represents us in Washington."

[Bill Lennox] I am Bill Lennox, candidate for Congress and I approve this message.

Treatment

[Bill Lennox] In Washington they want to risk your retirement in the stock market. In the hands of Wall Street, you could lose everything.

[A Senior Citizen] "Losing our retirement hurts seniors like me." [Bill Lennox] I am standing with our seniors and will vote against any harmful bill that would risk your hard-earned retirement.

[Group of Senior Citizens] "We stand with Bill Lennox because he will never abandon us in Washington."

[Bill Lennox] I am Bill Lennox, candidate for Congress and I approve this message.

Question 2: Having now learned more about the race, how FAVORABLY would you rate Bill Lennox?

      Extremely Favorable - Extremely Unfavorable

Question 3: And if you were voting in this election, for whom would you VOTE?

1. Bill Lennox
2. James Cook

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> Introduction to Applied Bayesian Modeling & Multivariate Statistical Methods
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  • Undergraduate; Spring 2014, for Charles Smith

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