

Democrats and Republicans Communicate Different Moral Values through their 2016 National Convention Speeches

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Abstract

In every civilization lies a set of morals, ethics, and values that people respect. These systems build customs and traditions that makes each culture unique. The Moral Foundations Theory was constructed to explain universal human values that are shared by each of these cultures despite their idiosyncrasies. This theory consists of five foundations of Harm, Fairness, Ingroup, Authority and Purity. The Harm and Fairness foundations are focused on the individual while the Ingroup, Authority and Purity foundations are based on the community. Despite these foundations' goal to explain the morals and values surrounding different cultures, the Moral Foundations Theory can also be used to explain the moral differences between liberals and conservatives in the United States. This is because the differences between the political cultures surrounding these ideologies have become so distinct that they resemble unique civilizations on their own. Each side speaks their own language and appeals to their base in unique ways such that they differ in the moral foundations that they emphasize in their speeches. This study focuses on the moral appeals that political elites use to communicate to their supporters. In this paper, I analyze speeches from the 2016 Republican and Democrat National Conventions to see if there are differences in the patterns of moral appeals that politicians use in their addresses. From the analysis, I find that Republicans are more likely to appeal to the binding moral foundations of Ingroup, Authority, and Purity while Democrats do not seem to significantly focus on one foundation over the others.

In his 2016 Democratic National Convention video address, former President Jimmy Carter proclaimed that the Republican party had nominated a presidential candidate who “seems to violate the moral and ethical principles in which this nation was founded”¹. In June of 2019, Representative Dan Crenshaw (R-TX) tweeted about the Democrat’s proposed policy to cancel student loan debt, where he claimed “When you say [Cancel Student Debt], you’re saying a minority of people who had the advantage of obtaining a degree should have their debt paid off by hardworking taxpayers...” and ended with a declarative “This is immoral.”²

While it is clear that President Carter and Congressman Crenshaw are addressing different topics, their comments are addressed towards the same theme – appealing to the moral values of their audience through verbal communication. These are not isolated instances. As the political discourse continues to build with each presidential election, we see many more instances of such occurrences that often get covered in the news of the day. For example, we saw this in news coverage that analyzes the ways in which politicians view the morality of the treatment of migrants along the US Southern Border³.

When a politician appeals to one’s moral values, they are speaking to the core beliefs that individuals have about themselves and their outlooks on an ideal social world. They are connecting to their supporters through values that they share. The goal of this study is to understand how moral appeals are used in a political context to woo voters to a particular cause. Specifically, do Democrat and Republican political speeches appeal to different moral foundations? If so, what patterns can we detect that distinguish the parties? For this study, I refer to Democrats and Republicans as liberals and conservatives quite interchangeably. Due to patterns in political polarization, it is increasingly the case that Democrats have become more associated with liberalism and Republicans with conservatism (Abramowitz, 2010;

¹As reported by Politico

²As reported by The Hill

³The Hill provides an example with Nancy’s Pelosi’s public address.

McCarty et al., 2016). I hypothesize that in political speeches, liberals and conservatives will appeal to different moral foundations as defined by the Moral Foundations Theory. Liberals will be more likely to relay messages related to protecting people from harm and ensuring a fair system. Conservatives will be more likely to speak to preserving the values of this country and focus on self-determination in the American Dream.

1 The Moral Foundations Theory

Morality was originally defined by philosophers to focus squarely on concerns related to care for others and justice for society and its groups (Haidt, 2012). Individuals care about others and would allow this to influence the ways that they behave and treat others. In many ways, this influences their character (Turiel, 2002). At the same time, individuals want to ensure fairness for the people in their groups and that everyone is being treated with respect (Piazza et al., 2018). With this desire for a group, people would be ore likely to cooperate to ensure the fulfillment of this goal.

According to the philosophers, morality is conceptualized in terms of cooperation and care (Turiel, 2002). However, broader moral systems can be more complex than these two values, especially when it comes to explain the ways that morality plays out in daily life (Haidt and Joseph, 2004). To formalize our definition of morality in social settings, we use the definition provided by (Haidt and Kesebir, 2010):

Moral systems are interlocking sets of values, virtues, norms, practices, identities, institutions, technologies, and evolved psychological mechanisms that work together to suppress or regulate selfishness and make social life possible

Morality, as a concept, can be hard to operationalize in the context of a study. While philosophers may see it as an outlet to understanding how people cooperate and care for one another, the definition that people associate with the term “moral” might be more nuanced

than cooperative values. To better capture the image of morality in the face of universal human values, the Moral Foundations Theory was developed (Haidt, 2013).

The Moral Foundations Theory is a social psychological concept that aims to figure out why norms vary with culture while still reflecting core human universals (Hibbing et al., 2013). The body of this theory consists of six foundations (Haidt et al., 2009; Graham et al., 2011; Schein and Gray, 2015; Lin et al., 2018) that aim to explain universal human values across different cultures. These foundations developed as a result of the experiences in evolution and the need to ensure the survival of their species (Haidt and Graham, 2007). The definitions for each of the foundations, in brief, are as follows

Harm/Care: The Harm/Care foundation emphasizes the innate sense of empathy that individuals have for others, especially when it comes to caring and protecting individuals who are most vulnerable.

Fairness/Reciprocity: The Fairness/Reciprocity, sometimes also referred as justice, focuses on equality and truthfulness, especially in the context of a cooperative relationship.

Ingroup/Loyalty: The Ingroup/Loyalty foundation focuses on the concern for building a cohesive group. This foundation values actions related to self-sacrifice in favor of one's group and vigilance towards the outgroups.

Authority/Tradition: The Authority/Tradition principle focuses on the challenges that are present in the course to create a hierarchical society which includes respect for those in power, good leadership and defense of the legitimacy of authority.

Purity/Sanctity: The Purity/Sanctity foundation addresses the motivation to avoid biological contaminants such as pathogens and parasites that posed challenges to human life.

Liberty/Oppression: The Liberty/Oppression foundation focuses on how peo-

ple react to the presence of domination in their surroundings. It originates from a desire to be able to cooperate in a small group and be wary of the rise of leaders who take power without the consent of the people.

The first five foundations of Harm, Fairness, Loyalty, Authority and Sanctity are the most researched in this area. As such, this paper will focus primarily on these foundations. Furthermore, research in moral foundations suggests that there is a fundamental difference between liberals and conservatives when it comes to the foundations that they internalize, which leads to differences in the ability to understand one another on moral terms (Haidt, 2012). Liberals focus more on the individualizing foundations of Harm/Care and Fairness/Reciprocity. Conservatives, on the other hand, focus more on the binding foundations of Ingroup/Loyalty, Authority/Tradition, and Purity/Sanctity (Graham et al., 2011).

2 Appeals to Morality in the Work of Politics

Political rhetoric often focuses on appeals to core political traditions, morals and values in an effort to persuade voters to support a cause (Brattebo et al., 2015). Consequently, many researchers apply the moral foundations theory to understand how morality is applied in the political context through different methods and lenses (Garten et al., 2016, 2018; Lin et al., 2018). Appealing to the moral values of American voters has become close to appealing to their political ideology (Lakoff, 2010). As Noel (2014) argues, conservative value preserving moral traditions associated to the American Dream while liberals want to ensure that everyone is being catered to through government policies. While many of these conversations are based in policy, the underlying meanings are rooted in appealing to the hearts and minds of the voters.

In a study on the language used in news releases about stem cell research, Clifford and

Jerit (2013) noticed that political elites insert their own moral beliefs into their methods of communicating with the people on this matter. In these press releases, liberal authors are more likely to use language that appealed to the Harm and Fairness moral foundations compared to their conservative counterparts.

While Clifford and Jerit (2013) analyzes moral appeals in political messages used in the media, my goal in this paper is to look more into morality in election-related speeches. This study utilizes the addresses from the 2016 Republican and Democratic National Conventions to understand how politicians directly appeal to morality as they shore up their support from their base and attract independent voters. Research in the past argues that convention speeches are not suitable candidates for such analysis because of how policies triumph over moral appeals (Graham et al., 2009). However, in this study, I will nevertheless analyze the speeches from the 2016 conventions for a few reasons. First, the goals of the parties have diverged from attracting moderate voters to shoring up their base in a more polarized America (Abramowitz, 2010; Grossmann and Hopkins, 2016). As a result, while conventions are watched by people across the country, the goals of the speakers remain to rally their voters around core issues, and ensuring that their side wins over the other. Second, more recent analysis of political rhetoric, especially when it comes to understanding representation in government, considers political speeches to understand how the elites cater to the demands of the voters (Burden, 2007; Griffin and Newman, 2008; Miler, 2018). Despite the policies that are predominant in these contexts, values, such as care for the poor (Miler, 2018) and fairness in minority interests (Griffin and Newman, 2008), nonetheless take front seat to show the people that their representatives have moral values. The fact that these moral values can be detected despite the presence of policies that are in each of these texts. Finally, this comment was based in a slightly different political climate where polarization and sorting was not as intense (Brattebo et al., 2015; Grossmann and Hopkins, 2016). The 2016 elections differ from their previous races such that many cited Donald

Trump for being a political maverick of sorts (Sides et al., 2018), and focused their attacks on his morals, or lack thereof. As such, the campaigns become an issue of making the moral arguments on who is more compassionate and caring for the country and the people it serves. Given the division of the parties on ideological lines and policy preferences (Grossmann and Hopkins, 2016; Levendusky, 2009), the messages that speakers in each convention deliver are relatively representative of the liberal and conservative values that are attributed to the parties simply based on the selection criteria that is often involved to be invited as a speaker to occasions of such caliber (Abramowitz, 2010). In using convention speeches, the goal of these analyses is to challenge the claim made by (Graham et al., 2009) and to gain a better understanding of how the politicians appeal to voters in regards to the use of rhetoric related to morality in political discourse. To my knowledge, a study on moral appeals in political convention speeches, like the one in this paper, has never been conducted. In this study, I hypothesize that, in the case of the 2016 convention speeches, we will see that the Republicans and Democrats appealed to different moral foundations that align with those that their core supporters cherish, as demonstrated by research into liberal and conservative differences in the moral foundations (Graham et al., 2009; Haidt et al., 2009). Despite the political motivations, Democrat convention speakers would be more likely to appeal to the individualizing foundations of Harm and Fairness while Republican convention speakers will be more likely to appeal to the binding foundations of Ingroup, Authority and Purity.

3 Method

3.1 The Data

3.1.1 2016 Democrat National Convention

As a brief look back to the Presidential race of 2016, the goal of the Democrat National Convention (DNC) was to nominate a candidate for President that would succeed the Obama years in the White House, define the party platform moving forward and advertise the nominee to viewers at the arena and on television across the country. Unlike the 2012 convention, the goal of this moment was to nominate a candidate, and to establish the image of this party as being in the best position to beat the Republican presidential nominee, Donald Trump. Their goal was to inspire their supporters to vote for Hillary Clinton in the general election and they did so by propagating their values in the ways that would garner the greatest support among their base (Hinck, 2018).

The DNC, like the Republicans which I will discuss later, placed speakers on the stage that matched their progressive agenda (Sides et al., 2018). Activists for women's rights, gun control, and climate change, among others, had their chances to deliver their message to the nation. Like the goals of the party, as described by Grossmann and Hopkins (2016), the party was interested in appealing to a diverse array of group interests and ensuring that they can get enough votes to secure the White House again.

This convention was held from July 25 to July 28, 2016 at the Wells Fargo Center in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. During the program, the party hosted a diverse docket of speakers whose addresses were collected for this project. For the analysis, the corpus for the DNC convention contained 152 speeches containing 104,586 words. This corpus contains 7 invocations and benedictions, which will be removed for the analyses. With these out of the picture, the DNC corpus becomes 145 speeches with 102,344 total words.

3.1.2 2016 Republican National Convention

Just as the Democrats held a convention to send out their message and nominate a candidate for President, the Republicans followed suit in their convention that was held from July 18 to July 21, 2016 at the Quicken Loans Arena in Cleveland, Ohio. The convention's goals were similar to the Democrats. Speakers advocated for the policies endorsed by the party and for the ideological positions that the party holds on the issues. The RNC corpus created from this convention contains 64 speeches with 66,183 words.

3.2 Materials

In each of the National Conventions, the media releases select speeches presented by the speakers as transcripts. Additionally, the party can also send speeches embargoed for delivery to the press⁴. In addition, major news outlets also release the schedule for the conventions, which were used to keep track of which speeches were included and which were still needed⁵. These tools are useful to generate the collection of convention speeches. However, not all the speeches, from both conventions, were able to be collected. As such, the corpus was constructed as a reflection of the speeches that I was able to acquire.

For this study, each speech was gathered and sorted by day, speaker, type of delivery (speech, video transcript, or benediction), and source of the transcript⁶. A spreadsheet was used to keep track of the file names assigned to each speech, which was used later to facilitate the analysis process. To analyze the tests, the Moral Foundations Dictionary was acquired from the `quanteda.dictionaries` R package. While I was able to acquire invocations and benedictions from the Democratic National Convention, these speeches are excluded from the

⁴See InfoDocket for the DNC speeches and Cision for a snapshot of the RNC speeches released as speeches embargoed for delivery.

⁵The schedule for the Republican National Convention, and the schedule for the Democratic National Convention were released in full by POLITICO.

⁶See <https://github.com/lin-jennifer/2016NCtranscripts> for the speech transcripts

analysis. Since invocations and benedictions are religious in nature and are only accessible for one of the conventions, I found it more suitable to compare the addresses made by politicians and guests.

3.3 Analysis Plan

In 2009, Graham et al. (2009) published a seminal piece of work in Moral Foundations Theory that discusses the differences between the moral roots of liberals and conservatives using different scales to measure morality and different methods. One of these is the use of textual analysis to determine patterns between liberal and conservative sermons in churches. Here, they developed the Moral Foundations Dictionary for use with the Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC) program created by Pennebaker et al. (2007). Through this process, the goal is to count the number of appearances of words associated with each of the moral foundations and generate a composite score that reflects the total percentage each foundation is utilized in the speech. While counting words alone has pitfalls when it comes to shorter texts, this method has been sufficient when understanding the bigger picture in larger works (Garten et al., 2016).

To build on the dictionary developed by Graham et al. (2009), a more refined version of the Moral Foundations Dictionary was created by Frimer et al. (2019) to include more words and greater variations in word tenses that were not reflective of the original dictionary. The analysis in this paper will take advantage of this more refined version of the Moral Foundations Dictionary.

In this study, we will analyze the speeches available from each of the 2016 conventions to understand their moral appeals using the Moral Foundations Dictionary. Each speech will be compiled and analyzed using the `quanteda` class of packages (Benoit and Nulty, 2017). This package is constructed as the open source version of LIWC and operates similarly to the intended package. For this analysis, the speeches are compiled into a corpus sorted

by convention using the `quanteda.corpora` package. This process creates a corpus for the Democrats and one for the Republicans.

To analyze the text, we use the `quanteda.dictionaries` package. This program is preloaded with the most updated version of the Moral Foundations Dictionary, among other LIWC-compatible dictionaries. In this first model, I use the analysis model described by Graham et al. (2009). This word count model uses each text as the unit of analysis. By comparing the text to the dictionary, the program generates a score that represents the percent in which words for the positive or negative aspect of a foundation appear out of the total number of words in the speech. The positive and negative percent scores for each foundation are summed and t-tests are conducted to compare the differences in moral word usage on each of the foundations between the political parties⁷.

To refine this model, I tokenize the text and analyze the results using the same processes above. This process refines the word count model by removing the noise in the text that might interfere with the words that are counted by the program (Grimmer and Stewart, 2013). Here, the unit of analysis becomes each individual word. Often, speeches contain plenty of stopwords, such as “and”, “is”, and “or”, which carries no moral meaning but are counted as a percentage of the total. Additionally, words ending with “-ed” or “-ing” might not be counted in the word count because it does not match the exact word in the dictionary. By tokenizing, we boil the texts down to the foundational structures, which can provide us a more accurate count of the moral appeals in the speeches itself. This includes removing the stopwords and stemming of words in this new analysis. After the tokenization process, I count the number of times the appeals to each foundation appear in each speech based on the Moral Foundations Dictionary and compare the conventions using t-tests⁸.

To validate the computer output, 10% of the corpus for the Democratic and Republican

⁷The commented R code for the word count analyses can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/wvqo3s6>

⁸The commented R code for the tokenization analysis can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/sm24qg>

Table 1: *Morality in Convention Speeches*

Foundation	Percentage		t	Effect Size (d)
	Democrat	Republican		
Harm	1.54	1.1	3.719***	0.464
Fairness	0.52	0.44	0.997	0.152
Ingroup	1.42	1.32	0.812	0.114
Authority	1.01	1.33	-2.983**	-0.454
Purity	0.51	0.56	-1.826(*)	-0.276

Notes: The percentage of words is calculated as a function of the instances words in each foundation, established by the Moral Foundations Dictionary, appeared in text divided by the total number of words in the speech.

(*) $p = .1$, * $p = .05$, ** $p = .01$, *** $p \leq .001$

convention will be hand verified. The sample will be representative of the body of the corpus and each word will be checked for match to the moral foundations dictionary. In addition, the context will be examined to see how well the computer was able to detect moral sentiment in the text, and to see if there are moral contexts that the computer missed along the way.

4 Results

To understand the use of appeals to morality among liberals and conservative in a more naturalistic setting, an analysis of speeches delivered in the 2016 Republican and Democratic National Convention was conducted using a similar procedure described in a previous study with these methods such as the one conducted by Graham et al. (2009). Here, instead of using LIWC, the test uses `quanteda` developed by Benoit and Nulty (2017), which completes the goals of LIWC in a free, open access fashion, allowing for better replicability of the results.

The results of the word count method for the text analysis of the convention speeches, as displayed in Table 1 and Figure 1, suggest that the Republicans were more likely to use the Authority/Tradition foundation ($t(117) = -2.983$, $p = .003$, $d = -.454$), while Democrats

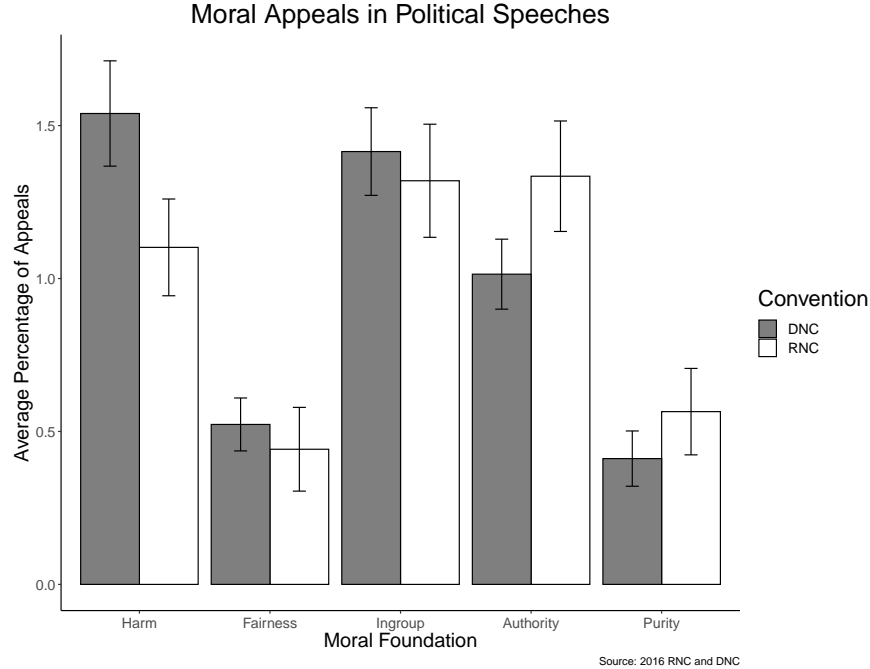


Figure 1: Cell Means and 95% Confidence Intervals for moral appeals by foundation and convention using the simple word count method

were more likely to use the Harm/Care foundation ($t(188) = 3.719, p < .001, d = .465$) in these speeches. Additionally, we see that Republicans are slightly more likely to appeal to the Purity foundation, even if this effect is not as pronounced ($t(118) = -1.823, p = .07, d = -.277$). The Republicans, in this election cycle, focused more on maintaining the image of the country with their “Make America Great Again” appeals and called to preserve the values associated with the founding principles of the country. Democrats, on the other hand, sought to speak to a variety of interests and ensure that they appealed to all their voters’ specific interests. Culture war issues such as abortion and gay marriage were hot topics of this election, with Republicans moving to cite God on these topics. These patterns can help explain why the results show that the Democrats are more likely to appeal to the care of people from diverse backgrounds while Republicans are more likely to appeal to traditions and religion.

In addition to word count method, we tokenized the text to remove noise from each of

Table 2: *Token Analysis of Convention Speeches*

Foundation	Instances		t	Effect Size (d)
	Democrat	Republican		
Harm	9.03	10.7	-0.867	-0.144
Fairness	2.04	2.84	-1.260	-0.222
Ingroup	3.34	5.34	-2.487*	-0.431
Authority	3.20	8.97	-5.053***	-1.007
Purity	1.88	4.06	-4.347***	-0.714

Notes: The instances of each foundations appears as a function of the number of times the stem of the word matches stems in the Moral Foundations Dictionary.

(*) $p = .1$, * $p = .05$, ** $p = .01$, *** $p \leq .001$

the texts as a way to get a clearer picture of the main ideas that are employed by speakers in each convention. The results here are measured in slightly different units than the word count method. Here, in lieu of percentages, the results are reported as instances in which something under a category appears to align with the dictionary.

In Table 2 and Figure 2, the results for the tokenization analysis shows that when we compare the speeches of both conventions, Republicans trump Democrats in their usage of Loyalty ($t(90) = -2.487$, $p = .015$, $d = -.431$), Authority ($t(73) = -5.053$, $p < .001$, $d = -1.007$), and Purity ($t(99) = -4.347$, $p < .001$, $d = -.715$) foundations. Meanwhile, Republicans and Democrats do not differ on their use of Harm ($t(98) = -0.867$, $p = .39$, $d = -.144$) or Fairness ($t(87) = -1.259$, $p = .21$, $d = -.222$). Due to the level of partisan sorting increasing over the years (McCarty et al., 2016) and its trends over the 2016 Presidential Race (Sides et al., 2018), the conservative Republicans are more likely to appeal to the binding foundations than the liberal Democrats. However, it is interesting that the Democrats are not more likely to use appeals to Harm and Fairness when compared to the Republicans.

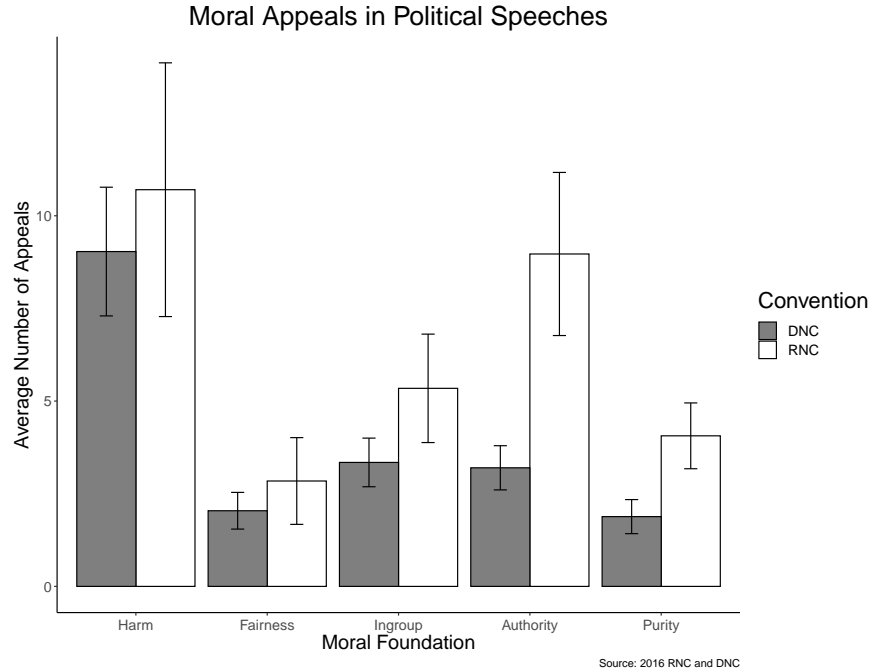


Figure 2: Cell Means and 95% Confidence Intervals for moral appeals by foundation and convention using the Tokenization method

5 Discussion

In our analysis of the speeches from the Democratic and Republican National Conventions, the methods provided different, but interesting, pictures to consider regarding the moral appeals each party’s speakers employed. In the first method, I used a traditional word count where the text was analyzed at face value. Here, the results suggest that Democrats were more likely to appeal to voters through the Harm/Care foundations while Republicans used Authority/Tradition more often. Additionally, Republicans showed a slight increase in their appeals to Purity/Sanctity compared to the Democrats.

However, after tokenizing the words in each of the texts, the results provide a different picture. Here, Republicans continuously trump Democrats in the use of loyalty, authority and purity appeals. However, Democrats do not seem to appeal to any one foundation more than their Republican counterparts.

In both of the computer-driven processes used in this paper, the computer treated each word as a numeric value on the back end (Grimmer and Stewart, 2013). As such, each individual word was analyzed on its own terms based on how it matches the dictionary. Groups of words and phrases with the connotation of a word describing each foundation were ignored in this process. Some examples were picked up in the hand-verification process. For example, the phrase “turned her back” is synonymous to “betray”. The latter word, “betray”, was recognized by the computerized processes but not the former. The hand-verification process provides a key insight to a limitation of both processes that can be addressed in future studies.

The patterns displayed in these analyses align with the trends of moral foundations research, which suggests that liberals are more likely to appeal to individuality while conservatives tend to value community. Through analyzing the Democratic and Republican National Convention speeches, we see these patterns emerge despite the goals of such conventions. While they exist to nominate a presidential candidate and launch policy proposals to lure independent voters, the speakers reflect what voters see as those fighting for quintessential values of the party. Each speaker for both of the conventions address issues that the party aims to represent in their public image, such as religiosity and gun rights for the Republicans, and women’s health and sensible gun laws for the Democrats.

Nonetheless, there can be a variety of reasons for this observation, including the climate of the election. While it is normal for parties to attack each other, the radical positions proposed by people like Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders has both sides claiming that these policies are not what the US represents. As such, this can motivate the use of moral appeals such that they can be detected more so in this election than in those of the past.

The methods in this study relies on Benoit and Nulty (2017)’s `quanteda` word count package. While research in machine learning argues that word count is inferior to train-test models in understanding semantics (Garten et al., 2018), the method was chosen as a

reflection of previous work on this subject (Graham et al., 2009). I used tokenization to get closer to Garten et al. (2018)'s ideal but there is more digging that can be done in this regard. This is not to dismiss the interesting results that may arise from understanding what machine learning can contribute to morality in political discourse. Future research can take advantage of the advanced technologies to understand semantic meanings behind the usage of words rather than understanding how much a foundation is used based on word count. While word count can allow us to understand prevalence, context-driven machine learning can help us understand the problem in novel contexts even without a sophisticated dictionary.

Additionally, given that this study focuses on the 2016 election, future research can be conducted on past convention speeches to see if the political climate influences the use of moral appeals. By understanding how these patterns change over time, it can help provide a better understanding for the motivations of political rhetoric, especially when it comes to electing a new President for the country. In many ways, the 2016 election, while it is not necessarily a realigning one, was something many people have not seen in their lifetimes. Republicans and Democrats alike thought Donald Trump was a political maverick of sorts and vowed to keep him far away from the Oval Office. Similarly, many Democrats were not so quick to buy the proposals of Bernie Sanders, even though they got plenty of attention from young voters (Sabato et al., 2017). While proposals like Medicare for All and free tuition are not new, they divided the Democratic party between the top candidates. Even though the contests of the Democratic nomination were not new the politics, the emergence of Donald Trump on the Republican side certainly stirred up fervor on both sides that may have led the rhetoric of this election to be different from those in the past.

Moreover, the dictionary used in this study reflect words associated to five of the six foundations. In future research, words related to the Liberty/Oppression foundations can be added to the dictionary. With this addition, research can reflect how liberals and conser-

vatives vary on their reactions to patterns of discrimination and oppression present in their social surroundings.

Finally, political parties are not meant to be monolithic ideological clusters (Noel, 2014). Due to partisan sorting (Levendusky, 2009), I am able to take the conventions as a reflection of ideologies. However, there are heterogeneous environments within each party as well, such that there are some Republicans that are more liberal than others (Weber and Federico, 2013). Future research can analyze these within parties to understand if partisans are as morally sorted as they are politically, and whether moral appeals in text are distinguishably different within a party as they are between parties. To analyze the partisans' morality within parties, we might be able to use the debate comments that are used in the Democrats' 2020 Presidential Primary. The diversity of candidates in the primary field provides us with different candidates on different locations on the liberal side of the ideological spectrum.

This analysis both replicated the methods of the Graham et al. (2009) study and expanded using a different, more refined method to understand the root meaning of the texts. However, as machine learning experts would argue (Garten et al., 2018; Lin et al., 2018), more in-depth models can be developed with a larger universe of examples to gain a better glimpse of the environment of interest.

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