MORAL APPEALS IN POLITICAL DISCOURSE: A MODERATE
APPROACH TO POLITICAL IDENTIFICATION

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Moral Appeals in Political Discourse: A Moderate Approach to Political Identification

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my family. I want to thank my father for his constant support, encouragement, and motivation. I could not have continued with my education had it not been for his unconditional love and support. I want to thank my mother for her constant sympathy, concern, and care. The knowledge that my mother constantly keeps me in her thoughts encourages me to continually progress, even when progress is only accomplished by scaling granite walls. I want to thank my sister for her companionship and uncanny ability to calm me down. Her ability to explain how my own concerns and fears are unfounded is incredibly stress-relieving, and the friendship that we share is invaluable.
Moral Appeals in Political Discourse: A Moderate Approach to Political Identification
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Congressional Democrats and Republicans continually blame one another for the problems facing our country, the American public seems to be heavily divided based upon political identification, and Congress has come to a standstill because of their inability to compromise. It seems as if our two-party political system is in fact the root of our problems, because as people form groups and engage in team psychology, they divide themselves from others and shut down open-minded thinking. Kenneth Burke, a leading figure in modern rhetorical theory, argues that in order for persuasion to occur, rhetors must identify with people by a sharing a substance or ideal that a particular group maintains. This leads to group identification and persuasion, but it can also encourage division. Jonathan Haidt and Jesse Graham, social psychologists who focus on morality and social justice, posit that moral foundations are innate moral precursors that influence political identification. Haidt and Graham find that on the global level there are six essential moral foundations that determine moralistic action and political foundation: Care, Fairness, Loyalty, Authority, Sanctity, and Liberty. If rhetoricians, social justice researchers, and academics who focus on social progress begin to understand the frameworks through which the moderate public situate and call upon their moral domains, perhaps we can begin to bridge the political divide and induce cooperation by understanding a base substance through which moderates can identify. We can thereby use Haidt and Graham’s Moral Foundations Theory to understand how to appeal to moderate Americans and unite the opposing parties. In this spirit, my project is to discover the knowledge scripts that create a foundation for moral appeals in political rhetoric. Therefore, a close examination of sample speeches from Mitt Romney and Bill Clinton’s 2012 campaign speeches will unveil the logical tropes and accompanying warrants under which these moral appeals are created, and thereby demonstrate the social knowledge that liberals and conservatives live by. This analysis discovers that, in political discourse, there is a complex relationship among each moral foundation, and the two moral foundations that are most at odds with one another according to political identification are the moral foundations of fairness and liberty. For liberals, liberty enables fairness in that American society should foster fairness for all so that people have the liberty to pursue self-development and personal pursuits. For conservatives, liberty enables the American community to prosper because businesses have the liberty to operate according to free-market capitalism, thus allowing individuals to achieve wealth according to the notion of equitable fairness. This difference in the conception of fairness influences each party’s conceptualization of community: for liberals, community should foster fairness and promote care, and for conservatives, people have a duty to bolster their community by following the rules of equitable fairness. This
study ultimately finds that Romney emphasizes division and marginalizes his opposition, while Clinton truly works to bridge the divide between the two parties.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Moral arguments are … like shadowboxing matches: Each contestant lands heavy blows to the opponent's shadow, then wonders why she doesn't fall down.

--Jonathan Haidt

_The Emotional Dog and Its Rational Tail_

In today’s information age, many mass media outlets bombard the public with politically biased information. Whether it is on FOX, CNN, or a myriad of other media outlets, party-based pundits blame the opposing political party, to varying degrees, for the social upheaval and economic unrest that has occurred throughout the last decade. Jonathan Haidt, social and political psychologist who focuses on political ideology and morality, affirms this point in “When Morality Opposes Justice: Conservatives Have Moral Intuitions That Liberals May Not Recognize” when he states, “Talk shows featuring the battle of good versus evil sell better than those that explore shades of gray; it’s more entertaining to watch people throw rocks at each other over the wall than it is to watch the slow, difficult process of dismantling the wall and understanding each other’s point of view” (Haidt and Graham 111).

A common belief about American politics is that partisan news media cause political polarization, which results in partisan camps that adhere to ideological stances based upon party identification. This partisan identification could limit the general public’s ability to elect appropriate leaders and vote for productive policy. News outlets showcase drama and highlight conflict for the sake of selling news and thus create the perception of polarization. But according Markus Prior, Professor of Politics and Public Affairs at Princeton University, the truth is that “Most Americans remain politically moderate or indifferent, and their news exposure reveals nonideological patterns” (122). Indeed, Stanford political scientists Morris P. Fiorina and Samuel J. Abrams come to the same conclusion in “Political Polarization and the American Public”: “The literature indicates that the American public as a whole is no more polarized today than it was a generation ago, whether we focus on general ideological orientation or positions on specific issues” (584). Since the majority of the American public
seems to have adopted a moderate stance, a moderate and balanced rhetorical approach could more readily appeal to Americans; after all, Prior argues that “The main danger of this more partisan media environment is not the polarization of ordinary Americans but a growing disconnect between increasingly partisan activists and largely centrist and modestly involved masses” (123). Based upon this research, it is difficult not to conclude that a moderate political appeal could readily facilitate cooperation and compromise between the two political camps and introduce more effective policy as a result. Indeed, according to Haidt, our society thrives off of a healthful and productive balance of liberal and conservative values ("The Moral Roots of Liberals and Conservatives").

In “When Morality Opposes Justice: Conservatives Have Moral Intuitions that Liberals May Not Recognize,” Haidt and Graham argue that to induce a healthy balance in political discourse and promote effective policy, liberals should first understand the moral ideologies that control both liberal and conservative thought. Within this article, Haidt and Graham shed considerable light on the political identification mechanism embedded within the human mind: their text explores the primary moral foundations that categorize moral choice. According to Haidt, political identification is based upon a preference to moral foundations that are partially innate and partially a product of socialization and deliberation; as a result, his explanation of morality offers a significantly new window into the political mind. When it comes to the moral propensities within the American public, infinite variation and weighting of the moral foundations is inevitable, but Haidt and Graham’s extensive study demonstrates how moral spheres control political identification at the global level.

Through the work of Haidt and his associates, rhetorical scholars and practitioners are provided a means of understanding and decoding the ideologies and maxims that liberals and conservatives use to organize and understand their lives. If the political left and right could more readily agree on political issues, American society could certainly benefit from a higher level of cooperation, and social justice programs could become more effective through a balanced form of political action. I am not trying to suggest that liberals and conservatives will agree on all issues, but balanced policies that seek a middle ground are certainly possible, and the middle ground could indeed be the most effective and productive balance ethically, socially, and fiscally. An understanding of the knowledge scripts, and their associated moral ideologies, that make up political group thought will enable rhetoricians,
social justice researches, and academics in general to bridge the gap between the two political parties. This common ground reflects Stephen Toulmin’s notion of a warrant in the sense that these moral foundations can allow rhetors to understand universal principles or maxims that control moral consciousness. An understanding of political moral ideologies can thus supply the substance upon which moral arguments are founded and further facilitate identification.

In News Analysis, mass media discourse specialist Teun van Dijk argues that news structures and media channels cover specific issues that are framed according to ideological thought, and the representation and reproduction of hegemonic group-based ideologies function as a strategic move to identify with and reify group norms based upon shared social representations (19). This reflects Kenneth Burke’s concept of identification: people use language to discover shared substances and thereby identify with one another, thus facilitating symbolic action. In the same way that news media frame specific issues according to ideological thought, so too do presidential campaign speeches and political debates. Presidential rhetoric will certainly include identification codes that both reify and appeal to group-based ideologies; indeed, van Dijk argues that group schemata heavily influence social ideologies “and provide contents for the legitimating of group position and action” (News Analysis 26). Therefore, a close examination of sample speeches from Mitt Romney and Bill Clinton’s (selected because of his reputation for charisma and a moderate approach to politics) 2012 campaign speeches will unveil the logical tropes and accompanying warrants under which these moral appeals are created, and thereby demonstrate the social knowledge that liberals and conservatives live by. Not only will this analysis contribute to Haidt and his colleagues’ developing theory of morality and social cognition, but the analysis of liberal and conservative discourse will unveil how each group identifies with one another, and thereby reveal the group schemata that control political understanding.

This present study will analyze how these group appeals and schemata are constructed and therefore contribute to the ongoing study of ideological identification, the rhetorical function of value appeals that lead to identification according to Kenneth Burke, and Haidt’s Moral Foundations Theory. I will utilize Burke’s notion of identification and discourse analysis to discover and substantiate Haidt’s moral foundations within presidential
speeches. To provide a balance, I will analyze Mitt Romney’s Speech in Chillicothe, Ohio (8/17/12), and Bill Clinton’s speech to the Democratic National Convention (9/6/12). Assumptions that betray ideological values will be discovered by utilizing Simon Blackburn’s Principle of Charity. In *The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy*, Blackburn asserts that the Principle of Charity “constrains the interpreter to maximize the truth or rationality in the subject’s sayings” (59). By doing so, the strongest interpretation of knowledge will “buttress [an argument] against skepticism,” and allow for the discovery of logical knowledge scripts that construct moral appeals (59).

Through the Principle of Charity, we can understand premises and warrants that buttress moral arguments and partisan rhetoric because the arguments’ logic will depend upon predetermined and unstated principles, but those principles must be consistent with the entirety of an argument to be considered true. Once those positions are understood, academics and social justice researchers will be able to face opponents at their strongest, and be more prepared to pave the way for cooperation. This analysis ultimately finds that even though there are certain moral foundations that control political ideology, the knowledge scripts that govern those foundations differ for liberals and conservatives. And of course, there is infinite variation in the general public, but certain knowledge scripts can be attributed to the political parties. This analysis discovers that, in political discourse, there is a complex relationship between each moral foundation, and the two moral foundations that are most at odds with one another according to political identification are the moral foundations of fairness and liberty. For liberals, liberty enables fairness in that American society should foster fairness for all so that people have the liberty to pursue self development and personal pursuits. For conservatives, liberty enables the American community to prosper because businesses have the liberty to run according to free-market capitalism, thus allowing individuals to achieve wealth according to the notion of equitable fairness. This difference in the conception of fairness influences each party’s conceptualization of community: for liberals, community should foster fairness and promote care, and for conservatives, people have a duty to bolster their community by following the rules of equitable fairness. This study ultimately finds that Romney emphasizes division and marginalizes his opposition, while Clinton truly works to bridge the divide between the two parties.
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

KENNETH BURKE ON IDENTIFICATION AND DIVISION

Kenneth Burke is often referred as the modern father of rhetoric. One of his most important concepts is that people naturally yearn to form bonds with others and therefore use language to identify with one another. When people amplify certain shared concepts or values through language, they become consubstantial; identification ultimately enables persuasion. Kenneth Burke argues for this key concept in *A Rhetoric of Motives*: “A is not identical with his colleague, B. But insofar as their interests are joined, A is identified with B. Or he may identify himself with B even when their interests are not joined, if he assumes that they are, or is persuaded to believe so” (20). In this sense, so long as two or more people share some common interest or “substance,” they can identify with the other. Identification is crucial for the art of persuasion, because without identification, persuasion cannot occur.

In order for people to identify with one another, they have to become “consubstantial” by sharing a common interest, idea, or purpose. Burke continues to explain that “two [people] may be identified in terms of some principle they share in common, an ‘identification’ that does not deny their distinctness” (*A Rhetoric of Motives* 21). People identify with one another by sharing some principal, idea, or ideology; however, people naturally have many different opinions, ideals, and perspectives, and so there is an inherently expansive and comprehensive nature to “consubstantiality”: “A doctrine of consubstantiality, either explicit or implicit, may be necessary to any way of life. For substance, in the old philosophies, was an act; and a way of life as acting-together; and in acting together, men have common sensations, concepts, images, ideas, attitudes, that make them consubstantial” (21). According to Burke, a shared substance is a shared ideal, a motive that encourages an act, or an act in and of itself. Therefore, “substance” is any shared concept, notion, ideal, or act that encourages people to form relationships:

Aristotle reviews the purposes, acts, things, conditions, states of mind, personal characteristics, and the like, which people consider promising or formidable, good or evil, useful or dangerous, admirable or loathsome, and so on. All of these
opinions or assumptions (perhaps today they would be treated under the head of “attitudes” or “values”) are catalogued as available means of persuasions. … [They] are but a survey of the things that people generally consider persuasive, and of methods that have persuasive effects. (56)

According to this explanation, the moral spheres that Haidt has identified on the global level perfectly function as “commonplaces,” “topics,” or “substances” that have indeed been established by humanity, and if rhetoricians can wrangle and control these topics and understand the logic upon which they are founded, they can understand these shared social representations and include them in persuasive appeals. As a result, rhetors can more effectively form arguments that appeal to the broader public and encourage a balanced form of political policy.

Interestingly, Burke continues to elaborate on identification and argues that people form groups based upon identification and in the process correspondingly become at odds with other groups. Burke explains that “to begin with ‘identification’ is, by the same token, though roundabout, to confront the implications of division” (A Rhetoric of Motives 22). By the nature of language, when people are encouraged to identify with a group based upon shared social representations, oppositional differences are amplified because people tend to understand concepts and language in terms of their binaries, and thus people divide themselves from others while they identify with a particular group. Political discourse has a tendency to encourage identification based upon group preference, so division inherently occurs, and discourse that argues for policy based upon specific group values becomes one-sided and problematic; bandwagon arguments result, and moderate policy becomes an impalpable specter.

Because there are two primary political groups, division inherently occurs through the act of identifying with a particular group, especially during heated presidential campaigns. But for our government to generate the most effective policy that works for the largest percentage of the general public while remaining ethical, the red tape that divides must be cut by political discourse that reduces division. But then, can a moderate approach be taken when the inherent nature of politics is a divided America? This study seeks to answer that question and discover a moderate approach through the analysis of presidential rhetoric.
SOCIAL COGNITION, KNOWLEDGE SCRIPTS, AND GROUP SCHEMATA

The study of news and mass media is important in the political arena because (1) significant political debate occurs in such outlets and (2) the study of such outlets can provide valuable information about the knowledge scripts and group schemata that define a political group. When discussing discourse processing and social cognition in *News as Discourse*, Teun van Dijk argues that “special forms of social cognition such as opinions, attitudes, and ideologies … presuppose not only knowledge or beliefs but also norms and values, which define and are characteristically shared by social groups or cultures” (108). Any discursive symbolic act by a speech user will provide information about personal and group interests:

> the inherently social nature of discourse production shows the social knowledge and attitude schemata that are presupposed by the speaker as a group member. Similarly, the speaker enacts the norms and values, the interests, power relations, or ideologies of his or her own group. By their communication they are reproduced, confirmed, and diffused throughout the ingroup. (van Dijk, *News as Discourse* 110)

Speech actors will adopt and represent predisposed knowledge scripts, which are ways of understanding life circumstances, based upon a particular group that they identify with. People assimilate social knowledge through group association and tend to maintain that knowledge in order to support group cohesion. In addition, through this identification, people adopt group-values associated with specific forms of knowledge scripts that construct group schemata. These adaptations are derived by a particular group from within a particular culture, which is a notion posited by Graham and his colleagues, including Haidt, in “Moral Foundations Theory: The Pragmatic Validity of Moral Pluralism”: “For many people … life stories include an account of the development of their current moral beliefs and political ideology. … [Many] such stories are not fully self-authored, but rather are often ‘borrowed’ from ideological narratives and stereotypes commonly held in the culture” (79). These stereotypes and ideological narratives depend upon the group to which a speech actor belongs, which is largely determined by the context of any given situation.

Teun van Dijk more thoroughly explains these knowledge scripts in his text *News Analysis: Case Studies of International and National News*. For a story to be accepted by the general public at large, or for a particular group, information must fit within the bounds of
predisposed cultural knowledge, but the contents of such scripts are often left implicit. Van Dijk elaborates on this idea with his supermarket-script example:

If we have a general supermarket script in our culture, the planning and execution of our actions in a supermarket, or the understanding of a story about events in a supermarket, is guided by such a script. In discourse understanding, the general contents of the script may be presupposed and hence left partially implicit, such as the information that in a supermarket one can buy food or household articles, that there are shopping carts … and that at the end one pays the cashier. (21)

These scripts are part of an ongoing process of enculturation, and people depend on these scripts to navigate their social order and structure their lives; but more importantly, any particular argument must include appropriate knowledge scripts for it to be accepted.

In “Ideology and Discourse Analysis,” Teun van Dijk argues that didactic discourse explicitly formulates and re/produces the ideological contents of group schemata, and he lists the categories of those schemata:

who we are (where we come from, what we look like, who can be a member of our group, etc.); what we do and stand for, what our norms and values are, who our friends and enemies are, and what our power resources are. … [Didactic ideological discourse] provides reasons and arguments in terms of general norms and values, and in view of the interests of the group and its members; about what is good and bad, just or unjust. It gives examples and provides images of venerated gods and leaders or other exemplary people. It tells stories about heroes and villains. (133-134)

These ideological schemata are learned through enculturation, and the notion that knowledge is assimilated from others reflects Burke’s parlor metaphor whereby people enter into a parlor and must first understand the heated debate occurring within before they are in a position to contribute. Once people understand the knowledge presupposed by the individuals within the metaphorical parlor, they can then use that information to identify with and persuade others (The Philosophy of Literary Form 110). By identifying these schemas within discursive arguments and understanding the knowledge scripts that construct those schemas, rhetorical scholars and practitioners can understand the ideological principles that organize liberal and conservative thought processes. As a result, rhetoricians can then use those principles to understand the foundational values that political groups adhere to, and can thus use those knowledge structures to facilitate compromise.
POLITICAL SCRIPTS AND SCHEMATA

George Lakoff supports van Dijk’s knowledge scripts by arguing that people use unconscious cognitive models to comprehend politics, and he defines the ideological scripts and schemas that make up liberal and conservative knowledge by analyzing political discourse in *Moral Politics: What Conservatives Know that Liberals Don’t*. According to Lakoff, “Whenever we instantaneously understand a political speech, we are filling in what is not explicitly said in the speech through … cognitive models” (150). Liberal and conservative cognitive models are based upon moral concepts that are controlled by family-based metaphors. Lakoff explains that conceptualization is based upon embodied cognition, and people communicate their understanding of life through metaphors that we live by: “When we think, we use an elaborate system of concepts, but we are not usually aware of just what those concepts are like and how they fit together into a system” (4). Lakoff continues to explain that “A conceptual metaphor is a conventional way of conceptualizing one domain of experience in terms of another, often unconsciously” (4). People’s thought processes are structured by metaphors and the surrounding context, and thus metaphors create conceptual frameworks for understanding new experiences based upon previous experience. But the metaphors themselves influence perception, and thus have an effect on frame of thought. These metaphors are developed over time, used on daily basis, and play a large role in the communication process, but more importantly, they can help us to understand the knowledge scripts and group schemas that substantiate political identification.

Conceptual understanding through metaphorical analysis can shed light on the frameworks or ideologies that control moral thought. In *Moral Politics*, Lakoff posits that liberals and conservatives rely on two distinct family-based metaphors: liberals conceptualize life through a Nurturant Parent model, and conservatives conceptualize life through a Strict Father model. Both models contain a correspondingly appropriate course of action for daily life and thus represent knowledge scripts and group schemas that are both social and political. According to Lakoff, political identification is controlled by the metaphoric mode of thought that a person adopts, which thereby influences their conceptual understanding of life. Lakoff’s two family models serve as a starting point for understanding political identification and the ideologies that support political group thought. This is useful because the analysis of metaphors in language can help us to understand moral codes, and if those
moral codes can be identified, the logical structures and ideological appeals that bind political groups can be better understood. As a result, rhetorical appeals can be more artfully crafted to persuade a particular audience and establish identification.

Indeed, in “Reframing Moral Politics,” linguist Zev Bar-Lev concedes to Lakoff’s argument in Moral Politics, and he adds to this study by stressing the need for a rhetorical balance when conducting critical discourse analysis. He affirms the Principle of Charity and posits that by understanding the opposition’s strongest argument through a balanced form of discourse analysis, rhetors and discourse analysts can better understand how to respond. Additionally, Bar-Lev finds an imbalance with Lakoff’s family-based models and proposes that future analysis should focus on balance: “I find that the (intuitive) concept of ‘balance’ — in particular, balance over the American political divide — was helpful in discovering specific modes of thought and rhetorical tropes that were not accounted for in Lakoff’s ‘Mommy’ (Nurturant Parent) model” (467). Lakoff’s two models may require tinkering, but they still provide effective avenues for understanding liberal and conservative conceptual frameworks.

THE ART OF PERSUASION AND THE MORAL FOUNDATIONS

Lakoff’s analysis of liberal and conservative thought is important because it illustrates how metaphoric thought influences or controls political party identification, and Haidt uses Lakoff’s Moral Politics as an important source for “The Emotional Dog and Its Rational Tail,” in which Haidt argues that persuasion is effected by identifying with an audience’s intuitive cues. While logic plays a substantial role in the art of persuasion, it is one’s ability to arouse emotion and establish relationships that enable persuasion. In this text, Haidt defines his Social Intuitionist Model, which explains that moral judgment is controlled by complex interactions between intuition, rationalization, and social influences.

Haidt asserts that people form quick, intuitive moral judgments to any situation: “reasoning may be the tail wagged by the dog. The dog itself may turn out to be moral intuitions and emotions such as empathy and love (for positive morality) and shame, guilt, and remorse, along with emotional self-regulation abilities (for negative morality)” (“The Emotional Dog and its Rational Tail” 825). Haidt employs the dog/tail metaphor to convey the idea that emotion and intuition primarily control moral judgment, and post-hoc
rationalization follows: “moral reasoning is not left free to search for truth but is likely to be hired out like a lawyer by various motives, employed only to seek confirmation of preordained conclusions” (822). Emotion is therefore an intuitive cue that encourages a moral judgment, a notion posited by Teun van Dijk when he argues that emotion rhetorically encourages cognitive adherence to an argument: “Facts are better represented and memorized if they involve or arouse strong emotions” (*News as Discourse* 85).

An important second point raised by Haidt is that relationships must be established, or identification must occur—to use Burke’s term—for rationalization and persuasion to be effective: “it is hypothesized that reasoned persuasion works not by providing logically compelling arguments but by triggering new affectively valenced intuitions in the listener” (“The Emotional Dog and Its Rational Tail” 819). “Valenced intuitions” can be triggered by identifying with or appealing to an audience’s moral propensities, and group scripts and schemata can allow rhetorical scholars and practitioners to discover those moral propensities. Haidt continues by arguing that “because people are highly attuned to the emergence of group norms … the [Social Intuitionist Model] proposes that the mere fact that friends, allies, and acquaintances have made a moral judgment exerts a direct influence on others, even if no reasoned persuasion is used” (819). These two primary concepts are important, and they reflect Kenneth Burke’s theory of identification and consubstantiality: emotional cues and moral intuitions represent innate “substances” that enable identification. If emotion and intuition must be triggered to effect persuasion, then the substance or knowledge scripts that influence moral judgment must be understood.

While Lakoff’s family-based metaphors shed considerable light on the conceptual frameworks and that encourage people to adopt a liberal or conservative stance, Haidt’s Moral Foundations Theory explains the moral topoi that appear to control political identification. In the article “When Morality Opposes Justice: Conservatives have Moral Intuitions that Liberals may not Recognize,” Jonathan Haidt and Jesse Graham argue that there are five moral spheres that influence emotion and control moral judgment: harm/care, fairness/reciprocity, ingroup/loyalty, authority/respect, and purity/sanctity. These foundations interestingly confirm many of Lakoff’s conclusions in *Moral Politics* regarding the ideological values that influence political identification, and Haidt and Graham’s study extends Lakoff’s study of morality’s influence on politics by identifying the moral schemas
that act as foundations for political identification. According to Haidt and Graham, these moral spheres have been identified on the global level, and they represent, to a degree, a preparedness for innate moral preference; they are the foundations upon which morality is based. While these moral schemas may be innate to a degree, according to Haidt’s Social Intuitionist Model, a preference for these foundations is also a product of cultural upbringing: “Virtues are cultural constructions, and children develop different virtues in different cultures and historical eras, yet the available range of human virtues is constrained by the five sets of intuitions that human minds are prepared to have” (106). Haidt and Graham have discovered that “Liberal morality rests primarily on these two foundations (we call them fairness/reciprocity and harm/care), whereas conservative morality rests on five foundations, including ingroup/loyalty, authority/respect, and purity/sanctity concerns as well” (112). They point out that once a political party can understand the moral reasons or foundations behind opposing political policy, then rhetoricians can “open up a door in the wall that separates liberals and conservatives when they try to discuss moral issues” (113). Indeed, Haidt and Graham “expect that the five foundations theory will be useful in the study of political action and rhetoric” (109).

Because conservatives tend to favor all of the moral foundations equally and liberals primarily favor the care and fairness foundations, a close examination of the logical scripts behind each foundation will help us to understand differences between liberal and conservative motivation. Jesse Graham et al. define the five moral foundations in their article “Moral Foundations Theory: The Pragmatic Validity of Moral Pluralism,” which extends the Moral Foundations Theory posited by Haidt and Graham in the article “When Morality Opposes Justice: Conservatives Have Moral Intuitions That Liberals May Not Recognize.”

The Care/harm foundation is defined as a functional system that “made it easy and automatic to connect perceptions of suffering with motivations to care, nurture, and protect” (Graham et al. 69). During Stanford University lecture “When Compassion Leads to Sacrilege,” Jonathan Haidt explains that “liberal morality is built mostly on one foundation (Care/harm)” for the purpose of reducing harm. Granted, liberal morality is also dependent upon the fairness/reciprocity foundation, but Care/harm morality is their primary focus.
The fairness/reciprocity foundation, referred to as the Fairness/cheating foundation by Graham et al. in “Moral Foundations Theory,” relates to “acts of cheating or cooperation by one’s own direct interaction partners, but the current triggers of the foundation can include interactions with inanimate objects ... or interactions among third parties that one learns about through gossip” (69). During his Stanford lecture, Haidt explains how the liberal and conservative concepts of fairness differ: “liberals value equality, but all other kinds of fairness, those related to proportionality, are valued more by conservatives” (“When Compassion Leads to Sacrilege”). The fairness foundation is a particular point of contention for liberals and conservatives: “One of the biggest disagreements between the political left and right is their conflicting notions of fairness. Across many surveys and experiments, we find that liberals think about fairness in terms of equality, whereas conservatives think of it in terms of karma” (Haidt, “What the Tea Partiers Really Want”). Haidt argues that conservative fairness can be understood as social fairness according to the law of karma: conservatives “want to live in a country in which hard work and personal responsibility pay off and laziness, cheating and irresponsibility bring people to ruin. Give them liberty, sure, but more than that: Give them karma” (“What the Tea Partiers Really Want”).

The ingroup/community foundation, identified as the Loyalty/betrayal foundation by Graham et al. in “Moral Foundations Theory,” is defined as the ability “to form cohesive coalitions,” which as a result, are “more likely to be part of winning teams .... Sports fandom and brand loyalty are examples of how easily modern consumer culture has built upon the foundation and created a broad set of current triggers” (70). Haidt continues to explain the differences during his speech: “liberals sacralize victim groups, and then blame America for harming victims, deny the national motto: E Pluribus Unum, and become unpatriotic universalists,” as opposed to conservatives who favor national patriotism and loyal groups (“When Compassion Leads to Sacrilege”).

The authority/respect foundation, defined as the Authority/subversion foundation by Graham et al. in “Moral Foundations Theory,” is explained as follows:

The various modules that comprise the Authority/subversion foundation are often at work when people interact with and grant legitimacy to modern institutions such as law courts and police departments, and to bosses and leaders of many kinds. Traits such as obedience and deference are virtues in some subcultures—such as among social conservatives in the USA—but can be seen as neutral or even vices in others—such as among social liberals. (70)
According to Haidt, liberals “demonize powerful groups … side with the underdogs to weaken the powerful … and heap contempt on traditions, bourgeois virtues … and the net effect is that liberals are seen as subverting order and promoting chaos … and [can be seen] as Satan” (“When Compassion Leads to Sacrilege”). Liberals prefer to question authority to ensure authority figures don’t take advantage of their power. Conservatives thereby view liberals as promoters of chaos (or worse as Satan) because liberals challenge established authority figures who maintain traditional notions of order and equilibrium. According to the conservative perspective, liberals thereby erode authority and challenge the current order. Conversely, conservatives work to maintain the order that has been constructed, value authority figures who rightfully acquire leadership positions through the concept of proportionality, and uphold respect for the deserving.

The fifth foundation is the purity/sanctity foundation, defined as Sanctity/degradation by Graham in “Moral Foundations Theory,” which has been determined to be one of most controlling foundations for conservatives. Graham and his colleagues elaborate on this foundation: “Disgust and the behavioral immune system have come to undergird a variety of moral reactions, e.g., to immigrants and sexual deviants. … People who treat their bodies as temples are praised in some cultures for the virtues of temperance and chastity” (71). In “Tracing the Threads: How Five Moral Concerns (Especially Purity) Help Explain Culture War Attitudes,” Spassena P. Koleva, Jesse Graham, Rivi Iyer, Peter H. Ditto, and Jonathan Haidt state that “the purity/sanctity foundation is based on the emotion of disgust in response to biological contaminants (e.g. feces or rotten food), and to various social contaminants like spiritual corruption, or the inability to control one’s base impulses” (185). These authors find that their “current studies speak most clearly to the role of concerns about physical and spiritual purity in many social controversies,” which makes this moral foundation an instigator of social controversy (192). Koleva and her colleagues assert that “The dominating importance of purity/sanctity concerns is surprising, and is not well captured by past psychological analysis of the determinants of political attitudes” (192). They continue by stating “that conservatives are more susceptible to the emotion of disgust … which in turn may underlie the evolutionary development of purity-based morality” (192). The foundation of disgust appears to be an important moral foundation that stokes social controversy and so
called “cultural wars,” and it fosters the division that occurs as groups identify based upon ideological preference.

An additional moral foundation defined as Liberty/oppression has recently been discovered and is discussed during Haidt’s Stanford Lecture “When Compassion Leads to Sacrilege.” Haidt explains that “there is a deep human desire to not be dominated, bullied, or oppressed, and we get together to take down those bullies.” There are two kinds of liberty at play in political discourse: “Negative liberty [is] the absence of obstacles which block human action. Freedom to be left alone. … Positive Liberty [is] having the power and resources to choose one’s path and fulfill one’s potential.” Haidt continues: “the right … stands for negative liberty. Give me liberty; don’t tread on me … whereas liberals gave up liberty basically. Liberals embraced positive liberty, and now act in ways that violate negative liberty.” Liberals embrace positive liberty by implementing restrictions in some sectors of life so that people can acquire the power and resources required for success. For example, liberals tend to favor taxation that redistributes wealth to the poor, or restrictions on business practices that empower individuals over business. This differs from the conservative concept of liberty in the sense that conservatives tend to favor absolute liberty, especially in business practice, but the policies enacted by liberals to create liberty for all inhibits business and other forms of conduct, thus offending some conservatives.

These moral foundations or moral intuitions serve as underlying elements that control political orientation. They shed light on the scripts and schemata that substantiate political groups, and therefore provide an effective means for understanding group-based political ideology.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This analysis utilizes several interrelated theories from prominent scholars in their associated fields to discover pragmatic approaches to moderate political discourse. These theories start with Kenneth Burke’s concepts of Identification and Division: people inherently identify with one another based on shared substances, acts, or ideologies, but consequentially divide from others in the process. Tuen van Dijk’s theory about a social setting’s influence on identification posits that certain ideologies or knowledge scripts must be understood and used in order to both identify with and persuade particular groups. George Lakoff lays the foundation for understanding how political ideology is control by a worldview that is constructed according to metaphoric thought, and he discovers two different worldviews that control political ideology. Jonathan Haidt supports and extends van Dijk’s concept of social cognition with his Social Intuitionist Model and posits that certain emotional cues and intuitions ultimately enable persuasion. Haidt’s Moral Foundations Theory extends Lakoff’s theory of political ideology by discovering the six essential moral foundations (schemata) that control moral thought and influence political orientation.

Haidt’s Moral Foundations Theory, which extends Lakoff’s family-based metaphors, provides a starting point for this analysis because it enables me to pinpoint moral appeals that could otherwise be too complex and difficult to navigate. Granted, because of the nature of discourse, there will always be a blend of ideologies contained within a moral argument. Additionally, these moral foundations are so closely related in the social setting that one particular moral foundation could influence another moral foundation. But this theory, which is thoroughly supported by social research and justifies Burke’s concept of consubstantiality, provides a foundation for targeting specific moral appeals within political rhetoric.

By pinpointing those moral appeals and utilizing Blackburn’s Principle of Charity and van Dijk’s knowledge structures, the logical conceptualization of those appeals within American discourse can be discovered. Because of the fact that many ideological arguments
contain and are supported by unstated premises, Blackburn’s Principle of Charity will enable me to discover the strongest moral premises that make up arguments on both sides of the political spectrum. The discovery of these premises that coincide with the knowledge scripts contained within political discourse will allow us to further understand the information that substantiates each of Haidt’s moral foundations, and it will further help us understand how moral appeals are situated within political rhetoric.

Last, but most importantly, the discovery of these knowledge scripts will enable us to further understand Burke’s concept of consubstantiality, identification, and division, thus allowing rhetoricians to better understand how moral appeals contained with political rhetoric sway the public to vote for or against political policy. Kenneth Burke’s theory of Identification and Division and Haidt’s Social Intuitionist Model help to explain why some moderate political speeches are more influential than others based upon their ability to identify with the moderate public by sharing moral substance. Considering that the general public is indeed more moderate than political elites and that a healthy blend of liberal and conservative morality is best for society, moderate approaches to political rhetoric could have the most influential impacts on society at large. Therefore, this study utilizes a blend of these theoretical approaches, which have been developed by scholars in several disciplines, including psychology, linguistics, argument, and rhetoric, to conduct a rhetorical analysis of political discourse. What follows is an analysis of Romney’s Chillicothe Address and Clinton’s Democratic National Convention Speech. This rhetorical analysis seeks to discover how liberal and conservative thought is based upon the moral foundations that Haidt and his colleagues have discovered, with the goal of determining the knowledge scripts that both unite and divide in our social and political world.
CHAPTER 4

ROMNEY’S CHILlicoTHE ADDRESS

In an attempt to discover moderate conservative group scripts and their underlying ideologies, the following analysis focuses on Romney’s Chillicothe Address in Ohio because the state contains a nearly even split between liberal and conservative votes. Most scholars, political scientists, and journalists agree that Ohio is a pivotal state for any presidential campaign, which was the case for Obama and Romney during the 2012 Presidential Election. In “Oct. 22: Ohio Has 50-50 Chance of Deciding Election,” professional statistician and electoral analyst Nate Silver argues that “Ohio is central enough in the electoral math that it now seems to matter as much as the other 49 states put together.” In the article “GOP Convention: Key States are Likely Target of Romney’s Big Speech,” political reporter Jonathan Lemire labeled Ohio the “battleground of battlegrounds.” In “Romney Heads to Ohio, The Most Enigmatic of Swing States,” political reporter Caitlin Huey-Burns argues that “No Republican has won the White House without carrying Ohio,” a state that is “large, diverse and fickle, making its 18 electoral votes all the more precious—and difficult to count on.” According to Paul Sracic, chair of the department of Political Science at Youngstown State University in Ohio, “swing voters are maybe five to eight percent of the population of Ohio, but those swing voters, small number, are probably going to determine which way Ohio goes, and if history is any teacher here, which way the national presidential vote will go.” The state of Ohio represents an important venue for the 2012 presidential campaign because of the largely balanced vote between Ohio’s citizens and the small number of swing voters who ultimately determine the state vote.

Not only is this state crucial to any presidential campaign, but it represents a venue where a moderate approach might be more appealing and successful. Romney’s speech took place in Ross County, where he held a small advantage, but that advantage was not large enough to guarantee a win, and a small number of voters were either undecided or unaccounted for. According to The New York Times’ “Election 2012 State Results” from Ohio, 50.4 percent of Ross County voters supported Romney and 48 percent supported
Obama at the time of the Chillicothe Address. This location provided Romney with a home court advantage because he was supported by a small majority of the county, but this small number could have changed at any moment because of the even split between voters. Considering this atmosphere, Romney might seem more reasonable and therefore appeal to a larger audience if he adopts a moderate stance, which could win over the moderates and Democrats who make up the undecided vote. Therefore, Romney’s Chillicothe address will be analyzed to discover how the moral foundations are situated within rhetorical appeals, and as a result, we can discover conservative scripts that substantiate in-group identification.

This analysis is not concerned with the validity of any of Romney’s assertions, but focuses on discovering the knowledge scripts that make up conservative political schemata, and thus aims to discuss how the binding moral spheres are situated within argumentative structures that encourage identification. In this speech, identification truly does encourage division, but that was Romney’s campaign choice, not a predestined end result.

In this speech, Romney obviously argues that he is the appropriate man for the Oval Office. He first points out the exigencies of the current presidency by amplifying the economic issues and the lack of jobs that plague the country. He points out that people are tired, concerned, and struggling to make ends meet, and he blames Obama and the Democratic Party for these issues. According to Romney, it has been Obama’s policies that have caused the country to fall into despair, and Romney has the plan and leadership to lead the country out of its downtrodden state. Romney is the “clear and honest choice.” This is a predictable argument, and it could be considered effective, but embedded within this argument are the moral appeals that lay a foundation for the conservative ideology. Romney utilizes antithesis to distinguish himself from Obama and his policy, and he portrays Obama as the scapegoat responsible for America’s struggles. In *The Philosophy of Literary Form: Studies in Symbolic Action*, Kenneth Burke explains that “Men who can unite on nothing else can unite on the basis of a foe shared by all,” and Burke defines this rhetorical theme as a scapegoating mechanism that induces identification (193). Obama is thus portrayed as the “Prince of Evil himself,” who is responsible for America’s downfall (193).

Romney opens his speech by touting Ohio’s great Republican “governor, John Kasich and [the] outstanding senator, Rob Portman” to appeal to Republicans in the audience. By doing so, he praises the state of Ohio and their conservative voters for electing outstanding
men who have been “doing a great job despite the head winds from Washington.” He continues by stating that he “can’t wait to work with Senator Portman to turn those Obama head winds into pro-job policies that will help working families across Ohio.” This statement encourages identification with those who have voted for or agree with these two politicians by amplifying their quality of work and beneficial policies, and it marks the beginning of Romney’s policy-based antithesis.

Interestingly, Romney further appeals to those Republicans through the “Obama headwinds” metaphor that erodes President Obama’s authority; Romney uses this metaphor to construct a group-based appeal that unites Republicans who disagree with Obama’s policies, but it also dissociates Democrats who agree with such policies. The headwinds metaphor alludes to headwinds that buffet a ship and prevent it from sailing in the right direction. The ship metaphor was heavily used by Frederick Douglass and religious speakers in earlier centuries, and it signifies a new and pure direction for the American community; it is important to note that this metaphor is deeply rooted in Christian belief and frequently used in American Jeremiads, and it is largely symbolic for a vessel that leads to a pure direction in life. In “The Meaning of July Fourth for the Negro,” Douglass utilizes the ship metaphor to signify the wrong direction that the American “ship of state” was headed by condoning slavery: “From the round top of your ship of state, dark and threatening clouds may be seen. Heavy Billows, like mountains in the distance disclose to the leeward huge forms of flinty rocks” (173). For Americans, the ship signifies a new direction because America’s forefathers fled Britain to start a new colony and form laws that were supposed to facilitate a pure society; therefore, the ship is an example of an embodied metaphor that America’s forefathers physically experienced. As a result, the “ship” became symbolic for the freedom that America gained, and it signifies a new path to a pure promise land: a new way to create a country, and a gift granted by God. As a result, “ship of state” has become symbolic for America’s government, which controls the direction that our country is headed, therefore the ship of state should signify President Obama and his cabinet. But the Obama headwinds metaphor suggests that detrimental headwinds result from President Obama’s policies, which dissociates Obama from his command of the ship that must take proper course. This metaphor suggest that he is responsible for steering the American ship off
course, a correlation that also signifies that our current ship has no captain or leadership, thus eroding President Obama’s authority.

Romney utilizes the ship metaphor to draw a correlation between Obama’s policy and America’s economic unrest. Romney labels America’s economic struggle as the “Obama Economy” and states that “it’s clear that President Obama’s policies aren’t fixing these problems, they’re making them worse.” In this case, Obama and his policies, “those headwinds,” are blamed for the lack of jobs that have changed America’s prosperous direction, and could thus be seen as corrupting the purity of the American community. This statement is based upon the premise that Republican policies automatically promote a strong economy and thus bolster the American community, while Democratic policies encourage “unemployment,” increase “poverty,” amass “debt,” and unfairly redistribute money from hardworking and deserving Americans and place it in the hands of undeserving deviants. Through this correlation, Romney illustrates President Obama as America’s scapegoat because his impure policies have corrupted smooth-running capitalism.

Romney further amplifies Obama’s impurity through the good-is-up/bad-is-down metaphor so compellingly discussed in George Lakoff and Mark Johnsen’s *Metaphors We Live By*: “Thus, GOOD IS UP gives an UP orientation to general well-being, and this orientation is coherent with special cases like HAPPY IS UP, HEALTH IS UP, ALIVE IS UP, CONTROL IS UP, STATUS IS UP is coherent with CONTROL IS UP” (18). Our conceptualization of these metaphors originates from physical and cultural experience; we have the common perception that those who stand up tall are fit, energetic, and ready to handle life, while those who fall down are hurt, weakened, or are exhausted. Romney asserts that “President Obama … [is] intellectually exhausted, out of ideas, and out of energy. And so his campaign has resorted to diversions and distractions, to demagoguing and defaming others … what’s different this year is the president is taking things to a new low.” In this passage, Romney illustrates Obama as a fallen politician who has stooped to “a new low” and now plays “an old game in politics” in which the practice of defaming is more important than arguing for appropriate policy. Purity conceptually equates with good health, being upright, and healthy; impurity conceptually equates to physical and intellectual exhaustion, and being low. Therefore, by suggesting that Obama has stooped to a new low, Romney ontologically defines Obama as an impure individual who institutes detrimental policy that prevents a
proper course of action. That purity—policy that encourages a healthful way of life—could have been protected by keeping the American ship on course through upright leadership, but President Obama’s policies corrupted the purity of that ship because of his fallen status and changed its direction, causing economic unrest and job loss, thus preventing the American community from taking advantage of their God-given liberty to work hard to bolster their own community.

An important premise behind this metaphor is that conservative policies promote job growth and thus provide people with the God-given liberty needed to make a living for themselves. By making this argument, Romney’s speech parallels Hitler’s rhetorical strategies in Mein Kampf, as discussed by Burke in The Philosophy of Literary Form, in the sense that Romney chastises President Obama’s policies, but fails to explain how those policies have caused the economic downturn. While analyzing Mein Kampf, Burke explains, there is a “medicine” for the “Aryan” members of the middle class in the projective device of the scapegoat, whereby the “bad” features can be allocated to the “devil,” and one can “respect himself” by a distinction between “good” capitalism and “bad” capitalism, with those of a different lodge being the vessels of the “bad” capitalism. (196)

Romney makes the same argument: Democratic policies promote “bad” capitalism and thus bring about economic ruin in the US, while Republican policies, which focus on deregulation and capitalistic liberty, promote “good” capitalism. I want to make it clear that in no way can the content of Romney’s speech be compared to the content of Hitler’s manifesto, but the rhetorical strategies included in both are blaringly similar. Romney identifies Obama as the impure scapegoat and blames him for America’s economic struggle (ironically, many argue that our economic mess results from a lack of regulation), but Romney fails to explain how or why Democratic policies promote “bad” capitalism. Ultimately, he does not need to support this argument if he only appeals to conservatives. The concept that Democratic policies inhibit the equitable fairness of “good” capitalism and trample upon economic liberty are common knowledge scripts for conservatives and do not need to be explained. Through Romney’s scapegoat mechanism and metaphor that create a division between the two parties, Republican policies are conceptually equated with pure policies that will guide the American ship back on course and replenish America’s economic landscape.
This emphasis on purity heavily relies upon the moral foundations of fairness and liberty—moral concepts that focus on economic liberty and justice based upon the equity of hard work—and both of these moral foundations have beneficial impacts on the American community:

America runs on freedom. Free men and women, pursuing their dreams, working hard to build a better future for their families. This is what propels our economy. When an American succeeds, when she wins a promotion, when he creates a business, it is that individual, that American that has earned it, that has built it. Government does not build our businesses, the American people do. (Romney)

This quote embodies the Republican concept of fairness: individual equity achieved through hard work, hard work acquired through policy that promotes liberty, and liberty maintained through deregulation. According to this logic or knowledge script, Obama’s low policies restrict people’s God-given liberty, thus defiling the American community and preventing the liberty necessary to succeed as individuals. But according to conservative knowledge scripts, individual success is an essential building block for the community. Conservatives stand by the concept of equity based upon hard work because it makes sense for those who work hard to be justly rewarded through monetary gains, and equity itself refers to the law of justice and monetary value in property. Romney does not explicitly reference any form of purity, but he does illustrate Obama as an impure individual whose Democratic policies prevent the American community from rightfully acquiring God-given equity through hard work. In the same way that being down is symbolic for being impure, being lost is symbolic for an impure direction.

While it is difficult to weigh exactly how Romney favors each of the moral foundations, it appears that the foundations of purity and fairness are paramount throughout his speech. And following suit, as Burke explains, identification truly leads to division, because in an attempt to identify with his conservative base and highlight the exigencies of his campaign, Romney chides Obama and his policies for the supposed wrong direction that America now heads: “we need to change the direction of the country by changing the current occupant of the Oval Office.” As a result, his speech could be seen as less than moderate, but it is important to note that he does express deep concern for the American community.
Romney then constructs the frame that Obama is responsible for the perceived “cultural wars” that the political elites create through media outlets, and this political antithesis further erodes President Obama’s ethos as an authority figure:

this president has pushed Republicans and Democrats as far apart as they can go. And now his allies are pushing us all even further apart by dividing us into groups. He demonizes some. He panders to others. His campaign strategy is to smash America apart and then cobble together 51 percent of the pieces. (Romney)

This quote appeals to the audience’s sense of community by categorizing Obama as a destroyer of the American community. In this sense, President Obama erodes the American community from within by widening the perceived gap between the two political parties that make up America. And by the nature of antithesis, if Obama widens the gap further, Romney will close that gap. Ironically, Romney’s speech is not a strong exemplar of rhetoric that unites individuals because he employs the same sort of division that he accuses Obama of using.

Romney closes his amplification of the exigency by focusing on the need for a more pure community that is united under one flag: “America is one Nation under God. American history has been a story of the many becoming one—uniting to preserve liberty, uniting to build the greatest economy in the world, uniting to save the world from unspeakable darkness.” This amplification of the moral foundations of purity and community are closely intertwined, which is only fitting considering that he vies for a seat of authority in a country that was founded largely on Christian belief. But this argument is effective, because it is through community and cooperation that a group of people uplift themselves, to use the common up-is-good metaphor, and so his audience will likely feel a sense of pride through patriotism and possibly associate more closely Romney. Furthermore, his reference to “one Nation under God” alludes to a pure and united society founded upon religious belief; those beliefs can strengthen the community, assuming they are steered in the right direction. The notion that America needs to save the world from unspeakable darkness further illustrates the relationship between purity and community by contrasting America’s purity with unspeakable darkness; in a sense, this mimics the American Jeremiads that foresee America as the new promised land and the light against darkness. According to Haidt’s theory, these appeals work by focusing on the audience’s moral foundations of religious and moral purity, and patriotic community, and therefore should strongly appeal to the conservative and
moderate members of audience. These appeals could work for liberal voters as well, but the
attack on Obama will divide Romney from the audience members who value President
Obama and his ideals.

Romney continues to appeal to the audience’s sense of patriotism and community by
recalling the dead who have given their lives for the American way of life: “there is no
mention of their race, their party affiliation or what they did for a living. They lived and died
under a single flag fighting for a single purpose. They pledged allegiance to the United
States of America.” This sense of patriotism will arouse pride in the audience and unite them
under the single greatest cause: the American community. The flag works as a unifying
symbol, and “unification under a single flag fighting for a single purpose” encourages the
audience to remember the patriotic sacrifices necessary to defend America’s identity and
values, especially liberty and freedom. By praising fallen soldiers who have pledged
allegiance to the US, Romney encourages the audience to follow in patriotic service to their
country and maintain the American community and its dream. Those soldiers, especially
those who have been killed or maimed, embody a duty and sacrifice to the American
community and its way of life, and when the audience is reminded of these great feats and
sacrifices, emotional upwelling could encourage the audience to feel the same duty and
protect the American community from impure threats. Additionally, there is no need for
racial identifiers; soldiers who risk their lives for their community become equal and united,
and they exemplify this greatest cause: allegiance to their homeland for the purpose of
development and improvement. Romney amplifies ideal American conduct from the
conservative perspective, and according to him, President Obama destroys those values,
highlighting Obama as the scapegoat responsible for the economic unrest and social upheaval
that followed: “So, Mr. President, take your campaign of division and anger and hate back to
Chicago and let us get about rebuilding and reuniting America.”

It is important to recognize that in this section, Romney refers to the angst and
struggle that America must face to defend its way of life. This ideal, the struggle for the
American values and its way of life, is an important aspect of conservative thought: for
conservatives, it is crucially important to defend community and to exact the equity of
fairness upon those who attempt to defile the community. The equity of fairness can be
reconceptualized as payback—another ontological metaphor that justifies retribution based
upon previous harmful conduct: an eye for an eye. Because conservatives see fairness as justice and/or payback, the American people rightfully have a duty to protect their way of life if it comes under threat: according to the equity of fairness, offenders deserve punishment and defenders deserve retribution. And so this ideal is laced into the argument by recalling those who have lost their lives defending American values. Those American defenders are then closely contrasted with Obama’s leadership and policy, which according to Romney have divided the country through hate and anger. The audience is therefore reminded of the hardship that American families have struggled with: those families cope with the loss of loved ones who defend the American continent and its values from abroad, while President Obama conversely wastes those efforts by destroying the country from within; this contrast further amplifies the narrative that President Obama is America’s impure scapegoat. Based upon this script, since President Obama threatens the American community, he is neither American nor fit to be the authority figure of the American ship of state.

Romney has made good use of the binding moral foundations to appeal to his audience, and he has primarily focused on the moral foundations of purity, community, and fairness, but he also relies on the foundation of harm throughout his speech. He amplifies the harm foundation by focusing on the hardship that has occurred, supposedly because of President Obama’s policies: (1) “Unemployment has been above 8 percent for 42 months”; (2) “Half of recent college graduates can’t find work or a job that matches their skills”; (3) “Nearly one of six Americans are in poverty today”; and (4) “the President has amassed five trillion dollars of debt.” These issues focus on the harm that has befallen the American community and could thereby arouse high levels of anger, distrust, and resentment towards the president and his Democratic policies. This arousal of emotion could therefore encourage the audience to vote for a conservative president. According to Burke and Haidt, identification and consubstantiality must occur at some level in order to persuade, and emotion must be aroused to encourage action. The embedded antithesis could encourage the audience to think that liberal policy has caused current issues. By the nature of antithesis, once negative emotion is associated with liberal policy, the audience could be more inclined to vote for a conservative authority figure who appears fit to lead the community and guide it in the right direction. They could associate conservatism with purification and repair, or a way to nudge the American community forward.
Romney effectively amplifies the binding moral foundations of purity, community, and authority to highlight the exigency of his campaign and appeal to his conservative base: Obama is an exhausted authority figure who inappropriately divides the country, defiles its purity, and saps the foundation that America is built upon. Unfortunately, because of his heavy use of antithesis and scapegoating, Romney’s speech was not as moderate as one would expect considering Ohio’s sociopolitical venue. His speech was likely not very successful for moderates in the audience, especially if they agreed with Obama’s perspectives and policies. Furthermore, the included group assumptions and schemas that make up conservative group scripts have been discussed; this discussion is clearly not an exhaustive list, but it contributes to larger understanding of conservative conceptualization. While Romney’s antithetical approach likely turned off many moderate voters who agreed with some of Obama’s policies and perspectives, antithesis could have worked considering the economic downturn and resulting social unrest. Since Romney is competing against President Obama, it makes sense to highlight President Obama as the man responsible for the economic downturn; by eroding Obama’s authority, Romney will appear to be a more viable and authoritative candidate by nature of antithesis, so long as the audience agrees with him. Romney certainly constructs rhetorical appeals that work for a conservative base, and even though he looks out for the general wellbeing of the community, he fails to construct a moderate appeal. For Romney, it is primarily through purity, community, and equitable fairness that the American dream can be reached.
In an effort to provide balance and discover the differences between liberal and conservative political scripts, Clinton’s “Democratic National Convention Speech” (DNC speech) should provide a counterpoint to Romney’s conservative knowledge scripts. Clinton’s gave his DNC speech on September 5, 2012, in Charlotte, North Carolina, to support Obama’s campaign and presidency. Because of the venue, the audience was primarily comprised of liberals and Democrats, but this speech was also televised and distributed through mass media, making it highly accessible to the moderate public. According to Real Clear Politics’ statistics that average 912 different polls in “Direction of Country,” on September 6, 2012, 62.8 percent of Americans believed the country was headed in the wrong direction, which presents a challenge for President Obama and his reelection. Therefore, considering the contentious and uncertain American atmosphere, it makes sense to address economic issues and construct a moderate appeal to sway the populace. Clinton gave a strong argument that included an effective balance between liberal and conservative moral foundations, particularly those of fairness, community, and liberty, but an appeal to care did stand out the most. And given the economic climate during this time period, much of his argument addresses economic conditions and the political policy instituted by President Obama and his Cabinet while simultaneously responding to claims made by Romney and Paul Ryan. What follows is a breakdown of some of the most prominent appeals that make use of the moral foundations or knowledge scripts and schemas identified by Haidt.

In this speech, Clinton supports President Obama’s authority by highlighting his success in counteracting the economic downturn that occurred just before he entered the White House; he does so by incorporating knowledge scripts that include complex appeals to the moral foundations. Clinton primarily focuses on economic recovery to promote the president’s authority: “I want to nominate a man … who saw [the economy] suffer the biggest collapse since the Great Depression; a man who stopped the slide into depression and
put us on the long road to recovery.” This argument for recovery, which is heavily supported by statistics, is an ongoing theme that buttresses the President’s authority and responds to many accusations and “Republican narratives.”

While Clinton supports President Obama’s authority, Clinton’s most dominant moral appeals focus on the moral foundations of care, fairness, and community. Shortly after Clinton introduces Obama’s beneficial policy, he highlights the Republican perspective of fairness and success: “This Republican narrative … says that every one of us in this room who amounts to anything, we’re all completely self-made,” a concept that represents the law of Karma according to Haidt: hard work pays off and promotes success. He then contrasts that concept with the liberal perspective by appealing to the moral foundations of care, fairness, and community:

We Democrats—we think the country works better with a strong middle class, with real opportunities for poor folks to work their way into it … with a relentless focus on the future, with business and government actually working together to promote growth and broadly share prosperity. You see, we believe that “we’re all in this together” is a far better philosophy than “you’re on your own. (Clinton)

In this section, according to the premise or knowledge scripts that act as secondary truth conditions, the concept that a “country works better with a strong middle class” suggests that a more equal distribution of wealth promotes a healthier economy and stronger community. This knowledge script includes an appeal to harm and fairness, because if a stronger middle class exists, more Americans can afford life’s necessities, which include food, shelter, health care, and education (required for growth and improvement). A focus on “real opportunities … with a relentless focus on the future” promotes both care and fairness because all individuals should have an equal opportunity to work hard to develop their future, and therefore policies should be introduced to provide those opportunities for lower and middle class citizens. The notion that “we’re all in this together” further supports the care foundation, because it’s through community and cooperation that any civilization thrives, and a group of people will be better off if they work together to construct a better community; it goes without saying that life throws hurdles in people’s path, and those hurdles can be random, but a community as a whole can better respond to those hurdles when compared to a single person. Indeed, Clinton supports this perspective on cooperation and thus appeals to community by asserting that “business and government [should] actually work together to
promote growth and broadly share prosperity.” Interestingly, while community is considered to be one of the foundations that conservatives care about more than liberals, this speech heavily appeals to community, but it is a community that fosters and cares for each other rather than a community that needs to defend itself from outsiders.

Embedded within this script is the moral foundation of fairness, and the premise behind this script includes a curious mixture of equality for all and proportionality. The conservative focus on fairness—the law of karma and proportionality—is included in this appeal because real opportunities are only opportunities; individuals must take those opportunities and succeed through hard work and determination. Furthermore, the intense focus on the future further suggests the conservative law of karma because hard work and dedication allow people to responsibly succeed and climb the social ladder. But in order for this prosperity to occur, there has to be equal opportunity for all people, and so Clinton includes the liberal perspective of fairness by emphasizing notions of equal opportunity and shared prosperity. If equal opportunity exists, then people are afforded the liberty to work hard and succeed, and shared prosperity within a community suggests that the distribution of economic income is fair and balanced. The opposite of a fair and balanced economy could look something like the economic distribution of today, or perhaps worse if today’s unequal distribution carries itself to the extreme ends. If a small number of individuals own a larger majority of today’s wealth, one can hardly argue that economic distribution is fair, nor can people argue that those individuals worked that much harder than the majority of people in the US, but true economics is based less upon fairness and more upon liberty. This analysis treats only a small portion of Clinton’s text, but his argument is full of these scripts that include a careful balance between liberal and conservative notions of fairness for the promotion of care within the American community.

After providing statistics to forward the claim that Democratic policies support the community by promoting job growth, Clinton continues to display care for the American community, which is dependent upon the concept of fairness:

advancing equal opportunity and economic empower is both morally right and good economics. Why? Because poverty, discrimination, and ignorance restrict growth. When you stifle human potential, when you don’t invest in new ideas, it doesn’t just cut off the people who are affected; it hurts us all. We know that investments in education and infrastructure and scientific and technological
research increase growth. They increase good jobs, and they create a new field for all of the rest of us. (Clinton)

Clinton laces the moral foundation of fairness into his appeal to community-care by focusing on the need to invest in the future through programs that promote the ability to work. The premise behind this short passage is that if a cooperative community invests in human potential through education, and if people are provided the means to acquire the education and job skills through equal opportunity, growth will increase, and all people within the community will be provided with the opportunity to work hard and create new fields that continually foster growth, thus fostering community improvement. This is a reoccurring argument, but it is different from Romney’s in the sense that community should promote growth, as opposed to individuals who promote community through the law of karma. Clinton straddles a middle ground by including both the laws of karma/proportionality and equal opportunity. This appeal is encouraging because it focuses on community promoting community, but it is important to note that these premises are couched within an appeal to care.

In addition to providing a good balance of the care, fairness (both liberal and conservative versions), and community (a strong conservative appeal) moral foundations, Clinton also appeals to the moral foundation of authority by praising President Obama’s ability to work closely with Republicans in office, specifically the national security team that was made up of both Democrats and Republicans at the time: “I am proud of the job [Hillary Clinton] and the national security team have done for America. … I am grateful that they have worked together to make us safer and stronger, to build a world with more partners and fewer enemies … for the relationship of respect and partnership … and the signal that sends to the rest of the world.” Clinton pinpoints Obama’s ability to cooperate with other representatives in office, some of whom competed against him. By doing so, Clinton works to bridge the perceived gap between Democrats and Republicans, and he buttresses the authority of Obama and those who have cooperated with the president. The fact that these authority figures have responsibly handled their duties through cooperation amplifies their authority, and this amplification highlights their ability to lead; authority becomes the product of cooperation (community) and fittingly justifies leadership.
Clinton continues to praise President Obama for his ability to handle his duty when he says, “President Obama’s whole record on national security is a tribute to his strength, to his judgment, and to his preference for inclusion and partnership over partisanship. We need more of it in Washington, D.C.” This statement boldly argues for a political community that works together rather than polarizes; and this is an astute response, especially given the political climate during Obama’s presidency. This view on cooperation stands in stark contrast to political tactics from the Republican Senate. In *The New Deal: The Hidden Story of Change in the Obama Era*, Michael Grunwald quotes a discussion with Republican Vice President Joe Biden that illustrates the Republican Senate’s determination to prevent cooperation during Obama’s presidency:

Vice President Biden told me that during the transition, he was warned not to expect any bipartisan cooperation on major votes. “I spoke to seven different Republican senators who said: ‘Joe, I’m not going to be able to help you on anything,’” he recalled. His informants said McConnell had demanded unified resistance. “The way it was characterized to me was: ‘For the next two years, we can’t let you succeed in anything. That’s our ticket to coming back,’” Biden said. (207)

Clinton appeals to the audience’s sense of authority by praising those individuals for acting upon their duty to work together. The premise behind this argument is that our leaders have a duty to work together to resolve America’s issues, and that is why they are in office, as opposed to working apart to institute their own policies based upon party-identification. This amplification of authority works well alongside a community appeal, because for Republicans, the American community and its preservation are incredibly important, and authority figures should be able to facilitate a smooth-running community that is defended from outsiders. The result of the compromise and cooperation from our head authority figure and his cabinet members are improved national security and a higher level of support from other countries. This appeal to authority, an appeal that works in tandem with community, is a strong moderate appeal because both the American people and outside countries are included in a union that is facilitated by compromise. The Conservative concept of community focuses on Americans, the liberal concept of community stresses the global community, and Clinton effectively appeals to both and thus likely identifies with many moderates in the audience.
Finally, Clinton facilitates a moderate appeal by including a strong reference to the conservative topoi of fairness. He first sets up context by pointing out charges made by pro-Romney ads that claimed “that President Obama wants to weaken the work requirements in the welfare reform bill.” Clinton then supports Obama’s policy and responds to that charge by arguing that the administration agreed to give waivers to those governors and others only if they had a credible plan to increase employment by 20 percent, and they could keep the waivers only if they did increase employment … The requirement was for more work, not less. (Clinton)

This inclusion is important, because it highlights President Obama’s willingness to place stringent requirements on welfare. Many conservatives despise welfare because it redistributes wealth from the “deserving” and gives it to the “undeserving”; and of course, the premise behind this conservative concept of equitable fairness is that people who fail to work hard enough find themselves jobless, and thus fail to adequately support their community. Therefore it is only fair that they fall into their poor position.

However, by requiring states to demonstrate their ability to move people from welfare into the workplace, Obama and Clinton uphold the concept of equitable fairness because the ultimate purpose is to get people back to work, not to give money to the undeserving. The money that is given functions as a security blanket that decreases harm, but that blanket does not act as a coddling womb with an indefinite duration and unlimited hand out. Clinton clarifies the stringent requirements of the welfare system, and those requirements illustrate a willingness to help families in need while highlighting and preserving the concept of equitable fairness: people must work to earn their due share. The premise behind this position is that welfare checks will help so long as politicians produce employment results. More importantly, this demonstrates President Obama’s ability to institute moderate policy that incorporates liberal and conservative moral foundations.
CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Burke’s asserts that people must share substance in order to become consubstantial—unification based upon shared topoi, knowledge, and ideologies—a consubstantiation that enables identification and encourages persuasion. Haidt’s Social Intuitionist Model, which clarifies how relationships and emotional cues that influence people’s intuitions encourage the adoption of new perspectives and understandings, supports and illustrates Burke’s identification theory. Teun van Dijk’s argument that group-based knowledge scripts that are consistent with and reify group schemata must be amplified in order for a particular group to accept a particular position, also supported by Haidt’s Social Intuitionist Model, further illustrates the logical mechanisms behind Burke’s theory on identification. What these theories point out is that knowledge scripts, which tend to be implicit concepts, can provide useful information that allows us to understand how political rhetoric works to unify or divide.

This analysis explicates the knowledge scripts that constitute and maintain moral appeals in political rhetoric, and the goal has been to discover the moral appeals, or knowledge scripts, that encourage political moderation. Haidt and his associates’ Moral Foundations Theory extends Lakoff’s Moral Politics by discovering the innate moral preferences and ideologies that encourage consubstantiality with and adherence to liberal and conservative sociopolitical philosophies. And while it is true that these philosophies do not necessarily control identification with Democrats or Republicans respectively, the ideologies espoused by liberals and conservatives are strong predictors of political party identification because their views are closely aligned with knowledge scripts that construct Democratic and Republican group schemata. More importantly, knowledge scripts are often implicit premises, and applying the Moral Foundations Theory and the Principle of Charity allows for a more informed discovery of the premises that constitute Democratic and Republican moral ideologies. This analysis begins to explicate the moral-political knowledge scripts and discover a means through which moderate appeals can facilitate political compromise.
Through this analysis, I have discovered that Romney’s Chillicothe Address and his included knowledge scripts are not the best exemplars of a moderate approach because of his heavy use of antithesis and scapegoating. He or his advisers consciously chose to construct an argument that polarizes for the sake of strengthening his own authority in the eyes of conservative voters, but the effect is rhetoric that encourages identification with hard-line conservatives while alienating moderate and liberal voters. Romney includes knowledge scripts that appeal to the moral foundation of care and display concern for the American public, but this appeal is constructed by framing President Obama as the scapegoat responsible for America’s economic unrest. Romney’s rhetoric vilifies Obama and his Democratic policies, which therefore polarizes and encourages division between the two parties.

Romney primarily follows Haidt’s explanation of the conservative moral foundations that serve as topoi or group schemata by primarily adhering to the concepts of purity, equitable fairness, and a duty to bolster the American community. Romney’s view of purity is negative purity in the sense that America’s purity has been lost and needs to be restored. Romney argues that purification will occur by replacing President Obama and instituting Republican policy, which will cleanse the American landscape and restore natural economic order. America’s purity has decayed because President Obama has instituted policies that tread upon the conservative concept of fairness and restrict the liberty of “good” capitalism. Republican policy will therefore cleanse America by facilitating job growth, which will allow people to reduce their own harm and act upon their duty to work hard for themselves and their community. This concept of fairness is based upon the premise that people have a duty, to themselves and their community, to strengthen the economy through hard work and dedication. This concept depends primarily upon equitable fairness, though he does illustrate a need for equality by amplifying the need for job growth within America. He displays care for the community, and he certainly amplifies the need to maintain and reinforce the community by purifying the Oval Office, but that care for the community is based upon the ability to produce jobs so that people can fulfill their duty to themselves. His message is less about caring for the general wellbeing of the community and more about providing jobs so that people can fulfill their own wellbeing through monetary gains and bolster their community.
Romney’s Chillicothe Address is glaringly ironic because, while he chastises Obama for widening the gap between the political parties and identifies Obama as the scapegoat responsible for America’s problems, Romney practices the same antithesis that he chastises Obama for, and Senate Republicans, his associated political-party members, have been chastised because of extreme partisanship. In “Jumping the Fiscal Cliff: The Political Economy of Fiscal Policy-Making under President Obama,” Stormy-Annika Mildner and Julia Howald argue that “deeply diverging beliefs and ideologies must be made responsible for Washington’s inability to govern on fiscal issues,” and they highlight the Republican Senate’s polarized position when they quote Republican Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell’s statement: “‘the single most important thing we want to achieve is for President Obama to be a one-term president.’ [This] is paradigmatic for the position most Republicans held, consequently blocking any kind of legislation proposed by the Democrats” (22). This raises questions as to whether Romney even attempted to adopt a moderate tone to address the widest possible audience, or whether he used fear tactics and identification to constitute conservatism in order to reinforce the Republican agenda. After all, in “Perceptions of Social Dangers, Moral Foundations, and Political Orientation,” social psychologists Florian van Leeuwen and Justin H. Park find that “people who perceived more social dangers also tend to place greater emphasis on the binding foundations [(authority, purity, and community)] relative to the individualizing foundations [(care, fairness)]” (172). In accordance with this and previous research, Romney’s rhetoric suggests that he was simply trying to scare his audience, thus elevating their intuitive emotional cues, and constitute a conservative audience by adhering to right-wing knowledge scripts that construct their associated moral ideologies.

Clinton provides a good counterpoint to Romney because Clinton’s appeals are much more balanced; therefore, his appeals enable him to identify with a larger number of Americans, thus making his argument more persuasive. In his Democratic National Convention speech, Clinton occupies a middle ground and constructs discourse intended to persuade the moderate public by including knowledge scripts that appeal to both liberal and conservative moral foundations. Despite delivering his speech at a venue that was dominated by Democratic voters, Clinton was wise to include moderate appeals because his speech was televised and reached a large audience. Clinton’s moderate approach to political discourse
could be one of the primary reasons for his reputation as a charismatic leader: he strengthens his ethos by setting aside combative rhetoric and bridges the political divide by exemplifying a moderate political position, therefore enabling identification with a larger audience. Haidt argues that “people's privately held judgments are directly shaped by the judgments of others”; therefore, Clinton’s identification and ethos strengthening proliferates as more people adhere to his argument (“The Emotional Dog and Its Rational Tail” 819).

Clinton constructs these moderate appeals by incorporating both liberal and conservative political ideologies. He includes two different knowledge scripts that constitute moral notions of fairness: equality for all (liberal) and equitable karma (conservative). He includes two different appeals to community, but primarily focuses on the American-community knowledge script: even though he argues that the American community has been strengthened by forming relationships with outside countries, he primarily emphasizes the need to bolster the American community, thus straddling the political divide between the Global community (liberal) and American community (conservative). Furthermore, that American-community appeal is framed to focus on cooperation that fosters those within, therefore making his moral standing more liberal by emphasizing cooperation and alluding to equality for all; the container thereby promotes the contained and reduces harm. In terms of policies that need to be introduced into the community, Clinton includes a conservative appeal by amplifying the need for fair programs that allow those contained within the community to promote themselves, and thus reinforce their container. He upholds and focuses on President Obama’s authority by incorporating facts that demonstrate how Obama promotes the general wellbeing of the American community. And while he includes many moderate appeals that could reach out to conservatives, his speech truly focuses on concern and care for the American people, which is his strongest and most prevalent appeal.

Between these two speeches, the knowledge scripts that constitute moral liberty seem to create conflict between the two parties. Conservatives favor free reign for the market economy, which encourages an economic liberty that bolsters the community through free growth. Liberals push for policy that constrains economic liberty but produces equality and cares for the American community at large. Considering the Republican notion that an unbridled economy facilitates maximum growth, especially after the economic issues that America struggles to recover from, I can’t help but question how much of that
conceptualization is based upon metaphoric embodiment. According to metaphoric embodiment, regulations that restrict economic development will therefore restrict economic prosperity: restriction on business suggests by association that profit will be restricted as well. Free-market reforms have certainly boosted economic growth in the short term, but when those reforms begin to erode America’s infrastructure, education for example, and create large disparities in wealth, there is no question that those reforms will have long-term effects. Regulation can prevent many different forms of harm that are associated with business practices; regulation can therefore promote more smooth-running economics for the entire country.

Another primary difference between the two political parties is illustrated by the knowledge scripts that construct each party’s concept of community. Liberals uphold positive community in the sense that community promotes itself through cooperation, and legal policies should promote the majority’s general well-being. This conceptualization is closely associated with the liberal concept of fairness: everyone deserves equality and a fair chance at life. On the other hand, Conservatives favor negative community in the sense that the community must defend itself from outsiders who wish to erode that community from within, and their conceptualization of “handouts” exemplifies this notion; again, this conceptualization is closely associated with the conservative concept of fairness. Furthermore, capitalistic rules exist in a combination of the conservative notions of fairness and community: those who fail to work hard do not deserve to be included within the community and are thus cast out because of their inability to work within. Under this knowledge script, the poor and homeless could be considered unworthy and are thus cast out by society; they failed to contribute and became parasites, thus deserving their “just” reward.

To a degree, many of the political group scripts included in these presidential speeches are clichéd and foreseeable, especially the appeals to community, simply because of the nature of the event. Presidential candidates magnify patriotism, and so campaigns are saturated with symbolic patriotic appeals; indeed, it is not difficult to praise Americans in America. But presidential campaign speeches are appropriate for analysis because the candidates must appeal to the widest possible audience, and considering the fact the majority of the American populace are indeed moderates, it makes sense for presidential candidates to adopt moderate rhetorical appeals. One of the pitfalls of American politics is that discourse
devolves into a blame game in which parties hurl insults at one another, as opposed to addressing current social issues and attempting to unveil the causes of social, economic, and political upheaval. Policies should address the economic, historical, and social contexts in which they arise, and politicians and their party members should use real information from the past and present to guide future policy choices.

Another glaring irony about American politics is that while millions of dollars are funneled into the political machine, both for presidential campaigns and think tanks, that funding often amounts to political attacks and rhetoric that work to divide; if only those funds could be rerouted to study the pitfalls of economics, address issues within our current economy, and discover more effective means to create equal opportunity. After all, in “The Impact of Inequality,” social justice researcher and public health specialist Richard G. Wilkinson concludes that societies that maintain a more equal distribution of wealth through policy promote stronger and healthier citizens who more easily maintain inclusive social relations, which further strengthens their community: “we can begin to see that there may be policy handles capable of improving the psychosocial well-being of whole societies … [and] the levels of psychosocial well-being in society are built on material foundations” (728).

Political rhetoric should induce policy that addresses critical issues and works to construct equality and opportunity, and our society should be strengthened by such policies. Therefore, American political rhetoric must change its focus, because America faces pressing issues, and there is proof that certain policies can strengthen whole societies and still fit within the bounds of free-market capitalism. Because those policies represent a healthy marriage of liberal and conservative perspectives, moderate rhetoric could induce cooperation and unification, and bring about a new era in American society. Political discourse needs to work for the benefit of the community, not for the benefit of the politician. American citizens no longer trust their government, and aside from greed and corruption, agonistic and distorted information within political discourse encourages this distrust.

The analysis of these two speeches only represents a small facet the moral scripts that encourage identification or division. Because each speech is respectively tailored to either support Obama or argue for Presidential replacement, both speeches include clichéd appeals to the American community and less-detailed knowledge scripts; however, Clinton’s speech more thoroughly incorporates useful information because of the detail he provides and the
evidence he relies upon. Ultimately, to develop a more thorough understanding of these moral appeals, political manifestos created to respond to an issue, which inherently incorporate details by nature of that response, need to be analyzed to discover the nuanced positions within those appeals. Rhetors and scholars will therefore be able to utilize that knowledge to understand the origins and ideologies that affect emotional intuitive cues, thus developing a better understanding of how to construct moderate political appeals.

Future studies should investigate how conservative-created animosity in the news, and the associated fear and disgust that is aroused by conservative rhetoric, influences the general public at large. Another interesting investigation could compare liberal and conservative rhetoric to discover which side includes stronger emotional appeals that encourage negative emotions, such as fear and disgust. Discourse that appeals to fear has certainly encouraged American war efforts, but I suspect that it has also strongly encouraged other policy decisions as well. Conservatives tend to incorporate offensive and antagonistic perspectives towards liberals, especially in news media, and if those appeals to fear influence the audience, our news media programs could inherently constitute a more conservative nation at large because of their antagonistic and fear-arousing rhetoric. And while liberals and Democrats may utilize rhetoric that arouses fear, I suspect those appeals are much weaker than conservative and Republican fear-inducing rhetoric. If this fear-inducing rhetoric influences the American public, the accumulation of conservative ideologies could result as the confluence of future issues creates more serious crises, including global warming, rising inequality, dwindling national resources, and the destruction of ecosystems that we depend upon. Fear and other negative emotional appeals tend to induce conservatism, and an escalation of fear coupled with crisis after crisis could in fact influence the entire public over time.

What Haidt’s Moral Foundations Theory seems to implicitly point out is that people adopt political ideologies based upon their own attitudes, which are more a product of genetics and social upbringing and less a product of intellectual deliberation. If this is the case, political policy could simply be an extension of a politician’s attitude: an egotistical and potentially insidious desire to see a political position materialized in society. Politicians should promote policy that provides a solution to a significant social problem rather than work for special interest groups or themselves. We are destined to have more and more
social issues as developing nations compete for dwindling resources. As a result, our local economies will feel the pinch, and we must use positive discourse to discover solutions to problems that are brought about by global contexts. We all think that our approach to an issue is the best, and many of us think that our assertions of truth are absolute, but when this egocentrism translates into political policy, democracy becomes a farce and politics becomes an egotistical exercise through which politicians promote and enforce their party’s agenda. As this argument concludes, a perfect example of this elite egocentrism is displayed by Congressional Tea Party members who have shut down the government in an effort to force President Obama to concede to their demands and defund the “Affordable Care Act,” a law that has already been passed and deemed constitutional, and they use the pending debt default as a weapon for extortion.
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