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Moral Foundations for Political Party Preference Among Residents of Politically Polarized U.S. Cities

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Walden University

College of Health Sciences and Public Policy

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Antoine Lee Barton

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Walden University
2023

Abstract

Moral Foundations for Political Party Preference Among Residents of Politically

Polarized U.S. Cities

by

Antoine Lee Barton

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Public Policy and Administration

Walden University

August 2023

Abstract

Excessive polarization, partisanship, and animosity can promote legislative gridlock in the American political electorate and can have a negative impact on democracy. The purpose of this qualitative study was to obtain a greater understanding of the moral foundations used by residents in polarized cities to determine political party preferences. Haidt and Graham's moral foundations theory and Janis's groupthink theory provided the conceptual framework. Secondary data consisting of open-ended responses from the 2020 American National Election Studies time series study were used. Secondary data were collected regarding likes and dislikes about the two major political parties (Democrat and Republican) from respondents in five polarized cities: Jackson, Mississippi; New Orleans, Louisiana; Baton Rouge, Louisiana; Birmingham, Alabama; and Shreveport, Louisiana. Data were analyzed to identify the moral foundations used by residents of politically polarized cities in the United States to determine political party preferences. Thematic coding was used through the lens of the conceptual framework, and findings indicate the moral foundations used by residents of politically polarized cities are primarily harm/care and fairness/reciprocity when assessing political parties. Ingroup/loyalty, respect/authority, and purity/sanctity were also used, but to a lesser extent. This research may contribute to positive social change by providing a better understanding of the reasons for political polarization, partisanship, and animosity, which could lead to methods for understanding partisanship to foster tolerance and civility in political discourse.

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Dedication

To my mom, Angela, who has been an amazing, and inspirational source for me during each step of my journey. You've helped me, cared for me, supported me, and I cannot believe our dreams are now coming true! We have come a long way, as being a child from a single parent, and low-income household. Growing up, even though we did not have a lot of money we were rich in love. We have come a long way, and we have made it, and most importantly we can try to help make others lives better. You made me become who I am, and I am so glad we can finally celebrate this amazing time! I could not have accomplished any of this without you. I love you! The world is better with you because of your caring and beautiful heart. This world is better because of many people like you in it, and the words thank you are not enough. What I have accomplished is thanks to you.

Love you always,

Antoine Lee

Dr. Antoine Lee

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

Political polarization, especially within cities, can adversely affect democracy and public policy. Political polarization has been an integral source of conflict within societies (Stewart et al., 2020). Excessive polarization can undermine democracy by making compromise difficult between individuals who disagree (Axelrod et al., 2021). Understanding the reasons for political polarization, animosity, and partisanship by specifically understanding the moral foundations of the United States' two major political parties by individuals in polarized cities can hopefully lead to greater understanding and possibly diffuse its effect. While engaging in politics, people aligning with a political party are more likely to view the opposing major political party unfavorably (Pew Research Center, 2016, 2022a). Republicans and Democrats agree that it is stressful to talk about politics among individuals who disagree (Van Green, 2021). Additional research should be conducted to explore this to better understand the moral foundations used by residents of politically polarized cities in the United States to determine individual political party preferences. In this chapter, I discuss the background, problem statement, purpose of the study, research question, conceptual framework, nature of the study, and significance of the study.

Background

As a result of excessive disagreements, it has become increasingly difficult for politicians to enact public policies that can help constituents. In many countries, an increasing amount of political polarization has raised concerns regarding the stability of

their respective nation's democratic governance (Brown & Enos, 2021). Polarization, partisanship, and animosity negatively affect democracy and public policy because polarization and partisanship result in a stalemate in legislation in the U.S. Congress. The animosity between individuals or political parties carries over into policy discussions, often resulting in legislative gridlock, which harms democracy.

Highly partisan individuals could be a source of animosity within the U.S. electorate. Individuals with high partisanship are defined as utterly loyal to a political party or a coalition (Mohammed, 2018). Pew Research Center (2019a) has found that political animosity, antipathy, and hostility have increased among partisan individuals. Many voters live in politically polarized areas with virtually no exposure to individuals from a different political party (Brown & Enos, 2021). According to Dottle (2019), Jackson, Mississippi; New Orleans, Louisiana; Baton Rouge, Louisiana; Birmingham, Alabama; and Shreveport, Louisiana, are the top five most polarized cities in the United States.

Studying the moral foundations used by residents of politically polarized cities in the United States to determine political party preferences could develop further insight into partisanship, animosity, and polarization. In this research, I investigated the moral foundations used by residents of politically polarized cities in the United States to determine individual political party preferences. The research was conducted to address a gap in knowledge by analyzing individual's preferences to the different political parties through the conceptual framework of Haidt and Graham's (2007) moral foundation theory (MFT) and Janis's (1972) groupthink theory.

Problem Statement

Excessive partisanship, polarization, and animosity can promote legislative gridlock in the political electorate and harm U.S. democracy. As previously noted, Jackson, Mississippi; New Orleans, Louisiana; Baton Rouge, Louisiana; Birmingham, Alabama; and Shreveport, Louisiana, are the top five most polarized cities in the United States (Dottle, 2019). Not understanding the moral foundations used by residents of politically polarized cities in the United States to determine political party preferences can promote even greater polarization, partisanship, and political animosity fueled by a lack of understanding of those initial conflicts.

Polarization, partisanship, and political animosity have increased significantly in the United States (Desilver, 2022; Pew Research Center, 2014a; Pew Research Center 2014b; Pew Research Center, 2016). In fact, the United States has experienced the largest increase in polarization over the past 40 years (Boxell et al., 2022). Specifically, in a politically polarized era in the United States, there remains sharp partisan divides that continue to be a significant factor in the public's political values (Pew Research Center, 2019b). As Dixit and Weibull (2007) explained, political polarization includes dire risks, including bitter political debates, and a civil society can be threatened as a result. Addressing this problem of polarization, partisanship, and political animosity is important for future generations.

Partisan polarization might worsen for future generations if not addressed. According to Fisher (2008), in the United States, partisan polarization has increased for younger Americans compared to the entire United States. This partisan hostility continues

to be a problem, as noted by Martherus et al. (2021) who found that partisans dehumanize members of the opposing party. This problem can worsen because as younger Americans age, the partisan gap could continually increase, where red states will become more Republican and blue states will become more Democratic (Fisher, 2008; Wilson et al., 2020). Furthermore, partisans in both political parties are more likely to feel negativity toward individuals in a different political party, which may continue if not addressed (Pew Research Center, 2022b).

As a result of negative views toward other political parties, partisanship has subsequently increased. Partisanship has caused many problems in the U.S. Congress and with citizens. As a result of increased partisanship, there remains record legislative gridlock, less bipartisanship agreement on policy, and many other views that cannot be represented in policy when one party holds a majority in all the branches of government (Pew Research Center, 2017, 2022a), which harms U.S. democracy. Excessive partisanship can also prevent beneficial legislation from becoming law, especially in a divided government. Examples of beneficial legislation include climate change, gun safety, minimum wage, and campaign finance reform.

Increased polarization and how polarization has formed in the electorate has been widely studied. Worldwide, polarization has jeopardized politics and democracies (Arbatli & Rosenberg, 2021). Unfortunately, affective polarization has become so problematic that it is now a defining feature in U.S. politics (Druckman et al., 2021). Political polarization has also become a problem because power-hungry politicians can take advantage of a polarized electorate and use government to intimidate citizens in

democracies; power itself plays an essential role in people using the knowledge they have to change institutions for their benefit (Arbatli & Rosenberg, 2021; Pfeffer & Drummond, 2011). The United States is experiencing increasing political polarization and government intimidation toward opposition, which further polarizes the nation (Arbatli & Rosenberg, 2021).

Peterson and Kagalwala (2021) have found that partisan selective exposure leads to more partisanship in the U.S. voting electorate. Partisanship selective exposure includes connecting to media sources, news, and opinions that an individual already agrees with, promoting a biased opinion (Peterson, Goel & Iyengar, 2021; Peterson & Kagalwala, 2021). Considering the increasing levels of partisanship and the increasing polarization of U.S. political parties, further research is needed to study how to bridge partisan divides (Desilver, 2022; Pew Research Center, 2014a; Pew Research Center, 2022a). Mason (2015) and Rekker (2021) found that partisan identities have polarized Americans, increased partisanship biases, activism, and anger, strengthening political identities.

Increasing levels of partisanship may lead to more intolerance between the two major U.S. political parties. The American electorate engaged in politics may force people into agreement with each other's political opinions, further promoting animosity. There is a need to better understand individuals' preferences with major political parties to explain polarization, partisanship, and animosity so that unity can be promoted. Studying the moral foundations used by residents of politically polarized cities in the

United States to determine political party preferences can help lead to an increased understanding of polarization, partisanship, and animosity.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to obtain a greater understanding of the moral foundations used by residents in polarized cities to determine political party preferences. Studying this might help explain the excessive partisanship, polarization, and animosity that can promote legislative gridlock in the political electorate and harm U.S. democracy. Through Haidt and Graham's MFT (2007) and Janis's groupthink theory (1972), I sought to better understand the moral foundations used by residents of politically polarized cities in the United States to determine political party preferences. Secondary data from the sample was drawn from the identified cities.

Data can be used to discover the political electorate's polarization, partisanship, and political animosity by exploring what individuals think of the United States major political parties. This research was conducted to explore the moral foundations used by residents of politically polarized cities in the United States to determine political party preferences. Exploring the moral foundations used by residents of politically polarized cities in the United States to determine political party preferences more deeply is essential, so individuals can become more informed on why Americans disagree regarding political parties. Understanding each other's differences may not mitigate political disagreements, but individuals will be able to understand each other better.

Understanding political polarization could support cooperation among politicians to promote legislation that helps as many citizens as possible. Arbatli and Rosenberg

(2021) found that research into political polarization could determine society's preferences and offer policy solutions. As Mason (2015) suggested, people have strong political identities, but individual positions on issues are not as polarized. Druckman et al. (2021) also found that narrowing issue divides does not exclusively require policy discourse but should include addressing partisan hostilities. Individuals are divided along partisan labels but may agree on specific issues (Mason, 2015).

In this research study, I considered the experiences of residents of politically polarized cities in the United States to determine political party preferences. Qualitative research was appropriate for this study because I analyzed respondents' words looking for themes to answer the research question. The phenomenon behind this research was divergent opinions on political parties with a goal to better understand polarization, partisanship, and political animosity. To address the understanding of political polarization, animosity, and partisanship, I sought to inquire on the moral foundations used by residents of politically polarized cities in the United States to determine political party preferences. My investigation of the moral foundations used by residents of politically polarized cities in the United States to determine political party preferences may foster a mutual understanding among individuals who disagree politically.

Research Question

The research question for this study was: What are the moral foundations used by residents of politically polarized cities in the United States to determine political party preferences?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework in this study included moral foundations theory by Haidt and Graham (2007) and groupthink theory by Janis (1972). This framework benefited this study because it explains how morality differs across individuals and groups. MFT can explain how contributing factors differ across political ideologies (Day et al., 2014). Individuals with different political ideologies have different likes and dislikes related to the political parties based on their morality. Individuals assess the appeal of different political parties based on their moral foundations, providing a rationale for why MFT is appropriate for the study.

Within the literature, there are central characteristics of MFT. Specifically, Haidt and Graham (2007) presented five foundations that individuals may prioritize: (a) authority/respect, (b) purity/sanctity, (c) harm/care, (d) ingroup/loyalty, and (e) fairness/reciprocity. MFT can explain why individuals have different political opinions on polarizing issues (Koleva et al., 2012). MFT can also explain differences on the likes and dislikes regarding the political parties and further explain why partisanship, acrimony, and polarization have increased. Wendell and Tatalovich (2021) explained how future research should focus on moral content research and distinguish between mixed and pure moral policies and non-moral policies to explore MFT further, and this is what was done in this study.

Groupthink theory helps to uncover the reasons for animosity between individuals of different political–ideological groups. Groupthink theory by Janis (1972) explains why the collective thinking of groups can present problems because the process can discount

alternatives that would have led members to think about their assumptions before committing to decisions. Groupthink can lead to conspiracy thinking in which individuals believe malevolent agents are responsible for adverse outcomes, and the group will perceive collective harm (Greenburgh & Raihani, 2022). Groupthink theory is essential for this topic of study because it explains why individuals of different political views are unwilling to compromise and thus have feelings of animosity toward individuals with different ideologies. Groupthink theory can explain why individuals are increasingly polarized and their varying support for different political parties. Central aspects of groupthink theory include a false perception of invulnerability, holding a belief that the group is inherently moral, rationalization by the collective, stereotyping outsiders, censoring oneself, the false perception of unanimity, self-appointed mind guards, and strong influence on dissenters (Barr & Mintz, 2018; Janis, 1973). As a result of the central aspects of groupthink theory, the symptoms include an incomplete assessment of objectives and alternatives, failure to reassess preferred choices, failure to reassess rejected alternatives, failure to search for information, selective bias when processing information, and failure to create contingency plans (Barr & Mintz, 2018; Janis, 1973).

Nature of the Study

The research design used for this study was a generic qualitative approach. I chose the qualitative research design because the method helps to deeply understand the experiences and phenomena that have influenced the data respondents being studied—in this case, residents living in the top five most polarized cities who self-identify with a political ideology or political party. The generic qualitative approach is interpretative

(Merriam, 2009), can be executed using an established qualitative methodology to create a new idea, and can have no methodological framework (Kahlke, 2014).

The generic qualitative research design incorporated in the present research study was used to analyze secondary textual data to gain insight into understanding the phenomena being investigated. Data were discovered on the American National Election Studies (ANES, 2021e) 2020 Time Series Study data center web page and were used as secondary data for this research. ANES stores open-ended secondary data responses by randomly sampling participants and inviting them to participate in completing a survey. A sample of the open-ended survey responses from individuals' explanations of their preferences for the Democratic and Republican parties were analyzed for the study.

I used the lenses of MFT and groupthink theory to explore the moral foundations used by residents of politically polarized cities in the United States to determine political party preferences (see Table 3). In turn, I aided in the discovery of causes of polarization, partisanship, and political animosity. By analyzing open-ended responses using the lens of moral development theory, I sought to understand how individuals are polarized and what leads to partisanship and highlighted reasons for polarization to reduce its effect.

Definitions

Legislative gridlock: Incapability of the government to enact significant policy proposals (Jones, 2001).

Morals: An individual and subjective view of what is right and wrong that can guide daily existence (Hazard, 1994).

Moral values: Divided between binding values that govern group behavior and individualizing values that support individual rights and liberties (Yudkin et al., 2021).

Partisanship: Coordination among individuals who commit to a party of shared political ideas, which can result in conflict where partisans will unite to oppose individuals who are directly at odds (White & Ypi, 2016).

Political ideology: A set of beliefs about how society should be ordered and how a better society can be achieved (Erikson & Tedin, 2019).

Political polarization: The extent to which opinions on a political issue have been met with increasing opposition throughout time (DiMaggio et al., 1996).

Politically polarized city: An American urban area that has high separation between Republicans and Democrats, which is also known as *partisan segregation* (Dottle, 2019).

Assumptions

An assumption is a belief held within the research that is necessary for carrying out the research; however, it is nearly impossible to prove (Simon & Goes, 2018).

Assumptions are that there would be minor political agreement among different political-ideological groups and minor political agreement among individuals with different moral foundations. Another assumption is that individuals' moral foundations are used for justification and opposition toward different political parties. It is believed that opposing groups disagree on several moral issues, and find it difficult to understand how an individual could hold contrary views (Winget & Tindale, 2020). Individuals with different moral foundations will use their moral values to oppose political parties (Walter

& Redlawsk, 2021). Other assumptions include that the data collection was valid, respondents answered honestly, and data collected and analyzed from residents in the top five most polarized cities can help find solutions to the research problem.

Scope and Delimitations

The scope of the study includes the parameters of the study and what the research study covers and aligns with framing the problem (Simon & Goes, 2018). Therefore, studying what moral foundations are used by residents of politically polarized cities in the United States to determine political party preferences were selected to better understand animosity, polarization, and partisanship within the political discourse. The population included was residents in the top five most polarized cities who self-identify with a political ideology/political party and who provided open-ended responses to their stated preferences about the Democratic and Republican parties. Delimitations are characteristics that occur from the limitations, scope, and conscious inclusion and exclusion criteria of the research study (Simon & Goes, 2018). Collecting data from a sample of residents from a specific city (the top five most polarized cities) and restricting the study to only studying U.S. citizens are the specific delimitations for the study.

Limitations

Limitations are defined as constraints beyond a researcher's control stemming from methodology and the research design but that can still affect the study's outcome (Simon & Goes, 2018). Limitations include sample findings that cannot be generalized outside the top five most polarized cities, lack of political knowledge from data

respondents, and perhaps a sample not reflecting individuals who have animosity when discussing politics.

Significance

This research may fill the gap in understanding the moral foundations used by residents of politically polarized cities in the United States to determine political party preferences. The research was conducted to address the gap in the literature by analyzing individual's residing in politically polarized cities, and their appeal to the different political parties through the lens of the conceptual framework of MFT and groupthink theory (see Haidt, 2001; Janis, 1972; see Table 3). Understanding the moral foundations used by residents of politically polarized cities in the United States to determine stated political party preferences about the two major political parties may allow for an exploration of what people think of the political parties. This could facilitate learning about causes of political animosity, polarization, and partisanship in U.S. political discourse. Although the dislike felt between Democrats and Republicans in modern political science is widely discussed (Iyengar et al., 2012; Iyengar & Westwood, 2015; Mason, 2015), there is less discussion regarding conflict between those who identify as liberals and conservatives (Mason, 2018).

Analyzing individual moral foundations used by residents of politically polarized cities in the United States to determine political party preferences can help to understand the conflict between political ideologies and political parties. Most importantly, facilitating tolerance and decreasing political animosity and polarization in the political discourse could promote social change in public policy and politics. Decreasing

polarization, animosity, and partisanship could help to facilitate thriving democratic governance in the U.S. political electorate.

To promote social change, individuals actively engaged in politics should become more united, committed to solidarity and promoting tolerance among individuals who have disagreements, especially for the sake of democracy. As stated by Arbatli and Rosenberg (2021), increasing political polarization and government intimidation of political opponents resulted in democratic erosion. I investigated the moral foundations used by residents of politically polarized cities in the United States to determine political party preferences in an effort to preserve democracy. The United States has become increasingly divided, and promoting greater understanding for people who have different perspectives would lead to more positive social change.

Not everyone agrees politically or has the same political opinions in a diverse country. I aimed not to promote more agreement; the U.S. Constitution protects citizens' right to disagree. Instead, I hoped to promote a greater understanding of the reasons for individual differences in opinions and perspectives. Hopefully, a better understanding of different opinions and perspectives can strengthen democracy, and public administrators can better serve everyone in the United States.

Social change can be fostered when people have civilized political discourse in which each conflicting political ideology better understands each other, and there is less animosity, anger, and even hostility within the political discourse. Understanding how morals and groupthink could influence partisanship, polarization, and animosity while analyzing individuals' preferences with two major political parties can be a start to

fostering more tolerance and change in the U.S. political climate. Decreasing political animosity and increasing understanding of the political climate can promote more bipartisanship, especially when it is necessary during divided government.

Summary

Political polarization, animosity, and partisanship could promote legislative gridlock in the United States, which could adversely impact democracy. This qualitative study sought a greater understanding of the moral foundations used by residents in polarized cities to determine political party preferences. Haidt and Graham's MFT (2007) and Janis's groupthink theory (1972) were used to analyze the moral foundations from respondents in polarized cities to determine political party preferences. This study would strive for social change by hoping to promote more unity, solidarity, tolerance and understanding among individuals who have disagreements. In the next chapter, the literature review will go into detail with discussion on the conceptual framework and prior research relating to the present study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Excessive partisanship, polarization, and animosity can promote legislative gridlock in a political electorate and have a negative impact on U.S. democracy. The purpose of this study was to obtain greater understanding of the moral foundations used by residents in Jackson, Mississippi; New Orleans, Louisiana; Baton Rouge, Louisiana; Birmingham, Alabama; and Shreveport, Louisiana, to determine political party preferences that might help understand the excessive partisanship, polarization, and animosity that can promote legislative gridlock in the political electorate and can have a negative impact on U.S. democracy. To ensure that individuals promote unity and understanding, society must first understand the differences between political ideology and how political ideology differences formulate.

Understanding political ideology and the factors that influence ideology is unique from determining which factors can most influence an individual. Alford et al. (2005) found that genetics influence an individual's political ideology and attitude. De Neve (2015) found that personality is a factor that can predict political ideology. Therefore, personality can predict an individual's political ideology and can be a factor for political disagreement. Murray and Mulvaney (2012) found that a specific parenting style is a factor that can predict one's political ideology. In this chapter, I will discuss how political ideology is formed, the conceptual framework I used to help uncover why individuals' political opinions are formed, which is explained in the MFT that each political ideology holds, and groupthink theory relating to how groups with similar political views operate.

Exploring political ideology differences and understanding why people are divided on political issues can also help people better understand each other and decrease animosity among individuals who disagree politically.

Literature Search Strategy

The library databases I used to locate relevant literature included EBSCO Discovery Service from Walden University library using key search terms: *political ideology, political ideology formation, political polarization, political discourse, political ideology support, Democratic party, Republican party, political party, political party affiliation, moral foundations theory, political policy, political policies, public administration, law, legislati*, government, politic*, partisan* political animosity, partisanship, political partisanship, and group-think theory*. Key search terms and themes also used to answer the research question included *United States adult citizens, political issues, different political ideologies, promoting polarization, political divisiveness, and promoting political unity*. This study, including the literature review, has been drafted since 2016, so literature has been collected throughout the span of 7 years. When searching for articles, I sought research articles that had been peer-reviewed related to the topic of study, including current peer-reviewed literature.

Conceptual Framework

I used Haidt and Graham's (2007) MFT and Janis's (1972) groupthink theory in my study of the moral foundations used by residents of politically polarized cities in the United States to determine political party preferences. MFT can explain people's opinions on what is right and wrong and is a better predictor of attitudes beyond ideology

and demographics (Koleva et al., 2012). MFT beginnings can be traced to as early as 2001 when Haidt explained how individuals utilize moral judgments (Haidt, 2001). Haidt and Joseph helped to establish MFT working with Shweder et al. (1997) on questions relating to the foundations cultures use to create their moral systems (Haidt et al., 2009; Haidt & Joseph, 2004). Haidt and Graham (2007) also contributed to the MFT components that will be discussed in this study. Graham, Nosek, Haidt, Iyer, Koleva, and Ditto (2009) helped to create the questionnaire of moral relevance related to the foundation-related concerns, and the contextualized moral judgments, i.e., the moral foundations (Haidt et al., 2009). The MFT questionnaire has been found to be reliable and valid (Graham et al., 2011). MFT, specifically morality, may have its root origins in being motivated by one's self-interest (Brown et al., 2021). With this framework it is important to fully understand the moral concerns relevant to each group's ideology to better understand each other. If Democrats would like to better understand what makes voters select Republicans, and vice versa, they need to better understand the spectrum of moral concerns and consider if they can use that spectrum themselves (Haidt, 2008).

Janis (1972) is considered to have popularized the term *groupthink* and helped to establish groupthink theory. This theory explains how groups enforcing the thinking of the members of the group can lead to defective decision making (Janis, 1972). The conceptual framework for this study includes MFT and groupthink theory. Groupthink could lead to defective decisions because the group may decrease its qualities of mental efficiency, reality, and moral judgments (Valine, 2018). Furthermore, it is important to fully understand each group's moral concerns to understand each other better.

Political misunderstanding can be explained by Haidt and Graham (2007) who found that individuals who identify as politically liberal have moral views primarily based on harm/care and fairness/reciprocity, whereas individuals who identify as politically conservative have moral views based on all five of the moral foundations (Prince, 2009). The difference in priorities of moral foundations, or lack thereof, is what Haidt and Graham state can cause the misunderstanding (Haidt & Graham, 2007). MFT can help to better understand those differences and hopefully foster better understanding.

Individuals may have political disagreements because people have yet to explore divergent motives and dispositions that cause individual differences about right-wing and left-wing political issues (Kugler et al., 2014). Van Loon et al. (2020) stated that dehumanization and dislike for outgroup members is motivated by the idea that political opponents perceive the world in a different way. Solutions for this problem can include gaining better understanding of outgroup members regardless of individuals' identity or political ideology. Not only is exploring divergent motives and differences important but so is exploring unity. Clarke (2020) stated how even when there are highly polarized political parties, the United States is not just a dichotomous choice; therefore, focusing on factions instead of unity, even within political parties, could cause in-fighting. Focusing on unity and understanding within the political parties and ultimately within the U.S. electorate could mitigate political polarization.

Previous research, including from Janis (1972), has indicated that individuals who disagree can still be friends. According to Neubaum et al. (2021) individuals who rated political statements that violated a variety of their moral foundations may not unfriend

each other on social media. Specifically, Neubaum et al. (2021) found that the moral judgments of specific political statements are only moderately related to an individual's decision on whether social media users would unfriend someone. Even while considering that morality can inhibit feeling offended, it can have pluralistic and intuitive components, and under specific circumstances, can motivate feeling offended (Silver & Silver, 2021). However, Neubaum et al. found that close friends are less likely to unfriend someone when they made morally violating statements (Neubaum et al., 2021). Therefore, if individuals are emotionally closer to each other, they are more likely to tolerate disagreeing moral opinions and remain friends.

Previous research has been focused on understanding how political ideology is formed, the factors that influence it, and the differences between individuals with different political ideologies. For example, Alford et al. (2005) tested whether political ideology has a genetic predisposition or an environmental influence. Alford et al. found that genetics helps to influence political views but only slightly influences political party affiliation (Alford et al., 2005). Although genes can influence how people view specific political issues, genetics only slightly influences if one becomes a Republican or Democrat (Alford et al., 2005). However, Smith and Hatemi (2020) found significant and consistent evidence of heritability regarding moral psychology specifically using the moral dilemmas approach. This can play into the role of understanding moral decision making and why people differ in their morals (Smith & Hatemi, 2020). Behavioral and social scientists would be better served if individuals explore underlying reasons why people disagree politically (Kugler et al., 2014).

Moral Foundations Theory

The first part of the conceptual framework selected for this research study is MFT. MFT explains how an individual's morals influence political and social opinions on five different moral foundations (Day et al., 2014). The foundations for MFT include (a) authority/respect, (b) purity/sanctity, (c) harm/care, (d) ingroup/loyalty, and (e) fairness/reciprocity (Haidt & Graham, 2007). The five moral foundations include psychological developments for how individuals react emotionally to issues.

Other moral developmental theories take a different perspective from MFT and are important to discuss to understand how morals are thought to be developed. Kohlberg's moral development theory includes levels and within the developmental levels include stages (Kohlberg & Hersh, 1977). Kohlberg's moral developmental levels include (a) preconventional level, aware of good and bad dependent on the consequences; (b) conventional level, doing what is expected from the family, group, or nation is perceived as valuable regardless of the consequences; and (c) postconventional, moral validity is no longer dependent on authority of a group but on universal ethical principles (Kohlberg & Hersh, 1977; Sanders, 2022). Kohlberg's moral developmental theory is cumulative and could be dependent on age, asserting that higher moral development levels are complex, while lower levels can be understood if one reaches higher moral developmental levels (Sanders, 2022).

Kohlberg's moral development theory became widely developed, and as the theory gained prominence, critiques arose. Gilligan asserted that care and responsibility within personal relationships are important characteristics of morality distinguished from

impartiality characterized within Kohlberg's moral developmental theory (Blum, 1988). While Kohlberg's ethics of justice, autonomy, and universal abstract moral principles was paramount in their proposed moral development theory, Gillian's critique on Kohlberg's morals development theory included prioritizing complex relationships based on caring for others (Reiter, 1996).

MFT helps to explain political views that are used, and how that facilitates understanding and form specific opinions regarding issues presented. In other words, MFT explains that political attitudes are developed in instinctual evaluations used to solve social issues (Smith et al., 2017). MFT shares political orientation, which can be influenced by ideological motives, however, MFT is still valuable in illuminating that people may react to political and social issues (e.g., authoritarianism) as if they are moral (Yilmaz & Saribay, 2019). The five moral foundations include fairness, care, purity, loyalty, and authority, all of which can predict political liberalism and political conservatism (Day et al., 2014). Each moral foundation can predict attitudes toward many political issues, for example, attitudes toward low-income individuals.

Harm has been found to be the strongest predictor of attitudes toward low-income individuals, followed by fairness, authority, ingroup-loyalty, and purity (Low & Wui, 2016). Each of those aforementioned five moral foundations have been found to be better predicting attitudes towards the poor compared to political affiliation (Low & Wui, 2016). Franks (2020) stated individuals high in the loyalty moral, who are more likely to be conservative, may show in-group bias toward their country by using less moral judgments of inequality in their country compared to other countries. Furthermore,

research incorporating the just-world phenomenon has shown that political conservatives are more likely to blame the poor for poverty (Franks, 2020). As a result, moral judgments have helped to provide further insight on why individuals value specific political stances.

In group loyalty within MFT can also explain charitable giving more so than political ideology, demographics, and religiosity. Specifically, individuals who have stronger morals in the individualizing intuitions (harm prevention and fairness) and weaker binding intuitions (authority, loyalty, and sanctity) are more likely to volunteer for charity (Nilsson et al., 2020). Individualizing intuitions predicted donations to causes that benefited out-groups, compared to binding intuitions which predicted donations that benefited in-groups (Nilsson et al., 2020). These findings suggest that the moral foundations (e.g., binding foundations) can explain the differences morals have when volunteering and donating to charity.

MFT has been found to be linked to an individual's political ideology, especially when an individual's morals are violated. Smith et al. (2019) suggest that an individual's political ideologies interact with their moral foundations, especially when someone violates another individual's moral foundations. Liberals are more likely to dislike a person if an individual violates the morals of care and fairness (Smith et al., 2019). At the same time, conservatives are more likely to dislike a person if the individual violates the morals of authority, purity, and loyalty (Smith et al., 2019).

By conducting this study, I found the moral foundations that are used by residents of politically polarized cities in the United States to determine political party preferences.

MFT explained the moral foundations individuals make, which could explain political ideology. Morals and values could be one of the strongest predictors for political ideology because, according to Franks and Scherr (2015), MFT could predict voting behavior in the 2012 presidential election beyond demographic variables that are typically included in election forecasts. Although genetics are a factor in influencing political ideology, MFT can also explain the underlying reasons why political groups think differently.

To first mitigate hostility and anger within the United States political discourse, society should learn more on why individuals disagree, and this could foster better understanding. MFT can explain the underlying reasons for why people disagree politically. Haidt (2001) initially explained how moral reasoning is considered a post-hoc construction used after a judgment has been made. MFT has been selected because the theory helps to understand the underlying reasons for why there are political differences in the electorate (Kugler et al., 2014). Hatemi et al. (2019) has found consistent evidence that political ideology can predict moral intuitions, which implicates MFT as a relevant theory for understanding the moral foundations that are used by individuals to determine political preferences related to the study.

MFT is one of the essential frameworks in helping to understand moral foundations and how it relates to political ideology (Skurka et al., 2020). MFT helps to explain how different political ideologies prioritize different moral foundations. MFT has also been found to explain why there are different opinions on many moral issues people take sides on when forming political opinions (Kugler et al., 2014). In short, MFT

assumes that morality is almost innate and can be developed and distinguished within a specific societal culture and social context (Egorov et al., 2020). Furthermore, morality has been considered to be contested, and important to each individual (Haidt & Joseph, 2007). Within the theory, a principal tenet is that moral judgments are motivated by intuitive factors; specifically, the factors are automatic, emotional, and non-deliberative (Egorov et al., 2020).

MFT has five foundations that assist in explaining different political ideologies moral priorities. These moral foundations include harm/care, fairness/reciprocity, ingroup/loyalty, purity/sanctity, and authority/respect (Dawson et al., 2023). Furthermore, according to MFT, there are two types of foundations that categorize the theory's foundations: (a) individualizing moral foundations include care, and fairness foundations, and (b) binding moral foundations, which include ingroup/loyalty, purity/sanctity, and authority/respect foundations (Gehman et al., 2021; Nilsson et al., 2020).

There are five moral foundations, and the foundations are categorized as either binding moral foundations or individualizing moral foundations. The binding moral foundations are respect for ingroup/loyalty, purity/sanctity, and authority/respect (Nilsson et al., 2020), and they are motivated by a need to reduce threat, uncertainty, and can be used to justify the system (Strupp-Levitsky et al., 2020). This can be further explained through the fact that overall, individualizing moral foundations was strongly tied with perceiving less threat, while individuals who score higher on binding moral foundations perceive more threat (Morris & Stewart, 2022). Specifically, Hadarics and Kende (2018) found that binding moral foundations is mildly associated with right-wing

authoritarianism and negative perceptions toward dangerous and dissident groups, while on the contrary, individualizing moral foundations had a positive evaluation with the aforementioned groups.

Physical formidability and conservative social policies including hierarchical inequality and aggressive competition has also been researched. Brown et al. (2021) have found that formidability has been negatively associated with individualizing moral foundations such as fairness and care, while socioeconomic status has a positive relationship with binding moral foundations such as loyalty, respect, and purity (Brown et al., 2021). Individualizing moral foundations can reduce prejudice, while binding moral foundations have been found to be selective and increases prejudice specifically against derogated and dangerous out-groups that puts at risk an individuals need for certainty and security and a need to remain formidable (Brown et al., 2021; Hadarics & Kende, 2018). Even in the interests of promoting national security against threats, binding foundations can motivate one's positions even at the expense of an individual's stated political ideology. On political issues specifically, MFT has found that when political issues do not have an inherent relevance to morality, the binding foundations can support a small pivot away from one's assigned political ideology position in the interest of cohesion and national uniformity (Malka et al., 2016).

When it comes to individualizing foundations within the MFT, Yilmaz and Saribay (2017) found that analytical thought caused individuals to value the individualizing moral foundations regardless of political orientation. This finding implies that supporting individualizing foundations mandates more mental effort and can provide

the necessary reconciliation between different political ideologies (Yilmaz & Saribay, 2017). Individual moral foundations, specifically care and fairness, value individual protections and individual rights (Goenka & Thomas, 2022; Milesi & Alberici, 2018), whereas binding foundations, specifically purity, loyalty and authority, value the group's welfare (Milesi & Alberici, 2018). Binding foundations have been found to subdue self-expression and individual autonomy in order to bind individuals into social groups i.e. nations, families, and tribes (Graham & Haidt, 2010). In regard to political ideology, research has found that political conservatives are more likely to promote binding foundations more than political liberals (Kivikangas et al. 2021). Political liberals are also more likely to separate their individualizing and binding foundational moral systems much more than political conservatives (Turner-Zwinkels et al., 2021).

From the literature, there are findings that supporting the individualizing foundations over binding foundations can encourage bridging the divide between the polarized political ideologies. For example, justifying the system is linked to conservative individualistic tendencies to moralize behaviors, which strengthens their motivation to rationalize blame by justifying that an individual's choices are a product of free will and personal responsibility (Everett, 2021). On the contrary, political liberal tendencies may have the opposite effect.

Individual morality can also be applied to administering death penalty cases. Vaughan et al. (2019) found individualizing foundations influenced individuals to be more lenient on sentencing decisions, compared to binding foundations which is likely to have a greater punitive influence on punishment. Punitive punishments could possibly be

linked to binding foundations because individuals may support punishment to support social and moral cohesion (Tyler & Boeckmann, 1997). For example, if someone commits a heinous act, it is not only offensive against the individual, but also against the larger collective society (Silver, 2017; Silver & Silver, 2017). Lenient sentencing has been associated with a concern for harm and/or unfair treatment of the defendant, which are key values in the moral foundation framework (Vaughan, 2019).

In reference to the binding moral foundations of what Strupp-Levitsky et al. (2020) stated, the binding moral foundations come from a need to reduce threat. Smetana and Vranka (2021) found that reducing threat would apply to in-group members, as individuals with scores in binding foundations will influence the sensitivity for in-group fatalities, specifically for the use of nuclear and chemical weapons. As it relates to in-group bias, some of the literature goes into specific detail on belief similarity between out-group and in-group members. Stern (2020) has found that political conservatives are more likely to perceive higher in-group similarity than political liberals. Specifically, political conservatives are more likely to see commonality among individuals in their group than individuals who identify as political liberal.

Stern (2020) also found that conservatives were more likely to overestimate in-group similarity, whereas liberals underestimated in-group similarity. Stern found that conservatives and liberals both underestimated the similarity of out-group members (Stern, 2020). Finally, Stern also found that liberals possess more in-group similarity than conservatives on a national level (Stern, 2020), which may seem contrary to assumed beliefs. This phenomenon also overlaps with groupthink theory, which is motivated from

the basis of homogeneity groups collectively thinking, and the problems that arise. Some research has found mixed results regarding similarities/differences within the major political ideologies. When researching politically engaged Twitter users, Boutyline and Willer (2017) found that conservative individuals were more likely to be homophilous (i.e., being identical) than liberal and moderate individuals. This can help to explain how society can better understand each other by figuring out how groups perceive each other, both within and out of the group, to mitigate polarization and promote more unity.

Loyalty within groups can also affect the degrees of partisanship and in-group strength within individuals who share political ideologies. In-group member loyalty carries double standards within the MFT depending on the group the person belongs to and the victim's group. Conservatives, for example, believed that moral foundations were much more critical if the victims were individuals that were preferred, such as corporations or other conservatives (Eriksson et al., 2019). However, conservatives were more likely to believe the moral foundations were less relevant when the same groups were perpetrators (Eriksson et al., 2019). Liberals also were found to show the same pattern as conservatives for groups that they liked, such as the news media and other liberal individuals (Eriksson et al., 2019). Therefore, although political liberals and conservatives may have different morals, both political ideologies can have preferences for specific groups.

The apparent double standards inherent in political ideology can also be applied to the media, specifically in newspapers. For example, conservative newspapers used more binding foundations when advocating for human rights compared to liberal newspapers

(Stolerman & Lagnado, 2020). The cause of liberals binding foundations in the United States can be explained by Baldner et al. (2018), who found that binding foundations were more approved when there was a higher need for cognitive closure. However, research on MFT and predicting ideology using specific moral foundations vocabulary terms have had mixed findings. Sterling and Jost (2018) surveyed members of congress and found that liberal legislators did use more fairness-harm related words, and surprisingly words related to group loyalty and purity. On the other hand, conservative legislators used more language relating to authority (Sterling & Jost, 2018). Sterling and Jost (2018) asserted that liberal and conservative legislators used similar words to express different policy objectives.

When it comes to the foundational values of care and fairness, individualizing moral foundations such as evading harm and maintaining fairness are associated with having empathetic moral motivations (Strupp-Levitsky et al., 2020). For example, Morris (2020) found a strong relationship between empathy and liberal political views. Understanding empathy is one way people can better understand why there is increased polarization and could account for some of the differences in political views between conservatives and liberals in the United States (Morris, 2020). It is important to note that compassion/fairness has been found among individuals who are more likely to be liberal, whereas authority, in-group loyalty and purity were more likely found in conservatives (Dickinson et al., 2016). However, Scheffer et al. (2020) found that the over-exaggeration led to a stereotype that Democrats/liberals were more compassionate than the average Republican/conservative. Because of this, the stereotype exaggerated the self-reports and

the differences individuals perceive compassion across different political parties (Scheffer et al., 2020). Although there could be ideological differences in compassion, there is also an exaggeration that may not affect the reality of how compassionate individuals are genuinely (Scheffer et al., 2020).

In understanding empathy deeper, compassion was associated with care, whereas disgust was associated with purity (Landmann & Hess, 2018). Both binding foundations and individualizing foundations explained how conservatives compared to liberals will maintain a lower agreement of human rights (Stolerman & Lagnado, 2020). However, some researchers have found slightly different findings when analyzing binding foundations within the MFT. According to Talaifar and Swann (2019), on average liberals with strong alignment within their group endorsed binding foundations more than conservatives, and to the same level as conservatives who strongly align with their respective group. Therefore, the relationship of individuals to their political group and ideology is also important to assess (Talaifar & Swann, 2019).

MFT helps individuals understand each other more profoundly and hopefully bring forth peaceful political discourse. According to Lewing (2020), MFT provides access to understanding the opinions of oneself, and the opinions of others. Moral foundations guide how people can make decisions, especially politically, and can promote understanding on individuals' moral foundations, so citizens involved in United States politics can better understand people who disagree politically. More specifically, MFT could lead to a better understanding, and increase respect of the moral stances and views of moral/political opponents (Musschenga, 2013).

Moral foundation theorists have found through their previous research that liberals are more likely to prioritize fairness and avoiding harm while conservatives are more likely to prioritize loyalty, authority, and sanctity to decide on political opinions (Kugler et al., 2014). In the 2016 election, liberal moral intuitions tend to side disproportionately with fairness and care when voting for Hillary Clinton (Nath et al., 2018). MFT explains how the consequences of an individual's political beliefs influence moral framework (Hatemi et al., 2019).

MFT comes from the perspective that the morals liberals and conservatives disagree on are rooted in beliefs of what is moral and not what is genuinely moral (Kugler et al., 2014). Even with word usage, conservatives are more likely to use authority and purity words but fewer words based on loyalty (Frimer, 2020). Moral theorists chastise liberals for not being sensitive to other moral beliefs (Kugler et al., 2014). The same can be said for people who disagree with liberal moral beliefs. The findings, as mentioned earlier, can explain why there tend to be hostile disagreements because people are not likely to understand each other deeply. Lack of understanding can fuel hostility and promote a lack of bipartisanship.

Morality has been found to not exclusively explain how individuals treat others, but morality also includes binding groups together, living in a noble and sanctified way, and supporting essential institutions (Haidt, 2008). The research has a gap in the literature in studying how moral foundations for residents in polarized cities will work when analyzing political party preferences currently as political partisanship continues to become more divided and hostile (Pew Research Center, 2016; Pew Research Center,

2022a). It is critical to understand partisanship, and people who come to different conclusions politically because partisanship has been increasing (Pew Research Center, 2016; Pew Research Center, 2019b).

MFT explains why individuals disagree on different moral issues, and why people have stark disagreements in their political opinions (Kugler et al., 2014). In addition, the moral divide could also be brought forth, in part, by individuals' views on creativity, specifically in the loyalty/authority and sanctity morals. Tyagi et al. (2018) has found that when individuals score higher in having a creative personality, individuals are more likely to align with the Democratic party. The opposite can be true for individuals who affiliate with the Republican party (Tyagi et al., 2018). This can be argued that a moral belief is already subjective because it is based on an individual's personal belief of what is right and wrong behavior.

According to the MFT, liberals are more likely to prioritize fairness and avoiding harm, while political conservatives are more likely to stress authority, loyalty, and sanctity (Kugler et al., 2014). Understanding some of these morals can help individuals better understand each other and mitigate political polarization through education and information. Nath et al. (2018) found that the moral foundations was significant in predicting one's voting preference in the 2016 presidential election. Therefore, MFT predicts how individuals vote and can explain voting behavior in policy.

Conservatives are more likely to choose their morals through wanting to have a virtuous lifestyle (Kugler et al., 2014). Specifically, extreme right-wing, religious, and nationalist political ideologies were more likely to be affiliated with binding motivational

factors of authority, loyalty, and purity (Hahn et al., 2019). On the contrary, extreme left-wing and single-issue political ideologies were affiliated with care and fairness motivational factors (Hahn et al., 2019). This coincides with the literature mentioned earlier that stresses the values each political ideology shares as it relates to fairness and care across the political spectrum.

Graham, Haidt, and Nosek (2009) followed that same idea by studying how political ideologies differed using MFT. Graham, Haidt, and Nosek wanted to determine if political-ideological differences were rooted simply in public policy differences or underlying differences between individuals who disagree politically (Graham, Haidt, & Nosek, 2009). Graham, Haidt, and Nosek found that people who identify as political liberals were more likely to have higher degrees of harm/care and fairness/reciprocity in contrast to the other three moral intuitions (Graham, Haidt, & Nosek, 2009). Political conservatives were more likely to equally support the five moral intuitions (Graham, Haidt, & Nosek, 2009). The reason why Graham, Haidt, and Nosek studied this specifically is to understand the moral disagreements individuals have in the United States on fundamental issues that have been labeled as the *culture war* (Graham, Haidt, & Nosek, 2009).

In 2021, MFT changed its foundations to (a) care/harm, (b) fairness/cheating, (c) loyalty/betrayal, (d) authority/subversion, (e) sanctity/degradation, and (f) liberty/oppression (Moralfoundations.org, 2019). Individuals with a conservative ideology are more likely to distinguish themselves from others in a vertical manner, utilizing social hierarchy which dictates that individuals may be better than others; on the

contrary, liberals are more likely to distinguish themselves horizontally, which dictates that individuals are unique from others (Ordabayeva & Fernandes, 2018). Ordabayeva and Fernandes (2018) found that this occurs because conservatives are more likely to support and liberals are more likely to oppose dominance-based hierarchy, which believes in legitimate social structures.

Within MFT, it is important to note that individuals scoring on the different moral foundations do not represent good/bad but should always represent the unique differences individuals have within morals (Lewing, 2020). The present research study uncovered reasons why individuals have differences in political opinion. Although investigating political differences regarding political parties may not altogether mitigate partisanship, there is hope that it would decrease animosity among individuals who have political disagreements. Utilizing MFT, the study understood what possibly motivates political groups to take specific stances on political issues.

Haidt and Joseph (2004) found liberals are more likely to focus on prioritizing individual welfare and rights on politically divisive issues such as cloning, same-sex marriage and stem-cell research. Conservatives also are more likely to focus on those issues but use a larger range of moral intuitions such as the purity moral to understand divisive issues (Haidt & Joseph, 2004). Political sophistication has been found to be a motivating factor for the stances people take regarding issues of equal rights and fairness (Milesi, 2016). Specifically, political sophistication can contribute to moral concerns on specific political issues.

Many issues could be deemed polarizing, but one of the most current polarizing political issues were the bathroom bills. Bathroom bills are legislation that requires an individual to use the bathroom based on the sex stated on their birth certificate (Spencer, 2019). Cox et al. (2021) found that MFT was also used when taking stances in favor or in opposition to the bathroom bills. Regardless of an individual's political affiliation, the morals of authority/respect and purity/sanctity were associated with support of the bathroom bills, while individuals who valued the care/harm morals opposed the bathroom bills (Cox et al., 2021). The aforementioned findings can help us to understand how MFT foundations can explain individuals' stances on current political issues.

Moral foundations can help gain further insight on increased partisanship. Clifford (2017) has argued that the moral foundation of loyalty can predict stronger partisanship identity among individuals who uphold loyalty as a moral foundation. Loyalty can dictate how strong an individual will stay devoted to an individual, group, and political party, which is important to investigate when understanding the intensity of partisanship and polarization. Even in policy, think tanks aligned with both political parties found that Democrats and Republicans emphasize political issues owned by their respective parties while reducing the prominence of other issues (Fagan, 2021).

Religiosity groups can also influence an individual's policy positions, which are arguably influenced by morals. For example, many policies from the U.S. government, including healthcare, welfare provisions, and immigration, have core supporters of evangelical voters in the United States, which Cuevas and Dawson (2021) state can result in prejudice or derision to out-groups. The derision to out-groups can also explain the

hostility and anger in U.S. political discourse, especially when discussing contentious political topics and moral foundations. Hostility toward out-groups can better explain why people hold specific positions on controversial public policy issues. Saldaña et al. (2018) found that conservative ideology and education can predict attitudes on public policy issues, specifically immigration. Saldaña et al. found that highly educated conservatives held more negative views on immigration compared to liberals who were educated and conservatives who were less educated (Saldaña et al., 2018). Saldaña et al. found that Trump supporters were also more likely to exhibit more negative views about immigration (Saldaña et al., 2018). Although Donald Trump was not found to be the cause of the negative views, Trump can be considered the catalyst for the attitudes (Saldaña et al., 2018).

Morality plays a key role in psychological mechanism, but it is important to understand what morality is in its role of political ideology and political party. Haidt (2008) provided an alternative definition of morality as “any system of interlocking values, practices, institutions, and psychological mechanisms that work together to suppress or regulate selfishness and make social life possible” (para. 14). It is also believed that morals are selected from a conservative perspective, especially to have a virtuous life, exemplifying how morals can be a lifestyle choice (Kugler et al., 2014). Clifford (2017) mentioned how the magnitude of an individual’s identification toward their political party can predict how an individual participates in voting, politics, and political polarization.

The literature remains unclear on why some individuals have intense partisanship while others have weaker partisanship (Clifford, 2017). The study would explore the moral foundations used by residents of politically polarized cities in the United States to determine political party preferences to hopefully explain political polarization, partisanship, and animosity. Although understanding political differences with someone an individual disagrees with may not mitigate partisanship, hopefully, it would help individuals with different political ideologies understand each other better. The present research study continued to investigate more on MFT to uncover why there are disagreements.

Using MFT, it can be hypothesized that individuals with different political ideologies disagree because individuals have different morals prioritized. The rationale for choosing MFT is that it can predict political ideology, and more importantly, it can help individuals understand each other. During debate, it is unnecessary to view an opponent as villainous who cannot be reached, but instead appeal to moral foundations with the goal of reaching an understanding (Haidt & Joseph, 2004). Appealing to a political opponent's morals may be much more successful in hoping to bring forth better understanding on politically divisive issues (Haidt & Joseph, 2004). Moral feelings can determine an individual's political views just as much as a demographic class; however, researchers have said that future research would be needed to dig deeper into MFT on political values and behaviors (Nath et al., 2018).

In regard to MFT in relationship to age, Friesen (2019) found that each of the elements of MFT have a stronger effect the older an individual becomes, especially

regarding the authority, and the purity moral foundation. By contrast, younger people are more associated with individualizing foundations, such as harm and fairness arguments (Friesen, 2019). Moreover, moral foundations do change across time, and the changes are less likely to be influenced by political attitudes and genetics (Smith et al., 2017).

Although Friesen found that some aspects of moral intuition beliefs are passed on within a family (Friesen, 2019). Morality politics are influenced not only by family, and age, but also politics, and an individual's group membership (Friesen, 2019).

MFT is critical for the conceptual framework, especially for the purpose of this present research because MFT assisted in gaining insight on individuals who have different preferences (Haidt & Joseph, 2004). MFT does that by providing knowledge that individuals are morally motivated when it comes to debate (Haidt & Joseph, 2004). MFT helps to explain vital differences in moral foundations with people who disagree politically, which is why MFT was used as part of the conceptual framework.

Furthermore, MFT is appropriate for public policy and administration because people are motivated by moral foundations when evaluating public policy stances, political ideology, and political party preferences.

Moral Foundations Theory and Public Policy and Administration

MFT relates to public policy considering an individuals morals can motivate their decision's on a choice of political party, political ideology, and motivate an individual's stances on public policy issues. Political parties and political ideologies typically consist of individuals with similar stances on public policy issues. Public policies consisting of morality policy tend to be more partisan, uphold deep values, include competitive

political parties, and seeks out solutions that are non-incremental (Haider-Markel & Meier, 1996; Mooney & Schuldt, 2008). More specifically, a public policy is considered a morality policy based on the understanding of the individuals involved and the terms within the debate among those individuals (Mooney, 2001; Mooney & Schuldt, 2008). Essentially, morality policy exist based on an individual's own perceptions of how the individuals involved feel moral public policies are defined. Furthermore, if at least one advocacy coalition participating in the debate can define the issue as threatening to their core values, then the issue would be considered a moral public policy issue (Mooney, 2001; Mooney & Schuldt, 2008).

As more Americans view political party opponents as threatening, and partisan antipathy has been increasing throughout the years (Gramlich, 2017; Pew Research Center, 2014b), MFT has been linked to public policy issues. Moral convictions tied to intolerance explains how individuals do not want to live nearby, be friends with another individual, and not sit in close proximity with an individual who does not share the same moral convictions (Haidt et al., 2003; Skitka et al., 2005). Present research explored individuals in polarized cities likes/dislikes about the two major political parties to help better understand partisanship, polarization, and animosity.

Groupthink Theory

The second theory of the conceptual framework that has been selected for this research is groupthink theory by Janis (Janis, 1972). Although this research will be focusing on how individuals from polarized cities evaluate the Democratic and Republican party, groupthink theory can help to explain why partisans evaluate the

political parties in the manner in which is currently done. Groupthink theory can answer further questions that explain why partisanship and polarization occur. The critical elements of groupthink theory include individuals falsely believing their own invulnerability, individuals within a group believing their group is inherently moral, collective rationalization, stereotyping outsiders (e.g., the out-group), a false belief of consensus, strongly influence dissenters especially within a group, and self-appointed guards of an individual's mind (Barr & Mintz, 2018; Janis, 1973).

MFT mentions a great deal on the topics of in-group vs. out-groups, however groupthink theory goes into detail on what happens when groups promote confluence to make decisions. The groupthink theory relates to the present study because it explained how obsessive partisanship can become a continuing problem. Groupthink arises when there is high stress coming from an external threat, and there is low self-esteem from failures or from having to face difficult decisions; which can determine high cohesion and lead to groupthink (McCauley, 1998). In fact, group cohesiveness when making quality decisions within groups, has become the core element of Janis's (1972) groupthink theory (Mullen et al., 1994). Janis (1982) also defined groupthink as a procedural way of thinking that individuals will engage in when group members have a deeply cohesive in-group, and because the group members seek uniformity, the group will not seek out alternative ideas. One of the most long-held beliefs for group members utilizing groupthink is that group decision-making would enhance the accuracy of the group's decisions (Günther, 2020). Groupthink has been hypothesized to occur because of an individual's need for concurrence, increasing the likelihood of malfunctioning

decision-making (Günther, 2020). For example, when looking at how political ideologies demonstrate false consensus making, liberals, moderates, and conservatives all engaged in false consensus making by overestimating their in-group consensus (Blanchard et al., 2021).

When there is a dissenting opinion when a group is garnering false consensus, the group utilizing groupthink could possibly make a dissenting opinion-holder feel as an other within their group. Groupthink elements can lead to othering group members that do not agree with the group. Making group members feel like the other because the individual does not agree with the group is another key element that defines groupthink. Some of the symptoms of groupthink theory that focuses on dissenting group members who are made to feel like an outsider include; direct pressure on dissenters, and having self-appointed mind guards which places pressure toward uniformity within the group (Rose, 2011). When a group member does not agree with the group they are brought forth suggestions to not cause disturbance within the group, pressured to not express arguments that go against the group's views, and when the information remains contrary to the group the fragmentation is kept hidden by self-appointed mindguards who help to keep the group cohesive (Katopol, 2015). Essentially, a self-appointed mindguard are members within a group that protect the group from information that is contradictory to the group's cohesive views and decision-making. This in effect, helps to prevent other group members from presenting alternative opinions that may disagree with the group.

False consensus making is also paramount in groups that use groupthink. False consensus making could be influenced by group members reluctantly expressing their

concerns about collective problems, especially when group members believe other group members will disagree (Packer, 2009). However, Blanchard et al. (2021) has indicated that false consensus was the strongest among individuals who identify as conservative, implying a political component toward this phenomenon. Political moderates and liberals were moderately likely and least likely to have false consensus, respectively (Blanchard et al., 2021). Individuals who identified as liberal scored higher on uniqueness, which consequently influenced the differences in the false general agreements between conservatives and liberals (Blanchard et al., 2021). Overall, there is differences in how political ideological groups overestimate ingroup consensus (Blanchard et al., 2021; Stern et al., 2014). This explains that within groups, there is overconfidence with consensus within a group, which creates issues in the future.

A major issue with groupthink is that groups can ignore alternatives not addressed within the group, and as a result, the group will make irrational actions that dehumanize other groups (Valine, 2018). The dehumanization of other groups can explain why individuals within different political views tend to interact with opposition, out-group animosity, and antipathy (Pew Research Center, 2014b; Pew Research Center, 2016). Furthermore, people seek conformity within a group, specifically group-thinking can stifle diversity of thought and increase the tendency to miss a solution. Groupthink can lead to accepting conspiracy thinking because of a lack of alternative perspectives presented that can challenge the conspiracy theory. For example, when the United States invaded Iraq in 2003, the decision was based on a misperceived undisputed threat the United States had that was formulated by swift concurrence seeking (Eder, 2019).

The United States' invasion in Iraq in 2003 is an example of a faulty groupthink decision, which led to conspiracy thinking. Groupthink arose between supporters of military intervention and supporters of a diplomatic response, and as a result of concurrence seeking within the larger group of military interventionists, the United States invaded Iraq in 2003 (Eder, 2019). As a result of groupthink, the group tends to exaggerate their abilities because of the support individuals have within the group (Barr & Mintz, 2018). Groupthink faulty decision making could have resulted in politically engaged individuals believing that the United States would be successful using military intervention in Iraq and left individuals devoid of the cost of potential obstacles and casualties for engaging in the war.

Reid et al. (2019) have stated that when there are elevated security issues, there should be diversity within the panel making decisions. This diversity among decision makers can avoid groupthink, which causes an obstacle in the judiciary's way to an alternate check on government's power. Groupthink theory explains how a group, especially a homogeneous group can collaborate, but still not meaningfully check government's power (e.g., authorizing the War in Iraq in 2002). This can be even more problematic when a group (e.g., a political party) can hold the majority in all three branches of government. Barr and Mintz (2018) found that the more successful group was the dominant group when forming public policy. This leads to problems that may include a group that does not have to find solutions to benefit everyone, yet, a partisan group must be dominant to implement their policy preferences. Therefore, groupthink can be problematic, especially when seeking solutions to public policy issues.

In short, groupthink essentially is a group falsely believing their own invulnerability, believing the groups inherent morality, collective rationalization, stereotyping outsiders, having a false belief of unanimity, strong influence on dissenters, and self-appointed guards of an individual's mind (Barr & Mintz, 2018). As a result of those beliefs, individuals who use groupthink result in specific defects including an incomplete evaluation of alternatives and objectives, failing to reevaluate preferred choice and rejected alternatives, searching for information poorly, a selective bias when it comes to processing information, and failing to create contingency plan (Barr & Mintz, 2018). Furthermore, this leads to understanding how groupthink can decrease chances to formulate successful outcomes.

A solution to groupthink may be more bipartisanship, or at the very least, more diverse views when making important decisions. Bringing this to the present study's objective of receiving greater understanding of the moral foundations used by residents of politically polarized cities in the United States to determine political party preferences to help better understand the excessive partisanship, polarization, and animosity that can promote legislative gridlock in the U.S. political electorate and have a negative impact on the U.S. democracy.

Literature Review Related to Key Concepts

Researchers have found that political ideology can be influenced by genetics, personality, parenting styles, family socialization, friends, and an individual's moral foundation, which will be briefly discussed to gain insight on those concepts to gain better understanding on the key concepts related to this research study.

To understand how polarization, partisanship, and political animosity have been formed, it is of the paramount importance to discuss how different political ideologies have arisen because they can be an influence on polarization, partisanship, and political animosity. There has been much research literature regarding the topic that affects an individual's political ideology, ranging from genetics to socialization. Alford et al. (2005) researched political ideology formations and found genetics influence political ideology and attitudes, but are less likely to influence political party identification. Settle et al. (2010) explained that a gene labeled DRD4-7R was previously associated with novelty seeking, and among individuals who have DRD4-7R, the number of friends a person has during adolescence is associated with a liberal political ideology. This can be interpreted to mean that possessing more 7R alleles and having more friends can be associated with an individual being more liberal (Settle et al., 2010).

Additional research has found that political ideology can be influenced by an individual's genetics. Hatemi et al. (2014) explained that regardless of time, era, population, sample, or political ideology measurements, genetics plays a role in political ideology, and psychological disposition. Mortimore and Tyrrell (2006) found that people are more likely to have the same political attitudes as their parents. Considering political ideology has been found to be influenced by genetics, and most people share genetics with one's parents, political ideology and political attitudes can be primarily influenced by an individual's family.

The role of parenting styles can also influence one's political ideology. Murray and Mulvaney (2012) have also found that authoritative mothers can influence their

children's political ideology more than authoritarian and permissive mothers. Ronnie et al. (2014) explained that social order, parental restrictiveness (by both parents), and an adverse reaction to social justice were more associated with conservatism, while the opposite was accurate for liberalism. Mortimore and Tyrrell (2006) found that political views formed during youth are less likely to remain unchanged throughout adulthood. Mortimore and Tyrrell have also found that people are more likely to have the same voting intentions as their parents (Mortimore & Tyrrell, 2006). Therefore, research has found that political views could be less malleable, but can be influenced by an individual's parents.

Personality has also been found to influence an individual's political ideology. As Ksiazkiewicz and Friesen (2021) mentioned, prior research has acknowledged a heritable influence on personality. De Neve (2015) explained how personality predicts political ideology; conscientiousness predicts conservatism, and openness to experience predicts liberalism. Therefore, parenting style and personality types have been found to influence an individual's political ideology. Genetics, parenting styles, and personality can influence political ideologies, but so can an individual's peers. Potrat et al. (2011) found that peers could have similar political ideologies, and conservatives and liberals agree with a degree of bipartisanship between their friends. Friendship is important because it can promote significant inter-group interactions.

Values can also influence voting behavior and political ideology, specifically on political issues. Witesman and Walters (2016) found that the 2012 presidential election saw differences between what others find appealing in candidates. For example, people

interested in Mitt Romney believed in government accountability, independent thinking when servicing the public, and citizen autonomy, while people who supported Barack Obama were attracted by liberal/Democratic values (Witesman & Walters, 2016).

Understanding values and analyzing diverse views on the U.S. two political parties can bring forth greater understanding among individuals who disagree.

Although today it may seem unimaginable to not have two major political parties, the country's founders warned against them (Pruitt, 2019). From the beginning of U.S. history, when the delegates were brought together at the constitutional convention in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, for the founding of the U.S. government, the delegates intentionally did not include any mention of political parties in historical documents (Pruitt, 2019). Chernow (2004) stated that Hamilton warned against the volatility of political parties. Hamilton detested political parties and believed that political parties were one of the deadliest diseases of popular government (Chernow, 2004; Pruitt, 2019). Hamilton wished that America would dispel itself of such aforementioned groups (Chernow, 2004).

Many framers also wanted to avoid divisions that divided England in the civil wars in the 17th century, and instead preferred a truly democratic government (Pruitt, 2019). The U.S. political electorate is in a situation in which political parties are polarized and deeply ingrained, so individuals should better understand each other to incrementally mitigate polarization. It has been found that people avoid engaging with others politically to prevent experiencing hostility that currently exists in partisan politics

(Carpenter et al., 2020). This study attempted to learn why there is division, and provided additional insight so individuals can better understand political disagreements.

Political divisiveness also has occurred, and as Johnson and Roberto (2019) mentioned, political divisiveness in the United States has been increasing, and the ramifications of political divisiveness even permeate organizations which will then influence how individuals interrelate with each other. This problem will only worsen because at the state level, political party polarization in the United States is significantly greater for younger Americans compared to other age groups (Fisher, 2008). If this trend continues, as younger Americans grow older, the partisan gap will increase well into the future (Fisher, 2008).

Political animosity, especially between individuals who disagree politically, can also produce negative consequences. Americans who disagree politically tend to view others with fear, frustration, and anger (Pew Research Center, 2016). Marchal (2022) found that political discussions online are polarized and are more acrimonious especially between individuals who disagree. If individuals referred negatively to another individual's political in-group, the conversations were found to be suspended altogether, however if an individual referred positively to the out-group, individuals were more likely to receive a positive response in return (Marchal, 2022).

This trend focusing on in-group/out-groups even applies on social media websites such as Facebook and Twitter. Rathje et al. (2021) found that social media posts about political out-groups, especially angrier posts were shared or retweeted more often compared to posts about in-groups. When posts about political in-groups were shared,

reaction language was associated with love exemplifying in-group favoritism (Rathje et al., 2021). Rathje et al. found that social media may be influencing out-group animosity as well (Rathje et al., 2021).

Angry opposition may be built on a commitment to partisan identities. Zmigrod et al. (2020) found that partisan extremes was associated with low cognitive flexibility regardless of an individual's political orientation. Therefore, the more staunchly partisan an individual may be, the less likely they would be flexible in their cognition (Zmigrod et al., 2020). Mason (2015) also found that partisan identities may increase partisanship biases, activism, and anger, further promoting partisan identities (Huddy et al., 2015). Decreasing obsessive partisanship and mitigating animosity are necessary to achieve well-informed public policy proposals.

Understanding how political ideology is formed can help reduce conflict by fostering understanding. Bell and Kandler (2015) have found that political party identification is heritable, and it has been found that environmental and genetic factors can influence political views, which consequently can influence political party identification (Bell & Kandler, 2015). Therefore, political party selection is rooted in genetics and environmental experiences, influencing an individual's political outlook. Half of the variation in political party identification can be attributed to genetic influences, while the other half comes from unique experiences, which can include the home environment (Bell & Kandler, 2015). Therefore, individuals receive half of the political identities through genetic influence, and the other half comes from a shared home environment. Simply put, political ideology comes from both nature and nurture.

After understanding how political ideologies, specifically liberalism and conservatism is formed and how it is influenced, it is crucial to understand why studying political ideology is important and the differences between political ideologies. As Johnson and Roberto (2019) mentioned, political ideology is the principal belief that influences individuals' behavior within the voting booth and other facets of their lives. There is additional evidence suggesting the importance on political ideology in relation to a recent global rise of political polarization (Kevins & Soroka, 2017; Lucas & Park, 2023). Therefore, political ideology can be a significant predictor of how someone votes, and is important in relation to the recent increase in political polarization. Hanson et al. (2019) investigated the political parties more holistically and found that liberal group identity was constructed around a concern for individuals, motivated by promoting a stronger egalitarian society. The same holistic analytic view was also done on conservative individuals. Conservative individuals connected their identity to their nation and valuing self-reliance and reverence for a national group (Hanson et al., 2019).

The literature seems to support the notion that political conservatives are more likely to search for avoidant strategies when they perceive a stimulus to be potentially dangerous. Shook and Fazio (2009) studied how political ideology was formed as well. Even when it comes to stimuli, political ideologies can be different. The conservative political ideology is more likely to have a substantial learning preponderance on negative stimuli (Shook & Fazio, 2009). Furthermore, conservatives are more likely to isolate their attention on social threats, insecurity, and fears in the world (Laustsen, 2017; Lewis, 2019). While in comparison, liberals are more likely to perceive the world as safe and

cooperative (Laustsen, 2017). Furthermore, when compared to liberals, political conservatives are more likely to seek out avoidant strategies to negative stimuli, stimuli that are potentially dangerous, and that increased their valence asymmetry while learning and forming attitudes (Shook & Fazio, 2009).

As stated earlier, conservatives and liberals may hold different perceptions of their social environment, which could partly explain why specific ideologies have disagreements, and what individuals across political ideologies prefer when assessing candidates. Compared to the characteristics mentioned earlier of what both conservatives and liberals seek, conservatives have been predicted to support candidates who had strong leadership in global affairs and support the candidate's power more so than liberal individuals (Laustsen, 2017). In contrast, liberal individuals are predicted to prioritize the characteristic of the warmth of a candidate more so than conservative individuals (Laustsen, 2017). This helps to explain how political ideology can predict the differences of candidate evaluations.

Power is a characteristic that can influence individuals as well as divide individuals based on ideology. When it comes to which characteristic divides individuals more, Laustsen (2017) found that power was a more substantial and robust ideological divider than an individual's warmth. That means that power can be a factor in ideological divisions compared to the other personality characteristics that have been studied in the literature. Political candidates evaluated as strong leaders and powerful personalities were assessed more positively among conservative voters, while political candidates who had warm personalities were evaluated more positively among liberal voters (Laustsen, 2017).

This can explain the ideological divide, and understanding this can reduce some of the hostility, at least in political discourse.

Reasons for the ideological differences could be further explained by differences in an individual's cognitive flexibility and memory. Regarding cognitive flexibility and working memory, Buechner et al. (2021) has also found that liberals are more likely to successfully update their responses, while conservatives are more likely to inhibit their responses. This shows a difference in cognitive flexibility, which can be linked to problem-solving, creativity, and self-control (Buechner et al., 2021). In public policy, these working memory processes may reflect the stances that many who identify as political conservatives and political liberals choose to select and can help individuals identify differences to better understand each other's perspectives. Although these findings are important, it is also noteworthy to mention that the association between political ideology in cognitive tasks might result from epistemic preferences, and a decreased motivation to perform well instead of measuring mental abilities (Burger et al., 2020). Therefore, researchers can discuss research findings on cognitive ability measures but not overvalue the aforementioned findings from Burger et al. that cognitive task performance may be influenced by decreased motivation and not actual cognitive ability (Burger et al., 2020).

Literature has also found evaluations of contempt bias between individuals who are either liberal or conservative. Although prior literature has found conservatives are more likely to react to negative stimuli, other literature has found that individuals who identify as liberal were more likely to hold a higher contempt bias for ideologically

dissimilar politicians than ideologically similar politicians (Steiger et al., 2019). However, on average, neither conservatives nor liberals differed in negative emotions toward politicians overall (Steiger et al., 2019). This could explain how politicians were evaluated and the contempt provided from each political ideology.

The goal of this research was to analyze political party views to decrease intolerance which can be accomplished by understanding diverse political opinions and groups. Decreasing partisan conflict will help society in many ways, especially in the arena of American politics, and ensuring that the U.S. government helps all of us, especially low-income individuals. For example, Balcilar et al. (2019) found that a decrease in partisan conflict can reduce income inequality, but only when inequality is not too high. Partisan conflict and inequality have been strongly associated in the literature. Stewart et al. (2021) found that economic events can influence polarization and sorts group identity and political parties. Political polarization arises because of a response to rising wealth inequality, and economic decline may continue even if those conditions were reversed (Stewart et al., 2020). Even globally, economic inequality has proven to be an influence on political polarization. Gu and Wang (2022) have found that countries with high income inequality, also become more polarized along social ideologies. However, when there is wealth redistribution, polarization can be counteracted and limited (Stewart et al., 2021).

As much as strong partisanship is not beneficial to a healthy economy, polarization also comes with faults. Polarized political environments are so negative, they can establish sociopolitical stressors (Nelson, 2022). Affective polarization, on the

contrary, can motivate political participation which then influences positive health (Nelson, 2022). Furthermore, the United States increasing polarization may influence American's health, but can increase political participation. Showing the importance of the United States needing to address both partisanship and animosity for the direct benefits of Americans.

If individuals in a political party are trying to find reasons why people wish to vote for a different political party, people must dig deeper, and hopefully consider understanding the full spectrum of Americans' moral concerns (Haidt, 2008). Researchers have found that political disagreements have become heated, divisive, and polarizing because individuals do not understand the motives for why people think differently on political issues (Graham, Haidt et al., 2009; Kugler et al., 2014). Instead of individuals dismissing people who are believed to be different in their thinking, discovering ways for individual political differences could be paramount in promoting better relationships (Kugler et al., 2014). Dismissing others simply because of their political party has been found to occur. Democrats and Republicans have been found to agree with a politically non-divisive aphorism comment as long as it was presented as belonging to their political party compared to a different political party (Hanel et al., 2018). This shows how divisive and polarized the United States has become in recent years, in which it only takes a political party label to influence an individual's opinion entirely.

Both political liberal and conservative individuals are more likely to perceive life through zero-sum thinking when it is beneficial (Davidai & Ongis, 2019). Zero-sum

beliefs come from the perspective that gains from one group comes at the expense from another group (Wilkins et al., 2015). The difference between the ideologies in how different political ideologies view life as a zero-sum game is that conservatives are more likely to use zero-sum thinking when the status quo is being challenged (Davidai & Ongis, 2019). Liberals, on the other hand, were more likely to use zero-sum thinking when they felt the status quo was being upheld (Davidai & Ongis, 2019). More specifically, lower need for cognition, strong death anxiety, and a desire to share reality contributed to economic system justification, and subsequently support for traditional values such as the Tea Party movement and opposition to Occupy Wall Street (Hennes et al., 2012).

Ideologically, the view on social inequalities has been viewed differently and carries different solutions dependent on one's ideology. Conservatives primarily viewed social inequalities when the status quo was challenged, while liberals viewed economic inequalities when the status quo was unchallenged (Davidai & Ongis, 2019). Davidai and Ongis (2019) asserted that the aforementioned findings explain ideological differences within the perceptions of conflict-differences. Explaining their findings can bring forth an understanding of political divisions in the United States and clarify why there can be difficulty in achieving bipartisan legislation (Davidai & Ongis, 2019). Essentially, understanding the political divide within the United States, specifically political ideological perceptions, can help to facilitate greater understanding and bipartisanship.

Some researchers have found that the media could be the cause for partisan polarization. McLaughlin (2018) found that even when individuals read a news story of political conflict, it will influence perception of inter-group conflict, partisanship,

affective polarization and ideological polarization. These results explain that even when being presented a story from the media about political conflict, the behavior can influence polarization and partisanship. Political polarization can also occur through a misconception of the divisions individuals believe to exist. Wilson et al. (2020) found that institutional polarization has contributed to individuals' misperception of polarization among the electorate which causes animosity. In other words, media, elites, and even social media reports covering the idea that U.S. society is polarized, influences the viewer to believe that and as a result creates further division and animosity between individuals who disagree (Wilson et al., 2020).

Understanding the moral foundations that are used by residents of politically polarized cities in the United States to determine political party preferences could help society better understand individuals' political differences and hopefully better understand the animosity, polarization and partisanship that exist in the political discourse. The present research determined the residents who live in the top five most polarized cities who self-identify with a political ideology/political party, and what the residents prefer about the major political parties using their moral foundations.

Summary and Conclusions

Researchers have found that political ideology can be influenced by genetics, personality, parenting styles, family socialization, friends, and an individual's moral foundations. In a democracy, it is vital that politically engaged individuals have diversity of thought and respectful disagreements. However, upholding blind partisanship could promote acrimony in political discourse. As Dunn and Singh (2011) found, multiparty

systems that promote tolerance of diversity assists in mitigating out-group intolerant effects because multiparty systems provide representation for diverse parties. This study helped fill in the gaps by stating the moral foundations of residents who live in the top five most polarized cities to determine political party preferences through the lens of the conceptual framework. The next chapter, the research method, will go into detail with the research design and how data would be collected to answer the study's research question.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to obtain a greater understanding of the moral foundations used by residents in Jackson, Mississippi; New Orleans, Louisiana; Baton Rouge, Louisiana; Birmingham, Alabama; and Shreveport, Louisiana, to determine political party preferences that might help to better understand the excessive partisanship, polarization, and animosity that can promote legislative gridlock in the political electorate and can harm U.S. democracy. I selected these five cities because they have been determined by Dottle (2019) to be the most polarized cities in the United States. Secondary data from the ANES open-ended data set from residents living in the aforementioned cities were used to qualitatively analyze what residents think about the political parties. The study was guided by the following research question: What moral foundations are used by residents of politically polarized cities in the United States to determine political party preferences?

In Chapter 3, I discuss the qualitative research design and the rationale by defining the central phenomena of the study. Then, I discuss the role of the researcher, stating any biases or ethical issues that may have been present in the research study. Next, I discuss the study's methodology, including the logic for participation selection and data collection. Next, I discuss issues of trustworthiness, including credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. In the final section of this chapter, I discuss ethical procedures and conclude with a summary of the chapter's main points and previewing Chapter 4.

Research Design and Rationale

The research study was conducted using a generic qualitative methodology with secondary data from ANES related to respondents' preferences for the Republican and Democratic parties. Generic qualitative research studies aim to provide a rich description of the phenomena being investigated (Kahlke, 2014; Lim, 2011). Furthermore, generic qualitative research approaches, precisely the generic qualitative research approach executed in this study, are deductive, use codes through the lens of the conceptual framework, and provide thematic analysis and categories when appropriate (see Kahlke, 2014; Lim, 2011).

Generic qualitative research methods are not guided by a single explicit, established philosophical assumption from one of the established qualitative methodologies (Caelli et al., 2003). Generic qualitative research studies do not have allegiance to any single established methodology, such as grounded theory, phenomenology, or ethnography (Kahlke, 2014; Richards & Morse, 2007). In this study, generic qualitative research methods allowed for data coding through the lens of the conceptual framework without the restriction of following established methodological criteria. I used a purposive sampling technique to ensure varied and diverse perspectives and to ensure respondents were residents of the identified polarized cities and that they self-identify with a political ideology/political party.

Role of the Researcher

In qualitative research, the role of the researcher is to attempt to gain access to the feelings and thoughts of participants being studied for research purposes (Sutton &

Austin, 2015). I obtained objective and factual information for this study to answer the research question. I designed the study, gained the necessary approvals set forth by the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB) to conduct the study, and analyzed the secondary data responses to answer the research question. Anderson (2010) has stated that researchers examining qualitative data for validity and reliability will assess the credibility and objectivity of the research. I sought to promote reliability and validity by remaining objective, truthful, and transparent in analyzing the data, ensuring only to analyze data as reported and not data I wished were reported.

Methodology

In the following section, I detail the methodology conducted for the study. A sufficient depth of information will be provided to allow other researchers to replicate this study if necessary. The information included in this section will include details on data selection, data collection, data analysis, and issues of trustworthiness.

Participant Selection Logic of the ANES Data Set

I conducted this study using secondary open-ended response data from the ANES 2020 Time Series Study data set. Secondary data responses were selected from the ANES 2020 Time Series Study data set. The ANES 2020 Time Series Study data set can be found on the ANES website (ANES, 2021e). The data set is available for anyone to use under the condition that users agree with the terms of usage, such as using the data set strictly for research purposes, not investigating specific survey respondents, and citing the ANES data appropriately (ANES, 2021a).

For the study, the population of participants within the ANES data set included U.S. residents in the top five most politically polarized cities. The target population included residents of Jackson, Mississippi; New Orleans, Louisiana; Baton Rouge, Louisiana; Birmingham, Alabama; and Shreveport, Louisiana. Participants needed to be 18 years old or older to be invited to participate in the study the ANES data set were collected from. Table 1 shows the estimated populations of residents 18 years old or older for the top five most politically polarized cities according to the U.S. Census Bureau, as of April 1, 2020. Partisan segregation, also known as political polarization, was calculated by each city’s election results from 2016 by determining how geographically separated Republicans are from Democrats (see Dottle, 2019). A map of each of the highest polarized cities illustrates the polarization within the cities (see Figures 1 to 5). The higher the partisan segregation score means the city has higher political polarization (see Dottle, 2019).

Table 1

Top 5 Polarized Cities

City	Population	Partisan segregation score
Jackson, Mississippi	116,045	0.63
New Orleans, Louisiana	307,198	0.58
Baton Rouge, Louisiana	178,791	0.56
Birmingham, Alabama	161,791	0.56
Shreveport, Louisiana	142,196	0.56

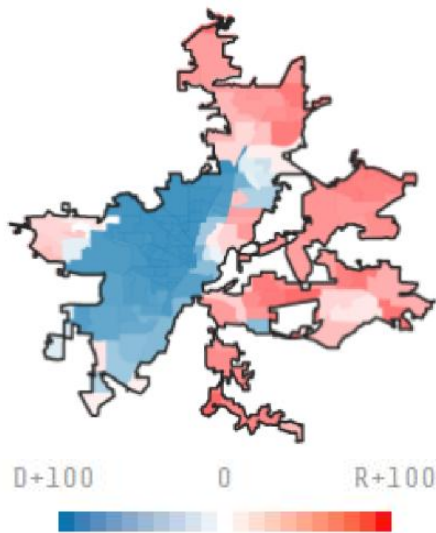
Source: “QuickFacts,” by the U.S. Census Bureau (2020a), and “Where Democrats and Republicans Live in Your City,” by Dottle (2019).

Figures 1 through 5 show the partisan segregation for each of the politically polarized cities used for this study. Blue represents where Democrats (D) live and red

represents where Republicans (R) live for each specific city. As the blue becomes darker (D + 100), the Democratic party is stronger in that area. As the red becomes darker (R + 100), the Republican party is stronger in that area.

Figure 1

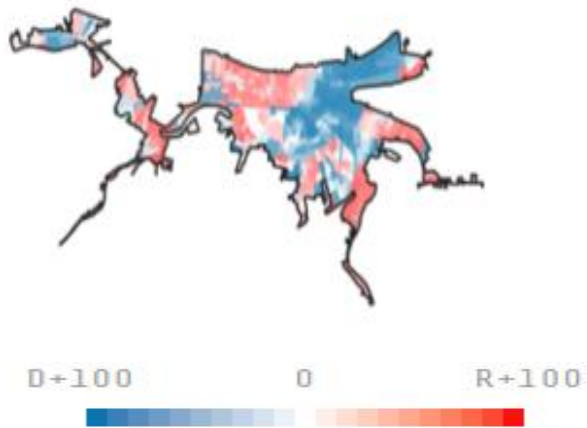
Partisan Segregation of Jackson, Mississippi



Note. Screenshot of a map of Jackson, Mississippi (Dottle, 2019).

Figure 2

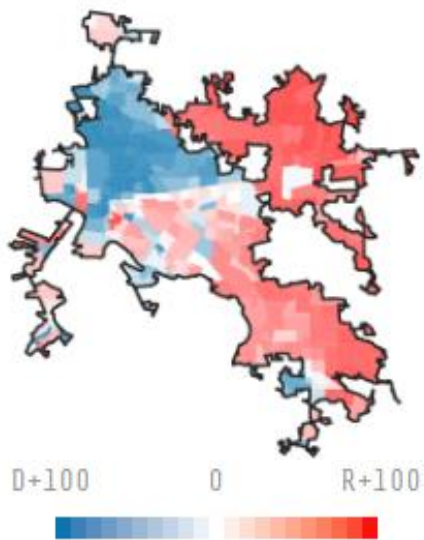
Partisan Segregation of New Orleans, Louisiana



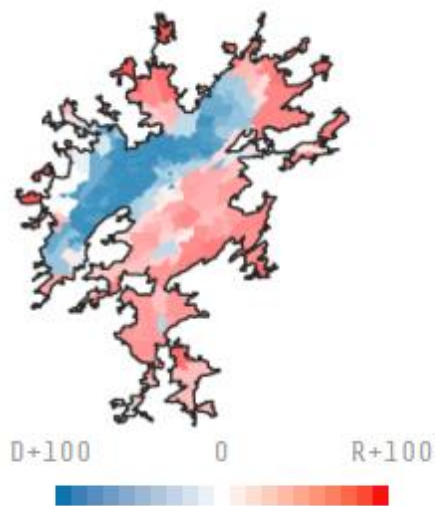
Note. Screenshot of a map of New Orleans, Louisiana (Dottle, 2019)

Figure 3

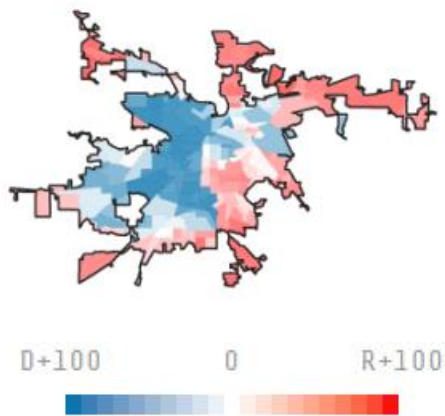
Partisan Segregation of Baton Rouge, Louisiana



Note. Screenshot of a map of Baton Rouge, Louisiana (Dottle, 2019)

Figure 4*Partisan Segregation of Birmingham, Alabama*

Note. Screenshot of a map of Birmingham, Alabama (Dottle, 2019)

Figure 5*Partisan Segregation of Shreveport, Louisiana*

Note. Screenshot of a map of Shreveport, Louisiana (Dottle, 2019)

The polarized cities have also been found to be geographically within the closest proximity to a county that voted in the 2020 presidential election contrary to their county. For the demographics of the population relevant to the study, according to *The New York*

Times (2020), the percentage of individuals who voted for the 2020 Democratic or Republican presidential candidate for each county and neighboring county (see Table 2).

Table 2

Polarized Area and 2020 Partisan Voting Results

Polarized city	County, parish, or neighboring county/parish	Democrat ic	Republica n
Jackson, Mississippi	Hinds County	73.4%	25.1%
	Rankin County	26.7%	72.0%
New Orleans, Louisiana	Orleans Parish	83.1%	15.0%
	Jefferson Parish	43.6%	54.7%
Baton Rouge, Louisiana	East Baton Rouge Parish	55.5%	42.5%
	West Baton Rouge Parish	44.0%	54.5%
Birmingham, Alabama	Jefferson County	55.8%	42.6%
	Shelby County	28.9%	69.3%
Shreveport, Louisiana	Caddo Parish	52.5%	45.8%
	Bossier Parish	28.7%	69.7%

Source: “Presidential Election Results: Biden Wins” (2020).

Once the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) Virtual Data Enclave (VDE) Data Use Agreement, and the Walden University IRB approval (Approval Number: 02-13-23-0599364) letter was submitted, I retained access to the 2020 ANES Time Series geocodes/ZIP codes (see Appendices B–D). I screened data to only include data from respondents who lived in the identified cities and who self-identified a certain political ideology/political party.

Sampling Strategy

I used secondary data from the ANES 2020 Time Series Study, and the sampling strategy was conducted on that data set. At the time of the ANES 2020 survey, the total population of the United States, age 18 and older, was 259 million people (U.S. Census

Bureau, 2020b). The ANES 2020 Time Series Study data set includes over 7,000 interviews (ANES, 2021c). The target population for this study included the 906,022 residents who lived in the five most polarized cities in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020a). The sample included approximately 40 participants who have open-ended data responses to the ANES survey. I used those responses to answer this study's research question by reviewing data from all respondents who lived in the target cities.

The participant data responses sampling frame included lists of residential addresses where the election survey recruited participants from the General Social Survey (ANES, 2021c). The user guide for completing the survey was mailed and delivered, and to participate in the ANES 2020 Time Series Study, participants must have been a resident of the sampled address, be a U.S. citizen, and 18 years old or older during the time of recruitment (ANES, 2021c).

The ANES 2020 Time Series Study invited participants by email or sent a letter if no email was on file or if there was no response in email (ANES, 2021c). Letters and emails requested household members to participate in screeners over the internet (ANES, 2021c). The screening instrument was screened by selecting one randomly assigned U.S. adult citizen living at the selected address to complete the questionnaire (ANES, 2021c). The cross-sectional sample was a random sample drawn from the U.S. Postal Service's computerized delivery sequence file (C-DSF) that included all residential addresses across the United States having an equal probability of being selected (ANES, 2021c). The selected addresses were given a series of letters designated to recruit one participant in the household to complete a survey online (ANES, 2021c). The invitation letter

included \$10, and \$40 was promised if the respondent completed the survey online (ANES, 2021c).

Household members who followed the invitation were directed to the screening and randomly selected one adult U.S. citizen from their home to complete the ANES questionnaire (ANES, 2021c). Participants were then invited to complete the survey based on their assigned group—web-only, mixed-web, and mixed video (ANES, 2021c). Web-only respondents completed the survey exclusively online (ANES, 2021c). Mixed-web respondents were offered to do the survey online or telephone, and nonrespondents and refusals in this group were shifted to complete the survey via telephone (ANES, 2021c). Mixed-video respondents were allowed to do a live video interview on Zoom and were shifted to the online survey if they declined the video request or failed to respond to the invitation (ANES, 2021c).

Nonrespondents and refusals were allowed to complete the survey via phone (ANES, 2021c). Later, nonresponding cases and refusals were shifted to the telephone during the final weeks of the pre-election period (ANES, 2021c). Of the mentioned sample, household members who did not respond were offered increased incentives, including \$100, and during the last weeks during the pre-election field period, participants who had a low response rate were offered \$200 to complete the survey to counter nonresponses (ANES, 2021c). The pre-election ANES data collection field dates were from August 18, 2020, to November 3, 2020. Participants were allowed to complete the survey anywhere they had internet, computer, or phone access, depending on which method they were assigned to complete the survey (ANES, 2021c). Phone and video

interviews were conducted by trained interviewers reading questions aloud to respondents and using software on the computer (ANES, 2021c).

My study's sampling strategy included selecting data from participants based on the following criteria: residing in one of the five politically polarized cities and self-identify themselves on a political spectrum ranging from very liberal to neither liberal nor conservative to very conservative and/or political party. My study's sampling strategy is nonprobability sampling, as I considered some members of the population who have a higher chance of being in the study than others. Researchers use nonprobability sampling for research of this magnitude, specifically when the research is qualitative because the research goal is to extensively gain a general understanding (DeCarlo, 2018). More specifically, the study has a nonprobability sampling technique with a subcategory purposive sampling strategy and a homogeneous sampling technique. Campbell et al. (2020) described the purposive sampling technique as a sampling technique having a long history of debate regarding whether the sampling technique is straightforward or complex. Most importantly, the reason for purposive sampling is that it allowed for better alignment of the sample for the objective and goals of the research, therefore improving the rigour, and increasing the trustworthiness of the results (Campbell et al., 2020).

In this research study, I analyzed secondary data from respondents who live in polarized cities, and purposive sampling helped to achieve those goals. The purposive sampling strategy means intentionally choosing participants based on pre-determined criteria (DeCarlo, 2018). Purposive sampling allows a researcher to select the participants from the sample with characteristics the researcher would need to investigate further

(DeCarlo, 2018; Dudovskiy, 2022; Flom, 2021). Doing so means a researcher will begin with specific characteristics that would be researched further, and seek out participants who meet those characteristics (DeCarlo, 2018). Researchers deliberately seek out the specific sample because the participants warrant inclusion (Taherdoost, 2016).

Criteria for Data Selection

In the study, I selected data based on specific locations. More specifically, residents of the top five most polarized cities. Considering this, the study's sampling technique is described as purposive sampling. In purposive sampling, the results cannot be generalized to any larger population, which is sufficient for the qualitative research method. Nonprobability sampling, much like qualitative research, does not aim to generalize to larger populations (DeCarlo, 2018).

The justification for purposive sampling is that as the researcher, I can directly and efficiently research the intended population. The efficiency of purposive sampling can be when wanting to research only cities that share a commonality. It would be a waste of time to randomly sample all cities when that is not the intended goal of the research study. Therefore, it is important to not generalize from the specific sample to a larger population but specify that the results can only be generalized within the context of the sample's characteristics that participated in the research study.

Procedures

The data used for the study included analyzing the secondary data set *American National Election Studies 2020 Time Series Study*. Self-identification is the only criterion for political ideology and political party. There were a total of 8,280 participants in the

ANES database who responded to the survey and open-ended questions. When corresponding with the ANES regarding the data responses from the top five polarized cities, 40 secondary data responses will be analyzed for the study. According to the correspondence with ANES, the 40 respondents that are expected to have provided secondary data to be analyzed are five residents in Hinds County, Mississippi, five residents in East Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana, six residents in Caddo Parish, Louisiana, seven residents in Orleans Parish, Louisiana, and 17 residents in Jefferson County, Alabama. Respondents were not required to answer all questions to have their data analyzed. Respondents were only required to answer at least one of the four survey questions to have their data analyzed for the study.

The ICPSR gave the present researcher geographic information (specifically ZIP codes) to assess which data comes from politically polarized cities in the ANES 2020 Time Series Study data set (ANES, 2021d). As the principal researcher, I applied for the ANES 2020 Time Series Study Geocodes/ZIP codes by submitting the Walden University IRB approval letter, and the Restricted Data Use Agreement for Restricted Data in the VDE from the ICPSR form (see Appendices B-D). Accessing the ANES 2020 Time Series Study ZIP codes allowed me to find the open-ended data responses from respondents who live in the top five most polarized cities.

Once I accessed the ZIP codes, respondents who live in the top five most polarized cities will be selected to have their open-ended data responses analyzed. There is expected to be 40 data respondents that will have their open-ended data responses analyzed to answer the study's research question. If data saturation is not reached from

the original top five most polarized cities, I planned on adding responses from the following sixth to tenth most polarized cities until saturation is obtained. The greater Memphis area, Tennessee; Columbus area, Georgia, Mobile, Alabama; Montgomery, Alabama, and the greater New York area, are the sixth to tenth most polarized cities, respectively (see Dottle, 2019). The sample had contradictory experiences or similar experiences, which met data saturation within the sample, signaling sufficient data for analysis.

Instrumentation

Secondary data from respondents in this study were generated by answering numerous survey questions administered by the ANES 2020 Time Series Study Pre-Election and Post-Election Survey Questionnaire (ANES, 2021b; see Appendix A). There was a total of 1,009 survey questions in the ANES Time Series Study Pre-Election and Post-Election Survey Questionnaire. Of the ANES open-ended questions, there were 27 questions in total. I selected 12 questions from the questionnaire pertaining to the topic of this study for further analysis (see Appendix A). The questions used to answer the research question included open-ended questions asking the “likes” and “dislikes” participants have regarding the Republican and Democratic party as well as questions on participants selecting their political ideology and political party (ANES, 2021b). The questions on the “likes” and “dislikes” of the two major political parties can be found on pages 67-71 in the questionnaire (ANES, 2021b), and those responses were analyzed for this study.

All participants were presented with the same question, and participants who answered “yes” on whether they have at least one like or dislike about a major political party were included in the data analysis. A participant providing a “no response” is not missing, or incomplete data, but on the contrary have responded that they do not have a like or dislike of at least one of the two major political parties. The participant was probed to answer their likes/dislikes regarding the Republican and Democratic party in detail until the respondents said there was nothing else they would like to add to the question ensuring the participant had answered the question thoroughly (ANES, 2021c). The self-identified political ideology and political party survey question was used to assess whether participants have a political ideology or political party (ANES, 2021b). The political ideology survey question asks, “Where would you place yourself on this scale or haven’t you thought much about this?” (ANES, 2021b, p. 71). The scale ranges from “extremely liberal” to “extremely conservative” (ANES, 2021b, p. 71). If participant selected, “moderate; middle of the road,” or “haven’t thought about it” they were then asked to choose between “liberal” or “conservative” (ANES, 2021b, p. 71). For this study, the political ideology question ensures that individuals have an ideology that may coincide with an individual’s moral foundations in the conceptual framework.

The political party question asks, “Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as [a Democrat, a Republican / a Republican, a Democrat], an independent, or what?” (ANES, 2021b, p. 90). The scale ranges from “No preference” to “Other party” with Democrat and Republican within the spectrum (ANES, 2021b, p. 90). If the participant responded, “Other Party” or “Independent” they were then asked to choose

between identifying “Closer to Republican” or “Closer to Democratic” (ANES, 2021b, p. 90). Analyzing the open-ended responses is best suited for a qualitative assessment which yielded numerous and diverse perspectives from the selected responses being analyzed.

Procedures for Recruitment

The specific data set that the study utilized as a secondary data set was the ANES 2020 Time Series Study, found under the Time Series tab in the Data Center section of the ANES website (ANES, 2021a). I analyzed open-ended responses from the data set regarding the moral foundations used by residents of politically polarized cities in the United States to determine political party preferences. Only respondents who thoroughly answered the question and stated “no” when asked if there is anything else they would like to add regarding the likes/dislikes of the Republican and Democratic parties had their data analyzed. The data responses were from one of the top five most polarized cities. I did not utilize primary data from participants. However, for the sake of protecting the privacy of the secondary data that I did analyze, I submitted an abstract of the dissertation, the IRB approval letter from Walden University, and my University’s Representative and committee chairperson signed a *Restricted Data Use Agreement for Restricted Data in the Virtual Data Enclave (VDE) from the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR)* form to access the ANES 2020 Time Series Study Geocodes/ZIP codes (see Appendix D). I found the open-ended data responses in the top five most polarized cities by the ZIP codes of the respondents.

Data Analysis Plan

The qualitative secondary data collected from the ANES website offered detailed data to help answer the research question, specifically what residents who live in the top five most polarized cities and their moral foundations used to determine political party preferences. The secondary data comes from the ANES questionnaire data responses, and the responses were qualitatively analyzed through thematic analysis (see Table 3). The open-ended data responses from all of the participants can be found on the “Redacted Open-Ends” Microsoft Excel file in tabs V201159, V201161, V201163, V201165 on the ANES 2020 Time Series Study web page (ANES, 2021e). Anyone who wants to access the “Redacted Open-Ends” may need to log-in or register for an ANES account.

The qualitative data has been coded and tabulated by thematic findings based on the conceptual framework analyzing the stated likes/dislikes and noting repetitive word usage, patterns, themes, and explicit meaning. MFT and groupthink theory offered additional insight into how to assess the open-ended data responses. When necessary, treatment of discrepant cases was noted for future research. Data responses were coded manually by analyzing each data response. To answer the research question for the first cycle of coding, qualitative coding was conducted using the preliminary coding framework through the lens of the conceptual framework (see Table 3).

I included a preliminary coding framework that codes descriptors from the dissertation’s conceptual framework, which aligned the research question with the conceptual framework (see Table 3). The study’s theoretical/deductive coding was done by assigning codes based on the conceptual framework along with the phenomena

mentioned in the problem, purpose, and research question to promote alignment. Table 3 displays my preliminary coding framework:

Research Question: What moral foundations are used by residents of politically polarized cities in the United States to determine political party preferences?

Table 3

Preliminary Coding Framework Based on Moral foundations Theory and Groupthink

Theory

Parent code	Child code
Purity/sanctity	Morality (MO)
Respect/authority	Leadership (LE) Obedience (OB) Authoritarianism (AU)
Fairness/reciprocity	Justice (JU) Equitable (EQ-1) Equality (EQ-2)
Harm/care	Animosity (AN) Like (L) Dislike (DL)
Ingroup/loyalty	Partisanship (PA)
False perception of invulnerability	Excessive partisanship (EP)
Inherent group morality	Purity/sanctity (PS)
Censoring oneself	Anti-democratic (AD-1) Anti-diversity of thought (AD-2)
Stereotyping outsiders	Overgeneralizations of other groups (OG)
False perception of unanimity	False unity (FU)
Pressure within group on dissidents	Conformity (C) Forced partisanship (FP) Polarization (PO)
Self-appointed mind guards	Respect/authority (RA)
Decision making (DM)	Defective (DM-d) Productive (DM-p)

Characteristics of groupthink theory include false perception of invulnerability, inherent group morality, rationalization of the collective, stereotyping outsiders,

censoring oneself, false perception of unanimity, force on dissenters, and self-appointed guards of the mind (Barr & Mintz, 2018). Characteristics of MFT include (a) authority/respect, (b) purity/sanctity, (c) harm/care, (d) ingroup/loyalty, and (e) fairness/reciprocity (Graham et al., 2013).

Once data were coded through the lens of the conceptual framework, there will be a tabulation of the codes that were mentioned in Table 3. The tabulation of codes will include the exact number of times each characteristic of the conceptual framework appeared in data responses when coding for the preferences of the Democratic and Republican parties. Typically, two to four codes will need to emerge from a characteristic to become a category, and approximately three distinct categories that emerge from a characteristic will bring forth the status of a theme/concept (Saldaña, 2013; 2021).

Issues of Trustworthiness

Credibility

Credibility measures internal validity, and credibility is ensured by establishing confidence that the meaning of data has been accurately interpreted (Carboni, 1995; Whittemore et al., 2001). Specifically, credibility explains if the results accurately reflect the participants' experiences (Carboni, 1995; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Whittemore et al., 2001). Because the study utilized secondary data from the ANES data center, member checks and credibility were conducted when participants were shown and validated their data responses before submission. For this qualitative research, the data were reviewed by my dissertation committee chairperson and available to my committee.

Transferability

Transferability is used in qualitative research where the results can be transferred to other settings or contexts with different participants (Anney, 2014). More specifically, transferability can be similar to generalizations (Anney, 2014; Bitsch, 2005; Tobin & Begley, 2004). In this research study, transferability was likely constrained because of the restricted scope of research respondents. The research study specifically studied adults residing in polarized cities, such as the top five most polarized cities with a political ideology, or political party. The study's research has limited transferability to a broader sample but can perhaps be transferred to other adults who have a political ideology or political party and live in a politically polarized city in the United States.

Dependability

Dependability is the next concept within the issue of trustworthiness that will be discussed. Dependability occurs when research findings having stability throughout time (Anney, 2014; Bitsch, 2005). Dependability would be ensured by making sure an audit trail can be conducted by keeping the raw data, observational notes, and any documents that were collected during data collection (Anney, 2014; Lincoln & Guba, 1982). Dependability was conducted by revisiting the raw data that has been coded to ensure the coding remained consistent upon the second cycle coding and analysis. Methods of triangulation was conducted by the principal researcher and an expert dissertation committee that assessed the research, research instruments, and the research plan before and after data collection.

Confirmability

Confirmability is when other researchers can confirm or corroborate the results (Anney, 2014; Baxter & Eyles, 1997). Confirmability ensures that the investigator's interpretations of the data originate from the data (Anney, 2014; Tobin & Begley, 2004). Confirmability was established by audit trails to ensure data interpretations have come from the ANES 2020 Time Series Study secondary data set (ANES, 2021e). Reflexivity includes examining my judgments and beliefs that could affect the research process after coding the data (Delve & Limpaecher, 2022). Reflexivity was considered by making personal notes in a journal during the data analysis, interpretation stage, and when debriefing with my committee chairperson.

Ethical Procedures

For the secondary data set used for the study, the ANES releases its data publicly but states that the terms of use are strictly for research and statistical discovery (ANES, 2021a). ANES also mentions that users cannot use the research data to investigate specific research participants (ANES, 2021a). If someone disagrees with the research terms on protecting participants' confidentiality, they cannot sign up to access the data. Ensuring that researching using the ANES data set will protect the confidentiality of each one of the participants promotes ethical procedures.

ANES participants are asked for their consent to participate by completing a questionnaire and are given financial incentives as a reward for completing the questionnaire (ANES, 2021c). Participants who volunteered to be a part of the ANES were given access to a questionnaire. Participants are free to participate in supplying their

answers to the questionnaire at their discretion. Participants were told before filling out the questionnaire that they could terminate participation at any time, participation is voluntary, and participants do not have to answer any question that makes them feel uncomfortable (ANES, 2021c). Participants are told that if there are any questions or complaints about the questionnaire, the participant is free to talk to Stanford Institutional Review Board to communicate with someone independent from the research team (ANES, 2021c).

Considering participants primarily completed a questionnaire to be used for this secondary study, ethical concerns are mitigated. Participants can discontinue participating at any time and are told their participation in the study is voluntary, which also decreases ethical concerns. Data collected and released publicly does not disclose confidential or personally identifiable information. Participants' data remains anonymous and confidential once the current researcher has access. For the dissertation, the research investigator can only access ANES 2020 Time Series Study Geocodes and ZIP codes, which told the present researcher the area where participants' data reside. I agreed to the terms of protecting participants confidentiality and privacy set forth on the *Restricted Data Use Agreement for Restricted Data in the Virtual Data Enclave (VDE) from the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR)* form to access the ANES 2020 Time Series Study Geocodes and ZIP codes, and only used ZIP codes to find data strictly for completing this dissertation (ANES, 2021d; Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research, 2020). In Chapter 4, data was coded, so table frequencies do not release any information on the sample, or key variable to adhere to the

data use agreement (see Appendix D). Short responses based on likes and dislikes are redacted to not include any participant's private information.

Once the data use agreement was submitted, my committee chairperson and I had to complete a quiz based on the appropriate use of accessing the data within the confidential server. In addition, the committee chairperson and I obtained a license after the quiz was successfully passed. The ZIP codes and geocodes remained in a confidential server and can only be removed once ICPSR vetted the data to ensure data responses did not disclose personal identifiable information. The only personal information I obtained is the ZIP codes to determine which data responses were from the aforementioned polarized cities. The ZIP code and geocode file do not give out any other personal information and only provides the researcher information on if the open-ended data responses originated from a polarized city.

For the present study, Walden University's requirements to collect data for IRB approval included submitting a Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative [CITI] human subjects protection training completion certificate, Form A and Form B. The CITI human subjects protection training certificate was earned by completing a series of quizzes dedicated to multiple topics of human subjects protections. Considering the present research analyzed secondary data that is publicly available, I striven to meet IRB requirements by completing Form A and Form B. The two forms asked questions on the present research study, and agree to ethical terms set forth, respectively. After completing each IRB requirement, this study received IRB approval from Walden University.

Summary

Hopefully, research on this topic will promote social change by providing a greater understanding of the moral foundations that are used by residents of politically polarized cities in the United States to determine political party preferences to help better understand the excessive partisanship, polarization, and animosity that can promote legislative gridlock in the U.S. political electorate and harm United States democracy. Exploring this will hopefully improve the dialogue between political actors, whether they are citizens, politicians, or public servants, and hopefully mitigate excessive partisanship, polarization, and animosity. Within this chapter, there was a discussion on how previous data were collected and how current data obtained maintained appropriate IRB standards. The research method uses qualitative secondary data from the ANES 2020 Time Series Study. The next chapter will include a detailed data analysis.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

For this study, I sought to better understand the moral foundations used by residents in polarized cities to determine political party preferences. The moral foundations used were authority/respect, purity/sanctity, harm/care, ingroup/loyalty, and fairness/reciprocity (see Haidt & Graham, 2007). MFT has two types of foundations that categorize the theory's intuitions: (a) individualizing moral foundations, which include harm/care, and fairness/reciprocity intuitions; and (b) binding moral foundations, which include ingroup/loyalty, purity/sanctity, and authority/respect intuitions (Ekici et al., 2021; Gehman et al., 2021; Nilsson et al., 2020). By studying moral foundations to determine political party preferences, I sought to explain excessive partisanship, polarization, and animosity that can promote legislative gridlock in the political electorate and harm U.S. democracy. My study was guided by a research question on the moral foundations used by residents of politically polarized cities in the United States to determine political party preferences. This chapter includes the research findings, descriptions of the setting, respondent demographics, data collection, data analysis, evidence of trustworthiness, and the results of the study.

Setting

I conducted this study using secondary data from the 2020 ANES time series open-ended redacted data set. I did not have any influence on the participants, nor could I influence the participants' experiences to impact the results of the study. For this study, I received Walden University IRB approval. Throughout data analysis, I also worked with

ICPSR who managed the ZIP codes/geocodes to ensure confidentiality requirements of the data respondents were met.

Demographics

The data for this study came from the 2020 ANES redacted open-ended data set asking participants their likes and dislikes on the two major political parties: Democrat and Republican. Data analyzed for the study included at least one *like* or *dislike* of at least one major political party. In total, there were 39 data respondents who resided in the top five most polarized cities. However, seven respondents did not answer any of the aforementioned open-ended survey questions and were removed from data analysis. For this study, data respondents were required to answer at least one open-ended survey question on the *like* or *dislike* of a major political party. There was a total of 32 data responses who provided at least one *like* or *dislike* for either of the two major political parties. This research study met data saturation requirements sufficient to answer the research question.

To protect respondents confidentiality, maintain consistency when reporting data, and adhere to the data use agreement, specific frequency counts for respondents' cities will not be disclosed (see Appendix D). However the respondents' cities in descending order included; (a) New Orleans, Louisiana; (b) Birmingham, Alabama; (c) Jackson, Mississippi; (d) Shreveport, Louisiana; and (e) Baton Rouge, Louisiana. The ranking for cities with the most polarizing codes in descending order included; (a) New Orleans, Louisiana; (b) Jackson, Mississippi; (c) Baton Rouge, Louisiana; (d) Birmingham, Alabama; and (e) Shreveport, Louisiana.

To protect respondents confidentiality, and adhere to the data use agreement, specific frequency counts for respondents' political ideology/party will not be disclosed (see Appendix D). However, the self-identified political ideologies of the respondents in descending order includes: self-identified liberals, conservative, and finally people who either have not thought much about their political ideology or who self-identify as moderate–middle of the road. The political party of the data responses in descending order include self-identified Democrats, Republicans, Independents and people who described their party as “other.”

Data Collection

A total of 32 data respondents provided at least one like or dislike of a political party. Twenty-one data responses stated likes of the Democratic party, 14 data responses stated likes of the Republican party, 20 data responses stated dislikes of the Democratic party, and 28 data responses stated dislikes of the Republican party. Some respondents did not have a like/dislike of both political parties but were included if they provided at least one like or dislike of at least one of the two major political parties. There were no variations in the data collection or analysis plan from those described in Chapter 3 of this study.

The data used in this study were secondary data; therefore, the data were previously collected, transcribed, and entered into a data spreadsheet before I obtained access. To obtain access to the geocodes and ZIP codes, my committee chairperson and I accessed the data through a secured VMware Horizon Client server and agreed to maintain confidentiality of the participant's ZIP codes before receiving access. The data

were stored in the VMware Horizon Client server, and the data analysis was conducted in the VMware Horizon Client server. For this study, data underwent a vetting process to ensure confidentiality of data respondents. Data were required to be vetted before removal from the VMware Horizon Client secured server.

Data Analysis

The data selection process started by choosing data respondents who lived in the identified politically polarized cities. I exclusively analyzed open-ended data that asked respondents their likes and dislikes of the two major political parties. To ensure alignment in conducting the data analysis, I used deductive coding that incorporated the essential characteristics of the conceptual framework. The research question sought to answer the moral foundations used by residents of politically polarized cities in the United States to determine political party preferences. I implemented Saldaña's (2013) deductive coding strategy to analyze the data by assigning codes from the preliminary coding framework that represent the open-ended responses. Coding is a researcher created construct that symbolizes and features an interpreted meaning to each datum for the purposes of pattern detection, categorization, theory, themes, and other data analytic processes (Saldaña, 2013).

When first conducting data analysis, I examined the open-ended responses, and read through each of them carefully. Then, I assigned codes from the preliminary coding framework presented in Chapter 3 (see Table 3). I followed Saldaña's (2013, 2021) coding framework and assigned deductive codes that symbolically represent the language for each of the data responses. Using characteristics of the conceptual framework and

objective definitions to define words allowed me to accurately assign codes to data (see Appendix E). During the first cycle of initial coding, I assigned as many codes as necessary to explain the essence of the qualitative data by applying in vivo coding. As Saldaña (2013) states, in vivo coding is a coding method that uses a respondent's own language for codes and is appropriate for all qualitative research. I used in vivo coding because in vivo coding allowed me to analyze respondents' own language and assign codes based on the data (see Saldaña, 2013).

During the second and third cycle of coding, I used focused coding and theoretical coding, respectively. Focused coding follows in vivo coding by categorizing codes based on themes and concepts that are similar (Saldaña, 2013; 2021). I used an amalgamation of both coding techniques because the coding techniques were best suited for the objective of the study. I conducted deductive coding based on the elements of the conceptual framework that aligns with the research question, and focused coding allowed me to answer the moral foundations used by residents in polarized cities to determine political party preferences. During the second cycle of coding, I read the responses anew to gain further insight into the respondents' language and meaning and assigned coding that best represented the data. During the second cycle coding process, the codes can be the exact same units, analytic memos on the data, or even reconfiguration of the codes (Saldaña, 2013). Therefore, I reorganized and recategorized the codes to streamline a more detailed analysis during the second cycle of coding. As Saldaña (2013) stated, during second cycle coding, codes can be refined, more detailed, and more selective and should become a smaller list to help generate broader categories.

Focused coding was mostly conducted during the second cycle of coding. While conducting focused coding, there were searches done on the most frequent and most significant codes to produce salient categories from the data corpus (see Saldaña, 2013; 2021). To determine the categories and themes that emerged within focused coding data analysis, I counted the total number of codes assigned for each of the data responses and produced a coding frequency table. I also used theoretical coding, which helped to uncover the central categories that identify the themes of the research. Theoretical coding is used when the codes and categories formed are integrated into a theme of the research (Saldaña, 2021). For this research, I compared data responses to find connections among each of the data and then themes emerged to assist in explaining the research findings. As in this data analysis, theoretical coding systematically integrates the categories and concepts to a central explanation for the phenomenon (see Saldaña, 2021). For this study, both moral values and groupthink helped to explain the phenomenon occurring in the data.

The themes that emerged from the data included (a) individualizing foundation from MFT, (b) group cohesion used for and against a group, (c) authoritarianism, binding moral foundations, and (d) groupthink behavior from groupthink theory. The themes emerged from the categories pertaining to a central concept that gathers the essence of the categories. Focused coding, when executed as a second cycle coding analytical process, was best suited for this data analysis because it helped to develop major categories and themes from the data itself (see Saldaña, 2013). Theoretical coding is also suited for data analysis because the coding technique helps to systematically unite the deductive coding

to core categories that help answer the research question (Saldaña, 2021). Theoretical coding helped to substantiate the fundamental elements of the study's conceptual framework. When finding themes emerge from the categories, Saldaña (2013) stated that a theme is an extended phrase or sentence that explains what the data mean. I followed the recommendations of Saldaña (2013, 2021) to code, categorize, and theme the data.

Description of the Codes, Categories, and Themes

The preliminary coding framework cited in Chapter 3 were the codes that have emerged from the data. Those specific codes that emerged from the data included morality (MO), leadership (LE), obedience (OB), authoritarianism (AU), justice (JU), equitable (EQ-1), equality (EQ-2), animosity (AN), like (L), dislike (DL), partisanship (PA), excessive partisanship (EP), purity/sanctity (PS), antidiversity of thought (AD-2), overgeneralizations of other groups (OG), false unity (FU), conformity (C), forced partisanship (FP), polarization (PO), respect/authority (RA), decision making defective (DM-d), and decision making productive (DM-p). The aforementioned codes along with the definitions are explained in Appendix E. When performing a cycle of coding, new codes did emerge: specifically, diversity (D) and respondents mentioning specific public policy issues that influenced their preferences on the selected political party. The public policy issues were coded as public policy issue-progressive (PPI-p) or public policy issue-conservative (PPI-c) based on the political ideology that primarily espouses the public policy issue. Each specific public policy a respondent mentioned (e.g., universal health care, immigration, supporting individuals with lower-incomes, abortion, etc.) has

been linked to either MFT or groupthink theory described in Chapter 2 of the literature review.

Considering the breadth of the conceptual framework, the preliminary framework codes encapsulated the essence of the new codes that emerged. Therefore, new codes that emerged were recoded following better suited preexisting codes based on the coding techniques brought forth by Saldaña's (2013) second cycle of coding. Approximately, two to four codes emerged from a characteristic to become a category. Approximately three codes emerged two times to become a category, and approximately two-three categories emerged to become a theme/concept (see Saldaña, 2013, 2021). Although, when codes, categories, and themes emerged, there was variation occurring with the aforementioned estimates per theme.

The specific categories and theme descriptions that emerged from the data included: fairness/reciprocity, harm/care, ingroup/loyalty/false perception of invulnerability, respect/authority, pressure within group on dissidents, stereotyping outsiders, purity/sanctity, inherent group morality, and censoring oneself. To highlight the important data from the themes, categories and codes emerged. The categories are the parent code shown in Table 3. The themes that emerged were the sections of the conceptual framework specifying either the theory (groupthink theory) or classifying components of the foundations (binding or individualizing foundation) discussed in the literature review in Chapter 2.

Discrepant Cases in Analysis

Discrepant cases can sometimes arise in qualitative open-ended responses after collecting data. In qualitative research methods, discrepant cases help to propose an expansion or modification to an existed theory (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). The qualities of the discrepant cases in the data were data that used harm/care and ingroup/loyalty both for and against a political group. The same can be said for the authoritarianism and groupthink behavior theme. I propose that harm/care and ingroup/loyalty can be used to not only measure political groups an individual agrees with, but political groups an individual disagrees with, as well. Specifically, ingroup/loyalty was used to describe opposition toward political parties. Examples of discrepant cases were factored into the data and coded appropriately based on the definitions of codes (see Appendix E).

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Credibility

Credibility refers to verisimilitude, plausibility, and trustworthiness of the research findings, and is achieved through crystallization, thick description, partiality, multivocality, and triangulation (Tracy, 2010). For this qualitative research, the data were reviewed by my dissertation committee chairperson before data analysis. I was available to my committee and IRB to answer any questions. Additionally, I never met with data respondents whose data were analyzed for this study. Tone of voice, non-verbal communication, facial cues, or data respondents when analyzing data for this study were

not a present factor to influence me. As a result of not interacting with data respondents, the lack of interaction promoted additional objectivity and decreased biases.

Transferability

In this research study, transferability remained constrained because of the restricted scope of research participants. Transferability occurs when individuals feel the research coincides with their individual predicament, thus can transfer the research to additional contexts and sites (Stahl & King, 2020; Tracy, 2010). The research studied adults residing in polarized cities, specifically individuals in the top five most polarized cities. The study's research had limited transferability to a broader sample, but perhaps can be transferred to other adults who live in the aforementioned politically polarized cities, have preferences regarding the major political parties, and identify with a political ideology/party.

Dependability

Dependability was done by revisiting the raw data that was coded to ensure the coding remained consistent upon the second coding analysis. An example of dependability is peer debriefing, peer review, and peer scrutiny because the aforementioned actions are habits that establish trust (Stahl & King, 2020). I conducted triangulation to promote dependability and confirmability. Triangulation was done by the principal researcher and an expert dissertation committee that assessed the research, raw data, coded data, analyzed data, research instruments, and the research plan before and after accessing the data.

Confirmability

Confirmability is achieved when consistency, truth and applicability have been addressed and accounted from participant's accounts (Noble & Smith, 2015).

Confirmability was established by audit trails to ensure data interpretations originated from the ANES 2020 Time Series Study secondary data set (ANES, 2021e). More specifically, to guarantee precise confirmability, I included data tables for the data analysis along with the survey questions that were used to generate each data response. The data tables present the coding frequencies and were used to generate the categories and themes that emerged from the data. Reflexivity was achieved by making personal notes in a journal after ICPSR approved and vetted the data that can be shared for data analysis and interpretation. Debriefing was conducted with my dissertation committee chairperson during bimonthly video conference meetings.

Results

The research question for this study was: what are the moral foundations that are used by residents of politically polarized cities in the United States to determine political party preferences? There were 1,009 survey questions and 27 ANES open-ended questions from the ANES 2020 Time Series Study. From the ANES survey questions, I selected 12 questions pertaining to the topic of this study (see Appendix A). The selected survey questions asked participants their *likes* and *dislikes* of the two major political parties. Utilizing the conceptual framework, individuals' views on the political parties was used to determine political party preferences. Tables 4 to 7 include the coding

frequencies that emerged. Coding was based on the elements from the conceptual framework and central research question.

To protect the confidentiality of individual participants and follow the data usage agreement (see Appendix D), frequencies less than 5 will have their categories combined within another category. Each respondent was assigned a random number to protect confidentiality. Random numbers were assigned to each respondent using an online random number generator setting the minimum number to one and the maximum number to 1000. The following helps to answer the research question based on the patterns and themes that emerged from the coded data:

Survey Question: Is there anything in particular that you like about the Democratic party? If so, what is that? This survey question asked the likes about the Democratic party. I was able to assess the likes and assign codes based on the elements of the conceptual framework. Table 4 shows the coding frequencies that emerged from the open-ended likes about the Democratic party from those who responded to the survey question.

Table 4

Emerging Code Frequencies (f) for Likes About the Democratic Party (N = 21)

Code	Total (f)
Partisanship (PA)	16
Equitable (EQ-1)	15
Equality (EQ-2)	15
Justice (JU)	9
Like (L)	9
Authoritarianism (AU)	< 5
Leadership (LE)	< 5

Considering the survey question asked about the likes of a political party, the responses produced emerging codes containing “partisan” and “like” responses.

Respondent 202 provided an example of a response for the code of partisanship, equity, and equality that stated, “Progressive stances, diversity of members, young delegates to lead us into the future” Respondent 38 provided an example of a response for the code of equity, equality, like, justice, and partisanship that stated,

They promote access to healthcare for all people. They promote access to and education for all people. They respect a woman’s right to choose when it comes to abortion. They promote a more humane treatment of asylum seekers. They realize the wealthy and large corporations should pay more in taxes.

Respondent 819 provided an example of a response for the code of equity, equality, partisanship, and leadership that stated,

I like the diversity of the Democratic Party. I like there are more women in the party of color to speak on my issues. I like the heroes act the Democratic party presented to help the American ppl during the COVID19 Pandemic. I like the healthcare plan that was passed under President Obama even though it need to be tweaked we still have healthcare and also help with pre conditions. I like the student loan plan the Democratic party that has implemented that Mitch McConnell [*sic*] has held up.

Respondent 748 provided an example of a response for the code of equity, equality, and authoritarianism that stated,

They are serious about helping Americans keep their health insurance, climate control, helping people stay in their homes who have lost their jobs due to Covid 19, serious about having a safe vaccine, helping small businesses, investigating Russian interference in our election, getting PPE equipment to those who need it and keeping Americans safe.

Survey Question: Is there anything in particular that you dislike about the Democratic party? If so, what is that? This survey question asked the dislikes about the Democratic party. I was able to assess the dislikes and assign codes based on the elements of the conceptual framework. Table 5 shows the coding frequencies that emerged from the open-ended dislikes about the Democratic party from those who responded to the survey question.

Table 5

Emerging Code Frequencies (f) for Dislikes About the Democratic Party (N = 20)

Code	Total (f)
Dislike (DL)	12
Over-generalizations of other groups (OG)	10
Animosity (AN)	6
Polarization (PO)	6
Excessive partisanship (EP)	5
Morality (MO)	5

Considering the survey question asked about the dislikes of a political party, the responses produced emerging codes containing “animosity” and “dislike” responses. Respondent 671 provided an example of a response for the code of dislike, animosity, over-generalizations of the other group, and morality that stated, “How out of touch they

are. They are a direct reflection of Joe Biden, which is not a good thing in my opinion.”

Respondent 445 provided an example of a response that was coded for dislike that stated, “The constant waste of tax payer money on frivolousness” Respondent 368 provided an example of a response that was coded for polarization that stated, “Nancy Pelositoo [*sic*] many career politiciansToo [*sic*] much left wing directionAmerica [*sic*] Last.”

Respondent 819 provided an example of a response that was coded for polarization, and excessive partisanship that stated, “Not speaking out more forceful against Donald Trump’s lies and fighting harder for the Heroes act and taking Mitch McConnell [*sic*] to the Mat in the Senate to pass these bills he is upholding!!!”

Survey Question: Is there anything in particular that you like about the Republican party? If so, what is that? This survey question asked the likes about the Republican party. I was able to assess the likes and assign codes based on the elements of the conceptual framework. Table 6 shows the coding frequencies that emerged from the open-ended likes about the Republican party from those who responded to the survey question.

Table 6

Emerging Code Frequencies (f) for Likes About the Republican Party (N = 14)

Code	Total (f)
Morality (MO)	7
Purity/sanctity (PS)	6
Partisanship (PA)	5
Authoritarianism (AU)	5
Conformity (C)	5

Respondent 644 provided an example of a response for the code of morality, authoritarianism, conformity and respect for authority that stated “pro-life, pro legal immigration, socially conservative” Respondent 441 provided an example of a response that was coded for partisanship and inherent group morality that stated, “I think the rep. party is great. I have been one since I was allowed to vote.” Respondent 387 provided an example of a response that was coded for purity/sanctity, and inherent group morality that stated, “I like positions formally taken by the party on the importance of international trade and cooperation, the importance of a strong military defense and the opposition to abortion”

Survey Question: Is there anything in particular that you dislike about the Republican party? If so, what is that? This survey question asked the dislikes about the Republican party. I was able to assess the dislikes and assign codes based on the elements of the conceptual framework. Table 7 shows the coding frequencies that emerged from the open-ended dislikes about the Republican party from those who responded to the survey question.

Table 7

Emerging Code Frequencies (f) for Dislikes About the Republican Party (N = 28)

Code	Total (f)
Dislike (DL)	19
Partisanship (PA)	12
Over-generalizations of other groups	10
Excessive partisanship (EP)	8
Polarization (PO)	7
Animosity (AN)	7
Authoritarianism (AU)	6

Considering the survey question asked about the dislikes of a political party, the responses produced explicit emerging codes containing “partisanship” and “dislike” responses. Respondent 671 provided an example of a response for the code of dislike, over-generalizations of other groups, and polarization that stated, “The GOP look to work toward policies that pad their pockets and avoid a bad relationship with Trump. No one is standing up and saying ‘this is wrong and not American.’ They are cowards.”

Respondent 368 provided an example of a response for the code of dislike that stated, “too many career politicians No spine” Respondent 304 provided an example of a response for the code of partisanship, authoritarianism, excessive partisanship, and polarization that stated, “they just follow whatever Trump says”

The themes that emerged from the coded data linked directly to the conceptual framework. While analyzing the data, four themes emerged from the data.

Theme 1: Individualizing Foundations

The Individualizing Foundation - Moral Foundation Theory theme consist of a total of six codes, and two categories. The three codes with the category of fairness/reciprocity includes justice ($f = 12$), equity ($f = 19$), equality ($f = 20$), and the second category of harm/care includes the codes of animosity ($f = 15$), likes ($f = 11$), and dislikes ($f = 34$), which are components of the individualizing foundation in the MFT. Individualizing foundations includes respondents utilizing harm/care and fairness/reciprocity to evaluate political parties. According to the data responses, the individualizing foundations (harm/care, and fairness/reciprocity) within the MFT was a theme that emerged, especially when looking at the data in regards to the preferences

individuals have regarding their likes for the Democratic party. The individualizing foundation theme from MFT emerged from data related to harm/care ($f = 60$) and fairness/reciprocity ($f = 51$) foundations.

The individualizing foundation was supported by respondent 595 who mentioned care specifically when stating, “cares more about middle class and low class people and/or families” and respondent 125 agrees mentioning fairness when stating their reason for liking a specific political party stating, “They encourage fairness regardless of our economic status” Harm/care were also used in coding when respondent 696 answered,

They are more concern about people who own businesses and corporations and not the poor and middle class Americans that make these businesses as successful as they are. You have CEO getting astronomical bonuses off the backs of lower level staff that don't usually share in the profits of the companies. These are the same companies that received undeserved millions of dollars in funds from the Cares Act.

Theme 2: Group Cohesion For and Against a Group

The group cohesion, partisan unity, and promoting a false belief of strength for and against a group was a theme that emerged. The theme is from the binding moral foundations in MFT and groupthink theory. The theme explains how respondents promote partisan unity, and group cohesion for/against a group. The theme consists of a total of two codes, and two categories. The code within the category of ingroup/loyalty include partisanship ($f = 34$), and the code within the category of false perception of invulnerability include excessive partisanship ($f = 13$). Ingroup/loyalty within MFT is a

component of the binding foundation. False perception of invulnerability is a component of groupthink theory describing how groups falsely believe they are invulnerable. According to the data responses, the binding foundation that promoted unity within a group (group cohesiveness) was a theme that emerged. Group cohesion and false perceptions of invulnerability was facilitated by respondents implying group cohesion of shared values and a false perceptions of invulnerability. For example respondent 513 stated, "I want the party to take a stronger stand for what the party stands for." Respondent 441 mentioned a comment exemplifying in-group loyalty (ingroup/loyalty) a component of MFT by stating the following, "I think the rep. party is great. I have been one since I was allowed to vote." The binding foundation from MFT emerged from data related to shared stances that promote group loyalty/ingroup, and groups falsely perceiving their invulnerability consisting of the overarching theme of group cohesion ($f = 47$).

The binding foundations from MFT that promote unity within a group was strengthened by a group's shared public policy stances. For example, respondent 319 stated, "Progressive tax system, pro gay civil union, concern for the environment, Obama got Osama, diverse coalition, dems circle the wagon better then any party." Respondent 387 stated their reasons for liking a group is due to the shared public policy stances saying, "I like positions formally taken by the party on the importance of international trade and cooperation, the importance of a strong military defense and the opposition to abortion" Group cohesion and partisan unity was also used for disliking united groups when respondent 878 stated, "THEY ARE TOO TRADITIONAL.//'" and respondent 445

stated, “The republican representatives who vote against measures just out of spite for the president”

Theme 3: Authoritarianism, Binding Moral Foundations

Another theme that emerged was authoritarianism by the conceptual framework of MFT within the binding moral foundations. This theme consists of a total of four codes, and 2 categories. The codes within the category of respect/authority includes leadership ($f = 5$), authoritarianism and obedience ($f = 19$). The code within the category of purity/sanctity include morality ($f = 15$). The categories of respect/authority and purity/sanctity are components of the binding moral foundations in MFT. According to the data responses, the binding foundation (respect/authority and purity/sanctity) within the MFT had an authoritarianism theme that emerged, especially when analyzing the data in regards to the preferences individuals have regarding their party. Authoritarianism was supported by respondent 197 who stated their preference for their political party as, “law & order, taxes, immigration, Iran, Israel” and respondent 319 agrees mentioning their preferences as, “Pro God, Pro Law and Order, Pro Borders, Pro Life, Low regulation on business, Pro school choice, SUPPOSED to be fiscally conservative, Patriotic, SUPPOSED to be small govt, Pro self accountability (meritocracy), Pro energy independence.”

Authoritarianism was also used for disliking a specific party when respondent 202 stated, “Unwilling/unable to stand up to the dictator that is our current president.” and respondent 908 stated, “unwillingness to check the blatant abuse of power of President Trump.” The binding foundation authoritarianism theme in MFT emerged from data

related to the respect/authority and purity/sanctity category consisting of the theme of authoritarianism ($f = 39$).

Theme 4: Groupthink Behavior

The groupthink behavior theme represented by the conceptual framework of groupthink theory consist of four categories and seven distinct codes. The codes within the category of pressure within a group on dissidents includes conformity ($f = 9$), forced partisanship and polarization ($f = 17$). The code within the category of stereotyping outsiders include over-generalizations of other groups ($f = 21$). The code within the category inherent group morality include purity/sanctity ($f = 17$).

The code within the category of censoring oneself includes anti-democratic and anti-diversity of thought ($f = 10$). The aforementioned categories for this theme are components of the conceptual framework groupthink theory. According to the data responses, groupthink behavior (pressure within group on dissidents, stereotyping outsiders, inherent group morality, and censoring oneself) within the groupthink theory was a theme that emerged. The groupthink theory components from the groupthink behavior theme emerged from data related to pressure within the group on dissidents ($f = 26$), stereotyping outsiders ($f = 21$), inherent group morality ($f = 17$), and censoring oneself ($f = 10$).

The groupthink behavior theme was supported by respondent 115 who stated, “Constantly bowing to the pressures of the most despicable members” and respondent 368 mentioned, “National Security positionImmigration approachEconomyAmerica [sic]First” People also accused others of groupthink when respondent 701 stated, “they

blame everything on everyone else.” Respondent 304 also agreed when they stated, “they just follow whatever Trump says” and respondent 303 stated, “They appear to not be an inclusive party as it relates to diversity and a party for the rich only.”

Discrepant Cases and Nonconforming Data

When coding, although many expressed dislikes about Republicans regarding equity and equality, it was coded as a dislike (category harm/care) of the party. This coding technique was done because respondents are not saying the party has the attribute of equity and equality, but are saying they dislike the party for the attribute being absent. I counted frequencies of equity and equality when respondents said they like/dislike the party for having that specific attribute. A case of nonconforming data were some data could not be coded at all, because it did not represent any of the coding, nor did it align with the scope of this research study. Due to the nature of this study, as it utilized secondary data by studying respondents in politically polarized cities, there was a degree of confidentiality that must be followed (see Appendix D). For example, data cases that had less than five respondents could not be disclosed, however, that nondisclosure did not affect the results of the study.

Summary

This chapter covered the setting, demographics, data collection, analysis, evidence of trustworthiness, and concluded with the data results. My research question is what are the moral foundations that are used by residents of politically polarized cities in the United States to determine political party preferences? The answer to my research question is the moral foundations that are used by residents of politically polarized cities

in the United States to determine political party preferences in descending order are; harm/care ($f = 60$), fairness/reciprocity ($f = 51$), ingroup/loyalty ($f = 34$), respect/authority ($f = 24$), and purity/sanctity ($f = 15$). The answer was discovered by conducting qualitative deductive coding through the lens of the conceptual framework using frequency analysis on open-ended data responses. Chapter 5 will include discussion on the findings based on the moral foundations used by residents of politically polarized cities in the United States to determine political party preferences, conclusions, and recommendations based on the research findings.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to obtain a greater understanding of the moral foundations used by residents in polarized cities to determine political party preferences. Studying this could help explain the excessive partisanship, polarization, and animosity that can promote legislative gridlock in the political electorate and harm U.S. democracy. This study was conducted to understand why individuals disagree politically and to help explain the partisanship, polarization, and animosity that exist. The study's key research findings included the moral foundations used by residents of politically polarized cities; in descending order, these are: harm/care ($f = 60$), fairness/reciprocity ($f = 51$), ingroup/loyalty ($f = 34$), respect/authority ($f = 24$), and purity/sanctity ($f = 15$).

Interpretation of the Findings

In my research data analysis, I used deductive coding based on elements of the conceptual framework. Based on the literature review in Chapter 2, the findings in this study confirmed much of the existing peer-reviewed literature. Findings confirmed that harm/care and fairness/reciprocity are used more for individuals within the likes of the Democratic party, which was shown in the literature. In the literature review, findings stated that political liberals are more likely to dislike someone if they violate the moral of care and fairness; whereas, conservatives are more likely to dislike someone if an individual violates their moral of authority, purity, and loyalty (Smith et al., 2019). This study's findings confirmed literature review findings, such as the likes for Republicans

are based on the MFT foundations of authority/respect, purity/sanctity, ingroup/loyalty (binding foundations) and morality.

As shown in the literature review, MFT has five foundations that help describe the preferences of liberals and conservatives: (a) authority/respect, (b) purity/sanctity, (c) harm/care, (d) ingroup/loyalty, and (e) fairness/reciprocity (Dawson et al., 2023). More specifically, there are two types of foundations that help to distinguish the MFT foundations and they include; individualizing foundations and binding foundations. As mentioned in the literature review, moral foundations are important because they help individuals better understand voters' partisan selections (Haidt, 2008). This study's research findings overall confirmed the literature; individuals who identify as politically liberal have moral views higher on harm/care and fairness/reciprocity, whereas individuals who identify as politically conservative have moral views supporting all five of the moral foundations (Haidt & Graham, 2007). Overall, individuals used many of the moral foundations (authority/ respect, purity/sanctity, harm/care, ingroup/loyalty, and fairness/reciprocity), but those who stated their likes regarding the Democratic party and opposition to the Republican party used harm/care and fairness/reciprocity more.

This study's research findings also confirmed what was found in the literature review regarding groupthink theory because the data indicates that individuals' preferences regarding a political party can promote groupthink and authoritarianism when faced with national security dilemmas, immigration, and domestic policies. Within the research findings, many who mentioned elements of authoritarianism and groupthink preferences for security, and law and order stated having an affinity toward strong leaders.

As found in the literature review, when there is high stress originating from an external threat and there is low self-esteem from having to face difficult decisions, this produces high group cohesion and leads to groupthink (McCauley, 1998). Within the theme of individualizing moral foundations in the context of the conceptual framework of MFT, the individualizing foundations have been found to reduce prejudice, whereas binding foundations have been found to increase prejudice against out-groups and increase security to remain formidable (Brown et al., 2021; Hadarics & Kende, 2018). This was also confirmed in the research findings as the binding foundations stress security dilemmas, law and order, immigration, partisanship, and polarization, especially toward political groups where there is high disagreement.

Analyzing Findings Through the Conceptual Framework

As mentioned in the conceptual framework, individualizing moral foundations (harm/care and fairness/reciprocity) reduce prejudice because individualizing moral foundations safeguard individual protections and rights (Goenka & Thomas, 2022; Milesi & Alberici, 2018). Analyzing the research findings through the conceptual framework, when respondents argued for harm/care and fairness/reciprocity, it was in regards to caring for individuals who have lower incomes, empathy, equality, equity, and diversity and the dislike was shown to those who were absent of those moral priorities. This can be explained through the conceptual framework of moral foundations where Morris (2020) suggested there is a strong relationship between empathy and progressive views. In fact, Morris found that understanding empathy is one way an individual can understand the

increased polarization that exists, and can explain some of the differences between political conservatives and liberals in the United States (Morris, 2020).

Binding moral foundations (authority/respect, purity/sanctity, and ingroup/loyalty) have been found to be selective and could increase prejudice against disparaged outgroups and value the group's welfare to prevent the risk of insecurity (Brown et al., 2021; Goenka & Thomas, 2022; Hadarics & Kende, 2018; Milesi & Alberici, 2018). Within the present study's findings, there was a high degree for the elements of authoritarianism, which typically occurs when individuals are seeking a high degree of security. As found within the research findings, the codes within the category of respect/authority includes leadership ($f = 5$), authoritarianism, and obedience ($f = 19$), which had a high degree of authoritarianism coinciding with the findings in the conceptual framework. The binding foundation found in the study was respect/authority, ingroup/loyalty, and purity/sanctity. Respect/authority was found in the conceptual framework as being the strongest predictor of treatment of the poor after harm/care and fairness/reciprocity, and ingroup/loyalty foundations (Low & Wui, 2016). Individuals who identify as liberal are more likely to value the morals of fairness/reciprocity and harm/care, which explains why that was a prevalent finding in this research study.

In regard to the individualizing foundations within the MFT, this research indicates that individuals use a higher than average degree of the harm/care foundation coded as likes ($f = 11$) and dislikes ($f = 34$). Within the conceptual framework of MFT, political misunderstandings can be explained by Haidt and Graham (2007) who found that individuals identifying as politically liberal prioritize morals foundations based on

harm/care and fairness/reciprocity, whereas individuals who identify as politically conservative prioritize morals based on all five of the moral foundations. Within the research findings, harm/care and fairness/reciprocity were shown more for individuals stating their likes for the Democratic party, and the moral foundations of harm/care and fairness/reciprocity were also cited if respondents felt a political party was devoid of those aforementioned morals. Within the research findings pertaining to the individualizing foundation theme, components of moral foundation are fairness/reciprocity, which includes justice ($f = 12$), equity ($f = 19$), equality ($f = 20$) and harm/care, which includes animosity ($f = 15$), likes ($f = 11$), and dislikes ($f = 34$). Analyzing through the lens of the conceptual framework, the aforementioned findings were relatively high but can be explained by individuals who identify as politically liberal are more likely to prioritize the components of the individualizing foundation of harm/care ($f = 60$) and fairness/reciprocity ($f = 51$).

Group cohesion was a theme that emerged within the data, and was also discussed in the conceptual framework within the literature. Group cohesion contained the categories of group loyalty that was found within the data for/against political groups ($f = 47$) because according to the conceptual framework, in-group loyalty was more likely found in conservatives (Dickinson et al., 2016). However, within the research findings, individuals of any political ideology used group shared unity stances for or against a political group, which can be explained through groupthink theory and MFT-binding foundations. Group loyalty, group cohesion, partisanship, and group-thinking can be explained in the conceptual framework; van Loon et al. (2020) found individuals

dehumanize and dislike opposing group members because of different perceptions of the world. This finding helps to explain the differences in moral priorities, and also motivates groupthink cited in the conceptual framework.

Critical elements of groupthink theory includes individuals believing their own groups inherent morality, stereotyping outsiders (i.e. the out-group) and engaging in a false belief of consensus (Barr & Mintz, 2018). Within the data, respondents promoted group cohesion by mentioning shared stances within a political party, standing strong for their views, and negatively overgeneralizing and stereotyping political groups in which they have disagreements. It was found in the literature that individuals having strong individualizing intuitions (harm prevention and fairness) and weaker binding intuitions (authority/respect, and ingroup/loyalty), were more likely to donate to causes that benefited out-groups compared to individuals with higher binding intuitions (Nilsson et al., 2020). On the contrary, a higher degree of binding intuitions can also predict group loyalty, which was found in this research study.

Binding foundations, group loyalty, group cohesiveness, and groupthink are core elements of MFT and Janis's (1972) groupthink theory (Hadarics & Kende, 2018; Mullen et al., 1994). Groupthink theory explains the high degree of binding foundations, and groupthink elements that have been found in this study, because it explains how individuals in groups value uniformity, cohesion, and not seeking out alternative ideas (Janis, 1972). Within the conceptual framework, group similarity tended to be overestimated by political conservatives, whereas political liberals were more likely to underestimate group similarity (Stern, 2020). This can help to explain groupthink, group

loyalty, group cohesiveness and binding foundations within the MFT that was found in the present study's research findings. An interesting analysis within each of the themes is how binding moral foundations (ingroup/loyalty, purity/sanctity, and authority/respect), and groupthink coincides with each other. As individuals high in ingroup/loyalty, purity/sanctity, and authority/respect, can relate to many of the integral components in groupthink theory.

The data findings relating to group loyalty, partisanship, and group cohesion can be explained through the conceptual framework. Groupthink theory explains that when a group member disagrees with the group, they are encouraged not to disturb the group, or express arguments against the group (Katopol, 2015). This can explain hard-line, moral absolutist stances in the research findings. Ensuring present research aligns within the boundaries of the scope of the study, the research studied individuals in U.S. polarizing cities to gain insight on polarization, partisanship, and animosity. The present research remained focused on analyzing responses of individuals within the context of MFT and groupthink theory remaining within the scope of the study.

Limitations of the Study

As mentioned in Chapter 1, limitations are constraints that the researcher cannot control that arise within the methodology, and research design that can affect the study's outcome. Therefore, as stated earlier in Chapter 1, the limitations of the findings cannot be generalized beyond the top five most polarized cities, and cannot be generalized among people who do not have formulated political opinions on United States major political parties. An additional limitation came from after accessing the data. After data

access, it was found that there were more respondents who identified as Democrats than Republicans whom had their responses analyzed in this research study. It was also found that most respondents identified from extremely liberal to slightly liberal, followed by extremely conservative to slightly conservative, and lastly respondents who identified as either moderate- middle of the road or who have not thought much about their political ideology.

Recommendations

Future research might also attempt to sample more individuals in political parties relative to the investigated population, and perhaps sample individuals within different political parties outside of the two major political parties. According to Pew Research Center (2022a), there is a frustration with the two-party political system that currently exist, and almost half of young adults wish there were more political parties. Most of the public interest has expressed having a major third political party (Saad, 2022). Future research might also analyze individuals appeal on third parties in the United States to determine what impact that may have on polarization, partisanship, and animosity in U.S. political discourse. In addition, if there is further research on this study, interviewers should ask detailed questions about public policy topics known to be polarizing to receive greater understanding from individuals in polarized cities, especially individuals who have acrimonious political discourse. Future research should also explore using the other six MFT foundations; care/harm, fairness/cheating, loyalty/betrayal, authority/subversion, sanctity/degradation, and liberty/oppression (Graham et al., 2013; Haidt, 2012).

Implications

The research will help to promote positive social change that is needed in society, especially in the United States. As it has been found within prior research, majority of Biden and Trump voters report having either “just a few” or no friends who support the other candidate (Pew Research Center, 2020). Almost half of college students would not share a dormitory room with someone who supports the opposing 2020 presidential candidate (Generation Lab, 2022). Even worse, at least 15% of people from both major political parties agreed that today the country would improve if large numbers of opposing partisans in public “just died” (Kalmoe & Mason, 2018). Much of this can be explained through radicalization through social media, conspiracy theories, groupthink theory echo-chambers mentioned in earlier chapters of this dissertation, and in media outlet research discoveries (Zadrozny, 2021).

Research has found a difference between the political parties perceptions on the political issues that are important (Pew Research Center, 2018; Pew Research Center, 2021). However, the differences of political views have not been found to be entirely from political issues, and can be from identity-based elements of ideology (Mason 2015; Mason, 2018). Ideology has been found to increase affective polarization against out-group ideologues even when there are low levels of policy attitude extremity or when not tied to a specific policy view (Mason, 2018). Furthermore, this brings us to the current research in which partisanship, polarization, and animosity should be further studied. The interpretations of the current research results have yielded support for the conceptual framework and provided further explanation of moral foundations and groupthink theory.

Society could learn from the research findings by learning the moral foundations individuals in polarized cities value and explore those values to gain insight with individuals who politically disagree.

Stakeholders involved in analyzing individuals within the context of MFT and groupthink theory may include think tanks, and research organizations also interested in this study's topic. Stakeholders may also include congressional members, state assembly members, and politicians especially in highly polarized areas. This research can also impact those in conflict-resolution between polarized political groups to hopefully better understand the reason for the differences. Stakeholders can also include those with vested interests in understanding individuals with political disagreements.

Social Determinants of Health (SDH) is integral toward facilitating a healthy society. SDH are factors not including medical care that could possibly be influenced by social policies, social norms, political systems, and development agendas that help to shape health in compelling ways (Braveman & Gottlieb, 2014; World Health Organization, 2008). The World Health Organization elaborated further and explained that SDH are conditions including; birth, growing, work, age, and systems that help to shape life's circumstances (World Health Organization, 2008). The World Health Organization (2008) list examples of social determinants of health that can have a positive and negative consequence on health equity. For the present study, the examples of SDH that could be aligned with this study include; income, social protection, and structural conflicts motivated by partisanship, polarization, and animosity between individuals who disagree politically. The World Health Organization's examples of SDH

that could help to facilitate positive social change include; social inclusion, and non-discrimination (World Health Organization, 2008).

The components of SDH, specifically structural conflicts motivated by polarization, partisanship, and animosity, as well as income could potentially have an adverse affect on health equity. As discussed in the literature review, decreasing partisan conflict may help to reduce income inequality when income inequality is not too high (Balcilar et al., 2019). Political polarization is linked with wealth inequality and economic decline (Gu & Wang, 2022; Stewart et al, 2020). Furthermore, groupthink, and partisanship could also promote structural conflicts with out-groups. This study could potentially have a positive effect regarding health equities pertaining to SDH. The positive effect would be achieved by gaining a better understanding of polarization, partisanship, and animosity to hopefully promote tolerance, unity, and civility within the U.S. political discourse. Additional positive effects includes promoting wealth equality, economic improvement, and reducing income inequality (Balcilar et al., 2019; Gu & Wang, 2021; Stewart et al, 2020).

Conclusion

The problem this research study addressed was partisanship, polarization, and animosity, which can promote legislative gridlock in the American political electorate and have a negative impact on democracy. While polarization, animosity, and partisanship has been studied in the literature to determine the main predictors of an individual's partisanship, this study utilized a conceptual framework by Haidt and Graham's MFT, and Janis's groupthink theory for data analysis. The study has found that

the moral foundations that are used by residents of politically polarized cities in descending order are; harm/care ($f = 60$), fairness/reciprocity ($f = 51$), ingroup/loyalty ($f = 34$), respect/authority ($f = 24$), and purity/sanctity ($f = 15$). Hopefully, this research can contribute to social change by gaining a better understanding of the reasons for political polarization, partisanship, and animosity to foster tolerance, unity, greater understanding, and civility between individuals.

This study explored the likes/dislikes individuals have with the two major political parties using the codes containing elements of MFT and groupthink theory. MFT's individualizing and binding foundations themes arose and helped to explain the focus for each moral foundations (i.e. on the individual vs. the group). The groupthink behavior theme also arose within the data, and helped to explain faulty decision-making that occurs within a group. The aforementioned themes may help us to understand partisanship, polarization, and animosity. The results state the moral foundations that are used by residents of politically polarized cities when assessing political parties are primarily harm/care and fairness/reciprocity. Ingroup/loyalty, respect/authority, and purity/sanctity were also moral foundations used, but to a lesser extent.

Future research should do further investigation on 3rd parties, sample people in a political party representative of the population, and attempt to gain an in-depth understanding into individuals' morals to uncover additional explanations of the polarization, excessive partisanship, and animosity that exist. This research is not striving to force agreement, but to at least better understand others when political disagreements occur. A final note from Neubaum et al. (2021) found that people are less likely to

unfriend someone on social media when the close friend made statements the individual felt were morally violating. Therefore, if individuals are emotionally close, they are more likely to tolerate disagreeing moral opinions and remain friends. Hopefully with this research, politically engaged individuals can reach a better understanding in U.S. political discourse.

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Appendix A: Survey Questions for Dissertation

Questions come directly from the American National Election Studies Questionnaire (ANES, 2021b). Below are the questions that will be used for the present study.

Complete survey can be found here: https://electionstudies.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/anes_timeseries_2020_questionnaire_20210719.pdf

Screening Question: What is the address where you are registered to vote now?

1. We hear a lot of talk these days about liberals and conservatives. Here is a seven-point scale on which the political views that people might hold are arranged from extremely liberal to extremely conservative. Where would you place yourself on this scale, or haven't you thought much about this?

1. Extremely liberal
2. Liberal
3. Slightly liberal
4. Moderate; middle of the road
5. Slightly conservative
6. Conservative
7. Extremely conservative

2. If you had to choose, would you consider yourself a liberal or a conservative? (if chose Moderate; middle of the road, or Haven't thought...)

1. Liberal
2. Conservative
3. Moderate

3. Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as [a Democrat, a Republican / a Republican, a Democrat], an independent, or what?

1. No preference {VOL}
2. Democrat / Republican
3. Republican / Democrat
4. Independent
5. Other party {SPECIFY}

4. Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican Party or to the Democratic Party?
(if chose other party, or Independent)

1. Closer to Republican
2. Closer to Democratic

5. Is there anything in particular that you like about the Democratic party?

1. Yes
2. No

6. If there is something that respondent likes about Democratic party, the participant is then asked, "What is that?"

7. Is there anything in particular that you don't like about the Democratic party?

1. Yes
2. No

8. If there is something that respondent dislikes about Democratic party, the participant is then asked, "What is that?"

9. Is there anything in particular that you like about the Republican party?

1. Yes
2. No

10. If there is something that respondent likes about Republican party, the participant is then asked, "What is that?"

11. Is there anything in particular that you don't like about the Republican party?


1. Yes
2. No

12. If there is something that respondent dislikes about Republican party, the participant is then asked, "What is that?"

Appendix B: Restricted-Use Data Access

Gaining access to the geocodes to determine which residents who live in polarized is restricted-use data. I have to apply for the geocodes/ZIP codes by submitting an application and and gaining IRB approval. According to ANES (2022), “ANES items identified as Restricted-Use Data are not publicly released but can be requested for the purpose of scientific and public policy research. ANES Restricted-Use Data are not available directly from ANES. The Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) handles applications for ANES Restricted-Use Data and provides access to the data through their Virtual Data Enclave (VDE), a secure, virtual environment that is accessible from your own desktop computer.

Application Process in Brief:

1. Choose one of the ICPSR links below to start an application.
2. Locate and click on the “Access Restricted Data” tab to begin.
3. Enter your contact information, project title, description and an abstract of 250 words or less in length.
4. Select the data files and analysis software you require. Please note: You can select multiple ANES restricted-use files in one application.
5. Click “create project.”
6. Check your email for the confirmation notice which will include a link to the ICPSR VDE Data Use Agreement.
7. Follow the application instructions in the confirmation notice and email your IRB documentation and completed Data Use Agreement to 

8. Once your request is approved, ICPSR staff will be in contact with you to set up your VDE license and account, as well as a quick training of how to use the VDE.

Available Files

Geocodes (including zip code)

2020 Time Series Geocodes” (American National Election Studies, 2022, para. 1-2)

Appendix C: Instructions on Receiving Geocodes/ZIP Codes

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, August 1, 2022 5:10 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: ICPSR Virtual Data Enclave Management System : Application Instructions

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your interest in data from the ICPSR.

Please download the ICPSR VDE Data Use Agreement document, print the document, complete and sign the document, scan your document, and email your completed document in its entirety along with IRB review documentation to [REDACTED] with the subject "Application for Project [REDACTED]". Please respond to this email with any further questions.

If you have issues with the link to download the ICPSR VDE Data Use Agreement, copy and paste the following URL into your web browser: [REDACTED]

Thank you,
[REDACTED]

Appendix D: ICPSR VDE Data Use Agreement Document

Restricted Data Use Agreement for Restricted Data in the Virtual Data Enclave (VDE) from the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR)**I. Definitions**

- A. “Investigator” is the person primarily responsible for conducting the research or statistical activities relative to the Research Description within the Online Application (the “Research Description”), or supervising the individuals conducting the research or statistical activities relative to the Research Description, for which Restricted Data are obtained through this Agreement.
- B. “Research Staff” are all persons at the Investigator’s Institution, excluding the Investigator, who will have access to Restricted Data obtained through this Agreement, including students, other faculty and researchers, staff, agents, or employees for which Institution accepts responsibility.
- C. “Institution” is the university or research institution at which the Investigator will conduct research using Restricted Data obtained through this Agreement.
- D. “Representative of the Institution” is a person authorized to enter into binding legal agreements on behalf of Investigator’s Institution.
- E. “Restricted Data” are the research dataset(s) provided under this Agreement that include potentially identifiable information in the form of indirect identifiers that if used together within the dataset(s) or linked to other dataset(s) could lead to the re-identification of a specific Private Person, as well as information provided by a Private Person under the expectation that the information would be kept confidential and would not lead to harm to the Private Person. Restricted Data includes any Derivatives.
- F. “Private Person” means any individual (including an individual acting in an official capacity) and any private (i.e., non-government) partnership, corporation, association, organization, community, tribe, sovereign nation, or entity (or any combination thereof), including family, household, school, neighborhood, health service, or institution from which the Restricted Data arise or were derived, or which are related to a Private Person from which the Restricted Data arise or were derived.
- G. “ICPSR” is the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research.

- H. “Online Application” includes all information entered into the ICPSR web-based data access request system, including Investigator information, Research Staff information, Research Description, Data Selection specifying which files and documentation are requested, Confidentiality Pledge signed by the Investigator, Supplemental Agreement and Confidentiality Pledge signed by each Research Staff, Data Security Plan, and a copy of a document signed by the Institution’s Institutional Review Board (IRB), or equivalent, approving or exempting the research project.
- I. “Data Security Plan” is a component of the Agreement which specifies permissible computer configurations for use of Restricted Data and records what the Investigator commits to do in order to keep Restricted Data secure.
- J. “Deductive Disclosure” is the discerning of a Private Person’s identity or confidential information through the use of characteristics about that Private Person in the Restricted Data. Disclosure risk is present if an unacceptably narrow estimation of a Private Person’s confidential information is possible or if determining the exact attributes of the Private Person is possible with a high level of confidence.
- K. “Derivative” is a file or statistic derived from the Restricted Data that poses disclosure risk to any Private Person in the Restricted Data obtained through this Agreement. Derivatives include copies of the Restricted Data provided through ICPSR’s Virtual Data Enclave (VDE), subsets of the Restricted Data, and analysis results that do not conform to the guidelines in Section VI.F.
- L. The “Virtual Data Enclave” permits monitored access to data that are not available to the general public. The virtual machine is isolated from the user’s physical desktop computer, restricting the user from downloading files or parts of files to their physical computer. The virtual machine is also restricted in its external access, preventing users from emailing, copying, or otherwise moving files outside of the secure environment, either accidentally or intentionally.

II. **Responsibility to Address Disclosure Risk**

Deductive Disclosure of a Private Person’s identity from research data is a major concern of federal agencies, researchers, and Institutional Review Boards. Investigators and Institutions who receive any portion of Restricted Data are obligated to protect the Restricted Data from Deductive Disclosure risk, non-authorized use, and attempts to identify any Private Person by strictly adhering to the obligations set forth in this Agreement.

III. Requirements of Investigator

- A. The Investigator assumes the responsibility of completing the Online Application and any other required documents, reports, and amendments.
- B. The Investigator agrees to manage and use Restricted Data, implement all Restricted Data security procedures per the Data Security Plan, and ensure that all Research Staff understand their requirements per this Agreement and follow the Data Security Plan.
- C. Investigators must meet each of the following criteria:
 - 1. Have a PhD or other research-appropriate terminal degree; and
 - 2. Hold a faculty appointment or have an appointment that is eligible to be a principal investigator at Institution.

IV. Requirements of Institution

The Institution represents that it is:

- A. An institution of higher education, a research organization, a research arm of a government agency, or a nongovernmental, not-for-profit, agency.
- B. Not currently debarred or otherwise restricted in any manner from receiving information of a sensitive, confidential, or private nature under any applicable laws, regulations, or policies.
- C. Have a demonstrated record of using sensitive data according to commonly accepted standards of research ethics and applicable statutory requirements.

V. Obligations of ICPSR

In consideration of the promises made in Section VI of this Agreement, and upon receipt of a complete and approved Online Application, ICPSR agrees to:

- A. Provide the Restricted Data requested by the Investigator in the Restricted Data Order Summary within a reasonable time of execution of this Agreement by Institution and to make the Restricted Data available to Investigator via the Virtual Data Enclave, a secure remoteaccess work space. Access requires proper

authentication. ICPSR will provide instructions on establishing user accounts within a reasonable amount of time after the execution of the agreement.

- B. Provide electronic documentation of the origins, form, and general content of the Restricted Data sent to the Investigator, in the same time period and manner as the Restricted Data.

ICPSR MAKES NO REPRESENTATIONS NOR EXTENDS ANY WARRANTIES OF ANY KIND, EITHER EXPRESSED OR IMPLIED. THERE ARE NO EXPRESS OR IMPLIED WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE, OR THAT THE USE OF THE RESTRICTED DATA WILL NOT INFRINGE ANY PATENT, COPYRIGHT, TRADEMARK, OR OTHER PROPRIETARY RIGHTS. Unless prohibited by law, Institution assumes all liability for claims for damages against them by third parties that may arise from the use, storage, disposal, or disclosure by the Institution of the Restricted Data, except to the extent and in proportion such liability or damages arise from the negligence of ICPSR.

VI. Obligations of the Investigator, Research Staff, and Institution

Restricted Data access provided under this Agreement shall be used or disclosed only in compliance with the terms of this Agreement. In consideration of the promises in Section V of this Agreement, and for use of Restricted Data from ICPSR, the Institution agrees:

- A. That the Restricted Data will be used solely for research or statistical purposes relative to the project as identified in the Research Description of the Online Application (the “Research Description”), and for no other purpose whatsoever without the prior written consent of ICPSR.
Further, no attempt will be made to identify Private Person(s), no Restricted Data of Private Person(s) will be published or otherwise distributed, the Restricted Data will be protected against Deductive Disclosure risk by strictly adhering to the obligations set forth in this Agreement, and precautions will be taken to protect the Restricted Data from non-authorized use.
- B. To comply fully with the approved Data Security Plan at all times relevant to this Agreement.

- C. That no persons other than those identified in this Agreement or in subsequent amendments to this Agreement, as Investigator or Research Staff and who have signed this Agreement or a Supplemental Agreement, be permitted access to the contents of Restricted Data files or any Derivatives from the Restricted Data.
- D. That within five (5) business days of becoming aware of any unauthorized access, use, or disclosure of Restricted Data, or access, use, or disclosure of Restricted Data that is inconsistent with the terms and conditions of this Agreement, the unauthorized or inconsistent access, use, or disclosure of Restricted Data will be reported in writing to ICPSR.
- E. That, unless prior specific, written approval is received from ICPSR, no attempt under any circumstances will be made to link the Restricted Data to any Private Person, whether living or deceased, or with any other dataset, including other datasets provided by ICPSR.
- F. To avoid inadvertent disclosure of Private Persons by being knowledgeable about what factors constitute disclosure risk and by using disclosure risk guidelines, such as but not limited to, the following guidelines¹ in the release of statistics or other content derived from the Restricted Data.¹
 - 1. No release of a sample unique for which only one record in the Restricted Data provides a certain combination of values from key variables.
 - 2. No release of a sample rare for which only a small number of records (e.g., 3, 5, or 10 depending on sample characteristics) in the Restricted Data provide a certain combination of values from key variables. For example, in no instance should the cell frequency of a cross-tabulation, a total for a row or column of a cross-tabulation, or a quantity figure be fewer than the appropriate threshold as determined from the sample characteristics. In general, assess empty cells and full cells for disclosure risk stemming from sampled records of a defined group reporting the same characteristics.
 - 3. No release of the statistic if the total, mean, or average is based on fewer cases than the appropriate threshold as determined from the sample characteristics.

¹ For more information, see the National Center for Health Statistics checklist, *NCHS Disclosure Potential*

¹ If disclosure review rules were established for a specific Restricted Dataset, they will be included in the dataset's documentation and are covered by this Agreement.

Checklist at http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nchs_microdata_release_policy_4-02A.pdf; and *FCSM*

Statistical Policy Working Paper 22 (Second Version, 2005) at <http://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/spwp22.pdf>

4. No release of the statistic if the contribution of a few observations dominates the estimate of a particular cell. For example, in no instance should the quantity figures be released if one case contributes more than 60 percent of the quantity amount.
 5. No release of data that permits disclosure when used in combination with other known data. For example, unique values or counts below the appropriate threshold for key variables in the Restricted Data that are continuous and link to other data from ICPSR or elsewhere.
 6. No release of minimum and maximum values of identifiable characteristics (e.g., income, age, household size, etc.) or reporting of values in the “tails,” e.g., the 5th or 95th percentile, from a variable(s) representing highly skewed populations.
 7. No release of ANOVAs and regression equations when the analytic model that includes categorical covariates is saturated or nearly saturated. In general, variables in analytic models should conform to disclosure rules for descriptive statistics (e.g., see #6 above).
 8. In no instance should data on an identifiable case, or any of the kinds of data listed in preceding items 1-7, be derivable through subtraction or other calculation from the combination of tables released.
 9. No release of sample population information or characteristics in greater detail than released or published by the researchers who collected the Restricted Data. This includes but is not limited to publication of maps.
 10. No release of anecdotal information about a specific Private Person(s) or case study without prior written approval.
 11. The above guidelines also apply to charts as they are graphical representations of cross-tabulations. In addition, graphical outputs (e.g., scatterplots, box plots, plots of residuals) should adhere to the above guidelines.
- G. That if the identity of any Private Person should be discovered, then:
1. No use will be made of this knowledge;
 2. ICPSR will be advised of the incident within five (5) business days of discovery of the incident;
 3. The information that would identify the Private Person will be safeguarded or destroyed as requested by ICPSR; and

4. No one else will be informed of the discovered identity.
- H. Unless other provisions have been made with ICPSR, all access to the Restricted Data will be terminated on or before completion of this Agreement or within five (5) days of written notice from ICPSR. Investigators requiring access to the Restricted Data beyond completion of this Agreement should submit a request for continuation three months prior to the end date of the Agreement.
- I. That any books, articles, conference papers, theses, dissertations, reports, or other publications that employed the Restricted Data or other resources provided by ICPSR reference the bibliographic citation provided by ICPSR and be reported to ICPSR for inclusion in its data-related bibliography.
- J. To provide annual reports to ICPSR staff (through ICPSR's online data access request system), which include:
1. A copy of the annual IRB approval for the project described in the Research Description;
 2. A listing of public presentations at professional meetings using results based on the Restricted Data or Derivatives or analyses thereof;
 3. A listing of papers accepted for publication using the Restricted Data, or Derivatives or analyses thereof, with complete citations;
 4. A listing of Research Staff using the Restricted Data, or Derivatives or analyses thereof, for dissertations or theses, the titles of these papers, and the date of completion; and
 5. Update on any change in scope of the project as described in the Research Description.
- K. To notify ICPSR of a change in institutional affiliation of the Investigator, a change in institutional affiliation of any Research Staff, or the addition or removal of Research Staff on the research project. Notification must be in writing and must be received by ICPSR at least six (6) weeks prior to the last day of employment with Institution. Notification of the addition or removal of Research Staff on the research project shall be provided to ICPSR as soon as reasonably possible. Investigator's separation from Institution terminates this Agreement.
- L. Investigator may reapply for access to Restricted Data as an employee of the new institution. Re-application requires:
1. Execution of a new Agreement for the Use of Restricted Data by both the Investigator and the proposed new institution;

2. Execution of any Pledges of Confidentiality by Research Staff at the proposed new institution;
3. Preparation and approval of a new Data Security Plan; and
4. Evidence of approval or exemption by the proposed new institution's IRB.

These materials must be approved by ICPSR before Restricted Data or any derivatives or analyses may be accessed at the new institution.

- M. That if the Investigator who is changing institutions does not have the new agreement executed by the time they leave their institution, ICPSR will temporarily deactivate the Investigator's account but will maintain the Investigator's profile to save their work during the transition. Upon approval of the new online application, ICPSR will reactivate the Investigator's account. If a new agreement is not executed within three (3) month, the Investigator's account will be deleted.
- N. That use of the Restricted Data will be consistent with the Institution's policies regarding scientific integrity and human subjects research.
- O. To respond fully and in writing within ten (10) working days after receipt of any written inquiry from ICPSR regarding compliance with this Agreement.

VII. Violations of this Agreement

- A. The Institution will investigate allegations by ICPSR or other parties of violations of this Agreement in accordance with its policies and procedures on scientific integrity and misconduct. If the allegations are confirmed, the Institution will treat the violations as it would violations of the explicit terms of its policies on scientific integrity and misconduct.
- B. In the event of a breach of any provision of this Agreement, Institution shall be responsible to promptly cure the breach and mitigate any damages. The Institution hereby acknowledges that any breach of the confidentiality provisions herein may result in irreparable harm to ICPSR not adequately compensable by money damages. Institution hereby acknowledges the possibility of injunctive relief in the event of breach, in addition to money damages. In addition, ICPSR may:
 1. Terminate this Agreement upon notice and immediately remove access to Restricted Data and any derivatives thereof;
 2. Deny Investigator future access to Restricted Data; and/or

3. Report the inappropriate use or disclosure to the appropriate federal and private agencies or foundations that fund scientific and public policy research.
 4. Such other remedies that may be available to ICPSR under law or equity, including injunctive relief.
- C. Institution agrees, to the extent not prohibited under applicable law, to indemnify the Regents of the [REDACTED] from any or all claims, losses, causes of action, judgments, damages, and expenses arising from Investigator's, Research Staff's, and/or Institution's use of the Restricted Data, except to the extent and in proportion such liability or damages arose from the negligence of the [REDACTED]. Nothing herein shall be construed as a waiver of any immunities and protections available to Institution under applicable law.
- D. In the event of a violation, the Investigator must:
1. Notify ICPSR within five (5) business days;
 2. Stop work with the Restricted Data immediately;
 3. Submit a notarized affidavit acknowledging the violation to ICPSR;
 4. Inform the Representative of Institution of the violation and review security protocols and disclosure protections with them.
 - i. The Representative of Investigator's Institution must submit an acknowledgment of the violation and security protocols and disclosure protections review to ICPSR; and
 5. Reapply for access to the Restricted Data.

VIII. Confidentiality

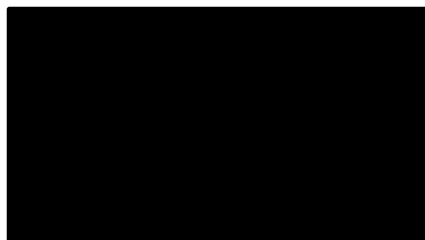
To the extent the Restricted Data are subject to a Certificate of Confidentiality, the Institution is considered to be a contractor or cooperating agency of ICPSR; as such, the Institution, the Investigator, and Research Staff are authorized to protect the privacy of the individuals who are the subjects of the Restricted Data by withholding their identifying characteristics from all persons not connected with the conduct of the Investigator's research project. "Identifying characteristics" are considered to include those data defined as confidential under the terms of this Agreement.

IX. Incorporation by Reference

All parties agree that the information entered into the Online Application, including the Data Security Plan, IRB approval, and any Supplemental Agreements and Confidentiality Pledges, are incorporated into this Agreement by reference.

X. Miscellaneous

- A. All notices, contractual correspondence, and return of Restricted Data under this Agreement on behalf of the Investigator shall be made in writing and delivered to the address below:



- B. This agreement shall be effective for 24 months from execution or until the IRB expires, whichever occurs first.
- C. The respective rights and obligations of ICPSR and Investigator, Research Staff, and Institution pursuant to this Agreement shall survive termination of the Agreement.
- D. This Agreement and any of the information and materials entered into the Online Application may be amended or modified only by the mutual written consent of the authorized representatives of ICPSR and Investigator and Institution. Both parties agree to amend this Agreement to the extent necessary to comply with the requirements of any applicable regulatory authority.
- E. The Representative of the Institution signing this Agreement has the right and authority to execute this Agreement, and no further approvals are necessary to create a binding agreement.
- F. The obligations of Investigator, Research Staff, and Institution set forth within this Agreement may not be assigned or otherwise transferred without the express written consent of ICPSR.
- G. ICPSR may provide Investigator and or Research Staff name, email, and organizational affiliation to the original producer of these Restricted-Use Data. The data producer may use this information to conduct internal analyses of the types of individuals using the data and to contact you to provide information regarding updates to the data, opportunities for user workshops/conferences, or other data-related communications.

Appendix E: Definition of Codes

Code	Characteristic of Theory	Definition
Morality (MO)	Respect/Authority within MFT	Moral; beliefs in right and wrong behavior
Leadership, (LE)	Respect/Authority within MFT	Position of a leader; ability to lead
Obedience (OB)	Respect/Authority within MFT	obedient; submitting to authority
Authoritarianism (AU)	Respect/Authority within MFT	Submitting to authority; favoring power of a leader, or powerful leading centralized government with concentrated power over others
Justice (JU)	Fairness/reciprocity within MFT	Just; impartial and fair
Equitable (EQ-1)	Fairness/reciprocity within MFT	Equity; being fair and equal with all involved
Equality (EQ-2)	Fairness/reciprocity within MFT	Equal; the same measure, number, and quantity when comparing
Animosity (AN)	Harm/care within MFT	Strong hatred or dislike; harmful
Like (L)	Harm/care within MFT	Attraction or engaging in pleasure; caring
Dislike (DL)	Harm/care within MFT	Disapproval or aversion; not pleasurable or causing harm
Partisanship (PA)	Ingroup/loyalty within MFT	Partisan; strong and possible blind allegiance to a party or loyalty
Excessive partisanship (EP)	False perception of invulnerability within GT	Exceeding partisan; very strong blind allegiance to a party
Purity/sanctity (PS)	Inherent group morality within GT	Pure/holiness or sacred; devoted exclusively to one service or use; supporting antiquated righteousness
Anti-democratic (AD-1)	Censoring oneself within GT	Opposed to democracy
Anti-diversity of thought (AD-2)	Censoring oneself within GT	Opposed to different thoughts

Code	Characteristic of Theory	Definition
Over-generalizations of other groups (OG)	Stereotyping outsiders within GT	Generalizing excessively by making vague statements toward other groups
False Unity (FU)	False perception of unanimity	Falsely believing of oneness
Conformity (C)	Pressure within group on dissidents within GT	Conforming; accordance with an authority or standard
Forced partisanship (FP)	Pressure within group on dissidents within GT	Forced strong allegiance to a party
Polarization (PO)	Pressure within group on dissidents within GT	Polarizing; separation into opposing groups
Respect/authority (RA)	Self-appointed mind guards within GT	High regard/power to influence
Defective (DM-d)	Decision making (DM) within GT	Defect; flaw
Productive (DM-p)	Decision making (DM) within GT	Producing; to cause existence

Note. Definitions come from Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2023 (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/>).