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Culture Wars: Explaining Congressional Partisanship and Organizational Dysfunction Through Moral Foundations Theory

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This is to certify that the doctoral dissertation by

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Abstract

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Through Moral Foundations Theory

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MA, Lewis and Clark College, Portland, OR, 1994

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Organizational Psychology

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Abstract

The focus of this study was the organizational working environment and existing partisanship evident in the United States Congress. There has been a reduction in the number of laws passed over the last 30 years from a high of over 1,000 to a low of around 120, with a period of complete government shutdown in 2013. This qualitative research utilized qualitative content analysis to discover the nature of partisan conflict as demonstrated by 6 members of Congress. The conceptual framework for this study was moral foundations theory. Different moral principles held by Democrats and Republicans were studied as a possible explanation for the inability of one end of the political spectrum to identify with, work with, and comprehend the belief systems of the other. Archival video data for each participant was viewed on C-Span and related transcripts were analyzed using qualitative content analysis. Emerging themes were then inductively coded in order to understand the nature of the partisan conflict in Congress. Results demonstrate that Republicans and Democrats rely on different sets of moral foundations and that there is limited crossover between those who occupy the extreme ends of the ideological continuum. This lack of crossover essentially leads members with differing ideology and moral foundations to not comprehend the moral message of their opponents. With this knowledge, political strategists can help to develop communication and political approaches that take into consideration the moral foundations of ideological opponents. Social change implications include improved understanding of the ideological stance of members of the opposing party and improved working relationships in Congress, resulting in an organizational working environment that is less conflicted.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to all of those in my family who have encouraged me to pursue my dreams, who have offered guidance, love and support along the way and who have never given up on me reaching the finish line. Additionally, to my dearest of friends who have continued to have faith in my ability to climb this mountain. I love and thank you all. Ultimately, none of this would be possible without my hero Brien Howard. Thank you for risking your life in order to save mine – you truly are my guardian angel.

In loving memory of Larry Hart and Kodi.

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I would like to acknowledge all of those individuals in my life who have been directly involved in facilitating my educational success. Originally, as a result of my high school psychology teacher Debra Murray, then subsequently due to the awesome staff in the Department of Psychology at the University of Warwick, England, I developed my initial love and understanding of the field of psychology. This was greatly broadened and deepened with the sound academic guidance of the Master's faculty at Lewis and Clark College, Portland, OR. I would like to acknowledge, in particular, Dr. Donald Mihaleow, who had the most significant impact on the trajectory of my academic career. Without his brilliant teaching style, wit, understanding and guidance I would not have found and adopted the "voice" I currently employ in my writing. He inspired a depth of thought and creativity that I had not known I possessed. I will also be eternally grateful to him for his willingness to write a fabulous letter of recommendation during my PhD application process and to then offer wonderful advice and encouragement at a challenging stage during this endeavor.

My time at Walden has provided me with a superb, high quality education grounded in critical thinking, a clear understanding of the research process, professional ethics and the admirable objective for each graduate to effect positive social change. This has given me the tools I need to be successful in any professional role after graduation. However, without the expert guidance of my dissertation chair, Dr. Jay Greiner, this would not have come to fruition. Dr. Greiner exemplifies the qualities of the perfect mentor. He believed in the importance of my study and encouraged me to pursue my

chosen direction for this research. He unbundled the dissertation process into a series of distinct, achievable goals, while simultaneously ensuring that I referred back to my problem statement, purpose and research questions often. He took a mountain and broke it into surmountable boulders, reminding me when to slow down and tread carefully and when to speed up and reach the next goal. He was eternally understanding and kind and his persistent sense of humor made this process an incredibly positive, profound and life-altering experience. I am sincerely grateful for his guidance in helping me to reach the finish line.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

It was the goal of this study to examine the well-documented problem of partisan conflict in the United States Congress (Dionne, 2012; Quirk, 2011; Ramirez, 2009) by examining the relationship between morality and politics in the U.S. Through investigating this phenomenon by analyzing video data of current members of Congress in action, it was hoped that this study could address an apparent gap in the existing literature. Adding this unique perspective of assessing the speeches of those who are working in this environment should add clarity invaluable for strategizing solutions to this ongoing conflict. The restoration of effective functioning in this organization could result in the quicker passage of laws to help correct the listing economy and fractured social fabric of this country. The work of elected officials could once again have an effective impact on reshaping the nation, through increased productivity borne of renewed cooperation across the aisle and a more civil work environment.

It is important to begin this inquiry by comprehending the complexity of the United States Constitution and the principles upon which it was founded, wherein the original desire of the country's founders to create a nation free from the tyranny of supreme power (Cato Institute, 2002) were reflected. The founders of the Constitution were truly brilliant and enlightened men, whose genius would still be enviable today. In creating a system of government laden with a series of checks and balances to prevent runaway power, their vision to establish a nation based on liberty, equality, and justice was realized. These remain as solid guiding principles for the nation today.

Since the ratification of the Constitution, the U.S. has become more complex. The population has increased (United States Census Bureau, 2014a) and the general populace has increasingly moved away from farming to living in the cities and suburbs (United States Census Bureau, 2014b). With geographic mobility, local community and family support has eroded (Starbuck, 2001) and individual and national economic cycles have sequentially ebbed and flowed. The society of the United States has matured, modernized, and globalized. Employment opportunities for lower skilled occupations have significantly diminished with the advent of the technological revolution (Mark, 1987). Life in the United States has changed.

Such changes, materializing in the last two hundred plus years, have brought about corresponding adaptations in the structure of the federal government (Levin, 2012). Once restrained by the mutual checks and balances of the executive, legislative, and judicial branches, the federal government has increasingly adopted a role previously designed for the legislatures of the individual states (Levin, 2013). Such adaptations may be viewed with equal vigor as positive or negative, depending on the political persuasion of the person in question. These changes have resulted the federal government being more present in the lives of the nation's citizens than was provided for by the Constitution (Levin, 2013).

This growth and maturation of the country and the resulting interventions of the federal government have provided a significant source for debate and disagreement. Those who may be described as progressive or liberal have welcomed the growing safety net (Dionne, 2012) against starvation, extreme poverty, inaccessible health care, and lack

of support in old age. As a global superpower and a first world nation the United States, liberals argue, should not consider doing otherwise. However, for those who may be described as conservative and whose belief systems are strongly bound to liberty and the rugged individuality of those who helped create this nation, this involvement by the federal government oversteps the limits put firmly in place in the Constitution (Levin, 2013). They argue that it insults the spirit of individuality in those who believe we should rely solely on ourselves and should not be required to support those who refuse to work hard for their living. These individuals argue that the over involvement of the federal government will lead to tyranny (Levin, 2012), and ultimately to the surrender of one's liberty to the common good.

These foundational principles for liberals and conservatives today appear to be at irreconcilable odds and may provide the template from which to uncover a potential source for the current political conflict witnessed in the U.S. government (Dionne, 2012). This dichotomy, also evident within the populace, clearly represents a challenging obstacle to overcome. Current political partisanship "threatens to stifle practical solutions to real world problems…[which are proposed]…in order to advance the common good" (Rhodes, 2014, p.136). The current inability of both ends of the political spectrum to find common ground is preventing all but microscopic progress in Congress (Benen, 2013) and holding the populace hostage to how the winds in the chambers of our elected officials deem to blow. "Governance by crisis" *(*Obama, 2013) appears to be the modus operandi. Essentially, the work of the federal government is not getting done (Benen, 2013). It is of vital concern that we increase our understanding of what may prevent the

effective running of this organization. Discovering and understanding the underlying mechanisms that are fueling the current partisanship in the U.S. government, provides the purpose of this research study.

As in many situations, with a crisis comes the opportunity for change. It is certainly apparent that this organization is in dire need of positive change in order to increase its effectiveness and productivity. This study provides a greater understanding of what may be inflaming exchanges between members of Congress so that potential solutions can be developed. The social implications of a more functional federal government that may result, include the potential to allow for more effective lawmaking, greater bipartisan support for bills introduced to Congress, and a more accurate representation of the desires and concerns of the citizens of the U.S..

After summarizing the background to this study, this chapter presents the statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions, definitions and assumptions. The conceptual framework for the study is briefly introduced and then described in further detail in Chapter 2. With a brief discussion of methodological considerations, which is described in greater detail in Chapter 3, a clear and concise framework with which the reader can establish the overall direction of the study is provided.

Background

In the last forty years party ideology in Congress has polarized significantly, with midcentury moderates and centrists significantly differentiating, condensing to the extremes of the liberal-conservative continuum (Blendon & Benson, 2011; Quirk, 2011).

Previously, party moderates would frequently cross over party lines, making bipartisan compromise feasible (Quirk, 2011). However, since Congressional members distilled into each end of the political spectrum, the center has disappeared, resulting in diminishing cooperation between parties (Blendon & Benson, 2011; Pildes, 2011). Conflict has increased between the two ideologically distinct ends of the spectrum as members' policy positions become more homogeneous within each party and increasingly heterogeneous between parties (Pildes, 2011). From this, gridlock ensues (Quirk, 2011), causing members of Congress to have the "inability to effect policy change" (Quirk, 2011, p. 2) or execute many of the functions they were elected to perform (Blendon & Benson, 2011).

It is important to determine whether movement by members of Congress towards the ideological poles of the political spectrum is indicative of the influence these members exert over the direction of their party's platform, or whether politically active members of the public and other core constituents in each party's base significantly influence the direction their elected officials take (Pildes, 2011; Quirk, 2011). Determining which of these has influenced the direction politicians have taken over the last several decades is important for discovering why partisan conflict in the government persists (Dionne, 2012). A primary goal of this research was to increase the overall understanding of this conflict through the analysis of a sample of videos of Congressional politicians. This can hopefully help to highlight potential solutions and interventions contingent on this increased knowledge base to address the ongoing negative impact of this conflict on the smooth running of the U.S. (Albert & Moskowitz, 2014; Andersson &

Pearson, 1999; Condon, 2013; Dean, 2007; Dinan & Klimas, 2013; Pelosi, 2013; Ricci & Seymour, 2012; Taibbi, 2012; Weiner & O'Keefe, 2013).

Contrary to Pildes (2011), who stated that the current conflict in Congress is simply evidence of a maturing democracy and is here to stay, I believe that this is a temporary condition, which has the potential to respond effectively to organizational interventions deemed useful in the business world. Rhodes (2014) has described the polarization of parties in Congress as changeable over time. He contends that the organizational cultures of Democrats and Republicans are different, with Democrats "emphasizing equality, inclusiveness and fairness" and Republicans demonstrating a "more hierarchical, orderly, and efficient organization" (p.126). As with organizational cultures in the business world, differences in the cultures of each party should be considered when developing possible solutions to the current dysfunction in Congress.

This study contributes to the current research, filling an apparent gap in the literature regarding a qualitative evaluation of video data of current members of Congress concerning the ongoing partisan conflict. It was hoped that emerging themes garnered from an exploration of U.S. Congressional members in action in the Congress would highlight factors not previously evident to researchers. This is intended to provide a platform from which to construct prospective solutions for alleviating the negative impact of this conflict on the productivity and efficiency of this organization. The solutions that were uncovered from this study are clearly needed in order to disrupt the dynamics responsible for the endless cycle of incivility, conflict and problematic organizational performance evident in the U.S. government.

Problem Statement

The problem under investigation in this research study was the partisan conflict evident within the U.S. government (Dionne, 2012; Haidt, 2012c; Harbridge, Malhotra & Harrrison, 2014; Mann & Ornstein, 2012; Pildes, 2011; Rhodes, 2014) its impact on the effective running of this governmental organization (Albert & Moskowitz, 2014; Andersson & Pearson, 1999; Harbridge et al., 2014; Quirk, 2011; Rhodes, 2014; Schraufnagel, 2005) and by extension, the U.S. as a whole. The polarization that has bred this dysfunction and conflict has produced an organization steeped in indecision, incivility, confrontation, and paralysis (Blendon & Benson, 2011; Dionne, 2012; Haidt, 2012c; Pildes, 2011; Ramirez, 2009; Rhodes, 2014). Even though strongly differentiated parties are thought to be integral to a 'healthy democracy' (Pildes, 2011), the lack of progress and productivity (Benen, 2013; Burwell, 2013; Dinan & Klimas, 2013; Pelosi, 2013; Ricci & Seymor, 2012; Taibbi, 2012; Wack, 2012) evident in recent years suggests that this differentiation has moved past healthy and now occupies a position in the dysfunctional sphere.

The increase in partisanship, conflict and polarization in the U.S. Congress over the last several decades (Pew Research, 2012) has impacted a variety of policy issues, spreading from the traditional areas of disagreement regarding the economy to those that are racial and cultural in nature (Brewer, 2005). Additionally, conflict has obstructed productivity in one of the primary functions of this organization—lawmaking—evident with the lack of legislation being passed (Pelosi, 2013; Weiner & O'Keefe, 2013), along with stalling of those laws that have been passed (Condon, 2013; Ricci & Seymour, 2012;

Taibbi, 2012; Wack, 2012). The entire organization was shut down in 2013 (Burwell, 2013), directly relating to the ongoing conflict in Congress and the lack of ability of members to compromise, problem solve, and find mutually acceptable solutions (Rhodes, 2014). Tactics preventing productivity, such as the use of the filibuster (Dinan, 2014; Dinan & Klimas, 2013; Milbank, 2013) have spiked, preventing any real progress from occurring. Without any clear measure of cooperation between the two political parties, the work of the government continues to be significantly diminished, thereby indicating an organizational problem that needs to be addressed.

Public evaluation of Congress is primarily judged by policy output since the job of Congress is to legislate (Ramirez, 2013). With diminished output and increased partisanship, public confidence in Congress has diminished (Harbridge & Malhotra, 2011; Ramirez, 2009). In addition, Harbridge & Malhotra (2011) and Ramirez (2009) noted that since the electorate is not as polarized as Congress, members are arguably not accurately representing the desires of the voting public who elected them to their current position. Evidence indicates that the public prefers bipartisan solutions and is more supportive of members cooperating across the aisle (Harbridge & Malhotra, 2011; Ramirez, 2013), particularly when it prevents legislative gridlock (Harbridge & Flynn, 2014). Voters are not supportive of the divisiveness and lack of cooperation occurring today, unless it advances their own policy preferences (Harbridge & Flynn, 2014). Viewing this through the lens of organizational psychology, I might describe these employees (members of Congress) as failing to perform the job that their employers (the public) hired them to do, both through not representing the overall desires of the nation

and not functioning in the manner the nation wishes them to (Klein, 2012; Newsweek Staff, 2010). Additionally, I would note that they have also lost the confidence of their employers (the voting public) to perform the job they were elected (hired) to do (McCarthy, 2014).

This study contributed to current research, filling a gap in the literature by evaluating videos of current members of Congress in relation to the on-going partisan conflict. There is a dearth of research in which partisan conflict between members of Congress is investigated. It was found that by qualitatively evaluating videos of members of Congress in action, emerging themes highlighting unique factors involved in the partisan conflict surfaced. When viewed through the lens of MFT, this provided a platform from which to construct prospective solutions for alleviating the negative impact of this conflict on the productivity and efficiency of this organization.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to qualitatively examine videos of members of Congress regarding the ongoing partisan conflict in the U.S. Congress. Through this, potential solutions to this situation could be developed through uncovering from where the polarization in American politics (Quirk, 2011) originates and to what degree individual politicians perpetuate the partisan conflict that is endemic in the federal government (Dionne, 2012). By qualitatively analyzing video data of current Congressional members, the answers to several questions regarding this phenomenon can be found.

A primary goal of this study was to discover whether members of Congress are driven by their own belief systems and morality (Haidt, 2012c) when actively working on policy in Congress, or whether they seek to accurately represent the wishes of their constituents (Pildes, 2011; Quirk, 2011). An additional goal was to determine whether politicians could rediscover common ground from which to rebuild bipartisan compromise and thus improve the function and productivity of the U.S. government.

The purpose of this qualitative study was to answer these and other questions, as themes gathered from the qualitative evaluation of videos of Congressional politicians were explored. In order to ameliorate the continuing negative impact of partisan conflict on the effective running of this organization (McCarty, Poole & Rosenthal, 2011), it was assumed that sufficient light could be shed on the situation in order to develop remedies to assuage the processes keeping the U.S. government locked in conflict and dysfunction.

Research Questions

The following three research questions guided the study, serving to explore the nature of the ongoing partisan conflict in the U.S. Congress:

1. What is the nature of partisan conflict for Republican and Democratic members of Congress?

2. How do Democrats and Republicans describe their core values?

3. How do morality dimensions link to political beliefs and fuel partisan conflict in the U.S. government?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework grounding this study was Jonathan Haidt's moral foundations theory (MFT, Haidt, 2012c; Haidt & Graham, 2007). The complexity of the problems within the organization under study necessitates discovery, inquiry, and understanding in order to ascertain their potential origin. From a review of the literature it was evident that the application of Jonathan Haidt's MFT (2012c) as a conceptual framework from which to build an understanding of this problem could serve as a viable platform from which to explain the continued conflict and apparent lack of understanding between Congressional members. Through comprehending the actions of members of Congress in relationship to the different moral foundations liberals and conservatives are argued to possess (Haidt, 2012c), this research provided a greater understanding of the problems in Congress.

In MFT, six moral principles are described as providing the foundation for the moral judgments people make (Haidt, 2012c; Koleva & Haidt, 2012). These judgments are based on intuitive responses to moral triggers that developed as a result of evolutionary necessities for survival (Haidt, 2012c). Such responses served to inform people instinctively how they should respond to certain situations in the most efficacious manner for their survival. The moral foundations delineated by Haidt (2012c) are as follows:

1. *Care/Harm* Foundation.

2. *Fairness/Cheating* Foundation.

3. *Liberty/Oppression* Foundation.

4. *Loyalty/Betrayal* Foundation.

5. *Authority/Subversion* Foundation.

6. *Sanctity/Degradation* Foundation.

Haidt noted that distinctive triggers activate each moral foundation, after which an individual responds intuitively and automatically to the situation. He noted that reasoning follows this intuitive response, where post hoc arguments justifying the individual's initial response are rapidly formulated. Although these responses are no longer grounded in survival, they do play a significant role in defining the everyday environment and informing the judgments individuals make on a daily basis (Haidt, 2012c).

Using Haidt's MFT as a lens through which to view the ongoing conflict evident in the U.S. government provides a unique perspective for understanding how this conflict is perpetuated. Haidt has demonstrated, through numerous studies, that liberals and conservatives tend to reliably differ with regard to the foundations they endorse (Graham, Haidt & Nosek, 2009; Haidt, 2012c; Haidt & Graham, 2007). Liberals routinely endorse the first three dimensions of *care/harm, fairness/cheating*, and *liberty/oppression* and assign only minimal value to the latter three dimensions of *loyalty/betrayal, authority/subversion*, and *sanctity/degradation*. Conservatives, however, attribute the same value to all six dimensions. As partisans develop and pursue their respective policies in Congress, MFT can explain why one political party finds it challenging to comprehend the belief system of the other. Naturally, this makes compromise and cooperation difficult and thus provides a fertile ground upon which to foment conflict. It is evident that this theory has the potential to provide a conceptual framework for this study as a basis for explaining the partisan conflict in Congress.

Nature of the Study

The goal of this study is to qualitatively examine video data of members of Congress regarding the partisan conflict evident in the U.S. government (Dionne, 2012). MFT (Haidt, 2012c) acts as a framework for the study, potentially explaining the presence of continued conflict. Given the nature of the information obtained from this study, a qualitative methodology was the most appropriate choice for the research.

This study employed qualitative content analysis and coding to analyze video data of members of Congress. By selecting qualitative content analysis and coding, a greater understanding of the challenges experienced between members and how this conflict impacts their ability to work effectively was possible. It was assumed that themes would surface during the analysis of the data, providing a rich understanding of the ongoing conflict between current Congressional members. It was further hoped that this understanding would provide a foundation from which to build potential solutions to this ongoing issue in Congress.

Definitions

The following are definitions of words used in this research study, provided to ensure that this researcher and readers have a mutual understanding of the topic of inquiry:

Conflict: For the purpose of this research study, the term conflict was used to describe the incivility, lack of cooperation, lack of compromise, diminished mutual problem solving and difficulty working effectively together by members of Congress, to achieve success in the work they were hired to do (Pildes, 2011).

Divided government: Different parties controlling at least two of the House, Senate and Presidency (Pildes, 2011).

Gerrymandering: This refers to the process of redistricting and changing boundaries regarding which voters fall into a specific district, in order to stack the odds in a specific party's favor. This provides politicians the ability to select and place in their district those most likely to vote for them, thus allowing for an electoral advantage. Essentially this practice allows for politicians to choose the voters before the voters can choose them (FairVote, 2014).

Partisan: In this research project, partisan refers to being in support of either the Democratic (liberals) or the Republican (conservative) Party (Haidt, 2012c; Pildes, 2011).

Social Intuitionist: Where moral judgments are grounded in emotion, and psychological responses and moral reasoning follows after these initial moral judgments have occurred (Gould, 2009).

Unified government: One party controlling the House, Senate and Presidency (Pildes, 2011).

Assumptions

It was assumed that members of Congress experience the conflict in their place of work as a problem that needs to be addressed. It was also assumed that, using purposeful, criterion-based sampling, enough useful data could be gathered from the videos of current members of Congress that would represent the problem under investigation.

Further, it was also assumed that the behavior and speeches of participants in the videos analyzed accurately showcased their everyday interactions in Congress.

Scope and Delimitations

The scope of this study was limited to current members of the United States Congress. I did not include other lawmakers at the state or local levels, limiting participants to those in the federal government. Other delimitations included the decision to not include Independents within this study, focusing instead on the Republican-Democrat distinction on the liberal-conservative continuum. Also, this study focused to a greater extent on partisan conflict that has developed over approximately the last 30 years, with a particular focus on the presidencies of George W. Bush and Barack Obama. Additionally, information regarding moral development was not discussed, as this study focuses on adults who already have developed morally. Further, results gained from this study applied only to liberal Democrats, moderate Democrats, moderate Republicans and conservative Republicans. Finally, this study did not use quantitative methodology since this study focused on qualitatively exploring and analyzing the problem. Qualitative methodology is more conducive to this style of data collection in which the motivation for discovery lies with deepening understanding of a particular phenomenon.

The focus of this study was examining video data of members of Congress in action, regarding the partisan conflict evident in the U.S. government. This focus was chosen due to the potential for gaining a better understanding of the dynamics involved in this conflict. By directly viewing the behavior and speeches of individuals who are living

and experiencing the phenomenon under investigation, guess work should be eliminated and experience-laden data gathered.

The potential for the generalizability of these findings rested with how many aspects of the purposeful, criterion-based sampling were met within the final sample. In order to consider the data gathered from this study generalizable, it was important that many of the sampling criteria were successfully met (Grbich, 2013). If there were not enough potential participants from both parties, from a range of geographic areas of the United States or from a variety of points on the liberal-conservative continuum, then the results of this study would be less generalizable, with the data gleaned from the participants only generalizable to others who embody the same criteria (Grbich, 2013). While uniqueness of experience is key in qualitative research, a sample that reflects enough of the various criteria of interest to a study can provide a foundation for a critical analysis of the population as a whole (Grbich, 2013). By following this guidline, my results were applicable to members of Congress as a whole.

Limitations

Two potential limitations existed in the design of this inquiry. First, a smaller sample size was used. Second, not all Democrats are routinely liberal in their voting patterns, just at not all Republicans are routinely conservative in theirs. Voting patterns often change based on the specific issue about which a vote is being cast.

These limitations were addressed by first taking every measure to attempt to ensure that all possible avenues were pursued to ensure a representative criterion-based sample was obtained. Voting records and ideological positions were accessed via

Congress.gov (n.d.) and GovTrack.us (2004) in order to discover the voting patterns and ideological stances of participants in this study and as a vehicle for confirming or disconfirming findings.

A bias that potentially exerted a powerful influence on this study and its outcomes relates to my personal political beliefs. My political ideology potentially influenced the way in which the data were collected or interpreted. Personal bias may have acted as either a negative or positive filter through which I interpreted the data, depending on whether the participant possessed the same or opposing ideological stance. I addressed this potential for bias through the use of bracketing (Wertz, et al., 2011) and reflexivity (Creswell, 2013).

Significance

It was believed that this study would add a valuable dimension to the literature regarding understanding the partisanship and conflict in the U.S. Congress. This information should be of significance to current members of Congress, as well as others who may have an interest in political issues and an investment in whether this organization is running effectively. Through gathering rich qualitative data and analyzing videos of members of Congress engaged in their daily duties in Congress, I believe that the everyday rules and workings of the U.S. Congress can be positively impacted. Going forward, stakeholders may start to consider the future before acting from a place of misinformation (Andersson & Pearson, 1999) and defiance. If cooperation and bipartisanship become the starting place for those who are employed to govern our nation, then there is likely to be a far greater chance for increased productivity, better

working conditions, and more positive relationships among those who work closely together on a daily basis (Wheelan, 2009).

There are several positive social change implications of this study. These included the potential for improvement in the interactions between the two political parties in the U.S government along with a corresponding expansion in productivity and enhanced overall functioning of the U.S. government. This will be evidenced by progress in civility in Congress and with an increase in the successful passage of bipartisan bills through Congress, as well as greater success with other Congressional responsibilities. Given the current economic situation in the U.S., it seems that now more than ever, the government needs to be more effective. Thus, finding solutions to the conflict occurring between Republican and Democrat politicians in Washington is essential for social change within the government, which would potentially produce a positive ripple effect and impact the entire nation.

Summary

The polarization and resulting conflict that exist within the U.S. government has been the subject of much research and discussion. However, the experiences of Congressional members who spend their workday in this dysfunctional work environment seems to have been largely overlooked as a focus for gaining insight. Through the qualitative analysis of video data in this study, it was believed that a clearer understanding of this phenomenon would emerge. I believe that Haidt's (2012c) MFT can provide a conceptual framework for understanding this issue and offer the

opportunity to grasp how this conflict is demonstrated by those whom it impacts the most.

These ideas, presented in the background, statement of the problem, purpose, and conceptual framework sections of this chapter, were addressed using the qualitative research tradition to answer three key research questions. Assumptions of the study, as well as its presumed limitations, delimitations and scope were presented. Finally, the significance of this study to those who occupy a role within the organization of the U.S. government was noted. The following chapter will provide a detailed analysis of the existing literature on the topic under investigation. Any pertinent history regarding the structure of the central government, history of the relationship between those occupying both sides of the conflict, previous evidence of the functionality of the relationships under investigation, as well as of efficient periods of productivity will be included.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The problem under investigation in this research study was the partisan conflict evident within the U.S. government (Dionne, 2012; Haidt, 2012c; Harbridge, Malhotra & Harrrison, 2014; Mann & Ornstein, 2012; Pildes, 2011; Rhodes, 2014), the resulting impact on the effective running of this governmental organization (Albert & Moskowitz, 2014; Harbridge et al., 2014; Quirk, 2011; Rhodes, 2014; Schraufnagel, 2005), and by extension, the nation as a whole. The polarization that has bred this dysfunction and conflict has produced an organization steeped in indecision, incivility, confrontation, and paralysis (Blendon & Benson, 2011; Dionne, 2012; Haidt, 2012c; Pildes, 2011; Ramirez, 2009; Rhodes, 2014). The purpose of this study was to explore the ongoing partisan conflict in the U.S. Congress through examining video data of members of Congress in action. Through this, it was believed that potential solutions to this situation could be developed by uncovering the origination of the polarization in American politics (Quirk, 2011) and to what degree individual politicians perpetuate the partisan conflict that is endemic in the federal government (Dionne, 2012).

Included in this chapter are the literature search strategy, the conceptual framework providing the foundation for this study, and a detailed account of the significant background of the problem under investigation. Key changes in each party over time are noted, as this provides important contextual information regarding the history of the problem. Additionally, a comprehensive review of how smoothly this governmental organization has run during several previous administrations is included.

After a discussion of the current culture wars evident between liberals and conservatives in the U.S., templates for potential solutions are noted. These provided a platform upon which to build once the data in this study had been collected and analyzed.

Literature Search Strategy

The initial source of information used to begin to structure this study was derived from current books within the political sphere and current media articles. This provided an up to date general perspective on the problem under investigation. It also allowed for a clear understanding of the way in which various politicians and those with whom they closely worked experienced and described the problem. Following this, web searches for key organizations relating to each political party were conducted in order to understand party values and establish context. Web searches of various government sites, including those for the Senate, the House, individual Congressional members, archival sites regarding laws that have been passed and various other agencies, were conducted. This provided additional contextual and historical information to demonstrate important moments of both partisanship and bipartisanship over time between the two parties.

Within the Walden Library, databases were searched, including Academic Search Complete, Business Source Complete, Political Science Complete, PsycARTICLES, PsycINFO, and SocINDEX, Search terms included *partisan conflict, Jonathan Haidt and morality, group conflict and productivity* and *religion and politics*. This last search term produced too diverse a selection of articles. The adoption of other terms such as *Religious Right* and *Christian Right* reduced the number of articles that were offered. Greater concentrations of applicable articles and studies were then found when using the SAGE

Premier database and when accessing multiple databases through THOREAU. The latter was particularly successful in finding specific articles. Search terms used in SAGE Premier and THOREAU included *group conflict and productivity, partisan conflict and morality, Jonathan Haidt,* along with *Jonathan Haidt and Moral Foundations Theory.* These search terms were also later used to access articles through GOOGLE SCHOLAR, which, when linked to the Walden library usually provided free access to full-text articles. Many very applicable and interesting articles were found by referring to the reference list of articles found within these databases.

Conceptual Framework

Rationalist theories of moral development, such as Kohlberg's cognitive developmental theory (Gould, 2011*)* have been used to explain the differences between liberals and conservatives in the moral judgments and decisions they make. Using such theories as an explanation seems to provide fuel for derogatory assessments concerning the moral development of one's political adversaries (Elmer, Renwick & Malone, 1983; Frimer, Biesanz, Walker & MacKinlay, 2013). This is particularly true regarding how this theory explains the moral development of conservatives – a situation that is not likely to be good for positive relationships between the two ends of the political spectrum (Elmer et al., 1983). Kohlberg's theory (Gould, 2011) implied that liberals have reached a higher level of cognitive development than their conservative counterparts and therefore have a more mature ability to reason than conservatives (Elmer et al., 1983; Frimer et al., 2013). The implication is that those who adopt a conservative viewpoint are unable to reason at higher levels – certainly fuel for partisan conflict.

In comparison, MFT (Graham, Haidt & Nosek, 2009; Haidt, 2012c) is described as a social-intuitionist approach to explaining moral development (Haidt, 2013; 2001). In this approach, reasoning is relegated to following initial intuitive responses rather than driving them. Regarding political moral reasoning, this theory is more prudent with its description of the differences between liberals and conservatives, being very careful not to speak pejoratively about either end of the political spectrum (Haidt, 2012c; Haidt & Joseph, 2004). Consequently, the moral judgments of liberals and conservatives are viewed as merely different, instead of better or worse than one another. This fact increases the likelihood of greater acceptance of this theory within the political realm and, therefore, demonstrates its relevance as a theoretical basis for this study.

Moral Foundations Theory

Modern day theorist, Jonathan Haidt, developed what he termed moral foundations theory (MFT) (Graham et al., 2009; Haidt, 2012c), which will serve as the theoretical foundation of this study. He completed numerous cross-cultural studies on the nature of morality and how and why it may have developed in humans. Like everyday reasoning, Haidt (2013; 2012c) argued that moral reasoning is automatic and intuitive and has developed in this manner through the process of natural selection (Haidt & Joseph, 2004). Haidt (2012c) argued that humans developed complex systems to aid in group cooperation and individual accountability, ultimately leading to the natural selection of successful groups over those with less cooperation and accountability. On an individual level, he noted that people are more concerned about how they appear to others than doing the right thing for its own sake. In an evolutionary sense, individuals

who were more attuned to how they were viewed and trusted by others in a group were more likely to survive than those were not trusted and were ousted from the group. Caring about reputation and pro-social behaviors was a key feature of natural selection in humans (Haidt, 2012c; Haidt & Joseph, 2004). The use of strategic reasoning to justify their initial intuitive judgments was of significant importance for acceptance and survival.

Politically, Haidt (2012c) noted that, rather than individuals voting selfishly for what is better for them, they actually seem to vote for what is preferable for the group with which they identify. This further indicates that group membership is valued above individual gain, providing additional support for the importance to the individual of acceptance within a group.

As previously mentioned, Haidt, in opposition to Kohlberg, argued that moral reasoning does not precede moral behavior, rather post hoc reasoning searches for plausible justification after the behaviors or choices have occurred (Haidt, 2013; 2012c; 2001; Sauer, 2012). He proposed that our moral judgments developed intuitively, automatically, and below the level of consciousness in order for humans to be able to react to situations with the speed necessary for survival (Haidt 2012c; 2001; Sauer, 2012). He then stated that strategic reasoning follows this initial intuitive reaction when assessing a situation. Intuitive responses occur almost instantaneously, giving people ample time to react accordingly and in accordance with their cultural sphere of influence. While culture will dictate what activates a moral intuition, Haidt argued that the same six dimensions he developed can be used to explain the moral intuitions of all humans (Haidt, 2012c; Haidt & Joseph, 2004).

People are very good at developing arguments that support their moral choices and decisions, justifying their behaviors and choices after the fact. He noted that people tend to look for evidence to support these existing beliefs, leading to what Wason (1960) termed *confirmation bias*. Wason (1960) found that while people are effective in questioning the beliefs of others, they notably lack in the ability to question themselves and their belief systems. Instead, they highlight only the evidence that supports or justifies their beliefs, arguing persuasively to defend their own viewpoint, even at the expense of the truth and when plenty of evidence exists to the contrary (Haidt 2012c; 2001).

The Moral Foundations

As noted, MFT relies on the premise that moral judgments are based on intuitions rather than reasoning (Haidt, 2012c; 2001). Covering a vast amount of research in anthropology, sociology, and psychology, with detailed accounts of evolutionary and cultural trends in the progression of human social development, Haidt (2013; 2012c) uncovered compelling data that led him to the creation of this theory. He argued that the moral principles people hold are most effectively explained by six areas, which act as the foundation for the moral judgments people make (Haidt, 2012c; Koleva & Haidt, 2012). He noted that these six key moral modules developed in response to evolutionary demands, particularly when humans began to settle into communities and leave nomadic life behind. Today, each moral dimension is triggered by events and thoughts that are qualitatively different from the original triggers but which are conceptually related.

The initial five moral foundations proposed by Haidt were created to represent five key adaptive challenges (Haidt, 2012c; p.125) that were evolutionarily necessary to overcome for survival. The *care/harm* foundation highlights the adaptive challenge relating to caring for one's young. Today it can be triggered by images of suffering, such as the poor in the U.S. or suffering in third world nations. The *fairness/cheating* foundation represents the adaptive challenge of finding a mutually beneficial two-way relationship, one in which the workload is evenly divided. Today's triggers for this foundation include those who break the law or scam others. The *loyalty/betrayal* foundation originally activated with the formation of groups that were beneficial to survival. Today, dueling sports teams and the national pride seen between citizens from different nations can trigger this. The foundation for *authority/subversion* likely met the "adaptive challenge of forging beneficial…[hierarchical]…relationships" (Haidt, 2012c, p.144) in developing societies. The development and preservation of order lay with leaders who were imbued with divine authority to maintain societal order. Leaders have exploited this authority for malevolent reasons. However, it is likely that this moral dimension is frequently tempered by several of the other foundations. Today, current triggers include levels of obedience and respect, law enforcement, and individuals in a position of authority. Finally, the *sanctity/degradation* foundation evolved in order to meet the adaptive challenge of avoiding the contaminants that became more pervasive as humans began living in larger groups. Original triggers of human waste and disease have now sublimated into current triggers such as purity, holiness, and taboo issues.

The *liberty/oppression* foundation was added later, when Haidt (2012c) concluded that the *fairness* dimension of *fairness/cheating* differed for liberals and conservatives. Liberals tended to view this dimension through the lens of equality, while conservatives deemed proportionality to be important when considering the *fairness* module. The adaptive challenge represented by the *liberty* foundation was the ability to live in cooperative social groups that successfully constrained the power of dominant males. Individuals showing dominance and attempts at oppression would have originally triggered this dimension. Today's triggers include the multiple global examples of the oppressed rising up to overthrow those who dominate. Within the U.S., examples include the desire for social justice and equality (liberals) and the freedom from government interferences in our lives (conservatives).

While other theories of morality are useful in understanding general moral development, MFT is a particularly useful theoretical model for understanding moral judgments, particularly in relation to political decisions regarding policy (Graham et al., 2009). This theory broadens our understanding of morality into six dimensions, detailing aspects of morality in more areas than offered by previous theorists. Liberals and conservatives endorse each of these six dimensions to differing degrees. It is not surprising that political discourse is replete with misunderstandings, poor communication, and reflexive judgments concerning the moral character and motivation of those occupying different positions on the liberal-conservative continuum.

Moral Foundations Differ for Liberals and Conservatives

Haidt has found that liberals and conservatives tend to be guided by different

moral matrices (Graham et al., 2009; Haidt, 2012c; Haidt & Graham, 2007). Cultures and

people who place value on individualism tend to base their moral judgments in three

critical areas: *caring, fairness*. and *liberty* (Haidt, 2012a; 2012c). Individuals and cultures

that value community above the individual will value three additional morality-based

themes: *loyalty, authority,* and *sanctity* (Haidt, 2012c). In MFT these themes are applied

to the liberal-conservative continuum, with liberals tending to focus their moral

judgments almost exclusively on the *caring, fairness*, and *liberty* foundations, while

conservatives valued these foundations to a lesser degree but were additionally concerned

with the areas of *loyalty, authority*, and *sanctity* (Graham et al., 2009; Haidt, 2012a;

2012b; 2012c; Haidt & Graham, 2007).

In a study using the Moral Foundations Questionnaire (MFQ) they developed,

Graham et al. (2009) asked 1,600 subjects to rate their political identity on a continuum

ranging from very liberal to very conservative. Subjects then answered a series of

questions designed to elicit responses, scoring how personally relevant they found each

of the original five moral foundations to be. While liberals seemed to place greater

emphasis on the importance of the *care* and *fairness* dimensions and almost no emphasis

on the *loyalty, authority* and *sanctity* dimensions with regard to their moral judgments

(see Figure 1), conservatives rated all five of the original dimensions to be of almost

equal relevance when considering moral issues (Graham et al., 2009 – see Figure 2).

These findings were replicated and validated further by Graham, Nosek, Haidt, Iyer,

Koleva and Ditto in 2011, through a massive online international study in which over

100,000 subjects answered the revised MFQ at YourMorals.org., and also by Graham,

Nosek and Haidt (2012).

The Liberal Moral Matrix
Most sacred value: Care for victims of oppression

| Care/
harm | Liberty/
oppression | Fairness/
cheating | Loyalty/
betrayal | Authority/
subversion | Sanctity/
degradation |
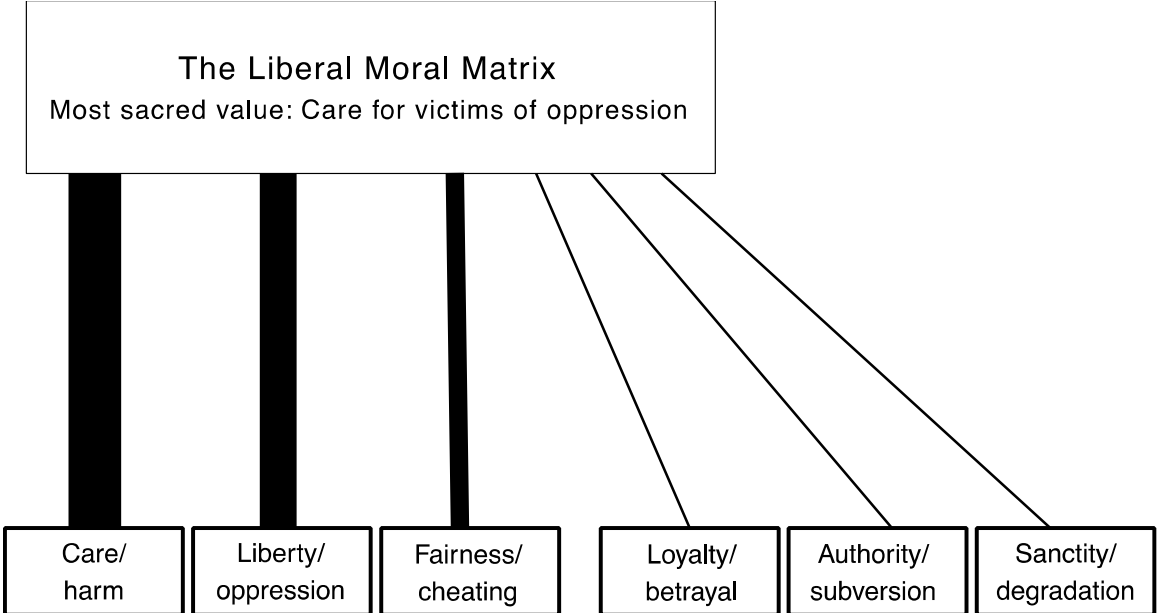
Figure 1. The moral matrix of American liberals. (Taken with permission from 'The

Righteous Mind' by Jonathan Haidt, 2012, p.297, see Appendix A).

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│         The Social Conservative Moral Matrix      │
│   Most sacred value: Preserve the institutions and│
│       traditions that sustain a moral community   │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
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| Care/ harm | Liberty/ oppression | Fairness/ cheating | Loyalty/ betrayal | Authority/ subversion | Sanctity/ degradation |
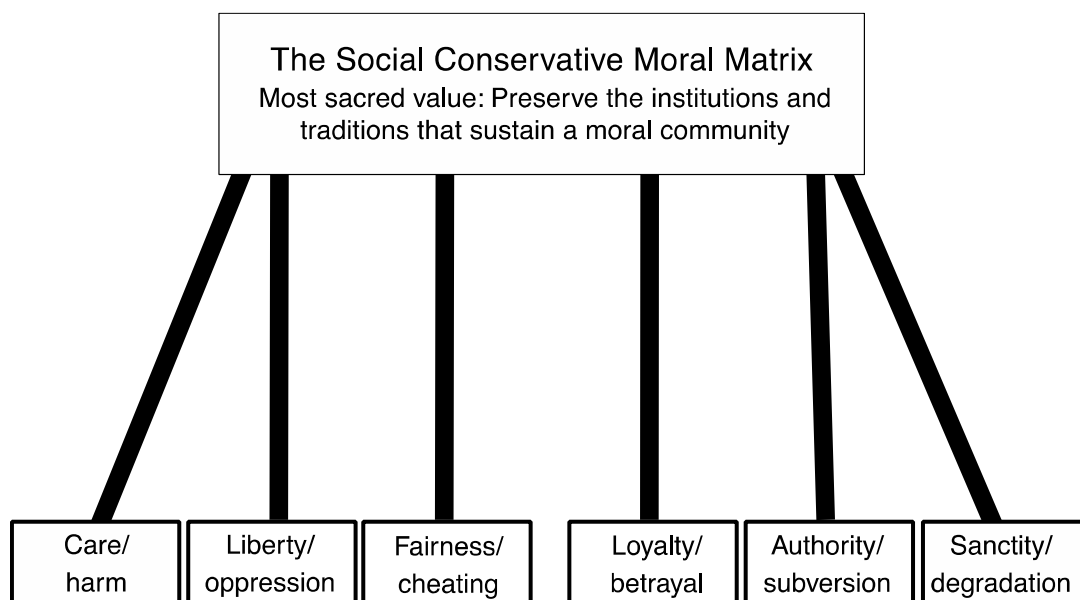
Figure 2. The moral matrix of American social conservatives. (Taken with permission

from: 'The Righteous Mind' by Jonathan Haidt, 2012, p. 306, see Appendix A)

Thus, between the two ends of the political spectrum, individuals attach moral

significance to distinctive threads of the moral foundations in MFT. Those who tend to

inhabit the extreme ends of the spectrum often more zealously expound their values and

beliefs (Haidt, 2012c). This can be seen with the Tea Party movement and the religious

right on the one extreme and the Occupy movement on the other (discussed later). With a

different array of moral foundations woven through the liberal mind than through that of

the conservative, the relevance of MFT is self evident for our understanding of why

partisan conflict remains prevalent in the U.S. government. When extremists from either

party then hijack the public conversation, the existence of the political stalemate routinely

witnessed in Congress begins to make sense. Each party ferociously adheres to their party

positions, which highlight the underlying moral principles that guide their party's platform, driving the elected officials of this nation further apart.

Examples of the policy positions of the Republican and Democratic parties will be introduced later in this chapter. Firstly, however, it is necessary to comprehend the philosophical foundation, upon which the U.S. was built, to grasp the evolution of the liberal and conservative values and beliefs and to understand the conflict seen between them today. Through understanding how the U.S. began and how extremes of political belief may differ one can potentially explain what may be fueling the current level of conflict in this organization, the U.S. federal government in Washington.

The Philosophical Underpinnings of the United States Republic

"E Pluribus Unum" – Out of Many, One.

Philosophers throughout history have attempted theoretically to construct the perfect utopian society – and failed. Thinkers such as Plato, Thomas More, Thomas Hobbes and Karl Marx have variously attempted to develop such a utopian society – one in which everyone is equal (Levin, 2012). However in order to achieve this, individualism, liberty and rights are necessarily removed. In these sometimes 'radically egalitarian' societies (Levin, 2012), everyone is required to dress, eat and live in the same way. Believing that individualism works counter to the collective good, these philosophers determined that equality was the preferred state and were willing to sacrifice liberty in pursuit of the utopian dream.

This obsession with equality at all costs is clearly at odds with the key tenets of liberty and individualism upon which this nation was founded. The Founding Fathers drew from these works, the lessons of history and the works of various brilliant philosophers of the Enlightenment, in seeking to frame the structure of the new nation. Philosophers such as John Locke, Charles de Montesquieu and Alex de Tocqueville, seeking to comprehend the nature of man and society, provided fertile philosophical ground upon which the seeds of the new republic were germinated (Levin, 2012). Their belief in the importance of liberty and property rights, and the relationship between the two, "[was] at the core of America's origin" (Levin, 2012, p.117). The ownership of property was viewed as the vehicle to equality, within the scope of liberty and individuality. Anyone who was industrious should be rewarded with the rights to the land he or she worked. The spirit of commerce was seen as a key facet for prosperity, which in its turn was viewed as paramount to liberty.

With the shared belief in the overriding core values of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, the diverse collection of citizens and immigrants across the country, became united as one nation. Along with the protections provided in the Constitution, these were the cornerstones of the emerging republic of the United States.

Framing the Constitution

Aware of the difficulty of the task with which they were faced, the Founding Fathers sought to frame the new U.S. government as a 'republic,' in which "the administration of [government] affairs is open to all the citizens……for their own benefit rather than for the benefit of a ruler" (Legal dictionary, 2014). History had taught them to

understand the nature of man and his tendency towards tyrannous behavior, when placed

in a position of power (Cato Institute, 2002; Levin, 2012). They knew their core value

system, grounded in liberty and unalienable rights, would not be safe without detailed

protections, checks and balances in the design of the new republic. History had

demonstrated this time and again (Levin, 2012).

Thus, to avoid the mistakes of history the United States of America became a

republic, under the protection of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. The citizens of

the new nation were safeguarded from the formation of a despotic government, by the

division of power between three branches of the federal government and the limits placed

on its power (Cato Institute, 2002). Additionally, the emphasis placed on maintaining the

sovereignty of the States and their individual citizens assured a further check to the

unleashing of tyrannous pursuits by those in power. Protections and rights established in

the Constitution for individual citizens included life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness

(Cato Institute, 2002). These additionally acted as further layers to protect society against

the runaway powers previously witnessed in history.

Shared U.S. Values and Principles

Thus was built a nation founded on a shared vision of freedom, independence,

individual rights and the pursuit of happiness. Throughout the history of the United

States, citizens and countless immigrants alike have followed the guiding light of these

values and principles, which remain central to the makeup and fabric of the United States

today. Traditional values of individualism and a caring community spirit continue to

undergird the essence of the American character (Dionne, 2012). On a daily basis, the

populace of the U.S. is subtly immersed in a constant exposure to twenty-four hour news cycles. These are accessed through T.V., tablets, smartphones, computers, and other streaming platforms, and feature pundits espousing these American ideals. Billboards, magazines, newsprint, and other vehicles for advertising, remind Americans constantly of the freedom and independence they have to make a thousand choices a day. As within a family, citizens have been and continue to be "united by their core principles, values and standards" (Salamone & Morris, 2012, p.6).

Communicated in perhaps more muted tones against a forceful push to focus on individualism, the importance of community and caring for one's neighbor is widely evident. The media outlets of the U.S. are flavored with this tone, with calls to join the military, to defend the nation and the ideals it stands for, along with well-known reality T.V. shows publicizing the police force, firefighters and medics. Teachers, nurses, doctors, and volunteers are commended for their services and for lasting changes they make to their communities. From Alaska and Hawaii to Maine and Florida the essence of what it is to be American is mutually understood by the citizens of this nation.

American Individualism and Communitarian Spirit

The foundational belief in the importance of individualism and a devotion to a communitarian spirit thus act as two core values of the U.S. (Dionne, 2012). These values capture the substance of the American spirit that drove the initial success of the first settlers. The hardy self-reliance of those who have come before helped to tame the land, build a nation and grow the entrepreneurial spirit that is woven into the very fabric of the American dream. Simultaneously, a strong communitarian spirit has flavored the

American culture, even as individuals steadfastly pursue their personal agenda. Small

communities acted as a safety net against the harsh realities of rural life. The balance

between these opposing values helped to give rise to the success and prosperity of

America (Dionne, 2012), wherein citizens value equally both individualism and

community as necessary countervailing forces inherent in a successful democracy.

The U.S. was founded on the belief that individuals have the freedom to follow

their chosen life and to reach their potential, but not at the expense of another's freedom.

Neighbors and local communities have historically come to the aid of those who are

negatively impacted by the self-serving actions of others. In recent history, this was

achieved by using the government as a "constructive force" (Dionne, 2012, p.5), in order

to contain radical individualism and to liberate the masses from the abuses of those with

excessive influence.

American Communitarian Spirit

Indicative of its communitarian spirit, the United States is often noted for its

generosity (Salamone & Morris, 2012). Citizens have traditionally given of themselves to

other citizens within their communities, helping those less fortunate and operating from a

place of empathy (Dionne, 2012; Salamone & Morris, 2012;). This was never more

evident than after the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center in New York in 2001.

Citizens from every useful sphere of work and from the furthest reaches of the country,

whether professionals or manual laborers arrived to offer their services, while others

around the nation donated blood or money to charity, in order to help their fellow

Americans (History.com, 2015). Globally, the Unites States has stepped in to aid other

countries, in wartime as well as for humanitarian and relief efforts, as seen with the Tsunami in Thailand in 2004 (The White House: President George W. Bush, 2005) and the earthquake in Haiti in 2010 (Salamone & Morris, 2012; USAID, 2014). These acts of generosity are usually funded by the U.S. and rarely come with strings attached.

Americans as a whole also abhor injustice, as evidenced by passing constitutional amendments such as the ratification of the 13th Amendment - the abolition of slavery in 1865 (National Archives, n.d.c) and the 19th Amendment – women's right to vote in 1920, (National Archives, n.d.b). As this nation matures, it appears to be moving towards a purer form of democracy, through community and political action aimed at aiding and protecting the rights of those who have suffered injustices and misfortune.

American Individualism

The United States has often been referred to as the land of opportunity. The possibilities that exist for newcomers to this country are frequently unimaginable in the countries from which they come. The resulting hope and fervor that arrives with each new immigrant adds in immeasurable ways to the critical momentum of the unstoppable mass that is the U.S. economy. Traditionally, this has fueled the economic might of the U.S., adding to its previously untouchable prosperity (Salamone & Morris, 2012). This has often led Americans to experience a shared pride in the wealth of opportunity and affluence that is possible to achieve through hard work and innovative ideas in this nation (Levin, 2012). In direct contrast to other nations, few barriers exist in the U.S. to prevent an individual with a strong work ethic and an entrepreneurial spirit from becoming very successful (Levin, 2012).

Additionally, the liberties and rights afforded to citizens of the U.S. are largely inconceivable in many other nations. Americans enjoy the freedom to travel and live wherever they choose, partake in any career, and read or research whatever their interests dictate. They are also free to achieve what they want in the pursuit of happiness, along with enjoying the right to free speech without fear of repercussions. These are just some aspects of daily life available to those who call the United States home (Salamone & Morris, 2012). Those who choose to strive have very few hurdles to overcome to build their life as they desire. All of these freedoms fuel the individualism for which the United States is well known.

Divergence of Republican and Democratic Viewpoints

From these common core values focusing on individual freedom and community, grew today's Republican and Democrat parties. Born of the same ideals and principles, these two political extremes have become separated by opposing modern philosophies. The agreeableness of decades past and shared concern by lawmakers for the citizens and country alike (Dionne, 2012; Matthews, 2013), have all but evaporated. No longer are party members close confidants and friends outside the workday in D.C. (Biden, 2008; Matthews, 2013). No longer do they seem to fight for a common objective. Today, members of Congress appear to endorse such divergent viewpoints that it remains highly improbable that they can find a middle ground (Dionne, 2012). "Americans disagree about who we are because we can't agree about who we've been" (Dionne, 2012, p.4). There no longer seems to be conscious awareness of or agreement about what it is to be American. The U.S. has been pulled from our shared notion of the American spirit and

our common values of individuality, liberty and community (Dionne, 2012). These values have traditionally woven together in such a fashion as to strengthen and fuel the prosperity of this republic for all citizens, but something has occurred to change this balance. Something needs to alter if a solution is going to be possible. For any hope of progress to occur, it is essential to grasp the differences in the world-views held by today's Republican and Democrat party members and politicians. The following is a discussion of these divergent views.

Conservative/Republican World View

The conservative/republican world-view (or republicanism) holds as centrally important, the belief that individuals should have the freedom to make their own decisions, should have equal rights and opportunity and that government should be limited in scope, resting mostly at the state level and with the people (GOP, 2014). Self-identified as the "party of the Constitution" (GOP, 2014), the Republican Party argues for the ordered liberty that can be achieved through the ideals enumerated in the Constitution. Discrimination based on any and all demographic characteristics is considered immoral and is rejected. Help for low-income individuals is supported but not at the cost of accepting quotas or preferences of any kind. Republicans also believe that advancement in our free society should result from hard work, innate ability and aptitude (GOP, 2014).

The current Republican focus includes the defense of and adherence to Constitutional principles, along with observing the rule of law and remaining true to the ideals of the Founding Fathers. Republicans maintain that all laws and public servants

must operate from these principles and original intentions of the Framers of the U.S.

Constitution (GOP, 2014) and act to guarantee liberty in the United States. They hold as

centrally important the sovereignty of individual states and the rights of the States and

individual citizens guaranteed by the Tenth Amendment (Cato Institute, 2002; GOP,

2014). They strongly believe that the governance of the people should lie mostly with the

state legislature. They then feel that the balance of power between the federal government

and that of the States should return to what was intended by the Framers. Additionally,

they vow aggressively to stamp out voter fraud and conduct elections with transparency,

in order to protect the very "foundation of representative government" (GOP, 2014).

Republicans also strongly support both the First Amendment – the protection of

religious freedom and the right to free speech, and the Second Amendment – the right to

bear arms. Along with these, Republicans support the Fourth and Fifth Amendments –

liberty, privacy and the protection of private property. The Ninth Amendment – affirming

our rights, along with the concept that power in the government comes from and remains

with the people, except for that which is determined to be a government function (GOP,

2014) – is also of great importance to Republicans. In addition, Republicans defend the

rights of the unborn child and support the sanctity of life (Family Research Council,

2014). Members of the Republican Party steadfastly hold true to these beliefs and

principles, which undoubtedly drive their decision-making and their interaction with

others.

The Christian Right

The fundamentalist Christian Right's influence over the Republican Party began in embryonic form in the mid to late 1950s during the presidency of Eisenhower (Blumenthal, 2009). Right wing paranoia was evident as 'McCarthyism' swept through Washington, in which virtual witch-hunts for alleged Communists within the ranks of the U.S. Government and military were undertaken. Members of the various factions of the political right were united by their anti-communist beliefs, which began to take root after World War II (Berlet and Quigley, 1995; Blumenthal, 2009). However, as fears of communism began to subside, theocratic ideology gained traction through the combined efforts of influential media personalities, high ranking religious leaders and wealthy conservative donors (Berlet, 2011b; Blumenthal, 2009). Various conservative right wing religious groups then began to congeal into what is now known as the fundamentalist Christian Right (Blumenthal, 2009).

The Christian Right follows a very strict moral code which members adhere to once they are 'born again' (Blumenthal, 2009), which is "a process of confession, conversion and submission to a strict father figure" (p.9). Frequently, members have experienced a crisis of character and become 'born again,' which serves to separate the 'sinful' part of their lives from the part in which they 'walk with Jesus.' Tolerance for liberal stances concerning several social and civil rights issues is absent, as Christian Right adherents hold diametrically opposing viewpoints to liberals (Blumenthal, 2009).

Consequently, the Christian Right is described as being engaged in a 'culture war' with secular humanists and progressives, with a goal of achieving the conservative

agenda regarding 'traditional family values' (Berlet and Quigley, 1995; Combs, 2014; Family Research Council, 2014; Focus on the Family, 2014a). Members abhor many of the civil rights advances that were made during the last century with regards to individual freedoms, women's rights, gay rights and the rights of minorities (Blumenthal, 2009; Family Research Council, 2014). Additionally, the culture war extends into the educational system, wherein the Christian Right battles secular education curriculum regarding evolution and sex education (Berlet and Quigley, 1995; Blumenthal, 2009; Family Research Council, 2014). There is also contempt for taxation and other methods in which wealth is more evenly distributed (Berlet and Quigley, 1995; Combs, 2014; Family Research Council, 2014).

Several of the Christian Right's religious leaders hold beliefs in 'Christian Reconstructionism' and 'dominionism,' wherein they seek for Christians " to dominate the political process as part of a mandate from God" (Berlet, 2013, para. 3). In addition, 'hard dominionists' wish to impose Biblical Law onto the Constitution and operate the United States as a Christian society (Berlet, 2011b; Blumenthal, 2009; Clarkson, 1994; McVicar, 2007). Some extreme Reconstructionists even declare that abortion and homosexuality should become capital crimes and believe that women should remain in the home raising children and lose their right to vote (McVicar, 2007). In the words of Berlet and Quigley (1995), "Taken as a whole the [dominionists] …call for clerical fascism in defense of wealth and patriarchy" (para. 45) and "challenge the very notion of a secular, pluralistic democracy" (para. 73). With a strong influence over the right wing of the Republican Party, this is indeed noteworthy.

Dominionists maintain their goal of eliminating religious freedom, which is protected by the First Amendment and of denoting Christianity as the only acceptable religion to practice within the United States (McVicar, 2007). Furthermore, the Christian Right has actively disregarded both the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 through discrimination in hiring practices and through gerrymandering Congressional districts, as witnessed in Texas (Theocracy Watch, 2006).

Over the last two to three decades, the Christian Right has expanded its grassroots reach, with the development of a highly intricate organizing infrastructure (Blumenthal, 2009; Diamond, 1995; Family Research Council, 2014; Focus on the Family, 2014a). The research, resources and solidarity provided by this infrastructure have given right wing strategists the tools to successfully use the media, churches and direct-mailing to get their message out to potential voters (Berlet, 2013; Family Research Council, 2014; Focus on the Family, 2014a). Within this movement, Reconstructionists have a surprisingly large voice and influence, primarily as a result of the deep pockets of several key figures. These individuals wish to spread their belief systems with the ultimate goal being a widespread dominion (Berlet & Quigley, 1995; Blumenthal, 2009).

The Tea Party Movement

Also on the far right of the conservative movement lives the 'Tea Party,' which was formed in 2009 as a result of dissatisfaction with the actions of the Obama administration (Ballhaus, 2014). While many of the values and principles of the Republican Party and those of the Tea Party intersect, the Tea Party is widely recognized as occupying the radical end of the conservative movement. Sharing this position with the

Christian Right, the Tea Party advances its cause with political figures such as Rick

Perry, Michelle Bachmann and Sarah Palin conveying their hard right Dominionist

agendas (Berlet, 2011a). This movement has gathered rapid momentum since 2009 and

has multiple representatives who are supportive of its principles in place in Congress.

Lobbyist are registered in Washington to push the agenda of the movement, and the Tea

Party caucus has been reestablished in the House and has gained recognition in the Senate

(Tea Party, 2014).

The key principles of this movement include "fiscal responsibility,

constitutionally limited government and free market economic policies" (Tea Party

Patriots, 2014). Other advocates of the Tea Party movement also endorse core principles

relating to individual freedom and a return to personal responsibility (Tea Party, 2014).

Societal expectations for social responsibility and civic duty are viewed negatively, as

evidence that socialism is insidiously seeping into American life (Dionne, 2012). As

strong supporters of the original founding principles of the United States, Tea Party

members seek a government that operates in a more fiscally responsible manner and does

not overspend. Members also support limiting the federal government and returning

power to the state level, as was the objective of the original Framers. Additionally they

offer strong support for a return to a free market economy and promote limits to

government interventions into this process (Tea Party Patriots, 2014).

Conservative/Republican Worldview Changes From Reagan to Obama

In order to comprehend the potential root causes of today's partisan conflict, it is

helpful to discuss influences to the conservative/Republican worldview during each of

the most recent presidencies. Through studying the influences affecting the development

of this conflict, it is possible that light may be shed on key factors behind the emergence

of the extreme Republican partisan thought, which seems currently to occupy the vast

majority of right leaning politicians. This is explored next.

The Reagan/Bush Senior Years

Just prior to Ronald Reagan taking office in 1980, the Moral Majority was formed

with Jerry Falwell at the helm, and an anti-abortion stance as a guiding issue

(Blumenthal, 2009). Moderate Republicans found the level of activism in this and other

right wing groups too radical, but leaders of various fundamentalist right wing groups

began to solidify into an alliance centered on theocratic ideology (Berlet and Quigley,

1995; Family Research Council, 2014). While their influence during the Reagan years

was effective in drawing the conservative Democrat's vote for Reagan's second term,

very little of their favored issues made any headway in Congress during this time (Berlet

and Quigley, 1995).

However, even with the televangelism scandals of the late 1980s and Pat

Robertson losing his presidential bid, hard right Christians packed substantial clout

through their grassroots infrastructure and networks of coalitions (Berlet and Quigley,

1995; Diamond, 1995; Family Research Council, 2014; Hardisty, 1995). While growth of

this movement remained at a slow simmer during the presidency of George H.W. Bush,

the 1992 election year saw a renewed vigor at the Republican convention for a "culture

war against secular humanism" (Berlet and Quigley, 1995). This convention was

evidence that Pat Robertson and other leaders had successfully achieved what they had

originally strategized – the development of a powerful Christian base that coalesced the multitude of fundamentalist Christian groups (Berlet and Quigley, 1995; Hardisty, 1995).

The Clinton Years

During the Clinton administration, the hard right adopted cultural issues (Berlet and Quigley, 1995) as their unifying platform, moving away from an economic and anti-communist agenda. The Christian Right's stance on issues ranging from abortion, homosexuality, sex education in the schools, feminism, immigration and racism became the glue that bound the various facets of the hard and radical right (Berlet and Quigley, 1995; Blumenthal, 2009; Family Research Council, 2014; Focus on the Family, 2014b; Hardisty, 1995). The John Birch Society, traditionally more concerned with fighting communism, independence for the U.S. and limiting the reach of the federal government, also began to push a conservative social agenda that mirrored that of the Christian Right (Hardisty, 1995; The John Birch Society, n.d.).

Supporting anti-gay initiatives was high on the John Birch Society's agenda early in Clinton's first term (Hardisty, 1995). Hate crimes stemming from a rising tide of homophobia increased during this time (Ross, 1995), even as the Christian Right's platform enjoyed greater mainstream acceptance. The momentum of the Christian Right movement simultaneously began to exert a negative influence over several of President Clinton's proposals and fuel Republican electoral successes around the nation (Ross, 1995). With this rising tide of influence from the Christian Right within the Republican Party, seemed to come a corresponding reduction in civility among members of Congress (Dean, 2006).

Along with this rightward shift, centrist Goldwater conservatives were progressively replaced by those from the hard right, who expected loyalty from individual members of Congress. Those with arguably more authoritarian styles, such as Republican Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich, began to exert a stronger influence over their party and members who dared to follow their own conscience risked the wrath of these leaders raining down on them and challenges to their Congressional seats (Dean, 2006). Gingrich also chose to end the seniority system for selecting a committee chairperson, opting instead to appoint whom he chose (Dean, 2007; Pildes, 2011). This situation undoubtedly produced the favoritism, competition and backstabbing that would be evident in any organization employing this style of upward mobility. However, the U.S. Government is based on democracy, and favoritism is not a democratic selection process.

The conservative legacy of civility, respect, dignity and professionalism within Congress began to disappear, subsumed instead by the radical and inflexible style of the hard right and the authoritarian cultural platform to which they now subscribed (Dean, 2006). With impeachment proceedings during Clinton's second term concluding in his being impeached on two articles of impeachment (Mitchell, 1998), the opposition's disdain for this liberal president was realized and the stage was set for a Republican White House win in 2000.

The George W. Bush Years

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 had a profound impact on the sense of safety long enjoyed by the populace of the United States. Occurring early on in the Bush

presidency, these events arguably played a defining role in his governance style. National security and foreign policy took center stage in the Bush White House, as key leaders and politicians sought to institute draconian measures in response to the attacks (Dean, 2007). Under the guise of national security, Bush and Cheney pushed for changes that would normally have been at best questionable and at worst unconstitutional (Dean, 2006).

The expansion of presidential powers became a key focus for the Bush administration, with justification resting on the need for rapid action during times of national emergency (Dean, 2007; Dean 2006). Unsubstantiated evidence for the existence of weapons of mass destruction was used as justification for a war with Iraq. A veil of secrecy slowly descended around the Bush administration, where those who questioned and probed were accused of being unpatriotic (Blumenthal, 2009; Dean 2007). Secrecy within a government is dysfunctional and often leads to fear among the citizenry, which is counter-intuitive for a democracy. As quoted by Thomas Jefferson, "When the people fear the government, there is tyranny, when the government fears the people there is liberty" (The Quotations Page, 2013).

Rules against torture, established through the Geneva Convention (International Committee of the Red Cross, 1988), were set aside, as enemy combatants were transported to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba and interrogated without representation, (Dean 2007; Dean 2006) or the right to habeas corpus (Center For Constitutional Rights, n.d.). A central provision of a free society, the writ of habeas corpus was enshrined by the Founders in Article 1 of the Constitution to prevent abuses of power to individual liberty (Bill of Rights Institute, 2010). This right, along with the Geneva Convention rules were

both effectively suspended with the passing of the Military Commissions Act of 2006

(The White House: President George W. Bush, 2006; United States Government Printing

Office, 2006). Justification for these unconstitutional behaviors was attributed to national

security, and criticism of them was viewed as condoning the actions of the detainees.

Thus as evidenced by the above, with very few successful checks to the Bush agenda,

presidential powers within this administration reached new levels and many of the

protections enjoyed by U.S. citizens began to falter.

Bush's administration aggressively pursued the concept of unitary executive

theory, first advanced during the Reagan administration (Dean, 2007). Within this

concept, the executive branch of the government is given virtually infinite power,

including over independent agencies. The checks and balances set forth in the

Constitution would therefore be essentially worthless, allowing for the executive to

function how it deemed appropriate. While other administrations had lightly tapped into

this proposed theory, the Bush-Cheney administration took the possibilities offered in this

concept to new extremes (Dean, 2007). Loss of rights related to liberty as seen in the

passage of the Military Commissions Act of 2006 (The White House: President George

W. Bush, 2006), along with privacy rights impacted by electronic spying by the National

Security Agency (NSA) (Greenwald and Ackerman, 2013), were evidence that the Bush

administration was pushing the Constitutional boundaries of the executive branch.

Congressional Republicans rapidly became the standard bearers for these changes,

fighting hard in Congress to protect and pass new legislation that would support the

White House agenda (Dean, 2007). Designed as a check on the executive branch of the

government, Congress during the second Bush presidency was woefully inadequate at performing this function (Dean, 2007). Whether this was due to an overly authoritarian style of the Bush presidency and Republicans in Congress at this time or a lack of sufficient pushback from the Democrats is a matter of debate (Dean, 2007). Certainly, however, there was cause for alarm as constitutionally protected rights were foregone (Greenwald & Ackerman, 2013; The White House: President George W. Bush, 2006).

During the Bush administration, House Republicans altered process issues to their advantage (Dean, 2007). For the few Democrats who did push back, this became a contentious point. Complaints were verbalized about the lack of democratic debate or inclusion in conference committees in the House (Dean 2007). However, the Republicans in Washington during this time were singularly focused on the Republican agenda that continued to be fueled and financed by the Christian Right (Blumenthal, 2009). With tunnel vision, their collective eye was likely on the prized agenda for their party and not for what might've been good for the country as a whole. The resulting environment, clearly not conducive to constructive debate and compromise between the two parties, instead produced enough tension to ignite further the partisan battles that had been building in the U.S. Congress.

The Obama Years: In-Fighting within the GOP

As a radical fringe of the GOP, the Tea Party essentially broke away from the traditional moderate Republican mindset. Strongly supportive of liberty and independence, their agenda rejected the importance of community – a central value traditionally held by the Republican Party (Dionne, 2012). Conservatism has long

purported the significance of family and community values, expressed through the church and various other institutions within a community (GOP, 2014). In recent times, however, a faction of conservatives began to move steadily away from this focus, frequently placing a greater emphasis on individual and states' rights. The extreme bi-product of this trend fueled the germination of the Tea Party, which was duly fertilized by the economic disaster of 2008 (Tea Party Patriots, 2015).

Around this time, the Tea Party agenda began to be accepted even by moderate Republicans (Altman, 2013). Super Political Action Committees (Super PACs) (Krieg, 2012), simultaneously poured funds into the political campaigns of Tea Party candidates across the nation (Altman, 2013; Dionne, 2012). Those who criticized the growing focus on individuality and called for a return to the community were viewed as socialists and were accused of being virtually treasonous to American individualism (Dionne, 2012). Soon, traditional conservatives began to be viewed as not being conservative enough, including their beliefs concerning moral issues like abortion and gay rights, along with funding for the poor, universal health care and Social Security (Dionne, 2012). Liberal advances in these highly charged areas were viewed as antithetical to Tea Party values. Reversing these became the clarion call of the radical right wing and by default the Republican Party as a whole (Dionne, 2012).

Not all conservatives were pulled so far to the right however and moderate Republicans today occupy many seats in both houses of Congress. Naturally, with this broad reach of what constitutes conservatism, conflict within the Republican Party has flourished. This lack of unity in the Republican Party came to a head, with the

government shutdown in October 2013. Radicals in the Republican Party fanned the flames of dissent, encouraging fellow Congressmen to deny the President's requests to keep the government open. Even after the Senate agreed that the government closure was the wrong thing to do, filibuster speeches in the House persuaded enough House Republicans to shut the doors of the government (Dinan & Klimas, 2013). Although this course of action appeared to be largely approved by the Republican Party at its outset, many moderate Republican Congressmen and women began to second guess themselves as the closure dragged on.

Since this time a palpable shift has occurred nationally, where moderate Republicans appear to be separating themselves from the radical right. Battles in congressional primaries between far-right and moderate conservatives have intensified as these two conservative viewpoints struggle to find unity and agreement on the future direction of the Republican Party (Altman, 2013). Traditional Republicans have begun to adopt strategies to oust Tea Party members of Congress in the wake of the damage caused by the government shutdown (Altman, 2013). Super PACs funneled money into the primary season in an attempt to influence which candidates would represent the Republican Party during the 2014 election cycle (Altman, 2013). Several Super PACs, who funded candidates in favor of the government shutdown, turned their coats and directed their funding towards moderate Republicans (Altman, 2013).

Liberal/Democratic World View

The Democratic Party today is the champion of the progressive/liberal political agenda. An open proponent of a strong federal government and the protective role it can

assume (Charles River Editors, 2014), the Democratic Party believes in the value of working together and giving everyone an equal chance to succeed (Democrats.org, 2014a). Key issues within the Democratic Party agenda include ensuring equal access to education and health care along with a focus on job creation and clean energy (Democrats.org, 2014a; Lakoff & Wehling, 2012). Historically, the Democratic Party has fought for civil rights, women's rights and the rights of workers and various minority groups (Democrats.org, 2014b). Leaders have implemented many progressive changes, including the 19th Amendment – guaranteeing a woman's right to vote, the New Deal and the Social Security Act, the GI Bill, the Civil Rights Act and, most recently, the Affordable Care Act (Democrats.org, 2014b).

With its beginnings rooted in Jeffersonian ideology under the banner of the Democratic-Republicans and led by Thomas Jefferson, todays Democratic Party began life with a different persona, calling for stronger states' rights and a smaller central government (Charles River Editors, 2014). During Andrew Jackson's second bid for the Presidency in 1828, Jackson adopted the term 'Democrats' to replace Democratic-Republicans label and hijacked much of its existing platform. This did not leave John Quincy Adams, the incumbent, a large constituency to court. Fighting back, he publically branded Jackson a "jackass" – which to this day remains the mascot of the Democrats (Charles River Editors, 2014).

The platform for the Democrats began to change under Woodrow Wilson, who saw the benefit of using the federal government to help workers. However, the character and ideology of the modern Democratic Party sprang most directly from the FDR

administration (Charles River Editors, 2014). Roosevelt is best known for spearheading the 'New Deal,' which included programs such as unemployment relief and Social Security. These programs, introduced in response to the crushing impact of the Great Depression on the national economy, were easily accepted at a time when so many needed help and assistance. Roosevelt's stance on involvement in World War II also designated the Democratic Party as the "internationalist party" (Charles River Editors, 2014, p. 25), while the Republican Party preferred to focus on domestic issues. These aspects of the Democratic Party ideology all led to an increase in spending and related expansion of the federal government, which experienced the greatest period of growth under Roosevelt (Charles River Editors, 2014). This overarching power and involvement of the federal government in the lives of U.S. citizens remains a point of contention today between the Democratic and Republican parties in Congress.

During the presidency of Harry Truman, the Democratic Party began to address civil rights and issues regarding race. Truman solidly supported desegregation in the military, enacting it into law in 1948 (Charles River Editors, 2014). Racial issues were now being addressed at the federal level, but only the Northern Democrats possessed this more liberal ideological platform. Since Wilson and Roosevelt, Democratic presidents had shifted the party's stance on the involvement of the federal government in the lives of everyday Americans, now using it as a tool to improve the lives of working class Americans and minorities alike (Charles River Editors, 2014). Through these changes, the Democratic Party expanded its appeal to a wide array of constituents. From those who

were well educated to farmers, along with both urban and rural populations, the

Democrats broadened its base significantly (Charles River Editors, 2014).

Prior to the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (VRA), Southern Democrats were the

conservative wing of the Democratic Party, particularly with regards to any issues related

to race (Pildes, 2011). During and after Reconstruction, they controlled the southern

states and maintained a powerful position in Congress for decades (Charles River Editors,

2014). With the Democratic Party stranglehold on the South, there was essentially a one

party system in operation in these states. However, once the VRA passed, the electorate

took on a different hue moving from blue to purple. Large swaths of previously

disenfranchised voters began to exercise their right to vote, but many of the existing

Southern Democrats chose to escape the liberal leanings of these incoming new voters

and moved over to the conservative wing of the Republican Party, leaving the

Democratic Party in the south to ideologically align with the more liberal agenda of its

national party (Pildes, 2011). Accordingly, the influx of Southern Democrats to the

Republican Party gave this party a foothold in the South that it had not previously

enjoyed. This translated into a true national two-party system during the Clinton era that

now included the South, when the VRA amendments created safe minority districts

(Pildes, 2011).

President Lyndon Johnson, who signed the 1965 VRA into law, continued the

legacy of Wilson, Roosevelt, Truman, and Kennedy, in using the federal government to

improve the lives of those needing assistance. He passed laws that helped minorities gain

greater equality, gave assistance to the poor, disabled and unemployed and provided

healthcare to the elderly and those in need (Charles River Editors, 2014). These laws

constituted the 'Great Society Program,' which continued the progressive trajectory from

the New Deal to the Democratic Party of today (Charles River Editors, 2014). Around

this time, each of the two parties began to purify and polarize into very distinct

ideologies, thus laying the groundwork for the partisan conflict seen between Democrats

and Republicans in Congress today.

Democrats did not see another president from their party, apart from the one term

of Jimmy Carter, until President Bill Clinton in 1992. Under President Clinton, the label

of 'New Democrats' was adopted, along with the new brand he billed as centrist (Pildes,

2011). He wanted to leave behind the ultra liberal wings of the Democratic Party and

appeal across the aisle to those with more moderate viewpoints in both parties. However,

with Newt Gingrich as Speaker of the House during Clinton's term, partisan conflict

began to simmer and then boil as Republican Congressional members tried to ruin

President Clinton (Charles River Editors, 2014). Clinton's adoption of a moderate

platform for the Democratic Party in the 1990s preceded the push to become more

partisan after Clinton, where 'New New Democrats' with more partisan ideology

effectively replaced centrist Democrats of the Clinton era (Pildes, 2011).

Today's Democratic Party under President Barack Obama continues with many of

the liberal agenda items that were initially proposed and implemented by previous

administrations. Using the federal government to better the lives of citizens, Democrats

support employee's rights over those of their employers, advocate abortion and gay

rights, embrace a pluralist society and remain internationalist (Charles River Editors,

2014; Lakoff & Wehling, 2012). The most far-reaching legislation of this administration is arguably the 'Affordable Care Act' of 2010 (Condon, 2013) – the crowning jewel of legislative achievements for the Obama administration. This law provides access to affordable health care for all citizens, but has caused a massive rift between Democrats and Republicans in Congress whose singular mission is to repeal this law (Condon, 2013; Ricci & Seymour, 2012).

With liberal agenda items on the Democratic platform and opposing conservative items on the Republican platform, it is not surprising that conflict is commonplace between the two parties. The liberal Republicans and conservative Democrats, who previously provided a bridge to bipartisanship, seem to have congealed towards the purer end of their party's ideology, thus polarizing further from the center (Charles River Editors, 2014; Pildes, 2011). Finding common ground for compromise and cooperation appears to be becoming more challenging, but is necessary for civility and respect to return to the halls of Congress. This may be possible by uncovering the fact that, although Democrats and Republicans favor opposing issues much of the time, beneath these policy stances most Americans operate from the same set of basic principles, including equality, freedom, justice and fairness (Lakoff & Wehling, 2012). It is the outward expression of the differences between liberal and conservative moralities grounded in these principles, that are responsible for much of the conflict evident in Congress today, according to Jonathan Haidt's (2012c) MFT.

The 'Long Consensus' Between Conservatives and Liberals

The early 1900's saw a time of great change in the United States, as a broader focus on fairness, safety and individual rights began to overshadow the unencumbered power enjoyed by large industrial companies and other prosperous enterprises (Dionne, 2012). The balance began to tip towards equality - meeting more people's needs, addressing injustices and correcting glaring inequalities, to give more citizens a shot at the American Dream. Allowing more of the populace to share in the prosperity of the United States shored up the economy, particularly after World War II and Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal (Dionne, 2012). Legislation, such as the Social Security Act of 1935 (National Archives, n.d.a), provided a social safety net that alleviated the fears associated with various risks to one's welfare, including old age, unemployment or illness. Paradoxically, this fomented greater entrepreneurial and economic risk-taking behaviors in the populace, which in turn further stimulated the economy (Dionne, 2012).

For a vast majority of the twentieth century, the support to citizens provided by the federal government to "temper the brutality of the industrial economy" (Dionne, 2012, p.210), and provide for "fair economic competition" (p.217), leveled the playing field and grew both the economy and the middle class. By tempering the power of the monopolies in the early part of the 1900s and continuing to address this issue through the anti-trust laws of this nation (The United States Department of Justice, n.d.a), both consumers and small business owners were protected by the federal government from the unconstrained power of big business. These changes arguably indicated a move away from a focus on unrestrained individualism, to one of caring and concern for one's fellow

citizens. As the citizenry became more geographically mobile, the safety net provided for by local communities gave way to community and institution building by the federal government (Dionne, 2012). During this time, the YWCA, Red Cross, Boy Scouts of America, Rotary and Sierra Clubs provided a sense of community and belonging across the U.S. (Dionne, 2012).

The term the 'Long Consensus' was coined by Dionne, (2012) to capture the essence of this delicate balance between individualism and community witnessed throughout most of the twentieth century. As the government increased it's constructive influence in the nation, prosperity and individual freedoms grew. The National Parks Service was created in 1916 under the Organic Act, 1916 (National Park Service, 2014), women gained the right to vote in 1920 (National Archives, n.d.b), anti-trust laws were established (the United States Department of Justice, n.d.a), and the Food and Drug Administration was established under its current name in 1930 (U.S. Food And Drug Administration, 2013). These were all protections for the individual, against the self-serving interests of those in business who may disregard individual rights, freedoms and safety in the name of capitalism and profit. Even with these influences from the federal government – and arguably as a result of them – the country continued to see a general increase in prosperity throughout the last century. The balance between individualism and community, profit and concern for others, freedom and security was largely maintained and saw the United States develop into a global economic powerhouse.

As the nation experienced the Great Depression and World War II, citizens and politicians of both liberal and conservative leanings grasped the value of the progressive

changes that swept the nation. The War had been the great equalizer, eradicating many of the social barriers evident in the pre-war era. The G.I. Bill (Servicemen's Readjustment Act, 1944 – ourdocuments.gov, n.d.), amongst other things opened up post-secondary education to returning veterans. With the development of the interstate highway system through the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956 (nationalatlas.gov, 1996), increased geographic mobility led to greater employment opportunities that became available to a more educated work force. Many of these social changes enjoyed bipartisan support. The federal government was the vehicle through which these far-reaching, positive changes were implemented across the U.S., permanently improving the lives of millions. Thus, individualism and community, conservatives and liberals, Republicans and Democrats alike appeared to find common territory from which to work together after mutually suffering the devastating effects of the Depression and the War.

When Bipartisanship Worked - Ronald Reagan, 1980-1988

Thus, although there have been several periods in history that have witnessed the federal government polarizing over highly charged issues, for the most part mutual respect and civility have been common in the last century. This was particularly evident during the Reagan administration in the 1980s, where Matthews (2013), who occupied a ringside seat as an aide to Speaker Tip O'Neill, described how President Reagan and the Speaker shared a mutual respect for each other even as they fought hard for their respective agendas. During the Reagan administration, a fair and democratic fight was the norm in which both parties honored the system of checks and balances laid down in the Constitution. They mutually demonstrated "joint loyalty to American self-government"

(Matthews, 2013, p.xvi) and represented the voters by whom they were elected. Both parties abhorred anything that would inhibit the forward momentum and effective operation of the federal government. They were efficient at meeting deadlines, as well as being respectful and civil with the opposition during times of debate, decision-making and accomplishing goals. In a nutshell, the Government and the Republic worked the way it was supposed to – effectively, efficiently and for the country and American people as a whole (Matthews, 2013).

Thus bipartisan deals, although hard fought on both sides of the aisle, were tempered with an overriding respect for opponents and a clear demonstration of respect and congeniality during the Reagan years (Matthews, 2013). Conservatives and liberals appeared to remain open to the bigger picture regarding what was best for the country as a whole, even as they pressed their party's agenda. This was evidence of democracy and the U.S. Constitution at work – no party was favored above another, the checks and balances of the tiers of Government were effective and the will of the American people was enacted into law (Matthews, 2013). This was most clearly evidenced during the negotiations of the National Commission on Social Security Reform, a bipartisan group selected by leaders in Congress and President Reagan to reach an agreement concerning revisions to the Social Security Act (Ball, n.d.). These recommendations led to the 1983 Amendments to the Social Security Act (Ball, n.d.). Bipartisan compromise was the foundation for its resounding success and although it meant concessions from both sides of the aisle, it demonstrated that the organization of the U.S. Government could work effectively to find a solution for the benefit of the entire nation (Ball, n.d.).

This ability for Republicans and Democrats to work together to find solutions to significant legislative issues facing the nation continued into Reagan's second term, when a bipartisan compromise was once again reached in the Tax Reform Act of 1986 (Bell & Akabas, 2013; Matthews, 2013). The "herculean bipartisan effort" (Bell & Akabas, 2013) that was needed to pass this Bill again demonstrates that liberals and conservatives can indeed find a common ground and perform the work required and expected of an elected U.S. Congressman. Additionally, both Speaker O'Neill and President Reagan remained unified on foreign policy regarding the Soviets, sharing a strong revulsion for the creep of communism (Matthews, 2013). This bipartisanship regarding foreign policy allowed the U.S. to project itself as a nation united in its collective mistrust of communist philosophy (Matthews, 2013) and to present itself as undivided to the powerful Soviet Union. Both facets of this immense organization demonstrated effectiveness in accomplishing the task at hand and working together to complete the work they were hired to do.

What then may have shifted since this time when bipartisan friendships, luncheons, and international travel were the norm? Mingling socially appeared to ease the potential for political tensions that might originate from opposing political philosophies (Biden, 2008; Wheelan, Davidson & Tilin, 2003)). Speaker O'Neill lived by his motto that the work of the Government should end at 6 p.m. (Matthews, 2013). After this time, members of Congress were mutually friendly, frequently socializing with each other's families. This offered the benefit of humanizing one another and of helping to develop trusting and mutually beneficial relationships. Having this kind of rapport naturally can be expected to have transferred to the floor of the House and the Senate, grounding the

daily interactions of party members in civility. Opposing party members enjoyed the honest fruits of their debates via the democratic process rather than by sabotage and dysfunction, which is arguably the overriding methodology observed in more recent times (Dean, 2007; Matthews, 2013).

The focus of this inquiry rested on discovering how the efficiency and productivity of the U.S. Government became destabilized over the last 20-25 years. Discovering why Congressional members no longer appear able or willing to work together effectively for the overriding good of the country, was also of interest. These questions fuel the purpose behind this study, where it is hoped that answers may be uncovered that will enable potential solutions to be developed to address this organizational challenge.

The Beginning of the End of Bipartisan Civility

George H.W. Bush, 1988-1992 and Bill Clinton, 1992-2000

Prior to and during President George H.W. Bush's term as president, Democrats with more liberal ideology began to enter Congress (Pildes, 2011). They disliked the seniority system that was in place for selection to committee chairmanship and so they began slowly to dismantle this system of power. This trend was further continued by Speaker Newt Gingrich, during the Presidency of Bill Clinton, where chair terms were limited to six years and seniority was officially eliminated as a selection criterion for chairmanship (Pildes, 2011). As a result, committee chairs needed to toe the party line to a greater extent, most likely resulting in more polarized policy positions and less common ground between committee members.

The rise of the Christian Right during Bush senior's presidency exacted an immense and growing impact on the direction of the Republican Party at the time Clinton was elected President. The political activism of this movement was fueled by the deep pockets of Christian donors, with the aim of increasing the electoral base of the Republican Party and of electing numerous hard right Republicans to local, state and federal political positions (Berlet and Quigley, 1995; Blumenthal, 2009; Dean, 2007; Dean 2006).

During Clinton's two terms, Washington became ever more polarized, and incivility increased (Dean, 2006). Speaker Newt Gingrich instigated several changes that negatively impacted the Washington social networking, which had been a very real benefit during the Reagan administration. These changes included discouraging members to move their families to Washington and instead remain in their home districts to which members should return after the two-day work week (Dean, 2007). Additionally, Congressional foreign travel was also discouraged. Both of these changes exacted a negative impact on the bipartisanship and compromise that had been evident during the Reagan years and beyond. Without the opportunity for members and their families to socialize with each other, it was easy for members to become partisan and view those in the opposing party as adversaries (Kornblut, 2006). Ideologies likely took precedence over personalities and character in defining political opponents on Capitol Hill, thus making civility less likely.

As the Republican Party's platform began to crystallize toward the hard right, the Republican and Democrat ideologies continued to polarize. This further decreased the

ability for members of Congress to compromise, make concessions across the aisle and interact civilly. Religion seeped into the historically nuanced style of democratic political debate within Congress, tearing it from its traditional, civil foundations and replacing it with a rigid and unswerving expectation for those on the Right to remain true to the party platform (Dean, 2006). Mixing politics and religion, as forewarned by the Founders, negatively impacted the democratic process and the ability for lawmakers to get their jobs done (Dean, 2006).

Soon the civility between members of Congress seen under Reagan rapidly deteriorated into full-scale warfare, as impeachment proceedings were initiated during Clinton's second term (Dean, 2006). As the impeachment battles raged, retired Senator Barry Goldwater condemned the viral spread of incivility that was overtaking Congress, arguing that this shift had occurred since cultural and social issues had become the key focus of the Republican Party platform (Dean, 2006). In a phone discussion between retired Senator Goldwater and Dean (2006), the Senator noted that "politics and governing demand compromise," (p.xxiv) and that the Christian Right believed they were on a mission from God, thus making compromise unlikely. His trepidation for how this could ultimately negatively impact the democratic process of governing upon which this nation was built, is still of concern today.

Political Polarization and the Final Demise of the Bipartisanship Era

George W. Bush – 2000-2008

While there has long been spirited debate and heated interaction between members of Congress, the flavor of these interactions in recent times has changed

significantly (Dionne, 2012). Conservatives and liberals naturally harbor opposing

ideologies. Smaller government, economic freedom, Second Amendment rights, and

reduced taxes make up the agenda on the Right. On the Left, however, personal freedom,

civil liberties, gun control, government assistance in ensuring equality and fairness for all

citizens are the areas of greatest importance. Bringing these two ideologies, often

grounded in differing moral foundations (Haidt, 2012c), to any useful agreement in the

realm of the federal government has frequently proven challenging. However, in recent

times the partisanship evident in the halls of Washington has been particularly

paralyzing, resulting from the continued polarizing of the two parties over the last two

decades (Dean, 2007; Dionne, 2012). The possibility of compromise on key issues has

become more elusive, with fewer areas in which ideologies overlap as both ends of the

political spectrum have edged toward their extremes (Blendon & Benson, 2011; Quirk,

2011). This further widening of the existing gulf between conservatives and liberals has

had serious ramifications for the effectiveness of several recent Congressional sessions

(Dean, 2007; Dionne, 2012; Haidt, 2012c).

During the administration of President George W. Bush, the Republicans

controlled both the Senate (United States Senate, n.d.b) and the House (History, Art &

Archives: U.S. House of Representatives, n.d.) for the majority of his presidency. Several

process changes were introduced that arguably drove a final wedge between the parties

and could be factors that potentially explain the increase of partisanship in Congress

occurring during the presidency of George W. Bush (Dean, 2007). Process changes

included shortening of the Congressional workweek, lack of bipartisan inclusion in

committee conferences and extended voting periods on the floor of the House leading to

more time for members to potentially be cajoled into voting a certain way (Dean, 2007).

Debate and deliberation, the norm on the floor of the House and Senate, were foregone

by the Republican majority, in favor of pushing through their favored legislation (Dean,

2007).

Compromise was no longer commonplace in the halls of Congress (Dean, 2007)

as the Hard Right continued to push their agenda. Large donations were funneled to the

campaigns of those who identified with this agenda, resulting in greater numbers of

supporters of the Hard Right winning seats in Congress and having influence over the

passage of laws and selections to the judiciary (Blumenthal, 2009; Dean, 2007). While

pushback from the Democrats was certainly limited, this environment was ultimately not

conducive to the democratic debate upon which this country was founded (Dean, 2007).

Much of the camaraderie common during the Reagan administration had withered

away as a result of the social changes instigated by Newt Gingrich under President

Clinton. With Congressional members returning home to their districts after a two-day

workweek in Washington, members no longer developed close bipartisan social ties to

others and their families (Dean, 2007; Matthews, 2013). Additionally, the removal of

regular Congressional trips eliminated further opportunities for members to become more

familiar with each other. This lack of opportunity for members and their families to

socialize arguably added to the partisanship evident within Congress. Removing the

humanizing quality afforded by social networking, quite possibly made partisan conflict

and lack of compromise acceptable to those Congressional members who would otherwise have maintained respect for each other.

In 2004, Senator John McCain and Senator Hillary Clinton benefitted from traveling together, forming a bond that allowed them to work successfully across the aisle (Kornblut, 2006). In a similar vein to the relationship that was formed between President Reagan and Speaker Tip O'Neill, the camaraderie that developed between Senator McCain and Senator Clinton allowed for each individual to become familiar with the other in a personal light outside of the expectations of the workplace (Kornblut, 2006). Thus, the incivility that would be the norm for two Senators from opposing parties in Washington became unnecessary when each knew the other personally (Kornblut, 2006). The removal of social networking opportunities within Congress, which facilitated bipartisanship, may indeed prove to have been a mistake. Instead, the lack of social contact has arguably provided a perfect venue for frustrations to continue building between Congressional Republicans and Democrats, potentially pushing each party's radical extremes to begin to ignite and take root (Wheelan et al., 2003).

In 2007, the last year of Bush's second term, Nancy Pelosi was elected to Speaker of the House (Pelosi.house.gov, n.d.). She pushed for non-compromise from Democrats in order to try to highlight to voters the differences between the Republican and Democrat Party and to prevent the Republicans from being successful with bipartisanship (Pildes, 2011). She was arguably mirroring the same strategies employed by Speaker Gingrich under Clinton, which continued to be enforced more recently with Speaker Boehner (Pildes, 2011).

Partisan war - Barack H. Obama 2008-Present

With two opposing political movements rising in response to the difficulties faced by the U.S. during the economic meltdown of 2008, the rift that was developing between liberals and conservatives split wide open. Initially, with the 2008 Democratic wins in Congress and the White House, the Right became mobilized. They sensed that communitarian values comprised the overriding force that had swung the election so definitively towards the Democrats. Those on the far Right felt especially alarmed that individualism would be swept aside and that, with the election of President Obama, socialism would begin creeping in and taking over (Dionne, 2012).

As the radical Tea Party fringe of the Republican Party grew, the polarization between liberals and conservatives increased exponentially as conservatives became emboldened by the results of the midterm elections of 2010. The Republican Party dug in and made a concerted and strategic effort to prevent President Obama from being elected to a second term (Dionne, 2012). They pushed back on anything that was proposed by the Democratic Party, using the weight of their success in the House in an attempt to achieve this goal. On the left, however, the movement was slower, coming to life in September of 2011 (Occupywallst, n.d.). The lack of liberal organizing until the Occupy Wall Street movement occurred begs the question as to why this might have been. Key progressive movements centered around specific issues such as feminism, environmentalism, and gay rights continued, but these core liberal issues failed to congeal into an overarching liberal movement (Berlet and Quigley, 1995). Perhaps this occurred as a result of the general progressive trend that gathered momentum from the 1960s onward, during which time

liberal victories ensued in the domains of civil rights, women's rights, gay rights and the political issue of school prayer (Berlet, 2011a). As a result, liberals may have become complacent, failing to grasp the need for action until resentment built into the Occupy movement.

Referred to as the Occupy Wall Street movement, liberals decried the misdeeds of those in positions of power in finance, who had successfully made themselves fabulously wealthy through spurious channels while fueling the onset of the financial crisis (Occupywallst, n.d.; Haidt, 2012d). The federal government was seen as negligent in failing to use its power to prevent the transgressions of those in the financial world. The protesters also sought to demonstrate about the inequities in financial growth experienced by this top financial bracket of the country, which had not been equally realized by the masses of the American populace (Dionne, 2012). While Occupy Wall Street pulled hard to the left, the Tea Party fringe pulled squarely in the opposite direction, between them mutually ripping apart the fabric of compromise that had long been frayed.

It is noteworthy that the absence of a countervailing liberal movement until 2011 had left the political narrative wide open to be hijacked by those who identified with the Tea Party agenda. Numerous talk show hosts on T.V., as well as radio, took advantage of the apparent apathy evident on the left, who were mistakenly over-confident from the wins in 2008. With a wide-open field, the Tea Party advocates began to mix a particularly strong cocktail of attacks, which was clearly demonstrated by "a sizable contingent of House members who view any compromise whatsoever as tantamount to treason" (Cottle, 2014). It took the vast Occupy Wall Street movement that spread rapidly across

the nation, to mobilize the liberal base into becoming more vocal. With President Obama's second term win in 2012 he became emboldened to push back against the far Right. Liberals in Congress equally gained confidence to begin to deflect the conservative narrative and agenda.

Any previously shared sense of values, principles and morality no longer provided an acceptable foundation upon which the two parties could build compromise. Both sides of the aisle have since continued stubbornly and inflexibly to hold onto their party ideals (Blendon & Benson, 2011), forgetting that beneath it all they are all Americans (Dionne, 2012). On a foundational level, liberals and conservatives alike recognize individualism, community and liberty equally. These principles, established deliberately and methodically by the Founders, are shared on a visceral level. Americans all understand the importance of offering a helping hand to those in need as much as they fiercely defend their rights and liberties. They all know that no matter how prepared one is life can deliver unanticipated curve balls. All Americans are exposed to the same unpredictability of life. They are also simultaneously all subject to the same overarching ethical and moral obligations to assist their neighbors – obligations that accompany the liberties and rights they all enjoy. Runaway liberty and individualism without community and consideration for others begins to resemble the tyrannical despotism that drove the Founders to separate from England and issue the Declaration of Independence (Dionne, 2012).

Current Status of the U.S. Government

This diminishing ability for members of Congress to compromise has created a litany of issues in the current session, which collectively have demonstrated that the federal government isn't working efficiently (Pildes, 2011; Rhodes, 2014). Congress is replete with examples of dysfunction and difficulties, as lawmakers attempt to create policy and function effectively under the process rules laid out by House leaders. Laws have not been passed (Pelosi, 2013; Weiner & O'Keefe, 2013), others have been relentlessly attacked since taking effect ('Dodd-Frank Act' – Taibbi, 2012; Wack, 2012; 'Affordable Care Act' – Condon, 2013; Ricci & Seymour, 2012); the Government has been forced to shut down (Burwell, 2013) and members of Congress have adopted the use of the filibuster as a frequently used weapon in their box of rhetorical tricks (Dinan, 2014; Dinan & Klimas, 2013; Milbank, 2013). Many of these tactics are a continuation from previous Congressional sessions in which process issues arguably impacted the smooth running of Congress (Dean, 2007).

Possible Paradigms To Explain Partisan Conflict

So, it is troubling to find that these two political groups can no longer work together to successfully execute all of the duties they were elected to perform. The work that our politicians were elected for has seemingly become difficult to accomplish. Conflict and incivility in the workplace can be detrimental to effective operations in an organization (Albert & Moskowitz, 2014) and can continue to negatively spiral as each act of incivility feeds off the next (Andersson & Pearson, 1999). The lack of successful interaction and compromise in Congress as noted above, has had serious repercussions

for the nation already thus underscoring the pressing nature of this problem. With the government shutdown, stalemates in Congress, and reduction in the number of Bills passed by Congress (Benen, 2013) it is certainly evident that this issue needs to be addressed. Whatever has led to this souring of the congeniality and respect, which was once the mainstay of the halls of power in our nation's capitol, requires intervention.

Explanations for the reduction in civility, cooperation and compromise seem to be lacking. Researchers, such as myself, are searching for clarification and understanding in an attempt to uncover solutions that may address the political polarization in Congress. I believe that if bipartisanship and civility amongst our elected officials can be increased, perhaps members of Congress can once again work toward the common goal of efficiently and smoothly performing the work they were elected to undertake. Civility, cooperation, and respect have cohabitated with effective lawmaking in the federal government in recent times and must be possible once more.

Researchers such as Pildes (2011) have offered various paradigms as explanations for the continued conflict within Congress. Pildes identifies three potential causes that have been proposed to explain the political polarization and resulting conflict in the U.S. Government, persons, history, and institutions. He notes that certain key politicians are argued to be the catalyst for increasing polarization, especially those who are notably divisive in nature. Liberals during the last Bush presidency would argue this to be the case with President George W. Bush (Pildes, 2011). However, he further states that partisanship can be viewed as continuing under President Obama, with his recent stimulus and health care bills failing to garner bipartisan support (Pildes, 2011). Both

Nancy Pelosi and Newt Gingrich were viewed as divisive elites in Congress, who each spearheaded the mirror image opposition to the respective Presidents they served under, fueling the partisanship evident in Washington (Pildes, 2011). Occurring under both Presidents and Speakers of different parties, this continuation of polarization suggests that other forces are at work.

Party primaries have held the blame for hyper-partisanship (Pildes, 2011), where party members who stray too far toward the center have found themselves challenged by their own party's primary. Voters in the primaries could thus be described as forcing the hand of existing Congressional members, influencing them to lean toward either end of the political spectrum and to remain solidly aligned with the party platform (Pildes, 2011). New members are also likely to be more partisan prior to the election, in order to avoid the same fate as existing members and to increase the likelihood of winning the election. However, while polarization in Congress can be explained through the party primary process, what might explain the reason for the concurrent polarization in the electorate that necessarily influences both the primary and general election process? This is considered next.

Historical influences on polarization, stemming from the results of immense social movements, have also impacted the way in which parties and electorates align (Pildes, 2011), as seen with the direct effect of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (The United States Department of Justice, n.d.b) on party affiliation. Prior to this time, the Southern states were dominated by affiliation to the Democratic Party. Each party held moderates, along with those who were aligned with the more extreme ideological policy

positions held by their respective bases (Pildes, 2011). After the passage of this law, there was a political realignment that occurred, where the South began to move slowly toward the right (Pildes, 2011). The Southern Democrats shifted towards the Republican Party, due in part to their stance on racial issues. As party policy began to purify along ideological lines, those in the center diverged to the outer ends of the liberal-conservative continuum, organizing themselves under significant political figures espousing the values they held dear (Pildes, 2011). As the Republican Party once again became a key player in the politics of the South, and moderates began to disappear, the balance of power began to shift in Congress setting the stage for a "massive political restructuring" over the next thirty years (Pildes, 2011). It is the results of this restructuring and continuing party purification and polarization that act as one possible reason for the persistent and pervasive partisan conflict impacting Congress today (Pildes, 2011).

Pildes (2011) noted that institutional factors such as gerrymandering have been suggested to be a third potential influence on the polarization of Congress. In his research however, he found little evidence for this. In contrast, he notes that the influence of House rules hold more weight as an explanation for polarization. Changes in rules for committee chairmanship selection has arguably caused more polarization, since members who hope to be selected would necessarily need to distill their values to meet those held by the party base selecting them to such a position. Additionally, he notes that campaign financing has undoubtedly impacted polarization, since financing from a candidate's party committee gives party leaders the ability to exert greater control over the voting patterns of newly elected members (Pildes, 2011).

In general Pildes' (2011) argument for what might have exerted the greatest influence on polarization and the resulting conflict, appears to be the realignment occurring from the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (The United States Department of Justice, n.d.b). His understanding of how this impacted the resorting of allegiances within the government is compelling. With the disappearance of moderates and centrists to cross over party lines, he argues that during periods of divided government, stalemate is likely to be the only outcome.

From his viewpoint Pildes (2011) believed this to be the characteristic of a more mature democracy, one in which parties have purified to each end of the liberal-conservative spectrum and remain true to their party's ideology. Strong parties that are ideologically coherent and highly differentiated from one another provide the electorate with a clear picture as to how their government is performing and where to lay blame. He contended that gridlock will be the norm for the U.S. government, except for in the rare instances that there is a unified government – one which is in control simultaneously of the House, the Senate and the Presidency. He did not see that it is likely that the factors influencing polarization and partisan conflict can be addressed. However, he conceded that perhaps attention can be given to examining the consequences resulting from the partisan interactions between political parties in Washington that have reached a crescendo during the last decade.

I wished to discover whether, with additional information gleaned from examining video data of current members of Congress, it was possible to build a framework from which to develop viable solutions to the dysfunction evident in this

organization. Through applying Haidt's MFT it was hoped that the current functioning of

Congress can be understood through the exploration of the behavior and speeches of

members who live and work with these issues on a daily basis. I hoped to comprehend

what factors drive their interactions with the opposition. It was hoped that by viewing

policy differences between liberals and conservatives through this lens it could help to

shed light on how members of Congress potentially make decisions. Through

understanding these factors, the development of solutions may be enhanced so that the

Government may once again work for the best interest of all Americans equally.

Policy Expressions of Contrasting Moral Matrices for Liberals and Conservatives

The Republican agenda appeals to all six moral principles in moral foundations

theory, giving them a distinct advantage when campaigning for office. Where Democrats

can trigger the *care, fairness* and *liberty* foundations during campaigning, the Republican

agenda provides additional campaigning opportunities for tapping into the *loyalty,*

authority and *sanctity* foundations that are of less importance to liberals (Haidt, 2012b;

2012c). Republicans thus clearly have an advantage in the number of ways they can

engage voters, by virtue of a greater number of moral foundations informing their policy

positions. It is noteworthy that, by viewing the ongoing culture wars in the U.S. through

this lens of MFT, it is easy to comprehend how a partisan can possess what appears to be

conflicting policy positions – such as the endorsement by conservatives of a pro-life

stance on abortion, yet their support for capital punishment, or the liberal endorsement

for pro-choice positions, but a commitment to gun control (Koleva, Graham, Iyer, Ditto & Haidt, 2012).

MFT can also help to explain why working class Democrats moved over to the Republican Party under Reagan (Reagan Democrats), seeming to vote against their own best economic interests. The moral foundations of *loyalty, authority*, and *sanctity* were not sufficiently represented in the liberal agenda during recent times. Great social change occurred in several areas, including globalization, increasing crime rates, abortion, and gay rights. However, it appears that the binding foundations evident in the developing conservative agenda of this time exerted a greater influence on these voters than the foundations evident in the policies offered by the Democratic ticket. Voters clearly needed the sense of stability offered by Reagan's policies in response to the sweeping social changes that were taking place (Haidt, 2012b) and as a way to assuage the resulting sense of uncertainty during this period in history (Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski & Sulloway, 2003).

Thus, even though the very people who would stand to benefit the most from social programs began to vote against them by voting for the Republican platform, they arguably found more comfort in the broader aspects of the conservative agenda that appealed to their sense of belonging, order and sanctity (Haidt, 2012b) even at the expense of economic protections (Haidt, 2012b). These culture war issues continue to be evident in policy platforms today, fueling the ongoing warfare evident between the left and the right. Some of these policy issues, taken from Haidt (2012b; 2012c) are presented next:

- *Care:* The liberal agenda activates the Care foundation with issues relating to helping the poor, children's programs, health policy, and welfare programs. The *care* foundation for conservatives rests on slightly different agenda items and is typically directed to those who have sacrificed for the greater good – such as members of the military. Conservative caring is also evident more locally in communities, with church programs that help those in need (Haidt, 2012b; 2012c).

- *Fairness:* Liberal policy relating to social justice rests squarely on the *fairness* foundation. As such, taxation policies that look for tax increases on the rich and fairness in housing, education and opportunity for the underprivileged are some of the ways in which this dimension is expressed in liberal policy. Fairness of the taxation system was the focus for the Occupy Wall Street movement in 2011. For conservatives, however, the *fairness* foundation motivates policy related to the welfare system, the tax system and health care system overhaul. Conservatives do not see it as fair that their hard earned money should be redistributed to those they consider to be lazy. Haidt (2012c) noted that there is a difference in the way in which liberals and conservatives view fairness. Liberals view it through the lens of equality while for conservatives it is related to proportionality (i.e., that the harder a person works, the more they earn).

- *Loyalty:* The *loyalty* foundation is more important to conservatives than for liberals, as evidenced by their nationalism and dislike of globalization (Haidt, 2012b; 2012c). Conservatives tend to advocate for America first. Conversely,

liberals are open to universalism and are more likely to support global policy

where the rights of the United States are not placed above those of other nations.

- *Authority:* The *authority* dimension is also of greater importance to conservatives

  than liberals and is evident in policy regarding crime laws and rules under the

  majority party within Congress. Conservatives traditionally believe in being tough

  on crime, where liberals tend to rely on their *care* and *fairness* foundations, often

  looking to advance social policy to improve the lives of underprivileged members

  of society (Haidt, 2012b; 2012c). Additionally, when Republicans are the

  majority party in Congress, there is a tendency to imbue the President with greater

  powers and be comfortable with less oversight by Congress (Pildes, 2011),

  whereas Democrats prefer to spread the powers between the executive and

  legislative branches of the government.

- *Sanctity Foundation:* The *sanctity* foundation is the third foundation that is of

  more importance to conservatives. It is evident in their policy regarding abortion,

  euthanasia, religion in schools, gay rights and issues related to sex. While

  conservatives view these issues through the lens of preserving the sanctity of life,

  purity, Christianity and marriage, the liberal policy gives little weight to sanctity

  when considering these areas. This essentially gives conservatives control of the

  family values platform – a key aspect of the American culture wars. Interestingly,

  however, sanctity for liberals can arguably be found in the grocery store in any

  number of organic products and also in liberal environmental policy (Haidt,

  2012b; 2012c).

- *Liberty:* Haidt (2012c) added the *liberty* foundation after discovering that liberals and conservatives hold a different perspective on the concept of fairness. He felt that the lens of equality through which liberals typically viewed the *fairness* foundation left the need for the addition of the *liberty* foundation to capture the liberal love of liberty. This leaves fairness to be viewed through the filter of proportionality for conservatives. Liberals view liberty in terms of the right for individuals to make major life decisions for themselves and as such, adopt policy that fights for the right to choose regarding abortion and euthanasia. Conservatives, however, view the *liberty* foundation through the lens of freedom from the interference and control of government on their lives and businesses and pursue corresponding policy themes. Once the *fairness* foundation was re-categorized in this manner, Conservatives began to score slightly higher than Liberals, indicating the importance they allocate to proportionality with regards to fairness (Haidt, 2012c).

Psychological and Moral Underpinnings of the American Culture Wars

In the same manner as moral decisions, political judgments are also formed intuitively (Haidt, 2012c). Individuals with similar moral matrices tend to converge politically, possessing mutual interest in specific policy issues. However, understanding other moral matrices is extremely challenging when different moral foundations than those of others support one's worldview (Haidt & Graham, 2007). The moral foundations described in Haidt's theory inform liberals and conservatives moral judgments in different ways and to various extents (Graham et al., 2009; Haidt, 2012a; 2012b; 2012c).

When individuals operate from dissimilar moral foundations, this undoubtedly makes for challenging collegial discourse between ideological opposites as evidenced by the continued conflict witnessed in the U.S. government. The intensity with which each political team supports their opposing policy positions blinds them to the values inherent in the opposing policy, putting compromise and bipartisan agreement solidly out of reach.

Ditto and Koleva, (2011) have referred to this lack of understanding as "moral empathy gaps" (p. 331), wherein people are unable to correctly infer the moral reasoning behind the judgments and beliefs of others in opposing political camps. Since moral intuitions directly influence one's political viewpoint, this can aggravate already contentious political dialogue as members of opposing ideological groups view the policies of their adversaries as founded in malicious intent and narrow intellect (Ditto & Koleva, 2011). Partisans at each end of the ideological spectrum tend to incorrectly judge the motivation for the other's moral agendas as resting on a desire for opposition with them, rather than a desire to pursue their own values (Chambers & Melnyk, 2006). If partisans in Congress mistakenly attribute the opposing party's agenda to that party's desire to intentionally attack their core values, tempers are likely to fly, mistrust increase and cooperation cease as members of Congress go on the defensive.

Furthermore, it appears that partisans across the political spectrum tend to hold mistaken judgments and erroneous stereotypes concerning the values of their political adversaries, particularly with regards to those values that are central to their own political platform (Chambers & Melnyk, 2006; Graham et al., 2012; Haidt, 2012a; Haidt & Graham, 2007). Liberals were found to be the least accurate in gauging the characteristics

of a typical liberal and a typical conservative, most notably over-exaggerating the importance of the individualizing liberal moral dimensions of *care* and *fairness* for liberals and underestimating the importance of these dimensions for conservatives (Graham et al., 2012; Haidt, 2012a). They regard Republicans as being unsupportive of their central issues such as rights of minorities and the right to choice regarding reproduction (Chambers & Melnyk, 2006). Conservatives however, underestimate the degree to which liberals held issues representative of the binding dimensions of *loyalty, authority* and *sanctity* as important (Chambers & Melnyk, 2006; Graham et al., 2012). For example, Republicans underestimate the degree to which Democrats support national defense, crime legislation and other issues related to the conservative agenda. Employing these stereotypes only adds further fuel to the increasingly flammable culture wars. Interestingly, neither party tends to disagree with the opposing party regarding issues that are not central to their party's policy platform (Chambers & Melnyk, 2006).

The above is noteworthy information for the current study, since exaggerated stereotyping by liberals and conservatives regarding themselves and their political opposites, provides a fertile breeding ground for the continued growth of hyper-partisanship political rhetoric. Such rhetoric in turn likely provides further fuel for the conflict occurring within the U.S. government. Viewing the American culture war through the lens of MFT (Ditto & Koleva, 2011; Graham et al., 2011; Koleva et al., 2012)), our understanding of the partisanship in Congress takes on a new clarity, washing it of the multiple layers of misunderstanding and blame that have made the likelihood of finding bipartisan solutions to our nations ongoing problems remote.

It is noteworthy that liberals and conservatives are found to contrast on measures of openness to experience (Jost et al., 2003; McCrae, 1996), intolerance for ambiguity, resistance to change, uncertainty avoidance, a need for order, structure and closure (Jost et al., 2003). "Political conservatism is related to psychological conservatism" (McCrae, 1996, p. 325), and other "psychological correlates of political ideology" that have been replicated in numerous cross-cultural studies (McCrae, 1996, p.326). Openness, described as heritable (Bouchard, 2004: McCrae, 1996), tends to impact whether the individual takes into consideration all significant factors when making a decision (McCrae, 1996). Those who are low on scores of openness to experience are found to be impervious to persuasion once they have already settled on a decision (McCrae, 1996).

Thus, relating this to MFT, the intuitive responses individuals display when a particular moral dimension is activated are potentially more resistant to influence for conservatives than for liberals. Both conservatives and liberals employ the strategic post hoc reasoning previously described and are both subject to the confirmation bias formerly noted (Wason, 1960), to justify their intuitive responses to moral situations. However, to use a term coined by Baron-Cohen in 1995 (Ditto & Koleva, 2011), perhaps conservatives are particularly 'mind blind', since the conservative mindset is less open to any new disconfirming information to their current beliefs. This arguably makes them less able to "apprehend another's moral mind...and…appreciate the visceral responses that motivate another person's moral concerns" (Ditto & Koleva, 2011, p. 332). Unable to empathize easily with the liberal moral position, political partisans on the right will naturally go on the defensive and crank up the partisan rhetoric in support of their own

strongly held beliefs. This in turn, exacerbates the liberal oratory in defense of their equally strongly held principles. Until moral empathy gaps can be bridged, this continuing vicious cycle of blindness to the other's viewpoint is likely to remain the norm.

Templates for Culture War Solutions

Perhaps if the inaccuracy of stereotypes could be demonstrated to members of Congress (Chambers & Melnyk, 2006) and creative ways developed to encourage them to be open to alternative information, it is possible that inter-party conflict could begin to dampen with the rise of mutual understanding. As Chambers and Melnyk (2006) noted, "explicitly informing partisans about their adversaries' true motives ha[ve] been demonstrated to facilitate harmonious and productive inter-group relations" (p.1309). Clearly this has implications for the development of potential solutions to the ongoing partisan conflict that currently permeates the federal government of the United States.

Interestingly, Haidt noted that political and other judgments could be influenced by the current affective state of the individual (Haidt, 2012c; Lai, Haidt & Nosek, 2014; Sauer, 2012). He discussed evidence that demonstrates moral judgments can be affected by environmental cues, which trigger a particular moral foundation. For instance hand sanitizer, a cleansing agent, elicits thoughts relating to cleanliness and moral purity – thus activating the moral foundation of *sanctity*, which is associated more with conservatism. Using this fact, political parties have most likely attempted to employ campaigning techniques that utilize moral module triggers in order to secure votes (Haidt, 2012c). Debates in Congress undoubtedly engage the same techniques, where speechwriters

include topics that harness the intuitive responses associated with one's moral

foundations. These scenarios of course only fan the flames of the culture wars in the U.S.,

making cooperation and bipartisanship increasingly more challenging to achieve. Perhaps

this knowledge could be applied beneficially to bring partisans together, instead of

driving them further apart.

In addition Chambers and Melnyk (2006) asked self-described Democrats and

Republicans how likely they were to develop friendships with and think positively of

individuals from the opposing party. Given the current hyper-partisan mood in politics in

the U.S., it is not surprising that members of each of these political groups gave more

positive ratings to members of their own party. They also had a greater interest in

developing friendships with these same members, over members from the opposing

party. The ramifications of this distinct in-group bias for developing prospective

resolutions for the conflict in Congress are self-evident. However, increased exposure of

members to those in the opposing political camp (Wheelan et al., 2003), in humanizing

and non-threatening situations, requiring the adoption of neutral roles with regard to each

other, may enable Congressional staff to begin to view each other in a different, perhaps

more positive light.

It is noteworthy that Haidt (2012c) also demonstrated that our intuitive judgments

are open to influence and even change, if there is a positive relationship between the

people who possess different judgments and opinions. As a result Haidt (2012c) argued

that it is important that decisions made for groups or society (such as policy decisions

within the government) should be made by a group of individuals demonstrating

"intellectual and ideological diversity" (p.90), wherein their joint powers of reasoning can be harnessed to civilly discuss the topic at hand. This would address issues associated with confirmation bias, which could occur in the development of public policy, if decision-making were left to an individual or a highly homogeneous partisan group.

Clearly, such a group would need to possess a positive and civil relationship in order for its members to remain open to each other's moral matrix or point of view. As noted by Haidt (2012c), "Liberal and conservative policies…[can be viewed as]...deeply conflicting but equally heartfelt visions of the good society" (p. 109). Even though other theorists in the field of morality take exception to several aspects of Haidt's Moral Foundations Theory (Blum, 2013), this author believes that the above quote captures one of the key applications of this theory to the political incivility in the U.S. That is, MFT contends that both liberals and conservatives arguably place equivalent value on the principles they live by and espouse and should thus give one another the respect due to an alternative viewpoint. Liberals can be quite vocal about the ways in which they feel conservatives are closed to other viewpoints, but it is important for social psychologists and liberals to be aware that they are also potentially discriminatory to conservatives (Klasios, 2012). As Haidt suggests, both ends of the political spectrum need to realize that the other end holds their viewpoint to be equally as sacred as they do (Haidt, 2012c) in order to move away from the "tribal moral communities" (Klasios, 2012, p. 718) that seem to comprise the flavor of the politics in Congress today.

In adopting this view, partisans could perhaps begin to accept that other political viewpoints may have merit. Those who balk at opening up to the value their adversaries

give to their own beliefs and the possibility that these beliefs may have merit, are demonstrating exactly the 'groupish' behavior discussed by Haidt (2012c). His argument that "Morality binds and blinds" is confirmed time and again in U.S. politics, as both liberals and conservatives employ empty rhetorical attacks on each other's core policies and belief systems (Haidt, 2012c, p. 311). As empathy for the viewpoint of another grows, anger and mistrust would naturally subside, allowing one to open one's mind to other possibilities. This information has important ramifications for formulating potential solutions to address the current partisanship in Congress.

Summary and Conclusions

The current functioning of the U.S. federal government is less than satisfactory (Harbridge et al., 2014; Quirk, 2011; Rhodes, 2014; Schraufnagel, 2005) and the ongoing partisan conflict that is widely evident in Congress self perpetuates (Dionne, 2012; Harbridge et al., 2014; Mann & Ornstein, 2012; Pildes, 2011; Rhodes, 2014). MFT (Graham et al., 2009; Haidt, 2012c) has successfully been used to explain differences in moral preferences between liberals and conservatives. Using this information, this study employed MFT as a conceptual framework from which to potentially explain the never-ending cycle of conflict in which members of Congress appear to be locked. In this explanation, partisan conflict can be viewed as resulting from the differing moral preferences of liberals and conservatives. Through examining qualitatively the video data of this conflict in Congress, it was hoped that some light was shed on how these factors fuel this cycle. This can provide us with more insight into the ways in which the moral

belief systems of liberal and conservative members of Congress may irreconcilably differ.

This approach can provide a unique perspective from which to explain and describe the flavor and intensity of the Congressional rhetoric, while offering the additional benefit of providing a window into the nature of the conflict as it occurs in Congress. Thus, this study intends to bridge the gap in the literature between what is currently known about the moral preferences of liberals and conservatives (Haidt, 2012c) and what is known about the conflict occupying Congressional members and their ability to effectively perform the duties for which they were hired (Harbridge et al., 2014; Quirk, 2011; Rhodes, 2014; Schraufnagel, 2005).

Within this literature review, an overview of the founding of the United States and the beliefs upon which this rests provided evidence for the uniting principles of the United States, common to all Americans. Following this, a summary of the various facets of today's conservatives/Republican Party helped to delineate the many and varied viewpoints existing at this end of the political spectrum. Each facet of the Republican Party naturally adheres to a slightly differing moral menu, but all exert an influence on the overall platform for the Republican Party. Vocal proponents of each wing of the Republicans are likely to push hard for their deeply held beliefs. In turn, members of the liberal end of the political spectrum/Democrats who adhere with equivalent passion to their opposing beliefs push back equally as hard. Aspects of liberal/Democrat ideology and history were then explored in detail.

The impact of major societal, ideological, and political changes under the last several presidents was then investigated. This was addressed in order to highlight any external influences that may have added to the lack of understanding, cooperation and the level of conflict evident within Congress. Additionally, process changes in Congress that were likely to have inflamed marginal working relationships were explored. Further, several specific possibilities offered as potential explanations for the partisan conflict in the current literature were presented. This chronological investigation into the progression from relatively successful and productive Congressional working relationships to today's dysfunction, inefficiency and lack of productivity was helpful. It helped to shed some light on the broad range of influences that needed to be considered when attempting to develop solutions to this organizational problem.

Finally, in this chapter the policy preferences of Democrats and Republicans were studied. Since these demonstrate the moral preferences of each party, how these differences likely fuel the current culture wars and conflict within the halls of Congress was discussed. Additionally, various studies presented provided other possible explanations for the current conflict, including those studies that focus on cognitive and psychological errors as explanations. When paired with MFT, these explanations provide a powerful rationale with which to describe and understand the processes evident in today's dysfunctional Congressional working relationships. This chapter concludes with an introduction to some potential solutions to ameliorate the interactions in Congress, which will be considered further in Chapter 5. The following chapter will focus on the

methods for this study, which fall under the qualitative tradition, using qualitative content

analysis and coding to analyze video data of current members of Congress.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore the ongoing partisan conflict in the U.S. Congress. It was hoped that potential solutions to this situation could be developed by uncovering the origination of the polarization in American politics (Quirk, 2011) and to what degree individual politicians perpetuated the conflict (Dionne, 2012). I determined that a viable source of data for my study was available using video footage of Congress in action, found on C-Span. This provided a rich source of data in which members of Congress are videoed as they conduct their legislative duties in the House or the Senate.

This chapter presents the rationale for the choice of research tradition and approach that was used in this study. It also delineates the research questions that were under investigation, discusses the role of the researcher, describes the logic used for participant selection, and introduces the instrumentation used to collect the relevant data. Issues of trustworthiness related to dependability, credibility, transferability, and confirmability are then addressed, which collectively tackle the equivalent of reliability and validity concerns within the qualitative research tradition. Procedures for ensuring the ethical nature of this study are covered last. Research questions and factors inherent in the rationale behind the selection of qualitative content analysis in the qualitative research tradition will be discussed next.

Research Design and Rationale

C-Span as a source of data had the capability to showcase members of Congress actually engaging in the behavior that constitutes the focal point of this study: partisan

conflict. Additionally, as this study used a qualitative methodology, it provided the

opportunity for me to select the most desirable participants for this particular study, those

who exhibited the clearest examples of the phenomenon of partisan conflict. I determined

that six individuals in Congress—four Senators and two Representatives with an equal

number from each party—would provide me with an excellent source of data. Examining

videos of these six preselected members of Congress for meaning and themes, promised

to provide a very rich set of data for this study. By essentially having a window into

observing the dynamics that occur within this organization, it was determined that the

data collected from this procedure would be representative of the problem under

investigation.

Data extracted from the video footage of Congress in action from C-Span were

applicable for addressing the problem statement and for answering research questions 1-3

that follow.

1. What is the nature of partisan conflict for Republican and Democratic

   members of Congress?

2. How do Democrats and Republicans indicate their core values?

3. How do morality dimensions link to political beliefs and fuel partisan conflict

   in the U.S. government?

During my research of the Congressional website (Congress.gov, n.d.), I

discovered transcripts of Senate and House sessions. These were found under

"Congressional Record" and provided an additional way to analyze the content of a video

from which themes could surface. Having access to both the video and transcribed text

had the potential to significantly enhance the data analysis of this material, as the ability to observe footage of members of Congress giving speeches offers a rich addition to reading the verbatim transcripts. These combined sources of data furnished rich information, as themes were harvested from the data through qualitative content analysis and coding. This provided insight into the dynamics involved in the continuing partisan conflict in the halls of Congress.

Research Tradition

While researching the direction for data collection and analysis for this inquiry, I maintained my commitment to the qualitative tradition. I initially considered discourse analysis as my approach for data analysis, as much of the literature describes discourse analysis as being focused on understanding the construction of meaning through the structures and practices used in discourse (Herrera & Braumoeller, 2004; Hopf, 2004). It also relates to how social reality is produced and how it is impossible to disconnect discourse from its wider social and historical context (Antaki, Billing, Edwards & Potter, 2003; Crawford, 2004; Hardy, Harley & Phillips, 2004; Hopf, 2004; Neuendorf, 2004). As I was dealing with discourse, I gave this approach a great deal of consideration. A key assumption of discourse analysis is that ontology cannot be separated from epistemology (Fierke, 2004). Analysts must have a comprehensive understanding of the historical and social context behind the discourse under analysis (Crawford, 2004), in order to correctly position and explain their findings.

This concept is important to qualitative analysis in general in order to grasp the historical context of a research problem. Three steps noted by Parker (2013) necessary

prior to conducting discourse analysis, include this concept. It is my belief that these are necessary for qualitative research generally and were focal to the direction and approach my study ultimately took. These three steps are as follows. Parker (2013) notes that firstly it is important to *historically* orient the phenomenon under investigation - that is, the researcher needs to know the history of how the phenomenon came to be. Relating to this research study, chapter two provides a detailed historical context for the partisan conflict evident in Congress today. Thus in order to appropriately situate my data, I maintained my awareness of this broader historical context during the analysis phase of this study.

Secondly, Parker (2013) states that the phenomenon should be grounded in a *theoretical* framework in order to steer and give structure to the research being conducted. In this study, Jonathan Haidt's MFT (2012c) acted as the theoretical guide for this study, providing the lens through which I examined the data. This theoretical framework provided a clear structure from which to formulate a coding frame used to analyze the data deductively. Lastly, Parker (2013) notes that it is important to acknowledge researcher *subjectivity* when analyzing data in discourse analysis. Such reflexivity (Parker, 2013; Patton, 2002) is also important generally in qualitative analysis and was accomplished through an account of my position regarding the data and the phenomenon under investigation. These three steps were employed in the methodology for this study, in order to ground this research in theory and to increase the trustworthiness of the analysis and the resulting findings.

As my final choice for data analysis I employed a combination of qualitative content analysis (QCA) and coding. Using QCA and coding as the approaches for the

analysis of these C-Span videos provided the potential to extract exactly the kind of

information I needed in order to answer my research questions. This made these

techniques the preferred choices for this study. QCA allows for the systematic description

and interpretation of meaning in qualitative data, initially through the use of a coding

frame that I designed with concept-driven and data-driven categories (Schreier, 2012).

Schreier (2012) notes that the validity of the coding frame is contingent upon the extent

to which the research question is represented in the coding frame categories.

Role of Researcher

In this study, the role of the researcher is that of a key interpretive instrument in

the collection and analysis of the data under investigation (Creswell, 2013). As such,

researcher subjectivity and reflexivity are imperative to acknowledge and activate to

ensure the trustworthiness of the data analysis and interpretation. With the use of analytic

memo writing (discussed in a later section), all related thoughts, concerns, interpretations,

intuitions, connections, and realizations during the initial viewing of the videos and

throughout data analysis were recorded and considered. These assisted in maintaining

researcher reflexivity during the entire analysis and interpretation phase of this study

(Saldana, 2013).

Methodology

Participant Selection

The population for this study consisted of current members of Congress in the

U.S. federal government. Two participants did not meet the original criteria for longevity.

I chose six participants purposefully (Patton, 2002) for this methodological approach.

These individuals were all high profile members of Congress who tended to be directly associated with much of the conflict and who appeared to be very vocal, partisan, and opinionated. The methods for this study focused on searching for and coding themes in video data gathered from C-Span, initially deductively via a coding frame based on my conceptual framework and subsequently inductively. I determined that these individuals embodied partisan conflict to a greater extent than other potential participants and thus would provide rich data conducive of being analyzed in this fashion.

Although two of these were freshmen Senators, one from each party, I firmly believe that the data I gleaned from their C-Span sessions in Congress provided me with ample rich and meaningful themes to assist me in my interpretation of this continuing phenomenon in Congress. I thus believe that their lack of longevity was outweighed by their formidable presence in the current makeup of Congress and stood to provide me with a unique perspective into what drives this conflict in Washington.

Instrumentation

As the researcher in this study, I constituted the instrumentation. I purposely chose the participants and selected which videos became my data, thus effectively acting as an instrument for data collection. I selected videos based on those that addressed issues likely to highlight facets of MFT, in order to demonstrate how issues grounded in morality are potentially at the root of the conflict occurring in Congress. These purposeful selections assisted in uncovering meanings and themes with the potential to answer the three research questions central to the study. Additionally, I acted as the instrument of analysis when I developed a coding frame for the initial deductive analysis,

along with when I subsequently coded the data inductively. Given how intricately I was involved in data collection and analysis, it was imperative to maintain reflexivity throughout this entire process.

Procedures

The procedures for this study began with purposefully selecting the members of Congress who best represent the phenomenon under investigation. Having selected six members, three from each party, the videos on C-Span that were viewed were selected based on topics that related to the moral foundations in Haidt's (2012c) model. I then searched for the appropriate transcripts to the corresponding C-Span video on the Congressional website (Congress.gov, n.d.). In addition to these sources of data, I studied the voting records and ideological position of each participant, which were found on GovTrack.us (2004). These provided an ideological and voting reference point for each of the participants.

The data for three participants was drawn from press conferences, instead of from their speeches on the floor of the Senate or the House. This was due to the brevity of these individual's appearances in their respective chambers of Congress. In these instances, transcripts were developed from the videos of these press conferences. These data were analyzed in an identical manner. Due to the availability of the video data and transcripts for three of the participants, it was not deemed necessary to make a separate recording of the videos. However, a hard copy of the transcripts was retained for coding purposes.

Prior to selecting individual videos for each participant, however, time was spent viewing entire debates in both the House and the Senate in order to situate the data collection within the broader context of Congressional operations. To accomplish this I studied several day-length debates within both the House and the Senate that included a varied mix of members of Congress in action. These were debates in the current Congress, which occurred in June/July 2015. Issues ranged from Planned Parenthood, the Highway Bill, The Iran Nuclear Agreement, coal ash regulation, pay equality, and health care.

This gave me an overall perspective regarding the procedures followed for debates in Congress, along with insight into how individual senators and representatives interact with each other and an idea into the level of mutual respect present between these members. During viewing of these video debates, I created analytic memos of my resulting impressions and reactions in order to develop a contextual lens through which to view and analyze my key data. By keeping record of my impressions and reactions throughout the data collection process, I ensured trustworthiness.

After viewing many hours of these debates and taking corresponding analytic memo notes, I took the time to consider my impression of this overall big picture regarding the operations of and ambiance in Congress. From this, I developed several insights important to this study. These are noted in Chapter 4 and my interpretations are discussed in Chapter 5. With this background context formulated, I began my data analysis, which included analyzing the videos of individual Congressional members and their specific debates that had come to my attention during this initial phase of my study.

Each individual participant's video was previewed with a hard copy of the transcript in hand and a notebook available for analytic memo writing. This enabled me to make quick notes on the transcript that were first impressions, along with writing memos in the notebook regarding awareness of any corresponding thoughts or intuitions that surfaced. I then conducted the data analysis as described in the following section.

Data Analysis

The data gathered in this study were C-Span videos six to thirty minutes in length, (see Table 1) and corresponding transcripts from the daily activities in Congress in July and August 2015. They were of selected topics representative of Haidt's moral foundations, (*care/harm; fairness/cheating; loyalty/betrayal; authority/subversion; sanctity/degradation; liberty/oppression*) such as the Planned Parenthood debate, the Iran Nuclear Agreement and climate change, and targeted participants who were commonly known to demonstrate many of the partisan behaviors that are the focus of this study. Three Democrat and three Republican members of Congress were the subjects of the various videos viewed and analyzed. The main data analysis techniques used in this study included Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA) (Schreier, 2012) and an eclectic fusion of invivo, descriptive, initial, affective, process, emotion and values coding that collectively constituted the inductive analysis (Saldana, 2013).

Table 1 Length of Videos (in minutes) Used for Data Analysis

Participant	1 Republican	2 Republican	3 Democrat	4 Democrat	5 Republican	6 Democrat
Length of video in minutes	20:00	6:17	13:38	6:83	8:02	26:34

Mayring (2000; 2014) describes using deductive category assignment during data analysis, wherein the data is coded according to preconceived coding categories, which themselves are grounded in the overarching theoretical foundation for the study, as noted by Parker (2013) and Schreier (2012) in QCA. QCA helps to designate meaning to qualitative material in a systematic way. Saldana (2013) however, describes inductive coding as a heuristic, which links data to ideas, giving shape and form to the essence of the data and allowing for the development of a coherent whole understanding. Applying these two techniques enabled me to highlight and classify aspects of the data as instances of the categories in the coding frame as well as to extract meaning and themes inherent in the material.

As previously noted, Haidt's (2012c) MFT provided the conceptual framework upon which to structure this coding frame, thus making it specific to the data under investigation. I directly superimposed on this coding frame the six moral foundations that Haidt (2012c) proposed. This contained the six moral foundations that are the central tenets of MFT (Haidt, 2012c), along with several other data-driven categories that were considered to be integral to the essence of this study. These were *confrontational, partisan, bi-partisan, respectful-disrespectful, defensive, accusatory, disbelief and infighting.* These additional coding frame categories were inductively derived from the data as the coding frame was being developed. This occurred prior to the final data analysis and was based on previewing the data. This process was described by Schreier (2012) as "data-driven" category structuring, while the use of MFT dimensions constituted "concept-driven" category structuring of the coding frame (p.84). The coding

frame and definitions can be viewed in Appendix B. This coding frame enabled me to begin to distill the data and make it more manageable (Saldana, 2013).

Subsequently, in accordance with Mayring (2000; 2014) and Schreier (2012), after applying the coding frame as described above, the total body of material was analyzed inductively (see Appendix C), where coding was applied to interpretations and understanding of meanings in the data as they surfaced. Mayring (2000; 2014) notes the importance of this inductive process, wherein areas of significant meaning emerge from the data as it is analyzed, and are then designated with a code that best captures the essence of the meaning being coded. This process of *de*coding the raw material and *en*coding it with a specific code that denotes the meaning (Saldana, 2013) also significantly condenses the data and allows for key themes to emerge and be identified.

Once the entire set of data is coded in this First Cycle coding, Saldana (2013) suggests that sets of codes can be woven together into longer phrases or paragraphs forming categories. These categories, while somewhat distinct from each other, will likely still remain interconnected, due to the nature of qualitative data and human interaction (Saldana, 2013). Weaving these clusters of categories together and thus developing themes in order to further elucidate the underlying meaning during Second Cycle coding, is called *themeing* (Saldana, 2013) and is a technique that I employed during data analysis.

These categories and themes efficiently reduce the data further into manageable units of meaning (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Themes for each participant are then merged together to create a holistic picture for each participant and then into an overall picture

for all participants combined. This data then forms the backbone of the research findings

to be addressed during the write up of the results and discussion. In relation to my study,

emerging themes that directly related back to MFT helped to explain the conflict that is

widespread in today's Congress. It was important to keep my research questions clearly

in mind also, in order to streamline the process.

Additionally, analytic memo writing offers the opportunity for researcher

reflexivity, as the researcher ponders and writes about his/her own process in analyzing

the data (Saldana, 2013). In this study, I wrote analytic memos as I watched the C-Span

videos, which were then examined and reflected upon during later coding (Saldana,

2013). By writing memos throughout the analysis phase of this study and expounding on

my data analysis process, I provided further richness and depth to the analysis of the data

under investigation.

The steps for the data analysis approach for this study were as follows. These

steps were applied in an identical manner to videos for each participant, yielding a data

set for each participant.

Step 1. I had a notepad available in which to write analytic memos, as I watched

the individual video an initial time through. I began adding data-driven categories to my

concept-driven coding frame (Schreier, 2012) that was grounded in MFT (Haidt, 2012c).

As indicated by Schreier (2012), I kept in mind the overall problem under investigation in

my research study, the research questions I wished to address and my chosen theoretical

background – in this instance Haidt's (2012c) MFT - as reference points. I wrote memos

on aspects of the video that struck me as particularly noteworthy on an initial run through

and also noted any thoughts that this elicited for me. I also highlighted on the transcript, those aspects of the video that initially provoked a reaction in me. Hsieh and Shannon (2005) suggest that these highlighted areas should then be coded according to the coding frame before commencing with further analysis.

Step 2. This step entailed watching the video through again and beginning to code the related verbatim transcript deductively, using the coding frame that I had already developed from Haidt's MFT (2012c) (see Appendix B). Utilizing this deductive category application allowed me to highlight those aspects of the data that connect back to the conceptual framework for my study – Haidt's MFT (2012c). These codes were noted on the written transcript. Examples of these codes can also be found in Appendix B.

Step 3. I repeated step 2, but this time analyzing the data inductively, developing codes relevant to meanings that surface from the body of material (see Appendix C) (Saldana, 2013). These codes were also noted on the written transcript. I moved back and forth between the video data and the transcripts, watching the video and noting codes on the transcripts. Each time I actively analyzed the data and assigned codes to those aspects of the data that have relevance, I made any analytic memos that I deemed necessary, based on reflexivity and an awareness of myself as an instrument of the analysis. The videos provided the richest source of data but the transcripts served to slow the information down, so that I could think more accurately about what themes were emerging as I verified what I had just heard on the video. The videos also provided a

broader and fuller data set for each participant, allowing themes to be based on far more than merely the content of their speech.

Step 4. At this point in my analysis of each individual participant, I had gathered a significant amount of data. While this undoubtedly condensed and summarized the original raw data, it was still in need of being distilled further. Thus, for each participant, I assigned various codes to conceptually similar categories and these are shown for each individual in Appendix D.

Step 5. After first cycle coding, I then ran through the data again and reassessed the codes assigned to each piece of data, in order to see if there was room for improvement in the code chosen. This acted as a way of re-checking my data analysis.

Step 6. Categories were then joined into themes, further reducing and simultaneously enriching the data.

Step 7. Themes for each participant were then gathered into an overall description for each participant. Additional information was gathered as a form of verification from GovTrack.us (2004). This process involved reviewing voting records and ideological positions to verify my findings. This information provided verification for the trustworthiness of the overall description that was formed for each participant.

Step 8. Finally, these were combined into deductive and inductive tables (see Appendix E and F) and a coherent discussion representing all participants within a particular party. At this point it was assumed that the findings would shed light on the research questions that were central to this inquiry.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Studying phenomena qualitatively necessitates ecological validity (Wertz et al., 2011). The C-Span videos and transcripts that constituted the data for this inquiry were grounded in the naturalistic environment, where the phenomenon under investigation, partisan conflict, naturally occurs. Thus, capturing speeches and interactions in Congress on video as they are actually happening garnered data that was steeped in ecological validity. Other aspects related to the trustworthiness such as credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability, are discussed next.

Credibility

Credibility was established through strategies confirming that the analysis was actually measuring what it claimed to be measuring (Gregory, 2011). In QCA, credibility (validity) relates to the degree to which the categories in the coding frame capture the concepts inherent in the research question(s) (Schreier, 2012). As the data were analyzed deductively with the coding frame, the presence of these concepts in the data became evident. Additionally, studying each participant's website for their professed stance on various issues, along with the various statistics, voting records and ideological ratings offered on GovTrack.us (2004), were a form of methods verification (Patton, 2002, p.556) and acted as an additional check to the credibility/validity of this study. This provided me with the opportunity to look for confirming and disconfirming information relative to my findings.

Analyst triangulation (Kline, 2002; Patton, 2002, p.556) was also a useful credibility strategy, in which an additional coder coded approximately 20% of my data in

order to confirm that themes in the data were recognized and independently validated by an additional individual. This coder was familiar with MFT and therefore understood the concepts in my coding frame. The second coder was not part of developing the coding frame. Their coding of the data was compared to mine for agreement and a consensus was reached regarding the application of codes.

Transferability

Lincoln and Guba (1985) referred to transferability as the "degree of congruence" or "fittingness" (Patton, 2002, p.584) between the research context and other contexts. In this study, transferability of the findings was considered to be possible due to the congruence between the research context and that of everyday operations in Congress. Operations in Congress follow a specific protocol and operate within narrow parameters, which allows for one to assume the trustworthiness of the transferability of these findings.

Dependability

Acting as the qualitative equivalent to reliability, this aspect of ensuring the trustworthiness of the study aims to ensure that results can be replicated (Wertz, et al., 2011). In relation to the QCA and coding that were employed, this was achieved in two ways. Firstly, I coded my data and then recoded the same data 10 days to 2 weeks later. This indicated the degree to which my coding was reliable across time (Schreier, 2012). This is also referred to as "consistency" by Schreier, (2012, p.167) in QCA, "where reliability therefore translates into consistency." The degree of consistency was extremely

high, given the limited number of deductive categories that were available to be employed.

Additionally, I had a peer code approximately 20% of my data to determine inter-subjectivity with an additional coder, validating that the themes surfacing for one researcher's reading of the data will be the themes that emerge for another researcher. This inter-subjectivity with another coder helps to ensure that the perspectives and biases of the key researcher in the study do not significantly influence the data. Analyst triangulation achieves this and was planned as a trustworthiness check to establish the dependability of this study (Schreier, 2012). Also, ensuring that both myself and the additional coder were clear regarding the definitions of codes in the coding frame and fully understood the research questions and conceptual framework for the study were other aspects that increased the dependability of this study.

Confirmability

Within this qualitative research direction, it was of extreme importance to maintain objectivity to the degree possible with the researcher acting as both the instrument of data collection and of analysis. Saldana (2013) suggests that even though coding "requires you to wear your researcher's analytic lens" (p.7), the researcher's own filter covers this lens and is influenced by their choice of qualitative approach. Thus, a grounded theorist may use a different code than an ethnographer. Additionally, the researcher's beliefs, values, experiences, history and culture among other factors will also act as filters when analyzing the data. Other influences to consider are what the research questions are trying to discover and what the conceptual foundation for the study is.

Analytic memo writing helped to serve this purpose in this study, reminding me to maintain a position of reflexivity regarding my thoughts, biases, beliefs and opinions as they related to data collection and analysis. Of key importance for confirmability in this study, was maintaining reflexivity regarding my personal political belief system. Since political beliefs are highly emotionally charged, they pose potentially more risk to the objectivity and validity of the study. Writing analytic memos before, during and after data analysis helped me to assess this and anything else that I may have brought to the study that may have negatively influenced its objectivity. This assisted me in remaining as objective as possible in my interaction with the data, allowing for themes to surface from the data and to be deductively uncovered with the application of the coding frame.

Ethical Procedures

The Ethics Code of the American Psychological Association clearly delineates guidelines and expectations for ethical conduct in research in Standard 8 of the 'Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct' (American Psychological Association, 2010). Institutional approval to collect and analyze data was necessary (Standard 8.01) and was obtained from the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB). Walden University dissertations are required to gain approval from the IRB prior to the collection of data and, as such, the IRB approval (Approval # 03-16-15-0073021) was obtained prior to the data collection phase of this study.

Each of the potential participants in this study was an active member of the U.S. Congress. Due to the sensitive nature of the participants' careers within the U.S. Congress, utmost care was taken in this study to ensure that individual participants could

not be readily identified. This is in light of the negative way in which information is often used against politicians by the media and by political opponents. Consequently, each participant was immediately allocated a code that bore no relationship to his or her identity, to be used for the duration of the study. Only myself, and members of the dissertation committee had access to raw data analysis. Confidentiality was maintained throughout data collection and analysis and will be for a period of 5 years, after which time all hard copies of transcripts and data analysis will be shredded. Until this time, transcripts and hard copies will be locked in a safe.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, methodological considerations were addressed. The introduction of the research design, questions and rationale clearly demonstrates the design of this study to be grounded in the qualitative tradition. Research questions focusing on the 'how' and the 'what' of the phenomenon under investigation (Wertz et al., 2011) naturally channeled this inquiry to qualitative analysis. Qualitative content analysis and coding were performed, in order to allow themes to be uncovered and to emerge from the video C-Span and transcript data.

Several factors relating to validity, issues of trustworthiness, participant selection, the role of the researcher and instrumentation were discussed. From this it was demonstrated that the study design was structured to produce robust, sound research results through a very thoughtful design and validation process, structured to ensure the overall trustworthiness of these results. Procedures to duplicate this study were itemized within this chapter, and ethical considerations were addressed.

Next, in Chapter 4, the results of this study are presented, along with data analysis, themes and evidence of the trustworthiness of this inquiry.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The dysfunction clearly evident in the U.S. federal government was the focus of this research study. The problem under investigation was the partisan conflict observed in the U.S. Congress (Dionne, 2012) and how it has negatively impacted the ability for members of the government to successfully conduct the job they were elected to perform. The purpose of this study was to explore the nature of partisan conflict in the U.S. Congress and to discover how MFT (Haidt, 2012c) and political beliefs connect in order to offer an explanation for the intensity of the current conflict.

This chapter reviews my findings regarding preliminary impressions of the general context for daily operations within Congress, along with presenting the setting, demographics, data collection and data analysis techniques employed to analyze the individual participant data in this study. Issues of trustworthiness and how they were addressed in the study are discussed and the results are presented.

Settings

The setting for data collection was the United States Congress in both the Senate and the House. These data were available via C-Span video recordings in which every debate or discussion that occurs in Congress is recorded live and is available for viewing by the general public. There did not appear to be any personal or organizational conditions evident in any of the video footage viewed for this study that could influence the interpretation of the study results.

Demographics

The participants for this study were purposefully selected members of the U.S.

Congress who demonstrated the partisan conflict that was the topic of inquiry in this

study. Three members of Congress from both major political parties were selected. Four

of these participants were current senators and two were current representatives. All but

two of the participants had longevity of service in the U.S. Congress, and these two were

arguably some of the most vocal critics of the opposing political party. Two women and

four men made up the participants selected and were from the Northeast, Midwest, South,

Deep South, Southwest, and West Coast.

Data Collection

Six current members of the U.S. Congress were included as participants. Archived

video recordings for each of these participants were retrieved from C-Span and viewed

(C-Span.org, 2015). Any corresponding transcripts were downloaded from Congress.gov

(n.d.) and printed. This provided a total of six videos and three transcripts of these videos

that constituted the data for this study. Both videos of participants' speeches in Congress

as well as videos of press conferences were available on C-Span. As was noted in the

procedures section in Chapter 3, it was deemed necessary to draw the data for three

participants from press conferences, due to the brevity of their speeches in Congress. In

these instances, transcripts were developed from these videos.

For each participant, I searched six or more C-Span videos, in order to find the

video that would provide the best data. My criteria included ensuring that the length of

the video was sufficient to allow me ample opportunity to uncover the underlying themes

and meanings in the data. As shown in Table 1, videos ranged from six to thirty minutes in length. Also of importance was finding a speech/discussion that was focused on material representative of the individual's policy beliefs. Further, analytic memos were created to help to organize my thoughts and ideas as I analyzed the data.

<div align="center">**Data Analysis**</div>

The speech and press conference data in this study were analyzed using QCA (Schreier, 2012) and coding (Saldana, 2013). For the press conferences, only what the participant said was coded. With my initial analysis using QCA, the data from each participant was analyzed deductively using a coding frame (see Appendix B). Haidt's (2012c) MFT provided the conceptual framework for this study and acted as the framework upon which the coding frame was constructed. This approach enabled me to highlight meaning and themes in the data that were instances of these categories in the coding frame. Finding instances in the data of these categories that represent MFT lent support to the validity of this theory as the conceptual framework for this study.

Inductive Process Used

The data for each participant was then reanalyzed inductively. Saldana (2013) notes that as data is analyzed it is important to consider not only the situation in which the data were produced but also the intentions of the communicator and the impact of this on the recipients. This was more important to keep in mind during the inductive analysis, since it allows deeper meanings to be considered and coded. During this phase of analysis, I maintained awareness of these factors, and kept in mind the problem under investigation, the conceptual framework for the study, and the three research questions.

Maintaining awareness of these factors helped me to remain objective as well as open to meanings, categories, themes, and concepts as they emerged from the data.

Through inductive coding, meaning was extracted from the data and coded for each participant, then formed into categories, and woven into themes and meaning units (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). During this inductive analysis phase an eclectic fusion of invivo, descriptive, initial, affective, process, emotion, and values coding were employed (Saldana, 2013). Data included not only what the participant said but also their overall demeanor and nonverbal behavior on the videos being viewed. Comparable individually coded units were then combined into single categories that captured the deeper essence integral to these units. These categories organized a range of related aspects of the data, gathering them together under an umbrella category, thus made the raw data more manageable.

The individually coded units shared certain characteristics that intuitively belonged together and, using classification reasoning, were classified as belonging to the same category (Saldana, 2013). These categories brought into focus the broader themes, which were developed further as I continued to examine the data. I found it to be especially helpful to replay the video data as I began to develop themes and meaning units from the categories that I had formulated. This helped me to conceptualize the deeper essence of the underlying meaning in each participant's speech.

As I moved from categories to themes in this way, I contemplated which word or phrase would most accurately represent groups of categories. This occurred intuitively, moving from the particular focus of a category to a more abstract concept or

phenomenon. All of the terms I chose for the emerging themes passed the touch test, described by Saldana (2013), wherein they represent abstract concepts that cannot physically be touched. This level of abstraction is exactly what is expected at this point in the analysis – wherein the themes I developed offered a clear picture of the underlying meaning in the data, while remaining grounded in the data. However, Saldana (2013) cautions about "transcending too high" (p.249) and losing touch with the data and your ability to clearly conceptualize what information is provided by the data.

From the combination of inductive and deductive analyses, a holistic picture for each participant was created. After this approach was completed for each participant, an overall picture capturing the aggregate of all participants within a particular party was created. Both individual and grouped descriptions provided details and descriptions that were grounded firmly in the data, which enabled me to apply the findings to the research questions in this inquiry.

The analytic memos I created during the data analysis phase were also examined. These notes regarding my own process, insights, impressions, and reactions to the data analysis provided a deeper level of immersion in the subtleties of the emerging meanings and a richer grasp of the developing themes. The use of analytic memos assisted me with researcher reflexivity and objectivity as I progressed further into the analysis of the data, and allowed me to reflect on any biases I may have had that possessed the potential to influence my analysis. As noted by Saldana (2013, p.41-42), "Memos are sites of conversation with ourselves about our data…. The object is researcher reflexivity on the

data corpus." These memos also allowed me to expand my initial impressions of the data

into a more coherent and detailed description of the meanings and themes that surfaced.

Thus, as noted by Saldana (2013), I used analytic memo writing to assist me in

my thought processes regarding what codes may be the most applicable to the data and

how these may combine to form categories and themes. I used them as a way to reflect on

and consider the content of the data and "as a transitional process from coding to the

more formal write up of the study" (Saldana, 2013, p.50). As such, these memos were not

coded, but were used to increase the richness of the coding given to the participant data.

Examples of Category, Theme and Concepts Emerging from the Data

As I deductively analyzed the data, instances of the categories in the coding frame

were highlighted. The coding frame included all six of the MFT dimensions, along with

several additional deductive categories that were considered to be significant for this

study that were data-driven categories structured based on previewing the data (Schreier,

2012). These included categories entitled *confrontational, accusatory, infighting,*

partisan, bipartisan, respectful-disrespectful, disbelief, and *defensive.*

In the inductive interpretation section of my analysis, the data for each participant

was coded, categories were then developed, and then themes emerged from weaving

together categories. Examples of each of these levels of the inductive analysis for each

participant can be viewed in Appendix D. Examples of categories and themes for each of

the participants are now presented here. Categories for one Republican participant

included the headings: *complains about lobbyists, inaction of Senate, Washington cartel,*

complains about career politicians, corporate greed, lying to the Senate, procedural

abuse, not representing the American people, not representing the Republican Party, being a renegade, challenging the system, dishonesty, and *lack of support for people with no lobbyists.*

Conversely, with a second Republican, categories included: *accepting of differences, bipartisan, trying to make things work, implementing solutions, future-focused practical, courteous, professional and honorable.* This individual also had several negative categories including *chastising President, blaming Democrats for Senate failure,* and *partisan.* The overall difference between the categories that emerged for these two members of the same party was quite striking. Categories for the third Republican participant included *disgust with Planned Parenthood video, attacking President over policy, protective of national security, abrupt interaction style, defensive,* and *avoidance of questions.*

Categories for one Democratic participant included *oppression of powerless, Republicans attacking women's health, dishonesty, bipartisanship, praise for work done, chastising Republicans for not voting on Bills, criticism of Republicans, job enjoyment, rule following, use of sarcasm, frustration with Republican policy,* and *concern for the environment.* Categories for a second Democrat included *attacks on women's healthcare, attacks on poor women, oppression of women, anger, had her fill, frustrated, disbelief,* and *loyalty to policy platform.* Clearly the categories for these two members were more similar than those noted for the two Republican members of Congress. The third Democratic member produced categories such as *proud of party members, supportive of*

President's agenda, open about details, respectful, polite, and *thoughtful.* These categories were in stark contrast to those uncovered for the third Republican participant.

Themes that emerged for the first Republican participant from further analysis of the data included: *betrayal, subversion, cheating, degradation, adversarial, argumentative/intransigence, principled, challenging, corruption, influence, avarice, disloyalty, recalcitrance, disappointment, defensive,* and *fairness.* For the second, themes were largely more positive and included *positive attitude, solution-focused, decisive, motivational, integrity, liberty, loyalty,* and *values*. Although there were negatively tinged themes for the second participant—such as *chastisement and reproach*—they were expressed in a matter of fact fashion without any evidence of malice or contempt. The third Republican participant produced themes that included: *self-preservation, self-protective, repugnance, justice, sacredness,* and *political assault.*

Themes that surfaced for one Democrat included: *oppression/power, disillusionment, work ethic, commending, reprimanding,* and *sanctity of the Earth.* Themes for a second Democratic participant included: *power/oppression, rights, uncompromising, exasperated,* and *policy adherent.* These themes had a different focus than for the first Democrat and centered on policy differences more than a lack of action and procedural abuses. For the third Democrat, themes included: *allegiance, peace process, accessible, considerate,* and *women's rights.* As with the categories, themes for the third Democrat were notably different than those for the third Republican.

Finally, as I probed further into the data, several concepts became apparent that were best represented by dimensions from Haidt's (2012) MFT for the first Republican. It

was evident that his speech was constructed to deliver a strong message of his dissatisfaction regarding his sense of disloyalty and corruption in Congress. Haidt's (2012c) MFT *loyalty-betrayal* dimension was deemed to provide the most accurate portrayal of the overarching topic of this speech. Additionally, potential aspects of his character became apparent during data analysis – such as being *principled, disappointed* and concerned with fairness. These also lent weight to the *loyalty-betrayal* dimension of MFT (Haidt, 2012c).

Further themes uncovered from the data included themes such as *challenging, adversarial, recalcitrant,* and *defensive.* These all suggest an individual who is potentially acting from the negative end of the *authority-subversion* dimension. He may have believed that through challenging and arguing against those with whom he was displeased, he may have been able to return power to its appropriate place. In my final findings for participant #1 therefore, it appeared that two of Haidt's MFT dimensions were well represented and stood to combine with the results of other participants to potentially provide answers to the research questions of this study.

For the second Republican, overall findings pointed to the speech for this individual being steeped in the *authority-subversion, loyalty-betrayal, sanctity-degradation* and *liberty-oppression* dimensions. The findings for this participant, especially the first three dimensions, are consistent with Haidt's MFT (2012c). For the third Republican participant, three dimensions best represented the content of his discussion: the *loyalty-betrayal, sanctity-degradation* and *liberty-oppression* dimensions.. These were expected findings for this participant.

Upon deeper consideration, several themes for the first Democrat were well represented by the *liberty-oppression* dimension. This dimension was particularly evident in the data, since a significant proportion of the raw data content contained references to the ways in which this participant felt that the opposing party has attacked the freedom and rights of vulnerable populations. The *authority-subversion* dimension was evidenced in themes such as *work ethic, degree of courteousness, disillusionment, performing job duties*. The *sanctity-degradation* dimension was also evident in this participant's speech. The presence of the *liberty-oppression* and *authority-subversion* dimension, along with the *sanctity-degradation* dimension thus seemed to capture the flavor of the speech for this participant – an interesting discovery for a Democrat.

Themes representing the content of the speech for the second Democrat combined well and were accurately captured by the *liberty-oppression* dimension. This was an expected finding for a Democrat. For the third Democratic participant the *loyalty-betrayal, authority-subversion* and the *liberty-oppression* dimensions captured the content of her discussion. The presence of the *authority-subversion* and the *loyalty-betrayal* dimensions were less expected for this Democratic participant.

When themes were combined across participants based on party and subsumed into one of the six moral foundations, an interesting finding emerged. For Republicans, the *loyalty-betrayal and authority-subversion* dimensions were the most accurate moral foundations under which the greatest number of these themes could be included. A few of the Republican themes fit well within the *fairness-cheating* and *sanctity-degradation*

dimensions, while only one was captured by the *liberty-oppression* dimension. The *care-harm* dimension was not represented in the themes across Republican participants.

For Democrats, all six of MFT dimensions were evident in the combined themes across participants and these themes were more evenly distributed between these six dimensions. However, the *sanctity-degradation* and the *care-harm* dimensions only captured one of the combined Democratic themes respectively. These results are, at first glance, in opposition to those indicated in Haidt's (2012c) MFT.

Discrepant Cases

During the data analysis, discrepant cases were treated in the same fashion as all the cases. A discrepancy was noted when the participant produced data that, when coded, generated categories, themes and concepts that were unexpected based on Haidt's (2012c) findings regarding the individual's political ideology. When I encountered a participant who produced this type of unexpected data, I remained aware of my own biases and beliefs and maintained an objective stance. I noted the discrepancy and selected themes and concepts that accurately captured what naturally emerged from the data, regardless of whether it was expected or not. Thus, my personal bias or expectations did not influence how the data in a discrepant case was analyzed or recorded. These findings were then considered in the same manner as the findings from all participants. As a result, I feel confident that the results therefore accurately reflect the underlying raw content of all of the cases that were analyzed.

It is noteworthy that a striking discrepancy for the Republican representative in this study was uncovered upon further inspection of the basic statistics available on C-

Span. This individual's total airtime in video footage amounted to approximately one third of the time spent on air by the Democratic member of the House in this study. Additionally, individual videos from press conferences for this member lasted about eight minutes but the Democratic representative averaged thirty minutes. While this may or may not offer any insight for this study, it certainly was a noteworthy finding.

Airtime was also notably different for leaders in the Senate as opposed to House leaders, with approximately 27.5 hours spent on camera for the Senate leaders and 1-3 hours for those in the House. This finding may also be of little importance to this study but presented a significant enough difference to be worthy of mention.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Credibility

The QCA coding frame for the deductive analysis of the individual participant's data was structured to include the six foundations for MFT (Haidt, 2012c), along with several other categories. This concept-driven data analysis allowed me to analyze the data for evidence of these moral foundations and thus added credibility to the study. Accessing ideological ratings from GovTrack.us (2004) was a useful verification and triangulation tool (Kline, 2008) with which to either confirm or disconfirm findings, thus adding credibility to this study. In addition, coding by a peer coder also acted as an additional check to the credibility of this study (Schreier, 2012).

Transferability

Due to the fact that the data were gathered in the same context as the everyday operations in Congress, it was assumed that the findings of this study were transferable to other members of Congress, as they operate daily within the same setting.

Dependability

Dependability was ensured in this study in three ways. First, I viewed multiple videos for each participant before selecting the one that would comprise their data. When I had selected a video that was between six and twenty minutes in length and focused on issues reflective of MFT, I then ensured that the individual's overall demeanor was not significantly different in the chosen video than in all the other videos viewed. This therefore confirmed that the video that was subject to analysis was a fair representation of the participant's general behavior. This facet of data collection assisted in increasing the overall reliability and therefore the trustworthiness of the study.

Secondly, as noted in Chapter 3, I tested the reliability of my coding over time (Schreier, 2012). I recoded a portion of the data approximately two weeks after my initial coding in order to assess the degree to which my coding produced similar findings. Thirdly, as a form of analyst triangulation, I engaged a peer who was familiar with MFT to code approximately 20% of my data and compared for agreement the codes they assigned to those assigned by myself (Schreier, 2012). These actions collectively increased the dependability of this study, adding to the trustworthiness of the findings.

Confirmability

As the instrument of both data collection and analysis in this study, it was extremely important for this researcher to remain as objective as possible and maintain a position of reflexivity regarding my existing beliefs, biases and values. Confirmability was initially maintained in this study with my use of analytic memo writing during my preliminary viewing of the daily operations of both houses of Congress. I noted my general impressions regarding the overall ambiance in the House and the Senate, how interactions between members appeared to flow and the procedural rules that were followed during discussions and debates. I found the context to be formal, professional and polite. Each member who wished to speak took their turn discussing their stance and often provided supporting visual data. Debate appeared to happen more readily in the House than in the Senate. The daily operations appeared to be adjudicated by a different presiding member in each video. Overall, daily operations in Congress appeared to run smoothly.

I adopted a position of reflexivity and maintained awareness of my personal, political and cultural values, beliefs and biases as I viewed the videos and as I wrote the analytic memos. This assisted me in remaining aware of any preconceived thoughts I may have, that could potentially influence my assessment of the individual or speech/debate content I was viewing. Remaining aware of all possible influences and writing analytic memos regarding their potential impact on the results was a key ingredient to maintaining the trustworthiness of this study. A variety of senators and representatives from both parties, along with a range of topics, were viewed during this initial viewing process.

This helped to add a deeper objective understanding of the context surrounding the individual videos that I subsequently viewed and thus further increased the trustworthiness of this study.

An identical level of objectivity was maintained during the main phase of data collection and analysis in this study. As I selected and viewed individual participant's videos, I remained aware of my political and personal biases, beliefs and values and any impact they may have on my selection and analysis of this data. I kept in mind my problem statement, research questions and conceptual framework as I analyzed the data to ensure that the essence of the study was held in mind objectively during my analysis of the data. I then wrote analytic memos to record any reactions I had to the individual participant's data, along with my assessment of these reactions. Additionally, I noted my impressions regarding the possible intention of the participant as the communicator, what they hoped to achieve in terms of their effects on the intended recipient(s) of their speech and also the situation in which the communication was produced.

Results

I began by creating analytic memos during my preliminary viewing of several debates and speeches from both chambers of Congress. In these I noted my initial impressions and reflections of the overall daily operations of the U.S. Congress. Through viewing the general operations of Congress during these debates and speeches, I was able to establish an understanding of the context within which the dysfunction under investigation in this study was situated. Thus, as a background for my subsequent analysis of and findings from the videos of the individual members of Congress, the

following description captured my overall impression and ensuing reflections regarding the general operations of and overall ambiance evident in Congress. I remained mindful of reflexivity and subjectivity as these impressions and reflections were noted in my analytic memo writing regarding what I observed. This description now follows.

From my initial viewing of several debates in the Senate and the House, my first impression was that there appeared to be a notable difference between the flavor of the speeches made by Republicans and those made by Democrats, regardless of the setting in which they occurred. In general, regardless of the topic under debate, Republican Senators and Representatives focused their arguments on topics such as states' rights, reducing federal government regulation, increasing job opportunities, and the necessity for the adherence to the correct procedural rules and laws for governing this country. The perceived impact on business owners and large corporations of whatever Bill was being discussed, was also of concern to Republican members of Congress, along with any ensuing cost to the local community. Members of the Republican Party also introduced issues deeply steeped in morality such as abortion and gay marriage.

In contrast, those speeches given by Democratic Senators and Representatives generally seemed to focus on highlighting health and safety concerns for both people and the environment. Bills and amendments that focused on ensuring equitable solutions for all stakeholders, particularly for those groups who lacked power and voice on the national stage, also flavored the debates of Democratic members of Congress. Additionally, a focus on individual rights often influenced the arguments of these legislators.

From this preliminary assessment of the general operations within Congress, it was noteworthy that instances of all of the categories of MFT (Haidt, 2012c) were observed. This general impression provides an initial rudimentary structure within which to further explore the applicability of MFT to the problem under investigation in this study.

Also of note was my general impression concerning the difference in ambiance, procedural style, and the level of mutual respect between members, in both the Senate and the House in the U.S. Congress. The Senate appeared to operate with a less hurried air and with greater formality. During most of the debates viewed, most Senators regardless of party operated from a place of respect, professionalism and observance for the established procedures in Congress. These seemed to aid in the smooth running of the daily functions of Congress, allowing operations to flow well and for progress to be made. However, it was evident that there were Senators who wished to "jam up the works," causing procedural delays and excessive time to be spent on potentially unnecessary aspects of the legislative process.

Debates in the House appeared to operate in a slightly more informal manner, but still with respect and professionalism and an adherence to the established procedural rules for debates in the House. There appeared to be a more argumentative atmosphere evident and more back-and-forth debate style, with members occasionally addressing each other directly instead of through the chairperson. In the debates I observed within the Senate, this did not seem to be the procedural style of this section of Congress and members

appeared to generally address each other through the chairperson in third person as if the other member were not present.

From my preliminary viewing of Congressional proceedings, it also appeared that certain topic areas elicited more emotive speeches and debates than others. Dry topics such as general funding bills for highways, federal lands etc., seemed to frequently draw bipartisan support, thus demonstrating that bipartisanship was often possible. This support was evidenced in the discussion presented by specific members. However, those topics grounded in moral issues definitely ignited more emotion from both sides of the aisle, eliciting debates and discussions that were somewhat disparaging to members of the opposing political party in general.

Such emotionally laden issues as abortion, health care, immigration reform and pollution were among these debates/speeches viewed. Members of each party seemed to generally vilify the opposing party in their debates of these emotionally laden issues and some Republicans members were finger pointing to the President regarding issues with which they specifically disagreed. These highly emotionally charged debates/speeches thus needed further investigation, lending support and credibility for my decision to select specific instances of participants' debates/speeches that are steeped in moral issues as the data for this study. These videos were selected due to the presence of aspects of the constructs of interest in this study.

Of note was what my personal reflection on my initial viewing of the overall operations in Congress brought to light. While maintaining a position of reflexivity of my personal, political and cultural viewpoints I believe I was able to maintain objectivity

when forming my initial assessment of the workings of Congress. While maintaining a position of reflexivity, I was struck by the apparent calmness, professionalism and courtesy that occurred within each chamber and in general between individual members. My preconceived impressions from the literature and from the way in which the media describe the operations of the U.S. Congress, led to my initial notion that partisan conflict would be evident in every Congressional interaction. While such conflict was certainly evident with highly charged issues, there were many interactions between multiple members of Congress that appeared to operate with a great degree of cooperation, respect and courtesy.

This was contrary to what I had expected prior to conducting research and was an important realization that was possible to experience as a result of operating from a position of reflexivity. In the same vein, I was also able to objectively view the debates/speeches of members of my opposing political party and to realize that they offered many cogent arguments to support their political position regarding whichever Bill was under discussion. My knee-jerk response to hearing speeches given by members of the opposing party had always been to disregard anything they discussed and to automatically assume that their arguments would be faulty and deliberately inflammatory. My objective impression found to the contrary. Therefore, adopting a position of reflexivity assisted me in maintaining awareness of the values, beliefs and biases that could have had the potential to negatively impact the results and my analysis of the data.

From my preliminary impressions of these examinations of the overall operations in Congress, I began to notice potential answers to my research questions. I noticed that these general findings indicated that particular topics seemed to produce a less cooperative, more defensive posture in debates in general and especially for some members in particular. These precursory findings began to point to explanations for RQ1: What is the nature of partisan conflict for Republican and Democratic members of Congress? And for RQ3: How do morality dimensions link to political beliefs and fuel partisan conflict in the U.S. government? Answers to RQ2 were less clear at this point in the study. With these general impressions and reactions in mind, the main data collection and analysis stage of this study began in earnest. The results of my analysis of the data gathered from the six participants are now presented as follows.

Research Question 1

What is the nature of partisan conflict for Republican and Democratic members of Congress?

After conducting this qualitative research study, I found that conflict within the United States Congress was evident in several situations but was not always partisan. I found that there were conflicts between certain members (Appendix D, Participant #1), between parties (Appendix D, Participant #3) and between the two chambers of Congress. There also seemed to be some animosity from certain members of the Republican Party directed towards the executive branch, specifically the President (Appendix D, Participant #5). In addition, conflict seemed to increase with those legislative topics that were morally charged. These included issues such as abortion,

women's health (Appendix D, Participant #4), universal health care and national security (Appendix D, Participant #2). Legislation related to funding infrastructure development and other less emotionally charged issues seemed to enjoy more bipartisan support and elicited less partisan conflict. Lastly, it appeared that certain personalities were more likely to be confrontational in their style of interaction than were others (Appendix D, Participant #1 & #3).

Who?

In relation to the different contexts noted above in which I discovered conflict I uncovered several noteworthy findings from my research and analysis. Firstly, the clearest illustration of one member of Congress clashing with another member was with my initial participant (Appendix D, Participant #1) who adopted a very confrontational stance towards a member of his own party. This was unexpected based on my preexisting understanding of the nature of conflict within the government. My impression was that conflict between individual members would be almost exclusively partisan in nature. However, as I discovered during my initial viewing of many hours of C-Span videos in which I studied the general operations of the House and the Senate, I did not encounter the degree of ongoing partisan conflict that one is lead to believe exists in Congress on a daily basis. Indeed, my experience was quite to the contrary. Most of the interactions between individual members of Congress within both chambers were notably devoid of conflict and were respectful and professional in nature.

Although partisan conflict between specific individuals in Congress was less evident, I did discover that particular members of Congress on the Republican side of the

aisle took exception to certain aspects of the current Democratic president's behaviors and beliefs. This led to comments made by one Republican Congressional member regarding the President that were actually quite disrespectful ("The President's incendiary rhetoric"). This was one of the few instances of partisan conflict I witnessed in which a member of one party directly targeted a specific member of the opposing party ("The President promised accountability. It hasn't happened"). Although it is certainly likely that there are other individuals who take exception to a specific peer within Congress, this was not evident in the videos I encountered.

Partisan conflict was encountered however, when members were discussing their position on a certain topic and rebuked the opposing party as a whole. They did not seem to target a specific individual, but rather the overall party platform of the other party. This partisanship was noted for members from both sides of the aisle and is arguably an expected aspect of our democracy. It is noteworthy that from both the general and specific member's videos I viewed, this style of conflict still did not seem dysfunctional, and rather could be construed as passionate debate about strongly held beliefs and values.

However, within the six participants in this study, there definitely seemed to be certain personalities who were more confrontational and accusatory than others (Appendix D, Participant #1, #3 & #5). Some members were exceedingly adept at getting their point across and making it clear that they did not support the policy of the opposing party, yet remained respectful, courteous and professional in the process ("We ought to treat this issue with the dignity it deserves;" Appendix D, Participant #2). Unfortunately however, others were very inflammatory and confrontational in their speeches, presenting

their argument in such a way as to make it hard to imagine the possibility for any

successful bipartisan compromise to be reached ("The Republicans are not serious about

governing"). Those who adopted a less cooperative and more partisan approach were

from both the Democratic and Republican parties. Those individuals who were notably

respectful and courteous also came from both parties, as did the two members who gave

very impassioned speeches. From these findings, it appears clear that partisan conflict

does not seem to emanate more from members of one party than another. This was an

interesting finding, as my previous understanding was that partisanship did indeed stem

from one side of the aisle more than the other.

What?

From my initial viewings of the C-Span videos the topic of the speech, press

conference or debate seemed to factor into whether partisan conflict occurred. I watched

many hours of daily operations from the Senate and the House. The videos I chose for the

individual participants were all from June-August 2015, thus ensuring that the topics

were a consistent thread throughout the videos of each participant. These topics included

funding the Highway Bill, the Export-Import Bank Reauthorization Bill, a bill to defund

Planned Parenthood and the Iran Nuclear Agreement and accompanying review act.

Those bills that related to funding and oversight by Congress regarding the Iran

Nuclear Agreement garnered much greater bipartisan support than these topics. As such,

speeches were less emotive and less confrontational towards the opposing party.

However, the bill to defund Planned Parenthood and aspects of the Iran Nuclear

Agreement certainly produced more extreme responses from both sides of the aisle. As

one would expect, these responses were notably greater for those individuals who appeared to be more adversarial in nature and style.

Where?

In addition to partisan conflict directed at the opposing party as a whole, along with the instances in which particular Republican members took aim at the current Democratic president, other conflict within Congress seemed to be between same party members as noted earlier and between the two chambers of Congress. Listening to speeches and press conferences from members from both chambers during my initial viewing of videos, there was a notable amount of criticism regarding the opposing chamber. This ranged from a respectful nudge to a veritable tear down of the workings of the other chamber and was witnessed from members of both chambers. For instance, several Senators were very vocal and opinionated regarding the date set for the August recess for members of the House, as they felt this left important unfinished business on the table. Members of the House expressed opinions on some of the legislation being returned to them from the Senate and complained about amendments added or the lack of other bills being attached to the legislation. These battles did not appear to be particularly partisan in nature but instead, seemed to be grounded in inter-chamber conflict.

Overall Findings for Research Question One

Thus, unweaving the many strands of partisan conflict and conflict in general from the tapestry of everyday operations in Congress has provided a starting point from which to assess potential ways in which this perceived conflict in Congress can be mitigated. By understanding that most members of Congress maintain a professional and

courteous interaction style and that many topics successfully garner bipartisan support and move smoothly from one chamber of Congress to another, it is easier to highlight where the problem areas may lie.

Answering the first research question therefore, one can describe the nature of partisan conflict for Republican and Democratic members of Congress as the following. Partisan conflict appears to reside in the interaction style of specific individuals more than others and with specific topics above others that are being legislated. In general the partisan attacks appear to emanate equally from both sides of the aisle and seem to be directed at the opposing party as a whole. This is with the exception of individual attacks on the current sitting President from across the aisle. Lastly, while conflict does seem to exist between individual members and between the two chambers of Congress, neither of these appears to be partisan in nature.

Research Question 2

How do Democrats and Republicans indicate their core values?

To answer this research question I studied the different ways in which members of Congress expressed core values that are consistent with the six moral dimensions of Haidt's MFT (2012c). As discussed previously, the data for each participant was analyzed deductively and inductively. The deductive analysis produced an overall impression of the values expressed by participants, through capturing instances of the moral foundations evident in their speeches and debates (Appendix D). These were grouped by party and can be viewed in Appendix E. During the inductive analysis however, themes were collected into groupings that could be subsumed into each of the

moral foundations (see Appendix F). My interpretation of these two analyses of the data comprises the basis for the answer to this research question.

Democrats

For Democrats, the deductive analysis showed instances of the *care-harm, fairness-cheating, liberty-oppression, loyalty-betrayal and authority-subversion dimensions* and very few instances of the *sanctity-degradation* dimension in the data (see Appendix E). Collectively these represented the overall essence of the deductive data for all three Democratic participants. The first three dimensions were expected for Democrats, but the latter three dimensions usually feature to a lesser extent for liberals (Haidt, 2012c). Looking further into the findings that emerged from the inductive analysis, I found that instances of the *liberty-oppression* dimension were notable in every Democratic participant's speech or news conference. This was also in alignment with Haidt's MFT (2012c), as liberty and the removal of oppression from those who are powerless is of central importance to the liberal mindset.

Upon further inspection, it did not seem that the importance attributed to each of the six dimensions followed the Haidt model for all three Democratic participants. Instead, in two of these members' speeches, both the *loyalty-betrayal* and the *authority-subversion* dimensions were strongly represented in the deductive analysis alongside those dimensions typically associated with the liberal mindset. These individuals both occupied a leadership role in Congress and spent a considerable amount of time either praising the work done by party members or criticizing the work of members of the opposition. One of these leaders demonstrated their extreme loyalty to their party and

members. The fact that these two participants were Democratic leaders may therefore explain why the Democratic members' speeches evidenced these two underlying values to be of importance to them.

Finding that these Congressional Democrats largely operated from all six dimensions, rather than from three is contrary to what was found in Haidt's MFT (2012c). The *loyalty-betrayal* and *authority-subversion* dimensions were theorized by Haidt (2012c) to be of less importance to liberals (along with the *sanctity-degradation* foundation) but this data evidenced that instances of these two dimensions were comparable to those noted for the first three dimensions, potentially as a result of the leadership roles occupied by two of the participants. This extension to what has previously been uncovered for liberals may be of importance for understanding the conflict within our government.

Republicans

For Republicans, the deductive analysis also produced results that were somewhat different than assumed from Haidt's (2012c) MFT model for all three participants. The dimensions with notable instances occurring in the data were the *loyalty-betrayal, authority-subversion, sanctity-degradation* and the *fairness-cheating* dimensions. While other dimensions were represented in the data, these four dimensions captured the overall essence of the data from the Republican participants. This discovery is not in alignment with the existing knowledge regarding the moral foundations from which conservative individuals tend to function (Haidt, 2012c). While there are instances of these dimensions for the Republican participants, the *care-harm,* and *liberty-oppression* dimensions were

only minimally represented. Thus this pattern is different from the existing literature, wherein Republicans are noted to draw from all six foundations equally.

Upon further assessment of the inductive data (see Appendix F), the *loyalty-betrayal* dimension was evident to the greatest extent in the speeches given by these Republican participants. The *authority-subversion, fairness-cheating* and *sanctity-degradation* dimensions also emerged from the content of the data. The *liberty-oppression* dimension was only minimally represented and the *care-harm* dimension was not captured from the inductive themes that emerged from the data. These findings were also unexpected for Republican participants and as such the previous literature was not supported.

The findings in this research did not suggest that Republicans in Congress tended to draw on all six of Haidt's moral foundations as is suggested in the literature. There was limited evidence for themes suggestive of the *care-harm* and *liberty-oppression* dimensions uncovered in any of the data gleaned from the Republican participants. In the instances that these dimensions were coded, it was for an extremely minimal amount of data. Thus, overall it appears that for the Republican participants in this study, core values tend to center on the *authority-subversion, loyalty-betrayal, fairness-cheating* and *sanctity-degradation* dimensions – dimensions that are largely theorized (with the exception of the *fairness-cheating* dimension) to be of minimal importance to Democrats in Haidt's theory. This finding may have relevancy when attempting to understand what fuels partisan conflict within Congress.

Overall findings for Research Question Two

Core values were clearly expressed by the Republican and Democratic members of Congress studied for this research as shown by the presence of Haidt's (2012c) moral foundations in the data. However, regarding which core values they expressed, the findings did not appear to support Haidt's model in MFT (2012c). The core values expressed by Democrats were grounded in all six dimensions (see Appendix E & Appendix F). The *loyalty-betrayal* and *authority-subversion* dimensions featured strongly in the data for two of the Democratic participants, a finding not indicated by MFT, which notes minimal reliance on these dimensions for liberals. For Republican participants, findings also did not support MFT, as the core values extracted from their data were aligned with the *authority-subversion, loyalty-betrayal, fairness-cheating* and *sanctity-degradation* dimensions and the *care-harm* and *liberty-oppression* dimensions were largely unrepresented. Thus, Democratic members of Congress appear to express a greater number of moral dimensions than do Republican members of Congress within the context of the speeches and press conferences examined for this study and Republicans seem to rely to a greater extent on the three foundations that feature less in the data for the Democrats. This is a surprising finding that is the mirror image of what was expected in this study.

Research Question 3

How do morality dimensions link to political beliefs and fuel partisan conflict in the U.S. government?

It has been the goal of this research study to search for clues to explain the partisanship evident in the U.S. central government. The combined findings for the first

two research questions in this study potentially offered explanations to pinpoint the roots

and location of this conflict. Research question one found partisan conflict to be different

in Congress than was initially thought. Where it was evident, it appeared to be during

speeches relating to highly morally charged issues and/or originating with particularly

confrontational personalities (see Appendix D, Participant #1, #3 and #4). Such issues

and individuals were found to reside in both parties and both sides of the aisle were found

to be equally responsible for partisan rhetoric and behaviors. Pairing these findings with

the discoveries of the second research question may begin to provide some clarity in

order to answer the third research question.

The discoveries of the second research question included finding that Democratic

and Republican members of Congress did not seem to fit the profiles noted in MFT

(Haidt, 2012c). Where liberals are believed to access the *care-harm, fairness-cheating*

and *liberty-oppression* dimensions to a far greater degree than the remaining three

dimensions, this study did not replicate these findings. Instead the majority of the

Democratic members of Congress in this study appeared to access all six dimensions

when functioning in their role as an elected legislator. Additionally, where Haidt's MFT

(2012c) allocates all six moral dimensions to the functioning of everyday conservatives,

this study found that Republican members of Congress tapped into four dimensions to a

far greater degree than the others, specifically the *authority-subversion, loyalty-betrayal,*

fairness-cheating and *sanctity-degradation* dimensions.

Combining these two discoveries provided potential answers to increase our

understanding of why certain topics and certain personalities were more divisive than

others and how these produced difficulties in the functioning of Congress. Thus, the results from the previous two research questions helped to provide an answer to the third research question in this study.

Democrats

In order to address the third research question, I looked for potential explanations regarding the discovery I made in the data examined for this study, in which Democrats tended to access all six moral foundations. On closer inspection, not all of the three Democratic members of Congress were found to access all six moral foundations when communicating in their role as a senator or representative. Two occupied leadership roles and were indicated to be moderate liberals on the ideology position section of GovTrack.us (2004) and did tend to access all six. However, the third member who was newly elected and did not occupy a leadership position actually fit the profile for liberals noted in MFT. She was indicated to be very liberal (GovTrack.us, 2004) and the bulk of her speech was grounded squarely in the *care-harm, fairness-cheating* and *liberty-oppression* dimensions.

Upon further reflection, it appeared that for Democrats in Congress, the senator who was indicated to be very liberal (GovTrack.us, 2004) was more in line with what the Haidt MFT model (2012c) noted than the two members who were more moderate in their political beliefs. When viewed through this ideological continuum lens, the results for all three Democratic members did in fact align with Haidt's model. Those whose ideology registered as more liberal relied on fewer moral dimensions than those whose ideological stance moved toward the center of the liberal-conservative continuum. This alignment for

Democrats with MFT (Haidt, 2012c) thus seems to be a function of how close or distant a member's ideology score is to the liberal end of the continuum.

From this, the first half of research question three can be answered for Democratic members of Congress: "How do morality dimensions link to political beliefs?" The results of this study indicated that Democratic members of Congress who were very liberal did indeed tend to favor accessing only three moral dimensions, as indicated in Haidt's MFT (2012c) for liberals. Those Democratic members of Congress who were more moderate in their liberal ideology seemed to access all the moral dimensions. This finding thus supported Haidt's model, as increased reliance on a greater number of moral foundations was seen when the individual's ideological position regardless of party affiliation moved toward the conservative end of the continuum.

Thus for Democratic members of Congress, the number of moral foundations accessed appeared to be a function of how liberal or moderate the individual was in their political beliefs. A greater array of morality dimensions was accessed for those Democrats whose political beliefs moved toward the conservative end of the ideological continuum than for those who presented as very liberal.

Republicans

The Republican members of Congress followed a different pattern. I would have expected to discover further evidence supporting my findings for Democrats, wherein accessing a greater number of moral foundations appeared to be related to the degree to which an individual is identified as a conservative on the liberal-conservative continuum. However, the *authority-subversion* and *loyalty-betrayal* dimensions were the main

foundations accessed by these participants. The *sanctity-degradation* and the *fairness-cheating* dimensions featured to a lesser extent, with the other two dimensions barely registering. MFT states that conservative individuals tend to access all six dimensions equally. Although the two Republican Party leaders in this study accessed five and six dimensions respectively, they did not access them to an equal degree. That is, the percentage of their total significant statements was less for two of the dimensions.

When considering all three Republican participants, I did not find evidence that was in alignment with Haidt's model (2012c) as I had on closer inspection of the data for the Democrat participants. However, if I considered the two individuals who were both leaders, the pattern mirroring Haidt's model (2012c) again began to partially emerge. The moderate conservative (GovTrack.us, 2004) accessed five dimensions and the very conservative member (GovTrack.us, 2004) accessed all six, although not equally. Thus by considering only two of the three Republican participants, discoveries supporting Haidt's model became more evident, and provided an answer to part of research question three for Republican participants: "How do morality dimensions link to political beliefs?' These two Republican members showed some evidence of the trend uncovered, in which participants identified as more conservative seem to access a greater number of moral dimensions, but it was less clear-cut than for Democratic members of Congress.

The junior Republican participant, who was not considered with these two Republican leaders, was somewhat of a discrepant case. He spent most of the time in the video I chose attacking a member of his own party. Interestingly in other videos considered for this participant he was more partisan. It is possible that the video I chose,

while representative of his interaction style in general, may not have accurately depicted this individual's overall ideology. An alternative participant or different video for this participant may have produced results that more accurately replicated the findings for the other Republican participants of this study.

The findings of the first half of research question three can now provide a foundation for answering the second half of the question: "[how does this] fuel partisan conflict in the U.S. government?" If I consider the above findings, there is emerging support for Haidt's model. With this the number of moral dimensions accessed for individuals depending on where they are located on the liberal-conservative continuum can potentially provide an explanation for what may fuel partisan conflict in the U.S. government as follows.

For the Democrat who was very liberal, the results of this study indicated that her speech was strongly grounded in the three moral foundations central to the liberal mindset as noted by Haidt (2012c). She argued for the liberal policies of the Democratic Party and had minimal use for the *authority-subversion, loyalty-betrayal* and *sanctity-degradation* dimensions. The other two Democratic participants accessed all moral dimensions. For the Republican participants, it was evident that the presence of both the *authority-subversion* and the *loyalty-betrayal* dimensions were a common finding for these members. Other dimensions were represented for these participants, including those central for the liberal mindset: the *care-harm, fairness-cheating* and *liberty-oppression* dimensions. However, as mentioned previously, these were only minimally represented

(as a percentage of their significant statements) instead of equally, as noted in Haidt's model (2012c).

It is not surprising therefore, that members with a liberal ideological stance may find it problematic communicating successfully with their Republican peers when they do not access the same moral foundations to the same degree. Effectively they may relate to only some of what Republican members of Congress believe since there is overlap with only four of the moral dimensions. Likewise, Republican members of Congress may find it challenging to elicit agreement from their Democratic colleagues for the same reasons. If these results are indicative of findings that could be produced in further studies then they may explain how morality dimensions, political beliefs and partisan conflict are related.

Thus, MFT may indeed offer an explanation for the conflict evident in Congress. Little overlap appears to exist in the moral dimensions accessed, between liberal Democratic members of Congress and Republicans from any point on the liberal-conservative continuum. It is not surprising therefore that very liberal members of Congress and Republican members do not seem to be able to understand the other's point of view. When they do consider the other party's position, they pass it through the moral filter to which they subscribe. As noted in the literature review, Ditto and Koleva (2011) describe this as possessing a moral empathy gap, wherein members are unable to comprehend the moral position of their political opponents. The resulting lack of understanding and subsequent frustration, become the fuel that ignites the partisan conflict observed with some topics of legislation and some individuals in Congress.

Overall findings for Research Question Three

Thus, answering research question three in its entirety, the number of morality dimensions accessed is related to where the member of Congress falls on the liberal-conservative continuum. This makes it challenging for members occupying different positions on this continuum to effectively comprehend the political messages of opponents who operate from a different set of moral dimensions than they do (Ditto & Koleva, 2011). Misunderstandings and frustration are very likely to result, especially between members who occupy the extreme ends of the ideology continuum. The subsequent behaviors, political maneuverings and procedural abuses then fuel further partisanship and negatively impact the efficient functioning of the U.S. government.

Summary

The results of this study produced some interesting findings. From my initial foray into observing several hours of the general operations of Congress for context, it was apparent to me that partisan conflict did not occur with the frequency or the intensity suggested in the literature or indicated in the media. Instead, in answering research question one, this study found that certain individuals and particular legislative topics acted as an accelerant that caused conflict to occur. Partisanship was also evident from specific individuals who targeted the current President. Research question two found that the content of communications from members of Congress indicated their core values. When the results were grouped for all Democrats or all Republicans, MFT was not supported. Instead, Democrats were largely found to draw from all six moral foundations

and Republicans from mostly three. This is the converse to what was indicated in Haidt's model (2012c)

Upon further investigation however, the results to research question two proved to be somewhat misleading. When using the Democratic/Republican dichotomy to describe members of Congress, these members' core values were not accurately represented using MFT. Instead, as I looked a little closer at the initial deductive analysis for each participant, some interesting discoveries surfaced. It became apparent that when participants were described in terms of their position on the liberal-conservative continuum, MFT once again became applicable. That is, liberals tended to draw from three moral foundations and conservatives from all six moral foundations. This finding was stronger for Democrats than for Republicans, who did not demonstrate equal reliance on all six foundations. Instead, the moral dimensions they seemed to access the most were the opposing three to the ones accessed by very liberal members.

Using these findings to explain the determinants of partisan conflict in the U.S. government, it became obvious that ideological extremists from either end of the continuum would likely have a challenging time effectively communicating with members from the opposite end of the spectrum. Conflict of a partisan nature would be an expected outcome for highly morally charged topics, given that it would be challenging to reconcile the differences in values between these two extremes (Ditto & Koleva, 2011).

Thus, in support of Haidt's model (2012c), this study found that a participant's standing on the ideology continuum was related to the number of moral dimensions they

drew from when functioning as a member of Congress in the U.S. government. This finding was strongly supported by the Democratic participants and to a weaker degree by the Republicans. It was assumed that further studies with a greater number of participants would remedy this potential anomaly, thus providing greater validity for this explanation regarding the origins of partisanship in Congress.

In Chapter 5 I interpret these findings, analyzing their meaning in relation to the conceptual framework for this study. I discuss the implications of these results for positive social change and make related recommendations for practice. Limitations of the current study are discussed and recommendations for future research explored.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Introduction

This study was conducted in order to discover the underlying cause of the partisan conflict in the U.S. Congress (Dionne, 2012; Pildes, 2011; Quirk, 2011; Ramirez, 2009) with the goal of developing potential solutions to mitigate this problem.

The study involved analyzing C-Span videos of members of Congress using qualitative content analysis with both deductive and inductive coding. The purpose for the study was to answer the three research questions and related questions, including whether members of Congress are driven by their own belief systems and morality and whether it may be possible to rebuild bipartisanship and improve the functioning of the U.S. Congress. The key findings of the study are summarized below.

Key Findings

Research Question One: What is the nature of partisan conflict for Republican and Democrat members of Congress?

My findings indicated that the nature of partisan conflict for Republican and Democratic members of Congress was as follows. It appeared that certain personalities in Congress were more likely to exhibit partisan behaviors than others, wherein they were accusatory, confrontational, critical, and uncooperative. Additionally, certain morally charged topics being legislated were more likely to elicit partisanship, which seemed to be directed at the opposing party as a whole and not at specific individuals. Only the President seemed to be the target of specific criticism from the opposing party. Partisan behaviors were encountered from both parties and in both chambers of Congress. Other

conflict observed between individuals or between chambers did not appear to be partisan in nature.

Research Question Two: How do Democrats and Republicans indicate their core values?

Findings for this research question were generally unexpected. Deductive and inductive analyses results indicated that overall themes for Democrats included the six MFT dimensions, with a similar reliance on each. This is a surprising finding for liberals who usually are grounded in the *care-harm, fairness-cheating* and *liberty-oppression* dimensions to a far greater degree than the *loyalty-betrayal, authority-subversion* and the *sanctity-degradation* dimensions.

In addition, findings for the Republican participants were also unanticipated. MFT states that conservatives tend to access all six dimensions equally, but this was not supported in by this study. The results of this study showed that, within the context of the data analyzed conservatives relied on the *loyalty-betrayal, authority-subversion, fairness-cheating* and the *sanctity-degradation* dimensions almost to the exclusion of the other two dimensions.

Research Question Three: How do morality dimensions link to political beliefs and fuel partisan conflict in the U.S. government?

This was a complex question to answer but was central to the premise, design, and choice of conceptual framework for this study. I proposed Haidt's MFT (2012c) as a platform from which to construct an understanding of the complicated nature of the conflict in Congress and how the interrelationship between morality, political beliefs, and

partisanship may offer an explanation for this issue. Answers to the first two research questions provided the beacon that helped to guide development of the answer to the third question.

For research question three, the initial findings from the second research question were analyzed more closely and ultimately uncovered evidence in support of Haidt's MFT (2012c). When the ideological positions for Democratic participants were individually assessed (GovTrack.us, 2004) and compared to the findings from their analyses, it became evident that the participant with the most liberal score tapped into the fewest moral dimensions, specifically the three that Haidt noted to be the most important for liberals. The moderate Democrats were found to access all six dimensions in MFT, but not all to the same degree. Republican participants were found to trend towards accessing all six foundations but not in the way described by Haidt. Instead of accessing all six equally, the two Republican participants on whom I focused accessed the opposing three dimensions to extreme liberals to the greatest degree and only relied on the three dimensions overlapping with the liberals to a somewhat minimal degree.

These findings, when combined with those of research question one, provided a direction for answering the third research question. Individuals who may be on the extreme ends of the liberal-conservative spectrum and who are addressing a highly morally charged topic are likely to find communication with and comprehension of their political opposite to be challenging. The moral foundations from which they draw their political position are unrelated to the dimensions from which their opponent draws theirs. This is clearly a fertile environment from which to grow frustration, contempt, and

conflict. Those who occupy the moderate positions in either party may actually have common ground from which they can communicate. Although these findings were demonstrated to a lesser extent for the Republican participants, I am hopeful that future research may produce results to support this supposition and thus provide an understanding of the mechanisms at play behind the partisan conflict evident in our federal government.

Interpretation of Findings

My initial impression concerning the daily operations of and the general ambiance in Congress, along with the level of mutual respect between legislators, provided me with a context within which to view my subsequent data collection and analysis. In my assessment, differences were noteworthy in three spheres.

First, regardless of the chamber in Congress, Democrats and Republicans appeared to differ with regard to the angle they adopted in the topics they debated or gave speeches on. As noted in Chapter 4, the topics discussed by Democratic and Republican members of Congress appeared to relate very well to the moral foundations noted by Haidt (2012c) to be associated with liberals and conservatives.

Thus, my initial impression was that liberals tended to debate and discuss issues that fall within the *care-harm* and *fairness-cheating* moral foundations, whereas Republicans tended to discuss issues that related to the *loyalty-betrayal, authority-subversion* and *sanctity-degradation* foundations. Both political parties discussed issues relating to *liberty-oppression*. It is noteworthy that in those instances in which Republican lawmakers discussed legislation that seemed to be grounded in care and

concern for citizens, these were often highly morally charged issues. Those instances of discussion and debate that could be described in this way were issues that would fall naturally into the *sanctity-degradation* moral foundation – such as issues relating to abortion and to child pornography. Thus even though these Republican legislators, when discussing these subjects, appeared to be operating from the shared *care-harm* foundation that is of central importance to liberals it is arguable that moral issues related to purity and sanctity are woven throughout the topics that were of interest to Republican lawmakers. One could surmise from this that within the *care-harm* foundation, Republicans and Democrats access this foundation through different doors.

Through my preliminary viewings of the daily operations in Congress, it appeared that I discovered instances of Haidt's moral foundations and thus introductory evidence for the applicability of MFT as an important conceptual framework for the focus of this study. This opening confirmation of the current knowledge in the area of moral psychology and of the underlying dynamics potentially occurring within the U.S. Congress acted as evidence for the credibility of this study and its overall trustworthiness. With these findings being eventually replicated in the main data collection and analysis phase, came the potential to explain the partisan conflict evident in the U.S. Congress, which provided a platform upon which to build potential solutions.

The second sphere within which I noted differences in the daily operations of Congress was in procedural and ambiance differences between the Senate and the House. As described in Chapter 4, these differences seemed to relate to the formality of proceedings, speed of operations, and interaction style between members of each

chamber. While the Senate appeared to operate in a more formal style, with a less hurried atmosphere and an apparent lack of direct interaction between its members, the House seemed less formal, appeared to be on a tighter schedule, and undertook direct debates between members, adjudicated by the chairperson with formal debate procedures. Although my initial viewing of these videos may not have captured other instances in which different procedures may have occurred in either chamber, the above descriptions appear to be generally applicable.

During the main phase of inquiry in my study I looked for patterns to discover whether there was more disruption and conflict in the speeches and debates of the participants who were members of the House, than those who were members of the Senate. This did not appear to be the case.

An additional reaction from my first viewing of these C-Span videos of debates and speeches was that there appeared to be certain personalities that were more argumentative in their manner, their delivery, and in the content of their speech. As noted in the previous chapter, two of these individuals had already been selected as participants in this study, due to them being well known for their tendency to be confrontational, thus increasing the trustworthiness and credibility of my selection of participants. Discovering whether specific members of Congress tend to fuel the greatest amount of the partisan conflict within Congress was of particular importance, expanding the understanding of the mechanics of partisan conflict and all the factors that tend to fan the flames of dispute between the two political parties.

The third sphere in which I noticed a difference related to the content of a Bill under discussion. I assessed whether certain speeches/debates were more conflict ridden in relation to specific topics than others. Naturally, it was found that certain topics in Congress inflame more emotion than others. My impression was that bipartisanship occurred easily with issues that were less emotionally charged. Legislators from both parties seemed to be willing to join together regarding issues such as designating land to be a national park, general funding for veterans, and laws regarding aviation workers. However, issues that seemed to be extremely partisan appeared to be rooted in deeply moral topics, such as funding for Planned Parenthood, healthcare, and immigration. This added further support for choosing MFT as the conceptual framework for this study. Issues that connect the Congressional member to any of the six moral foundations are clearly going to cause a different reaction than issues with little to no moral foundation.

From these primary impressions and reactions, a context for the rest of the study was thus developed. Debates and/or speeches viewed for each of the six participants were analyzed and the findings reported at length in Chapter 4. During the analysis phase of these C-Span videos, this overall context for the study was kept in mind, as were the previously noted specific items I wished to examine further. These included noting obvious differences in the content of speeches/debates between Republicans and Democrats, exploring whether some personalities are more prone to instigate partisan conflict than others, studying whether procedural differences between House members and Senators could contribute to conflict in Congress and lastly, whether highly morally charged speeches/debates tended to be conflict-ridden and partisan while other topics

tended to be conflict-free and bipartisan. My description and interpretation of the results from the analysis of the six participants now follows.

Findings for Research Question One

Description

The purpose for pursuing this area of research was to attempt to discover what may be underlying the partisan conflict evident in the U.S. government (Dionne, 2012c). Plenty of evidence exists that demonstrates the ways in which the operation of the federal government in recent years has been less than satisfactory (Blendon & Benson, 2011; Dean, 2007; Dinan & Klimas, 2013; Pelosi, 2013; Pew Research Center, 2015; Rasmussen Reports, 2015; Ricci & Seymour, 2012; Taibbi, 2012; Weiner & O'Keefe, 2013). My general impression regarding the daily operations in the U.S. Congress prior to conducting my research was that partisan conflict was commonplace and that civil interactions were a rare commodity. Certainly the national media portrayed Congress in this light (Herald Review, 2014). My findings however, conflicted somewhat with this initial notion.

Rather than finding partisan conflict to be endemic in the chambers of Congress, I found it to be less evident than initially expected. Certainly there were debates, speeches and press conferences in which partisanship was very evident, but I found this to be much less common and generally occurred with much less intensity than I had previously anticipated. Thus, this finding disconfirmed the initial impression I held, as well as that which was stated in some of the literature. Partisan conflict does not appear generally to

hamper the operations of Congress on a daily basis, at least in terms of what is observable on C-Span. Instead, much of the daily operations run smoothly (Herald Review, 2014).

What I did discover was that certain individuals seemed to be more antagonistic and adversarial than others. While some individuals could discuss a divisive topic quite politely and yet still demonstrate that they held different beliefs than members from the opposing party, others were either unwilling or unable to contain their confrontational style and were arguably somewhat unprofessional at times. I did find that when partisanship did occur, it was generally directed at the opposing party as a whole or towards the President in particular. I did not discover any conflict that was partisan between the individual members of Congress in this study or between its two chambers. Any conflict I did note that occurred between two members of Congress or between the two chambers appeared to be nonpartisan in nature. While it is very probable that partisan interactions between individual members do occur in Congress, this was not evident in the data that I examined. These findings yielded a greater understanding of the ways in which conflict occurs within Congress.

Additionally my findings revealed that when an individual expressed a strong party position on legislation, it was usually with regard to a highly morally charged topic. I believe that this was an important finding to uncover and separate out from the general notion of Congress being in daily conflict. From my research, I witnessed interactions that contradicted the perception of continuous conflict and instead, showed a smooth running organization when the topic being legislated was less morally charged. The Highway Bill and the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act were two such pieces of

legislation that enjoyed wide bipartisan support. However, when the subject of legislation

moved into highly charged arenas such as defunding Planned Parenthood and reviewing

the actual agreement on Iran, the intensity changed and members became more partisan

and less willing to cooperate. Thus, the content of the legislation under review was a

factor evident in instances of increased partisan conflict. This finding also seemed to

discount the notion that partisan conflict flavored the everyday interactions between

members of Congress.

Lastly, a further finding disconfirming my preconceived impressions related to

my initial impression that one party instigated the partisanship in the U.S. Government

more than the other and that one chamber was more partisan than the other. My findings

demonstrated that neither party nor either chamber appeared to exhibit a greater degree of

partisan behaviors than the other. This was also an unexpected finding for this study and

as such, extends the knowledge of the daily operations within Congress.

Interpretation

Through my interpretation of these findings for the first research question, I am

led to question the accuracy of the media's accounts regarding the functionality of

Congressional operations (Herald Review, 2014). Of course it generally behooves

reporters to embellish their accounts of any news story, including their accounts of the

daily operations of Congress. I suspect that, at least to a degree, this is what has happened

in the media and their reporting regarding Congress. It is commonly known that certain

channels on TV support one political party over another and, as such, undoubtedly offer a

somewhat biased viewpoint. Such biased reporting from supporters of both sides of the

aisle has likely colored the American public's general opinion of the everyday performance of the U.S. government (Harbridge & Malhotra, 2011; Levendusky & Malhotra, 2015). Media outlets supporting either party have arguably placed blame on the opposing party for their unwillingness to compromise and have exaggerated the impression of a hostile climate in Congress. This has potentially added to the partisanship that occurs within the general populace who then go on to vote their feelings and beliefs in the next election (Levendusky & Malhotra, 2015). Biased reporting in the national media may have a lot to answer for (Harbridge & Malhotra, 2011; Herald Review, 2014)!

C-Span is a wonderful tool offered to the American public, wherein any citizen can be privy to the everyday actions occurring in the U.S. Congress by virtue of simply tuning into this television station or by watching the associated website. By watching the footage, members of the public can accurately form their own opinion of how our government is functioning, without it being run through the filter of a partisan media outlet. It is obvious that this channel simply records the workings of the two chambers of Congress without input or editing. What is distressing is that each of the daily videos that I analyzed had barely been watched. Numbers of views ranged from 50+ to over 2,000. Considering the population of the United States, this is an extremely troubling discovery and may be indicative of how disconnected the public truly is from the actual operations of the federal government. It also lends support to the interpretation that the media is indeed where the general public gathers their information regarding the government, given the microscopic numbers who are forming their own opinion directly from the source on C-Span.

Looking at the finding that only a few strong personalities are particularly vocal, opinionated and confrontational was an interesting exercise for me. It appeared to me before conducting this study that not only were the majority of Congressional members partisan, but that members from the opposing party to mine instigated this style of interaction. After completing my analysis however, it was apparent that only a very few individuals operated in an adversarial partisan fashion and that they harkened from both parties. This finding supported a similar finding by Pildes (2011). On further analysis of the data and results, there did not seem to be a common MFT thread that connected these individuals except for the presence of the *liberty-oppression* and *sanctity-degradation* dimensions in the content of their speeches or press conferences.

Interpreting this further, the expressions of these dimensions were different for the members of each party. While Democrats tended to address liberty in terms of those who are oppressed, Republicans usually addressed liberty with regards to the nation as a whole. Additionally, sanctity for the Republicans frequently related to the sanctity of life in regards to the abortion controversy, whereas for the Democrats sanctity related much more to nature, the environment and global warming. Perhaps these high intensity individuals tap more readily into dimensions that are arguably connected to highly contentious issues. These interpretations however, warrant further study with a greater number of participants in order to improve their trustworthiness.

Analyzing the different ways in which the *liberty-oppression* and the *sanctity-degradation* dimensions are expressed for members of each party also provides potential insight into why certain issues are more contentious than others. If topics steeped in

liberty and sanctity themes – both highly charged topics – are viewed differently for members from opposing parties, then they are arguably not even discussing the same thing or viewing it through the same lens when they debate a given topic. This fractured representation of certain MFT dimensions between the two parties may indeed pose a problem when members are trying to gain support (and thus votes) for their viewpoint. Members may indeed virtually be speaking a foreign language to each other when they discuss issues grounded in these two foundations. Further research into this interpretation would be beneficial in the future.

From the findings and their subsequent interpretations it was evident what the nature of partisan conflict was for members of Congress. It was found to be markedly different than the general impression of an organization paralyzed by conflict put forth by the media and the literature. Partisan conflict certainly was found during this research, but in a much more muted amount than I understood to be the case at the outset of this study. It was found to lie with some members more than others and in some areas of legislation to a greater extent than others. It did not seem to emanate from one party more than the other or from one chamber of Congress more than another. Conflict was evident in other forms including between members of the same party and between the two chambers of Congress. In addition, the opposing political party directed partisanship in particular at the current sitting president.

To a large extent therefore, the findings for the first research question disconfirmed what was expected from the literature. However, the difference in how Republicans and Democrats appear to tap into the *liberty-oppression* and the *sanctity-*

degradation dimensions may well be a finding that extends what is known in the literature, regarding how members of Congress debate their party platform. That is, when a contentious issue such as abortion or the environment is discussed, understanding that members of Congress are broaching the same issue from an entirely different vantage point may help to explain why Congressional members' debates seem to fall on deaf ears. Investigating this further was beyond the scope of this study and should be considered as a possible area of interest for future research.

Findings for Research Question Two

Democrats

From the deductive and inductive analyses for Democratic members of Congress data fit well into categories representing all six of Haidt's (2012c) moral dimensions. As noted in Chapter 4, three dimensions are usually minimally evident for liberals – *authority-subversion, loyalty-betrayal* and *sanctity-degradation*. These findings can be interpreted as evidence that perhaps MFT may be less applicable to Democrats who occupy roles in Congress. As such, this potentially extends knowledge in the discipline since MFT indicates that liberal individuals tend to access only three dimensions to a large degree.

Republicans

The deductive and inductive analyses for the Republican participants yielded different discoveries than from the analyses of the Democratic participants. While Haidt's MFT (2012c) indicates that conservatives tend to tap into all six moral dimensions, this was not supported for the Republicans in this study. Republican members of Congress

tended to operate from the *authority-subversion, loyalty-betrayal, fairness-cheating* and *sanctity-degradation* foundations with the other two dimensions barely registering for these participants. As previously noted by Rhodes (2014) Republican organizational culture can be described as hierarchical, orderly and efficient, thus making this finding explicable. As was suggested in the findings just discussed for the Democrats, perhaps this gives further merit to the interpretation that MFT also may be less applicable to Republican politicians in the federal government. This additionally extends the knowledge presented in the literature since MFT indicates that conservative individuals tend to access all six dimensions to the same degree – a finding not replicated in this study.

Interpretation

It is possible that the extraordinary array of demands placed on the loyalty and support of members of Congress make expressions of party loyalty important to their political survival. These individuals have to delicately toe the line between the expectations of the party base, the party leadership, the members of the chamber in which they work and their own values and beliefs. Any missteps can be met with chastisement from a variety of quarters, ranging from being ostracized by members of their own party to being voted out of office (Pildes, 2011). It therefore makes sense that the speeches given by Democratic participants were flavored by liberal themes and that the underlying themes evidenced in the data were steeped in loyalty and authority themes.

The Republican platform tends to be imbued with issues relating to the three foundations of *authority-subversion, loyalty-betrayal* and *sanctity-degradation* to a much

greater extent than the *care-harm, fairness-cheating* and *liberty-oppression* dimensions. As such, it undoubtedly behooves these politicians to clearly espouse these values during their time on the floor of the House or Senate or when being interviewed by the Press. Their political survival may make it impossible to do otherwise (Pildes, 2011).

Thus remaining in lockstep with the party platform for members of both parties and demonstrating party loyalty and obedience may be what it takes for members of Congress to endure in the office they hold (Pildes, 2011). For example, Democrats need to strongly espouse ideals related to the *care-harm, fairness-cheating* and *liberty-oppression* dimensions, while Republicans should vocalize their commitment to the *authority-subversion, loyalty*-betrayal and *sanctity-degradation* dimensions. However, this interpretation does not account for why it may be that the data for the Republican participants in this study did not show instances of all six moral foundations as is suggested for conservatives by Haidt's (2012c) MFT. Further research is recommended in order to validate these interpretations.

Findings for Research Question Three

Description

This question necessitated a more in depth analysis of the raw data and the findings from the first two research questions. Initially the data suggested that Haidt's MFT (2012c) was not supported for Democratic and Republican members of Congress. However, when the data was studied a little closer and was compared to where the member fell on the ideological continuum, Haidt's model was once again applicable. This relationship was clearer for the Democratic participants in this study than for the

Republicans. That is, the more liberal the individual on the ideology continuum, the less

dimensions they were found to draw from. Haidt (2012c) noted that conservatives tended

to access all six moral foundations. However, I found that Republicans tended to tap three

foundations to a greater extent than the other three, which is a contrary finding to his

model. I also found that the three dimensions they drew from were the opposite three to

those employed by Democratic members of Congress. This is discussed in the following

interpretation section.

A discrepant Republican case was not considered when answering this question,

thereby reducing the number of participants from which to demonstrate a trend for the

conservative members. This individual spent his entire speech attacking a member of his

own party, thus evidencing an instance where partisanship was not demonstrated but

infighting was. This may well have impacted the findings for the Republican participants

as it reduced the participants to only two. Future research with a greater number of

participants may be able to capture more accurately this trend for Republican members of

Congress. This may then serve to definitively support the findings of MFT (Haidt,

2012c).

Interpretation

Partisanship in Congress negatively impacts aspects of daily operations, which

can be detrimental to the efficient running of this organization. With the finding that the

number of moral dimensions tapped by Democratic members of Congress tends to relate

to how liberal or conservative they are on an ideology scale, MFT was supported (Haidt,

2012c). Republicans members of Congress appeared to access three dimensions to a far

greater degree than the other dimensions and these are the opposing dimensions to those accessed by liberal Democrats. In this finding there may lay an explanation for the partisan conflict evident in the chambers of Congress. That is, Republican and Democratic members of Congress tap into different moral foundations, with potentially very little overlap for those who occupy the extreme end of the liberal-conservative continuum. When these members attempt to garner support for their beliefs from those who are on the polar opposite end of the ideological continuum, they are likely discussing issues in a style that is contrary to the moral thinking of these individuals.

Reliance on three moral foundations for liberal Democrats – the *care-harm, fairness-cheating and liberty-oppression* dimensions – meant that a narrow field of morality concerns flavored their speeches, debates and other communications. This was in contrast to moderate Democrats and to Republicans in general in this study that were found to access between five and six moral dimensions. Although these findings for Republicans need to be researched further, the trend towards support for Haidt's model was noted, when Republican and Democratic members of Congress were considered in terms of their position on the liberal-conservative continuum rather than as a member of one party or another.

Given these findings, an explanation can be developed for the struggles experienced in Congress. As noted in Chapter 4, if Republicans and Democrats in Congress are not operating from the same moral foundations, they may be unable to comprehend the importance of policy to members of the opposing party (Ditto & Koleva, 2011). Indeed members may be functioning from a completely different set of three

foundations to those who occupy a more liberal or conservative position than they do on the ideology continuum. This lack of crossover may make cooperation, understanding and bipartisanship challenging to achieve. Conflict and frustration are likely outcomes, particularly regarding highly morally charged issues and specifically for more reactive individuals or when individuals make the wrong inference regarding the motivation for the lack of compromise from their opponents (Chambers & Melnyk, 2006; Ditto & Koleva, 2011).

While individuals from either party hold their ideals to be as sacred as their opponents (Haidt, 2012c), the differences between the moral foundations, values and beliefs that are of importance to liberals verses conservatives, would effectively prevent reconciliation of the subject matter (Ditto & Koleva, 2011), thus providing a breeding ground for conflict of a partisan nature. Using the abortion debate as an example, participant #4 (see Appendix D) spent her entire speech defending abortion rights for women, but using verbiage that was indicative of her support for a woman's right to choose what happens to her body and to avoid oppression. Conversely, Republican participants discussed the abortion debate (participant #2 and #5) in terms of how it related to the sanctity of human life. Thus, in this example, the same highly morally charged issue was addressed from two completely different moral stances – the *liberty-oppression* dimension and the *sanctity-degradation* dimension. It is reasonable to assume that a moral empathy gap is likely to occur (Ditto & Koleva, 2011), making openness to the arguments proposed by the opposing members of Congress difficult to hear.

Limitations of the Study

Limitations to the trustworthiness of this study were listed in Chapter 1 of this

research document. Two of these limitations included concerns regarding the smaller

sample size as well as my personal political beliefs. With regards to the sample size, this

did produce a limitation to the trustworthiness during the execution of this study –

particularly with regards to the findings for the Republican participants. With three

participants representing each of the two political parties, the findings for an individual

participant heavily influenced the results. One of the Republican participants was found

to be somewhat of a discrepant case and thus was excluded from the analysis for the third

research question. With only two Republican participants remaining, this reduced the

dependability of the findings for Republican members of Congress. The in-depth nature

of this study rectified this somewhat. However, future research could rectify this further

by ensuring that a greater number of participants are considered when replicating this

study.

Regarding limitations to objectivity based on my personal political beliefs, I

believe that this was sufficiently addressed and prevented. I remained aware of my

political beliefs and preconceived viewpoints regarding the subject matter of this study. I

employed analytic memo writing and reflexivity in order to remain fully aware of any

biases I may have possessed and how these could have potentially colored my analysis of

the data. In so doing, the findings of this study demonstrated that I was open to the raw

data and let patterns and themes emerge, simply reporting these findings. From this, it is

my assessment that the trustworthiness of the findings for this study was sufficiently

grounded in adequate reliability, validity, generalizability and objectivity. Apart from the

aforementioned benefit to securing a larger participant pool for Republicans, the findings

in this study appear to be grounded in sufficiently trustworthy methodology.

Recommendations

Recommendations for further research in this section are made based on the

findings for each research question and are thus discussed separately as follows.

Research Question One

Upon reflection, it is possible that national and local media outlets are partly

responsible for fueling this nation's impression that conflict is the only modus operandi

within the chambers of our federal government. Through watching C-Span I was struck

by how many hours of footage showed little evidence of conflict. In fact, many

interactions between less well-known members of Congress appeared to be very

congenial and respectful. The overriding professionalism, courtesy and adherence to

protocol were unexpected. C-Span provides a completely unbiased record of the

proceedings within Congress and simply records on video and on transcripts exactly what

happens when it happens. There are no filters or interpretations, biases or hidden agendas

in this data. It is simply raw, untainted data that is open to an individual's personal

interpretation.

Thus, it would be of interest to determine whether members of the public may

experience a similar reaction to the reaction I experienced, finding less conflict evident

than expected in the everyday operations of Congress. Discovering any potential

influence from the media on our perception of conflict in Congress is beyond the scope of

this research inquiry. Possible suggestions for future research could therefore include a study in which participants' impressions of the amount of conflict in Congress could be measured before and after viewing several hours of C-Span, as well as before and after viewing print articles from the national and local media regarding operations in Congress. It would be interesting to see whether there is a tendency for members of the media to over-report instances of conflict between parties in Congress, thus tainting the overall opinion of the American public regarding the operations of the federal government.

Media outlets may also fuel the conflict that does actually occur in Congress (Herald Review, 2014; Levendusky & Malhotra, 2015). Those members who adopt a more confrontational approach certainly appear to gain more media coverage on TV as well as in print (Herald Review, 2014). This may be deemed useful during campaign seasons and reelection bids. Confrontational speeches and behaviors become the subject of talk shows, wherein the member of Congress is supported by the hosts who share their views and is vilified by the hosts from the opposition. It is all exposure however, no matter who is discussing their noteworthy speech. Perhaps these personalities relish this type of exposure, whether it is to assist a campaign or otherwise. If this is the case then they may adopt this as their style with the intention of continuing to gain exposure in the media and to increase national recognition (Herald Review, 2014). However, assessing whether this may be the case is also beyond the scope of this dissertation. An additional direction for future research would thus be to ascertain whether the most vocal and disruptive personalities in Congress tend to be those who are more likely to run for higher offices, including president of the United States.

From my findings and interpretations for my first research question, I suggest that the media is responsible for fueling the image of the government locked in daily partisan battles and thus may actually incite a greater degree of partisanship within the general population than may naturally occur. Given that this population then goes on to vote, it is apparent that future research should be directed at discovering the impact the media has on provoking partisanship and on the accuracy of its reports on the workings of Congress.

Research Question Two

As the results of the second research question did not support the model proposed by Haidt (2012c) for the Democrat/Republican dichotomy, further research to replicate the findings of this study are recommended. Haidt's MFT is based on extensive cross cultural research with very large pools of participants and as such is suggestive of the need for replication of the discoveries of the current research study. Applying Haidt's model based on whether an individual is identified as a Republican or a Democrat did not seem to capture the essence of his findings. Thus, it is recommended that additional research into the Democrat/Republican dichotomy and its relationship to MFT, would benefit from a larger sample size in order to test the reliability and potentially increase the trustworthiness of these findings.

Research Question Three

The findings uncovered from further exploration of the data for this research question offered an explanation for the inconsistencies uncovered in research question two. When I looked further into the ideological position of participants on the liberal-conservative continuum regardless of their party affiliation, Haidt's MFT (2012c) was

once again supported. However, due to the less definitive support of this finding with the conservative (moderate to very conservative Republican) participants, these results need to be replicated in further research. It is therefore recommended that this study should be repeated with a greater number of participants in order to validate these findings and that participant ideological positions on the liberal-conservative continuum are considered at the outset of the study.

Implications

Positive Social Change

Understanding the nature of partisan conflict in Congress can provide a platform from which to render assistance to the public image of Congress. By unraveling the misconception of Congress as a highly dysfunctional organization, the public can begin to develop more trust in the democratic process, the workings of Congress and in their elected officials. As the exact location of and catalyst for conflict within Congress is pinpointed, the voting public can make better-informed decisions regarding how to cast their vote. Understanding that one party is not more adversarial than the other, but rather that particular individuals and specific topics seem to spark greater conflict can help voters make decisions at the ballot box. Those politicians who may overstep and those Bills and Propositions that are not likely to draw some form of bipartisan support may be selected out of the running by a more accurately informed voting public.

The discovery that Democratic members of Congress access up to six moral dimensions when undertaking their duties in Congress, while Republicans access three to a greater extent, has the promise for creating positive social change. If this finding is

replicated in future research, it can be combined with what is already known in Haidt's

MFT (2012c) and as such, provide a framework upon which to build solutions to the

defensive partisanship that accompanies certain legislative topics and inhabits the

interaction style of certain Congressional members.

However, the results of further inquiry into the data uncovered evidence that

Haidt's MFT (2012c) was still largely supported when the position of the participants on

the liberal-conservative continuum was located. Uncovering this aspect of the data

provided the findings of this study with the powerful framework of MFT from which to

assess the roots of partisan conflict in Congress. As a result of understanding that liberals

and conservatives in Congress who occupy the opposing ends of the ideological

continuum access the opposing three MFT dimension to each other, some of the potential

causes of partisan conflict begin to surface. With this theoretical validation, the

challenges with communication and the resulting lack of cooperation and understanding

between members of Congress can be addressed and ameliorated. Suggestions are made

in the recommendations for practice section below.

The potential for positive social change in this instance should be self-evident.

With less conflict along with greater cooperation and understanding resulting from the

suggestions discussed shortly, the overall functioning of the federal government should

be improved. This should have a direct impact on the efficiency with which even thorny

legislation flows through Congress. With the smoother movement of legislation in our

federal government, the lives of everyday citizens could be impacted in a multitude of

ways.

Methodological/Theoretical Implications

I found qualitative content analysis to be an extremely interesting and useful analysis tool. Looking at the data both deductively and inductively allowed me access to a far greater variety of meanings and themes than otherwise. Firstly, studying the data deductively and extracting instances of the coding frame from the data helped to ground this study in the conceptual framework that was chosen. The six moral foundations from Haidt's MFT (2012c) featured in the coding frame along with several other applicable categories. As the data was analyzed deductively using this coding frame, instances of these categories were noted. This reduced the data, selecting only aspects that were related to the research questions (Schreier, 2012). This style of analysis helped to paint an overall picture of the data and bring its relationship to MFT into focus. A study by Winkelhage, Schreier and Diederich (2013) captured the usefulness of this technique for accessing the broader meaning in data and for finding evidence for the conceptual framework and research questions in the data.

Analyzing the data inductively produced far greater detail and allowed for more subtle meanings and themes to emerge from the data that may have been overlooked with only deductive analysis. This allowed for a deeper understanding and more detailed reflection on the data, thus increasing the trustworthiness of the results of this study. A study by McDonald, Wearing and Ponting (2009) employed qualitative content analysis to produce data driven (inductive) categories and themes regarding peak experiences in wilderness settings. This allowed for central themes and meanings to emerge from the data and thus provide the detail necessary to comprehend the nature of these experiences.

In the same manner, inductive analysis in this study increased my understanding of the nature of partisan conflict in the U.S. Congress.

From this, it is my belief that qualitative content analysis and coding are excellent qualitative analysis tools in this situation, especially due to the inaccessibility of this population for other forms of qualitative inquiry. By performing a comprehensive analysis of the data, these methods have the potential to provide answers to a variety of research questions. In future research of a similar vein, I would use this research methodology again, as I believe it successfully unravels the meanings and themes evident in complex data.

Recommendations for Practice

From my initial exposure to the general workings of Congress after my first viewing of the C-Span videos, I developed several preliminary recommendations for actions that could positively impact the workings of Congress. Firstly, since it appeared that bipartisan support for a Bill occurred more frequently with less morally charged issues than with those steeped in morality, it would seem beneficial to the productivity of this organization to refrain from attaching highly charged issues to Bills that do not provoke a large emotional response. In this way, passage of these latter Bills would be expedited and the productivity in Congress would be increased. Secondly, Congress should consider limiting the practice of attaching any two Bills together within a ruling. This practice requires Congressional members to be willing to vote the same way on each Bill, thus slowing the progress of both Bills through the chambers of Congress. If each

Bill were presented separately, voting would likely be more expeditious and therefore the federal government would accomplish more.

From listening to the complaints discussed by some members of Congress during their speeches, it appears that certain members use these techniques as a way of stalling the legal process, sometimes to reach an unnecessary end such as delaying voting so that the Bill is not addressed until after the recess. Some members described such actions as procedural abuse and accused the member in question of wasting the American public's time. It did seem that more of these complaints originated with Senators who were complaining about House members negatively influencing the legislative process.

Recommendations to address these attempts at disruption by certain members would need to fall within what is acceptable in the legislative branch of the federal government. While some of these stalling techniques are used as tools of American style democracy, clearly some of these tools have either been abused or have been modified in a way in which they should not be used. Thus, within the confines of the rules for operation within Congress, it is recommended that these apparent rogue members should be confronted on their flagrant abuse of a system that was meant to act as a check and balance to runaway power and not as a convenient way to go on vacation sooner or to avoid addressing contentious issues or to prevent the passage of a Bill with which they disagree.

Further recommendations are based on the additional findings of this study. For example, this study's findings revealed that the position occupied by the member of Congress on the liberal-conservative continuum and the number of moral dimensions

accessed appeared to be linked. Liberal Democrats largely accessed only three: the *care-harm, fairness-cheating and liberty-oppression* dimensions, while more moderate Democrats accessed all six dimensions. The latter three dimensions: *authority-subversion, loyalty-betrayal* and *sanctity-degradation* were drawn on to a lesser extent. In contrast, provisional findings for the Republican members indicated that they operated from the latter three dimensions to the greatest degree and barely tapped the initial three dimensions. Due to the necessity of excluding one Republican participant from this finding (as a result of a discrepancy), these findings for Republicans need to be further replicated with a greater number of participants and are therefore provisional at this juncture.

Assuming that these findings indicated a possible trend, it was apparent that the further to the political right a member was located on the ideological continuum, the greater the reliance on all six of Haidt's (2012c) moral foundations they exhibited. However, the reliance on the *care-harm, fairness-cheating* and *liberty-oppression* foundations was not found to be equal as was suggested in MFT. If this result is replicated, it certainly gives credence to the explanation of partisan conflict resulting from the lack of reliance on common moral foundations between opposing party members. When these members discuss a highly charged issue, they are essentially talking about completely different aspects of the issue and very likely find it difficult and frustrating to comprehend the message of the opposition (Ditto & Koleva, 2011).

If we take a contentious issue such as abortion and consider it through the lens of this finding, it is evident that this is the case. While Democrats/liberals support the rights

and liberty of the woman in an abortion debate, the Republicans are discussing the

sanctity of life. On a conceptual level they are not discussing the same thing. Perhaps, as

a recommendation, issues need to be broken down further to represent the subtle

differences being discussed. Maybe Democrats should discuss the concept of a woman

having the right to decide what she does with her body in terms of liberty and oppression

and as a separate idea from the pro life/pro choice argument. Additionally, perhaps

Republicans should talk about the sanctity of human life in general terms and unravel this

concept from the abortion issue. It is possible that there would be bipartisan agreement

about these concepts if they were separated as such.

With this, politicians may have a starting place from which to discover potential

new territory for the development of bipartisan solutions to these currently unsolvable

issues. It does otherwise seem almost pointless for politicians to hammer away on an

opponent who has an entirely different conception of an issue than they do. There is

probably nothing about their argument that is likely to sway an individual who occupies

the opposing end of the ideology continuum and therefore communicates from an entirely

different set of moral dimensions (Ditto & Koleva, 2011). The templates for solutions

discussed in Chapter 2 may also prove useful. As Chambers and Melnyk (2006) noted,

when partisans learn what motivates their opponents, they have a greater likelihood of

cooperating with each other. This lends validity to the recommendation noted above, that

is breaking out separate concepts that reside in contentious issues may provide a pathway

for greater understanding between opposing party members. With the accompanying

increase in understanding of the other's point of view, bipartisan solutions may become

possible. Additionally, increasing exposure to individuals from the opposition in social situations may prove beneficial, as was evident during the Reagan years when members and their families frequently socialized with others from across the aisle.

These findings may be invaluable for those strategists who are employed to address ways in which to get the political message of their party or Congressional member across to others. As noted in Chapter 2, the affective state of an individual can influence their political judgments (Haidt, 2012c; Lai et al., 2014; Sauer, 2012). Through fostering opportunities for civil social interaction between members of opposing parties, it may be possible for members to increase their empathy for individuals from across the aisle and develop an understanding of the deeply held beliefs of their opponent's version of society. With the grasp strategists have on the issues at hand and the workings of Congress, they could make use of the results of this study to create arguments that appeal to the moral foundations of importance to the opposition. By strengthening relationships between opposing party members, the likelihood of these arguments being considered and alternative viewpoints respected is likely to increase.

Conclusion

This qualitative study was an exploratory foray into the workings of Congress, with the goal of attempting to uncover and understand what might fuel the partisan conflict evident in this organization. This goal has been achieved. Preliminary findings indicated that Congressional members' position on the ideological continuum and the number of moral foundations from which they draw offered a viable explanation for partisan conflict.

Those who occupied the liberal end of the continuum were found to access three dimensions to the greatest degree, confirming Haidt's MFT (2012c) which acted as the conceptual foundation for this study. Moderate liberals appeared to access a higher number of foundations. Moderate conservatives accessed greater numbers also, but not in the way described by MFT. They relied mostly on only three dimensions and these were the opposing three dimensions to those upon which liberals relied. This lack of common moral ground was proposed to be a key factor in the difficulties occurring in Congress. Members occupying different positions on the liberal-conservative continuum arguably do not even comprehend each other's policy positions, making compromise and cooperation challenging to achieve.

With this finding informing everyday practice in Congress, change may be possible. Political strategists may be able to use this information proactively and help members to structure speeches and debates in ways that appeal more to the moral foundations of their opponents. Understanding that certain personalities were found to be more confrontational than others and that particular legislative topics evoked greater conflict than others, these interventions could be surgically placed to pinpoint the exact location of the problem.

The United States was founded on principles that act as the backbone for how all Americans live their daily lives. Whether an individual identifies as liberal or conservative, Democrat or Republican, the same foundational principles inform our national persona. If we all harbor the same life code, then finding a path into the mindset of our political opponents should logically be feasible. This may be possible through

learning their moral language and creating ways to understand and successfully communicate with them. Although to some this may seem like an impossible task, the C-Span videos viewed for this study evidenced a more functional organization than was originally assumed.

It is my belief that members of Congress sincerely wish to execute their daily duties to the best of their abilities and that underneath the rhetoric they and their constituents all essentially want the same things. Taking this as a starting place, the findings of this study can offer a blueprint from which to build a bridge to the moral mindset of their opponents. In so doing, the organizational difficulties spurred by contentious legislative issues and adversarial personalities may be ameliorated and the functioning of our federal government altered in a positive and productive direction.

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Appendix A: Permission Letter From Penguin Random House

November 6, 2014

Re: THE RIGHTEOUS MIND by Jonathan Haidt

Dear Requester:

We have no objection to you use of the above material in your dissertation, as requested in your email of November 4, 2014, subject to the following conditions:

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2.   Full acknowledgement of the title, author, copyright and publisher is given.

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Best wishes for the success of your paper.

Sincerely,

Melanie Flaherty

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Appendix B: Coding Frame and Examples

Coding Frame Categories

Care-Harm (C-H)	Fairness-Cheating (F-C)
Loyalty-Betrayal (L-B)	Authority-Subversion (A-S)
Sanctity-Degradation (S-D)	Liberty-Oppression (L-O)
Confrontational (C)	Partisan (P)
Respectful-Disrespectful (R-D)	Bi-Partisan (B)
Accusatory (A)	Defensive (D)
Disbelief	Infighting (I)

Examples of Haidt's Moral Foundations Categories From the Data

Name of Category	Definition	Example
Care-Harm	Instances relating to caring for those who are underprivileged	"Women who can't get appointments anywhere else go to Planned Parenthood"
Fairness-Cheating	Instances relating to equality and proportionality for members of society	"Title X that provides birth control to low-income and uninsured people"
Liberty-Oppression	Instances relating to individual freedom, choices and government interference in life	"Able to go to the airport without fear of being arrested"
Authority-Subversion	Instances relating to authority, rules, crime laws	"[The] leader was visibly angry with me that I would ask such a question"
Loyalty-Betrayal	Instances relating to honesty, allegiance, trustworthiness, loyalty to nation	"My staff told me that afternoon: He is lying to you"
Sanctity-Degradation	Instances relating to sanctity of life, marriage, family or environmental policy	"The icecaps are melting in the arctic. Don't worry about it"

Definitions and Examples of Additional Categories From Data

Name of Category	Definition	Example
Confrontational	Instances of direct challenge to others leadership/ideas	"I stood and asked the majority leader very directly"
Respectful-Disrespectful	Instances of respectful or courteous versus disrespectful or un-courteous comments	"I ask my Republican colleagues a question: Do you have any idea what year it is? Did you fall down and hit your head?"
Accusatory	Instances of blaming members of the other party	"In 2013, Republicans threatened to shut down the government unless they could change the law"
Partisan	Arguing for party platform	"The Republicans have had a plan for years to strip away women's rights"
Bi-Partisan	Able to work with or compliment opposing party	"I took Judd Gregg, a Republican….and a Democratic counterpart, Kent Conrad, who is just as good"
Defensive	Instances of participant adopting a defensive stance and justifying actions or	"To be clear, the Federal Govt. is not paying for any of them – not one dime"

	comments	
Disbelief	Instances of participant seeming to be shocked about an action or comment	"I simply cannot believe that in the year 2015, the U.S. Senate would be spending its time…"
Infighting	Criticizing members of one's own party	"We keep winning elections and then we keep getting leaders who don't do anything they promise"

Appendix C: Category and Theme Examples

Selection of Coding-Categories-Themes from Participant Data

Code Examples	Categories	Themes
"We have government of the lobbyists, by the lobbyists and for the lobbyists; Senate operations; betrayed; anger; "This majority….listens to….the voice of the Washington Cartel"	• Complains about corporate handouts • Complains about lobbyists • Washington Cartel • Inaction of Senate	• Corruption
"What I've tried to do is emphasize things upon which there was some bipartisan agreement;" problem solving; ways to work together; discussing successes	• Accepting of differences • Bipartisan • Accepting of procedures in Congress • Trying to make things work	• Solution-focused
"The environment. Don't worry about it; it is fine;" criticizing; frustration; complaining that Republicans are not doing their job	• Disbelief of Republicanism • Disappointment • Frustration with Republican policy • Use of sarcasm	• Disillusionment
"I am sick and tired of it;" anger; chastising	• Anger • Had her fill	• Uncompromising
"If you have seen this video I don't have to tell you how sickening it is;" visceral reaction to video contents	• Disgust with Planned Parenthood video	• Repugnance
Explaining and answering in detail to questions from Press; willingness for transparency; providing	• Detailed response to questions • Open about details	• Accessible

details	• Open	

Appendix D: Individual Participant's Data

Participant #1

Examples for Code Categories

Categories	Percentage of total statements	Example from Data
Loyalty-Betrayal	9%	"My staff told me…he is lying to you"
Authority-Subversion	8%	"The majority leader said no, he would not do so"
Fairness-Cheating	4%	"We ought to live under same rules"
Sanctity-Degradation	1%	"Defunding Planned Parenthood after the gruesome video"
Confrontational	19%	"I asked the …leader in front of all the Republican Senators"
Accusatory	27%	"An army of lobbyists who write campaign checks"
Infighting	16%	"Republican leader is behaving like [Democrat leader]"
Partisan	9%	"Their actions speak louder than their words"
Respectful-Disrespectful	1%	"He refused…that was an extraordinary step"
Disbelief	2%	"I cannot believe he would tell a flat-out lie"
Defensive	4%	"I gave them nothing, there is no deal"

Codes, Categories and Themes

Codes Examples	Categories	Themes
"This majority… listens to… the voice of the Washington Cartel;" "He filled the tree blocking everyone else's amendments;" Senate operations	• Complains about corporate handouts • Complains about lobbyists • Washington Cartel • Inaction of Senate	• Corruption
Deal; "They huddled on the floor and negotiated a deal;" "corporate welfare;" lobbyists	• Power of the lobbyists over the Congressmen • Complains about career politicians	• Influence
"Giant corporations getting special favors"	• Greed of corporations	• Avarice
"The majority leader cut off all amendments;" Controlling; Lying; "These 100 Senators….don't lie to each other"	• Not representing Americans • Lying to Senate • Procedural abuse • Not representing Republican party	• Disloyalty
"It was a direct question I asked the majority leader;" "We keep getting leaders who don't do anything they promise"	• Being a renegade • Questioning/challenging the system	• Recalcitrance
"I cannot believe he would tell a flat-out lie"	• Dishonest/lying	• Disappointment
"I voted based on those assurances;"	• Explaining actions regarding voting	• Defensive

Surviving;		
"Do you know who doesn't have a lobbyist;" Supporting	• Lack of support for people with no lobbyists	• fairness

Participant Profile

This participant was a Republican Senator. The topic of this speech related to perceived procedural abuse and perceived dishonesty by another member of the Senate. The deductive data for this participant demonstrated that there were more *accusatory* and *confrontational* statements than other types of statements. Occurrences in the data for each of these categories were 28 and 19 respectively. There were also more instances suggestive of conflict with his own party (*Infighting* = 16) than with the opposing political party (*Partisan* = 9). His speech tended to be flavored by negativity ("Today is a sad day for this institution") and referred throughout to instances of dishonesty ("He is lying to you"), corruption ("Enriching some more lobbyists on K Street") and betrayal ("There is no deal. Like Saint Peter, he repeated it three times").

With inductive coding, several clear categories emerged from the data. As an example, during his speech, this participant had many complaints about Washington lobbyists, about corporate handouts, career politicians, cronyism and use the term "The Washington Cartel." This participant also highlighted what he perceived to be dishonesty in Congress. Weaving these categories together under the theme of *corruption* seemed to capture the essence of the central tenet in this participant's speech. This is evidenced in the following direct quote from this participant: "Sadly today we have government of the

lobbyist, by the lobbyist and for the lobbyist." These categories can be viewed in the above table. Themes were then developed from categories that were woven together and these are also listed in the above table.

Participant #2

Examples for Code Categories

Categories	Percentage of total statements	Example from Data
Authority-Subversion	19%	"I've said…we are going to handle this debate in the following way"
Loyalty-Betrayal	13%	"Republicans in Congress who have legitimate concerns"
Liberty-Oppression	4%	"The Voting Rights Act has been a big success"
Care-Harm	2%	"Not a penny less for women's health"
Fairness-Cheating	2%	"We have divided government and we have to talk to each other
Sanctity-Degradation	2%	"What Planned Parenthood has engaged in is truly outrageous"
Partisan	18%	"The most important Democrat in the country didn't sign it"
Bipartisan	6%	"I emphasized things upon which there was some bipartisan agreement"
Respectful-Disrespectful	12%	"We ought to treat this issue with the dignity it deserves"
Accusatory	7%	"The President's incendiary rhetoric"
		"What is not helpful is

Confrontational	7%	rhetoric like the President has been using"
Defensive	6%	"Republicans in Congress who have legitimate concerns"
Disbelief	2%	"We are basically being asked to trust the biggest funder of terrorism"
Infighting	1%	"This tactic has been tried… frequently by Republican majorities"

Participant Profile

This participant was a Republican Senator. The video viewed for this participant was a weekly press conference due to the insufficient length of available videos from his activities within the Senate. The content of this press conference included the Iran Nuclear Agreement, discussing successful legislation in the Senate, criticism of the President and noting differences between the two chambers of Congress. The deductive analysis for this participant indicated that there were more *authority-subversion* and *partisan* statements than other types of statements. Occurrences in the data for each of these categories were 21 and 20 respectively.

Many of the themes emerging from the inductive analysis were unexpected for this participant. The media has often portrayed this individual as very partisan, blaming and inflexible. However, this individual appeared to be respectful ("We ought to treat this issue with the dignity it deserves"), upbeat ("Clearly the Senate is up and running and

trying to focus on things where we can make progress") and professional but partisan

("What is not helpful is rhetoric like the president has been using this morning").

Codes, Categories and Themes

Code Examples	Categories	Themes
"Regardless of the President's incendiary rhetoric;" chastising; dysfunction in Senate; frustrated; "We are….being asked to trust the biggest funder of terrorism"	- Problems in Senate - Chastising President - Partisan - Skeptical of Iran deal - Blaming Democrats for Senate failures	Partisan
"We are going to handle this…in the following way;" planning; decision-making; "We are not doing government shutdowns;"	- Firm in decision making - Practical - Future focused - Implementing solutions	Decisive
"We've had so far this year over 160 roll call votes in the first half of the year;"	- Proud of successes in Senate - Positive outlook for Senate productivity - Open to working together	Positive attitude
"What I've tried to do is emphasize things upon which there was some bipartisan agreement;" problem solving; ways to work together; discussing successes	- Accepting of differences - Bipartisan - Accepting of procedures in Congress - Trying to make things work	Solution-focused
"We are going to deal with this in a respectful way;" answering questions; polite; "Each Senator will get an	- Honorable to members of own party - Courteous	Integrity

opportunity to speak and actually be listened to;" respectful	• Polite, professional • Addresses Iran debate with dignity	
Fear of Iran Nuclear Agreement; being asked to trust; "appropriate to have skepticism"	• Concern for nation's security • Support for Voting Rights Act	• Liberty
"Take funding…. and use it for Women's health"	• Women's health vs. Planned Parenthood	• Values

Participant #3

Examples for Code Categories

Categories	Percentage of total statements	Examples from Data
Care-Harm	5%	"The Republican bill cuts finding for substance abuse and mental health"
Fairness-Cheating	9%	"For about 30% of women [Planned Parenthood] is their healthcare"
Liberty-Oppression	5%	"To be able to go to the airport without fear of being arrested"
Loyalty-Betrayal	8%	"My friend…has worked hard on this highway bill…it was hard…the Republicans weren't allowing her to come up with revenue"
Authority-Subversion	5%	"they need to sit down with us so we can craft a bipartisan compromise"
Sanctity-Degradation	3%	"We have the worst fires in the history of Alaska because of climate change"
Confrontational	14%	"The Republicans are not serious about governing"
Accusatory	17%	"The Republicans are failing their most important job"
Partisan	24%	"We called on Republicans to get serious…they have refused"
Respectful-Disrespectful	4%	"the pretty posters and the fancy words…are an attack

		on women"
Defensive	2%	"we have done something since then. We have reduced the debt"
Bipartisan	3%	"pleaded with them to sit down and negotiate a long term bipartisan plan"

Codes, Categories and Themes

Code Examples	Categories	Themes
"a woman who was…. allowed to get her driver's license…and they want to do away with that;" attack on immigration; describing powerless people; protective	• Republicans attacking women's health • Republicans attacking powerless people • Oppression of powerless • Dishonesty	• Oppression/Power
"We compromised. We worked together to fund this government;" applauding; proud; working together; dedication of two Senators; solutions	• Discussing bipartisanship • Discussing members who put institution first • Praise for work done • Praise for bipartisanship	• Commend
"Republicans are not serious about governing;" "Republicans do not work	• Chastising Republicans for not voting for bipartisan	

with us on appropriations bills;" anger; criticizing; failure to do their job; "We called on the Republicans to get serious about budgeting. They have refused."	bill • Accusing Republicans of not working • Criticizing Republicans for cutting finding to social programs etc. • Blaming Republicans for not working on appropriations • Criticism	• Reprimand
"I loved working on the Appropriations Committee;" reminiscing; work enjoyment; happy	• Job enjoyment • Rule following/following the law • Fairness	• Work Ethic
"The environment. Don't worry about it; it is fine;" criticizing; frustration; complaining that Republicans are not doing their job	• Disbelief of Republicanism • Disappointment • Frustration with Republican policy • Use of Sarcasm	• Disillusionment
"The ice caps are melting in the Arctic. Don't worry about it;" environmental issues; concern; disdain	• Concern for environment • Description of negative environmental impact of Republican policy	• Sanctity of Earth

Participant Profile

This participant was a Democratic Senator. The topic of the speech related to reporting on a list of policy differences between Democrats and Republicans and communicating his dissatisfaction with their policies (see inductive table above). The

deductive analysis showed that there were more *partisan* and *accusatory* statements than other statements, with 24 and 17 occurrences respectively.

The inductive analysis for this participant uncovered what appeared to be an overriding sense of frustration with the inaction of the Republican Party ("They are not showing up for work") and for the policies they pursue ("There are bears that don't even hibernate anymore. It is not cold enough"). However, he did praise those who had worked hard and had reached across the aisle ("They worked on that airplane side by side for 14 hours and worked up a plan"). He used sarcasm quite extensively in his speech ("The environment. Don't worry about it; it is fine") and was frequently disarming, using words such as "my friend" to refer both to members of his party and to those of the opposition.

Participant #4

Examples for Code Categories

Categories	Percentage of total statements	Examples
Care-Harm	17%	"Preventive services for poor and uninsured people"
Liberty-Oppression	17%	"50 new restrictions on women's access to legal health care"
Fairness-Cheating	10%	"It is a vote to defund cancer screenings, birth control and basic health care for millions"
Loyalty-Betrayal	3%	"I stand with Planned Parenthood and I hope my colleagues will do the same"
Authority-Subversion	0%	None
Sanctity-Degradation	0%	None
Partisan	20%	"Deliberate, methodical, orchestrated, rightwing attack on women's rights"
Accusatory	13%	"The Republicans have had a plan for years to strip away women's rights"
Confrontational	9%	"I am sick and tired of it"
Defensive	9%	"The Federal Government is not paying for any of

		them – not one dime"
Respectful-Disrespectful	1%	"Do you have any idea what year it is? Did you fall down and hit your head?"
Disbelief	1%	"I simply cannot believe…the Senate would…defund women's healthcare centers"

Codes, Categories and Themes

Code Examples	Categories	Themes
"Right wing attack on women's rights;" "Republicans….plan…to strip away women's rights to make choices about their own bodies;' reproductive rights; reducing access to birth control; disbelief	• Attack on women by Republicans • Attack on women's healthcare • Attack on poor women • Oppression of women	• Power/Oppression
"Women have lived through a world with backward-looking ideologues…and we are not going back"	• Pro-life agenda	• Rights
"I am sick and tired of it;" anger; chastising	• Anger • Had her fill	• Uncompromising
Angry; "I cannot believe that in the year 2015, the U.S. Senate would be…"	• Frustrated • Disbelief • Disappointment	• Exasperated
"The government doesn't fund abortions, period;" protecting abortion rights; frustrated; services provided by Planned	• Wide accessibility of Planned Parenthood • No federal funding	• Policy Adherent

Parenthood	used for abortion • Loyalty to policy platform	

Participant Profile

This participant was a junior Democratic Senator. The topic of her speech centered on the Republican push to defund Planned Parenthood in the wake of some undercover videos. Statements relating to the *care-harm* and the *liberty-oppression* dimensions occurred more often than other types of statements in the deductive analysis, numbering 12 each. This participant also made a notable number of *partisan* statements – with 14 occurrences in her speech.

In the inductive analysis phase, it was evident that this participant felt very strongly about the topic under discussion ("I am sick and tired of it. Women everywhere are sick and tired of it. The American people are sick and tired of it"). She made it clear that she was going to strongly defend women's rights ("we are not going back – not now, not ever") and that she was not going to vote to defund Planned Parenthood ("I stand with Planned Parenthood and I hope my colleagues will do the same").

Participant #5

Examples for Code Categories

Categories	Percentage of total statements	Examples
Authority-Subversion	19%	"I'm also demanding that the President denounce and stop these practices"
Loyalty-Betrayal	12%	"Sanctions on a general who supplied militants with weapons to kill Americans"
Sanctity-Degradation	12%	"The gruesome practices embraced by Planned Parenthood"
Fairness-Cheating	7%	"There needs to be reform in our criminal justice system"
Liberty-Oppression	2%	"We've got a lot of people in prison….that really don't need to be there"
Care-Harm	0%	None
Partisan	12%	"President Obama says it is this deal or war. Well that is a false choice"
Confrontational	10%	"Yesterday the President admitted it will likely further Iran's support for terror activities"
Defensive	10%	"If you saw the video…I could talk about it but I think I would vomit"
Respectful-Disrespectful	7%	"I've always respected the way he has done his job"

Accusatory	5%	"The President promised accountability. It hasn't happened"
Disbelief	5%	"Only two VA officials have been fired for the waiting list scandal…"

Codes, Categories and Themes

Code Examples	Categories	Themes
"White House cut it's forecast for growth;" "President promised reform at VA. It hasn't happened;" blaming;	• Attacking President over policy • Blaming President	• Political Assault
"We are going to fight a bad deal that's wrong for our national security;" protecting; Iran Nuclear Act; concerned	• Protective of U.S.A national security	• Patriotic
"If you have seen this video I don't have to tell you how sickening it is;" visceral reaction to video contents	• Disgust with Planned Parenthood video	• Repugnance
"People are in there for…flimsy reasons;" broken criminal justice system; unhappy with system	• Fairness to prisoners	• Justice
Admiring; holding Pope in high esteem;	• Respect for Pope	• Reverence

"I don't think I want to get into all the detail;" "I think it's time we review these issues;" deciding; firm	- Dictating - Abrupt interaction style - Authoritative stance	Dismissive
Avoiding; abrupt answers to questions; curt	- Defensive - Avoidance of questions - Lack of disclosure	Self-protective

Participant Profile

This participant was a Republican Representative. What was of particular note was how little time this member was actually out on the floor of the House giving speeches. The time was so minimal that it was impossible to use any data from his actions within the House. Instead, a news conference became the subject of my analysis.

A striking finding was uncovered upon further research into the C-Span data for this participant. His airtime on video over the last three years amounted to an average of an hour for the entire year, whereas his Democratic House counterpart averaged three and a third hours a year. Additionally, this conspicuous difference in time spent on camera was also evident for the videos of their news conferences. This Representative averaged eight minutes with the press, including questions and answers, whereas the Democratic representative in this study averaged thirty minutes.

Also noteworthy was the difference in time spent on camera for participants in this study from the Senate verses those from the House. Members of the Senate in this study, featured in close to twice as many videos as did members of the House. The average time spent on camera for Senators in this study was approximately 27.5 hours.

The content of his short speech and then question and answer session with the press, centered around the criminal justice system, veterans affairs, Planned Parenthood and the Iran Nuclear Agreement. From the deductive analysis it was found that statements relating to the *authority-subversion* dimension occurred more often than other types of statements. From the inductive analysis, his speech contained many instances of disapproval of the President, wherein he criticized his policy or actions ("The President promised reform at the VA. It hasn't happened"). He also discussed his opinion regarding Planned Parenthood, abortion ("The gruesome practices embraced by Planned Parenthood") and the impending visit of the Pope. In addition to these two areas, this participant demonstrated that he felt that the criminal justice system was incarcerating some individuals who really did not need to be in jail ("People are in there for flimsy reasons").

Participant #6

Examples for Code Categories

Categories	Percentage of total statements	Examples
Authority-Subversion	23%	"We want the members to have all the information they require, that they need"
Loyalty-Betrayal	16%	"The President has proposed the 'Grow America Act'….it's exactly what this country needs"
Liberty-Oppression	16%	"The members are going to do what they believe….and the administration is endless and boundless in it's interest in supplying this information"
Care-Harm	9%	"Planned Parenthood….is a very important part of women's health in America"
Fairness-Cheating	6%	"Let's have an investigation of those people who were trying to ensnare Planned Parenthood in a controversy that doesn't exist"
Sanctity-Degradation	1%	"To improve the quality of our air"
Partisan	18%	"The clock is ticking on the Highway trust fund [and on] the Ex-Import Bank"
Bipartisan	3%	"Last week 100 Democratic and Republican ambassadors came out in support of the bill"

Confrontational	1%	"The Republican Congress should not use this"
Respectful-Disrespectful	3%	"I'm really very proud of our members"
Defensive	3%	"I don't stipulate that the Health Care Bill is why we didn't win in 2010"
Infighting	1%	"Those who voted for it have a lot of explaining to do"

Participant Profile

This participant was a Democratic Representative. As with other participants, this individual's data was extracted from a news conference due to the minimal amount of time she was on video during House sessions. The content of the video selected included a discussion of the Iran Nuclear Agreement, sanctuary cities, and immigration, Planned Parenthood, the Highway Bill and the Ex-Imp Bank. From the deductive analysis, statements reflecting the *authority-subversion* dimension had a higher number of occurrences than other types of statements.

From the inductive analysis it appeared that this individual spent a lot of time praising her party members for their diligence and commitment to reviewing the Iran Nuclear Agreement ("As I said I am very proud of the thoughtfulness and the seriousness that members are bringing to this"). She was particularly polite, friendly, courteous, open and accommodating to the questions posed by the Press.

Codes, Categories and Themes

Code Examples	Categories	Themes
"As I said I am very proud of the thoughtfulness and the seriousness that members are bringing to this;" supporting	• Proud of party members • Supportive of President's agenda	• Allegiance
A third path to dealing with Iran – non-nuclear, secular Iran; advocating; hopeful	• Demonstrating wide support for Iran deal • Broader thinking regarding Iran	• Peace Process
"A CR would be a failure;" frustration; detailing what needs to happen	• Chastising Republicans • Bills under a time crunch • Unhappy with appropriations	• Leadership
Explaining and answering in detail to questions from Press; willingness for transparency; providing details	• Detailed response to questions • Open about details • Open	• Accessible
"They've been out to get Planned Parenthood for as long as I can remember;" importance of Planned Parenthood to women's health; irritated	• Irritated regarding attack on Planned Parenthood • Protect women's health	• Women's rights
"The person got a gun online;" sanctuary cities; fairness of immigration reform	• Democrat platform items • Immigration reform • Gun control	• Democratic champion
Polite interactions; wanting to ensure that Press has all pertinent information;	• Respectful • Polite	• Considerate

openness	• Thoughtful	

Appendix E: Occurrences of Coding Frame Categories In Data per Party

Occurrences of coding frame categories in Data for all Republican participants combined and all Democratic Participants combined

Moral Foundations Dimension and Additional Dimensions	Percentage of total statements for Republican Participants	Percentage of total statements for Democratic Participants
Care-Harm	0.07%	10%
Fairness-Cheating	4%	8%
Liberty-Oppression	2%	12%
Loyalty-Betrayal	11%	9%
Authority-Subversion	15%	10%
Sanctity-Degradation	4%	2%
Partisan	13%	21%
Bipartisan	2%	2%

Infighting	6%	0.3%
Confrontational	12%	8%
Accusatory	14%	11%
Respectful-Disrespectful	7%	3%
Defensive	6%	4%
Disbelief	3%	0.3%

Appendix F: Group Themes and Their Relationship to Moral Foundation

Republican Participant's Combined Themes to Related Moral Foundation

Combined Themes of all Republican Participants	Related Moral Foundation
Partisan Disappointment Integrity Defensive Corruption Political Assault Influence Patriotic Disloyalty Self-Protection	• Loyalty-Betrayal
Decisive Positive Attitude Solution-focused Recalcitrance Dismissive	• Authority-Subversion
Values Avarice Fairness Justice	• Fairness-Cheating
Repugnance Reverence	• Sanctity-Degradation
Liberty	• Liberty-Oppression

	• Care-Harm

Democratic Participant's Combined Themes to Related Moral Foundations

Combined Themes for all Democratic Participants	Related Moral Foundation
Leadership Considerate Commend Reprimand Work Ethic	• Authority-Subversion
Allegiance Democratic Champion Policy Adherent Disillusionment	• Loyalty-Betrayal
Peace Process Power/Oppression Oppression/Power Rights	• Liberty-Oppression
Accessible Women's Rights Uncompromising Exasperated	• Fairness-Cheating
Sanctity	• Sanctity

Oppression (advocating women's healthcare)	• Care-Harm