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LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY  
School of Behavioral Health  
in conjunction with the  
Faculty of Graduate Studies

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Elections Have Consequences: Moral Value Foundations Ensure  
Gridlock through the Ballot Box

by

Gregory John Regts

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A Dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of  
the requirements for the degree  
Doctor of Philosophy in Clinical Psychology

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September 2015

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Each person whose signature appears below certifies that this dissertation in his/her opinion is adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree Doctor of Philosophy.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

MFT	Moral Foundations Theory
IF	Individualizing Foundations
BF	Binding Foundations
MFQ	Moral Foundations Questionnaire
SEM	Structural Equation Modeling
CFI	Comparative Fit Index
SRMR	Standardized Root Mean Square
RMSEA	Root Mean Square Error of Approximation
LM	Lagrange Multiplier

## ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Elections Have Consequences: Moral Value Foundations Ensure  
Gridlock through the Ballot Box

by

Gregory John Regts

Doctor of Philosophy, Graduate Program in Clinical Psychology  
Loma Linda University, September 2015  
Dr. Hector Betancourt, Chairperson

In the midst of unprecedented partisan polarization in the voting public and congressional gridlock in Washington, research in moral psychology has implicated reliance on differing moral value foundations between liberals and conservatives as a determinant of partisan divides. While Moral Foundations Theory (MFT) research has highlighted the effect of moral values on a variety of issues, little research has explained their effect on psychological factors and voting behavior related to fiscal concerns. Guided by Betancourt's integrative model for studying culture, psychological factors, and behavior, the present study investigated the extent to which socially shared moral value foundations influence psychological reactions to a politician's support for a compromising balanced fiscal policy, and related voting intentions among Democrats and Republicans. Five hundred twenty-three Democratic ( $n = 300$ ) and Republican ( $n = 223$ ) participants were recruited using convenience and snowball sampling. As proposed, participants who endorsed socially binding moral values (e.g. authority, purity, and in-group loyalty) had stronger emotional and cognitive reactions to a politician's support for a compromising balanced fiscal policy, which affected their intention to vote for that politician. This effect was indirect, through attribution-emotion processes, and moderated

by party affiliation, such that reactions were negative for Republicans and positive for Democrats. Results suggest that moral values may lead voters to elect politicians who are farther from the political center, perpetuating gridlock.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

In the wake of several controversies that riddled the Obama administration during the early part of 2013, a Republican congressperson from Oklahoma took to the floor of the House of Representatives to present a scathing rebuke against the President's leadership ability. In his remarks, Representative Bridenstine stated that the President's "dishonesty, incompetence, vengefulness and *lack of moral compass* lead many to suggest that he is not fit to lead" (Vamburkar, 2013; emphasis added). The comments themselves are not all too uncommon in the world of talk radio and cable news. What was unique about these comments was the assumed appropriateness of making such an attack on a sitting President's *morality* on the floor of the House of Representatives. In distinguishing right from wrong, the congressman was fortified in his belief that *his* right was objectively right, whereas the President's right was objectively wrong, so much so that he was motivated to express his contempt on a public and generally civil stage.

The contentiousness in this incident has become all too typical in America's current political atmosphere, but is marked by an underlying conviction that those in the opposing party could not possibly hope for, or want, what is best for the country. As a result, recent polling suggests that Americans are more polarized along partisan lines on values and basic beliefs now than at any point in the past 25 years (Pew Research Center, 2012). This divide was found to be greater than those based on gender, age, race, or class. Of greater concern, however, is the fact that this increase in partisanship has mostly occurred over the past 14 years, causing the two major political parties to become more ideologically homogeneous (Pew Research Center, 2014). Specifically, it was found that

the largest partisan differences leading up to the 2012 elections were over the scope and role of government in the economic realm (Pew Research Center, 2012).

With the apparent hyper-partisanship in the voting public, it is no surprise that contentiousness and partisan divide have spilled over into the government itself. During the first half of the 111<sup>th</sup> congress (2009) there were a record 67 filibusters, double what occurred between 1950 and 1969 (U.S. Senate, 2013). By the end of the 111<sup>th</sup> congress's two-years, there were 137 (U.S. Senate, 2013). An inability to work together, or to compromise, can have significant consequences on legislative effectiveness. Four hundred bills passed by the House of Representatives from 2009 through 2011 were never voted-on or even debated in the Senate due to an inability to obtain the required 60 votes (U.S. Senate, 2013). By the fall of 2013, Congress's inability to compromise ultimately led to an 18-day shutdown of the United States government (Ferraro & Younglai, 2013).

The clear and halting gridlock that has resulted has been frustrating to voters and politicians alike. Although partisan polarization is not new, the current level of legislative ineffectiveness is unprecedented (Pew Research Center, 2014). In order to remedy this problem, however, we must first attempt to identify the source of the conflict. The purpose of this study was to investigate factors that may influence the escalating tension between Democrats and Republicans that has become all too apparent in Washington. Specifically, the present study examines the potential role of socially shared moral values and related psychological factors as they influence voter reactions to political compromise.

## Moral Foundations Theory

Recent research in political psychology has taken important strides towards understanding political tension. Haidt and his colleagues suggest that the basic conflict in partisanship is one based on moral values. Specifically, they have found that liberals and conservatives rely on a different set of moral foundations in determining what is right or wrong (Haidt, 2012). In this way, his Moral Foundations Theory (MFT) provides a more fundamental explanation for the unprecedented hyper-partisanship that we are seeing in our current political system, which provides a possible justification for why one politician might accuse another of “lacking a moral compass.”

According to Haidt, varying moral foundations determine how the mind is organized to react in advance of experience (2012). In other words, he assumes that each person maintains an intuitive sense of *right* and *wrong*, and that this intuition initiates specific emotions (e.g. disgust, sympathy). One’s reactions to these intuitive emotions become the basis of moral judgments. Individuals subsequently create rationalizations for their evaluations (Sherman & Haidt, 2011). Haidt (2012; 2001) describes this process as an emotional (intuitive) dog, and its rational tail. In other words, intuition leads, and reason follows. Notably, this conceptualization stands in contrast to explanations provided by social-cognitive theories such as attribution theory, in which cognitive appraisals directly affect emotions (Weiner, 2006). In Haidt’s explanation, intuitive emotional reactions themselves influence our rational, or cognitive, appraisals.

MFT suggests that varying sets of five moral foundations control each person’s intuitive dog. The first two (fairness/cheating, harm/care) are considered *individualizing foundations* (IF), as they are primarily concerned with protecting the rights of individual

people (Graham, Haidt, & Nosek, 2009). The fairness foundation, much in the way that Kohlberg described morality (1969), emphasizes the importance of fairness, reciprocity, and justice in moral judgments (Haidt & Graham, 2007). The harm foundation, which mirrors Gilligan's descriptions of moral development (Gilligan & Wiggins, 1987), is concerned with caring, nurturing, and protecting vulnerable individuals from harm (Haidt & Graham, 2007). These individualizing foundations have been identified and extensively studied in developmental psychology. However, MFT advances the argument by suggesting that moral values are not limited to values that protect individuals, but also include values that bind groups (Graham, Haidt, & Nosek, 2009).

The *binding foundations* (BF) (loyalty/betrayal, authority/subversion, purity/sanctity) are hypothesized to have evolved as a way to preserve social institutions (Haidt, 2012). Haidt and Graham (2007) suggest that the loyalty foundation upholds virtues of loyalty and patriotism, and functions to celebrate sacrifice for the group, and punishment for traitors. The authority foundation helps to maintain respect for and obedience to tradition by supporting values of subordination and respect for authority, and the purity foundation encourages an ethic of purity that serves both hygienic and social functions by marking cultural boundaries and suppressing carnal selfishness.

With respect to these foundations, researchers have consistently found that liberals rely on IF in their moral evaluations, whereas conservatives tend to utilize all five foundations to some extent, with BF consistently endorsed at higher levels (Graham, Haidt, & Nosek, 2009; Graham, Nosek, Haidt, Iyer, Koleva, & Ditto, 2011). As such, moral values do not necessarily indicate an objective right or wrong; rather, they are evolved psychological mechanisms that work together to suppress or regulate self-

interest, and to protect and promote certain social institutions (Haidt, 2012). From this perspective, it may very well be the case that a Democratic president does actually “lack” the moral compass that a Republican congressperson holds, while not actually lacking *a* moral compass. Even so, moral foundations alone cannot explain the current gridlock in congress entirely. If that were the case, the existing congressional ineffectiveness would be perpetual, rather than increasing. Perhaps the answer lies in how these moral foundations affect the most basic of democratic ideals.

### **Voting Behavior**

How do voters decide which politicians stay in office, and which politicians leave? Voting behavior has long been an area of focus in American political science. Several theoretical models have been developed to help describe the motivators of voter choice (Antunes, 2010). Some models of voter choice primarily implicate partisanship (Campbell, Converse, Miller, & Stokes, 1960 as cited in Antunes, 2010), whereas others emphasize rational choice/self-interest (Downs, 1957 as cited in in Antunes, 2010) as essential for motivating political decision-making. These models, although disparate, help to map the domain of voting behavior, but only hold true for some voters in some contexts. One major criticism is the failure of existing models of voting behavior to acknowledge the variation across the voting public, and instead viewing the public as one group (Cottam, Dietz-Uhler, Mastors, & Prestion, 2010). Research in political psychology has identified other factors that have a great deal of influence on individual voter choice, and that lead people to vote against their party or even against their own self-interests.

Recent investigations into how and why people vote for particular issues or candidates reveals the complex, and sometimes inconsistent, effects of psychological processes on political opinions and behaviors. As an illustration of this complexity, research on the varying influence of emotional factors on voting, information seeking, and support for policy issues has found some competing results. For example, Miller (2011) found that political sophistication and engagement led to higher emotionality about political issues. Similarly, political engagement in the form of candidate evaluations were found to influence voter anxiety (Ladd & Lenz, 2008). On the other hand, voter fear and anxiety itself has also been found to cause voters to be less reliant on partisanship, and more likely to be more politically engaged by seeking out candidate information (Marcus, Neuman, & MacKuen, 2000). Findings like these stimulate questions about the actual role of emotions in political behavior. Does emotionality lead to political engagement, or does political engagement lead to emotionality? Given results like these, it is at least clear that political behavior is not a purely emotional endeavor and that other factors must be involved.

Research into cognitive processes related to political behaviors has helped to clarify some of these inconsistencies, highlighting the importance of the cognition-emotion relationship for political behavior. One study found that, independent of political ideology, opinions about welfare were based on cognitive factors such as perceptions of the recipients' effort, and that this effect was mediated by anger and compassion (Petersen, Sznycer, Cosmides, & Tooby, 2012). Further highlighting the complex role of cognition and emotion in political disposition, researchers have found that individuals differ in their need to engage in effortful thinking versus their need to seek out emotions

when evaluating political information, and that this difference implicates a different set of psychological predictors of political choices (i.e. cognitive evaluations versus affective attachments)(Arceneaux & Vander Wielen, 2013).

Clearly, the factors that influence political behaviors are complex and variable, interfering with voters' ability to vote consistently, or even "correctly." In a study investigating the ability of voters to vote "correctly" for candidates who represent their own priorities, Lau (2012) found that primary voters performed barely better than chance, and were much worse than general election voters. Presumably, primary voters are, in fact, more partisan than general election voters. These findings highlight the fact that the act of voting, especially partisan voting, is often less rational than many would like to think.

Given these discrepancies and the variable effects of emotion and cognition, some have suggested that there is something more fundamental, or innate, that determines how and why people vote. Lakoff (2004) suggests that voters tend to make political decisions by voting for their values, or their vision, for the country and its future. Related to general moral behaviors, some research has found that morality itself is more predictive of future deviant behavior in teenagers than other demographic factors (i.e., household income, parents' education, social networks, and church attendance) (Vaisey, 2009). In this way, morality is implicated as a motivator of behavior, and suggests that even unarticulated moral schemas influence how people behave.

Given MFT's proposition that liberals and conservatives consistently vary in the moral values that they utilize (Haidt, 2012), the act of voting itself could be viewed simply as a means of voting for one's moral vision for the future, separate from one's

self-interest, but rather for the interest of the group. Recent research has provided some evidence for this, emphasizing the influence of moral value concerns and intention to vote. Johnson et al. (2014) found that IF foundations predicted voting intentions for liberals whereas BF predicted intentions for conservatives. As such, voting for or against specific candidates had a moral basis, and therefore could serve to indirectly push congressional representatives ideologically farther apart by way of the ballot box. In other words, the binding function of moral values could cause the need to maintain group cohesion to dominate the functionality of the institution. This may be highlighted by research that suggests that the importance of one's political group identity is even more present in the aftermath of an election. Motyl (2014) found that, following the 2012 election, Romney voters were more likely to endorse desire to migrate out of the country due to a reduced sense of belonging to the U.S. If moral values are at the basis of these political intentions and behaviors, serving to bind, strengthen, and increase our sense of belonging to communities, while dissuading or punishing moral violators (Haidt, 2012), then voting itself is a moral behavior.

In a broad sense, research suggests that moral value foundations have a substantial impact on various aspects of one's psychological make-up. Niemi and Young (2013) found links between moral value foundations and various interpersonal orientations such that individuals who were oriented towards controlling and status-seeking behaviors were more likely to endorse authority values and less likely to endorse caring values, whereas higher caring valuations were associated with more prosocial orientations. Similarly, individualizing moral foundations specifically have been found to be negatively associated with levels of spitefulness (Zeigler-Hill, Noser, Roof, Vonk, &

Marcus, 2015). Research goes as far as highlighting associations between moral value foundations and pathological personality features such as negative affect and antagonism (Noser, Siegler-Hill, Vrabel, Besser, Ewing, & Southard, 2015). Additionally, evidence suggests that differing moral emphases do influence voter decisions. Not surprisingly, moral value foundations have been found to influence attitudes on culture war issues (e.g., the effect of sanctity on same-sex marriage, abortion, and cloning), and that this effect accounts for significantly more variance than more general value constructs (Koleva, Graham, Iyer, Ditto, & Haidt, 2012). Moreover, moral value foundations have been found to influence the degree of political polarization on environmental attitudes, even indicating that conservatives' attitudes about the environment can be improved by couching environmental issues in more conservatively endorsed BF (Feinberg & Willer, 2012). Moral value foundations have also been found to be influential in explaining foreign policy attitudes, as IF predict preference for cooperative internationalism and BF predict militant internationalism (Kertzer, Powers, Rathbun, & Iyer, 2014). Overall, the literature suggests that moral values foundations affect one's psychology generally (i.e., cognitions, emotions), and, therefore, are important in both dictating ideological concerns, and influencing moral behavior in general social contexts (Carnes, Lickel, & Jonoff-Bulman, 2015).

Research on differences in the mechanisms of political decision-making between liberals and conservatives implicates the unique link between morality, emotion, and cognition. Regarding the administration of personal aid, for example, liberals were found to feel morally wrong using personal responsibility as a criterion for withholding aid while conservatives did not (Skitka & Tetlock, 1993). However, liberals may actually

have initial responses to issues that more closely resemble conservative reactions, but tend to re-think and correct these responses (Skitka, Mullen, Griffin, Hutchinson, & Champerlin, 2002), indicating more active cognitive mechanisms. Similarly, others have found that by reducing cognitive faculty through fatigue, distraction, and higher cognitive load, liberals tended to act more like conservatives in their decision-making (Eidelman, Crandall, Goodman, & Blanchar, 2012). These findings suggest that there are cognitive mechanisms for liberal decision-making that may function differently than the cognitive mechanisms involved in conservative decision-making.

Research on MFT provides strong evidence that moral values, at least in part, have substantial influence in determining our political reactions and ideologies, but has not investigated the impact of moral values on the psychological factors central in political decision-making. For MFT to more completely describe the underlying mechanisms that determine partisanship and the scope of voting behavior, evidence must show that the hypothesized moral values also effect subsequent intuitive reactions and cognitive evaluations. To date, there has been little research on whether specific cognitive mechanisms are motivated by these underlying value foundations.

### **The Present Study**

The existing literature makes it clear that voter decision-making is a complex and interactional process, and much of the research on moral value foundations and voter attitudes is limited to its effect on social, non-fiscal, issues. At the basis of MFT, however, is the assumption that there are innate moral value structures that serve to bind individuals into conservative or liberal factions. If this is the case, and if voting is in fact

a moral behavior, then the act itself may function to maintain group cohesion by punishing those perceived to be moral violators, even on economic rather than social policy. Over time, and with the certain environmental factors (e.g., media), this may lead individuals to vote to the extremes and away from compromise, further polarizing the government. In the current study we intend to further elucidate these effects by investigating the following questions: Do moral foundations determine voting behavior related to economic issues? What is the role of cognition in determining voting behavior based on moral foundations? Do we tend to punish elected officials who offend our moral foundations?

In order to test research questions that involve complex interrelations of multiple variables, strong theoretical guidance is necessary. Unfortunately, existing models of voter behavior do not necessarily include hypotheses that integrate cultural influences (e.g., socially shared moral values) *and* psychological factors. In order to account for the influence of moral values and psychological factors, the current study will utilize an integrative theoretical model designed to study the structure of relationships among social structural, cultural, and psychological factors, as they relate to behavior (Betancourt, Hardin, & Manzi, 1992; Betancourt & Lopez, 1993), that has previously been adapted to investigate the role of culture in determining health behaviors (Betancourt & Flynn, 2009; Betancourt, Flynn, Riggs, & Garberoglio, 2010). For this study, Betancourt's integrative model was applied to voting behavior in order to examine the hypothesized structure of relationships (*see* Figure 1). Expectations based on this theoretical model recognize the direct and/or indirect influence of a person's own cultural beliefs, values, norms, and expectations on a particular behavior, as well as the proximal influence of



## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **METHODS**

#### **Participants and Procedures**

Data were collected as part of a larger effort to study the cultural and psychological antecedents of voter decision-making. Following approval from Loma Linda University's Institutional Review Board, recruitment was conducted using internet-based convenience and snowball sampling. Participants were recruited from online social media sources between January 2014 and May 2014. Participants were eligible for inclusion if they were (a) over the age of 18, (b) eligible to vote in the U.S., (c) able to access the internet in order to complete the online survey, and (d) able to read and respond to an English language survey.

After being contacted online via social networks and email listservs, participants were directed to a website where they were given the opportunity to complete the online survey, which utilized Qualtrics Software. Once they arrived at the website, potential participants were presented with a written summary of the objectives of the study, the risks and benefits of participation, and electronically acknowledged consent to participate in the study or decline without penalty. Participants were then required to confirm that they met the eligibility criteria summarized above before being directed to complete the survey. After accessing the instrument, participants were first asked to respond to several items regarding demographic variables, followed by items related to moral values, and concluding with the measure of political compromise described below. Throughout completion of the survey, participants were required to answer each item on a page before being directed to the subsequent page. Participants who completed the survey

**Table 1.** Sample demographics by Political Party Affiliation

Variable	Study Sample		Not Retained	
	Republican ( <i>n</i> = 223)	Democrat ( <i>n</i> = 300)	Republican ( <i>n</i> = 7)	Democrat ( <i>n</i> = 15)
	<i>M</i> (SD)	<i>M</i> (SD)	<i>M</i> (SD)	<i>M</i> (SD)
Age in years <sup>b</sup>	41.89 (16.10)	35.00 (14.09)	29.86 (14.59)	33.73 (11.65)
Education	16.44 (2.50)	16.67 (2.76)	14.71 (3.2)	17.27 (3.47)
Likelihood of Voting in Next Election	7.16 (1.78)	7.16 (1.68)	6.0 (2.08)	7.10 (1.22)
	<i>n</i> (%)	<i>n</i> (%)	<i>n</i> (%)	<i>n</i> (%)
Gender <sup>a</sup>				
Male	88 (39.5)	111 (37.0)	3 (42.9)	8 (53.3)
Female	135 (60.5)	189 (63.0)	4 (57.1)	6 (40.0)
Other	-	-	0 (0.0)	1 (6.7)
Income <sup>b</sup>				
≤ \$14,999	15 (6.7)	22 (7.3)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
\$15-24,999	7 (3.1)	22 (7.3)	0 (0.0)	1 (6.7)
\$25-39,999	17 (7.6)	41 (13.7)	0 (0.0)	4 (26.7)
\$40-59,999	35 (15.7)	46 (15.3)	3 (42.9)	4 (26.7)
\$60-79,999	30 (13.5)	49 (16.3)	1 (14.3)	1 (6.7)
\$80-99,999	32 (14.3)	39 (13.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (6.7)
\$100-149,999	41 (18.4)	51 (17.0)	3 (42.9)	3 (20.0)
> 150,000	46 (20.6)	30 (10.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (6.7)
Marital Status <sup>b</sup>				
Single	59 (26.5)	112 (37.3)	5 (71.4)	6 (40.0)
Married	139 (62.3)	129 (43.0)	2 (28.6)	5 (33.3)
Cohabiting	3 (1.3)	32 (10.7)	0 (0.0)	2 (13.3)
Divorced	9 (4.0)	14 (4.7)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
Separated	2 (0.9)	2 (0.7)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
Widowed	4 (1.8)	2 (0.7)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
Never Married	7 (3.1)	9 (3.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (13.3)
Race/Ethnicity <sup>c</sup>				
Anglo	161 (72.2)	205 (68.3)	3 (42.9)	12 (80.0)
Hispanic/Latino	15 (6.7)	41 (13.7)	1 (14.3)	1 (6.7)
African America	4 (1.8)	9 (3.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
Asian American/PI	13 (5.8)	13 (4.3)	0 (0.0)	2 (13.3)
Native American	2 (0.9)	1 (0.3)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
Other	28 (12.6)	31 (10.3)	3 (42.9)	0 (0.0)

<sup>a</sup> significant differences/associations between/across Democrats.

<sup>b</sup> significant differences/associations within 'Study Sample'.

<sup>c</sup> significant differences/associations within 'Not Retained'.

were given an opportunity to enter a random drawing for a chance to receive one of ten \$50 Amazon.com gift cards.

Utilizing these procedures, a total of 607 participants were recruited over a three-month period. Of those, 17 were excluded based on evaluation of adequate time to complete survey accurately ( $> 15$  min), and eight were excluded due to their responses on poor effort screening items ( $n = 25$ ; 7 Republican, 15 Democrat, 3 Other). Of the 582 remaining participants, 300 (51.5%) identified as Democrat/Democrat-leaning Independents, 223 (38.3%) identified as Republican/Republican-leaning Independents, and 59 (10.1%) identified as Libertarian or “Other.” The resulting proportions were remarkably similar to observed party affiliation in the U.S. [Democrat/Democrat-leaning (47%), Republican/Republican-leaning (41%), Other (12%); Gallup, 2013]. Because the study aims were intended to focus on response patterns based on party affiliation between the two major U.S. political parties, only Democrat/Democrat-leaning Independents ( $n = 300$ ) and Republican/Republican-leaning Independents ( $n = 223$ ) were examined. Demographic information and comparisons between retained and not retained participants are presented in Table 1 and described below. Throughout the rest of this paper, these combined groups will be referred to by their major party affiliation (Democrat, Republican).

## **Measures**

### ***Population Factors/Demographics***

Population factors and demographic variables were self-reported by participants including age (in years), gender, income, education (in years), race/ethnicity, marital status, political party affiliation, and partisanship. Income was measured based on eight

ordinal categories, and was treated as continuous in study analyses. Partisanship was determined based on a seven-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly liberal) to 7 (strongly conservative) with moderate at the midpoint.

The method has been used with great utility in past research in political and moral psychology (Graham, Haidt, Nosek, 2009; Jost, 2006).

**Moral Values.** Moral values were measured using the Moral Foundations Questionnaire (MFQ; Graham, Haidt, Nosek, 2009). The MFQ included two parts. The first part included 16 items with the question stem, “*When you decide whether something is right or wrong, to what extent are the following considerations relevant to your thinking?*” Participants rated their responses on a 6-point Likert scale anchored at the extremes from 1 (not at all relevant) to 6 (extremely relevant). Following are examples of items that relate to each of the five moral foundations: “Whether or not someone suffered emotionally” (Harm/Care), “Whether or not some people were treated differently than others” (Fairness/Reciprocity), “Whether or not someone’s action showed love for his or her country” (In-group/Loyalty), “Whether or not someone showed a lack of respect for authority” (Authority/Respect), and “Whether or not someone violated standards of purity and decency” (Purity/Sanctity).

The second part of the MFQ also included 16 items. However, participants were asked to “*Please read the following sentences and indicate your agreement or disagreement.*” Responses were rated on a 6-point Likert scale anchored at the extremes from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). Following are examples of items that relate to each of the five moral foundations: “Compassion for those who are suffering is the most crucial virtue” (Harm/Care), “When the government makes laws, the number

one principle should be ensuring that everyone is treated fairly” (Fairness/Reciprocity), “I am proud of my country’s history” (In-group/Loyalty), “Respect for authority is something all children need to learn” (Authority/Respect), and “People should not do things that are disgusting, even if no one is harmed” (Purity/Sanctity). Scores for the MFQ range from 0-30 for each of the five foundations, which are composed of 6 items.

The Cronbach’s alphas for each 6-item Moral Foundation scale demonstrated good to poor reliability: Harm/Care ( $\alpha_{\text{REP}} = .54$ ;  $\alpha_{\text{DEM}} = .51$ ;  $\alpha_{\text{Overall}} = .54$ ), Fairness/Reciprocity ( $\alpha_{\text{REP}} = .70$ ;  $\alpha_{\text{DEM}} = .57$ ;  $\alpha_{\text{Overall}} = .66$ ), In-group/Loyalty ( $\alpha_{\text{REP}} = .65$ ;  $\alpha_{\text{DEM}} = .68$ ;  $\alpha_{\text{Overall}} = .67$ ), Authority/Respect ( $\alpha_{\text{REP}} = .57$ ;  $\alpha_{\text{DEM}} = .69$ ;  $\alpha_{\text{Overall}} = .69$ ), and Purity/Sanctity ( $\alpha_{\text{REP}} = .76$ ;  $\alpha_{\text{DEM}} = .78$ ;  $\alpha_{\text{Overall}} = .82$ ). Although some of the Cronbach’s alphas were lower than what is generally considered acceptable in social science research, the observed values were consistent with previously published research using these constructs: Harm/Care ( $\alpha = .62$ ), Fairness/Reciprocity ( $\alpha = .67$ ), Ingroup/Loyalty ( $\alpha = .59$ ), Authority/Respect ( $\alpha = .39$ ), and Purity/Sanctity ( $\alpha = .70$ ) (Graham, Haidt, & Nosek, 2009).

Similar to more recent research utilizing these scales (Napier & Luguri, 2013; Smith, Aquino, Koleva, & Graham, 2014), this study delineated IF and BF (IF [ $\alpha = .80$ ] and BF [ $\alpha = .81$ ]; IF [ $\alpha = .86$ ] and BF [ $\alpha = .85$ ]), finding similarly good reliability among political parties (IF (12 items):  $\alpha_{\text{REP}} = .77$ ,  $\alpha_{\text{DEM}} = .70$ ,  $\alpha_{\text{Overall}} = .75$ ; BF (18 items):  $\alpha_{\text{REP}} = .81$ ,  $\alpha_{\text{DEM}} = .86$ ,  $\alpha_{\text{Overall}} = .87$ ).

**Psychological Factors Related to Political Compromise.** The Political Compromise Scale was developed in order to measure emotions and cognitions related to perceptions of political compromise regarding the government’s role in economic policy

(e.g., size and scope of government), as this was found to be the largest partisan difference leading up to the 2012 elections (Pew Research Center, 2012). Participants were asked to respond to a vignette indicating that a congressperson from their own district and political party voted for a bill that helped to balance the federal budget by increasing taxes on wealthy Americans and cutting spending for social assistance programs. Following the vignette, participants were asked, “How does this make you feel about your congressperson?” and rated their responses on a 7-point Likert scale anchored at the extremes from 1 (Very Displeased) to 7 (Very Pleased), measuring their intuitive emotional reactions to the behavior. Next, attributions for compromising behavior were assessed as participants were asked to indicate why they thought their congressperson voted this way on a 6-point Likert scale anchored at the extremes from 1 (Entirely for personal gain) to 6 (Entirely for the good of the country). Finally, participants were asked, “Based on this vote, how likely would you be to vote to reelect this person in an upcoming election?” which was also rated on a 6-point Likert scale.

### **Statistical Analyses**

Several statistical procedures were utilized to address study aims and hypotheses. Descriptive statistics, evaluations for univariate and multivariate normality, psychometric evaluations, partitioning of covariates, independent samples *t*-tests, and bivariate correlation analyses were conducted using SPSS 22.0. In order to test the hypothesized structure of relationships while accounting for the influence of other study variables, Bentler’s structural equation modeling (SEM) program was used (EQS 6.1; 2005) with the maximum likelihood method of estimation. The influence of covariates (i.e., age,

education, income, and gender) were partitioned from the covariance matrix prior to SEM in order to maintain a simplified model without using up model degrees of freedom (*see* Kammeyer-Mueller & Wanberg, 2003). Adequacy of model fit was assessed using a non-significant  $\chi^2$  goodness-of-fit statistic, a  $df/\chi^2$  ratio of less than 2.0 (Tabachnick et al., 2001), a Comparative Fit Index (CFI) of .95 or greater, a Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) of less than .08, and a Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) of less than .05 and upper-bound CI < .10 (Browne & Cudeck, 1993). Modifications to the hypothesized model were employed based on results from the Lagrange Multiplier (LM) test for adding parameters, the Wald test for removing model parameters, in addition to theoretical considerations.

In order to test moderating hypotheses, multi-group tests of invariance were also conducted according to procedures outlined by Byrne (1995). The test of invariance was performed in multiple steps following the establishment of fit of baseline models for Democratic and Republican participants. First, separate baseline models were tested without constraints across parties, serving as the reference model, in order to establish configural invariance, which would suggest that the same items are indicators of the same factors for both parties. Second, factor loadings were constrained to be equal across parties, where a non-significant change in fit indicates measurement equivalence between groups. Therefore, if differences in structural paths occurred, they could be assumed to be due to actual differences between groups rather than measurement artifacts (van de Vijver & Leung, 1997). In the final step, all structural paths were constrained to be equal across parties. If decrement in fit was indicated by the LM Test of equality constraints and it was determined that releasing equality constraints drastically improved model fit, based

on LM  $\chi^2 \geq 5.0$  per  $df$ , then paths were considered non-invariant and released sequentially.

## CHAPTER THREE

### RESULTS

#### Preliminary Analyses

A comparison between the removed Republican and Democrat cases and those retained (*see* Table 1) revealed no significant differences between groups in age,  $t(543) = 1.64, p > .05, d = .36$ ; years of education,  $t(543) = 0.20, p > .05, d = .04$ ; household income,  $t(543) = 0.42, p > .05, d = .09$ ; partisanship,  $t(543) = 0.90, p > .05, d = .20$ ; or likelihood of voting in the next election,  $t(543) = 1.17, p > .05, d = .25$ . Similarly, no significant associations were found between those removed and retained on race/ethnicity,  $\chi^2(5) = 1.54, p > .05, \phi_c = .05$ ; or marital status,  $\chi^2(6) = 7.36, p > .05, \phi_c = .12$ . However, there was a significant association for gender in that those removed were more likely to be male (50%) than those retained (38%),  $\chi^2(2) = 25.49, p < .001, \phi = .22$ .

Moreover, comparisons between removed and retained participants for Republicans indicated no significant differences in age,  $t(228) = 1.95, p = .052, d = .74$ ; years of education,  $t(228) = 1.79, p > .05, d = .69$ ; household income,  $t(228) = 0.04, p > .05, d = .02$ ; partisanship,  $t(228) = 0.62, p > .05, d = .24$ ; or likelihood of voting in the next election,  $t(228) = 1.70, p > .05, d = .65$ ; and no significant associations were found between those removed and retained on gender,  $\chi^2(1) = .03, p > .05, \phi = .01$ ; race/ethnicity,  $\chi^2(5) = 6.60, p > .05, \phi_c = .17$ ; or marital status,  $\chi^2(6) = 6.98, p > .05, \phi_c = .17$ . Similarly, comparisons between removed and retained participants for Democrats indicated no significant differences in age,  $t(313) = 0.34, p > .05, d = .09$ ; years of education,  $t(313) = 0.81, p > .05, d = .21$ ; household income,  $t(313) = 0.30, p > .05, d = .08$ ; partisanship,  $t(313) = 0.21, p > .05, d = .06$ ; or likelihood of voting in the next

election,  $t(313) = 0.22, p > .05, d = .06$ ; and no significant associations were found between those removed and retained on race/ethnicity,  $\chi^2(5) = 5.29, p > .05, \phi_c = .13$ ; or marital status,  $\chi^2(6) = 5.70, p > .05, \phi_c = .13$ . However, there was a significant association for gender in that those removed were more likely to be male (53%) than those retained (37%),  $\chi^2(2) = 22.23, p < .001, \phi = .27$ .

Within the study sample, Republican participants ( $M = 41.89, SD = 16.10$ ) were older than Democratic participants ( $M = 35.00, SD = 14.09$ ),  $t(521) = 5.20, p < .001, d = .46$ ; and had significantly higher income ( $M = 5.46, SD = 2.09$ ) than Democratic participants ( $M = 2.06, SD = 2.06$ ),  $t(521) = 3.43, p = .001, d = .30$  (see Table 1). An association was found between party affiliation and marital status such that Democratic participants were more likely to be single (37.3%) or cohabitating (10.7%) and less likely to be married (43.0%) than Republican participants (26.5%, 1.3%, and 62.3% respectively),  $\chi^2(6) = 32.19, p < .001, \phi_c = .25$ . No significant associations or differences between party affiliation and race/ethnicity, gender, or education were found. Additionally, the majority of participants within each party were female (60.5% Republican; 63.0% Democrat) and Anglo-American (72.2% Republican; 68.3% Democrat) with greater than 16 years of education (Republican:  $M = 16.44, SD = 2.50$ ; Democrat:  $M = 16.67, SD = 2.76$ ).

Prior to hypothesis testing, the variance explained by relevant covariates (i.e., age, gender, education, and income) was partitioned from the study variables in order to maintain a simplified model without using up model degrees of freedoms (see Kammeyer-Mueller & Wanberg, 2003). Correlations of covariates with study variables, and means and standard deviations of covariates are displayed in Table 2.

**Table 2.** *Intercorrelations with covariates, means, and standard deviations as a function of Party*

Variable	Age	Gender	Education	Income
1. Partisanship	<b>.202**</b> (.026)	.001 (-.067)	.023 (-.095)	.051 (-.049)
2. Harm/Care	-.027 (.116*)	.318*** (.227***)	<b>-.162*</b> (.098)	-.098 (.010)
3. Fairness/Reciprocity	-.038 (.011)	<b>-.162*</b> (.090)	<b>-.141*</b> (.104)	-.097 (-.049)
4. Ingroup/Loyalty	.124 (.039)	.006 (-.084)	-.137* (-.104)	.012 (-.013)
5. Authority/Respect	<b>.279***</b> (.106)	.089 (-.059)	-.094 (-.066)	.111 (-.015)
6. Purity/Sanctity	.274*** (.120*)	.062 (.024)	-.133* (-.070)	.040 (-.034)
7. Intuitive Reaction	-.062 (-.013)	-.053 (-.094)	.102 (.000)	.063 (.004)
8. Attribution for Compromise	.057 (.060)	.022 (-.079)	.125 (.071)	.037 (.030)
9. Vote for Compromise	-.053 (.051)	-.072 (-.063)	.120 (.078)	.065 (.049)
<i>M</i>	<b>41.89</b> ( <b>35.00</b> )	-	16.44 (16.67)	<b>5.46</b> ( <b>4.83</b> )
<i>SD</i>	16.10 (14.09)	-	2.50 (2.76)	2.09 (2.06)

*Note.* Intercorrelations, means, and standard deviations for Republican participants ( $n = 223$ ) are presented in upper portion of cell, and values in parentheses represent Democratic participants ( $n = 300$ ). Boldface indicates that groups differ significantly at  $p < .05$ .

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

## Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

Prior to conducting a test of the structural model for Democrat and Republican samples, data were screened for multivariate outliers. Following these analyses, one Republican and two Democratic participants were removed from further analysis.

Additional tests of multivariate normality revealed no violations; therefore, standard test statistics were used to evaluate model fit. Means and standard deviations of study variables following the removal of multivariate outliers and partitioning of covariates are displayed in Table 3. As expected, Republicans were found to be significantly more

conservative than Democrats,  $t(518) = 29.14, p < .001, d = 2.58$ . Similarly, as expected based on Moral Foundations Theory (Graham et al., 2009), Democrats scored significantly higher than Republicans on Harm/Care and Fairness/Reciprocity,  $t(518) = 4.36, p < .001, d = .39$ ; as well as on Fairness/Reciprocity,  $t(518) = 7.74, p < .001, d = .69$ . Republicans scored significantly higher than Democrats on Ingroup/Loyalty, Authority/Respect, and Purity/Sanctity ( $t[518] = 5.84, p < .001, d = .52$ ;  $t[516.95] = 10.96, p < .001, d = .97$ ;  $t[502.62] = 13.50, p < .001, d = 1.20$ ), respectively.

Table 3 also displays the correlations among study variables after partitioning of the covariates noted above. Fisher's  $r$ -to- $z$  test of difference revealed several significantly different correlations based on political party. Specifically, significantly stronger positive correlations were found for Democrats between partisanship and Ingroup/Loyalty as well as between partisanship and Authority/Respect, such that increased levels of conservatism were associated with higher levels of endorsement of these value foundations for Democrats compared to Republicans ( $z = 3.09, p < .01$ ;  $z = 2.06, p < .05$ ), respectively. Similarly, greater endorsement of the Purity/Sanctity foundation was found to be associated with significantly higher levels of endorsement of the Ingroup/Loyalty and Authority/Respect foundations for Democrats compared to Republicans ( $z = 3.55, p < .001$ ;  $z = 2.70, p < .01$ ), respectively. On the other hand, increased endorsement of the Harm/Care foundation was related to higher levels of endorsement of the Ingroup/Loyalty and Authority/Respect foundations, and higher endorsement of the Fairness/Reciprocity foundation was related to greater endorsement of the Ingroup/Loyalty foundation for Republicans compared to Democrats ( $z = 2.27, p < .05$ ;  $z = 2.41, p < .01$ ;  $z = 2.03, p < .05$ ), respectively

**Table 3.** Intercorrelations with means, and standard deviations of study variables as a function of Political Party after partitioning covariates

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Partisanship	—								
2. Harm/Care	-.126 (-.085)	—							
3. Fairness/Reciprocity	-.169* (-.167**)	.613*** (.528***)	—						
4. Ingroup/Loyalty	<b>.057</b> <b>(.321***)</b>	<b>.379***</b> <b>(.194**)</b>	<b>.347***</b> <b>(.179**)</b>	—					
5. Authority/Respect	<b>.261***</b> <b>(.423***)</b>	<b>.274***</b> <b>(.066)</b>	.296*** (.143*)	.562*** (.623***)	—				
6. Purity/Sanctity	.374*** (.464***)	.287* (.199**)	.076 (.086)	<b>.241***</b> <b>(.510***)</b>	<b>.425***</b> <b>(.601***)</b>	—			
7. Intuitive Reaction	<b>-.155*</b> <b>(.116*)</b>	-.050 (-.031)	.017 (-.054)	<b>-.203**</b> <b>(.131*)</b>	<b>-.153*</b> <b>(.100)</b>	-.154* (.017)	—		
8. Attributions for Compromise	-.077 (.074)	.016 (-.014)	.022 (.031)	<b>-.117</b> <b>(.111)</b>	-.071 (.063)	-.072 (-.011)	<b>.506***</b> <b>(.332***)</b>	—	
9. Vote for Compromise	<b>-.147*</b> <b>(.067)</b>	-.028 (-.075)	.061 (-.101)	<b>-.172*</b> <b>(.078)</b>	-.125 (.026)	-.153* (-.010)	.807*** (.755***)	<b>.629***</b> <b>(.501***)</b>	—
<i>M</i>	<b>5.24</b> <b>(2.60)</b>	<b>4.33</b> <b>(4.57)</b>	<b>4.20</b> <b>(4.64)</b>	<b>3.80</b> <b>(3.40)</b>	<b>4.30</b> <b>(3.64)</b>	<b>4.20</b> <b>(3.05)</b>	3.86 (3.63)	3.78 (3.77)	3.99 (4.03)
<i>SD</i>	1.01 (1.03)	0.67 (0.61)	0.69 (0.59)	0.76 (0.79)	0.60 (0.78)	0.90 (1.02)	1.57 (1.47)	1.18 (1.11)	1.74 (1.49)

*Note.* Intercorrelations, means, and standard deviations for Republican participants ( $n = 222$ ) are presented in upper portion of cell, and values in parentheses represent Democrat participants ( $n = 298$ ). Boldface indicates that groups differ significantly at  $p < .05$ .

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

These analyses also indicated significant differences in directionality such that increased levels of conservatism were found to be related to more negative intuitive reactions to an act of political compromise for Republicans, but more positive reactions for Democrats ( $z = -3.06, p < .01$ ), with similar difference in directionality noted in the correlations between partisanship and an affirmative vote ( $z = -2.41, p < .01$ ). Similarly, increased endorsement of Ingroup/Loyalty was associated with negative intuitive reactions, attributing politician's vote to efforts at personal gain, and voting against that politician for Republicans, but positive relationships between these variables for Democrats ( $z = -3.79, p < .001$ ;  $z = -2.57, p < .01$ ;  $z = -2.82, p < .01$ ), respectively, and increased endorsement of Authority/Respect was associated with negative intuitive reactions for Republicans, and positive reactions for Democrats ( $z = -2.85, p < .01$ ). Finally, the positive association between intuitive reactions and attributions for compromise as well as the association between attributions for compromise and one's subsequent voting choice were found to be significantly stronger for Republicans compared to Democrats ( $z = 2.38, p < .01$ ;  $z = 2.12, p < .05$ ), respectively. Given these significant between-group differences, the need to conduct a test of invariance was further confirmed.

## **Structural Equation Modeling**

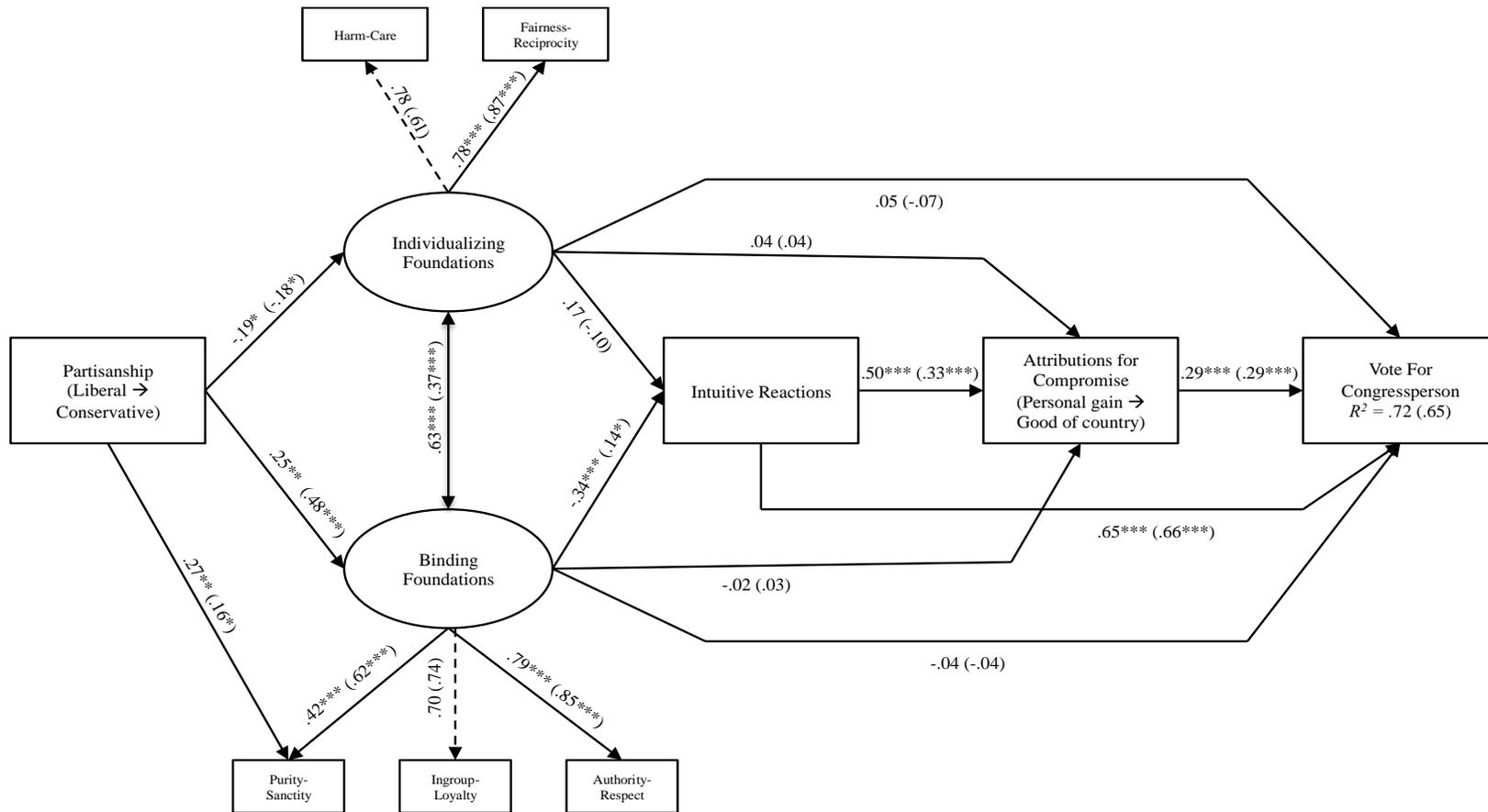
### ***Test of the Hypothesized Model***

The hypothesized model for Democrats (CFI = .98,  $\chi^2 (18, n = 298) = 34.44, p = .01, \chi^2/df = 1.91, SRMR = .035, RMSEA = .055, 90\% CI (.026, .083)$  demonstrated good fit to the data aside from significant  $\chi^2$  (Figure 2). However, the hypothesized model for

Republicans (CFI = .96,  $\chi^2$  (18,  $n = 222$ ) = 42.54,  $p = .001$ ,  $\chi^2/df = 2.36$ , SRMR=.044, RMSEA =.079, 90% CI (.048, .11)) demonstrated poor fit due to significant  $\chi^2$ ,  $\chi^2/df > 2.0$ , and upper bound RMSEA CI  $> .10$ . Due to the above noted detriment in fit, re-specification and modifications of the models based on theoretical and statistical considerations was indicated.

### *Modified model*

Based on theoretical and statistical considerations, the hypothesized model was modified. Specifically, in a sequential manner, a direct path was added from Harm/Care to Purity/Sanctity, and estimates were removed from IF to attribution for compromise and voter choice, and from BF to attribution of motivation and voter choice (*see* Figure 3). The resulting model for Democrats (CFI = .99,  $\chi^2$  (21,  $n = 298$ ) = 31.30,  $p = .07$ ,  $\chi^2/df = 1.49$ , SRMR=.035, RMSEA = .041, 90% CI (.000, .069)) demonstrated excellent fit, and the Republican model (CFI = .98,  $\chi^2$  (21,  $n = 222$ ) = 34.14,  $p = .04$ ,  $\chi^2/df = 1.63$ , SRMR=.045, RMSEA =.053, 90% CI (.014, .084)) demonstrated good fit as the  $\chi^2$  statistic was improved, but continued to be significant. The resulting models explained 64% of the variance in voter choice for Democratic participants ( $R^2 = .64$ ), and 72% of the variance in voter choice for Republican participants ( $R^2 = .72$ ). In addition, some differences in magnitude and significance of the associations between factors were observed, again indicating the need for comparison, and were further examined through multiple group analyses (Figure 3).



Republican: CFI = .96,  $\chi^2$  (18,  $n = 222$ ) = 42.54,  $p = .001$ ,  $\chi^2/df = 2.36$ , SRMR = .044, RMSEA = .079, 90% CI (.048, .11)

Democrat: CFI = .98,  $\chi^2$  (18,  $n = 298$ ) = 34.44,  $p = .01$ ,  $\chi^2/df = 1.91$ , SRMR = .035, RMSEA = .055, 90% CI (.026, .083)

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

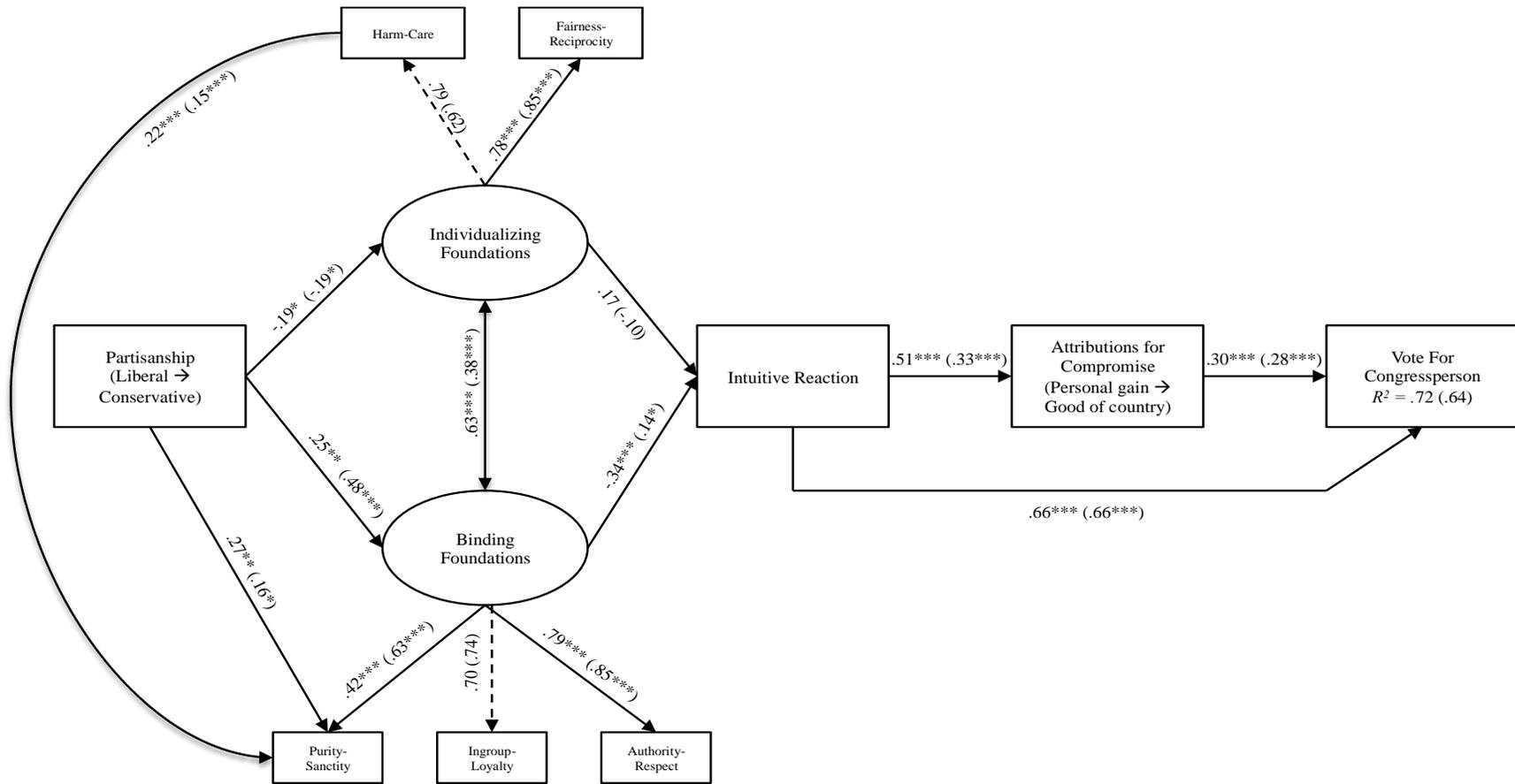
**Figure 2.** Hypothesized model of moral values, intuitive reactions, and attributions for compromise for Democrats and Republicans. Values in parentheses represent Democratic participants; Harm/Care and Ingroup/Loyalty were used to set metric for latent variables; Correlations between latent variables were specified as correlations between disturbances.

### *Test of Configural Invariance (Model 1)*

In order to test measurement equivalence, configural invariance first needed to be established. The factor structure of the baseline model was tested without constraints in order to establish equality across political groups. The requirement for configural invariance suggests that the same items must be indicators of the same factor for Republicans and Democrats, permitting differences in factor loadings across groups (Byrne, 2006). The fit indices revealed a good fit to the data, and therefore configural invariance was upheld (CFI = .99,  $\chi^2$  (42,  $n = 520$ ) = 65.44,  $p = .01$ ,  $\chi^2/df = 1.56$ , SRMR = .040, RMSEA = .046, 90% CI (.022, .067)). Although  $\chi^2$  statistic continued to be significant, the  $\chi^2/df$  ratio was well below 2.0, and other fit indices indicated excellent fit.

### *Test of Measurement Invariance (Model 2)*

Measurement equivalence was tested by constraining the factor loadings of the revised model to be equal across groups, which made them invariant between Republicans and Democrats. The fit of the constrained measurement model was also good (CFI = .98,  $\chi^2$  (45,  $n = 520$ ) = 74.45,  $p < .004$ ,  $\chi^2/df = 1.65$ , SRMR = .047, RMSEA = .050, 90% CI (.029, .070)). A significant decrement in model fit was not indicated, as the LM test of equality constraints statistics indicated no significant between-group differences in the paths of the measurement model of LM  $\chi^2 \geq 5.0$  per  $df$ , confirming that the measurement model operated similarly for both Republicans and Democrats. As such, any observed group variations in the multi-group model could be interpreted as group differences rather than the result of measurement artifacts (Chen, 2008).



Republican: CFI = .98,  $\chi^2$  (21,  $n = 222$ ) = 34.14,  $p = .04$ ,  $\chi^2/df = 1.63$ , SRMR = .045, RMSEA = .053, 90% CI (.014, .084)

Democrat: CFI = .99,  $\chi^2$  (21,  $n = 298$ ) = 31.30,  $p = .07$ ,  $\chi^2/df = 1.49$ , SRMR = .035, RMSEA = .041, 90% CI (.000, .069)

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

**Figure 3.** Modified model of moral values, intuitive reactions, and attributions for compromise for Democrats and Republicans. Values in parentheses represent Democratic participants; Harm/Care and Ingroup Loyalty were used to set metric for latent variables; Correlations between latent variable was specified as correlation of disturbances.

### ***Test of Structural Invariance (Model 3, 4, 5, 6)***

In order to test for differences in the magnitude of paths among the study variables across political party, constraints were imposed on all structural paths. In the first iteration of this process, a decrement in fit was observed in the constrained model compared to the configural model (CFI = .97,  $\chi^2$  (55,  $n=520$ ) = 108.54,  $p < .001$ ,  $\chi^2/df = 1.97$ , SRMR=.088, RMSEA = .061, 90% CI (.044, .078)), indicated by the LM test for equality of constraints, which suggested that the constraint on the path from BF to Intuitive Reaction should be released (LM  $\chi^2 = 9.74$ ,  $p = .002$ ). This confirmed that the effect of BF on Intuitive Reaction differed as a function of political party. After releasing this path, the fit improved slightly (CFI = .97,  $\chi^2$  (54,  $n=520$ ) = 97.93,  $p < .001$ ,  $\chi^2/df = 1.81$ , SRMR=.074, RMSEA = .056, 90% CI (.038, .073)). However, the LM test indicated additional improvement of fit with the release of the constraint on the path from Partisanship to BF (LM  $\chi^2 = 9.51$ ,  $p = .002$ ). The resulting multi-group comparison demonstrated good fit to the data (CFI = .98,  $\chi^2$  (53,  $n=520$ ) = 88.28,  $p = .002$ ,  $\chi^2/df = 1.67$ , SRMR= .065, RMSEA = .051, 90% CI (.031, .069)), and the LM test did not suggest additional improvement of fit of LM  $\chi^2 \geq 5.0$  per  $df$  with the release of additional constraints.

### ***Test of Research Hypotheses***

The proposed structure of the model in which the influence of moral values on voter choice would act both directly and/or indirectly through psychological factors (e.g., intuitive reaction, and attributions for compromise) demonstrated good fit for Democrats, but poor fit for Republicans. Modifications to the model resulted in significant

improvement in fit for both groups. The first hypothesis that the effect of population factors would have an indirect, rather than direct, influence on voter choice through moral values and psychological factors was upheld. Partisanship was found to have a significant indirect effect on voter choice for Republicans and Democrats such that higher levels of conservatism had a negative indirect effect on voter choice for Republicans,  $\beta_{\text{indirect}} = -.09, p = .01$ , whereas higher levels of conservatism had a positive indirect effect on voter choice for Democrats,  $\beta_{\text{indirect}} = .06, p = .03$ .

The second hypothesis, that moral values would influence participant's voting behavior directly and/or indirectly through psychological factors was upheld for BF, but not for IF. Significant indirect effects from BF to voter choice were found for Republicans,  $\beta_{\text{indirect}} = -.25, p = .002$ , and Democrats,  $\beta_{\text{indirect}} = .10, p = .04$ , but not from IF to voter choice (Republican:  $\beta_{\text{indirect}} = .12, p = .12$ ; Democrat:  $\beta_{\text{indirect}} = -.065, p = .17$ ). Additionally, although direct effects from moral values to voter choice were specified in the hypothesized model, they were found to be non-significant (IF (Republicans:  $\beta = .05, p > .05$ ; Democrats:  $\beta = -.07, p > .05$ ); BF (Republicans:  $\beta = -.04, p > .05$ ; Democrats:  $\beta = -.04, p > .05$ )), and the Wald test for removing parameters suggested removing those paths from subsequent models.

The third hypothesis, which predicted that the role of moral values on voter behavior would be moderated by party affiliation, was also upheld. The test of structural invariance revealed differences in the magnitude of two structural paths in the model. First, a significant negative effect was found for the path from BF to intuitive reaction for Republicans,  $\beta = -.34, p < .001$ , whereas a significant positive effect was found for Democrats,  $\beta = .14, p < .05$ , indicating that greater endorsement of BF influenced more

negative reactions to compromise for Republicans, but positive reactions for Democrats. Second, the strength of the effect from partisanship to BF was also found to differ as a function of group affiliation in that higher levels of conservatism for Democrats were found to have a significantly stronger positive effect on endorsement of BF,  $\beta = .48, p < .001$  whereas the strength of the effect was lower for Republicans,  $\beta = .25, p < .01$ .

### *Additional Findings*

Further investigation of the direct effects in the model revealed additional findings of note. Specifically, partisanship was found to have direct negative effects on IF (Democrat:  $\beta = -.19, p < .05$ ; Republican:  $\beta = -.19, p < .05$ ) and direct positive effects on BF (Democrat:  $\beta = .48, p < .001$ ; Republican:  $\beta = .25, p < .01$ ) for both parties indicating that increased conservatism effected lower endorsement of IF and higher endorsement of BF. Significant direct effects of partisanship on Purity/Sanctity were also found for Democrats,  $\beta = .16, p < .05$ , and Republicans,  $\beta = .27, p < .01$ , such that increased levels of conservatism were found to effect greater endorsement of this specific foundation for both groups. Similarly, modifications to the model indicated a direct positive effect from Harm/Care to Purity/Sanctity for both parties (Democrat:  $\beta = .14, p < .001$ ; Republican:  $\beta = .22, p < .001$ ).

Although significant direct effects were found from BF to intuitive reaction, as noted above, the direct path from IF to intuitive reaction was not found to be significant for either party (Democrat:  $\beta = -.10, p > .05$ ; Republican:  $\beta = .17, p = .058$ ). Regarding the specified psychological factors, positive intuitive emotional reactions were found to effect more selfless attributions for compromise for both groups (Democrat:  $\beta = .33, p <$

.001; Republican:  $\beta = .51, p < .001$ ), and to have a positive direct effect on voting affirmatively for one's congressperson (Democrat:  $\beta = .66, p < .001$ ; Republican:  $\beta = .66, p < .001$ ). Finally, attributions for a congressperson's vote to compromise were found to have a positive direct effect on voter choice in that attributing a congressperson's vote to his/her interest in the good of the country increased the likelihood that one would vote to keep that congressperson in office (Democrat:  $\beta = .28, p < .001$ ; Republican:  $\beta = .30, p < .001$ )

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DISCUSSION

This research highlights the central role that moral value foundations and psychological factors play in influencing voters' political decisions. Specifically, this study indicates that one's moral values, and related psychological factors, influence voting behavior related to fiscal issues above and beyond partisanship or ideology alone, which echoes previous research on culture war issues (Koleva et al., 2012). Overall, these findings may even demonstrate how voters' psychological reactions, drawn from their moral values, serve to punish politicians who violate their moral vision by ultimately voting them out of office.

The hypothesized causal model representing both direct and indirect effects of moral values on voting behavior demonstrated good fit for Democrats, but poor fit for Republicans. After modifications to the model based on theoretical and statistical considerations, the fit improved for both, indicating that the influence of moral values on voting behavior was mediated by emotional and cognitive reactions to political compromise. This finding, that moral values exert their power by influencing one's intuitive emotional reactions, and subsequent rationalizations, corroborates the theoretical predictions from MFT (Haidt, 2012). Findings are similarly consistent with cultural research findings guided by Betancourt's integrative model demonstrating that the effect of cultural beliefs and values on behaviors is, at least in part, mediated by psychological processes. This highlights the need to study the role of socially shared cultural factors within the context of psychological processes and dispositions (*see* Betancourt et al.,

2011; Flynn, Betancourt, Garberoglio, Regts, Kinworthy, & Northington, 2015; Flynn, Betancourt, & Ormseth, 2011).

Similarly, the strength and direction of the specific paths were consistent with predictions based on MFT. For example, results confirmed previous findings that suggested that liberalism was associated with greater endorsement of IF whereas conservatism was associated with lower endorsement of IF. However, these findings present added complexity by suggesting that the noted effects of partisanship occur similarly within the more liberal Democratic and the more conservative Republican groups. Results also demonstrated that conservatism was associated with higher levels of endorsement of BF, although the strength of this effect was actually higher for Democrats. Findings like these highlight the reality of in-group heterogeneity that has been an undeniable tenet in cultural psychology (Betancourt & Flynn, 2009; Betancourt et al., 2011; Betancourt et al., 2010), but has been more elusive in political science. As such, the findings suggest that BF may also play a significant role for self-ascribed Democrats who may also rely on more traditionally conservative moral values.

Moreover, the results underscore the importance of utilizing statistical techniques that can take into account this in-group variability by investigating moral values within a multivariate context. Although this research found many similar effects for both parties, by utilizing multivariate statistical techniques with multi-group comparisons, we were able to observe a greater complexity in effects based on party affiliation that would not be observed with bivariate comparisons alone. Specifically, between-group differences in direction and strength of effects were found, demonstrating that the effects of moral value foundations not only vary based on partisanship, but also vary within political party. It

was also found that levels of endorsement of these moral foundations actually have differential effects on how participants evaluate the political actions made by their politicians. Extant research has demonstrated notable variability in endorsement of moral values within different ideological categories of conservatism (Weber & Federico, 2013). As such, statistical analyses, like those utilized in the study, can help to shed light on the causal functionality of moral values across the spectrum of conservatism and liberalism, rather than more confined between-group mean comparisons.

By utilizing these statistical techniques, this study yielded additional findings beyond those specifically highlighted by the research hypotheses. In particular, statistical tests for adding parameters suggested inclusion of a direct path from the Harm/Care foundation to the Purity/Sanctity foundation. Adding this path improved fit for both Republicans and Democrats and indicated a direct positive effect for both groups highlighting a potential unique relationship across value foundations such that increased endorsement of Harm/Care values effected increased endorsement of Purity/Sanctity values. Findings like these suggest that the varying influence of IF versus BF values may not be as dichotomous as previously noted.

This study also highlights the fact that, even with lower aggregate endorsement of certain values based on ideology, those values still influence voter reactions toward compromise. Recent research has shown that, regardless of political ideology, priming for more abstract versus concrete thinking increases valuation of IF and decreases valuation of BF (Napier & Luguri, 2013). These findings also suggest that BF may be more peripheral for both groups and that liberals and conservatives primarily rely on IF, which seems to contradict predictions that conservatives would primarily rely on BF. However,

the current study shows that, even if peripheral, there is likely to still be an effect of BF, even for the more liberally persuaded Democratic participants. Therefore, it may be the case that, in other contexts, BF can be activated above and beyond their baseline functioning. Moreover, IF were found to have equal effects for both parties, whereas the effects of BF were found to differ between parties, indicating that the BF may be more important in differentiating party-based evaluations of politicians.

Results also imply that the Purity/Sanctity foundation in particular may play a unique role in differentiating influential BF between parties. Although the statistical tests on lifting between-group constraints in testing measurement equivalence did not indicate doing so for the Purity/Sanctity foundation, there was some statistical indication of possible between-group measurement variance, which would suggest that the purity foundation was representative of BF for Democrats, but may play a more unique role for Republicans. The significant positive direct influence of partisanship on the purity foundation for both groups further highlights its distinct role in this context indicating that increased conservatism, regardless of party affiliation, uniquely influences increased endorsement of the purity foundation.

This study also adds to a growing body of research that suggests that the strength of moral value foundations is affected by context. For example, when individuals' cognitive resources are limited, they tend to endorse BF less (Wright & Baril, 2011), but endorse them more if they tend to perceive danger (van Leeuwen & Park, 2009). The literature suggests that, given different political, or even social, considerations, we may see different effects of endorsement and effects of individual moral foundations. By analyzing the foundations separately, the complexity of effects may be further elucidated.

This would be consistent with research showing the differing relevancy of moral value foundations in various social contexts (Carnes, Lickel, & Janoff-Bulman, 2015). As such, multivariate analyses are additionally important in the study of moral values because the effects of moral foundations are likely to vary depending on the issue being studied.

Although the current research suggests that moral values represent one potential mechanism underlying political gridlock, the question remains: what other factors are perpetuating and exacerbating gridlock? The results from this study, particularly in showing that Republicans demonstrated a more negative reaction to an act of political compromise, seem to suggest that Republicans are primarily responsible for perpetuating gridlock. However, there are several alternative explanations for these findings. First, the operationalization of political compromise may not have exclusively measured compromise. Although the vignette utilized a “balanced” economic bill that included both spending cuts *and* tax hikes, President Obama proposed a similarly balanced plan at times throughout his presidency. Therefore, the proposed bill may have actually been identified as a Democratic policy by participants in this study, rather than an effort at political compromise. If this was the case, Democratic participants likely reacted to a vote for this bill as upholding Democratic concerns, whereas Republican participants may have viewed the vote as a betrayal of their party’s concerns. In this way, the specific directionality of effects from BF to intuitive reaction may be suggestive of intolerance toward ideologically dissimilar and threatening groups (Brandt, Reyna, Chambers, Crawford, & Wetherell, 2014), rather than actual reactions to political compromise. Public polling research indicates that, although both liberals and conservatives say they want compromise, partisans actually indicate that they want more of what their party asks

for (Pew Research Center, 2014). Similarly, the order of wording in the vignette presented the “increasing taxes on wealthy Americans,” first, which may have primed Republican participants’ to view the proposed bill as a betrayal of their concerns, while supporting Democratic concerns. Future research could investigate this by alternating the order of policy initiatives presented in the vignette.

Second, both liberals and conservatives have been found to demonstrate intolerance towards groups with dissimilar ideology (Pew Research Center, 2014). In this case, the negative reactions identified for Republicans, and positive reactions for Democrats, may be indicative of a perceived moral boundary violation, and actually demonstrate the tendency for both liberals and conservatives to exclude individuals who violate their group’s moral parameters, and include individuals who do not. A more provocative question that follows for future researchers is related to why a balanced fiscal approach to the federal budget would be viewed as threatening for Republican participants. Perhaps the approach itself was not viewed as balanced, or if it was, perhaps refusal to compromise has itself become a value. One direction for future inquiry could be to investigate the current cultural/political media context. With more points of media contact now than at any point in history, the consistent activation of moral value foundations may be to blame for the apparent parting of the political red and blue seas. Continued efforts to understand and remedy this divide may be required before political divisiveness eliminates those navigating through the center.

Third, it could be that Republican participants in this study, who skewed more economically advantaged, perceived the proposed bill in the vignette to be more *personally* threatening as it sought to increase their economic costs while decreasing

costs for those less economically advantaged. If so, the psychological reactions against threat, noted above, that lead to decreased tolerance of ideologically dissimilar groups, are also relevant. Similarly, research suggests that endorsement of BF predicted support for torture of out-group members (Smith, Aquino, Koleva, & Graham, 2014). Rather than demonstrating differences in partisan reactions to compromise, results from the current study may actually highlight the tendency for voters who are more reliant on BF, Republican or Democrat, to punish politicians who violate their in-group moral values.

Finally, there is some evidence from the literature that perceived government management may influence voter intentions. Winterish, Zhang, and Mittal (2012) found that high moral identity internalization influenced increased charitable giving to government-managed charities for liberals, and privately-managed charities for conservatives. Applied to the current research, the fact that the vignette implied government management may in and of itself led to more negative reactions by conservatives.

Findings from this study have important implications for future research on moral value foundations in political contexts, as they help to broaden the scope of investigation to economic concerns. If moral value foundations do in fact influence our psychological reactions and subsequent behaviors to fiscal policy actions by politicians, then the messaging appeal of moral values goes beyond those social and environmental concerns previously highlighted. Research has already shown that framing issues based on relevant moral foundation conditions can affect political attitudes for liberals and conservatives by either strengthening existing political attitudes, or altering political attitudes (e.g. increasing conservatives' liberal attitudes)(Day, Fiske, Downing, & Trail,

2014). Others have found evidence that existing examples of rhetoric by political elites utilize language that taps into moral foundations during public policy debates (Clifford & Jerit, 2013). The current study, taken with these results, suggests that moral rhetoric that appeals to relevant foundations could also be influential in fiscal policy debates.

This research also extends a growing body of literature related to the utility of the robust conceptual framework employed to predict the structure of relationships. Although Betancourt's integrative model for the study of culture, psychology, and behavior has previously been used to investigate the role of culture and psychological factors in health behavior, it demonstrated great utility in the present study on political behavior. Future research designed to investigate the influence of culture and psychology on political behavior may also benefit from utilizing this theoretical model.

Despite the significance and implications of the study findings, some limitations should be considered. First, the sampling method used was chosen to maximize participation, but resulted in a sample over-representative of Anglo Americans and under-representative of minorities. Additionally, this study was focused on investigating the influence of moral values for Republicans and Democrats. As such, these findings may be limited in generalizability to individuals affiliated with other political parties (e.g., Libertarian). Second, as noted in the results, the  $\chi^2$  statistics in some of the structural equation models were significant, indicating unexplained variance, or correlations among measured variables. Although the other fit indices indicated excellent fit to the data, the significant  $\chi^2$  statistics suggest that additional specifications may more fully explain the influence of moral values on political evaluations. For example, there was some evidence from the results (e.g., a significant direct path from partisanship to purity) that the purity

foundation may play a unique role in determining our political evaluations. Finally, as alluded to above, the measure of political compromise utilized in this study may have been more partisan than intended when it was initially constructed. Future researchers may seek to construct an improved measure of political compromise to remedy this limitation.

Future research may also benefit from differentiating between types of emotions and the magnitude of their effects. This study utilized a single emotion variable to measure intuitional reactions that might have overlooked the complexity of emotional reactions, and may have not necessarily tapped into participants' reactions as a member of a group. The structure of relationships investigated in this study was also based on the hypothesis from MFT that intuitive emotional reactions precede cognitive appraisals. Future research could test the order of the relationships between emotion and cognition by including expectations gleaned from attribution-emotion theory (Weiner, 2006), perhaps even investigating reciprocal emotion-cognition-emotion dynamics.

Similarly, future research could investigate the causal effects of more complex psychological factors. For example, evidence for regional differences in personality profiles (Rentfrow, Gosling, Jokela, Stillwell, & Kosin, 2013) presents an exciting direction for research into how the causal influence of moral value foundations may actually vary by region within the United States, just as the current study demonstrated differences based on political party alone. Researchers could also expand investigation into the cognitive variables related to moral value foundations and political compromise by studying the influence of attributions of controllability. Some research has suggested that attributions about the president's ability to control the national debt actually

predicted moral evaluations of the president (Chin & Cohen, 2014). Findings such as this highlight the important link between citizens' moral schemas and the attributions they make for a politician's behavior. Finally, the growing body of moral foundations and moral psychology research suggests both cross-cultural generalizability in endorsement of foundations (Nilsson & Erlandsson, 2015), as well as important cross-cultural differences in the function of moral attributions (An & Trafimow, 2014). Future research should build on these findings and investigate the function of moral value foundations in political decision-making internationally, and among culturally diverse minority populations nationally, by utilizing robust theoretical frameworks that account for culture *and* psychology.

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## APPENDIX A

### MORAL FOUNDATIONS QUESTIONNAIRE

Part 1. When you decide whether something is right or wrong, to what extent are the following considerations relevant to your thinking? Please rate each statement using this scale:

[1] = not at all relevant (This consideration has nothing to do with my judgments of right and wrong)

[2] = not very relevant

[3] = slightly relevant

[4] = somewhat relevant

[5] = very relevant

[6] = extremely relevant (This is one of the most important factors when I judge right and wrong)

1. Whether or not someone suffered emotionally
2. Whether or not some people were treated differently than others
3. Whether or not someone's action showed love for his or her country
4. Whether or not someone showed a lack of respect for authority
5. Whether or not someone violated standards of purity and decency
6. Whether or not someone was good at math
7. Whether or not someone cared for someone weak or vulnerable
8. Whether or not someone acted unfairly
9. Whether or not someone did something to betray his or her group

10. Whether or not someone conformed to the traditions of society
11. Whether or not someone did something disgusting
12. Whether or not someone was cruel
13. Whether or not someone was denied his or her rights
14. Whether or not someone showed a lack of loyalty
15. Whether or not an action caused chaos or disorder
16. Whether or not someone acted in a way that God would approve of

Part 2. Please read the following sentences and indicate your agreement or disagreement:

[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]	[6]
Strongly	Moderately	Slightly	Slightly	Moderately	Strongly
disagree	disagree	disagree	agree	agree	agree

1. Compassion for those who are suffering is the most crucial virtue.
2. When the government makes laws, the number one principle should be ensuring that everyone is treated fairly.
3. I am proud of my country's history.
4. Respect for authority is something all children need to learn.
5. People should not do things that are disgusting, even if no one is harmed.
6. It is better to do good than to do bad.
7. One of the worst things a person could do is hurt a defenseless animal.
8. Justice is the most important requirement for a society.

9. People should be loyal to their family members, even when they have done something wrong.
10. Men and women each have different roles to play in society.
11. I would call some acts wrong on the grounds that they are unnatural.
12. It can never be right to kill a human being.
13. I think it's morally wrong that rich children inherit a lot of money while poor children inherit nothing.
14. It is more important to be a team player than to express oneself.
15. If I were a soldier and disagreed with my commanding officer's orders, I would obey anyway because that is my duty.
16. Chastity is an important and valuable virtue.

## **APPENDIX B**

### **POLITICAL COMPROMISE SCALE**

In an attempt to get a Federal budget approved, imagine that a congressperson presented a bill that cuts deficits by raising taxes on higher income Americans AND cuts spending for social programs (such as welfare).

1. Now imagine that a congressperson from your city/town and political party voted for this bill and it passed by one vote. How does this make you feel about your congressperson?

[1] Very Displeased

[2] Displeased

[3] Somewhat Displeased

[4] Neutral

[5] Somewhat Pleased

[6] Pleased

[7] Very Pleased

2. On the following scale, please indicate whether you think your congressperson voted entirely out of interest for (0) personal gain, entirely out of interest for (5) the good of the country, or somewhere in between.

[1] Entirely for personal gain

[2] Mostly for personal gain

[3] Partly for personal gain

[4] Partly for the good of the country

[5] Mostly for the good of the country

[6] Entirely for the good of the country

3. Based on this vote, how likely would you be to vote to keep this person in congress in the next election?

[1] Very Unlikely

[2] Unlikely

[3] Somewhat Unlikely

[4] Undecided

[5] Somewhat Likely

[6] Likely

[7] Very Likely