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The Myth of Political Reason - The Moral and
Emotional Foundations of Political Cognition and
US Politics

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Abstract

The current ascendancy of right-wing populists across western democracies is a concerning trend, and so far, the left has not managed to mount an effective counterstrategy to arrest its momentum. Much of the rhetoric of these right-wing populists has focused on evoking fear and suspicion, verging on hatred, of outsiders and fellow countrymen and women with opposing political ideologies, to great effect. The importance of understanding why certain rhetoric is effective cannot be understated, and the works of George Lakoff, Jonathan Haidt, and Drew Westen that illuminate the moral and emotional factors behind how individuals interpret and respond to inputs of a political nature are reviewed and synthesised. Individuals' underlying moral mental structures and the emotional responses that they can trigger must be understood in order to generate political messaging that resonates strongly with its target audience and consequently increases the likelihood of their actuation to vote. The recent phenomenon of individualisation, stemming from the current era of reflexive modernity is analysed within the context of divergent conservative and liberal moral matrices, and is found to be disproportionately ailing the liberal side of politics. In delineating the key elements of liberal and conservative morality, the existence of liberal moral tenets that are discordant with longstanding liberal communitarian ideals were revealed. In contrast, conservative morality appears to exhibit an inherent coherence that may contribute to conservatism's resilience in the face of reflexive modernity and disparate policy priorities of its constituents. The importance of understanding the moral and emotional foundations of political cognition is emphasised not only for its potential to bolster the efficacy of left-wing political parties, but also to provide an avenue by which the increasing hostility across the political spectrum can be subdued.

1. Introduction

"Reason is, and ought only to be the slave of the passions, and can
never pretend to any other office than to serve and obey them"

—David Hume, *Treatise on Human Nature*

A trend is currently evident across much of Europe and in the USA, whereby left-wing parties are ceding ground to a brand of right-wing populism that now exhibits a widespread and growing level of support (Inglehart & Norris 2016, Tartar 2017). The twin 2016 shocks of Brexit and Donald Trump's election can be seen as the very concrete political realisation of the potential this trend has for profound and long-term societal change. The UK will be dealing with the after-effects of Brexit for a generation and many of the democratic and political norms in the USA have been decimated, while the confirmation of two conservative supreme court judges will shape the judicial landscape for decades. Mudde (2004) defines populism as:

> "…an ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, 'the pure people' versus 'the corrupt elite', and which argues that politics should be an expression of the volonté générale (general will) of the people"

The success of the right-wing brand of populism — evidenced in recent political happenings across Europe and the USA — has been largely attributed to harnessing both economic and cultural anxieties in an increasingly interconnected world (Arzheimer, 2009; Gidron & Hall, 2017; Mols & Jetten, 2016; Rodrik, 2017), but what is often left unexamined is the role that is played by the mental processes that lead people to these anxieties in the first place.

Fear has long been known as a potent emotion, susceptible to manipulation for political gain, and as the pace of change in today's modern world increases, there are many things that can evoke it. However, many such fears are stoked by political rhetoric that is neither based in reality nor withstands the rigours of reasoned argumentation. This expression of irrational fear is not, however, the only emotional response manifested in this way without a sound basis in reality. It is in the interests of politicians to evoke as many emotions that further their political goals as possible, and the methods utilised by the current crop of right-wing populists for doing-so and the reason for

their efficacy need to be understood, lest the current-day political domain in western democracies remain a lopsided battlefield, continually exploited to great effect by one side of the political spectrum, while the other languishes in opposition. This is an urgent undertaking, as the politics of fear and division have resulted in some of the darkest chapters in modern human history and this current trend must therefore be arrested.

To understand why these emotionally evocative strategies are so effective, a study of the source of such emotional responses must be undertaken. Morality is proposed as deeply interrelated with emotion, and an area of study that must be included in any such endeavour. This thesis reviews the work of three authors (George Lakoff, Jonathan Haidt, & Drew Westen) that draw on different theoretical foundations and utilise different methodological approaches to explore how emotion and morality are related to not only the manifestation of political views, but what the underlying mental mechanisms and processes are that contribute to their manifestation. This manifestation of political views and their underlying causative mental mechanisms and processes will hereafter be referred to as 'political sense-making'. The work of these three authors has been used to create a synthesis, bringing various elements together to delineate the varied facets of this political sense-making process. This forms the foundation from which suggestions of priority areas of focus for left-wing political parties and areas of future research are derived. As all three of these authors are from the USA, the specific delineation of the moral architecture of individuals and how it relates to political sense-making is likely to be specific to the USA. However, the fundamental claim of this thesis regarding the role of morality and emotion in the political sense-making process is expected not to be country-specific, but rather a universal tendency of the human mind.

In addition, the process of individualisation of modern western societies is discussed and its impact on the underlying moral architecture of individuals in a society is analysed. Findings from the review of key literature and domains of moral convergence identified within the synthesis are then interpreted through the lens of a potentially lopsided influence of this individualisation process on one side of the political spectrum relative to the other. Finally, a construct is derived from the synthesis that insinuates there may be fundamentally discordant elements of left-wing ideology which are contributing to the flagging fortunes of left-wing parties across modern western societies, and that the individualisation process may be exacerbating this phenomenon.

An underlying philosophy of interdisciplinarity informs this thesis, which is a core reason behind the epistemological focus on triangulation and the methodology of theory synthesis chosen to

explore this topic. Siloed bodies of specialised knowledge are not capable of adequately dealing with the inherent complexity of many social phenomena, as their boundaries often flow across multiple academic fields. The political sense-making process is one such phenomenon and as such, it demands a broad approach to adequately describe its multi-faceted nature. The three authors chosen as the primary focus of the literature review for this thesis are from the fields of cognitive linguistics, moral psychology and clinical psychology and are able to coalesce a broad range of theoretical and empirical findings into their own syntheses which have subsequently been utilised to illuminate the findings of this thesis. This recognition of complexity and consequent rejection of reductionist forms of analysis relating to social phenomena, embodies both the theory of Cultural Political Economy and the meta-theory of Critical Realism that underpin this thesis.

2. Theory

2.1. Cultural Political Economy

Engaging in study of the social world inevitably involves some manner of complexity reduction, as the world is too complex to be grasped in all its complexity in real time (Sum & Jessop, 2008) and, unlike the realm of natural sciences, reductionist forms of enquiry cannot isolate individual self-evident components in their entirety, as social relations and phenomena are invariably interrelated with others. One way to successfully study the social world is with the use of the processes of semiosis and structuration, which can flesh out social imaginaries, and emphasise structure-agent relationships that may not be self-evident. Sum & Jessop (2013) define semiosis as '…the most general term for sense- and meaning making' (Sum & Jessop, 2013, p.152) and as often involving '…conversation, negotiation, contestation and, indeed open conflict about the sense and meaning of communications' (Sum & Jessop, 2013, p.152), whereas structuration is defined as 'limiting compossible social relations' (Sum & Jessop, 2013, p.3) or more specifically '…a form of enforced selection that sets limits to compossible combinations of relations among relations within specific time-space envelopes' (Sum & Jessop, 2013, p.4). These analytical processes underpin the theory of the Cultural Political Economy (CPE) which stresses the importance of the cultural dimension (semiosis or meaning-making) in dealing with the inherent complexities of social formations.

This research paradigm evolved in reaction to the cultural turn, a movement beginning in the 1970s which argues for a shift away from positivist epistemological attempts to comprehend the social world and towards a focus on meaning and complexity and the role of culture in contemporary debates. Ontologically, CPE insists that the process of semiosis itself contributes to the construction and composition of social phenomena and epistemologically, critiques the inadequacy of orthodox political economy categories and methods in capturing historic and contextual elements of reality (Jessop, 2004). CPE seeks to ground the cultural turn in political economy in the necessity of complexity reduction as the fundamental impetus of research in this field (Jessop, 2010), while combining the cultural turn with institutional and evolutionary political economy perspectives (Jessop, 2004). The concept of the 'imaginary' is used to describe 'semiotic systems that shape lived experience in a complex world' (Sum & Jessop, 2013, p.26), and will be particularly relevant

for this thesis, as both the central metaphors of Lakoff and Haidt's Moral Foundation Theory are argued as being such imaginaries.

CPE is primarily used to critique reductionist approaches to economic analysis and offer an alternative synthesis of a political economy that adequately accounts for cultural, social and historical factors that constitute the complex reality in which the political economy is embedded. This ontological insistence on the inherent complexity of reality and the epistemological rejection of such reductionist approaches to the social world make CPE an ideal research paradigm to apply elsewhere in the social sciences (Sum & Jessop, 2013). Specifically, CPE's focus on semiosis and structuration constitutes a methodology that is useful to focus anywhere that complex social relations and practices beg to be understood.

The claim that semiosis has a constitutive effect on social phenomena has particular relevance for the field of political science. A sub-section of the field is engaged in attempts to create political success out of understanding what factors motivate individual voting tendencies and where there are opportunities to exploit subconscious biases or vulnerabilities, and as both phenomena are borne out of complex interactions between the human mind and social formations, this assertion of a constitutive influence suggests that the very study of these interactions and their connection to real-world political outcomes has the potential to, in itself, affect such outcomes. This implication provides impetus for the study of these interactions to advance specific political agendas, and as a core motivating factor for this thesis is responding to the efficacy of current-day right-wing populism, it lends justification for the topic of this thesis.

Understanding the inherent complexity of how a human mind politically ideates and responds to politically oriented inputs requires an approach that accommodates such complexity, rather than attempting to deny or neglect it. Semiosis and structuration provide such an analytical approach; emphasising the need to appreciate complexity, while reducing it into describable elements. These analytical principles will be applied in this research project, as it is assumed there are real structures and mechanisms that contribute to the political orientation of individuals, and while some may be empirically verifiable, others may lay beneath the realm of directly observable phenomena. In considering this, the semiotic analysis undertaken in this thesis will seek to engage with the real that may lie beyond the realm of the empirical, as well as utilising the empirically observable in an

attempt to adequately describe reality. This approach embodies the philosophical perspective of critical realism.

2.2. Critical Realism

To understand reality through the lens of an empiricist worldview is to reduce reality merely to the observable (Danermark, Ekstrom, Jakobsen, & Karlsson, 2002). While this satisfies a scientific approach that seeks to simply document the phenomena experienced by humans, it falls short of unveiling the mechanisms that may have interacted with each other to manifest these phenomena. In the natural sciences, many of the mechanisms that interact in this way have been previously described without direct observation by discovering and interpreting the laws of physics, and many have subsequently been observed once our technology had advanced to a point where it became possible to do-so. The realm of social science does not have the luxury of unbreakable natural laws, and as such, it is problematic to rely solely on a positivist approach to understand mechanisms that operate on this level. While positivist approaches can still yield valuable insights relating to the social world, they cannot provide insights into such mechanisms that operate below the realm of the observable. Critical realism attempts to articulate this point, by emphasising the need for a clear ontology. A critical realist ontology states that while the objects of natural science are socially defined, but naturally produced, and the objects of social science are socially defined *and* produced, the socially produced objects are no less real (Sayer, 1992).

A central feature of critical realism is its critique of the 'epistemic fallacy' in which questions about the existence of a phenomena or its ontology, are answered by relating what we know about it. Put another way, the ontological domain of existence is reduced to the epistemological domain of knowledge or what we can know or experience (Mingers, 2006). Neoclassical economists are accused of falling prey to this by reducing the economy to atomised consumers and firms that can be analysed using a formalistic methodology, but they are not alone in committing this fallacy, as many in the social sciences reject anything other than a positivist approach. To move past this and acknowledge complexity and underlying mechanisms and fundamental structures opens another paradigm for social science research, where conceptualisation and mixed methodology approaches are afforded greater prominence. Abductive and retroductive reasoning are fundamental to a critical realist approach and can also play a pivotal role in this new research paradigm; recontextualising a

given phenomenon giving it a new meaning, and imagining what reality must be like for a given concrete phenomena to come about respectively (Danermark et al., 2002). Both abduction and retroduction are creative processes, as relations and connections that have not been identified yet between one phenomenon and others requires the forming of these connections through creative reasoning. While these types of reasoning stand in contrast to the formal logic of induction and deduction, they can be combined with induction in order to increase the reliability or validity of associations made as new cases occur and can be continuously related to these associations.

Retroduction has at its core transcendental argumentation, where the basic prerequisites for social phenomena, reasoning and knowledge are sought. As this type of argumentation goes beyond merely the realm of the observable, it is also known as transfactual argumentation (Danermark et al., 2002). Examples of such reasoning are Zygmunt Bauman's (1989) explanations of the Holocaust by asking the question: what made the Holocaust possible? And Randal Collins' (1990) probing of the nature of rituals and their role in society by posing the question: What is the ultimate precondition for social solidarity and for society to exist? By posing questions that seek to explain not just the occurrence of a phenomenon, but the factors that allowed it to come to be, an opening is created to explore the deep structures and mechanisms of the social world and in doing so, evokes the use of creative thinking to produce a new synthesis. This transfactual argumentation is behind the conceptual metaphors and categories that Lakoff uses to answer his own transfactual questions: what unifies the collections of progressive and conservative political positions? (Lakoff, 1996) The theoretical background that supports the use of conceptual metaphors as an explanatory tool is explored below.

2.3. Moral Reasoning as Metaphorical Reasoning

Much of everyday language is of a metaphorical nature, whether it be during an informal conversation between friends, or a work-related discussion (Gibbs, Jr, 1994). There are three generally accepted reasons why people tend to speak in such metaphorical forms (Fainsilber & Ortony, 1987; Gibbs, Jr, 1994; Ortony, 1975). Firstly, the inexpressibility hypothesis, which states that metaphors provide a way of expressing ideas that would be extremely difficult to convey with literal language. Secondly, the compactness hypothesis, which proposes that the use of metaphor can more effectively convey complex configurations of information in relatively few words compared to the use of literal language alone, and thirdly and relatedly, the vividness hypothesis,

which asserts that due to metaphor's ability to convey complex configurations of information, richer, more detailed and vivid accounts of our subjective experience are possible with their use, compared to literal language. These hypotheses provide a compelling account as to why metaphors are used frequently in language, but is metaphor perhaps used at a higher level of cognition to relate more complex and interrelated concepts and moral systems?

By utilising linguistic evidence, Lakoff & Johnson (1983) argue for a Contemporary Theory of Metaphor, wherein much of the human conceptual system is claimed to be metaphorical in nature. They give the example of the concept of an argument being translated into the metaphor of 'argument is war'; where arguments are won or lost, claims defensible or indefensible, weak points can be attacked or shot down and criticisms can be either on- or off-target. Another example given is that of money as a metaphor for time; where time can be spent, given, invested, saved, budgeted, or put aside. The essence of metaphor is understanding one type of phenomenon in terms of another, and Lakoff & Johnson argue that this is a fundamental part of how humans conceptualise and make sense of the world. The fact that its role in such conceptualisation has largely gone unanalysed until recent decades (Fainsilber & Ortony, 1987) may be a symptom of the fact that we are rarely aware of our conceptual system. However, looking more closely at language and how it conveys various concepts can illuminate the role that metaphor plays in this system.

George Lakoff asserts that much of moral reasoning is metaphorical reasoning and provides examples of such in his book Moral Politics (1996). He cites an op-ed in the Houston Chronicle (section A, p. 30, February 4, 1995) that describes a large budget shortfall ($722M) in the city of Washington D.C. being caused, metaphorically, by "a poor mother with a credit card" who believes "If it's good for the kid to have, then I ought to buy it—and worry later where the money will come from" and who has "…reached her credit limit" and should "…learn to say no—not just to junk food, but to quality cuts of meat she can't afford" (Lakoff, 1996, p. 6). This is an elaborate conceptual metaphor, one in which it is assumed the readers will not only understand but see as common sense. However, to see this as common sense, requires a particular moral interpretation of this metaphor, as one must agree that the cited budget shortfall is indeed due to 'irresponsible' spending and paying for things that are 'unaffordable'. The image of an ill-disciplined mother who is indulging her children irresponsibly with money she doesn't have implies she must *learn* discipline and self-denial in order to be a good mother. Another moral interpretation of this situation is that essential services for the citizens of D.C. are not being underwritten by sufficient government

revenue and that the government has a responsibility to find alternative sources of revenue to maintain these services. This is a clear demonstration of the role that metaphor can play in reasoning about issues of a moral, political nature, and how this can be utilised to reinforce political narratives of a certain ideology, as the overspending, ill-disciplined motif is typically representative of conservative ideology. If it is accepted that much of this kind of moral reasoning is indeed metaphorical in nature, then the question that arises is to what extent is political ideology constituted through conceptual metaphors. This question is comprehensively explored by Lakoff in Moral Politics (1996) and is addressed further in chapter four.

2.4. Moral Foundation Theory

Jonathan Haidt, with the use of insights from social psychology and sociology, has developed an alternative explanation for how morality is intertwined with political ideology, stemming primarily from his Moral Foundations Theory (Haidt, 2012). Conceptual metaphor is not afforded a key role in explaining the process of moral reasoning, although similarly to Lakoff, moral reasoning, for the most part, is asserted as mostly intuitive, not deliberative (Graham et al., 2012). Haidt, however, seeks to combine previous insights on the origin of human morality and build on them to explain the process of an individual's moral evolution from birth to adulthood. A broad exploration of Moral Foundations Theory and its implications for political sensemaking will be undertaken in chapter four, but here, a brief exploration of the origins and theoretical underpinnings of this theory will be attempted.

2.4.1. Origins

In the late 20th century, there was a debate between social scientists studying the origins of morality as to whether morality is derived or constrained by innate mental systems and if so, how many mental systems (de Waal, 1996; Joyce, 2006; Wright, 1994). Kohlberg (1969) asserted that the answer is one; that a progression to higher stages of moral development could be explained by a continual reference to the promotion of justice. Gilligan (1983) argued that there is an ethic of care women and girls develop that cannot be derived from that of justice, and in doing so, asserted that there is at least two mental systems at play. This care/justice formulation has been widely accepted in recent decades and has been shown to primarily be the basis of morality for those in WEIRD (Western, educated, industrialised, rich, and democratic) cultures (Haidt, 2012). Shweder, Mahapatra and Miller (1987) have shown through their research, however, that the moral domain

is broader in India than it is in WEIRD cultures. This finding has not only been backed up by looking at other countries such as Brazil (Haidt, Koller, & Dias, 1993) and Japan (Markus & Kitayama, 1991) and comparing them to WEIRD cultures, but by looking within lower socioeconomic groups in countries with WEIRD subgroups (Haidt et al., 1993). Whereas WEIRD cultures tend to see a world full of separate objects rather than relationships, and think analytically (detaching the focal object from its context, assigning it to a category and then assuming that what's true about the category is true about the object) (Nisbett, Peng, Choi, & Norenzayan, 2001), those from other cultures tend to focus more on relationships, contexts, groups and institutions and to think more analytically (seeing the whole context and the relationships among parts) (Haidt, 2012). With this distinction in perception and thinking between cultures, argues Haidt, comes a distinction in the kind of moral framework and the virtues and concerns incorporated within it, required to bind such people together.

Based on the research Shweder conducted in India, he formulated a new theory of morality based on three ethics: autonomy, community, and divinity (Shweder et al., 1987). These ethics were isolated through analysing the hundreds of interviews conducted and each one is based on a different idea of what a person really is. The ethic of autonomy is dominant in individualistic societies and is strongly related to WEIRD cultures, as it is based on the notion that people are, first and foremost, autonomous individuals with wants, needs, and preferences (Haidt, 2012). Conversely, the ethic of community is based on the idea that people are, first and foremost, members of larger entities such as families, teams, armies, companies, tribes, and nations, that these entities are important, and that their gestalt is greater than the sum of the people who compose them. Moral concepts such as duty, hierarchy, respect, reputation and patriotism align seamlessly with this ethic. The third ethic of divinity is based on the notion that people are primarily temporary vessels within which a divine soul has been implanted and that they should behave as if they were a child of god. This notion then leads to the formulation of moral concepts such as sanctity, purity, and elevation (Haidt, 2012).

Alan Fiske (1991) wrote about four elementary forms of human relations: communal sharing, authority ranking, equality matching and market pricing, upon which moral judgement relies. Despite many overlapping threads between Shweder's three ethics and Fiske's four relational models, it was not possible to create a credible synthesis as they tackle fundamentally different problems: categorising moral discourse and analysing interpersonal relationships. Haidt sought to

broaden the inquiry to understand how morality varies across cultures and to specify universals of human nature, the result was Moral Foundations Theory (Graham et al., 2012).

2.4.2. Theoretical Underpinnings

There are four fundamental claims that underpin Moral Foundations Theory, and its credibility relies on these claims not being disproven or generally abandoned by psychologists. The four claims are: nativism, cultural learning, intuitionism and pluralism (Graham et al., 2012).

Nativism here according to Haidt refers to the claim that, while some morality is innate, it is also malleable to environmental influences. That the genes imbed a certain degree of moral knowledge into neural tissue and this is revised through childhood (and to a lesser extent) adulthood (Graham et al., 2012). This is supported by studies like Mineka and Cook (1988) whereby young rhesus monkeys, exposed once to footage of an older monkey responding fearfully to a plastic snake or to plastic flowers, then learned to be fearful of the snake, but not the flowers. Something innate facilitated the fear of the snake, but not the flowers, after just one exposure and Haidt argues that morality works in the same way.

Sperber (2005) proposes a version of modularity theory in which there are "learning modules" present at or shortly after a child's birth whose function it is to generate a host of more specific modules as the child develops. This concept forms the theoretical basis for the moral foundation, as Haidt claims that children will "employ their innately given moral foundations within a particular cultural context" (Graham et al., 2012, p. 10). The cultural context then determines to which extent these foundations are actualised and the prominence they will assume in an individual's life. This cultural learning is claimed to be what reinforces variations in morality across cultures.

Much of the cognitive processes involved in decision making and evaluations are effortless, associative and heuristic and occur rapidly and automatically. This kind of processing is known as System 1 thinking (Kahneman, 2011) and Haidt argues that much of moral reasoning operates in the same manner (Haidt, 2001). He has formalised this argument in the form of his Social Intuitionist Model, whereby moral intuition is defined as "the sudden appearance in consciousness, or at the fringe of consciousness, of an evaluative feeling (like–dislike, good–bad) about the character or actions of a person, without any conscious awareness of having gone through steps of search, weighing evidence, or inferring a conclusion" (Haidt & Bjorklund, 2008, p. 188). The deliberative form of thinking (System 2) also has a moral counterpart, but Haidt argues that this is

enacted for socially strategic reasons; to account for the need to explain our judgements to others if required to do so. A form of motivated reasoning (Ditto, Pizarro, & Tannenbaum, 2009).

Haidt asserts that due to the recurrent and varied nature of social challenges experienced by humans and our ancestors over millions of years, innate mental structures developed in response. The variation in these challenges in turn requires a diverse set of responses and Moral Foundations Theory is an attempt to identify the most effective modules in detecting relevant patterns in the social world and facilitating a response with the optimal motivational profile (Graham et al., 2012). Sperber's (1994) modular cognitive organisation provides a robust theoretical basis for the existence of such delineated moral foundations. The variation in these identified modules and the social challenges they address is a pluralistic approach to understanding the origins of human morality, an approach which wholly underpins Moral Foundations Theory.

3. Epistemology & Methodology

3.1. Triangulation

The notion of triangulation of different methods in a research context has varying interpretations across social science academia, with some claiming that a convergence of results through both qualitative and quantitative methods can increase the validity of findings (Webb et al, 1966), whereas others assert that the aim of triangulation should be to produce differing elements of a multi-faceted reality, whereby more knowledge is generated about a particular phenomenon (Sale et al, 2002). In a general sense, it refers to "an epistemological claim concerning what more can be known about a phenomenon when the findings from data generated by two or more methods are brought together" (Moran-Ellis et al., 2006). In an inherently complex world, acknowledged as such by the metatheory of critical realism, a mixed methods approach to delineate the varied facets of reality—particularly with regards to socially produced phenomena—is not just justified, but can be preferable, as positivist, empirically focused approaches can only elucidate directly observable phenomenon. The complex social process of an individual's political sense-making and subsequent actuation with political intent is one such phenomenon that cannot be purely empirically observed, and as such, calls out for a mixed methods triangulation of sorts. This thesis seeks to highlight areas of overlapping findings arrived at via different methodological processes—increasing the validity of these findings—while also providing the premise for delineating distinct, yet related mental processes, all of which are argued to be elements of the multi-faceted political sense-making process.

George Lakoff uses retroductive reasoning in his attempt to explain what unifies the diverse political positions of liberals and conservatives. His use of cognitive modelling to construct a model of how the mind—using natural cognitive apparatuses like conceptual metaphors and radial categories—engages in this task of political sense-making, is a constructivist approach to semiosis (Neimeyer & Levitt, 2001). The Contemporary Metaphor Theory on which it is based is justified by linguistic evidence of how metaphors are used to express sophisticated concepts, evidence gained through a discourse analysis of sorts across various domains of language. This assertion of the primacy of conceptual metaphor in how humans perceive and make sense of the world is then used as the basis for constructing such conceptual metaphors that explain the collections of liberal and conservative political positions. It is reinforced by the claim that much of moral reasoning is

metaphorical in nature, and thus, the moral element of political sense-making can be traced back to the core conceptual metaphors of the nation as family, and the strict father and nurturant parent models of family. The qualitative, constructivist nature of the discourse analysis underpinning Contemporary Metaphor Theory and the strict father and nurturant parent conceptual metaphors emerging from the use of this framework to study political sense-making, is what led to the adoption of Lakoff's analysis of this phenomenon as one component in its mixed methods triangulation.

The evolution of our understanding of the moral domain has formed the basis of Jonathan Haidt's formulation of Moral Foundations Theory. By studying the variation in moral matrices across cultures and considering an evolutionary perspective in how this relates to adaptive challenges that our ancestors faced for many thousands of years, Haidt is taking an interdisciplinary approach to conceptualising our moral bandwidth. This is further reinforced by his incorporation of Sperber's (1994) cognitive modules concept spawning from the field of cognitive anthropology. This first attempt at the delineation of humans' moral bandwidth enabled the design of a questionnaire that further particularised this delineation across the political spectrum. The combination of a qualitative synthesis of evolutionary and moral psychology and the quantitative verification of the moral foundations formulated by Haidt make this undertaking a mixed methods approach to understanding the role of morality in political sense-making. In combination with the qualitative, constructivist approach by Lakoff to illuminate the role of morality and conceptual metaphor in political sense-making, a second methodological perspective is added to the triangulation process.

By utilising neuroimaging to study the reactions and specific regions of the brain relating to politically oriented stimuli, Drew Westen has provided evidence for the primacy of emotion in influencing individuals' process of political sense-making. His focus on delineating the regions that are most heavily involved both in processing inputs of a political nature and manifesting the cognitive reflexes that are critical to understand for those wishing to influence people with political messaging, is a positivist, empirically-based approach to understanding how generating particular emotional reactions in large numbers of people can have either a crucially positive or negative impact on political campaigns. Including a positivistic, reductionist approach such as this in the task of understanding the political sense-making process provides a third methodological perspective to the triangulation process.

The use of differing methods with differing epistemological groundings by these three researchers to derive varied types of data all relating to the same phenomenon enables its multi-faceted, contingent nature to be explored. Contemporary Metaphor Theory and the morality-based central conceptual metaphors it effectuates are a constructivist, theoretical attempt to generate a framework for explaining the political positions of liberals and conservatives, whereas Moral Foundations Theory provides empirical evidence of the relative primacy of specific moral tenets for these two groups and both theories contribute towards the ability to determine effective communications strategies to target these groups. The overlapping elements in these analyses provide foci of particular interest, as these components that have been derived through inherently different approaches, with differing theoretical backgrounds, are perhaps touching on the same elements of this socially constructed reality. The role of emotion is tightly related to that of morality in the process of political sense-making and Westen's positivistic contribution to delineating the physical brain structures and imaging partisans' emotional reflexes to political communications provides compelling evidence for the primacy of emotion in this process and on which emotional triggers can be utilised by political strategists.

3.2. Theory Synthesis

The notion of integrating distinct theories into a synthesis that leads to a gestalt not previously describable within the confines of one theoretical framework has existed within the field of sociology for decades (Pound & Campbell, 2015). However, in recent years the concept of theory synthesis has been embraced across a broader range of academic disciplines, including international relations (Moravcsik, 2003), public health (Pound & Campbell, 2015), political science (Andreatta & Koenig-Archibugi, 2010), criminology (Bernard & Snipes, 1996), and psychotherapy (Gaete & Gaete, 2015). The central tenet of theory synthesis is to "…compare and weave together specific, related theories of interest" (Pound & Campbell, 2015, p. 58) in a way that provides a greater level of insight on the chosen topic of investigation. A purely positivistic approach to this endeavour, whereby 'the truth' can be found by combining disparate theories is criticised by Smith (2003) as overly simplistic, but there are multiple forms of theory synthesis and these must be adopted according to the specific characteristics of the phenomenon under investigation. Jupille et al (2003) assert four modes of theory synthesis: competitive testing; additive theory based on complementary domains of application; sequencing of theories; and incorporation/subsumption. An additive approach, which attempts to "…build a more comprehensive composite in which the whole

provides some gains over partial representations, all the while preserving the integrity of the contributing parts" (Jupille et al, 2003, p. 19) is suggested as being the most appropriate for the task undertaken in this thesis. This is in part because it allows for theories with differing epistemological foundations to contribute to a more meaningful gestalt, but also because its aims are relatively modest compared to other more in-depth syntheses which would be beyond the scope of this thesis. The theories of Lakoff and Haidt—namely Contemporary Metaphor Theory and Moral Foundations Theory—are brought together and compared while also synthesised in conjunction with the concept of individualisation to illuminate its potential political ramifications.

4. Literature Review

The three authors whose work is central to this thesis (George Lakoff, Jonathan Haidt, and Drew Westen) provide three attempts at understanding the role that morality and emotions play in political sense-making and practice. They utilise different theoretical approaches to support their theses, but all are seeking to illuminate the complex nature of an individual's process of political ideation and ideology formation as well as investigate the conventional wisdom that reason plays a central role in these processes. The diverse theoretical approaches of these three authors are explored below.

4.1. George Lakoff

The notion of conceptual metaphors playing a dominant role in an individual's ability to explain complex phenomena is George Lakoff's central thesis. Conceptual metaphors are defined by Lakoff as a "correspondence between concepts across conceptual domains, allowing forms of reasoning and words from one domain to be used in another" (Lakoff, 1996, p. 63). These conceptual metaphors are claimed by Lakoff to be commonly fixed in our conceptual systems, to frequently contribute to our everyday modes of thought, and importantly, are used without effort or conscious awareness, yet play a significant role in characterising an individual's worldview. While much of Lakoff's early work aimed to consolidate the robustness of the case for the centrality of conceptual metaphor in everyday life (Lakoff, 1992; Lakoff & Johnson, 1983; Lakoff & Turner, 1989), in the last two decades, he has spent considerable effort in applying this insight to the realm of political behaviour theory. Moral Politics (1996) is a consolidation of the case for both conceptual metaphor and for that of moral reasoning as metaphorical reasoning, specifically in relation to determining an individual's political ideology.

Cognitive science serves as the academic basis for Lakoff's claim on the importance of conceptual metaphor in explaining moral reasoning and political ideology. Cognitive scientists have studied the nature of common-sense reasoning extensively and found it to be primarily subconscious, in that individuals are not aware of the process involved in such reasoning. While the notion of common-sense may seem uncontentious, cognitive scientists such as Lakoff argue that there are deep, sophisticated, complex and subtle processes at play when one is engaging in common-sense

reasoning, and that common-sense reasoning has a conceptual structure that lies beneath an individual's conscious awareness (Lakoff, 1996). It is the common-sense nature of political discourse that makes it appealing to study from a cognitive science perspective.

Another central component of Lakoff's research that relates to his thesis on political metaphorical reasoning is that of radial categories. Radial categories are the most common form of conceptual categories and are characterised not by properties shared by every member of the category, but by variations on a central model (Lakoff, 1996). The example provided by Lakoff is that of the concept of a mother; wherein the central model is defined by a mother giving birth to a child, caring for that child, imparting half of her genes onto that child and being the wife of the father of that child. However, there are numerous variations on this central model, but all can still be considered a mother, for example: a foster mother, stepmother, surrogate mother and adoptive mother. The central model of a mother here is a subclass of prototype, with other subclasses being ideal case, typical case, anti-ideal case, stereotype, salient exemplar and an essential prototype. Lakoff argues that the central model prototype can be used to delineate types of conservatives and liberals[1]. The central task of Moral Politics (1996), relatedly, is to provide a theory of what determines the parameters of variation between these conservatives and liberals; to explain why conservatives and liberals have the clusters of policies they have. The varying policy positions held by liberals and conservatives are often seen as puzzling and lacking a coherent ideology by those on the opposing side. For example, liberals are puzzled by conservatives' support for the right-to-life coinciding with support for the death penalty or lack of support for prenatal care programs that save the lives of newborn babies, or their support for increases in spending on the military, police and prisons under the guise of protection, but see regulation that protects individuals from predatory business practices as a form of interference, rather than protection. Conversely, conservatives see as puzzling, liberals' support for abortion coinciding with advocating for welfare and education policies for children, their support for labour while simultaneously advocating for regulations that may limit development and eliminate jobs, or their claim to be for equality of opportunity existing alongside support for affirmative action.

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[1] Liberal will be used henceforth to describe individuals that identify with progressive, left-wing political ideology, as this is the terminology utilised in the USA and therefore used by all three authors centrally featured in this thesis.

Lakoff proposes three adequacy conditions that he asserts should be met by any model that explains liberal and conservative worldviews. The model must: explain why certain stands on issues go together, explain why the policy positions held by liberals and conservatives are often puzzling for the other side, and explain the topic choice, word choice, and forms of reasoning in liberal and conservative discourse. Through a process of retroductive reasoning—that is, asking what makes X possible, whereby X is conservative and liberal worldviews—Lakoff provides such a model, with two central conceptual metaphors, the Strict Father model and Nurturant Parent model, representing the conservative and liberal worldviews respectively. The unifying metaphor that underlies both of these models is that of the nation-as-family, which Lakoff argues is commonplace, unconscious and automatic, and provides the link between family-based morality and politics. Lakoff claims that within this metaphor, the government is seen as an older male that protects its citizens as a father would protect his children. The examples of commonplace language like the 'fatherland', 'Uncle Sam' and 'Big Brother' are used to support this claim. Another important claim that supports Lakoff's central metaphorical models is that much of moral reasoning is metaphorical reasoning. A conclusion derived from the cognitive studies literature is that moral reasoning is imaginative and that it depends fundamentally on metaphorical understanding (Churchland, 1995; Flanagan, 1991; Johnson, 1993). Johnson (1993) emphasises this claim:

> We human beings are imaginative creatures, from our most mundane, automatic acts of perception, all the way up to our most abstract conceptualisation and reasoning. Consequently, our moral understanding depends in large measure on various structures of imagination, such as images, image schemas, metaphors, narratives, and so forth. Moral reasoning is thus basically an imaginative activity, because it uses imaginatively structured concepts and requires imagination to discern what is morally relevant in situations, to understand empathetically how others experience things, and to envision the full range of possibilities open to us in a particular case.[2]

Lakoff is quick to stress that not all morality is metaphorical in nature, and in fact it is the non-metaphorical aspects of morality—those related to the experience of wellbeing—upon which the system of metaphors for morality is based. These aspects of morality that promote the experiential wellbeing of others and the avoidance of experiential harm to others include being: healthy as

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[2] Johnson, (1993) *Moral Imagination,* preface

opposed to sick, wealthy as opposed to poor, strong as opposed to weak, and free rather than imprisoned. As it is better to be wealthy than poor, strong rather than weak, or healthy rather than sick, morality is often conceptualised in terms of these preferable states of wellbeing and, consequently, it follows that such non-metaphorical morality is the basis for metaphorical morality. For example, a fear of the dark has spawned the conception of evil as dark, and good as light, and the notion that walking upright is superior to falling down has led to the conception of morality as uprightness (Lakoff, 1996). The aforementioned forms of experiential wellbeing are universal around the world, and as such, the same metaphors for morality appear in culture after culture. The 'nation as family' metaphor is likewise noticeable in many other countries, with Mother Russia, Mother India and Mother England all found in the vernacular of these countries. Lakoff asserts that this nation as family metaphor is what links conservative and liberal worldviews to his two models based around the central conceptual metaphors of the Strict Father and Nurturant Parent.

4.1.1. Strict Father

The Strict Father model proposed by Lakoff represents a distinct moral system in which the world is understood as a fundamentally dangerous place, with evils lurking everywhere, including within the human soul and survival relies on discipline, obedience to moral authority, and observance of a defined moral order. This Strict Father model is as follows:

> A traditional nuclear family, with the father having primary responsibility for supporting and protecting the family as well as the authority to set overall family policy. He teaches children right from wrong by setting strict rules for their behaviour and enforcing them through punishment. The punishment is typically mild to moderate, but sufficiently painful. It is commonly corporal punishment—say, with a belt or a stick. He also gains their cooperation by showing love and appreciation when they do follow the rules. But children must never be coddled, lest they become spoiled; a spoiled child will be dependent for life and will not learn proper morals. The mother has a day-to-day responsibility for the care of the house, raising the children, and upholding the father's authority. Children must respect and obey their parents, partly for their own safety and partly because by doing so they build character, that is, self-discipline and self-reliance. Love and nurturance are a vital part of family life, but should never outweigh parental authority, which is itself an expression of love and nurturance—

tough love. Self-discipline, self-reliance and respect for legitimate authority are the crucial things that a child must learn. A mature adult becomes self-reliant through applying self-discipline in pursuing his self-interest. Only if a child learns self-discipline can he become self-reliant later in life. Survival is a matter of competition, and only through self-discipline can a child learn to compete successfully. The mature children of the Strict Father have to sink or swim by themselves. They are on their own and have to prove their responsibility and self-reliance. They have attained, through discipline, authority over themselves. They must, and are competent to, make their own decisions. They must protect themselves and their families. They know what is good for them better than their parents, who are distant from them. Good parents do not meddle or interfere in their lives. Any parental meddling or interference is strongly resented.[3]

Three central themes arise from this model (Lakoff, 1996, p. 68) with important implications for the potential impact on political sense-making from a conservative worldview:

- Self-discipline is very important, because the world is difficult, and it is therefore necessary to survive. If you are obedient, you will become self-disciplined, leading to success, meaning therefore, that success is moral.

- Competition is moral, because it shows who is self-disciplined and is a condition for the development and sustenance of the right kind of person. Correspondingly, restraints on competition are immoral; they inhibit the development and sustenance of the 'right' kind of person, and consequently, meritocracy is desirable, as is hierarchy; some people have authority over others, and their authority is legitimate.

- Those with legitimate authority have a responsibility to exercise it for the benefit of those under their authority. This includes: maintaining order; sustaining and defending the system of authority itself, using their authority to protect those under it, and working for the benefit of those under their authority, especially helping create self-disciplined people.

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[3] Lakoff, (1996) *Moral Politics,* p. 65

These themes are in addition to numerous moral priorities, which are implicitly accepted when this model of the family is accepted. Many of these moral priorities also manifest as metaphors under the Strict Father model according to Lakoff and these moral priorities make up what Lakoff refers to as Strict Father morality. Some of the key metaphoric moral priorities are described below.

Moral Strength

This metaphor is central to Strict Father morality and embodies the notions that being bad is being 'low', being good is being 'upright', doing evil is 'falling' (e.g. falling from grace), evil is a 'force' that can make you 'fall' or commit immoral acts, and that morality is 'strength' that can stand up to evil and which is built through self-discipline and denial. This metaphor provides a mode of unconscious reasoning; that anything that promotes moral weakness is immoral, for example, welfare that disincentivises work, and unconsciously reasoning in this manner leads to these assertions becoming common sense. It also excludes explanations relating to social forces or class. An important ramification of this metaphor is that one is not born with moral strength, but rather it must be built. It follows from this that we all start out as morally weak and with an overwhelming tendency to do immoral things, and unless our parents intervene to discipline us, we will naturally become immoral.

Moral Authority

This metaphor is patterned on parental authority, whereby the authority figure sets standards of behaviour and punishes those that do not meet these standards. Moral behaviour by one subjected to authority is obedience to the authority figure, and conversely, the exertion of moral authority is moral behaviour on the part of the authority figure, providing they are using it legitimately. Failure to assert authority by setting standards of behaviour and enforcing them through punishment is therefore immoral. A resentment toward 'illegitimate authority' occurs when the conditions for legitimacy of parental authority are not met. This occurs when one subject to authority claims to know better than the authority figure what their and their community's best interests are and is capable of acting in these best interests in place of the authority figure and also when the authority figure is acting against these best interests. The federal government is a common target for this sentiment (Lakoff, 1996). As other countries have different manifestations of the endpoint of legitimate parental authority over their children

and of the age of full autonomy of children from their parents (i.e. Italy, France, Spain, China, Israel (Lakoff, 1996)), it is expected that unlike in the USA, the perception of illegitimate parental meddling in one's life is less pronounced in the versions of Strict Father morality in these countries, and the relationship between citizens of these countries and their governments is indeed less adversarial in this respect.

Moral Order

The moral order metaphor is based on a folk theory of the natural order in which the natural order is the order of dominance that occurs in the world. This metaphor legitimises perceived "natural" power relations into a hierarchy of moral authority whereby certain groups have moral authority over others (Lakoff, 1996). For example, God over people, people over nature, adults over children and men over women. However, with this moral authority comes responsibility for the wellbeing of those lower in the hierarchy. This moral hierarchy serves to legitimate the existing power relations between groups in society as being natural and thus makes social movements seeking to disrupt these power dynamics such as feminism appear immoral. In addition to this, it legitimates the view of nature as a resource for humans and delegitimates the notion of an inherent value of nature and provides justification for those that argue for a natural superiority, like white supremacists, Nietzsche's moral theory claiming the moral authority of nobility over commoners, the Nazi claim that Aryans ranked higher in the moral order than Jews or Gypsies, or Calvinist ideals of the moral relativity of rich and poor people. The notion of moral superiority of rich people over poor fits particularly snugly within the American Strict Father morality, as the notion of the American Dream can easily be interpreted that if you are too lazy or untalented to achieve it, then you deserve poverty.

Moral Wholeness

Strict father morality requires that there are natural, strict, uniform, unchanging standards of behaviour that must be followed if society is to function, and one way to conceptualise uniform standards of behaviour is through the metaphor of moral wholeness (Lakoff, 1996, p. 90). Wholeness entails a homogeneity and unity of form which makes an entity strong and resistant to pressures as well as stable and predictable in the way it functions. In this regard, wholeness is perceived as moral, whereas degeneration is immoral. The consequences of this metaphorical

mode of thought are considerable, as moral standards that change with time, social situation, or ethnicity are perceived to be a danger to the functioning of society. Progress in morality consequently does not exist, it is permanently fixed, and any so-called moral progress is rather an evil that chips away at the moral foundations upon which society rests.

Moral Purity

Many linguistic examples showcase the relevance of concept of moral purity, as an undesirable act can be "disgusting", much as an undesirable character can be "dirty", or someone that has yet to lose their innocence is known as "pure" and a city that is perceived to be in moral decline needs to be "cleaned up". The implications of this metaphor are profound; "just as physical impurities can ruin a substance, so moral impurities can ruin a person or society, and just as substances, to be usable, must be purged of impurities, so societies, to be viable, must be purged of corrupting individuals or practices." (Lakoff, 1996, p. 92)

Moral Self-Interest

The pursuit of self-interest in the Strict Father model of the family is seen as moral, as it can only be achieved through self-reliance attained by maintaining self-discipline. So long as it is not conflicting with other moral priorities like authority and strength, the pursuit of self-interest serves as a link between these Strict Father morals of self-reliance and self-discipline and is seen as leading to an increase in wellbeing for all, as it represents a metaphorical version of Adam Smith's invisible hand. This also helps to explain the strong link between conservative ideology and free-market economics. Conversely, interference in the free-market is seen as preventing the moral pursuit of self-interest and is to be resisted accordingly.

The moral metaphors that constitute the Strict Father model are not exclusive to it, rather they are commonly found in other cultures and contexts and occur in other moral systems. It is the particular nature in which they are collated and organised that creates the specific emotional and logic dynamic of Strict Father morality; an elaborate, unified moral system based on a specific interpretation of family life that provides moral guidance across a number of realms relevant in the development of a political ideology. The differing relationships between adult offspring and their parents and corresponding variation in tolerance for ongoing authority and input provide the potential for culture-specific variations on the Strict Father model, but the universal nature of much

of its metaphorical moral composition suggests that it is a valid model through which to interpret the conservative political ideologies found in other cultures around the world. The moral metaphors discussed above, and others are said by Lakoff to exist in a hierarchy, whereby priority in the mind of those engaging with Strict Father morality is heeded to the Strength Group of metaphors (moral strength, moral order, moral wholeness, moral purity etc.) above moral self-interest which is above moral nurturance in last place.

4.1.2. Nurturant Parent

Lakoff's Nurturant Parent model is primarily oriented around the concept of empathy, as nurturance can only be provided once one is able to empathise with the needs of those who require nurturing. Based around a concept of an ideal family, it similarly to the Strict Father model assumes that the model of childrearing will be reproduced in the child, although this results in self-nurturance in the Nurturant Parent model as opposed to self-discipline in the Strict Father model. The Nurturant Parent model is as follows:

> A family of preferably two parents, but perhaps only one. If two, the parents share household responsibilities. The primal experience behind this model is one of being cared for and cared about, having one's desires for loving interactions met, living as happily as possible, and deriving meaning from mutual interaction and care. Children develop best through their positive relationships to others, through their contribution to their community, and through the ways in which they realise their potential and find joy in life. Children become responsible, self-disciplined, and self-reliant through being cared for and respected, and through caring for others. Support and protection are part of nurturance, and they require strength and courage on the part of parents. The obedience of children comes out of their love and respect for their parents, not out of the fear of punishment. Open, two-way, mutually respectful communication is crucial. If parents' authority is to be legitimate, they must tell children why their decisions serve the cause of protection and nurturance. The questioning of parents by children is positive, since children need to learn why parents do what they do, since children often have good ideas that should be taken seriously, and since all family members should participate in important decisions. Responsible parents, of course, have to make the ultimate decisions and that must be clear. Protection is a form of caring, and protection

from external dangers takes up a significant part of the nurturant parent's attention. The world is filled with evils that can harm a child, and it is the nurturant parent's duty to ward them off. Crime and drugs are, of course, significant, but so are less obvious dangers: cigarettes, cars without seatbelts, dangerous toys, inflammable clothing, pollution, asbestos, lead paint, pesticides in food, diseases, unscrupulous businessmen, and so on. Protection of innocent and helpless children from such evils is a major part of a nurturant parent's job. The principal goal of nurturance is for children to be fulfilled and happy in their lives and to become nurturant themselves. A fulfilling life is assumed to be, in significant part, a nurturant life, one committed to family and community responsibility. Self-fulfillment and the nurturance of others are seen as inseparable. What children need to learn is empathy for others, the capacity for nurturance, cooperation, and the maintenance of social ties, which cannot be done without the strength, respect, self-discipline, and self-reliance that comes through being cared for and caring. Raising a child to be fulfilled also requires helping that child develop his or her potential for achievement and enjoyment. That requires respecting the child's own values and allowing the child to explore the range of ideas and options that the world offers. When children are respected, nurtured, and communicated with from birth, they gradually enter into a lifetime relationship of mutual respect, communication, and caring with their parents.

This model is based on a very different set of metaphors for morality than the Strict Father model, as it emphasises empathy, nurturance, self-nurturance, social ties, fairness and happiness, with the two moral metaphors given the greatest primacy being morality as empathy and morality as nurturance. The key moral metaphors of Nurturant Parent morality are outlined further below.

Morality as Nurturance

Nurturance presupposes empathy, as in order to care for another being, one must first care *about* that being and be able to sense what they require. Insofar as a child has a right to be nurtured and a parent has a duty to care for their child, the metaphor of morality as nurturance embodies the primacy of nurturance to the liberal ideology, whereby this

family-based morality is projected onto society as a whole. Morality as nurturance can be described by the following conceptual metaphor:

- The community is a family

- Moral agents are nurturing parents

- People needing help are children needing nurturance

- Moral action is nurturance
  (Lakoff, 1996, p. 117)

There are a number of elements of this metaphor that relate it to how individuals perceive society and their and their government's role within it. These include:

- To nurture children, one must have absolute and regular empathy with them
- To act morally toward people needing help to survive, one must have absolute and regular empathy with them
- Nurturance may require making sacrifices to care for children
- Moral action may require making sacrifices to help truly needy people
  (Lakoff, 1996, p. 117)

This can be extended if one also conceptualises their community as family:

- Family members have a responsibility to see that children in their family are nurtured
- Community members have a responsibility to see that people needing help in their community are helped
  (Lakoff, 1996, p. 117)

The morality as nurturance metaphor is the overarching metaphoric element of the Nurturant Parent model and encapsulates a number of other encompassed metaphors including morality as empathy, moral self-nurturance, morality as self-development and morality as fair distribution which are outlined below.

Morality as Empathy

As one cannot literally project one's consciousness into another's being to feel what another feels, the notion of empathy is fundamentally metaphorical. To try and imagine what another feels is the core of what it means to be empathetic towards another, however there are variations on the central concept of empathy, including absolute, egocentric and affordable empathy. Absolute empathy is truly feeling what another feels without some disclaimer or condition, whereas egocentric empathy is projecting one's capacity to feel while maintaining their own values. Affordable empathy is simply the empathy that well-off people are able show to those less fortunate than themselves, something that those similarly unfortunate are often not able to do. The central logic of morality as empathy is that having felt another's individual perception, one would want the other to experience a sense of wellbeing and therefore be motivated to engender it in them.

Moral Self-Nurturance/Morality as Self-Development

In order to maintain a nurturant mindset, Lakoff argues that one must be nurturant towards oneself, ensuring that one's basic needs (health, job, personal relationships etc.) are being maintained and accordingly, not allowing oneself to operate continually in a mode of selflessness. Selflessness is described as putting the needs of others ahead of one's own and goes beyond nurturance as maintaining this mode of operation can lead to burnout. Lakoff distinguishes between moral self-nurturance and morality as self-development as two distinct but equal subsects of the morality as nurturance metaphor, but whereas moral self-nurturance refers to the need to nurture oneself in order to continue nurturing others, morality as self-development refers to the pursuit of one's desire to increase empathy, help others, nurture social ties, make people happy or increase one's own capacity for happiness. These can desires can manifest in activities like meditation, development of artistic skills, attainment of education, experiences in nature and community service.

Morality as Fair Distribution

In an ideal family, each child would receive equal levels of nurturance and parents would share the burdens of parenthood equally and this notion is behind the morality of fair distribution metaphor within Nurturant Parent morality. As there are many models of fair distribution (equality of distribution, equality of opportunity, procedural distribution, rights-based fairness, needs-based fairness, scalar distribution etc.) a number of these can be found within the Nurturant Parent model, but they arise according to the relevant context as is the case with parenting; based on the relevant conditions of family life. Lakoff argues that this metaphor is a cornerstone of Nurturant Parent morality (Lakoff, 1996, p. 124).

Moral Self-Interest

Lakoff is careful to distinguish moral self-interest from notions of moral self-development, morality as self-nurturance and the pursuit of happiness in the service of others. He argues that the latter all are involved in and foster interdependence, rather than independence and autonomy of the individual and that the claims that they are in the pursuit of self-interest by some theorists are not true within the system of Nurturant Parent morality. However, he argues that with the constraints on the application of moral self-interest within Nurturant Parent morality, the pursuit of self-interest once these constraints are met is perfectly moral and is a component of the moral system.

Lakoff asserts that as with the Strict Father model, there is a hierarchy in the moral values in the Nurturant Parent morality. It is argued that the Nurturance Group (moral nurturance, moral empathy, moral self-development, morality as fair distribution etc.) are the top moral priorities followed by moral self-interest and lastly the Strength Group (moral strength, moral order, moral wholeness, moral purity etc.).

4.1.3. Applications

The implications of these moral hierarchies are profound assuming they are accurate, as it suggests a blueprint for targeting individuals with political communications. That is precisely what Lakoff has used this conceptualisation of the moral basis of conservative and liberal politics to do. Lakoff

suggests that by focusing on the language by which politicians address the public, it is possible to reframe key issues and therefore make them more palatable or relevant for different groups. As conservatives and liberals are asserted to exist in radial categories, not in uniform, clearly defined archetypes, he asserts that it is possible to devise framing techniques that activate individuals that Lakoff labels biconceptuals; progressive on some issues, conservative on others (Lakoff, 2014). By carefully selecting language and phrasing that activates the Nurturant Parent model, rather than the Strict Father model, which he asserts is also running in these biconceptuals, it is possible to actuate these individuals to support progressive causes. Potential specific strategies and language selection will be discussed further in the recommendations chapter.

4.2. Jonathan Haidt

With the use of three central metaphors, Jonathan Haidt conceptualises the three principles of moral psychology, also being the three central tenets of his book The Righteous Mind (2012). These are outlined below and used as a starting point to explore the key findings of this text, a seminal contribution towards understanding the interplay of intuition, morality and reason in political sense-making.

4.2.1. Intuitions Before Reasoning

Conventional liberal political wisdom is that, given sufficient information about the issues and policies spruiked by liberal political parties, a majority of the population will reason their way to accepting that these issues are relevant and that the proposed policies are in their best interests and therefore worth voting for. Haidt refutes this and asserts that intuitions—moral intuitions more specifically—are by far the dominant factor in explaining people's perspectives. In a similar vein to David Hume's assertion that reason is the "slave of the passions" (Hume, 1969 [1939/40, p. 462), Haidt argues that reasoning is done primarily post-hoc and in response to an immediate, subconscious intuition, and that this also applies to moral reasoning. He provides supporting examples of interview responses from people asked about the moral acceptability of hypothetical actions that could be perceived as disgusting or taboo, but specifically constructed without the potential for harm to oneself or others, in which subjects continually invented victims of harm that contradicted the details of the question (Haidt et al., 1993). What's more, when corrected on these details, they would often invent another victim, demonstrating this process of post-hoc moral reasoning to justify a position landed upon, immediately and subconsciously, through moral

intuition. When it became too difficult to conjure another victim, many people became morally "dumbfounded", insisting the action was still morally wrong, but without being able to reason their way to an answer as to why.

Haidt provides a number of major research findings beyond his own observations that support this notion of intuitions coming before reason. Robert Zajonc, leaning on the 1890's doctrine of "affective primacy" (Wundt, 1896), uncovered what he called the "mere exposure effect" whereby exposing individuals to words or images repeatedly led to a greater affinity for those words or images (Zajonc, 1968). Based on these findings, he advocated for a dual-process model in which affect or "feeling" precedes thinking and asserted that affective reactions "reduce the universe of alternatives" available to later thinking (Zajonc, 1980). This model was supported by findings that exposure to words of a positive or negative nature or "affective priming" can create a pre-judgement of the word or image that follows it (Fazio et al, 1986; Greenwald et al, 1998) and similarly, that prejudices against political candidates could be measured by using their names as primes in the same fashion (Morris et al, 2003). Sensory stimulation of the disgust and displeasure responses in subjects has been shown to also negatively affect responses to survey questions (Schnall et al, 2008; Eskine et al, 2011), while feelings of cleanliness or dirtiness has been shown to sway responses to questions of morality and political ideology in similarly designed studies (Zhong, et al, 2010; Helzer & Pizarro, 2011). Neuroscientists have recently been studying the regions of the brain that correlate with emotional processing to see how they respond to scenarios relating to moral violations, charitable donations, assigning punishment for crimes, playing games with cheaters and co-operators (Rilling et al, 2008; Sanfey et al, 2003) and inducing deontological versus utilitarian judgements relating to the saving or sacrificing of human lives (Greene et al, 2001). These results show consistently that when faced with these kinds of morally charged scenarios, the areas of participants' brains associated with emotional processing activate almost immediately. This is significant, as high activity in these areas correlates with the kinds of moral judgements or decisions that participants eventually make (Greene et al, 2009).

Haidt uses the metaphor of a rider sitting on an elephant to describe the interplay between intuition and reason, whereby the elephant represents the automatic processes that operate within the subconscious including intuition and the rider represents the controlled processes like (moral) reasoning. The metaphor conveys that the rider has evolved to serve the elephant, and as with the

relative discrepancy in their sizes, the rider is only able to affect minimal control over the elephant, representing the primacy with which moral intuitions affect our perspective and the post-hoc role of reasoning. The implication from this is that in order to reach an individual through discussion or argumentation regarding a moral or political issue, it is important to address the 'elephant' or that individual's moral intuitions in order to be effective. To do this however, it is necessary to understand from where these moral intuitions originate and to have a model for tailoring these communications to capture the variation in moral intuition that exists across cultures and the spectrum of political ideology.

4.2.2. Moral Foundations Theory

The second principle of moral psychology that Haidt explores in The Righteous Mind (2012) is: there's more to morality than harm and fairness. As discussed in chapter 2, WEIRD (western, educated, industrial, rich, developed) societies have been shown to have a generally narrower moral domain than those of other societies (Henrich, Heine, & Norenzayan, 2010), with the care/justice paradigm playing a disproportionate role in the moral systems of WEIRD individuals that focus primarily on the ethic of autonomy (Haidt, 2012). Attempts to broaden the scope of study beyond individuals from WEIRD countries, particularly those that are educated and (upper-) middle class who are frequently recruited for academic studies out of sheer convenience (Arnett, 2008), show that the moral domain of individuals outside of WEIRD societies and within religious and conservative moral matrices within WEIRD societies is broader and commonly includes the ethics of community and divinity (Shweder et al, 1997). These findings are in line with Hume's analogy of morality as the sensory experience of taste and the variable distinctions of it available to us from sweet to bitter (Hume, 1960 [1777]). Whereas much of the focus of moral sciences has been on the primacy of rationalist deontological or utilitarianist interpretations of morality favoured by earlier intellectuals like Immanuel Kant (1993 [1785]) and Jeremy Bentham (1996 [1789]), Hume before him and now Haidt, argue for a more descriptive, pluralist approach to understanding the moral landscape. By drawing a link between anthropology and evolutionary psychology, Haidt proposed that the notion of cognitive modularity—that areas of an animal's brain evolve to respond to certain patterns in nature that assist in that animal's survival—is relevant for understanding how morality develops differently in different contexts. It is understood that cognitive modules can have different triggers than those that they were adapted for (Sperber & Hirschfeld, 2004), and Haidt asserts that

this can be applied to the moral realm, where triggers can be shrunk or expanded depending on the societal context (Haidt, 2012). Out of the adaptive challenges faced in social life that evolutionary psychologists frequently wrote about, Haidt formulated what he considered to be the five cognitive modules that also correlate to the virtues that are found in some form in many cultures (Neuberg et al, 2010). These adaptive challenges are: caring for vulnerable children, forming partnerships with non-kin to reap the benefits of reciprocity, forming coalitions to compete with other coalitions, negotiating status hierarchies, and keeping oneself and one's kin free from parasites and pathogens, which spread quickly when people live in close proximity to each other (Haidt, 2012, p. 146).

Humanity's understanding of innateness has developed considerably in recent decades; while previously any 'innate' human trait was considered necessarily to be hardwired, fixed, and immutable, it is now accepted as relating to something "organised in advance of experience" (Haidt, 2012, p. 153), while concurrently malleable over time. The cognitive modules outlined above are claimed by Haidt to be such an example of innate human traits, and critically, that they interact with an individual's environment, become triggered by different stimuli and with variable sensitivity. This attempt to describe the innate cognitive modules that relate to human morality resulted in the formulation of Haidt's Moral Foundations Theory, wherein the aforementioned adaptive challenges form the evolutionary basis for these modular moral foundations. The five original moral foundations are Care/Harm, Fairness/Cheating, Loyalty/Betrayal, Authority/Subversion, and Sanctity/Degradation. This was supplemented after the initial conceptualisation of the theory with the Liberty/Oppression foundation, which came about after the realisation that much of the desire for fairness expressed by individuals was related more so to proportionality than equality, and that there was another evolutionary adaptive challenge that demanded a response. Haidt argues it is that of living in small groups with individuals who would, given the chance, bully, dominate, and constrain others, with the original trigger being signs of attempted dominance over others (Haidt, 2012, p. 200). Haidt's (currently) six moral foundations are outlined below.

Care/Harm

Evolving in response to the biological requirement of comprehensive and long-term care and protection of infants, the original trigger for this cognitive module was witnessing the suffering of one's own children. However, as is the case for any cognitive module, there can be multiple triggers

and these triggers can change over time; we now care about many more classes of victims than half a century ago (Pinker, 2011). Skyrocketing rates of veganism in the US and UK in recent years are a demonstration of this, as a core reason for embracing a vegan diet is concern for the welfare of animals (GlobalData, 2017; Ipsos, 2016).

Fairness/Cheating

The theory of reciprocal altruism has helped humanity to explain non-kin altruism by asserting that when a species remembers previous interactions with others, an incentive is created to play a tit-for-tat strategy in order to maximise an individual's payoff (Trivers, 1971). This has also been shown to be the optimal strategy in the iterated prisoner's dilemma developed in game theory, wherein players remember previous interactions and the decisions taken by a player's opponent (Axelrod & Hamilton, 1981). It is in response to this adaptive challenge of achieving reciprocity with non-kin individuals that has given rise to the Fairness/Cheating moral foundation. The original triggers for this module are acts of cooperation or selfishness towards oneself, but these have expanded and diverged in recent times across the political spectrum towards equality and social justice on the left, but more so towards proportionality and people receiving what they have 'earned' on the right.

Loyalty/Betrayal

The prevalence of warfare in human societies over thousands of years points to the adaptive challenge of forming and maintaining coalitions to fend off rival groups in order to survive. This requires a trait that facilitates robust tribes and communities, and current day humans are the descendants of those that managed to do so, as opposed to those that lived a more individualistic existence. The original trigger for this module would have been anything that signified that your tribe member was committed to fighting for the benefit or survival of the tribe, but in the current day, humans have created elaborate outlets for this innate tendency, creating sport teams and political parties that encourage tribalism and displays of group loyalty. The reverse of this affinity towards loyal tribespeople or teammates is a hatred for traitors, which can manifest when a player requests a trade to another sport team, or when a liberal person expresses disdain for hostile foreign policy. The political divide existent within the loyalty/betrayal foundation will be discussed further below.

Authority/Subversion

Social hierarchies exist not just across the full span of human history, but commonly within the animal kingdom. It is not the mere existence of these hierarchies that makes authority a compelling candidate for a moral foundation, but the legitimating nature of the responsibilities of leaders for their subordinates and their maintenance of order that pushes it into the moral domain. Original triggers of these modules include any behaviour that asserts authority or conveys submissiveness, but now comprise any kind of acts that could be construed as obedience, disobedience, respect, disrespect, submission, or rebellion towards legitimate forms of authority.

Sanctity/Degradation

The "omnivore's dilemma" refers to an omnivore's need to constantly explore new sources of food, while remaining wary of parasites, pathogens, and toxicity that could cause them harm (Rozin & Fallon, 1987), leading them to exhibit both neophilia and neophobia, simultaneously being attracted and fearful of new things. The interplay between them has implications for an individual's political ideology, whereby liberals tend to exhibit a much stronger tendency to seek out new experiences whereas conservatives tend to stick with what they know and seek to protect existing paradigms and social structures (McCrae, 1996). The omnivore's dilemma led to the evolution of the emotion of disgust in humans, a "behavioural immune response" that helps to prevent humans from being exposed to threats like those aforementioned (Schaller & Park, 2011), which was the adaptive challenge that drove the evolution of the Sanctity foundation. The experience of disgust at sights, smells or tastes that indicated proximate danger was the original trigger for this foundation, however, it has broadened extensively across different cultures, but commonly includes out-group members like immigrants and the perceived desecration of sacred objects or institutions.

Liberty/Oppression

While the majority of human history has consisted of egalitarian hunter-gatherer communities, it is suggested that humans are innately hierarchical, but underwent a "political transition" that enabled them to live in such egalitarian groups (Boehm, 1999), before the agricultural revolution catalysed the transition back into hierarchical societies. The tendency for groups to band together and strike down an alpha male that was abusing his position of authority enabled these egalitarian groups to prosper for thousands of years and living in a group with the ever-present threat of such an abuse of power is proposed by Haidt as the adaptive challenge from which the Liberty/oppression

foundation evolved. The original trigger for this was therefore signs of attempted domination over the group or its individual members, but this has since evolved into the perception of illegitimate restraints to one's liberty. This can manifest in suspicion or outright contempt for government in conservatives, and similar sentiments towards unbridled capitalism and the extremely wealthy in liberals.

4.2.3. Evidence for the Moral Foundations of Politics

To test whether the moral foundations formulated by Haidt had a particular correlation with people's political ideology he developed the Moral Foundations Questionnaire (MFQ) in collaboration with his colleagues Jesse Graham and Brian Nosek. The MFQ asked people how relevant considerations relating to each of the foundations were in judging whether something was right or wrong, from "extremely relevant" to "not at all relevant" and mapped this onto self-identification of political ideology on a spectrum from "very liberal" to "very conservative". The results were as they were expecting, with the care and hard foundations ranking high and the loyalty, authority and sanctity foundations ranking low for the most liberal respondents and a convergence occurring at the most conservative end of the spectrum with a gradual, but clear trend showing relatively lower relevance for the care and harm foundations and relatively higher relevance for the loyalty, authority and sanctity foundations.
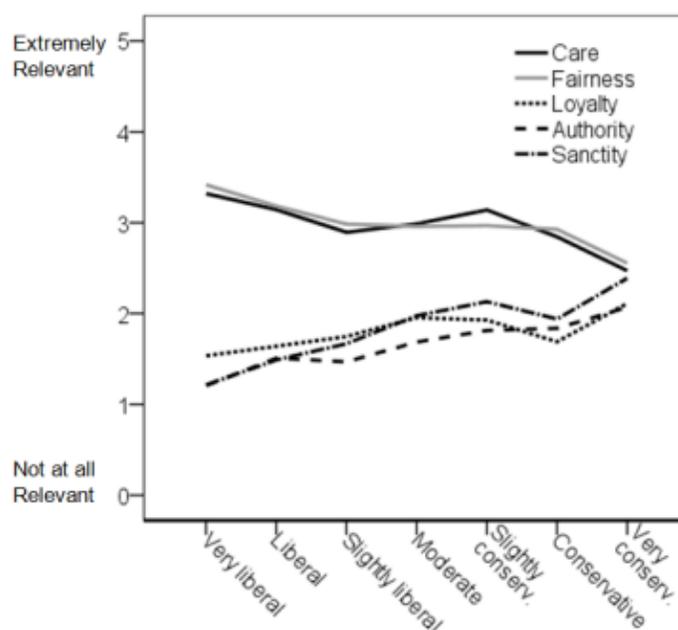
Figure 1. First evidence for Moral Foundations Theory (Graham, Haidt, Nosek, 2011, p. 184)

This survey was completed with 1,600 responses and was the first evidence of a clear distinction between liberals and conservatives and the relative weight that these specific moral foundations hold in reflecting their political orientation. The MFQ was further refined over the following years and was released on a designated website for garnering responses. It quickly achieved 132,000 responses by 2011 and the results were even more emphatic; the downward gradient of the care and fairness foundations and the upward gradient of the loyalty, authority and sanctity foundations were much steeper than from the results of the first survey.
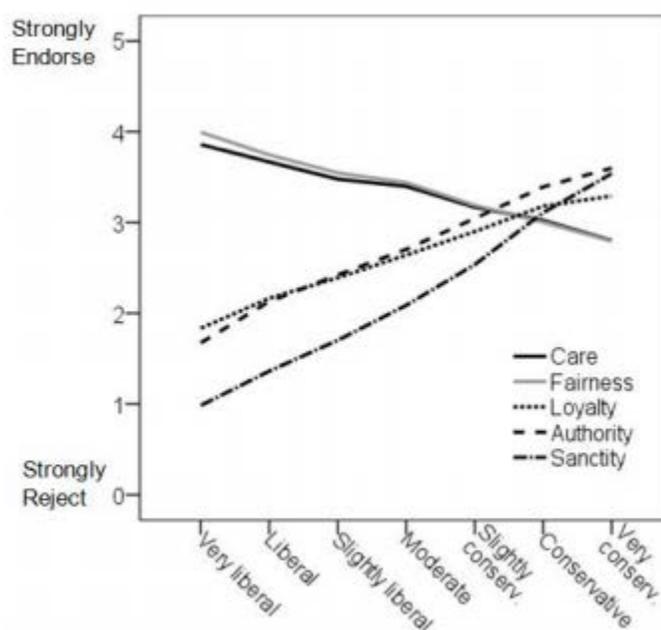

Figure 2. Scores on the MFQ, from 132,000 responses (Haidt, 2012)

The results show consistency and have been corroborated through other analyses, including: parsing sermons from Unitarian (liberal) and Southern Baptist (conservative) churches for their usage of words associated with the different foundations (Graham, Haidt & Nosek, 2009), and examining the brainwaves of liberal and conservative students after being exposed to two versions of a statement, with one endorsing an idea consistent with a particular foundation and the other rejecting it (Graham, 2010). Liberal brains showed a greater level of surprise, relative to conservative brains when confronted with sentences that rejected Care and Fairness concerns. This result provides strong supporting evidence for the notion that intuitions come first and reasoning second, as the reactions to these statements detected in the partisan participant's brainwaves registered within the first half-second, virtually immediately, implying that from this moment, the

reasoning process for each is starting from a different point, with a filter in place prior to any kind of conscious cognitive operation, leading the partisan to search for different kinds of evidence and reach different conclusions.

Once the Liberty/oppression foundation was added into the questionnaire and fairness was reframed as relating to proportionality rather than equality, it became clear that conservatives and liberals were both using this foundation, albeit, with it forming a greater component of liberals' moral matrix than that of conservatives. It also became clear that once fairness was reframed with a focus on proportionality, it became a less central component of liberals' moral matrix while it stayed consistently important to conservatives. Upon reanalysing the responses to the MFQ questionnaire with these alterations, Haidt developed the following representations (**Figure 3** of the moral matrices of liberals and social conservatives relating to the six moral foundations.
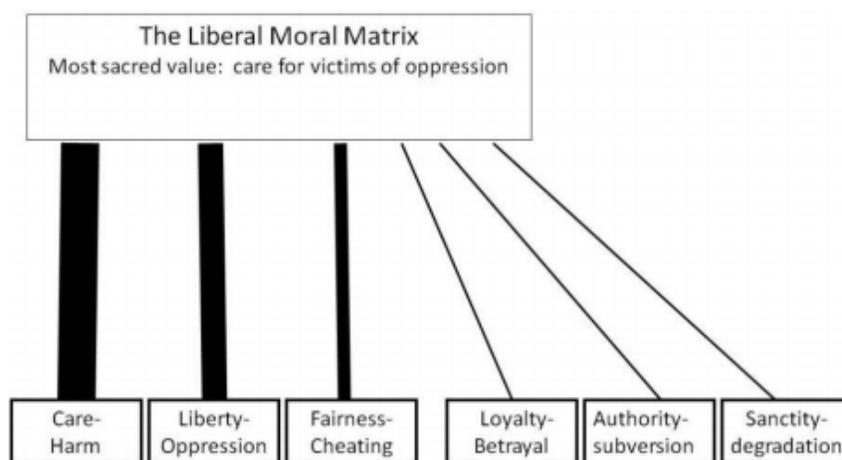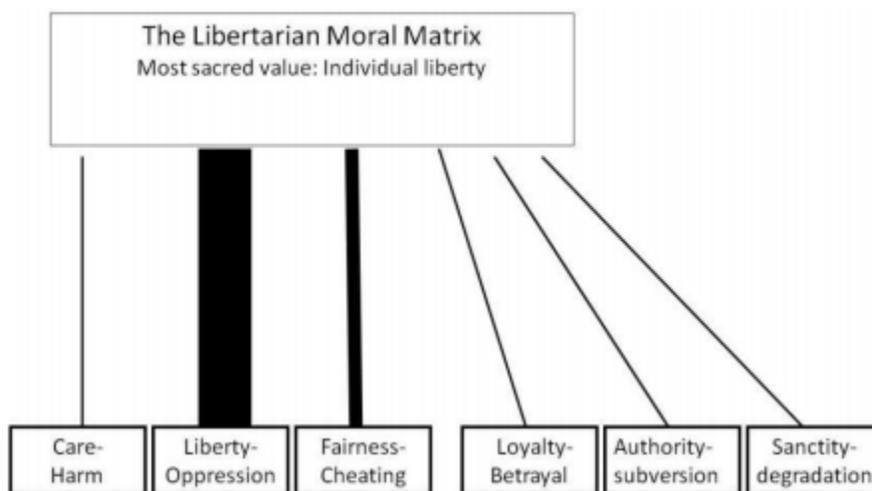

Figure 3. The moral matrix of US liberals
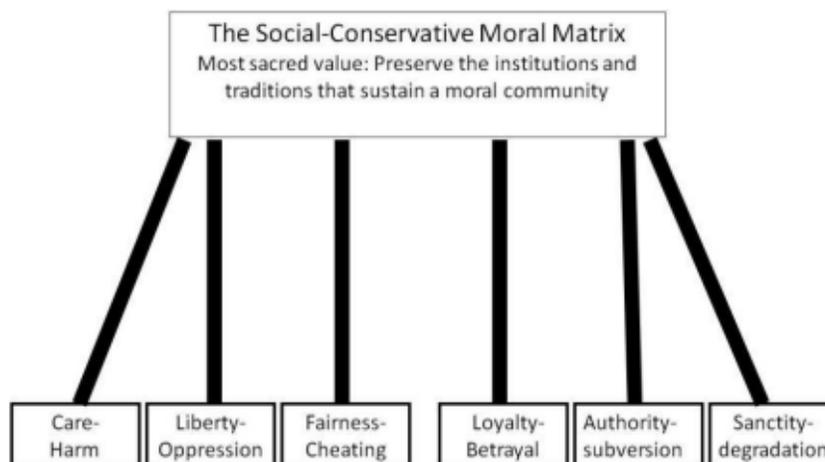
Figure 4. The moral matrix of US social conservatives

The Libertarian Moral Matrix

A common political ideological manifestation across the world is that of libertarianism, with the International Alliance of Libertarian Parties (IALP) representing 21 libertarian parties across six continents (IALP, 2018). With a strong focus on individual liberty and laissez-faire capitalism, while sceptical of authority and state power, this ideology does not neatly fit within the liberal or conservative delineations primarily analysed by Haidt. Due to the global manifestation of this ideology however, it is perhaps worth noting how it relates to Haidt's Moral Foundations Theory. Haidt surveyed 12,000 libertarians and compared their results against those of liberals and conservatives and concluded that in many respects they are similarly morally constituted to liberals, with two significant differences: they score very low on the care foundation, even lower than conservatives, and much higher on the liberty foundation, even higher than conservatives.

Figure 5. The moral matrix of US libertarians

As with liberals, libertarians score very low on the loyalty, authority and sanctity foundations, implying they have a similarly narrow moral palate, although even narrower due to the almost non-existence of the care foundation.

These moral matrices offer a blueprint for understanding the key factors that bind people with similar political ideology together, providing a basis for those from across the political spectrum to better empathise with those on other parts of the spectrum. Haidt asserts that this is a central aim of his work, to facilitate a greater level of civility between those with differing political ideologies,

as without the comprehension of these moral foundations, the binding together of those with the same moral matrix blinds them to the coherence, or even existence of other matrices (Haidt, 2012).

4.2.4. Morality Binds and Blinds

Haidt uses the writings of two prominent intellectuals of philosophy and sociology, John Stuart Mill and Emile Durkheim respectively to exemplify the differences in how liberals and conservatives would conceive of how to approach the challenge of creating a society in which unrelated people can live together peacefully. The Millian society relies solely on the care and harm foundations, whereby "all individuals are equal, left as free as possible to move, develop talents and form relationships as they please" (Haidt, 2012, p. 191), and wherein "the only purpose that power can rightfully be exercised over any member of a civilised community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others" (Mill, (2003 [1859]). This society would be a "peaceful, open, and creative place where diverse individuals respect each other's rights and band together voluntarily to help those in need or to change the laws for the common good" (Haidt, 2012, p. 191). Conversely, the Durkheimian society would exist "not as an agreement among individuals, but as something that emerged organically over time as people found ways of living together, binding themselves to each other, suppressing each other's selfishness, and punishing the deviants and free-riders who eternally threaten to undermine cooperative groups. The basic social unit is not the individual, it is the hierarchically structured family, which serves as a model for other institutions. Individuals in such societies are born into strong and constraining relationships that profoundly limit their autonomy" (Haidt, 2012, p. 192). In this society, norms would be held sacred, as anomie is to be avoided at all cost, and it would value "self-control over self-expression, duty over rights, and loyalty to one's group over concerns for out-groups" (Haidt, 2012, p. 192)

Haidt argues that the Durkheimian vision of society is careful to maintain 'moral capital'; the resources that maintain a moral community, or more specifically "the degree to which a community possesses interlocking sets of values, virtues, norms, practices, identities, institutions, and technologies that mesh well with evolved psychological mechanisms and thereby enable the community to suppress or regulate selfishness and make cooperation possible" (Haidt, 2012, p. 341). It is liberals' narrow focus on care, fairness and liberty, Haidt asserts, that makes them more likely to inadvertently erode this moral capital and create the conditions for anomie. Examples provided include: the tendency for increased ethnic heterogeneity to increase anomie or social

isolation within neighbourhoods (Meer & Tolsma, 2014; Putnam, 2008), giving the right of students to sue their teacher and schools in the 1970s eroding authority and moral capital in schools (Arum, 2003), and multicultural education programs in the USA in the 1980s that emphasised differences among Americans, when emphasising differences tends to make people more racist, not less (Stenner, 2005). Haidt highlights this tendency of the left to overlook the importance of moral capital and the potential for it to be degraded as the left's fundamental blind spot, while acknowledging that conservatives' failure to notice certain classes of victims, to limit the predations of powerful interests and to see the need to update institutions over time.

The liberal and conservative moral matrices identified by Haidt that lead to the manifestation of the idealised Millian and Durkheimian societies are the forces that bind these groups together, but they are also responsible for leaving those within them unable to see the coherence or validity of the moral matrix of others. It follows from this, that an understanding of the composition of these moral matrices provides a path towards greater efficacy in targeting those across the political spectrum with political campaigns and effective messaging.

4.3. Drew Westen

The dispassionate vision of the mind that predominates the design of many liberal political campaigns is argued by Drew Westen, a prominent clinical psychologist and political strategist, to be an illusion, with no bearing on how the mind actually works. His book, The Political Brain (2008), seeks to outline with the use of his own findings and those from the latest psychological literature on the interface of politics and the workings of the brain, that the segments of the brain that process emotional stimuli are far more important in how individuals respond to politically natured inputs than those involved in reasoning. Westen argues that rather than weighing evidence and reaching conclusions that make the most sense of the data provided, people react to emotional commitments that are activated by effective messaging.

4.3.1. The Passionate Brain

The notion of "bounded rationality", originating from the field of economics, but also found in the fields of cognitive science, psychology, business, and political science, is a response to the neo-classical economics concept of *homo oeconomicus* that asserts that humans make decisions purely

based on a 'rational' pursuit of self-interest after considering all relevant information. Bounded rationality concedes that humans are not perfectly rational, rather they use heuristics to deal with the excessive amount of information that cannot realistically be processed for decision-making, however, at its core is the axiom that rationality remains central to any decision-making process. Westen argues that an increasingly substantial body of evidence from psychology and neuroscience studies shows that this is not the case, and that rather than appealing to the "boundedly rational" individual, he urges liberals to consider the role of emotion in the design of political campaigns.

Westen highlights the work of Charles Darwin, B. F. Skinner, and Sigmund Freud to support his claim against *homo oeconomicus* and bounded rationality and demonstrate the dominant role of emotion in how the brain processes politically related stimuli.

Darwin claimed that emotions serve an adaptive function, in that, animals will signal their readiness to fight, run, or attend to each other's needs through a variety of postural, facial, and other nonverbal communications. For example, the baring of teeth signifies an aggressive posture while a baby's cry signals distress to its parents. This ability to send and receive emotional signals regulates social behaviour and increases an individual's chances of survival (Westen, 2008, p. 70) and there is an extensive scientific literature demonstrating that emotion is one of the most potent drivers of human behaviour (Izard, 1997; Lang, 1995; Plutchik, 1980; Plutchik, 2003; Tomkins, 1962). Westen also highlights that natural selection favours reciprocal altruism and consequently, the emotions that have evolved over millions of years to enable such altruism.

B. F. Skinner's primary contribution towards a passionate vision of the mind is his addition to Darwin's theory of natural selection that behaviour also faces these forces, through the two primary mechanisms of reinforcement and punishment. He showed that these are the primary mechanisms through which organisms learn to adapt to their environment, providing an evolutionary advantage. These mechanisms work in the manner that they do however, because these reinforcing and punishing experiences elicit positive and negative feelings and emotions, and these are associated with two neural systems called the behavioural approach and behavioural inhibition system respectively (Gray 1987; Gray 2000). The behavioural approach system generates pleasurable emotional states, leading animals to approach stimuli associated with them, whereas the behavioural inhibition system generates anxiety which leads to avoidance of such stimuli. These

systems correspond with different neural circuitry as well as with the use of different neurotransmitters (dopamine vs norepinephrine).

One of Sigmund Freud's contributions to our understanding of the human mind is his development of instinct theory. Freud proposed sex and aggression to be the two central instincts that motivate human behaviour and that these are regulated by the cerebral cortex, which when it is damaged or removed, tends to manifest highly aggressive and brutal behaviours, particularly in men. While the centrality of these instincts to human behaviour is disputed, it has led to the development of a more nuanced model of human motivation that proposes wishes, fears, and values as the factors that "drive" people (Westen, 1985; Westen 1994), and emotion is central to all three. Wishes are the human mind manifesting a mental representation of a desired situation associated with a positive emotional state, while fears are the mind manifesting a negative situation associated with a negative emotional state. Values are "emotion-laden beliefs about how things *should* or *should not* be—morally, interpersonally, or aesthetically" (Westen, 2008), p. 82), and while values are primarily viewed as cultural manifestations, cross-cultural value-based motivations that are connected to biological proclivities do exist such as rejections of incest or the prioritisation by individuals of family members over those not in one's family.

Perhaps Freud's greatest contribution to an understanding of the passionate mind is the description of emotion-laden neural networks in the brain that contributes to much of our behaviour; interlinked networks of associated thoughts, memories, images, sounds, smells, and feelings. A crucial distinction by Freud was that these networks could be activated below the level of our consciousness, and this finding has been corroborated by modern neurological research (Westen, 1998). Cognitive neuroscientists have been able to demonstrate the efficacy of priming a subject with words activating one part of a network in activating the rest of network, for example: priming with the word dog, led to subjects being able to identify the correct spelling of the words *terrier* and *collie* more quickly than without priming, and priming with the words *ocean* and *moon* made participants more likely to name the Tide brand of laundry detergent than others (Nesbitt & Wilson, 1977), as *ocean* and *moon* are part of a network of associations that includes *tide*. The expression a "Freudian slip" refers to the situation where a person means to say one thing but says another that exists within an associated network that is active below the level of consciousness. Given the nature of these interlinked networks of associations, Westen argues that the creating, solidifying, and

activating of networks that primarily create positive feelings toward a party or party's candidate should be a central aim of political parties, and that Republicans in the USA have focused tremendous resources towards this end for decades and have been highly successful. The Democratic party and US liberals, he argues, have been successfully associated with high taxes, reckless government expenditure, military weakness and questionable morals by Republicans.

Further evidence for the passionate vision of the mind can be derived from an examination of the role of the brain's amygdala—an area of the brain involved in emotional processes like identifying emotional responses in others or attaching emotional significance to events—in detecting subliminal stimuli. Westen and his colleague Joel Weinberger conducted research whereby individuals were shown pictures of politicians' faces while the word RATS was flashed on the screen for a consciously indistinguishable period of time (Weinberger & Westen, 2008), with a control group shown STAR; RATS spelled backwards. This was an attempt to discern whether there could have been a meaningful affect achieved by a TV attack ad against Al Gore run by the Republican National Committee in 2000 for George W. Bush that similarly featured—whether unintentionally as claimed, or intentionally—a subliminal flashing of RATS on the screen. In Westen and Weinberger's study, a clear negative effect was seen on the perception of politicians that were shown with the subliminal RATS message. While intentional subliminal messaging in political campaigns is ethically dubious at best, there are other methods that utilise more blatant stimuli that can become functionally subliminal if an individual is not devoting direct attention to it. For example, repeated slogans on a screen behind a talking politician or the choice of music or sound effects in a political ad are technically not subliminal but can be unintendedly overlooked and become implicit, all the while eliciting a significant subconscious effect through stimulation of the amygdala (Brader, 2006).

An additional demonstration of the passionate brain in action within a political context, is Westen's findings that individuals shown conflicting statements by favoured politicians were not only observed to have activated neural networks indicating distress, but that they reasoned to a false conclusion and in doing so, these networks were switched off and circuits involved in positive emotions were turned on (Westen et al, 2006). This study is demonstrating the occurrence of two well established and closely linked phenomena—cognitive dissonance and motivated reasoning—within the realm of political ideation and sense-making. Cognitive dissonance can be described as

a type of psychological stress that occurs when an individual is confronted with information that contradicts a deeply held belief. This emotional state is precisely the kind of stimulus that leads an individual to engage in motivated reasoning; the tendency to reason towards pre-conceived ideas, attitudes, and beliefs (Kunda, 1990). The neural networks indicating distress in this study are capturing the neural mechanism conveying cognitive dissonance, and the false conclusion arrived at coinciding with activation of neural networks associated with the creation of positive emotions illuminates the neurological actuation of the motivated reasoning process. Another demonstration of this kind of motivated reasoning incited by emotional factors is found in Westen's survey of individuals asking about the motivations of an accuser that alleged sexual harassment claims against Bill Clinton. The study found cognitive constraints—the level of knowledge about both Clinton's history and the scandal itself—had minimal impact on people's judgement, whereas emotional constraints—feelings about the Democratic and Republican party and feelings toward Clinton—each strongly predicted their beliefs about the scandal (Westen et al, 2005). The neurological response to cognitive dissonance in a political context, and the significance of emotional constraints shown in these two studies gives further credence to the primacy of emotion in political ideation and sense-making.

4.3.2. Availing the Passionate Brain

After making a case for discarding the vision of a primarily rational, dispassionate political brain, Westen uses the evidence he provides for the alternative, passionate vision of the brain to provide concrete prescriptions for liberal political parties and their politicians to run more effective campaigns.

The choice of candidate must be determined not just on their knowledge of policy or political nous, but on a slew of factors relating to their impact on the public's perceptions and emotional responses to them. Too often the focus on how well a candidate can navigate the political landscape to secure the necessary party support and explain details of key policies outweighs how well they can engage with emotional aspects of a campaign or whether they possess personal traits that engender trust and other positive emotions in the public. Resistance to the use of emotion in political campaigns can originate from numerous sources, including relying on facts and figures to portray a belief in moral superiority, a belief that utilising an appeal to emotional responses is somehow manipulative, or an inherent discomfort in displaying or appealing to emotion (e.g. obsessional personality style,

emotional avoidance) that exists in many highly cognitive individuals that perceive themselves to rather be highly logical and rational (Westen, 2008). Ample evidence exists that shows voters' feelings towards a party and/or candidate has a strong influence on their choice in an election, that these feelings can be swayed one way or another and that when these feelings are in contradiction with more considered assessments of strengths and weakness that feelings tend to trump beliefs (Campbell et al, 1964; Abelson et al, 1982; Lavine et al, 1998; Marcus, 1988; Marcus et al, 2000; Granberg & Brown, 1989).

With this in mind, Westen prescribes four goals for any political campaign:

1. Transcending any specific candidate, to define the party and its principles in a way that's emotionally compelling and tells a coherent story of what its members believe in, and to define the other party and its values in a way that undermines its capacity to resonate with voters

2. Maximise positive and minimise negative feelings about a candidate and to encourage the opposite set of feelings about the opposition candidate

3. Manage feelings towards a candidate's personal characteristics in order that they appear trustworthy, competent, empathic, and capable of strong leadership

4. Manage positive and negative feelings towards a candidate's/party's policies and positions (Westen, 2008, p. 137)

Based on the weight of evidence and the corresponding relative weights associated with each prescription discerned from the studies covered, Westen argues that these goals be prioritised in the order listed above. For instance, responding to an attempt at character assassination from an opposition candidate or party by focusing on policy can be potentially catastrophic to a political campaign (Westen, 2008). Finding the right rhetoric is key to executing these priorities and Westen uses Reagan's potent rhetoric in the 1984 presidential election to demonstrate how Republicans have historically been able to master this effort to great effect. Taxation was deemed "confiscation", attempts to solve social problems were "costly social experiments" and regulation of market failures became "economic tinkering", creating an image of the Democrats as bumbling, ineffectual and intrusive in the lives of individuals (Westen, 2008, p. 154). Another key, related technique for

actualising these goals is with the use of metaphor and analogy. In the same 1984 presidential campaign, Reagan and the Republicans referred to "Morning in America" creating the metaphor that under Reagan, the USA had entered a new day, evoking positive feelings of the Republicans and Reagan as returning the country to prosperous times of a bygone era and creating an implicit contrast with the "dark days" under the previous Democratic administration. Reagan's use of the term "freedom fighters" when referring to Nicaraguan death squads completely altered the context in which these soldiers were seen and shifted the terms of discourse for the media and other politicians (Holyoak & Thagard, 1989), and George H. Bush used the analogy of Hitler to describe Saddam Hussein, rather than to compare the potential for a protracted insurgency and guerrilla conflict in Iraq with the US's experience in Vietnam, which framed the conflict in a more urgent and morally imperative fashion, softening public opinion for the forthcoming Gulf War.

Stimulating and managing these kinds of emotional associations that positively contribute to people's perception of a candidate or campaign are critical to electoral success according to Westen, and in this vein, he proposes four principles designed to guide the construction of persuasive political appeals (Westen, 2008, p. 257-275):

- *If You Don't Feel it, Don't Use it*
  Every piece of political communication should be intended to elicit a specific emotion, so the design of it should consider this first and foremost and must describe the associated values and principles with *emotional clarity*.

- *Frame Messages for Emotional Impact*
  Republicans in the USA have successfully focused on the framing of key issues and pieces of legislation for a number of decades and provide evidence of effectiveness, as many of these frames have then been used by both sides of politics. Some examples: *tax cuts* were translated into *tax relief,* legislation to reduce regulation on polluting companies was called the "Clear Skies Act", legislation to allow logging in national forests was called the "Healthy Forests Restoration Act", and the *estate tax* was turned into the *death tax*. Generic or conventional language to refer to important areas of policy should be avoided at all cost and formulations that have the potential to evoke an emotional response should be prioritised.

- *Pitch Messages at the Right Level*

  Focusing on communicating values or ideological principles at the "basic level"—that is, categories to which our minds generally gravitate, wherein objects share many features in common, features which help distinguish them from other objects (e.g. dinner, car, bird)—is what Westen calls a *principled stand.* Whereas either including a high level of detail or abstracting at too high a level tends to leave individuals either confused, or at least emotionally unengaged, a *principled stand* resonates emotionally with individuals while conveying the appropriate level of detail. Some examples are: "If I wouldn't send my child to war, I won't send yours", "My opponent likes to call maintaining a low federal minimum wage "business friendly", we call it corporate welfare paid for by low-income workers".

- *Appeal to the Whole Brain*

  Use as many sensory inputs as possible to activate as many neural networks as possible. Evocative imagery, visual effects, music, sound effects, and wording should be used together whenever possible to activate emotional associations and ensure the messaging is as memorable and resonant as possible. Care should be taken to ensure that this is done in a way that aims at evoking an intended emotional response, and that it isn't inadvertently working in the favour of opposition.

The prescriptions proffered by Westen go against much of liberal conventional wisdom, which tends to deify the appeal to individuals' reason and logical evaluation of political messaging. The use of contemporary studies on the role of emotional centres of the brain provides strong evidence that the role of emotion in influencing people's perception of politicians and political campaigns is profound. These findings create a passionate vision of the mind, that is swayed first by unconscious responses to emotional stimuli with reason playing a post-hoc role to justify these emotional responses.

5. Synthesis

By considering the insights of the three authors covered by this thesis on the topic of political sense-making it is possible to bring together relevant elements of their analyses to both reinforce overlapping findings and provide the basis for a deeper critique on the current plight of left-wing politics in the USA. The relative primacy of morality, emotion, and reason in the political sense-making process will be discussed, and the impact that the modernity induced process of individualisation has had on both sides of politics will be addressed.

5.1. Morality, Emotion, Reason

In the age of early Greek philosophers, preeminent thinkers like Plato and Socrates were convinced that reason played a dominant role in human nature; that it was perfectible and that by controlling our passions we could harness it to guide us towards a virtuous existence (Plato, 1943). This perspective asserts that the function of moral reasoning is to help us discover truth and to assist us in knowing how to live a righteous life and who to condemn when they misbehave. It is this kind of thinking that motivates many politicians on the left to rely on the purveyance of facts, figures, policy outlines and lists of policy priorities to convince individuals of the merits of voting for them. The notion that people just need more information to decide how to vote and that when considering how to reach voters they need to find ways to maximise factual content of political communications is widespread amongst liberal political parties and campaigns. This deification of objective, conscious reasoning in the pursuit of truth flies in the face of a large body of evidence that shows that people are affected heavily by subconscious mechanisms that corrupt such reasoning (Bersoff, 1999; Ditto, Munro, Apanovitch, Scepansky, & Lockhart, 2003; Ditto et al., 2009; Kunda, 1990; Mercier & Sperber, 2011; Nickerson, 1998; Pyszczynski & Greenberg, 1999). The "treacherous trio" of confirmation bias, cognitive dissonance and motivated reasoning are well understood psychological phenomena which actively, but subconsciously, work to distort the process of objective reasoning. The domain of political sense-making is no exception to this rule, and as cognitive dissonance occurs most prevalently when incoming information conflicts with an element closely related to one's core identity—as many political beliefs can be—it may be particularly vulnerable to this form of cognitive distortion.

All three authors (Lakoff, Haidt, Westen) refute this notion of a dispassionate and objective mind reasoning towards political conclusions absent the influence of cognitive biases, and provide differing modes of evidence to support their assertions that reason plays a much smaller role in political sense-making than is suggested by the approaches chosen in many political campaigns conducted by liberal parties and candidates in the US in recent years. Jonathan Haidt spends a significant portion of his book The Righteous Mind outlining the first principle of moral psychology; that moral intuitions come first, and strategic reasoning second. He and Drew Westen both evoke Freud's metaphor of a rider (ego) haplessly attempting to control a horse (id) but update it to represent the relation of mental reasoning and its inability to fully affect the direction of automatically generated intuitions. Haidt provides much evidence to show how our brains evaluate instantly and constantly (Wundt, 1907; Zajonc, 1968), and how social and political judgements depend heavily on quick intuitive flashes (Todorov et al, 2005; Greenwald et al, 2003). This evidence is then corroborated by the studies conducted by Drew Westen and his colleagues showing that emotional areas of the brain are instantaneously activated when individuals are asked to reason about political information either confirming or contradicting previously established beliefs (Westen et al, 2005; Westen et al, 2006).

A clear demonstration of the post-hoc nature of moral reasoning is provided by Haidt's study showing people morally dumbfounded after attempting to generate moral argumentation against hypothetical scenarios, only for those arguments to be contradicted by interviewers showing these concerns were not represented in the hypothetical scenario (Haidt et al., 1993). Interviewees, after discovering their moral arguments were irrelevant to the scenario, did not change their perspective, but rather stuck with their original 'moral intuition', absent any rational justification. Haidt uses the analogy of a press secretary that is tasked with justifying the policy positions of their political boss without control over these same policy positions, to demonstrate the relationship between moral intuitions and the post-hoc rationalisation of them.

The initial emotional response to inputs of a political nature demonstrated by Westen and his colleagues show the interface between morality and emotions and by bringing together the analyses of Westen and Haidt, we begin to see how tightly linked they are in the processing of political stimuli. The neuroimaging studies conducted by Westen et al (2005,2006) highlight the emotional centres of the brain as immediately activated by partisan stimuli, but these are the same areas of

the brain that have been shown to deal with moral judgements. Haidt presents the findings of studies of individuals subjected to functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) scans while ordered to navigate moral dilemmas, process moral violations, make charitable donations, assign punishments for crimes, or play games with cheaters or co-operators (Greene et al, 2001; Rilling et al, 2008; Sanfey et al, 2003). In all these cases, the parts of the brain known to be involved in emotional processing were all activated immediately in response to these situations. What the automatic emotional responses to the politically oriented, partisan stimuli shows, is a physiological manifestation of moralistic predetermined positions existent within the subconscious mind of the individual. These responses are triggered by a fundamental layer of moralistic mental architecture: a moral matrix that consists of delineable components that exist within each person's mind.

Jonathan Haidt's Moral Foundations Theory is his attempt to give structure to this architecture and to propose a clear, measurable delineation of these moral components between liberals and conservatives. The six moral foundations (care, fairness, liberty, loyalty, authority, sanctity) are proposed to have evolved in response to common adaptive challenges faced by our ancestors from many thousands of years ago, and to materialise in specific manifestations across the political spectrum according to a combination of genetic predisposition and life experiences. Liberals are shown to have a strong expression of the care, fairness, and liberty foundations, with the care foundation having the strongest moral bearing on liberal individuals out of all the foundations, while the authority, loyalty and sanctity foundations are found to be almost completely absent from the moral matrix of liberals. The care foundation has a significantly lower expression amongst conservatives, who show a relatively even but significant manifestation of all six foundations, whereas libertarians are shown to have virtually no expression of the care, loyalty, authority, or sanctity foundations and a moderate expression of the fairness foundation, while the liberty foundation has an extremely strong bearing on their moral matrix. These moral configurations provide a deep insight into the triggers of emotional responses such as those discussed above; the more a moral foundation is present in one's moral matrix, the greater the potential there is for the emotional centres in the brain to respond in kind and the implications of this for political strategists are profound. Westen claims that political decision making is a rationalisation for individuals' emotional preferences and prejudices (Westen, 2008, p. 97), however this neglects to address the deeper causal mechanism behind these emotional preferences and prejudices, which—based on an

understanding of Moral Foundation Theory—can be interpreted as stemming from the composition of one's moral matrix.

Another interpretation of the role of morality in political sense-making is George Lakoff's description of the central conceptual metaphors of the Nation-as-Family, Strict Father and Nurturant Family. Lakoff argues that "it is the common, unconscious, and automatic metaphor of the Nation-as-Family that produces contemporary conservatism from Strict Father morality and contemporary liberalism from Nurturant Parent morality" (Lakoff, 1996, p. 13), and contained within these two family-based moral matrices are a number of moral metaphors that are unique to each model. Lakoff asserts that much of moral reasoning is metaphorical in nature, and that in the political context, these conceptual metaphors and the moral priorities contained within them are central to understanding how liberals and conservatives come to hold the clusters of policy positions that they do. The unconscious nature of these conceptual metaphors implies that the moral reasoning that is associated with them stems from this subconscious mental architecture, not from some conscious, cognitive, and objective interpretation of incoming information. This interpretation of the mental processes at work bears significant similarities to Haidt's description of the unconscious moral matrices containing specific combinations of moral foundations which he claims forms the basis for how people engage in moral reasoning. Both accounts of the origins of moral reasoning claim that delineable moral components that can be isolated and specified for individuals at either ends of the political spectrum, exist, and are the critical driving force behind generating moral conclusions with predictable political manifestations. There is considerable overlap in these specified moral components between the two theories and these will be explored below. The analysis by Westen shows that when these moral components are engaged by political considerations that relate to them, there is a measurable physiological reaction in the emotional centres of the brain, and that these reactions are predictable and must be understood in order to run an effective political campaign.

The prevailing inference from these analyses with regards to the relative primacy of morality, emotion, and reason, is that reason should not be afforded its place as the critical determiner of an individual's political perspective. What underlies the political sense-making process is a subconscious moral architecture that varies across the political spectrum and dictates how incoming information of a political nature is processed. Once received and percolated through this moral

architecture, it generates an instantaneous emotional response that can be harnessed to motivate an individual in a particular political direction. The exact nature and composition of this moral architecture varies according to Haidt and Lakoff's accounts, but the primacy afforded to its moral components that trigger and imbue the undertaking of moral reasoning and generate the emotional responses highlighted by Westen in the political sense-making process, is clear. If we are able to delineate these moral components that constitute this subconscious moral architecture, it may be possible to utilise them in bolstering efforts to influence an individual's political perspective and ultimate decision at the ballot-box. The following section will aim to do just this, by analysing where the authors' analyses converge.

5.2. Moral Domains of Convergence

While the methodology and theoretical foundations behind Lakoff and Haidt's findings relating to what is behind people's political worldview differ substantially, a critical similarity between the two is the fundamental role that morality is found to play. While Haidt's Moral Foundation Theory was not derived for the express purpose of understanding the political particularisation of specific moral constituents, the liberal/conservative/libertarian distinction proved to yield distinct moral compositions that have proven highly stable across a large sample of the United States population. Lakoff's Strict Father and Nurturant Parent models rely on a number of metaphors for morality that constitute the moral fibre of two well established models of the family. The list of moral metaphors derived by Lakoff that is inherent to the two models of the family aligns strikingly well with Haidt's moral foundations providing a compelling reason to explore these similarities in some detail to see what can be discerned from these overlapping findings.

Care/Nurturance/Empathy

The care foundation described by Haidt—which his findings show is the most prominent foundation in the moral matrix of liberals—is closely aligned with Lakoff's formulation of the morality as nurturance and morality as empathy metaphors which he asserts are the two most dominant moral metaphors in the nurturant parent model. Lakoff's claim that nurturance presupposes empathy and that in order to nurture a child one must project one's capacity for feeling onto a child accurately enough to gain a sense of what that child needs, implies that these two moral metaphors are closely intertwined. The gist of these moral metaphors is wholly congrous with the

adaptive challenge proposed by Haidt as the evolutionary catalyst for the care foundation, providing a relatively seamless theoretical basis to justify the existence of some conformation of this form of morality in the moral architecture of liberals. The relative primacy shown by both authors of the respective representations of this type of morality for liberals provides a compelling indication that it plays a critical role in the political sense-making process for individuals on this part of the political spectrum.

Fairness/Liberty/Fair Distribution

The notion of fairness is not a straightforward one, with its many iterations a function of the broad moral spectrum found across and within countries around the world. Accordingly, it is represented differently in Haidt and Lakoff's characterisations of the moral architecture of conservatives and liberals in the USA. While Haidt initially proposed that the fairness moral foundation was primarily related to notions of equality, he soon realised that this was primarily only capturing one type of liberal interpretation of fairness, whereas conservatives also cared much about fairness, but rather a proportionality related interpretation of it (Haidt, 2012, p. 196). This led to the derivation of the liberty foundation, as Haidt claims that the liberal, equality-related interpretation of fairness is more closely related to the psychology of liberty and oppression rather than reciprocity and exchange. Once this foundation was added and the fairness foundation was amended to reflect notions of proportionality rather than equality, it became clear that while liberals and conservatives tended to care equally about this interpretation of fairness, the liberty foundation was more prominently represented in the moral matrix of liberals than of conservatives.

Lakoff claims that morality as fair distribution is a "cornerstone of Nurturant Parent morality" (1996, p. 124), and lists ten different models of fair distribution, which is an attempt to underscore the complex nature of this moral domain. He specifies four distinctive variations of equality-based fairness (equality of distribution, equality of opportunity, equal distribution of responsibility, equal distribution of power), while the proportionality-based variation is labelled scalar distribution. As Lakoff doesn't allude to notions of fairness in his Strict Father model, whereas Haidt has empirically found that proportionality is an important element within the moral matrix of conservatives, it appears that Lakoff may be underestimating its relevance for the conservative political worldview. With this said, the Strict Father model's strong emphasis on discipline in the context of a competitive world leading to a moralistic notion of wealth and success heavily implies

that proportionality is desirable, lest "lazy", "immoral" people are awarded with unearned benefits. The amendment of Haidt's fairness foundation after detecting a conservative affinity towards a proportionality-related notion of fairness also includes, implicitly, a moralistic endorsement of competition dictating the relative fortunes of individuals in a society.

Authority/Order

Both Haidt and Lakoff identify the primacy of the concept of authority within the conservative worldview, with Haidt deriving it from the adaptive challenge of forging relationships that will benefit an individual within social hierarchies, whereas Lakoff asserts that it is patterned metaphorically on parental authority. Haidt's derivation of the authority moral foundation also draws on the natural authority and mutual expectations of the parent child relationship, whereby perceptions of legitimate authority are accompanied by an expectation of responsibility for those under such authority. The conservative affinity and moralistic legitimisation for notions of authority is highly consequential in the realm of politics, as not only can conservative leaders utilise this for energising potential voters, but it is possible to justify the consolidation of executive powers under the guise of a strong, but legitimate use of this political authority. Embedded in this perceived legitimacy of authority within the conservative moral architecture is an implicit endorsement for hierarchy. This is also demonstrated by Lakoff's assertion that the concept of moral order is entrenched within the political worldview of conservatives. Lakoff asserts that it originates from a folk theory of the natural order whereby God has moral authority over people, people over nature, adults over children, and men over women. The existence of this metaphor of moral order has profound implications for legitimating certain existing power relations as being natural and therefore moral. For example, the feminist and environmental conservation movements can easily be framed as unnatural for pushing for gender equality and a view of nature having an inherent value. Lakoff's notion of the moral order and its embedded conceptualisations of moral authority is a further demonstration of the inherent affinity conservatives hold for perceived legitimate forms of authority.

Sanctity/Purity/Wholeness

Haidt claims that due to the omnivore's dilemma and living in a world full of pathogens and parasites, humans developed a moral sense of sanctity towards many objects and values in response to these adaptive challenges. This tendency is claimed by Haidt to stem from the evolved sense of

disgust that humans experience towards things that are potentially harmful, like faeces, rotting flesh, and diseased animals and individuals, however as our omnivore ancestors were constantly needing to balance the expression of neophilia (attraction to new things and experiences) and neophobia (aversion to new things and experiences) to optimise food intake and maximise longevity, the spectrum of how these tendencies manifests is broad. Haidt proposes that those that have a stronger expression of neophilia tend to be predisposed to a smaller representation of the sanctity foundation and this helps to explain why it is not prominent within the moral matrix of liberals. Haidt's sanctity moral foundation overlaps significantly with Lakoff's metaphor of moral purity, with both proposed as core parts of the conservative moral architecture. Lakoff uses linguistic examples to show how conceptions of immorality are expressed as "disgusting", "dirty", or "filthy", whereas moral actions or behaviour is expressed as "pure", or "clean". The moral wholeness metaphor conceived by Lakoff and asserted to be closely linked with the moral purity metaphor also relates to Haidt's sanctity moral foundation as it intimates that moral standards must remain fixed over time; that any change in morality in the name of moral progress is an evil force attempting to undermine the moral foundations of society and tear the social fabric apart. This is very much in line with the neophobic origins of Haidt's sanctity moral foundation, as perceiving moral standards as fixed and immovable is a manifestation of a sanctified moral code.

5.3. Individualisation and its Political Manifestation

The shift from the cultural state of modernity to what Ulrich Beck and Anthony Giddens refer to as 'reflexive modernity'—the stage of modernity within which the key social institutions and principles are being transformed so as to be unrecognisable from those which formerly were stably extant (Beck, Bonss, & Lau, 2003)—has roughly coincided with the rise of neoliberalism into its ideological hegemony. The neoliberal fetishisation of markets and accompanying deification of the individual as the basic social unit and lens through which to analyse our economic systems has likely made a significant contribution to the individualisation of the societies of western nations, although ostensibly alongside an overarching structural change in these societies that is arguably more pervasive—what Beck labels *institutionalised individualisation* (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002). In this age of reflexive modernity, Beck argues that "human mutuality and community rest no longer on solidly established traditions, but, rather, on a paradoxical collectivity of reciprocal individualisation" (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002, preface). Individualisation is specified as an

intentionally ambivalent term, as it is proposed to be nonlinear, open-ended, and undecided; simultaneously a structural phenomenon and occurring at the level of the individual whereby it is internalised and leads to the destruction of all standard social foundations (Mills, 2007). The central premise of this concept, however, is the transformation of the determination of human identity and an individual's consequent social standing from a 'given' to a 'task', with individuals possessing the agency of performing this task, having previously been essentially born into their identity (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002, foreword). An individual's lifestyle is no longer set by pre-existing patterns and habits, it is consigned to obligatory self-determination, and these lifestyle choices are no longer cursory elements of one's life, rather they constitute a reflexive narrative of 'self' and serve to define an individual (Giddens, 1993).

This individualisation process that has been unfolding over recent decades has inevitable political implications, as it concurrently moulds the values and morals relating to an individual's perception of their place in society and of the nature of their relationship with others. The increased impetus toward self-determination, self-sufficiency, and self-actualisation has led to individuals feeling both responsible for and empowered to deal with broad, complex issues like environmental degradation; accepting the paradigm that personal lifestyle changes *en masse* can provide a solution in lieu of addressing deep structural failures or misaligned incentives. This feeling of empowerment is often however accompanied by feelings of confusion, ambivalence or uncertainty caused by the sense of individual responsibility (Connolly & Prothero, 2008). In all probability, the effects of individualisation do not manifest uniformly in individuals across the political spectrum. As Haidt has indicated with his liberty moral foundation, liberals tend to exhibit this tenet of morality within their moral matrices to a greater extent than conservatives, and the notions of individual freedoms and freedom of expression are critical ingredients in catalysing the individualisation process. Haidt's demonstration that the basic social unit of conservatives is the family, versus the individual for liberals, provides a potential insight into the relative resilience of each side of the political spectrum against this social phenomenon. The primacy of tradition, and the importance of maintaining social norms and moral standards are all central tenets of conservative ideology and are all compatible with the constant promotion of immutable "family values" demonstrated by conservative political parties. All these traits act as counterweights to the increasing pervasiveness of notions of self-determination, self-sufficiency and self-actualisation that are hallmarks of the individualisation process. Conservative ideals of sacrifice, duty, and loyalty highlighted by Haidt

and Lakoff also act in opposition to these traits, which serve to further demonstrate that there is a potential mismatch in the susceptibility of conservatives and liberals to the individualisation process.

The demonstrated discrepancy in the prominence of Haidt's liberal foundation between conservatives and liberals, combined with the almost non-existence of the authority, loyalty, and sanctity foundations amongst liberals, provides a snapshot of the liberal moral matrix and alludes to the current degree of influence the individualisation process has had on it. The idea that moral matrices are entirely stable over time and that the relative prominence of each foundation is fixed in individuals across the spectrum of political ideology is unrealistic. As cultural standards shift, and new generations are raised with these standards as a given rather than a new paradigm to interpret against the backdrop of previous cultural eras as is the case for current generations, the constitution and relative weighting of moral components within moral matrices is sure to evolve. This is particularly pertinent for liberals, as the conservative reverence for tradition and maintaining cultural norms and tendency to sanctify many moral facets may act as a bulwark against this process, whereas the liberal propensity towards neophilia and social evolution are likely key drivers of the advancement of these cultural standards. Lakoff's use of radial categories to differentiate between distinct variations of liberals provides further evidence of the pliable nature of the liberal moral architecture. Lakoff asserts there are six types of liberals in the USA: socioeconomic, identity politics, environmentalist, civil liberty, spiritual, and antiauthoritarian, and that they are all captured within the nurturant parent model of morality.

If the process of individualisation of society is indeed altering the moral matrices of its members, and disproportionately so those of liberals, the political ramifications of this are profound. A large body of empirical research is highlighting the evolution of social relations in modern societies towards more superficial, impersonal, and instrumental interactions, leading people to express their experiences of loneliness and longing for intimacy (Lane, 2001). Relatedly, a "Machiavellian syndrome" appears to be increasingly manifest in modern western societies, whereby individuals display a manipulative attitude towards others around them, calculating the costs and benefits of a relationship and ceasing it when it no longer "pays off" (Blokland, 2006). The continual pursuit of self-sufficiency, perceived as critical to achieving well-being, in turn leads to a greater degree of noncommittal and superficial relationships within society. This directly undermines one of the key

tenets of liberal ideology; that of communitarianism. Intimate and meaningful relations are not just the fundamental building blocks of human wellbeing, they are necessary to sustain strong and functioning communities. If the liberal fallibility against individualisation remains unchecked, it will become harder and harder to not only perpetuate the importance of communitarianism across societies, but to fulfil related goals of socialist government policy including strong social infrastructure and safety nets.

One outcome that might be expected as a result of individualisation impacting on the composition and relative prevalence of different moral matrices is the increase in individuals identifying as libertarians or leaning libertarian. According to Haidt's moral foundation theory, libertarians are essentially liberals with an extremely prominent liberty foundation and almost non-existent care foundation. The spreading Machiavellian Syndrome described by Blokland (2006), fits well within this narrative and the statistics in the USA show those identifying as libertarian steadily rising since 2000 and at an all-time high of 27% of survey respondents in 2015, making them the largest single political affiliation group above Democrats and Republicans (see **Figure 5).**
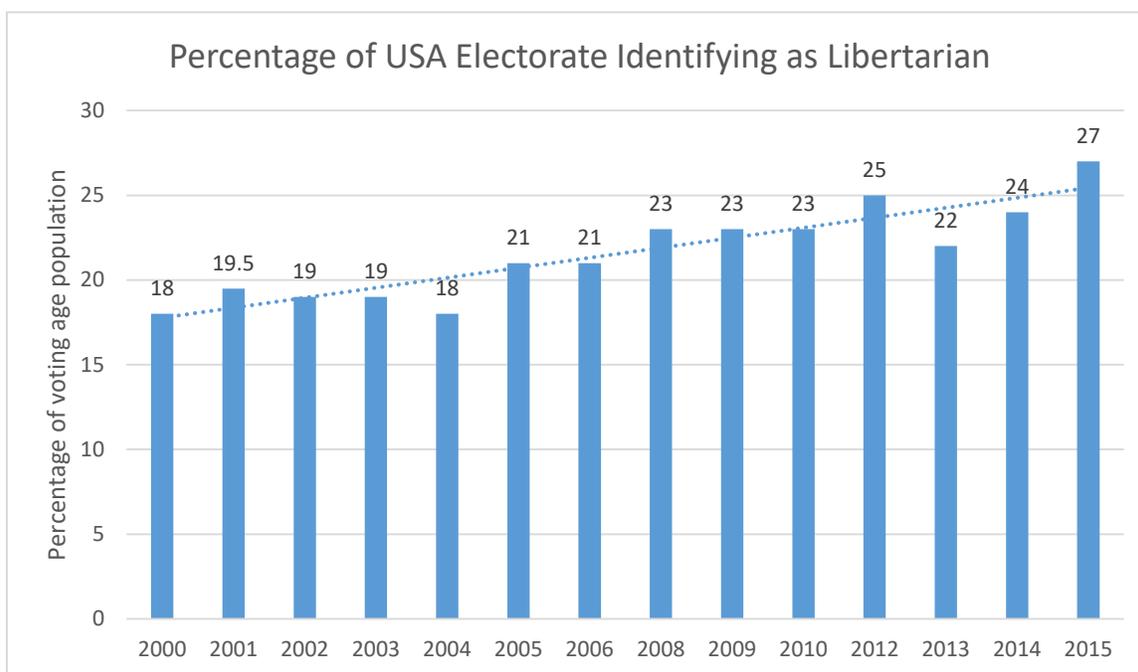
Figure 5. Trend in USA Libertarianism (Source: Gallup Governance Surveys 2000-2015)

The liberal moral metaphors relating to self-development and self-interest identified by Lakoff are likely being engaged by the individualisation-related trends towards self-determination and self-actualisation. Lakoff has outlined his observation of a hierarchy of moral priorities namely nurturance-related morality (including empathy, nurturance and fair distribution), moral self-interest, and strength-related morality, and a potential by-product of individualisation is a realignment of the prioritisation of moral self-interest closer to the nurturance group.

While Beck celebrates the individualisation trajectory that western societies are on for its potential to "reinvigorate" the politics of these societies embracing the new paradigm of unshackled individualism to "forge new, politically open, creative forms of bond and alliance" (Beck, 1997), Zygmunt Bauman, another preeminent writer on individualisation cautions that this process may instead bring a weakening of communal bonds and ever greater anomie[4]. Haidt's warning of the liberal tendency to disregard the value to society of tradition and the moral capital it engenders suggest that Bauman is closer to the mark (Haidt, 2012), however his assertion that conservatives are inherently morally constituted to sanctify these traditions and other facets of society that contribute to moral capital implies that perhaps they are less susceptible to the individualisation process.

It is possible that individualisation has played a role in the emergent dominance of identity politics on the left in western societies in recent decades. Martin Luther King Jr.'s call for black and white people to be treated equally in the early 1960's was usurped in the late sixties by a call from groups such as the Black Panthers and the Nation of Islam for recognition of their own traditions and 'lived experience'. A demand for recognition of the unique lived experience and the intrinsic differences of each marginalised group in society has replaced a call for treatment as equals to the dominant group (Fukuyama, 2018). The time at which this shift commenced coincides roughly with the proposed genesis of Beck's institutionalised individualisation, and the emphasis on achieving recognition of defining experiential and intrinsic differences correlates with a greater emphasis being generated towards the paramountcy of an individual's specific identity traits that is embodied by the individualisation process. The tendency of the left to engage so prominently in forms of

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[4] Bauman in Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, *Individualization,* 2002, xviii

identity politics around gender and race in recent years may be a symptom of the afore proposed greater susceptibility of liberals to the individualisation process.

5.4. Conservative Coherence, Liberal Discordance

The current dominance of right-wing populist politics across wealthy western nations undoubtedly has many roots and interrelated causal factors. But studying the moral underpinnings of political sense-making has the potential to provide useful insights for devising strategies to counter this trend. Lakoff and Haidt corroborate a number of each other's key findings relating to which moral facets are critical elements in the moral architecture of individuals from either side of the political spectrum.

On the conservative side of the ideological spectrum, both authors concur that the role of family is fundamental to the conservative worldview, with Haidt evoking Emile Durkheim's assertion that the hierarchically structured family is the basic conservative social unit, while Lakoff asserts that a hierarchical strict father model of the family is the overarching moral metaphor from which all supplementary conservative moral facets are derived. The conservative perception of family and the primacy with which it is held both consciously and unconsciously appears to exact a significant influence on the political sense-making of conservatives. The strict father morality that Lakoff proposes is disproportionately constituted by the metaphor of moral authority, asserted to be a cornerstone of conservative ideology and holding a high moral priority. This overlaps strongly with Haidt's assertion that the authority moral foundation is a distinctive and critical element of conservative ideology. This reverence for authority interrelates with and legitimates the conservative conception of family as a hierarchical institution with the father figure as the authority figure. The moral nature of discipline and sacrifice in the pursuit of material success claimed by Lakoff implies that the competitive nature of modern western societies with a strong belief in markets as the arbiters of fair distribution is not just moral, but ideal, as it is a mechanism by which moral, disciplined people can be discerned from lazy, undeserving, immoral individuals. This is also supported by Haidt's reinterpretation of the conservative understanding of fairness to reflect the notion of proportionality, another way of describing the distribution resulting from the vision of a competitive meritocracy. This idealisation of competition is coherent both with a strict, hierarchical family context that instils the necessary discipline to survive and thrive in a competitive

world, and with notions of legitimate authority, with the state enforcing the rules of this competitive society and ensuring free-riders and cheaters are dealt with harshly. These core elements of conservative ideology: family, legitimate authority, and competition, are not only strongly coherent with each other and form the constituents of a cogent conservative vision of society, but they serve to reinforce the credence among conservatives of this vision. The coherence of this conservative vision of society underpinned by these moral components identified by Lakoff and Haidt may be part of the reason behind the current dominance of conservative politics in the USA and other western countries.

Conversely, there are findings laid forth by Haidt and Lakoff that insinuate potential inconsistencies within the liberal political ideology that may be undermining electoral success for the Democrats in the USA and other left parties in western countries around the world. The prominence of Haidt's liberty moral foundation in the moral matrix of liberals encapsulates the strong liberal emphasis on self-determination and individual freedoms, whereby the individual is the basic social unit. This is also captured by Lakoff's liberal metaphors of moral self-development and self-interest. As Haidt has pointed out, the liberty foundation "…operates in tension with the authority foundation" (Haidt, 2012, p. 201), but whereas conservatives have managed to coalesce a legitimate interpretation of authority alongside their (admittedly distinct) penchant for liberty, the notion of authority does not register within liberals' moral architecture. Lakoff's liberal moral metaphorical framework similarly has no recognition of authority contained within it either. This absence of a moral interpretation of authority has manifested in a distinguishable liberal aversion and suspicion towards authority that may only be increasing as the process of societal individualisation progresses. Underpinning many of the political goals of liberal political parties are communitarian ideals of a connection between the individual and the community. In order to provide assistance and care to those in need, protect the weak and vulnerable from predatory capitalism, and create a broad program of social infrastructure to foster a harmonious and prosperous society, a frontline of workers and volunteers is needed to materialise it. A vision of this kind of society then necessarily requires a strong level of cooperation amongst citizens in official employment capacity and in voluntary support roles. Regardless of whether, as this thesis has suggested, liberals are disproportionately being affected by the process of individualisation, the resultant increasingly prominent societal notions of self-sufficiency, self-determination, and self-actualisation are likely to erode the practical likelihood of materialising a communitarian vision of society. This

individualisation trend, the pre-existing prominence of the liberty foundation in liberal moral matrices and metaphorical notions of moral self-development and self-interest are acting to push liberally-minded individuals away from this goal, despite it still remaining an implicit element of the liberal political agenda.

The liberal aversion towards authority creates yet another obstacle in creating this kind of society, as strong leadership and an effective judiciary system are crucial in correcting for the insidious elements of modern capitalist societies. Predatory elements in industries such as pharmaceuticals, health insurance, commercial and investment banking, mortgage broking, payday loans and others can only be reigned in by strong and moral political leadership, a judiciary that is non-partisan and ruling in the interests of the people, not those of corporate entities, and entities like federal law enforcement agencies that have historically maintained low levels of support from liberals (Thomson-DeVeaux, 2018). The Occupy movement that emerged in the USA in 2011 is a useful example of the practical manifestation of the left's anti-authoritarianism, as the movement intentionally stayed leaderless throughout its period of prominence. However, without a clear set of demands or a focal point for achieving political influence, the movement subsided without any clear achievements outside of arguably shifting the terms of political debate. American political philosopher Jodi Dean articulated this issue after the movement had subsided:

> "Emphasis on autonomy encouraged people to pursue multiple, separate and even conflicting goals rather than work toward common ones. Celebration of horizontality heightened skepticism toward organizing structures like the General Assembly and the Spokes Council, ultimately leading to the dissolution of both and assertions of leaderlessness as a principle incited a kind of paranoia around leaders who emerged but could not be acknowledged or held accountable as leaders" (Dean, 2012).

This is symptomatic of the relationship many on the left have with legitimate forms of authority and while conservatives simply mobilise to install authoritarian leaders to impose their ideological objectives, liberal apathy toward legitimate political authority can lead to the repeal of many critical liberal institutions. Donald Trump's election to the presidency in 2016 is an example of this phenomenon, as voter turnout was the lowest in twenty years (Wallace, 2016) and he is currently in the process of dismantling much of the liberal legacy of President Obama

including attempts to repeal a greater level of health insurance coverage under the Affordable Care Act.

These facets of liberal morality that are highlighted by Haidt and Lakoff, namely an individualistic leaning and an aversion toward authority, while significant elements of liberal political sense-making, are argued here to be counter-productive towards manifesting the cooperative, communitarian vision of society that is similarly prominent within the liberal political ideology. They act as barriers that must be overcome to achieve this vision, rather than as forces tendentially propelling society in this direction and contrast with the seamless conservative interrelationship of the notional hierarchical family with legitimate forms of authority and a competitive society with proportionally distributed material wealth. This coherence of key elements of conservative morality and consequent political sense-making contributes to the propagation of conservative ideology and is potentially one key reason behind the dominance of the conservative side of politics in the USA in recent decades and possibly the current widespread electoral success of right-wing parties across the western world. In contrast, the waning fortunes of many left-wing parties in recent years may be linked to the current and potentially increasing degree of divergence between the fundamental underlying communitarian ideals of such parties and the counterproductive anti-authoritarian and individualistic tendencies that partly constitute the liberal moral architecture. In order to effectively counter this recent current of conservative ascendancy, strategies must be devised that acknowledge these antithetical elements and seek to ameliorate them. **Figure 6** below depicts the coherence of the aforementioned elements of the conservative moral architecture and the discordance of the liberal equivalents.

Figure 6. The coherence and discordance of key facets of conservative and liberal morality (Novy/Wilson, own elaboration)

6. Discussion

A key finding of this thesis is the relative primacy of morality and emotion in political sense-making compared to the role that reason plays in this same process. Reason is found to be mostly a post-hoc process that is acting in response to emotional triggers that have their genesis in the moral architecture of individuals. The conventional focus of liberal politicians and parties to target individuals with strategies primarily promoting policy issues and factual information is therefore doomed to be less effective than those that utilise a moralistic and emotional framework to generate communications. The implications of this finding are not limited to a US context, despite the three authors critical to this thesis being of US origin, as the mechanisms involved are of a subconscious psychological nature with roots in the neurology of the brain. This is therefore something that liberal political parties around the world should take note of and consider when developing their political communication strategies and materials. Focusing on emotive and moralistic strategies does not exclude the potential for incorporating relevant policy and factual content, but rather it should not form the primary thrust of any political communications at the expense of triggering emotional responses derived from engaging the subconscious moral architecture of individuals that is so critical in influencing their political sense-making process.

The domains of moral convergence between Lakoff and Haidt's analyses identified in this thesis provide a strong theoretical underpinning to a practical blueprint for liberal political campaigns in the USA. A focus on producing messaging that engages with notions of care, empathy, fairness, and liberty that are shown by Lakoff and Haidt to be core elements of the subconscious moral architecture of liberals is critical to evoking the kind of emotional responses in individuals that makes their political actuation more likely. This is particularly important in countries where voting is voluntary like the USA, as there is a threshold of apathy or passivity that must be overcome to effectuate political success. The proportionality related interpretation of fairness outlined by Haidt is just as prominent in the moral matrix of conservatives as that of liberals and therefore communications that have it embedded within them are more likely to evoke a positive response from conservatives as well as the primary target of liberals. Lakoff's broader interpretation of fairness that includes notions of equality overlaps with Haidt's equality related liberty foundation and this suggests that both interpretations of fairness should be utilised for maximum impact. Both authors assert that there is a moral hierarchy of sorts, with care/nurturance/empathy being the most

prominently represented element within the liberal moral architecture, followed by liberty according to Haidt, or rather fairness according to Lakoff. Fairness is ranked third by Haidt, showing that it is prominent in both analyses. This implies that liberal political discourse, at least in the USA, should focus heavily on both issues and emotive communications relating to care/nurturance/empathy as constitutes a disproportionately significant component of the liberal moral architecture.

The language used in political communications is fundamentally important in translating Haidt, Lakoff and Westen's findings into real-world influence. Both Lakoff and Westen emphasise the value of framing techniques for influencing individuals' perspectives of specific policies and issues, as it is a key mechanism by which moral connections to these policies and issues can be engendered. By choosing wording and metaphorical descriptions that link a specific policy or issue to ideas or visualisations that embody one or more of the constituents of liberal morality, the perspective an individual has of that policy or issue can be changed over time. Lakoff argues that Republicans in the USA have been doing this for decades to great success, framing taxes as a burden to be relieved of ("tax relief"), rather than an investment in society, and giving Orwellian names to pieces of legislation like The Clean Skies Initiative that weakened previous legislation on air pollution, and the Healthy Forests Initiative that allowed logging in previously protected forests (Lakoff, 2014). The people that Lakoff asserts are most susceptible to a change in perspective from these types of framing techniques are what he dubs "biconceptuals", individuals who are conservative on some issues and progressive on others. Another description of these people is the political "middle", as there is no political ideology of the middle, but rather people who do not neatly fit into Haidt's delineated conservative and liberal moral matrices, nor are governed entirely by Lakoff's strict father or nurturant parent models of morality. For instance, libertarians, who according to Haidt's analysis are essentially liberals without a care foundation, but an extremely prominent liberty foundation could be considered within this biconceptual or middle framework. Targeting these individuals by framing the current increasing levels of wealth inequality and stagnating social mobility in the USA as oppression by a rich elite and placing a heavy focus on equality of opportunity may be one way to do this. Similarly, framing other liberal issues like legalisation of marijuana and maintaining abortion rights as pushing the government out of people's lives may prove effective in attracting libertarians to the liberal side of politics and away from the free-market conservatives with whom they are currently most commonly aligned. Finding ways to

frame core liberal issues in ways that engage with the moral foundations present in the moral matrices of conservatives, yet absent from those of liberals—namely authority, loyalty, and sanctity—while not putting off liberal voters, is key to translating these biconceptual individuals into votes at the ballot box.

If it is conceded that the moral matrices of individuals in a society are not fixed over time, this raises important considerations for liberal political parties and their long-term strategic planning. The individualisation of western societies brings with it the impetus to not only understand how this is shaping politics in each country, but how it is remoulding people's morals and values. This is a crucial area for future research, as the rate at which the process of individualisation is altering the moral architecture of liberals and the extent to which liberals are potentially disproportionately impacted by it are critically important for fostering the imperative to develop current strategies that deal with this problem. Future research may be able to discern whether this is indeed something that warrants significant attention, and precisely to what extent resources should be dedicated to allaying the problem in the present. If the analysis in this thesis proves to be correct—that individualisation is contributing to liberals becoming more libertarian over time—then a greater emphasis on communitarian ideals and developing strategies to counter this trend would be of a high priority. Likewise, if the analysis provided herein, that liberal individualistic and anti-authoritarian tendencies are inherently counter-productive to achieving these communitarian ideals, then a longer-term perspective on altering the liberal moral matrix to be more conducive towards achieving them would be prudent. Again, further research on discerning the nature of this issue and the extent to which current-day liberal morality provides a barrier to achieving the long-standing liberal goal of an increasingly communitarian society is to be encouraged.

As has been previously discussed, the focus of liberal political parties and politicians on appealing to individuals' ability to reason and interpret information rationally is misguided. Lakoff (2014) outlines how Republicans in the USA have recognised this for many years and developed sophisticated language and framing techniques in response. It is not only, however, their use of language and framing that is so advanced, but their understanding of the full suite of tactics available to influence individuals below the level of the conscious reasoning process. Westen provides many examples of Republican advertising campaigns that utilise effective visual and auditory cues to activate established neural networks and evoke emotional responses in viewers

that subsequently increase the likelihood of these viewers to vote, and vote for conservative candidates. The infamous Willie Horton ad produced by supporters of George H. W. Bush in 1988 is one such example. The ad played on subconscious race-based prejudices against African Americans by telling the story of William Horton, a black man who committed rape while on a weekend pass from prison, to link the Democratic candidate Michael Dukakis with being weak on crime while governor of Massachusetts. The racial overtones were clear, but the style of the ad was designed specifically for maximum subconscious impact; the menacing William Horton mugshot was used prominently to evoke fear and particularly unflattering and goofy-looking pictures of Dukakis were juxtaposed against a tough, resolute looking Bush to reinforce the message of incompetence on the issue of crime. Despite the criminal never going by the name Willie (Farhi, 2004), the ad used this more conventionally black name, as it further contributed to the activation of the desired mental associations. The ad was followed up immediately by an official Bush campaign ad promoting the notion that under Dukakis, there was a "revolving door" for criminals leaving prison on weekend furloughs, intended to reinforce the neural pathway that was established by the Willie Horton ad. This ad used similarly evocative imagery and sound effects to great effect, showing a long line of prisoners entering and immediately leaving prison through a revolving door while the words "268 escaped" appeared on the screen. The sound of increasingly loud, shuffling feet keeping time like a metronome and menacing, monotonous music accompanies the imagery of prisoners leaving prison to the outside world. Donald Trump has utilised an ad in a similar vein to "Willie Horton" in the 2018 midterm elections showing a convicted murderer who was deported twice, but made his way back into the USA, laughing in court while admitting to killing US police officers and wishing he had killed more. This is juxtaposed against footage of a large crowd of migrants breaking down a fence to gain access to the other side. The words "Democrats let him into our country", "Democrats let him stay", and "who else would Democrats let in?" are shown on the screen while menacing music with beating drums plays in the background.

While these ads are clearly unethical, the techniques they use are effective, because they are triggering subconscious neural networks and primal emotions like fear and loathing towards outsiders. Finding ways to trigger negative emotional responses towards opposition candidates and positive emotional responses in an ethical way towards their own candidate should be a priority of liberal political parties everywhere. As Haidt has identified the care foundation as the strongest represented moral foundation within the liberal moral matrix and Lakoff has similarly asserted that

empathy and nurturance are the top moral priorities of liberals, it would appear this is a logical domain to attempt emotionally evocative communication strategies. However, the notion of oppression has the potential to strongly engage with both the liberty and fairness foundations and has the added bonus of potentially instigating libertarians to side with liberals, given their liberty foundation is extremely pronounced. Historical resistance of liberals to techniques like those used in the Willie Horton and revolving door advertisements may stem from the fact that many examples are similarly stoking insidious racial prejudices and are blatantly unethical. However, there is nothing inherently unethical in attempting to activate neural networks associated with strong emotional responses. Liberal political parties must seek to understand better how to activate neural networks connected to core elements of liberal morality that simultaneously have the potential to elicit a strong emotional response.

In a similar vein, recognition of the potency a candidate that can elicit positive emotional inclinations can have is potentially underestimated. Westen (2008) provides research showing that a candidate's body language—mannerisms, facial expressions, eye contact etc.—can have a significant subconscious impact on perceptions of a candidate and consequently their electoral success. If there is a choice between a candidate that has a superior breadth of knowledge on the issues that is unlikeable or a similarly—albeit less—knowledgeable candidate who is highly charismatic and exudes authenticity while exhibiting favourable body language and demeanour, the latter candidate may be more conducive to electoral success. Conventional pathways to candidacy or leadership, especially in countries that do not have open primaries can elevate individuals who are factional stalwarts or policy wonks, who have managed to nimbly navigate the political arena, but who may not resonate with voters. While the ability to connect with individuals' underlying moral architecture is critical, the delivery also matters; if opposing candidates are both successfully engaging with a voter's morals and values, but one projects potent body language and demeanour while the other does not, this would likely reflect an electoral advantage. This should not be underestimated in internal party considerations relating to candidate selection.

The assertion made in this thesis regarding the primacy of morality and emotion, relative to reason, in political sense-making, is uncontroversial. It is supported by a large body of empirical evidence showcased in this thesis, as well as well-developed theoretical analyses from authors like Haidt and Lakoff. Further research and contemplation on this issue may be warranted but should not be a

priority. Alternatively, the further delineation of moral matrices across the political spectrum and how these interact with emotional centres of the brain is a crucial and urgent area for future research. The intangible nature of these phenomena demand as much corroboration as possible, and the broader range of methodological attempts utilised to do-so the better, as it has the combined benefit of potentially illuminating previously unearthed facets of them, while also increasing the confidence of their concrete existence when there are overlapping findings. Further exploration of the partisan divide of influence from the individualisation of society is also imperative, as a lopsided detriment to the liberal moral architecture and its consequent political manifestation may entail dire future consequences. A decision to take a long-term approach to altering the moral architecture of liberals in order to be more politically competitive should be based on a strong theoretical and empirical foundation. As such, this is suggested to be yet another priority area for future research.

7. Conclusion

 The current political climate in the USA and other western democracies is tense, and subject to divisive rhetoric attempting to engender fear of outsiders, of the differences between those within a society and of a rapidly changing world. The fomenting of these fears is made possible by formulating rhetoric that effectively engages with subconscious mental mechanisms that are triggered by particular language and other auditory and visual cues. The authors that constitute the core focus of this thesis all conclude that the conservative side of politics (at least in the USA) have been much more successful in understanding how to craft such language and sensory cues than those on the left and that this has created a lopsided playing field whereby the left is failing to energise individuals and actuate them to vote to the same degree. Without a remedy to this paradigm, the dominant politics of fear and division will potentially lead to conflict and a tearing of the social fabric. There is much at stake, and the left must find ways to become effective in the face of this current penchant for right-wing populism found across western democracies. Talk of the need for a "unifying vision" or a "kinder, gentler brand of politics" is noble in its intent but misguided in its prognosis; these conceptions are not necessarily counterproductive but fail to recognise the critical importance of communications orchestrated with an understanding of whether they will engage with people's underlying moral architecture and evoke emotional responses accordingly. Incorporating an understanding of the role that morality and emotion plays in political sense-making is not mutually exclusive with such virtuous proclamations, but priority should be given to the former.

The primacy of morality and emotion in the political sense-making process is a core finding of this thesis and is supported by the work of the three authors covered. The potential that an understanding of the delineation of moral architecture found across the political spectrum has for influencing political outcomes is profound, as political communications that embody the most critical or prominent elements of morality represented in an individual's moral matrix are much likelier to evoke a strong emotional response regardless of the actual details of the particular policy or issue being presented. This is how Republicans in the USA have managed to maintain their electoral success, despite promoting policies that are often solely in the interest of a small, wealthy elite. While this is a disheartening fact, the potential upside for political parties on the left is enormous, as in contrast to conservatives, the primary focus of liberal policies is the benefit and prosperity of

all of society. Messaging that reflects this while effectively embodying critical elements of liberal morality like care, empathy, nurturance, fairness, and liberty is likely to evoke strong emotional responses from liberals and consequently an increased likelihood of their actuation to vote, and vote for liberal political parties. This is especially relevant in the USA and other non-compulsory voting countries where voter turnout tends to be low. Targeting "biconceptuals" with messaging that still conveys conventional liberal policies but in a way that engages conservative elements of morality such as authority, loyalty, and sanctity is one way to win over individuals that are considered to constitute the political "middle", or in other words, that do not typify either side of politics, but rather possess views and positions from both. Libertarian individuals with highly pronounced liberty foundations are also identified as potential targets for morally loaded communications that demonstrate how traditionally liberal positions promote the liberation of individuals from different forms of oppression. Potential examples include framing abortion rights and the legalisation of marijuana as keeping oppressive government intervention out of the lives of individuals and framing wealth inequality and stagnating social mobility as oppression by a rich elite over those less fortunate in society.

As the moral architecture of individuals across the political spectrum is likely not to be static over the long term, political parties should consider which areas of morality that are currently under-represented or absent from liberal moral matrices may be useful to foster over time. The suggestion of this thesis is that fostering an acceptance of legitimate forms of authority and highlighting the insidious tendency of individualism to make it harder to achieve communitarian goals may provide such long-term benefits. The process of individualisation of modern western societies is proposed to be disproportionately affecting the liberal side of politics, as the liberal tendency to exhibit neophilia, combined with a strong focus on individual rights and self-development and self-actualisation makes the quest for carving out one's unique identity—so central to today's reflexive modernity—an utmost priority, whether it be through choice of career, travel experiences, fashion, lifestyle etc. This individualistic undercurrent imposes the cost of fewer people investing fewer resources in altruistic and communitarian goals, long a central plank of liberal ideology. Further research into confirming the existence of this discrepancy in the ideological susceptibility to individualisation is encouraged, as is research into its primary root causes if it indeed exists.

As the degree of division and tribalism increases across many western democracies in this current age, it is imperative to find ways to bridge this divide for the sake of maintaining social cohesion

and avoiding conflict. Part of the solution is to create avenues for discussion, where people from across the political spectrum are invited to express their ideas and the moral reasoning behind them to others from differing ideological vantage points. This exposure to ideas that differ from one's own in a constructive setting is healthy for democracy and should be encouraged wherever possible. New forums for these kinds of conversations are emerging such as podcasts, YouTube channels and festivals of ideas like The New Yorker Festival and Politicon. However, the mere existence of these new forums will not be sufficient to safeguard our societies from the kinds of tribalistic tendencies on display in recent years. What is critically needed in addition to this is a concerted effort from those in society to understand the morality of those that do not share our worldview. Recognition that there is indeed more than one matrix and that having a different set of morals to one's own does not make those morals invalid is key to mollifying the vitriolic disdain between opposing sides of the political spectrum that has typified political discourse in recent years, particularly in the USA. This thesis seeks to contribute to that goal by highlighting the works of Lakoff and Haidt that seek to delineate the differing moral architecture of liberals and conservatives and explain where they originate. A widespread understanding of not only the legitimate differences in others' moral matrix, but also of their potential to provide a useful societal counterweight to one's own set of morals, has the potential to contribute to the abatement of hostility that plagues our current political landscapes.

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