

THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY  
SCHREYER HONORS COLLEGE

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY AND CRIME, LAW AND JUSTICE

POLITICS AND PUNITIVENESS: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF MORALITY

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SPRING 2014

A thesis  
submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements  
for baccalaureate degrees in Crime, Law and Justice and Philosophy  
with honors in Crime, Law and Justice

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the relationship between a) political orientation, b) morality, and c) punitiveness. While we often recognize these social factors as influencing decisions, this study closely investigates their interconnectedness as quantified variables. Specifically, the study evaluates the role that morality plays in mediating political orientation's propensity for punishment. Results show that conservatives have stronger punitive attitudes than liberals. Additionally, the data indicate that conservatives and liberals differ in their moral foundations, with liberals demonstrating higher scores on harm and fairness, and conservatives demonstrating higher scores on loyalty, authority, and purity. Finally, the results show that the moral foundations of loyalty, authority, and purity partially mediate the relationship between political orientation and punitiveness, controlling for gender and race. Implications for future research and policy are discussed.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Over the course of my undergraduate career, Penn State has provided qualified faculty to prepare me for writing an Honors thesis. Naming the entire faculty who shaped my academic development would be exhausting. Specifically, Dr. Eric Silver's help has been invaluable—not only by reviewing my thesis but also by introducing me to core concepts in his lectures on the Sociology of Deviance. His sociological expertise has complemented my interests in philosophical theory. In addition to offering academic support, Dr. Silver's positive encouragement provided me with enthusiasm and energy for conducting research. His graduate student, Leslie Abell, also volunteered time to review my thesis and coached me regarding data coding and statistical analyses. I would like to thank Dr. Silver and Leslie Abell for making my Honors thesis an *experience* rather than an *assignment*.

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

From sound progress to staunch reinforcement of the status quo, political leaders and moral entrepreneurs dominate the history of mankind. If rhetorical persuasion proves insufficient to a governor, punishment of the governed, both traditionally and currently, serves to guarantee compliance. As our primitive ancestors became increasingly social creatures, they formed communities in order to meet shared goals. In meeting these shared goals, groups slowly developed standards of acceptance that encouraged like-minded behaviors. Out of shared goals and acceptable forms of behavior, emerged a collective consciousness—morality.

Thus, the formation of human groups is grounded in the development of moral values, which requires “selfishness [to be] punished and virtue [to be] rewarded” (Haidt, 2007). Eventually, a group’s moral values become codified into specific forms of punishment. Even primitive societies, prior to the development of legal systems, relied on “informal mechanisms of social control such as shaming and open disapproval” (Vago, 2012, p. 39). Emile Durkheim, one of ‘the founding fathers’ of sociology, described “punishment as a mechanical reaction” to deviance (Vago 51). The expansion of groups and technological innovations that facilitated transportation spawned highly complex legal systems to deal with violations of a group’s values. Moreover, modern Americans, notorious for voluminous litigation suits and high incarceration rates, use the courts as avenues for punitive retribution.

While sociologists are largely in agreement with the aforementioned, and notably brief, history of human group formation, the origins of morality in and of itself have always been questioned. In attempting to make sense of a moral consciousness, Socrates speculated about the conditions of moral philosophy by asking, “Is the pious being loved by the gods because it is pious, or is it pious because it is being loved by the gods?” (Plato, 2002, p. 12). For centuries,

man has been unable to concretely conceptualize the ethics that dominate every facet of life—loyalty to kin, duty to state, social contracts with fellow citizens, and sometimes a commitment of piety to a divine being. The law, which governs man’s everyday life, is an extension of and intimately connected to these established moral values, yet we have been unable to universally conceptualize morality. Is morality a biological element or a social and political convention? Is it historically variable or constant? More importantly, what *are* our moral values? Research has provided useful insight into answers but our understanding regarding morality remains, undoubtedly, inadequate.

Hence, a critical examination of the variables measured in a study of over 1,300 Penn State students conducted in Fall 2012 regarding moral decision-making and attitudes toward punishment can help us to establish potential links or relationships between morality and punishment. Specifically, what types of moral evaluations influence a person’s willingness to inflict punishment? For example, does one’s political affiliation predict one’s degree of punitiveness? The differing beliefs between conservatives and liberals have led to the formation of the Republican and Democratic parties that organize and crusade for their particular values. It is a common understanding that Republicans support expanding gun rights while Democrats promote gun restrictions such as background checks; Republicans oppose abortion while Democrats support *Roe v. Wade*; Republicans prefer wages to be determined by the marketplace while Democrats advocate progressive programs such as organized labor wage negotiations or increases in minimum wage. What, if any, variables account for such differences? Mark Lagon and William Schulz, in *Conservatives, Liberals, and Human Rights*, postulate that conservatives and liberals are not all that different, that perhaps the conflict rests “less over philosophical first principles than it is around the practical application of those principles” (2012, p.25).

Social psychologist Jonathan Haidt and colleagues note that political campaigns focus primarily on anticipating the behavior of self-interested voters (Graham, Haidt & Nosek, 2009, p. 1029). Haidt recognizes that self-interested behavior is often erratic and frequently amenable to change. This is an especially important insight in a highly politicized society where strong disagreements frequently undermine social progress. It is commonly understood that liberals prioritize government-protected civil liberties while often embracing a more individualistic ethic of freedoms.

Haidt sought to explore the relationship between moral foundations and political ideology by connecting sociological and evolutionary theories of moral psychology, crediting them each for their symbiotic, relational role in morality. While moral foundations are recognized as a collaborative product of social, subjective, and intuitive feelings, previous research was limited due to the inability to conceptualize and *measure* the various dimensions of morality. In order to account for cultural variations, Haidt and colleagues developed the Moral Foundations Questionnaire to measure moral principles that “were [historically and evolutionarily] common across cultures” but also variable in terms of the cultural salience (Graham, Nosek, Haidt, Iyer, Koleva, & Ditto, 2011, p. 3). In addition to harm and fairness, currently the most traditional and widely studied moral foundations, Haidt proposed adding three more *psychological foundations*: loyalty, authority, and purity.

The addition of loyalty, authority, and purity is crucial because focusing strictly on harm and fairness “limit[s the moral domain] to concerns about individuals harming or unfairly treating other individuals...[and] morality as justice” (Graham et al., 2011, p. 1). Morality is not limited to concerns with justice—it involves a larger and more holistic view of societal values that is translated through political ideology or legislative agendas. In contrast to a progressive,

liberal ideology, Haidt described a conservative's vision as having "a stronger preference for things that are familiar, stable, and predictable" (Graham et al., 2009, p. 1030). Indeed, Haidt (2009) found that conservatives have a "more even distribution of values...including the two individual foundations [harm and fairness] and the three binding foundations [authority, loyalty, and purity]" while liberals have a tendency to prioritize values of harm and fairness (p. 1031). It is important to note that liberals did not find the binding foundations *irrelevant*; rather, the individual foundations of harm and fairness were *more* relevant to them. Such a theory will be highly applicable to the "Deviance and Morality Survey" data analyzed in this study. For instance, variables such as loyalty and fairness are two key components of social altruism and cooperation; if loyalty and fairness are of significant importance, then an individual who does not reciprocate with altruism or social contributions will be scorned.

Graham, Nosek, and Haidt (2012) examined the extent to which liberals and conservatives varied with regard to moral foundations. Research suggests that "outgroup stereotype exaggeration was strongest for those most identified with their ingroup," meaning that moderate liberals and moderate conservatives might not be so ideologically opposed to each other (Graham et al., 2012, p. 2). The political climate triggers outgroup hostility more so than the moral concerns themselves; not only do "liberals and conservatives exaggerate the existing group differences," but they also "exaggerate the moral concerns of their own group" (p. 3). As stated earlier, the moral foundations approach indicates that liberals and conservatives score differently on the Moral Foundations Questionnaire, which is not contested by either political community; however, the extent to which liberals and conservatives differ is misunderstood and frequently exaggerated by society. For example, Graham, Nosek, and Haidt (2012) illustrated that people often believe " 'typical' liberal[s] and conservative[s are] even more polarized than

the actual polarization between *extreme* liberals and conservatives” (p. 4).

Now that we have identified different beliefs and potential explanations for the discrepancy of such values, how are differences in responses to rule-breaking behavior explained? Previous research highlights political disparities regarding punitiveness by evaluating imprisonment variation from state to state. For instance, Vanessa Barker of Florida State University (2006) reports that liberal states like New York and Minnesota are recording imprisonment rates below the national average while conservative states like Texas and Louisiana rank well above the national average. Of course, these trends are not universal given that California, commonly considered a liberal state, imprisons above the national average; still, such empirical inquiries are of consideration in determining whether conservatives’ and liberals’ differing punitiveness is explained by a differing configuration of moral foundations. The “Deviance and Morality Survey,” which measures punitive reactions to violations of the moral foundations, provides a means by which to test *the moral foundations hypothesis* and complement existing research regarding political attitudes. What contributes to the significance of my findings is the incorporation of moral foundations in order to understand differences in punitiveness. Using these data, I will examine the relationship between political orientation and associated moral foundations and the relationship between political orientation and resultant punitive reactions. An examination of the political and moral foundations of punitiveness is likely to reveal ideological differences because people react punitively to violations of their most intimate ideals and ideological convictions. In the same way that Haidt and colleagues investigated the degree to which people value each foundation, I will analyze Penn State students’ political orientations, moral decision making, and punitiveness to understand if differences in punitiveness are explained by differences in political and moral convictions.

## Current Study

This thesis seeks to understand how a community's values translate into a specific level of punishment and rule enforcement for deviant acts. While previous research suggests that moral communities have culturally variable norms, politics, as an agent of socialization, define moral codes and categorizes norm violations that are meant to apply on a societal scale. Industrialized countries rely on politics as a formal mechanism for handling differences of opinion and categorizing opposing viewpoints. By studying punitiveness, man's most natural reaction to norm violations, we can begin to understand political and ideological standpoints and expose their underlying moral roots.

More specifically, this study examines the relationship between political affiliations and punitiveness, beginning with the hypothesis that conservatives exhibit a greater propensity to punish than do liberals. Secondly, it reviews whether or not liberals and conservatives differ in their moral configurations; specifically, I hypothesize that liberals will have higher scores regarding harm and fairness and conservatives will have higher scores regarding loyalty, authority and purity. Lastly, I will examine the moral foundations with respect to the relationship between political orientation and punitiveness. I hypothesize that the moral foundations mediate the relationship between political orientation and punitiveness.

### Summary of Hypotheses

1. Conservatives will exhibit a greater propensity to punish than liberals.
2. Liberals and conservatives will differ in their moral foundations with liberals having higher scores on harm and fairness and conservatives having higher scores on loyalty, authority, and purity.
3. Moral foundations will mediate the relationship between political affiliation and punitiveness.

## CHAPTER 2: DATA AND METHODS

The data for this study come from Dr. Eric Silver's "Deviance and Morality" survey that was administered during the Fall of 2012 to a sample of over 1,300 Penn State students. Participants in the survey were students in large, general education sociology and criminology courses. The investigators used Qualtrics (<http://qualtrics.com>), an online survey administration platform, to send recruitment emails to students explaining the purpose of the study, as well as individualized links that led to the survey instrument. Students who completed the survey received an extra credit percentage point added to their final course grade. Course instructors were not provided access to the data in order to guarantee the privacy and anonymity of individual responses. The investigators were solely responsible for data management and analysis and, as per an Institutional Review Board (IRB) Authorization Agreement, all personally identifying information was removed from the data prior to analysis. Of the 1,854 students recruited, 1,429 completed the survey, yielding a 77% response rate.

Survey respondents indicated their *political orientation* on a scale ranging from 1-7 with 1—very conservative and 7—very liberal. The five *moral foundations* measures indicate how important each foundation is to the respondent, ranging from 1-6 with 1—not at all relevant and 6—extremely relevant. A scale from 1-11 measured how supportive respondents were of punitive criminal justice policies. Respondent's *gender* was coded such that 0 indicates male and 1 indicates female and the *race* variable was coded such that 0 indicates white and 1 indicates nonwhite.

Using data from the survey, I began by examining the relationship between *political orientation* and *punitiveness*. Subsequently, I investigated whether political orientation was associated with each of the moral foundations (harm, fairness, loyalty, authority, and purity).

Lastly, I considered the extent to which the moral foundations explain (or mediate) the relationship between political orientation and punitive attitudes. Controlling for race and gender ensures that my analyses are not confounded by spurious associations between these variables and the variables of interest in the study. All analyses were conducted using SPSS software.

The survey pertains to Penn State students and, consequently, is not necessarily generalizable to the public. Despite this limitation, however, the data are well suited to examine the theoretically predicted relationships among the variables. Therefore, results will be relevant for informing future research. Finally, I end the study by discussing the policy implications of the results, and outline implications for future research.

### CHAPTER 3: RESULTS

The bivariate correlation between political orientation and punitiveness is  $-.277$  ( $p < .01$ ), indicating that the relationship is negative and statistically significant. Because the data are coded such that liberals are “higher” than conservatives, this relationship indicates that a higher level of liberalism is associated with a lower level of punitiveness.

As shown in Table 1, a linear regression model predicting punitiveness with gender, race, and political orientation produced an R-squared value of  $.076$  meaning that 7.6% of the variation in punitiveness is explained by gender, race, and political orientation. The table, which is presented below, illustrates a significant relationship between political orientation and punitiveness when controlling for gender and race. Likewise, it indicates that the slope of the linear regression model (B) between political orientation and punitiveness is  $-.300$ , which means each unit increase in liberalism results in a  $.300$  unit decrease in punitiveness. These results support my first hypothesis: conservatives have stronger punitive attitudes than liberals.

**Table 1 – Predicting Punitiveness**

Variables	Punitiveness
<b>Female</b>	.073
<b>Nonwhite</b>	.107
<b>Political Aff.</b>	$-.300$ ***
<b>Constant</b>	6.829 ***
<b>R-Squared</b>	.076

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

In order to examine the relationship between political orientation and the five moral foundations (harm, fairness, loyalty, authority, and purity), a bivariate correlation between each of the variables was created. These correlations are shown below in Table 2. The foundations of

harm and fairness have a positive relationship with political orientation of .180 and .236, respectively, while the foundations of loyalty, authority, and purity have negative relationships with political orientation of -.250, -.250, and -.208, respectively. All of the correlations are significant at  $p < .001$  level. Thus, a higher level of liberalism is associated with a stronger consideration of violations of harm and fairness in decision making while a higher level of conservatism is associated a stronger consideration of violations of loyalty, authority, and purity in decision making.

**Table 2 - Correlation between Political Affiliation and the Moral Foundations**

Moral Foundations	Political Affiliation	Significance
<b>Harm</b>	0.180	***
<b>Fairness</b>	0.236	***
<b>Loyalty</b>	-0.250	***
<b>Authority</b>	-0.250	***
<b>Purity</b>	-0.208	***
<b>N</b>	1374	

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

While these correlations demonstrate a relationship between political orientation and the moral foundations, they could be explained by other factors that were not yet controlled (i.e., gender and race). Table 3, below, therefore shows linear regressions predicting moral foundations with political orientation and the aforementioned controls (race and gender). As shown in Table 3, political orientation is an extremely important variable for predicting all of the moral foundations ( $p < .001$ ). Also shown in Table 3, the relationship between political orientation and the harm foundation remains positive (as it was in the bivariate correlation), and each unit increase in liberalism results in .049 units of increase in moral foundation of harm, net of the effects of gender and race. The R-square value of .124 means that 12.4% of the variation in the

harm foundation is explained by political orientation, gender, and race. It is also interesting to note that females score higher on the harm foundation than males.

**Table 3 - Predicting the Moral Foundations**

Variables	Harm	Fairness	Loyalty	Authority	Purity
<b>Gender</b>	0.439***	0.182***	-0.187***	-0.011	0.205***
<b>Race</b>	0.044	0.185***	-0.022	0.112*	0.461***
<b>Political Aff.</b>	0.049***	0.067***	-0.101***	-0.108***	-0.142***
<b>Constant</b>	3.981***	3.849***	4.534***	4.435***	3.478***
<b>R-Squared</b>	0.124	0.089	0.082	0.068	0.108

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

As shown in the 3<sup>rd</sup> column of Table 3, after controlling for race and gender, the association between political orientation and the fairness foundation is statistically significant (p<.001). Similar to the bivariate correlation, the relationship in the linear regression model indicates a positive relationship between the variables with each unit increase in liberalism resulting in a .067 unit increase in the moral foundation of fairness. In other words, liberalism is associated with a stronger consideration of the fairness foundations in decision-making, net of gender and race. 8.9% of the variation in the fairness foundation is explained by the variation in political orientation, gender and race.

As shown in the 4<sup>th</sup> column of Table 3, a linear regression model between political orientation and the foundation loyalty that controls for gender and race reveals a significant relationship with an R-squared value of .082; hence, 8.2% of the variation in the loyalty foundation is explained by political orientation, gender, and race. The results in the 4<sup>th</sup> column of Table 3 also indicate that the slope of the linear regression between political orientation and the loyalty foundation is -.101. Thus, the results confirm the negative relationship demonstrated in

the bivariate correlation; each unit increase in liberalism is associated with a .101 unit decrease in the foundation loyalty.

As shown in the 5<sup>th</sup> column of Table 3, political orientation has a significant negative relationship with the authority foundation. The slope of the linear regression model (B) indicates that each unit increase in liberalism is associated with a decrease of .108 units in the authority foundation. Unlike gender, with a significance value of .759, race is significant with a value of .010. Political orientation has a strong, statistically significant relationship with the authority foundation, and political orientation (along with gender and race) explains 6.8% of the variation in the authority foundation.

As shown in the final column of Table 3, political orientation is significantly associated with the moral foundation of purity while controlling for gender and race. The relationship remains negative in the linear regression model (as it was in the bivariate correlation), each unit increase in liberalism resulted in a .142 decrease in the purity foundation. In other words, conservatism is associated with a stronger endorsement of the purity foundation in decision-making. With an R-square value of .108, 10.8% of the variation in the purity foundation is explained by political orientation, gender, and race.

Overall, the results regarding the relationship between political orientation and the moral foundations support my second hypothesis: liberals and conservatives differ in their moral foundations with liberals having higher scores on harm and fairness and conservatives having higher scores on loyalty, authority, and purity. These results are consistent with those reported previously by Haidt (2009).

Before examining whether the moral foundations mediate the relationship between political affiliation and punitiveness, it is useful to examine the bivariate correlations between the

moral foundations and punitiveness because in order for a variable to function as a mediator, it must be correlated with the dependent variable in a regression model. As shown in Table 4, all of the moral foundations are significantly associated with punitiveness, though harm and fairness are less associated than loyalty, authority, and purity.

**Table 4 - Correlation between Moral Foundation and Punitiveness**

Moral Foundations	Punitiveness	Significance
<b>Harm</b>	-0.065	*
<b>Fairness</b>	-0.096	***
<b>Loyalty</b>	0.234	***
<b>Authority</b>	0.284	***
<b>Purity</b>	0.176	***
<b>N</b>	1397	

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

The final step in my analysis is to test whether the moral foundations mediate the relationship between political affiliation and punitiveness. These results are shown in Table 5. The first linear regression examines the relationship between political orientation and punitiveness. The next five models test whether or not the moral foundations mediate, that is, decrease or eliminate the significant effect of political orientation on punitiveness. Models 2 and 3 in Table 5 demonstrate that harm and fairness are not significant predictors of punitiveness when political orientation is included in the models. In other words, knowing an individual's score on either the harm or fairness foundation does not increase the accuracy of predicting his or her punitiveness when one already knows a person's political affiliation. On the other hand, models 4, 5, and 6 indicate that the loyalty, authority, and purity foundations are significant predictors of punitiveness, controlling for political orientation. In addition, results show that the loyalty, authority, and purity foundations mediate the relationship between political orientation

and punitiveness. The findings support partial but not full mediation because political orientation still remains significant in Models 4, 5, and 6, even though the magnitude of the association was reduced in all three instances. Hence, we can conclude that punitiveness is related to both political affiliation as well as the loyalty, authority, and purity foundations. Table 4 indicates that the harm and fairness foundations are less correlated with punitiveness as compared to the loyalty, authority, and purity foundations, which helps us to understand why they mediate less of the association with political orientation, and are non-significant in Models 2 and 3 of Table 5. Thus, the results of Table 5 provide partial support for my third hypothesis, that moral foundations mediate the relationship between political affiliation and punitiveness.

**Table 5 - Predicting Punitiveness (Moral Foundation Mediate)**

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
<b>Gender</b>	.073	0.087	0.088	0.156	0.083	0.023
<b>Race</b>	.107	0.108	0.122	0.119	0.044	-0.008
<b>Political Aff.</b>	-.300***	-0.299***	-0.294***	-0.254***	-0.239***	-0.264***
<b>Harm</b>	-	-0.033	-	-	-	-
<b>Fairness</b>	-	-	-0.085	-	-	-
<b>Loyalty</b>	-	-	-	0.436***	-	-
<b>Authority</b>	-	-	-	-	0.561***	-
<b>Purity</b>	-	-	-	-	-	0.249***
<b>Constant</b>	6.829***	6.96***	7.156***	4.84***	4.332***	5.96***
<b>R-Squared</b>	.076	0.076	0.076	0.105	0.119	0.088

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

## CHAPTER 4: DISCUSSION

The results of this study generally support my hypotheses regarding the role that morality plays in the relationship between political affiliation and punitiveness. With regard to the first hypothesis – that conservatives will exhibit a greater propensity to punish than liberals – the results were affirming. Conservatives were significantly more likely than liberals to report punitive attitudes. My second hypothesis, that liberals and conservatives differ in their moral foundations, with liberals having higher scores on harm and fairness and conservatives having higher scores on loyalty, authority, and purity, was likewise supported. Hypotheses 1 and 2 are also supported by Jonathan Haidt’s research (2009). What makes my research findings especially important and unique is that I find partial support for my third hypothesis: the loyalty, authority, and purity foundations mediate the relationship between political orientation and punitiveness. I should add, however, that while my results are consistent with the notion of “mediation,” the data I am using are cross-sectional and, therefore, causal relationships among the variables of interest cannot be definitely established. While my results are consistent with the causal model reflected in my hypotheses, it remains for future research using longitudinal methods to more definitely address the issue of causality.

Nonetheless, the results produced while testing the first hypothesis provide valuable, theoretical implications for Herbert Packer’s models of the criminal process: the crime control model and the due process model. With an emphasis on punishment or punitiveness, crime control theorists connect the legitimacy of the law with its strict enforcement. On the other hand, the due process model prioritizes safeguarding the rights and liberties of the accused when faced with the possibility of punitive damages. Under the due process model, law is a more procedural entity than a punitive deterrent to crime. The finding that conservatives are more supportive of

punitive practices than liberals suggests an association between conservatism and the crime control model and between liberalism and the due process model. Still, that is not to say that conservatism guarantees crime control or liberalism due process—Packer admits to ‘common ground’ or ‘shared values’ between the models and my research simply suggests an association between higher levels of liberalism and lower levels of punitiveness; political orientation and punitiveness exist as gradations along a scale and are not dichotomies as are the crime control models.

Other policy ramifications are suggested through an in-depth consideration of punitiveness. The United States, which represents approximately 5% of the world’s population, holds nearly 25% of the world’s prisoners (Annas 2012). Of course, it is unfair to categorize entire beliefs or agendas as solely ‘conservative’ or completely ‘liberal’ but, for the most part, conservatives have largely adopted tough-on-crime policies as an approach to reinforcing public safety. None of this is to suggest that one method of punishment is more or less successful than another; instead, it serves as evidence that liberals and conservatives approach crime or moral violations with different frames of mind. As discussed in the literature review, southern conservative states with conservative policies exhibit higher incarceration rates than more liberal western and northeastern states according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS). Moreover, incarceration rates increased on a nation-wide scale under conservative President Reagan’s war on drugs. Tough-on-crime programs have been arguably successful and well received by the electorate—voters consider crime as a threat to their security and, consequently, incarceration of offenders as a mechanism for promoting safety. Another example of conservative punitiveness is many Republicans’ endorsements of ‘three-strikes’ laws, which impose harsh sentences on recurring offenders, sometimes regardless of the severity of the offenses. These findings are

maintained by methodologists from the London School of Economics & Political Science who determined differences in punitiveness to be explained by conservatives' valuing "social order and cohesion" (Gerber & Jackson, 2012, p.4). It is important to note that conservative punitiveness is not necessarily an indication of malice but rather a correctional reaction to illicit acts under the belief that "punishment can bring offenders back on the right track" (Gerber & Jackson p.4). Gerber and Jackson, who also found that punitiveness is partly ideological, discuss liberals' reformatory, or rehabilitative outlook towards offenders (Gerber & Jackson 2012). Thus, the results showing a relationship between political orientation and punitiveness are consistent with contemporary policy trends.

Undoubtedly, the relationship between political orientation and punitiveness is of critical importance to lawyers during jury selection process. More specifically, one can imagine a system whereby lawyers increasingly rely on social science methodologies. For example, lawyers can determine which moral foundations are most violated by an offense, so that a defense attorney representing a sex offender would be cautious towards an overly conservative jury due to their stronger valuing of purity while a defense attorney representing a small business owner in a civil rights court over wrongful termination would be cautious towards an overly liberal jury due to their stronger valuing of individual harm and fairness.

Likewise, my results serve to explain certain political and ideological trends. By understanding how political orientation correlates with specific moral foundations, politicians can tailor message development for their campaigns. A democratic politician with foreknowledge of the relationship between liberalism and harm can consider effective campaign platforms and tailor his message development by appealing to such values. Liberals are more inclined to regulate market economics with stricter Federal Trade Commission (FTC) guidelines

and monitor the production of commodities that increase the risk of harm or injury. Currently, many democrats renounce practices such as hydraulic fracturing, or ‘fracking,’ under the contention that it pollutes groundwater and violates public health. Perhaps the link between liberalism and the harm foundation is better represented by its extension to nonhuman entities such as protecting the ecosystem and endangered species. Democratic candidates can stimulate the fairness foundation within the electorate by speaking on discriminatory matters such as fair labor and equal pay. They can address issues such as rising healthcare premiums, which have become exclusive commodities of the upper class, appearing to exacerbate inequalities. Conservatives looking to satisfy the authority foundations can appeal to traditional institutions like the military. Usually, U.S. conservatives oppose defense-related budget cuts in order for their country to remain an international superpower. In that sense, the military is our institutional, authoritative, police force that ensures national security. Often, conservatives are more likely to support stop and frisk laws, permitting an officer to engage with a suspicious individual and frisk his person for any potential contraband. An examination of the relationship between political orientations and the moral foundations sheds light on the stop and frisk law; perhaps the political disagreement rests upon a trust or distrust of police—hence, *authority*.

The conservative Republican Party is sometimes described as resistant to change. The moral foundations perspective suggests that a resistance to change is not necessarily a political strategy but an inherent value of loyalty to traditional practices or policies. Much of this is demonstrated through the politics of the courts; liberals occasionally exhibit activist tendencies under a more expansive interpretation of the Constitution while conservatives generally favor a greater emphasis on tradition and adherence to the original intent of the law as written. Finally, the stronger relationship between conservatism and the purity foundation explains certain values

associated with political orientation. Republicans, who more often have conservative Christian backgrounds, are more likely to adopt socially conservative policies within their political framework. Considering its religious implications, same-sex marriage has become a politically and legally sensitive issue. Same-sex marriage, Republicans argue, compromises the sanctity of the traditional marriage between a man and a woman. Democrats who might be less concerned with the purity foundation and more concentrated on the fairness foundation remain open-minded to same-sex marriage, considering it a shared civil liberty. For example, homosexual couples unable to marry usually struggle with end-of-life hospitalization matters, inheritance, and taxation issues. Likewise, abortion is a highly contentious subject between political parties. Conservatives consider life as divine and holy, beginning at conception; thus, abortion represents a violation of conservatives' purity foundation by its ending of a life whereas Democrats often associate abortion with a woman's right over her own body—hence, the fairness foundation.

Notably, the harm and fairness foundations are less important because they are more universal, which is why there is a greater association between punitiveness and loyalty, authority, and purity violations; regardless of political affiliation, an overt act of harm or injustice tends to be viewed as indisputably wrong. The stronger relationship between the remaining foundations (loyalty, authority, purity) and punitiveness reflects individual differences in political orientation and their correspondingly associated values. Perhaps the statistical quantification of political orientation, moral foundations, and punitiveness will facilitate compromise between opposing viewpoints by identifying moderate center-points. While former research reveals similar social trends, the results of this study aim to explain tendencies for a greater understanding of such trends. Ultimately, by examining moral foundations and their relationships with political

orientations, we can sow the seeds of social progress through intellectual and interactive dialogue aimed at understanding our differences rather than reflexively engaging in conflict over them.

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## ACADEMIC VITA

Craig Castiglia [cjc5383@psu.edu](mailto:cjc5383@psu.edu)

### EDUCATION

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#### **Penn State University – Schreyer Honors College**

Majors: Crime Law and Justice  
Philosophy

Minor: Sociology

#### **Student Activities / Honors:**

- 2014 Student Marshal for the Department of Philosophy
- 2014 Jabir Shibley Memorial Scholarship in Philosophy
- Penn State Liberal Arts Undergraduate Council
- Teacher's Assistant – Sociology of Deviance
- Teacher's Assistant – Law and Society
- Phi Beta Kappa Society
- Published in 2012 edition of Kalliope Literary Magazine at Penn State
- Private tutor for Symbolic Logic
- Dean's List (Fall 2010 to Present)

### WORK EXPERIENCE

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#### **Internship at Montgomery County District Attorney** Summer 2013

- Forfeiture Unit—drafted petitions of motions for forfeiture
- Attended court proceedings
- Composed descriptive write-ups of material seizures
- Performed follow-ups with police officers on behalf of Assistant District Attorneys
- Participated in mock trial
- Toured Correctional Facility and Juvenile Detention Center
- Accompanied patrol officer on duty

#### **Matt Bradford Campaign for Reelection** Summer 2012

- Canvassed alongside State Representative Bradford in his successful campaign

#### **Legislative Internship at the Office of State Rep. Matt Bradford** Summer 2011, 2012

- Assisted in planning large scale events (Job Fair, Senior Fair, Family Fair)
- Managed new resident spreadsheets/database
- Fielded inquiries from constituents
- Assisted with coordination of State Representative Bradford's public schedule

#### **Home Depot Sales Associate** Apr 2010 to Aug 2010

- Provided customer service
- Offered information on product features

#### **Internship with the Obama Campaign for Change** Feb 2008 to Nov 2008

- Canvassed neighborhoods to deliver literature
- Contacted registered voters
- Registered voters
- Worked alongside community organizers