Framing Of Culture War Issues In Congressional Campaign Websites

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Framing

The **framing** of an issue refers the choice of words which encourages an audience to view the issue from a particular perspective.

Framing affects our opinions.

"Is the American government spending too little on. . .

Welfare?"	23%
Assistance to the poor?"	63%

How do politicians frame their discussion of culture-war issues?

The Data

- .txt files of web-pages of House of Representative candidates from 2008–2018
- 1,371 pages discussing abortion
- Covariates for each candidate/year combination including:
    - Party
    - Gender
    - District religiosity
    - District political-lean

Structural Topic Modeling

- "Bag-of-words" model
- Topics are mixtures over words
- Documents are mixtures over topics
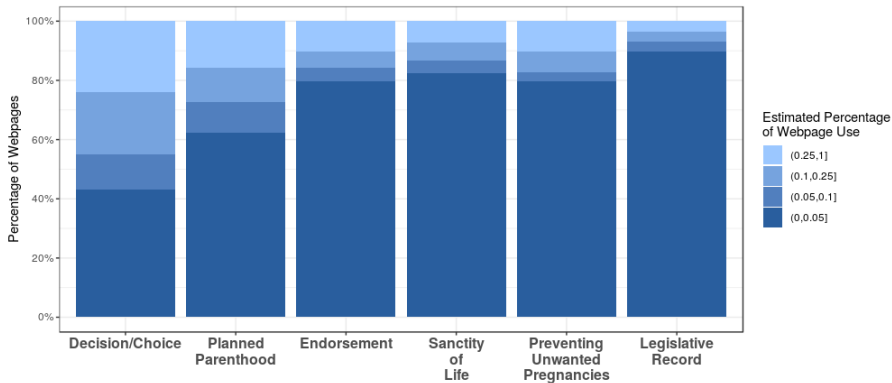- Able to include document-level meta-data in model-fitting process

Document Generative Process

1. Draw document-level attention to each topic

2. Draw each word's topic assignment

3. Draw a word from the assigned topic

Results: Democrats
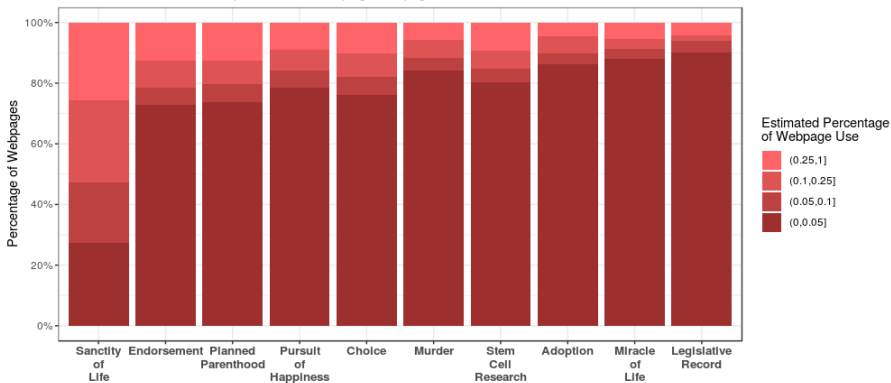

Democrats Candidates' Framing of Abortion
From 2008–2018 House of Representatives Campaign Webpages

Estimated Percentage of Webpage Use

- (0.25,1]
- (0.1,0.25]
- (0.05,0.1]
- (0,0.05]

Results: Republicans

Republican Candidates' Framing of Abortion

From 2008–2018 House of Representatives Campaign Webpages

Thank you!

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