**Title**

Moral Foundations of Political Reasoning: Investigating the Moral Underpinnings of Political Judgment

**Overview**

This paper examines whether and under which conditions conservatives and liberals rely on different moral foundations when evaluating political parties and candidates. The analyses are based on the open-ended survey responses in the 2012 ANES.

**Abstract**

According to Moral Foundations Theory, moral thinking is fundamentally structured by ﬁve innate intuitions (Haidt/Joseph 2008). Subsequent studies showed that liberals and conservatives systematically differ in their emphasis on these moral foundations (e.g. Graham et al. 2009). The goal of the paper proposed here is to investigate whether individuals also rely on different moral foundations when evaluating political candidates and parties. Based on open-ended survey responses in the 2012 American National Election Study, it will be examined to what extent the apparent diﬀerences in moral judgments between liberals and conservatives actually shape and structure individual reasoning and evaluations in the political context. More speciﬁcally, I utilize the moral word lists used by Graham et al. (2009) to identify references to basic moral intuitions when individuals report on their attitudes towards political parties and candidates. Furthermore, it is examined whether the relationships connecting ideology and moral reasoning are moderated by political interest or expertise.

**Keywords**

Moral Foundations, Ideology, Political Reasoning