A Wordcount Approach
to Assessing the Moral Color
of Old & New Media

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It ain't in the word counts; it's in the dictionary

Counting words appears to suffice for...

...detecting…

  ...personality traits [1]

  ...deception [2], etc.

...predicting...

  ...future mental health [3]

  ...relationship stability [4], etc.

...comparable results to more sophisticated (lexical) methods [5].
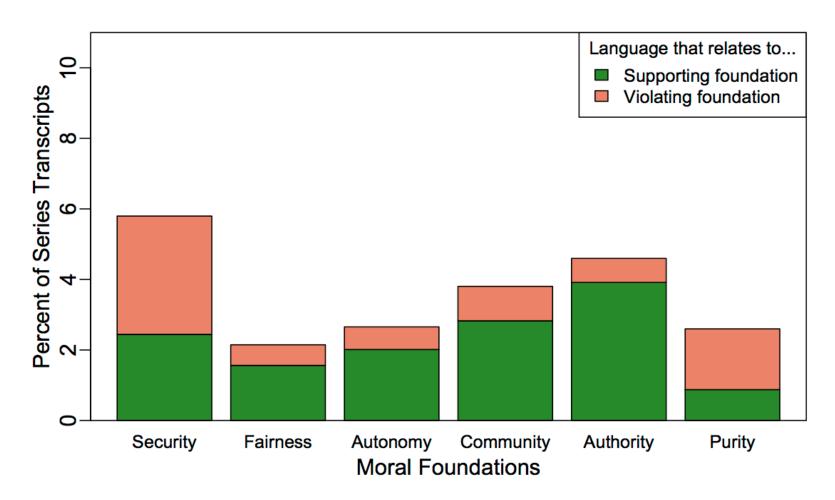
How? A dictionary derived from a domain-relevant theory does all of the work of detection/prediction in each case.

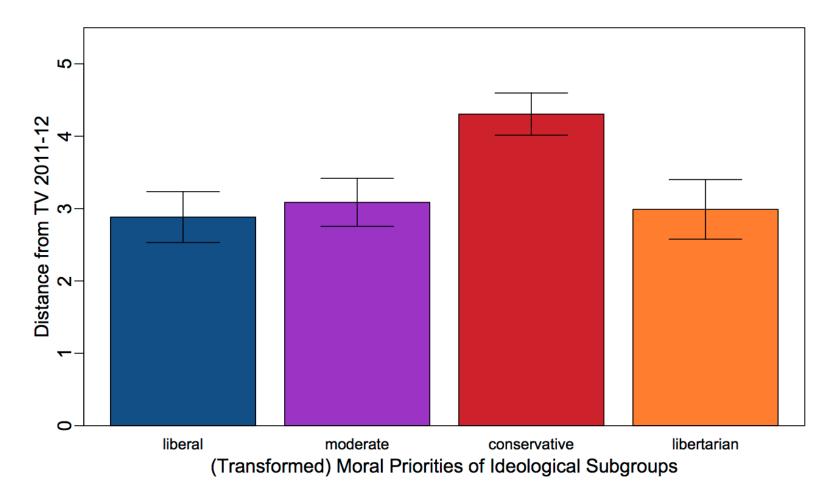# *Developing a dictionary from Moral Foundations Theory*

Foundation	Valence	Prototypical Words & Concepts
Security	+	empathy, kindness, gentleness, & nurturance
	-	violence, abuse, irascibility, & meanness
Fairness	+	equity, proportionality, truthfulness, & friendliness
	-	partiality, prejudice, fraudulence, & hostility
Autonomy	+	liberty, independence, dissent/consent, & self-determination
	-	oppression, subservience, coercion, & subjection
Community	+	loyalty, dutifulness, patriotism, & self-sacrifice
	-	betrayal, dereliction, treachery, & egocentrism
Authority	+	deference, respect, legitimacy, & hegemony
	-	recalcitrance, affront, subversion, & heterodoxy
Purity	+	sanctity, temperance, innocence, & healthfulness
	-	profanity, indulgence, corruption, & infirmity

c.f. http://www.moralfoundations.org/

The moral color of television

Conservative complaints about TV bias might be right

Distance from TV 2011-12

liberal | moderate | conservative | libertarian

(Transformed) Moral Priorities of Ideological Subgroups

Social media as data about behavior & as behavior

Social media can serve both as data & as laboratory. In either case its usefulness derives from social (psychological) theory.

As data, social media helps in testing social (psychological) theories by recording the unfolding of social interactions.

eg., does TV exert a cumulative influence on viewers [7]?

As behavior: social media requires social (psychological) theories for making sense of those unfolding interactions.

Does a *post*, a *like*, an *un/friending*, etc. constitute...
● an assertion of values,
● a value judgement of another's behavior, or
● an attempt to regulate that behavior?

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