Framing the 2016 election: Politicians, parties, and perspectives

by

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A Thesis Submitted
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

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May, 2019
For Janice Koth (1948-2016)

My finest “gobbledygook” to date
Abstract

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This dissertation offers a new model to analyze political rhetoric: political Frames of Reference (FoRs) which analogically map our ability to describe navigating in three-dimensional space onto the ideological need to describe how our socio-political world functions. Through their messages, the twenty-two candidates who ran for president in 2016 offered their own unique yet party-approved ideological worldviews, and laid out paths of logic, demarcated by various semantic parameters or Grounds, for voters to follow in order to properly assess the policy prescriptions on offer, both their merits and whether they would indeed chart a better course forward for the nation. Three FoRs and the nature of their different Grounds are identified: the Democrats’ Conjoint, the Republicans’ Absolute, and Trump’s particular take on the Absolute called a Decompetitive FoR.

Through the rhetorical tactics of decontestation and rhetorical erasure, the Republican candidates reified a series of supposedly shared, extra-human social constructs, such as Christian Morality, American Exceptionalism, and Economic Supremacy, as Absolute fixed bearings which permeate the socio-political landscape and delimit the standards of behavior and assessments that Americans should accept if they want to properly make sense of what is happening in America. The Democratic candidates acknowledged that policy issues are discussable from multiple viewpoints, and contextualized the socio-political landscape by referring to the perspectives which people take on the commonplace behaviors and assessments everyone engages in within the social systems created by people’s mutual interactions with one another. Trump offered his ideological worldview through mutually entailing Grounds, victory and
defeat, as he refereed what was fairly or unfairly happening in the world. Through these winner-take-all and by-any-means-necessary conceptual routines, Trump was able to engage in zero-sum thinking about e.g. how much wealth or justice exists in the world and its proper distribution, activating a series of “folk” knowledges as a means to speak more directly to the fears and concerns of voters as he argued how he would Make America Great Again.
Acknowledgments

As my time with this project winds down I find myself reflecting on some of the challenges I faced, and I am humbled by the support I have received from my mentors, friends, and family. As I began working, I did not fully appreciate just how big the task would become. Compared to my friends and colleagues on the same journey, I felt like I had too much data, too many possible paths to follow, too many variables to juggle, and too little time to fully explore it all. But perhaps my grass was greener as well: the data was readily accessible and people from all political persuasions were willing and able to talk about what was happening, offering insights and inspiration to help me refine my ideas and consider alternate viewpoints. I can only hope I have done justice for the time and faith they invested in me.

My mentor, advisor, and committee chair, Michel Achard, helped me see the potential for this project before I even realized it was what I should do. I wanted to work on the representation of ISIS in the media, and lo and behold I found a much better explanation for what was concerning me. You were right; there was too much, but you kept me from sinking ... except for the few times you had to push me to see what you saw hiding beneath the surface. Nancy Niedzielski showed me the value of examining how people come together to create a shared idea of who they are in the world through the language they use. It’s been a long haul from a detached quantitative analysis of salient political words in a massive corpus to this qualitative analysis of people creating their partisan identities, but your seminar helped me get there. Dominic Boyer reminded me to think beyond the words and meanings and see the candidates for who they were trying to appear to be, and how they were being made into what we saw; at least that’s what your comment about affect came to mean to me. I am also immensely grateful for the teaching, advice, and counsel of numerous professors over my years in school: Robert Englebretson, Suzanne Kemmer, Masayoshi Shibatani, Christian M. Willis Oko and Kevin McGowan at Rice; and Janet Bing at Old Dominion University. Special thanks are due to my mentors
Joanne Scheibman from ODU for setting me on the path of linguistics, and to Richard Guthrie from Christopher Newport University—you said I’d eventually get here. And a final special thank you to Rita Riley for helping keep me on track with all the paperwork and comings and goings in the office.

Journeys are always better with fellow travelers or friends to meet with along the way. My fellow linguists at Rice helped me see all the things I might have missed on my own: Ben Chauvette, John Galindo, Penelope Howe, Lisa Jeon, Haowen Jiang, Bazile Lanneau, Carlos Molina-Vital, Ann Marie Olivo, Emily Remirez, Marina Santiago, Vlad Soare, Philipp Stempel, Bethany Townsend, and Stephen Watters. Though it is hard to point out a few for special thanks, I am grateful to Sarah Seewoester Cain for the writing retreat to help me get my bearings again; she and Katherine Nelson also read many of my early ramblings. And Daniela Tijerina Benner and Jonas Wittke were the bookends, being there to chat with and encourage me at the beginning and at the end. Other students at Rice helped remind me that there should be more to life than work as well: Ben White (sorry the stats didn’t make it in), Dave Hughes, Kelly Weber, Stephen Wolff, and all the rest of y’all at Valhalla.

To all of the friends from before and hopefully long after, I also thank you for putting up with me and the craziness I brought up whether you wanted it or not. Kylene Becker, you’re probably the only person I know who actually took the whole time to figure out who to vote for, and you probably put up with my ramblings the most. I am grateful to those who helped me keep working, writing, reading, and editing: Michael Curry, Kim Lee, Victoria Mathis Sanders, and Michael Sundblad. Thanks to the poker crew for the breaks: David Arehart, The Hon. Michael Mullin (Del. VA), Jack Watson, and Kurtis Wiley. And last but not least, two friends who were always there when it mattered: Amanda McKinney, and Elise Brown. No doubt I have missed a few who should be thanked, so with apologies I thank you for being there.

No words of thanks could suffice for my family who have been with me through
it all and then some. Here’s to you Al and Christopher Koth, a dad and brother like no other. To the Texan side of the family, Dianne and Frank Steele, and Katie and Will Kammerer, you helped me feel at home and we had plenty of good talks about politics that helped me appreciate some of the subtleties of Republicanism; hopefully I can still come to some more Thanksgivings. Mom, I wish you could have been here at the finish line.
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Typographic Conventions

“text” Quotations
Data at a distance from its example
Citation form of a word used as an example itself e.g. “pro-abortion”

text Titles of referenced works and Supreme Court cases
Data from the current example
Terms in languages other then English
text Terms of art
Emphasis where necessary
TEXT Concept of e.g. ECONOMY versus the word “economy”

Within transcripts:
, Noticeable change in pitch contour
. Terminal pitch contour
? Long rising pitch contour typical of questions
% Audible glottal stop
@ Laughter particle
{|} Likeliest hearing(s)
[ ] Phonetic sounds
   Interruptions
( ) Sounds of note

Within figures:
arrows Directionality of conceptual correspondence
∞ Proportional conceptual correspondence
Chapter 1

Introduction

The dominant two party system of American politics has created a near binary distribution of positions on a given issue, e.g. for or against universal healthcare or additional barriers along the southern border. The seventeen Republican and five Democratic candidates who ran for president in 2016 faced the difficulty of staking out their own unique ideological position within the field of candidates and the wider American political landscape, while also having to sound as Republican or Democratic as possible. Navigating this tension required candidates to tread a precarious path by using many of the same linguistic resources as every other candidate in similar but different ways: in order to offer what amounted to the same position on any given issue as their co-partisans but differently enough so as to sound unique while not violating party expectations; and in order to sound differently enough from both co- and opposing partisans to argue that they alone knew how best to fix the problems of the nation. This problem of crafting individual messages within certain tolerances of party expectations was no more evident than in Trump’s candidacy, as he argued why he should be president by pushing against the ideological boundaries of the Republican party, whose nomination he ran for and won. Using publicly available data in the form of candidacy announcements and debate performances, this dissertation offers a model to capture how American presidential candidates can simultaneously sound unique as a person and party member but unequivocally Republican or Democratic: political Frames of Reference (FoRs).
Political discussions are replete with spatial terms: policy position, border, country, “Our country is on a very bad course” (Bush 06/15/15), “living in peace” (Perry 06/04/15), and so on. Using insights from cognitive linguistics with respect to our spatial reasoning and its linguistic realizations (§1.3), the political FoRs described here analogically map our ability to describe navigating in three-dimensional space onto the ideological need to describe how our socio-political “environment should [best] be structured” (Denzau and North 1994:4, brackets mine). In our experience of three-dimensional space, we make use of various objects or perspectives as landmarks or reference points to locate other objects and to find, start, and follow paths. Similarly, in the ideological space of politics, politicians make use of various ideological reference points to locate themselves and their policy ideas for voters, offering paths of logic for voters to follow in order to assess the validity and appropriacy of said policy ideas as charting a better course forward for the nation. Given the need of political parties to stake out their own clearly demarcated ideological spaces within the political landscape, it should come as no surprise that a given party and their party members will use language differently from other parties in order to indicate where they stand on issues and how their ideas better capture what is going on in America and how to fix any problems. As a starting point for this dissertation, I turn to an initial definition of ideology which will lay out the course of this chapter.

1.1 Ideology: A beginning

Ideology, as an analytical object, is notoriously difficult to define (Eagleton 1991; Jost 2006; Maynard 2013; Thorisdottir and colleagues 2009). These and other authors (Denzau and North 1994; Fetterman and colleagues 2015; Glassman and Karno 2007; Jost and colleagues 2009) note the multiple possible features one can or should include
in defining ideology as well as the methodological means through which ideology can be studied (in particular Maynard 2013). To hold the concept of ideology steady, I begin with Denzau and North’s (1994:4) definition: “[I]deologies are the shared framework of mental models that groups of individuals possess that provide both an interpretation of the environment and a prescription as to how that environment should be structured”. Their definition contains what appear to be the most common elements of a definition of ideology: a shared nature, often between groups of people, some form of belief or mental modeling, an understanding of how society is structured, usually as an ideal, and the means to achieve that (idealized) structure. Decomposing this definition into its constituents pieces will help lay out the structure of this chapter and introduce some of the terminology used throughout, while also pointing out at the outset the links between the theoretical issues which I will argue for in more detail.

Ideology is first and foremost enacted by people. The root of ideology is an individual taking a particular perspective or worldview on the “environment” understood as the social world, the socio-political landscape, socio-economic landscape etc. Some of these perspectives relate to ideological “interpretations” about the “structure” of the world such as who are good and bad people, why the world works the way it does, why certain policies are related, and so on. Other perspectives relate to policy “prescriptions” that should maintain or alter the “structure” of the world once made manifest; these are mainly policy proposals for laws or campaign promises, but at times can be reminders of the standards of behavior and assessments expected by and of citizens. These ideological interpretations and policy prescriptions are the data of the dissertation, being the messages which the candidates offered to the voters during the entire election cycle.
As people gather into groups, they debate and abstract over their individual world-views into a coherent set of ideas which they can all agree to. This “shared framework” or repertoire of ideas, and the words and meanings which index, indicate, or point toward them, help unite such groups into a Community of Alignment (CoA) (Wenger 1998). As people band together to create actual change in the world through policy initiatives and holding of offices, sharing in a “joint enterprise” (ibid.) of governance, they become the political parties we are accustomed to talking about (§1.2).

The individual’s own mental model remains in all of its complexity, but the abstraction which the CoA has settled on is also available as a means for individuals (and the group) to understand and make sense of the social world, as “the shared framework of mental models” of ideological interpretations of how the world works and the policy prescriptions to make it better. This shared framework and the abstractions that hold it together are the political Frames of Reference (FoR) (§1.3) which I offer as a means to analyze some of the differences that separate the two American political parties, noting different series of semantic parameters or Grounds (§1.3.2) which the candidates used to generate paths of logic for people to follow as they understand or make sense out of the socio-political landscape. The utility and validity of these political FoRs can be assessed with respect to previous work on ideology, both partisan and cultural (§1.4), by demonstrating some of the rhetorical means which the candidates used to justify their positions throughout the campaign.

1.2 Communities of Practice and Alignment

Rather than viewing political parties and their ideologies as a top down identity category that people simply take on by claiming a party affiliation, it is important to recognize that politics and ideology are enacted by individual people who gather into
groups in order to make improvements in the nation, as Denzau and North pointed out. A model which can help capture this individual and group dynamic at the broad level of party membership is Wenger’s (1998) Communities of Alignment (CoA)–a variant community type to that of the Community of Practice (CoP) pioneered by Lave and Wenger (Lave 1991; Lave and Wenger 1991; Wenger 1998), and brought into sociolinguistic research by Eckert (1999; see also Eckert and Wenger 2005).

A CoP is a group of individuals who frequently engage in being and doing together, and who negotiate a series of practices and symbols to identify who they are as a community and distinguish themselves from other groups of individuals or communities (Eckert 1999; Wenger 1998). CoPs require mutual engagement, joint enterprise, and a shared repertoire of signs and symbols (Wenger 1998:73). These three criteria define the community part of “community of practice”. In Wenger’s words these three dimensions are “the relation by which practice is the source of coherence of a community” (p. 73); that is, the community members are interrelated with one another through their engagement, activity, and repertoire. Practice is defined as “doing in a historical and social context that gives structure and meaning to what we do. In this sense, practice is always social practice” (p. 47). Wenger develops the combination of these two definitions throughout his text to engender a concept that is highly localized, wherein members must often be co-present and engaging in practice together. For example, engaging in certain activities on and off campus, dressing a certain way, and speaking a certain way, over time, became known to the students at Belten High as a way of being a jock as opposed to a burnout or someone in between (Eckert 1999). This shared repertoire of symbols and practices is what brings people together as a CoP.

While Wenger (1998) and Eckert (1999) were both explicit in the locally bounded
nature of CoPs, Wenger also described other modes of belonging to social groups that extend beyond a local environment, including communities of imagination and alignment. People are not always co-present and practicing with the communities they identify with. Alignment as a mode of community-belonging does not require mutual engagement and allows members to create communities that span time and space in ways practice, which requires constant mutual engagement, cannot. Within a CoA, the members’ energies, actions, and even practices when present are coordinated on a large scale. Wenger (1998:178-81) points to the example of the insurance company he studied, Alinsu, defining it as a CoA. Structurally, not all of Alinsu’s members were co-present in space and time and multiple types of practice were engaged in; and yet a single, corporate entity could be pointed to. Each of Alinsu’s departments were CoPs, linked as they were by their mutually engaged departmental practices, e.g. the claims processors he studied in depth were a CoP due to their practice of processing claims. The abstract corporate entity, Alinsu, was a CoA because it was a coordinated effort of multiple CoPs—the claims processors, the accounting department, and so on—all working in concert to a unified goal, that is, a joint enterprise.

A CoA directs its energies to a shared purpose or goal, which is a form of joint enterprise. But, the members do not necessarily have to be together and engaged in joint practice for this goal to be met. They also share a repertoire of symbols which group them together as a community as distinct from other communities. Their alignment comes through their shared attention to a common purpose; their community comes about through this shared goal coupled with their shared symbols. These symbols of group membership are negotiated between members, and in relation to outside communities, though not necessarily through a relation of complete contrast.

With respect to the election, the candidates, as members of CoAs, were actively
engaged in (re)defining the identity of their parties, who they are and what their joint enterprise will be for the next four years. The political parties have staked out differences in policy positions, as well as different symbols like color and animals: red and elephants for Republicans, blue and donkeys for Democrats. There are even lexical differences between the parties in certain respects as the Republicans claim to be “pro-life” while the Democrats claim to be “pro-choice”. Both stake out opposite positions of a single issue, but make use of different lexical items to do so. And neither camp would likely be willing to take on the connotations of the other, so as to not submit to the opposing side’s perspective. That is, the pro-choice camp would be hard pressed to accept “anti-life” or even “pro-death” as their group label with the attendant connotations they would bring upon their movement. Similarly, the pro-life camp would be unwilling to label themselves as “anti-choice” or “anti-women’s rights”.

In the terms of this dissertation, being a member of a political party, e.g. to align or identify as Republican or to even vote for Republican candidates, is more than just calling yourself a Republican. A person has to share in the goals of the party as negotiated between the base and the leaders, in particular the presidential nominee, as well as the shared repertoire of signs and symbols. The legitimacy of group membership in a political party is heavily policed, both by in-group members as well as outsiders. For example, Republican party members at times use the pejorative “RINO” (Republican In Name Only) to attack other members who are perceived as not aligning fully with the party. Group members perceived as RINOs may call themselves Republicans, however they may not talk like members (violating shared repertoire), which may indicate that the goals they will follow through on may be insufficient or out of bounds in a way (violating joint enterprise).
At times Sanders, an avowed Democratic Socialist who has historically caucused with the Democratic Party as an Independent, has questioned how Democratic or progressive Clinton’s and even Obama’s ideological positions were. Given Sanders’ critiques, it is perhaps unsurprising that his candidacy was viewed as problematic by some Democrats over the course of the election. Much in the same vein, Trump and his candidacy were similarly problematized by Republicans. Even though these two candidates are in certain respects atypical party members, and despite their similarities in populism (Brewer 2016; Mather and Jefferson 2016; Schoor 2017), it may seem odd that I focus special attention on Trump while leaving Sanders subsumed within the Democratic CoA. However, Trump’s candidacy and election provided a unique opportunity to refine or validate the model in real time as it was possible to demonstrate how his FoR was a subframe if you will, modifying or simplifying the complexities of the Republican’s FoR. And given the size of the Republican field, there was ample data to derive an analysis on the Republican side even without Trump. For the Democrats however, the field narrowed to Sanders and Clinton quite early and giving special attention to Sanders would have splintered the data sample in half, providing in essence an individualized accounting of Clinton’s and Sanders’ idiolects and ideological worldviews, and would have made comparisons with the Republican party as a whole less tenable or informative. Future work should look to a larger sample of Democrats to confirm the findings here.

1.3 Cognitive Linguistics

In this section, I describe how cognitive linguistics approaches language, cognition, the individual, and the social, and how these interact with one another. Concepts are unique to individuals and independent of words (Evans and Green 2006; Lakoff
Words are shared between people and depend on the concepts they index or point to. Language reflects the concepts speakers are assumed to share between one another. Words are agreed upon by a community of speakers to designate an approximation of the concept that everyone is willing to ascribe to as more or less shared. The link between word and concept happens at the individual level while being overlaid with the shared nature of words. This social level of word-concept linkage is one aspect of what is generally thought of as “the definition” or “the meaning” of a word. As an example, I conceive of ECONOMY in a way unique to myself, an aggregate of all of my experiences of economy both as a word I hear and use, and as a human living within a system of other humans. I have learned over time that this concept I have is called “economy”. However, my ECONOMY differs from another speaker’s ECONOMY, but the only way we can talk about it together is the imperfect medium of the word “economy”. Over time, communities of speakers have tacitly negotiated the meaning of the word “economy” to approximate a schematic concept of ECONOMY—e.g. some as a free market system, others as a democratically socialist managed system—that they all could agree should be so named.

This negotiation of “meaning” is a natural part of being human and part of a community, and so is never settled for three reasons. Firstly, each individual’s concepts of the world are always changing. Secondly, the community itself is ever changing. Thus, as both the concept and the community that needs to share a means to discuss the concept are changeable, the “meaning” of a word is always in flux. Thirdly, our conceptual system is complex to a point, but even it cannot handle the complexity of the world in its every detail. The world around us and our conceptualization of it is a continuous stream of sensation and thought. Saussure (1972:111-116) notes how
language breaks up this continuous stream, segmenting our conceptualization into discrete, manageable chunks. In a sense, language digitizes the continuous analog signal of conceptualization. In order to more finely approximate the analog in language, other conceptual abilities such as metaphor (§1.3.1) are used. And, as I argue in this dissertation, these other conceptual abilities can be deployed differentially based on membership in a political party and acceptance of its ideological outlook.

Nowhere should this negotiation of meaning be more prevalent or important than in the election of leaders who are granted the power to effect change in the world on our behalf. These changes have the power to alter our conceptualizations of the world and thus the words used to describe it. This is not to say that every single word comes under fire in every election, but major concepts are addressed, and how we as citizens should relate to them. Candidates sold the electorate numerous policy positions, which were blueprints for changing the world and how we interact with one another. These changes which the candidates stood for, and hoped to enact through law, would necessarily change how we interact in the world, thus how we conceive of it, and therefore how we talk about it. The sale of these potential changes occurred through the words the candidates used, encouraging the electorate to buy into their concepts such that a majority would vote them into office.

Analyzing the words of the various candidates using the theories and methods of cognitive linguistics allows us to get a glimpse, however imperfect, of what their conceptualization of e.g. AMERICA, AMERICAN, and ECONOMY are. The citizens of this country also have a notion of what it means to be American and how and why our government works the way it does. This conceptual space has multiple facets and divisions based on: the various policies the government can enact, on our sense of uniqueness of place in the world, on our common history as a group of people, on our
shared spirit as Americans, and so on. While the policy positions we can vote on are often boiled down into one of two choices, e.g. pro- or anti-abortion, how we choose to talk about them reflects and colors the conceptual space into various shades.

“Pro-life” and “pro-choice” do not mean the same thing as “anti-abortion” or “pro-abortion” respectively. If they did, people would use those terms instead. Rather, people have chosen to come to an understanding of abortion in different ways, focusing differentially on the rights of an unborn child to life, or on the mother and her rights to plan her future. Even these two approximations I offer are not the only possibilities, nor do they fully sketch out the entirety of the understanding that a person who ascribes to one viewpoint actually holds. The words we use leave so much left unsaid (Langacker 2008). They gloss over a multitude of possibilities which must be filled in to come to a reasonable understanding of what a person means when they use a word, e.g. “pro-life”. In the realm of politics, I argue, political ideology is one such force that helps fill in these gaps. The political and ideological landscape in America has, over time, been subsumed under two broad communities, the Republican and the Democratic Party, lending two predominant ways to perceive, understand and make sense of the American socio-political landscape.

In the remainder of this section I present two areas of linguistics which structure my analysis of the political rhetoric of the 2016 election. First, I turn to the concepts of framing and conceptual metaphor to describe how we abstract over recurrent lived experiences to create different ways of thinking and talking about the world. Then I turn to the Frames of Reference themselves, using insights from how we talk about and understand physical space and landscapes as an analogy for how we construct ideological worldviews, offer paths of logic for people to follow, and make sense out of the socio-political landscape. Intimately tied into our spatial reasoning is the
Figure-Ground relation, where certain features act as landmarks or Grounds which can be used to generate search domains to locate another object or Figure. Due to the intersectional nature of language, the lexical and conceptual, it is important to realize that though I present these frameworks as somewhat discrete from one another, they are naturally linked together.

1.3.1 Framing and Conceptual Metaphor Theory

Research in cognitive science and cognitive linguistics has consistently shown that we abstract over repeated instances of particular experiences in order to generate schematic representations of what to expect in a given routine day-to-day experience by specifying the generic roles, responsibilities and interactions that occur, as well as the possible perspectives we can take on those experiences (e.g. Evans and Green 2006). One particular strand of research describes such schematic representations and their linguistic manifestations as a frame (Fillmore 1977a, 1977b, 1982). Frames reflect the organization and structure of the background knowledge and assumptions people have and make about how and why the world works the way it does, based on those repeated patterns observed in the world. Frames also organize the linguistic means useable to give voice to that knowledge; and speaking about a situation in certain ways reinforces the background knowledge it is based upon to begin with.

In order for a candidate to sound unique as an individual, yet appropriately partisan their messages have to conform to party expectations of what constitutes appropriate background knowledge and assumptions about the problems occurring in America. In politics this type of background knowledge is known as an ideology or ideological worldview. A system of frames that can describe partisan rhetoric has to account for both the ideological worldview and the linguistic regularities within and
differences across the candidates and parties. Sometimes the relation is overt, where the word and background knowledge are near identical such as the terms “pro-life” and “pro-choice” with respect to the issue of abortion. Other times the relation comes in under the horizon of consciousness or observation (Fauconnier and Turner 2002; Turner 2001), where the link between the overt lexical and background conceptual are less readily perceptible. This may be particularly true with some of the argumentation strategies I discuss such as decontestation (§1.4) where people using them might not be aware that the strategy is reflective of and reinforces their ideological worldview.

Frames are not simply a static laundry list of ideas and words; rather, they are a dynamic conceptual tool that can be used to prompt perspectives on a given situation and inferences on how to react appropriately. By abstracting over repeated instances of something as every day as the buying and selling of goods, we have generated a schematic outline of expectations and understandings of how such situations will unfold. Coupled with the appropriate lexical items to describe these situations we get what Fillmore called the commercial event frame.

Frames work by overlaying or mapping these durable memory structures of expectations and linguistic items onto transitory moments of interaction or discussion. As we go about a particular activity we compare what is going on with our background knowledges in order to find a fit with previous patterns of experience; if some of these experiences trigger conceptual routines related to buying or selling, we can then access the whole commercial event frame. These comparisons and connections are called mapping; once we have made an initial connection, we can continue mapping out the other aspects and begin building up our expectations of what should happen next. The same process occurs in politics where we have generated whole series of frames,
just at the slightly more abstract level of e.g. policy issues.

One such political issue frame is the drug issue frame, which encapsulates the background knowledge and numerous linguistic resources we have to discuss drug users, drug use, buying drugs, treatment options etc., but note how we do not always talk about the drug problem in America through these informative or purely descriptive terms. Oftentimes we use a conceptual metaphor, which is another avenue of research in cognitive linguistics which examines the link between cognition and language (Johnson and Lakoff 2002; Lakoff and Johnson 1980, 1999; Lakoff and Turner 1989; Langacker 2008; Lizardo 2012; Ortony 1993), one which has been fruitfully applied to political rhetoric (Bar-Lev 2007; Díaz-Peralta 2018; Frayssé 2014; Hernández 2013; Johansen 2007; Lakoff 1995, 2002, 2004; Massengill 2008; Musolff 2006). By applying another often more basic frame of experience or source domain, we can help fill in the more schematic or abstract frame, called a target domain, mapping elements from the source onto the target to provoke both a particular perspective on a situation as well as inferences and expectations about how to deal with it. The cross-domain mappings between source and target domains are necessarily partial, because both domains often lack identical structures which would allow for one hundred percent congruence.

For example, we can readily use the commercial event frame as a source domain to describe some of the drug problem in terms of sales, but for other aspects we have to use different domains, in particular those types of domains which can help us understand how to solve or take care of problems generally. One common conceptual metaphor for the drug problem is known as the “war on drugs” which structures our expectations and inferences with respect to ideas of combat or interdiction; while another more recent metaphor is the “opioid epidemic” which calls up a medical source
domain. Just as in the more basic commercial event frame, where certain sequences of mappings with respect to customer and proper types of treatment can generate expectations along the lines of “the customer is always right” so too do these two metaphors, setting up a series of mappings that lead to certain expectations of how to treat drug users, either being met by cops with guns, or being saved by cops using Naloxone or Narcan. The mappings that lead to these expectations are DRUG USER as an ENEMY COMBATANT or a PATIENT respectively. By mapping these different forms of background knowledge onto various issues we can see how metaphor and framing can prompt or are indicative of different perspectives and inferences being taken about what is or should be going on in the world.

Many conceptual metaphor theorists posit that the directionality from source to target is unidirectional and invariant (e.g. Kövecses 2010; Lakoff and Johnson 1980, 1999; Lakoff and Turner 1989), while others argue that outside of certain root or primary metaphors (Grady 1997) the directionality might be less strict (Egaña 2016; Goschler 2005); or rather, what is being understood as an abstract target and a more concrete source can be reversed, offering different and distinct mappings, entailments, and inferences. Through PEOPLE ARE MACHINES we can talk about someone “running out of gas” or “not firing on all cylinders”, while through another metaphor MACHINES ARE PEOPLE we can talk about a “stubborn” computer “hating” its user (adapted from Grady 1997:56, 221). In the former, we map notions of a machine’s function

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1 The usual formulation of conceptual metaphors is TARGET IS SOURCE, where the abstract target idea or domain is understood through a more basic, concrete, and tangible source domain. These two metaphors can be phrased ADDRESSING DRUG USE IS WAGING WAR and ADDRESSING DRUG USE IS TREATING AN ILLNESS respectively (modified from MetaNet Metaphor Wiki 2018d and MetaNet Metaphor Wiki 2018c).
on to people; in the latter we map human characteristics onto machines. This bi-
directionality or reversibility of target and source domains is especially salient in
something as complex as politics, particularly with less than concrete domains such
as PEOPLE and MACHINES, both of which can act as source or target domains in
numerous other metaphors. Depending on the needs of a given argument, candidates
can use a domain as a source or target to alter a conceptual metaphor in use in order
to offer different entailments, or as a means to link together several metaphors across
a series of domains into metaphor chains (Kövecses 2010; Lakoff and Turner 1989)
(§3.4.1).

The choice of conceptual metaphors, cross-domain mappings, entailments, and
inferences to invoke permits candidates to highlight and erase various aspects of a
given issue under discussion, obscuring elements that would be problematic for a
given ideological understanding of an issue or accentuating those elements which cast
a favorable light. Within these potential differences, a candidate is able to tweak a
given metaphor to prompt voters to take a different perspective on the given issue
being discussed and to follow a different path of logic to assess the merits of the
ideological position on offer.

Given the multiple possible metaphors and framings for all of the issues, describing
how a candidate sounds unique as an individual is relatively straightforward. As I will
demonstrate however, a candidate’s choices are not entirely free, being constrained
by the political FoR that their party prefers (Ch. 3 in particular). To capture the
consistency of expectations both in terms of policy and in terms of member or voter
reception, where they can say something like “he’s just saying the same thing as all
the other party members”, we need something like a master frame that can identify
and describe those coherent party lines of thought or ideological worldviews which
guide the candidates in using their particular partisan framings.

Because ideologies help guide our understanding and expectations about our world or social environment in an abstract sense, as a target domain if you will, I looked toward research in spatial cognition, which explains how we understand and make predictions about our world in the concrete physical sense, as a source domain, in order to find a model that could help structure how to analyze these similarities and differences in thought and speech occurring within and across party lines. The linguistic model of spatial Frames of Reference seemed particularly suited as an analogical tool for two reasons. Firstly, it describes different linguistic systems for talking about the world consistently and efficiently, which maps quite nicely onto political rhetoric, helping identify and describe the partisan differences in linguistic patterns. Secondly, it describes conceptual differences that structure and organize how and why those different ways of talking exist, which maps nicely onto the different background knowledge and assumptions or ideological worldviews of political parties and makes it possible to identify and describe their different natures. The choice was also cognitively valid in a way, since using spatial reasoning to talk about different possible understandings of a situation goes beyond the political as well, when I can say something along the lines of “let me explain where I am coming from here” as a means to transition into an explanation for my reasoning.

1.3.2 Spatial Frames of Reference

The hypothesis underlying cognitive linguistics is that our cognition may be influenced by or covary with the language we speak. Consistent with research in cognitive linguistics (Evans and Green 2006; Lakoff 1987; Lakoff and Johnson 1980, 1989; Langacker 2008), Levinson (2003) analyzed one particular link between language and
cognition, our understanding of space, and demonstrated the influence that linguistic coding of space had on various non-linguistic tasks that required spatial reasoning such as map drawing, dyadic picture description tasks, and wayfinding. Levinson described three main spatial FoRs—clusters of systematic semantic parameters which speakers use to locate or position objects in physical space. These spatial FoRs are a shared repertoire of semantic parameters, words like “north”, “front”, or “left” which name an immediate context or search domain in which a speaker is locating or positioning objects with respect to other objects. Reporting on a series of carefully designed experiments related to spatial reasoning, Levinson demonstrated the impact that a language community’s preferred FoR had on how the speakers performed the tasks.

Spatial FoRs afford community members a level of systematicity in their description of physical space, giving speakers semantic parameters which point out search domains so that listeners may find objects or correct paths through a space quickly and efficiently. In much the same way, political parties and candidates need some systematic means to describe the social or political landscape as they understand it, to offer their “mental models ... that provide both an interpretation of the environment and a prescription as to how that environment should be structured” (Denzau and North 1994:4) quickly, so voters can properly assess how and why the offered policies will impact the socio-political landscape. An individual candidate needs a level of systematicity in order to sound consistent about their policy positions, lest they be accused of flip-flopping or changing their position, and also so that their entire policy agenda appears in some way coherent, executable, and desirable to voters. The political parties need a level of systematicity for the same reasons, so that their brand of ideological interpretations and policy prescriptions unite public officials and
voters across the country, articulating a plan on how to improve the nation as a whole across all levels of government. Politicians, then, need a political FoR to help hold their ideas and ideologies steady across elections and across the nation.

I use the term FoR analogically, importing many of the features of Levinson’s (2003) model and applying it to political rhetoric. Indeed, numerous terms I have used up to this point carry with them that sense of space: worldview, social landscape, socio-political landscape, follow paths of logic, position, stance, viewpoint, and so on.

In spatial FoRs, speakers locate or position objects in the complex web that is physical space, describing where things are or how to get to a particular location in the physical world. Per Levinson, there are three spatial FoRs attested in the worlds’ languages: Absolute, Intrinsic, and Relative:

Absolute FoR: Fixed bearings are used, whether the cardinal directions, features of the landscape, directions of meteorological phenomena, or celestial bodies, which “encompass” or “permeate ... the environment” (Talmy 2000:203-4)—“the ball is north of the house”. An Absolute description is viewpoint independent, remaining constant no matter where the speaker stands nor how the two objects themselves are faced with respect to one another because the reference points impose that sense of directionality onto the scene externally to the objects subject to it.

Intrinsic FoR: The search domain is projected from some facet or plane of an object, labeled via a conventional understanding of the object where e.g. the side of a house with the usual point of entry is named “front”—“the ball is in front of the house”. An Intrinsic description is also viewpoint independent, being the same no matter where the speaker chooses to stand. Unlike an Absolute FoR, the sense of directionality does not
permeate or encompass the scene, rather the orientation between the objects must remain constant such that the functionally understood “front” of the house must face the ball in order for the description to be valid.

Relative FoR: As a derivative or extension of the Intrinsic FoR (Levinson 2003:107-8), semantic parameters such as “front” are used, but linked to the viewer’s own perspective. The viewer’s own bodily planes are used to project the search domain, where certain facets of other objects acquire names contingently with respect to how the viewer is oriented to them; “the ball is to the left of the house” means search in the plane projected from the house which is understood as left from the speaker’s vantage point. Unlike the other two FoRs, the Relative is viewpoint dependent, where the facets projecting search domains acquire different names as the speaker moves around the scene.

While the Intrinsic shares certain features with the Absolute and Relative spatial frames, there is evidence that Relative frames derive from Intrinsic frames over time due in part to an often shared inventory of lexical items like “front” and the non-permeating style reference points they invoke. Given these reasons as well as our two dominant parties and their ideological worldviews, and the fact that mappings from source to target domains are selective or partial, it seemed prudent to subsume the Intrinsic and Relative spatial frames under an overarching label–Conjoint–to reflect this combining. This decision relates to the issue of analytical clarity as well; should future work demonstrate a need for all three frames, all of the original labels are still available, and my work should not create a terminological tangle.

In political rhetoric, a candidate locates or positions two things: themself and their candidacy within the political landscape of American politics—who is the most
centrist or furthest left or right; and their ideas within the complex web of rhetorical, semantic, or ideological space. In each of these positionings, candidates describe the search domains where voters may locate the validity of the ideological interpretations and policy prescriptions being presented and from that vantage point to assess the presented ideas as charting a better path forward for the nation than those presented by other candidates.

When describing their position on an issue, candidates may refer to various supposedly shared cultural understandings of what should define the north, south, east, and west of America’s social, political, and economic landscape, including specific interpretations of *The Constitution* and Christian moral imperatives, as well as ideas of American Exceptionalism and the nature of the economy among others. These social constructs serve as fixed bearings for an Absolute political FoR which generate ideological spaces or search domains in which voters can locate a candidate’s position on a given issue. Candidates who use a Conjoint political FoR generate ideological spaces by invoking the perspectives that people take on our shared political or social context, situating their position with respect to people’s lived experiences, and how their own and others’ lives have been impacted by the issues being discussed. Voters can locate a candidate’s understanding on an issue, assessing its validity and merit, by searching through the shared experiences being described by the candidate rather than by referring to externally imposed fixed bearings. This shared experience and sharing of perspectives reflects an additional reason for the Conjoint label, the idea that understandings of the social world are centered between people rather than having to look outward toward cultural constructs.
Figure-Ground

One aspect of cognition that is particularly relevant to our understanding and use of space is the Figure-Ground distinction (Evans and Green 2006; Langacker 2008; Levinson 2003; Talmy 2000). In a spatial scene, the Figure is the object being located and the Ground is another object which acts as a landmark or reference point to generate the search domain in which the Figure can be found. In Levinson’s discussion of spatial FoRs, the reference points are semantic parameters which speakers use to project search domains from a Ground, whether the speakers themselves or other objects, in order to locate a Figure; the difference between the spatial FoRs lies in how these reference points generate search domains, not in some quality of the Ground itself. That is, the spatial FoRs are a series of semantic parameters which define coordinate systems that can be overlaid on any object in order to generate a search domain wherein a particular Figure can be located. The distinction of particular import between the Absolute and Relative spatial FoRs is that the Absolute reference points are independent of every speaker’s unique perspective; to use Talmy’s (2000:203-204) term, they are “encompass[ing]”, where their “forms of directionality permeate–can be referred to throughout–the environment”. A fixed bearing reference point serves as a form of Ground in a way, pointing out the exact same search domain for everyone everywhere at every moment. In a Relative spatial FoR, the reference points and search domains they generate are contingent on a unique personal perspective; the search domains projected from a Ground are not as consistently labeled between speakers due to their particular vantage they take on a given spatial scene.

With respect to political FoRs, the reference points are semantic parameters used by people, whether candidates or voters, to locate their understanding of ideological interpretations and policy prescriptions within the ideological space of American poli-
tics, and these reference points are of two different natures. In the Absolute FoR, supposedly shared social constructs serve as fixed bearings that overlay and permeate the socio-political landscape, which individuals are enmeshed within and therefore must orient toward in order to locate an understanding of a particular ideological interpretation or policy prescription. Throughout this dissertation, I will demonstrate the discursive means by which the Republican candidates generated these shared social constructs, through processes such as decontextualization, reification, categorization, and one I label rhetorical erasure (§4.4).

Whether Trump’s policy positions went against the Republican grain or not, he was able to argue for them in a way that did not violate the general Republican preference for fixed bearings that everyone should accept as given, by constraining the possible perspectives on issues to those that would naturally lead to our assured victory and avoid our current defeat. While other Republicans had to rank or array the various Absolutes in just the right way to create or describe a proper understanding of what is going on in America, Trump’s northern star of victory and its polar opposite of defeat reduced the complexity or dimensions of policy issues down to two options, both of which could be deployed strategically to offer the right winning message at the right time.

In the Conjoint FoR, candidates locate their ideological interpretations and policy prescriptions within search domains projected from their own or other peoples’ perspectives on our shared social and political context. The Democratic candidates’ uses of people’s unique perspectives is less encompassing and more localized, being contextually bound to a given policy and its potential affects on people, permitting contestation and examination of how we construct the society we experience and how, through our actions, we impact the lived experiences of other people.
1.4 Ideology and political Frames of Reference

Having laid out the major theoretical strands relevant to this dissertation, I now synthesize them into a coherent analytical model of political FoRs which can be used to describe the linguistic differences between the candidates from both parties during the 2016 presidential election. Returning to the initial definition of ideology is beneficial: “[I]deologies are the shared framework of mental models that groups of individuals possess that provide both an interpretation of the environment and a prescription as to how that environment should be structured” (Denzau and North 1994:4). Ideologies, then, are a shared repertoire of various forms of social capital, whether lexical, conceptual, rhetorical, metaphorical, and so on, debated between and across groups of people as they come together into joint enterprise to make changes in the socio-political landscape. One aspect of these mental models that can account for some of the linguistic differences between political parties is a FoR, a series of semantic parameters which party members use to come to a shared understanding of how the world works and how people can and should orient their understanding to that worldview. The two political FoRs examined in this dissertation are the Absolute of the Republican CoA, organized by a series of fixed bearings that permeate the socio-political landscape, and the Conjoint of the Democratic CoA, structured by the unique viewpoints people can take on the socio-political landscape itself. As I will demonstrate, Trump’s use of the mutually entailing reference points of victory and defeat is more Absolute in character, coming preloaded with social meanings and value judgements and also offering rather limited or monotonic perspectives—winning and strength are viewed positively while losing or weakness are viewed negatively (Tännsjö 1998).

While Denzau and North’s definition is excellent to describe what an ideology is
as an analytical concept, a more targeted understanding of what specific ideologies look like is also necessary. Given that ideologies do not simply spring up of their own accord but are enacted by people going about their lives, a moment of reflection on previous works with respect to ideology is in order: political ideologies in particular, and American political ideologies specifically.

Freeden’s (1996) work on political ideology, describing the historical roots of the structural differences between conservative and liberal ideologies, serves as the basis of my use of “ideology”. As Freeden noted, the distinction between ideologies that can be considered liberal is vast; for the purposes of this dissertation, however, the distinction rests between the conservative worldview generated by the Republican party and candidates and the liberal worldview generated by the Democratic party and candidates, whether they would claim to be liberal, progressive, democratic, or be labeled as socialist, communist, or Marxist.

While not a cognitive linguistic analysis per se, Freeden closely examines the root ideas or conceptualizations which differentiate conservative and liberal ideologies as he analyzed the way philosophers, political theorists, and politicians spoke about political matters. Freeden offered a morphological analysis of ideologies, describing specific “configurations of political concepts” and noting that the contestability of these concepts creates the “flexibility out of which ideological families and their sub-variants are constructed” (p. 4). Here we can see some initial traces of the link to my analysis as members of the two dominant CoAs in American politics debate internally and across party lines about political concepts like what makes the economy work the way it does and how immigration should be understood and handled, while also arguing for how their ideas better help structure and make sense of the socio-political landscape.
Freeden offered three core components which structure conservative ideology, of which the first two are relevant for this dissertation: a concern for “organic change” which should not be “artificial, [or] humanly devised ... [lest it] carr[y] with it the prospect of potential entropy” (p. 333); “a belief in the extra-human origins of the social order, i.e. as independent of human will” (p. 334); and “its mirror-image characteristic” which “develop[s] substantive antitheses to progressive core concepts” but only as a means to defend the other two core concepts (p. 336; italics in the original). These may not seem like the political concepts one would expect, e.g. liberty or constrained government power, where the meaning of liberty and its application to society can be debated between candidates as they offer who understands best how to keep government in check. But, this is a remarkable insight about some of the overarching conceptual structure which governs the entire ideological worldview which conservatives argue for. This preferred nature of change and ordering of the socio-political landscape as extra-human implicate an ideological worldview that is not human centered, one with Absolute fixed bearings which delimit the “standards of behaviors” (Lakoff 2002:Ch. 5) and assessments which Americans should accept as how the world works, and which therefore can help individuals make sense out of the socio-political landscape’s layout and figure out how to orient themselves and others properly therein.

In his discussion of the structure of liberal ideology on the other hand, Freeden offered what most people would readily understand as political concepts acting as core components: “liberty, individuality, progress, rationality, the general interest, sociability, and constraints on power” (1996:176). While I do not dispute his analysis, his later “comment on the liberal core” provides, in my opinion, a better counterpoint to the nature of the conservative core, and perhaps strikes truer to the core of liberal
ideology as analyzed in this dissertation:

What has been termed liberalism’s self-critical spirit is morphologically corroborated by the conscious readiness of liberals to entertain multiple rearrangements of their [political concepts] to a far greater extent than would non-liberal ideologists. Scepticism, non-dogmatism, or tolerance are thus translated into a disposition for conceptual reconfiguration.... [Which] encourage[s] synchronic conceptual flexibility.... [and] the passive diachronic flexibility of the liberal tradition whose features encourage unintended conceptual change over time.” (p. 177; brackets mine)

Rather than assuming that their ideological system should be structured by supposedly shared beliefs acting as extra-human origins of the social order, liberals seem willing to actively change their ideological system over time by reflecting on the issues of the day and their historical antecedents. In this regard, liberal ideology does not abstract away from direct human experience, being ready, willing, and able to adapt based on what is going on in the socio-political landscape, on how people are experiencing their day-to-day lives, and on what perspectives people are taking on their lives and on the “known instances of commonplace behaviours” (p. 101) and assessments they and other people engage in. This constant rechecking of the socio-political landscape implicates an ideological worldview that is grounded in a Conjoint FoR, taking people’s lived experiences as the means to make sense of how the world works through their interactions with one another.

In his description of American political ideologies through the metaphor Nation is a Family, Lakoff (2002) captured this liberal tendency to examine what is happening in the day-to-day experiences of people as they go about their lives with the notion of empathy. While his use of empathy seems to bring with it that sense of sharing
feelings about a situation, what is relevant for this dissertation is the root conceptual mechanism or routine which permits such empathy in the first place: the ability to put one’s self in another person’s shoes, whether one chooses to share the other’s feelings or not. That is, our ability to empathize is based on our ability to take another person’s perspective or viewpoint, to see the world and their experience of it through another’s eyes. This basic ability to share perspectives is at the heart of a Conjoint FoR. This is the first piece of evidence that demonstrates the link between a political FoR and the manner in which its preferred reference points or Grounds can influence the types of metaphors or conceptual processes a candidate may make use of.

In Lakoff’s NATION IS FAMILY, liberal ideology is described as a NURTURANT PARENT, highlighting issues of empathy, care for one’s self and others, and a mutual responsibility to one another if society is to function properly. All of these features or mappings point toward a Conjoint orientation toward, or understanding of the socio-political landscape, making reference to people and how they interact with one another and the commonplace behaviors that they engage in, and the viewpoints they take or assessments they make as to the appropriacy or inappropriacy of those actions. Conservative ideology is described as a STRICT FATHER, highlighting “natural, strict, uniform, unchanging standards of behavior that must be followed if society is to function” (2002:90) at all. These features point to an Absolute orientation toward, or understanding of the socio-political landscape, making reference to supposedly natural, extra-human standards of behavior which people must share, observe, and accept as givens if they are to properly assess how society functions and the propriety of actions taken within it.

An election is a process whereby candidates gather together and offer arguments
as to how best to understand and fix the problems facing the nation. Through their speeches and debates, candidates engage in a contest over these ideas through various rhetorical tactics. Freeden (1996) described this process as a contestation of political concepts with the inevitable end point of trying to decontest one’s ideological viewpoint as the only possible way a political concept should be understood. Within the data of this particular election, the endpoint of the process of decontestation was realized more by the Republican candidates (§2.3). Given the need of an Absolute FoR to have clear and Absolute fixed bearings, this need to decontest one’s ideology seems yet another reflex that can be attributed to an FoR impacting the rhetorical choices candidates make, and provides further evidence that the Republican CoA uses an Absolute FoR in generating their ideological worldview. The process of contestation itself, as rendering discussable or “entertaining multiple rearrangements of ... [political concepts]” (p. 177), seems more in line with a Conjoint FoR that makes use of different perspectives which people take; as such I reserve the term discussable for the Democratic candidates when necessary. To be clear, both sides render political concepts as discussable to a point, but the Republican candidates often went a step further and decontested their ideological viewpoints to justify their policy prescriptions; for analytical clarity, I make a distinction between these two processes when such issues are at stake (see Ch. 4 in particular).

This process of decontesting a political concept to a singular way of understanding a particular political issue and of viewing the socio-political landscape is tied up with the notion of opinion, whether heterodox or orthodox within a given society, and doxa, defined as an understanding of the principles which organize the social world as being self-evident or natural (Bourdieu 1977:164). In the following section, I demonstrate the link between the rhetorical process of decontestation and doxa which results in
two other features of an Absolute FoR: reification—the process of reducing or flattening the complexity of a given series of events and interactions into an abstract, unitary conceptualization, and a rhetorical tactic I call rhetorical erasure.

### 1.4.1 Doxa and rhetorical erasure

There is an apparent contradiction or paradox in an Absolute political FoR with its belief in the “extra-human origins of the social order ... as independent of the human will” (Frieden 1996:334). Creating supposedly shared cultural constructs that permeate the socio-political landscape requires decontesting any possible counterargument, removing an opponent’s ideological worldview from the “universe of discourse (or argument)” or “opinion” by promoting one’s own within the “universe of the undisputed (undisputed)” or doxa (Bourdieu 1977:168). It is not enough to argue against a counterargument, because doing so would lend legitimacy that such a counterargument is possible to make. In Bourdieu’s (1977) terms, the fixed bearings of an Absolute FoR serve as a form of doxa, a commonsense understanding of the world “establish[ed as a] cosmological and political order [which] is perceived not as arbitrary, i.e. as one possible order among others, but as a self-evident and natural order which goes without saying and therefore goes unquestioned” (p. 166)—though with respect to political rhetoric I would alter the end to “therefore must go unquestioned”. The task then of politicians and people who see their social world through an Absolute political FoR is to argue that their ideological interpretations and policy prescriptions are above question; accomplishing this task requires removing any “possible order among others”. This decontestation is achieved, paradoxically, by a hyper-focus on “The Individual”. In a moment of self-reflection with respect to their field’s inquiry into the psychology of acculturative rhetoric, Bowskill and colleagues
(2007:795) worried that their analytical tradition

... focuses our attention firmly on the individual in a manner which threatens to remove responsibility for particular forms of multicultural relations from wider, collectively driven, sociopolitical forces. For example, locating the desire for integration or assimilation within the individual risks reifying the particular acculturation construct, while glossing over its social construction and functions within wider systems of meaning. The lack of concern with the way [research] participants orient to and engage in the functional construction of the acculturation process serves to remove variability from the equation. The possibility for contestation and reconfiguration is shut down in ways which risk glossing over the collective practices involved in morally privileging or denigrating particular acculturation ‘strategies’. (brackets mine)

What is a worry for researchers examining politically consequential topics is the *modus operandi* of political partisans who view the world through an Absolute political FoR. The fetishization of “The Individual”, by rhetorically locating policy issues through e.g. personal responsibility or picking oneself up by one’s bootstraps (Augoustinos and colleagues 2005; Lakoff 2002), serves to erase the socially constructed or contested nature of our lived experiences and thereby reify various social constructs. This “Individual” serves as an ideological construct, erased of any unique personal perspectives, motivations, or interactions, exemplifying how to properly orient one’s behaviors toward and understanding of the supposedly shared cultural constructs which act as fixed bearings in the Absolute FoR. Further, the focus on “The Individual’s” responsibility for adhering to the Absolute fixed bearings defocuses those partisans clamoring about “The Individual” to begin with, obscuring their self-nominated
power to define the Absolutes and make people “constantly dependent on [their] subjective judgement” “as the final authority that can ‘grant’” or deny (Antonsich 2012:73) confirmation that “The Individual” has performed appropriately.\(^2\)

Another means to create such shared cultural constructs is to condemn the obstruction of one’s preferred ideological interpretation or policy prescription. As Bowskill and colleagues noted “By condemning the obstruction of [a policy issue, it] itself becomes morally privileged, a state that should be facilitated rather than impeded” (2007:801; brackets mine). Rather than arguing for a given issue on its merits by rendering it discussable and contestable, such condemnation of obstruction only serves to doxically presuppose one’s ideological interpretation as the only valid way of understanding an issue. This rendering of issues as undiscussable, removing the possibility of “contestation and reconfiguration” (p. 795) takes place through a process of rhetorical erasure, metalinguistically erasing the possibility of discussion by rendering the topic out of bounds since the other side is not “us[ing the right] couple of words” (Trump Example 5.8; brackets mine) (see §4.4 and 5.4).

1.5 The corpus of data

The data for this dissertation are drawn from the candidacy announcements and debate performances of all twenty two candidates who ran for president in 2016, comprising approximately 515,000 words spoken (or written) by the candidates.\(^3\) Publicly available transcripts were collected and re-transcribed for accuracy and completeness, and to include hesitations, false starts, common shortenings such as “gonna” and

\(^2\)Throughout this dissertation the capitalized Individual will refer to a particular ideological construct being used by a candidate in their decontestations and reifications.

\(^3\)Webb (D) announced his candidacy in the form of a letter.
“wanna”, other vocalizations, interruptions, and a more natural rendering of prosodic contours rather than the more written style sentence breaks. The transcripts are rendered in a more accessible style for ease of reading. Transcription conventions are available in the front matter.

1.6 Structure of the dissertation

In the first three analytical chapters, I use data from the primary election, excluding Trump, in order to lay out the differences between the Republican and Democratic CoAs. Given the volume of data and the number of issues discussed it was necessary to restrict the analysis to those issues that both provided a maximum ideological distinction between the individual candidates and the two parties as a whole, and which also narrowed the possible linguistic terrain as the chapters went on to show how the candidates managed their uniqueness despite more limited options.

In Chapter 2 I describe in more detail the structure of the Absolute and Conjoint FoRs through a discussion of rights and rule of law. These two more abstract issues had the widest linguistic terrain, being less encumbered by routine conceptual metaphors, framings, or turns of phrase. This allowed me to map out the broader differences of how the candidates view the American political landscape and to sketch out some of the linguistic edges and boundaries separating the two parties, yet encompassing their respective candidates. The analysis includes a discussion of the nature of the two different types of Grounds which structure each FoR, the rhetorical tactics of decontestation and discussability, and the nature of the socio-political landscape as either a reified abstraction or a contextual, interdependent system. For the Absolute FoR, I introduce various fixed bearings: Christian Morality, Rule of Law, Original Meaning of The Constitution, the Glorious Past of the nation, Economic Supremacy
(see also Ch. 3), and American Exceptionalism, Ideal American, and Islamism (see also Ch. 4). For the Conjoint FoR, I demonstrate the use of unique perspectives as reference points by the Democratic candidates.

In a discussion of economic issues in Chapter 3, the linguistic terrain narrowed due to various routine conceptual metaphors such as ECONOMY IS A LIVING ORGANISM. Using insights from conceptual metaphor theory, I demonstrated the manner in which candidates from both parties make use of this same metaphor to talk about various aspects of the economy to include its nature, wages, and poverty. I also demonstrate how the choice in metaphors and cross-domain mappings are systematic and consistent with the preferred Grounds of each CoA, where other party specific metaphors were shown to reflect the same economic outlook that underlied each party’s preferred perspective on the LIVING ORGANISM metaphor.

In Chapter 4 I bring together the insights from the first two chapters in a discussion of international affairs including trade, immigration, and terrorism, and demonstrate more clearly the links between the FoRs, metaphors, and issues of doxa, decontestation, rhetorical erasure and discussability on the one hand, and reification and contextualization on the other. The salience of the more basic conceptual domain of SPACE offered a good proving ground for the decision to use spatial FoRs as an analogical tool. The discussion centers on how the candidates used SPACE in markedly different ways as they argued for their positions on international affairs, and how those differences percolated up into different uses of the NATION IS CONTAINER METAPHOR. I also introduce the COMPETITION source domain and its use by candidates from both parties, in particular the Republicans’ use of the idea of a “level playing field” in their discussion of international trade. This discussion also permits points of access and comparability to the discussion of Trump’s use of COMPETITION metaphors.
In the final analytical Chapter (Ch. 5) I expand the discussion of the competition source domain to capture Trump’s ideological worldview, one predicated on a more extreme understanding which I label decompetition (Shields and Brede- meier 2011). The uniqueness of Trump’s ideological worldview, differing sufficiently from the other Republican candidates, necessitated this description of his personal Decompetitive FoR which is structured by two pairs of mutually entailing Grounds, victory and defeat, and his frequent refereeing of what is fairly and unfairly going on in the world. Within these Grounds, Trump was able to argue that America should win at any and all costs, engaging in zero-sum thinking and activating a series of “folk” forms of knowledge (Swedberg 2018) about economics and trade (Rubin 2003), justice, immigration, and terrorism. To do justice to Trump’s candidacy, I make use of his data from both the primary and general election cycles, demonstrate his similarities and differences from the other Republican candidates, and offer counterpoints from Clinton’s presidential debate performances where applicable.

To conclude the dissertation (Ch. 6) I offer a discussion of the findings and offer avenues of future inquiry to either refine or expand upon the use of political FoRs in exploring the linguistic differences between the two parties.
Chapter 2

Frames of Reference: Rights and rule of law

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter I introduce the two political frames of reference (FoR) in detail through an analysis of how the Republican and Democratic candidates argued for their ideological worldviews as they discussed rights, the Supreme Court, same-sex marriage, and healthcare. As each candidate argued that they best appreciated what was going on in America and that their ideas would best help make things better, they described their understanding of the nature of the American socio-political landscape and how voters can best make sense of or understand it. In constructing their worldview, the candidates used various reference points as Grounds in order to contextualize their arguments, as starting points or baseline understandings from which voters can follow the candidates’ logic and against which voters could make determinations as to the arguments validity and appropriacy.

In §2.2 I describe the nature of the Grounds and how they differ between the two FoRs. The Republican Absolute FoR takes various supposedly shared social constructs as fixed bearings which permeate the socio-political landscape, acting as guideposts which Americans rely upon to navigate through their lives and come to understand how and why America works the way it does. The following Absolutes are discussed in this dissertation, though there may be more: Christian Morality, Rule of Law, Original Meaning of The Constitution, the Glorious Past of the nation, Economic
Supremacy, American Exceptionalism, and Islamism. The Democratic Conjoint FoR uses people’s unique perspectives of what is occurring in America as Grounds, in order to describe its layout and how and why America works the way it does because of the interactions between Americans.

In §2.3 I describe two different rhetorical strategies, which the nature of each FoR requires candidates to utilize, as they argue for their ideological worldviews. Due to the “extra-human” (Freeden 1996:334) nature of the Absolute fixed bearings which permeate an American’s understanding of the socio-political landscape, Republican candidates have to decontest their ideological worldview as the only right and proper way to make sense of America, lest people become misoriented or fail to understand how best to move America forward. Given the Conjoint FoR’s use of people’s unique perspectives as Grounds, the Democratic candidates understand that policy issues and ideological worldviews must necessarily be contested or rendered discussable so that the courses of action being offered can be assessed against one another and with respect to peoples’ lived experiences in order to determine which policies will work better in America.

In the final analytical section (§2.4) I bring the Grounds and rhetorical strategies together to describe the nature of the socio-political landscape as people can view it through their preferred FoR. There is an unavoidable paradox within an Absolute FoR (§1.4.1), namely 1) that there exist shared social beliefs serving as guideposts for people to properly orient their understandings of America and 2) which people have to accept as the only proper means to orient their understanding because those guideposts are what the socio-political landscape must be oriented with respect toward. To resolve this paradox, the Republican candidates decontest their preferred ideological worldview in order to reify their Absolutes as the “extra-human origins of the social
order” (Freeden 1996:334) which define and describe the nature of the American socio-political landscape and delimit the “standards of behavior” (Lakoff 2002:Ch. 5) which Americans should adhere to. The Conjoint FoR understands America as a shared Social Context, best perceived and understood through the interdependent interactions and “known instances of commonplace behavior” (Freeden 1996:101) which people engage in as they create the social systems they are enmeshed within.

2.2 Different ideological Grounds: Extra-human or personal

In this section I describe the nature of the semantic parameters or Grounds which can be used to generate search domains wherein voters can locate the validity and merit of the candidates’ ideological interpretations and policy prescriptions. The Republican candidates located their positions within shared social beliefs that should permeate American life, e.g. Christian Morality, as Absolute fixed bearings which provide guidance on what it means to “be an American” (Rubio Example 4.9), in the form of standards of behavior or of understanding. The Democratic candidates located their positions within the varied perspectives and lived experiences of people, justifying their policy ideas with respect to the everyday lives of Americans.

An Absolute political FoR overlays socially constructed ideals as invariant Grounds over the socio-political landscape, offering unerring guideposts toward which social actors should orient themselves and their actions. As a form of agreed upon morality or moral compass, these fixed bearings are useful to social actors in assessing what behaviors, motivations, and beliefs are appropriate. In the following example, Rubio demonstrated quite neatly the intertwining of our understanding of political concepts within our spatial reasoning (Finlayson 2007) when he noted that some Americans are feeling ... left behind and left out due to Obama’s chang[ing]/ America into a
different country. Further evidence for this connection between political and spatial understandings comes toward the end where Rubio claimed this election to be a turning point in our history and that his presidency would turn this country around from the backwards treatment it has received from Obama and would continue to receive from Clinton. For Rubio, these problematic perceptions can be traced to a misorientation of America from its proper alignment to various Absolutes: Christian Morality when he claimed our rights come from God, Economic Supremacy where we embraced free enterprise, and the Glorious Past of our country for the past two hundred years which we have to reclaim to prevent leaving a potentially diminished country to our children.

(2.1) Y’know, two hundred years ago America was founded on this powerful principle that our rights don’t come from government. Our rights come from God. That’s why we embraced free enterprise, and it made us the most prosperous people in the history of the world. That’s why we embraced individual liberty, and we became the freest people ever, and the result was the American miracle. But now as I travel the country people say what I feel. This country it’s changing. It feels different. We feel like we’re being left behind and left out. And the reason is simple, because in two thousand eight, we elected as president someone who wasn’t interested in fixing America. We elected someone as president who wants to change America. Who wants to make it more like the rest of the world. And so he undermines the Constitution, and he undermines free enterprise by expanding government, and he betrays our allies and cuts deals with our enemies and guts our military. And that’s why twenty sixteen is a turning point in our history. If we elect Hillary Clinton, the next four years will be worse than the last eight, and our children will be the first Americans ever to inherit a diminished country. But if we elect the right person, if you elect me, we will turn this country around we will reclaim the American dream. And this nation will be stronger and greater than it has ever been. (APPLAUSE)

(Rubio, GOP Debate 6)

The Absolute I label Christian Morality perhaps best demonstrates how these fixed bearings can serve as guideposts for individuals. As a religious and moral system,
Christianity offers a cosmological understanding of how the world came to be, how it should work, and how people should behave toward one another. By averring that our rights come from God, and explicitly rejecting the role of government in providing or securing them, Rubio demonstrated one of the core aspects of conservative ideology described as “a belief in the extra-human origins of the social order, i.e. as independent of human will” (Freeden 1996:334). While the extra-human nature of this particular Absolute is readily apparent, as will be demonstrated throughout this dissertation the Republican candidates may simply remove or deny agency from individuals or government, reifying as social constructs their preferred understandings of how the world should work in order to naturalize their ideological interpretations and policy prescriptions as a “self-evident and natural order which goes without saying and therefore goes unquestioned” (Bourdieu 1977:166).

This removal of human will from the Republican CoA’s ideological worldview has a number of implications for my arguments. Firstly, individuals have to behave or orient their understanding appropriately to the various shared cultural constructs which they find themselves enmeshed within since the social order is independent of their lived experiences. With respect to reification §2.4, America is the way it is and governmental interference will only serve to diminish the nation. With respect to decontestation and doxa more broadly §2.3, this supposed extra-human nature of the social order offers Republicans a means to portray their ideological interpretations and policy prescriptions as the only right and proper way not on their merits per se, rather on the notion that any ideas other than theirs will only serve to change America from what it should rightly be. The potential for this wrong sort of change to occur in America reflects another core aspect of Republican ideology, a preference for “organic change” which should not be “artificial, [or] humanly devised ... [lest it]
carr[y] with it the prospect of potential entropy” (Freeden 1996:333); note that this Republican understanding of organic change is particularly salient in their discussion of the economy in relation to the metaphor of ECONOMY IS A LIVING ORGANISM and its propensity to grow of its own accord (Ch. 3).

Rubio’s understanding of America should be so naturalized that he laments it being lost. Rubio directed his ire at Obama for attempting to change rather than fix America, to subvert the Absolutes in favor of a model more like the rest of the world. One of the defining characteristics of an Absolute FoR is that it is Absolute, that there are no other possible options outside of the established social order. Throughout the primary election season numerous Republican candidates voiced this general sentiment in differing ways. Jindal decried the “American dream” being turned into the “European nightmare” (05/24/15, GOP debate 1-3). Perry claimed we should not have to “apologize for American exceptionalism” (06/04/15). Comments such as these all point to an ideological interpretation of America, due to its proper ordering of Absolute ideals, as immutable and the benchmark against which all nations and peoples should be compared and found wanting (see also Ch. 4).

By opening his final statement of this debate with the discourse marker Y’know, Rubio would have voters align with his offered understanding of our Christian Moral roots almost without question, as being part of their general understanding of the nature of the world which they simply know to be true (Schiffrin 1987). From this beginning of Christian Morality, Rubio constructed a path of logic for voters to follow: that it was a natural outcome from such an understanding and acceptance that rights can only come from God that we embraced free enterprise and individual liberty. From here, we begin to see the some of the shape of the Republican Absolute FoR where God stands above rights and both of which stand above our economic system and
liberty.

During a later closing argument from the ninth GOP debate, Rubio made more explicit the inerrancy of the Absolute view of the America. His claim that Our culture’s in trouble. Wrong is now considered right and right is considered wrong broadened his ideological interpretation to more than just governance or economic concerns, implicating that the entire social fabric in which Americans live has been upended. The very idea that the Republican Absolute FoR is not being adhered to, that the wrong sorts of changes have been occurring and permitting various problematic behaviors and actions to exist, is what Rubio finds wrong.

(2.2) Thank you thank you for watching tonight. This is a difficult time in our country. Our economy’s flat. It’s not creating the jobs it once did, people struggle living paycheck to paycheck. Our culture’s in trouble. Wrong is now considered right and, right is considered wrong and, all the things that once held our families together are now under constant assault. And around the world, America’s reputation’s in decline. Our allies don’t trust us, our adversaries don’t fear us, Iran captures our sailors and parades them before the world on video. These are difficult times. But twenty sixteen can be a turning point. That’s why I’m running for president that’s why I’m here today to ask you for your vote. If you elect me president we are going to f-re-embrace free enterprise, so that everyone can go as far as their talent and their work will take them. We are going to be a country that says that life begins at conception and life is worthy of the protection of our laws. We’re gonna be a country that says that marriage is between one man and one woman. And we are going to be a country, that says the constitution and the rights that it that it talks about, do not come from our president, they come from our creator. And we are going to be loyal to our allies like Israel, not enemies like Iran. And we will rebuild the US military so no one will dare test it. Vote for me. I will unify this party. (BELL RINGING) I will grow it. We will win this election and we will make the twenty first century a new American century. (APPLAUSE)

(Rubio, GOP Debate 9)

Rubio reiterated his claim regarding where our rights stem from, that they come from our creator and not from our president. His focus on the president was not simply
another rejection of the role of government, rather as a more explicit divestment of
the social order from human will, stating quite clearly that a particular human being
does not guarantee rights to Americans. During Cruz’s candidacy announcement
he broadened this sentiment to all mankind: “The idea that the revolutionary idea
that this country was founded upon, which is that our rights they don’t come from
man. They come from God Almighty” (03/23/15). The policy prescriptions which
Rubio offered also serve to preclude human perspectives being taken into account.
The argument that life begins at conception does not permit an understanding of
pregnancy from the viewpoint of the mother and her day-to-day situation which
might impact the viability of a pregnancy or having a child. Limiting marriage to
only heterosexual couples does not permit an understanding that gay people can
experience love or desire to claim fidelity to another person before their families
and society. For Rubio, only a return to the previous layout of the social order, by
re-embracing our lost cultural understandings of right and wrong can we move
forward into a new American century.

This preclusion of differing perspectives is a defining feature of an Absolute FoR
which takes as given an extra-human ordering of the social order; though making such
explicit rejections of basic humanity frequently would likely not be a good tactic to
engender alignment from voters. However, there are certain aspects of human expe-
riences which were routinely rejected as salient when compared to various Absolutes,
Christian Morality being perhaps the most notable (see §4.4 in particular). What is
telling in the next two examples is how other Absolutes were juxtaposed with Chris-
tian Morality, providing additional guideposts to help triangulate just how “wrong”
(Rubio Example 2.2) it is for a person to believe that their unique life experience
might impact their understanding of the America and their place therein.
One Absolute the Republican candidates often paired with Christian Morality is the Rule of Law. During the second GOP debate, Fiorina invoked the blindness of justice, coupled with equality in the eyes of God, to create an Individual American as an ideological construct devoid of unique lived experiences when she rejected who you are ... what you look like ... how you start ... your circumstances as being valid reference points to make sense out of their position within the social fabric of America. Indeed, she roundly rejected all of these for the only possibilities that should be relevant in the Absolute system, one’s God-given gifts.

(2.3) I think what this nation can be and must be is symbolized by Lady Liberty and Lady Justice. Lady Liberty stands tall and strong. She is clear eyed and resolute. She doesn’t shield her eyes from the realities of the world, but she faces outward into the world nevertheless as we always must. And she holds her torch high, because she knows she is a beacon of hope in a very troubled world. And Lady Justice, Lady Justice holds a sword by her side, because she is a fighter, a warrior, for the values and the principles that have made this nation great she holds a scale in her other hand. And with that scale she says all of us are equal in the eyes of God. And so all of us must be equal in the eyes of the law and the government, powerful and powerless alike. And she wears a blindfold. And with that blindfold she is saying to us that it must be true, it can be true that in this country, in this century, it doesn’t matter who you are, it doesn’t matter what you look like, it doesn’t matter how you start, it doesn’t matter your circumstances, here in this nation, every American’s life must be filled with the possibilities that come from their God-given gifts. One nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all. (APPLAUSE)

(Fiorina, GOP Debate 2)

While Fiorina’s metaphor of Lady Justice sounds reasonable, she nonetheless advocated for a rejection of any role of human experience or understanding within American governance. Note how she reasoned that from Lady Justice’s scale, understood as a measure of equality in the eyes of God, that therefore the law and the government should also measure people in equal terms. Her entire metaphor served to place God above government and law, eschewing individual human experience which she claimed
Justice turns a blind eye toward. This understanding of law and justice, as subordinate to God and therefore rejecting individual human circumstance, is one possible relation between the Absolutes of Christian Morality and the Rule of Law that the Republican candidates offered. As will be demonstrated throughout this dissertation, the relation between the Absolutes are not necessarily set in stone when it comes to something as socially fraught as politics; many of the Republican candidates offered differing ideas of which Absolutes should be considered more prominent than others when evaluating how the social order should be understood.

This variability in how the Absolutes can be related to one another does not undermine the overall thrust of this analysis; different languages which have Absolute spatial FoRs make use of different fixed bearings which are oriented in differing ways based upon their society’s unique understanding of their spatial topography (Levinson 2003). The shared feature that this grouping of languages possesses is the manner in which their speakers describe their understanding of the spatial landscape. While these languages do not constitute a specific language family per se, these languages nevertheless share a defining feature which demonstrates a level of similarity. In much the same way, different interest groups within a political party may prefer a differing order of Absolutes, but what unites them as a CoA I argue is their orientation of the socio-political landscape with respect to Absolutes to begin with, along with a concomitant underrepresentation of differing perspectives as a means to make sense of the socio-political landscape and locate their own and others’ ideological positions.

One could argue that Fiorina’s metaphor of Lady Liberty did take into account human experiences, because Liberty doesn’t shield her eyes from the realities of the world. That does indeed sound like Lady Liberty at least looks upon the world as it actually stands, making no reference to Absolutes, and might offer a more Conjoint
form of framing. But this potential relativism is illusory for the simple fact that Lady Liberty faces outward, her back turned to America. As mentioned in the discussion of Example 2.1, in the Absolute FoR America is understood as a benchmark for the rest of the world; and Fiorina reiterated that point, noting how Liberty’s torch is a beacon of hope in a very troubled world. All of the world should look to America, with its proper ordering of Absolutes and its blindfold[ed] view toward human experience, as the model worth emulating in order to ease their socio-political troubles. This idea of America as a benchmark is another Absolute, American Exceptionalism, which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.

Another Absolute often mentioned alongside Christian Morality as a means to underrepresent the salience of human experiences is, for lack of a better term, the Glorious Past. According to Freeden (1996:333), the conservative preference for organic change requires a ...

... specific version of historical continuity [which] secures the preservation of social order per se. The accumulative conception of history in which conservatives locate change involves a particular reading of practices rather than an accurate and concrete representation of ‘what actually happened’.

For conservatives, a particular overarching structure of history needs to be understood rather than the day-to-day complexities which history is made up of. Traces of this “preservation of the social order” can be seen in Rubio’s comments where he feared Obama “chang[ing]” America (Example 2.1) from what it was and should always be and “All the things that once held our families together” previously now being “under constant assault” (Example 2.2). This idea of the Glorious Past was in fact one of the primary Absolutes that Trump pointed toward throughout the election with his
slogan “Make America Great Again” (see Ch. 5). In the following example, Carson lamented how the Glorious Past of our supposedly shared Judeo-Christian roots has been supplanted by secular progressives sowing divisiveness and … hatred.

For Carson, gone are the days when Americans recognize right and wrong and have standards … values and principles to guide their behavior and understandings, whenever America was whatever it isn’t anymore. Carson addressed his appeal to the majority of people in America who believed in values and principles which made America great. What these values and principles did not include, however, are the potential to assess or make sense of America located in search domains related to issues of race, gender, income, age, and religion—save for those Judeo-Christian roots. Unlike Rubio and Fiorina, Carson laid blame on some Americans themselves, those secular progressives who are trying to drive … out the Absolute FoR which should rightly orient Americans’ experiences.

(2.4) Well there’s no question that we should be able to look at any past president [Bill Clinton]. Whether they’re married to somebody who’s running for president or not in terms of uh their past behavior and what it means. But y’know, here’s the real issue, is this America anymore. Do we still have standards. Do we still have values and principles. Y’know you look at what’s going on, you see all the divisiveness and the hatred that goes on in our society. Y’know we have a war on virtually everything race wars, uh gender wars, income wars, religious wars, age wars. Every war you can imagine, we have people at each other’s throats. And our strength is actually in our unity. Y’know you go to the internet, you start reading an article and you go to the comments section you cannot go five comments down, before people are calling each other all manner of names. Where did that spirit come from in America? It did not come from our Judeo-Christian roots, I can tell you that. (APPLAUSE) And wherever it came from we need to start once again recognizing that there is such a thing as right and wrong. And let’s not let the secular progressives drive that out of us. The majority of people in America actually have values and principles, and they believe in the very things that made America great. They’ve been beaten into submission. It’s time for us to stand up for what we believe in. (APPLAUSE)

(Carson, GOP Debate 6; brackets mine)
Throughout this example, Carson offered a sense of America that he felt had been lost somewhere in time. A hallmark of the Glorious Past Absolute seems to be its lack of time depth, where no concrete point in the past is offered up as when America was great, or when Americans had standards. This lack of time depth helps to uncouple the actions or experiences of Americans in the present from any possible historical antecedents. By overlooking or decontesting history as Carson did, he can claim that there were no race wars in our shared past, ignoring one of the primary factors of the Civil War and the Jim Crow era; that there were no gender wars despite the disenfranchisement of women until 1920; and that there were no income wars despite the era of the Robber Barons during the late 1800s to early 1900s. This uncoupling of present circumstance from past precedent has two attendant effects. Bad actors have no reason to be acting the way they do: the secular progressives and their actions are completely without antecedent and have sprung up from wherever. Good actors follow values and principles, which are decontextualized, naturalized, and eternalized, in short reified as the very roots America was founded on (§2.4).

These preceding examples have set the stage for further discussion of the Absolutes which Republicans believe should orient the American socio-political landscape. Throughout this dissertation I will examine how each of the Republican candidates made use of this shared repertoire of Absolutes to guide voters in assessing that his or her candidacy alone was best suited to win the presidency. The centrality afforded to Christian Morality as an Absolute extra-human guidepost made it a reasonable starting point for the analysis, while offering an engaging crux on which to pivot to what a political ideology based on a Conjoint FoR looks like.

A Conjoint FoR does not permeate the socio-political landscape in the same way that an Absolute FoR does, rather, it offers the means to understand America through
people’s eyes and their own unique perspectives on and experiences of situations; people and their interactions with one another are what Ground and contextualize the socio-political landscape rather than fixed and arbitrary guideposts. From the examples presented thus far, one can infer the sense that to be a good American, one has to believe certain unalterable truths: that our rights, values, and principles are Christian in origin (Carson Example 2.4; Rubio Example 2.1); that government, law, and justice have a subordinate place thereto (Fiorina Example 2.3; Rubio Example 2.2); and that rejecting any of these facts is tantamount to dividing the nation (Carson Example 2.4) or changing America for the worse (Rubio Examples 2.1 and 2.2). Rather than locating ideological positions within search domains Grounded in some assumed normative belief system which is superimposed over our social, political, and economic experiences, a Conjoint FoR allows for ideological positions to be drawn from within the daily interactions between people. In the following example from the seventh Democratic debate, Sanders and Anderson Cooper (CNN) had some discussion after an audience member’s question about the relevance of God. Throughout his answer, Sanders kept returning to the interaction between people, whether we should do unto others as you would like them to do unto you or not ... turn[ing] our backs on children ... or veterans. For Sanders, religious principle and morality are defined by how people interrelate with each other.

Rather than the naturalized and reified idea of shared principles, standards, and values presented by the Republican candidates, Sanders foregrounded his understanding of moral[s] and ethic[s] within the interactions between people; that is, people and actions are not moral because of adherence to a specific Absolute creed, rather people’s treatment of others can be assessed as moral or not based on the outcomes of that treatment and the affected person’s perspective on the matter. Sanders’ entire
answer was framed within the materiality of our day-to-day existence. His ethical
cconcerns related to how the corporeal selves of people were being affected, how the
children of Flint were being poisoned, how veterans ... are sleeping on the street, and
how people working in stores ... had numbers on their arms. In a way, Sanders also
brought religion down to the material plane when he claimed his being Jewish ... is
an essential part of who I am as a human being. Rather than constructing religious
experience as somehow extra-human, Sanders made it as much part of his flesh as the
very numbers inscribed on so many people’s arms.

(2.5) GHATTAS: Thank you. Senator Sanders, do you believe that God is relevant?
Why or why not.

SANDERS: Well I think, well, the answer is yes, and I think when we talk
about God whether it is Christianity, or Judaism, or Islam, or Buddhism,
what we are talking about is what all religions hold dear. And that is to do
unto others as you would like them to do unto you. (APPLAUSE) I am here
tonight. And I’m running for president, I’m a United States Senator from my
great state of Vermont, because I believe that. Because I believe morally and
ethically we do not have a right to turn our backs on children in Flint
Michigan who are being poisoned, or veterans who are sleeping out on the
street. (APPLAUSE) And what I believe what I believe as the father of seven
beautiful grandchildren I want you to worry about my grandchildren and I
promise you I will worry about your family. We are in this together.
(APPLAUSE)

COOPER: Senator Sanders. Let me just follow up. Just this weekend there
was an article I read in the Detroit News saying that that you keep your
Judaism in the background and that’s disappointing some Jewish leaders. Is
that intentional?

SANDERS: No. I am very proud to be Jewish and being Jewish is so much of
what I am. Look. My father’s family was wiped out by Hitler in the
Holocaust. I know about what crazy and radical and extremist politics mean.
I learned that lesson as a tiny tiny child when % my mother would take me
shopping and we would see people working in stores who had numbers on their
arms because they were in Hitler’s concentration camp. I am very proud of
being Jewish and that is an essential part of who I am as a human being.
(APPLAUSE)

(Sanders, DEM Debate 7)
This example helps illustrate a major difference between the Absolute and Conjoint FoRs through the nature and placement of religion within the American socio-political landscape. Republicans orient their understanding with regard to Christian Morality such that morality and Christianity are almost synonymous (see §4.4); America and Americans can only be moral in so far as actions, behaviors and understandings are aligned with Christian norms and principles. Within a Conjoint FoR, people see and experience morality generated within the interactions between people. It was no accident that Sanders offered an understanding of God and morality across all religions, because not all Americans are Christian. A Conjoint FoR allows for many perspectives, including different faiths; further, its very potential to allow people to orient their own and others’ behavior is contextualized by how people treat others, and how people perceive they are being treated by others.

The focus on unique personal viewpoints in a Conjoint FoR does not preclude the idea that there are abstract, shared principles which exist and help organize American life; ideologies and FoRs after all are a means to draw inferences about how and why the world works the way it does. These shared principles have a very different nature than the supposedly shared social constructs which structure the Republican Absolute FoR, being a series of viewpoints which can have a high degree of consistency across speakers. In the following example, O’Malley described certain truth[s] related to our shared reality which demonstrates that there is just such a consistent understanding; multiple people may take the same perspective and generate similar inferences as others when confronted with a given situation. I label this aspect of the Conjoint FoR shared Social Context, where multiple people come to understand a situation in similar ways because of their similar vantage; but this does not negate the possibility of others who view a situation from a different vantage from coming to different
conclusions. Much of the difference between Democratic candidates and their policy prescriptions can be attributed to how they used various viewpoints to locate their position on issues, either their own perspectives or those of other people which they chose to describe.

(2.6) The hard truth of our shared reality is this unemployment in many cities and many small towns across the United States of America is higher now than it was eight years ago. Conditions of extreme poverty, breed conditions of extreme violence. We have work to do. Our economic and political system is upside down and backwards and it is time to turn it around. (APPLAUSE) Understanding precedes action. And we must understand that what happened to our economy, the damage done to the American Dream we share, did not happen by chance. Nor was it merely the result of global forces somehow beyond our reach. Powerful wealthy special interests here at home have used our government to create in our own country an economy that is leaving a majority of our people behind. An economy that has so concentrated wealth and power in the hands of the very few that it has taken opportunity out of the homes of the many. (LIGHT APPLAUSE) An economy where a majority of our people are unheard, unseen, unneeded and left to conclude that their lives, and their labors, are worth less today than they were yesterday. And will be worth less still in the future.

(O’Malley, 05/30/15)

The thrust of O’Malley’s comment was that many things are going wrong in the shared Social Context of America, but rather than claiming that these problems stemmed from a rejection of various Absolutes as Rubio (Example 2.2) and Carson (Example 2.4) did, O’Malley described their cause stemming from people’s actions and their impacts on others. For O’Malley, the economy is not some abstract, reified, extra-human system that exists above or apart from people’s daily lives, rather it is a complex system create[d] by people interacting with one another. Much like Sanders with religion, O’Malley brought the economy down to earth and placed it in the hands of the people. This Conjoint understanding of the economy as being generated by people and their interactions as opposed to an autonomous Absolute entity will be
discussed further in Chapter 3. The important point to take away at present is that an understanding of the socio-political landscape in a Conjoint FoR is drawn from people’s actions toward others and the potential viewpoints these offer, regardless of whether that treatment is understood in terms of morality, economics or, as we turn to next, law.

Unlike an Absolute FoR where reference must be made to arbitrary Absolute guideposts, a Conjoint FoR allows for empathy, seeing the world through other peoples’ perspectives in order to understand American life. The idea of empathy plays a more central role in Lakoff’s (2002) analysis of liberal thinking, being a primary feature from which other aspects of his model follow. In this dissertation, empathy is no less central, but empathy itself follows from one of the defining characteristics of the Conjoint FoR, the ability and propensity to take other viewpoints as reference points. Webb described his understanding of the Democratic party’s mission as giving people who otherwise have no voice in the corridors of power a voice, offering their viewpoints as Grounds for locating the need for and enacting policy prescriptions. Rather than glossing over the problematic Jim Crow era in our history, Webb invoked it as he justified his policy prescription to offer diversity programs for struggling whites by drawing a parallel between their culture and the unique history [of African-Americans] in this country.

Webb’s sentiment that laws can be made with regard to Americans culture and unique history differs from that of Fiorina (Example 2.3), where Lady Justice is blindfolded to people and their lived experiences. As a member of a CoA who interprets the world through a Conjoint FoR, Webb saw how people are being treated differently based on their ability to access the corridors of power. Rather than lending a particular reading to history as Carson (Example 2.4) did through the Glorious Past,
Webb contextualized the experiences of African-Americans in relation to their unique history and treatment at the hands of Jim Crow laws. What is particularly interesting about this debate answer is how Webb used this contextualized understanding of one group of people to demonstrate a parallel with another, those struggling whites like the families in the Appalachian mountains. The key feature that unites both of these groups is a less than equitable treatment of their members by various historical and legal forces, enacted by people who denied these groups a chance to help craft policy prescriptions. Webb empathized with both groups, by noting the historical contexts which have brought them to their present positions, and he would seek to give them equal voice in how their country should be run, which in turn would grant them equal treatment by polices which they would help craft. Equal treatment by the law looks very different in a Conjoint FoR versus blind justice: laws and policies, crafted with respect to the voices of the people being impacted by them, should take into account the contextually bound lived experiences of people and should serve to help people who are being negatively impacted by others. This disparity between the two FoRs as relates to law and justice is examined in greater detail in §§4.3, 4.4 and 5.4.

(2.7) No actually I I believe that I am where the Democratic Party traditionally has been. The Democratic Party, and the reason I decided to run as a Democrat, has been the party that gives peeper- [people] who otherwise have no voice in the corridors of power a voice. And that is not determined by race. And as a clarification, I have always supported affirmative action for African Americans. That’s the way the program was originally designed because of their unique history in this country with slavery and the Jim Crow laws that followed. What I have eh- discussed at eh- a a n- number of times is the idea that when we create diversity programs that include everyone, quote, of color, other than whites, struggling whites like the the families in the Appalachian mountains, we’re not being true to the Democratic Party principle of elevating the level of consciousness among our people about the the hardships that a lot of people who happen to be white have by culture, by the way.
Because a Conjoint FoR takes differing viewpoints as reference points, and because people’s day-to-day experiences have changed over the course of history, it follows that ideological interpretations and policy prescriptions can and should change over time. Rather than the sense of organic change with its worry of “potential entropy” (Freeden 1996:333) and which offers a supposed immutability to Absolutes, a Conjoint viewpoint can be influenced by empathy as just described, or by observation as to how policy prescriptions impact America over time. With respect to the Trans Pacific Partnership trade deal, the following comment by Clinton speaks to the adaptability of Conjoint viewpoints, and indeed such changes in viewpoint should not be understood as abandoning one’s “beliefs” (Jindal Example 2.14), an attack that can only make sense within an Absolute FoR and the supposed immutability of its fixed bearings.

(2.8) Well actually I have been very consistent over the course of my entire life, I have always fought for the same values and principles. But like most human beings including those of us who run for office, I do absorb new information. I do look at what’s happening in the world. Um y’know take the trade deal. I did say when I was Secretary of State three years ago that I hoped it would be the gold standard. It was just finally negotiated last week, and in looking at it it didn’t meet my standards. My standards for more new good jobs for Americans, for raising wages for Americans. And I wanna make sure that I can look into the eyes of any middle class American and say this will help raise your wages and I concluded I could not.

(Clinton, DEM Debate 1)

People’s viewpoints changing over time is another form of Social Context which stands in opposition to the Glorious Past Absolute. The Glorious Past permits people to orient their understanding of America and its history in narrow terms, “decontest[ing] history” (Freeden 1996:333) itself by obscuring or erasing any troubles or benefits that do not serve the ideological purpose of supporting the other Absolutes. Social
Context does not look past the lived experiences of all Americans and how they are impacted by policy prescriptions over time, nor how these have contributed to the present structure of American society. Related to the trade deal, Clinton looked at the current shared Social Context of what’s happening in the world and assessed how this particular policy initiative did not live up to the desires she had at the outset three years prior. This change in Social Context, where a desired outcome in a past Social Context would not be realized in the present (or future) Social Context altered her vantage point and thus her conclusions about the viability of the policy. Altering conclusions based on changes in shared Social Context is what Clinton described as human beings ... absorb[ing] new information. In a Conjoint FoR, every person grapples with changes in perspective over the course of [their] life and is welcome to change their mind.

For Clinton, changing one’s mind as most human beings do (Example 2.8) is a natural consequence of seeing the world and how people’s experiences of it change over time. At the end of his answer, Webb noted how part of the Democratic Party’s job is to spread awareness of other people’s lived experiences and thereby to encourage voters to see the world through the Conjoint FoR. O’Malley took a slightly different tack to engender alignment, offering an understanding of “our shared reality” (Example 2.6) as constituted by people’s mutual interaction, which voters “must [come to] understand” (l. 6). Sanders’ appeal for alignment was perhaps phrased with the most attention to personal perspectives, “I want you to worry about my grandchildren, and I promise you I will worry about your family” (Example 2.5). Each of these appeals offered a glimpse to voters of the perspective that a Conjoint FoR takes on the socio-political landscape: evolving viewpoints, concern for your fellow countrymen’s lived experiences, the shared construction of America, and a reciprocal concern
between you and your neighbor. Within an Absolute FoR, the socio-political landscape is viewed differently: the Absolutes are a series of naturalized and reified social constructs which all Americans should share; they assure equitable treatment to all citizens regardless of individual circumstance; and any subversion of the Absolutes is directly responsible for all of America’s woes. Rubio’s (Example 2.1 l. 3 - 6) sequence of cause-effect “why” clauses offered an understanding as to the nature of American rights and our economy. His series of policy prescriptions as to what kind of country “we are going to be” (Example 2.2) was indicative of the underrepresentation of personal experience which characterizes an Absolute FoR, as was Fiorina’s coordinated modal booster, that “this nation can be and must be ... symbolized by Lady Liberty and Lady Justice” (Example 2.3). And Carson lamented the proliferation of different ideas about values and principles, that “wherever [that spirit] came from we need to start once again recognizing that there is such a thing as right and wrong” (Example 2.4).

2.3 Rhetorical style: Decontested or discussable

In the following sections I describe how candidates from both parties argue for their ideological interpretations and policy prescriptions with respect to the Supreme Court and its decisions as understood by both parties. For the Republican candidates, the discussion presented in this section circles around their reaction to marriage equality and how a Supreme Court Justice should approach their responsibilities. For the Democratic candidates, the discussion of the Supreme Court revolved around the issues of Roe v. Wade, Citizens United v. FEC, and gun rights. In order to describe for voters what an America under their presidency would look like, the Republican candidates decontested (Freeden 1996) their ideological positions, rendering other
counterarguments or possible socio-political orders undiscussable (Bourdieu 1977), in two respects: individually within the Republican field, and as opposed to the Democratic candidates. Due to the tight link between decontestation and reification, whereby Republicans focus on “The Individual” as ideological construct in order to present their fixed bearings as extra-human guideposts (§2.4), I have endeavored to present my arguments in the following two sections clearly in order to do sufficient justice to each concept and their impact on my arguments as a whole; however, there is some unavoidable slippage between the two.

The Democratic candidates on the other hand did not decontest their ideological prescriptions by rendering other possible orders or counterarguments as undiscussable, a virtual impossibility in a political FoR which takes multiple possible viewpoints as Grounds. While the Democrats did argue for their policy prescriptions as the proper course of action for America under their leadership, they did so without erasing the possibility that other possible ways exist to understand an issue or to accomplish similar outcomes. While Freeden describes decontestation with respect to the contestability of political concepts, for the purposes of this analysis I will use the term discussable instead of contest or contestable. This choice is in part motivated for ease of reading because of the Democratic emphasis on context and the interdependence of people’s lived experiences (§2.4), which stands in opposition to the Republican use of reification. Further, discussable helps keep prevalent one salient distinction between the two parties, where the Republican candidates attempted to present their ideological positions within the “universe of the undiscussed (undisputed)” or doxa while the Democrats did so in the “universe of discourse (or argument)” or “opinion” (Bourdieu 1977:168).

The Republican Party, being a CoA, has a shared repertoire (Lave and Wenger
1991; Wenger 1998) of ideological interpretations and policy prescriptions which delineate how members should see the world. An Absolute FoR is not tied to the transitory moment or person, rather the Absolutes and their relative prominences define and delineate how individuals should interpret not only their role and actions in America, but for others as well. By shifting the arrangement of Absolutes from one array to another, candidates are able to differentiate themselves from one another and decontest their ideological worldviews as better for America than all of their opponents, whether Republican or Democratic, without violating the shared repertoire of Absolutes nor the fixed bearings’ power to constrain individuals in orienting and assessing their own and others’ behaviors.

The following example comes from an exchange regarding marriage equality during the second undercard GOP debate. The topic of marriage equality generally, and the lengthy exchange that occurred during this particular debate, provides rich data to demonstrate how the Republican candidates decontested their own ideological positions regarding the role of the Supreme Court. In this comment, Pataki offered the full complexity of marriage equality that the Republican candidates had to contend with: religious freedom, the obligation to the follow the law, the Supreme Court, and the role of legislators and other public officials. This example is also particularly useful to lead off this discussion because it demonstrates the connection between decontestation and reification in a way that is easily teased apart. Pataki decontested his preferred array of Absolutes with greater precedence given to Rule of Law over Christian Morality, lest we no longer have a society due to our dependence on Rule of Law. By focusing on an Individual elected official, and indeed an ideologically constructed understanding of Supreme Court Justices, Pataki reified the fixed bearings of Rule of Law and Christian Morality as a shared social belief which should guide
the elected official, Kim Davis, and other individuals in assessing the appropriacy of their own and others’ behaviors, again lest our society crumble.¹

Pataki decontested his understanding of the America such that an Individual should know how to orient their behavior appropriately based on the proper understanding of the Absolute of Christian Morality, an orientation which he applaud[s]. Such behavior can become problematic, however, when that Individual is an elected official who has an obligation to support and reinforce the Rule of Law Absolute. In this way, Pataki revealed a tension between Absolutes, such that in his understanding of American life, the Rule of Law can and should supersede Christian Morality as a primary guidepost to orient toward. Davis’ oath to uphold the law, all the laws in effect supplanted the centrality of the Christian Moral Absolute as a guidepost for her, Pataki, and others to assess how she should comport herself in her role as an elected official. In so doing, Pataki underscored the power that the Absolute FoR with its proper ordering of fixed bearings has to constrain an Individual’s choices of appropriate behaviors in specific situations. For Kim Davis or any Individual to take her own personal viewpoint on how to act within her official capacity, in the face of what the Absolutes are requiring of her, would in effect unravel the social order by rendering contextual, contestable, and discussable—what should be understood as naturalized, decontested, and reified social conventions like the Rule of Law which society ... depends on.

(2.9) The el- the elected representatives of the people always have the opportunity to change that law. The Supreme Court makes a determination but it’s ultimately the elected officials who decide whether or not that would be accepted. [SANTORUM: We’re in agreement.] By the way, if I have a chance

¹At the time, Kim Davis was an elected country clerk of the state of Kentucky who chose to deny marriage licenses to gay couples and also compelled the subordinates in her office to do the same.
to uh lead this country, I will appoint judges who understand their role. They’re not gonna be making the law, they’re gonna be interpreting law that the elected officials passed. But there’s a huge difference, between an individual standing up and saying I am going to stand for my religious freedom and my religious rights. I applaud that. This is America. You should be able to engage in your religious belief in the way you see fit. But when you are an elected official, and you take an oath of office to uphold the law, all the laws, you cannot pick and choose or you no longer have a society that depends on the rule of law.

(Pataki, GOP Debate 2)

Pataki’s preferred ranking of Absolutes with Rule of Law as the most salient is what permitted him to assess the official[s] actions as no longer praiseworthy. Some Republican candidates applauded and defended Kim Davis nevertheless, but that was because of their desire to orient America more towards the Christian Moral Absolute as the most important. Earlier in this debate for example, Jindal decried Kim Davis being jailed for her actions as an example of “the biggest discrimination [which] is going on against Christian business owners and individuals who believe in traditional forms of marriage” (GOP debate 2). Neither group of candidates questioned the overarching structure of the FoR, where Absolutes can and should be oriented toward as a means to understand why individuals behave the way they do and where to draw appropriate inferences about those behaviors from. However, both groups of Republicans assessed her actions in different ways because of their preferred array of the Absolutes.

The second strand of Pataki’s comment, involving the Supreme Court and their role in American governance, was another prominent concern on the Republican side during the primary election. As with the Individual official, Pataki’s concern related more to how judges ... understand their role, where a narrowly defined understanding of the Rule of Law would naturally lead them to the appropriate action of only
interpreting the law. With respect to the Democratic field, the Republican candidates generally decontested their ideological understanding of the Supreme Court by focusing on how Justices should understand their role as one of interpreting the law or The Constitution “according to its original meaning” (Rubio Example 2.13). This ideological position requires a subjective understanding of the boundary between rulings which merely interpret laws versus those which somehow can be perceived as making, pass[ing], or chang[ing] laws, a distinction which the Republican candidates decontested as underst[ood] by every American, but which simply relies on their self-nominated authority to confirm or deny (Antonsich 2012) which rulings have been properly interpret[ed].

Pataki’s type of argument represents what I will label the more structural argument against marriage equality from the Republican party, where the Supreme Court was believed to overstep their authority by striking down state level marriage bans as unconstitutional and requiring states to offer and recognize same-sex marriages in Obergefell v. Hodges (see Graham Example 2.20 for a counter point), a move seen as legislating from the bench rather than interpreting such state bans in light of The Fourteenth Amendments’ Due Process and Equal Protection Clauses as the majority wrote. As Santorum described it in the turn immediately prior in the same debate, this supposed overreach would shatter the Rule of Law Absolute, supplanting it with a social order based on judicial supremacy, one which he rejects.

1 (2.10) No, what you have is judicial supremacy. You don’t have a rule of law when the court has the final say on everything.

(Santorum, GOP Debate 2)

This structural argument about same-sex marriage through the role of the Supreme Court and the Rule of Law differs from another potentially more problematic argu-
ment, at least in light of engendering voters to align with a campaign; some Republican candidates like Santorum and Huckabee (Example 2.12) argued against marriage equality as a violation of Christian Morality, condemning the supposed immorality of such laws and by implication those who desire, support, or obey them. In the following example, Santorum rebutted Pataki’s advocation that the relation between Rule of Law and Christian Morality should be understood in such a way that Individual public officials must orient themselves more toward Rule of Law. Santorum decontested his ideological position from Republican candidates like Pataki as well as the Democrats, claiming that marriage equality is an unjust law which goes against the moral code; by invoking the supposedly shared extra-human ordering of the social order as stemming from God’s law, or the natural law, Santorum would preclude various possible orders: Pataki’s (Example 2.9) array of Absolutes with Rule of Law being more prominent than Christian Morality, the unjust law and its attendant social order which the Supreme Court foisted on America, and an America where people who support such a ruling would willingly condone and accept such immoral laws to begin with.

(2.11) Martin Luther King wrote a letter from a Birmingham jail. And he said in that letter that there are just laws and there are unjust laws. And we have no obligation to condone and accept unjust laws. And he and ye- then he followed up and said what’s an unjust law? An unjust law is a jaw- th- a law that go against the moral code, or God’s law, or the natural law. I would argue that what the Supreme Court did is against the natural law it’s against God’s law. And we have every obligation to stand in opposition to it.

(Santorum, GOP Debate 2)

It is interesting that Santorum used the words of Dr. King—who advocated for overturning laws passed by many legislatures which he felt unjustly impacted some Americans—to argue how unjust the actions of the Supreme Court were—namely overturning laws passed by many legislatures which were ruled as unjustly impacting
some Americans. Yet, there is no dissonance to Santorum’s comment when viewed through the Absolute FoR. He explicitly spelled out at the end of this comment that the real miscarriage of justice was not the marriage bans, or even that he perceived the Supreme Court to have overstepped their legal authority, rather that the Supreme Court would ignore the Absolute of Christian Morality, violating the natural law and God’s law. For some members of the Republican CoA, the Absolute of Christian Morality is indeed the most salient guidepost every individual should orient at all times. From this ordering of Absolutes, we can see Santorum attempting to decontest away his real fear as an impossible other order, that “judicial supremacy” (Example 2.10) might subvert the natural order and abolish the Rule of God’s Law.

Santorum’s comment that we have every obligation to stand in opposition to marriage equality implicated that at the least some members of the Republican CoA, those who support his understanding of the American socio-political landscape as naturally oriented to the northern star of Christian Morality, are compelled to do everything they can to overturn such an unjust law. This example further illustrates how Individuals should use FoRs to orient not only their own behavior, but assess and perhaps constrain other people’s. Expanding upon Pataki’s description of an Individual public official, Santorum implicated the Supreme Court as one such grouping of Individuals who are forcing an improper understanding of what is appropriate behavior on everyone, acting not only as a censure of the Supreme Court for its actions but also as a rallying cry for those in the Republican CoA who support his worldview.

Santorum’s concern rests in the actions of the Supreme Court which shifted the socio-political landscape out from under his and his supporters’ feet. As with Rubio (Examples 2.1 and 2.2) and Carson (Example 2.4), a misorientation of America from its proper alignment to the Absolutes should naturally cause Americans to feel
uncomfortable, to be unable to make proper inferences or assessments about proper behavior, and worse to be able to make improper ones about improper behavior. By altering the alignment of the social order away from Christian Morality, the Supreme Court through *Obergefell* has permitted Americans to behave inappropriately. Huckabee, during his candidacy announcement, offered numerous claims about what such a misorientation would and has entailed. Much like Santorum, Huckabee decontested his array of Absolutes by admonishing how *many of our politicians* have supplanted the *supreme being* with the Supreme Court. Both Huckabee and Santorum decontested the possible order where marriage equality could ever be legal, whether passed by judicial review or by duly appointed elected representatives. In either case, it is incumbent upon this generic and inclusive *we* (Scheibman 2004) to stand up for *moral[ity]* and *natural[al]* laws that would be *overturn[ed]* by anyone.

(2.12) But we’ve lost our way morally. We’ve witnessed the slaughter of over fifty
five million babies in the name of choice, and we are now threatening the
foundation of religious liberty by criminalizing Christianity in demanding that
we abandon Biblical principles of natural marriage. Many of our politicians
(APPLAUSE) many of our politicians have surrendered to the false god of
judicial supremacy, which would allow black robed and unelected judges the
power to make law as well as enforce it upending the equality of our three
branches of government as well as the separation of powers so very central to
the Constitution. My friend the Supreme Court is not the supreme being
(APPLAUSE) and they cannot overturn the laws of nature or of nature’s God.

(Huckabee, 05/05/15)

An understanding of political rhetoric as constructing a FoR goes beyond simply
noting which principles organize the frame of reference and how people are situated
within it. A FoR also allows us to make determinations about the world, why people
are situated where they are, and how they should orient themselves to one another
or toward any relevant guideposts. Huckabee offered numerous determinations of his
own, while also prompting inferences to be made by voters precisely because of the Absolute FoR he expounded. As noted, Christian Morality should be understood as an Absolute landmark; so should a decontested understanding of The Constitution’s separation of powers, an Absolute I call Original Meaning which is developed in the next example. Any effort that does not accord with these Absolutes is forbidden, being a false god that leads Americans astray. Much like the Original Meaning of The Constitution, Americans must adhere to the laws of nature’s God as set down in the Christian Bible; these are unalterable truths, the denial of which sends one down a path of immorality.

Americans, and particularly women, have violated these truths by advocating for choice (l. 2). Huckabee’s use of choice here was not accidental nor simply a matter of rhetorical convention as regards abortion in American politics; choice is the very antithesis of an Absolute FoR. Only very limited possibilities for perspective-taking and action exist within a political system understood through an Absolute FoR. Advocating for marriage equality is similarly a violation of the Absolute of Christian Morality, one that threatens the very foundations of the Absolute of Christian Morality and religious liberty because it will naturally lead to criminalization of the faithful. The unalterability or reification of these Absolutes decontests the possibility of any elected or appointed government official from exercising their powers to allow proscribed behaviors being legalized, including: abortion, same-sex marriage, judicial review (particularly in those instances where expanded access to proscribed behaviors results; when it accords with the Absolutes those decisions are fine), and even the advocation for any and all such proscribed behaviors. This last prohibited behavior is the very false god Huckabee was warning about.

One final inference Huckabee would have the electorate accept is that the sins of
one are manifest on all Americans. Standing by and doing nothing to prevent abortion, to prevent same-sex marriage, to prevent people from having alternate viewpoints makes one equally culpable as if one had *slaughtered* (l. 1) a child, engaged in homosexuality or its celebration, or permitted government officials to offer other possible orders. Note how Huckabee used *we* inclusively, implicating that all Americans had gone astray due to the actions of some Individuals, casting every American as equally affected by the actions of a subset. This sin by association in a sense falls out from an Absolute FoR: people have to orient themselves with regard to the Absolute fixed bearings since those are what organize the socio-political landscape, not one’s own perspective on a given situation. Taking a personal viewpoint, and worse getting others to empathize with such a differing viewpoint, will eventually lead people to reorient the social order itself, such that ways that were once moral now seem immoral, and immoral ways would seem moral. It is in this reorientation away from the Absolutes where Huckabee and Jindal’s fear about *criminalizing Christianity* finds its full meaning. This subjugation of Rule of Law so completely to Christian Morality was an offered ideological order not without its detractors in the Republican field, Pataki going so far as to warn against falling toward theocracy (Example 2.19).

The concern that public officials, particularly the Supreme Court, would improperly impact American life is a common argument offered by the Republican candidates in favor of their own campaigns or at the least for electing Republicans rather than Democrats to all levels of government. My argument that the Absolutes are immutable is readily seen in the Republican candidates’ concern that the *Constitution is not a living and breathing document*, as noted by Rubio in the following example. This ideological interpretation decontests the possibility of interpreting the text, language, or *meaning of The Constitution* with reference to the present day. Rubio’s
defense of this practice during the ninth GOP debate demonstrates how the Abso-
lutes alone should guide how people experience their socio-political reality. I would
also argue that it is not *The Constitution* as a written document itself which acts as
the Absolute which Republicans would have voters align toward, rather toward the
belief in the immutability of this Absolute *Original Meaning* (l. 7), as subjectively
defined by Republicans and enacted through what they decontest as the only properly
decided Supreme Court cases.

(2.13) Well let me first talk about Justice Scalia—his loss is tremendous and
obviously our hearts and prayers go out to his family. He will go down as one
of the great justices in the history of this republic. You talk about someone
who defended consistently the original meaning of the Constitution, who
understood that the Constitution was not there to be interpreted based on the
fads of the moment. But that they were there to it was there to be interpreted
according to its original meaning Justice Scalia understood that better than
anyone in the history of this republic. His dissent for example on the
independent counsel case is a brilliant piece of jurist
work and of course, his dissent on Obergefell as well. Number two I do not
believe the president should appoint someone. And it’s not unprecedented in
fact it’s been over eighty years since a lame duck president has appointed a
Supreme Court justice. And it reminds us of this, how important this election
is. [DICKERSON: Thank you] Someone on this stage will get to choose the
balance of the Supreme Court. And it will begin by filling this vacancy that’s
there now. We need to put people on the bench that understand that the
Constitution is not a living and breathing document. It is to be interpreted as
originally meant.

(Rubio, GOP Debate 9)

Rubio constructed an interpretation of *The Constitution* as an inanimate document
if you will, one that does not *live* and *breathe*. His belief that only people who
properly *understand* its Original Meaning should be made judges is a natural con-
sequence of an Absolute FoR; people may not have personal ideas about the nature
of an Absolute, let alone those charged with discussing an Absolute’s impact on the
socio-political landscape. By harkening back to the time of The Constitution’s writing, one could argue that Rubio is sensitive to the idea of historical context insofar as historical situations may allow fruitful information to be brought to bear on current times. However, I would argue that his refrain about *original meaning* is a specific instance of the Glorious Past Absolute, one used frequently enough by Republican candidates to warrant status as a fixed bearing of its own. Rubio invoked the past not as a means to understand or contextualize the present, but to decontest the possible order where people might try to believe that the America is changeable. Rather than bringing historical information to bear on the present, the thrust of this comment is that the nature of the American social order should be understood as being as unchangeable as the written text, that the socio-political landscape is as inanimate as the very words on the pages of the Constitution. What laws might be allowed, and their impacts, must be severely curtailed by this Original Meaning Absolute, lest America be at the mercy of other possible orders which are only *fads of the moment* and the potential entropy they carry (Freeden 1996).

This supposed immutability of the Absolutes and proper orientation of the socio-political landscape reflect the conservative concern for organic change (Freeden 1996) and that a change spurred on by human intervention may upset the social order to the point of societal collapse. In many of the preceding examples I have shown how the Republican candidates have taken issue with various changes being promulgated upon America, decontest ing as inappropriate orders such changes they deemed have been wrongly injected into America. I have also argued how individual viewpoints are highly constrained within an Absolute FoR. In the next example, we can see these two concerns meet head on as Jindal expresses his dislike for Supreme Court Justices who change their viewpoint over time, turning away from their supposedly proper
understanding of the Absolutes and their role as defined by those Absolutes. Note how Jindal derided *conservatives* for not *stand[ing] up for our beliefs*, implicating that they have *evolved*.

(2.14) I think absolutely putting Roberts, I think putting k- Kennedy, I I think putting before them, uppiting- putting Souter o- on the bench was a mistake. But look, I think the the first responsibility starts in the White House. The reality is conservatives have not been willing to stand up for our beliefs. Unlike the the liberals look, y- you never worry about where the Democratic judges are gonna vote, it’s always the conservatives. You’ve never had a Democratic judge wake up and say, surprise, I’ve evolved, I’ve become a conservative. It’s always the Republicans, because we have presidents that try to find judges with no records, no rulings, no writings. I’ll tell you, I am gonna have a litmus test. For judges, I’m gonna find judges that are conservative, judges that are gonna be pro-life, judges that are gonna follow *The Constitution*, judges by the way that are gonna follow the American law, not international law. They’re not appointed there to interpret international law, they’re there to apply *The United States Constitution*. Judges understand, their job’s not to write law. If they want to write law, they should run for the Senate or the House. It’s time for a Republican president as the next commander in chief, I will do as the Democrats have done. I will appoint bold judges that are actually consistent with my values that’ll be conservatives and then force the Senate to confirm them.

(Jindal, GOP Debate 2)

Jindal lauds the Democratic judges for not changing their judicial behavior. This praise makes sense in an Absolute FoR because those judges are defending whatever it is they believe in. Their lack of *evolution* on issues, their immutable pattern of rulings in support of their ideological beliefs, is a proper behavior which Jindal finds lacking in the *conservatives*. This is not to say that he finds their judgements to be good or proper, but he can at least respect their lack of *evolution*. Consistent with his understanding of Original Meaning, Rule of Law, and to some extent American Exceptionalism, Jindal decontests his position to appoint judges who would only follow *The Constitution*, only interpret *American law*, and who would unwaveringly
stand up for [their] belief in these Absolutes. These are Jindal’s values which he felt should be shared by his judicial nominees. That he would also compel the Senate to confirm those nominations, without any possibility of dissent or likely even in-depth vetting, is also consistent with an understanding of an Absolute FoR. Jindal’s proper understanding of the Absolutes and their application to judicial appointments should be as decontested and undiscussable as the Absolutes themselves, particularly by those who might not share his values exactly.

The issue of the Supreme Court, notably its proper role in American governance, was particularly salient on the Republican side because of its link to the Rule of Law Absolute. On the Democratic side, however, the issue of the Supreme Court and its role was more muted overall. It may be that in the Conjoint FoR the Supreme Court is simply understood as one branch of an interdependent government which serves the people, and can do so based on the unique lived experiences of the Justices and with regard to the needs and will of the people. Specific issues tended to be rendered discussable, particularly Citizens United v. FEC by Sanders, but this was due to their impact on people’s lives rather than about the nature of the Supreme Court or law per se. The appointment of federal judges, and in particular Supreme Court Justices, took on particular import after the death of Justice Antonin Scalia (February 13, 2016), followed by the Republican led Senate’s choice that same day to not consider any nomination by Obama to fill his seat; in a sense, the Republican led Senate chose to decontest the possibility of a president filling a Supreme Court vacancy during an election year (see Rubio Example 2.13).

The eighth Democratic debate was their first held after Scalia’s passing, during which Clinton offered her understanding of the role of the Supreme Court and the Justices. Rather than nominating Justices who would offer rulings based on sup-
posedly shared Absolutes, Clinton would prefer Justices who understand their role through a Conjoint FoR. Justices should have a heart, and assess the merits of their decisions based on the impact on the lives of Americans instead of how best to orient the socio-political landscape to various Absolutes, either Christian Morality by denying marriage equality as e.g. Santorum and Huckabee would have them, or Original Meaning by deciding that a company’s ability to fund campaign ads is a form of free speech as in Citizens United.

Clinton’s concern for the impact on people’s lives is characteristic of a Conjoint FoR because American life is defined by and understood through the lived experiences of people, and how they might and do interact with one another. To this first point, Clinton’s requirements describe the onus on Justices to take into account how their rulings might impact others, that from their life experience they should assess whether their actions would adversely affect others. This concern should guide Clinton’s nominees to view Roe v Wade as settled law, not because it should be undiscussable, rather because it protects the woman’s right to choose how best to handle her reproductive health from interference by the government and other people. To the second point, a Conjoint understanding must take into account how people broadly can impact others; decisions of the Supreme Court can inadvertently enable some people to exert disproportionate power over others, upsetting the balance of power between e.g. political advocacy groups who can afford to widely distribute a preferred ideological narrative via advertising dollars versus voters who only have their singular voice and vote within the electorate. This actual or perceived imbalance of power should at the least lead to Citizens United being reopened for discussion in order to reassess its impact with respect to the new shared social Context it created, and perhaps be found worthy of being overturned.
Well I think this is one of the most important issues facing our country right now. And I fully support President Obama’s uh intention under The Constitution to nominate a successor to Justice Scalia. (APPLAUSE) And I believe I believe no state probably understands this better than Florida cuz lets remember three words Bush versus Gore. (LIGHT APPLAUSE) A court took away a presidency. Now we’ve got the Republican Congress trying to take away The Constitution and we should not tolerate that. (APPLAUSE) And so from my perspective, it is imperative that we put enormous pressure on the Republicans in the Senate to do their constitutional duty. Now obviously you look for people who are not only qualified on paper but have a heart, have life experience, understand what these decisions mean in the lives of Americans. And understand the balance of power that their decisions can disrupt one way or the other. So clearly I would look for people who believe that Roe v Wade is settled law and that Citizens United needs to be overturned (APPLAUSE) as quickly as possible.

(Clinton, DEM Debate 8)

The concept of balance (Johnson 1987) is a central concern within the shared repertoire of the Democratic CoA. Many of the Democratic examples examined so far have contained descriptions which could be understood as attempts to achieve or maintain a balance of forces or interactions between people. Sanders’ (Example 2.5) invocation of the “Golden Rule” should be understood as assuring one’s actions toward others are balanced with respect to one’s expectation of treatment in return. O’Malley (Example 2.6) described numerous imbalances created by “wealthy special interests” at the expense of “a majority of our people”. Webb (Example 2.7) noted how all people deserve equivalent access to their government regardless of an imbalance of power that may exist between them, whether economic or political. Balance is so central to the Democratic CoA because it is central to a Conjoint FoR as related to political rhetoric. People assess their placement within the fabric of American life based on how they interact with others; the constant check against one another’s behavior allows for an assessment of how well or poorly such interactions are from both sides’ vantage point. Perhaps the worst treatment which people could experience at
the hands of others is being made unable to live their lives (Example 2.15 l. 11) as they see fit.

The following example from Clinton demonstrates this idea of imbalance as undue influence or a disproportionate exercise of force by some people over others. In this debate answer, Clinton reiterated her concern about the Supreme Court with specific regard to women’s rights. What is particularly interesting about this comment is that she had to bring up the issue herself, to render discussable between herself and Sanders what debate moderators had so far chosen not to ask about. Clinton framed her concern with regard to various political bodies or people, and how they would, and do, attempt to constrain women from or punish them for making their own decisions in how to live their lives, while arguing that her opponents, both Republican and Democratic alike, have attempted to render undiscussable or distract attention from women’s lived experiences which may justify their choice to exercise their rights and autonomy as human beings capable of decisions about how best to live their lives.

(2.16) Y’know, there is no doubt that the only people that I would ever appoint to the Supreme Court are people who believe that Roe v Wade is settled law and Citizens United needs to be overturned. (LIGHT APPLAUSE) And I wanna say something about this since we’re talking about the Supreme Court and what’s at stake. We’ve had eight debates before this is our ninth. We’ve not had one question about a woman’s right to make her own decisions (APPLAUSE) about reproductive healthcare, not one question. And in the meantime we have states, governors doing everything they can to restrict women’s rights. We have (APPLAUSE) a presidential candidate by the name of Donald Trump saying that women should be punished. And we are never asked about this. And to be complete in my concern, Senator Sanders said with respect to Trump it was a distraction. I don’t think it’s a distraction it goes to the heart of who we are as women, our rights, our autonomy, our ability to make our own decisions, (APPLAUSE) and we need to be talking about that and defending Planned Parenthood from these outrageous attacks.

(Clinton, DEM Debate 9)
Clinton framed the actions of various agents, the states, governors, and even Trump as outrageous attacks because such actions would allow other people to exert undue power over all women, not just those who might actually seek an abortion. Such actions would prevent all women from exercising their own autonomy to conduct their lives by removing one possible choice of reproductive healthcare. Within a Conjoint FoR, it is no coincidence that Clinton invoked both Roe and Citizens United because both can be understood as undue power in the hands of some people which can limit the choices of others. For the former, Roe granted women autonomy from other people attempting to exercise their power to restrict women from, or punish them for their choices, whether governments or men broadly by implicature via Trump. Similarly, the desire to have Citizens United overturned stems from the power it granted to various organizations to exert undue influence over elections. As Clinton noted during her candidacy announcement in the following example, the problem with Citizens United rested in the disparity between the people with their right to vote, to make a personal choice for a preferred candidate, versus larger corporate entities with their ability to assure their preferred government through purchasing power, in essence to decontest an election in favor of their preferred social order; note the similarity with her concern about “Bush versus Gore” and how the Republican majority of the Supreme “[C]ourt took away a presidency” (Example 2.16).

(2.17) We need Justices on the Supreme Court who will protect every citizen’s right to vote, (APPLAUSE) rather than every corporation’s right to buy elections. (APPLAUSE)

(Clinton, 06/13/15)

Balance need not be understood solely with regard to differentials in power and how to ameliorate them. Given the emphasis on unique personal perspective in a Conjoint FoR and the need to render all ideological positions discussable, balance
can simply be taking into account different groups’ lived experiences within their given contexts as Sanders argued for bring[ing] people together around strong, commonsense le- gun legislation. By allowing people from rural states and urban states to take another look at gun legislation and offer their differing voices and views, Sanders would hope to overcome the weaknesses in current gun legislation while at the same time assuring that such laws do not create undue difficulties for either side.

(2.18) Absolutely, I think the governor gave a very good example about the weaknesses in that law and I think we have to take another look at it. But here is the point Governor. We can raise our voices, but I come from a rural state, and the views on gun control in rural states are different than in urban states whether we like it or not. Our job is to bring people together around strong commonsense le- gun legislation. I think there is a vast majority in this country who want to do the right thing, and I intend to lead the country, in bringing our people together on that issue.

(Sanders, DEM Debate 1)

Consistent with the Conjoint FoR, Sanders noted how the different contexts people live in contribute to different views or perspectives on issues. Each group’s perspective should be assessed and empathized with, both by legislators and by the other group themselves. By getting both groups together, they should eventually empathize with one another’s viewpoint and then come to some middle or common ground, balancing their needs with respect to the other group’s. Though each group’s particular contexts supposedly varied dramatically, there should still be a way to bring a vast majority in this country toward a shared perspective which takes into account the needs and desires of both groups without creating an imbalance such that one side would feel disrespected or unduly burdened by weak or overly repressive laws being passed.
2.4 The socio-political landscape: Reified or contextual

This section details the differences in how the candidates of each party construct and understand the nature of the socio-political landscape and citizens’ location or placement within it; both parties’ ideological worldviews help voters assess the merits of ideological interpretations, policy prescriptions, and one another’s behaviors.

The Conjoint FoR of the Democratic CoA bases such assessments on unique personal viewpoints regarding the interactions between people, a form of \textit{a posteriori} knowledge extrapolated from their own and others’ lived experiences; the Absolute FoR of the Republican CoA bases such assessments on a form of \textit{a priori} knowledge–what is right and wrong, good and evil, and moral or immoral etc.–which they have granted themselves the power to subjectively define. To explore these different natures of the socio-political landscape, I return to the issue of marriage equality on the Republican side and then turn to healthcare on the Democratic side.

For the Democratic candidates, people and nations, used as both Figures and Grounds, are enmeshed in interdependent systems which they construct and render discussable through their unique lived experiences and interactions with one another; the nature of this shared Social Context can best be perceived and understood through the “known instances of commonplace behavior[s]” (Freeden 1996:101) which people engage in together and assess on a daily basis. For the Republican candidates, the extra-human ordering of the social order delimits particular standards of behavior (Lakoff 2002:Ch. 5): standards used as Grounds which Individual Figures depend upon to make sense of the socio-political landscape, and which are defined by the supposedly shared social beliefs and standards which Individual Figures are enmeshed within. Defining such shared social constructs as fixed bearings requires decontesting them as taken-for-granted, extra-human, reified givens which structure and permeate
Individual Figures’ experiences of the socio-political landscape.

In order to reify their fixed bearings as extra-human guideposts which delimit standards of behavior and which structure an Individual’s experiences, a Republican candidate has to decontest their ideological worldview as the only right and proper way for Individuals to understand their own and others’ actions which do, did, should, and could occur. By pointing out how and why Individual Figures properly orient, or worse misorient themselves and others, Republican candidates simultaneously defocus attention from the constructed and contested nature of the guideposts and the standards of behavior they supposedly delimit, while taking for granted that such guideposts exist to begin with as the extra-human Grounds against which such (mis)orientation can be assessed because of the standards of behaviors they delimit. This seeming paradox (§1.4.1) is somewhat unavoidable: to claim that an Individual’s behaviors do or do not violate standards requires a belief that standards exist in the first place; and further, in order for the offered assessment to make meaningful sense, everyone must agree that these standards exist as standards to begin with. Through a careful analysis of the behaviors which the Republican candidates describe Americans engaging in and assessing as proper or improper, we can peel back the layers of the extra-human order which the Republican candidate believe to be the “self-evident and natural order which [should go] without saying and therefore [should not be] questioned” (Bourdieu 1977: 166; brackets mine).

Creating such shared cultural beliefs requires erasing personal perspectives of or motivations from the interactions between Individual Figures, locating their actions only with respect to the fixed-bearing Grounds of the Absolute FoR, including an erasure of the Republican candidates’ own personal motivations in defining the Absolutes and the standards they delimit to begin with. The issue of marriage equality is partic-
ularly suited to such an analysis because the Republican candidates could accuse the Supreme Court Justices not only for violating the extra-human ordering of American society and its “principles of natural marriage” (Huckabee Example 2.12) but also for allowing their “own individual interpretations” (Christie Example 2.21) to sway their judgement and improperly “interpret” (Pataki Example 2.9; Rubio Example 2.13) the state-level same-sex marriage bans as unconstitutional.

One tactic Republican candidates employed to reify their fixed bearings as givens was to triangulate Individuals within two or more Absolutes, describing how and why certain behaviors, beliefs, or actions should be understood as problematic given the Individuals’ location within the socio-political landscape and the Absolutes which govern them through the standard behaviors they require. Such triangulations also offered the Republican candidates a means to differentiate their candidacies’ from one another by offering a particular configuration of Absolutes which voters should see as offering a better structure to and understanding of the social order, and a better means to navigate toward a better future for America. One Absolute with particular relevance for this section is one I label Islamism, briefly defined as an understanding of Islam as a problematic or negative force in the world, which was frequently employed to demonstrate particularly antithetical American values; for additional discussion of this Absolute see §4.4.2.

As the examples from the Republican candidates in this section demonstrate, the standards of behavior which the fixed bearings impose have real ramifications for how Individuals can assess their own and others’ behavior, and on what the nature

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2I chose the nominal derivation of the Republican candidates’ oft repeated adjective “Islamic” to differentiate it from the faith of Islam itself. Note that one Republican candidate, Gilmore, did use the term “Islamism” during his appearance on the seventh GOP debate.
of the American socio-political landscape should be and could be, depending on how the fixed bearings are arrayed. In the following example, Pataki decontested his preferred ideological worldview of America as a country where Rule of Law requires an Individual elected official to follow that law [even] if it conflicts with [one’s] beliefs, lest America become more like Iran. By erasing Kim Davis’ personal beliefs as valid, in light of her duty as an elected official to perform that wedding, Pataki reified the fixed bearing of one Rule of Law in America which delimits a series of standards of behavior and their proper assessment for Americans with respect to marriage equality and its provision to citizens; elected officials should not deny their duty to their constituents due to their religious belief, and Americans should accept that as the case lest we become similar to a theocratic regime.

Triangulating the actions of two Individuals, an elected official and a generic Muslim, within the fixed bearings of Rule of Law on the one hand and Christian Morality and Islamism respectively on the other, Pataki noted how problematic assessments of those actions have been, or worse could be made. For the former, Kim Davis having been censured for standing up for her beliefs, both the beliefs and her commitment to them being locatable within the Christian Moral Absolute as appropriate and valorized, was met with outrage by many in the Republican CoA; for the latter, had the Individual Muslim been censured for not performing that wedding based upon their beliefs, both being locatable within the fixed bearing of Islamism and its potential for negative assessments, such outrage against their censure would not have been forthcoming. For Pataki, such disparity in assessments of behaviors due to an improper understanding and ordering of the fixed bearings could potentially lead to the America becoming more like a place where the religion supersedes the rule of law.

(2.19) PATAKI: Jake, if I can comment on this. Yes, uh Kim daz- Davis is different from Islamist radicals from the Middle East. But on the other hand, we
have one rule of law in America, and an elected official can’t say that I’m not
going to follow that law if it conflicts with my beliefs. I think she should have
been fired and if she had worked for me, I would have fired her. [TAPPER:
We’re gonna] We have to uphold the rule of law. (APPLAUSE)

TAPPER: Thank you, Governor.

PATAKI: Imagine one minute Jake, imagine one minute that was a Muslim
who said that I don’t believe in gay marriage, and refused to to perform that
wedding. We wouldn’t have had that outrage. There is a place where the
religion supersedes the rule of law. It’s called Iran. It shouldn’t be the United
States.

(Pataki, GOP Debate 2)

Much like Sanders (Example 2.5), Pataki discussed more than just Christianity, but
to offer an understanding of religion in the America such that the Rule of Law should
apply uniformly above any Absolute based on a religious code. The assessment he
offered for voter consumption is that undue privilege of any religious code could
potentially turn America into a theocratic state. For Pataki, it seems that the proper
alignment of Absolutes with Rule of Law as the most salient is indicative of America’s
Exceptionalism, unlike the opposite ordering some other Republicans offered in §2.2;
America should be understood as a better nation than others in part because of its
adherence to Rule of Law above religious codes.

Pataki’s juxtaposition of Christian Morality and Islamism was in part motivated
by the preceding commentary in the debate which revolved around ISIS and possible
terrorist attacks on American soil. However, the issue of American Muslims and Islam
generally had the same problematic nature as marriage equality within the Republican
CoA because of the interface between Rule of Law and religious liberty broadly. Note
how Pataki exploited this similarity and in so doing demonstrated the inferential
potential inherent in FoRs (Levinson 2003) and the reason why the relation between
Absolutes should be carefully considered so Individuals can make proper sense of the
socio-political landscape. He described two Individuals who should be understood as orienting their behavior toward a religious Absolute at the expense of Rule of Law, and noted how two different inferences would be derived depending on the particular religion being adhered to. Kim Davis’ actions would be viewed as correct and therefore her censure as incorrect. Pataki’s comment that *We wouldn’t have had that outrage* seems to point toward a scenario where the censure of the Muslim’s actions would be viewed as correct, and therefore that the Muslim’s behavior, and by extension their faith, was incorrect.

The fact that Pataki was able to generate these two inferences for voter consumption helps to demonstrate the utility of the Absolute FoR and its fixed bearings in a discussion of political rhetoric, while hopefully allaying concerns that my analysis may be overly subjective or that I create any Absolute I might desire. The first inference regarding Kim Davis actually happened, where a backlash against her censure for standing up for her beliefs occurred. It is not just that Pataki was repeating what happened, but actually that such an inference about how to react to a given situation was available for being acted upon by numerous Individuals since that is what FoRs do: present possible inferential potentials regarding appropriate beliefs, understandings, actions and reactions relating to the socio-political landscape. This possible inference regarding how to assess her actions as appropriate was then made manifest by the actions of various members of the Republican CoA; they had to think it appropriate to be outraged before they could go out and act outraged. But, given that possible inference regarding Kim Davis and its follow-through being the case, Pataki’s comment regarding the opposite assessment of a Muslim behaving the same way should thus be understood in a different light. For Pataki to draw the second inference within an Absolute FoR which has shared cultural beliefs that act as guide-
posts, that a Muslim could potentially be rightly censured while engaging in a similar behavior as a Christian, means that there must be an Absolute somewhere in the FoR that would license just such an alternate inference for the members of the CoA to make, an Absolute which would permit or require a negative view of Islam, or at the least those aspects of Islam which Republicans would have voters understand as being “radical” (Graham Example 2.20).

Graham offered a similar argument to Pataki regarding the Rule of Law such that the Supreme Court’s ruling on marriage equality must be followed, while warning that careful consideration of how the Absolutes are understood in relation to one another is required since an overly stringent interpretation or ordering of Absolutes might make it difficult for voters to assess what actions and behaviors are appropriate. Unlike most of the other Republican candidates, including Pataki (Example 2.9), who argued that the Supreme Court’s decision was an overreach, Graham decontested his understanding that the Supreme Court’s decision was within their power per the Rule of Law Absolute, and that the standards of behavior it requires both of the Justices, and of the rest of America is neither up for debate, being the law of the land which we have to follow whether we agree with it or not.

Graham also deemphasized the Absolute of Original Meaning by asserting that the Supreme Court does have the power to interpret The Constitution as to what it means in order to maintain an understanding of Rule of Law such that the Supreme Court’s role does include the power of judicial review of laws. Rather than assessing the socio-political landscape based on how people can and do interact with each other, Graham’s concern was how an overly strict interpretation of the Rule of Law Absolute, being in line with Pataki (Example 2.19) on this point in certain respects, might prevent Individuals from practicing their faith as required by their religious
Absolute, while not sharing Pataki’s fear of theocracy outright however. Graham’s policy prescription to protect religious people was about making manifest an appropriate understanding of Rule of Law such that the Supreme Court has the power of judicial review in matters that some would rather see as more appropriately governed by a religious Absolute, while also not unduly burdening Individuals from practicing their faith as their religious Absolute would require.

Unlike Pataki specifically, Graham hesitated somewhat in decontesting an array of Absolutes such that Rule of Law supersedes Christian Morality. While Graham was willing to accept that marriage equality is now the law of the land, he still personally did not agree with the decision, decontesting that even his own personal opinion and perspective should not be taken too far into account, which in turn reinscribed and reified the fixed bearings and their standards of behavior which everyone, including him, have to follow. Graham triangulated the behaviors of Individuals exercising
their religious rights within the standards imposed by Christian Morality and Rule of Law such that Individuals should be able to exercise their faith free of government interference, including the ability to marry people consistent with the tenets of your … faith. One would hope his protect/ion/ would extend to all citizens, even if they have no tenets that preclude same-sex marriage; after all, while others in the Republican CoA might not agree with Graham, they should still abide by the law as required.

Going further than Pataki, Graham makes explicit that the Islamism Absolute does exist, and is counter to a proper orientation of the socio-political landscape. Graham decontested his ideological worldview as natural, that Americans should orient toward Rule of Law and Christian Morality, by warning that the American social landscape itself is threatened by radical Islam. Tagging on this decontestation at the end served to render Graham’s arguments undiscussable in way, presenting as doxic his understanding of how America is right now which no one should lose sight of. His use of the belief system of Islam itself, rather than implicating agents such as terrorists or an invading army, lends evidence to my claim that his concern was more about the system of Absolutes than people and their actions, as does his call to not lose sight of the big picture, both of which erase the legitimacy of any friction which may be occurring between the wedding cake baker or the gay couple or the Baptist preacher. In essence, the debate about whether Rule of Law or Christian Morality being a more salient Ground for assessing one another’s behavior was defocused by Graham in this particular moment, reifying their standards of behaviors as givens through fear of their loss due to the types of actions licensed by radical Islam, namely that we’ll all be kill[ed] if we don’t stop arguing amongst ourselves and take seriously that an Absolute like Islamism exists with the problematic behaviors it supposedly requires of its adherents.
Christie also decontested his ideological interpretation regarding marriage equality with regard to the Absolutes of Christian Morality, Rule of Law, and Islamism. Consistent with Pataki and Graham, he argued that the Rule of Law must be oriented toward, but in a more transactional manner such that some Individual clerk must assure access to the machinery of marriage. This resembles a free-market argument where if one store is unable to help a customer, another one should be; as relates to Kim Davis, another member of her staff should do the job which she feels violates her conscience. Much like Graham, Christie orients the socio-political landscape such that the Rule of Law is upheld by the actions of some members, and Christian Morality is upheld by not forcing people to behave counter to the demands of their faith.

For Christie, the issue with marriage equality revolves more around why the marriage license transaction should be structured in a certain way to assure that all of the Individuals involved neither feel nor are compelled to behave in inappropriate ways, and less around actual interactions between people: the license-seeker should not feel affronted nor burdened by having to seek out a second clerk; this second clerk should not feel burdened having to serve the license-seeker; and Kim Davis should not feel burdened to violate her faith. Christie’s choice of syntax was designed to describe how Individuals should orient toward the Absolutes and that their behavior toward one another follows naturally from those orientations; his entire description was composed of clauses that never once mentioned the license-seeking couple in a benefactive or recipient semantic role of being helped by the clerks, the closest being the person (l. 6) experiencing a need (l. 7) to receive the license. Syntactically, the clerks and license-seeker are never in a relationship of transfer, only in having personal obligations or needs to be met.
(2.21) No. What I said Chris was that the law needs to be followed. And that someone in that office has to do their job. So if Miss Davis wanted to step aside and get rid of her ability to be able to do that, there should be someone else in that office who it didn’t violate their conscience so they could follow the law of the state of Kentucky. I never said that Miss Davis should either lose her job, or that she had to do it. But what I did say was, that the person who came in for the license needed to get it. And so if there’s someone in that in that organization, and it turns out there was, who was willing to be able to do that, that’s what we should do. But % just as importantly, and I n- agree with what John said. Y’know we all have our own individual interpretations of our faith. And here’s the problem with what’s going on around the world. The radical Islamic jihadists, what they wanna do is impose their faith upon each and every one of us. Every one of us. And the reason why this war against them is so important, is that very basis of religious liberty. They want everyone in this country to follow their religious beliefs the way they do. They do not want us to exercise religious liberty. That’s why as commander in chief, I will take on ISIS, not only because is keeps us safe, but because it allows us to absolutely conduct our religious affairs the way we find in our heart and in our souls. As a Catholic that’s what I wanna do. And no matter what your faith is that’s what I want you to be able to do. (APPLAUSE)

(Christie, GOP Debate 7)

By triangulating his argument against Islamism, Christie decontested his preferred array of Christian Morality and Rule of Law as precluding a possible order where Americans could be forced to follow [someone else’s] religious beliefs the way they do, which in turn reified what behaviors do and do not violate religious liberty or impose a faith based assessment upon someone’s actions. Each Individual’s actions are assessed as appropriate because of America’s proper orientation toward Rule of Law and Christian Morality, which engenders that very basis of religious liberty to absolutely conduct our religious affairs the way we find in our heart and in our souls. Individual license-seekers should not infer a negative assessment of their actions when an Individual clerk like Kim Davis, who adheres to a particular religious belief system, refuses to sign a document. And neither party should feel that such an interaction is an example of someone trying to impose their faith upon each and every one of use
to compel the other to follow their religious beliefs the way they do. Which, Christie reminds us, is what radical Islamic jihadists attempt to do.

Christie’s comment that we all have our own individual interpretations of our faith might seem to be a Conjoint understanding of religious experience; however, the totality of his answer does not afford this conclusion. Christie doxically presupposed that everyone should understand the socio-political landscape in a specific way such that the beliefs and actions of each clerk and license-seeker are not interpreted through their own unique perspectives, each respected on its own merits and empathized with by the others. Rather, the shared belief system of the Absolute FoR with its proper ordering of Absolutes is reified as extra-human and assures everyone’s understanding of and compliance to the standards of behavior which the various Absolutes spell out; lest our society come to resemble the problem with what’s going around the world: Islamism. Because his ordering of Absolutes still permits a degree of Christian Morality to determine the extent to which certain actions are assessed as appropriate in America, as a form of religious liberty, while arguing against the potential for a similar degree of religious liberty under Islam, Christie manages to obscure the subjective nature of Absolutes: the potential for Islamism to offer a proper assessment of behaviors should be understood a form of imposing their faith on each and every one of us, while Christian Morality doing the same should not be understood so.

Unlike the other Republican candidates discussed in this section, Kasich did not frame his understanding of marriage equality with respect to Islamism; though, much like Graham, he chose to move on rather than dwelling on the morality of the ruling or how government officials should behave with regard to marriage equality. Kasich quite literally decontested his position ... [as] clear and inviolate with No question and no doubt about it by triangulating various behaviors and their assessments within
the fixed bearings of Rule of Law, Christian Morality, and Economic Supremacy. In brief, Economic Supremacy privileges economic concerns above most any other; after all, according to Kasich if you’re in the business of commerce, conduct commerce and, if necessary, pray after the problematic transaction is complete. Much like Christie’s concern regarding access to services, Kasich feared a slippery slope in problematic behaviors and assessments; if Christian Morality were allowed to supersede Economic Supremacy, Individual business owners might not sell to somebody [they] don’t agree with, eventually refusing sales to more than just same-sex couples desiring access to the machinery of marriage. In an effort to not harm his campaign by alienating voters who privilege Christian Morality, he would make allowances for religious institutions, likely houses of worship and other establishments that are specifically religious in nature, practicing their religion regardless if some of their actions might appear economic.

In his complex series of triangulations between Christian Morality and Rule of Law with respect to Economic Supremacy, Kasich reified Christian Morality and to a certain extent Rule of Law, and the behaviors which they both delimit, as appropriate ways for various Individuals to understand the structure of the social order which should neither be negatively assessed nor brought up for discussion, lest we be unable to know where does it end. So long as the commercial transactions between Individuals occur appropriately within the fixed bearing of Economic Supremacy and the ideological spaces it has precedence over, Kasich doxically presupposed the other two Absolutes, their standards of behavior, and the Individuals orienting to them as natural occurrences which Americans should all expect to come across as they simply conduct commerce.

\[3\]See Chapter 3 and §4.2 for a fuller analysis of Economic Supremacy.
Well y’know, of course, I mean and if you look I was involved in just being a pioneer in a new church. Religious institutions should be able to practice the religion that they believe in. No question and no doubt about it. Now in regard to same-sex marriage, I don’t favor it I’ve always favored traditional marriage. Uh but you look the court has ruled and I’ve moved on. And what I’ve said, Hugh is that, look, y’know where does it end? If you’re if you’re in the business of selling things, if you’re not gonna sell to somebody you don’t agree with, y- OK today I’m not gonna sell to somebody who’s uh who’s gay, and tomorrow maybe I won’t sell to somebody who’s divorced. I mean if you’re in the business of commerce, conduct commerce. That’s my view. And if you don’t agree with their lifestyle, say a prayer for them when they leave and hope they change their behavior. But when it comes to the religious institutions, they are in inviolate in my mind, and I would fight for those religious institutions. And ik- look, I’ve appointed over a hundred judges as governor. I even appointed a judge to the Ohio Supreme Court. And y’know what they are? They’re conservatives. Go check it out. They are conservatives. They don’t make the law. They interpret the law. That’s all they do. And they stick by the Constitution. So I will do that. But let’s just not get so narrow here as (BELL RINGING) to gotcha this or that. I think my position is clear.

(Kasich, GOP Debate 10)

This example demonstrates how the complexity of lived experiences and people’s interactions with one another can be described and understood through an Absolute FoR and its fixed bearings, delineating which sorts of behaviors are appropriate or not based on the Absolutes which take precedence under certain situations. Kasich’s array of Absolutes described the standards of behavior and their appropriate assessment based upon how particular Individuals are located within the triangulation of various fixed bearings: 1) Economic Supremacy supersedes Christian Morality because of the Rule of Law for Individual business owners who should respect the Rule of Law above their own Christian Morality by selling to anyone and only praying after; and 2) Christian Morality supersedes Economic Supremacy because of the Rule of Law for religious institutions which should not have to sell to somebody who’s uh who’s gay, regardless of how their activities may seem like economic ones be-
cause such institutions are inviolate with respect to Economic Supremacy. Even these less-than-welcome customers should orient toward Christian Morality by not negatively assessing an Individual business owner who might hope that they change from their improper behavior[s], whether homosexuality or divorce since the only behaviors sanctioned within the customer-seller interaction are those delimited by Economic Supremacy. Kasich’s array of Absolutes may appear to offer differential actions to business owners who orient toward a religious Absolute dependent on a particular circumstance, seeming somewhat Conjoint insofar as an Individual business owner should behave in one way during business hours and in another way when not. However, this relativism is only illusory for two reasons. All Individual business owners regardless of religious affiliation should behave in the same manner, orienting to Economic Supremacy; this array of Absolutes does not compel them to violate their orientation to a given religious Absolute, because they are still able to say a prayer immediately after the customer leave[s].

The examples presented so far in this section constitute a second possible faction within the Republican CoA, the first being in the vein of Huckabee (Example 2.12) and Santorum (Example 2.11) where Christian Morality should supersede Rule of Law because that is their preferred understanding of the nature of the world. The four candidates in this section were a bit more hesitant about that particular orientation of Absolutes. A likely reason for their hesitation can be traced to their need for voters to align with their candidacies. The more rigid structure of Absolutes offered by Huckabee and Santorum might distance voters who approve of marriage equality, or those who do not find the process of its passage as problematic. However, rejecting that more rigid ordering outright would likely be too great a violation of the shared norms and repertoire of the Republican CoA, resulting in a candidate’s failure to gain
traction with the Republican membership as well. So instead, these candidates took great pains to not outright reject the centrality of Christian Morality and Rule of Law, but also to be less dogmatic in how they oriented them. The other Absolutes, whether invoked in the questions or immediately surrounding discourse, or invoked exclusively by the candidate as Christie’s concern (Example 2.21) regarding Islamism offered the candidates cover in a way, permitting them the latitude to debate the ordering of Christian Morality and Rule of Law to ensure America does not become like Iran (Pataki Example 2.19) or excessively violate free-market principles (Kasich Example 2.22).

While Republican candidates can differentiate themselves by subtly manipulating how the Absolutes are arrayed and how Individuals should orient toward them, Democratic candidates can differentiate themselves through their choice in perspectives: whose viewpoints they choose to take into account, what aspects of a situation they choose to foreground or background, and the interrelation between these two aspects of perspective. Because a Conjoint FoR has no arbitrary landmarks whose salience dominates a viewer’s understanding, the socio-political landscape itself and how people are enmeshed within the systems they create through their interdependent interactions must be focused on, offering the Grounds within which the Democratic candidates can locate the validity of their ideological worldview; but, that focus can be set at whatever level of granularity the candidate chooses to take. While the goal of a better America may be the same, the paths each Democratic candidate chooses to chart and their justification as to their path’s validity may differ depending on the features of the socio-political landscape they choose to highlight or obscure. To argue how their ideological worldview can help voters make better sense of the socio-political landscape, the Democratic candidates located their ideological interpreta-
tions and policy prescriptions through descriptions of the unique lived experiences and perspectives of various people, groups, and even nations as both Figures and Grounds, foregrounding and backgrounding various behaviors and their impacts, as well as possible assessments of both, as commonplace and discussable. Through their discussion of healthcare, I demonstrate the Democratic CoA’s understanding of the nature of the socio-political landscape as a shared Social Context which can best be understood through these observable, commonplace interactions which people engage in together and make assessments of.

By appealing to others’ perspectives, the Democratic candidates buttress their argument through the mutually perceptible shared Social Context, where various people can come to similar conclusions about the world and how it does and could work: if others can act in and think about the world in some way, perhaps we all can. Rather than presupposing that there is only one right way to run a country or experience citizenship, Sanders would often support his positions by offering other nations or their citizenry as perspective-takers, describing their view of their own socio-political landscape and how Americans could come to see their own in similar ways.

In the next example, Sanders offered the perspective that it is both possible and fruitful to compare and contrast our method of governance with other nations. By setting the granularity of viewpoint of the Social Context to an international scale, Sanders offered an understanding of healthcare that backgrounded the commonplace interactions between Americans and the insurance industry, defocusing the economic nature of our system as currently practiced. By locating a possible American understanding of healthcare as a Figure within the Ground of how other nation’s accomplish it, Sanders encouraged the electorate to look at the socio-political landscape
differently, to examine how other nations accomplish healthcare as a right and to appreciate that such a view is both possible and achievable. Further, he would have us join them, sharing the same Social Context by moving closer toward or by their side in a way; rather than simply noting the different possible perspectives one could take, Sanders would have Americans change vantage point entirely, to see the Social Context of our own country in such a way that healthcare can be a right secured by the government to its citizens.

(2.23) Thirdly, we have got to understand that in America we should be thinking big not small. (APPLAUSE) [BLITZER: Thank you.] We need to join the rest of the industrialized world and guarantee healthcare to all people as a right. (APPLAUSE) My view not her view.

(Sanders, DEM Debate 9)

In many comments like this throughout his candidacy, Sanders pointed out the different perspectives that other nations and their citizenry take on the concept of rights, such that some policy prescriptions like healthcare and higher education, which are currently practiced in the American Social Context in a predominantly economic manner, can be secured by a government as “a right of citizenship” (Sanders DEM debate 1). Sanders’ frequent use of other nations and their commonplace interactions as Grounds, worthy of making assessments about our own socio-political landscape with respect to, differs from the Republican candidates and their understanding of American Exceptionalism; Sanders in effect claimed that other nations and their people might possibly be governing and living better than America and we should take a look at how they manage it.

At times, Sanders differentiated his policy prescription from Clinton’s not through substantive details per se, but through how their unique perspectives on a policy differed; though he might believe his view of the issue is better than hers, he does
not reject the possibility that policy issues are discussable, that people can have different opinions on what is best for the nation. Note how he chose to describe his understanding of healthcare as \[\text{his view}\], and only claimed that Clinton did not inhabit the same vantage point since it was \text{not her view}. Sanders constructed his ideological worldview as one that takes into account a broader perspective, a more complex Social Context which includes how other nations understand what a socio-political landscape should look like; Clinton’s, he argued, does not share such a broad scope. Though Sanders offered no explicit information about Clinton’s perspective on healthcare, a voter can infer that it is perhaps much narrower in scope, likely circumscribed by only American ideas of what healthcare or rights can look like, or perhaps simply her own personal ideas.

As mentioned previously (Example 2.7), empathy is one of the primary means to take different perspectives into account. Empathy in a Conjoint FoR related to political rhetoric considers how people might perceive their lives being impacted by various policy initiatives. I hedge here because of the nature of political rhetoric where candidates generally talk about large groups of people. Do the candidates know exactly how a policy impacts every person in a given group? No. However, the nature of the socio-political landscape as a shared Social Context can account for the capability to empathize with large groups, being understood as constructed by the interactions of all of the people within it. Given that large groups can be seen engaging in similar or commonplace behaviors, being impacted by policies or other people in similar ways, and reacting to those impacts in similar ways, the Democratic candidates can reasonably infer that those groups are taking a similar perspective on various situations, which can then be empathized with.

In the following example, Clinton highlighted the economic nature of healthcare as
practiced in America, Grounding her perspective by empathizing through the perspectives of various groups and how they have been impacted. Clinton described various people’s negative experiences which resulted from the actions of *insurance companies* and other businesses which previous healthcare policies allowed, whether a *terrible situation* experienced by *people with pre-existing conditions* not having affordable options, *women* being *charged more than men*, or *young people* losing insurance simply due to their age. For Clinton, government policies can engender positive impacts in America by assuring that certain groups do not *game* the system to their advantage at the expense of other Americans. The *important point* or perspective voters should attend to is the problematic practices of certain businesses which have resulted in a Social Context lacking in *competition* and allowing unfair pricing practices; the remedy she offered is greater governmental *oversight* or assessment of the pricing practices businesses engage in.

(2.24) Well I would certainly build on the successes of the Affordable Care Act and work to fix some of the glitches that you just referenced. Uh number one, we do have more people who have access to health care. We have ended the terrible situation that people with pre-existing conditions were faced with where they couldn’t find at any affordable price health care. *Women are not charged more than men* any longer for our health insurance. And we keep young people on our policies until they turn twenty six. (APPLAUSE) Those are all really positive developments. But out of pocket costs have gone up too much and prescription drug costs have gone through the roof. And so what I have proposed, number one, is a five thousand dollar tax credit to help people who have very large out of pocket costs be able to afford those. Number two, I want Medicare to be able to negotiate for lower drug prices just like they negotiate uh with other countries’ health systems. (APPLAUSE) We end up paying the highest prices in the world. And I want us to be absolutely clear about making sure the insurance companies in the private employer policy arena as well as in uh the Affordable Care exchanges are properly regulated so that we are not being gamed. And I think that’s an important point to make because I’m going through and analyzing the points you were making Martha. We don’t have enough competition and we don’t have enough oversight of what the insurance companies are charging everybody right now.
Rather than advocating for her healthcare policy prescriptions in an abstract sense as Sanders often did regarding healthcare as a right, Clinton chose to focus attention on how people perceive the impacts of healthcare policy within the American Social Context alone and in primarily economic terms. Given the fact that healthcare is practiced in almost purely economic terms in the American Social Context, keeping her policy prescription grounded in these more familiar terms may have held greater appeal to more voters.

This is not to say that Sanders never addressed healthcare policy in economic terms, nor that he only argued for it through an international Social Context alone. As demonstrated in this final example, Sanders attempted to reframe healthcare as a right while highlighting economic issues grounded within people’s experiences of the American Social Context. Given his call for universal healthcare, his economically based discussions usually centered on the cost of his healthcare policy prescriptions and who would have to pay how much. In one of these more economic arguments, Sanders equated buying power with privilege. By contrasting two potential perspectives on healthcare as either a right or as a privilege, Sanders would have voters attend to the nature of healthcare itself, whether it should be understood as some sort of luxury good that only those who had sufficient economic buying power should enjoy, or whether it should be understood as a necessity of life, the benefit of which might be deserving of some governmental protections.

The economic argument Sanders offered differed from Clinton’s in that he obscured the role that various economic institutions might have played. Throughout his campaign, Sanders was never shy about laying blame on business leaders and economic institutions; but, by obscuring the role of businesses in this moment, Sanders
was able to keep voters’ perspectives focused on raw economic power and how it is experienced differentially by people. Clinton’s focus on businesses helped generate an understanding of healthcare in transactional terms, erasing the disparity in economic position down to the familiar commonplace roles of buyer versus seller. Here, Sanders obscured the seller side of the transaction, turning his answer into one long explication of how powerless most people are when it comes to healthcare. This disparity was so severe that some people were unable to comply with their doctors’ orders regarding medications or other procedures. For Sanders, those few who could comply, based solely on their ability to afford costs, experience the privilege of healthcare that others have to deny themselves.

(2.25) Well, let’s level (APPLAUSE) let us level with the American people. Secretary Clinton has been going around the country saying Bernie Sanders wants to dismantle the Affordable Care Act, people are gonna lose their Medicaid, they’re gonna lose their CHIP program. I have fought my entire life to make sure that healthcare is a right for all people. We’re not gonna dismantle anything. But here is the truth. Twenty nine million people have no health insurance today in America. We pay by far the highest prices in the world for prescription drugs. One out of five Americans can’t even afford the prescriptions their doctors are writing. Millions of people have high deductibles and co-payments. What I said, and let me repeat it, I don’t know what economists Secretary Clinton is talking to. But what I have said, and let me repeat it, that yes, the middle the p- family right in the middle of the economy would pay five hundred dollars more in taxes and get a reduction in their healthcare costs of five thousand dollars. In my view healthcare is a right of all people, not a privilege, and I will fight for that.

(Sanders, DEM Debate 6)

Sanders’ policy prescription would balance this economic disparity by having everyone pay a small amount in additional taxes in order to receive a larger reduction in their overall cost of healthcare. Rather than Clinton’s attempt to encourage businesses to behave better toward consumers, Sanders would alter the current Social Context and
its entire dynamic by aggregating the buying power of the nation and in so doing lower the overall cost burden on the citizenry.

These three examples demonstrate how Democratic candidates who view politics through a Conjoint FoR can argue for their preferred policy prescriptions by highlighting or obscuring various commonplace behaviors, their impacts, and assessments of both, and the perspectives people take on them as they interact with one another. Some perspectives can offer completely different understandings of this shared Social Context and how it can be structured; this may be a risky tactic depending on how divergent such perspectives from those voters have or are more familiar with. Other perspectives privilege the commonplace understandings of the shared Social Context, invoking the familiar so ideological interpretations and policy prescriptions seem less peculiar. By selectively focusing a perspective on certain aspects of American life, highlighting some and erasing others, a candidate can offer voters potential ways to see the socio-political landscape which they may not have considered before.

2.5 Chapter summary

In this chapter I have laid out the overarching structure of the Absolute and Conjoint FoRs, describing the semantic parameters used as Grounds and their different natures. These Grounds serve as the reference points within which candidates can locate the validity of their ideological worldviews, and within which voters can locate a particular candidate’s position in the ideological field of American politics as well as the best means to make sense of and understand the socio-political landscape and their own and the candidates’ placement therein.

The Republican candidates used supposedly shared social constructs as Absolute fixed bearings which permeate the socio-political landscape. While the Republican
candidates have to respect the shared repertoire of Absolutes that their CoA requires of them, the order of salience of those fixed bearings is one means for different factions within the CoA to claim a certain position within the ideological field of Republicanism. By arraying the fixed bearings differentially, certain factions of Republicans can lay claim to a particular Republican identity e.g. evangelical conservative as per Huckabee (Example 2.12) and Santorum (Example 2.11) or law and order conservative as per Graham (Example 2.20) or Pataki (Example 2.19).

The Democratic candidates described the commonplace interactions and inferences people engage in as they generate the social systems which they are enmeshed within, using people’s unique perspectives on their lived experiences as Grounds. Depending on whose perspectives a candidate chooses to highlight or obscure, and at what level of granularity they offer them, Democratic candidates can indicate their unique position within the ideological field of the Democratic CoA, laying claim to or being accused of enacting a particular Democratic identity whether e.g. a corporate democrat for Clinton (Example 2.24) or a democratic socialist for Sanders (Example 2.23).

In the next two chapters, I discuss various conceptual metaphors which the candidates use, some shared and some unique to themselves or their party, as they discuss the economy and international affairs (Chapters 3 and 4 respectively). I will demonstrate how the candidates’ uses of these conceptual metaphors reflect and reinforce the structure and nature of each party’s FoR, and continue to describe in greater detail the different ideological worldviews of each party as generated by its member candidates. The discussion in Chapter 3 in particular will demonstrate how candidates can stake out unique positions within their party’s ideological space, creating or enacting different types of Republican or Democratic identities.
Chapter 3

Conceptual metaphors: Economy

3.1 Introduction

Conceptual metaphor theory has been fruitfully applied to our understanding of the economy (Alejo 2010; Cardini 2014; Charteris-Black 2004; White 2003). As noted in the Introduction, most conceptual metaphors are a shared linguistic resource, generally understood by most speakers of a language. But, that does not preclude people from using metaphors for various effects, whether offering a novel cross-domain mapping to generate tension in a story, or as a means to prompt a voter to think about an issue differently. These subtle differences also help candidates distinguish themselves from their co-partisans, staking out various possible positions within a party’s ideological space and creating different types of Republicans and Democrats.

I argue that a candidate’s choice of metaphors and cross-domain mappings is constrained by the preferred political frame of reference (FoR) of their party. That is, candidates make use of metaphors and cross-domain mappings which highlight or erase aspects of policy issues in order to generate an appropriate understanding of the America as seen with respect to their preferred FoR. Republican candidates strategically use metaphors to highlight or erase (in)appropriate standards of behaviors and assessments to reify supposedly shared cultural constructs and beliefs; Democratic candidates use metaphors to highlight or erase aspects of our shared Social Context and the commonplace experiences of people.
Framing a policy position using a metaphor with cross-domain mappings that flout (Grice 1989) or clash with a party’s preferred FoR opens a candidate up to counterattacks that they do not understand the situation properly, that their logic is flawed, or that their position is not conservative or progressive enough—charges lobbed frequently throughout the primary season. A political FoR is a shared repertoire (Lave and Wenger 1991; Wenger 1998) of semantic parameters, whether lexical items or concepts, which constitute a system of reference points which can be used to locate the validity of ideological interpretations and prescriptions within the ideological space of political rhetoric. The systematicity of the reference points must be maintained across all rhetorical tactics, such as metaphors, metonymies, hyperbole, and understatement, in order to ensure consistent and effective communication. This systematicity assures that each candidate sounds ideologically consistent with respect to all of their positions and that each party as a whole articulates a coherent agenda across all levels of government, in the hopes that voters will arrive at accurate assessments of the validity and appropriacy of the positions being offered.

3.1.1 Chapter layout

The goals of this chapter are twofold: to demonstrate the interparty systematicity of framing choices and how they are indicative of each party’s FoR, differentiating the two parties in the ideological landscape of American politics; and to demonstrate the intraparty variation possible within that systematicity, where candidates distinguish themselves from their fellow party members in order to stake out their own unique ideological positions within the narrower ideological landscape of their party.

In the next section, I lay out the interparty differences by examining two issues, wages and the economy, understood as concepts about how and why the world
works the way it does rather than simply as issues being debated about the role of government. For example with respect to wages, the parties make use of different conceptual metaphors to construct their variant ideological spaces where voters can come to appreciate what wages mean for Republicans versus Democrats. While this type of variation may not sound interesting on its face, two groups of people talking about the same idea but using different linguistic resources to do so, the utility lies in how readily apparent the reason why candidates from each party use these different metaphors can be traced to how the two different FoRs help people orient their understanding of American life. For the economy, the parties use the same conceptual metaphor ECONOMY IS A LIVING ORGANISM, but use different cross-domain mappings made possible through the metaphor in order to construct their variant ideological spaces. Unlike the discussion of wages, the differential uses of cross-domain mappings within the single LIVING ORGANISM metaphor are less readily discernible with respect to each party’s preferred FoR. In summarizing §3.2, I pull together the two analyses to demonstrate that one source for some of the ideological differences between political parties can be traced to the differences in cross-domain mappings, whether whole-sale through completely different metaphors or more subtly through different mappings within a single metaphor.

In §3.3 I examine intraparty variation, where candidates talk about poverty differently from their fellow party members, but do so within the confines of the systematic variation expected within their CoA. Given the analytical finding that a source of the variation between the two parties resides in the cross-domain mappings, a candidate is free to select almost any metaphor they choose, provided they use it in an ideologically consistent manner by not violating the party’s ideological norms of preferred cross-domain mappings. In order to stake out their own position within the party’s
ideological space, a candidate must frame their position uniquely compared to their fellow members, without positioning themself too far afield from the party’s understanding of the ideological space lest they not be seen as party members. Through this intra-party variation, we can see more clearly some of the internal variability possible within a political party which creates spaces where different types of Republicans and Democrats can enact different partisan identities.

In the final analytical section (§3.4), I provide a wider view of each party’s ideological space by examining the issue of money, teasing out additional metaphorical entailments and confluences which emerge as the candidates interweave their party’s shared repertoire of metaphors and cross-domain mappings to support various overlapping policy prescriptions. This analysis demonstrates some of the problems each party may experience in attracting voters to align with their policy prescriptions due to how a party’s unique shared repertoire of metaphors constructs the relationship between people, the economy, education, taxes, and money. Further, this analysis affords an opportunity to demonstrate how Clinton attempted to straddle the ideological divide between the Republican and Democrat CoAs by using more Republican sounding metaphors, though with more Democratic cross-domain mappings.

Before moving on to the analysis proper, I have a piece of fortuitous data from Republican candidate Christie which concisely describes one of the Republican CoA’s primary understandings of how people and government should understand the economy as he decontested his position that sixty eight percent of the voting public is wrong about raising taxes on millionaires. By holding the fixed bearing of Economic Supremacy and some of its delimited standards of behavior and assessments steady at the outset, the analysis can focus more on the variation and its systematicity with respect to the Republican FoR. For Christie, a proper understanding of the socio-
political landscape oriented with respect to Economic Supremacy delimits certain economic standards, namely that wealth, and by metonymy millionaires or “rich” (Kasich Example 3.13) people, must be treated more kindly. Those voters who argue against the truth of this naturalized and extra-human ordering are wrong and only engaging in class warfare. If money or rich people are not treated kindly enough, it is totally predictable, understandable, and justifiable that they should leave either a given state or the nation as whole.

(3.1) David? Hey David? David? Hey David? I I actually have experience with raising taxes on millionaires in my state. It was done. It was done by my predecessor and I want everybody in the public who is in that sixty eight percent, I wanna tell you the truth. You’re wrong. And here’s why you’re wrong. After New Jersey raised taxes on millionaires, we lost, in the next four years, seventy billion dollars in wealth left our state. It left our state to go where it would be treated more kindly. If if the United States raised taxes any further, that money will leave the United States as well. We won’t have better jobs. Let New Jersey be the (BELL RINGING) canary in the coalmine. It is a failed idea and a failed policy it’s class warfare. It happened in my state. I’ve stopped it from happening again. But we cannot do it. The sixty eight percent of the people are wrong about that it will hurt the American economy, we tried it in New Jersey, come take a look it did not work. (APPLAUSE)

(Christie, GOP Debate 8)

Christie may have been trying to talk tough or say it like it is in order to engender a sense of authenticity so that voters might align with his candidacy. Either way, his answer succinctly maps out the Republican ideological understanding of how Individuals, the government, and the socio-political landscape as a whole should be oriented with respect to the fixed bearing of Economic Supremacy. The standards of behavior and assessments delimited by Economic Supremacy, and its import to society are built upon by three supposedly shared cultural presuppositions: government must be deferential to money or it will react negatively; voters should not argue against treating money kindly lest their mistreatment compel it to act negatively;
and an Individual should assess their own or others actions and value with reference to money and the due respect it should be afforded. Throughout the election, Republican candidates located their positions on economic issues by making reference to these supposed truths.

Allow me to forestall some criticism up front; I will justify each of the points I have just described throughout this chapter. Few Republican candidates framed their positions as pointedly as I have formulated them, instead exploiting conceptual metaphors and other rhetorical tactics to frame their positions on economic issues in a manner which they would hope to be more voter friendly. In fact, Christie’s use of the metonymic link between millionaires and wealth or money was just such a gambit to help diminish some of the potential negative evaluation of his comment. Rather than claiming that millionaires need to be treated kindly lest they take their money elsewhere, Christie personified the money as having its own will to react to tax policies. By highlighting money and defocusing the millionaires who have it, he was able to frame his answer in a more palatable way by asking voters to appreciate the inherent value of money and our need for it while avoiding the possible inference that continued tax cutting policies can be seen as “feather[ing] the nest [of] the super wealthy” (Clinton DEM debate 3).

Further, I am cognizant that money is pretty important in the world; for that reason, it is also pretty fundamental to our understanding of the world, being a source domain in numerous conceptual metaphors: TIME IS MONEY, BENEFICIAL PROPERTIES ARE MONETARY POSSESSIONS, WELL-BEING IS WEALTH, and so on. My argument should not be taken to imply that the Democratic candidates think money is unimportant, though that inference may underlie frequent Republican attacks of Democratic policies as giving stuff away for free or without regard for where the money
comes from to pay for those policies. Rather, I will demonstrate how the Democratic candidates do not use the concept of money in their ideological interpretations and policy prescriptions in the same way as the Republican candidates do; the Democratic Party’s understanding of money is simply as a medium of exchange within the shared Social Context, not as a standard used for making assessments or comparisons as one tries to make sense out of the socio-political landscape.

3.2 Interparty variation

3.2.1 Wages

Conceptual metaphors allow us to use our understandings of our more basic lived experience to grasp and talk about more abstract or complex concepts and to generate valid inferences about e.g. the nature of the economy and how best to improve the lives of citizens with respect to the marketplace. A basic lived experience for most people is working to earn money, whether as a business owner making a profitable business or an employee working for a wage. Lakoff (2002:54-55) described two metaphors we have for work and wages which politicians use in support of their ideological interpretations and policy prescriptions: WORK IS REWARD and WORK IS EXCHANGE.

According to Lakoff, the WORK IS REWARD metaphor is used to cast wages as a reward or prize granted by an employer for fulfilling their orders. Through the WORK IS EXCHANGE metaphor, wages are understood as a commodity exchanged between employer and employee for services rendered. Lakoff described numerous different entailments and inferences which these two metaphors offer (Kövecses 2010; Lakoff 1993; Lakoff and Johnson 1980). The WORK IS REWARD metaphor is unilateral, where the employer sets an arbitrary wage for the work desired; the work itself is understood
as having no inherent value, only what the employer is willing to pay. The employer’s willingness or ability to set the wage level can even be erased through a claim along the lines of the “free market sets wages”. The work is exchange metaphor is more reciprocal, where the work or labor is possessed by the employee and which the employer can voluntarily exchange money for; the labor itself is understood by both employee and employer as having an inherent value which should be compensated for with a fair price. Note how these two descriptions match up with the two political FoRs. Work is reward sounds more Absolute with an arbitrary fixed bearing of appropriate wages, set by some reified social construct of the “free market” which itself is generated by employers and politicians pointing to that very market in order to absolve themselves (Antonsich 2012) of their role as wage setter; work is exchange sounds more Conjoint where a facet of value is projected on or from the work which can be attended to consistently by the employee, employer, and any other onlooker.

A third metaphor relevant to the discussion at hand is beneficial properties are monetary possessions (Lakoff and colleagues 1991:12) where good qualities or experiences can be understood as if they have a monetary value. Interestingly, Lakoff and colleagues note that this metaphor is also understood as well-being is wealth, a formulation Lakoff later used exclusively in Moral Politics (2002). As will be demonstrated, these are actually two slightly different metaphors where the well-being target domain is more restricted in application to situations relating to a good or healthy existence, as opposed to the broader application to good things or qualities of the beneficial properties target domain.

In his description of the work is reward metaphor, Lakoff (2002:54) laid out the typical cross-domain mappings often made; of note for this analysis are the mappings of work is service-as-obedience and wage is money-as-reward. This latter mapping
requires a bit of cognitive buy-in given our strong conceptual association between money and its market value. The sleight-of-mind required to make the work is reward metaphor a possible conceptual routine to begin with would first have to break or modify this association. I argue that the beneficial properties are monetary possessions helps set the conceptual staging which permits the wage-as-reward mapping to make sense, mediating the conceptual path taken in the cross-domain mapping. By compressing (Fauconnier and Turner 2002) the beneficial properties are monetary possessions into a unitary concept of reward, the idea of money having to be paid to an employee can effectively be supplanted with any number of good things being given instead, whether self-esteem per Paul (Example 3.2), “dignity” (Walker 07/13/15 among others), “experience” (Carson Example 3.12), or many other non-monetary properties.

According to Lakoff, the nature of the relationship between employer and employee is understand through the work is reward metaphor not as money-for-service but as reward-for-obedience. Through this metaphor and its implications, work is not understood as a good or service with inherent value per se, rather as proper obedience to the orders of a superior; and, a wage is not given in compensation for the work done, rather proper obedience is proportionally rewarded.

Given Lakoff’s analytical focus to frame political rhetoric with respect to morality, and particularly to moral authority, these mappings make sense. However, Paul’s use of the work is the reward (l. 5) metaphor in the following example may be better understood with respect to the Absolute FoR, describing how an Individual can interpret their value or self-worth not through their own unique personal point of view, rather only with respect to the standards delimited by Economic Supremacy—as something akin to a moral imperative, namely want/ing to work and hav/ing a job—and the
provision of an assessment thereof that want[ing] and hav[ing] work is what makes one a valuable member of America.

This understanding of Economic Supremacy, that an Individual’s value in society can only rightly be assessed with respect to those standards of economic behavior, allowed several Republican candidates to triangulate their understanding of work and wages in an ideological space where the BENEFICIAL PROPERTIES aspect of the WORK IS REWARD metaphor was highlighted, in effect erasing the domain of money, such that working hard is not enough, rather want[ing] to work and realiz[ing] the value of hard work is what earn[s] that sense of who [they] are or self-esteem, as much if not more so than actually hav[ing] a job at whatever wage (see Fig. 3.1).

In this particular configuration of the ideological space with respect to Economic Supremacy, the work-as-obedience mapping of WORK IS REWARD is not defocused per se; rather, the receiver of the obedience is shifted from any given employer to the fixed bearing of Economic Supremacy itself, since Individuals must orient their behavior with respect to the Absolute FoR and its standards in order to live a good life according to Republican ideology.

(3.2) From an early age I worked. I taught swimming lessons, I mowed lawns, I did landscaping, I put roofs on houses, I painted houses. I never saw work though as punishment. Work always gave me a sense of who I am. (APPLAUSE) Self-esteem can’t be given it must be earned. (APPLAUSE) Work is not punishment work is the reward. (APPLAUSE) Two of my sons work minimum wage jobs while they go to college. I am proud of them as I see them realize the value of hard work. I can see their self-esteem grow as they cash their paychecks. I have a vision for America where everyone who wants to work will have a job. (APPLAUSE) Many Americans though are being left behind. The reward of work seems beyond their grasp.

(Paul, 04/07/15)

Paul constructed an ideological worldview which essentially erased the concept of money entirely since the reward is no longer money, but work itself and the BEN-


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WORK employer</th>
<th>REWARD employee</th>
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<tr>
<td>work / service</td>
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<td>wage / money</td>
<td>→ BENEFICIAL PROPERTIES</td>
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<td>ARE MONETARY POSSESSIONS</td>
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Figure 3.1: WORK IS REWARD

Efficial properties of self-esteem or a sense of who [one is] that wanting and having it grants in return. Even in the closest purely transactional understanding of work with respect to money that Paul offered, when he noted that his sons cash their paychecks (l. 7 - 8), the only boon his sons experienced was a growth in their self-esteem not in the amount of money in their checking accounts. Rather than garnering monetary compensation for adhering to the orders of a given employer, Individuals can only experience the reward [that is] work (l. 10) itself by fully orienting their actions and indeed their understanding of American life to Economic Supremacy. Note how Paul’s approval of his sons was not garnered by their actual hard work, rather from their realizing the value of hard work, of coming to understand the standards required of them such that desiring and having work and the good feelings it offers in compensation are the only reward to be expected. Even Paul’s personal sense of pride in this moment is indirectly based on the same appreciation of Economic Supremacy, that his sons have come to realize, in both senses of become aware of and reproduce, the standards expected of them.

The Democratic candidates offered a different understanding of work and wages, locating their understanding within the lived experiences of workers, codifying those commonplace and shared experiences of having to work for a living through the WORK
is exchange metaphor. As described by Lakoff (2002:55), work or labor itself is conceived of as an object with its own value, owned by the worker and exchanged for money from the employer. In the terms of the Conjoint FoR, both the worker and employer must come to a shared perspective of the value inherent in the work, a value which other onlookers should perceive in the same way, in order for the exchange to be deemed appropriate (see Fig. 3.2). Starting from this understanding as a reference point, voters could follow Sanders’ argument to locate the validity of his policy prescription that women should be paid equally for performing the same work as men.

(3.3) Let us also be honest and acknowledge that today millions of American workers are now working for totally inadequate wages. The current federal minimum wage of seven and a quarter an hour is a starvation wage and must be raised. (APPLAUSE) The minimum wage in this country must become a living wage which means which means raising it to fifteen dollars an hour over the next few years. (APPLAUSE) Our goal, this is not a radical idea but our goal must be that any worker in this country who works forty hours a week is not living in poverty. (APPLAUSE) Further we must establish pay equity for women workers. (APPLAUSE) It is unconscionable that women earn seventy-eight cents on the dollar compared to men who perform the same work. We must also revise our overtime standards so that meeple-people making twenty-five or thirty thousand an hour thirty thousand a year who are working fifty sixty hours a week get time and a half. (APPLAUSE) And and we need paid sick leave and guaranteed vacation time for every worker in this country.

(Sanders, 04/30/15)

Unlike the work is reward metaphor, there is no constitutive beneficial properties metaphor within the work is exchange metaphor, because there are no cross-domain mappings of valuable object to money. The work-as-valuable object and wage-as-money mappings are internal to the work domain where each has an inherent value; the exchange domain simply maps responsibilities for who transfers what to whom under which conditions. This is not to say that Democrats do not
make use of the BENEFICIAL PROPERTIES metaphor to help locate their position on some issues (see §3.4.2), but with respect to the issues of work and wages it seems the entailments and inferences offered by the WORK IS EXCHANGE metaphor do not join a person’s sense of self-worth or value to society to their job or their wage.

Consistent with their Conjoint FoR, the Democratic candidates usually located their position on wages by referring to people’s lived experiences. Sanders described his position on the minimum wage by contrasting two Grounds understood with respect to the ability to survive: living wage and starvation wage. For Sanders, the reason for raising the minimum wage should be understood with respect to people’s continued well-being as continued survival. In this way, the WELL-BEING IS WEALTH metaphor helps Sanders organize his perspective of the socio-political landscape, where a person’s quality of life can be measured in economic terms. It is within this understanding of WELL-BEING that the Democrats advocate for policy prescriptions such as overtime pay, paid family and sick leave, vacation time, and even for raising taxes on the wealthy (Sanders Example 3.17). For the Democratic candidates, Americans should neither have to nor continue to sacrifice so much of their well-being for the inadequate remuneration they are receiving.

Conceptual metaphor theory explains more than just the types of domains being brought together or what cross-domain mappings are constitutive of the metaphor.
Within each metaphor, a series of entailments and inferences are made possible, where the cross-domain mappings serve as a starting point for rich detail to be imported from the source domain into our understanding of the target domain (Kövecses 2010; Lakoff 1993; Lakoff and Johnson 1980). For example, in **beneficial properties are monetary possessions** one entailment is related to value, where the quality of a beneficial property is assessed with respect to a monetary value such that: good properties have or receive higher value, and bad properties have or receive lower value. From this entailment, possible inferences can be drawn such that people who earn or have more or greater monetary assets have more or better properties than others; the reverse can also be inferred such that people with fewer or lower monetary assets have worse properties (see §3.3.1). The former inference can in certain respects be seen at work in Christie’s claim that money, with its inherent value, deserves to be treated “kindly” or else it will leave (Example 3.1). The latter inference is often relied on as an implicit assumption in discussion of issues such as poverty, because an outright derogation of people would not help align voters to a candidate’s campaign (see §3.3.1); careful examination of the data, however, can reveal how this entailment is indirectly implied.

### 3.2.2 Economy

One key conceptual metaphor we use to understand the complex system of the economy is **economy is a living organism** (Alejo 2010; Cardini 2014; Charteris-Black 2004; White 2003). Through this metaphor, the performance of the economy is understood either with respect to a living organism’s potential for growth, where good economic performance can be spoken of as the fruits or flowers produced and poor economic performance as disease or weakness, or with respect to its structure, where
certain features of the economy or business and their relationship to one another can be described along the lines of roots, shoots, and leaves. The LIVING ORGANISM metaphor seems to have been previously analyzed primarily as describing an abstract, Individual entity possessing its own internal drive for growth. Such an understanding of the economy as a reified, autonomous construct driven to grow of its own accord seems more consistent with Republican ideology, given their focus on the extra-human origins of the social order and organic change with the attendant concern of entropy that improper human intervention may cause (Freeden 1996). An inference Republican candidates make available by highlighting the autonomous nature of the LIVING ORGANISM is that policy prescriptions which may “hurt” or hamper the natural growth of the economy are disfavored or “wrong” (Christie Example 3.1). The inverse of this entailment is often phrased more forcefully by the candidates, hence the stronger wording: only policy prescriptions which may aid in economic growth are justified. This understanding of the LIVING ORGANISM metaphor and the inferences they draw from it sketch out the Republican understanding of the social order, properly oriented toward the fixed bearing of Economic Supremacy, where government must be beholden to money or it will react negatively. To extend the ecological metaphor, the Republican candidates see the forest while the Democratic candidates see the trees; while they are two halves of the same coin, it is this difference in granularity of viewpoint chosen by the two parties which differentiate their uses of the same metaphor.

The Democratic candidates do not seem to share the autonomous understanding of the LIVING ORGANISM with an internal drive for growth. Instead, they take a more fine-grained perspective which highlights the interdependence of people and even nations as a shared Social Context when it comes to economic issues. During the
third Democratic debate, O’Malley offered a striking understanding of the economy with respect to the LIVING ORGANISM metaphor when he described its structure as an ecosystem. Through this novel use of the LIVING ORGANISM metaphor, O’Malley described the economy as a complex network of people interacting with one another, where economic growth is the result of people’s forces and resources coming together as opposed to the more typical understanding of an autonomous entity naturally predisposed to grow of its own accord; for O’Malley, the economy seems best understood as an organized farm or garden as opposed to a wild forest. Through this understanding, O’Malley located his ideological interpretations and policy prescriptions that the origin of economic growth is the people and their ability to earn and spend, and that the role of government is to forestall an excessive concentration of power or resources which inhibits that growth.

(3.4) Look I look at our economy n- n- as an ecosystem. And the fact of the matter is that the more fully people participate, the more our workers earn, the more they will spend, the more our economy will grow. And most heads of businesses large medium and small understand that. But there is a better way forward be de- in uh than either of those offered by my two uh opponents here on this stage. Uh we’re not going to fix what ails our economy, we’re not gonna make wages go up for everyone, by either trying to replace American capitalism with socialism, which by the way, the rest of the world is moving away from. Nor will we fix it by submitting to sorta Wall Street directed crony capitalism. And for my part, I have demonstrated the ability to have the backbone to take on Wall Street in ways that Secretary Clinton never ever has. In fact in the last debate very shamefully she tried to hide her cozy relationship with Wall Street big banks by invoking the attacks of nine eleven. I believe that the way forward for our country is to actually reinvigorate our antitrust department with the directive to promote fair competition. There’s mergers that are happening in every aspect of our country that is bad for competition and it’s bad for uh uh for upward mobility of wages. And the worst type of concentration Secretary Clinton is the concentration of the big banks, the big six banks that you went to and spoke to and told them, oh, you weren’t responsible for the crash, not by a long shot. And that’s why today you still cannot support as I do, breaking up the big banks and making sure that we pass a modern day Glass-Steagall, like we had in late nineteen ninety
nine, before it was repealed and led to the crash, where so many millions of families lost their jobs and their homes. And I was on the front lines of that, looking into the eyes of my neighbors.

(O’Malley, DEM Debate 3)

Following some of the inferences O’Malley offered through this metaphor, all of the people participating can be understood along the lines of gardeners, tending to sections of the economy by infusing resources such as energy and money. The reason the economy is ailing has to do with a shortage of resources resulting from an inadequate level or stagnation of wages. O’Malley located that shortage as due to the concentration of power and capital which resulted from various heads of business, metonymically recalled by Wall Street, amassing resources at the expense of rising wages because the government abdicated their role in monitoring mergers. One potential drawback in O’Malley’s formulation is his conflation of wages as both origin and product of economic growth. His policy prescription as framed does not directly benefit people, rather by preventing certain actions on the part of Wall Street which he assesses as problematic, the resource of money will flow more easily through the system generating growth which in turn will make wages rise. Though he was good at setting up the premise that the economy is about people, he did not seem to hammer home the point that his policies will directly benefit voters. O’Malley’s cyclical or reciprocal representation of an interdependent economic system was more complex than the more linear or straightforward representation offered by most Republican candidates.

For the Republican candidates, the entailments and inferences made possible by the ECONOMY IS A LIVING ORGANISM metaphor are rather different. Their use of the LIVING ORGANISM metaphor usually backgrounded people, highlighting descriptions of positive or negative forces in the abstract which affect the economy and its natural
tendency to grow of its own accord when unhindered to do so. When people are mentioned, they are usually described as reacting to these extra-human forces rather than causing them, though there are exceptions when it comes to the negative actions of certain “wrong” Individuals (Christie Example 3.1) or the government, both of whose intervention creates entropy in the economy.

For Kasich, a robust economy which is growing like crazy is one that produces jobs and rising wages. This natural and wild growth of the economy is only possible under the right conditions which preclude problematic governmental intervention: a balanced budget, tax cuts, fiscal discipline, and limited regulations. These proper conditions will directly benefit job creators, providing beneficial properties of comfort and confidence; once this confluence of positive forces is secured for them they will then invest their capital.

(3.5) Well look it takes three things basically to grow jobs. And I’ve done it when I was in Washington when we had a balanced budget, had four years of balanced budgets paid down a half trillion of of debt and our economy was growing like crazy. It’s the same thing that I did in Ohio it’s a simple formula. Common sense regulations which is why I think we should freeze all federal re-regulations for one year, except for health and safety. It requires tax cuts, cuz that sends a message to the job creators that things are headed the right way. And if you tax cuts if you cut taxes for corporations, and you cut taxes for individuals, you’re gonna make things move, particularly the corporate tax which is the highest, of course in the uh in the world. But in addition to that we have to have fiscal discipline we have to show that we can march to a balanced budget. And when you do that, when you’re in a position of managing regulations, when you reduce taxes, and when you have fiscal discipline, you see the job creators begin to get very comfortable with the fact that they can invest. Right now? You don’t have the you have taxes that are too high. You have regulations I mean, come on they’re affecting everybody here particularly our small businesses. They are uh they’re in a position where they’re smothering people. And I mean are you kidding me? We’re nowhere close to a balanced budget or fiscal discipline. Those three things put together are gonna give confidence to job creators and you will begin to see wages rise. You will begin to see jobs created in a robust economy. And how do I know it? Cuz I’ve done it. @ I did it as the chairman of the Budget Committee
working with Senator Domenici. And I’ve done it in the state of Ohio as the chief executive. Our wages are growing faster than (BELL RINGING) the national average we’re running surpluses and we can take that message and that formula to Washington to lift every single American to a better life. (APPLAUSE)

(Kasich, GOP Debate 6)

Through this understanding of the economy, the only resources which need to be expended in the process of growth are the investments of the job creators, akin to seeds (Kövecses 2010; White 2003) scattered in the naturally fertile climate of Kasich’s preferred policy prescriptions and which will grow of their own accord with little to no further intervention or tending by the job creators, government officials, nor anyone else really. Americans broadly are denied both syntactic and meaningful agency, simply being lift[ed] to the reward of a better life by receiving the fruits of the job creators’ investments. The linearity and fulsome of this growing like crazy process, where jobs and wages are the abundant natural outcome of invest[ments] made within a climate lacking problematic human intervention, more readily highlights the end point of the process which benefits the average voter; Kasich in effect offered them a more straightforward argument to follow, promising them the reward of a better life with jobs and wages once his policy prescriptions are enacted.

3.2.3 Summary

Having sketched out how the two parties make use of these metaphors in the presentation of their ideological interpretations and policy prescriptions, I can address a central claim of my analysis in this chapter: the choice of conceptual metaphors and cross-domain mappings are constrained by the political FoR of a party in order to assure consistency in ideological messaging.
Consistent with people and the commonplace interactions they engage in with one another being the reference points used as Grounds within a Conjoint FoR, through the \textit{WORK IS EXCHANGE} metaphor work is understood as a reciprocal relationship between employee and employer, and money as the medium of exchange offered in proper proportion for services rendered. In O’Malley’s use of the \textit{LIVING ORGANISM} metaphor, the economy is understood as a reciprocal relationship between all people; and when money is able to circulate properly through the system, broad economic growth occurs. Economic growth, understood as “the upward mobility of wages” (O’Malley Example 3.4), is inhibited when people with economic power are enabled to stifle the flow of capital by paying “inadequate wages” (Sanders Example 3.3) or benefits to their employees. Those “starvation wages” (Sanders Example 3.3) leading to an “ail[ing]” (O’Malley Example 3.4) economy demonstrates a consistency of understanding that \textit{WELL-BEING IS WEALTH}, whether for people or for the entire economy.

Given the Absolute FoR and its extra-human fixed bearings as reference points that Individuals must orient toward, through the \textit{WORK IS REWARD} metaphor work is understood as proper obedience of Individuals to their employers and Economic Supremacy itself conceived of as “the marketplace”, and \textit{BENEFICIAL PROPERTIES} as the reward granted for proper obedience to both. In Kasich’s use of the \textit{LIVING ORGANISM} metaphor, the economy is understood as an autonomous entity obedient to its nature to grow of its own accord; and when proper policies are in place that keep excessive governmental intervention out of the extra-human order of the economy, investments will naturally bloom into jobs and wages. Economic growth occurs only when such favorable policies are enacted and Individuals abide by the standards of behavior, those which “reward” (Paul Example 3.2) job creators for their “invest-
ments” (Kasich Example 3.5) and assure “kind” (Christie Example 3.1) treatment to both. Unfavorable policies should be avoided, those which withhold the “comfort” and “confidence” (Kasich Example 3.5) the job creators are owed and which diminish “their self-esteem” (Paul Example 3.2) that “the value of [their] hard work” (Paul Example 3.2) will grow sufficient fruits to “lift every single American to a better life” (Kasich Example 3.5).

3.3 Intraparty variation: poverty

In this section I examine the ways in which candidates from both parties stake out their own unique position within the ideological space of their party by making use of different metaphors or perspectives as they discuss the issue of poverty. A general understanding that most people share is that poverty is not a good thing; indeed this is one of the key entailments of well-being is wealth (Lakoff 2002:42). Beyond that shared understanding, however, the manner in which candidates describe poverty differ significantly, including its origin, the day-to-day experience of it, and the proper means to remove it from America. Consistent with the finding in §3.2, I will demonstrate how candidates use various metaphors in ways that are consistent with the constraints placed on them by their political FoR. Regardless of the metaphors used, the Republican candidates defocus the lived experiences of Individuals in favor of the standards of behavior and assessments delimited by the Absolutes; the Democratic candidates describe the commonplace interactions people engage in on a daily basis. These consistent choices in perspective across multiple different metaphors provides the best evidence that the political FoR of a candidate exerts a strong influence on how a candidate can give voice to their ideological worldview. In order to sound like a member of a given CoA, the candidates must talk the talk using the right shared
repertoire, even if they choose to frame their messages in unique ways. Further, these intra-party differences can point toward some of the possible types of partisan identities which members from each party can enact, e.g. Santorum’s (Example 3.9) social conservative construction of poverty as stemming from a breakdown of mom-and-dad families.

3.3.1 Republican variation

As understood by Republican candidates and consistent with the conservative focus on the extra-human ordering of the social order and the concern for entropy due to human intervention, poverty is an aberration that exists only because certain shared social beliefs have been violated, whether by governmental action, liberal politicians, or Individuals failing to make the right and natural choices in life. The first two points are part and parcel of political rhetoric where the government itself or the opposition are faulted for society’s ills. To the final point, a common argument some Republican candidates made is that many people do not make these poor life choices willingly, rather they unwittingly fall into poverty because politicians have “made it in their economic interest not to take a job” (Pataki GOP debate 1). For such an argument to make sense though, one must believe in the natural propensity for the American economic organism to grow and produce abundant prosperity such that people need only reach out and “grasp” (Paul Example 3.2) it. This may seem at first blush an odd premise to make, one that I have not offered sufficient evidence to support as of yet; however, that belief is just that, an ideal of the extra-human nature of the social order. Unfortunately, ideals and reality sometimes clash. We can see this conflict between idealism and the needs of reality played out in the following debate answer provided by Rubio.
During the ninth GOP debate, Rubio described poverty as *free enterprise not reaching people*. The idealized assumption in this description is that the economic system has a natural propensity to reach everyone; but, the reality Rubio would contest in comparison to his fellow Republicans is that it might need help doing so at times since *you can’t have free enterprise without antipoverty programs*. Consistent with the Absolute FoR’s defocusing of Individual perspective or life experiences however, Rubio framed his understanding of poverty such that it is not something that people actually experience, rather the system itself suffers from poverty. By framing poverty as a disease (Shaikh and colleagues 2014; MetaNet Metaphor Wiki 2018a) that needs to be cured, Rubio reproduced the Republican understanding of the living organism metaphor as an autonomous entity which is itself afflicted by poverty, as something akin to a natural or preexisting condition. To further differentiate his unique ideological position from the others, Rubio triangulated his understanding of poverty, in particular its amelioration, within Original Meaning and the powers reserved to the states, noting that state level programs run by Republicans will do a better job curing poverty than any programs run by Democrats, whether federal or state.

(3.6) Y’know this the issue of poverty is critical because for me poverty is the f- is is free enterprise not reaching people. Today we have antipoverty programs that don’t cure poverty. We don’t cure poverty in America. Our antipoverty programs have become, in some instances a way of life, a lifestyle. Now we do need antipoverty programs, you can’t have free enterprise without them, but not as a way of life. And so I have a very specific proposal on this and I don’t, in sixty seconds I can’t describe it all, but it basically turns the program over to states. It allows states to design innovative programs that cure poverty, (APPLAUSE) because I think Nikki Haley will do a better job curing poverty than Barack Obama. (APPLAUSE)

(Rubio, GOP Debate 9)

The differential mappings that Rubio juxtaposed in order to locate his position in
the Republican ideological space relate to understandings of *antipoverty programs*: as medicine in the hands of state governments, or drugs in the hands of the federal government. This novel conflict in mapping is reflective of the wider discussion in America about medicines like opioids, which in the hands of doctors have legitimate medicinal use but which are increasingly being abused, and a drug like marijuana, which is increasingly being prescribed by doctors for medicinal purposes despite its long running defamation as a narcotic when used. Within the medicine domain, when administered by an appropriate politician like fellow Republican *Nikki Haley* (governor of North Carolina at the time), *antipoverty programs* can cure the economic organism of the limited pockets of poverty which it will naturally experience from time to time. In the wrong hands of people like *Barack Obama*, *antipoverty programs* are foisted on the wrong patient, that being Americans, to the point of addiction becoming, in some instances, a way of life, a lifestyle. With a little bit of a stretch, this medicinal use of *antipoverty programs* can be likened to Kasich’s (Example 3.5) fiscal policies, dosing out the right amount of “formula” to get the economy to “grow like crazy” but not so much that it falls into entropy which too much intervention is believed to cause.

Even though Rubio may have flouted (Grice 1989) a norm of the Republican CoA, by describing poverty as a feature of the *free market* system (albeit negatively so), he might have been forgiven since his overall position on the issue can be located squarely within the fixed bearings of Economic Supremacy and Original Meaning—shoring up his identity as something akin to a constitutional conservative. His preferred policy prescription would assure that the socio-political landscape gets oriented such that the state governments will once again serve the needs of the economic organism, rather than the federal government drugging up individuals. More generally, Republican
candidates were less inclined to link poverty directly to the economy’s performance, fostering a conceptual distance between a shortfall of monetary possessions and the performance of the economic organism, which supposedly produces more than enough money for everyone, by blaming Democrats, government, or even single-parenthood (Santorum Example 3.9) for poverty.

The conservative tendency to defocus the commonplace interactions of people and ground their ideological worldview within extra-human fixed bearings seems to offer more coarse grained perspectives, whether the bird’s eye view of the ECONOMIC forest as described to this point, or a panoramic view of the well-oiled and properly functioning SOCIETY IS A MACHINE that seems more suited to the following three examples. The two source domains of LIVING ORGANISM and MACHINE are both readily applied to the economy (White 2003) and are not as dissimilar as they sound on their face, both being subdomains of a wider ABSTRACT SYSTEMS domain (Kövecses 2010). As White (2003:144) noted, the MACHINE domain permits an understanding of abstract processes such that they can break down from time to time, usually as a “result of accident” (ibid.) whether caused by individuals or not, and can be repaired so that they return to their proper and continuous performance; left behind are the inherent frailties of a LIVING ORGANISM which will eventually die off, a concern rarely broached in LIVING ORGANISM metaphors (though see Trump Example 5.5). With respect to the Republican candidates discussed through the remainder of this section, the MACHINE domain also permits a few slots for people to be mapped in to, namely those causing the accidents, or more interestingly as damaged or sabotaged parts themselves in a way. Both of these descriptions of people are available in Rubio’s (Example 3.6) description as well, though through the MEDICAL domain: Obama being the drug dealer for some individuals and the resultant “lifestyle” they
experience. Again, this demonstrates how completely different metaphors can be used by fellow party members provided the cross-domain mappings still accord with the necessary perspectives required by a political FoR.

During his candidacy announcement, Pataki located his ideological interpretation of the origin of poverty through SOCIETY IS A MACHINE, blaming liberals for creating the poor, mapping them as some sort of product or manufactured object. Further, this patient syntactic roll serves to strip the poor of any possible responsibility for the condition they find themselves in. By framing the poor with the definite determiner, Pataki indicated at minimum his non-membership in such a group of Individuals and may have inadvertently offered up a possible inference that such a group should be viewed negatively (Acton 2014). Though the use of a definite construction like the poor does not automatically entail derogation, by making them the patient of creat[e], the inference that he is less than pleased by such a concept is not a stretch. I will therefore err on the side of caution and operate under the assumption that his distaste was directed toward liberals ... creating poverty through their flawed policy prescriptions. Following the entailments of his MACHINE metaphor, poverty can best be understood as a series of bad properties resulting from liberals intervening in the proper functioning of SOCIETY, invoked here along the lines of installing a bad part of a welfare check. Given the confluence of these syntactic and metaphorical representations, Pataki in effect dehumanized those who experience poverty into the Individual poor, themselves absolved of any wrongdoing or responsibility for their condition, and in so doing he reified both the economic system, which should naturally produce the American dream of paychecks, and Economic Supremacy, whose standards of behavior the liberals have violated by intervening in the proper functioning of the socio-economic MACHINE.
Seems like liberals have so much compassion for the poor that they creep- keep creating more of them. (LAUGHTER) When I took office, we had every poverty program government could think of. And yet one in eleven of every single New York state resident was on welfare. Not on medicaid or disability. One in eleven of every man woman and child in the state of New York from the tip of Long Island to the shores of Lake Erie were on welfare. The American dream did not seem real to them. But after twelve years of my conservative policies, we replaced dependency with opportunity, resignation with hope, mere existence with dreams, a welfare check with a paycheck.

(Pataki, 05/28/15)

Note how Pataki’s understanding of poverty was devoid of any mention of the economy and an almost complete absence of money save for the metonyms welfare check and paycheck, though his use of these check[s] is much like Paul’s use (Example 3.2) where paychecks reward BENEFICIAL PROPERTIES and welfare checks punish with harmful properties. Pataki played within the meaning making potential of the BENEFICIAL PROPERTIES ARE MONETARY POSSESSIONS metaphor through the entailment of value. The good or right sort of money like a paycheck begets good PROPERTIES like opportunity, hope, and dreams; tainted money like a welfare check begets dependency, resignation, and mere existence. This latter mapping of mere existence is a particularly egregious charge against liberal policies, because simply living day-to-day is insufficient for people in a society properly oriented to its extra-human origins. People should expect life to be of greater meaning, measurable with respect to their MONETARY POSSESSIONS. Naturally, according to an understanding of the fixed bearing of Economic Supremacy, only a properly earned paycheck can lead to a happy and fulfilled life, one which his conservative policies can assure.

Comments like Rubio and Pataki’s are noteworthy for the attempt to erase or obscure the people affected by poverty from the discussion of poverty. By locating poverty as a condition of the economic system or as a quality created by liberals’
interference through their failed policies, voters who are themselves on various forms of government assistance can locate the origin of their problems without making reference to themselves; and other voters can locate the origin of poverty without having to think about poor people. From that vantage, both groups of voters can infer that the policy prescriptions offered will either not negatively impact poor people or may even be in their best economic interest, by healing the economic system or replacing the problematic component of their income. Not every Republican candidate charted this particular course when locating their position on issues related to poverty.

During the fourth GOP debate, Huckabee offered a rather interesting variation of society is machine, where something like a “poverty-industrial-complex”, with its parallels to the military-industrial-complex, is improperly producing poverty as it wages war through the metaphor ADDRESSING POVERTY IS WAGING WAR (Flusberg and colleagues 2018; MetaNet Metaphor Wiki 2018b). The general mapping that this metaphor permits is that POVERTY IS AN ENEMY or a negative force impacting people. Sort of like Pataki, however, Huckabee mapped POVERTY as a manufactured object, but as a WEAPON within the WAR domain, one created by the government as a whole rather than simply “liberals” (Pataki Example 3.7) and which has been turned against its citizens. In Huckabee’s ideological interpretation, the industry of poverty was created for the sole purpose to employ people to continuously manufacture the very poverty we still have so much of rather than to win the war itself.

(3.8) ... [Social Security and Medicare are] different than the social programs that we’ve spent two trillion dollars on since the war on poverty began exactly fifty years ago this year. Now the reason we still have so much poverty is because, it was never designed to get people out of poverty. It was designed to make sure that there was an industry of poverty so that the people in the poverty industry would have a lot of jobs. But the people who are poor haven’t been benefited. Having grown up poor I know a little something about it. Nobody
who is poor wants to be. That’s a nonsense statement and I hear it all the
time. Well poor people ought to work harder. They’re working as hard as they
can for gosh sake. But the problem is the system keeps pushing them down
because if they work, then they get punished. They lose all the benefits.
When we did welfare reform in the nineties you know what we did? We said
you’re not gonna lose everything at once there’s not an arbitrary threshold. So
as you move up the ladder from work and training, you’ll actually always be
better off than you were before. That’s the American way.

(Huckabee, GOP Debate 4; brackets mine)

The victims of the war on poverty, being pushed … down into the very poverty they
are trying to get … out of, are those Individuals who abide by the standards delimited
by Economic Supremacy; playing off Paul’s understanding that good Americans have
to “want to work” (Example 3.2), these Individuals do not want to be poor and in
fact are working as hard as they can. Rather than poverty being the aggressor or
enemy to be defeated, government employees in the “poverty-industrial-complex” are
faulted for their continued improper use of the weapons designed to combat the enemy
that is poverty against their own citizenry. Though Huckabee lauded poor people for
working as hard as they can and trying to be better off than [they] were before, properly
orienting their behavior toward the American way of Economic Supremacy, through
this WAR metaphor poor people have simply become collateral damage of their own
government’s policies. In certain respects, Huckabee may have been attempting to
merge his economic ideas into a more national security conservative stance.

Unlike Rubio, Huckabee conforms to the Republican CoA’s ideological position
of avoiding inferences that the economic system itself may have some predilection
for poverty by implicating government and its employees as the continued cause of
poverty. Further, his valorization of poor people for abiding by the standards that
Economic Supremacy requires absolves them of any wrongdoing. Huckabee still laid
the blame on government, an appeal that likely works well enough for some voters;
but, his explicit absolution of poor people from the charge that they do not work hard enough may also appeal to some other voters, many of whom might themselves be classified as poor or living in poverty, and to other voters for whom anti-government sentiment may not offer a sufficient understanding of poverty. The last example of poverty I will present for the Republican side links poverty and poor economic performance to single parent[hood], perhaps speaking to voters who privilege Christian Morality as a more important fixed bearing.

Consistent with a social conservative identity, Santorum opined that the origin of poverty and most of the other economic woes in America may better be understood as a breakdown in the transmission of the standards expected of Americans as society has been misoriented from its proper orientation to Christian Morality with a knock-on effect to Economic Supremacy. Much like Huckabee (Example 2.12), Santorum warns that anyone misorienting their behavior can have dire consequences for everyone; the breakdown of many family is a machine has lead to malfunctions in the entire society / economy is a machine. Triangulating his position within Christian Morality and Economic Supremacy, Santorum offered a unique metaphor along the lines of poverty is a broken (single parent) family machine. By erasing any possible reason why some families may have come to be structured as single parent households, Santorum decontest ed his preferred array of Christian Morality over Economic Supremacy, reifying a specific set of standards that people should abide by. For Santorum, the moral imperative to work embedded within Economic Supremacy, as described in work is reward (Paul Example 3.2), is insufficient to assure continued American economic success. Only a return to the proper formation of family is machine will change this economy and society back to what it should have always been.
Rather than locating the origin of poverty within politicians’ actions or the economic system, Santorum would have voters follow his argument that poverty results from Individual single parents failing to abide by Christian Moral norms, which condemns them and their children to the economic hardships of single parent family neighborhood[s], single parent family school[s], and failing, and failing, miserably in life. While noting that even mom-and-dad families can be poor and disadvantaged (l. 21 - 22), Santorum defocused the type of social infrastructure they live in as he described their children as being able to survive and do well. Whether or not the facts regarding actual social infrastructure differs between the un-economically defined single parent households and poor mom-and-dad households is irrelevant within the ideological space Santorum is constructing for voters to attend to. Within his preferred array of Absolutes, Santorum’s answer describes how those who abide by Christian Moral norms will transmit the right standards to their children which will lead them to prosper, who will in turn change this economy back to whatever it was before those single parent families erred and began hollowing out ... the middle of America (see Fig. 3.3).

(3.9) Y’know we’ve had this debate about the economy and we haven’t talked the uh the one issue that now increasingly, even the right, and the no- and the left are coming to agree with. I’ve run around uh uh doing three hundred town hall meetings talking about a book written by a liberal Harvard sociologist, not a normal thing for me to be talking about but, uh by no - name Robert Putnam who wrote a book called Our Kids. And he wrote this book I think ostensibly to support the democratic argument that the ha- middle of America’s hollowing out, and the income gap is widening, and the rich are gething [getting] richer. When he studied all the a- all the information as to what was going on he realized, that the biggest reason that we’re seeing the hollowing out of the middle of America, is the breakdown of the American family. The reality is that if you’re a single parent fa- sing- uh uh child of a single parent, and you grew up in a single parent family neighborhood, and you went to that single parent family school, the chance of you ever, ever, reaching the top twenty percent of income earners is three percent in America.
Now ladies and gentlemen I don’t know about you, but that’s not good enough. And we have been too politically correct in this country, because we don’t wanna offend anybody, to fight for the lives of our children. (APPLAUSE) You wanna you wanna be shocked? You read the first few chapters of of Mister of of Doctor Putnam’s book. He talks about Port Clinton Ohio and growing up there in the fifties and how, poor kids actually survived and did well, even though they were poor and disadvantaged. But then he goes to the towns today, and these kids are failing, and failing, miserably they’re not even they don’t have a shot. And we won’t even have the courage to have leadership at the federal level not with legislation, but the most powerful tool a president has, the bully pulpit to encourage each and everyone of you, churches, and businesses, and educators, and community leaders, to let’s have a national campaign. To rebuild the American family and give every child its birthright, which is a mom and a dad who loves them. That will change this economy. (CHEERING & APPLAUSE)

(Santorum, GOP Debate 6; brackets mine)

For Santorum, the poor economic outcome of America hollowing out is a result of some people not abiding by the standards of behavior delimited by Christian Morality to only become mom-and-dad families. Single parents, by shirking those standards at the top of the Absolute array, have misoriented the entire American socio-political landscape from Christian Morality to Economic Supremacy, resulting in their less than ideal neighborhoods and schools to the detriment of their children and the entire American middle. Mom-and-dad parents who may be poor, by abiding by
the standards delimited by Christian Morality do not inadvertently misstep from a path having a natural and proper bearing toward Economic Supremacy, insulating themselves and their children from bad social infrastructure thus resulting in their children having a greater opportunity to do well. Or, at the least, mom-and-dad parents insulate themselves from politicians blaming them for their neighborhoods, their schools, their children’s economic success, or the *hollowing out* of the entire American *middle*.

While this contribution by Santorum may appear to take into account the lived experiences of the people he is speaking of, his comments do not take into account the perspectives those people may have of, or share regarding their understanding of American life. Rather, he lays out the standard course Individuals should naturally choose to follow through life, anchored by the fixed bearing of Christian Morality and triangulated with respect to Economic Supremacy. His descriptions of the different lives led merely serve as examples of what happens when society is functioning properly or not: even if they are poor, Individuals are supposed to marry if they want children who will have an opportunity to *survive*; a parent who does not marry will make children who will *fail, miserably*, not because she may also be poor but because of her *single parent* status.

### 3.3.2 Democratic variation

Generally speaking, the Democratic candidates did not locate their position on poverty by framing it as a negative force either afflicting idealized systems or being deployed against people. Rather, they tended to discuss issues of poverty as resulting from an imbalance in the interactions between people within the economic ecosystem through constructions like Sanders’ oft repeated “income inequality”, “inequities” as per Clin-
ton (Example 3.11), or “injustice” per O’Malley (DEM debate 1). It is through the well-being is wealth metaphor that such “inequalities” can transform from a statement of perceived economic fact, where some are able to acquire more wealth than others, to a criticism of the economic system for being unjust as currently practiced.

The collocation living in poverty, which Sanders uses in the next example, has been analyzed as a form of the conceptual metaphor being impoverished is being in a bounded region (MetaNet Metaphor Wiki 2018e), itself a special subcase of states are locations (Lakoff and colleagues 1991). The states are locations metaphor is a prominent one which we use to help understand complex concepts by comparing them to our experiences in three dimensional space; indeed this entire dissertation is one long example of ideas and mental conceptualizations being understood by analogy to spatial FoRs. In this particular use of being impoverished is being in a bounded region, Sanders located his position on poverty with respect to two ideological spaces demarcated by a temporal boundary of working forty hours a week: a living in poverty space, and a living wage space. Through the work is exchange metaphor, Sanders’ ideological interpretation of poverty can be discerned as people being paid too little which necessitates them to work two or three jobs; even though they have gone past the forty hour barrier, they are still in the poverty space because the wages paid are too low. Through the well-being is wealth metaphor, poverty can be understood as people being unable to care for themselves and their kids on account of those bad exchanges.

Voters could follow Sanders’ argument regarding poverty by taking into account the lived experiences of people. For Sanders, poverty does not exist as a symptom in the abstract free market system nor as a weapon in the hands of the government;
rather, poverty is a negative experience people have either when they are consistently underpaid for their labor, or when they are unable to support their families because of such imbalanced exchanges. This latter experience of poverty as a quality of life such as being unable to support a child activates a sense of poverty along the lines of hardship, and is one which many people experience directly. This understanding of poverty as a hardship in one’s quality of life is awkwardly present in Rubio’s understanding of “antipoverty programs” (Example 3.6) as a “a way of life, a lifestyle”; however, the possibility of being seduced into poverty by government programs is itself the problem in Rubio’s understanding dominated by Economic Supremacy, while for Sanders the actual living conditions experienced by those in poverty and their origins are the problem. It is from this latter understanding that Sanders can direct voters to attend to his policy position to move the minimum wage to a living wage (l. 10 - 11), where the sought after goal is an improvement in the people’s living conditions.

(Sanders, DEM Debate 2)

The former experience of feeling like you are working too hard and not getting paid enough is a somewhat novel way of understanding poverty, but this experience may be shared by a much wider swath of the electorate. Sanders’ description was a subtle
nudge to the electorate to take a different look at their own circumstance and allow the potential conclusion that they themselves are being paid inadequately for the amount of work they are doing. Huckabee shared a similar understanding of poverty existing despite Individuals appropriately orienting themselves with respect to the fixed bearing of Economic Supremacy by “working as hard as they can” (Example 3.8); however, Huckabee positioned the reason for people being poor despite working hard as located with respect to the government withholding certain monetary benefits in an “arbitrary” manner, while for Sanders a lack of government oversight has permitted employers to underpay too many Americans. From this understanding of poverty, Sanders could direct voters to attend to his policy position that this country needs to move toward a living wage (l. 5 - 6) broadly for everyone earning under fifteen bucks an hour, a position within the ideological space of American politics that he argues should not be understood as enacting an identity that could be called radical Democrat. In certain respects, Sanders’ policy prescription can be seen as helping tend to the well-being of the economic ecosystem as a whole by ensuring a more remunerative spread of wealth over the entire nation.

While Sanders focused more on the lived experiences of people throughout his campaign, empathizing with them and sharing their perspectives of given issues, Clinton would frequently point toward the shared Social Context of the entire nation throughout hers, those “hard truth[s] of our shared reality” (O’Malley Example 2.6 l. 1). This granular difference in perspective, between the more unique / personal and the more communal / commonplace, is one way that Clinton differentiated herself from Sanders in the Democratic ideological space. Her choice to frame many of her arguments within the Ground of shared Social Context, as she did in the following example, may be what separates centrist democrats from their co-partisans further
to the left within the ideological space of American politics. It is possible that by not adequately reflecting people’s perspectives of their unique lived experiences, some Democratic voters may have found her unempathetic to their worldview and perhaps acting like “the [Democratic] candidate of Wall Street” that O’Malley accused her of being (DEM debate 2; brackets mine).

This example may seem out of place when compared to the others in this section due to its lack of the word “poverty” or “poor”. However, given the purpose of this section to demonstrate how candidates differ from one another in how they talk about the same issues, I feel this example is well suited to demonstrate the differences between Sanders and Clinton. Indeed, this answer came in rebuttal to an answer given by Sanders when he spoke of “the casino capitalist process by which so few have so much and so many have so little” (Sanders DEM debate 1) which, through the well-being is wealth metaphor, evokes the concepts of wealth and poverty. Clinton’s use of inequality refers back anaphorically to that section of Sanders’ answer, which evokes the concept of poverty within her answer, allowing her to offer her own ideological position on poverty and how it differs from Sanders’ position. Both Sanders and Clinton were asked about the idea of capitalism; Sanders framed his answer with respect to the lived experiences of people and how much wealth they did or did not possess due to the “casino” nature of capitalism, while Clinton instead focused her answer on how to prevent the inequities of poverty and excessive wealth from occurring in the system of capitalism to begin with. For Sanders, the impact on people’s lived experiences was sufficient enough to reject the system of capitalism as a valid economic model as practiced in America, while for Clinton the system could be rebalanced through proper rein[ing in]. Rather than advocating for policy prescriptions which might fundamentally change the economic system by mistaken[ly...] turn[ing]
our backs on what built the greatest middle class in the history of the world, Clinton would prefer to save capitalism from itself by pruning back or rein[ing] in [some of] the excesses that are creating choke points in the ecosystem.

(3.11) Well, let me just follow up on that Anderson because when I think about capitalism, I think about all the small businesses that were started because we have the opportunity and the freedom in our country for people to do (APPLAUSE) that and to make a good living for themselves and their families. And I don’t think we should confuse what we have to do every so often in America, which is save capitalism from itself. And I think what Senator Sanders is saying certainly makes sense in the terms of the inequality that we have. But we are not Denmark. I love Denmark. We are the United States of America. And it’s our job to rein in the excesses of capitalism so that it doesn’t run amok and doesn’t cause the kind of inequities that we’re seeing in our economic system. But we would be making a grave mistake to turn our backs on what built the greatest middle class in the history of the world.

(Clinton, DEM Debate 1)

Clinton positioned her understanding of capitalism Conjointly with respect to the people who have built it up, how they have been able to make a good living for themselves and their families as well-being, and how they can and should control its excesses. This is a slightly different formulation than O’Malley’s ecosystem of people metaphor (Example 3.4), but one that provides her a bit of rhetorical cover because it defocuses unique life experiences in favor of the economic system as a shared Social Context that everyone exists within. From this position she is able to claim that the inequities of poverty and excessive wealth result from the capitalist economy is a living organism in the abstract, with its own independent will which has begun to run amok, rather than blaming certain people in the country for causing others to experience poverty. In this way, Clinton was able to position herself as a centrist democrat. Rather than implicating that employers are at fault for poverty as Sanders did through his use of the work is exchange metaphor (Example 3.10),
Clinton located the origin of poverty within capitalism itself, sounding a bit like Rubio (Example 3.6). Noting some of the wild-like growth potential of the (capitalist) economy is a living organism toward excesses that might almost be too much, Clinton sounded a bit like Kasich (Example 3.5). By framing capitalism as producing a force which negatively impacts people with poverty, Clinton sounded a bit like Huckabee (Example 3.8). Clinton’s comments about [us having] to save capitalism from itself and our job [being] to rein in the excesses of capitalism, however, violate the fixed bearing of Economic Supremacy by implying that the economy might somehow damage itself or need protection from itself, and that it can and should be restrained by human intervention; note also that these two comments were also some of the most Conjointly framed portions of her answer.

3.3.3 Summary

Candidates from either party address their understanding of poverty in similar ways as their co-partisans, but do so through different conceptual metaphors. These subtle differences at times pointed toward the different possible partisan identities which candidates and other members of each CoA could enact.

Given the debate between Republicans as to which fixed bearing should serve as the most prominent reference point for people to orient themselves with respect to, it is unsurprising that a slightly different conceptual understanding of poverty was possible, one that could lay the burden on Individuals for failing to follow the right path; Santorum’s (Example 3.9) use of the FAMILY IS A MACHINE linked poverty to a breakdown in family structure due to single parents not respecting the Christian Moral norm to get or remain married when rearing children. The Republican policies to deal with poverty involved simply reorienting America toward Economic Supremacy
through proper “conservative policies” (Pataki Example 3.7), or by triangulating the reorientation with the help of other fixed bearings, in a constitutional conservative way by using the Original Meaning of *The Constitution* (Rubio Example 3.6), or Santorum’s social conservative use or Christian Morality.

For the Democratic candidates, poverty is understood by making reference to people’s quality of life, the origins of which can be traced to a breakdown in the economic ecosystem. Clinton (Example 3.11) attempted to stake out a centrist democrat identity or position, noting this breakdown in the Social Context was sufficient and her policy prescriptions would serve to keep such problems in check without upending the socio-economic order. Sanders (Example 3.10) advocated for a non-“radical” democrat position, highlighting the nature of the breakdown as systemic improper exchanges occurring between employer and employee resulting in inadequate wages paid out, and would prefer using various governmental policies to correct this problem.

### 3.4 MONEY problems in the ECONOMY

In this section I offer a wider view of each party’s ideological space by examining candidates’ understanding of MONEY as they offer various policy prescriptions related to the economy, education, taxes, and MONEY more broadly. For the Republican candidates, I describe a series of additional metaphors that relate to WORK IS REWARD which help restrict the idea of MONEY to a cost of doing business to employers, but one that itself becomes obscured as a form of PRODUCTION VALUE to absolve employers from their role in the wage relationship. If employees want to earn more MONEY, they have to attend to their own PRODUCTION VALUE in appropriate ways lest they fail to live up to their ECONOMIC or even HUMAN WORTH. For the Democratic candidates, MONEY is understood as a medium of exchange within the economic ecosystem, where
undue concentrations can be understood as affecting the well-being of both citizen and economy, rather than being used as a yardstick to compare people’s successes to one another. Throughout this section I demonstrate how the various ideological interpretations and policy prescriptions may serve as alignment calls to various voters, whether within or across party lines, as a means for candidates to broaden their voter base.

3.4.1 Republican REWARDS

Consistent with the Absolute FoR’s extra-human organization of the social order, Carson felt the need to educate Americans about how to properly understand the fixed bearing of Economic Supremacy and the standards it delimits. Carson advocated against raising the minimum wage, locating his position through the work is reward metaphor; through an anecdote of his own life, he demonstrated that he understood and accepted the right and proper orientation of the socio-political landscape, where Individual youngster[s] should willingly forgo being paid a large amount of money because being Rewarded instead with various Beneficial Properties like a tremendous amount of experience, and how to operate in the world and how to relate to different people which allow them to become a responsible individual. From this Ground, Carson expected voters to naturally conclude that raising the minimum wage would increase the number of jobless people by giving them everything and keep them dependent, much like Pataki’s understanding of poverty, by Rewarding them with the “mere existence” (Pataki Example 3.7) of money instead of the experiences which make them able to enter the job market and take advantage of opportunities.

(3.12) CARSON: Well first of all, (THROAT) delighted to be here. Uh my family’s here, and my little granddaughter who’s three years old said she wanted to
come to the debate. So this is very cool. Um as far as the the minimum wage is concerned y- m- people need to be educated on the minimum wage. Every time we raise the minimum wage, the number of jobless people increases. It’s particularly a problem in the black community. Only nineteen point eight percent of black teenagers have a job, who are looking for one. Y’know th- and that’s because of those high wages. If you lower those wages that comes down. Y’know I can remember as a youngster, y’know my first job working in a laboratory as a lab assistant and multiple other jobs. But I would not have gotten those jobs if someone had to pay me a large amount of money. But what I did gain from those jobs is a tremendous amount of experience, and how to operate in the world and how to relate to different people, and how to become a responsible individual. And that’s what gave me what I needed to ascend the ladder of opportunity in this country. That’s what we need to be thinking about. How do we allow people to ascend the ladder of opportunity, rather than how do we give them everything and keep them dependent?

(APPLAUSE)

CAVUTO: So sir just to be clear, you would not raise it?

CARSON: I would not raise it. I would not raise it, specifically because I’m interested in making sure that people are able to enter the job market and take advantage of opportunities.

(Carson, GOP Debate 4)

Carson’s understanding of Economic Supremacy orients America in such a way that the employers should be free to REWARD their workers through whatever combination of money and BENEFICIAL PROPERTIES they deem fit. Carson positioned the minimum wage as a form of problematic human intervention, a barrier which keeps Individuals from enter[ing] the job market, which he presumes has sufficient opportunities (l. 22) for people to take advantage of and ascend the ladder of opportunity.¹

Only after that barrier is removed, which wrongly compels employers to pay those high wages, will the extra-human nature of the social order be able to exert itself once more and cause the number of jobless people to come down.

¹Via the metaphors LIFE IS A JOURNEY (Johnson and Lakoff 2002; Kövecses 2010; Lakoff and Johnson 1980, 1999; Lakoff and Turner 1989; Langacker 2008) and SUCCESS IS A LADDER (Lakoff 2002).
The ideological interpretation that the minimum wage in monetary terms begets employment problems is a recurrent theme on the Republican side; even Trump went so far as to make a similar comment about the minimum wage during the same GOP debate (Example 5.2), but perhaps expanding his meaning to include all of American “wages [as] too high”. Such comments indicate a possible breaking point or an emergent cross-domain mapping in the work is reward metaphor. Lakoff (2002:54) described work is reward with respect to labor-as-obedience and wage-as-reward. I have analyzed the wage-as-reward mapping as a compressed form of the beneficial properties are monetary possessions, allowing Republicans to erase money from the idea of employee earnings, offering other forms of compensation such as experience as equally if not more valuable. However, when it comes to the cost to employers having to pay [someone] a large amount of money as wages, the idea of money seems to take center stage again.

In order to talk about wages-as-money akin to a cost of doing business without losing the compressed beneficial properties mapping, Republicans seem to use another cross-domain mapping or stand alone conceptual metaphor that I would gloss along the lines of human worth is economic worth, offering the entailments that who an individual is determines the value of the labor they provide and the value of wage they should be paid. In a previous debate, Carson (GOP debate 2) went so far as to advocate for “two minimum wages, a starter, and a sustaining because how are young people ever gonna get a job if you have such a high minimum wage that it w- it makes it impractical to hire them”. In attempting to decompose the minimum wage into two tiers, Carson explicitly broke any conceptual link between value of labor and wage remunerated. In essence, this is the exact opposite form of the argument made by Sanders (Example 3.3) where those “who perform the same work” should be paid
the same regardless of their gender, since the labor itself has inherent value for both employer and employee. There are two implications of Carson’s rupture to follow. Firstly, regardless of the value or difficulty of labor performed, an inexperienced worker performing it makes it less valuable; perhaps it was “impractical” for the lab to pay Carson the same as other workers in the lab who did similar work because his labor or product was less polished and more “starter” looking. Secondly, regardless of the type of labor being done, individuals can and should be paid differently because of an aspect of themselves they may or may not have control over, like Carson being a youngster.2

To this second point, through this emergent cross-domain mapping or stand-alone conceptual metaphor of **human worth is economic worth**, Carson’s comments make a particular sense: young individuals aren’t worthy of a high minimum wage, so employers should be freed from having to pay them so. Broadening this statement to encapsulate the entire possible series of entailments and inferences results in something like: certain individuals aren’t worthy of certain wages. Though I have phrased these entailments in the negative due to Carson’s comment above, their inverses are available at the highest level of abstraction: certain individuals are worthy of certain wages. The extent to which this metaphor and its entailments might account for ideas like rich people are better people, poor people are worse people, good people are good investments, bad people are bad investments, and so on merits further study. But at present, the important aspect I focus on relates to the meaning making potential that this metaphor offers to candidates for locating their ideological interpretations and policy prescriptions. I would also argue that this metaphor or one of its entailments

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2See Jindal Example 4.6 for a similar argument about features related to ethnicity with respect to immigration.
underlies Christie’s admonition to treat rich people “kindly” (Example 3.1).

To the first point, given this insight into a seemingly emergent conceptual metaphor in Republican ideology, and in particular how it seems to be tied to or act as a new constituent cross-domain mapping within the work is reward metaphor, I feel confident in offering a new entailment of work is reward with a similar function: certain types of labor aren’t worthy of certain wages, a cross-domain mapping that can be phrased production value is monetary worth. While this may sound like a reasonable or market centered understanding of labor as is present in the work is exchange metaphor, the major difference is that the work-as-valuable object mapping is work domain internal in work is exchange (Lakoff 2002:55), the value or worth of labor being understood with respect to the work itself (see Fig. 3.2). Here, due to the cross-domain mapping, the target of production value can rightly be understood with respect to whatever monetary worth a person chooses to assign, allowing positive or negative appraisal without regard for any inherent value of the labor itself; the choice of the source domain worth is meant to reflect cases where objects may or may not have an inherent or quantifiable value, but may still be worth nothing or something respectively to someone. The reason for postulating this cross-domain mapping and its entailments lie in their complementarity to the human worth mapping; Republicans seem to need a way to bring the concept of money back into their discussion of employment, but in a way that helps them further their ideological agenda, that being the nature of work is reward and its moral imperative that work defines “a sense of who [one] is” (Paul Example 3.2). The reason I have chosen the term production is meant to reflect that need, where the employee is removed from the work domain in favor of the more abstract process of production. Some of the ideas this metaphor and its entailments may account
for are good jobs pay good money, bad jobs pay bad money, bad money pays for bad jobs, and good money pays for good jobs.

Traces of the confluence of the HUMAN WORTH and PRODUCTION VALUE metaphors can be observed in Pataki’s distinction between “welfare check” and “paycheck” (Example 3.7), where the right type of money pays for or is indicative of the right type of existence. This confluence or chain (Kövecses 2010; Lakoff and Turner 1989) of metaphors, made possible by the source domains related to money, may itself be a conceptual metaphor. Compressing the two metaphors to erase monetary consideration leaves us with HUMAN WORTH IS PRODUCTION VALUE (see Fig. 3.4). This understanding, whether a standalone metaphor or a metaphor chain, underlies comments like “the dignity of being a welder. The dignity of being a carpenter” (Santorum GOP debate 4) or “Welders make more money than philosophers. We need more welders and less philosophers” (Rubio Example 3.14), where the type of work a person does should be understood as granting a degree of HUMAN WORTH irrespective of the monetary cost or benefit associated with it. One possible entailment of this metaphor chain is the moral imperative to work within the WORK IS REWARD METAPHOR, where Americans rightly “want to work” (Paul Example 3.2) rather than
living a “mere existence” (Pataki Example 3.7).

This complex web of metaphors offers Republican candidates a highly adaptable system which can be used to highlight or erase various aspects of people’s day-to-day experiences of work as they lead voters through the internal logic of their ideological positions. In the following example, Kasich talks a lot about people and money, carefully weaving a series of cross-domain mappings to locate his ideological interpretations and policy prescriptions on issues of wage stagnation, education, general economic concerns, and the American Dream. For Kasich, people are upset that wages don’t rise and he located the reason why it hasn’t risen in two search domains: a skills mismatch with respect to employment, and Federal Reserve policy which he claims shifted the investments of the wealthy into stronger assets. Kasich downplays this latter concern, forestalling an inference that we should hold the wealthy responsible for wages not rising due to this reallocation of capital by ignoring it through most of his answer then capping it off entirely through the human worth is economic worth metaphor in the aphorism from his father: we never we don’t hate the rich—Americans should not judge the wealthy wrongly for investing their money as they see fit even if it makes things very very difficult for them—because we just wanna be the rich ourselves someday. However, the potential for the voters’ human worth is understood as having an opportunity to realize the American Dream not necessarily as wealth, a potential that can only be located with respect to rising wages, which they can acquire only by increasing their production value through proper training ... for jobs that ... exist, that are good jobs that can pay. This chain of logic is the uncompressed form of human worth is production value where the source domain of money helps mediate the conceptual flow: raising one’s production value improves their potential monetary / economic worth thus their human worth.
... So here’s this the situation I think Maria. And this what we have to I’ve gotta tell you, when wages don’t rise, and they haven’t for a lot of families for a number of years it’s very very difficult for them. Part of the reason why it hasn’t risen is because um sometimes we’re not giving people the skills they need. Sec- Sometimes it’s because the Federal Reserve kept interest rates so low, that the wealthy were able to invest in in strong assets like the stock market, when everybody else was left behind. People are upset about it I’ll tell you what else they’re upset about you’re fifty you’re fifty one years old, and some kid walks in and tells you you’re out of work. And you don’t know where to go and where to turn. Do we have answer for that? We do. There are ways to retrain the fifty and fifty one year olds cuz they’ve got great value. I’ll tell you uh what else people are concerned about. Their kids come out of college, they have high debt, and they can’t get a good job. We gotta do a lot about the high cost of high higher education, but we’ve gotta make sure we’re training people for jobs that are exist, that are good jobs that can pay. (APPLAUSE) Let me tell you that, in this country in this country, people are concerned, about their economic future. They’re very concerned about it. And they wonder whether somebody is getting something to keeping them from getting it. That’s not the America that I’ve ever known my father used to say Johnny we never we don’t hate the rich. We just wanna be the rich. And we just gotta make sure that every American has the tools, in K through twelve and in vocational education, in higher education. And we gotta fight like crazy so people can think the American dream still exists because it does. With rising wages, with full employment, and with everybody in America and I mean everybody in America, having an opportunity to realize the American dream of having a better life than their mother and their father....

(Kasich, GOP Debate 6)

Kasich’s example of the fifty and fifty one year olds also decompresses the metaphor chain while serving as an appeal to older voters who have been laid off to align with his campaign. For Kasich, these workers already have great value which can ambiguously be understood either as human worth or production value. However, that great value was not sufficient to protect them from being fired or replaced by some kid, whose age renders the value of their managerial judgement dubious. Through the juxtaposition of the older workers with their great value and some kid lacking the same, Kasich evoked the human worth is economic worth entailment that
certain people are worthy of certain jobs and wages, through which the older worker should justifiably feel upset by the lack of respect for their human worth shown by the kid as much as in the loss of employment. However, the older workers should take heart that Kasich still respects the great value of their human worth, because he properly understands that it can be respected once more with proper economic worth, attainable by retraining for jobs ... that exist, which will increase their production value, just like the kids com[ing] out of college have to do.

Each of Kasich's metaphors reflects a proper understanding of American life and describes proper standards of behavior and assessments delimited by the fixed bearing of Economic Supremacy. The America that [Kasich has always] ... known assures respect for the human worth of the wealthy by not hat[ing] them nor questioning their involvement in wage stagnation. By attending to one's production value properly, through the right kind of education leading to jobs that ... exist, everybody in America can achieve the American Dream thus their human worth. This latter ideological interpretation or prescription that people have to get the right kind of education or skill set to increase their production value was variously mentioned by Republican candidates. Rubio twice lamented people getting degrees that did not “lead to a job” (04/13/15, GOP debate 4); Santorum linked problems getting off welfare with a “low skill level” (GOP debate 1), and low wages and workforce participation rates with a mismatch between training and skills and the jobs that are being created (GOP debate 3); Walker linked wages going up to people “get[ting] ... the education, the skill they need, to take on careers that pay more than minimum wage” (GOP debate 2). Individual Americans must look to the wealthy as guides, who through their proper orientation to Economic Supremacy have managed to navigate the social and economic landscape to maximize their human worth, and should
follow their lead by responding properly to the demands of the autonomous Economy in acquiring the right education which will “lead to a job” (Rubio) that exists which will reward them with the “dignity of being” (Santorum GOP debate 4) properly employed.

Saying that some Americans work the wrong kind of jobs outright would not be a good tactic to align voters to one’s campaign. This rich metaphorical system however grants Republican candidates subtle ways to generate hierarchies of job types or workers which may or may not accord with an analysis based on how much money they make, the value of their labor within the economy, the demand of the labor and supply of people who can accomplish it, and so on. By substituting money with ideas of Beneficial Properties, Human Worth, and Production Value, they can organize the socio-economic pecking order to suit the moment and target a specific type of voter. Kasich valorized older workers at the expense of “some kid”, and also those students who focused on the right kind of job degree in college the first time at the expense of those who “have high debt and ... can’t get a good job” because they did not. During the fourth GOP debate, Rubio opined that because welders make more money than philosophers the natural conclusion should be that we need more welders and less philosophers. If Rubio wanted voters to locate his estimation of the value of those job types in an ideological space of Money, the first comment would have been sufficient. The addition of the second comment however helps reorient the logic of his position with respect to the rest of his answer, where the value of job types can be understood with respect to the ideological space of success and perseverance rather than how rich they make a person.

(3.14) Well let me begin by answering both the first question and this one, cuz they’re related. As uh y- I’ve said many times before my parents were never rich people, my father was a bartender, my mother was a maid, they worked
for a living. But they were successful people. Because despite the fact that they weren’t well educated and had those jobs, they made enough money to buy a home in a safe and stable neighborhood, retire with dignity, leave all four of their children better off than themselves. We call that the American dream, but in fact, it’s a universal dream of a better life that people have all over the world. It is a reminder that every country in the world has rich people. What makes America special is that we have millions and millions of people that are not rich, that through hard work and perseverance are able to be successful. The problem is that today people are not successful working as hard as ever because the economy is not providing jobs that pay enough. If I thought that raising the minimum wage was the best way to help people increase their pay, I would be all for it, but it isn’t. In the twentieth century it’s a disaster. If you raise the minimum wage you’re gonna make people more expensive than a machine. And that means all this automation that’s replacing jobs and people right now is only gonna be accelerated. Here is the best way to raise wages. Make America the best place in the world to start a business or expand an existing business, tax reform, and regulatory reform, bring our debt under control, fully utilize our energy resources so re-can reinvigorate um manufacturing, repeal and replace Obamacare, and make higher education faster and easier to access, especially vocational training. For the life of me, I don’t know why we have stigmatized vocational education. Welders make more money than philosophers. We need more welders and less philosophers. (APPLAUSE) And if we do that and if we do this if we do this, we will be able to increase wages for millions of Americans and we will be able to leave everyone better off without making anyone worse off.

(Rubio, GOP Debate 4)

For Rubio, wage stagnation is a result of the autonomous ECONOMY not provid- ing jobs that pay enough because of a misorientation of the socio-political landscape through supposedly bad policy prescriptions which have made America a problematic place to start a business or expand a business. The problem cannot be located with respect to payroll per se, since rais[ing] the minimum wage would wrongly inflate the MONETARY WORTH of some employees without increasing their PRODUCTION VALUE, granting them “unearned success” to use Jindal’s turn of phrase (GOP debate 3, 4). Instead, the solution resides in properly maximizing the PRODUCTION VALUE overall through various policies which supposedly reduce the cost to run a business, and at
the Individual level by re-educating the workforce, both in skills and in understanding which career choices are bad, leading them away from non-PRODUCTION VALUE jobs like those that pay the minimum wage or philosophers in favor of vocational jobs like welders. In one fell swoop, Rubio reoriented the socio-economic pecking order to co-locate those who work minimum wage jobs and those philosophers, both with the wrong type of skills, as below welders or those in vocational jobs. This reorientation serves as an appeal to voters who work vocational jobs, and perhaps to those who like hearing college educated types being negatively appraised.

Rubio’s anecdote about his parents also serves to locate the problem of wage stagnation with respect to the wrong type of job in a way. His parents worked for [their] living of being successful in certain jobs despite the fact that they weren’t well educated; but, Rubio triangulated their struggles within the search domain of the Glorious Past, decontesting the historic trend of the purchasing power of the minimum wage, or even middle class wages, or any other such economic changes. Back when, people did not have to have a particular type of PRODUCTION VALUE, they were simply good people like his parents working jobs that made enough money, their HUMAN WORTH of success being directly reflected through their ECONOMIC WORTH. People in the twentieth century, however, cannot simply work hard and persever[e] to earn their success in jobs that do not have sufficient PRODUCTION VALUE, lacking a certain level of training or education, despite such jobs like bartender or maid being necessary for some businesses to continue operating. Today, people have to realign their PRODUCTION VALUE for the right kind of jobs which will reward them their HUMAN WORTH of the American Dream. Much like Kasich’s older workers, the position of older people like Rubio’s parents in the socio-economic landscape can be located through the metaphor of HUMAN WORTH IS ECONOMIC WORTH,
while younger Americans must understand their position through the metaphor chain human worth is production value. Given the flexibility of metaphoric systems, it is perhaps unsurprising that Rubio made a similar argument to locate his position on immigration (see Example 4.9).

These three Republican candidates navigated through a series of metaphors in order to locate their ideological positions on how to improve the economic situation of Americans. Consistent with a socio-political landscape properly oriented with respect to the fixed bearing of Economic Supremacy, voters should understand that their location in or value to the socio-economic landscape should not be determined by how much money “someone had to pay them” (Carson Example 3.12), rather only through their production value, which only they can control through proper education to work the right kind of jobs “that ... exist, that are good jobs that can pay” (Kasich Example 3.13) rewards accordingly. Raising the minimum wage cannot result in better socio-economic situations because such a policy would only inflate their economic / monetary worth. Free of the constraints of a minimum wage law and other such policies that violate the need to treat those with capital “kindly” (Christie Example 3.1), the autonomous economy will naturally produce the right type of jobs with higher production value which in turn will “increase wages for millions of Americans and we will be able to leave everyone better off without making anyone worse off” (Rubio Example 3.14). Through this complex web of metaphors, Republicans are able to erase or obscure the idea of money from their arguments, and absolve business leaders and the economic organism itself from culpability for causing any interference in the living situations of Americans. The extra-human socio-economic landscape is what it is, and it is up to each Individual to navigate it however it is structured to assure their own human worth. Only
governmental policies are barriers which stymy Individuals in their pursuit of their American Dream by creating entropy in the extra-human ordering of the social order; whatever edifices the wealthy may construct in pursuit of their own HUMAN WORTH that lie in one’s path are there to be appreciated along the way, even if they may obstruct one’s travel briefly.

3.4.2 Democratic EXCHANGES

The Democratic candidates did not exploit MONEY as a source domain within a complex web of metaphors as they talked about issues related to the economy. I would argue their lack of such a complex set of metaphors stems from a different perspective about the significance of money; that is, in a Conjoint FoR where the commonplace interactions between people and their lived experiences take center stage, money simply acts as a transactional mechanism between people rather than as a measure of one’s worth in comparison to others. Money is just money. While it can be exchanged for WELL-BEING in the form of goods and services, it is not some substance that confers on its owners “dignity” nor does it command “kind” (Christie Example 3.1) treatment in terms of policy initiatives out of fear that those who have it head for the hills or le[ave], as O’Malley stated during the second Democratic debate.

(3.15) Kathie this was not merely theory in Maryland. We actually did it. Not only were we the first state in the nation to pass a living wage we were the first to pass a minimum wage. And the US Chamber of Commerce which hardly ever says nice things about democratic governors anywhere named our state number one for innovation and entrepreneurship. We defended the highest median income in the country. And uh uh so look, the way the the a stronger middle class is actually the source of economic growth. And if our s- middle class makes more money, they spend more money and our whole economy grows. We did it. And it worked. And nobody headed for the hills or left the state because of it.

(O’Malley, DEM Debate 2)
Consistent with his “ecosystem” (Example 3.4) version of the economy is a living organism and the well-being is wealth metaphor, O’Malley located his understanding of money with respect to the need for people to earn enough for their well-being or living. By securing a certain level of living wage to the people, which will in turn help them increase their spending habits, the continued well-being as growth of the economic ecosystem can be assured. Whether or how this Democratic preference for the well-being is wealth metaphor inhibits their using the beneficial properties is monetary possessions or those others described in §3.4.1 is an open question that merits further research; but, within my analysis of this data, I do not see the Democrats linking wage earnings or employment types to abstract qualities or states like “dignity”, “self-esteem” (Paul Example 3.2), or “hope” (Pataki Example 3.7) as consistently or completely as the Republicans did. Rather, the Democratic candidates offered a worldview that sees the value of money as a measure of a quality of life and a well functioning interdependent economic ecosystem rather than as a yardstick to hierarchically position individuals in the socio-economic landscape with respect to one another.

During the third Democratic debate, Clinton seemed to try and bridge the rhetorical divide in a way, attempting to frame her answer through a work is reward metaphor. This example demonstrates the problem a candidate may have when attempting to use an opposing political CoA’s shared repertoire; she may have used many of the right words, but she did not put them together in the right metaphorical mappings. While Clinton did invoke work is reward by saying hard work is gonna be rewarded, her beneficial properties mapping offered feelings of optimism and confidence. These rewards seem qualitatively similar to Pataki’s (Example 3.7) “hope” and “dreams” that people have who are not poor as opposed to the “dignity”
or “self-esteem” (Paul Example 3.2) that people earn through hard work. Kasich (Example 3.5) did speak of “confidence”, however that was a state that certain policies would grant to “job creators”; being that his use was not in a WORK IS REWARD metaphor, it may add more credence to the remainder of this argument. These differences may seem subtle but their effects are not unexpected given our proclivity to use metaphors and the inherent flexibility the system provides; Clinton may have inadvertently activated the POVERTY domain as understood by members of the Republican CoA, sounding like she was talking about ameliorating poverty rather than helping workers earn their success. That is, there may be restrictions on which BENEFICIAL PROPERTIES can be REWARDED to hard workers versus those to Individuals trapped in poverty; this hypothesis merits further inquiry but likely requires a vastly expanded data set to do so. Given this potentially flawed beginning, her entire answer becomes one long list of ideological interpretations and policy prescriptions that by definition can do nothing “to help people increase their pay” (Rubio Example 3.14) to a member of the Republican CoA.

(3.16) Well I’ve been talking to a lot of these families, and this is uh such an outrage, both because it’s bad for our economy, we’re a seventy percent consumption economy, people need to feel optimistic and confident, they need to believe that their hard work is gonna be rewarded. And it’s bad for our democracy. Uh it’s absolutely the case that if people feel that the game is rigged, that has consequences. I I think it’s great standing up here with the senator and the governor talking about these issues because you’re not gonna hear anything like this from any of the Republicans who are running for president. (APPLAUSE) They don’t wanna raise the minimum wage, they don’t want to do anything to increase incomes. At the center of my economic policy is raising incomes, because people haven’t been able to get ahead, and the cost of everything from college tuition to prescription drugs, has gone up. Of course we have to raise the minimum wage. Of course we have to do more to incentivize profit sharing, like we see with Market Basket right here in New Hampshire and New England, where all of the employees get a chance to share in the profits. (APPLAUSE) And we’ve got to do more on equal pay for equal work. That means pass the Paycheck Fairness Act so we have transparency
about how much people are making. That’s the way to get women’s wages up
and that’s good for them and good for their families and good for our
communities. (APPLAUSE) And there is a lot we can do in college
affordability. I have debt free tuition plans, free community college plans,
getting student debt down. I also am very eh committed to getting the price
of drugs down. And there’s a lot. You can go to my website, [MUIR:
Secretary] hillary clinton dot com, and read about it. But I guess the final
thing that that I would say is this is the kind of debate we need to take to the
Republicans in the fall.

(Clinton, DEM Debate 3)

A Republican would likely nod along that you’re not gonna hear anything like this
from any of the Republicans who are running for president not simply because of
the animus directed against Clinton herself, but also because the validity of each of
her policy prescriptions that she offered can rightly be assessed through a Conjoint
FoR, not an Absolute one. All of Clinton’s ideological interpretations and policy
prescriptions more accurately reflect an understanding of money through the work
is exchange metaphor where employees should get a chance to share in the profits
because “their hard work earns” (Clinton 06/13/15) such profits, and where the
value of work should be transparent because everyone should see that equal work is
receiving equal pay. Further, Clinton locates the validity of her prescriptions solely
in the well-being of families and communities, subtly differentiating herself from
O’Malley by not describing outright any positive effects on the economy as a whole.

Clinton’s ideological interpretation that the game is rigged also merits a moment
of discussion, particularly with respect to the “ecosystem” (O’Malley Example 3.4)
understanding of the economy is a living organism. Both rigged and “ecosys-
tem” are indicative of the concept of balance. In his examination of balance,
Johnson (1987:88) described the concept of an ecosystem as a functional system
predicated on understanding how various forces interact with one another in proper
proportion: natural forces such as temperature and weather, and “social forces” such as interactions between animal and insect species. Similarly, the idea that a game can be rigged implies that there exists a preferred equilibrium between the rules and the competitors in a game which can be upset to one competitor’s advantage. The Republican candidates also framed problems in the economy through game or competition metaphors, mainly in discussions about international trade (§4.2) but not in balance terms; and indeed competition seems to structure most of Trump’s ideological worldview (Ch. 5).

Throughout her campaign, Clinton nodded toward various imbalances as existing, whether here simply noting that the game is rigged or the “inequalities that we have” and the “excesses of capitalism” (Example 3.11). Her ideological interpretations and policy prescriptions usually offered end states or remedies, backgrounding the actual imbalances themselves in favor of what the proper balance itself should be understood as. Her use of the discourse maker of course (Furkó 2007) defocused the imbalances that rais[ing] the minimum wage and profit shar[ing] would redress into the background of the shared Social Context of the socio-economic landscape. Sanders, on the other hand, was usually more explicit about the nature of the imbalances through his description of the effects they had on people’s lived experiences.

During his campaign announcement, Sanders located his ideological positions within the lived experiences of Americans at the hands of the billionaire class in their quest to have it all, akin to poachers preying on or within the economic ecosystem. Using the well-being is wealth metaphor, Sanders described the imbalance which affects every corner of this nation: through huge tax breaks and stash[ed] ... profits abroad a significant amount of wealth has been extracted from the American socio-economic landscape which has resulted in massive unmet needs of well-being,
whether *children in this country go[ing] hungry* or a lack of employment for *millions* of people. Rather than erasing the complicity of the wealthy in these *imbalance*, Sanders highlighted their *greed*, locating the origin of these problems for voters within an ideological space projected from the *billionaire class*’ flawed perspective of excessive self-interest.

(3.17) This campaign starting today is going to send a message to the billionaire class. And that is you can’t have it all. (APPLAUSE) You can’t get huge tax breaks while children in this country go hungry. (APPLAUSE) You can’t continue sending our jobs abroad while millions are looking for work. (APPLAUSE) You can’t hide your profits in the Cayman Islands and other tax havens while there are massive unmet needs on every corner of this nation. (APPLAUSE) To the billionaire class I say that your greed has got to end. You cannot take advantage of all of the benefits of America if you refuse to accept your responsibilities. (APPLAUSE) And that is why we need a tax system which is fair and progressive, which tells the wealthiest individuals and the largest corporations that they are going to begin to start paying their fair share of taxes. (APPLAUSE)

(Sanders, 04/30/15)

Sanders took an interesting metaphorical turn for the last *imbalance* when he admonished the *billionaire class* for *taking advantage of all the benefits of America* while shirking their *responsibilities*. This particular comment seems to make more sense through a *beneficial properties are monetary possessions* metaphor where, for Sanders, an increase in one’s wealth should entail an understanding of an increase in one’s *responsibilities*. Much like Clinton’s attempt to use the more Republican *work is reward* metaphor, Sanders shows an interesting variation in his use of *beneficial properties*; the Republican candidates tended to map monetary compensation into the *favorable* or *good* semantic subspace within the target domain of *beneficial* through lexical items like “dignity”, “hope” (Pataki Example 3.7), or “self-esteem” (Paul Example 3.2), while Sanders seems to map the ill-gotten gains
of the *billionaire class* into the **CONSTRUCTIVE** or **HELPFUL** semantic subspace of **BENEFICIAL** in his use of *responsibilities* here. His use of *benefits* can also be understood as a mapping into the **CONSTRUCTIVE** or **HELPFUL** semantic subspace where certain features of the socio-economic ecosystem are advantageous for the generation of wealth.

At the same time, this **HELPFUL** semantic subspace of **BENEFICIAL** seems to have some conceptual overlap with the idea of **WELL-BEING**, through a conceptually adjacent subspace of **HEALTHFUL**. I would argue that Sanders used *all of the benefits* precisely for its ability to bridge both the **BENEFICIAL PROPERTIES** and **WELL-BEING** metaphors. In his construction *take advantage of all of the benefits*, Sanders admonished the *billionaire class* for poaching too many of the choicest **BENEFICIAL PROPERTIES** of the economic system for their personal gain, while shirking their *responsibilities* as dross and the resulting imposition on the **WELL-BEING** of their fellow Americans—given the Conjoint FoRs focus on the lived experiences of people, those benefits being *take[n] advantage of* would be the *children* left to hunger and *millions* left without jobs.

From Sanders’ vantage, voters should rightly discern that one proper course of action to restore **BALANCE** throughout the socio-economic landscape is to ensure that *the wealthiest individuals and largest corporations* pay *their fair share of taxes*, the increase in tax revenues being reflected in increases in **WELL-BEING** and **BENEFICIAL PROPERTIES**. The proper proportion of taxes paid will satisfy *the wealthiest individuals’ responsibilities* by paying back the socio-economic *benefits* they have abused; and the taxes paid will be used to increase **WELL-BEING** by helping meet the *unmet needs on every corner*. The validity of the **progressive** nature of this *fair share of taxes* can be located in the ideological space projected from one sense of *fair* meaning
a “scalar distribution of responsibility” exemplified by Lakoff as “the greater your abilities, the greater your responsibilities” (2002:61). This scalar framing potential of “fair” is possible in a Conjoint political FoR, which generates ideological spaces with respect to people’s interactions with one another, because the nation can be seen as an ecosystem with competing forces which have to be balanced to assure a particular degree of well-being for the citizenry. The framing potential of “fair” is quite different in the Absolute FoR where individual’s actions are assessed in relation to fixed bearings and often mediated through competition metaphors (see §4.2 and Ch. 5).

3.4.3 Summary

Consistent within the fixed bearing of Economic Supremacy, the Republican candidates located money within an ideological space of human worth when earned, but a problematic cost of doing business for employers; to keep the latter in check businesses should be allowed to reward employees with a mix of whatever wage they choose and intangibles such as “experience” (Carson Example 3.12) and “dignity”. Workers should increase their production value through education if they want to see their human worth rise. Due to a chain metaphor, it is assumed that the workers’ monetary worth will naturally increase in tandem with their production value and human worth, but only if they fully orient themselves to Economic Supremacy and its demands of “jobs that ... exist” (Kasich Example 3.13). Business’s ability to pay more money in wages is effectively erased. These mappings serve as an alignment call for voters who understand (or desire) that assessments of status in the socio-economic landscape should be based on the propriety of the work done, whether or not it is paid well, and for business leaders who feel they should be allowed to set
whatever wages they like.

The Democratic candidates were less shy about policy prescriptions which would assure increases in money paid out by employers to their employees either as a “share in the profits” (Clinton Example 3.16) or because it is the “responsib[le]” thing to do (Sanders Example 3.17). While some business leaders might not find these policy prescriptions beneficial to them and choose not to align with the Democratic CoA, O’Malley (Example 3.15) noted they often do not flee a state because of such policies, contrary to Christie’s assertion that they will (Example 3.1). The Democratic candidates located their policy prescriptions within an ideological space of balance, appealing to voters who may feel like “the game is rigged” (Clinton Example 3.16), allowing them to be taken advantage of and paid insufficiently for their labors in comparison to the profits being taken in by their employers. Clinton did attempt to cross the ideological divide by using Republican sounding metaphors, however her more Democratic cross-domain mappings may have subverted her attempt by making her not sound Republican enough.

3.5 Chapter summary

In this chapter I have demonstrated some of the linguistic differences between the Democratic and Republican CoAs with respect to their understanding of the topics of wages, the economy, poverty, and money by examining the variable uses of numerous conceptual metaphors by candidates from both parties. Each candidate’s individual uses of metaphor were demonstrated as being consistent with the political FoR preferred by their party; the choice in metaphors and cross-domain mappings served to highlight or erase the appropriate reference points, reflecting each party’s preferred political FoR system. At times, the differences in metaphor use can demar-
cate a particular space within a CoA’s ideological field, indicating possible partisan identities which members may enact e.g. social conservative or centrist democrat.

For the Republican candidates, the extra-human origins of the social order are reflected in their description of the economy as an autonomous entity which can not be forced to grow against its nature through governmental policy or other human intervention. They used a network of metaphors to define standards of behavior and their assessment with reference to the fixed bearing of Economic Supremacy, setting up a socio-economic order of good workers who behave properly and are rewarded appropriately, bad workers who do not, and poor people who are made unable to do so. Those same metaphors are also used to erase the issue of money in order to hide both the employers’ and politicians’ actions from view when wages are discussed.

For the Democratic candidates, the emphasis on the lived experiences of people in the Conjoint FoR necessitates an understanding of the economy with respect to how the system as a whole is generated by the commonplace interactions of the citizens and their own contributions to its continued growth. Democratic candidates use metaphors to highlight the Conjoint experiences of people in the socio-economic landscape and describe an economic system which should secure the quality of life of all Americans. Money serves as the medium of transaction in this understanding of the economic system and the various problems within the economy can be appropriately linked to its imbalanced distribution.

In the next chapter I continue examining the linguistic differences between the two parties as they discuss issues related to international affairs through various spatial metaphors. Given the analogical use of the spatial FoRs, the next chapter is well suited to refine the link between political FoRs and conceptual metaphors begun here. Rather than analyzing each party in isolation I bring data from both sides into
a conversation, juxtaposing the ideological worldviews of the parties point for point to further clarify some of the boundaries between their ideological spaces. I will also introduce the COMPETITION domain and discuss “fair” more, necessary precursors before turning to a discussion of Trump’s rhetoric (Ch. 5).
Chapter 4

Doxa or opinion: International affairs

4.1 Introduction

More so than issues of the economy, rights, or rule of law, issues of international affairs are intimately concerned with both people and physical spaces in the form of nations. For this reason, we can see the clearest distinction between the two political frames of reference (FoRs) and how candidates from both Communities of Alignment (CoAs) use them to organize their ideological worldviews and rhetoric. With respect to immigration for example, the Republican candidates worried as much if not more about the security of the border and America’s landmass than they did immigrants; the Democratic candidates were more concerned with how immigrants were being treated and focused less on the border. Consistent with the pervasive discourse of “radical Islamic terrorism” (Jackson 2007; Nimmer 2011), the Republican candidates framed terrorism as a war against western civilization in order to erase any socio-political motivations of terrorists in favor of religious fanaticism alone while the Democratic candidates argued against such erasure, offering the perspectives of Muslims looking on as their religion is being maligned by both terrorists and American politicians. With respect to international trade, traces of this difference in focus between space and people can also be seen in the Republican candidates worry about “level playing fields” (§4.2) with their own supposedly shared rules that everyone should obey while Democratic candidates would prefer that American workers not be
forced to compete with low wage workers in other countries (Sanders Example 4.1).

Recall that the Figure-Ground distinction is operationalized differently by the two political FoRs due to the nature of their reference points. In an Absolute FoR, the Ground is enmeshed within the fixed bearings which permeate across the socio-political landscape; in a way, the fixed bearings serve as the Ground itself. In the Conjoint FoR, personal perspectives serve as valid reference points which in a way makes people themselves the Ground, not the socio-political or physical landscape. The Republican candidates created a symbolic and ideological link between the very ground of the nation and the Ground of their fixed bearings, needing to protect the American ideological mythos as much as the American frontier. The Democratic candidates focused less on spatial concerns and more on people in their discussions of international affairs precisely because their preferred Ground is people and their unique perspectives and lived experiences.

I have been making use of a spatial metaphor throughout this entire dissertation, analogically mapping spatial frames of reference onto political rhetoric. In this chapter, SPACE becomes particularly salient as a source domain for numerous metaphors which the candidates used in their messaging related to trade, immigration, and terrorism. SPACE or LOCATION is a prevalent source domain in conceptual metaphor because the “apparent familiarity of space, the givenness of space, its fixity and inertness, ... make a spatial grammar so fertile for metaphoric appropriation” (Smith and Katz 1993:68). This givenness and fixity can lend meaning generically, as in my use of ideological “position” throughout this dissertation, where there are no known, concrete places picked out by this spatial term, but which nonetheless lends a sense of demarcation between people and a stability to a candidate’s ideas. As relates to a nation, however, SPACE becomes loaded with specificity, a concrete sense of what
is known and knowable about a specific territory of the world, what is familiar and alien, given and forbidden (Dixon and Durrheim 2000; Keith and Pile 1993; Taylor 1994; Wallwork and Dixon 2004).

The static and fixed nature of space may also make it particularly appealing as a source domain for the Republican candidates for two reasons. Firstly, space serves to help construct their “prized notion of organic change” (Freeden 1996:335) and enforce its enactment through policy prescriptions. With respect to immigration, this valorization of “organic change” is manifested through assimilationist rhetoric structured with spatial metaphors in an attempt to slow undesirable cultural changes in America which may occur when immigrants cross the border and do not assimilate (Antonsich 2012; Bowskill and colleagues 2007; Charteris-Black 2006). Secondly, the Republican candidates rely on the “fixity and inertness” (Smith and Katz 1993:68) of physical space to lend an unyielding sense of resolve to their ideological positions with their “given” (1993:68) “extra-human origins” (Freeden 1996:334). Through the metaphor beliefs are locations (Lakoff and colleagues 1991:110), Republicans and other ideologues (Jackson 2007; Nimmer 2011) divide the world along a civilization line, reifying “western civilization” with its better values (Kasich Example 4.11) and noting that it is in a conflict, though the other side is granted no civilization of its own, erasing a space to terrorists in order to erase the validity of both their actions and beliefs in any worldview. Similarly, by focusing on the “level playing field” of international trade, the Republican candidates further compartmentalize (Hamington 2009) economic forces as “independent of human will” (Freeden 1996:334), operating under a set of self-referential rules which govern international trade is competition (Cudd 2007; Hamington 2009; Shields and Bredemeier 2011). Through a discursive tactic I label rhetorical erasure, intimately tied up with doxa and the
erasure of other possible orders of understanding (Bourdieu 1977) (§1.4.1), the Republican candidates also precluded possible counterarguments to their ideological position, reifying their **belief** as the only possible position appropriate within the American ideological landscape.

Given the Conjoint FoR’s emphasis on people to begin with, **space** is less prevalent in the Democratic candidates’ discourse of international affairs, its very “givenness” allowing a de-emphasis of the spatial aspects of issues in favor of people. Focusing on the competitors of the **INTERNATIONAL TRADE IS COMPETITION** rather than the supposedly impartial rules, the Democratic candidates highlighted the well-being of workers and the negative impacts on it caused by people in power who write trade deals to their own advantage or to assure a preconceived victory benefiting America alone. On immigration, the Democratic candidates located their positions with respect to issues of citizenship and the equitable treatment before the law for immigrants in America. The pervasive discourse of “radical Islamic terrorism” (Jackson 2007; Nimmer 2011) has tilted the American ideological landscape such that the Democratic candidates had a harder time locating their positions effectively, having to push back against both the broader discourse of terrorism which erases socio-political motivations from terrorists in favor of religious fanaticism, and the Republican candidates’ rhetorical erasure which seeks to reject any other possible ideological position than theirs to begin with. By emphasizing the perspectives which Muslims throughout the world have taken on terrorists, the Democratic candidates, to varying degrees of success, argued against the predominantly western viewpoint taken on terrorism and Islam, and in so doing attempted to reclaim the validity of other possible orders for understanding terrorism.

The order of the chapter is as follows; first I turn to international trade to examine
how how SPACE can be used to implicate a sense of givenness through its link to supposedly impartial rules of COMPETITION. Then in §4.3 I explore the link between SPACE and categorization in immigration rhetoric as a means to generate a fixed BELIEF, particularly with respect to what it means to be American. Finally, with respect to terrorism (§4.4) I examine how SPACE can be manipulated at the ideological level to preclude the possibility of other viewpoints.

4.2 International trade

In order to locate their positions on issues of international trade, candidates from both parties made use of the metaphor INTERNATIONAL TRADE IS COMPETITION. Much like the LIVING ORGANISM source domain, COMPETITION is multifaceted (Cudd 2007; Hamington 2009; Shields and Bredemeier 2011; Suits 2018), allowing candidates from each party to highlight or erase various aspects of the international trade debate in order to locate their position with respect to their parties’ preferred reference points. The literature on COMPETITION points out three elements with particular relevance to this analysis: the nature of the goal, the constitutive rules or guidelines on how to achieve that goal, and the rules of “fair play”. Aspects of these elements cluster together into two broad understandings with particular relevance to business and trade, especially within an analysis of political rhetoric based on Absolute and Conjoint FoRs. One cluster focuses on the constitutive rules which delineate the stringent guidelines for how to determine who wins and who loses; this understanding tends toward a zero-sum, winner-take-all conceptualization; this zero-sum understanding of win-loss is particularly salient in Trump’s ideological worldview (Ch. 5). The goal of this COMPETITION cluster is a “specific achievable state of affairs” in the world (Suits 2018) which the constitutive rules are constructed with respect to. The second
cluster focuses more on the competitors as they cooperate together in an activity to better each other through a test of skills; this understanding does not reject the constitutive rules or goal-orientation of COMPETITION, but sees them as means to achieve other additional objectives such as enjoyment or self-improvement, irrespective of winning the game as defined by the constitutive rules. The goal of this second cluster is almost completely external to the COMPETITION itself, being more about the competitors and their selves and less about achieving the win condition set forth by the constitutive rules. Rather than a zero-sum understanding, this second cluster seems more in line the more win-win idea prevalent in economic theory (McCloskey 1995; Rubin 2003). The rules of sportsmanship or “decency and fair play” (Cudd 2007:55) are present in each cluster, but are used to further different ideological ends.

Cudd’s use of “fair play” to define the non-constitutive rules of COMPETITION is problematic in a discussion of the political rhetoric of international trade due in no small part to the semantic ambiguity of “fair” (Lakoff 2002) but also with respect to the relationship between “free trade” and “fair trade” which numerous candidates contended with. Even the constitutive rules of COMPETITION are assumed to be fair or impartial in the procedural sense of fairness as described by Lakoff (2002:60) because everyone competing is held to the same understanding of the nature and processes of the COMPETITION. For the purposes of this analysis, the term mores will be used for those non-constitutive rules that prescribe proper behaviors and proscribe improper behaviors of competitors with respect to both one another and to the constitutive rules themselves. Unfortunately, the mores of “fair play” crosscut a number of models of fairness which Lakoff presented, while at the same time offering that sense of proper and improper behavior which Lakoff did not directly address. It is perhaps impossible to separate constitutive rules and mores from one another
completely, but it is in the very ambiguity and conflation between them that this analysis must contend precisely because the candidates themselves trod over them with ideological certainty that their party alone had the proper understanding of what “fair trade” is in INTERNATIONAL TRADE IS COMPETITION.

The constitutive rules can also be problematic when using COMPETITION as a source domain in metaphors for economics or international trade, offering potentially fallacious inferences particularly at the level of the people or business (Hamington 2009). While I take Hamington’s words of caution seriously, there are two aspects which seem at play in the distinction between the Democratic and Republican uses of INTERNATIONAL TRADE IS COMPETITION: the self-referential nature of constitutive rules (p. 477) and the voluntary agreement to join in the game and be bound by its rules (see Cudd 2007 for both as well). As Hamington notes, the self-referential nature of the rules, constituted solely for the purposes of defining how to achieve a specific state of affairs (Cudd 2007; Suits 2018), permits a potential “compartmentalizing [of] morality” (p. 477) where broader social mores can be ignored in pursuit of the goal—e.g. in boxing the rules say it’s okay to cause certain amounts of injury to another person in order to win. Indeed, the very compartmentalization of SPACE into constitutively defined fields, courts, and tracks where COMPETITION may consistently occur serves to homogenize how people experience the world in certain respects (Vertinsky 2001); the world that is business is assumed to have its own rules which may or may not reflect all of a nation’s social mores, let alone the social mores of every nation. As will be demonstrated, the Republican candidates’ focus on enforcing a SPATIALLY understood “level playing field” and its policy equivalent of “fair trade deals” tends to highlight and erase certain socio-political differences between nations, both in terms of laws but even in terms of economic systems, to help them frame their narrative
that Americans are being forced to compete at a disadvantage in international trade.

The voluntary nature of signing up for COMPETITION does not map well into economic domains when it comes to people (Cudd 2007; Hamington 2009) since most economic systems require people to work in order to survive, though see Clinton Example 4.4 noting the necessity of a “basic safety net” for good competition as a counterpoint. But, at the level of policy prescription, disgruntlement at trade deals can be framed with respect to how they are wrongly compelled on people or nations (see Sanders Example 4.1 and Santorum Example 4.2 respectively). Interestingly, the notion of “free trade” plays against both of these aspects of the constitutive rules of COMPETITION: free trade should have as few rules as possible which inhibit the voluntary contract between people in the buying and selling of goods (see Rubio Example 4.3).

Sanders located his ideological position on the COMPETITION of international trade by offering the perspective of American workers who have been forced, through various trade policies, to compete against people in other nations where laws and other factors permit a much lower minimum wage. For Sanders, American trade agreements over the past years have lacked sufficient protections for American workers in favor of tolerating corporate owners moving jobs and factories abroad. By juxtaposing those unfettered free trade deals with his ideal fair trade policies, Sanders argued that the American government and corporations have violated both constitutive rules and mores. In terms of the constitutive rules, the American workers were disempowered when corporate America wr[ote] agreements favoring themselves, which in turn forced Americans into an involuntary COMPETITION with “low income countries” (Sanders earlier in the same debate). This forced disadvantage violated numerous mores. Making Americans work longer hours for lower wages violates the scalar
distribution (Lakoff 2002:60) of labor to wage inherent in the work is exchange metaphor. Granting employers the power to threaten the livelihood of their workers to force cuts in pay violates the general sense of equality Americans feel they should possess with respect to business owners. Allowing companies to continue to profit off Americans buying products manufactured abroad which used to be made here smacks of deception and pretense, if not outright hypocrisy. Knowing that these deals have encouraged corporations to shut down in America and “go abroad to exploit poor people” (Sanders DEM debate 7) violates our general sense of shared humanity (see his concern about “slavery” in Example 4.7).1

(4.1) Chuck Chuck Chuck, I believe in trade. But I do not believe in unfettered free trade I believe in fair trade which works for the middle class and working families of this country and not just large multinational corporations. I was not only in opposition to NAFTA and this is an area where the secretary and I have disagreements. I was not only in opposition to NAFTA I was on the picket line in opposition to NAFTA. Because (APPLAUSE) I understood I don’t think this is really rocket science. We heard all of the people tell us how many great jobs would be created. I didn’t believe that for a second. Because I understood what the function of NAFTA CAFTA PNTR with China, and the TPP is, it’s to say to American workers, hey, you are now competing against people in Vietnam who make fifty six cents an hour minimum wage. I don’t want American workers to compete against people making fifty six cents an hour. I don’t want companies shutting down in America, throwing people out on the street, moving to China, and bringing their products back into this country so, do I believe in trade? Of course I believe in trade. But the current trade agreements over the last thirty years were written by corporate America, for corporate America, resulted in the loss of millions of decent paying jobs, sixty thousand factories in America lost since two thousand and one, millions of decent paying jobs and also a downward spiral, a race to the bottom. Where employers say, hey, you don’t wanna take a cut in pay? We’re going to China. Workers today are working longer hours for lower wages. Trade is one of the reasons for that. (APPLAUSE)

1NAFTA stands for The North American Free Trade Agreement, CAFTA for the Central American Free Trade Agreement, PNTR for Permanent Normal Trade Relations and TPP for the Trans-Pacific Partnership.
The self-referential aspect of the constitutive rules of competition implies an interesting corollary which is particularly noteworthy given Sanders argument about corporate America writing trade agreements to their own advantage: the constitutive rules of competition are necessarily divorced from the people subjected to them. That is, the rules exist independently of the players striving within their confines and are set and enforced by some independent authority who is not directly impacted by the struggle being played out on the field. Consistent with a Conjoint FoR’s dispreference for reified social constructs as reference points which people must orient toward, Sanders pushed back against this potential for constitutive rules to appear opaque and self-referentially extant through his implicit and explicit mentions of the American government and corporate America respectively. For Sanders, voters should look to the actions of those people drafting trade deals, unfettered for themselves and unfair for everyone else, to locate the origin of their involuntary recruitment to compete against workers in other nations and the concomitant downward spiral of their lower wages and well-being which that competition has brought.

Some Republican candidates, on the other hand, were willing to exploit this self-referential nature of constitutive rules in order to decontest other possible orders in favor of their ideological interpretations and policy prescriptions, particularly through their focus on the “playing field” and how it should be “level”. Given that “level playing field” straddles the line between a constitutive rule and a mores (Cudd 2007), a brief decomposition is in order. As a spatial concept, the playing field is imbued with a sense of givenness, fixity, and inertness (Smith and Katz 1993), demarcating a space with its own rules which people must adhere to (Cudd 2007; Hamington 2009). The idea of a playing field brings with it a homogeneity or consistency that can and
should span across nations such that soccer fields the world over are required to have the same dimensions and even large sporting stadiums are beginning to be structured similarly to one another (Vertinsky 2001). Consistent with their Absolute FoR and its focus on shared social beliefs, the playing field element of COMPETITION is particularly fruitful in attempting to define and delineate proper standards for everyone everywhere with respect to INTERNATIONAL TRADE; by asserting that the world is a playing field, the Republican candidates are able to evoke a sense for voters that everyone should be bound by the same constitutive rules of COMPETITION, namely any laws that inhibit capitalism are bad, but especially those that disadvantage America (see Rubio Example 4.3). The “level playing field” with respect to a Republican understanding of INTERNATIONAL TRADE IS COMPETITION thus evokes two interrelated senses, that no competitor should be granted undue advantage over America and only under that condition can COMPETITION be considered “good, successful, [and] satisfying” (Cudd 2007:62). For the Republican candidates, a “level playing field” is one that is non-advantageous to all competitors which, due to the fixed bearing of American Exceptionalism, should only result in victories which satisfy Americans, allowing America to win like “we used to” (Trump GOP debate 3) and “once again be able to stick out its chest and say, we truly are the greatest nation in the world” (Christie GOP debate 2).

In the following example, Santorum located his ideological position through the COMPETITION metaphor quite differently than Sanders. Rather than workers being forced to compete in a game they did not sign up for, Santorum focused on nations who are compet[ing] against one another on an international playing field. This space has self-evident rules like export financing which, despite conservative misgivings, America must follow in order to win. While Santorum’s displeasure at the
American government hamstringing itself by not following the self-referential rules is evident throughout, at the end of his answer he noted how the lack of a *level playing field* has made for an unsatisfying competition for *American workers*, failing to secure the victories for them that it should have. Santorum located his position through the *competition* metaphor with its potential zero-sum, winner-take-all conceptualization and supposed impartial constitutive rules, advocating that anything goes in the world of international trade, even violating an ideological norm of Economic Supremacy, namely government non-interference in the economy. Playing off the interrelated senses of the *level playing field*, Santorum offered an understanding for voters that international trade as currently structured is not procedurally impartial for America precisely because the rules do not assure satisfaction to Americans, regardless of whether corporations are *still making money* and *still doing well*.\(^2\)

(4.2) A true conservative wants to create a level playing field. That’s what that’s what we’re uh that’s what government is supposed to do. They’re not supposed to favor uh one group over another. And when it comes to our manufacturers, the level playing field is not in the United States. It’s international. And so the federal government should have laws, tax laws, regulatory laws, and yes finance laws. There’s sixty other EX-IM banks all over all over the world. Every major competitor for the United States’ manufacturing dollar has one of those banks. And guess what? They use those banks a heck of a lot more than they’re than than the United States of America does, number one. So in order to have a level playing field, which is what conservatives talk about all the time, level playing field, then we have to have export financing and here’s why. Because export financing doesn’t help Boeing or GE. GE just lost a contract. You know what they did? They went to France. They got the v- EX-IM bank in France, to support it, and what did they do they moved manufacturing out of South Carolina, out of Texas, moved it to j- to to Hungary and to France. GE’s still’s making money. GE’s still doing well. But American workers are out of jobs. That’s why we have to have this level playing field so we can compete with the rest of the world.

(Santorum, GOP Debate 3)

\(^2\)EX-IM stands for Export Import.
Santorum front loaded a justification for his potential violation of the ideological norms of the Republican CoA, claiming that he had the true conservative understanding of international trade and that he was not advocating to favor one group over another, rather simply trying to assure that the American government obeyed the rules of the international playing field which allows export financing. The given-ness of the playing field and the self-referential rules it enforces allowed Santorum to take and decontest his position that seems contrary to Republican ideology broadly, that the federal government should be willing and able to affect the market by offering capital to certain types of corporations in order to keep manufactures from moving operations abroad. While this might appear to violate the fixed bearing of Economic Supremacy through the government offering undue assistance to certain industries, by triangulating it with American Exceptionalism via the need for American victory and satisfaction Santorum inoculated himself from charges of undue government largesse by locating his position in an ideological space akin to American Economic Supremacy.

While it may appear odd for Santorum to claim that export financing neither helps corporations nor violates the Republican ideological dispreference for undue favor in economic matters, within the COMPETITION metaphor as he set it up there is no conflict; the nations are the competitors who must follow the rules and the corporations are absolved from any potential violation of social mores. By constantly focusing on the level playing field with its potential sense of a constitutive rule, Santorum offered a double compartmentalization (Hamington 2009) for the corporations, isolating them from most social mores by invoking a separated international playing space and isolating them from the constitutive rules of COMPETITION as well since the corporations were not cast as the competitors themselves. Through this compart-
mentalization, Santorum would have voters understand that the corporations are not violating social mores such as patriotism or loyalty to their workers when they accept money from non-American governments to fund their contracts and then move operations abroad, which itself is not a constitutively illegal thing to do; the real problem is the American government not doing what every other country does in order to compete “successful[ly]” (Cudd 2007:62) by winning contracts for corporations to manufacture in America and thereby assuage American workers that the competition is both “good ... [and] satisfying” (ibid.).

Consistent with the self-referential nature of constitutive rules, Santorum did not mention who makes the rules or why they exist to begin with, only that America should be playing by the same rules as other nations. Given the fixed bearing of Economic Supremacy in the Republican Absolute FoR, businesses should do whatever is necessary to make money; with respect to international trade, if some nations decide to fund corporations in order to win the competition, clearly America should follow suit. The extent to which laws or trade deals written by governments can be considered part of the self-referential constitutive rules of international trade is competition in Republican ideology merits further study, but I can offer some tentative evidence to the negative. Note the link between the Republican understanding of the autonomous economy (Ch. 3 and §3.2.2 particularly) which should be left to its own devices and the competition of international trade which should be permitted to operate by its own self-referential, autonomously ordered rules. Any laws or trade deals may automatically be considered non-self-referential precisely because non-economic entities like governments have crafted them to begin with, violating the autonomy of the economy and the impartiality of the competition’s rules. Given this particular understanding, some Republican candidates like Carson (GOP debate
3) would like to remove almost every “regulation” on the books in order to “get the government out of our [economic] lives, and let people rise and fall based on how good they are” [brackets mine].

Rubio offered a similar sentiment to remove laws which impinge on free trade, particularly those of other nations whose tariffs are too high which prevent American access to their markets. For trade deals to be free and fair in Rubio’s view, they must not allow artificial rules like skewed tariffs to prevent Americans from competing. Here then is the conundrum with respect to the Republican ideological understanding of the economy and its autonomy from governmental interference: trade deals are non-self-referential rules, being written by governments, which are being imposed on the supposedly autonomous constitutive rules of international trade is competition in order to remove other non-self-referential rules such as tariffs which should not exist in the competition to begin with. Rubio’s coordinating free and fair is a conceptual hack which approximates the interrelated senses of the “level playing field” in a way, where fair projects a search domain from the ideological space of mores, helping implicate that both trade deals and tariffs are not to be considered constitutive rules at all; trade deals are recast not as burdensome rules imposed externally on the competition rather as a necessary transgression to prohibit the real burden and iniquity of laws like tariffs. This is qualitatively different from Sanders’ understanding of fair trade deals which are both constitutive of competition and, like any other law, should reflect and enforce the mores of the people drafting and being subjected to them.

(4.3) No I support, g- fra- kr- free trade deals that are good for America. We’re five percent of the world’s population. If all we do is sell things to each other we can only sell to five percent of the people on earth. We have to have access to the hundreds of millions of people in the world today, who can afford to buy things. The problem is we’re a low tariff country. To import something into
the United States is not very expensive. But many of these countries we can’t
export to, because their tariffs are too high. And so I am in favor of deals that
allow us to bring down those tariffs, so that America can sell things to all of
these people around the world. There are good trade deals and there are bad
ones. So for example, here in Florida we have benefited greatly from the free
trade deal with Colombia. It’s allowed flower exporters to come into the
United States, but it’s created jobs for millions of- of- for hundreds of people
who are now delivering those flowers and working in that industry, we have a
surplus with Colombia. On the other hand you’ve seen trade deals like in
Mexico that have been less than promising in some aspects better in others.
Bottom line is I wan- I believe that America, if given access to foreign
markets, our workers are the most productive in the world, our people are the
most innovative on this planet. If it is a free and fair trade deal, we can
compete against anyone in the world and we need to in the twenty first
century. (APPLAUSE)

(Rubio, GOP Debate 12)

Note the unidirectionality in Rubio’s understanding of free trade deals which must be
good for America, where we have to have access to buyers in other nations so America
can sell things and where other nations’ activities are measured only in terms of the
jobs or surplus that they help create in America. Though Rubio lauded the trade
deal with Colombia, his use of but (l. 12) lends an air of forbearance that such trade
has to occur; given that some few jobs have been created and that some net surplus
exists in the trade with Colombia, voters should be able to discern that such a deal
is free and fair and thus good enough. Given Rubio’s somewhat lopsided preference
for free trade that must be good for America, voters should be able to follow his
argument regarding what aspects of trade deals with countries like Mexico are better
or less than promising, namely those that benefit America for the former and do
not disadvantage America in the latter, regardless of the impacts they may have for
individuals or economies in other countries.

This unidirectional understanding that free trade is only good when it benefits
America reveals Rubio’s understanding that the goal of this competition is not
simply a “specific achievable state of affairs” (Suits 2018:34) which all nations should have an equal shot to attain. Rather, the goal is a pre-specified state of affairs, a zero-sum, winner-take-all situation where American Economic Supremacy would be (re)achieved were it not for bad trade deals that have not compelled other nations to get their laws out of America’s way so proper competition can occur. Much like Santorum, Rubio triangulated his position on trade through Economic Supremacy and American Exceptionalism, where free trade deals do not prevent American access to any markets and where fair trade deals cannot deny victory to America since our workers are the most productive in the world, our people are the most innovative on this planet and should be rewarded for this Exceptionalism.

Consistent with the Conjoint FoR’s understanding of the economy as a reciprocal relationship between people (§3.2.2), Clinton offered a different understanding of the goal of competition with respect to international trade; American workers can compete and win in the global economy because it is based on reciprocal trade. Rather than recapturing a pre-specified victory for Americans, the goal which everyone should be able to achieve is engaging in the win-win of complementary trade. Clinton offered line of reasoning for voters by evoking a Shared Context of the global economy, where trade occurs between people in a mutually beneficial fashion as opposed to the more unidirectional understanding offered by Santorum and Rubio, or the “downward spiral[ing]” sort per Sanders (Example 4.1). Consistent with Sanders, Clinton did note that trade agreements should not cause undue impact on the best interests of the workers of America, particularly their incomes, as a consideration which may influence whether to oppose or renegotiate an agreement or, more radically, to retool American laws to shore up the basic safety net.³

³UAW stands for The International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Im-
(4.4) You know, Chuck, I’ve only had responsibility for uh voting for trade agreements as a senator. And I voted against a multinational trade agreement when I was senator, the CAFTA agreement. Uh because I did not believe it was in the best interests of uh the workers of America, of our incomes, and I opposed it. I did hope that the TPP, negotiated by this administration, would put to rest a lot of the concerns that many people have expressed about trade agreements. And I said that I was holding out that hope that it would be uh the kind of trade agreement that I was looking for. I waited until it had actually been negotiated because I did wanna give the benefit of the doubt to the administration. Once I saw what the uh outcome was I opposed it. Now I have a very clear view about this. We have to trade with the rest of the world. We are five percent of the world’s population. We have to trade with the other ninety five percent. And trade has to be reciprocal. That’s the way the global economy works. But we have failed to provide the basic safety net support that American workers need in order to be able to compete and win in the global economy. So it’s not just what’s in the trade agreement that I’m interested in. Um I did help to renegotiate the trade agreement that we inherited from uh President uh Bush with Korea. We got the uh UAW on board because of changes we made. So there are changes that I believe would make a real difference if they could be achieved, but I do not currently support it as it is written.

(Clinton, DEM Debate 5)

For Clinton, the *reciprocal* nature of trade seems to preclude her from using free or fair as collocates of trade. An understanding of trade as being more give-and-take than winner-take-all likely inhibits thinking of trade agreements in terms of fairness precisely because countries have different mores, and what may be perceived as fair to one country and its citizens might not appear fair to others. Further, if a country chooses to have laws which create barriers to trade, that is their prerogative along with the concomitant restriction of trade that might occur with them; while trade agreements may seek to mitigate such barriers, there is no reason to assert that world

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pment Workers of America.

4Though, see her only use of “fair trade” in the current data set which came during the first Presidential debate Example 5.6.
trade should be freed from such laws which nations may feel help protect the interests of their workers and incomes.

Rather than seeking trade agreements which compel other nations to play by rules self-referentially generated by the supposedly autonomous ECONOMY which is only truly understood by Americans, Clinton argued that changing certain laws in America may help mitigate some of the problems created by trade as has been practiced. In certain respects this line of argument is similar to Santorum’s concern about America not using enough export financing (Example 4.2), a policy which Clinton did broach and defend previously during this particular debate. While Santorum chose to focus on “leveling the playing field” by matching other nations’ capital outlays to corporations in order to satisfy an American need to achieve victory, Clinton offered the perspectives of American workers more directly through their need for a better basic safety net akin to the protections which other nations whom we trade with provide their citizenry. Since other countries offer more robust protections to their citizens to mitigate pressures which the reciprocal nature of trade may cause, such as Sanders’ “downward spiral” (Example 4.1), Clinton offered voters a perspective that it is both advisable and permissible that America should follow suit in order to remain competitive.

Clinton may have been attempting to occupy an ideological middle ground, locating her position within a search domain approximating Economic Supremacy by faulting the federal government rather than corporations for the problems with trade as Santorum did. But, her preferred policy prescriptions which would directly aid American workers would likely not appeal to voters who believe as Carson (GOP debate 3) did that the government should be kept out of our economic livelihoods. Voters who may share Sanders’ view that the government has bowed to pressure from
corporate interests resulting in a negative impact on their incomes may agree with
Clinton’s desire for the government to become more proactive, but may not find her
policy prescription of an improved basic safety net sufficient enough to counteract the
“downward spiral” which Sanders (Example 4.1) implicated corporate America has
enabled.

4.3 Immigration

One metaphor that is particularly salient for a discussion of political rhetoric and
immigration is nation is a container (Charteris-Black 2006; Chilton 2004), but
one which begs the question what is being contained. People and land are readily
obvious as physical contents; the cross-domain mapping of people are contents
is one favored by the Democratic candidates. But a nation can also contain beliefs,
culture, and identity. Over the course of development of the modern nation-state,
“the national homeland became a cultural container” of people who were presumed
to “share crucial cultural attributes so that their citizenship was not an arbitrary
matter of location” (Taylor 1994:155). This link between place and culture, values,
and identity is an avenue of research being investigated at a number of levels (Dixon
Wallwork and Dixon (2004) demonstrated various linguistics means–nominal com-
ounding, metonymy, and anthropomorphism–through which a British political issue
group created a particular sense of national British identity linked to rural spaces
in order to further their political agenda with respect to fox hunting. In a cognitive
linguistic analysis, the integration of culture and place at the level of nation is re-
flected in the conceptual metaphor BELIEFS ARE LOCATIONS (Lakoff and colleagues
1991:110) which over time has been compressed (Fauconnier and Turner 2002), fus-
ing culture and land into an almost unitary concept of e.g. America (see Trump Example 5.11). This compression has been accomplished over time through frequent: nominal compounds such as “American values” (Bush, Carson, Christie, Clinton, Walker); metonymies like “We elected someone as president who wants to change America, who wants to make it more like the rest of the world” (Rubio Example 2.1) where “America” cannot mean place or people but rather culture or values; and personifications especially with respect to what beliefs or attitudes the country should have as in “America doesn’t wanna be a socialist country” (Rubio GOP debate 11).

As will be demonstrated, this latter understanding along the lines of NATION IS A BELIEF CONTAINER is one favored by the Republican candidates, reproduced almost intrinsically by the nature of their Absolute FoR and its shared cultural constructs delimiting the Ground of their ideal nation.

The dual nature of NATION as container of people or of beliefs is also captured in ideological interpretations and policy prescriptions of immigration between immigration control—concerned with access to a nation, and immigration integration—concerned with incorporating immigrants into the nation (Carvalho and Ruedin 2018; Givens and Luedtke 2005; Money 2010). The Republican candidates focused equally on control, in spatial terms via the border, and on integration, particularly the immigrant’s responsibility to assimilate evoked through spatial metaphors such as SIMILARITY IS PROXIMITY. Democrats focused more on integration, but from the perspective of how Americans should treat and respond to immigrants and refugees. The very givenness and fixity of space perhaps led Democrats to deemphasize the borders ideologically, worth defending yes absolutely (O’Malley Example 4.10), but not worth fretting over to the point of being distracted from or ignoring people which is the real issue in their estimation.
In the following example, Jindal wove together the generic and specific levels of space while offering his ideological interpretation and policy prescriptions about immigration. At the generic level, Jindal wanted to make very clear what his position was in the ideological space of the 2016 election, separating his candidacy from the rest of the field of presidential contenders. In staking out his own location, Jindal offered a sense of concreteness to his belief that the only solution to the immigration issue is securing the border, decontesting immigration control policy prescriptions over those integration prescriptions which he deemed ineffective. This sense of concreteness is reflected in his understanding about the border itself, as something that we can get ... done as a policy precisely because it can be accomplished physically. By securing the physical border of the nation, amorphous thousand page policy prescriptions like a comprehensive plan and amnesty are rendered not needed; no changes would have to be made to America’s beliefs, reflected in its laws, once the physical location is rendered as secure as Jindal’s own very clear ideological stance. Jindal’s focus on the physical solution of border security to the exclusion of other more human centered concerns accords well with the Absolute FoR of the Republican party and its deemphasis on the lived experiences of people.

(4.5) Yeah Dana, I want to clarify I want to make very clear that everybody understands my position is we need to secure the border, period. Any talk of doing any more we don’t need a comprehensive plan, don’t need a thousand page bill, like the Gang of Eight, we don’t need amnesty. Everybody in DC talks about it. We need to get it done. As president, I’ll get it done in six months. It won’t be perfect but we can get it done. I’m not for amnesty. We do need to secure the border. A smart immigration makes our country stronger. Right now we’ve got a weak one. One of the things I’ve said I know the left I know Hillary didn’t like this, immigration without assimilation is invasion. We need to insist the people who come here come here legally, learn English, adopt our values, roll up their sleeves and get to work. We do need to secure the border.

(Jindal, GOP Debate 2)
Jindal framed his answer with respect to the two aspects of immigration–control and integration–by making use of both the physical and cultural understandings of the nation is a container metaphor. He actively decontested his position that control is the only proper policy when it comes to immigration with his refrain of securing the border. And, his understanding that it is up to immigrants to assimilate rendered any need for integration policy moot.

When Jindal claimed that a smart immigration makes ... our country stronger, he shifted conceptual planes from his own beliefs are locations to that of the wider nation is a container. Jindal’s comment that Right now we’ve got a weak one, due to the semantically and referentially ambiguous pro-form one, operates across both metaphors, tying together the two planes of his argument. At the physical level, it serves as a critique regarding the security of the border. At the beliefs level, it contrasts the firmness of his resolve–As president, I’ll get it done–versus everybody in D.C. who just talk. At the policy level, it critiques the state of our immigration system as a whole which does not act smart. And, cataphorically it projects a weakness at the cultural level, one rendering us unable to resist the onslaught of invasion. The confluence of all of these problems have left us with a country that is weak, physically, culturally, and politically, and needs to be made stronger. This lack of resolve with respect to immigration control of the very border itself has left America incapable of immigration integration, where the wrong sort of immigrants are threatening both the physical and cultural container that is America.

Jindal’s use of invasion with respect to immigration is not unexpected in conservative political rhetoric (Charteris-Black 2006; Chilton 2004; Cisneros 2008; Kil 2014; O’Brien 2003). For Jindal, the solution to this invasion rests on two fronts: securing the border will protect the nation is a container of people and land
while requiring *assimilation* will protect the *container* of American beliefs. This latter defense decontests a myriad of issues with respect to immigration. Focusing exclusively on the Individual immigrant, Jindal placed the onus and blame for failure to succeed in a new country squarely on the shoulders of the immigrant, whether through a lack of commitment or inability to *learn* the language and *adopt [the] values* of their new home (Bowskill and colleagues 2007), and in so doing obscured the level of resources available, whether public, private, or individual, which may help immigrants to adapt. This assimilationist rhetoric also decontests the immigrant’s humanity in a way; whatever reason may have brought someone to America is erased in favor of either the proper intent to assimilate or an invasive intent that can itself only be erased by earning approval from whoever it is who gets to determine that they have sufficiently *assimilated* (Antonsich 2012).

This assimilationist or acculturative rhetoric absolves current citizens, whether politicians or no, from any responsibility in their dealings with immigrants both in terms of accountability and fidelity. As will be demonstrated these absolutions include: not having to respect that immigrants may have their own deeply held religious convictions which deserve respect let alone equal protection by and from government action (Bowskill and colleagues 2007) (Pataki Example 4.13); or not worrying about painting all immigrants from particular regions or faiths with an overly broad brush (Trump Examples 5.10 and 5.14). Jindal also located his position on assimilation with respect to Economic Supremacy where immigrants may not be successful in integrating if they fail to *roll up their sleeves and get to work* hard enough; this particular strand of rhetoric often occurs in discussions about immigrants coming to a country in order to live off welfare benefits, but also in rhetoric about them having the wrong skill set, working the wrong jobs, taking all the jobs, or being
relegated to specific jobs (Quinonez 2018) (see Rubio Example 4.9). This absolution of responsibility for current Americans does not, however, remove authority from some abstract majority, indicated in Jindal’s *we* (1. 10), to both dictate the conditions which need to be met and to either “‘grant’ (but also [perhaps] postpone indefinitely) the status of ‘assimilated’” (Antonsich 2012:73; brackets mine). This then is the double-bind that the Individual immigrant must face in assimilationist rhetoric: it’s their fault if they aren’t able to meet the subjective whims of those who demand that they assimilate.

This double-binding assimilationist rhetoric, I argue, is more likely to be used in political ideologies that use an Absolute FoR, which assumes that certain shared cultural beliefs serve as fixed bearings. An Absolute FoR by definition obscures personal perspective, requiring everyone to orient themselves to a series of non-contestable givens in life. In order to fit in to a society defined by Absolute guideposts, it becomes incumbent on citizens to demand of one another to not argue against the reference points which hold the society together nor to take their own unique perspective or lived experience as a measure worthy of consideration, in short to assimilate or make same with what everyone else is doing.

Assimilationist rhetoric reflects a form of categorization, in particular a form of enforced conformity to the reified cultural beliefs of the Absolute FoR. There is a robust literature on what the nature of categories are and how they are constructed (Evans and Green 2006; Lakoff 1987; Langacker 2008; Saeed 2009), of import to the present analysis is that categories are cognitive structures or processes which we use to group items into sets based on perceived similarities. Jindal’s call to immigrants to either *assimilate* and “be an American” (using Rubio’s turn of phrase Example 4.9) or not and be *invaders* is perhaps the most overt use of categorization that occurred
during the election; an immigrant is a member of either one category or the other and there is a process, albeit quite subjective, to determine which to put them in.

It is no coincidence that the left and Hillary did not like Jindal’s particular choice in framing since it strikes hard against a Conjoint FoR’s privileging of personal perspectives as valid reference points. For the left, the richness of people’s lived experience should not be reduced to how well or poorly they are deemed by some amorphous judge to fit into some reified social construct of what a good American is, let alone the fact that Jindal’s use of invasion created a binary distinction with such a negative intention; though, in certain respects this invasive intent is also not unexpected in Republican rhetoric given their discussion of terrorism §4.4. But, there are more subtle means of invoking categories and deploying them to reify the fixed bearing of an Ideal American, particularly with respect to the domain of space, traces of which can be seen in Jindal’s answer above-and-beyond his demand for assimilation.

One presumption underlying Jindal’s argument is captured by the spatially understood metaphor similarity is proximity (Grady 1997:130), rooted in the general experience that like items tend to be grouped together, either naturally where groups of the same type of tree or plant tend to spring up close to one another, or artificially where types of retail items are grouped together for ease of location. This metaphor interacts with the nation is a container metaphor (Chilton 2004; Hart 2010) permitting two inferences. One occurs at the international level in a way: people in nations that are closer together are more similar than people in nations that are further apart. This inference underlies some aspects of the immigration debate, where people from certain nations are said to have harder times integrating than others, and also underlies rhetoric about the clash between western civilization and Islam (see Kasich Example 4.11). The inference more relevant to the present argu-
ment relates to assimilation: people in a nation, due to their proximity, should be similar to one another. Much like the retail industry’s artificial re-creation of similarity through proximity, assimilationist rhetoric is dependent on this politically motivated entailment, along the lines of proximity requires similarity. Given this possible ideological understanding of the world, it becomes perfectly reasonable for Jindal to demand that those who have come into the nation willingly should stop trying so hard to be different, all the more so since his own parents were able to integrate, noting later in the same debate how they came to America with the right intent, to not be hyphenated Americans:

(4.6) ... But I want to go back on immigration. Let me be very clear. Immigration, we need to insist on assimilation and integration. My parents came here legally almost forty five years ago. They came here, they followed the rule of law. They knew English, they adopted the values. They didn’t come here to be hyphenated Americans. They’re not Indian Americans. They’re not Asian Americans. They’re Americans. [TAPPER: Thank you, Governor.] We it is important we insist on that in immigration going forward.

(Jindal, GOP Debate 2)

In arguing against coming to America to be, or living in America as hyphenated Americans Jindal privileged a categorical notion of the Ideal American based on a decontested series of ideologically necessary-and-sufficient features (Evans and Green 2006): speaking English, having unspecified values, following the rule of law, and “roll[ing] up their sleeves and get[ting] to work” (Example 4.5). His rejection of features related to country or region of origin—Indian and Asian—which often present with physical differences is also a form of decontestation, delimiting the Ideal American to a series of beliefs and standards, features which should appear readily changeable to everyone. In a way this is an argument that is practical; a person can not exactly change their physical appearance in order to assimilate. But at the same time, this
argument naturalizes the idea that the features immigrants are being demanded to assimilate toward are all perfectly reasonable aspects that any newcomer to a country should expect to change, precisely because they are not expected to change things about themselves that are impossible to change. This in turn reifies the social and ideological construct of the Ideal American as a fixed bearing, based on perfectly reasonable and unquestionably shared features of what being an American is all about. But, those unspecified values sometimes become problematic, especially with respect to religion and Islam in particular (see Pataki Example 4.13) and perhaps even political ideology as Kasich opined that all “Republicans and Democrats, [should be] Americans first, [and put] party and ideology second in the second back seat of this country” (Kasich GOP debate 8; brackets mine).

The Democratic candidates, on the other hand, located their ideological interpretations and policy prescriptions on immigration through the experiences of immigrants themselves. Rather than decontest ing a generic immigrant’s intent for coming to America down to assimilation and the implicit rejection of its ideological contrary of invasion, Sanders offered the perspective of some immigrants by describing their reasons for being in America, those who fled violence in Honduras or came to do guest work. By offering perspectives of people here in the nation already, the border itself and the act of crossing it become backgrounded if not outright erased. Note the difference with Jindal’s representations where the immigrant was seemingly always on the outside looking in, either on the other side of the physical border or on the other side of the Ideal American categorical border. For Sanders, the immigrants are already stay[ing] in this country and ready to work; the point of immigration policy, at least in this answer, has to revolve around issues of integration since the immigrants whose perspectives he is offering have already come in. SPACE is not something that
has been transgressed, it is simply *where we are right now*.\(^5\)

(4.7) Secretary Clinton and I do have a disagreement here. If my memory is correct, I think when we saw children coming from these horrendous, horrendously violent areas of Honduras and neighboring countries. Uh people who are fleeing drug violence and cartel violence, I thought it was a good idea to allow those children to stay in this country. That was not, as I understand it, the secretary’s position. Terms of two thousand and seven immigration reform, yeah, I did vote against it. I voted against it because the Southern Poverty Law Center, among other groups, said that the guest worker programs that were embedded in this agreement were akin to slavery. Akin to slavery where people came into this country to do guest work were abused, were exploited, and if they stood up for their rights they’d be thrown out of this country. So it wasn’t just me who opposed it it was LULAC, one of the large Latino organizations in this country. It was the AFLCIO. It was some of the most progressive members of the United States Congress who opposed it for that reason. But we are where we are right now. And where we are right now is we have got to stand up to the Trumps of the world who are trying to divide us up. What we have to do right now is bring our people together and understand that we must provide a path towards citizenship for eleven million undocumented people.

(Sanders, DEM Debate 6)

Sanders describes three strands of integration policies: *allow[ing] those children to stay in this country*, allowing guest workers to *st[and] up for their rights*; and *a path towards citizenship for eleven million undocumented people*. The first two do carry a subtle shade of immigration control, setting certain conditions where immigrants can remain in the country as opposed to being deported. The children should be permitted to remain in order to protect them from violence in their home country, and guest workers should not be *thrown out of this country* for pointing out mistreatment at the hands of their employers. Whereas the Republican candidates seemed inclined to promote policies which would protect the *space and beliefs* of the nation, the

\(^5\)LULAC stands for League of United Latin American Citizens and AFLCIO for The American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations.
Democratic candidates promoted policy prescriptions which would favor protecting people from the transgressions of other people.

Sanders’ third strand of integration, citizenship, is a more typical understanding of integration policy (Givens and Luedtke 2005) as a sort of goal at the end of an immigrant’s journey, but so too is his advocation for the various protections whether legal or physical for people in America’s borders (Money 2010). With respect to the idea of physical protection, even the Republican candidates would argue that one responsibility of a government is to protect its citizens from foreign aggression, much like what Sanders would like to see happen for those children. The Republicans may object to the fact that these children are not citizens yet, and that fleeing violence is not a sufficient reason to grant asylum; however, Sanders’ concern is that they are here now and thus should not be protected any less from physical violence than any other person within our borders. The same holds true with his call to protect guest workers from conditions akin to slavery. Though the Republicans may be leery about how much to protect citizens with respect to slavery and exploitation—that is, potentially unfair wage and labor practices of employers (§3.4.1)—Sanders still finds it reasonable to think government should offer guest workers the same legal workplace protections other people in this country have against those practices.

These workplace protections applying to all people in our borders take on particular significance for immigrants precisely because of their lack of protection to stand up for their rights nor be abused or treated like slaves without fear of retribution and being thrown out of the country. So too does the protection from foreign aggression being applied to all people regardless of their status as undocumented or citizen. Sanders’ argument that these protections should apply to every person in the country regardless of their undocumented status brings with it an unusual inference that may
at first blush seem odd for someone to make but, within the broader context of the entire election and the degree of assimilationist rhetoric offered by the Republican candidates and other interest groups within the Republican or right-aligned CoA: one could wonder how far government would go to protect a citizen who fell short of, or met, their preferred degree of ideological assimilation. Recall the support and adulation some Republicans gave to Kim Davis for adhering to her Christian Morality despite her sworn duty to provide governmental services to her fellow citizens (§2.4). The converse of that is the chilling feeling gay people feel when Republicans talk about ending marriage equality, or any other censure of their equality before the law.

The link I am making between assimilationist rhetoric and marriage equality is not by happenstance. Clinton also linked these two policies during her candidacy announcement while pointing out the Republican ideological need to categorize Americans when she decried the second class status that the current lack of a coherent integration policy confers on hard working, law abiding immigrant families. Clinton’s bringing these two policies together makes sense given the same reference points that these policies are being located within: the lived experiences of people, those families who should able to live, learn, marry, and work just like everybody else.

(4.8) In America, every family should feel like they belong. So we should offer hard working, law abiding immigrant families a path to citizenship. (APPLAUSE) Not second class status. And, we should ban discrimination against LGBT Americans and their families, (APPLAUSE) so they can live, learn, marry, and work just like everybody else. (APPLAUSE) Y’know America’s diversity, our openness our devotion to human rights and freedom is what’s drawn so many to our shores. What’s inspired people all over the world. I know. I’ve seen it with my own eyes.

(Clinton, 06/13/15)

There is a subtle difference here in ideological positioning between Clinton and Sanders with respect to immigration. Both are arguing for the integration policy of citizen-
ship. Sanders does so by offering perspectives of people but noting how strikingly different their lived experiences are from the majority of Americans. Clinton on the other hand located her position with respect to shared Social Context, focusing on how we all live ... just like everybody else. However, liv[ing] like everyone else is not what is at stake in the Republican ideological discussion of immigration, let alone marriage equality, rather the intent of “be[ing] an American” (Rubio Example 4.9) like everyone else, at least as the Republican candidates feel they have the authority to define it (Antonsich 2012).

This proper intent to become the right sort of American can be seen in Rubio’s more subtle form of assimilationist rhetoric during the third GOP debate. Rubio triangulated his position on immigration, invoking Economic Supremacy and the Ideal American to restrict acceptable immigrant types to those who have the right merit to become an American, defined as having skills and being able to contribute economically. This right sort of immigrant properly understands that their human worth is economic worth, neither aspect of which do they get to set the value of; their economic worth is set by the vagaries of the autonomous and reified free market economy while their human worth as a potential citizen also rests in the subjective judgement of the reified final authority (Antonsich 2012) of the immigration system which that nebulous we again gets to define. Rather than implicating who gets to determine which skills and contributions are necessary and sufficient, Rubio simply placed the burden of proof on the Individual immigrant, through his repetition of you throughout, to align their behavior properly to a reified immigration system and economy and their demands imposed by, approved by, and accountable to no one in specific.

1 (4.9) Thank you. Well um, s- I’ve learned the rules on that. (LAUGHTER) Look in addition to what uh Donald is saying an- % is we also need to talk about the
legal immigration system for permanent residency. Today we have a legal immigration system for permanent residency, that is largely based on whether or not you have a relative living here. And that’s the way my parents came legally in nineteen fifty six. But in two thousand fifteen we have a very different economy. [QUICK: mhm] Our legal immigration system from now on has to be merit based it has to be based on what skills you have, what you can contribute economically, and most important of all, on whether or not you’re coming here to become an American. [QUICK: Thank you senator.] Not just live in America d- but be an American.

(Rubio, GOP Debate 3)

Only by accepting that their human worth is economic worth does the Individual immigrant display the proper intent to be an American; in this turn final equative clause, Rubio blends (Fauconnier and Turner 2002) the Individual immigrant into the Individual Ideal American, which just so happens to evoke the Individual Ideal American implicitly into the discourse. This Individual Ideal American is subjected to a similar form of erasure and decontestation as the reified immigration system, reflected in Rubio’s rendering as insufficient both a spatial, and certain social aspects of American citizenship; just liv[ing] in America or hav[ing] a relative living here are of no consequence to understanding what it means to be an American; neither jus soli nor jus sanguinis suffice, only something like jus sententiae or “right of belief” can define an Ideal American. Through his erasure of the spatial and social component of American citizenship in favor of the equative clause be an American, Rubio evoked an ideologically delimited understanding of American as defined primarily if not solely by their economic worth. Contrary to Clinton’s understanding, simply living like everyone else is not enough to be categorized as an Ideal American, only be[ing] like everyone else.

The general trend in the literature on immigration policy is to place issues of assimilation as an integration concern (Antonsich 2012; Bowskill and colleagues 2007;
Carvalho and Ruedin 2018; Givens and Luedtke 2005; Money 2010). This makes analytical sense at the level of national policy prescription, where decisions are made on how best to provide resources for immigrants to adapt to their new country or to define under what conditions citizenship is granted; and indeed Money (2010) was quite clear in her focus on integration policy issues at the nation-state level rather than on individual immigrant choices in how to adapt. I would argue however, that at the level of ideological interpretation, assimilationist rhetoric becomes another aspect of immigrant control (Antonsich 2016), one based not on who should or should not enter the national CONTAINER of space, rather who gets to be categorized as an Ideal American, as a member of the CONTAINER of beliefs. There is a metaphorical border between the American and Non-American categories if you will, for Republican candidates, policing and securing this categorical border is as significant as securing the physical border. Unlike the physical border, however, the metaphorical one is a moving goal post based on subjective concerns (Antonsich 2012).

The extent to which the metaphorical and physical borders have become blended in Republican ideology is an interesting question. There is some tentative evidence that the subjectivity of the categorical border is being mapped with the concreteness of the physical border, generating an emergent conceptualization (Fauconnier and Turner 2002), one reflex of which is that only certain aspects of the physical border rightly need securing. When discussing the border with Canada for example, Graham (GOP debate 2) and Trump (GOP debate 10) were somewhat dismissive about our ability or need to secure the border with Canada. In this respect, immigration control as border security is subjectively focused on areas of the physical border that are viewed as penetrable by the wrong sort of immigrants. The counterargument to my

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6CATEGORIES ARE BOUNDED SPATIAL REGIONS (Grady 1997:283).
claim here can be framed with reference to resource allocation or pervasiveness of illegal crossings; the southern border seems to be more problematic and more easily secured with physical fortifications, thus it is ideologically obvious to focus attention there. But, much of the debate on the Republican side was concerned with how much security would be enough: how many guards, how much and what type of fencing, how tall a wall, how large a deportation force, how many and what type of visas to grant, and so on, all with an eye toward the south. An additional understanding of this Republican arms race of who would secure the border better can be seen through the blend of the subjective and physical; the more the physical country is secured, the more the category of the Ideal American will be preserved from change (Charteris-Black 2006). In this respect, it becomes dubious to believe that any amount of physical security can ever be enough—an inference which O’Malley exploited during the second Democratic debate in order to locate his position on issues of immigration control and integration—even if Mexico pays for it (Trump Example 5.11).

Ideological systems and political rhetoric are all about contesting the understanding of how the world should work. One tactic in this contestation can be using your understanding of an opponent’s ideology against them. This provides an interesting form of evidence about the possible and potentially inadvertent inferences made available by members of a CoA through their recurrent framings of a given policy issue. With respect to immigration, O’Malley notes the futility of Democrats concentrating too heavily on border security to the exclusion of talking about comprehensive immigration reform precisely because, in his view, the Republicans will never stop asking for more immigration control, thus never permit discussion of integration policies.

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7See §5.4 for additional discussion about resource allocations and their rhetorical use in glossing over other potentially problematic framings.
Well, m- m- mister Cooney we’ve actually been focusing on d- border
security to the exclusion of talking about comprehensive immigration reform.
In fact if more border security and these and more and more deportations
were going to bring our Republican brothers and sisters to the table it
would’ve happened long ago. The fact of the matter is and let’s say it in our
debate cuz you’ll never hear this from that uh immigrant bashing carnival
barker Donald Trump, (LAUGHTER) the truth of the matter is
(APPLAUSE) the truth of the matter is net immigration from Mexico last
year was zero. Fact check me. Go ahead, check it out. But the truth of the
matter is if we want wages to go up we’ve got to get eleven million of our
neighbors out of the off the books shadow economy and into the full light of
an American economy. That’s what our parents and grandparents always did.
That’s what we need to do as a nation. Yes, we must protect our borders. But
there is no substitute for having comprehensive immigration reform with a
pathway to citizenship for eleven million people uh many of whom have known
no other country but the United States of America. Our symbol is the Statue
(APPLAUSE) of Liberty. It is not a barbed wire fence.

(O’Malley, DEM Debate 2)

O’Malley explicitly called out our Republican brothers and sisters as a means to
(re-)contest or render discussable the problems in American immigration policy. Rather
than locating the problems with respect to a generic immigrant and their failure or
success in assimilating, or arguing for more immigration control, O’Malley called out
the Republicans and Trump for their overly subjective judgement (Antonsich 2012).
Presenting various fact[s] (l. 3 and 9), O’Malley laid claim to an ideological space
where voters could understand that sufficient control has been achieved, and where
Republicans have intentionally obscured this fact in order to maintain their supposed
self-nominated authority to define the entirety of the immigration debate. O’Malley’s
concise argument that Yes, we must protect our borders reflects an acknowledgment
that immigration control policy is important, but implicitly so rather than having
to be focused on as intently as Republicans do. The very givenness of space which
Republican candidates relied on to mask some of their subjective judgements about
immigrants allows O’Malley to background issues of border control and its accomplishment in favor of the lived experiences of immigrants in America now.

With respect to integration policy, O’Malley was consistent with the other Democratic candidates, focusing on the lived experiences of the immigrants in America who should be protected by labor and wage laws. Using a spatial metaphor, O’Malley wanted to bring our neighbors out of the shadow economy and into the full light of the economy where all Americans are. Invoking the shared Social Context of Americans over time, O’Malley offered a perspective on immigration policy that sees the utility in both control and integration policies as opposed to the rhetoric of current Republican politicians who may have lost sight of the Statue of Liberty with their continued fixation on the barbed wire fence to the south.

4.4 Violent non-state action

In this section I examine how the Republican candidates framed the global issue of terrorism, using space and categories on a wider scale and in so doing rely even more heavily on the confluence of these two concepts in order to erase any motivation other than religious fanaticism from terrorists, verging on a fanaticism of their own reflected in their doxic call to use the right words, “radical Islamic terrorism”, lest western civilization fail to win the conflict (Kasich Example 4.11). The Republican candidates’ attempt at rhetorical erasure of any other possible order for understanding terrorism, coupled with the entrenchment of the discourse of “radical Islamic terrorism” (Jackson 2007; Nimmer 2011) in the American ideological space to begin with, forced the Democratic candidates to wage the battle of ideas on two fronts. By offering perspectives of Muslims throughout the world, the Democratic candidates pushed back against the discourse of “radical Islamic terrorism” and its erasure of other socio-
political motivations of groups like ISIS; and they argued against the Republicans’
doxic incantation of “radical Islamic terrorism” on the grounds that it makes gaining
Muslim allies more difficult.

The Republican use of categorization extends into the international sphere par-
ticularly with respect to the “war on terror”. Through the WORLD IS A COMMUNITY
metaphor (Lakoff 1999), the two aspects of a NATION IS A CONTAINER get reified
differently. The physical CONTAINER of land and people gets locked to the borders
of each individual country, creating an international COMMUNITY of physically sepa-
rated entities akin to houses on a street. The beliefs CONTAINER, however, becomes a
vehicle to crosscut the physical demarcations and group these properties into neigh-
borhoods of particular ideological orientations. The physical CONTAINER is brought
to the fore when discussing issues of military action, which happen on the ground
somewhere else, and where our soldiers come home from. While polices related to
ground forces and operations are topics worthy of consideration in their own right, I
focus on the bigger war … the battle of ideas which the Republican candidates made
more salient over the course of the election.

The beliefs CONTAINER is used to group western civilization together as a mono-
lithic whole that is battling against various ideas which are trying to “commit civ-
ilization jihad” (Carson GOP debate 7). This diffusion of beliefs across the physical
CONTAINERS of nations may in part be necessary due to the need to mobilize nu-
merous nations against the threat of violent non-state action as well as the physical
diffusion of violent non-state actors across nations. But, it also permits the erasure

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8The term “terrorist” is fraught for several reasons, but with respect to this dissertation an
analytical label is preferred to avoid confusion between mentions of “terrorist” in the data and the
analysis of terrorism as a discursive or rhetorical concept. Similarly violent non-state action will be
of differences between nations with respect to political or economic ideology etc.,
categorizing areas of the world into places where people should either feel fulfilled in living because of their faith in the Jewish and Christian principles or people are “[un]civilized” because of their “desolate”, “barren”, and “primitive” lands reflected in their “radical Islam” (Huckabee GOP debate 6).

(4.11) I called for boots on the ground many months ago in a coalition with our friends who share our interests. Y’know you win a battle with the military. And when we go somewhere we need to be mobile and lethal, we need to take care of business, and we need to come home. But we face also a bigger war. And tha- and you win the bigger war with the battle of ideas. You wonder why young people, and s- educated people, rich people, schooled people, have tried to join ISIS. Western civilization, all of us need to wake up to the fact, that those murderers and rapists need to be called out en- in western civilization we need to make it clear that our faith in the Jewish and Christian principles force us to live a life bigger than ourselves [TAPPER: Thank you, Governor] to be centers in justice so that we can battle the radicals, call them out for what they are, and make sure that all of our people feel fulfilled in living in western civilization [TAPPER: Thank you, Governor. Dana Bash]
This is a giant battle in the world today.

(Kasich, GOP Debate 2)

By erasing the complex lived experiences of millions of people with their numerous beliefs down to a supposedly shared faith or orientation to the fixed bearing of (Judeo-)Christian Morality, Kasich reified western civilization as a belief container in which some unspecified all of us belong. The Individual who orients themself properly to (Judeo-)Christian Morality’s force lives a certain type of life, one that does not focus on the mundanity of ourselves rather on living bigger as a singular

used with respect to “terrorism” or “terror”. Pace anti-political correctness rhetoric, my decision here is not an “unwilling[ness] to utter [the right] name” (Cruz GOP debate 5), rather to assure a clear analysis.
embodiment of (moral) justice. Those who do not properly orient to this fixed bearing need to be called out of the western civilization category, their violation of this necessary and sufficient feature marking them for what they are: radicals.

Kasich’s use of centers in justice is also understood in metaphorically spatial terms; per Chilton (2004:172) a center-periphery schema can be used to understand morality such that “what is inside [a container] is close to the self, and what is outside is also outside the law” [brackets mine]. This spatially schematic representation of justice as center[ed] in the Individual who properly orients themself within (Judeo-)Christian Morality, in effect links (moral) justice to (Judeo-)Christian Morality and western civilization alone. Anything deemed outside these centers is necessarily immoral and unlawful, allowing Kasich to erase any valid form of faith or belief from ISIS, let alone any socio-political motivations. Consistent with the need of doxa to erase other possible orders, Kasich does not grant these radicals a form of civilization or reified social construct in which their behaviors and assessments can find some form of social appropriacy or legitimacy. In so doing, Kasich denies the radicals any purchase in any legitimate worldview (Monk 2018a).

For Kasich and the Republican candidates broadly, the idea of civilization can only be located at the center of certain ideologically appropriate fixed bearings. One inappropriate fixed bearing that cannot project a search domain onto this focal point is Islamism. The inability of Islamism to project a valid possible orientation for making sense of the socio-political landscape is indicated by Kasich’s wondering why some people would join ISIS. His puzzlement that people would stray from his assumed proper life for a clearly improper path is natural in a worldview based on fixed bearings. What is radical about the fixed bearing of Islamism, with respect to a worldview that requires adherence to reified social beliefs to the exclusion of unique
lived experiences, is that an Individual would dare divert from the compulsory force which valid fixed bearings require, rejecting the life bigger than ourselves. The fixed bearing of Islamism appears to allow such an Individual to focus too much on their mundane experiences of youth, schooling, or riches to the point of dissatisfaction with their civilized and fulfilled life. By rejecting the force properly exerted by (Judeo-)Christian Morality onto one's behaviors and assessments, and implicitly the other fixed bearings as well, such an Individual follows after the fixed bearing of Islamism to their baser instincts leading eventually to murder, rape, and injustice.

During the third Democratic debate, Clinton pointed out that the Republican tendency to decontest any other possible order with respect to civilization may have problematic consequences. Consistent with the Conjoint FoR’s emphasis on the lived experiences of people, Clinton located her ideological position through the world is a community metaphor, but one where people are contents when she noted that there are Muslims here in the United States and literally around the world who are hearing the Republican candidates’ rhetoric. Rather than viewing the world as a series of discrete, spatially bounded nations grouped into ideologically similar neighborhoods, Clinton offered a perspective of the world as a shared Social Context which all people experience, some of whom have different beliefs. This focus on Social Context likely appealed to voters who are less inclined to view the world as if America were the only “shining city on the hill” (Cruz 03/23/15; Kasich GOP debate 2) or “the single greatest nation in the history of all mankind” (Rubio GOP debate 8).

Through this shared Social Context, Clinton’s use of civilizations becomes both similar and different from the Republican candidates—similar in that it denotes an ideological grouping, but different in that by grouping people she implicitly denied any trace of spatiality; rather than crosscutting nations into ideological neighborhoods,
she crosscut the people in the world into groups who have shared life experiences with
respect to their faiths. Her use of civilizations in the plural also differs in that she
did not attempt to decontest away the legitimacy of other possible orders based on
religious beliefs.

(4.12) ... I worry greatly that the rhetoric coming from the Republicans,
particularly Donald Trump, is sending a message to Muslims here in the
United States and literally around the world that there is a clash of
civilizations, that there is some kind of western plot or even war against Islam,
which then I believe fans the flames of radicalization....

(Clinton, DEM Debate 3)

For Clinton, the Republican rhetoric of decontestation may be the origin of further
radicalization. Clinton offered the perspective of Muslims who, in hearing that their
Social Context of Islam is a non-existent civilization let alone a legitimate or co-
equal worldview, might infer that they are being rejected from the community of
the world’s people. While not empathizing with those people who might radicaliz[e],
Clinton was able to locate the origin of radical[ism] not in certain types of people
per se, but as a response to various social forces perceived as being exerted by others
in the form of some kind of western plot or even war against Islam. Further, she
neither legitimated nor illegitimated the lived experiences of Muslims or radical[s],
rather simply presenting one possible reason for their discontent among other possible
orders. Rather than erasing the complexity of the social world and how people affect
others, where a reified religious belief can “force” (Kasich Example 4.11) people to
behave a certain way, Clinton noted the possibility that some people might become
upset when others deny their religious community a semblance of respect, if not its
existence outright.

Through the perspectives and lived experiences of its followers, Clinton and the
other Democratic candidates acknowledged Islam as a complex faith generated by the
interactions between competing socio-political and religious factions exerting forces on one another. Rather than reifying religious faiths as social constructs which exert “force[s]” on an individual to conform to proper behavior, the Democratic candidates focused on how people are enmeshed within belief systems which they shape through their interactions with one another, whether the Muslims hearing messages as anti-Islamic, radical[s] who might feel plotted against, or the Republicans who may be seen as sending [just such] a message about Islam. In an Absolute FoR, beliefs seem understood as a container holding individuals into standards of behaviors and assessments while in a Conjoint FoR beliefs are what people do through their commonplace lived experiences. This differential profiling (Langacker 2008) on people and their lived experiences versus the reified belief system which “force[s]” individuals to behave a certain way is problematic in an Absolute worldview because it breaks down the supposedly clear boundaries between categorical containers which help voters understand and make sense of the world.

The following example from Pataki during the fifth GOP debate demonstrates the significance of these reified categorical boundaries in an Absolute FoR in helping Americans understand what is going on. In Pataki’s view, Trump (Example 5.14), Clinton, and Obama failed to mark proper categorical boundaries separating the good Muslims from the bad radical jihadis or radical Islamists. By failing to distinguish between the categorical containers of radical Islam and the non-radical Islam which embrace[s] our freedom and living and safety, Americans became misoriented (see also Carson Example 2.4; Rubio Examples 2.1 and 2.2; Santorum Example 3.9) and might have inadvertently lump[ed] everyone together into the wrong category. In the Republican ideological space, “radical Islam” is no more decomposable into constituent meaning-making units than “American”. In a way, this is the reverse of
Jindal’s (Example 4.5) concern about “hyphenation” with respect to Americans; if an individual doesn’t want to be just American, then they are not really, fully, or completely American. Similarly, the category reified as Islam can only contain individuals who believe in Islam; any belief system that does not match that category exactly requires a different name: radical Islam. Note Pataki’s subtle assimilationist undertone where Islam as Muslims may practice it is not enough, rather they have to add an additional embrace [of] our freedom and living and safety whether they want to or not lest they be mistaken for radical Islamists.

(4.13) ... I fault Hillary and Obama as well [as Trump]. Because by not distinguishing between Muslims and radicalized jihadists, by refusing to acknowledge that it is radical Muslim radical Islamists who are v- carrying out these attacks against America they let Americans who are confused and angry lump everyone together. We have to embrace the Muslims who embrace our freedom and living and safety. We have to destroy those who embrace jihad and want to engage in violence against us, here or abroad. (APPLAUSE)

(Pataki, GOP Debate 5; brackets mine)

By pointing out how his adversaries refuse to acknowledge the difference between these two categories, Pataki doxically presupposed that these two categories self-evidently exist within the American ideological space. The combination of his adversaries’ failure to use these proper categories and worse their intransigence in recognizing their existence to begin with amounts to a form of ideological obstruction, a denial to Americans of the ideological search domains needed to properly orient and make sense of the social and ideological landscapes. Rather than arguing for why such categories may help or hinder dealing with violent non-state action, or indeed why they need to exist to begin with, Pataki simply argues that ignoring them will cause Americans to orient themselves improperly. As Bowskill and colleagues (2007:801) noted with respect to assimilationist rhetoric, by condemning the obstruction of a
particular ideological position, said position itself becomes imbued with a sense of propriety and legitimacy, unearned in a sense due to the lack of any reference made to the position’s actual merits and to the decontestation or erasure of any socio-political forces at work (see §1.4.1). Instead of focusing on the nature of the policy issue at hand, Pataki’s argument about people not recognizing the proper categories or names takes a metalinguistic turn, arguing that the problem is really the failure in not calling “them” “that” because that’s who they are, all the while he didn’t bother to justify the “them” or the “that” to begin with. These categories are what they are and no amount of obstruction from the Democrats will hold Republicans “prisoners to political correctness. Rather we will speak the truth”, naming the “unnamed malevolent force. It is radical Islamic terrorist (sic)” (Cruz GOP debate 5).

Some attention has been given to the discourse of violent non-state action itself and how terminology like “radical Islamic terrorism” serves to obscure the socio-political foundations of violent non-state action and the rationales driving both violent non-state actors and even state actors as well (Jackson 2007; Nimmer 2011), whether the latter can be considered violent or imperialist in their interactions within the Middle East for example. Such discourse on the whole is an ideological level of erasure, serving to flatten the complexity of policy issues to a limited number of dimensions within a desirable series of ideological search spaces. This example from Pataki presents a second, rhetorical layer of erasure where any contestation of “radical Islamic terrorism” itself is being erased, denying any possible legitimate opposition to the existence of “radical Islamic terrorism” as it stands and any other possible order of understanding of the socio-political landscape to begin with.

Rather than being satisfied with obscuring the socio-political reasons which generate violent non-state action itself as Kasich did (Example 4.11), some Republican
candidates like Pataki also chose to focus on proper naming practices in order to preclude “the possibility for contestation and reconfiguration” (Bowskill and colleagues 2007:795) of the ideological space to begin with, shutting down democratic discussion or debate by proclaiming their ideological position as the only tenable position to hold. While those candidates may view such naming practices as assuring “our clarity of vision and our strength of resolve” (Cruz GOP debate 8), as pushing back against the “the moral relativism” of Democrats (Cruz GOP debate 12), and as helping Americans distinguish between good Muslims and violent non-state actors (Pataki Example 4.13), instead what they are arguing for is a complete rejection of any other possible ideological understanding of violent non-state action in general. In effect, the Republicans are attempting to replace fear of violent non-state action itself with a suspicion of other people who dare refuse to acknowledge that the Republicans are right and everyone else is wrong. While that may sound a bit harsh, that is exactly what is required for an ideological position to be doxic: rendering any other counterposition undiscussable (Bourdieu 1977).

I realize the idea of rhetorical erasure may seem overly broad or abusable as an analytical concept or tool. While I can only point to a few examples at present that can help demonstrate what rhetorical erasure looks like, I can say what it should not look like. Simply arguing that an ideological opponent’s interpretations or prescriptions are wrong or that yours are right is not rhetorical erasure; those are opinions which are sayable and thus heterodox and orthodox respectively (Bourdieu 1977:167-170). While arguing over opinions can provide the positive spaces in which to perceive the negative space of doxa, care must be taken to not mistake the one for the other. Rhetorical erasure removes the possibility of having an opinion that does not accept as given the ideological position being presented, turning the orthodox positive space
of opinion into the negative space of doxa itself; it is not about agreeing or disagreeing with the position, it is about making manifest the futility of having an opinion at all with respect to the position being offered as doxic. For Pataki, we can’t not think about radical Islamists in a certain way because it has led to catastrophe, all the better since that’s how we should understand that that is what they are to begin with. While that might sound a bit glib, the problem with explicating a doxic belief is precisely that you can’t explain doxa per se since it “goes without saying because it comes without saying” (Bourdieu 1977:167); and it is in this “universe of the undiscuss[able]” (p. 168) where rhetorical erasure might get abused.

For the moment, I argue that rhetorical erasure occurs when a speaker condemns the obstruction of their preferred policy position (Bowskill and colleagues 2007) since they leave undiscussed their own policy position or why others may oppose it in favor of arguing that their opponents wrongly attempt to forestall following through on the supposedly proper course of action; though, further research may demonstrate other linguistic or discursive means to effect this doxic sleight-of-mind. The following example also touches on rhetorical and ideological erasure as well as categorization, but Cruz split his focus between violent non-state action and all lives matter, which may make it seem out of place; the significance of all lives matters lies in its juxtaposition with the Black Lives Matter movement which began as a response to perceived excessive force being used by police against African-Americans. However, this presents a worthwhile opportunity to examine rhetorical erasure in more depth across two policy issues: violent non-state action with its robust discourse which has accomplished much of the erasure for the Republican candidates already; and a potentially new discourse which seeks to erase state power and its exercise against its citizens. The extent to which these two process of ideological and rhetorical erasure go hand-in-
hand and reinforce each other over time merits further study. At present, what is noteworthy is how compactly Cruz manages the ideological and rhetorical erasure of all lives matter, despite the fact that it has no robust discourse backing its ideological erasure to begin with. Perhaps Cruz linked these two issues together precisely to help further along the ideological erasure of state power with respect to all lives matter.

As evidenced by Pataki, denigrating political opponents for “refusing to acknowledge” (Example 4.13) his desired categorical boundaries is a way to condemn their obstruction. During his closing argument of the sixth GOP debate, Cruz similarly condemned Obama for betray[ing] military members and their families for his refusal to even speak the name of our enemy, radical Islamic terrorism. Again, we see a Republican candidate presupposing the existence of the category radical Islamic terrorism with no explication as to any socio-political forces at work. Cruz simply located his position for voters in the search domain of Islamism and precluded any other possible social order, faulting Obama for his failure to recognize and incant the right name which would have forestalled his incredible ... betrayal of American service members and their families. Later in his comment he also condemned Clinton for apologiz[ing] for saying all lives matter. Clinton’s obstruction was perhaps more grievous than Obama’s, being an about-face from her initial and proper reference to the fixed bearing of the Rule of Law which begets an understanding of the social order such that police action should be given the benefit of the doubt that it is usually if not always unbiased, reasonable, and fairly administered.9

(4.14) Thirteen Hours. Tomorrow morning, a new movie will debut about the incredible bravery of the men fighting for their lives in Benghazi and the politicians that abandoned them. I wanna speak to all our fighting men and women. I wanna speak to all the moms and dads whose sons and daughters

9See §5.4 for a more in depth analysis of these latter points in Trump’s ideological worldview.
are fighting for this country and the incredible sense of betrayal, when you have a commander in chief who will not even speak the name of our enemy, radical Islamic terrorism, when you have a commander in chief who sends a hundred and fifty billion dollars to the Ayatollah Khamenei who’s responsible for murdering hundreds of our servicemen and women. I wanna speak to all of those maddened by political correctness, where Hillary Clinton apologizes for saying all lives matter. This will end. It will end on January twenty seventeen. And if I am elected president to every soldier, and sailor, and airman, and marine, and to every police officer, and firefighter, and first responder who risks their lives to keep us safe, I will have your back. (APPLAUSE)

(Cruz, GOP Debate 6)

Much like the discourse surrounding “radical Islamic terrorism”, all lives matter serves to obscure the power and responsibility of state actors and action, flattening the complexity of state action against its citizens. By invoking all lives matter and its implicit opposition to Black Lives Matter, the socially constructed and contested nature of the lived experiences of African-Americans, other minorities, and any other people that believe they have been improperly treated by the state is erased, reifying a shared belief of an unbiased, fair, and impartial Rule of Law as a fixed bearing which the Individual should properly orient themself toward so that their life will not be impacted by state action to begin with. This juxtaposition of whose lives matter more serves to obscure the variable levels of force which the state can exercise, let alone the possibility that its use may be invalid, in favor of blaming Individuals for their failure to conform to the Rule of Law. As with assimilationist rhetoric, the Individual is being held responsible for their subjective treatment at the hands of the state while the self-nominated authority of the state (Antonsich 2012) to deem fit whatever level of force it so desires to exercise is simultaneously rendered hidden.

Cruz coupled this nascent “all lives matter” discourse with the rhetorical erasure of any other possible order, namely Black Lives Matter, and in so doing denied any purchase in any legitimate worldview (Monk 2018a) and rendered undiscussable
(Bourdieu 1977) that some Americans may have legitimate grievances about excessive force at the hands of the state. Cruz’s description of Clinton’s apologizing for saying *all lives matter* acts very much like Pataki’s “refusing to acknowledge” (Example 4.13) the proper term for violent non-state action, reifying two belief containers: one where (l. 10) *political correctness* has driven people mad and compelled Clinton to apologize for incanting properly that *all lives matter*, and the other where *all those [people]* upset about *political correctness* can rightly believe *all lives matter* and therefore avoid becoming either angry or insane. Again, no merits are offered explicitly for the policy need of either category, simply a condemnation for not incanting the self-evidently right name which has flustered Americans by failing to properly orient America to the Rule of Law, rendering the world itself *mad*. The extent to which charges against *political correctness* serve to rhetorically erase other possible orders for understanding the socio-political landscape which Republicans find objectionable merits further study; it seems at first blush that simply naming something as politically correct may serve to shut down the policy positions of Democratic candidates on the grounds of not being called the right thing as opposed to being a legitimate other possible worldview.

The Republican candidates’ attempts of rhetorical erasure coupled with the general discourse of “radical Islamic terrorism” (Jackson 2007; Nimmer 2011), which constructs violent non-state actors in groups like ISIS or al-Qaeda as fanatics driven by religious doctrine alone, posed a problem for the Democratic candidates. When asked about a claim made by Rubio that “we are at war with radical Islam” (Dickerson DEM debate 2), Clinton pushed back against the Republicans’ attempts at rhetorical erasure. Unlike the Republicans who argue that only one possible framing

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10Quoted from an interview on ABC’s “This Week” 11/15/15
is allowed, Clinton noted that you can talk about Islamists who um clearly are also jihadists. Rather than shutting down other possible orders as undiscussable, Clinton noted that any of these shortcut[s] would only make gaining allies who are Muslim more difficult. Through her empathizing with Muslim countries, taking their perspective that the discourse of “radical Islamic terrorism” itself my prompt an inference that we’re at war with Islam or with all Muslims and that we are somehow against Islam, Clinton also pushed back against the discourse of “radical Islamic terrorism” itself, giving Muslim “civilization” (Clinton Example 4.12) a voice in how violent non-state action by ISIS should be understood. By offering Muslims a seat at the table of ideological definition, Clinton argued against the obscured self-nominated power of “western civilization” (Kasich Example 4.11) to define what motivates groups like ISIS, and by extension what is and is not Islam to begin with.

(4.15) CLINTON: I don’t think we’re at war with Islam. I don’t think we at war with all Muslims I think we’re at war with jihadists who have uh yes

DICKERSON: Just to interrupt, he s- he [Rubio] didn’t say all Muslims. He just said radical Islam. Is that a phrase you don’t

CLINTON: I I think that you can you can talk about Islamists who um clearly are also jihadists. But I think it’s % it’s not particularly helpful to make the case that uh Senator Sanders was just making that I agree with that we’ve gotta reach out to Muslim countries we’ve gotta have them be part of our coalition. If they hear people running for uh president who basically shortcut it to say we are somehow against Islam. That was one of the real contributions despite all the other problems that George W. Bush made after nine eleven when he basically said after going to a mosque in Washington, we are not at war with Islam or Muslims. We are at war with violent extremism. We are at war with people who use their religion for purposes of power and oppression. Um and yes, we are at war with those people but I don’t want us to be painting with too broad a brush.

(Clinton, DEM Debate 2)

True to a Conjoint FoR, Clinton located her ideological position on violent non-state action through the perspectives of both Muslims and Non-, rather than only focusing
on a perspective from the vantage point of the west or Americans and their need to have specific and clearly delineated categories in order to properly understand and respond to the issue. By quoting the words of former President George W. Bush (R) to bolster her ideological position, Clinton attempted to occupy a middle ground in the American ideological space where voters could refocus their perspective on the issue as violent extremism ... [and] people who use their religion for purposes of power and oppression. This understanding of violent extremism pushes back against the discourse of “radical Islamic terrorism”, which erases socio-political motivations from violent non-state actors in favor of purely religious fanaticism. Rather than reifying religion or politics as shared social constructs which can “force” (Kasich Example 4.11) people to behave and make assessments in certain ways, Clinton focused attention on the people who were misusing their religious lived experiences as justification in their drive to adversely impact the lived experiences of others. While during her answer she did not make the clearest break from the discourse of “radical Islamic terrorism”, at least Clinton side stepped its more problematic aspect of condemning religious fanaticism alone, instead admonishing certain people for misusing their religion for illegitimate socio-political ends.

Sanders offered the clearest break from both the discourse of “radical Islamic terrorism” and the Republican attempt at rhetorical erasure when prompted to respond to Clinton in the same debate. For Sanders, arguing over what term to use is less important than understanding how organizations of violent non-state actors are trying to impact the lived experiences of other people. Two traces of the discourse of “radical Islamic terrorism” are discernible in Sanders’ answer in his juxtaposition of modern society and going back several thousand years (Jackson 2007). However, Sanders coupled these with the impacts people would experience, noting how recent
state granted assurances of autonomy for women and children would be lost. In this respect, Sanders’ concern seems less about religious attitudes toward women and children per se, and more about securities which nation-states have made available to all of their citizenry. By forgoing any mention of religion, and grounding his answer in the lived experiences of people who would see recent socio-political protections lost, Sanders offered an ideological interpretation of violent non-state action almost entirely grounded in socio-political motives. From this understanding, voters should follow his argument and find it reasonable to expect this world [to] ... come together to protect everyone from violent non-state actors seeking to limit or overturn socio-political freedoms for everyone. For Sanders, we are all in this together, even those nations whose citizens are predominantly followers of Islam, and that perspective is what matters most.

(4.16) I do not I don’t think the term is what’s important. What is important to understand, is we have organizations whether it is ISIS or Al Qaeda, who do believe we should go back several thousand years, we should make women third c- class citizens, that we should allow children to be sexually assaulted, that they are a danger to modern society and that this world with American leadership can and must come together to destroy them. We can do that. [O’MALLEY: John] And it requires an entire world to come together including, in a very active way, the Muslim nations.

(Sanders, DEM Debate 2)

The concern for the Democratic candidates generally was that by framing the conflict with violent non-state actors like ISIS as motivated by religious zealotry rather than socio-political concerns may cause other followers of Islam to feel denigrated, whether “Muslim countries” per Clinton (Example 4.15) or our Muslim-American neighbors in this country per O’Malley. As O’Malley noted Muslims throughout the world already understand that these violent non-state actors are perverting the name of their religion, they do not need to hear American politicians doing the same.
(4.17) I believe calling it what it is, is to say radical jihadis, that’s to call what it is.

But John let’s not fall into the trap of thinking that all of our Muslim American neighbors in this country are somehow our enemies here. They are our first line of defense. And we are going to be able to defeat ISIS on the ground there, as well as in this world, uh because of the Muslim Americans in our country and throughout the world who understand that this brutal and barbaric group is perverting the name of a great world religion. And now like we never before we need our Muslim American neighbors to stand up and to uh and to be a part of this.

(O’Malley, DEM Debate 2)

Unfortunately, O’Malley fell into the trap created by the confluence of the discourse of “radical Islamic terrorism” and the Republican candidates’ rhetorical erasure, failing to offer a framing that did not erase potential socio-political origins of the motivations of groups like ISIS. By calling it what it is ... saying/ radical jihadis and condemning their actions as irrational via brutal and barbaric, O’Malley used terminology associated with the discourse of “radical Islamic terrorism”, locating his position within an ideological space defined by a discourse that has erased any understanding of violent non-state action as anything but religious. He also allowed his position to shift into the universe of the undiscussable by failing to reframe or reject the necessity of such terms.

There are some traces of framing which may or may not have been enough to rescue O’Malley’s position in the eyes of voters who see the world through the Conjoint FoR. O’Malley did empathize with most Muslims who feel that their religion is being tarnished by the actions of a few. Unlike Sanders, O’Malley offered his position more from a perspective of non-Muslims, noting how we ... need them. For Sanders, the whole world which naturally includes Muslims should work “together” (Example 4.16); for O’Malley, Muslims, while a vital part of the mission, still stand somewhat apart, being seen more through the eyes of the west. While O’Malley may
have been trying to find an ideological middle ground, he seems to have done so less successfully than Clinton.

### 4.5 Chapter summary

In this chapter I have demonstrated a significant difference between the two parties with respect to their use of the space domain in their discussion of international affairs and immigration. The Republican candidates utilized the “givenness” and “fixity” of space (Smith and Katz 1993:68) to lend a sense of givenness and self-evident necessity to their policy positions, reifying the fixed bearings of their Absolute FoR as “extra-human origins of the social order ... as independent of the human will” (Freeden 1996:334). The Democratic candidates did not focus on spatial concepts as much as their Republican counterparts; the very given nature of space allowed it to be backgrounded in order to focus on the motivations or needs of people.

Consistent with their Absolute FoR which takes impersonal fixed bearings as reference points, the Republican candidates located their ideological interpretations and policy prescriptions through spatial concepts like the level playing field, the (southern) border, and an ideological divide separating western civilization and non-. Making use of the extant discourse of “radical Islamic terrorism”, assimilationist rhetoric, and rhetorical erasure, Republican candidates attempted to preclude counterarguments to their ideological positions, pre-specifying states of affairs that should hold in the world were it not for the obstruction of others who refuse to accept these self-evident truths and their extra-human origins while simultaneously erasing their complicity in pre-specifying or defining these origins to begin with.

The Democratic candidates located their ideological interpretations and policy prescriptions by looking at the world through the motivations of people and how their
actions impact others. Given the Conjoint FoR’s focus on unique, personal viewpoints as reference points, spatial concepts tended to be backgrounded. Making reference to various possible perspectives makes it highly improbable for the Democrats to attempt to preclude counterarguments to their ideological positions by obstructing others from arguing for their own ideas; though, discussing why other ideas may not be the best to follow is simply to offer their own ideas as a better alternative than others.

In the final analytical chapter, I examine Trump’s rhetoric over the course of the primary and general elections drawing on the insights from the first three chapters. Through his competitive worldview, I demonstrate his zero-sum, winner-take-all logic that may have been more natural for voters to follow as they made sense of the American socio-political landscape in 2016.
Chapter 5

Winning and losing: Trump’s competition

5.1 Introduction

Trump’s candidacy and electoral college win has generated a great deal of discussion about his rhetoric (Ahmadian and colleagues 2017; Ali and Shamimah Binti Haji Mohideen 2016; Darweesh and Abdullah 2016; Degani 2016; Greven 2016; Haynes 2017; McClay 2017; Mohammadi and Javadi 2017; Monk 2018b; Quinonez 2018; Stamenkovic 2017; Winberg 2017). Some researchers have used quantitative methods (Bond and colleagues 2017; Kayam 2017; Wang and Liu 2018). Many have compared him to various candidates and former President Obama (Jordan and Pennebaker 2017; Li and colleagues 2017; Quam and Ryshina-Pankova 2016; Savoy 2018; Schoor 2017; Schumacher and Eskenazi 2016), while others have compared him only to Clinton (Egaña 2016; Lee and Lim 2016; Lee and Xu 2017; Liu and Lei 2018; Ping and Lingling 2017; Yaqub and colleagues 2017). In this chapter I offer an analysis of Trump’s rhetoric within the broader framework of political Frames of Reference (FoR) and conceptual metaphors which I have outlined throughout this dissertation, offering counterpoints to the entire field of candidates, with special emphasis on Clinton and her debate appearances during the general election.

Trump was able to navigate through the primary election as the Republican candidate to beat because he offered his ideological positions, whether normally expected from a Republican candidate or not, through the mutually entailing concepts of WINNING and LOSING. Rather than having to rank various Absolutes in relation to one
another to generate his own unique message about what is going in America as the other Republicans had to, Trump flattened the complexity or dimensionality of problems occurring in America down to his northern star of victory and its polar opposite of defeat. So long as voters could follow his offered logic, that his position would lead to American exceptionalism and supremacy again, Trump was able to offer most any position no matter how atypical for a Republican candidate, whether saving Social Security (Example 5.5) or abridging the constitutional rights of some Americans via stop and frisk since “what do [they] have to lose? It can’t get any worse” (§5.4; PRES debate 2). By describing what voters should understand as “fair” or “unfair” (Example 5.7) treatments or behaviors—and numerous other guises whether more transparently as “equal footing” (Example 5.13) or “not being treated right … [nor] properly” (Example 5.11), or more as opaque “embarrassed” (Example 5.3) or “that’s a shame” (Example 5.14)—Trump leveled with voters that only he really understood their feelings of anger, discontent, contempt, and disenfranchisement at the hands of the government, immigrants, terrorists, other nations, and the other candidates. Fusing these two aspects together, Trump could simultaneously define who is (un)deserving of victory and (dis)respect and justify what issues are worth discussion, action, or worry; this, in no small part, garnered him enough votes to win both the primary and general elections.

Trump located his ideological interpretations and policy prescriptions within the mutually entailing Grounds of victory and defeat within what I call a Decompetitive FoR. This Decompetitive FoR is a structured series of semantic parameters drawn from our general understanding of the COMPETITION domain but in its most extreme sense (Hamington 2009) more akin to a war-like understanding of competitions (Shields and Bredemeier 2011). As I will demonstrate, this Decompetitive FoR has
more in common with the Absolute FoR of the Republican CoA, the Grounds of which are supposedly shared cultural constructs; as Grounds, victory and defeat come pre-loaded with both social meaning and value judgements (Tännsjö 1998). The rather monotonic perspective that is generated by an obsessive concern over victory and defeat makes the Decompetitive FoR less like the Conjoint FoR which takes the multiple possible perspectives of people as Grounds.

Several aspects of Trump’s Decompetitive FoR (Hamington 2009), in particular its reliance on zero-sum thinking (Cudd 2007) and its utility in cueing emotional reactions (Tännsjö 1998), made it possible for Trump to speak more directly to voters, engaging them through forms of knowledge that might be termed “folk” (Swedberg 2018), speaking to people in a more common parlance about issues such as economics (§5.3) (McCloskey 1995; Rubin 2003), justice (§5.4), immigration (§5.5), and terrorism (§5.6).

First, I turn to the decompetition source domain itself, its structure and differences from competition (§5.2), and then I describe Trump’s particular usage of it as a political FoR (§5.2.1). In Sections §§5.3-5.6 I analyze Trump’s ideological positioning across particular issues and how his Decompetitive framing differed from all of the other candidates with particular emphasis on Clinton. Unlike the previous chapters, I make use of data from both the primary and general elections in order to fully flesh out Trump’s rhetoric over the course of the entire election cycle, and I use data from the general election for Clinton to demonstrate her attempts to counter his ideological positionings directly.
5.2 (DE)COMPETITION

As with any source domain, COMPETITION is a neutral conceptual resource (Hamington 2009) which can help us organize our understanding of the world. However, whenever people, but especially ethicists, business people, or even we linguists, take a conceptual metaphor to extremes, fallaciously thinking that the metaphor is “definition[al]” (p. 475) or literal of how the world is and should be experienced as opposed to simply an analogical device, numerous problems can arise. While COMPETITION metaphors can give us linguistic and conceptual resources to understand and describe abstract concepts such as business or international trade, when people start believing that the only way to experience e.g. business is as COMPETITION, conflating the two rich domains of experience as being one and the same, what was once simply descriptive is presumed determinative. Further, the richness of the target domain becomes flattened in certain respects, becoming less-than itself as it becomes more like the source domain, losing a degree of its own complexity in the process.

Throughout this chapter I will not be arguing that Trump only sees or experiences his world as one of COMPETITION; rather, I will demonstrate how his use of COMPETITION as a source domain to structure his ideological interpretations and policy prescriptions is indicative of, and expands upon, the extremes which could bleed into one’s understanding of the BUSINESS domain: “compartmentalized morality, truncated ethics, trivialized stakes, and the privileging of adversarial relationships” (ibid. 477). Far from being logical fallacies one might inadvertently map into a target domain by too closely equating the source domain as its definition, Trump actively used these and other COMPETITION extremes to offer his personal ideological worldview which resonated with a sufficient portion of the population to become President. Given his frequent refrain that he was a businessman and not a politician,
it comes as no surprise that he would use COMPETITION, one of the central source domains for understanding capitalism (Cudd 2007), as a central construct within his political ideology.

Unlike the discussion in Chapter 4 where COMPETITION sufficed as an analytical label even given the differences between the Democratic and Republican candidates’ rhetoric with respect to international trade, Trump’s extensive and idiosyncratic use of the COMPETITION domain across numerous policy issues merits an additional analytical label. DECOMPETITION encompasses the semantic subspace of our understanding of sports, competition, or contests when being more WAR-like (Shields and Bredemeier 2011) or extreme. The key distinction made between these two domains was related to the etymology of competition, an understanding that opponents are “striving] with” (p. 33, see also Cudd 2007:61) one another to better themselves, enjoy the contest, and eventually attain the goal of having a good time whether they win or lose; this understanding is akin to a win-win scenario. In contrast, players who come in with the more WAR-like understanding decompete or “strive against” (ibid.) their opponents by any means necessary on the road to their pre-determined victory; this is the win-loss or zero-sum scenario which underlies much of the “folk” knowledges which Trump employs.

I will use decompetition to point out where Trump compartmentalized morality, truncated ethics, trivialized stakes, privileged adversarial relationships, and generated contempt by decrying weakness or the losers who display it (Tännsjö 1998) on his quest to become “the greatest jobs president that god ever created” (Trump 06/16/15). Decompetition also stands in relation to decontestation as used in this dissertation. Much like the Republican candidates, Trump decontested some of his ideas in order to promote his own preferred ideological order (Freeden 1996) through
tactics such as rhetorical erasure, categorization, and metaphoric highlighting and erasure; but he also went further. Whereas decontestation promotes one’s ideological interpretations and policy prescriptions as above question by erasing other possible ideological orders (Bourdieu 1977), decompetition promotes one’s ideology by delegitimating the people who have different ideological orders. Decontestation is concerned with the ideas themselves, where counterarguments are erased leaving one’s ideological interpretation or policy prescription as doxic while covertly maintaining the arbitrary nature of the naturalized “cosmological and political order” (Bourdieu 1977:166). Decompetition delegitimizes counterarguments by denying the integrity of one’s ideological opponents themselves. Rather than waging “the bigger war ... the battle of ideas” (Kasich Example 4.11), Trump would instead aver that “nobody can believe how stupid our leadership is” (PRES debate 3) as a primary means for voters to assess the logic of his arguments and the validity of his policies over everyone else’s.

Decompetition, I argue, is not a form of doxic argument, rather a form of orthodox argument that derides other people for having heterodox opinions, rendering a person’s ideas as heretical not because the opinion is invalid but because the person is contemptible. Unlike an Absolute worldview which relies on a “self-evident and natural order” whose arbitrariness is masked as common sense (Bourdieu 1977:166), a worldview offered through Decompetition acknowledges, if not revels in, its arbitrary nature and its supposedly superior order as it bristles and vociferously defends itself when others call either that superiority or its arbitrariness into question. Consistent with an extreme understanding of competition, the decompetitive gaze twins the thrill of victory with the agony of defeat, whether a thrill at the defeated’s agony (Shields and Bredemeier 2011) or a contempt for their weakness (Tänsjö 1998).

An extreme understanding of COMPETITION can engender problematic value judge-
ments to occur when excessive emphasis is placed on the success and strength of the victor, whether by spectators watching (Tännsjö 1998) or by the competitors themselves (Cudd 2007; Hamington 2009; Shields and Bredemeier 2011; Suits 2018). Tännsjö described the moral value judgements that spectators undertake when they assess competitors for their skill, ability, talent, and success; within zero-sum winner-take-all contests, an admiration for such attributes and the victors who display them impart a positive value and, given that value is inherently a scalar or comparative concept, losers get viewed as having or deserving less value. Second place is after all the first loser Tännsjö reminds us (p. 27). This coupled value judgement of “admiration for the winner and contempt for the loser” may be indicative of fascist and nationalist ideology (p. 26). While some research is being done as to the extent that the 2016 election had implications with respect to nationalist ideology (e.g. Lieven 2016; Whitehead and colleagues 2018), I do not follow that line of inquiry here. Rather, I demonstrate how Trump generated perspectives of admiration for strength—usually his own or for the nation only he can Make Great (Again)—and contempt for weakness—usually everyone else’s or from how America is viewed by other nations—in his ideological interpretations and policy prescriptions in order to justify who is (un)deserving of victory and (dis)respect and what methods are necessary to achieve that end.

Some might wish to counter-argue that what I analyze as contempt is nothing more than Trump sharing, responding to, or stoking anger in the electorate for their mistreatment at the hands of the political establishment worldwide in order to achieve vote share. Trump himself made that argument during the sixth GOP debate:

(5.1) ... I’m very angry. Because our country is being run horribly. And I will gladly accept the mantle of anger. Our military is a disaster. (APPLAUSE) Our healthcare is a horror show. Obamacare, we’re gonna repeal it and replace it.
We have no borders. Our vets are being treated horribly. Illegal immigration is beyond belief. Our country is being run by incompetent people. And yes I am angry. (APPLAUSE) And I won’t be angry when we fix it, but until we fix it, I’m very very angry.... I’m angry because our country is a mess. (APPLAUSE)

(Trump, GOP Debate 6)

However, anger and contempt are not mutually exclusive emotions; rather, frequent or excessive anger can lead to, or as in this case can be stoked into contempt (Fischer and Roseman 2007). The distinguishing characteristics between anger and contempt are: the level of control one perceives they can exercise in altering the offender’s behavior, the degree to which one’s perception of the offender starts out as or changes for the negative, and the social function one seeks to accomplish by acting out such an emotion. Trump’s description of his own anger straddles the first two points of difference. With respect to perceived level of control, the more one feels that they can encourage a change in the offender’s behavior, the more likely one is to view them with anger; in this regard Trump’s accepting the mantle of anger indicates his perception that he and those who also feel this anger can create positive changes, if not in the behavior of others at least in the dire state of the nation. But also, Trump’s claim to anger serves to blunt his criticism; despite the country being run horribly like a disaster or horror show, with no borders leading to a mess, he’s really only just angry at his fellow citizen-politicians for their incompetence. To the second point, these rather negative appraisals are more in line with contempt since such negative appraisals through derogation and outright name-calling serve to cast a person as inferior and undeserving of basic respect (p. 105). A person can be angry at someone they respect, but to perceive someone contemptuously they have to strip them of any shred of respect. The overarching structure of Trump’s answer offers just such a pathway for voters to channel their anger toward a perception of contempt.
Determining whether or not Trump actually felt anger or contempt is not the goal of my analysis, rather to demonstrate how some of his rhetoric can be read by voters for indicators of anger or contempt, the latter being stoked by impugning the character of other people to the point that they are viewed as something less-than. That is, through his rhetoric Trump offered ideological interpretations to engender particular perceptions of the socio-political landscape, to include emotional cues, to encourage voter alignment to his candidacy so that he could achieve his policy prescriptions.

With respect to the third difference between anger and contempt, the social function one seeks to accomplish when acting out anger is to control the behavior of another, censuring them for improper actions in order to coerce a correction. In certain respects we see Trump claiming anger at how poorly politicians have run the country as a means to censure them for their errors, though he hoped to be the one who could fix them as opposed to encouraging them to alter their ways. When acting out contempt, however, a person does not seek to change the offender’s behavior rather to exclude the offender from one’s social environment to minimize any affect the offender’s bad character or negative actions may have, both on the person feeling contempt but also on the social environment itself. Here, we can see the bleed between anger and contempt since Trump was not expecting the incompetent people to change, rather he was hoping to make the changes himself by ousting them out of power. Again, the difference between anger and contempt is a matter of degree, but Trump seems willing to delegitimize the character of others readily, whether through name-calling or outright derogation as when he described Mexican immigrants as “rapists” and “crim[inals]” (Example 5.10). One other means Trump employed to access this emotional pathway was to declare that others were being unfair or not treating him or America nicely enough (Example 5.11). To put it plainly, anger
seeks redress from and correction of an offender’s behavior while contempt blames the offender because of who they are and how they’re making one’s world miserable (Fischer and Roseman 2007:105). To accomplish these social functions of correction or exclusion, anger is acted out directly to the source of anger while contempt is acted out either internally by ignoring the offender or socially by literally turning the social order itself against the offender through belittling, gossip, or walling them off.

5.2.1 Trump’s Decompetitive Frame of Reference

Within the decompetitive FoR that Trump constructed, victory and defeat serve as the two primary Grounds for voters to locate his ideological positions within. In certain respects there is an elegant simplicity to these two mutually entailing Grounds because each has the power to invoke the other: one person’s victory entails another’s defeat and vice versa. Neither the fixed bearings of the Republican Absolute FoR nor the multiple possible perspectives of the Democratic Conjoint FoR can accomplish that. What the Absolute and Conjoint FoRs have in common is a multiplicity of possible worldviews or perspectives with subtle gradations being possible between each and every one. For the Republican candidates, this complexity is evident as they jockeyed the salience of various Absolutes around in order to stake a claim as to knowing how best the Absolutes structure American life; just because one policy may be better understood through the fixed bearing of e.g. Christian Morality does not mean Islamism will factor in. As for the Democrats, offering perspectives of various stakeholders as a means to navigate the socio-political landscape is inherently non-binary since no two perspectives will ever be exactly the same. Trump on the other hand needs only mention one understanding of what is going on to also invoke its opposite, generating two mutually entailing perspectives that happen to valorize his
position as the only one that will achieve victory while avoiding defeat.

Given the centrality of victory and defeat to Trump’s Decompetitive FoR, it is necessary to begin with Hamington’s third concern of trivialized stakes, one form of which is called teleopathy (Goodpaster 2008:2067; Hamington 2009): an excessive fixation on some goals to the point that they “become idols; obstacles become threats; second thoughts are silenced—and eventually, second thoughts disappear”. In the realm of politics, teleopathy can occur when a politician presents an outsized emphasis on a limited set of goals while reducing the salience of other goals and the people who may voice them. Much like the discourse on “radical Islamic terrorism” (Jackson 2007; Nimmer 2011), teleopathy serves as a form of ideological erasure, flattening the complexity of policy issues to a limited number of dimensions which simultaneously support one’s own ideological interpretations and policy prescriptions while ignoring other possible perspectives on the issue or by silencing those who do not view the issue in the right and proper way. This type of trivialization can be seen in Trump’s comments like “If we don’t have borders, if we don’t have strength, we don’t have a country” (GOP debate 9) or his signature claim to Make America Great Again both of which cast every other policy initiative or citizen concern as second thoughts worthy of erasure or as obstacles to securing borders, strength, and greatness—however vaguely defined.

Trump’s teleopathy is evident throughout his campaign as he advocated for Making America Great Again and lamented that we don’t win anymore (Example 5.2). These two adverbs, “again” and anymore, are particularly salient markers with respect to Trump’s Decompetitive ideological worldview. Rather than being regular competitive goals which are “specific achievable state[s] of affairs” (Suits 2018:24) that competitors can vie for on equal terms, and going beyond the Republican pre-
specified states of affairs which are waiting for us like e.g. the triangulated fixed bearing of American Economic Supremacy (see §4.2 and Rubio Example 4.3 specifically), Trump’s decompetitive goal has a pre-specified “certainty of outcome” (Shields and Bredemeier 2011:35) precisely because we used to have it, namely America’s “rightful place at the pinnacle” in the world (Carson GOP debate 2; see also Christie 06/30/15 for a similar sentiment). Much like an athlete might cry foul that a game or points were stolen, Trump would often lament how other nation’s are stealing our companies, jobs, or wealth. The only resolution to such an unfair state of affairs in the world is to reverse that wrongful theft and loss, and to make great again what should have been recognized as great all along.

This mutual entailment of victory and defeat is at work in the following example from the fourth GOP debate as Trump decompeted a policy goal of some Americans, raising the minimum wage to fifteen dollars an hour, due to the negative impact such a move would have on our ability to compete against the world. Voters can locate his argument that we just can’t do it within the Ground of our continued defeat since we are being beaten on every front economically, militarily and don’t win anymore. Trump and those voters who choose to view the economy through his decompetitive gaze can’t be sympathetic to such a policy prescription because what we do now with our current laws, including the current minimum wage, is preventing us from winning like we used to. Both the heterodox policy position of raising the minimum wage, and those arguing for it, are summarily shut down since their actions would only serve to defeat America. Consistent with the other Republican candidates, Trump also argued we are losing because our taxes are too high.

1 (5.2) CAVUTO: ... Mister Trump. As the leading presidential candidate on this stage, and one whose tax plan exempts couples making up to fifty thousand dollars a year from paying any federal income taxes at all, are you
sympathetic to the protesters’ cause since a fifteen dollar wage works out to about thirty one thousand dollars a year.

TRUMP: I can’t be Neil. And the reason I can’t be is that we are a country that is being beaten on every front economically, militarily. There is nothing that we do now to win. We don’t win anymore. Our taxes are too high I’ve come up with a tax plan that many many people like very much it’s going to be a tremendous plan. I think it’ll make our country and our economy very dynamic. But, taxes too high, wages too high, we’re not gonna be able to compete against the world. I hate to say it, but we have to leave it the way it is. People have to go out, they have to work really hard and they have to get into that upper stratum. But we cannot do this if we are going to compete with the rest of the world. We just can’t do it.

CAVUTO: So do not raise the minimum wage.

TRUMP: I would not raise the minimum. (APPLAUSE) (Trump, GOP Debate 4)

While claiming that he had a tax plan that would make our country and our economy very dynamic, he did not explicitly state he would lower taxes. His use of but (l. 11) implies a causal connection between our current non-competitive, non-dynamic economy and our high taxes and high wages. The entailed inference which voters can follow is that the only way for us to compete and win again is by lowering taxes; unfortunately, his paratactic structure rightly or wrongly also provided the potential inference that our competitiveness can only be restored by also lowering wages, very conspicuously not minimum wages. While some would argue that Trump did not mean to imply lowering all wages, and indeed he claimed that we have to leave it [the minimum wage law] the way it is, Sanders was willing to exploit the potential inference during the third Democratic debate when he accused Trump of “think[ing] a low minimum wage in America is a good idea. He thinks low wages are a good idea”.

The reason this misfired inference had enough potential to become a point of attack, I argue, rests in the very Decompetitive worldview in which Trump constructed
it; had this been framed in any other political frame of reference, I do believe this comment would have simply registered as little more than a slip of the tongue. Recall that Carson (Example 3.12) made similar arguments, right after Trump in this very debate in fact, with the same slip “because of those high wages” contributing to unemployment and his comment was not taken up for attack. Carson framed his comment with respect to teenagers and that their being compensated in experience or potential opportunities can be seen as a reasonable offset for not “pay[ing them] a large amount of money”. Trump’s Decompetitive framing on the other hand made it possible to infer that America as a whole loses economically because we pay everyone too much, but especially those people protesting about their minimum wage status instead of going out ... [and] work[ing] really hard.

Trump’s teleopathic focus on winning economically by rendering some protesters’ policy initiatives as an unworkable “second thought” (Goodpaster 2008:2067) that we just can’t do it is indicative of one reflex of contempt (Tännsjö 1998:27): negligence by “think[ing] them away”. It may be that Trump took part of his cue from Cavuto’s asking about sympathy for those who are seeking policy initiatives from their elected officials, but Trump spun it through the emergent Republican metaphor of human worth is economic worth (§3.4.1) where the protestors and their cause do not warrant consideration by their government, let alone sympathy, precisely because they are not the type of workers who have worked really hard ... to get into that upper stratum. Much like the Individual immigrant being blamed for failing to satisfy the subjective whims of a self-nominated authority in order to absolve average Americans in their dealings with immigrants (§4.3), America’s inability to compete and to not keep losing is being laid at the feet of the Individual worker, subjectively viewed as not trying hard enough to get into that upper stratum, in order to absolve average
Americans from having to consider policy issues related to how little an employer can pay a worker.

With respect to Trump and Carson’s ideological interpretations of (minimum) wages, a mismatch between wage and category of worker—whether hard workers versus protestors, teenagers lacking experience not being worth a certain wage (Carson Example 3.12), or even temporary foreign workers versus Americans (Trump Example 5.4)—can be understood as a misallocation of resources which renders success unattainable for both worker and employer per Carson, or for the nation per Trump. I am not denying that a link exists between business success and an appropriate exercise of resources; however, within a Decompetitive FoR and its mutually entailing relationship between victory and defeat, indicative of or predicated upon a zero-sum relationship (Cudd 2007:58), discussions of resources, whether wages, America’s wealth, or even America’s jobs (Example 5.5), can begin to take on traces of zero-sum thinking (McCloskey 1995; Rubin 2003), through which one can intuit the status of one’s gains with respect to another’s losses and vice versa, or one can rationalize or justify one’s actions or beliefs as appropriate to achieve the proper balance between gains and losses (Burleigh 2016). In zero-sum fashion, the Individual worker should recognize the fixed nature of the wage pie and redouble their efforts to get into that upper stratum from their current lower one. Given Trump’s assessment that America is losing economically due to high taxes and wages, the only appropriate course of action for us to win back our rightful economic victories is to reduce taxes (gains to businesses and workers, losses to government revenues) and not increase (minimum) wages (non-losses to business but also non-gains to protestors). While such economic instances of zero-sum thinking seem tenable, if dispreferred by economic theory (McCloskey 1995; Rubin 2003), other uses can be problematic such as when “societal
compassion” can be seen as a scarce resource (Cole 2007:33) that must be judiciously allocated, let alone “social justice” or even “social respect” to play on Cole’s theme (Example 5.8).

“Thinking away” (Tännsjö 1998:27) and silencing those “second thoughts” (Goodpaster 2008:2067), and using zero-sum thinking to rationalize one’s ideological viewpoint at the expense of another person’s are indicative of Hamington’s (2009) first two concerns: compartmentalization of morality and a truncation of ethics. An excessive understanding of the COMPETITION source domain could permit a compartmentalization of morality such that actions in the business world are allowed to operate under their own self-referential rules, permitting business people to behave without censure in ways that would be perceived as less than appropriate in wider society as they pursue their business goals; also note the same has been said for politics is COMPETITION (Cudd 2007; Hamington 2009; Shields and Bredemeier 2011; Tännsjö 1998).

What Hamington viewed as potentially problematic turned out to be the consistent and ultimate defense for Trump throughout the election. Prior to the second Presidential debate, the Access Hollywood tape from 2005 was released in which Trump claimed “You can do anything. Grab them by the pussy. You can do anything.” (Wikipedia 2018). When asked about this comment during the second debate Trump did indeed apologize for these comments, but within a COMPETITION metaphor by claiming that this was locker room talk. Trump sought to compartmentalize the negative moral judgements that his problematic comments from years past might provoke against him by invoking a SPACE intimately connected to, or at the least frequently associated with COMPETITION, one with its own given, fixed, and inert (Smith and Katz 1993) self-referential rules and mores about what constitutes permissible
understandings of and comments about women (Vertinsky 2001). By walling off his past comments within a locker room where different rules apply, Trump attempted to absolve himself from recrimination of both sexism or sexual assault (Cooper) and of making inappropriate comments to begin with.¹

(5.3) COOPER: Thank you Mister Trump. The question from Patrice was about are you both modeling positive and appropriate behaviors for today’s youth. We’d received a lot of questions online Mister Trump about the tape that was released on Friday as you can imagine. You called what you said locker room banter. You described kissing women without consent grabbing their genitals. That is sexual assault. You bragged that you have sexually assaulted women. Do you understand that?

TRUMP: No I didn’t say that at all I don’t think you understood what was said this was locker room talk. Uh I’m not proud of it. I apologize to my family I apologize to the American people. Certainly I’m not proud of it. But this is locker room talk y’know when we have a world where you have ISIS chopping off heads where you have and frankly drowning people in steel cages where you have [NI] wars and and horrible horrible sights all over. Where you have so many bad things happening this is like medieval times we haven’t seen anything like this the carnage all over the world. [NI] And they look and they see can you imagine the people that are frankly doing so well against us with ISIS? And they look at our country and they see what’s going on yes I’m very embarrassed by it. I hate it. But it’s locker room talk and it’s one of those things. I will, knock the hell out of ISIS. We’re gonna defeat ISIS. ISIS [NI] happened a number of years ago in a vacuum that was left [COOPER: So] because of bad judgment. And I will tell you. I will take care of ISIS. [COOPER: So mister Trump ] And we should get on to much more [NI] important things and much bigger things.

(Trump, PRES Debate 2)

In the remainder of his answer Trump offered a parallel description of violent actions committed by ISIS which he labeled as much more important ... and much bigger than his walled off locker room talk. By crafting his answer to compartmentalize his comments as excusable–begrudgingly so since it’s one of those things that is

¹[NI] indicates a pronounced nasal inhalation of air.
permissible, if not expected in a men’s locker room—while hyperbolizing the actions of ISIS as carnage all over the world, Trump offered his perspective for voters, a decompetitive gaze they could follow in order to find the same embarrass[ment] in the contrast between these two issues that Trump does. His anger and embarrass[ment] are not only about his past comments and their reception but also that various people are look[ing] at our country and seeing us focus on what in his view are less important arguments while those same people are chopping off heads and frankly doing so well against us. This is yet a second layer of compartmentalization, entering into the realm of rhetorical erasure (§4.4), where Trump would prefer we get on to much more important things than his years-old comments which should not have even been brought up for debate to begin with, given his preferred more pressing concerns.

Trump’s locker room defense is also indicative of a second form of trivializing stakes, encapsulated in comments like “it’s only a game” or just one of those things, diminishing the importance of situations by casting them as a form of sport or entertainment. Trump’s use of COMPETITION served to make the situation at hand seem less important than what people made it out to be. By locating his problematic comments in a game room and juxtaposing them with the wars raging across the world, Trump attempted to diminish the impact that his previous comments about women would have on his candidacy. Simultaneously, he offered a potential path of logic for voters to follow that issues like sexist remarks, if not sexual assault, are themselves a trivial matter since there is a war going on and such discussion makes America appear weak. This type of trivialization looks at the entirety of a given situation and diminishes it on the whole while teleopathy offers an understanding of a situation almost entirely in terms of the goal of COMPETITION and its acquisition at any and all costs.
Hamington’s (2009) second concern of truncated ethics relates to the system of constitutive rules and mores which structure the moral and ethical system within a COMPETITION metaphor: no matter how complete or thorough a set of constitutive rules or mores are for a given COMPETITION, they are insufficient to reflect upon “the complexity of human existence” (p. 478) as a whole. In certain respects this concern is tied into the compartmentalization of morality, which permits a conceptualization that the world operates under different moralities in different SPACES, while pointing out that the rules are necessarily going to be limited in scope and impact precisely due to their limited sphere of application. Hamington’s tone is generally one of warning about such a truncation of ethics permitting “moral shortcuts” (p. 479) in the world of business, where business leaders may feel it unnecessary to worry about how their actions may impact America broadly so long as they meet their short-term goals. There is one bulwark against such potentially morally dubious activity, albeit a weak one (p. 478): the social mores which players or community members should adhere to. The truncation of ethics results, then, from the constitutive rules being highly limited in terms of application coupled with social mores being insufficient to cover all the gaps left behind. People who choose to game the COMPETITION metaphor to absolve themselves of potentially problematic practices can simply point to how they aren’t breaking the rules, which can ambiguously refer to the constitutive rules or mores depending on the needs of the moment.

During the twelfth GOP debate Trump offered a perfect example of such truncated ethics. In order to position himself as an expert on the issue of H-1B visas and other immigration control policies, Trump noted that in the course of his business dealings he has made use of such problematic policies even though he knew he shouldn’t be allowed to use we shouldn’t have it because of the negative impact on American
workers. As he began to transition to another point, a reaction can be heard in the audience which Trump attends to. Though the content of the reaction is not discernible, Trump acted as if it was some form of negative appraisal or censure of his behavior. In defending his position, Trump simply claimed that his status as a businessman requires him to use whatever laws are on the books, regardless of any violation of social mores which that might entail. It is likely that Trump knew or at the least could appreciate that such policies disadvantage American workers and he made use of them anyways. And yet, in denying personal accountability to such social mores for his actions he was met with some applause and cheers.

(Trump, GOP Debate 12)

While Hamington’s concern about COMPETITION was primarily directed toward how business leaders or ethicists may extend its potential too far, here we see Trump acting out such truncated ethics and a portion of this particular audience being inclined to excuse his behaviors precisely because that is just how one has to do business. By
describing his actions as excusable, and gaining audience absolution through applause, Trump was able to shift the focus back onto the laws themselves as being the problem for just *sitting there waiting for you*. Consistent with an extreme understanding of the *competition* metaphor, neither the goal of doing well in business, nor the need to achieve that goal by any and all means necessary is the problem—note Trump’s self-correction that the H-1B system is not *very bad for business in in terms of uh it’s very bad for our workers* instead; rather, the problem is the fact that such a rule is made possible by the *leadership* of this nation. For Trump and those who applauded, the real *unfair[ness]* is not a business person just playing by the rules even when problematic at least by social mores, but the nature of this particular rule and its potential for abuse to disadvantage Americans in favor of workers granted visas. Any merits which H-1B-like immigration control policies may have, or ideas which the other candidates have offered to deal with them are decompeted away since *people that don’t know what they’re doing in terms of our leadership are just … leading with the chin* to failure. By juxtaposing a gaze of contempt on current leaders with the reported admiration for his ability from *Disney workers*, who know that *he’s the only one that’s gonna be able to fix it*, Trump valorized his preferred policy prescription of halting various immigration policies for a few years.

The final aspect of Trump’s Decompetitive worldview relates to Hamington’s final concern, that an extreme understanding of *competition* can lead to privileging adversarial relationships. While “there is nothing inherently unethical about adversarial relationships” (Hamington 2009:480), at least within a more neutral use or understanding of *competition*, an extreme understanding begets an Us versus Them mentality (Shields and Bredemeier 2011): Us deserving of victory and respect; Them undeserving of either, and perhaps deserving defeat and disrespect. Coupled
with compartmentalized morality, truncated ethics, and teleopathy, this aggressively adversarial conceptualization can lead to the adoption of morally questionable behavior either because it helps one keep up with or defeat a better competitor, or because the other side did it first therefore it is necessary to follow suit (2009:481) by e.g. engaging in waterboarding or targeting non-combatant family members in order “to be able to fight, on at least somewhat of an equal footing [against...] ISIS” (Trump Example 5.13). Traces of this use of adversarial relations to absolve morally dubious actions are also present in previous examples. In Example 5.3, Trump claimed that ISIS is the real adversary he must face and will “knock the hell out of”, not the imagined women of his past comments that have been “[mis]understood” and he would prefer not be talked about. More subtly in Example 5.4, Trump noted that his hiring of H-1B visa workers was simply a matter of course because no other business people seem willing to resist what is “sitting there waiting for” them so he is obliged to use the laws as well to remain competitive against them.

5.3 Economy and international trade

Given the analytical decision to focus on Trump’s Decompetitive FoR, a discussion of his ideological interpretation of the economy will not focus solely on GROWTH metaphors. Supporting this decision is the fact that only once in the primary season data set did Trump actually talk about the economy using GROWTH, discussed in this section, but embedded within his Decompetitive framing.\(^2\) Though there are no explicit lexical items in the following example which seem to invoke the DECOMPETITION domain like “fight” or “win”, other indicators of the extreme understandings

\(^2\)In the general election data set he used GROWTH three times, each with respect to the rate at which the gross domestic product or economy as a whole should change.
which I have argued are typical of a Decompetitive FoR are present. Throughout
the following debate answer, Trump decompeted his ideological interpretations and
policy prescriptions by valorizing his ideas as making our economy strong again as
opposed to our current dying state caused by the government which has no idea what
they’re doing or saying, as they’ve proven very well. These are the same types of
people who have no chance of getting elected regardless of whether they can manage
to accomplish their bad policy prescriptions or not.

Trump’s Decompetitive framing of the economy has to do with zero-sum, win-loss
thinking as indicated by other nations taking our jobs. They are taking our wealth
which supposedly rightfully belong to us and which Trump will bring ... back. This
ideological interpretation that there are a finite number of jobs and amount of wealth
which can be illicitly taken, and which are inherently ours to lose possession of, is
predicated on a Decompetitive understanding that there is a pre-specified certainty of
outcome (Shields and Bredemeier 2011:35) which has been violated. “Lose” is a poly-
semous verb, and the sense generally activated in Trump’s construction that workers
are losing their jobs, and you’re gonna lose yours would be interpreted along the
lines of “to no longer possess what one once had”, as opposed to the sense one might
expect in a competition metaphor, along the lines of “to be defeated”. However,
within a decomposition metaphor there is some conceptual slippage between these
two senses due to the pre-specified certainty of outcome, namely our victory, such
that a loss or defeat can be interpreted as losing possession of what should rightfully
have been won. Just as a decompetitive athlete might claim an opponent or official
robbed them of points or a game that should have rightfully been theirs, so too does
Trump argue that other nations are “stealing our companies and our jobs”, to use his
turn of phrase from the first Presidential debate.
First of all, the when you say I’m the only candidate, if you listen to the Democrats they wanna do many things to Social Security. And, I wanna do them on its own merit. You listen to them, what they wanna do to Social Security, none of these folks are getting elected, OK whether they can do it or not. I’m gonna save Social Security. I’m gonna bring jobs back from China. I’m gonna bring jobs back from Mexico and from Japan, where they’re all every country throughout the world now Vietnam, that’s the new one. They are taking our jobs. They are taking our wealth. They are taking our base. And you and I have had this discussion. We’re going to make our economy strong again. I’m lowering taxes. We have two and a half trillion dollars offshore we have two and a half trillion that I think is actually five trillion because the government has no idea when they say two and a half they have no idea what they’re doing or saying, as they’ve proven very well. We’re gonna bring that money back. You take a look at what happened just this week. China bought the Chicago Stock Exchange, China, a Chinese company. % Carrier is moving to Mexico, air conditioning company. Not only the ones I talk about all the time, Nabisco, and Ford and they’re they’re all moving out. We have an economy that last quarter, (BELL RINGING) GDP didn’t grow [STRASSEL: Can I just] it was flat. We have to make our economy grow again. We’re dying. This country is dying. And our workers are losing their jobs, and you’re gonna lose your Soc- [STRASSEL: But in terms of] I’m the only one who gonna save Social Security believe me.  

(Trump, GOP Debate 9)

Trump’s advocation for tax cuts rested on the following ideological paradigm: reducing taxes will make our economy strong again and shift the balance of competition, which in turn allows us to win back the wealth, jobs, and base that have been stolen. The zero-sum supply of wealth and jobs in the world is “conserve[d]” (Trump GOP debate 8), just reallocated to their rightful owners. Competitively, this is a win for America which corrects the losses we have endured to other nations. Though in-country this appears to be a win-win, since capital, labor, and consumer all share in the victory, there are still other nations losing to us. This adversarial relationship leading to our victory and their loss is the crux of Trump’s zero-sum thinking which likely resonated with voters who use “folk economics” (Rubin 2003) to make sense of the economy.
Rubin defines “folk economics” as a form of zero-sum economic thinking (see Swedberg 2018 also with respect to Trump’s campaign); this non-academic understanding which many people rely on for their intuitions about economic issues is concerned with wealth allocation or distribution, particularly the person’s own, rather than gross production of the entire global economic system (2003:157). Rubin links this individual person’s desire to maximize their own wealth as indicative of or predicated upon zero-sum thinking, one reflex of this link being the perception that labor or jobs, being tradable goods, are a fixed commodity that one naturally loses at another’s gain. The zero-sum, win-loss thinking underlying “folk economics” stands in opposition to the positive-sum, win-win interactions which economists theorize drive the economy (McCloskey 1995; Rubin 2003). Note the parallel with the difference in views of the intuitively or culturally more obvious DECOMPETITION for winning at any and all costs and the less obvious COMPETITION for fun or mutual engagement (Cudd 2007:§3). Though the zero-sum thinking of “folk economics” may be considered problematic by economic theorists who view the win-win scenario as more explanatory, such thinking is not without precedent given one of the other central economic metaphors: LIVING ORGANISM (Alejo 2010; Cardini 2014; Charteris-Black 2004; White 2003); eternal life and unending expansive growth, without occasional bouts of sickness or injury are not something we are accustomed to LIVING ORGANISMS experiencing. Given Trump’s zero-sum thinking about the economy, it is perhaps unsurprising that he is the only candidate to have used the GROWTH metaphor with its natural end state of dying. While I am unsure that Trump’s zero-sum thinking about the economy is preferable, his willingness to talk about the economy and its potential for death is definitely notable as it seems to fly against most of the literature
on the ECONOMY IS A LIVING ORGANISM metaphor.\(^3\)

Much like the other Republican candidates, Trump offered an ideological construct of an Individual as Figure, but rather than positing a good economic outcome for those who orient themselves appropriately to the fixed bearing of Economic Supremacy, Trump locates them in the Ground of economic defeat *you’re gonna lose your [job]* at the hands of government officials *who have no idea what they’re doing*. While this sounds like Sanders’ (Example 4.1) interpretation of the problem with trade and job loss in certain respects, one big difference is that Sanders viewed the problem as related to workers in various nations being forced to compete with one another based on wage levels, while Trump seems to view the problem as COMPETITION between nations for companies, jobs, and wealth, sounding more in line with Santorum (Example 4.2) and Rubio (Example 4.3).

Trump’s ideological interpretation of the nature of the economy also differed from his fellow Republican candidates, not simply because he used the completely different DECOMPETITION metaphor and upended one of the most standard views of the LIVING ORGANISM metaphor. As demonstrated in Chapter 3, each party has a network of metaphors which come together to structure their ideological interpretation of the economy, with some like ECONOMY IS A LIVING ORGANISM crossing party lines but being activated through different cross-domain mappings in accordance with each parties’ preferred FoR. The more Republican understanding of the economy, regardless of metaphors chosen, is as a reified, autonomous, Individual entity responsible for its own GROWTH. Their ideological interpretation, rooted in those extra-human origins, defocuses people in their day-to-day dealings with one another as a means to obscure

\(^3\)When the economy is in trouble other source domains such as OBJECT, MACHINE (see §3.3.1), or NATURAL DISASTER tend to be used (Cardini 2014).
the actions of business leaders and perhaps their own policies, which themselves may harm American workers, in service of “treat[ing money] more kindly” (Christie Example 3.1) to “give confidence to the job creators” (Kasich Example 3.5), and prevent us from “hat[ing] the rich” (Kasich Example 3.13).

Trump’s ideological interpretation seems more of a nuts-and-bolts variety, where workers, jobs, corporations, and wealth are understood as resources which nations COMPETE over in order to have strong economies, seeming more inline with the Democratic candidates’ interdependent ecosystem model (O’Malley Example 3.4), with an added twist of predator nations stealing what is rightfully ours. Rather than taking a more localized perspective of the workers themselves as a Conjoint understanding would privilege, except noting the impact of losing their jobs though due to other’s actions, Trump keeps an intermediate bird’s-eye view—not so high up as the Republican candidates where they only see the reified forest of the economy, but not so low that he can’t see the forest for the trees themselves. And, rather than blaming only fiscal policies, or politicians for that matter, for the condition of our economy as the other Republican candidates were generally wont to do, Trump admonished corporations for moving out of America and contributing to our country . . . dying. While these mentions are more targeted than Sanders’ frequent censure of business leaders broadly via “millionaires”, “billionaires”, or “the top one percent”, the general tone is that corporations which gain their success at the expense of the whole American economy can be held accountable for their actions.

Trump’s willingness to censure some corporations for doing what they have to in service of their goal of being successful may at first blush seem a violation of his own Decompetitive worldview, where teleopathy, compartmentalized morality, and truncated ethics permit business leaders to pursue their goals by any and all means
necessary, a defense Trump himself used throughout his campaign to justify his own breeches of economic patriotism (Example 5.4), if you will. A few pathways that might explain away such a seeming violation include: Trump is only doing any and all things necessary in order to win the election; compartmentalized morality lets him claim that his actions are totally justifiable while those corporations’ actions aren’t; or the presented goal here of making the entire American economy strong permits a contempt for those subverting that goal. The most likely absolution may be Trump’s ideological interpretation here that America is in an extreme adversarial relationship with every country throughout the world, and corporations that are working with the enemy can be called out as traitors. This apparent flexibility in the Decompetitive FoR may stem from the fact that it only has two mutually entailing Grounds serving as valid reference points, victory and defeat; so long as those two are kept in some semblance of focus while justifying a given ideological interpretation or policy prescription, any and all things go.

Breaking from economic theory and following the LIVING ORGANISM metaphor to its natural conclusion, Trump positioned himself outside of the political mainstream. Though Trump’s policy prescription to lower taxes to strengthen our economy is one typically associated with Republican candidates, his willingness to censure corporations for their business decisions is less so. But, his use of “folk economic” theory to blame foreign governments for luring our corporations into treachery and our government for failing to prevent them from leaving may have sufficed to attract voters who fear for their own economic livelihood, which they may also believe they have little control over despite the frequent assertions that they alone control their human worth is production value made by Republicans.

Clinton took an opportunity in her second turn during her first debate with Trump
to note that they had different experiences growing up which have led them to take different perspectives on what’s best for the economy. But, given Trump’s ideological interpretation of the economy that has traces of interdependence in the way that the other Republican candidates generally did not, many of the points she made against Trump’s economic thinking likely had less force than she had hoped. Where her perspective did differ is the lack of a zero-sum heuristic (Burleigh 2016) of gains and losses, which is indicated in her use of the living organism metaphor with its more typical unending win-win ability to grow and produce jobs and rising incomes. Given Trump’s frequent dire predictions about our “dying” economy (Example 5.5), Clinton’s ideological interpretation of consistent growth may have come off as overly optimistic and her policy prescriptions of investing in you, your education, your skills, your future as insufficient to beat back other countries for the jobs they have stolen.

(5.6) Well I think that trade is an important issue of course we are five percent of the world’s population we have to trade with the other ninety five percent. And we need to have smart fair trade deals. We also though need to have a tax system that rewards work, and not just financial transactions. And the kind of plan that Donald has put forth would be trickle down economics all over again in fact it would be the most extreme version the biggest tax cuts for uh the top percent of the people in this country than we’ve ever had. I call it trumped up trickle down because that’s exactly what it would be. That is not how we grow the economy. W- we just have a different view, about what’s best for growing the economy, how we make investments that will actually produce jobs and rising incomes. I think we come at it from somewhat different perspectives. Uh I understand that. Y’know Donald uh was very fortunate in his life and that’s all to his benefit. Uh he started his business with fourteen million dollars borrowed from his father. And he really believes that, the more you help wealthy people the better off we’ll be, and that everything will work out from there. I don’t buy that. I have a different experience my father was a small businessman he worked really hard he printed drapery fabrics on, long tables where he pulled out those, fabrics and he went down with a silkscreen, and dumped the paint in, and took the squeegee, and kept going. And so what I believe is the more we can do for the middle class, the more we can
invest in you, your education, your skills, your future, the better we will be off, and the better we’ll grow, that’s the kind of economy I want us to see again.

(Clinton, PRES Debate 1)

Recycling her ideological interpretation about the reciprocal nature of trade in the interdependent economic system from the primary season (Example 4.4), Clinton was unable to lay some of the blame for America’s economic problems at the feet of other nations. Instead, Clinton argued against Trump’s overall economic message as *trumped up trickle down*, a form of supply side tax policy which posits economic growth is achieved through tax cuts for owners of capital at an initial cost of reduced tax revenues and diminished services, initially seeming a win-loss, which advocates claim eventually even out to something more win-win. Later in the same debate she offered a more pointed formulation of the win-loss understanding of *trumped up trickle down* as giving “more advantages for people at the very top” at the expense of “inclusive growth” for everyone else. While her argument presupposed that trickle down is a zero-sum policy, where the benefits paid to the wealthy are assumed as being at the expense of everyone else, she actually failed to argue against Trump’s actual zero-sum form of thinking, namely America’s internal win-win through victory over other nations. Clinton’s claim that *he really believes that, the more you help wealthy people the better off we’ll be, and that everything will work from there* still presupposed the eventual win-win scenario of current economic theory since everyone gets something: *help* for the wealthy, and the rest of us, including *the other ninety five percent* of the world, being *better off*. While she may have hoped her message would resonate with voters as an indictment of Trump’s flawed economic thinking, she simply reframed her own type of win-win thinking with a flawed recapitulation of his thinking also in win-win terms. Her message may have sounded more reasonable
with its focus on the middle class and more jobs and rising incomes, but overall she did not speak the “folk economic” language which many people use to intuit how the economy works.

5.4 Justice: Rights and rule of law

Zero-sum thinking arises not only from situations of, or beliefs about resource scarcity—where people may feel there is not enough of something to go around for everyone, but also from situations where people feel they have the proper understanding of how resources should be allocated—where there may or may not be plenty to go around but where some people feel they know who deserves what amount, known as a resource entitlement belief (Burleigh 2016). Resource entitlement beliefs set a particular amount of a given resource as a reference point from which the allocation of the resource becomes imbued with meaning; this resource as reference point is understood as a comparison point or threshold which separates the evaluation of the distribution of resources “into regions of desirable outcomes (gains) and undesirable ones (losses)” (Kahneman 1992:296). This use of “reference point” is not dissimilar from the one adopted in this dissertation, as a semantic parameter used to generate search domains where ideological assessments can take place. Resource entitlement beliefs become zero-sum when the believer sets the reference point in such a way that they feel they have an exclusive or outsized right to a given amount; any amount less than this arbitrarily set reference point is viewed as a loss to the believer and an ill-gotten gain to everyone else. This can more readily occur when a resource is perceived as self-evidently fixed or finite as demonstrated in Example 5.5 as Trump framed that our “economy” and “country is dying”, in part because other countries are “taking” the “jobs” and “wealth” which he constructs as self-evidently “ours”.
Resource entitlement beliefs act as a scalar value judgement that centers around an arbitrary reference point (Burleigh 2016) which links zero-sum thinking into our understanding of balance in its moral or legal sense (Johnson 1987): the reference point, whether finite in actuality per resource scarcity or more arbitrarily set with respect to resource entitlement, coupled with the judgments regarding the proper allocation of said resources describe a form of desirable or pre-determined equilibrium (p. 86-8). Whether that equilibrium is an equal or “fair” distribution is not the point; rather, the system itself becomes imbued with meaning as requiring a particular distribution of resources to be properly balanced. Some may argue that zero-sum thinking cannot be a form of balance since it seems by nature to be advantageous to some at the expense of others, but that is simply to note that zero-sum thinking may be (inherently) imbalanced, which necessarily relies on our sense of balance to begin with. My line of reasoning is warranted in this section given that the discussion will turn around non-tangible resources like law, order, safety, and legal rights and their allocation to various groups of people, and also given that a balance based understanding of politics and moral judgements is not unprecedented (Johnson 1987; Lakoff 2002), though the zero-sum aspect seems novel. In certain respects, this section lays out an ideological belief resembling Rubin’s (2003) “folk economics” akin to “folk justice”, also being based on zero-sum thinking.

Our abstract understanding of balance is mapped into our legal / moral and mathematical systems (Johnson 1987:90-95). For the former we talk about the scales of justice and making sure the punishment fits the crime (see Clinton Example 5.9), being neither too lenient nor too strict; for the latter, mathematical equality is a balancing operation where any changes occurring on one side of an equals sign must be changed on the other to maintain the equal nature of an equation. While
Johnson pointed out that these two systems often become connected, generating moral calculations in the form of cost-benefit analyses to determine the best course of action in society based on the attendant costs, Lakoff (2002:Ch. 4) expanded this idea into a full fledged metaphorical system of MORALITY IS ACCOUNTING. In MORALITY IS ACCOUNTING, gains and losses of moral action must be tracked, but ACCOUNTING as a source domain may have had unintended analytical consequences, assuming that these gains and losses should eventually equal out; as Lakoff noted “... it is important that the moral books be balanced” (p. 46). As I will demonstrate, this BALANCE of moral action need not necessarily be equal, rather simply balanced with respect to an arbitrary reference point deemed as fair (Trump Example 5.7).

Due to the structural complexity of the discussion regarding Trump’s understanding of law and order during the first Presidential debate—occurring over a series of lengthy turns with the moderator Lester Holt—it is prudent to begin with Trump’s final comment, analyzed in Example 5.7. This particular turn of the debate more concisely encapsulates the resource entitlement belief I argue underlies his policy prescription to continue and expand the use of “stop and frisk” (Example 5.8), an NYPD practice which at present has been deemed unconstitutional—a point which both Holt and Trump addressed before this particular turn in the debate (not reprinted here)—for violating the Fourth and Fourteenth amendments due to its disparate racial outcome (Floyd, et al. v. the City of New York, et al.).

Over the course of this whole debate discussion, I argue, Trump advocated for continuing and expanding stop and frisk through a zero-sum resource entitlement belief,

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4Trump’s use of “stop and frisk” with its specific social and legal baggage, as opposed to the more general Terry stop which is constitutional (Terry v. Ohio) and from which it derives, merits this line of discussion. Note also that the Floyd decision may yet be appealed.
setting the reference point as the safety or protection of all Americans which permits a value judgement about the allocation of constitutional rights, namely an abrogation of a few rights for some Americans, whether warranted or not, in order to secure all rights to those who deserve them more. Trump’s argument is indicative of a form of zero-sum thinking found in some conservative writings: “societal compassion”—or even justice as it appears here in Trump’s argument—is in finite supply (Cole 2007:33).

Trump punctuated this lengthy debate exchange with the claim that failing to secure law and order through the expansion of stop and frisk is unfair to people living in our inner cities. Trump’s use of unfair is in part motivated by his preceding turn in the debate (not reprinted here) that stop and frisk was wrongly found unconstitutional by “a judge who was a very against police judge” in Floyd. What is thus unfair in Trump’s estimation is not the policy of stop and frisk itself, with its adjudged disparate racial impact and abridgment of constitutional rights, rather its biased removal as a policing tool, one that he believes can help and has helped restore law and order, regardless of its questioned constitutionality. What would be fair treatment, then, is to restore stop and frisk in order to “bring back law and order” (Example 5.8).

(5.7) ... But we need Lester. We need law and order. And we need law and order, in the inner cities, because the people that are most affected by what’s happening are African-American and Hispanic people and it’s very unfair to them what our politicians are allowing to happen.

(Trump, PRES Debate 1)

The nature of stop and frisk as being fair treatment merits additional attention. According to Lakoff (2002:60), “fairness is about the equitable distribution of objects of value (either positive or negative value) according to some accepted standard.” With respect to the discussion of zero-sum resource entitlement beliefs and balance:
objects of positive value or desirable outcomes (Kahneman 1992) indicated in Trump’s argument include explicitly *law and order* and implicitly the rights and safety it secures for all Americans; objects of negative value or undesirable outcomes include explicitly the “living ... hell” of “our inner cities” (Example 5.8) and implicitly the abrogation of some constitutional rights to those rightly or wrongly being stopped and frisked. “[S]ome accepted standard” would be the arbitrary reference point of Trump’s assessment that *we need law and order* as only he understands it (see his use of rhetorical erasure during the first turn of this exchange in Example 5.8). The *fair* treatment Trump is advocating for is thus an (in)equitable distribution of safety and rights for some Americans to restore law and order for all. One model of fairness which seems applicable in this context is “Need-based fairness (the more you need, the more you have a right to)” (Lakoff 2002:60), perhaps better phrased with respect to this resource entitlement belief as “the more law and order all Americans need, the fewer constitutional rights some have a right to”.

At the outset of his argument, Trump decompeted his ideological position by engaging in a form of rhetorical erasure (see §4.4) as he criticized Clinton for not *want[ing] to use, a couple of words and that’s law and order*, arguing that her lack of desire to say the right *words* amounts to an obstruction of the policy prescriptions he has to offer, making them appear as self-evidently obvious means (Bowskill and colleagues 2007) to assure that we still *have a country*, namely *stop and frisk ... which worked very well in New York [City]*. Unlike Pataki’s (Example 4.13) or Cruz’s (Example 4.14) doxic uses of rhetorical erasure which flattened the complexity of violent action, both state and non-, in an effort to obscure the problematic uses of state power against people, Trump advocated for an increase of state power being exercised against some American citizens in service of the teleopathic goal of saving
our country from the living ... hell of a war torn country it has become. What Trump seems to be erasing here is the constitutionally dubious nature of stop and frisk, which Holt later calls him out on, but also his own credibility issues to make claims about fastidiously following the rule of law given his own socially or morally dubious run-ins with bankruptcy and H-1B visa laws (Example 5.4) in the past.

Recall how Cruz’s (Example 4.14) admonishment to use “all lives matter” doxically presupposed the proper orientation of the America with respect to the fixed bearing of Rule of Law by rendering undiscussable the other possible order of Black Lives Matter, which claims state power has been improperly exercised against some of its citizens. Here, Trump described in vivid terms that we have to bring back law and order to stem the tide of thousands of deaths in Chicago and to protect our inner cities which are being decimated by crime, by expanding the use of stop and frisk. Rather than obscuring problematic state action behind the mask of an unbiased, fair, and impartial Rule of Law fixed bearing as is possible in an Absolute FoR with its extra-human origins of the social order, Trump acknowledges the arbitrary nature of his policy prescription since we have to be very strong ... [and] vigilant and know what we’re doing as we bring back law and order, through “fair” (Example 5.7) if unconstitutional means.

(5.8) Well first of all Secretary Clinton, doesn’t want to use, a couple of words and that’s law and order. And we need law and order. If we don’t have it, we’re not gonna have a country. And when I look at what’s going on in Charlotte a city I love, a city where I have investments, when I look at what’s going on throughout various parts of our country whether it’s I mean I can just keep naming them all day long. We need law and order in our country. [NI] And I just got today uh the as you know the endorsement of the Fraternal Order of Police we just uh just came in. Uh we have endorsements from I think almost every police group very I mean a large percentage of them in the United States. Uh we have, a situation where we have uh our inner cities, African Americans Hispanics, are living in hell because it’s so dangerous. You walk down the street you get shot. In Chicago they’ve had thousands of shootings
thousands since January first. Thousands of shootings. And I’m saying where is this. Is this a war torn country, what are we doing? And we have to stop the violence. We have to bring back law and order. In a place like Chicago where thousands of people have been killed thousands over the last number of years. Fact almost four thousand have been killed since Barack Obama became president over four almost four thousand people in Chicago have been killed. We have to bring back law and order. Now whether or not in a place like Chicago you do stop and frisk which worked very well Mayor Giuliani is here worked very well in New York. It brought the crime rate way down. But you take the gun away from criminals that shouldn’t be having it. We have gangs roaming the street. And in many cases they’re illegally here illegal immigrants. And they have guns. And they shoot people. And we have to be very strong. And we have to be very vigilant. We have to be we have to know what we’re doing. Right now our police in many cases are afraid to do anything. We have to protect our inner cities because African American communities are being decimated [HOLT: Your] by crime, decimated.

(Trump, PRES Debate 1)

If Trump were advocating to use stop and frisk across all corners of the nation, with a heightened vigilance of reasonable suspicion being cast on all people at all times so as to avoid the disparate outcome found in Floyd, I would not be following the resource entitlement belief line of argument. But, Trump justifies his argument by pointing to places like Chicago, our inner cities, and where gangs are roaming the streets as opposed to also arguing for its increased use in e.g. small towns in New Hampshire where heroin is “poisoning the blood of their youth” (PRES debate 3), subjecting all of New Hampshire’s “youth” to an increase in vigilant reasonable suspicion in order to find the drugs only some of them are using to “poison” themselves.

A counterargument could be that Trump was offering a policy prescription with regard to applying additional police scrutiny where there is greater incidences of crime needing prevention; but, this only changes the resource entitlement thinking from the idea of finite social justice to an allocation of finite state resources, a common twist taken by conservative writers who also claim that the former is in far shorter supply
than the latter (Cole 2007) as they advocate for their ideological interpretations and policy prescriptions. Such a counterargument may be even more problematic given that Trump is advocating for a policy prescription while keeping an eye out for his *investments* in addition to the more noble goal of reducing crime; people wanting to, and investing money in these *war torn* areas of the country are equally or perhaps more deserving, than are people who are *get[ting] shot*, of an expenditure of finite state resources at the expense of some citizens’ constitutional rights in order to protect their investments in the form of increased *vigilant* reasonable suspicion of those not making such investments.

My counter counterargument, that Trump’s zero-sum thinking with respect to finite state resources still tips in favor of the right category of American, is also not without precedent given Trump’s campaign as he often spoke of taking advantage of American laws, whether for bankruptcy (GOP debate 1, 2, 3, and 9; and just previous to this comment in PRES debate 1) or visas (GOP debate 11 and Example 5.4 in 12). Yes, his uses of the bankruptcy and H-1B visa laws were legal, if only socially or morally suspect to some sectors of the electorate. Either way, by claiming we need *law and order* despite the problematic optics of stop and frisk and his own behavior, Trump games the socio-political system for its “partially tolerated restraints” (Shields and Bredemeier 2011:35): advocating for some people, who have committed no actual crimes but were simply in the wrong place at the wrong time to arouse reasonable suspicion, to tolerate an abridgment of their constitutional rights so that we can *have a country* again; while also asking Americans to tolerate the lawful actions of business people like himself, who also have committed no actual crimes but simply appear to have affronted American economic mores, because they are only trying to make America economically strong. To put it more directly, white collar non-
criminals and the police [who should no longer be] ... afraid to do anything do not deserve suspicion of their motives, but inner city non-criminals should welcome such “fair” (Example 5.7) treatment from their government.

While that may sound crude, such an analysis is also grounded in Trump’s Decompetitive framing and the contempt it can generate. Two other reflexes of the contempt which can arise in extreme understandings of competition include: aggression to root out the weak; and paternalism, where “we want to ‘take care’ of those ‘poor creatures’” (Tännsjö 1998:27). For the former, emboldening the police to not be afraid to do anything and to bring back law and order will remove the criminal elements which can make investing in our cities risky. For the latter, it is only fair to “take care” of those people in these communities that are living in a hell they cannot seem to fix on their own since they keep bringing lawsuits like Floyd to their own detriment. As Trump asked of African-Americans, “the Latino Americans the Hispanic Americans ... [living in] the inner cities ... what do you have to lose? It can’t get any worse” (PRES debate 2).

Offering his position through the resource entitlement of “folk justice”, Trump spoke to people’s concern for their own safety. By highlighting an endemic need to bring back law and order in America while erasing the constitutional questions of stop and frisk, Trump was able to argue for a position that some voters who privilege strict adherence to constitutional rights might find problematic, assuring them their safety by any and all means necessary. Within his Decompetitive framing, Trump rendered other possible orders as contemptible, both the indiscriminate adherence to constitutional rights which permits some people to continue decimating parts of the country, and those which would “unfair[ly]” (Example 5.7) prevent the use of such policies leaving police ... afraid to do anything and consigning some Americans to
When given a chance to respond to Trump’s argument in the same debate, Clinton pushed back against his attempt at rhetorical erasure; for Clinton we cannot just say law and order as a means to justify continued or expanded use of stop and frisk, let alone the other disparate impacts some policies and their enforcement have had on some Americans. Unlike Trump who based his argument on a zero-sum resource entitlement belief to secure safety for all at the expense of some people’s constitutional rights, Clinton advocated for keep[ing] people safe while addressing the problems and unintended consequences that have resulted in a series of imbalances in our justice system where we have put too many people away for too long for doing too little, disproportionately impacting African American and Latino men. Consistent with the Conjoint FoR’s understanding of the socio-political landscape as the interdependent actions of people enmeshed in the systems that they create, Clinton did not simply absolve criminals for their actions or ignore the need for law and order, nor did she render the criminal justice system blameless for its imbalanced treatment of some citizens. Rather, she advocated for policy prescriptions like criminal justice reforms and comprehensive background checks for gun purchases as a means to keep the crime rate from creep[ing] back up.

(5.9) Well, I I’ve heard um I’ve heard Donald say this um at his rallies and, it’s it’s really unfortunate that he paints such a dire, negative picture of black communities in our country. [TRUMP: Ugh.] Y’know the vibrancy of the black church the, black businesses that employ so many people, uh the opportunities that so many families are working to provide for their kids. Uh % there’s a lot that we should be proud of and we should be supporting and lifting up. But we do always have to make sure we keep people safe. There are the right ways of doing it and then there are ways that are ineffective. Stop and frisk was found to be unconstitutional. And in part because it was ineffective. It did not do what it needed to do. Now I believe in community policing. And in fact violent crime is one half of what it was in nineteen ninety one, property crime is down forty percent. We just don’t wanna see it
We’ve had twenty five years of very good cooperation but there were some problems, some unintended consequences. Too many young African American and Latino men ended up in jail for nonviolent offenses. And it’s just a fact that if you’re a young African American man, and you do the same thing as a young white man, you are more likely to be arrested, charged, convicted, and incarcerated. So we’ve got to address the systemic racism in our criminal justice system. We cannot just say law and order. We have to say we we have to come forward with a plan that is going to divert people from the criminal justice system, deal with mandatory minimum sentences which have put too many people away for too long for doing too little. We need to have more second chance programs. I’m glad that we’re ending private prisons in the federal system, I want to see them ended in the state system. You shouldn’t have a profit motivation to fill prison cells with young Americans. So there are some positive ways we can work on this. And I, believe strongly that commonsense gun, safety measures would assist us right now. And this is something Donald has supported along with the gun lobby right now, we’ve got too many military style weapons on the streets. In a lot of places our police are outgunned. We need comprehensive background checks, and we need to keep guns out of the hands of those who will do harm, and we finally need to pass a prohibition on anyone who’s on the terrorist watch list from being able to buy a gun in our country if you’re too dangerous to fly, you are too dangerous to buy a gun. So there are things we can do and we ought to do it in a bipartisan way.

(Clinton, PRES Debate 1)

Clinton’s argument in part rests on correcting various IMBALANCES to restore a proper equilibrium without relying on zero-sum thinking, following more in line with Johnson (1987) and Lakoff (2002). Clinton advocated to address minimum sentencing laws so that punishments more appropriately fit the crimes for everyone, but also so that disparate racial impacts in sentencing can be avoided. Her call for commonsense gun, safety measures should help our police no longer be outgunned. Even her desire to remove profit motivation from the prison system can be seen as addressing an imbalance that weighs the lives of young Americans in terms of a return on investment for the prison-industrial complex.

However, the proper equilibrium that Clinton argued should be restored was not
without its own problems. Generically, her advocacy for keep[ing] people safe is laudable, but rather than leaving it in the abstract as Trump did, she brought numbers into the mix. Noting that various crimes have gone down by various percentages since the 1990s sounds excellent on its face, but rather than arguing for how to continue or improve that downward trend, she offered the goal of keeping it from creep[ing] back up. This may have been a realist sentiment that there will always be some crime or an inference that criminal justice reform and rehabilitation programs can inhibit additional crimes being committed by nonviolent offenders who become hardened by the system. In essence, however, her argument became a lose-lose scenario; if the crime rate goes back up we all suffer an additional lack of safety, even if the rate stays the same everyone still loses because our safety has not increased. Trump’s zero-sum thinking, while problematic given its “undesirable [outcomes] (losses)” (Kahneman 1992:296; brackets mine) for some Americans, still may have resonated better amongst the electorate given the presence of a win condition for most other Americans.

5.5 Immigration

Trump’s strategy of speaking to voters through “folk” knowledges and as spectators of a competition helped him differentiate himself from the other candidates. Compared to the Republican candidates whose Absolute FoR structured how voters should understand and make sense of America and to the Democratic candidates whose Conjoint FoR offers multiple perspectives for voters to see through and empathize with, Trump instead cued voters how to feel as they made sense out of his ideological worldview. From the outset of his campaign, Trump activated anger and contempt for politicians and other nations as well as self-contempt in voters whenever other nations are laughing at us at our stupidity; but, he also offered voters thrills for the
victories we would achieve again and admiration for their strength in being the right kind of people. Within the first few minutes of his candidacy announcement Trump used decompetition metaphors to allow voters to lament how other nations beat us on trade, and also how Mexico defeats us at the border both economically and in terms of immigration. But, he also offered them positive feelings when he called them the best and finest sort of people as compared to the rapists and other criminals that Mexico dump[s] on our country. Much like the discussion in the preceding sections, Trump spoke in zero-sum terms to arouse voter’s concern for their safety and economic livelihood, offering a path through “folk immigration” for voters to follow to see the validity of his policy prescription that “We need the wall” (Trump PRES debate 6), even if they might not want to believe so.

Unlike watching a competition in real time where the coupled value judgement of admiration for success and contempt for loss can occur simultaneously at the moment of victory, a rhetorical presentation of admiration and contempt has to occur over time. Just like a narrated sports broadcast creates and releases tension by describing the achievement of a team in scoring a goal accompanied by how the other team failed to defend, Trump would often juxtapose admiration for self and contempt for self and other as a means to keep the spectators in his corner. Too much contempt and voters might perceive Trump as nothing but doom and gloom; too much admiration and they might feel put-on. In this early section of his candidacy announcement speech, Trump set the stage as America under siege by the Mexican government, casting his present audience as the finest, who are being subjected to an onslaught of criminals, and who are all too aware of the self-evidently obvious common sens/ical problem which the American government is too stupid to prevent.

(5.10) When do we beat Mexico at the border? They’re laughing at us at our stupidity. And now they are beating us economically. They are not our friend,
believe me, but they are killing us economically. The US has become a dumping ground for everybody else’s problems. [AUDIENCE: That’s why we need you. Yeah!] (APPLAUSE) Thank you. It’s true. And these are the best and the finest. When Mexico sends its people, they’re not sending their best. They’re not sending you. They’re not sending you. They’re sending people that have lots of problems, and they’re bringing those problems with us [sic]. They’re bringing drugs, they’re bringing crime, they’re rapists, and some, I assume are good people. But I speak to border guards and they tell us what we’re getting. And it only makes common sense. It only makes common sense. They’re sending us not the right people it’s coming from more than Mexico.

(Trump, 06/16/15; brackets mine)

The gaze Trump turned toward those not the right people does have overtones of anger. Trump’s displeasure at the drugs and crime they bring can come off as a matter-of-fact statement describing practices which are worthy of censure and change. His comment that they’re rapists starts leading toward an offering of contempt, which Trump himself may have sensed at the moment of speaking. His hedging that some, I assume are good people may have been an attempt to mitigate some of the potential negativity of his string of descriptions; he was not condemning all immigrants as criminals and rapists after all, only most of them. The hedge may also have offered him the ability to argue later, as he often did like in Example 5.3, that people did not “understand what was said” since he did not claim that all Mexican immigrants are bad because he clearly said some … are good people. What is true about all of them, apparently, is that none of them have any personal motivation to come to America, simply being dumped like dirt (Lizardo 2012; Santa Ana 1999) or pollution (Cisneros 2008) onto America so that Mexico no longer has to deal with their problems. By erasing the immigrants’ volition or agency, Trump stripped them of most of their humanity, which, coupled with his negative appraisal of their behaviors, can be heard as cueing contempt for the electorate to take up.
Note the similarity in Trump’s argument and the process of categorization which structures much of the Republican ideological system with respect to immigration (§4.3). Much like Jindal (Example 4.5), Trump offered up two types of immigrants for consideration, though only the bad and worse kind. For Jindal and Rubio (Example 4.9), some immigrants can be understood as the good kind so long as they have the proper intent when coming in to America, either to “assimilat[e]” per Jindal or “be an American” per Rubio. These small bits of agency or intent were erased by Trump; even the non-rapist immigrants are still not coming of their own volition. While they might not be as bad as those bringing drugs and crime, they are still clearly not coming of their own accord to “be an American”. This complete erasure of intent allows Trump to “think away” (Tännsjö 1998:27) any discussion of immigration integration policies in favor of control policies designed to exclude such polluting forces from dirtying our nation. In this respect, Trump’s call to build a wall should seem as self-evident common sense; since these immigrants have no potential to integrate, the only possible response is to keep them out by any and all means necessary.

Walling off or excluding such bad characters from our “best” and “finest” is the social function one typically attempts to accomplish when acting out contempt (Fischer and Roseman 2007). As demonstrated in §4.3, the southern border in particular has taken on special significance for the Republican CoA, becoming blended with the metaphorical border between American and Non-American categories such that the strength of that physical border is indicative of the fixedness of the Ideal American category and its resistance to change (Charteris-Black 2006). Trump exploited this emergent conceptualization while pairing it with his Decompetitive ideological worldview, linking issues of immigration control policy to a general flagging of American
strength and control due to our unfair treatment of not being treated right ... [nor] properly at the hands of immigrants and other nations. Trump’s policy prescription to remedy this lack of right and proper treatment by certain immigrants and other nations is to build a wall, as a physical barrier to keep our country from being flood[ed] with the wrong sort of immigrants.

As described in the discussion of immigration (§4.3), the nation is container metaphor has a dual nature, containing land and people, or beliefs each with their attendant policy reflexes of control and integration respectively. Trump’s advocation for a wall goes beyond simply compressing America’s landmass, people, and beliefs into a unitary concept; Trump quite literally will build a wall, making manifest and actually reifying the boundary between America and Non-as a means to render the boundary between the Ideal American and Non-American categories as fixed and as inert (Smith and Katz 1993) as the very wall itself. Rather than leaving the nation and its people exposed to the physical danger of “crim[inals]” and the ideological danger of those other “not the right people” (Example 5.10) who refuse to assimilate, Trump’s wall would serve both as control policy to keep the criminals out, and integration policy by refusing entry to those “some, [he] assume[s] are good people” but are none the less bad for America.

(5.11) ... We have no border. We have no control. People are flooding across. We can’t have it. We either have a border, and I’m very strongly I’m not proposing. I will build a wall. I will build a wall. Remember this, the wall will be paid for by Mexico. We are not being treated right. (LIGHT APPLAUSE) We are not being treated properly. If we don’t have borders, if we don’t have strength, we don’t have a country. People are flowing across....

(Trump, GOP Debate 9)

By offering a physical wall as his policy prescription, Trump in certain respects gives the lie to much of the Republican candidates’ rhetoric with respect to immigration.
No border can be stronger than one with an unbroken physical fortification, so why keep arguing about how much fencing, guards, or types and numbers of visas, and so on we should have: build the wall. No ideological border between American and Non-American based on the subjective, moving goal post of assimilationist policy or rhetoric can be stronger than keeping the wrong sorts of immigrants from *flooding* in to the country: build the wall. By flattening the complexities of immigration issues to a three-dimensional wall between America and “rapists”, Trump decompeted any other possible order as a heterodoxic lack of “common sense” (Example 5.10).

Over the course of the Presidential debates, Clinton countered Trump’s ideological interpretations and policy prescriptions with respect to immigration by advocating for a mix of integration and control policies. During the third debate, she made use of multiple perspectives for voters to look through to understand her position on immigration issues while also pushing back against the types of perspectives she thinks Trump and other employers like him take on *undocumented workers*. Clinton argued against Trump’s characterization of immigrants as *rapists, and criminals and drug dealers* and instead focused on the impact *employers like Donald* can have on the economy by *underpaying* and *exploiting* undocumented workers (l. 15). For Clinton, controlling entry into the country is worthy of policy prescriptions like *border security*, but her different view than Trump’s is to *deal with immigrants* now by integrating them *into the formal economy* and get it *working*.

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(5.12) I voted for border security and there are [TRUMP: And the wall.] uh some there are some limited places where that was appropriate, there also is necessarily going to be new technology and how best to deploy that. [TRUMP: [NI]] Uh but it is clear when you look at what Donald has been proposing he started his campaign bashing immigrants calling Mexican immigrants rapists, and criminals and drug dealers. Uh that he has a very different view about what we should do to deal with immigrants. Now what I am also arguing is that bringing undocumented immigrants out from the
shadows, putting them into the formal economy, will be good because then employers can’t exploit them and undercut Americans’ wages and Donald knows a lot about this he used undocumented labor to build the Trump Tower. He underpaid undocumented workers and when they complained he basically said what a lot of employers do. You complain I’ll get you deported. I want to get everybody out of the shadows, get the economy working, and not let employers like Donald exploit undocumented workers which hurts them but also hurts American workers.

(Clinton, PRES Debate 3)

While Clinton’s use of other perspectives to locate her ideological position is appropriate within the Conjoint FoR of the Democratic CoA, her choice here to use the perspectives of employers like Donald and American workers only served to remove the agency from the immigrants themselves. Much like Sanders (Example 4.7), Clinton argued for securing legal protections for undocumented workers in America to complain about problematic treatment by their employers, an unfortunate turn of phrase which likely did not endear her to the electorate in the way Sanders’ “st[anding] up for their rights” might have. This problematic framing came about precisely because she did not offer her policy prescription through the immigrants’ perspective themselves, rather looking through the eyes of Trump and other such employers who would perceive an undocumented worker pushing back against their exploitation as complaining. Clinton attempted to generate some animus toward Trump and those employers who act like him, but doing so at the expense of the immigrants themselves likely did not help engender certain voters to align with her campaign.

Much like O’Malley (Example 4.10), Clinton also backgrounded the importance of immigration control policies such as border security likely due to the “givenness” (Smith and Katz 1993:68) of space and the fact that she had voted for it before. In her previous turn in the same debate she even argued that her “comprehensive immigration reform plan of course includes border security”, naturalizing the inclusion
of “border security” in her policy agenda with the discourse marker “of course” (Furkó 2007). O’Malley’s focus on the Republicans’ dogmatic focus on control policies at the expense of integration policies made his backgrounding of control policies somewhat necessary and effective; Clinton’s choice to focus on the viewpoints of employers at the expense of immigrants’ lived experiences while defocusing control policies, however, made it easy for Trump to accuse of her of “having a disaster with [her] open borders” in his rebuttal to her debate answer here.

Trump’s Decompetitive framing of immigration, generating thrills of victory and agonies or fears of defeat, allowed him to speak to voters in a way that differentiated his candidacy from everyone else running. By offering emotional cues of anger and contempt to voters, Trump was able to move the electorate in a way that sounded less detached or clinical, or perhaps just less political. Trump’s “folk immigration” offered a path of logic for voters to follow to assess the merits of his ideological worldview, that his wall is the only solution to the “common sense” problem of continued loss of American safety and even economic success (Example 5.10) which results from immigration.

5.6 Violent non-state action

“The war on terror” entering its sixteenth year made it a particular sticking point for the election cycle. There is a close conceptual link between the domain of war and competition where many features are shared between the two, if only to differing degrees (Shields and Bredemeier 2011), with the former being more aggressive in numerous respects. Trump’s Decompetitive framing of war naturally errs toward the decompetition semantic subspace of the competition source domain. By nature of the topic at hand, Clinton was in certain respects forced into using competition
to locate her ideological positions and, given her attempts to occupy a middle ground within the ideological space of American politics, we can see her trying to straddle the line between the **COMPETITION** and **DECOMPETITION** subspaces. However, Trump likely had an advantage in attracting voters to align to his ideological positions on war since we tend to understand it more as a **DECOMPETITION** (Shields and Bredemeier 2011).

When it comes to waging a real war, truncation of ethics inhabits a dual role—negatively when people feel freed from wider social accountability and emboldened to do whatever is necessary to win a competition (Hamington 2009), but also positively where the world at large may deem certain actions as morally or ethically out of bounds. What I am calling a positive truncation of ethics may not be present within regular **COMPETITION** because the stakes of war and sport, games, and even business are very different. In **COMPETITION**, competitors do not have to kill people to achieve the goal; in war, extensive damage can be done both to people and the planet in order to win. As such, various rules of war have been codified over time (e.g. the Geneva Conventions) to forbid the types of atrocities that have occurred in the past. In this way, some actions have been imbued with ethical considerations and found egregious enough to bar them from being performed in war. This possibility of restriction is perhaps the dividing line between **COMPETITION** and war on the one hand and **DECOMPETITION** on the other: the former still believe in ethical or moral boundaries.

A hallmark of a decompetitive attitude is a view of rules as “partially tolerated restraints” (Shields and Bredemeier 2011:35). Unlike the visa laws Trump availed himself of ambivalently in order to be a successful businessman (Example 5.4), in the following example he was quite insistent that laws which prevent *us* from torturing violent non-state actors or targeting their families are unacceptable. Trump decom-
peted this ideological position by juxtaposing the types of violent action they commit on people to excuse the morally dubious nature of similar actions which the American nation-state should be allowed to perform. Note how Trump’s rhetoric buys in to the broader discourse of “radical Islamic terrorism” (Jackson 2007; Nimmer 2011), casting violent non-state actors as religious fanatics bent on barbarism, while stripping back one of its core components: the supposed higher moral standing of western powers. For Trump and those who applauded at his desire to engage in such actions, the teleopathic goal of knock[ing] out ISIS and all of the others that are so bad, perhaps including anaphorically all those in large mosques ... all over the Middle East ... chanting death to the USA, more than warrants altering our laws in order to be able to fight, on at least somewhat of an equal footing. Rather than viewing the playing field as not level due to a higher moral standing on the part of those people and nations who abide by the Geneva Conventions, Trump offered an understanding rooted in something akin to “folk terrorism”: an unfairly imbalanced battlefield has rendered us losers or suckers for not engaging in the same forms of violent action or [un]friendly chant[s] that they do.

(5.13) TAPPER: Thank you Governor Kasich. (APPLAUSE) Mister Trump I wanna ask you about something else you’ve said during the course of this campaign you said that the US has to quote take out the families of terrorists. When it was pointed out that targeting civilians is against the Geneva Conventions you said quote, so they can kill us but we can’t kill them? It is against federal military and international law to target civilians. So how will you order the military to target the families of suspected terrorists while also abiding by the law.

TRUMP: First of all let me go back to the other just for a second in large mosques, w- all in all over the Middle East, you have people chanting death to the USA. Now that does not sound like a friendly act to me. As far as the families are concerned and as far as the law is concerned we have a law this all started with your question on waterboarding. We have a law that doesn’t allow right now waterboarding. They have no laws they have no rules they have no regulations and they chop off heads. They drown forty fifty sixty
people at a time in big steel cages, pull them up an hour later everyone dead. And we’re working on a different set of parameters. Now we have to obey the laws. Ok have to obey the laws. But we have to expand those laws because we have (APPLAUSE) to be able to fight, on at least somewhat of an equal footing or we will never ever knock out ISIS and all of the others that are so bad. We better expand our laws or we’re being a bunch of suckers and they are laughing at us they are laughing at us believe me. (APPLAUSE)

(Trump, GOP Debate 12)

This example also illustrates how Decompetition differs from doxic arguments supporting an Absolute worldview (§4.4); rather than casting his worldview as self-evidently natural (Bourdieu 1977) as the other Republican candidates generally attempted, Trump privileged the adversarial relationship between America and violent non-state actors as he ground his argument into the very mundanity of actions and reactions noting just how arbitrary both worldviews are: Theirs being unfairly lawless and Ours being unacceptably lawful. For Trump, the problem with violent non-state actors is less about a clash of civilizations, where the naturalized superiority of the Judeo-Christian west should “force” everyone into the same categorical standards (Kasich Example 4.11); rather, the problem rests in the political order lacking laws, rules, and regulations which merits our descending to their level. The Geneva Conventions and other such laws, passed and supported by people who are content with being a bunch of suckers and laugh[ed] at, can and should be expand[ed] to “bring back waterboarding and I’d bring back a hell of a lot worse than waterboarding” (Trump GOP debate 8), allowing us to respond to their actions in kind since they did it first. Our actions would however become just, since We would be obey[ing] these expand[ed] laws rather than acting out of lawlessness as They do.

In order to justify his policy prescription to expand[ing our] … laws in contravention of the Geneva Conventions or other such laws which he views as problematic, or
perhaps simply to just do whatever is necessary to win, Trump offered voters a contemptuous gaze to follow. The politicians who are causing us to be viewed as suckers and a laughing stock by others should be seen as contemptible for their (in)actions and their incongruent morality given the actions of violent non-state actors. While other Republican candidates advocated for freeing our military from some underspecified restrictions (Bush GOP debate 5 and 7; Carson GOP debate 6; Cruz GOP debate 7), none generated a contemptuous gaze aimed at politicians or American morality as a means to legitimize their ideological positions. Trump’s rhetoric also invited voters to feel a bit of self-contempt for themselves in a way, for being a bunch of suckers and being made weak and unable to knock out ISIS. This contempt at our supposed inability to “win anymore” (Trump GOP debate 1, 3, 4, 5, 8-10) due to the actions of politicians and other people or nations taking advantage of us may have resonated with a portion of voters for whom calls like Cruz’s to “lift the rules of engagement so we’re not sending our fighting men and women into combat with their arms tied behind their backs” (GOP debate 7) did not adequately reflect their own worldviews. While comments like Cruz’s offered a sense of support on behalf of soldiers, what is missing is the direct link to a voter’s own perspective or worldview which Trump forged. Trump’s “folk terrorism”, including the sense of self-contempt, brought the war home to the average voter, allowing them to feel as if they too had experienced the agony of defeat personally and to take umbrage at the twinned thrill and contempt that the victors, and all the other onlookers, have had at our expense.

Trump’s generation of anger and (self-)contempt through his Decompetitive framing was not without its potential pitfalls, generating problematic inferences in portions of the electorate. During the second Presidential debate, the candidates were asked questions by voters; of relevance to the discussion of violent non-state action was one
posed by an American Muslim and her worry about the rise of Islamophobia (Hamed) in America. This example may seem out of place given Hamed’s question was not about violent non-state action; however, Trump spun his response to a discussion of violent non-state action occurring in America and around the world, after only touching on Islamophobia as a shame. But which likely has come about due to a lack of sufficient vigilance on American Muslims’ part in reporting when they see something going on. He then pivoted to a discussion of violent non-state action, engaging in rhetorical erasure within the discourse of “radical Islamic terrorism” when he stated that:

... these are, radical Islamic terrorists. And she [Clinton] won’t even mention the word, and nor will President Obama he won’t use the term [NI] radical Islamic, terrorism. Now to solve a problem you have to be able to state what the problem is or at least say the name. [NI] She won’t say the name and President Obama won’t say the name. [NI] But the name is there. It’s radical Islamic terror...

Throughout his answer, Trump erased Hamed’s concern about Islamophobia rising because of political rhetoric and instead highlighted the “folk terrorism” understanding about what the right problem is and a proper fear of radical Islamic terrorism (Monk 2018b); this, in effect, replaced the origin of Islamophobia in “folk terrorism” terms as stemming from Individual Muslims’ failure to report When they see hatred going on from people contemplating violent non-state action, which is the real reason for everything and that’s a shame.

Clinton on the other hand chose to engage with the original question’s concern about how Muslims are being labeled (Hamed), and with Trump’s offered topic of violent non-state action; she rebuffed Trump’s attempt at rhetorical erasure, noting the divisive dark things [being] said and Trump’s own demagogic rhetoric and its potentially Islamophobic connotations, while offering her ideological position that
we need to cooperate with Muslims in America and abroad in order to defeat ISIS without losing what America is and what we want America to be for our children and our grandchildren. In so doing, Clinton (re-)contested the ideological space of violent non-state action out from the negative space of doxa back into the positive space of opinion by bringing other possible orders of understanding (Bourdieu 1977) the situation into focus, while at the same time casting Trump’s ideological positions as heterodoxic because of their divisive dark and demagogic nature.

Clinton’s desire to cooperate and form coalitions with Muslims here and abroad straddles the line between competition and decompetition; we need to “strive with” other nations as we “strive against” violent non-state actors (Shields and Bre-demeier 2011:33). Throughout her answer, Clinton juxtaposed numerous distinctions between the models of competition and decompetition (2011:35). Clinton focused more on “positive emotions” through her desire to include and welcome Muslims and reject Islamophobia while arguing against Trump’s more “negative” divisive dark and demagogic tone which only plays into the hands of terrorists. She also noted the shared “mutual interests” of America and other countries as opposed to Trump’s focus on American Greatness and winning at any and all costs.

(5.14) HAMED: {Hi |Alright}. There are three point three million Muslims in the United States and I’m one of them. You’ve mentioned working with Muslim nations, but with Islamophobia on the rise how will you help people like me deal with the consequences of being labeled as a threat to the country after the election is over.

RADDATZ: Mister Trump you’re f- first.

TRUMP: Well you’re right about Islamophobia and that’s a shame. [NI] But one thing we have to do is we have to make sure that, % because there is a problem. I mean whether we like it or not and we could be very politically correct, but whether we like it or not there is a problem. And we have to be sure that Muslims come in and report when they see something going on. When they see hatred going on they have to report it as an example in San Bernardino. [NI] Many people saw the bombs all over the apartment of the
two people that killed fourteen and wounded many many people. Horribly wounded they’ll never be the same. Muslims have to report, the problems when they see them. And, y’know there’s a r- there’s always a reason for everything. If they don’t do that it’s a very difficult situation for our country. [NI] Because you look at Orlando. [NI] And you look at San Bernardino and you look at the World Trade Center go outside you look at Paris. Look at that horrible these are, radical Islamic terrorists. And she won’t even mention the word, and nor will President Obama he won’t use the term [NI] radical Islamic, terrorism. Now to solve a problem you have to be able to state what the problem is or at least say the name. [NI] She won’t say the name and President Obama won’t say the name. [NI] But the name is there. It’s radical Islamic terror. And before you solve it you have to say the name.

RADDATZ: Secretary Clinton.

CLINTON: Well thank you for asking your question and I’ve heard this question from a lot of Muslim Americans across our country. Because, unfortunately there’s been a lot of very divisive, dark things said about Muslims. And, even someone like Captain Khan the young man who sacrificed himself defending our country in the United States Army has been subject to attack by Donald. I wanna say just a couple of things first, we’ve had Muslims in America since George Washington. And we’ve had many successful Muslims. We just lost, a particularly well known one with Muhammad Ali. My vision of America is an America where everyone has a place. If you’re willing to work hard, you do your part, you contribute to the community. That’s what America is that’s what we want America to be for our children and our grandchildren. It’s also very short sighted and even dangerous to be engaging in the kind of demagogic rhetoric that Donald has about Muslims. We need American Muslims to be part of our eyes and ears on our front lines. I’ve worked with a lot of different Muslim groups around America. I’ve met with a lot of them, and I’ve heard how important it is for them to feel that they are wanted, and included, and part of our country, part of our homeland security, and that’s what I want to see. It’s also important I intend to defeat ISIS to do so in a coalition with majority Muslim nations. Right now a lot of those nations are hearing what Donald says and wondering, wh- why should we cooperate with the Americans? And this is a gift to ISIS and the terrorists. Violent jihadist terrorists. We are not at war with Islam. And it is a mistake and it plays into the hands of the terrorists to act as though we are. So I want a country where citizens like you, and your family are just as welcome as anyone else.

(PRES Debate 2)

Throughout Clinton’s answer we can see her overall dispreference for an extreme
understanding of COMPETITION given her lack of any of the four features which Hamington (2009) warned about. Rather than a teleopathic goal of “knock[ing] the hell out of ISIS” (Trump Example 5.3), Clinton offered two goals of defeat[ing] ISIS while also maintaining the nature of America as she understood it. Because part of Clinton’s response to violent non-state action was to not lose American values in the process, she did not compartmentalize our morality nor truncate our ethics in the way that Trump advocated for in “expand[ing] our] ... laws” (Example 5.13). And while she did note that ISIS is an adversary, she did not privilege the adversarial relationship to the point that we should alter what America is in order to beat them. Indeed, during the first Presidential debate with respect to issues of ISIS, Iran, and nuclear weapons broadly, Clinton asked:

(5.15) ... Are we gonna lead the world with strength and in accordance with our values that’s what I intend to do. I intend to be a leader of our country that people can count on both here at home, and around the world. Uh to make decisions that will further peace and prosperity but also stand up to bullies whether they’re abroad or at home...

(Clinton, PRES Debate 1)

Clinton’s focus on our need to maintain our values while still appreciating that we need to stand up to bullies whether they’re abroad or at home and “defeat ISIS” (Example 5.14) is perhaps the clearest evidence of the difference I argue separates COMPETITION and war from DECOMPETITION, namely ethical boundaries that keep us from losing our values as we seek to further peace and prosperity rather than winning at any and all costs so that we’re no longer “being a bunch of suckers and ... laugh[ed]” at (Trump Example 5.13). Unfortunately, the more typical understanding of competitions generally (Cudd 2007:§3), and war specifically (Shields and Brede-meier 2011) tends more toward the DECOMPETITIVE semantic subspace of the COMPETITION domain. Clinton’s attempt to offer ideological positions on violent non-state
action without making use of elements from the DECOMPETITION metaphor may have left her open to attacks that “she’s not gonna get rid of nobody”, particularly ISIS (Trump PRES debate 3).

Trump’s discussion of violent non-state action and Islamophobia seems to capture an understanding of “folk terrorism”. The extent to which this “folk terrorism” is predicated on or simply reinforces the discourse of “radical Islamic terrorism” is an interesting question that merits further study. Given the extent to which the discourse of “radical Islamic terrorism” has become so prevalent in American politics (Jackson 2007; Monk 2018a, 2018b; Nimmer 2011), and in particular its use by the Republican candidates, Trump’s comments seem to accord with the Absolute FoR rather easily. Much like his discussion of economics, justice, and immigration, Trump staked out his own ideological space in the American political landscape by invoking a sense of concern for the safety or livelihood of some Americans and its potential loss by the improper understanding of violent non-state action which some people have.

5.7 Chapter summary

In this chapter I have offered one explanation for how Trump talked his way into the presidency. By offering his ideological interpretations and policy prescriptions thorough his Decompetitive FoR, Trump positioned his candidacy within the mutually entail ing Grounds of victory and defeat, his and America’s for the former and everyone else’s for the latter. Coupling together the thrill of Our victory and the agony of Their defeat, Trump was able to cue voters to feel admiration, anger, and (self-)contempt in varying degrees and an eventual catharsis as Trump wove together a narrative to Make America Great Again. Within his Decompetitive FoR, Trump was also able to referee what was “fair” or “unfair”, engage in zero-sum, win-loss thinking, and use or
generate a more “folk” knowledge of economics, justice, immigration, and terrorism all of which likely helped Trump come off as more authentic, or at the least much less political, than the other candidates.

Trump’s Decompetitive worldview, though different from both the Absolute and Conjoint FoRs in the nature of the Grounds used to generate search domains for voters to locate his ideological positions within, has more in common with the Absolute FoR of the Republican CoA. The fixed bearings of an Absolute FoR are supposedly shared social constructs which people must orient toward in order to make proper sense of the socio-political landscape. Trump’s mutually entailing Grounds of victory and defeat come prepackaged with shared social meaning—thrills, admiration, value, success etc. for the former; agony, contempt, insignificance, failure etc. for the latter—while also having a built-in value judgement of good and bad respectively. While the fixed bearings of an Absolute FoR themselves do not necessarily impart value judgements, they can be used to delineate standards of behaviors and assessments, e.g. who is a better American in various respects (see §4.3 in particular). With respect to the Conjoint FoR, both the shared social meanings and built-in value judgements of the Decompetitive FoR entail that a certain perspective be taken; this monotonicity of viewpoint is generally disfavored in the Conjoint FoR which Grounds its ideological positions within the multiple possible perspectives of every person.
Chapter 6

Conclusion

In this dissertation I have described political Frames of Reference (FoRs), a model which captures some of the ways that candidates representing the Republican and Democratic parties generate their own unique yet party-approved ideological world-views, and generate paths of logic for voters to follow as they assess the merits of the policy ideas on offer as charting a better course forward for the nation. With respect to cognitive linguistics, the political FoRs operate analogously to our spatial FoRs (Levinson 2003), having different groupings of semantic parameters which act as Grounds wherein voters can locate the validity of a given ideological position. Operationalizing each party as a Community of Alignment (CoA) (Lave 1991; Lave and Wenger 1991; Wenger 1998) with its own shared repertoire of linguistic capital distinct from the other has aided in the description of how candidates could use the same linguistic resources, whether metaphors or lexical items, and yet sound both similar and dissimilar to their co-partisans, staking out a unique place in their party without coming off as an outsider, while also sounding completely different than their opposing partisans. The motivations for this linguistic differences has been traced to the different semantic parameters underlying each party’s preferred FoR. In the analysis of Trump’s rhetoric, the utility and flexibility of political FoRs was demonstrated, being able to account for his similarities to the other Republican candidates, as well as his differences from both the Republican and Democratic candidates.
6.1 Summary of the model and findings

The Absolute, Conjoint, and Trump’s unique Decompetitive FoR were described, identifying the different nature of their semantic parameters. In arguing for their policy positions, the Republican candidates reified a series of supposedly shared, extra-human social constructs, such as Christian Morality, American Exceptionalism, and Economic Supremacy, as Absolute fixed bearings which permeate the socio-political landscape and delimit the standards of behavior (Lakoff 2002) and assessments Americans should accept if they want to properly understand how America works. The Democratic candidates offered their ideological worldviews through the perspectives which people can take on the commonplace behaviors and assessments they and others engage in as they interact with one another in the social systems they help create; these various perspectives are indicative of a Conjoint FoR. Trump offered his ideological worldview through mutually entailing Grounds, victory and defeat, which come pre-loaded with both social meaning and value judgements as he refereed what should be understood as fair or unfair while arguing that only he could “Make America Great Again”.

The differences between the Democratic candidates presented throughout this dissertation might appear less stark than that of the Republicans for a number of reasons. In part, this could be related to English being a language which predominately uses a Relative spatial FoR for its coding of spatial relations (Levinson 2003). Given that this is the conventional manner for American English speakers to describe the spatial world, taking different perspectives is a pretty common activity Americans engage in; candidates doing so as justification for their various ideological interpretations and policy prescriptions might just feel par for the course, no matter how differently the perspectives they offer may seem. In a Conjoint FoR, the socio-political landscape
and the people creating it must be focused on, but that focus can be set at whatever level of granularity a viewer chooses to take; there are no arbitrary landmarks whose salience must dominate a viewers’ understanding. Democratic candidates differentiate themselves through their choice in perspectives: whose view they choose to take into account, what aspects of a situation they choose to highlight or erase, and the interrelation between these two aspects of perspective.

Further, the field of Democratic candidates was small enough to begin with: five in the beginning, three by the end of the first debate, and by the fifth debate it was down to only Clinton and Sanders. Given that a Conjoint political FoR takes into account different viewpoints and perspectives, the limited pool of candidates in a way eventually led to two dominant viewpoints. Add in the fact that a CoA is predicated on a set of shared characteristics, to include how members orient toward ideological interpretations and policy prescriptions as argued here, and what was once a binary set of viewpoints can suddenly seem quite monotone. Indeed, during the fifth Democratic debate, Clinton went so far as to claim that she and Sanders had “vigorous agreement” on “rein[ing] in the excesses of Wall Street”, though she then went on to describe how she had a “broader view”, to include “pharmaceutical companies”, which would help keep people from “missing the big picture” by taking in more of the socio-political landscape at a glance than Sanders was offering.

The reason that differences between the Republican candidates may seem so striking in contrast to the Democrats rests in the nature of the Absolutes, and the sheer number of candidates running. In an Absolute FoR, attention must be focused on the various Absolutes which allows for the actions occurring within America to be glossed over or backgrounded. A Republican candidate is able to differentiate themself by subtle manipulation of how the Absolutes are ordered and how the nation should ori-
ent toward them. For the seventeen Republican candidates to distinguish themselves from one another they had to carefully explicate their personal understanding of why Individuals (§1.4.1) and the social order must orient toward a specific configuration of the Absolutes in their entirety. In essence, each Republican candidate had to build a house of cards using the same Absolutes, one that justified their candidacy as better than others’ because of how their own could better explain America’s structure and functioning, while not violating some basic conventions about how that house of cards should look.

Through a discussion of the political concepts of rights and rule of law in Chapter 2, the different nature of the semantic parameters Grounding the Republican and Democratic worldviews were described and linked to two rhetorical tactics and conceptual routines. Through the rhetorical tactic of decontestation (Freeden 1996), the Republican candidates offered their understanding of policy issues as the only proper way to understand what is happening in America, which in turn reified certain ways of perceiving the socio-political landscape as supposedly shared cultural constructs delimiting the standards which Americans need if they are to properly make sense out of the world, and to properly assess their own and others actions. The Democratic candidates did not attempt to decontest their ideological viewpoints, rather they rendered policy issues as discussable, offering multiple possible perspectives to be taken on what is happening in America, rooting their discussion within the multiple contextualized perspectives and assessments that people take on the Shared Context of America, noting the commonplace interactions people engage in with one another.

In Chapter 3, the discussion of economic issues afforded an examination of the inter- and intraparty linguistic differences in conceptual metaphors and cross-domain mappings chosen between candidates from the two parties, revealing how their lin-
guistic descriptions thus conceptualizations of the ECONOMY differed in systematic ways which could be attributed to the nature of the different Grounds of their respective FoRs. The Republican candidates advocated for an understanding of economic issues, whether wages, growth, and poverty among others, as rooted in the extra-human nature of the ECONOMY IS A LIVING ORGANISM whose growth and success comes naturally, and that human intervention particularly by liberals or government should be blamed for any problems. For the Democratic candidates, the ECONOMY IS A LIVING ORGANISM permitted an understanding of the interdependent nature of people interacting with one another as an “ecosystem” (O’Malley Example 3.4), and that both the successes and problems of the economy can be traced to how people and institutions affect one another.

The discussion of international trade, immigration, and violent non-state action in Chapter 4 was intimately tied up with the conceptual domain of SPACE, permitting the clearest distinction to be made between the two FoRs and demonstrating their utility in describing the ideological worldviews of political parties. For the Republican candidates, the “givenness of space, its fixity and inertness” (Smith and Katz 1993:68) was highlighted through various conceptual metaphors including COMPETITION to lend that sense of extra-human and shared nature to their Absolute fixed bearings, and to define a series of categorical understandings of what it means to “Not just live in America d- but be an American” (Rubio Example 4.9). The discussion of violent non-state action (§4.4) is also noteworthy for its description of another rhetorical tactic, which I label rhetorical erasure, whereby Republican candidates argued against the discussability of policy issues as a means to doxically presuppose and reify their understanding of the social order as the only way to understand what is happening in the world. That same “givenness of space” permitted the Democratic candidates
to background issues related to space like the border in a way, rendering them as simply “where we are right now” (Sanders Example 4.7), and to instead focus the discussion of policy issues on the lives of people and how they are being impacted by various policy decisions.

The utility of political FoRs was demonstrated in the analysis of Trump’s campaign rhetoric in Chapter 5. In analyzing his rhetoric, two frequently occurring mutually entailing Grounds were identified, victory and defeat, as he refereed how what is happening in the world should be understood as fair or unfair. These Grounds and the extreme formulations of competition metaphors they came packaged in described a more war-like understanding of competition which, per Shields and Bredemeier (2011), I label a Decompetitive FoR. Through the winner-take-all and by-any-means-necessary conceptual routines underlying Decompetition, Trump was able to engage in zero-sum thinking, both in terms of resource scarcity and resource entitlement (Burleigh 2016). Using such zero-sum heuristics about how much wealth or justice exists in the world and its proper distribution, Trump activated a series of “folk” knowledges (Swedberg 2018) as a means to speak more directly to the fears and concerns of voters.

6.2 Implications and limitations

Political FoRs offer an additional means to examine political rhetoric, describing a relationship between the candidates’ words and rhetorical tactics on the one hand, and the conceptual routines that provide a structure which they hang from on the other as candidates and parties generate their ideological worldview, those “shared framework[s] of mental models that groups of individuals possess that provide both an interpretation of the environment and a prescription as to how that environment
should be structured” (Denzau and North 1994:4). While the number of semantic parameters may be limitless, whether numerous Absolutes, different contrasting concepts like Trump’s victory and defeat, or indeed the multiple possible viewpoints which can be taken on an issue, the important characteristic of the model to attend to is the nature of the semantic parameters or Grounds themselves. At present I have described two sorts, rooted in previous linguistic analyses of our spatial systems (Levinson 2003): Absolute fixed bearings understood as supposedly shared social constructs akin to the cardinal directions; and Conjoint Grounds which generate search domains based on the unique perspectives people take on their own and others’ lived experiences.

The potential flexibility of political FoRs should not be overstated. I was able to argue for Trump’s mutually entailing Grounds having more in common with Absolute fixed bearings due to their nature as concepts which come pre-loaded with both social meaning and value judgements; further, his use of zero-sum thinking and “folk” knowledges within these Grounds implicated a type of “shared framework of mental models” useful for interpreting the socio-political landscape. What I did not do was try to claim that his Grounds were of a different nature than either the Absolute fixed bearings or the Conjoint preference for unique perspectives. Levinson did describe a third spatial FoR, the Intrinsic, which is somewhat between an Absolute and a Relative spatial FoR which uses facets of an object labeled via a conventional understanding e.g. “front of the television”; future work should look into the possibility of including such an additional Grounding system in political FoRs, the nature of its parameters, and how those parameters would be operationalized both by politicians and by researchers. However, until new evidence sheds additional light on the link between our spatial cognition and the language we use to describe our experience
of space, I would caution against positing new types or natures of Grounds within political FoRs.

Just as an analytical decision was made to split Trump out for special attention, so too was an analytical decision to keep Sanders subsumed under the Democratic party, despite these two candidates being very atypical for each party. Both decisions were well motivated and did not impact the rigor of the analysis. Trump was one of seventeen Republicans so pulling him to the side did not diminish the analysis. Sanders was one of the two Democratic candidates to make it through the entire primary season; splitting him out would have created an individualized accounting of Clinton’s and Sanders’ idiolects and ideological worldviews. Keeping Sanders within the Democratic side of the analysis helped maintain the focus at the party level between the Democratic and Republican differences, while allowing those tentative explorations of some of the individual differences.

This individual level of analysis is perhaps the one that merits the most caution, as a limitation of what these political FoRs may be able to account for. This analysis was relatively abstract and top-down, conducted on large amounts of data drawn from a particularly rambunctious American presidential election and its two party system in order to identify party level differences reflected in how American political party members talk about and think about the world. Some differences between individual candidates were highlighted to refine some of the edges, but the extent to which these FoRs can account for a bottom-up analysis of individual party members and their internal debates with one another behind closed doors as it were is an open question. Further, its applicability to a party system with more than two, or outside of the particular American idiom of politics may be an open question. But these concerns are worth exploring for some of the reasons and with some of the ideas outlined in
the next section.

6.3 Future work

This dissertation has discovered a few issues which merit future inquiry. During the discussion of Clinton’s (Example 3.16) use of the more Republican metaphor beneficial properties are monetary possessions, I posited that her use of certain lexical items like “optimistic” may have sounded more like a Republican candidate speaking about alleviating poverty rather than rewarding workers for their labor. A distributional analysis of the different types of lexical items which occur in Republican and Democratic uses of metaphors related to e.g poverty and wages would help substantiate this qualitative noticing, hopefully leading to a better understanding of how and why “the poor” (Pataki Example 3.7) and many other policies, whether economic or not, are understood so differently between the two parties.

Having sketched out the ideological worldviews at the top of the CoAs, a natural next step would be an analysis of the party memberships themselves. Operationalizing the parties as CoAs should permit a nuanced analysis of partisan identity and its formation. Rather than positing a party as an ideological monolith with only one way of talking about the world, I have pointed to some of the subtle differences which can occur within each party through an analysis of the candidates’ messages. Much like the differences between students known as the burnouts and the more extreme “burned out burnouts” in Eckert’s (1999) sociolinguistic study of high school students, CoAs can have or permit subgroupings of individuals who enact different degrees of linguistic variation required or expected of members within a CoA, thus indexing different degrees of centrality or status of membership within it. Where possible, I have pointed out some of the possible subgroupings of party members, using the
more common partisan identities circulating in political discourse e.g. evangelical conservative or centrist democrat. I believe that the findings in this dissertation will be supported: that a shared repertoire of ideological and conceptual leanings differentiate the two parties, and that within those shared repertoires there is sufficient intraparty variation possible to allow party members to select from the constellation of features available as they enact their own unique partisan identity as they talk about and think about their social world in ways similar to their co-partisans.

The news media is another group whose discussion of politics should be analyzed. As brokers who can transmit information from the top down (candidate to voter) and side to side (between the parties) (Wenger 1998; Eckert 1999; Bucholtz 1999; Quan-Haase and Wellman 2005), (partisan) journalists may show the breaking points in a given party’s shared repertoire: pointing out how and why the opposing party does not understand an issue in the right way and how their own party has the right of it. Unlike the candidates arguing for their own ideological worldview and occasionally having to directly defend it against an opponent, the media’s job is to compare and contrast the messages coming out of both parties and across all levels of government, altruistically to assure civil democratic debate and to come to a shared understanding of American politics, or more cynically as a means to assure greater levels of voter alignment to their preferred party, candidates, and their own network(s) of news sources.

With respect to ideological messaging generally, the tactic of rhetorical erasure needs additional refinement (§4.4 and 5.4). Metalinguistically silencing an opponent’s ideological worldview as a means to privilege one’s own as the only right and proper way to understand an issue seems qualitatively different than arguing against an opponent’s position on its merits. The extent to which charges of acting out of, or
demanding political correctness can silence an opponent’s ideological standpoint as undiscussable deserves careful attention and will likely yield refinements to the nature and limits of rhetorical erasure on the whole. Further, examining rhetorical and ideological erasure and “folk” knowledges together may yield insights into whether or how these processes operate together as a means to generate discourses like “radical Islamic terrorism” (Jackson 2007; Nimmer 2011) that preclude other possible orders of understanding policy issues. Much like the political FoRs themselves, there is potential for rhetorical erasure to be over used as an analytical tool; further refinement should help ensure it is applied prudently.

6.4 Final comments

While the goal of a better America may be the same, the paths politicians choose to chart and their justification as to its validity may differ depending on the features they choose to highlight or obscure. I hope this dissertation helps offer new insights into how and why politicians make the choices they do. While I may be a linguist who is fascinated by language and how we use it, I would respectfully disagree with Trump who claimed “It’s just words folks. It’s just words.” (PRES debate 2) and hope that “Words matter when you run for president” (Clinton PRES debate 1) again in the future.
References


