



Love and Hate Across the US Political Spectrum



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Introduction

- Negative partisanship in the US has increased over the past 40 years (Abramowitz et al., 2018).
- Posts attacking a political out-group receive more engagement online (Rathje et al., 2021; Yu et al., 2023).
- Partisanship is mostly driven through in-group favoritism, more so than out-group animosity (Lee et al., 2022).
- Politicians on Twitter praise their own party more often than they attack the out-party (Yu et al., 2023).

Theoretical Framework

- SIT - Individuals categorize themselves into groups and internalize their group membership as part of their self-concept, resulting in in-group favoritism and out-group derogation (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).
- Groups that are morally based attack outgroups more frequently (Parker, 2013).

Past Research on Twitter

- Group identity strength can be observed and measured on Twitter.
- Liberals and conservatives speak differently on Twitter (Sylwester & Purver, 2015).
- Moral emotional language leads to greater message diffusion and this effect is more pronounced for conservatives (Brady et al., 2019).
- Text analysis of alt-right revealed farther right twitter users were more focused on white identity than mainstream users (Ganesh, 2020)

Proposed Method

Measures

Group identity strength (GIS):

- Liberal and conservative politicians of similar GIS will be selected on Twitter.
- DW-NOMINATE (Poole & Rosenthal, 2007) will be used to measure their GIS as a continuous variable.
- Followers of these accounts will be placed into groups based on how many political accounts they follow. More political accounts followed means a user has stronger GIS.

In-group favoritism and out-group animosity:

- Word collocation of the top 10 words associated with love and hate for each level of GIS for liberals and conservatives.
- In-group words collocated with love will be measured as in-group favoritism.
- Out-group words collocated with hate will be measured as out-group animosity.
- Collocates of love and hate represented as a log-likelihood statistic.

Qualitative Analysis

- Random tweets from each level of GIS will be selected for examination of the full message, allowing for full context.

Expected Findings

- The results would be a descriptive summary of the top 10 collocates of love and hate for each level of GIS for liberals and conservatives, as well as the frequency that love and hate appear.
- In-group/out-group words would be measured as in-party favoritism, out-party animosity, in-party animosity, or out-group favoritism.
- Expected findings are that people with higher GIS will praise their party more than they attack the out-party, consistent with the findings of Lee et al. (2022) and Yu et al. (2023).
- Exceptions to this would be extremists (Yu et al., 2023), or people who do not have strong GIS, who would as a result display less in-group favoritism (Lee et al., 2022).

Table 1. Data visualization example: Word cloud of most common bigrams in a sample of 100k tweets collected during the 2016 presidential election.



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