

**An Assessment of Abraham Lincoln's and Stephen Douglas's Political Ideology Through
Modern Interpretations of Ideological Traits**

An Undergraduate Honors Thesis

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Introduction

During the United States Civil War Era, political ideology was not a topic that was fully examined or realized; rather, political party was the defining source of a person's political standings. However, present-day political parties are not very reflective of what they were during the Civil War. The flip-flop of party names and the other various policy-stance changes of the political parties over time are because political parties are flexible throughout time. In contrast, research has found that political ideology is actually what stays the same throughout time. Based on this political ideology research finding, and the evidence of political parties changing since the Civil War, there should be similar beliefs and personalities between conservatives and liberals of the Civil War Era and present day.

To explore this thesis statement, a case study is used to examine two political leaders during the pre-Civil War Era, Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglas, to determine where they would fall on the conservative — liberal political ideological scale in present-day terms based on their personalities. Lincoln and Douglas were chosen for this case study mainly due to the seven debates they engaged in with each other in 1858 when they both ran for the Illinois Senate seat. In fact, this Senate spot is what prompted Lincoln to revisit politics as he wanted to combat Douglas's recent Nebraska-Kansas Act.¹ The two men got to this point of national fame together despite their contrasting childhoods. Their lives intersected in the early 1830's in Illinois due to the practice of law, and their lives remain intertwined in the political realm until Douglas's death in 1861. For this thesis, I have specifically analyzed personal and public writings and speeches

¹ Roy Morris Jr. *The Long Pursuit, Abraham Lincoln's Thirty-Year Struggle with Stephen Douglas for the Heart and Soul of America*, (Harper Collins, 2009), xi.

done by themselves and those close to them at the time. I have also utilized newspaper articles and political party publications/platforms in addition to the sources specifically about Lincoln and Douglas. The time frame of 1850 to 1861 has proved to provide fruitful data as those years were full of political debate, new legislation, the question of slavery, and westward movement; however, primary sources from before and after that time period are sparingly utilized for necessary context.

This topic is rooted in current-day research that has linked political ideologies to certain personality traits, psychological behaviors, and values. In addition to findings these findings, there have also been studies that link political ideology to having a genetic base, which is complimented by environmental influences. This current-day research also claims that the findings that link personality, behavior, and values to political ideology can be held true across time. Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote in his essay “Politics” that “A [political] party is perpetually corrupted by personality.”² If political parties can be destroyed by personality, that means personality must be a constant throughout history. Therefore, regardless of whether political ideology is based solely in personality, psychology, values, genetics, or the environment, ideological traits should be consistent across time. The specific research that will serve as the methodology in which I will examine the primary sources focuses on the personality traits, psychological tendencies, and values that have been consistently found to belong to both liberals and conservatives, respectively. After the secondary sources are analyzed through two literary themes, the primary sources are analyzed through the two themes, as well as the methodology. The themes will allow for the evaluation of the two leaders’ personalities, political ideology, and

² Ralph Waldo Emerson. *Politics*. <https://emersoncentral.com/texts/essays-second-series/politics/>.

even American identity. Abraham Lincoln will be categorized as a liberal, and Stephen Douglas to be categorized as a conservative in respect to present-day ideological research findings.

Lincoln and Douglas's personalities and communicative methods through literature. The case study will show how these themes were prominent in the debates, and a discussion will link the themes found in literature review to the rhetoric used in the debates, as well as the rhetoric and themes used in the debates to political ideology.

Literature Review

The literature about both Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglas in the pre-Civil War era is bountiful. However, within this bountiful literature are various viewpoints, stories, and interpretations about the two Civil War Era leaders; yet, there are common themes about the two leaders that is reflected throughout the literature. There are two of these themes that proved to be the most prominent throughout the literature. The first is that Lincoln often felt slightly differently internally than what he proclaimed to the masses, whereas Douglas was confident in his beliefs. The second theme is the contrast in the two leaders' personalities, where Lincoln's can be described as energetic but patient, and Douglas's can be described as intense but captivating.

The first of these themes is shown through John Burt's book, *Lincoln's Tragic Pragmatism: Lincoln, Douglas, and Moral Conflict*. Burt argues that the seven debates in 1858 between Lincoln and Douglas were more than just political debates: they were a test of the legitimacy of democracy and whether it could solve ethical conflicts.³ His interpretation of both

³ John Burt, *Lincoln's Tragic Pragmatism: Lincoln, Douglas, and Moral Conflict*, (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2013), 249.

Lincoln and Douglas is that they had to navigate between moral conscience and public persuasion, which brought a tragic limitation to liberalism in the United States.⁴ Lincoln struggled with this navigation more than Douglas, as the first theme reflects, and that ultimately contributed to his role in the Civil War. Burt included letters written by Lincoln in the book, which show direct insight into Lincoln's feelings and beliefs. Often, these personal letters contained beliefs that were different than what he spoke to crowds about. One in particular was written in 1855, in which Lincoln described how children were being taken away from their childhood, families, and friends and bounded in chains.⁵ This was a contrast to those who believed that slaves passed their time happily dancing, singing, and joking. Included in *Lincoln's Tragic Pragmatism* are also writings and speeches of Douglas, which reveal his outlook on America and his viewpoint on several issues, as well. An example of his outlook on America is how he used scare tactics to target poor, white farmers. He often said that if African Americans were free, they would take over all the land, which would leave none for the whites.⁶ Douglas's intensity— can be related to the second literary theme— in this rhetoric could effectively make poor, white farmers nervous because they would have a whole new demographic to compete with. This economic reasoning, as opposed to Lincoln's humane reasoning, shows a difference in their ideological beliefs.

The second theme is displayed in *The Life of Abraham Lincoln* by Isaac Arnold. Arnold was an advisor to Abraham Lincoln during his time as president, but he also had known him

⁴ Burt, *Lincoln's Tragic Pragmatism: Lincoln, Douglas, and Moral Conflict*, 4.

⁵ Burt, *Lincoln's Tragic Pragmatism: Lincoln, Douglas, and Moral Conflict*, 338.

⁶ Burt, *Lincoln's Tragic Pragmatism: Lincoln, Douglas, and Moral Conflict*, 556.

previously. Therefore, this book has a personal touch, as Arnold was an eye-witness to around 25 years of Lincoln's life. As an eye-witness to Lincoln's life, Arnold felt that it was his duty to correct any misinterpretations of Lincoln and further analyze the life of the man he admired so greatly.⁷ In doing so, he may not have reached full objectivity, but his interpretation of how he saw Lincoln allows for a deeper understanding of the second theme displayed through the literature— which is Lincoln's energetic, but patient, personality and moral character. A chapter that further expands on this theme is Chapter Nine, the Lincoln and Douglas Debates. Arnold uses this chapter to discuss the personality differences between the two men, including how Douglas had a temper and was overly confident, whereas Lincoln had humor and played on the emotions of the time.⁸ The book also makes the distinction in how Lincoln thought of slavery as a moral problem, but Douglas saw it as a political or economic problem.⁹ This distinction of morality is important because liberals are typically more concerned about moral and social human rights, and conservatives are typically more concerned about if things are lawfully or economically just.

The Long Pursuit by Davis and Wilson discussed both of the literary themes. Davis and Wilson deeply described the lives of Lincoln and Douglas, beginning with how the two grew up, and they then moved on to how their lives became intertwined to the point of their seven great debates in 1858. The authors coin Lincoln as “calm and rational” while pegging Douglas as

⁷ Isaac Arnold, *The Life of Abraham Lincoln*, (4 ed. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Lincoln Press, 1994), 4.

⁸ Arnold, *The Life of Abraham Lincoln*, 145.

⁹ Arnold, *The Life of Abraham Lincoln*, 152.

“combative and excitable”.¹⁰ While Douglas believed in “the voice of the many”, Lincoln believed that the federal government was necessary to oversee everyday life of Americans; in other words, individuals— such as slaves— needed to be protected from those who tried to dominate them.¹¹ An additional contrast the authors bring up is that while Douglas saw slaves as property, Lincoln saw them as human beings.¹² Douglas got his self-confidence from his grandfather, who served five terms in the Virginia General Assembly.¹³ This self-confidence relates to the second theme in that Douglas was confident in his beliefs. An interesting commonality that the two shared is that growing up, both Lincoln and Douglas lost a parent at a young age—Douglas his father and Lincoln his mother— which impacted both of their worldly outlooks. Douglas became involved with politics at age 15.¹⁴ Lincoln and Douglas met in 1834 in the Illinois legislature—Lincoln’s first year in Illinois politics, but at the time they did not know the extent to which their paths would ultimately cross in the future.

Another work that contributes to the two themes is *Liberty and Union: The Civil War Era and American Constitutionalism* by Timothy Huebner. Huebner’s interpretation of the role of the Constitution is that a key difference in northern and southern beliefs about Americanism and a need for Civil War stemmed from their understanding of the Constitution.¹⁵ Some, such as

¹⁰ Davis and Wilson, *The Long Pursuit*, 2.

¹¹ Davis and Wilson, *The Long Pursuit*, xii-xiii.

¹² Davis and Wilson, *The Long Pursuit*, xiii.

¹³ Davis and Wilson, *The Long Pursuit*, 8.

¹⁴ Davis and Wilson, *The Long Pursuit*, 10.

¹⁵ Timothy Huebner, *Liberty and Union: The Civil War Era and American Constitutionalism*, (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2016), viii.

abolitionists and over time most northerners, believed the Constitution was merely a guiding principle, while others, mainly southerners believed it was the ultimate expression of government.¹⁶ This fundamental split in beliefs is a solid base in understanding why Northern and Southern leaders, such as Lincoln and Douglas, viewed national issues in different ways. However, Huebner also notes that soldiers on both sides often cited devotion to their country, desire to protect liberties, and preserve American government.¹⁷ In fact, the country as a whole had a reverence for the Constitution and what it stood for, it is just the difference in the role it played in political matters that contributed to the two differing sectional beliefs.¹⁸ Therefore, both the north and the south believed in America, however, they each had differing salient American values. For the south, it was capitalism; for the north, it was freedom. These two different values stemmed from the core differences in the economies, which was also touched on in Burt's and Arnold's works. The southern economy depended on slave labor, and in contrast, the north's economy depended on free labor.¹⁹

Liberty and Union: The Civil War Era and American Constitutionalism connects with *Lincoln's Virtues: An Ethical Biography* by William Miller in the sense that the Constitution, and the law, were extremely important to Lincoln and his beliefs. Lincoln saw the Constitution as a guiding principle of American government for the future, and Miller makes mention of how this was a liberal approach through a satirical mention of how conservatives do not like change, but

¹⁶ Huebner, *Liberty and Union: The Civil War Era and American Constitutionalism*, 20.

¹⁷ Huebner, *Liberty and Union: The Civil War Era and American Constitutionalism*, 19.

¹⁸ Huebner, *Liberty and Union: The Civil War Era and American Constitutionalism*, 19.

¹⁹ Huebner, *Liberty and Union: The Civil War Era and American Constitutionalism*, 22.

Lincoln accomplished change.²⁰ Lincoln was able to do so because he felt a moral obligation to the words “all men are created equal” written in the Declaration of Independence. Miller also wrote about how Lincoln spent almost all his time reflecting and deliberating over morality and the issues at hand, and how he should address them as public opinion and support was the key to success, be that winning an election or passing a law.²¹ This reflects the first literary theme in that Lincoln was very intentional with what he shared, when he shared it, and who he shared it with. Miller’s work also reflects the second theme in that he describes Lincoln as “ambitious” and “calculated,” which emulates the energetic but calm persona he so often displayed.²² The patience aspect is shown through Miller’s description of Lincoln as having “perseverance” and “persistence”, two values necessary for a patient man with a vision.²³ Overall, Miller’s interpretation of Lincoln was that he was a man of morals who never forgot his roots, and he kept his values in the forefront of all he did and accomplished.

Making an Antislavery Nation: Lincoln, Douglas, and the Battle over Freedom by Graham Peck analyzes the long term reasons of Lincoln’s ascension to president. Peck finds that a large part of the issue was the north and south interpreted freedom differently, which is similar to Huebner’s finding that a key difference between the north and south was how they viewed the Constitution. He begins by introducing Illinois as a mini-United States in that there was a battle by ballots in the 1820’s to determine if the state would remain antislavery, or become proslavery;

²⁰ William E. Miller, *Lincoln’s Virtues: An Ethical Biography*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2002), 198.

²¹ Miller, *Lincoln’s Virtues: An Ethical Biography*, 84.

²² Miller, *Lincoln’s Virtues: An Ethical Biography*, 239.

²³ Miller, *Lincoln’s Virtues: An Ethical Biography*, 154.

in 1824, the state officially opposed slavery.²⁴ The state remained divided on the issue, as shown through the 1858 Lincoln-Douglas debates. Peck described Douglas as “powerful, capable, confident, and visionary” in regards to attempting to solve the issue of slavery with popular sovereignty.²⁵ These words relate to the first literary theme, which is that Douglas was confident in his beliefs; however, it can also relate to the second literary theme in that Douglas was “powerful” and “capable”, similar to him being intense and persuasive. In addition, the first theme is shown through Douglas’s goal for unity of the North and South through his belief in the power of Democratic Party.²⁶

The final piece of literature that contributes to the two themes is *Stephen A. Douglas* by Robert W. Johannsen. This biography by Johannsen works to describe Douglas’s personalities and beliefs. The goal of Johannsen is to show what America was like in the 1850's through the lens of Douglas's life.²⁷ Johannsen's work connects with *Liberty and Union: The Civil War Era and American Constitutionalism* by supporting the first literary theme in that Douglas was confident in his beliefs. Johannsen describes how Douglas knew with conviction that his position was the correct position, even when he was being rejected by the South in 1854 due to the doctrine of popular sovereignty included in his legislation.²⁸ Nevertheless, Douglas gained back popularity among Southern Democrats in the spring of 1855, which was when he was able to successfully argue the constitutionality of his bill in pertinence to states' rights. Johannsen uses

²⁴ Peck, *Making an Antislavery Nation: Lincoln, Douglas, and the Battle over Freedom*, 17.

²⁵ Peck, *Making an Antislavery Nation: Lincoln, Douglas, and the Battle over Freedom*, 8.

²⁶ Peck, *Making an Antislavery Nation: Lincoln, Douglas, and the Battle over Freedom*, 124.

²⁷ Robert W. Johannsen, *Stephen A. Douglas*, (Oxford University Press, 1973), ix.

²⁸ Johannsen, *Stephen A. Douglas*, 465.

words of Douglas throughout the book, and in a speech Douglas claimed that he had no right to interfere with state institutions that exist "under the Constitution and laws of the land".²⁹ Douglas not only believed in his position, but he also believed that the constitution supported it. The confidence of Douglas described by Johannsen agrees with Huebner's work since Huebner also said Douglas believed that he was preserving the constitution and the Union through his political work.³⁰

The importance of these two literary themes in comparing Lincoln's and Douglas's political ideologies can be seen in the next three literary works. The first of the three is *Predisposed: Liberals, Conservatives, and the Biology of Political Differences* by John Hibbing, Kevin Smith, and John Alford. The authors' main finding that is relevant to this study is that political ideologies are true across time due to bedrock principles. Bedrock principles include how individuals believe that they should be protected from out-group members, how in-group violators should be punished, how resources should be distributed within the in-group, how the group should be led, and how people should be oriented to change.³¹ Therefore, the political ideological traits that Hibbing, Smith, and Alford found through their research should apply to both Lincoln and Douglas, regardless of the 156 year difference.³² *Predisposed* features original research done by the authors; their research includes surveys, eye-tracking, electrodermal activity, and MfRI studies to discover how both physiology and the environment influence

²⁹ Johannsen, *Stephen A. Douglas*, 481.

³⁰ Johannsen, *Stephen A. Douglas*, 471.

³¹ John Hibbing, Kevin Smith, & John Alford, *Predisposed: Liberals, Conservatives, and the Biology of Political Differences*, (New York, NY: Routledge, 2014), 44.

³² Hibbing, Smith, & Alford, *Predisposed*, 7.

political beliefs and ideologies. Surveys are useful in research, but their worth is only as good as the accuracy of the self-reporting. In contrast, eye-tracking technology, electrodermal activity, MfRI machines allow the unconscious tendencies of a person to be recorded. By studying the unconscious tendencies in adjunction with survey responses, they found that humans are genetically predisposed to a certain political ideology. Further, they found that those who are conservative have fundamental, physical, biological differences from those who are liberal.³³ However, being predisposed a certain way does not mean that someone will certainly be a liberal or conservative ideologically, as the environment still plays a large role. The findings in *Predisposed* allow for the analysis of the conservative and liberal traits, and beliefs, held by Lincoln and Douglas in the 1850's due to their biological, trans-time, nature. Therefore, the analysis of traits through Lincoln's and Douglas's beliefs can be used to decipher how they each fell—and would fall today— on the political ideological spectrum. Their findings compliment the idea of bedrock principles holding true across time, as well as the importance of prominent differences in personality and psychology in the differing ideologies.

In addition to the findings in *Predisposed*, Jonathan Haidt created the theory of moral foundations. *The Righteous Mind: Why Good People are Divided by Politics and Religion* discusses Haidt's findings that tie moral foundations to political ideologies. Haidt also created the social intuitionist model of moral judgment to explain how people justify their moral judgements. This model claims that an intuitive response comes first, which creates judgement, and then this judgment is justified by reason which may or may not have social influence.³⁴ The

³³ Hibbing, Smith, & Alford, *Predisposed*, 6.

³⁴ Haidt, *The Righteous Mind: Why Good People are Divided by Politics and Religion*, (New York, NY: Pantheon Books, 2012), 55-56.

intuitive response is often emotional, and does not provide true reasoning for a judgment, but it is cognition none-the-less.

John Jost's work relates to the findings in *Predisposed* and *The Righteous Mind*, as well as adds the dimension of values to the discussion of political ideology. Jost's work discusses the differing core values of conservatives and liberals. He finds that one of the dearest values for liberals is equality. In contrast, he found that conservatives do not care as much about equality, and they are okay with inequality in social organization.³⁵ Further, conservatives are resistant to change as they highly value tradition. Jost's work is important because the differing values of conservatives and liberals are key to understanding the differing beliefs that each hold.

Methodology

The two themes found throughout the literature were also portrayed across various sources that were produced during Lincoln and Douglas's lifetime, as well as shortly after. The following primary and secondary sources allow a deeper understanding of both Lincoln and Douglas and how their personalities and beliefs relate to present-day qualities of conservatives and liberals.

Theme 1 and Lincoln

The first theme that will be explored is how Lincoln felt slightly different about slavery internally than what he proclaimed to the masses. Lincoln's original, ultimate goal was to keep as many people happy as possible in an effort to prevent a civil war. This goal meant that Lincoln could not always say exactly how he truly felt. However, his true beliefs were not always easy to keep hidden. Even Douglas could see this, and he challenged Lincoln on his true beliefs. At a

³⁵ John Jost, "Ideological Asymmetries and the Essence of Political Psychology," *Political Psychology* 38, no. 2 (2017): 169.

debate, Douglas said, “Now, gentlemen, your Black Republicans have cheered every one of those propositions, and yet I venture to say that you cannot get Mr. Lincoln to come out and say that he is now in favor of each one of them.”³⁶ These words show that while the Republican party gained African American support due to their efforts to contain slavery, Republicans still did not all necessarily want African Americans to be free, and Lincoln’s silence on that matter reflected this.

Despite Douglas’s words, Lincoln observed how slaves were constantly aware that they were being wronged in their system.³⁷ He was able to empathize with slaves’ feelings of discontentment and oppression. However, abolition was not a part of the Republican platform yet, and Lincoln was still trying to keep as many people happy as possible in order to keep the Union together, even though some of them believed in slavery. As early as 1837, an example of this occurred in a joint statement Lincoln released with Dan Stone, another Santana County representative in the Illinois State legislature. Their statement said, "They believe that the institution of slavery is founded on both injustice and bad policy, but that the promulgation of Abolition doctrines tends rather to increase than abate its evils. They believe that the Congress of the United States has no power under the Constitution to interfere with the institution of slavery in the different States. They believe that the Congress of the United States has the power, under the Constitution, to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia, but that the power ought not to be exercised unless at the request of the people of the District...". Years later, when drafting

³⁶ Stephen Douglas, "Senator Douglas's Speech During the First Lincoln-Douglas Debate" (Speech, 1858, <http://www.sonofthesouth.net/slavery/abraham-lincoln/stephen-a-douglas-speech-debate.htm>).

³⁷ Abraham Lincoln, *Abraham Lincoln's speech fragment on Slavery*. (<https://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-by-era/lincoln/resources/lincoln-speech-slavery-and-american-dream-1858>).

resolutions for the Kanas-Nebraska Act, one of his most important resolutions was that, “they [representatives] use their utmost constitutional endeavors to prevent Slavery ever being established in any county or place, where it does not now legally exist”.³⁸ This resolution was to help continue to bridge the gap between Lincoln’s hatred of slavery, while still keeping in mind his constituents’ expectations that slavery would not be spread further. Therefore, Lincoln was unable to share the extent of his personal thoughts on slavery.³⁹

Yet, Lincoln was extremely close to sharing his personal thoughts in his 1858 House Divided speech. He said, “in my opinion, it will not cease, until a crisis shall have been reached, and passed... I believe this government cannot endure, permanently half slave half free...in the end it will be all slave or all free”. He goes on to say that slavery will either not spread westward and move in a direction of extinction in the south, or slavery will move into every state. This view still does not reflect abolition, but is moving closer to it. The opening of this speech does show, however, that Lincoln was personally opposed to slavery, and he wanted to see it come to an eventual end.

Theme 1 and Douglas

In contrast to Lincoln, the first theme points out that Douglas was confident in his beliefs. More than just being confident in these beliefs, Douglas proudly displayed and communicated his beliefs. For example, in a speech he stated that, “They [the United States Founding Fathers]

³⁸ Abraham Lincoln, *Draft Resolutions for Illinois General Assembly concerning Repeal of Kansas-Nebraska Act*, Abraham Lincoln Papers at the Library of Congress. Transcribed and Annotated by the Lincoln Studies Center, Knox College. Galesburg, Illinois, January 4, 1855 [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/mal:@field\(DOCID+@lit\(d0042900\)\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/mal:@field(DOCID+@lit(d0042900))).

³⁹ Abraham Lincoln. *Abraham Lincoln’s Speech Fragment on Slavery*. (1858, <https://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-by-era/lincoln/resources/lincoln-speech-slavery-and-american-dream-1858>).

knew when they framed the Constitution that in a country as wide and broad as this, with such a variety of climate, production, and interest, the people necessarily required different laws and institutions in different localities.⁴⁰ Further, Douglas demonstrated his confidence in the same speech by discussing Lincoln's beliefs. He said, "This doctrine of Mr. Lincoln, of uniformity among the institutions of the different States, is a new doctrine, never dreamed of by Washington, Madison, or the framers of this government. Mr. Lincoln and the Republican party set themselves up as wiser than these men who made this government, which has flourished for seventy years under the principle of popular sovereignty, recognizing the right of each State to do as it pleased."⁴¹ Douglas's statement displays his confidence in his beliefs because they more closely reflect those of the country's founders. However, his beliefs could also be seen as dogmatic in that

The personalities of Lincoln and Douglas are contrasting as shown through previously discussed literature, which led to the second theme: Lincoln's energetic but patient persona, and Douglas's intense but captivating persona. These contrasting personalities are further analyzed through primary sources.

Theme 2 and Lincoln

A member of the U.S. Christian Commission, J. T. Duryea, met often with Lincoln, and, after his death, Duryea spoke about his interactions with Lincoln. He described Lincoln's personality as "Earnest, yet controlled, frank, yet sufficiently guarded, patient, yet energetic,

⁴⁰ Douglas, "Senator Douglas's Speech During the First Lincoln-Douglas Debate".

⁴¹ Douglas, "Senator Douglas's Speech During the First Lincoln-Douglas Debate".

forgiving, yet just to himself; generous yet firm”.⁴² Duryea’s recollection of Lincoln contributes to the second theme because it shows how Lincoln had the energy needed to motivate people, as well as the patience to persuade them.

Lincoln, probably unknowingly, once described his patience through a lecture on the practice of law. He advised the students in the lecture to practice diligence in law, as cases took lots of research and time. Further, Lincoln noted that, “as a peacemaker the lawyer has a superior opportunity of being a good man”.⁴³ With these words, Lincoln was encouraging future lawyers to use patience and take the extra time needed to resolve a matter before it enters the courtroom, as this often ensured the absence of negligence, honesty, and moral case results.

Gurdon Hubbard was one of Lincoln’s fellow senators in the Illinois State Legislature, and the pair knew each other for about twenty years. Hubbard described Lincoln in a conversation as someone who “never loses sight of the principal point under discussion”, which is a key characteristic that fits in the second theme.⁴⁴ Hubbard’s insight exemplifies how Lincoln’s patient persona allowed him to listen to others and their viewpoints, no matter how off-base, and then he would be able to counter their points with his persistence and knowledge. Hubbard also described how Lincoln appealed to and excited audiences through his illustrated

⁴² Barrie Davenport, "Life Lessons From The Person And Character Of Abraham Lincoln", 2012. <https://liveboldandbloom.com/11/self-improvement/life-lessons-from-the-person-and-character-of-abraham-lincoln>.

⁴³ Abraham Lincoln. *Notes for lecture on law, 1850-60*. Abraham Lincoln Papers at the Library of Congress. Transcribed and Annotated by the Lincoln Studies Center, Knox College. Galesburg, Illinois. [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/mal:@field\(DOCID+@lit\(d0045500\)\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/mal:@field(DOCID+@lit(d0045500))).

⁴⁴ Gurdon Hubbard, “Lincoln in the Legislature” In *Life and Works of Abraham Lincoln: Early speeches, 1832-1856*, edited by Marion Mills Miller, Litt. D., xii. Rahway, NJ: The Quinn & Boden Co. Press, 1907.

stories and freedom from “political trickery”.⁴⁵ Hubbard meant that Lincoln did not have to lie to excite his audiences or gain support. Another fellow senator, Robert L. Wilson, described that when Lincoln spoke with others his stories had “an inexhaustible fund of facts, from which he would draw conclusions, and illustrating every Subject...accomplishing the double purpose, of not only proving his Subject by the anecdote, that no one ever forgets, after hearing Mr Lincoln tell a Story, either the argument of the Story, the Story itself or the author.”⁴⁶ Wilson’s description shows that Lincoln was patient in finding the right words to make a point, but did so in a way that entertained and excited those he was speaking with.

United States Senator from Illinois, Lyman Trumbull, wrote to Lincoln following the 1858 Ottawa debate to tell him how he had done in the debate, which aligns with his patient, yet energetic personality. Trumbull wrote, “In manner, temper, spirit, eloquence & every thing else you have obtained a complete triumph over the little pettifogger, for really that is all he [Douglas] is”.⁴⁷ Even Alexander Stephens, the Vice President of the Confederacy, noted after the war that Lincoln, “illustrated everything he was talking about by an anecdote, always exceedingly apt and pointed, and socially he always kept his company in a roar of laughter”. Stephens also recalled from their time in Congress together that Lincoln had the ability to command the attention of the House whenever he was speaking. As a Confederate, Stephens'

⁴⁵ Hubbard, “Lincoln in the Legislature” In *Life and Works of Abraham Lincoln: Early speeches, 1832-1856*, xii.

⁴⁶ Douglas L. Wilson and Rodney O. Davis, editor, *Herndon’s Informants*, (Letter by Robert L. Wilson to William Herndon, February 10, 1866), 204-205.

⁴⁷ Lyman Trumbull, “Lyman Trumbull to Abraham Lincoln, August 24 [1858] (1858 campaign)”, ([http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/mal:@field\(DOCID+@lit\(d0071900\)\)\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/mal:@field(DOCID+@lit(d0071900))))).

words and memories serve as a strong testament to Lincoln’s energy in his presence and his words, as well as his patience when telling a story to make his point.⁴⁸

Theme 2 and Douglas

The second theme in relation to Douglas characterizes his personality as intense, but captivating, especially for audiences. Milton described Douglas as “captivating in company”, showing how his personality drew in others.⁴⁹ In regards to audiences and people, Douglas was said to have a “hold upon their hearts [that] is as firm as was that of the old hero in his palmiest days” in the *Feliciana Democrat Newspaper* in Louisiana.⁵⁰ This shows that even though he was losing the presidential election, the people— specifically the Southern people— still liked him due to his charismatic personality. The people also knew he had been successful before, and the grip his personality had held on them previously was still present and as strong as ever.

He was also described as having a “legal mind and lucid style”.⁵¹ This quote describes how his personality was sharp, like a lawyer, as well as clear to understand. He may be intense, but that intensity demanded respect of those he was around. Alan Nevins furthered this intensity when he once described Douglas’s attentiveness in discussions and debates. In reference to a congressional Kansas-Nebraska debate in 1854, Nevins said, “whenever a stroke was needed, he

⁴⁸ William E. Barton, *The Life of Abraham Lincoln*, Volume I, 281.

⁴⁹ George Fort Milton, “Stephen A. Douglas,” In *Kansas Historical Quarterly*. Edited by Kirke Mechem, James C. Malin, & Nyle H. Miller, 9, Topeka: Kansas State Historical Society, Spring 1954. https://archive.org/stream/kansashistorical21kansrich/kansashistorical21kansrich_djvu.txt.

⁵⁰ “Stephen A. Douglas,” *Feliciana Democrat Newspaper* (Clinton, LA), Jan. 15, 1859.

⁵¹ “Senator Douglas on Popular Sovereignty,” *Harper’s Weekly*, 1859, <http://0-app.harperweek.com.library.unl.edu/ViewIndexEntryImage.asp?subEntryClass=Combined&subEntryKey=002296&page=0>).

[Douglas] was on his feet, tossing his mass of dark hair like a lion's mane and scowling at his enemies.”⁵²

Ideology

Lincoln believed in the idea that all men were created equal, which is a fundamental ideal of Americanism.⁵³ However, many liberals push the ideal that "all men were created equal" further in that they also have a tendency to feel strongly about social equality of all people. In Lincoln's case, the idea that "all men were created equal" was more than just an ideal, it was a call to action because he could plainly see that in American society, not every man was treated equally. In an undated fragment of Lincoln's writing, this ideal was reflected when Lincoln described "Liberty to All" as "entwining the human heart".⁵⁴ This ideal was also reflected at the 1856 Republican National Convention, during which it was decided that Republicans would from thereon "invite the affiliation and cooperation of the men of all parties, however differing from us in other respects, in support of the principles herein declared; and believing that the spirit of our institutions as well as the Constitution of our country, guarantees liberty of conscience and equality of rights among citizens, we oppose all legislation impairing their security".⁵⁵ With these words, the Republican Party, which Lincoln was a part of, declared that equality of the rights given in the Declaration of Independence were to be an important agenda

⁵² Alan Nevins, "Stephen A. Douglas". In *Kansas Historical Quarterly*. Edited by Kirke Mechem, James C. Malin, & Nyle H. Miller, (Topeka: Kansas State Historical Society, Spring 1954), 10.

⁵³ *Declaration of Independence*, 1776.

⁵⁴ Harry V. Jaffa, *Crisis of the House Divided: An Interpretation of the Issues in the Lincoln-Douglas Debate*, (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 331.

⁵⁵ The Presidency Project. "Republican Party Platform of 1856", 1856. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=29619>.

item for the next election. Lincoln stayed with the party for the next four years and ran for president as a Republican, so he accepted this agenda item, as well as “liberty of conscience” in that he was allowed to believe that slavery was morally wrong, even if not all Republicans he represented believed that yet.

Lincoln also was firm in his morality. His morality can be assessed by using the moral foundation theory by Jonathan Haidt. Haidt created five moral foundations that relate to political ideologies. The five moral foundations are harm avoidance, fairness, in-group loyalty, purity, and authority.⁵⁶ Research has found that liberals tend to favor individual morals, which are morals that reflect more of how unique people are being considered in contrast to how a group of people are being considered.⁵⁷ Therefore, liberals tend to have the moral foundation of harm avoidance the most, which means that they care for victims of oppression and do not want anyone to suffer.⁵⁸ Liberals also tend to have the moral foundation of fairness, meaning they believe in equality and justice for all people. This matches with Lincoln’s internal unrest with the institution of slavery and how to address it. His morality can be combined with the liberal tendency to be open to new experiences, which is one of the big five personality measures.⁵⁹ These two characteristics help to better understand his future role in slave emancipation, motivated by his openness, harm avoidance, and equality.

⁵⁶ Haidt, *The Righteous Mind*, 153.

⁵⁷ John Hibbing, Kevin Smith, & John Alford, *Predisposed*, 107.

⁵⁸ Haidt, *The Righteous Mind*, 157.

⁵⁹ Hibbing, John, OCEAN, POLS 250 Lecture, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, September 6, 2016.

Lincoln's abolitionist role is exemplified by his signature of the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863. It was the result of decades of thought, debate, and consideration. However, Jessie Fell, a prominent man in Illinois, once reflected that Lincoln "was brave and fearless in the protection of what he believed to be right".⁶⁰ Even though at that time Fell's was referencing popular sovereignty, it speaks to Lincoln's persistence in what he believed was a moral direction.⁶¹ Upon reflection, Hugh agreed with Lincoln's morality in a reflection he wrote for the compilation *Reminiscences of Abraham Lincoln*. He credited Lincoln's "greatness" to his "unwavering adherence to the principles which he avowed" and "his humanity", among other similar characteristics.⁶² All these characteristics show his morality, empathy, and tendency towards social equality.

Lincoln's childhood environment also could have contributed to his liberal ideology. He spent the first seven years of his life in Kentucky, a southern slave state. Here, he was a first-hand witness to all of the evils of the institution of slavery. His county had a population of about 7,500, and over 1,000 of that population was enslaved people.⁶³ Lincoln's family cabin lay near a cross-roads upon which slaves often passed by.⁶⁴ Burt discussed how Lincoln watched slave children pass by; the need to protect and care for children whom are suffering can be an indicator

⁶⁰ Allen Rice, *Reminiscences of Abraham Lincoln: By Distinguished Men of His Time*, (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1909), 125.

⁶¹ Rice, *Reminiscences of Abraham Lincoln: By Distinguished Men of His Time*, 125.

⁶² Rice, *Reminiscences of Abraham Lincoln: By Distinguished Men of His Time*, 162.

⁶³ Eric Foner, "Lincoln's Evolving Thoughts On Slavery, And Freedom," October 11, 2010, *Fresh Air*, produced by NPR, podcast, 36:04 accessed November 20, 2017, <https://www.npr.org/2010/10/11/130489804/lincolns-evolving-thoughts-on-slavery-and-freedom>.

⁶⁴ Foner, "Lincoln's Evolving Thoughts On Slavery, And Freedom," 2010.

of the moral foundation of harm-avoidance. Lincoln recalled that his father partially chose to move their family to Indiana due to slavery, in addition to land titles.⁶⁵ So, when Lincoln said that he could not recall a time in which he did not view slavery as unjust, much of that view is probably due to his childhood environment.⁶⁶ Political ideology influences how people respond to different conditions in the environment, so the fact that Lincoln kept this negative view on slavery throughout the remainder of his life— and most notably following the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854— shows that his liberalism very well could have influenced how the environment affected him in a socially moral way.⁶⁷

While he lived in the North for the remainder of his childhood and adult years, he traveled to the South on a few occasions for work where he was able to observe slavery. Also, his wife, Mary Todd Lincoln, and her family owned slaves in Kentucky. Although a contradiction, Mary Todd was fond of her personal slave, Mammy Sally, yet she rejected slavery and held anti-slavery views, as did the rest of her family.⁶⁸ Lincoln very well could have affirmed his own anti-slavery views with his wife’s interactions with the institution of slavery, regardless of the interactions’ nature, since she ultimately was displeased with it.

In contrast to Lincoln’s alignment with a liberal political ideology, Douglas strongly aligns more closely with a conservative ideology. He aligns more with a conservative ideology because he believed in limited government power, states' rights, in-group loyalty, and authority.

⁶⁵ Foner, “Lincoln’s Evolving Thoughts On Slavery, And Freedom,” 2010.

⁶⁶ Eric Foner. Lincoln’s Evolving Thoughts On Slavery, And Freedom,” 2010.

⁶⁷ Alford, Funk, and Hibbing, “Are political orientations genetically transmitted?” in *American Political Science Review*, 2005, 165.

⁶⁸ Kimberly J. Largent, “The Life of Mary Todd Lincoln: The Early Years,” (Columbus, OH: The Ohio State University Department of History), <https://ehistory.osu.edu/articles/life-mary-todd-lincoln>.

His party affiliation, the Democratic Party, also can give insight to his beliefs as he wanted to reflect his constituents while he was in the senate and later when he was campaigning for President.

Unlike Lincoln, Douglas's childhood environment may not have had as much impact on his future as Lincoln's did. Douglas grew up in the free state of Vermont, so he had no contact with the evils of slavery at a young age in the ways that Lincoln did. In fact, by the time Douglas ran for the 1860 presidency, he controlled a plantation of slaves his wife had inherited in Mississippi. Yet, when various sources, such as the *New York Tribune*, accused Douglas of having "southern aspirations" that led him "to adopt the luxurious habits of the Southern aristocracy" prior to joining the Democratic Party, Douglas ignored them or got upset as he believed he was working in the interests of the Democratic Party and its people.⁶⁹ Therefore, it is possible that Douglas may have innately guided towards his conservative tendencies, but had he experienced slavery at a young age in the way that Lincoln did, his innate tendencies could have been swayed toward liberal tendencies.

Because Douglas was a Democrat, the 1856 Democratic Platform gives insight into what beliefs he held. One of these beliefs was that the federal government should have limited power, and, further, this limited power must only be that which is derived from the United States Constitution.⁷⁰ The 1856 Democratic Platform also discussed the importance of state rights. The platform stated, "Congress has no power under the Constitution, to interfere with or control the domestic institutions of the several States, and that such States are the sole and proper judges of

⁶⁹ George Anastaplo, *Reflections on Slavery and the Constitution*, 190.

⁷⁰ "The Democratic platform," *The Presidency Project*, June 2, 1856. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=29576>.

everything appertaining to their own affairs, not prohibited by the Constitution”.⁷¹ This particular section related to the institution of slavery, which the southern states believed they should have control over. Even though Douglas never directly defended slavery, he defended the right for the institution to exist where the people wanted it to.⁷²

A Louisiana newspaper describes Douglas and his actions as “pure & consistent Democratic record”.⁷³ This newspaper quote shows that the South— at least prior to 1860— thought of Douglas as loyal to his [The Democratic] party, as well as to the values and ideals that the party held at the time. This ties to political ideology through the moral foundation of in-group loyalty, which is putting those who you most saliently identify with due to common histories, similar goals, shared experiences, or mutual dependence, before those who do not fit into this group characteristic that you share with others.⁷⁴ Douglas’s in-group loyalty was to the people of the South whom had a mutual dependence on the slave economy, a shared goal of expanding slavery westward, and a shared history of believing in the preciseness of the US Constitution. Douglas wanted to make sure his political agenda matched that of his constituents, so he stayed loyal to them in all he did in the majority of the pre-Civil War era. The exception was in the mid-1850s he began to lose some Southern following due to his strong belief in popular sovereignty. This was because Douglas did not necessarily care for slavery or if it expanded westward, he just wanted the people to have the choice as he believed that was the most

⁷¹“The Democratic platform,” 1856.

⁷² Robert Johannsen, *The Frontier, the Union, and Stephen Douglas*, (University of Illinois Press, 1989), 193.

⁷³ “Stephen A. Douglas,” Jan. 15, 1859.

⁷⁴ Jordan Soliz, *Intergroup Contact Theory*, (Lecture, University of Nebraska Communication Studies 465, Lincoln, NE, February 7, 2017).

democratic way. In fact, when the Missouri compromise was repealed by his Kansas-Nebraska Act, he admitted he was not pro-slavery.⁷⁵ Yet, overall, Douglas's belief in the law over his own emotions showed his purity in conservative ideology. Douglas's words and actions were not muddled or conflicting as time passed and new complications, such as his debates with Lincoln, were added to his political agenda. Douglas believed what he said to the world about the Constitution, and he knew that what he said was what his constituents—the votes he needed—believed.

Another moral foundation is authority, which is defined as needing a clear structure for society in which someone tells someone else what to do, and that someone else obeys.⁷⁶ Douglas reflects this strong belief in authority because he worked for the people to be in charge—that is, the people who were white-skinned. He believed that America was approaching its full potential in power and strength, both traits that reflect authority.⁷⁷ A parallel of Douglas's belief in authority was reflected in the institution of slavery. Democrats, including Douglas, saw the Republicans as a direct threat to the total authority because Republicans threatened the choice of slavery, which was a form of power for the Democrats. Threat is an important item to conservative ideology because psychologically they are more attuned to threats, meaning they lean toward policies that aim to manage potential threats.⁷⁸ Conservatives are more likely to lean towards authoritarian personalities as well, which means that in response to certain

⁷⁵ Jaffa, *Crisis of the House Divided*, 47.

⁷⁶ John Hibbing, "OCEAN" (Lecture, University of Nebraska Political Science 250, Lincoln, NE, September 6, 2016).

⁷⁷ Johannsen, Robert, *Stephen A. Douglas*, 422.

⁷⁸ John Hibbing, "Psychology" (Lecture, University of Nebraska Political Science 250, Lincoln, NE, November 17, 2016).

environmental influences, they can become aggressive towards people who do not conform to their beliefs. Authoritarian personalities also believe that obedience and respect are two of the most important virtues that can be taught, and further that important things are learned through suffering. Nineteenth century Democratic personalities, especially those involved in the institution of slavery, reflected authoritarian personalities because to keep slaves from rebelling, masters often forced them to be obedient by following all orders, or else they would suffer through punishment.

The Lincoln and Douglas debates will serve as the case study. The methodology of the case study is to evaluate Lincoln and Douglas in regards to their political ideology. Lincoln will be evaluated in the modern understanding of liberalism, whereas Douglas will be evaluated in the modern understanding of conservatism. By linking the evidence from their pre-Civil War debate rhetoric and beliefs to modern beliefs, we will be able to see if it is in fact possible that political ideology can transcend time. Their political ideology would be a distinction from their political parties, because parties change over time and are dependent on the issues of the current-day.

Case Study

To further test my theory of Lincoln's and Douglas's political ideologies, a case study of the Lincoln-Douglas debates will analyze the rhetoric and themes as discussed by the two candidates. At the time of the debates, there were several newspapers— it was the era of the “penny-press”— and each had a political agenda. Often, newspapers had different reports on what was said at each debate. In order to conduct a fair analysis of Lincoln's and Douglas's verbiage at the time, I consulted the book entitled *The Lincoln-Douglas Debates* by Rodney O.

Davis and Douglas L. Wilson. Davis and Wilson worked to compare differing accounts of the debates and find the middle.

The debates began over an open Illinois U.S. Senate seat in 1858. Although local elections were not usually discussed on a national scale, the seven debates that Lincoln challenged Douglas to were followed across the United States. States as far away as Texas found the Illinois debates “exciting”, and a German reporter from New York wrote, “the eyes of the whole country” were on Lincoln and Douglas.⁷⁹ Even prior to the debates, Douglas made a series of speeches across Illinois before the debates, with Lincoln following with his own speeches just a day after Douglas. However, the joint debates allowed for audiences who may not have chosen a side yet to see both Lincoln and Douglas together. Yet, to understand the debates, it is necessary to first understand two speeches which preceded them; one by Lincoln, and one by Douglas.

Debate Prelude: Lincoln’s speech in Springfield and Douglas’s speech in Chicago:

In order to best understand the famous Lincoln-Douglas debates of 1858, it is first important to have knowledge of the two separate speeches that occurred before the debates ever began. In these speeches, Lincoln and Douglas clearly laid out their beliefs and began to form themes, both of which would remain important aspects throughout the seven debates.

House Divided Speech. The first of these speeches was Lincoln’s in Springfield, Illinois, which became better known as the “House Divided” speech. Lincoln took on a strong stance by opposing slavery in this speech, which allowed for a preview of the debate themes of slavery, morality, and radicalism.

⁷⁹ Guelzo, *Lincoln and Douglas: The Debates that Defined America*, (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2008), xii.

We are now far into the *fifth* year, since a policy was initiated, with the *avowed* object, and *confident* promise, of putting an end to slavery agitation.

Under the operation of that policy, that agitation has not only, *not ceased*, but has *constantly augmented*.

In *my* opinion, it *will* not cease, until a *crisis* shall have been reached, and passed.

"A house divided against itself cannot stand."

I believe this government cannot endure, permanently half *slave* and half *free*.

I do not expect the Union to be *dissolved* -- I do not expect the house to *fall* -- but I *do* expect it will cease to be divided.

It will become *all* one thing or *all* the other.

Either the *opponents* of slavery, will arrest the further spread of it, and place it where the public mind shall rest in the belief that it is in the course of ultimate extinction; or its *advocates* will push it forward, till it shall become alike lawful in *all* the States, *old* as well as *new* -- *North* as well as *South*.

Have we no *tendency* to the latter condition?

Let any one who doubts, carefully contemplate that now almost complete legal combination -- piece of *machinery* so to speak -- compounded of the Nebraska doctrine, and the Dred Scott decision. Let him consider not only *what* work the machinery is adapted to do, and *how well* adapted; but also, let him study the *history* of its construction, and trace, if he can, or rather *fail*, if he can, to trace the evidence of design and concert of action, among its chief architects, from the beginning.⁸⁰

Douglas's Springfield Speech. Douglas made this speech in response to Lincoln's "house divided" speech. Below is an excerpt pertaining to his views and his thoughts on Lincoln's views.

My principle is to recognize each State of the Union as independent, sovereign and equal in its sovereignty. I will apply that principle not only to the original thirteen States, but to the States which have since been brought into the Union, and also to every State that shall hereafter be received, "as long as water shall run and grass grow... Mr. Lincoln does not think this Union can continue to exist composed of half slave and half free States; they must all be free or all slave. I do not doubt that this is Mr. Lincoln's conscientious conviction. I do not doubt that he thinks it is the highest duty of every patriotic citizen to preserve this glorious Union, and to adopt these measures as necessary to its preservation. He tells you that the only mode to preserve the Union is to make all the States free or all slave. It must be the one or it must be the other. Now that being essential, in his estimation, to the preservation of this glorious Union, how is he going to accomplish it? He says that he wants to go to the Senate in order to carry out this favorite patriotic policy of his, of making all the States free,

⁸⁰ Abraham Lincoln. *House Divided Speech*. <http://www.abrahamlincolnonline.org/lincoln/speeches/house.htm>.

so that the house shall no longer be divided against itself. When he gets to the Senate, by what means is he going to accomplish it? By an Act of Congress? Will he contend that Congress has any power under the Constitution to abolish slavery in any State of this Union, or to interfere with it directly or indirectly?⁸¹

Debate One: Ottawa, August 21, 1858. Douglas started off the debate, and immediately put Lincoln on the defensive as Douglas connected Lincoln to the 1854 Republican platform.

Lincoln had to spend his time denying his connection to the radical platform, and reread a part of his speech from Peoria that discussed his view on African Americans. Lincoln stressed that African Americans should have the rights the Declaration of Independence gives all men, but he would not give them social or political equality. Further, he said “I have no purpose directly or indirectly to interfere with the institution of slavery in the states where it exists. I believe I have no lawful right to do so, and I have no inclination to do so. I have no purpose to introduce political and social equality between the white and black races.”⁸² Douglas’s reply returns to the 1854 Republican convention and platform, as well as Lincoln’s view on African Americans.

Douglas spent his entire speech time in the debates harping on Lincoln, rather than talking about himself.

Debate Two: Freeport, August 27, 1858: To begin, Lincoln answered the seven questions that Douglas had posed to him in Ottawa. His answers were slightly confusing because he said that he did not support prohibiting slavery in Washington D.C., but he did support prohibiting slavery in general. He later discussed he would support the prohibition of slavery if it were gradual, the result of a majority vote, and the unwilling owners be compensated.⁸³ However, Lincoln also

⁸¹ Stephen Douglas, Speech at Springfield, Illinois. 1858. <http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/speech-at-springfield-illinois/>.

⁸² Davis and Wilson, *The Lincoln-Douglas Debates*, 20.

⁸³ Davis and Wilson, *The Lincoln-Douglas Debates*, 48.

said that it is the right and duty of Congress to abolish slavery in all states.⁸⁴ Douglas referred often to his bills and his work in the legislature. He also discusses how the prohibition of slavery is not in the constitution, so it would be unjust. Overall, Douglas still on offensive, and Lincoln is still on defensive.

Debate Three: Jonesboro, September 15, 1858: Southern-most debate, in a county that was as south as southern Virginia. Douglas focuses on Democratic being of national unity, while Republicans were sectional with no internal unity. He says that the Republican party was created for abolition in response to the Kansas-Nebraska Act. Douglas also discusses that slavery should be decided by each state. "Government was formed on the principle of diversity in the local institutions and laws, not on that of uniformity".⁸⁵ Douglas then discussed the detrimental effects that would occur should there be a war between the North and South.⁸⁶ In comparison, Lincoln became less responsive to Douglas's claims, and more assertive of his own views, at Jonesboro. He brought up the Freeport Doctrine, and he also charged Kansas-Nebraska Act with reversing the direction of extinction the founders had put slavery on. Douglas concluded the third debate in his rebuttal by saying that he supported the Democratic Party's idea that the government had no right to interfere with slavery.

Debate Four: Charleston, September 18, 1858: Lincoln opened the debate, and he did so by continuing to mention the conspiracy of trying to nationalize slavery that he had charged Douglas with. This was in regard to Trumbull and a Toombs bill. Lincoln also said, "I am not, nor

⁸⁴ Davis and Wilson, *The Lincoln-Douglas Debates*, 47.

⁸⁵ Davis and Wilson, *The Lincoln-Douglas Debates*, 95.

⁸⁶ Davis and Wilson, *The Lincoln-Douglas Debates* 94.

have ever been, in favor of making voters or jurors of negroes, nor of qualifying them to hold office, nor to intermarry with white people.”⁸⁷ Douglas discusses how Lincoln changes his position based on how far south the debate is. Douglas says Lincoln calls for abolition in the north, and popular sovereignty in the south, but half the Republican party supports one and the other half supports the other. Douglas mimics Lincoln’s “house divided” speech, saying, “...how does he expect his abolition party to stand, when in one-half of the state it advocated a set of principles which it has repudiated in the other half”.⁸⁸ Douglas questions further, “Why cannot this government endure divided into free and slave states, as our fathers made it?”⁸⁹

Debate Five: Galesburg, October 7, 1858: This was the debate when Lincoln began to attack Douglas on his morals; specifically, Lincoln was able to attack Douglas’s morals since he defended the institution of slavery. However, Douglas opened the debate by discussing how four years ago in Knox County, the county Galesburg was in, he had appeared to talk about “the great fundamental principle that the people of each state and territory of this Union have the right...of regulating their own domestic concerns...”⁹⁰ Douglas continued to attack Lincoln on grounds of being “two-faced” by saying that Lincoln was a “...pro-slavery man in the South and a negro equality advocate in the North...”⁹¹ Lincoln began his speech by saying that “a very large portion of the speech which Judge Douglas has addressed to you has previously been delivered

⁸⁷ Davis and Wilson, *The Lincoln-Douglas Debates*, 131.

⁸⁸ Davis and Wilson, *The Lincoln-Douglas Debates*, 162.

⁸⁹ Davis and Wilson, *The Lincoln-Douglas Debates*, 163.

⁹⁰ Davis and Wilson, *The Lincoln-Douglas Debates*, 176.

⁹¹ Davis and Wilson, *The Lincoln-Douglas Debates*, 185.

and put in print”.⁹² Lincoln was trying to show that Douglas never discussed anything new in the debates, and everything he said could be read elsewhere.

Debate Six: Quincy, October 13, 1858 Douglas admitted he wanted free and slave states to remain divided forever. Douglas also claimed that “negroes” were not included in the Declaration of Independence and the inalienable rights that it grants. In Lincoln’s response, he said that Douglas’s claim was not true because no one— including Washington and Jefferson— had ever “affirmed” that African Americans were not included in the equalities of the Declaration of Independence.⁹³ Lincoln reiterates his belief that African Americans should have the right to “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness”, but not to social or political equality.⁹⁴

Debate Seven: Alton, October 15, 1858 Douglas opened with remarks on how the debates began, Lincoln’s house divided speech, and his speech in response. Douglas says he has focused on refuting three of Lincoln’s claims: First, that white man and black man are not equal, the Dred Scott decision was justified, and that the Union could continue to exist as their fathers made it.⁹⁵ He said that he will not waver in his political creed “wherever the American flag flies over American soil.”⁹⁶ Lincoln responded by claiming that the main issue between himself and Douglas was if slavery was morally right or wrong.

⁹² Davis and Wilson, *The Lincoln-Douglas Debates*, 187.

⁹³ Davis and Wilson, *The Lincoln-Douglas Debates*, 188.

⁹⁴ Davis and Wilson, *The Lincoln-Douglas Debates*, 189.

⁹⁵ Davis and Wilson, *The Lincoln-Douglas Debates*, 255.

⁹⁶ Davis and Wilson, *The Lincoln-Douglas Debates*, 255.

Discussion: Theme Evaluation through Primary Sources

The seven debates between Lincoln and Douglas showed the most comparable dialogue of the two during the pre-Civil War era. These debates touched on several key points of both men, such as slavery, morality, and radicalism. Through the dialogue of key points, the two themes found through secondary literature, as well as ideology found through the previous methodology, was supported.

Overall, Douglas tended to focus on the same points throughout all the debates, whereas Lincoln changed his speech a little bit between each debate.⁹⁷ Lincoln claimed it was because he was learning from each debate, but analysis of theme one will further explore Lincoln's reasoning and Douglas's strategy. Next, theme two will analyze the tactics each man used in reference to their personalities. Ideology will explore the men's respective debate rhetoric through three common themes seen throughout the debate. Then, the rhetoric from the debates will be analyzed in respect to each man's American identity. Finally, I will discuss how this case study relates to other studies, other possible explanations of my findings, and the limitations that arose throughout the course of the study. I will conclude this section by discussing future studies that could expand upon this case study.

Theme 1

In the debates, Douglas often brought up the notion that Lincoln changed his speech to tailor the language based on where the debate was located. Douglas's claim relates to the first literary theme, which is that Lincoln often felt slightly differently internally than what he proclaimed to the masses, whereas Douglas was confident in his beliefs. This is because each

⁹⁷ Davis and Wilson, *The Lincoln-Douglas Debates*, 129.

debate location differed, and the views of the people at the debated differed, as well. Lincoln did, in fact, speak slightly differently about slavery and equality in the more northern and southern regions, and he focused more on Douglas's character in the South. This is an intentional rhetorical technique that Lincoln effectively utilized, even if Douglas tried to say otherwise.⁹⁸ An example of Lincoln feeling differently than what he proclaimed to the masses occurred in the second debate. Here, Lincoln was responding to the question of slave trade between states, which Douglas had posed in the first debate. Lincoln says that he cannot speak on the topic because he had never thought much about it, which made him unqualified to have an opinion.⁹⁹ This statement by Lincoln shows that even though he probably had a personal opinion on the matter, he knew that his personal opinion was not one that should be shared in a political setting.

Douglas was confident in his beliefs, views, and speaking points, so his speeches only varied to respond to Lincoln. Yet, even then he used similar talking points to other debates. Part of Douglas's confidence seemed to draw from the fact that the Democratic Party was more established and weathered than the essentially brand-new Republican Party. His party was rooted in tradition and time, so his words and views radiated the confidence only gained from such an established party. In contrast, Lincoln had to focus on his goal of persuasion to get audiences to understand the positions he was taking on issues.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ Michael W. Loudenslager, *What We Can Learn About the Art of Persuasion from Candidate Abraham Lincoln: A Rhetorical Analysis of the Three Speeches that Propelled Lincoln into the Presidency*, (2013).

⁹⁹ Davis and Wilson, *The Lincoln-Douglas Debates*, 49.

¹⁰⁰ Loudenslager, *What We Can Learn About the Art of Persuasion from Candidate Abraham Lincoln*, 522.

Theme 2

The second theme of Lincoln's patient, yet energetic personality and Douglas's intense, but captivating personality is shown throughout the debates. For example, Lincoln called out Douglas in Galesburg, the fifth debate, about using the same speech he had given at a previous debate and not using the word "democrat" when speaking in Tazewell (even though he accused Republicans meeting and not going by the name "Republican"), shows his wit. The second theme is the contrast in the two leaders' personalities, where Lincoln's can be described as energetic but patient, and Douglas's can be described as intense but captivating. Lincoln's wit shines through the debates, but Douglas's captivation does, as well. Both are effective speakers, but the way in which they give their speeches are different.

Lincoln's speeches show his energy. The crowd was very interactive at each debate, and Davis and Wilson make several notes of applause and laughter. Lincoln's energy kept the crowd engaged, and his wit brought laughter. He was able to do this through persuasive techniques of alliteration, metaphor, theme, repetition, as well as by affirmatively tackling adverse arguments Douglas threw at him.¹⁰¹ These techniques can be attributed to his background in arguing cases as a lawyer. Some of these cases included litigating for the railroad; in fact, the Illinois Central Railroad was his most frequent client as he litigated over 50 cases on their behalf— as well as around 50 against them. This particular litigation allowed for Lincoln to reach wider prominence, as well as sharpen his rhetorical techniques.¹⁰² The technique of alliteration is shown through his

¹⁰¹ Loudenslager, *What We Can Learn About the Art of Persuasion from Candidate Abraham Lincoln*, 522.

¹⁰² Loudenslager, *What We Can Learn About the Art of Persuasion from Candidate Abraham Lincoln*, 524.

opening line, "...it is important that as profound silence be preserve as possible"; Lincoln's next sentence continues the alliteration with the letter "p" with the words "...producing a perfect equality between the negroes and white people. While I had not proposed...."¹⁰³ Another example of his use of persuasive techniques is shown in debate five when he tackles the arguments in Douglas's speech. Lincoln lays out his speech by saying, "...I shall follow him backwards upon some notes which I have taken, reversing the order by beginning where he concluded."¹⁰⁴ Here, Lincoln effectively laid out his argument so the audience could follow along, but also showed that he was talking off the cuff in by his mention to his "notes", which is a characteristic of a quick-witted lawyer.

Douglas's speeches exemplify his intensity and his ability to captivate an audience. He also received lots of applause and laughter during his speeches, but mainly for his intense claims. A clear example of this intensity is in debate three. Douglas opens by saying the point of the debates is to discuss "the political questions that now agitate the whole country", but goes on to say that Lincoln has discussed none of these such questions.¹⁰⁵ He receives applause for this claim, and then he actually asked the audience to be silent so that he could talk his whole time without the interruptions that cheering would instead occupy. Later in debate three, Douglas jabbed at Lincoln by saying, "I supposed that Mr. Lincoln was capable of making a public speech on his own account, or I should not have accepted the banter from him for a joint discussion".¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ Davis and Wilson, *The Lincoln-Douglas Debates*, 131.

¹⁰⁴ Davis and Wilson, *The Lincoln-Douglas Debates*, 187.

¹⁰⁵ Davis and Wilson, *The Lincoln-Douglas Debates*, 144.

¹⁰⁶ Davis and Wilson, *The Lincoln-Douglas Debates*, 145.

Douglas received cheers for this sentence, showing that he had captivated the audiences attention with his intense charge, despite the fact that he said this instead of actually responding to Lincoln's claim about the Trumbull conspiracy. A voice from the crowd called him out on the his part in the conspiracy, but Douglas stayed calm and responded that he was "going to make the speech in his own way", which relates back to theme one in that Douglas was confident in his talking points and did not change his speeches much at all, even to thoroughly respond to Lincoln's claims.¹⁰⁷

Ideology

Characteristics of political ideology can be pulled from the dialogue of the seven debates, and then these characteristics can be put together to form a fuller picture of Lincoln's and Douglas's own ideologies. In this section, I will explain the characteristics found in the speeches and connect them to the previous findings in primary sources. This can be done through the issues of slavery, morality, and radicalism.

Slavery. The issue of slavery was a primary key point in every debate. Each debate, Douglas spent time discussing how popular sovereignty was essential for any new territories wanting to become states in order to be in-line with the constitution. Douglas constantly worked to focus on how popular sovereignty was the most democratic option for the issue of slavery. Overall, he tried to avoid the merits of slavery in the debates and instead focus on popular sovereignty because he did not believe that Congress should be making a decision that could be done by local governments.¹⁰⁸ He also made references to the founding fathers, saying that if

¹⁰⁷ Davis and Wilson, *The Lincoln-Douglas Debates*, 145.

¹⁰⁸ Jaffa, *Crisis of the House Divided*, 44.

they wanted slavery to cease, they would have made it so. In fact, in debate seven he said that the Union should continue to exist as their fathers made it.¹⁰⁹ His stance on slavery reflects conservative values because he values the law over emotion.

In contrast, Lincoln repeatedly said that the founding fathers knew that the institution of slavery was morally wrong, and, further, that their goal was to slowly move slavery towards extinction.¹¹⁰ Lincoln used the rhetoric from, and appeal to, the moral foundation of equality in this claim. Douglas also attacked the Republican party by using the verbiage of Lincoln's "house divided" speech, saying, "one-half of the state...advocates a set of principles which it has repudiated in the half".¹¹¹ By this, Douglas meant that the Republican party was split on the issue of slavery. This split in Republicans goes to show that political party does not always perfectly align with political ideology; so, even though Lincoln may have been more progressive in his views than other— more traditional— Republicans.

Morality. Although Lincoln's position on slavery was rooted in morality all along, he did not explicitly say so until the fifth debate. In fact, Lincoln used morality inexplicably in his House Divided speech, before the debates even began. When he said, "a house divided against itself cannot stand", he was referencing a passage from the bible in attempt to weigh on moral consciences.¹¹² Lincoln drew not only upon the constitution to bring in morality, but also brought in words from the Declaration of Independence. He said the "inferior races" right to "life,

¹⁰⁹ Davis and Wilson, *The Lincoln-Douglas Debates*, 255.

¹¹⁰ Davis and Wilson, *The Lincoln-Douglas Debates*, 22, 100, 166, 276.

¹¹¹ Davis and Wilson, *The Lincoln-Douglas Debates*, 162.

¹¹² Lousenslager, *What We Can Learn About the Art of Persuasion from Candidate Abraham Lincoln*, 548.

liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” made them equal to whites, and further that “these declarations I have constantly made in reference to the abstract moral question” because “there is no other just rule”.¹¹³ Whereas both Lincoln and Douglas could rely on the Constitution to back their views of slavery, only Lincoln could use the Declaration. Lincoln's position of morality on the issue of slavery reflects liberalism because of his empathy for slaves and his recognition of their right to freedoms in the Declaration. Empathy resonates with the liberal-leaning moral foundations of harm avoidance and equality. These qualities were both previously observed through other primary sources about Lincoln.

Douglas used laws and bills to support his view, and he rarely ever used the words “moral” or “immoral”. By doing so, Douglas was working to ignore the emotionality of slavery by focusing rather on the legality of slavery. He strongly believed that slavery was not a question for Congress, but rather a question for the people.¹¹⁴ This is a trait of conservatism because conservatives believe in the consistent authority of the law over the changing human emotions.¹¹⁵ This trait of authority was found in Douglas through other primary sources of the pre-Civil War era.

Radicalism. Douglas relied on pegging Lincoln as a radical because radicalism is the opposite of traditionalism. A key of the conservative ideology is that of traditionalism; examples of traditionalism can be pulled from current-day studies which have found conservatives to

¹¹³ Davis and Wilson, *The Lincoln-Douglas Debates*, 189.

¹¹⁴ Jaffa, *Crisis of the House Divided*, 166.

¹¹⁵ Hibbing, Smith, & Alford, *Predisposed*, 143.

prefer meat and potatoes over exotic cuisine and landscape paintings over abstract paintings.¹¹⁶ Conservatives are wary of change, and prefer the things that are tried and true in their minds. Douglas believed that by putting the “radical” label on Lincoln, he could scare more moderate people away from Lincoln and into siding with his more traditional views due to the disturbing thoughts of radicalism. Douglas’s main attack on Lincoln through this radicalism was by trying to tie Lincoln to the 1854 Republican party platform; however, Lincoln repeatedly denied any connection to the platform. During the third debate, Douglas went as far to say that the Republican party was formed solely for the abolition of slaves in response to the Kansas-Nebraska Act. The formation of the Republican Party meant that the North believed they were not only stronger than the South, but they also were reacting the Constitution as the founding fathers had made it.¹¹⁷ By saying that the Democrats were the “same national party” they had always been, Douglas tried to make the entire Republican Party seem radical, not just Lincoln’s influence in it. Then, in debate six, Douglas subtly tried to tie Lincoln to radicalism by saying Lincoln’s belief that the Declaration of Independence applied to African Americans was “slander” to the founding fathers and their intentions.¹¹⁸ The use of the word “slander” not only implies malicious intent, but it also implies that Lincoln was lying. Further, Douglas’s verbiage was intended to make Lincoln’s view of equality seem crazy, far-fetched, and not applicable to the founding father’s wishes. Lincoln’s view of equality can be attributed to the liberal trait of

¹¹⁶ Hibbing, Smith, & Alford, *Predisposed*, 91-93.

¹¹⁷ Davis & Wilson, *The Lincoln-Douglas Debates*, 87-9.

¹¹⁸ Davis & Wilson, *The Lincoln-Douglas Debates*, 188.

openness to new experiences, and serves as a stark contrast to Douglas's conservative trait of traditionalism.

Lincoln was able to refute the radicalism charges, and he actually went further to say that Douglas, along with Lanipher and Harris, forged the Republican resolutions to make Lincoln seem radical.¹¹⁹ In addition, beginning in the first debate and lasting until the fourth one, Lincoln continually charged Douglas with being a part of a conspiracy to spread slavery west and throughout the nation. By doing this, Lincoln worked to make Douglas seem radical, as well. People tend to be wary of those with radical beliefs because they often deviate from the mainstream viewpoints. However, Lincoln's charge of conspiracy was a bit of a stretch, and Douglas was consistently able to defend himself and refute the charge. In fact, in the first debate Douglas said that if Lincoln "dares attack my moral integrity, by a charge of conspiracy between myself, Chief Justice Taney, and the Supreme Court, and two Presidents of the United States, I will repel it".¹²⁰ Since Lincoln's conspiracy charge was connected to a moral justification and Douglas's was connected to legal justification, Douglas was able to avoid downfall due to Haidt's social intuition model in that it is hard to justify moral intuition. Yet, in the end, Douglas's downfall had nothing to do with radicalism, and instead occurred because of his unwillingness to commit to the defense of the institution of slavery.

Relating Case Findings to Rhetoric through Primary Sources

The case study findings are important because not only do they relate to the literary themes found through secondary sources, but they also reflect other primary sources of the pre-

¹¹⁹ Davis & Wilson, *The Lincoln-Douglas Debates*, 195.

¹²⁰ Davis & Wilson, *The Lincoln-Douglas Debates*, 39.

Civil War era. The rhetoric used by Lincoln and Douglas not only shows where each fell on the political ideological scale, but it also gives us clues on how each man was identified in America at the time. Their rhetoric contains clues of the stories each believed, how they were responding to current issues, and their political ideology. These three components that were found in their rhetoric can each be added together to form both Lincoln and Douglas's American identity, respectively.¹²¹ Their American identities are important to understand because identity helps to explain the nuances that political ideology alone cannot.

The rhetoric that Lincoln used throughout the debates clearly states that he believed in African Americans having equal rights in regards to those given in the constitution, but not equal political or social rights. The contradiction in equality can be accredited to his progressive mindset conflicting with society's embedded racism. A second component to his rhetoric was the effort to be honest in all seven debates; Lincoln wanted his constituents to trust him and believe in his message, and, to him, honesty was the best route. His honesty paralleled his now popular nickname, "Honest Abe". This nickname came from his constant honest and ethical actions while working at Denton Offutt's store in Illinois.¹²² The nickname clearly shows how in addition to his actions, Lincoln's choice of rhetoric influenced his social identity. not only in the 19th century, but for the rest of time. Overall, Lincoln's American identity seems to be rooted in justice. His background as a lawyer, his belief in morality, and his fight for the truth are all a part

¹²¹ Ronald Lee and Karen King Lee, 1998, "Multicultural education in the little red schoolhouse: A rhetorical exploration of ideological justification and mythic repair", *Communication Studies*, 49:1, 15.

¹²² *How Lincoln Got the Name "Honest Abe"*, 2012, <https://aboutpresidentabrahamlincoln.blogspot.com/2012/03/how-lincoln-got-name-honest-abe.html>.

of how his rhetoric portrayed him to others. He may have been conflicted in how to navigate the issue of slavery, but ultimately he wanted what was just.

Douglas believed in defending the right of the institution of slavery, but was not a defender of slavery, or the South, in the end. In fact, due to Douglas's rhetoric during the debates, he had already lost popularity by the time he won the senate election.¹²³ By the time Lincoln won the presidential election of 1860, Douglas had been shunned by the Southern states. In response, Douglas pledged his loyalty to the North once the war began. Like Lincoln, Douglas also had a nickname during the course of his political endeavors— his was the “little giant”. He was given this nickname due to the contrast between his short stature, five feet and four inches, and his big personality, which led to his influence as a legislature.¹²⁴ Overall, Douglas's American identity seems to be rooted in traditional progress. By defending the institution of slavery, extending the railroad, and citing the founder's Constitution, Douglas showed how he believed in progress, but only if the progress is supported by traditionalism— not progressivism. This would be due to his belief in Manifest Destiny, a myth that proved to define America. Manifest destiny is the belief that Americans were destined to expand westward. Yet, his belief in manifest destiny explains the nuance of Douglas's true feelings on slavery. Douglas believed that as America expanded westward, more free states would be added to the union, and slavery would eventually be eliminated.¹²⁵

Relation of the Findings to Similar Studies

¹²³ Jaffa, *Crisis of the House Divided*, 4.

¹²⁴ Andrew Glass, “‘Little Giant’ Stephen Douglas born, April 23, 1813”, *Politico*, 2017. <https://www.politico.com/story/2017/04/23/stephen-douglas-little-giant-born-april-23-1813-237366>.

¹²⁵ Jaffa, *Crisis of the House Divided*, 48.

The findings relate to the political science research that political ideology is partially based in genetics, and, further, that the findings of the research can transcend time. The researchers believe that ideology can transcend time because it is embedded in genetics, and genes are passed down each generation. However, the findings from this thesis show that Lincoln and Douglas had the personality and psychological traits of certain ideologies, regardless of their genetics. Therefore, this study is also similar to other studies that analyze liberalism and conservatism based on traits that may or may not be genetic.

Case Study's Limitations

The case study of the Lincoln-Douglas debates to search for fragments of ideology proved to have a few limitations. One of these limitations that was found during the case study is that Lincoln and Douglas are no longer living, so it was not possible to implement any kind of laboratory testing or survey used by current ideological researchers. A second limitation was that the men were not accessible to answer any questions that may have helped me to better understand their debates, rhetoric, viewpoints, or personal feelings better. A third limitation of this case study is that it was not possible to test the political ideology of their decedents or predecessors due to a lack of resources.

Alternative Explanations of the Findings

Although the case study findings mirror the ideological findings of my research in literature, there could be alternative explanations to the findings. Due to the limitation of not being able to speak directly with either Lincoln or Douglas, bringing them into a laboratory for studies or having them fill out a survey is not an option. Therefore, proving their political ideologies is impossible. In addition, their respective alignments with liberal and conservative

traits based on their personalities and rhetoric could be merely coincidental. Possibly, Lincoln and Douglas could have hidden their true feelings on various matters their entire lives without ever revealing if they believed something contrasting to the actions they took and the words they said in their political lives.

Areas for Further Research

Extending the study to encompass Lincoln's and Douglas's close associates would be a either be a good affirmation or challenge to the mens' political ideology. If the people who they surrounded themselves with mirrored their beliefs, personalities, and visions, then that would help to affirm their ideological connections to their respective parties at the time. Secondly, this type of case study could be used to evaluate other historical figures in order to see where they would fall on the political ideological scale in present-day terms. Another way to further the research done through this thesis, and with the case study, could be to use the methodology on present-day political figures and the people they surround themselves with. Then, it could become a generational study that would attempt to truly find if the core tenets of political ideologies can transcend time.

Conclusion: Personality, Political Ideology, and American Identity

In conclusion, the second theme, which pertains to Lincoln's and Douglas's personalities, and the methodology of defining political ideologies, are most important to this thesis and is supported by the case study. These are the most important discussions because Lincoln and Douglas's personalities intertwine so well with their political ideologies and explain much of their behaviors and decisions in the pre-Civil War Era, including their dialogue during the seven debates. In addition, personality has a closer tie to political ideology, and beliefs tie more closely

to political party. Therefore, since political party names have swapped in the last 75 years, their personalities can be tied to the ideologies most often associated with a party, but not the parties themselves.

Lincoln's personality, when compared to traits of liberals today, lines up in almost every way. The exception would be that Lincoln did not necessarily believe that slaves should be completely equal to whites, just that slaves should have the rights granted in the Declaration, which made the institution of slavery immoral. Further, Douglas's personality traits correlate almost perfectly when compared to traits of conservatives today. The exception for Douglas was that he did not really care to defend the institution of slavery. This exception, however, ended up costing Douglas the Southern vote for presidency in the election of 1860. The personality traits were analyzed through the moral foundations theory, which when used with political ideology implies that conservatives and liberals have differing reflexive responses to their social, psychological, and physical environments.¹²⁶

The analyzation of their personalities and political ideologies also showed the role that each aspect played in their respective American identities. While both were Illinois men who rose to national fame due to their debates in 1858, how they viewed themselves was not only different from each other, but also different for themselves across their lives. They both believed in the American Constitution, but viewed it in different ways. They both wanted to keep the United States together, but saw different, potentially successful routes in order to do so. In the pre-Civil War era, Douglas's legislative work to expand the nation westward grew the wedge between him and Lincoln due to the issue of slavery, whereas Douglas's identity placed his

¹²⁶ Hibbing, Smith, and Alford, *Predisposed*, 107.

loyalty with Southern wishes. In contrast, Lincoln's identity landed his loyalty with Northern wishes. However, once the Civil War began, Douglas aided Lincoln in working to unite the Union again.

The parallels drawn between the two pre-Civil War political leaders and present-day political ideology supports the research that traits of political ideology can— and do— transcend time. In addition, these traits manifest in personality and beliefs, but they require the impact of the environment, as well. The final conclusion from the analytics is that Lincoln was a liberal then, and would be a liberal today; in addition, Douglas was a conservative then, and would still be a conservative today.

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