POLITICAL PERSPECTIVES IN CENTRAL OKLAHOMA: TESTING SOWELL AND LAKOFF

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This paper examines two models of political ideology and assesses their ability to predict the self-described ideological perspectives of central Oklahoma community leaders. The purpose is to quantifiably affirm or deny the usefulness of the models as tools for understanding how and why individuals support or oppose various public policies.

There is an abundance of literature on the various types of ideologies and the underlying philosophies that produce them, but few attempts to measure the compatibility of these philosophies with what might be called a "commonplace" understanding of ideological labels. Whether one is reading Baradat's *Political Ideologies*, Hoover's *Ideology and Political Life*, or Susser's *Political Ideology in the Modern World*, what is found is a predetermined categorization of ideologies and public policy questions, with an analysis of the philosophies which are believed to influence how individuals and societies come to adopt or reject certain ideologies and their subsequent policies. What is not found in any of these analyses, however, is a quantifiable measurement that verifies the congruence of those philosophies with how individuals view ideological terms such as "liberal," "conservative," "moderate." In other words, there is no attempt to answer the question, does one's agreement with a

philosophical position necessarily translate into a traditional understanding of ideological labels, and result in support for a compatible public policy? It is the argument of this paper that on the whole, individuals do adhere to a consistent set of principles from which they make decisions regarding public policies. Whether one wishes to call such sets of principles "visions" as does Thomas Sowell, or worldviews, or any other term, they provide a framework of logic that allows individuals to makes sense out of their surroundings.

This will attempt to test two philosophical models. One model is based upon the book *A Conflict of Visions*, by Thomas Sowell. According to Sowell, people generally fall into one of two categories depending on how they understand human nature. These two categories, the "constrained vision" and the "unconstrained vision," have their own set of consistent and logical policy consequences.

The second model is based upon George Lakoff's book, *Moral Politics*. According to Lakoff, the policy preferences of individuals can be traced to their understanding of family life. Specifically, Lakoff argues that how one views parenting will, in large measure, determine how they decide to support or oppose various public policy proposals. Lakoff's two basic family models are the "strict father" and the "nurturant parent." Like Sowell's contrasting visions, each of Lakoff's models possesses its own internal logic and consistent policy preferences.

A survey was given to a group of business and community leaders and elected officials within the Oklahoma City Metro Area. It contained thirty-one questions, which were divided between identifier questions (5), model questions (18), and policy questions (8). The survey was designed to determine if respondents' policy answers were consistent with their positions within the two models and their self-described political ideology. If valid, the models should be able to reasonably coincide with the ideological labels the respondents gave themselves. This information will be useful not only to political scientists and philosophers, as they constantly search for explanations as to how individuals perceive and interpret political solutions, but also, for the practitioners of politics, who must constantly communicate to voters in the most effective manner possible.

THE MODELS

According to conservative political analyst Thomas Sowell, a vision is "a sense of causation," that precedes any theory or verifiable hypotheses. It is the starting point from which theories, hypotheses, and all other attempts of verification and explanation result (Sowell, 14-16). Sowell states,

> Social visions are important in a number of ways. The most obvious is that policies based on a certain vision of the world have consequences that spread through society and reverberate across the years, or even across generations or centuries. Visions set the agenda for both thought and action (Sowell, 16).

According to Sowell, all social visions have at their foundation differing conceptions about human nature. Whether one reads the writings of William Godwin, James Madison, Edmund Burke, Thomas Paine, or, more recently, Friedrich Hayek or John Kenneth Galbraith, Sowell argues that within each is a specific perspective on the nature of humanity.

> The capacities and limitations of man are implicitly seen in radically different terms by those whose explicit philosophical, political, or social theories are built on different visions (Sowell, 18-19).

Although he recognizes the existence of numerous visions, Sowell groups them into two categories – the constrained vision, and the unconstrained vision. According to Sowell, central to the constrained vision is an acceptance of humanity's moral limitations. These limitations form the basic constraint of this particular vision. Within the constrained vision, writes Sowell,

> The fundamental moral and social challenge was to make the best of the possibilities which existed within that constraint, rather than dissipate energies in an attempt to change human nature . . . (Sowell, 21).

Subscribers to the constrained vision, according to Sowell, tend to identify how the moral and social benefits desired of individuals could be produced in the most efficient manner, while accepting human nature

as fundamentally flawed (Sowell, 21). Drawing from Adam Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Sowell argues that proponents of the constrained vision seek to develop "a system of moral incentives" in order to inspire people to act in the interests of others, rather than trying to solve the problem of human nature's inherent selfishness (Sowell, 22-23).

By contrast, those of the unconstrained vision focus on the motivation behind behaviors. According to Sowell, those of the unconstrained vision perceive human nature as capable of being molded and designed to do what is right, regardless of self-interest. In fact, Sowell argues that those of the unconstrained vision have a genuine disdain for social incentives, as they could retard the development of a "higher sense of social duty" within human nature (Sowell, 24). States Sowell,

> Implicit in the unconstrained vision is the notion that the potential is very different from the actual, and that means exist to improve human nature toward its potential, or that such means can be evolved or discovered, so that man will do the right thing for the right reason, rather than for ulterior psychic or economic rewards (Sowell, 26).

For Sowell, it is the fundamental difference between the two visions' conceptualizations of human nature that result in further disagreements on a host of other issues. If one believes that human nature is fundamentally and unalterably flawed, then a variety of other beliefs about society, government, law, etc., will logically follow. However, if one believes that human nature has the potential for "perfection," then a very different set of beliefs will result.

In comparing the two visions, Sowell states,

> Running through the tradition of the unconstrained vision is the conviction that foolish or immoral choices explain the evils of the world – and that wiser or more moral and humane social policies are the solution...By contrast, the constrained vision sees the evils of the world as deriving from the limited and unhappy choices available, given the inherent moral and intellectual limitations of human beings (Sowell, 38).

Flowing from their differing perspectives of human nature, Sowell points out that the constrained and unconstrained visions will necessarily disagree on topics as diverse as social planning, equality, justice, freedom, and power. According to Sowell, those who fall within the unconstrained vision will be disposed to favor social planning efforts, have a results oriented perspective of equality and freedom, view justice on a case-by-case basis, and are generally uninhibited in using government power to achieve their desired social goals.

On the other hand, those with the constrained vision tend to have a process oriented view of equality and freedom, are skeptical of social planning efforts, view justice in terms of its benefits to society, and are wary of employing the powers of the state in pursuit of social goals or ideals. According to Sowell, those in the constrained vision believe that the accumulated wisdom and insights of the ages, which they perceive as the foundation for current social, political, and legal institutions, should not be traded for contemporary rationalizations. Whereas, those of the unconstrained vision view modern, explicit, rationalization as the key to reversing the inequities and injustices of preceding generations.

It is important to note that Sowell makes provision for those views that fall in between the constrained or unconstrained visions, or even somewhat outside of them (what he calls "hybrids"). Two such "hybrids," according to Sowell would be Marxism and Utilitarianism. Both philosophies, states Sowell, combine enough of the constrained and unconstrained visions as to avoid strict classification. And according to Sowell, the existence of hybrid visions "make[s] it impossible to equate constrained and unconstrained visions simply with the political left and right (Sowell, 115)." Sowell points out that while the unconstrained vision

> is clearly at home on the political left . . . but the constrained vision . . . is also incompatible with the atomism of thoroughgoing libertarians. In the constrained vision, the individual is allowed great freedom precisely in order to serve social ends – which may be no part of the individual's purposes (Sowell, 116).

But Sowell does provide two important criteria for identifying where a particular "vision" may fall within his framework. First, one must look at the locus of discretion, and second, one must identify the mode of discretion. As Sowell explains,

> Social decisions are deliberately made by surrogates on explicitly rationalistic grounds, for the common good, in the unconstrained vision. Social decisions evolve systemically from the interactions of individual discretion, exercised for individual benefit, in the constrained vision – serving the common good only as an unintended consequence . . . (Sowell, 98).

He further states,

> it is only when both the locus of discretion and the mode of discretion consistently reflect the underlying assumptions of either the constrained vision or the unconstrained vision that a given social philosophy can be unambiguously placed under either rubric (Sowell, 103).

In other words, to identify where a particular vision falls within his model, Sowell seeks to ascertain where the decision-making authority resides for that vision, and how such decisions are carried out. For the constrained vision, the decision-making authority primarily resides with autonomous individuals who make agreements with one another, and cooperate to achieve mutually beneficial ends. For the unconstrained perspective, decisions are made by those who have the most "knowledge" or "wisdom" within the society, and their decisions are enforced for the good of the whole community. The constrained view begins with the individual and ends with society. In contrast, the unconstrained view begins with society and ends with the individual.

Sowell's approach of identifying basic philosophical positions, and then examining the ideological and policy implications that they produce is in stark contrast to liberal linguistics professor George Lakoff's methodology. Lakoff begins with the ideological positions of "conservatives" and "liberals", and then searches for a model to adequately explain those positions. Lakoff believes family models can adequately explain the differences between these two perspectives. He argues that conservative and liberal worldviews "center on two opposing models of the family (Lakoff, 33)."

According to Lakoff, conservatives center their world-view on a "strict father" family model. Such a model, writes Lakoff,

posits a traditional nuclear family, with the father having primary
responsibility for supporting and protecting the family as well as
the authority to set overall policy . . . and to enforce the rules.
The mother has the day-to-day responsibility for the care of the
house, raising the children, and upholding the father's authority.
Children must respect and obey their parents; by doing so they
build character, that is, self-discipline and self-reliance . . . Self-
discipline, self-reliance, and respect for legitimate authority are
the crucial things children must learn (Lakoff, 33).

The liberal worldview, in contrast, centers on a "nurturant parent"
model of the family. In this model,

Love, empathy, and nurturance are primary, and children become
responsible, self-disciplined, and self-reliant through being cared
for, respected, and caring for others . . . The obedience of children
comes out of their love and respect for their parents and their
community, not out of the fear of punishment . . . Good
communication is crucial. If their authority is to be legitimate,
parents must explain why their decisions serve the cause of
protection and nurturance . . . The principal goal of nurturance is
for children to be fulfilled and happy in their lives . . . What
children need to learn most is empathy for others, the capacity
for nurturance, and the maintenance of social ties . . . Raising a
child to be fulfilled also requires helping that child develop his or
her potential for achievement and enjoyment. That requires
respecting the child's own values and allowing the child to explore
the range of ideas and options that the world offers (Lakoff, 33-
34).

According to Lakoff, conservatives and liberals derive their
worldviews from family-based morality, which views "the nation as a
family, with the government as a parent."(Lakoff, 35) He believes that
this recognition explains the various policy differences between liberals
and conservatives.
Strict father morality, according to Lakoff, assumes that individuals
are predisposed to act according to their own self-interest. However,
they will change their behavior in order to obtain rewards or avoid
punishment (Lakoff, 67). States Lakoff,

> The entire Strict Father model is based on the further assumption
> that the exercise of authority is itself moral; that is, it is moral to
> reward obedience and punish disobedience . . . the Morality of
> Reward and Punishment (Lakoff, 67).

In addition, Lakoff argues that an integral part of the strict father model entails a vision of the world as a dangerous and hostile place in which those skills that enable one to survive are highly valued. Hence, in the strict father model, competition is viewed not only as a valuable way to teach certain skills and attitudes, but also as a fundamentally moral concept because it develops necessary survival skills. States Lakoff,

> Competition is therefore moral; it is a condition for the
> development and sustenance of the right kind of person.
> Correspondingly, constraints on competition are immoral; they
> inhibit the development and sustenance of the right kind of
> person (Lakoff, 69).

Lakoff asserts that those who fall within the strict father model will tend to eschew social welfare programs, support tough punishments for criminals, oppose needle exchange programs, oppose providing benefits to illegal aliens, support tax cuts, and support high spending on national defense. These positions, argues Lakoff, arise out of the moral principles of the strict father model (as outlined above). And they are intricately linked to the model's morality of reward and punishment, as well as the model's emphasis of self-discipline and self-reliance.

The nurturant parent model also has its corresponding moral emphasis. Empathy as morality, according to Lakoff, is the key to understanding the nurturant parent model, and the liberal worldview. It is empathy that leads people to cooperate with one another, to help one another, and to care for one another. According to Lakoff, it is empathy that leads to the nurturing life (Lakoff, 116). Furthermore, according to Lakoff, the nurturing parent model leads people to a "social responsibility" to create a nurturing world. This is view is a complete contrast of the strict father model which views the world "as it is" and imposes no obligation to change it.

The nurturant parent model, argues Lakoff, naturally predisposes its adherents to support social welfare programs, needle exchange programs for drug addicts, and providing benefits to legal and illegal

immigrants. Conversely, they would oppose tax reductions, especially if they were to "benefit the rich," increases in defense spending, and high spending on prisons.

Lakoff argues that that these two models represent two fundamentally different moral views of life. Hence they naturally lead to differing perspectives on various policy matters (Lakoff, 179). If one understands the family-based morality of an individual, asserts Lakoff, then one should be able to understand the policy preferences of that individual as well.

In comparing the two models, it is quite easy to see how Lakoff's family-based approach can fit within Sowell's, contrasting visions. The similarities of Lakoff's nurturant parent model, and Sowell's unconstrained vision are especially striking. And although Sowell tries to avoid simply equating one vision with a particular political ideology, it is not hard to assimilate much of Lakoff's text within the outlines of Sowell's two visions.

However, it is important to note that Sowell's approach makes more allowance for variations than does Lakoff's. This is, in large part, due to Lakoff's starting point being the ideological perspectives of conservatives and liberals. Sowell is careful to avoid such ideological linkages to his "visions," and acknowledges that both the constrained and unconstrained visions have many variations and degrees of consistency. Lakoff's family models are far more tied to the political ideologies of conservatives and liberals.

THE SURVEY

The survey used to test these two models contains three parts. First were the standard identifier questions. Five questions were used to identify various characteristics of the respondents. The questions covered the age, gender, and political leaning of the respondents, as well as asking how frequently they attended religious services and in how many civic organizations each respondent was a participant.

The second section asked a specific series of questions designed to determine where each respondent would fall within the two models. Because of the dichotomous nature of the models, a simple majority of questions was used to determine to which category the respondents

belonged. This approach will provide more understanding of the overall predictive nature of the models.

The questions asked in this section focused on key aspects of each author's model. For Sowell's model, the questions covered such topics as human nature, how to motivate people to act in the interests of others, the best method of achieving the good society, the nature of freedom, equality, and justice, and the primary cause of crime. From Lakoff's model, questions covered the type of values a family should instill in children, the respondents' attitude regarding competition and cooperation, and the respondents' definition of a "model citizen."

The third section of the survey asked a series of policy questions designed to divide respondents along the conservative-liberal axis. Again, in order to adequately assess the validity of the two models, it was important to maintain the dichotomous nature of the questions. It must be emphasized that the test was of the two basic models, and did not try to assess the amount of variation within the models that might exist.

As was mentioned previously, the test group was comprised of business and community leaders, as well as elected officials within the Oklahoma City Metro Area. These individuals were targeted because of their active involvement within their communities. Such involvement tends to indicate more familiarity and prior thought regarding the topics covered in the survey. Also, their activity within the community was assumed to result in a higher response rate to the survey than many other subgroups. Three hundred twenty surveys were mailed to these various individuals. They were identified through membership lists of local civic organizations, including chambers of commerce, rotary clubs, regional organizations, etc.

It is anticipated that the ideal results would find that those who identified with Sowell's constrained vision would also fall within Lakoff's strict father model, and would have a tendency to answer the policy questions in politically conservative manner. Conversely, those who identified within the unconstrained vision of Sowell should also fall within Lakoff's nurturant parent model, and show a tendency to answer the policy questions from a politically liberal perspective. To the extent that this ideal holds, the models should be compatible with a common understanding of ideological labels.

RESULTS

One of the most striking aspects of the survey has been a general dislike for the dichotomous nature of the questions on the survey. Many respondents felt the choices offered were too limiting to accurately reflect their views. A sizeable portion of some questions was left unanswered. While this attitude is understandable, the ability to test the two models depended on offering clear, distinct, and opposite choices, as each author presented them. In addition, providing multiple responses would have increased the length of the survey and most likely reduced the response rate.

Of the three hundred twenty surveys mailed to elected officials, and business and community leaders, 39% (125) have been returned. This is a very high response rate that validates targeting the survey to this subgroup, as well as minimizing the length of the survey.

Of those who responded, 1% were between the ages of 18-25, 19% were between 26-40, 52% were between 41-56, 21% were between 56-65, and 7% were over the age of 65. Fifty-two percent of the respondents were male; forty-eight percent were female. Forty-three percent of the respondents were members of 2 or 3 civic organizations, while twenty-seven percent were members of 5 or more civic groups. Seventeen percent of respondents identified themselves as "liberal," 34% stated they were "conservative," and 47% identified themselves as "moderate." Two percent selected the "Other" designation.

However, when examining the model questions, 54% responded in a conservative manner, 34% in a liberal manner, and only 11% were identified as "moderates" according to their responses to the policy questions. While this difference between the self-identifier and the responses to the policy questions is interesting, it must be viewed with a very cautious eye. The survey was designed to force individuals to choose between opposing viewpoints. Therefore, it was likely that there would be a difference between those who identified as "moderates" and how they would answer the policy questions, which were based on a conservative/liberal dichotomy. Also, the determination for whether one was counted as a "liberal," "conservative," or "moderate" from the policy questions was based solely on the number of responses that fell into a particular category. For example, there were eight policy questions,

for one to be counted as a moderate, they would have to answer four questions from a liberal perspective, and four from a conservative perspective to be designated a "moderate," since there were no "moderate" answers provided. Obviously, the likelihood of such a result is lower than if one was to choose one more "liberal" response than the number of "conservative" responses they provided, or vice versa.

Another interesting note about self-identified moderates is the exact division of them between conservative and liberal designations based on their policy responses. In their policy responses, 41% of moderates identified as "liberals" and 41% identified as "conservatives." Nineteen percent of moderates actually responded evenly between the conservative and liberal responses. For the purposes of this examination, they could be said to be the "true moderates."

In evaluating the responses to the model questions, 65% of the respondents fell within Sowell's "constrained vision" (based on answering a simple majority of questions from this perspective), while 26% identified with the "unconstrained vision." Ten percent of the respondents answered the model questions in an evenly mixed manner (6 constrained, 6 unconstrained). However, Lakoff's model was reversed, with 32% of the respondents identifying with the strict father model, while 50% fell within the nurturant parent model. Eighteen percent responded to Lakoff's questions in an exactly even manner.

Of those who fell within Sowell's constrained model, 44% also identified with Lakoff's strict father model. Thirty-six percent fell within Lakoff's nurturant parent model, and 20% of those who identified with the constrained model were evenly divided between Lakoff's two models. However, 84% of those who identified with Sowell's unconstrained model also identified with Lakoff's Nurturant parent model. A mere 6% of those who fell within Sowell's unconstrained model also identified with Lakoff's strict father model. An only slightly higher 9% of those in the unconstrained model fell evenly between Lakoff's two models.

Of those who were evenly divided between Sowell's two models, 27% identified with Lakoff's strict father model, 58% with the nurturant parent model, and 25% were also evenly divided between Lakoff's two models. These figures would indicate a consistency between the two models with a higher correlation existing between the unconstrained and nurturant parent models.

Since this paper is focusing on the compatibility of the models with the ideological self-identification of the respondents, the rest of the analysis will be dedicated to examining the respondents' answers to question number five as compared to their answers to the model and policy questions. We will begin with those who identified themselves as "liberals."

Of those who identified themselves as liberals, 24% fell into Sowell's constrained vision, while 76% fell within the unconstrained model. Similarly, 5% of self-described liberals fell into Lakoff's strict father model, while 86% of liberals identified with his nurturant parent model (9% were evenly split between Lakoff's two models). It would appear that Lakoff's model is slightly more compatible with the respondents' understanding of political liberalism. However, the difference could not be described as significant.

Of those who identified themselves as conservatives, 88% fell within Sowell's constrained model, while only 7% could be assigned the unconstrained view (5% were evenly split between the two models). Lakoff's model also appeared to be compatible with the self-identification of the respondents, with 63% of conservatives identifying with the strict father model and 23% identifying with the nurturant parent model, and 14% being evenly split between the two. When it comes to compatibility with the conservative perspective, Sowell's model seems to have the slight advantage. However, the difference is small enough not to be considered significant.

Unfortunately, the models tend to fail to hold for those who identified themselves as "moderate." This is seen in the fact that while 63% of those who identified as moderates fell within Sowell's constrained model, 56% of moderates fell within Lakoff's nurturant parent model. While Lakoff's model could be viewed as at least nominally reflective of what the moderate response rate should be, Sowell's cannot. And the disparity between the two certainly begs for further investigation. How can a large portion of the same respondents identify with two such divergent perspectives?

When comparing the responses to the policy questions to the model questions and the self-identifier, the models remain compatible with those who identified themselves as conservative or liberal. However, they remain less compatible with those who identified themselves as moderates, especially Sowell's model. Of those who identified

themselves as liberals, 14% answered a majority of the policy questions in a conservative manner, 76% answered a majority in a liberal manner, and 10% were evenly mixed. Of conservatives, 93% answered a majority of the policy questions "conservatively," 5% answered them from a liberal perspective, and 2% were evenly mixed. As mentioned previously, of those who identified themselves as moderates, 41% answered a majority of the policy questions in a conservative manner, 41% answered them as liberals, and 19% were evenly mixed. Again, neither model accurately reflected the actual responses from this group.

What is also interesting from the policy questions is the difference in accuracy in the model questions when compared by the self-identification of the respondents, and their responses to the policy questions. While 76% of those who identified themselves as liberals fell within Sowell's unconstrained model, 86% fell within Lakoff's nurturant parent mode. This would indicate that Lakoff's model was more compatible with those who identified themselves as liberals. However, when examining the policy questions, Sowell's model seems more accurate than Lakoff's, with 76% of those who identified themselves as liberals also answering a majority of the policy questions in this manner – an exact match for those who identified themselves as liberals and fell in Sowell's unconstrained model. It would appear that more respondents fell into Lakoff's nurturant parent model than actually answered the policy questions in a "liberal" manner.

The same shift holds true for conservative respondents. Of those who identified themselves as conservatives, 88% also fell within Sowell's constrained model. This would indicate a very high compatibility between Sowell's model and a common understanding of conservative ideology, since 93% of those who identified as conservatives actually answered the policy questions accordingly. However, the 63% of conservative respondents who fell within Lakoff's strict father model is considerably below the 93% who answered the policy questions in a conservative manner. From a macro perspective, Sowell's model would appear to be slightly more compatible to a common understanding of "conservatism" and "liberalism" than Lakoff's when comparing responses to the model questions with responses to the policy questions.

When one examines the responses to specific questions, some very interesting results are revealed. This is especially true when discovering how those who identified themselves as "moderates" chose

between answers designed on the liberal/conservative axis. For example, question eight asks,

> I believe that when people fail it is because:
> a) people are inherently limited
> b) social conditions keep them from succeeding

Of those who identified themselves as liberals, 38% answered that people fail because of inherent limits (Sowell's "constrained" perspective), while 62% said that individual failure was a result of existing social conditions (Sowell's "unconstrained" perspective). In contrast, 72.5% of "conservative" respondents believed that personal failures are due to the inherent limitations of people, while 27.5% believed that such failures were the result of existing social conditions. Clearly, for those who identified themselves as conservatives or liberals, Sowell's model accurately reflected how they perceived the answer to this question. However, moderates, who had no "moderate response" offered to them, greatly sided with what would be considered the liberal response. In fact, a larger portion of moderates, 65%, selected social conditions as the catalyst to success or failure than did liberals. Only 35% of moderates believed that inherent limitations primarily determined personal success or failure. In this instance, moderates clearly were aligned with liberals, and fell firmly into Sowell's unconstrained model.

However, if question 15 is examined, the opposite results are found. This question asks,

> Crime results from:
> a) social inequalities
> b) flaws in human nature

Of those who identified themselves as liberals, 76.5% answered that crime is primarily a result of social inequalities (unconstrained perspective), while 23.5% stated that crime resulted from human nature (constrained perspective). Not surprisingly, conservatives answered in just the opposite manner. Ninety-eight percent of conservatives responded that crime was a result of the flaws of human nature, while only 2% stated that crime could be attributed to social inequalities. Those who identified themselves as moderates tended to also believe that crime was a result of human flaws, though not to the extent conservatives did.

Sixty-seven percent of moderates identified human flaws as the primary cause of crime, versus 33% who stated that social inequalities were to blame.

Another interesting response from Sowell's model came with question 11. This question asks,

> Law should be:
> a) flexible and easily changed over time to adapt to new
>   situations and information
> b) consistent over time and slow to change in order to provide
>   stability

Seventy-six percent of liberals stated that they believed the law should be flexible, while 23% answered that it should be consistent. Again the "conservative response" was opposite that of liberals. Eighty-eight percent of conservatives responded that the law should be consistent over time, while only 12% stated that the law should be flexible. Moderates, however, were evenly split, with 50% stating that the law should be flexible and 50% stating that it should be consistent.

While the questions from Lakoff's model did not produce any responses in which moderates, or either of the other groups, were evenly divided, these questions revealed a tendency of moderates to answer questions from the nurturant parent (liberal) perspective. For example, question 18 asks,

> The best family is one in which parents emphasize:
> a) respect for authority, obedience, self-discipline and
>   self-reliance
> b) love, empathy, and nurturance

Thirty-two percent of liberals answered that the best family emphasizes respect for authority, obedience, etc. (Lakoff's strict father perspective), while 68% said that the best families emphasize love, empathy, and nurturance (Lakoff's nurturant parent perspective). Again, self-described conservatives had the opposite response, with 65% favoring emphasizing respect for authority, obedience, etc., while 35% preferred an emphasis on love, empathy, and nurturance. Moderates preferred the love, empathy, and nurturance response in the same proportion as liberals – 68% to 32%.

Also, on question 22, which asks,

> The model citizen is someone who is:
> a) self-disciplined, self-reliant, and believes in a system of
>   rewards and punishments
> b) empathetic, helps the disadvantaged, protects the weak,
>   and exhibits self-fulfillment

liberals and moderates tended to answer in the same manner, although to a lesser extent that to question 18. Of liberals, 89.5% (nurturant parent perspective) responded that the best citizen is empathetic, protects the weak, etc., while only 10.5% selected a self-disciplined, self-reliant, etc. (strict father perspective) individual as the best citizen. Similarly, 58% of moderates selected the empathetic and self-fulfilled individual as the ideal citizen as opposed to 43% who selected the self-disciplined, self-reliant, etc. response. Conservatives, not surprisingly, differed completely, with 83% selecting the self-disciplined, self-reliant individual as the best citizen, compared to just 17% choosing the empathetic, self-fulfilled answer.

Again, Lakoff's model would also appear reflective of the conservative/liberal perspectives. However, moderates, across the range of Lakoff's model questions, consistently coincided with the nurturant parent (liberal perspective) model. This is a subject that will be discussed in more detail in the conclusion.

Interestingly enough, however, the policy question results reveal a slight tendency for moderates to prefer the conservative responses. In five of the eight policy questions, self-described moderates chose the conservative answer. A majority of moderates (56%) and conservatives (79%) believe that school vouchers (question 25) "allow freedom of choice and promote the competition that increases quality." Similarly, a majority of moderates and conservatives support capital punishment (question 28) as being "necessary to control crime" (moderates, 57%; conservatives, 76%), teaching moral values in public schools (question 29: moderates, 97%; conservatives, 100%), and believe that the environment is adequately protected by current law (question 30: moderates, 56%; conservatives, 83%). Also, a majority of both moderates (54%) and conservatives (80.5%) believe that the rich should "pay the same tax rate as the middle class"(question 31).

However, on the three questions that the majority of moderates and liberals find agreement, it appears stronger than the agreement found between conservatives and moderates. For instance, both moderates (68%) and liberals (95%) believe that "access to basic health care is a right"(question 24). Likewise, a majority of moderates (61%) and liberals (86%) believe that "more gun control laws are necessary" (question 27). And when answering as to what they believe about the issue of abortion (question 26), a majority of liberals (86%) and moderates (77%) answered that they believe abortion is a woman's right and should not be restricted.

Finally, in examining the specific questions, it must be noted that several of the model questions, and one policy question received the same responses regardless of the respondents' ideological identification. A majority of liberals (100%), conservatives (95%), and moderates (93%) believe that the "best method for motivating individuals to act in the interests of others is providing incentives for such behavior" (question 7). Similarly, the majority of respondents believe that "addressing social problems like poverty and illiteracy requires finding solutions and carrying them out"(question 9: liberals, 76%; conservatives, 62%; moderates, 70.5%), that freedom is experienced "when the means of achieving my goals are available" (question 12: liberals, 84%; conservatives, 90.5%; moderates, 97%), and that equality occurs "when everyone has the same opportunity" (question 14: liberals, 90.5%; conservatives, 98%; moderates, 95%).

Likewise, regardless of ideological perspective, a majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that it is important to "develop a nurturing attitude in children" (question 20: liberals, 95%; conservatives, 95%; moderates, 100%), that the most important value to teach a child is "responsibility" (question 23: liberals, 52%; conservatives, 74%; moderates, 74%), and that the "public schools should teach certain fundamental moral values" (question 29: liberals, 86%; conservatives, 100%; moderates, 97%).

For the model questions, the consistency of responses regardless of ideological perspective is an indication that these specific questions are not reflective of a particular ideology. Thus they do not have a predictive value. On these specific topics, either the model is somewhat faulty, or the question should be rephrased to provide a better divide between ideological perspectives.

For question 29, it is interesting to note that the vast majority of respondents, regardless of ideological label, believe it is important to teach fundamental moral values in public schools. One would have to assume that a division would occur between the ideologies when specific values are discussed. Certainly, this question is unreliable as an indicator of ideological perspective.

CONCLUSION

Although certain specific questions within the models have been identified as lacking any correspondence to a particular ideological perspective, on the whole, the models are reflective of the three ideologies to which they were compared. In the aggregate, each model has a certain predictive value with the respondents' ideological perspectives. For those who identified with Sowell's constrained perspective, and Lakoff's strict father perspective, they also tended to answer the policy questions in a conservative manner, as Sowell and Lakoff predict they would. The results are similar for liberal respondents who identified with the unconstrained perspective and the nurturant parent perspective. Both liberals and conservatives displayed a strong amount consistency in their responses. This consistency tends to validate a portion of the original hypothesis.

Moderate respondents tend to cause a disparity between the models, as a majority of moderates identified with both Sowell's constrained perspective and Lakoff's nurturant parent perspective. And, as was previously noted, moderates tended to answer the policy questions in a slightly more conservative than liberal manner. This would, at first glance, indicate that Sowell's model might have a more accurate reflection of the moderate perspective. However, since self-described moderates evenly split their policy preferences between liberal and conservative answers (41% each), it appears that neither model is wholly accurate at predicting moderate responses. This was not unexpected considering the dichotomous nature of the survey. And both authors emphasized that there exist many variations between the two extremes that are used as the base models.

It must be remembered that this survey was not intended to be a reflection of the opinions of the general population in Oklahoma, or even in the Metro Oklahoma City area. Instead, it was designed to provide a measure of understanding into the political perspectives of community leaders within the central Oklahoma area. This group was targeted for three reasons. First, these individuals are active in the community in which they live, as well as in broader communities. Because of this they exert a larger influence on policy makers, since they shape and represent the opinions of others. They are the "movers and shakers" who "make things happen." Therefore, it is important to understand how and what they think about social and political matters.

Second, because they are active in their communities, it is assumed they have spent a greater amount of time thinking about, and involving themselves in, the issues covered in this survey. As community leaders, they are looked to for guidance regarding various public policy issues. The reasoning that produces their political perspectives should be of interest to both academics and political strategists.

Third, it was assumed that these individuals would be more likely to take the time to fill out the survey and return it. The high response rate to the survey would seem to substantiate such an assumption. Such individuals constantly seek out ways to influence their communities, even to the extent of filling out the various surveys that come throughout any given year.

Also, it is important to understand that the survey was not designed solely to identify the opinions of the respondents, but to test two philosophical models as well. To the extent that the majority of respondents answered the model questions and policy questions consistently with one another and with their self-applied ideological label, both models appear to be quite compatible with a "common" understanding of such labels. Both Sowell and Lakoff appear to have developed models that can, in some measure, predict the ideological preferences of the respondents of this survey.

However, it is clear that there exists a need for further research. One suggestion would be to examine each model independently. Because of the sophisticated constructs each author has developed, and because of the constraints inherent in designing a survey that will receive an adequate response rate, each model could be more fully examined through separate studies.

Also, many of the model questions could be followed up with a series of their own specific policy questions. Such an approach should lead to a more precise understanding of the reasoning used by respondents to decide their positions on various issues.

A final suggestion would be to take the political self-identifier and simply compare it to a broader range of public policy issues. Such an examination would certainly help to determine the consistency in thinking of the respondents, as well as verifying the relevant current ideological labels continue to possess. Although some have argued that ideological labels such as "conservative" and "liberal" are losing their relevance, this survey would indicate that they remain useful in describing the overall perspective a given individual has towards public policy issues. Nevertheless, it is important to continue to verify the relevance of such labels

Although the results of this examination may have limited applications, they are a beginning to a process that has been neglected. Many writers offer their thoughts on how and why people think certain ways about public policy issues. However, rarely is an attempt made to actually measure and test these hypotheses. If we are to weed out those ideas that have little relevance or compatibility to current political thought, and more fully develop those that do, such attempts should be conducted.

Without adequately testing the various constructs offered to explain ideological preferences, we are left with little more than a variety of often-conflicting hypotheses. While such ideas are often interesting, their value lies in their ability to reflect, predict, and explain political thought and behavior. These are determined only through adequate testing and measurement. Therefore, it is hoped that more attempts will be made to verify such constructs as offered by Sowell and Lakoff.

REFERENCES

Lakoff, George. 1996. *Moral Politics: What Conservatives Know that Liberals Don't*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

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APPENDIX A
THE SURVEY

Survey: Political Views

Directions: Select the answer that seems to you to be most accurate. Record your answer on the Scantron form provided. Thank you.

1. My age group is
    a) 18-25
    b) 26-40
    c) 41-55
    d) 56-65
    e) over 65

2. I am
    a) male
    b) female

3. I attend religious services
    a) regularly (2 or more times per week)
    b) frequently (once per week, on average)
    c) occasionally (once a month)
    d) seldom (less than once per month)
    e) never

4. I am a member of ____ civic organizations
    a) 1
    b) 2-3
    c) 4-5
    d) more than 5

5. I consider myself to be a
    a)   liberal
    b)   conservative
    c)   moderate
    d)   other

6. On the whole, I find that
    a)   people are limited in their willingness to act in the interests of
          the whole community
    b)   people are generally willing to act in the interests of the whole
          community

7. The best method for motivating individuals to act in the interests of
    others is
    a)   requiring this behavior
    b)   providing incentives for such behavior

8. I believe that when people fail it is because
    a)   people are inherently limited
    b)   social conditions keep them form succeeding

9. Addressing social problems like poverty and illiteracy requires
    a)   finding solutions and carrying them out
    b)   considering trade-offs in which the costs and benefits to
          society must be carefully weighed

10. Achieving a good society requires
    a)   allowing social processes to evolve over generations into
          political, economic, and legal institutions that address
          society's needs
    b)   careful planning and government intervention

11. Law should be
    a)   flexible and easily changed over time to adapt to new situations
          and information
    b)   consistent over time and slow to change in order to provide
          stability

12. I experience freedom when
    a)   I have no constraints on my behavior
    b)   the means of achieving my goals are available

13. Justice results in a particular case when
    a)   a fair outcome is achieved
    b)   fair rules and procedures have been observed

14. Equality occurs when
    a)   everyone has the same opportunity
    b)   everyone has the same benefits

15. Crime results from
    a)   social inequalities
    b)   flaws in human nature

16. The free market, without government interference,
    a)   fairly and effectively distributes goods
    b)   unfairly and ineffectively distributes goods

17. Social justice demands that
    a)   individuals enjoy at least a minimal share of the benefits of
         society
    b)   society's rules be applied fairly without guarantee of a
         particular outcome

18. The best family is one in which parents emphasize
    a)   respect for authority, obedience, self-discipline and self-
         reliance
    b)   love, empathy, and nurturance

19. With the statement "Competition is moral," I
    a)   strongly agree
    b)   somewhat agree
    c)   am undecided
    d)   somewhat disagree
    e)   strongly disagree

20. With the statement "It is important to develop a nurturing attitude
    in children," I
    a)   strongly agree
    b)   somewhat agree
    c)   am undecided
    d)   somewhat disagree
    e)   strongly disagree

21. With the statement, "Cooperation is more moral than competition,"
    I
    a)   strongly agree
    b)   somewhat agree
    c)   am undecided
    d)   somewhat disagree
    e)   strongly disagree

22. The model citizen is someone who is
    a)   self-disciplined, self-reliant, and believes in a system of
         rewards and punishments
    b)   empathetic, helps the disadvantaged, protects the weak, and
         exhibits self-fulfillment

23. Which of the following is the most important to teach a child:
    a)   empathy
    b)   self-discipline
    c)   self-appreciation
    d)   responsibility

24. Access to basic health care
    a)   is a right
    b)   is a privilege, not a right

25. Vouchers to allow parents to select their children's schools
    a)   allow freedom of choice and promote the competition that
         increases quality
    b)   undermine the public school system that guarantees education
         for all

26. The ability to have an abortion
    a)   is a woman's right and should not be restricted
    b)   is a woman's right but should be discouraged, not restricted
    c)   is not a woman's right but should be discouraged, not
         restricted
    d)   is not a woman's right and should be restricted

27. More gun control laws are
    a)   necessary
    b)   not necessary

28. Capitol punishment is
    a)   necessary to control crime
    b)   not necessary to control crime

29. Public schools
    a)   should teach children certain fundamental moral values
    b)   should not teach children certain fundamental moral values

30. Currently, the environment is
    a)   adequately protected by law
    b)   not adequately protected by law

31. The tax system should be designed so that
    a)   the rich pay the same tax rate as the middle class
    b)   the rich pay a higher tax rate than the middle class

APPENDIX B

Ideological Preferences Compared to Model Responses

	Liberal	Conservative	Moderate	Other
Constrained	24%	88%	63%	50%
Unconstrained	76%	7%	22%	0%
Mixed	0%	5%	15%	50%
Strict Father	5%	63%	20%	0%
Nurturing Parent	86%	23%	56%	100%
Mixed	9%	14%	24%	0%

APPENDIX C

Ideological Preferences Compared to Policy Rreferences

	Liberal	Conservative	Moderate	Other
Liberal	76%	5%	41%	50%
Conservative	17%	93%	41%	50%
Mixed	10%	2%	19%	0%