
Conceptual Metaphor in Political Discourse: A Semantic Analysis of Four State of the Union Addresses Delivered by George W. Bush

by Emily Hayes
Linguistics

Faculty Mentor: Eric Pederson, Linguistics

Abstract

In conceptual metaphor theory, metaphor plays a fundamental role in how we understand our world. Metaphorical models help us understand one domain of knowledge in terms of other, different domains. According to linguist George Lakoff, one example of conceptual metaphor can be seen in politics. He argues that we have a metaphorical understanding of our nation as a family. Lakoff claims that two of the major political ideologies in the United States, conservatism and liberalism, are metaphorically based on the Strict Father family model and the Nurturant Parent model, respectively. This study looks for evidence of these metaphors in political discourse through a semantic analysis of four State of the Union Addresses delivered by George W. Bush. Although there is little explicit metaphor, the language is consistent with the entailments of the Strict Father model.

Introduction

Metaphors are ways to understand one thing in terms of another. We often think of them devices used in poetry and literature. But metaphors are common in everyday speech and in ways of which we

may not always even be aware. In *Metaphors We Live By*, linguist George Lakoff and philosopher Mark Johnson claim that thoughts are structured metaphorically. According to Lakoff and Johnson, complex metaphorical structures arise from physical experiences in the world. For example, many expressions convey the metaphor Nurturance Is Warmth. It is this language that Lakoff and Johnson take as evidence that metaphors underlie the way people think about and understand the world. That is what is meant by “conceptual metaphor.”

One feature of a conceptual metaphor is that it is largely unconscious, meaning that people are often unaware that language is metaphorical. That lack of awareness is one reason that Lakoff and Johnson claim that the metaphors are deeply embedded within conceptual frameworks, and also a reason that conceptual metaphors can seem so subjective and difficult to analyze. The analysis therefore often takes the form of interpreting the logical presuppositions and entailments that must follow if the metaphor holds. The metaphor itself is understood as a mapping of one domain onto another. Within each domain are concepts—networks of ideas with particular relationships to one another. Thus, one domain is mapped onto another through the structure of these relationships. For example, the metaphor Love Is A Journey has the concept “journey” in its source domain and “love” in its target domain. A journey is a concept that includes travelers, an origin, a destination, and a path. In the target domain, then, each of these components has a corollary: the lovers, their meeting, their goals together, and the time they spend together. Each of these pieces is activated as part of the concept “journey.” By extension, the idea that a relationship is not “heading anywhere,” may not consciously

evoke the metaphor, but it is a working example of the metaphor Love Is A Journey.

In his book *Moral Politics*, Lakoff argues that political discourse in the United States is based on the metaphor that the nation is a family. He takes this as evidence of a conceptual metaphor, one that structures not just general talk about politics but the way in which different political viewpoints are translated into actual governmental policies. The Nation As A Family metaphor is evidenced in such phrases as “fatherland” and “brothers in arms.” Based on this overarching metaphor and a systematic analysis of the ways in which conservative and liberal views differ, Lakoff identifies two particular family models as those upon which the two major political philosophies are metaphorically based. Specifically, he argues that the family model that structures the conservative framework is the “Strict Father” model and for liberals it is the “Nurturant Parent” model.

The family models are prototypes or stereotypes that we become familiar with growing up in a culture that propagates them through television and other media. These family models are not necessarily based in real life nor do they need to be in order for us to understand what they entail. This process involves what are known as schemas and scripts. A schema can be thought of as something like a play. It is the stage and the setting for what is going to take place. In our analogy, a script is just that—the script. It is the set of actions that are called for based on the setting or schema. For example, a schema with which we are all familiar is eating at a restaurant. The details of what happens at a restaurant might vary somewhat according to the kind of restaurant, but the experience has the same basic structure everywhere. Customers either seat themselves or are

seated by a host. They choose what to eat from a menu and convey this choice to a waitperson, who then brings the food and (ideally) takes care of other aspects of the meal, such as water service. When finished eating, the customer pays for the food and includes a tip for the service. Only once the meal is finished and paid for does the customer leave. The setting of eating at a restaurant is a schema, and the expected actions are the script. People rarely think about how they know what to do at a restaurant – they simply know. Yet everyone had to learn the particulars of what that situation means in our culture, how to act, and how others are expected to act. It seems simple but in fact involves a huge amount of social knowledge that we have had to acquire.

According to theories in psychology and cognitive science, schemas and scripts are critical processes that human beings use to structure the world and thus to make sense of it. Children begin organizing their experiences into scripts and schemas when they are very young and continually revise them as they learn and grow. The Strict Father and Nurturant Parent models of family are schemas. Although an individual may not have grown up in these stereotypical kinds of families, or even known anyone who did, the schemas are recognizable and make it possible to think about some of the things that take place in these models. The basic ways in which these models are structured are clear and understandable because the scripts that accompany them are linked to other cultural experiences.

The Metaphors

In each family model, there are founding principles and guiding philosophies. Each member of the family has particular rights

and responsibilities within this framework. According to Lakoff, the Strict Father family begins with the view that the world is fundamentally a dangerous place. As the head of the household and primary authority, the father's duties are to protect his family from these dangers and to teach his children how to protect themselves. The goal of the father is to raise his children to be independent and strong enough to protect their own families from the world. According to the Strict Father model, children do not know enough about the world to make their own decisions but instead need to be taught by the father, who has gained his knowledge through experience and by being taught himself. Therefore one of the highest values espoused in the Strict Father family is obedience to authority, because that obedience will keep the family safe and lead ultimately to its success.

In the Nurturant Parent model, the world is a place to be explored. It has inherent dangers, but parents should educate their children about those dangers rather than shield children from them. Above all, it is the parents' responsibility to provide for their children's needs so that they have a solid foundation from which to grow and learn about the world. The goal of the Nurturant Parent family is to promote the overall well-being of their children and therefore the whole family. According to Lakoff, the quality most necessary to meet that goal is empathy. With empathy, one can understand the needs of others, care about those needs, and want to meet them. The primary guiding values in the Nurturant Parent family then are empathy and nurturance. The Nurturant Parent family seeks to instill these values so that the children will continue to treat the world in the same way.

From these foundations Lakoff further deconstructs the family

models into groups of moral metaphors and organizes them according to their importance within the Strict Father or Nurturant Parent model (appendix A). These moral metaphors are identified based on the worldviews, goals, and actions specific to each family model. The success or failure of a family is determined by the system of values that family holds. These are the values that, according to Lakoff, become modeled metaphorically in politics and thereby contribute to the social and economic landscape of the country.

The metaphorical mapping of the family models with respect to the political philosophies of conservatives and liberals allows us to understand the viewpoints of these philosophies in the same framework. Therefore, according to Lakoff, conservative positions are based on the same idea of the world as is the Strict Father family. Specifically, the world is a dangerous place in which authority must be obeyed until one has enough knowledge and strength to navigate it. The liberal viewpoint, on the other hand, is based on the view that the world is a place to be cared for, something people learn by caring for and respecting one another. As he argues in *Metaphors We Live By*, Lakoff finds evidence for these metaphorical positions in the language we use, in this case, the language of politics.

The purpose of this study is to examine recent political discourse to see whether the metaphors are as evident as Lakoff suggests. The representative sample of political speech is a collection of State of the Union Addresses by George W. Bush. Rather than a comparison of the two philosophies, this analysis focuses on one philosophy, the conservative viewpoint, and the corresponding family structure upon which Lakoff claims it is metaphorically modeled. The analysis seeks to investigate the implications for an underlying

conceptual understanding based on the stability or instability of the metaphors within each of several domains over time. State of the Union Addresses are rich sources of political rhetoric addressing the key domains Lakoff identifies: social issues such as abortion, gay rights, and education; foreign and domestic policy; and the economy. Using State of the Union Addresses from one administration over a span of seven years provides an opportunity for this longitudinal approach.

By investigating the metaphorical models, it is possible to find one of two versions of Lakoff's theories: the strong and the weak hypotheses. The strong version would ideally find explicit metaphorical language that articulates the moral metaphors outlined by Lakoff. For example, a statement by President Bush that "America is a family and, as the father of that family, I have the moral obligation to provide leadership through strong authority and self-discipline" would be a concrete example of the strong hypothesis, but such direct language is unlikely. Alternatively, the weak hypothesis would look for language that implies positions consistent with the models—that is, language that can be interpreted as lining up with the Strict Father framework even if it does not point directly to that framework. While this weaker version would also be open to explanations other than Lakoff's metaphorical models, it would still offer support for his theories.

Analysis

The analysis of the State of the Union Addresses focuses on the following areas: the economy including the federal budget and taxes; Social Security, Medicare, and health care; domestic social issues and faith-based charities; energy and the environment; and foreign

policy including Iraq and the “war on terror.” The study examines each of these topics in turn in order to determine whether either or both of the metaphorical family models are present and whether they are evenly represented across the domains listed above.

The Economy Including the Federal Budget and Taxes

In his 2001 State of the Union Address, Bush asserted:

Government has a role, and an important role. Yet, too much Government crowds out initiative and hard work, private charity and the private economy. Our new governing vision says Government should be active but limited, engaged but not overbearing. And my budget is based on that philosophy.

Beginning with the notion of “crowding out,” it is necessary to understand when such a thing can happen. For something to be crowded out, at least two conditions must be in place: competition and limited space. Without these things, no crowding out will take place. The competing actors are clearly identified: government versus the private sector. But to make sense of the analogy, we must understand from what the space the government might crowd out initiative and hard work. This can be seen in entailments of the MORAL AUTHORITY metaphor. In his discussion of the Strict Father model, Lakoff articulates an important set of entailments regarding legitimate and illegitimate authority that arise when the child in the Strict Father family reaches maturity. A fundamental goal of the Strict Father family is to raise an independent child who will, ideally, become the head of his own family and uphold the same values. Thus it is necessary for the child to become a moral authority in his own right. Once this happens, it is no longer moral for the parent to exercise his authority over the child. To do is to prevent the child,

now an adult and therefore equal, from exercising his duty and right to be a moral authority himself. The quote above can be understood in this sense of the Strict Father model. Here, the father and child in the source domain are the federal government and private citizens in the target domain. It is made clear that government does not have legitimate authority in this sphere, because the child is reaching maturity. Thus too much government, or authority, "crowds out" the mature child's ability to make his own decisions. Rather, the role of the authority is to maintain limited guidance as the child transitions from being obedient to being an authoritative figure in his own right.

The view that government's role in regulating the economy is and should be extremely limited is just as explicit in the other State of the Union Addresses. From the 2003 State of the Union Address, in a statement regarding the federal budget, comes one of the most straightforward examples of the overarching Nation As A Family metaphor:

We must work together to fund only our most important priorities. I will send you a budget that increases discretionary spending by 4 percent next year, about as much as the average family's income is expected to grow. And that is a good benchmark for us. Federal spending should not rise any faster than the paychecks of American families.

One might argue that this is not metaphorical language, that from an economic standpoint this is simply common sense. To understand the goal articulated in this statement one must see if it matches a particular viewpoint. Why is it undesirable for federal government spending to increase proportionately more than citizens earn? If the aim is a balanced budget, then the reason

is that the government cannot spend more than it receives. If the rate of government spending exceeds the rate at which Americans are paying taxes into the system, then there are only two ways to compensate and maintain a balanced budget: decrease federal spending or increase taxes. These two alternatives are not inherently good or bad prospects—they only become so within a specific economic framework.

In the Nurturant Parent framework, according to Lakoff, the needs of the family and specifically the children take priority over all else. If more money needs to be spent to meet those needs, then more money should be spent. That idea maps metaphorically onto the liberal philosophy that the government's priority is to meet the needs of the citizens. This need takes precedence over lower taxes, therefore if the need for spending increases then taxes should increase accordingly. By contrast, the entailments of the Strict Father model, as outlined above, require that government allow private citizens to meet those needs themselves. In terms of monetary means, the way to do that is to allow the citizens to use their own funds as they see fit.

The latter point is made clear in this statement regarding tax reform from the 2001 address:

My attitude is, Government should never stand in the way of families achieving their dreams. And as we debate this issue, always remember, the surplus is not the Government's money; the surplus is the people's money.

Bush's stated position is an example of the Moral Authority metaphor because of the idea that taxation by the government interferes with the ability of families to "achieve their dreams." How

does this happen? As Bush stated, the money belongs to the people, not to the government. Viewed from the perspective of the Strict Father model, then, if the government attempts to take the money through taxation or dictate how the money should be spent through legislation, then it is impinging upon the rights of the citizens to do as they see fit. The government is not respecting the citizens as their own moral authorities. Instead of taxing the people and spending their money, the responsibility of the government in this sphere is to model self-discipline by reducing spending, keeping taxes low, and in this way maintaining a balanced budget. Thus, the statement that federal spending should maintain a consistent pace with the earnings of America citizens is not just a way of summing up an economic policy. Instead, it reveals a complicated set of values identified in the Strict Father family model.

The notion of self-discipline is an important one in the Strict Father family and comes up many times in Bush's statements about the federal budget. In his 2005 State of the Union Address he said:

America's prosperity requires restraining the spending appetite of the federal government. I welcome the bipartisan enthusiasm for spending discipline. So next week I will send you a budget that holds the growth of discretionary spending below inflation, makes tax relief permanent, and stays on track to cut the deficit in half by 2009. My budget substantially reduces or eliminates more than 150 government programs that are not getting results, or duplicate current efforts, or do not fulfill essential priorities. The principle here is clear: a taxpayer dollar must be spent wisely, or not at all.

He echoed those statements in 2007:

What we need is spending discipline in Washington, D.C. We set a goal of cutting the deficit in half by 2009

and met that goal 3 years ahead of schedule. Now let us take the next step. In the coming weeks, I will submit a budget that eliminates the Federal deficit within the next 5 years. I ask you to make the same commitment. Together we can restrain the spending appetite of the Federal government, and we can balance the Federal budget.

Self-discipline is at the heart of the Strict Father family. Along with obedience to authority, which is how the child learns right from wrong, the child must also gain the self-discipline to choose right over wrong and to resist bad choices. This allows him to build up his moral strength that, in turn, is necessary to become independent and successful in the world. Thus, it is the moral obligation of the father to model self-discipline for the child. It is important for the federal government to reduce spending and therefore taxes according to the Strict Father metaphor. However, actually reducing spending requires that the government make choices about what is necessary and what is unnecessary. This requires both the knowledge about what should be done and the moral strength and self-discipline to act accordingly. Spending discipline is therefore more than a catch phrase—it is a philosophy crucial to the Strict Father model of government.

Social Security, Medicare, and Health cCre

The topics of Social Security, Medicare, and health care are interesting examples of the tension and sometimes contradictions within the family models. The Strict Father model does not preclude any metaphors for nurturance, but the main difference between the nurturance metaphors in the Strict Father model as opposed to the Nurturant Parent model is their priority assignment.

In the Strict Father model, nurturance corresponds to the popular notion of “tough love” and is secondary to such values as obedience to authority, moral strength, and self-discipline. In the Nurturant Parent model, nurturance takes precedence over all else and each of the moral metaphors is subordinate to it. Considering the moral metaphors regarding Social Security, Medicare, and health care, the frameworks and their entailments must be kept in mind.

One of the most interesting things about the way in which these issues are presented in all of the speeches is the view that Social Security and Medicare in particular, and health care to a lesser degree, are challenges to be confronted. That view immediately recalls the Strict Father idea that the world is primarily full of dangers and obstacles requiring moral strength and fortitude to overcome. In contrast, the Nurturant Parent model views care for the poor, elderly, young, and healthy alike as a basic need to be met as opposed to a challenge to be faced. The rhetoric that sets up Social Security and Medicare as challenges begins with the first State of the Union Address in 2001:

Perhaps the biggest test of our foresight and courage will be reforming Medicare and Social Security....Without reform, this country will one day awaken to a stark choice: Either a drastic rise in payroll taxes or a radical cut in retirement benefits. There is a better way.

Bush did not specifically identify Social Security and Medicare as the challenges, but rather the systems through which they are administered. That the systems need to be “reformed” presupposes that they are not working in the first place, but this does not alone entail the Strict Father viewpoint. The alternatives to reform that Bush went on to list, however, do. He presented two choices, made

obviously equally undesirable: an increase in taxes or a reduction of benefits. The Strict Father model tends to see raising taxes as an unacceptable course of action and is particularly applicable in this area. Social Security and Medicare are social programs and therefore should, as much as possible, be funded and administered in the private sector, according to the Strict Father model. In this family model, the maturing and matured child is responsible for preparing for and securing the future. Assistance from authority oversteps the authority's moral boundaries and is seen as coddling or spoiling. Thus, even programs that are well established as governmentally funded do not merit an increase in taxes to meet their growing needs.

That view is seen even more clearly in another quote on the matter from 2003, in a discussion of health care reform:

A growing economy and a focus on essential priorities will be crucial to the future of Social Security. As we continue to work together to keep Social Security sound and reliable, we must offer younger workers a chance to invest in retirement accounts that they will control and they will own.

Here it is made explicit that financial preparation for retirement is an individual's right as well as responsibility and therefore the government's role should be minimal. The "essential priorities" referred to in this quote may at first be confusing. The statement seems to suggest that Social Security is an essential priority, as it is followed by a statement about keeping Social Security "sound and reliable." Yet this is immediately qualified with the declaration that the younger generation should be investing privately in their retirement, which implies that Social Security will not be available to them later in life, at least not in its sound and reliable state. Thus

the essential priority is not keeping Social Security well-funded, rather this can be understood to mean that funding should be withdrawn from any program that is not essential, so as to keep as much money in Social Security as possible without raising taxes.

Also from the section on health care reform in the 2003 address is a statement on Medicare that evidences one of the few examples in the speeches of the Nurturant Parent model unqualified by the Strict Father model in any way:

Health care reform must begin with Medicare. Medicare is the binding commitment of a caring society. We must renew that commitment by giving seniors access to preventive medicine and new drugs that are transforming health care in America.

Unlike other health care programs and Social Security, Bush does not advocate privatization of the Medicare system. The language specifically invokes the MORALITY IS NURTURANCE metaphor, of which two sub-metaphors are clear. The first sub-metaphor, The Community Is A Family, implies that the nation is the community and, thus, the family. The second sub-metaphor is People Needing Help Are Children Needing Nurturance, where those people receiving Medicare are understood to be the children who require nurturance. Also, the MORALITY AS SOCIAL NURTURANCE metaphor is at work regarding the system of Medicare itself. Two additional sub-metaphors tie in to this quote: Social Ties Are Children Needing Care and Moral Action Is the Nurturance of Social Ties. In this mapping, it is not those citizens who use the services of Medicare who are the children, but the "binding commitment" itself which requires nurturance.

The same MORALITY AS SOCIAL NURTURANCE metaphor appears

to be present in a quote from 2005 about Social Security, but as the speech goes on we must reevaluate the conditions:

One of America's most important institutions—a symbol of the trust between generations—is also in need of wise and effective reform. Social Security was a great moral success of the 20th Century, and we must honor its great purposes in this new century. The system, however, on its current path, is headed toward bankruptcy. And so we must join together to strengthen and save Social Security... By the year 2042, the entire system would be exhausted and bankrupt. If steps are not taken to avert that outcome, the only solutions would be drastically higher taxes, massive new borrowing, or sudden and severe cuts in Social Security benefits or other government programs....

You and I share a responsibility. We must pass reforms that solve the financial problems of Social Security once and for all...I know that none of these reforms would be easy. But we have to move ahead with courage and honesty, because children's retirement is more important than partisan politics. I will work with members of Congress to find the most effective combination of reforms. I will listen to anyone who has a good idea to offer. We must, however, be guided by some basic principles. We must make Social Security permanently sound, not leave that task for another day. We must not jeopardize our economic strength by increasing payroll taxes. We must ensure that lower income Americans get the help they need to have dignity and peace of mind in their retirement. We must guarantee that there is no change for those now retired or nearing retirement. And we must take care that any changes in the system are gradual, so younger workers have years to prepare and plan for their future.

This very long quote offers an example of conflicting metaphors. The MORALITY AS SOCIAL NURTURANCE seems to emerge as strongly as in the statements on Medicare in the reference to Social Security as a “symbol of trust between generations” and a “shared responsibility,” yet it is embedded within a Strict Father framework. Once again, Bush offered the equally disastrous options of raising taxes or reducing benefits, which is an entailment of the Strict Father model. Importantly in this quote and unlike with Medicare, this shared responsibility is carefully qualified by a marked delineation in authority. Bush declares that he will work together with Congress but then sets out strict guidelines as to what he will consider a “good idea.” It is perfectly clear where ultimate authority resides, which is with the executive branch. The mapping in this metaphor is that the authority figure in the Strict Father family is the executive branch and it is this authority who will, as the moral authority, make the ultimate decision regarding the child, Social Security.

In 2007, these same conflicting Nurturant Parent and Strict Father metaphors appear in precisely the same context, only now Medicare and Medicaid are included under the umbrella with Social Security:

Social Security and Medicare and Medicaid are commitments of conscience, and so it is our duty to keep them permanently sound. Yet we're failing in that duty. And this failure will one day leave our children with three bad options: huge tax increase; huge deficits; or huge and immediate cuts in benefits.

An important conclusion to draw from these examples is these metaphorical systems are not exempt from contradictions. Both the Strict Father and Nurturant Parent models are schemas that provide

frameworks but do not dictate exact sequences of actions. People face contradictions every day and are remarkably flexible and adaptive in the face of these tensions. These quotes illustrate the complexity of some of these issues and why they are not so simply or easily resolved.

In regards to health care in general, the views of Bush's administration are consistent throughout the set of State of the Union Addresses: health care belongs in the private sphere and government's role should be as limited as possible. The obligation of the government when it comes to health care is to protect the private sphere's authority over it:

My budget puts a priority on access to health care, without telling Americans what doctor they have to see or what coverage they must choose (2001).

Yet for many people, health care costs too much, and many have no health coverage at all. These problems will not be solved with a nationalized health care system that dictates coverage and rations care (2003).

To make our economy stronger and more productive, we must make health care more affordable, and give families greater access to good coverage, and more control over their health decisions. I ask Congress to move forward on a comprehensive health care agenda—with tax credits to help low-income workers buy insurance, a community health center in every poor county, improved information technology to prevent medical errors and needless costs, association health plans for small businesses and their employees, expanded health savings accounts, and medical liability reform that will reduce health care costs, and make sure patients have the doctors and care they need (2005).

The quote above from 2005 is another example of what at first pass appears to be Nurturant Parent metaphors, yet in fact can be more accurately analyzed as an example of the Morality Is Nurturance in the Strict Father model. In this metaphor, the role of authority is not so much to help those who cannot help themselves as it is to help them learn to help themselves. Thus, the role of government as authority here is not to provide health care to low-income families, but to stimulate and protect the private economy, which is in turn responsible for caring for its citizens. This position is clearly articulated in 2007:

A future of hope and opportunity requires that all our citizens have affordable and available health care. When it comes to health care, Government has an obligation to care for the elderly, the disabled, and poor children, and we will meet those responsibilities. For all other Americans, private health insurance is the best way to meet their needs....My second proposal is to help the States that are coming up with innovative ways to cover the uninsured. States that make basic private health insurance available to all their citizens should receive Federal funds to help them provide this coverage to the poor and the sick.

Domestic Social Issues and Faith-based Charities

One way in which Bush resolved the tension between the federal government's responsibilities to its citizens and the view that the private sphere is the true moral authority for those in need is through faith-based charities. In 2001, Bush mentioned faith-based groups as a way to address some of the most often identified domestic social problems—homelessness, drug and alcohol addiction, and violence:

And my budget adopts a hopeful new approach to help the poor and the disadvantaged. We must encourage and support the work of charities and faith-based and community groups that offer help and love, one person at a time.

In 2003, he introduced the Faith-Based Initiative Act:

Americans are doing the work of compassion every day, visiting prisoners, providing shelter for battered women, bringing companionship to lonely seniors. These good works deserve our praise. They deserve our personal support, and when appropriate, they deserve the assistance of the Federal Government. I urge you to pass both my Faith-Based Initiative and the Citizen Service Act, to encourage acts of compassion that can transform America, one heart and one soul at a time.

Again in 2005, in response to social challenges, faith-based charities were part of the solution:

Because one of the deepest values of our country is compassion, we must never turn from any citizen who feels isolated from the opportunities of America. Our government will continue to support faith-based and community groups that bring hope to harsh places.

Charity presents a dilemma for the Strict Father model: helping others in need is a moral act and it is the duty of the father in the Strict Father model to encourage and reward moral behavior. At the same time, it is immoral for the father to reward immoral behavior, and such issues as poverty and drug abuse are usually understood to be the result of immoral behavior. This tension is resolved by introducing a mediating role. The reason it is immoral for the father to help others who are in a bad position because of their own lack of moral strength is that he is in a position of authority.

Help, therefore, is reward, while it is his duty to punish immorality and, by doing so, encourage the subordinate to become moral and self-supportive. It is not, however, immoral for someone on equal footing with the less fortunate person to help that person. In that case, it is help or support, and not reward, because the two are in equal positions with respect to power and authority. Thus, in the Strict Father model, the metaphor can be mapped in the following way: the authority figure in the Strict Father family is the federal government and therefore the father's moral duty to reward moral behavior but not coddle or spoil those who have gotten themselves in a bad situation is the federal government's duty. The child, over whom the father has moral authority, is the private sphere—in this case, faith-based charities, whose moral duty it is to help others less fortunate.

It is specifically faith-based charities that are in a position to help others because they get their authority from the highest of all: God. A rigid hierarchy exists within the Strict Father family that most people recognize whether they subscribe to it or not: God has authority over people, man over woman, adult over child, and people over nature. This is the Moral Order metaphor, and it specifies why faith-based charities and initiatives are not only condoned by the authority but also encouraged and rewarded. In this way, it becomes clear why it is immoral for the federal government to fund social programs for the poor or those with addictions, yet moral for private citizens to do so and moral for the federal government to reward those private charities.

Energy and the Environment

The topic of energy is not a simple one and is therefore

intertwined with other areas of policy in the speeches, usually the environment. This often creates more conflict between the Strict Father and Nurturant Parent models. The Nurturant Parent model is activated with respect to the environment and thus environmentally responsible sources of energy. This is contrasted, however, with the Strict Father model that views the issue of energy as one of freedom and independence. The metaphors active, either implicitly or explicitly, are MORALITY AS NURTURANCE and MORAL STRENGTH. However, these two metaphors have very different roles and therefore different implications within the two family models. In the Strict Father model, MORAL STRENGTH must be upheld above all else and therefore nurturance is in service to it. In the Nurturant Parent model, however, it is the opposite and MORALITY AS NURTURANCE is the prime directive and MORAL STRENGTH must be constrained by that. With that in mind, let us look at the individual quotes and also note their progression:

Our energy demand outstrips our supply. We can produce more energy at home while protecting our environment, and we must. We can produce more electricity to meet demand, and we must. We can promote alternative energy sources and conservation, and we must. America must become more energy independent, and we will (2001).

Bush began by setting up the need for more energy and by portraying this need as a challenge to be met. As with other descriptions of obstacles, this invokes the MORAL STRENGTH metaphor, since facing challenges requires strength. Here, the MORALITY AS NURTURANCE metaphor is clear in the statements regarding the need to protect the environment and promote the environment. However, the final proposition on the list emphasizes the need for

energy independence, which involves the MORAL STRENGTH, MORAL AUTHORITY, and MORAL BOUNDARIES. The first two, MORAL STRENGTH and MORAL AUTHORITY are at work in much the same way as in the economy: a moral authority, in this case the United States, must demonstrate leadership through moral strength, here the strength to become more independent. As an authority, the US is understood to have the right to act freely, without constraint from others. This right can be understood as the right to move unobstructed along a particular path of motion. These are the CONSTRAINTS ON Freedom and Rights AS PATHS entailments of the MORAL BOUNDARIES metaphor and they are central to the energy issue in the other speeches:

Our third goal is to promote energy independence for our country, while dramatically improving the environment. I have sent you a comprehensive energy plan to promote energy efficiency and conservation, to develop cleaner technology, and to produce more energy at home I have sent you Clear Skies legislation that mandates a 70-percent cut in air pollution from powerplants over the next 15 years. I have sent you a Healthy Forests Initiative, to help prevent the catastrophic fires that devastate communities, kill wildlife, and burn away millions of acres of treasured forests (2003).

To keep our economy growing, we also need reliable supplies of affordable, environmentally responsible energy. Nearly four years ago, I submitted a comprehensive energy strategy that encourages conservation, alternative sources, a modernized electricity grid, and more production here at home, including safe, clean nuclear energy. My Clear Skies legislation will cut power plant pollution and improve the health of our citizens. And my budget provides strong funding for leading-edge technology—from

hydrogen-fueled cars, to clean coal, to renewable sources such as ethanol. Four years of debate is enough—I urge Congress to pass legislation that makes America more secure and less dependent on foreign energy (2005).

The above two quotes once again focus on environmental responsibility, the MORAL NURTURANCE metaphor. However, they also are once again bookended by the importance of energy independence. In 2007, independence becomes an explicit moral obligation:

Extending hope and opportunity depends on a stable supply of energy that keeps America's economy running and American's environment clean. For too long, our Nation has been dependent on foreign oil. And this dependence leaves us more vulnerable to hostile regimes and to terrorists who could cause huge disruptions of oil shipments and raise the price of oil and do great harm to our economy (2007).

Here Bush made clear his view of the consequences for not exercising our duty and right to acquire and maintain energy independence. He couched this in terms of the strength required to literally fight evil, which is an instance of the MORAL STRENGTH metaphor. Because moral strength is the first priority in the Strict Father family, other models such as MORALITY AS NURTURANCE are only active to the degree that they support MORAL STRENGTH.

Foreign Policy Including Iraq and the “War on Terror”

The entailments of the MORAL STRENGTH, MORAL AUTHORITY, and MORAL BOUNDARIES metaphors as described above are seen nowhere more clearly than in the sections regarding foreign policy, which even in January, 2001, before the attacks of September 11, centered

around the Middle East and terrorism:

America has a window of opportunity to extend and secure our present peace by promoting a distinctly American internationalism. We will work with our allies and friends to be a force for good and a champion of freedom... Our Nation also needs a clear strategy to confront the threats of the 21st century, threats that are more widespread and less certain. They range from terrorists who threaten with bombs to tyrants in rogue nations intent upon developing weapons of mass destruction. To protect our own people, our allies, and friends, we must develop and we must deploy effective missile defenses... A strong America is the world's best hope for peace and freedom.

Here there is little room to interpret talk of protection as reflecting the MORALITY AS NURTURANCE metaphor. Rather, this is protection in the strictest of the Strict Father sense—the duty of an authority figure to shield those for whom they are responsible from evil. Bush vividly evoked the danger with his discussion of bombs and weapons of mass destruction. The MORAL BOUNDARIES metaphor establishes an understanding that the threat is both physical as well as an issue of American moral freedom to act as it chooses. The MORAL STRENGTH metaphor makes it clear that it is the right as well as duty of the United States to oppose this danger, and the MORAL ORDER and MORAL AUTHORITY metaphors spell out the chain of command so that everyone understands the government to be the authority whose job it is to protect the citizens. In his 2003 address, MORAL AUTHORITY and its relationship to MORAL BOUNDARIES is articulated even more clearly:

In all these efforts, however, America's purpose is

more than to follow a process; it is to achieve a results, the end of terrible threats to the civilized world. All free nations have a stake in preventing sudden and catastrophic attacks. And we're asking them to join us, and many are doing so. Yet the course of this Nation does not depend on the decisions of others. Whatever actions are required, whenever action is necessary, I will defend the freedom and security of the American people.

In 2003, Bush left no room for doubt as to who held the highest position of authority. The metaphors in the Strict Father model outline the authority's obligation to protect the structure of that model above all. The language reflecting this remains vivid in the other speeches, such as in these quotes from 2005 and 2007:

In the long term, the peace we seek will only be achieved by eliminating the conditions that feed radicalism and ideologies of murder. If whole regions of the world remain in despair and grow in hatred, they will be the recruiting grounds for terror, and that terror will stalk America and other free nations for decades. The only force powerful enough to stop the rise of tyranny and terror, and replace hatred with hope, is the force of human freedom (2005).

This war is more than a clash of arms; it is a decisive ideological struggle. And the security of our Nation is in the balance. To prevail, we must remove the conditions that inspire blind hatred and drove 19 men to get onto airplanes and to come and kill us. What every terrorist fears most is human freedom, societies where men and women make their own choices, answer to their own conscience, and live by their hopes instead of their

resentments. Free people are not drawn to violent and malignant ideologies, and most will choose a better way when they're given a chance. So we advance our own security interests by helping moderates and reformers and brave voices for democracy. The great question of our day is whether America will help men and women in the Middle East to build free societies and share in the rights of all humanity. And I say, for the sake of our own security, we must (2007).

These quotes illustrate the way in which the moral metaphors of the Strict Father family model interact to perpetuate themselves. Within the framework of the Strict Father family, there is a right way to live and a wrong way, and it is the moral obligation of the father to enforce the right way. Applied metaphorically, it is the duty of the leader of the United States to ensure that the citizens are governed in accordance with the values laid out by the family model and to protect any threats to those values that arise, whether internal or external.

Challenges and Criticisms

Examining a text for evidence of these metaphors has presented challenges. Although there are explicit instances of the Nation as a Family metaphor, few of the moral metaphor groups that constitute the models outlined in *Moral Politics* can be clearly and unambiguously identified. Instead, the analyses have relied on logical entailments of the wording and stated positions in order to better understand the framework within which the goals and policies are desirable. There is, therefore, some amount of inherent subjectivity. Nevertheless, it is possible to understand how these metaphors could be derived from the Nation As a Family metaphor

given the framework Lakoff articulated.

Researchers must accept, of course, that they are essentially “working backwards” to fit examples of speech into preconceived frameworks. With an advance idea of how language looks, it becomes easy to interpret it as conforming to that idea. Several possible alternatives exist to address the lack of explicit Strict Father metaphor: the language actually reveals one or more different metaphors, it is not metaphorical at all, or the particular medium of the State of the Union Address does not offer a lot of metaphor.

If the examples in this analysis are in fact evidence of a metaphor other than the Strict Father metaphor, then that plausible alternative metaphor must come to light. There is an issue of parsimony here. One advantage of the Strict Father metaphor is that it allows a *structured* analysis—many different concepts fit together within it in predictable ways that can be explained. That is not to say that everything always fits together neatly. On the contrary, it is precisely the flexibility inherent within the system that allows for some contradiction—for example, the nesting of some aspects of the Nurturant Parent model within the Strict Father model. The point at which alternative metaphorical models become apparent should come when the contradictions reach some as yet unspecified critical mass so that this one model can no longer sustain them. In that case, it is incumbent upon the alternative metaphorical system to provide as coherent an explanatory structure as possible for the conservative and liberal philosophies. The author has not yet encountered such an alternative framework.

The second alternative is that there is no underlying metaphorical structure at all—that political ideologies are not based upon any other ideologies but rather exist in their own right.

This problem is linked to the psychological reality of conceptual metaphor in general, and it is perhaps the most significant criticism of Lakoff's work. Here the issue is less one of what kinds of metaphors can be inferred from the language and more what the implication of the metaphor is. Even if one accepts that the Nation as a Family metaphor is present in political discourse and that the family models correspond to the way that conservatives and liberals speak about politics, what does this mean for the way people *think* about politics in the United States? Lakoff is definitive in his views: Americans talk about politics this way because they fundamentally understand politics this way and the choice of words impacts beliefs, choices, and ultimately policies. This is known as "framing," and in "Moral Politics" and other works (e.g. "Don't Think of an Elephant," "Thinking Points," and "Whose Freedom?") Lakoff advocates conscious use of framing to shape political debate and policy.

The question about whether and to what extent language shapes thought is long-standing and has been addressed by philosophers, linguists, and cognitive scientists, and is outside the scope of this study. Yet, questions about whether conceptual metaphors can be activated and influence our thought processes have been experimentally addressed to some degree. For instance, studies on spatial metaphor (Richardson, et al., 2003; Wilson & Gibbs, 2007) have found that performing certain tasks in a vertical or horizontal motion can prime faster lexical identification of verbs metaphorically associated with that direction, such as push (horizontal) and respect (vertical). It is difficult to imagine exactly what an experimental study on political metaphor might look like, but this is the kind of direction this research would need to go in order to investigate

whether the metaphors suggested by Lakoff are indeed active in political understanding. For example, participants might be given a story which describes a typical scene in one of the two family models and then asked questions regarding governmental policy in order to determine whether there is any priming or inhibition effect.

Finally, these speeches were initially appealing because of the scope of the State of the Union Addresses in terms of issues as well as the ability to compare positions on those issues over time. The need, however, for the speeches to appeal to a wide audience may have reduced the number and saliency of metaphors that may otherwise have been present. The audience for the speeches in this case included a public which was not united in support of the President and a divided Congress with whom the President had to work to get his policies enacted. There was a great need, therefore, to soften any divisive language. Additionally, the speeches are rewritten many times over and extensively rehearsed. This kind of scripted language is not the most fertile ground for the kinds of spontaneous metaphor we often hear in political dialogue. Thus, it is possible that the analysis was not as fruitful as was hoped for as a result of the data set and not the hypothesis.

Conclusions

While the psychological implications of this research and its use in framing may be debated, it is evident that the moral metaphors that make up Lakoff's Strict Father family model abound in the State of the Union addresses we have examined. The frequency and consistency of these metaphors are worth attention, as these points strain the argument that these are simply figures of speech, convenient phrases used to punch up political rhetoric for an audience. Their stability suggests a coherent framework, a model that both explains and predicts a particular worldview and its corresponding actions. Whether we want to embrace Lakoff's claim about how much influence this model has over policies in the United States, it is at least a useful analytical tool. After all, as noted in the first example analyzed in this paper: "Our new governing vision says Government should be active but limited, engaged but not overbearing. And my budget is based on that philosophy." When a nation is funded according to a particular governing philosophy, that philosophy requires critical consideration.

Appendix A

I. The Strict Father Model

MORAL STRENGTH

- Being Good Is Being Upright
- Being Bad Is Being Low
- Doing Evil Is Falling
- Evil Is a Force (either internal or external)
- Morality Is Strength

MORAL AUTHORITY

- A Community Is a Family
- Moral Authority Is Parental Authority
- An Authority Figure Is a Parent
- A Person Subject to Moral Authority Is a Child
- Moral Behavior by Someone Subject to Authority is Obedience
- Moral Behavior by Someone in Authority Is Setting Standards and Enforcing Them

MORAL ORDER

- The Moral Order Is the Natural Order

MORAL BOUNDARIES

- Rights As Paths

MORAL ESSENCE

- A Person Is An Object
- His Essence Is the Substance the Object Is Made Of

MORAL WHOLENESS

- Morality Is Wholeness
- Immorality Is Degeneration

MORAL PURITY

- Morality Is Purity
- Immorality Is Impurity

MORAL HEALTH

- Morality Is Health
- Immorality Is Disease

MORAL SELF-INTEREST

MORALITY AS NURTURANCE

II. The Nurturant Parent Model

MORALITY AS NURTURANCE

- The Community Is A Family
- Moral Agents Are Nurturing Parents
- People Needing Help Are Children Needing Nurturance
- Moral Action Is Nurturance

MORALITY AS EMPATHY

- Morality Is Empathy

MORAL SELF-NURTURANCE

MORALITY AS SOCIAL NURTURANCE

- Moral Agents Are Nurturing Parents
- Social Ties Are Children Needing Care
- Moral Action Is the Nurturance of Social Ties

MORALITY AS THE NURTURANCE OF SOCIAL TIES

MORALITY AS SELF-DEVELOPMENT

MORALITY AS HAPPINESS

MORALITY AS FAIR DISTRIBUTION

MORAL GROWTH

- The Degree of Morality is Physical Height
- Moral Growth Is Physical Growth
- Moral Norms for People Are Physical Height Norms

MORAL STRENGTH

- Being Good Is Being Upright
- Being Bad is Being Low
- Evil Is a Force (external or internal)
- Morality Is Strength

RETRIBUTION AND RESTITUTION

MORAL BOUNDARIES

MORAL AUTHORITY

References

- Johnson, M. and Lakoff, G. (1980). *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Lakoff, G. (1996) *Moral Politics: How liberals and conservatives think*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Lakoff, G. (2004) *Don't Think of an Elephant: Know Your Values and Frame the Debate*. Vermont: Chelsea Green Publishing Company.
- Lakoff, G. (2006). *Thinking Points: Communicating Our American Values and Vision*. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux.
- Lakoff, G. (2006) *Whose Freedom: The Battle Over America's Most Important Idea*. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux.
- Richardson, D. C., Spivey, M. J., Barsalou, L. W., & McRae, K. (2003). Spatial representations activated during real-time comprehension of verbs. *Cognitive Science*, 27, 767-780.
- Wilson, N. L. and Gibbs, R. W. Jr. (2007). Real and imagined body movement primes metaphor comprehension. *Cognitive Science: A Multidisciplinary Journal*, 31, 721-731.
- Woolley, J. and Peters, G. *The American Presidency Project* [online]. Santa Barbara, CA: University of California (hosted); Gerhard Peters (database). Available from World Wide Web: (<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=24446>).