

Liberal and conservative dissensus in areas of domestic public policy other than business and economics

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Abstract. This research is part of a project that examines the nature of political ideology in the United States and its impact on the formulation of public policy. Here we explore the bases of liberal – conservative dissensus in areas of domestic policy other than business and the economy using a model developed by Janda, Berry, and Goldman. We find that the major elements of dissensus are: a strong conservative disposition to defend order; with a few exceptions a liberal indifference to order as conservatives define it; conservative opposition to the expansion of federal power over states or individuals and/or expansion in federal (and often state and local government) spending unless order is threatened; much greater liberal emphasis on equality; and varying conceptualizations of basic values to the degree that liberals and conservatives seem almost to be talking past each other using two different languages.

Introduction

This research is part of a project that seeks to learn the nature of political ideology in the United States and its impact on the formulation of public policy. We define a political ideology as an action-oriented model of people and society (Parsons, 1951: p. 349; Johnston, 1996: p. 13; Dijk, 1998: p. 8). The study of ideology and policy formulation in the United States implies a study of liberalism and conservatism. The ideological orientations of members of Congress form a bipolar distribution with large majorities at or near liberal and conservative extremes and minorities at or near the middle (Kolodny, 1999; Grofman et al., 1991; Herrera, 1992; and others). Furthermore, ideological moderates whether in the electorate or Congress appear to function mostly by drawing elements from liberal and conservative positions and mixing these elements in various ways; there is little or nothing in scholarly or journalistic accounts suggesting the existence of some third free standing moderate ideology.

Along with Lowi (1995) and others, we recognize that the terms liberal and conservative represent simplification. In particular, the Right, as it should perhaps more accurately be termed, is split among classical liberals and Chamber of Commerce conservatives (represented by the *Wall Street Journal*) and the so-called social conservatives who include Burkean conservative intellectuals and the Christian Right (represented to some degree in *National Review* in an oddly secularized form). However, the editorials in the publications examined rarely devote space to internal liberal or conservative conflict. At the same time, they provide far more texture and detail than indicators such as ADA ratings. Our approach stands between the unidimensional and often bipolar imagery of ideology and public policy in much of political science and economics and the rich detail of works like Lowi's.

Liberal and conservative domestic policy orientations

In another publication (Grafton and Permaloff, 2001), we developed an explanation of liberal and conservative public policy positions for business and economics for the years 1961–1998. That work was based on our variant of the theory of market failure. We found substantial liberal – conservative agreement in that both think about business and economics in terms of market economics. Disagreement and policy movement is based on liberal and conservative perceptions of whether instances of market failure represented what we term market misbehavior (the market functions but unhappiness with the result is widespread) or market breakdown. Liberals and conservatives differ regarding how and when the federal government should intervene in or supplement the economy.

With only a few exceptions, the liberal and conservative reliance on market economics does not transfer and cannot transfer to their thinking about areas of public policy other than business and economics. We categorize domestic policy areas as: abortion; church – state; civil rights – freedom of expression, racial discrimination, other discrimination, privacy, voting, and immigration; crime – basic causes and approaches, law enforcement and police, rights of the accused, rights of the guilty, gun control, drug abuse, and violence and terror; education – academic rigor, funding, structure of programs, and academic freedom; urban problems; and welfare – structure of programs, funding, and public housing. Market theory arises only rarely in these policy areas except perhaps in a general conservative hostility to federal government growth and tax increases at all levels of government reflective of a conservative enthusiasm for *laissez faire*. We must look elsewhere for a theory that explains liberal and conservative public policy positions in public policy fields other than business and economics.

Editorials as indicators of liberalism and conservatism

In earlier publications (Grafton and Permaloff, 2001, 2004, 2005; Permaloff and Grafton, in press) we established the utility of editorials of the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* as barometers of liberalism and the *Wall Street Journal* and *National Review* magazine as indicators of conservatism. Editorials cover a much wider swath of issues than, for example, the fewer than 40 votes a year covered by the Americans for Democratic Action (20 in the House and 20 in the Senate with some duplication) in its widely used indices. Newspapers are: “. . . rich in the vocabulary of political ideology current among the elite . . .” and editorials are also useful to scholars because of their uniform formats and “more or less explicit point of view” (Lasswell et al., 1952: p. 17).

Our core database of 1961–1998 editorials is a random sample of 1377 days for the newspapers and 326 issues for the biweekly *National Review* for a total of 13,827 editorials. To learn how the editorials related to the ADA standard, we compiled all non-foreign and defense policy ADA positions for even numbered years from 1962 through 1998. When our sample of editorials did not contain matches to ADA positions, we performed searches to supplement the core database. The searches were

on the day of the congressional vote on which the ADA took a position plus or minus 2 days for the newspapers and plus or minus one issue for *National Review*.

We found strong positive correlations between ADA positions and positions taken in *New York Times* and *Washington Post* editorials and strong negative correlations between ADA positions and *Wall Street Journal* and *National Review* editorials (Grafton and Permaloff, 2001, 2004; Permaloff and Grafton, 2005). We calculated agreement scores for the four publications following ADA procedures for its index and found that the overall *New York Times* and *Washington Post* ADA rating would be approximately 90. A score of 100 signifies perfect agreement with the ADA. The *Wall Street Journal* and *National Review* would have ADA ratings of approximately 5. *New York Times* – *Washington Post* and *Wall Street Journal* – *National Review* disagreements constituted 2.2 and 5.2% of their editorials, respectively.

For the present study, we extend our core database of editorials with electronic searches of all editorials from approximately the mid-1980s (index starting points differ among the publications) to February 2005.

The Janda, Berry, and Goldman model

Because countless historians and theorists have studied the relationships among equality, freedom, and order as they are represented in liberalism and conservatism, these concepts may provide an intellectual structure comparable to our market failure variant. Kenneth Janda, Jeffrey M. Berry, and Jerry Goldman (JBG) have developed a succinct model that encompasses many scholarly treatments of liberalism and conservatism (Janda et al., 1992: p. 175). By their reckoning, both liberals and conservatives value equality, freedom, and order, but the difference is one of ranking. A liberal tends to favor equality over freedom and freedom over order. A conservative tends to favor order over freedom and freedom over equality. The suggestion is that if there are tradeoffs between or among these values, those tradeoffs will be resolved according to these two sequences. JBG largely ignore divisions within liberal and conservative camps, but their work can serve as the beginning of a theoretical framework or model if we consider attitudes toward freedom, equality, and order as core values or building blocks for ideological prescriptions for domestic public policy not involving business and the economy.

Equality

James P. Young (1996: p. 6) described classical liberals and New Deal and post – New Deal reform liberals as viewing “human beings as equal, rights-bearing, interest-oriented individuals – individuals who are entitled to have those rights defended, particularly against governmental intrusion.” Contemporary reform liberals continue to see individuals as free, equal, and rights-bearing, but now “those individuals may best be served by an active government, though one that, in economics, still adheres to the theory of the market, albeit in regulated form”(p. 7).

The central distinction separating liberal and conservative perspectives toward equality is between the classical liberal (and now conservative) endorsement of

equality of opportunity versus the contemporary liberal's more sweeping sense of equality (Sandel, 1984: p. 4; Galston, 1991: pp. 184–190; Manning, 1976: pp. 101–102; Hayek, 1960: p. 85). Van Dyke (1995: p. 85) expressed the conservative sense of equality of opportunity as: “What exists in the absence of arbitrary discrimination.” He observes that liberals support this aspect of equality plus the absence of “disadvantages or handicaps for which society is responsible” (p. 85). In addition, many liberals would add the absence of “disadvantages or handicaps for which the individual is not responsible, such as birth in a poor family or with a physical handicap” (Van Dyke, 1995: p. 85; Kaus, 1992). This is a shift in the direction of equality of outcome, and in terms of public policy this change is probably most commonly associated with affirmative action.

Order

Generic definitions of order variously include tidiness, peace and quiet, systematization, regularity, uniformity, custom, discipline and obedience, and hierarchy. Politically, order sometimes means adherence to established custom. It also means an absence of crime and a condition in which one's person and property are not interfered with except for a sound legal reason and then only by government. The opposite of order is disorder, a condition in which established custom is violated or in even more extreme circumstances a condition in which there is no established custom.

Conservatism extending back to Edmund Burke is strongly associated with the maintenance of order (Van Dyke, 1995: pp. 149–154). Clinton Rossiter's *Conservatism in America* (1995: p. 9) characterized conservatives as subscribing “to principles designed to justify the established order and guard it against careless tinkering and determined reform.” More recently, John Gray (1995: p. 79) described conservatism as having “as its central terms, authority, loyalty, hierarchy and order—rather than equality, liberty or mankind.”

It is commonly suggested that conservatives are more likely to favor the expansion of government powers for the maintenance of order (controlling crime, preventing abortion, maintaining traditional family life, eliminating pornography, etc.) than are liberals (Van Dyke, 1995: pp. 182, 190–191, 203–204; Gold, 1992: pp. 34, 37–38; Heywood, 1992: p. 88; Reichley, 1981: p. 26). Order, central to the consciousness of conservatives and to the founders of liberalism centuries ago, has been taken for granted by contemporary liberal academics who either ignore the topic or deal with it in passing (e.g., Manning, 1976; Levin-Waldman, 1996; Young, 1996; Van Dyke, 1995).

Freedom

Generic definitions of freedom often include: political independence; immunity from the arbitrary exercise of authority; exemption from an unpleasant or onerous condition as in freedom from want; and the capacity to exercise choice. These phrases suggest a widely discussed distinction that represents a major point of disagreement between liberal and conservative political theorists regarding what is usually called negative and positive freedom that has its origins in the work of British theorists near the end

of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th. T. H. Green and L. T. Hobhouse are the most commonly cited (Freedman, 1978: pp. 16–18). An especially clear definition of negative freedom comes from Friedrich Hayek (1960: p. 11) as the “state in which a man is not subject to coercion by the arbitrary will of another or others.” For many conservatives, negative freedom is achieved when government is reduced to the level suggested by the phrase *laissez faire*. For liberals, positive freedom may mean freedom from the “. . . tyranny of custom, a tyranny of opinion, even a tyranny of circumstance . . .” (Hobhouse quoted in Meadowcroft, 1994: p. 56). Hayek (1960: p. 16) defines his version of positive freedom which he calls “liberty as power” as “the ability to satisfy our wishes, or the extent of the choices of alternatives open to us.” Liberals believe that positive freedom can only be achieved by a relatively proactive government (Ritchie, 1902: p. 85). Conservatives largely reject the notion of positive freedom (Hayek, 1960: p. 17).

Testing the JBG model

Just as our use of newspaper and journal of opinion editorials had to be calibrated by the ADA standard, the JBG model must be examined if we are to use it to organize and analyze editorials. We accomplished this analysis in a 2003 publication (Permaloff and Grafton, 2003). The basic question we sought to answer was whether the JBG sequence accurately models liberalism and conservatism. To avoid circularity we had to find a standard other than *Washington Post*, *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, and *National Review* editorials. ADA ratings appeared to be the tool of choice, but the sparseness of descriptive material associated with ADA vote positions made this impossible; it is often not clear what JBG value or values the ADA is applying to any given position.

Because scholars devote a great deal of attention to liberalism and conservatism even though their work rarely addresses the relationship between ideology and public policy, we evaluated the JBG model by comparing its characterizations of liberalism and conservatism to descriptions found in refereed scholarly journal articles. We searched the journals in EBSCO Host (Academic Search Elite), a relatively comprehensive online collection of social science journals. We limited our search to full text, peer reviewed articles published in 1992–2001 using the search combination: political AND ideology AND liberalism, and then substituted conservatism for liberalism. The coding procedures applied to those data were used for the present study.

Each article was read in its entirety. We applied a simple rating system to each paragraph to evaluate whether an author imputed equality, freedom, and order to liberalism and conservatism. A score of 3 associated with one of these values for a given paragraph means that the text describes that value (e.g., freedom) as an important part or one of the most important parts (e.g., freedom and order are valued equally) of the ideology under discussion. A score of 2 means that a value is associated with an ideology, but in a role explicitly subordinate to one or both of the others values. A score of 1 means that a value’s association with an ideology is subordinate to another and can be gleaned only with some interpretation. Whenever the paragraph identified an ideology as hostile to a value, the score was recorded as a –1 for that value.

A zero means that the value is entirely absent from discussion in the paragraph. Our perspective in scoring was that of the author (Permaloff and Grafton, 2003: pp. 188–189).

We found that the authors who discussed liberalism viewed it as emphasizing equality more than freedom and freedom more than order – the sequence predicted by the JBG model. The differences were statistically significant. Authors who discussed conservatism viewed it as emphasizing order and freedom more than equality. The difference between order and freedom was not statistically significant, but the difference between them and equality was statistically significant. The JBG model was somewhat less successful in characterizing conservatism, but it correctly placed equality in a statistically significant third place.

The JBG model and editorials

For the analysis presented here, we read the editorials in our original sample using the same scoring system that we applied to the journal articles except that the unit of analysis is an editorial, not paragraphs. Because of its simplicity this coding system has the advantage of maximizing consistency and reliability. Fundamentally, a coder need only identify which JBG values are invoked, and whether values are invoked positively or negatively. Editorial writers usually explain their positions clearly, so there is rarely any doubt.¹ While this coding system has the advantage of simplicity and reliability, it does not take into consideration different definitions or conceptions of JBG values. Several such differences are at the heart of liberal – conservative policy disagreements. These differences can only be drawn out of editorials with careful examination and interpretation of the thematic policy content of the editorials. We present these results later in the narrative.²

Our scoring of editorials using the JBG values of equality, freedom, and order can be found in Table 1. The mean scores of Table 1 show that, consistent with JBG, the *Washington Post* applied the value of equality over the other two values (which are approximately equal to each other), but the *New York Times* gave the three values virtually equal weighting with freedom being slightly lower than the others. The conservative publications were more consistent with JBG in that both gave order substantially greater weight than the other two values which were approximately equal to one another. We will see that the JBG model is better than Table 1 suggests at highlighting reasons for liberal – conservative differences, but the model will require augmentation.

Some of the policy areas shown in Table 1 are represented by a relatively small number of editorials. In some instances, this is not a problem. For example, our sample caught only 16 *New York Times* and 7 *Washington Post* editorials on abortion. However, all 23 take the same position. The same is true of the 11 *New York Times* and 19 *Washington Post* editorials on church–state relationships.

Table 2 presents the JBG value scores for the inadequately represented policy areas (editorials in single digits). The table is based on reading editorials identified through key word electronic searches in ProQuest Newsstand over the last 17–20 years (the time span varies from publication to publication in the database). The data in Table 2 reinforces the position of order as the most important conservative JBG value.

Table 1. Equality, order and freedom scores for the editorials from the four publications (sample data only)^a.

Public policy area	New York Times				Washington Post				Wall Street Journal				National Review			
	Equality	Order	Freedom	N	Equality	Order	Freedom	N	Equality	Order	Freedom	N	Equality	Order	Freedom	N
Abortion	0.75	0.94	1.69	16	2.14 ^c	0.00	0.86	7	0.00	3.00	-0.50	2	0.00	2.45 ^c	-0.82	10
Church – state	0.27	1.36	2.73 ^c	11	1.94 ^c	1.53 ^c	-0.16	19	0.43	1.71 ^b	0.00	7	0.28	2.33 ^c	0.61	18
Freedom of expression	0.09	-0.22	2.19 ^c	32	0.00	-0.53	2.53 ^c	36	0.00	0.58	2.50 ^c	12	0.12	1.35 ^c	0.81	26
Immigration	1.70 ^b	0.00	1.50 ^b	10	1.10	0.30	0.80	10	3.00	-1.00 ^c	1.50	8	-0.82	2.18 ^c	-0.91	11
Racial discrimination	1.96 ^c	0.15	0.43	119	2.12	0.18	0.82	113	2.19 ^c	0.28	0.11	18	0.15	1.44	0.11	27
Other discrimination	1.69 ^b	0.62	1.24 ^b	29	3.00 ^c	0.15	0.15	20	0.50	0.17	1.50	6	0.30	1.80 ^c	1.20	10
Privacy	0.00	1.36 ^b	1.36 ^b	11	0.13	0.35	1.96 ^c	23	2.19	0.28	0.11	53	1.11	1.02	1.06	62
Voting	2.44 ^c	0.00	0.38	32	2.10 ^c	0.10	0.21	29	0.20	0.60	0.00	5				0
Crime – causes, approaches	0.38	1.67 ^c	-0.03	39	0.92	1.82 ^c	0.00	49	0.18	1.41 ^c	0.00	17	-0.03	2.17 ^c	0.00	30
Law enforcement/police	0.00	1.32 ^c	0.00	50	0.27	2.14 ^c	0.82	22	0.00	2.00 ^c	0.00	6	0.00	1.57 ^b	0.00	7
Rights of accused	0.43	0.75	1.18	28	1.41	-0.07	2.54 ^c	46	0.16	2.26 ^c	0.05	19				4
Rights of guilty	0.42	1.58 ^c	0.00	43	0.60	0.80	0.00	5	0.00	2.56 ^c	0.00	9	0.00	3.00 ^c	0.00	6
Gun control	0.00	2.45 ^c	-1.00	26	0.00	2.94 ^c	0.00	63	0.00	2.44 ^c	0.33	9				1
Drug abuse	0.00	2.30 ^c	0.69	30	0.29	1.95 ^c	0.24	21	0.67	1.89 ^c	-0.11	9				4
Violence/terror	0.12	1.58 ^c	0.00	26	0.20	0.53	0.60	15	0.90	2.40 ^c	0.00	10	0.00	2.62 ^c	0.38	8
Academic rigor	0.63 ^c	0.71 ^c	0.00	38	0.86 ^c	0.34	0.00	35	0.39	1.71 ^c	0.21	28	0.20	0.40	0.20	15
Education funding	1.15 ^c	0.23	0.00	52	2.49 ^c	0.23	0.06	53	1.00	0.96	0.96	25	-0.09	0.27	0.00	11
Education – program structure	0.21	1.14 ^c	0.00	58	1.65 ^c	0.45	0.00	20	0.67	1.00	0.33	9	0.23	2.00 ^c	0.00	13
Academic freedom				1				1	1.20	1.80	1.50	10	0.27	0.27	2.73 ^c	11
Urban problems	0.81	1.50 ^c	0.00	142	1.80 ^c	0.90	0.00	9	0.22	2.22	0.38	32				0
Welfare – program structure	1.22 ^c	0.17	0.00	108	1.75 ^c	0.14	0.00	65	-0.23	0.82 ^c	0.41	11	0.00	0.75	0.30	20
Welfare funding	0.74 ^c	-0.04	0.00	27	2.15 ^c	0.00	0.00	65	-0.18	1.91 ^c	0.00	5				2
Public housing	1.59 ^c	0.19	0.00	32	2.42 ^c	0.00	0.00	33	0.67	1.00	0.50	65				0
Mean score all	0.75	0.90	0.56		1.33	0.65	0.52		0.61	1.52	0.44		0.10	1.51	0.18	

^aIn some cases liberal and conservative definitions of a value may be different.^bStatistically significant at the 0.05 level.^cStatistically significant at the 0.01 level or better.

Table 2. Equality, order and freedom scores based on electronic key word search for low *N* items in Table 1^a.

Public policy area	New York Times			Washington Post			Wall Street Journal			National Review		
	Equality	Order	Freedom	Equality	Order	Freedom	Equality	Order	Freedom	Equality	Order	Freedom
Abortion												
Church – state							0.68	2.04 ^c	1.84			24
Freedom of expression												
Immigration	1.86	1.68	0.75	28	0.58	2.84 ^c						
Racial discrimination							0.00	2.00	0.25			4
Other discrimination							0.21	0.64	1.79 ^c			8
Privacy							1.23	2.18 ^c	0.14			22
Voting												5
Crime – causes, approaches							0.00	2.50	0.50			6
Law enforcement/police												
Rights of accused												
Rights of guilty							1.13	2.12 ^c	0.00			8
Gun control							0.00	2.44 ^c	0.33			9
Drug abuse							0.00	3.00 ^c	-0.31			16
Violence/terror												
Academic rigor												
Education funding												
Education – program structure												
Academic freedom							0.86	2.43 ^c	-0.04			28
Urban problems												
Welfare – program structure												
Welfare funding							-0.50	0.00	1.00 ^c			12
Public housing												

^a In some cases liberal and conservative definitions of a value may be different.^b Statistically significant at the 0.05 level.^c Statistically significant at the 0.01 level or better.

Conservative and liberal differences

Based on our detailed reading of the editorials (sample and electronic searches), Table 3 summarizes liberal and conservative basic policy positions, the JBG values they employ, and how liberals and conservatives seek to implement their policies. Our objective is to isolate the differences that account for liberal and conservative disagreement.

Four major patterns emerge. In general, probably *the* major difference between liberals and conservatives is the conservatives' strong disposition to defend order and with few exceptions a liberal indifference to order as conservatives define it in the editorials.

Second, conservatives repeatedly oppose liberal policies because (often among other reasons) those policies call for an expansion of federal power over states or individuals and/or an expansion in federal (and often state and local government) spending. Except in a few instances where federal power expansion is deemed necessary to preserve a conservative vision of order, there is a visceral conservative opposition to government expansion. There appears to be a conservative sense that freedom is threatened both by expansion itself and by associated tax increases. Also, in some instances, federal programs are seen as ineffective or counter productive. This positioning is not confined to the Bush or Reagan era. It is an integral part of conservatism throughout the years included in this study and probably beyond.

The third major difference is that conservatives (as predicted by the JBG model) place much less emphasis on equality than do liberals. The fourth major difference is varying conceptualizations of JBG values, especially order. Sometimes liberals and conservatives are talking past each other in different languages. These differences will be discussed later.

The conservative sense of order

In every major policy field listed in Table 3 except isolated aspects of education, crime, and urban problems, there are basic differences between liberals and conservatives with regard to order. Earlier we noted that order means adherence to established custom, an absence of crime, and a condition in which one's person and property are not interfered with except for a sound legal reason and then only by government. When *National Review* and the *Wall Street Journal* take policy positions to defend order, adherence to established custom appears to be almost as important as any other aspect of order. It is this emphasis on tradition that most separates conservatives from liberals with tradition applicable to family life and social, religious, economic, and political institutions.

Perhaps the clearest expression of what might be termed traditional order appeared in a *National Review* editorial (Reaganormality, 5/28/82) that sought to isolate the most basic differences between liberals and conservatives:

Liberalism has set itself against traditional society, organized by the energies of private life. Conservatism insists that liberalism must fail, because it doesn't grasp the norms behind the central dynamisms of society: worship, work, family.

Table 3. Summary of major liberal–conservative policy positions and reasoning behind the positions,

	Policy position	Value	Implementation
Abortion			
Liberals	Pre <i>Roe v. Wade</i> – for legalization. Currently: Seek to maintain legalization	Freedom, order, equality	Expand federal power over the states
Conservatives	Pre <i>Roe v. Wade</i> – opposed or resisted legalization. Currently: Seek to constrain or eliminate legalization	Order, freedom (as a negative value)	Oppose federal government expansion. Legalization strengthened conservative opposition
Key differences	Conservatives are defending traditional order. Liberals are applying all three values but use a different definition of order. For liberals order insures equality of access. For conservatives freedom from federal governmental expansion is also important		
Church–state			
Liberals	Support wide separation of church–state; No school prayer; No government-sponsored religion	Freedom, equality, order	Expand federal power over the states
Conservatives	Opposed or resisted wide separation of church–state	Order, freedom, equality	Oppose federal government expansion. Court orders strengthened conservative opposition
Key differences	Both sides applying all three values although defense of traditional order is central for conservatives. Conservatives oppose expansion of federal government per se. Conservatives and liberals define freedom and order differently		

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Table 3. (Continued)

	Policy position	Value	Implementation
Civil rights: Freedom of expression, immigration, racial discrimination, other discrimination, privacy, voting rights			
Liberals	Support expansion of civil rights, privacy, etc.	Equality, freedom, order	Expand federal power over the states
Conservatives	Resisted civil rights expansion without much conviction. On privacy often agreed with liberals	Order, freedom, equality	Most resisted expansion of federal government authority
Key differences	Order and later equality defined differently by conservatives and liberals. Conservatives oppose expansion of federal government <i>per se</i>		
Crime: Violence/terror, causes and approaches, rights of accused, rights of guilty, drug abuse, law enforcement/police, gun control			
Liberals	Support reducing crime while expanding rights of the accused. Pro gun control. Anti death penalty	Order, equality	Expand federal power over the states and over some areas of crime
Conservatives	Oppose most proposals for federal government expansion. Resist expanding rights of the accused. Anti gun control and pro death penalty and disagree with liberals about their effects	Order	Oppose federal government expansion in areas of major state responsibility
Key differences	Differences in conception of order: Conservatives for traditional order. Major differences in evaluating the effectiveness of gun control and death penalty. Major differences in evaluation of the basic causes of crime. Liberals tie the cause to inequalities and conservatives tie crime to the erosion of family life and other traditional order issues		

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Table 3. (Continued)

	Policy position	Value	Implementation
Education: Funding, program structure			
Liberals	Support improving the quality of public schools	Equality, order, freedom	Expand federal government funding for education. Maintain the public school system and oppose vouchers
Conservatives	Oppose most proposals for expanded federal involvement in education. Promote the creation of a voucher system	Order	Oppose federal government expansion in area of major state responsibility. Create a voucher system
Key differences	Conservatives place greater emphasis on school problems as problems of order. Liberals stress inequalities as the source of educational problems. Conservatives oppose federal government involvement as an expansion of federal power and support privatization of education efforts		
Urban problems			
Liberals	Condition of cities and public housing should be improved	Equality, order	Expand federal funding
Conservatives	Cities' problems are the cities' problems	Order	Oppose expanded federal role; evaluate federal programs as ineffective. Promote business oriented solutions
Key differences	Conservatives using the traditional definition of order and not much concerned about equality issues. Conservatives oppose federal authority expansion and view federal programs as doing as much harm as good		

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Table 3. (Continued)

	Policy position	Value	Implementation
Welfare: Funding, program structure			
Liberals	Support improved conditions for the poor	Equality	Expand federal programs and federal authority
Conservatives	View poverty as caused by individuals and federal government programs. Oppose federal government expansion in this area	Order, freedom	Oppose federal program expansion
Key differences	Liberals and conservatives have different notions of order. Conservatives not as concerned with equality and oppose federal program expansion partly because they do not believe federal programs work		

Conservatives hold that the free market, for example, is not so much an abstract ideal as a description of the way things really work. Tamper with it too much, and you run athwart human nature.

Ronald Reagan won in 1980 because liberalism had been exposed as normless – morally and practically. Its social spending had long since forgotten the limit at which aid to exceptional cases disrupts the normal flow of material transactions. It had pressed its pet civil liberties to an extreme at which they harmed normal liberties (like walking down the street unmugged).

Reagan's deeper strength . . . is his harmony with the enduring norms of the West . . .

The conservative sense of order applied to specific policy areas

In an editorial against abortion (Who are the bigots? 10/19/84) *National Review* characterized its opposition to legalized abortion as arising “from within the old moral consensus.” Phrasing of this sort does not appear in *New York Times* or *Washington Post* editorials on any policy area.

The basic conservative position with regard to church–state separation is that the separation need not be absolute. The central argument pivots on traditional order. The *Wall Street Journal* and *National Review* supported religious holiday displays on public property and prayer in public schools. In its criticism of U.S. Supreme Court decisions against prayer in public schools *National Review* (God go home, 7/2/63) asked: “How can you revere this nation's historical institutions [traditions

such as school prayer, military chaplains, and holiday displays] and also the Supreme Court of the United States?” The *Wall Street Journal* (Values in a vacuum, 9/11/63) characterized these decisions as “an affront to the long religious tradition so deeply entwined in our history.”

Turning to racial discrimination, voting rights, and other discrimination, the conservative defense of traditional order changed over time. In a 1963 editorial (The prize and the risk, 5/9/63) the *Wall Street Journal* observed that it favored the objectives of the civil rights movement and the legal ways that civil rights gains had been achieved, but the newspaper objected to civil rights leaders provoking violence:

From the small, sporadic, scattered and relatively quiet sit-ins of a few years ago have grown large organized marches on cities. The invasion of Birmingham [Alabama] came under the label of nonviolent demonstrating, but it was all too likely to degenerate into violence by the very nature of the undertaking.

A year later, the *Wall Street Journal* shifted its attention from the nature of civil rights tactics to criticizing the constitutionality and substance of civil rights and voting rights legislation. While conceding that civil rights legislation was inevitable and in many ways good, the newspaper expressed concerns regarding the legislation’s constitutionality as well as the intrusion of the federal government into the affairs of state and local governments and people’s lives (Surfeited with disorder, 4/8/64; Force by default, 6/23/64). The *Wall Street Journal* also argued that the Voting Rights Act was not needed because laws already on the books at state and federal levels if enforced would ensure voting rights (Means for a high purpose, 3/29/65). This editorial, typical for conservatives in this era, added opposition to federal government expansion as a threat to freedom to its defense of traditional law and order as well as what it regarded as established law. As the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Voting Rights Act of 1965 became established law and as liberals moved from their original position of supporting strict color blind equality to support for affirmative action, conservatives shifted to acceptance of strict color blind equality; this became the new standard of order for conservatives.

Turning to the “other discrimination” category a *Wall Street Journal* editorial (Awareness, yes, but . . ., 9/30/69) written in the early years of the women’s rights movement described “radical feminism” as a “curious and startling” ideology:

The more militant feminists . . . do not talk so much of winning job opportunities for women or other relatively legitimate concerns as of restructuring society, ‘changing its definitions of masculine and feminine, of work and the family . . .’ Now, with our own household still relatively under control, we can’t feel especially threatened by these mutterings on the feminine left.

This editorial then speculates darkly about whether universities will be “forced to establish departments of feminine studies, offering courses in ‘feminine history’ and ‘institutionalized sexism’.” It concludes: “Such things may well come to pass. For as we are depressed to observe, awareness alone is not enough to cure a society of absurdity.” The *Wall Street Journal* (ERA death watch, 6/17/82) also was unsympathetic to the Equal Rights Amendment, arguing that improving conditions

for women did not require passage of a constitutional amendment. This typical conservative defense of traditional order constitutes a chasm between conservatives and liberals.

Homosexual rights also falls in our other discrimination category. *National Review* (Gay rights, 6/7/74) initially defended traditional order this way:

At least ten American cities have now adopted one or another measure designed to assure the so-called civil rights of homosexuals and other deviants, and such legislation is now under consideration in New York City . . . The language of this bill, reflecting the avowed goals of various 'gay liberation' organizations, would make homosexuality merely another lifestyle in the eyes of the law, and would both break down social resistance to it and stigmatize such resistance as 'bigotry'.

A similar measure . . . was recently put to the test of a referendum in Boulder, Colorado, and the voters rejected it by an overwhelming majority. If that expression of ordinary human feeling constituted prejudice, then it was prejudice in the Burkean sense of the word: the intuition of norms and assumptions that lie at the roots of Western civilization.

As the years passed, here too conservatives shifted to accept equal rights for homosexuals (except for gay marriage), but they opposed federal court abrogation of state laws concerning sexual behavior. Regarding a Texas anti-sodomy law *National Review* (Sex and the senator, 5/19/03) commented: "The state legislature of Texas should repeal its law. But the question before the Supreme Court is not whether Texas should retain its law, but whether it may do so – or, better, whether the Court is authorized to nullify it." In this area, the defense of order is both a defense of traditional political arrangements and a defense of the traditional cultural and religious norms that vary from state to state.

A split arose between the *Wall Street Journal* and *National Review* in the areas of privacy and freedom of expression. In both categories, the *Wall Street Journal* emphasized freedom far more than order or equality, while *National Review* emphasized order over freedom and equality. With regard to privacy, when Attorney General John Mitchell and Central Intelligence Agency Director Richard Helms argued that they should be trusted with broad domestic intelligence powers, the *Wall Street Journal* (Advice from Publius, 5/10/71) objected. The *Wall Street Journal* also stood firmly opposed to prior censorship (see Rocky Mountain law, 1/25/84 for a typical editorial).

In the area of privacy *National Review* emphasized order somewhat more than freedom. For example, *National Review* (Cops, crooks and bugs, 6/27/67) blasted a U.S. Supreme Court decision declaring unconstitutional a New York State law that permitted the bugging of premises harboring suspected criminals. *National Review* (The death of pluralism, 2/16/73) also was sharply critical of the Supreme Court's logic in its *Roe v. Wade* decision. As the title of the editorial suggests, one basis for criticism was that the Court had short-circuited the political (electoral and legislative) process – an attack on order. In addition: ". . . the majority opinion is grounded in the due-process clause of the Fourteenth Amendment – the uses of which are ever-expanding – from which [Justice] Blackmun inferred a 'right to privacy' which includes the right

to abortion.” The editorial predicted that the decision would result in the “alienation of many Catholics – and also, of course, anti-abortion Protestants and Jews . . .” Our scoring for *National Review* in Table 1 probably overstates the magazine’s emphasis on freedom in the area of privacy as the other three publications would understand freedom in this area. For example, it defended Central Intelligence Agency *domestic* spying as necessary for the maintenance of order and [explicitly] freedom (*National Review*, CIA wonderland, 1/31/75). In other words, order may take precedence over some personal freedom for freedom at the systemic level can only be insured by maintaining order.

National Review also emphasized order over freedom with regard to freedom of expression. For example, *National Review* (On with it, 10/21/61) supported a Supreme Court ruling that upheld the constitutionality of the McCarran Act. Among other things, this statute required that the Communist Party register the names of its members. In this and many similar editorials *National Review* argued that the Communist Party was substantially different from other political movements in ways that required that concerns of order trump freedom of expression. In another example, *National Review* (That’s obscenity! 12/31/87) refused to defend the right of *Hustler* magazine to publish an inaccurate and obscene parody of evangelist and Christian-right activist Jerry Falwell.

In relation to crime, both conservative publications placed far greater emphasis on order than the other JBG values. Liberals also emphasized order in this area, but not by as great a margin as conservatives. Here, the difference lay in a greater conservative emphasis on order, not in different conceptions of order.

With regard to education, conservatives again placed greater emphasis on order than did liberals. For example, both conservative publications opposed so-called bilingual education. This technique was intended to ease non-English speaking (primarily Spanish) students into the educational process by teaching in Spanish and gradually shifting students to English. Both conservative publications argued that in practice the result was Spanish-only education which hurt students’ chances of long-run success (scored as a 3 for equality) and represented, as *National Review* (Winning propositions, 6/1/98) characterized it, an “injustice.” Both conservative publications also characterized bilingual education as slowing the integration of Spanish speaking people into the American culture.

Another conservative defense of traditional order came with the *Wall Street Journal*’s (Choice’s big menu, 2/4/91) opposition to proposals by California Governor Pete Wilson for public schools to become involved in a wider range of child rearing activities. The *Wall Street Journal* noted that some conservatives agreed with Wilson, finding that some children were so bereft of a supportive home life that teachers have little chance to work productively with them. But the *Wall Street Journal* argued that parental failure is the exception, and that academic performance tends to diminish as schools try to do things beside teach. The *Wall Street Journal* turned the issue into both a defense of traditional families (order) and an economic issue by suggesting that increasing tax exemptions for children would “relieve the economic burden that impels two parents both to work” (equality) and calling for greater school choice options (freedom) through the use of such devices as vouchers. For education funding, conservatives do not emphasize order more than the other JBG values. As we will

see later, opposition to federal funding is the pivot point of liberal – conservative differences in this policy area.

With regard to academic rigor, order is by far the dominant value for the *Wall Street Journal* and by a narrow margin also *National Review*. The major theme here is the mediocrity of primary and secondary schools. In this respect, conservatives are little different from liberals, although their respective solutions to disorder are radically different.

The urban category consists mostly of editorials on inadequate housing, urban infrastructure decay, and poor public schools. Virtually all of the editorials call for improved order as do the counterpart liberal editorials. The big difference is how conservatives would establish order compared to liberals. The conservative answer is market mechanisms, lower taxes, and massive reform or elimination of the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Our sample picked up no *National Review* editorials devoted to urban problems, and only 12 appeared in our electronic search. Order and freedom were the most heavily referenced JBG values for this category, but not to a degree that was statistically significant. The 32 *Wall Street Journal* editorials on this subject had order as the dominant value. With regard to welfare as with urban issues, *National Review* devoted little attention to this topic except in structure of programs where order is the most frequently referenced value. With the *Wall Street Journal* order is the dominant value in both categories.

The liberal commitment to order

What is the difference between the liberal and conservative advocacy of order? First, in law enforcement/police, drug abuse, and violence/terror there are no differences (except for *National Review*'s sometime libertarian advocacy of drug legalization). Both liberals and conservatives favor similar measures to achieve what might be termed law and order. However, there is no sense of *traditional* order in liberal positions in these areas.

The liberal and conservative sense of what constitutes order or how order can be achieved are often radically different. These differences are notable in the fields of crime – basic causes and approaches, rights of the accused, rights of the guilty, and gun control. We lack sufficient space to explore these differences here, but the rights of the guilty category is illustrative of them all. In terms of numbers of editorials written by liberals the most important topic in this area is capital punishment. Liberals argue that capital punishment fails to reduce crime, but the primary focus of their editorials on this subject is that execution has no place in a civilized society. The *New York Times* (What Velma wore, 11/3/84) characterized capital punishment as barbarism. For liberals, capital punishment represents disorder and a return to the state of nature. For conservatives, it is a way to preserve order and prevent the return to a state of nature.

The visceral conservative opposition to government expansion

We saw in the preceding section that conservatives frequently oppose liberal programs because they are defending order especially traditional order. From a public policy perspective this stand is often expressed as conservative opposition to expanded federal

government power over states or individuals and/or greater federal, state and local government spending. Conservatives seem to oppose federal government expansion and greater government spending at all levels, unless they view governmental expansion as the only alternative available to loss of traditional order. Their position separates them still further from liberals who with few exceptions regard federal government expansion and increased government spending with equanimity. An especially revealing *National Review* editorial (Oremus, 5/28/82) opposed a proposal by President Reagan to amend the Constitution to permit organized prayer in public schools. Although *National Review* favored school prayer, it objected to the President's policy on the grounds that while the Supreme Court's 1982 ruling against school prayer was an abuse of the Constitution, it is bad public policy to "amend the Constitution to make it mean what it meant in the first place." Instead, *National Review* recommended that Congress reduce the power of the court, and that government encourage private education where parents would be free to design programs to fit the needs of their children. Opposition to the expansion of federal power and to increased taxation at all levels separates conservatives from liberals in: church – state relations; most elements of civil rights; crime – rights of accused; gun control; education funding; and all elements of welfare.

Some recent policy disputes such as same sex marriage and the Terri Schiavo case could lead to the conclusion that conservatives favor the expansion of federal power. As we show in Appendix A conservatives have been somewhat inclined to favor increased federal power in these cases, but there is a substantial range of opinion in terms of policy positions or the ways that those policy positions were formulated. Furthermore, the present study covers 23 policy areas that include dozens of policy positions spanning more than three decades. When viewed in this light our characterization of conservatives as resisting federal expansion is strongly supported. Appendix B shows conservatives opposing the expansion of federal power or favoring the reduction of federal power in 16 policy areas, favoring the expansion of federal power in two policy areas so as to protect or preserve order, and split in two more. Conservatives do not take significant positions with regard to the federal government in only three policy areas.

Conservatism and equality

Earlier we saw that liberals do not give equality as much emphasis as we would expect from the JBG model, but both liberal newspapers place much greater emphasis on equality than do the conservative publications. Liberals typically weight it at least as heavily as the other JBG values, and conservatives place little emphasis on it. Equality is highest ranked for *National Review* only for privacy (where it is almost equal to the scores for freedom and order). Equality in the *Wall Street Journal* was most heavily weighted for immigration and education funding (where the difference was not statistically significant). This is consistent with the literature on conservatism written by conservative and liberal scholars (Piper, 1997: pp. 14–20; Hayek, 1960: pp. 85–102; Van Dyke, 1995: p. 85; Kaus, 1992; Rossiter, 1962; Kirk, 1953).

The major characteristic of conservative editorials in relation to equality (even in public policy areas where we might expect a strong emphasis on equality) is its absence. For example, on abortion where equality is the most heavily emphasized

value by the *Washington Post* and a significant factor for the *New York Times*, both conservative publications received a score of zero. Our sample caught 2 *Wall Street Journal* editorials on abortion (and 9 in a 1984–2005 electronic search) and 11 *National Review* editorials. None made any reference to equality. This is not surprising, since the premise of all conservative editorials on abortion is that it is immoral or at best distasteful and an affront to order; equal access is not a theme (e.g., *Wall Street Journal*, The Daschle abortion ban, 11/06/03).

When conservative editorials do not ignore equality, they sometimes treat it negatively. For example, *National Review* (Madison Avenue equality, 6/25/76) ridiculed the campaign on behalf of the Equal Rights Amendment and predicted that the amendment, if passed, would subject women to: the military draft and combat; Social Security tax increases; and loss of special status in divorce and child custody cases. In addition, the ERA would produce an expansion in the federal bureaucracy with substantial transfers of authority from the private to public sectors.

Conservatives, liberals, order, equality, and federal power

When the values that constitute liberalism considered alone are compared to the JBG model, the model's performance is mediocre, but the fit to conservative values is closer. However, when liberalism and conservatism are compared, the model accurately describes many areas of disagreement between them. The areas consistent with JBG include conservative defense of traditional order and indifference or hostility to equality and liberal indifference to traditional order and substantial emphasis on equality. In addition, there is a frequent conservative opposition to and liberal advocacy of government expansion especially at the federal level. These conservative – liberal differences are enough to create a substantial divide.

While the JBG model mirrors key liberal–conservative differences, it does not predict or explain intra ideological disagreements, and it is blind to inter ideological differences that hinge on sometimes varying conceptions of freedom, equality, and especially order. The JBG model is a good first approximation for assessing the ideological underpinning of domestic policy disputes unrelated to business and the economy.

Appendix A: Conservative perspectives on two recent debates

Same sex marriage

The *Wall Street Journal* approaches this issue in a considerably more nuanced manner than *National Review*. We were only able to locate five *Wall Street Journal* editorials in an electronic search. Three editorials took no position with regard to the federal government and two opposed federal expansion into this area. One of these two *Wall Street Journal* editorials (Toying with marriage, 7/14/04) read: “We oppose the Allard-Musgrave amendment . . . Instead of some national definition of marriage, we'd prefer an amendment that reserves issues of family law for the arena where the Founders wanted such issues handled: the American people, acting through their

elected state representatives. . . . Right now, the only proposal for consideration is the Allard-Musgrave version whose first sentence defines marriage as a union between a man and a woman and whose second decrees that no court can construe constitutions, state or federal, to say otherwise.” This position was essentially repeated in the other *Wall Street Journal* editorial opposing increased federal power in this area (Marriage and democracy, 2/27/04).

National Review vigorously opposes same sex marriage and favors federal action against it, including a constitutional amendment.

The Terri Schiavo case

The *Wall Street Journal*'s basic position is summarized in an editorial (Terri Schiavo's legacy, 3/25/05) that argues that cases of this sort should be handled by states, but that Congress' involvement was "narrowly limited to Terri's case and essentially procedural; it does not trample on states' rights." Although the specific policy positions of the *Wall Street Journal* and *National Review* are very similar, they come at their positions from opposite directions. While the *Wall Street Journal* appears to regret even this one-time reach of federal power into what the newspaper regards as state matters, *National Review* is an enthusiastic advocate of federal action to reverse Florida's decision.

Appendix B: Summary of conservative perspectives on federal authority in relation to domestic policy areas

Policy area	Conservative position vis-a-vis federal authority
Abortion	On balance, both conservative publications want some increased federal authority. The <i>Wall Street Journal</i> wants increased limits on abortion while <i>National Review</i> favors a federal ban on all abortions
Church-state	Both publications want reductions in federal power. For example, they want federal courts to stop blocking local government Christmas displays and school prayer
Freedom of expression	On balance, with some <i>National Review</i> exceptions, conservatives favored reduced federal authority. For example, the <i>Wall Street Journal</i> opposed an attempted extension of FCC power over cable television because cable is not broadcast. The <i>Wall Street Journal</i> also defended the <i>New York Times</i> and <i>Washington Post</i> after they printed <i>The Pentagon Papers</i> . <i>National Review</i> 's positions on freedom of expression were similar to the <i>Wall Street Journal</i> 's except that in the 1960s it regarded the Communist party as having unique characteristics that justified blocking Communist party publications from being delivered by the U.S. Post Office. Also, <i>National Review</i> favored censorship of pornography while recognizing the practical difficulties of doing so
Immigration	Probably the widest policy split in the American Right. The Chamber of Commerce/libertarian <i>Wall Street Journal</i> favors easier entry into the United States, while the Social Conservative perspective represented by <i>National Review</i> is that immigration should be reduced

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Policy area	Conservative position vis-a-vis federal authority
Other discrimination	This category mainly represents discrimination against homosexuals and women. Overall, both publications have opposed federal civil rights legislation for these groups including the Equal Rights Amendment and federal court rulings
Privacy	Aside from a few <i>National Review</i> exceptions, the thrust of both publications' editorials is to oppose the application of federal power that they regard as interfering with privacy rights
Racial discrimination	The vast majority of both publications' editorials in this area call for a reduction or oppose an increase in federal power. The largest policy categories are affirmative action and busing to achieve school desegregation
Voting discrimination	The <i>Wall Street Journal</i> is hostile to the Voting Rights Act as it contributes to racial gerrymanders. The <i>Wall Street Journal</i> also opposed Motor Voter legislation because it believes it contributes to vote fraud. A small minority of <i>Wall Street Journal</i> editorials can be interpreted as calling for federal court intervention in gerrymandering cases which the newspaper blames on the federal government in the first place. <i>National Review</i> positions are very similar
Crime –causes	A very small percentage of editorials in this category relate to the federal government; most concern state and local matters. The only editorials that concern the federal government are critical of federal programs designed to reduce crime which both publications characterize as welfare programs in disguise
Drug abuse	The <i>Wall Street Journal</i> and <i>National Review</i> split drastically in this area. Oddly, it is <i>National Review</i> that takes the libertarian position and the <i>Wall Street Journal</i> that defends something near a standard social conservative and liberal anti-drug policy
Gun control	Both publications are consistently hostile to increased federal government power
Law enforcement	This category concerns police and law enforcement administration. Many editorials concern state and local matters, but when the federal government is discussed both publications favor reductions in federal activities
Rights of accused	The <i>Wall Street Journal</i> opposes the use of entrapment by the FBI and wants a reduction in use (abuse) of RICO. Both publications have been highly critical of federal court expansion of rights of the accused (for example, the <i>Wall Street Journal</i> would reduce the applicability of the exclusionary rule)
Rights of guilty	The main issue in this category is the death penalty which both publications favor, but federal power is not a major theme except when federal courts block its application
Violence/terrorism	Overall, both publications advocate increases in federal power and to a lesser degree state and local government power
Academic freedom	None of these editorials relates to the federal government
Academic rigor	The overall tenor is one of opposing federal programs and expenditures
Education funding	Both publications oppose federal programs and expenditures

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Policy area	Conservative position vis-a-vis federal authority
Education – structure of programs	Both publications oppose federal programs and expenditures
Urban	The overall tone used by both publications is one of opposition to government programs at any level to aid cities and positive toward tax reductions and market-oriented devices such as enterprise zones
Welfare – funding	Both publications are highly critical of welfare funding. They either advocate funding reductions or defend the status quo against increases
Welfare – structure	Both publications advocate reduction or oppose expansion of welfare programs or advocate variations of workfare
Public housing	Both publications advocate the reduction of public housing or some sort of privatization

Notes

1. The application of content analysis to newspaper editorials in both the public policy and media and politics literatures is largely confined to analysis of single issues or a single election contest. The coding schemes used tend toward simple coding and gross counting of whether the issue is supported or opposed in the editorial, not varying perspectives (ideological or otherwise).
2. We see theorists as working on the leading edge of ideological change and the editorial writers of our four publications using the works of the theorists (and many other scholars such as policy specialists) and applying them to current issues thereby influencing the policy formulation process.

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