

Decision Processes Colloquia

Monday, April 1, 2019

Where: 340 JMHH

When: 12:00 – 1:20 pm

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Metaphor and Political Ideology: The Link Between Helicopter Parenting and Political Attitudes

ABSTRACT:

Abstract concepts like political ideology are hard to mentally represent, so some scholars have argued that we ground them in concrete concepts through metaphor. One prominent example is Lakoff's 'government as family' theory, suggesting that our perspective on how government should function is based largely in our perspective on how families should function. Lakoff has suggested, for example, that a preference for nurturant (as opposed to disciplinarian) parenting style will yield different attitudes on issues such as welfare, prison sentences, and law enforcement. In this paper we explore the recent rise of helicopter vs. free range parenting styles through the lens of Lakoff's model, finding evidence of a link between helicoptering and preference for paternalistic government policies, while free range parenting styles yield a preference for libertarian policies. This parenting metaphor explains more of the variance than ideology, party affiliation, and several other common predictors of political preference. We then explore the extent to which this metaphor extends beyond political settings, exploring the implications for business, education, and several other domains.

