

A STUDY OF THE RELEVANCE OF LOCATION
ON THE PERCEPTIONS OF “RED” AND “BLUE”
STATES

By

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STATES

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

In the 2004 election year, stereotypes of the Republican and Democratic parties were common. Television and news commentators frequently clashed with one another while defending their perceptions of the two political groups. Once the fight over “Red” and “Blue” territory began, the topic became practically inescapable to any American who wanted to watch the news. Many people are familiar with the classifications that liberal or conservative critics have attributed to these “Red” and “Blue” states; however, what does a typical non-critic think of these terms? What influences their perceptions?

This study intends to ask students at Oklahoma State University what sort of characteristics they believe can be attributed to the terms “Red State” and “Blue State.” However, the objective of this study is not only about the meanings that they attach to these places, it is about what has influenced these perceptions. In particular, this study is interested in whether or not place and location has an impact upon respondents’ beliefs about and identification with “Red” states and “Blue” states. It is believed that respondents from similar locations will share similar perceptions about these two political regions and will identify closely with one another in their definitions of these two places.

Electoral College Background

The Electoral College plays a large role in how the U.S. public elects a president. A candidate ultimately wins or loses an election based upon the number of electoral votes he/she receives (which usually reflect the number of popular votes he/she receives). One element of the Electoral College that has never changed since its creation in 1785 is the process used to determine the number of electors each state has. According to William C. Kimberling:

Each State was allocated a number of Electors equal to the number of its U.S. Senators (always 2) plus the number of its U.S. Representatives (which may change each decade according to the size of each State's population as determined in the decennial census). This arrangement built upon an earlier compromise in the design of the Congress itself and thus satisfied both large and small States. (Revised May 1992)

The choice of electors in each state is an important task. Technically, “voters are actually casting their votes for the Electors for the presidential and vice presidential candidates of their choice rather than for the candidates themselves” (Kimberling, 1992). All states, except for Nebraska and Maine, must cast all of their electoral votes for one candidate. If all votes are cast for the Republican candidate, this results in a “Red” state. Likewise, if all votes are cast for the Democratic candidate, this results in a “Blue” state (It should be noted here that the Electoral College is not responsible for creating this color scheme. The American media is responsible for creating this “Red”/“Blue” format). Nebraska and Maine are the only states that allow their votes to be split. If either state were to split their votes, this would result in a “Purple” state (however, this has yet to happen).

There are many criticisms of the Electoral College process and many people who believe the College should no longer be used. Most notable is the argument that the

College makes it possible for a president to be elected without a majority of the popular vote. This incidence has occurred four times throughout history, most recently in 2000. Because each elector receives only one electoral vote, an area where the popular vote is nearly split between two candidates appears to be tremendously in favor of just one on Election Day. The popular votes for the losing candidate do not count at all. There is also criticism of how the electoral votes are allotted. Each state receives a number of votes equal to their amount of senators and House representatives. Regardless of population, each state has two senators and at least one representative, giving every state at least three electoral votes. In a close election, three votes given to a very small minority of the population could determine who becomes president. On the other hand, the electoral college also gives tremendous power to the most populous states. In fact, if a candidate wins the electoral votes from the 12 most populous states, he or she would not need any votes from the other 38—negating the votes of a large section of the population.

An alternative to the Electoral College would be a direct popular vote. However, this option would bring new problems. In 1977, a Constitutional amendment to create a direct popular vote was proposed but not passed. Under this amendment, only 40% of the vote would be needed for a winning candidate. Therefore, a minority president would be a possible outcome. Under the current Electoral College system, it is less likely that a minority candidate would be elected (although still possible) because of the way electors are allotted to the population. In addition, a recount under the Electoral College system is simpler than a recount under the direct election system. The current system is based upon states' votes and, if a vote were to be questioned, only certain states would need to recount their ballots rather than the entire nation. Also, since the president is currently

elected by each state, voters must be registered members of the state in which they vote. Therefore, the Electoral System reduces the confusion that a direct national election would bring.

Problem & Purpose of Study

The problem researched in this study is the indefinite identification of the terms, “Red State” and “Blue State.” Specifically, it will examine how today’s educated youth define these terms, how they feel about people from “Red” and “Blue” states, and whether or not location has influenced these feelings. By examining this, a better understanding can be formed of how these terms are comprehended. “Red” states and “Blue” states have become a part of modern political culture only in the last decade and have yet to be formally defined. This study will help researchers to understand the political culture of the late 1990’s and early 2000’s as it pertains to “Red” and “Blue” states.

Objectives of the Investigation

The main objective of this study is to determine if people from similar locations (based on population) have similar views on “Red” and “Blue” states. Locations with similar populations may have provided comparable opportunities and cultures to the respondents. Those from rural hometowns may have had shared experiences that led them to believe a certain way politically, as do those from suburban or urban hometowns. While this study is not interested in what those particular experiences were, it will

determine the general political beliefs that those experiences have led to and whether they are shared among respondents from varying types of places based on population.

A second objective is to determine whether people look negatively upon the type of state (whether “Red” or “Blue”) with which they do not identify. Commentators and comedians have put forth the image of a “culture war” among “Red” state identifiers and “Blue” state identifiers in the media, particularly on television cable news programs. This study will determine whether or not this “culture war” is true among today’s youth by asking whether or not “Red” state identifiers feel negatively towards those from “Blue” states, and vice versa.

The third objective is to discover how people categorize “Red” and “Blue” states. For the purpose of this study, the “correct” definitions of a “Red” and a “Blue” state are those already mentioned—specifically, that a “Red” state is a state in which the electoral votes went to the Republican candidate for president and that a “Blue” state is one in which the electoral votes went to the Democratic candidate for president. However, there are many assumptions people make that go beyond these “correct” definitions. Throughout any election cycle, it is likely that there will be talk on television, with family or friends, or in any social setting about what characterizes a typical “Red” or “Blue” state. These discussions have led to certain stereotypes that are prevalent throughout the country and recognized by many. Therefore, people have begun to develop their own vernacular definitions of these terms.

These personal vernacular definitions can tell the geographic community much about how people perceive other political regions. The “Red” and “Blue” electoral map clearly identifies certain geographic regions as different from one another. While the

character and boundaries of these regions shift over time, people’s perceptions are applied to the entire region. While it is an issue that these vernacular definitions can be stereotypical and incorrect; this research will be more focused on what particular categorizations people have about these “Red” and “Blue” regions and whether or not urbanity and rurality appears to influence these perceptions.

Research Questions

Research Question 1: Will respondents with a rural background more often identify with “Red” states?¹ Since the survey is taking place in Oklahoma—a strong Republican, or “Red,” state—I expect to have a majority of respondents identify with “Red” states. Furthermore, it is expected that almost all respondents that are from strictly rural places or rural towns and villages will overwhelmingly identify with a “Red” state because smaller towns provide a more conservative, Republican upbringing.

Research Question 2: Will respondents with an urban background have greater identification with “Blue” states than those from rural regions?² Larger towns such as Oklahoma City, Tulsa, and Dallas offer a wide range of activities and people for the respondents to interact with. Therefore, respondents from urban areas, suburban areas and small urban places will have greater diversity and will identify with values outside of

¹ For this study, strictly rural places are determined by using the U.S. Census classification of a population of less than 2,500. Categorization of rural towns and villages is defined under the Methodology chapter of this study.

² For this study, urban areas are determined by using the U.S. Census classification of urban areas (found at <http://www.census.gov/geo/www/ua/st2kua.txt>). Suburban areas and small urban places are determined by using the U.S. Office of Management and Budget’s report on the “Update of Statistical Area Definitions and Guidance of their Usage.” Further categorization is defined under the Methodology chapter of this study.

Oklahoma more than respondents from more rural places. This will be reflected by more respondents who live in these urban places identifying with “Blue” states. It is not anticipated that “Blue” state identifications will constitute a majority of the urban responses, but when compared to the rural responses, they will be more numerous.

Research Question 3: Will respondents show a negative attitude toward states—whether “Red” or “Blue”—with which they do not personally identify their voting beliefs? In the last two elections, candidates’ and pundits’ political beliefs were stated strongly on television and in political debates. This affected the public by showcasing the differences between Republican and Democratic voters, and perpetuating the so-called “culture war” discussed above. As a result, it is believed the respondents will identify strongly with their political views and look negatively upon those who do not share them. While this is not necessarily profound, it will prove whether or not the respondents believe negative stereotypes about other regions.

Research Question 4: Will respondents identify “Red” states as being Republican and “Blue” states as being Democratic? Will respondents identify “Red” states with a conservative viewpoint and “Blue” states with a liberal viewpoint? How else will respondents describe “Red” and “Blue” states? Because red is assigned to the Republican Party and blue is assigned to the Democratic Party in the media, these will be the first associations respondents will make with the terms, “Red state” and “Blue state,” respectively. Furthermore, because of party perceptions by the general public (see Bastedo and Lodge 1980) that Republicans are more conservative and Democrats are

more liberal, these will be the second most associated perceptions made by respondents. Besides these primary associations, it is expected that respondents will overwhelmingly associate “Red” states with perceived conservative values, such as pro-life abortion rights, anti-gun control laws and tax cuts, and “Blue” states with perceived liberal values, such as pro-choice abortion rights, gun control laws and raising taxes for social programs. These words are relatively new to the American vocabulary and are not formally defined. Therefore, respondents will have created their own associations and definitions of these regions.

Definitions and Terms

1. “Red” State— a state that allotted its electoral votes to a Republican candidate for president.
2. “Blue” state—a state that allotted its electoral votes to a Democratic candidate for president.
3. Culture War—political conflict based on different idealized cultural values (Wikipedia 2007).

CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

Perception of political parties and their candidates is a main factor in how one determines their vote. The introduction of “Red” and “Blue” states has thrown another factor into the mix of how a voter perceives politics and voting regions. However, to a geographic observer, voting regions have always existed. This literature review will begin by examining how major voting regions have been determined in the past and where they have been located. This will provide a glimpse of how our modern “Red” and “Blue” state regions have evolved.

In addition to the creation of voting regions, this literature review will examine how regions and parties in the United States have been perceived over time. As voting regions change over time, so do perceptions of these places. In particular, “Red” states and “Blue” states have created a wave of new perceptions that this study wants to uncover.

Establishment and Location of Regions

The creation of regions is integral to the first objective of this study. Grouping voters into rural/suburban/urban regions, North/South regions, “Red”/“Blue” regions, etc., can show whether or not people in similar locations have similar political views. Therefore, literature on the establishment of regions based upon political views is reviewed first.

J. Clark Archer addressed voting regions in his paper, “Some Geographical Aspects of the American Presidential Election of 1980” (1982). By studying numerous presidential elections, Archer (along with colleague P.J. Taylor) were able to determine three regions: the “Northeastern core,” the “Southern periphery” and the “Western periphery” (Archer 1982, 127). Archer again points out these same three voting regions with Fred Shelley in their book, *American Electoral Mosaics* (1986, 86). First, the “Northeastern core” is made up of states from Missouri to Delaware up to Minnesota and Maine. Archer’s study was based upon uncovering the Republican percentage in the United States and therefore does not determine how many Democrats reside in these regions. He believes the “Northeastern core” is on average 45.3% Republican (1982, 127). The “Southern periphery” ranges from Oklahoma to Texas east to Virginia and Florida and was found to be on average 47.9% Republican. The “Western periphery” is composed of the remaining states, including Alaska and Hawaii. This region was found to be on average 54.5% Republican. Archer does not delve into cultural traits of these regions, but by merely grouping these states together, he provides a basis for other authors to follow.

John Heppen's 2003 article, "Racial and Social Diversity and U.S. Presidential Election Regions," breaks down the United States into similar voting regions. He identifies "The Coasts," "Middle America," and the "Sun Belt" in addition to a smaller voting cluster made up of the District of Columbia. (2003). The similarity of these regions to those listed by Archer, Taylor and Shelley is not a coincidence; Heppen notes that his regions "confirm the findings of Shelley and colleagues and Archer and Taylor," showing that he clearly used their input (2003, 202). However, his regions are not exactly identical to the "Northeastern core," "Southern periphery" and "Western periphery." His "Sun Belt" is comparable to the "Southern periphery," ranging from Arizona to Virginia, excluding Florida and Kentucky. Florida is instead grouped into "The Coasts" along with California, Washington, a few New England states, and, oddly enough, Colorado (among others). "Middle America" is comprised of states in the interior West and East, along with coastal states such as Oregon and Maine. "The Coasts" and "Middle America" blend states listed in both Archer's "Northeastern Core" and the "Western Periphery."

It is clear that pure location was not the main determinant in Heppen's philosophy. He created these regions based upon shared perceptions of the states grouped together. The "Sun Belt" states are found to be "conservative, diverse" and "lower income" (2003). "The Coasts" states are "liberal, semi-diverse" and "wealthy" (2003, 202). Finally, "Middle America" is "conservative, white" and "middle-income" (2003, 202). These classifications go beyond what Archer, Taylor and Shelley created to show cultural traits of voting regions.

Gerald Webster also studied the works of Archer, Taylor and Shelley when writing his article, "Presidential Voting in the West" (1988). However, he only examines

one American voting region—the “Interior West” (1988, 213). His region is comprised of Nevada to Montana over to North Dakota and south to Kansas. It is comparable to Archer’s “Western periphery” and Heppen’s “Middle America.” Webster characterizes this region as Republican, especially in its rural places (1988, 211). He points out that more urban places in this region have a higher Democratic vote (although not a majority) and are characterized by “employment in forestry or mining” and “large Hispanic or Native American populations” (1988, 211). This conclusion lends credence to this study’s view that rural and urban places will have different political viewpoints.

Besides creating a region and defining its traits, similar to Heppen, Webster takes his ideas on the “Interior West” further in his 1989 article, “Partisanship in American Presidential, Senatorial, and Gubernatorial Elections in Ten Western States” (1989). Here, he determines that there is a “New Western Normal Vote” in the “Interior West” that is characterized by Republicanism and conservatism (1989, 163), thereby linking these two together. Furthermore, in a connection to the second objective of this study, he also determines that there is “animosity” and distrust between Western and Eastern regions of the nation (1989, 175–177). Webster points out what is now prevalent in talks about people that live in the “Red” and the “Blue”—that they distrust one another. This study will examine this concept further by asking people if they feel negatively toward either of these regions.

While studies like Archer et al.’s, Heppen’s and Webster’s prove that voting regions can be measured on a national scale, David Ley, Kenneth Janda and Robin Gillies provide studies showing political divisions on other scales. In Ley’s 1987 article, “Styles of the Times: Liberal and Neo-conservative Landscapes in Inner Vancouver, 1968–

1986,” he examines politics on a local level in two Vancouver communities, False Creek Southside and British Columbia Place. Ley’s purpose is to show that False Creek Southside has been built as a more liberal, post-modern settlement while British Columbia Place exemplifies a more modern, corporate culture. Ley explores the design of these two communities and how they have built their environment to serve their citizens. He also provides information about the political atmosphere when the communities were first developed. Therefore, it is clear that he believes each neighborhood was created as some sort of reaction (whether it be positive or negative) to political events at the time. His paper is relevant to this study because it shows how people separate themselves based upon political and social ideas. Ley is also demonstrating that this separation can actually be gauged.

Kenneth Janda and Robin Gillies look at the creation of regions on a global scale in “How Well Does ‘Region’ Explain Political Party Characteristics?” (1983). Their work is based upon 10 global political regions that were identified in one of Janda’s earlier works. These are:

- Anglo-America
- West Central Europe
- Northern Europe
- South America
- Central America and the Caribbean
- Asia and the Far East
- Eastern Europe
- Middle East and North Africa
- West Africa
- Central and East Africa (1983, 181)

Janda discovered these regions by testing the political parties within 147 countries against 11 political factors. These were:

- Restrictive Orientation

- Competitive Orientation
- Institutionalization
- Diversity of Social Support
- Liberal Orientation
- Centralization of Power
- Marxist Orientation
- Organizational Complexity
- Involvement of Party Members
- Coherence
- Governmental Effects (1983, 183)

Janda and Gilles are primarily concerned with whether or not the concept of “region” aids in the creation of political parties. In response to this question, the authors whittle down their 10 regions to only three based upon an analysis of 138 political parties—the “Western community,” “Eastern Europe” and the “developing areas.” By dividing the parties into only three groups, “124 (90 percent) [political parties] were classified in ‘their’ world” (1983, 198). Therefore, they found that similar political parties tended to be located in the same geographic region.

As in the Archer and Shelley work, it is highly interesting to see how the authors go about determining their regions and what factors they think “region” will affect. In contrast to *American Electoral Mosaics*, Janda and Gillies use much more detail in describing each of their factors, and this is rewarding for the reader. Also, while Archer and Shelley’s American analysis may be more relevant to this research, it is fascinating to see a global breakdown of regions such as Janda and Gillies put forth.

Manipulation must be mentioned in this discussion of voting regions. The way that voters are divided into districts and even on a state-by-state basis impacts how groups appear to be voting as a whole. In “Gerrymandering, Geography, and Grouping,” William Bunge disputes our political systems’ often bizarre way of dividing voting districts (1966). Gerrymandering, the art of manipulating the shape of a voting district to

provide sought-after results, along with the idea that all voting districts should be contiguous, are what Bunge believes are two of the causes of incorrect and unfair balloting (1966). Bunge goes on to identify current and proposed methods of creating voting districts, something that is not truly relevant to this research. However, Bunge's short paper does serve as an important reminder that gerrymandering and district creation may affect the voting outcome of a certain area, whether it is "Red" or "Blue." Therefore, what we think may be going on is not always true.

In "Some Geographical Aspects of the American Presidential Election of 1980" Archer also looks at manipulation, he looks at how voting returns can manipulate how a vote is interpreted (1982). In particular, he examines the election of 1980 between Democratic incumbent Jimmy Carter and Republican challenger Ronald Reagan. This was a peculiar election because Reagan solidly defeated an incumbent president in what appeared to be an Electoral College landslide victory. Archer goes beyond the Electoral College results and looks at the election on a local level to discover that the vote was not as one-sided as it appeared to be. Archer and Bunge both recognize and remind readers that districts can be manipulated through gerrymandering and other tactics. This manipulation can guarantee that a party wins an election or it can simply make the voters of a district appear to be tremendously in favor of a candidate when they are not. Therefore this study is attempting to look at regions on several population levels ("urban areas," "suburban places," "small urban places," "rural towns and villages," and "strictly rural places) so that a more intricate analysis of perception can be examined.

Unlike the studies listed above, this study is not interested in discovering voting regions because they are already predetermined (the "Red" and the "Blue"). However, the

concept of voting regions is still central to the objectives of this study. Archer and his colleagues took the first step by determining voting regions, Heppen, Ley, Janda and Gilles expanded on this by categorizing them, and Webster went even further by pointing out that there is perceived animosity among them. This study aims to further this research by discovering how people perceive the relatively new regions of “Red” and “Blue” and if animosity between these regions is real in the minds of the respondents. These perceptions will then be analyzed based upon the locations that the respondents have lived in, seeking to find a connection between those from more rural or more urban places.

Political Perception

The third objective of this study relates to how parties and regions are perceived and characterized. Therefore, literature was also reviewed that looks at the formation of specific perceptions. In “Attitudes toward Presidential Candidates and Political Parties: Initial Optimism, Inertial First Impressions, and a Focus on Flaws,” Allyson L. Holbrook et al. provide an article that focuses on geographic and political perception (2001). The authors’ purpose is to find a model that best uncovers how voters create their opinions. One of their approaches was a pre-election interview in which respondents were asked to list the good and bad qualities of a candidate (2001, 934). While the actual answers were ignored and only the number of positive and negative qualities was recorded by the researchers, this study still influenced the decision to ask respondents for a listing of their perceptions. While our methods may be different from one another, both the Holbrook et

al. study and this study are concerned with uncovering modern political perceptions and how they are created.

Tom W. Rice and Meredith L. Pepper's article on "Region, Migration, and Attitudes in the United States" also deals with perceptions in the United States (1997). While this study is examining "Red" state and "Blue" state views, Rice and Pepper are examining the views of southern whites and non-southern whites. Rice and Pepper survey in order to find out if the views of native southern whites, non-southern whites, native southern whites who have left the south, and non-southern whites who have moved to the south are different.

The researchers' belief is that non-southerners and southerners have differing opinions on certain controversial issues. In this case, southerners tend to be more "conservative" on issues than non-southerners (Rice & Pepper 1997, 84). Rice & Pepper's survey was an attempt to determine if the beliefs of these four groups were different and if they had an overlap, especially with the non-native residents. Questions on the survey had to do "race," "religion," "gender roles," "sexual matters," and "civic values" (1997, 93-94).

The conclusions of Rice and Pepper's survey were that none of the other three groups were taking on the south's more conservative views. As native southerners moved north or west, they gradually took on other views, and as non-southerners moved into the south they retained their former, less-conservative views (1997, 89). The authors were able to show that location did have an effect on migrant's views of contemporary issues. In this case, migrants that moved into the south were most affected by their prior, non-southern location, while migrants that moved out of the south were somewhat affected by

their new, non-southern location. Non-southern locations prove to be heavily influential in this study. This research will determine if location has an effect on personal views. However, while this study does provide research as to where a respondent has lived throughout their life, it will focus more on whether or not they lived in a rural or urban place than where in the nation they are from.

Because it is anticipated that many of the respondents will primarily identify “Red” and “Blue” states with the Republican and Democratic parties, respectively, the article, “The Meaning of Party Labels” by Ralph W. Bastedo and Milton Lodge, has been reviewed. These authors delve into the meaning of the Republican and Democratic labels, and ask “What do these concepts mean to respondents? . . . Are the meanings consensual among Republican identifiers, Democratic identifiers, and Independents?” (1980, 289).

These questions are similar to what is asked in this study. This study is partly motivated by wanting to define “Red” and “Blue” states and that is why respondents are asked to list words that they identify with each term. Bastedo and Lodge’s survey is nearly similar. They determine characteristics that respondents of the 1964–1976 SRC/CPS national election studies identified with candidates, then they asked respondents which of those characteristics they identified most with the labels of “Republican,” “Democrat,” and “Independent.” In this way, they were able to generate a working definition of the terms (1980, 295–300). It is anticipated that in the surveys, many of the respondents will characterize “Red” and “Blue” states in the same ways that Bastedo and Lodge’s respondents characterized Republican and Democratic candidates.

As stated, a purpose of this study and literature review is to determine the cultural traits that respondents will attribute to “Red” and “Blue” states. Because of the endless

use of these terms in discussions and debates, they have come to take on individual meanings for each person. To some, they simply denote whether or not a state voted overwhelmingly for a Republican or Democratic candidate. For others, the terms signify a wealth of information about the culture and values of a state and its people.

Furthermore, a new kind of rhetoric has become the norm on television and in literature when dealing with these two terms (Baer and Boeke 2005; Baer and Boeke 2005a; Beard and Boswell 2006; Bremson 2005; Ceaser and Busch 2005; Davis 2005; Falciglia 2005; Grevstad 2005; Williams 2005). Books such as these cited attempt to popularize characteristics of modern politics. This study attempts to fill in the gap between commentary and what people really perceive. This new lingo does not stop with just the “Red” and the “Blue.” “Flyover States” as well as “Purple States” are now identified with this terminology. As the political candidates become more and more divided on their respective issues, the differences between the “Red” and the “Blue”—and consequently the Republican and the Democratic—will become more prominent in our daily lives and culture.

Conclusion

In order to study the perceptions that students in Oklahoma have about “Red” and “Blue” states, it is important to define a method for differentiation. This literature review has helped to examine and evaluate what other researchers have done to demarcate regions and to determine political or social separations between communities. These works show that the concept of a “region” is influential on the American electorate. This correlates highly with the theory that students in Oklahoma will define “Red” and “Blue”

states as two different regions based upon their own perceptions and the political parties they represent.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Only in the last decade have the terms, “Red State” and “Blue State,” become common. It is possible that with the next presidential election that the nation will not be so polarized and divisions of “Red” and “Blue” may not be as important. Therefore, this study focuses on capturing the perceptions of a specific time period, that of 1999–present. In this timeframe, the terminology has become recognized and used frequently. This study will focus on the perceptions of “Red” and “Blue” states after they have risen to general use among Americans.

In addition, this study concerns a specific group of people—students between the ages of 18–24. Limiting the study to this age group will provide a collective feeling of how the educated youth perceive “Red” and “Blue” states. This concentration has been decided upon because the educated youth will most likely become the core voting population over the next 20–30 years and because they are a high target of political campaigns currently. The “youth vote” is a contested area among politicians and it is worthwhile to examine how they perceive political elections and candidates.

Study Design

In the early months of 2005, when first developing the thesis topic, the initial preference was for mailed surveys to be sent to rural and urban counties of Oklahoma so that the mindsets of persons from differing locations could be compared to one another. However, cost and the probability of low response rates changed these plans (Stouthamer-Loeber and van Kammen 1995; Bourque and Fielder 1995; Sapsford 1999). Instead, the survey population will be made up of students in introductory geography classes at Oklahoma State University. These students are very accessible on campus and will give an example of the “youth” perspective. Surveying introductory classes means that many freshmen and sophomores will be included—a population that has just moved away from home and will likely still relate closely to their hometown beliefs. An added benefit is that respondents will be diverse because OSU is the flagship land-grant university in the state of Oklahoma and has students from all over the state, region, and nation. While this study will be limited in the areas of age and educational diversity—I will only use responses from students age 18–24 who are obviously educated beyond high school—I will be able to find a population that is varied in its location history and race. Since responses from students from all over the state and beyond will be obtained, a rural-urban spectrum can still be examined.

Because the survey is the main source of information for this study, survey design and question creation had to be clear and unbiased. Throughout the creation of this survey, the best method for presenting questions had to be determined along with finding the best questions to ask. This required determining exactly how long the survey was to last and how to organize that data once the results had been received. Although the

surveys will be administered to classrooms, it will be voluntary and maximum participation is optimal. In the words of Don A. Dillman, the intention is to find a way to “produce both high quality information and high response rates” (2000, 29). Therefore, it was of utmost importance to organize the survey so that it will be simple but informative.

Along with Dillman, and with great influence by Ira M. Sheskin’s *Survey Research for Geographers*, examples of organized and coherent surveys to use as a model were found (1985). This led to the creation of a three-section approach. Questions on sex, age, race and education were placed in the first section, a method that some researchers question. Bourque and Fielder advise placing demographic questions last because they are the most boring, and if placed first, the questionnaire may be perceived as tedious and the response rate will suffer (1995, 57). The decision was to place them at the beginning because they are the easiest to answer and make the questionnaire look more official and familiar. The impacts these demographics will have on political perceptions have not been hypothesized, but they are to be asked to better understand the survey population. This section will be useful in ensuring that there is an accurate representation of the OSU student population. In order to prove the validity of the results, the answers of these demographic questions will be compared to the 2006 OSU Student Profile to determine whether or not the study is skewed towards a specific sex, race or educational range.

Question 1 of the questionnaire (see Appendix A) asks, “Are you familiar with the terms, ‘Red State’ and ‘Blue State?’” If unfamiliar, the respondent is instructed to skip to the end of the questionnaire because the following questions on perception will not be applicable to them. These respondents will still provide their location history and this

information will be used to determine which respondents have less familiarity with the terms.

The second section of the questionnaire continues with questions on “Red” state and “Blue” state perception. These questions had to be created carefully so that they will not be too invasive, while still gathering the information that is needed. As Roger Sapsford puts it, it is necessary to “sneak up on’ people’s attitudes by asking questions in an indirect way and deducing overall attitudes from the pattern of replies” (1999, 141). This is not to imply that the respondent is tricked or deceived, but that Questions 2 & 3 had to be phrased so that they were less direct in order to let the respondents show their true feelings. For example, instead of asking, “Do you think Red States are Republican, conservative, and/or more rural?,” the respondent is asked to list descriptive words that come to mind when they think of a “Red” state. The hope is to get a list of adjectives that can be somewhat grouped together to form a tentative definition of a “Red” and a “Blue” state. This will fulfill the third objective of this study and will answer the fourth research question.

After posing these questions (one over “Red” states and one over “Blue” states, see Appendix A), the next question asks if the respondent identifies their political sentiments with a “Red” state, “Blue” state or “neither.” Because they will have just described each in their own words, they will have thought about what each one means to them and, hopefully, know which one is more representative of their beliefs (or they will select “neither”). This question, along with the location information that will be asked of the respondent in the third section, will gather information that will fulfill the first objective of the study—whether or not location can be tied to political beliefs—and will

answer the first and second research questions. What “state” the respondent identifies him or herself can be compared with the information on respondents’ location histories to see if people from similar places have similar identifications.

The second section continues by asking questions over how the respondent feels toward people from other states. If they identified with a “Red” state, it is asked if they feel negatively towards people from a “Blue” state, and vice versa. It is also asked if their opinion of “Red” and “Blue” states affects their perception—either positively or negatively—toward other states. This is certainly the most difficult question because it is probably the hardest to understand. It is necessary to ask these three questions in order to fulfill the second objective of whether or not people look negatively upon the type of state (whether “Red” or “Blue”) that they do not identify their beliefs. In addition, this will answer the third research question of the study.

The final section asks questions on location history. This is in order to fulfill the first objective and to answer the first and second research questions, but it is placed last so that the questionnaire can be easily organized into sections on demographics, perceptions, and location history. The hometown and state of the respondent is asked to determine whether it is an “urban area,” “suburban place,” “mostly urban place,” “rural town or village” or “strictly rural place,” and if it is “Red”/“Blue.” The zip code of their hometown is also asked in case the hometown cannot easily be found and further help is needed in locating it. Questions 9 & 10 ask how long the respondent has lived in Oklahoma and what other places (and the lengths of time) they have lived in so that it can be determined if there are other influences upon their location history. For example, if a 20-year-old respondent stated that their hometown was Bartlesville, OK and had lived in

Oklahoma 20 years, it would show that there was little or no other influence based on location outside of Oklahoma. If they had stated that their hometown was Oklahoma City, OK, that they had lived in Oklahoma for only 17 years, and that they had lived in Texas for 3 years, it would show that they had influence outside the state.

Pilot Study

A pilot study for this research was completed in the Fall of 2005. Since surveying for this preliminary study, the questionnaire and survey population have been modified. The original questionnaire used in this pilot study is in Appendix B. This section will briefly outline some of the results of this preliminary research and their effect on the final study design.

Three hundred Oklahoma State University students were surveyed for this pilot study. This number was reduced to 278 when foreign respondents were excluded. While the thesis research is limited to respondents age 24 or less, this pilot study used responses from students of all ages. It was determined after this preliminary study that using only respondents under age 25 would better represent the “youth” vote. Table 1 presents demographic information for all respondents included in the pilot study and in the final study of this research. This is compared to the 2005 OSU Student Profile (OSU Office of Institutional Research and Information Management 2005).³ An analysis of this table shows that this pilot study was not representative of the OSU student population. Males, Whites, Asians, Freshmen and Sophomores were all over represented in this study. The

³ The final study’s population will be compared to the 2006 OSU Student Profile due to it being conducted a year later.

population of the final study is much more representative of the OSU total student body, likely because of an increase in respondents.

TABLE I
PILOT STUDY RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

	Pilot Study % of Respondents	Final Study % of Respondents	2005 OSU Student Profile
SEX			
Female	39.0%	45.6%	48.22%
Male	61.0%	54.4%	51.78%
AGE			
18-20	61.3%	75.2%	**
21-24	35.0%	20.6%	**
25-30	1.7%	3.2%	**
31+	2.0%	1.0%	**
RACE			
White	80.3%	80.7%	76.27%
Black or African American	3.0%	6.3%	3.91%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	5.0%	5.0%	8.41%
Asian	3.7%	1.8%	1.65%
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	--	0.2%	***
Hispanic or Latino	2.7%	2.8%	2.23%
Other Race	--	0.4%	***
Two or more Races	--	2.8%	***
EDUCATION****			
Freshman	48.3%	47.6%	18.49%
Sophomore	28.3%	27.6%	17.64%
Junior	15.7%	16.3%	20.81%
Senior	7.7%	8.1%	23.09%
No Answer	0.0%	0.4%	--

*Undergraduate only.

**University does not supply information by age. Mean age for undergraduates is 21.5.

***University does not supply information.

****Because no graduate or "other" students were surveyed, information is not provided.

For this pilot study, only two classifications were made for the location analysis, “rural” and “urban.” These were determined by looking up the population of each respondent’s hometown according to the 2004 U.S. Census (United States Census Bureau 2004). The determination of urban and rural cities was based upon the U.S. Census’ definition of urban places as consisting of more than 2,500 people (United States Census Bureau 1995). A substantially larger amount of eligible urban respondents (242) participated in the survey than eligible rural respondents (36). This discrepancy influenced the decision to create more population classifications in the final study so that the respondents could be better represented.

The preliminary survey asked the question, “What sorts of beliefs are important to you when voting?” This question was included as a sort of “back-up” to ensure that the respondents were familiar with “Red” and “Blue” states. Upon examination, it was found that this question would not be needed for the thesis research. In the pilot study, most of the respondents did exactly what was wanted, which was to write down beliefs that were similar to what they had identified as their type of state’s goals. A large number (33.0%) of the respondents wrote that their vote depends upon the candidate and their character, honesty, beliefs, and leadership skills, an answer which does not lend much to this research. Therefore, this question is not included in the survey used for the final thesis.

Another question was also deleted from the survey after the pilot study: “Which state do you most identify with in terms of values and beliefs? In other words, where did you feel most ‘at home?’” This question was asked so that it could be determined how strongly the respondent identified with their chosen “state” identification. For example, if a respondent stated that he identified with a “Blue” state, it was expected that they might

answer “New York” or “California” to this question. However, most respondents answered that they felt most “at home” in their home state, regardless of their identification with “Red” or “Blue.” It was determined that this question was confusing and not useful. Therefore, it was deleted.

The pilot study provided a wealth of information and insight into respondent views on “Red” and “Blue” states, most of which is reflected in the final study’s findings. This preliminary research helped to shape and define how the final surveys would be conducted and how to analyze the respondents’ answers.

Data Analysis

The method of analyzing the data will be based upon the three objectives and four research questions stated at the beginning of this proposal. In order to determine whether or not people from similar locations (based on population) have similar views on “Red” and “Blue” states—the first objective—I will first divide the respondents into those that can be classified as from an “urban area,” “suburban place,” “mostly urban place,” “rural town or village” or “strictly rural place.”

The first category will be determined by the U.S. Census’s listing of large urban areas (United States Census Bureau 2002). “Suburban places” will be determined by using the U.S. Office of Management and Budget’s report on the “Update of Statistical Area Definitions and Guidance of their Usage” (2004). Cities and counties in the listing of “Metropolitan Statistical Areas” in the report will be labeled “suburban places” in this study (2004, 29–53). To determine “mostly urban places,” the listing of “Micropolitan Statistical Areas” (found in the same report) will be used (2004, 63–104). Other towns

and villages not listed in this report but with a population of 2,500 or higher will be listed as “rural towns and villages.”⁴ Finally, all other places with a population of less than 2,500 will be listed as “strictly rural places.”

In order to determine whether respondents from these classifications of places have similar perceptions and identifications with “Red” and “Blue” states, the responses to Question 4—“Would you identify yourself and your political sentiments more with a ‘Red’ state or a ‘Blue’ state?”—will be broken down based upon rurality and urbanity. Percentages of those from these five areas will be calculated as to whether or not they identify with “Red” states, “Blue” states, or neither. Therefore, it can be shown if there is a consensus among rural to urban respondents as to how they identify their political beliefs.

In addition to the figures that will be made to display the percentages calculated, two maps will be created. Since the majority of respondents will be natives of Oklahoma, these maps will show the home counties of all survey respondents from Oklahoma who identified with a “Red” state and the home counties of all survey respondents from Oklahoma who identified with a “Blue” state. Through these maps, the rural and urban respondent distribution can be better shown.

To further fulfill the first objective and answer the first and second research questions, the location history of all respondents will be tracked. The total number of those that identified with a “Red” state and those that identified with a “Blue” state will be broken down based upon where the respondents have lived prior to Oklahoma. This will be done to determine what type of locations may have influenced the respondents’

⁴ This number was determined by using the U.S. Census’ classification of rural places as having less than 2,500 people.

beliefs. For example, in the preliminary study that was conducted (see following chapter), it was found that more people who identified with a “Blue” state actually lived in a “Blue” state prior to moving to Oklahoma. It can be presumed that they are more sympathetic to “Blue” states because they have lived in one and experienced their political culture. A table will be created to show what states “Red” state identifiers and “Blue” state identifiers lived in besides Oklahoma and this information will be compared to respondent identification.

To determine whether or not people look negatively on the type of state they do not identify themselves with—the second objective of this study and third research question—Questions 5, 6, and 7 will be analyzed in detail. First, percentages of those that answered “Yes,” “No,” and “Not Sure” will be calculated so that it can be shown how many “Red” state and “Blue” state identifiers feel negatively or indifferent to each other. Secondly, each question will be broken down on a rural and urban basis. This will identify exactly how many rural and urban “Red” state identifiers and rural and urban “Blue” state identifiers feel negatively toward people who do not share their beliefs. By breaking down the answers to these questions based upon whether the respondent is “Red” or “Blue” or rural or urban, it can be identified whether there are more negative or indifferent feelings between these types of people.

Analyzing how the respondents categorize “Red” and “Blue” states—the third objective and fourth research question—will be based upon the answers to Questions 2 and 3 of the survey. A count will be taken of similar descriptive words that the respondents use to describe “Red” and “Blue” states in order to create a tentative definition of these two terms. In order to create a general definition based upon all

responses, these will not be broken down based upon whether or not the respondent identified with a “Red” or “Blue” state.

In addition to the analysis explained above, it is expected that there will be additional analysis of surveys that for some reason or another are not deemed “normal.” This will include: 1.) Respondents who said they were unfamiliar with the terms, “Red State” and “Blue State.” 2.) Foreign respondents. 3.) Respondents who have confused the definitions of these terms (i.e. have labeled “Red” states as Democratic and “Blue” states as Republican). Each one of these subsets (and any others that are identified during analysis) will be addressed in the final thesis.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Introduction

A total of 504 surveys were administered in February of 2007 and used for this study. However, 51 of the respondents were either above the age limit (25 or older), had a foreign hometown, or confused and/or reversed the meanings of “Red” and “Blue” states. These groups of respondents will be examined as subsets of the survey population at the end of this chapter. While this chapter will provide demographic information and location history on all 504 survey respondents, only the 453 surveys that do not fall within a subset will be used as data for the majority of the findings on identification, bias and definition.

This chapter will begin by providing a respondent demographic profile on age, race, sex and educational history of the survey population. Respondents’ location history will be given next, including a listing of where respondents are from according to the five population categories outlined in the Methodology section of this paper. This profile will also include an inventory of which states are home to the respondents and how long they have lived in Oklahoma. Familiarity and identification among the respondents will be

addressed next, followed by an account of respondent bias toward “Red” or “Blue” states and their inhabitants. Finally, a description of respondent characterizations of “Red” and “Blue” states will be given, and all subsets will be addressed. All conclusions on these findings as they pertain to the three objectives of this study will be made in the following chapter.

Respondent Demographic Profile

Of the 504 surveys administered for this research, 45.6% were female and 54.4% were male (see Table 2). Respondents age 18-20 made up 75.2% of the population, ages 21-24 made up 20.6%, ages 25-30 made up 3.2% and ages 31 and older made up only 1.0%. White respondents totaled 80.7% of the population, black or African American respondents were 6.3%, American Indian or Alaskan Native respondents were 5.0%, Asian respondents were 1.8%, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander were 0.2%, Hispanic or Latino were 2.8%, other races made up 0.4% of the population and respondents who were two or more races made up 2.8% of the survey population. Educational levels were represented by 47.6% Freshman, 27.6% Sophomores, 16.3% Juniors and 8.1% Seniors. Two respondents (0.4%) chose not to provide their educational level and no survey respondents were graduate students or “other.”

Female percentages were lower and male percentages were higher than the 2006 OSU Student Profile (OSU Office of Institutional Research and Information Management 2006). Student ages are not provided by Oklahoma State University, however the mean age of all OSU students is 21.5. Over three-fourths of the participants in this study were between the ages of 18–20, meaning they were typically younger than the OSU mean

age. Racially, participants in this study are nearly similar to all OSU students, with a few exceptions. Black or African American students were slightly overrepresented in this

TABLE II
RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

	# of Respondents	% of Respondents	2006 OSU Student Profile %*
SEX			
Female	230	45.6%	48.99%
Male	274	54.4%	51.01%
AGE			
18-20	379	75.2%	**
21-24	104	20.6%	**
25-30	16	3.2%	**
31+	5	1.0%	**
RACE			
White	407	80.7%	81.76%
Black or African American	32	6.3%	4.36%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	25	5.0%	9.57%
Asian	9	1.8%	1.86%
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	1	0.2%	***
Hispanic or Latino	14	2.8%	2.45%
Other Race	2	0.4%	***
Two or more Races	14	2.8%	***
EDUCATION****			
Freshman	240	47.6%	23.97%
Sophomore	139	27.6%	23.72%
Junior	82	16.3%	25.36%
Senior	41	8.1%	26.95%
No Answer	2	0.4%	n/a

*Undergraduate only.

**University does not supply information by age. Mean age for undergraduates is 21.5.

***University does not supply information.

****Because no graduate or "other" students were surveyed, information is not provided.

study and American Indian or Alaskan Native students were underrepresented. The University does not provide information on Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islanders, other races, or two or more races. On an educational level, Freshman were overrepresented. However, since all classes surveyed were introductory and because this survey is trying to capture the perceptions of students age 24 and under, this was to be expected. Sophomores are also slightly overrepresented. Juniors and Senior are underrepresented in this survey compared to the latest student profile.

Respondent Location Profile

Five population categories were identified in the Methodology section of this paper. These were: Urban Area, Suburban Place, Mostly Urban Place, Rural Town or Village, and Strictly Rural Place. Please refer to the Methodology chapter for how these were determined. Table 3 shows the results of the respondents' location history for the 453 surveys that did not fall into a subset (international, above 24 years of age, or confused/reversed). More respondents were from a Suburban Place than any other category (39.3%). Following this, 32.5% of respondents were from an Urban Area, 15.2% were from a Mostly Urban Place, 6.8% were from a Rural Town or Village, and 4.9% were from a Strictly Rural Place. Seven respondents (1.3%) chose not to respond. This information will be used further to determine if rurality and urbanity has a correlation with "Red" state and "Blue" state identification.

TABLE III
RESPONDENT LOCATION HISTORY

POPULATION CATEGORY	# of Respondents	% of Respondents
Urban Place	147	32.5%
Suburban Place	178	39.3%
Mostly Urban Place	69	15.2%
Rural Town or Village	31	6.8%
Strictly Rural Place	22	4.9%
No Response	6	1.3%

TABLE IV
RESPONDENTS' HOME STATES

Home State	# of Respondents	"Red"/"Blue" (2004 Election)
Alaska	1	Red
Arizona	2	Red
California	4	Blue
Colorado	3	Red
Florida	2	Red
Georgia	1	Red
Idaho	1	Red
Illinois	2	Blue
Indiana	1	Red
Kansas	9	Red
Louisiana	1	Red
Massachusetts	1	Blue
Michigan	1	Blue
Missouri	6	Red
Montana	2	Red
North Carolina	1	Red
New Jersey	1	Blue
New Mexico	6	Red
New York	1	Blue
Ohio	2	Red
Oklahoma	327	Red
Texas	77	Red
Virginia	1	Red

Figure 1: Home Counties of Those Who Identified with a "Red" State

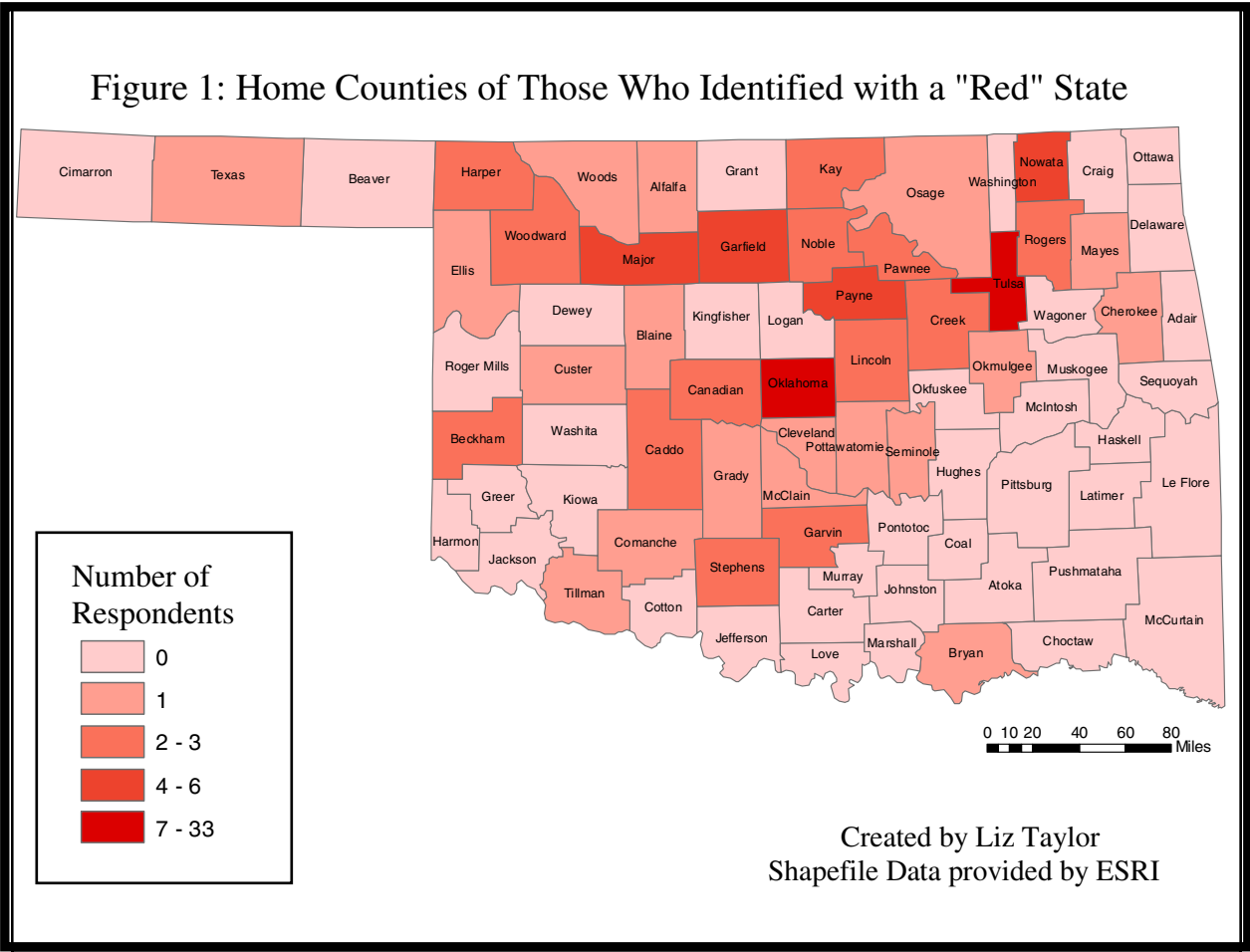
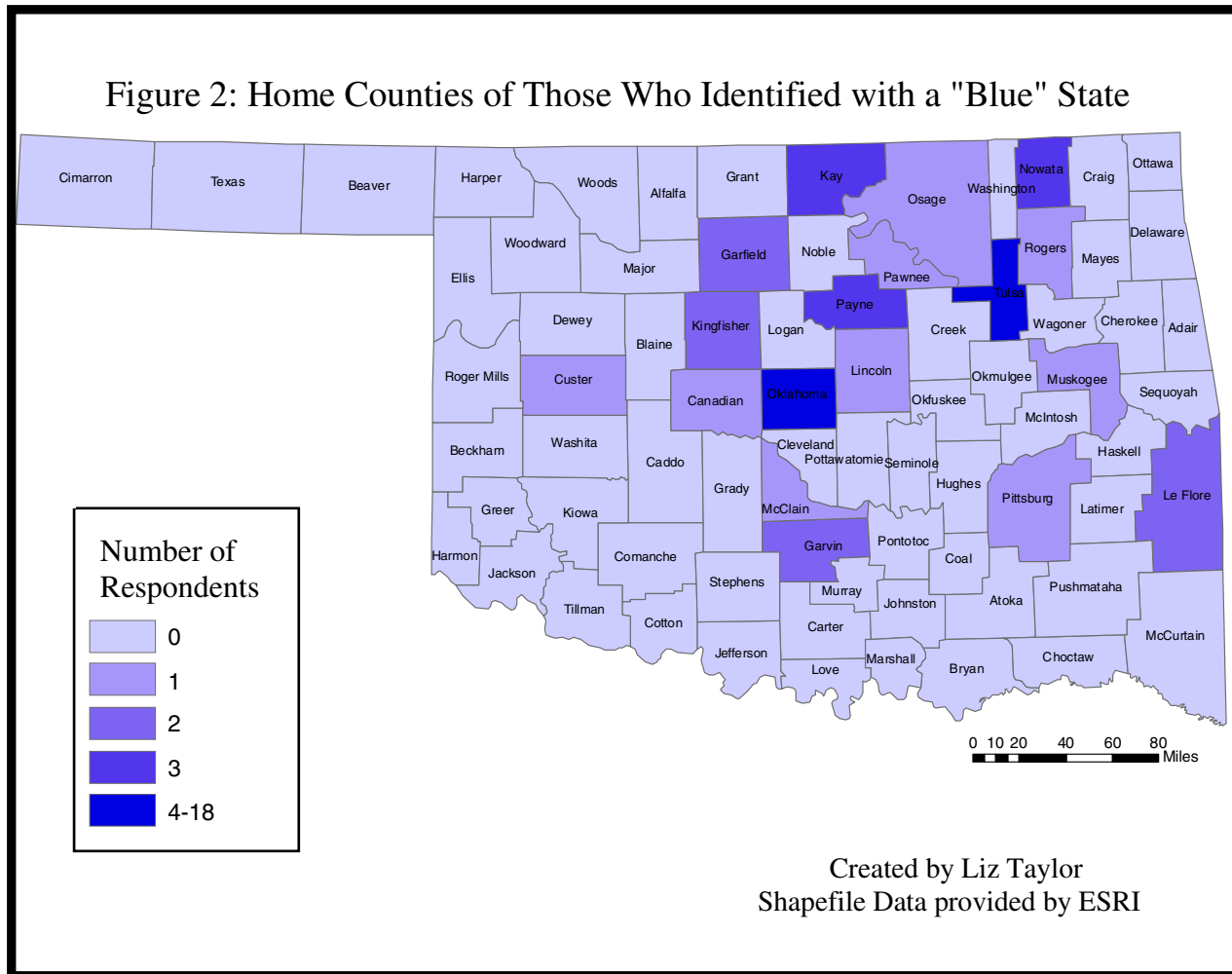


Figure 2: Home Counties of Those Who Identified with a "Blue" State

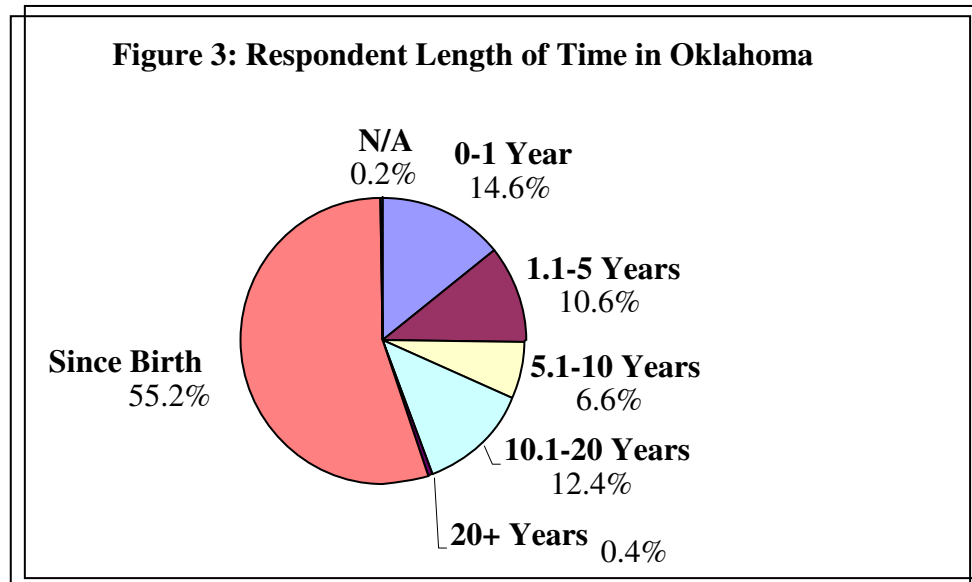


Created by Liz Taylor
 Shapefile Data provided by ESRI

TABLE V

LISTING OF OTHER STATES RESPONDENTS HAVE LIVED IN

State Lived In	# of "Red" state Identifiers who Lived in this State	% of "Red" State Identifiers who Lived in this State	# of "Blue" State Identifiers who Lived in this State	% of "Blue" State Identifiers who Lived in this State	"Red"/"Blue" (2004 Election)
Alabama	1	0.5%	0	-	Red
Alaska	3	1.4%	0	-	Red
Arizona	4	1.8%	3	3.2%	Red
Arkansas	4	1.8%	1	1.1%	Red
California	13	5.9%	3	3.2%	Blue
Colorado	4	1.8%	2	2.2%	Red
Connecticut	0	-	0	-	Blue
Delaware	0	-	1	1.1%	Blue
District of Columbia	0	-	0	-	Blue
Florida	3	1.4%	3	3.2%	Red
Georgia	0	-	0	-	Red
Hawaii	1	0.5%	0	-	Blue
Idaho	1	0.5%	0	-	Red
Illinois	4	1.8%	5	5.4%	Blue
Indiana	3	1.4%	0	-	Red
Iowa	3	1.4%	2	2.2%	Red
Kansas	12	5.4%	2	2.2%	Red
Kentucky	1	0.5%	0	-	Red
Louisiana	2	0.9%	1	1.1%	Red
Maine	0	-	0	-	Blue
Maryland	0	-	1	1.1%	Blue
Massachusetts	0	-	0	-	Blue
Michigan	0	-	1	1.1%	Blue
Minnesota	1	0.5%	0	-	Blue
Mississippi	0	-	0	-	Red
Missouri	7	3.2%	1	1.1%	Red
Montana	1	0.5%	1	1.1%	Red
Nebraska	1	0.5%	1	1.1%	Red
Nevada	0	-	1	1.1%	Red
New Hampshire	0	-	0	-	Blue
New Jersey	0	-	0	-	Blue
New Mexico	4	1.8%	3	3.2%	Red
New York	1	0.5%	0	-	Blue
North Carolina	0	-	0	-	Red
North Dakota	0	-	0	-	Red
Ohio	2	0.9%	1	1.1%	Red
Oregon	0	-	0	-	Blue
Pennsylvania	0	-	0	-	Blue
Rhode Island	0	-	0	-	Blue
South Carolina	0	-	0	-	Red
South Dakota	0	-	2	2.2%	Red
Tennessee	0	-	0	-	Red
Texas	43	19.4%	13	14.0%	Red
Utah	1	0.5%	1	1.1%	Red
Vermont	0	-	0	-	Blue
Virginia	3	1.4%	0	-	Red
Washington	1	0.5%	1	1.1%	Blue
West Virginia	0	-	0	-	Red
Wisconsin	1	0.5%	0	-	Blue
Wyoming	2	1.6%	1	1.1%	Red



The 453 eligible respondents came from 23 different states (see Table 4). The majority of the respondents' hometowns were in Oklahoma (72.2%) and Texas (17.0%). Figures 1 and 2 provide maps of Oklahoma respondents' hometowns. These are broken into those that identified with a "Red" state and those that identified with a "Blue" state. The state's two most populous counties, Oklahoma and Tulsa, provided the most respondents in both maps. However, more rural counties such as Payne, Kay, Garfield, Major and Nowata provided even more respondents than the state's third most populous county, Comanche. This is likely because of their proximity to OSU. These maps show that the respondents from Oklahoma who identified with a "Red" state were more spread out across the state and its more rural counties. Between one to six "Red" state identifiers each were from counties other than Oklahoma and Tulsa, while no more than three "Blue" state identifiers each were from counties other than Oklahoma and Tulsa.

Table 5 provides a listing of other states that respondents have lived in besides Oklahoma, broken down into "Red" state and "Blue" state respondents. This table shows how many respondents lived in each state (Keep in mind that a respondent may have

listed numerous states in which they once lived) as well as what percentage they make up of the total of “Red” and “Blue” state identifiers. The largest percentages of “Red” state identifiers were from California, Kansas, Missouri and Texas. Except for California, these states have been “Red” for some time. The largest percentages of “Blue” state identifiers were from Arizona, California, Florida, Illinois, New Mexico and Texas. All of these states (except for Texas) are either strongly “Blue”—California and Illinois—or have strong “Blue” followings (more than 40% in the last two Presidential elections).

Figure 3 displays how long the respondents have lived in Oklahoma. These findings show that nearly three-quarters of the eligible survey population has lived in Oklahoma for more than five years. This information means that there is a considerable amount of “Red” state influence from living in Oklahoma upon almost 75% of the respondents.

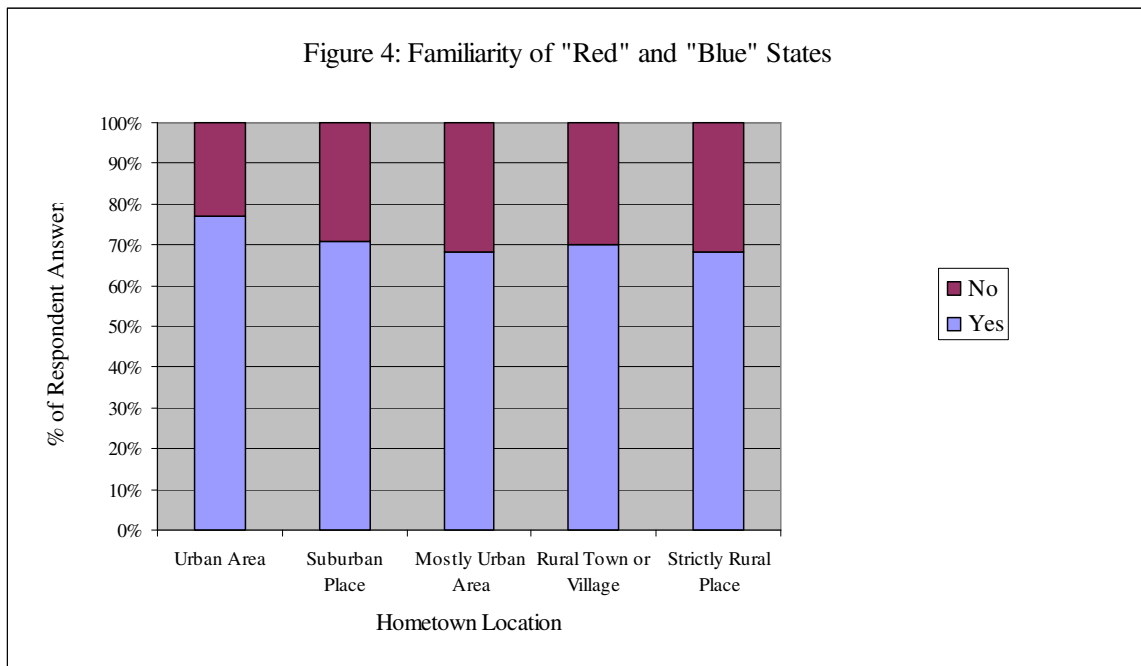
Familiarity of “Red” and “Blue” States

In order to determine how many respondents recognized the terms, “Red state” and “Blue state,” the survey asked whether or not the respondent was familiar with the terms. Of the 453 eligible surveys, 324 (71.5%) respondents were familiar with the terms. Of those that were familiar, 34.9% were from an Urban Area, 38.6% were from a Suburban Place, 14.5% were from a Mostly Urban Place, 6.5% were from a Rural Town or Village and 4.6% were from a Strictly Rural Place. Three respondents who did not give their hometown also said that they were familiar with the terms. There were 127 (28.0%) respondents who did not recognize the terms. Of these, 7.5% were from an Urban Area, 11.5% were from a Suburban Place, 4.9% were from a Mostly Urban Place,

2.0% were from a Rural Town or Village, and 1.5% were from a Strictly Rural Place.

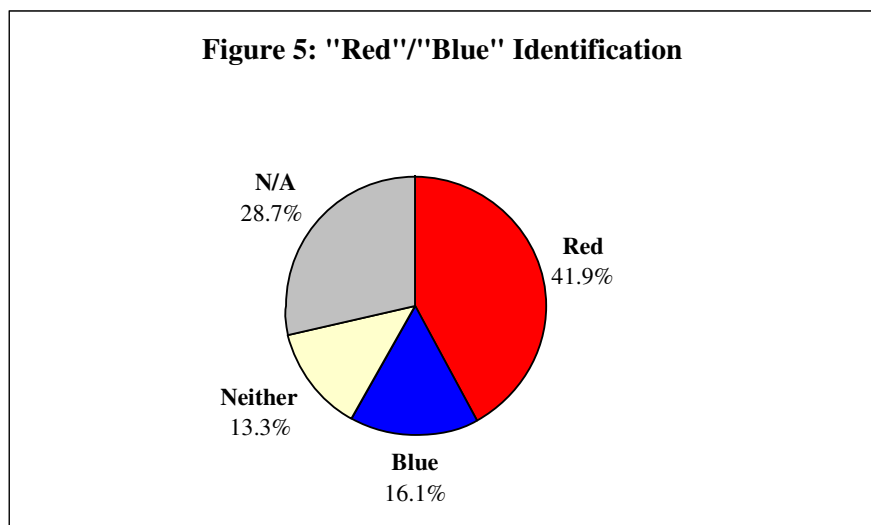
There were also three respondents who did not provide their hometown but said that they were not familiar with the terms.

Figure 4 provides a further analysis of the familiarity findings. Respondents from an Urban Area were the most familiar with the terms. Familiarity among the respondents from the remaining four location categories was very similar, ranging between 68%–72%. The highest amount of unfamiliarity was among respondents from Mostly Urban Areas, although this study cannot find that being from a hometown of this size leads to unfamiliarity with the terms, “Red state” and “Blue state,” because unfamiliarity was nearly uniform among four of the five location categories. However, since over 75% of those from an Urban Area were familiar with the terms, it can be presumed that being from a hometown of this size slightly increases the chance that a person would be familiar with “Red” and “Blue” states.



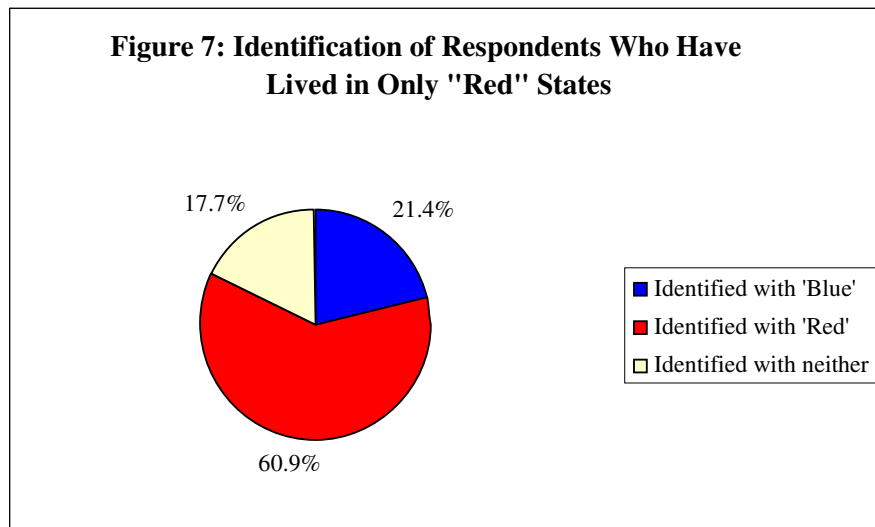
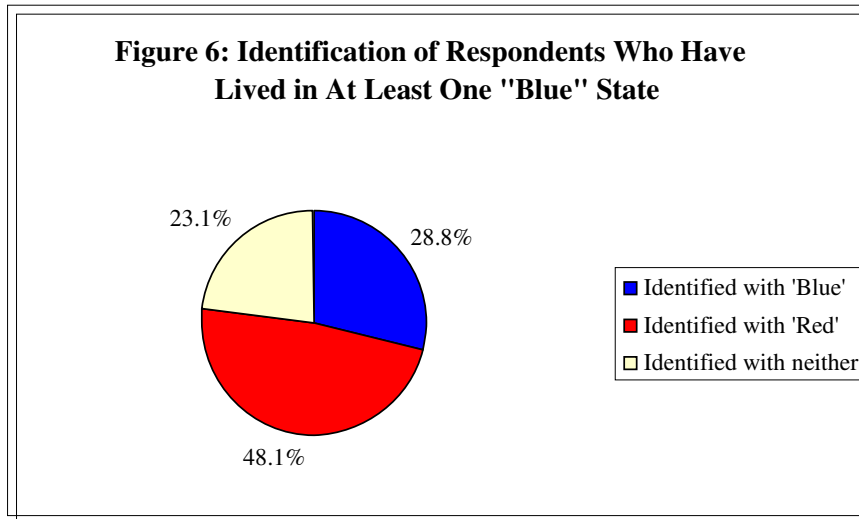
Identification of “Red” and “Blue” States

Determining respondent identification with either a “Red” or “Blue” state is necessary to answer the first and second research questions of this study. Of the 453 eligible respondents, 41.9% identified their political sentiments with a “Red” state, 16.1% identified with a “Blue” state, 13.3% identified with neither and 28.7% gave no answer (see Figure 5). This unresponsiveness is due to the fact that so many respondents (28.0%) were unfamiliar with the terms and were instructed to skip this question (see Appendix A: Questionnaire, Question 1). Therefore, only 0.7% (3 respondents) were unresponsive to this question even though they were familiar with “Red” and “Blue” states.



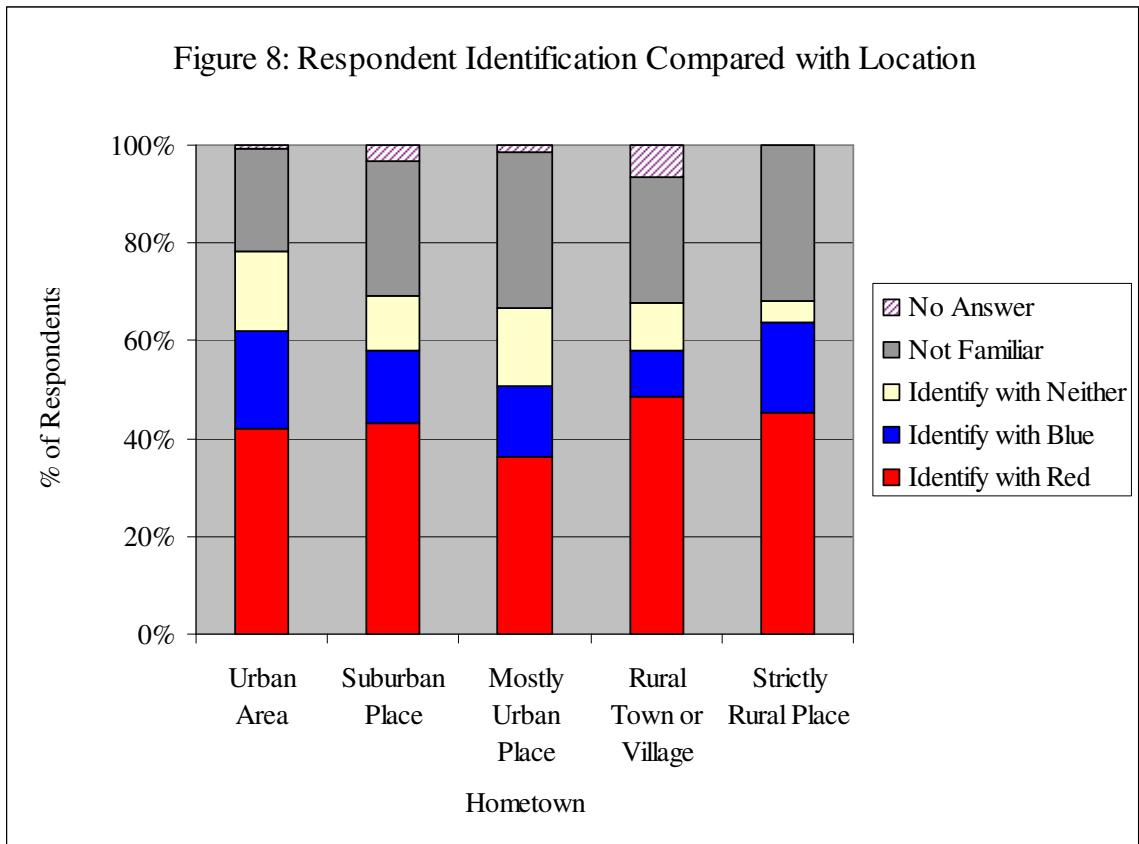
It is found that respondents who had formerly lived in at least one “Blue” state were slightly more likely to identify with a “Blue” state or neither than those who had lived in only “Red” states (see Figures 6 & 7). Among those that have lived in at least one “Blue” state, 28.8% identified with a “Blue” state while only 21.4% of those that had lived in only “Red” states identified with a “Blue” state. Similarly, of those that lived in at least one “Blue” state, 23.1% identified with neither while only 17.7% of those that

lived in only “Red” states identified the same way. Therefore, it is also found that living in only “Red” states makes one more likely to identify with a “Red” state.



In order to determine whether respondents with a more rural background identify more with “Red” states (Research Question 1), a comparison of respondent identification with rurality and urbanity must be made (see Figure 8). The largest percentages of those that identified with a “Red” state are from the two most rural hometown categories, Rural Town or Village (48.4%) and Strictly Rural Place (45.5%). However, these percentages are only slightly higher than the percentage of those who identified with a “Red” state

from the two most urban hometown categories, Urban Area (42.2%) and Suburban Place (43.3%). Those from a Mostly Urban Place had the lowest amount of respondents who identified with a “Red” state (36.2%). Therefore, in answer to Research Question 1, it is found that being from a more rural place makes one only slightly more likely to identify with a “Red” state. An analysis of this information as it pertains to Objective 1 will be provided in the next chapter.



An examination of “Blue” state identification provides different results. While the largest percentage (19.7%) of respondents who identified with a “Blue” state are from Urban Areas, the second largest percentage (18.2%) are from the most rural hometown category, a Strictly Rural Place. Those from Suburban Places and Mostly Urban Places have nearly the same percentage of respondents who identify with a “Blue” state, 14.6%

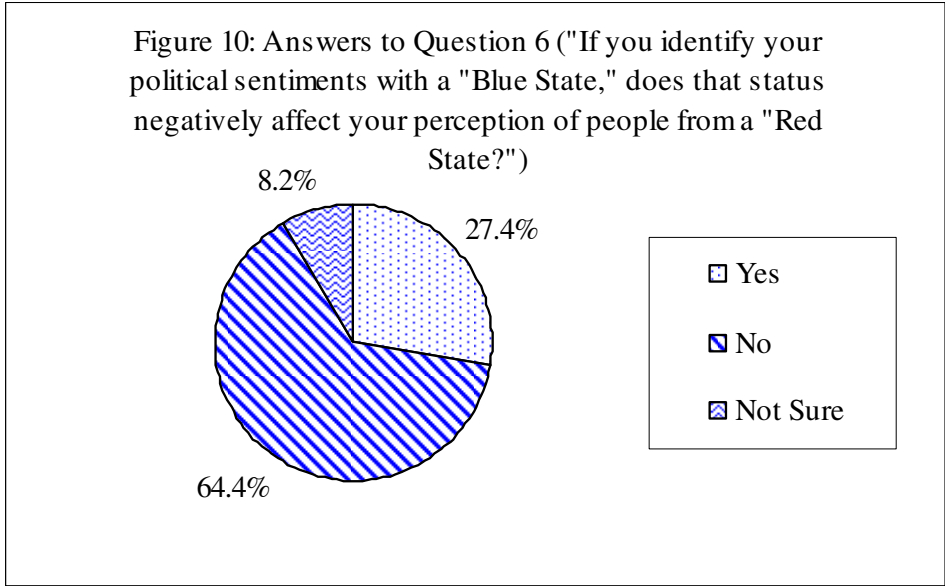
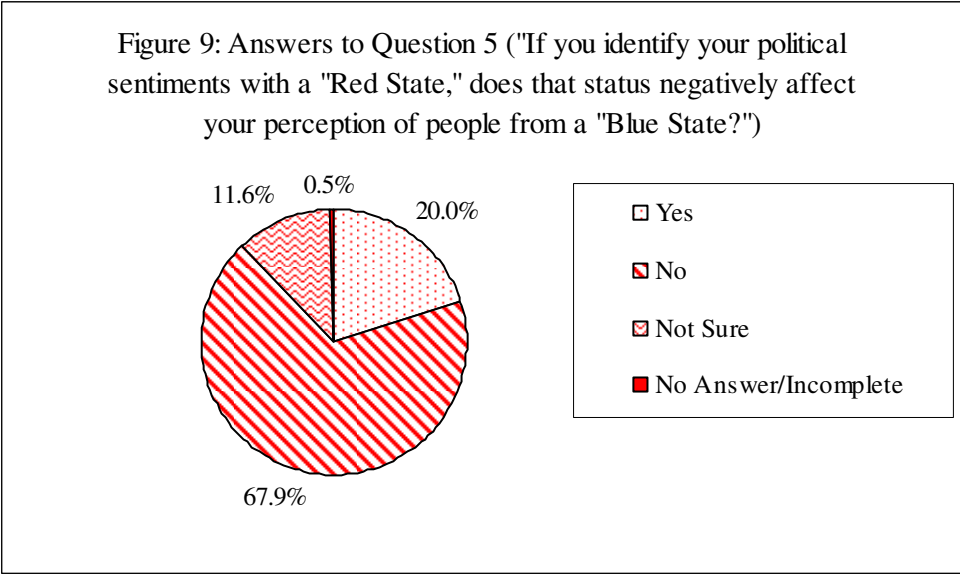
and 14.5% respectively. The fewest amounts of those that identified with a “Blue” state came from Rural Town or Villages (9.7%). Therefore, in answer to Research Question 2, being from a more urban hometown does not make one more likely to identify with a “Blue” state. This answer is based solely upon the greater percentage of respondents from a Strictly Rural Place that identified with a “Blue” state than those from other more urban areas. An analysis of this information as it pertains to Objective 1 will be provided in the next chapter.

Bias Toward “Red” or “Blue” States

Research Question 3 asks whether or not respondents are biased toward the type of state that they do not identify their beliefs with. In order to answer this question, Questions 5, 6 and 7 have been compared to how respondents’ identified their political sentiments. Figure 9 provides a breakdown of how respondents answered Question 5: "If you identify your political sentiments with a "Red State," does that status negatively affect your perception of people from a "Blue State?" This question is addressed to only those who identify with a “Red” state and therefore only those who stated in Question 4 that they identified their political sentiments with a “Red” state were considered. The majority (67.9%) answered “No,” 20.0% answered “Yes,” and 11.6% were unsure (1 respondent did not answer).

Conversely, Question 6 asked “If you identify your political sentiments with a "Blue State," does that status negatively affect your perception of people from a "Red State?" Only answers from those who identified their political sentiments with a “Blue” state in Question 4 were considered. Once again, the majority (64.4%) answered “No” to

this question (see Figure 10). There were a larger percentage of “Yes” answers to this question (27.4%) and fewer “Not Sure” answers (8.2%).



Question 7 also dealt with bias, asking “Does your opinion of ‘Red States’ and ‘Blue States’ affect your perception (*positively or negatively*) about other states and their inhabitants?” This question was addressed to all respondents regardless of how they identified their political sentiments. Of the 327 respondents who answered this question

(126 left this blank either because they were unfamiliar with the terms or because they chose not to answer), the majority (68.8%) once again answered “No.” Slightly more than one-fifth (21.7%) answered “Yes” and only 9.5% were unsure (see Figure 11).

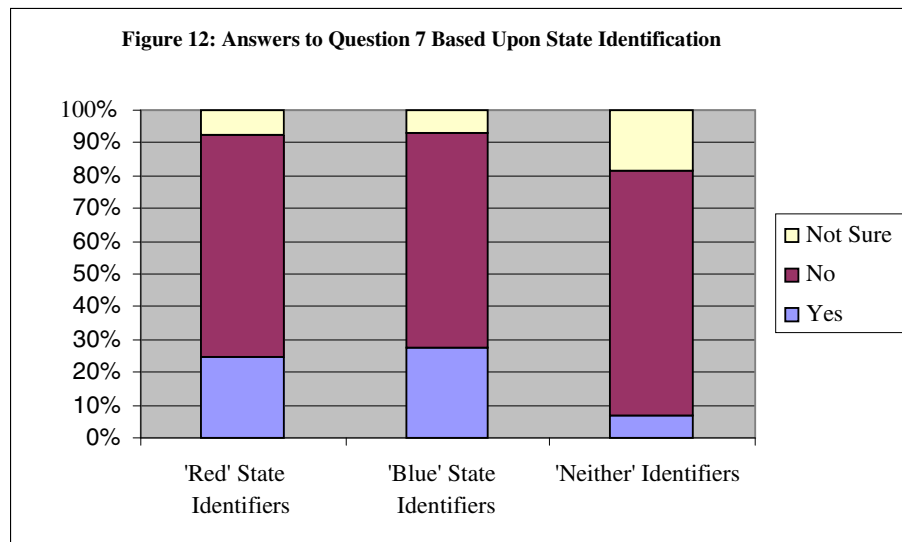
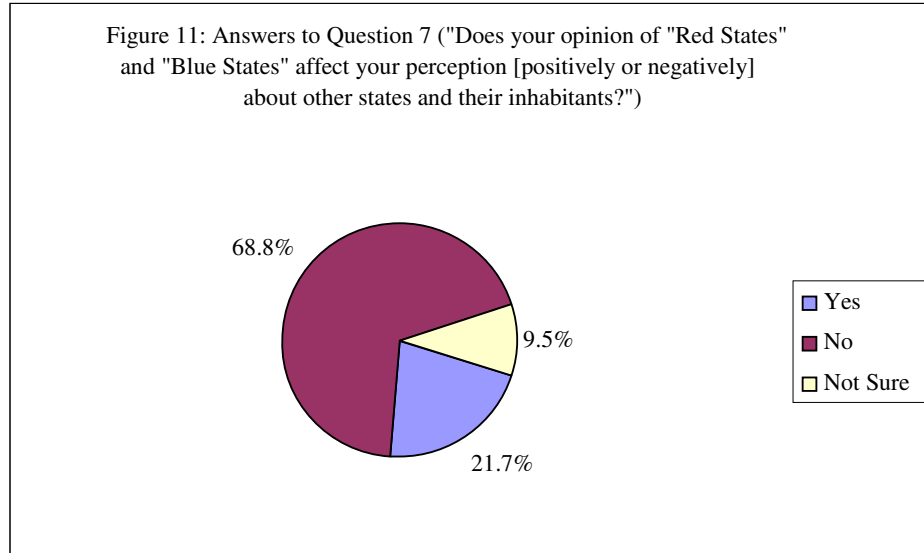


Figure 12 breaks down the answers to Question 7 based upon how respondents identified their political sentiments (“Red” state, “Blue” state or neither). This shows that “Blue” state identifiers had the largest percentage of “Yes” (meaning respondent is admitting to bias) answers and that those who identified with neither had the lowest

percentage of “Yes” answers. Alternatively, those that identified with neither had the largest percentage of “No” (meaning respondent claims no bias) answers and those that identified with “Blue” states had the fewest percentage of “No” answers.

In response to Research Question 3 of this study, the overall findings suggest that the majority of respondents are not biased toward the type of state that they do not identify with. However, bias is slightly more common among those that identify with a “Blue” state and less common among those that have no state identification. These findings as they relate to Objective 2 of this study will be discussed in the following chapter.

Characterizations of “Red” and “Blue” States

In order to characterize “Red” and “Blue” states, answers from Questions 2 & 3 of the survey have been used. These answers were taken from the 453 eligible respondents. Each respondent was allowed to write as many descriptive words as they pleased, therefore, there were over 1500 words used to describe both “Red” and “Blue” states. Tables 6 & 7 show all descriptive words that were used by three or more respondents to describe “Red” and “Blue” states.

The primary characterization used by respondents to describe a “Red” state was a political party affiliation, “Republican.” Similarly, “Democrat” was the primary characterization of “Blue” states. “Conservative” was the second most used characterization for a “Red” state and its political inverse, “liberal,” was the second most used characterization for a “Blue” state. The Republican/Democrat and conservative/liberal terms were addressed in Research Question 4 and, since these were

the primary and secondary characterizations and were used by so many respondents, it is found that people do indeed associate Republicans and conservatism with “Red” states and Democrats and liberalism with “Blue” states.

TABLE VI
RESPONDENT DESCRIPTIONS OF A “RED” STATE

DESCRIPTION	RESPONDENTS WHO USED THIS WORD TO DESCRIBE A "RED" STATE
Republican	221
Conservative	208
Religious/Christian	38
South	25
Pro-life	17
Right-wing	16
Bush	12
Traditional	11
Mid-America/Midwest	10
Rural	10
Guns	7
Moral	7
Rich/Wealthy	7
Close-minded	6
Bible Belt	5
Agricultural	5
War	5
Redneck	4
Elephant	4
Family	4
Middle Class	4
Old-fashioned	4
Business	3
Capital Punishment	3
GOP	3
Oklahoma	3
White	3

TABLE VII

RESPONDENT DESCRIPTIONS OF A “BLUE” STATE

DESCRIPTION	RESPONDENTS WHO USED THIS WORD TO DESCRIBE A "BLUE" STATE
Democrat	226
Liberal	202
North	19
East/West Coast	19
Left-wing	17
Pro-choice	16
Urban/Large City	12
Modern/Progressive	10
Open-minded	10
Upper Class/Wealthy	7
California	5
Minority	5
Tree Huggers	5
Welfare	5
Accepting	4
Donkey	4
Gun Control	4
Hippies	4
Kerry	4
Poor	4
Clinton	3
Diverse	3
Education	3
Pro-gay	3
South	3
Tolerant	3

Research Question 4 also asks how else respondents will characterize “Red” and “Blue” states. Tables 4 & 5 present these findings, and a few aspects of these characterizations are noteworthy. First, many geographical terms were used to describe these two places. “Red” states were associated with the South, Mid-America/ Midwest, Rurality, the Bible Belt, Agriculture and Oklahoma. “Blue” states were associated with

the North, East and West Coasts, Urbanity, California, and the South. The use of geographical terms shows that respondents base their definitions not only on how people from “Red” and “Blue” states think or vote, but on their location in the United States as well.

Secondly, respondents characterized “Red” and “Blue” states with opposing terms. The South, Mid-America/Midwest and Rurality were used to describe “Red” states while the North, the Coasts and Urbanity were used to describe “Blue” states (although three respondents also used the South to describe these states). Also used: right-wing and left-wing, pro-life and pro-choice, traditional and modern, close-minded and open-minded, middle class and upper class. These opposite descriptions show that respondents think of “Red” states and “Blue” states as very opposing and different places.

Finally, significant people were also used to describe “Red” and “Blue” states. President George W. Bush (or possibly his father) was associated with “Red” states and President Bill Clinton and Senator John Kerry were associated with “Blue” states. This represents that respondents who included these characterizations tend to think of these three men as very polarized and representing only a section of the nation.

In response to Research Question 4, the findings in this section provide an overall characterization of how respondents view “Red” and “Blue” states. An analysis of this information as it pertains to Objective 3 and a tentative definition of “Red” and “Blue” states will be provided in the next chapter.

Respondent Subsets

25 Years or Older Respondents

In order to get a perception of the youth vote, only respondents ages 24 years and younger were included in the above findings. However, 19 people above the age of 24 also completed the survey. Table below provides the demographic information on these respondents. In this subset, five (26%) of the respondents were unfamiliar with “Red” and “Blue” states. Of those that were familiar with the terms, “conservative” and “Republican” were the primary and secondary characterizations of “Red” states and “liberal” and “Democratic” were the primary and secondary characterizations of “Blue” states.

TABLE VIII

25 YEARS OR OLDER SUBSET DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

	# of Respondents	% of Respondents
SEX		
Female	9	47%
Male	10	53%
AGE		
25-30	14	74%
31+	5	26%
RACE		
White	13	68%
Black or African American	4	21%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0	0%
Asian	0	0%
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	0	0%
Hispanic or Latino	1	5%
Other Race	1	5%
Two or More Races	0	0%
EDUCATION		
Freshman	3	16%
Sophomore	4	21%
Junior	7	37%
Senior	5	26%
Graduate	0	0%

Identification with each state was split, with five respondents identifying with “Red” states, five respondents identifying with “Blue” states, and five respondents identifying with neither. The remaining four respondents did not answer (all of these also said they were unfamiliar with the terms). Of those that identified with a “Red” state, one was from an Urban Area, two were from a Suburban Place and two were from a Mostly Urban Place. Of the five that identified with a “Blue” state, there was one person from each hometown category. While it would appear that there is some connection between urbanity and identifying with a “Red” state in this subset, the sample size is too small to discern any pattern.

Of the five respondents who identified with a “Red” state, all said that they did not feel negatively toward people from a “Blue” state on Question 5. Of those that identified with a “Blue” state, four said they did not feel negatively toward people from a “Red” state on Question 6 and one answered that they did. Question 7 yielded 13 “No” (unbiased) responses, one “Yes” (biased) response and one unsure response. Once again, four chose not to answer.

This subset provides some interesting responses that contradict some of the larger findings on state identification and hometown size. However, the sample size is too small to draw any further conclusions about respondents age 25 or older.

International Respondents

Ten respondents who participated in this survey were from a foreign country. Demographic information on these respondents is provided in Table 7 on the next page. Of these respondents, only two were familiar with “Red” and “Blue” states. These two

characterized “Red” states as “confederate,” “Republican,” “conservative,” “Midwestern” and “caucasian.” “Blue” states were characterized as “North,” “anti-slavery,” “liberal,” “educated,” “East coast,” “Democratic” and “diverse.” Both of these respondents identified themselves with a “Blue” state. One answered “Not Sure” to Question 6 and “Yes” to Question 7. The other respondent answered “No” to both questions. Because their hometowns could not be classified under the specified categories (Urban Area, Mostly Urban Place, etc.) these respondents’ answers could not be used for the results of this study. In addition, there are too few international respondents to remark on an international viewpoint of “Red” and “Blue” states.

TABLE IX
INTERNATIONAL SUBSET DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

	# of Respondents	% of Respondents
SEX		
Female	8	80%
Male	2	20%
AGE		
18-20	5	50%
21-24	5	50%
25-30	0	0%
31+	0	0%
RACE		
White	4	40%
Black or African American	0	0%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0	0%
Asian	4	40%
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	0	0%
Hispanic or Latino	1	10%
Other Race	0	0%
Two or More Races	1	10%
EDUCATION		
Freshman	4	40%
Sophomore	2	20%
Junior	3	30%
Senior	1	10%
Graduate	0	0%

Confused or Reversed Respondents

This subset includes respondents (22) who provided characterizations of “Red” and “Blue” states that were the reverse of what the majority of respondents provided. For example, most in this subset characterized “Red” states as “Democratic” and “Blue” states as “Republican.” It is impossible to confirm whether or not this is how these respondents characterize these places or if they were merely confused. Either way, their responses had to be examined separately from the rest of the surveys. Table 8 provides a demographic profile of these respondents.

Of these 22 respondents, 20 characterized “Red” states as “Democratic” and/or “liberal,” with one respondent also characterizing them as “left-wing.” These same 20 respondents also characterized “Blue” states as “Republican” and/or “conservative,” with one respondents also adding “right-wing.” The remaining two respondents could not remember which state was which.

None of these respondents stated that they identified with a “Red” state. Fifteen said that they identified with a “Blue” state, 5 identified with neither and 2 chose not to answer. It is impossible to confirm whether or not these respondents truly identify with the state that they chose because their classifications may have been confused or reversed. Therefore, further analysis of their answers would be irrelevant.

TABLE X

CONFUSED OR REVERSED SUBSET DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

	# of Respondents	% of Respondents
SEX		
Female	10	45%
Male	12	55%
AGE		
18-20	15	68%
21-24	7	32%
25-30	0	0%
31+	0	0%
RACE		
White	21	95%
Black or African American	0	0%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0	0%
Asian	0	0%
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	0	0%
Hispanic or Latino	1	5%
Other Race	0	0%
Two or More Races	0	0%
EDUCATION		
Freshman	7	32%
Sophomore	8	36%
Junior	2	9%
Senior	5	23%

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Summary of Study Objective Findings

The primary objective of this study was to determine if people from similar locations (based on population) have similar views on “Red” and “Blue” states. In particular, familiarity with “Red” and “Blue” states and identification with “Red” and “Blue” states was examined. It was found that whether a respondent was from a rural or an urban place did not appear to have an effect upon whether or not a respondent was familiar with the terms, “Red State” and “Blue State.” Familiarity was almost uniform among respondents from all five location categories (see Figure 4). Findings on identification with “Red” or “Blue” states showed that rurality and urbanity appeared to have somewhat of an effect upon whether a respondent identified his or her political sentiments with a “Red” state. Those from a more rural hometown were slightly more likely to identify with a “Red” state than they were to identify with a “Blue” state. Hometown location did not appear to have significance on whether or not a respondent identified with a “Blue” state. The most significant findings on identification pertained to the overall residential history of a respondent. Respondents who had lived in at least one

“Blue” state were more likely to identify with a “Blue” state than those who had not lived in a “Blue” state. In addition, respondents who had lived in only “Red” states were more likely to identify with a “Red” state than those who had lived in at least one “Blue” state.

The second objective of this study was to determine if people look negatively upon the type of state they do not identify with. While nearly one quarter of the survey population admitted to harboring some sort of bias, the majority of all respondents stated that they did not feel negatively toward the type of state they did not identify with nor with that state’s inhabitants. However, it was found that negative bias was slightly more common among those who identified with a “Blue” state and less common among those that have no state identification.

The final objective of this study was to determine how people categorize “Red” and “Blue” states and to build a tentative definition of these terms. Tables 4 & 5 list words used by at least three respondents to describe a “Red” and a “Blue” state. However, to build a tentative definition, only words used by at least 10 respondents are included.⁵ Therefore, a “Red” state is Republican, conservative, right-wing, traditional, associated with religion (especially Christianity), located in the rural South or Midwest, and supports pro-life abortion laws and President Bush. A “Blue” state is Democratic, liberal, left-wing, modern/progressive in action, has open-minded residents, located in the more urban coasts and north of the United States, and supports pro-choice abortion laws.

⁵ In order to keep the tentative definitions concise, it was decided to use only words used by 10 respondents. See Tables 6 & 7 for further characterizations.

Limitations of the Study

This study presents a unique example of how a specific group of people view “Red” and “Blue” states and is therefore limited in its scope and applications. The survey population was comprised of only Oklahoma State University students age 24 and under and hence the results of the survey cannot be generalized to a larger populace. Furthermore, the survey research was conducted in a “Red” state and the survey population was biased toward “Red” state identification. As well, the results were analyzed by qualitative descriptions and not by quantitative methods or statistical analysis. It is possible that by determining the statistical significance of the results that the findings would be different than as they are presented here.

Recommendations for Further Applications

This study was created in order to advance understanding of the relatively new terms, “Red State” and “Blue State.” This particular application brings awareness to how youth at Oklahoma State University understand these terms. However, in order to better understand how all people view “Red” and “Blue” states, replication of this study is recommended. Importance was placed upon ensuring that this study is replicable in other states and with other age groups. Expanding the survey population beyond Oklahoma State University students ages 18–24 would provide alternative viewpoints of these terms.

In addition, since hometown location has shown to only have a limited impact upon perception of “Red” and “Blue” states, the research could be expanded to study

other possible influences. For example, the effect of the media could be explored. This study was created in reaction to television, radio and newspaper usage of the terms, “Red State” and “Blue State.” In order to determine how much these outlets have influenced familiarity with “Red” and “Blue” states, respondents could also be asked how they became familiar with the terms. By doing so, it could be determined where people primarily learned about “Red” and “Blue” states.

Concluding Statement

The intent of this study has been to better understand an aspect of modern American politics. “Red” and “Blue” states may be only a short-lived phenomena in political history, but an understanding of this geographical terminology is important. While “Red” and “Blue” may give way to “Green” and “Yellow” in a matter of time, the way that we form perceptions about political spaces will be slower to change. The places that voters are from and the people they identify with there will have a lasting impact upon perceptions for a long time to come. This paper has been dedicated to determining how a person’s personal geography has affected these perceptions.

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APPENDIX A: Study Questionnaire

Participant Information Sheet

Project Title: A Study into the Relevance of Location on the Perceptions of “Red” and “Blue” States

Investigator: Elizabeth B. Taylor, OSU Department of Geography, B.A. in Geography

Purpose: The objective of this study is not only about the meanings that can be attached to places, but also about what has influenced these perceptions. In particular, I am interested in whether or not place and location have had an impact upon their beliefs and identification with “Red States” and “Blue States.” I believe that students from similar locations will share similar beliefs about these two political regions and will identify closely with one another.

Procedures: A survey that can be completed in approximately 10 minutes is attached to this information sheet. Please complete the survey in class and return it to the investigator or aid. The survey has questions about your sex, age, race, education, your personal perceptions of “Red” and “Blue” states, and your location history.

Risks of Participation: There are no known risks associated with this survey which are greater than those ordinarily found in daily life.

Benefits: This survey is a part of a master’s thesis which is expected to illuminate some of the ways in which location history can affect political perceptions. This will be a benefit to the geographical and political community.

Confidentiality: All information will be anonymous and no names or identification numbers will be asked for or recorded on the survey. After the data has been recorded in a computer file, the surveys will be destroyed no later than August 2007. No identifying information will be used in the computer file. The OSU IRB has the authority to inspect consent records and data files to assure compliance with approved procedures.

Contacts: If you have any questions about the research or your rights as a participant in this study, please feel free to contact Elizabeth B. Taylor or Dr. Allen Finchum at the Oklahoma State University Department of Geography, 405-744-6250. For information on participants’ rights, contact Dr. Sue C. Jacobs, IRB Chair, 415 Whitehurst Hall, 405-744-1676.

Participant Rights: Your participation in this research is appreciated and completely voluntary. You may choose not to participate at any time without any penalty or problem. Returning your completed survey to the investigator or aid indicates your willingness to participate in this study.

Section 1:

Sex:

- Male
- Female

Age:

- 18–20
- 21–24
- 25–30
- 31+

Race:

- White
- Black or African American
- American Indian or Alaskan Native
- Asian
- Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- Hispanic or Latino
- Other race
- Two or more races

Education: Are you currently a

- Freshman
- Sophomore
- Junior
- Senior
- Graduate
- Other

Section 2:

1. Are you familiar with the terms, "**Red State**" and "**Blue State**?"

Yes

No—*Skip to Question 8
on next page*

2. If you are familiar with these terms, please list some descriptive words that you believe can be associated with a "**Red State**."

3. If you are familiar with these terms, please list some descriptive words that you believe can be associated with a "**Blue State**."

4. Would you identify your political sentiments more with a "**Red State**" or a "**Blue State**?"

"Red State"

"Blue State"

Neither

5. If you identify your political sentiments with a "**Red State**," does that status negatively affect your perception of people from a "**Blue State**?"

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure
- I do not identify myself with a "**Red State**."

6. If you identify your political sentiments with a "**Blue State**," does that status negatively affect your perception of people from a "**Red State**?"

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure
- I do not identify myself with a "**Blue State**."

7. Does your opinion of "**Red States**" and "**Blue States**" affect your perception (*positively or negatively*) about other states and their inhabitants?

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure

Section 3:

8. What is your hometown and state? Also, if known, please include the zip code of your hometown.

9. How long have you lived in Oklahoma?

10. Please list any other states that you have lived in also, along with approximate living periods in years and months.

APPENDIX B: Pilot Study Questionnaire

Participant Information Sheet

Project Title: A Study into the Relevance of Location on the Perceptions of “Red” and “Blue” States

Investigator: Elizabeth B. Taylor, OSU Department of Geography, B.A. in Geography

Purpose: The objective of this study is not only about the meanings that can be attached to places, but also about what has influenced these perceptions. In particular, I am interested in whether or not place and location have had an impact upon their beliefs and identification with “Red States” and “Blue States.” I believe that students from similar locations will share similar beliefs about these two political regions and will identify closely with one another.

Procedures: A survey that can be completed in approximately 10 minutes is attached to this information sheet. Please complete the survey in class and return it to the investigator or aid. The survey has questions about your sex, age, race, education, your personal perceptions of “Red” and “Blue” states, and your location history.

Risks of Participation: There are no known risks associated with this survey which are greater than those ordinarily found in daily life.

Benefits: This survey is a part of a master’s thesis which is expected to illuminate some of the ways in which location history can affect political perceptions. This will be a benefit to the geographical and political community.

Confidentiality: All information will be anonymous and no names or identification numbers will be asked for or recorded on the survey. After the data has been recorded in a computer file, the surveys will be destroyed no later than August 2006. No identifying information will be used in the computer file. The OSU IRB has the authority to inspect consent records and data files to assure compliance with approved procedures.

Contacts: If you have any questions about the research or your rights as a participant in this study, please feel free to contact Elizabeth B. Taylor or Dr. Reuel Hanks at the Oklahoma State University Department of Geography, 405-744-6250. For information on participants’ rights, contact Dr. Sue C. Jacobs, IRB Chair, 415 Whitehurst Hall, 405-744-1676.

Participant Rights: Your participation in this research is appreciated and completely voluntary. You may choose not to participate at any time without any penalty or problem. Returning your completed survey to the investigator or aid indicates your willingness to participate in this study.

Section 1:

Sex:

- Male
- Female

Age:

- Under 20
- 21–25
- 26–30
- 30+

Race:

- White
- Black or African American
- American Indian or Alaskan Native
- Asian
- Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- Hispanic or Latino
- Other race
- Two or more races

Education: Are you currently a

- Freshman
- Sophomore
- Junior
- Senior
- Graduate
- Other

Section 2:

1. Are you familiar with the terms, "**Red State**" and "**Blue State**?"

- Yes
- No—*Skip to Question 8 on next page*

2. If you are familiar with these terms, please list some descriptive words that you believe can be associated with a "**Red State**."

3. If you are familiar with these terms, please list some descriptive words that you believe can be associated with a "**Blue State**."

4. Would you identify your political sentiments more with a "**Red State**" or a "**Blue State**?"

- "Red State"
- "Blue State"
- Neither

5. If you identify your political sentiments with a "**Red State**," does that status negatively affect your perception of people from a "**Blue State**?"

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure
- I do not identify myself with a "**Red State**."

6. If you identify your political sentiments with a "**Blue State**," does that status negatively affect your perception of people from a "**Red State**?"

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure
- I do not identify myself with a "**Blue State.**"

7. Does your opinion of "**Red States**" and "**Blue States**" affect your perception of other states? (For example, are your feelings toward Texas and Texans affected—*either positively or negatively*—because it is a solidly "Red State?")

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure

8. What sorts of beliefs are important to you when voting?

Section 3:

9. What is your hometown and state?

10. How long have you lived in Oklahoma?

11. Please list any other states that you have lived in also, along with approximate living periods in years and months.

12. Which state do you most identify with in terms of values and beliefs? In other words, where did you feel most "at home?"

APPENDIX C: IRB Approval

Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board

Date: Monday, March 12, 2007 Protocol Expires: 8/29/2007
IRB Application No: AS069
Proposal Title: A Study into the Influence of Location on the Perceptions of "Red" and "Blue" States
Reviewed and Processed as: Exempt
Modification
Status Recommended by Reviewer(s) Approved

Principal Investigator(s):

Elizabeth Taylor Allen Finchum
1105 Kelly Park Rd. 219 Scott Hall
Edmond, OK 73003 Stillwater, OK 74078

The requested modification to this IRB protocol has been approved. Please note that the original expiration date of the protocol has not changed. The IRB office MUST be notified in writing when a project is complete. All approved projects are subject to monitoring by the IRB.

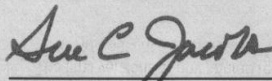
The final versions of any printed recruitment, consent and assent documents bearing the IRB approval stamp are attached to this letter. These are the versions that must be used during the study.

The reviewer(s) had these comments:

The following modifications are approved:

Change in advisor to Dr. Allen Finchum
Removal of two questions from questionnaire
Four changes to questionnaire

Signature :


Sue C. Jacobs, Chair, Institutional Review Board

Monday, March 12, 2007
Date

VITA

Elizabeth B. Taylor

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: THE RELEVANCE OF LOCATION ON THE PERCEPTIONS OF “RED”
AND “BLUE” STATES

Major Field: Geography

Biographical: Born in Oklahoma City and now residing in Edmond, Oklahoma.

Education: Graduated from Putnam City West High School, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma in May, 2000; received Bachelor of Arts in Geography from the University of Central Oklahoma, Edmond, Oklahoma, in May, 2004; completed the requirements for a Master of Science Degree in Geography at Oklahoma State University in July, 2007.

Experience: Employed by the Association of Central Oklahoma Governments, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, for three months (2003); employed by the Journal of Cultural Geography at the Geography department at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma, for two years (2004-2006).

Name: Elizabeth B. Taylor

Date of Degree: July 2007

Institution: Oklahoma State University

Location: Stillwater, Oklahoma

Title of Study: THE RELEVANCE OF LOCATION ON THE PERCEPTIONS OF
“RED” AND “BLUE” STATES

Pages in Study: 78

Candidate for the Degree of Master of Science

Major Field: Geography

Scope and Method of Study: This study aims to determine if people from similar locations (based on population) have similar views on “Red” and “Blue” states. In particular, familiarity with “Red” and “Blue” states and identification with “Red” and “Blue” states are examined. In addition it is determined if people look negatively upon the type of state they do not identify with and a tentative definition of “Red” and “Blue” states is created. All information is based upon a survey administered to Oklahoma State University students about their perceptions of “Red” and “Blue” states and their personal location histories.

Findings and Conclusions: It was found that whether or not a respondent’s hometown was rural or urban did not have a dramatic effect upon “Red” and “Blue” state identification. The most significant findings showed that overall prior location history had the most influence on how a respondent identified their political sentiments. In addition, the majority of respondents did not feel negatively biased toward people from the type of state that they did not identify their political beliefs with. As well, most respondents characterized “Red” and “Blue” states with an appropriate political party association.

ADVISER’S APPROVAL: Dr. G. Allen Finchum
